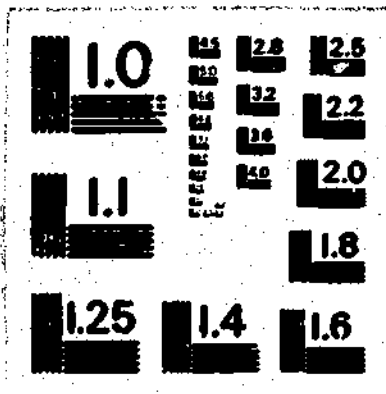




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**THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE IN THE KOREAN WAR
1950 - 1953**

by

DERMOT MICHAEL MOORE

**submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of**

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PROMOTER: PROFESSOR M. BOUCHER

JOINT PROMOTER: PROFESSOR C.J. BARNARD

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SUMMARY

In response to a United Nations request the South African Government sent 2 Sqn SAAF to the Far East. A contingent of 50 officers and 157 other ranks arrived in Japan on 4 November 1950. After a brief conversion to the Mustang F-51D, a detachment of 13 officers and 21 airmen was sent to Korea. Its pilots flew the first SAAF sorties from P'yongyang East (K-24) on 19 November 1950.

Forced to withdraw in the face of the Chinese intervention, this detachment was finally re-united with the main body of the squadron at Chinhae (K-10) towards the end of 1950. For the next two years 2 Sqn operated in the ground attack role under the operational control of the 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing of the US Fifth Air Force. From November 1951, the military stalemate and the diplomatic deadlock forced the United Nations Command to use airpower in an attempt to bring the war to a conclusion. Accordingly, 2 Sqn SAAF took part in air pressure raids against targets such as the North Korean capital and the industrial and transportation infrastructures. These raids were carried out in addition to the routine tasks of close air support, interdiction, reconnaissance and air rescue.

During the last week of December 1952, 2 Sqn handed its surviving Mustangs over to the USAF and left Chinhae for Osan (K-55). At Osan they began a conversion course on the Sabre F-86F. In the face of a threat from the rapidly expanding Communist air forces 2 Sqn initially flew its Sabres on counter-air operations before reverting to its ground attack role. By the time the Armistice came into effect 264 officers and 555 other ranks had seen service with the SAAF in the Far East. They had been responsible for more than 12 000 combat sorties. Altogether 34 pilots and 79 aircraft had been lost. Although the contribution made by the SAAF to the overall UN effort was relatively small, the efficiency of its personnel and the effectivity of its operations was impressive.

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PREFACE

During July 1978, the 25th Anniversary of the Korean Armistice was commemorated in South Africa. Twenty-five years after the event, the broad issues and minor details surrounding the role of 2 Sqn SAAF in the Korean War were still largely unknown to those who had not been directly involved in that remote campaign. Many younger South Africans were surprised to learn that airmen from this country had travelled halfway around the world to assist a United Nations' force in resisting an act of armed aggression.

In contrast to the excellent official accounts produced by the various US armed services, very little literature is to be found in South Africa on the part played by its pilots and technicians. The written material presently available is essentially commemorative. Thus, by its very nature, it tends to be far too brief and laudatory. The main publications of this type are:

- a. An article entitled "Korea" in the South African Air Force Golden Jubilee Souvenir Book, 1920-1970, edited by Cndt S.J.W. Inglesby.
- b. "The History of No 2 Squadron, SAAF, in the Korean War", an eight page article in the Military History Journal, Vol.4, No.3, June 1978, written by Col P.M.J. McGregor.
- c. A 74 page section on 2 Sqn in The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War, Vol.I, published by the Ministry of National Defence, Republic of Korea, in 1971. This was followed in 1977 by a further 17 pages in Vol.VI of the same series.

In view of the above, senior officers on the staff of the Military Information Bureau (MIB), formerly the SADF Documentation Centre, suggested this more intensive study.

The aim of the present work is to determine the role played by 2 Sqn SAAF in the Korean conflict, and to place its contribution towards the UN war effort in historical perspective. It is not intended to be a day-to-day chronicle of the squadron's activities. Attention is thus given to elements of the general situation in the context of which 2 Sqn operated. These aspects include the UN command structure, prevailing operational procedures, and the ground and air situation. An attempt is also made to preserve a balance between specific themes on the one hand, and a chronological development on the other. This has led to certain anomalies, such as the account of a particular pilot being killed in action, preceding a mention of the same officer as a member of a successful mission. It is hoped that this exploratory study of the operations of 2 Sqn SAAF in Korea will provide a sound basis for the examination of specific themes which could only be touched upon here. These include such aspects as air-sea rescue, intelligence and security, morale and casualty rates, and problems associated with capture and internment.

The general background material was gained from published sources which are listed in the Source List. These publications include the official US Army and Air Force Histories of the war, as well as numerous articles written during, or shortly after, the conflict. The main repository of the primary material used in this study is the Military Information Bureau. Here the Korean documents are to be found in five main collections, as yet largely unsorted, which reflect the channels of command and administration from DHQ, Pretoria, to 2 Sqn HQ in Korea, via the Office of the Senior Air Liaison Officer in Tokyo. Carbon copies of letters and reports can be found in the mass of documents deposited from each of these sources. The material originating from any of these headquarters does, in many respects, duplicate what is to be found in the files of the other two.

In compiling this work primary attention has been given to the

original documents generated in Korea. Thus the two collections which were initially built up in the squadron headquarters, the War Diaries and Missions (WDM) and 2 Squadron Korea (2 Sqn K), are used far more extensively than those of the Senior Air Liaison Officer (SALO), and the Director-General of the Air Force (DGAF) and the Adjutant-General (AG). The first two collections and to a lesser extent, the other three, contain a mass of material consisting of letters, reports, operations orders, frag orders, the war diaries of 2 Sqn and of the Liaison Headquarters, mission debriefs, mission returns, aircraft accident investigations, signals and numerous other documents of an operational and administrative nature produced during the course of nearly three years of operational deployment.

In many cases these documents are drawn up according to the particular styles of the CO, Adjutant, Operations Officer, Intelligence Officer or clerk concerned, with a resultant lack of consistency of format, content and use of abbreviations. The War Diary is a case in point. During the initial months and again just before the Armistice, the daily account of events, the mission debriefs, and comprehensive appendices were all consolidated and bound into a single volume. At other times the mission debriefs and other documents, previously included in the appendices, were bound and filed separately. The records of the debriefs themselves are also found in various forms. On occasion, the details of the same missions are recorded by means of pencilled entries on the form "SAAF 220" and on a similar form issued by the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group. Where this occurs the two accounts, written by different persons attending the same debriefing session, were found to be in substantial agreement. A further typed copy of each completed SAAF debrief form was also made, and other than typographical errors, it is faithful to the handwritten original.

Some of the most reliable and detailed information is to be found in the files relating to aircraft accident investigations. The heavy reliance on this material may give the impression that the SAAF experience in Korea consisted of little more than a series of casualties and mishaps. The risk of creating this impression has been knowingly taken in order to make full use of the detailed accounts of missions, which apart from their unfortunate endings, may be regarded as typical of the operational experiences of the "Flying Cheetahs" in the Far East.

Unfortunately the official documents relating to the decision to send a South African force to Korea are not yet available. In spite of having to contend with this disadvantage the author of a contemporary study enjoys the bonus of being able to interview people who have lived through the events he is recording. Although other considerations were taken into account, Korean veterans were selected for interviews mainly on the basis of the access they would have had to significant information during the campaign in the Far East. Interviews were preceded by a study of the documentary evidence, and although the informants were free to mention anything they considered to be important, specific questions were asked with a view to clarifying the written sources. A tape recorder was used to ensure that the oral testimony was processed with due regard to accuracy and detail. Some of these Korean veterans are still serving officers in the South African Air Force, thus it would not be in the interests of security to provide biographical sketches. However, the proximity of these officers to the events they describe can be deduced from the text itself. The ever changing set of circumstances under which the squadron operated in Korea resulted in each member of each group of replacements having its own unique experience of the campaign. Their various accounts, frequently supported by entries in flying logbooks, were different, but complementary rather than contradictory.

A writer of military history must, of necessity, make use of military abbreviations and ranks. A list of the former has been included for the convenience of the reader, but the latter presents a slightly more complex problem. The SAAF personnel in Korea experienced frequent changes in rank. These were mainly of a temporary nature, made in order to maintain the correct command structure in the face of continual rotations. Hence, the writer has made little effort to permanently fix the rank of any particular individual. Ranks have been used as they have appeared in the various accounts of a particular incident. In the case of interviews, the rank of the informant has been given in the footnote, as it was at the time the interview was conducted.

Maps have been included with a view to guiding the reader through a strange land with even stranger place names. The spelling of these names has been based on the aeronautical charts used in Korea and issued by the USAF Aeronautical Chart Service. The maps have been compiled specifically to illustrate the text. Locations and features have been confined to those mentioned in the written account, with the addition of a few details necessary for general orientation. With the exception of Map 20, which is based on a chart in the SA National Museum of Military History, all the maps are original. They have been derived from the various published sources as well as from archival material.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to all those who have assisted me, either directly or indirectly, with this work. The staff of the Military Information Bureau have not only offered me outstanding facilities for research, but at all times have gone out of their way to meet my numerous requests and queries. Valuable assistance has also been received from the South African Air Force Museum, the South African Museum of Military History and the SADF Central Library. The manner in which I was received by the South African veterans

of the Korean War not only made it easy to solicit the desired information, but was also a great source of encouragement. I should like to record my appreciation of my promotor, Prof. M. Boucher, who consented to undertake a task that has required both patience and sympathetic insight. Thanks is also due to Mr D. Forsyth of Johannesburg for giving me access to his list of Korean War medal winners and to Mrs E.M. Booysen of Fort Beaufort, who typed the script, and to my fellow officers of Group 7 Headquarters in Grahamstown, who have cheerfully borne an extra burden to enable me to finish this thesis.

Finally, this work would never have seen its final form if it had not been for the tolerance and assistance of my ever patient wife. My two daughters have had to put up with a pre-occupied and humourless father for far too long. I hope that I shall now be able to compensate my family for these inconveniences by spending much more time with them.

Fort Beaufort
29 May 1982

A grant from the Human Sciences Research Council made it possible to undertake certain parts of this research. I hereby acknowledge this contribution and record my gratitude.

LIST OF CHIEF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	antiaircraft
CAP	combat air patrol
CCAF	Chinese Communist Air Force
CCF	Chinese Communist Forces
CG	Commanding General
C-in-C FEC	Commander-in-Chief Far East Command
C-in-C UNC	Commander-in-Chief United Nations Command
CO	Commanding Officer
CIO	Chief Technical Officer
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross
DGAF	Director-General of the Air Force (SAAF)
DE	drop zone
EUSAK	Eighth United States Army in Korea
18 FBW	18th Fighter-Bomber Wing
FBG	Fighter-Bomber Group
FB Sqn	Fighter-Bomber Squadron
FBW	Fighter-Bomber Wing
FEAF	Far East Air Forces
FENCOM	Far East Air Materiel Command
FIG	Fighter-Interceptor Group
FI Sqn	Fighter-Interceptor Squadron
FIW	Fighter-Interceptor Wing
5AF	Fifth Air Force
GP	general purpose bombs
GCA	Ground Control Approach
HE	high explosive
HVAR	high velocity aircraft rocket
IAS	indicated air speed
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross

JCS	Joint Chiefs-of-Staff
KATUSA	Korean troops with the US Army
KIA	killed in action
KMAG	Korean Military Advisory Group
KPA	Korean Peoples' Army
MIA	missing in action
MLR	main line of resistance
MSR	main supply route
NavFE	Naval Forces, Far East
NKAF	North Korean Air Force
NKPA	North Korean Peoples' Army
PSP	pierced steel planking
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAF	Royal Air Force
RCT	regimental combat team
recoe	reconnaissance
ResCAP	rescue combat air patrol
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKAF	Republic of Korea Air Force
RT	radio/telephone
RTU	return to unit
R and R	re-arm and refuel
R and R	rest and recuperation
SAAF	South African Air Force
SALO	Senior Air Liaison Officer
TACC	tactical air control centre
TACP	tactical air control party
TADC	tactical air direction centre
UN	United Nations
UNC	United Nations Command
UNCACK	United Nations Civil Assistance Command

UNKRA **United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency**
US **United States**
USAF **United States Air Force**
USAFIK **United States Army forces in Korea**
USSR **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics**

PART I

THE BACKGROUND TO SOUTH AFRICAN PARTICIPATION

IN THE

AFRICAN WAR 1950-1953

CHAPTER 1

THE GEOPOLITICAL BACKGROUND TO AIR OPERATIONS IN KOREA

POSITION AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Korea is a peninsula 925km at its greatest length and varying in width from 170km in the centre to 400km in the north; in the south the average width is 240km. It has an area of 220 149km². By comparison, the area of the Transvaal, including the recently independent national states, is 283 917km². It lies between 34°N and 43°N latitude and 124°E and 131°E longitude, with the greater part of the peninsula between 34°N and 40°N. In the north the Yalu and Tumen Rivers form the boundaries with the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union respectively. The Sea of Japan lies to the east, with the Korea Strait to the south and the Yellow Sea to the west.¹

The strategic position of Korea, lying at the centre of a triangle formed by Russia, China and Japan (Map 1), has resulted in the Korean people falling victim to great power aggression since pre-Christian times. In this respect Korea could be termed the Poland of the Far East. Its traditional capital of Seoul lies 547km from Kyushu, 1 174km from Tokyo and 1 287km from Okinawa.² The excellent port of Pusan is situated at the southern end of the peninsula only 200km from the islands of the Japanese archipelago. Pusan and other good ice-free harbours in the south give to Korea the characteristic of a bridge between Japan and continental Asia; it has been conversely described as a dagger pointing at the heart of Japan.³ For this reason, the rulers of Manchuria and Japan,

1. Defense Mapping Agency, Aerospace Center: Operational Navigation Charts 1:1 000 000, Nos. G-10 and F-9.
2. R.F. Futrell, L.S. Moseley, A.F. Simpson: The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953, p.60.
3. C.A. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.285.

and more recently, the Soviet Union and the United States of America, have been sensitive to the exercise of political influence and the presence of military forces on the peninsula.

However, Korea's problems started long before the present Cold War rivalry. Just prior to the Christian era, the northern sector of Korea, known as the Kingdom of Ch'ao Hsien, was incorporated into the Han Empire of China. The small kingdoms of the south remained independent. Gradually they united in mutual defence against China, and in 57 BC the Kingdom of Silla emerged. As the centuries passed the Chinese hold weakened and by 668 AD the entire Korean peninsula had become one political unit under Silla. One of the great unifying forces had been the Korean culture, similar to, yet distinct from, the Chinese tradition. One of its distinctive features was the Korean language which played a significant role in the development of cultural identity.⁴

During the thirteenth century Korea was invaded by the armies of Genghis Khan. In 1592 the Japanese general, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, embarked upon a successful attempt to launch an invasion against China via Korea, which was devastated in the process. Within a short time Korea was once again destined to fall victim to the territorial ambitions of a more powerful neighbour, when in 1627 the Manchus invaded from the north in an effort to secure their eastern flank prior to an advance into China. Their success led to Korea becoming a tributary state of the Ch'ing Dynasty in Peking. The Korean people reacted to their misfortunes by becoming politically introverted and isolationist. Towards the end of the nineteenth century this isolationism had combined with official corruption and a suppressive form of feudalism to render the Koreans politically impotent.⁵ In this weakened state Korea had to face the wave

4. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), pp.283-284; A.J. Grajdanzev: Modern Korea, p.23.

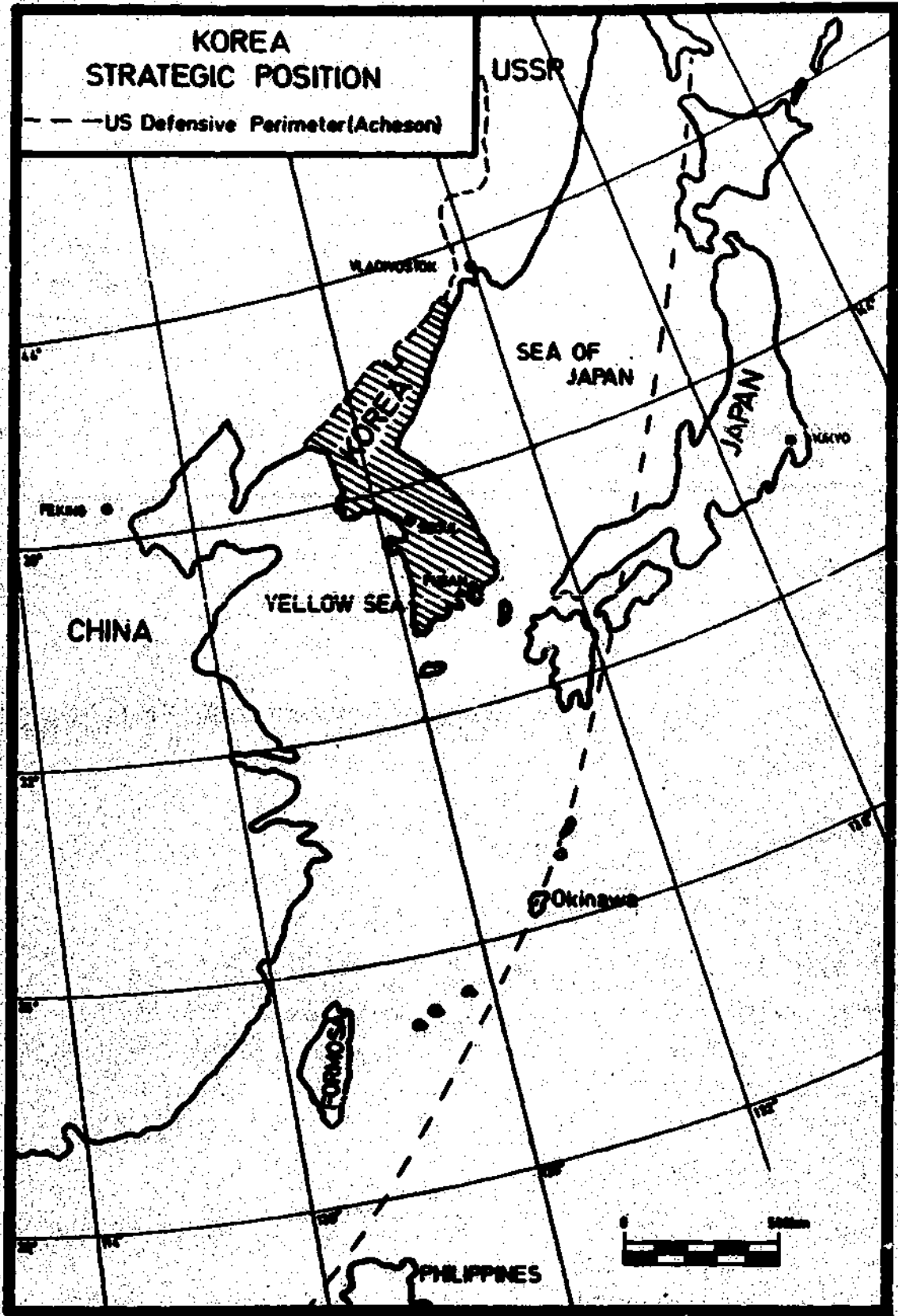
5. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.285; A.J. Grajdanzev: Modern Korea, pp.23-25.

of imperialism that swept the world during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Although still nominally under the suzerainty of China, she became a prime target of the imperialistic rivalry between Russia and Japan, for during the second half of the nineteenth century Russian expansionism had added a third dimension to the traditional Chinese-Japanese rivalry over Korean territory.

In 1860 China had ceded the Ussuri territories to Russia, giving her a 190km long border with Korea along the Tuman River. To Japan, it was important that imperialism, especially Russian imperialistic ambitions in Korea, should be checked in the interest of her own security. The peninsula held potential for Japan as a source of raw materials and as an outlet for excess population. In 1876 the Japanese government recognized Korean independence in terms of the Treaty of Kangwha, an essentially commercial agreement which among other favourable concessions permitted Japanese immigration to Korea. Owing to the low standard of living of the rural Korean peasants Japanese immigrants tended to settle in the urban areas. During 1894-1895, the revolt of a group of fanatical Korean nationalists, known as the Tonghaks, led to war between China and Japan on Korean soil. The matter was eventually resolved by the Treaty of Shimonoseki, in terms of which China agreed to respect the complete independence of Korea.

Chinese influence having been neutralized, Russo-Japanese rivalry in the area increased. In 1896 the Japanese revived the British proposal of 1894 to divide Korea into Russian and Japanese spheres of influence along the 38th parallel. The Russians rejected the proposal and tension mounted steadily, culminating in Japan's surprise attack on the Russian naval base at Port Arthur on the night of 8-9 February 1904. The war that followed proved disastrous for the Russians, and in terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905) Japan, amongst other gains, was able to extend a protectorate over Korea. The Korean government was placed under the supervision of a Japanese Resident-General. In 1907 the Korean King was

MAP 1



forced to abdicate in favour of his feeble-minded son and in August 1910 Japan formally annexed Korea bringing to an end its short-lived independence and the 500 year old Yi Dynasty.⁶

TERRAIN AND CLIMATE

The subsequent role that Japan assigned to Korea was that of supplier of food, raw materials and "Lebensraum". The subordination of Korea's interests to those of the metropolitan power was as much a reflection of her geography as of her history. The major geographic considerations of terrain and climate which had exercised a decisive influence over military operations on the peninsula throughout the centuries were also to influence the ground and air battles of the Korean War in the mid-twentieth century.

The word that most clearly describes the Korean terrain is mountainous. Although the mountains are generally relatively low, ranging in most cases from 200m to 1 500m, the sharp difference in height between the peaks and ridges and the adjacent plains and valleys present a landscape of precipitous slopes, deep river valleys, defiles and ravines, punctuated by sharp peaks and razor-backed ridges. The relief pattern is extremely tangled with mountains sometimes cutting across one another to such an extent that the geographer finds it difficult to identify clearly defined mountain ranges in the normally accepted sense of the term. Reference can rather be made to mountain groups or areas. Three such groups can be identified:

- a. North Korean Mountains:- the tangled ranges north of the 40th parallel.
- b. East Korean Mountains - the ranges from the 39th parallel southwards, running parallel to the east coast.

6. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), pp.286-287; W.F. Choinaki: South Korea (G. Wint (Ed.): Asia Handbook), p.246; Grajdanzev: Modern Korea, pp.32-33.

c. South Korean Mountains:- the ranges of the south-west, located south of the Kum River and west of the Nakdong River (Map 2).

The mountains of North Korea are higher than those to the south, with some peaks rising to 3 000m. The slopes are steep and densely wooded, making communication possible only along the deep river valleys. The roads and the railways thus frequently follow the rivers on their way through the intertwined mountain chains. The area is very thinly populated. The East Korean ranges run parallel to the coast for more than 450km, averaging 1 200m to 1 500m in height and gradually becoming lower in the south. They constitute a barrier to east-west communication and because of their proximity to the east coast, they restrict the north-south communication along the eastern side of the peninsula to a very narrow coastal route. At some points the mountains reach heights of 1 700m within only 15km of the coast.

The mountains in the south-west follow a similar pattern, but they are somewhat lower with most of the peaks barely reaching 1 200m. These western mountains are further from the coast than those in the east. The result is a coastal plain 40-70km wide, which allows for relatively easy north-south communication. Other lowland areas in Korea are confined to the larger river valleys, which in most cases run east-west from watersheds in the North and East Korean Mountain areas. This almost uninterrupted mountainous terrain was to have a profound effect upon both ground and air operations during the war of 1950 to 1953. The diarist of 2 Squadron SAAF points out a similarity between the terrain of the southern section of Korea and the Valley of a Thousand Hills in Natal, with the main difference being that the Korean Mountains are covered with bush and undergrowth.⁷ In

7. WEM: Box I, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.9.1950



Korean Landscape near Chinhae

Military Information Bureau (MIB) Photograph No:700012289

the low-lying regions the industrious Korean peasant cultivates every available piece of ground; rice is even sown between the stones of what we in South Africa would term "Koppies".⁸

Air operations were both helped and hindered by this type of terrain. Movement by road was confined to narrow winding tracks in the mountainous areas, while in the low-lying areas vehicles had to move along roadbeds built up above the sodden rice paddies. The movement of large concentrations of troops or of road and rail traffic was thus very restricted and it was almost impossible to avoid attack from the air when caught out in the open. In the mountains, however, troops on foot could easily melt into the surrounding valleys and forests. The mountainous terrain presented other problems to the airman, since from the air the numerous valleys and ridges looked alike, making target identification extremely difficult. United Nations aircrews could thus not always be sure that they had attacked the correct targets.⁹ Moreover, the narrow ravines left little room in which to manoeuvre aircraft, whilst their slopes provided excellent positions for anti-aircraft weapons.

The east-west flow of many of the larger rivers, namely the Yalu, the Ch'ong-ch'on, the Nen, the Han, the Kum and the Naktong, influenced the course of the land battle. The largest of these rivers is the Yalu; it forms the border between Korea and Manchuria and is 813km long with a width of 150-160m in the middle reaches and 8km at the mouth. In the cold, dry season it, like the other rivers mentioned above, can usually be crossed at any point by men on foot; even those parts that remain deep frozen solid. However, in the wet months they constitute a decisive barrier to north-south communication. The main rivers thus often served as jumping-off and defensive lines for both the Communist and the UN forces in their

8. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.9.1950; Maj. M. Winstanly; Recorded Interview, Port Elizabeth, 24.2.1981.

9. G.P.M. Kotze; Recorded Interview, Port Elizabeth, 23.2.1981.

movements from north to south and vice versa.¹⁰

A geographic factor that exercises a major influence on military operations, particularly upon air operations, is climate. The Korean climate has three basic controls:

- a. Latitudinal location in the system of planetary westerlies and the cyclonic storms.
- b. Continental Asiatic location and monsoon influence.
- c. Maritime location between the deep Sea of Japan and the shallow Yellow Sea.¹¹

These controls combine with the mountainous Korean terrain to create a climate of extremes with regard to both temperature and precipitation, with greater variations in the north than in the south. 2 Squadron Paymaster, Maj. M. Winstanly, who served at K-55 Airbase (Osan) during most of 1953, later recalled the discomfort that such a climate can cause a man on active service. He relates that in winter he had to wear several jerseys, a battle dress and wellingtons in an attempt to keep warm, while in the summer the heat and humidity caused the SAAF khaki uniform to become wet with perspiration.¹²

The Korean peninsula is subjected to two monsoons annually; the winter monsoon from the north which originates in the Siberian anti-cyclone, and the summer monsoon which blows inland from the tropical seas. The winter monsoon begins in October-November, with the north-westerly winds bringing in cold, dry air from the interior of the Asian continent. Clear, cloudless skies mark the beginning of a long winter, which is especially severe in the north where the average temperature in the mountains drops to minus 17°C.

10. Operational Navigation Charts, Nos. G-10 and F-9; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.60; V.T. Zaichikov (trans. A. Parry): Geography of Korea, pp.15-20, 27-29; Grajdanzev: Modern Korea, pp.8-14

11. S. McOmre: Climatic Regions of Korea and their Economy (Geographical Review, Vol.31, No.1, January 1941), p.95.

12. Maj. M. Winstanly: Recorded Interview, Port Elizabeth, 23.2.1981.

Along the southern coast, however, the Yellow Sea exercises a moderating influence on the icy northern winds. Although temperatures below zero are sometimes experienced, during the coldest months they average 2°-4°C. Cyclonic storms during the winter months bring warm southern winds. These result in unstable weather conditions, which normally occur in three to four day cycles. During the winter months only 4-15% of the annual precipitation falls. The northern mountains are blanketed with snow, while the south only experiences occasional snowfalls.¹³

The summer temperatures can reach as much as 40°C, although July averages are milder varying between 20° and 25°C, with the south being only slightly hotter than the north. The summer monsoon begins weakly in June and develops strongly in July. The rains which accompany it usually begin round about 10 July and last for approximately five weeks. About 65% of the annual precipitation falls during the summer months. Even on clear days heavy fog can occur suddenly when the sea winds meet the humid air over the land, reducing visibility to zero. The Korean summer thus offers the least favourable flying weather of the year, with the added hazard of the southern typhoons which reach the Korean shores in September.¹⁴ Map No.2 and Diagram No.1 illustrate climate controls and conditions in Korea with special reference to the central part of the peninsula, the focus of ground and air operations during the major part of the war, and to the south where major UN tactical airfields were located.

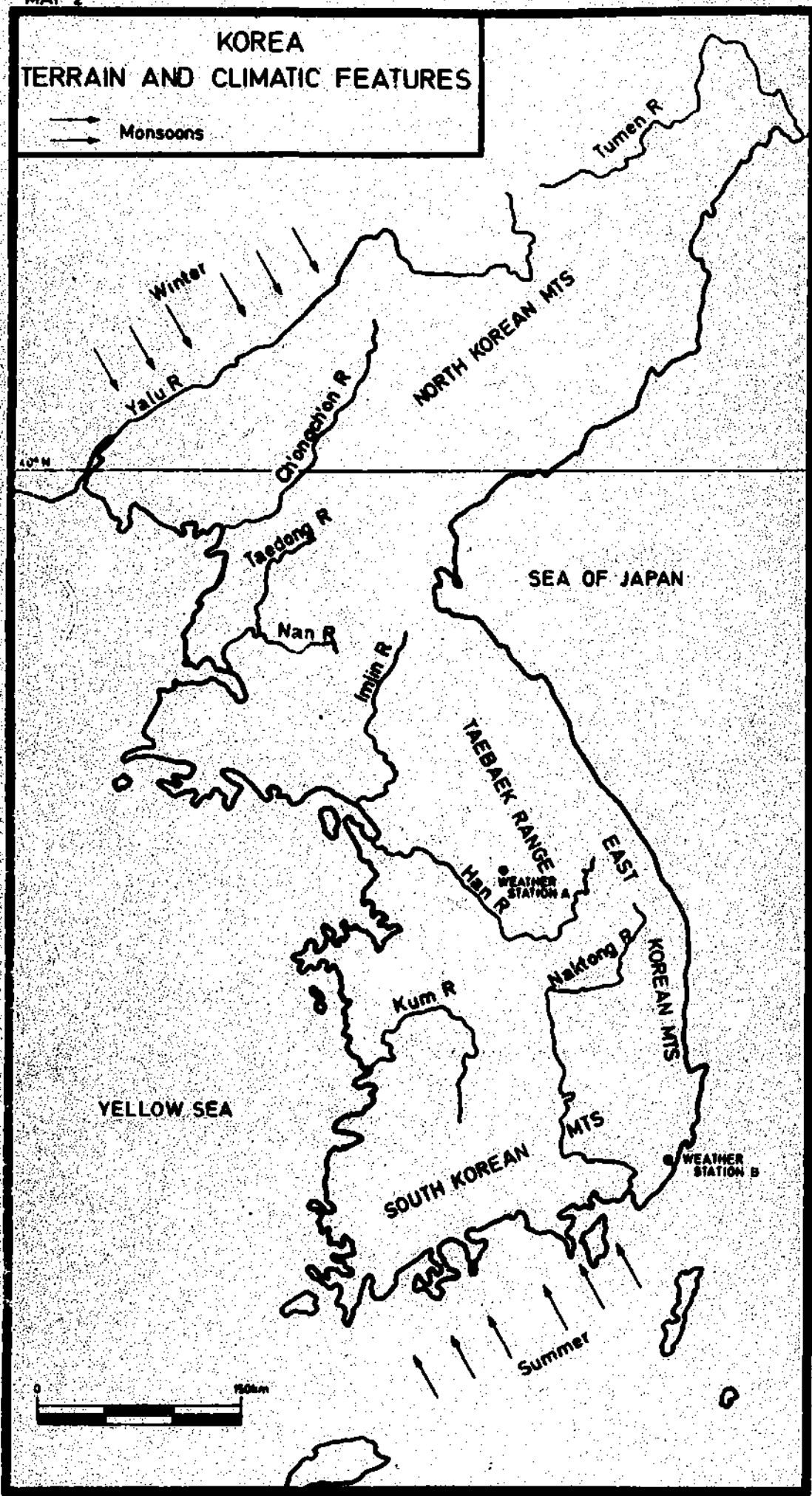
Although the best weather for air operations over Korea occurs during the winter months, airmen were not always able to make the most of it during the Korean War. As mentioned above, the prevailing flow of weather during the winter months is from the north-west, with weather systems originating in Siberia and moving across Manchuria and finally down the

13. Zaichikov: Geography of Korea, pp.21-22.

14. Zaichikov: Geography of Korea, pp.21-22.

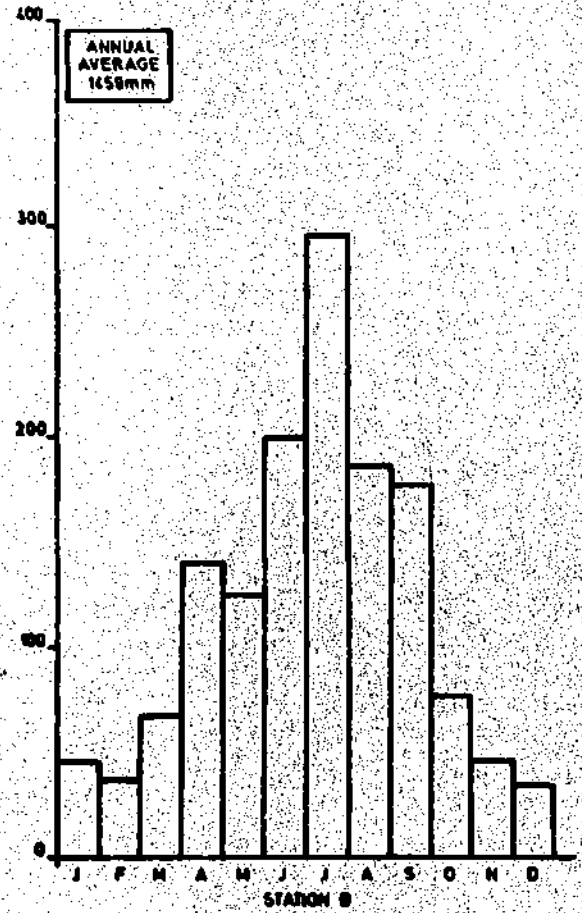
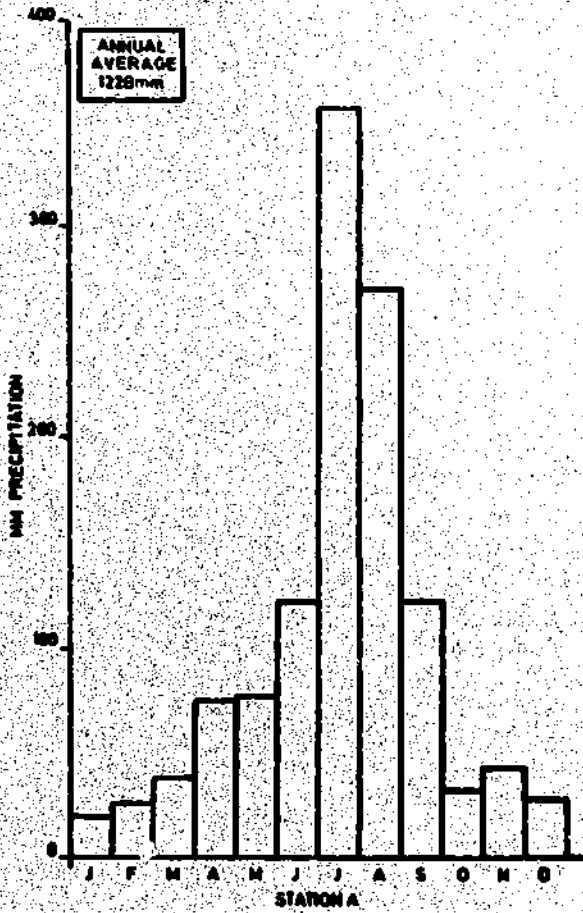
KOREA TERRAIN AND CLIMATIC FEATURES

→ Monsoons

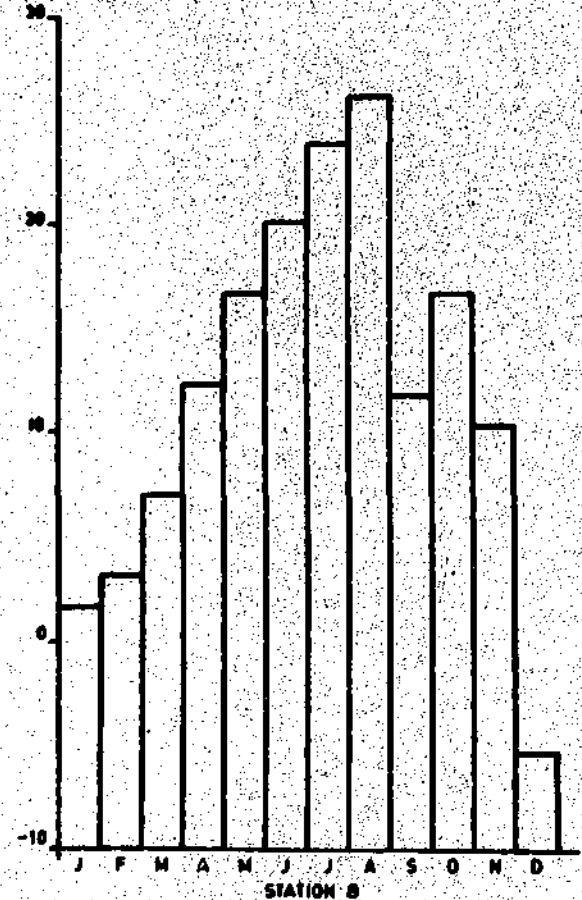
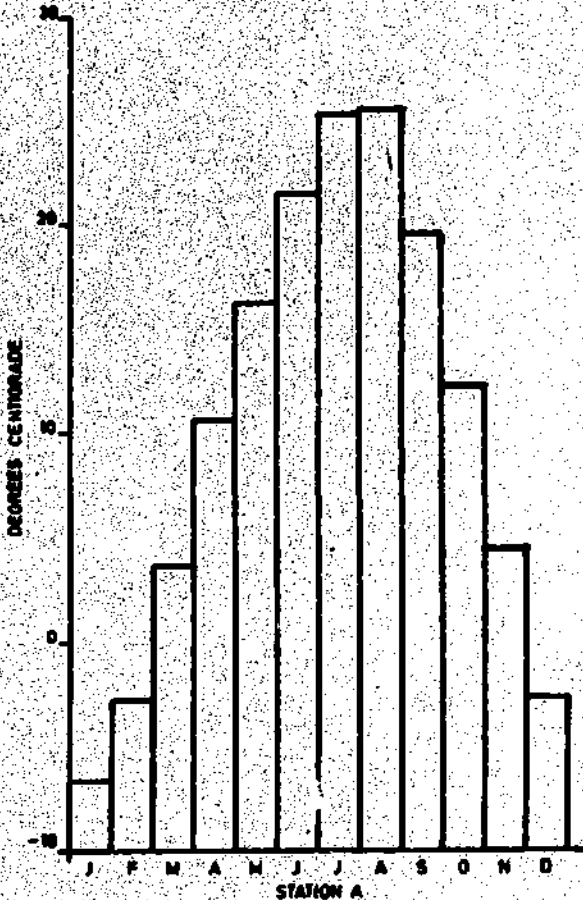


Met. Stations A and B Map 2

MEAN MONTHLY PRECIPITATION



MEAN MONTHLY TEMPERATURE



Korean peninsula. Although the Russian weather stations continued to broadcast the standard data during the war, the Chinese failed to follow suit; US meteorologists were thus unable to map changes in weather fronts as they moved over Northern China and Manchuria. Their problems were further complicated by the irregular relief and the presence of warm ocean currents. Under these circumstances accurate weather forecasting for the planning of air operations was difficult to achieve.¹⁵

THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION

The interaction between geographic factors and the economic and political policies of the Japanese rulers produced the Korean economy of the mid-twentieth century, an economy which differed vastly from that of the previous century. From 1910 onwards Japan had systematically proceeded to subordinate Korean interests to those of her own. By 1945 reclamation schemes had doubled the total area under cultivation. This, together with the introduction of fertilizer and better rotation schemes had led to a large agricultural surplus, especially of rice. By the mid-thirties Korea had become Japan's largest single source of food imports, providing her with 8% of her total annual consumption. But all this did not benefit the Koreans. As an indication of the marked drop in the standard of living experienced by the Korean peasant, the per capita consumption of rice in Korea dropped by half between 1915 and 1938. This was of particular significance in a land where 80% of the population were peasant farmers or labourers engaged in the cultivation of the land.¹⁶

15. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.59.

16. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.290; McCune: The Climatic Regions of Korea and their Economy (Geographical Review, Vol.31, No.1, January 1941), p.95.

The Japanese developed Korean industry along the same lines as they had exploited Korean agricultural potential: to serve Japanese needs. Iron-ore deposits in the mountains of northern and central Korea formed the basis of an iron and steel industry which by 1944 was producing 812 000 tonnes of pig iron and 406 400 tonnes of steel annually. Other strategic metals produced included copper, lead, zinc, aluminium and magnesium. Large chemical plants were established in the ports of northern Korea. These installations were of great strategic importance to the Japanese for they were mainly synthetic oil plants and fertilizer factories; the latter could easily be converted to the production of explosives. The Japanese exploited the abundant supply of relatively cheap labour by using crude, labour-intensive industrial processes, instead of processes based on more advanced technology. From 1932 to 1945, although the industrial output of Korea increased almost 15 times, she remained a primary producer feeding the light secondary industries which were concentrated in Japan. Thus the industrial development of their country, like her agricultural development, brought little improvement to the daily lot of the native Koreans.¹⁷

The Japanese also developed the infrastructure upon which the metallurgical and chemical industries depended, especially the transportation and power supply systems. The development of the transportation system had a military as well as an economic purpose. The main transportation axis of Korea is a double-track railway line that crosses from the good, ice-free harbours of the south-east to the Manchurian border in the north-west. For the most part the route traverses the coastal lowlands between the Yellow Sea and the Mountains. This facility enabled the Japanese to deploy troops along the Manchurian border prior to the invasion of 1931; thereafter it served to link the Japanese-dominated economies of Manchuria and Korea.

17. Zaichikov: Geography of Korea, pp.66-77.

Other railway lines and roads were built, mainly to link the rest of the country with the main south-east to north west route. By 1940 the Japanese had built 6 600km of railways and 53 000km of roads of all types. The railways were the most important means of transportation as few of the roads were surfaced with asphalt or as wide as 8m; most of them varied in width from 4 to 5 m. The railways were well constructed with soundly ballasted beds and modern bridges. The roads tended to wind over the ridges, but the railway lines passed through numerous tunnels, which offered convenient shelter from observation and aerial attack.¹⁸

By 1944, 90% of Korea's electricity was produced by hydro-electric plants. Most of these plants were situated in the north of the country, the largest being at the Suiho Reservoir on the Yalu River, 80km upstream from Sinuiju.¹⁹ These plants, linked in a grid, constituted the major energy source for Korean industry. So plentiful was electric power, that, except in the remote areas, electric lighting was commonplace in rural villages.²⁰

There were three features which characterized the Japanese leaders' handling of the native Korean population: re-location, the monopolization of key positions, and denationalization. According to Japanese statistics, the population of Korea in 1942 was 26 300 000. Under continuing Japanese rule this number decreased by 10%. Approximately one million Koreans found their way to Manchuria, some as the result of the expropriation of peasant land, whilst others were moved by the Japanese to strengthen their position in the newly acquired territory. Japan itself imported Korean workers for auxiliary and seasonal labour tasks until the number of Koreans in Japan had reached one million by the outbreak of the Second World War. Other groups of

18. Zaichikov: Geography of Korea, p.83; Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.288.

19. Zaichikov: Geography of Korea, p.69.

20. Zaichikov: Geography of Korea, p.49.

refugees from Japanese rule found their way to the United States, the Soviet Union and China. Many of the Koreans who went to the Soviet Union found themselves drafted into the Soviet Army, in which some of them attained officer status. The latter were to play a leading role in Korea after 1945.²¹ Many of the Koreans who went to China during the later period of Japanese rule were incorporated in the Eighth Route Army and gained valuable military experience and credibility among their own countrymen by opposing at first Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces, and then the armies of the invading Japanese.²²

The Japanese systematically deprived the Koreans of participation in the administration and management of the economy; senior posts in the civil service and in the business sector were reserved for Japanese, and Korean landlords were even compelled to have Japanese managers on their estates. Korean communal lands were appropriated and sold to Japanese landlords. Although the Japanese comprised only about 3 to 4% of the population, one half of the funds allocated to elementary education was spent on schools attended exclusively by Japanese children. So great was the monopolization of top posts and the denial of opportunity to Koreans, that after the Japanese defeat of 1945 and their return to their home country, Korea experienced an acute shortage of skilled personnel of every kind.²³

The Japanese attempt to integrate Korea into a greater Japan went further than the monopolization of the administration and the economy. A definite attempt was made to denationalize a homogeneous nation and to

21. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.287.

22. H.M. Vinache: A History of the Far East in Modern Times, p.702; Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.290; Zaichikov: Geography of Korea, p.38.

23. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.292.

turn Koreans into loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor. In 1919 more than 30 prominent Koreans, encouraged by Woodrow Wilson's utterances on national self-determination, sent a proclamation of independence to the Japanese Governor-General. The result was the ruthless and systematic suppression of all expressions of Korean nationalism. By 1937 the Korean language had been abolished in all primary schools and the study of Korean linguistics and history was forbidden. Pressure was put upon the Koreans to change their personal names to Japanese names. Japan's state Shinto religion was forced upon the Koreans, mainly through the agency of the schools. However, these measures provoked an inevitable reaction; Koreans, encouraged by prominent exiles, became increasingly nationalistic, and groups of supporters clustered around various national leaders: Syngman Rhee in Hawaii, Kim Koo in Chungking and Kim Il-sung in Manchuria. A Provisional Government was established at Chungking in 1944.²⁴ When Japan was defeated in 1945 the Koreans saw the occupation forces of both the Soviet Union and the United States as liberators from 35 years of oppression.

THE PARTITION OF KOREA

With the Japanese surrender on 2 September 1945 Korea entered the era of the Cold War. The peninsula was once more to feel the effect of the old Russian ambition to gain control of her harbours in the south as a base from which to extend Russian influence in the Far East. The western powers, and especially the United States, were later to perceive that Soviet ambitions in Korea would pose a threat to the security of the whole region. However, such realizations were only to crystallize gradually.

At the Cairo Conference in November 1943 the United States, the United Kingdom and China included the following in their declaration:

24. Cholski: South Korea (Wint (ed.): Asia Handbook) p.246; M.B. Jansen: Japan and China: From War to Peace, 1894-1972, p.463; Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.291.

"The aforesaid three Great Powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent."²⁵

President Roosevelt suggested to Stalin at Yalta that Korea should be prepared for independence by an international trusteeship which would include Russian members.²⁶ On 28 May 1945 President Truman received a cable from Harry Hopkins in Moscow to the effect that Stalin had agreed to a trusteeship of Korea under China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States.²⁷ At the instigation of the United States the Chinese Foreign Minister Soong conferred with Stalin on 30 June 1945 as a part of a diplomatic initiative to smooth the way for the entry of the Soviet Union into the war against Japan. He reported to Ambassador Harriman that Stalin had confirmed his agreement to the establishment of a four power trusteeship in Korea. At the same time, Soong also expressed fear that two Russian trained Korean divisions might be used by the Soviets to exploit the trusteeship in order to gain dominance over Korean affairs.²⁸

On 26 July 1945, Truman and Churchill, with the ratified approval of Chiang Kai-shek, issued a document during the Potsdam Conference calling for the surrender of Japan. This document stipulated the following:

"The terms of the Cairo declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku and such minor islands as we determine."²⁹

25. The Cairo Conference, November 22-26, 1943 (L.S. Snyder (ed.): Fifty Major Documents of the Twentieth Century), p.103.
26. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.15.
27. H.S. Truman: Memoirs I: Year of Decisions, pp.264-65.
28. Truman: Memoirs I: Year of Decisions, p.317.
29. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, General Assembly Official Records: Fifth Session Supplement No.16 (A/1350), p.5.

In her declaration of war against Japan on 8 August 1945 the Soviet Union associated herself with this stipulation.³⁰ Thus there was consensus among the Great Powers with regard to the liberation of Korea from Japanese occupation. The expulsion of the Japanese left a power vacuum on the economic, political and military fronts which was filled by American and Soviet influences and agents. From being the nineteenth century Poland of the Far East, Korea was to find herself in a position in the East analogous to that of Germany in post-war Europe.

On 12 August 1945 President Truman found a message in his office from Ambassador Pauley, whom he had dispatched to Moscow to seek agreement with the Russians on the reparations issue. Pauley's message was ominous. He warned:

"Conclusions I have reached through discussions on reparations and otherwise (I repeat otherwise) lead me to the belief that our forces should occupy quickly as much of the industrial areas of Korea and Manchuria as we can, starting with the southerly tip and progressing northwards."³¹

As much as they would have liked to have followed Pauley's suggestion, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) had to consider their relative shortage of manpower and lack of mobility in the Pacific theatre. They thus proposed the 38th parallel as the line which should define the USSR and US zones of influence for the purpose of the Japanese surrender. Even this line was too far north to allow for effective occupation by US forces coming in from the south. If the Soviets had objected, the Americans would have been able to offer little opposition.³² The Soviet leadership accepted the 38th parallel without comment, and the United States thus gained the psychological advantage of being able to accept the surrender of the Japanese forces in the southern part of Korea in the ancient capital of Seoul.

30. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, pp.4-5.

31. Truman: Memoirs I: Year of Decisions, p.433.

32. Truman: Memoirs I: Year of Decisions, p.444-445

After the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 and on Nagasaki 3 days later, Japan sued for peace on 10 August 1945 in terms of the Potsdam Declaration of 26 July 1945. The formal Japanese surrender was signed on board the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945. This surrender confirmed the Japanese acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. Meanwhile, three weeks earlier, on 12 August 1945, Soviet troops had already entered Korea from the north. The United States was slower to establish a military presence in the country. When Japan surrendered, those American troops closest to Korea were on Okinawa; they only entered Korea on 8 September 1945.³³ The following day Lt-Gen. J.R. Hodge, commander of the US XXIV Corps, and the newly designated commander in Korea, accepted the Japanese surrender in Korea.³⁴ On 12 September he appointed Maj.-Gen. A.V. Arnold, commander of the US 7th Division, as military Governor of South Korea. Maj.-Gen. Arnold was assisted by a political adviser, H.M. Benninghoff of the US State Department.³⁵

It soon became evident that the Soviets regarded the 38th parallel as something more than a line of convenience to clarify the Japanese surrender procedures. General Douglas MacArthur, who had been appointed Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Japan, reported that it had become rigid boundary closed by the Russians to observation from the south. Truman's comment on the position in Korea was:

"Korea, instead of being helped to become a free and independent nation was on the way to being divided."³⁶

This de facto division into Soviet and American zones was to be confirmed during 1946 and again in 1947 by the failure to reach agreement on the manner in which Korea was to gain independent status and on the brand of democracy her citizens were to enjoy. At the Moscow Conference of

33. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.5;
 Choinski: South Korea (Wint (ed.): Asia Handbook), p.246.
 34. R.E. Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.3.
 35. J.F. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.17.
 36. Truman: Memoirs I: Year of Decisions, p.522.

Foreign Ministers in December 1945, it was decided to establish a Provisional Democratic Government for the whole of Korea. A Joint Soviet/United States Commission was established and authorized to make recommendations to the four powers on ways and means of establishing an acceptable form of government in Korea. The Commission reached deadlock on the procedure to be followed. The United States wanted to consult representatives of all political and social organizations, while the USSR insisted on excluding those which had opposed the Moscow agreement. Except for the South Korean Labour Party (Communist) and its affiliated organizations, all other parties had opposed the idea of the trusteeship on the grounds that it smacked of a protectorate and consequently a curb on the full independence of a future united Korea.³⁷ From this point onwards Korea was to follow a path similar to that of post-war Germany. In both, the American and Soviet authorities were to embark upon the economic and political rehabilitation of their respective zones according to their own particular ideologies.

In their zone the Soviets lost no time in taking steps which would ensure the permanence of their influence in the independent Korean state of the future. Chinese Foreign Minister Soong's fears expressed in June 1945 were rapidly realized. Korean Communists who had long been resident in the Soviet Union arrived to provide the essential link between the occupation forces and the local Korean population. Japanese administrators and their collaborators were replaced by a hierarchy of People's Committees consisting of Korean labourers, farmers and political organisers, all of whom fell under the control of the Soviet military commanders.³⁸

On February 1946 the Soviets established a body to exercise the

37. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, pp.5-6.

38. Vinacke: History of the Far East in Modern Times, p.705.

functions of a central government. This body, styled the Provisional People's Committee for North Korea, was headed by an all Korean cabinet under Kim Il-sung, the partisan leader recently returned to Korea. All political groups in North Korea were united into a single New People's Party and Soviet style elections were held in November 1946.³⁹ On the economic front, Japanese and Korean landlords were dispossessed of their estates and the land was redistributed among the Korean peasants. The Soviets also initiated an industrial revival in their zone.⁴⁰

The American actions were less drastic. Initially they maintained the Japanese administration, and only transferred power to a US military government in January 1946. Meanwhile, two distinct groups had made representation to the American occupation forces: the Korean People's Republic and the exiled Korean Provisional Government. The former, which had been proclaimed on 6 September 1945, was Communist dominated and opposed to the US Military Government, while the latter consisted of Korean exiles who had returned from the United States and China. Although the US Command officially recognized neither group as such, it came to rely on the anti-Communist leaders in the exercise of its administrative function. Amongst these leaders, who usually belonged to the wealthier classes, were returned exiles or those who could speak either English or Japanese. In fact, the extreme reliance upon Korean interpreters created difficulties for the US Military Government which became known among the people as "government by interpreters". The South Korean people distrusted the interpreters and believed that they exercised an undue influence on the formulation of policy.⁴¹ In February 1946 an Advisory

39. Vinacke: A History of the Far East in Modern Times, p.705; Jansen: Japan and China: From War to Peace, 1894-1972, p.464.

40. Vinacke: A History of the Far East in Modern Times, p.705; Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.293.

41. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.19.

Council was formed and in November 1946 an Interim Legislative Assembly was brought into being, with half the members elected through indirect elections and half appointed by the Military Government. The elections were opposed by the Communists who fermented pre-election strikes, riots and open rebellion. There was also disconcerting evidence of inexperience of the democratic process. Due to the government's reliance on the wealthier classes land reform in the south was difficult and slow. However, US aid in the form of grain and fertilizer held out the hope of agricultural self-sufficiency.⁴²

The Korean people continued to express a deep-rooted desire for national unity. This feeling had emerged before the Japanese occupation and had crystallized in resistance to the denationalizing efforts of the Japanese overlords between 1910 and 1945. The expulsion of the Japanese at the end of World War II had brought hopes of a new era, but partition soon frustrated the Koreans' political and economic aspirations. By June 1950, partition had caused a net migration southwards of two million people. Economically the northern industrial centres which produced minerals, metals, fertilizers and hydro-electric power became separated from the south which was not only the major region of agricultural production, but also possessed a few industries producing consumer goods.⁴³ On the agricultural front alone this was to severely hamper the recovery of Korea; the southern farmer was separated from his source of fertilizer, while the northern industrial worker was separated from his main source of food. This partition was to touch other aspects of Korean life as illustrated by Tables 1 and 2 below.

42. Vinacke: A History of the Far East in Modern Times, pp.706-707; Choinski: South Korea (Wint (ed.): Asia Handbook), p.246; Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), pp.292-294.

43. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, September 1954), pp.291-292.

Table 1: Effect of Partition on the Korean Population. 44

	<u>NORTH</u>	<u>SOUTH</u>
Area in Km ²	123 000 (56%)	177 000 (44%) approx.
Population 1949	9 170 000 (31%)	20 400 000 (69%)
Density: persons/Km ²	74	210
Major cities 1949	P'yongyang (500 000)	Seoul (1 445 000) capitals Pusan (474 000) Taegu (314 000) Inch'on (266 000)

Table 2: Effect of partition on the Korean Economy. 45

(Production figures are for 1944)

	<u>NORTH</u> (percentage of total)	<u>SOUTH</u> (percentage of total)
Rice	36	64
Other grains	37	63
Soya beans	69	31
Fish	62	38
Anthracite	68	32
Iron ore	97	3
Tungsten	46	54
Chemicals	88	12
Metals	85	15
Textiles	14	86
HEP	96	4
TEP	30	70

44. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.293.45. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.293.

THE DRIFT TOWARDS WAR

While the Koreans were feeling the political and economic effects of the frustration of their desire for national unity, their divided country was rapidly becoming one of the flashpoints of the Cold War. The failure of the Joint US/USSR Commission led the United States to bring the matter before the United Nations General Assembly on 17 September 1947. On 14 September 1947 the General Assembly passed Resolution 112(II), in terms of which a UN Temporary Commission was established to supervise the process by which the elected representatives of the Korean people were to be consulted regarding their country's attainment of independence. These representatives were to constitute a National Assembly, which was to be empowered to establish a National Government for Korea. The Soviets opposed the idea of the Temporary Commission in the General Assembly, and the North Korean authorities refused to allow the Commission to function north of the 38th parallel.⁴⁶

Elections under UN supervision were duly held in the south on 10 May 1948. On 12 June the newly elected National Assembly met and expressed the hope that free elections would soon be held in North Korea, resolving to leave 100 Assembly seats vacant for the North Korean representatives. On 12 July a constitution was formally adopted, and Syngman Rhee was elected the first President. On 15 August 1948 the Republic of Korea was formally proclaimed. The North Koreans countered this event by proclaiming the Korean People's Democratic Republic on 9 September 1948.⁴⁷

46. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.6; United Nations General Assembly Resolution 112(II) (K.Krakau, H.v. Wedel and A. GÖhmann: Dokumente Band 43, UN-General Assembly Resolutions, A Selection of the most important resolutions during the period 1949 through 1974), p.30

47. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, September 1954), p.292; Vinacke: A History of the Far East in Modern Times, pp.707-708; United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.7.

The UN General Assembly Resolution 112(II) called for a complete withdrawal of the armed forces of the occupying powers within 90 days of the establishment of a National Government.⁴⁸ The Soviets were the first to respond, and on 19 September 1948 the Soviet Foreign Office advised the US Embassy in Moscow that all Soviet forces would be withdrawn from Korea by the end of 1948.⁴⁹ The Americans for their part saw distinct advantages in the withdrawal of US troops. On 25 September 1948 the JCS submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of State on the matter. They pointed out that the 45 000 US troops in Korea could well be used elsewhere, that the lack of timely progress towards a free and independent Korea could ultimately lead to disorder, and that the withdrawal of US troops in the face of such disorder would lead to a damaging loss of prestige. Moreover, they considered that should strong enemy naval and air bases in Korea later threaten US interest, these bases could be neutralized by air action. In the long run, such action would be more feasible and less costly than large scale ground operations.⁵⁰

As the Soviets withdrew their troops, the North Korean Government established a Ministry of Defence and activated the North Korean People's Army (NKPA). Soviet instructors and supervisors remained and prior to June 1950 about 3 000 Russians played an active role in the North Korean army build-up.⁵¹ By the end of June 1949 all US military personnel had been withdrawn from Korea with the exception of 482 advisers of the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG), which had been left behind to train the South Koreans.⁵² As late as 26 August 1950 the Secretary of the Air Force,

48. UN General Assembly Resolution 112(II) (Krakau, et al.: Dokumente Bande 43), p.30.

49. Truman: Memoirs II: Years of Trial and Hope, p.374.

50. Truman: Memoirs II: Years of Trial and Hope, pp.370-371.

51. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.7.

52. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.13.

T.K. Finletter, explained this withdrawal in much the same terms as those of the JCS memorandum of 25 September 1948. He said to members of the Air Force Association:

"While recognizing our treaty obligations and that areas of special strategic importance exist, it is not and it must not be the purpose of the Defence Department to dispose of forces in being - especially ground forces - capable of resisting aggression at all parts of the world. Thus in the Far East Japan was protected against air and sea threats." ⁵³

On 12 December 1948 the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 195(III) which recognized the establishment of a lawful government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) where the Temporary Commission had been able to function. It declared that the ROK government was the only government in Korea based upon free elections under supervision of the Commission. The reports of the Temporary Commission were approved, and a further Commission on Korea was established consisting of Australia, China, El Salvador, France, India, the Philippines and Syria to continue the work of the Temporary Commission with special attention to unification. ⁵⁴

In spite of the work of the new Commission and the withdrawal of troops, the Korean situation steadily deteriorated. In its report of 5 September 1950 the UN Commission on Korea made the following statement with regard to the policies of the North Korean Government prior to June 1950:

"The Commission has already expressed its opinion that deliberate planning and preparation for the aggression of 25 June 1950 were an essential part of the policy of the North Korean authorities. This act of aggression, initiated without provocation and without warning, has made it clear to the Commission that the objective of these

53. T.K. Finletter: Air Power in the Korean Conflict (Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol.16, No.23, August 1950), pp.732-733.

54. UN General Assembly Resolution 195(III) (Krakau, et al.: Dokumente Bande 43), pp.31-32.

authorities has all along been to secure by force what could not be gained by other means. This act of aggression was preceded by sustained efforts to undermine and weaken the Republic of Korea. It was part of the plan of the North Korean authorities to encompass by these efforts the downfall of the Republic or, failing that, so to enfeeble the Government that it could no longer resist their ultimate onslaught."⁵⁵

North Korean policy had obviously been directed by the USSR, whose leaders saw in the Korean situation an opportunity to engage in satellite aggression without undue involvement or risk.⁵⁶

North Korean aggression against the Republic of Korea, prior to the conventional invasion of 25 June 1950, assumed three distinct forms: a campaign of inflammatory propaganda, an in-depth guerilla penetration, and a campaign to foster insurrection. Spearheading the propaganda campaign was Radio P'yongyang. A continuous flow of propaganda aimed at subverting the people was beamed southwards. A "Letter of Appeal" broadcast on 13 January 1950 typified this propaganda, one paragraph which read:

"It is clear that if democratic elections were held, free from the interference of American Imperialists and the United Nations Commission on Korea, the Korean people would severely denounce in concert the Syngman Rhee country-selling traitor gang, which is their enemy, mop up its rule of South Korea and drive it into the swamps of ruin ..."⁵⁷

A further example of propaganda, combined with an indication of North Korean intentions, was the publication of a manifesto of the United Democratic Patriotic Front in P'yongyang newspapers of 8 June 1950. This manifesto proclaimed the objective of a parliament elected by delegates from both North

55. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.7.

56. Fisher: The Role of Korea in the Far East (Geographical Journal, Vol.120, No.3, September 1954), p.294; Military Aid to Korean Security Forces (Department of State Bulletin, Vol.XXII, No573, June 1950), p.1048.

57. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.8.

and South Korea at a meeting scheduled to take place in Seoul on 15 August 1950.⁵⁸

The propaganda campaign was supported by guerilla incursions. Armed bands were formed and trained in North Korea to act as guerillas and political agents in the south. Radio P'yongyang broadcasts and leaflets were directed at the people of South Korea encouraging them to join the guerillas. Civil servants were urged to commit sabotage, while members of the armed forces were charged to shoot their officers and join the guerillas.⁵⁹ Many guerillas and agents thus recruited were sent back to their regions to exploit their personal knowledge of the area and its inhabitants in the course of operations and further recruiting. Their overall aims were to attack the security forces and to subvert the local population.⁶⁰

The Government of the Republic of Korea countered this threat with a certain measure of success. The National Security Act was promulgated in November 1948 and amended in December 1949. The Act was strictly enforced, and under its provisions 118 621 persons were arrested during 1949 and 32 019 during the first four months of 1950. There were reports of the violation of constitutional liberties, brutality and torture, especially during the election campaign of April-May 1950. In the field the guerillas were combated by the police and the army. In December 1949 guerilla bands were actively opposed in the area of the Taebaek Mountain Range from Mount Chidae in the north-east to Mount Chiri in the south-west (Map 3). The UN Commission visited a Divisional Headquarters of the ROK Army at Taegu on 20 February 1950. The Divisional Commander could report that during the previous six months the percentage of the area under his command that could be considered hostile had been reduced from 85-90% to a mere 15%. He classified an area as hostile

58. New York Times, 27 June 1950, as quoted in Appleman: South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu, p.19.

59. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, pp.9-10.

60. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.9.

where the local population aided the guerillas and refused to co-operate with the security forces.⁶¹

The increasing success of the government forces during the first few months of 1950 is reflected in the following table⁶² which illustrates the position in the North and South Kyongsang Provinces:

<u>Type of Incident</u>	<u>Total 1949</u>	<u>Total Jan-Apr 1950</u>
Police and auxiliaries killed:	333	61
Government officials killed:	96	7
Civilians killed:	720	266
Civilians kidnapped:	1 267	83

The United States Ambassador to Korea, J.J. Muccio, confirmed the effectiveness of the security forces' actions when he stated that from September 1949 to April 1950 the estimated guerilla strength had been reduced from 2 000 to 577.⁶³

As the efforts of the authorities became more successful, so their support from the local subsistence farmers increased. The Commission ascribed the success of the anti-guerilla campaign to the absence of any large scale support for the subversive elements by the local population.⁶⁴

In addition to the guerilla and propaganda onslaught against the South, the North Koreans maintained constant pressure along the 38th parallel by means of continual infiltrations at the beginning of 1950. The chief of RMAC merely regarded such incidents as inevitable in a border region, and did not consider them to be indicative of anything serious.⁶⁵

61. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.20.

62. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.27.

63. Muccio: Military Aid to the Korean Security Forces (Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XXII, No.573, June 1950), p.1049; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.38.

64. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.27.

65. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.10.

THE KOREAN SITUATION: JUNE 1950

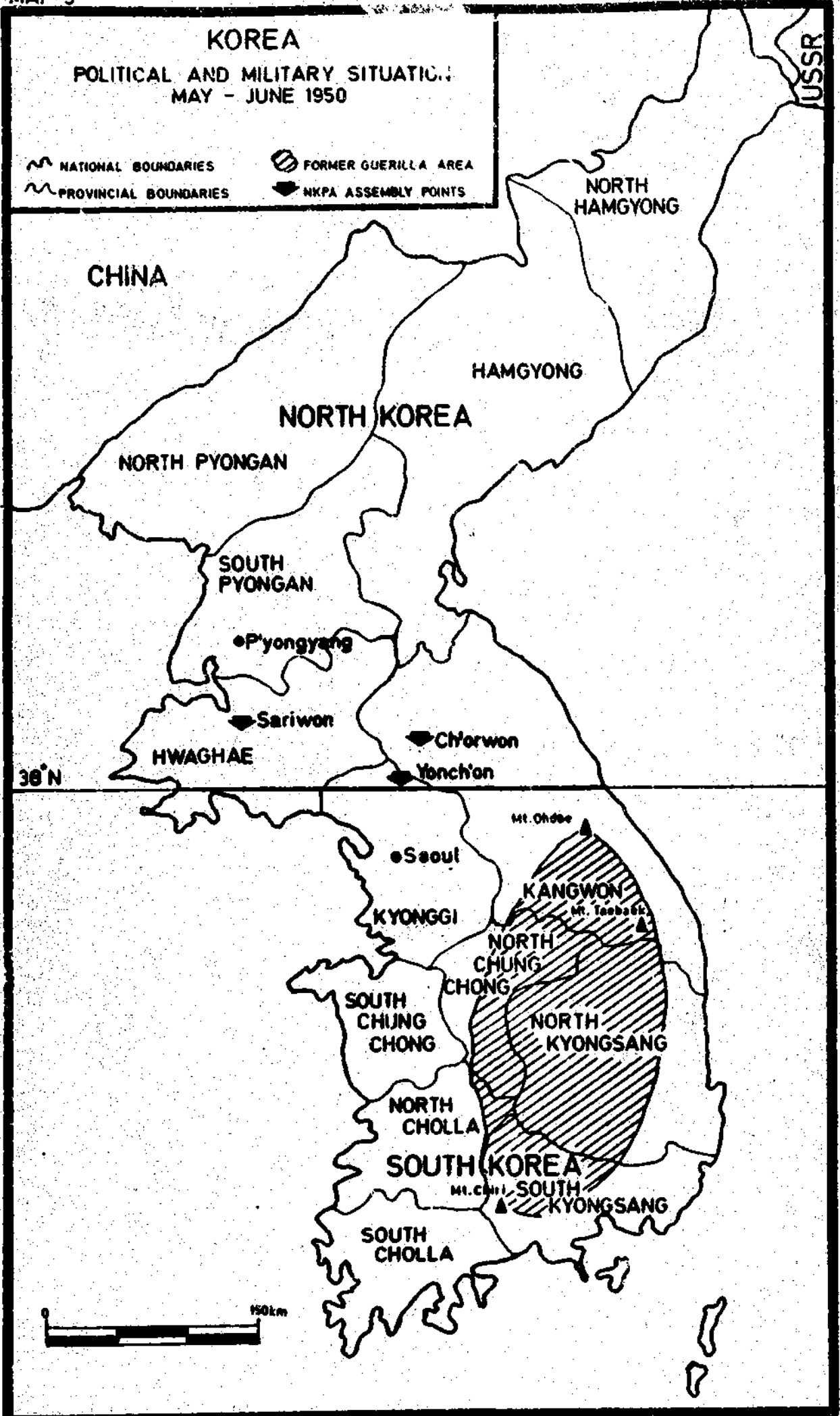
By the middle of 1950, however, the situation in Korea had assumed a more serious aspect. On 12 May 1950, the ROK Acting Chief-of-Staff, Col Paik Il, and the Chief of Intelligence, Col Chang Do Yong, reported to the UN Commission on the North Korean strength and deployment just north of the 38th parallel. According to them three divisions of constabulary were deployed in the frontline just north of the border; in their rear a division of the NKPA backed by a tank regiment was to be found in each of three locations: Sariwon, Yonchon and Ch'orwon (Map 3). They reported that these troops had only recently been moved into position, and that to their rear a further build-up of men and equipment was taking place. Renewed efforts were also being made to infiltrate large groups of highly trained and well equipped guerillas. Although the ROK officers expressed concern over the matter, two American KMAC officers present at the briefing felt that there was no danger of an invasion and that, should one take place, they were confident that the ROK Army could contain it.⁶⁶

The Americans continued to be off-hand about the situation. They were guided by a policy speech delivered by the Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, to the National Press Club in Washington on 12 January 1950. On that occasion he had stated that Korea and Formosa lay outside the US defence perimeter in the Far East (Map 1).⁶⁷ His political rivals were later to accuse him of having given the Communists the go-ahead for the invasion of South Korea.⁶⁸ In his memoirs, Acheson makes the following statement in his own defence:

66. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.29.

67. D. Acheson: Crisis in Asia - An Examination of U.S. Policy (Department of State Bulletin, Vol.XCII, No.551, January 1950), p.116.

68. D. Acheson: Present at the Creation, My Years in the State Department, p.365; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.51.



"Later it was argued that my speech gave the 'green light' to the attack on South Korea by not including it in the defensive perimeter. This was specious, for Australia and New Zealand were not included either, and the first of all our defense agreements was made with Korea. If the Russians were watching the United States for signs of our intentions in the Far East, they would have been more impressed by the two year agitation for the withdrawal of combat forces from Korea, the defeat in Congress of a minor aid bill for it, and the increasing discussion of a peace treaty with Japan." ⁶⁹

In his personal account of the Korean War, General Ridgway, who at the time was Deputy Chief-of-Staff of the Army, supported Acheson:

"He was merely voicing an already accepted United States policy. Korea had always been outside our defense perimeter and we had written her off several times in our dealing with her. The ROK Forces lacked equipment and lacked trained leaders largely because we attached no strategic importance to Korea and were chiefly concerned that we did not become so involved there as to find ourselves fighting in the wrong place at the wrong time." ⁷⁰

Meanwhile, during the days between 15 - 24 June 1950, the North Korean command moved all their army divisions to the close vicinity of the 38th parallel and deployed them along planned lines of departure for an attack on South Korea. The troops already on the parallel were joined by a further 80 000 men who moved into position undetected. Altogether seven infantry divisions, a tank brigade, an independent infantry regiment, a Border Constabulary Brigade and a motor cycle regiment totalling 90 000 trained

69. Acheson: Present at the Creation, My Years in the State Department, p.358.

70. M.B. Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.10.

and equipped soldiers were poised just north of the 38th parallel.⁷¹

Whatever the immediate stimulus for the eventual Communist invasion of South Korea, it is clear that the Soviets and the North Koreans, faced with their failure to incorporate the south by means of diplomatic pressure and internal subversion, chose the final option - direct military invasion. The United States Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, J.J. Muccio, made a far more accurate assessment of the situation than his military colleagues. In a statement published in the Department of State Bulletin of 26 June 1950, which was of necessity prepared before this date, he prophetically stated:

"Although the threat of North Korean aggression seems, temporarily at least, to have been successfully contained, the undeniable matériel superiority of the North Korean forces would provide North Korea with a margin of victory in the event of a full-scale invasion of the Republic. Such superiority is particularly evident in the matter of heavy infantry support weapons, tanks and combat aircraft with which the U.S.S.R. has supplied and continues to supply its Korean puppet."⁷²

71. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.19.

72. Muccio: Military Aid to the South Korean Security Forces (Department of State Bulletin, Vol.XXII, No.573, June 1950), p.1049.

CHAPTER 2

COMMAND AND CONTROL

Having traced the political developments in Korea immediately prior to the Communist invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950 it is necessary to examine the following aspects of the military situation in order to place the South African contribution into perspective:

- a. The command and control structure into which 2 Squadron SAAF was integrated.
- b. The US doctrine governing the tactical application of airpower, and the extent to which it had developed in the Far East by the time 2 Squadron was committed to operations in November 1950.

UNITED NATIONS/FAR EAST COMMAND (Diagram 2)

On 7 July 1950 the Security Council of the United Nations adopted a resolution sponsored by the US, which established a United Nations Command (UNC) under the US President. This meant that he, as an agent of the UN, was authorized to make final strategic decisions without reference to any UN body. In terms of the same resolution the US President was empowered to appoint a commander for the UN forces. On 8 July 1950 Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who was already Commander-in-Chief of the US Far East Command, was named C-in-C of the UN Command.¹ He formally established his new command on 24 July 1950, while retaining his former appointment. His Far East Headquarters simply assumed a dual role and was re-designated GHQ UNC/FEC.²

Due to the predominant US military presence in the Far East with its existing command structure, those forces contributed to the UN effort by various member states fell under the operational control of the C-in-C UNC/FEC and were thus virtually integrated into the American military system. The

1. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.28; W.G. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.53.

2. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.39.

various member nations did, however, retain the administrative control of their own forces who were represented at GHQ UNC/FEC by senior liaison officers. The details of this arrangement were spelt out in the UNC General Order No.1 dated 24 July 1950:

"Maximum direct participation by all members of the United Nations in support of the United Nations effort in Korea will be encouraged.

The senior representative of each nation contributing forces to the United Nations Command will have direct access to the Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command, for matters of major policy affecting the operational capabilities of the forces concerned. In such cases the senior United States component commander will be advised in advance that the representative of the force concerned proposes to discuss the matter with the Commander-in-Chief, United Nations Command.

The senior representative of each nation contributing military forces to the United Nations Command, will retain the right to direct communications with his government on administrative matters affecting the forces of his government." ³

The countries which contributed to the UN effort were: Australia - two infantry battalions, some naval forces and a fighter squadron; Belgium - one infantry battalion; Canada - one reinforced infantry brigade, some naval forces and a transport squadron; Colombia - one infantry battalion and a frigate; Ethiopia - one infantry battalion; France - one reinforced infantry battalion; Greece - one infantry battalion and some transport aircraft; Luxembourg - one infantry company; the Netherlands - one infantry battalion and some naval forces; New Zealand - one artillery regiment; Philippines - one infantry battalion and one tank company; Thailand - one

3. Adjutant-General: Box 228, AG(3) 1906/14 Vol.III: UNC General Order No.1 dated 24 July 1950 quoted by Ridgway in a memorandum: Policy for Integration of Forces into the United Nations Command, dated 27 August 1951.

infantry battalion, naval forces and air and naval transports; Turkey - one infantry brigade; Union of South Africa - one fighter squadron; United Kingdom - two infantry brigades, one armoured regiment, one and a half artillery regiments, supporting ground forces, the Far Eastern Fleet and two Sunderland flying boat squadrons; Denmark, Italy, India, Norway and Sweden - medical units. The Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and United Kingdom ground forces were combined to form the Commonwealth Division.⁴

Having been appointed UN agent, the US employed its own existing decision-making machinery to conduct the war in Korea. Two post World War II developments in the US administration were to influence this process. The first was the unification of the various armed forces under the Defence Department; this implied, among other things, that the US Air Force attained a status equal to and independent from the US Army, as it was no longer the US Army Air Force. The second development was the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) in 1947, which consisted of the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defence and the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board. Its principal duties were to assess and appraise the objectives, commitments and risks of the US in relation to national security, and then to advise the President on the most suitable course of action.⁵

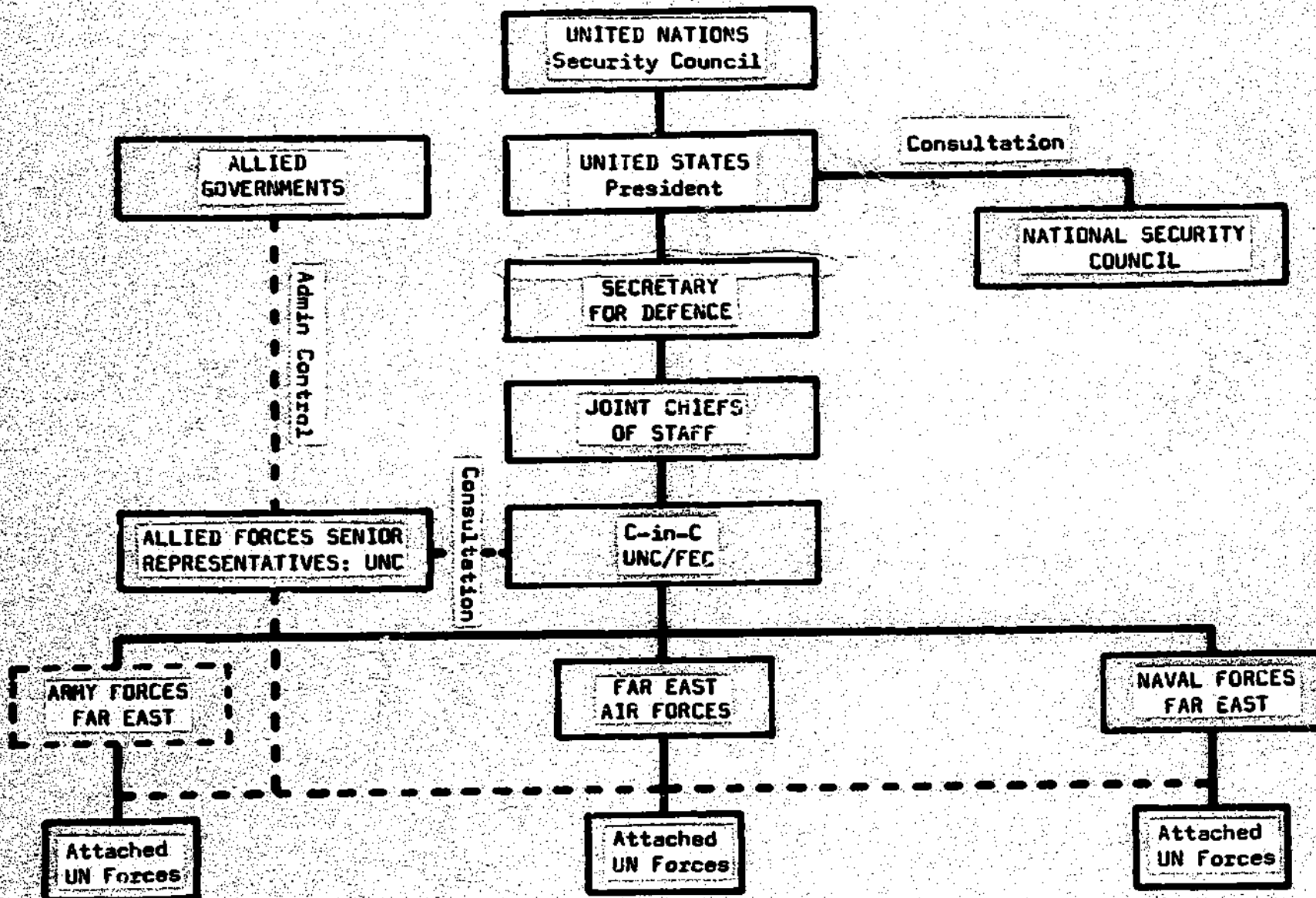
The President exercised his control through a chain of command extending downwards through the Secretary of Defence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commanders of the various commands throughout the world. The highest military link in the chain was the JCS, which consisted of: US Army Chief of Staff, US Air Force Chief of Staff, Chief of Naval Operations and a Chairman appointed by the President. This body functioned as the principal

4. D. Rees: Korea: The Limited War, p.457.

5. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.53; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.42-43.

Diagram 2

UN/US COMMAND AND CONTROL RELATIONSHIPS
FAR EAST 1950 - 1952



military advisory body to the President, the Secretary of Defence and the NSC. At the outbreak of the Korean War the head of the JCS was Gen. Omar Bradley. The specific tasks of the JCS were:

- a. The preparation of strategic plans and the strategic direction of military forces.
- b. The preparation of joint logistic plans and the assignment of logistic responsibility.
- c. Review of the major requirements of the military forces in the light of prepared plans.
- d. The establishment of unified commands in strategic areas.⁶

In 1950 the major overseas US commands were: Far East Command, Alaskan Command, Caribbean Command, Pacific Command and European Command.⁷ When MacArthur had been appointed C-in-C FEC with effect from 1 January 1947 no specific boundaries had been defined but he commanded forces stationed in Japan, Korea, the Ryukyu Islands, the Philippines, and the Mariana, Volcano and Bonin Islands. His command comprised an island area of 686 000km² which included 100 000 000 inhabitants. C-in-C FEC was tasked with three general missions:

- a. To discharge US occupation responsibilities in Japan, Korea and the former Japanese islands.
- b. To support US policies in the areas controlled by his forces.
- c. To prepare to meet a general emergency at any time.⁸

Theoretically, FEC was a unified command which implied that the theatre commander, in accordance with the principles of armed force unification, was expected to stand detached from his own service and to command all services impartially for the effective achievement of his mission. On 20

6. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.43-43.

7. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.43.

8. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.46-47.

August 1949 MacArthur made a minimal effort to comply with these principles by establishing a Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group under the G-3 of the GHQ FEC which had the mission of rendering assistance and advice to the C-in-C FEC in the exercise of his unified command.⁹

In a Joint Headquarters, staff appointments should reflect an inter-service balance with regard to both rank and authority.¹⁰ This was not the case with GHQ FEC under MacArthur. Theoretically the three component headquarters of the command were: Army Forces Far East (AFFE), Far East Air Forces (FEAF) and Naval Forces Far East (NavFE) (Diagram No.2). In fact, only the headquarters for FEAF and NavFE were activated. AFFE was not activated and both the commander and staff of GHQ FEC held the dual functions of commander and staff for the Far East Theatre and the army component. The result was a predominance of army staff and thinking, a lack of balance and a magnification of interservice problems. The failure to establish a separate army headquarters was to cause difficulty during the first two years of the war.¹¹

FAR EAST AIR FORCES (Diagram 3)

The primary mission of FEAF in June 1950 was to maintain the air defence of FEAF's area of operations. Charged with the responsibility of carrying out his mission was Lt-Gen. G.E. Stratemeyer. The pre-war FEAF was divided into four sub-commands:

- a. The Fifth Air Force (5AF) stationed in Japan and responsible for the defence of the Japanese home islands.
- b. The Twentieth Air Force stationed in Okinawa and responsible for the defence of Okinawa and the Marianas.

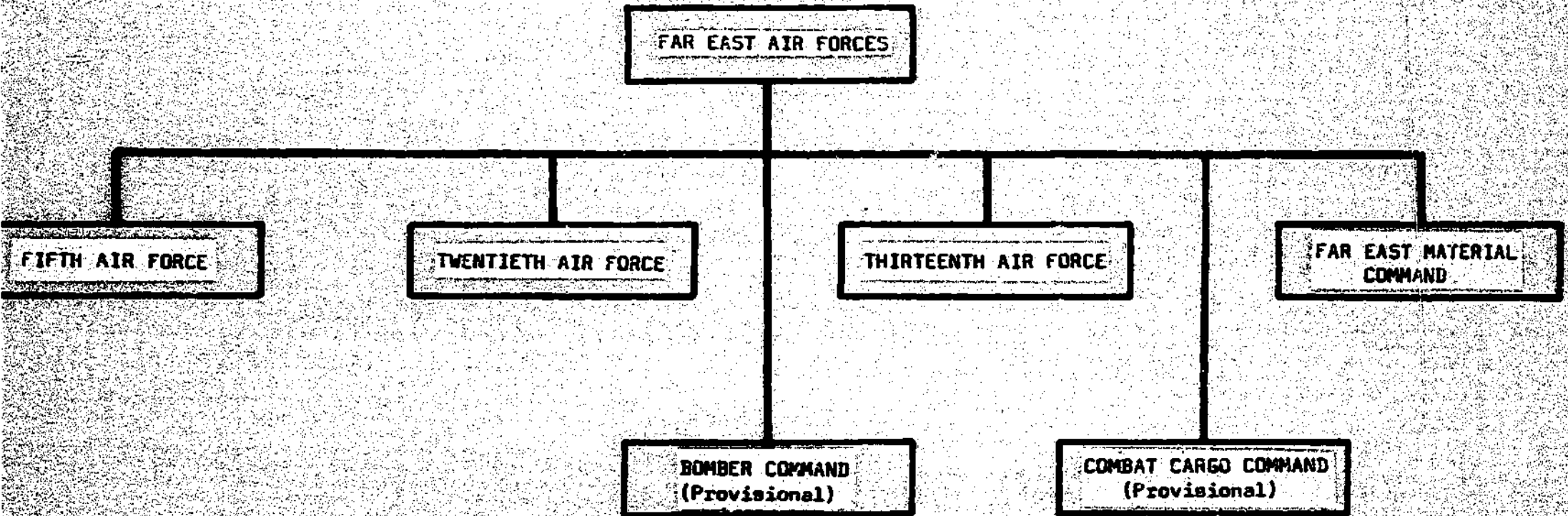
9. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.43; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.47.

10. W.W. Momyer: Airpower in Three Wars, p.53.

11. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.44; Momyer: Airpower in Three Wars, p.53; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.46-48.

Diagram 3

FAR EAST AIR FORCES 1950



- c. The Thirteenth Air Force stationed in the Philippines and responsible for their defence.
- d. The Far East Material Command stationed in Japan and responsible for the logistic support of all USAF units in the Far East.¹²

By May 1950 budgetary considerations had reduced FEAF strength to a minimum consistent with its defensive mission. Even before the outbreak of the war MacArthur had protested that "His Air Force units were inadequate in number and his capabilities to defend his command area had been reduced to a point even below that of calculated risk."¹³ FEAF consisted of eight wings: five fighter, two bomber, one transport and various support units. There were 1 172 aircraft of all types of strength, of which only 553 were deployed in operational units, including the main fighter strength of 365 F-80 Shooting Stars.¹⁴ At the outbreak of the Korean war FEAF retained its overall defensive mission in the Far East, thus initially one medium bomber wing, one light bomber wing and eight fighter squadrons were committed to the Korean effort, with ten fighter squadrons being retained in the defensive role.¹⁵

The outbreak of the Korean War forced Lt-Gen. Stratemeier to redeploy, to reorganize and to send an urgent request to the US for reinforcements. He asked for 164 F-80 Shooting Stars and 64 F-51 Mustangs. He was sent 145 F-51's which were transported across the Pacific, together with urgently needed personnel and equipment, by the aircraft carrier USS Boxer in a record

- 12. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.3-6.
- 13. P.F. Futrell and A.F. Simpson: Air War in Korea II (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.IV, No.3, Fall 1951), p.47.
- 14. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.57.
- 15. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.56-57; O.P. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (J.T. Stewart (ed.): Air Power, the Decisive Force in Korea), p.6.

breaking voyage of eight days and seven hours from San Francisco to Yokohama. Also in transit were 44 F-80's without engines. The remaining 120 which had been requested were simply not available.¹⁶

In order to alleviate the situation in the Far East the USAF Chief-of-Staff, General H.S. Vandenberg, initiated the temporary transfer of two medium bomber groups from the Strategic Air Command to the Far East on 3 July 1950. An organization was then needed to co-ordinate FEAF's augmented strategic bomber capability. Hence, on 8 July FEAF Bomber Command (Provisional) with headquarters at Yokota Air Base in Japan was activated to exercise operational command over the newly transferred 22nd and 92nd Bombardment Groups, the 19th Bombardment Group and the 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron. Maj.-Gen. E. O'Donnell was appointed to head Bomber Command.¹⁷

It also became necessary to establish another co-ordinating headquarters within FEAF, since the competing requirements of air transport and troop carrying demanded the optimum utilization of the FEAF air transport capability. Maj.-Gen. W.H. Tunner, who had commanded the India-China "Hump" operations and the Berlin Airlift, was called in to solve the problem. By 10 September he had organized FEAF Combat Cargo Command (Provisional) with the mission of co-ordinating all transport tasks in the theatre.¹⁸ The South African squadron, like other combat units stationed in Korea, came to rely heavily upon this organization for numerous transport services.

The creation of unique organizations such as Bomber Command and

16. Futrell and Simpson: Air War in Korea II (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.IV, No.3, pp.51-52; Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), p.7. W.Karig, M.W. Cagle and F.A. Manson: Battle Report, The War in Korea), p.104.

17. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.45-46.

18. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.149.

Combat Cargo Command within FEAF and MacArthur's failure to activate AFGE gave rise to problems in the practical conduct of the war. Attempts were made to solve these problems by certain ad hoc procedures which were to affect 2 Squadron SAAF, both directly and indirectly, on its arrival in the Far East. Additional to these complications was the general politico-military context in which the Korean War was fought. As far as the UN and the US were concerned, political considerations frequently proved decisive in arriving at what should have been purely military decisions. The Korean conflict can thus rightly be termed a "limited war" where political considerations limited the application of military force.¹⁹ In the particular case of air-power the war was limited in several respects:

- a. Air power was not allowed its most awesome weapon - the nuclear bomb, either strategic or tactical.
- b. Strategic bombers were restrained from attacking the main sources of Communist war material in Manchuria.
- c. The tactical air force was forbidden to attack Communist airfields or aircraft north of the Yalu River. The Communist Chinese Air Force could thus launch offensive air operations from a safe sanctuary.
- d. The decision to attack certain North Korean targets lay in Washington and not in Tokyo.

The restricting effect of these policies and MacArthur's unorthodox procedures led to the UN airmen experiencing continual frustration throughout the war resulting from the clash between the characteristics of airpower and its application.

The range, speed and fire-power of modern aircraft gives air power its two main characteristics: flexibility and the ability to concentrate fire-power. If these characteristics are to be exploited to the full, it is

19. Rees: Korea: The Limited War, pp.x-xvi.

necessary that the theatre air commander be in a position to move his entire force of aircraft at will.²⁰ This principle of placing the control of the air in the hands of one man was to be hotly contested throughout the war by both ground force and naval commanders, since both groups felt that the air force existed to support them and that it did not exist as a power in its own right. Gen. W.W. Momyer expresses the airman's point of view as follows:

"Thus for airpower to be employed for the greatest good of the combined forces in a theater of war, there must be a command structure to control the assigned airpower coherently and consistently and to ensure that the airpower is not frittered away by dividing it among army and navy commands."²¹

Although this was the view that was to finally prevail, it was continually challenged and complicated interservice relationships emerged during the first months of the war as a result of the compromise.

THE FIFTH AIR FORCE

The Fifth Air Force (Diagram 4) was the tactical component of FEAF which was to absorb 2 Squadron SAAF. The mission of the 5AF as visualized by Stratemeyer was to continue to be responsible for the air defence of the Japanese home islands, while at the same time carrying out tactical air force missions in Korea.²² In order to fulfil his missions in both Japan and Korea the commanding general of 5AF, Lt-Gen. E.E. Partridge, had to split his headquarters. On 14 July 1950 he activated Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Fifth Air Force (Advance) at Itazuke charged with the direction

20. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), p.39.

21. Momyer: Airpower in Three Wars, p.39.

22. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.45.

of the tactical war in Korea. The Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Fifth Air Force (Rear) remained at its old station at Nagoya under the command of Brig.-Gen. D.T. Spivey, who was appointed 5AF vice-commander on 10 August 1950. On 24 July the Advance Headquarters was moved to Taegu City.²³

The 5AF was sub-divided into wings along conventional lines. The official USAF historian defines a wing in the following manner:

"According to the concept, a combat wing was a nearly self-sufficient entity in which one wing commander directed the combat effort, supporting elements, base services and medical services necessary for the performance of his mission."²⁴

Each wing was made up of four groups: the Combat Group, the Maintenance and Supply Group, the Air Base Group and the Medical Group. The Combat Group which was the fighting element consisted of a number of squadrons, usually three, flying the same type of aircraft. The other groups were made up of the various service squadrons whose support was necessary to maintain the combat readiness of the Combat Group. There were two variations of the normal structure: a "Reinforced Wing" where the squadrons within the Combat Group flew a variety of aircraft types (Diagram 5).²⁵

By early August 1950, when the tactical situation allowed for the deployment of air combat groups in Korea, it was found that the wing structures were so deeply involved in the accomplishment of the 5AF mission in Japan that they could not be moved to Korea to support their respective combat groups. Partridge then supplied the same solution for the wings as he had improvised for 5 AF HQ. He organized "Provisional Tactical Air Support Wings"

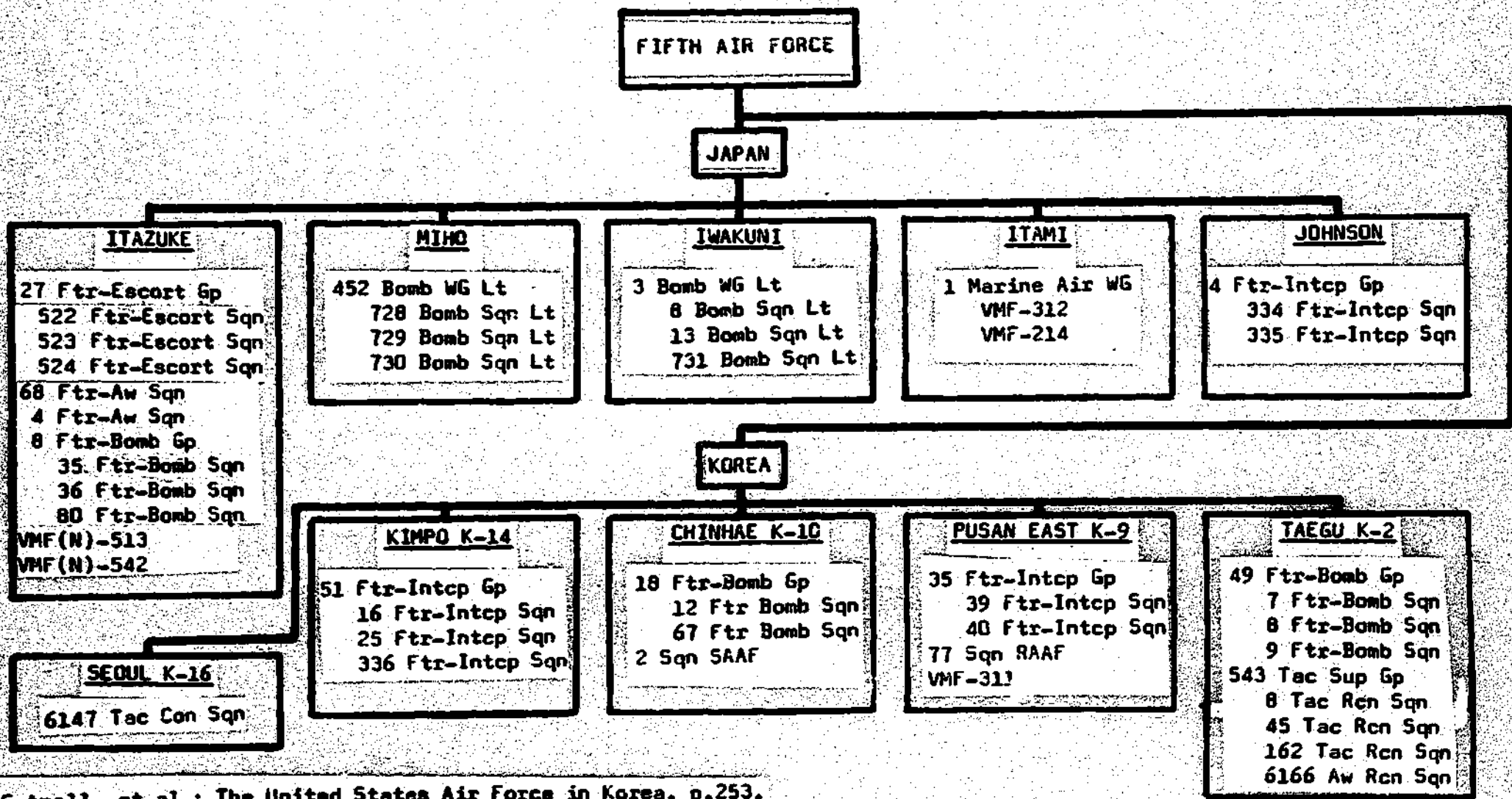
23. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.97.

24. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.56.

25. 2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2SOD/818/3/ORG: CO 35th Fighter Interceptor Wing - CO 2 Squadron (no date), Enclosure 4: Air Force Regulation No.20-15, Attachment 3: Wing Reinforced (SADF Documentation Centre).

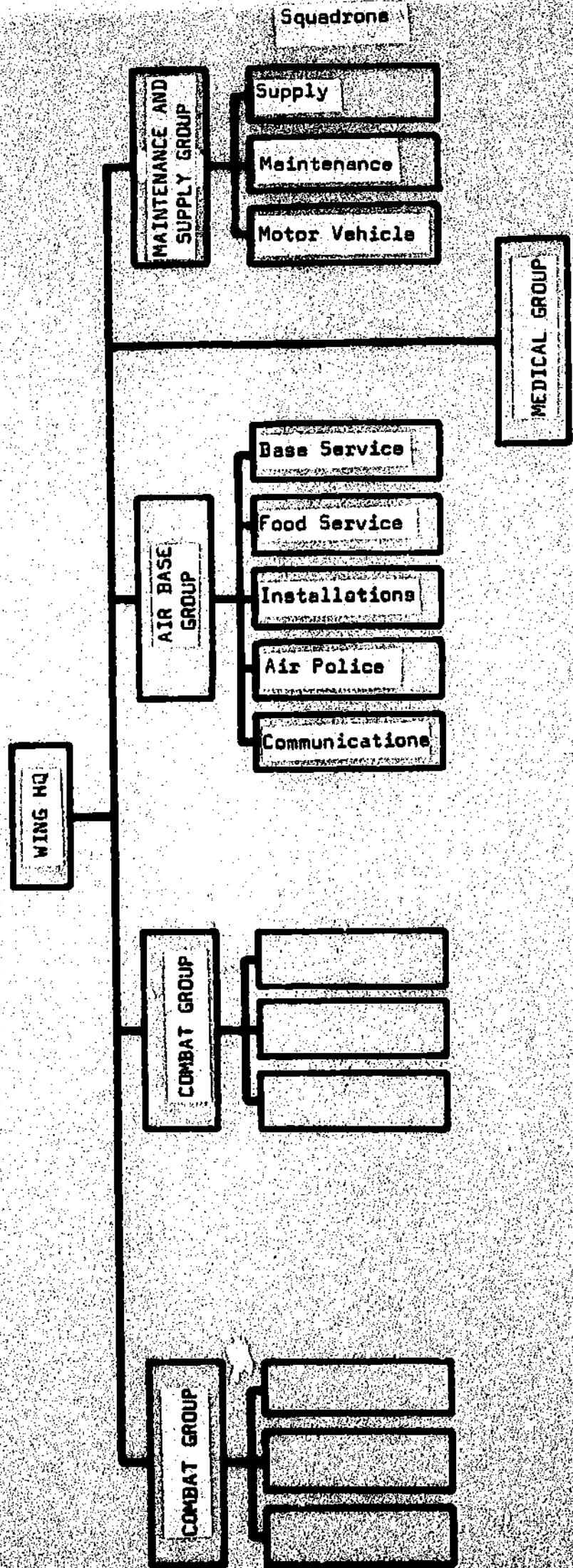
Diagram 4

FIFTH AIR FORCE TACTICAL UNITS
31 December 1950



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
REINFORCED WING USAF

Diagram 5



qn K: Box 10, 2 SQD/810/3/ORG: CO 35th Fighter Interceptor Wing - CO 2 Squadron
(date), Enclosure 4: Air Force Regulation No.20-15, Attachment 3: Wing Reinforced.

to accompany and support the combat groups in Korea while the parent wings remained at their stations in Japan.²⁶ On 1 December 1950, however, this split control was ended with the establishment of 314th Air Division at Nagoya. Its function was to perform the tasks formerly allocated to the Rear HQ, while the latter was absorbed into 5AF Advanced HQ in Korea. At the same time the Provisional Tactical Support Wings were replaced by the original parent Wings.²⁷ Thus when the advance detachment of 2 Squadron SAAF arrived in Korea on 16 November 1950, they found themselves attached to the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group which was supported and controlled by the 6002nd Tactical Support Wing (Provisional).²⁸ The 6002nd Tactical Support Wing was replaced by the 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing on 1 December 1950.²⁹

The mission of 5AF in Korea was in accordance with prevailing doctrine, as expressed in the War Department's Field Manual, issued in 1946 under the signature of the then US Army Chief of Staff, Gen. D.D. Eisenhower. This publication was a joint manual which represented the "Lessons Learnt" with regard to the co-operation of air and surface forces during World War II. It stated:

"Mission:

The tactical air co-operates with the ground forces to destroy the enemy forces within, moving into or withdrawing from a combat zone. In addition to fulfilling a requirement for continuous reconnaissance, it usually is essential to the accomplishment of the common mission that the tactical air command perform the following operations in order of priority:

26. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.246.
 27. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.247.
 28. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16-17.11.1950.
 29. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.247.

- (1) Establish and maintain local air superiority.
- (2) Isolate the battle area by restricting movements of enemy troops and supplies into, within, or from the selected area.
- (3) Destroy enemy ground forces within the zone of contact in conjunction with friendly ground forces.

Depending upon the local tactical situation some or all of these missions may be performed concurrently."³⁰

This mission was fulfilled in all its aspects by 5AF Combat Groups in Korea; counter-air missions established and maintained air superiority, interdiction missions isolated the battlefield, and close support missions helped to destroy enemy ground forces. The SAAF contingent in Korea became involved in all these various types of missions with a predominance of interdiction and close support.

COUNTER AIR OPERATIONS

The priorities given to the three parts of the 5AF mission in Korea were to be the subject of continuous inter-service controversy, the least of which was the priority given to counter-air operations. The latter included all those operations carried out against enemy aircraft and installations whether in the air or on the ground. Gen. W.W. Momyer, who has been involved in the conduct of air operations at three different levels of command in three different wars; World War II, Korea and Vietnam, states:

"The first task of air power is to gain and maintain air superiority."³¹

Air Chief Marshal Lord Tedder, who was Gen. Eisenhower's Deputy Commander

30. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, p.14.

31. Momyer: Airpower in Three Wars, p.111.

during World War II states the case for the priority allocated to counter-air operations even more strongly:

"But the outstanding lesson of the late war was that air superiority is the prerequisite for all war winning operations, whether at sea, on the land or in the air. In other words, in order even to begin to wage war successfully, it is necessary to arrive at the situation in which the enemy air opposition is unable to interfere effectively with our own operations - that is what we mean by air superiority."³²

Two further reasons can weigh the case for considering the counter-air mission to be the top priority of a tactical air force; no surface weapon can be used against an enemy air force with an efficiency equal to that of the tactical air force, and until the enemy air force is neutralized, one's own air capability cannot be utilized for other tasks.³³ In the Korean situation a third reason also bears consideration: the numerical superiority of the Communist ground forces which after November 1950 significantly increased the need to rely on the air force as an offensive weapon.³⁴

Counter-air missions which were undertaken by USAF and Bomber Command in Korea included:

- a. Fighter sweeps, escort missions and interceptions.
- b. Bombing missions aimed at the destruction of aircraft on the ground and supporting ground installations.
- c. Photographic and visual reconnaissance missions.³⁵

Initially the UN air forces gained air superiority with relative ease, but once the Chinese entered the war, a continual effort was necessary to sustain

32. A.W. Tedder: Air Power in War, pp.32-33.

33. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), p.24.

34. Momyer: Airpower in Three Wars, p.114.

35. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation In Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), p.24.

its slender lead. The main reason for FEAF's rapid initial success was the lack of determined opposition on the part of the North Korean Air Force (NKAF). The Soviet failure to develop the North Korean air and air defence strength to match the build-up of its ground forces could be ascribed to one of four possible reasons, or to a combination of these reasons:

- a. The Politburo feared that, given air as well as ground strength, Kim Il-Sung would be tempted to follow Tito's example.
- b. The Kremlin was convinced that the conflict would be restricted to the forces of North and South Korea.
- c. The Soviets failed to appreciate the importance of air power.
- d. A shortage of pilots.³⁶

Whatever the reason, the North Koreans opened their offensive in June 1950 with a wholly inadequate air force. Estimates of NKAF strength at the outbreak of hostilities vary from 132 to 180 combat aircraft.³⁷ The official USAF history of the war used FEAF Intelligence Summary of 10 March 1950 to arrive at the following figures: 62 Ilyushin Il-10 bombers, 70 Yakovlev Yak-3 and Yak-7B fighters, 22 Yak-18 transports and 8 Poplikarpov PO-2 trainers. The NKAF HQ was at P'yongyang and the organization consisted of an air division divided into a fighter regiment, a ground attack regiment and a training regiment.³⁸

This small and inadequate air force could hardly inflict much damage on

36. E. Bauer: Trial of Strength in Korea (Interavia, Vol.5, No.11, 1950), pp.567-568; Futrell and Simpson: Air War in Korea II (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.IV, No.3, Fall 1951), p.53.

37. Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.12; Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power, The Decisive Force in Korea), p.5; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.20.

38. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.19-20.

the UN forces; by 10 August 1950 UN pilots claimed to have destroyed 110 NKAF aircraft and by September the tally had risen to 137, with 85 claimed by FEAF, 51 by the US Navy carrier-based aircraft and one by 77 Squadron RAAF. The NKAF had apparently been eliminated.³⁹ However, by the end of November 1950, the Chinese Communist intervention in the air as well as on the ground had introduced a new phase in the battle, a development which co-incident with the arrival of the advance detachment of 2 Sqn SAAF in Korea.

INTERDICTION OPERATIONS

During the initial months of the Korean War the bulk of the UN air power was devoted to interdiction and close support missions since a minimal amount was needed for the actual maintenance of air superiority. Interdiction can be defined as any air action which prevents, or delays, or destroys enemy movements of men and supplies to the battle zone.⁴⁰ The aim of interdiction is to isolate the battlefield from the rear zones. The experience of World War II taught that this could be best achieved by operating according to the following concepts:

- a. Strike the source of the war material.
- b. Concentrate the attacks against the weak elements of the logistical system.
- c. Continuously attack, day and night, the major lines of communication supplying the army in the field.
- d. Inflict heavy losses on enemy logistics and forces before they approach the battlefield where the difficulty of successful interdiction is the greatest.

39. Futrell and Simpson: Air War in Korea II (Air University Quarterly Review, vol. IV, No. 3, Fall 1951), p. 54.

40. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p. 117.

- e. Keep continuous ground pressure on the enemy to force him to consume large quantities of material.⁴¹

The doctrine current at the time of the Korean War taught that these objectives were most effectively achieved by three types of interdiction missions:

- a. Armed reconnaissance missions which consisted of searching a specific area or supply route for targets of opportunity. These targets were usually road convoys, trains, supply dumps and marching or resting troops.
- b. Pre-planned bombing missions against such targets as bridges, rail and road systems, supply dumps and troop concentrations.
- c. Photographic, visual and electronic reconnaissance to provide planning information.⁴²

The influence of terrain upon interdiction missions during the Korean War has been commented upon from two different points of view, each of which reflects the differing opinions on the effectiveness of air interdiction as seen by air and ground force commanders. The air force historians, Futrell and Simpson, wrote in 1951:

"Being a mountainous country served by only a few well developed railroads and highways, which in turn have many bridges and tunnels, Korea lent itself to interdiction."⁴³

In his account of the Korean War published in 1967, Gen. M.B. Ridgway, who succeeded Lt-Gen. W.H. Walker as commander in the Eighth Army in December 1950, and who later succeeded MacArthur as C-in-C UN, said:

"There is simply no such thing as choking off supply lines in a country as wild as North Korea, or in a jungle country either.

41. Moyar: Airpower in Three Wars, p.169.

42. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), p.25.

43. Futrell and Simpson: Air War in Korea II (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.IV, No.3, Fall 1951), p.63.

And when the enemy soldier is self-sufficient as in Asia, where he carries his supplies and his weapons on his back and where he can move at night and travel by day along foot trails not visible from the air, it is self-delusion to think that he can be defeated by dropping bombs on him."⁴⁴

Ridgway had the benefit of hindsight when he wrote, but the fact remains that when the factors of terrain and enemy were combined as they were in Korea, the UN interdiction efforts were not as successful as they might have been. That the North Korean ground forces were self-sufficient by western standards is reflected in the following figures. Before 15 September 1950, the North Koreans supplemented their nocturnal vehicle convoys with an estimated 300 000 human carriers, each of whom carried a 20kg load over a distance of 20km during the hours of darkness. They were able to move 508 tonnes from Seoul to the front each day, which is a significant figure when it is noted that the daily combat requirement of a North Korean Division was 50,8 tonnes and that each North Korean soldier's estimated daily requirement was only 3,45kg. Nevertheless, the UN interdiction effort did have an effect on the North Korean offensive at the onset of the war; estimates from prisoner-of-war interrogations indicate that half their total tonnage of food and ammunition was destroyed en route to the front. Moreover POW's most frequently attributed the low morale in the NKPA to a shortage of food.⁴⁵ Further estimates from the same source attributed to air action the following percentages of the total losses suffered by the NKPA before 1 January 1951: personnel casualties - 47%, tanks - 75%, soft skinned vehicles - 81%, artillery pieces - 72%.⁴⁶

44. Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.76.

45. Futrell and Simpson: Air War in Korea II (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol. IV, No.3, Fall 1951), p.67.

46. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), p.42; Futrell and Simpson: Air War in Korea II (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.IV, No.3, Fall 1951), p.67.

Such successes were achieved in spite of a somewhat sporadic interdiction policy. Rival claims of ground force and air force commanders with regard to the effectiveness of interdiction, already mentioned, and the urgent requirement for close air support to relieve a critical ground situation initially resulted in a failure to keep the enemy lines of communication under continuous attack. During the period prior to the launching of the first Chinese offensive, it is possible to identify three phases in the UN interdiction effort: 26 June - 2 August 1950, 3 August - 15 September and 16 September - 26 November. During the first phase, the UN air forces had to commit their entire close support capability, (which included the unorthodox employment of medium bombers), in the close support role, in order to support the UN ground forces at first engaged in a retrograde action and then in the desperate defence of the Pusan Perimeter. During this period, the amount of effort available for interdiction was minimal and the NKPA was able to move supplies virtually unchecked by road and by rail.⁴⁷

By 3 August 1950 the ground force commanders, hitherto unenthusiastic about interdiction, had become alarmed at the reports of trains and convoys moving towards the battlefield. At this juncture Stratemyer unexpectedly gained approval from the C-in-C UN for a comprehensive and co-ordinated interdiction campaign which the FEAF had long planned and had actually launched on 2 August.⁴⁸ For the next six weeks co-ordinated attacks were made against the railway system, bridges, roads and convoys. The NKPA was thus decisively weakened in preparation for the Inchon landing and the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter.

47. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), p.37.

48. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.120.

During the initial phase of the UN counter-offensive from 15 September to 26 November 1950, the main task was again the close support of UN ground forces. But, this time the UN troops were advancing, and as they advanced further northwards the interdiction area narrowed, having been squeezed between the advancing front and the Yalu River. Thus, during October and early November 1950 the interdiction campaign again slackened, this time not due to the diversion of the available air effort to close support operations, but to the lack of targets.⁴⁹ However, by the time 2 Sqn SAAF found itself committed to operations in Korea during the second half of November, Chinese Communist intervention was progressing and interdiction and close support missions were again on the increase.

CLOSE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Operations in fulfilment of the third part of the tactical air commander's mission:

"To destroy enemy ground forces within the zone of contact in conjunction with friendly ground forces",⁵⁰

are commonly known as close support operations. Unlike counter-air and interdiction operations, close support must be carried out in close co-operation with the ground forces. This implies the existence of a command and control system to co-ordinate the joint effort. Before considering this joint system, however, it is necessary to take a look at close support from the perspective of the airman.

Quantitative rewards for close support are fewer than those for interdiction. When supplies and troops are of necessity concentrated for

49. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), p.38.

50. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, p.14.

transportation, greater destruction is possible with less expenditure of air-delivered weapons. On the other hand, when the same troops and supplies are dispersed and camouflaged on the battlefield, the use of air-delivered weapons becomes less economical. Thus in the allocation of air effort, priority is usually given to interdiction strikes. However, if ground weapons are not available when and where needed, or if one's own ground forces come up against defences and terrain that prevent the effective use of ground weapons, the use of air weapons becomes an effective, if expensive, alternative.⁵¹

There were four types of close support missions flown in Korea:

- a. **Air Alert Strikes:** These were strikes by aircraft which were already orbiting in the region of the ground forces they were supporting. The strike was called for by the forward air controller at the request of the local ground commander. The time lapse between request and strike was a matter of minutes.
- b. **Column Cover:** On these missions aircraft flew above rapidly advancing armoured columns ready to render immediate close support.
- c. **Call Missions:** Call Missions took place where ground alerted pilots were pre-briefed on the ground and their aircraft loaded with specialized weapons. The price paid for the accurate delivery of suitable weapons was a delay of two to four hours between the request and the strike.
- d. **Reconnaissance Missions:** Both visual and photographic reconnaissance missions were flown to assist the close support effort by the accurate location of targets and the evaluation of strikes.⁵²

51. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), p.27.

52. Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (Air Force, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), pp.27,34; War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, pp.2-3.

JOINT OPERATIONS PLANNING

In order to understand the role and modus operandi of 2 Sqn SAAF in Korea it is necessary to examine more closely the joint operations doctrine prevalent in the US armed forces in 1950 and the extent to which it had been applied by the time the South Africans became operational. The following basic principles with regard to joint planning were officially promulgated:

- a. "Joint action of all arms and services based on a plan prepared jointly by ground and air forces is essential to success in combat.
- b. Co-operation begins in the initial planning phase and continues throughout the operation.
- c. Co-operative air-ground effort is integrated at the command level which produces maximum continuing results from the available air and ground forces.
- d. Since the tactical air force is the lowest echelon of the air forces which plans and conducts independent operations, the army and tactical air force form the fundamental air-ground team. For this reason army headquarters and tactical air force headquarters are located as close together as practicable."⁵³

The first step towards the practical implementation of these principles was to be the holding of joint planning conferences. During the preliminary planning stage it was foreseen that these conferences would be relatively few, but once the operation commenced a daily conference was recommended. The latter were to be attended by both air and ground commanders or their representatives and by operations and intelligence personnel of both air and ground staffs.⁵⁴

53. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air Ground Operations, pp.16-17.

54. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air Ground Operations, pp.19-20.

At all stages this planning was to take place on a joint basis between commanders of equal status. Whilst the ground commander could request air support, the final decision as to the tactical employment of his aircraft lay with the air commander. Thus, the ground commander had no authority to exercise command over the air effort at any stage.

The agency which was formed to prepare for the daily planning conference, execute its decisions and to co-ordinate the air-ground effort on a continuous basis was to be the Joint Operations Centre (JOC). It was envisaged as the nerve centre of the air-ground operations system. As an integral part of the HQ structure it was to consist of an army component, the Air-Ground Operations Section, and an air force component, the Combat Operations Section. The Air-Ground Operations Section was to be staffed by army personnel headed by a G-2 Air while the Combat Operations Sections was to be staffed by air force personnel headed by the A-2 of the tactical air force.⁵⁵

Prior to the Korean War the above theory was tested and refined by the establishment of a JOC at Pope Field, Fort Bragg, where exercises revealed the need for further army training in the use of air support. The training programme was developed, but too late for the effect to be felt during the initial stages of the Korean conflict.⁵⁶

Besides the fact of MacArthur's failure to establish a proper Joint HQ for FEC, the lack of enthusiasm and training on the part of army personnel hampered the implementation of the air-ground operations doctrine. During exercises held in April 1950 both the 5AF Commander, Lt-Gen. Partridge, and his deputy, Maj.-Gen. E.J. Timberlake, familiarized themselves with the content of FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, but for a time they were to stand

55. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, pp.2,4-5.

56. M.J. Dolan: What's Right and Wrong with Close Air Support (Combat Forces Journal, Vol.1, No.12,1951), p.25.

alone.⁵⁷ A while later, after touring the combat zone, Brig.-Gen. G.J. Higgins, Director of the Army Air Support Centre commented that it was

"highly significant that the Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, was apparently the first individual in the theater to recognize, and take steps to implement, the necessity for the co-ordination of air and ground troops."⁵⁸

Acting according to doctrine, on 3 July 1950, Timberlake organized a Combat Operations Section of 10 officers and 35 airmen under Lt-Col J.R. Murphy at Itazuke. Two days later they opened operations in an office adjoining the G-3 of the 24th Division at Taejon, but the army failed to establish a corresponding Air-Ground Operations Section. As a result the air force intelligence officers were forced to wander around the divisional HQ gathering information with regard to possible targets as best they could, but due to the fluid situation and rapid advance of the NKPA, accurate information was hard to come by.⁵⁹

On 13 July General Walker assumed command of all the ground forces in Korea and established the Eighth US Army in Korea (EUSAK) HQ in Taegu. He also appointed officers to serve as G-2's and G-3's in an Air-Ground Operations Section. Thus with effect from 14 July a JOC began to function in Korea at army/tactical air force level, in accordance with the book.⁶⁰ Fifth Air Force HQ (Advanced) also moved to Taegu and was set up near EUSAK HQ on 20 July. However, the army was not easily convinced that the

57. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.74.

58. G.J. Higgins: Air Support in the Korean Campaign, 1.12.1950, report quoted by Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.74.

59. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.75.

60. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.97-98.

JOC could function effectively and by mid-August the Air-Ground Operations Section still lacked 16 duty officers. The G-2 and G-3 Air sections that the army was supposed to establish at corps and division level were handled on a part-time basis until the spring of 1951.⁶¹

Even under Gen. Ridgway, who succeeded Walker, the JOC never developed fully as the joint planning and operating agency envisaged by the authors of the manual. Nevertheless, a workable system did evolve. Instead of holding a daily conference, the army early morning staff conference was attended by air force officers. There they received an estimate of the army's air requirement for the following day. The 5AF planning conference was subsequently held at 13h00 daily and exact allocations of the air effort for the following day were made. Liaison officers of the other services attended these conferences.⁶² In Korea the JOC thus functioned as it had in World War II, as the command facility of the tactical air commander and not as a joint facility in the sense that it was jointly directed by the air and ground commanders.⁶³ It was according to this procedure that the commander of 2 Sqn SAAF was tasked through the commander of 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing.

61. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.75.

62. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.315.

63. Momyer: Airpower in Three Wars, p.258.

CHAPTER 3

KOREA 1950: THE OPENING PHASES OF THE KOREAN WAR

In addition to the foregoing outlines of the geographical context of the Korean War and of the UN/US doctrines governing its conduct, an adequate background sketch to the participation of South Africa requires a consideration of the following:

- a. A brief analysis of the entire war, which will serve as a framework for the evaluation of the role of the South African Air Force.
- b. A review of the major military events during the phases preceding the first SAAF combat mission in Korea on 19 November 1950, 148 days after the invasion of South Korea.

ANALYSIS

Based upon the general direction of movement of the opposing ground forces along a north-south axis, the operations of the Korean War can be divided into five distinct phases:

- Phase One:** The North Korean invasion and the UN reaction - from the successful invasion of South Korea by the NKPA on 25 June until the landing of the UN forces at Inch'on Harbour on 15 September 1950.
- Phase Two:** The UN advance to the Yalu River - from the Inch'on landing until the beginning of the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) intervention on the night of 25-26 November 1950.
- Phase Three:** The CCF intervention - from 26 November until the launching of the UN counter-offensive on 25 January 1951.
- Phase Four:** The UN return to the 38th parallel - from 25 January until the commander of the UN ground forces in Korea was ordered to cease offensive operations on 12 November 1951.
- Phase Five:** Stalemate - from 12 November 1951 until the signing of the Armistice on 27 July 1953.

The above phases vary in duration from just over two months for Phase Two to 18 months for Phase Five. Phases One to Four were marked by varying degrees of mobility, whereas Phase Five was characterized by relatively static defence lines. No major offensives were mounted by either side, other than the CCF final offensive, which started in May 1953. In this chapter Phases One and Two will be examined in order to review the course of the land battle up to the time of the deployment of the advance elements of 2 Squadron SAAF. In further chapters a general outline of Phases Three to Five will be integrated with an account of the SAAF participation.

PHASE ONE: THE NORTH KOREAN INVASION AND THE UN REACTION

The concern, expressed to the UN Commission by the ROK intelligence chief on 12 May 1950 and echoed by Ambassador Muccio a few weeks later, proved to be well founded.¹ By June a marked difference had developed between the military strength of the Republic of Korea, in the south, and that of the Korean People's Democratic Republic, in the north. At that stage the ROKA consisted of 94 808 officers and men, while the strength of the various auxiliary forces was: Coast Guard - 6 145; Air Force (ROKAF) 1 865; National Police - 48 273. On paper the ROKA had eight divisions, but only four were up to the full authorized strength of 10 000 men. The infantry divisions were inadequately supported by an assortment of heavier weapons, the most impressive being 27 armoured cars and 700 artillery pieces. The latter included 105mm howitzers, 60mm and 81mm mortars, 140 anti-tank guns and approximately 1 900 5,99mm (2,35inch) bazookas.²

In comparison, the NKPA consisted of eight full strength infantry divisions, as well as two other infantry divisions at half strength, a

1. Vide, pp.31-33.

2. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.14.

separate infantry regiment, an armoured brigade equipped with 150 Soviet T-34 tanks and a motor cycle reconnaissance regiment. Their supporting weapons included 76mm and 122mm howitzers, 122mm guns, 76mm self-propelled guns, 45mm anti-tank guns and mortars of 61mm, 82mm and 120mm.³

As already mentioned, various intelligence estimates placed the NKAF strength at between 132 and 180 combat aircraft, with a balance between trainers, fighters and attack bombers.⁴ Although inadequate by great power standards, this small air force was a relative giant in comparison with the ROKAF of 32 aircraft. The South Korean air order-of-battle consisted of 12 liaison type aircraft, 10 T-6 Harvard trainers and 10 F-51D Mustangs, of which the last mentioned were under the control of a KMAG advisory team as no ROKAF pilots had yet qualified to fly combat missions.⁵ When this imbalance in air power is considered together with the NKPA superiority of 150 : 0 in tanks, and a maximum ROKA artillery range of 7 500m as opposed to a NKPA range of 12 800m,⁶ it is clear that the KMAG confidence in the ability of the ROKA to contain an invasion was misplaced.⁷ The North Koreans were not only capable of striking across the 38th parallel, they were also planning to do so.

The North Korean invasion plan, which was reputedly the work of Gen. Antonov of the Soviet Military Mission, called for diversionary attacks on the extreme eastern and western flanks, while the main thrust southwards would be made along the three main communication routes in the centre.⁸ The execution of this plan commenced at 04h00 on the morning of 25 June 1950.

3. Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.8,12.

4. Vide, p.52.

5. Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.17.

6. Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.17-18.

7. Vide, p.31.

8. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.2; E. O'Ballance: Korea: 1950-1953, p.30.

when the NKPA crossed the 38th parallel at five different points. The main attacking force in the centre advanced along the axes: Kaesong-Munsan-Seoul, Poch'on-Uijongbu-Seoul and Ch'unch'on-Hongch'on-Wonju. The attack through Uijongbu by two NKPA infantry divisions was spearheaded by the Russian T-34 tanks of the armoured brigade. This route gave direct and easy access to the South Korean capital of Seoul. In spite of a counter-attack by the ROK 7th Division at Uijongbu, the South Koreans' lack of anti-tank weapons forced them to withdraw and the invading forces were able to enter that key town on 26 June. They were thus within striking distance of Seoul, the South Korean capital.⁹ As planned, secondary attacks were made on the western flank, against the Ongjin Peninsula. One battalion of the ROK regiment on the peninsula was lost before the other two were evacuated by sea on 26 June.¹⁰ On the eastern flank, the NKPA 5th Division and the 766th Independent Unit attacked down the coastal road. Elements of these units were also successfully landed in the vicinity of the east coast town of Samch'ok and Kangnung. In the face of this offensive, the ROK 8th Division was forced to withdraw on 27 June (Map 4).¹¹

Meanwhile the UNO machinery had been in motion. At 13h30 on 25 June the UN Commission on Korea, sitting in Seoul, had been informed by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea that the Republic's territory had been invaded by North Korean armed forces. He reported that the towns of Ongjin, Kangnung, Ch'umunjin, Kaesong and others had already been occupied by the invaders. He also stated that the ground that had been lost had been conceded according to plan as it had lain in advance of the Republic's main defence lines.¹² After having consulted with President Rhee and the US Ambassador

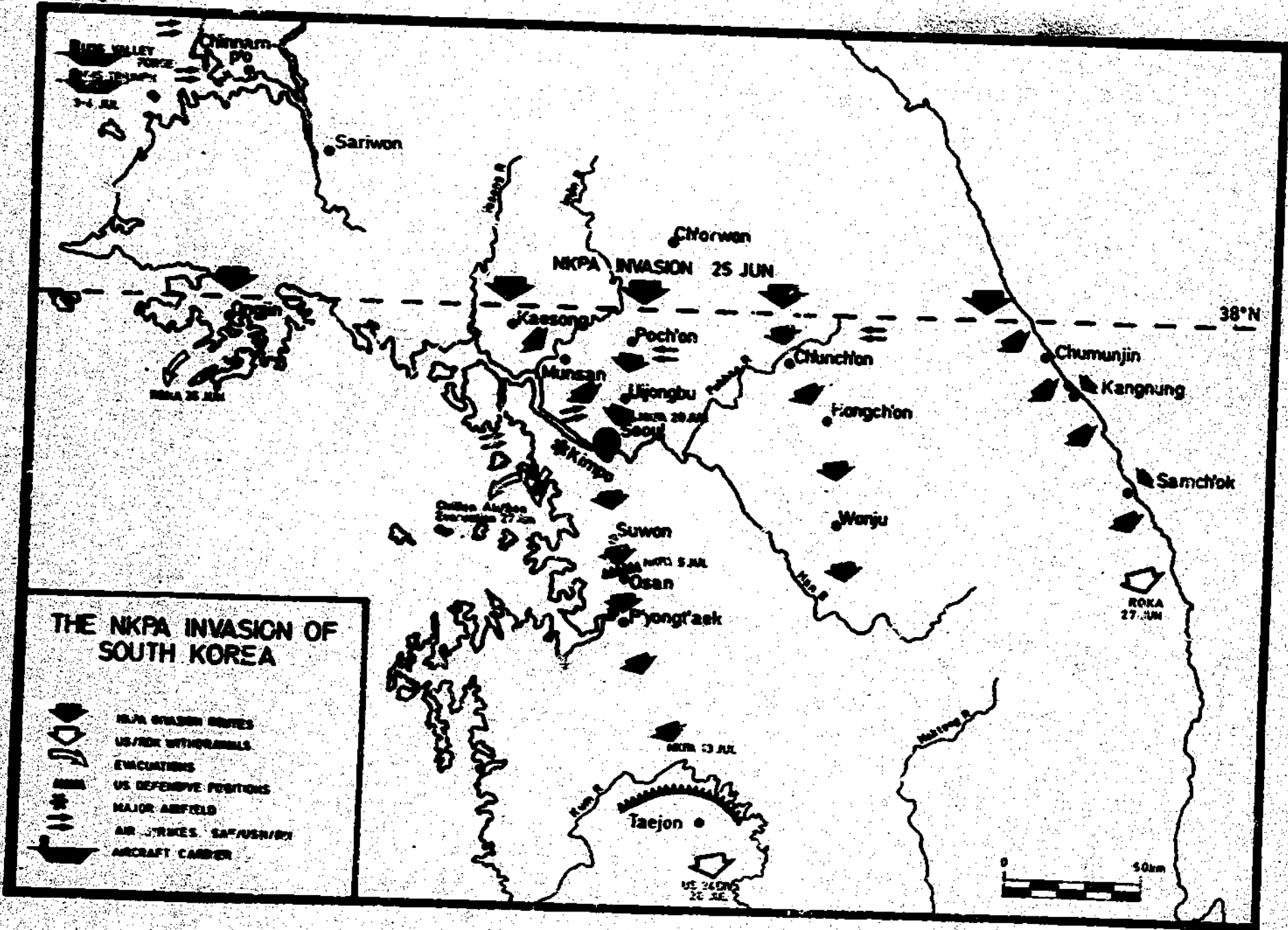
9. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.29-39.

10. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.22.

11. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.28.

12. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.2.

MAP 6



Muccio, the Commission informed the UN Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, of the developing situation, suggesting that the invasion be brought to the attention of the Security Council.¹³ Lie received the Commission's recommendation at noon (Eastern Standard Time) and reacted in the following manner:

"I resolved to take up the Commission's suggestion, not only because the United Nations organ most immediately involved so advised, but because this to me was clear-cut aggression — apparently well calculated, meticulously planned, and with all the elements of surprize which reminded me of the Nazi invasion of Norway — because this was aggression against a 'creation' of the United Nations, and because response of the Security Council would be more certain and more in the spirit of the Organization as a whole were the Secretary-General to take the lead."¹⁴

The Security Council lost little time in acting, and on the same day, 25 June, adopted a ceasefire resolution proposed by the United States by nine votes to nil, with Yugoslavia abstaining. Russia was absent from this crucial Council meeting in protest at the presence of Nationalist China. The resolution termed the invasion "a breach of the peace", and called upon North Korea to cease hostilities immediately and to withdraw beyond the 38th parallel. The UN Commission was instructed to supervise the withdrawal and was requested to make use of assistance from UN member states to repel the invaders.¹⁵

At this stage, the Far East Command of the United States had only one minor mission with regard to Korea: to ensure the safety of US nationals in the event of war or disorder. An operational plan for the evacuation of American civilians had been distributed as early as 21 July 1949.¹⁶ As part

13. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, p.2.

14. T. Lie: In the Cause of Peace, pp.328-329

15. United Nations: Report on the United Nations Commission on Korea, pp.2-3.
Vinache: A History of the Far East in Modern Times, p.712.

16. Appelman: South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu, p.39.

of this plan FEAF had been charged to provide fighter cover and aircraft for an airlift. Subsequently, an operational plan had been issued by FEAF HQ on 1 March 1950.¹⁷

The time arrived to execute the plan on 25 June. At 11h30 Maj.-Gen. E.E. Partridge, Acting Commander of FEAF, instructed Air Force units in Japan to deploy for the evacuation mission. However, flights to Korea had to await further orders. At 17h00 two NKAF Yak fighters strafed Kimpo airfield, while four Yak's strafed Seoul's main airfield. The attack on Kimpo was repeated at 19h00 by six Yaks which completely destroyed an American C-54 transport aircraft that had been damaged during the previous raid.¹⁸

On the evening of that eventful 25 June Muccio informed MacArthur that he had decided to evacuate American nationals from Seoul, as NKPA tanks had been seen to be concentrating at Uijongbu. At 00h45 on 26 June MacArthur ordered Partridge to cover the seaborne evacuation, and on the same day the air evacuation plan was ordered.¹⁹ American civilians began to move from Seoul to Inch'on at 01h00 where they boarded the Norwegian ship, Reinholt, which had just unloaded a consignment of fertilizer. The Reinholt, carrying 682 women and children, left Inch'on Harbour at 16h30 escorted by fighters of the Fifth Air Force.²⁰

The air evacuation plan was initiated at dawn on 27 June. At noon 5 Yaks, intent on attacking Kimpo, were challenged by five USAF F-82's, and three of the attackers were destroyed. Later in the afternoon four out of eight Il-10's were shot down over Kimpo by F-80's. The protection afforded by the USAF fighter aircraft enabled 748 people to be safely evacuated by air before midnight on 27 June.²¹

17. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.8;
Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.39.

18. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.9.

19. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.10.

20. Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.39;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.12.

21. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.13.

Whatever their successes in covering the evacuation, the US aircraft were not at that stage authorized to attack ground targets in support of the retreating ROKA. However, when Rhee appealed for help, President Truman did authorize the supporting use of American naval and air forces south of the 38th parallel. This authorization was telephoned to MacArthur during a conference on the evening of 26 June (the morning of 27 June in Tokyo).²² The following afternoon the NKPA entered Seoul whilst the ROKA withdrew in disorder across the Han River. The premature demolition of the Han River bridges by the latter's engineers resulted in much valuable equipment being abandoned on the northern bank.²³ MacArthur immediately acted upon Truman's authorization in an attempt to relieve the rapidly deteriorating ground situation. He began with air attacks on NKPA troops, tanks, artillery and vehicles moving between the 38th parallel and Seoul. Fighter aircraft, mainly F-80's and B-26 light bombers, braved bad weather to fly from their bases in Japan. The F-80's had to extend their range to the utmost in order to complete their missions over Korea and return to their Japanese bases. These lighter aircraft were also joined by medium bombers, B-29 Superfortresses, which flew in from Guam.²⁴ The attack took a considerable toll of NKPA troops and equipment moving southwards along the cramped roads, and NKPA efforts to repair the Han River bridges were also halted. This hastily devised interdiction programme broke the momentum of the Communist advance at a critical juncture, which gave the ROK forces an opportunity to reorganize south of the Han River.²⁵

Time was also won for decisions to be taken at Lake Success and in Washington, which cleared the way for the employment of US ground troops

22. Truman: Memoirs II, p.384.

23. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.32-33.

24. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.26-27.

25. O'Ballance: Korea: 1950-1953, p.37;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.29.

on the Korean peninsula, thereby depriving the North Koreans of a swift and early victory. On the morning of 30 June Truman gave the green light for the deployment of US troops on Korean soil. Initially he authorized the employment of only one regimental combat team, but later in the day this authorization was extended, when MacArthur was informed by the JCS that he could use all the Army forces available to him.²⁶ On the same day the US President approved the use of US airpower north of the 38th parallel, subject to the restriction that it was only to be directed against military supplies within the borders of Korea.²⁷ Impressed by the threat posed to ground troops by the NKAF, MacArthur gave the commander of the 5AF his verbal go-ahead for attacks on the North Korean airfields.²⁸ These authorizations were acted upon with the minimum of delay, with the 5AF being assisted by carrier based aircraft from the USS Valley Forge and HMS Triumph. They commenced their attacks on the airfields in the P'yongyang-Ch'innamp'o area on 3 July.²⁹ These strikes proved so successful that by the end of July the NKAF had been rendered ineffective; only 18 NKAF aircraft remained serviceable.³⁰ Thus the UN forces gained the vital advantage of air superiority at an early stage in the conflict, which was to have a profound effect on the whole character and course of the war.

The first US Army troops, previously based in Japan, reached Korea on 1 July. They consisted of two companies of the 21st Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, with understrength support platoons. This initial force, later to be known as "Task Force Smith", was airlifted from Japan to Pusan. On landing in Korea, the force were rushed northwards by rail. It was followed within days by the rest of Maj.-Gen. W.T. Dean's 24th Division. During the first week

26. Truman: Memoirs II, p.390; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.79.

27. Truman: Memoirs II, pp.388-389.

28. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.30.

29. Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.52.

30. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power, The Decisive Force in Korea), p.7.

of July the American infantrymen, handicapped by the lack of effective anti-tank weapons, made a vain attempt to halt the NKPA armoured spearhead at Osan and P'yongt'eak, and Dean was forced to withdraw.³¹ He fell back on a defensive line south of the Kum River in an effort to hold the city of Taejon. These positions were breached by the NKPA's T-34's on 13 and 14 July, and by 19 July the battle for Taejon had commenced in earnest. The following day NKPA elements entered the city. In the confusion Dean was separated from his command and after wandering behind enemy lines for 36 days was eventually captured.³² During this period US reinforcements were poured into Korea and on 13 July Lt-Gen. W.H. Walker established his EUSAK HQ at Taegu.³³ The following day, the entire UN Command in Korea was effectively unified when President Rhee placed the Republic's security forces under MacArthur's command.³⁴

Taegu was to prove a wise choice for the EUSAK HQ, for by the beginning of August the UN Command had withdrawn all its forces into a defensive perimeter in the south-east corner of the peninsula. The ground held by the UN force formed a rough square approximately 10 000km², with Taegu in the north-west corner and the key port of Pusan in the south-east. The defensive lines ran from Yonil in the east to the north of Yongch'on, curved around Taegu and followed the east bank of the Nakdong River southwards. Where the Nakdong turns eastwards the lines carried on southwards to the coast to include Masan. The NKPA offensives against the Pusan Perimeter consisted of repeated assaults at four main points: towards Masan in the south, against the so-called Nakdong Bulge in the centre of the western edge, against

31. Appleman: South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu, pp.60-82.

32. Appleman: South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu, p.117;
Rees: Korea: The Limited War, p.40.

33. Vide, p.61.

34. Appleman: South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu, p.117;
Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.102.

Taegu in the north-west corner, and down the Pohang-Kyongju Corridor towards Pusan. By means of skilful deployment and redeployment along internal lines, Walker managed to ward off determined NKPA offensives during mid-August and at the beginning of September. The UN continued to pour men and equipment into the Pusan beachhead, and by September the balance of forces was decidedly in its favour. At that stage the NKPA consisted of 98 000 men in 13 infantry divisions, one depleted armoured division, two armoured brigades and miscellaneous support units. The total UN strength within the perimeter was roughly 180 000 men. Although the ROKA boasted 92 000 men, many were non-combatant members of labour battalions. The total Eighth Army's strength was 67 000, which included US Marines and a British Commonwealth Brigade consisting of two British and one Australian battalion. In addition, the NKPA's former superiority in armour had been reversed by the end of August, with the arrival of over 500 M-26 Pershing and M-4 Sherman tanks. By then the Communists had only 100 T-34's which were still serviceable.³⁵

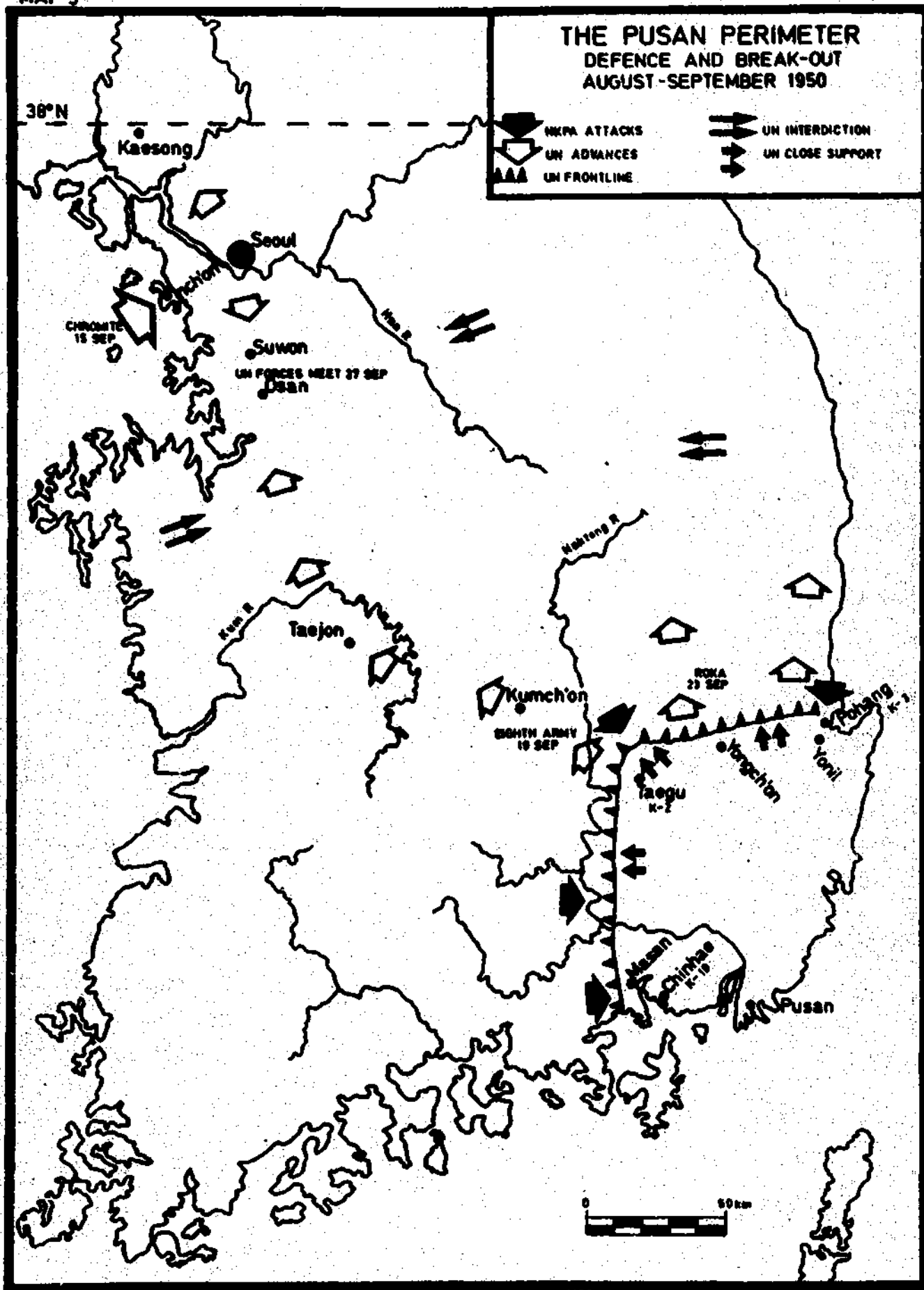
Whatever the opinions of the protagonists in the interdiction vs close support controversy,³⁶ the desperate ground situation during the defence of the Pusan Perimeter frequently demanded that priority be given to missions in support of the hard-pressed infantry. At that stage airpower was used to compensate for the ground forces' lack of fire power, a state of affairs which had resulted from the US pre-war policy of denying the ROKA an offensive capability, and from the piecemeal manner in which it had been necessary to commit US troops to Korea.³⁷ Such was the requirement for close support that the unusual step was taken of tasking medium bombers with close support missions. One of the more spectacular incidents involving this unorthodox

35. Rees: Korea: The Limited War, pp.48-49;
O'Ballance: Korea: 1950-1953, pp.42-43.

36. Vide, pp.52-56.

37. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), p.9.

MAP 5



approach took place on 16 August. A concentration of NKPA troops was reported on the west bank of the Naktong River near the town of Waegwan. MacArthur requested Stratemyer to use his B-29 Superfortresses to neutralize the new threat. A raid was subsequently mounted, and within 30 minutes, 98 B-29's had released 3 084 227kg (500lb) and 150 454kg (1 000lb) general purpose bombs from altitudes varying between 1 500m and 3 000m, on a strip of land 12km by 5,6km. The Eighth Army made no immediate attempt to send patrols into the area, and although the bombing patterns were reported to be excellent, no accurate assessment could be made of the effectiveness of the raid.³⁸

Notwithstanding the conflicting demands made upon the available air capability, there is little doubt that the UNC's application of airpower enabled its troops to cling to their foothold on the south-eastern corner of the peninsula until it became possible to mount a counter-offensive in September 1950. Gen. Walker subsequently acknowledged the value of the air support he had received when speaking to the US Air Force Evaluation Group two months later:

"I will gladly lay my cards right on the table and state that if it had not been for the air support that we received from the Fifth Air Force, we would not have been able to stay in Korea."³⁹

Gen. Weyland later commented:

"The United Nations air forces played a decisive role and became the primary offensive weapon of the Korean War."⁴⁰

When one considers the decisive influence of air power during the first few months of the Korean War, it is not surprising that the UNC accepted the South African offer of a fighter squadron with alacrity.

38. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.131.

39. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.477.

40. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), p.8.

Although the UNC acceptance was announced by the South African Chief-of-Staff on 27 August,⁴¹ the war was to pass through another phase and to assume a completely new political and military aspect before the South African squadron actually became operational in the Far East.

PHASE TWO: THE UN ADVANCE TO THE YALU RIVER

Gen. MacArthur rejected the idea of a break-out from the Pusan beachhead by means of a frontal assault as a crude approach which would result in relatively high UN casualty figures. Instead he decided to isolate the NKPA troops in South Korea by landing in their rear and cutting their lines of communication and supply. At a conference held in Tokyo on 23 August representatives of the JCS, Gen. J.L. Collins and Adm. F.P. Sherman, grudgingly approved MacArthur's plan for an amphibious landing which was to take place on 15 September at Inch'on, the port serving Seoul. This particular date was selected for "Operation Chromite" as it was the very next date on which the harbour's extreme tides would permit such an operation, alternative dates being 27 September and 11 October. By 30 August MacArthur's staff had completed UNC Operations Order No.1. The general outline of the plan was:

- a. On D-day the US X Corps, consisting of the 1st Marine Division and US 7th Infantry Division, commanded by Maj.-Gen. E.M. Almond (UNC Chief-of-Staff), was successively to take and secure Inch'on, Kimpo airfield and Seoul, and to sever all enemy lines of communication.
- b. NavFE were to transport landing forces, seize the Inch'on beachhead and provide support for Almond in the form of carrier based aircraft, naval gunfire and initial logistical support.
- c. On D-day + 1 the Eighth Army was to break out of the Pusan encirclement and move northwards along the axis Taegu-Taejon-Suwon.

41. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-4.9.1950.

- d. FEAF were to supply general air support, isolate the objective area, and furnish air-ground support to the Eighth Army. FEAF were also tasked to stand-by to drop the 187th Regimental Combat Team (Airborne).⁴²

The Air Force's contribution to the planning of the operation and to the preparatory softening-up of the North Koreans included intensive and accurate photographic reconnaissance of the Inch'on-Seoul objective, as well as the destruction of the North Korean railway system and airfields. Two fighter-bomber groups flying F-51D Mustangs were moved forward to ensure close air support: the 8th FBG was sent to Taegu and the 18th FBG, which would be joined by 2 Squadron SAAF in November, to Pusan East.⁴³

MacArthur's plan was put into operation as scheduled. The Inch'on landing was carried out by the X Corps under air cover provided by Navy aircraft from the three carriers of Task Force 77. Although a few hitches occurred, by the afternoon of D-day + 2 the Marines were in possession of Kimpo airfield, and preparations were under way to use this facility to fly in supplies.⁴⁴ Seoul though, was to prove a more difficult objective to take; it was only after almost a week of hard fighting against its defences and through its streets that, on the afternoon of 27 September, a detachment of Marines finally reached Government House and replaced the North Korean flag with the American colours. The next day the NKPA resistance in the streets of Seoul finally ended and the rearguard withdrew northwards.⁴⁵

Despite X Corps' success, the break-out from the Pusan Perimeter, due to commence on D-day + 1, was delayed. In his planning, Walker had placed

42. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.140;
Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.151-152;
W. Manchester: American Caesar, Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964, pp.530-533.

43. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.151.

44. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.152.

45. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.536.

great reliance upon close air support, but on 16 September low cloud brought in by typhoon Kezia made such support impossible. However, by first light on 18 September the weather had cleared sufficiently to allow two B-29 groups to carry out another carpet bombing attack near Waegwan, where Walker intended to launch his main attack. The 5AF supplemented this B-29 raid with 286 close support sorties. The following day 5AF aircraft flew another 361 close support sorties, which finally enabled the 24th Division to break out across the Naktong and advance towards Inch'on along the planned axis. On the northern and western fronts the NKPA withstood the combined air-ground assault for nearly a week, but on 22 September, demoralized by the success of the unexpected Inch'on landing, they suddenly staged a general withdrawal.⁴⁶

During their retreat the Communists provided the 5AF with numerous lucrative targets as they broke cover during the daylight hours and withdrew along the narrow roads. On 23 September 5AF pilots claimed 6 500 enemy soldiers killed, and on the following day another 1 400. The UN advance southwards from Inch'on and northwards from Pusan progressed rapidly and on 27 September a platoon of 7th Cavalry tanks advancing from Suwon to Osan met 7th Division infantrymen on a small bridge just north of Osan.⁴⁷ The previous day, 50 South African officers, together with 157 other ranks, had left Durban Harbor on the Tjisadane bound for Korea.⁴⁸

The success of MacArthur's plan on the ground made a more practical deployment of 5AF combat units possible. Forward airfields, abandoned in the retreat from the 38th parallel, could be re-occupied and fighter-bomber and fighter-interceptor squadrons moved from Japan to Korea. By the beginning

46. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.154-156; Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.553.

47. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.156-158.

48. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.9.1950.

of November 1950 the USAF units in Korea were deployed as follows:

- a. Kimpo (K-14): The 8th FBG (35th FB Sqn, 36th FB Sqn) and the 51st FIG (25th FI Sqn, 80th FI Sqn).
- b. Pohang (K-3): The 35th FIG (39th FI Sqn, 40th FI Sqn). This group was later joined by 77 Sqn, Royal Australian Air Force.
- c. Taegu (K-2): The 49th FBG (7th FB Sqn, 8th FB Sqn, 9th FB Sqn).
- d. Pusan (K-9): The 18th FBG (12th FB Sqn, 67th FB Sqn). This group was later joined by 2 Sqn South African Air Force.

These combat groups were supported by the 6147th Tactical Air Control Squadron, one flight of the 3rd Rescue Squadron deployed well forward at P'yongyang East (K-24), and by the 543th Tactical Support Group with its 8th and 162nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadrons at Taegu.⁴⁹

The 51st FIG at Kimpo, which had a 1 800m asphalt runway, and the 49th FBG at Taegu, with a 1 731m pierced-steel plank runway, were the only combat units at that stage to be equipped with jet aircraft (F-80C Shooting Stars). The rest crossed to Korea flying F-51D Mustangs. The RAAF squadron had flown these veterans of World War II while on occupation duty in Japan before the war, but the remaining six USAF squadrons had to be converted from their newly acquired Shooting Star jets back to the conventional Mustangs. This caused a certain amount of dissatisfaction among the American pilots.⁵⁰ The South African squadron was also to find itself equipped with Mustangs and initially some of its pilots were to share the misgivings of their American comrades. This feeling was expressed in the House of Assembly on 1 February 1951, when an Opposition spokesman quoted a letter from one of the SAAF pilots then serving in Korea, which expressed the opinion that the South African pilots felt that they were at a distinct disadvantage when they compared their aircraft with the Communist jets.⁵¹





49. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, Map - Disposition of USAF Tactical Units, 1 November 1950, p.204.

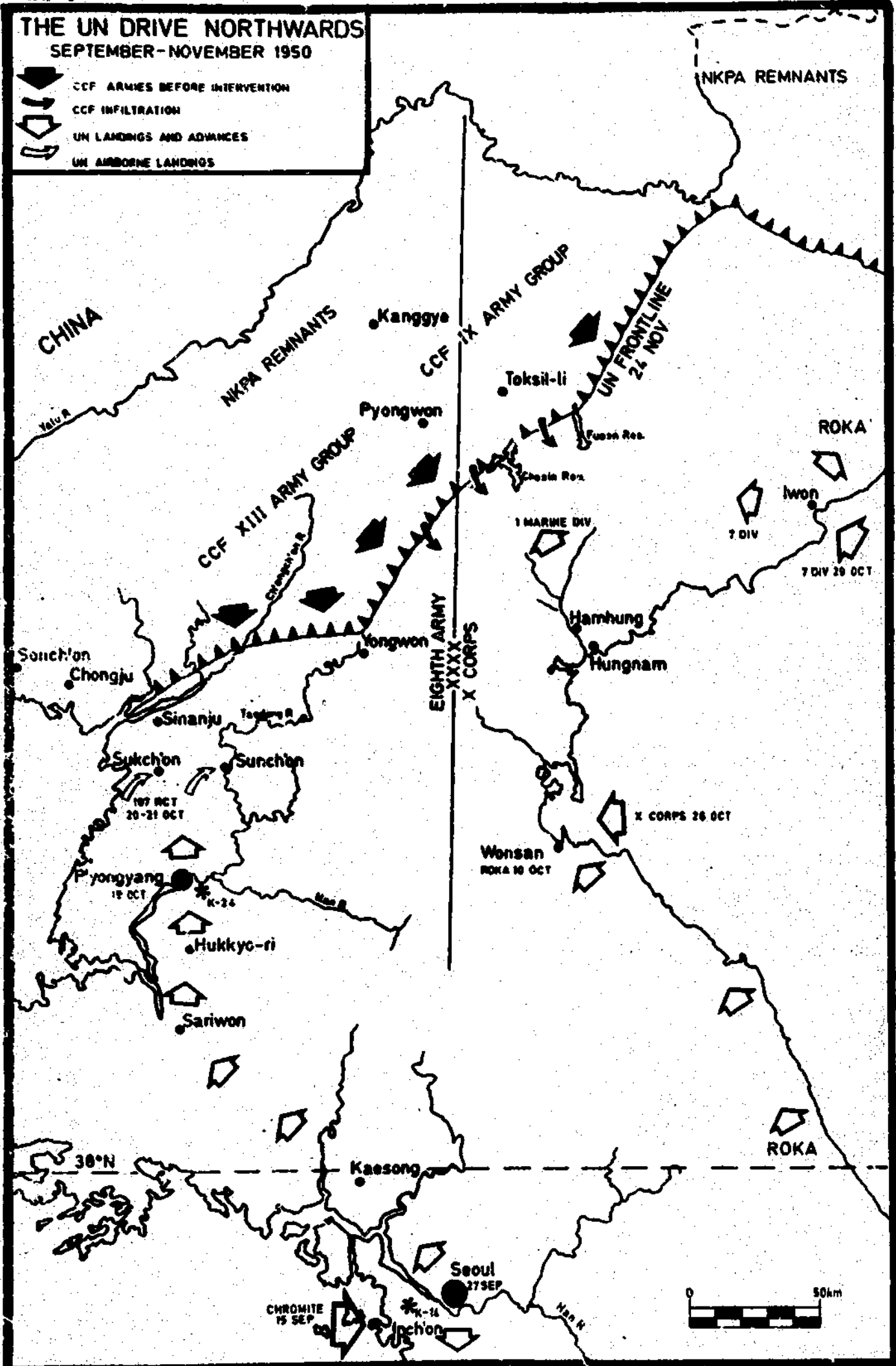
50. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.104-105.

51. Col Jordan: Speech in the House of Assembly, 1.2.1951 (Hansard, col.535-536)

MAP 6

THE UN DRIVE NORTHWARDS SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1950

-  CCF ARMIES BEFORE INTERVENTION
-  CCF INFILTRATION
-  UN LANDINGS AND ADVANCES
-  UN AIRBORNE LANDINGS



In spite of dissatisfaction in Korea and at home, the USAF had little option but to use F-51D Mustangs at the onset of the Korean conflict. There were insufficient jet aircraft available to supply the needs of FEAF and at the same time to provide for the defence of the United States. However, this could not be admitted at the time without endangering the security of the USA. On the other hand, the Mustangs were available; besides the initial consignment which had been shipped to Japan on the USS Boxer,⁵² there were 750 others in National Guard units and 800 in storage. In addition to its availability at the beginning of the war the Mustang had certain advantages over the Shooting Star: it had a greater range, particularly at low altitudes; and it could operate from the rough, short Korea airstrips.⁵³ Initially the commander of the 5AF assigned the F-51D's to the ground support role, while the F-80C's were given the primary task of interdiction.⁵⁴ The advantages of using the Mustang during the early stages of the war were underlined by the FEAF deputy-commander, Maj.-Gen. E.J. Timberlake, who stated that:

"One F-51 adequately supported and fought from Taegu airfield is equivalent to four F-80's based on Kyushu."⁵⁵

UN EXPLOITATION

Gen. MacArthur's victory in South Korea led to a change being made in his mission. This change was incorporated in a directive sent to him by the JCS on 27 September. Henceforth, his first objective was to be the destruction of the NKPA and then, if possible, the unification of all Korea. He was authorized to cross the 38th parallel, but only after his plans for operations

52. Vide, pp.42-43.

53. C.G. Teschner: The Fighter-Bomber in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), p.109; Futrell and Simpson: Air War in Korea II (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.IV, No.3, Fall 1951), p.71.

54. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.105.

55. E.J. Timberlake quoted in Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.89.

in North Korea had been approved by the JCS. Operations north of the 38th parallel were subject to the following restrictions:

- a. There must be no threat of Chinese Communist or Soviet entry into North Korea.
- b. Under no circumstances should the UN forces cross the Manchurian or Soviet borders.
- c. No non-Korean ground forces should be used in the area along the northern border.
- d. Support of operations north or south of the 38th parallel should not include air or naval action against Manchurian or Soviet targets.⁵⁶

The UN victory also led to a change in air objectives. In anticipation of final victory and peace, the JCS cancelled all strategic air attacks against targets in North Korea. From 27 September only tactical targets with immediate bearing on the situation were to be selected.⁵⁷

After the North Koreans failed to respond to a call to surrender, broadcast by Radio Seoul on 1 October, the UN General Assembly passed a US sponsored resolution on 7 October which recommended that:

- a. All appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea.
- b. All constituent acts be taken, including the holding of elections, under the auspices of the United Nations for the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic government in the sovereign state of Korea.
- c. All section and representative bodies of the population of Korea South and North, be invited to co-operate with the organs of the

56. Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.607; Truman: Memoirs II, p.411; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.182.

57. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.184.

UN in the restoration of peace, in the holding of elections and in the establishment of a unified government.

- d. UN forces should not remain in Korea otherwise than so far as necessary for the achieving the objectives specified in a. and b. above.
- e. All measures be taken to accomplish the economic rehabilitation of Korea.

The resolution also called for the establishment of a Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, which was to continue the work of the Commission of 12 December 1948, but with special emphasis on the formation of a unified, independent and democratic government for all Korea.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, the Republic of Korea had re-established its capital in Seoul. The event was marked by a victory parade attended by President Rhee and Gen. MacArthur.⁵⁹ With the end of the war seemingly only a few weeks away, the members of 2 Sqn SAAF aboard the Tjisadane were already asking the question: "Will we be in time for the final campaign in Korea?" They expected to be recalled at any moment.⁶⁰ These feelings were enhanced on 1 October when news reached the Tjisadane that the ROKA had advanced 11km into North Korea.⁶¹

On 2 October MacArthur issued UNC Operations Order No.2 for operations north of the 38th parallel, thus anticipating the General Assembly resolution of 7 October. That he and the JCS were correct in their assessment of future UN policy is borne out by the UN Secretary General:

"The dominant feeling in the Assembly, which I shared, was that the North Korean failure to heed the Security Council's call to cease fire

58. UN General Assembly Resolution 376(V), The Problem of the Independence of Korea, 7 October 1950 (Krakau, et al.: Dokumente, Band 43), pp.32-33.

59. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.158; Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.536-537.

60. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.9.1950; Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 16.3.1981.

61. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.10.1950.

and withdraw, and continued broadcasting that the retreat was temporary and 'strategic', indicated that they would soon strike south again, giving the United Nations forces no alternative to an advance north of the 38th parallel."⁶²

UNC Operations Order No.2 laid down the following general outline. The UN forces were to advance separately, just off the NKPA's main axis of withdrawal. This was to be achieved by the Eighth Army and the US X Corps remaining under separate command, with both commanders individually responsible to C-in-C UN. Walker's Eighth Army was to advance along the Kaeson-Sariwon axis with P'yongyang as its objective. Almond was to embark his X Corps at Inch'on and Pusan and then to carry out an amphibious landing at Wonsan on the east coast. From there he was to push westwards to link up with the Eighth Army and hence to establish a general defensive line across the peninsula through Chongju, Yangwon, Hamhung and Hungnam. Once this was achieved the encircled NKPA was to be destroyed. During these operations the Eighth Army was to be supported by the 5AF and X Corps by the 1st Marine Air Wing. D-day at Wonsan was set for 20 October 1950.⁶³

The entire UN advance proved to be easier and more rapid than MacArthur and his staff had anticipated. By 9 October the Eighth Army had captured Kaeson and advanced north of the 38th parallel towards Sariwon. The 5AF supported the ground troops as planned and in particular covered the advancing army's left flank, which lay open to attack from the Ongjin Peninsula.⁶⁴ On the east coast generous air support also aided the rapid advance of the ROK ground forces, which entered Wonsan on 10 October. Within a few days they had captured the airfield and established themselves in positions 35km

62. Lie: In the Cause of Peace, p.345.

63. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.190-191; Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.609-612.

64. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.195-196.

north and 20km west of Wonsan.⁶⁵ On 17 October MacArthur amended his orders of 2 October. In the case of X Corps he moved the line restricting the northward movement of non-ROKA UN troops approximately 90km towards the Yalu, from Chongju-Yangwon-Hamhung-Hungnam to a line running through Toksil-li and Songjin. On the Eighth Army front the line was moved approximately 20km northwards in the west, and 90km northwards in the east so that it ran from Sonch'on to Pyongwon. This line was only 65km from the Yalu, and other than the diminishing close support requirements, there was seemingly little work left for the 5AF. On 24 October all restrictions on the northward movement of US troops were lifted and Stratemyer, in order to reduce the chances of any violation of Chinese territory, issued instructions that only selected pilots and experienced leaders were to be used for missions along the Yalu.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, X Corps with 50 000 troops on board a 250 ship armada had waited off Wonsan Harbour, beaten to their objective by the speed of the advance and a large number of hair-trigger contact mines in the approaches.⁶⁷ Finally, on 26 October, after a channel had been cleared by minesweepers, they made an administrative landing on the beachhead secured by the ROKA. Three days later, in order to ease the congestion in the landing area, the US 7th Division landed further up the coast at Iwon.⁶⁸ From these positions the advance northwards continued. The ROK I Corps moved along towards Ch'ongjin, the 1st Marine Division towards Hamhung and the Chosin Reservoir, and the 7th Division towards the Fusen Reservoir.⁶⁹

Also in the interim, Gen. Walker in the west had advanced at a rate of 16km per day. In spite of a last ditch stand made by the NKPA at the town

65. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.199;
Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.616-618.

66. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.195-196;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.201-202.

67. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.208-210;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.198-199.

68. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.219.

69. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.201.

of Hukkyo-ri, 16km south of P'yongyang, the 1st Cavalry Division reinforced by the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade had entered the North Korean capital on 19 October.⁷⁰ The following day, in an attempt to cut off fleeing North Korean leaders and officials, 2 860 paratroopers and 306 tonnes of equipment of the 187th Regimental Combat Team had been lifted from Kimpo by 71 C-119's and 40 C-47's and had been dropped on the towns of Sukch'on and Sunch'on, which straddle the two main routes to the north. They were followed on 21 October, by a further 1 093 paratroopers and 108,5 tonnes of supplies. As planned, they linked up with the ROK and US troops which had broken through from the south. The operation proved a great success. Large numbers of NKPA troops were cut off (2 764 killed in action and 3 000 POW's) and large quantities of supplies were taken.⁷¹

Although the UN forces seemed poised for a final victory, they were thwarted by the long feared intervention of the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF). During their meeting on Wake Island on 15 October, Gen. MacArthur had informed President Truman that he thought that there was little chance of CCF intervention.⁷² He had made this assessment despite US intelligence reports of the transfer of 450 000 troops from southern and central China to Manchuria. This transfer was reported to have taken place between 8 July and 21 September 1950. MacArthur ascribed this movement to the return of elements of Gen. Lin Piao's Fourth Field Army which were normally stationed in Manchuria, but had been moved southwards to threaten Formosa. The CCF threat against Formosa had been checkmated by the deployment of the US 7th Fleet in the area.⁷³

70. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.196;
Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.650.

71. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.197-198;
Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.661-663.

72. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.188-190;
Truman: Memoirs II, p.416; Manchester: American Ceaser, p.548.

73. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.188-190;
Vinache: A History of the Far East in Modern Times, p.717.

In spite of MacArthur's optimism, evidence of the presence of CCF soldiers in Korea gradually emerged. The first Chinese soldier was captured by an army patrol on 26 October and by the end of the month nine others had fallen in UN hands. On the night of 2 November advance elements of the 8th Cavalry Regiment were encircled near Unsan. The next day, Walker was forced to withdraw his Eighth Army to a bridgehead on the northern bank of the Ch'ongch'on River in order to regroup and accumulate supplies before the advance could continue.⁷⁴ While building up ground reinforcements the UNC used airpower to deprive the enemy of his sources of supply and manpower replacement. Ch'ongjin was bombed with incendiaries on 4 November and Kanggye on 5 November. Two days later Sinuiju, a major communications centre and temporary home of Kim Il-sung's government, was hit by 5AF and Bomber Command. Shooting Stars and Mustangs prepared for the arrival of the Superfortresses by carrying out flak suppression. Top cover was flown by Shooting Stars, which were attacked by MIG-15's based just across the Yalu from Sinuiju. This was the first all jet air battle in history. The MIG-15's were much faster than the F-80C's but their pilots lacked experience and Lt R.J. Brown of the 51st FIW became the first UN pilot to destroy a Communist jet over Korea.⁷⁵

On 4 November MacArthur submitted an appreciation of the question of Chinese intervention at the request of the JCS. He concluded that there were four courses of action open to Peking:

- a. Intervention with full military force at an appropriate time.
- b. Covert military aid, concealed for diplomatic reasons.
- c. A flow of "volunteers" to aid the North Koreans.
- d. The continuation of a covert intervention, already under way, in the mistaken belief that only ROK troops would be sent to the Yalu.

74. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.207; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.235-236.

75. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.210-212.

The first option was considered to be a possibility, but a combination of the last three was considered to be the most likely enemy course of action.⁷⁶

The OCF had, in fact, begun with their First Phase Offensive during the last week of October, and by the 26th of that month, when the first Chinese Communist soldier was captured, four armies of Lin Piao's Fourth Field Army had crossed the border and penetrated deep into North Korea using the thickly wooded mountains as a cover. Three of these armies had been deployed in front of the Eighth Army and one in front of X Corps, with strong elements concentrating on the mountainous gap between the two UN field commands. By the end of October two more OCF armies had been infiltrated into North Korea. A OCF army usually consisted of headquarters troops and three divisions of about 8 000 men each, giving an approximate strength of 30 000 men per army. The movement of OCF troops southwards had continued into November and by the middle of the month there were about 300 000 Chinese troops deployed in North Korea. The UNC estimate was between 60 000 and 70 000.⁷⁷

The OCF were poised to launch their offensive and when they did, the newly operational advance detachment of 2 Sqn SAAF would lie in their path, together with the rest of the surprised and confused UN forces in Korea.⁷⁸

76. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.208; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.240.

77. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.216; Appleman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp.766-769.

78. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24-30.11.1950.

PART II

SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE OPERATIONS

IN

KOREA 1950-1953

CHAPTER 4WATERKLOOF TO PUSAN EAST2 SQN SAAF IS SENT TO KOREATHE DECISION TO SEND 2 SQN SAAF TO THE FAR EAST

The day the war broke out in Korea, South African parliamentarians were on their way home after a stormy session. The news of the Communist violation of the 38th parallel was closely followed by a report that the UN Security Council had adopted a US-sponsored resolution calling for the withdrawal of the North Korean forces, and requesting UN members to render every assistance in its execution.¹ A sequence of events followed which resulted in the deployment of an SAAF fighter squadron in Korea. On 29 June 1950, it was reported that the South African Government was awaiting news of the developing situation in the Far East from official sources, before deciding on what steps to take as a member of the United Nations in support of the Security Council's resolution.² The next day the Minister of Defence, Advocate F.C. Erasmus, flew from Pretoria to Durban, and from Durban to Umhloni Park on the Natal South Coast, to consult with the Prime Minister, Dr D.F. Malan. In view of the important role that the helicopter was to play in the coming conflict in Korea, it is significant that the Minister undertook the last leg of his journey in a SAAF Sikorsky.³ On 1 July the Department of Foreign Affairs issued a statement to the effect that, although the Government identified with the Security Council resolution, it considered Korea to be beyond the sphere of the Union's military responsibility. The statement went on to say that the South African

1. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.66-67; Eastern Province Herald, 24-25.6.1950.

2. Eastern Province Herald, 29.6.1950.

3. The Star, 30.6.1950.

Government would be prepared, in consulting with Britain and the Commonwealth countries, to give a sympathetic hearing to any emergency call.⁴

The domestic political upheavals surrounding the commitment of SA troops for overseas service during World War II were still fresh in the memories of politicians and public alike, and the Government was not prepared to take a snap decision on the matter. In some quarters there was dissatisfaction with the lack of any immediate Government action and the editor of the Eastern Province Herald expressed his disappointment on 3 July at what, he termed the "lack of resolution and decision in the Government's attitude". He went on to say:

"For its part the Government should feel strengthened by the virtual unanimity of the people of South Africa on this issue. We cannot stand aside and we cannot act alone. But in concert firstly, with our partners in the Commonwealth and secondly, in the United Nations, we can and should make a worthy contribution to the common cause."⁵

When the Ministers returned to their Pretoria offices on 20 July they were immediately summoned to a special Cabinet meeting to discuss the Government's response to a further request for assistance from the UN Secretary-General. The Cabinet decided that owing to the great distance between South Africa and Korea, direct military participation in the conflict was impractical and unrealistic. It subsequently entered into negotiations with the US Government to determine whether or not there was some other way in which South Africa could contribute to the UN effort.⁶ The various types of assistance that were considered included financial contributions, medicines, ambulance units and a transport squadron. However, the South African Government was finally informed that direct military assistance would be the most valuable

4. Die Burger, 1.7.1950.

5. Eastern Province Herald, 3.7.1950.

6. Dr D.F. Malan: Speech in the House of Assembly, 31.1.1951 (Hansard, col.506).

form of aid.⁷

While these negotiations were under way, disappointment that the Government had not decided to send even a mere token force, such as an air force squadron or a naval frigate, was expressed by the Leader of the Opposition Mr. J.G.N. Strauss. He was reported to have said that it was a pity that the Government was unwilling to back up its anti-Communist crusade by appropriate means when challenged.⁸ This was a reference to the passing, during the 1950 parliamentary session, of the Suppression of Communism Act (No.44 of 1950).

In reaction to the American communication that direct military assistance would be more valuable than any other form of support, the Cabinet again met on 4 August 1950. After an all day meeting it was announced that an air force squadron would be made available to the UN effort in Korea.⁹ The next day The Star published an editorial which supported the Government decision:

"It is hard to believe that the United States could not handle this situation unaided, and there is no doubt that it will, in fact, bear the brunt of the fighting and carry it in the end to a successful conclusion. But an important principle was involved, the principle of united action by the United Nations to meet aggression wherever it occurs and demonstrate that it does not pay. South Africa, in common with other members of the organization, has a duty to perform, and a refusal to respond to the official appeal received from the Secretary-General, in accordance with the Security Council resolution, would have had serious implications.

South Africa has good reason to wish to avoid any appearance of isolation in the conflict now unfolding in the world. Communism is regarded

7. Adv. F.C. Erasmus: Speech in the House of Assembly, 1.2.1951 (Hansard, col.545-546).

8. Eastern Province Herald, 22.7.1950.

9. Eastern Province Herald, 5.8.1950.

as a potential threat to Africa not less serious than to Asia and Western Europe. That threat, it is true, has not yet developed, but every Communist advance anywhere in the world brings the time nearer when it will be real indeed. If, and when, it does develop South Africa will have need of all the friends it can command. It has, unfortunately, alienated too many already and has been made to appear a half-hearted member of both the United Nations and the British Commonwealth. This is a situation it can ill afford, and the dispatch of even a token force, to the aid of the common cause will do something to correct both impressions, especially if the squadron is integrated with the other Commonwealth forces; as it should be.

The fact is that the logic of events always has compelled South Africa to take its stand with the nations whose cause is freedom, from whatever quarter that cause was threatened. Communism is only the latest manifestation of that challenge. The Nazi threat was no less dire. It is a pity the inescapable nature of this choice was not as freely accepted ten years ago as now. Let it at any rate be clearly understood that South Africa has been "dragged into" a conflict much more remote than Poland or Abyssinia not by any sinister forces or false sentiment but by her unchanging interest in freedom.

It is to be hoped that his attempt to stem the flood at its source will succeed and that the larger devastation of total war will be averted. But in the preparations now being made for defence South Africa must co-ordinate its plans with the whole free world and escape the folly of isolation."¹⁰

During the next parliamentary session the Opposition used the occasion of the no-confidence debate to criticise the Government for its hesitation in arriving at the decision to send a South African force to Korea, and for

10. The Star, 5.8.1950.

its failure to consult parliament on the matter. However, they supported the Government's action in principle.¹¹ When he rose to reply on 25 January 1951, the Prime Minister stressed the same points that had been mentioned in The Star editorial quoted above, namely, that it was essential that South Africa should take a determined stand against Communism, particularly in the light of the nature of the threat facing her from that source, and her need for allies to help her face her problems. He said:

"South Africa's attitude must, I think, be clear to everyone by this time. It is based in the ultimate instance, on this conception that communism, where it is a danger to the world, -- I speak here of aggressive Communism -- is a double danger to South Africa. Aggressive Communism can be more destructive in South Africa than elsewhere, not merely because of its ideology but because of the fact that it makes a special appeal to the country's non-European population, and if the communists achieve in South Africa what they want to achieve as far as the non-European population of the country is concerned, then the death knell would have been sounded over white civilization in South Africa. That is the situation and in those circumstances it was evident that we in South Africa would throw our forces with the others, and we have done so with regard to communism, we have thrown in our forces with UNO, with friendly countries, anti-communist countries, and when aggressive communism has for the first time raised its head, we have sided with the anti-communist countries to combat it. We need the anti-communist countries for our own protection and I think to a fair

11. A.G. Barlow: Speech in the House of Assembly, 22.1.1951 (Hansard, col.35);
 M. Kentridge: Speech in the House of Assembly, 22.1.1951 (Hansard, col.41);
 J.H. Russell: Speech in the House of Assembly, 22.1.1951 (Hansard, col.46);
 P.A. Moore: Speech in the House of Assembly, 25.1.1951 (Hansard, col.171).

degree if all conditions are taken into account, the anti-communist countries also need South Africa in their battle."¹²

One lone voice was raised in parliament against the presence of the South African Air Force in Korea: it was that of S. Kahn, Native Representative for Cape Western, and a former member of the South African Communist Party, which had been dissolved in June 1950 in anticipation of the passing of the Suppression of Communism Act. He called for a withdrawal of the South African airmen from Korea, declaring that not only must Asia be left to the Asiatics, but Africa must be left to the Africans.¹³

MUSTERING THE SQUADRON

On 4 August 1950, when it was announced that a South African squadron would be offered to the UNC, volunteers were called for as the Defence Act of 1912 (as amended) laid down that no man could be sent to fight outside the Union without his consent.¹⁴ In all, 332 officers and 1 094 other ranks made it known that they were available. Just over 200 officers and men were required.¹⁵ After a lapse of more than three weeks the Chief of General Staff (CGS) was able to announce that the UNC had accepted South Africa's offer and that the squadron for the Far East would be built around the existing nucleus of 2 Squadron, the establishment of which would be brought up to combat readiness with regard to personnel before departure, while aircraft and equipment would be purchased in the operational theatre.¹⁶

12. Dr D.F. Malan, Speech in the House of Assembly, 26.1.1951 (Hansard, col.180-181).

13. S. Kahn: Speech in the House of Assembly, 26.1.1951 (Hansard, co.232).

14. 2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, p.1.

15. Adv. F.C. Erasmus: Speech in the House of Assembly, 1.2.1951 (Hansard, col.546).

16. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-4.9.1950.

2 Sqn, which had developed from 1 Sqn SAAF in East Africa during September 1940, already had a distinguished combat history. It had initially drawn attention to itself when two of its pilots, flying Hurricanes borrowed from 3 Sqn, had shot down three Italian Savoia 81 bombers during a single engagement. In October 1940, 2 Sqn officially adopted the "Flying Cheetah" as its insignia, the idea for which originated from the squadron mascots, two small cheetah cubs. During 1941, 2 Sqn found itself in action against the Axis powers in the Middle East and later in Italy. By the end of World War II it had been credited with shooting down 102 enemy aircraft.¹⁷

The names of the officers and other ranks selected for service in Korea were announced on 27 August 1950. There were 18 officers appointed to key posts in the squadron, in addition to a further 32 pilots and 157 other ranks. These officers represented a wealth of general flying and operational experience; the key appointments were:

Commanding Officer:	Cmdt S van Breda Theron DSO, DFC, AFC.
Deputy Commanding Officer:	Maj. J.P.D. Blaauw DFC
Flight Commanders:	Capt. J.F.O. Davis DFC
	Capt. G.B. Lipawsky DFC
	Capt. H.O.M. Odendaal DFC
	Capt. W.J.J. Badenhorst AFC
Adjutant:	Capt. P.A. le Grange
Pay Master:	Capt. L.von Caus
Equipment Officer:	Capt. M. Strydom
Engineering Officers:	Capt. S.N. Brace MBE
	Lt V.T. Kilburn MBE
Medical Officers:	Maj. H.C. Enslin

17. 2 Sqn Unit History File: SAAF Press Release, 2 Squadron Second Anniversary of Operations in Korea; J.A. Brown: South African Forces in World War II, Vol.II, A Gathering of Eagles, p.75; H.J. Martin and N. Orpen: South African Forces in World War II, Vol.VI, Eagles Victorious, p.103.

	Lt M.J. Mentz
Operations Officer:	Capt. M.J. Uys AFC
Intelligence Officer:	Lt S.J.W. Inglesby
Signals Officer:	Capt. W.D.S. Marais
Technical Weapons Officer:	Lt M.Brady
Chaplain:	Capt. M.C.V. Cloete MC ¹⁸

On 30 August the Director-General of the Air Force (DGAF) issued an instruction that all ranks selected for service in the Far East were to report to Waterkloof Air Station by 5 September 1950. The instruction also covered such matters as flying and other medicals, dental surveys and inoculations, as well as the signing of a "Form of Undertaking". This form, whereby the squadron personnel met the requirements of the Defence Act by volunteering for foreign service read:

"I a member of the S.A. Permanent Force, hereby volunteer to serve on active service against the forces of North Korea or any other armed forces against whom the United Nations Organization may require or direct its members to take up arms. I acknowledge that I shall at all times be subject to the South African Defence Act of 1912 (Act No.13 of 1912) as amended, the regulations framed thereunder and the Military Disciplinary Code."

The names of those who did not sign the "Form of Undertaking" were to be sent to the Air Directorate immediately.¹⁹

Further instructions confirmed the DGAF signal of 30 August and gave fuller details concerning the establishment and tasks of the South African Contingent to the Far East. The contingent was to consist of two components:

- a. The South African Air Force Liaison Headquarters.
- b. 2 Squadron SAAF.

18. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-4.9.1951; Brig. S.v.B. Theron: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 13.1.1982.

19. AG: Box 228, AG(3)1906/14 Vol.I, DGAF - Address List 1, 30.8.1950; WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-4.9.1950.

These two components were to be supported by a flying boat shuttle service operated fortnightly by 35 Sqn between Durban and Iwakuni, Japan, via Mauritius, Diego Garcia, Singapore and Hong-Kong. The SAAF Liaison Headquarters was made responsible for:

- a. Liaison with other UN forces.
- b. Personnel administration of all personnel of the Far East Contingent, forming the administrative link between Pretoria (GHQ), and the SA Far East Contingent.
- c. The purchase of and the accounting for equipment according to the approved tables.
- d. Any other duties assigned by DGAF.

The mission of the SAAF Liaison Headquarters was in accordance with the role of such headquarters as laid down in UNC General Order No.1, dated 24 July 1950. 2 Sqn itself was charged with:

- a. The execution of operations as given by the controlling formation.
- b. The general welfare and administration of the personnel on the squadron strength.

In effect, 2 Sqn was to fall under the operational control of a USAF wing from the date of arrival in the Far East, and under the administrative control of the SAAF Liaison Headquarters, commanded by a Senior Air Liaison Officer (SALO), Cndt J.D. Pretorius AFC.²⁰

The unusually large number of pilots and ground crew whose names were announced on 27 August to fill the posts in a single squadron, was due to the decision to organize the SAAF squadron for Korea along the lines of a standard USAF fighter squadron. There were thus four flights consisting of a Flight Commander and eight pilots each, which together with the Commanding Officer and his deputy, gave the squadron a pilot strength of 38. The ground personnel strength was 12 officers and 157 other ranks, and the aircraft

20. AG: Box 228, AG(3)1906/14 Vol.I, General Instruction: Korea Campaign, 2.9.1950; SALO: Box 7, SALO/S/818/1/ORG, Organisasie en Administratiewe Instruksie, Afdeling 1, Nummer 26, 7.19.1950; AG: Box 229, AG(3)1906/14/2 Vol.I, DGAF - AG, 7.9.1950; Vide, pp.37-38.

strength 25. This enlarged squadron establishment was confirmed by DGAF in establishment tables issued on 5 September 1950. Diagrams 6-1 to 6-6, drawn up as part of a report in mid-1951, clearly illustrate the organizational and command relationships that governed 2 Sqn in Korea. As long as 2 Sqn operated F-51D Mustang aircraft this organization did not alter substantially.²¹

As directed by DGAF, the squadron officers and other ranks reported to Waterkloof Air Station on 5 September. By 16h30 the squadron was complete, including the personnel of the Liaison Headquarters. The medical programme of examinations and inoculations was begun, as was flying training on Spitfires, Vampires, Harvards and Devons. As there was no existing Air Force organization to handle the clearing-in procedure for a squadron preparing for active service, it was necessary immediately to activate the various squadron offices in order to handle the administration.²²

The next ten days were occupied in much the same manner as the first, with medical examinations, determination of blood groups, inoculations, the making of arrangements for the payment of income tax, the drawing up and filing of Last Wills and Testaments, the issue of personal kit and continuous flying training. The squadron diarist, Capt. P.A. le Grange, noted that age seemed to have brought a measure of composure and wisdom ("Besadigheid en Lewenswyshheid") to the squadron personnel, for unlike 10 years previously, most displayed a sense of purpose and composure without any loss of the enthusiasm evident during the 1939-1945 war.²³

There were a few deviations from the training and administrative routine. Two officers of the SAAF Liaison Headquarters, Cndt J.D. Pretorius

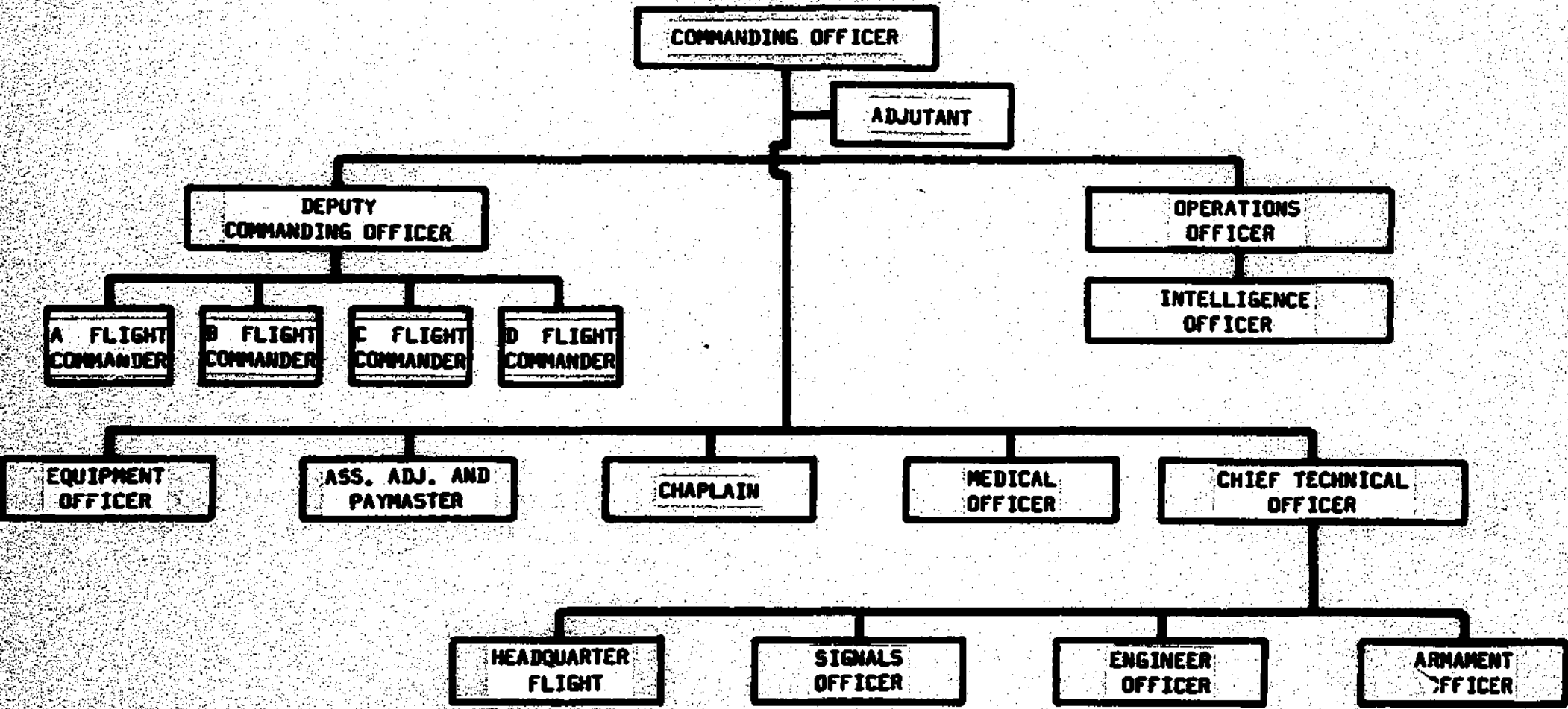
21. SALO: Box 6, SALO/S/811/2/ORG Vol.I, Provisional Establishment, SAAF Far East Contingent, 5.9.1950; 2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2 SQD/818/3/ORG, CO 2 Sqn - SALO, Enclosures 1-6, 2.7.1951.

22. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.9.1950.

23. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6-16.9.1950.

Diagram 6-1

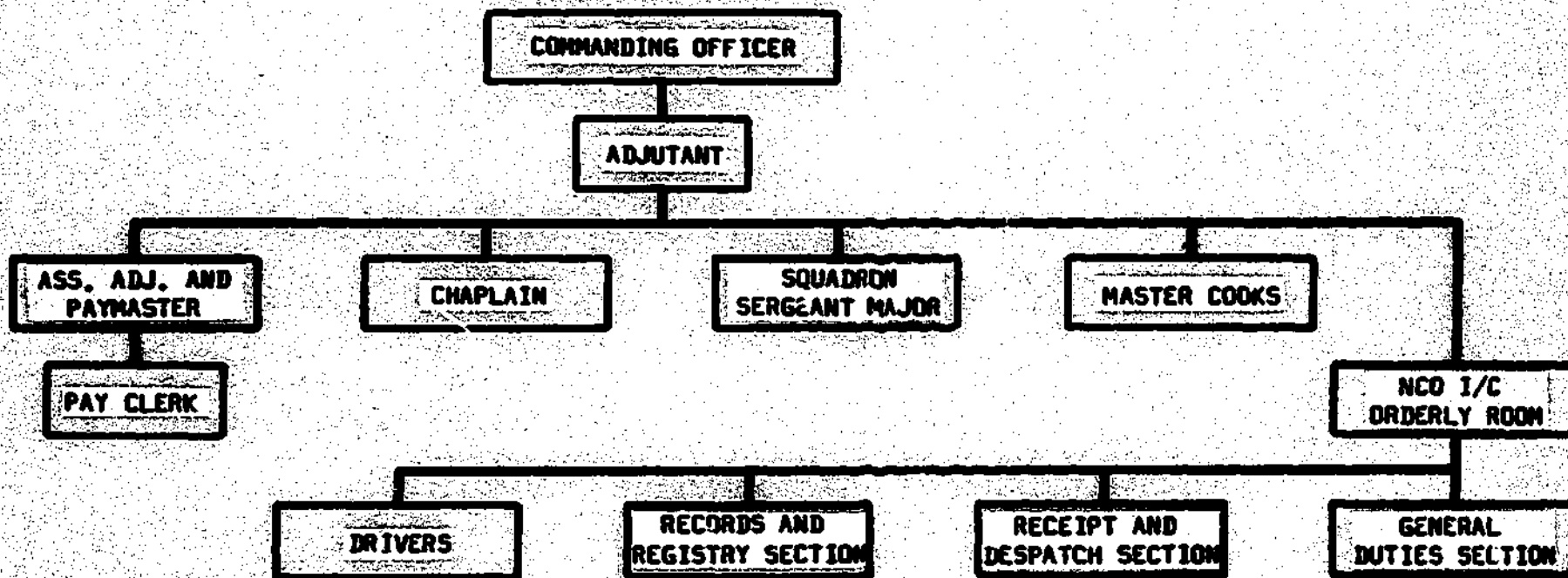
2 SQN SAAF
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



2 Sqn K; Box 10, 2 SQD/010/3/ORG, CD 2 Sqn - SALD, 2.7.1951, Review of Squadron Organization, Enclosure 1.

Diagram 6-2

**2 SQN SAAF
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS**



2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2 SQN/818/3/ORG, CD 2 Sqn - SALO, 2.7.1951,
Review of Squadron Organization, Enclosure 2.

Diagram 6-3

**2 SQN SAAF
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
OPERATIONS SECTION**

COMMANDING OFFICER

**DEPUTY
COMMANDING OFFICER**

**OPERATIONS
OFFICER**

**A FLIGHT
COMMANDER**

**B FLIGHT
COMMANDER**

**C FLIGHT
COMMANDER**

**D FLIGHT
COMMANDER**

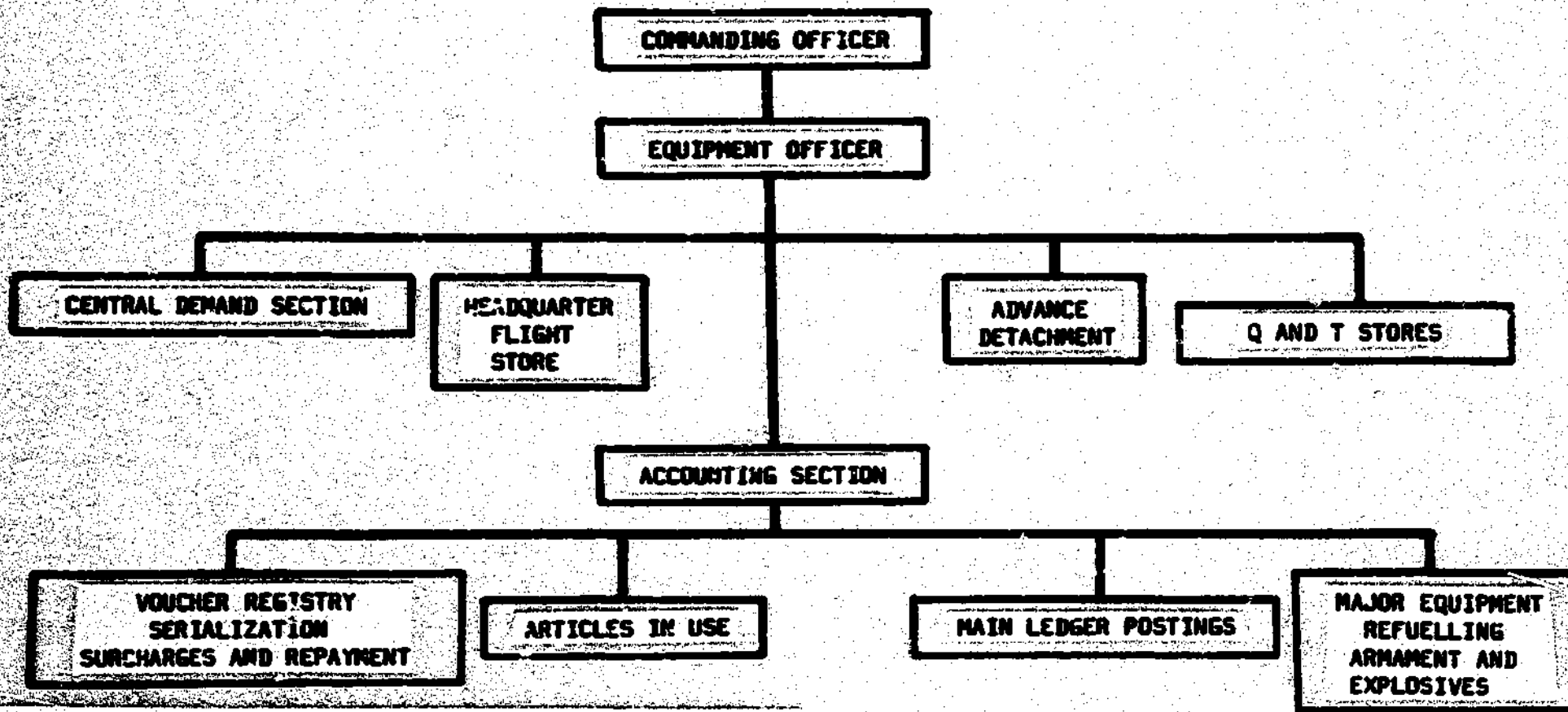
**INTELLIGENCE
OFFICER**

**OPERATIONS
CLERK**

2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2 SQD/810/3/ORG, CD 2 Sqn - SALO, 2.7.1951,
Review of Squadron Organization, Enclosure 3.

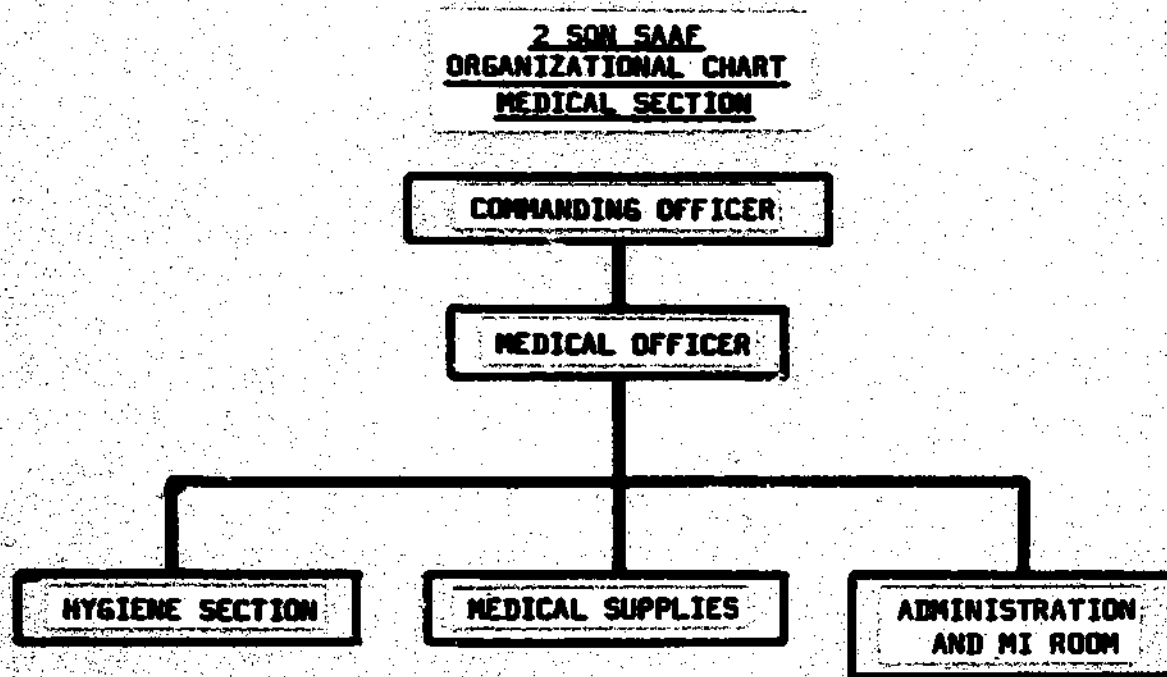
Diagram 6-4

**2 SQN SAAF
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
EQUIPMENT SECTION**



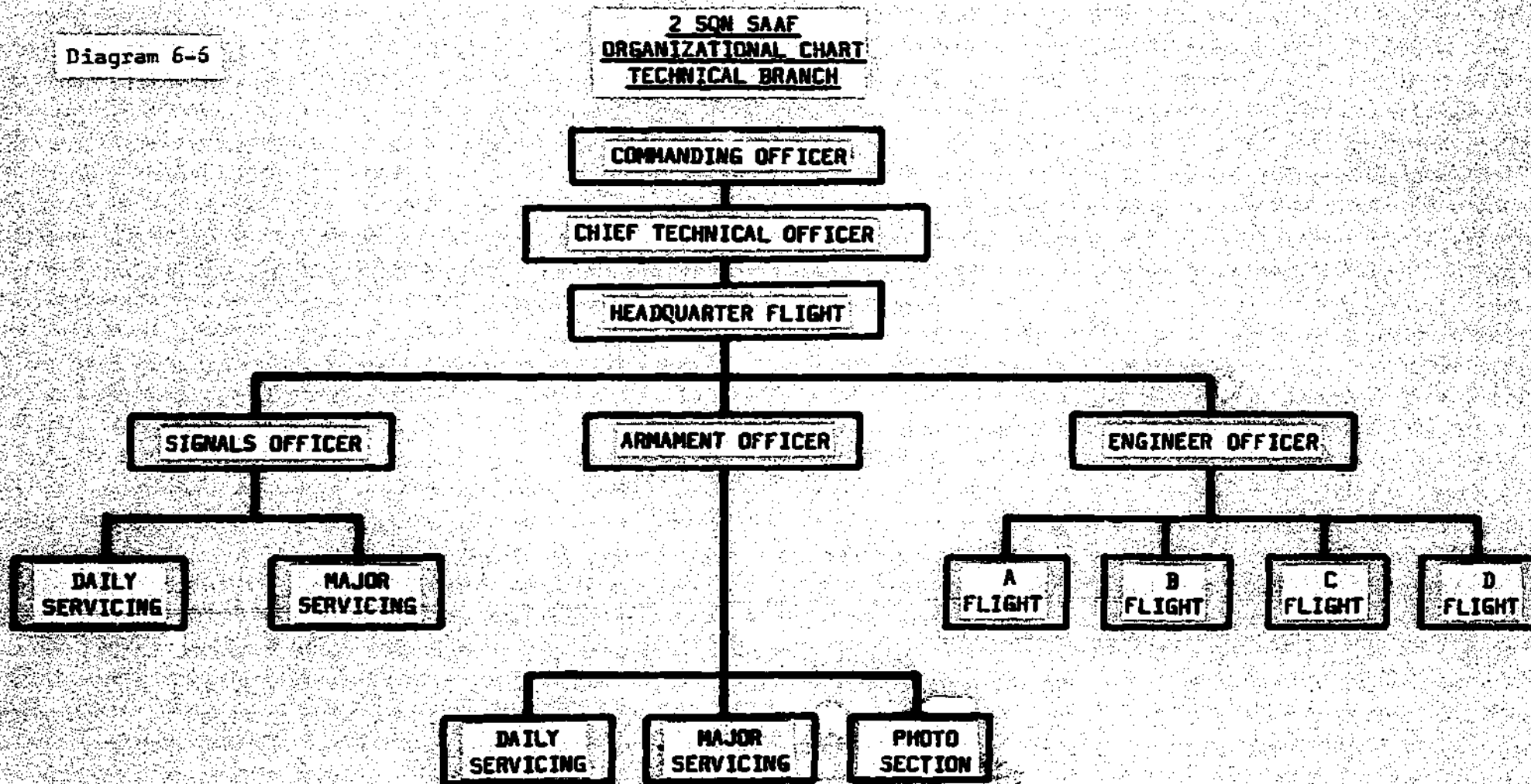
2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2 SQD/818/3/ORG, CO 2 Sqn - SALD, 2.7.1951,
Review of Squadron Organization, Enclosure 4.

Diagram 6-5



2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2 SQD/818/3/ORG, CO 2 Sqn - SALO, 2.7.1951,
Review of Squadron Organization, Enclosure 5.

Diagram 6-5



2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2 SQD/818/3/DRG, CO 2 Sqn - SALD, 2.7.1951,
Review of Squadron Organization, Enclosure 6.

and Maj. D. Swanepoel, left for Japan by BOAC flying boat from the Vaal Dam on 10 September. They preceded the squadron to Japan in order to complete the administration necessary to enable it to become operational in the minimum time.²⁴ The next day the Minister of Defence, accompanied by the Chief of General Staff and the Director-General of the Air Force, inspected the squadron at 10h00. He was introduced to all the officers by the Commanding Officer and gave a speech wishing the members well and promising to take care of the next-of-kin left at home.²⁵

Finally on 16 September, after a check to see that all the instructions had been complied with, all personnel (except the CO and a skeleton HQ Staff) left on six days' embarkation leave. Each member was issued with rail warrants, bedding and meal tickets to enable him to travel home and to return to Waterkloof by 09h00 on 25 September. Some few members obtained special permission to report at the port of embarkation.²⁶

While the squadron was on embarkation leave the officers of the SAAF Liaison HQ arrived in Tokyo. On 20 September they were presented to the General Commanding the Far East Air Forces, Lt-Gen. G.E. Stratemeier. The extent of their liaison task soon became apparent for no-one seemed to know what to do with them. The SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary reads:

"There followed a general office to office movement which created the impression that no-one in FEAF Headquarters was quite certain exactly how the SAAF contingent was to fit into the overall picture."²⁷

Finally, two days later it was decided that the South African squadron would

24. WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, September 1950, Introduction.
25. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.9.1950.
26. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.9.1950.
27. WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, 20.9.1950.

be attached to a USAF wing and that the SAAF Liaison HQ would be accommodated in the FEAF HQ, Meiji Buildings.²⁸ Maj. P.C.S.W. Daneel arrived on 30 September to augment the liaison team.²⁹

Meanwhile, back in South Africa all ranks reported as instructed and they left Waterkloof for Pretoria station at 14h45 on 25 September. The train left Pretoria for Durban at 16h10.³⁰

JOURNEY TO THE FAR EAST

The train arrived in Durban at 11h00 the following day and the contingent immediately boarded the Royal Inter-ocean Lines vessel, the Tjisadane. Altogether, 50 officers and 157 other ranks embarked for Korea. During the course of the day the officers and men aboard ship were visited by various dignitaries including the DGAF, the Commanding Officers of Natal Command and 2 Group SAAF, and the Mayor of Durban. Meanwhile, all SAAF personnel on board, especially the other ranks, were delighted to find that they were not to undertake their journey under the familiar troopship conditions of World War II, but as regular 1st or 2nd class passengers. At 17h00 on 26 September the Tjisadane left harbour and once more, a mere five years after the cessation of hostilities in Europe, South Africans were again leaving their country to go to war.³¹ On the same day elements of Walker's Eighth Army and Almond's X Corps were moving towards their meeting north of Osan, which signified the success of "Operation Chromite".³²

During the first few days at sea it became obvious that the monotony of the long sea voyage would have to be alleviated by various means. Physical

28. WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, 22.9.1950.

29. WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, 30.9.1950.

30. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.9.1950.

31. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1950, Appendix H: Embarkation List.

32. Vide, p.78.



A last look, leaving Durban Harbour - 26 September 1950.

MIB Photograph No: 70005919

training sessions were decided upon and Maj. Blaauw, Capt. le Grange, WO I R.A.P. Heydenryck and WO II G.W. Yeo were appointed physical training instructors. Arrangements were also made with the ship's radio officer for a daily news bulletin.³³ On 29 September, when MacArthur and Rhee held their celebrations to mark the liberation of Seoul,³⁴ 2 Sqn members reacted to the news with the question:

"Will we be in time for the final Campaign in Korea?"

Many of the rather frustrated sea-bound airmen expected the squadron to be recalled.³⁵

Progress seemed to be painfully slow, and on 3 October the Tjisadane passed the Eagle and African Islands of the Seychelles Group. A further activity was arranged to utilize the abundant spare time. Various experienced officers were appointed to deliver lectures on selected topics relevant to the action which lay ahead. Lt G.D. Doveton commenced the lecture programme on 4 October with a talk on the gyro-gunsight. This initial lecture was followed by others, which were:

5-6 October:	Lt M.H.E. Frost	Rocket Firing and the Effect of Missiles.
7 October:	Lt J.M. Sweeney	Ground Strafing.
9 October:	Lt M.H. Rorke	Fighter-Bombing.
20 October:	Capt. H.O.M. Odendaal	Handling of the Mustang Aircraft.
23 October:	Lt S.J.W. Inglesby	Korea.
30 October:	Maj. H.C. Enslin	Survival. ³⁶

However, PT sessions and officers' lectures were not the only means of passing the time and diversions of a lighter and more entertaining nature

33. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27-28.9.1950.

34. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.184-185.

35. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.9.1950.

36. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3-30.10.1950.

were also indulged in. At 15h00 on 5 October the traditional "Crossing of the Line" ceremony was held.³⁷ A series of "Quizzes" was held between teams of four, representing the officers, the senior NCO's, the junior NCO's and the airmen.³⁸ The spiritual welfare of the men was not neglected; the squadron Chaplain, Capt. M.D.V. Cloete, held well attended services in the Officers' Lounge every Sunday at 09h30.³⁹

The most welcome diversions of the long voyage were provided by the Royal Air Force (RAF). On 13 October, at 11h30 the Tjisadane anchored in Singapore Harbour and the CO of 2 Sqn was officially welcomed by the senior RAF officers. Arrangements were made for the entertainment of the South Africans at the RAF bases at Changi and Seletar.⁴⁰ During the course of the next three days all ranks enjoyed some shore leave, and a series of rugby, hockey and cricket matches against their RAF hosts.

The South African airmen found the hospitality overwhelming, and they were told that it was a small attempt to return the almost legendary hospitality experienced by British servicemen who had visited South Africa during World War II.⁴¹

A note of uncertainty was sounded during the visit to Singapore. On 16 October, the local newspaper carried a report to the effect that the South African Government had decided not to proceed with its plans for a flying boat base on Diego Garcia. The possibility of the squadron being recalled once more became a matter for speculation.⁴²

37. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.10.1950.

38. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9-12.10.1950.

39. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-29.10.1950.

40. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 13.10.1950.

41. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.10.1950.

42. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.10.1950.

The Tjisadane sailed from Singapore on 18 October, bound for another British enclave, Hong-Kong.⁴³ There the South African contingent was again entertained by the RAF. During the first evening in Hong-Kong, 23 October, the officers left the ship at 18h30 to attend a cocktail party at the RAF base at Kai Tak, while the other ranks were granted shore leave. The following day all ranks went to Kai Tak, where the usual round of sports matches took place. The hospitality was once more exceptional. On 25 October all ranks were granted shore leave. While in Hong-Kong, news items read in the local press once again raised the possibility of the war ending before the squadron could become operational.⁴⁴

The anticipation of such an anticlimax was well founded, for on 24 October, while the South African airmen were challenging their British counterparts on the sportsfields of Kai Tak, Walker took over personal command of his new Eighth Army Advance Headquarters in the same building in P'yongyang, that until recently had housed the HQ of the North Korean Premier/C-in-C, Kim Il-sung.⁴⁵ At the same time, American planners were preparing detailed directives for the occupation and military government of North Korea.⁴⁶ The UNC HQ informed the SAAF Liaison HQ in Tokyo of the occupational role assigned to 2 Sqn on 19 October. The SAAF squadron, together with 77 Sqn RAAF and two USAF squadrons, were earmarked to form a composite wing to operate F-51D Mustangs from Korean airfields until a general election could be held and the UN forces withdrawn.⁴⁷ When the Tjisadane sailed from Hong-Kong on the afternoon of 26 October, the details of this plan were unknown to the seafaring airmen, as the SAAF Liaison HQ had no direct contact with the squadron.⁴⁸

43. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 18.10.1950.

44. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23-26.10.1950.

45. Appelman: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p.652.

46. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.219-220.

47. WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, 19.10.1950; SALO: Box 1, SALO/TS/2/1/AIR, CG FEAF - DGAF, Top Secret Signal, 24.10.1950.

During the final stage of the voyage from South Africa to Japan (the relatively short leg from Hong-Kong to Kobe), Capt. Walter, the master of the Tjisadane, gave farewell dinners to passengers in the 1st and 2nd class, during which he commented on the good behaviour of the members of the squadron. By 31 October, after 35 days at sea, the travelling airmen had obviously had enough of waiting for action, while the anxiety generated by financial embarrassment owing to the unexpected high cost of living and lack of allowances while in transit, added to their general impatience.⁴⁹ In spite of speculation to the contrary, the 2 Sqn personnel knew that they would see action in Korea, when on their arrival in Kobe Harbour during the early hours of 1 November, they learnt of a new development on the Korean front. Red Chinese "volunteers" had been identified as being in action in North Korea.⁵⁰

At 12h30 Omdt Pretorius and Maj. Daneel arrived from Tokyo and informed the CO that the squadron would disembark at Yokohama, from whence they would travel by road to Johnson Air Base near Tokyo. From there they would be attached to the 35th FIW for operational training. The liaison officers also handed over a letter of welcome from the CO of the 35th FIW and a comprehensive information bulletin.⁵¹

The next day the Tjisadane left Kobe at 13h00 and Omdt Theron used the opportunity to address all airmen on living conditions in Japan, a topic well covered in the welcoming bulletin. It included details such as resorts to visit, shopping, various recreational facilities available in and around Johnson Air Base, the bus times to Tokyo and words of warning

49. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27-31.10.1950.

50. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.11.1950.

51. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.11.1950; WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1950, Appendix A, Johnson Air Base Welcomes the 2nd South African Air Force Squadron to Japan, 28.10.1950.

about a 24h00 curfew on all military personnel in public places. They were also warned of the dangers of swimming in lakes and rivers, and of eating Japanese food, owing to the local custom of fertilizing the fields with the "honey bucket".⁵²

Early the next morning the Tjisadane arrived in Yokkoidu Harbour and left again the same afternoon for Yokohama. While members of the squadron were gratefully packing their personal kit in preparation for disembarkation the following morning, Oudt Pretorius and Maj. Swanepoel went to Johnson Air Base to make a final check on the arrangements for the handing over of equipment and the training of the squadron. They were assured that 90% of the equipment was already available at Johnson and that the remainder would arrive within a few days.⁵³

At 06h30 on 4 November, the Tjisadane finally moved into the Yokohama Harbour, and officers and men representing various UN members states came aboard to welcome the new arrivals. These included Lt-Gen. Sir Horace Robertson, C-in-C of the British Commonwealth Forces, and Brg.-Gen. O.S. Pitcher of the USAF. To the surprise of the South Africans, the welcome also included an all-black American brass band, the members of which had been drawn from various units for the occasion. This had been planned by the Americans as a special gesture to welcome an unexpected contingent of black personnel from South Africa.⁵⁴

All ranks disembarked at 08h30 and paraded for inspection and addresses of welcome by the two generals. They then left for Johnson Air

52. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.11.1950; WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1950, Appendix A, Johnson Air Base Welcomes the 2nd South African Air Force Squadron to Japan, 28.10.1950.

53. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3.11.1950; WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, 3.11.1950.

54. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.11.1950; Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 16.3.1981; Maj.-Gen. M.D.V. Cloete: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 31.3.1981; Col S.J.W. Inglesby: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 31.3.1981.

Base, where they arrived at 14h30. They had not been long there, when the financial problems experienced aboard ship assumed a new aspect. It was found that certain services and commodities that the South Africans expected to be provided as a charge against the Union Government had, in fact, to be paid for by individual members. Officers were required to pay cash for meals, refreshments, bed linen and the hire of blankets. Other ranks had to pay for refreshments between meals and for laundry facilities. These arrangements came as a surprise and as no extra allowances had been authorized, the remaining pay book credits had to be paid out.⁵⁵

The first working day brought the discovery that, although aircraft and equipment were ready for handing over by the USAF, various frustrations were encountered which led to the commencement of the flying training programme being put off until 8 November. This further delay tested the patience of the pilots, who had already sat out a long ocean voyage waiting to get into operational flying. The difficulties encountered were inherent in a situation where an entire fighter squadron had to be equipped with every item from aircraft to winter flying kit, during a war, and many thousands of kilometres away from the main source of supply. Two different accounting procedures had to be reconciled; tool kits had to be made up, and worn items of personal issue had to be exchanged. The USAF Mustangs, which had deteriorated somewhat in storage, had to be brought up to standard and taken on charge by the SAAF. Under such circumstances, it was inevitable that USAF-SAAF relations should get off to an uncertain start, but differences were soon ironed out and the representatives of the two air forces began to establish a smooth working relationship.⁵⁶

55. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.11.1950

56. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5-8.11.1950; SALO: Box 3, SALO/S/42/AIR, CO 2 Sqn - SALO, 25.1.1951; CC 35 FTW - CG 5AF, 28.11.1950; SALO-CG 5AF, 15.1.1951; Brig. S.v.B. Theron: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 13.1.1982.

Although the flying training was delayed, the ground training of the pilots commenced without delay. Although some thought that the detail presented was too elementary for experienced pilots, the training was thorough, with lectures being presented on:

- a. General flying and local airfield regulations.
- b. Ditching and Survival.
- c. Circuit and RT procedure.
- d. Tactics.
- e. Escape and evasion.
- f. Hydraulics and emergency systems of the F-51D.
- g. Electrical systems and the instruments of the F-51D.
- h. Oxygen and radio aids.
- i. Armaments and range procedure.⁵⁷

Within four days the equipment and kit problems had been sufficiently sorted out to enable the first seven SAAF pilots, led by Capt. J.F.O. Davis, to take off in F-51D Mustangs bearing the SAAF markings and the proud "Flying Cheetah" emblem.⁵⁸

The markings which were to be so proudly carried for nearly three years, were approved by FEAF a few days later in the following form:

- a. Roundels comprising an orange Springbok on a white background with a blue outer ring appear above and below the outer portion of both wings and on either side of the fuselage to the rear of the canopy.
- b. The fin markings comprise three vertical stripes coloured, reading from front to rear, orange, white and blue on each side of the fin.

57. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5-10.11.1950.

58. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7-8.11.1950.

- c. The aircraft will be numbered consecutively from 301.
- d. The Flying Cheetah appears on both sides of the fuselage between the rear of the engine nacelles and the cockpit."⁵⁹

When the flying training started, the SAAF pilots, most of them veterans of World War II, were perturbed to find themselves being treated as novices by the Americans. The South Africans, however, soon demonstrated their competence by achieving results on the weapons range which astonished their instructors.⁶⁰

The day after the first SAAF training flights at Johnson Air Base, an urgent signal was received from CG 5AF expressing his desire to commit 2 Sqn to operations with the least possible delay, even if the initial employment was by flights.⁶¹ The CO of 2 Sqn replied mentioning his difficulties, but stated that nine experienced operational pilots would be ready for combat duties within a week. He also mentioned the desirability of SAAF ground crew being available to service their own aircraft when these were sent to Korea.⁶² On 15 November a signal was received from 5AF HQ authorizing the movement of 2 Sqn to Pusan East (K-9) for attachment to the 6002nd Tactical Support Wing.⁶³ The 2 Sqn CO reacted immediately, and the same day he issued Operation Order 1/50 for the movement of 13 officers, 21 other ranks, five F-51D's and the necessary equipment to Korea. Cmdt Theron decided that he and his flight commanders would be the first SAAF pilots to fly to Korea. He wanted the leader group to gain local combat experience as soon as possible so that they would be in a position to lead

59. SALO: Box 5, SALO/608/ET, SALO - CG 5AF, 10.11.1950.

60. Maj.-Gen. M.D.V. Cloete: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 31.3.1981; Brig. S.v.B. Theron: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 13.1.1982; Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 16.3.1981; Capt. J.A. Joubert: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 2.4.1981.

61. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1950, Appendix M, CG 5AF - CO 35 FIW, 9.11.1950.

62. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1950, Appendix N, CO 2 Sqn - SALO, 9.11.1950.

63. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1950, Appendix P, CG 5AF - CO 35 FIW, 15.11.1950.

the SAAF missions with confidence.⁶⁴

At 09h00 on 16 November, two USAF C-47 Dakotas left Johnson Air Base with South African personnel and equipment bound for Korea. Nearly four hours later Cndt Theron and the four flight commanders, Capts Davis, Odendaal, Lipawsky and Badenhorst, flew their F-51D's out of Johnson. At 16h00 both groups arrived at K-9. On landing the five South African aircraft became the centre of attention owing to their exceptionally clean condition.⁶⁵ The SAAF had finally arrived in combat zone, 104 days after the South African Government had announced its decision to contribute a fighter squadron to the UN effort.

64. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1950, Appendix Q, 2 Sqn Operation Order 1/50, 15.11.1950; Brig. S.v.B. Theron: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 13.1.1982.

65. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.11.1950; WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, 16.11.1950.

CHAPTER 5

FIRST OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCES

17-26 NOVEMBER 1950

THE TACTICAL AIR CONTROL SYSTEM

When the first SAAF pilots arrived in Korea they found a Tactical Air Control (TAC) system in operation which was a compromise between the theoretical model laid down in the manual and the realities of the actual combat situation. As the war progressed personnel and equipment became more readily available, and skills and techniques were refined, making it possible gradually to reconcile practice with laid down procedures. A brief survey of the theory and practice of tactical air control, as it had evolved in Korea by November 1950, will provide a point of departure for an appreciation of the various improvements made during the course of the conflict. Because the TAC system, which controlled all missions over Korea, was also the air force instrument for the execution of joint operations, such a survey is also essential background to the numerous detailed accounts of specific SAAF missions which are to follow.

According to prevailing doctrine, the link between the planners at the JOC¹ and the pilots in the aircraft was the Tactical Air Control Group, which consisted of the following elements: the Tactical Air Control Centre (TACC), the subordinate Tactical Air Direction Centres (TADC), Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP) and Ground Observer Teams (GO). The TAC Group controlled all tactical aircraft, including those engaged in ground-air operations. The task of the TAC Group was spelt out in the Field Manual: Air-Ground Operations.

"The mission of the Tactical Air Control Group is to provide the facilities and information required for aircraft control and early warning."²

1. Vide, pp.59-61.

2. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, pp.55-56.

The TACC, the nerve centre of the tactical air control system, was to be located adjacent to the Combat Operations Section of the JOC³ and was allocated the responsibility for the overall control of all air operations including anti-aircraft (AA) co-ordination and air-sea rescue.⁴ The TADC's were envisaged as subordinate air control facilities, each responsible for its own sector of friendly and enemy air space. They were equipped with radar in order to be able to direct tactical aircraft on deep penetration missions, and to vector interceptors towards enemy intruders. The prescribed composition of the TACP's was, an experienced fighter pilot as Forward Air Controller (FAC), and the personnel necessary to assist him in his task of directing fighter-bombers against ground targets in the vicinity of the front lines. Ideally, the TACP was located at division level close to the divisional artillery fire direction centre (Diagram 7-1).⁵

In order to allow for the adequate control of air-ground operations, there were supposed to be 12 communication nets established by the air force and seven nets established by the army. The main nets on the air force side, as laid down, were:

- a. The tactical air force net to provide communication between the tactical air force HQ, TACC, TADC's, TACP's and the air bases.
- b. The tactical air direction net for communication between the TACC, TADC's, TACP's and the aircraft actually airborne on missions.

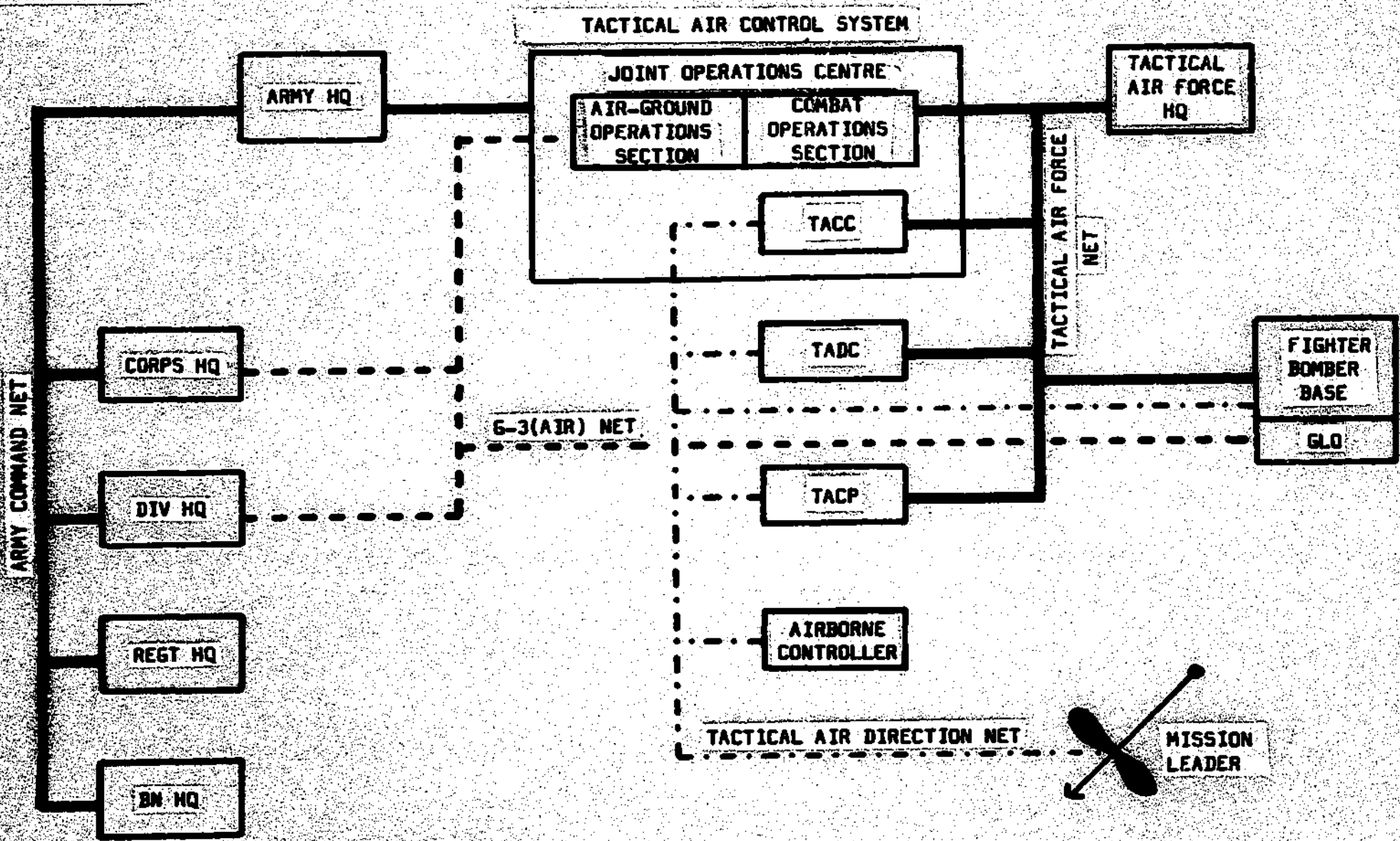
On the army side, the most important net was the G-3(Air) net for communication between the G-3(Air) at army, corps and division levels, and the ground liaison officers (GLO) attached to units of the tactical air force. All air requests originating at battalion and regimental level were supposed to be passed along

3. Vide, p.59.

4. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, pp.7, 56-59.

5. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air Ground Operations, pp.63-65.

Diagram 7-1



War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, pp.45-47, 71-74;
 Vide, pp.120-126.

the organic army command net to divisional HQ's, from whence they were to be channelled through the G-3(Air) net (Diagram 7-1).⁶

As with the planning,⁷ so too with the execution; certain difficulties were encountered when the doctrine was put into practice. The first problem was caused by the rapid and piecemeal deployment of the UN forces in Korea to meet the NKPA invasion. On 28 June 1950, two TACP's were rushed to the front lines. They were soon joined by four others. These initial TACP's were hastily put together from personnel of the 620th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, which had been stationed in Japan at the outbreak of the war. At this time the USAF's only TAC Group, the 502nd, was in the United States. It took three months to bring them to the Far East. Meanwhile, the 6132nd TAC Group (Provisional) was formed from various units in Japan and was tasked to establish an integrated air control system in Korea. On 23 July, this Group established a TACC adjacent to the JOC at Taegu and took over from the makeshift control system. As more personnel and equipment became available, the single TACP assigned to each US division was increased to four, allowing for a TACP with each regiment, in addition to a divisional net control. ROKA corps and divisions were provided with one TACP each.⁸

The establishment of efficient communications was to prove a major problem for both the air force and army. The air force's main problem lay with the available radio equipment. Initially, each TACP was equipped with an AN/ARC-1 radio jeep. The radios in these jeeps were easily jolted out of tune and damaged on the rough Korean roads. The lack of remote equipment

6. War Department Field Manual F31-35: Air-Ground Operations, pp.71-74.

7. Vide, pp.59-61.

8. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.98.

exposed the vehicle and the FAC to enemy fire while air strikes were being directed from exposed positions.⁹

The army side of the communications system was virtually non-existent. The radio equipment required for the G-3(Air) net was not available in the Far East. Although the army attempted to use organic command nets for passing air requests from the lowest levels through to the JOC, these were severely overloaded. In desperation, the regimental commanders passed their air requests through the TACP over the vital tactical air direction net. This procedure worked, but it also caused problems related to the overloading of a command net. Air requests passed through the TACP also short-circuited the laid down procedures, by by-passing the intermediate headquarters. The latter were thus unable to monitor the air-ground co-operation effort in their subordinate formations and units. In an attempt to clear his tactical air direction net, Gen. Partridge assumed the army responsibility for the establishment of the G-3(Air) net, when he dispatched detachments equipped with SCR-399 radios to the Air Liaison Officer of each division. However, unit and regimental commanders still found difficulty in passing air requests along their command nets to divisional HQ's, according to the prescribed procedure, and they persisted in using the TACP for this purpose.¹⁰

In the Field Manual: Air-Ground Operations brief mention is made of the solution to many of these problems:

"It may be desirable at times that additional forward air controllers operate airborne as tactical air co-ordinators."¹¹

9. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.77.

10. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.101-102.

11. War Department Field Manual FM31-35: Air-Ground Operations, p.64.

On 9 July, just two weeks after the opening of hostilities, two USAF lieutenants used two of the 24th Division's L-17 liaison aircraft to direct air strikes. The next day the suitability of the T-6 Harvard (known in the USAF as the Texan) trainer was demonstrated for this type of work. The effectiveness of the tactical air co-ordinators in directing strikes, and in gathering battlefield information, soon became evident. In the 5AF Fragmentary Operations Order (Frag Order) for 15 July 1950, these airborne controllers were given radio call signs starting with "Mosquito", a name which was to be used for the rest of the war.¹²

On 1 August, after three weeks of unofficial operation, the Mosquito controllers were organized into a unit designated as the 6147th Tactical Control Squadron (Airborne) stationed at Taegu airfield.¹³ During the first week of October the 502nd TAC Group eventually arrived from the United States. Its arrival marked the establishment of a more regular TAC system. The 6132nd TAC Group (Provisional) was disbanded and its equipment and personnel absorbed by the newly arrived Group, which also assumed responsibility for the TAC system in Korea. At the same time the Army's 20th Signal Company (Air-Ground Liaison), also arrived to provide the much needed G-3(Air) net for the effective channelling of air requests.¹⁴ Thus, by the time the SAAF became operational in Korea an effective TAC system had been established.

The tasking and control procedures which had evolved by the time the first SAAF combat missions were flown can be described briefly. Every day, at approximately 15h00, the operations officer of each tactical wing contacted the 5AF HQ and was told the type and number of sorties his units would be expected to fly the following day. Soon afterwards the 5AF Frag Order was transmitted to the wings by teletype. This order

12. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.77-78.

13. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.99.

14. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.170.



Operations Officer, Capt. M.J. Uys, receives the Frag Order.

MIB Photograph No: 761000385



Mission Briefing: (L to R) Lt G.D. Doveton, Lt F.E. Potgieter,
Capt.J.F.O. Davis (Flt Cndr), Capt. G.B. Lipawsky.

MIB Photograph No: 761000375



Briefing in the Far East.

Cartoon of a Mission Briefing.

gave details of the pre-planned missions, as well as the number of aircraft allocated to air alert and to ground alert. At about midnight, confirmation was received when a courier delivered two copies of the Frag Order to each base. If sudden changes in the ground situation warranted alterations to the Frag Order, the matter was handled by the air force duty officer in the JOC and by the Operations Officers at the various tactical wings.¹⁵

The Frag Order specified take-off times, and co-ordination of the air effort demanded strict adherence to these times. Once airborne the mission leader was required to set course and call up the TACC, giving the number and details of his mission. He was then instructed, either to proceed as briefed, or he was diverted to a new mission. If on a close support mission, the leader was instructed to report to a specific Mosquito controller who, on co-ordinating with the mission leader, would mark the target with a smoke rocket. He then used the smoke as a reference point and guided the leader in on to the target. The leader was followed on to the target by the rest of his flight. When the strike was over, the Mosquito controller gave the leader an estimate of the damage. Such information was passed on to the TACC by the mission leader, when he reported-in on his way back to his base (Diagram 7-2).¹⁶

THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS INTERVIEW

The anxiety experienced by 2 Sqn personnel during the long voyage to the Far East, that they would arrive in Korea too late to undertake any combat missions, proved, in the event, to be groundless. In fact, the

15. Capt N.J. Swardt: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 28.9.1981;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.101.

16. Col S.J.W. Inglesby: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 31.3.1981;
Capt. J.A. Joubert: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 2.4.1981;
Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong, Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981.

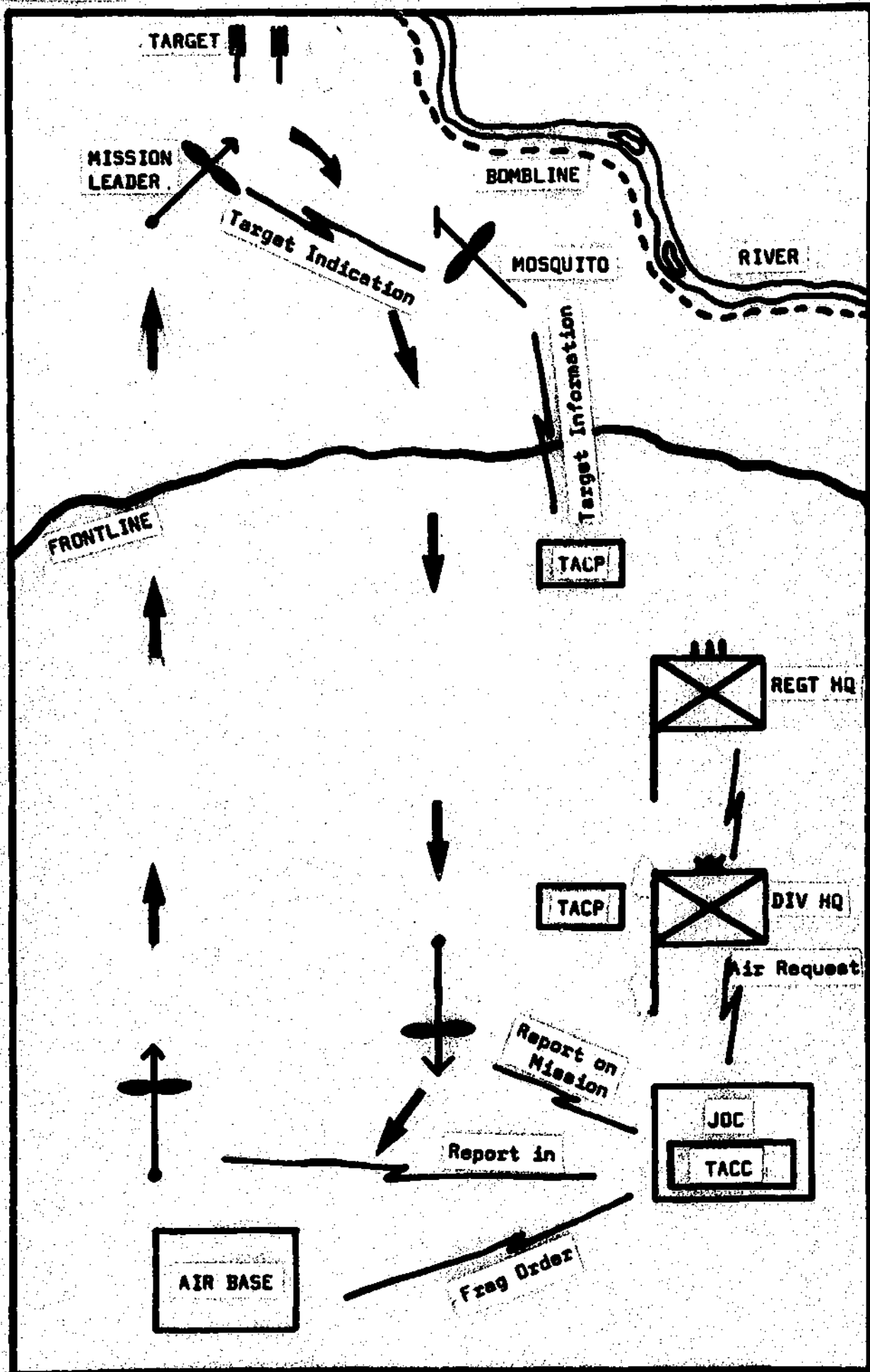
advance detachment of 2 Sqn arrived in Korea at a critical stage, at the time when C-in-C UN and his staff were pondering the possibility of a large scale Chinese Communist intervention. Whether the OCF intervened or not, MacArthur saw an advance as his own best course of action. He reasoned that if the Chinese did not come, a UN offensive would end the war; and if they did come the UN forces would best meet them with an advance, rather than try to hold an immobile, thinly defended line. On 9 November he informed the JCS that it would be fatal to weaken the UN's fundamental policy, which was to destroy all resisting armed forces in Korea, and to form the country into a united and free nation. He maintained that with his airpower he could restrict the number of Chinese reinforcements crossing the Yalu sufficiently to enable his forces to destroy those Chinese troops already in Korea. He thus proposed to launch a major offensive in mid-November and to keep going until he reached the Manchurian border.¹⁷

In the X Corps sector the advance from the beachheads at Wonsan and Iwon moved steadily northwards. By 13 November the 7th Marines had reached the Chosin Reservoir, and on 21 November the 7th US Division reached Hyesanjin on the Yalu River, while the ROKA Capitol Division prepared for an assault against the city of Nanam. On 24 November MacArthur approved a X Corps plan to envelope the hard-pressed NKPA forces by attacking in a westerly direction with the towns of Changjin and Mup'yong-ni as the initial objectives. Almond then named 27 November as D-day for his operation.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the Eighth Army build-up in the Ch'ongch'on bridgehead had been progressing favourably, and on 18 November MacArthur informed the JCS that the advance in this sector would be resumed on 24 November.

17. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.218;
Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.250-251.

18. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.221-222;
Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.265-266.



Maj. J.M. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 16.3.1981; Col S.J.W. Inglesby: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 31.3.1981; M.J. Dolan: What's Right and Wrong with Close Air Support (*Combat Forces Journal*, Vol.1, No.12, July 1951), pp.24-27
 Anon.: The Air-Ground Operation in Korea (*Air Force*, Vol.34, No.3, March 1951), pp.30-31.

The jump-off took place as scheduled and the Eighth Army advanced along a 80km front. At this stage, UNC intelligence estimated a Communist opposition in North Korea of between 123 734 and 153 734 troops, consisting of 82 799 North Koreans and between 40 000 and 70 935 Chinese. Initially, it looked as if the UNC estimates of the Communist strength had been correct and the UN ground forces moved rapidly northwards, making gains of up to 19km during the first 36 hours, against moderate resistance. The Eighth Army dispositions were: on the left the US I Corps, in the centre the US IX Corps and on the right the ROK II Corps. The US 1st Cavalry Division, the ROK 6th Division, the 27th and 29th British Brigades and the Turkish Brigade formed the reserve. Shortly after dark on 25 November the OCF troops launched their long planned advance against the Eighth Army's centre and right flank. This was a complete surprise, for during the days immediately prior to the general advance, MacArthur had ordered aerial reconnaissance of the gap between the Eighth Army and X Corps. Sorties had been flown both day and night for this purpose, but no enemy forces had been located on Walker's right flank.¹⁹




The ROK II Corps scattered under the attack and the IX Corps in the centre was forced to withdraw. On the left, the I Corps, although not under pressure, was forced to fall back in co-ordination with the forces on its right flank. On 27 November, X Corps' advance westwards immediately ran into strong resistance and Almond's leading elements, moving from the Chosin Reservoir towards Mup'yong-ni, soon found that strong Chinese forces had infiltrated to their rear and cut their supply routes. MacArthur then realized that he faced a Chinese force of about 300 000 men and that the entire character of the war had changed.²⁰

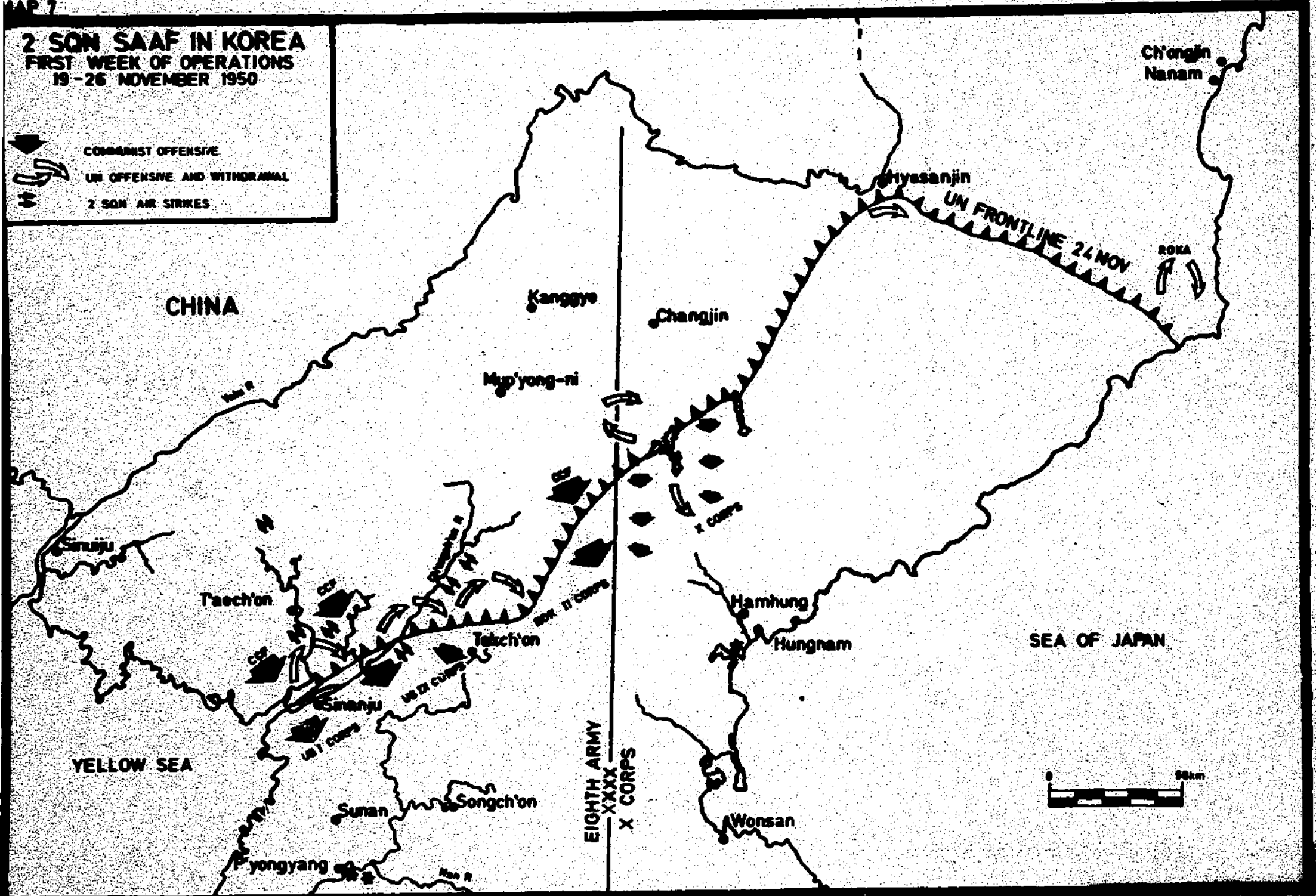
19. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.272-274;
Leckie: Conflict, p.199.

20. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.274-275;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.222-223.

2 SON SAAF IN KOREA

FIRST WEEK OF OPERATIONS
19-26 NOVEMBER 1950

-  COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE
-  UN OFFENSIVE AND WITHDRAWAL
-  2 SON AIR STRIKES



THE FIRST OPERATIONAL SORTIES

The 6002nd FBW (Provisional) at Pusan East (K-9) controlled and supported the 18th FBG, which consisted of the 12th and 67th FB Sqns USAF. These squadrons were based at Pusan East and staged through P'yongyang East airfield (K-24), which had been recently taken from the Communists.²¹ The commanding officer of this Wing, at the time of the arrival of the South Africans, was Col C.R. Low. It was planned that 2 Sqn SAAF would eventually operate as an additional group directly under the wing, thus making the 6002nd Wing a "Reinforced Wing". In the interim, pending the arrival of the whole squadron, the advance detachment in Korea came under the operational control of the 18th FBG, along with the two USAF squadrons. This arrangement also gave the new arrivals the opportunity to fly with USAF pilots who had already had operational experience in the theatre.²²

Although the 2 Sqn detachment had finally reached the combat zone, two more days were to pass before the first combat sorties were flown. On their arrival at K-9 they found that all the units at that airfield were in the process of being airlifted to P'yongyang East. This move was part of a general redeployment of USAF tactical groups. Between 19 and 25 November, in addition to the small SAAF detachment, seven squadrons of tactical aircraft were moved forward to three airfields previously used by the Communists. This move placed the 35th FIG (including 77 Sqn RAAF), the 8th FBG and the 18th FBG within 80km of the front lines at Yonpo (K-27), P'yongyang (K-23) and P'yongyang East (K-24) respectively.²³

While awaiting the move, time was once more devoted to ground training. On 18 November the newly arrived pilots were given lectures at K-9 on:

- a. Escape and Evasion.

21. Vide, pp.49,79.

22. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17.11.1950;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.104-105.

23. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.220-221.

- b. Rescue.
- c. Types and methods of attack.²⁴

Finally the great day arrived. During the early hours of 19 November, while the SAAF ground personnel enthusiastically prepared the Mustangs bearing the "Flying Cheetah" emblem for operations, representatives of the three fighting units attended an early morning conference in the base commander's office. There they learnt that their units would be given priority in the move to K-24. The operational responsibilities of 2 Sqn SAAF were also outlined for the first time. These were:

- a. General reconnaissance.
- b. Fighter escorts to bomber groups.
- c. Close support of ground troops.²⁵

Instructions were given that aircraft flying operational sorties were to return to K-24 after the missions and to remain there. Only four SAAF Mustangs were operational as the fifth one had developed engine trouble and was awaiting an engine change. Capt. Odendaal was assigned to ferry this aircraft from K-9 to K-24. At 07h10, in clear weather and with excellent visibility, Cndt Theron and Capt. Lipawsky took off on the squadron's first combat sortie of the Korean War. They undertook a close support mission in the IX Corps sector, where the frontline crossed the Ch'ongch'on River. They carried the standard armament for close support missions, namely, two napalm bombs, six 127mm HVAR rockets and the Mustang's six 12,7mm machine guns. With the assistance of a Mosquito airborne controller they achieved satisfactory results, claiming the destruction of 13 camouflaged objects and five vehicles.²⁶

24. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 18.11.1950.

25. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.11.1950.

26. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.11.1950.

Although this was the first official sortie flown by 2 Sqn in Korea, it was not the first operational sortie flown by a SAAF officer in the Korean War. On 8 October, while on a familiarization trip to Korea, the Senior Air Liaison Officer, Cndt Pretorius, had checked out on a F-51D. The next day he had flown an escort mission from K-9, accompanying a B-26 bomber to within 16km of the Manchurian border.²⁷

At 09h00 Capts Davis and Badenhorst took-off on the second 2 Sqn mission. That afternoon each pair flew a second mission. All these missions were directed against enemy positions, facing the US I Corps line near the town of T'each'on. Another vehicle was destroyed, enemy positions damaged and camouflaged supply dumps set on fire. No flak was observed.²⁸ Capt. Odendaal had the opportunity to fly his first sortie the next day. He took-off with Capt Lipawsky and successfully attacked a train near a tunnel in the vicinity of Hwach'on, 25km behind enemy lines.²⁹

On 21 November, the Commanding General of FEAF acknowledged these first ten SAAF sorties with a letter to the CO of 2 Sqn:

"I noted with considerable satisfaction this morning that your squadron was operational on 19 November from its base at K-24 in Korea.

I wish to congratulate you on the expeditious manner in which your squadron has become operational and take this opportunity to wish you every success in your air operations as a member of the United Nations team."³⁰

27. WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, 9.10.1950.

28. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.11.1950.

29. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.11.1950.

30. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1950, Appendix I, CG FEAF - CO 2 Sqn, 21.11.1950.

LIFE AT A FORWARD AIR BASE

Whatever discomfort might have been experienced by the personnel, there were considerable advantages to the 18th FBG's advanced position at P'yongyang East. Prior to the move to K-24, the pilots and aircraft of the 18th FBG had extended to the limits of their endurance. In order to complete a mission from K-9, they had to fly a distance of 500km from their base to the bomblines, find targets, attack and return to base without running short of fuel. Although staging forward airfields had been used, the missions had lasted up to five hours and had placed a severe strain on the pilots. From P'yongyang East it was possible to fly missions of shorter duration, spend more time over the target and dispense with external fuel tanks. The SAAF pilots arrived just in time to benefit from the new location. Their first ten sorties varied in duration from 1hr 40mins to 3hrs 45mins.³¹

The proximity of the P'yongyang airfields to the frontline also had some distinct disadvantages. The JOC had been moved forward from Taegu to Seoul at midnight on 13 October. Between these two centres lay 180km of war-torn and guerilla infested countryside. Although K-23 and K-24 had been connected to the JOC by landline, due to the unreliability of the existing VHF radio communications, this arrangement was far from satisfactory. The result was that intelligence from the JOC was sparse and often arrived too late.³² But this was not the only problem; large numbers of Communist guerillas were operative behind UN lines. UN troops were killed daily in P'yongyang and, as all local labourers and inhabitants were suspect, they were not allowed into the camp at K-24.³³ The necessity for

31. WEM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.20.1950;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.221;
ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.399;

32. ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.400,
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.169-170.

33. WEM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.11.1950.

this security measure was borne out on the night of 22-23 November, when 12 UN troops were killed in an ambush in a P'yongyang street and two hand grenades were placed on the runway at K-24. The latter were fortunately discovered intact the next morning.³⁴

A major threat developed on 22 November, when 5 000 guerillas were reported to be approaching P'yongyang from the north. Cndt Theron was summoned by the base commander and informed of the situation. All officers and other ranks were alerted. This alert was considered a somewhat futile exercise by the South Africans for, in spite of repeated requests, the other ranks had not been issued with rifles. Much to the relief of all, paratroopers sent from P'yongyang dispersed the guerillas into the hills after a short encounter.³⁵

The UN personnel at P'yongyang East were also threatened from the air. At 20h00 on the same eventful day, 22 November, the air raid alert was sounded. However, no enemy aircraft were heard, no bombs dropped and the "All Clear" was sounded within the hour. Four days later, two enemy aircraft approached the airfield and three F-51D's of 12th Sqn were scrambled. No contact was made with the hostile aircraft, which disappeared in a westerly direction at about 7 500m.³⁶ The fighter-bomber group at K-23 were less fortunate, especially at night. The 2 Sqn diarist ascribed this to the relative ease with which the K-23 hard-topped runway could be seen from the air, as opposed to the dirt runway at K-24. The aircraft, which made nightly attacks on K-23, were probably PO-2 biplanes. These were used in a similar role later in the war.³⁷

34. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23.11.1950.

35. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.11.1950.

36. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.11.1950.

37. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.11.1950;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.232.

Although the forward airfields captured from the Communists were obviously well established air bases they had suffered at the hands of the UN bomber crews and Communist demolition squads with the result that the existing hangars and barracks had been badly damaged. On their arrival, the SAAF detachment had to pitch tents to serve as living and office accommodation. Two tents were allocated for administrative purposes, one as an operations room and the other as a crew tent. An old NKAF hangar served as a mess hall for all ranks. It had been built out of clay plastered over a wooden framework and the walls gaped holes. As the move to K-24 had been made during mid-winter, while the monsoon was blowing in from Siberia, the cold was extreme and the primitive shelter was little help against the biting wind. Everything containing water, such as watercarts, domestic water cans and drinking bottles froze solid. The situation was slightly relieved when the squadron's domestic area was provided with tent stoves on 25 November.³⁸

The weather, lack of equipment and the intensity of operations made severe demands on the ground crew. As the days were short, with first light at 06h45 and the last light at 17h15, maximum use had to be made of the daylight hours for flying. This meant that the ground crews had to rise at 05h00 to warm-up the aircraft. They then had to join a long queue for breakfast before the 07h00 take-off. The extreme cold made the arming and refuelling of the aircraft difficult, and the lack of mechanical transport and refuellers meant that 2 Sqn had to rely upon the Americans, who in their turn were battling with antiquated and frozen equipment. The situation was slightly alleviated on 22 November when the SAAF detachment was issued with a weapons carrier.³⁹

38. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20,25.11.1950;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.221.

39. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 21,22.11.1950.

FURTHER MISSIONS FROM K-24

The sorties flown during the week 21-26 November typified the operations that fell to the lot of 2 Sqn for the greater part of the Korean campaign, with interdiction and close support missions predominating. Combinations of either two SAAF and two USAF, or of three SAAF and one USAF pilots were flown. The Mustangs, bearing the "Flying Cheetah", ranged over western Korea in support of the Eighth Army. Their operations were confined to a relatively narrow strip, 80-100km wide, between the UN frontlines and the Yalu River. The shortened Communist lines of communication reduced the opportunity for effective interdiction. Nevertheless, the fighter-bombers were still tasked to reduce the flow of enemy material and reinforcements by carrying out armed reconnaissance missions. The seven armed reconnaissance sorties flown by SAAF pilots on 21 and 22 November enabled them to become familiar with the procedure of patrolling the communication routes to the north of the frontline, looking for targets of opportunity and for information of enemy movements, dispositions and supply dumps. These first armed reconnaissance missions were relatively short, lasting from one and a half to two hours each. On one of these, Capts Davis and Badenhorst were surprised to see some larger buildings in the North Korean villages, ostensibly serving as warehouses, pour black and yellow smoke, and explode when hit with napalm and rockets. Even a school house which was attacked exploded, revealing the use to which it had been put. The South Africans also flew along the North Korean-Manchurian border. On 21 November Capt. Odendaal and Lts W.E.St.E. Wilson and F.B. Richter flew an uneventful armed reconnaissance mission along the Yalu River.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 21-22.11.1950.

In co-ordination with the Eighth Army offensive of 24 November, the 5AF fighter-bomber squadrons were switched to ground support missions. During the first few days of the offensive the 5AF flew 345 close support sorties, and the "Flying Cheetahs" were called upon to play their part. When news of the offensive reached the main body of the squadron, still at Johnson Air Base, they became restless and anxious to get to Korea. The pilots and ground crew already in Korea also regretted the absence of their comrades, as they were called upon to produce a maximum effort.⁴¹

The ground offensive jumped off at 08h00 on 24 November. At 07h30 Capt. Lipsky and Lt D.D. Deans took off on the first close support mission of the day. They were directed by a Mosquito controller in several attacks against a small hill held by the enemy. The attacks were well co-ordinated and the results were good. Claims mounted to two mortar positions destroyed and 50 enemy troops killed. In spite of the call for close support, this was to be only one of two such missions flown by 2 Sqn on the first day of the offensive. That afternoon, Capt. Davis and Lt Wilson undertook another successful close support mission resulting in claims for one self-propelled gun, two vehicles and a supply dump destroyed. The other 2 Sqn mission of the day was somewhat unusual. Capt. Badenhorst and Lt E.N. Jones were assigned the task of covering a UEN minesweeper which was operating off the west coast just north of Ch'o-do Island. This they did without incident, until Capt. Badenhorst's aircraft developed engine trouble and they had to return to base.⁴²

On 25 November a further six close support sorties were flown, with one mission of three SAAF aircraft in the morning and a similar mission in the afternoon. The following day saw the same routine adopted. During the

41. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24.11.1950;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.223.

42. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24.11.1950.

afternoon mission, the controlling aircraft directed Capt. Lipawsky, Capt. Odendaal, Lt Richter and their American companion against a village, reported to be a troop concentration point. The strike was successfully executed and it was later confirmed that 300 enemy troops had been killed.⁴³

During these first ten days of operations, although very little opposition in the form of ground fire was reported, the flying was not altogether hazard free. The single dirt runway at K-24 was alternately dusty or muddy, with the former presenting the greater hazard to aircraft. Moreover, the already poor condition of the runway was not improved by the continual coming and going of the heavy transport aircraft on which the base depended for its supply.⁴⁴ In addition, the Korean terrain held flying hazards of its own, as Omdt Theron and Capt. Davis discovered during a close support mission on 23 November. They had difficulty making their runs against Communist troops dug-in on a hill, when they found their approach to the target hampered by a power line running along the top of the ridge. At this stage of the war, a threat was also posed by enemy aircraft, and pilots were warned to remain on the alert against possible attack. A member of each flight was tasked to monitor a specially reserved VHF channel on which enemy aircraft sightings were reported.⁴⁵

THE MAIN BODY AT JOHNSON AIR BASE

The ebb and flow of the war during the last two weeks of November 1950 left the main body of 2 Sqn stranded at Johnson Air Base. Before the CCF counter-offensive on the night of 25-26 November, it seemed as if the stranded South African fliers would only reach Korea after the hostilities had ended. They became increasingly frustrated as orders for the move to

43. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25-26.11.1950.

44. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.11.1950.

45. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23.11.1950; 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1950, Appendix, 18th FBG Frag Order 11-26 for 26 November 1950.

Korea were repeatedly reviewed and cancelled. On 19 November, at 11h30 the long-awaited instruction was finally received. The squadron was to move to Korea by the first available means. Great activity ensued as preparations were hastily made. However, at 18h30 on the same day, the instruction was cancelled and 27 November was given as the date of departure.⁴⁶

The following day a signal confirmed the latest instruction and the 35th FIW was urgently requested to make all outstanding equipment available in order to enable the move to be carried out on schedule. On 21 November a very necessary issue of extra winter clothing was made to all ranks. Three days later, Cndt Theron left K-24 for Japan to make the final arrangements for the move to Korea. Capt. Davis was appointed acting commanding officer of the advance detachment in the absence of the CO.⁴⁷ On his arrival at Johnson Cndt Theron briefed all ranks on his Korean experiences. On 26 November two more pilots, Lts F.E. Potgieter and A.D. Maclean, flew their F-51D's to Korea to join their comrades. However, the other members of the squadron were destined to be frustrated once again in their plans to leave Japan on schedule, owing to the sudden turn of events in Korea.⁴⁸

Meanwhile steps were already being taken in South Africa to replace the pilots in Korea. The first group of SAAF replacement pilots for the Far East had started their operational training course at the Air Operational School at Langebaanweg on 11 November. This training was being undertaken in accordance with policy, which laid down that all replacement pilots for Korea must attend a five week course. They were trained on Harvards and Spitfires. The programme required each pilot to undergo 46hrs of ground

46. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.11.1950.

47. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20-21, 24.11.1950.

48. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25-26.11.1950.

training, 40hrs of actual flying training and 86hrs of cockpit drill.

The flying training was divided as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|----------|
| a. Fighter vs Fighter Combat | - | 4hrs |
| b. Fighter vs Bomber Combat | - | 8,45hrs |
| c. Ground Attack | - | 20,20hrs |
| d. Air-to-Air Firing | - | 6,15hrs |

The course remained substantially the same until Course 11 was introduced during September 1952. Pilots were then also trained on Vampires, in anticipation of the conversion of 2 Sqn to F-86F Sabres. As soon as possible, tour expired pilots from Korea were posted as instructors to the AOS.⁴⁹

49. LAFS: Box 25, AOS/202/15/3/TR to AOS/202/15/15/TR: Reports on Operational Training Courses Nos.1-13.

CHAPTER 6

2 SQN SAAF SETTLES DOWN IN KOREA

PHASE THREE: 27 NOVEMBER 1950 - 24 JANUARY 1951

THE GROUND SITUATION

On 28 November 1950, with the UN ground forces falling back in the face of the Chinese Communist offensive, General MacArthur summoned his two ground commanders in Korea (Generals Walker and Almond), to an emergency conference in Tokyo. There he informed them that in his opinion, the preservation of UN ground forces was to be given top priority in the new situation that had developed. He accordingly ordered Walker to make the withdrawals necessary to prevent the outflanking of the Eighth Army. Whilst maintaining contact with the enemy Almond was to withdraw his X Corps into the Hamhung-Hungnam beachhead. These actions were implicitly approved by the JCS when they instructed the C-in-C UNC to put aside any previous directives which conflicted with his current plan to defend.¹

Several factors made it difficult for the UN forces to find a defence line which could be developed in order to check the Communist advance. The high broken terrain of the Taebaek Range made east-west communication between the Eighth Army and the X Corps both difficult and, according to MacArthur, inadvisable. Thus the idea of the establishment of a single unbroken line of defence running east-west across the peninsula was dropped. The CCF were able to take advantage of this and exploited the gap between the two forces during their advance, as they had done in their initial attack. Moreover, the rough terrain enabled the CCF to employ their dispersion tactics effectively, thereby diminishing the losses which could have resulted from the UN interdiction effort.²

1. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.278-279.

2. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.280-281.

In addition to having to contend with difficult terrain, MacArthur had a manpower problem. His frontline troops had been continuously involved in combat for five months and were getting weary. Without reinforcements, the only prospects were of prolonged resistance in the Pusan and Hungnam beachheads at best, and the evacuation of Korea at worst. On 4 December 1950 the JCS and President Truman formally approved the plan to consolidate into beachheads.³

The unfavourable turn of events in Korea precipitated problems both within the UN Command and in the United States. On 6 December 1950, when the Chief-of-Staff of the US Army, General J.L. Collins, returned to Tokyo from a visit to the Korean frontlines, he conferred with the C-in-C UNC and his staff. MacArthur strongly objected to the restrictions placed on his hard pressed command; namely, the prohibition on air attacks against Chinese base areas in Manchuria, the failure to set up a naval blockade of China, the refusal to consider reinforcements from Nationalist China, and the policy not to send reinforcements from the US until April 1951 at the earliest. He had already voiced these objections publically and the rift between MacArthur and his President was beginning to show.⁴

The successful intervention by the Chinese in the Korean conflict increased the danger of the war spreading. On 4 December 1950 the British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, visited the United States, where he held discussions with President Truman which lasted for five days. They decided in principle not to object to any approach by an Asiatic nation to the CCF for a ceasefire. A short while later, on 15 December 1950, the escalating need for men and equipment caused Truman to declare a state of national

3. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.281-282.

4. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.283-284.

emergency. The Communist Chinese had caught their enemy on the wrong foot both politically and militarily, and the West was unsure of how to respond.⁵

The uncertainty prevailing in the corridors of power was reflected in the battle zone. In the eastern sector MacArthur ordered the X Corps to evacuate through Hungnam to Pusan, where they were to pass under the command of the Eighth Army on arrival. This order was successfully executed by 24 December 1950 when the rearguard, the US 3rd Division, finally withdrew under strong support from naval guns and carrier-based marine and navy aircraft. No serviceable equipment was abandoned and all personnel were safely evacuated. Moreover, within 14 days, in addition to the 105 000 troops, the 193 ships had evacuated 98 000 Korean civilians, 17 500 vehicles and 355 600 tonnes of bulk cargo. A remarkable aspect of the highly successful operation was the skill with which Maj.-Gen. O. Smith extracted his 1st Marine Division from a trap in the Chosin Reservoir area. Although he suffered 7 500 casualties in the process (half of them to frostbite) he inflicted 37 500 casualties on the encircling OCF with the help of air support.⁶

The situation in the Eighth Army sector was less clear cut. On 5 December 1950 Walker withdrew the Eighth Army to the south of P'yongyang. The Chinese did not pursue and broke contact. Gen. M.B. Ridgway ascribed this to two factors:

- a. the OCF policy of only supplying their troops for a few days' combat at a time, and

5. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.285-286, 298-299.

6. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.301-303;
M.B. Ridgway: The War in Korea, pp.70-71;
Leckie: Conflict, pp.219-225.

- b. the effect of aerial attacks on the lengthening Chinese supply lines.⁷

Although the lack of contact with their enemy took the immediate pressure off the UN commanders, it left them in ignorance as to the dispositions and intentions of the OCF. By mid-December the Eighth Army had fallen back to a vague line south of the Imjin River running through Yongp'yong, Hwach'on and Inje, to Yangyang on the east coast. There, repeated minor clashes occurred with North Korean troops whom the Chinese main body appeared to be using as a reconnaissance and screening force. MacArthur suspected that the OCF were preparing for another offensive and ordered aggressive ground reconnaissance.⁸

At that stage, on the morning of 23 December 1950, General Walker was killed in a vehicle accident near Uijongbu. His successor, Lieutenant-General M.B. Ridgway, Deputy Chief of Army Staff for Administration, arrived in Tokyo at midnight two days later. At 09h30 he conferred with MacArthur in the C-in-C's office. The latter complained at having to operate in a "mission vacuum" and of the poor supply discipline exercised by the UN troops. He also expressed a lack of confidence in the value of tactical air support. This was in contrast to his prior claims, during early November 1950, that airpower could restrict the number of Chinese reinforcements crossing the Yalu sufficiently to enable him to destroy the Chinese forces already in Korea. He also proceeded to give his new army commander far more authority than Walker had enjoyed when he informed Ridgway that:

7. Ridgway: The War in Korea, pp.72-73.

8. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.304-305.

"The Eighth Army is yours, Matt. Do what you think best."⁹

General Ridgway took over an army which for over a month had been withdrawing in the face of numerically superior forces. Soon after his arrival in Korea, travelling by light aircraft, helicopter and jeep, he visited all the Corps and Division commanders, with the exception of the ROK Capitol Division on the east coast. He found that he had indeed inherited a morale problem and that there was a complete lack of offensive spirit. He described his new command as a "bewitched army, not sure of itself or its leaders, not sure what they were doing there, wondering when they would hear the whistle of that homebound transport."¹⁰ On 26 December 1950, the 2 Squadron diarist noted the extent to which this defeatist attitude had affected the Fifth Air Force personnel at K-10:

"It appears that some members of the United Nations Forces at this base have no wish to fight in Korea and many cannot see the reason for them being here. The personnel of this Squadron, however, remain very aggressive and our only desire is to fight this war the way we were used to."¹¹

The new commander made it his immediate task to rectify morale problems. His efforts included a letter addressed to each individual assigned or attached to the Eighth Army on 21 January 1951. The letter was headed: "Why are we here? What are we fighting for?" Ridgway's answers to these questions bear comparison with the editorial of the Star

9. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.306-307;
Ridgway: The War in Korea, pp.81-83.

10. Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.86.

11. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.12.1950;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.251.

of 5 August 1950 and the South African Prime Minister's speech in the House of Assembly on 25 January 1951.¹² Ridgway concluded his letter thus:

"In the final analysis, the issue joined right here in Korea is whether Communism or individual freedom shall prevail; whether the flight of fear driven people we have witnessed here shall be checked, or shall at some future time, however distant, engulf our own loved ones in all its misery and despair."¹³

However, before Ridgway could restore his army's fighting spirit and hence take the offensive, he was forced to make further withdrawals in order to preserve his forces intact. On the night of 31 December 1950 - 1 January 1951 the UN forces all along the frontline were subjected to a preparatory mortar and artillery bombardment, and at daybreak the CCF launched a major offensive. This became known as the Chinese Third Phase Offensive or the New Year Offensive. The weight of the attack fell in the west and centre against the US I and IX Corps, with the main drive aimed at Seoul and Inch'on along the Yongch'on-Uijongbu-Seoul axis. Ridgway's troops were forced to fall back to a line which ran along the south bank of the Han River to Yongp'yong and from there to the Sea of Japan through Hongch'on and Chumunjin. Included in this defence line was a bridgehead around Seoul intended to delay the Chinese armies and to deny them the Han River bridges.¹⁴

When withdrawal to this line proved insufficient, Ridgway realized

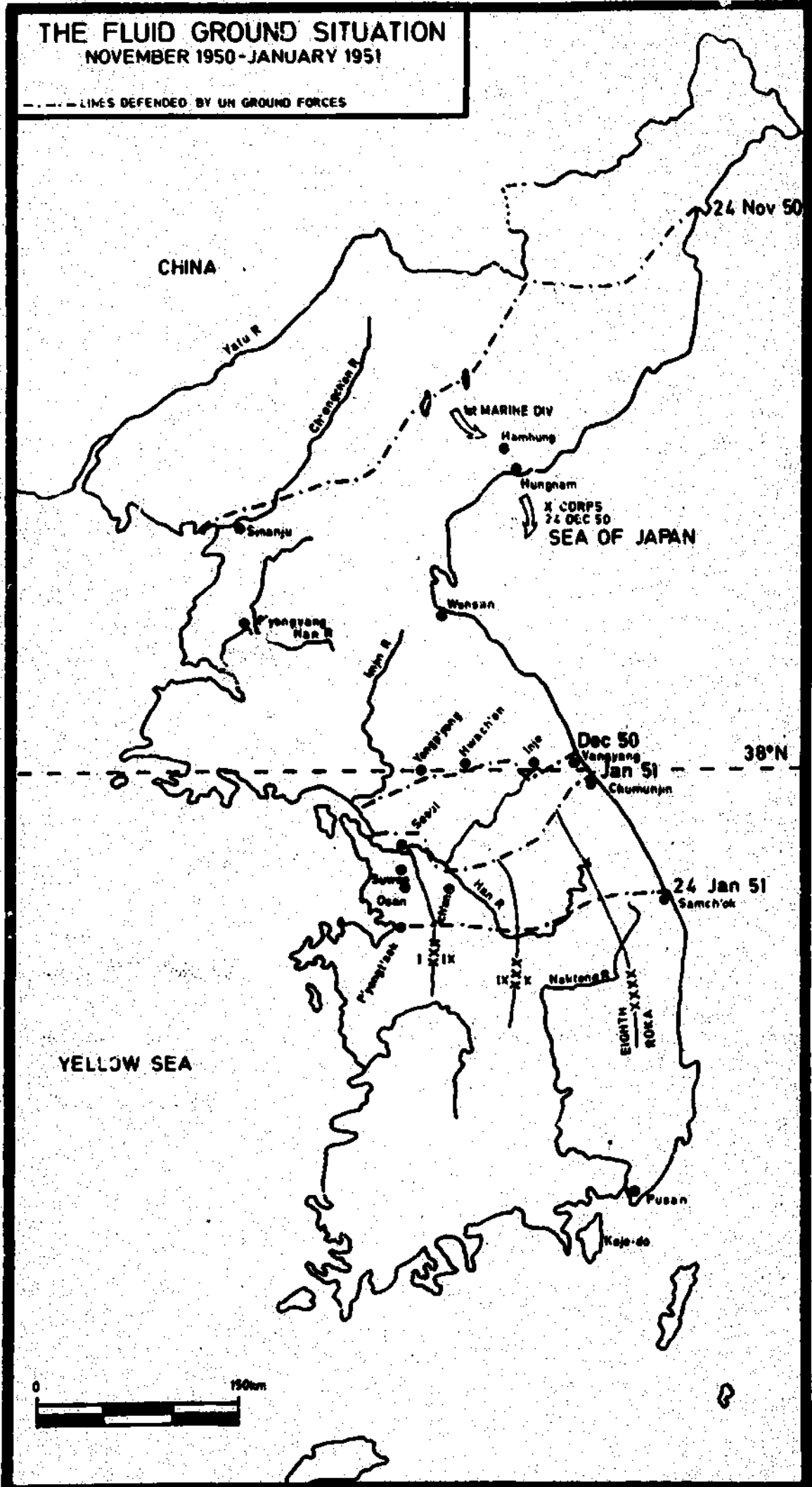
12. Vide, pp.89-93.

13. Ridgway: The War in Korea, pp.86-87, 264-265.

14. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.308-309; J. Miller, O.J. Carroll and M.E. Tackley: Korea 1951-1953, p.5; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.407.

THE FLUID GROUND SITUATION NOVEMBER 1950 - JANUARY 1951

--- LINES DEFENDED BY UN GROUND FORCES



that he would have to establish a defence line further down the peninsula in order to avoid the destruction of his army. Such a move would present an opportunity to capitalize on the weaknesses of the OCF logistical system which was in danger of being outrun by their tactical progress. He thus decided to move southwards and subsequently abandoned Seoul on 4 January 1951. In order to inflict the maximum damage on the enemy, instructions were given that the withdrawal was to be conducted as a delaying action. As the military withdrew ROK civilian officials also left Seoul. By mid-January 1951 a defence line had been established across the peninsula from P'yongt'aek to Samch'ok. This was to mark the limit of the UN withdrawal southwards.¹⁵

It was from this line that the UNC launched its first offensive action since 24 November 1950. Aerial reconnaissance had revealed an enemy build-up between Osan and Suwon, and on 14 January 1951 Ridgway ordered Operation Wolfhound. This was to be an armour supported attack against the detected concentration with the aim of killing as many of the enemy as possible and then immediately withdrawing. On 15 January the 27th Infantry Regiment reinforced with artillery, tanks and engineers, advanced as far as the southern outskirts of Osan before drawing fire. They found the countryside to be virtually deserted. The Communist New Year Offensive had obviously run out of steam. There were indications that the Chinese were experiencing supply and morale problems. Also, it became clear that they had suffered heavy casualties during the first half of January 1951. Ridgway saw that the time to strike was ripe.¹⁶

15. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.309;
Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.6.

16. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, pp.326-327;
Leckie: Conflict, p.257; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.8-9.

In a further attempt to develop the CCF dispositions, at 05h30 on 22 January 1951 a task force of the 1st Cavalry Division jumped-off in a reconnaissance in strength towards Ich'on. They too found the countryside empty and encountered little resistance. Although Ridgway feared a trap, his doubts were finally removed when he reconnoitred the area in a T-6 trainer piloted by General Partridge himself. On the morning of 25 January seven columns of the I and IX Corps struck northwards in an operation codenamed "Thunderbolt", with the limited objective of clearing the area south of the Han River. The UN ground forces were once more moving northwards.¹⁷

THE AIR SITUATION

When faced with the successful Communist offensive in late November 1950, General Stratemeyer announced that the air forces under his command would continue to maintain air superiority, interdict the Communist lines of communication, render close support to the ground forces and provide air transport. The first three missions involved the tactical air force of which 2 Squadron SAAF formed part. Like their comrades on the ground the air forces too had to contend with a new enemy. UN air superiority had been challenged as early as 1 November 1950 with the appearance of the Chinese Communist Air Force (CCAF) over North Korea. During December 1950 FEAF intelligence estimates set the CCAF strength at 650 combat aircraft, which included 250 conventional and jet fighters, 175 ground attack aircraft, 150 conventional twin-engine bombers and 75 transport aircraft.¹⁸

17. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.333; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.10; Leckie: Conflict, p.259; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.262-63.

18. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.229-230; R. Steel: Mig vs Sabre (War Monthly, No.31, 1976), p.40.

It was the presence of these jets, the MIG-15's, that posed the greatest threat. These Soviet fighters, which incorporated a swept-wing design of German origin and an imitation of the British Rolls-Royce Nene engine, were better than anything the FEAF had available in the Far East, including the US Navy's new F9F Pantherjets. The MIG-15 had an operation ceiling of 15 500m, a top speed of 1 075 kph at sea level, and was armed with one 37mm N37 gun on the starboard side and two 23mm NR23 cannon on the port side. The possession of these fighters, together with the new 1 800m runway and long range radar facility at Antung on the northern bank of the Yalu River, gave the OCF the theoretical capability of dominating the airspace of north-western Korea. Fortunately for the United Nations, the Communist pilots were mainly young and inexperienced and failed to press home their theoretical advantage.¹⁹

The UN answer to the appearance of the MIG-15 included the deployment of the latest US jets and the adoption of defensive tactics. On 6 December 1950 the 27th Fighter-Escort Wing flew its first Republic F-84E Thunderjet mission from Taegu, and on 17 December the 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing mounted its first F-86A Sabre mission from Kimpo. On the same day the Sabres claimed their first MIG victim. The F-86A was the latest US jet and like the MIG-15 was swept-wing. It was powered by a General Electric J-47-GE-1 engine, which gave it a top speed of 1 083 kph at sea level and an operating ceiling of 14 630m. It was armed with six 12,7mm M-3 machine guns, mounted in threes on either side of the cockpit. The Sabre had one definite advantage over the MIG; it lay in the man who flew them. Unlike the OCAF, the first USAF jet wings deployed in Korea had

19. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.230-231; Steel: Mig vs Sabre (War Monthly, No.31, 1976), p.40.

several experienced aces of World War II within their ranks.²⁰

The defensive measures taken by the FEAF included multiple bomber raids in place of single bomber raids, to enable the medium bombers to give one another mutual support. The fighter-bombers also had to adopt new tactics. On armed reconnaissance missions flights broke up into two elements, one of which searched at low level for its targets, while the other provided top cover. All missions were obliged to conserve fuel against the possibility of enemy attack. Although the appearance of the MIG-15 did not lead to the loss of UN air superiority, it did considerably curtail FEAF combat effectiveness.²¹

During the two periods of contact which lasted from 24 November to 5 December 1950 and from 1 to 5 January 1951, the 5AF provided the Eighth Army with close air support. This support proved to be decisive, particularly in events towards the end of 1950. The withdrawing UN forces frequently found their route southwards straddled by strong OCF roadblocks. Flights of fighter-bombers broke the roadblocks and allowed the trapped troops to escape.²²

On 15 December 1950 FEAF formally instituted "Interdiction Campaign No.4". Korea north of the 37th parallel was divided into 11 interdiction areas and specific interdiction targets were selected along the main supply route (MSR). Acting in accordance with the plan, the B-29 Superfortress medium bombers attacked P'yongyang during the hours of darkness, while daylight attacks were made by flights of fighter-bombers.

20. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.232-235; M. Allward: F-86 Sabre, pp.13-16; Steel: Mig vs Sabre (War Monthly, No.31, 1976), p.40.

21. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.232.

22. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.237-242.

Targets included marshalling yards, airfields, supply vehicles and trains. During the weeks in December while the UN ground forces broke contact with the enemy, the FEAF intelligence section estimated that its aircraft had killed and wounded personnel equivalent to five CCF divisions (\pm 8 000 men per division).²³

During the New Year Offensive, five days of clear crisp weather enabled the 5AF fighter-bombers to find prime targets in the columns of southward moving Chinese troops. A maximum effort was made by all wings. The busy roads converging on Seoul from Kaesong and Yonchon proved to be particularly lucrative target areas. Fifth Air Force sorties flown during the first five days of January 1951 totalled 564, 531, 556, 498 and 447 respectively. During the course of the first two days of the offensive fighter-bomber flights reported to the TACC at ten minute intervals.²⁴

The overwhelming air support enjoyed by the UN ground forces during January 1951 combined with the Communists' lack of effective airpower were the decisive factors in halting the CCF offensive. Eighth Army Headquarters estimated that 38 000 casualties were inflicted upon the enemy during the first 26 days of January 1951; of these the FEAF claimed 18 820.²⁵ Lin Piao, the commander of the Chinese Fourth Field Army, complained that it was the UN air support that had prevented him from pushing his enemy into the sea.²⁶ General O.P. Weyland, who served

23. ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, pp.407-408; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.243-245.

24. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.256.

25. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.261-262.

26. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.263.

on the FEAF staff at the time, later wrote that the cumulative effect of the UN air strikes had led to the collapse of the OCF logistical system, with the result that they could no longer maintain their offensive. In particular, he quotes POW interrogation reports which claim that reinforcements took from two and a half to four months to reach the front, and when they eventually arrived they were not physically fit for combat.²⁷

2 SQUADRON ADVANCE DETACHMENT EVACUATES K-24

The Chinese success in their "Second Phase Offensive" of November 1950 exposed the 5AF forward bases at P'yongyang and Yonpo to danger from OCF ground forces.²⁸ Armoured cars and heavy tanks began to arrive at K-24 on 28 November, accompanied by the distant sound of heavy gunfire and exploding bombs. Against this background the station commander called a conference at which he alerted all units to stand by for a sudden evacuation. That night an assassination attempt by two North Koreans on the commander of the nearby K-23 was narrowly averted by the arrival of two American sentries.²⁹

During the course of the next few days the South Africans saw increasing evidence of the reversal of UN fortunes. On 29 November several armoured units passed by en route southwards. The weary troops who had to fight their way through enemy ambushes along their line of retreat spoke highly of the effectiveness of the close air support that they had received. News also reached K-24 of Communist guerillas

27. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power The Decisive Force in Korea), p.13.

28. Futrell, et al: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.247-248.

29. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28-29.11.1950.

attacking UN columns to the south of P'yongyang. The airmen feared that they were fast becoming surrounded.³⁰ When on 1 December, the British Commander-in-Chief, General Robertson called in at the Squadron Operations Tent on his way southwards, he and the South African personnel renewed their acquaintance under circumstances vastly different from those of their original meeting on board the Tjisadane.³¹

There was also evidence of the new Communist aggressiveness in the air. On 29 November the vapour trail of a MIG-15 was spotted from K-24. Although F-51's were scrambled, no contact was made with the very much faster Communist aircraft. That same afternoon and again on the following day, more unidentified aircraft were sighted from K-24 and 2 Squadron alerted. But once again no contact was made, and neither was the airfield attacked.³² The 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing at K-23 did not, however, fare so well. On 1 December several of its aircraft were damaged when the base was strafed and bombed by three Communist fighters. The 2 Squadron diarist summed up the general dismay felt at the sudden turn of events with the entry:

"This war is surely going the wrong way."³³

Meanwhile on 30 November 1950, the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group had started to withdraw to Suwon (K-13). The bulky equipment was flown out on C-47, C-54 and C-119 transports which left at ten minute intervals. Heavy equipment, including the 822nd Aviation Engineer Battalion's plant, was moved by road, rail and even sea, with much of it being lost in the

30. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28-30.11.1950.

31. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.12.1950; Vide, p.112.

32. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29-30.11.1950.

33. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.12.1950.

process.³⁴ The fighter units were instructed to hold out at K-24 until the last so as to be able to operate for as long as possible from a base close to the advancing OCF. On 1 December 1950 all ranks assisted in pulling down the detachment's tents. Only the Operations Tent and two billet tents were left standing. The next day the OCF advance elements reached the outskirts of P'yongyang and the evacuation of K-24 was ordered. The three remaining tents were pulled down and sent to the loading ramp. At 11h00 a C-119 flew out 26 personnel and 6 718kg of equipment belonging to 2 Squadron. On arrival at Suwon they were faced with the unenviable task of having to pitch the tents on snow covered ground much of which had been churned into mud.³⁵

As with the other fighter-bomber units, the SAAF detachment did not lose a single day's operations during their withdrawal. Its pilots' aggressiveness was matched and supported by the ground crew who had to contend with extremely adverse conditions including an acute shortage of equipment and the bitterly cold weather blown in by the north wind. They worked day and night to keep the seven available F-51 Mustangs at combat readiness. The two armourers in the detachment were faced with the mammoth task of having to handle and load napalm bombs, rockets and machine guns in the open air without the necessary equipment. Even after all the extra work and excitement involved in the evacuation to K-13 the ground crew could not afford to rest, but once again had to prepare their aircraft for operations.³⁶

34. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.11.1950;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.248.

35. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.11.1950;
WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-2.12.1950.

36. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27-28.11.1950;
WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.12.1950.

From 27 November until 2 December 1950 the 11 SAAF pilots at K-24 flew 43 sorties in close support of the Eighth Army. They found most of their targets along the main communications route in the vicinity of Kunu-ri and Tokch'on. The flights continued to consist of one USAF and three SAAF aircraft. The armament for all missions at this stage was standard; two napalm bombs, six 127mm (5 inch) HVAR rockets and the fitted 12,7mm (0,5 inch) machine guns. The frag orders required missions to stand by for immediate scramble by JOC. The effectiveness with which the Mosquito controllers co-ordinated attacks during this period of intense operations was a decisive factor contributing to the success of the missions. Communist troops, supplies and vehicles were destroyed by the fighter-bombers with the main target being troops.³⁷

On several occasions the "Flying Cheetahs" were called to the rescue of ambushed UN troops and were directed to attack OCF roadblocks that had been thrown across the escape routes. The narrow defiles through which the Korean roads passed made these roadblocks particularly difficult for the men on the ground to assail unaided, and the fighter-bomber pilots had to use all their nerve and skill to root out the enemy entrenched in inaccessible positions in the broken and rugged terrain.³⁸

Mission 02-Charlie, flown by one USAF and three SAAF pilots on 30 November was a typical "ambush busting" expedition. The four Mustangs took-off at 08h30 with Capt. J.F.O. Davis leading. Capt. W.J.J. Badenhorst and Lt F.E. Potgieter were the other South African pilots. They were briefed to report to the TACC, call sign "Mellow", for a close support

37. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27-30.11.1950;
WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-2.12.1950.

38. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27-30.11.1950;
WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-2.12.1950.

mission. Mellow assigned them to a target just south of the important road and rail junction of Kunu-ri, 75km north of P'yongyang. The OCF had ambushed southward moving UN troops with a system of two roadblocks. The target was indicated as OCF held buildings parallel to the railway line and close to a road and a rail bridge. Before the attack, because Capt. Davis' VHF radic had become unserviceable, Capt. Badenhorst took over the lead. Both bridges were effectively bombed and rocketed and the buildings destroyed. At the time the ambushed troops and their vehicles were only some 100m away from one of the bridges. However, the attack was so well co-ordinated that they were unharmed, although many of the OCF troops were killed. The only opposition experienced during the attack was from small arms fire. On their return to base the pilots received a congratulatory message from the commander of the rescued troops.³⁹

The failure of the Communist ground forces to conceal themselves during the first week of their advance gave the SAAF pilots the opportunity to attack large numbers of exposed troops on 1 December 1950. Three successive missions consisting of the usual one USAF and three SAAF combination were dispatched at 09h00, 11h30 and 14h30 to attack enemy concentrations along the southern bank of the Ch'ong-ch'on River just north-east of Anju. In all three cases the troops packed on the congested roads presented easy targets and excellent results were obtained. The returning pilots gave vivid accounts of soldiers being machine gunned as they fled the fearsome napalm blasts with their clothing ablaze. On the following day, the last mission to be flown by the SAAF was from K-24, at 08h30. The aircraft involved landed two hours later at K-13. It was the only mission of the day and its purpose

³⁹. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.11.1950.

was to destroy 280 vehicles abandoned by the retreating Eighth Army on the road between Kunu-ri and Yongwon-ni.⁴⁰

2 SQUADRON ADVANCE DETACHMENT AT K-13

The advance detachment stayed at Suwon airfield (K-13), just 30km south of Seoul, until 22 December 1950, when the first echelons of the main body of the squadron which had been flown from Johnson to Chinhae (K-10) via Itazuke five days earlier, entered operations. At the same time, 21 ground personnel and all the pilots with the exceptions of Capt. Badenhorst and Lts Maclean, MacDonald and Richter were transferred from K-13 to K-10. Thus from 22 December until 4 January 1951, K-13 served only as a staging base where a small detachment of 14 SAAF ground crew re-armed and refuelled 2 Squadron's F-51 Mustangs.⁴¹

Living conditions at K-13 were relatively primitive. A clear picture of the hardships experienced by the pilots and ground crew alike is given in the reports of two officers from the SAAF Liaison HQ, Maj. P.C.S.W. Daneel, Senior Administrative Officer, and Maj. D. Swanepoel, Senior Equipment Officer, who visited K-13 from 17 to 19 December. The Operations "Room" at Suwon consisted of a single US squad type tent divided into two sections. The front section housed the Operations "Room" proper, while the rear section served the Operations Officer as his living quarters. The tent was well lit with sealed beam electric lights coupled to a generator. Warmth was provided by a single oil stove. There was a camp telephone and an operations telephone, but the link to

40. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-2.12.1950.

41. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17-22.12.1950;
WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-4.1.1951.

the officers' tents was frequently out of order. As the officers' tents were some way from the Operations Tent the length of time required to summon the pilots constituted an operational hazard. Also, the single radio in possession of the squadron had found its way into the Operations Tent and lounging listeners contributed to the general congestion.⁴²

The officers and men were accommodated in squad type tents, each occupied by four to five officers or by eight other ranks. In an attempt to keep out the biting cold, each tent was equipped with two oil burning stoves and each man was issued with a comforter, a sleeping bag and an adequate supply of blankets. The detachment's ablution facilities were improvised from one half of a drop tank brought from K-24. Water had to be fetched in jerry-cans which were placed at various points in the camp. The sanitary arrangements were primitive. The standard American facility consisted of four buckets in an unventilated wooden shack. The South Africans, however, preferred the cold but fresh air and erected a hessian screen around an open-air bucket. There were no laundry facilities, each man had to wash his own clothes which were hung over the tent stoves to dry.⁴³

Other small inconveniences were also experienced by the SAAF personnel at K-13. None of these in itself was critical, but the cumulative effect did have a corrosive influence on morale. Post did not reach the men at Suwon on a regular basis and cigarettes were virtually unobtainable. There was no tea or coffee to be had between meals or after hours. In

42. SALO: Box 4, SALO/S/49/1/AIR, Maj. D. Swanepoel: Visit to 2 Squadron SAAF in Korea at K-10 and K-13, 16.12.1950 to 21.12.1950 dated 27.12.1950; Maj. P.C.S.W. Daneel: Report on visit to 2 Squadron in Korea 16 December 1950 to 21 December 1950 dated 27.12.1950.

43. SALO: Box 4, SALO/S/49/1/AIR, Maj. P.C.S.W. Daneel: Report on visit to 2 Squadron in Korea 16 Dec 50 to 21 Dec 50 dated 27.12.1950.



Washday in a Forward Base.

MIB Photograph No: 70006720

addition to these small problems, the officers and men had to contend with the extreme cold, and due to the squadron being split, a shortage of personnel and equipment. Also, they lacked confidence in the F-51 and to top it all, a residual feeling of dissatisfaction at the original misunderstandings over equipment and training at Johnson Air Base persisted.⁴⁴

The ground crew had their own particular problems with which to contend. As the detachment lacked base support until the arrival of the main body in Korea, the Engineering Officer advised that missions be limited to one per aircraft per day. However, the wing operations required a daily minimum of two. The Engineering Officer eventually agreed to this provided that the missions were well spaced; but, due to inadequate staff, spares and equipment the desired sortie rate could not be achieved. In an effort to maintain maximum combat readiness, however, armourers frequently worked late into the night in order to effect the last minute changes in armament and bomb load. American assistance to SAAF ground crews enabled 2 Squadron to keep its aircraft in operation. Nevertheless, despite their difficulties, the advance detachment at Suwon was able, not only to keep its aircraft in combat, but also to inflict considerable damage upon the enemy.⁴⁵

After the Eighth Army broke contact during the first week of December 1950 the 5AF combat groups turned their attention from the

44. SALO: Box 4, SALO/S/49/1/AIR, Maj. P.C.S.W. Daneel: Report on visit to 2 Squadron in Korea 16 Dec 50 to 21 Dec 50 dated 27.12.1950; Maj. D. Swanepoel: Visit to 2 Squadron SAAF in Korea at K-10 and K-13 16.12.1950 to 21.12.1950 dated 27.12.1950.

45. SALO: Box 4, SALO/S/49/1/AIR, Maj. P.C.S.W. Daneel: Report on visit to 2 Squadron in Korea 16 Dec 50 to 21 Dec 50 dated 27.12.1950.

enemy troops to the lengthening supply lines. Hence interdiction missions against rolling stock, vehicle convoys and reinforcement troops being brought up to the frontline became the most common type of operation.⁴⁶

The target area covered by 2 Squadron from Suwon during December 1950 included two branches of the main supply route (MSR) running northwards from P'yongyang to the Ch'ong-ch'on River, the western branch crossing the frozen river at Sinanju and the eastern branch near Kunu-ri. Armed reconnaissance missions were also flown along the MSR between Haeju and P'yongyang. Targets included the marshalling yards at Kunu-ri, P'yongyang and at Sinanju, where harbour installations and shipping also came under fire. Weather permitting, two missions of four aircraft each were usually flown per day, one in the early morning and the other during the afternoon. At that stage the South Africans started to fly without the accompaniment of an American pilot on each mission, however, the USAF pilots had made an invaluable contribution to the effectiveness of 2 Sqn pilots by familiarizing them with the theatre.⁴⁷

It was during the course of a typical railway interdiction mission that the first SAAF F-51 Mustang was lost in operations. The pilot, however, was rescued from behind enemy lines by two remarkably brave American officers. It happened on 5 December 1950 when Mission 18-Easy was briefed to destroy ten UN railway trucks loaded with explosives, which had fallen into Communist hands and had been located on the main-line ten km north of Sunan.⁴⁸ The four aircraft mission took-off from K-13

46. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3-22.12.1950; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, pp.401-403.

47. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3-22.12.1950; Brig. S.v.B. Theron: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 13.1.1982.



48. Sources for this mission and its consequences are WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1950, Appendix A, Capt. J.F.O. Davis: Report on Crash Landing in Mustang No.311, 6.12.1950; WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.12.1950; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/5/AIR, Capt. G.B. Lipawsky: Flight Leader's Mission Report Mission 18-Easy, 5.12.1950.

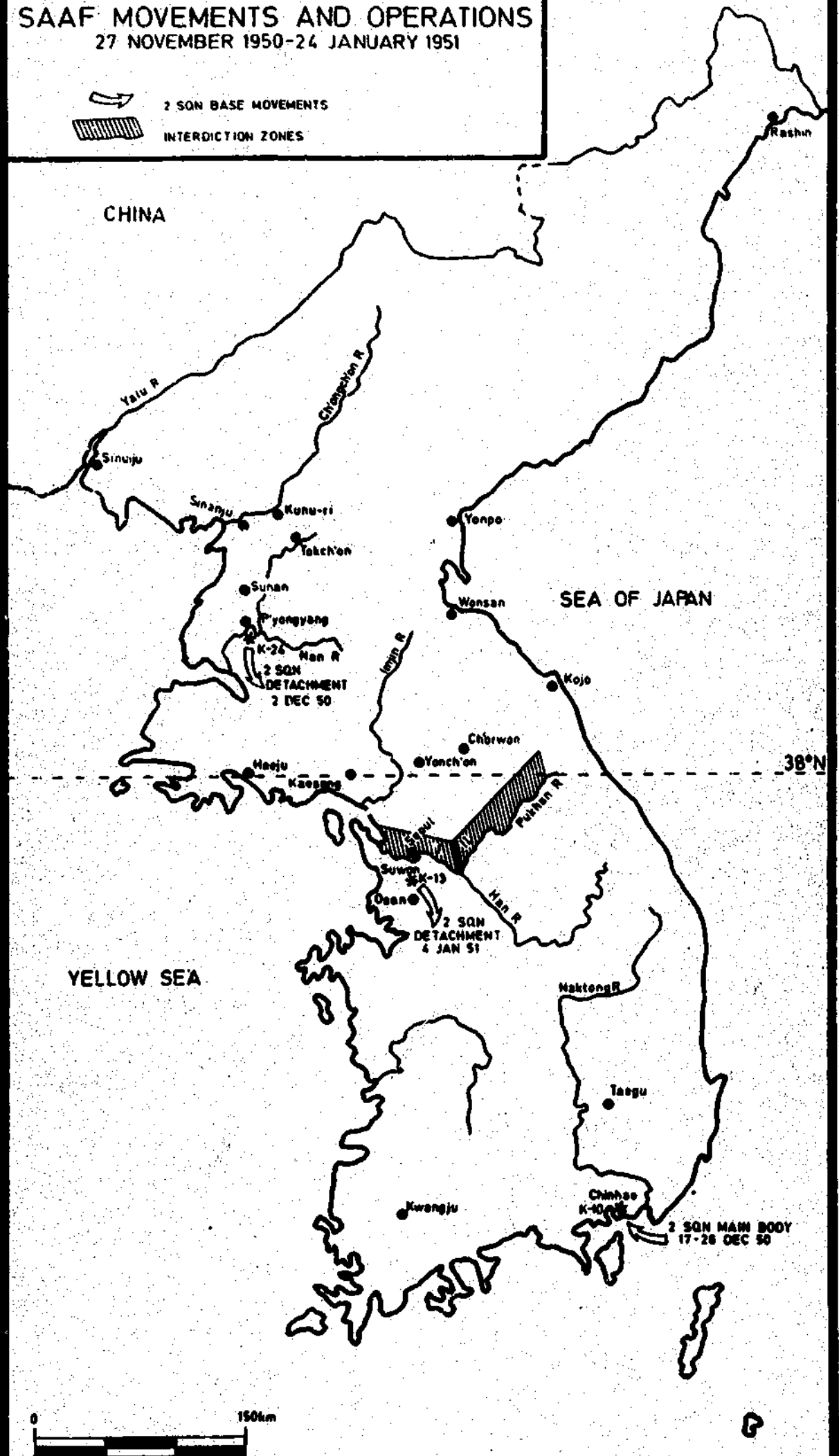
at 14h00 carrying six HVAR rockets and the usual 12,7mm ammunition. Capt. G.B. Lipawsky led the mission, with Lt F.B. Richter No.2, Capt. J.F.O. Davis No.3 and an American No.4. En route to the target the USAF pilot developed engine trouble and decided to return. He was escorted back by Lt Richter and Capt. Davis moved into No.2 position.

When they reached the target area north of Sunan Capt. Lipawsky provided top cover while Capt. Davis dropped to tree-top level to search for the railway trucks which he could not find in the reported position. Meanwhile, Capt. Lipawsky had spotted large supply dumps at a railway siding 20km to the south and just 6km north of P'yongyang. They decided to attack these instead. Capt. Davis made three strafing runs on the dumps at the southern end of the siding but they failed to burn. When rockets were used, however, the dumps burst into high flames and billows of white smoke. Although Capt. Davis made two further rocket runs on a large dump in the centre of the siding he missed the target. Finally he commenced an attack from 900m with his last rocket. The dump exploded with such force that Capt. Lipawsky, who was circling at 1 200m, temporarily lost control of his aircraft. Capt. Davis, who had gone in very low to deliver his last rocket, was knocked unconscious. It is remarkable that his aircraft (No.331), which had been trimmed tail heavy, managed to clear some hills that lay in its path.

When he came to his senses Capt. Davis found the elevator and aileron controls inoperative and he had to resort to using his elevator trim to climb away. A survey of the damage revealed that both ailerons had been blown off; both mainplanes were full of holes (some as large as soup plates); there was a hole of about 15cm in diameter in the floor of the cockpit to the left of the control column, and the engine was streaming glycol and smoke and vibrating. When Capt. Davis notified

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Capt. Lipawsky that he had been hit, the latter immediately transmitted a "Mayday" call on the emergency channel. It was picked up by the area controller. Meanwhile Capt. Davis managed to maintain an indicated air speed (IAS) of 320kmh at 760m. He was only 5km from friendly lines when his engine overheated and cut out. As the aircraft was not on fire he decided not to bale out. He was too low to leave by stepping over the side, and he could not use the alternative procedure of rolling over as he had no aileron control. Thus he had to attempt a forced landing. He selected a piece of road for the purpose, but his airspeed dropped too rapidly and he was finally forced to crash land in a freshly ploughed paddy field. Just before touching the ground the battered F-51 knocked down two trees with its wings.

Although the aircraft was almost a total wreck, the radio still worked. Capt. Davis used it to contact his flight leader, only to learn that no rescue helicopter was available. As a last resort, he then transmitted the information that the nearby road was suitable for a fixed wing liaison type aircraft, and went out to sit on the wing of his wrecked Mustang to await developments. After a few minutes he observed the approach of a number of men carrying rifles, whom he assumed to be North Koreans. His call for help over the VHF set was taken up by Capt. Lipawsky who drove them away successfully. When the capping aircraft was eventually forced to climb in order to fix the position the North Koreans once again approached, this time to within 200m; they seated themselves in a semi-circle with their rifles across their knees. For ten minutes they remained immobile and the anxious South African pilot became increasingly convinced that he was going to be shot. Finally, an old man rose, saluted and waved the South Korean flag. The supposed North Koreans professed to be members of the Korean Democratic Youth Party and the UN Special Police operating behind Communist lines. They

offered to guide their new friend back to the UN lines if he were not picked up.

At that stage, Capt. Davis lost his top cover when Capt. Lipawsky's aircraft and two USAF F-80 Shooting Stars which had come to their assistance ran low on fuel. Shortly afterwards, however, a T-6 (referred to in the SAAF as a Harvard) arrived on the scene. It dropped a note instructing him to burn his aircraft and then to walk in a southerly direction towards friendly territory. Although he accordingly carried out the first order, his "escort" dissuaded him from obeying the second, as they maintained there were enemy troops in the hills a kilometre to the south. Instead they started to take him northwards to their village. After the T-6 dropped a second note to say that they were walking in the wrong direction, Capt. Davis returned to the burning Mustang accompanied by two of the Koreans. It seemed as if his luck had finally run out, but rescue was not far away. The crew of 25th US Division L-5 Liaison aircraft on a routine observation flight had realized the desperate plight of the South African pilot. They landed their aircraft on the road nearby. The observer, Capt. L.L. Millet, although he was unarmed and knew that the North Koreans were closing in, voluntarily gave up his place in the L-5 to Capt. Davis, thus enabling the pilot, Capt. Lawrence, to lift him to safety. When Capt. Lawrence finally returned to pick up his observer he found him under fire from North Korean troops. At that stage too, the light was failing. Nevertheless, he landed on the road again and carried out a second rescue successfully. Capt. Millet's courage was subsequently recognized with the award of America's highest decoration, the Congressional Medal of Honour.

Other notable achievements also occurred on the more routine operations. For instance, Capt. Badenhorst had considerable success in leading attacks against vehicle convoys. On 11 December 1950 he led

four aircraft against a concealed convoy and succeeded in destroying 15 large trucks and damaging eight others, despite the fact that the target was not only well camouflaged but located on a narrow riverside road in a low-lying area surrounded by cloud covered hills.⁴⁹ He claimed a similar score two days later whilst leading two Mustangs on the squadron's third successive mission to a bridge over the Ch'ong-ch'on River near Sinanju. They had been tasked to ensure that the enemy would not cross the river at that point. As on the two previous missions, although Capt. Badenhorst saw no enemy troops initially, whilst returning low over the road he suddenly came upon a stationary convoy of 25 vehicles. In the attack which followed 15 of them were destroyed and others damaged. Other prime targets in the area included the Headquarters complex of the North Korean Commander-in-Chief. It fell victim to the 2 Squadron Mustangs on 12 December 1950, being strafed in the morning and again in the afternoon by four aircraft flights led by Capt. H.O.M. Odendaal and G.B. Lipawsky. Although intense AA and machine-gun fire was experienced during these attacks, the South African pilots and their aircraft emerged unscathed.⁵⁰

It was during this period that the South African pilots became distressed at certain aspects of the war in Korea. In order to maintain their logistics system the Communists made use of numerous deceptions, the most common of which was that of shielding behind the local population. They moved reinforcement troops and supplies mainly at night, and during the day concealed them in the villages which dotted the countryside. They also impressed the villagers to serve as porters. This tactic of using the civilians as a screen served a dual purpose: firstly, it provided cover from aerial observation; and secondly, when concentrations of

49. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.12.1950.

50. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12-13.12.1950.



A Korean Village.

MIB Photograph No: 70006704



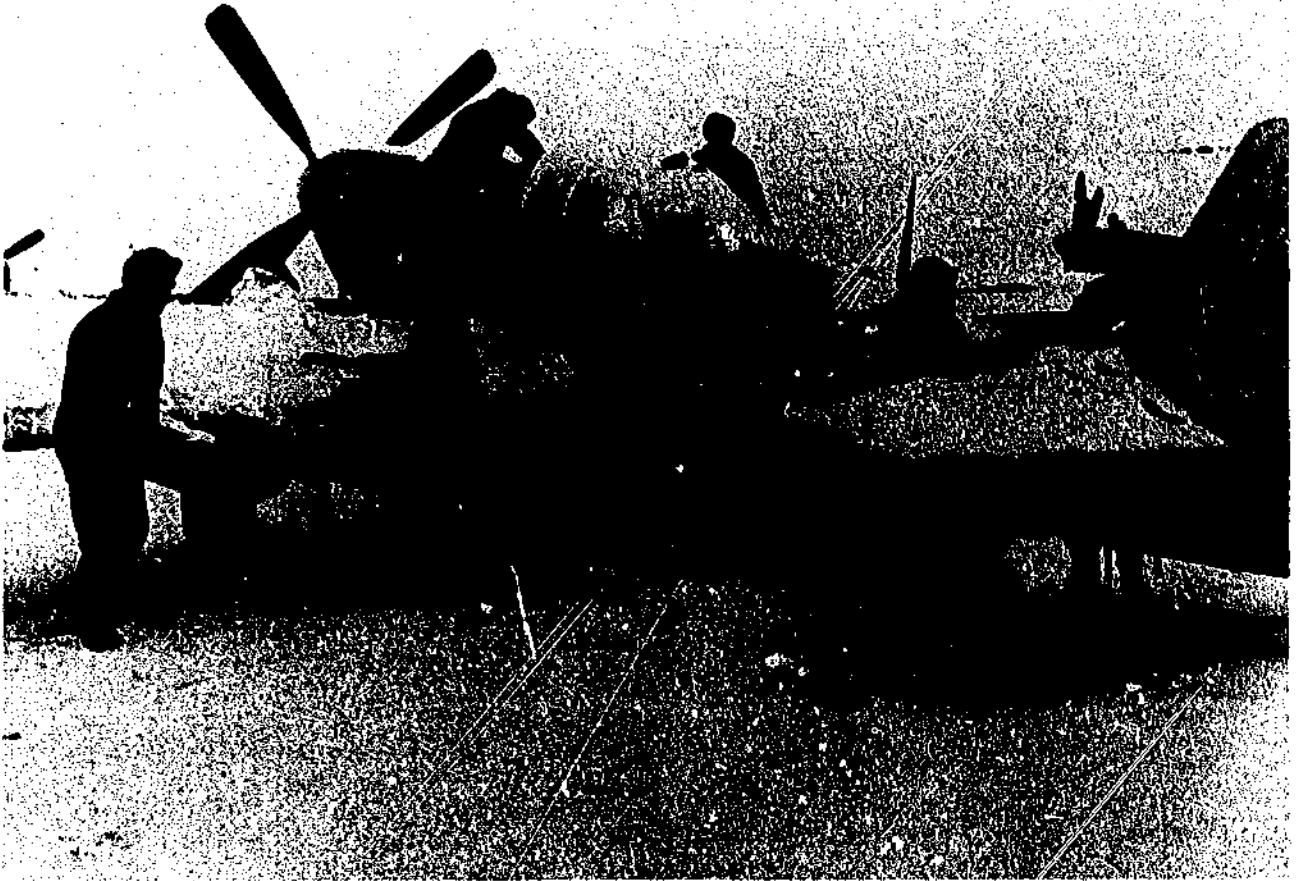
A Korean Peasant and his A-frame.

military supplies and personnel hidden in the villages were attacked, such incidents were used by the Communists to discredit the UN forces in the eyes of the local population. Enemy hiding places in the villages were often indicated by vehicle tracks in the morning snow. During December 1950 SAAF missions were directed to bomb villages from P'yongyang eastwards towards the central mountain ranges. Although they understood the reasons for the selection of these targets the South Africans received their assignments with dismay, especially when on 7 December they were directed to attack a village occupied by people they had known during their brief stay near the North Korean capital. The white-clad refugees moving southwards on foot through the snow and the many left to die by the wayside also made a deep impression on the South African pilots.⁵¹

In addition, not only was the clothing issued by the USAF totally inadequate for the severity of the Korean winter, but the weather itself caused delays in take-offs with consequent morale problems. The thick snow which gathered on the wing surfaces overnight had to be hammered loose with flat pieces of wood before the ice cracked and could be scraped off. Movement on the airfield itself was difficult, with vehicles being continually bogged down in the slush and mud. On 3 and 16 December snow grounded all aircraft. The unexpected break gave the South Africans an opportunity to mark "Dingaan's Day" in a unique fashion, with the building of a snow replica of the "Mother and Child" statue standing at the entrance to the Voortrekker Monument.⁵²

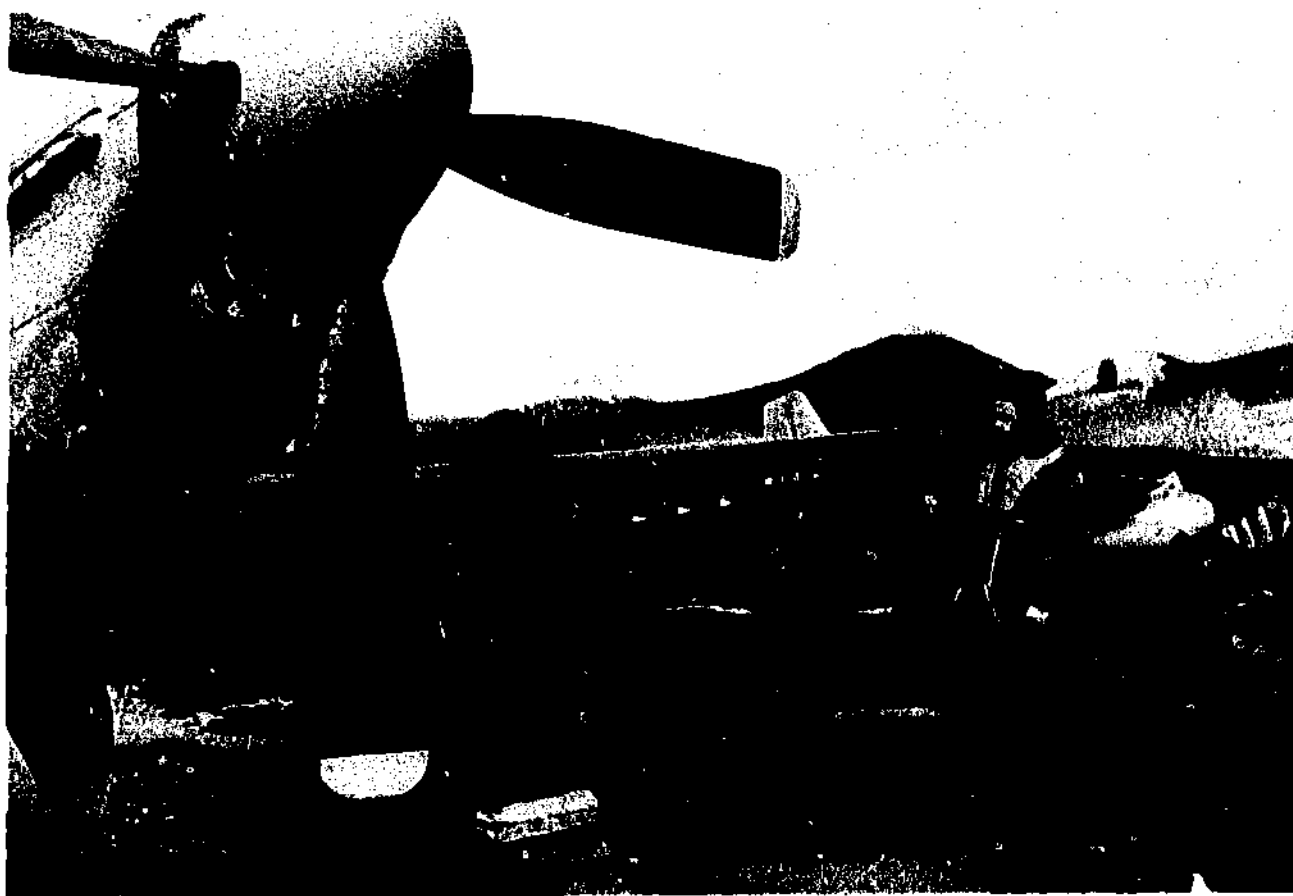
51. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7-22.12.1950; Maj.-Gen. M.D.V. Cloete: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 31.3.1981.

52. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3-16.12.1950.



Preparing a Mustang for Operations.

MIB Photograph No: 761004847



Mustangs and Mud.

MIB Photograph No: 70006647

The general feeling of relative defencelessness in the face of the advancing Communist ground forces was slightly relieved on 9 December then the other ranks at K-13 were finally issued with American rifles.⁵³ At the time Communist activity in the air was still evident. On 7 December two F-51D's from K-13 had been scrambled against a MIG-15 seen circling the airfield at 9 000m but no contact had been made.⁵⁴ Then, on the night of 9 December two unidentified aircraft arrived in the vicinity of the airfield. It seems that due to the poor visibility they failed to determine the exact location of K-13 and their bombs exploded harmlessly some distance away.⁵⁵

The evidence of OCAF activity which aroused the most interest at the time was that of an eye-witness account brought back by a mission led by Cndt S. van B. Theron. It described an encounter between MIG-15's and F-51D's, which presented the squadron with its first opportunity to analyse the OCAF tactics from first hand evidence. On 10 December 1950, while leading a mission of three South African Mustangs against Communist supply dumps, Cndt Theron saw nine MIG-15's attack nine USAF F-51D's which were escorting B-29's to the Yalu River. The MIG-15's attacked simultaneously from 12, 9 and 3 o'clock positions in flights of three aircraft each. The attacks were pressed home and the breakaways were down and backwards at terrific speeds. After the attack, which severely damaged one B-29, the jets climbed away across the Yalu outstripping the much slower F-51D's.⁵⁶

53. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9.12.1950.

54. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.12.1950.

55. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9.12.1950.

56. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.12.1950.

2 SQUADRON REUNITED AT K-10

The latter half of December 1950 saw the re-unification of 2 Squadron and its establishment at the rear base, K-10, situated near the town of Chinhae on the south coast of Korea. On 9 December the Senior Medical Officer, the Engineering Officer, the Armament Officer, five pilots and their F-51D's, and 18 other ranks were ordered to Korea to reinforce the advance detachment. The pilots were Lts A.M. Cooke, S. Armstrong, J.J. van Z. van Heerden, K.B. MacDonald and Lt E.N. Jones, who was returning to Korea after a short visit to Japan. The newcomers were welcomed enthusiastically at K-13 and put to work without delay. At that stage the status of 2 Squadron was also changed from that of a squadron operating under the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group to that of a Group under 18th Fighter Bomber Wing.⁵⁷

On 14 December 1950 arrangements to bring the main body of the squadron to Chinhae Air Base were finalized, when Oudt Theron was informed that those of his men who were still in Japan would be moved to K-10 within two days. The next day he flew to Chinhae to check the reception arrangements and returned well satisfied. On 16 December, while the South Africans in Japan were celebrating the national holiday, their Adjutant was instructed to alert the squadron for the move to Korea. Combat Cargo Command was initially charged to provide five C-54 Skymasters for the move. However, as there was a shortage of transport aircraft, it was finally arranged that the squadron's vehicles would be railed to the south of Japan from where the airlift to Korea was relatively short. On the

57. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9-11.12.1950

morning of 17 December squadron personnel rose at 03h30, and at 09h15 the first loaded C-54 took-off from Johnson Air Base. The airlift could not, however, take place as planned. The C-54's were found to be too heavy for the runway at K-10, so personnel and equipment had to be off-loaded at Itazuke Air Base in the south of Japan. From there a fleet of five C-47 Dakotas was provided to fly the squadron to K-10. At 18h30 when the Adjutant, Chaplain and 19 other ranks finally arrived, they were welcomed by the Commanding Officer of 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing. During the next week, groups of personnel and equipment were flown in at irregular intervals. By 26 December 2 Squadron was still struggling to find transport for 26 of its men and 3,8 tonnes of equipment stranded at K-9.⁵⁸

On 18 December at 13h00 seven of the squadron's remaining aircraft in Japan left Johnson Air Base in two flights; Lt F.A. Swamer led one of four Mustangs and Lt A.B. de Wet three. However, inclement weather forced them to land at Itazuke where they had to spend the night.⁵⁹ The next morning whilst landing at K-10, Lt De Wet had a narrow escape when his aircraft (No.307) crashed. He made a normal approach and touched down halfway down the runway, when his boot slipped behind the instrument panel and jammed the starboard brake. Corrective action resulted in the aircraft tipping on its nose. The pilot escaped uninjured.⁶⁰ It was not the first operational flying accident which the squadron had experienced in the Far East. On 4 December 1950 Lt J.A. Joubert, who was ferrying one of four F-51's from

58. WEM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14-26.12.1950.

59. WEM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 18-19.12.1950.

60. 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/4/AIR, Lt A.B. de Wet: Sworn Affidavit, 23.12.1950.

FEAMOOM at Tachinawa to 2 Squadron at Johnson Air Base, also wrote off his Mustang (USAF No.4511456) whilst landing. That particular Mustang was to have been allocated the SAAF number 325. Thus, for some time the number 325 was missing from the South African sequence.⁶¹

On 18 December, in view of the pending arrival of the whole squadron in Korea and the up-grading of the status of 2 Squadron, the Commanding Officer of the 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing (18FBW), Col C.R. Low, issued the Commanding Officer of 2 Squadron SAAF with a formal mission letter. Cdt Theron received it four days later. In it the verbal instructions which had been given on 19 November were confirmed and expanded upon: the command, control and training of 2 Squadron was to be the responsibility of the Commanding Officer of the squadron under the direction of 18FBW. He was charged to hold the squadron ready for the following types of operations:

1. The destruction of enemy airpower.
2. The close support of UN ground forces.
3. Maximum range armed reconnaissance and offensive strikes.
4. Interdiction of enemy ground lines and communications to include attacks along avenues of escape of enemy forces.
5. Escort and/or cover for UN air, sea and land forces.
6. The air defence of military installations.

These operations were to be carried out subject to restrictions which forbade 2 Squadron aircraft to:

1. Attack any target beyond those specific boundaries established by current operations directives from 18FBW Headquarters.
2. Attack hydro-electric plants or associated equipment located

^{61.} 2 Sqn R: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/3/AIR, Lt J.A. Joubert: Sworn Affidavit, 12.12.1950.

in Korea.

3. Attack surface vessels or small craft in the coastal waters of Korea except on the specific authority of the Commanding General of the 5AF.⁶²

On 21 December 1950 a further instruction followed which laid down the procedure for staging through K-13. On normal commitment days, two of the 18FBW squadrons were to furnish one flight each and the third squadron two flights. The latter were to depart from K-10, but would remain overnight at K-13 before returning to base. An example of how this was to work was given as follows:

	<u>12th Sqn</u>	<u>67th Sqn</u>	<u>2 Sqn SAAF</u>
22 Jun	8A/C	4A/C	4A/C
23 Jun	4A/C	8A/C	4A/C
24 Jun	4A/C	4A/C	8A/C

This system came into operation on 23 December.⁶³

The newly arrived members of 2 Sqn spent their first day at K-10 pitching tents for their own accommodation and for the administrative section and stores. Nissen huts were provided but there were only sufficient for 25 officers and 60 other ranks. Although the ablution facilities were initially very poor they were rapidly up-graded to the extent of even being able to offer the luxury of a warm shower. Also when 2 Sqn first arrived meals had to be eaten standing, as no seating was provided in the communal mess hall. This had its problems, as the cold was so piercing that it was necessary to eat with alternate hands, whilst the other was kept tucked in a pocket for warmth.⁶⁴ Besides the general dis-

62. WEM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.12.1950; WEM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1950, Appendix F, Mission Letter to Commanding Officer 2nd SAAF Squadron, 15.12.1950.

63. WEM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22-23.12.1950; WEM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1950, Appendix G, 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing, Operational Procedure, 21.12.1950.

64. WEM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 18.12.1950.

comfort, the South Africans had to contend with an additional problem in the form of a black rabbit, brought back from the forward bases by the advance detachment. At meal times the clandestine acquisition of greens for their pet as well as condensed milk for that essential item without which no South African force can operate, the occasional cup of tea or coffee, necessitated careful planning and stealth.⁶⁵

On Christmas Day 1950 a good dinner was provided for all, including the servicing detachment at K-13. Some of the fare enjoyed by the members of 2 Sqn was the result of the generosity of the South African Gifts and Comforts Fund and the Floor Representatives of the Commercial Exchange of Southern Africa who contributed £210 and £50 respectively. Each South African was also presented with a gift parcel by their American allies, with whom Christmas was to herald a note of increasing harmony.⁶⁶

In his report on a visit to the Squadron over the Festive Season, Col J. D. Pretorius, Senior Air Liaison Officer, commented:

"Thus it will be seen that whereas there was initially reason for concern, the personnel of the squadron are now settling down and their future relationship with the USAF personnel is being established on a basis of cordial co-operation."⁶⁷

OPERATIONS FROM K-10 DURING PHASE III

From the time it started operations from K-10 on 23 December 1950 until the actual launching of the OCF offensive on the night of 31 December,

65. Capt J.A. Joubert: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 2.4.1981.

66. WEM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 8,9,25.12.1950.

67. SAIO: Box 4, SAIO/S/49/1/AIR, Col J.D. Pretorius: SAIO-DGAF, Morale of No.2 Squadron SAAF, 23.2.1950.

the Communist build-up for the New Year Offensive provided 2 Squadron with its main targets. During this period the SAAF attacked both troops and stockpiles, but particularly the former. With the whole squadron operational the sortie rate rose to 16 per day, usually consisting of two four aircraft missions in the morning and two in the afternoon. On occasions the sortie rate was increased; on 27 and 29 December, 20 and 23 sorties were flown respectively. The four aircraft missions were usually pre-briefed to attack specific concentrations of OCF troops in occupied villages, while occasional two aircraft missions undertook armed reconnaissance flights along the MSR to seek targets of opportunity. Because they staged through K-13 these missions varied in duration from two and a quarter to two and a half hours.⁶⁸

There was ample evidence of the effectiveness of the missions flown by the "Flying Cheetahs". On Christmas Day Lt E.N. Jones led four aircraft on a close support mission against OCF troops dug-in along a ridge. The attack was so successful that, besides being congratulated by the forward controller, Lt Jones had the satisfaction of hearing him give the ground commander clearance for an attack.⁶⁹ The SAAF ferretted out Communist troops sheltering in the villages; occasionally they saw them fleeing with their clothes aflame from houses which had been napalmed. On 28 December, during an attack led by Cndt Theron against three Communist occupied houses Lt Wilson claimed 40 troops killed in a single rocket attack. His claim was later confirmed.⁷⁰

On 29 December Generals Stratensyer and Partridge visited K-10. The South African contingent was particularly honoured when the two generals visited the Operations Tent and expressed their appreciation

68. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23-31.12.1950.

69. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.12.1950.

70. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28.12.1950.

at the organization of the Operations Room and the procedure of employment of pilots on combat missions.⁷¹ This visit was followed up on 23 January 1951 when General Partridge made his official command inspection and presented Omdt Theron with a flag of the Union of South Africa.⁷²

During the first week of January 1951 a maximum effort was called for to counter the New Year Offensive. The squadron's sortie rate rose to 24 per day. On 4 January the Communist advance forced the evacuation of K-13 which meant that all future missions had to be flown directly from K-10. On the same day when Capt. Lipawsky returned from a mission he reported that the ground situation near the bomblines was confused and that it was difficult to fix close support targets as the TACP's were on the move.⁷³ Despite the proximity of the approaching enemy forces K-13 had to be used once again by 2 Squadron when on 5 January engine trouble forced Lt F.A. Swenmer to make an emergency landing there. Fortunately for him the airfield was still in friendly hands.⁷⁴ The next day when Omdt Theron and four ground crew arrived in a C-47 to repair the aircraft, the enemy was only 18km away. Omdt Theron flew the Mustang back to K-10 while the other returned in a C-47.⁷⁵

The high sortie rate during the first week of January taxed the ground crews to their limit. Various ailments resulting from working long hours out of doors and in the extreme cold began to take their toll, particularly among the armourers. As replacements for such casualties were not readily available a re-organization was carried out in order to

71. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.12.1950.

72. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23.1.1951.

73. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-4.1.1951.

74. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.1.1951.

75. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6.1.1951.

keep 2 Sqn's Mustangs operational. Instead of being divided into flights as they had been previously, the armourers were re-organized into crews, each under a senior NCO. The new system consisted of a maintenance crew, a napalm crew, an RP crew and an ammunition crew. Improvisations were also called for. For instance, men whose task it was to load the 12,7mm machine guns and thus had to sit on the cold mainplanes, became victims of piles. This hazard was countered by providing each armourer with a small canvas cushion. However, despite such difficulties it was reported that the armourers displayed a keenness for and an efficiency in their work.⁷⁶

After the abandonment of Seoul on 4 January 1951 and the subsequent breaking of contact with the Communist ground forces the emphasis was again placed on interdiction missions. These usually took the form of two or four aircraft armed reconnaissance missions. Fifth Air Force divided the country west of the Eastern Mountain Range into interdiction areas. River Area I was a strip 6km wide to the north of the Han River from its mouth to its junction with the Pukham River. River Area II was a similar strip 6km wide north-west of the Pukham River, from its confluence with the Han River to the town of Hwach'on. Armed reconnaissance missions were despatched to specific river areas where they were tasked to destroy troops, equipment and supplies, and to prevent them from crossing the river. The fluid ground situation made it necessary to warn pilots against attacking troops inside the bombline unless they had been positively identified as the enemy. Other armed reconnaissance missions patrolled the two branches of the MSR from Seoul to Sariwon and from Seoul to Ch'orwon.

76. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1951, Appendix B, Armament Report, 8.1.1951.

When they found no worthwhile targets in these areas pilots were instructed to expend their ordnance on airfields which had fallen into Communist hands.⁷⁷

The above orders established the pattern of 2 Sqn operations until the last week of January 1951 when Operation Thunderbolt got underway. The sortie rate dropped from more than 20 per day to less than 16 per day, weather permitting. This enabled the ground crew to recover from the pressure under which they had been operating, and by 14 January 23 of the squadron's 24 aircraft were serviceable. Missions flown were generally from two and a half to three hours duration. The pilots patrolling the MSR and the river areas often had difficulty in finding targets in the open for the only daytime movement came from the pitiful lines of refugees moving southwards. They were nearly all clad in white, the traditional Korean colour of mourning. The numerous vehicles tracks in the snow however indicated a high level of nighttime activity. Where these tracks led into villages they were bombed with telling effect as many houses exploded or burnt fiercely thus indicating the presence of ammunition or fuel stores.⁷⁸

At times, there were some variations from this general pattern of armed reconnaissance missions. The Frag Order for 17 January outlined a tactic designed to prevent the Communists from repairing and using the airfields recently abandoned by SAF. Missions were assigned to bomb these just before last light, using 227kg (500lb) general purpose bombs fitted with equivalent proportions of .025, one hour and

77. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1951, Appendix P, Frag Order 1-7 for 7 January 1951.

78. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7-24.12.1950.

six hour delay fuses. These bombs were intended to hamper the Communist runway repair crews in their work, usually undertaken under cover of darkness.⁷⁹ At 16h00 on 17 January Lt Jones took off from K-10 to lead such a mission against Haeju airfield. He and his pilots succeeded in placing all their bombs on the runway.⁸⁰

A special mission was carried out on 20 January when a OCF major-general was reported to be active in the mountains south of the town of Kwanju in south-west Korea. Dressed in civilian clothing and supported by an estimated force of 5 000 to 7 000 guerillas he had been engaged in turning the local population against the UN forces and the ROK government. His methods were those of terror. Some weeks previously he had captured three black American convoy drivers who had been subjected to the humiliation of being led through the village streets by bull rings inserted through their noses, carrying the "honey buckets". Then, to drive the lesson home they had been decapitated at weekly intervals and their heads displayed on stakes. By 20 January the 11th ROK Division and their KMAG advisers had isolated the Communist guerillas in an area containing 27 small villages. It was then that they requested air support.⁸¹ Early in the morning KMAG officers briefed three flights of four F-51's, one flight from each squadron, at K-10. They destroyed five villages and damaged five others. Altogether 511 guerillas were killed by air attack and the ground troops moved in to account for another 167.⁸²

79. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1951, Appendix P, Frag Order, 1-17 for 17 January 1951.

80. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17.1.1951.

81. Col S.J.W. Inglesby: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 31.3.1981; Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 20.3.1981.

82. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.1.1951.

On 26 January 1951 letters were received at K-10 from both Shim Heng Tek, Chief of the Cholla Nando Provincial Police and Park Chul Soo, Governor of Cholla Nando, acknowledging the work of the wing against the guerillas. The Governor wrote:

"I express from the depth of my heart gratitude for your heroic accomplishments in fighting for peace of a free world and independence in Korea.

Some 2 000 armed and 20 000 unarmed communists are still remaining in this province [sic]...

With transfere [sic] of the front of the Korean War to South Korea the activities of the remaining communists have become rampant, causing unrest among the people. I hope you will continue to assist the army and the police force here so that they can route [sic] out these communists as early as possible."⁸³

January saw the strengthening of Communist opposition to air attack in the form of small arms fire and light anti-aircraft (AA) fire from 20mm guns. On 3 January Lt Deans, leading a two aircraft reconnaissance mission from K-13, had sighted a large building near Kojo on the east coast, well behind Communist lines. Painted on the roof were the words "YMCA Korean Police Please Help". He made a low pass but observed nothing further. Later evidence confirmed that it was a "flak-trap".⁸⁴ Lt Deans had another narrow escape on 16 January 1951 while leading a

83. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1951, Appendix J, Chief of Cholla Nando Provincial Police - Commanding Officer Chinhee Air Force Base, 25.1.1951; WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1951, Appendix K, Governor of Cholla Nando - Commanding Officer Chinhee Air Force Base, (no date).

84. WDM: Box 10, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 3.1.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, p.18.

four aircraft mission against an enemy occupied village, where he encountered intense small arms fire and shortly after the attack his engine began to vibrate. Fortunately he managed to reach K-2 where he carried out a successful emergency landing.⁸⁵ A week later, two other SAAF pilots also had narrow escapes. On 22 January Lt S.G. de la Harpe's Mustang was hit in the wing by shrapnel and the next day Lt van Heerden was lucky to emerge unscathed when he flew into a high tension wire and suffered no more damage to his aircraft than a dented spinner.⁸⁶ During the next phase of the war the Squadron's luck was to run out when these various flying hazards claimed its first victims.

85. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.1.1951.

86. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22,23.1.1951.

CHAPTER 7THE UN FORCES ADVANCE TOWARDS THE 38TH PARALLELPHASE FOUR, PERIOD 1: 25 JANUARY - 28 FEBRUARY 1951ANALYSIS OF PHASE FOUR

The fourth phase of the Korean War lasted from the launching of "Operation Thunderbolt" on 25 January 1951 until the Commanding General of the Eighth Army was ordered to cease offensive operations on 12 November 1951. During this time the UN forces advanced from their defensive positions just north of the 37th parallel to a line which in places crossed the 38th parallel. This advance was slow and deliberate and it suffered set-backs when faced with determined Chinese counter-offensives. During this period the OCF launched two major operations: the "Fourth Phase Offensive" from 11 to 17 February and the "Fifth Phase Offensive". The latter consisted of the "First Impulse" from 22 to 28 April, and the "Second Impulse" from 16 to 23 May. The failure of these ground offensives was followed by the opening of peace negotiations in July 1951.

Both on the ground and in the air these 10½ months saw some of the heaviest fighting of the entire war. With the onset of the truce talks the emphasis moved from ground to air operations and an analysis of the mission returns reveals that this was a period of intense operational activity for 2 Sqn SAAF. Although only 32% of 2 Sqn's Korean War operational days fell between 25 January and 12 November 1951, 41% of the Squadron's effective combat sorties were flown at this time. Of the total losses of F-51D Mustangs experienced by 2 Sqn in Korea, 59% were lost during this same period (Appendices A-1, A-5).

Taking cognizance of both ground and air operations, Phase Four can be divided into four periods:

1. From the launching of "Operation Thunderbolt" on 25 January, until the end of February 1951.
2. From the preparations for "Operation Ripper", commencing on 1 March, until the collapse of the Chinese "Fifth Phase Offensive" on 19 May.
3. From the beginning of the renewed UN offensive on 20 May, until the commencement of the CCAF's final air campaign on 31 August.
4. From the CCAF air campaign until the UNC order to cease the ground offensive on 12 November.

In order to reduce the account of 2 Squadron's operations in Korea to manageable segments, each one of the above periods will be dealt with in separate chapters. The same procedure will be adopted for the even more lengthy fifth phase of the war.

PHASE FOUR - PERIOD 1: THE EIGHTH ARMY ADVANCES

The main features of the war on the ground from the last week of January 1951 until the end of February were the three UN offensive operations: Thunderbolt, Round-up and Killer. These were launched on 25 January, 5 February and 21 February respectively. The Communist response took the form of their "Fourth Phase Offensive". "Operation Thunderbolt" was originally conceived as a methodical, co-ordinated advance designed to move through the area south of the Han River in order to develop enemy dispositions, disrupt hostile communications, and inflict maximum destruction on the Communist forces. Being well aware of the OCF ability to infiltrate, Ridgway ensured that no gaps were left in his line. He insisted on the basic principles of fire and movement, and the maintenance of a solid front. Well co-ordinated close air support played a significant role in this advance.¹







1. Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.333;
Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.10-11.

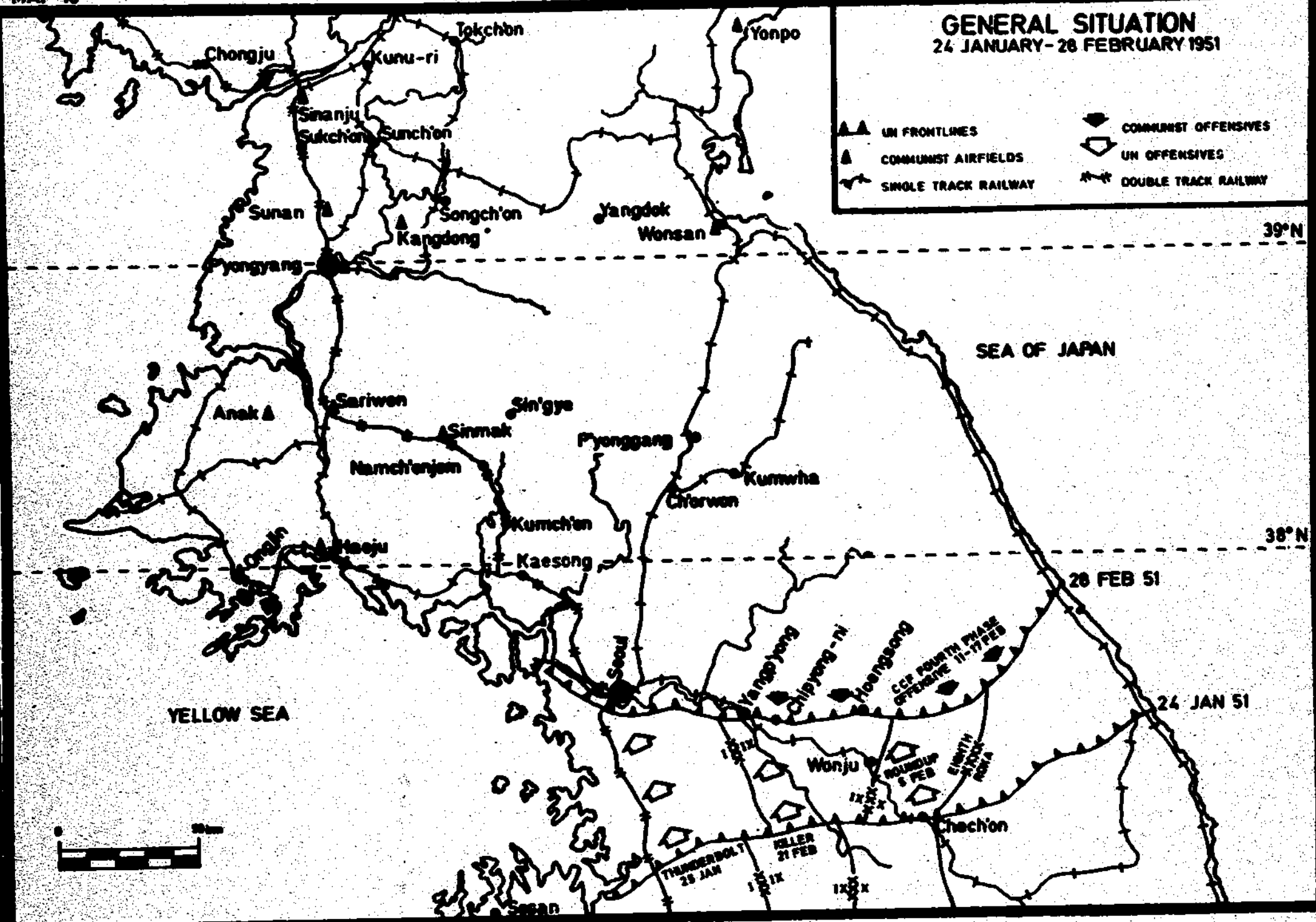
During the first few days of Thunderbolt, only sporadic resistance was encountered from scattered elements of two divisions of the OCF 50th Army which had been deployed as a screening force. On 30 January this resistance began to stiffen and counter-attacks in battalion strength were launched by the OCF. In spite of this spirited resistance, it became clear that the Communists were fighting a delaying action. Thunderbolt, which had originally been a reconnaissance in force, developed into a full scale offensive. The Eighth Army was successful, not only in finding and destroying the enemy, but in taking ground and holding it. On 9 February the Communist resistance finally crumbled and the UN forces advanced to within sight of Seoul. The next day the port of Inch'on and the airfield at Kimpo fell once more into UN hands.²

Heartened by the success of Thunderbolt and concerned at the need to protect the right flank of IX Corps, Ridgway ordered X Corps to attack in the central/eastern sector. This advance by X Corps was codenamed "Operation Round-up". Round-up soon ran into stiff resistance, indicating the presence of substantial OCF forces. Intelligence probing and aerial reconnaissance detected a large Communist presence on the boundary between IX and X Corps. The expected Communist counter-offensive in this area materialized during the night of 11-12 February. Waves of Chinese and North Korean troops forced ROK divisions of X Corps to fall back from Hoengsong to Wonju on 13 February. It seemed likely that the Communists would break through the UN line. The main weight of their attack was thrown against Chip'yong-ni, a small town situated at a road junction north-west of Wonju. A combat force of 4 000 men of the US 2nd Division and the French Battalion held this town for three days against three Chinese divisions, until they were relieved by an armoured task force. Air supply and close

2. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.14; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.409; Leckie: Conflict, p.256.

GENERAL SITUATION 24 JANUARY - 26 FEBRUARY 1951

	UN FRONTLINES		COMMUNIST OFFENSIVES
	COMMUNIST AIRFIELDS		UN OFFENSIVES
	SINGLE TRACK RAILWAY		DOUBLE TRACK RAILWAY



air support played a decisive role in enabling them to hold their ground.³

To the east of Wonju the Communists made a secondary attack in the direction of Chech'on, but the situation in this sector was stabilized within a few days. Following evidence of a general Communist withdrawal on the central front, Ridgway initiated a general advance by both the IX and X Corps on 21 February. This advance was called "Operation Killer" and was intended to deny important positions to the enemy and, as the name implied, to destroy as many of the retreating troops as possible. The objective line of Killer ran through Yangp'yong on the Han River, eastwards to the north of Chip'yong-ni and on towards the Sea of Japan. For the next two weeks the UN infantry moved forward slowly through the mud of the spring thaw until this line had been secured. Evidence of heavy Communist casualties was found in shallow mass graves in the vicinity of Wonju and Chech'on. Many of these soldiers had died of cold, hunger and inadequate medical treatment; testimony to the success of 5AF interdiction efforts.⁴

THE COMMUNIST AIR PLAN

The Chinese realized that their ground forces had failed during January because they lacked air support. The UNC intelligence officers soon found ample evidence that efforts were being made to rectify the situation. Reports were received that Red China was rapidly increasing her number of MIG-15's. In addition, a Chinese staff officer, captured in February, told his captors that each regiment of the Fourth Field Army had sent representatives to an air-ground training conference in Mukden. In

3. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.15-16; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.409; Schnabel: Policy and Direction: The First Year, p.335; Leckie: Conflict, p.260.

4. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.16-18; Leckie: Conflict, pp.260-261; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.410.

fact, these two developments were part of Gen. Liu Ya-lou's (C-in-C OCAF) air war plan which was designed to provide the necessary air support for future Communist ground offensives by the spring of 1951.⁵

According to a document which fell into the hands of FEAF late in 1951, Gen. Liu Ya-lou's plan was to have been implemented in two phases. During the first phase MIG-15's, based at Antung, would establish air superiority over north-west Korea. Under this fighter screen and behind barrages of AA fire, existing airfields would be repaired and new ones constructed. Secret airstrips just north of the 38th parallel were also envisaged. This first phase was also intended to give the MIG-15 pilots much needed training. The second phase was to consist of a full-scale air offensive against the UN forces, using MIG-15's and ground attack aircraft stationed at the airfields, brought into service during the first phase. Liu Ya-lou's plan had a good start. Unsure of the outcome of the land battle, Partridge withdrew his jet wings from Korea at the end of January and their Communist counterparts were left unchallenged between the Yalu and Ch'ongch'on Rivers. This area of Communist air superiority became known as Mig Alley. The airfield construction programme was also set in motion and construction groups were put to work repairing runways and building protective revetments at Sinuiju, Sinanju, Sunan, P'yongyang, Yonpo, Wonsan, Ongjin, Anak, Sirmak and Kangdong.⁶

Although the MIG-15's had succeeded in dominating the airspace over north-west Korea, the Communists' communication zone extended much further south, and they were still obliged to carry their supplies and personnel replacements to the frontline over a transport system that was subject to

5. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.265-266.

6. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.266-270.

constant interdiction by FEAF. From mid-January onwards the provision of their armies became the OCF's major strategic concern. By the same token the North Korean transport infrastructure continued to receive the unremitting attention of FEAF's bombers and fighter-bombers. In order to maintain their links with the front, the Chinese decided upon a three part plan of action; the organization of a simple but effective logistical system, an air defence organization, and a persistent and tenacious road and rail repair programme.⁷ The pilots of 2 Sqn found ample evidence of all three actions during February 1951 and the months that followed.

THE 18TH FEW CONCENTRATES ON INTERDICTION

In common with the two other squadrons of 18th FEW, 2 Sqn concentrated on armed reconnaissance missions from late January to the end of February 1951. Occasionally these missions were diverted to render close support, while others were pre-briefed to close support or interdiction targets when the intelligence section managed to locate concentrations of troops or supplies. A major element of the Communist supply system was the main supply route (MSR), a double track railway line and road running from Seoul through Kaesong, Sariwon, P'yongyang and Sinanju to Sinuiju and Manchuria. There were numerous sidelines and roads branching off from the MSR which served as alternate routes in the event of the MSR being inoperative. The other main north-south route was the road and railway line running the entire length of the peninsula along the east coast. These two routes were connected by lateral railway lines and roads from P'yongyang to Wonsan, and from Seoul to Wonsan. Roads linking the smaller towns to the main routes and to each other completed the network. The fighter-bombers of 18th FEW found targets along this entire system, but 2 Sqn paid particular attention to the section of the MSR between Seoul and Sariwon, the eastern route

7. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.288.

between Wonsan and the Chosin Reservoir via Hamhung, and the lateral route between Wonsan and P'yongyang.⁸

The armed reconnaissance missions were usually undertaken by flights of only two aircraft, and occasionally by four, with as many as seven to eight missions being mounted by 2 Sqn in the course of a single day. The standard armament consisted of napalm, rockets and machine guns. Missions of long duration (3-4hrs) were undertaken by flights of four aircraft armed with rockets and machine guns only. On 4 February, 2 Sqn experienced a day of operational flying which typified their activities during that month. On that day four armed reconnaissance missions of four aircraft each were flown along the supply routes. The missions were all between three and four hours in duration and the sections of the supply routes patrolled were: the MSR from Seoul to Kaesong; the lateral route from P'yongyang to Wonsan; a by-pass line from P'yongyang to Kumu-ri; and a section of road between Sin'gye and Yangdok. The total claims for the day amounted to 19 vehicles destroyed and three damaged, one fuel dump, seven buildings and two enemy troops destroyed; and one bridge and two tanks damaged. The most successful mission of the day was the last one. At 13h20 Cndt Theron took off with four aircraft to patrol the Sin'gye-Yangdok road. He found a stationary convoy of well camouflaged vehicles which his flight rocketed and strafed. Of the convoy of 20 vehicles, 13 were left burning, while the remaining seven were left undamaged when a lack of ammunition forced them to break off the attack.⁹

During December 1950 the FEAF Target Committee had noted the large number of tunnels on the North Korean rail routes. The planners suspected that these tunnels were used as daytime hideouts for trains moving between the front and the supply zone. Their suspicions were confirmed when B-26

8. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.1.1951 - 31.1.1951; WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1 - 28.2.1951.

9. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.2.1951; WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 4.2.1951.

night intruder crews reported trains moving from tunnel to tunnel under the cover of darkness, and pilots on first light recess saw steam and smoke pouring from tunnel entrances. The advantages of attacking these tunnels were obvious and the JOC selected targets based upon reported sightings.¹⁰

On 8 February, Maj. Blaauw was pre-briefed to lead eight SAAF aircraft against a tunnel near Ch'ongjin. Each Mustang carried a single 227 kg HE bomb, fitted with a 15 second delay fuse, and the normal 12,7mm ammunition. The mission took-off at 07h05 and soon afterwards fuel flow trouble forced one of the pilots to return. On reaching the target the remaining seven found it so situated that a glide approach would have been extremely hazardous. Instead, the less accurate dive-bombing technique was decided upon. Of the seven bombs, one cut the tracks at the east end, whilst another cut the tracks at the west end. One exploded right in the tunnel, throwing the debris out at both ends. The tunnel was thus effectively changed from a daytime refuge, and a time saving transport route, into a serious obstacle. Gangs of impressed North Korean peasants would have to be employed in its repair, while others would have to backpack supplies across this gap in the rail system.¹¹

The Communists also restricted road movement to the hours of darkness in an attempt to evade the 5AF armed reconnaissance. Several ruses were resorted to in order to conceal large convoys of trucks from aerial detection. Special camouflaged shelters were built along the main roads to allow the trucks to pull off and remain in safety during the hours of daylight.

10. Staff Study: Communist Camouflage and Deception (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.1, Spring 1953), p.93; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.290-299.

11. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 8.2.1951; WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, February 1951, Appendix O, 18th FBW Frag Order 2-8 for 8.2.1951; WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 8.2.1951; Staff Study: Communist Camouflage and Deception (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.1, Spring 1953), p.93.

Wooded areas, orchards and hedgerows provided cover for convoys. Trucks were even disguised as small houses, enabling them to form a "village" at short notice. "Project Tack" was hence conceived in an attempt to outwit the convoy drivers. Shortly after midnight, on 5 February, C-47 Dakotas, flying only a few metres above four selected roads south of P'yongyang, dropped more than eight tonnes of roofing nails. Fighter-bombers were briefed to reconnoitre these routes at first light in order to seek out and destroy vehicles immobilized by punctured tyres. Two SAAF missions participated in the project. However, they did not find any crippled vehicles and expended their unused ammunition on some warehouses in the area. Other squadrons had similar experiences and altogether the entire 5AF found only 28 stalled vehicles that morning.¹²

During the last two weeks of February the interdiction effort was intensified. The 18th FBW Frag Order for 13 February gave each squadron permanent responsibility for a particular area. Each squadron was to constantly maintain two aircraft over its area; one mission being relieved by the next before returning to base. 2 Sqn was assigned to an area just north-west of Seoul. The selection of armament was left to the squadron commanders, and it was stressed that the mission of the wing was to seek out and destroy enemy vehicles, supply concentrations and troops.¹³

Col T.C. Rogers took over active command of the 18th FBW from Col C.R. Low on 19 February. Shortly afterwards he gave instructions for the further refinement of armed reconnaissance techniques in the Frag Order for 25 February. These instructions were based on the philosophy that there was only one way to detect camouflaged vehicles and that was by fly-

12. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.2.1951; WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, February 1951, Appendix O, 18th FBW Frag Order 2-5 for 5.2.1951; WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 5.2.1951; Staff Study: Communist Camouflage and Deception (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.1, Spring 1953), pp.93, 95; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.300.

13. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 13.2.1951; WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, February 1951, Appendix O, 18th FBW Frag Order 2-13 for 13.2.1951; WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 5.2.1951.

ing low, slowly and thoroughly searching every foot of ground, every building, haystack, ravine, wooded area and roadside. Flights were instructed to approach their reconnaissance routes at "minimum practical altitude". Shooting Star squadrons provided top cover over the reconnaissance areas in order to protect the low flying Mustangs from interference by hostile aircraft. The first flight to take off each morning conducted a sweep for vehicles damaged by night intruders. These dawn patrols had the additional effect of forcing the enemy drivers to pull off the road and camouflage their trucks before first light, thus reducing their travelling time still further. Other flights then conducted methodical searches over small sections of their assigned routes. This thorough approach resulted in Gen. Partridge paying the 18 FBW the compliment of naming them the "Truckbusters of the Fifth Air Force".¹⁴

CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

From the onset of "Operation Thunderbolt" until the end of February, only a few 2 Squadron missions were specifically pre-briefed for close support missions. When the ground situation demanded it however, armed reconnaissance missions, which were already airborne, were diverted to assist hard pressed infantry. During this period 21,6% of 2 Squadron's combat sorties were flown on close support missions, with 78% on interdiction and 0,4% on rescue missions.¹⁵ One of the few pre-briefed close support missions was led by Capt. Davis in support of Thunderbolt on 25 January. He has left a graphic description of what he termed his "first real close support show in Korea":

14. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.2.1951; WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, February 1951, Appendix O, 18th FBW Frag Order 2-25 for 25.2.1951; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.305.

15. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25-31.1.1951;
WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAP 220, February 1951.

"Own troops were situated approximately initially 500yds (457m) from the target area. United Nations troops were seen to be standing on top of their tanks and vehicles having a grandstand view of the S.A.A.F. causing death and destruction to a formidable enemy entrenched in a village."¹⁶

On 3 February and again three days later, long range armed reconnaissance missions equipped with drop tanks and armed with rockets and 12,7mm rounds, were diverted to assist ground troops in the US IX Corps sector. The targets were Communist occupied houses and a command post respectively. In both cases they used their external fuel tanks as incendiary bombs with marked success.¹⁷

During the week of the Communist "Fourth Phase Offensive" the requirement for close air support increased sharply and numerous missions were diverted for this purpose. 2 Sqn was also charged to maintain a flight on constant ground alert, ready to be scrambled by JOC. On 13,15 and 17 February SAAF Mustangs gave valuable assistance to the UN defenders of Chipyong-ni. All three strikes were directed against troops occupying trenches along the mountain ridges. These missions demonstrated just how effective napalm was against entrenched infantry.¹⁸

Thus, when "Operation Killer" got under way during the latter half of February, 2 Sqn pilots once again found themselves either scrambled or diverted to the aid of the US IX and X Corps. Two of their missions illustrate both the problems and the successes of this period of intense and varied operational flying. On 24 February, Capt. Badenhorst led a four aircraft flight which had been scrambled for close support. On reaching the target he found that it was not clearly indicated, and owing to the

16. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.1.1951.

17. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3,6.2.1951.

18. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 13,15,17.2.1951.

danger of mistaking nearby friendly troops for the enemy, he refused to attack. Instead, he expended his ordnance on a target well beyond the bomb-line.¹⁹ The pilots of Capt. Odendaal's flight had a different experience when they were scrambled on 27 February. Their target was a concentration of approximately 700 infantry troops sheltering in a valley east of Hoengsong, where the hilltops were covered in cloud. Their flight commander led by skilfully crawling along the valleys. They subsequently found and attacked the target. Although the weather did not permit any immediate observation of the damage, the controller later reported that the results were excellent.²⁰

THE THREAT FROM COMMUNIST GROUND FIRE

During February 1951 the first signs of a definite Communist plan to protect their troops and equipment from UN air attack became evident when UN aircrews began to experience an increasing amount of ground fire. The entry of the OCF into the war had resulted in a large scale deployment of anti-aircraft weapons and equipment in North Korea. The AA equipment was of World War II vintage and Soviet methods of air defence developed during that same conflict were followed.²¹ The main weapons in the Communist AA arsenal were the Soviet 85mm M-1939 AA gun, the Soviet 37mm AA automatic weapon, the 12,7 DShK M-1938 machine gun and the standard infantry rifle in the hands of special "Killer Squads" trained to use their small arms against attacking aircraft. The 85mm AA artillery was usually deployed around heavily defended areas in batteries of four to eight, but the greatest threat to the USAF fighter-bombers came from the lighter weapons. The most effective of these smaller calibre guns was the Soviet 37mm automatic weapon.

19. WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 24.2.1951.

20. WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 27.2.1951.

21. A.T. Soltys: Enemy Antiaircraft Defenses in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.1, Spring 1954), pp.75-76;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.307.

It had a manual fire control and reflex sights which collated data of range, target speed, target course, and deflection for azimuth and elevation. It could accommodate target speeds of up to 480kph and ranges from 200m to 360m.²²

The 12,7mm DShK heavy machine gun, which is still in use in Soviet client states, can deliver both ground and AA fire. It has a wheeled mount which can be converted for use in the AA role by removing the wheels and unfolding the legs. A special AA ring sight can also be fitted. Theoretically, its effective AA range is considered to be 1 000m, but practical experience in Korea showed that this was only 550m to 730m. The "Killer Squads" depended upon concentrated fire from their small arms to bring down attacking aircraft. They developed special tactics, such as holding their fire until the aircraft began to level-off from a dive, or until it had passed over the target. The Communists frequently placed these squads and the lighter AA weapons on hillsides, in order to improve the firing angles against fighter-bombers engaging targets located in the deep valleys.²³

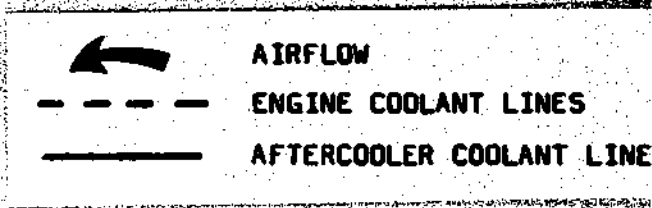
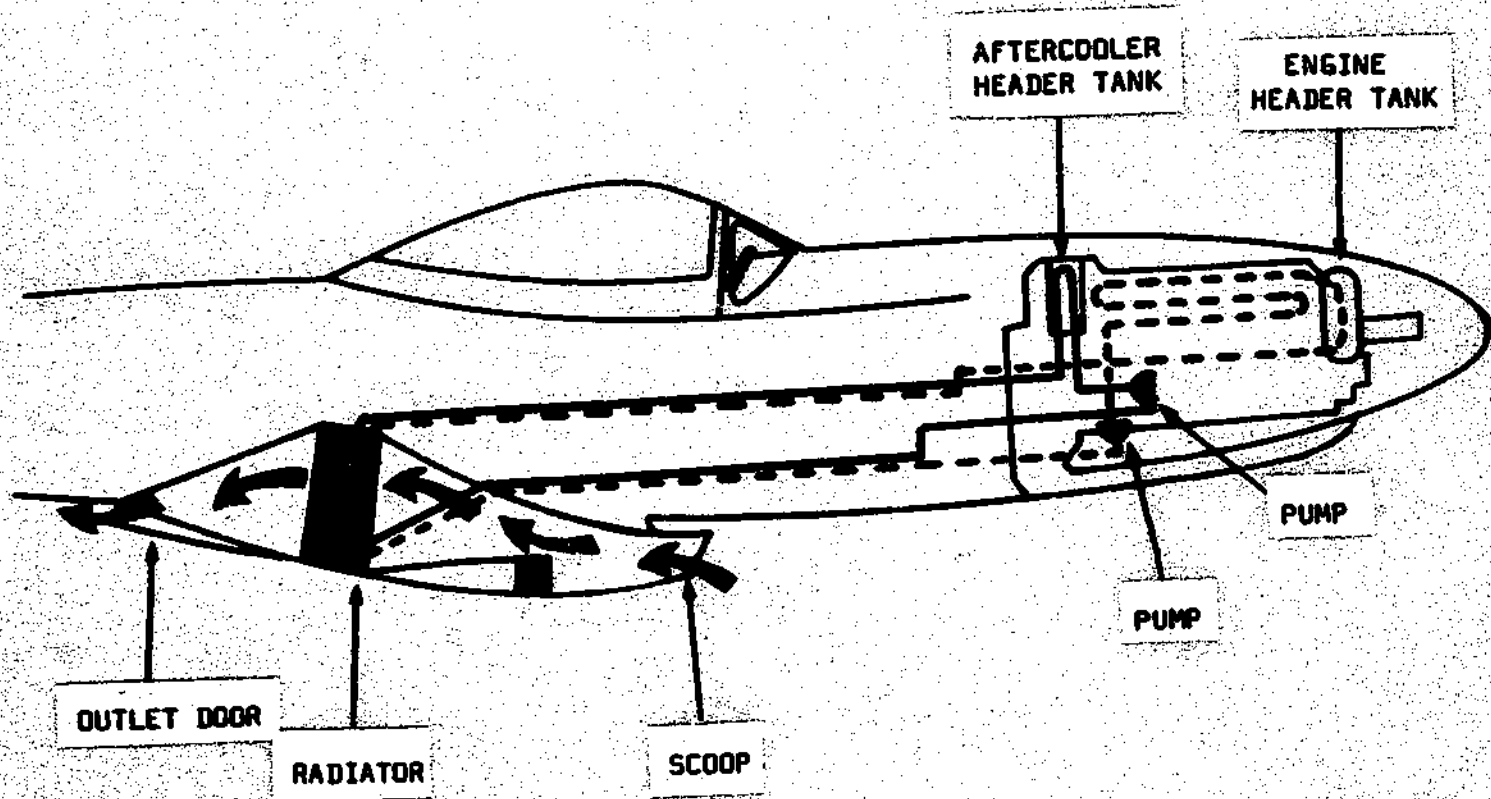
Most of the damage inflicted upon UN ground attack aircraft was the work of automatic weapons or small arms. In this regard the cooling system of the F-51D Mustang made it particularly vulnerable. The engine was cooled by two separate systems. The first cooled the engine proper, the second, an after-cooling system, cooled the supercharger (Diagram 8). The coolant of both systems passed through separate sections of a single radiator, which was located in the big air scoop aft of the cockpit and under the fuselage.

22. Soltys: Enemy Antiaircraft Defences in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.1, Spring 1954), pp.78-79.

23. Soltys: Enemy Antiaircraft Defences in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.1, Spring 1954), pp.79-80; J.I.H. Owen (ed.): Brassey's Infantry Weapons of the World 1950-1975, p.116.

Diagram 8

THE COOLING SYSTEM OF THE F-51D MUSTANG





A Mustang Flight Leaves on a Combat Mission.

MIB Photograph No: 761000347

The coolant itself was a mixture of ethylene glycol and water and it was under pressure of 207kPa in the engine system and 138kPa in the after-cool system. An air outlet door at the rear of the scoop controlled the airflow through the radiator and thus the temperature of the engine.²⁴

All the vital parts of the system, the radiator, the air outlet door and the pipes conveying the coolant between the radiator and the engine, were exposed to ground fire. When a projectile of even small calibre damaged a pipe or the radiator the high internal pressure caused a rapid loss of coolant, leaving the pilot only minutes before his engine overheated and seized, or caught fire. In other respects, such as manoeuvrability, endurance, armament and load carrying capability, the Mustang was a most suitable aircraft for the ground attack role assigned to 2 Sqn in Korea.²⁵

The Communists were not slow to exploit the vulnerability of the F-51D to ground fire, and besides the conventional use of weapons and techniques already mentioned, they made extensive use of flak traps. These traps consisted of a bait, usually damaged or dummy vehicles or equipment, well covered by concealed AA weapons. Occasionally unwary pilots were led to the bait by vehicle tracks in the snow. Some flak traps also featured the additional refinement of cable strung across valleys in the probable flight paths of attacking aircraft.²⁶

Pilots of 2 Sqn encountered two such examples of Communist deception in early 1951. On the afternoon of 27 January Capt. Davis led a two aircraft

24. HQ Army Air Forces: Pilot training Manual for the Mustang P-51, p.24 reproduced in L. Morgan: The P-51 Mustang.

25. Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981;
Brig. S.v.B. Theron: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 13.1.1982;
Col A.C.J. Bosch: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1981;
Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 16.3.1981;
Capt. G.P.M. Kotze: Recorded Interview, Port Elizabeth, 23.2.1981.

26. Soltys: Enemy Antiaircraft Defenses in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.1, Spring 1954), p.80.

armed reconnaissance mission along the MSR between Seoul and Kaesong. He spotted a battery of ten guns resembling British 88mm field guns (25 pounders) and ten trucks arranged in a half moon. His experience led him to be suspicious and he concluded that the guns and vehicles were dummies that had been placed in the open in order to draw the attention of patrolling pilots away from supply dumps in the vicinity. Acting upon his conclusions he ignored the possible flak trap and attacked the nearest village. The explosions that followed the attack were big enough to indicate the presence of an ammunition dump.²⁷ On 13 February Maj. Blaauw was pre-briefed to lead four Mustangs against enemy tanks reported to be near the road between Kumwha and T'ongch'on. He located the tanks, which turned out to be dummies and the bait of a flak trap. His aircraft was hit five times by ground fire but the damage was slight.²⁸ Three other SAAF pilots were not so fortunate. By 2 February, 2 Sqn had been operational in Korea for 54 days, and had flown 899 combat sorties for the loss of only one aircraft in operations.²⁹ The Squadron's 900th sortie saw the end of this remarkable record when Lt W.E. St E. Wilson became the first South African battle casualty of the Korean War. Lt Wilson took off at 07h25 from K-10 to lead four Mustangs on an armed reconnaissance mission over the Wonsan area. Soon after take off the No.4 developed engine trouble and returned to base leaving only three aircraft to continue with the mission. On reaching the target area Wilson went down in search of targets while Lts M.H. Frost and I.J. Gow provided top cover. Just north-east of Wonsan Wilson's Mustang (No.319) suddenly developed engine trouble, and although the covering pilots did not observe any flak, a glycol leak indicated a hit in the cooling system.³⁰

27. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.1.1951; Col S.J.W. Inglesby, Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 31.1.1981.

28. WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 13.2.1951.

29. WDM: Box 10, Return of Daily Missions, 31.1.1951;
WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.2.1951.

30. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.2.1951;
WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 2.2.1951.

Wilson immediately climbed to gain altitude and finally baled out at 1 200m, approximately 20km north of Wonsan. His parachute opened and he made a successful descent, only to land in an intensely cold and choppy sea. Although Gow saw the parachute sink almost immediately, he and Frost dropped to sea level in order to search for their missing leader. They were soon joined by USN Corsairs, Shooting Stars and an amphibious SA-16 rescue aircraft. The pilot was eventually spotted and the SA-16 landed nearby. Once on the surface the crew caught glimpses of a Mae West in the metre high swells. Although they battled to reach the bobbing pilot for 35 minutes, they finally abandoned their rescue attempt when the Mae West disappeared from sight. In their official report they stated that they presumed Lt Wilson had sunk in the icy water.³¹

The officers and men of 2 Sqn had hardly recovered from the shock of this first loss when Omdt Theron returned from a mission along the Wonsan-Hamhung road, on the morning of 7 February, with the sad news that Lt D.R. Leah was also missing in action. Their flight had found three camouflaged vehicles on the road just north of Yonghung. As they had previously attacked a supply dump, their only remaining weapons were their machine guns. As he was pulling out of his second strafing run, Lt Leah's Mustang (No.307) went into a right-hand turn and the starboard wing hit the ground, the aircraft had cartwheeled and burst into flame spreading wreckage for 300m. There was no indication that the F-51D had been hit by enemy fire.³²

There is a belief among the flying fraternity that casualties occur

31. 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/6/AIR, Mission Report Air Rescue Squadron 6.2.1951; CO 2 Sqn - SALO, 19.2.1951; Lt I.J Gow: Sworn Affidavit, 24.4.1951; WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 2.2.1951.

32. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.2.1951; WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 7.2.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/7/AIR, Omdt S.v.B. Theron: Eye-Witness Account, 16.2.1951.

in threes, and the events of February 1951 seemed to verify this idea for the pilots of 2 Sqn. At 13h00 on 15 February Lt G.D. Doveton took off on an armed reconnaissance of the Kaesong-Haeju-Sariwon MSR with Lt D.W. McKellar as his wingman. They found a camouflaged vehicle about 6km north-west of Kaesong and attacked it repeatedly. After the fourth pass the vehicle started to burn and the leader told McKellar to continue the reconnaissance while he went in for a final run. As McKellar proceeded to comply with these instructions he saw Doveton's Mustang (No.304) bounce off a hillside in a cloud of smoke. The latter's aircraft somersaulted tail-over-nose, hit the ground and burst into flames. It was still carrying an external drop tank and four HVAR's. On hearing the news Cndt Theron and Capt Davis immediately set off to investigate the crash, but they found no sign of life at the scene.³³

In spite of these setbacks, 2 Sqn SAAF had begun to make its mark in Korea by the end of February 1951. By the end of that month the "Flying Cheetahs" had flown 1 217 combat sorties (407 missions) in Korea.³⁴ The efforts of the South Africans had been formally recognized on 22 February, when 5AF General Orders arrived at K-10 with the notification of the award of American Air Medals and Oak Leaf Clusters to 2 Sqn pilots. These were 38 Air Medals, 19 First Oak Leaf Clusters, 11 Second Oak Leaf Clusters and 3 Third Oak Leaf Clusters. Further recognition was received on 27 February when the award of five American Distinguished Flying Crosses to SAAF pilots was announced. The recipients were Cndt Theron and Cpts Davis, Odendaal, Lipawaky, and Badenhorst.³⁵

33. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 15.2.1951; WDM: Box 11, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 15.2.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/8/AIR, CO 2 Sqn - SAIO, 19.3.1951; Lt D.W. McKellar: Statement (no date).

34. WDM: Box 11, Return of Daily Missions, 28.2.1951.

35. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22,27.2.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, pp.30-31.

REPLACEMENT POLICY

On 14 December 1950, while the main body of the Squadron was still in Japan, the South African Air Liaison Officer in Tokyo made his recommendations to the DGAF on the duration of an operational tour in Korea. He recommended that a tour consist of 75 sorties, listing the following circumstances as having a direct bearing on operational fatigue in Korea:

- a. The extremely severe winter.
- b. The US system of centralized "feeding" and community living, which did not compare with a SAAF squadron's mode of life, with its personal comforts and relaxation between sorties.
- c. The all-weather flying in Korea was much worse than that to which the South Africans were accustomed.
- d. The vulnerability of the F-51D, and the fact that it was out-classed by the MIG-15.
- e. The last point was stated as follows:

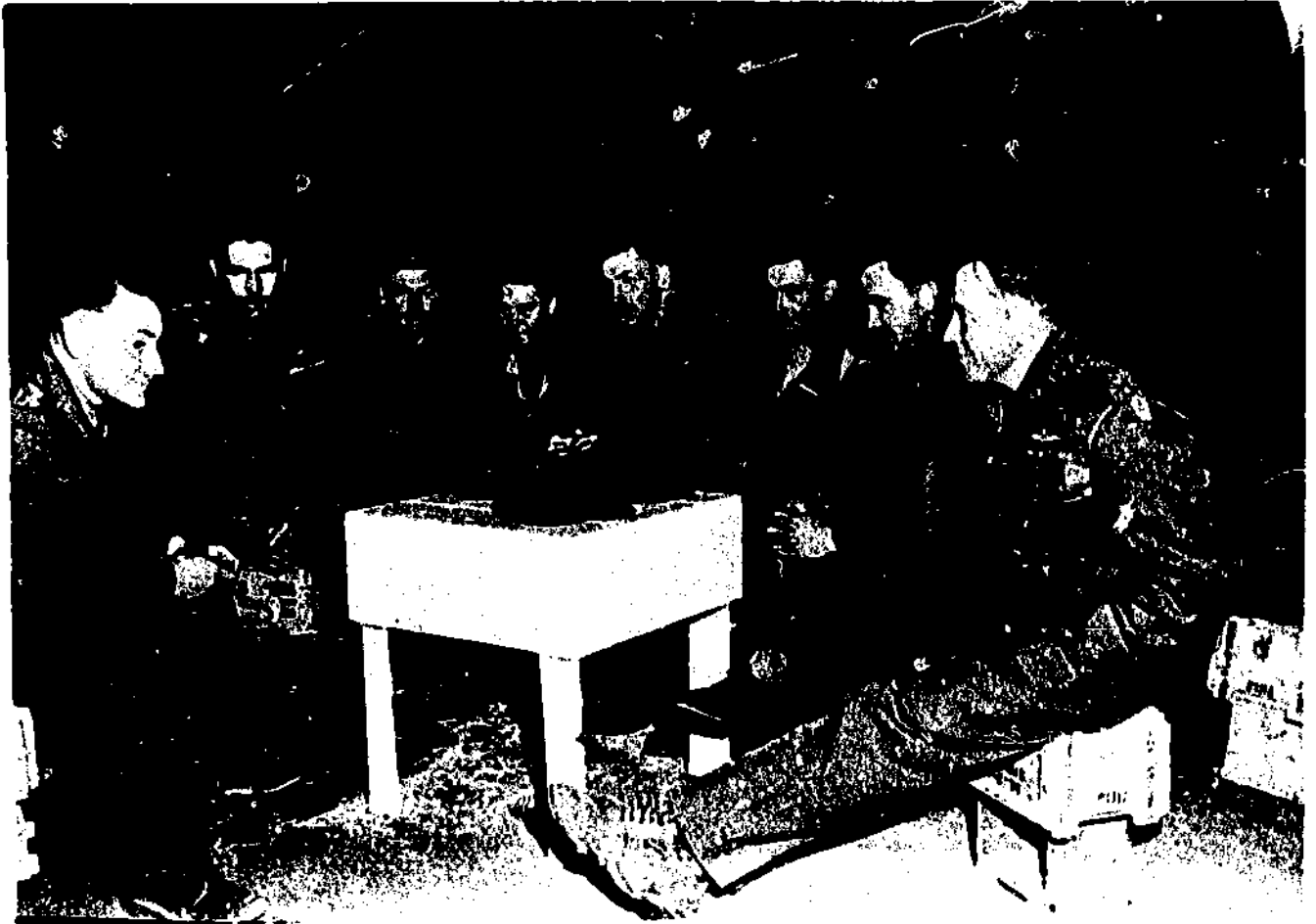
"Pilot morale is adversely affected by conditions of evasion and escape behind enemy lines. The Koreans and the Chinese were not at the Geneva Conference and have their own codes of justice. Owing to the extensive use of napalm fire bombs and the destruction wrought by aircraft the percentage of pilots who escape from enemy territory is extremely small."³⁶

These recommendations were clearly taken into account when the OGS defined the replacement policy. During February 1951 SALO informed the CO of 2 Sqn of the decision made by the OGS. The replacement policy was laid down point-by-point:

36. SALO: Box 16, SALO/S/960/2/P2, SALO - DGAF, 14.12.1950.

- a. Operational Tour: The RAAF pilots in Korea flew an operational tour of 50 combat sorties, while the USAF tour extended to 100 sorties. Owing to the distance and transport problems between South Africa and the Far East, 50 was considered to be too few for an SAAF tour, while 100 was considered to be too demanding, thus the SAAF tour of duty was defined as 75 combat sorties.
- b. Replacement Pilots: Replacement pilots were to be drawn from a reserve officers' pool at Waterkloof. SALO was cautioned to give timely indication of the numbers required.
- c. Replacement of Flight Commanders: Flight commanders would be replaced by qualified pilots with the substantive rank of captain, drawn from the pool at Waterkloof.
- d. Replacement of Squadron Commander and 2 i/c: These key officers were to be replaced by officers nominated by DGAF and approved by OGS.
- e. Squadron and Flight Commanders Designate: It was laid down that these officers were only to assume command after they had acquired thorough experience in the Squadron's current operations. In order to gain this experience they could be carried supernumerary to the authorized establishment. It was left to the Squadron Commander to decide at what stage they would take over actual command.
- f. Promotions: SALO was authorized to act in the case of a casualty, but recommendations for promotion were to be passed to GHQ in the normal manner.³⁷

37. AG: Box 228, AG(3)1906/14, Vol. I, OGS - AG, 31.1.1951; AG - DGAF, 13.2.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 13, 2 SQDN/C/960/4/P2, CO 2 Sqn - SALO, 21.1.1951.



A Lecture on Local Combat Conditions.

**(L - R) Cmdt S. v.B. Theron, Capt. J.G. Willers, Lt G.T. Sykes,
Lt P. Clulow, Lt P.J. Strydom, Lt M. Mentz, Lt H. MacDonald,
Cmdt R.F. Armstrong.**

While this policy was still being passed down through the channels it became evident that, given the realities of the Korean situation and the pilot resources of the SAAF, it would be more difficult to implement than to define. At the outset the CO of 2 Sqn found that a higher than expected sortie rate, following on the OCF intervention, would have an influence on the size and frequency or arrival of the batches of replacement pilots. During the period from 1 to 12 January the average duration of a sortie was 2hrs 20mins, while from 1 to 11 February this figure rose to 3hrs 25mins following the withdrawal to K-10. At the latter rate a tour of 75 sorties could amount to more than 250hrs of operational flying. Under these circumstances the CO requested groups of replacement pilots from seven to nine strong.³⁸ The ideas of the DGAF coincided substantially with those of the squadron CO, and when the first batch of replacements departed for Korea by air on 15 February, he stated that further groups of approximately six pilots would depart at intervals varying between one and two months. It was impossible to set a more regular interval owing to the unpredictability of the casualty rate and the intensity of operations.³⁹

The first draft of replacement pilots consisted of Cmdt R.F. Armstrong, who had been nominated to take over from Cmdt Theron; Capt. J.G. Willers, Lts P. Clulow, H. MacDonald, M. Mantz, P.J. Strydom and G.T. Sykes. They arrived at K-10 on 24 February. With the exceptions of the SALO personnel and Capt. J.G.W. van Wyk, who had arrived on 17 January to replace Capt. von Caus as Paymaster, these seven SAAF officers were the first to fly from South Africa to the Far East. In spite of their

³⁸. 2 Sqn K: Box 13, 2 SQDN/C/960/4/P2, CO 2 Sqn - SALO, 11.2.1951.

³⁹. AG: Box 228, AG(3)1906/14, Vol.I, DGAF - AG, 21.2.1951.

long journey, no time was lost in issuing them with kit; at 15h00, on the day of their arrival the pilots commenced with their training programme under the supervision of Capt. W.J.J. Badenhorst.⁴⁰

IMPROVED FACILITIES AT K-10

The newly arrived pilots found a quality of life at K-10 which was a great improvement on that encountered by 2 Sqn personnel who had arrived at Chinhae a month previously. Facilities had been vastly improved with the opening of various messes stocked with commodities imported directly from the USA, two laundries, a barber shop, a post exchange and a branch of the American Special Services. The last mentioned provided a most welcome service which enabled squadron members to send recorded messages home. There were also off-duty opportunities for hunting, hiking, boating and fishing. South African ingenuity even produced a passable boat made from two long range fuel tanks bolted together. This improvised vessel was equipped with a mast, sail and paddles, and proved to be seaworthy and easy to handle.⁴¹

By mid-February most of the circumstances which had earlier exercised a negative influence on morale had changed for the better. In fact, the Squadron was settling down well in Korea. Letters, newspapers and parcels from the Union began to arrive on a regular basis, as did a free issue of brandy and cigarettes.⁴² Morale improved noticeably, together with a growing sense of comradeship with the Americans. On 10 February the squadron diarist made the following comment:

40. WDM: Box 2, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17.1.1951;
WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24.2.1951.

41. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10,26.2.1951;
2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, p.27.

42. 2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, pp.27-28.



The Improvised Sailing Boat.

"This squadron is enjoying excellent co-operation from the Wing Headquarters, other squadrons and sections on this base and it is opportune to record the mutual understanding that has been developed during the course of this squadron's attachment to this wing."⁴³

This spirit of goodwill was echoed by Col C.R. Low on the occasion of a party given in the 2 Sqn pilots' rest room to mark the end of his term as Wing Commander. He mentioned the immense satisfaction he had derived from his association with the Squadron.⁴⁴

As their own situation improved the South Africans could not help but notice the needs of others around them. Korea's long history of conflict had left a heritage of numerous homeless orphans. The sight of these cold and hungry children turning over rubbish bins in search of food made a deep impression on the airmen and when the Chaplain, Capt. M.D.V. Cloete, made an appeal to the members of 2 Sqn the sum of \$191 was collected. This money, together with contributions from their own food parcels from home, was donated to an orphanage that had been established in the nearby town of Chinhae. South African assistance to this orphanage became a regular feature of squadron life at K-10.⁴⁵

43. WEM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.2.1951.

44. WEM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17.2.1951.

45. WEM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.2.1951; Maj.-Gen. M.D.V. Cloete: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 31.3.1951; Capt. C. Scott Shaw: Recorded Interview, Pietermaritzburg, 8.1.1982; 2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, pp.25-26.

CHAPTER 82 SON ACTIVITY REACHES A PEAK OF INTENSITYPHASE FOUR, PERIOD 2: 1 MARCH - 19 MAY 1951TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACKWARDS

By the end of February 1951 Gen. Ridgway had attained the geographical objectives of "Operation Killer". The UN line ran through Yangp'yong and Hoengsong, and then curved north-east to Kangnung. The commander of the Eighth Army decided to follow up with a further limited drive in order to create a bulge east of Seoul from which the South Korean capital could be enveloped. This new offensive was named "Operation Ripper". It began on 7 March, when the 25th Division crossed the Han River near its confluence with the Pukham and established a bridgehead on the northern bank. On the same day USAF pilots flew 575 operational sorties, of which approximately 200 were in direct support of the ground troops. The UN advance progressed steadily, and faced with the developing threat on their left flank, the Communist forces abandoned Seoul on 18 March. The next day the ROK flag was once more raised over the battered capital. Of an original civilian population of 1 500 000, only 200 000 were found to be still living in Seoul.¹

Although Ripper had gained ground by mid-March, it had not resulted in the destruction of Communist troops and equipment in sufficient quantities. Ridgway thus enlarged the operation to include a manoeuvre, "Operation Tomahawk", designed to isolate and destroy the enemy's forward elements. In a co-ordinated move an armoured task force from I Corps drove towards the

1. Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.113; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.21-22; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in Korea I, p.413; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.323.

Imjin River, while on 23 March, the 187 RCT and two Ranger Companies were airdropped near Munsan. The intended victims, however, had fled and only 200 were killed and 87 captured. The I Corps commander then ordered the 187 RCT to strike eastwards in order to cut-off Communist troops fleeing along the road from Seoul to Yongch'on. The terrain, the weather (the spring thaw had set in), and supply difficulties hampered their progress and once again the cut-off troops arrived too late. In so far as it had only won back territory without achieving the destruction of the main body of the Communist army, "Operation Ripper" was only a limited success.²

By the end of March 1951 the UN forces had consolidated a line across Korea from Munsan in the west, through Ch'unch'on to Yangyang on the east coast. Faced with strong indications that the Communists were regrouping and building up supplies for a major spring offensive, Gen. Ridgway decided that it was better to move forward and keep his enemy off balance than to stand still. Consequently he ordered a new offensive, "Operation Rugged", in the form of a general advance to a new phase line which ran parallel to and just to the north of the 38th parallel, except in the west where it followed the line of the Imjin River.³

"Operation Rugged" began on 5 April. Within four days all units of the US I and IX Corps in the western and central-western sectors, and the ROK I Corps on the east coast, had reached the so-called Kansas Line. In the central and central-eastern sectors, owing to the rugged terrain and lack of supply routes along Korea's mountainous spine, the US X Corps and the ROK III Corps had fallen behind. While these units were catching up, the I and IX Corps continued to advance on the left flank towards a new phase line, the Utah Line. This advance threatened the Communists'

2. Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.115; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.23; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.326-327.

3. Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.116; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.25.

"Iron Triangle", a vital communications and supply area based on the towns of Ch'orwon, Kumha and P'yongyang. By 19 April the UN forces had consolidated along the Utah-Kansas Line and were preparing to envelop the "Iron Triangle" from the west.⁴

While the Eighth Army was moving northwards, dramatic developments in Washington and Tokyo deprived it of the commander who had changed it from a despondent body of retreating troops into an aggressive and effective army in the field. The difference of opinion between the US President and C-in-C UNC/FEC as to the manner in which the war in Korea was being conducted became an open rift towards the end of March 1951. On 11 April Truman issued an executive order which relieved MacArthur of all his commands. He was replaced by Ridgway, who in turn was succeeded as Commanding General, Eighth Army, by Lt-Gen. J.A. van Fleet.⁵

Van Fleet's first problem was the expected Communist "Fifth Phase Offensive". This was to be their final attempt to force a military decision, either by driving the UN forces from the peninsula or by destroying them in the field. The new army commander decided to meet the threat by the application of the doctrine followed by his predecessor: "... to deal out maximum damage at minimum cost". He planned to conduct a well co-ordinated withdrawal through a series of phased defence lines. Contact with the enemy would be maintained and UN artillery and airpower would be used to concentrate maximum firepower on the advancing Communist forces.⁶

On the night of 22 April three Chinese Communist armies, totalling more than 350 000 troops, attacked by the light of the full moon. They

4. Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.117; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.26-27; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.335.

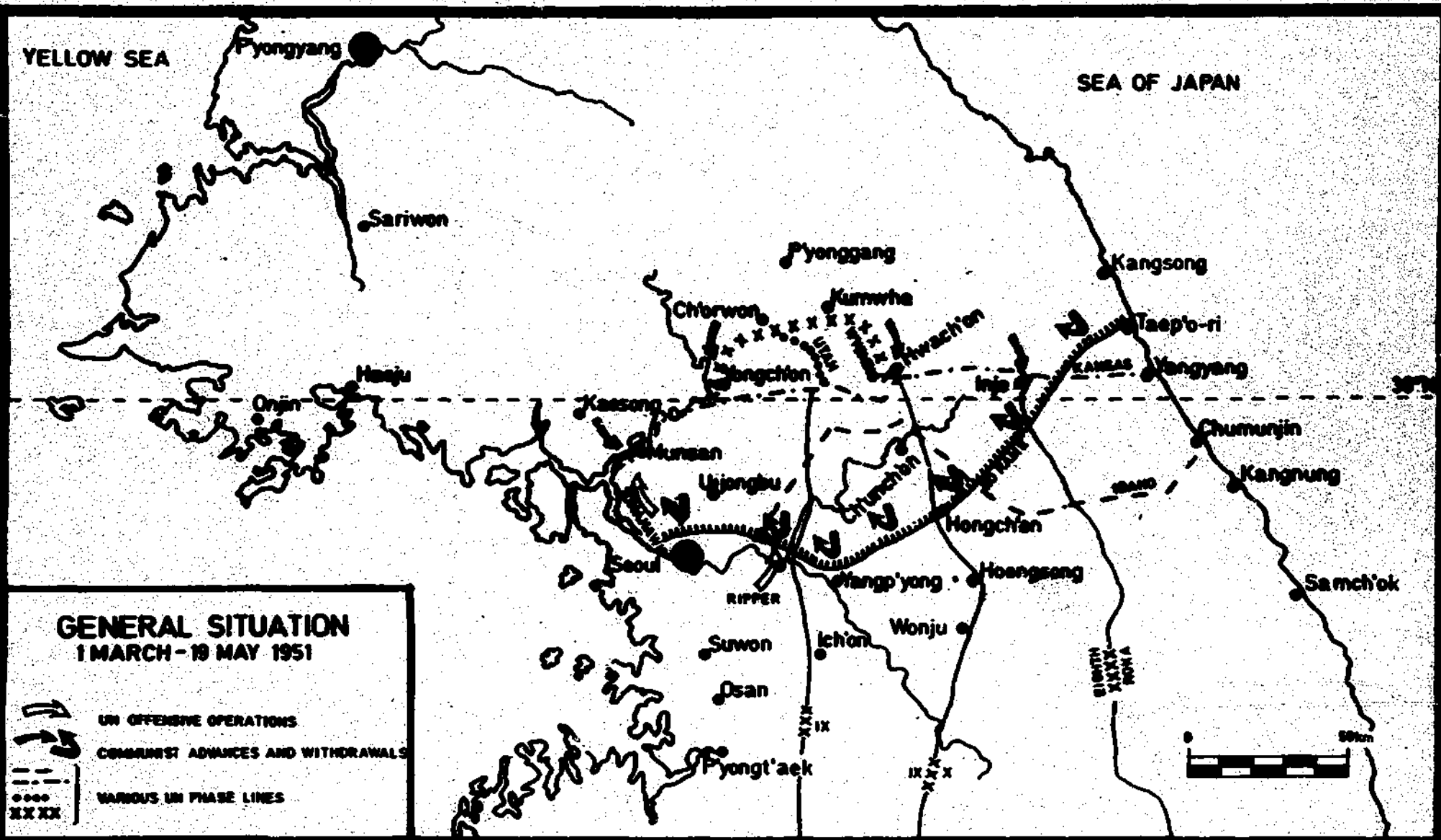
5. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.26; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.335; Ridgway: The War in Korea, pp.141-158; Manchester: American Caesar, pp.593-597.

6. Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.117; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.26-27; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.336.

used massed infantry "human wave" tactics, co-ordinated with the infiltration of small units. The main effort was a double envelopment in the west against Seoul. Secondary attacks were directed against the Yongch'on-Hwach'on area and against Inje. This major Communist drive was only supported by a minimum number of guns and tanks. In addition, the assault troops did not receive any assistance from the Communist air forces. By way of contrast, the UNC employed its full air capability in order to inflict maximum damage on the enemy. On 23 April, FEAF aircraft flew more than 1 100 sorties, including 340 in close support of the Eighth Army. The FEAF pilots maintained this tempo for another three days, flying more than 1 000 sorties per day. After an unsuccessful attempt to ferry infantrymen across the Han River to the Kimpo peninsula, during which they lost more than 6 000 men to UN air attack, the OCF were ready to admit that the "First Impulse" of their offensive had ground to a halt. The UN forces had conceded ground, but they still held a continuous line, No-name Line, from north of Seoul through Sabangu to Taep'o-ri just north of the 38th parallel. Van Fleet's plan had succeeded; he had exacted a high price for a little territory. The OCF had suffered 70 000 casualties to the 11 000 that they had inflicted on the UN forces during the offensive.⁷

During the first two weeks of May, UNC intelligence officers detected an attempt by the OCF to regroup and resupply. Between 1 and 16 May FEAF aircraft flew an average of 287 interdiction missions per day in an attempt to hamper this build-up. Despite their harassment, however, the "Second Impulse" of the OCF spring offensive was directed southwards on the night of 15-16 May. An estimated 21 Chinese divisions, flanked by three North Korean divisions in the west and six in the east, attacked down the central mountains against the US X Corps and the ROK III Corps. The ROK divisions

7. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.5.1951; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.103-105; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.336; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, pp.416-147.



on the UN right flank were forced back, and although they had to give ground, the "Second Impulse" was brought to a standstill by the UN resistance within four days. This was to be the last major offensive action initiated by the Communists until June 1953.⁸

2 SQN BASE MOVEMENT

The back and forth movements of the UN ground forces during this period placed great demands upon the supporting fighter-bombers. During March 1951 2 Sqn SAAF flew its greatest number of sorties for any single month of the Korean War; the squadron undertook 633 combat sorties, an average of 20.4 per day. Expenditure of napalm bombs, HVAR rockets and 12.7mm machine gun ammunition also reached a peak during this month (Appendices A-1 to A-5). An analysis of the sorties for the whole period shows that 92% were on interdiction, 16% on close support and 2% on rescue missions. Over the whole period the squadron flew 1 281 sorties, or just over 10% of the total number of sorties flown by the SAAF during the entire Korean War.⁹

These sorties originated from four different airfields: K-10, K-9, K-13 and K-16. With the coming of the torrential summer rains it was feared that flying operations would be hampered if the earth runway at K-10 were to break up under the heavy traffic. It was thus decided to lay a pierced steel planking (PSP) runway at K-10. The CO of 2 Sqn was notified of this decision on 14 March and was instructed to prepare for a move to Pusan East (K-1), while the other 18FBW squadrons were ordered to Pusan (K-1). On 23 March the advance party under Capt. P.A. le Grange flew to K-9, and the remaining

8. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.105-107; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.306-307, 339-340; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, pp.420-421.

9. WDM: Box 12, Return of Daily Missions and Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, March 1951; WDM: Box 13, Return of Daily Missions, April 1951; WDM: Box 14, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, April 1951; WDM: Box 15, Return of Daily Missions and Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1951.

members of the squadron followed the next day when missions took off from K-10 and landed at K-9. For the duration of their stay at Pusan East the squadron came under the operational control of the 35th FIW.¹⁰

The stay at K-9 lasted exactly one month. From 23 April onwards SAAF missions were once again to land at K-10. During the squadron's absence from Chinhae many improvements had been made over and above the new PSP runway. The living and recreational facilities had been up-graded, while the infrastructure of the base had been adapted to allow for operations in all types of weather. The 2 Sqn diarist commented that the new facilities at the base were equivalent to those found at any permanent South African air station.¹¹

Other than the temporary movement of the rear base, the 18 FBW once more began to stage through forward bases. The UN advances since January 1951 again made it possible to operate from airfields situated between the 38th and 39th parallels. On 1 May a group of 20 SAAF groundcrew left for Suwon (K-13) to establish a re-arming and re-fuelling (R and R) detachment for 2 Sqn Mustangs. The next day 18 FBW missions were staged through this airfield.¹²

The re-commissioning of this forward base brought the starting point of missions 280km closer to the targets. The rotation procedure was laid down in the 18 FBW Frag Order for 2 May. The three squadrons of the wing: 67 Sqn USAF, 12 Sqn USAF and 2 Sqn SAAF, were instructed to rotate their flights through K-13 as follows:

- a. One flight of four aircraft to be dispatched daily from K-10 on an operational mission landing at K-13.
- b. The same flight to re-arm and re-fuel at K-13 and fly another two

10. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14,23,24.3.1951.

11. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23,24.4.1951.

12. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1,2.5.1951.

missions from K-13 on the same day.

c. The flight then had to stay the night at K-13.

d. The next day they were to fly one more mission from K-13, after which they were to return to K-10.¹³

On 7 May the R and R detachment was moved from K-13 to Seoul (K-16) where the same rotation procedure was applied.¹⁴

In practice, this rotation through the forward airfields became far more demanding than the instructions of the original Frag Order had indicated. A typical example is that of a flight consisting of Capt. G.P.M. Kotze, and Lts A.B. de Wet, I. Gow, M. Frost and F.M. Bekker. Three of these pilots flew 10 successive missions over a period of five days before returning to the rear base. The standard of the ground crews' work can be assessed by the fact that the same four aircraft were used on all 10 missions.¹⁵ Some of the practical implications of this routine were not so pleasant for the pilots. Owing to the limited storage space in a fighter aircraft, each pilot could take with him only the minimum baggage. This consisted of his toiletries and a change of underclothing; flying overalls had to be worn day after day. On their return to K-10 pilots were as pleased to have a change of clothing as they were of the opportunity to relax.¹⁶

INTERDICTION BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT

During the spring of 1951, 2 Sqn concentrated on finding targets of opportunity along the road and rail routes radiating northwards from Seoul towards P'yongyang and Wonsan. Occasional missions during early March also

13. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, May 1951, Appendix 1, 18 FBW Frag Order 5-2 for 2 May 1951.

14. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.5.1951.

15. WDM: Box 15, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 13-16.5.1951; D.M. Moore: SAAF in Korea (Militaria, 10/4, 1980), pp.26-27.

16. Col B.E. Martin: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1981.

patrolled the lateral routes linking P'yongyang and Wonsan, and the coastal route between Wonsan and Hahung. Initially these reconnaissance missions were only armed with HVAR's and 12,7mm and were tasked to search specific sections of the supply routes. Later, as the OCF became adept at avoiding the searching aircraft and more active in the building up of their April offensive, interdiction missions were armed with 227kg GP bombs (some fitted with six hour delay fuses), in addition to the HVAR'S and 12,7mm, and were pre-briefed to cut specified stretches of rail and roadway, or to bomb selected bridges and tunnels.¹⁷

The Communists sought to neutralize the effect of the armed reconnaissance missions by increasing their AA defences, especially along the supply routes, and by refining their camouflage and deception techniques. UNC intelligence officers noticed that preparations for the April offensive included the reinforcement of the OCF regiments with air defence companies equipped with Soviet 12,7mm machine guns. During May 1951, towed Soviet 37mm M-1939 automatic weapons appeared in increasing numbers along the supply routes. During the same month FEAF intelligence officers plotted the locations of 252 AA guns and 673 automatic weapons.¹⁸ This was an increase from the July 1950 total of 36 AA guns and 100 automatic weapons.¹⁹

Faced with this threat to low flying aircraft, the two aircraft armed reconnaissance missions, which had been customary during March, were changed to four aircraft missions. This allowed one element to search at 100m while the other flew at 1 000m to protect its comrades from both enemy aircraft and flak. These tactics reduced the efficiency of the 5AF fighter-bombers, and to this extent the Communists were partially successful in protecting

17. WDR: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, March 1951; WEM: Box 14, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, April 1951; WEM: Box 15, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1951.

18. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.306-307.

19. Soltys: Enemy Antiaircraft Defenses in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.1, Spring 1954), p.77.

their vehicles and supplies.²⁰ Their degree of success is reflected in the following figures for vehicles claimed as either damaged or destroyed:

Table 4

Month	5AF		2 SQN SAAF	
	Destroyed	Damaged	Destroyed	Damaged
March	2 261	1 326 ²¹	108	44 ²⁴
April	2 336	1 496 ²²	131	74 ²⁵
May	1 245	1 624 ²³	49	28 ²⁶

The figures for both 5AF and 2 Sqn show a remarkable drop in vehicles claimed as destroyed during May 1951, after a peak had been reached during the previous month.

Improved OCF deception techniques incorporated a well co-ordinated system of staging trucks through the interdiction area. They hid their vehicles in inaccessible ravines in tunnels and in specially built log bunkers during the hours of daylight, and moved them at night according to a three stage schedule. During the first night loaded trucks travelled from the flak-protected areas in the north to the bunker zone. The second night allowed them to deliver their loads to the front line and to return to the shelters before dawn, and the third night saw them return to their bases in the north.²⁷

20. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.306; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.420.

21. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.305.

22. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.307.

23. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.307.

24. WDM: Box 12, Return of Daily Missions, March 1951.

25. WDM: Box 13, Return of Daily Missions, April 1951.

26. WDM: Box 15, Return of Daily Missions, May 1951.

27. Staff Study: Communist Camouflage and Deception (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.1, Spring 1953), p.95; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.306; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.413.

2 SQN ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE

In an effort to counter the improved Communist tactics, the UN pilots became increasingly adept at detecting and destroying camouflaged vehicles in shelters and tunnels, while the movement of convoys under cover of darkness was hampered by B-26 night intruder missions. At this juncture the "Flying Cheetahs" enhanced their reputation by effective truck hunting. On 1 March 2 Sqn established a new 18 FBW record by flying 32 combat sorties in a single day. These sorties consisted of eight patrols over the roads north-east of Ch'orwon, and eight close support missions. All were two aircraft missions. One of the armed reconnaissance missions flown by Lts D.W. McKellar and D.D. Deans was a great success. They found seven vehicles hidden in an area surrounded by high hills, which made them difficult to approach. The South Africans solved the problem by using an unconventional tactic. They dive-bombed with napalm, a procedure never previously used by the squadron, and scored direct hits. Lt E.N. Jones also had a successful outing when he led a close support mission which destroyed two tanks in the southern section of Seoul.²⁸

Although they did not take part in the night raids, on 12 March, 2 Sqn did get a taste of the radar bombing technique, when Capt. G.B. Lipawsky, on his last mission in Korea, led a four aircraft flight which carried out an experimental MPO₂ radar-directed drop through the overcast. The TADC ground controller directed the flight on four different bombing runs at increasing altitudes before he finally gave them the order to release their ordnance at 7 000m. His instructions were constantly interrupted by other controllers, and when they finally reach a suitable position Capt. Lipawsky and his men found little satisfaction in releasing their bombs blindly into the cloud. They reported that the whole procedure was very inefficient

28. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.3.1951; WDM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 1.3.1951.

and that a separate radio channel was necessary for such missions.²⁹

A variation of "Operation Tack" was tried on the night of 14-15 March, when night intruders dropped specially manufactured hollow tetrahedrons and butterfly bombs at several choke points on the North Korean roads. The 18 FBW was then directed to search for stationary vehicles in the vicinity of Sibyon-ni, Sin'gye and Sirmak. 2 Sqn pilots only managed to locate and destroy four vehicles.³⁰ In spite of such innovations, the South Africans remained convinced that there was no substitute for systematic and close ground searching for hidden vehicles. Techniques developed by pilots, such as Capt. W.J.J. Badenhorst and Lt J.H. Kruger, as well as careful planning and co-ordination by the new squadron commander, Omdt R.F. Armstrong, enabled them to excel in truck hunting during late March and early April 1951. Some of these techniques involved flying across the patrol routes in overlapping circles, with pilots returning to the same areas. Thus they were able to notice the slightest changes on the ground. Also, when a single vehicle was spotted, they waited until the whole convoy had been sighted before going into the attack.³¹

On 24 March Maj. J.P.D. Blaauw and Lt F.E. Potgieter found 12 camouflaged trucks drawn up alongside a road just south-east of Sirmak. As was customary at that time, they were only carrying HVAR's and 12,7mm ammunition. However, they were able to use their limited ordnance so effectively that 10 of the trucks were destroyed and one was damaged.³² Further successes against camouflaged vehicles were recorded over the next two weeks, with Capt.

29. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12.3.1951; WDM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 12.3.1951; Col S.J.W. Inglesby: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 31.3.1981.

30. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1951, Appendix L, 18 FBW Frag Order 3-15 for 15 March 1951; WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 15.3.1951; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.300.

31. MEM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17.3.1951; Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 16.3.1951.

32. WDM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 24.3.1951.

H.O.M. Odendaal and Lt J.H. Kruger destroying nine trucks on 2 April just south of T'osan.³³ These achievements were recognized during the UNC morning briefing on 4 April, when Gen. Partridge cited 2 Sqn as being the most efficient unit at seeking out and destroying camouflaged vehicles. Gen. Stratemeyer reacted by congratulating the SAAF on a fine job.³⁴

Early April 1951 saw the SAAF Mustangs participating in an attempt to paralyse the North Korean transport system by cutting roads, railway lines and bridges. An example of this occurred on 3 April when 31 SAAF sorties delivered 62 227kg bombs onto the relatively short section of the MSR (10km) between Sirmak and Sohung. Over the next two days this same section received a further 46 and 24 SAAF bombs. In this case, as in others, the Communist repair gangs were hampered by those bombs which had been fitted with delay fuses.³⁵

Prior to the OCF spring offensive, which they had hoped to support from the air, the Communists showed signs of challenging UN air superiority. This increased the possibility of aerial attacks on UN air bases during April 1951. As a precautionary measure the squadrons at K-9 were instructed to disperse their aircraft as widely as possible in the crowded parking area. In addition, the squadron commander decided to call his pilots together in the operations room in order to prepare them for any eventuality. Drawing upon the lessons of World War II he addressed them on:

- a. Measures to be taken on the sudden appearance of enemy aircraft.
- b. Enemy aircraft types and their performance.³⁶

After some discussion the assembled officers took a number of decisions

33. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.4.1951.

34. WDM: Box 9, SAAF Liaison HQ War Diary, 4.4.1951.

35. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3-5.4.1951.

36. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.4.1951;
Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981.

regarding their tactics against the Communist air threat. They decided to:

- a. Reduce RT "chatter" to a minimum.
- b. Fly in closer formation to and from the target areas, and to pay more attention to searching the sky.
- c. Still consider the first "on target" priority to be the destruction of enemy transport and supplies.
- d. Take offensive action against propeller driven enemy aircraft, with pilots fighting in pairs.
- e. Use defensive tactics against all enemy jets. The formation would stick together and fight as a team. The leader would reduce altitude and manoeuvre to sport the enemy position for attack, and to turn into each attack as it developed.

These tactics were based on the fact that the slower moving Mustangs could turn far more sharply than the high performance MIG-15 jets.³⁷

Despite the threat of the latter, the armed reconnaissance missions met with increasing success. On 14 April Lts J.H. Kruger and S.G. de la Harpe set a new squadron record for the number of vehicles destroyed during the course of a single mission. They took off at 07h15 and after one and three quarter hours of searching they found a camouflaged convoy of 19 vehicles at Songwol-li, a village on a side road 12km north-east of Sohung. Their strike destroyed 18 of the 19 trucks. Soon afterwards they found six more vehicles alongside another secondary road 16km north-east of Sinnak. They destroyed three of these vehicles. When they returned to base Lt Kruger and his wingman claimed 21 enemy vehicles destroyed and one damaged.³⁸

The squadron commander was amazed at Kruger's ability to pick out camouflaged vehicles and was somewhat sceptical about his claims. Determined

37. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.4.1951;
Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981.

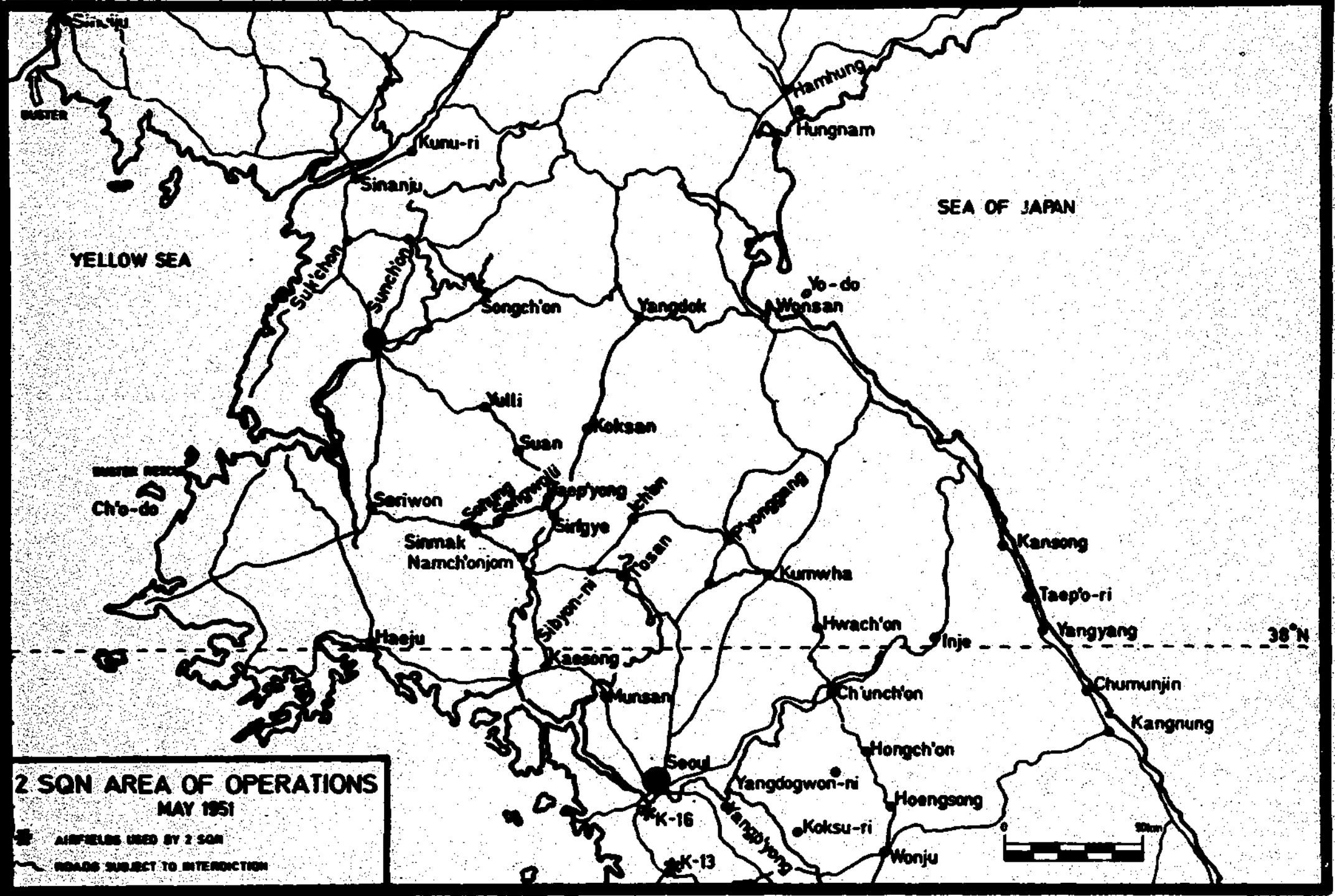
38. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.4.1951;
Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 20.3.1951.

to see for himself, Cndt Armstrong arranged to fly as Kruger's wingman the next day. Poor weather caused a delay, but on 16 April they took off together to patrol the MSR just north-west of Kaesong. They had just about reached the point where a shortage of fuel would have forced them to return to base without having made any sightings, when Kruger spotted about 30 trucks tucked away in a narrow ravine. In spite of the narrowness of the valley they attacked and the trucks burnt intensely. On his return to base Cndt Armstrong dispatched another mission to finish off any of the vehicles which might have survived the first attack. His doubts as to the younger pilot's spotting ability had turned to admiration and he recommended the award of an American DFC, which was approved on 10 May 1951.³⁹

Lt J.M. Sweeney also earned a DFC on the same day when he added a tank to the squadron's tally of 32 vehicles. The citation (the award was made on 13 June) tells the story:

"Leading a flight of two (2) F-51 type aircraft in the Kumchon area of North Korea and although the anti-aircraft fire was accurate throughout the period spent in the area, he continued to fly at low altitude investigating suspicious objects. His complete disregard for personal safety and unremitting perseverance was rewarded when he sighted an enemy tank and cleverly concealed anti-tank gun. He unhesitatingly attacked both targets with relentless accuracy and left the area only after the complete destruction of both was assured. In the process the aircraft which T/Captain Sweeney was flying was hit in the left gun bay by an explosive shell which burnt all the rocket and electrical wiring. Quite undeterred,

39. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10,15,16.5.1951; WDM: 2 Sqn War Diary, May 1951, Appendix C, Citation; Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 20.3.1951.



**2 SQN AREA OF OPERATIONS
MAY 1951**

AIRFIELDS USED BY 2 SQN
ROADS SUBJECT TO INTERDICTION



however, T/Captain Sweeney continued on his mission and caused severe damage to an enemy village before returning to base."⁴⁰

The intense pressure on air and ground crews alike was somewhat relieved on 17 April when 18 FBW announced that each squadron would be committed to only 16 sorties per day for the immediate future. This temporary reduction in the sortie rate was to allow the ground crews to increase aircraft serviceability in preparation for an all-out effort against the expected Communist offensive. The cut-back did not dampen the determination of 2 Sqn to stay on top in the SAF's competitive "truck busting" campaign. On the evening of 18 April Cndt Armstrong held a meeting with the four flight commanders and the operations officer in order to discuss squadron policy with regard to armed reconnaissance. He stressed that the reputation of the squadron and of the SAAF depended upon their success in destroying vehicles. He urged the flight commanders to maintain their present high standard.⁴¹

Effective "truck hunting" depended largely upon two actions: firstly, a thorough and co-ordinated search of clearly defined areas, and secondly, the exploitation of the flexibility of airpower by the rapid dissemination of information once a convoy had been located. In order to achieve the first, Cndt Armstrong sub-divided the area assigned to the squadron by JOC and allocated a flight to each sub-area for at least a week at a stretch. In this way the pilots became thoroughly acquainted with the terrain and its potential for concealment. Flights were instructed to first reconnoitre their own sub-areas, and then to proceed to known "fruitful" areas.⁴²

40. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.4.1951; WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, June 1951, Appendix B, Citation.

41. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17-18.4.1951.

42. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 18.4.1951;
Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1951.

Whilst the South Africans were fully aware of the need for close co-operation with their American comrades, they were determined, in a spirit of friendly rivalry, that vehicles found by 2 Sqn would be destroyed by its own pilots. When a flight leader passed information concerning the locality of targets over the RT, every UN fighter-bomber over Korea could hear him, and those on armed reconnaissance missions homed in for the kill. The South Africans ensured confidentiality by using Afrikaans over the RT on these occasions. While on a mission Cndt Armstrong had overheard a frustrated American pilot call "foul" with regard to this practice. He thus instructed his pilots to give the other UN pilots a fair chance by using English to pass target information.⁴³

The members of 2 Sqn received further recognition of their efforts when a letter (dated 18 April 1951) was received on 9 May, which read:

- "1. On 12 April 1951, just two months after flying its 1 000th sortie, Number 2 Squadron, South African Air Force, completed 2 000 combat sorties in support of the United Nations Forces in Korea. This continuing high sortie rate is most noteworthy.
2. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the personnel of Number 2 Squadron who have contributed to this commendable effort."

signed: George E. Stratemeier
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commanding.

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An endorsement by the CG 5AF accompanied this letter of appreciation:

- "1. The above compliments of the Commanding General, Far East Air Forces, carry the enthusiastic endorsement of this headquarters.
2. The enviable combat record of the 2d SAAF Squadron in the Korean

43. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 18.4.1951;
Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981.

44. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, May 1951, Appendix A, CG FEAF - CO 2 Sqn, 18.4.1951.



The Ground Crews Contribute to the High Sortie Rate.

MIB Photograph No: 700012389



Improvised Fuses for Napalm Bombs.



Loading the 12,7mm Machine Guns.

MIB Photograph No: 761000350



A Mustang's Load of 127mm Rockets is Checked.



SAAF Airmen Build a Revetment.

MIB Photograph No: 781005812



Standing Guard in Korea.

MIB Photograph No: 700012262

War is a splendid tribute to the fighting spirit of the freedom loving people of your nation.

3. My congratulations to you and to the members of your command for the outstanding performance demonstrated. The aerial achievements of your organization have reflected great credit upon yourself and the United Nations."

signed: E.E. Partridge
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commanding.

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2 SQN SUPPORT OF GROUND FORCES: 1 MARCH - 19 MAY 1951

During this period only 16% of 2 Sqn's combat sorties were flown in close support of the ground forces.⁴⁶ Although the armed reconnaissance missions usually carried only MVAR's and 12,7mm, and occasionally napalm and 227kg GP bombs, the combination of napalm, HVAR's and 12,7mm remained the standard armament for close support. Most of the close support missions during March were in support of "Operation Ripper" against targets located between the Han and Pukham Rivers.⁴⁷ During Ripper UN pressure forced the OCP infantry to break cover and large numbers were caught in the open by the marauding fighter-bombers. On 11 March Capt. Lipawsky led a flight of four aircraft against a Communist infantry column 300 strong, moving up a narrow valley. During the debriefing he gave a graphic account of the enemy troops running up the valley with their clothes aflame after the first napalm strike. After the final attack the controller had reported heaps of burning corpses.⁴⁸ Similar carnage occurred five days later when a Mosquito controller found 1 200 men fleeing along a road east of Hongch'on. He directed six air strikes against this group, two of which were carried out by SAAF flights. The US 7th Division, moving up the road shortly afterwards, found

45. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, May 1951, Appendix B, CG 5AF - CO 2 Sqn, 18.4.1951.

46. Vide, p.219.

47. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1951.

48. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.3.1951.

600 dead and 300 wounded.⁴⁹

On 23 March, "Operation Tomahawk" gave 2 Sqn experience of a particular type of close support. Three SAAF two aircraft flights were successively tasked to provide continuous cover to the US I Corps armoured column. Each flight spent three hours over the column before being relieved. Each aircraft carried two 110kg (260lb) fragmentation bombs, six HVAR's and the normal 12,7mm ammunition. As none of these flights was called upon to beat off threats to the column, they were all directed to expend their ordnance on nearby close support targets after their spell of watching over the task force.⁵⁰

After 23 April the pressure of the Communist offensive made it necessary to divert aircraft, already airborne on interdiction missions, to close support targets. On 23 April itself, two SAAF armed reconnaissance missions were called upon to render close support. Two of these missions joined up under the leadership of Lt J.H. Kruger, and they were directed against OCF infantry that had been caught crossing the Imjin River. They strafed and rocketed these troops killing an unknown number.⁵¹

The most remarkable of those missions diverted to close support was led by Lt J.A. Joubert on 4 May. He had been pre-briefed for a road cutting mission and his four aircraft were armed accordingly with GP bombs, HVAR's and 12,7mm. They crossed the bomblines in rapidly deteriorating weather and visibility was further reduced by a new Communist tactic of using smoke generators to create a haze over the front. Just after crossing the bomblines the flight was diverted to assist the ground forces just south of Koksuri on the northern side of the Han River. By the time

49. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.3.1951;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.324.

50. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23.3.1951.

51. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23.4.1951; WDM: Box 14, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 23.4.1951; Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 20.3.1951.

they had reached the target area the clouds were down to about 300m and visibility was about 800m. The clouds lay on the high ridges and Joubert had to lead his flight along the valleys, below the cloud. The target, an enemy held ridge just 200m in front of friendly infantry, was neutralized without the UN troops being harmed. After the air strike the UN ground forces were able to take the ridge with little difficulty. Lt Joubert was awarded the American DFC for the outstanding leadership and devotion to duty that he had displayed during this mission.⁵²

A departure from the routine of close support and interdiction missions occurred on 9 May, when 2 Sqn pilots took part in "Operation Buster". This raid, which involved 312 aircraft from the 5AF and the 1st Marine Air Wing, was directed against the 26km² support area surrounding the Simuiju airfield. This airfield was on the point of becoming operational, and in view of the OCF offensive plans, its neutralization was imperative. In this major air operation there were four distinct tasks:

- a. The provision of top cover to protect the strike aircraft from the MIG-15's stationed on the nearby Manchurian bases.
- b. Flak suppression.
- c. The actual bombing of the airstrip and the surrounding revetments and supply dumps.
- d. The rescue stand-by.

The top cover was provided by the new F-86 Sabres, F-84 Thunderjets and Marine Pantherjets. F-80 Shooting Stars suppressed the flak, while the actual strike was carried out by F-51D Mustangs from 18 FBW and Marine Corsairs. 2 Sqn was tasked to protect the rescue aircraft (SA-16's and SA-17's) and downed pilots. In fulfilment of this mission, 16 SAAF Mustangs in four

52. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.5.1951; WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, May 1951, Appendix I, 18 FBW Frag Order 5-4 for 4 May 1951; WDM: Box 15, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 4.5.1951; Capt. J.A. Joubert: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 2.4.1981; Capt. J.A. Joubert: Private Papers, Citation.

flights of four aircraft each took-off in relays, starting at 11h10. They orbited over the Yellow Sea just west of Ch'o-do Island towards which pilots in distress had been directed to fly. As only one Thunderjet was damaged during the operation the South African missions were without incident. The raid itself was a great success: besides hitting a number of OCAF aircraft on the ground the Mustangs and Corsairs destroyed 106 buildings, one large dump of aviation fuel, and 26 ammunition and supply dumps. They also inflicted heavy casualties on enemy personnel.⁵³

THE EFFECT

Prisoner-of-war interrogations conducted at this time revealed that UN air strikes were the greatest obstacle to Communist success. Other difficulties mentioned by POW's were a lack of mobility and firepower, and the problems associated with operations in an unfamiliar terrain without knowledge of the local language. UN air strikes were responsible for a shortage of war material at the front; frostbite and illness were rife owing to a lack of adequate clothing and footwear, whilst a shortage of weapons and ammunition limited the scope of military operations. The OCF soldiers also suffered from a lack of sleep, as UN air activity during the day only allowed them to move under cover of darkness.⁵⁴

The effect on the morale of the common Communist soldier can be seen from this entry in a captured notebook, a translation of which was entered into the 2 Sqn War Diary:

- *(a) Marching difficulties because roads are ice covered and slippery.
- (b) Soldiers are now exhausted because of incessant night marches. To make matters worse, during the day, when they should be

53. Moore: SAAF in Korea (Militaria, 10/4, 1980), pp.27-28.

54. A.L. George: The Chinese Communist Army in Action, p.165.

resting, they cannot sleep due to enemy air strikes.

- (c) Due to shortage of winter boots, almost all soldiers are suffering from frostbite.
- (d) Soldiers must be still in their shelters during the daytime when enemy planes appear overhead.
- (e) Soldiers have had to cross rivers with their uniforms on when in combat, which has resulted in severe frostbite.
- (f) The fighting is becoming critical due to the shortage of food and arms.
- (g) Lack of lubricants causes untimely malfunction of rifles.
- (h) Soldiers have been unduly burdened by being forced to carry heavy equipment on their backs.
- (i) The physical condition of the soldiers has been getting worse, as they have to hide in shelters all day long, and fight only at night or under enemy air assault.

Morale of the soldiers in our unit:

- (a) Some of the soldiers are courageous in fighting, some lack courage.
- (b) The enemy air strikes frighten them worst of all.
- (c) The most unbearable burden was to carry heavy equipment up mountains and along ridge lines.
- (d) Their conviction that we will win the war is wavering.
- (e) They worry about whether or not they can return to their homes when the war is over.
- (f) They are not as willing to fight in South Korea as in North Korea.
- (g) Most of the soldiers are not well informed of the present unfavourable situation.
- (h) Low morale and lack of determination."⁵⁵

The dissemination of this information could well have been a UN propaganda stunt, but it had a positive effect on the airmen of 2 Sqn.

THE COST

The increasing Communist AA capability, together with the high intensity of operations, was bound to result in losses. Some pilots had narrow escapes when their aircraft were hit by enemy fire. Four aircraft went down and one was written-off in an accident, but the pilots survived. However, others were not so fortunate: three pilots were killed in action and one in an accident during this period. Altogether nine aircraft were lost.

On 2 March, 2 Sqn lost two of its most experienced pilots, Lt D.A. Ruiter and Capt. W.J.J. Badenhorst. At about midday Lt Ruiter, who was leading a four aircraft mission to the north of Wonsan, developed engine trouble en route to the target area. Just west of Wonsan he reported that his coolant temperature was fluctuating; his No.2, Lt M.H. Rorke, on checking the outlet door, reported that it was functioning normally. Ruiter then decided to return to base and told Rorke to escort him. After a few minutes the latter saw white glycol smoke pouring from his leader's Mustang (No.301). Ruiter, realizing that he only had a few minutes grace, attempted to crash land on the beach at Yo-do Island. He misjudged his approach, over-shot, and while turning to the left hit the sea. The aircraft sunk almost immediately. In spite of a search conducted by three surviving members of the flight and three naval vessels, no trace of the pilot was discovered.⁵⁶

Capt. Badenhorst was lost the same day. He was leading a long range armed reconnaissance mission towards the section of MSR between Sinanju and Chonju. While crossing the Ch'ongch'on River at an altitude of 150m they suddenly drew heavy AA fire. The No.2, 2/Lt J.C. Ansell heard his leader say: "Look out there's bags of heavy flak ..." He stopped in mid

56. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.3.1951; WDM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 2.3.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/9/AIR, Lt M.H. Rorke: Eye-Witness Account, 9.3.1951; Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981.

sentence and there was no further radio contact with him. His F-51D (No.317) appeared to be out of control, and after climbing and then diving steeply towards Sinanju, it pitched over and crashed into the town in flames.⁵⁷ Lt F.A. Swenner narrowly escaped being the third fatality within a week when, two days later, the engine of his Mustang (No.305) cut on take-off and he landed in a rice paddy at the end of the runway. The pilot was uninjured but the aircraft was a write-off.⁵⁸

On 10 March Capt. Davis led a strike against Communist infantry dug in along a ridge near Yandogwon-ni, between the Han and the Pukham Rivers. The four SAAF Mustangs drew intense small arms fire from the target area. As Davis was turning into the attack at 600m his aircraft (No.321) went into a spin, failed to recover, and hit the ground carrying a full load of napalm, HVAR's and 12,7mm. It burnt fiercely while the rest of the flight pressed home the attack.⁵⁹

Other SAAF pilots were more fortunate. Three days after the loss of Capt. Davis, the 2 i/c of the squadron, Maj. J.P.D. Blaauw, had a narrow escape during a strike against railway trucks along the MSR. His F-51D was hit in the left mainplane by a 20mm explosive shell and he had great difficulty in bringing the crippled aircraft back to base and making a safe landing.⁶⁰ On 19 March Lt F.E. Potgieter became the first SAAF pilot to be wounded in action in Korea. While patrolling the Imjin River with Lt Joubert he noticed moderate, but accurate, AA fire from both banks to the north of Munsan. Lt Potgieter's Mustang was hit in the starboard side of the cockpit by a 12,7mm bullet which pierced the radio control box and struck the pilot on the right chest causing a superficial wound.

57. WEM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.3.1951; WEM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 2.3.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SODN/6/1/10/AIR, 2 Lt J.C. Ansell: Eye-Witness Account, 10.3.1951.

58. WEM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.3.1951.

59. WEM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.3.1951;
WEM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 10.3.1951.

60. WEM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 13.3.1951.

This incident did not deter the two airmen, who only returned to base after rocketing and strafing targets in Kaesong.⁶¹

The next day Lt S. Armstrong had the good fortune to land in friendly territory when he was forced to bale out. He had been flying No.2 to Capt Armstrong, en route to patrol the supply routes north-east of Kaesong, when his engine began to run roughly. After about ten minutes the cockpit was filled with smoke and flames appeared from under the top cowling in front of the windscreen. Correct application of the emergency drills brought him safely to earth on a hillside behind the bombline, some 30km south-west of Wonju. A number of friendly Koreans stayed with him until the rescue helicopter arrived.⁶²

April 1951 almost passed without 2 Sqn losing a single aircraft, but on the last day of that month Lt P.S. Calliers was shot down behind enemy lines. As leader of a four aircraft mission, he had been pre-briefed to attack a railway tunnel on the MSR just east of Sirmak. His flight released its bombs on the tunnel and then broke into two separate elements in order to find targets of opportunity for their rockets and machine guns. Shortly after they left the primary target Calliers' Mustang (No.313) was hit by AA fire and burst into flames. His wingman, Lt G.G. Paterson, saw him bale out successfully just 5km east of Sirmak. Paterson alerted the rescue service and then recalled the other element of the flight to assist him in protecting his leader. A second SAAF flight, which was diverted after having bombed a tunnel in the Schung area, relieved them and soon afterwards the rescue helicopter retrieved Calliers from hostile territory. He was grounded for three months owing to a lacerated wound in the right calf.⁶³

61. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.3.1951; WDM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 19.3.1951.

62. WDM: Box 3, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.3.1951; WDM: Box 12, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 20.3.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 GDM/8/1/13/AIR, Lt S. Armstrong: Report, 21.3.1951.

63. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.4.1951; WDM: Box 14, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 30.4.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 GDM/8/1/14/AIR, Lt P.S. Calliers: Report, 3.5.1951; Lt. G.G. Paterson, Eye-Witness Account, 4.5.1951.

Capt. J.M. Sweeney was also wounded three days later. He was flying No. 3 on an interdiction mission against a railway tunnel between Kaesong and Namch'onjom. They attacked the primary target without incident and were engaged in strafing some vehicles, in the face of intense automatic fire, when his Mustang was hit in the left aileron trimming and in the starboard side of the cockpit. He suffered a lacerated wound in the right buttock and began to loose blood rapidly. Maj. Blaauw coaxed the wounded pilot back to K-16 where he passed out on landing. From K-16 he was evacuated by air to K-10. There the squadron medical officer declared him unfit for flying for six months.⁶⁴

By the middle of May 1951 eleven of the original draft of SAAF pilots had completed their tours and returned home. One who nearly did not make it was Lt V.R. Kruger. The story of his rescue from behind enemy lines, on his 74th sortie, has become one of the legends of South African military aviation. At 15h30 Maj. J.P.D. Blaauw took-off from K-16 with Lt V.R. Kruger, Lt M. Mantz and Capt. P. Clulow. They bombed their primary target, a bridge 8km west of Ch'orwon, and then commenced a reconnaissance to the west. At 16h30, while flying over Taep'yong, Kruger's Mustang (No.309) was hit in the starboard mainplane; the wing collapsed and the aircraft caught fire. The pilot baled out, but in the process suffered burns on his hands and face, and dislocated his right shoulder. The leader instructed Clulow to gain altitude in order to alert the rescue service, while he and Mantz flew a ResCAP over the injured pilot. By 17h15 all three were running short of fuel and no rescue helicopter or relief flight for the ResCAP had arrived. Blaauw then instructed his two companions to return to base while

64. WIM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.5.1951;
WIM: Box 15, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 2.5.1951.

he remained behind.⁶⁵

Maj. Blaauw's decision to stay was made with the knowledge that he would not have enough fuel to return to base and in the belief, prevalent among the SAAF pilots at that time, that the Communists were shooting captured UN pilots out of hand. After 15 minutes he was joined by two Corsairs, but by 18h45 his fuel ran out and he crashlanded close to Kruger, bruising his face in the process. After spending another 30 minutes on the ground both pilots were evacuated by helicopter while under enemy fire. On returning to the forward base Blaauw telephoned his CO to report on the unusual manner in which he had lost his aircraft. He was surprised to receive war commendation for his actions. Omdt Armstrong was impressed with the courage of his 2 i/c, and with the positive effect such an action would have on the morale of the pilots, which had been severely tested by the recent losses. Maj. Blaauw was awarded the American Silver Star for gallantry displayed on this occasion. This is the highest award made by the United States to members of foreign armed services.

RORKE'S INN

The more regular arrival of mail from home, the attendance at and participation in Service Club concerts, and such thoughtful gestures as the individually addressed parcels from the Gifts and Comforts Fund, helped to maintain morale at a high level during this difficult period. The losses and narrow escapes had placed the pilots under considerable strain and something extra was needed to relieve the tension. That something was the inspiration of a young officer from the Eastern Cape, Lt M.H. Rorke.

65. The sources for this mission and its consequences are WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.5.1951; WDM: Box 15, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 11.5.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/15/AIR, Maj. J.P.D. Blaauw: Report, 7.6.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 43, 2 SQDN/909/5/P1, Dept. of the Air Force, General Orders No.80, 13.12.1951, Citation; Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981; Col P. Clulow: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1951.

He felt that, although the American Officers' Club was comfortable and friendly, it lacked atmosphere. He decided to do something about it, and drove 65km to Pusan in a borrowed jeep, where he bought 10 dollars worth of liquor at a British NAAFI. On his return to Chinhae he used some ammunition boxes to set up a counter next to his bed and went into business. His prices, with "Scotch" at seven cents a tot, were much lower than those paid in the American Club. The idea was a success and "Rorke's Inn" was soon properly established in a tent, and later in a wood and iron building. This institution stayed with 2 Sqn until they were withdrawn from Korea. It became a place where the South Africans could feel at home and let off steam, and where a tradition and an esprit de corps could be born and nourished. It was here that they could sing away their anxieties and give expression to the exuberance following successful combat.⁶⁶ Many of the songs came from previous wars, but others had a distinctive flavour born out of the Korean experience, such as:

IT'S A LONG, LONG WAY FROM

PUSAN TO P'YONGYANG

It's a long, long way from Pusan to P'yongyang,
and the mountains are high and wide,
If my engine quits, you can write off a Mustang,
'Cause I'm fixin' to go over the side.
Now close support is a damn fine mission,
'Cause you work so close to the troops,
But fifties and forties will get you in the coolant,
Then she'll cough and she'll splutter and poop;
So you bale right out while your buddies circle round you,
as the Commies blaze away,

⁶⁶. Capt. J.A. Joubert: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 2.4.1981;
Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 16.3.1981;
2 Sqn Unit History File: SAAF Press Release, "Rorke's Inn",
The Tale of a Famous Tavern, 2.4.1953; ROK: The History of
the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.415.

And the 'copter comes in and picks up your elbows,
 Registration boys will get the rest some day.
 It's a damn fine war and we love every mission,
 And we hope we're here to stay,
 For we'd rather fight than go out fishin'
 They can keep the R and R and the pay.
 Now Commandant is a damn fine leader,
 But he leads you into flak,
 Then it's 61 - 3 000, as we clean out the engines,
 and the drinks are on the last man to get back.⁶⁷

Unfortunately Rorke's Inn outlived its founder. On 15 May, Lt Rorke was the No.2 in a four aircraft interdiction mission. It was his third mission of the day; as his Mustang (No.330) became airborne, about three-quarter way down the runway, it failed to climb. Instead it stayed approximately 3m off the ground and made a slow turn to the left, eventually crashing near a damaged B-29 bomber which was parked just off the runway. The two napalm bombs, which were released just before impact, turned both aircraft into an inferno.⁶⁸ Such tragic losses notwithstanding, the "Flying Cheetahs" continued to stick to their task in Korea with enthusiasm.

67. South African National Museum of Military History: 951.9042/2, Songs the Cheetahs Sang in Korea.

68. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 15.5.1951; WDM: Box 15, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 15.5.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/17/AIR, Lt A.R. Götze: Sworn Affidavit, (no date).

CHAPTER 9FOCUS ON THE AIR WARPHASE FOUR, PERIOD 3: 20 MAY - 31 AUGUST 1951THE LAND BATTLE REACHES STALEMATE

After halting the OCF in mid-May 1951, Gen. Van Fleet immediately launched a general offensive along the whole of the Eighth Army front. The Communist forces offered little resistance, and by the end of the month the UN infantry had returned to the vicinity of the Kansas Line. South Korea was, once again, virtually clear of regular Communist forces. The frontline had been established north of the 38th parallel with the exception of the UN left flank, where it bent to take advantage of the Imjin River. Having driven his enemy from South Korea, Van Fleet did not embark upon another pursuit to the Yalu; instead, he acted in accordance with the limited UN objectives, and obeyed a JCS directive to stay on the Kansas Line. However, Ridgway did authorize local advances to gain better ground for the stabilization of a defensive line.¹

The Eighth Army reserve elements thus spent the first days of June 1951 consolidating defensive positions along the Kansas Line. Civilians were evacuated, barbed wire and minefields were placed along the front, shelters were constructed, fields of fire were cleared, artillery concentrations plotted and patrol bases established ahead of the MLR. However, two areas of OCF resistance challenged the security of this well established line. They were the "Iron Triangle" and its surrounding ridges, located 30km from the east coast and 30km from the 38th parallel, was a key area.²

While the Kansas Line was being strengthened, the I and IX Corps

1. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.110; Ridgway: The War in Korea, pp.178-179.

2. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.111-112; Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.180; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.74.

continued their advance towards the Wyoming Line, which ran along the base of the "Iron Triangle". By 11 June both Ch'orwon and Kumha had fallen and the Wyoming Line had been secured. The "Punchbowl" and its surrounding ridges, which gave observation on to the UN frontline, proved far more difficult to take and several bloody actions were fought at points such as Bloody Ridge and Heartbreak Ridge, before they finally fell to the 1st Marine Division during the second half of September 1951.³

As the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean conflict approached, the first serious attempts were made to initiate peace negotiations. On 23 June the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Jakob Malik, speaking on the UN "Price of Peace" radio programme, stated that the Soviet peoples believed that a peaceful settlement could be achieved in Korea. He went on to suggest armistice discussions. Four days later the Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, informed the US ambassador in Moscow that his government felt an armistice should be negotiated by the field commanders. Ridgway responded on 30 June with a broadcast during which he proposed peace talks with the CCF commander on board a hospital ship in Wonsan Harbour. The next day the North Korean Prime Minister and commander of the NKPA, Kim Il-sung, and Gen. Peng Teh-huai, commander of the Chinese "Volunteers", responded favourably. Negotiations began at Kaesong on 10 July. The leader of the UN delegation was Vice-Admiral C. Turner Joy, and the chief Communist negotiator was the NKPA Chief-of-Staff, Lt-Gen. Nam Il.⁴

With a ceasefire a possibility, Ridgway resolved to keep UN losses to a justifiable minimum. He thus instructed his commanders to retain the initiative by means of strong patrols and local attacks with limited objectives. These would gain tactical terrain, thereby enabling the UN infantry to extend

3. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.111, 117; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.430; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.81-82.

4. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.115; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.343-344; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.15-16; Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.182.

their observation while curtailing that of their enemy. According to UNC intelligence estimates, the Communists appeared to be following a similar policy, but in addition they were concentrating reinforcements in their rear. The war on the ground had reached a stalemate with both sides dug-in along a line which formed a belt around the thin waist of the Korean peninsula.⁵

A NEW MISSION FOR FEAF

The events of the summer of 1951, which had led to a relatively static ground situation, brought the war in the air into sharper focus. In retrospect, the CCF ground commanders had attributed the failure of their "Fifth Phase Offensive" to the collapse of Gen. Liu Ya-lou's plan to provide them with air support. The air commander stated that incomplete preparation and inadequately trained aircrews had prevented an effective air offensive. UNC photo interpreters also judged that FEAF attacks on Communist airfields during April 1951 had rendered all North Korean airfields unserviceable. In spite of this setback, the Communist planners, faced with a stalemate on the ground, looked to a revision of their air war plan for victory in Korea. They began to implement this new plan in mid-June. The new plan, which did not differ substantially from the original, had four phases:

- a. An "International Communist Volunteer Air Force" would supplement the insufficiently trained Chinese pilots, and together they would provide a protective MIG-15 screen over North Korea.
- b. Under cover of CCAF air superiority, efforts to bring the North Korean airfields to a serviceable state would be redoubled.
- c. As soon as possible, light aircraft would fly harassing raids against UN bases and positions from partially repaired airfields.

5. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.115; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.32; Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.183.

- d. Ilyushin ground attack units, trained by the Soviets in Manchuria would be brought forward to the North Korean airfields.⁶

The UNC responded to this threat by intensifying the airfield neutralization programme. This battle for the North Korean airfields between the Communist labourer and AA gunner, on the one hand, and the UN pilots on the other, was to continue with varying degrees of intensity until the very last day of the war. The FEAF aerial reconnaissance kept the 34 Communist airfields in North Korea under constant surveillance, and as soon as the gangs of peasant labourers had made appreciable progress on a particular airfield it was raided. Initially the fighter-bombers attacked the airfields by day, under a screen of F-86 Sabres, but as the AA defences were improved these strikes became too costly, and night-flying B-29 Superfortresses were allocated a greater share of the neutralization task. On 12 July, the Communists, realizing that their efforts at airfield repair were uneconomic, suddenly called a halt to these activities.⁷

Besides coinciding with an intensification of the air war, the commencement of peace negotiations was to have a direct effect on the actual role of airpower in the conflict. Up until the commencement of the armistice talks, the UN air forces had provided support for actions initiated by the ground forces, but after July 1951 the ground forces assumed a static role and the war-winning initiative lay with the air forces. During its last two years the Korean war was essentially an air war. This change is explained by Gen. O.P. Weyland, who succeeded Gen. Stratemyer as commanding general of FEAF at this time. Weyland states that with the opening of peace negotiations the political and military objectives for each side became the same, namely,

6. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.278-279.

7. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.280-284; Staff Study: Enemy Airfields in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.V, No.4, Winter 1952), pp.12-15.

an armistice on favourable terms. The UNC military strategy changed accordingly; while the ground forces were tasked to maintain a strong defensive line, the air forces were given the mission of denying the enemy the capacity to maintain and sustain further decisive ground attacks, and to create a situation favourable to an armistice by maintaining maximum pressure on the enemy. The responsibility for obtaining the final objective had passed from the ground forces to the air forces, and in this sense the Korean war became an air war.⁸

The talks at Kaesong were only a few days old when Communist intransigence led Ridgway to order intensified air operations. The FEAF planners complied by selecting P'yongyang and Rashin as targets for massed air raids, which took place over the next six weeks. Sensitive to the reservations of the nations providing troops for the UN effort, the JCS counselled caution and Weyland had to be content to apply limited air pressure by selecting only tactical targets. The forebodings were shown to be well founded when Communist allegations of a UN air raid on Kaesong were used as a pretext to suspend the talks on 24 August.⁹

NEW TASKS FOR 2 SQN SAAF

A breakdown of the sorties flown by 2 Sqn between 20 May and 31 August 1951 yields the following figures:

Interdiction:	67%
Close Support:	23%
Rescue:	2%
Counter-air (airfields):	8%

This shows a change in emphasis from the previous period when 82% of the sorties had been flown on interdiction missions, and 16% on close support.¹⁰

8. O.P. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), p.20; Staff Study: Enemy Airfields in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.V, No.4), p.13.

9. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.400-401; Hernes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.42-43.

10. WDM: Box 15, Return of Daily Missions, May 1951; WDM: Box 16, Return of Daily Missions, June 1951; WDM: Box 17, Return of Daily Missions, July 1951; WDM: Box 18, Return of Daily Missions, August 1951.

This change can be partially ascribed to three circumstances: The new overall situation, the availability of combat experienced pilots to 2 Sqn, and the weather. The shift in emphasis from ground to air offensives had a direct influence on the activities of 2 Sqn in Korea; SAAF flights participated in mass raids against P'yongyang during July 1951, and against various other targets further to the north during the following month. In addition, they took part in the extensive airfield neutralization programme. At this stage UN airpower was also employed on a new interdiction campaign which concentrated on the North Korean transportation infrastructure (bridges, tunnels, marshalling yards, roads and railway lines) rather than on vehicles and rolling stock. The main weapons employed on these missions were the 227kg GP bomb, instead of the napalm bomb. This change is clearly reflected in the ammunition expenditure graphs, which show a decrease in the use of napalm corresponding with an increase in the use of GP bombs (Appendix A-3).¹¹

The shorter duration of missions flown from K-16 had led to an increase in the sortie rate, and it was feared that there would not be sufficient pilots left in Korea by the end of May to train and lead the replacements. Consequently, it was decided, on 22 May, to limit the squadron to 16 sorties per day.¹² The authority granted to some pilots to extend their tours of duty to 100 sorties, also helped to maintain a hard core of experienced pilots in operations. The first pilot to avail himself of this concession was Lt G.H. Marshall.¹³ The reduced sortie rate was maintained until the end of June, when the 12 pilots who had arrived at the end of May became operational.¹⁴ Thereafter, batches of replacement pilots arrived regularly at six weekly intervals.¹⁵

11. WDM: Box 15, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1951; WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1951; WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1951; WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, August 1951.

12. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.5.1951.

13. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24.5.1951.

14. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.5.1951.

15. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.7.1951;
WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.8.1951.



Lt G.H. Marshall on Completing 100 Combat Sorties.

The South Africans in Korea experienced their first summer monsoon in 1951. During July and August the south-easterly winds blew in moist air from the Korea Strait, and even if it was not actually raining at the SAAF bases, the overcast in the target areas frequently made successful target location impossible (Map 2, Diagram 1). On six days of these two months the weather made operational flying impossible, while on other days only weather reconnaissance missions were undertaken. The weather also influenced the type of mission flown; when low cloud over North Korea made the interdiction targets inaccessible, the 5AF fighter-bombers were dispatched along the bomb-line to be directed to close support targets identified by the Mosquito controllers.¹⁶

The unsettled August weather even caused operations from the forward base at K-16 to be suspended. On 9 August the Han River, swollen by the summer rains, threatened to flood the runways and parking areas at Seoul. The 18 FEW R and R detachments were withdrawn until the river subsided nine days later. When the 3 officers and 54 other ranks returned to K-16 they were accompanied by all the serviceable squadron aircraft, as the southern base was being threatened by a typhoon.¹⁷

"OPERATION STRANGLE"

Towards the end of May 1951, the acting commander of the 5AF, Maj.-Gen. E.J. Timberlake, ordered "Operation Strangle", an intensive interdiction campaign designed to halt all Communist transport in the zone between the 39th parallel and the frontlines. This zone was divided into three areas and the 5AF, the 1st Marine Corps and Task Force 77 were each assigned to a specific area. When the Strangle attacks began on 31 May, the 18 FEW

16. WEM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, July 1951; WEM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, p.65.

17. WEM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9,18.8.1951.

squadrons were instructed to operate in the western sector. There they selected sections of road and railway, where repairs or by-passes would be difficult; they pot-holed them with GP bombs, some of which were fitted with delay fuses. Favourite targets were roadbeds built-up above wet, low ground such as rice paddies.¹⁸ Depending upon other commitments, the availability of aircraft and aircrew, and the weather, 2 Sqn assigned from two to six missions per day to the interdiction programme. On these missions each Mustang usually carried two 227kg GP bombs and the normal 12,7mm ammunition. Their targets were found mainly along the road/rail route between Kaesong and Sariwon; along the alternate route between the two centres via Haeju; and along the secondary north-south road networks linking such towns as Sin'gye, Suan, Sunch'on, Koxan, Yulli, Sibyon-ni, T'osan and Ich'on (Map 12).¹⁹

Two typical Strangle missions were flown in early June. On 4 June Lt P.J. Strydom led four Mustangs against a section of secondary road about 15km south of Ich'on. This road was cut into a hillside, and Strydom and his pilots were able to block it effectively in two places by bombing the rockface and causing an avalanche.²⁰ On 10 June Lt S.G. de la Harpe led one of three road interdiction missions mounted by 2 Sqn. His target was a section of road north of Koxan, with a river on one side and a steep mountain on the other. His flight cut the road in such a manner that the construction of a by-pass would be impossible.²¹

One of the most remarkable Strangle missions was led by Capt. R.H.D. Rogers, an officer who had gained vast experience during World War II as a squadron commander. On 16 July, Capt. Rogers, with Lt F.A. Montanari as his wingman, was briefed to lead four aircraft on an interdiction mission

18. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.296-297,360.

19. MEM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1951;
MEM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1951.

20. MEM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 4.6.1951.

21. MEM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 10.6.1951.

to the Suan area. On reaching the target area they found it to be covered in cloud low enough to touch the hilltops. Undeterred, the leader searched until he found a gap in the overcast over the main highway, through which he led his flight on a bombing run. On pulling out he noticed a convoy of eleven vehicles and decided to stay below the cloud with his wingman. Meanwhile, the other two aircraft had returned through the gap, which closed immediately afterwards.²²

The two pilots then found themselves having to manoeuvre their Mustangs in a very restricted flying space, bounded by the clouds above and the steep hills on each side. In spite of these dangerous conditions, Capt. Rogers led a series of rocket and machine gun attacks on the vehicles, destroying eight and damaging three. He then led the way up through the cloud and rejoined Lts J. Haskins and B.E. Martin, who had been anxiously searching for their leader and his wingman. This episode had its sequel on 17 August when Capt. Rogers was presented with the American DFC.

In spite of the sterling efforts of individual airmen the cumulative effect of the road interdiction programme was not satisfactory. On 19 June Capt. P. Clulow returned from a mission to the Yulli area to report that the Communists were losing no time in repairing the damaged roads.²³ In fact, the ability of the Communists to improvise with local materials and to muster virtually unlimited labour, both military and civilian, enabled them to repair the roads and bridges as fast as the UN air forces could damage them. The people responsible for the Communists' logistics were also helped by the lull in the fighting after July 1951, which significantly reduced the quantity

22. The sources for this mission are WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 16.7.1951; WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1951, Appendix N, Citation.

23. WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 19.6.1951.

of matériel required by the Communist frontline troops.²⁴

Diminishing returns forced the SAAF planners to re-evaluate "Operation Strangle". They noted, that with the exception of a few arms factories in P'yongyang and Kunu-ri, the sources of Communists war supplies were located in Manchuria or Siberia. These supplies were brought forward to southern terminals, such as Sariwon and P'yongyang, primarily by rail. In addition, the railway was a far more economic system of transportation than the roads. In North Korea, it had a further advantage, in that fuel was readily available. Planners thus concluded that the railway system would be a far more lucrative target for their fighter-bombers than the roads. The rail system offered three possible types of targets; the tracks, the bridges and the rolling stock. The tracks were selected as the most likely to furnish adequate returns for effort expended, and thus they became the primary interdiction target from mid-August.²⁵

This change of policy was evident in the selection of 2 Sqn targets during the last two weeks of August, when SAAF missions were directed against the following sections of railway line: the main double line between Ch'ongju and Sariwon through Sinanju and P'yongyang, the line between Sinanju and Kunu-ri, the two alternate routes to the north through Sunch'on and Songch'on, and the line from Sariwon to Kaesong via Haeju (Map 10)²⁶ The relatively narrow railway lines were not easy targets and even the multi-track sections proved difficult to hit under certain conditions. On 22 August, two SAAF flights (eight aircraft) attacked a marshalling yard on the line between Kunu-ri and Sunch'on with a singular lack of success, when a high crosswind blew all 16 bombs off the target.²⁷

24. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.403; Ridgway: The Korean War, p.191; F. Kozaczka: Enemy Bridging Techniques in Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.V, No.4, Winter 1952), pp.49-51.

25. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.297,403-404; Ridgway: The War in Korea, p.191.

26. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 15-31.8.1951.

27. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 22.8.1951.

In spite of these difficulties, such incidents were the exception, and a number of track cutting strikes were successfully driven home during the last week of August. Instead of missions consisting of only one or two flights, 18 FEW began to organize raids on a wing basis, with two 2 Sqn flights flying as an element of a wing formation of up to 36 aircraft. These formations, screened by high-flying Sabres, mounted two raids daily against the rail infrastructure between Kaesong and Ch'ongch'on River. As the Communists took more trouble to protect their marshalling yards and bridges with AA batteries, it became necessary to assign at least one flight to the task of flak suppression on each raid. These aircraft were usually armed with proximity fuse bombs, which were found to be most effective in this role. By the end of August 1951, the effects of rail interdiction were being felt by the Communists, and they were hard put to finding ways and means of keeping their railway system operational.²⁸

CLOSE SUPPORT ALONG THE MAIN LINE OF RESISTANCE

In spite of the heavy demands made by the more systematic interdiction campaigns, 2 Sqn continued to fulfil its close support commitment. Throughout the period, 20 May to 31 August, the SAAF flew one or two sorties each day, in support of the Eighth Army. The missions during May and June were undertaken in support of the advance to the forward positions just to the north of the Kansas Line, while during July and August they provided air support for the limited ground operations mounted to develop the new defence line. On occasion, the entire available strength of the squadron was committed to special close support tasks.²⁹

One of the most effective strikes by 2 Sqn at this time was led by

28. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 24-31.8.1951;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.408-411.

29. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26-27.6.1951;
WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1,3,6,14.7.1951.

Lt. G.H. Marshall, accompanied by 2 Lts J.F.G. Howe and J.P. Verster, and Capt. L.P.T. Eager. They took-off from K-16 and set course for their pre-briefed interdiction sector north-east of Kaesong. En route to the target area, they heard a Mosquito controller make a desperate call for help with an urgent close support task. Marshall diverted his flight in response, and the controller showed him a concentration of Communist troops on the south bank of the Imjin River, about 35km south-west of Ch'orwon. They were settled in difficult terrain and protected by numerous automatic weapons and AA batteries.³⁰

In spite of the danger, Marshall led his pilots into a series of skilfully co-ordinated attacks on the lucrative, but extremely hazardous target. They were met by an intense and accurate AA barrage, but succeeded in pressing home their attacks and destroying one 40mm gun and two automatic weapon positions. One AA gun was also damaged, and a number of troops killed. The flak was so intense that the controller expected the South Africans to be hit, and he instructed a USAF flight to stand-by to cover the rescue. For their part, Howe and Verster expressed surprise at their survival. The efforts of these four pilots was recognized on 2 July 1951, when 2 Sqn received notification that Lt Marshall had been awarded the American DFC, and the other three, the Air Medal.

Close support missions of another nature were flown on 26 and 27 June, when the SAAF flew column cover for a 24th US Division task force, which was thrusting northwards from the UN frontlines about 15km east of Kumwha. On the first day the Frag Order instructed 2 Sqn to have two, four aircraft flights on 30 minute ground alert from 07h00 until 20h00, to be scrambled by JOC to attack targets in support of the 24th Division.³¹ In the event,

30. The sources for this mission are WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24.6.1951; WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 24.6.1951; WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, July 1951, Appendix A, Citation.

31. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, June 1951, Appendix I, Frag Order 177-51 for 26 June 1951.

three flights were actually scrambled to disperse OCF troops threatening the task force.³² The next day 2 Sqn was tasked to provide continuous column cover for the latter.³³ Three flights of four aircraft, armed with napalm, rockets and machine guns, flew over the advancing column in relays. Each mission was airborne for approximately two hours, and altogether there were seven missions flown. The first took-off at 06h40 and the last landed at 20h20. Unlike their previous experience of flying column cover, while supporting the Tomahawk task force on 23 March, the 2 Sqn pilots were kept busy on this occasion, dislodging Communist troops from commanding ridges and silencing hostile artillery batteries.³⁴

Four days later 2 Sqn was again required to provide column cover, this time to an armoured task force of the 3rd US Division, which was engaged in capturing tactical ground just to the north of Ch'orwon.³⁵ Operations followed the same pattern as the previous week, with the exception that 2 Sqn managed to add a tank to its tally when Lt R. Sherwood scored a direct hit with a napalm bomb.³⁶

On two other occasions during July 1951, 2 Sqn committed its entire effort to close support. On 6 July, seven missions were sent against OCF troops hidden in bunkers, in a series of hills on the south bank of the Injin River about 20km south-west of Ch'orwon. The claims for these strikes were somewhat meagre, amounting to 25 troops killed, one supply dump and one field gun destroyed, and one field gun damaged.³⁷ On 14 July the weather

32. WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 26.6.1951.

33. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, June 1951, Appendix I, Frag Order 178-51 for 27 June 1951.

34. WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 27.6.1951.

35. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, June 1951, Appendix I, Frag Order 181-51 for 1 July 1951.

36. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 1.7.1951.

37. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 6.7.1951.

threatened to delay operations, until Maj. Blaauw led a weather reconnaissance from K-16 at 11h55 and found it possible to operate along the bomblines. That afternoon five SAAF missions were able to render close support when called upon, until darkness forced the last back to base.³⁸

The degree to which the ground forces appreciated the work done by 2 Sqn during this relatively small scale, but extremely bitter, fighting can be discerned from an enthusiastic letter received by the squadron on 4 July 1951.³⁹ This letter, dated 23 June, was written by PFC J.P. Megnin, a frontline marine of the 1st Marine Division, and was addressed to the "Flying Cheetahs". Due to his vagueness concerning dates, it is not possible to associate the events he describes with any particular mission. Nevertheless, his words graphically describe the feelings of an infantryman who benefitted from the presence of the SAAF in Korea:

"About two weeks ago this date, though dates are sceptical, I'll forever recall with minute detail the most spectacular feat I've ever lived to witness and tell about.

We had gained the ridgeline of our objective, upon which we were catching all hell because of an overwhelming "gook" counter-attack. The tide of battle was leaving casualties in its wake like seashells cast upon a beaches [sic] sands. The going was not eased, nor to us did it appear that it had any premonition of doing so - until a "spotter" made a suicidal dive to our front. It was then we saw four silvery streaks plummet from the skies above with guns blazing. It was so wondrous a sight we completely forgot our whereabouts on the line and just stood up in our foxholes

38. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 14.7.1951.

39. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.7.1951.

and cheered. I'll never forget the astonishment on the men's faces, nor their remarks of "Those c-r-a-z-y bastards," as those four mighty F-51's barely cleared the treetops. Our carelessness of standing and cheering from the foxholes was offset by the fact that every gook was turned to rout. To us it was a miracle and a blessing from above.

My thanks, and I know that there isht [sic] a man who was on that hill, that doesn't share the same heartfelt feelings. The "Hall of Fame" does not possess any greater men than those who flew that day for the United Nations (and George Company)."⁴⁰

AIRFIELD NEUTRALIZATION

In accordance with their revised air war plan the Communist effort to bring the North Korean airfields to a servicable state got under way during June 1951. From 14 June onwards they were able to use some of these airfields as bases for Polikarpov (PO-2) bi-planes. These slow flying, canvas covered aircraft were used to mount nuisance raids against US air bases. They would fly over UN airfields at night with the man in the back dropping hand-grenades over the side of the open cockpit. Small bombs were also dropped from the wing racks. These stealthy "Bedcheck Charlies", as they were soon named, harassed the ground crews preparing aircraft for the next day's operations, and deprived pilots of much needed sleep.⁴¹ On the night of 15-16 June the SAAF personnel experienced their first such raid, when K-16 was bombed and strafed. No damage was done and no casualties were reported.⁴²

The UNC responded to the threat from the air by a series of strikes against the Communist airfields in North Korea (Map 10). These airfield

40. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, Appendix E, PFC J.P. Megnin - Flying Cheetahs, 23.6.1951.

41. Furtell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.279-280.

42. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.6.1951.

neutralization strikes were opposed by determined OCAF action. The MIG-15's left the relative safety of "Mig Alley", and using long range tanks, penetrated as far south as P'yongyang. They appeared in large groups of up to 40 aircraft, and the pilots showed signs of improved leadership and training. They adopted the so-called "Yo-yo" tactics in which a formation of MIG-15's would evade the F-86 Sabre screen, and orbit over a smaller group of UN fighter-bombers. From this orbit position, they would dive down in elements of two, attacking their victim from high astern. After making a pass they would climb back to the pool of circling aircraft.⁴³

Cndt Armstrong's planning and preparation to meet the eventuality of a MIG-15 attack, done during April, finally paid off on 8 July. On that day, he led an element of eight SAAF Mustangs in a 32 aircraft formation on a raid against Kangdong airfield. This raid typified the larger raids of the airfield neutralization effort. The strike had been planned as follows: three flights were to attack the AA positions with proximity fused fragmentation bombs and rockets, to be immediately followed by the rest of the formation, which would drop 227kg bombs on the runway. The attack went off as planned, with the two SAAF flights going in last. They dive-bombed down the length of the runway and placed 15 out of 16 bombs on the target.⁴⁴

After pulling off the target Cndt Armstrong quickly drew his aircraft into formation. Immediately after forming up he heard an American call "MIGS" of the RT, and noticed MIG-15's above the point where the Americans were busy reforming. As the smaller SAAF formation was being left in peace, he set course for the secondary target. However, as they turned eastwards at 2 100m, six of the enemy aircraft detached themselves from their formation

43. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.281-283.

44. The sources for this incident are WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 8.7.1951; WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 8.7.1951; Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview: Pretoria, 23.3.1951; Vide, pp.226-227.

and approached the Cheetah flights. They followed the pattern of attack which had been anticipated; two MIG-15's came in on a quarter attack from the north, followed by two from the south, while the remaining pair flew top cover. The squadron commander applied the defensive tactics decided upon during the April conference. As the first pair of MIG-15's closed from astern, he turned his own flight to face the attack, forcing the Communist pilots to pull out of their dive without even firing. Further passes were countered by continually turning both flights about and crossing over each other, so that one flight was always in a position to meet an attack. Meanwhile, they slowly lost altitude. The Communist pilots made a further five or six unsuccessful passes, some so close that the South African pilots could see their faces, then broke and headed northwards. The entire engagement lasted for about five minutes.

Earlier, on the morning of the same day, Capt. H. Snyman had led a successful strike against Ongjin airfield, during which his flight had placed six of their eight bombs on the runway. The day's operations were concluded with Capt. J. Swanepoel leading two SAAF flights in a 32 aircraft formation against Sariwon airfield. This particular raid left the Communist repair crews with hazardous prospects for the night's work, as all the bombs had been fitted with six hour delay fuses.⁴⁵ Under similar circumstances, all available SAAF aircraft were committed to the airfield neutralization programme on five other days during late June and early July, when Sariwon, Anak, Haeju, Ongjin and Sirmak airfields were the targets.⁴⁶ The SAAF undoubtedly helped the Communist planners to realize that the airfield repair phase of their new air war plan had been a failure, hence the abandonment of the latter's efforts in this direction on 12 July.⁴⁷

45. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 8.7.1951.

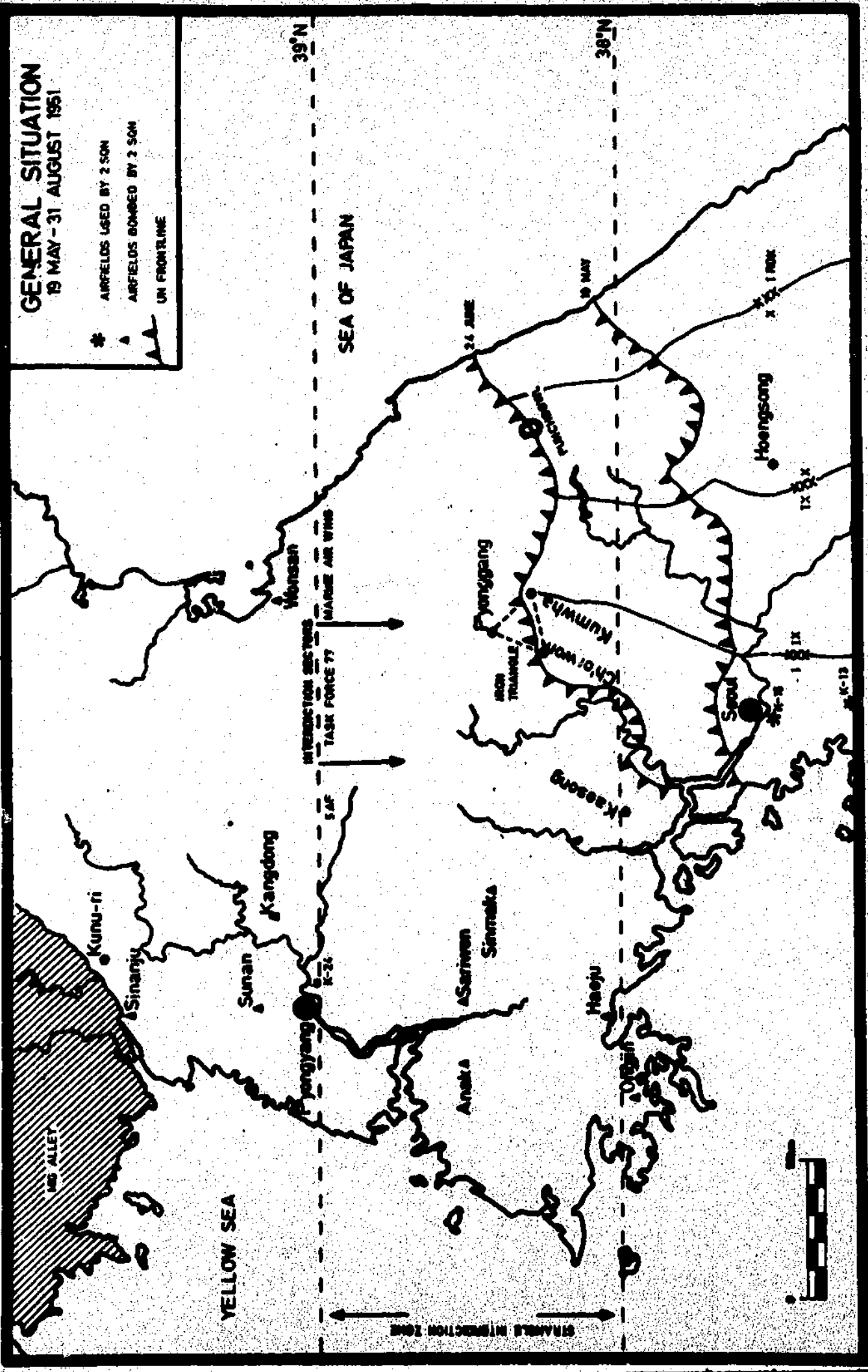
46. WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 23,24,25.6.1951;
WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 7,9.7.1951.

47. Vide, p.252.

GENERAL SITUATION 19 MAY - 31 AUGUST 1951

* AIRFIELDS USED BY 2 SON
 ▲ AIRFIELDS BOMBED BY 2 SON
 UN FRONTLINE

MAP 13



A LIMITED APPLICATION OF AIR PRESSURE

The SAAF also participated in the few attacks on targets in North Korea, for which Gen. Weyland managed to get JCS approval. These deep penetration strikes were designed to persuade the Communist negotiators at Kaesong to be less intransigent. On the morning of 30 July, 91 Shooting Stars were tasked to suppress flak over P'yongyang in preparation for a raid by 354 Marines and 5AF fighter-bombers. The 18 FBW dispatched a formation of 64 aircraft on this raid, including 12 SAAF Mustangs under the leadership of Capt. R.H.D. Rogers. They napalmed and strafed an ammunition factory and were credited with 80% coverage of their target. That afternoon, three SAAF flights returned to P'yongyang on a similar mission, but found the whole area clouded over, and were diverted to secondary interdiction targets.⁴⁸

Two weeks later the squadrons of 18 FBW once more participated in a mass raid on P'yongyang. However, owing to the temporary abandonment of the partially flooded K-16, these raids had to be mounted from K-10. The distance from K-10 to P'yongyang is almost twice that from K-16 to P'yongyang. The duration of the missions on 30 July had been 1,55hrs, while the missions from Chinhae took 3,20hrs, and were appropriately described by the pilots as real "bum-busters". In addition to testing the endurance of the pilots, the additional distance made it necessary for each aircraft to carry one long range fuel tank in place of one of its napalm bombs, thereby reducing effectivity.⁴⁹ On this occasion the South Africans were led by Cndt J.P.D. Blaauw, who had taken over command of 2 Sqn on 26 July.⁵⁰ On the morning

48. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 30.7.1951;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.401.

49. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 30.7.1951;
WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 14.8.1951;
Col B.E. Martin: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1981.

50. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.7.1951.

raid four SAAF flights and two reserves flew to the target area in a 64 aircraft, 18 FFW formation. On reaching P'yongyang they dropped their napalm on a group of warehouses along the river bank, and then proceeded to strafe two AA batteries. During the attack they experienced intense and accurate AA fire and some of the pilots were apprehensive when they took off again at 15h35 on a similar mission.⁵¹

During the afternoon raid Oudt Blaauw led the entire 18 FFW formation of 64 Mustangs, including 17 from 2 Sqn. The target allocated to the South Africans was a large tank and vehicle repair shop which they destroyed with their napalm before turning their machine guns on two river boats. This time the AA guns only offered moderate opposition, but as he was pulling out of his napalm run, 2 Lt C.L. de Jongh (Mustang No.349) called up to say that his aircraft had been hit and that he was heading for the sea. Lt W.H. van den Bos, who was in the same flight, saw No.349 streaming glycol as it left the target. The aircraft was never seen again and 2 Lt de Jong was listed as MIA. Six other 18 FFW pilots failed to return from this raid.⁵²

While participating in these two raids, 2 Sqn pilots had flown 35 sorties in a single day, which was a new record for the squadron in Korea. Col. T.C. Rogers, the 18 FFW commander, acknowledged this achievement in a letter to the CO of 2 Sqn, which has been entered into the War Diary:

"The entire 18th Wing did an excellent job in mounting the attacks on 14 August 1951. However, I wish to particularly commend the Officer and Airmen of 2 Squadron for the outstanding manner in which they executed their portion of the maximum effort mission. Your

51. WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 14.8.1951;
Col B.E. Martin: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1951.

52. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.8.1951;
WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 14.8.1951;
2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/34/AIR, 2 Lt D.J. Earp, Sworn Affidavit, 15.8.1951; Lt W.H. van den Bos, Sworn Affidavit, 15.8.1951.

unit turned in an enviable performance both in the air and on the ground. The Esprit de Corps displayed and the effectiveness of effort in mounting thirty-five (35) combat sorties without an abort and in preparing your aircraft for the second portion of the mission by refuelling and rearming in the minimum time of 30 minutes reflects the greatest credit upon your unit and upon the South African Air Force. My hearty congratulations for a job well done."⁵³

SAAF CASUALTIES IN KOREA REACH A PEAK

Unfortunately, 2 Sqn established another record during the period 20 May to 31 August 1951. At this time aircraft and personnel casualties reached a peak; 20 of the squadron's Mustangs were written off, seven pilots (including 2 Lt de Jongh) were reported to be either missing or killed in action, and two pilots were captured by the Communists (Appendices A-6, A-7). Although initially reported as MIA on 1 June, while on an early morning armed reconnaissance mission, Lt H. Macdonald became the first South African known to have been captured by the Communists in Korea. His flight napalmed a target in Ch'orwon and then proceeded northwards, flying at an altitude of 15m in search of targets of opportunity. Suddenly, the leader, Lt A.R. Götze, heard a call over the RT: "I am baling out, I am baling out", but as no call sign had been given, he did not know who was actually baling out until he noticed that his No.2 was missing. After a 30 minute search the flight found wreckage, which could not be identified, strewn for 200m across a railway line just north of Ch'orwon. They gained the impression that the pilot had carried out a high speed landing.⁵⁴

53. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.8.1951.

54. WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 1.6.1951;
WDM: Box 15, 18 FBG Mission Report, 1.6.1951;
2 Sqn K: Box 14, 2 SQDN/8/1/18/AIR, Lt A.R. Götze: Sworn Affidavit, 2.6.1951; Maj. J.P.D. Blasum, Sworn Affidavit, 15.7.1951.

Nothing more was heard of Lt MacDonald, and the Senior Air Liaison Officer concluded that he must have been killed. About six weeks later, a Voice of India radio broadcast was picked up in Usakos, South West Africa, which mentioned that a certain Lt MacDonald was being held by the Communists. The unexpected piece of information was confirmed when MacDonald's brother received a letter, which had been written by the missing pilot, about four months after the broadcast. It had been sent through the good offices of the "Chinese People's Committee for World Peace against American Aggression" and stated: "I am in the good hands of the Chinese People's Volunteers".⁵⁵

On 9 June, 2 Sqn lost another pilot in an accident similar to that which had killed Lt M.H. Rorke, when 2 Lt T. Liebenberg crashed on take off. The same pilot had had a lucky escape a week earlier when his Mustang had swung off the runway on landing.⁵⁶ Nearly two weeks passed before the next casualty occurred. On 22 June, Lt A. Frisby was leading an interdiction mission north-west of Namch'onjom when his Mustang (No.337) was hit at 300m. The pilot called on the RT to say that he was baling out and Cndt Armstrong, who was in the No.3 position, saw the canopy come off and a brown object fall from the crippled aircraft. No parachute was seen to open, and the aircraft eventually crashed in a river bed 10km east of Namch'onjom. No sign of the pilot was found during a subsequent air search, and it was generally felt that the pilot had baled out, but that his parachute had failed to open.⁵⁷

Within 10 days of each other, two more South African pilots were lost while on ferry flights from K-10 to K-16. On 1 July, 2 Lt J.P. Verster

55. H. Parker: Out of the Sky and in the Bag (The Outspan, Vol.51, No.1352, 23.1.1953), p.24.

56. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2,9.6.1951;
WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 9.6.1951.

57. WDM: Box 16, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 22.6.1951;
WDM: Box 15, 18 FBW Mission Reports, 22.6.1951;
2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/22/AIR, Cndt R.F. Armstrong, Sworn Affidavit, (no date); Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981.

was reported overdue at K-16. The following day JOC informed 2 Sqn that the wreckage of his aircraft had been found and his body located near the village of Sosan, on the west coast. The Engineering Officer, Lt V.T. Kilburn, was sent to investigate the accident. He found a hole in the ground made by the aircraft, with the propeller buried 3 to 4m below the surface. A Korean, who had witnessed the crash, told Lt Kilburn what had happened. He had seen the aircraft pouring black smoke come to within 15m of the ground, when it suddenly plunged straight down, throwing the pilot clear.⁵⁸

Lt Kilburn found that the local Koreans had made a coffin for Lt Verster's body, which they had placed on a makeshift altar with a cross. The coffin was flanked by two lighted candles and by flowers. Two school easels supported wreaths more than a metre in diameter, and the UN flag was displayed with inscriptions in Korean and English. Lt Verster's remains, which had been honoured in this way, were finally laid to rest in the UN cemetery at Tangdok a few days later.⁵⁹

On 9 July Maj. L.B. Pearce, an experienced World War II pilot, was killed under circumstances which have not yet been explained. He strayed from his flight while climbing through cloud above K-10 and failed to respond when called on the radio. Eventually, the wreckage of his Mustang (No.316) was found just 24km north of K-10 and, as in the case of Lt Verster, it was evident that the aircraft had hit the ground under power. The pilot had left the aircraft before impact and his body was found in a nearby rice paddy.⁶⁰

58. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-2.7.1951;
2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/25/AIR, Lt V.T. Kilburn: Sworn Affidavit,
6.7.1951; Chung Pyuk-hae, Statement, (no date).

59. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.7.1951;
2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/25/AIR, Lt V.T. Kilburn: Sworn Affidavit,
6.7.1951.

60. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5,9.7.1951;
2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/26/AIR, Lt G.H. Marshall: Sworn Affidavit,
15.7.1951; Capt. S.N. Brace: Sworn Affidavit, 15.7.1951; Lt J.P.A.
Venter: Sworn Affidavit, 15.7.1951.

The SAAF suffered its greatest blow of the whole campaign on 23 July, when Capt. F.M. Bekker and Lt R.M. Du Plooy were killed, and 2 Lt M.I.B. Halley was captured. They took off from K-16 at 15h05, with 2 Lt D.A.R. Green making up the fourth member of the flight, to fly a weather reconnaissance along the west coast. On completing their observations of the weather conditions they bombed a bridge 30km south-west of Ch'orwon and then proceeded, at a low altitude and in close formation, to search for more targets. At 15h43 they passed over a low hill (100m) and suddenly caught the full brunt of a surprise salvo from a hidden Communist AA battery. Bekker's aircraft (No.335) immediately caught fire and began to break up. The pilot succeeded in jettisoning the canopy, but was enveloped in flames and crashed before he could bale out. Halley's aircraft (No.331) was hit as he went to investigate the wreckage of his leader's Mustang, and he was also forced to bale out. He landed safely and waved to the surviving pilots.⁶¹

Du Plooy went down to protect Halley, who was already being approached by Communist troops camouflaged with branches, while Green raised the alarm on the emergency channel. After about an hour the helicopter announced its approach. But, before it could reach the downed pilot, he was captured by the Communists. Meanwhile Du Plooy, who had continued to protect his comrade until he ran out of ammunition, disappeared. Although the wreckage of his aircraft was found in the vicinity, there was no trace of the pilot. In recognition of his gallantry, in risking his own life to fend off the attempts to capture his wingman, Lt du Plooy received a posthumous award of the Silver Star.

61. The sources for this incident and its consequences are 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/28/AIR, 2 Lt D.A.R. Green: Sworn Affidavit, 25.7.1951; SAIO: Box 2, SAIO/S/37/1/AIR, Report on the Interrogation of ex-POW Lt M.I.B. Halley, September 1953; Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981.

These sad losses were balanced by several narrow escapes. On 22 July the cooling system of 2 Lt R.L. Staats' F-51D (No.312) was damaged by ground fire and he was forced to abandon his aircraft over Wonsan Harbour. He had the good fortune to be rescued from his inflated dinghy within 20 minutes of landing in the water by an American destroyer, the USS Cunningham.⁶² Two days later Capt. H.T. Snyman's Mustang (No.339) was also hit over enemy territory. He managed to reach the east coast before the engine seized and forced him to bale out into the sea. He was rescued by a SA-16 amphibian, but was found to have dislocated his right shoulder when his arm became entangled in his parachute harness.⁶³ On 26 July, 2 Lt J.F.G. Howe was picked up by helicopter from friendly territory when he abandoned his aircraft (No.336) after it had developed an internal glycol leak.⁶⁴

A series of crash landings occurred during August 1951. While attacking a road bridge over the Imjin River on 12 August, about 30km west of Ch'orwon, 2 Lt A.M. Miller's Mustang was badly damaged by his own rocket blast. The hydraulic system was put out of action and the rudder cables severed. He made a flapless, wheels-up landing at K-2 and walked away uninjured.⁶⁵ The same pilot had previously escaped injury in a similar incident on 1 July, when the hydraulic system of the aircraft that he was testing failed and he landed without flaps at 208kph.⁶⁶

62. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.7.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/20/AI
2 Lt R.L. Staats, Sworn Affidavit, 28.7.1951.

63. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24.7.1951.

64. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.7.1951.

65. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12.8.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/33/AI
2 Lt A.M. Miller: Sworn Affidavit, 31.8.1951; Lt-Gen. A.M. Miller:
Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 22.9.1981.

66. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.7.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/24/AIR
2 Lt A.M. Miller: Sworn Affidavit (no date); Lt-Gen. A.M. Miller:
Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 22.9.1981.

2 Lt Green, who had been the only survivor of the fateful mission on 23 July, nearly became a casualty himself on 29 August, when his F-51D (No.329) developed coolant failure on take off from K-16. He jettisoned his two GP bombs and crash landed in a nearby river bed. He emerged from the wreck shaken, but otherwise unhurt.⁶⁷ The last landing mishap of the month occurred the next day when Omdt Blaauw was returning from an interdiction mission, during which his aircraft (No.306) had sustained serious battle damage. His rudder controls had been shot away, and on landing, the crippled Mustang swung off the runway and headed straight for a parked C-47. Omdt Blaauw avoided a collision by raising the undercarriage. On inspection, Lt W.J. van Rensburg, the new Engineering Officer, counted 12 hits on the wrecked aircraft.⁶⁸

MORALE BUILDING AND NEW FACES

Amidst all the hard work the pilots and ground crew of 2 Sqn did find some time for recreation. Some resourceful handymen turned their attention to boat building, while others used the timber salvaged from ammunition boxes to make furniture.⁶⁹ The summer also brought the opportunity to play a little sport and, on 3 June, a SAAF soccer team played the first South Africa vs Korea match against a team from the South Korean Navy. The result was a 1-1 draw.⁷⁰

One of the most popular morale building activities was the traditional "Braaivleis", with a few extras for the benefit of American guests.

67. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.8.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/35/AIR, 2 Lt D.A.R. Green: Sworn Affidavit, 10.9.1951.

68. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.8.1951; WDM: Box 17, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 30.8.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/36/AIR, Lt W.J. van Rensburg: Sworn Affidavit, 12.9.1951.

69. WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.5.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, p.51; Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, 16.3.1981.

70. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3.6.1951.



An SAAF "Braai" in Korea.

MIB Photograph No: 700012642



The SAAF Lead Dancer.

One such function, which was a resounding success, was held on 29 June, when 2 Sqn entertained 40 USAF personnel from the 18 FEW Wing HQ and from the two other squadrons in the wing. Meat and beer was available in abundance, but the highlight of the evening was the performance of a Zulu war dance by a SAAF "impi". All participants were suitably blackened and dressed for the occasion and the stars of the show were the squadron CO, Cndt Armstrong, and the chaplain, Capt. Cloete.⁷¹

August 1951 also saw the first large scale change over of ground crew in Korea. On 11 August, four officers and 66 other ranks arrived at K-10 from South Africa.⁷² Within five days the officers had completed the handing and taking over of the various sections from their predecessors as follows:

Adjutant:	Capt. L.P.J. Hechter replaced Capt. P.A. le Grange,
Operations Officer:	Capt. A.Q. de Wet replaced Capt. M.J. Uys,
Equipment Officer:	Capt. A.B. Stofberg replaced Capt. M. Strydom,
Engineering Officer:	Lt W.J. van Rensburg replaced Lt V.T. Kilburn. ⁷³

Capt. W.D. Marais, the Signals Officer, was not replaced⁷⁴ and the Intelligence Officer, Lt S.J.W. Inglesby, had already been replaced on 7 August by Lt C.J.J. van der Merwe.⁷⁵ The transfer of responsibilities completed, the first batch of RTU ground personnel, consisting of 6 Officers and 65 other ranks left K-10 by air, on 19 August, for Japan to embark on the MV Boissevain for the journey home.⁷⁶ The Korean war was over for them, but it would be more than two years before the last SAAF personnel would leave the Far East.

71. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.7.1951; Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1951; Maj.-Gen. M.D.V. Cloete: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 31.3.1951.

72. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.8.1951.

73. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.8.1951.

74. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1951, Appendix A, Nominal Roll of Tour Expired Personnel.

75. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.8.1951.

76. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.8.1951.

CHAPTER 10

INTERDICTION, CLOSE SUPPORT AND RESCAPS

PHASE FOUR, PERIOD 4: 1 SEPTEMBER - 12 NOVEMBER 1951

FROM LIMITED OFFENSIVES TO THE ACTIVE DEFENCE

With the truce talks suspended at the end of August 1951, Van Fleet once more took the offensive, and the period from the beginning of September until 12 November was one of general advance along the entire UN frontline. In the east the action centred around the high ridges on the western side of the "Punchbowl", Bloody Ridge and Heartbreak Ridge. The 2nd Division of X Corps took more than six weeks to dislodge a determined enemy from these key features. The Communists desperately defended each successive position, and the UN forces had to carry their supplies up the precipitous terrain with the assistance of Korean peasants and their A-frames. Finally, on 14 October, the northern feature, Heartbreak Ridge, was secured by the UN infantry.¹

In the centre, IX Corps carried out local advances all along the front during early October. This was done to improve the defensive positions, and to maintain pressure on the enemy. By 23 October, the 24th US Division, and the 2nd and 6th ROK Divisions had consolidated positions just south of Kumsong.² Along the western sector of the front, the action during September consisted of local attacks and counter-attacks, and strong combat patrolling. On 3 October, I Corps launched an offensive designed to push the UN frontline forward for about five or six kilometres in order to establish a new line which would offer adequate protection to the Seoul-Ch'orwon railway. This drive was called "Operation Commando" and was successfully concluded on 19 October.³

1. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.116-117; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.96.

2. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.117; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.103.

3. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.117; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.101-102.

These limited offensives came to an end during late October, with the resumption of the peace talks. On 10 October, liaison officers from both sides met at Panmunjon, but negotiations were soon halted owing to violent Communist protests at a misdirected UN air attack in the vicinity of the meeting site. The liaison officers met again on 22 October, and after three days the full peace talks resumed at Panmunjon.⁴ On 11 November Ridgway cancelled offensive operations that had been planned by Van Fleet, and the following day he ordered the commander of the Eighth Army to assume the "active defence". This was defined as the seizure of terrain along the general line, most suitable for defence and which did not require the commitment of more than one division. At the same time, he was directed to be prepared to exploit favourable opportunities to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy.⁵ The two major considerations which led to the decision to cease offensive operations were: the estimate that the cost of further major assaults would be more than the results would justify, and the possibility of peace emerging from the armistice talks.⁶

THE COMMUNISTS CHALLENGE FENF AIR SUPERIORITY

When the UNC reacted to the suspension of the peace talks with a ground offensive, the Communists replied with an air offensive commencing on 1 September. The OCAF now possessed 525 MIG-15's and these entered North Korean airspace in packs of up to 90 aircraft at a time.⁷ The only UN aircraft which could match the MIG-15 in performance was the F-86 Sabre. The USAF had only two squadrons of Sabres deployed in Korea. They belonged to the 4 FFW stationed at Kimpo (K-14).⁸ Gen. Weyland asked for

4. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.117; Hernes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.113.





5. Hernes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.176.

6. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.205.

7. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.373.

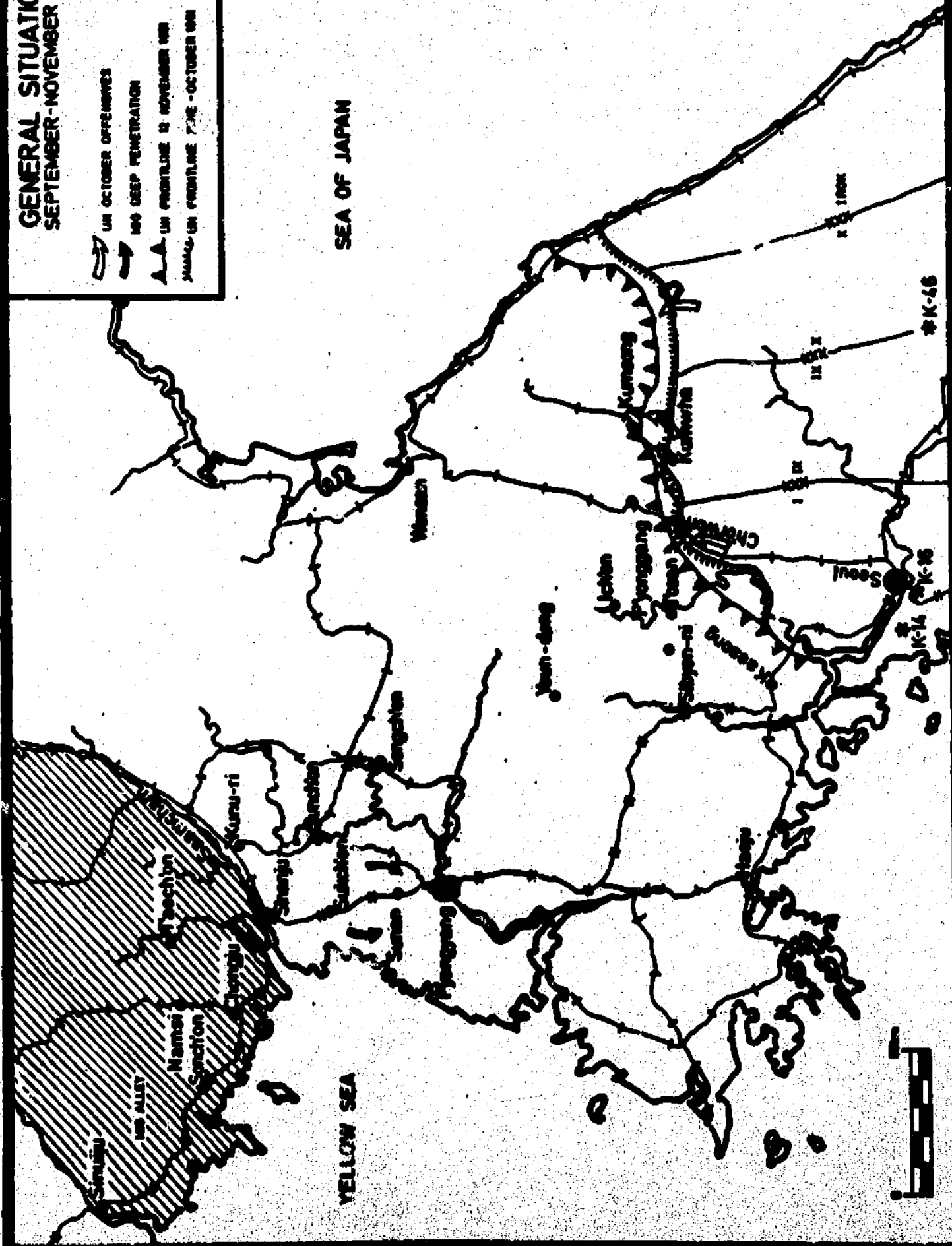
8. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.367.

GENERAL SITUATION SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1951

-  UN OCTOBER OFFENSIVES
-  MCQ DEEP PENETRATION
-  UN PROGRESS 13 NOVEMBER 1951
-  JMWAVE UN PROGRESS 7-10 OCTOBER 1951

SEA OF JAPAN

YELLOW SEA



MAP 14

more F-86's, but was informed by the USAF Chief-of-Staff that none was available for Korea.⁹

In addition to the 4 FTW, the main tactical elements of the 5AF in Korea, at this stage, were:

- a. The 8FBW and the 51 FTW at Suwon (K-13) with F-80 Shooting Stars.
- b. The 18 FBW at Chinhae (K-10) with F-51D Mustangs.
- c. The 49 FBW and the 136 FBW at Taegu (K-2) with F-84 Thunderjets.¹⁰

A prerequisite for the deployment of more jet squadrons in Korea was the improvement of existing runways, and in September 1951 Seoul airfield (K-16) fell due for re-building. The 2 Sqn R and R detachment was thus moved from K-16 to Hoengsong (K-46).¹¹ On 1 October, 2 Sqn started staging its missions through K-46.¹

During the last months of 1951 the Sabres of 4 FTW, and to a lesser extent the outclassed Thunderjets of the 49 and 136 FBW's, attempted to protect the UN fighter-bombers from MIG-15's, which ranged as far south as P'yongyang. However, the latter frequently succeeded in evading these patrols and pounced on the ground attack aircraft, seriously impeding the interdiction programme.¹³

The pilots of 2 Sqn witnessed MIG-15 activity on several occasions. On 13 September, Maj. B.A.A. Wiggatt led two SAAF flights in a wing formation of 36 aircraft against rail and road bridges 25km due south of Kumu-ri. The flights from 39 Sqn, which had joined the 18 FBW in May 1951, were the last over the target. As their "Tail End Charlie" pulled out three MIG-15's came in low and shot him down. No further attacks were made on the formation of Mustangs.¹⁴

9. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.374.
10. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.367.
11. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.366.
12. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.10.1951.
13. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.373-374.
14. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 13.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 13.9.1951; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.360.

The screening of the ground attack aircraft by the faster jets was usually effective, and incidents such as those related above, were the exception. The SAAF pilots saw just how effective this top cover could be on 6 October. That morning, during a railway interdiction mission north of P'yongyang, two 2 Sqn flights witnessed an aerial battle between F-86's and MIG-15's. The latter were kept at bay, and the vulnerable Mustangs attacked their target without interference.¹⁵ However, nearly a month later 2 Sqn had its second encounter with MIG-15's. On the morning of 2 November, eight SAAF Mustangs took off from K-46 on a group railway interdiction mission. Low cloud over the base caused confusion after take off resulting in two air aborts and two early returns. The remaining four SAAF Mustangs carried on to the target just south of Sunan, where they found about 15 MIG-15's waiting for them. Two of the enemy aircraft broke off from the group and made a pass over the SAAF flight. The leader, Capt. A. van Rensburg, followed the already proven procedure and turned his flight in to meet the attack. This caused the MIG-15's to break away. A third MIG-15 then positioned itself high above the Mustangs at 5 o'clock. However, the flight turned in towards it, and it failed to press home its attack. The Communist jets then broke off the engagement and headed north.¹⁶

The Communist air offensive met with limited success. The CCAF penetrations southwards, together with the lack of F-86 Sabre re-inforcements, restricted the 5AF fighter-bomber interdiction attacks to the zone between P'yongyang and the Ch'ongch'on River. The Communists decided that the time was opportune to resume their airfield repair programme, which they had abandoned two months earlier. At the end of September three new major

15. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6.10.1951;
WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 6.10.1951.

16. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 2.11.1951.

airfields were found to be under construction just north of the Ch'ongch'on at Namsi, T'aech'on and Saamcham.¹⁷ During October, efforts to neutralize these air bases using B-29 Superfortresses led to major air battles between the medium bombers and their escorts, and the Communist jets.¹⁸ By the end of October the OCAF had stationed strike aircraft south of the Yalu; 64 conventional aircraft were reported to be at Sinuiju and 26 MIG-15's at Uiju.¹⁹ These Communist successes represented a serious threat to UN air superiority over North Korea.

OPERATION STRANGLE CONTINUES

With the suspension of the peace talks at the end of August 1951, the UN air and ground commanders agreed that 96 sorties per day would be an adequate close support allocation. They planned to devote the rest of the 5AF's fighter-bomber capability to the interdiction campaign.²⁰ This close support allocation and the "Strangle" programme were the two main influences which defined the pattern of operations for the fighter-bomber wings during September and October 1951.

Each day, the 5AF Frag Order directed each FBW to destroy a particular section of the railway system, about 25 to 50km in length. Under Sabre cover, group formations of 32 to 64 aircraft attacked their designated targets twice during the course of the day. Usually there was one morning and one afternoon raid. The main armament for these raids was 227kg GP bombs. Each wing also undertook first and last light reconnaissance flights of the MSR. Initially these recce aircraft carried no armament in addition to their fitted 12,7mm guns, but from the beginning of October, the growing

17. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.374-376.

18. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.376-380.

19. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.380.

20. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.106.

~~number of Communist~~ AA weapons deployed along the supply routes caused them to add proximity fused bombs to their weapon load for flak suppression.²¹ This improved Communist AA capability led to a further variation in the pattern of operations. The massed group formation was replaced by the individual squadrons taking off separately at five minute intervals, in order to give the lead elements sufficient time to search out and destroy the AA batteries. Proximity fuses were fitted to 20% of the bombs dropped on a raid, and dive bombing was used instead of the more accurate glide bombing. These practices reduced the effectiveness of the fighter-bombers, but they also reduced the casualties.²²

The railway interdiction missions flown by 2 Sqn at this time, were mainly directed against the section of double track between P'yongyang and Sinanju. Early in September, before the threat from MIG-15's increased, sections of the main line between Sinanju and Sonch'on were also attacked. Other lines which received the attention of the South Africans were the single tracks from P'yongyang to Kumu-ri via Sunch'on, the Sinanju-Kumu-ri line, and the western half of the lateral link between Wonsan and Songch'on (Map 10).²³

The activities of 2 Sqn on 1 September were typical of this period. At 10h45 two SAAF flights took off as part of a wing formation from K-16. The four aircraft flight was under the leadership of Capt. L.P.T. Eager and Lt W.H. van den Bos. They successfully attacked their target, which was a section of the main line 20km south-east of Sonch'on. Their GP bombs were well placed and cut the line completely in three places.

21. WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1951; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.408.

22. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.410.

23. WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1951.

The two flights then split up in order to look for targets of opportunity along the MSR, en route to K-16. Lt van den Bos found 300 boxcars 15km north of Sonch'on, which his flight attacked destroying 15 and damaging 100. That afternoon 2 Sqn Mustangs returned to this lucrative target. They only contributed one flight to the wing effort, while Capt. Eager led another flight directly to the find. They expended their entire armament on the boxcars, destroying a further six and damaging 20.²⁴

The SAAF flight which participated in the wing raid was led by 2 Lt M.O. Grunder. After making three railcuts on the main line midway between Sukch'on and Sinanju they proceeded on the routine MSR reconnaissance. Throughout the mission they experienced moderate but accurate AA fire, especially when passing over sensitive areas. Towards the end of the recce, Grunder drew AA fire while investigating a wooded area just south of Youn-dong. He called on the radio to say that he thought he had been hit. Nevertheless, he proceeded to rocket and strafe the position. The rest of the flight followed his lead and they succeeded in destroying six AA positions. Unfortunately, 2 Lt Grunder did not survive the attack. His No.2, Maj. Wiggett, lost sight of him as he pulled up into the sun after a strafing run. Although the latter saw a canopy and some papers floating down at 450m, there was no sign of a parachute. The flight later found the wrecked aircraft (No.342) and conducted a 20 minutes air search, but there was no sign of life. 2 Lt Grunder was officially listed as MIA.²⁵

On 19 September 2 Sqn pilots once again found a large concentration of North Korean rolling stock. That afternoon Capt. R.H.D. Rogers led two SAAF flights on a wing raid against a railway bridge just 5km south

24. WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 1.9.1951.

25. 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/37/AIR, Maj. B.A.A. Wiggett: Sworn Affidavit, 1.9.1951; WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 1.9.1951; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.431.

of Sinanju. The attack on the bridge went off as planned and the SAAF flights turned southwards to reconnoitre the MSR. Just 5km to the south they found 150 boxcars, which they proceeded to attack until their ammunition was exhausted. Their claims amounted to two boxcars destroyed and 50 damaged.²⁶ On 11 October a further large group of boxcars was discovered and attacked by 2 Sqn flights, but the results were not observed.²⁷

The Communists evolved ingenious methods to deceive 5AF pilots, observers and photograph interpreters. A 2 Sqn flight found ample evidence of this on 22 October. That day, Lt J.A. Meiring led a flight in search of secondary targets, after a strike against a primary railway target. They carried out the usual reconnaissance of the MSR and discovered a well camouflaged pontoon carrying the lines of the single track between Haeju and Sariwon. They attacked the bridge with rockets and succeeded in damaging it.²⁸

These attempts at deception began to pay dividends towards the beginning of November 1951. A typical case was the bypass bridge at Sunch'on. Daylight photographs showed that there were two spans missing from the middle of the bridge, and it was assumed to be unserviceable. However, photographs taken on the night of 7 November showed the two missing spans in place. These spans were put into place after dark allowing the bridge to carry traffic all night. At dawn the spans were removed and hidden.²⁹ The combination of AA defences, ingenious repair techniques and deception came close to neutralizing the UN air forces' railway interdiction efforts by the middle of November 1951.

26. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 19.9.1951.

27. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.10.1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 11.10.1951.

28. WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 22.10.1951.

29. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.411-412.

THE SAAF SUPPORTS THE LIMITED GROUND OFFENSIVE

An analysis of the mission types flown by 2 Sqn during the various periods of Phase Four of the war in Korea, is given in the table below.

Table 5 Phase Four: Analysis of Sorties. (Percentages of Total)

Period	Interdiction	Close Support	ResCAP	Counter Air	
1. 25 Jan - 28 Feb	78	21,6	0,4	-	30
2. 1 Mar - 19 May	82	16	2	-	31
3. 20 May - 31 Aug	67	23	2	8	32
4. 1 Sep - 12 Nov	57,6	38,4	3,4	0,6	33

A study of these figures, in conjunction with the course of the war during the different periods, shows that as the intensity of the ground war decreased, so the 2 Sqn commitment to close support increased. This employment of SAAF aircraft on close support missions reached a peak of 38,4% during the last period, at a time when the Eighth Army was restricted to limited offensives. An explanation can be found in an examination of the Frag Orders and Debriefing Forms for September, October and November 1951. At that time, the entire 18 FBW close support commitment was allocated to a single squadron, on a daily rotation basis. This meant that 2 Sqn concentrated on close support missions every fourth day.³⁴ In fact, on occasion, 2 Sqn flew nearly half of the SAAF allocation of 96 close support sorties, with 40 being flown on 26 September, 48 on 4 October, 36 on 8, 12 and 16 October, 39 on 25 October, and 36 on 8 November.³⁵

30. Vide, p.197.

31. Vide, p.219.

32. Vide, p.254.

33. WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951.

34. WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951.

35. WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951.

In addition to these maximum close support efforts, 2 Sqn undertook occasional close support missions on days when the squadron was tasked primarily with interdiction assignments. The close support targets against which the South Africans were directed, at this stage, lay all along the Eighth Army front. Particular attention was paid to the enemy resisting IX Corps during their gradual advance towards Kumsong, and to the forces resisting the attempts of X Corps to take and hold the key ridges to the west of the "Punchbowl".³⁶

One of the squadron's major close support efforts took place on 26 September 1951, the first anniversary of their departure for the Far East. On that day, the four squadrons of the 18 FBW flew 122 sorties, with 2 Sqn improving its record for the Korean campaign with 40 combat sorties. These were flown during the course of ten missions against targets all along the IX and X Corps' fronts. The SAAF pilots used napalm bombs, rockets and machine guns against Communist soldiers in well established defensive positions. Claims for the day amounted to 13 buildings and two field guns destroyed, four buildings damaged, and an unknown number of enemy troops killed in action. Most of the pilots on flying duty that day flew three missions, but one flight, consisting of Lt D.R. Earp, Lt C. Lombard, Lt D. Marchand and Lt H.B. Horscroft, was credited with four missions. The duration of these missions varied between 1hr 5mins and 1hr 35mins, and the take off times were 08h35, 11h00, 15h25 and 18h05. Such a strenuous programme made great demands on both the pilots and the ground crews.³⁷

The new record of 40 sorties in a single day did not stand for long, for on 4 October 2 Sqn operations reached a peak in Korea when its pilots

36. WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951.

37. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 26.9.1951.

flew 48 combat sorties in support of the IX and X Corps. These sorties included the squadron's 5 000th sortie in the Korean campaign, which was flown by Lt B. Willson. The first mission took off at 06h45 and the last landed at 19h00; there were no aborts during more than 12 hours of continuous combat operations. This achievement is all the more remarkable when it is noted that the squadron possessed only 15 combat ready aircraft, eight of which flew four consecutive missions. The claims were the only disappointment of the day; they amounted to the destruction of one supply dump and one AA position, and 11 enemy troops KIA.³⁸ A clear picture of the demands made upon the pilots and ground crews can be obtained from the following table.

Table 6 Record of Missions 2 Sqn SAAF, 4.10.1951.³⁹

Mission No	Members of Flight	Time up	Duration	Target Coverage
1871	Capt. M. Parker, Lt C. Lombard Lt D. Green, Lt J. du Plessis	06h45	1,50	75%
1875	" "	10h10	2,30	Arty destroyed
1878	" "	14h05	1,10	80%
1881	" "	16h15	2,00	95%
1872	Capt. B.E. Martin, Lt W. Botha Lt B. Willson, Lt P. Relief	06h45	1,30	90%
1874	" "	09h55	2,00	80%
1877	" "	13h15	1,05	85%
1880	" "	15h30	1,35	90%
1873	Lt M. Pretorius, Lt F. Grobler, Capt. A. van Rensburg, Lt E. Keevy	08h15	1,30	75%
1876	" "	11h45	2,05	75%
1879	" "	14h40	2,00	95%
1882	" "	17h30	1,30	75%

38. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.10.1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 4.10.1951.

39. WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 4.10.1951.

The achievement of 4 October was almost equalled exactly three weeks later, when 2 Sqn flew 10 close support missions and one ResCAP. A faulty radio, detected during a pre-flight check, caused one pilot to abort while still on the ground, giving the squadron a total of 43 combat sorties for 25 October.⁴⁰ The same pattern of close support missions continued into the next month, with 40 SAAF sorties being flown again on 8 November.⁴¹ One variation in the pattern occurred at this time, owing to the ever increasing deployment of Communist AA weapons. Each mission divided its bomb load equally between napalm and proximity fused 227kg GP bombs, the former as anti-personnel weapons and the latter for flak suppression.⁴²

AIR/SEA RESCUE OPERATIONS

Fifth Air Force losses to Communist ground fire totalled 26 aircraft lost and 24 damaged in August, 32 lost and 233 damaged in September, and 33 lost and 238 damaged in November 1951.⁴³ This relatively high rate of attrition is reflected in the number of SAAF rescue missions undertaken on behalf of 2 Sqn pilots, as well as for pilots from other SAF units (Table 5). Throughout the duration of the Korean War the pilots engaged in combat over North Korea received the support of an excellent air/sea rescue system. The main responsibility for this essential service was borne by the 3rd Air Rescue Squadron, which was based in Japan under the operational control of 5AF. Initially, a detachment of this squadron, Detachment F, equipped with Grumman SA-16 amphibians and Sikorsky H-5A helicopters, was responsible for both the rescue of downed airmen and the medical evacuation of ground force casualties. By the late spring of 1951, the decrease in ground force

40. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.10.1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 25.10.1951.

41. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 8.11.1951.

42. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951.

43. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.412.

casualties and the Eighth Army's acquisition of its own organic helicopters for medical evacuation, enabled the Air Rescue Squadron to pay more attention to its primary mission of air rescue.⁴⁴

In June 1951, Detachment F was redesignated Detachment 1, and received extra personnel and equipment, which enabled it to station elements at strategic points along the frontline (The H-5A had a radius of action of only 136km). A full scale Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre was also set up at the 5AF TACC at Seoul. A request for a rescue flight was received via the tactical air control system, and the rescue attempt was then co-ordinated using the same facility.⁴⁵ When a pilot was shot down, his comrades were responsible for alerting air rescue, protecting him from enemy interference by providing a rescue combat air patrol (ResCAP), and finally for guiding the rescue helicopter or handing the ResCAP over to a relieving flight. Detailed air rescue data, including frequencies and locations of air and sea rescue facilities, were incorporated in the Frag Orders and conveyed to the pilots during the pre-flight briefings.⁴⁶

UN air superiority allowed the rescue operations to take place with a minimum of interference from hostile aircraft. During the course of the war, air rescue crews saved 170, or 10%, of the USAF pilots who came down in enemy territory. They also evacuated 84 airmen from other UN air forces, from enemy territory.⁴⁷ The existence of this air rescue system was a great morale booster to the South African pilots, who firmly believed that pilots landing in enemy territory would be shot on capture, especially if they fell into the hands of North Korean militia in an area

44. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.536-539.

45. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.539.

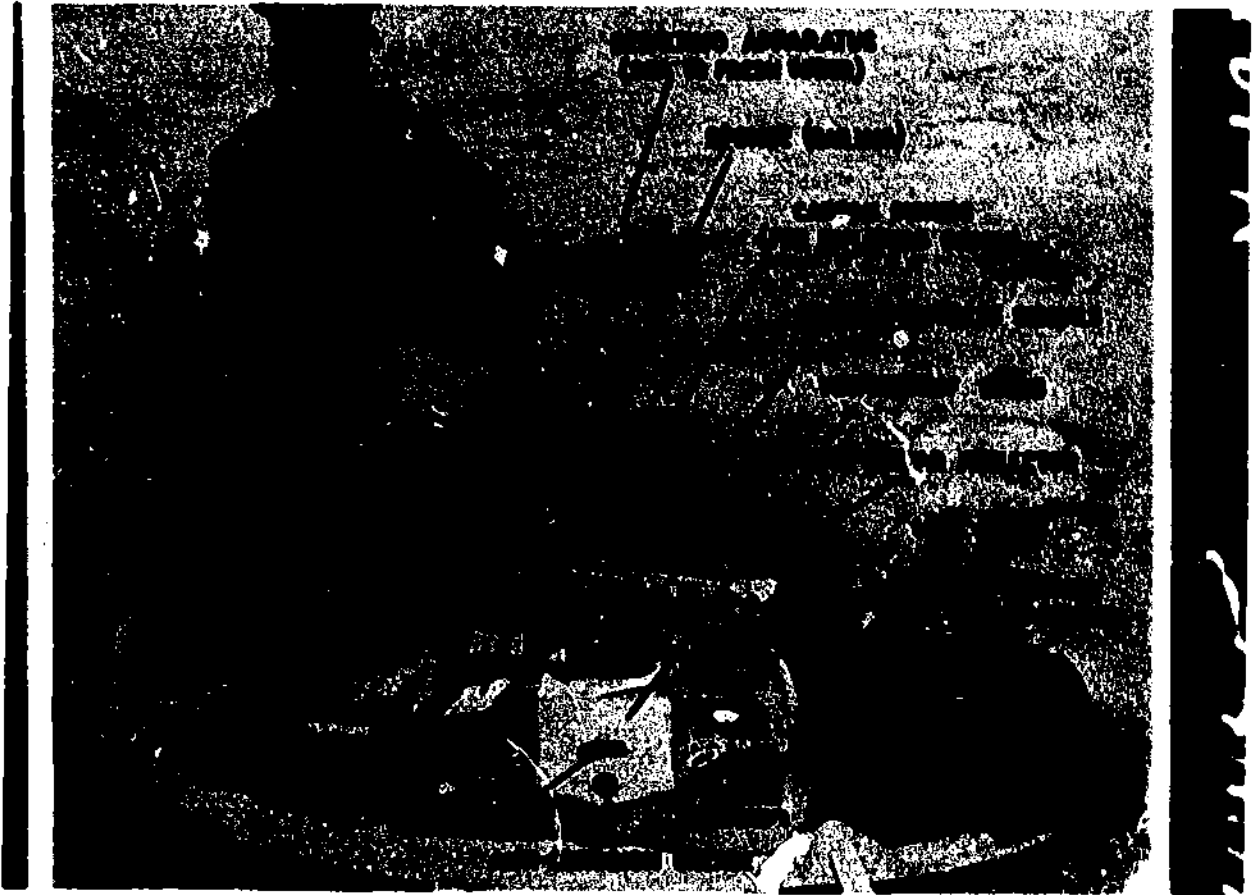
46. Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interviews, Pretoria, 16.3.1981; WIM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1951, Appendix V, Annex G to Operations Order 228-51 for August 1951, SAR Information.

47. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.543.



An Amphibious Rescue Aircraft.

MIB Photograph No: 70006243



Standard Survival Kit.

MIB Photograph No: 700006247

where they had just carried out a strike.⁴⁸

Between 1 September and 12 November 1951, 2 Sqn pilots were involved in several rescue operations. On 5 September, 12 out of a total of 24 SAAF sorties were flown on ResCAP's, when Capt. W.H. van den Bos was shot down while engaged in the rescue of a USAF pilot. During the search, which took place 200km behind enemy lines approximately 20km north-east of Sunch'on, Van den Bos' Mustang (No.344) was hit in the cooling system by small arms fire. His engine failed at an altitude of 240m. He decided to crash land, and selected the bed of a shallow stream as a likely landing place. In spite of the aircraft catching fire while it was still 60m above the ground, he made a successful landing. Van den Bos left the burning aircraft as quickly as possible and took cover in a nearby ditch. Meanwhile, two more SAAF flights, led by Lts M. Parker and N. Biden, arrived at the scene to assist. About 45 minutes after being shot down, Van den Bos was finally rescued by helicopter and taken to a ship in Wonsan Harbour.⁴⁹ Tragically, Lt Biden, one of the rescuers, was lost a few hours later when his Mustang (No.302) failed to pull out of its dive during a napalm attack against a Communist artillery position in the "Punchbowl" area.⁵⁰

Just four days later the rescue helicopters were again alerted for a SAAF pilot. Capt. D.H. Barlow experienced engine failure just 20 minutes

48. Col S.J.W. Ingleby: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 31.3.1981;
Col B.E. Martin: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1981;
Lt-Gen. A.M. Miller: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 22.9.1981.

49. 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/39/AIR, Lt H.W. van den Bos, Sworn Affidavit, 16.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 5.9.1951;
Col B.E. Martin: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1981.

50. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 5.9.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/38/AIR,
Maj. B.A.A. Wiggatt: Sworn Affidavit, 20.9.1951.

after take off and was forced to bale out. As he was floating down, his abandoned Mustang (No.352) crashed just below him. The bomb blast caused the partial collapse of his parachute, and approaching the ground faster than normal, he was knocked unconscious. When he regained his senses he was alarmed to find himself surrounded by a crowd of curious Koreans. Fortunately he had come to earth behind the UN frontlines on the northern tip of the peninsula bounded by the Han River estuary and the Yellow Sea. Shortly afterwards he was lifted by helicopter to the 121 Evacuation Hospital, where he was treated for an injured back.⁵¹

2 Lt A.M. Miller, who had survived a crash landing on 12 August, had another unhappy experience on 3 October 1951. On that day he led a SAAF flight in a 24 aircraft raid against the Kumu-ri - Kanggye railway line, on the south bank of the Ch'ongch'on River. They took off from K-46 at 08h30, and about an hour later his flight informed him that his Mustang (No.310) was streaming glycol. The leader of the SAAF element, Capt. B.E. Martin, instructed him to head eastwards, which he did escorted by his own flight. At 09h40 he found himself over a valley and decided to bale out. This decision proved to be the beginning of a long rescue drama.⁵²

In the process of abandoning the aircraft, Miller was stuck halfway out of the cockpit for a few seconds. However, he managed to free himself and made a successful descent, landing in some trees. The spot on which he landed was deep in enemy territory, approximately 120km behind the frontlines and in the centre of the peninsula, midway between Sonch'on and Wonsan. Fully aware of the danger of being captured, he tried to arrange his parachute

51. 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/41/AIR, Capt. D.H. Barlow: Sworn Affidavit, 8.10.1951; WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 9.9.1951.

52. The sources for this rescue operation are 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/47/AIR, 2 Lt A.M. Miller: Sworn Affidavit, 6.10.1951; WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3.10.1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 3.10.1951; Lt-Gen. A.M. Miller: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 22.9.1981.

on the ground in such a manner that it would be visible from the air, but not from the ground. He then climbed through the bush, and up a nearby ridge until he reached a clear spot on the slope. There he tried to attract the attention of the ResCAP by waving his scarf and flashing his mirror, but these actions only drew rifle fire from some closeby bushes.

2 Lt Muller then noticed a clearing lower down, and deciding that it might be safer than his present position. He started to make his way downwards through the bushes, only to fall down a 5m sheer drop. He then proceeded more carefully, moving from cover to cover, until he found a rock which gave him excellent protection from the surrounding marksmen, but allowed him to attract the attention of the ResCAP pilots. By that time his own flight had been relieved by a USAF flight, which in turn was relieved by another SAAF flight, once more led by Capt. Martin. These successive ResCAP missions maintained a four hour watch over their pilot on the ground until he was finally picked up by a rescue helicopter. The helicopter, which sustained light damage when it came under fire during the rescue, dropped Muller on the USS Gunston Hall, a warship cruising off Wonsan Harbour.

Another South African pilot was less fortunate. After completing 65 sorties, 2 Lt D.R. Earp had the misfortune of becoming the victim of a set of circumstances under which the ResCAP drill failed. On 27 September he was forced to bale out just behind the enemy's forward position, 25km north-east of Keasong, when his Mustang (No.355) sustained damage to the cooling system. During the descent the unfortunate pilot drew small arms fire from the ground but escaped injury except for wrenching a knee on landing. His own flight started to orbit the area, and was soon joined by a further flight from 39 Sqn. The capping aircraft, however, failed to detect the Communist soldiers who were closing in on their comrade. Earp, on the other hand, was very much aware of the seriousness of his predicament.

He found himself in the path of a Chinese search party. The soldiers were spread out in three lines searching the undergrowth. They had camouflaged themselves with branches and were careful to move only when the covering aircraft were out of sight. Earp took cover in a ditch and avoided detection by all three lines of searchers as they passed close by. Wondering what to do next, he decided that his best course of action would be to follow the search party. As he was on the point of leaving the shelter of the ditch in order to carry out his plan, a lone soldier stumbled upon him. The South African pilot and a rather startled Chinese Communist infantryman faced each other; the former tugging to free his revolver from its holster, and the latter fumbling with the safety catch of his rifle. Before either made any progress the alarm was given and Earp began a term of 23 harrowing months as a POW.⁵³

The failure to rescue 2 Lt C. Lombard when he baled out 160km behind enemy lines on 7 October, gave rise to a mystery which was only cleared up when he was released by the Communists on 23 August 1953. While en route to attack the main railway line 25km north of Sonch'on, he was forced to abandon his aircraft, owing to complete failure of the electrical system. His descent was uneventful and his own flight saw him lay out his parachute and walked about. The valley where he landed seemed to be deserted, and after 47 minutes the SAAF aircraft, which were running low on fuel, were relieved by a USAF F-80 flight. These USAF pilots reported that they had seen Lombard running up a river bed accompanied by two figures, and when the rescue helicopter arrived he could not be located. There was at the time no means

53. The sources for this incident are SALO: Box 2, SALO/S/37/1/AIR, Report on the Interrogation of ex-POW Lt D.R. Earp, September 1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/44/AIR, Lt D. Marchand: Sworn Affidavit, 2.10.1951; Lt H.B. Horscroft: Sworn Affidavit, 2.10.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 27.9.1951.

of knowing whether Lombard had been assisted by pro-UN guerillas, or captured by Communists.⁵⁴

FURTHER LOSSES

Besides 2 Lt Grunder and Lt Biden, three other South African pilots were lost in action during his period. Capt. F.A. Montanari was reported MIA, while leading a flight on a lightly armed (12,7mm only) first light reconnaissance. On arrival in the target area they found it to be closed in by heavy cloud. Spotting a few gaps, he instructed the other three pilots to orbit at 2 400m, while he went down to 100m to reconnoitre a road. His aircraft (No.351) was hit by heavy flak 20km north-west of P'yongyang. The No.2, Lt A.R. Beamish, saw the crippled F-51D streaming glycol as it pulled up to 1 000m. Montanari then appeared to attempt a crash landing in a river bed, but the aircraft disintegrated on impact. No sign of the pilot was observed and heavy flak prevented any closer investigation.⁵⁵

Within a week of each other two young pilots, 2 Lt H.T.R. Joyce and 2 Lt C.J. Papas, were reported MIA under very similar circumstances. On 29 October, while on a railway interdiction mission in the vicinity of Ich'on, Joyce went missing during an attack. The evidence, including a brilliant explosion on a hill to the south of the town, indicated that he had crashed into the hillside on his bombing run.⁵⁶ On 4 November,

54. SALO: Box 2, SALO/S/37/1/AIR, Report on the Interrogation of ex-POW Lt C. Lombard, September 1953; WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.10.1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 7.10.1951.

55. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 12.9.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/40/AIR, Lt A.R. Beamish, Sworn Affidavit, 19.9.1951.

56. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.10.1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 29.10.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQDN/8/1/52/AIR, Lt M.S. Pretorius, Sworn Affidavit, 3.11.1951.

2 Lt Papas disappeared during an attack on a village just north-east of Sibyon-ni. It was his first combat mission. Lt B.A.T. Maskell reported having seen a very bright silvery flash as Papas' aircraft (No.363) pulled out of its dive. It appeared that the Mustang had exploded on being hit by AA fire, although no hostile fire had been encountered in the vicinity.⁵⁷

Lt J.A. Meiring was one of the more fortunate pilots. On 30 October, he led a close support mission against an enemy Command Post in the village of T'osan. This target was well defended by 40mm AA guns, and as he was pulling out after dropping his two napalm bombs, his F-51D (No.354) was hit in the starboard wing, tailplane and fuselage. The frontlines were only 24km to the south, and with his crippled Mustang streaming glycol, he headed for an emergency landing strip just behind the UN positions. He jettisoned the canopy at 150m above the ground and made his approach at 210kph. The aircraft bounced, hit again and then ran out of airstrip. It jumped a ditch 2m wide, and finally came to rest in a sand heap. The straps restraining the pilot broke and he was thrown forward, his head against the reflector sight. Fortunately, 18 FBW pilots had been equipped with hard flying helmets and although Meiring's helmet was ruined he was saved from serious injury.⁵⁸

The "Flying Cheetahs" went in as low as possible over their targets, but they had to pay the price for their increased accuracy.

57. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.11.1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 4.11.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQDN/8/1/53/AIR, Lt M.S. Pretorius, Sworn Affidavit, 9.11.1951; Lt B.A.T. Maskell: Sworn Affidavit, 10.11.1951.

58. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.10.1951; WDM: Box 19, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 30.10.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/51/AIR, Lt J.A. Meiring: Sworn Affidavit, 17.11.1951.

2 Lts T.H. Sivertsen, J. de Wet and H.R. Whitehead all had unpleasant experiences when their aircraft were damaged by flying debris over the target. On 20 September, 2 Lt Sivertsen was leading a glide bombing attack from 1.800m, using 227kg bombs with 8 second delay fuses, against a railway yard midway between Chonju and Sinanju. In order to make sure of hitting the target he decided to go in at 300m, and on releasing his bombs he flew into a mass of black earth thrown up by bombs from a previous aircraft. The Mustang (No.357) had its wings, tailplane and canopy badly damaged, and the engine started to run roughly. He was escorted back to K-16 by a USAF flight, where on arrival the airfield was cleared for an emergency landing. He had difficulty in controlling the aircraft and while turning on the finals the Mustang suddenly lost power and height, and the left wing dropped out of control. It hit the ground at 240kph, 140m short of the runway with the port wing touching first. No.357 was a write-off, but Sivertsen's most serious injury was a lacerated forehead.⁵⁹

Five days later, 2 Lt de Wet's face was cut when his canopy was smashed by the debris thrown up by an ox-cart, which exploded violently on being attacked.⁶⁰ 2 Lt Whitehead's aircraft was damaged in a similar manner on 9 November, when he went too low during a bombing run and an exploding bomb ripped his canopy and damaged a wing tip. He was escorted back to K-46 and landed safely.⁶¹

THE GROUND ROUTINE CONTINUES

By the end of 1951, the administration of 2 Sqn SAAF in Korea had

59. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 20.9.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 15, 2 SQDN/8/1/42/AIR, Lt T.H. Sivertsen: Sworn Affidavit, 26.9.1951.

60. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.9.1951; WDM: Box 18, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 25.9.1951.

61. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9.11.1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 9.11.1951.

become largely a matter of routine. The staff of the SAAF Liaison HQ had been rotated during August 1951, and by the end of September the newly arrived officers were handling the affairs of the squadron. The posts in Tokyo had been rotated as follows:

Senior Air Liaison Officer: Col J.D. Pretorius was replaced by Col G.T. Moll DSO.

Staff Officer Administration: Maj. P.C.S.W. Daneel was replaced by Maj. D.W. Pidsley.

Staff Officer Equipment: Maj. D. Swanepoel was replaced by Maj. C.H. Hartzenberg.

Administrative Officer: Lt D.T. Cochran was replaced by Lt F.A. Boston.⁶²

The rotation of pilots and ground crew had continued on a regular basis, with pilots generally being flown home as soon as they had completed their tours of duty. They were replaced by a steady stream of pilots sent out by air from South Africa. Eight replacement pilots arrived on 1 September six on 13 October, two on 18 October, three on 20 October, four on 23 October, and five on 10 November. At this stage, experience gave way to youth as the balance swung away from the combat wise World War II veterans, towards a group of younger 2nd Lieutenants, who had just completed their training. They came out to Korea to lay the foundations of a flying career on the firm base of combat experience.⁶³

On 10 September the second batch of tour expired ground personnel (one officer and 24 other ranks), who had served the squadron during its first year in Korea, left K-10 for Yokohama where they boarded the ship

62. 2 Sqn K: Box 64, FEAF Historical Office AG, South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History, pp.76,81.

63. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.9.1951; WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 13, 18, 20, 23.10.1951; WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.11.1951.

for the long awaited voyage back to the Union.⁶⁴ This completed the first rotation of the ground personnel, and the departing ground crew left behind an enviable reputation. They had achieved a very high standard of work under circumstances that, on occasion, had bordered on the impossible. Their successors became aware of the high standard set when comment was received from an impartial source on 14 October. It came in the form of a letter addressed to the Commanding-General of the Far East Air Material Command by Messrs. Wright Patterson of Ohio. The manufacturers of the Mustang engine stated:

"The scope of the engine maintenance work performed by the South African Air Force reflects complete knowledge of the Packard Rolls-Royce engine and is commendable."

This letter was passed on to the CO of 2 Sqn with the endorsement:

"I wish to state that I am very pleased with the maintenance standards and the 'know how' of your engineering section."⁶⁵

The big event on the ground during September 1951 was the celebration of the first anniversary of the squadron's departure for Korea. The occasion was marked on the day itself, 26 September, with a party held at the Special Services Club at K-10. Invited guests included Brig.-Gen. Rogers, the Commanding General of 18 FBW, and the heads of his various staff sections. Also present was the newly arrived SAIO, Col G.T. Moll. The party served also to bid farewell to Cndt J.P.D. Blaauw, who had completed his tour of duty with his 100th combat sortie on 23 September. He was the only pilot still left in Korea of the original draft that had sailed from Durban on the Tjisadane. He handed over command to Cndt B.A.A. Wiggett.⁶⁶

The various 2 Sqn celebrations had a sequel on 5 October, when an Officers' Confidential Order was posted for the signature of every officer

64. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.9.1951; WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1951, Appendix A, Operations Order 4/51.

65. Quoted in WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.10.1951.

66. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23, 26.9.1951.



A/Cpl B.M. Petrowski Tunes a Mustang Engine.

in the squadron. It stated that the wing commander was inclined to take a serious view of certain forms of celebration, which included

"stamping holes in the floor, throwing articles of furniture and glasses about."

Culprits were threatened with being debarred from the club and grounded.⁶⁷

As the SAAF and the USAF celebrated at K-10 on 26 September, they could look back on a year during which the squadron had overcome difficulties related to administration, operational conditions, inter-air force co-operation, and morale, to become a well integrated and highly respected combat unit in the Far Eastern theatre. In fact, by the end of the first year a large proportion of the squadron's task in Korea had been accomplished. If the statistics for the entire campaign are taken into consideration, by the end of the first year they had already flown 40% of the sorties, written off 46% of all the aircraft lost, lost 59% of the pilots to be listed as MIA or KIA, and received 36% of the American DFC's to be finally awarded.⁶⁸ Within two months of this first anniversary celebration, the war on the ground was to enter a completely new phase and the intensity and nature of the air war was to change accordingly.

67. 2 Sqn R: Box 10, 2 SQN/C/819/6/ORG, Officers' Confidential Order 1/51, 5.10.1951.

68. WDM: Box 5, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.9.1951; 2 Sqn Unit History File: The South African Air Force in Korea.

CHAPTER 11

THE CONTINUATION OF THE INTERDICTION CAMPAIGNS

PHASE FIVE, PERIOD 1: 13 NOVEMBER 1951 - 30 APRIL 1952

ANALYSIS OF PHASE FIVE

The re-opening of the peace talks on 25 October, and Ridgway's restrictive order of 12 November 1951, reduced the war on the ground to a stalemate that was to last until the final few weeks of the conflict. The official US Army historian, W.G. Hermes, in his work, Truce Tent and Fighting Front, makes the following comment on the situation:

"In many ways the Korean ground war in 1952 seemed to be an anomaly -- a throwback to the Western Front of World War I rather than a successor to World War II. The static quality of the battlefield, the defence in depth with its barbed wire and intricate series of trenches, the accent on artillery and mortar fire and the everlasting patrols and raids -- all harked back to the 1914 - 1918 period."¹

While the negotiators haggled at Panmunjon over such issues as a demarcation line, a neutral zone, the impartial supervision of an armistice, the repatriation of prisoners of war, and the political future of Korea, the UN ground forces were engaged in the active defence of a 250km front stretching across the narrow waist of the peninsula. Except for small changes caused by the continual contest for tactical terrain features, this line remained unchanged for the remainder of the war, and it finally became the demarcation line when the armistice was signed on 27 July 1953.

1. Hermes: Fighting Front and Truce Tent, p.185.

This line was defended from west to east by the US I Corps, the US IX Corps, the US X Corps and the ROK I Corps. On the Communist side the Chinese forces were deployed in the west and centre, and the North Korean People's Army in the rugged eastern centre.²

The Communist and UN commands responded to the dramatic decrease in the intensity of ground operations in very different ways. The Communists decided to use the lull to increase their troop strength, and from 377 000 men on 1 November 1951 the OCF grew to 642 000 by 1 January 1952. The NKPA maintained its force level at 225 000. Rotation programmes caused a drop in the US ground force strength from 264 670 on 1 November 1951 to 260 479 on 30 April 1952. The ROK strength was increased from 281 800 to 341 113 over the same period. In addition, there was an increase in the contribution made by the other UN countries (from 33 258 to 35 912).³ It was clear that the UN forces, with a 1,36 to 1 disadvantage on the ground, were in no position to apply sufficient pressure along a 250km front to influence the Panmunjon talks. During this final phase of the war, airpower provided the UNC with the only possible means of applying significant military pressure. Owing to the central role of airpower, an analysis of Phase Five can be made on the basis of the various ways in which it was applied, and upon the SAAF participation in its application. Four distinct periods can be identified:

1. The continuation of the interdiction campaigns: 13 November 1951 - 30 April 1952.
2. The application of an air pressure strategy: 1 May 1952 - 30 August 1952.
3. The last of the Mustangs: 1 September 1952 - 31 December 1952.
4. The Sabre era: 1 January 1953.

2. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.205-206.

3. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.199.

Period 1 will be considered in this chapter. The main feature of the war during the winter of 1951-1952 was the continuation of the interdiction campaign against the North Korean rail network.

2 SQN OPERATIONS

The main considerations and operational requirements which determined the nature and extent of 2 Sqn operations during this period were:

- a. The FEAF decision to continue the railway interdiction programme.
- b. The establishment of a well fortified defence line by the Communists.
- c. The need to neutralize the Communist artillery and heavy mortars deployed in a strip to the immediate north of the MLR.
- d. The improvement of the Communist counter-air capability.
- e. The need to monitor Communist vehicles approaching the site of the truce talks from the north.
- f. The provision of combat air patrols to cover the rescue facilities and operations in the vicinity of Chb-do Island.
- g. The rotation and operational training of SAAF personnel.

Various combinations of the above factors were operative in determining the circumstances under which the SAAF pilots flew the different types of missions.⁴

The missions undertaken at this stage can be classified as one of the following: railway interdiction; supply and troop interdiction; the neutralization of forward troop, artillery and mortar positions (close air support); MSR reconnaissance; and stand-by ResCAP's. During the course of most of the interdiction and close support missions some, or all, of the SAAF element filled a flak suppression role. Many missions were dual purpose, with ResCAP

4. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1951; WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1951; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1952; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, February 1952; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1952; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, April 1952.

and interdiction missions undertaking MSR reconnaissance on their return to base. In such cases, the primary purpose of the mission has determined its classification in the table below which gives a breakdown of the 2 Sqn mission types for each month of the period. The MSR reconnaissance sorties are classified as interdiction, and the miscellaneous rescue sorties as ResCAP's.

Table 7 Phase Five, Period 1: Analysis of Sorties. (Percentage of Total)

Month	Interdiction	Close Support	ResCAP	
November	58,5	41,5	-	5
December	73	23	4	6
January	53,5	38,25	8,25	7
February	78	11,5	10,5	8
March	74	12	14	9
April	67	10	23	10
TOTAL	67	23	10	

With the exception of the significant increase in ResCAP sorties the 2 Sqn pattern of operations from November 1951 to April 1952 shows little variation from the previous periods of the Korean campaign.

RAILWAY INTERDICTION

The rival claims of the UNC proponents of interdiction on the one hand and of close support on the other, were still being aired in the Far East at the end of 1951. At this stage, the view predominated that interdiction was, in the long term, the more effective application of available

5. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951.
6. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1951.
7. WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, January 1952.
8. WDM: Box 23, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, February 1952.
9. WDM: Box 24, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, March 1952.
10. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, April 1952.

airpower. Interdiction was seen primarily as a defensive measure, rather than as a means to support UN offensive operations. Its aim was seen as preventative; to prevent the Communists from building up sufficient supplies and ammunition to enable them to launch a major offensive. From November 1951 to April 1952, FFAF averaged 9 000 interdiction sorties per month, while close support sorties ranged from 339 to 2 491 per month.¹¹

The Strangle railway interdiction raids continued according to the mid-1951 pattern. Daily morning and afternoon raids were mounted by the 18 FBW. These raids tended to be on a smaller scale, with 16-24 aircraft per formation, rather than the previous 32-64. The flak suppression element in each formation was increased to at least one flight, armed with proximity fused bombs. Flak suppression flights did not always go in first. When the need to locate silent AA batteries arose, a normal flight was sent in to draw fire, enabling the flak suppression pilots to spot and destroy their targets.¹²

The Strangle missions flown by 2 Sqn from November 1951 to February 1952, were directed almost exclusively against two short stretches of track: a 30km section of the double main line between P'yongyang and Sariwon, and a 60km section of the secondary line between Sunch'on and Hwadong-ni. The main threat to the fighter-bombers on these raids came from AA weapons, which the Communists had deployed in increased quantities along vulnerable sections of the MSR. MIG-15's, which occasionally ventured south of the Ch'ongch'on River, constituted a further danger. While leading a SAAF flight on a Strangle mission, on the morning of 8 December, Capt. J.R. Trotter observed a dog-fight involving these aircraft 15km south of Sunch'on. That afternoon, the

11. Hennes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.192.

12. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1951; WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, January 1952; WDM: Box 23, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, February 1952; Capt. A.S. Rae, Recorded Interview, Germiston, 30.9.1981.

18 FBW strike against the Sunch'on-Hwadong-ni section had to be diverted to a secondary target, owing to continued MIG-15 activity in the primary target area.¹³

By the beginning of 1952, after more than eight months of "Operation Strangle", the 2 Sqn railway interdiction missions had assumed the aspect of a routine chore. The only breaks in the monotony occurred in a negative manner, with the loss of either a pilot or an aircraft, or both. The unfortunate consequences of becoming separated from one's flight were clearly brought home on 24 November, when Lt G. Krohn was listed as MIA. Three SAAF flights were briefed to join a 18 FBW formation on a railway interdiction mission against a target just south of Sunch'on. Radiator trouble on the ground caused Krohn to leave 10 minutes after his own flight. He was noticed passing two USAF flights in an attempt to catch up with the SAAF Mustangs. After the latter had completed their runs over the target, they heard Krohn call on the RT to say that he was going into the attack. He went in with a USAF flight and his bombs were seen to explode. The last American off the target later reported having seen a lone "Cheetah" Mustang heading southwards. Nothing more was seen or heard of Lt Krohn.¹⁴

Another pilot was lost five days later over a secondary target. An SAAF flight, led by Capt. A.J. van Rensburg, was briefed as the flak suppression element on a routine Strangle raid. No flak was observed over the primary target, and the SAAF flight did not expend their ordnance. They proceeded to the secondary target, a village used as a supply dump, just south-east of Suan, which they bombed, rocketed and strafed. As they were forming up after the last run, the flight came under fire from 12,7mm and

13. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1951, 8.12.1951; WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, January 1952; WDM: Box 23, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, February 1952.

14. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24.11.1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 24.11.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQDN/8/1/56/AIR, 2 Lt F.J. Grobler, Sworn Affidavit, 24.11.1951; 2 Lt A.B. Berdley (67 SQN), Sworn Affidavit, 25.11.1951.

20mm guns. The leader's aircraft (No.346) immediately started to leak glycol. It then dived suddenly, apparently out of control, and the No.3, Lt L.W. Parsonson, had to take evasive action to avoid a collision. The No.4, 2 Lt N.L. Hansen, saw the pilot of the stricken aircraft slumped forward. The Mustang did not recover from the dive, and plunged straight into the ground.¹⁵

Lt Parsonson himself fell victim to Communist ground fire on 6 January 1952, under circumstances similar to those which had led to the loss of Capt. van Rensburg. He was hit while making his second strafing run on a secondary target 15km north-east of Kumsong. He headed southwards, but before he could reach friendly lines his Mustang (No.353) caught fire and crashed.¹⁶ A third pilot, involved in an almost identical incident nine days later, escaped with his life, but lost his freedom. After attacking the Sunch'on-Hwadon-ni railway, 2 Lt R.E. Gasson followed his leader, Capt. J. Trotter, on an attack against a supply dump just east of Sibyon-ni. His Mustang (No.372) was hit by ground fire during the strafing run. He immediately turned southwards, but decided to bale out when his clothes caught fire. On abandoning the aircraft he was thrown against the stabilizer fin, broke his leg and lost consciousness. His parachute somehow opened, even though Gasson found the D ring still in his pocket when he regained consciousness. Ten minutes after he had landed a helicopter arrived, but was prevented from lifting the badly injured pilot by intense ground fire. Gasson spent the next 14 months in Communist POW camps and was finally released during "Operation Little Switch" on 20 April 1953. He was the

15. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.11.1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 29.11.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQDN/8/1/58/AIR, Lt L.W. Parsonson, Sworn Affidavit, 29.11.1951; 2 Lt V.R. Blackbeard, Sworn Affidavit, 29.11.1951; 2 Lt N.L. Hansen, Sworn Affidavit, 29.11.1951.
16. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6.1.1952; WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 6.1.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQDN/8/1/66/AIR, Maj. R.V. Lyon, Sworn Affidavit, 8.1.1952.

first SAAF POW to be released and was awarded the Bronze Star in recognition of the information he was able to give to UNC intelligence officers.¹⁷

Two weeks later another SAAF pilot, 2 Lt R.E. Earp-Jones, fell into enemy hands whilst flying in No.4 position on a railway interdiction mission. After attacking their target, also on the Sunch'on-Hwadong-ni section, his flight immediately set course for K-46. They were halfway back to base when the engine of his Mustang (No.358) suddenly spluttered and cut. He baled out and landed in a metre of soft snow near Chiha-ri. He was captured on landing, and after a preliminary interrogation, the startled South African pilot was brought before a Chinese rifle platoon. He thought that he was facing his executioners, but was relieved to learn that he was only being exhibited to the "Killer Squad", which claimed to have brought down his aircraft with rifle fire. 2 Lt Earp-Jones spent the rest of the war in Communist POW camps.¹⁸

As the Strangle campaign carried on into its seventh month, the Communists intensified their efforts to reduce its effects. In addition to heavier flak concentrations they made the best use of their most available resource, manpower. The North Koreans had three brigades (7 700 men each) engaged in full time railway repair. A crew of skilled workers was stationed at each major railway station and supplemented by ten man teams of labourers, placed along the tracks at six kilometre intervals. Augmented by local labour these teams worked day and night to repair cuts in the line. Fifth Air Force intelligence officers estimated that, at any one time, as many as 500 000 military and civilian workers were engaged in countering Strangle.¹⁹

17. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 15.1.1952; WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 15.1.1952; SALO: Box 2, SALO/S/37/1/AIR, Report on the Interrogation of 2 Lt R.E. Gasson, 17.5.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 39, SALO/909/4/P1, Citation.

18. WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 31.1.1952; SALO: Box 2, SALO/S/37/1/AIR, Report on the Interrogation of 2 Lt R.E. Earp-Jones, 23.9.1953.

19. Harnes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.195.

As well as increased flak and the optimum use of their vast manpower resources, the Communists also employed refined deception techniques in their struggle to minimize the effects of the railway interdiction campaign. In addition to the trick of the movable bridge spans, barges and underwater fords were used to create the impression that sound bridges were unserviceable. In the final analysis, however, manpower proved to be decisive. The Communists with their autocratic system and hordes of impressed labourers, could afford to make repair gangs work among unexploded delayed fuse bombs, and to transport supplies across the gaps in the system on the A-frames of North Korean peasants.²⁰

Aerial reconnaissance photographs taken during December 1951, showed that the Communists could repair a rail cut within eight hours, that is, between midnight and sunrise.²¹ On 23 December SAF conceded that the railway blockade had been broken and that the Communists had won the use of all key rail arteries. After a thorough review of the results of the interdiction programme, Ridgway conveyed his conclusions to the JCS on 4 January 1952. He noted that it had seriously affected the enemy's supply operations, forced him to divert troops and material to maintenance and protection of the rail system, and had destroyed thousands of pieces of rolling stock. In spite of this, the enemy had successfully supported a static defence, and could eventually accumulate sufficient supplies to support a major offensive.²²

Both Ridgway and Weyland concurred in a decision to continue the attacks pending the evolution of an alternative plan. The alternative plan that eventually emerged, during February 1952, was called "Operation Saturate".

20. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), p.25.

21. ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War VI, p.48.

22. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.413-414.

Saturate involved round-the-clock daylight concentration of fighter-bombers against selected short sections of track, followed up by B-26 attacks during the hours of darkness. These strikes were far more controlled than the Strangle attacks had been, with the JOC selecting targets, approach routes, withdrawal procedures, altitudes and time over target (TOT) for each wave of strike aircraft. Four segments of railway line were selected for intensive interdiction; Kunu-ri to Huich'on, Sunch'on to Hwadong-ni, Sinanju to Namsi-dong, and P'yongyang to Namch'onjom.²³ As these included the two sections that had been under attack by 2 Sqn since November 1951, the new campaign only introduced the South Africans to two new target areas, one along the southern bank of the Ch'ongch'on River and the other in MIG-15 territory to the north of this river.

"Operation Saturate" was launched on 3 March 1952. It had the effect of somewhat revitalizing 2 Sqn operations. During February the total SAAF combat sorties had dropped to 266, the lowest monthly total since December 1950, and the lowest since the squadron had been operating as a unit in Korea. In March 1952 this figure rose to 470, and in April it was 369 (Appendix A-1).²⁴ A feature of Saturate was the resumption of raids along and across the Ch'ongch'on River. This change can be ascribed to the SAAF appreciation of three considerations: the Communist flak concentrations south of the Ch'ongch'on had become too heavy; the relative lack of AA weapons between the Ch'ongch'on and the Yalu, where the Communists relied upon the MIG-15's to keep the air clear of UN ground attack aircraft; and the waning aggressiveness of the OCAF pilots since the beginning of 1952.

23. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.416.

24. WDM: Box 10, Return of Daily Missions, December 1951;
 WDM: Box 22, Return of Daily Missions, February 1952;
 WDM: Box 23, Return of Daily Missions, March 1952;
 WDM: Box 24, Return of Daily Missions, April 1952.

MIG-15 attacks against UN fighter-bombers on interdiction missions between the Ch'ongch'on and the Yalu totalled only eight in January 1952, six in February, ten in March and nine in April.²⁵

In spite of their lack of enterprise, the Communist pilots still occasionally penetrated south of the Ch'ongch'on River. The only South African pilot to be shot down by an enemy aircraft during the entire Korean conflict was lost during March 1952. 2 Lt D.L. Taylor had only been in Korea for seven days when, on 25 February, he had a narrow escape while coming in to land after a training flight. Whilst on finals, his Mustang (No.308) stalled and cartwheeled into Chinhae Bay. He was rescued by two American Master Sergeants, S.M. Starvis and R. Renaud. The latter risked his life to free the trapped pilot from the submerged cockpit and was awarded the Soldier's Medal for Bravery in recognition of this deed.²⁶ 2 Lt Taylor's luck ran out on 20 March. On that day, Able and Dog flights of 2 Sqn participated in three 18 FBW strikes against the Sunch'on-Kwadong-ni section of the railway system. On the last of the missions, which was the second of the day to a point known as "Butterfly Bend", the eight SAAF Mustangs, led by Cndt R. Clifton, were tasked with flak suppression.²⁷

Shortly after take off one of the Mustangs developed engine trouble and was escorted back to base, leaving only six "Cheetahs" to carry out the mission. On their two previous strikes they had carried out the normal

25. Putrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.415;
RCK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War VI, p.40.

26. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17,24.2.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/81/AIR, 2 Lt D.L. Taylor, Sworn Affidavit, 25.2.1952; Master Sergeant S.M. Starvis: Sworn Affidavit, 24.2.1952; Aircraft Accident Report, Squadron Commander's Comments.

27. The sources for this mission are: Maj.-Gen. R. Clifton: Letter, 31.3.1982; Capt. J.A. Joubert: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 2.4.1981; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.3.1952; WDM: Box 24, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 20.3.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/87/AIR, Lt J.S.S. Enslin: Sworn Affidavit, 23.3.1952.

practice of breaking to the north as they came off the target, so as to be in a position to face any MIG-15's coming in from that direction. They had experienced intense AA fire of all calibres during the previous raids, and in order to break the pattern during their last mission, they decided to break south after the bombing runs. This tactic, employed to deceive the AA gunners, exposed them to an attack by five Communist jets as they were pulling off the target.

Taylor's Mustang (No.320) was hit in the fairing, between the main-plane and the fuselage, by fire from a MIG-15. He immediately turned southwards towards friendly lines with his aircraft streaming glycol and black smoke. The rest of the flight attempted to cover their crippled comrade, but they were forced to take action to counter further attacks. The enemy aircraft, with flaps lowered to slow them to the speed of the conventional Mustangs, made four more passes from the 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock positions. In the confusion Lt J.S.S. Enslin managed to fire a long machine gun burst into one of the MIG-15's, which damaged its right wing. This hit was confirmed by both the flight leader and the camera gun photographs. Enslin claimed to have only damaged the aircraft, although Capt. J.A. Joubert, who was flying behind him at the time and Capt Clifton were sure that it had been a kill. 2 Lt V.F. Kuhn, who had been separated from the rest of the group, also managed to fire a few bursts in the direction of two MIG-15's as they broke off an attack. Meanwhile, Taylor had disappeared and was listed as MIA.

This incident passed into the lore of 2 Sqn in the form of a song, which became part of the Korke's Inn repertoire:

MUSTANG

Mustang - jy moet nou huis-toe gaan —————

Want die MIGs hulie skiet vir jou Mustang,
 Die MIGs hulie skiet vir jou Mustang,
 Daar by Sonch'on sal die koeëls vir jou slaan,
 Mustang jy moet huis-toe gaan!

Nee, nee, nee my Mustang nee,
 Nee my Mustang nee - nee my Mustang nee,
 Nee, nee, nee my Mustang nee,
 Ek gaan nie terug na Sonch'on nie!!²⁸

The first Saturate effort across the Ch'ongch'on in which 2 Sqn participated, took place over two days, 25 and 26 March. On this occasion the 5AF operations officers had selected a segment of railway track between Chongju and Sinanju. It was based on a roadbed built up through swampy terrain, which the repair gangs would find difficult to negotiate during the spring thaw. During the first day 307 fighter-bomber sorties dropped 530x454kg and 84x227kg bombs, on the night of 25-26 March eight B-26 bombers added 42x227kg bombs, and the following day 161 fighter-bomber sorties continued the attack on the same target.²⁹ The role of 2 Sqn in this particular operation was that of flak suppression with 227kg proximity fused bombs.³⁰

During April 1952, the "Flying Cheetahs" took part in strikes north of the Ch'ongch'on along the railway line to Namsi-dong on 1, 6, 13 and 18 April.³¹ The raids of 6 April, against targets just 5km north-west of Sunch'on, were the most northerly missions that had been undertaken for some months by F-51D's, and it was inevitable that they should attract the

28. South African National Museum of Military History; 951.9042/2, Songs the Cheetahs Sang in Korea.

29. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.417.

30. WDM: Box 24, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 25.3.1952; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.417.

31. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 1,6,13,18.4.1952.

attention of the MIG-15 patrols. The Communists attacked three of the four 18 FBW formations in the target area, and on one occasion 2 Sqn Mustangs were directly involved. This occurred during the second raid of the day. As the wing formation approached the target at 2 500m, the SAAF flight of four, led by 2 Lt A.S. Rae, was attacked by four MIG-15's. The leader ordered his flight to jettison their bombs and to turn towards their attackers. He managed to get two machine gun bursts at one of the MIG-15's as it passed, but no damage was observed. After a few tactical turns they successfully evaded the enemy and returned safely to base.³²

The section of the railway between Kunu-ri and Suich'on, running along the southern bank of the Ch'ongch'on, enjoyed the attention of the 18 FBW Mustangs on 2, 10, 11 and 22 April.³³ On the last mentioned date, a 24 aircraft formation, led by Capt. J.G. Newton of the SAAF, bombed a point midway between Kunu-ri and Huich'on, just 12km further north of the target attacked on 6 April.³⁴

These operations also took their toll. After the first mission on 10 April, Lt J.O. Holtzhausen (No.372) failed to return. Haze over the target, just north of Kunu-ri, had reduced visibility considerably, and when the flight checked in at the RV point after the attack, Holtzhausen was missing. Before the SAAF aircraft left the area, he reported over the RT that he was joining an American flight. He was not seen or heard of again and was listed as MIA. Maj. C.P. Mouton, who had led the flight, considers it possible that the flight of Mustangs that Holzhausen had joined belonged, in fact, to the North Korean Air Force.³⁵

32. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6.4.1952; WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 6.4.1952; Capt. A.S. Rae: Recorded Interview, Germiston, 30.9.1981.

33. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 2,10,11,22.4.1952.

34. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.4.1951; WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 22.4.1951.

35. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.4.1952; WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 10.4.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/88/AIR, Capt. J.L. van der Merwe, Sworn Affidavit, 14.4.1952; Maj. C.P. Mouton: Sworn Affidavit, 11.4.1952; Col C.P. Mouton: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.9.1981.

The attrition rate of 5AF aircraft during the interdiction campaign had been high, and 2 Sqn suffered in proportion to its participation. The loss of No.372 reduced the number of Mustangs on the strength of 2 Sqn to a mere 12. Since the end of May 1951, when "Operation Strangle" had been instituted, the aircraft lost by 2 Sqn had been as follows: four in June 1951, nine in July, four in August, six in each of September, October and November, two in December, eight in January 1952, four in February, and two in each of March and April. Not all of these aircraft had been lost on interdiction missions (Appendix A-7). By April 1952, the 5AF as a whole had reached the nadir of its fighter-bomber strength; it had lost 243 fighter-bombers in Korea and had received only 131 replacements. Although the Saturate attacks had managed to keep the line between Sinuiju and Sinanju out of action during April, the depleted aircraft strength was inadequate to allow for the simultaneous interdiction of the alternate rail routes. A new strategy was clearly necessary.³⁶

SUPPLY AND TROOP INTERDICTION

The 5AF interdiction attacks during this period were not confined to railway lines and installations. Supply dumps and troop concentrations were also attacked when they could be accurately located. These troops and supplies had successfully evaded the strikes against the transport system, and were usually found just north of the MLR, in a belt 20-50km wide, stretching right across the waist of Korea. Troop and supply strikes were carried out by aircraft specifically briefed for the purpose, or by railway interdiction missions which had been given supply dumps and resting areas as alternate targets. Examples of the latter were the missions on which Capt. van Rensburg (29 November) and Lt Parsonson (6 January) were lost, and the mission on 15 January during which Lt Gasson was made a POW.

36. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.4.1952; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.417-418.

Towards the end of 1951, the aircraft on these interdiction missions still carried two napalm bombs as their main armament. At the beginning of 1952, a switch was made to 227kg GP bombs, some with proximity fuses, when it was found that the static nature of the war had enabled the Communists to build substantial bunkers for both troops and supplies.³⁷

Typical of such strikes were several missions flown from November 1951 to February 1952. On 20 November two SAAF flights were briefed to attack two supply centres, only about a kilometre apart, which had been located 8km south of Koksan. Each aircraft was armed with napalm bombs as well as rockets and machine guns.³⁸ Two similar missions were flown on 28 December. The first was directed against troop billets just south-east of Ich'on, and the second, against a troop and supply area 5km south of Sibyon-ni. In both cases, two of the Mustangs carried 227kg proximity fused bombs while the other six used napalm.³⁹

Two of the strikes against the Communist forward supply dumps and concentration areas resulted in the loss of SAAF aircraft during early January. On New Year's Day 1952, Capt. J.S. Montgomery was briefed to lead seven SAAF F-51D's on a strike against Communist storage areas 20km due east of Sibyon-ni, and only 20km north of the MLR. They took off with two of the Mustangs carrying 227kg proximity fused bombs, while the rest were armed with napalm. During the first strafing run Lt J.H. Rautenbach, who was in No.3 position in the second flight, pulled off the target with his aircraft (No.350) streaming glycol. He immediately attempted to gain height and headed southwards. The Mustang had received a direct hit from

37. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1951; WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, January 1952.

38. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 20.11.1951.

39. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 28.12.1951.

an explosive shell on the engine cowling just behind the spinner. Soon after crossing into friendly territory, the engine of the badly damaged aircraft stopped and the pilot decided to bale out. A difficult exit left him just enough time to open his parachute before landing heavily on his back against a hillside. As he lay there, winded and covered by the collapsed parachute, he was found by a member of the 45th Infantry Division, who informed the dazed pilot that he was in the middle of a minefield. The twice lucky South African pilot was taken to the Divisional HQ in a jeep and then flown back to K-46 in a liaison aircraft.⁴⁰

Two days later, Lt J.G. Newtown had a similar, but less dramatic experience, while in the No.3 position in an eight aircraft formation. The target was a village housing troops and supplies 20km east of Namch'onjom. On arrival in the area the "Cheetahs" were kept orbiting for one and a half hours, being passed from one controller to another, before the target was finally indicated. The two lead Mustangs had been armed and tasked for flak suppression, so it fell to Newton to lead the remaining six into the attack in the face of intense and accurate small arms and automatic weapons fire. His aircraft (No.368) was hit and he turned towards friendly lines. The crippled Mustang had holes through the port fuel tank and the oil cooler. Newton had 30km to cover before he left enemy territory, and for the first 5 or 6 minutes he flew with no oil pressure, ready to abandon the aircraft at the first sign of trouble. He was 20km into UN territory when the Mustang started to burn and he baled out, landing safely on the side of a steep hill. He was soon rescued by men from the 3rd Division and flown back to base.⁴¹

40. WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 1.1.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/64/AIR, Lt J.H. Rautenbach: Sworn Affidavit, 4.1.1952.

41. WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 3.1.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/65/AIR, Lt J.G. Newton: Sworn Affidavit, 6.1.1952.

NEUTRALIZATION OF ENEMY ARTILLERY AND INFANTRY POSITIONS

After the war, Gen. Weyland, at the time Commanding General of FEAF, explained the disproportionate effort devoted to interdiction:

"In a static situation close support is an expensive substitute for artillery fire. It pays its greatest dividends when the enemy's retraining capability has been crippled and his logistics cut to a minimum while his forces are immobilized by interdiction and armed reconnaissance. Then decisive effects can be obtained as the close support effort is massed in co-ordination with determined ground action. Thus in the fall of 1951 it would have been sheer folly not to have concentrated the bulk of our air effort against interdiction targets in the enemy rear areas."⁴²

In spite of Weyland's views, the aircraft of 2 Sqn were employed in a role that amounted to airborne artillery during the winter of 1951-1952. An exceptional 41,5% of SAAF missions during November 1951, and 38,25% during January 1952, were allocated to close support (Table 7). In keeping with Van Fleet's desire to impress the Chinese and North Koreans with the tremendous firepower of the Eighth Army, artillery and air strikes were directed against Communist bunkers on alternate days. The Communist infantry had capitalized on the static situation to build elaborate and effective fortifications in their frontline positions. It was common to find the primary defence positions on the forward slope of a hill linked by tunnels to personnel and supply shelters, artillery positions, and command posts on the reverse slopes. Nearly all the 2 Sqn close support missions during this period were carried out, either against such frontline infantry bunkers, or against supporting artillery and mortar batteries within 20km of the MLR. The strength of the bunkers and gun emplacements

42. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Factor in Korea), pp.22-23.

was such that their destruction required a direct hit from a 227kg or a 454kg bomb. The nature of the 2 Sqn targets is reflected in the decreasing use of napalm bombs between November 1951 and February 1952 (Appendix A-3). In fact, 2 Sqn seldom used napalm again in Korea after February 1952.⁴³

It was after missions against frontline positions on 13 November, that both Capt. C.J. Collins and Lt F.J. Grobler returned to K-46 in aircraft other than the Mustangs in which they had set out. Collins became the first victim of the day when his Mustang (No.327) lost its coolant after being hit while he was strafing frontline troops 30km north-east of Kaesong. He baled out over friendly territory and was picked up by engineers of the Commonwealth Division. He was brought back to K-46, later in the day, by helicopter.⁴⁴

Lt Grobler (No.365) had an unusual experience while leading a strike against Communist infantry dug in along a ridge just west of Ch'orwon. The Mosquito placed a white smoke rocket to mark the target, but it fell too far to the west. Grobler decided that he would indicate the target to the rest of the flight himself by means of a strafing run. As he pulled up from the pass he found that the enemy's 12,7mm fire had caused the control column to have jammed in a central position, and that he could not use the elevators. He still had aileron control and orbited south of the target with the No.2, until the others had completed their attack. As he attempted to turn for base he also lost aileron control and was forced to bale out over friendly territory. He was copped for 10 minutes by his own flight before being picked up by a helicopter from the 25th Division's forward airstrip. He was finally brought back to K-46 three days later in a L-19 liaison aircraft.⁴⁵

43. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.207.

44. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 13.11.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQDN/8/1/54/AIR, Capt. C.J. Collins, Sworn Affidavit, 16.11.1951.

45. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 13.11.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQDN/8/1/55/AIR, Lt F.J. Grobler, Sworn Affidavit, 19.11.1951.

Other SAAF close support missions at this stage were more successful and less expensive. On 18 November 2 Sqn dispatched 11 flights against MLR targets between Ch'orwon and the east coast. Able Flight distinguished themselves by flying 16 of the 44 sorties, using the same four pilots for all four missions; they were Lt J.A. du Plessis, Lt J. Parsonson, Capt. J.A. Meiring and Lt N. Hansen. They were awarded 75%, 60% and 100% target coverage for their first three missions. Their final attack was called off at the last moment, as the controller felt that nearby UN troops could be endangered in the failing light.⁴⁶

The 22 combat sorties completed by 2 Sqn pilots on 14 December were typical of this period. Three, two flight missions were directed against mortar and artillery positions within range of the MLR, on the north-western edge of the "Punchbowl". All these missions carried a variety of bombs. The first flight of each mission was armed with 227kg bombs (two aircraft with proximity fuse bombs and two with normal GP bombs), the second flights all carried napalm bombs. The missions took off at 07h30, 11h00 and 15h00, and the claims for the day amounted to one supply dump and two field guns destroyed.⁴⁷

A close support mission on 14 January resulted in another F-51D being written off, although the pilot escaped unscathed. Capt. J.R. Trotter took off at 14h25 leading six Mustangs against four artillery positions on the north-western edge of the "Punchbowl". They dropped their 227kg bombs on the target without incident and commenced their rocket attacks. After his first rocket run Lt N.C. van Zyl reported engine trouble and immediately headed southwards. His engine failed soon after he had left the target area

46. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 18.11.1951.

47. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 14.12.1951.

and he made a successful "wheels up" landing on an emergency strip inside friendly territory, halfway between the "Punchbowl" and K-46. The pilot was uninjured but the Mustang (No.376) was damaged beyond repair.⁴⁸

RECONNAISSANCE AND RESCAP

With the reopening of the peace talks at Panmunjom, 2 Sqn shared in the task of patrolling the MSR from P'yongyang to Kunch'on. The primary aim of these patrols was to monitor the vehicles used by the Communist delegates and their supporting elements to reach the site of the talks. By mutual agreement such transport displayed red panels. Secondary aims were the collection of information and the destruction of targets of opportunity.⁴⁹

The SAAF pilots started to fly these missions during the last week of November 1951. The first missions of this type, flown on 28 November, set the pattern for the rest. On that day, the Mustangs flew in elements of two and patrolled the MSR, between P'yongyang and Kunch'on, for periods varying from two and a half to five hours. The times for these missions are tabulated below:

Table 8 Mission Times and Duration: 28 November 1951

Mission No	Time Up	Duration (hrs)
1871	07h00	4,45
1872	07h20	4,50
1875	13h45	3,40
1876	14h30	2,35

Initially, these missions were lightly armed with only 12,7mm machine guns,

48. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.1.1952; WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 14.1.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SJD/8/1/67/AIR, Lt N.C. van Zyl, Sworn Affidavit, 18.1.1952.

49. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1951, Appendix L, 18 FBW Frag Orders; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1952, Appendix M, 18 FBW Frag Orders; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, February 1952, Appendix H, 18 FBW Frag Orders; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1952, Appendix K, 18 FBW Frag Orders; Capt. A.S. Rae, Recorded Interview, Germiston, 30.9.1981; Col. C.P. Mouton: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.9.1981.

50. WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 28.11.1951.

but later 4 HVAR's per aircraft were added for flak suppression. They served their purpose by ensuring that the Communists did not use the transport needs of their negotiating team as a screen for the conveyance of matériel and troops along the MSR. The South African pilots regularly brought back reports of sightings of red panelled vehicles south of P'yongyang, which enabled the UNC intelligence officers to evaluate the movements of the Communist peace teams.⁵¹

On 18 March 2 Sqn sent three missions to reconnoitre the MSR. One of these recces, flown by Lt J.O. Holtzhausen and Capt. J.L. van der Marwe, gives a clear idea of the task of the pilots, and of the type and variety of information that they gathered. During the course of their debriefing they reported the following:

- a. Several vehicles on the MSR displaying red panels.
- b. A large airfield 5km north of Hwangu with a 2 500m runway and adjoining parking bays. There appeared to be dummy craters in the runway, while surrounding genuine bomb craters were apparently being used for gun positions.
- c. The bridge at Simwon-ni appeared to be serviceable.
- d. There were an estimated six 88mm guns at Namch'onjom.
- e. An uncoupled locomotive at Namch'onjom was strafed and rocketed.
- f. Three vehicles sighted at Chungkwa were without panels. These vehicles were not attacked as a flak trap had been suspected.⁵²

The aircraft patrolling along the MSR were exposed to constant AA and small arms fire. On 24 January, Lt A. Gardiner-Atkinson's Mustang sustained battle damage, which was typical under the circumstances. The aircraft was hit in the right flap by a 40mm shell. The shell damaged the rear spar and

51. WDM: Box 23, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, February 1952; WIM: Box 24, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, March 1952.

52. WDM: Box 24, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 24.1.1952.

cut the aileron cables, forcing the pilot to make a high speed landing (225kph), without the use of his starboard flap or aileron.⁵³

From the first week of January onwards, the SAAF pilots in Korea found themselves more involved in the overall rescue organization of the SAF. In the event of their aircraft being hit, pilots operating over North Korea were briefed to head for either Ch'o-do Island off the west coast, or Yo-do Island in Wonsan Harbour off the east coast. An immediate ResCAP was to be provided by the remaining members of the flight until they could be relieved by special stand-by flights, which were orbiting both islands. Most of 2 Sqn's Stand-by ResCAP's were flown over Ch'o-do, where they formed part of a team with a Grumman SA-16 amphibian from 3rd Rescue Sqn, which was also in continuous orbit. Two Sikorsky H-5 helicopters on strip alert on Ch'o-do itself completed the rescue team. The ResCAP aircraft were only armed with their fitted 12,7mm machine guns and were loaded with maximum internal fuel.⁵⁴

From the beginning of 1952, when SAF fighter-bomber strikes in the Ch'ongch'on River region became more frequent, the Ch'o-do Stand-by ResCAP sorties allocated to 2 Sqn sharply increased from 4% of the total in December 1951 to 23% in April 1952 (Table 7). From mid-April onwards these operations were shared by the four squadrons of 18 FBW, with each squadron contributing one aircraft to each mission.⁵⁵ It was while flying in No.3

53. WDM: Box 24, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 18.3.1951.

54. WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, January 1952; WDM: Box 23, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, February 1952; WDM: Box 24, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, March 1952; WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, April 1952; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1952, Appendix M, 18 FBW Frag Orders; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, February 1952, Appendix H, 18 FBW Frag Orders; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1952, Appendix K, 18 FBW Frag Orders; Capt. A.S. Rae: Recorded Interview, Germiston, 30.9.1981; Col C.P. Mouton: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.9.1981; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.539-540.

55. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, April 1952.

position in such a composite flight, that Lt G.J. Baransky was lost on 20 April. The flight was called inland from its Ch'o-do orbit position to the aid of two downed pilots just west of Sonch'on. Lt Baransky's aircraft (No.318) was seen to crash in flames during the ResCAP.⁵⁶

The next day, 2 Sqn flew 15 ResCAP sorties out of a total of 18 for the day. The first effected the rescue of the pilot whom Lt Baransky had been protecting when he was lost. Capts R.W. Clark and D.L. Hefer took off at 06h10, escorted the rescue helicopter to the USAF pilot near Sonch'on, contacted him and saw the Sikorsky safely back to base. In the process they carried out numerous strafing runs in order to ward off the enemy. Their efforts were commended in a signal received from Lt-Gen. F.F. Everest, Commanding General SAAF. He commented:

"The nature of the operation was not only hazardous but demanded the closest timing and the highest degree of airmanship. I would like particularly to commend the pilots who contacted the downed pilot and escorted the helicopter. It is evident that they used sound judgement and excellent flying technique in their flying operations."⁵⁷

The most remarkable rescue attempt of the period arose as a sequel to the disappearance of 2 Lt C. Lombard on 7 October 1951.⁵⁸ During the last days of November 1951, reports were received that Lombard had not been captured by the Communists, but was in the hands of friendly guerillas, and that a rescue was possible. 2 Lt F.J. Grobler, who had capped Lombard on 7 October, was entrusted with the rescue attempt. Accordingly, on

56. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 20.4.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/89/AIR, Lt W.C. Stapley (USAF): Sworn Affidavit, 20.4.1952.

57. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 21.4.1952; CG SAAF - CO 18 FBW quoted in WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 21.4.1952.

58. Vide, pp.299-300.

5 December he led three SAAF Mustangs in a search of the mountainous area, in the middle of the peninsula midway between Kunu-ri and Yonghung, about 25km north-east of the spot where Lombard had last been seen. They searched for more than an hour and a half but only heard a shrill radio signal.⁵⁹

The following day Grobler returned to the area in a USAF "PIG 885" (a F-51D specially converted to carry a passenger) with Lt Hong, a ROK Army officer, in the passenger seat. Radio contact was made with some Koreans on the ground, and it was arranged to pick up Lombard at 08h00 the next morning. Grobler duly led a rescue mission of four Mustangs and a helicopter to the agreed spot. Contact was again made with the Korean agent on the ground, but when he was requested to bring Lombard into the open for purposes of recognition, he refused, and the rescue pilots, suspecting a trap, withdrew. No further contact was made, in spite of attempts on 9 and 11 December, and the operation was abandoned. Shortly after these events the Communists announced that the elusive South African was being held as POW.

The mystery surrounding 2 Lt Lombard was only cleared up 19 months later, on 28 August 1953, when he was released by his captors. He was then able to tell how the particular circumstances of his capture had been exploited by the North Korean Command in the hope of using him as bait to capture a UN helicopter. He related how they had sought to gain his co-operation for the scheme by the offer of a Colonel's post in the NKAF and a safe conduct for his family to North Korea. This offer was made

59. The sources for this incident are WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1951; SALO: Box 2, SALO/S/37/1/AIR, Report on the Interrogation of ex-POW, Lt C. Lombard, September 1953; ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War I, p.434.

by Lt-Gen. Nam Il in person. Lombard went on to tell how, when bribery failed, he was quartered with a double agent, Kim Dong Shik, and both were set to work on a pig farm near P'yongyang. Acting on instructions from the North Koreans, Kim Dong Shik had used radio equipment, brought with him from South Korea, to send a message to say that Lombard was in the hands of guerillas and that a rescue could be arranged. He had later used a URC-4 radio on 5, 6 and 7 December to attempt to lure the UN helicopter into the sights of waiting NKPA infantry.

ACCIDENTS AND TRAINING CASUALTIES

From November 1951 until the end of February 1952, the South African contingent in Korea suffered aircraft and personnel casualties in a series of unfortunate mishaps. The costliest of these flying accidents was a mid-air collision, which occurred on 3 December. This incident cost the lives of Lt P.I. Norman-Smith and 2 Lt K.R. Whitehead. The accident occurred when Lt Norman-Smith was leading a mission back to K-46 in poor weather. They were running low on fuel and decided to look for K-16. As they approached Seoul they were flying in battle formation at 300m, and in good visibility, when the leader was rammed by the No.3, 2 Lt Whitehead. Norman-Smith's Mustang (No.341) rolled over and crashed into the Han River, while Whitehead's aircraft (No.324), minus its propeller and engine, plunged to the ground. The loss of 2 Lt Whitehead was particularly ironical, as six days earlier, he had walked away unscathed from Mustang No.356, after he had crash landed the battle damaged aircraft on an emergency strip just behind enemy lines.⁶⁰

Mechanical failure led to the loss of a further five Mustangs and another pilot. On 26 January, Capt. J.C. Collins had a disconcerting

60. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28.11.1951; WDM: Box 21, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 28.11.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/59/AIR, 2 Lt K.R. Whitehead: Sworn Affidavit, 30.11.1951; Lt P.I. Norman-Smith: Sworn Affidavit, 28.11.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/60/AIR, Capt. J.S. Montgomery: Sworn Affidavit, 9.12.1951; Lt H.J. Tindall: Sworn Affidavit, 9.12.1951.



A Batch of Replacement Pilots.

(L - R) Lt K.R. Whitehead, Lt H.T.R. Joyce, Capt. R.V. Lyons,
Lt F. Gouws, Lt P.I. Norman-Smith, Lt G.H. Krohn.

MIB Photograph No: 781001928

experience while attempting to take off from K-10 in Mustang No.364 for a test flight. His engine cut just before he became airborne, but he managed to bring the aircraft to a stop at the end of the runway by raising the undercarriage.⁶¹ Capt. R.A. Harburn was killed, on 11 February, on his early return from a railway interdiction mission. He decided to abort when his aircraft (No.375) developed an oil leak. On approaching K-46 he jettisoned his bombs and prepared to land. While in circuit his engine suddenly cut and the Mustang crashed in flames.⁶² Nine days later Lt J.G. Newton walked away unharmed from the wreck of Mustang No.370. Immediately after take off his coolant guage had burnt out giving a false maximum reading and he reacted by making an emergency downwind landing at full power.⁶³ On 6 March Capt. A. van der Spuy experienced engine failure immediately after take off at 100m, when he changed the selector lever from the left main fuel tank to the fuselage tank. He managed to jettison his bombs and crash landed against a hillside. His Mustang (No.373) was a wreck, but he was uninjured.⁶⁴

Two further casualties occurred while the pilots concerned were still engaged in operational training. Lt R.L. Staats started his second tour in Korea on 12 January. His previous tour had extended over mid-1951. Five days after his arrival he failed to return to K-10 after a test flight. On 20 January the wreckage of his aircraft (No.374) was located in Chinhae Bay and his body recovered by South Korean divers.⁶⁵ 2 Lt J.N. Lellyet

61. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.1.1952.

62. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.2.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 11.2.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SOD/8/1/78/AIR, Lt G.J. Baransky: Sworn Affidavit, 11.2.1952.

63. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.2.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SOD/8/1/80/AIR, Lt J.G. Newton: Sworn Affidavit, 24.2.1952; Aircraft Accident Report, Squadron Leader's Comments.

64. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6.3.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SOD/8/1/83/AIR, Capt. A. van der Spuy, Sworn Affidavit, 11.3.1952.

65. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12,17,20.1.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SOD/8/1/69/AIR, Capt. W.J. van Rensburg, Sworn Affidavit, 22.1.1952.

arrived at K-10 with 11 other replacement pilots on 19 February. Then days later, towards the end of their operational training period, Capt. D.R. Leathers led a simulated rail interdiction strike against a railway bridge 5km north of Chong-do. Lellyet, in the No.2 position (Mustang No.362), failed to recover from a dive bombing attack and was killed instantly.⁶⁶

THE SAAF CONTRIBUTION TO THE TAC SYSTEM

Towards the end of 1951 the South African pilots began to extend the scope of their contribution to the 5AF operations. When his tour of operational flying expired, Capt. R.H.D. Rogers was attached to the JOC for two months with effect from 1 October. In order to facilitate relations with his American colleagues he was temporarily promoted to Major. On 1 December he returned to K-10 en route to South Africa.⁶⁷ On 16 December, 2 Lts J.F.G. Howe and J. de Wet returned from detachment to the Tactical Air Control Group, where they had served as forward air controllers.⁶⁸

In some cases, considerations other than an enthusiasm for extra duties, led to South African participation in the TAC effort. The 18 FBW Safety Officer found three pilots, Capt. B.A.T. Maskell, Capt. H.E. Kirby and Lt G.H. Shawe, to be too large for the F-51D cockpit when dressed in winter flying kit (Maskell: 185cm, 100kg; Kirby: 185cm, 102kg; Shawe: 183cm, 107kg). A test revealed that they were unable to operate the aileron control fully, and they could not reach various selection switches.

66. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19,29.2.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/82/AIR, Capt. D.R. Leathers: Sworn Affidavit, 29.2.1952; Lt H.G. Austin: Sworn Affidavit, 29.2.1952.

67. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.12.1951; WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.10.1951.

68. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.12.1951.

In addition, there was the danger that they would have difficulty in abandoning the aircraft in an emergency. They were thus grounded and sent to Japan for a GCA course on 1 January 1952.⁶⁹ In the spring of 1952 they returned to K-10, eager to complete their operational tours, but to their bitter disappointment, were once more grounded on 22 April. On this occasion, Maj. C.P. Mouton was also tested but he was allowed to continue flying.⁷⁰

GROUND CREW ACHIEVEMENTS

A minor ground crew rotation took place during December 1951. On the 18th of that month, three officers and 59 other ranks arrived at K-10 from South Africa. The officers were Lt H.C. Knight (Engineering Officer), Lt H.A. Kotze (Paymaster), and the new squadron chaplain, Capt. C. Scott Shaw.⁷¹ The new draft arrived just in time to help celebrate the squadron's second Christmas in Korea. The celebrations themselves were held on Christmas Eve. At a successful party attended by representatives of 18 FBW and the SAAF Liaison HQ, each member of the squadron received a parcel from the South African Gifts and Comforts Fund. The squadron parties continued with enthusiasm right into the New Year, and it was finally considered necessary to throw a damper on excessively high spirits by issuing the Officers' Confidential Order 1/52. This was an exact copy of that previously issued on 5 October 1951. Christmas Day itself was quiet, with bad weather over the target area precluding any operational flying.⁷²

69. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.12.1951; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.1.1952.

70. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, April 1952, Appendix E; Maj. R.L. Holsonbach: Pilots too Large for F-51 Cockpit, 21.4.1952; Maj.-Gen. R. Clifton: Letter, 31.3.1982.

71. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1951, Appendix N, Nominal Roll of Far East Replacements.

72. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24,25.12.1951; 2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2 SQDN/C/819/6/ORG, Officers' Confidential Order 1/52, 26.2.1952.

The best Christmas present of all came to Maj. S.N. Brace, the Engineering Officer, and 13 tour expired ground crew. They flew from K-10 on Boxing Day to board the homeward bound MV Ruys in Japan.⁷³ This was a well deserved rest for Maj. Brace and 10 of the 13 men with him who had been among the original draft who had boarded the Tjisadane in Durban Harbour on 26 September 1950.⁷⁴ These long serving members were:

F/Sgt R.E. Pfennell	LAM T.G. Laycock
A/Sgt G.C. Doherty	LAM T.R. le Roux
A/Sgt C.S. Joynt	A/Mec T.J. Leamon
A/Cpl J.J. Dauth	LAM C.W. Rudman
LAM F.W. Fiford	LAM F.R. Cammock

An unfortunate incident on 9 December had resulted in the death of an eleventh member of the original draft, just a few weeks before he was to have returned home. A/Cpl W.D. Patterson was knocked down by a weapons carrier in the early morning, owing to the driver's vision being obscured by a frosted-over windscreen. He was immediately taken to the 121 Evacuation Hospital, where he died a few hours later.⁷⁵

A project undertaken by 13 members of the squadron reached fruition on 26 February. On that day the number 325, which had been missing from the SAAF sequence since the Mustang destined to bear this number had crashed on delivery at Johnson Air Base on 4 December 1950, was finally painted on the fuselage of a SAAF Mustang. The new No.325 had been rebuilt from parts salvaged from three aircraft that had been written off. These were No.359, crashed on landing (Lt G.N. Shawe,

73. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1951, Appendix A to 2 Sqn Ops Order 6/51, Nominal Roll of Tour Expired Personnel.

74. WDM: Box 1, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1950, Appendix H, Embarkation List.

75. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9,13.12.1951; SALO: Box 34, SALO/902/1/1/P8447/Pl, Court of Inquiry, P8847, A/Cpl Patterson, W.D.

29.10.1951); No.364, crashed on take off (Capt. J.C. Collins, 26.1.1952); and No.365 crashed in friendly territory after sustaining battle damage (2 Lt F.J. Grobler, 13.11.1951). The project had been approved by the squadron OC on condition that it did not interfere with routine squadron maintenance work. Thus, the new Mustang had to be built in the mens' spare time. It took 30 days to build an aircraft from the salvaged parts, and when it was test flown, No.325 was found to be 25kph faster than any other 2 Sqn Mustang. This famous F-51D was given the name "Pappasan", and was finally reduced to spares when the SAAF Mustangs were handed back to the USAF in December 1952. The men involved in this task were:

WO II F. Willard	A/Cpl J.A. van der Merwe
F/Sgt F.J. Stoffberg	A/Sgt B.V. Watkins
A/Cpl S.J.M. Swanebol	A/Sgt B.R. Leach
A/Cpl H.A. de Bod	A/Cpl W.E. Naude
A/Cpl C.L. Berry	LAM H.D. Millard
LAM K.E. Pugh	A/Sgt F.W. Carnell ⁷⁶
F/Sgt H.S.J. Barber	

A further ground crew achievement received formal recognition on 10 March 1952 when, along with the award of the DFC to 2 Lt F.J. Grobler who had completed his 100th sortie on 1 March, A/Sgt L.H. Burgess was presented with the Soldier's Medal. This award was a sequel to events of 20 December 1951, when Burgess had risked his life to defuse the bombs and rockets of a F-51D which had crash landed near the motor pool at K-46.⁷⁷

76. WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.2.1952; Maj.-Gen. R. Clifton: Letter, 31.3.1982; 2 Sqn Unit History File: Press Releases, 13.5.1952 - 18.12.1952.

77. WDM: Box 6, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.12.1951; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.10.3.1952; WDM: Box 7, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1952, Appendix E, Citation for the Award of the Soldier's Medal to A/Sgt L.H. Burgess; 2 Sqn K: Box 33, 2 SQD/909/10/P1, Recommendation for Award of Soldier's Medal, 31.1.1952.

By the end of April 1952, 2 Sqn had been through the most hectic period of the war. The fifteen months of the war that remained were to cost only three more lives, with an additional loss during the truce period, out of a total pilot casualty figure of 34 for the whole campaign (Appendix A-6). By this time the SAAF had flown two-thirds of the total number of combat sorties for the campaign (Appendix A-1). In spite of this, the work of 2 Sqn in Korea was far from over.

CHAPTER 122 SQN SAAF HELPS APPLY AIR PRESSUREPHASE FIVE, PERIOD 2: 1 MAY - 31 AUGUST 1952THE TRUCE TALKS

Although the ground situation in Korea remained static during the summer of 1952, minor encounters continued to take place along the main line of resistance (MLR). During May the CCF infantry increased their probing attacks and patrols, but their artillery became their main means of harassing the UN frontline forces. Ten months earlier, during July 1951, they had fired an estimated 8 000 artillery and mortar rounds. By May 1952 their available artillery had increased to such an extent that during the course of that month the Eighth Army positions were bombarded with a total of 102 000 rounds. The ability of the CCF gunners to concentrate fire and to direct counter-bombardments had also improved considerably. During June 1952, in the sector west of Ch'orwon, the UN ground forces encountered this Communist threat by pushing forward and establishing a series of patrol bases from one to three kilometres forward of the MLR. In spite of counter-attacks the Eighth Army held on to these new positions. Along the central and eastern sectors of the front both sides continued with light probing attacks from May to July, but owing to their strongly developed defensive positions and the rugged terrain, no large scale operations took place. Even these light attacks were reduced to a minimum during August when heavy rains virtually brought a stop to ground operations.¹

Meanwhile, the delegates in the truce tents at Panmunjom were locked in a stalemate every bit as futile as that being experienced by the soldiers in the strongly fortified bunkers along both sides of the MLR. The main cause of the deadlock at Panmunjom was the question of the voluntary repatria-

1. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.209-210, 269-270.

tion of prisoners of war. Deliberately contrived demonstrations among the more than 100 000 POW's in UN prison camps on the island of Koje-do made the issue even more difficult for the UN delegates to handle. The unrest culminated in the camp commandant, Brig.-Gen. F.T. Dodd, being kidnapped by his own prisoners on 7 May 1952.² The bargaining over the number of prisoners to be repatriated and the screening procedures to be used continued throughout May and June. By the beginning of July both sides had agreed on every article of the draft armistice, except on Article 51 which read:

"All prisoners of war held in the custody of each side at the time this Armistice Agreement becomes effective shall be released and repatriated as soon as possible. The release and repatriation of such prisoners of war shall be affected in the conformity with lists which have been exchanged and have been checked by the respective sides prior to the signing of the Armistice Agreement."³

During July and August further wrangling followed concerning the lists of POW's to be used for purposes of an exchange. While the UN delegates took a firm stand at the negotiating table, the new C-in-C UNC, Gen. M.W. Clark, who had taken over from Ridgway on 12 May 1952, sought to move the Communist delegation to a more accommodating frame of mind through military pressure. This was applied by the selective use of airpower.⁴

A STRATEGY OF AIR PRESSURE

Even before the arrival of Gen. Clark it had become evident that a change in the UN air combat operations policy was necessary. The rail interdiction programs had reached the same stalemate as the land battle and the truce talks. The Communist repair crews were managing to repair

2. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.234-250.

3. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.272.

4. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.276-277, 320.

breaks in the North Korean rail system as fast as the UN air crews could cut the railway lines and destroy the bridges. Hermes, in Truce Tent and Fighting Front, sums up the situation by quoting the USAF Historical Study No.127, which states that "to continue the rail strikes would be, in effect, to pit skilled pilots, equipped with modern expensive aircraft, against unskilled oriental coolie labourers, armed with pick and shovel."⁵

The rail interdiction raids were only gradually reduced and 18 FBW, including 2 Sqn SAAF, continued to fly their regular, twice daily, wing rail strikes throughout May. This was cut to a single daily strike during the first half of June, and thereafter, both large and small raids were mounted against specific targets on an ad hoc basis.⁶ As the portion of the available USAF fighter-bomber strength allocated to railway raids decreased, so more aircraft were released to broaden the scope of the general interdiction programme. Ground attack aircraft were more frequently directed against enemy supplies, equipment and personnel concentrated within a wide belt, from approximately 10km to 50km north of the MLR and parallel to the frontline.⁷ At this stage the airfields, railway system, and supply and communication centres were left to the routine attention of the medium bombers.⁸

Although the idea of pressurizing the Communists at Panmunjom through the aggressive application of airpower had already been considered by UNC planning staff before the arrival of Gen. Clark, the former World War II commander of the US Fifth Army in Italy, brought a more forceful attitude

5. USAF Historical Study No.127, quoted in Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.319.

6. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1952.

7. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July, 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, August 1952.

8. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.319.

to the upper echelons of the UNC in the Far East. Various North Korean industrial plants supporting the Communist war effort, such as ammunition factories, vehicle repair shops and metallurgical plants were subjected to mass air raids. From 200 to 500 sorties were directed against a selected industrial complex during the course of a single day. The first of these attacks took place on 8 May 1952, when 485 fighter-bomber sorties were pre-briefed to bomb a supply depot near Suan.⁹

The air pressure was further increased by the UNC when, the hitherto untouched hydro-electric power system of North Korea came under attack. On 6 June the commander of FEAF, Gen. Weyland, explained the significance of the HEP system to the new C-in-C UNC. Clark immediately ordered him to prepare plans for the destruction of all major installations, excluding the massive Suiho Reservoir. This was a sensitive target owing to its location on the Manchurian border, and the power it supplied to Manchurian industry. Weyland's staff completed the plans within 11 days and when they were presented, Clark ordered the commanders of FEAF and NavFE to co-ordinate combined mass attacks. When the JCS received their information copy of Clark's directive they sought and gained presidential approval for the inclusion of the Suiho plant on the target list. These mass strikes against the North Korean HEP system began on 23 June.¹⁰

The new course that FEAF had, in fact, taken during May and June of 1952 was defined in a FEAF operational policy directive issued by Weyland on 10 July. Weyland himself had been promoted to full general on 5 July, but he had retained command of FEAF. On 30 May the commander of the 5AF, Lt-Gen. F.E. Everest, had been rotated back to the United States and replaced by Maj.-Gen. G.O. Barcus with the temporary rank of Lt-Gen.

9. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.448-449.

10. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.320; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.449-450; Staff Study: The Attack on Electric Power in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.2, Summer 1953), pp.13-15.

The FEAF analysis of the situation recognized some significant points:

- a. The Communists had amassed air forces in the Far East which were large enough to be employed offensively against the UN forces at any time.
- b. The major sources of enemy supply were "off limits" to UN air attack; the supply lines from Manchuria to the MLR were relatively short; the stable ground situation demanded a small consumption of supplies, making stockpiling possible.
- c. Ground forces in a stabilized situation did not require a great amount of close air support.

With these considerations in mind, and in order to exert maximum pressure against the Communist forces in North Korea, FEAF priorities were listed as:

- a. The maintenance of control of the air.
- b. The maximum selected destruction in order to make the war as costly as possible to the enemy in terms of equipment, supplies, facilities and personnel.
- c. Air operations to reduce the immediate threat to the UN forces posed by the Communist ground armies.

This meant that the major portion of the UN air capability, in the prevailing situation, would be employed in destruction operations against the following targets listed in order of priority: aircraft, serviceable airfields, electric power facilities, radar equipment, manufacturing facilities, vehicle repair facilities, locomotives, supply, ordnance and petroleum products, railway cars, vehicles, military personnel, rail bridges and tunnels, marshalling yards and road bridges.¹¹

An analysis of the 2 Sqn debriefing forms for July and August 1952 shows that missions flown by SAAF pilots in Korea during these months

11. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.448, 457-458.

were undertaken within the framework of this policy. The regular twice daily 18 FBW rail interdiction strikes no longer featured. Instead, missions were flown against targets selected from the above list. The SAAF flights formed part of FEAF, 5AF or 18 FBW strikes, or they flew in small independent SAAF formations of one or two flights.¹²

2 SQN PARTICIPATION IN THE APPLICATION OF AIR PRESSURE

The continuation of the rail interdiction programme into mid-June took 18 FBW formations, including the usual one and sometimes three SAAF flights, further north than they had penetrated during 1951 and early 1952. 2 Sqn aircraft attacked two stretches of railway line south of the Ch'ongch'on River from Sinanju to P'yongyang and from Kanggye to Kumu-ri, with occasional raids on other sections of the MSR. Railway interdiction targets north of the Ch'ongch'on, in "Mig Alley" were also bombed by SAAF pilots. These missions followed the fixed pattern of the Strangle and Saturate raids, with the 18 FBW mounting morning and afternoon raids against pre-briefed targets, using aircraft armed with 227kg G.P. bombs and 12,7mm ammunition. Depending upon the enemy AA deployment around the target, one or two flights would be armed with proximity fused bombs and briefed for flak suppression.¹³

During the last six weeks of Saturate these raids were generally uneventful for 2 Sqn. However, two incidents involving SAAF personnel are worthy of note. At 08h10 on 5 May 2 Lt F.M. Lance took off with a group "gaggle" to bomb the Kanggye-Kumu-ri rail link at a point 15km south-west Huich'on. On the way back to base the engine of his Mustang (No.348) cut and he was forced to land on a light aircraft strip south of Kumsong, just

12. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, August 1952.

13. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1952.




3km on the friendly side of the MLR and 100km north-west of K-46. He landed with the undercarriage raised and slid off the runway just 150m from the point of touch down. The pilot walked away from the badly damaged aircraft with a cut finger and was flown to K-46 by rescue helicopter.¹⁴

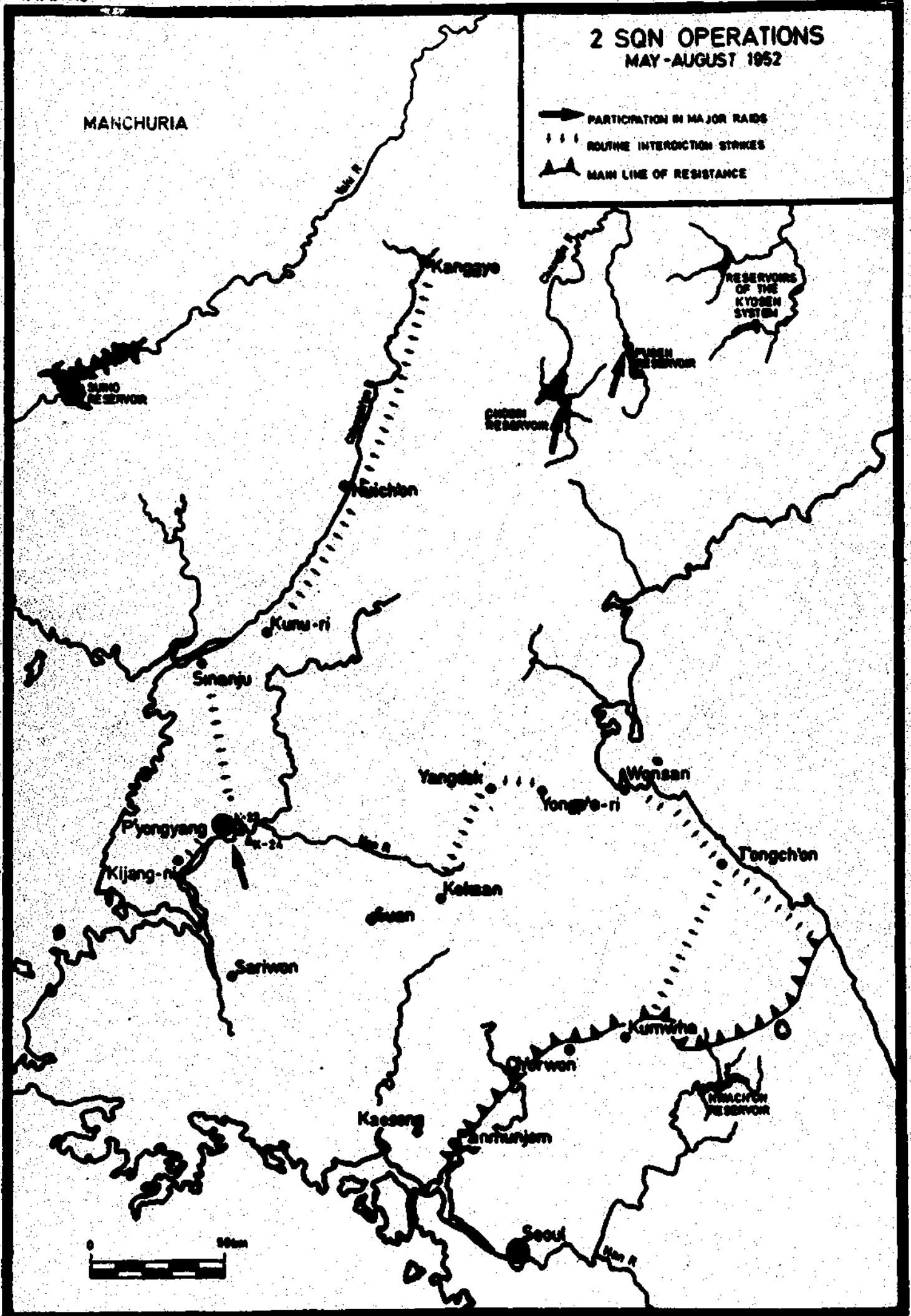
After talking to Lance, the Engineering Officer, Lt H.C. Knight, obtained permission from the CO, Cndt R. Clifton, to survey the crashed aircraft and its locality. He returned, confident that he and his staff could salvage the badly needed Mustang. The task was tackled in two phases: first F/Sgt H.R. Huxd and A/Cpls D.V.H. Brown and A.F. Visser took a few days to dismantle the damaged parts, then Lt Knight and a hand picked crew consisting of F/Sgts C.E.R. Burger, H.S.J. Barber, A/Sgt M.H.C. Greef, A/Cpls J.L. Camons, J. McOullum, R.G. Stone, D. Bower and C.R. Collocott brought a truckload of tools, spares and rations to the forward airstrip and tackled the reconstruction. Encouraged by the frontline American troops and within sight of artillery and tank duels, the South Africans repaired their aircraft. They slept under the wings and the canvas truck covering. Their stay in the open brought A/Cpl Greef into contact with Korean frogs, which he noted were green on top and red underneath. He wondered whether they had survived the earlier Communist occupation by floating on their backs.

After less than three weeks of hard work the Mustang, which had virtually been written off, was ready to fly. The crash strip was narrow and short with a hump in the middle about 200m down the runway. Capt. A.C.J. Bosch, who was given the task of flying No.348 back to K-46, just managed to get airborne before hitting the bump, and was given an enthusiastic reception

14. Sources for this incident are 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.25.5.1952; WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 5.5.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 16, 2 SQD/8/1/91/AIR, 2 Lt E.M. Lance: Sworn Affidavit, 5.5.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/27/1/AIR, Vol.I, The story of S.A.A.F. 348 in Korea as told by the Squadron Padre; Maj.-Gen. R. Clifton: Letter, 31.3.1982.

2 SQN OPERATIONS MAY-AUGUST 1952

-  PARTICIPATION IN MAJOR RAIDS
-  ROUTINE INTERDICTION STRIKES
-  MAIN LINE OF RESISTANCE



on returning to base. Lt Knight was less fortunate on his return trip by road. He was stopped for speeding by a Black American military policeman, but was let off when he pleaded that he had not been able to see the MP in the dark.

Lt Knight was not the only South African to display exceptional initiative during May 1952, and to come home with a success story. On 16 May Capt J.A. Joubert was a member of a SAAF flight in a wing formation on the afternoon railway interdiction mission. The target was the railway line 32km south of Kanygye. Owing to poor visibility the American leading the group got lost. Capt. J.A. Joubert, who was on his second Korean tour, volunteered to take over the lead, much to the dismay of his compatriots, who felt that he was being too presumptuous. In the event, he did not let them down and led the USAF/SAAF formation to the target without further incident.¹⁵

Three days later, on 19 May 1952, Capt Joubert flew four close support sorties in a single day. On alighting from his Mustang after the last mission, he was treated to the usual ceremony, involving a bottle of beer and a "wreath" around the neck, which customarily marked the end of a tour of duty in Korea. This particular little ceremony, however, was unique in the South African experience in Korea as the number of combat sorties written on the "wreath" was not 75 but 175. This was a new record for the 18 FBW in Korea; the previous record of 160 had been held by a Capt. Taylor of 39 Sqn.¹⁶

The "Cheetah" sallies across the Ch'ongch'on into "Mig Alley" attracted the attention of the Communist pilots patrolling the Yalu. On 17 May Capt. R.W. Clark flew with three USAF pilots to provide a ResCAP for an

15. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 16.5.1952; Col A.C.J. Bosch: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1981; Capt. J.A. Joubert, Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 2.4.1981.

16. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.5.1952.

F-84 pilot who had been shot down near Songch'on. While orbiting the downed pilot, they were jumped by four MIG-15's which they shook off by heading out to sea. When they returned the four F-51D's were attacked again, this time by six enemy aircraft. A dogfight ensued but no damage was experienced by either side.¹⁷

On 25 May the Sabres flying top cover came to the rescue of Capt. J.L. van der Merwe, who was leading a formation of 8 SAAF and 20 USAF Mustangs against a rail target only 35km south of the Yalu. The Communist jets attacked as the Mustangs were pulling off the target and, after a brief skirmish, the Sabres chased the attackers across the Yalu.¹⁸ The South Africans in Korea celebrated Union Day 1952 with yet another brush with the OCAF interceptors. While leading the SAAF flight in a 20 aircraft mission against the same stretch of rail that they had attacked on 25 May, Capt. D.L. Hefer had to instruct his flight to take evasive action. They jettisoned their bombs and turned to meet the attacks of the two flights of MIG-15's which dived on the UN fighter-bombers in a series of Yo-Yo attacks. Hefer and his pilots repeatedly turned to meet their attackers, all the while working their way southwards, until the MIG-15's finally broke off without having inflicted any damage.¹⁹

As the number of railway interdiction missions decreased they were replaced by destruction missions against the North Korean facilities for the production of war matériel. These attacks frequently took the form of large scale raids. As previously mentioned, the first of these took place on 8 May. Other similar raids continued throughout May with 256 sorties against a vehicle repair shop at Tang-dong on 15 May, 472 sorties against an ammunition and hand grenade factory at Kijang-ni on 22 May, and 275

17. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 17.5.1952.

18. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.5.1952.

19. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 31.5.1952.

sorties against a steel plant in the same area on 23 May.²⁰

Of the 485 sorties flown to Suan on 8 May, 2 Sqn contributed 23. Three separate missions, including two SAAF flights in each, were undertaken by 18 FBW. They took off from K-46 at 06h15, 10h30 and 15h40. Each time the Mustangs were preceded over the target by a group of F-80's briefed to suppress the flak, which they did effectively, clearing a way for the fighter-bombers. The large number of aircraft over the target soon resulted in a dust and smoke haze which prevented accurate observation of the bombing results.²¹ On 22 May the SAAF supported the general effort by flying eight sorties in two separate group raids on electrical installations just southwest of P'yongyang, while the following day another eight sorties were flown during two similar raids on a P'yongyang hand grenade factory.²²

Some of the most telling blows in the UNC application of air pressure strategy were the attacks made against the North Korean HEP system. The SAAF became deeply involved in these raids (Maps 16,17). The North Korean HEP complex consisted of four major generating systems: Fusen, Chosin, Kyosen and Suiho. The removal of generators and turbines by the Russians, the normal deterioration of equipment, and inefficient maintenance by the North Koreans had reduced the power output from a designed production capacity of 1 695 000 kilowatts in 1945 to between 752 000 and 1 000 000 kilowatts in 1952. An extensive network of transmission lines linked these HEP plants to all the major industrial centres, as well as to most rural settlements. It consisted of two integrated grid systems: the eastern grid was supplied by Fusen, Chosin and Kyosen, while power for the western grid

20. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.448-449.

21. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 8.5.1952; WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 8.5.1952.

22. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 22-23.5.1952.

came from the huge Suiho plant on the Yalu River. A 154 000 volt transmission line from Wonsan to P'yongyang connected the two grids. Owing to its flexibility, the destruction of this HEP system required concentrated and simultaneous attacks on all its major elements.²³

The Suiho generating facility consisted of a concrete dam 106m high and 900m long, backing up 45km of reservoir. The generating house was located at the foot of the dam on the Korean side of the river and was 3 storeys high, 180m long and 21m wide. It was flanked by transformers and switchyards. The generating plants in the eastern grid were all of a similar design, consisting of the following elements: a reservoir high in the mountains, a pressure tunnel through solid rock, a surge tank, penstocks and a power house containing the generators and the transformer yards. After water had been discharged from the first generating plant it flowed further down the mountain to another power station. In the Fusen, Chosin and Kyosen systems the water passed through a succession of four power stations before reaching the Sea of Japan. In all cases the elements selected for destruction were the penstocks, power houses and transformer yards.²⁴

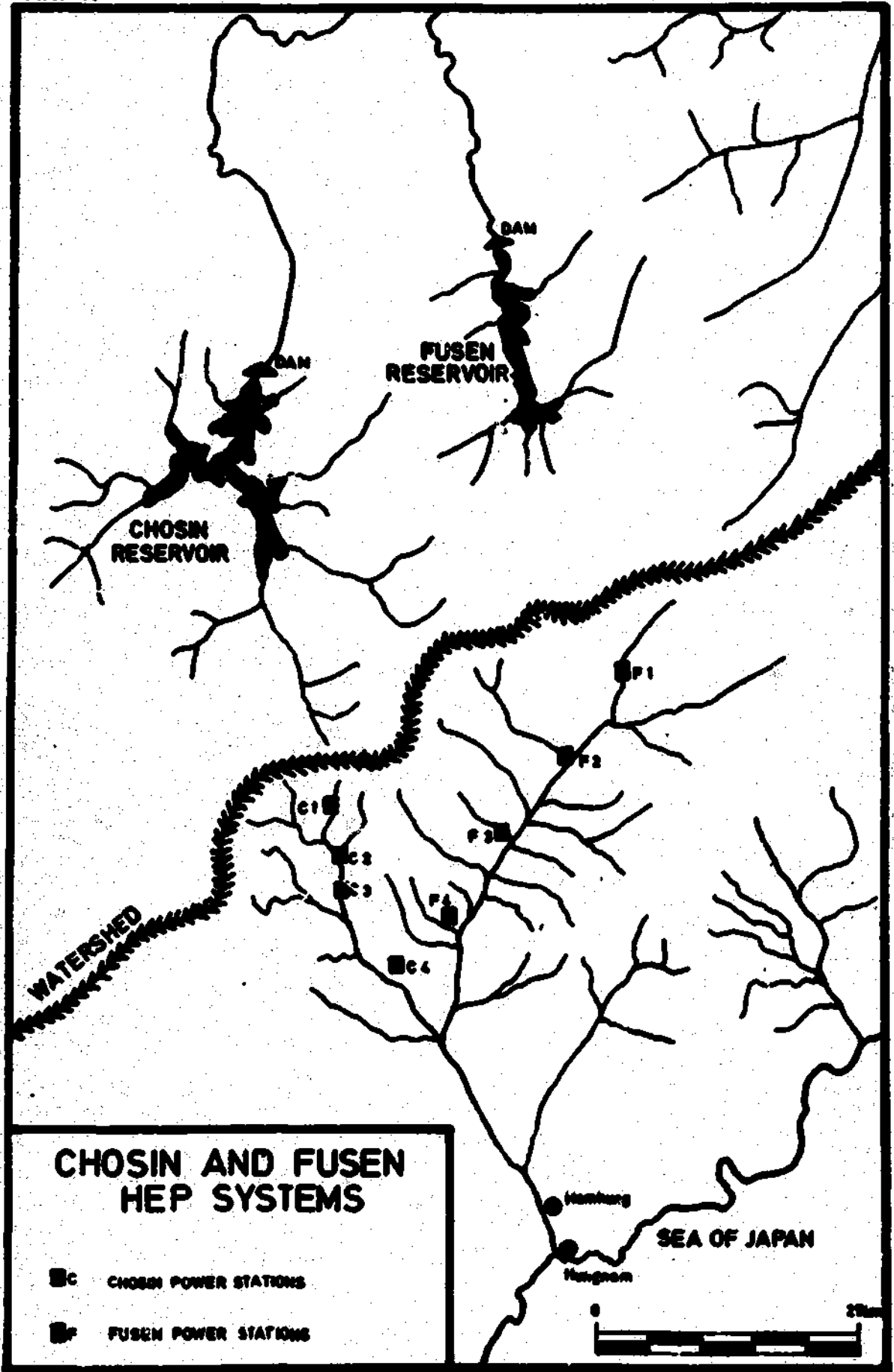
Gen. Weyland's plan called for the destruction of North Korea's generating capacity to begin with attacks by Navy dive-bombers and USAF fighter-bombers on Suiho. Once these strikes were in progress USAF pilots were to hit Chosin No.3 and No.4, and Fusen No.3 and No.4; while Navy pilots would be directed against Fusen No.1 and No.2, and the four Kyosen plants. Finally, Shoran guided B-29's would bomb Chosin No.1 and No.2 during the night following the daylight strikes. The attacks were scheduled to begin at 09h30 on 23 June 1952.²⁵ For this massive air operation over 230 carrier

23. Staff Study: The Attack on Electric Power in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.2, Summer 1953), pp.14-15.

24. Staff Study: The Attack on Electric Power in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.2, Summer 1953), pp.14-20; Futrell, et al: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.450-451.

25. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.451.

MAP 17



based aircraft from the units of Task Force 77, and 270 SAF and Marine fighter-bombers were made available. In addition SAF Sabres and Navy Pantherjets were to provide top cover for the strike aircraft.²⁶

On 23 June, heavy cloud over the Yalu delayed the initial strikes against Suho until 16h00. Finally, preceded by flak suppressing F9F's, the first strike aircraft went in at 16h10. The attacks were continued through the night by the B-29's as planned, and by the fighter-bombers the next day. A series of follow up strikes were launched on 26 and 27 June.²⁷ 2 Sqn SAAF was directly involved in these raids on 23, 24 and 26 June. On the first day, Cndt H.J.P. Burger, who had taken over command from Cndt Clifton on 13 June, led six SAAF Mustangs with the whole of the 67 Sqn against Fusen No.3. Later photographic reconnaissance of the target showed that they had completely demolished the power house. The South Africans claimed three direct hits with their 227kg bombs. While Cndt Burger was bombing Fusen No.3, Capt B.J. Grové and A.C.J. Bosch each led a SAAF flight with 12 Sqn against Fusen No.4. These installations were also destroyed, with the Cheetahs claiming four direct hits on the power house.²⁸

Pilots from 2 Sqn took off again the next day to participate in the raids against Chosin No.3 and No.4. During the morning Capt. Grové led 16 SAAF Mustangs to the Chosin targets. Four of these aircraft carried proximity fused rockets, while the rest carried the usual 227kg bombs. They found their pre-briefed targets obscured by valley fog and elected to attack supply buildings and flak positions 28km to the west. The afternoon effort proved more successful when 2 Lt R. McClure led eleven Mustangs against the same Chosin target. In spite of 6/8 to 7/8 cloud cover he managed to

26. Staff Study: The Attack on Electric Power in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.2, Summer 1953), p.23.

27. Staff Study: The Attack on Electric Power in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.2, Summer 1953), pp.23-24; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.451-452.

28. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 13, 23.6.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 23.6.1952; SAIO: Box 9, SAIO/S/823/2/ORG, War History, June 1953.



Ondt R. Clifton Hands Over to Maj. H.J.P. Burger.

reach the power house and attack both it and a pumping station. Smoke and dust prevented an accurate assessment of the damage.²⁹ By 18h00 on 23 June electric power production in North Korea had been effectively halted, but owing to the flexibility of the system, follow up attacks were necessary. Thus, the Fusen and Chosin plants were again attacked on 26 and 27 June.³⁰ 2 Sqn participated in the raids on the afternoon of 26 June. Lt J.F. de Jager and 2 Lt B.R. Kenny each led a SAAF flight in a maximum wing strike on the Chosin plants. All their bombs were placed in the target area and two large fires were started. Intense smoke pouring off the targets, as well as numerous Navy Corsairs and F-80's milling around in the vicinity, prevented an assessment of the damage.³¹ On 27 June 2 Sqn was only indirectly involved in the final mopping of the HEP system, when Lt de Jager led a flight to cover a USAF pilot who had come down in the vicinity of Chosin.³²

During the four days of sustained operations against the HEP installations SAAF flew 730 fighter-bomber sorties and 238 counter-air sorties, whilst the Navy flew a total of 546 sorties. UN losses were minimal, but the destruction was great. Of the 13 plants in the four major complexes attacked, 11 were rendered unserviceable, while the remaining two were so damaged as to cast serious doubt on their usefulness. More than 90% of North Korea's generating capacity was knocked out.³³

It was immediately decided that further strikes against the HEP system would be necessary if it was to be kept out of action. However, following the new operational directive of 10 July, other elements of the North Korean

29. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24.6.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 24.6.1952.

30. Staff Study: The Attack on Electric Power in North Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VI, No.2, Summer 1953), p.26; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.452.

31. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.6.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 26.6.1952.

32. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27.6.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 27.6.1952.

33. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.452.

industrial infrastructure had to receive the attention of the FEAF bombers and fighter-bombers. Thus, the next major target selected by the FEAF planners was the North Korean capital of P'yongyang, from which the Communist war effort was being administratively and logistically sustained. It was also hoped that the selection of this particular target would soften the attitudes of the Communist negotiators at Panmunjom.³⁴

The South African Mustangs took part in two major raids over P'yongyang, one on 11 July and the other on 29 August. The first raid, known as "Operation Pressure Pump" involved practically every operational air unit in the Far East in strikes against 30 specific targets in P'yongyang. Altogether, 1 254 combat sorties were flown in what, by that stage, was the biggest air operation of the Korean War.³⁵ The Navy, Marine and SAAF aircraft made strikes at 10h00, 14h00 and 16h00. At 09h30 three 2 Sqn flights took off under the leadership of Capt. G.C.S. Dodson to participate in the first raid of the day. Their targets were ammunition dumps in the vicinity of the capital. In spite of heavy 20mm and 80mm AA fire the strike was successfully pressed home. While pulling off the target Capt Grové spotted a dug-in enemy tank firing on the attacking aircraft. The eleven Mustangs which 2 Sqn contributed to the second raid took off at 13h10, and so effective were the SAAF debriefing and briefing procedures that the information concerning the tank was passed on to these pilots. This enabled 2 Lt B.W. Singleton to mark the last mission of his tour by locating and destroying the tank spotted by Capt. Grové. Two SAAF flights, which took off at 17h10, took part in the last "Pressure Pump" raid of the day. Altogether the SAAF undertook 31 sorties out of a UN total of 1 254 for the operation.³⁶

34. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.481; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.324.

35. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.482; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.324.

36. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.7.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 11.7.1952.

Three of the 30 targets in P'yongyang were completely destroyed and 25 others were heavily damaged. Later, Radio P'yongyang announced that the UN air strikes had destroyed 1 500 buildings and inflicted 7 000 casualties.³⁷

"All United Nations Air Effort" was the name given to the envelopment of P'yongyang by the UN air forces on 29 August. On this occasion the list of industrial targets was expanded to include all identifiable public offices, and a record number of 1 403 combat sorties was directed against the city.³⁸ As had been the case with "Pressure Pump", the participating SAAF Mustang's main armament was the 227kg M-76 incendiary bomb. 2 Sqn flew 31 sorties in three separate formations, which took off at 08h30, 12h30 and 16h00. All missions found the flak over the target to be intense and the observation of damage was obscured by a rising cloud of dust and smoke.³⁹ Later bomb damage assessment photography revealed that the "All United Nations Air Effort" had resulted in moderate to severe damage to 31 targets.⁴⁰

VARIATIONS TO THE ROUTINE TASKS

Besides their participation in the multi-flight railway interdiction raids during May and June, and in the more spectacular air pressure strikes during June, July and August, 2 Sqn pilots continued with tasks which, by this stage of the war, had become routine. These routine missions determined the character of the daily rounds of 2 Sqn in Korea. The bigger raids were exceptional operations, rather than the norm. The table below gives some idea of the nature of these day-to-day operational chores.

37. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.482.

38. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.489.

39. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.8.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 29.8.1952.

40. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.489.

Table 9 Phase Five, Period 2: Analysis of Sorties. (Percentage of Total)

Month	Interdiction	Close Support	ResCAP	Counter Air	
May	57	27	16	-	41
June	64	27	6	3	42
July	62	32	6	-	43
August	58	25	15	2	44
Total	60	28	11	1	

In this table, sorties flown on air pressure operations have been included in the interdiction column. It is clear that the general pattern, which was established with the return of the ground war to the 38th Parallel in June 1951, was maintained. This can be discerned by comparing the totals for this period with the corresponding figures for the three preceding periods. From May 1951 until August 1952 the percentage of the total 2 Sqn effort devoted to interdiction and close support remained fairly constant, varying between 57,6% and 67%, and 23% and 38,4% respectively (Tables 5, 7 and 9).⁴⁵

A noticeable change was the increase in close support during July, owing to a combination of slightly intensified ground activity, poor weather (2 Sqn lost 10 days operational flying as a result of poor weather during July 1952), and the availability of MFQ-2 radar to direct fighter-bombers on close support raids under marginal conditions. The radar guidance system had become effective when the stabilization of the frontline had made it possible to install a complete TACC system, including radar equipped TADC's. The ResCAP sorties also provided a further departure from the norm with a drop from 16% in May to 6% for both June and July, and an increase to 15%

41. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1952.

42. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1952.

43. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1952.

44. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, August 1952.

45. Vide, pp.289,310.

for August. This can be ascribed to a change in the primary task of the Ch'o-do Standby missions from June 1951, and to an increase in the pre-briefed rescue missions during August 1951. The June counter air operations were directed against North Korean airfields, and those during August against suspected intruders.⁴⁶

The close support targets remained the same: namely, the well dug in bunkers of the Communist frontline, and their artillery and mortar positions just to the north of the MLR. When the July monsoons brought in conditions which resulted in poor visibility over the target area, 2 Sqn once more became involved in radar directed drops. The MPQ-2 radar directed bombing techniques, which had been tested by Capt. G.B. Lipawsky on his last mission on 12 March 1951, had been improved considerably during the intervening year and from mid-June 1952 three TADC's controlled blind strikes against Communist frontline positions. With few exceptions these close support missions, unlike the interdiction raids, consisted of individual flights of four aircraft which reported over the target in relays.⁴⁷

Not all the MPQ-2 bomb drops were successful. Nevertheless, they forced the enemy to keep his head down even in weather unsuitable for fighter-bomber operations. On 9 July Lt W.F. Church took off at 14h50 to lead four Mustangs on a pre-briefed radar controlled drop through a solid overcast from 2 500m. The mission went off as planned and the controller congratulated the flight on an excellent performance. Later in the day, another flight of SAAF Mustangs completed a similar mission.⁴⁸ A further

46. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, August 1952; C.G. Teschner: The Fighter-Bomber in Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.2, Summer 1954), p.77.

47. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, August 1952; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.501.

48. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 9.7.1952.

effective radar drop was carried out by 2 Sqn aircraft under similar conditions on 16 July.⁴⁹ Four days previously, however, they had not been so successful. On that occasion Capt. J.S.S. Enslin and his three companions had been repeatedly diverted by the controller before a shortage of fuel had forced them to abandon the mission, jettison their bombs and return to base.⁵⁰

From May to August 1952 the Ch'o-do ResCAP's developed on lines similar to the close support missions. The basic pattern was retained but variations were introduced in order to take advantage of technical developments. When the air alert over Ch'o-do was first started at the beginning of 1952, the orbiting F-51D's only carried 12,7mm ammunition and were assigned the sole function of protecting pilots in distress.⁵¹ It soon became evident that these ResCAP's could serve a dual purpose and towards the end of April the Mustangs assigned to the Ch'o-do missions were equipped with four rockets each, in addition to the 12,7mm rounds for their machine guns. This armed them for a secondary task, which was to attack Communist artillery and troop positions along the west coast, opposite the UN held Ch'o-do and Sok-to Islands from the mouth of the Taedong River to P'ungsan.⁵² This pattern was maintained until the end of July, when a further variation appeared. The latter changed the primary nature of these missions. Some ResCAP's were fitted with 227kg bombs and were directed mainly against hard targets along the coast by the surface controller. Thus, from July 1952 two different types of missions were initiated from an air alert over Ch'o-do and Sok-to, the usual ResCAP Standby, and the more heavily armed missions which were more like armed recess than ResCAP's.⁵³

49. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 16.7.1952.

50. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 12.7.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12.7.1952.

51. WDM: Box 22, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, February 1952.

52. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, April 1952.

53. Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, August 1952.

Normal armed reconnaissance missions along the MSR also fell to the lot of 2 Sqn from May to August 1952. The routes patrolled by the SAAF Mustangs were in the central and eastern sectors, mainly those from Yangdok to Koksan, Yongp'o-ri to Yangdok, the coastal road from Wonsan to the M.R., and T'ongch'on to Kumha. The interdiction of Communist troop and supply concentrations in the zone to the immediate north of the M.R. was also maintained. Occasionally napalm was used against these targets, but the most common weapon was the 227kg GP bomb.⁵⁴ These were pre-briefed missions which sometimes consisted of more than the usual single flight. On the morning of 23 July Cndt Burger led three SAAF flights against a large concentration of troops and possible ammunition carriers, which had been detected just off the lateral road about 15km south-west of Wonsan. In spite of intense and accurate automatic fire over the target, they covered the area with their bombs and rockets, but with little visible effect. The same afternoon the three flights returned under the leadership of Capt. J.Z. Eloff. This time the results were more spectacular. There was one major explosion and two secondary ones, and the "Cheetahs" left the target area with smoke billowing to a height of 600m.⁵⁵

The previous summer's strikes against North Korean airfields were revived for 2 Sqn on 14 June 1952, when Lt A. Gardiner-Atkinson led 13 SAAF Mustangs in three flights as part of an 18 FBW formation on a SAAF raid. The targets were the two P'yongyang airfields, K-23 and K-24, the latter having been used by the South Africans as a base for their first Korean operations. As Shooting Stars had been sent in to suppress the flak prior to the arrival of the Mustangs, the slower conventional fighter-

54. WDM: Box 25, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, May 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, August 1952.

55. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23.7.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 23.7.1952.

bombers encountered little ground fire, and the South Africans were able to mark their return to K-24 by placing 14 of their 227kg bombs directly on the runway.⁵⁶

Counter air missions of a different sort were undertaken by 2 Sqn pilots on 11 and 15 August, when SAAF Mustangs were dispatched on air-to-air missions. This was an extremely rare occurrence while 2 Sqn was operating F-51D's. On 11 August Capt. R. McClure and Lt W. Thornton were scrambled to intercept suspected enemy aircraft during a Red Alert at K-10. They failed to make a sighting and landed after 15 minutes.⁵⁷ Capt. McClure was again involved four days later, when he led an SAAF flight armed with only 12,7mm rounds, on an air-to-air intercept patrol from Kimpo (K-14) to the northern most branch of the Han River estuary. They made no sightings during the 2 hours and 45 minutes that they were airborne.⁵⁸

A DECREASE IN THE CASUALTY RATE

As mentioned earlier, of the 34 SAAF pilots lost during the Korean campaign only four became casualties after 1952, of whom two were brought down as a result of enemy action. This represented a dramatic decrease in the 2 Sqn casualty rate. From November 1950 until the end of April 1952 one pilot was lost for every 266 combat sorties, while during the remaining 15 months of the war this figure dropped to one pilot for every 1 013 sorties (Appendices A-1 and A-7). Although other circumstances were operative, such as the change to F-86F Sabres, the prime reason for

56. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.6.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 14.6.1952.

57. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 11.8.1952.

58. WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 15.8.1952.

this remarkable reduction in aircrew casualties was a new policy laid down by the commanding general of the 5AF. Operational analysis had shown that fighter-bombers had sustained most of their damage at altitudes below 914m, and during the second or third run at the same target. By mid-June 1952 the 5AF was losing fighter-bombers faster than they could be replaced. Lt-Gen. Barcus decided that as long as the ground war remained static, no target was important enough to justify the loss of a pilot and his aircraft. He thus restricted the fighter-bombers to a minimum operational altitude of 914m, including the recovery from a dive bombing attack, and to one pass per aircraft at any particular target.⁵⁹

It was in spite of these restrictions that the two South Africans who died through enemy action in 1952 fell victim to Communist gunners. The two casualties occurred under very similar circumstances. On the morning of 9 July, Lt T.C. Scott led a flight to a frontline target 30km north-east of Kaesong. On arrival over the target area Scott had difficulty contacting the controller and changed places with 2 Lt B. Singleton, who had been in No.3 position. The controller warned of flak, but none was observed, and the strike commenced. The Mustangs followed one another down in a steep dive bombing attack. At approximately 914m the No.4, Lt H.G. Austin, saw a flame on the aircraft (No.391) just in front of him. He then saw large pieces breaking away from the leader's F-51D, which did not recover from the dive.⁶⁰

On 22 August, Maj. R.P.G. Kotzenberg, who had been appointed 2 Sqn deputy commander at the beginning of the month, was reported MIA after a dive bombing attack on artillery positions in the same area. The mission

59. Cndt N.J. Swardt: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 28.9.1981; Teschner: The Fighter-Bomber in Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.2, Summer 1954), p.78; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.484.

60. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 9.7.1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 9.7.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SOD/8/1/97/AIR, Lt H.G. Austin: Sworn Affidavit, 9.7.1952.

was led by Capt. J.C. Bolitho and consisted of two flights with Kotzenberg bringing up the rear as the No.4 in the second flight. No one saw what actually happened to his Mustang (No.380), but when he did not report over the RV point a search was initiated. Although it revealed a secondary fire in the target area, the fire could not be positively associated with the missing aircraft and its pilot.⁶¹

The period May to August 1952 also brought its quota of mishaps, such as accidents on the taxiways, undercarriage malfunctions and overshoots. The Mustang that had been rebuilt from scrap, No.325, featured in an incident on 12 May. During a ferry flight from K-10 to K-46 Capt. B.J. Grové found that No.325 would not do more than 320kph while in straight and level flight. On reaching K-46 he made three attempts to land at the prescribed IAS (185-193kph), but on each occasion his aircraft floated and he was forced to go round again. On the fourth attempt he put the aircraft down with the main wheels on the yellow marker, which indicated the recommended spot for touch down, at an IAS of 192kph. He found that he was still travelling too fast when he approached the end of the runway, and was forced to retract the undercarriage in order to save himself. The aircraft came to an abrupt halt as it slid off the end of the runway. On inspection it was found that the primary cause of the accident was the chafing of a pipeline in the wheel well which caused the air speed indicator to under read. Preventive action was prescribed in a Unit Technical Order which called for the daily and between flight inspection of all accessible pumps, valves, lines, hoses and connections.⁶²

61. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1,y,22.8.1952; WEM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 22.8.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQD/8/1/103/AIR, Capt. J.C. Bolitho, 22.8.1952.

62. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12.5.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQD/8/1/92/AIR, Capt. B.J. Grové: Sworn Affidavit, 13.5.1952; Capt. W.J. van Rensburg: Sworn Affidavit, 16.5.1952; Unit Technical Order, Part II (Servicing) No.24/52, 15.5.1952.

Another technical problem resulted in a series of accidents. The resurfacing of the runway at K-46 caused tar and grit to adhere to the pulleys guiding the cable which actuated the tail wheel lock mechanism of the F-51D. This extended the cable and withdrew the lock. On landing the unlocked tail wheel caused the aircraft to swing violently to starboard approximately 50m after touch down. The resulting damage as the Mustang hit the embankment on the side of the runway was usually extensive.⁶³ Lt J.F. de Jager had this disconcerting experience on 29 May, as did 2 Lt B.R. Kenny on 6 August.⁶⁴ Lt Thornton, however, earned himself a green endorsement in his flying logbook on 5 August by managing to keep his Mustang on the runway after his tail wheel failed to lock.⁶⁵ The tail wheels were inspected and cleaned after each flight, but as the tar was often picked up on take off, the problem was not eliminated until the resurfacing operation was completed.⁶⁶

The Fifth Air Force concern with flying safety resulted in the squadron deputy commander, Maj. C.P. Mouton, and Capt. J.G. Groenewald being grounded. These two pilots were bitterly disappointed when, after having flown a number of successful sorties, the 18 FBW Flying Safety Officer carried out a series of tests and found them too large to fly the F-51D safely. They thus joined the three other 2 Sqn members who had been found too big for the cockpit of the Mustang.⁶⁷

63. 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQD/8/1/94/AIR, Aircraft Accident Investigation, Squadron Commander's Comments; 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQD/8/1/96/AIR, Aircraft Accident Investigation, Squadron Commander's Comments; 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQD/8/1/102/AIR, Aircraft Accident Investigation, Squadron Commander's Comments.
64. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.5.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6.8.1952.
65. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.8.1952.
66. 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQD/8/1/96/AIR, Aircraft Accident Investigation, Squadron Commander's Comments.
67. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 8.5.1952; Col C.P. Mouton: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.9.1981.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

The summer months of 1952 saw the usual comings and goings of the SAAF personnel in Korea. A final large scale rotation of ground crew took place with two groups arriving in Korea and three groups departing. On 19 May Capt. N.J. van Hoepen and 27 other ranks arrived at K-10 and were welcomed at a squadron party held the same night. The party also served as a farewell function for Capt. J.P.A. Venter and a group of 23 other ranks who left the next day for Yokohama to board the MV Tegelberg en route to South Africa.⁶⁸ Further homeward bound drafts left Korea on 1 July (Capt. W.J. van Rensburg and 25 OR's), and on 30 July (Capt. A.C.J. Bosch, A.Q. de Wet, L.P.J. Hechter and 43 OR's). With the exception of Capt. Bosch, who was a pilot, these officers and men were replaced by a group of three officers and 65 other ranks who had arrived at K-10 on 19 July. This new draft had included Capt. J.F. Smits (Adjutant), Capt. W.G.A. Rogotta (Chief Technical Officer), and Capt. J.B. Davis (Operations Officer).⁶⁹

The slower pace of the ground war made it easier to predict the intensity of air operations. This facilitated the estimation of air crew requirements and also allowed adequate time for conversion training and combat orientation. The pilots who benefitted from this more stable situation arrived in two batches, eight on 31 May and seven just over a month later on 1 July. Capt. R.A. Gerneke arrived on his own on 4 July.⁷⁰ These groups were trained by Capt. J.A. Joubert and A.C.J. Bosch respectively. This training was rounded off with operational missions just across the bombline, against railway targets on the line between Haeju and Kaesong.⁷¹

68. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19,29.5.1952.

69. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1,18,30.7.1952.

70. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 31.5.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1,4.7.1952.

71. 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.6.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 52, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.7.1952; Capt. J.A. Joubert: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 2.4.1981; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, June 1952; WDM: Box 26, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, July 1952.

The SAAF Liaison HQ in Tokyo reported on the high morale of the squadron at this stage, which was attributed to the following circumstances:

- a. Tour expired personnel were sent home within a week of the end of their tour of duty. They knew the date and the means of their departure three months in advance.
- b. The excellence of the living quarters for both officers and men.
- c. The food in the American messes was exceptionally good, although it differed from the normal South African diet.
- d. Recreational facilities were good with sport of all types being organized by the Wing Sports Council.
- e. The comradeship between the Americans and the South Africans.⁷²

It was obvious that by the end of August 1952 the South Africans had become an integral part of 5AF, but a year of operations still lay ahead. During this year the task of 2 Sqn became even more routine in nature, and an effort had to be made to overcome the negative effects of relatively low intensity operations, monotony, and the uncertainty created by the wavering peace negotiations.⁷³

72. SALO: Box 9, SALO/S/823/2/ORG, War History, June 1952.

73. Omdt N.J. Swardt: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 28.9.1981.

CHAPTER 13THE LAST OF THE MUSTANGSPHASE FIVE, PERIOD 3: 1 SEPTEMBER - 31 DECEMBER 1952THE TRUCE TALKS GO INTO RECESS

The attempts to force the Communist negotiators at Panmunjom to adopt a more accommodating attitude had failed to bear fruit by the beginning of September 1952. Neither military pressure, in the form of the air raids on the power, industrial and administrative infrastructure of North Korea, nor the attempt to drive a wedge between the Chinese Communists and their Soviet patrons had had any effect on the uncompromising attitude of the Communist delegation.¹

Under these circumstances, Gen. Clark, with the approval of the US President and the JCS, increased the diplomatic pressure at the conference table itself. After the plenary session of the truce talks on 20 September he announced that the 11 000 South Koreans who, owing to the circumstances of their capture had been classified as prisoners of war, had been reclassified as civilian internees and that their release would begin on 1 October.² Against the background of this announcement Maj.-Gen. W.K. Harrison, who had succeeded Vice-Adm. C. Turner Joy as senior delegate of the UNC on 22 May 1952, went to the plenary session of 28 September with a "take it or leave it" package of proposals. The Communists were faced with the choice of either accepting one of the UN suggestions or of allowing the talks to go into recess.³

The UN proposals for breaking the deadlock on the POW issue were all dependent upon the prior formal acceptance of an armistice. They were:

"(a) All prisoners would be brought to the demilitarized zone,

1. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.492-493.

2. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.278.

3. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.265, 280.

identified, and checked off by one or a combination of Red Cross and joint military teams. They would then be considered as fully repatriated. If a prisoner stated at this time that he desired to return to the side that had detained him, he would be free to do so. In that case, he would assume civilian status and would not be employed again in acts of war in the Korean conflict.

- (b) All prisoners desiring repatriation would be exchanged expeditiously. All nonrepatriates would be delivered to the demilitarized zone in small groups, released from military control, and then interviewed by representatives of countries not participating in the Korean hostilities. This could be done with or without military representation and under the observation of the ICRC, joint Red Cross teams, or joint military teams as the Communists desired.
- (c) All prisoners wishing repatriation would be exchanged as quickly as possible. All nonrepatriates would be delivered to the demilitarized zone and freed from military control. Then, without questioning, interview, or screening, each individual so released would be free to go to the side of his choice. This plan could also be carried out under military or civilian observers if the Communists so wished."⁴

The leader of the Communist delegation, Lt-Gen. Nam Il rejected the UN proposals and reiterated his side's demand for full repatriation. However, he did agree to a recess of 10 days, as proposed by Harrison. When they reconvened in plenary session on 8 October, Nam Il repeated his rejection of the UN terms. In reply, Harrison stated that the UNC had no further proposals to make and that his delegation did not intend to continue to come to Panmunjom to listen to the abuse and false propaganda of the Communist delegation. He then declared a recess until the enemy either accepted one of the

4. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.281.

UN proposals or submitted a constructive proposal of their own in writing. It was agreed that military liaison officers would continue to meet at Panmunjom during this period.⁵

The months that followed saw both sides trying to force a return to the conference table on its own terms by the application of military pressure. The Communists applied this pressure primarily through ground operations, while the UNC used airpower as its major instrument of persuasion. On some occasions airpower was employed on a limited scale in conjunction with ground forces, but routinely it was applied to the continuation of the destruction and interdiction programmes.

THE SWING TO CLOSE SUPPORT

During the last few months of 1952 the 5AF and its attached units were called upon to render assistance to the Eighth Army. This occurred on a scale that had not been experienced since November-December 1950, when the Eighth Army had been fighting for its survival in Korea. During September 1952 UN aircraft flew 2 908 close support sorties, while the number of similar sorties flown by the 5AF and attached units during October and November rose to 4 488 and 3 546 respectively.⁶ This sudden swing from interdiction to close support is shown clearly in the table below. From October onwards the usual monthly allocation of between 23% and 38,4% of the total SAAF effort to close support was almost doubled. During the months of October and November 2 Sqn was responsible for 3,59% (161) and 4,65% (165) respectively of the total 5AF air support to the UN ground troops.⁷

5. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.281-282;
Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.493-494.

6. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.503.

7. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1952. Vide, p.359.

Table 10 Phase Five, Period 3: Analysis of Sorties. (Percentage of Total)

Month	Interdiction	Close Support	ResCAP	Counter Air	
September	73	23	4		8
October	36	49	15		9
November	25	57	18		10
December	22	56	9	13	11
Total	39	46	12	3	

The remarkable swing to close support missions by 5AF fighter-bomber units can be ascribed to the need to aid various ground actions initiated by both the UN and Communist armies. The battle for the possession of tactically situated outposts along the MLR erupted again in September 1952, once the soaking August rains had ceased and made movement relatively easy. The Communist armies backed their sallies against the UN patrol bases and observation posts with a continual barrage of harassing artillery and mortar fire. During October some of the heaviest ground fighting of the war for more than a year took place along the base of the "Iron Triangle". The OCF launched an attack against White Horse Hill (Hill 395) and Arrowhead (Hill 281) on 6 October, and eight days later the Eighth Army countered with "Operation Showdown", a series of assaults on key OCF outposts north of Kumwha. Similar actions continued all along the frontline until the winter weather took hold and their frequency decreased.¹²

Besides its regular missions to neutralize the growing threat from Communist artillery and mortar batteries, the SAAF took part in various minor, and also a few major, outpost battles. The enemy frequently ventured from the cover of their well fortified bunkers at first and last light on small scale reconnaissance probes. In order to be able to provide immediate air

8. WDM: Box 31, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1952.

9. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1952.

10. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1952.

11. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1952.

12. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.270-271; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.303-305, 310-318; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.494-495.

support against these actions the 5AF required a certain number of its fighter-bombers to be on daily "Strip Alert" during the twilight and dawn hours. This duty was rotated among the four squadrons of 18 FBW operating out of the forward base at K-46, and it became a feature of the routine followed by 2 Sqn pilots.¹³

The early morning "Strip Alert" is best remembered by the members of 2 Sqn owing to its inconvenience. The pilots of the duty flight were awakened at approximately 04h00. A quick wash was followed by a brisk walk to the mess through the chilly pre-dawn air, a good breakfast and an operational briefing. Then wrapped in their heavy winter clothing, flying kit and escape and evasion gear, they carried out their pre-flight checks on the Mustangs while the ground crew scraped the ice off the wind-screens and cockpit canopies. The F-51D's were then started up and taxied to the end of the runway for take off. At this stage the normal procedure was interrupted, for after all the final checks had been made, the engines were shut down and the four pilots would just sit in their cockpits in the dark awaiting a call from a desperate M/R outpost. The "Strip Alert" flight was always backed up by another stand-by flight, which would replace the aircraft waiting at the end of the runway in the event of its being called out. Once airborne, a flight was air briefed to a specific area controller, who directed it to a forward air controller, who in turn would indicate the target.¹⁴

2 Sqn also became involved in the large scale outpost battles during October and November 1952. The struggle between the OCF 38th Army and the ROK 9th Division for White Horse Hill and Arrowhead raged from

13. 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/27/1/AIR, 2 Lt J.H. Krige: Strip Alert; Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981.

14. 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/27/1/AIR, 2 Lt J.H. Krige: Strip Alert; Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981.

6 to 15 October. White Horse Hill, just 8km north-west of Ch'orwon, and Arrowhead, just 3km to the west, dominated the western approaches to Ch'orwon. Possession of these key terrain features would have given the Chinese control of the lateral roads behind the UN frontlines and enabled them to threaten the main supply route to Ch'orwon. On 6 October a record preparatory bombardment preceded the main attack on White Horse Hill. The Communist guns and mortars delivered more than 93 000 rounds on to the UN positions. The attacks and counter-attacks which followed continued until 15 October, when the ROK 9th Division finally consolidated their positions after repelling the last of the enemy's assaults.¹⁵

The ROK casualties during this particular engagement amounted to 3 500, while the OCF paid for their aggressive sally by losing more than 10 000 men. Tactical air support can claim to have accounted for a large proportion of these enemy casualties. During the daylight hours of the operation the 5AF dispatched 669 close support sorties, with 76 being flown on night bombing missions. During the course of 10 days they delivered a total of 2 700 GP bombs, 358 napalm bombs and 750 rockets.¹⁶ During this period SAAF pilots flew 61 sorties in support of the Eighth Army, although not all were directed against the OCF assault troops north-west of Ch'orwon.¹⁷

It was during one of these missions that Lt P. Maxwell made a forced landing just behind the UN frontlines in Mustang No.360. He took off on the afternoon of 14 October with three USAF pilots from 67 Sqn to support the defenders of White Horse Hill. On reaching the target area he found his radio to be unserviceable. The element leader indicated that he should circle to the south and stand-by. Maxwell watched the rest of the

15. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.303-306; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.271-272.

16. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.306-307.

17. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 6-15.10.1952.

flight make three passes at a concentration of Communist troops and then decided to follow his American comrades into the next attack. It was only when he was committed to the dive that he noticed that not only the gun-sight, but all the instruments were malfunctioning. The engine then cut out. He pulled out of his dive and, having made an unsuccessful attempt to restart the engine, he immediately lined up for a landing on a 600m emergency strip just behind UN frontlines. He overshot the short strip by 400m, damaging the aircraft beyond repair but saving himself.¹⁸

Although a JCS directive to the C-in-C UNC on 25 September had specifically precluded any major ground offensive, Gen. Van Fleet felt that his enemy was gradually gaining the initiative by forcing the Eighth Army to continually defend its front against small offensive actions. On 5 October he submitted a plan which he hoped would allow the ground initiative to pass into UN hands. This plan called for an assault on five hills just 6km north of Kumwha, at a point where the units of IX Corps had been taking relatively high casualties. It relied upon the delivery of maximum fire power by the artillery and the 5AF. "Operation Showdown", as the assault on the Triangle Hill complex came to be called, was approved by Gen. Clark on 8 October and began six days later.¹⁹ This operation, which was estimated to take a few days and to cost IX Corps 200 casualties, finally ground to a halt six weeks and 9 000 UN casualties later. The Chinese were estimated to have suffered 19 000 casualties.²⁰ During October alone the 5AF and its attached units flew 2 217 sorties in support of Showdown.²¹

During October and November 1952 Mustangs of the 18 FBW and 2 Sqn

18. 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQDN/8/1/105/AIR, Lt P. Maxwell: Sworn Affidavit, 15.10.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 14.10.1952.

19. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.311-313; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.272-273.

20. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.317-318.

21. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.503.

SAAF undertook close support missions all along the MLR, including the area just north of Kumwha where Showdown was in progress. The most common close support targets were Communist mortar and artillery positions, although infantry bunkers were also frequently attacked.²² The persistence with which some of these strikes were driven home was well illustrated by a mission flown on 27 October, during which everything seemed to go wrong. On that day, a four aircraft flight was pre-briefed to attack enemy bunkers and trenches about 25km north-east of Kaesong. Even before they were airborne technical hitches forced two of the pilots to abort. The remaining two Mustangs, flown by Capt V.F. de Villiers and D.J. Stewart, took off at 15h10. Heavy smoke over the target area obscured the controller's markers as well as the enemy positions, which were only 400m from the first UN troops. The pilots were forced to rely solely upon their controller's description in order to locate the target. In spite of these difficulties, which were compounded by strong winds and intense small arms fire, the two South Africans succeeded in covering 90% of the target with their 227kg bombs and HVAR's. They claimed three bunkers destroyed, one damaged and 10 Communist infantrymen killed.²³

Another difficult close support strike was undertaken on 10 November by a flight consisting of 2 Lts J. Moir, M.J. de K. du Plessis, B.M. Forsyth and Lt P. Maxwell. They were directed against artillery positions and infantry trenches which faced the 3rd ROK Division's sector, just 20km due east of Kumsong. On reaching their target they found that the Mosquito airborne controller had been forced to withdraw with battle damage.

22. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1952.

23. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 27.10.1952.

Undeterred, the mission leader established contact with a ground controller who used artillery smoke shells to mark the target. The flight's difficulties, however, were not as yet over. Forsyth's bombs failed to release on the first pass and he had to make a second run. In the process, his Mustang and Maxwell's were hit by automatic fire and the oil pressures of both aircraft dropped to well below normal. On landing at K-46 the pilots were surprised to see a large crowd waiting in the parking area. Forsyth ascribed the excitement to their emergency landing and the battle damage. When he emerged from the cockpit, however, he was relieved to find that a reception had been organized to mark the 18 FBW's 50 000th combat sortie of the Korean campaign, which he had just completed. Among a list of firsts, the 18 FBW had become the first fighter-bomber wing in Korea to reach this total,²⁴ of which 2 Sqn SAAF had contributed 10 000 sorties.²⁵

Another incident involving the SAAF occurred when the Mustang No.348, which had been saved by the valiant efforts of Lt H.C. Knight and his mechanics during May 1952, again gave engine trouble over the target area. This time, however, the pilot was forced to bale out and the aircraft was lost. It happened on the afternoon of 6 December when 2 Lt J. Moir was orbiting an artillery target under controller's instructions in the "Punchbowl" area. His engine suddenly started to run roughly and he noticed a drop in oil pressure. The mission leader, Maj. A.P. Rich, immediately ordered him and his companion, 2 Lt A.V. Mather, to return to base. They had only covered half of the 100km that separated them from K-46 when Knight's aircraft started to pour clouds of white smoke. Finally the engine cut out altogether. Moir

24. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10.11.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1952, Appendix B, Report of 50 000th Sortie, 18 FBW; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 10.11.1952.

25. WDM: Box 26, Mission Returns, 31.8.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 36, 2 SQDN/5/825/4/ORG, Returns and Statistical Data 2 Sqn, 1-30.9.1952, 1-31.10.1952, 1-30.11.1952.

baled out and landed on a hillside after an uneventful parachute descent. He was immediately covered by a flight led by Lt Maxwell, which had been diverted on its return from a close support mission in the "Punchbowl" area. The pilot on the ground used the emergency URC/4 radio to maintain contact with Maxwell until he was picked up by the American military police.²⁶

AIR PRESSURE AT A REDUCED RATE

The last four months of 1952 saw a general reduction in the 2 Sqn combat sortie rate. The effective combat sorties for these months as recorded in the Debriefing Forms are: September - 260, October - 327, November - 289, and December - 228.²⁷ These figures can be compared to the monthly average of 389 sorties for the 31 months during which 2 Sqn was operational in Korea (Appendix A-1). This slackening in the pace of operations was also reflected in periodic stand downs. During the last third of 1952, 28 days out of a total of 122, or 22.9%, were lost to operational flying. A shortage of combat ready aircrew caused 2 Sqn to stand down from operational flying on 22 September, and on 26 and 31 October, 17 November and 5 December the whole of the 18 FBW stopped flying to allow essential maintenance to be carried out. A total of 19 days of operational flying were also lost because of unfavourable weather. In addition, the squadron suspended operations from 28 December (inclusive) in order to hand back its Mustangs and to move to Osan for conversion to F-86F Sabres.²⁸

In spite of this drop in the intensity of air operations and the unusual allocation of available effort to close support, 2 Sqn pilots still

26. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6.12.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 6.12.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/108/AIR, 2 Lt J. Moir: Sworn Affidavit, 6.12.1952.

27. WDM: Box 31, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1952.

28. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, October 1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1952.

carried out their fair share of destruction raids, interdiction of troops and supplies, armed reconnaissance of the MSR, and ResCAP's. The UNC also continued to use airpower to maintain pressure on the Communists in North Korea by directing its available resources against those elements of the industrial infrastructure that had survived the attacks of the summer of 1952. The B-26 and B-29 bombers attacked at night and the lighter fighter-bombers during the daylight hours. Targets included gold, tungsten, monazite, zinc and lead mines, strategic installations, and troop and supply shelters.²⁹

Pilots from 2 Sqn took part in these strikes and on occasion distinguished themselves. On 5 September 18 FBW sent four waves of 12 aircraft each, as part of a larger SAAF effort, against a mine and an ore-processing plant at Tangi, just 21km north-east of Kunu-ri. The initial formations took off at 06h25 and 06h35. The first consisted of two flights from 12 Sqn and one SAAF flight led by Capt. J.Z. Eloff. The second was made up of two flights from 67 Sqn and a single SAAF flight led by Capt. D.J. Stewart. They carried 227kg GP bombs designed to break up the target so that the M-76 incendiary bombs, due to be dropped by the succeeding strikes, would be more effective. Since the Mustangs had been preceded by flak suppressing F-80 Shooting Stars and F-84 Thunderjets, ground fire over the target was negligible, but the rugged terrain and the location of the target at the bottom of a narrow valley called for skillful airmanship. The follow up formations, which left K-46 at 10h55 and 11h05, were constituted in the same manner as the preliminary groups, except that they carried the incendiary bombs. Capt. Eloff had to lead his flight against the same difficult target a second time, and twice more that busy day he flew

29. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.493-494.

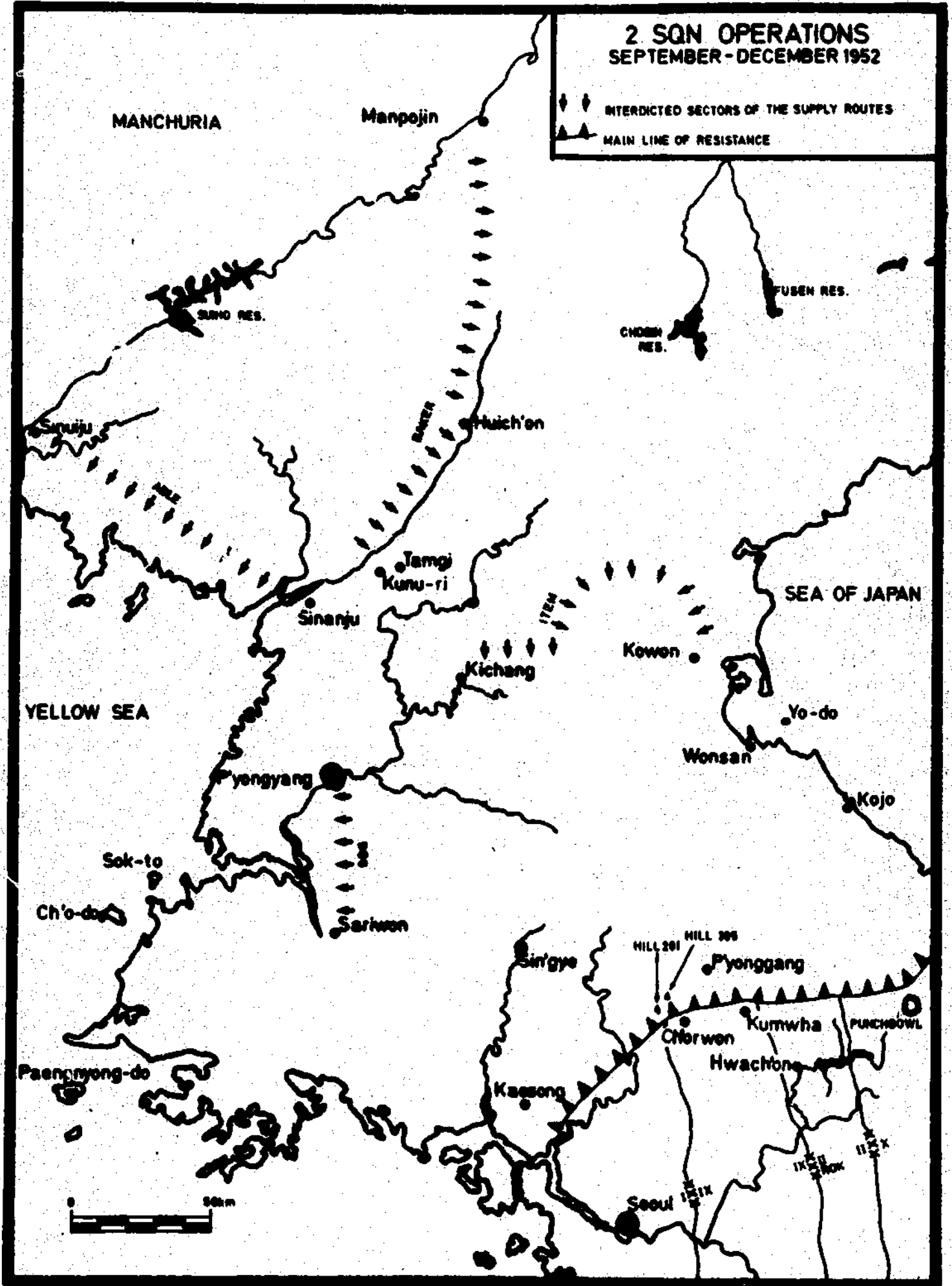
combat sorties. The last two strikes were against artillery positions along the west coast and on the MLR. When he left on the fourth sortie, as No.4 in a flight led by Lt E.A.C. Pienaar, he had already completed more than 5 hours of combat flying in a single day. On reaching the target he made two bombing runs, scoring a direct hit on an artillery piece with the second bomb. He followed this up with three strafing runs and a rocket attack.³⁰

The bulk of FEAF's reduced MSR interdiction effort fell to Bomber Command's B-29's which concentrated on keeping rail bridges out of operation at such choke points as Yongmi-dong and Huich'on. The B-26's of the 5AF patrolled the supply routes at night in "Hunter" and "Killer" groups. With the "Hunter" element using a mixed load of fire, general purpose and butterfly bombs to establish an obstruction in the road so that the "Killer" element could expend its ordnance on the piled up traffic. These night tactics were supplemented by fighter-bomber daylight patrols, with special attention being paid to four main routes: Item - from Kichang to Kowon, Dog - From P'yongyang to Sariwon, Able - from Sinuiju to Sinanju, and Baker - from Manpojin to Kunu-ri. Occasionally the 5AF ground attack aircraft also took part in pre-briefed daylight strikes.³¹

With the exception of the more vulnerable points along the MSR and the sensitive industrial targets, where the Communists concentrated their AA batteries, the 2 Sqn pilots encountered very little opposition from

30. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.9.1952; WDM: Box 31, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 5.9.1952.

31. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.499-500; Teschner: The Fighter-Bomber in Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.2, Summer 1954), p.77; Staff Study: The Bridges at Sinanju and Yongmi-dong (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.1, Spring 1954), pp.24-25.



ground fire during the last third of 1952.³² During this period only one SAAF Mustang was lost as a direct result of enemy action and it happened during an air-to-air encounter. On the morning of 12 October, Lt P. Maxwell left K-46 with a flight of four Mustangs to carry out an armed reconnaissance along the lateral route via Samdong and Kowon. After 10 minutes, engine trouble forced him to return to base and he handed over the lead to Lt G.G. Allan. The three remaining Mustangs completed the first leg of their recon from west to east and the leader led them out over the Sea of Japan so that they could reform for the return. As they approached Kowon for a second time they were attacked by four MIG-15's which closed in a shallow dive from the 6 o'clock position. Lt Fryer, in the No.2 position, took a direct hit on his Mustang (No.392), which flipped over in a spin and burst into flames. The two remaining F-51D's broke to starboard to meet the attack. The Communist jets made two more passes but the South Africans shook them off by dropping to 914m and heading for Yo-do. From Yo-do they returned to K-46 at a low altitude.³³

Meanwhile, Lt Fryer had successfully baled out of his blazing aircraft and had come to rest with his feet just above the ground, suspended by his parachute, which had caught a tree. In the confusion his flight had neither seen him leave No.392, nor noticed any sign of the parachute. He slipped his harness, scrambled to the top of a hill and hid in the foliage. He was hampered in his movements by badly burnt hands and face, blurred vision and a metal fragment in the back of his head. Nevertheless, he managed to bring his URC/4 radio into operation, but received no response to

32. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, October 1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1952.

33. The sources for this incident are 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12.10.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 12.10.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQDN/8/1/104/AIR, Interrogation Report on encounter between MIG-15's and John Baker Flight, 2 Sqn SAAF, 12.10.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 17, 2 SQDN/3/1/104/AIR, Lt G.G. Allan: Sworn Affidavit, 18.10.1952; SAIO: Box 2, SAIO/S/37/1/AIR, Report on the Interrogation of ex-POW, Lt T.R. Fryer, September 1953.

his calls. The wounded and dazed South African pilot was captured shortly afterwards by the North Korean Security Police and taken to a nearby house where his wounds were dressed and the preliminary interrogation begun. He was subsequently listed as MIA, and his POW status was only revealed to the UN authorities in April 1953, when prisoners released in "Operation Little Switch" reported his presence in Communist POW camps.

One of the missions undertaken on 18 December sent seven SAAF aircraft to bomb the Wonsan-P'yongyang road. They carried loads of 227kg bombs, fitted with delayed fuses set from one tenth of a second to six hours. On the same day another mission succeeded in cutting the coastal railway line and road near Kojo.³⁴ The only large scale pre-briefed rail-cutting mission in which 2 Sqn participated during these months took place on 21 December, when two SAAF flights joined a 24 aircraft 18 FBW formation in a strike against the "Item" route at a point just west of Kowon.³⁵

In common with the other units of the 5AF, 2 Sqn's main interdiction targets towards the end of 1952 were not the supply routes but the communication centres, and the concentrations of troops and supplies in the zone to the immediate north of the MLR. These strikes were carried out by both single and multi-flight formations.³⁶ On 12 September Lt R.C.M. Lewer led a particularly successful mission of this type. He was directed to lead two "Cheetah" flights against supply shelters located just north of Sin'gye. The target was almost clouded over (ceiling - 200m), but Lewer's navigational skill brought his Mustangs over the designated target, where he led the eight

34. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 18.12.1952.

35. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 21.12.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 21.12.1952.

36. WDM: Box 31, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, September 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1952; Staff Study: The Bridges at Sinanju and Yongmi-dong (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.1, Spring 1954), pp.24-25.

aircraft through a solitary gap in the clouds. The enemy, who felt secure under the cloud cover, was taken completely by surprise and offered little opposition. The leader was able to score two direct hits with his 227kg bombs, causing a secondary explosion. All the other pilots placed their bombs in the target area.³⁷ The efforts of these pilots were recognised when authority was received on 27 October for the award of the American DFC to Lt Lewer and Capt. Eloff.³⁸

On occasion, supply targets further to the north were attacked by 2 Sqn pilots. On 23 October Omdt R.A. Gerneke, who had taken over command of the Squadron from Omdt Burger on 22 September, led 12 of his Mustangs in an 18 FBW strike against supply shelters just north of the Ch'ongch'on River, midway between Huich'on and Kunu-ri.³⁹ However, as the year drew to a close stockpiles and troop resting areas in the immediate vicinity of the MLR continued to receive attention. Another typical mission took place on 11 December, when Capt. E.A.C. Pienaar led an 18 FBW formation consisting of 7 SAAF and 9 USAF F-51D's. The targets were ammunition storage revetments which were under construction just north of the village of Suktung on the Imjin River.⁴⁰ 2 Sqn pilots continued to fly these missions right until the final week of SAAF operations with Mustangs. On 25 December Maj. A.P. Rich led a South African flight in a formation of 32, 18 FBW aircraft against a supply target just 20km north-west of the "Punchbowl". The last combat sortie in a Mustang was flown on 27 December when eight 2 Sqn F-51D's, together with 16 from the USAF, bombed personnel shelters just to the rear of the Communist frontline.⁴¹

37. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 12.9.1952; WDM: Box 31, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 12.9.1952.

38. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27.10.1952.

39. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.9.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 23.10.1952.

40. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 11.12.1952.

41. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 25,27.12.1952.

From the beginning of October 1952 ResCAP's over Ch'o-do Island again became common. They were carried out by flights of two or four aircraft armed only with 12,7mm ammunition and rockets. In addition to the Ch'o-do ResCAP's on the west coast, 2 Sqn also undertook occasional missions of a similar nature over Yo-do Island on the east coast.⁴²

These were intended to provide cover aircraft to serve as immediate protection for pilots headed towards the crash strips on Ch'o-do, Paengnyong-do and Yo-do Islands. Pilots in distress had been instructed to head for these emergency landing strips in the revised rescue instructions which were published at the end of August 1952.⁴³

Rescue stand-bys were not without their incidents. At 13h50 on 19 November, Maj. J.S.R. Wells took off from K-46 in command of a four aircraft flight. They orbited over Ch'o-do for 2hrs and 5mins without receiving any calls. They then returned to K-46, but on arrival had to stand off for 30mins while a crashed aircraft was cleared from the runway. Landing clearance was finally given at 18h40, by which time it had grown dark. A power failure added to the troubles of the South African foursome and the emergency landing lights had to be brought into operation. However, this lighting proved far too faint to allow the flight to land safely, and after several attempts, the pilots were diverted to K-16, with fuel in the four Mustangs running dangerously low. Although the leader's engine cut while he was making his final approach at K-16, he managed to land safely, followed by No.3 and No.4. The latter had only 15 litres of fuel left in his tanks. No.2 landed at nearby K-13, which he had mistaken for K-16. The flight had been airborne for 5hrs and 30mins.⁴⁴

42. WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, October 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, November 1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, December 1952.

43. 2 Sqn K: Box 63, Pilots' Orders, Combat Search and Rescue, Standing Operating Instructions, 31 August 1952.

44. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.11.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 19.11.1952.

During December 1952 2 Sqn was called upon to fly a few of its very rare air-to-air intercept missions while equipped with Mustangs. The dropping of propaganda leaflets was practised by both sides during the Korean conflict, with surrender pamphlets or "Safe Passes" being dropped over the North Korean lines as early as September 1950.⁴⁵ However, during December 1952 it was Communist liaison type aircraft which were causing the UNC concern by dropping similar pamphlets over the eastern sector of the MLR. This sector was defended by the ROK I Corps. On 20, 22, 23 and 24 December, 2 Sqn flights, armed with only 12,7mm rounds, were sent on intercept sweeps along the bomblines to look for leaflet dropping light aircraft.⁴⁶

On Christmas morning 1952, Capt. J.F. Nortje was briefed to lead a two aircraft flight on one of these bomblines with 2 Lt J. Moir as his wingman. They were flying over the Hwach'on Reservoir after having checked in with the area controller, when they spotted an unidentified light aircraft at low level. Nortje left his partner to provide top cover and dived down to investigate. Unknown to the SAAF pilots the strange aircraft was a Marine spotter engaged in directing Marine strikes in the area. As Nortje descended he was followed by a Marine Skyraider which had detached itself from a circling flight. In order to cover his leader Moir followed the Marine aircraft down, only to draw two further Skyraiders down on to his own tail. The latter opened fire. Moir's Mustang (No.383) was hit, burst into flames and crashed 9km south of Hwach'on killing the pilot. Nortje assumed that the attacking aircraft were enemy and called for assistance over the RT, only to hear a report to the controller: "I have just

45. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.158, 377, 385-386.

46. 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/109/AIR, 2 Sqn - SALO, Secret Signal, 26.12.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20, 22, 23, 24.12.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 20, 22, 23, 24.12.1952.

shot down a drab grey aircraft that has been making passes at us."⁴⁷

NEW ARRIVALS AND VIP VISITORS

The normal rotation of pilots and ground crew continued. On 11 September, 13 replacement pilots arrived and two days later they began their training under Maj. R.A. Gerneke. Despite the shortage of pilots being experienced at the time no compromise was made with regard to the thoroughness of their operational orientation. Although the lack of combat ready pilots forced the squadron to stand down on 22 September, the new batch was not declared to be completely ready for operations until the end of the month.⁴⁸ September 1952 also saw Col Moll hand over the SAAF Liaison HQ to Col D.A. du Toit.⁴⁹ On 14 December the new paymaster, Capt. M. Winslanly, arrived with a further quota of replacement pilots. These were also prepared for operations on Mustangs but they were destined never to fly that particular type of aircraft in operations, as the Mustangs were to be handed back to the USAF before their training could be completed.⁵⁰

On 18 October, Lts G.N. Louw and J. Goddard arrived at K-10 with 36 other ranks to replace Lt H.C. Knight and 49 ground personnel who left Moresia six days later. These comings and goings were suitably marked with a "Welcome/Farewell Party" at which various Zulu curios were presented to Morke's Inn. These mementos of home were a gift of the then Mayor of

47. 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/109/AIR, Capt. J.F. Nortje: Sworn Affidavit, 26.12.1952; 18 FBG(Det 1) - 2 SQN SAAF, Signal, 25.12.1952; 2 SQN SAAF - SALO, Secret Signal, 26.12.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 25.12.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 25.12.1952; Cmdt N.J. Swardt: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 28.9.1981.

48. 2 Sqn K: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11,13,22.9.1952.

49. SALO: Box 9, SALO/S/823/2/ORG, War History, September 1952.

50. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.12.1952; Brig. G. Thom: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 25.9.1981.

Durban, Cllr H. Osborne.⁵¹ Lt G.N. Louw and nine of his party left Korea within three weeks to begin a course on the F-86F Sabre at Tzuiki, Japan. This was done in view of the pending supply of these new aircraft to all the 18 FBW squadrons. Throughout October, November and December 1952, small groups of SAAF technicians were sent to Tzuiki for this conversion training.⁵²

The public announcement that 2 Sqn would finally be equipped with the latest available jet aircraft was made by the Minister of Defence, Adv. F.C. Erasmus, during a dinner given in his honour at the University Club, Tokyo, on 29 October 1952.⁵³ In fact, the USAF had agreed in principle to re-equip the 8th and the 18th FBW's (including 2 Sqn SAAF) with a fighter-bomber version of the F-86F Sabre as early as July 1952. The target date for this conversion was set at November 1952.⁵⁴

The Minister's eleven day visit to the Far East had commenced the previous day when he and his party were met at Haneda International Airport by the British Ambassador and the Commanding General of FEAF. On the morning of 29 October he had been received in audience by the Emperor of Japan. The Korean leg of the tour began on 31 October, when the official party left Japan on board Gen. Clark's personal Skymaster, "Bataan", which had previously been used by Gen. MacArthur. They arrived at K-10 at 16h25 and were met by the commanding officers of 18 FBW and 2 Sqn. A SAAF Guard-of-Honour under the command of Capt. J.F. Smits awaited them on the tarmac. That evening the Minister met the squadron officers during a party at Rorke's Inn, and the next day he inspected K-10 and the SAAF facilities.

51. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 18,19,24.10.1952.

52. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, November 1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1952; Brig. G.N. Louw: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1981.

53. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, October 1952, Appendix H, Speech by The Minister of Defence, the Honourable F.C. Erasmus, 29.10.1952.

54. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.462-463.

On 2 November they proceeded to K-46 where they attended the briefing and debriefing of a 24 aircraft napalm strike against enemy personnel and vehicles, which was led by Maj. R. Turner. They were then taken to a vantage point just behind the MLR from which they could see 12 SAAF Mustangs, led by Cndt Gerneke, bombing enemy bunkers and trenches.⁵⁵

On his return from Korea the Minister attended a ceremonial parade held in his honour at the UNC HQ, after which he lunched at Gen. Clark's residence and paid a courtesy call on the British Ambassador. His final day in Japan, 7 November was marked by a visit to the US naval base at Yokosuka. That evening the official party attended a reception given in honour of the final function included the Pakistani and Australian Ambassadors and senior diplomatic representatives from New Zealand, India and Canada. Later the visitors boarded the aircraft which took them back to South Africa.⁵⁶

CHRISTMAS 1952

The destruction of homes and the displacement of persons in the wake of the Korean hostilities placed a heavy responsibility for short term relief and long term rehabilitation upon the UNC. There were more than humanitarian reasons for caring for the thousands of displaced persons in South Korea. Very early in the war the UNC realised that unrest and disease would vastly complicate their military operations. Accordingly, the UN Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) was established on 1 December 1950 in anticipation of a rapid UN victory and peace, but its work was

55. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28.10.1952 - 2.11.1952; SALO: Box 9, SALO/S/823/2/ORG, War History, October - November 1952.

56. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4-7.11.1952; SALO: Box 9, SALO/S/823/ORG, War History November 1952; SALO: Box 30, SALO/S/816/1/ORG, Guest List Reception in honour of the South African Minister of Defence, the Honourable F.C. Erasmus, Friday, November 7, 1952, 6-7.30 pm.

hampered by the continuation of the war. When it became clear that the conflict would go on for some time the UN Civil Assistance Command in Korea (UNCACK) was set up under Eighth Army command in order to provide immediate relief to the civilian victims of the war. This command supervised the organization of refugee camps, the establishment of medical facilities, the execution of disease prevention programmes and the distribution of aid to orphanages. The SAAF personnel became involved in this last mentioned aspect of the civil assistance programme.⁵⁷

Thousands of children had lost their families and had been abandoned to wander with the streams of refugees. These children were taken into existing orphanages whenever possible. These institutions were adopted by various UN fighting units, which supported them with money, food, clothing and other necessities to supplement the UNCACK distributed aid. 2 Sqn, along with other units of the 18 FBW, had adopted such an orphanage in Chinhae early in 1951, under the guidance of Capt. M.D.V. Cloete. It added a special dimension to the squadron's Christmas celebrations in 1952.⁵⁸

On 24 December the squadron Christmas party was held in the workshops and a souvenir beer mug was presented to each member. While 2 Sqn pilots flew eight combat sorties on Christmas Day, including the counter-air mission on which 2 Lt Moir was shot down, Christmas was celebrated by their comrades. The chaplains, Capt. E.D. Brown (Anglican) and Capt. J.A. Olivier (DRC), conducted a joint service in the base chapel at K-10. During the afternoon 12 South Africans led by Col D.A. du Toit and Cndt R.A. Gerneke visited

57. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.215-217; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.214-215.

58. Maj. M. Winstanly: Recorded Interview, Port Elizabeth, 24.2.1981; Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, p.215.

the orphanage in Chinhae. They were met by a Korean missionary, Pastor Lee, the "father" of the orphanage. The events that followed have been recorded by an anonymous squadron member:

"Inside, we felt, I think, like rather clumsy giants blundering about in a dolls' house, an impression which was heightened by the doll-like appearance of its exquisite little inhabitants. Rows and rows of tiny little people, the boys with cropped hair and the girls with their straight black hair cut in a short 'bob', sat crowded together and yet entirely orderly, dressed neatly in bright-coloured clothes made for them at the orphanage out of the bundles of old garments and material received from America. The youngest of them, a fat and solemn baby, dressed in a yellow knitted outfit with cap to match, that had presumably recently adorned some bonny 'junior' in the States, broke ranks and gave us an unrehearsed clown-act that went on intermitently the whole afternoon.

Pastor Lee introduced us, and then the children themselves entertained us with songs, recitations, and a dumb-show act with dancing, all obviously long prepared and practised, and yet with a delightful gaiety and charm and a distinctive quality all of its own. One tiny person in particular delighted us with her natural graces and feather-like lightness, as she postured and pranced about in unselfconscious enjoyment. Some of the older children sang songs. The Koreans are a musical people and the youths have strong, resonant voices which they use to great effect.

Then came the big event of the afternoon, as each child came forward in turn to receive the presents we had brought for them. A polite little bow, and back they went to their seats on the floor, clutching a little bundle of American candy, a writing block, a pencil, and other small items. We were surprised to see that none of them ate



Chinhae Orphanage - Christmas 1952.

MIB Photograph No: 700012476

the candy, such would have been considered impolite. The restraint was too much for the S.A.A.F.'s, who urgently asked Pastor Lee to tell them to 'tuck in', which was granted.

Then came more 'items', but our time was short, and we had to leave. They all came down the road to see us off, and to have their photographs taken with us, and they cheered us as we drove away. I am sure that many of us went off with a 'lump in the throat', and all of us felt that a Christmas afternoon in Korea could not have been more profitably or happily spent."⁵⁹

FAREWELL TO THE MUSTANGS

The Festive Season of 1952/53 saw the "Flying Cheetahs" part with their F-51D Mustangs, which had served them in combat for the past two years. At 15h30 on 27 December two SAAF flights of four Mustangs each took off in a 24 aircraft formation to bomb personnel shelters 15km north-west of the "Punchbowl". On this occasion, "Baker Flight" consisted of Maj. A.P. Rich, Lt M.J. de K. du Plessis, Capt. W.A. Dowden and Lt B.M. Forsyth, all of whom completed their operational tour with this last mission. "Able Flight" consisted of Lt J.J. Kruger, Lt W.J. Grobler, Maj. J.S.R. Wells and Lt L.A. Dixon. They successfully placed all their bombs on the target and, on reaching base, both flights staged an impromptu formation fly past. This was followed by "Baker Flight" aerobatics. These unscheduled gestures marked the end of the Mustang era for 2 Sqn SAAF.⁶⁰

59. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 24-25.12.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/27/1/AIR, Vol.I, Cheetahs' Christmas Afternoon, 2.1.1953.

60. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27.12.1952; WDM: Box 32, Debriefing Forms SAAF 220, 27.12.1952.

Two days later a fly past of all surviving 22 SAAF Mustangs (including No.325) was staged at K-46, after which they were landed at K-10 for servicing before being handed back to the USAF.⁶¹ They were then flown to Kisarazu, Japan, on 31 December for delivery to the 6408th Maintenance and Supply Group. The pilots made use of the opportunity to combine with the officers of the SAAF Liaison HQ in Tokyo for a memorable New Year's party at the University Club.⁶² Altogether the SAAF had purchased 95 Mustangs from the USAF, of which 74 had been written off in Korea, resulting in 33 South African pilots being listed as killed or missing in action.⁶³ Various statistical sources give a variety of figures for the number of combat missions and sorties flown by the SAAF in Mustangs in Korea. The 2 Sqn War Diary mentions 2 890 missions and 10 597 sorties,⁶⁴ while the corresponding figures in the Mission Returns and Statistical Data Tables are 2 884 and 10 569 respectively.⁶⁵

While the pilots were attending to the delivery of the last Mustangs to the USAF, the removal of the entire squadron and its equipment to Osan (K-55) got underway on 30 December with the departure of an advance party under the command of Capt. J.B. Davis.⁶⁶

61. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.12.1952.

62. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 31.12.1952; SALO: Box 9, SALO/S/823/2/ORG, War History, December 1952.

63. Capt. D. Bekker: History and Fate of 2 Sqn Aircraft in Korea (Lists supplied by the South African Air Force Museum).

64. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27.12.1952.

65. WDM: Box 26, Mission Returns, 31.8.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 36, 2 SQDN/S/825/4/ORG, Statistical Data, September-December 1952.

66. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.12.1952.

CHAPTER 14THE SABRE ERAPHASE FIVE, PERIOD 4: 1 JANUARY - 27 JULY 1953RE-ORGANIZATION AND RE-LOCATION

The move of the 18 FBW to K-55 and their conversion to F-86F Sabres was a small part of a general re-organization that had been under-way in the Far East since Gen. Clark had taken over as C-in-C UN in May 1952. As early as 10 July 1952 he had relieved the Eighth Army Commander, Gen. Van Fleet, of the necessity of continually having to look over his shoulder towards his rear areas. This was done by creating the Korean Communications Zone with its headquarters at Taegu. This new command extended over the southern two thirds of Korea and was responsible for such matters as the POW camps, supply movement and stockpiling, maintenance of ports and railways, and the co-ordination of relief and reconstruction work.¹

On 20 August Gen. Clark announced that he would comply with the JCS directive of December 1946 and establish a genuine joint headquarters for UNC/FEC. Both MacArthur and Ridgway had ignored this directive and FEC had been dominated by army personnel.² The first step towards the establishment of a joint HQ was the activation of the army HQ to function on the same level as FEAF and NavFE. Accordingly, Army Forces Far East (AFFE) Headquarters was established on 1 October 1952. Gen. Clark retained command of the army in the Far East, being designated Commanding General US Army Forces Far East, in addition to being C-in-C UN. However, he left the routine running of AFFE to his deputy, Maj.-Gen. T.L. Harrold.³ With the preliminary re-organization completed, the UNC/FEC HQ was able to begin

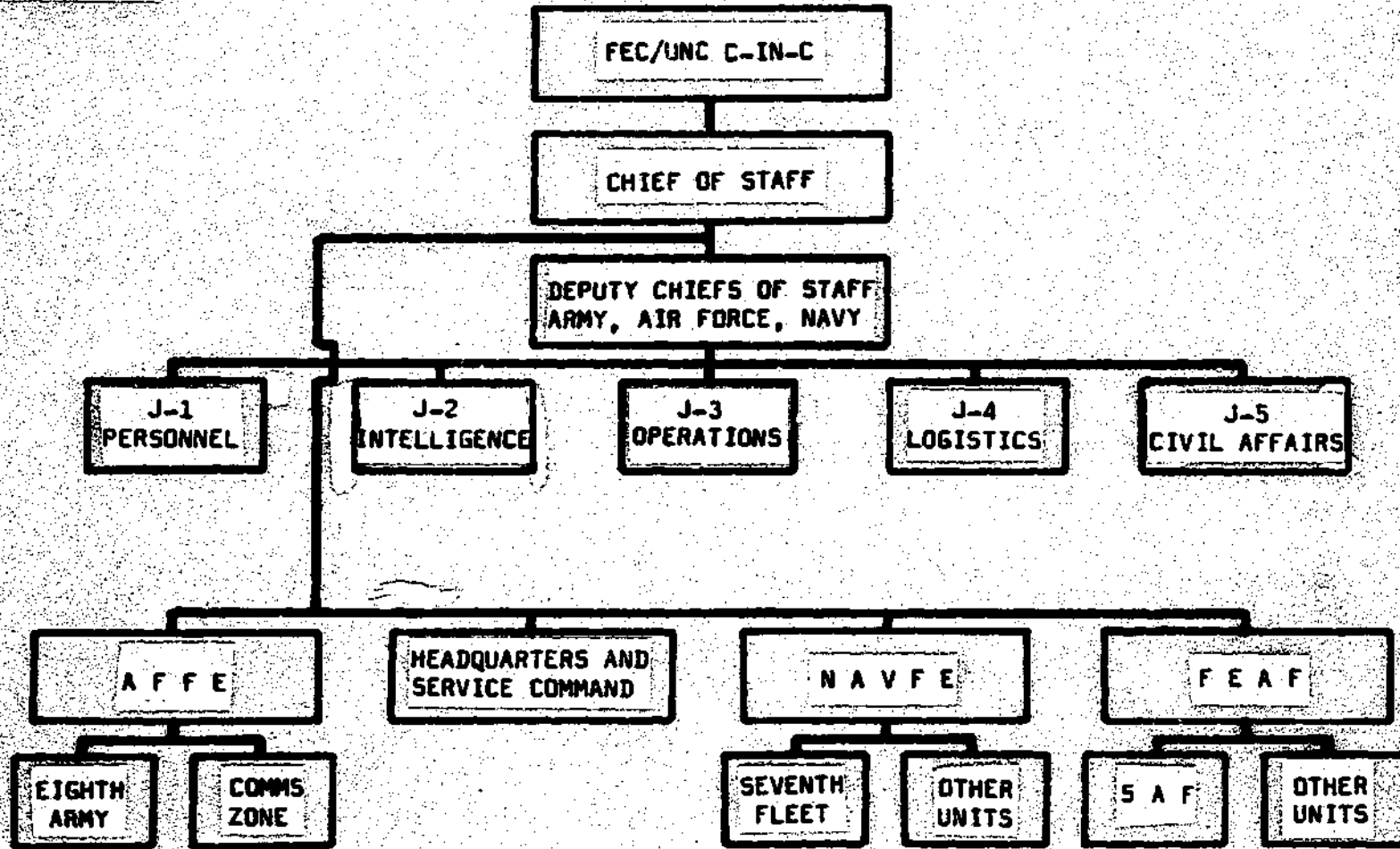
1. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.362.

2. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.363; Vide, pp.39-40; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.455.

3. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.363.

**FAR EAST COMMAND
STAFF AND MAJOR COMMAND ORGANIZATION
1 JANUARY 1953**

Diagram 9



Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.364.

functioning as a joint organization on 1 January 1953. It was staffed by 91 Army, 48 Air Force and 43 Navy officers. The upper echelon of the HQ consisted of a Chief-of-Staff and three Deputy Chiefs-of-Staff representing the three services. The five staff compartments were designated J-1 (Personnel), J-2 (Intelligence), J-3 (Operations), J-4 (Logistics) and J-5 (Civil Affairs) (Diagram 9).⁴

Ironically, this re-organization of the overall command structure in the Far East was completed only for the last stages of the Korean War. In much the same manner, 5AF's tactical capability was brought to a peak in time for the armistice. As 1952 drew to a close new base facilities and aircraft became available to Gen. Barcus' 5AF. The new facilities were provided by the 417th Engineer Aviation Brigade and its ten engineer battalions, which started an intensive programme of upgrading the Korean airfields in July 1952. This included the only airfield in Korea to be built from the ground up, K-55 at Osan, just 64km south of Seoul. The new air base, which was provided with a 2 760m concrete runway, had progressed sufficiently by the end of 1952 to enable the 18 FBW to use it as a base for the conversion to F-86F Sabres. The airfield at Suwon was also upgraded to allow the 8 FBW to convert to the same advanced aircraft.⁵

One of the greatest advantages that 2 Sqn derived from the re-location of the 18 FBW was the elimination of the need for an advance and rear base. The squadron would no longer have to operate in two sections, with an advance detachment at K-46 and the rest of the personnel and equipment at K-10. Noteworthy features of the squadron's move from K-10 to K-46 to K-55 were the remarkable carrying capacity of the C-119 "Flying Boxcars", the biting cold of the Korean winter, and the need to move into new and

4. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.363; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.455.

5. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.594-596.

unfinished accommodation. The members of the squadron were forced to repeat all the improvisations that had taken place when the first detachment arrived in Korea in 1950, in order to make themselves comfortable and to operate effectively.⁶

With the physical move successfully completed by 8 January, the squadron was re-organized to conform with the requirements of the new operational circumstances. Instead of four flights, it was divided into only two flights with the key appointments as follows:

Commanding Officer:	Cndt R.A. Gemeke
Deputy Commander:	Maj. J.S.R. Wells
A Flight Commander:	Capt. A.D. Lawrenson
A Flight Deputy Commander:	Capt. E.A.C. Pienaar
B Flight Commander:	Capt. J.F. Nortje. ⁷

The B Flight Deputy Commander was not appointed until 26 January, when authority was received for Lt J.J. Kruger to fill this post with the temporary rank of Captain.⁸

CONVERSION TRAINING

Both the 8 FBW and the 18 FBW were equipped with the new ground attack version of the F-86F known as the F-86F-30. This variant differed from the interceptor in that it was fitted with bomb shackles, a modified bomb/gun/rocket sight, and could carry two 757lt long range fuel tanks. These modifications made for a versatile aircraft, for besides being effective in the ground attack role it could jettison its ordnance and extra fuel

6. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, December 1952, Appendix Q, Operations Order No.4/52, 27.12.1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/27/1/AIR, Vol.II, Anon.: Operation Boxcar, The Flying Cheetahs Move Base.

7. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.1.1953.

8. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.1.1953.

at the touch of a button and switch to the interceptor role. These Sabres could carry two 454kg bombs, had a combat radius of 910km, were fitted with a General Electric J47-GE-27 engine, and had a maximum speed of 1 107kph at sea level, a stalling speed of 206kph, and a climb rate of 2 834m/min and a service ceiling of 14 630m.⁹

These latest US fighters compared favourably with the best aircraft available to the Communists. The MIG-15bis had a higher ceiling (16 764m) and a superior rate of climb, but was slightly slower in level flight (1 075kph at sea level) and in the dive. It also tended to be unstable at slower speeds and to go into a spin without warning.¹⁰

Although the South Africans were confident that their new aircraft could match the best the enemy could send against them, the comparison that concerned them during January 1953 was not that between the MIG-15 and the Sabre, but that between the Mustang and the Sabre. They were faced with the task of converting, under operational conditions, from a conventional piston engined aircraft to a high performance jet fighter. Fortunately, all but two of the pilots had previously flown jet aircraft (Vampires) during pre-operational training in South Africa. Nevertheless, the task facing Maj. Walls as OC Flying was a daunting one, especially as 2 Sqn was the first of the 18 FBW squadrons to convert to Sabres. As the pioneer in this undertaking he had to draw up the training syllabus, handling notes, lecture precis and briefing guides.¹¹

9. Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981; M. Allward: F-86 Sabre, pp.120,125; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.596.

10. R. Steele: Mig vs Sabre (War Monthly, No.31, 1976), pp.40-41,48.

11. SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.

In spite of the initial difficulties, Maj. Wells tackled his task systematically. He collaborated with the USAF instructors, who had been detached from 4 FIW and 51 FIW, in the compilation of the training literature. He also ensured the closest co-operation with these instructors by billeting with them and holding nightly discussions on the progress of the South African pilots.¹² As the Mobile Training Detachment (MTD) was not available during the first week of January, the ground training of the SAAF pilots began on 4 January with the preliminary jet indoctrination. This consisted of lectures covering such topics as: Escape and Evasion, Jet Navigation, Physiological Indoctrination, High Altitude Fighter Tactics, Jet Instrument Flying, Radio Compass and Ground Control Approach (GCA).¹³ On 7 January the F-86F MTD began instruction on the technical aspects of the new jets. The instructors, a captain and nine senior NCO's, gave lectures four hours per day for 10 days. The pilots then wrote a 50-item multiple-choice test on the technical aspects of the Sabre.¹⁴

The first F-86F Sabre was delivered to 2 Sqn on 27 January. This event caused great excitement and for the next few days curious personnel crowded around the aircraft. The 2 Sqn diarist commented:

"If we had charged 10 cents admission to view the aircraft the Squadron and the Air Force fund would not require donations for years."¹⁵

The excitement continued for a few days and on 29 January it was reported that Maj. Wells had finally managed to clear the cockpit of "odd bodies"

12. SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.
13. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4-6.1.1953; SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.
14. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7-18.1.1953; SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.
15. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27.1.1953.

and accomplished a start and ground run.¹⁶ The arrival of the new jets gave the 2 Sqn pilots the opportunity to complete their ground training, each with four hours in the cockpit in order to familiarize himself with the lay-out. A blindfolded cockpit check followed.¹⁷

The actual flying training had already commenced on 7 January with dual instruction on a T-33 jet trainer, in which each pilot received instruction until he was ready to fly solo on the F-86F. On 30 January Cndt Garneke and Maj. Wells flew the first SAAF solos on the Sabre. The event was celebrated in the customary manner, with a squadron party. Within eight days all 28 SAAF pilots under training had flown the new Sabres.¹⁸

Developments in Manchuria led to major changes in the envisaged flying training syllabus.¹⁹ By the beginning of 1953 the Communist air order of battle in Manchuria amounted to 1 485 aircraft including 950 jet fighters, 165 conventional fighters, 100 Il-28 jet bombers, 65 conventional light bombers, 115 ground attack aircraft and 90 transports. The new Il-28's had a radius of operation of 1 110km and could carry a two tonne bomb load. This capability posed a definite threat to UN airfields in particular, and to UN air superiority in general.²⁰ An appreciation of this challenge caused the CG of SAAF to issue the following directive to the CO of 18 FBW:

"When all pilots in a squadron have been completely trained in fighter-interceptor tactics, and have flown sufficient interceptor

16. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.1.1953.

17. SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.

18. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.1.1953; WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1-7.2.1953; SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.

19. SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.

20. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.565.

missions to be considered proficient, training in fighter-bomber tactics will be instituted."²¹

The decision to employ the newly converted squadrons initially in the fighter-interceptor role was reflected in the inclusion in the syllabus of such items as Formation Flying, Combat Formation and Air-to-Air Ciné. The Combat Formation exercises, which were flown between 10 500m and 14 000m, at speeds varying from Mach 0,8 to Mach 0,92, taxed the pilots' flying and formation holding abilities to the utmost. There was little surplus power available at these altitudes or speeds for repositioning in the event of error. The most difficult exercise of the whole conversion, however, proved to be the Air-to-Air Ciné. Initially this was flown in pairs, with each aircraft being attacker and target in turn. A progression was then made to flying the exercise in flights of two elements each. The target element wingman reported the attacks and the attacking element wingman practised station keeping and clearing the leader's tail. The high speeds, the half second period allowed for tracking by the sensitive radar gunsight, and the sensitive "pip", made it difficult to get in any shots, other than those from dead astern. However, as training progressed the films showed a steady improvement.²²

All this training was undertaken from a base that was still under construction. Bulldozers, trucks and other assorted vehicles drove around the runway and taxiways while flying was in progress. In spite of these hazards there was only one flying accident and one near accident during the entire training period. Maj. Walls attributed this safety record to:

21. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, January 1953, Appendix C, CG 5AF - CO 18 FEB, 18.1.1953.
22. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 26.2.1953, 1-3.1.1953; SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.

- a. Sound technical training by the MID.
- b. Good air traffic control.
- c. The long (2 760m) runway.
- d. Close and strict supervision by two very experienced flight commanders.²³

The near accident occurred on 27 February, when 2 Lt L.A. Dixon experienced a "flame-out" while in circuit. He completed his approach, but left the undercarriage retracted until the very last moment, as he was not sure that he would reach the runway.²⁴

The next day Lt R.L. van Rooyen became the first SAAF pilot to eject from a F-86F (No.608). While returning from an air-to-air exercise he lost his leader as they descended through the overcast. His radio compass was inoperative and he ran out of fuel before he could find the airfield. He ejected successfully at 450m and landed in a rice paddy 112km south of K-55.²⁵ This mishap had a sequel a few days later when Van Rooyen gave all the pilots a talk on his ejection experience. It was followed by a practice of ejection procedure on an ejection seat provided by the MID.²⁶

The conversion training drew to an end during the second week of March 1953. The individual SAAF pilots had averaged 30hrs pre-operational training on the Sabre. On 22 February, a few weeks before the end of the training period, Omit Gerneke flew the first SAAF operational sortie in a F-86F. He flew as No.2 to the CO of 67 Sqn, Maj. Hagerstrom, while the CO of 18 FBG, Col M.L. Martin, and the CO of 12 Sqn, Maj. Evans, made up the other element. They sighted numerous MIG-15's but no contact was

23. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27.2.1953; SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.

24. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27.2.1953.

25. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28.2.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/110/AIR, Lt. R.L.van Rooyen: Statement, 28.2.1953.

26. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.3.1953.

made with the enemy aircraft.²⁷ On 11 March Maj. Welis and Capt. Nortje flew with two USAF pilots on a Yalu sweep and the next day 2 Sqn became fully operational on Sabres when four counter-air patrols were flown along the Yalu. These missions marked a turning point in the history of the SAAF, as 2 Sqn became the first South African Squadron to go into action flying jet aircraft.²⁸

The restoration of 2 Sqn to operational status can be ascribed in no small measure to the hard work and resourcefulness of the SAAF ground crew. Not only did they have to cope with a completely new aircraft, but the problems involved in the simultaneous conversion of six squadrons to sophisticated aircraft temporarily defeated the USAF logistical section. In his report covering the month of February 1953, the Chief Technical Officer (CTO), Capt. W.G.A. Rogotta, mentioned that the squadron was short of 65% of the ground handling equipment that it needed. This deficiency was made up by adapting some of the old Mustang equipment and by borrowing from a central wing pool.²⁹ Efforts were also made to ensure the procurement of the necessary spares, by detaching F/Sgt I.J. Schraader and A/Cpl C.J. Venter to the 51st Maintenance and Supply Group at Tsuiki in Japan on 14 February. A week later these two NCO's were joined by a third, F/Sgt W.C. Sparkham.³⁰

By the end of March Capt. Rogotta was able to report that the situation had improved slightly. The squadron had 50% of its ground handling equipment, a slight improvement in the supply of some spares had taken place, and bomb and rocket racks had been received in anticipation of

27. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.2.1953.

28. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11-12.3.1953.

29. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, February 1953, Appendix O, Monthly Technical Report, 2.3.1953.

30. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14,21.2.1953.

a reversion to the fighter-bomber role.³¹ Matters continued to get better and by the end of April the CTO stated that the general serviceability of the aircraft had reached a satisfactory peak and that 60% of the vital ground handling equipment had been acquired.³²

The technical personnel's concern for the new aircraft was shared by the pilots. As far as servicing difficulties and the ratio of pilots to aircraft would allow (28:18), each pilot was allocated to fly a particular F-86F. The first pilot to have regular use of a particular machine was entitled to give it a name. The names of wives, children, girl friends, or various combinations of names were most frequently used. Such names as "Just Joan", "Jean", "Kevric" (Kevin and Richard) and "Sandra-Anne" appeared. Other names such as "Lady of Lorette" and "Lady Elizabeth" harped back to the days of chivalry, while "Imp", "Monkey" and "Tomtit" (flown by 2 Lt G. Thom) were given to various Sabres by less conservative members of the squadron.³³

NEGOTIATIONS AND MILITARY PRESSURE

The general situation in Korea during 1953 was characterized by a continual interplay between the peace negotiations and military activity. Both the UNC and the Communists attempted to strengthen their position at the conference table by the selective application of military pressure. As the gap between the negotiators narrowed both sides engaged in eleventh hour military operations designed to place their forces in favourable positions on armistice day. While the pilots of 2 Sqn were struggling to master the intricacies of the world's most advanced fighter, the leadership

31. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1953, Appendix J, Monthly Technical Report, 2.4.1953.

32. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, April 1953, Appendix Q, Monthly Technical Report, 2.5.1953.

33. 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/27/1/AIR, Capt. (Rev.) E.D. Brown: Naming the Sabre Jets; Brig. G. Thom: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 25.9.1981.

of both the world's superpowers changed hands. These changes co-incided with progress at Panmunjom. On 20 January Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was sworn in as President of the United States in succession to Truman. The inauguration of a new administration did not lead to any change in Truman's Korean policy of watchful waiting.³⁴ Of more significance was the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953. The Asian Communist leaders returned from the Soviet dictator's funeral with the view that the Korean conflict should be terminated.³⁵

The new Communist attitude was manifest on 28 March, when Gen. Clark received a favourable reply from Kim Il-sung and Gen. Peng Teh-huai to a letter he had written more than a month previously. In this communication the Communists agreed to an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners and suggested that such an exchange would smooth the way to peace.³⁶ It took less than three weeks to reach agreement on the details and the exchange took place between 20 April and 3 May. The UNC handed over 6 224 POW's (5 194 North Koreans and 1 030 Chinese) and 466 detained civilians in return for 684 UN POW's. One of the first UN prisoners to be released was 2 Lt R.E. Gasson, who until that moment had been listed as missing in action.³⁷

The big breakthrough, however, came on 9 April when Nam Il wrote to Harrison suggesting a solution to the problem of forcible repatriation. He proposed that the non-repatriates be handed over to a neutral state which would then allow "expainers" to remove all fears of repatriation. This letter represented the positive response that had been sought by Harrison when he had broken off the plenary sessions on 8 October 1952. It came close to acceptance of one of the possible solutions that had been

34. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.408-409.

35. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.606.

36. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.411-412.

37. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.4.1953; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.419; Vide, pp.314-315.

put forward by the UN team prior to the suspension of the talks. Harrison responded on 16 April by suggesting a re-opening of the plenary sessions, and 10 days later the chief negotiators and their staffs gathered around the table at Panmunjom.³⁸

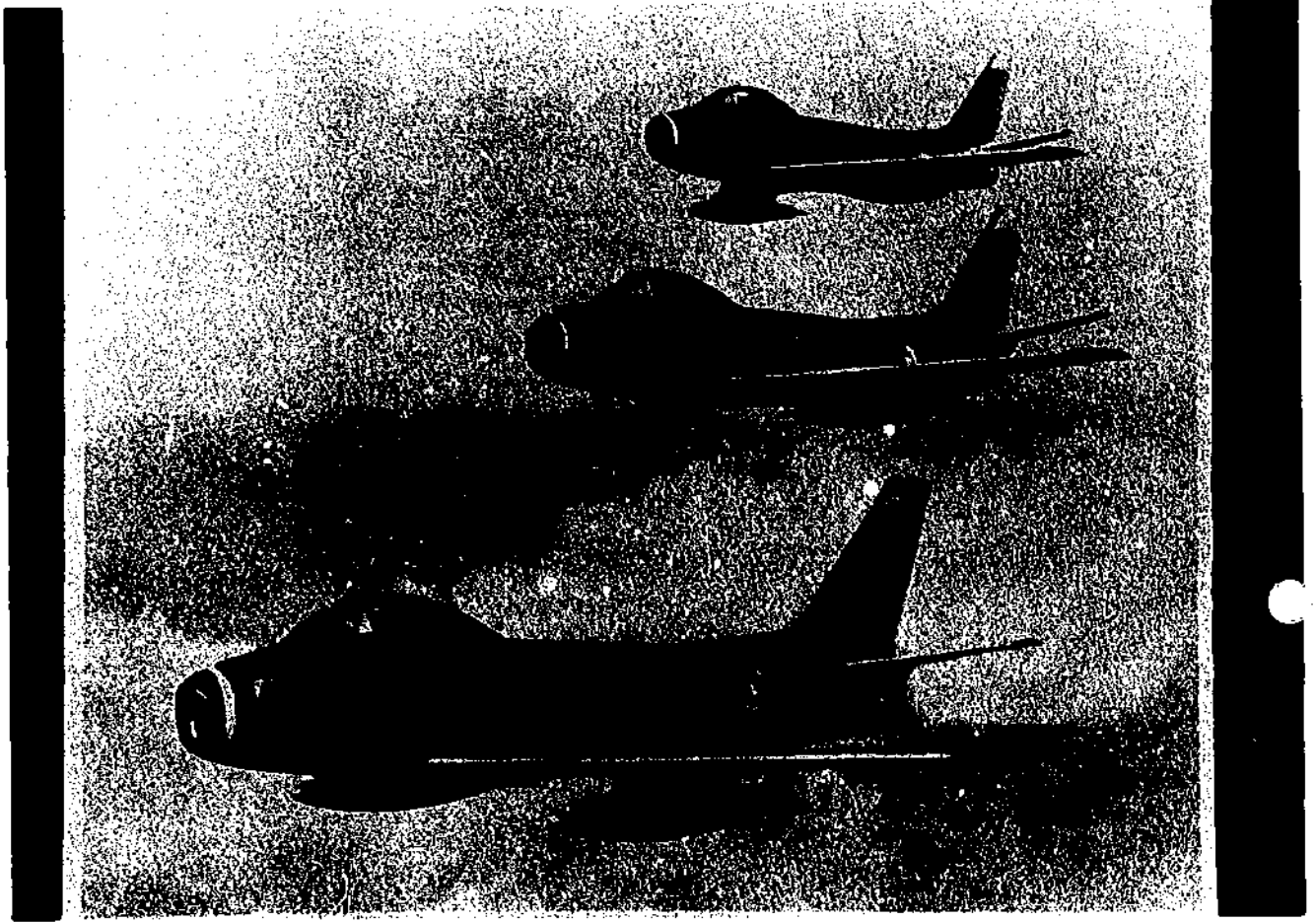
While the two sides were engaged in all this diplomatic activity the military stalemate along the MLR persisted. Besides the OCF and NKPA battalion and regimental attacks against UN outposts at the beginning of March, only small scale patrols and routine harassing operations disturbed the relative calm along the MLR. The level of activity by the IX Corps recorded at this time was:

- a. During January the IX US Corps sent out 2 668 night patrols which resulted in only 64 engagements with the enemy.
- b. During February and March they dispatched some 2 500 patrols to raid, ambush and reconnoitre. Fewer than 100 of these patrols made any contact with the enemy.³⁹

Once negotiations recommenced activity along the frontline increased. Realizing that the armistice line would be determined by the position of the MLR when the truce was signed, the Communists mounted fresh ground offensives designed to push the UN frontline southwards. During the final week of May they launched a diversionary attack against the I US Corps positions east of Kaesong, while the main thrust (launched on 10 June) was directed against the II ROK Corps at a point where the line bulged to form a salient in the vicinity of Kumsong. The South Koreans fell back some 3 000m before stabilizing their line on 18 June. A final effort was made on 13 July, when three Chinese divisions broke through on the right flank of the IX US Corps and forced the II ROK Corps to withdraw

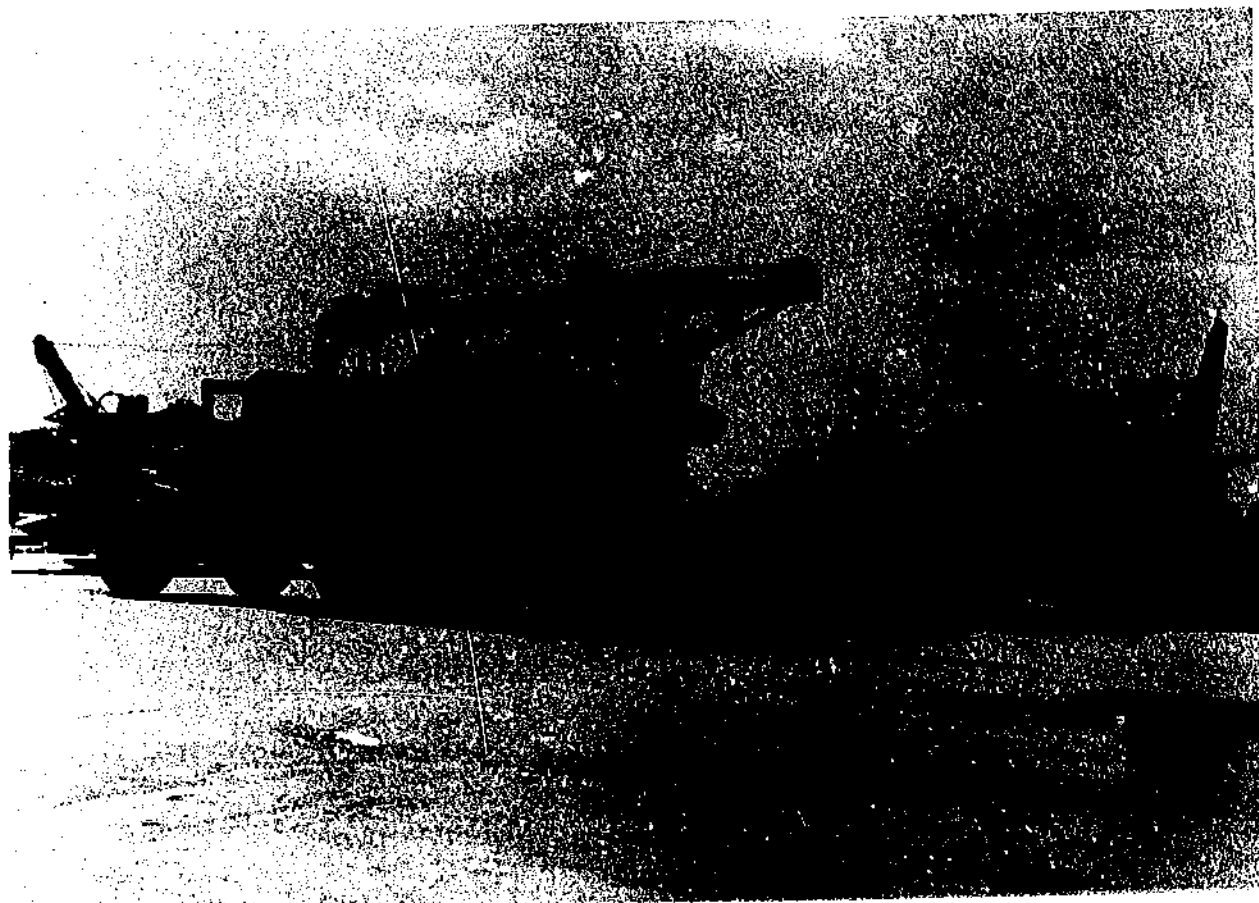
38. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.419-420.

39. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.277-279; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.369-370.



SAAF F-86F Sabres Fly in Formation.

MIB Photograph No: 781002730



F-86F Sabres Being Armed.

MIB Photograph No: 700018189

in order to protect their exposed left flank. By 20 July the UN forces had established a new MLR on the high ground south of the Kumsong River.⁴⁰

The escalation of frontline activity during the last two months of the war is clearly illustrated by the following table:

Table 11. Artillery Rounds Fired and Casualties Suffered, Korea 1953.⁴¹

Month	COMMUNIST		UNC	
	Casualties (Estimated)	Artillery Rounds	Casualties	Artillery Rounds
April	10 000	51 690	4 343	1 255 015
May	16 454	99 340	7 570	1 747 718
June	36 346	326 130	23 161	2 710 248*
July	72 112	375 565*	29 629	2 090 982

* Highest total during the Korean War.

While the Communists were attempting to beat the armistice deadline by pushing southwards on the ground, the UN leaders were using their superior airpower for two main purposes:

- a. To nudge the Communist negotiators through difficult phases of the Panmunjom talks.
- b. To ensure that a deployment of Red air units in North Korea immediately prior to the ceasefire would not threaten the security of South Korea.

These tasks were undertaken in addition to the routine counter-air, interdiction and close support missions.⁴²

With resumption of the talks at the end of April the Communists soon fell into the familiar pattern of delay, stall and stalemate. This time the bone of contention was the duration of the proposed explaining period.

40. Miller, et al.: Korea 1951-1953, pp.280-284; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.430-431.

41. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.477.

42. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.606-608, 615.

In addition, the two parties were having difficulty in agreeing on a neutral nation to handle the repatriates.⁴³ By the first week of May stalemate once more loomed at Panmunjom. Gen. Clark felt that the time had come to look more closely at a target system that the FEAF intelligence officer had been studying for some time. This was a series of irrigation dams along the MSR to the north of P'yongyang.⁴⁴ These were attacked the next week when the irrigation dams at Toksan and Chasan were bombed on 13 and 16 May respectively. The flood waters from these dams destroyed large sections of the communication routes between the Yalu and P'yongyang, sweeping railway lines, bridges and marshalling yards away in their path. The Kuwonga dam was bombed on 22 May and again on 29 May but the damage was minimal as the Communists had lowered the water level.⁴⁵ The reaction of the enemy to these events was a propaganda campaign to make the world believe that the whole irrigation system had been devastated and the entire Korean rice crop destroyed. In spite of these accusations, agreement was reached at Panmunjom and the truce documents were finalized by 8 June.⁴⁶

The second challenge taken up by FEAF during the closing months of the war related to the primary task of any air force, the maintenance of air superiority. The UNC realized that the Communists could use an armistice to introduce combat aircraft in the event of a resumption of hostilities.⁴⁷ On 28 April 1952 a compromise agreement had been reached to the effect that the armistice terms would make no mention of the reconstruction of airfields but would ban the introduction of any additional troops or

43. Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.424-431.

44. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.624-625.

45. Staff Study: The Attack on the Irrigation Dams in North Korea (Stewart, (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), pp.173-180; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.626-627.

46. Staff Study: The Attack on the Irrigation Dams in North Korea (Stewart, (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), p.183; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.431.

47. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.636; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, pp.124-125.

equipment into Korea after the ceasefire. These terms were finally written into the agreement signed on 27 July 1953.⁴⁸

Thus the OCAF and the NKAF had considerable warning of the restrictions that would be placed upon the creation of an air order-of-battle once the armistice agreement came into effect. The information brought back by FEAF reconnaissance flights during the spring of 1953 indicated that the enemy intended to beat these restrictions by repairing the North Korean airfields and then rushing a maximum number of combat aircraft on to these strips during the last hours before the agreement became effective. To counter this plan Gen. Weyland listed 35 North Korean airfields and directed his air forces to keep them unserviceable. The initial neutralization attacks took place in mid-June. These were followed up with further raids during the last week of the war. UN air superiority during the post-armistice period was thereby assured.⁴⁹

INITIAL 2 SQN OPERATIONS ON THE SABRES

On returning to operations in the spring of 1953, 18 FBW and 2 Sqn SAAF were equipped to play a far more versatile role in making their contribution towards the general effort of the 5AF. The F-86F was not only more effective than the F-51D in the fighter-bomber role but it also gave 18 FBW a formidable counter-air capability. As a result, the South Africans were tasked with the full range of missions during the last few months of the war, including counter-air, interdiction, ResCAP and close air support.

48. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.636; Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.173; Armistice Agreement, Panmunjom, 8.6.1953 reprinted in Hermes: Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p.519.

49. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.636-637.

They also took part in the attacks on the irrigation dams and in the airfield neutralization programme. The table below shows how the available 2 Sqn effort was distributed over the various types of missions. The irrigation dam attacks have been classified as interdiction and the raids on the airfields as counter-air missions.

Table 12 Phase Five: Period 4 Analysis of Combat Sorties (Percentages of Total).

Month	Interdiction	Close Support	ResCAP	Counter-Air	
April	55	1		44	50
May	44	35		21	51
June	31	35	2	31	52
July	34	31	4	31	53
Total	41	25,5	1,5	32	

The figures for March 1953 have been omitted from the above table. In accordance with the SAF directive of 13 January 1953, all 2 Sqn combat missions during March and the first two weeks of April were counter-air patrols.⁵⁴ These counter-air patrols either took the form of sweeps along the Yalu River, or of air alerts along the west coast and the bomblines (Line Easy Patrols). The Yalu sweeps were made with elements of other 18 FBW squadrons in an effort to entice the MIG-15's to cross into Korea and engage in combat. The air alerts were single flight missions intended to provide top cover for F-84 Thunderjets engaged in frontline close support and interdiction tasks.⁵⁵

Barely a week after the first operation sorties on F-86F's the South Africans were considered to be fully ready for air-to-air missions and

50. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, April 1953.

51. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, May 1953.

52. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, June 1953.

53. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, July 1953.

54. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1953; WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, April 1953.

55. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, March 1953; WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, April 1953; Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981.

flights consisting exclusively of SAAF pilots, as opposed to mixed SAAF/USAF flights, became the order of the day. The first mission of this nature was undertaken by Omdt Gerneke, Lt Stocks, Capt. Pienaar and Lt Jean de Wet on 18 March 1953.⁵⁶ Before this stage was reached, however, a South African pilot was involved in an encounter with a MIG-15. This happened on 13 March when Capt Pienaar was flying wingman to the 18 FBG commander, Col M.L. Martin, on a Yalu patrol. Pienaar followed his leader in pursuit of two MIG-15's. Martin emptied his guns into one of the enemy jets and then handed over to Pienaar, who also fired a few well placed bursts. A shortage of fuel forced them to break off the pursuit and they saw their quarry disappear into some cloud. Immediately afterwards a bright glow appeared which led them to believe that the damaged MIG-15 had exploded. This "kill" was later confirmed but the Pentagon gave credit to the American colonel.⁵⁷

On 6 April the three squadrons of 18 FBW were instructed to commence air-to-ground training and the next day dive bombing practice began.⁵⁸ Within a week they were ready for their first ground attack operation, and on 14 April Col Martin led 12 aircraft, including 4 SAAF Sabres, on an attack on stockpiles hidden in a west coast village just south-east of Haeju. They placed all their 227kg bombs in the designated target area, but they found that the minimum altitude restriction was as much an impediment to accurate bombing with the F-86F as it had been with the F-51D.⁵⁹ Thereafter, the 2 Sqn effort during the second half of April was taken up almost exclusively with participation in regular morning and afternoon group raids on troop concentrations and supplies located along

56. SALO: Box 4, SALO/S/204/3/1/IR, CO 2 Sqn - SALO, Secret Signal, 18.3.1953.

57. Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981.

58. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7-8.4.1953.

59. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.4.1953; Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981.

the transportation routes west of the P'yongyang-Kaesong MSR, in the vicinity of Sariwon, P'unysan, Ongjin and Haeju.⁶⁰





This pattern of operations continued until the last day of the month when variations were introduced with regard to ordnance, targets and type of mission. That day 2 Lt J.H. Krige initiated 2 Sqn operations when he took off at 09h45 to lead a close support mission against mortar positions and trenches along the IX Corps front. Unfortunately the leader became separated from his flight, which then proceeded to bomb a road just north-west of Ch'orwon. The next innovation of the day took place at 11h00 when Cndt Gerneke led a SAAF flight loaded with 454kg bombs instead of the 227kg variety. This was the first time that 2 Sqn Sabres had carried the heavier ordnance and they made good the occasion by delivering six of their eight bombs on to the runway at Sirmak airfield. This was also the final mission of Cndt Gerneke's tour of 86 sorties. He handed over to Cndt Wells on 5 May before returning to South Africa. Capt. Nortje added to the success of the day by leading a SAAF flight of eight aircraft in a raid against enemy troops concentrated 20km west of P'yongyang. All 16 bombs were placed in the target area.⁶¹

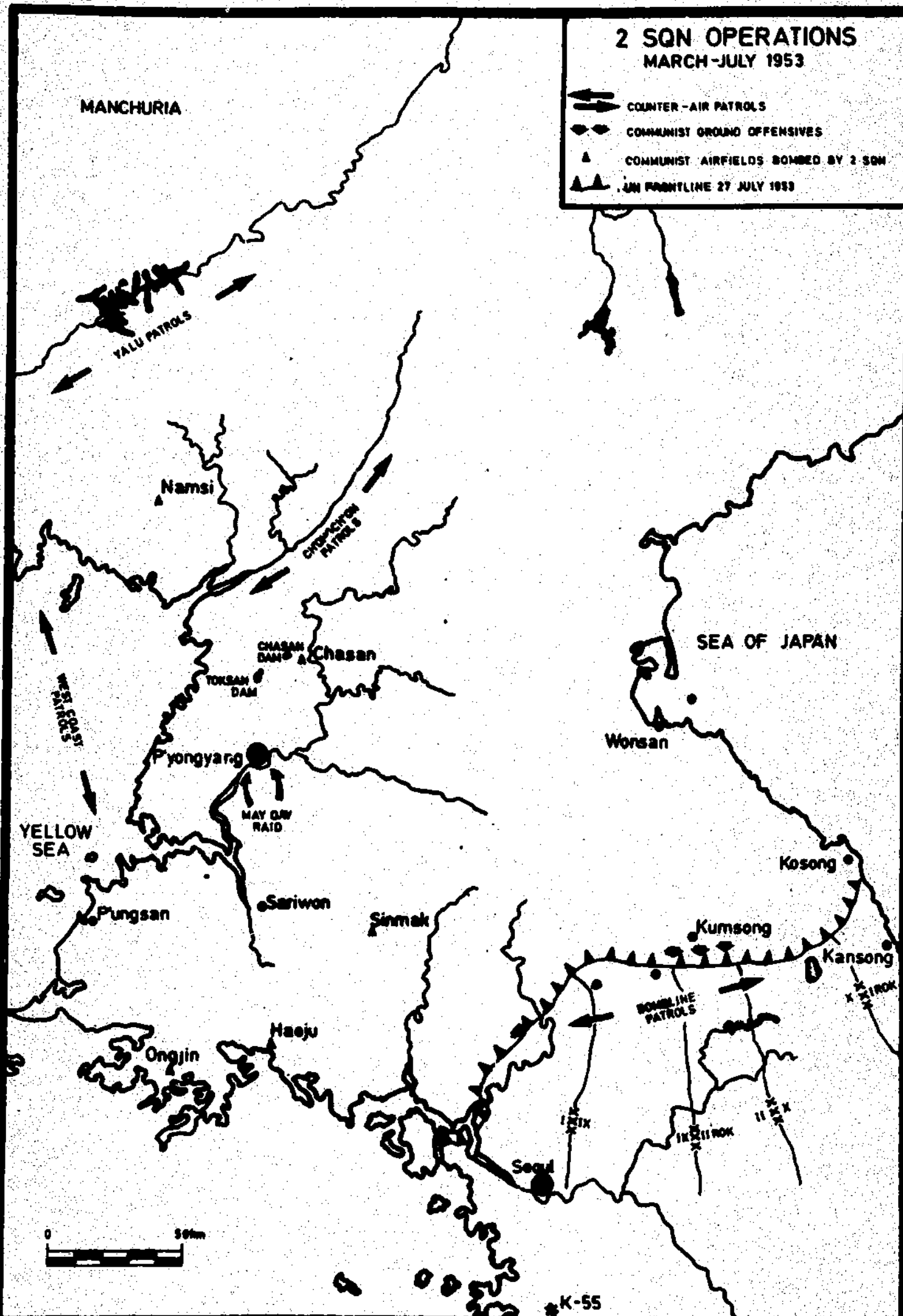
The first months of operations on Sabres were not without loss, but fortunately no pilots became casualties. On the afternoon of 19 April nine SAAF Sabres flew in a group formation of 24 aircraft against a troop concentration just south of the Sariwon-Sohung railway line. The dive bombing attack was a success with the last man over the target, Lt J.J. Koekemoer, scoring a direct hit on two large buildings. On returning to K-55 Lt P.J. Visser discovered that his F-86F "Kevric" (No.615) did not respond when he attempted to operate the landing gear, speed

60. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 15-29.4.1953.

61. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.4.1953; WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.5.1953.

2 SQN OPERATIONS MARCH-JULY 1953

-  COUNTER-AIR PATROLS
-  COMMUNIST GROUND OFFENSIVES
-  COMMUNIST AIRFIELDS BOMBED BY 2 SQN
-  UN FRONTLINE 27 JULY 1953



K-55

brakes or flaps. He cut the engine while still 5km out and at 90m and carried out a belly landing. The pilot was uninjured but the aircraft was beyond repair. On investigation it was found that burnt out field windings on a generator had caused a complete electrical failure.⁶²

THE LAST ROUND OF REPLACEMENTS

Two batches of replacement pilots arrived at Osan during the time that 2 Sqn was engaged in winning its spurs on the F-86F. On 20 January, Lts J. de Wet, J.R. Morris, I.W. Gow and 2 Lt A.S. Rae reported for duty. All these pilots had had the experience of a Korean tour on Mustangs.⁶³ Two months later, on 22 March, four more pilots arrived, they were Capt. M.H. Delpont and 2 Lts R.H. Anderson, J.H. Roberts and W. van Heerden.⁶⁴ In addition to the conversion training and the re-introduction of the main group of pilots to operations, these new arrivals had to be trained on the new aircraft. Overall the training went smoothly and there was only one mishap. On 21 April, 2 Lt J.H. Roberts lost direction on his return from a practice mission. His Sabre (No.613) ran out of fuel and he glided towards K-2 guided by a F-84 pilot, but he did not make it and was forced to eject at 914m. He parachuted to safety without incident.⁶⁵

The spring of 1953 also saw the final rotation of SAAF ground personnel in Korea. On 2 April, Capt. C.J. Slabbert and 25 other ranks arrived at K-55 and were welcomed with a party at the NCO's Hizikazimba Club which had been temporarily housed in a tent. On that same evening a squadron tradition

62. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.4.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/112/AIR, 2 Lt P.J. Visser: Sworn Affidavit, 19.4.1953.

63. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.1.1953.

64. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.3.1953.

65. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 21.4.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/113/AIR, 2 Lt J.H. Roberts: Sworn Affidavit, 23.4.1953.

was revived when a newly constructed "Rorke's Inn" was handed over to 2 Sqn by the CO of the 839th Aviation Battalion Engineers. This occasion was marked by entertaining 55 American officers.⁶⁶ On 11 April the men who had been relieved by Capt. Slabbert's draft, Capt. E.J. van Hoepen and 25 airmen, left for South Africa.⁶⁷ Further arrivals from the Union were Capt. W.J. Roots and 37 technicians who landed at Yokohama on 5 May. They were immediately sent to Tsuki for a three week familiarization course.⁶⁸

Other events which affected the squadron at this time were the South African general election and the first release of POW's taken in Korea. Under supervision of two officers from the Liaison Headquarters, the South African personnel at K-55 registered their votes on the morning of 14 April.⁶⁹ This somewhat solemn occasion co-incided with celebrations brought on by the announcement the previous day that a South African prisoner was to be released during "Operation Little Switch". No information had been given regarding the identity of the fortunate POW.⁷⁰ Speculation came to an end a week later when, much to everybody's surprise, 2 Lt Gasson was among the first UN prisoners to be released.⁷¹

The reduced tempo of operations and the coming of the Korean spring made it possible for the SAAF personnel to spend slightly more time than usual on recreational activities. Although relations with their American comrades were excellent, the nature of the team sports favoured by the South Africans did not invite participation by the Americans, and the sportsmen of 2 Sqn had to rely upon their Commonwealth ties in order to

66. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.4.1953.

67. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.4.1953.

68. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.5.1953.

69. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 4.4.1953.

70. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 13.4.1953; SALO: Box 9, SALO/S/823/2/ORG, War History, April 1953.

71. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.4.1953; SALO: Box 9, SALO/S/823/2/ORG, War History, April 1953.

get some outside competition.⁷² On 7 March the squadron actually called a halt to training and stood down to play rugby against a New Zealand team in Seoul.⁷³ Later that same month a South African team again visited the South Korean capital to meet a team from a British Field Maintenance Unit on the soccer field.⁷⁴ On 28 March a New Zealand rugby team visited Osan and fought the SAAF team to a draw in a muddy paddy field.⁷⁵ The season was finished off with a rugby tour to Japan, when at the end of April Maj. Wells left for Tokyo with 17 players. They were victorious against a Commonwealth team at Ebisu (37-3) but lost against the students of a Waseda University (13-21).⁷⁶

FINAL SAAF OPERATIONS DURING THE KOREAN WAR

By the end of April 1953 the combat squadrons of 18 FBW were capable of undertaking the whole range of operations expected of a fighter-bomber unit. During the last three months of the war the 2 Sqn effort was evenly distributed over counter-air, interdiction and close support missions, with the occasional ad hoc ResCAP as a further variation (Table 12).⁷⁷ The month of May opened with an air operation designed to upset the Communists, a May Day air raid on their principal propaganda organ, Radio P'yongyang. This target had survived a B-29 attack in January, only to go off the air for a short time following a B-29 strike on 15 February which cut the power to the long range transmitters. During the May Day strike the 4 and 51 FIW's provided top cover while the attacking force, consisting of the 8 and 18 FBW's, including eight SAAF Sabres led by Capt. J.F. Nortje, passed over

72. Maj. M. Winstanly: Recorded Interview, Port Elizabeth, 24.2.1953.

73. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7.3.1953.

74. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary 25.3.1953.

75. WDM: Box 33, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28.3.1953.

76. WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.4.1953.

77. Vide, p.413.

as if heading towards the Yalu and then suddenly let down to drop their 454kg bombs on the radio station. The enemy flak batteries were taken completely by surprise and proved ineffective. After the last bomb had fallen Gen. Barcus, who had personally commanded the operation, circled over P'yongyang and using a radio frequency known to be monitored by enemy intelligence, promised further raids in retaliation for propaganda directed against the 5AF.⁷⁸

Two days later the SAAF took part in the first of a new series of strikes against the North Korean airfields. Six 2 Sqn Sabres carried 227kg bombs to Sinmak airfield and succeeded in placing eight of the twelve on the runway.⁷⁹ Other operations during May 1953 consisted mainly of participation in group raids on concentrations of enemy troops along the P'yongyang-Kaesong railway line and along the west coast, air-alert patrols between Ch'o-do Island and the Yalu mouth, and close support missions against artillery and mortar positions, and bunkers along the M.R. Besides having the advantage of heavier weapons, the 5AF close support effort was no longer hampered by bad weather over the target areas. The technique of guiding fighter-bombers with MPQ-? radar had been greatly improved, and 2 Sqn pilots were frequently called upon to fly in large formations and drop their bombs through the overcast on the command of a ground controller.⁸⁰

Two of the SAAF's Sabres came close to being written off during this period. On 19 May 2 Lt J.H. Coetzee found that the nose wheel of his F-86F (No.619) was not fully locked on landing. The circuit breaker had popped before the landing gear had completed the down cycle and had passed unnoticed. This resulted in a nose wheel collapse at the end of the landing

78. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.5.1953; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.610-511.

79. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 3.5.1953.

80. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, May 1953.

run.⁸¹ Ten days later 2 Lt M.D. Gedye had a far more spectacular escape when he joined 11 other SAAF pilots in a rehearsal for a mass fly-past over Seoul to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Just after take off the control tower informed him that he had lost the outer cover of a tyre. Undaunted he carried on with the exercise and when the formation returned to K-55 after 50 minutes they were welcomed by fire engines, ambulances, crash tenders and a tense crowd. Gedye made a perfect landing on the remaining canvas cover and inner tube, both of which stayed intact.⁸² Ironically, the actual fly-past, which was due to have taken place on 31 May, was cancelled owing to poor weather conditions.⁸³ However, 2 Sqn eventually had its chance to participate, when on 2 June ten SAAF Sabres marked Coronation Day by flying over the Commonwealth Division's sector of the frontline in an "E" formation.⁸⁴

Operational flying by SAAF pilots reached a peak during June 1953 with a total for the month of 400 combat sorties. The bulk of these were flown in direct and indirect support of the II ROK Corps, which was in the forefront of the resistance to a final Communist offensive to the south of Kumsong. When the ground situation on the II ROK Corps front deteriorated in mid-June the newly appointed 5AF commander, Lt-Gen. S.E. Anderson, waived the minimum altitude restrictions and ordered all out support for the ground troops. Along with the other squadrons of 18 FBW, 2 Sqn responded with direct close air support along the frontline, and with reces along the north-south supply routes in the rear of the attacking Communist divisions.⁸⁵

Typical of this air support was a mission flown by 2 Lt L.A. Dixon,

81. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19.5.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/114/AIR, Squadron Commander's Comments.

82. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.5.1953.

83. WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 31.5.1953.

84. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2.6.1953.

85. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, June 1953; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.631.

Capt. M.H. Delpont and two USAF pilots on 13 June. Their targets were four heavy AA batteries 24km north-east of Kumsong. No ground fire was observed and they had no difficulty in placing all their bombs in the target area. Nevertheless, Dixon's Sabre was hit in the nose by shrapnel and the radar equipment was damaged.⁸⁶

Three more SAAF Sabres sustained battle damage before the Communist ground offensive was brought to a halt. On 15 June, No.607, flown by 2 Lt M.C. Botha was hit in the port elevator by small arms fire, and the same day No.620 (2 Lt L.L. Wilmans) suffered minor damage from automatic weapons fire.⁸⁷ Small arms fire was also responsible for battle damage to the speed brakes of No.614 (2 Lt J.H. Roberts) three days later.⁸⁸

The South African contribution to halting the Communist ground offensive can be seen in perspective when it is noted that during June 1953 FEAF aircraft flew 7 023 close support sorties. This was supplemented by 1 348 Marine Air Wing sorties and 537 by non-American UN fighters, of which 140 were credited to 2 Sqn.⁸⁹

The SAAF also participated in the airfield neutralization programme. On 10 June four SAAF F-86F's delivered their bombs on to the revetments and taxiways of Chasan airfield. This was followed up the next day with an attack of Haeju by eight SAAF Sabres, and the day after a further eight "Cheetah" aircraft flew as part of a 36 aircraft formation against Onjin airfield.⁹⁰ With one possible exception, all the North Korean airfields had been neutralized by 23 June 1953.⁹¹ In a small way 2 Sqn also had a hand in the controversial strikes against the irrigation dams. On 14 June,

86. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, 13.6.1953.

87. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, 15.6.1953.

88. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, 18.6.1953.

89. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, June 1953; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, pp.631-632.

90. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, 10-12.6.1953.

91. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.637.

four SAAF Sabres joined a 16 aircraft 18 FBW formation in a strike against the Toksan Reservoir. All their 454kg bombs fell into the water and the damage to the wall was negligible.⁹²

The month ended with numerous SAF missions being directed to render close support in unfavourable weather conditions under the control of the TADC's and their MPQ-2 radar. The radar control facilities received more aircraft than they could handle and the excess missions were directed to make "free drops" well behind enemy lines. South African flights had this rather disconcerting experience on 27 and 29 June.⁹³

As 2 Sqn entered its last month of operations in Korea the summer monsoon made its presence felt. Operational flying was impossible from 2 to 9 July. The squadron commander, accompanied by Capt. J.J. Koekemoer, used the lull to visit the Commonwealth Division. While they enjoyed the hospitality extended by the Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and British officers, they attended the GOC's briefing, visited the frontline, and discussed various ways of improving close support techniques.⁹⁴ When the weather finally improved, close support, interdiction and air alerts continued with the MPQ-2 radar making missions possible in marginal conditions.⁹⁵

On 20 July the SAAF participated in the follow up strikes against the enemy airfields when Cndt Wells led nine Sabres armed with 227kg bombs against the runway at Sinuiju. All their bombs landed in the target area.⁹⁶ A further attack was led by Cndt Wells two days later when five SAAF F-86F's struck Namsi airfield.⁹⁷

The only SAAF Sabre to be lost to enemy action in Korea went down on

92. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, 14.6.1953.

93. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27,29.6.1953.

94. WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, 2-9.6.1953; WDM: Box 34, 2 Sqn War Diary, June 1953, Appendix A, Report on Visit to Commonwealth Division, 8.6.1953.

95. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, July 1953.

96. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 20.7.1953.

97. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 22.7.1953.

21 July. 2 Lt G. Thom was on his 72nd combat sortie, which was an armed recce from Wonsan to P'yongyang, when the leader aborted and he had to take over. He continued the recce with 2 Lt H.H. Ludick and Lt B.K. Ross. On their home run the leader saw some vehicles through a gap in the clouds. He decided to go down but told the others not to follow as there was heavy AA fire in the vicinity. As he pulled out of his strafing run he felt a thud and saw the fire warning lights come on. He climbed to 2 700m with flames spurting from the mid-section of his F-86F (No.616).⁹⁸

He ejected immediately and his parachute carried him safely on to a hillside just north-east of P'yongyang. The downed pilot made contact with Ross on the URC/4 emergency radio and told him that he had left the parachute on the slope and was heading for cover in the ravine. Ross called on the emergency channel and two SAAF flights were diverted from an interdiction mission to cover their comrade. A helicopter was dispatched, but poor weather, confusion with regard to the co-ordinates, and a lack of fuel resulted in the Sabres having to leave the scene before a rescue could be effected. However, a rescue attempt would have borne little fruit as the South African pilot had already fallen into the hands of a North Korean militia section which was under the control of a Chinese officer. During the course of the week that followed Thom underwent a number of field interrogations while he and his captors were billeted in North Korean homes. On 28 July the South African POW noticed that the ever present UN aircraft had disappeared from the North Korean skies. That evening his "hosts" left the house and returned late in a celebratory mood. He concluded that the war had ended, although he could not get his Oxford-educated interrogator to admit this fact.

98. Sources for this incident are WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 21.7.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/115/AIR, Lt B.K. Ross: Sworn Affidavit, 21.7.1953; SALO: Box 2, SALO/S/27/1/AIR, Report on the Interrogation of ex-POW 2 Lt G. Thom, September 1953; Brig. G. Thom: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 25.9.1981.

For those pilots and ground crew still serving with the squadron in Korea, the last week of the war seemed interminable. By mid-July the feeling that the peace talks would never prove decisive caused a drop in morale. The future seemed very uncertain. Each morning and afternoon the pilots flew regular MQ-2 bombing missions, which they felt were impersonal and lacked challenge. Finally, on the afternoon of 26 July the world received the news that the truce would be signed at 10h00 the next day and that it would come into effect 12 hours later. While Col du Toit and the other UN Liaison Officers travelled to Panmunjom to attend the signing ceremony the 5AF prepared for a final effort with the objective of preventing the last minute transfer of a Communist air force from Manchuria to North Korea.⁹⁹

The 2 Sqn ground crew did not spare themselves and on the morning of 27 July, 14 of the 16 Sabres on the squadron strength stood ready for the final day of combat. These included the first improved Sabre to be allocated to the SAAF. The wings had been widened by 15,24cm at the wing root and by 7,62cm at the tip (6 x 3 wing), and had been fitted with fixed leading edges. The squadron flew four missions on the last day of the war and established a new record for operations on the F-86F, with 41 combat sorties during the course of a single day. From 11h00 to 13h20 a formation of 14 SAAF Sabres patrolled the Yalu River. They were succeeded by a similar patrol of 14 aircraft along the Ch'ongch'on River. At 17h00 another four "Cheetahs" took off for a Yalu patrol, followed at 18h00 by two more SAAF flight plus one reserve. The last flight was led by Cndt Wells and when it returned to base at 20h00 the No.4, 2 Lt L.L. Wilmans, was credited with the last SAAF combat sortie of the Korean War. The war had ended for 2 Sqn with a remarkable performance. They had averaged 2,93 sorties per aircraft on 27 July in comparison with 1,92 for 12 Sqn and 1,76 for 67 Sqn. That evening all the

99. WTM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23-26.7.1953; SALO: Box 9, SAIO/S/823/2/1, SALO War Diary, July 1953.

SAAF personnel at K-55 combined to celebrate the cessation of hostilities. 100

PART III

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 15CONCLUSIONTHE POST-ARMISTICE PERIOD

On the first day of peace in Korea a parade of all ranks of the 18 FBW was addressed by the Wing Commander, Col M.L. Martin. A lone Sabre¹ represented the "Flying Cheetahs" in a formation fly-past at this ceremony. The very next day the post-war flying training programme commenced with 2 Sqn pilots practising combat formations.² The squadron remained operational in Korea until 29 September. During these two months of peace time flying the SAAF pilots were credited with 555 sorties. Some of these involved only training exercises, while others combined training with tasks arising out of a need to maintain watch over the Communist air forces.³ This total of 555 sorties, flown after 27 July on Sabres, may well be compared to the number of operational sorties flown on Sabres up to and including the last day of the war.⁴ The more reliable of these totals vary between 1 427 and 1 454.⁵

The post-war training included combat formation flying, air-to-air firing with both towed targets and ciné gun cameras, ground control approaches, low and high level cross-country flights, a mock attack on an airfield (Operation Spyglass, 22.8.1953) and a naval affiliation exercise with HIS Ocean.⁶ It was during the last mentioned manoeuvre that the SAAF suffered its only post-war casualty. Four "Cheetah" Sabres were involved in this

1. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28.7.1953.

2. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.7.1953.

3. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28-31.7.1953; WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1953.

4. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28-31.7.1953; WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1953.

5. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28-31.7.1953; WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 36, 2 SQDN/S/825/4/ORG, Statistical Data, March-September 1953; 2 Sqn Unit History File: Summary of South Africa Operations by Quarter, July 1950 through 27 July 1953.

6. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28-31.7.1953; WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1953.

exercise, which took place off the west coast on 28 August. On completing his dummy runs 2 Lt M.C. Botha reported to the leader, Cndt Wells, that his aircraft (No.614) was not responding normally to the controls. On being instructed to climb towards the coast he reported that his controls were locked on both the alternate and the emergency systems. When he ejected at approximately 4 000m he was over the land, but he was blown out to sea and finally his parachute was seen to hit the water about 2km off-shore and 45km south of Inch'on. Meanwhile, Cndt Wells, who had run short of fuel, had returned to base. Taking another aircraft he returned to the scene and led helicopters, amphibians and two naval units in a fruitless search for the downed pilot. The air-sea rescue operation continued for two days and was only called off after thorough questioning of the inhabitants of an island in the vicinity failed to yield any useful information. Ironically, Botha had returned from an escape and evasion course only the day before he went down in the Yellow Sea.⁷

The UNC was wary of a sneak attack across the armistice line by Communist air and ground elements and a constant watch was maintained by flights of four to eight aircraft which patrolled the area to the immediate south of the demarcation line. Similar missions also kept a vigilant eye on the east and west coasts. These patrols were backed up by flights on ground alert. 2 Sqn was involved in both these defensive measures until it finally stood down on 29 September. The squadron was placed on ground alert for stretches of four to six days, broken by two to three days' relief from this duty. While on ground alert the squadron usually had to maintain a single four aircraft flight on 15 minutes stand-by from before sunrise until after sunset. This stand-by flight was supported by a further eight Sabres which were placed on call at first and last light. Occasionally the JOC would

7. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 27-30.8.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 18, 2 SQDN/8/1/116/AIR, Cndt J.S.R. Wells: Sworn Affidavit, 28.8.1953.

scramble the waiting aircraft. When this happened on 9 August, three SAAF Sabres managed to get airborne in 12 minutes, but the fourth member of the flight was forced to ground abort as a result of a technical malfunction.⁸

Relieved of the physical demands and the psychological tensions of daily combat and averaging just over nine sorties per day on training and patrols, the members of 2 Sqn found that they had time on their hands. This, in addition to the prospect of a homeward journey on a date as yet unannounced, made it necessary to provide distractions for the restless airmen. Among other diversions, musketry training was arranged during August, but the highlight of the month proved to be a visit by the Combined Services Entertainment Unit which gave a much appreciated concert at K-55. During the first two weeks of September excess energy was channelled into the levelling and preparation of rugby and cricket pitches. These facilities were put to good use during the second half of the month.⁹ On 19 September 2 Sqn SAAF played cricket against 77 Sqn RAAF, and six days later a SAAF team departed from K-55 to play a match against the 10th New Zealand Transport Company. The final sporting event in Korea was a rugby match against 77 Sqn RAAF, which was followed by a traditional braaivleis.¹⁰

Besides these sporting activities and the demobilization parade of 28 July, various other incidents also helped to break the monotony. On 7 August the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, H.C. Lodge, visited the squadron, to be followed three days later by Gen. West, the GOC of the Commonwealth Division. 2 Sqn rounded off this busy week

8. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28-31.7.1953; WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1953.

9. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, August 1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, September 1953.

10. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19,25,30.8.1953.

by providing the Guard for a Retreat Ceremony held on 14 August.¹¹ Certain members were also gratified to receive some acknowledgement for their efforts when the following awards were made:

- a. The American DFC to Cndt J.S.R. Wells and Maj. J.F. Nortje on 27 August.
- b. The Bronze Star to Capt. J.B. Davis, Capt. J.F. Smits, Lt H.C. Knight and A/Col C. de la Rosa on 19 August.¹²

THE RELEASE OF THE POW'S

Among the occurrences that gave heart to the South Africans waiting in Korea to go home, and to the nation in general, were the intermittent releases of the SAAF prisoners of war. On 5 August, the officer who had been held the longest was released first. This was Lt H. MacDonald who, having been captured on 1 June 1951, had been a POW for 26 months.¹³ The last of the seven South Africans to be returned to the UN during "Operation Big Switch", as this exchange of prisoners became known, was 2 Lt G. Thom who had been held for only nine weeks. He regained his freedom on 6 September and was in good enough health and spirits to visit his comrades at Osan before departing for South Africa on 18 September.¹⁴

The returning airmen were thoroughly debriefed by UN intelligence officers soon after being handed over at Munsan.¹⁵ The various accounts of

11. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7,10,14.8.1953.

12. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 30.7.1953; WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 19,27.8.1953.

13. WDM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 5.8.1953.

14. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6,12,18.9.1953.

15. The sources of information concerning the experiences of the POW's are Brig. G. Thom: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 25.9.1981; SALO: Box 2, SALO/S/37/1/AIR, Reports on the Interrogations of 2 Lt D.R. Earp, 2 Lt R.E. Earp-Jones, 2 Lt T.R. Fryer, 2 Lt R.E. Gasson, 2 Lt M.I.B. Halley, 2 Lt C. Lombard, Lt H.B. MacDonald, 2 Lt G. Thom.

experiences while in the hands of the Communists have several features in common. They found that the Korean militia, who usually effected the capture, and the civilians were invariably hostile and had to be restrained by Chinese officers and NCO's. Initial interrogations usually took place in the field and en route to the main interrogation centre, the so-called "Coal Mine Camp". During the first few months of captivity these interrogations were frequent and seemed to be interminable. They were conducted by well educated Chinese and Korean officers who had a good command of English and displayed a remarkable knowledge of South African history and politics. Caucasians, possibly Russians, also took their turns at asking questions. The efforts to get information from the POW's were frequently extended to spells of solitary confinement, deprivation of food, threats of summary execution and various other persuasive techniques, depending upon the officer asking the questions.

The information sought by the Communists included details of operational training, squadron organization and strength, armament, tactics, call-signs, tactical control systems, base organization and airfield facilities. The South African prisoners replied with silence or they resorted to various ruses to avoid giving any useful information to the enemy. When possible they colluded to invent plausible stories in order to deceive the interrogators. One officer used the layouts of well known South African taverns as the basis for fictional ground plans of air bases, while another gave Afrikaans obscenities as the names of senior squadron personnel. Mutual support under these circumstances was important. This aspect was typified by an incident during April 1952, when 2 Lt C. Lombard experienced welcome encouragement from fellow prisoners. He had been placed in solitary confinement as punishment for non-co-operation with an enemy interrogator, when he heard traditional South African songs being sung in the adjoining stockade. Four South African pilots, Lt MacDonald and 2 Lts Earp, Earp-Jones and Halley, as well as some British officers, had noticed his

predicament and decided to stiffen his resolve with their serenade.

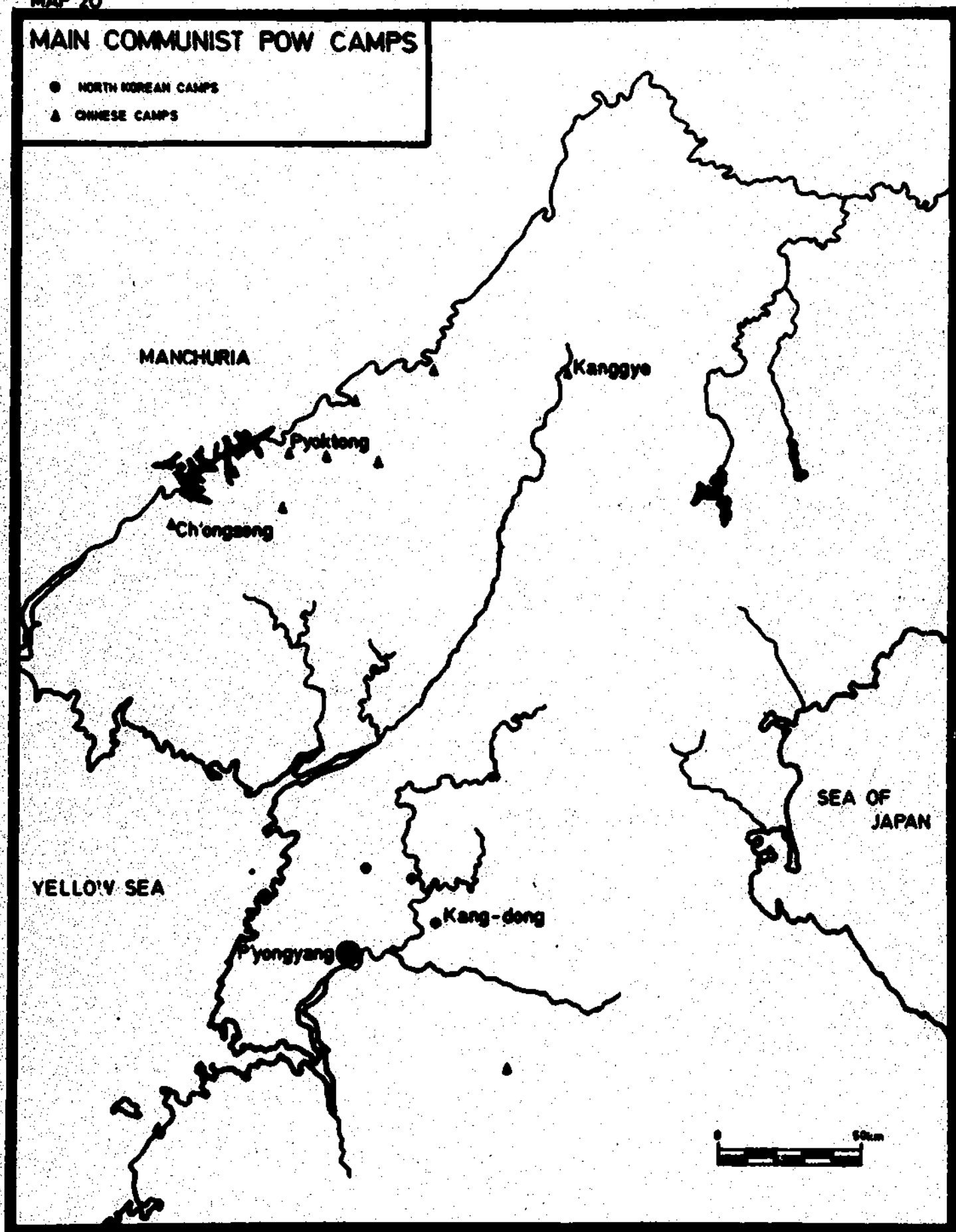
The treatment received by the sick and wounded officers such as Lt MacDonald and 2 Lts Gasson and Fryer, was comparable to the medical care given to the enemy soldiers in a similar condition, but the shortage of medical equipment and supplies caused by UN bombing was evident. The POW's frequently saw other evidence of the effectiveness of the UN air strikes, and on one occasion a B-29 night raid was used as cover for an escape attempt. This attempt, on 2 October 1951, was one of four made by 2 Lt M.I.B. Halley. 2 Lts Earp and Lombard also made unsuccessful attempts to escape and evade recapture. Although the former was relatively easy, the latter proved to be impossible. The escapees were invariably recaptured owing to their distinctive facial features, stature and gait. The North Korean camps were situated to the north-east of P'yongyang and the Chinese camps in a belt south of the Yalu from Kanggye to Chongsong. Occupying the ground between these camps and the sea was an unsympathetic local population. On identifying Westerners they either handed them over to the authorities or forced them to give themselves up by refusing any sort of assistance.

One of the most traumatic experiences which came the way of South African POW's was the "Death March" from Kangdong, just to the north-east of P'yongyang, to Pyoktong on the Yalu. 2 Lts Earp and Halley set out on this journey on 14 November with 41 other prisoners. The relentless pace of the march, general weakness, dysentery, and the ill-treatment meted out by the guards and passing civilians all took their toll. Some of the UN POW's died on the 12 day journey and some of the survivors arrived in Pyoktong in critical condition. 2 Lt Halley, who died in Durban in August 1954 from the effects of the treatment he had received as a POW, testified to the personal courage of 2 Lt Earp. He claimed that the support given by Earp to his comrades on this terrible journey strengthened

MAP 20

MAIN COMMUNIST POW CAMPS

- NORTH KOREAN CAMPS
- ▲ CHINESE CAMPS



them both morally and physically, enabling them to withstand the harsh conditions.

THE RETURN OF EQUIPMENT AND FAREWELLS

While the repatriation of the POW's was in progress the SAAF personnel at Osan made tentative arrangements to hand back their equipment. As early as 1 August the Senior Air Liaison Officer had ruled that the draft which had left the Union in September 1952, would be the first to return and that they would enjoy the bonus of air travel.¹⁶ In accordance with this decision, a group of 14 ranks under the command of Capt. P.A. le Grange left K-55 on 7 September to be followed two weeks later by another group of 22 accompanied by Capt. J. Goddard.¹⁷

Other individual officers left during the course of August and September, but when flying ended on 29 September the preparations for the homeward journey began in earnest. On 30 September all 16 Sabres still on 2 Sqn strength were grounded for 100 hour inspections, prior to being returned to the USAF. Altogether the SAAF had taken 22 F-86F's on charge, of which five had been written off and one, No.617, which had crashed with a collapsed nose wheel, had been transferred to the Chinese Nationalist Air Force in May 1953. When the inspections had been completed and the aircraft test flown, they were handed over to various USAF combat units between the 6th and 11th October.¹⁸

The schedule for the withdrawal of the squadron was announced on 2 October. In response to this announcement the stores and administrative personnel worked late into the night in order to complete the return of

16. WEM: Box 35, 2 Sqn War Diary, 1.8.1953.

17. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 7,21.9.1953.

18. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29,30.9.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6-11.10.1953; D. Bekker: List of 2 Sqn Aircraft in Korea (South African Air Force Museum).

all the various items that had been issued by the USAF within the shortest possible time.

Between 5 and 17 October five different groups of SAAF personnel left for Japan en route to South Africa until finally, a rear party of only five officers and 19 other ranks remained in Korea. These departures were accompanied by various farewell gestures. On 6 October, Cndt Wells, together with Lts de Wet and Dixon, travelled to the UN cemetery where they performed the poignant duty of paying the respects of the surviving members of the squadron to those South Africans who would not be going home. A more joyful farewell took place the following day when the 18 FBW held a dinner for the departing SAAF officers, during which the squadron commander received a 18 FBW plaque on behalf of his unit. On 9 October Cndt Wells and Capt. Koekemoer bade farewell to their Commonwealth comrades by flying in formation with two Meteors from 77 Sqn RAAF.¹⁹

As a final tribute to the SAAF the 18 FBW organized a Retreat Ceremony on 28 October. The SAAF flag was to have been lowered by the squadron CO on this occasion. Unfortunately torrential rain prevented the parade from taking place, but the American commander issued a policy directive which ensured that the association between his wing and the SAAF would not be forgotten. It read:

"During the United Nations' action in Korea 2 Squadron, South African Air Force served as an integral part of the 18th Fighter Bomber Wing, United States Air Force. In memory of this living evidence of United Nations' solidarity and in memory of our gallant South African comrades, it is hereby established as a Wing Policy that

19. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, October 1953.



**The Flags of South Africa and the United States of America
on Parade in Korea.**

at all retreat ceremonies held by the wing the playing of our National Anthem shall be preceded by the introductory bars of the South African National Anthem, "Die Stem Van Die Suid Afrika". [sic] All personnel of this Wing will render the same honors to this Anthem as to our own."²⁰

Finally, on 29 October the last four South African officers (the Adjutant had left on 25 October) left Korea. They were Omdt J.S.R. Walls, Capt. M. Winstanly, Capt. D.J.J.C. van Vuuren and Capt. W.J. Roets.²¹ This event signified the end of the SAAF involvement in the Korean War and the Senior Air Liaison Officer in Tokyo sent a simple message to Defence Headquarters in Pretoria:

"The Squadron has been withdrawn from Korea."²²

THE ROLE OF 2 SQN SAAF IN THE KOREAN WAR

The SAAF contribution to the overall UNC air effort can be expressed in terms of statistics relating to sorties flown, damage claimed and casualties suffered. From June 1950 until July 1953 FEAF possessed or controlled an average of 62 squadrons with 1 248 aircraft on strength at any one time. A peak of 70 squadrons was reached during the summer of 1952.²³ The various air forces operating in Korea have been credited with combat sorties as follows:

FEAF	720 980
US Navy	167 552
US Marines	107 303
Other UNC units	44 873 ²⁴

20. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 28.10.1953; 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, October 1953, Appendix C, Wing Policy Number 13, 28.10.1953.

21. 2 Sqn K: Box 54, 2 Sqn War Diary, 29.10.1953.

22. SALO: Box 7, SALO/TS/819/3/1/ORG, SALO - DHQ, 29.10.1953.

23. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.644.

24. R. Jackson: Air War over Korea, p.171; Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.645.

Altogether 352 023 of these were flown by fighter-bomber units,²⁵ including approximately 12 000 by 2 Sqn SAAF.²⁶ Thus it can be calculated that the "Flying Cheetahs" flew 1,158% of all sorties undertaken during the Korean conflict, and 3,423% of all the fighter-bomber sorties.

Various sources give different figures for the estimates of damage done to the enemy, his equipment and the infrastructure of North Korea, by the UN air forces and by 2 Sqn. However, there are no significant variations in the figures. The claimed destruction of the following types of targets is indicative of the SAAF contribution:

Table 13 Claims by UN Air Forces and 2 Sqn SAAF (Targets Destroyed).

27

Target	UNC Total	UNC Average (62 squadrons)	2 Sqn Total	2 Sqn as % of UNC Total
Vehicles	82 920	1 337	615	0,742
Tanks	1 327	21	18	1,356
Fd and AA guns	8 663	139	280	3,232
Locomotives	962	16	4	0,416
Rolling Stock	10 407	168	200	1,921
Tunnel Entrances	65	1	4	6,154
Bridges	1 153	19	46	3,989
Buildings	118 231	1 907	3 021	2,555
Railcuts	28 621	461	472	1,647
Enemy KIA	184 808	2 980	2 276	1,232

When the percentages in the last column of this table are compared with the estimation that the SAAF flew 1,158% of the UNC sorties, it is clear that the squadron operated with an above average effectiveness. The damage tabulated

25. Teachner: The Fighter-Bomber in Korea (Air University Quarterly Review, Vol.VII, No.2, Summer 1954), p.78.

26. Vide, pp.394, 427.

27. Weyland: The Air Campaign in Korea (Stewart (ed.): Air Power: The Decisive Force in Korea), p.25; ROK: The History of the United Nations in the Korean War VI, p.53; Jackson: Air War over Korea, p.172; WDM: Boxes 12-26, Return of Daily Missions, March 1951 - August 1952; 2 Sqn K: Box 36, 2 SQDN/S/825/4/ORG, Statistical Data, September 1952 - July 1953.

above was wrought at considerable cost. Altogether 1 986 aircraft were destroyed during the course of the Korean War, an average of 32 per squadron for 62 squadrons. Of these 79 were SAAF Mustangs and Sabres. The total UN air force personnel killed was 1 180, an average of 19 per squadron for 62 squadrons. The SAAF suffered 35 fatal casualties or cases still classified as missing in action.²⁸

The above figures are largely based on approximations and estimations, as well as unconfirmed air crew claims. If judged merely by statistics, the SAAF contribution to the overall UN effort does seem relatively insignificant. However, when compared to the performance of the average UN squadron the SAAF representatives excelled in almost every respect, including the price they paid in pilots and aircraft. Just as the impact made by an individual squadron is the sum of the efforts of its members, however insignificant, so the total contribution of an air force towards the war-winning effort is the sum of the contributions made by each particular unit. The overall performance of 2 Sqn in Korea cannot thus be judged by statistics alone, but also by attempting to determine how adequately 2 Sqn fulfilled the operational task assigned to it in accordance with the overall mission of the tactical air force to which it was attached. The SAAF mission in Korea was to co-operate with the ground forces in the destruction of the enemy, by executing counter-air, interdiction, close support and reconnaissance operations.²⁹ The mission letter issued to the CO of 2 Sqn SAAF on 18 December 1950 was in accordance with this concept of the role of a tactical air force.³⁰

28. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.645.

29. Vide, pp.49-50.

30. Vide, pp.177-178.

In answer to the above, it can be stated that all the available evidence testifies to the professionalism with which the SAAF in general, and 2 Sqn in particular, strove to accomplish the Korean mission. This was evident in the day-to-day efficiency, extending over thirty-two months of operations, with which both air and ground crews approached their work. The pilots went into action thoroughly trained and flying machines which were maintained at a high standard and, in spite of occasional lapses, showed their ability to work effectively as part of a much larger team in accordance with laid down procedures. On the rare occasions when individuals were found guilty of unbecoming conduct prompt action was taken which prevented such deviant behaviour from affecting the discipline and morale of the squadron.³¹

The fighting qualities of the South African airmen were formally recognised by three governments, those of South Africa, the United States of America and the Republic of Korea. This recognition took the form of the following Honours and Awards, amongst others:

South Africa:	797 Korean War Medals
The United States:	2 Silver Stars
	3 Legions of Merit
	50 Distinguished Flying Crosses

31. Maj.-Gen. R. Clifton: Letter, 31.3.1982; Brig. S.v.B. Theron: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 13.1.1982; Cmt. N.J. Swart: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 28.9.1981; SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR, Report on the Conversion of 2 Squadron onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953; SALO: Box 4, 2 SQN/S/42/1/AIR, Report on Operation of 2 Squadron on F-86F Aircraft, 22.10.1953; LAFS: Box 25, AOS/202/15/3/TR, Syllabus for Special Five Weeks Weapons Course for 2 Squadron Replacements, 19.10.1950; 2 Sqn K: Box 10, 2 SQD/818/3/ORG, CO 2 Sqn - SALO, 2.7.1951, Review of Squadron Organization, Enclosure 7, Conversion Training and Operational Instruction for Replacement Pilots; WDM: Box 4, 2 Sqn War Diary, 6.6.1951; WDM: Box 53, 2 Sqn War Diary, 11.9.1952; WDM: Box 36, 2 Sqn War Diary, 23.4.1953; WDM: Box 8, 2 Sqn War Diary, 16.5.1953; Vide, pp.117-124, 140, 373, 387, 398-405.

- 1 Cluster to DFC
- 40 Bronze Stars
- 176 Air Medals
- 152 Clusters to Air Medals
 - 1 Soldier's Medal
- 1 Ulchi with Silver Star
- 6 Ulchis
- 5 Chungmu with Gold Star
- 4 Chungmu with Silver Star
- 2 Wharang with Gold Star
- 2 Wharang with Silver Star
- 818 Korean War Service Medals

The Republic of Korea:

In addition, 2 Sqn was awarded Presidential Citations by the presidents of both the United States and the Republic of Korea.³²

The South African airmen in Korea also demonstrated sufficient flexibility to allow them to respond appropriately to constantly changing circumstances. The conditions which had a particular influence on the nature and intensity of 2 Sqn operations were:

- a. The fluid, and later the static, ground situation.
- b. The air situation.
- c. The FFAF plans and policies (Interdiction campaigns, air pressure operations).
- d. The strategic restrictions imposed by the UNC and FFAF (Non-violation of Chinese airspace, reserved targets, avoidance of shipping).

32. ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War VI, p.346-347; Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Address to the Royal Aeronautical Society, (No date); 2 Sqn Unit History File: The South African Air Force in the Korean War.

e. Capability of aircraft type being operated.

The effects of the strongest of these influences is best demonstrated by a consideration of those instances where 2 Sqn operations deviated from the norm. 2 Sqn activity peaked in intensity from March to May 1951 and from September to November 1951. In the first instance this can be ascribed to efforts, such as "Operation Saturate", to isolate the battlefield from the Communist sources of supply. This was in indirect support of Gen. Ridgway's offensives.³³ The latter peak can be associated with a continuation of the interdiction campaigns in conjunction with intensive close air support of UN ground troops during the battles for the key ridges in the "Punchbowl" area. This was the period during which the proportion of 2 Sqn sorties allocated to close support reached an unprecedented 38.4%.³⁴

Minimal operational activity took place during September-December 1952. This stage of the war was characterized by a diplomatic stalemate at Panmunjom, and the attempts by both sides to exert military pressure through limited ground offensives. Tactical terrain around the base of the "Iron Triangle" was the prize contested for by both the UN and the Communist armies, as each strove to force his enemy back to the conference table on his own terms. It is noteworthy that, despite the general low intensity of operations, as many as 46% of the SAAF sorties were directed against frontline targets during this period.³⁵

The other remarkable variations in the pattern of 2 Sqn operations were the increases in counter-air sorties from May to August 1951, and from March to July 1953. The first can be attributed to the FEAF airfield neutralization programme which aimed to disrupt the OCF new air

33. Vide, pp.214-219, Appendix A-1.

34. Vide, pp.285-292, Appendix A-1.

35. Vide, pp.371-372, Appendix A-1.

war plan to base a strong air force in North Korea. The record of 32% of 2 Sqn sorties allocated to counter-air operations while flying Sabres during 1953, was in compliance with a directive from the commander of 5AF. He issued this instruction in order to exploit the counter-air capability of the 18 FBW's new F-86F's in the face of a rapid build up of enemy air forces in Manchuria.³⁶

The tactics adopted by 2 Sqn can be seen as a response to a variable set of circumstances of relatively minor importance, that included:

- a. Passive enemy counter measures (concealment, camouflage, deception).
- b. Active enemy counter measures (AA deployment and tactics, hostile aircraft).
- c. The rate and means of Communist recovery from the damage caused by air strikes.
- d. The utilization of opportunities to allow single missions to serve a dual purpose.
- e. Tactical restrictions imposed by 5AF (minimum altitudes, formation size, armament).

Examples of how fighter-bomber tactics changed to meet a fluid situation are numerous. During February 1951 particularly skilful enemy concealment and camouflage was countered by instituting first and last light recones, systematic low altitude searching, and even such imaginative tactics as "Project Tack".³⁷ By April 1951, the enemy had deployed enough AA weapons of various types along the main supply routes to constitute

36. Vide, pp.252-254, 401, 413.

37. Vide, pp.195-196.

a serious danger to low flying aircraft. In addition, the numerous MIG-15's posed a definite threat from another quarter. In response the 5AF armed recon missions were strengthened from two to four aircraft, search techniques were refined and adapted, proximity fuses were fitted for flak suppression and counter-air tactics were worked out. The last mentioned even took into account the manoeuvrability of the F-51's as opposed to the relatively rigid pattern of attack imposed upon the MIG-15's by their high speed.³⁸

The manner in which the OCF and the NKPA mobilized their vast manpower resources to effect the repair of the bomb damage to runways, railway lines and roads, forced the fighter-bomber wings to resort to tactics designed to hamper this work which was usually carried out at night. Ground attack aircraft flying missions just before last light dropped GP bombs fitted with a selection of delay fuses timed to explode the bombs from one to six hours after delivery.³⁹ A similar flexibility in the use of armaments and mission function was demonstrated in the case of the Ch'o-do ResCAP's. During the first months of 1952 ResCAP missions standing by over the west coast were lightly armed with 12,7mm machine guns for the sole purpose of rendering assistance to UN pilots in distress. By the middle of the year it had become evident that these missions could be given an additional task on their return trip. Their armament was increased by the addition of rockets, and later bombs, to enable them to attack enemy artillery positions along the west coast at the end of their Ch'o-do vigils.⁴⁰

38. Vide, pp.199-201, 222-223, 225-226, 286.

39. Vide, pp.183-184.

40. Vide, pp.330, 361.

One of the circumstances which most affected the UN fighter-bomber operations during the latter half of the war was self imposed. In June 1952, the minimum altitude restriction set by the CG 5AF, Lt-Gen. G.O. Barcus, forced the pilots to release their bombs so that they could pull out of their dives above 914m. Bombing accuracy suffered, but the casualty rate dropped dramatically. Between June 1952 and June 1953, when Lt-Gen. S.E. Anderson lifted the restriction to meet the threat of the enemy's last desperate ground offensive, only two SAAF pilots were lost in circumstances which indicated that their aircraft had been hit by ground fire. When the toll taken on SAAF aircraft by ground fire during the course of the war is taken into account, the effect of the minimum altitude restriction on the 2 Sqn casualty rate can be seen in perspective.⁴¹

It is clear that 2 Sqn SAAF, as with other fighter-bomber units of the 5AF, demonstrated a flexibility and tenacity in fulfilling its mission which has entitled it to rightly claim some of the credit, however slight, for the overall achievements of airpower during the Korean campaign. The essential role of airpower in bringing the war to an end has been summed up by the authors of the Republic of Korea publication, The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War VI, with the following remarks:

"Why the Communists finally accepted the United Nations Command's terms for ending the Korean War was a secret which would remain locked in the archives of Moscow and Peking. One thing, however, was clear that the pressure of air attack had forced the Reds to accept the armistice terms. The United Nations Command had

41. Vide, pp.364,421, Appendix A-7.

established a pattern of destruction by air which was unacceptable to the enemy, and the degree of destruction suffered by the Communists, in relation to its resources, was greater than that which the Japanese islands suffered in World War II."⁴²

At the tactical level, in their day-to-day contact with their American allies the SAAF personnel found that they had gained the respect of their fellow UN airmen.⁴³ This attitude towards the "Flying Cheetahs" was given final and unequivocal expression by the Commanding General of FEAF in his farewell tribute:

"I need not dwell on the gallantry, fighting qualities or co-operation of the SAAF - these have been indelibly engraved in the hearts and consciousness of your comrades-in-arms in FEAF. It has been a privilege and an honour for me to command your forces in the field and I have the same pride in the SAAF squadron as in any American unit."⁴⁴

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SAAF PARTICIPATION IN KOREA

A matter of major importance in an appreciation of the role of the SAAF in the Korean War is an assessment of the significance of 2 Sqn participation to the SAAF itself. In considering the impact that the Korean campaign had on the USAF, its official historian concluded:

"From its growth and experience during the Korean hostilities the fledgling United States Air Force emerged as a power better able to maintain the peace through preparedness."⁴⁵

Although the SAAF could not have been described as a fledgling air force

42. ROK: The History of the United Nations Forces in the Korean War VI, p.52.

43. Lt-Gen. R.F. Armstrong: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 23.3.1981; Maj. J.H. Kruger: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 12.3.1981.

44. 2 Sqn Unit History File as quoted by Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar in an Address to the Royal Aeronautical Society (No date).

45. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.667.

at the outbreak of the Korean hostilities, it was relatively small, like the USAF, subject to post-World War II cutbacks.⁴⁶ According to various veterans, including Lt-Gen. A.M. Muller (Chief of the Air Force), Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar (Inspector-General of the Air Force), Maj.-Gen. R. Clifton (2 Sqn OC, January to June 1952) and Brig. S.v.B. Theron (The first CO of the squadron in the Far East), the Korean experience definitely strengthened the South African Air Force. It provided the present leaders with an opportunity to gain operational experience. They agree that although the techniques have changed with the technical improvement of guidance and weapons systems, the basic principles of ground attack and air combat manoeuvre remain the same. This experience is of particular importance in view of the similarity between the ground attack role of the SAAF in Korea and the operational demands being made on the air force at present. Pilots to-day are trained on manuals which have had many of the lessons of the 1950-1953 campaign written into them.⁴⁷

Korea introduced both the pilots and the ground crew of the SAAF to the handling of a modern high speed jet fighter under operational conditions. A whole group of young pilots and technicians were trained on the F-86F in the Far East, and this proved to be invaluable when an improved version of the Sabre, the Canadair CL-13B Sabre Mk6, was purchased by the South African Government in 1956. In the case of the ground crew the South Africans found that they were in a position to exchange ideas with their American counterparts. They found that the USAF used more men and tended to a higher degree of specialization, whereas the SAAF used fewer men with a broader knowledge, which led to high maintenance standards

46. Futrell, et al.: The United States Air Force in Korea, p.663; H. Potgieter and W. Steenkamp: Aircraft of the South African Air Force, pp.33-34.

47. Lt-Gen. A.M. Muller: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 22.9.1981; Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981; Brig. G. Thom: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 25.9.1981; Brig. S.v.B. Theron: Recorded Interview, Johannesburg, 13.1.1982; Cmdt N.J. Swardt: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 28.9.1981; Maj.-Gen. R. Clifton: Letter, 31.3.1982,

under the pressure of continual operations. In particular, Lt J. Goddard's thorough knowledge of the Sabre's new radar gunsight was of value not only to his own squadron but to the whole of the 18 FBW.⁴⁸

The SAAF presence in Korea had political as well as military significance. It had given practical expression to the principle of combined UN action against aggression. The importance of this principle to South Africa was outlined by both the then Prime Minister, Dr D.F. Malan and the Editor of the opposition mouthpiece, The Star, when commenting on the decision to send a South African force to the Far East.⁴⁹ By taking part South Africa had clearly demonstrated its attitude towards Communist expansionism. During a SATV documentary screened in July 1978 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Korean Armistice, Lt-Gen. D.R. Earp pointed out the most important politico-military lesson to South Africa of the Korean War:

"Ek dink die les is opvallend. Ons het geleer hoe die Kommuniste veg. Ons het besef wat gedoen moet word om hulle tee te staan. Hierdie ideologie verander effens van volk tot volk, maar die basiese ideologie verander nie, en as ons teen so 'n vyand wil wen, en ek vermoed dat ons volgende vyand sal Kommunisties wees, dan moet ons voorbereiding baie, baie deeglik wees."⁵⁰

These sombre words echoed the sentiment expressed by President Eisenhower on the signing of the Armistice in July 1953:

"We have won an armistice on a single battleground not peace in the world. We may not now relax our guard or cease our quest."⁵¹

48. 2 Sqn K: Box 4, 2 SQDN/5/102/6/ARM, Radar Gunsight Maintenance; Maj.-Gen. E.A.C. Pienaar: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 24.9.1981; Brig. G.N. Louw: Recorded Interview, Pretoria, 18.3.1981; Brig. G. Thom: Recorded Interview, 25.9.1981; Potgieter and Steenkamp: Aircraft of the South African Air Force, p.59.

49. Vide, pp.92-93.

50. Lt-Gen. D.R. Earp: SATV Documentary, Korea - 'n Terugblik, July 1978.

51. Gen. D.D. Eisenhower as quoted in Miller: Korea: 1951-1953, p.284.

The history of the "Flying Cheetahs" in Korea will remain a proud and significant chapter in the more general history of the SAAF. This sentiment was expressed by the Air Chief of Staff, Brig. H.J. Willmott, in a Special Order of the Day, issued on 28 July 1953:

"The signing of a truce in Korea yesterday marked yet another milestone in the proud history of the S.A. Air Force.

For nearly three years we have maintained a fighter squadron at full strength in a war theatre halfway across the world. It is not necessary for me to enlarge on its achievements or on the renown which it has brought to us as a Service; that is common knowledge. But it is with a feeling of deepest pride that I now take the opportunity of congratulating all those who have been connected with this meritorious effort. Our thoughts go first and foremost to those who have laid down their lives in the cause of freedom. Glory can never be earned without some such sacrifice.

Next we must remember the 264 officers and 555 other ranks who have seen service in the Far East and who have upheld the great tradition of 2 Squadron. They, however, could never have achieved what they did without the solid backing of each and every other member of the Air Force.

This, as always, has been a team effort, and the S.A. Air Force, as was expected, has come up to scratch again. Every member has, in some way or another, contributed towards the success of the squadron and it, in turn has played its vital part in bringing this long-drawn-out campaign to a close.

My heartiest congratulations to you all."⁵²

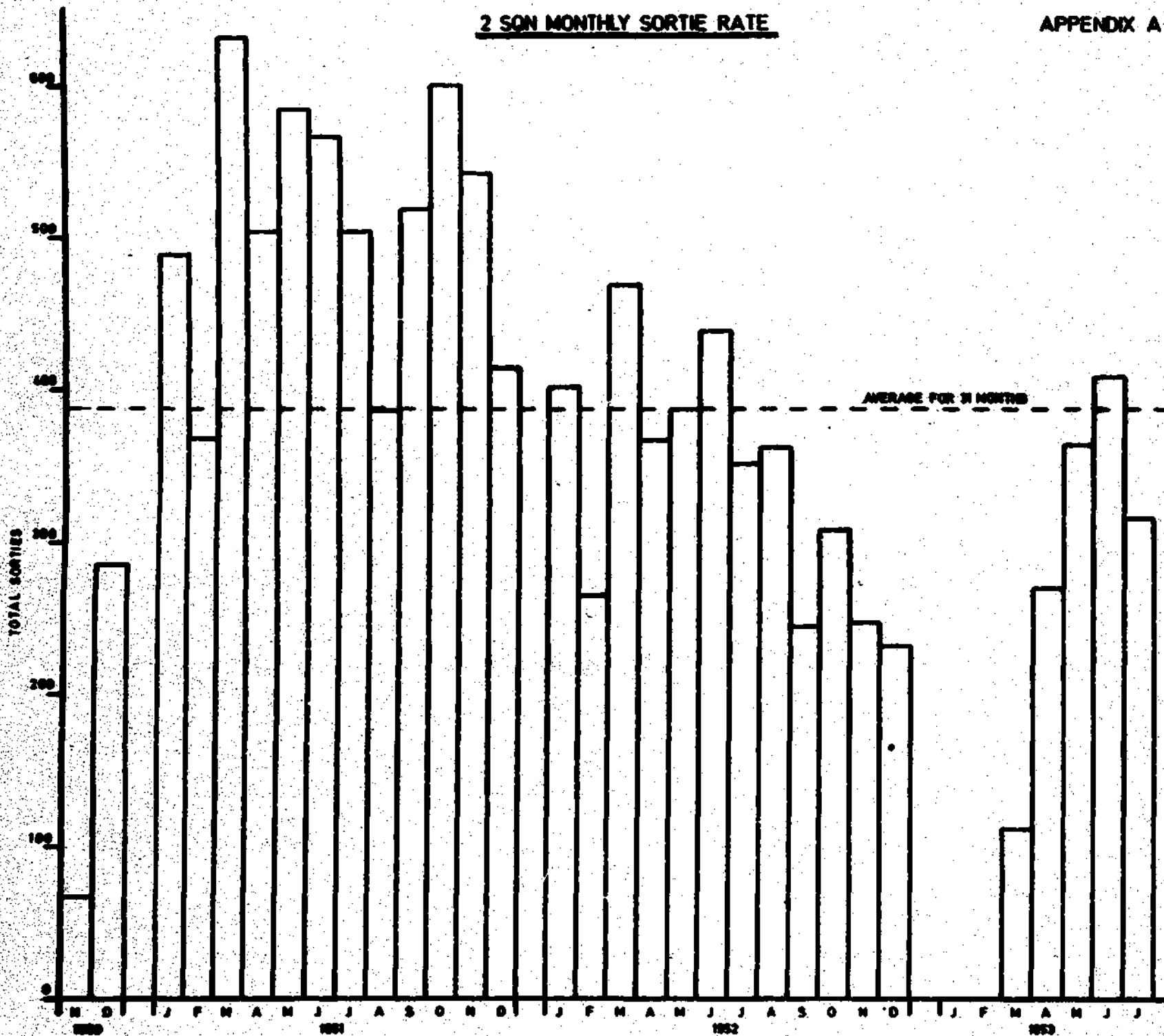
52. SALO: Box 30, SALO/816/1/ORG, Special Order of the Day by Brigadier H.G. Willmott C.B.E. - Air Chief of Staff.

APPENDIX A

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF STATISTICS

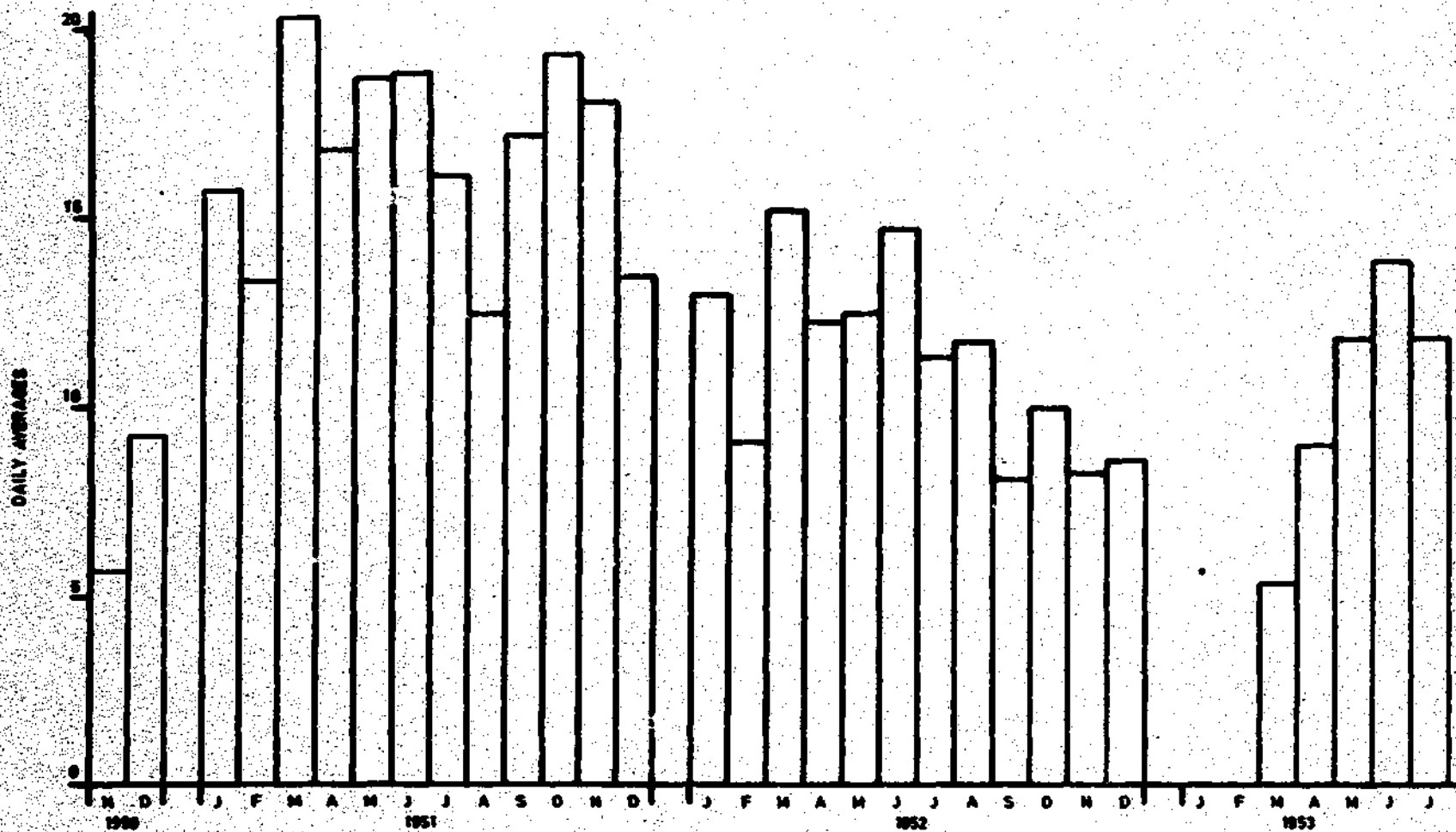
2 SQN MONTHLY SORTIE RATE

APPENDIX A-1



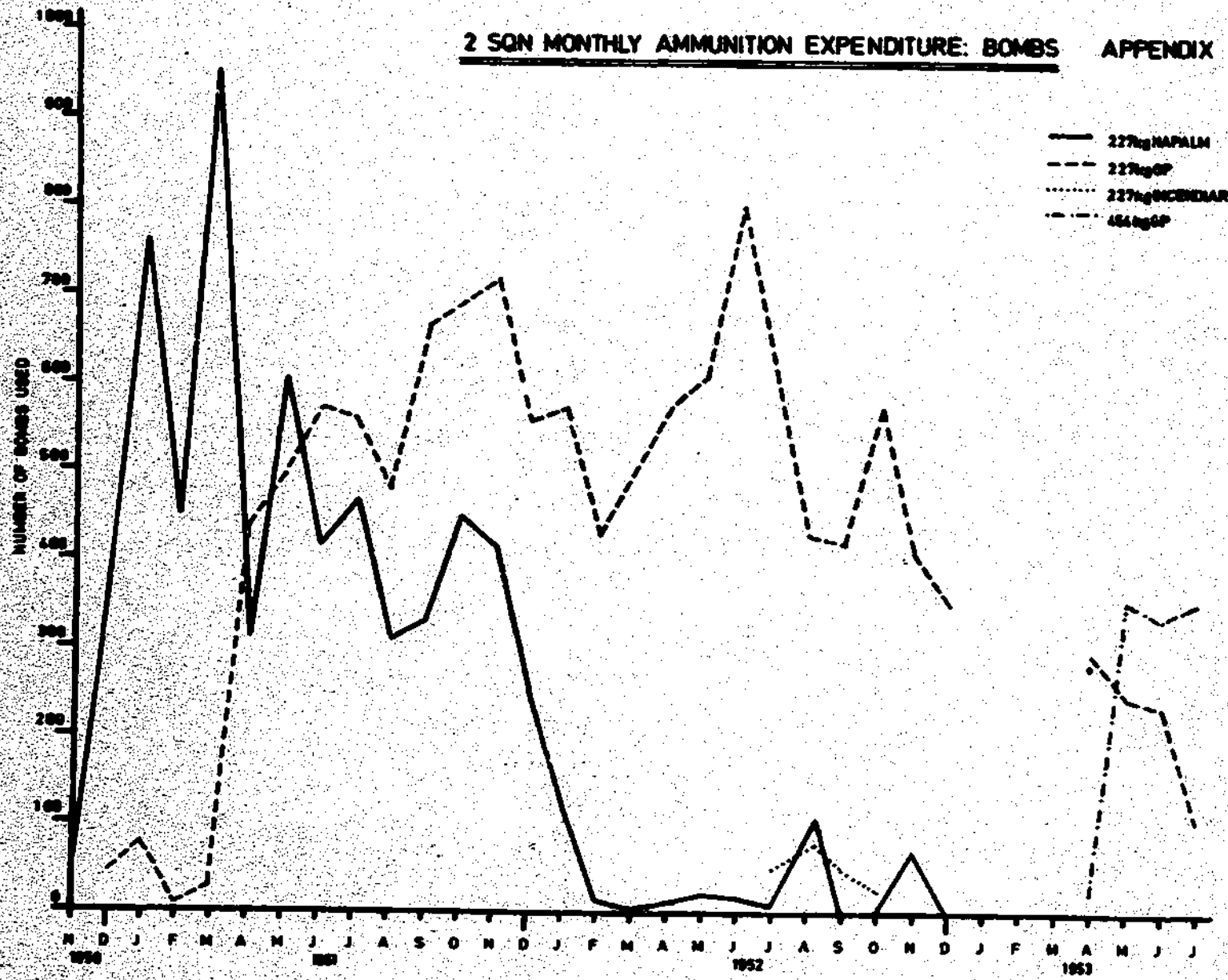
2 SQN SORTIES: DAILY AVERAGE FOR EACH MONTH

APPENDIX A - 2



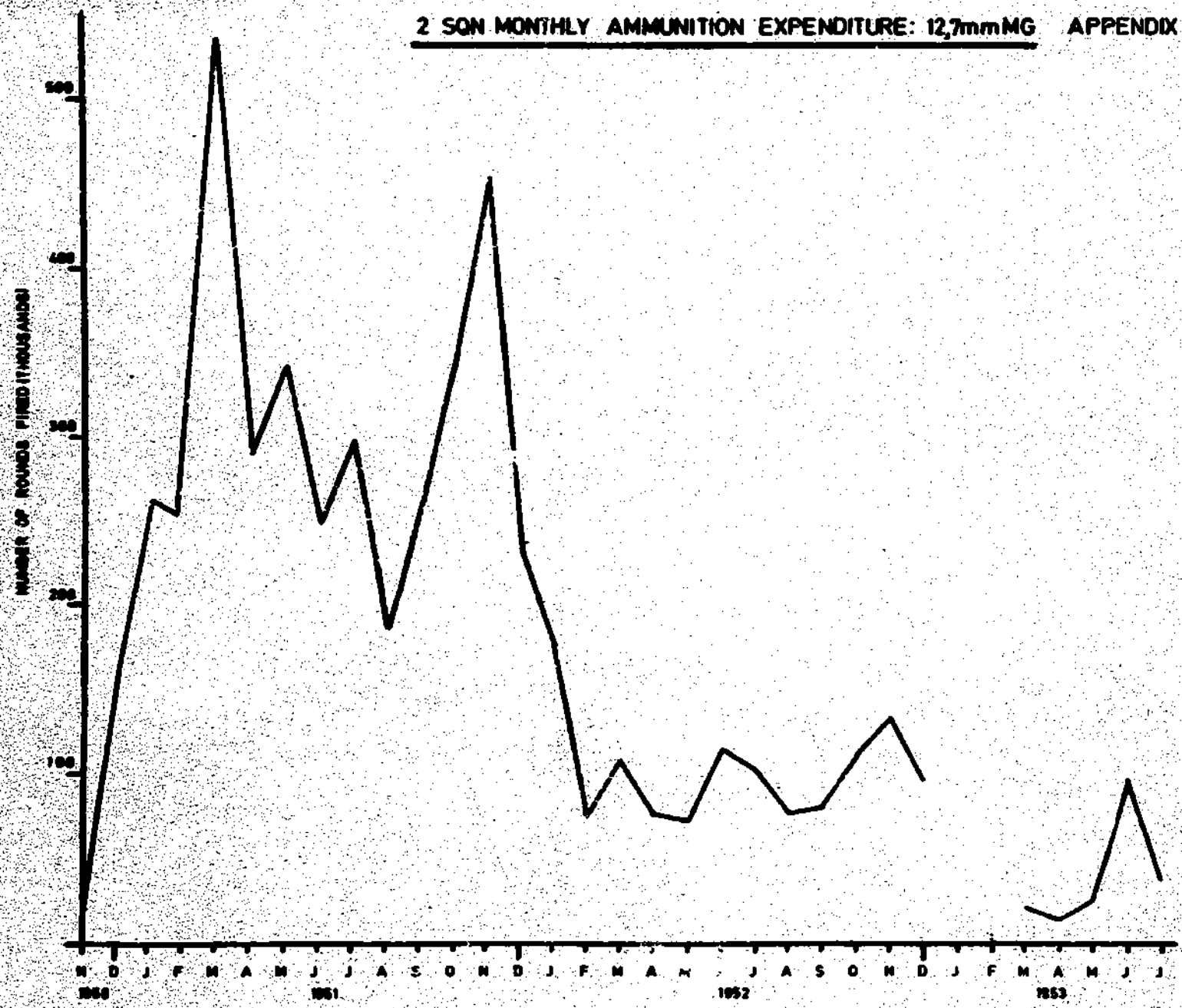
Derived from the same sources as Appendix A - 1

2 SQN MONTHLY AMMUNITION EXPENDITURE: BOMBS APPENDIX A-3



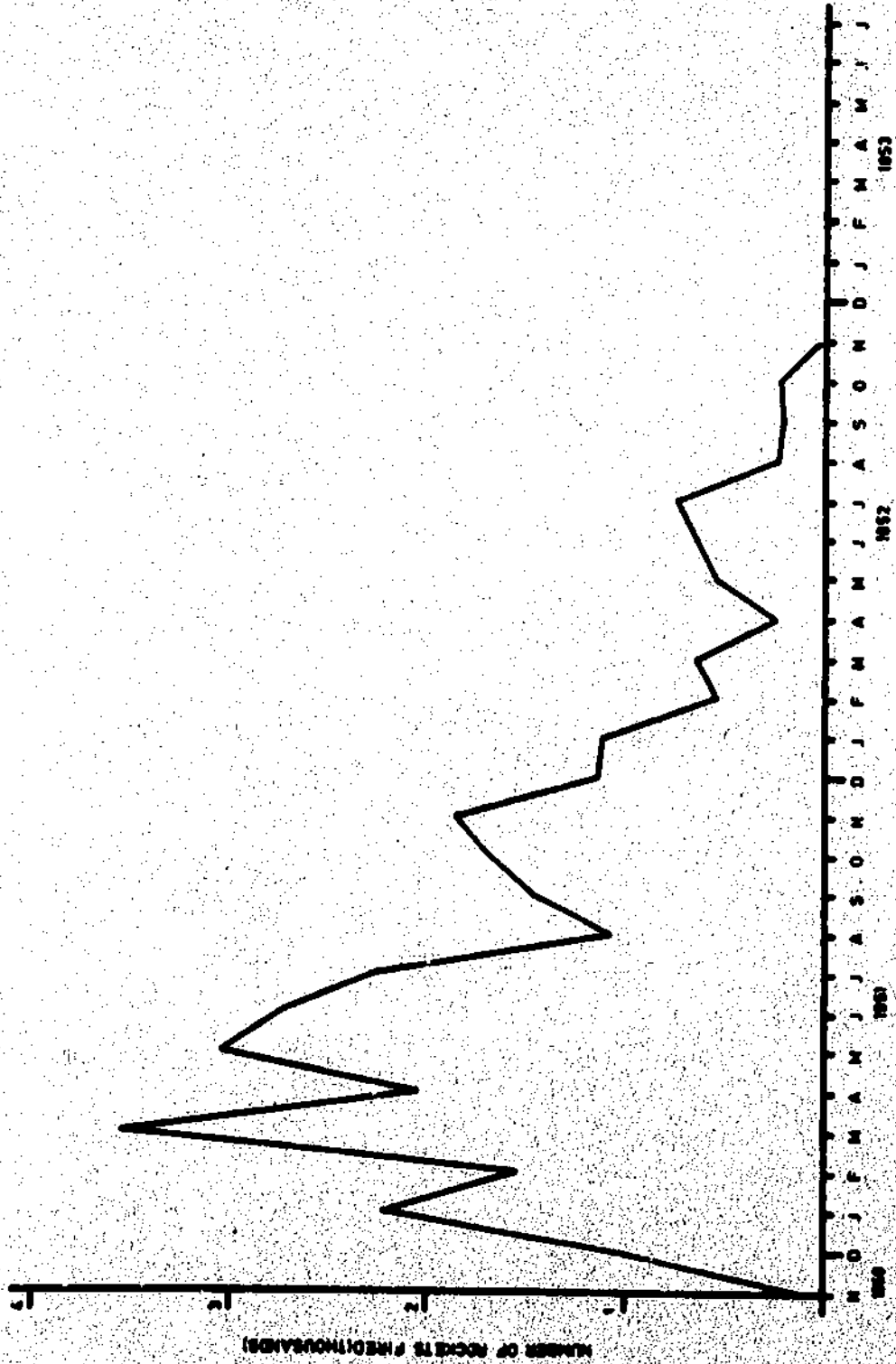
Derived from 2 Sqn K: Box 35, 25001/ER254/CR0, Statistical Data 2 Sep, Appendix to War Diaries Form SAAF 221.

2 SQN MONTHLY AMMUNITION EXPENDITURE: 12,7mmMG APPENDIX A-4



Derived from the same source as Appendix A-3

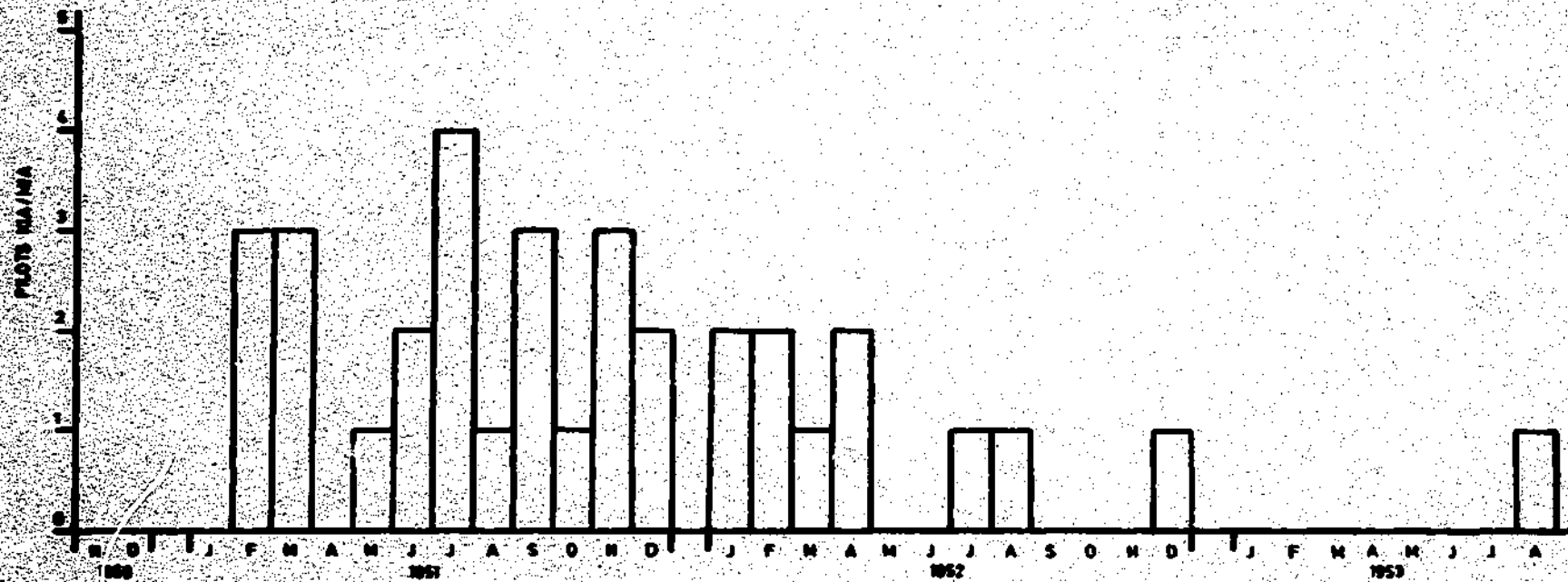
2 SON MONTHLY AMMUNITION EXPENDITURE: HVARs APPENDIX A-5



Derived from the same source as Appendix A-3

2 SQN AIRCREW CASUALTIES

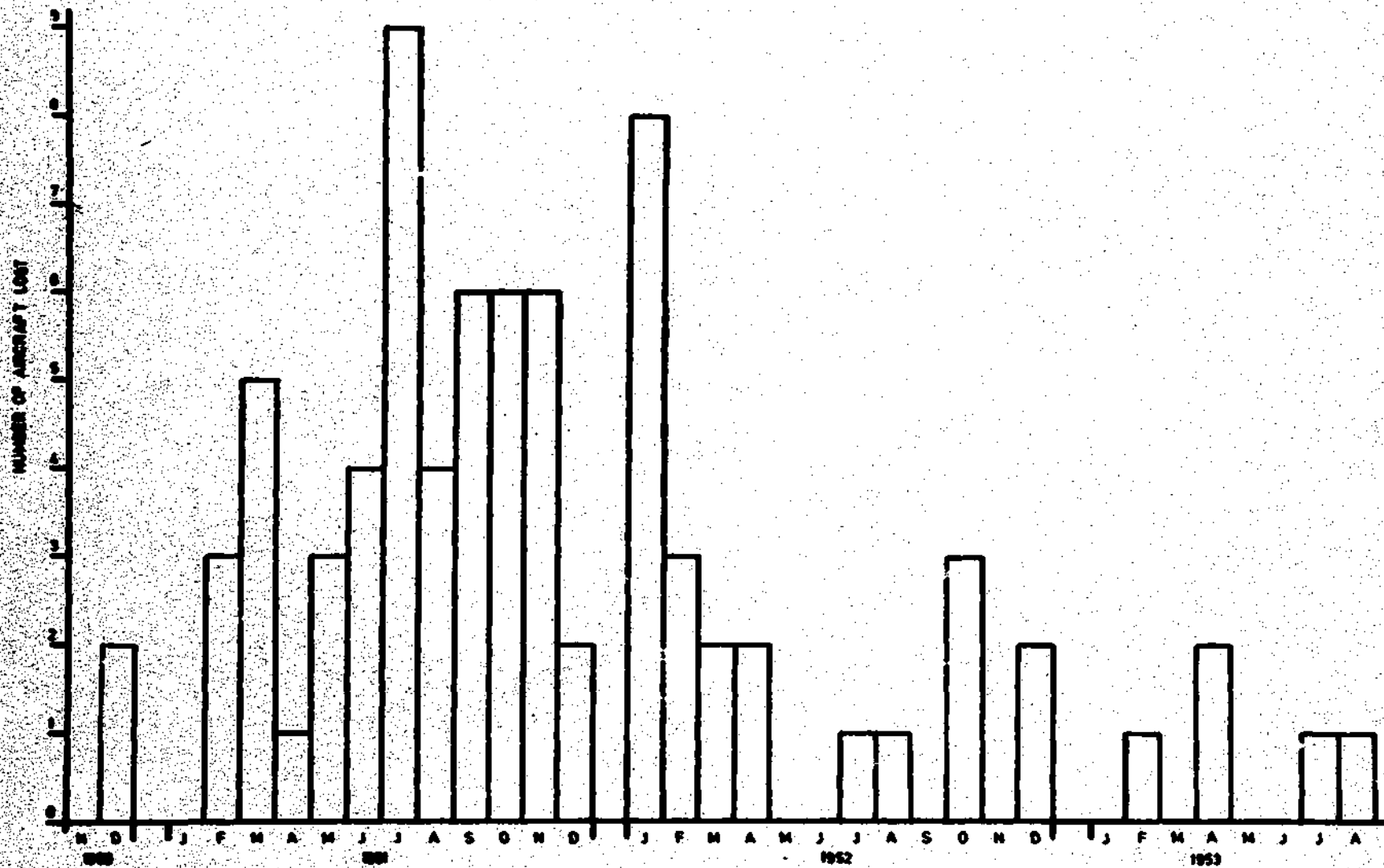
APPENDIX A-6



Date of from text

2 SON AIRCRAFT LOSSES: ENEMY ACTION AND ACCIDENTS

APPENDIX A-7



Derived from text

APPENDIX B

RECIPIENTS OF THE KOREA MEDAL

RECIPIENTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN KOREA MEDALWHO SERVED WITH 2 SQN SAAF ¹

Albany-Ward	A.F.	LAM	Barker	W.	A/Cpl
Allen	G.G.	Lt	Barlow	D.H.	Capt.
Allwright	J.	A/Cpl	Barnard	A.J.J.	A/Cpl
Alton	D.	A/Sgt	Barnard	B.C.	2 Lt
Ambrose	F.H.M.	A/Sgt	Barnes	F.	A/Sgt
Anderson	H.	A/Cpl	Barr	E.F.	A/Sgt
Anderson	R.H.	2 Lt	Bartlett	H.J.	A/Sgt
Andrews	C.J.	A/Cpl	Basson	N.D.M.	LAM
Annandale	J.J.K.	A/Sgt	Bass-Taylor	G.J.	S/Sgt
Annett	B.J.	A/Cpl	Beamish	A.R.	Lt
Ansell	J.C.	Lt	Beaton	F.A.	Lt
Armstrong	R.F.	Maj.	Beets	W.C.	A/Cpl
Armstrong	S.	Lt	Bekker	F.M.	Lt
Austin	H.G.	Lt	Bergh	R.D.	A/Mec.
Badenhorst	J.L.	A/Sgt	Bernard	D.J.	A/Sgt
Badenhorst	W.J.J.	Capt.	Berry	C.L.	A/Sgt
Baird	J.W.	LAM	Bester	A.W.	A/Cpl
Baker	E.	LAM	Beukes	D.N.	A/Mec.
Balcomb	N.H.	A/Cpl	Biden	N.	Lt
Baransky	G.J.	Lt	Bidgood	P.E.	A/Sgt
Barber	H.S.J.	F/Sgt	Bishop-Brown	M.	F/Sgt
Barber	J.P.	F/Sgt	Bisschoff	J.F.	A/Sgt
Barker	D.	A/Cpl	Bissett	R.G.	Lt
Barker	E.E.	A/Sgt	Blaauw	J.P.D.	Cndt

1. This medal was awarded to members of the South African Forces who served in Korea for at least 30 days. This list was compiled by Mr D. Forsyth of Johannesburg and verified by the Military Information Bureau.

Blackbeard	V.R.	2 Lt	Boyd	H.V.	A/Sgt
Blignaut	H.J.J.	LAM	Brace	S.N.	Maj.
Blignaut	H.P.	F/Sgt	Brady	M.	Lt
Blignaut	J.S.	LAM	Brand	A.	A/Sgt
Blignaut	P.C.B.	F/Sgt	Brink	J.A.	LAM
Bolitho	J.C.	Capt.	Britz	P.S.	A/Cpl
Booyesen	A.J.	A/Sgt	Britz	R.P.	LAM
Bornmann	H.C.J.	A/Sgt	Bronkhorst	J.E.	A/Cpl
Bosch	A.C.J.	Lt	Brown	D.M.	A/Cpl
Bosch	L.J.	A/Cpl	Brown	D.v.H.	A/Cpl
Boshoff	J.E.	A/Sgt	Brown	E.D.	Capt.
Bosman	J.J.	A/Cpl	Browne	H.P.	A/Sgt
Botes	A.L.	A/Mac.	Bruce	W.U.	WO II
Botes	W.J.	LAM	Buckinger	C.G.	LAM
Botha	A.J.	A/Cpl	Burger	B.v.Z.	F/Sgt
Botha	A.S.	A/Cpl	Burger	C.E.R.	F/Sgt
Botha	D.S.	WO II	Burger	H.J.P.	Maj.
Botha	G.J.	A/Mac.	Burger	J.F.	A/Cpl
Botha	I.J.	A/Sgt	Burger	J.H.	A/Cpl
Botha	I.Z.B.	Cpl	Burger	W.J.	A/Cpl
Botha	J.C.	A/Cpl	Burgess	L.N.	A/Sgt
Botha	J.H.	LAM	Bussio	L.	A/Sgt
Botha	M.C.	2 Lt	Butler	G.P.	A/Cpl
Botha	P.D.N.	A/Cpl	Butler	T.C.	LAM
Botha	V.W.	A/Mac.	Cairncross	M.	Lt
Botha	W.C.	Capt.	Camock	F.R.	LAM
Botha	W.P.B.	F/Sgt	Canons	J.L.	A/Cpl
Bouwer	D.	A/Cpl	Cant	R.E.C.	A/Mac.
Bouwer	H.J.	A/Cpl	Carelse	R.S.	A/Mac.
Boyce	D.	A/Sgt	Carnell	F.W.	Lt

Carpenter	R.H.	WO II	Cook	R.E.	A/Mec.
Carstens	L.W.	F/Sgt	Cooney	A.J.	Lt
Chadwick	E.W.	LAM	Coram	G.W.L.	Sgt
Chalmers	D.H.	A/Sgt	Cornack	H.G.S.	WO II
Chapman	C.	A/Mec.	Coxon	N.	LAM
Church	F.W.	Lt	Coxshall	E.	LAM
Cilliers	P.S.	Lt	Crofton	G.P.	A/Sgt
Claassen	L.H.	Cpl	Crofton	V.W.	A/Cpl
Clark	A.J.H.	A/Mec.	Cronhout	I.L.	F/Sgt
Clark	R.W.	Lt	Cronje	G.F.	LAM
Clausen	F.T.	Lt	Crous	D.G.	A/Mec
Clifton	R.	Maj.	Cudmore	S.A.	A/Cpl
Cloete	H.J.	A/Sgt	Currie	J.D.	A/Cpl
Cloete	M.D.V.	Capt.	Curtis	K.A.	A/Cpl
Clulow	P.	Lt	Dalton	O.E.C.	A/Mec.
Clur	M.B.	2 Lt	Deuth	J.J.	A/Cpl
Cockburn	R.J.	LAM	Davis	J.B.	Capt.
Coetzee	I.E.	A/Sgt	Davis	J.F.O.	Capt.
Coetzee	J.H.	Lt	Deans	D.D.	Lt
Coetzee	J.L.	A/Cpl	De Beer	B.P.	A/Cpl
Cohen	P.H.	A/Mec.	De Beer	J.A.B.	A/Cpl
Coleman	B.E.	LAM	De Beer	M.J.	A/Cpl
Coleman	T.G.	A/Sgt	De Beer	M.J.	A/Cpl
Collins	D.A.	A/Sgt	De Beer	P.H.S.	A/Mec.
Collins	D.J.	LAM	De Bod	H.A.	A/Cpl
Collins	J.C.	Capt.	De Bruyn	J.J.	A/Cpl
Collins	M.E.	LAM	De Jager	J.F.	Lt
Collins	V.C.	LAM	De Jongh	C.L.	2 Lt
Collocott	C.R.	A/Cpl	De La Fontaine	M.S.	A/Cpl
Cooke	A.M.	Lt	De La Harpe	B.S.G.	Lt

De Lange	P.H.	A/Sgt	Du Plessis	G.G.	WO II
De La Rosa	C.	A/Cpl	Du Plessis	H.C.	LAM
Delpont	M.H.	Capt.	Du Plessis	J.	A/Cpl
De Villiers	A.H.	A/Sgt	Du Plessis	J.A.	Lt
De Villiers	V.F.	Capt.	Du Plessis	J.A.C.	A/Cpl
De Vos	A.H.	A/Cpl	Du Plessis	M.J.deK.	2 Lt
De Wet	A.B.	Lt	Du Plooy	R.M.	Lt
De Wet	A.Q.	Capt.	Du Preez	J.J.	Sgt
De Wet	J.	Lt	Du Preez	M.A.	F/Sgt
De Wet	J.G.	Lt	Du Toit	A.C.	LAM
De Wet	P.W.	A/Sgt	Du Toit	J.P.	Cpl
Dickinson	E.	A/Cpl	Eagar	L.P.T.	Capt.
Dittmer	F.S.	A/Sgt	Earp	D.R.	2 Lt
Dixon	G.J.	A/Mec.	Earp-Jones	R.C.	2 Lt
Dixon	L.A.	2 Lt	Ehlers	C.C.	A/Sgt
Dods	G.C.S.	Lt	Elliott	A.B.	Sgt
Doherty	J.C.	A/Sgt	Eloff	J.R.	A/Mec.
Dornahl	W.J.	F/Sgt	Eloff	J.Z.	Capt.
Doveton	C.G.	Lt	Els	J.M.	A/Cpl
Dovey	D.M.	A/Mec.	Engelbrecht	A.S.	A/Cpl
Dowden	W.A.	Lt	English	A.A.	LAM
Downie	E.	2 Lt	Enslin	H.C.	Maj.
Dury	W.R.	A/Sgt	Enslin	J.S.S.	Lt
Duncan	C.R.	LAM	Evaris	R.S.	A/Mec.
Duncan	R.J.	A/Mec.	Facer	C.W.	A/Sgt
Dunn	W.H.	F/Sgt	Fairbanks	D.J.	F/Sgt
Dunning	L.	A/Cpl	Fairbanks	R.E.	F/Sgt
Du Plessis	A.v.d.M.	A/Sgt	Faul	H.W.	LAM
Du Plessis	D.J.	A/Sgt	Featherstone	D.W.	Lt

Ffennell	R.E.	F/Sgt	Geeringh	W.J.	Lt
Fiford	F.W.	A/Mec.	Gerneke	R.A.	Maj.
Fineberg	D.G.	A/Mec.	Geyser	M.J.	LAM
Fisher	A.M.	A/Cpl	Giffen	G.H.	A/Mec.
Flemmer	E.L.	A/Sgt	Gildenhuis	B.P.A.	A/Sgt
Foley	C.J.	A/Mec.	Gillispie	F.H.	A/Sgt
Foota	A.R.	LAM	Glinster	J.D.	LAM
Fordham	E.L.	A/Cpl	Gobey	I.W.	LAM
Forsyth	B.M.	Lt	Goddard	J.	Capt.
Fouche	G.E.	A/Cpl	Godwin	D.E.L.	A/Sgt
Fouche	G.J.	A/Mec.	Gooding	W.	A/Cpl
Fouche	J.H.	A/Sgt	Gotze	A.R.	Lt
Fouche	N.L.	A/Sgt	Goussard	J.C.	A/Cpl
Fourie	E.M.	LAM	Gouws	F.	Lt
Fourie	H.B.	A/Cpl	Gouws	P.A.M.	A/Cpl
Fourie	L.J.	LAM	Gove	R.W.	A/Sgt
Fourie	L.W.G.	A/Mec.	Gow	I.J.	Lt
Fox	H.	A/Cpl	Graaff	R.J.	A/Cpl
Frisby	A.G.	Lt	Grace	D.D.	Lt
Frost	M.H.E.	Lt	Graham	E.A.	A/Cpl
Fryer	T.R.	Lt	Greeff	M.H.C.	F/Sgt
Frylinck	C.D.	LAM	Green	D.A.R.	Lt
Fuller	G.P.	A/Sgt	Green	J.W.	A/Cpl
Furstenburg	S.	A/Sgt	Green	W.B.	A/Cpl
Fyfer	J.M.	LAM	Griffiths	R.E.	A/Mec.
Gardiner-Atkinson	A.	Lt	Grim	C.	F/Sgt
Gasson	R.E.	2 Lt	Grbler	D.C.	A/Cpl
Gearing	H.T.	A/Cpl	Grbler	F.J.	Lt
Gebhardt	A.V.	A/Cpl	Grobler	W.J.	2 Lt
Gedye	M.D.	2 Lt	Groenewald	C.P.C.	LAM

Groenewald	J.G.	Capt.	Hefer	D.L.	Capt.
Groenewald	J.L.	A/Sgt	Henn	A.deK.	F/Sgt
Groenewald	L.H.	Capt.	Herbst	H.J.	LAM
Grové	B.J.	Capt.	Herbst	P.J.	A/Sgt
Grunder	M.O.	2 Lt	Herholdt	J.D.	A/Sgt
Gunter	J.L.	A/Cpl	Herringer	W.S.	LAM
Guthrie	C.V.	LAM	Heuff	C.J.	F/Sgt
Halley	M.I.B.	2 Lt	Heydenrych	A.L.	F/Sgt
Hammond	K.H.	A/Cpl	Heydenrych	R.A.D.	WO I
Hammond	L.P.	A/Sgt	Heyne	L.	WO I
Hanekom	A.J.	A/Cpl	Hill	P.K.	LAM
Hansen	N.L.	2 Lt	Hirsch	N.C.C.	A/Mec.
Harburn	R.A.	Capt.	Hodgskin	L.	A/Cpl
Harmse	J.	A/Cpl	Hodgson	G.C.D.	F/Sgt
Harmsen	W.F.	F/Sgt	Hoffmann	S.E.	LAM
Harre	R.F.	LAM	Holloway	L.R.	LAM
Harris	D.J.	A/Sgt	Holshausen	I.A.	2 Lt
Harris	N.	A/Cpl	Holtzhausen	H.G.	Lt
Hartley	K.C.	A/Sgt	Holtzhausen	J.O.	Lt
Hartzer	P.D.	A/Cpl	Honeyborne	P.A.St L	F/Sgt
Haskins	J.H.	Lt	Hood	L.W.	F/Sgt
Haskins	J.H.	A/Mec.	Hopkins	D.G.	WO II
Haskins	W.B.	F/Sgt	Horn	F.R.	A/Mec.
Hassett	S.J.	A/Sgt	Horscroft	H.B.	Lt
Hattingh	J.C.	A/Sgt	Howard	E.L.	A/Sgt
Hayton	H.E.	LAM	Howe	J.F.G.	2 Lt
Heap	A.	LAM	Howell	D.T.	A/Sgt
Hearne	P.J.	A/Cpl	Hudd	H.R.	F/Sgt
Heath	R.E.	A/Sgt	Hudson	B.L.	2 Lt
Hechter	L.P.J.	Capt.	Hulley	O.M.	F/Sgt

Humphreys	P.J.	LAM	Knight	A.	LAM
Hunter	L.S.	A/Cpl	Knight	H.C.	Lt
Hutchinson	D.A.	LAM	Knoesen	J.F.v.R.	WO I
Imelman	D.G.	A/Cpl	Koekemoer	B.	Sgt
Inglesby	S.J.W.	Lt	Koekemoer	J.J.	Lt
Jansen	J.A.C.	LAM	Korb	J.A.	A/Mac.
Jaques	W.C.	A/Cpl	Kotze	G.P.M.	Lt
Jenkins	E.C.H.	F/Sgt	Kotze	H.A.	Lt
Jenkins	W.C.	F/Sgt	Kotzenberg	R.P.G.	Capt.
Jones	D.	LAM	Kriek	H.S.	A/Cpl
Jones	E.N.	Lt	Kriel	P.A.	F/Sgt
Jones	G.	A/Sgt	Krige	J.H.	Lt
Jordaan	T.P.	A/Mac.	Krohn	H.G.	Lt
Joubert	A.G.	LAM	Kruger	F.A.W.	A/Sgt
Joubert	J.A.	Lt	Kruger	J.H.	Lt
Joyce	H.T.R.	2 Lt	Kruger	J.J.	Lt
Joyce	J.	A/Cpl	Kruger	V.R.	Lt
Joynt	C.S.	A/Sgt	Kuhn	J.M.	A/Sgt
Keen	K.C.	A/Mac.	Kuhn	V.F.	2 Lt
Keavy	E.R.	2 Lt	Kunneke	C.	F/Sgt
Kemp	A.C.	A/Cpl	Kuter	E.S.	A/Cpl
Kempster	J.P.	Maj.	Labuschagne	C.A.C.	S/Sgt
Kennedy	F.J.	A/Cpl	La Grange	J.P.	Capt.
Kenny	B.R.	Lt	Lahner	H.R.	A/Cpl
Keyter	D.	A/Sgt	Laing	W.T.	A/Sgt
Kilburn	V.T.	Capt.	Lamb	M.J.	Lt
King	M.	LAM	Lance	E.M.	2 Lt
Kirby	H.E.	Maj.	Landsberg	G.F.	A/Sgt
Kirsten	H.J.J.	A/Sgt	Langeveld	R.E.	A/Mac.
Kleynhans	I.L.	A/Cpl	Langford	R.M.R.	LAM

Lawrenson	A.D.	Capt	Lourens	B.J.	A/Cpl
Laycock	T.G.	A/Mec	Louw	G.N.	Lt
Leach	B.R.	A/Cpl	Louw	J.J.E.	A/Sgt
Leach	W.B.	A/Sgt	Louw	W.J.	LAM
Leah	D.R.	2 Lt	Ludick	H.H.	2 Lt
Leamon	T.J.	A/Mec.	Lynch	D.M.J.	A/Sgt
Leathers	D.R.	Lt	Lyon	R.V.	Capt.
Ledingham	R.D.	LAM	Lyons	W.M.	A/Mec.
Le Grange	J.P.	A/Cpl	McCallum	J.	A/Cpl
Le Grange	P.A.	Capt	McClure	R.	Lt
Leighton	C.I.	LAM	MacDonald	H.	Lt
Lellyet	J.N.	2 Lt	McDonald	K.B.	Lt
Le Roux	F.R.	LAM	MacGillicuddy	H.C.	Cpl
Le Roux	J.N.	A/Sgt	MacGillicuddy	H.C.	A/Mec.
Le Roux	M.G.	LAM	McGregor	A.	Cpl
Lesch	J.C.M.	LAM	McKay	G.H.	Capt.
Letherbarrow	B.	A/Cpl	MacKay	P.S.	A/Cpl
Letley	P.	Capt.	McKellar	D.W.	Lt
Lewer	R.C.M.	2 Lt	McKelvey	J.G.	A/Cpl
Liebenberg	D.J.J.	A/Mec.	MacLaughlin	D.W.	2 Lt
Liebenberg	T.	2 Lt	MacLean	A.D.	Capt.
Lightfoot	L.M.P.	LAM	McLeod	A.J.	Lt
Lindsay	C.G.	A/Sgt	Magill	J.H.H.	WO I
Ling	R.A.	A/Mec.	Maltman	A.	A/Mec.
Lipawsky	G.B.	Capt.	Marais	H.C.	A/Sgt
Little	J.J.	F/Sgt	Marais	W.D.S.	Capt.
Lock	D.A.S.	Lt	Marchand	D.leR.	2 Lt
Lombard	C.	2 Lt	Marshall	G.H.	Lt
Lombard	P.H.	LAM	Martin	B.E.	Lt

Martins	B.J.	A/Sgt	Myburgh	P.J.	Sgt
Maskell	B.A.T.	Capt.	Naude	J.H.	Lt
Mather	A.V.	2 Lt	Naude	W.E.	A/Cpl
Matthee	R.W.N.	A/Mec.	Nel	J.A.	A/Sgt
Maxwell	P.	Lt	Nell	J.J.D.	LAM
Meiring	J.A.	Lt	Nell	L.D.	LAM
Meise	L.F.	A/Sgt	Neveling	A.C.	A/Cpl
Mellet	V.T.	Sgt	Newton	J.G.	Lt
Mentz	M.	Lt	Niedermeyer	W.R.	A/Cpl
Mentz	M.J.	Lt	Norman-Smith	P.I.	Lt
Meyer	C.F.J.	A/Sgt	Nortje	G.	A/Mec.
Meyer	C.P.	A/Cpl	Nortje	J.F.	Capt
Meyer	G.H.W.	A/Cpl	Oberholzer	H.J.G.S.	LAM
Meyers	C.J.P.	A/Cpl	O'Brien	P.J.	A/Mec.
Millard	H.D.	A/Cpl	O'Connell	P.A.	A/Mec.
Milner	C.H.	WO II	Odendaal	H.O.M.	Capt
Minnaar	H.L.	F/Sgt	Oldreive	E.R.	A/Sgt
Mitchell	R.R.	LAM	Oliver	E.E.	LAM
Moir	J.	2 Lt	Oliver	J.A.	Capt.
Montanari	F.A.	Lt	Oosthuizen	C.C.	A/Cpl
Montgomery	A.P.	A/Sgt	Oppermann	F.H.B.	A/Cpl
Montgomery	J.S.	Capt.	Opperman	H.C.F.	LAM
Moolman	C.J.	A/Sgt	Oswell	B.O.	F/Sgt
Morris	J.R.	Lt	Page	A.R.	A/Mec.
Mouton	C.P.	Capt.	Papenfus	A.R.	A/Cpl
Muller	A.M.	Lt	Zappas	C.J.	2 Lt
Munnik	D.J.	A/Cpl	Parker	M.A.	Lt
Munro	R.J.H.	F/Sgt	Parsonson	L.W.	Lt
Murray	J.J.L.	A/Cpl	Paterson	G.G.	Lt

Patrick	L.F.	A/Sgt	Pugh	K.E.	A/Cpl
Patterson	W.D.	A/Cpl	Raath	C.W.	A/Sgt
Pearce	L.B.	Maj.	Rabbits	K.I.	F/Sgt
Peens	W.M.	LAM	Rabie	W.F.	A/Mec.
Pepler	I.M.C.	A/Mec.	Rademeyer	J.G.H.	A/Cpl
Petrowski	B.M.	A/Cpl	Rae	A.S.	Lt
Pfuhl	J.A.	F/Sgt	Rautenbach	E.D.F.	A/Sgt
Phillipson	S.	A/Cpl	Rautenbach	J.H.	Lt
Plek	J.J.C.	LAM	Rankone	J.W.J.	A/Cpl
Plenaar	B.J.	A/Sgt	Reed	E.D.	A/Cpl
Plenaar	E.A.C.	2 Lt	Retief	P.J.T.	2 Lt
Pieterse	J.J.	A/Cpl	Retief	P.M.	Maj.
Pieterse	L.M.	A/Sgt	Rich	A.P.	Capt.
Pitfield	N.F.	A/Mec.	Richards	R.	Lt
Pond	L.	A/Cpl	Richter	F.B.	Lt
Posthumus	C.P.J.	A/Cpl	Riding	G.	LAM
Posthumus	R.K.	A/Cpl	Rieger	D.W.	A/Cpl
Potgieter	F.E.	Lt	Robberts	J.H.	2 Lt
Potgieter	M.J.	F/Sgt	Robbertze	B.F.S.	A/Cpl
Powell	J.E.G.	A/Sgt	Robertson	A.N.	A/Cpl
Pretorius	G.P.J.	A/Cpl	Robinson	J.W.	A/Mec.
Pretorius	G.R.	A/Cpl	Rogers	R.H.D.	Capt.
Pretorius	H.T.	F/Sgt	Rogotta	W.G.A.	Capt.
Pretorius	M.E.	A/Cpl	Rolfe	G.H.	A/Cpl
Pretorius	M.S.	Lt	Roos	P.G.	A/Cpl
Pretorius	P.F.J.J.L.LAM	LAM	Roots	W.J.	Capt
Prevost	W.M.P.	A/Sgt	Rorke	M.H.	Lt
Prinsloo	D.B.J.	Capt.	Ross	B.K.	Lt
Prinsloo	J.A.	A/Sgt	Ross	G.M.	F/Sgt
Prinsloo	M.N.	A/Sgt	Rouncivell	K.H.	F/Sgt

Roux	J.C.	A/Cpl	Smit	D.P.J.S.	A/Sgt
Rox	W.T.	A/Cpl	Smit	G.C.	F/Sgt
Rudman	C.W.	LAM	Smit	P.J.M.	A/Cpl
Ruiter	D.A.	Lt	Smith	E.	LAM
Saayman	A.F.	A/Cpl	Smith	G.V.E.	A/Sgt
Sache	G.B.	A/Sgt	Smith	H.P.	LAM
Sandilands	A.W.	A/Cpl	Smith	J.A.H.J.	A/Cpl
Sawyer	E.W.	LAM	Smith	L.B.B.	A/Cpl
Schnetter	P.J.	F/Sgt	Smith	M.R.	A/Cpl
Schoeman	P.A.	A/Sgt	Smith	R.B.	A/Sgt
Scholtz	D.J.	A/Cpl	Smith	V.F.	LAM
Schonfeldt	D.A.	A/Sgt	Smits	J.F.	Capt.
Schoombie	F.J.	A/Sgt	Snyders	J.D.S.	A/Mec.
Schraader	I.J.W.	F/Sgt	Snyman	H.T.	Capt.
Scorgie	L.	F/Sgt	Sorgdrager	P.	LAM
Scott	T.C.	Lt	Spangenberg	J.J.	A/Sgt
Scott	W.B.	A/Cpl	Sparkham	W.C.	F/Sgt
Scott Shaw	C.	Capt.	Staats	R.L.	2 Lt
Seery	D.	LAM	Starke	A.	F/Sgt
Shaw	H.	LAM	Stear	F.W.	A/Sgt
Shawe	G.N.	Lt	Sterley	E.J.	A/Sgt
Sherwood	J.C.	LAM	Stevens	E.W.	A/Cpl
Sherwood	L.O.	A/Cpl	Stewart	D.J.	Lt
Sherwood	R.W.	2 Lt	Steyn	D.E.	LAM
Sidebottom	J.	F/Sgt	Steyn	F.J.	A/Sgt
Sieberhagen	C.R.	A/Cpl	Steyn	J.J.J.	Sgt
Singleton	B.	2 Lt	Stockland	K.	A/Cpl
Sivertsen	L.H.	2 Lt	Stocks	N.A.	Lt
Skeen	T.J.	LAM	Stofberg	A.B.	Capt.
Slabbert	J.M.	Capt.	Stoffberg	F.J.	A/Sgt

Stohr	F.	A/Cpl	Thompson	W.A.	A/Cpl
Stone	R.G.	A/Cpl	Thornton	W.	Lt
Stone	W.A.	A/Mec.	Tindall	H.J.R.	Lt
Strauss	D.J.G.	A/Sgt	Tiran	J.P.	A/Cpl
Strydom	M.	Capt.	Titchener	L.A.	A/Cpl
Strydom	P.J.	Lt	Trenoweth	G.W.	A/Mec.
Sundstrom	H.B.	A/Sgt	Trent	M.C.	A/Sgt
Swanepoel	B.	A/Sgt	Trollip	H.S.	Cpl
Swanepoel	J.W.	Lt	Trotter	J.R.	Lt
Swanepoel	S.J.M.	A/Sgt	Truter	C.	F/Sgt
Swardt	C.C.D.	A/Cpl	Truter	C.J.D.	F/Sgt
Swardt	N.J.	Lt	Turner	R.	Lt
Swardt	A.J.R.	A/Cpl	Turner	W.	LAM
Swart	E.B.J.	A/Sgt	Uys	C.J.	A/Cpl
Swart	H.J.	A/Cpl	Uys	M.J.	Capt.
Swart	P.J.L.	A/Mec.	Van Achterberg	H.	A/Sgt
Sweeney	J.M.	Capt.	Van As	L.	A/Sgt
Swanmer	F.A.	Capt.	Van Aswegen	J.	A/Cpl
Sykes	G.T.D.	Lt	Van den Bos	W.H.	Lt
Taljaard	J.N.F.	A/Sgt	Van der Merwe	C.J.	A/Sgt
Taylor	D.L.	2 Lt	Van der Merwe	C.J.J.	Lt
Templeman	A.J.A.	A/Sgt	Van der Merwe	E.P.	A/Cpl
Terry	D.E.	LAM	Van der Merwe	F.	A/Cpl
Theron	J.G.	A/Sgt	Van der Merwe	F.J.	A/Cpl
Theron	L.W.	Sgt	Van der Merwe	H.M.	A/Sgt
Theron	S.v.B.	Ondt	Van der Merwe	J.A.	A/Cpl
Thom	G.	2 Lt	Van der Merwe	J.L.	Capt.
Thomas	R.H.	LAM	Van der Spuy	A.	Lt
Thompson	G.P.	A/Sgt	Van der Westhuysen	A.J.	A/Sgt
Thompson	R.N.	A/Sgt	Van der Westhuisen	B.D.	F/Sgt

Van der Westhuisen J.H.L.	A/Sgt	Venter	B.C.	LAM
Van der Westhuisen L.C.	A/Sgt	Venter	C.duP.	A/Cpl
Van der Westhuisen P.T.	A/Mec.	Venter	C.J.	A/Cpl
Van Eck D.A.	LAM	Venter	J.H.	A/Cpl
Van Heerden J.J.v.Z.	Lt	Venter	J.H.	A/Mec.
Van Heerden W.	Lt	Venter	J.P.A.	Capt.
Van Hoepen E.J.	Maj.	Venter	W.H.	A/Mec.
Van Jaarsveld J.A.	A/Sgt	Vermaak	A.J.	A/Sgt
Van Niekerk D.J.	A/Cpl	Vermeulen	C.J.	A/Mec.
Van Niekerk J.F.	LAM	Verster	J.P.	2 Lt
Van Rensberg Janse A.	Capt.	Viljoen	C	A/Cpl
Van Rensberg N.H.	A/Cpl	Vinar	V.H.	A/Mec.
Van Rensberg A.J.	Capt.	Visser	A.F.	A/Cpl
Van Rooyen P.J.	A/Cpl	Visser	A.J.	LAM
Van Rooyen G.F.	A/Cpl	Visser	P.J.	2 Lt
Van Rooyen R.L.	Lt	Visser	S.P.	A/Mec.
Van Schalkwyk P.J.	Lt	Visser	L.	A/Cpl
Van Staden G.C.	LAM	Voget	K.	LAM
Van Staden P.I.	A/Mec.	Volckmar	A.F.	LAM
Van Tunder C.A.P.	A/Cpl	Von Brughan	J.	F/Sgt
Van Vuuren C.H.	F/Sgt	Von Caues	L.	Capt.
Van Vuuren D.J.J.	Capt.	Vorster	J.H.L.	A/Cpl
Van Vuuren D.L.	Lt	Wahl	D.L.	A/Sgt
Van Winkel J.G.	LAM	Walker	C.G.	A/Cpl
Van Wyk J.	A/Sgt	Walsh	I;C;	F/Sgt
Van Wyk J.G.W.	Capt.	Ward	A.M.	A/Cpl
Van Zyl N.C.	Lt	Watkins	B.V.	A/Sgt
Varley N.F.	F/Sgt	Webb	L.J.C.	A/Sgt
Venables D.P.	LAM	Weich	A.F.	Sgt

Weinrich	C.B.	A/Sgt	Wolhuter	G.J.	A/Sgt
Wells	J.S.R.	Capt.	Whod	R.J.	F/Sgt
Welsh	L.M.	A/Cpl	Wyllie	W.D.	A/Cpl
Welthagen	D.H.	A/Mec.	Yeo	A.F.	A/Sgt
Wentzel	P.C.	F/Sgt	Yeo	G.W.	WO II
Wessels	H.J.	A/Cpl	Zeele	J.H.	Cpl
Wessels	M.H.	F/Sgt			
Wessels	W.J.	A/Sgt			
West	G.J.B.	A/Cpl			
Weston	C.G.J.	A/Mec.			
White	C.J.	A/Mec.			
White	J.	A/Cpl			
Whitehead	K.R.	2 Lt			
Whitfield	D.C.R.	F/Sgt			
Wiggett	B.A.A.	Maj.			
Wild	A.W.	A/Cpl			
Willard	F.	WO II			
Willers	J.G.	Maj.			
Williams	G.H.	A/Cpl			
Williamson	J.J.	A/Cpl			
Wilson	B	Lt			
Wilmans	L.L.	Lt			
Wilson	A.	A/Mec.			
Wilson	W.StE	Lt			
Winstanly	M	Lt			
Winterton	K.N.E.	A/Sgt			

SOURCESARCHIVAL MATERIAL1. MILITARY INFORMATION BUREAU, PRETORIAADJUTANT-GENERAL

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>File Number</u>	
228	AG(3)1906/14 Vols I-III	Organization: Korea Campaign Military Assistance to UNO.
229	AG(3)1906/14/2 Vol. I	Pay and Allowances: Korea Campaign.

LANGEBANNEG ADVANCED FLYING SCHOOL (LAFS)

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>File Number</u>	
25 and 26	AOS/202/15/3/TR	Operational Training Courses to No.1 to No.14.
	AOS/202/15/16/TR	

SENIOR AIR LIAISON OFFICER, TOKYO (SALO)

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>File Number</u>	
1	SALO/TS/2/1/AIR	Employment 2 Sqn
2	SALO/S/37/1/AIR	Intelligence: Prisoner of War Reports.
3	SALO/S/42/AIR	Operations: Policy and Instructions.
4	2 SQN/S/42/1/AIR	Report on Operation of 2 Squadron on F-86F Aircraft, 22.10.1953.
	SALO/S/49/1/AIR	Visits and Inspections to No.2 SAAF Squadron.
	2 SQN/S/204/2/2/TR	Report on the Conversion of 2 Sqn onto F-86 Sabre-Jet Aircraft, 10.4.1953.
	SALO/S/204/3/1/TR	Training Air: Conversion Training F86A/C Course No.1/53.
5	SALO608/ET	Registration Marks of Aircraft: Policy and Instructions.

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>File Number</u>	
6	SALO/S/811/2/ORG Vol. I	Provisional Establishment, SAAF Far East Contingent, 5 Sept 1950.
7	SALO/S/818/1/ORG	Organization SAAF Korea Contingent.
	SALO/TS/819/3/1/ORG	Orders and Instructions, Policy and Instructions: Withdrawal of 2 Sqn.
9	SALO/S/823/2/ORG	Historical Records SAAF Far East: War Histories - June 1952 - May 1953.
	SALO/S/823/2/1	SALO War Diaries January to October 1953.
16	SALO/S/960/2/P2	Staff General - Officers: Personnel Requirements.
30	SALO/816/1/ORG	Greetings and Congratulations.
34	SALO/902/1/1/P8447/P1	Courts of Inquiry: P8447 A/Cpl Patterson, W.D.

2 SQUADRON KOREA (2 SQN K)

- a. **Aircraft Accident Reports:** Each file contains miscellaneous documents including: Sworn Affidavits, CTO's Report, MC's Report, Squadron Commander's Comments, Recommendations, etc.

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>File Number</u>	<u>Aircraft Number</u>	<u>Pilot</u>
14	2 SQ/8/1/3/AIR	45-11456	Lt J.A. Joubert
	2 SQDN/8/1 /AIR	307	Lt A.B. de Wet
	2 SQDN/8/1/5/AIR	311	Capt. J.F.O. Davis
	2 SQDN/8/1/6/AIR	319	Lt W.E. St E. Wilson
	2 SQDN/8/1/7/AIR	307	2 Lt D.R. Leah
	2 SQDN/8/1/8/AIR	304	Lt G.D. Doveton
	2 SQDN/8/1/9/AIR	301	Lt D.A. Ruiter
	2 SQDN/8/1/10/AIR	317	Capt. W.J.J. Badenhorst
	2 SQDN/8/1/13/AIR	315	Lt S. Armstrong
	2 SQDN/8/1/14/AIR	313	Lt S. Celliers
	2 SQDN/8/1/15/AIR	322	Maj. J.P.D. Blaauw

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>File Number</u>	<u>Aircraft Number</u>	<u>Pilot</u>
14	2 SQDN/8/1/17/AIR	330	Lt M.H. Rorke
	2 SQDN/8/1/18/AIR	332	Lt H. MacDonald
15	2 SQDN/8/1/20/AIR	312	2 Lt R.L. Staats
	2 SQDN/8/1/22/AIR	337	Lt A.G. Frisby
	2 SQDN/8/1/24/AIR	342	2 Lt A.M. Muller
	2 SQDN/8/1/25/AIR	328	2 Lt J.P. Verster
	2 SQDN/8/1/26/AIR	316	Maj. L.B. Pearse
	2 SQDN/8/1/28/AIR	335	T/Capt. F.M. Bekker
	2 SQDN/8/1/33/AIR	323	2 Lt A.M. Muller
	2 SQDN/8/1/34/AIR	349	2 Lt C.L. de Jongh
	2 SQDN/8/1/35/AIR	329	2 Lt D.A.R. Green
	2 SQDN/8/1/36/AIR	306	Cndt J.P.D. Blaauw
	2 SQDN/8/1/37/AIR	342	2 Lt M.O. Grunder
	2 SQDN/8/1/38/AIR	302	Lt N. Biden
	2 SQDN/8/1/39/AIR	344	Lt W. van den Bos
	2 SQDN/8/1/40/AIR	351	T/Capt. F.A. Montanari
	2 SQDN/8/1/41/AIR	352	Capt. D.H. Barlow
	2 SQDN/8/1/42/AIR	357	2 Lt T.H. Sivertsen
	2 SQDN/8/1/44/AIR	355	2 Lt D.R. Earp
	2 SQDN/8/1/47/AIR	310	2 Lt A.M. Muller
	2 SQDN/8/1/51/AIR	354	Lt J.A. Meiring
	16	2 SQDN/8/1/52/AIR	340
2 SQDN/8/1/53/AIR		363	2 Lt C.J. Pappas
2 SQDN/8/1/54/AIR		327	Capt. J.C. Collins
2 SQDN/8/1/55/AIR		365	2 Lt F.J. Grobler
2 SQDN/8/1/56/AIR		345	Lt G.H. Krohn
2 SQD/8/1/58/AIR		346	Capt. A.J. van Rensberg
2 SQD/8/1/59/AIR		356	2 Lt K.R. Whitehead
2 SQD/8/1/60/AIR		341	Lt P.I. Norman-Smith
2 SQD/8/1/64/AIR		350	Lt J.H. Rautenbach

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>File Number</u>	<u>Aircraft Number</u>	<u>Pilot</u>
16	2 SQD/8/1/65/AIR	368	Lt J.G. Newton
	2 SQD/8/1/66/AIR	353	Lt L.W. Parsonson
	2 SQD/8/1/67/AIR	376	Lt N.C. van Zyl
	2 SQD/8/1/69/AIR	374	Lt R.L. Staats
	2 SQD/8/1/78/AIR	375	Capt. R.A. Harburn
	2 SQD/8/1/80/AIR	370	Lt J.G. Newton
	2 SQD/8/1/81/AIR	308	2 Lt D.L Taylor
	2 SQD/8/1/82/AIR	362	2 Lt J.N. Lellyett
	2 SQD/8/1/83/AIR	373	T/Capt. A. van der Spuy
	2 SQD/8/1/87/AIR	320	2 Lt D.L. Taylor
	2 SQD/8/1/88/AIR	372	Lt J.O. Holtzhausen
	2 SQD/8/1/89/AIR	318	Lt G.J. Baransky
	2 SQD/8/1/91/AIR	348	2 Lt E.M. Lance
17	2 SQD/8/1/92/AIR	325	Capt. B.J. Grové
	2 SQD/8/1/94/AIR	380	Lt J.F. de Jager
	2 SQD/8/1/96/AIR	382	Lt W. Thornton
	2 SQD/8/1/97/AIR	391	Lt T.C. Scott
	2 SQD/8/1/102/AIR	386	Lt B.R. Kenny
	2 SQD/8/1/103/AIR	380	Maj. R.P.G. Kotzenberg
	2 SQDN/8/1/104/AIR	392	Lt T.R. Fryer
	2 SQDN/8/1/105/AIR	360	Lt P. Maxwell
18	2 SQDN/8/1/108/AIR	348	2 Lt J. Moir
	2 SQDN/8/1/109/AIR	383	2 Lt J. Moir
	2 SQDN/8/1/110/AIR	608	Lt R.L. van Rooyen
	2 SQDN/8/1/112/AIR	615	2 Lt P.J. Visser
	2 SQDN/8/1/113/AIR	613	2 Lt J.H. Roberts
	2 SQDN/8/1/114/AIR	619	2 Lt J.H. Coetzee
	2 SQDN/8/1/115/AIR	616	2 Lt G. Thom
2 SQDN/8/1/116/AIR	614	2 Lt M.C. Botha	

b. Miscellaneous:

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>File Number</u>	
4	2 SQDN/5/102/6/ARM	Radar Gunsight Maintenance.
10	2 SQD/818/3/ORG	Organization 2 Sqn Korea.
	2 SQDN/C/819/6/ORG	Orders and Instructions: Confidential Orders.
13	2 SQDN/C/960/4/P2	Staff General - Officers: Tour of Duty and Replacements, Officers.
18	2 SQDN/27/1/AIR Vol.I and Vol.II	Communiques and Publicity Information, Press Information.
33	2 SQD/909/10/P1	Honours and Awards: Soldier's Medal.
36	2 SQDN/5/825/4/ORG	Statistical Data 2 Sqn: Ammunition Expenditure. Miscellaneous Statistics. Damage Inflicted on the Enemy. Aircrew Casualties. Honours and Awards
39	SALO/909/4/P1	Honours and Awards: Bronze Star.
43	2 SQDN/909/5/P1	Honours and Awards: Silver Star.
52 - 54	May - December 1952	2 Sqn War Diary and Appendices.
54	September 1953	2 Sqn War Diary and Appendices.
	October 1953	2 Sqn War Diary and Appendices.
63		Pilots' Instructions.
64		South African Air Force Far Eastern Contingent War History.

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<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Month and Year</u>	
1 - 7	September 1950 - April 1952	2 Sqn War Diary and Appendices.
8	May 1953	2 Sqn War Diary and Appendices.
9	September 1950 - April 1952	SAAF Liaison HQ Far East War Diary.
10	November 1950	Recapitulation Summary, 5AF Assigned/ Attached Units: Statistical Breakdown.
10 - 26	December 1950 (dated: 1 Jan 1951) - August 1952	Return of Daily Missions, 2 Sqn SAAF: Miscellaneous Statistics, Damage Inflicted on the Enemy.
11 - 33	February 1951 - March 1953	Debriefing Forms SAAF 220.
15	June 1951	18 FBG Missions Reports.
33	January - March 1953	Ammunition Expenditure SAAF 221.
34 - 35	June - August 1953	2 Sqn War Diary and Appendices.
36	April 1953	2 Sqn War Diary and Appendices.

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<u>Person Interviewed</u>	<u>Place of Interview</u>	<u>Date of Interview</u>
Armstrong, Lt-Gen. R.F.	Pretoria	23.3.1981.
Bosch, Col A.C.J.	Pretoria	18.3.1981.

<u>Person Interviewed</u>	<u>Place of Interview</u>	<u>Date of Interview</u>
Cloete, Maj.-Gen. M.D.V.	Pretoria	31.3.1981.
Clulow, Col P.	Pretoria	18.3.1981.
Inglesby, Col S.J.W.	Johannesburg	31.3.1981.
Joubert, Capt. J.A.	Pretoria	2.4.1981.
Kotze, Capt. G.P.M.	Port Elizabeth	23.2.1981.
Kruger, Maj. J.H.	Pretoria	16,20.3.1981.
Low, Brig. G.N.	Pretoria	18.3.1981.
Martin, Col B.E.	Pretoria	18.3.1981.
Mouton, Col C.P.	Pretoria	23.9.1981.
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Pienaar, Maj.-Gen. E.A.C.	Pretoria	24.9.1981.
Rae, Capt. A.S.	Germiston	30.9.1981.
Scott Shaw, Cpln C.	Pietermaritzburg	8.1.1982.
Swardt, Cndt N.J.	Pretoria	28.9.1981.
Theron, Brig. S.v.B	Johannesburg	13.1.1982.
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SAIV DOCUMENTARY

Earp, Lt-Gen. D.R.

Korea - 'n Terugblik

July 1978.

END