



JACK

Operations & Activities Korea, 1951 - 1953

by Charles H. Briscoe

In mid-April 1951 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Japan formally consolidated its assets in Korea. The Office of Policy Coordination (OPC / covert operations) section and the Office of Special Operations (OSO / intelligence collection and espionage activities) group were united to form the first combined Clandestine Services field mission. Its cover name was JACK (Joint Advisory Commission, Korea).¹ The CIA role was already confusing to American military commands, but combining assets enabled the Agency to best provide intelligence to the Far East Command (FEC) and Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) until hostilities ended. As explained in "CIA Paramilitary Operations in Korea, 1950-1951," all the U.S. military services, the British Royal Marine 41 Commando, the CIA, and Republic of Korea (ROK) military and civilian intelligence conducted special and intelligence operations during the war.

My purpose is to: correct, clarify, and expand "Soldier-Sailors in Korea: JACK Maritime Operations" published in 2006; emphasize realities of aircrew rescue operations; separate JACK Special Mission Group (SMG) activities (covert maritime operations) from US military special activities in 1951-1953; and reveal critical roles of Army, Navy, and USMC officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) detailed to the Agency.² The military veterans describe JACK paramilitary operations in Korea. While this article is centered on the last two years of the war, CIA internal compartmentation of intelligence operations and paramilitary activities meant that few personnel could explain JACK organization or the full scope of Agency missions in Korea.

The previous article, "CIA Paramilitary Operations in Korea, 1950-1951," described how the effort to build an escape and evasion (E&E) overland corridor for UN airmen collapsed when guerrilla units dedicated to that mission were destroyed in the winter of 1951-52. During the war hundreds of Agency-trained guerrillas

and intelligence agents were inserted into North Korea by parachute and boat, never to return. The lack of CIA familiarity with Communist-imposed social controls meant that this practice continued throughout the war.³

Allied 'deep' behind the lines activities failed for many reasons. Guerrilla dependency on air resupply compromised base camp areas and facilitated systematic elimination by Communist security forces. Planned CIA command and control (C&C) island bases at each end of the E&E corridor never materialized. The 'offshore safety net' (coastal smuggling/fishing fleets to search for and recover downed airmen) failed because radios were not provided to Koreans. Hence, the CIA in Japan had no control over these contracted assets. Without American military advisors to insure discipline and mission focus, bored guerrilla leaders conducted unconventional warfare against targets of opportunity. But, guerrilla attacks on local infrastructure caused more work for the residents and limited support died. The peasants had to make the repairs and serve as village guardsmen. Continual guerrilla and agent losses did not deter JACK or UN-affiliated commands and agencies from sending more North Korean refugees behind enemy lines.

"Despite abysmal results, we had to continue trying. The very presence of guerrilla units behind the lines, regardless of how long they lasted, disrupted their lines of communication and harassed the North Korean military. Agents had to be inserted if tactical intelligence was to be collected. And, we [CIA] still had the covert E&E mission," remarked then Major (MAJ) John K. 'Jack' Singlaub, chief of staff and deputy commander, JACK.⁴ The aircraft 'snatch recovery' (personnel) system explained in "JACK Air Operations in Korea, 1951-1953" was another CIA attempt to satisfy its FEC E&E mission.

The *quid pro quo* for Agency independence was to establish a guerrilla-operated E&E corridor across North Korea, just south of the China border area (called 'MiG



“The very presence of guerrilla units behind the lines, regardless of how long they lasted, disrupted their lines of communication and harassed the North Korean military.” — MAJ Singlaub

MAJ John K. 'Jack' Singlaub was the Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of JACK, 1951-52.



Retired GEN Walter B. Smith, Director of Central Intelligence.

Alley'), to assist downed UN aircrews and to provide intelligence until the end of hostilities. Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) retired General (GEN) Walter Bedell 'Beetle' Smith satisfied the concerns of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington and GEN Douglas A. MacArthur in FEC by combining assets in Korea. Navy Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) and Marine raids on North Korean coastal infrastructure demonstrated how to harass the enemy, but the U.S. Navy ships in support broadcasted intentions and reduced effectiveness.

Covert coastal raiding by specially-trained guerrilla forces accompanied by American advisors included intelligence collection. While CIA motorized whaleboat (MWB) raiders were attacking Soviet sea mine storage sites in North Korea ("CIA Paramilitary Operations in Korea, 1950-1951"), Hans V. Tofte, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Europe veteran who headed OPC, had other ongoing projects.⁵ His paramilitary operations chief, USMC MAJ Vincent R. 'Dutch' Kramer, had realized the futility of conducting guerrilla operations deep behind enemy lines after his lack of success with an E&E corridor. Based on the success of Navy UDT/Marine coastal raids, the WWII Guadalcanal and U.S. Naval Group China veteran proposed creation of a standing CIA guerrilla force (Special Mission Group [SMG]) specifically for covert operations and intelligence collection. Concerns about compartmenting the SMG from the other guerrilla and agent training on Yong-do prompted Hans Tofte to establish a more isolated base on Kadok-do, a small island northeast of Koje-do and west-southwest of Pusan.⁶

In the interim, MAJ Kramer needed additional experienced military trainers/advisors to work with the thousand volunteers assembled at Yong-do. The old Japanese Army island camp was fairly secure because the entrance to the causeway linking it to the peninsula hooking around Pusan harbor was always guarded. He recruited Army Captain (CPT) Hilary H. 'Hunt' Crawford, Jr. (WWII OSS), Navy UDT-3 veteran, Lieutenant junior grade (LTJG) George C. Atcheson, III, Sergeant First Class (SFC) James C. 'Joe' Pagnella, F Company, 2nd Battalion, 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team paratrooper who made both Korea combat jumps, and USMC First Lieutenant (1LT) Thomas L. Curtis (Amphibious Corps Scout-Observers



(L to R) Hans V. Tofte, director CIA paramilitary operations, Korea, ROK MAJ Han Chul-min, and USMC MAJ Vincent R. 'Dutch' Kramer at Atsugi Airbase, Japan.



(L to R) USMC 1LT Thomas L. Curtis, UDT LTJG George C. Atcheson, III, and SFC James C. 'Joe' Pagnella, JACK advisors to SMG on Yong-do.

and OSS Greece and China). Mr. Oh Pak, a former river pirate, was nominal 'first sergeant' of the South Korean and disaffected North Korean trainees. Since the SMG was to be a raiding force, marksmanship ranges had to be built beyond those used for weapon orientations.⁷

"Captain Hunt Crawford told me to build the ranges. We had to have a thousand-inch range to zero individual weapons and a two-hundred yard combat marksmanship range. I traded booze for Japanese pistols with the first sergeant of the 'ack ack' [anti-aircraft artillery (AAA)] battery on Yong-do. Those old weapons got me explosives and a bulldozer with operator from an engineer outfit. When our ranges were done, we built the AAA guys a first class volleyball court," chuckled SFC Pagnella. "Yong-do had been a Japanese Army base long before WWII. Surrounded by open water on three sides, our crew-served weapons [range] fans extended into the sea. We just had to watch for ships entering and leaving Pusan harbor."⁸ Because the SMG would conduct ship-launched and supported raids, ambushes, prisoner snatches, and destroy North Korean coastal roads, bridges, and railway infrastructure, specialized training was arranged.⁹

Classes were assigned amongst the Americans according to ability and experience. UDT LT Atcheson conducted



Formation of CIA guerrilla trainees on Yong-do.



SFC James C. 'Joe' Pagnella

- **Born** 27 November 1929, Rochester, NY
- **Enlisted** for parachute duty, 1948
- **BCT** Fort Dix, NJ
- **Airborne/Glider training**, Fort Benning, GA, March 1949
- **F Company, 2/187th PIR**, 11th Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY
- **Weapons NCO Course**, Fort Benning, GA, January 1950
- **187th ARCT** shipped to Japan, August 1950, then airlifted to Korea, September 1950
- **Sunchon/Sukchon** combat jump, 20 October 1950
- **Munsan-ni** combat jump, 23 March 1951, WIA
- **PFC to SFC** with F Co, 187th ARCT
- **JACK** detail, November 1951-December 1952
- **CIA** detail in Virginia, 1953-1958¹⁰



Mr. Oh Pak, a former river pirate, was the nominal 'first sergeant' of the JACK SMG raiders.



SMG trainees learn assembly and disassembly of Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR) under U.S. supervision on Yong-do.

rubber boat, amphibious raids, and demolitions training, and provided scout swimmer instruction. SFC Pagnella was the primary weapons instructor for everything from hand grenades, mines and booby traps to the .30 cal. M-1 Garand rifle and M-2 carbine, .45 cal. M-3 sub-machine gun, 30.06 cal. Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), .30 cal. light and .50 cal. heavy machine guns, 60mm mortar, and 57mm antitank (AT) recoilless rifle. Marine 1LT Curtis taught .45 cal. pistol combat (OSS 'instinctive') shooting, hand-to-hand combat, and guerrilla warfare tactics. Chinese and Russian weapons, first aid, map reading, patrolling, and ambush techniques rounded out the classes. MAJs Kramer and Han Chul-min, the ROK Army intelligence officer, jointly supervised the SMG training.¹¹ The U.S. Navy supported maritime training until the Agency could acquire some commercial vessels.

The primary SMG delivery vessels were to be U.S. Navy destroyer transports (APD) with their four 36-foot LCPR (landing craft personnel, ramped) or LCVF (landing craft vehicle, personnel) that were designed to support Marine Raiders and UDT in the Pacific during WWII. Three of the four APDs that served in Korea, the *Horace A. Bass* (APD-124), *Wantuck* (APD-125), and *Begor* (APD-127) supported JACK. Several thousand yards offshore the LCPRs or LCVFs would be launched at night to tow guerrilla-laden rubber boats (RB-10) about 500 yards from shore. Scout swimmers would reconnoiter the beach landing site before

signaling the boats to come ashore.¹² LT Acheson tested the viability of the SMG concept early in training.

Late on the night of 25 January 1952, LT Acheson led a 45-man guerrilla raiding party to destroy a railway bridge. Shortly after emplacing the explosive charges, Acheson spotted a fifteen man enemy patrol approaching. He directed naval gunfire so skillfully that fourteen of the enemy soldiers were killed and one was captured. Then, the UDT-3 veteran calmly supervised the placing of detonators on the time cord, activated the fuses, and led his men and the prisoner back to the beached rubber boats to paddle out to a loitering LCPR. As the group was being

towed to the APD, the explosive charges erupted with a great roar. At daylight, a derailed locomotive at the bridge site was rendered useless by naval gunfire.¹³ Afterwards, training was compressed to conduct the first 'full-up' SMG mission from the *Wantuck* (APD-125) on 21 March 1952.¹⁴ Meanwhile, 1LT Curtis and two newly assigned airborne sergeants, Master Sergeant (MSG) Walter Hoffman and Sergeant (SGT) Thomas G. Fosmire, had been working to establish the new training base on Kadok-do.

SGT Tom Fosmire, Reconnaissance Company, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC, had to reenlist to get to Korea. He wanted a Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB) like his brother, Chuck, had earned in the 9th Infantry Division in Europe. Military service was a family tradition. Their father, gassed in WWI, wore the German bullet that wounded him as a tie clasp.¹⁵

Casualties in Korea were heavy the winter of 1951-52 and SGT Fosmire felt certain that he would get a combat infantry assignment. But, he was surprised and irritated when ordered to the Far East Air Forces Technical Analysis Group (FEAF/TAG) headquarters in Tokyo. When he complained about this diversion from combat, the EUSA replacement company commander advised, "You ought to take the assignment. But if you come back, I will definitely send you to Korea as an infantryman."¹⁶

Fosmire shouldered his duffle bag and got on the bus to Tokyo. The FEAF/TAG (CIA cover) office was in the old NYK Shipping Company up the street from the *Dai'ichi* building, FEC headquarters. As SGT Fosmire entered the lobby he was amazed to see American women at work. "An Army first sergeant [1SG] wearing every valor decoration except the Medal of Honor administered a battery of aptitude tests to me. Then, after checking my scores, he told me that I was being assigned to JACK. I was to catch the bus to Atsugi Airbase (outside of Tokyo). There, a *Civil Air Transport* twin-engine C-46 *Commando* would take me to Pusan," recalled the airborne sergeant.¹⁷

"A jeep was waiting when we landed. The driver took me to an old Japanese hotel in Tongnae, a spa village just outside Pusan. Instead of sleeping in a pup tent like most



USMC MAJ Vincent R. 'Dutch' Kramer observes SMG rubber boat insertion training with U.S. Navy.

USS *Horace A. Bass* (APD-124) with LCPRs at its stern and MWB whaleboats visible on the fantail. Its unofficial insignia featured a UDT seaman straddling the vessel.



“An Army first sergeant wearing every valor decoration except the Medal of Honor administered a battery of aptitude tests to me. Then, after checking my scores, he told me that I was being assigned to JACK. — SGT Fosmire

infantrymen in Korea, I was assigned a bunk bed in a hotel room. This was the field headquarters for JACK. It had a central hot bath and a very nice mess hall. While checking around, I discovered that there were Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force personnel assigned and most were WWII veterans,” remembered SGT Fosmire.¹⁸

The military officers detailed to JACK paramilitary operations brought a wealth of combat experience. Amphibious Corps Scout-Observers, U.S. Naval Group China, and OSS hands included Marine Lieutenant Colonels (LTC) William A. “Rip” Robertson, Jr. and Tucker P.E.P. Gougelmann, MAJ “Dutch” Kramer, 1LT Tom Curtis, Army MAJ John K. ‘Jack’ Singlaub (OSS France and China and CIA Mukden) and CPT Hilary H. ‘Hunt’ Crawford (OSS). Colonel (COL) Benjamin H. Vandervoort, the legendary 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment commander (82nd Airborne Division) of France and Holland, and CPT John F. ‘Skip’ Sadler, 11th Airborne, the Philippines, were the paratrooper vets. UDT-3 Lieutenant George Atcheson, frocked Army CPT Robert C. Kingston, and USAF MAJ Jack Nabors, and USAF Second Lieutenant (2LT) John W. MacDonald were the Korean War veterans. COL Vandervoort succeeded Hans V. Tofte.¹⁹ The officers assigned to intelligence collection were just the opposite.

Junior intelligence officers were the weakest link. Straight from Ivy League colleges, the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) second lieutenants were given three months of basic paramilitary skills and parachute training at Fort Benning, GA (Training Center One).²⁰ “These inexperienced OSO case officers [agent handlers] had just enough training to be dangerous,” commented CPT ‘Skip’ Sadler.²¹ A CIA history stated: “Quite frankly, with the exception of hard core cadre, green and untried case officers were substituted for qualified, experienced officers because the latter were in short supply.”²² “An exception was Nestor D. Sanchez who became a career CIA case officer and chief of the Latin American Division,” said MAJ Singlaub.²³ Military officers and NCOs detailed to JACK paramilitary operations were appropriately paired.

For field operations the CIA teamed a select cadre of strong, experienced sergeants with seasoned officers. These Americans trained and advised the indigenous



CPL Oscar ‘Pete’ Johnson, Jr., JACK parachute rigger, and SGT Thomas G. ‘Tom’ Fosmire, JACK Maritime, collect supplies for K-333 at the British Exchange in Pusan, before returning to Yo-do.



The NYK Shipping Company building, facing the Imperial moat, housed the Allied Translator and Interpreter Section until deactivation in late 1948. It was up the street from the *Dai-ichi* building which served as the Far East Command (FEC) headquarters of General Douglas A. MacArthur.



The Hotel Traymore in Seoul served as JACK headquarters.

operational elements of JACK. “COL Vandervoort knew first-hand the value of paratroop NCOs,” commented SGT Fosmire. “In lieu of any specific preparatory training most sergeants were sent to guerrilla and intelligence agent camps to assist in training volunteers.”²⁴ Operational demands dictated OJT (on-the-job-training) for most.²⁵

Thus, newly-arrived SGT Fosmire and MSG Walter Hoffman were assigned to one of the most senior lieutenants in the Marine Corps, 1LT Tom Curtis. This ‘mustang’ officer (enlisted to warrant to battlefield commission) was a highly-decorated veteran from Atlantic Fleet Scout–Observer Group and OSS in Greece and China.²⁶ The three men were sent down to Kadok-do to build a thousand-inch zero range and small arms, machine gun, and crew-served ranges (57mm recoilless rifle and 60mm mortar). They also were to train a thirty-man guerrilla cadre in marksmanship (American, Chinese, and Russian weapons), hand grenades, mines, and booby traps, first aid, and map reading. Small unit infantry tactics emphasized raids and ambushes. Seventy more guerrillas training at the CIA site on Saipan were slated to join them. Barracks were added to the construction schedule.²⁷

A thirty-ton motorized Chinese *junk* delivered supplies, foodstuffs, and munitions weekly. It was large enough to carry an Army jeep to the island. However, the strong currents and prevailing westerly winds made the resupply trips to and from Pusan miserable two-day affairs. Since the three Americans alternated this duty, 1LT Curtis was able to stay abreast of SMG activities on Yong-do.²⁸ What Sergeants Hoffman and Fosmire did not realize was that they were providing orientations to personnel slated for the SMG and did the ‘grunt’ work for a training base that would be discarded by JACK.

The first two SMG missions with a ‘full up’ unit proved disappointing. On 21 March 1952, the CIA guerrilla raiders launched from the *Wantuck* to ambush a North Korean truck convoy. They were to capture some drivers and identify the cargo. After a perfect insertion and undetected movement into ambush and security positions, no enemy vehicles appeared. The withdrawal went smoothly, but the guerrillas were disgruntled. A few days later rough seas and high surf prevented the execution of a rail destruction mission. A frustrated MAJ Kramer, bobbing in an LCPV offshore, allowed SFC



“Quite frankly, with the exception of hard core cadre, green and untried case officers were substituted for qualified, experienced officers because the latter were in short supply.” — CPT Sadler

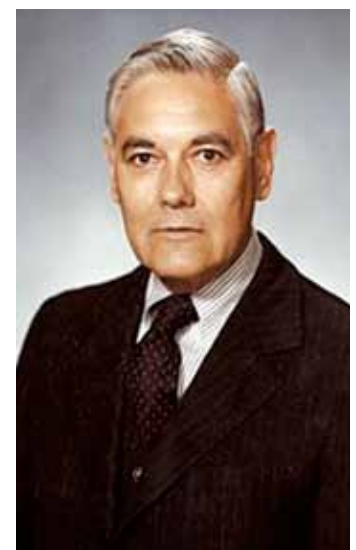
CPT John F. ‘Skip’ Sadler, JACK Air chief, was an 11th Airborne Division combat paratrooper.



(L) BG James M. Gavin, CG, 82nd Airborne Division, and (R) MAJ Benjamin H. Vandervoort, of the legendary 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (France and Holland) were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for their valorous actions during the Normandy invasion. It was COL Vandervoort who replaced Hans V. Tofte in Korea.



USMC LTC William A. ‘Rip’ Robertson replaced MAJ John K. ‘Jack’ Singlaub as JACK chief of staff.



Nestor D. Sanchez, recruited from New Mexico Military Institute (1950), was a JACK case officer.



JACK advisors (L to R), SFC James C. 'Joe' Pagnella, Navy UDT LT George C. Atcheson, III, MAJ John K. 'Jack' Singlaub, USMC 1LT Thomas L. Curtis, and USMC MAJ Vincent R. 'Dutch' Kramer observe SMG rubber raft training.



1LT Tom Curtis (L) and MSG Walter Hoffman (R) with Korean crew aboard K-333.

Pagnella to fire several 57mm high explosive rounds at a candlelit defensive bunker 600 yards north of the landing site. Secondary explosions provided some consolation.²⁹ Then, the SMG with its principal advisors, MAJ Kramer, LT Atcheson and SFC Pagnella, returned to Yong-do where more training was conducted. Coincidentally, the Americans on the Kadok-do project returned to Tongnae for a weekend R&R (rest & relaxation) after being isolated for almost three months.

That very short respite at headquarters landed 1LT Curtis, MSG Hoffman, and SGT Fosmire in JACK maritime operations. After a night of hard drinking, the mustang lieutenant decided that a prank would 'loosen up' a few 'stiff-backed' JACK officers. He used a fire extinguisher to wake them. The next morning 1LT Curtis was 'standing before the mast' in COL Vandervoort's office. Fortunately, the two senior Marines available—LTC 'Rip' Robertson, a fellow Atlantic Fleet Scout-Observer, and MAJ 'Dutch' Kramer, a kindred China man—spoke up in his behalf. They suggested that Curtis, instead of being immediately reassigned, be sent to command a trawler that had been purchased to cover the aircrew recovery mission off the northeast coast of Korea.³⁰

An 85-foot Japanese-built trawler, K-333, crewed by Koreans, would be the first JACK vessel to operate from Yo-do (island) at the mouth of Wonsan harbor. The WWII OSS officer accepted conditionally; both MSG Hoffman and SGT Fosmire had to volunteer to join him. The two paratroopers agreed and the three became seamen aboard a 1940s, diesel-powered, 80-ton fishing trawler that would rescue downed UN airmen and conduct covert insertions along the northeast coast of Korea.³¹

K-333 and its 12-man Korean crew were berthed at Pusan while shipboard modifications were being made. Interior compartments had to accommodate forty passengers. Hidden crew-served weapons mounts had to be installed and the radio antennas concealed. Capable of a top speed of twelve knots (twelve nautical miles per hour) and a cruising speed of eight to ten knots, the modified trawler K-333 had four hatch-covered foredeck holds to accommodate forty guerrilla raiders. Light machine gun mounts (.30 caliber) were placed on both sides of the forward hold section and a .50 caliber heavy machine gun station was installed at the back of the captain's cockpit (wheelhouse).³² The antennas were hidden in the masts and cranes so as not to attract attention from a distance.³³ K-333 was to be a 1950s version of the WWI and WWII Q-boats, armed Q-boats vessels disguised as merchant ships.

The Japanese trawler became home for Sergeants Fosmire and Hoffman. They collected the individual and crew-served weapons, supervised the fabrication and installation of armor-shielded machine gun mounts, and accumulated ammunition to test fire everything. 1LT Curtis signed for liquor and cigarettes, both of which were used to pay the crew and to barter for food and supplies only available on the black market. After several multi-day shakedown cruises well beyond Pusan harbor, the K-333 team received orders.³⁴ Meanwhile, a more experienced SMG resumed raid and intelligence missions along the northeast coast, well north of Wonsan.



JACK Maritime trawler K-444, sister ship of K-333, berthed at Pusan.



MSG Walter Hoffman (far left rear in Army sweater and soft cap) with both Korean trawler crews aboard K-444.

On 21 April 1952, the *Horace A. Bass* (APD-124) supported an operation to capture rail workers to get the latest information on identification (ID) cards. The North Koreans regularly changed ID paper colors and stamps. The secondary mission of the SMG was to destroy a railway bridge or tunnel where the railroad hugged shallow coastal beaches at the base of rugged mountains.

These were dangerous targets because there were no harbors or inlets and riptides were common. Most railroad targets were near fishing villages where manpower was conscripted to repair damage from bombs and naval gunfire. With the Red Chinese entrenched along the main line of resistance, North Korea had tightened up internal security and critical infrastructure protection.³⁵

The SMG discovered this the hard way. An enemy beach patrol spotted and engaged the three scout swimmers. Despite heavy covering fire from the .30 cal. machine guns on the LCPR during UDT LT Atcheson's recovery effort, the SMG lost three guerrillas. The biggest loss was their primary interpreter, Chon Do-hyun ('John Chun').³⁶

Nine days later the SMG raiders acquitted themselves well using their 57mm recoilless rifles. The gunners trained by SFC Pagnella hit a locomotive, but it escaped destruction by quickly backing into a tunnel. The demolitions team blew up a railway bridge and captured three North Korean civilians.³⁷ About the same time, K-333 was headed northeast to Yo-do.

Many UN forces were based on the largest island in Wonsan harbor. Garrisoned by ROK Marines, Yo-do had been used as a special operations base by the British Royal Marine 41 Commando, Marine/Navy Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) teams, and ROK Army special intelligence units since late summer



The primary SMG interpreter sighting the 57mm recoilless rifle, Chon Do-hyun, 'John Chun,' was killed in action on 21 April 1952.

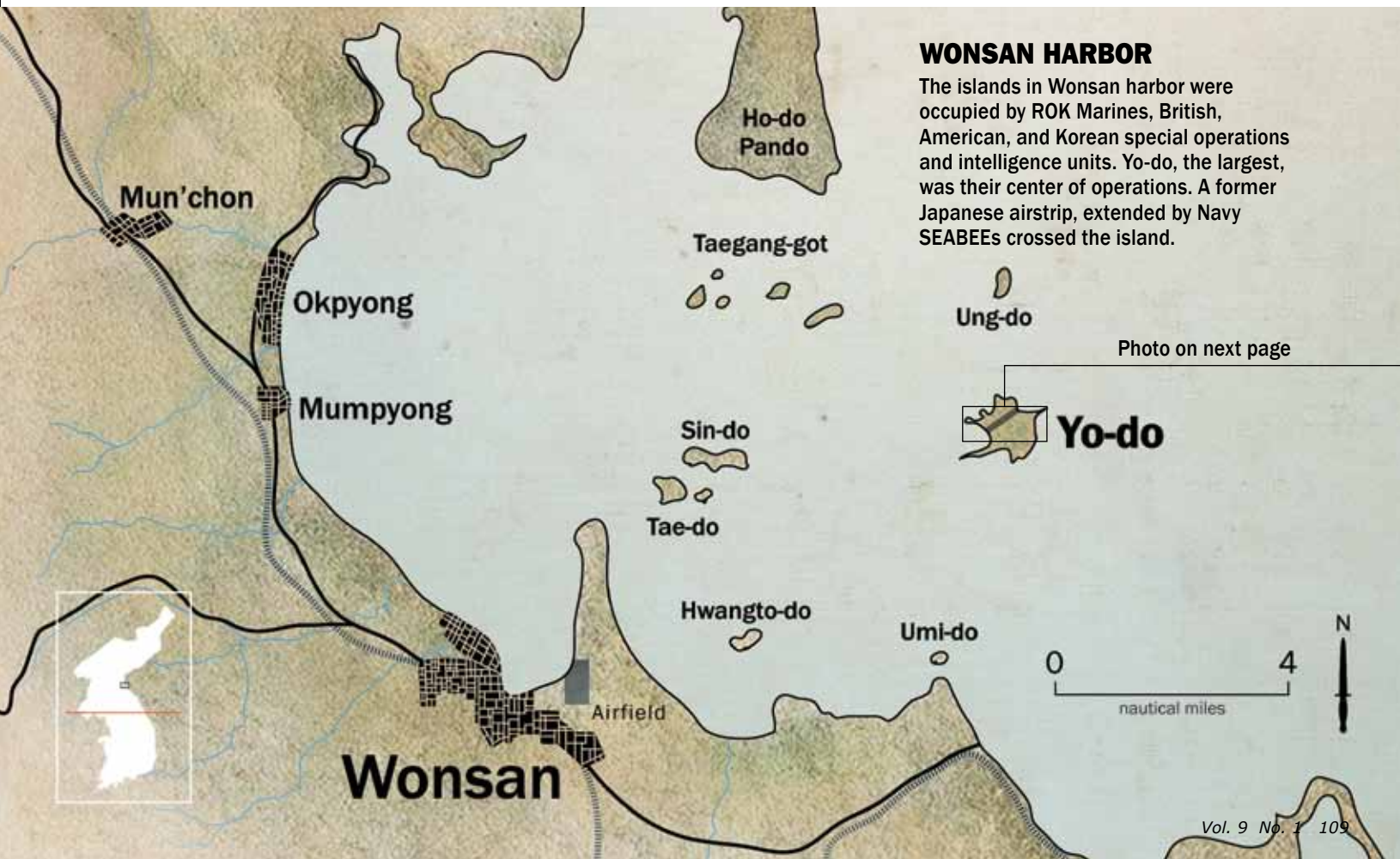


CIA Korean SMG aboard U.S. Navy ship for raid mission.

1950. The CIA and ROK Army began using the island in early 1951 as an agent training base and launch site for intelligence operatives and raiding forces.³⁸ The Far East Air Forces (FEAF) 3rd Air Rescue Squadron (RS) kept an H-5 Sikorsky helicopter detachment on the island to recover downed UN pilots. The old Japanese airstrip was extended by Navy Seabees to handle Beechcraft C-45 *Expeditors*, C-46 *Commandos*, C-47 *Skytrains*, and emergency landings of carrier-based propeller aircraft.³⁹ Yo-do was a natural base location for K-333.

Although several hundred ROK Marines guarded Yo-do and the surrounding islands, the Americans and Korean

crew slept aboard the CIA trawler at night. They only ate meals ashore in the heavily sandbagged messhall.⁴⁰ This was a wise precaution because the offshore islands and UN minesweepers and blockade ships were targeted daily by the North Korean shore batteries ringing Wonsan harbor. These coastal batteries ranged from heavy mortars to 155mm howitzers. Exchanges varied from single harassment rounds to barrages of more than a hundred rounds. The ships counter-fired during the day when Marine and Navy spotter teams on the harbor islands identified shore targets. Thus, destroyers, minesweepers, and UN personnel stationed on the islands were hit daily by artillery resulting



in deaths, injuries, and damaged vessels, especially after the Soviets provided radar-controlled fire direction systems.⁴¹

The mission of the K-333 trawler team was to rescue downed UN airmen, surreptitiously land and extract JACK intelligence agents, support SMG coastal raids, and direct naval gunfire against targets of opportunity along the coast from Wonsan to the Tumen River.⁴² Though the SMG continued to use Navy APDs, K-333 with its non-military signature could come closer to shore. Still, its primary function was to plug holes in a nonexistent JACK aircrew recovery net.⁴³ At night, they regularly put agents over the side into “wiggle boat” fishing *sampans* coordinated by ROK intelligence units on Yo-do.⁴⁴ The South Koreans simply emulated the small boat agent insertions done by North Korea since before the war.

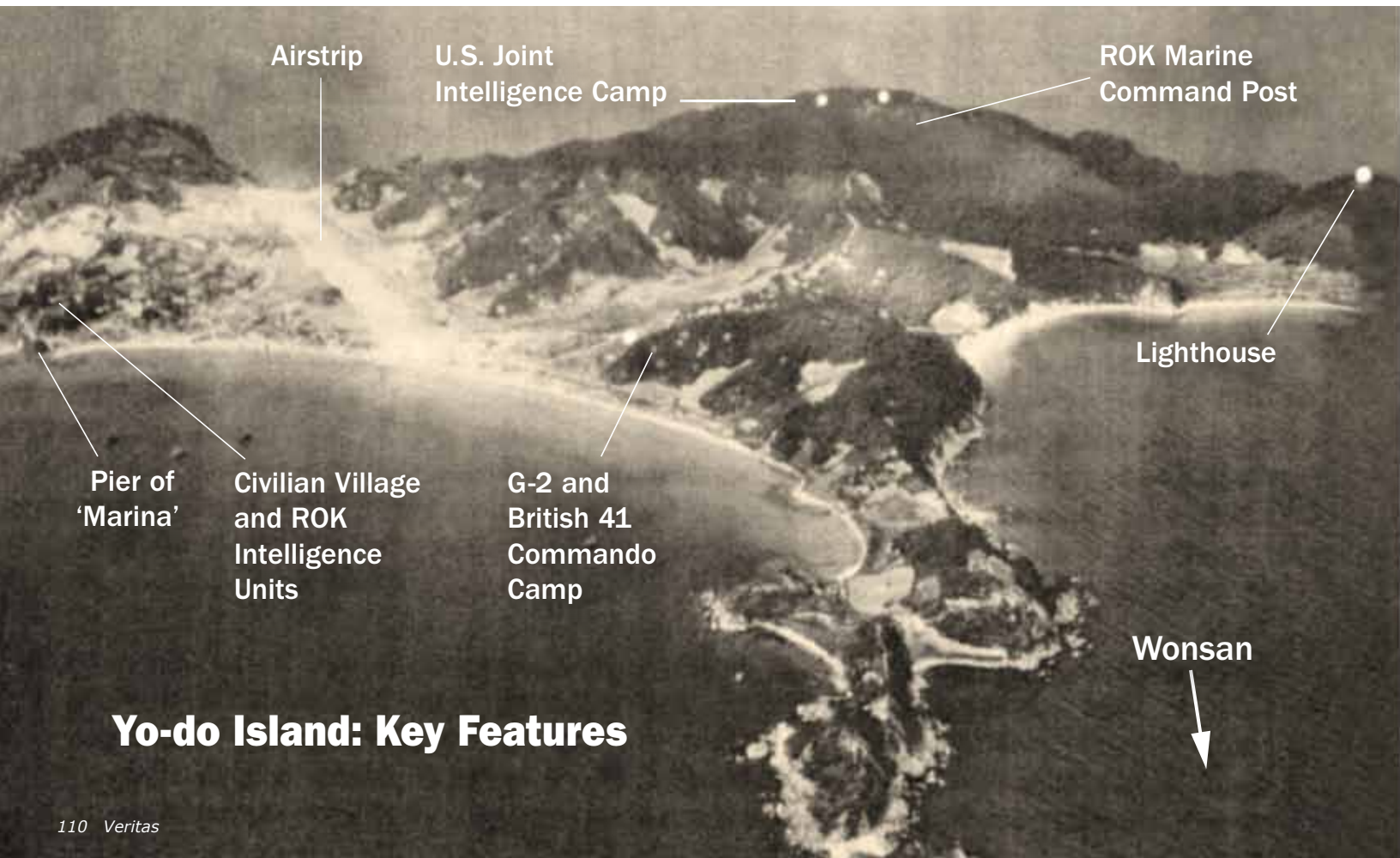
Confronted by heavy losses of agents infiltrating enemy lines overland (‘line crossers’) in late 1950, the EUSA guerrilla command Tactical Liaison Office (TLO) started copying the South Korean use of small indigenous craft to insert agents along the West coast. The 441st Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) espionage operation, SALAMANDER, contracted fishing *junks* and *sampans* to put agents deep into North Korea, initially from West coast islands above the 38th Parallel that were occupied by anti-Communist North Korean guerrillas. In early 1951, the 441st CIC moved north from Paengyong-do to Cho-do to be closer to the Yalu River estuary. An East coast SALAMANDER base was established on Yo-do in the summer of 1951 so that their agents could infiltrate one coast and exfiltrate via the other. In addition to

increasing the special warfare population on Yo-do, the 441st introduced fast American sea craft to compensate for size, speed, and limited deep sea-worthiness of native fishing boats.⁴⁵ It was easy for K-333 to blend in with the various ‘commercial’ vessels using the Yo-do ‘marina.’

Numerous U.S. military officers and sergeants ‘served’ in JACK, yet few knew about the other paramilitary and intelligence activities. Each mission was compartmented on a ‘need to know’ basis. It was the same in EUSA guerrilla command. Yet, at the tactical level, limited maritime and air assets had to serve everyone and therein was a tenuous connection.

“Since air and sea assets were shared by a ‘whole blizzard of organizations involved with special operations, the lines of command and coordination were blurry,’” recalled 1LT Daniel C. Helix, FEC Liaison Detachment (FEC/LD), Sasebo Naval Base, Japan. “The boats on my books were used by a variety of elements in Korea. I arranged engine repairs, overhauls, modifications, and new vessel purchases. I also provided pay for the Korean crews. ‘Deals with the CIA’ were concocted aboard the USS *Dixie* (AD-14) at levels CIA way above my pay grade. That Seventh Fleet destroyer tender served as the C&C vessel for the Navy East coast blockade.”⁴⁶ (see “Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities, Korea (CCRACK)” and “The CCRACK Navy” articles in this issue).

JACK elements capitalized on CCRACK maritime assets ‘carried on’ the FEC/LD property books. It was simple because those assets were ‘controlled’ by a dysfunctional headquarters. Military compartmentation enabled JACK



Yo-do Island: Key Features



The Seventh Fleet destroyer tender USS *Dixie* (AD-14), the command and control vessel for the East coast blockade, had secure facilities for classified special operations meetings.



Yo-do 'marina' harbored a number of CCRAK Q-boats.



CCRAK Q-boat leaves U.S. Navy blockade vessel after coordinating upcoming special operation.

“When we turned to face the lights and appropriately respond to the challenge, I realized that virtually every gun on the ship was trained on us.” — SGT Fosmire

to hide its operations among theirs. “CCRAK never ‘broke the code,’ or chose to ignore it,” said MAJ ‘Jack’ Singlaub. “My old friend from OSS Jedburgh and China days, LTC [Benton M.] ‘Mac’ Austin was the CCRAK liaison for JACK and FEC/LD. We talked often to keep ‘feathers from getting ruffled.’”⁴⁷ By mid-1951, however, the static combat situation hampered paramilitary operations and limited intelligence collection in Korea.

Neither the U.S. military, the UN, JACK, nor the South Koreans factored how tightly the Communists controlled their populations. When Armistice talks began in the spring of 1951, the front lines between conventional forces became semi-fixed.⁴⁸ The floods of refugees that fled the fluid battlefront in 1950 and early 1951 became trickles as fortified trench lines began to separate the opposing forces. With Chinese troops manning key terrain along the front, the North Korean military ‘locked down’ internal security, especially along the coasts.

This was the environment in which LT Curtis and Sergeants Hoffman and Fosmire operated. It was very hostile and despite the conglomeration of special operations assets working from Yo-do, there was no

coordinated UN effort. Blockade ships ordered to reduce North Korean mine carrying *sampan* infiltrations occasionally sank boats containing friendly agent teams.⁴⁹ Still, the JACK added a second trawler (K-444) to the Wonsan operation. By typhoon season, MAJ ‘Dutch’ Kramer had rotated home and CPT Robert Kingston had taken his place at Yong-do.⁵⁰

Typhoons regularly hit Korea and Japan in the summer. In June 1952, Typhoon Dinah severely curtailed air operations and forced the UN blockade ships to seek safe harbor for nearly ten days. UN ground forces had only artillery to counter enemy attacks. “Sheltered in a small cove of Yo-do, we had all three anchors out and kept the engine of K-333 running ‘slow forward’ for thirty-six hours to keep from being driven ashore. Every time the stern scraped bottom we’d ‘rev up’ the engine to pull away. It was a hairy time,” remembered SGT Fosmire.⁵¹ Operating inside the UN naval blockade line posed other problems.

Not being recognized as a friendly by UN air and naval vessels was a constant danger. Visual signals identifying the two JACK trawlers as ‘friendly’ vessels changed monthly. Simple signals supported the commercial

Q-ships to Q-boats

American merchant sea raiding dates to the Revolution. These commercial predators (privateers) were granted official 'letters of marque' to attack and seize ships flying flags of hostile countries. 'Prizes' (cargoes and vessels) were sold. The governments and the sailors shared the money. Prize income was a considerable boost to seaman wages.

Armed commercial vessels slipped through the Federal Navy blockades of Southern seaports during the Civil War. The money-driven 'blockade runners' actually complemented Confederate Navy commercial raiders that attacked shipping bound for Union ports. Both used speed to escape heavily-armed, often iron-clad warships that patrolled popular shipping lanes. Steam power and the evolving technology of the Industrial Revolution brought major changes to overseas commerce and imperial navies.

As the end of the 19th century approached steam-powered, iron-hulled vessels replaced 'clipper' sailing ships whose international sea routes were determined by vagaries of the wind. Strategically placed coaling stations and communications (radio and transoceanic telegraph cables) led to reliable ship scheduling, a key to transporting perishable cargo. Heavily armored, huge steel battleships armed with monster cannons to combat surface fighting ships represented the 'Age of Ironclads.' Natural physics and money determined size and numbers while navies experimented with subsurface 'equalizers.'

The submarine, introduced before WWI, revolutionized naval warfare. 'Gentleman rules' were applied to noncombatant merchant vessels (surface attacks with deck guns to compel crews into abandoning ship) early in the war. This tactic led the British to employ decoy merchantmen,

(Q-ships) to ambush submarines that surfaced. After several German U-boats were surprised and sunk underwater attacks became the norm. Q-ship losses mounted as tactics changed. Still, both sides employed them in a cavalier fashion throughout the war, despite lackluster results.

Germany sidestepped postwar restrictions on surface warships by building more submarines and developing fast 'pocket' battleships (heavy cruisers with battleship guns) during the interwar period. The combination of German U-boat 'wolfpack' attacks on transoceanic convoys, the pocket and Bismarck-class battleships, and Axis commerce raiders (Q-ships) devastated Allied shipping in the early years of WWII. Disregarding previous experience Allied nations responded in kind, but accomplished even less than in WWI.

So, why was this concept resurrected by special ops elements in Korea and why was it viable then? Agent drop-offs and pick-ups along the coast were the most successful means of insertion and recovery. UN naval forces dominated the waters around the peninsula. Air (limited transport assets in theater) and ground resupply (unsecure road systems) of the widely dispersed friendly guerrilla forces was not viable. JACK (Joint Advisory Commission, Korea), Eighth U.S. Army, and CCRAK (Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities, Korea) acquired 'civilian' boats and armed them. These 'Q-boats' hugged the coastline enjoying the protection of Navy blockade ships. They delivered cargos weekly that ranged from trucks and Quonset huts to tons of rice. While the Q-boats did support agent and raid missions, most of their work was resupply. Though captained by U.S. personnel they were not purchased or leased to attack North Korean maritime commerce.

On 15 August 1915 the disguised fishing Smack *Inverlyon* (similar to the pictured *Brightling Sea* above) sank UB-4 with gunfire about thirty-five miles from Lowestoft. The Royal Navy and civilian crew split a bounty paid by the Admiralty. After its short career as a Q-ship, the *Inverlyon*, fishing fifteen miles from Trevoze Head, was shelled and sunk by U-55 on 1 February 1917.



The Q-ship, (HMS) SS *Cape Howe*, its hold filled with balsa wood, sank slowly south of Iceland on 21 June 1940 after being hit by two torpedoes fired from U-28. Seventy officers and seamen perished.



USS *Atik* (AK 101)/SS *Carolyn* was sunk 300 miles east of Norfolk, VA by U-123 on the fourth day of its shakedown cruise, 27 March 1942. Six officers and 135 enlisted sailors were lost.

'fishing trawler' cover. They ranged from flying three rice sacks to hanging two glass-ball fishing floats on the mast during daylight to using colored identification lights and flares to respond to night challenges. Since the two trawlers regularly hugged the coast at night to observe enemy activity (truck convoys or steam locomotives sneaking out of tunnels), to offload and recover SMG raiding parties, and to slip agents aboard *sampans*, the two JACK vessels naturally raised the suspicions of radar men on blockade vessels paranoid about enemy *sampans* carrying mines.⁵² (See "CIA Paramilitary Operations, 1950-1951" in this issue).

The CIA trawlers were challenged regularly. In dark-of-the-moon nights, blockade destroyers on 'flycatcher' patrol (searching for North Korean mine-carrying *sampans*) would slip in quietly and 'light them up' with all searchlights. "A 'light up' was brighter than a Hollywood set," said SGT Fosmire. "When we turned to face the lights and appropriately respond to the challenge, I realized that virtually every gun on the ship was trained on us."⁵³ Even when recognized as friendly, Fosmire was often ordered to turn seaward ninety degrees and go to the five-mile

limit. If they were idling, awaiting the return of a SMG raiding party, the JACK guerrillas had a long paddle in store while K-333 or K-444 responded to directives. After the 'flycatcher' vessel left the area, the trawler would slip back in for the rubber boat pickup.⁵⁴ The following actions illustrate a few JACK SMG coastal operations.

The mission to capture a group of Russian officers meeting with North Korean military leaders near Dok-jin-ri (North Hamgyong) was assigned in mid-October 1952. Instead of using the trawlers (K-333 and K-444) to put the SMG force ashore, Lieutenant Curtis and Sergeants Hoffman and Fosmire were to assist LT Atcheson and SFC William Hanscombe (SFC Pagnella's replacement) aboard MW Bs, twenty-six-foot plywood motor launches used for general duty and as auxiliary lifeboats. The three-man East coast maritime team transloaded the SMG raiders from their trawlers to a destroyer escort (DE-699), the USS *Marsh*. This was done at night on 17 October 1952 on the seaward side of Yo-do to mask the transloading. When the empty trawlers returned to the other side of Yo-do to anchor, the *Marsh* slipped away to the north.⁵⁵

Shortly after midnight 18 October 1952, the *Marsh* pinpointed the beach landing site with its radar and lowered two MWBs into the dark sea. Lines were tossed to each and the RB-10 rubber boats were slid over the side. Then, the SMG raiders climbed down cargo nets to board eight bobbing rubber craft. The two whaleboats, each towing four boats, tugged the SMG raiders 600 meters offshore, and then stood-by idling, to tow them back after the raid. LT Curtis and MSG Hoffman were teamed with LT Atcheson in the command whaleboat while SGT Fosmire accompanied SFC Hanscombe in the other. The *Marsh* had guided the MWBs ashore by relaying radar navigational vectors to the Navy coxswains wearing radio headsets.⁵⁶

The scheduled meeting (according to the defector with them) was two miles inland in a village. The SMG was operating in the dark-of-the-moon, their preferred phase. The ingress went smoothly. Only the muffled engines and phosphorescent boat wakes signaled the movement of the attack force. After reaching shore safely, the scout swimmers reconnoitered the area. Then, using light sticks, they signaled "all clear."⁵⁷ The flank security and assault elements began paddling their RB-10s to shore.

As the beach security elements disembarked and ran crouched to their flank guard positions, the situation changed drastically. Both security teams began receiving effective small arms fire. When a heavy machine gun began firing tracers from the north, instead of "laying low," the SMG raiders, "itching for a fight," returned fire. With their positions identified in the darkness an intense firefight broke out.⁵⁸

"By the time LT Atcheson fired his flare gun to signal an immediate withdrawal, several rubber boats had been hit. As the firing increased and the machine gun tracers moved closer to the beach landing site, both whaleboats headed in to grab the RB-10 tow lines. We got in first and grabbed four rubber boat lines. As we turned to head back out with four boats in tow, I noticed that Atcheson's whaleboat was 'dead in the water.' Its propeller had become fouled in



Navy Cross recipient, USMC MAJ Vincent R. 'Dutch' Kramer, rotated to the States in the summer of 1952.



Korean SMG raiders on the fantail of the USS *Begor* (APD-127) before the 25 January 1952 raid.

some fishing nets. We swung alongside and I passed our towlines to Lieutenant Curtis. Then, under even heavier small arms fire, we turned about and raced back to the beach to collect the remaining RB-10s, two of which were partially deflated,” related SGT Fosmire.⁵⁹

“In the confusion, neither coxswain radioed the *Marsh* for suppressive fires. Both seamen were intent on their tasks—steering or freeing their whaleboats. They were hell bent on breaking contact and getting out of small arms range,” said Fosmire. “In the time it took us to return, the remaining SMG raiders had gotten their wounded in the boats and cleared the shore. They were paddling frantically to get beyond small arms range. When we got to them, Hanscombe and I grabbed the tow lines and lashed them to our stern as the coxswain swung back out to sea. In the meantime, LT Atcheson’s coxswain had ‘cleared’ the propeller and was headed back to the *Marsh*,” said Fosmire. “The action didn’t last more than ten minutes . . . or so it seemed, but it was quite exciting.”⁶⁰

While the wounded SMG raiders were treated in the sick bay, DE-699 steamed south to Yo-do. Fortunately, no one was killed. On the seaward side of the island the SMG transloaded aboard the two trawlers for the return trip to Yong-do. SGT Fosmire was decorated for his heroic actions.⁶¹ Another SMG raid with the soldier-seamen using their trawlers was more successful.

The mission to ambush a convoy and capture some North Korean soldiers was the first solo operation for SGT Fosmire and MSG Hoffman after LT Curtis rotated to the States. Both airborne sergeants were aboard the K-333 as it slipped in close to a rocky section of the East coast to offload an SMG platoon in rubber boats.⁶² The SMG raiders triggered their ambush by disabling the lead and trail vehicles of the convoy with 57mm anti-tank recoilless rifles.⁶³ A badly stunned North Korean lieutenant and several soldiers were quickly captured and hustled down to the rubber boats. They had to escape quickly before reinforcements arrived to investigate the heavy gunfire.⁶⁴

With the SMG raiders and enemy prisoners stowed safely aboard the trawler, the K-333 crew fired their machine guns at the ambush site to cover the withdrawal. This served to prevent any patrolling UN blockade vessels from mistaking them for enemy. Afterward, the North Korean lieutenant brazenly climbed out of the hold to



The carrying capacity of the Navy twenty-six foot plywood Mark II motorized whale boat (MWB) was limited. The coxswain normally stood to steer the craft. It is easy to understand why the coxswains were eager to break contact and get beyond small arms range.

smoke a cigarette on deck. To remove any ideas that he might have had about being a VIP prisoner, MSG Hoffman knocked him down, grabbed him by his collar and belt and threw him headfirst into the hold, keeping the lieutenant’s fur-lined hat. It came in handy because the frigid cold was a constant in winter.⁶⁵

Between the harsh weather and limited contact with UN naval vessels patrolling the coasts, life aboard the trawlers was tough, primitive, and dangerous for all hands—Korean and American. The engine room was the only warm place. Two weeks of below zero temperatures in the winter of 1952–1953 instantly turned sea spray to ice, coating everything. Crewman used sledgehammers constantly to prevent ice buildup on the all-iron vessels. The accumulated weight of ice topside could cause the boat to ‘turn turtle’ unexpectedly, trapping the crew inside or throwing them overboard into the freezing cold water.⁶⁶ Survival suits were things of the future.

Coordination sessions aboard Navy ships (arranging naval gunfire support and delivery of SMG elements) offered respite from the harsh daily routine. It gave American advisors an opportunity for a hot meal, shower, and sometimes, a change of clothes. Occasionally, a Navy H-5 Sikorsky helicopter would ferry them out to a ship. When time was an issue, the JACK resupply airplane



“In the time it took us to return, the remaining SMG raiders had gotten their wounded in the boats and cleared the shore. They were paddling frantically to get beyond small arms range.” — SGT Fosmire

SFC Thomas G. Fosmire

would drop clean uniforms, rations, fresh water, rice, and fuel on the Yo-do airstrip before heading off for additional missions.⁶⁷ Otherwise, JACK Maritime headquarters at Yong-do would 'piggyback' on an Army-owned/Navy-skipped civilian CCRAK vessel. At the tactical level U.S. and Korean leaders on the harbor island worked together.

In the spirit of cooperation the JACK trawlers at Yo-do assisted the Navy with a downed pilot recovery in Wonsan harbor. "An H-5 helicopter lifted a pilot from the wing of his Corsair without getting his shoes wet. We idled K-333 between the aircraft and shore to serve as a shield during the rescue. The nearby blockade ships were reluctant to do this because of the innumerable floating mines in the harbor," commented Fosmire.⁶⁸ Back at Yong-do Navy UDT LT Atcheson's replacement (CPT

Kingston) was anxious to get involved in paramilitary operations and field intelligence collection.

CPT Kingston coordinated to use whatever CCRAK, JACK, and U.S. Navy vessels were available to insert and retrieve intelligence agents and attack North Korean coastal infrastructure. Overloading Q-576, a well-armed 63-foot CCRAK patrol boat (plywood hull) at Sok-cho-ri, with twelve agents and an interpreter, Kingston proceeded two hundred miles north to Son Jin. "It took three attempts to get all agents ashore without being detected. After we had them ashore, we retired to our original rendezvous and waited for three days to pass before we returned to pick up the agents," said Chief Quartermaster (CQM) B.W. Collins, Navy skipper of Q-576.⁶⁹

"The pick-up was a bit more trouble than putting them ashore. It took us four nights to complete the mission. As we were picking up the last two men a sentry on the beach spotted the men in a small boat and opened fire. We were about one hundred yards from them, so I ordered the gun crews to open fire on him. The sentry hit the dirt, and the two remaining agents came aboard safely. One agent had been hit in the arm, but it was only a flesh wound. We gave him first aid and headed south for Sok-cho-ri," related CQM Collins.⁷⁰

Within days CPT Kingston had another operation arranged for Q-576 and both JACK trawlers. Using Q-576 as his command post, Kingston brought along two other

Blizzards and severe ice storms typified the winter of 1952-53 in Korea. Fire support for conventional and special operations was limited to artillery.



Army officers and a doctor. K-333 and K-444, carrying “thirty Tiger Killers” (SMG) each, rendezvoused with Q-576 forty miles south of Son-jin. The demolition target was a railway bridge that could be seen five miles away. At dark they secured five ten-man rubber boats astern the Q-576 for a tandem raft tow. “We loaded the rafts [RB-10s] with fifty ‘Tiger Killers’ and headed for shore. We encountered no difficulty in getting the men ashore because I had taken them within fifty yards of the beach before cutting them loose,” said Collins.⁷¹

“We managed to pick up all the men safely, and returned to the position where the other boats were waiting. There still had not been any explosion. The captain [Kingston] said that something must have gone wrong. He wanted to return and investigate. We moved back to a place about one hundred yards from the beach, and were in the process of putting the small boat in the water, when the explosion cut loose, the bridge flying into hundreds of pieces. We recovered our boat and got out of there as fast as the old boat would run,” explained Collins. “The big boys had given him [Kingston] too many slaps on the back. We didn’t need to take on the North Koreans by ourselves, but on occasion [with Kingston] I sure felt that we were.”⁷² Not all JACK advisors were as aggressive and ‘hands on’ as the Army 7th ID veteran.

Back at Sok-cho-ri, Marine LTC William ‘Rip’ Robertson, MAJ Kramer’s replacement, was waiting to use Q-576 to put five intelligence agents ashore a mile from a North Korean seaport. To add to the excitement a squadron of enemy torpedo boats was based there.⁷³ This made coordination with the blockade command critical. The following night Q-576 trailed in the wake of a destroyer until it was five miles from the seaport. Then, CQM Collins was radar vectored to the beach landing site by the Navy vessel. The agents’ boat was cast off about a hundred meters offshore. After recovering its small boat Q-576 had moved about 2,000 yards away when the destroyer warned that it had “two pips on the radar scope.” One, moving twenty knots, was headed to intercept them.⁷⁴

The destroyer suggested that Collins hide near a small island about a half mile to the south. “We could hear the motors from the other boat by then, and they were really moving along at a fast clip. I pulled around the west side of the island and waited. About ten minutes later, I was informed that the boat had proceeded on a southeasterly course trying to intercept me before we reached the UN patrol line and safety. I circled back north and headed out at full speed, which was about fifteen knots. As soon as I felt that we were clear enough to make a dash for safety, I changed to an easterly course,” said CQM Collins. “It was sufficient time to reach the patrol line.”⁷⁵ With the East coast CCRAK boats based at Sok-cho-ri, LTC Rip Robertson and CPT Kingston decided to move the SMG from the original Yong-do organizational site.

The Army combat infantryman had several reasons for establishing a new camp near the CCRAK boat base. “There was small dirt airstrip (K-50) just to the south with a pine grove right off the beach. A beached Canadian corvette could serve as a good training aid for



‘Frocked’ CPT Robert C. Kingston, the 7th ID task force commander ‘first to the Yalu’ in early November 1950, replaced Navy UDT LT Atcheson as the SMG advisor. GEN Kingston was the first commander of the U.S. Central Command.

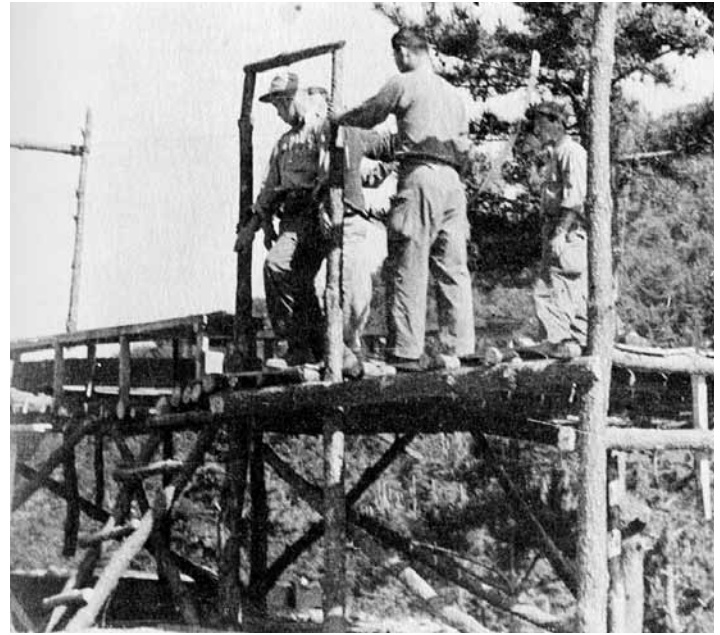


USS Samuel N. Moore (DD-747).

demolitions and steel cutting [practice] with explosives. The South Koreans [SMG recruiters] had their military personnel office [at the entrance] on Yong-do. To get to the camp, you had to go through a leper colony. So, few people came to visit their relatives or our facility,” said CPT Kingston.⁷⁶ Still, the SMG had been around Pusan too long. Sok-cho-ri with its protected harbor could accommodate LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) and large ocean going freighters. And, the snug harbor was the supply terminus for I Corps (American). It did not take long for Kingston to get a secure compound built by American combat engineers with the help of some CIA-supplied whiskey and .38 cal. snub-nosed pistols. It consisted of wooden-framed and floored U.S. Army winter hexagonal tents with squad heaters inside.⁷⁷ The new base was much farther north, closer to the 38th Parallel.



SGT Thomas G. Fosmire (left carrying reserve parachute), JACK Maritime Ops and SGT Donald F. Stephens (first behind Korean carrying main parachutes on A-frame), JACK Air Section, return to the assembly area after making a pay jump near Pusan in 1952.



Parachute training for the SMG raiders was very rudimentary.

CPT Kingston made naval gunfire support a constant for all SMG coastal raids. "One day we briefed the skipper [Commander (CDR) Everett Marsalis 'Easy' Glenn] of the USS [*Samuel N.*] *Moore*, [DD-747], who had been a prisoner of the Japs during World War II. What the destroyers on picket duty up North always wanted was to knock out a train running between the railroad tunnels. So, I told the skipper, 'Hell, we'll get you a train.' We took one of his gigs [MWB] and put a radio and some sailors in it. Then, we laid off the southern entrance of one of the many tunnels coming down the coast," said the infantry captain. "The locomotives got up speed inside the tunnel. When they broke out, you could catch the flash of the old steam engine's firebox. They ran without lights but you could also hear them. A few hours later a train came south and the destroyer opened fire with everything it had, a couple of 5-inch guns, I guess. There was a big explosion. When we got back, I thought the skipper was going to give me the ship," commented Kingston.⁷⁸

"Reality was that we only operated during the dark of the moon phase. We had about a five-to-seven day period, at the most, in which we could really operate," said Kingston.⁷⁹ That left most of the month for training. But, with an Armistice pending, harassment missions were curtailed in the early spring of 1953. Fortunately, LTC 'Rip' Robertson provided a challenging diversion for the SMG.

The CIA maritime raiding force, like EUSA guerrilla command units, was to become airborne qualified. CPT Kingston requested parachutes, sufficient reserves to be rotated between aircraft loads ('sticks'), an airplane, and MSG Merry Christmas from JACK Air. The SMG was trucked over to K-50 in time to watch a C-46 *Commando* land with the requisite equipment, MSG Christmas, and LTC Robertson.⁸⁰

The morning was spent doing rudimentary ground training. Wooden boards laid across fifty-five gallon fuel drums served as parachute landing fall (PLF) platforms.

A suspended parachute harness was used to demonstrate parachute turning maneuvers in the air, actions in the event of a mid-air collision with another jumper, and the proper 'prepare to land' riser 'slip into the wind' before impact. After lunch, the airborne trainees boarded the C-46 for some 'in the aircraft actions' (individual static line hook up, jump commands, and emergency procedures). Then, the SMG 'chuted up' and jumped. "In March [1953] the rice paddies along that part of the East coast were still frozen. We didn't have any [jump] refusals and didn't have any casualties. LTC Robertson got so excited that he said, '@#\$%! I might as well go too!' He followed me out of the aircraft on his first and only parachute jump," said CPT Kingston. "A bunch of kids with A-frames carried the parachutes to the assembly area after each drop."⁸¹ In the meantime, personnel rotations had changed American supervisors on the CIA trawlers.

SFC Tom Fosmire, the skipper of K-333, had accumulated enough points to rotate back to the States. But he agreed to another assignment despite the pending Armistice. 1LT Curtis and MSG Hoffman were long gone; two Agency civilians, Michael Nolan, former fullback for the Los Angeles *Rams*, and another had been assigned to the CIA trawlers at Yo-do.⁸²

Fosmire joined airborne SGT John Blake at the CIA training base on Saipan to give six weeks of paramilitary training to forty Chen-do Gyo, a radical religious group living in the mountains north of Wonsan harbor. They had originally been part of the defunct CIA E&E corridor for downed UN airmen. The Chen-do Gyo were vehemently anti-Communist and very nationalistic. They began fighting the Japanese in 1928, and the North Korean Communists in the late 1940s.⁸³ They also supported the 441st CIC East coast SALAMANDER operation.⁸⁴ The Chen-do Gyo were not guerrillas or mercenaries, but the armed wing of a very strong theocratic political movement intent on free government in a modern Korea.⁸⁵

After their Saipan training, the Chen-do Gyo were moved to the former SMG camp south of Sok-cho-ri for advanced training (the CIA guerrilla unit had been disbanded and CPT Kingston reassigned to the 'line crosser' section). At Sok-cho-ri, the armed religious militants learned of the approaching ceasefire. They became very upset that they would not be able to retaliate against the North Korean military for abuses suffered by their people. One cold, rainy day they refused to train and began drinking. That night, SGT Blake had to wrench an M-2 carbine from a drunken Chen-do Gyo intent on killing Fosmire. That incident convinced the Milwaukee native that it was time to return to the U.S. Army and go home.⁸⁶ SFC Fosmire was one of many American soldiers who realized the futility of trying to motivate guerrillas with a cease-fire pending. The Armistice negotiation caveats included return of the offshore island strongholds and demobilization of the guerillas. These were very dicey times for all U.S. military advisors in JACK and EUSA guerrilla command.⁸⁷

With UN ship patrols and aircraft flights restricted to south of the 38th Parallel after the Armistice, North Korean fast patrol craft eliminated amphibious raids into North Korea. CIA agent overland insertions continued, but survivability was limited to a few days. Walkouts were precarious enterprises. The guerrilla E&E corridor across North Korea had proven to be an expensive exercise in futility by the time it self-destructed in the winter of 1951.⁸⁸ The cease-fire requirement to evacuate the North Korean offshore islands (reduced to five total on both coasts) was the final death knell for guerrilla operations.⁸⁹ For all intents and purposes, the Armistice ended JACK paramilitary operations and the EUSA guerrilla mission.

Of all CIA covert operations against North Korea, the paramilitary actions and intelligence collection efforts conducted by JACK Maritime were the most successful. East coast raids were conducted primarily by the CIA-trained and led SMG. EUSA guerrilla command elements were restricted to south of the bomb line (below Wonsan). The guerrilla raids against the mainland proved only to have nuisance value. Since U.S. Army advisors were restricted from accompanying 'their' guerrillas, 'success' claims could not be substantiated.⁹⁰ However, the JACK military advisors like the Army men in EUSA guerrilla command, routinely used CCRAK boat assets for operations and resupply, coordinated naval gunfire support with U.S. Navy 'picket' destroyers, and maintained liaison with ROK coastal forces at the tactical level.⁹¹

JACK was not immune to CCRAK, General Matthew B. Ridgway's attempt to control all covert operations in theater.⁹² The Document Research Division (cover for the CIA liaison office in FEC) provided the deputy director of CCRAK. MAJ Singlaub, the JACK chief of staff and operations officer, was 'tagged' with that duty. However, the CIA only reported directly to Washington. Its worldwide strategic mission transcended that of FEC. In his memoirs Singlaub simply stated "that JACK had neither the responsibility nor inclination to coordinate its independent covert activities with CCRAK."⁹³ But,

because JACK was filled with detailed military, career officers 'walked a tightrope' with their service commands in Japan and Korea. "Though CCRAK was a 'paper command,' I considered it a rival for personnel, funding, air support, and above all, mission authorization. However, if one wanted to get a conventional combat command in Korea, you tread carefully," said Singlaub.⁹⁴ Scarce military air and sealift and contracted maritime assets were not allocated by CCRAK according to mission need.⁹⁵ Control of delivery means was perceived by them to be a source of power. But, at the tactical level, the Army 'doers' shared transportation to accomplish operational and resupply missions.⁹⁶

"If we did any good, I was never told. We were just out there being a pain in their ass." — GEN Kingston

JACK did better with their resources than the U.S. military services involved in paramilitary activities and intelligence collection because its advisors accompanied the SMG on combat missions and inserted and recovered agents. Its Maritime Section did accomplish the most. However, retired General Robert Kingston summed it up: "If we did any good, I was never told. We were just out there being a pain in their ass."⁹⁷ JACK headquarters closed in August 1953, shortly after the Armistice was signed (27 July 1953). A postwar assessment of CIA and JACK intelligence reports revealed that Communist counterintelligence "papermills and fabrications" were the sources for most North Korean intelligence provided to FEC and Washington during the Korean War.⁹⁸ †

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 - 12 Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 67.
 - 13 Silver Star Citation, LTJG George Atcheson, US Navy detailed to Joint Advisory Commission, Korea at <http://projects.militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/search.php?term=Atcheson> accessed 4/10/2013.
 - 14 Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 67.
 - 15 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
 - 16 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
 - 17 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; *Civil Air Transport (CAT) enabled the Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK) to ignore the cumbersome restrictions of Combined Command Reconnaissance Activities, Korea (CCRACK) to aerial resupply guerrilla bases and to shuttle hundreds of guerrillas and agents between its various training and staging bases throughout the Far East.* William M. Leary, *Perilous Missions: Civil Air Transport and CIA Covert Operations in Asia* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 126.
 - 18 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; retired MG John K. Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty: An American Soldier in the Twentieth Century* (NY: Summit Books, 1991), 81.
 - 19 COL Albert R. 'Bert' Haney, first JACK commander, was a CIA careerist covered as a U.S. Army colonel. When it came to planning and conducting military and paramilitary operations, the 'nominal' colonel relied heavily on his detailed military service professionals. Singlaub interview, 21 March 2012; Sadler interview, 18 November 2011; Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; retired GEN Robert C. Kingston, interview by LTC Anthony V. Nida, 1987. U.S. Army Military History Institute, Senior Officer Oral History Program, Project 1987-16, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle Barracks, PA, hereafter cited by name and project number; Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea: The History of Amphibious Special Warfare in World War II and the Korean War* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1998), 237, 249-250; Dwyer "Behind the Lines," 67; Both USMC LTCs 'Rip' Robertson and Tucker Gougelmann stayed with the CIA after the Korean War "Rip Robertson and Tucker Gougelmann had been in Vietnam long before I arrived. They were still there on an extended tour to help counter the roughly 3,000 VC terrorist assassinations annually which included innocent school teachers, their families, government officials, land owners, and anyone outwardly opposed to Communism," commented Rudy A. Enders at www.air-america.org/Articles/enders/riviernam_1.pdf accessed 11/5/2012.
 - 20 Cremeans, "The Role of the USS *Begor* (APD-127) in Clandestine Operations in North Korea, 1950-51," 2 at <http://www.ussebegor.org/seaStories49.htm> accessed 11/6/2012; Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 61-62.
 - 21 Sadler interviews, 3 March 2011 and 18 November 2011; Nicholas Dujmovic, "Extraordinary Fidelity: Two CIA Prisoners in China, 1952-73," *Studies in Intelligence* (December 2006), 50:4, 2.
 - 22 Far East Division, CIA, "The Secret War in Korea: June 1950 to June 1952," 17 June 1968 at <http://www.fas.org/irp/cia/product/korea.pdf> accessed on 11/9/2012.
 - 23 Singlaub interviews, 12 September 2008 and 20-21 March 2012.
 - 24 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 181-82; Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 248; Dwyer "Behind the Lines," 67.
 - 25 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 67.
 - 26 MAJ Robert E. Mattingly, unpublished U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College Paper, "Herringbone Cloak - GI Dagger Marines of the OSS," (Quantico, VA: USMC Development and Education Command, 1979), 103.
 - 27 George C. Atcheson, III, telephone interview by Briscoe, 3 March 2006, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
 - 28 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005. Army infantry COL William R. Peers, OSS Detachment 101, Burma, WWII, was detailed to the CIA on Taiwan. One of his tasks was to "gear up a motorized *junk* construction and rehab operation up the coast at Keelung," according to Frank Holober. Holober, *Raiders of the China Coast: CIA Covert Operations during the Korean War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999), 19.
 - 29 Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 6 from <http://www.korean-war.com/Archives/2004/02/msg00118.html> accessed 10/9/2012; Korean War Chronology at <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea/chron52b.htm> accessed 10/12/2005.
 - 30 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
 - 31 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
 - 32 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
 - 33 Colonel Rod Paschall, "Special Operations in Korea," *Conflict*, 7:2 (1987), 162.
 - 34 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
 - 35 Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 7 from <http://www.korean-war.com/Archives/2004/02/msg00118.html> accessed 10/9/2012; Korean War Chronology, <http://www.history.navy.mil/korea/chron51a.htm> accessed 10/12/2005; When John Limond Hart left as the second JACK chief (1952-1953), "the enemy's security precautions were so stringent that we still did not have any intelligence agents located in the North." Hart, *The CIA's Russians* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 10.
 - 36 Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 7 from <http://www.korean-war.com/Archives/2004/02/msg00118.html> accessed 10/9/2012; Korean War Chronology, <http://www.history.navy.mil/korea/chron51a.htm> accessed 10/12/2005.
 - 37 Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 8, 9 from <http://www.korean-war.com/Archives/2004/02/msg00118.html> accessed 10/9/2012; Korean War Chronology, <http://www.history.navy.mil/korea/chron51a.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea51b.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/korea/chron51a.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea51b.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea/chron51a.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/horea/chron52b.htm> accessed 10/12/2005.
 - 38 Hwang-Sung (editor), *My Father's War* (Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear Publishing, 2008), 132.
 - 39 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; The Yo-do airstrip would later be improved and lengthened by Navy Seabees. On 15 July 1952, seven Corsairs made emergency landings on the airstrip, refueled, and flew back to their aircraft carrier. It was later named in honor of Vice Admiral R.P. Briscoe, Commander, NFFE, who authorized its enlargement. Korean War Chronology at <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea/chron52b.htm>; Frank Ransom, "Air-Sea Rescue 1941-1952," U.S. Air Force Historical Study No. 95. USAF Historical Division, Research Studies Institute, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL (August 1954), 160, 166; Forrest L. Marion, *That Others Might Live: USAF Air Rescue in Korea* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2004), 11; CDRs Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson, *The Sea War in Korea* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1957), 427-430.
 - 40 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Kingston interview, 1987, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
 - 41 Korean War Chronology, <http://www.history.navy.mil/korea/chron51a.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea51b.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/korea/chron51a.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea/chron51a.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/horea/chron52b.htm>; <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea/chron53a.htm> accessed 10/12/2005.
 - 42 Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 181-82.
 - 43 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
 - 44 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005. Supporting the USMC ANGLICO (Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company) on Yo-do was a bilingual Navy Intelligence officer, LT James S. Lampe. Born and raised in Syen Chun (northwest Korea, fifty miles from the Yalu and 225 miles northwest of Seoul), Lampe was the son of Presbyterian missionary H.W. Lampe (Princeton Theological Seminary). As the only American on Yo-do fluent in Korean, LT Lampe had strong rapport with the ROK military intelligence units and civilian residents. Still, there was no way to 'vet' the fishermen whose boats were used to deliver agents to the mainland. For them and their families on the mainland to survive most also 'worked for' North Korean intelligence. "LT James S. Lampe and USS *George K. MacKenzie* (DD-836)" at <http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/events/kowar/log-sup/kor51.html> accessed 4/5/2013.
 - 45 John P. Finnegan, "The Evolution of US Army HUMINT: Intelligence Operations in the Korean War," *Studies in Intelligence*, 44: 2 (2000), 85; Monthly Historical Reports, 442nd Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment, 1 March 1951 through June 1951, RG 319, National Archives; retired MG Daniel C. Helix, interview by Briscoe, 14 April 2006, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
 - 46 Helix interviews, 7 December 2005 and 14 April 2006; Helix, *The Kochi Maru Affair* (Walnut Creek, CA: Devil Mountain Books, 2004), 66, 83.
 - 47 Singlaub interviews, 20-21 March 2012.

- 48 Hart, *The CIA's Russians*, 10; Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 62, 64.
- 49 On 6 January 1952 the USS *Erben* (DD 631) sank a boat near Kojo that did not have proper recognition signals. It was carrying X Corps intelligence agents. This incident caused the Seventh Fleet commander to charge CTF 95 (US Naval blockade command) with the responsibility for controlling and clearing all friendly small craft operating near or above the bomb line on both coasts of Korea. FEC gave EUSA guerrilla command 'clearinghouse' authority and coordination responsibility for maritime operations with CTF 95. The two JACK trawlers stayed abreast of current US Navy operating requirements. Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Korean War Chronology, <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea/chron5a.htm> accessed 10/12/2005.
- 50 Singlaub interviews, 12 September 2008 and 24 May 2011.
- 51 Korean War Chronology, <http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/korea/chron52b.htm> accessed 10/9/2005; Fosmire interview, 13 April 2006.
- 52 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 53 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 54 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 55 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 67.
- 56 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 67.
- 57 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 67.
- 58 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 59 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 60 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Lee Wha Rang, *The Secret History of the Yong-do Partisan Unit* (Seoul: PROCOM Publishers, 2001); Yong-do Partisan Unit at <http://www.kimsoft.com/2005/Yong-doPartisans.htm>, 71-72 accessed 10/5/2006.
- 61 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Headquarters, Eighth U.S. Army Korea, General Orders Number 763, dated 12 December 1952, Award of the Bronze Star Medal with Letter "V" Device to Sergeant THOMAS G. FOSMIRE, for heroic achievement in connection with military operations against an armed enemy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **GO Number 763 was forwarded to Commanding Officer, Joint Advisory Commission Korea, APO 72, on 14 December 1952.**
- 62 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 63 Pagnella interview, 17 March 2006; Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 253–55; Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 67.
- 64 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 65 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 66 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 67 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 68 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 69 Retired U.S. Navy LT B.W. Collins, undated, unpublished memoir "A Rare Experience," File: Korean Partisans/ Operations Papers/Oral History, U.S. Army Heritage & Education Center, Carlisle, PA.
- 70 Collins, "A Rare Experience."
- 71 Collins, "A Rare Experience."
- 72 Collins, "A Rare Experience."
- 73 Collins, "A Rare Experience."
- 74 Collins, "A Rare Experience."
- 75 Collins, "A Rare Experience."
- 76 Kingston interview, 1987, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 77 Kingston interview, 1987, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 78 Kingston interview, 1987, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 79 Kingston interview, 1987, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 80 Kingston interview, 1987, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 81 Kingston interview, 1987, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 82 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Kingston interview, USAMHI Project 1987-16; "Mike Nolan was an old Southeast Asia hand. He had been recruited during the Korean War when the Agency hired all the paramilitary officers they could find. Being a former professional football player with the Los Angeles Rams, Mike met the recruiting criteria: strong, aggressive and brave. However, like all quick start programs, most of these contract officers were axed when the Korean War ended. Mike, however, survived and was sent to Laos. Afterwards, he spent many years in hardship posts usually reserved for what insiders call 'knuckle draggers,'" wrote Rudy A. Enders at www.air-america.org/Articles/enders/revietnam_1.pdf accessed 11/5/2012.
- 83 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005.
- 84 Finnegan, "The Evolution of US Army HUMINT," 83; Historical Report, Far East Command/Liaison Detachment (Korea), 1 November 1951.
- 85 Major Shaun M. Darragh, "Where Special Operations Began: Hwanghae-do: The War of the Donkeys," *Army*, November 1984, 73.
- 86 Fosmire interview, 6 September 2005; Kingston interview, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 87 Retired COL Charles W. Norton, interview by Briscoe, 9 April 2004, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 88 *CIA in Korea*, Volume III, 529 excerpts cleared for release by CIA, 6 June 1997.
- 89 Michael E. Haas, *In the Devil's Shadow: UN Special Operations During the Korean War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 200.
- 90 Darragh, "Where Special Operations Began," 75.
- 91 Paschall, "Special Operations in Korea," 175; Kingston interview, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 92 Haas, *In the Devil's Shadow*, 38–39.
- 93 MAJ Steven A. Fondacaro, MMAS thesis, "A Strategic Analysis of U.S. Special Operations during the Korean Conflict, 1950–1953," U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS (19 May 1988), 69; Ben S. Malcolm, *White Tigers: My Secret War in North Korea* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1996), 130; Dwyer, "Behind the Lines," 19 at <http://www.korean-war.com/Archives/2004/02/msg00118.html> accessed 10/9/2012.
- 94 Singlaub interviews, 20-21 March 2012 ; Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty*, 181–82; Kingston interview, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 95 Paschall, "Special Operations in Korea," 160.
- 96 Sadler interview, 3 March 2011; Singlaub interviews 20-21 March 2011; Paschall, "Special Operations in Korea," 160.
- 97 Kingston interview, USAMHI Project 1987-16.
- 98 *CIA in Korea*, Volume III, 530-531 excerpts cleared for release by CIA, 6 June 1997; Hart, *The CIA's Russians*, 10.

SFC Thomas G. Fosmire conducts formal guard mount of Chen-do Gyo guerrillas at the CIA facility on Saipan.