

CIVIL AFFAIRS

THE UN OCCUPATION OF P'YONGYANG

by Charles H. Briscoe

P'yongyang, the capital of North Korea, fell to Republic of Korea (ROK) and U.S. forces on 19 October 1950. Five weeks after the Inch'on landing, United Nations (UN) forces had broken out of the Pusan Perimeter and Seoul had been recaptured. With ROK forces already across the 38th Parallel in pursuit of the North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA), General Douglas MacArthur received permission to conduct UN offensive operations to destroy the NKPA threat. That launched the race to the Yalu River. P'yongyang became an intermediate tactical objective along the way and logical site for the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) advanced command post. As expected, tactical UN and ROK commanders were focused on the continuing fight. Neither the strategic commander nor tactical commanders anticipated controlling large parts of North Korea, let alone two of its largest cities, including the capital.

Why is this relevant today? U.S. and coalition leaders had much the same priorities for Afghanistan and Iraq. President George Bush chose the capture of Baghdad to mark the end of hostilities in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. In 1950, the newly created UN did not want military government established in North Korea and the phrase "Civil Assistance" was coined to cover the P'yongyang mission. Fifty years later, U.S. Army Civil Affairs teams are conducting civil military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq just as Military Government teams did in North Korea in 1950. And, similar to recent events in Afghanistan and Iraq, the North Korea civil assistance campaign plan and the organization to carry out Phase



General Douglas A. MacArthur, commander of UN Forces in Korea, 1950-1951



Kim Il Sung, Premier of Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)



Dr. Syngman Rhee, President of Republic of Korea (South Korea)

Four activities (as they are now called) were approved after the perceived end of combat hostilities. In the midst of the ensuing chaos, North Korean citizens were denounced by neighbors as Communists in order to steal their property. Is that any different than people reporting somebody as a *Taliban* or *Fedayeen* in order to take possession of a truck, car, or house in Afghanistan or Iraq?

Not until after the capture of P'yongyang did General MacArthur approve the creation of a UN Civil Assistance Command Korea (UNCACK) for all of Korea. It was a State Department-driven action that resulted in a "paper" organization containing more than one hundred personnel. UNCACK was initiated in Tokyo to help rehabilitate Seoul, provide humanitarian and civil assistance to refugees in the south, and to reestablish government, law, and order throughout North Korea. UNCACK stood up in Seoul just in time to organize its own evacuation to Taegu.

Despite the lack of attention by the strategic command, the small Civil Assistance (CA) Team accomplished great things in P'yongyang, Chinnamp'ŏ, and in Pyongan-Namdo Province during its short thirty-seven day tenure from 29 October to 6 December 1950. The successes must be attributed to Colonel (COL) Charles R. Munske, Field Artillery—probably the most experienced Military Government officer in the Far East Command at the time. A veteran of both world wars, COL Munske had organized and run military governments in the Philippines, and had served as Military Governor of Kyushu, Japan, for two years. Having just returned to the Pacific theater in mid-October 1950,



Colonel Charles R. Munske led UN Civil Assistance Command Korea efforts in P'yongyang, and played a key role in UNCACK activities in Seoul. *Photo courtesy of Judy Munske.*

Munske was rushed to Seoul to organize civil assistance in South Korea. That mission was short-lived—his experience was critically needed in P'yongyang.

What follows are the experiences of COL Charles Munske and his team in P'yongyang and the surrounding towns and villages, told primarily in his own words. The information and excerpts are from Munske's letters, notes, papers, and documents. As "the Civil Assistance man in P'yongyang," who better to tell the story? [Direct quotes from COL Munske are indicated by *italics*.]

Early in the morning of 24 October 1950, COL Charles Munske received a terse order from the EUSA G-3: "Organize a small military government team and proceed at once with the advancing troops to P'yongyang. Set up the local governments, prevent sickness, starvation, and unrest among the inhabitants and do what you can in the line of quick rehabilitation. Remember this is a United Nations effort and you will not actually set up military government. You will be known as a Civil Assistance Team and will act as such. The legal currency north of the 38th Parallel will be North Korean *won* and no South Korean political activities will be allowed until further instruction." The G-3 concluded with: "Remember this is a United Nations occupation."²

Munske's proposed military government team table of organization and equipment reflected *what was required to perform the mission competently, but per usual it was cut by two-thirds*. Weapons and ammunition were readily available, but everything else was in short supply. Military government equipment and supplies, DDT, drugs, and medicines were virtually nonexistent. From available personnel, Munske organized a team of four officers, two UN civilians, one enlisted clerk, four enlisted

Shortly after the Pyongan-Namdo Civil Assistance Team arrived in P'yongyang, ROK President Syngman Rhee visited the North Korean capital. His strident reunification speech in downtown P'yongyang reverberated all the way back to Washington and the United Nations in New York.



Major Policy Decisions Affecting Civil Affairs in Korea¹

- **27 June 1950:** U.S. military forces committed to action in Korea.
- **6 July 1950:** Commander in Chief, UN Command (CINCUNC) advised of pending civil affairs directive.
- **31 July 1950:** UN Security Council asks U.S. to provide machinery for relief and support of civilian population in Korea.
- **7 September 1950:** Interim civil affairs directive issued to CINCUNC.
- **29 September 1950:** President defines responsibilities of Army and Economic Cooperation Agency for economic aid to Korea.
- **1 December 1950:** UN Assembly creates UN Korea Relief Agency.

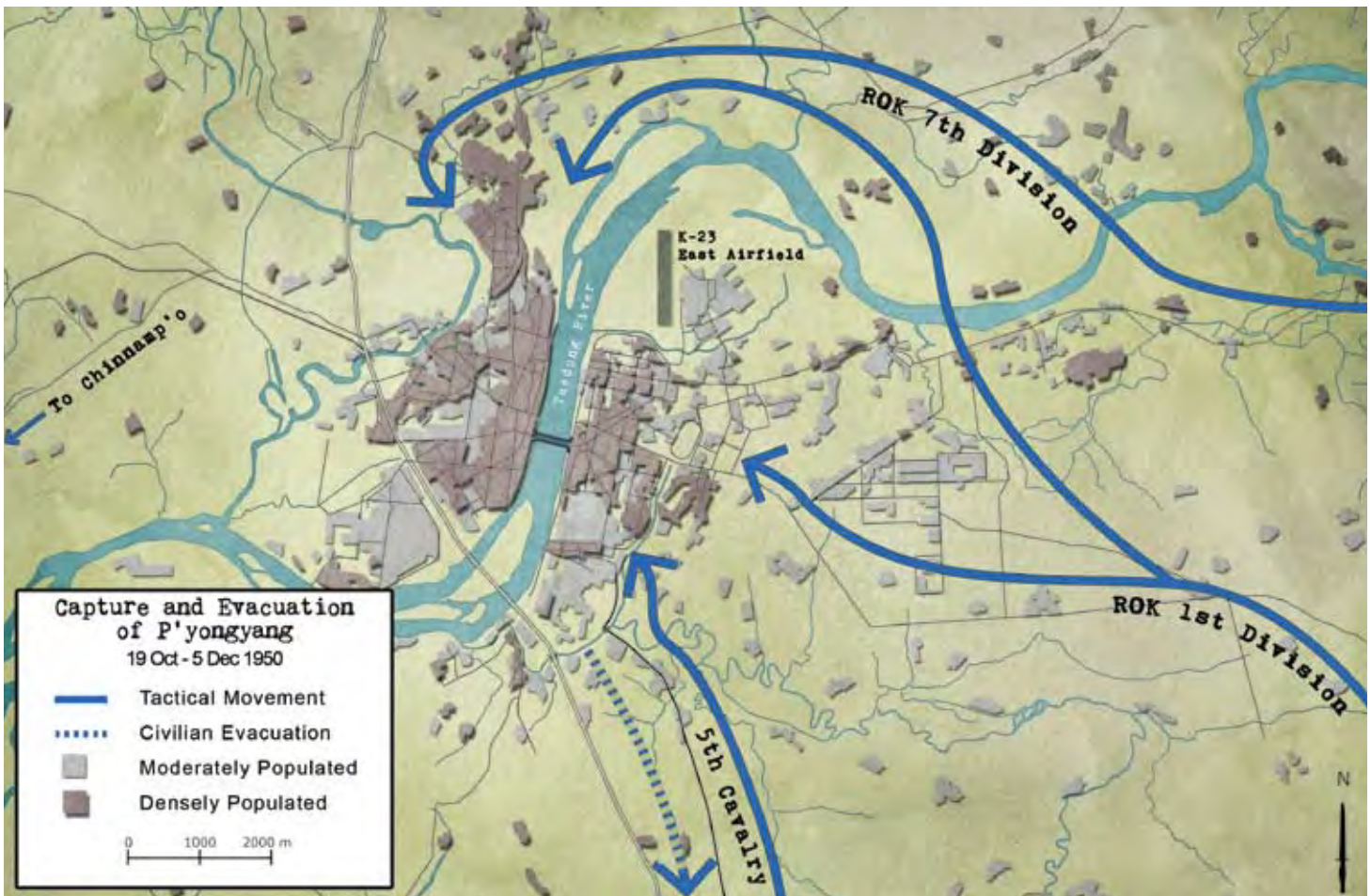
Munske's Proposed Military Government Team:

- 1•Team Commander *Colonel, Artillery* COL C.R. Munske
- 1•Public Health Officer *U.S. Civilian, WHO** Dr. F.K. Cassel
- 1•Sanitarian *English Civilian, WHO** Mr. S.A.C. Lord
- 1•Public Welfare Officer *Captain, Infantry* CPT T.C. Vangen
- 1•Public Safety Officer *Captain, Infantry* CPT W.F. Gerard
- 1•Civilian Supply Officer *Captain, Infantry* LT W. Stack

**World Health Organization*

drivers, an enlisted cook, and two Korean interpreters:

Mr. S.A.C. Lord, Major (MAJ) E.H. Davies, Captain (CPT) Davidson, CPT E. Ellingson, and First Lieutenant (1LT) Bruce Fisher joined the team on 10 November and were followed by Dr. A.K. Lee, preventive medicine physician, Lieutenant Colonel J.J. Livingston, and MAJ T.J. Cook.



Map depicts UN assault on P'yongyang by the ROK 1st and 7th Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division, 19-20 October 1950.

First Lieutenant John Golden, 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT) Finance Officer, was also detailed to assist COL Munske in P'yongyang.³

Only two officers in North Korea had any military government experience: CPT Terrance Vangen had served in the post-WWII Korea occupation, and the Chinnamp'o Sub-team chief, CPT Loren E. Davis, had held a military government assignment in Okinawa, Japan.⁴ A few of the enlisted men had also served in military government companies. Munske's team was composed of *real good men, who were "Jacks of All Trades," excellent connivers, and experienced midnight requisitioners—without which a lot of the work accomplished could never have been contemplated.* Three ROK legal officers with their sergeants were also attached. *The ROKs got plenty of training, but in addition they were very helpful.*⁵

The CA team scrounged three Jeeps, a 1¼-ton truck, and a 2½-ton truck with ½-ton trailer. Then, they sat and waited for orders—which came nearly two days later. As the convoy rolled out of the Seoul University gate, the acting first sergeant surprised Munske with a dilapidated civilian truck pulling two ½-ton trailers loaded with equipment. The extra trailer was hooked to the 1¼-ton truck. Then, the trip—which turned out to be full of work, happiness, despair, and pathos—began.⁶

The day was beautiful, sunny, and warm, with a cold twang in the air. The road north was crowded with vehicles. The

*ground was dry and the road had about six inches of powdered dust on it. Every wheel that turned would raise the dust up into a cloud that settled on the vehicles and the occupants until everything was grayish. Everyone wore a scarf or a handkerchief tied around his face, trying to cover the nose and mouth, making it almost possible to breathe. It was out of the question to stop, and because our group was small and light, we weaved in and out of the long lines of slow moving vehicles headed north. The other side of the road, going south, also had considerable traffic—empty trucks and loaded ambulances, and occasionally a truckload of prisoners.*⁷

People were in the streets and South Korean flags were everywhere in Kaesong. Every house seemed to have a flag. One officer said, "Either the 1st Cavalry Division or 2nd Infantry Division must have a flag vendor with them. How else could North Koreans get ROK flags so quickly?" As they crossed the 38th Parallel, signs were everywhere—courtesy of various units. Munske added a UNCACK sign. In Jonghyon-ni, Munske's group saw bodies in the streets, houses burned down, and civilians being held prisoner by vigilantes. They witnessed a runaway detainee killed. Anyone could denounce another as a Red and have him arrested and his property confiscated.⁸

Early the next morning, 29 October, the CA team resumed its movement north at maximum speed. As the group wound through mountain passes, knocked out tanks stared at them from vantage points. Sariwon,

a large city on the edge of the mountains, had been severely damaged in the fighting. Beyond the city was a large flat plain. Battle-damaged vehicles and artillery pieces littered the flanks of the road and stood skeleton-like in the cotton fields and rice paddies. Empty artillery shell casings, small arms debris, and ammo boxes and crates were everywhere. Large sections of rail track had been ripped up. Bomb craters pocked the ground. Trains were lying on their sides with the locomotives and cars riddled by thousands of bullets. Others stood burned on the tracks. Only the blackened walls of stations remained. Few bodies were seen despite heavy fighting just a few days previously. That changed in P'yongyang.⁹

Divided by the Taedong River, the west side of P'yongyang contained most of the population, government and municipal buildings, cultural centers, churches, numerous schools, and hotels. The east side of the city was mainly industrial, but a large housing project was nearing completion. Entering the eastern outskirts of the capital, the CA team drove by badly damaged factories. One was the American Corn Products Refinery Company. An American mobile army surgical hospital had already been erected nearby. Near the airfield (designated K-23) on the northeast side of the capital were signs pointing to Division and Corps command posts.¹⁰

The impressive, dual-span railroad bridge crossing the Taedong had suffered extensive damage in the fighting. Lone pilings stood bolt upright in the river where bridge sections had collapsed. The highway bridge had suffered a similar fate. The viaduct running from an island in the river to the mainland had been broken, and a large water pipe hung precariously over the water. By the time Munske's team arrived, Army engineers had constructed a sizeable pontoon bridge to handle the heavy traffic. Troops and military police were everywhere. After crossing the bridge the CA group turned left along the river toward the city center. The journey took them past neatly stacked ammunition left behind at NKPA defensive positions, and streets filled with people wandering aimlessly. The drivers had to navigate through the numerous bodies of dead NKPA soldiers that lined the roads.¹¹

While the CA team set up in the courtyard of an abandoned Japanese house for the night, COL Munske visited the city proper. He saw little damage from bombing or shellfire, but signs of heavy looting were everywhere—doors broken in, windows smashed, and household effects lying out in the streets. In the center of the city, he encountered more troops milling around, mostly American GI stragglers.¹² *Dead bodies were lying in side*

United Nations Command units took great pleasure in marking their journey north across the 38th Parallel, many leaving signs such as this one created by the ROK 3rd Division.



UN troops encountered similar scenes to this friendly welcome in Chinnamp'o in each village and city they liberated during their drive into North Korea.

*streets and in the parks, and nightly shootings, rapes, and robbery were common.*¹³

At the City Hall, COL Munske encountered some I Corps officers that he knew, one of whom was the military government officer, COL Melchoir. He briefed Munske on the situation, showed him on a map where the command posts of EUSA (Advance), I Corps, and IX Corps were located. The North Korean government formerly occupied the Presbyterian Missionary compound, the largest in Asia, and this is where Eighth Army set up its headquarters. Melchoir also informed Munske that his CA team would be attached to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT) for logistical support. A tactical CA team from the 2nd Infantry Division had just taken over from the 1st Cavalry Division.

COL Melchoir ended by providing a list of *supposedly*



Task Force INDIANHEAD



Task Force (TF) INDIANHEAD, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ralph L. Foster, 2nd Infantry Division G-2, was given the mission to capture Russian and Chinese military advisors, collect documents of intelligence value left behind in the government offices of Kim Il Sung, and to rescue American POWs reportedly being held in P'yongyang. Comprised of two halftracks, seven 2½-ton trucks, five medium tanks, two light tanks, a reinforced demolition squad, a doctor and two medics, two antiaircraft artillery halftracks, military policemen, Counter-Intelligence Corps agents, and a team of interpreters, TF INDIANHEAD convoyed north from Chuoc-Myon toward P'yongyang on 17 October 1950.¹

When Lieutenant Colonel Foster pulled his TF INDIANHEAD convoy serial into a P'yongyang school yard on 19 October, he found more than one thousand NKPA prisoners being tried by a ROK Army military tribunal. Ignoring the ROK forces, the TF members began searching the school yard. In one of the classrooms they discovered that the names of sixty-five Americans had been written on a blackboard. "I remember the last name was Galvin. The school, I assumed, had served as a holding area for American POWs . . . but, I do not remember any barbed wire nor bars on windows or doors," stated Corporal Mario Sorrentino, demolition specialist.² The task force encountered no opposition in its searches. After failing to find any American POWs or Russian and Chinese advisors, they focused on collecting documents in the abandoned military and government offices of the North Korean capital. On 25 October, TF INDIANHEAD was disbanded, and the POW search and rescue mission handed over to the 187th ARCT.

Endnotes

- 1 Lieutenant Clark C. Munroe, *The Second United States Infantry Division in Korea 1950-1951* (Tokyo: Toppan Printing Co., 1952), 51.
- 2 Donald Knox, *The Korean War: Pusan to Chosin: An Oral History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 400, 413.

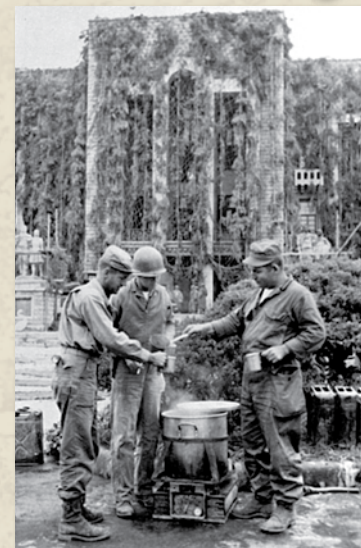
good dependable citizens that could be counted as non-Communists. One of them had already been appointed city mayor. Munske could only muse: *This was really rushing it, for there certainly had not been enough time to investigate the background of any of these people. However, it was now our problem.*¹⁴ He quickly discovered that the city government set up by I Corps was simply going through the motions. Lacking money, it could only hire people on the promise of future payment, and without vehicles, the various departments—i.e., sanitation, public works, health and welfare, etc.—were inoperative.¹⁵

Unaware of the Louis Heren article in *The Times* (London)¹⁶ lambasting him and his colleagues, COL Munske entered City Hall and established UNCACK headquarters on the second floor. He reported to UNCACK in Seoul that the constant shifting of responsibilities was not conducive to good civil assistance management, especially since the tactical teams had ideas of their own.¹⁷ Later, he conceded that in spite of the changing unit boundaries and

command responsibilities, the final outcome of the combined efforts of all CA activities could be considered satisfactory.¹⁸

During the team's first night in P'yongyang, an NKPA soldier was killed by ROK MPs. Afterwards, they threw his body into the CA team yard—a warning from ROK Provost Marshal "Tiger" Kim, who wanted to be the military governor and did not want the Americans interfering with him.¹⁹ However, Munske's orders were explicit that the Koreans would have no military government functions in North Korea nor were they to have any control over the civilian populace. *They were not authorized to try civilians in courts; appoint town, city, or provincial leaders and officials; seize homes, property or businesses; nor interfere in any way with normal civilian activities. This was the function of the Civil Assistance Team or Military Government, by whatever name you called it.*²⁰

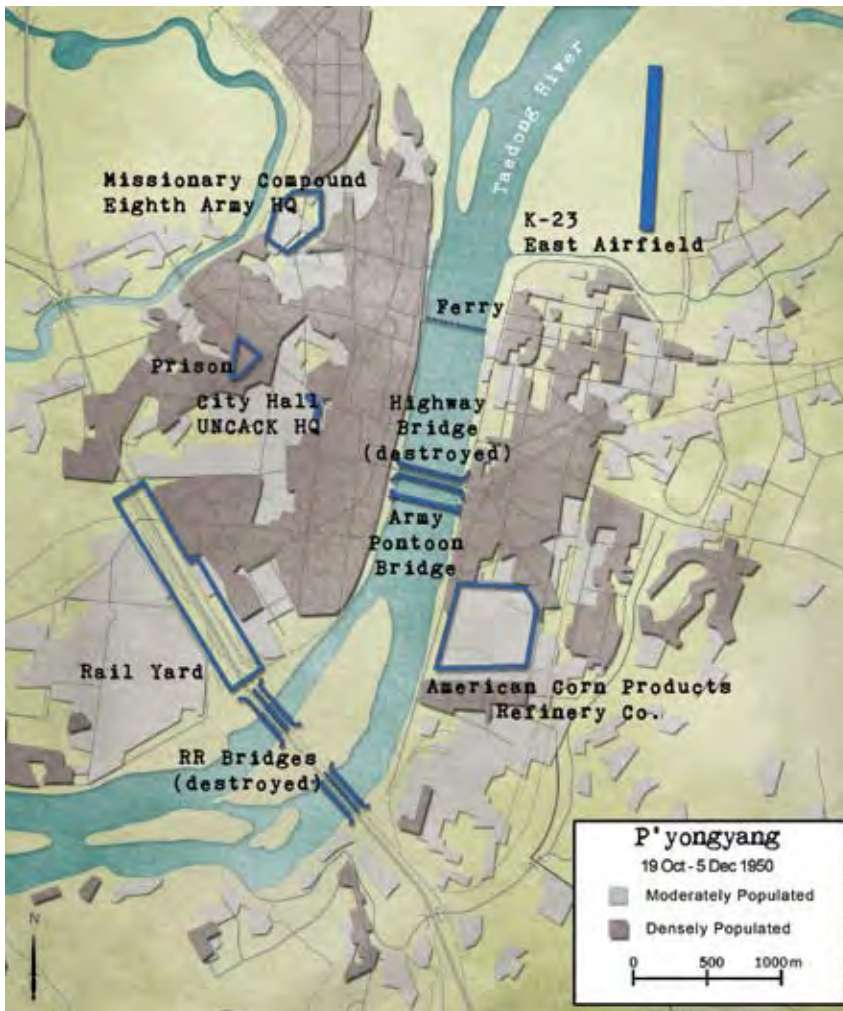
COL "Tiger" Kim had a reputation as a tough gangster, but being a close associate of President Syngman Rhee,



Members of TF INDIANHEAD set up their kitchen in front of the North Korean capitol building in P'yongyang, shown here in defensive camouflage. This building became Eighth Army Headquarters.



LTC Ralph Foster, seated at Kim Il Sung's desk, and members of TF INDIANHEAD searched government offices in P'yongyang for documents and information regarding American POWs.



Map of P'yongyang in late November 1950. The Missionary Compound served as the Palace of Premier Kim Il Sung and then EUSA Forward Headquarters. The UN Civil Assistance Team for Pyongan-Namdo Province & P'yongyang established themselves in the City Hall. The American Corn Products Refinery complex became the last residence of the UN CA Team in December 1950.

he was immune from arrest. *I had my troubles with him but they were minor*, recalled Munske.²¹ He had much bigger problems: public utilities in poor shape; no water, lighting, or electricity; and no public transportation.²²

Planning and operations had to be done simultaneously since there was no time for long range planning. Based on his available officers, COL Munske established four sections: Public Health, Public Welfare, Public Safety, and Civilian Supply. The team leaders were responsible for organizing local and provincial governments assisted by the three ROK legal officers. Public Works, Finance, Transportation, Warehousing, Labor, and Billeting functions were also parceled out to the CA officers and enlisted men as the need arose. The situation was continually updated by team visits, conversations with any and all native Koreans willing to talk, and information from local Counter-Intelligence personnel, which included Major Moffat, who was from an old American missionary family that had served in Korea.²³

Anyone not in complete sympathy with the Communist regime had disappeared in the last days before the North Korean government and troops evacuated. Some had been executed and others had been taken north. Some

simply disappeared on their own. These were the ones Munske wanted to contact. Of the estimated 625,000 people living in P'yongyang in early 1950, only 300,000 remained.²⁴ One positive aspect of the Communists' flight was the predominantly anti-Red feeling among the populace.²⁵

Based on problems he encountered in the initial days of his administration, Munske soon established his objectives: set up a city government; start provincial governments, appoint mayors and governors, repair power plants because water was needed for sanitation and firefighting, simultaneously rebuild the water works, get the trolleys and trains operating, gather food, find North Korean *won* money plates, set up hospitals and welfare agencies, move ROK military squatters out of private homes, eliminate the thousands of ROK deserters, prevent the nightly looting and burning of buildings, and post proclamations effecting all of the above.²⁶

Some of the other major issues Munske faced included: land reform, the looting of banks (ROK soldiers carrying off large rice bags of five-*won* notes made it difficult to obtain operating currency), and a prison fire.²⁷ In a 1 November 1950 letter home, he described the bank situation: *Every vault was dynamited and blown up. Money was scattered all over the floors. In a Russian bank the manager had started a fire in the vault before locking it and it was still burning. I have to gather up all of this money as it is the only available. Trying to pick the money out of the rubble is a job, but we are getting to it.*²⁸

While Brigadier General Frank S. Bowen Jr., 187th ARCT commander, assumed responsibility for Civil Assistance in P'yongyang on 2 November, COL Munske was there to *make it happen*. Bowen attended the first police school graduation and ordered that the five Japanese sake factories be dynamited.²⁹ Those were Bowen's major contributions to the CA effort in P'yongyang. Munske, writing to his wife by flashlight in his house (no lights, heat, water, or toilet facilities) in the missionary compound, and wearing multiple layers of clothing, revealed his frustrations: *Everybody lives like pigs. No progress has been made. This is the worst situation that I have ever faced, and it is very depressing. We are trying to organize governments, get electric power and water back into the city, set up police and fire departments and do a million other things. Ironically, he concluded on a positive note: It doesn't seem that we will ever get anywhere with this setup. One of these days all the pieces of this puzzle will fall into its proper place and we shall lick it.*³⁰

After working at City Hall all day, Munske and his small team routinely traveled to EUSA headquarters to eat and attend updates. The only safe nighttime activity was to chase fires. On 6 November, the NKPA prisoners

The Sunch'on/Myongucham Massacre

Captured by North Koreans along the Nakdong River in early August 1950, Private First Class Lloyd Kreider, a 34th Infantry Regiment medic, was marched to Taejon and then taken by train into Seoul. About the time of the Inch'on landing, approximately three thousand prisoners of war were being held at a school house in Seoul. Shortly after the landing, about seven hundred of those still capable of walking were marched north. Prisoners unable to keep up were taken off to the side of the road and shot. "The road to P'yongyang was the real death march. As soon as a man fell out, he was shot or bayoneted. We were never given any food or water. Very few of us had any clothes, just some rags around the waist. I think about three hundred and fifty of us finally reached P'yongyang," recalled Kreider.¹

The POWs had been housed in a P'yongyang school for about a week when they saw flares at night over the city. They knew that meant the UN forces were close by. The North Koreans quickly herded the prisoners out of the school house. At least a third of the prisoners were killed—the invalids. The rest were marched to a train bound north via Sunch'on. The train traveled only at night, hiding from UN aircraft in tunnels during the day.

On the morning of 20 October, the steam engine was stoked to the maximum in an effort to asphyxiate the prisoners in the tunnel with smoke. When that effort proved too slow, the guards began taking groups of forty off the train to execute them with their machine guns. Private Kreider survived by falling down just

as the shooting started and then playing dead. After the prisoners were shot, another group bayoneted the bodies. Kreider was stabbed in the knee, but managed not to scream. At nightfall, once convinced that the guards had left, he crawled away from the dead. While searching for a good hiding place Kreider discovered another POW still alive—a master sergeant. The two hid in some bushes. In the morning, Kreider hailed a passing young North Korean boy for help. He returned with an old man who took the two escaped prisoners to his home and fed them. Then he loaded the two men on a cart and carried them to Sunch'on, where he turned them over to an ROK unit, which in turn transferred them to the 187th ARCT.²

"We'd heard rumors about a death march, where the NKPA herded this big group of American prisoners along, trying to get them into China, and shooting and killing them all along the way. Then, we discovered evidence that it was true. We were sent up to help gather evidence for war crimes trials later on. We dug up the American POWs who were shot in the Sunch'on tunnel massacre," related Sergeant William Chambers of EUSA Graves Registration. Fortunately, Lloyd Kreider was not among them.³

Endnotes

- 1 Lloyd Kreider, "Into the Tunnel," in Rudy Tomedi, *No Bugles, No Drums: An Oral History of the Korean War* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1993), 57–59.
- 2 Kreider, "Into the Tunnel," 57–59.
- 3 William Chambers, "Death All Day," in Tomedi, *No Bugles, No Drums: An Oral History of the Korean War*, 48–49.



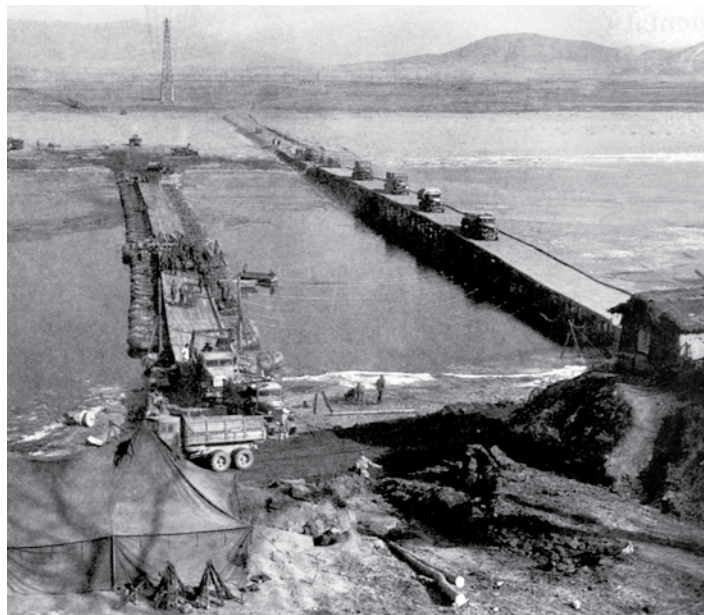
The North Koreans force-marched American POWs north, ahead of the UN advance in October 1950. Hundreds died along the way and in temporary prisons, but the remaining POWs taken from Seoul were killed in a tunnel near Sunch'on, north of P'yongyang. War crimes investigators later found mass graves and unburied bodies at the site of the massacre.

of war set their prison on fire. Hundreds among the several thousand prisoners there died. While surveying the damage afterwards, the CA team discovered more than two thousand bodies buried in the prison yard.³¹ An estimated three thousand partisans and stay-behind NKPA being hunted by UN troops (primarily the 187th ARCT) during the day were responsible for most night fires and sabotage.³²

These are very hectic days trying to establish law and order here. The whole sky is red with fire. A really big one is burning in the pouring rain. We have no way to stop fires here since we have no fire engines. The Commies took them all north. Even if we had some we have no water in the city since they destroyed the entire water system. The CA team stopped the spread of that fire by using their trucks and cables to pull adjacent wooden buildings down. A few days afterwards, the team found three fire trucks twenty miles north of the city, where they had been strafed and bombed by UN fighters. Though all were in very bad condition, they were towed back to the city in hopes that one usable truck could be built from the three wrecks. That was accomplished and a Fire Department was established at the end of November 1950.³³

On 9 November, Munske's toughest problem was handling the ROK troops and South Korean youth groups who were causing a lot of trouble. They were out and out 'carpetbaggers,' taking what they wanted and shipping it South. The 'kangaroo courts' held by these South Korean patriotic youth groups made the local populace resentful.³⁴ *They are treating the people here as though they are still Commies and are robbing and shooting them. If I could get them moved out of here, at least half of our troubles would be over.*³⁵ The five thousand ROK military personnel (including ROK Air Force personnel without airplanes and Navy sailors without boats) scrounging food and supplies, caretaking houses for their commanders, and stragglers and deserters, were causing mayhem. They took rice, millet, vegetables, machinery, clothing, and medicine, and shipped it south on trucks confiscated from the villages. Two rice mills were operated by the 8th Regiment, 7th ROK Division. When a ROK Air Force officer demanded the first one thousand bags of rice harvested in Mirim-ni, seven miles east of P'yongyang, Munske figured that they would have to look for a new mayor shortly.³⁶ With the ROK military having a three week headstart on foodstuffs, Munske's team struggled to collect rice and millet to put in central storage for emergencies.³⁷

As the central UN supply agency for North Korean *won*, the UNCACK team was stringently doling out money to American units, while ROK Army units were discarding what they had stolen earlier because they could buy nothing with it. To keep repairs and reconstruction going, COL Munske was spending between one and two million *won* per day.³⁸ All the factories had either been systematically sabotaged by the Reds or looted by the ROK military. Money was essential to rehabilitation. The coal miners would not work without pay or rice and they



While the Highway Bridge (right) across the Taedong River had been destroyed, U.S. Army engineers quickly erected a pontoon bridge (left) to reconnect East and West P'yongyang until the Highway Bridge could be repaired.

Reported in the Media...

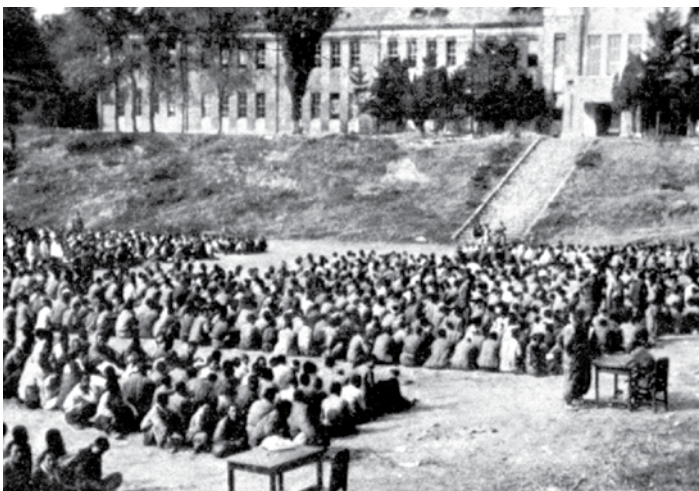
Correspondent Louis Heren of *The Times* (London) reported on conditions in the North Korean capital in mid-October. Effective politics of the Southern occupation of North Korea consisted mostly of the National Police and the rightist youths who trundled along with it. Cho Pyong-ok, Home Minister, announced that National Police controlled nine towns north of the 38th Parallel and that a special force of thirty thousand Koreans was being recruited for occupation duty. Heren called the U.S.-South Korean occupation a disgrace. American Civil Affairs officers were "pathetically few" and inexperienced.

"The recruitment of a provisional city council for P'yongyang would have been farcical, if the implications were not so obviously tragic. It was rather like watching an Army sergeant selecting men for fatigue duty. As a result, weeks after the fall of the city there were no public utilities, law and order was evident only on the main streets during the hours of daylight, and the food shortage due to indifferent transport and distribution had assumed serious proportions."

were critical to restoring electrical power for lighting and to operate the water pump system for the city.³⁹ The CA team recovered forty-six million *won* in five- and ten-*won* notes. Payments to contractors were usually stuffed in large rice sacks and carried away in oxcarts. Despite its illegality, South Korean *won* brought north by the ROK military, Seoul officials, and railway personnel complicated the situation.⁴⁰



Mounted South Korean soldiers “ride herd” on a prisoner as he is marched through a P’yongyang street to a prisoner-collection point. A bicycling North Korean citizen, wearing an armband that identifies him as an anti-Communist, joined the parade.



The 2nd Infantry Division was responsible for hundreds of POWs after the fall of P’yongyang. Makeshift holding areas were established in streets and in open areas, such as the basin in front of Eighth Army Headquarters in northern P’yongyang.



The UN Civil Assistance Command was the primary agency for managing and administering aid to refugees. In P’yongyang, it also served as the military government and helped establish a new civilian government in the city.

Photo courtesy of Judy Munske.

NKPA forces still controlled the northern half of Pyongan-Namdo Province and the ROK I Corps divisions were still fighting. Munske revised his initial estimate that the war was practically over. He now saw that it could drag out for a long time.⁴¹ On 11 November 1950, IX Corps troops passed through the North Korean capital on their way to the front to prepare to continue the EUSA offensive.⁴²

On the positive side, Dr. Kassel found no signs of serious illness, malnutrition, or other health problems in P’yongyang, Chinnamp’o, and the surrounding villages. But, as Mr. Lord noted, sanitation was always deplorable everywhere. Six hospitals were made operational in the CA team’s short tenure in P’yongyang.⁴³

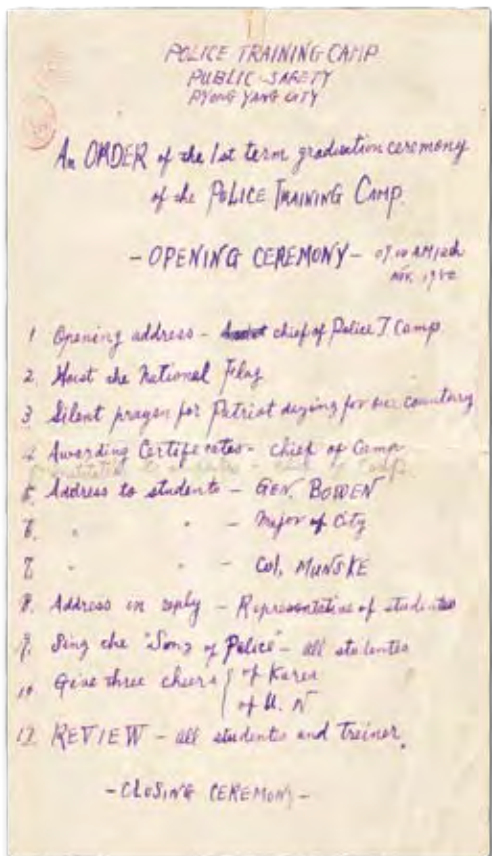
The city police department was also functioning, and a police school, organized by MAJ Jack Young, 2nd Infantry Division, was conducting accelerated training classes. A cadre of South Korean national police had been requested to officer the several hundred policemen.⁴⁴ On 15 December 1950, the city police force was to be increased to three thousand effectives.⁴⁵

P’yongyang was being governed as a “special city,” separate from the provincial government. The CA team later consolidated bureaus in the city government to eliminate redundancy.⁴⁶ *Our first plans are to follow the governmental system in use since the occupation of North Korea.* Colonel Munske made it clear to the *Stars and Stripes* that the system was not a military government. *We allow the newly-appointed local officials as much of the burden of administration as they possibly can handle, with our officers serving only as advisers.*⁴⁷

While Korean custom normally dictated that an elder male scholar be used in the higher echelons of government, it was felt that if such a man was not available to handle the demands of forming a new government, a younger man ought to be selected. Records of numerous persons were carefully scrutinized for capable leaders. Underground sources helped them find personnel acceptable to the majority. Then, a public meeting was set in the city auditorium to discuss the gubernatorial candidates in a democratic forum. Public Notices of decisions, authenticated by COL Munske’s chop (seal), were posted afterwards.⁴⁸

Munske and his team were making good progress by mid-November. Pyongan-Namdo Province officials were installed on 13 November. An interim governor, Kim Sung Chu, nominated by President Syngman Rhee, had actually served for a week. Non-potable water was now being pumped into the systems on both sides of the Taedong River, and limited lighting was available on the east side. One nearby coal mine was operating, but it only furnished enough coal to run one power plant. Several local citizens requested permission to print newspapers. In an interim report to Seoul dated 12 November 1950, COL Munske stated that *generally, things have been in a chaotic condition, but slowly we are beginning to see slight changes for the better.*⁴⁹

By mid-November, COL Munske thought that they were beginning to get control of the crime wave in the city, though



Vital to restoring order to P'yongyang was a competent police force. The first class from the Police Training Camp graduated on 12 November 1950, with speeches given by BG Bowen of the 187th ARCT, the mayor of P'yongyang, and COL Munske. *Courtesy of Judy Munske.*

nightly rapes persisted. Conditions outside the city were still tough. Guerrillas operated at will, daily attacking military convoys and running rampant in the small villages. To the south of P'yongyang, strong enemy attacks were being made against the UN forces, which included Turks and Filipinos.⁵⁰

In the north, the Americans and British were preparing for the final push to the Yalu. Still, *increasing contact with Chinese soldiers is still unresolved. Everyone is holding his breath. However we are not greatly worried. We are just damned sore. We had expected the fighting to be over by now.*⁵¹ Despite growing tactical evidence in the form of several hundred Chinese POWs, denial of a Chinese threat by Tokyo sufficed, especially since extremely cold weather reduced active patrolling by troops lacking winter clothing.

In the meantime, the senior UN Civil Assistance advisor was plagued by law and order challenges. After meeting with the ROK Commander in Chief MAJ Ly, the Counterintelligence Division commander, and MPs the night before, COL Munske joined a 20 November raid on a gang of racketeers.

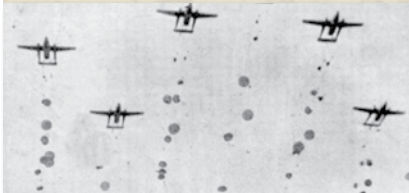
Rakkasan Assault on Sukch'on and Sunch'on



The 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team made a parachute assault on Sukch'on and Sunch'on the morning of 20 October 1950. Although the jump was a success, faulty intelligence caused the Rakkasans to miss both cutting off the North Korean divisions north of P'yongyang and rescuing American POWs.



The Sukch'on/Sunch'on parachute assault was the first time that C-119s were used for a combat parachute operation. They dropped a total of four thousand troops and six hundred tons of supplies that day.



Delayed by heavy rain at Taegu, South Korea, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT—"Rakkasans"), did not conduct parachute assaults on Sukch'on and Sunch'on until late morning 20 October 1950. The drop zones were adjacent to the railway lines going north from P'yongyang, the North Korean capital. The primary mission of the 187th was to cut off and then contain two North Korean divisions as part of the Eighth U.S. Army and ROK offensive into North Korea following the successful UN landing at Inch'on and the breakout from the Pusan Perimeter. A secondary mission was to rescue approximately two thousand American prisoners of war that were being shipped north to serve as future "bargaining chips" in UN negotiations.

The Sukch'on/Sunch'on airborne assault was the first time that heavy equipment was para-dropped in combat, and the first use of C-119 Flying Boxcar transports for a combat parachute operation. On 20 October and the days afterward, about four thousand troops and six hundred tons of equipment and supplies were dropped at Sukch'on and Sunch'on. This included twelve 105 mm howitzers, thirty-nine Jeeps and trailers, four 40 mm antiaircraft artillery guns, four ¾-ton trucks, and 584 tons of ammunition, gasoline, water, rations, and other supplies.¹

The Rakkasans arrived too late to contain the North Korean divisions and rescue the American POWs. The trail elements of the enemy units were a full day ahead on the north side of the Chongchon River. Communist Premier Kim Il Sung and his government had fled P'yongyang on 12 October for Manpojin on the Yalu River. Far East Command intelligence was seven to ten days old. When the Rakkasans were ordered to P'yongyang on 23 October, they had accumulated thirty-eight hundred prisoners, killed between two and three thousand North Korean soldiers, and suffered a hundred casualties. Unfortunately, the remaining UN prisoners had been taken from their train and machine gunned by their guards before dawn on 20 October—at the same time the 187th was preparing for the parachute assault.²

Notes

- 1 Roy E. Appleman, *US Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950)* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1961), 656-57.
- 2 Edwin P. Hoyt, *On to the Yalu* (New York: Stein & Day, 1984), 242-43.



A single working fire “truck” (actually a motorcycle) was available to fight fires in P’yongyang in late 1950. This demonstration of the pumper’s power took place in front of the damaged City Hall, which can be seen in the center background. Photo courtesy of Judy Munske.

Headquarters (EUSAK) Civil Assistance Command.
 Pyong an-Nam do, Province
 Apo. 301
Off Limits

This building, and the contents therein is now under control of the Civil Assistance Team, UN Force.

All persons are prohibited from entering, and removing, or destroying any part of the building, grounds, equipment, and furniture, or any food located therein.

Trespassers will be apprehended, and prosecuted by the proper authority.

By Command of General Bowen:
 C. R. MUNSKÉ
 Colonel, Arty
 Chief, Civil Assistance Team

Youth groups became black marketeers under the guise of South Korean patriotic organizations. They had been robbing everything they could. After their raid on the gangsters, Munske investigated a cave twelve miles outside the city where a big guerrilla arsenal had been found. The UNCACK team got an unexpected bonus from the counterguerrilla operations: two captured Russian trucks and a Russian Jeep.⁵²

In mid-November, UN soldiers enjoyed an unexpected treat: “The greater portion of the day was spent patrolling, attending [winter] clothing classes, and enjoying the Bob Hope Show. The two-hour comedy show was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.” “No one who saw the show could forget Marilyn Maxwell’s sweater, the acrobatics of the Taylor Maids, the wit of Jerry Colona, the music of Les Brown, and, most of all, the great man himself. It was hard to imagine that Bob Hope was actually in P’yongyang,” said Private First Class Jimmy Marks, A Battery, 61st Field Artillery Battalion.⁵³

COL Munske was too busy to attend the show. He was escorting official visitors throughout the city, explaining and showing what the CA team had accomplished. After dinner with Senator Claude Pepper of Florida, Munske was called back to Seoul to talk with U.S. Ambassador John J. Muccio about conditions in the North Korean capital. This was prompted by a *Christian Science Monitor* article noted by Secretary of State Dean Acheson. In Seoul, COL Munske found the UN Civil Assistance Command Korea well ensconced in the Bonto Hotel. The UNCACK was concerned about guerrilla activities affecting work throughout Korea. Perhaps to make up for a busy Thanksgiving, in Munske’s absence, CA team sergeants found the Russian ambassador’s old desk and some nice leather chairs, which they set up in their chief’s room in P’yongyang.⁵⁵

When Munske returned from Seoul on 27 November, he was accompanied by Brigadier General Crawford F. Sams, MacArthur’s Chief of Public Health and Welfare. General Sams wanted to visit city hospitals and clinics

無斷出入 및 財産撤去 嚴禁

이 건물 및 이 건물 내의 施設 備品 等 一切 財産은
 本民事務에서 管理한다
 軍警民間 如何한 者를 莫論하고 許可 없이 이 건
 物 내 및 地域 내 에 出入 하거나 其 내 에 있는 施設 備
 品 又 는 食料 品 等 一切 財産을 除去 搬出 或 는 破壞
 함을 嚴禁한다
 前記에 違反 하여 不法侵入 又 는 侵害 하는 者는 逮捕 하
 여 嚴罰에 處한다

平壤駐屯軍司令官 牟平將命에 依하여
 國際聯合軍 牟平民軍 總長 牟平大領사 알만스키



UNCACK issued various notices and proclamations as it reestablished law and order in P’yongyang. Posted instructions were often authenticated by COL Munske’s “chop,” or seal, with his name in both English and phonetic Korean.



Bob Hope's USO Tour was always a raving success, and the show in P'yongyang was no different. Shown here with President and Mrs. Syngman Rhee in Seoul, Bob Hope and Marilyn Maxwell headlined the wildly popular show.

before going up to the front where fighting was heavy. The night before, "Bed Check Charlie" had bombed K-23 airfield and everyone had been put on alert to defend the city.⁵⁶ Although Lieutenant General Walton Walker had formally told everyone that extremely large numbers of Chinese were breaking through Eighth Army lines, Munske calmly reassured his wife, *Don't worry about the Reds shoving us out of P'yongyang. We have British, Filipino, ROK, and American troops here. I'm not worried. UN troops are moving north now. The 7th Infantry Division has reached the Manchurian border and is sitting there.*⁵⁷

The uncertainty of the situation enabled COL Munske to survive an assassination attempt by guerrillas. *It happened about the time of the big UN push to the Yalu River in the northwest. The mayor, police chief, and I were supposed to discuss contingencies in the event a withdrawal became necessary. A group of Communist guerrillas figured to kill all of us. Fortunately, the ROK Counter Intelligence Corps discovered the plot and arrested the ringleaders. The group was 'loaded for bear;' the eleven were packing rifles, pistols, and grenades. One was a trusted police lieutenant.*⁵⁹

Despite most of the heavy fighting taking place in the northern part of Pyongan-Namdo Province, COL Munske and his CA team tried to conduct *business as usual* in order to dispel any thoughts of panic. But, *local officials and medical personnel were getting very jittery because when they accepted*

*"Around Thanksgiving, word came up that the Eighth Army was going to launch a general attack all along the front. We were told that theater intelligence believed the Chinese in the area would fall back into Manchuria... It looked like this would be the final stage of the war, and that we'd all be home by Christmas. That same night, the night the UN offensive was supposed to be in full swing, all hell broke loose. All that night we were engaged almost continuously in firefights." — CPT Sherman Pratt, B Company, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division.*⁶⁵

*positions in the government established by us, they automatically signed their death warrants with the Communists. Witness to the long line of troops coming back through P'yongyang, beaten, haggard, and dirty they knew that the Chinese Army had hit U.S. hard and practically destroyed the ROK army. Evacuation was only a matter of time.*⁶⁰

On 1 December, during his visit to 8th Army headquarters, COL Munske was told that the 2nd Infantry Division had been "cut to pieces;" only forty percent of the division survived. The 9th Infantry Regiment that had been in P'yongyang had lost sixteen hundred of its assigned two thousand men. General Sams discovered that his son-in-law, a battalion surgeon in the 9th Infantry, had been killed when his aid station had been overrun. Shortly afterwards, the 1st Cavalry Division was hit hard and the U.S. units began to fall back. Munske was told that the EUSA advance headquarters was reestablishing itself east of the Taedong, effectively cutting P'yongyang in half. He was instructed to handle the refugees ("Keep the people out of the Army's way"), to insure that repaired facilities were destroyed, and to use his judgment as to when to leave.⁶¹

COL Munske gathered the city and province government officials and told them to assemble everyone who worked for the UN governments and UN forces and tell them to prepare to move.⁶² Medical and public health

COL (Ret.) Walton H. "Buck" Walker II



COL (Ret.) Walton H. "Buck" Walker II, now Acting Deputy, G-7, U.S. Army Special Forces Command, is the grandson of General Walton H. Walker, Commander, Eighth U.S. Army in Japan and Korea. His father, General (Retired) Samuel Sims Walker, a company commander in the 24th Infantry Division in Korea, served under his dad and secured the Taedong Highway Bridge during the withdrawal. As a third generation West Pointer, Buck retired after thirty years of service having commanded airborne infantry, Special Forces, and a joint force in Haiti.

Costly Withdrawal...

On 27 November, UN forces began a costly withdrawal across the Ch'ong-ch'on River. While covering this retreat, the 2nd Infantry Division of IX Corps suffered roughly five thousand casualties and lost most of its artillery as it fought its way through large numbers of Chinese to reach the river and then through the mountain passes south of Kunu-ri.⁵⁸

personnel, the few remaining Christian missionaries, and the police force were included. The next day, 2 December, American unit after unit was rushing "pell-mell" through the capital to cross the pontoon bridges while CA was told to stand by. *Military government is a peculiar thing*, observed Munske.⁶³

"Bed Check Charlie" bombed the airfield again that night. On Sunday, 3 December, COL Munske assembled the "official" group of more than two thousand North Korean refugees and personally escorted them across the

pontoon bridge to the east side of the river Taedong, and installed them in the old American Corn Products factory near the railway station. Another one hundred thousand people gathered along the river were warned that the Filipinos guarding the crossing site would shoot them if they attempted to use the pontoon bridge. The CA team delivered several tons of rice to the factory to feed the "official" group while it waited for its train to safety.⁶⁴

Back at City Hall, COL Munske issued destruction and distribution orders to his team. The two newly built power plants, water system and machinery, printing presses, and Radio P'yongyang, were to be destroyed. Ninety-six crates of South Korean currency plates seized by the Communists in Seoul were loaded aboard trains heading south. The underground weapons factory found hidden in an abandoned lead mine between the towns of Sinchon and Yonam-Ni on the Pallyu River (BV 6346) was destroyed by combat engineers from the 187th ARCT. All freight cars on the west side of the river were rigged for demolition. Rice and millet in the UNCAK warehouse were distributed freely to the city's residents; two tons were placed on the steps of City Hall for people to help themselves.⁶⁶



Map reveals the extent of the UN advances in the east and west after five CCF (Communist Chinese Forces) Armies launch massive counterattacks to halt the Allied offensive and cause withdrawals south of the 38th Parallel.



Detailed limits of advance by UN regimental forces when they are countered by CCF Armies.

Shortly after lunch, COL Munske was surprised by an unexpected visitor. Captain Loren E. Davis, chief of the CA Sub-Team at Chinnamp'o, reported to him for instructions. He had just driven forty miles through guerrilla-controlled territory to collect medical supplies and planned to spend the night in P'yongyang. Munske quickly explained how precarious things were in the city and ordered him to return immediately with his medicines. He was not to await any further orders from him—leave when the U.S. troops (3rd Logistical Command) left the port. Captain Davis remembered, "I jumped back into my Jeep and we set a speed record getting back. Burning up the engines was the least of my concerns."⁶⁸

After making another tour of the deserted city in his Jeep, COL Munske had his team pack up in the missionary compound and moved across the river to safety.⁶⁹ That night, 3 December, the CA team occupied a hospital building with intact windows, sheltering from the below-freezing conditions. About 2130 hours, the sentry reported a large fire nearby. *Within an hour, they heard small arms begin to pop and explosions became progressively louder until the team realized that mortar and artillery shells were exploding. The nearby ammo dump was on fire. Fragments*

Dreams of Garrison Life...

The 1st Cavalry Division troops charged with the security of P'yongyang had begun to dream of the joys of garrison life in Japan and were more concerned with the proper arrangements for the "Homecoming Parade" in Tokyo than with the persistent stories of Chinese intervention.⁵⁴

This North Korean *hundred-won* note was legal currency during UNCACK's administration of P'yongyang, though five- and ten-won notes were much more common denominations.



Radio P'yongyang

While COL Munske worked civil assistance in P'yongyang, and CA officers with the divisions and corps dealt with tactical issues, the Psychological Warfare (Psywar) Division of G-2, EUSA in Seoul wanted to counter daily Russian and Chinese radio broadcasts into North Korea. Major Tom O. Matthews (pictured) and Captain Max W. Dolcater of G-2 Psywar, UN Command, Tokyo, were dispatched to North Korea. These officers would single-handedly get Radio P'yongyang operational. Intelligence reported that Radio P'yongyang had one Japanese and one Russian transmitter. Both had water-cooled tubes. When Matthews and Dolcater arrived in early November they discovered that key parts of the Japanese transmitter had been wrecked and little remained of the Russian machine. With some inquiries, they were shown where elements of the Russian transmitter were buried and told that the other parts had been shipped north by rail. Major Matthews flew to Tokyo to scrounge essential parts. While he was gone, Captain Dolcater found the necessary Russian radio parts on some abandoned railway cars near Sunch'on.¹

A bigger problem was electrical power. A nearby coal mine had supplied fuel for the main P'yongyang power plant, but the miners refused to work without rice. Matthews and Dolcater got themselves appointed official rice officers by COL Munske, and worked with his team to get coal delivered to the city power plant. To their surprise, these efforts to get Radio P'yongyang on the air also restored electricity to the waterworks and a hospital.² A few days before Thanksgiving 1950, Radio P'yongyang began broadcasting on 855 kilocycles (kc), but its signal varied from 830 to 880. By then Radio Seoul had also resumed broadcasting on 860 kc.³

The UN Command broadcast themes for Radio P'yongyang in November 1950—"Relief, rehabilitation, unification for Korea," "Democracy, how it works, and ROK Constitution," "Soviet Obstruction," and "Stragglers"—fell off after the Chinese attacks. By the end of November, they had been replaced by themes that emphasized "Chinese Intervention," "Soviet tyranny, lies, and oppression," "Refugees," and "UN determination and ultimate victory." Limited electricity reduced the North Korean broadcasts to nightly thirty and sixty-minute periods: 2200-2230 hours, 2300-2400 hours. Essentially, the second period was a rebroadcast of "North Korean News and Commentary."⁴

Notes

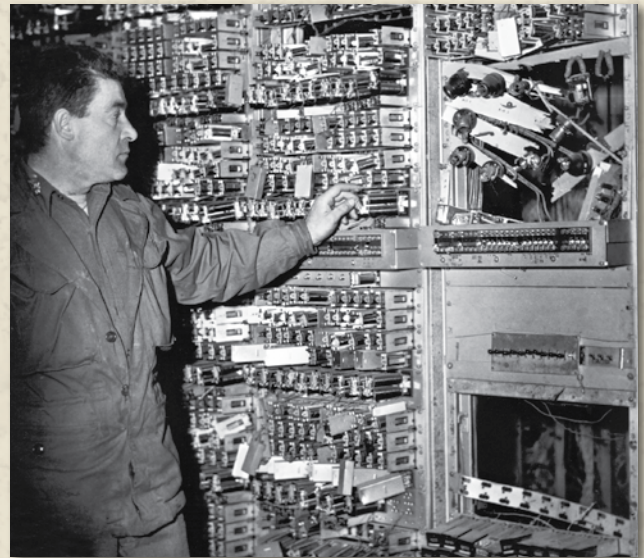
- 1 Colonel Kenneth K. Hansen, *Psywar in Korea* (Washington, DC: Joint Subsidiary Activities Group, OJCS, 1960): 91.
- 2 Hansen, *Psywar in Korea*, 83–84.
- 3 Hansen, *Psywar in Korea*, 91.
- 4 Captain Max W. Dolcater, "Evaluation of Enemy and Friendly Broadcasts with Respect to UN Military Operations and Pertinent Recommendations," Undated Report to Chief, Psychological Warfare Branch, G-2 Section, GHQ, Far East Command in Murray Dyer, *Strategic Radi Psywar in FEC, ORO-T-4 (FEC)* (Washington, DC: Department of Army, 31 January 1951): 31–32, 39–40. Long-range and short-wave frequencies were different for each broadcast to preclude enemy jamming. This tactic created major problems for the listener who had to constantly change frequencies every half hour. As Major Tom Matthews and Captain Max Dolcater worked to get Radio P'yongyang operational, the 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, recently arrived in Tokyo, sent officers and soldiers throughout recently repatriated South Korea to rebuild stations. Captain Robert A. Leadley, Lieutenants Ernest H. Luick, William Eilers, and Robert J. Morris, and Corporals Devere D. Doerr and Arnold Tepfer covered South Korea, getting stations back on the air and then back into the network. Hansen, *Psywar in Korea*, 85.
- 5 Dolcater, "Evaluation of Enemy and Friendly Broadcasts with Respect to UN Military Operations and Pertinent Recommendations," 26–27.

Russian Daily Broadcasts to Korea

0800 to 0830 hrs on 8 frequencies (4 short-wave)
0900 to 0930 hrs on 8 frequencies (4 short-wave)
1130 to 1200 hrs on 10 frequencies (6 short-wave)
1245 to 1315 hrs on 13 frequencies (9 short-wave)
1500 to 1530 hrs on 13 frequencies (9 short-wave)
2100 to 2130 hrs on 8 frequencies (4 short-wave)
2230 to 2300 hrs on 8 frequencies (4 short wave)

Radio Peking Daily Broadcast to Korea

One hour in Korean (short-wave)⁵



MAJ Thomas O. Matthews (pictured) and CPT Max W. Dolcater managed to begin Radio P'yongyang broadcasts shortly before Thanksgiving 1950. In the course of obtaining power for the transmitter, they also restored electricity to the waterworks and a hospital. Photo courtesy of Judy Munske.

of iron and steel fell ringing on the roof like heavy hailstones while those hitting the streets shot off sparks.

Suddenly, there was a terrific explosion, far worse than any before, and then all the windows, frames, and sashes blew into the room. The explosion knocked everyone down, and the glass and flying debris struck, inflicting cuts and bruises, and overturning a heating stove to start a fire. While Dr. Kassel administered first aid, the stove was dragged outside. But, before anyone could recover, the building was racked by another explosion, louder and bigger than before. Colonel Munske and CPT Stack were physically lifted off the floor and tossed into the makeshift kitchen area. That caused Munske to yell, *Let's get out of here!* and lead everyone out the back door. *The brick buildings across the street were falling down, whole walls were collapsing, so we kept going down deeper into the Korean village. We finally stopped and huddled up, cold as hell, freezing, weather below zero, and a sorry looking lot.* About 0500 hours, a few men went to check the trucks. Miraculously, *not one of our vehicles was touched.*⁷⁰

After dawn, the cold and very disheveled group returned to its old building. The walls were pockmarked with shell craters and splattered with bullet holes. The yard looked like an iron scrap yard, bent and twisted iron all over the place, including some whole [mortar and artillery] shells which had not exploded. The only visible casualty—a dead dog.⁷¹ A couple officers were sent to the American Corn Products factory to tell the “official” North Korean refugees that no train was coming for them. Only seventeen of the two thousand were still there. The officers told them to leave.⁷² The P'yongyang city CA team chief had reached a decision point.

Colonel Munske crossed back over the Taedong to make a final reconnaissance. There was only a British tank company securing the bridgehead. At City Hall only the custodians remained. The building in the missionary compound that housed the EUSA advance headquarters contained only four Signal Corps soldiers awaiting final orders from the Signal Officer. Since there were no telephones and no one else around, COL Munske told them to leave. After burning all the papers in his office that he could not carry, the CA Team chief told the remaining policemen to seek safety across the river. CPT Vangen escorted them across the pontoon bridge while Munske mused.

I sat there smoking a good cigar trying to think what to do next. I figured that it was time to leave. I had completed my mission, but was worried about the other three hundred thousand people still left in the city. About 85 percent of them were Christians, the largest number being Presbyterian, second largest Methodists, and third were the Catholics. He concluded that he could do nothing more for them and drove to the pontoon bridge, where the final calamity awaited him.⁷³

At the bridge, MAJ Sullivan, commander of the POW military police detachment, stopped him to say that a train for the “official” North Korean refugees and the remaining eight hundred political prisoners in the jail had just arrived to take them to Chinnamp'o. Captain Gerard was dispatched to the prison where he found



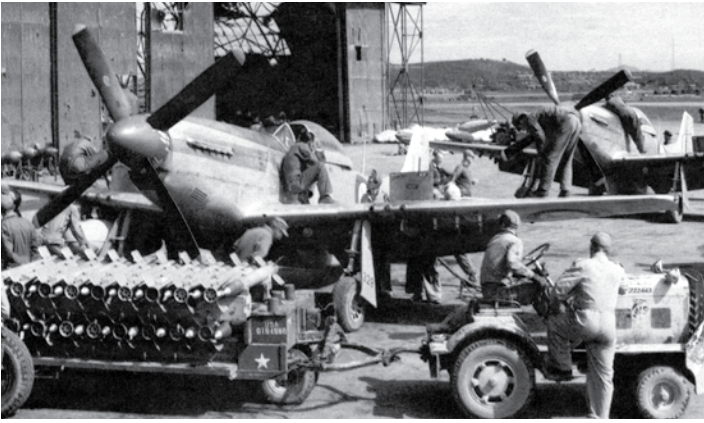
“I sat there smoking a good cigar trying to think what to do next. I figured that it was time to leave.”—COL Charles R. Munske, P'yongyang, 4 December 1950



As UN troops withdrew from P'yongyang in the face of the Chinese offensive, they were forced to leave behind valuable equipment and supplies. In order to keep resources out of enemy hands, units destroyed vehicles, burned fuel, and generally followed a “scorched earth” policy during the evacuation.

that the guards had run away with the keys. As a parting gesture, CPT Gerard and the police delivered bags of rice to each cell for the inmates and helped the few remaining “official” refugees aboard their train. During Munske’s last check of I Corps Headquarters, two civilian assistance officers asked to join him. Then, he met a patrol that told him that the Chinese were only four miles from the city. With only a British tank company between them and the approaching Communists, COL Munske led his convoy out of the city on the afternoon of 4 December 1950.⁷⁴

The UN civil assistance to P'yongyang ended when COL Munske and his CA convoy joined the thousands of refugees headed south along the main P'yongyang–Seoul road. The Chinnamp'o CA team did not depart North Korea until 6 December, when a naval covering force of two Australian, one American, and three Canadian destroyers escorted the ammunition ships and the landing ship tank carrying the CA team out of



U.S. and South African Air Force F-51 Mustangs were flying out of P'yongyang's East Airfield (K-23) by mid-November 1950. The F-51 squadrons had just completed their move to K-23 on 22 November when the Chinese offensive forced them to displace south after only ten days in the north. The F-51s never missed a day of air strikes, but the squadrons did destroy and abandon considerable equipment when they left P'yongyang.



During the retreat from P'yongyang, Army engineers were confronted with the disheartening task of destroying bridges they had so recently repaired or rebuilt. Engineers rigged this bridge near P'yongyang with explosives on 1 December, preparing to blow it once UN troops had passed. This was the bridge guarded by CPT Samuel S. Walker, 24th ID.

the river estuary.⁷⁵ Since the I Corps Advance at Sinmak had no wire or radio communications to contact the CA Sub-Team at Haeju, a light airplane was sent to tell them to withdraw to Seoul.⁷⁶

The CA team made quite a caravan when it departed P'yongyang. The October convoy of three Jeeps, one 1¼-ton truck, one 2½-ton (six-by-six) truck and a Korean civilian truck had grown to five Jeeps, two 1¼-ton trucks, one 2½-ton truck, and four Russian trucks loaded down with equipment plus rice, gasoline, clothing, refugees, and two geese. We had to leave the horse behind—couldn't get him on the truck. We looked like Delaney Street on the move. No one had washed or shaved for three days. All vehicle side curtains had been removed and the windows knocked out. Every officer, soldier, and civilian had their weapons pointed out as they 'ran the gauntlet' through guerrilla-held territory. It was quite a 'gypsy' caravan.⁷⁷

At 1500 hours on 5 December 1950, Radio Tokyo (Broadcasting Corporation of Japan) announced the official UN abandonment of P'yongyang. This was not broadcast on Psywar radio because it was not an official communiqué. Instead, on the night of 5 December, Psywar radio, limited to the UN Command directives, reported that "United Nations forces continued to consolidate defensive positions south of P'yongyang."⁷⁸

Sometime on 7 December 1950, COL Munske and his team reached Seoul. His team was disbanded and the officers sent to handle refugee problems. Colonel Munske was sent to Taegu on 9 December because *if the Eighth Army retreats any further, this city will become the headquarters, and that is why I am here. I was ordered to set up a rear echelon headquarters, and to write a report on the evacuation of P'yongyang.* Truth be known, I think I got too

*much publicity, and they are shoving me into the background for a while. I was outdrawing the general in newspaper articles, and that's not good.*⁷⁹

"When we withdrew through P'yongyang, the company passed a railroad spur where I counted thirty-two new Pershing tanks on flat cars. Soldiers were thrusting thermite grenades down their gun muzzles. It made me sick! And, when my first sergeant, Mitchell, and Sergeant Jim Huber were confronted by the major responsible for burning a heaping pile of winter clothing, they held a carbine on him while they loaded the truck, and were gone before reinforcements arrived."

— CPT Norman Allen, I Company, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.⁶⁷

Later (14 December 1950), in a letter to his son Richard, COL Munske confided that despite the excitement at the end I wish that we could have stayed in P'yongyang, for we were really doing a swell job getting things going. Always an optimist, Munske concluded, *Now that the whole city has been burnt down, it is going to be much harder to get things*

*going if we ever go back.*⁸⁰

What did the P'yongyang and Pyongdan-Namdo province Civil Assistance Team accomplish during their thirty-seven days in North Korea?

1. By 14 November, one trash truck had been rebuilt from several destroyed ones and was hauling refuse to the dumps. By 1 December, four oxcarts and four horse carts were also in service. Collection of city night soil was restarted with a "honey wagon brigade." Volunteer youth groups cleaned the streets.

2. Thirty-five hundred people were immunized against typhus, while four thousand received the smallpox vaccine.

3. Generally speaking, by the time the city was evacuated, law and order was fully established in the city and complete cooperation was being had from all units in the area.

4. Police in Chinnamp'o were fairly well organized and under the control of the city team.

5. Non-potable water had been brought into the water system and pipelines from wells on the Taedong River islands, but on a strict rationed basis. A CA team "alert detail" with Jeeps would rush to the valves in order to allow water to flow into the proper sector when a

fire was discovered. One fire engine was rebuilt from the wrecks of three, and a Fire Department was established in late November 1950.

6. North Korean, Russian, Japanese, and American medical supplies and equipment were collected and stored in a central warehouse for distribution throughout the capital and Pyongan-Namdo Province.

7. At Kaesong, Dr. Kassel set up a DDT dusting station. Local health officials were instructed to establish check points along the railroads and highways to dust and inoculate refugees. They agreed to provide certificates to each person processed.

8. Mr. S.A.C. Lord and Dr. A.K. Lee organized the capital into five medical districts with North Korean health officers (one per ten thousand people) charged with the prevention and control of infectious diseases. Almost thirty male and female indigenous DDT dusting teams were organized and equipped to dust people; fumigate suspect homes; and inspect barbershops, restaurants, cafes, food-preparing premises, and bath houses.

9. The buried machinery for the Central Water Works was located, recovered, and reinstalled about the time the two rebuilt local thermal power plants began producing electricity. The overhead viaduct and pipeline to carry water from the island pumping station was reconstructed the day before the evacuation.

10. All the personnel in the six orphanages in P'yongyang (245 children) were DDT dusted on 14 November, and medical and food supplies provided to all. Before evacuating, each was given a one month supply of food.

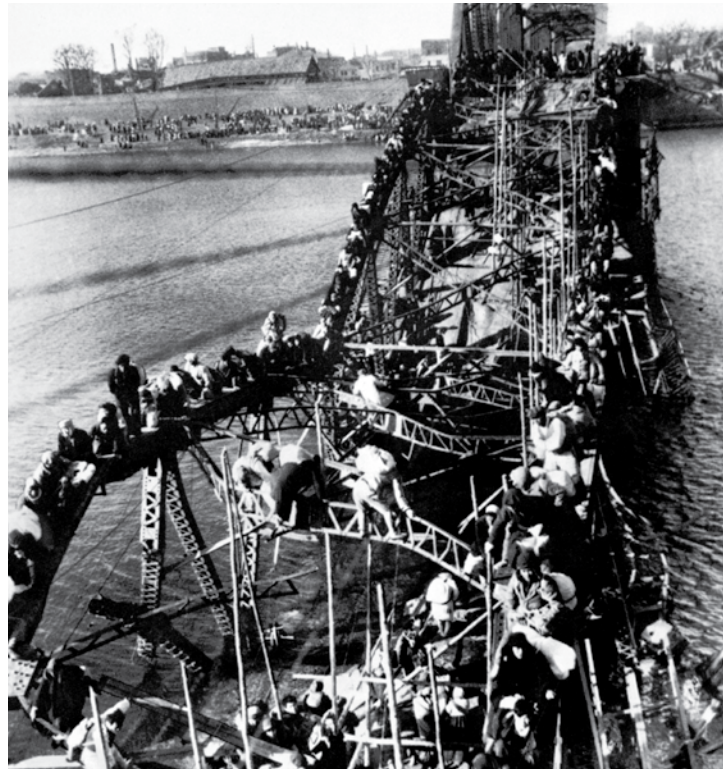
11. Food was plentiful. Insufficient transportation to distribute coal and salt was the biggest issue.

12. Two standby power plants were put into operation: one at the Sandong Coal Mine by U.S. Air Force engineers (822nd Engineer Aviation Battalion assigned to the 20th Air Force) and the other at the American Corn Products Refinery Company plant. A U.S. Navy power barge was brought to provide electrical power at Chinnamp'o.

13. The P'yongyang streetcar system had been repaired and only lacked power.

14. The railway bridge across the Taedong was to be completed by 15 December.

15. The local telephone system was ready for operation when the evacuation was ordered.⁸¹



The impending Chinese invasion sent millions of North Koreans south. Refugees from P'yongyang streamed across the remains of the Taedong River Railroad Bridge, climbing twisted girders and balancing on broken railroad ties.

Communist forces retook P'yongyang on 5–6 December 1950. Much of the city infrastructure and stockpiled military supplies had been dynamited or burned by U.S., British, and South Korean troops. The British liaison officer at Far East Command reported back to London on what he called "the unusual situation:" U.S. troops having to fight their way back through guerrillas while being harassed by Chinese from the North.⁸²

Despite all their frustrations in the process, COL Charles R. Munske in P'yongyang and CPT Loren E. Davis in Chinnamp'o managed major civil affairs feats in these two North Korean cities, with minimal assistance. Unfortunately, the tide of war radically changed with the massive intervention of the Red Chinese armies. Virtually all signs of progress were explosively demolished as the Eighth U.S. Army withdrew to the 38th Parallel and then further south to

SGM (Ret.) Ernest K. Tabata



USASOC's very own Ernest K. Tabata remembers attending the Bob Hope Show in P'yongyang as a lowly PFC demolition man with the 14th Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. After serving with the 11th Airborne Division in the mid-1950s, Tabata soon transferred his demolition skills to U.S. Special Forces, where he served for twenty years. He retired in 1981 as a Sergeant Major, after thirty years of service. Still unable to give up blowing up bridges, he has been teaching engineers at the Special Warfare Center and School since 1984. He still remembers the Bob Hope Show in P'yongyang with fondness; it was almost as much fun as watching trains being driven off the Taedong River Railroad Bridge during the evacuation.

regroup. Still, this is a tribute to the capabilities of CA officers and soldiers who were tasked *to make civil assistance happen* in North Korea in late 1950, and to today's Civil Affairs soldiers "making it happen" in Afghanistan and Iraq. ♣

The P'yongyang article would not have been possible without the assistance of Ms. Judy Munske, daughter of COL Charles Munske, who granted me access to her father's papers and family correspondence. Excerpts from his letters and reports enabled this experienced Civil Military Government officer to describe the numerous challenges of restoring order, rebuilding the infrastructure, and caring for the people in the North Korean capital and to share the small triumphs and myriad of frustrations while retaining his optimism.

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and the Lodge Act.

Endnotes

- 1 C. Darwin Stolzenbach and Henry A. Kissinger, *Civil Affairs in Korea 1950-51* (Department of Army, Operations Research Office, ORO-T-184, 12 May 1952), 23.
- 2 Charles R. Munske, Chief, P'yongyang and P'yong-dan Province CA Team, Eighth U.S. Army, Korea Forward, North Korea, undated handwritten notes, 19 October–5 December 1950, courtesy of Judy Munske, copies in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Munske Papers.
- 3 Munske Papers; Report on Activities of the Pyongan-Namdo Civil Assistance Team (n.d.), copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Munske Undated Report.
- 4 Loren E. Davis, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 2 February 2005, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, hereafter cited as Davis interview, 2 February 2005.
- 5 Munske Papers.
- 6 Munske Papers.

- 7 Munske Papers.
- 8 Munske Papers.
- 9 Munske Papers.
- 10 Munske Papers.
- 11 Munske Papers.
- 12 Munske Papers.
- 13 Munske Undated Report.
- 14 Munske Papers; Eighth U.S. Army Korea Civil Assistance Command, Pyongan-Namdo Province, APO 301, Interim Report dated 12 November 1950, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Munske Interim Report.
- 15 Munske Undated Report.
- 16 Jon Halliday and Bruce Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 107.
- 17 Munske Interim Report.
- 18 Munske Undated Report.
- 19 Munske Papers.
- 20 Munske Papers.
- 21 Munske Papers.
- 22 Interim Report.
- 23 Munske Papers.
- 24 Munske Papers.
- 25 Munske Papers.
- 26 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 2 November 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 27 Munske Papers.
- 28 Charles R. Munske, letters to his wife, 2 and 3 November 1950, copies in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 29 Munske Interim Report; Munske Undated Report.
- 30 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 2 November 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **Conditions in Seoul were not much better. Munske said their billets were like a refrigerator and the office was a constant icebox.** Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 24 October 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 31 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7 November 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 32 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7 November 1950.
- 33 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 3 November 1950; Munske Undated Report.
- 34 Eighth U.S. Army Korea Civil Assistance Team, Pyongan-Namdo Province, APO 301, undated report, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files. **(This is presumably the 30 November 1950 monthly activities report promised by Munske in his 12 November 1950 Interim Report).**

The UN Command kept refugees off the main roads for tactical reasons, so millions of North Koreans filtered south through the hills and valleys on cart tracks and footpaths, fleeing the Chinese "hordes" invading from the north.



- 35 Charles R. Munske, letters to his wife, 9 and 12 November 1950, copies in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Undated Report; Gordon Walker, "Political Vacuum Jars Pyongyang: Chaos Balks Interim Unit," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 1950: "The EUSA has set up a local civil assistance team of six officers which is now attempting to establish an interim civil government. But it lacks detailed instructions, personnel, and the ability to enforce what orders it puts out."
- 36 Munske Interim Report; Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 3 November 1950.
- 37 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7 November 1950; Munske Undated Report.
- 38 Munske Interim Report; Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 3 November 1950.
- 39 Munske Interim Report.
- 40 Munske Undated Report.
- 41 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 9 November 1950.
- 42 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 12 November 1950.
- 43 Munske Undated Report.
- 44 Munske Interim Report; Eighth U.S. Army Korea Civil Assistance Command Public Safety Office, P'yongyang City Police Training Camp, 1st Term Graduation Ceremony, 12 November 1950; Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 12 November 1950; Munske Undated Report.
- 45 Munske Undated Report.
- 46 Munske Interim Report; *Public Notice* dated 13 November 1950, and *Public Notice #2* dated 26 November 1950, copies in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 47 Private Hal Gamble, "UN Government Work Above Parallel," *Stars and Stripes*, 7 November 1950.
- 48 Munske Undated Report.
- 49 Munske Interim Report; *Public Notice*; *Public Notice #2*. The water supply of P'yongyang was obtained from a series of wells on sand bars in the Taedong River. These wells were necessary because the river froze in the winter. Crawford F. Sams, "Medic": *The Mission of an American Military Doctor in Occupied Japan and Wartorn Korea* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 231.
- 50 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 16 November 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 51 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 16 November 1950.
- 52 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 18 December 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 52 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 19 November 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Munske Undated Report.
- 53 Donald Knox, *The Korean War: Pusan to Chosin: An Oral History* (NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 422-24.
- 54 Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 53-54.
- 55 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 23 November 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 56 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 28 November 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 57 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 23 November 1950.
- 58 D.M. Giangreco, *War in Korea 1950-1953* (New York, NY: Presidio Press, 1990), 128.
- 59 Frank McKeown, "Colonel Who Made It Hard Way Is Feted," *The News* (New York), 23 June 1957, M6.
- 60 Charles R. Munske, letters to his wife, 1 and 2 December 1950, copies in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Munske Undated Report.
- 61 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 5 December 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Date of this letter does not track with chronology of events cited in 7(?) December letter.
- 62 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 5 December 1950.
- 63 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 5 December 1950.
- 64 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7(?) December 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 65 Sherman Pratt, "A New Enemy," in Rudy Tomedi, *No Bugles, No Drums: An Oral History of the Korean War* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1993), 64.
- 66 Pratt, "A New Enemy," 64; Munske Undated Report.
- 67 Knox, *The Korean War: Pusan to Chosin: An Oral History*, 658.
- 68 Davis interview, 2 February 2005; Munske Undated Report; Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7(?) December 1950.
- 69 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7(?) December 1950.
- 70 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7(?) December 1950.
- 71 Hal Boyle, "Brooklyn Colonel Sad At Leaving Pyongyang: Munske Was Tempted To Burn City Hall," *The Bradenton Herald*, 7 December 1950, 1A, 2A, 8A.
- 72 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7(?) December 1950.
- 73 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7(?) December 1950; Munske Undated Report.
- 74 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 7(?) December 1950.
- 75 Giangreco, *War in Korea*, 128.
- 76 Munske Undated Report.
- 77 Charles R. Munske, letter to his wife, 18 December 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 78 Captain Max W. Dolcater, "Evaluation of Enemy and Friendly Broadcasts with Respect to UN Military Operations and Pertinent Recommendations: Undated Report to Chief, Psychological Warfare Branch, G-2 Section, GHQ, Far East Command, in Murray Dyer, *Strategic Psywar in FEC, ORO-T-4 (FEC)*, (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 31 January 1951), 38.
- 79 Charles R. Munske, letters to his wife, 8 and 9 December 1950, copies in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 80 Charles R. Munske, letter to his son Richard, 14 December 1950, copy in Munske Papers, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 81 Munske Undated Report.
- 82 Halliday and Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, 120.
- 83 Halliday and Cumings, *Korea: The Unknown War*, 126.

Eighth Army troops withdrawing south from Sunch'on to P'yongyang after the CCF launches a massive counteroffensive.

