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THE DRAGON FROM THE STREAM:
THE ROK ARMY IN TRANSITION AND THE KOREAN WAR,
1950-1953

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the development of the Republic of Korea Army during the Korean War, focusing on its effort to enhance the combat effectiveness. It began first as the Constabulary in January 1946, when the United States Army military Government formed it to support police. Until the establishment of the ROK government in 1948, the Constabulary remained a police reserve. From the fall of 1948, the ROK army was responsible for the national defense of the new republic. However, on the eve of the war, the South Koreans had just about 100,000 men in the armed forces, of which 90,000 was for the army. The eight light-infantry divisions were solely defending the nation from the internal and external threats.

With the coming of the war on June 25, 1950, the ROK army units could not stop the well-trained and heavily-equipped the Korean People's Army of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). During the first year of fighting, the ROK army did not show any reliable combat power in the field. However, when the armistice was signed on July 27, 1953, three years later, the ROK army was defending two-thirds of the frontline with over 600,000 men and women in uniform. The most significant changes within the ROK army happened in the areas of leadership, training and schooling, and weapons and equipment.
Improvement in these areas began from the summer of 1951 when the front became stabilized to initiate the intensive and systematic programs of training. These training and schooling programs began to transform the ROK army to an effective army. Along with this came the improved firepower. After the summer of 1952, the ROKA units showed the enhanced combat effectiveness and, as a result, it launched the expansion program to the twenty-division army. At the same time, the ROK army added heavy weapons and equipment to its inventory, increasing its combat power.

The ROK army of 1953 had much different characteristics from that of 1950. It became a reliable army for national defense. Improvement of the combat effectiveness, especially in the areas of leadership, training and schooling, and weapons and equipment, played the key role in changing the ROK army’s characteristics.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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General Paik Sun-yup [백선엽], the former Chief of Staff, Republic of Korea (ROK) Army, claims that the Korean army of 1953 was "very much a different animal from what it had been." What General Paik saw must be a dragon that the Koreans have believed to defend their nation from the outside invaders. A legend tells us that King Munmu [문무왕] of Silla [신라] in the 7TH century A.D. promised his people to protect the kingdom from the Japanese invaders by transforming himself to a dragon once he died. The ROK army in 1953 was a dragon defended the nation from the Communists invasion.

General Paik's characterization of the ROK army includes two arguments that draw our attention. First of all, he reminds the readers of a widely known fact that the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) fought the war from the beginning as one of four major belligerents, which includes the United States, the People's Republic of China, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The forces from the ROK and U.S., along with relatively small contingents from fifteen other nations, fought under the flag of the United Nations. Across the line, the (north)
Korean People's Army (KPA, Inmin-gun, 인민군), the initial invader, was saved by the Renmin Zhiyuanjun (Chinese People's Volunteers Army, 人民志愿軍, also known as the Chinese Communist Forces).

In fact, when the armistice was signed in July 1953, the ROK army defended two-thirds of the front with sixteen divisions, and it was expanding to a twenty-division army. Considering its short history, this was a great achievement by the Korean army. Just like other areas of the Korean society, the military had to begin from nothing when the Japanese surrendered in August 1945. During the Japanese colonial rule of four decades, the military tradition was interrupted and almost disappeared, and only a small number of Koreans served in semi- or regular-military forces, either for Japan or against it, and they became the military leaders of South Korea. Therefore, the liberated and divided Koreans had to start from the beginning adopting the military systems provided by their protectors.

The first military force in South Korea was the Constabulary, a police reserve. Established in January 1946, it had eight regiments with a total strength of 25,000. This became the nucleus of the ROK army in 1948, and it soon expanded to an army of eight divisions by June, 1950. They were equipped as light infantry and remained primarily as a force for internal security and border patrolling. However, the war forced a change in its function, and the ROK army became a national defense force
to defend the nation from external threats. In the process of development, the ROK army underwent two significant changes — one in size, the other in combat effectiveness.

In the Constabulary era, the force's strength was approximately 25,000 officers and men, and this figure increased to 90,000 at the brink of war in June 1950. In three years, the army grew as a powerful combat machine with over 600,000 men and women. More important than the growth in size was the fact that the ROK army had modernized and attained a reasonable level of combat effectiveness. Composition of elements within the ROK army had been changed suitable to wage war, too. If the pre-war ROK army was an army of light infantry for internal security and border security, in 1953 it was a formidable defense force against external threats.

In the way of such development, the ROK army had tried eagerly to adopt the system of the United States Army, while the Inmin-gun depended on the Soviets for the creation, training, and logistical support. As happened in other areas of the world after World War II, the two Koreas became pieces in the Cold War system and became a vivid example of confrontation between two superpowers. Accordingly, the modernization of the ROK army equaled its Americanization — an adoption of American military tradition and practice in addition to the restructuring of the units with American ways and the equipping them.
with American weapons. The Americanization path to modernization drew complaints from those officers trained in other military institutions, especially in the Japanese military, but the reforms ultimately improved combat effectiveness.

This study will trace the development of the ROK army and examine its combat performance during the Korean War. The performance of an army during peace or war is not easily evaluated, because it is typically an outcome of continuous and accumulated effort, and because it reflects every element of the society that creates the army. Basically, it has too many non-linear aspects to evaluate. Despite these difficulties, there have been several attempts to measure military effectiveness. Scholars like Trevor N. Dupuy and Martin van Creveld employ quantitative analysis to gauge performance of a military organization.² This approach cannot, however, fully assess such non-linear elements as cultural or sociological factors. Professor John A. Lynn in his research of the French revolutionary army of the 1790s demonstrates an approach involving a sociological emphasis in the paradigm of ‘relative combat effectiveness.’³

In contrast, Professors Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray provide a different but more persuasive approach to the analysis of a military organization, using the criteria of “military effectiveness,” which they define as "the process by which armed forces convert resources into
fighting power." They divide military effectiveness into four different levels of activity: political, strategic, operational, and tactical effectiveness. This method shows to what degree a military organization could achieve maximum fighting power when everything goes as intended, and how much fighting power it generated in reality. Using some aspects of the "military effectiveness" analysis, especially those of operational and tactical ones, I will look at the ROK army's performance in wartime and show what reforms made the ROK army of 1953 so different from that of 1950. Although political and strategic effectiveness is more crucial in determining the results of war than operational and tactical effectiveness as Germany in World War II showed, I will focus more on the operational and tactical levels for the case of the ROK army for several reasons. The ROK government did not have much room for political and strategic maneuver, and in many areas it did not even have capability for changes at the political and strategic levels because of its economic dependency and political subordination. For example, in neither Tokyo nor Washington did the ROK government participate in decision-making during the war. The other critical reason is the ROK army had been during the almost entire period of the war under operational control of the U.S. Eighth Army, Korea (EUSAK). Focusing on operational and tactical levels, therefore, I will examine the wartime measures taken by the ROK army in its effort to maximize combat power.
It was not an easy task for the ROK army to improve itself while desperately fighting the war. During the first year of the war, the ROK units did not have any chance to improve its capability, because it was fully committed to combat and because the tide of the war changed too frequently without allowing room for any actions other than combat. Only after the front became stabilized in the fall of 1951 was it possible for the American and Korean leaders to take measures that modernized the ROK army. By that time, another event entirely changed the course of the war. With the growing recognition that winning the war militarily would be too costly to both sides, the truce talks began in July 1951. The war became confined in a narrow area in the central part of the peninsula. U.S. domestic politics also brought a significant change in U.S. policy toward Korea. With the coming of the national elections in 1952, the Korean War became a critical issue for those candidates and the public. Finally, the U.S. government moved toward the Koreanization of the war, involving the transformation of the ROK army into a reliable and effective force.

In evaluating the combat effectiveness of the ROK army, I selected and analyzed three elements that determined the capability of the ROK army — leadership, training and education, and weapons and equipment. There were other critical elements in determining the performance of the ROK units on the fields. As always, logistical capability, especially compared to that of the opponent, often decided the
outcome of battle or even war. In case of the ROK army, however, logistics had been relegated to the Americans from the beginning, and the United States government provided logistical support to the ROK army sufficient to operate in combat. The factors related to the military personnel are also critical. Who served in the army? How well were they treated? And, why did they decide to serve in the military? Such questions merit further inquiry, but fall out of the scope of this study. One thing is clear, though, and that was the fact that after the introduction of compulsory military service in late 1950, some of above questions related to the personnel issue could be answered easily.

First, I will examine the military leadership of the Korean officers and its influence on combat actions. Leadership is very subjective and its evaluation can be based entirely on battlefield performance of leaders. It is clear that by the end of the war the Korean officers had gained strong leadership traits that they lacked in June 1950. At the same time, I will analyze the turnover ratio of the Korean commanders. It is a common wisdom that a commander should be allowed at least four months to convert the battalion or regiment into ‘his unit.’ Although it is closely related to the development of the war, during the first year of the war saw the highest turnover.

The second theme is the schooling and training system of the ROK army. It is where the enlisted men and officers alike were trained to
be ready for combat as an individual soldier or as a member of a unit. Intensive and systematic training programs introduced from the summer of 1951 were one of the key factors that began to transform the ROK army into a modern and professional army. Above all, it greatly improved the ROK units' combat performance.

Finally, weapons and equipment were critical in determining the combat power of a certain unit, especially compared to the opponent. Both tanks and artillery are the decisive elements of firepower and maneuverability of the ground forces. I will examine strength of tanks and artillery of the ROK army and compare them with their equivalents in the Korean People's Army (KPA), where data is available. Since this is a criterion of relativity, the ROK army's strength in tank and artillery was often decided by that of American manning.

All the elements mentioned above are too important to be ignored but do not fully explain the development of the ROKA. The role of the government, though limited, is also essential to understand the effectiveness of the war effort. Because the Korean War was a total war, the ROK government's leadership in the war is as critical as other elements. However, the government's role falls outside of the focus of this study, which discusses the army's combat power at the tactical level.

At the same time, I will explore some important battles, moving up and down a hill or two with ROKA units, in order to assess the
“output.” Even though it is not easy to show the output in terms of quantitative analysis, it is worthy to note the correlation between reform measures and combat performance. While looking at those battles, one should realize that ROK soldiers were not the only component of those ROK units. American officers and men also climbed the hill with ROK units bearing the same burdens and suffering as the Koreans did. As military advisors, they were deeply involved in this effort. Senior American commanders such as General James A. Van Fleet changed the speed and direction of the process. Overlooking American involvement in this process would leave the story of the modernization of the ROK army incomplete.

In order to examine the major themes mentioned above, this dissertation includes five chapters in chronological order. The first half of Chapter 1 sketches the Constabulary established in early 1946 and ends when it was renamed the ROK army in August, 1948. After speculation, the U.S. Military Government in Korea, which occupied a half of the Korean Peninsula south of the 38th Parallel, decided to form a police reserve of 25,000 men. It remained throughout this period as an internal security force, backing up the Korean national police. However, a common belief among the American and Korean officers and men within the Constabulary was that it would become at the appropriate time a national army. In fact, the officer corps of the Constabulary became the
first generation of the Korean officer corps, and it was they who occupied the top layer in the chain of command during the Korean War. The second half of Chapter 1 discusses the prewar ROK army and its performance as a national defense force. By looking at the prewar army, one can understand why the ROK army met a devastating defeat in the hot summer days of 1950. The army was not ready for war in June, but before blaming its failures on itself, one should remember that it had not had time and opportunities enough to prepare for a general war.

The second chapter covers the period from June to October of 1950 and explains the problems that the ROK units revealed in combat actions. The front moved from the 38th Parallel down to the Naktong River, then up to the Yalu River. Even though weakness of the ROK army had been noticed, there was no action taken to remedy the problems. The fluctuating front did not allow the ROK army to do so. The next period of about eight months, with which Chapter 3 deals, was very similar to the previous one. From late October 1950 to May 1951, the Chinese launched a series of five offensives, pushing the units under the United Nations Command to the central part of the peninsula. Both sides returned near to the 38th Parallel. At the end of this period, the truce talks began to end the war politically. Facing the surprise intervention of the Chinese People's Volunteers Army, the ROKA units were desperately trying to keep the nation alive. In each of the Chinese offensive, the ROK army
suffered severe defeats and the Allies, especially the United States, lost confidence in it and forced to take actions to cure the problems and weakness at the end of the period.

Chapter 4 covers from June 1951 to April 1952, a period that transformed the ROK army. The American leaders and Koreans together paid a serious attention to improve the ROK army as a combat force. Their efforts were mostly concentrated on revising and improving the training and education programs the service institutes provided. From replacement training to officer refreshment training, the Americans and Koreans created new training programs if necessary or intensified the existing programs. It was also during this period that about 250 young officers were sent to the U.S. army schools for training. At the same time, there were signs of firepower increase. Overall, the ROK army for the first time began to transform into a professional army.

The last chapter deals with the next twelve months explains the backgrounds of the decision to expand the ROK army and the process of that expansion. Based on the confidence the ROK units showed, the U.S. government granted to support the ROK army of twenty divisions and supporting units, including artillery and tank units. Its strength would reach over 600,000 men and women when all those units were activated. And this decision proved to be right when the ROK 9TH Division defeated
the Chinese forces at the Battle of the White Horse Mountain in October 1952.

Finally, the concluding chapter touches briefly the Chinese Last Offensive, to which the Korean units responded well. The Battle of the Kumsung Salient was the final combat that tested the ROK army's capability, and the ROK army passed the test with a reasonable combat effectiveness. With the end of the offensive, the armistice was signed on July 27, 1953, after three years and one month of bitter hostilities. On that day, about two-thirds of the front was taken by the ROK units.

In the end, I hope this dissertation explains not only the development of the ROK army but also the American involvement in its development. Specifically, commanders of the Eighth Army and the United Nations Command and officers and enlisted men of the United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea played a critical role in that effort. Historical research on the ROK army's performance and development during the wartime a half-century ago, I believe, carries lessons even today. It will teach us how to make an army to be effective and reliable.
1 Paik, Sun Yup, From Pusan to Panmunjom: Wartime Memoirs of the Republic of Korea's First Four-Star General (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 1999), p. 239.


CHAPTER 1

THE ARMY ON THE EVE OF THE WAR

When war broke out on June 25, 1950, the ROK army was still in a very early stage of its development. Less than five years was insufficient to create and develop an army strong enough to defend its nation from threats within and without. An unstable political situation in South Korea hampered the already shaky progress of military development. The seemingly daily struggles and conflicts in particular between pro- and anti-Communists were leading the divided South Koreans to an inevitable collision course against each other. For the army, the result was numerous mutinies and rebellions among the army units. Worsening this situation was the infiltration of North Korean guerrilla units into South Korea. Consequently, by the time war broke out, the ROK army could not afford much time and effort to improve itself through training and schooling. It struggled to meet the emergency of an insurgency well before the Korean War broke out.
The prewar period from 1945 to 1950 could be divided into two distinctive phases — the U.S. military occupation and the establishment of the Republic of Korea. During the first two-and-a-half-years, Koreans and American military government officials attempted to build a foundation for the future armed forces. They first established a constabulary and a modest coast guard. Though the Constabulary was supposed to be a police reserve, it was considered an army in nature, thereby easing its transition into the Republic of Korea Army following the August 1948 creation of the South Korean government. The next two years saw slow transition from a police reserve or constabulary to an army that assumed the burden of defending its mother nation. Because of the slow transition, however, the ROK army consisted mostly of light infantry units and was not a modern army by contemporary standards when the war broke out.

[The Constabulary, January 1946 - December 1947]

The creation of security forces within its zone was one goal of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) upon its arrival in September 1945 as the occupational force for the area south of the 38th Parallel. ¹ The Military Government initially planned to establish national armed forces in October, ² but it had to abandon the
idea because of a strong Soviet opposition at the US-USSR Joint Commission. A new plan, the Bamboo Plan, embraced instead a 25,000 police reserve of the Constabulary. The Department of Internal Security was to control the Constabulary and the Coast Guard.³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reg</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Begin</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Officers in Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1Rg</td>
<td>Taenung (Former Japanese Army barracks)</td>
<td>1/15/46</td>
<td>11/1/46</td>
<td>Chae Byeong-duk [Fat Chae], Chung Il-Kwon (* KC Training Center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2Rg</td>
<td>Taejon (Jap. Army airfield)</td>
<td>2/28/46</td>
<td>12/25/46</td>
<td>Capt. Lee Hyung-kun (His hometown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4Rg</td>
<td>Kwangju (Former Jap. Navy Training Facility)</td>
<td>2/15/46</td>
<td>12/?/46/</td>
<td>Lt. Kim Hong-jun, Choi Hong-hee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5Rg</td>
<td>Pusan (Former Jap. Army Barracks)</td>
<td>1/29/46</td>
<td>1/25/47/</td>
<td>Park Byong-kwon, Lee Chi-up (Speedy Lee), Paik Sun-yup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6Rg</td>
<td>Taegu (Former Jap. Army Barracks)</td>
<td>2/18/46</td>
<td>6/15/48/</td>
<td>Disbanded on 1/15/1949 -&gt; remnants to 22Rg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7Rg</td>
<td>Chungju</td>
<td>2/7/46/</td>
<td>1/15/47/</td>
<td>Min Gi-sik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8Rg</td>
<td>Chunchon (Textile Co.)</td>
<td>4/1/46/</td>
<td>By the end of 1946</td>
<td>Kim Jong-gap, Hwang Heon-chin, James Hausman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9Rg</td>
<td>Cheju</td>
<td>11/1/46</td>
<td>Two Bns. (But only a Bn. Strength)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 The Formation of the Constabulary Regiments⁴

The Bamboo Plan units would spread out to the peninsula south of the 38th Parallel, covering each of the eight provinces with a regiment.
The first company was formed in January 15, 1946, at Taenung [대원], a former Japanese army post and future site for the Korea Military Academy. By the next month, the Constabulary officers and enlisted men were forming the units, and they had developed the core company of each of the eight regiments by April 1 of the same year.\(^5\) In a year, all regiments had formed three battalions, except for the 6\(^{TH}\) Regiment in Taegu [대구].\(^6\) After Cheju [제주] Island became a province in August 1946, the USAMGIK approved the formation there of a constabulary regiment, the 9\(^{TH}\) Regiment.\(^7\) Table 1.1 shows a summary of activation by each of the Constabulary regiments.

On December 1, 1947, the Constabulary formed three brigade headquarters to command and control three regiments each. The 1\(^{ST}\) Constabulary Brigade established its headquarters in Seoul and commanded the 1\(^{ST}\), 7\(^{TH}\), and 8\(^{TH}\) Regiments. In Taejon [대전], the 2\(^{ND}\) Brigade set up its HQs with the 2\(^{ND}\), 3\(^{RD}\), and 4\(^{TH}\) Regiments and in Pusan [부산] the 3\(^{RD}\) Brigade with the 5\(^{TH}\), 6\(^{TH}\), and 9\(^{TH}\) Regiments.\(^8\) Brigade headquarters served only an administrative purpose and did not have any supporting units other than the three regiments.

Upon the completion of the Bamboo Plan, the Department of Internal Security set a new plan for expansion. In January 1948, the department decided to form an additional fourteen regiments by June 1949.\(^9\) Until the establishment of the Korean government in August, the
Koreans and American advisors were able to add six regiments to the existing nine regiments. With these regiments from the 10\textsuperscript{TH} to the 15\textsuperscript{TH}, two additional brigade headquarters – the 4\textsuperscript{TH} and 5\textsuperscript{TH} - were formed in Chungju [청주] and Kwangju [광주].

The rapid expansion of the Constabulary necessitated the formation of other non-combat service units to support the infantry units. Therefore, the Supply Unit was formed within the 1\textsuperscript{ST} Regiment on July 1, 1946, under the direct control of the Department of Internal Security and commanded by Major Chae Byong-duk [“Fat Chae,” 채병덕]. In April 1947, this unit was separated into four companies of ordinance, automobile, warehouse, and supply. Later in January 1948, the Constabulary expanded them into battalions in each of following branches: engineering, signal, ordinance, and quartermaster. It also had two small hospitals in operation, one in Seoul and the other in Taejon [대전].

By the time the Republic of Korea Army was officially established on September 5, 1948\textsuperscript{,} following the birth of the new Republic of Korea on August 15, 1948, the Constabulary consisted of five brigades with fifteen regiments and a handful of supporting units. It had also the strength of 50,490, of which 1,403 were officers and 49,087 the enlisted men\textsuperscript{.}
Officers of the Constabulary are of interest to historians on several points. First, they left a long-term effect on the ROK army. Since they had become the Constabulary's first officers, they remained in the top echelon of the ROK army's hierarchy throughout the 1960's and 70's. Second, even though they ascended the ranks at a very young age, they had had previous military experiences. Most of them had served in the Imperial Japanese army, while some had worked with the Chinese Nationalist military or with the Restoration army of the Korean Provisional Government. Lastly, and of more relevance to this study, they eventually became military leaders during the Korean War and led the ROK army in such roles as the army's Chief of Staff, corps or division commander, or regimental commander. They were the core group that provided the ROK army's leadership effectiveness throughout the war.

As American officers in the USAMGIK dealt with the idea of creating Korean defense forces in late 1945, they realized that the language barrier would pose the most significant problem and must be overcome as quickly as possible. The Americans came with an idea of producing translators and opened the English Language School on December 5, 1945, in Seoul to teach the Koreans military English. However, it was a temporary measure, and the school had neither
systematic curricula nor qualified instructors. The length of education varied with the students' individual capability for English learning. The curriculum emphasized English and often provided courses on Korean history, automobiles, small weapons, and military staff functioning.

The school began with sixty students and soon increased its enrollment to 200. Of these students who entered the school, 110 were commissioned as Constabulary officers. The military backgrounds of those 110 officers were divided mainly into three tracks. The first group and majority were those who had served in the Imperial Japanese military. Eighty-seven officers were former officers or non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the Japanese armed forces. The second group came from the Manchukuo army with twenty-one officers. The third category included two officers who had served with the Chinese nationalists. In the meantime, they were a group of young and energetic officers. One hundred and four (104) officers were thirty years old or younger in 1946, and during the war they held positions of regimental commander or above.

The graduates of the English Language School served in the Department of Internal Security and the Constabulary headquarters and as commanders and staff officers of the Constabulary regiments. Eventually, the graduates of the English Language School comprised the nucleus of the Constabulary and the following ROK army.
When the Officer Training School (OTS)\textsuperscript{15} was opened within the Korean Constabulary Training Center at Taenung on May 1, 1946, the Military Language School closed and remaining students were transferred to the OTS. Until the OTS changed its name to the Korean Military Academy in September of 1948, following the birth of the ROK army, it produced over 1,200 officers throughout the Sixth Class.\textsuperscript{16} The following table shows a brief summary of schooling from the First to Sixth Class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>No. of Graduates</th>
<th>Previous Career</th>
<th>Training Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st}</td>
<td>5.1-6.15.46</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>NCOs of Foreign Military</td>
<td>Basic drills of formation and organization/Small arms training (Japanese rifle of Model 99 or 38)/ Small unit tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>9.25-12.14.46</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>Foreign Military Service/Civilian</td>
<td>Map reading, parade, and bayonet drill added to above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd}</td>
<td>1.13-4.19.47</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>Constabulary NCO</td>
<td>Same with the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Class/Introduction of M-1, Carbine, and .50 machine gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>5.16-9.10.47</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Constabulary NCO</td>
<td>Same with the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>10.23.47-4.6.48</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>Civilian</td>
<td>Training of M-1, Carbine, and .50 machine gun added to the 4\textsuperscript{th} Class' along with academic education such as Korean history, Korean Language, English, geography, and military law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>5.5-7.28.48</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>Constabulary NCO</td>
<td>Training of M-1, Carbine, and .50 machine gun / Academic education such as Korean history, Korean Language, English, geography, and military law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 Training at the Officer Training School\textsuperscript{17}

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At that time, the OTS was the only gateway to the officer corps. However, though it represented greater progress toward professionalization and thereby effective military leadership than did the English Language School, the OTS was still far behind from its equivalent in other modern armies. First of all, the OTS suffered from a lack of instructors and training equipment. It was the Third Class that finally began training with the M1 rifle; until then, Japanese rifles were the standard individual arms. Second, the term of training was relatively short compared to that of the later officer candidate courses. It could be argued that the short duration of training was not the problem because of the candidates’ previous military experiences. Considering that the OTS was the only institution for officer candidates and that their military backgrounds varied widely and represented different military organizations of different countries, however, this period should have been extended to enable a more thorough assimilation into a new military institution.

Coupled with these difficulties was the problem in developing an officer corps with a uniform identity. As mentioned before, officer candidates were from different sources and had been indoctrinated therefore with different identities. The OTS had no ready solution to this problem, due to a divergence of official policy from actual practice. Under the United States military occupation, the OTS was officially
directed to follow American practices; in fact the Americans provided not only equipment and weapons but also textbooks and field manuals for the newly developing officer corps. However, many officers and instructors of the OTS were teaching what they had learned from their previous military careers. Thus, the training methods actually used in the curricula were predominantly Japanese; this was especially apparent in military training and barracks life that covered most of schooling at the OTS, since few of the pertinent U.S. manuals were translated into Korean. Fortunately enough, however, in spite of difficulties and problems they confronted, the Constabulary’s officers became a group of passionate and patriotic officers who threw themselves into the creation of a professional military.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

When the American and Korean planners “planted” the Bamboo, they planned to create Constabulary regiments on two principles — voluntary enlistments and regional recruiting. Recruiting from the regiment’s “home” province provided several advantages. It appealed to the local residents that the unit’s first responsibility would be the defense of their own province. This idea produced much positive attention among them, which increased the number of volunteers for the Constabulary. As
expected, most of regiments were formed by the first months of 1947. The rapidity with which regiments were formed did not mean the American and Korean officers in each province worked without any problems or difficulties. On the contrary, they were unwelcome virtually everywhere. The Constabulary was not considered as an army but rather as a police reserve, and thus its officers faced the widespread negative attitude toward police, bordering on outright antagonism — a legacy of Japanese colonial rule. Therefore, people were not easily persuaded to enter the Constabulary. Officers had to explain that the Constabulary was not so much a police force as it was a prototype for the national army. They often tried to draw interest from potential recruits by marching the streets in formation.18

In fact, American and Korean officers and enlisted men in the field were solely responsible for recruiting, and they could not expect much support from the Department of Internal Security or Constabulary’s headquarters in Seoul. This meant that the officers had to perform dual missions of running the regiment and of recruiting. They often searched and secured buildings appropriate for accommodating the units. Accordingly, they faced a shortage of officers and NCOs, which was somewhat relieved by the commissioning of 196 officers in the OTS’ Second Class in December 1946. The responsibility of recruiting remained with field officers and NCOs until the ROK government
changed recruiting policy from the voluntary system to compulsory service in 1949.

Recruits came initially from the people with prior military backgrounds. As mentioned before, the USAMGIK upon creation of the Constabulary forbade any militia or private armies within its jurisdiction in January 1946. The former members of militia or private army now applied to the Constabulary for their second opportunity in the military. For example, the first company of the 5TH Regiment, A Company was formed in Pusan [부산] with the former members of the Pusan Branch of the Korean Preparatory Army [조선 국군 준비대], which had been considered a leftist group. The branch had about seven hundred members before being disbanded, and its members willingly answered the call from the Constabulary recruiters. Similarly, veterans of the foreign militaries volunteered to serve in the Constabulary. In a political climate with an ever-diminishing tolerance for leftist groups, many Communists or their sympathizers found sanctuary in the Constabulary.

At first, the Constabulary was equipped only with small arms. mainly with Japanese rifles such as the Model 99 or 38, and a few Japanese heavy weapons. Even uniforms were Japanese leftovers with
slight modification. The outfit of the early Constabulary highly resembled that of the Japanese army during WWII, such as an officer’s outfit of Japanese fatigue with a Japanese sword at his waist. Unity at least in outfit was achieved in 1946 with the distribution of American uniforms.²¹

Around the same time, the Constabulary switched the Japanese regulations for barracks life to the American ones. From the Constabulary’s beginning, American officers as decision-makers had planned for the Koreans to emulate American barracks life in this new military organization. In reality, there were numerous factors impending a duplication of U.S. military characteristics. First of all, most of the Constabulary officers had had military experience from the Japanese army (including the Manchukuo army), which was not easily unlearned. Second, few Korean officers could accurately interpret and implement the U.S. army’s field manuals. In spite of their language training at the English Language School, it was still hard for them to grasp and incorporate into daily practice all the new military terms and concepts. Lastly, American officers and enlisted men — as commanders and staff members, and later as advisors after September 1946 when this authority was transferred to the Koreans — could not supervise every unit. Two officers — lieutenants in most cases — and four enlisted men struggled with the language barrier, cultural differences, and long trips to cover the scattered Constabulary units under their responsibility.²²
The Americans and Koreans countered this problem using special methods. First, in March 1946, they unsuccessfully tried to eliminate the practice of barrack life modeled after the Japanese army. American officers were especially upset by severe disciplinary measures, brutal physical punishments, or beating.23

While everyday barrack life was hard to change, training was not. From the beginning, it focused on formation, marching, small-unit tactics, and riot suppression.24 Considering the Constabulary's origin as a police reserve, training in those subjects was understandable. However, even this police-like training was badly conducted, mainly because of poor circumstance. Without a sufficient supply of American advisors and without Korean translations of field manuals, and without an effort to control and coordinate Constabulary units, training was the commander's discretion. However, the Constabulary in September 1946 unified its training along the lines of the U.S. army. To speed this transition, the OTS postponed the entrance of the Second Class until September 1946 and opened a refresher course from July 15 to August 26.25 The course was to provide Korean officers, who had had little opportunities at the Military Language School to learn the American way of training, with U.S. army training basics. Twenty-nine officers from each regiment were selected for the course.26
The American and Korean officers were busy in recruiting for the rapidly expanding Constabulary and thus unable to devote much time to training; and the quality of training still depended to the commander’s initiatives. In some cases, Korean commanders were eager to acquire advanced military knowledge from the U.S. army. In the fall of 1947, Major Paik, then commander of the 5TH Regiment, coordinated with the U.S. 6TH Division in Pusan [부산] to train his troops with American weapons such as the M1 rifle, machine guns, and mortar. He also directed a battalion maneuvering exercise with twenty American armored vehicles.27 Captain Chung Il-kwon, commander of the 4TH Regiment in Kwangju [광주], trained his troops with new weapons upon receiving support from the U.S. 22ND Regiment with M1 rifles and a handful of instructors.28 However, these examples were uncommon and drew attention from American advisors. During the war, these two officers led the Korean army as chief of staff.

Another difficulty with training was related to the Constabulary’s mission: it had to spend more time maintaining the social order, especially for the first several years. In 1946, for example, the 5TH Regiment in Pusan [부산] helped the police control traffic in an effort to halt the spread of cholera. On March 1, 1947, the regiment again aided the police in suppressing a mob that gathered after a ceremony for the March First (3.1) Movement of 1919. From autumn of 1947, the 5TH
guarded the Pusan Port as increasing amounts of military supply and relief items arrived in the port.\textsuperscript{29}

The role of the Constabulary would change from a police reserve to a national army, once an independent government was established in Korea. This shift in function became apparent in 1947 when the Joint US-USSR Commission failed to reach an agreement on the future of Korea. Dividing the Korean Peninsula at the 38th Parallel, the United States and the Soviet Union had been working, superficially at best, for the possibility of establishing a single independent government. With the failure of the Joint Commission that resumed its meetings on May 22, 1947,\textsuperscript{30} the United States sought a solution from the United Nations. After a series of discussions and consideration from late September through early November, the United Nations' General Assembly passed a resolution on November 14 to hold a nationwide general election under the U.N.'s supervision and to create the U.N. Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to handle the Korean problems.\textsuperscript{31} As the Soviet Union refused to cooperate with this resolution, the election was held only in South Korea on May 10, 1948, and the Republic of Korea was born on August 15, 1948.

These sudden changes in Korean political circumstance also brought a new direction to the Korean Constabulary. The United States Army, in favor of an early withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea,
prevailed over the opinions of the Department of State, which wanted U.S. forces to stay in Korea until the Korean national armed forces developed the capability to defend the nation. In the winter of 1947-1948, the U.S. army sought optimal policies for the future defense forces in South Korea. After hearing recommendations from General Douglas MacArthur of Tokyo and General Hodge of Seoul, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in March of 1948 approved a military plan as part of NSC 8 to create an army of 50,000 men equipped with American weapons and equipment, including 105mm howitzers and tanks, which were transferred from the withdrawing U.S. army forces from Korea. The Constabulary’s strength would reach to the level and it was over 50,000 when the ROK government was formed in August. The Constabulary also began to equip itself with new weapons from the U.S. 6TH and 7TH Divisions and the list included M1 rifles, light and heavy machine guns, 60mm and 81mm mortars, 57mm antitank guns, and light 105mm howitzers. The U.S. army forces not only furnished weapons but also helped the Constabulary increase its effectiveness in other ways. About ninety officers volunteered for assignment to the Constabulary units as advisors. At the same time, the U.S. divisions temporarily operated three Weapon Schools in Seoul, Pusan, and Chinhae to train the Koreans with the newly issued American weapons. In July of 1948, one more achievement brought the Constabulary one step close to a national army — the standardization of
organization, training, and regulations and rules. For the first time, the Korean Constabulary could have unity and consistency among its units, from saluting to table of organization & equipment (TO/E).

The Constabulary of 1948 had changed dramatically since early 1946. In size, it grew in less than three years to three brigades and nine regiments with over 50,000 men from nothing. There were many developments in other areas: the Constabulary Academy (Officer Training School), in spite of the poor conditions and short curriculum, was commissioning junior officers constantly; training was standardized; new weapons were distributed; training centers were in operation; and, above all, self-confidence and morale increased among the soldiers, and they never doubted their role as the core of national defense forces.

These rapid achievements were also the result of guidance and assistance from the Americans, supplied from the very beginning. The Constabulary was a product of the U.S. Army Military Government in Korea and its pervasive influence upon the nation-building process. The American officers’ deep involvement in creating the Constabulary, and their considerable influence over its operation were a source of many conflicts between Korean and American officers. However, with advisors, weapons and equipment, and budget from the United States came new ideals and ethics, which gradually but indelibly affected many Korean officers.35
While the rapid expansion and development of the Constabulary had been a necessary measure, these changes also posed new problems that would cause troubles for the newly formed army. The most enduring and significant problem for the Constabulary and later the ROK army was the infiltration by communists. This had been a constant problem for the Constabulary from the early period, but every incident had been perceived and handled as an individual affair rather than as a problem affecting the entire Constabulary. It became apparent in 1948 and 1949 that no part of the Constabulary was free of communist infiltration.

The infiltration began when the USAMGIK with a plan to create a police reserve decreed on January 8, 1946 to disband all military or quasi-military organizations. Whatever objective they had in mind, these groups were sharply divided into two political fronts — anti- and pro-Communists. The division became clear when the superpowers decided to place a five-year trusteeship on Korea in December 1945. While most of the South Koreans rejected the idea and participated in nationwide anti-trusteeship demonstrations, the Communist and pro-Communist organizations welcomed the trusteeship. For example, former student soldiers of the Japanese military at first formed the Hakbyeong Dongmaeng [Union of the Student Soldiers, 학병동맹]. As the Union revealed its tie with other pro-Communist organizations, those members with stronger anti-Communist convictions left the union and formed a
new Hakpyeong-dan [Student Soldiers Corps, 학병단] on December 16, 1945, eleven days after the trusteeship decision.37

Disbanded by the decree, many former veterans of the foreign military entered the Constabulary, where they were welcomed, since the Constabulary was in the process of rapid expansion. The applicants had only to pass a superficial screening, which made infiltration simple. There was an attempt to screen the applicants by a Korean officer, but American authority erroneously recommended a great emphasis on and faith in oathtaking.38 The infiltration was not limited to the recruits, but involved also the population of officer candidates. Even the OTS lacked measure to filter those candidates with ties to the Communists. A substantial portion of officer candidates was commissioned in all six classes before the establishment of the Korean government. For example, the First Class lost six members [fifteen percent of the class] in the purges, and the Second Class included the future president Park Chung-hee [박정희], whose life was barely saved. Even the Sixth Class of 1948 saw twenty five class mates — about ten percent — being purged as Communists or Communist-affiliated.39 During the Constabulary era, however, agitation by communists was not yet serious except in the Taegu [대구] Revolt by the 6TH Regiment in October 1946.

Another problem for the Constabulary lay in the creation of its own identity and unique military culture. When the Constabulary was
formed from nothing, various military practices were also introduced to the embryonic military institution. Understandably, American and Japanese ways formed two mainstream cultures in the Constabulary. The existence of two different ideals caused conflict between the Koreans and the Americans, in addition to a slew of complaints from the enlisted men because of harsh treatment by Korean officers. Often, Korean officers with experience in the Japanese military tended to emphasize military discipline and hard training and pushed the subordinates to the limits of their endurance. In May 1946, men from the 1ST Regiment used violence against officers to reveal their grievances. In December, six candidates of the Second Class of the OTS assaulted the commander of the Candidate Battalion, Captain Lee Chi-up [“Speedy” Lee, 이치엽], for his alleged beatings and harsh physical treatment. In April 1947, Captain Song Yo-chan [“Tiger Song,” 송요찬], commander of the 3RD Battalion, 8TH Regiment in Kangnung [강릉], was locked in and beaten by his subordinates. They were angered by Song’s command, based on harsh discipline and extremely hard training. This practice of emphasis on discipline and hard training would be loosened as the time goes by, but the cases of abuse appear even in the 1990s.

Despite all the problems the Constabulary faced, the biggest achievement was that it had built a foundation upon which the South Korean army was established and developed. While its official status
remained as police reserve, the Constabulary approached an army in its characteristics, as both American and Korean military leaders had intended from the beginning. By the time the ROK government was established in August 1948, the Constabulary showed its commitment in many areas to making itself a modern army. Even in its infancy, the Constabulary began to promote its combat power in various ways, vividly evident in the increased military training and education in the field or institutions. In retrospect, it is clear that without the Constabulary experience the ROK army of 1950 would have been less developed and far weaker, and the fate of the ROK would have been different. For the next two years, the ROK army tried to improve its combat power, in spite of significant impediments by the surrounding circumstances.

[The ROK Army in Transition, August 1948 - June 1950]

With the establishment of the new republic, the most urgent task for the ROK army in the second half of 1948 was to fill the power vacuum left by the U.S. forces’ withdrawal from the Korean Peninsula by the end of the year. Particularly, the ROK army had to position units along the 38TH Parallel against the U.S.S.R. sponsored North Korean People’s Army in the north. At the same time, the ROK army continued to suppress rebels and guerrilla forces on Cheju Island and in the southern and
eastern provinces. All of Cheju Island was plagued by violence after April 3, 1948. The insurgency spread to the mainland when the 14th Regiment at Yosu joined the anti-government rebellion in October. The seriousness of these revolts in Cheju and Yosu made some scholars believe them as the start of the Korean War. The consecutive rebellions in late 1948 and early 1949 by the 6th Regiment in Taegu confirmed the existence of a communist stronghold in ROKA units. On the mountainous northeastern sectors, ROKA units fought North Korean guerrilla units. In the year of 1949 alone, North Korea dispatched special units south of the 38th Parallel ten times.

To meet all these missions, the ROK army first needed to expand in size and strength. With fifteen infantry regiments, each with three battalions, it seemed to be impossible to accomplish all the missions. The ROK army had to increase its combat capability by numbers and effectiveness as the principal force for national defense. It needed to enhance the professionalism of the officer corps. More training would remove the leadership problem, which had often appeared in the Constabulary. Moreover, the army had to improve the combat effectiveness among its units through training and education and by equipping them with the modernized weapons. The army's primary challenge was to purge the communists, who had been a source of trouble from the early period of the Constabulary. For the next two years (1948-
1950), the ROK army struggled to be an effective army, an army that could defend its nation from threats within and without.

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The Koreans did not stop or slow down the phase of expansion, even when the strength of the Constabulary reached 50,000 as approved by the NSC-8 in March 1948. In September, the ROK army was manned with about 1,400 officers and 49,000 enlisted men in three brigades of fifteen regiments and handful of supporting units. It also had several schools in operation to enhance the combat power of the units. From this foundation set by the Constabulary, the ROK army continued progressing to the level of strength set for the post-withdrawal ROK army. According to expert opinion, an army with 100,000 officers and enlisted men would be needed for national security. This idea appeared first in October 1947 when Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, commander of the U.S. XXIV Corps in Korea, answered the JCS's question on the issue of Korean military manning. Although this proposal met with sharp disapproval from General MacArthur and the JCS and was replaced by the plan for a 50,000 army, Hodge's estimate must have been remembered by the Koreans. The ROK government on November 11, 1948 decided to recruit additional 40,000 men and to activate additional units with them.
The process to activate a new regiment had begun before the decision was announced. On October 28, the 16th Regiment was formed at Masan, based on a battalion from the 15th Regiment. The next month witnessed the activation of three additional regiments. On November 20, the 17th, 18th, and 19th Regiments were in operation at Sihungh [시흥]. Pohang [포항], and Kwangju [광주] respectively. In January 1949, the 7th Brigade was also formed under the command of Colonel Lee Ung-jun [이웅준]. The Koreans continued their efforts to increase the ROK army's strength and in the first half of 1949 three more infantry regiments — 21st, 23rd, and 25th — were newly activated. The ROKA also had a cavalry squadron, which was expanded to a regiment as a reconnaissance unit in December 1948 and was in fact a mixture of horse cavalry and M-2 half-track squadrons.47

With twenty-two regiments, the ROK army could now create a tactical unit bigger than the brigade and reorganized the existing six brigades into divisions on May 12, 1949. A month later, two additional divisions — the 8th and the Capital Security Divisions — were activated.48 The policy showed the resolution of the Koreans since all these efforts were done in the midst of other national emergencies such as the Cheju 4.3 Incident and the Yosu-Sunchon Rebellion. Now with eight divisions in hand, the ROK army seemed to meet one of the urgent requirements: to have enough strength for national security. It was able to

38
deploy four divisions and an independent regiment along the 38th Parallel. The remaining four divisions stayed in the rear areas to tackle the suppression of the Communist guerrillas.

The table of organization for a ROKA infantry division provided for three regiments, headquarters, headquarters company, an artillery battalion, an engineer company, a quartermaster company, an ordnance company, and a medical battalion. A division was to be manned with a total strength of 10,561 — 625 officers and 9,936 enlisted men. For an infantry regiment, 157 officers and 2,781 men were serving in headquarters, headquarters company, three infantry battalions, an anti-tank artillery company, an heavy mortar company, a service company, and a medical team.49 By the time the last U.S. army unit — the 5th Regimental Combat Team — left Korea in June 1949, the ROK army was 80,000 strong; in the next month its personnel had grown to nearly 100,000 officers and men.50

To fill the spaces for the rapidly expanding army, the ROKA needed to increase the capacity of the manpower system. It first accelerated the Korea Military Academy program to increase its junior officers.51 As the only officer candidate school in Korea,52 the academy produced four classes from the Seventh to Tenth (August 1948-June 1950) with a total of about 3,700 officers before the war began.53 The regular candidates, except for the Tenth Class, received six-month-long training,
while the special candidates with previous military backgrounds underwent short-term training from three to twelve weeks according to the duration and nature of their military experience.

Until the Ninth Class graduated, the academy was not truly a military academy and was considered by the American officers as an officer candidate school. This attitude changed in the summer of 1949 with the ROK army's adoption of long-term education for the new officer candidates. Until then, the circumstances did not allow the ROK army to install a long-term education and training for the officer candidates. First of all, the huge demand for new officers continued until the summer of 1949. As previously mentioned, the ROK army was in the process of a rapid expansion from August 1948 to June 1949 and formed seven more regiments during the same period. Furthermore, the ROK army was not ready to provide candidates with a long-term program. It lacked facilities, weapons, and equipment. Even worse was the shortage of qualified instructors at the academy.\textsuperscript{54} Anticipating a sharp decrease in the demand for new officers once the ROK army formed eight divisions, the Korean Military Academy renewed its program for a two-year term. After the graduation of the Eighth Class in May, the academy tried to secure qualified instructors for both academic and military subjects. With assistance from American advisors, instructors received intensive training for five weeks. The Tenth Class entered the academy with the Ninth Class
at the same date, a measure to obtain officers without interruption. Along
the way, the program was cut to one year, and the cadets were about to be
commissioned when the war broke out.55

Officer candidates who entered the Korea Military Academy from
August 1948 were very similar to the candidates for the Constabulary
Academy. Many brought military experience from the Japanese army,
Manchukuo army, Chinese Nationalist army, Restoration army, or
Constabulary. Just like the Constabulary officer candidates, a substantial
portion of candidates was people who had escaped from North Korea.
However, there were also some significant differences in these later
classes. First of all, many candidates came directly from the civilian life.
and thus a six-month program became the standard. Secondly, and more
importantly, the ROK army, in response to the Cheju Incident and the
Yosu-Sunchon Rebellion, introduced a screening process in the entrance
examination. Unlike the classes of the Constabulary, therefore, the later
classes were free from the communist infiltration. A third distinctive
characteristic of the later classes was the introduction of the veterans of
the Restoration army, who had been reluctant to join the Constabulary,
accusing the Constabulary officers of being collaborators for Japan. With
the establishment of the ROK government, many former members of the
Restoration army relinquished their suspicion of the Constabulary's

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legitimacy and joined the ROK army officer corps. They contributed both intense nationalism and anti-communism to the officer corps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>No. of Grads</th>
<th>Training Subjects or Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular 7th</td>
<td>5/5- 11/11/48</td>
<td>Civilians</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>Training of HMG, Mortar, &amp; Recoilless rifle added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/9- 11/11/48</td>
<td>NCOs of the Constabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special 7th</td>
<td>8/17- 10/12/48</td>
<td>Foreign Military officers</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Introduction to the American Training Doctrine/M1 Rifle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 7th</td>
<td>11/12- 12/21/48</td>
<td>NCOs of ROKA &amp; Civilians</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>Officers for Eng, Sig, Medic, and JAG branches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular 8th</td>
<td>12/7/48- 5/23/49</td>
<td>Civilians</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>Academic Subjects/ Company level tactics taught first time.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/27- 5/23/49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/12- 5/23/49</td>
<td>NCOs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special 1 (8th)</td>
<td>12/7/48- 1/1/49</td>
<td>Senior officers in foreign military</td>
<td>11*</td>
<td>Introduction only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special 2 (8th)</td>
<td>12/7/48- 1/14/49</td>
<td>Officers or NCOs of foreign military</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>Weapons and small unit tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special 3 (8th)</td>
<td>12/7/48- 3/2/49</td>
<td>Militia or NCOs of foreign military</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>Weapons and small unit tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special 4 (8th)</td>
<td>2/21- 3/19/49</td>
<td>Seniors (in age) or officers of foreign military</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>Weapons and small unit tactics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2/21- 4/27/49</td>
<td>Juniors or NCOs of foreign military</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Weapons and small unit tactics</td>
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<td>9th</td>
<td>7/15/49- 1/14/50</td>
<td>Civilians</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>Same as the 7th Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>7/15/49- 7/10/50</td>
<td>Civilians</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>Began as two-year program. (Also known as Cadet First Class)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Out of eleven officers, nine were commissioned as colonel, one as lieutenant colonel, and one as captain.

Table 1.3. Classes of the Pre-war KMA

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
While the establishment of the ROK government and the ROK army reduced the accusations the Constabulary had faced, other factors also helped to attract qualified men. First, among applicants for the academy were many refugees from North Korea who had seen and experienced the communist rule and thus expressed a strong anti-communist sentiment.\(^57\) For example, among the Regular Eighth Class candidates, roughly half were refugees from North Korea. Second, a series of social disturbance attributed to leftists or Communists further strengthened anti-Communist sentiment among non-Communist population. Lastly, the introduction of conscription persuaded many young talented people to choose officer commissions rather than to serve as the enlisted personnel.\(^58\)

At the senior level, the ROK army officer corps encountered a serious problem that had never existed in the Constabulary era. With the formal transfer of authority to the Koreans, officers began to maneuver among politicians or to form factions, intentionally or unintentionally, according to region, school or academy, or political party.\(^59\) Factionalism among the officer corps exerted two negative influences on the professionalization process: first, the promotion of an officer tended to be based on personal connections rather than individual capability and achievement;\(^60\) second, it hampered the creation of an ethos within the officer corps. The latter problem posed a significant danger to the ROK
army, which lacked any previous military tradition: it seemed to be
critical to have an ethos acceptable to every officer. There was serious
friction between those who tried to adopt American military traditions
and those who did not.

Recruitment of enlisted men was done without many difficulties.
Even without universal conscription, the ROK army was able to get
recruits enough to man the newly created units. When the ROK army
formed additional regiments in the winter of 1948-49, it recruited from
the pro-government youth organizations, which flourished with
governmental support.61 During the first half of 1949, the ROK army
continued its expansion effort, formed new regiments, and created new
infantry divisions. This time, the disbanded Patriotic Army provided the
pool of additional recruits for the ROK army.62

The enlisted recruits of the ROK army had a critical advantage
over those of the Constabulary. The recruits volunteered for military
service at the time when both the Constabulary and the ROK army needed
new soldiers to man the newly created units. While the Constabulary did
not, and could not have a screening process, the ROK army now with the
understanding of American advisors was able to put a screening measure
in the proceeding.63 At the same time, a substantial portion of recruits for
the ROK army was the northern refugees with a strong anti-Communism
convictions, and the members of the pro-government youth paramilitary
organizations. They had been actively involved in the government’s efforts to suppress Communism and willingly joined the Korean army. Unlike the Constabulary recruits, therefore, their political views were more uniform.

As briefly mentioned above, however, the ROK army remained plagued by revolts by its subordinate units because of the earlier infiltration of the Communists into the Constabulary. The biggest challenge came from the 14TH Regiment when a group of officers and NCOs of the regiment led a revolt against the government in October 1948. The regiment was supposed to re-enforce the ROK army’s operation on Cheju Island. First Lieutenants Kim Ji-hoi [김지회] and Hong Sun-seok [홍순석] and Sergeant Ji Chang-su [지창수] gathered 2,500 followers and seized the city of Yosu on the night of October 19. They then solicited leftist-supporters among civilians and students, who stayed underground. Next morning, the rebels controlled most of the city and moved toward the city of Sunchon. Before the day ended, Sunchon also fell under the control of the rebels. Faced with this rapid development of the incident, the Korean senior officers and American advisors agreed to suppress the revolt as soon as possible. Deploying every available unit except for those along the 38TH Parallel, the ROK army created a task force and placed it under the command of General Song Ho-sung [송호성], who was also Commander-in-Chief of the ROK army. After October 22, the rebels
began to lose the momentum, and ROKA units retook two cities by October 27.\textsuperscript{65} The remnants of the rebels retreated to the Chiri-san \textsuperscript{\[X\]} Mountain area and continued guerrilla operations even after the Korean War ended in 1953.\textsuperscript{66}

While ROKA units were struggling to put down the rebels in the Yosu-Sunchon area, other units were conducting similar operations in other different locations. On Cheju Island, anti-guerrilla operations were the ongoing task since April 1948, and ROKA units barely brought peace and social order on Cheju in May 1949. At Taegu in North Kyongsang Province, the 6\textsuperscript{TH} Regiment continued to show its strong connection with the Communists, which often led to violent revolts. The Communists within the 6\textsuperscript{TH} Regiment had hidden themselves in the army after the 10.1 Uprising of 1946. To escape arrest, they had entered the 6\textsuperscript{TH} Regiment’s units. In the winter of 1948-49, three different units mutinied on November 2, December 6, 1948, and January 30, 1949.\textsuperscript{67} Even worse awaited the already shocked Korean and American leaders. In May 1949, two Korean battalion commanders in the Chunchon \textsuperscript{\[£\]} area led their units across the 38\textsuperscript{TH} Parallel and surrendered to the Korean People’s Army.\textsuperscript{68}

This series of events finally convinced the Korean and American leaders of a serious problem in the ROK army and the necessity for a remedy. Just after the successful suppression operation at the Yosu-
Sunchon area, the intelligence bureau under Colonel Paik Sun-yup commenced investigations and arrested several thousand officers and men by the summer of 1950. Some of them were discharged from the army, as in the example of Major Park Chung-hee, but others faced imprisonment or execution.⁶⁹

In the meantime, the ROK army still had the urgent task of increasing its combat power. As mentioned earlier, the U.S. government decided in the spring of 1948 to withdraw its troops from Korea and to provide military assistance to the ROK military. This package included two programs: to arm the ROK military of 50,000 by transferring American weapons and equipment before withdrawing from Korea, and to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon</th>
<th>Estimated Requirement</th>
<th>Weapons on Hand</th>
<th>Shortage</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>155MM Howitzer</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105MM Howitzer</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81MM Mortar</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60MM Mortar</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>386</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57MM Antitank Gun</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.36&quot; Rocket</td>
<td>3,264</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,364</td>
<td>(27 Armored Vehicles on hand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-26 Tank</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-45 Tank</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4. The Shortage of Weapons, ROK Army⁷⁰
assist the ROK military to be an effective force through military advisory activity. As a result, it was American weapons that covered the ROK army's weapon inventory in June 1950. The U.S. government provided weapons and equipment for 50,000 men in 1948 and increased the ceiling to 65,000 in 1949, when the ROK army reached near to 100,000. The table shows the estimated requirement major weapons for the 100,000 army and the weapons actually on hand in June 1950.

Warned by the shortage of weapons in ROK units, the Koreans and their American advisors doubled their efforts in schooling and training individual officers, enlisted men, and ROKA units. Even though a series of incidents forced a substantial number of ROK units to conduct constant military operations, Korean and American military leaders never gave up their objective to improve ROK units. Without a doubt, American advisors did play a critical role in the process of improving the ROK army's combat effectiveness.

Organized first into a Provisional Military Advisory Group (PMAG) under the command of Brigadier General William L. Roberts, who had been advisor to the Director, Department of Internal Security since May 1948, American advisors tried to cover as many ROKA units as possible. They served from the ROK army's headquarters at the top to battalions. After the 5TH Regimental Combat Team (RCT) withdrew from Korea in May and June 1949, PMAG remained the only U.S. military
presence in Korea and was renamed as the U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG). Its manpower grew from 100 officers and men to about 500 on the eve of war. Even with this increased strength, KMAG could not meet the demand of all ROKA units for American advisors because the ROK army continued to expand beyond the ceiling that the U.S. government had recognized for the provision of weapons and equipment and for KMAG spaces. By thinning out its manpower, however, KMAG provided advisors to one of the critical institutions in the ROK army — schools and training centers.71

Knowing well the importance of continuing education and training for its officers and men, the ROK army was diligent in opening schools and training centers. Some programs were for the Constabulary officers, who had few opportunities for more education after graduating from the academy (OTS). During the Constabulary era, only a handful of schools and improvised programs had helped the Constabulary improve its effectiveness. For a police reserve with the main responsibility of keeping social order, a systematic education and training program was not a serious necessity. However, an army with burdens for national defense was more than a police reserve, and its personnel had to learn how to conduct major operations. To meet these demands, the ROK army opened schools or training centers offering refresher courses for officers and men in almost every branch. These courses were an absolute necessity.
particularly for the field grade officers, who had achieved high rank in a very short period at a very young age and whose army did not have any modern military tradition.\textsuperscript{72}

With assistance from the KMAG advisors, the ROK army opened and operated various schools and training centers in 1948 and 1949.\textsuperscript{73} The Infantry school reopened on July 1, 1949, at Sihung [시흥] with four courses: officer candidate course (6 months), officer's basic course (3 months), officer's advanced course (3 months), and police officer's course (2 months). The origins of the Artillery School were the Weapons Schools that the U.S. 6\textsuperscript{TH} and 7\textsuperscript{TH} Divisions opened in the summer of 1948. With the formation of the ROKA Artillery Corps in November 1948, the Artillery Training Center was also activated. In October 1949, the center changed its name to the Artillery School and opened an artillery officer candidate course and several basic and refresher courses for artillery officers and men. Other branches opened their own schools or training centers for their personnel, including engineers (opened on 25 November 1948), signal men (26 August 1948), quartermasters (1 May 1949), finance clerks (15 October 1949), ordnance men (24 May 1949), intelligence men (20 May 1949), military police (26 January 1949), and medical corpsmen (15 August 1949).\textsuperscript{74}

At the same time, the ROK army at the initiatives of the KMAG opened the Staff College for senior officers at Yongsan [용산] on July 1,
1949. The KMAG advisors had always been aware of the fact that Korean senior officers lacked the education appropriate for the positions they held as commanders and staff officers of division or higher units. The college was to focus on commander and staff officers’ responsibility and their relationship. Students began the eight-week education with an officer’s advanced course at the Infantry School for three weeks, where they learned U.S. army tactics in general and weapons. Then, they got a five-week schooling at the Staff College on military doctrine, operations, the commander’s role and responsibility, and staff duty. Instructors were all from the KMAG, and General Roberts, chief of the KMAG, also lectured regularly on tactics.\textsuperscript{75}

While the KMAG advisors attempted to coordinate and integrate the ROK army’s schools and training centers into an effective system, they also took other measures to improve professionalism among officer corps. In August, KMAG was able to send six officers to Ft. Benning, Georgia for the U.S. army’s infantry officer’s advanced course. Upon arrival in September 1949 after about a year training, the ROK army hoped to incorporate what the officers had learned at Ft. Benning into the entire officer corps.\textsuperscript{76} They were assigned to such important institutions as the Infantry School, the Staff College, and the Military Academy. In July 1949, an additional six officers attended U.S. army military schools. Two colonels were sent to the Infantry School and other four officers to
the Artillery School. KMAG advisors seemed to take every possible course to improve ROK officers' leadership and professionalism. In April 1950, they sent four sections of thirty-three Korean officers from lieutenant to colonel to the Eighth Army's divisions in Japan. Korean officers were selected from each branch — infantry, artillery, signal, engineer, ordnance, and medical. Unfortunately, however, they could not complete their three-month on-the-job training and had to return to Korea upon receiving the news of the outbreak of war.77

Equal attention was also directed at the ROK army's unit training. KMAG advisors were able to make a blueprint for unit training in the early summer of 1949. Based on the U.S. army's training model, the six-month training program was divided into two phases — Phase I for training up to company level and Phase II for battalion and regimental training.78 However, this plan did not go as scheduled, and in January 1950, the ROK army again issued a training directive ordering all divisions to complete unit training from squad to battalion level by the end of March.79 Even the units of ROK divisions along the 38TH Parallel, which suffered from much less interruption than those of the divisions in the rear area, could not finish the battalion-level training before the war came. On June 25, only five regiments and a battalion were ready to progress to the next phase of training.
The ROK army on the eve of the war might seem to be a great success for the eyes of the contemporary observers. Especially for those deeply involved in the ROK army and Constabulary, it was a monument built on ground zero. In a relatively short period of just over four years, American and Korean officers and men formed and developed an army of 100,000. As General Roberts commented just before leaving Korea, the ROK army was the “best insurance the Western World has on this part against Communist aggression.” At a first glimpse, KMAG Chief’s praise of the ROK army seemed accurate. In fact, the ROK army was in rapid transition and development. In every aspect of the army’s activities, the Koreans had demonstrated the ability to reach U.S. army standards. Unfortunately, however, the Koreans had to meet “aggression” when they were only in a beginning stage. If war had come several years later, its outcome might have differed greatly. In June 1950, however, the ROK army was for several reasons unprepared to meet a general offensive.

First, its officer corps and NCO corps were still immature and not sufficiently professionalized. As late as March 1950, KMAG advisors were criticizing ROK officers, especially divisional commanders and staff, for not knowing “how to use their staff . . . [to] coordinate each other.” Second, the training of individual soldiers and units was incomplete at the
onset of war. Even the scheduled unit training had been interrupted by the continuous operations due to border incidents, guerrilla infiltration, or rebellion. Third, the inferiority of weapons and equipment to those of the KPA became apparent in the conflict and was quickly added to the list of the ROK army weaknesses. The ROK army, lacking the support of air force and tanks, could not match the KPA in the initial period of the war. Even the artillery piece — 105mm howitzer (M-3) — had a maximum range of 8,200 yards, much shorter than KPA's 122mm howitzers with 12,904 yards.82 ROK units' anti-tank weapons were of no avail against T-34 tanks, which rolled south as the spearhead of attacking columns.

Finally, the South Korean government, specifically the Ministry of National Defense, seemed to lack the capability to manage the emergency of war in 1950. Economic strength to support war machines notwithstanding, the Koreans did not provide reliable leadership at the beginning of the war.83

No matter how grievous the weakness and problems of the ROK army in the early morning of June 25, 1950, the burden of national defense remained on its shoulders. Mirroring the perseverance of the Korean people, the ROK army endured and overcame the ordeal of war for three years. Throughout that ordeal, the army developed rapidly, equipped well, trained effectively, and armed itself with the professionalized officer's and NCO's corps. In the first year of war, however, this was not

54
the case, as the ROK army struggled merely to survive the war. Through defeat after defeat, the ROK army continued to expose its weaknesses in the field.

2. General Lim Sun-ha [임선하] recalls that he began to work with American officers on this project from October 1945.


6. Due to continuous rebellions by the subordinate units, the regiment could not finish forming all three battalions until June 1948. Moreover, the regiment was disbanded in April 15, 1949.


9. *Ibid.* According to James H. Hausman, the Koreans did not follow the appropriate procedure in spending Constabulary budget. For example, when the USAMGIK allotted budget for 25,000 troops, the Koreans made it for 50,000 troops. James Hausman & Chung Il-hwa [정일화], *한국 대통령을 놀랄 만한 미국 대위 [An American Captain Who Influenced Korean Presidents]* (Seoul, 1995), p. 131.

10. The legal date for the establishment of ROK armed forces was December 15 when two organizational laws for the National Armed Forces and the Ministry of National Defense provided the legal bases for them.


13. Some of them never enrolled in the school but were considered as graduates of the school. General Paik Sun-yup and Lim Sun-ha, for example, were commissioned without attending the school. Han Yong-won [한용원], *창군 [The Creation of An Army]* (Seoul, 1984), p. 105.
14 Han Yong-won [한용원], 장군 [The Creation of An Army], pp. 72-75; HQ, ROK Army [육군부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army’s Development], vol. I, pp. 85-87.


16 There are different figures on the number of officers commissioned through the OTS: 1,254 in Han Yong-won [한용원], 장군 [The Creation of An Army] (Seoul, 1984), p. 82; 1,237 in HQ, ROK Army [육군부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army’s Development], vol. II, p. 118; 1,238 by Huh Nam-sung, “The Quest For A Bulwark of Anti-Communism: The Formation of the Republic of Korea Army Officer Corps and Its Political Socialization, 1945-1950,” (Ph.D. Diss., The Ohio State University, 1987), pp.151-160. The KMA official history, Fifty-Year History of the Korea Military Academy does not tell the exact number. Because Huh uses the Korean Constabulary’s appointment orders, his figure seems to be the most accurate one.

17 Huh, “The Quest For A Bulwark of Anti-Communism,” pp. ; HQ, ROK Army [육군부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army’s Development], vol. I; GHQ, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, Summation of United States Army Military Government Activities in Korea, No.9 (June 1946), No.12 (September 1946), No.14 (November 1946), No.15 (December 1946), No.16 (January 1947), No.18 (March 1947), No.19 (April 1947), No.21 (June 1947). Unlike most accounts, including the official history, the Fifth Class had a total of nine month training that includes another three-month training at the three regiments, the 1ST in Seoul, 3RD in Iri, and 5TH in Pusan. They received basic military training at each regiment and were subsequently gathered at the OTS: the majority of the class came from civilian backgrounds. See Association of the KMA Fifth Class [육사 5기생회], 육사 5기생 [The KMA Fifth Class] (Seoul, 1990), pp. 39-41.


21 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부],  육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army's Development], vols. I, p. 112.

22 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army's Development], vols. I, pp. 116-117; Han Yong-won [한용원], 장군 [The Creation of An Army], pp. 165-166; Robert Sawyer, Military Advisors in Korea, pp.15-16; James Hausman & Chung Il-hwa [정일화], 한국 대통령을 응직인 이군 대위 [An American Captain Who Influenced Korean Presidents], p. 124. Captain James Hausman became commander of the 8TH Regiment in Chunchon [춘천] in August 1946. In each regiment, a Japanese-American enlisted man, who could speak Japanese language, was also assigned to this team. In reality, most regiments could not have all six American officers and NCOs. According to Hausman, one officer was often responsible for two regiments. In the 5TH Regiment, Lt. Paik Sun-yup was assisted by two 2ND lieutenants and two NCOs. Once a regiment had all three battalions, American advisors came from higher ranks. Paik Sun-yup [백선엽]. 군과 나 [The Army and I], pp. 330-331.


24 Department of Internal Security placed restrictions on which training the Constabulary units could conduct. See Sawyer, Military Advisors in Korea, p. 24.


26 Han Yong-won [한용원], 장군 [The Creation of An Army], p. 94.

27 Paik Sun-yup [백선엽], 군과 나 [The Army and I], p. 331.

28 James H. Hausman & Chung Il-hwa [정일화], 한국 대통령을 응직인 이군 대위 [An American Captain Who Influenced Korean Presidents], p. 145. It is not clear when this happened. Captain Chung was commander of the regiment from May 1946 to January 1947.

29 GHQ, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, Summation of United States Army Military Government Activities in Korea, No. 25, October 1947, p.135; Paik Sun-yup [백선엽], 군
According to James Hausman, the Constabulary was able to get half of its budget from the US Army Military Government by guarding and protecting such vital installations as railroad, communication facilities, ordnance and food storage buildings, and bridges. See James Hausman & Chung Il-hwa (장일화), 한국 대통령을 움직인 미군 대위 [An American Captain Who Influenced Korean Presidents], pp. 131-132.

30 The Russians withdrew their representatives from Seoul in October 1947.


33 James Hausman & Chung Il-hwa (장일화), 한국 대통령을 움직인 미군 대위 [An American Captain Who Influenced Korean Presidents], p. 159; Sawyer, Military Advisors in Korea, p. 31.

34 Sawyer, Military Advisors in Korea, pp. 30-31; James Hausman & Chung Il-hwa (장일화), 한국 대통령을 움직인 미군 대위 [An American Captain Who Influenced Korean Presidents], p. 159. Hausman recalls that these schools/training centers were the first attempt at military school. However, there had been several short-lived schools operated by the Constabulary: Signal School (May 1, 1947 to February 20, 1948), Military Police School (December 5, 1947 to April 6, 1948), and Infantry School (February 21 to July 1, 1948). See HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. I, p. 120. In the case of the Weapon Schools at Seoul and Chinhae, the course lasted about two months, and the capacity was about 30 officers and men in each class. Han Kwang-son (한광선), "The Proud Pioneers of Artillery," in Office of Military History, ROK Army, ed., 홍성용사 6.25 참전 전투 수기 [The Patriot Veterans' Memoirs of the 6.25 Battles], Vol. 2 (Seoul, 1988), pp. 90-100.

35 Without doubt, it is impossible to discuss the ROK Army not mentioning the role of the United States and American officers and men. Among many accounts on the American’s role in creating and developing the Korean Armed forces, Allan R. Millett’s article, “James Hausman and the Formation of the ROK Army” and Sawyer’s Military Advisors in Korea are the detailed and balanced ones, and they are the place to begin with for the scholars interested in the Korean armed forces.

36 It is noteworthy that some of the groups were in fact militia and were operating to keep social order. Others existed merely for the promotion of their interests and often
formed a group or association. The enumeration of these groups varies upon their definition. At one point, there existed 96 organizations with military affiliations or characteristics. See HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. I, pp. 69-81.

37 Ibid., pp. 73-76.

38 Colonel Lee Ung-jun [이웅준], then military advisor to the UAMGIK, opposed this practice and insisted to have a screening process. Lee's argument was not adopted. See ibid., p. 90.


40 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. I, pp. 231-243; Millett, “James Hausman and the Formation of the ROK Army,” pp. 512-513; Han Sin [한신], 신념의 실천에서: 한신 최고록 [In a Life with Faith: Memoirs of Han Sin], p. 79; Lee Won-bok [이원복], 타이거 공군 송요찬 [Tiger General Song Yochan], pp. 64-77.

41 The US 5TH Regimental Team, the last combat troops, remained in Korea until June 1949.

42 The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) emerged on September 9, 1948, under the Kim Il Sung's rule.

43 The name 4.3 Incident came from the date it began. The prevailing opinion was that the incident was started by a group of the Communists, and among others was the notorious Kim Dal-sam [김달삼]. It has been called the Cheju 4.3 Riot until the recent changes in political circumstance, especially the emergence of a liberal government under President Kim Dae-jung [김대중], allowed for the title the Cheju 4.3 Incident.

44 Around this time, the Navy had two Special Task Fleets with 105 ships--mostly small ships, and over 3,000 officers and men. See KIMH, The Korean War, Vol. 1, p.75.

45 Schnabel, Policy and Direction, pp. 32-33.


47 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. I, pp. 131 & 137-141; KIMH, The Korean War, Vol. 1, pp. 81-83. The 4th and 6th Regiments were reorganized and renamed to the 20th and 22nd respectively after their relations to mutiny or rebellion.
48 KIMH, *The Korean War*, vol. 1, pp. 82-83.


50 Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, p. 58.

51 Even though the Koreans called it the Korea Military Academy [대한민국 육군사관학교], it was still an officer candidate school in nature.

52 The Infantry School had an officer candidate course of six-month duration within its program, but it stopped after commissioning only one class of 149. The Artillery Training Center (later Artillery School) also had a course for artillery officer candidates, but it is not known the number of graduates and the curriculum. See HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], *History of the ROK Army’s Development*, vols. I, pp. 219-220.

53 The Tenth Class was commissioned in July 1950 but the author includes them in this category because they completing the course were waiting to be commissioned on June 25.

54 Huh, “The Quest For A Bulwark of Anti-Communism,” pp. 174-175.

55 At first, the Tenth Class was planned as a four-year program but, due to the need from the fields, lack of facilities and instructors, it was cut to the one-year program in the end.

56 Republic of Korea Military Academy [육군사관학교], *대한민국 육군사관학교 50 년사*, 1946-1996 [Fifty-Year History of the Republic of Korea Military Academy, 1946-1996]; Huh, “The Quest For A Bulwark of Anti-Communism”; Association of the KMA Special Seventh Class [육사특별 7기 동기회], *The Recollection of the Old Soldiers* (Seoul, 1988); Association of the KMA Eighth Class [육사 8기 동회], *The Testimonies of the Old Soldiers* (Seoul, 1992).

57 The populace figure for the people moved from North Korea to South Korea before the war is not clear. The biggest one is about 3.5 million but it must be between 500,000 to 1 million. The majority of them used to be the leaders of community in the North, and their political ideals (democracy & capitalism), economical background (landlord), or religious faith (Christianity) could not synchronize with those of the Communist regime. See Commemoration Committee of the Korean War [전쟁기념사업회], *The History of The Korean War*, Vol. 6: The Impact of the Korean War (Seoul: Haengrim Publishing Co., 1992), pp. 245-246.

58 Republic of Korea Military Academy [육군사관학교], *대한민국 육군사관학교 50 년사*, 1946-1996 [Fifty-Year History of the Republic of Korea Military Academy, 1946-1996],
The ROK government made the universal conscription system a law in August 1949.

The well-known are Northerners vs. Non-northerners, and Gwangbok Army group vs. Japanese Military group.

It has been a norm in Korea that the coup of 1961 was a result of struggle between the northerners and non-northerners.

Military Manpower Administration [병무청], 병무행정사 [The History of the Military Manpower Administration], pp.251 & 259. President Rhee Syngman’s directive forced all youth organizations to be incorporated into the Korean Youth Corps [대한청년단], but anti-Communist youth organizations were still in operation even after Rhee’s directive. The Northwest Youth Corps [서북청년단] and the National Youth Corps [민족청년단] remained in action and participated even in politics. The former was formed by the northerners, especially those from Hwanghae Province [황해도], and the latter by National Defense Minister Lee Pom-sok [이범석] and his followers.

The Patriotic Army [호국군, 호국군] was formed as Minister of National Defense, Lee Pom-sok [이범석] saw the need to have a strong reserve force. When the ROK government issued the National Armed Forces Organization Act in November 1948, Minister Lee included an article to create the Patriotic Army as a reserve force. In one point, its strength reached to 20,000 and, as a result of political power struggle between Minister Yi and President Rhee, the ROK Army disbanded it in August 1949, when universal conscription was introduced.

According to James Hausman, American advisors were still able to control ROK units. By an agreement between President Rhee and General Hodge on August 24, 1948, the U.S. Army Forces in Korea would preserve operational control over the ROK Army until the last U.S. unit withdrew in June 1949. See James Hausman & Chung Il-hwa [정일화], 한국 대통령을 응직인 미군 대위 [An American Captain Who Influenced Korean Presidents], p. 171.


According to General Paik, the ROK government lifted the restriction to enter the Chiri-san area in the spring of 1955. Paik, 실록 지리산 [The True Record of Chiri Mountain], p.371.
Some officers fought back to the south after they figured out the battalion commanders’ intention. Lt. Kim In-sik, a company commander, originally from the North, and his company successfully got through NKPA units encirclement without leaving any soldier but seven KIAs. After this incident, Major General Lee Ung-jun, Army chief of staff, resigned from his office.

According to General Paik, the Army purged over 4,700 officers and enlisted men by June 1949.

The data are from KIMH’s *The Korean War*, Vol. 1, (Lincoln, NE, 1997), pp. 82, 90.

For example, Paik Sun-yup [박선엽] was commissioned as lieutenant in 1946 at the age of 25, and about two years later he became Colonel. When he got promoted to a four-star general in January 1953, he was barely 33 years old.

Basically the ROK Army’s schooling system was based on Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, ch.2-3.

One day General Roberts proposed an idea for defense against the future North Korean invasion, which was first to defend enemy offensive in three phases of defense at the Han River, the Kum River [금강], and then Naktong River. This was exactly what happened in June-July 1950, but at that time Korean officers did not accept the idea of retreating and argued against Roberts’ idea. See HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], *History of the ROK Army’s Development*, vol. I, pp. 217-218.

Among six officers, one officer, who had U.S. citizenship, remained in the states. According General Lee Han-lim [이한림], his experiences in the U.S. “opened his eyes” and changed his ideas about being an officer. Until then, he had never thought about “education of tactics or staff” other than “training”. See Lee Han-lim, *세기의 격랑* [The Century’s Raging Waves]: *Memoir of Lee Han-lim* (Seoul, 1995), pp.111-115.
Leadership within the Ministry of National Defense and HQ, ROK Army seemed to collapse in a couple of days. There were a series of signs to predict this: false news of ROK units' success, miscommunication and lack of coordination, conflict among high commanders, loss of supply in Seoul, and premature demolition of bridges on the Han River. This might be one reason that President Rhee transferred authority of operational control over ROK armed forces to General MacArthur three weeks after the war began.
CHAPTER 2

THE ARMY COLLAPSED? JUNE–OCTOBER 1950

The surprise invasion by the [North] Korean People’s Army (KPA), followed by the rapid and devastating advance during the first ten days of the war, caused Westerners to question the defense capability of the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA). Worried about the survival of the newly established republic, the world responded to this crisis in a hurry under the auspices of the United Nations. The United States sent the first ground forces first to Korea as early as July 1, just six days after the outbreak of the war. One of the reasons for this quick response was the belief that the ROK army had already lost its capability as combat forces. In fact, General Douglas MacArthur after a brief inspection tour to Korea on June 29 concluded in his report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) that the ROK army was “entirely incapable of counteraction” and that, without outside assistance, the ROK Army might not prevent the fall of the republic.¹
As a first-hand observation, the general's view on the ROK army established a baseline of inaccurate understanding of the ROK army's status and role for the next three years. This misunderstanding was reinforced by the KPA's operational successes in June and July, which forced the allied forces to retreat to the Pusan [부산] Perimeter by early August. Once the United States sent its troops into Korea, the war seemed to become an American war, forgetting the role of the ROK army in the conduct of the war. However, ROKA divisions continued to fight alongside the allied units to the end of the conflict. MacArthur was wrong when he reported that the ROK army was too weak to stand against KPA units.

The ROK army met its first test in June with many weaknesses inherited from the pre-war army. Training, firepower, mobility, and leadership were far inferior to that of the KPA, which also enjoyed the manpower superiority. Easily defeated by the superior KPA in the first week of the conflict, the ROK army was forced to retreat in confusion and in disarray. En route to the south it reorganized the remaining units into five divisions and conducted a series of successful delaying actions until the KPA's advance was stopped at the Pusan [부산] Perimeter in August. Reduced to this small defense perimeter, the ROK army in August and the first half of September desperately needed to enhance its combat capability, but circumstance did not allow for any action. All efforts were
concentrated to defend the Pusan Perimeter. Even the sudden turning of the tide achieved by the Inchon [인천] landing operation changed none of these. After reaching the 38TH Parallel in early October, under U.N. General Assembly authorization, the United Nations Command (UNC) changed its objectives and advanced north of the 38TH Parallel to unify Korea. Now, with a possibility of the military victory in hand, the ROK army ignored the problems it had faced in the long and hot summer. Only after another disasveryous blow from the Chinese People's Volunteers Army (CPVA) was the ROK army reminded of its shortcomings.

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The leadership of the ROK Army during the first four months of the war seemed poor in every respect. Historians and military professionals together have leveled relentless criticism at the ROK army's leadership.4 The Korean officers at almost every level were blamed for the army's ill-preparedness for war, for erroneous evaluation of the North Korean threat, for poor conduct of operations, and, above all, for not being professional. As General MacArthur succinctly expressed in his report, the ROK army was "in confusion, ha[d] not seriously fought, [and] lack[ed] leadership."5 This impression of faulty leadership in the ROK army persisted to the end of the war and distorted the leadership issue.

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Assessing the leadership of the ROK army’s senior officers differs from that of other armies due to the wartime circumstances surrounding the ROK army. Because the ROK army had been under the operational control of the United Nations Command (UNC), and subsequently under the Eighth U.S. Army, Korea (EUSA K) from the July 14, 1950, Korean senior officers, including Chief of Staff, ROK army were in precarious position between President Rhee and American commanders in Taegu (EUSA K) or Tokyo (UNC). Furthermore, almost all of logistical supply came from the United States. Despite such limitations, however, the leadership of Korean senior officers was the factor that affected the ROK army’s combat performance to a great degree, as it was they who ran the ROK army in terms of administration and personnel.

Four generals served as Chief of Staff, ROK army, during the war. Major General Chae Byong-duk [“Fat Chae,” 채병덕] led the ROKA units only for the first several days of the war and was replaced by Major General Chung Il-kwon [정일권] on June 30. The term of General Chung, from June 30, 1950 to July 23, 1951, spanned the critical period of the war and coincided with the period of maneuver warfare. Major General Lee Jong-chan [이종찬] took the position when the truce negotiations began. During his term, from June 23, 1951 to July 23, 1952, General Lee had to focus more on politics than on the ROK army. In one point, he
opposed President Rhee, who solicited military support in arresting national assemblymen who opposed Rhee’s constitutional changes. Because of this, General Lee was fired from the position and followed by Lieutenant General Paik Sun-yup [박선엽], whose term continued to the end of the war.

Although his duties and responsibilities were slightly different as the circumstance of the war changed, the Chief of Staff, ROK army performed several fundamental duties. First, he was the military advisor to the Korean president. As the top military leader, he had to follow what Rhee ordered. Usually, the objectives of the war matched those of the UNC, but the ROK government sometimes took a different stand. Second, in same manner, he was the Korean advisor to the American ground force commander. The commanding general of EUSAK received information on the ROK army from two sources, one from Chief of Staff, ROKA, and the other from Chief, KMAG. Thirdly, the Chief of Staff, ROKA had administrative responsibility of the ROK army, of which manpower management was the key issue. He was also responsible for the schooling and training of ROK individuals and units. With assistance and guidance from KMAG advisors, he and his staff planned and executed the training of ROK units.

For corps and division commanders, the assessment can be more general than individual. Throughout the entire period of the war, only
three or fewer ROK corps existed at any one time. In most cases, their role was limited, but several incidents showed the importance of corps commander in an emergency. Divisional commanders were more numerous than corps commanders, around ten for most of the period. Only after a plan for twenty divisions emerged in the second half of 1952 did the ROK army add new divisions to the already existing ten-division list. One thing worth mentioning is that there was not much change in the list of senior officers throughout the war period. The officers from the English Language School of the Korean Constabulary continued to dominate the top level of ROK army officer corps.

When the war started, Chief of Staff of the ROK army was Major General Chae Byong-deok [채병덕], also known as Fat Chae. General Chae was born in 1914 in Pyongyang [평양] and graduated from the Japanese Military Academy in 1937. Commissioned as an ordnance officer, he was a major when Japan surrendered to the Allied forces in 1945. Returning to Korea, he entered the English Language School and was commissioned as a captain of the Korean Constabulary due to his previous service with the Japanese army. Before being appointed in May 1949 as Chief of Staff, ROK army, he had served as commanding officer in various units: the 1STM Battalion of the 1ST Constabulary Regiment, the Supply Unit, and the 6TH Brigade. He also served as chief of ordnance in the Constabulary. After two battalions of the 6TH Brigade surrendered to
the North Korean People's Army in May 1949, Chae replaced General Lee Ung-jun [이응준] as Chief of Staff, ROK Army.

How General Chae secured the trust of President Rhee is unknown, but he clearly had the full support of the president. In October 1949, he and Colonel Kim Suk-won [“Kaiser” Kim, 김석원] were forced to retire from the army after an incident that caused conflict between them. However, Chae returned to the army as Chief of Staff in April 1950, confirming the strong support of the president. Unfortunately, he now had to face all the burdens of the coming war. The sudden turn of events forced him to show skills in emergency management which he did not possess.

When General Chae was appointed as Chief of Staff in 1949 and again in 1950, his military experiences were limited to non-combat units, except for brief periods as commander of a Constabulary battalion and the 6TH Brigade. In fact, it was not unusual for Korean high ranked officers not to have much command experience. The ROK army had a history of less than five years, and its officer corps was composed mostly of very young officers. For example, the four chiefs of staff discussed herein had climbed to the top of the army’s ladder in their thirties. In the case of Chae, criticism has been readily directed at him, especially for his incompetence during the initial stage of the war.
His critics begin with Chae’s shuffling of the ROK army leadership on June 10, 1950, which included most divisional commanders along the 38th Parallel. The exchanges of positions might be a natural step for any new chief of staff. The problem in this case was the timing, especially when the intelligence continued to indicate the possibility of North Korean invasion in near future. In fact, the ROK army had been on the constant alert since January, 1950. Chae’s move seemed to worsen the initial situation of the war, because it did not allow commanders, especially of divisions along the parallel, to have time to familiarize themselves with troops and terrain. Therefore, the untimely changes of commanders were enough to bring an accusation against Chae. However, this criticism is based on the retrospective analysis and seems to be less legitimate.

More serious leadership problems unfolded as the KPA launched a general invasion from all along the 38th Parallel. Shocked by the surprise offensive, General Chae and his colleagues in the ROK army could not come up with the countermeasures to defend the nation. Confusion and shock prevailed over headquarters, ROK army during the first several hours of the war. On that morning, General Chae listened to his staff officers, who provided recommendations for possible military operations for his final decision. Some suggested that the ROK army should retreat to south of the Han River, but General Chae repeated only
the same phrase: “Repulse the enemy with bravery.” He did not mention any possible plan for future defense. In the eyes of a combat-proven soldier like Captain James H. Hausman, USA, who was advisor to General Chae and, on June 25, the acting chief of KMAG, Chae did not possess the capability for crisis leadership. In general, the senior leaders of the ROK army were in a “total panic” during the first days of the war.11

A closer look at the combat situation also reveals that the KPA attack would not have been so disastrous had the army’s leaders taken prudent measures even after the surprise attacks. The ROK 6TH and 8TH Divisions in the east and central-east area were able to hold their positions and retreated only after the fall of Seoul. In the west the 1ST Division was pushed back but not without blooding the enemy that made the western corridor (Kaesong-Munsan-Seoul) one of its two main thrusts. In the early morning of June 28 when the bridges on the Han were demolished and with them the division’s only retreat route, the 1ST Division was still positioned northwest of Seoul, contesting the enemy advance. It was in the Uijongbu [의정부] area that the KPA successfully penetrated the ROK army defense line. With its two infantry divisions and two tank regiments overpowering an infantry division supported only by one artillery battalion, the KPA entered Seoul in the early morning of June 28.
Sensing the urgency of the situation developing in this area, General Chae visited the 7TH Division four times within 24 hours. He may have considered the possibility of stopping the enemy invasion if he could succeed here. If so, he was demanding his inferior army to accomplish the unattainable. He knew ROKA units did not possess any effective anti-tank weapons, yet he still ordered them to stop enemy tanks with "special attack teams" — the suicidal attack teams with demolitions. His concern in this area was derived from the fact that he had tried to carry out the president's order. After figuring out that it was not the usual border skirmish but a general invasion, the president and ROK government decided that Seoul was to be held at all costs. This decision probably imposed a limitation on General Chae's military options. However, as a chief military advisor, he was also responsible for providing reasonable and sound courses of action. Considering the circumstance and his knowledge of the situation, he should have recommended the withdrawal of the ROK troops south of the Han River. This might not stop the enemy's advance but should reduce the losses of troops and supplies the ROKA units suffered north of the Han. The young chief of staff was overwhelmed by the old and king-like president.12

Chae's next senior civilian boss, Minister of National Defense Sin Sung-mo [신성모], did not help to relieve the leadership problems. A former captain of a British merchant ship, Sin had little knowledge
related to the military. When he replaced Defense Minister Lee Pom-sok [이범석] in March 1949, Sin was head of the Korean Youth Corps [Daehanchongnyon-dan, 대한청년단], which President Rhee used to replace Minister Lee Pom-sok's youth group. When the war broke out, Sin was concurrently serving as the acting prime minister. Though he had considerable authority in his own right to affect the ROK's next possible course of action, Sin, like his military partner, was more focused on what the president wanted. For the first critical days after the outbreak of the war, Minister Sin along with Chief of Staff General Chae insisted on holding Seoul.

A possible explanation would be the tendency among Koreans, especially among ROK Army officers, that continued to appear during the entire period of the war: they tended to understand the term 'loyalty' as to be absolute obedience to the person above him in rank. ROK officials and officers seemed to not understand how to be loyal to the institution or to the Korean people they served. As a result of this practice, Minister Sin was "remarkable in carrying out what Rhee ordered, but not in counseling what the president needed."  

The organizational structure of the ROK army doubled Chae's responsibilities and burdens. During the pre-war period and the initial phase of the war, the ROK army never had any intermediate command position between headquarters, ROK army and eight divisions in the field.
In a normal situation, it seemed to be more effective since this structure allowed the chief of staff to command and control the divisions directly. Now in a war, General Chae and his staff officers at the army’s headquarters had to deal with all of the subordinate units, which kept asking for help and support as the KPA attacked with superior weapons and equipment. The ROK army G-3 (training and education), Colonel Chang Chang-kuk could do nothing other than to answer phone calls from the subordinate units. Fifteen telephone sets kept ringing for ROKA headquarters’ support in ammunition, equipment, or troops.\footnote{14}

When the KPA broke through the ROK army’s defense line south of the Han River, ROKA units were forced to join the columns heading south. Major General Chae was relieved after taking responsibility for the terrible defeats, and Brigadier General Chung Il-kwon replaced him on June 30. President Rhee soon gave up operational control of the ROK army to the United Nations Command (UNC) and the Eighth United States Army in a couple of weeks. From then on, the Chief of Staff, ROK army reduced his role in great degree and remained simply the senior liaison officer between headquarters, EUSAK and the ROK corps and divisions.\footnote{15}

Confusion and a lack of leadership affected the officers in the field units, too. After the defense line along the Han River collapsed on the last day of June, it was a long and harsh month for the ROK army as it
retreated to the Naktong River where the grounds units of the United Nations Command, including the ROKA units, established for the first time a connected and coordinated defense line. In the midst of retreat, the ROKA units suffered a series of defeats, due to the shortage of manpower and the lack of weapons and equipment. To overcome these weaknesses by hardening the fighting will among the South Korean troops, the ROK army introduced an extreme measure: regimental commanders and above were authorized to execute without trial any subordinate officer who failed in combat. The result was a further decline in morale among the officer corps — especially junior officers.16

The effectiveness of the ROK army, both in administration and in combat, was diminished by the lack of a clear understanding, especially at the army's headquarters, of all that was entailed in a military profession. For example, headquarters, ROK army did not place strict control on officers' assignment, and the officers often chose with which unit or commander he would serve. Colonel Paik, the demanding commander of the 1ST Division, simply watched as his subordinate officer left for another commander.17 The mismanagement of personnel by headquarters, ROK army caused a serious leadership problem in combat units, too. The turnover rate of the commanders in division, regiment, and battalion command reveals how often commanders were changed during this period.18 For divisional commanders, I looked at only the five divisions
that survived the reorganization in July. For four months, from late June to late October, all divisions experienced at least one change and on the average two command changes. The Capital Division saw a total of five commanders in the period. The same phenomenon occurred with the regimental and battalion commanders. Of nine regiments and twenty-six battalions from the 1st, 5th, and 8th Divisions, which I chose as a sample group, the average turnover in a period of four months was 1.3 for regimental commander and 1.7 for battalion commanders. Such a rate would make difficult, if not impossible, for establishing rapport between the commanders and their assigned units.19

These problems were inherited from the pre-war ROK army and reoccurred during 1950. The ROK army could not afford to remedy these shortcomings in leadership, confronted with the rapidly advancing KPA in the summer of 1950. After the Inchon landing, the issue was temporarily forgotten with the favorable development of the war, yet reoccurred through the winter 1950 to the spring 1951 and with disastrous consequences.

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Leadership was not the only area in which the ROK army was unprepared to be a modern army or to wage war. Just like the leadership
of the army's officers, the South Korean army possessed weapons and equipment far inferior, in terms of quantity and quality, to the KPA on the eve of the war. Without the capability to equip its own army and other forces, the ROK government was totally dependent on American support and aid from the creation of the Korean armed forces. Even worsening was the fact that the ROK army lost much of its weapons and equipment, especially guns and trucks, when it had retreated over the Han River during the first week of the engagement.

The basic weapon for the ROK soldiers was M1 rifle. A handful of non-combat units in the rear area were equipped with the Japanese rifles. The ROK army on the eve of the war had on hand M1 rifle ammunition to last just six days. A ROK division also had other crew-served weapons: 57mm antitank guns, 2.36-inch rocket launchers, 81mm and 60mm mortars, and .30-caliber machine guns. A typical ROK infantry regiment had three infantry battalions and an antitank weapons company. The antitank company was equipped with six 57mm recoilless rifles, and this was the only firepower an infantry regiment could employ for its own. An infantry battalion had more fire in hand with four 81mm mortars, nine 60mm mortars, and eighteen 2.36-inch rocket launchers.

A division had an artillery battalion to provide fire support to its subordinate units. Before the war broke out, the South Korean Army had a total of six artillery battalions equipped only with 105mm howitzers.
These M3 model howitzers, which the American units had left behind when they left Korea between 1948 and 1949, had far shorter effective range (7,250 yards) than that of the standard M2 model 105mm howitzers in American divisions (12,500 yards). They were also outranged by the KPA’s 122mm guns with an effective range of 14,000 yards. Out of 91 howitzers, 89 pieces were serviceable. Each battalion possessed fifteen howitzers in three batteries. Of six battalions, four were assigned to the four divisions on border. Two other battalions were in reserve in the Seoul area.

Meanwhile, KPA units enjoyed a great advantage in firepower over the ROK army. In June 1950, a North Korean infantry regiment had eighteen 45mm antitank guns, twenty-seven 82mm and six 120mm mortars, and four 76mm howitzers. The infantry division was equipped with such additional weapons as sixteen 76mm self-propelled guns (SU-76), twenty-four 76mm howitzers, and twelve 122mm howitzers. Moreover, each corps had an artillery regiment of two 122mm gun battalions and a 122mm howitzer battalion. The corps also commanded two anti-air artillery regiments with twenty-four 37mm and twelve 85mm anti-aircraft guns in each regiment.

Even worse, the ROK army did not have any effective weapon against enemy T-34/85 tanks. Tanks, the best antitank weapon, were not included in the ROK army’s inventory. Even antitank weapons of the ROK
army were not effective against one of the best tanks of World War Two. The 57mm antitank guns or 2.36-inch rockets of the ROK army could not penetrate a T-34's armor. The lack of effective antitank weapons generated a tank-phobia among ROK soldiers, and tanks became the key weapon system that determined the result of battles, especially for the enemy during the first weeks of the war.26

After being forced to retreat south of the Han, the ROK army's inventory of weapons decreased in quantity and quality. The unexpectedly rapid enemy advance and the sudden destruction of bridges on the Han caused this great loss of weapons and equipment. When all of the ROKA units — other than two divisions on the central-east and east area (the 6TH and 8TH ROK Divisions) — were hurriedly forming a defense line along the southern bank of the Han, a division was able to employ only 2-3 mortars, 5-7 machine guns, and no howitzers.27 The thirty 105mm howitzers in the 6TH and 8TH Divisions were all that the ROK army had in early July.

The loss of other equipment also brought difficulties to the ROK army, especially vehicles. Prior to June 25, the ROK army had about 2,800 vehicles ranging from 1/4-ton jeep to 2.5-ton truck. A division had on average 196 vehicles, much less than to 377 that the table of equipment (TE) allowed. Out of these vehicles in hand, only about 40 percents were in operation due to wear or repair needs.28 For the first
days of fighting, the ROKA units lost a great number of vehicles. For example, the ROK 1st Division had to give up every heavy weapon, vehicle, and equipment before crossing the Han River. As General Paik, then a colonel and division commander, remembers, he could not see "any way that a single one of the division's 150 vehicles, artillery pieces, or other heavy equipment would ever get out [to south of the Han River]." Even a transportation company under the ROK army headquarters lost all forty-eight trucks when the bridges on the Han were blown. By the time Seoul fell under enemy hands, the ROK Army had lost a total of about 2,500 vehicles. To fill the shortage, it conscripted civilian vehicles but still could not meet its need.

With manpower, weapons, and equipment reduced, the ROK army could not stop the KPA from crossing the Han River. The ROKA units started the long road southward to the Naktong River. Along the way, the ROK army reorganized its remaining units into five divisions and a couple of independent regiments, directed by two corps. At the same time, the United States sent not only the air and naval units but also four infantry divisions and a marine brigade to the Korean peninsula. With this force came improvement to the ROK army's weapons and equipment supply.

While sending combat troops, the U.S. government also provided the ROK army with military supplies in order to maintain the South
Korean army's combat effectiveness, enough possibly to prevent the KPA advance. As an instruction to the Commander-in-Chief, Far East (CINCFE), sent to General MacArthur on June 25, the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized him to "send any ammunition and equipment to Korea as he deems necessary." Soon, a flow of weapons and equipment were transferred to the Koreans.

On July 3, 990 M1 rifles were airlifted to the Taejon airfield, and 100 were immediately distributed to the Capital Division. Later, the remaining rifles were sent to the newly reorganized units of the I ROK Corps. A week later, 590 M1 rifles and six 60mm mortars were added to them. To add firepower, twelve 105mm howitzers arrived and

<table>
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<td>M-1 Rifle</td>
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<td>60MM Mortar</td>
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<td>81MM Mortar</td>
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<td>515</td>
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<td>Automatic Rifle (BAR)</td>
<td>2,623</td>
<td>105MM Howitzer</td>
<td>154</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5&quot; Rocket</td>
<td>2,110</td>
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Table 2.1. Supply of Weapons to the ROK Army, June 25-December 31, 1950

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became the backbone of the I Corps’ artillery group.\textsuperscript{35} From then on, the ROK army depended absolutely on American weapons and equipment, as illustrated in the table below.

With the arrival of weapons and equipment in a massive amount, the ROK army approached its pre-war levels. Especially, fire support of artillery units was crucial in combat action and each division was able to secure at least one battalion of 105mm howitzers by September 10, just before the Inchon \[이천\] landing operation. In early July, the ROK army reorganized the remaining units into six battalions, but they were not in full strength. Because of the losses in the initial battles, each battalion seemed to have only one or two companies.\textsuperscript{36} All units were under the direct control of the ROK army headquarters, and this made the ROK army very flexible and effective in responding to the KPA’s offensive in August and early September along the defense lines of the Pusan Perimeter.\textsuperscript{37}

Once fully equipped, the ROK army assigned its six battalions of 105mm howitzers to the ROK infantry divisions, one battalion to each of six divisions. On September 10, the ROK army formed an additional four battalions of 105mm howitzers and began the appropriate training program at the Artillery Training Center. With the activation of new divisions, the ROK army assigned the four battalions (20\textsuperscript{TH}, 26\textsuperscript{TH}, 27\textsuperscript{TH}, and 30\textsuperscript{TH}) to the 2\textsuperscript{ND}, 5\textsuperscript{TH}, 9\textsuperscript{TH}, and 11\textsuperscript{TH} Divisions.\textsuperscript{38} As a result, the
ROK army by the time the Chinese intervened was able to return to its pre-war strength in artillery as well as infantry — one 105mm howitzer battalion to each infantry division.

The TO/E of the ROK division in October 1950 showed clearly that it was much better structured than the division of early July. This was possible because of U.S. recognition, reluctant enough, that the South Korean ground troops were also a major participant of the United Nations Command (UNC). However, the ROK army was still far behind other armies in terms of weapons and equipment. First of all, the ROK army was barely able to assign one battalion of 105mm howitzers to an infantry division, unlike other armies of the day in which an artillery group of three or four battalions provided fire support. It also did not have long-range artillery pieces such as 155mm or 8-inch howitzers. For the infantry regiment, it had to depend on light or medium mortars, but it did not include 4.2-inch heavy mortars in its TO/E. The ROK corps was also limited to an administrative structure between headquarters, ROK army and an infantry division. It did not have its own artillery units to provide general support fires to its subordinate divisions.

Being less equipped seemed not to be the problem in the mood of victory after the Inchon landing and the recapture of Seoul. With enemy resistance rarely encountered enroute to the Yalu, the Koreans and Americans alike did not feel the necessity of strengthening the firepower
of the ROK army. In October and November, however, the ROK army met another challenge, this time from the Chinese People’s Volunteers Army. Again, it was ROKA units that showed less effectiveness, and the II ROK Corps collapsed under the Chinese offensive. The Chinese aimed specifically at ROKA units that had far less firepower and mobility than American units. However, this “disaster” at the Chongchon [청천] River was a product of lack of training in the ROK units, too.

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Prior to the war, training had not been the first priority for the ROK army. The Koreans were eager to expand the armed forces, especially the army, and in less than two years they doubled the size of the army from 50,000 to almost 100,000. At the same time, the ROK government had to deal with communist revolts, rebellions, and North Korean guerrilla infiltrations, and the ROK army was the very institution to face conflict at the first line. In June 1950, units of three divisions (2ND, 3RD, and 5TH) in the rear area were in anti-guerrilla operations at the mountainous areas. Other divisions also were not free to master individual and unit trainings. Border security duties and the constant border incidents with KPA units did not release four divisions along the
38TH Parallel free for training. However, it did not mean the Koreans had never emphasized the importance of training for their fledgling army.

With guide and help from the KMAG advisors, the ROK army planned the phased training programs in 1949 and again in 1950, which ROK Army units never completed. Just before the outbreak of the war, infantry units were in company or battalion-level training, and only five regiments and a battalion were able to complete the battalion-level training. Schools and training centers began to appear from the second half of 1948. However, with the coming of the war, the emerging system of training in the ROK army collapsed. By the time U.S. and Korean units established a stable defense line along the Naktong River in August, those schools and training centers had become only names on a map and functioned at best as gathering places.

With unit training in suspension, the ROK army did not take any long-term substitute measures, even with recruit training. At first, as in the ROK 1ST Division did, the army got replacements from the Youth Defense Corps. Often, the young people were forced to enter the army by the military police or national police, and they barely had any training before meeting the enemy. The first attempt to improve the replacement training was made in July 14 when the ROK army established the First Replacement Training Center (RTC) at Taegu [태구]. It was a new attempt for the ROK army to have a centralized replacement training
system. Prior to the war, each division was responsible for training new recruits, but in the national emergency the army needed to respond to it with a system to meet the necessity of all units.

With a capacity of 10,000 and a daily output of 1,000, the 1ST RTC was originally planned to provide a ten-day training program, but the urgent needs of replacements often reduced even this short period of training. Once the KPA's advance was checked along the Naktong River in early August, the ROK army could expand the capacity of the replacement training programs with much more stabilized plans. In August and September, it opened four more RTCs to provide a steady flow of replacements. The 2ND RTC at Pusan, the 3RD at Kupo-ri near Pusan, and the 5TH at the Cheju Island were capable of training 5,000 recruits and turned out 500 replacements a day. The 6TH RTC at Samnangjin with a capacity of 2,000 produced 200 new soldiers daily. Within a ten-day period, the RTCs emphasized such essentials as rifle marksmanship, basic squad tactics, and lectures of the "why we fight" nature. The ROK army's RTCs of this period did not place emphasis on quality but on quantity, and tried to produce as many replacements as possible for the combat-stricken ROKA units.

At first, most of new replacements were sent to the existing units to fill the vacancies. After the initial engagements in late June, the strength of the ROK divisions dropped dramatically and, even after the
reorganization, it barely climbed to the original strength of about 10,000. For example, the ROK 1ST Division, which had over 10,000 officers and men before the outbreak of the war, had only 2,000 men remaining after a week of fighting. The reorganization of the ROK divisions in early July and the constant inflow of new replacements restored the division's strength to over 7,000 in late July. While functioning as the pools for the existing units, the RTCs were also responsible for manning the newly formed ROK divisions. In late August, the ROK army began to prepare a program for the ten-division ROK army, and on August 20 reactivated the 7TH Division with Task Force Min and several independent battalions. The plan also saw the re-establishment of the 2ND and 5TH Divisions and the birth of two new divisions — the 9TH and 11TH — along with the III ROK Corps.

The expansion of the ROK army included the task of training new units. In case of the 7TH Division, it did not need a unit-training program, because it was composed of the combat-proven units and sent directly to the front. However, other divisions coming directly from the replacement training centers needed a unit training program before they saw combat. The ROK army, therefore, put the new divisions into the anti-guerrilla operations or the security-keeping activities in the rear area. The 11TH Division began the process of activation from August 27 with a master plan for three infantry regiments, an artillery battalion, and an

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engineering battalion. With the appointment of Brigadier General Choi Duk-sin as the first commanding general on September 25, the ROK army completed the process of activation. Soon, the division without the artillery battalion moved to the Cholla Province and started anti-guerrilla operations from October 6.

The reactivation of the 5th Division was typical of the ROK army’s process of formation and training. On October 7, Ministry of National Defense (MND) issued a general order (#86) to reactivate the 5th Division. It would have three infantry regiments and other supporting units, but would not enjoy the luxury of having an artillery battalion. Most of enlisted men came directly from the replacement training centers and did not have any combat experience. It had been just twenty days since the division’s activation and was still in the process of equipping and training, when the division got an order to initiate anti-guerrilla operations in the Kyongsang Province from October 24. The division stayed in the southeastern area until it was summoned to replace the IX US Corps in Kangwon Province, so that the IX Corps could participate in the ‘Home-By-Christmas Offensive’ in late November.

Both the 2nd Division, reactivated on November 7, and the 9th Division, newly formed on October 25 in Seoul, followed a similar path as the 5th Division took. Upon completion of manning and equipping, the divisions were put into anti-guerrilla operations in the rear areas until
they were trained and experienced enough to be put into the front line.\textsuperscript{47} The ROK army under the pressure of the circumstance could not follow a systematic training process. Instead, it tried to achieve two objectives at once by placing the newly formed units into light missions like guarding key facilities or anti-guerrilla operations. As General Chang Do-young remembers, the new divisions had to perform all three missions of "organizing [units], training [individual soldiers and units], and guarding [key facilities] at a time."\textsuperscript{48} Temporarily, this practice seemed to work to meet the ROK army's needs, but it could not solve the ROK army's lasting problems with training.

The ROK army and KMAG also knew the importance of implementing a school system as soon as possible. The ROK army's schools and training centers had stopped operating soon after the KPA invasion. Prior to the outbreak of war, the Command and Staff College, Military Academy, and various training institutions of each branch had been in operation. Although not in mature status, they had testified to the ROK army's goal toward a fully developed effective army. Retreating rapidly toward a small pocket around Pusan, the Koreans at first did not have room for running those schools. Once the KPA's stormy pressure reached its height in August and early September, the South Koreans with support and guide of the American advisors were able to open a new school in mid-August 1950.
The biggest concern was to obtain qualified candidates and to train them as officers. The loss of officers during the initial engagement and the expansion of the ROK army now created the problem of finding many replacements. After the collapse of the school system and before the emergence of new schools, the ROK army relied on officers of the National Defense Youth Corps and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). For example, the ROK army commissioned 1,153 new officers in August 1950. Of these, 8 were from the reserve, 40 from civilians, 298 from the Youth Corps, and 807 from NCOs. However, this was just a mere improvisation to cope with the emergency and by no means a long-term solution.

In response to this problem, the ROK army and KMAG opened the Infantry School on August 15 at Tongnae just north of Pusan, and the school received on August 23 its first class of 200 officer candidates. However, because the Infantry School was in actuality for all branches of the army, not just for infantry, the ROK army re-designated it as the Korean Army Service School and, then, the Army Ground General School (TAGGA) on September 1, 1950. The school's intent was principally to train infantry officers, but it also provided programs for other branches – field artillery, signal, engineer, ordnance, and quartermaster. Its capacity increased soon to 250 graduates each week, and more than half of them were infantry officers. The remaining spaces
were distributed among the other five branches according to the needs in the fields. Every candidate was expected to complete a four-week basic training (branch immaterial course) before he moved up for a specialized branch material course lasting another four weeks.51

The Koreans and KMAG advisors faced several critical problems that would hamper the school's effective operation. First of all, the cadre found it hard to accommodate trainees in the crowded Pusan area. Second, finding qualified officer candidates was not an easy task for the school, mainly because the ROK army did not have a centralized system of screening and procuring officer candidates. Lastly, training equipment was almost nonexistent in the school's inventory. In mid-October, Major John Clark, senior advisor of the school, reported the shortage of equipment along with the other problems stated above. He reported that the school had none of radio set or 60mm mortar, two 81mm mortars, two 4.2-inch mortars, and five 3.5-inch rocket launchers.

Upon receiving Clark's report, KMAG and ROK army headquarters could do little to improve the school's situation. Because the ROK army was then expanding to ten divisions, equipment went first to the newly formed units. At the same time, developments at the front in October brought optimism for a quick end to the hostility. With this in mind, the Koreans and American advisors planned to establish a new system of schooling and training for the post-war ROK army and to
maintain the Ground General School in its current status. The first step was to inspect the former sites of schools and training centers. Major Richard Crawford and Captain Bernard J. Kuszewski, both from KMAG, along with Korean partners traveled twelve sites in the Seoul area. Headquarters of the Korean army prepared a general guideline for the postwar school system on November 10, 1950, when the U.N. forces were preparing for what seemed to be the last offensive. As a result, the Ground General School continued to provide new second lieutenants until the ROK army revised its school and training system in January and February 1951, after the Chinese left another severe scar on the ROK army.

As the ROK army's Chief of Staff commented, the school and training system of the ROK army during the summer and fall of 1950 was to meet the wartime requirements, and had produced a sufficient number of military personnel, but it did "not provide a sound basis for military training." It was a system that emphasized more on "how many" than on "how good." Even though the schooling and training programs seemed to work temporarily for the emergency tasks, they were still emergency measures and not the long-term solution. When ROKA units encountered the Chinese Volunteers Army again in November, the ROK Army was still producing officers and the enlisted men through the same programs that the ROK army had established as emergency measures. The devastation
wrought by the Chinese offensives dramatized the ROK army's school and training system's need for vast improvement.

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As the KPA's offensive swept South Korea in the summer of 1950, the ROK army was put into a test of its defense potential. From the beginning, the KPA enjoyed a great advantage in manpower, firepower, leadership, and training. As the hot and rainy summer days passed by, the ROK army was pushed almost to the brink of collapse in its desperate effort to stop the Inmin-gun. It was not until late August that the ROK army began to expand its size and to improve its combat effectiveness. With aid and support from the U.S. through the KMAG, the ROK army was able to add new artillery pieces to infantry divisions and to recover its prewar strength in firepower. Each division got fire support from a battalion of 105mm howitzers. At the same time, new schools and training centers re-opened to provide ROKA units with 'trained' personnel. These training programs were to meet the urgent needs of the war and thus taught the minimum skills. The expansion of the ROK army doubled the burden of the already overburdened personnel supply system and, therefore, the refresher trainings both for officers and the enlisted men seemed to be luxurious. Furthermore, no unit trainings were offered to the
newly formed units or to the reorganized ones that had survived the KPA’s initial offensive; and they therefore trained themselves while fighting the enemy.

The lack of effective leadership in the ROK army went unremedied during this period. In fact, the ROK army was not able to take actions while retreating, and it forgot the problem in the midst of victorious mood following the Inchon landing. As a whole, the ROK army was trying to recover from the damage sustained during the initial engagement and in November 1950 it was in very similar shape to that of June 1950. The Chinese offensives served as a grim reminder that the ROK army could not fight unaided and, as in June 1950, the ROK army again showed incompetence and ineffectiveness. The next seven months witnessed a series of battlefield failures by the ROKA units.54
1 C-56942, from CINCFE Tokyo to JCS and State Department, June 30, 1950 in Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS), 1950, Vol. VII (USGPO, 1976), pp.248-250.

2 In contradiction to General MacArthur's conclusion, ROK two divisions in the east were successfully defending enemy invasion and, after the fall of Seoul, retreated south maintaining their strength.

3 In a rectangular shape, it ran about a hundred miles from north to south and about fifty from east to west. Later, its boundaries shrank more as the NKPA launched offensives in late August and early September, but the UN forces were able to defend this defense perimeter. It is also recognized as the defense line where General Walton H. Walker issued the so-called 'stand-or-die' order.

4 Especially, this is conspicuous among the Korean literatures. Kim Haeng-bok [김행복], 한국전쟁의 전장지도 [Conduct of War in the Korean War] (Seoul, 1999).


6 At the initiatives of President Syngman Rhee, the ROK and U.S. governments agreed to place the ROK Army under the UNC's operational control. Chief of Staff, ROK Army had only the authority over administration.


8 Col. Kim was commanding officer of the ROK 1ST Division near Kaesong [개 성] and found out that South Korean merchants, under protection of politicians and top military leaders, smuggled American weapons to North Korea. Kim forbade all trades in the area under his command, and this brought strong opposition from the politicians and top military leaders, Chae among them. Without any investigation, President Rhee and Defense Minister Sin Sung-mo [신성모] tried to reconcile the two — Kim and Chae — to no avail.

9 Chae Byong-duk was born in 1914, Chung Il-Kwon in 1917, Lee Jong-chan in 1916, and Paik Sun-yup in 1920. Interestingly enough, they had had military experience from the Japanese Army and the Manchurian Army. It is not clear why President Rhee appointed these relatively young and former Japanese officers as Chief of Staff during the war, even though there were some experienced senior officers to these four generals or those from the Kwangbok Army [Restoration Army, 광복군]. A couple of possibilities are that the president might not want for those senior officers to come close
to the 'real’ power or that he hoped to control them with ease (President Rhee was born in 1875 and seventy five years old in 1950).

10 There is even an accusation that Chae was an agent for North Korea. Reasoning with several examples of General Chae’s actions, General Lee Hyong-kun [이형근] believes that General Chae was helping the North Korean regime.


12 President Rhee was notorious for dictatorial practice. He used to proclaim his hatred for monarchic government, but he emphasized at the same time that he might ascend to the throne if the Chosun [조선] kingdom had continued. “Thumnail Sketch of Dr. Syngman Rhee,” no author, a biographical note on Rhee in the Thomas W. Herren Paper, US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.


14 Kim Haeng-bok [김행복], 한국전쟁의 전쟁지도 [Conduct of War in the Korean War] , p.76.

15 For the very same reason, I will not pay much attention on the ROK Army’s Chief of Staff, unless he had left a significant mark in the development of the ROK Army.

16 Association of the KMA Eighth Class [육사 8 기생회], 노병들의 증언 [Testimonies of the Old Soldiers], pp. 315-320. Among officers from the Eighth Class, three officers faced with such a fate. In one case, the regimental commander ordered the military police to execute a battalion staff officer on the spot for making different operational recommendations from his. There is an indication that this happened in other classes, too.

17 Paik, From Pusan to Panmunjom, p. 31.

18 I calculated the turnover ratio with the following rules. Because the periods each chapter covers are different and the term of commander did not coincide with the period the chapters cover, it is difficult to compare turnover ratio of each period. Therefore, I show simply how many times the command changes happened during the period. A turnover ratio 2.0, for example, means that there occurred two times of command changes or three commanders served during the period.

19 This is based on the unit history of three divisions. For the divisional commanders, I
referred HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army’s Development], vols. I & II.

20 For detailed explanation, see Chapter 1.

21 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army’s Development], vol. I, pp. 206-207.

22 Roy Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, p. 16

23 The author is not able to find a document of ROK Army’s table of organization and equipment prior to the war. HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army’s Development], vol. I, pp. 203-204; The 8TH Infantry Division [보병 제 8 사단], 오 두기역사 [The History of Tumbling Doll] (1980), pp. 78-79; Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp. 16-17.

24 Appleman, South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, pp. 16-17; Sawyer. Military Advisors in Korea, p. 106.


26 The drastic example of this was the ROK Army’s decision to withdraw from Seoul and to demolish the bridges on the Han when senior officers in the headquarters heard the news that NKPA tanks (actually just two tanks) appeared in northeast of Seoul.

27 Commemoration Committee of the Korean War [전쟁기념사업회]. 한국전쟁사 [The History of The Korean War], vol. 3, p. 173; Kim Haeng-bok [김행복], 한국전쟁의 전쟁 지도 [Conduct of War in the Korean War], p. 150. Because of urgency and confusion after the fall of Seoul, it is not possible to figure out the exact amount of heavy weapons that had been retreated, too. Another author argues that “the only crew-served weapons in each mixed regiment were 2 or 3 mortars and 5 or 6 machine guns.” However, when the ROK Army established a defense line at the Han River, it without considering the former unit of the soldiers formed a mixed battalion whenever it could gather 500 soldiers, and then assigned the battalion to the ‘mixed division.’ Either way, it did not change the shortage of crew-served and heavy weapons in ROK units. And, the strength of the ‘mixed division’ was just over an infantry regiment. See also, KIMH, The Korean War, vol. 1, p. 282.

28 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army’s Development], vol. I, p. 208.
At first, the I ROK Corps commanded the Capital, 1ST, and 2ND Divisions that absorbed troops from the dissolved 3RD, 5TH, and 7TH Divisions. Later, on July 12, the ROK Army also created the II Corps headquarters to command the remaining two divisions. Then, on July 20 and 24 after arranging and adjusting the defense lines with the Eighth U.S. Army, the Koreans reorganized the ROK divisions once again. This time, the heavily damaged 2ND Division was absorbed into the new 3RD Division. The ROK Army in late July had the I Corps with the Capital and 8TH Division and the II Corps with the 1ST and 6TH Division. The 3RD Division on the east coast was under the direct control of HQ, ROK Army. KIMH, The Korean War, vol. I, p. 351.

It is not clear how ROK artillery units were organized during this period of retreat. It is said that the new 10TH, 11TH, 16TH, 17TH, 18TH, and 50TH Battalions were formed in early July. However, because it was the period that the ROK Army lost artillery pieces of four battalions and did not get artillery pieces from the U.S. enough to equip all four battalions, those artillery battalions must be under-strengthened.

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to the Yalu, p. 384.

41 Memo, Assistant Adjutant general (AG), KMAG, to Commanding General (CG),
EUSAK, subject, “Replacement Training Centers, Korean Army,” September 2, 1950,
Record Group (RG) 338: KMAG Administrative Record, 1948-1951 (hereafter RG 338:
KMAG, 1948-1951), National Archives (NA); Memo, G-1, KMAG, to Chief, KMAG,

42 Study, Chief, KMAG, “Experience & Lessons Learned in Training the ROK Army,”
not dated, RG 338, US Army Pacific (USARPAC), Military History Office, Classified
Organizational Record (hereafter RG 338, USARPAC, MHO, Classified), NA.

43 Paik Sun-yup 《The Army and I》, pp. 28-54.

44 KIMH, The Korean War, pp. 514-515.

45 The 11TH ROK Infantry Division, A Brief History of the Hwarang Unit
(1975), pp. 74-76. Later in late October, it was assigned to the III ROK Corps along with
the 5TH Division, which relieved the IX US Corps from the responsibility of rear area
security.

46 The 5TH ROK Infantry Division, The Unit’s History (1979), pp. 89-121.

47 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], History of the ROK Army’s Development,
vol. I, pp. 378-382 & 399-401; Appleman, South to the Naktong, North To the Yalu, p.
667; Sawyer, Military Advisors in Korea, pp. 146-148.

48 Chang Do-young [장도영], Nostalia or Homesickness: A Memoire of Chang Do-young, Former Chief of Staff, ROK Army[제도영]
(Seoul, 2001), pp. 205-206. Brigadier General Chang Do-young [장도영] was appointed as the
first commanding officer of the 9TH Division.

49 Memo, G-1, KMAG, to Chief, KMAG, subject, “Information Concerning
Procurement of Officers During August 1950,” September 3, 1950, RG 338: KMAG,
1948-1951, NA. Most of the NCOs commissioned to officers were result of absolute
necessity in the units, and directly moved up by filling the vacant spaces on the spot.
This practice of direct field commissioning continued throughout the entire period of the
war even after the ROK Army established effective schools for officer candidates, and
produced 12,479 officers from June 1950 to December 1953. See HQ, ROK Army [육군
본부], History of the Korean War at the Rear Zone: Personnel, p.121.

50 Administrative Instruction to General Order No. 57, HQ, ROK Army, subject,
“Korean Army Service School,” September 1, 1950, RG 338: KMAG, 1948-1951, NA; HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], 6.25 사병 훈방기사: 인사원 [History of the Korean War at the Rear Zone: Personnel], p.176. Because of the frequent changes in the name, it was called either the Korean Army Service School (KASS) or the Army Ground General School (TAGGS).


54 I do not mean the ROK Army has always failed in the battles. There were many exceptional cases of success, but as a whole the ROK Army could not thwart enemy attacks.
CHAPTER 3

CHINESE OFFENSIVES AND ANOTHER ORDEAL, NOVEMBER 1950–JUNE 1951

On October 26, 1950, the Chinese People’s Volunteers Army (CPVA) launched its first offensive against the United Nations Command (UNC), which was followed by four more offensives until May 1951. The entry of the Chinese forces into the Korean War changed both the nature and outcome of the war. Just prior to the opening of the Chinese offensives, the Eighth Army on the west and the X US Corps on the east were advancing north toward the border. Meantime, the ROK army had ten divisions in the field by November. The ROK 1ST Division was under the command of the I US Corps that covered the western sector. The II ROK Corps with the 6TH, 7TH, and 8TH Divisions positioned east of the I US Corps, but after the First Chinese Offensive in October it moved east to cover the unguarded mountainous area between the Eighth Army and the X Corps. The IX US Corps with the US 2ND and 25TH Divisions and the Turkish Brigade entered the area between the I US Corps and the II ROK Corps. On the eastern area, the X US Corps with the 3RD Infantry

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and 7th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Marine Division landed at Wonsan and Hungnam ports after the I ROK Corps' Capital and 3rd Divisions cleared the ports. In the rear area, the newly activated ROKA divisions were busy suppressing guerrilla forces, whose activities caused logistical problems for the UNC forces. The 2nd, 5th, 9th, and 11th Divisions were searching and destroying the guerrilla units in the Chiri Mountain and the Chorwon area, the latter known as the Iron Triangle area, which the IX US Corps left when it moved up to participate in the would-be-final offensive in November.

The UNC's offensive, dubbed as 'Home-By-Christmas' Offensive, began on November 24, but met strong opposition the next day from all directions. Soon the Chinese turned to the offensive and forced the UNC forces to halt their offensive and shift to the defense. On the west where the Eighth Army was in operation, the Chinese Communist forces began to attack ROK and US divisions from the mountainous central area to the west coast. Collapsing in order — "the domino at the Chongchon River" — the Eighth Army had not only to abandon all of its positions north of the river but also to "bug out" and retreat to south of the 38th Parallel. In the east, the X US Corps and the I ROK Corps barely avoided the Chinese entrapment at the Jangjin (Chosin)- Hungnam area. By December 20, the UNC secured a new defensive line from the Imjin River in the west to Hwachon and to Yangyang.
on the east coast, and both sides returned to the very places where they had begun. The difference this time was that the war had escalated into an international affair.  

From January to June, the front moved back and forth in the middle of the Korean Peninsula; at the end of the fluctuation both sides realized that a military solution, though not impossible, would exact a huge cost on both of them. Both sides tried to find an alternative solution to the military ones, and thus the truce talks began from July, which lasted the next two years. Eventually, the truce talks brought stabilization and the front did not change much thereafter. For the ROK army, the period of maneuver warfare from November 1950 to June 1951 provided an opportunity to assess its capability as a reliable fighting force. As in the previous period of the war, the ROK army yet again demonstrated the need for a substantial improvement in every aspect, especially in leadership, firepower, and training. The failures of the II Corps in November 1950, the 6TH Division in April 1951, and the III Corps in May 1951 were the conspicuous examples of the ROKA’s problems.

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The lack of effective leadership among officers continued to pose one of the most crucial problems in the ROK army, and during the period
1950-1951 was not exception. As in the previous months, inexperience, rapid turnover, and the absence of a professional officer corps were the key factors causing the leadership problem. There were some competent high commanders in the ROK army, but in general the Korean commanders showed incompetent leadership in critical situations, which might bring disastrous consequences to the unit.

Among senior leaders, there had not been any significant changes of faces. Most had been assigned to these positions even before the war started. The Chief of Staff, Major General, Chung Il-kwon [정일권] held his position until he was replaced by Major General Lee Jong-chan [이종찬] in June 1951. In case of commanders for three ROK corps, it was rotated among five officers. For the I Corps, General Kim Paik-il [김백일] who had replaced General Kim Hong-il [김홍일] in September 1950 continued to serve until General Paik Sun-yup replaced him in April 1951. The short-lived II corps had General Yu Jae-hung [유재홍] as its commander until it was disbanded in January 1951 after the disaster at the Chongchon [장천] River. The III Corps in a seven-month period had two commanding generals — General Lee Hyong-kun [이형근], the former commander of the ROK 2ND Division on June 25, from October 1950 to January 1951, then General Yu Jae-hung — until May 1951 when it was disbanded after its disgraceful loss to the Chinese offensive in that month.
With the activation of the new infantry divisions in late summer and autumn, several new commanders appeared in the circle of the ROK army’s high command. They were all graduates of the English Language School and about thirty years old (born between 1917 and 1924). At the same time, much older and experienced divisional commanders, who had been appointed to improve the ROKA units’ leadership, were relieved from their post and assigned to less critical positions. For example, General Kim Sok-won, who had gained his fame as a great combat leader and rose to the rank of full colonel in the Japanese army, served only a couple of months as commander of the Capital and 3rd Divisions and thereafter became a “useless old soldier.” General Kim Hong-il, commander of the I Corps until September 1950, and General Lee Jun-sik, commander of the 3rd Division, also had to step aside from the commanding post of ROKA combat units.

Without significant personnel changes among high-ranked officers, young officers filled most of the commanding posts for division and corps. Fast rise to the higher rank at the age of around thirty did not provide the opportunities for them to sufficiently experience combat. This inexperience might have been countered somehow in well-developed training programs. Unfortunately, as seen in the previous chapters, the school and training system of the ROK army was still in its fledgling stage in June, 1950 and had ceased to operate following the invasion of...
the KPA. When the Koreans opened new schools and training centers in late summer, they could not accommodate the refresher courses for officers promoted to a higher rank or appointed to a new position. Without proper orientation and reorientation, commanders frequently encountered difficulties in commanding and controlling their subordinate units. Especially, at the critical juncture of battle requiring a commander's prompt decisions, such deficiencies blinded the commanders to the battlefield situation and kept them from making sound and proper decisions.

On November 25, 1950, the II ROK Corps was advancing toward the Yalu River as part of the UNC's offensive launched, the previous day. The corps consisted of the 6TH, 7TH, and 8TH Divisions had been weakened in the Chinese First Offensive a month ago. The night of November 25, Major General Yu Jae-hung [유재 hend], commanding general of the II ROK Corps, sensed something was going wrong, but he did not realize what happened that night. In front of General Yu’s II ROK Corps, the Chinese had concentrated three armies of nine divisions.5 Notwithstanding their superiority in manpower, the Chinese were well-trained for night combat and they penetrated the II ROK Corps’ positions at the boundary between two frontal divisions. By the next morning, not only had the corps’ line of defense collapsed, but enemy units had also penetrated deep into the corps’ rear area and cut the retreat route. However, General Yu did not
know the situation until midnight, seven hours after the beginning of the
enemy’s attack. The delay of report was due to poor communication and
the reluctance from subordinate commanders to report the unfavorable
developments to their superiors. This incident provides an indication of
the low state of professionalism among the Korean officers. General Yu
immediately dispatched the corps’ reserve regiment to remove the gap,
but it was too late.  

In the 7TH Division area, the 5TH and 8TH Regiments could not
held their positions and began to retreat from the early morning of
November 26. Once again, the incompetence of the Korean officers was
clearly revealed. Just as it happened on the days of June, the ROKA units
retreated “in greater disarray” and the “chain of command was paralyzed
and the infantry men began to escape individually.” A typical pattern of
disintegration during forced withdrawal scenarios dominated the
“confused” and “scattered” the ROKA units, whose officers were not able
to control and command their subordinates. As Sergeant Kim Ki-Yon says
of his experiences with the 10TH Regiment, 8TH Division, once the enemy
attacks intensified, his battalion rapidly became disorganized and
“platoon leaders and company commanders could not command the
confused crowd of [soldiers].” When the division regrouped at the rear
area, the strength of his company was reduced by a half, and none of
company commander and platoon leaders were in presence. Fear,
confusion, and lack of training had caused the disastrous withdrawal from the Chongchon River. Even worse was the lack of leadership among the Korean officers, which caused further deterioration in the situation of the ROKA units.

En route to the new positions just north of the 38th Parallel, the ROKA units taking the retreating routes closer to the mountainous central part were ordered on high alert for guerrilla’s attack. The 8th Division was to take its new positions at the Yonchon [안천] area, west of Chorwon [철원]. On December 9, the division’s infantry units were attacked by the enemy’s guerrilla troops and suffered heavy casualties. An investigation of the incident revealed that the division’s commander, Brigade General Lee Sung-ga [이성가], divided the units into two groups — one with infantry regiments and the other with the motorized units — because of the poor condition of the roads. For the first group of three infantry regiments, which were the division’s core units, he left commanding authority to a regimental commander, when this group should have remained under his own direct command. Instead, General Lee decided to lead the other group mostly composed of vehicles, as he “thought his presence would help this group not to have any problem in using the congested roads.” Later in January, he was court-martialed and got a capital sentence for negligence of duty in front of the enemy.⁹
These problems did not get any immediate attention due to the magnitude of the Chinese intervention and the defeat of the Eighth Army. Now, no one knew whether they could stop the Chinese Communist Forces. The leaders in Tokyo and Washington had to prepare a plan for the withdrawal from Korea, and the future of the Republic of Korea was in question. The new Eighth Army commander, Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway, who took the position after Lieutenant General Walton Walker was killed in a car accident on December 23, faced a serious and extremely difficult task of rebuilding the fighting power and morale of the defeated army, which now included the X Corps. The energetic commander had by February changed the gloomy Eighth Army into a fighting force with heightened morale, especially after the Battle of Chipyong-ni in which the US 23rd Regiment Combat Team overcame and defeated the siege by the Chinese six regiments.

Meanwhile, the ROKA units also seemed to recover from the shock they had suffered from the first two Chinese offensives in the previous year. They got new replacements and weapons they had lost in North Korea. However, this did not mean the ROK army became an effective army with a high capability; they appeared still unreliable as seen at the Battle of Hoengsong in February, where the 8th Division received another heavy blow. Despite these deficiencies, the Korean leaders, especially President Rhee, raised their voices for
expansion of the ROK army to twenty divisions. Knowing that the United States had changed the war's objectives and that the ROK army should assume at some point full responsibility for national security, they felt it was time to discuss the issue. The Koreans even had a new Eighth Army commander who had a favorable view on the expansion of the ROK army. Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet took the command of the Eighth Army after General Ridgway replaced General MacArthur in April. It was the Koreans themselves, however, who rendered the expansion impossible.

In April and May, the Chinese Communist Forces launched an one-month-long offensive — the First and Second Spring Offensives. As soon as the February Offensive ended, the UNC's forces turned to the offensive and continued to advance north to the Kansas-Wyoming Line. In the early morning of April 22, the enemy began to attack the Eighth Army units from every front, but the main strike came to the area known as the Iron Triangle of Chorwon-Kimhwa-Pyonggang. The ROK 6TH Division was hit hard while spearheading the advance of the IX US Corps. The ROK 6TH Division's three regiments disorganized and withdrew as rapidly as possible; the next morning they found themselves ten miles south of the original line, despite General Chang Do-young's desperate efforts to set a defense line. According Major General William M. Hoge of the IX US Corps, regiments of the 6TH Division "fled in disorder without
offering the slightest resistance, abandoning weapons and equipment to
the enemy and permitting friendly supporting elements to be overrun.”
This had been the typical retreat following an ROKA unit's defeat since
the breakout of the war. This time, the ROKA units met a harsh criticism
from the Eighth Army commander. In response to ROK Army Chief of
Staff, General Chung Il-kwon's explanation of failure as “lack of
training,” General Van Fleet took this case seriously enough to define it
as “disgraceful conduct,” caused by the lack of proper leadership among
the Korean officers and non-commissioned officers who had no “sense of
responsibility and devotion to duty” or, above all, the “will to fight.”
It was apparent that the Koreans had to develop a competent officer and
NCO corps before expanding the ROK army's size.

In May, another battle proved that General Van Fleet's argument
was correct. From May 16, the Chinese launched the second phase of their
spring offensive. This time, they concentrated the forces to the east,
especially against the ROKA units. In the central east area, the Chinese
main attacks came to four ROK divisions - the 5TH and 7TH of the X US
Corps and the 9TH and 3RD of the III ROK Corps. At the end of the
offensive, the ROKA units gave up a large gap between the X US Corps
and the I ROK Corps. Among others, two divisions of the III ROK Corps
collapsed and disintegrated entirely. General Van Fleet barely stopped the
enemy advance with the US 3RD Division near Soksa-ri, about forty miles

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south of the original line. During the Battle of Hyon-ni, the ROKA units revealed again their biggest weakness — lack of leadership. When the corps’ only retreating route was cut by the enemy with an unknown strength, the corps’ commander just told two divisional commanders to break through the entrapment and left the area via a helicopter. It was later revealed that the enemy at just less than battalion-strength had cut the road. Not knowing this, two commanders devised a plan to break through the blocking forces, which may have been successful had it been launched. However, the enemy took the initiative and opened mortar fire on the mixed and confused two divisions. Soon, the Koreans gave up the breakthrough and disengaged individually or by small groups, abandoning all of heavy equipment and supply materials in the valley. Later, the Fifth Air Force bombed the material left by the III ROK Corps.18

A series of incidents involving misconduct by the Koreans should not, however, be interpreted as a general trend among the ROK units. In fact, there were many units that had performed well since the outbreak of the war. The ROK 1st Division, which had been under the I US Corps, was cited for “superior spirit and conduct” by American leaders.19 Even the 6th Division mentioned above did perform in an “exemplary manner” before and after the defeat in April, as General Hoge commented.20 However, the shock of those defeats by the ROKA units was profound enough to kill the idea of ROK army expansion, which the Korean leaders
had raised; the very reliability of the Army was in doubt in light of these shocking defeats. Instead of expansion, the Korean and American leaders agreed that the ROK army needed above all else to improve itself.

One cause of these failures by the ROKA units could be answered with the frequent command changes. In case of divisional commanders of the same five divisions, it improved in a great degree and the average ratio was 1.0 for the eight-month period from late October 1950 to early June 1951, which means there was just one time of command changes. Two divisions saw none of changes, and the same commander served the entire period of eight months. The average turnover rate for regiments was 2.3 and for battalions 2.2, and this meant that their average term of service was three months and half both for regimental and battalion commanders. It was much better than that of the previous period, but the turnover rate was still high during this eight-month period.

In analyzing the misconducts of the ROAK units, however, the Koreans and Americans had different views. General Chung Il-kwon, Chief of Staff, ROKA, in a press conference attributed the recent Korean defeats to “lack of firepower, insufficient training and inexperienced leadership.”21 General Chung knew that the Chinese Communist forces had focused the attack on the ROKA units because the ROKA units were less equipped than the US units, especially in firepower. Contrary to General Chung’s ideas, the American leaders in the Far East and
Washington found other causes of deficiencies in the ROKA units and concluded that the lack of leadership was the most crucial factor. From the birth of the ROK army, the Korean officer and NCO corps had never had the chance to build a sense of professionalism and, within it, proper leadership. To have a professionalized corps, an army had to develop a systematic and centralized schooling and training program — a luxury the ROK army never had in the pre-war period and the first year of the war. In early 1951 the ROK army and KMAG began to create such a program for the ROK army; in April and May, however, it was too early to see the result of the new school and training program.\textsuperscript{22}

If the lack of a systematic and centralized schooling and training program caused deficient leadership, the high turnover ratio of the Korean commanders also contributed to the failure of the ROKA units. For the first year of the war from June 1950 to June 1951, the average turnover rate for commander of the surviving five divisions was 3.2, meaning each division had experienced over three command changes within a year. This also indicates that each division had more than four divisional commanders serving an average of less than three months.

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Between the Chinese first offensive in October 1950 to the spring offensive in April and May 1951, the nature of the training program of the ROK army had changed little. The program focused primarily on obtaining and training of new officers and enlisted personnel. In October 1950, the Ground General School was the only military institution providing officer commissions with a weekly output of 250 newly commissioned second lieutenants to the infantry units or other branches. For the replacements, the ROK army operated five replacement training centers turning out about 2,700 new soldiers every day. The ROKA and KMAG had been mostly concerned with meeting the demand of the field units. Now in October and again in November and December, they faced the new circumstances, and the ROK army's school and training system needed to change its primary objectives.

In October the end of the war seemed near, and the ROK army and KMAG together chose to prepare a plan for a training and education program of the post-war ROK army rather than to make a short-term improvement. Keeping the current programs temporarily, they focused on drawing a new system that would encompass replacement training at the bottom to education of high-ranked officers. In the meantime, the sudden turn of events in late October and November forced the planners to rethink the current program. The Chinese offensives revealed the problems not just in leadership but also in training. Combined together.
these factors would bring a new and systematic education and training program as early as possible.

The replacement training system first adopted an improved program. On January 22, 1951, the ROK army consolidated all five replacement training centers (RTCs) at Mosul-po [모슬포] on the island of Cheju-do [제주도], utilizing a former Japanese airfield. This volcanic island was not considered a proper area to accommodate such a large military camp. It was notorious for water shortages and strong winds which prevented the docking of naval ships an average three months a year. This would cause a serious setback to the input of recruits and logistical support. Despite the unfavorable conditions, President Rhee, convinced by the Chinese intervention, insisted on building the First RTC on Cheju in order to employ the island as the “last fortress against the Communists.”

Under the command of Brigadier General Paik In-yup [배인엽], the First RTC had a total capacity of 13,800 trainees and a daily output of 250 replacements for ten infantry divisions and other supporting units. It also instituted a new training program with a lengthened period. At first, it trained each recruit for four weeks before graduation, and in April it doubled this period to eight weeks. KMAG advisors patterned training program after the basic training program of the United States Army. It was a program improved in a great degree from the summer of 1950,
compared to the previous one that had only ten-day training with basic skills like firing.

Another key factor deciding the performance of the ROKA units was professionalism of the Korean officers and NCOs, or the lack of thereof as evidenced by leadership problems and defeats in October and November. Enhancing tactical proficiency and technical competence was an issue gaining urgency in early 1951. In January, the KMAG and ROK army came up with a revised and improved plan for officer training. After the war began, the ROK army had depended on the field commission or the graduates of the officer candidate course at the Ground General School. They could not help but provide new officers for the ROKA units as fast as possible during the early months of the war, and at the sacrifice of professionalism.

The first action was to prepare the proper institutions to train officers with a professional training program. Therefore, the ROK army deactivated the Ground General School in February and established specific branch schools (training centers). While the site of the Ground General School at Tongnae [동래] was transferred to the Infantry School, the Artillery School opened at Chinhae [진해], the Signal School at Pusan [부산], the Engineer School at Kimhae [김해], and the Ordnance Training Center near Kyongju [경주]. This expansion and specification allowed the ROK army to install more sophisticated training programs in the
schools, which would in turn improved professionalism among the Korean officers and enlisted men. The first remedy was to lengthen the officer candidate course. The course had begun with a six-week program for infantry and eight weeks for other branches and soon increased to nine weeks. The new plan prescribed an eighteen-week training program for officer candidates, dividing into a ten-week basic training phase (branch immaterial) at the Infantry School and an eight-week branch material training at each branch school or training center. Class size was reduced from 250 to 200, and the monthly output was 400. Out of 200 candidates, 150 candidates of every class were sent to infantry while the remaining fifty were distributed to artillery, signal, engineer, and ordnance according to the requirement.

The ROK army and KMAG also saw the need to re-institute refresher courses for officers in the field. Except a brief period just before the war, the ROK army had not provided any refresher courses for the Korean officers, who therefore had to rely on their own experiences and on the KMAG advisor's wisdom. From March, major branches began to offer refresher courses to the Korean officers, especially for those who had been commissioned directly in the field without formal officer training. For example, the Infantry School in March offered an officer basic course (OBC) of fourteen weeks duration. The infantry OBC targeted the officers commissioned on the battlefield and those who
received training in the initial officer candidate course that provided only six-week training. The course had a capacity of 525 students with an output of seventy-five graduates every two weeks. Around the same time, the Artillery, Signal, and Engineer Schools began their own refresher program with less capacity and a shorter term than that of infantry.³¹

After the officer basic courses were installed in each school, the ROK army and KMAG prepared the next step of officer training. After preparation in April, they opened in May an infantry officer advanced course (OAC) at the Infantry School. The OAC of a fourteen-week program had a class of thirty officers and a monthly output of thirty graduates. The course was to train officers in "regimental level operations and division's general staff work."³² As a whole, the ROK army gradually adopted the US army’s system of officer training and education during the first half of the year 1951.

Meanwhile, the idea of unit training was also reintroduced. Before the war, the ROKA units were undergoing a series of unit training, and in June 1950 most of them were in company or battalion level unit training programs. Therefore, the Korean commanders and staff officers, especially those of larger units like regiment or division, showed deficiencies in commanding, coordinating, or controlling subordinate units on the battlefield. As a part of practical training, the unit training was the final stage of all training and a process of applying theories to
the fields. On February 27, the ROK 8TH Division — defeated several times from November 1950 to February 1951 — was put into a rehabilitation program for four weeks at Taegu [대구]. Although the program included unit trainings, it focused on reorganization to compensate for huge losses of manpower and equipment from the previous battles. Replacements came directly from the training centers, and the majority of junior officers were the recent graduates of the officer candidate course. Though the division at the program's conclusion was in full strength and closer to newly formed, it was not ready for combat, needing more experience before it would face the enemy again at the front line. The ROK army assigned the division to the anti-guerrilla operation in the rear area, through which the division would acquire combat experiences enough to advance again to the front.

Overall, the ROK army had a much better training and education system underway in June 1951. Its replacement training program was intensified and doubled in duration to eight weeks. However, it was officers who ultimately benefited most from the improved training and education. The duration of the officer candidate course had been increased, and new refresher courses in the major branches were added to enhance proficiency of the Korean officers. And for the first time, an entire division underwent a unit-training program, although it was limited by the emphasis on reorganization. All of these changes indicated that the
ROK army and KMAG had begun to emphasize all three areas of training — enlisted men, officers, and units. However, the system was not fully developed. First of all, it did not include higher-ranked officers — colonel and above, whose professionalism would decide the performance of such large units as regiment, division, and corps. Second, the ROK army needed to exercise strict supervision over the selection of officers for the refresher courses. As in the early classes of the infantry OBC, the commanders in the field units tended to keep competent officers in their units and thus prevented them from getting an opportunity to new and higher military training and education.35 Such a short-sighted attitude would hamper in the long run the development of the ROK officer corps. Finally, as soon as circumstances would allow, unit training should be implemented as it would be the best way for a unit to build and develop a mechanism of teamwork and coherence.

Unfortunately for the ROK army’s training system, however, the disasters of April and May 1951 among the ROKA units came too soon to reflect the positive effect of the existing training system, and those setbacks were more evident than ever. As the truce negotiation commenced from June, it also allowed the Eighth Army and ROK army to review the ROKA training system. As a result, the Eighth Army, KMAG, and ROK army came up with a revised training and education system in the second half of 1951.
Firepower of the ROK army as a whole had made little change during the period from October 1950 to June 1951. The ROK corps remained just as an administrative headquarters without supporting units. A battalion of eighteen (18) 105mm howitzers was still supporting an infantry division, and 60mm and 81mm mortar units were equipped for infantry regiments. As non-divisional units, the ROK army had an independent battalion and a battery, each equipped with 105mm howitzers. At the same time, the needs for heavy mortar got increased. With the Korean terrain, covered by mountains and with a poor road system, such heavy mortars as 4.2-inch mortars were desirable for their mobility and strong firepower. The first heavy mortar company was established and underwent training in the spring of 1951.

If the ROKA units did not see any increase of weapons on the table of organization, they saw it on the battlefield. After their retreat to the 38TH Parallel in December 1950, the ROK divisions were often placed under the command of a US corps. It was the ROK 1ST Division that was first assigned to a US corps from September 1950. The ROK 1ST Division seemed to an exceptional case but it proved that a ROK division under a US corps could be much more effective than other ROK divisions because
it would get much stronger fire support from the corps’ supporting units.\textsuperscript{39}

As the headquarters of the ROK II and III Corps were abolished in January and May respectively, more and more Korean divisions were placed under US corps.\textsuperscript{40} For example, when the ROK 6\textsuperscript{TH} Division advanced toward the Hwachon [ хозяй ] Reservoir in May, the division was able to secure not only the direct fire support from the divisional artillery battalion but also a general support from the IX US Corps’ three artillery battalions.\textsuperscript{41}

In February 1951, the KMAG submitted a new Table of Organization & Equipment (T/O&E) to the Department of the Army, which was approved on April 21, 1951. This T/O&E created a Korean division of 13,554. It would also provide spaces for one battalion of 105mm howitzers, one battalion of 155mm howitzers, a company of medium tanks, and an engineer battalion of two companies.\textsuperscript{42} However, time was needed to fill the spaces, especially artillery units. The 155mm howitzer unit began to appear in October at the Artillery School. In the spring of 1951, only the engineer unit appeared on the division’s organization.

During the period concerned here, the ROK army’s firepower had remained almost unchanged from the prewar period. Among the reasons for lack of heavy equipments in the ROK divisions were the shortage of trained personnel and the Americans’ reluctance to hand them over to the
ROKA units, which in turn had easily relinquished them when retreating or withdrawing by force. In fact, many cases in the ROK divisions showed that the Koreans were not skilled in employing artillery in combat. As happened in the ROK 6TH Division in April, the division launched an attack with the operational plan utterly lacking coordination between maneuver plan and fire support plan. Furthermore, according to the commanding officer of the division's artillery battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Kim Sung, the battalion suffered heavy losses when caught in traffic exacerbated by the lack of roads in the division's sector, another critical factor that limited the employment of heavy equipment.

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For the ROK army, the Chinese intervention brought another ordeal. The ROKA units faced the Chinese People's Volunteers Army in late October 1950, without remedying the weakness revealed in the retreat to the Pusan Perimeter. With the end of the war in sight, the ROK army and KMAG prepared rather a plan for the postwar ROK army than a temporary remedy. The Chinese intervention brought them to the battlefields and forced them rethink the effectiveness of the ROK army. One by one, the ROKA units suffered heavy losses by the Chinese forces who concentrated their actions on the ROKA units. A series of defeats by
the ROK divisions brought a crisis to the entire front, and each time bringing into question the reliability of the ROKA units.

At the beginning of 1951, the ROK army and KMAG came up with measures to improve the ROK army, especially to enhance professionalism. They revised the existing training programs and created new ones where necessary. Extension of the training period was the common method used to incorporate more subjects with intensity. But the ROKA units met catastrophic disasters in the spring of 1951 before the impact of these new programs could become manifest. Generals Ridgway and Van Fleet agreed to take thorough measures to make the ROK Army more reliable. With the coming of the truce negotiations in June, they had an opportunity to deal with shortcomings of the ROK army.

For a discussion of the international dimensions of the war, please see William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995). Stueck argues that the Korean War was a “substitute for World War III” and contributed significantly to “the evolution of an order that escaped the ultimate horror of a direct clash of superpowers.” (p. 3)

Spencer Tucker, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Korean War*, vol. 1, pp. 319-320. He was born in 1893 and forty seven years old in 1950. The citation was from Gen. Kim’s memoir and recited here from the above encyclopedia.

General Lee was graduated in December 1948 as the First Group of the Special Eighth Class and commissioned as a full colonel. His exact age is not known, but according to one source he might have been around fifty years old at the time of the war. Huh, *The Quest for a Bulwark of Anti-Communism*, p. 168.

A Chinese “Army” was equivalent to a US corps and usually had three divisions, although it was armed with less firepower than a US corps. For the Chinese account of the battle, see Military History Institute, Military Science Academy, People’s Republic of China (PRC), *History of War to Resist the United States and to Assist North Korea* (1988), translated into the Korean language by the Korean Research Institute of Strategy (Seoul, 1991). Hereafter, when I cite the book, I refer the translated one.


At this time, General Lee was just twenty-eight years old (born in 1922). Later, he was pardoned and returned to the army. He continued to serve in the army until his retirement as a major general in 1962.

The X US Corps was created initially for the Inchon landing operation of September 1950, and General MacArthur continued to keep a separated line of command thereafter, despite General Walker’s vigorous complaints of this exercise.


From February 11 and 13, the casualty of the ROK 8th Division reached to 9,844. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, p.279, Table 4.


It was formulated into the NSC 48/5.


Letter, CG, IX Corps to CG, ROK 6th Division, April 28, 1951, the Van Fleet Paper. In the period of April 22 and 23, the ROK 6th Division lost the following equipment – 6 75MM howitzers, 8 105MM howitzers, 2,353 M1 rifles, 852 carbines, 85 BARs, 45 HMGs, 43 LMGs, 72 sub-machine guns, 44 60MM and 81MM mortars.


CINCFE (Ridgway) to Dept. of Army, CX 62985, May 21, 1951, Van Fleet Paper.

CG, IX Corps to CG, EUSAK, IXCGC 76, not dated (just after the Chinese First Spring Offensive in April), Van Fleet Paper. The ROK 6th Division recovered from the shock of defeat when it crushed a Chinese attack of three divisions at the Battle of Yongmun-san in May.


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26 The RTC on the island of Cheju was the only RTC, but to distinguish it from the soon-to-be-built Second RTC, it was called the First RTC.


28 An untitled pamphlet in the Van Fleet Paper shows each school’s brief introduction with the training programs each offered.

29 Each school except the Infantry School provided courses for enlisted men to train for the specific skills and knowledge that the branch required.

30 Memo to Senior Advisor, TAGGS, subject, “Officer Candidate School Training, TAGGS,” January 3, 1951, RG 338:KMAG, NA. In a normal month, 400 graduates were composed of 300 infantry officers, 35 artillery, 30 engineer, 20 signal, and 15 ordnance officers.

31 See the footnote #28.


33 The 8TH Division lost 14 howitzers, 68 trucks, 87 mortars, 164 machine guns, 2389 carbine rifle among others, and 4,096 M1 rifles and 7,142 soldiers were killed or missing.
34 Memo, G-3, KMAG to G-3, EUSAK, subject, “Rehabilitation [of the] 8th ROK Division,” February 16, 1951, RG 338:KMAG, NA; Memo, CoS, ROKA to CG, EUSAK, subject, “Employment of the 8th Division,” March 22, 1951, RG 338:KMAG, NA; The 8th Infantry Division [보병 제 8 사단], 오우기역사 [The History of Tumbling Doll], pp. 392-393. It was July when the division returned to the front near Inje [인제] after more than three months of anti-guerrilla operations.

35 Memo AG, KMAG to Senior Advisor, Infantry School, subject, “Academic Standard,” May 3, 1951, RG 338:KMAG, NA. HQ, KMAG urges the Infantry School to have a strict screening process to enhance the standard of students.

36 By the end of 1950, the ROK Army maintained three corps headquarters, but in June the I ROK Corps at the eastern coast was in operation. The II Corps was abolished after the Chinese Second Offensive and the III Corps after the Chinese Spring Offensive of May.

37 Memo, Asst. AG, FECOM to Asst. CoS, G-3, Department of the Army, subject, “Order of Battle, Republic of Korean Army,” November 19, 1951, RG 319: Records of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations Records Section, March 1950-1951, Box #127, NA. This document shows the strength of all defense forces. For the ROK Army strength, it itemizes down to infantry regiment and various combat supporting units or service units. It explains that each division had an artillery battalion with about 580 officers and men.


39 In late October, the list of supporting units for the ROK 1st Division at the Battle of Unsan [운산] other than the division’s artillery battalion of 105MM howitzer included an artillery group led by Colonel William Hennig and a tank battalion. The artillery group was composed of one anti-air artillery battalion of 18 90MM guns, one field artillery battalion of 18 155MM howitzers, and one heavy mortar battalion of 18 4.2” mortars. See Paik’s From Pusan to Panmunjom, pp. 50, 90-97.

40 Until April 1952 when the II ROK Corps was reactivated, the ROK Army kept only one corps headquarters with two divisions, and even this corps was under direct operational control of the Eighth Army, bypassing HQ, ROK Army. Other eight divisions were under the command of the I, IX, and X US Corps.

41 The 6th ROK Infantry Division, 장성전사 [A Combat History of the Blue Star] (1981),
pp. 529-532.

42 Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea*, p. 166.

CHAPTER 4

TRANSFORMING THE ROK ARMY,
JUNE 1951 – APRIL 1952

The Soviet Delegate to the United Nations, Jacob Malik, speaking in a June 23, 1951 radio broadcast, answered positively to a US proposal to settle the war in Korea by negotiation. The United States government had been reviewing the policy toward Korea from March and reached its final decision, shaped as NSC 48/5, on May 17. This policy was critical in its separation of the ultimate objective of unification from the military means. While leaving the establishment of an independent and unified free nation in Korea as a long-term political goal, it sought to end the military conflict through an "acceptable political settlement." The preliminary meeting was held on July 8 at Kaesong [卡森], and two days later the first session opened the negotiations, which would continue for two years.

While the attention was turned to the truce talks, each side tried to draw the greater advantage from the relatively calm period to prepare for the future military operations. The Chinese and North Koreans
completed building two defense lines both from the west coast to the east coast by mid-August. At a meeting held between September 4 and 10, the Chinese command decided to thicken these defense lines with a tunnel system and to build a third line behind them and the coastal defense lines on both sides. While the Communist forces were strengthening their defensive positions, the Eighth Army also attempted to remedy its weakness — the ROK army. In June, the UNC had four corps, seventeen divisions, and three separate brigades as their ground troops. Of these, ten infantry divisions were the Korean troops, and three were under the I ROK Corps. Other divisions were under the command of the US corps. The ROKA units comprised more than half of the manpower within the United Nations Command (UNC) forces. At the end of June, the UNC’s total strength of 554,577 was made up with 253,250 American troops, 28,061 other UN personnel, and 273,266 Koreans (including 12,718 KATUSAs). Therefore, the future operation of the Eighth Army seemed to depend on the performance of the ROKA units. Generals Ridgway and Van Fleet were committed to taking firm measures to improve the ROK army, especially through the various training and education programs.

Meanwhile, although the US government directed the Eighth Army to limit military operations, General Van Fleet wanted to keep his army in action and launched limited offensives in summer and fall of 1951. When the Eighth Army ended its offensives in late October, it held
a defense line very similar to the present demarcation line. With the agreement to draw a demarcation line based on the current positions, large military operations disappeared from the scene, and instead small-scale hill fighting dominated the front.6

Far from the front and the truce tents, the ROK divisions in December 1951 initiated ‘Operation Rat Killer’ in the Chiri-san area. Major General Paik Sun-yup commanded Task Force Paik, composed of the ROK Capital and 8TH Divisions, in a massive and thorough anti-guerrilla operation. Lasting over a month, Rat Killer was very successful and — although it was directed against guerrilla troops and not against regular units — brought confidence among the Korean officers for a larger operation. With this confidence among the Koreans and Americans, the ROK army established a ‘true’ corps headquarters in April 1952, which signified true progress beyond mere superficial growth.

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On June 23, the day before Jacob Malik spoke of the Soviets’ willingness to settle the war through negotiations, President Rhee appointed a new Army Chief of Staff, Major General Lee Jong-chan [이종찬]. The former Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Chung Il-kwon was fired for the Kochang [고창] Incident and for a scandal involving the
National Guard. General Lee entered the ROK army much later than his colleagues. On June 22, 1949, he was commissioned as a full colonel and appointed as Director of the First Bureau in the National Defense Ministry, all made possible by the strong recommendation and support of General Chae, then Chief of Staff, ROK army and Lee’s classmate of the Japanese Military Academy. Lee and Chae graduated the Japanese Military Academy in June 1937 and both served in the Japanese Imperial Army until 1945. Lee ended the war while serving as an acting commander of an isolated engineer regiment in New Guinea.

Like Chung or Chae, Lee’s experiences in the ROK army were very limited, especially with field units. After serving a year at the Ministry of National Defense, he was appointed as the commander of the Capital Security Command (later the Capital Division) on June 18, 1950, just one week prior to the outbreak of the war, but he was relieved the next month. In September he returned to command the 3rd Division and served about three months. When he heard the news of appointment to the ROKA’s Chief of Staff, he was head of the Infantry School. As Chief of Staff, General Lee’s authority was strictly confined to administrative duties, because headquarters, ROK army was “stripped of even minimal operational functions.” In May following the Chinese Spring Offensive, General Van Fleet placed all ROKA units under his direct command, bypassing headquarters, ROK army. During his term from June 1951 to
July 19, therefore, Lee remained as an advisor to both President Rhee and General Van Fleet, but he soon came into conflict with Rhee by opposing the president's use of the military for his own political purposes. While Lee tried to keep the military out of politics, he supported General Van Fleet and his ideas of improving the ROK army through intensive and systematic training and education.

At the ROK corps and division level, there were many changes in commanding position, but the same group of officers — the 1945-46 class of the English Language School — dominated them. Since April, Major General Paik Sun-yup was commander of the only ROK corps, I Corps. From July, he was concurrently appointed as the Korean representative at the truce talks. He led the corps until he left to command the Task Force Paik in December, and General Lee Hyung-kun [01] took Paik's place in January 1952. After graduating the Japanese Military Academy in 1942, Lee was commissioned as an artillery officer and ended the war in Japan as a captain. When the Korean War came, he was commander of the 2ND Division but he was released from the position due to the conflict with General Chae, Chief of Staff, ROK Army. After that, he was not assigned to combat units, except for a short term of commanding general of the III ROK Corps, which was responsible for anti-guerrilla operations in the rear area.10
At the divisional level, a positive sign for leadership appeared during the period of negotiations. For once, the turnover rate of the divisional commanders decreased dramatically. In eleven months, changes of the divisional commander happened only six times among the entire ten ROK divisions. Six divisions had two commanders each and other four divisions had the same commander for the entire period. For the same group of regimental and battalion commanders I used in Chapters 2 and 3, the rate dropped 2.3 to .8 for the regimental commanders and from 2.2 to 1.8 for the battalion commanders for even a longer period. Throughout the remaining period of the war, the turnover rate was kept in low except for the last a couple of months of the conflict.11 Each commander thus had sufficient time to know and then control and command his unit before he took another assignment. It was a positive policy to improve leadership, and this was possible due to the relatively stabilized front and to the absence of offensives from both sides.

However, the ROK army's leadership deficiencies were not entirely dispelled. At the Bloody Ridge just west of Punchbowl, the 36TH Regiment of the ROK 5TH Division engaged in a series of fierce battles from August 18 to 30. The determined ROK troops made continuous attacks on enemy defense positions for five days and finally took the ridge, but the regiment suffered huge casualties. A company commander testified laying implicit blame on the senior commanders, who insisted
upon the frontal and piecemeal attacks against the well-prepared enemy defense positions, which caused heavy casualties. In the midst of fighting, the enemy counterattacked and pushed the 36\textsuperscript{TH} Regiment back to its original positions. While retreating, the Korean troops panicked and the officers could not control their units. Again, the ROK troops showed a lack of confidence, and the officers lacked leadership to command and control their units. In the two weeks of the bloody battle, the ROK 36\textsuperscript{TH} Regiment lost nearly half its total strength with 158 killed, 1,071 wounded, and 224 missing.\textsuperscript{12}

Fortunately for the ROK army, this was one of rare cases of poor performance by an ROKA unit. During the limited offensives in late summer and fall of 1951, the ROK divisions side by side US divisions and with units from other nations performed very well and made many successful attacks, and it was this period that provided the ROK army opportunities to build up experience and, more importantly, confidence. For example, the 5\textsuperscript{TH} Regiment, 7\textsuperscript{TH} Division was known as a cursed regiment with extremely low morale. The regiment had never experienced the “spirit of winning,” and the previous regimental commanders had been released from the post for dishonorable failure or had been wounded or killed in action. When Colonel Chae Myong-sin [채영신] was appointed as the commander in early August 1951, he learned his predecessor had been killed in action. Among the Korean officers, the regiment was known as a
"grave of commander," and in a year, the regiment saw six commanders come and go. With a success in the next battle over a hill, which the regiment attacked and seized, however, Colonel Chae witnessed a change in the regiment. It was "full of high morale and confidence."13 Step by step, the ROKA units were becoming effective fighting forces, and the Korean officers were acquiring more and more combat experiences.

These improvements were possible because the Eighth Army and the US Fifth Air Force forced the enemy into a defensive posture, and because the Eighth Army took the initiative from the enemy. A more significant factor was the method General Van Fleet employed for the ROK divisions. General Van Fleet instead wanted to maximize the Korean manpower and to minimize the firepower weakness of the ROKA units. His solution was to sandwich ROK divisions between the US divisions under the US corps. In so doing, the ROKA units would get fire support enough to stop the Chinese mass attacks.14

Meanwhile, as the truce talks resumed and the front quieted, the Eighth Army and ROK army planned to clean up guerilla units who were concentrated in the Chiri-san area following the 1948 failed Yosu-Sunchon Revolt. It was after the UNC's Inchon landing operation the guerrillas became a greater threat to security and logistics. The successful connection between the X Corps and the Eighth Army after the Inchon landing entrapped a substantial number of KPA units south of Seoul-
Taejon-Taegu-Pusan axis; North Korean troops who could not make their ways north joined the local communists. Due to the UNC’s pacification operations, the areas of influence were largely confined to mountains, principally the Chiri-san area. The ROK army estimated some four thousand guerrillas to be governing the mountain areas, which had been known as the “Republic of Korea in daytime and the People’s Republic of Korea at night.” And, with the stabilization of the front, the Eighth Army was able to accept some risk and commit frontline divisions to the guerrilla clean-up operation. General Van Fleet expected that the enemy would not mount an offensive after the ground operations in the summer and fall and the air operations of interdiction.

In November, General Paik Sun-yup, then commanding general of the I ROK corps, was selected to lead the task force. Paik had experienced this kind of operation while suppressing rebels and guerrillas as the commander of the 5TH Division during the Yosu-Sunchon Revolt. He appointed two infantry divisions for the job: the Capital (Brigadier General “Tiger” Song Yo-chan commanding) and 8TH Division (Brigadier General Choi Young-hee commanding), both proven in combat. Four Combat Police regiments and seven Independent Combat Police battalions, all under the Korean National Police, joined the operation as blocking units on the edge of the main operational areas.
From the planning stage, General Paik and his staff enjoyed the full support of the Eighth Army. The Korean officers worked closely with their KMAG advisors and Eighth Army staff members. Task Force Paik, taking advantage of the snowy winter and the guerrilla units’ inferior equipment and supplies, successfully ended the operation by eliminating more than 10,000 guerrillas. With solid experience, the fresh memory of victory, and confidence, Task Force Paik moved its headquarters to Chunchon to form the headquarters of a new ROK corps in February, leaving the Capital Division to wrap up the operation. It was time to test the Koreans’ performance at the corps level — and it would be an entirely new trial for the transforming ROK army.

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In his July 13 letter to the Chief of Staff, US Army, General Van Fleet clearly stated his method for improving the ROK army. Van Fleet decided to take action in three areas: first, schools and basic training; second, unit training up to division size; and third, the frontline operations. Van Fleet’s ideas also appealed to General Ridgway. Anticipating that it would take two years if the hostilities ended now or three years if the present conditions continued, Ridgway explained the various avenues he and Van Fleet would take to transform the ROK army.
into an army with a "reliable state of combat effectiveness." This agenda included the creation of a centralized school and training system, a long-term unit training program, and a plan to train Korean officers the US army schools in the United States.

The first action was to establish a command to supervise and control all schools and training institutions of the ROK army. This move would give the ROK army a centralized and systematic program. In turn, it would also give the ROK Army the best opportunity to build coherency in training and military operations. Previously, training depended upon the initiative of individual KMAG advisors at training institutions. For this job, General Van Fleet selected Colonel Arthur Champeny and promoted him to brigadier general. From August 1, Champeny would be the senior advisor for the Replacement Training and School Command (RT&SC) at Pusan. He and other advisors would play a critical role in running that command. The RT&SC would assume operational control of all institutions related to training, except for the Intelligence School, which remained under the direct control of the ROK army’s G-2. The RT&SC was to supervise the performance of schools and training centers, and to coordinate training efforts among the ROK army’s headquarters, KMAG, each branch units, and the RT&SC’s schools and training centers.
Once the Replacement Training and School Command was established, the ROK army and KMAG moved to the next step. In order to increase efficiency and to reduce duplication, they decided to consolidate certain schools to locations that could accommodate personnel and facilities. The area near Kwangju [광주] was perfect for a large military complex. It had an airstrip with sufficient water supply and had been used as a military base since Japanese rule. The Infantry School with tank and chemical sections, Artillery School, and Signal Training Center moved to the new area by November 15, and on January 6 the Korean Army Training Center opened with them. It was able to accommodate and support 15,000 troops and secured such critical facilities as ranges for various arms and fields for tactical maneuvering, all in walking distance from the camps.22

In the meantime, the ROK army and KMAG also revised the existing training programs to provide better and enhanced training, beginning with the Replacement Training Center (RTC) on Cheju [제주] Island. In April 1951, the RTC had lengthened the training curriculum from four weeks to eight weeks. However, this did not meet the requirements of the field units. In response, the RTC on July 1 increased the length of replacement training from eight weeks to twelve weeks. Recruits attended first the branch immaterial training for eight weeks, mastering basic subjects. At the end of the first phase training, sixty
recruits per day assigned to the different schools or training centers for a four-week branch material training. Remaining replacements for infantry units stayed and continued the specialized training at the First RTC. The daily output of the RTC increased to 300 on July and expanded to 500 in September.23

Even with this improvement, the ROKA units were complaining about the ill-trained replacements. As KMAG advisors in the ROK divisions reported, the newly arrived enlisted men revealed the low status of training, even in marksmanship among other specialized skills. One reason for these deficiencies was the low standard of the instructors, both officers and enlisted men.24 Nevertheless, while removing those “misfits and incompetents,” the First RTC continued to revise its replacement training program, and in January 1952, it replaced the old twelve-week program with a sixteen-week one.25 The extended period would allow for in-depth-training with rifles and other weapons.

Meanwhile, General Van Fleet and General Lee Jong-chan decided to open another second replacement training center on the mainland and selected Nonsan [노산], southwest of Taejon, for this purpose. Although the reasoning behind his decision was never made explicit, it would not be difficult to infer them from the conditions of the First RTC at the Cheju-do. In addition to the lack of water and the strong winds, it was located too far from the mainland, and the transportation of
material and personnel was difficult and costly. They might have expected the Second RTC to be the main source of the replacements once the hostility ended. Upon the activation of the Second RTC in November, the cadre members prepared to receive the first trainees, and in January 1952 it officially opened. Initially, the Second RTC had only an eight-week branch immaterial training for replacements other than the infantry branch. After eight weeks of basic training, the trainees were sent to the Artillery School or other technical or administrative branches' schools (or training centers). With a total capacity of 14,400, the Second RTC provided 200 new replacements daily.26

While programs for the enlisted men were revised and improved after the truce talks began, officers also took advantage of the better training and education programs. In the spring of 1951, the ROK army and KMAG extended the officer candidate course from six or eight weeks to eighteen weeks. In July, it was lengthened to twenty-four weeks, divided into a ten-week branch immaterial course and fourteen-week branch material course. Selected from NCOs, civilians, and even replacements, officer candidates began basic and general training at the Infantry School. Upon completion of branch immaterial training at the end of the tenth week, they were assigned to branch schools or training centers for further specialized training according to the branch requirements. The officer candidate course had a monthly output of 400,
starting new classes every other week, and increased to 550 in early 1952. At the same time, refresher courses such as an officer’s basic and an officer’s advanced course were offered at the various branch schools.\textsuperscript{27}

The most significant changes in officer training were the establishment of the Korea Military Academy and the Command & General Staff College. The Korea Military Academy was the work of General Van Fleet, who believed it would be a “long-term solution to the problem of leadership for the Republic of Korea.”\textsuperscript{28} Under wartime conditions, however, it was not easy to invest in a long-term solution. Through private and official channels, Van Fleet endeavored to open a military academy at the earliest day. He appointed for the mission Colonel Harry E. McKinney, who had served at West Point for twelve years before coming to Korea. While preparing to select cadets, Colonel McKinney found a suitable site for the academy at Chinhae [진해].\textsuperscript{29}

The first class of two hundred cadets arrived at the academy on January 1, 1952. They were selected from 1,400 applicants; a third of these cadets were enlisted men.\textsuperscript{30} The academy’s curriculum and other systems were heavily influenced by those of the US Military Academy. For four years, cadets would receive both academic education equivalent to education in a civilian university and military training for leadership in the military service. As General Ridgway addressed in the opening ceremony on January 20, 1952, the Korea Military Academy would be a
“strong and sturdy bulwark of the Korean people” for freedom. If the Military Academy did not help improve the ROK army’s leadership immediately, it would produce a “nucleus of well-rounded officers in order to develop the future Republic of Korea Army.” The Korea Military Academy at least symbolized the effort toward an effective and professional army.

In contrast to the Korea Military Academy, the other addition to the ROK Army’s training and school system helped improve professionalism immediately among the Korean officer corps. Modeled after the US Army Command & General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, the Korean Command and General Staff College (C&GSC) was activated on October 28, 1951 in Taegu. As the highest level of the ROK army’s military school system, the C&GSC aimed to prepare senior army officers as commanders and general staff officers of divisions and corps. For six months or twenty-six weeks, the students were taught the principles in tactics, staff duties and functions, and operations at the divisional and corps level. Instruction was delivered in English by American officers. To study at the C&GSC, an officer had to meet all of the following requirements: lieutenant colonel or higher rank, commanding officer for over six months at battalion or above, staff officer at a division or above for over six months, and graduate of the officer’s advanced course. The first class of thirty officers finally began

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the course on December 10, 1951; according to General Van Fleet’s introductory address, it marked “another step in the development of a Korean army that can stand on its own feet.”

The training and education of the Korean officers were not limited to the Korean army schools. Through the Mutual Defense Assistance Program (MDAP), the KMAG secured spaces for the Korean officers at the US Army Infantry and Artillery Schools. The first group of 250 Korean officers — 150 infantry and 100 artillery — departed for the United States on September 11, 1951. For twenty weeks, the officers were trained in the officer’s basic course at both schools; the Korean students were taught in a separate group. Instructions were given by the American officers, but the Korean interpreters were always present. Just after the first group graduated in March, the second group left Korea, composed of the same number of officers from both branches. This was not an entirely new program; a dozen officers had been sent to the US service schools before the hostilities began. The aim was to train and incorporate the Korean officer corps into the American military system. With the same objective, but to achieve them in a quickest time, KMAG dispatched such a large group to be trained directly at the US schools; this exchange continued to the end of the war.

The third and final part of the training programs that Generals Ridgway and Van Fleet had in mind in June and July of 1951 was the unit
training. If the training programs for the replacements and officers were to improve tactical proficiency, technical competence, or understanding the responsibilities of leadership at the individual level, the unit training would combine the three and incorporate them into practice. This synergistic combination of all elements in a unit as a dynamic combat team would be practiced in a minimum two-month training session. Encouraged by successes with the Greek divisions, General Van Fleet, with General Ridgway's support, planned to put all of ten ROK divisions through this training.\textsuperscript{35}

As the conditions of the front allowed in June and July, General Van Fleet, through KMAG, established the Field Training Center (FTC) at the rear area of the I US Corps in August and appointed Vice Commander, IX US Corps, Brigadier General Thomas J. Cross, as its Chief.\textsuperscript{36} The FTC was to reorganize, reequip, and train ROK divisions taken from the front and assigned to the FTC. In September, KMAG and the ROK army established three more FTCs, one for each corps area.\textsuperscript{37} The ROK 9\textsuperscript{TH} Division that had suffered a great loss both in manpower and equipment during the Chinese Second Spring Offensive in May was the first to take advantage of the FTC.

Upon arrival at the FTC, a ROK division would reorganize and reequip with new replacements and new equipment while the division's staff and KMAG advisors prepared a plan for phased training. Using the
concept of "fillers—training—confidence," the training at the FTC moved up step by step from individual, squad, platoon, company to battalion level. At the end of training, the ROK army and KMAG inspected almost every aspect of the division before it left for the front. Even though the training was scheduled to last eight weeks, it typically ranged from three weeks to ten weeks, according to the situation of the war or division's training status. By the end of 1952, all ten ROK divisions went through the FTC course once, and some did twice. The FTC seemed to be a great success, as General Paik Sun-yup, then corps commander before being appointed as the Army's Chief of Staff, praised it so highly. Paik, who had led both pre- and post-FTC ROK divisions, evaluated the effect of the FTC.

Units that completed the [FTC] course lost 50 percent fewer men and equipment in combat than did units that had not had the training. Furthermore, divisions that completed the course and returned to the front revealed an élan and confidence quite superior to what they had shown before going through the training. No one can deny that this training of virtually the entire force provided a firm foundation for today's ROK Army.

From June 1951 to April 1952, the new training programs helped the ROK army transform its character. Existing programs for replacements and officers were revised and extended to cover subjects in depth. In addition, the ROK army created new schools such as the Korea Military Academy and Command & General Staff College. In the field, the Field Training Commands were established as a means for unit
training for the ROK divisions. As a result, the ROK army in April had schools and training commands that complemented each other and that were managed to provide continuous learning.

It should be noted that KMAG always played a central and critical role in this process of transformation. At the beginning of the war, it had only about five hundred officers and men to assist the infant ROK Army. Now, its strength grew to around 2,000, and, on April 30, 1952, KMAG had 1,965 men — 601 officers, 14 warrant officers, and 1,350 enlisted men. They were seen wherever the ROK troops were. From Headquarters, ROK army to an infantry battalion, or from the Korea Military Academy to the replacement Training Center, the American advisors were ever-present to assist their Korean counterparts. Knowing the importance of KMAG advisors’ role to improve the ROK army, General Van Fleet wanted the most qualified personnel to be assigned to KMAG. It was their effort in that changed the character of the ROK units.

During the same period, the ROK army’s inventory of weapons and equipment did not experience the same improvement as other aspects of military readiness did. Basically, the size of the ROK army remained
the same, ten divisions. However, although it was not a huge increase, there were changes in artillery and tank units. From the beginning, an ROK division depended on one artillery battalion of 105mm howitzers. Often, US artillery units supported the ROKA units, but a battalion remained as the only organic artillery unit for a ROK division. Even worse was the tank unit. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the ROK army had some armored vehicles, but no tanks. The Korean leaders asked in vain the US government to provide tanks. Now, for the first time, the ROK army was equipped with tank companies.

The expansion of the ROK artillery force had been a constant subject of discussion among Korean and American military leaders: firepower had always been a problem for ROK divisions. Unlike a US division that had three 105mm howitzer battalions and one 155mm howitzer battalion as the division's organic units, a ROK division had only one battalion of 105mm howitzers. In February and again April 1951, the ROK army and KMAG had appealed to the Eighth Army and the US Department of the Army to equip a ROK division with a battalion of standard 105mm howitzers and a battalion of 155mm howitzers as a way to increase the firepower of the ROK units. After months-long study and discussion by American planners, the ROK army and KMAG were granted authority to activate four battalions of 155mm howitzers as non-divisional units. With this limited amount incapable of supporting all ROK divisions,
they believed these four battalions would remain best as independent units. This would allow them to support the combat units with flexibility.43

The first battalion was formed on September 5, 1951 and immediately began an eight-week training under the supervision of the US corps senior artillery personnel. By the end of 1951, all four battalions were activated and were in operation or training stage.44 At the same time, in order not to exceed the ceiling that US Department of the Army granted for supply purpose, the ROK army pulled out five batteries of 75mm howitzers from the front in October and consolidated them at the Artillery School for training.45

While activating and training four battalions of 155mm howitzers, the ROK army and KMAG planned to activate more non-organic artillery units. Their eventual object was to expand the ROK army's artillery strength to an equal level to the US divisions and corps. However, all equipment other than personnel had to come from the United States, thus limiting expansion. As a temporary step, the Korean leaders and KMAG advisors planned to form three field artillery groups each with two battalions of 105mm howitzers and a headquarter battery in December 1951. After the first group was activated in January 1952, a total of twelve groups were activated by the end of 1952. They remained as non-
organic artillery units until the ROK army consolidated them into a
divisional artillery group in April 1953.46

In the meantime, the ROK army began to put the armored units
into combat. At first, it started with six M36 Gun Motor Carriages47 that
the United States in December 1950 provided the ROK army as
substitutes of medium tanks. Then, the Infantry School trained tank crews
with them, but the training was soon discontinued due to the shortage of
armored equipment. It was resumed when the Infantry School received
thirty-eight M36s in April 1951. Though there were just enough tanks to
activate one company, the ROK army formed three companies and trained
them with the existing tanks. After completion of the Unit Tank Course
for twenty-four weeks within the Infantry School at Tongnae (it was
before the service schools moved to the Korean Army Training Center.
Kwangju), the 51ST and 52ND Tank Companies were activated in October.
While the 51ST Company moved up to the I ROK Corps with twenty-two
M36s and one M32 tank recovery vehicle, the 52ND Company had to wait
for the further arrival of tanks. In March 1952, twenty-eight M24 light
tanks arrived in the Infantry School, and the 52ND Company left for the
IX US Corps area as the organic unit of the soon-to-be II ROK Corps. 48

Activating such artillery or tank units was just one step in the
modernization of the army; integrating them into combat team was an
entirely different problem. Unlike infantry units, the artillery and tank

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units required not only high tactical proficiency but also technical competence. In the ROK army, in many cases, division commanders did not understand how the artillery or tank units worked. For example, the Korean commanders of infantry units did not recognize appropriate ammunition expenditures and ordered the artillery commander to make a concentrated fire with thousands of rounds.\textsuperscript{49} Despite these deficiencies, however, the addition of such assets to the ROK Army definitely increased firepower and hereby the combat power of the ROK units.

During the period between June 1951 and April 1952, the ROK army experienced many changes in leadership, training, education, and weapons and equipment. Within combat units, officers were growing confidence in leadership through successes in battles and through various channels of education and training. The school and training system of the ROK army also raised professionalism among the Korean officer corps and NCOs, while trying to enhance the quality of replacement training. The Field Training Command offered the chance for unit training for the ROK infantry units. Furthermore, the activation of new heavy artillery units and tank units changed at least the organizational structure of the ROK army as a fighting machine, if not its character as well. As a whole,
the ROK army in April 1952 appeared to transforming itself into a modern army. In the same month, the II ROK Corps, which had been deactivated after the crushing defeat at the Chongchon River by the Chinese in late 1950, re-emerged. As General Paik put it, the corps was the “symbol of the new army.” 50

2 For security reasons, the UNC in October sought to relocate from the enemy-held Kaesong [기성] to Pamunjom [판문점] or known as the Freedom Village.


5 The Korean Augmentation to the United States Army (KATUSA) was first introduced in August 1950 to fill the vacancies in the US divisions. Integrating 2,500 Korean soldiers to a US division at maximum, the Eighth Army solved the manpower shortage in its units. In October 1950, the KATUSA strength peaked at 26,021. For further detail, see David C. Skaggs, “The KATUSA Experiment: The Integration of Korean Nationals into the U.S. Army, 1950-1965,” *Military Review*, vol. 38, April 1974, pp. 53-58.

6 Until the Chinese Last offensive in June and July 1953, the nature of the war turned into the bloody battles on the numerous hills, air operations of strategic bombing, interdiction and close air support, and the prolonged truce negotiation.

7 The Kochang [기창] Incident occurred on February 10 and 11, 1951 while units of the ROK 11th Division (BG Choi Duk-sin commanding) were in anti-guerrilla operations near the Chiri-san Mountain area. In this incident, more than 700 innocent civilians were massacred by a battalion from the 9th Regiment. The National Guard Scandal made public the knowledge that over 1,000 conscripted guardsmen (or reservists) died of starvation, illness, and hypothermia/exposure during the winter of 1950-1951. As revealed later, the budget was misused and a substantial portion of it spent for personal purpose or went to the politicians. For detailed accounts, see Tucker, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Korean War*, vol. I, pp. 325-326 & 369-370.


10 Lee Hyung-kun [이형근], *A Lonely Life of Military Serial Number 1: Memoir of Lee Hyung-kun* (Seoul, 1994), passim. There exist
two very contrasting views on him; he was knowledgeable of military operations and tactics, and he was too much self-centered and Japanesque. For example, he proudly explains how he “refused” a Defense Ministry order to go to the Embassy in Japan as military attaché.

11 For the next period from April 1952 to April 1953, the ratio was 1.0 for regimental commanders and 1.5 for battalion commanders. During the last months of the war, there occurred many changes in command. Many old commanders were selected for studies in the U.S. and in the ROK Army service schools. As the Chinese forces began their offensive from May 1953, the ROK Army, not confident on the new commanders, assigned the old commanders to the units again. This increased the turnover ratio in May, June and July 1953.


17 There exist many different accounts on the guerrilla casualty. Paik says that Task Force Paik inflicted about 7,000 casualties and captured about 6,000, while Hermes says a total of about 8,000 was killed or captured. Paik Sun-yup, The True Record of Chiri Mountain, p.92; Hermes, Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p. 183.

18 Letter, General Van Fleet to General Collins, June 13, 1951, Van Fleet Papers.

19 CX 6784, Personal Message from General Ridgway to General Hull, July 23, 1951.
The schools and training centers under the RTSC were the Infantry School, Replacement Training center, Artillery Training Center, Signal Training Center, Engineer Training Center, Medical School, Ordnance Training Center, Military Police School, Quartermaster School, Finance School, Band School, WAC Training Center, and Adjutant General School. KMAGCG to BG Arthur S. Champeny, subject, “Activation of the Replacement Training and School Command,” August 6, 1951, and Memo, G-3 KMAG to Chief, KMAG, subject, “Change in Program of Instruction,” August 7, 1951, both in RG338: KMAG, NA.


Myers, “KMAG’s Wartime Experiences,” pp. 149-151; KMAG Command Report, January 1952. The KMAG and ROK Army did not add the sixteen-week training program (for infantry units) until August 1952.


30 Ibid., pp. 147-148.

31 Korea Military Academy, “Korean Military Academy Catalogue for 1952-1953,” Van Fleet Paper; “Korea Military Academy,” a pamphlet of the Korea Military Academy Foundation, Van Fleet Paper. Among others, the most conspicuous example that the KMA borrowed from West Point was the ‘honor system.’


36 General Order Number 16, KMAG, subject, “Activation of Field Training Command,” August 1, 1951, RG 338: KMAG, NARA.

37 General Order Number 20, September 12 & General Order Number 21, September 25, RG 338: KMAG, NARA.


39 Paik, From Pusan to Panmunjom, p. 162.


42 Prior to the war, ROK artillery units were composed of 105MM howitzers. However,
to supplement the huge losses of these pieces during the initial period of the war, 75MM howitzers were equipped to some batteries. In July 1951, all divisional artillery battalions were again equipped with 105MM howitzers. Other than an artillery battalion, one heavy mortar company was supporting some of ROK divisions. The ROK Army began to form the heavy mortar company of 4.2" mortar from early 1951, but it is not clear when and how many companies were formed. By the end of 1951, every ROK divisions in the front seemed to have one company of 4.2" heavy mortars. Memo, G-3, KMAG to G-4, KMAG, subject, "ROKA 155mm How Bns," August 12, 1951, RG 338: KMAG, NA.


44 Senior Advisor, Artillery School to Chief, KMAG, subject, "Senior Advisors, Korean Artillery Battalion," December 1951, RG 338: KMAG, NA. The list shows that the American advisors were assigned to ten ROK divisional battalions and four 155MM battalions.

45 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. II, p. 595; Memo, G-3, KMAG to G-4, KMAG, subject, "ROKA 155mm How Bns," August 12, 1951, RG 338: KMAG, NA.

46 HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. II, p. 595; Memorandum for Record, subject, "Expansion Program, Korean Artillery," December 13, 1951, and Inclosure #1, KMA GAPT, to CG, EUSAK, November 21, 1951, RG 338: KMAG, NA; The 11th ROK Infantry Division, [A Brief History of the Hwarang Unit], p. 141.

47 It is better known as tank destroyer and armed with a 90MM gun.

48 Myers, "KMAG's Wartime Experiences," pp. 211-212; HQ, ROK Army [육군본부], [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. II, pp. 598-600; Memorandum for Record, KMA GAPT, subject, "Staff Visit to the Infantry School, G3 Representative," September 30, 1951, RG 338: KMAG, NA.


50 Paik, From Pusan to Panmunjom, p. 194.
CHAPTER 5

EXPANDING THE ROK ARMY,

APRIL 1952 – APRIL 1953

The war was almost two years old by April, 1952, and the truce talks had dragged on without a hint that the hostilities would end. Since the fall of 1951 the war had consisted predominantly of sudden outbursts of artillery barrages and limited ground actions on the front — the battle for the unknown hills. Most of the hills could not be found on the maps in Tokyo or Washington; it was a twilight war to the outside of Korea.

During the twilight war, the ROK army had been transformed into a new army, thanks to the whole-hearted effort of KMAG advisors and their Koreans counterparts.

As the twilight war continued, the truce talks grew heated. The issue of prisoners of war (POWs) slowed the truce negotiations. Since December 1951, both sides defended their positions on how to repatriate the POWs. The Communist plan, based on the Geneva Convention of 1949, insisted on all the POWs compulsory return. However, the UNC disagreed, especially after realizing that there were thousands of POWs who did not
want to return to Communist China or North Korea; South Koreans who had been conscripted in South Korea by the North Koreans or North Koreans who renounced Communism that had no future in North Korea. The UNC argued that POWs should be repatriated by choice, based on the convention’s fundamental ideal of humanitarianism and to protect POWs from mistreatment. After the Communist POWs in custody of the UNC kidnapped the commander of the prison camps at the Koje [거제] Island, Brigadier General Francis Dodd in May, the issue of repatriation became part of the war of ideology each side represented. Only after the death of Joseph Stalin in March 1953 was there a breakthrough to resolve the differences on POW repatriation.

Also in April 1952, the idea of expanding the ROK army again faced American leaders. While they were reluctant to make a final decision, the ROK 9TH Division helped persuade them by defeating three Chinese divisions at the Battle of the White Horse Hill in October 1952. The Eighth Army, KMAG, and the ROK army accelerated the formation, training, and deploying ten additional ROK divisions into combat. The 12TH and 15TH Divisions, the first divisions under the expansion plan, were activated in November 1952. By the war's end in July 1953, the ROK army had sixteen divisions in operation and plans to activate four more divisions, and it assumed responsibility for two-thirds of the entire
front line. The ROK army grew to a point where it had the capability to defend its fatherland.

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On a spring day at a valley surrounded by hills, the II ROK Corps flag was blowing in the wind next to Taeguk-ki (태극기, Korean national flag), just as the IX US Corps' flag did with the Stars and Stripes. The scene of the activation ceremony of the II ROK Corps was enough to explain who was fighting the war and how the ROK army had developed: the flags of the two corps were nearly identical except for the Roman number 'II' in the center of the ROK Corps' banner. It borrowed the shapes and colors from the IX US Corps' flag, reflecting the military know-how the Koreans had learned from the Americans. Officers and men of the IX US Corps had trained the Koreans to form a new unit with characteristics much different from the existing ROKA units. The proud attendees at the ceremony included President Rhee, Ambassador John Muccio, and Generals Van Fleet and Lee Jong-chan (이종찬). What they witnessed on that day was more than the mere addition of a new unit. It represented a new confidence on leadership of the ROK officer corps.

General Lee Jong-chan continued as Chief of Staff, ROK army, until his dismissal for political reasons in July 1952, which resulted not
from any flaw in his military leadership so much as from a conflict with President Rhee, who sought to employ the army to break the power of the National Assembly. General Paik Sun-yup was appointed as Lee’s substitute. Paik was one of a few high-ranking Korean officers who had been proven in combat. At the beginning of the war, he commanded the ROK 1ST Division until he left for the I ROK Corps in April 1951. Then, after the successful completion of Operation Rat Killer at the Chiri-san area, he became the commander of the re-activated II ROK Corps in April 1952. Paik at the age of thirty-two was also a young general officer like many of his fellows, but he had plenty of combat experience as divisional and corps commander and proved himself a competent officer. He served as the Chief of Staff until he became commanding general of the newly activated First ROK Army in February 1954.

The corps commanders were also from the same group of graduates of the English Language School. General Lee Hyung-kun [이형규] continued to serve as commander of the I ROK Corps from November 1951 until the end of the war. He was known as Korea’s Napoleon, but he had not demonstrated the Napoleonic genius in combat. There were several commanders for the II Corps. General Paik served about three months before taking the office of Chief of Staff, ROK army. General Yu Jae-hung [유재홍], then Vice Chief of Staff, ROKA, filled General Paik’s position in July. General Yu had sufficient combat experiences from the
beginning of the hostilities, but he did not always show competent leadership. In February 1953, General Chung Il-kwon [정일권], former Chief of Staff, ROK army, was appointed as Yu’s replacement. General Chung had studied at Fort Leavenworth for a year, and after returning to Korea, he had refused his appointment to a division commander, but he changed his mind.³ After three months as a division commander, he got a new place at the IX US Corps as Vice Commander, until he was appointed as the commanding general, II ROK Corps in February 1953.

Divisional commanders continued to be predominantly graduates of the English Language School. At the same time, the First Class of the Officer Candidate School or those who had got special commissions emerged for the first time as divisional commanders. Between April 1952 and April 1953, twenty-nine officers served as commanders for sixteen ROK divisions. Of the twenty-nine, three were from the First Class of the OCS and another three had been specially commissioned.⁴ Though new to the position of divisional commander, they had endured the war for almost two years as regimental commanders or divisional and corps staff officers and were the experienced combat leaders.

However, inactivity in the front did not provide many opportunities to the new division commanders. For the first ten months of 1952, the front calmed down, especially after the demarcation line was agreed upon at Panmunjom in late November, 1951. The United Nations
Command and General Ridgway, with approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, set the new courses of action for the ground forces, according to the changed circumstances. The 'active defense' made the Eighth Army's ground operations very limited, and the war turned into the battles for position — usually high grounds, raids and patrols to gather intelligence on the enemy. The spring of 1952 saw none of ground battles involving a division or more. Operations like Chop Stick No. 6 or No. 16 planned by the Eighth Army were canceled or delayed, and any operation that might negatively affect the truce talks was eventually delayed indefinitely. The summer of 1952 passed by without heavy fighting other than small-scale battles for the outposts near the Old Baldy area. This relative inactivity would soon change as the Communists prepared the next offensive after having used the time to fortify their positions and to reinforce their strength.

The enemy mounted an offense in fall of 1952 all over the front. On September 14, the North Korean-Chinese Combined Command issued an order to its corps to launch the counter-offensive in its own sector. It would last about a month from September 20 and be divided into two phases. Betty, Nickie, Nori, Old Baldy, Pork Chop, Eerie, T-born, Capital, Finger, Bunker, Christmas, and 351 were some of the hills or outposts on which both sides clashed in September and October. The aim as usual was to take or defend certain favorable ground, not to penetrate
deep into the opposing forces. In fact, the strong defense positions built by both sides rendered such maneuvering warfare virtually impossible. The fighting grew fierce, and it always entailed the strong firepower support. In this series of fighting, the Battle of White Horse Hill best demonstrated the combat effectiveness of the ROK divisions.

The ROK 9TH Division under the command of Major General Kim Jong-o [김종오] held White Horse Hill (Hill 395), which guarded the extreme left of the division’s sector. Because the hill dominates the western Chorwon Valley, it was of critical importance to both sides. If the ROK 9TH Division retained the hill, the IX US Corps could use the Chorwon road net. On the contrary, if the enemy seized the position, the IX US Corps would be forced to pull back from the valley because it provided the enemy with direct observation of the valley.

Before the Chinese launched attacks on the hill, the ROK 9TH Division was able to take preliminary actions due to information it obtained from a Chinese officer who deserted. It reinforced the defense forces on the hill by adding an additional battalion. The division also kept other units in a short alert. The corps, too, provided various supports to strengthen the defense. Over all, during the entire period of the battle, at least six artillery battalions supported the 9TH Division. Two tank companies — one Korean and the other American — secured the flanks from enemy encirclement. The Chinese had also determined to take the
hill at any cost. The 38TH Army (three divisions) was in charge of the attacks and prepared very well with replacements and ammunitions. They even demolished the dam on the Yokkok [/effects] River to flood the valley behind the ROK forces on the hill.

In the evening of October 6, the Chinese launched their first attack, which lasted for ten days. Exploiting its advantage in firepower, the ROK 9TH Division kept the hill at last. The Chinese 38TH Army committed at least seven regiments to the offensive, but failed nevertheless and suffered a huge casualty of over 9,500. The hill changed ownership seven times between the ROK 9TH Division and the Chinese 38TH Army, but the Koreans ultimately retained the hill. Even though the ROK 9TH Division lost 421 KIA, 2,391 WIA, and 507 MIA in this battle, it was a great victory for the Koreans because it demonstrated the combat capability of the ROK units. Especially, the commander and staff officers of the ROK 9TH Division with the KMAG advisors’ assistance prepared for defensive plans and, during the battle, coordinated well between infantry and artillery fire and maneuver and fire plans between the ground units and air force. Above all, the Korean officers showed the American commanders that they could command and win a battle against a formidable enemy. The battle received more attention as Operation Showdown of the US 7TH Division east of the ROK 9TH Division failed to remove the Chinese troops from the critical positions. As General Kim
Young-sun [荏光 Sentry], then a battalion commander, recalled, it was a win that proved not only the "combat capability of the ROK 9th Division but also raised morale of the Korean people and the credibility of the ROK army."\textsuperscript{10}

The low turnover of commanders, especially in regiments and battalions, helped the ROKA units to be successful in combat. For the period of eleven months, the ratio was 1.0 for regimental commanders and 1.5 for battalion commanders. Stabilization of command reflected the front situation, and it also contributed to the improvement of leadership by allowing the commanders more time with their units.

The front, however, had changed little by the end of the fall battles, a testament to the heavy fortification of defense positions and the determination of both sides not to relinquish their positions. The front calmed down again and severe battles had to wait until next summer. In the meantime, there were various efforts to break the deadlock at Panmunjom. In November, Dwight D. Eisenhower got elected as president on a platform promising a speedy conclusion. In December, the International Red Cross passed a resolution calling for the immediate repatriation of sick and wounded POWs, a resolution that the US government favored and supported. The JCS approved the US government position, and the UNC requested the Communists to exchange the sick and
wounded POWs in February 1953. In March, the news from Moscow of Stalin’s death accelerated the truce talks at Panmunjom.

From the spring of 1952 to the spring of 1953, the war remained relatively static except for the fall of 1952. Either the military operations or the political negotiations could not bring an end to the war, and the war became very unpopular. For the ROK army, it was a period of dramatic growth. After two years of campaigning and intensive training and education, it proved to the world that it had the capability to bear the major role in defending its nation, if not to win the war. The Battle of White Horse Hill, just one of several battles against the Communists in October, provided an opportunity for the ROK army to prove itself. As the KMAG put it, “October’s violent fighting, in which divisions of the Republic of Korea Army had played such a vital and heroic role, marked the beginning of a significant new chapter in ROKA history.” Within Korea, a new sense of pride and confidence emerged throughout the ROK army. Overseas, events in October were impressive enough for the decision-makers in Washington to expand the ROK army on a larger scale. Finally in November 1952, the ROK army activated the first two additional divisions.
The idea of expanding the ROK army first came from the Koreans as early as April, 1951. Just before the Chinese spring offensive, President Rhee through the Korean Ambassador in Washington conveyed his desire to expand his army from ten to twenty divisions. However, American decision-makers doubted the economic capability of the ROK to support twenty divisions. Furthermore, the defeat of the ROKA units and lack of leadership stopped further discussions of the issue. The question of the ROK army's expansion appeared again in April 1952, this time from the American side. General Van Fleet indicated in his meeting with Secretary of the Navy Dan Kimball in late March that he favored the creation of ten additional ROK divisions. After returning to Washington, Secretary Kimball raised the issue at a meeting of the Armed Forces Policy Council. Surprised by this initiative, General John E. Hull, Vice Chief of Staff, US Army, asked an explanation of General Ridgway, who had argued against increasing the ROK army's strength.\textsuperscript{13}

As it turned out to be a surprise, General Van Fleet believed that the expansion of the ROK army would be the "most economical approach" to achieve the United States mission in Korea, and that the Korean manpower was now "available," "cheap," and "loyal and willing to fight." Furthermore, he felt that, since it was the Koreans who had to face the Communists in Korea after the United States left, the ROK army should be increased.\textsuperscript{14} However, after confirming Ridgway's opposition to the
idea of the ROK army’s expansion, General Van Fleet temporarily put aside this proposal. Like General MacArthur, General Ridgway opposed the idea because he thought that the ROK army lacked proper training and qualified leaders.

In May 1952, General Mark W. Clark replaced General Ridgway who left Tokyo to assume the Supreme Allied Command, Europe. This change brought an alteration of attitude to the expansion of the ROK Army. In contrast to his predecessor, Clark favored expansion and felt that, from the beginning of his assumption of the command in the Far East, the United States “should build up the ROK Army to its maximum capability.” In June, he endorsed General Van Fleet’s recommendation to increase the ROK army’s ceiling to 362,946 from 250,000, the figure the United States had set in September 1950 for the ten-division ROK army. However, after a survey and discussions with General Van Fleet, Clark soon changed his mind and decided that it would be much better to have an additional two divisions. He proposed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff to increase the ROK army to twelve divisions with 415,046 men. The Department of the Army denied the proposal, reaffirming the ten divisions of 250,000 troops should be the post-war ROK army strength.

After further studies of the issue, the JCS decided in early October to increase the strength of the ROK army to over 500,000. Though this was not a final decision, it clearly predicted future American
policy to the ROK army. The major considerations for this decision were that the "combat capability and reliability of [the] ROKA increased" and that the expansion of the ROK army would bring a "progressive reduction of American pers[onnel]." The JCS asked General Clark to develop a phased plan to activate additional ROK divisions and supporting units.18 After discussing the matter with Van Fleet, Clark submitted to General J. Lawton Collins a phased program to activate an additional ten divisions by August 1953. If adequate and timely logistical support were made to the Eighth Army, it would also release one American division from the war in May 1953 when four new ROK divisions were combat-ready.19

On November 12, the 12TH and 15TH Divisions along with six independent regiments were activated at the Unit Training Center at Yangyang. The 12TH division finished its training at the Unit Training Center, then combined training at the IX US Corps, and moved to the X US Corps area to relieve the US 45TH Infantry Division before the year ended. In a similar manner, the 15TH Division began its training at the Unit Training Center from early December and transferred to the front to relieve the ROK 5TH Division in late January 1953.20 Before the spring ended, four more ROK divisions were activated as planned. The 20TH and 21ST Divisions were formed in February, and two months later the 22ND and 25TH Divisions were activated at the Unit Training Center.21 By April
1953, the ROK army had sixteen divisions in hand and twelve divisions at the front, relieving the US and other UN units.

With the expansion of the ROK army, the Eighth Army and the ROK army had to pay more attention on the training and school system. The sudden growth would disrupt the smooth progress of training programs or reduce the combat effectiveness of the existing units by taking out the trained troops as cadre members for the newly activated units.

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The training and school system had played a key role in transforming the ROK army. In 1952, it remained an important means to increase the combat power of the rapidly expanding ROK army. Because most of the schools and training centers by then had well-developed training program, the ROK army and KMAG made just a few revisions. Instead, they were concerned more about unit training, and emphasis was shifted to the training of the newly activated units, especially the infantry divisions, artillery battalions, and tank companies.

First of all, replacement training was not changed much, and two Replacement Training Centers (RTC) had the same training program of sixteen weeks that had begun in January, 1952. A trainee received for the
first eight weeks the branch immaterial training in basic subjects. Upon completion of the branch immaterial training, a trainee became a rifleman. The second phase was the branch material training that was to train a rifleman as a specialist. The First RTC at Cheju Island trained recruits for the infantry units, and the branch material training was divided into three groups — the BAR and light machine gun (50%), the 57mm recoilless rifle and 60mm mortar (35%), and the 75mm recoilless rifle and 81mm mortar (15%). The Second RTC at Nonsan trained replacements for units other than infantry until it added the second eight-week branch material training program for infantry in August 1952. After eight weeks of basic training, the trainees were transferred to branch training institutions. This eighteen-week training program continued to provide new replacements to the rapidly expanding ROK army through the end of the hostilities. Other training also remained unchanged for the rest of the war. Officer candidate courses, officer basic and advanced courses, and other courses for officer candidates and officers were similarly formatted. During this period, the schools and training centers had one more advantage. In early summer 1952, the Korean officers attending the US military schools returned to Korea after almost a year of training and education, and the ROK army assigned a substantial number of those officers to the schools and training centers, in order to increase the quality of instructions. The Infantry School, for example, had sixty-seven
officers out of about 150 graduates of the US Infantry School as instructors in October 1952.\textsuperscript{23}

While the schools and training centers provided the routine training programs, the ROK army and KMAG emphasized unit training both for the existing ROK divisions and for the newly activated units of the various branches. They used three methods for the unit training. First, some of branch schools had their own unit training programs. The Infantry School, for example, had courses for armor unit training and heavy mortar unit training. The second method was to utilize a field training facility, which was used to effectively retrain the ten ROK divisions. Finally, the ROK army’s new units were often attached to a corresponding American unit for on-the-job training. This method was introduced to apply American methods to the new units, such as corps headquarters or artillery groups. Depending on the situation, the newly activated units took advantage of one or a combination of the methods.

In July 1951, General Van Fleet, disappointed by the ROK army’s performance during the spring campaign, had made Korean divisions go through an intensive unit training at the Field Training Command. All ten veteran divisions finished the course by the end of 1952. While other FTCs were phased out and eventually deactivated, the FTC #2 at Yangyang [양양] was re-designated to the Unit Training Center under the control of the KMAG in July 1952.\textsuperscript{24} It was primarily to train the newly
activated ROK infantry regiments and divisions, four weeks each. Before
taking divisional level training at the Unit Training Center, the division’s
organic units had been trained for sixteen weeks with each branch’s
training program. The duration of the training period varied depending on
the combat situation.25

On-the-job training with an American unit was employed
frequently, and the training process of the II ROK Corps would be a vivid
example. Upon completion of “Operation Rat Killer” in the winter of
1951-52, General Paik Sun-yup, commanding general of Task Force Paik,
and his staff were ordered to activate Headquarters and Headquarters
Company, II ROK Corps in February 1952. About two hundred officers
and enlisted men moved up to the area near to Headquarters, IX US Corps
at Chunchon [춘천]. For about five weeks, under supervision and
assistance of Lieutenant General G. Willard Wyman and his corps staff,
the Koreans learned from their American partners about the policies and
procedures each staff section should follow in supervising, controlling,
directing, or coordinating their subordinate units. On April 5, the II ROK
Corps was put into combat.26

After reforming and revising the ROK army’s school and training
system after the summer of 1951, the Eighth Army and KMAG launched
the program to expand the ROK army. To meet the requirement of training
the newly activated units, the unit training became an important part of
the ROK army’s training system. The unit training, however, was not limited to infantry units, and it was applied to the new units of more complex and technical branches such as artillery and armor.

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With its growth in size, the ROK army also added new elements to increase its combat power. Transferring equipment and weapons to Korea was an issue of debate in Washington because Korea was not the only country that the United States had promised to support. A sudden increase of the flow of weapons to Korea would interrupt the United States programs in other areas — Europe, Taiwan, and French Indochina. However, as the United States policy was to end the war as quickly as possible and to withdraw as many American troops as possible, it became evident that the ROK army should be equipped to defend the nation by its own capability. The artillery, which had been the biggest weakness of the ROK army, increased not just in total number of artillery pieces but also in the number of each division’s artillery battalions. The number of tank units also increased, but slowly.

The formation of new artillery battalions had been in progress since January 1952. By the end of 1952, the ROK army finished activating twelve new artillery groups of two battalions, each with
105mm howitzers. These were intended to be divisional artillery in near future. In training of these artillery battalions, the ROK army and Eighth Army employed a familiar method: the cadre-filler method. With cadre members coming from the old units, the ROK army activated a group each month. After four weeks of cadre training at the Artillery School, new fillers, who completed artillery replacement training at the Artillery School, were assigned to the group. The Artillery School then put the unit through an eight-week unit training program. Upon completion of training at the Artillery School, the new group moved up to the front and were assigned to the 5TH US Artillery Group under the II ROK Corps. There they took tests and practical training before going into combat.27

In the midst of this expansion program, the Eighth Army with the Department of the Army’s authorization planned to form six additional 155mm battalions, making ten battalions in total. On June 16, the ROK army activated six (88TH, 89TH, 91TH, 92ND, 93RD, and 95TH) field artillery battalions with only cadre members of eight officers and 200 enlisted men. Then, they were assigned to the American divisions — one battalion to a division — for about four weeks of training. The reason for this method was to make ready them for early commitment to combat without interrupting the other artillery expansion program (one artillery group of two 105mm battalions in each month) at the Artillery School.28 Just as the ROK army activated two additional field artillery groups in
November 1952 for the newly activated 12\textsuperscript{TH} and 15\textsuperscript{TH} Divisions, two more battalions of 155mm howitzers were formed and put into training under operational control of the I and IX US Corps in January 1953.\textsuperscript{29}

By 1953 the ROK army had sufficient artillery units to form a US-type divisional artillery group, and the Eighth Army directed the ROK army to integrate field artillery groups and medium artillery battalions (155mm) into the division's artillery group. The ROK Capital, 1\textsuperscript{ST}, 2\textsuperscript{ND}, 7\textsuperscript{TH}, and 9\textsuperscript{TH} Divisions now had a headquarter battery, three light-artillery battalions of 105mm howitzers and one medium-artillery battalion of 155mm howitzers.\textsuperscript{30} By the time the truce was signed in July 1953, all sixteen ROK divisions had an artillery group consisting of three 105mm and one 155mm battalions.\textsuperscript{31}

Another area where the ROK Army suffered an imbalance was armor. In October 1951, the first tank company was activated and, by April 1952, two companies (51\textsuperscript{ST} and 52\textsuperscript{ND}) were in operation under the I and II ROK Corps. The ROK army continued to activate and train tank companies at the Infantry School, and, by the end of April, thirteen companies were activated and nine were in operation. In January 1953, Headquarters and Service Company of the 1\textsuperscript{ST} Tank Battalion were activated and began the unit training at the Infantry School. After two months of training, the 1\textsuperscript{ST} Battalion moved to front under the control of the II ROK Corp. Contrary to the original plan to support each division
with a tank company, the ROK army and KMAG integrated the units into a battalion of three companies in order to employ tank units with effectiveness and flexibility. In April, the 2\textsuperscript{ND} and 3\textsuperscript{RD} Tank Battalions were activated and began the unit training at the Infantry School (the Armor School was separated from the Infantry School on May 15), and were attached to the II and III ROK Corps just before the war ended.\textsuperscript{32}

In combat actions, the ROK tank units played an active and positive role and proved that the armor units could play a vital part in combat actions even in the mountainous Korean terrain. In October 1952, three tank companies were committed to the battles on the White Horse Hill and the Sniper's Ridge, and they got “acclaim” and assured that the “complexities of mechanized warfare could be ... absorbed by ROK officers and men.”\textsuperscript{33} In spite of the shortage of equipment, the ROK armor grew steadily to form at least the nucleus of tank units for the rapidly expanding and improving ROK army.

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From the spring of 1952 to the spring of 1953, combat at the front was limited to small scale fighting over the hills of the combat outpost line or between patrols. The hot war spread to the truce tent and the POW camps. Utilizing this stabilized front, the ROK army launched a
project to double its size to twenty divisions. By the time the truce was signed on July 27, 1953, the ROK army had sixteen divisions and the responsibility for two-thirds of the front. Along with this growth, the ROK Army also activated artillery battalions of 105mm and 155mm howitzers enough to support all ROK divisions with the same level of firepower as an American division had. Though small, a nucleus of tank units was activated and trained for combat, and three tank battalions, one for each ROK corps, were in operation before the hostilities stopped.

Along with the expansion, training played a key role in maintaining and improving combat effectiveness of the existing units and the newly activated units. While the improved programs of the school and training system continued to produce qualified officers and enlisted men, the unit training at the training centers or at the field units became more important than ever before. Practical training such as on-the-job training, especially at the US units, improved the effectiveness of the newly activated ROKA units. In July 1953, all these expansion and training programs were operating without interruption to facilitate the modernization and increase the reliability of the ROK army. However, it had one more ordeal to pass before it could be proclaimed a modern army. Just before the truce was signed, the Chinese People’s Volunteers Army launched the last offensive of the Korean War.
1 The first half of 1952 was covered by the news of political crisis [or constitutional crisis] caused by President Rhee's attempt to revise the Constitution to allow himself another term of office. After declaring martial law in Pusan (temporary capital), Rhee ordered General Lee to send one or two divisions to the area, but General Lee refused to follow his order. General Van Fleet supported General Lee's rejection.

2 Once President Rhee asked "Is it true that you are known as the Korean Napoleon or Korean Tojo?" Lee Hyung-kun [이형근], 군인 1번의 외길 인생: 이형근 회고록 [A Lonely Life of Military Serial Number 1: Memoir of Lee Hyung-kun], p. 100.

3 It was because he had never served at a division or corps level. After hearing the news of appointment at the 2ND Division, Chung got furious and stayed at home. In his letter to General Van Fleet, he complained this appointment, because he felt it would draw upon himself "public's laughter" by accepting the "demotion in assignment." Letter, General Chung to General Van Fleet, July 22, 1952, Van Fleet Papers.

4 HQ, ROK Army, 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. II, pp. 360-417; Han Yong-won [한용원], 창군 [The Creation of an Army], passim.

5 Hermes, Truce Tent and Fighting Front, ch. IX; KIMH, The Korean War, vol. III, ch. III.

6 It is not known the exact strength of both the North Korean People's Army and Chinese People's Volunteer Army for the period concerned here. The NKPA in January 1952 had eighteen infantry divisions and three mechanized divisions. By the end of the war, it added four more infantry divisions. Its strength of October 1951 was as follows — 293,684 combat troops out of total 427,046 for the NKPA. North Korean Air Force in October 1951 had three air divisions with 4,306 officers and men. The First Combat Air Division had fifty-two MIG-15s, the Second Division forty-eight LA-9s, and the Mixed Division thirty-two YAK-9s and thirty IL-10s. The Navy concentrated for the coastal defense had about 29,100 troops. The Chinese people's Volunteer Army had in January 1952 seventeen armies (corps strength) and 52 infantry divisions as the ground combat units, and it also had another four divisions by the end of the war. Korean Institute of Military History Research and Compilation, trans. & ed., 소련 공군은 장 라주바에프의 6.25 전쟁 보고서 [The Korean War Reports by Chief of the Soviet Military Advisory Group Rajubaef], vol. II, p. 241 and vol. III, pp. 158-267; Korean Institute of Strategic Affairs, trans., 중공군의 한국전쟁: 항이원조전사 [History of the Korean War and the Chinese Communist Army: History of the War to Resist America and to Assist Korea], pp. 221-222.

7 Korean Institute of Strategic Affairs, trans., op. cit., pp. 237-245.

During the ten-day battle, the friendly units fired over 385,000 rounds of howitzers, 392,000 of rockets, and 251,000 of mortars. The ROK 9TH Division also enjoyed the close air support (CAS) in a great number - 669 sorties in daytime and 76 sorties at night. HQ, IX US Corps, "Special After Action Report, Hill 395 (White Horse Mountain), 6-15 October 1952," October 23, 1952, Enclosure "A" & "B," Van Fleet Paper.

General Kim, graduate of the Seventh Class, Korea Military Academy (still Officer Candidate School in 1948), commanded the ROK 9TH Division in the Vietnam War. Kim Young-sun, [Glory at White Horse Hill: Memoir of Kim Young-sun], vol. I, (Seoul, 1997), p. 88. The 9TH Division was called as the White Horse Division after this battle.

Hermes, Truce Tent and Fighting Front, p. 411.


Message, TEK-22, General Ridgway to General Van Fleet, April 11, 1952 and Message, KET-24, General Van Fleet to General Ridgway, April 12, 1952, Van Fleet Papers. General Ridgway’s opposition was based on the inability of the Korean economy to support such a large army, his consideration of the impact of the unbalanced increase in ROK military on the Japanese thinking, and his preference of the expansion of the Japanese military to that of the ROK armed forces.


Message, DA 920585, Dept. of Army to CINCFE, October 13, 1952, Van Fleet Papers.

AG 322 KCS, HQ, EUSAK to CINCFE, subject, "Expansion of ROK Army," October


24 Those FTCs were transferred from KMAG control to each corps, and the corps employed them as a training facility for the corps’ reserve units.

25 Myers, KMAG’s Wartime Experiences, pp. 142-144 & 164-166; HQ, EUSAK, “Experience & Lessons Learned in Training the ROK Army,” pp.9-11, RG 338: USAPAC, Military History office, Formerly Classified Organizational History Files, NA.

26 Paik, From Pusan to Panmunjom, pp. 193-195; Staff Memorandum, HQ, IX US Corps, subject, “Training of Task Force Paik,” February 12, 1952 and a study entitles “The Corps Staff,” both in RG 338: USARPAC, Military History Office, Organizational History Files, Box #62, NA.

27 The artillery groups activated in the second half of the year were assigned to other US corps for test and practical training. HQ, EUSAK, “Experience & Lessons Learned in Training the ROK Army,” p. 10, RG 338: USAPAC, Military History office, Formerly Classified Organizational History Files, NA.


The 2ND Division lacked the medium-artillery battalion because only four battalions were combat ready, which had been formed in 1951. Myers, "KMAG's Wartime Experience," pp. 104-105; HQ, ROK Army, 육군발전사 [History of the ROK Army's Development], vol. II, p. 597.

The divisions under the II ROK Corps – 3RD, 5TH, 6TH, and 8TH – did have a 'provisional' artillery group with the same composition of artillery pieces other divisions had. HQ, EUSAK, "Investigation Concerning Displacements of II ROK Corps Artillery Units During the July 1953 Enemy Offensive," pp. 2-4, August 30, 1953, RG 338: USARPAC, Military History Office, Formerly Classified Organizational History Files, NA.


CONCLUSION

THE FINAL TEST, MAY-JULY 1953

After 'Little Switch' in April 1953 resulted in the exchange of the sick and wounded prisoners, the truce talks moved rapidly to a conclusion. As the Communists gave up their position on the POW repatriation and, on June 8, agreed to voluntary repatriation under international supervision, the last negotiating obstacle to end the war was removed and the only thing remained seemed to be the signing ceremony. However, President Rhee opposed ending the war without firm security guarantees for South Korea. Publicly he advocated unification under his regime and made his point with government-sponsored mass demonstrations against the truce or 'cease-fire.' The final blow came on June 18 when he ordered the Korean commanders of the security guards at the POW camps to release the anti-communist Korean POWs. About 25,000 POWs were freed from custody, and less than a thousand of them were recaptured.¹ Rhee demanded that the United States give South Korea a "guarantee," as General Paik explained to President Eisenhower.
which turned out to be a mutual defense pact between the Republic of Korea and the United States.

Under the surface of such turbulent political events in the spring and early summer of 1953, the front began to heat up again. In March, the Chinese completed the deployment of the newly-arrived First, Twenty-Third, Twenty-Fourth, and Forty-Sixth Armies to the front, the Sixteenth and Fifty-Fourth Armies to the western coast, and the Twenty-First Army to the eastern coast.² The Chinese then mounted an offensive against the vulnerable outposts the UNC held, following their decision in March “to get the units recently arrived in Chosun [Korea] to have experiences by assigning them to the excellent positions of the front.”³ In April, they continued the small scale attacks on the outposts, and on May 5 the Chinese high command issued a directive to prepare a major offensive by the end of the month.⁴

According to the directive, the Communist forces would launch an offensive divided into three phases between early June and July. Each phase would take about ten days and, after a five-day break, shift to the next phase. The basic purposes of this offensive were to “annihilate the enemy, to train the units and to give them [combat] experiences, to assist those in Panmunjom, and to improve the positions of the friendly forces of the frontline.” In each phase of the offensive, an army would attack “a
battalion or smaller unit and attempt to annihilate the enemy from one or
two platoons to one or two companies.\textsuperscript{5}

The last offensive was to end around July 10, but Mao Zedong
decided on July 19, the day after Rhee freed the anti-Communist POWs,
to "take actions to show their concerns" over Rhee's unilateral initiatives.
Fully understanding Mao's concern, Peng Dehuai, Supreme Commander of
the CPVA, suggested to Mao that the CPVA "inflict a heavy blow on
Rhee's military by annihilating 15,000 troops." The next day Mao
approved Peng's proposal. Peng committed the Twentieth Army Group
(similar to a US field army) with five armies against the four ROK
divisions at the Kumsung salient — the Capital Division at the extreme
right of the IX US Corps zone, and the 3\textsuperscript{RD}, 5\textsuperscript{TH}, and 8\textsuperscript{TH} Divisions under
the II ROK Corps. On July 13, the CPVA Twentieth Army Group opened
fire with its 1,100 artillery pieces and mortars at the ROK positions and
thus began the final test of the ROK army.\textsuperscript{6}

In the meantime, the ROK army was performing its usual
activities. With the support of the Eighth Army's new commander,
Lieutenant General Maxwell D. Taylor, the expansion program for the
ROK army continued to activate new infantry, artillery, and armor units
and other technical and service units. The ROK army activated the
Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the III ROK Corps in May
1953 and placed them under the X US Corps for the on-the-job training.
Around the same time, in order to increase the effectiveness and flexibility of firepower support, the ROK army began to activate the corps field artillery groups. On the whole, the ROK army made a smooth progress toward its goal of a twenty-division army with supporting units. However, the ROKA units, which had fought off the small scale attacks in June, had to face the last and one of the largest offensives of the war and could not afford to repeat its mistakes in the Chinese Spring Offensive of April and May of 1951.

On July 13, it was cloudy and about to rain. At 2100 hours, CPVA units launched attacks across the entire front of the Kumsung salient and penetrated deep into the ROK positions. By the morning of July 15, the enemy advances had created a big penetration, twenty-three miles wide and seven miles deep. The next day, the II ROK Corps, under the command of Lieutenant General Chung Il-kwon, began to counterattack enemy positions. Three days later, units of the II ROK Corps secured a line along the southern bank of the Kumsung River. On July 20, the front quieted, and officers at Panmunjom were busy with the last touches to the truce agreement and began to draw the demarcation line. On July 27, the truce was signed, and the Korean War ended after three years and one month of fighting.

During the last Chinese offensive, the ROKA units failed to repulse the Chinese attacks from their initial positions and allowed them
to penetrate deep into the rear areas. Though they recovered a portion of the lost areas, the ROKA units had to give up the salient north of the Kumsung River. Therefore, by the outcome of the combat actions, the ROK divisions' performance was unsatisfactory. A noteworthy fact, however, was that the Koreans — both officers and enlisted men — reacted differently to the overwhelming enemy forces than they had in the 1950-1951 engagements. There was confusion but not panic, retreat but not a rout. Furthermore, officers led their troops with a stronger will to fight. A platoon from the ROK Capital Division fought to the last man to hold its position, even after they were encircled. An after-action analysis summarized the Koreans' performance thus:

With a powerful [enemy] attacking force operating on a narrow front, it was inevitable that some positions would be flanked, isolated, and overrun. But troops involved fought extremely well. Instances of outstanding leadership, and individual and unit heroism and tenacity were commonplace. While the situation sometimes was obscure, it was still apparent that commanders and their men at the scene of action were reacting to circumstance as they should have done; that is, they inflicted casualties and damage upon the enemy wherever possible, withdrew when their withdrawal was unavoidable, and strove continuously to maintain the integrity of units.

The ROKA units became more reliable combat forces after three years of war and in less than a decade after the Constabulary formed. As General Taylor put it, the Battle of Kumsung Salient was a “graduation exercise for the ROK Army which had demonstrated its ability to recover from a heavy blow and come back fighting.”
The ROK army at the end of the Korean War had become a different force than its earlier versions of 1948 or even 1950. In just a five-year span, or seven years including the Constabulary period, the ROK army developed into a modern army with considerable combat capability. Most of transformation was made during the war. This study has attempted to examine the formation and development of the ROK army as a modern ground force. On the one hand, this is an institutional history that follows the changes in the army over time. To illustrate the historical background of the ROK army, I touched on the Constabulary and the pre-war ROK army. The Constabulary is crucial in analyzing the ROK army because it formed the pool of officers who would later lead the ROK army. These officers lacked professionalism, but were armed with strong anti-Communist convictions. It also built a foundation upon which the future ROK military forces would be based. Like other areas of the South Korean society, the military chose — albeit involuntarily — as its model the American military system and tried to “emulate” it for the rest of the period.

For the entire period covered in this study, therefore, the American service personnel has always been with the ROK army’s units.
from the beginning, and it was the Americans who made the ROK army a modern army in a very short period. Notwithstanding such top military leaders as Generals Van Fleet and Clark, many others played the key role in developing the ROK army; these soldiers assigned to the KMAG as advisors were especially important to the entire process.13 Coming down to the infantry battalion, the American advisors not only advised the Koreans but also supervised or even commanded them in a crisis. Furthermore, the United States provided the ROK army with logistical support, especially weapons, equipment, ammunitions, and communications radios.

Building a modern army with combat capability is more than forming units, and it usually takes quite a long time accumulating knowledge and tradition. In August 1945, the Koreans had no recent experience; in the late nineteenth century, the Chosun Kingdom attempted to form a 'new' army, but it failed.14 The Japanese colonial government never allowed the Koreans to form their own security force, though they permitted a handful of the Koreans to serve in the Japanese Imperial military forces and in the Manchukuo Army. In the 1940s, the Japanese government forced young Koreans to serve in the Japanese military. Therefore, after the Japanese surrendered to the Allied forces, terminating their colonial rule over Korea, the Koreans had to build an army on the new grounds.
To examine the combat effectiveness of the ROK army, this study traced the changes and development in the ROK army’s officer corps and leadership. On the eve of the Korean War, the officer corps was not a professional group, and it was one of the reasons for the disastrous defeat in the initial combat. Several causes might explain the lack of professionalism among the Korean officers. Most of them were young and without much military experience, and they entered the Korean military with different backgrounds. The ROK army did not have a system of training and education to teach them a coherent doctrine. Just before the war, some schools emerged, but they were not part of a “system” and came too late. One thing this study does not touch is the conflict between the Japanese military tradition and the American one. Many Korean officers demonstrated their reluctance to adapt themselves to the American ways, especially during the early period of the Constabulary. This problem seemed to disappear as the United States played the leading role in 1950-1953, not just in developing the ROK army but also in winning the war.

By the time the war ended, the Korean officer corps showed a great degree of professionalism, armed with tactical proficiency, technical competence, and a thorough understanding of leadership. This was possible through the systematic and intensive training and education at the schools, training centers, and field units. Initiated by Generals Van
Fleet and Ridgway, the varied and improved training and education programs began to transform the ROK army after the summer of 1951. It was focused on three areas: replacement training, officer candidate courses and refreshing courses, and unit training. As a whole, the training and schooling programs changed the character of the ROK army and built the foundation for the expansion that began from the summer of 1952.

As the final factor, this dissertation has traced the increase of the firepower in the ROK army by looking at the artillery and tank units. The artillery strength of the entire ROK army in June 1950 was only six battalions of 105mm lightweight howitzers. However, when the hostilities stopped, every division had artillery strength equaling that of a US division. The ROK corps was also able to provide fire support to the subordinate divisions with their own artillery units. More important than the mere increase in number was the fact that the Korean artillery personnel were trained fully in tactics and technology. Armored units experienced a growth, too. Because some American military leaders believed that the Korean terrain was not fit to employ tanks, the ROK army was not armed with tanks at all when the tank units of the [North] Korean People’s Army spearheaded its invasion in June 1950. Notwithstanding its firepower, the psychological impact of enemy tanks on the South Korean soldiers was tremendous. By the end of the war, the
ROK army had a nucleus of armor units with nine tank companies, which surely boosted the Koreans morale.

All these factors of combat power in combination should show a positive result in combat, as proof that the ROK army was indeed on the right track. As seen in many cases after the summer of 1951, the ROKA units made successful operations one after another. Though the ROK army was not a first-class army, it was sufficiently reliable for national defense. As the ROK army continued to demonstrate its capability in combat, the United States government decided to support a ROK army of twenty divisions.

Because an army could prove its combat power only in combat actions, I reviewed the major battles or campaigns in which the ROK army was involved. No doubt the Korean War was a tremendous ordeal to the Korean people, especially for the military personnel. But it was ultimately the Korean War that made the ROK army into an effective military institution. The war revealed every problem and weakness of the ROK army. After finding the weakness and problem, it was much easier to remedy them. It also gave the Korean military personnel, especially officers and NCOs, invaluable combat experience. Finally, the war also forced the Korean people to maintain the very consciousness of war’s reality and united them under strong anti-Communism, a solidarity found even today’s Korea. This consciousness has continued in the ROK Army.
which motivated its officers and men to maintain the high level of combat effectiveness it had attained during the war.
1 Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, vol. III, pp. 548-557. Some figures of the table on page 556 are incorrect. The second column of the table, which says "No of POWs Released," should be from top to bottom 392 (from Koje), 3,930 (from Kayari), 10,432 (from Kwangju), 8,024 (from Nonsan), 2,936 (from Masan), 904 (from Yongch'on), 538 (from Pup'yong), and 232 (from Taegu).

2 Korean Institute of Strategic Affairs, trans., [History of the Korean War and the Chinese Communist Army: History of the War to Resist America and to Assist Korea] (Seoul, 1988), pp. 268-269. This has been translated from Chinese Academy of Military Science's *Zhongguo Renmin Zhiyuanjun Kangmei Yuanchao Zhanshi [The History of the CPVF in the War to Resist America and to Aid Korea] (Beijing: Military Science Press, 1988). The overall picture of the Communists disposition was as follows: eleven Chinese armies and three North Korean corps to the front; six CPVA armies and one NKPA corps to the western coast; and two CPVA armies and two NKPA corps to the eastern coast. See also Xiaobing Li, Allan R. Millett, and Bin Yu, trans. & ed., *Mao's Generals Remember Korea* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2001), pp. 227-232.

3 Korean Institute of Strategic Affairs, trans., [History of the Korean War and the Chinese Communist Army: History of the War to Resist America and to Assist Korea], p. 268.

4 Ibid., 275-278.

5 Ibid., p. 275.

6 Ibid., pp. 287-289.


10 "The Offensive of June-July 1953," no author and no date, RG 338: USARPAC, Military History Office, Organizational History Files, Box # 69, NA.

According to Huh Nam-sung, it was the US policy to build a pro-American and anti-Communist Korean power base to stem the Soviet expansion in Korea and South Korean political and military leadership's active efforts to achieve their cohesion and legitimacy over North Korea. For a detailed account, see Huh Nam-sung, "The Quest for a Bulwark of Anti-Communism: The Formation of the Republic of Korea Army officer Corps and Its Political Socialization, 1945-1950" (Ph.D. Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1987).


The first American military advisors to Korea were a group led by William McEntire Dye, who arrived in Korea in April 1888. Dye, a West Pointer (1853), served in Korea as drill officer until September 1889. Richard Weinert, "The Original KMAG," Military Review, 45 (June 1965), pp. 93-99.

A vivid example was when Park Chung-hee complained about the American methods, asking to his regimental commander "whether this is an American army or Korean Army." James Hausman & Chung Il-hwa, 한국 대통령을 움직인 미군대위 [An American Captain Who Influenced the Korean Presidents] (Seoul, 1995), p. 113.
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[Source: Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War*, vol. 1 (Lincoln, NE; University Press of Nebraska, 2000), front inside page]

Map 1. Korea

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