18. *Sustained Air-Pressure Operations*

1. General Assembly Debates Clarify Political Issues

When the truce negotiations were indefinitely recessed at Panmunjom on 8 October 1952, the arena of armistice discussions almost immediately shifted to the General Assembly of the United Nations, which convened at its seventh session in New York late in the same month. For more than a month the U.S. Department of State had known of an inclination among uncommitted nations to sponsor some possible solution for the fighting in Korea which would bring about a cessation of hostilities on the terms already agreed upon and leave the question of the prisoners who did not want to be repatriated to be disposed of by subsequent political negotiations. The U.S. Department of Defense opposed such a solution, reasoning that "if the Communists did not accept our proposal on the POW's under military pressure, they undoubtedly would never do so without military pressure."[1] On the eve of the General Assembly meeting the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff reiterated this position. "It would be undesirable from the military point of view," they said, "to conclude an armistice in which the disposition of nonrepatriates would be left for subsequent settlement."[2] At the opening of the General Assembly the United States accordingly introduced a draft resolution approving the manner in which the United Nations Command had conducted the armistice negotiations and calling upon Communist China and North Korea to avoid further bloodshed and accept nonforcible repatriation of prisoners. Soviet Foreign Minister A. Y. Vyshinsky countered with a resolution providing for an immediate cease-fire and the establishment of a commission to take up a political solution of the Korean question. In the opening days of the General Assembly the United States and Russia thus stated strongly opposite positions.[3]

Early in the autumn of 1952, in New Delhi, Ambassador Chester Bowles had expressed in conversations with India's diplomats the forceful proposition that an extension of the Korean hostilities was inevitable unless a satisfactory solution was soon reached. Ambassador Bowles had unofficially suggested that India should take the initiative, and, after exhaustive consultations with Arab-Asian delegations and other interested parties, India introduced a compromise proposal in the United Nations on 17 November. The proposal adopted the American position that there must be no forcible repatriation of prisoners, and it advocated the establishment of a neutral nations repatriation commission which would take charge of prisoners and return those who desired it to their homelands. The status of prisoners who did not return home at the end of ninety days would be referred to the post-armistice political conference. It was common knowledge both in New York and in New Delhi that the Chinese had been shown a draft of the Indian plan. Apparently, Chou En-lai had not formally approved it, but he had given indications that a truce could be arranged on terms such as these.[4]

Although the Indian resolution was immediately acceptable to many members of the United Nations—including Great Britain and France—

the United States did not like it. Secretary of State Dean Acheson urged that the Indian resolution accepted the words of the principle of nonforcible repatriation but left prisoners of war no escape from the custody of the neutral nations repatriation commission but to accept eventual repatriation.[5] The Joint Chiefs of Staff continued to oppose any plan that declared an immediate armistice before resolving the disposition of prisoners of war. "The principal factor favorable to the United Nations Command in the present military situation in Korea," explained General Bradley, "is the air superiority which United Nations Command forces hold over North Korea.... In view of the refusal by the Communists in the face of military pressure to agree to the principle of no forced repatriation, it can hardly be expected that they would agree to that principle in the post-armistice negotiations."[6] At a conference with President Truman on 18 November, President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower heard the problem discussed and subsequently issued a statement of emphatic agreement opposing forcible repatriations of prisoners of war in Korea.[7] In the United Nations General Assembly India's delegate, V. K. Krishna Menon, denied that his country's compromise resolution would mean indefinite retention for prisoners of war. Menon allowed the resolution to be amended to meet American objections. If, after a total period of 120 days, the repatriation commission and the political conference had made no agreeable disposition of those prisoners who resisted repatriation, the responsibility for their subsequent disposition should be transferred to the United Nations. With the support of the United States, India's plan was adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 1952 by a vote of 54 to 5 with 1 abstention.[8]

Despite some unfavorable comments from the Russian press, the United Nations at first believed that India's plan might be acceptable to Russia and China. On 24 November, however, Vyshinsky not only refused to endorse the Indian proposal but attacked it as a "camouflage for horrible American policy." Soviet propaganda broadcasts called the Indian resolution "nothing but a slightly veiled American draft." In a milder broadcast from Peking, Chou En-lai declared his country could not accept any solution which did not include repatriation of all prisoners of war. Following its adoption by the General Assembly, the resolution was nevertheless formally cabled to Peking and Pyongyang. On 14 December Chou En-lai replied with a formal refusal to accept the United Nations solution for the Korean fighting. Communist China, he said, adhered to the principle of complete repatriation, and he called the General Assembly's action "illegal," since Communist China had no representative on that body. A few days later North Korea made a similar reply.[9] While Red China had rejected the General Assembly's solution for ending the Korean war, many observers believed that the decision had been made in Moscow and not in Peking. The Indians believed that China had wanted to get out of the war for a long time but that Russia insisted on a continuation of the hostilities. If China had really opposed the solution, Indian diplomats argued, she would have turned it down when the first overtures were made by the Indian ambassador in Peking.[10] Although the United Nations' debates failed to provide a compromise solution for the Korean fighting, the negotiations strongly indicated that Communist China wanted to terminate the war.

2. *United Nations Airmen Maintain Control of the Air*

"I have become greatly concerned about the possible effect of an enemy air offensive on the operational capability of this command," General Barcus stated on 5 January 1953. "Our position had become more sensitive in recent months due to the continued enemy buildup and conversion to jet aircraft, particularly in such types as the IL-28 jet bomber."[11] In the winter of 1952–53, FEAF estimated that the Communists attained a strength in Manchuria of 1,485 aircraft, including 950 jet fighters, 165 conventional fighters, 100 IL-28 jet bombers, 65 conventional light bombers, 115 ground-attack planes, and 90 transports.[12] After November 1952 the chief potential hazard to United Nations Command ground installations was no longer the MIG-15, which had a dubious ground-attack capability at distances so close to its range limits, but the force of modern IL-28 light jet bombers which the Communists established in Manchuria. These bombers were at once recognized as the "greatest possible threat to FEAF," for the IL-28 could fly a normal-flight profile to a maximum radius of 690 miles with a two-ton bomb load. Its speed of 400 knots promised to make the IL-28 vulnerable if employed in daylight attacks, even with MIG escort, but the IL-28 had a formidable night-attack potential. The presence of these bombers in Manchuria enhanced the possibility of a major night attack against United Nations installations in Korea.[13] Evidently designing to "show off" their newest air weapon, the Reds flew two IL-28's along the Yalu on 17 December 1952 at the very moment that Sabres were patrolling on the other side of the river.[14] The Reds probably wanted to temper any offensive plans that the United Nations Command might be making.

The Communist air order of battle in Manchuria represented a serious offensive threat to the United Nations Command. Yet, except for more frequent night-heckler raids, the Reds preferred to limit their air war to an active air defense of northwestern Korea. In the winter months of 1952–53, the Red air activities continued to indicate the existence of a far-reaching plan to use Korea as a training and testing ground. Quite unlike World War II, when Soviet air units had been chiefly concerned with ground support, the Reds were now using their aircraft in an air-superiority mission. In the winter of 1952–53 Communist air commanders were probably attempting to devise air-superiority tactics and to develop fighter-interceptor cadres—sacrificing quality for quantity.[15] In January 1953 the Reds again experimented with line-abreast passes against Sabres, obviously using the Sabres to simulate bombers. In February 1953 the Seoul tactical air-control center frequently plotted MIG's who penetrated south of the Chongchon and immediately withdrew when Sabres were sent out. Everyone supposed that the Reds were probing United Nations radar defenses and testing the scramble time of the Sabres. Such experiences as these indicated that the Communists were continuing to work out the mechanics—command, staff, maintenance, supply, and related problems—of sizable counter-air efforts against the best of United Nations airpower.[16] What the Reds would do when they completed their training was anyone's guess.

To the Sabre pilots of Col. James K. Johnson's 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing and of Col. John W. Mitchell's 51st

Fighter-Interceptor Wing, the MIG-15 airmen sighted in the air over northwestern Korea in the winter of 1952–53 were best described as "wily." Adverse weather hindered all flying to some extent, but the Communist pilots generally followed their already familiar training cycle. During November and December 1952 Communist pilots generally flew at altitudes above 35,000 feet and rarely initiated attacks unless they had the advantage of the Yalu River or of superior numbers. In November the MIG's made a few unsuccessful attacks against United Nations fighter-bombers, but in December the Red pilots made no effort to attack the fighter-bombers or reconnaisance planes.[17] Most of the MIG's sighted flew high and evidently were engaged in training, but the Reds who were willing to fight often displayed good coordination and handled their aircraft skillfully. In the slack month of air fighting during November 1952 the Sabre wings lost four planes but claimed 28 MIG's destroyed. In aerial combat at the middle of the month, the 4th Wing enrolled two new jet aces. On 17 November Colonel Royal N. Baker, commander of the 4th Group, shot down his fifth plane to become the Korean war's 21st jet ace. Colonel Baker's score was four MIG-15's and one LA-9 destroyed on 17 November, but by 17 March 1953, when he would rotate, he would have 12 MIG's and one LA-9 to his credit. On 18 November Captain Leonard W. Lilley, of the 334th Squadron, shot down his fifth MIG and became the 22d jet air ace. A few days later, on 22 November, Captain Cecil G. Foster of the 51st Wing became the world's 23d jet air ace.[18] The Fifth Air Force pilots were not too sure of the nationality of the Red airmen they engaged, but on 18 November, when Task Force 77 attacked the North Korean border town of Hoeryong,

Col. Royal N. Baker

unmarked but obviously Russian MIG-15's swarmed down from Vladivostok. A flight of three Pantherjets from the *Oriskany* engaged several MIG's which were heading toward the fleet and shot one of them down. At General Clark's recommendation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed to make no public disclosure of the Navy's clash with the Russians.[19]

According to the normal course of affairs in a typical Communist training cycle, MIG-15 operations in December 1952 were better coordinated. In many instances the Red pilots covered each other so efficiently that the Sabre men were unable to stay around long enough to confirm victories and had to claim planes "probably destroyed." The Reds worked out a "box-in" tactic which was hard to oppose. About twenty minutes before the Sabre patrols were given a signal to withdraw because of approaching fuel exhaustion, MIG flights crossed at the Sui-ho reservoir and headed down to the Chongchon River. When the Yalu patrol leader gave the code call "Bingo," signaling that all Sabres were to withdraw, flights of MIG's immediately

Capt. Cecil G. Foster

crossed the Yalu and pursued the Sabres southward while the MIG's posted to the Chongchon turned northward to make head-on passes against the retiring American planes. If the Sabres had not been able to get radar warnings of the MIG ambushes, they could have been severely hurt by the superior numbers of Red planes. Even as it was, a number of Sabre pilots caught in the traps had to bail out over Cho-do because of fuel exhaustion and others landed at their home bases critically short of fuel. Already in November the Fifth Air Force had begun to post a number of Sabre flights at points south of the Yalu for ground-controlled interceptions of MIG's who evaded the main Sabre screen, and these flights helped break up the Red "box-in" traps. The main Sabre patrol also began to return homeward over the Yellow Sea whenever possible, thus avoiding combat while low on fuel. The Reds were improving, but they still lacked an ability to tangle with the Sabres. At a cost of two Sabres lost in aerial combat during December, the Sabres destroyed 28 MIG's.[20]

The "class" of Communist pilots who had apparently begun training in November 1952 evidently reached its peak of proficiency and aggressiveness during January 1953. A large proportion of the 2,248 MIG sorties observed still flew in large training formations above 35,000 feet, but many of the 648 MIG's who engaged in combat used almost every maneuver in the book and often refused to break off combat even when they could have easily escaped across the Yalu. Beginning on 22 January, moreover, both the 4th and 51st Wings reported combat with a unit of MIG's which were camouflaged blue underneath and copper top sides. These MIG's maintained excellent flight integrity and demonstrated a skillful tenacity far above that of the average enemy pilot. As a predominant tactic, the Reds sent large formations of high- and fast-flying MIG's across the Yalu at Sui-ho, made wide right turns, and recrossed the river at Sinuiju. Flights of four to eight MIG's often broke away from the high-flying formation and attacked elements of Sabres. The Reds also attempted to use the "box-in" trap tactic which they had originated the month before.[21] Sabre pilots always welcomed the months when the Reds turned aggressive for they got highest kills then. A majority of the engagements between the Sabres and MIG's were fought at altitudes above 40,000 feet and many of the Sabre kills were chalked up by pilots who flew the new F-86F's. By withdrawing from the Yalu prematurely, moreover, the Sabres saved enough fuel to turn and fight the MIG's who tried to box them in. In the goodly number of air battles in January Sabre pilots lost a single plane and shot down 37 MIG's and a single TU-2 bomber. On 24 January Captain Dolphin D. Overton III and Captain Harold E. Fischer, Jr., both of the 51st

Wing, became the 24th and 25th jet air aces. Both of these pilots had flown full combat tours with fighter-bomber wings in Korea before volunteering to fly additional tours with Sabrejets. On his last four Sabre missions in his combat tour, Captain Overton downed five MIG's to set a record for becoming a jet ace in the shortest period of time. Lt. Raymond J. Kinsey, of the 4th Wing, shot down the errant twin-engine TU-2 bomber on 30 January—the first Red bomber to be destroyed in more than a year.[22]

Earlier in the Korean war, noting that the Communist air forces customarily reduced their combat sorties following a month of heavier-than-normal losses, FEAF intelligence officers speculated that the Red commanders must be holding down their effort while they assessed their operational tactics. By January 1953, however, Sabre pilots explained the seemingly erratic and unorthodox MIG tactic as one more manifestation of the Communist training cycle. The Sabres got their peak kills in months when a Red pilot "class" attained its peak proficiency and became aggressive. Following such a month, the Red "class" rotated and new Communist airmen entered combat. In these interim periods Red "Honcho" pilots carried on the war while the "trainee" pilots generally avoided combat.[23] Communist air activities in the three months following January 1953 bore out this "cycle" theory. The Sabre pilots spotted few Chinese insignia but mostly plain red stars on the MIG's they engaged in these months. While sighted in fewer numbers, the Red pilots were noticeably aggressive, and the old F-86E's had trouble closing on the Red jets. Pilots who flew F-86F's continued to score victories, but on one occasion Colonel Baker chased a MIG almost all the way across North Korea without being able to overtake him, even though he was flying an F-86F.[24]

Knowing that the Reds continued to have all the advantages of altitude, air speed, and position, and that they could be expected to initiate combat on most favorable terms, the Sabre wings relied upon their superior pilot skill for attaining victories and modified their tactics to fit the changing patterns of Red operations. In order to provide mutual cover, the Sabre wings adopted a "train" type of squadron formation. Each "train" usually consisted of six flights, each of four aircraft. In this refinement of the jet stream, the flights flew the usual "fluid-four" formation, but they remained in a loose trail formation, each flight following another within an easy supporting distance of about one mile. The "train" formation permitted the Sabre wings to get a maximum number of fighters into contact with enemy formations, and it appreciably reduced the susceptibility of individual Sabre flights to enemy attack. At the same time the individual Sabre flights retained their maneuverability and offensive flexibilty. To counter MIG's who penetrated over North Korea between the times of the main Sabre patrols, flights of four F-86's began to perform intermediate airborne patrols north of Cho-do.[25]

Even the best of Communist pilots made mistakes, and in mid-February 1953 the Sabre airmen effected good kills on MIG pilots who attempted to penetrate as far south as Chinnampo. The courage of the Sabre pilots also stood them in good stead, for on 18 February a flight of four F-86's attacked 48 MIG's near the Sui-ho reservoir. The Sabres shot down two of the enemy planes and caused two others to spin out and crash while attempting to follow through violent evasive maneuvers.[26] At a cost of

Maj. James Jabara

two Sabres lost in air combat, the Sabre wings destroyed 25 MIG's during February 1953. The month's claims of enemy planes destroyed were not too high, but a spectacular race to determine who would be the top American jet air ace in Korea was beginning. On 12 January Major James Jabara had returned for a second combat tour with the 4th Wing, and the world's first jet air ace had begun to add new victories to his score of six MIG's destroyed.

On 16 February Captain Joseph McConnell, Jr., a flight-leader of the 51st Wing's 16th Squadron, destroyed his fifth MIG, but because of a delayed confirmation he was recognized as the 27th jet air ace. Captain Manuel J. Fernandez, Jr., of the 4th Wing's 334th Squadron, was listed as the 26th jet ace of the Korean war when he destroyed his fifth and sixth MIG on 18 February.[27] As yet these officers were not seriously challenging the combat scores of Colonel Baker and Captain Fischer, but they were starting a three-way rivalry for the honor of top jet air ace.

In the heat of combat in the latter part of February 1953 some Sabre pilots possibly pursued fleeing MIG's across the Yalu for short distances. General Clark admitted as much to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 9 March, when the latter cautioned him that there must be no border violations.[28] In March the Sabre pilots found many of their victories closer to their own bases, for the Red MIG's, while slow to give combat early in the month, turned aggressive in the last ten days. Possibly in an effort to boost the morale of Communist ground forces by making a show of force over the battlelines, MIG airmen carried external fuel tanks to tangle with Sabres over Sariwon on 21 March, with Marine fighter-bombers in the Chinnampo area on 26 March, and with two RF-80's and two Meteors between Sariwon and Sinmak on 27 March. The last engagement was only 38 miles north of the ground front. In each case the MIG's were too poor in gunnery to score on the slower United Nations planes.[29] Finding the Communist pilots willing to fight at altitudes as low as 17,000 feet, the Sabre wings destroyed 34 MIG's and sustained only two combat losses. In preparation for fighter-bomber work the 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing had begun to fly F-86F counterair missions on 25 February, and on 27 March one of its officers, Major James P. Hagerstrom, destroyed his fifth MIG to become the 18th Wing's only jet ace and the 28th jet air ace. In additional aerial fights on 28 and 29 March Colonel James K. Johnson and Lt. Col. George L. Jones, both of the 4th Wing, each ran their scores up to 5½ MIG's destroyed and became the 29th and 30th jet air aces. During March Captain Fernandez downed four more MIG's to become a double jet air ace.[30] As the closing days of March 1953 brought the end of another winter of air-to-air warfare over

Col. James K. Johnson

North Korea, the Fifth Air Force Sabre wings could take pride in the fact that they had again beaten the Communist air forces.

In the winter months of 1952–53 the Communist air forces did not seriously challenge the daytime air superiority which the United Nations Command exercised over North Korea. In the nighttime skies, where the old B-29 Superfortresses were seeking to attack their targets by shoran, the Communists waged a much more effective air defense. "The air war," wrote Brig. Gen. William P. Fisher, "is getting tougher all the time.... We are using every bit of ingenuity and changes in tactics we can think of to get by without losses, but it is getting pretty tight."[31] In night flights at lower altitudes, the Fifth Air Force's B-26's were able to escape most of the hazards of the Red night air defenses, but the Superforts proved extremely vulnerable to the Communist air-defense system. In the months after the loss of B-29's over Kwaksan on the night of 10/11 June 1952, Bomber Command had avoided losses by employing its bombers so as to take advantage of weaknesses in the Red air defenses. In diagnosing these Red defenses General Fisher recognized that the enemy had "an extremely well-developed" ground-control radar-interception capability over northwestern Korea, particularly within a 90-mile radius of Antung. Anywhere north of the Chongchon River the Reds had enough searchlights to pick up and illuminate night-flying B-29's. Antiaircraft artillery guns provided the Reds with defenses of more important targets, but they were not too dangerous provided the Superforts kept higher than 18,000 feet. "As a matter of fact," noted General Fisher, "we can fly anywhere in North Korea under any weather conditions with little concern for flak except on the Yalu River." As night interceptors, the Reds employed a miscellany of jet and propeller-driven day-fighter aircraft, and beginning in December 1952 Bomber Command received fairly positive reports that two Russian night-fighter squadrons were actively engaged in combat over northwestern Korea. The Communist air-defense system had one serious defect: the Red night fighters did not have airborne intercept radar. The Antung ground-control intercept radar could place a Red fighter within two to five miles of an American bomber, but to make the kill the Red pilot had to get close enough to see his target.[32]

Understanding the vulnerabilty of the old Superforts to air attack, FEAF made studious efforts to afford them as much protection as was possible. Beginning in June 1952, when they established their ground-control intercept capability, the Communists worked hard to counter the Superfortress raids. Between 18 November and 30 January 1953 Red air defenses were in the

Capt. Manuel J. Fernandez

ascendancy, costing Bomber Command five B-29's destroyed and damaging three others so badly that they required depot reclamation. On the night of 18/19 November 1952 the Reds revealed new tactics when they shot down a 98th Wing B-29 coming off its supply-center target at Sonchon. Riding above the B-29, a Red spotter dropped flares each time the bomber changed direction. The flares allowed searchlights to lock on the bomber, and four Red fighter passes riddled the bomber, forcing its crew to abandon ship over Cho-do.[33] On the night of 30/31 December, when a full moon was at its zenith and contrails were streaming at bombing altitudes, Red searchlights coned three 19th Group B-29's which were attacking an ore-processing plant near the Yalu at Choak-tong. A conventional airplane called signals from above the bombers, and Red fighters shot down one B-29 and damaged two others so badly that their crews were forced down at Suwon.[34] Bomber Command blamed the moonlight and the contrails for the losses, but in the dark of the moon on the night of 10/11 January 1953 a 307th Wing B-29 was coned by searchlights, hit by flak, and shot down by fighters over Anju's marshaling yard. The position of this bomber was apparently betrayed by light contrails.[35] On the night of 12 January Red fighters intercepted and shot down a lone 91st Reconnaissance Squadron RB-29 which was distributing leaflets along the Yalu. On 28/29 January enemy fighters apparently silhouetted a 19th Group B-29 against a full moon over Kimpodong and needed no other illumination to shoot it down. Moonlight again betrayed 307th Wing B-29's, when they bombed the Unjong-ni supply area on the night of 30/31 January. Some ten Red fighters prosecuted attacks which so badly damaged a B-29 that it barely made an emergency landing in South Korea. The total number of Red interceptions was not great. Bomber Command reported only 20 nonfiring and 23 firing passes made against its aircraft in January 1953.[36] But the Red night interceptions were becoming extremely effective.

Darkness was no longer affording the old B-29's the protection they needed to attack targets in North Korea. Under General Fisher's direction, however, Bomber Command was giving close attention to all factors which affected the success of its missions, and this attention to mission-planning factors was beginning to overcome the Red air defenses. First of all, Bomber Command well recognized that the shoran-bombing system made its crews extremely vulnerable to Red defenses. The Reds had learned how the system worked and usually concentrated their defensive efforts along the shoran arcs or else hit the bombers over their targets. Seeking to make the best of a bad situation, General Fisher ordered his B-29 commanders to cut the time

required to attack a target by shoran to the absolute minimum. On 30 September 1952, for example, the B-29 stream had been over Namsan-ni for two hours, and the Reds had been able to give undivided attention to each individual bomber. As a matter of highest precedence after October 1952, Bomber Command emphasized the compression of its bomber streams so that individual bomber crews would attack at one-minute instead of three-minute intervals. Whenever possible, the bombers were assigned as many as four separate shoran aiming points, so that the crews could attack as nearly simultaneously as possible. By such procedures as many as nine strike aircraft could be in a space 1,000 feet wide and eight miles long, each giving mutual support to the other.[37] Bomber Command's compression tactics received continuous emphasis, and FEAF reported that "maximum compression of the bomber force was the outstanding device for reducing over-all risk."[38]

The compression of the bomber stream not only reduced the time in which the B-29's were vulnerable to enemy air defenses, but it also increased the effectiveness of Bomber Command's electronic countermeasures. After June 1952 FEAF actively pushed electronic countermeasures. The 548th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron added a section which collated, evaluated, and disseminated electronic data obtained by 91st Squadron "ferret" aircraft. Bomber Command secured qualified electronic countermeasures officers for assignment to its intelligence and operations functions and added an enlisted electronic countermeasures operator to its bomber crews. Despite the use of old equipment and partly trained operators, Bomber Command's electronic countermeasures program demonstrated substantial achievements in 1953, particularly against enemy searchlights. Between 1 January and 27 July 1953, 534 B-29 sorties sighted searchlights and 114 aircraft were illuminated. In at least 87 of the latter cases electronic countermeasures caused the searchlights to lose contact with the bombers. Had Bomber Command not utilized electronic countermeasures, FEAF thought that its losses after November 1952 would have been triple what they were. Aside from keeping Bomber Command's losses low, concluded FEAF, one of the most beneficial aspects of the employment of electronic countermeasures in Korea was the education of commanders and crews in techniques which had been largely neglected after World War II.[39]

Following the Superfortress losses over Kwaksan in June 1952, the Fifth Air Force showed interest in providing night-fighter combat support for light- and medium-bomber strike forces. The 319th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron at Suwon Airfield was capable of deep penetration into enemy territory, but the squadron's F-94B Starfire aircraft were equipped with the latest model fire-control systems and USAF had directed that the F-94's should be used only for local air-defense scrambles.[40] The Fifth Air Force also controlled Marine Squadron VMF(N)-513, whose conventional F7F's were equipped with older airborne-intercept radar and could be sent over enemy territory. After July 1952 the Marine squadron made four F7F's available for bomber support each night. In support of the B-29's, the F7F's customarily preceded the bomber stream by about five minutes between the initial point and

A radar observer makes final navigational computations before a mission with the 19th Bomb Group.

the target. The conventional F7F's, however, were said to be "completely ineffective" for battling Red jet aircraft at night.[41] Early in November 1952 the Marine squadron received 12 F3D-2 Skynight all-weather jets, whose older airborne intercept radar could still be used for deep penetrations. The Skynight jets initially supported the B-29's by flying "barrier cover," or patrols 20 to 50 miles north of the attacking bomber stream. On the night of 3 November a Skynight pilot got Korea's first jet-versus-jet night kill, when ground-control radar vectored him to shoot down a Yak-15 jet near Sinuiju. Another F3D pilot shot down an aircraft believed to have been a MIG-15 northwest of Sonchon on the night of 8 November.[42] Informed of the problem concerning the F-94's while he was visiting the theater in November, General Vandenberg personally authorized the Fifth Air Force to remove restrictions on the employment of the Starfire fighters. The 319th Squadron began to use a part of its night fighters to maintain screens between the Yalu and Chongchon rivers.[43]

General Fisher credited the night-fighter patrols with "some small degree of success" in protecting his medium bombers, for the friendly fighters turned back some enemy interceptors and shot down others. But the Reds still continued to shoot down B-29's, and in many instances they were not detected by friendly ground-control intercept radars until they were attacking the bombers. Toward the end of January 1953 the Fifth Air Force suggested that the Reds might be using two forces of night fighters. One force decoyed friendly fighters away from the bombers, while another force, which orbited too high over the bombers to be detected by friendly ground radar, came down to make kills. On the basis of such a diagnosis, Bomber Command asked that the F3D Skynights should fly "overhead cover" for the Superforts between the initial point and the breakaway from the target. Flights of F3D's began to maintain positions 2,000 to 3,000 feet above the bombers. If the bomber was coned by searchlights, the Skynights covered the bomber's tail. Using the new tactics, the Skynights soon got two new kills, one each on the moonlit nights of 28 and 31 January. At this same time the 319th Squadron began to employ four to six F-94's in a barrier patrol about 30 miles in advance of medium-bomber targets. The Starfire squadron's commander, Lt. Col. Jack C. West, complained that Red interceptors usually retreated rather than come up against the F-94 barrier patrols, but this protected the bombers. On the

night of 30 January Captain Ben L. Fithian and Lt. Sam R. Lyons successfully destroyed a conventional LA-9 for the first Starfire kill in Korea. The victory was achieved completely by radar. The Starfire pilot and observer never saw the enemy plane until it burst into flames.[44] In the months that followed the Skynights scored more victories, and the Starfires shot down enemy jets on the nights of 10 May and 12 June. The friendly fighters also turned back a number of Red fighters which would otherwise have attempted to attack the bombers. In its final evaluation of night-fighter support Bomber Command recorded that "numerous unidentified aircraft approaching the bomber stream were turned back by the escort or barrier fighters, and although fighter escort did not prevent attacks, it was a great morale boost for the aircrews to know that there were friends out there in the dark as well as enemies."[45]

During the autumn of 1952 Bomber Command sought to attack targets in enemy-defended areas only when adverse target weather blanketed the hostile defenses, but the policy failed because of imperfect weather conditions. The phase of the moon and the atmospheric conditions producing condensation trails were predictable, and after January's losses were attributed to these causes, General Fisher took the problem to General Weyland. As the result of their agreement, Bomber Command launched no attacks in the area between the Chongchon and the Yalu in periods of bright moonlight or at flight altitudes where contrails would form. General Fisher disliked the policy because it represented a reduction in his force capability, but he recognized that discretion was the better part of valor. The contrail level began to lift in March, and it soon was no longer a problem at medium-bomber attack altitudes. Weather conditions also began to worsen, and Bomber Command crews entered the heavily defended zones with more liberty. The phase of the moon continued to be a matter of consideration in planning medium-bomber missions into the sensitive area.[46]

At the end of January 1953 the fate of Bomber Command's old Superfortresses seemed in doubt, but after this time Bomber Command would lose no more B-29's to enemy action. Through careful adherence to an amalgamation of tactical safeguards, Bomber Command successfully thwarted the Red air defenses. Attacks were scheduled as irregularly as possible; altitudes were varied as much as shoran allowed; the bomber stream was compressed to the utmost. Contrail-forming altitudes were avoided, and heavily defended targets were attacked where possible in the dark of the moon. Planes were camouflaged, and crew defenses were strengthened. Friendly night fighters provided combat support. Electronic countermeasures were constantly employed with great success against hostile gun-laying and searchlight-director radars. These tactics hampered hostile fighter attacks and reduced the effectiveness of the hostile interceptors whose pilots had to sight the bombers before they could attack them. While the tactics were successful, General Fisher recognized that the controlling circumstance was the fact that the Reds either did not possess airborne-intercept radar or else did not want to use it in Korea. Because of this providential unreality the weary old B-29's could weather their last crisis in Korea, but General Fisher realized that the Superforts were living on borrowed time. "If the Communists ever crack that last link and get an all-weather

capability of pressing an accurate firing attack," General Fisher warned, "the B-29 business is really going to get rough."[47]

3. Communist Armies Become Destruction Targets

After the intensified air operations flown in support of the Kojo amphibious demonstration off eastern Korea in mid-October 1952, General Weyland reduced all operational schedules to the rate of effort which the Fifth Air Force and FEAF Bomber Command could sustain indefinitely in daily operations. Intelligence and operations planners at all echelons redoubled their efforts to develop profitable targets for destruction operations. "Special" targets, which were of some intrinsic importance to the Reds, were getting scarce, but FEAF would attack them as they were discovered. More and more, however, FEAF gave its attention to the destruction of Communist armed forces and of hostile logistics, for these were the chief items of value which still remained in North Korea.

Learning from a covert source that the North Koreans had established the "Kumgang Political School" at Odong-ni, the Fifth Air Force confirmed the report by photography and targeted the installation where 1,000 men were undergoing six months' training for subversive activities in the Republic of Korea. FEAF ordered the attack, and on 25 October the Fifth Air Force laid it on. In the first stage of the attack, a formation of day-flying B-26's dropped general-purpose and fragmentation bombs, and 84 fighter-bombers of the 49th, 58th, and 474th Wings finished off the target with bombs and napalm. The installation was almost completely destroyed.[48] In November the Fifth Air Force continued its relentless strikes against varied targets. Two waves of fighter-bombers—179 sorties—attacked a large troop concentration and supply area near Kanggye on November, marking a deep penetration into enemy territory which emphasized an ability to strike targets at will. On 21 November the three Thunderjet wings sent 117 sorties to plaster the Oryong-dong target complex northeast of Chongju. In December 1952 the Fifth Air Force's primary targets were Red troop concentrations, and large strikes hit enemy cantonments around Wonsan and Haeju on nine separate days.[49]

In October 1952 General Weyland had asked the FEAF Bomber Command to attack military targets at Sinuiju and Uiju, "mainly for the purpose of displaying our air strength in the sector."[50] Aside from their psychological significance, these Yalu River targets represented important military values to the Reds. Sinuiju and Uiju airfields served Red air garrisons, and troop headquarters, factories, and vehicle and locomotive repair shops were located in the towns of Uiju and Sinuiju. General Fisher secured permission to delay attacks until bad target weather was predicted.[51] In late October and early November Bomber Command launched numerous strikes against the Sopo supply complex, situated a few miles north of Pyongyang. In the villages of this area photo interpreters had plotted 106 supply targets. Fighter-bombers could not safely attack the area because of numerous automatic weapons, but the medium bombers met no difficulty. In addition to these attacks, the medium

bombers mounted strikes against the Okung Lead and Zinc Mill, the Hokusen Cement Plant, and several mines. These attacks finished off such Red industrial plants as remained in North Korea.[52]

After the middle of November 1952 weather experts predicted cloud cover over northwestern Korea, and the FEAF Bomber Command moved promptly against "sensitive" targets. On 17 November the medium bombers attacked the remaining portion of the mine at Choak-tong, east of Sinuiju and within sight of the Yalu. On 18 November B-29's went within 35 miles of the Yalu to attack the Sonchon supply center. On this night target weather was clear and the B-29's lost one of their number to Red interceptors. On the night of 28/29 November Bomber Command sent 44 B-29's, in three forces at forty-five-minute intervals, to attack the long-assigned targets at Sinuiju and Uiju. Once again the bombers met clear weather instead of predicted clouds, but they emphasized other protective measures and escaped injury. A sudden snowfall prevented exact determination of the damages inflicted by this attack, but the B-29's apparently had not destroyed the supply and communications targets in Uiju to the desired degree. Accordingly, on the night of 12/13 December, the 307th Wing sent 14 B-29's back to Uiju to effect the 50 percent destruction which was wanted. On other nights in December the medium bombers bearded the Reds with attacks north of the Chongchon and thrice hit targets near the Yalu.[53] The Communists did not like these Yalu River attacks. Their increasing efforts to shoot down Superfortresses indicated as much. On 10 December, moreover, India's delegate to the United Nations voiced the Communist line and charged that the United States had sabotaged the prospects for an armistice in Korea by bombing along the Yalu.[54]

Although FEAF was continuing to mount air attacks into the "sensitive" area along the Yalu, the Communist armies and their men, supplies, and equipment increasingly became the main objective of United Nations air attack. There were two reasons for this. Back of the front lines, out of range of United Nations artillery, the Communists had not yet managed to get all of their forces, supplies, and equipment underground. According to intelligence reports, moreover, the Communists had evacuated most civilians from towns and villages south of the 39th parallel and were using the buildings to shelter supplies and equipment. From the air planners' viewpoint trained Communist troops and scarce military equipment were valuable to the Reds, and these targets were available in sufficient quantity to keep the United Nations air forces gainfully employed.[55] The second reason for increased United Nations air attacks against Communist armies sprang from reports that the Reds were beginning to augment their ground forces in North Korea. Beginning in December 1952, increased sightings of Communist vehicles caused General Clark to see the threat of a Red ground offensive as a distinct possibility for early 1953.[56]

When they commenced a new course of sustained air pressure operations in the latter part of October 1952, the United Nations air forces had devoted some part of their capabilities to enemy personnel and supply targets close to the front lines. The Navy airmen of Task Force 77 emphasized massed fighter-bomber attacks against troop and supply positions near the main line of resistance—attacks which they liked

to call "Cherokee" strikes. In these strikes the Navy customarily employed eight F4U's, eight AD's, and eight to twelve F9F's. Such a massed force had good expectations of inflicting maximum damage with minimum losses. The Fifth Air Force also attempted to find one "special" target worthy of 100 fighter-bomber sorties each day, and it devoted the remainder of its efforts to attacks against enemy supply points and personnel areas in the zone south of the line between Pyongyang and Wonsan. Almost at once the Fifth Air Force and the Navy met the same problem. For purposes of safety, the Eighth Army designated a bombline, within which aircrews could not launch attacks unless under positive control of a tactical air-control party or an airborne coordinator. The Eighth Army's bombline was spread as far as 10,000 meters out in front of friendly ground positions. Air attacks far out in front of friendly troops were thus required to observe close-air-support procedures, even though there was no danger that friendly forces would be inadvertently bombed. If they complied with the close-support formalities, neither Task Force 77 nor the Fifth Air Force could place large air strikes on a target fast enough to profit from the shock effect of the massed strike.[57]

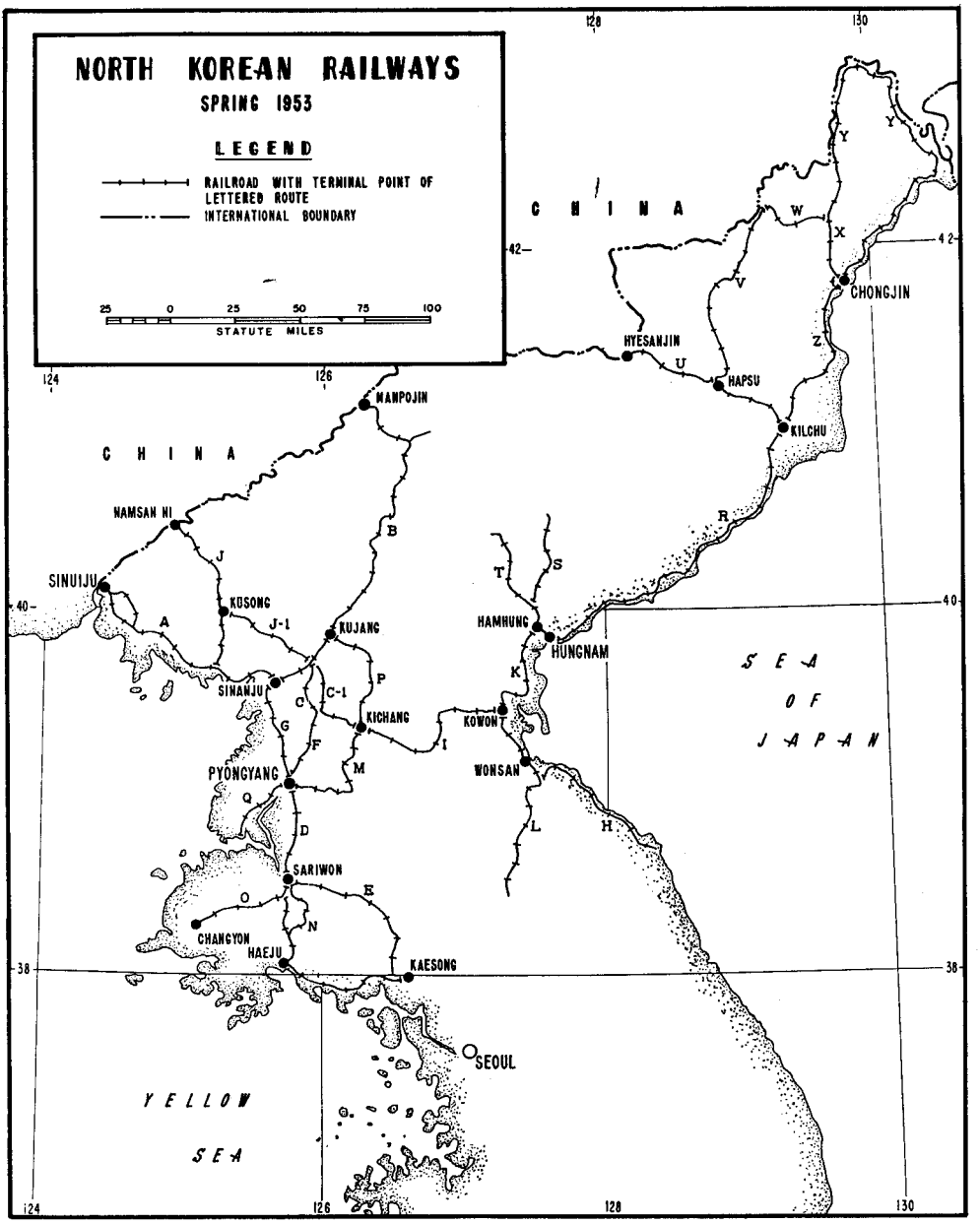
Early in December 1952, at the Fifth Air Force's suggestion, the Eighth Army agreed to move its bombline to a position approximately 3,000 meters beyond its outposts. At this same time a line was drawn approximately 25 miles beyond the bombline separating "general support" from "interdiction." Now, with greater facility, Task Force 77 and Fifth Air Force units launched forces of 24 to 36 aircraft against hostile personnel and supply areas lying outside the 3,000-meter line but generally within 20,000 meters of the ground front. Almost all of Task Force 77's planes flew Cherokee strikes, and in December the Fifth Air Force used 1,891 sorties in general-support strikes. The Fifth Air Force found that the massed attacks, accomplished in a minimum time with little loss of aircraft, appeared to be highly demoralizing to the enemy. Eighth Army officers praised the Cherokee effort and called it "airpower's most potent contribution to the Korean war in its present static-front condition."[58]

The FEAF Bomber Command would continue to employ its forces against "special" targets, but in October 1952 the Superforts began methodically to attack and destroy several hostile supply and communications targets each night from a list of more than 200 such objectives. At first General Fisher felt that this target list left "something to be desired." Many of the targets seemed to be nothing more than villages and towns, but the medium-bomber attacks set off so many secondary fires and explosions that it was soon evident that these villages and towns were Communist arsenals. "We have possibly found," wrote General Fisher, after a few months, "the last currently vulnerable link in the supply and distribution system of the Communist armies."[59] In making these attacks against small objectives, the shoran-bombing B-29 crews almost always employed 500-pound general-purpose bombs. Early in November General Weyland suggested that both the Fifth Air Force and Bomber Command ought to try incendiary munitions against hostile supply concentrations. Weyland reasoned that in the dry weather before the first snowfalls the incendiaries would start fires which would feed on grass and brush and spread to dispersed dumps. On 13 November five B-29's used incendiary clusters against

a supply area at Sopo. The results were not good enough, for only 4.1 percent instead of a desired 60 percent of the target was destroyed. After two more tests yielded similar results, Bomber Command returned to a standard loading of general-purpose bombs.[60] Relentlessly, hitting 30 to 40 of the targets each month, Bomber Command destroyed Red supply, personnel, and communications centers, which General Fisher began to think were the "backbone and support of the Communist armies." By April 1953 Bomber Command had attacked 168 of these centers and had substantially destroyed 132 of them. At this time General Fisher reported that he was "firmly convinced that this program has made the support of the Communist armies so difficult and so costly in men, materiel, and required dispersion, that the Chinese want no more of it."[61]

Early in the winter of 1952–53 General Barcus began to give some serious thoughts to air interdiction of Communist supply lines—not the old delay-and-disruption interdiction attacks but a new type of destructive interdiction. At the times when United Nations air forces had severed the enemy's rail lines the Reds had employed trucks recklessly to supply their military forces. General Barcus believed that properly managed interdiction attacks could set the Reds up for significant destruction. The thing to do was to hit a bottleneck in the enemy's railway lines and then destroy accumulations of rail equipment and motor transport. One of the major potential bottlenecks in the enemy's rail-transportation network was evidently in the Chongchon estuary northwest of Sinanju where the "Able" rail line crossed the Chongchon and Taeryong rivers. The Reds were evidently aware that this was a bad bottleneck, for at Yongmi-dong, where "Able" crossed the Taeryong, they were building a fourth rail bridge to supplement the three bridges that they already possessed there.[62] Proposing to keep the bridges out of action for a month, General Barcus sent 114 fighter-bombers to Yongmi-dong on 1 November. On 6 November 100 fighter-bombers returned to renew the attack, only to find that the Reds had already repaired their three operational bridges and had moved in enough antiaircraft artillery to shoot down a plane and negate bombing results of the second attack. The Reds also began to build a fifth bypass bridge at the Yongmi-dong crossing.[63] General Fisher declined to send his B-29's against the Yongmi-dong bridges because there were too many of them and the area was too dangerous for repeated B-29 strikes. On 12 November, however, six shoran-directed B-29's chopped four spans out of Pyongyang's restored railway bridges. During November and December the Fifth Air Force employed moderate numbers of fighter-bombers to keep "Dog" and "Item" rail lines out of action.[64]

The FEAF railway attacks interdicted Communist rail traffic for nothing more than short periods of time, but even this small dislocation contributed to the success of concomitant attacks against vehicles and trains. In November the Fifth Air Force obtained good results from a main supply-route interdiction plan called "Choke." At last light fighter-bombers attacked selected road bridges, shortly after dark roadblock B-26's hit similar objectives, and during the night other night-intruder B-26's reconnoitered and bombed vehicles stalled behind the blown-out bridges. Even though hampered by unfavorable weather, "Choke" was described as "highly


NORTH KOREAN RAILWAYS
SPRING 1953
LEGEND
RAILROAD WITH TERMINAL POINT OF LETTERED ROUTE
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
25 0 25 50 75 100
STATUTE MILES
CHINA
CHINA
SEA OF JAPAN
YELLOW SEA
HYESANJIN
HAPSU
CHONGJIN
KILCHU
HUNGNAM
HAMHUNG
WONSAN
KOWON
KICHANG
KUJANG
SINANJU
KOSONG
SINUIJU
NAMSAN NI
MANPOJIN
PYONGYANG
SARIWON
HAEJU
CHANGYON
KAESONG
SEOUL
124
126
128
130
42
40
38

satisfactory," and during November the Fifth Air Force claimed to have destroyed 3,139 Red vehicles.[65] In December the Fifth Air Force put into action a "Truck Killer" plan whereby fighter-bombers made road cuts at dusk, light bombers attacked vehicle concentrations during the night, and fighter-bomber sweeps at dawn sought out vehicles which had not gotten under cover. Poor flying weather in the early morning hours prevented the fighter sweeps from contributing much, but the Fifth Air Force nevertheless claimed destruction of 2,321 vehicles.[66] In the last week of December RB-26's and B-26 intruders began to cooperate against enemy rail traffic in a project called "Spotlight." The RB-26 crew located trains, called in a B-26 intruder, and then illuminated the target with flares while the B-26 attacked. This procedure paid off almost at once. On the night of 30 December an RB-26 located five locomotives in one marshaling yard, and two night intruders destroyed four of them and damaged the other one.[67]

Despite their lack of success in such effort early in the Korean war, General Barcus also decided to make additional tests to determine whether day-fighter aircraft could perform night-intruder functions. General Barcus directed each fighter-bomber wing to train two flights for night interdiction work. On the night of 9/10 November the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing flew the first such interdiction mission. On suitable moonlight nights during November and December the Fifth Air Force customarily employed eight fighter-bombers on the route from Sariwon to Pyongyang and eight on the route from Pyongyang to Chongju. The night-flying day-fighters left their airfields at ten-minute intervals, and a tactical air-direction center positioned them over their main supply routes. The pilot cruised with reduced power at about 15,000 feet until he spotted a string of truck lights. He then entered a shallow glide and released his bombs from 6,000 to 4,000 feet. Because the jets approached suddenly and quietly, Red convoys usually did not have time to extinguish their lights before the fighter laid his bombs on them. For these same reasons the fighter seldom drew any ground fire. As a night-intruder, the fighter-bomber was no substitute for a bomber-type intruder,* nor could it work as effectively against point targets by night as it could by day, but the night-flying fighter-bombers were one more hazard to Communist vehicular traffic in North Korea.[68]

Beginning in December 1952 and continuing into January 1953, United Nations sightings of Communist vehicular traffic were higher than at any time in more than a year. Much of the traffic was proceeding south of Pyongyang toward Haeju and Kaesong. "Such unusual enemy activity," reported FEAF intelligence, "might normally be associated with a pending offensive."[69] In order to combat the Communist build-up, General Barcus on 2 January 1953 asked General

*Because of the successful employment of day-fighter aircraft in night attacks, FEAF suggested in January 1953 that it might be possible to train and equip a fourth squadron in each fighter-bomber wing to serve as night intruders. The Fifth Air Force agreed that such a solution for night-intruder organizational problems would be very desirable, but it believed that "an all-weather aircraft capable of detecting and attacking vehicular and rail traffic" would still be needed. Operational experience bore out the Fifth's contention. Fifth Air Force operations analysts calculated that a night-flying fighter-bomber had an expected claim per sortie rate of only 0.262 vehicles. In night attacks against bridges, the fighter-bombers had an expectation of scoring hits with only four bombs out of 100, less than half the rate that could be expected in daylight fighter-bomber attacks.

Weyland to approve a short series of intensive rail attacks to be made by the Fifth Air Force and Bomber Command. General Barcus called for the destruction of all rail bridges at Sinanju and Yongmi-dong and the interdiction of other rail bridges on the main north-south rail lines. General Weyland approved the operation, and Bomber Command agreed to bomb marshaling yards in the vicinity of Sinanju in order to destroy rail equipment which was backed up as a result of the bridge attacks.[70] According to plan, the Fifth Air Force began to attack the key bridges in the Chongchon estuary on 10 January. Missing the next day because of weather, the fighter-bombers concluded the bridge assault on 15 January. In the six days the fighter-bombers flew 1,166 sorties, 713 which suppressed flak and 453 which attacked the bridges. On the nights of 9 through 14 January formations of from four to six B-29's bombed marshaling yards near Sinanju. Light bombers and fighter-bombers harassed enemy repair work at night. In all, the operation consumed approximately 54 percent of FEAF's combat effort in the period of its execution. The principal positive achievement was the interdiction of the main rail line "Able" for eleven days and the equally important "Baker" line for five days. As General Barcus had predicted, the Reds hurriedly increased their antiaircraft artillery defenses in the Chongchon estuary and shot down seven fighter-bombers. Chiefly because of defective coordination, the marshaling-yard attacks made by the B-29's were not very effective. Bomber Command concluded its attacks before accumulations of enemy rolling stock became really lucrative. Over the Anju marshaling yard on the night of 10/11 January, moreover, Bomber Command lost a B-29 to Red fighters.[71]

While FEAF airmen were attacking North Korea's railroads, General Clark moved to cut down on Communist traffic to Kaesong and Panmunjom. From the beginning of truce negotiations the United Nations Command had permitted the Communists to run nine-vehicle convoys both ways from Pyongyang to Kaesong each day without molestation from air attack. General Clark believed that these daily convoys provided resupply to a major Red military headquarters near Kaesong. In fact, the whole Kaesong area—whose "Holy Land" status protected it from air attacks, even though the truce negotiations had not met there very long—was probably a Communist military concentration point. Since truce negotiations were suspended, General Clark saw no reason to permit daily convoys into Kaesong. After obtaining approval from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Clark had his liaison officers inform the Communists on 15 January that, beginning ten days later, they would be permitted to run only two nine-vehicle convoys to and from Pyongyang and Kaesong, only on Sundays, between 0700 and 2000 hours.[72] The Communists loudly protested these restrictions, but the action probably cut down an otherwise free flow of supply to Red military forces at the western end of the battleline.

Aided by a cover of snow, which enabled them to pick out well-traveled roads, especially on moonlight nights, the Fifth Air Force's night-intruders varied their tactics in January and February 1953. Since heavy enemy vehicular traffic was sighted well south toward the battleline, "Firefly" C-46's and C-47's assigned to the 6167th Air Base Group frequently searched out and lighted targets for B-26 intruders. These paraflare operations continued in

February, but the intruder squadrons placed greater reliance on cooperative roadblock and attack tactics. One B-26 blocked a road and then diverted succeeding B-26's to attack backed-up traffic. Since the heavy flow of enemy vehicles provided good opportunities for attack, the Fifth Air Force claimed 2,582 vehicles destroyed in January and 2,850 in February.[73] In these months the Reds also permitted many sightings of trains on the west-coast routes, and "Spotlight" cooperation between RB-26's and B-26's allowed locomotive hunters to claim 33 locomotives destroyed in January and 29 in February.[74]

Although FEAF gave more than a usual amount of attention to the Communist's rail lines in January 1953, it did not neglect special targets. In view of its fine bombing record, Bomber Command selected the 98th Wing for an attack against the installations of Radio Pyongyang on 17 January. The target was a difficult one: except for dispersed antennae, Radio Pyongyang was completely underground and was only a thousand feet from a prisoner-of-war camp. Employing 11 aircraft which reached the target, the 98th Wing scored eight to ten hits with 2,000-pound general-purpose bombs, but these weapons apparently did not penetrate deeply enough to destroy the radio station.[75] Since neither General Barcus nor General Fisher was prepared to sustain excessive losses, FEAF railway-interdiction activities continued on a much reduced scale during February, and both commands gave most of their attention to accumulations of Communist supplies and personnel. For the Fifth Air Force, February's "strike of the month" was against the Sui-ho hydroelectric power plant, where photo interpreters believed two generators

Locomotive ace, Capt. William A. Jessup, knocked out five Communist trains during night intruder missions.

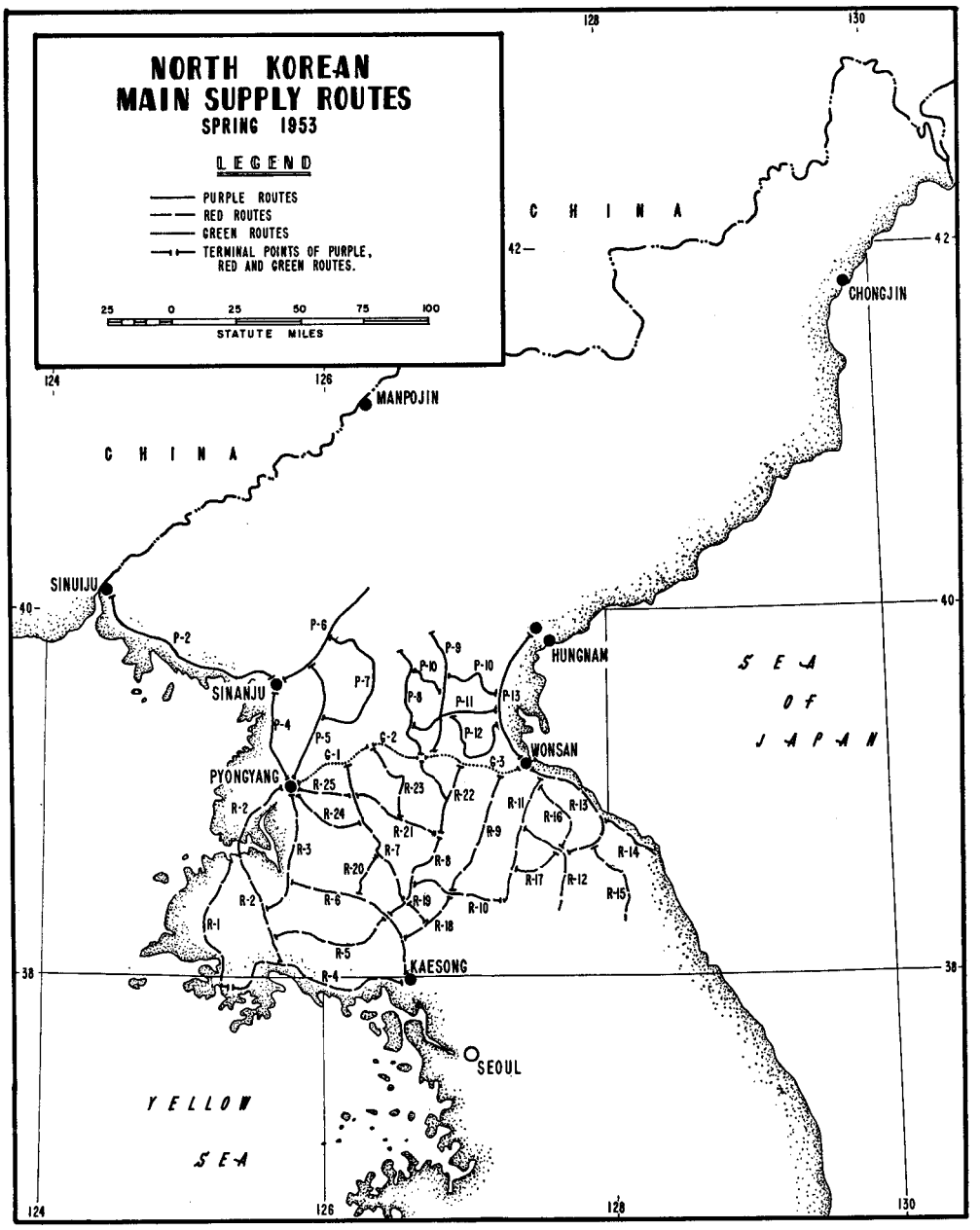
were again operating. The Reds evidently expected another B-29 attack, for they were defending Sui-ho with 141 heavy guns and only 26 automatic weapons. Exploiting the Communist mistake on the afternoon of 15 February, the 474th Fighter-Bomber Wing sent 22 Thunderjets to Sui-ho, each armed with two 1,000-pound semi-armor-piercing bombs. While 82 escorting and covering Sabres drew off 30 MIG's, the Thunderjets drove into Sui-ho at low level and put their bombs into the long, concrete generator house. The fighter-bombers suffered no damage, and their bomb hits halted power production at Sui-ho for several more months.[76] In a notable two-day effort againt the North Korean tank and infantry school at Kangso, on 18 and 19 February, the 8th, 49th, 58th, and 474th Wings and Marine Air Group 33 made 379 sorties to destroy at least 243 buildings. The commander of Marine Air Group 33 led the attack, which was one of the largest all-jet fighter-bomber strikes of the war and

the largest number of aircraft ever led by a Marine.[77]

Early in March both the Fifth Air Force and Bomber Command struck targets deep within enemy territory. In a very long fighter-bomber mission on 5 March the Fifth Air Force sent 16 Thunderjets to attack an industrial area at Chongjin, just 63 miles from the Siberian border in northeastern Korea.[78] On the night of 13 March 12 B-29's returned to the Choak-tong ore-processing plant to destroy a cantonment area which had not been attacked in two previous raids. On the night of 17 March, after four B-29's suppressed flak, 21 B-29's attacked the several small factories and many buildings in an industrial area at Punghwa-dong, only three miles south of Sinuiju. Other than a few flak holes, the B-29's sustained no damage.[79] The Superforts were serving notice on the Reds that they would be back in business in MIG Alley for the duration of the war.

Although FEAF had not emphasized rail-interdiction attacks during February, Fifth Air Force reconnaissance planes had kept a sharp watch behind the Communist lines to make sure that the Reds did not gather their forces for a major attack. As the month passed without any significant Communist ground action, Far East Command intelligence stated that the Reds had missed their best opportunity for several months to come. Any Communist ground offensive between mid-March and mid-May would be greatly hampered by spring thaws. For this reason the Reds would probably wait until May before they opened a ground campaign.[80] Learning these intelligence predictions, FEAF planners outlined a short but intensive aerial interdiction attack—named "Spring Thaw"—which was expected to disrupt the enemy's supply lines, destroy some of his transportation, and force him to consume supplies which were stored in the forward areas. The combined damages of the aerial attack and the seasonal deterioration of the supply routes would complicate any plans which the Reds might make for a general ground offensive.[81]

All elements of FEAF were committed to "Spring Thaw," and on the night of 21 March Bomber Command started the attack with 18 Superfortresses, which knocked spans out of two of the three principal bridges at Yongmi-dong and made a third unserviceable. On the next night eight B-29's continued the attack, but they noted that the Reds had already repaired one of the bridges which had been severed the night before. After these two strikes Bomber Command suspended attacks against Yongmi-dong because it feared that "another attack might have been costly in...aircraft losses."[82] In order to provide prompt sightings of rolling stock which might be stagnated by the rail bridge attacks, Sabres returning from the first and third Yalu patrols reconnoitered the main rail lines and reported sightings to the Joint Operations Center. Thunderjet strikes, coinciding with the second and fourth Sabre patrols, were supposed to attack fleeting traffic concentrations, but poor flying weather allowed the fighter-bombers to make only one effective follow-up strike.[83] The rail attacks were only one part of "Spring Thaw," and most of the Fifth Air Force's fighter-bombers and light bombers worked together against the enemy's main supply routes. The fighter-bombers attacked selected road bridges at dusk, the intruders bombed resultant vehicle concentrations during the night, and before dawn the intruders bombed other bridges to stagnate vehicles for fighter-bomber sweeps. The combined


NORTH KOREAN
MAIN SUPPLY ROUTES
SPRING 1953
LEGEND
PURPLE ROUTES
RED ROUTES
GREEN ROUTES
TERMINAL POINTS OF PURPLE, RED AND GREEN ROUTES.
25 0 25 50 75 100
STATUTE MILES
128
130
42
40
38
124
126
CHINA
CHONGJIN
MANPOJIN
SINUIJU
SINANJU
PYONGYANG
HUNGNAM
WONSAN
KAESONG
SEOUL
SEA of JAPAN
YELLOW SEA
P-2
P-4
P-5
P-6
P-7
P-8
P-9
P-10
P-11
P-12
P-13
C-1
C-2
C-3
R-1
R-2
R-3
R-4
R-5
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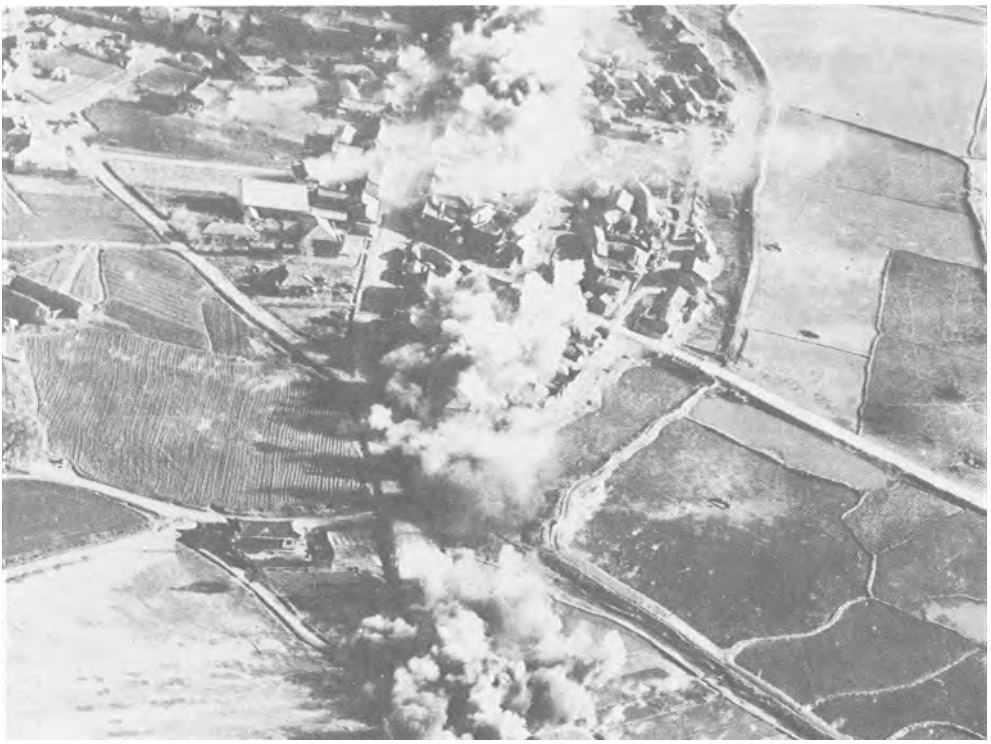
attack destroyed 50 road bridges, damaged 56 others, and made 134 road cuts, but the planned cooperation between the fighters and the intruders required close timing which was frequently impossible in the marginal weather of late March. During March the Fifth Air Force nevertheless claimed destruction of 2,005 enemy vehicles, and sightings of enemy traffic showed that the Communists were using their boggy secondary roads more frequently than usual. From this evidence the Fifth Air Force concluded that "Spring Thaw" had "caused...a slowdown of vehicular traffic."[84]

With better flying weather and more precise timing, FEAF believed that an operation similar to "Spring Thaw" could achieve better results. During the dark of the moon, early in April, Bomber Command and the Fifth Air Force accordingly repeated the operation with a few changes in target areas. On the nights of 6, 7, and 11 April forces of 15 B-29's attacked the three serviceable rail bridges across the Chongchon at Sinanju. On each of these nights the B-29's cut spans from the three bridges, but, as Bomber Command reported, the "ability of the enemy to repair bridges was just short of miraculous," and none of the structures were out of operation for more than twenty-four hours at a time.[85] Since the thawing zone was moving northward and the Reds had also augmented their flak along the roads to the south, the Fifth Air Force moved its fighter-bombers and light bombers beyond a line between Sinanju and Wonsan to attack the enemy's main supply routes. During the first half of April Fifth Air Force crews destroyed 18 road bridges, damaged 38, and made 86 road cuts. During the month the Fifth Air Force also claimed the destruction of 2,732 enemy vehicles, a larger than normal total which was attributed to an increasing level of skill among B-26 crews.[86] During these interdiction operations of March and April the Fifth Air Force required its rail-reconnaissance crews to make roadblocks with internally carried para-demolition bombs before going on to reconnoiter rail routes. This policy hampered locomotive destruction, and the Fifth Air Force could claim only 11 locomotives destroyed in March and eight in April.[87]

From December 1952 through April 1953 the United Nations air forces gave more attention to the interdiction of Communist ground armies in North Korea, but the interdiction had a different purpose than earlier air-interdiction campaigns for it was intended to destroy the Red armies rather than to delay and disrupt their plans. Communist actions and announcements gave reason to believe that the new destructive interdiction was hurting them. In order to bypass the whole Chongchon estuary, the Reds began one of their most remarkable construction projects ever attempted in Korea. Beginning work in January 1953, they built an entirely new 70-mile-long railroad connecting Kusong, Kunu-ri, and Sinpyong-ni. Completed on 15 April, the new railroad connected the Namsan-ni to Chongju ("Jig") line with the Sinanju to Manpojin ("Baker") line. This costly project allowed the Reds to bypass the bottleneck in Chongchon estuary.[88] In March 1953 Radio Peking quite suddenly changed its propaganda line regarding railway attacks. Until this time Red propagandists had played up the mass destruction of the "terrorist" air attacks, but they suddenly began to claim that United Nations air attacks were not very effective. These propaganda broadcasts

assured listeners that the "hands" of the North Koreans were superior to the "machines" of the Americans and that "spirit" would triumph over "material." The broadcasts were very similar to the propaganda line advanced by the Third Reich during the winter of 1945, when German soldiers were "reassured" that Allied superiority in weapons were valueless compared with German will power and *esprit*. The propaganda about-face suggested that their morale was so impaired that the Communists were forced to deprecate the effectiveness of United Nations air attacks.[89]

What North Korea looked like after almost a year of air pressure attacks was well described by General William F. Dean, whose Communist captors moved him about to various places of imprisonment in the spring of 1953. "The town of Huichon amazed me," wrote General Dean. "The city I'd seen before—two-storied buildings, a prominent main street—wasn't there any more.... I think no important bridge between Pyongyang and Kanggye had been missed," remembered General Dean, "and most of the towns were just rubble or snowy open spaces where buildings had been.... The little towns, once full of people, were unoccupied shells. The villagers lived in entirely new temporary villages, hidden in canyons or in such positions that only a major bombing effort could reach them." General Dean was also impressed with Communist countermeasures to air attack. Duplicate



"...and most of the towns were just rubble..."

bypass bridges had been built, and bridge spans were stored ready to be slipped into place when needed. Sacks and boxes of military supplies were stored in the remnants of villages. General Dean thought that the enemy's countermeasures were improving faster than the United Nations Command's means of destruction, but he failed to recognize that the Reds could have no really effective countermeasures to positive aerial destruction which was making their cause both hopeless and extremely costly.[90] Each day the war continued the Reds lost more and more economic wealth.

4. All Elements of FEAF Grew Stronger

During the year following July 1952 FEAF was promised increased support from productive and training establishments in the United States. After two years to get ready, USAF was finally taking delivery of new planes and was turning out new crews which FEAF needed. Despite these promises of additional support, FEAF would have to continue to husband its resources if it were to maintain continuous air pressure upon the Communists. To ensure that tasks were accomplished with the least expenditure of scarce men and equipment, FEAF would have to examine and modify its organizational concepts. To ensure that each scarce air sortie would hurt the enemy, FEAF had to emphasize combat training. In order to achieve maximum results and conserve againt operational losses and deterioration, the tactical air wings in Korea needed better air facilities. While it would benefit from better support from the United States, FEAF would have to gain much of its increased combat effectiveness from the employment of sound management principles. Everyone knew that the Communists respected nothing so much as strength. If the combat commands in the Far East could wage continuous air pressure and simultaneously increase their strength, the Communists would likely be forced to recalculate their prospects for continuing the war in Korea.

At the beginning of the third year of the Korean hostilities the FEAF Bomber Command was laboring to employ its old conventional B-29 Superfortresses as gainfully as possible in what had become a jet air war. As its striking force, Bomber Command possessed operational control over the Strategic Air Command's 98th and 307th Bombardment Wings and the Twentieth Air Force's 19th Bombardment Group. Each of these organizations would continue to be authorized 31 B-29's and to accept two additional B-29's as a maintenance-acceptable overage, giving Bomber Command a total authorized strength of 99 B-29's. Counting replacement aircraft en route from the United States, Bomber Command would possess an average of 105.6 B-29's in the year following July 1952. Although Bomber Command's organization was but little changed and its strength remained virtually the same, Brigadier Generals Wiley D. Ganey, William P. Fisher, and Richard H. Carmichael, who took command on

B-29 night duty.

15 June 1953, employed principles of management analysis so effectively that they virtually doubled the combat effectiveness of Bomber Command.[91]

In order to attain operational effectiveness, the FEAF Bomber Command sought to effect organizational homogeneity and efficiency in the medium-bomber units under its operational control. The Strategic Air Command wings gave little trouble, but this was not true of the anomalous organization of the 19th Bombardment Group. At the beginning of the Korean war the 19th Bombardment Wing had remained on Guam, and the 19th Bombardment Group was supported at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa by a table of distribution air-base wing organized by the Twentieth Air Force. The 19th Group was not organized according to Strategic Air Command principles and, as a matter of fact, still used the old crew-chief maintenance system whereby a single assigned crew maintained a single B-29 aircraft. Other factors were partly to blame, but after August 1952 the 19th Group's aircraft-in-commission rate declined and dragged Bomber Command's rate below the 70 percent of aircraft-in-commission which was desirable. "Our experience," stated General Ganey on 3 October 1952, "has clearly established that the combat and direct support units of a wing are mutually dependent and that sustained effective bombardment operations cannot be conducted unless these elements are combined in a single self-sufficient organization under centralized control." General Ganey accordingly recommended that the 19th Group should be rebuilt as the 19th Wing, under the tables of organization

for a Strategic Air Command medium-bombardment wing.[92] Both FEAF and USAF agreed with General Ganey's proposal, but they could not program the change for several months. Anticipating the reorganization, however, Col. H. C. Dorney, the 19th Group's commander, abandoned the crew-chief system on 12 January 1953 and organized a provisional periodic maintenance squadron to perform specialized dock maintenance on his aircraft according to Strategic Air Command procedures. The 19th Group's aircraft-in-commission rate increased so rapidly that Bomber Command's rate soon exceeded the desired 70 percent. Effective on 1 June 1953, the 19th Bombardment Wing (M) and its support units were moved to Kadena, less personnel and equipment, and the wing was simultaneously reorganized according to Strategic Air Command standards.[93] The reorganization of the 19th Group, together with other factors such as the rotation of combat-weary B-29's to the United States for depot overhaul, helped Bomber Command keep a maximum number of Superfortresses ready for combat at all times.

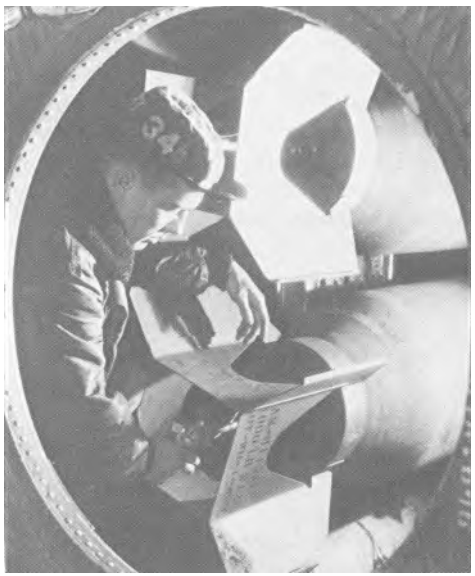
One other rather simple organizational change had a substantial impact upon the operational effectiveness of the medium-bomber units based on Okinawa. Because of the length of their missions, Kadena-based B-29's not infrequently developed mechanical trouble or sustained combat damages which forced them to make emergency landings either in Korea or in southern Japan. When their planes were forced down, the Okinawa units had to transport maintenance crews and equipment to the site of the forced landing. The time lost in such a procedure necessarily reduced the combat capabilities of the Okinawa units. Recognizing this problem, Bomber Command in February 1953 organized Detachment No. 1 at Itazuke Air Base. Manned by personnel of Bomber Command, the 19th Group and the 307th Wing, this detachment provided servicing and maintenance for the B-29's which were unable to return to their home base after a combat mission. This detachment accomplished its duties in a commendable manner, and made a good contribution to the combat capabilities of the 19th Group and the 307th Wing.[94]

The rate of combat operations which Bomber Command could fly depended not only on its own maintenance effort but also upon the logistical support which it received from the United States. Improving logistical support after August 1952 allowed Bomber Command to program each of its three medium-bomber organizations to fly 1,800 hours each month, thus giving Bomber Command a maximum sustained operational capability of approximately 20 combat sorties a day. In the third year of the Korean war, however, the medium-bomber organizations actually averaged 1,307 combat hours a month, and Bomber Command accordingly flew an average of 16 combat sorties per day.[95] During 1953 Bomber Command usually scheduled the 19th Group and the 307th Wing for sorties on two nights straight running and the 98th Wing for sorties every third night. In January 1953, when moonlight became a factor in operational planning, Bomber Command ceased to employ a given number of aircraft each night and scheduled more combat sorties at irregular intervals. This permitted Bomber Command to fly at minimum effort in full-moon periods, and permitted the bomber units to gain experience in mounting larger combat forces.[96]

With a full understanding that it was

diverting combat effort, Bomber Command had long been compelled to use a substantial portion of its flying hours for shoran training. For nearly a year after October 1951 all medium-bomber crews had to receive all of their shoran training in the Far East. According to Bomber Command's experience, every shoran crew needed at least 35 practice drops to establish its proficiency with the bombing technique, but the best that Bomber Command had been able to do was to give most replacement crews 20 practice drops. The new crews had to get the other 15 releases which they needed to establish proficiency while on combat missions over North Korea. While the proficiency of its crews had not been uniformly good, Bomber Command had still been able to secure the destruction of assigned targets by committing relatively large numbers of aircraft to attack them. During 1952 at Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka, Kansas, the 90th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing began to provide FEAF replacement crews with 20 shoran practice drops, and the replacement crews who arrived in the Far East in July and August 1952 were said to have had "a shoran bombing capability equal to that of previous crews after three weeks' training with their Bomber Command units."[97]

The arrival of the better-trained replacement crews increased the accuracy of Bomber Command's bombing attacks, but at about this same time the requirements of the air pressure operations increased the difficulty of the bombing problem. When attacking area targets under the destruction strategy, Bomber Command announced in August 1952 that it would normally commit sufficient force to secure destruction of 60 percent of the target. By scheduling a large enough



A1C Ray K. Richert inserts tail fuses into 1000-pound bombs destined for an enemy supply build-up in North Korea.

force against a single target, Bomber Command was able to attain this desired amount of destruction. In October 1952, however, General Weyland asked Bomber Command to attack two or more targets each night with smaller forces of B-29's. As it splits its force against numerous targets, Bomber Command soon discovered that approximately half of its crews were responsible for most of the accurate bombing in the command. In small-scale attacks Bomber Command was not attaining the desired 60 percent destruction of area targets.[98] If it was to attain the results it desired, Bomber Command would have to improve the skills of its shoran crews and to remedy defects in the shoran system.

As Bomber Command sought increased combat effectiveness, improvements in the shoran-bombing system and in shoran-bombing skills went hand

in hand. It was often difficult to determine why shoran-bombing missions failed; sometimes the system was at fault and sometimes the bomber crew made mistakes. Recognizing that successful operations were dependent upon a thorough study of operational factors affecting the course of a bomber mission, General Ganey had already organized a mission analysis program in the summer of 1952. After each bomber mission representatives of Bomber Command's targets intelligence and combat operations directorates studied the data accumulated by the strike crews and reported the results of their critique to the commander of Bomber Command. Vigorously supported by General Fisher, the mission analysis function provided evaluated data which allowed Bomber Command to overcome Communist night air defenses and also to increase the effectiveness of its shoran-bombing attacks.[99]

An early problem in the shoran-bombing system had been the inexact location of many objectives in North Korea on existing maps. Such target-location errors decreased materially after November 1952, when the 548th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron began to provide Bomber Command with multiplexed target coordinates.* "We are almost eliminating target-location errors," General Fisher stated in February 1953.[100] In November 1952 the 1st Shoran Beacon Squadron established a detachment at Yokota which was able to provide Bomber Command with the shoran computations it needed much more rapidly and accurately than had been the case when shoran coordinates were computed in Korea.[101] As the shoran skills of its crews increased, Bomber Command was able to identify many malfunctions in the shoran beacon stations operated by the Fifth Air Force's 1st Shoran Beacon Squadron. After an exploratory conference at Yokota on 7 March 1953, a team of shoran experts from Bomber Command and FEALogFor visited the shoran stations in Korea. The Bomber Command representatives impressed shoran operators with the importance of their work, and the FEALogFor technicians suggested improved operating procedures. Effective coordination transcended the command barrier, but General Fisher nevertheless believed that the primary using command should have controlled the shoran ground stations. "If the Strategic Air Command has any plans to do shoran bombing anywhere else," he worte, "it is most desirable that the shoran squadrons which operate the ground stations and do the target computations be under Strategic Air Command command and control."[102]

The arrival of better-trained and more-willing replacement crews from the United States after July 1952 did not eliminate the requirement for crew training within the medium-bomber wings. The replacement crews from Forbes Air Force Base still needed about 15 more shoran practice drops before they were proficient. After graduating at Forbes, moreover, the replacement crews underwent additional survival training, were given leaves, and spent a number of days en route to the theater. Each of these delays detracted from their shoran proficiency and caused the new crews to need refresher training. Because of all these requirements, Bomber Command continued to allocate about 500 hours of flying time each month to each

**See* Chapter 15, p. 503.

bomber wing for training. Except for general supervision, General Fisher preferred to leave the details of this training to his wing commanders.[103] By personnel actions Bomber Command undertook to reward meritorious crews and to penalize the laggards. On 15 December 1952 General Fisher authorized wing commanders to rotate deserving crews after five months in combat and to retain less effective crews to a maximum of seven months.[104] As was the case throughout the Air Force, Bomber Command's reserve officers were given an opportunity to accept or decline a permanent reserve commission in the spring of 1953, and those who declined were relieved from duty in February and March 1953. After 1 April Bomber Command's crews contained none but career officers or voluntary reservists. "Their attitude, interest and incentive seem much better," said General Fisher. "They are more anxious to do a job and are not so much in a big hurry to get back home."[105]

Month by month, in the last year of the Korean war, the FEAF Bomber Command increased its combat effectiveness. Bombing accuracy sharpened, gross errors dwindled, abort rates on combat missions dropped from 6.7 percent in September 1952 and averaged only 2.5 percent for the last year of the war. Starting in January 1953, the medium bombers effected a steadily growing percentage of destruction upon the area targets which they attacked. In December 1952 forces of seven to nine B-29's attacked 50 area targets and effected an average of 35.5 percent destruction. In May 1953 similar-sized B-29 forces attacked 44 similar-sized area targets and effected an average of 69.3 percent destruction at each of them. Reckoned in these terms, Bomber Command virtually doubled the combat effectiveness of its medium-bomber force. Vigorous mission analysis study, intensive training and competition between bomber wings, precise target location by multiplex methods, better reception of the shoran beacon signals, improved attitudes of voluntary aircrews, and the personal interest of unit commanders were the factors which enabled Bomber Command to attain increased combat effectiveness.[106] Bomber Command's experience was an outstanding example of the value of sound management practices.

According to USAF forecasts, the Fifth Air Force was scheduled to receive new fighter-bombers in the year following 1 July 1952. During the spring of 1952 the Fifth Air Force had already received the additional engineer aviation forces which were needed to build modern air facilities in Korea. USAF training programs would begin to provide the tactical air wings with a steady flow of replacement air crews, most of whom would be younger officers who had not known aerial combat. Each of these developments promised to reinforce the Fifth Air Force, but most of them carried some element of hazard to operational capabilities. The receipt of new jet aircraft in the winter of 1951–52 had caused a period of near logistical chaos in the spring of 1952. If the construction of new air facilities did not properly anticipate wing transition schedules, the new jet fighter-bombers would not be able to operate efficiently. Without combat training the new aircrews might well reduce the Fifth Air Force's operational capabilities. Planning was never more important. Unless these several programs were carefully coordinated, the Fifth Air Force might run into operational difficulties which would weaken the

pressure of the sustained air attack it was waging against the Communists. Through adherence to sound management practices, however, the Fifth Air Force—under the command of Lt. Gen. Glenn O. Barcus and of Lt. Gen. Samuel E. Anderson, who took the post on 31 May 1953—was going to be able to manage a year of smashing air attacks against the Communists and still emerge as a stronger force than it had been twelve months earlier.

Anyone who toured Korea in June 1952 could not help noting that most of the Fifth Air Force's airfields were of mixed construction, representing old Japanese-built installations which had been patched up and expanded. The only exception was a new 9,000-foot cement-concrete runway at Taegu. The 417th Engineer Aviation Brigade, however, was mustering its ten aviation engineer battalions for a construction program which would provide the operating facilities which the Fifth Air Force had long required. In addition to the modern runway at Taegu, the engineer aviation troops extended Suwon's runway to 9,000 feet and resurfaced it with hot-mix asphalt. Other engineers began work on another 9,000-foot cement-concrete runway at Kunsan Airfield, which would be completed in the autumn of 1953. The engineers resurfaced and slightly lengthened Kimpo Airfield's runways. They built a heavy-duty runway to accommodate Globemaster transports at Seoul Airfield. They worked hard to keep the two airfields at Pusan in repair. To serve Marine Air Group 12, one engineer aviation battalion built a new runway at Pyongtaek Airfield. The engineers also began to rehabilitate a war-torn army compound at Yongsan, which, after the war ended, would house Fifth Air Force headquarters. In the valley of the Chinwi-chon, at the village of Osan-ni, about 40 miles south of Seoul, the aviation engineers began the largest single-construction project and the only airfield which was to be built from the ground up. Three aviation engineer battalions raced against time at Osan-ni to build a 9,000-foot cement-concrete runway and other facilities to serve a wing of new Sabre fighter-bombers. Heavy rains and floods on the Chinwi-chon delayed earthwork in July and August 1952, but the battalions displayed an unbeatable willingness to overcome adversity with hard work, and Osan-ni Airfield (K-55) was ready to receive its fighter-bomber wing in December 1952.[107]

Building the 9,000-foot semipermanent runways which the Fifth Air Force required for its fighter-bombers in Korea required approximately 4.5 battalion months of effort, whereas aviation engineer forces during World War II had built 4,000-foot fighter strips in 1.5 battalion months. Fifth Air Force experience nevertheless proved that the better air facilities paid their way in reduced operating costs and greater effectiveness. Operating its Thunderjets from a pierced-steel plank runway at Taegu in July 1951, the 49th Fighter-Bomber Wing delivered 310 tons of ordnance with 625 sorties. Operating its Thunderjets from the concrete runway in July 1952, the 49th Wing delivered 1,595 tons of ordnance with 1,713 sorties. In July 1951 the jet-assisted takeoff (JATO) units required to get heavily loaded fighters airborne off the short runway had cost $2,976 per ton of ordnance; in July 1952 the jet-assisted takeoff unit cost was only $649 per ton of ordnance lifted. The longer, hard-surfaced runway also saved tires and lessened structural damages to aircraft.[108] Despite the lengthened runways, FEAF's cost-conscious materiel officers noticed that jet aircraft

were still being lost when they overran the runways on takeoffs and landings. Beginning work in September 1952, a FEALogFor project drew upon aircraft-carrier experience and devised a successful aircraft-arresting barrier. Given operational tests at Kimpo in April 1953, the aircraft-arresting gear installed at the ends of the runway proved so successful that it was soon placed in use at Taegu, Suwon, and Osan-ni. The inexpensive barriers saved so many expensive aircraft that USAF adopted them for use at its world-wide fighter bases.[109]

Although the 417th Engineer Aviation Brigade ably accomplished its construction programs in Korea, it continued to be plagued by the old engineer problems of shortages of adequately qualified personnel and of deadlined construction equipment. The engineer replacement troops provided to the 417th Brigade were generally inexperienced, forcing the brigade to emphasize special training courses and on-the-job training. By the time new men were becoming skilled and proficient, they had completed their year's combat tour in Korea and were ready for rotation. Since trained mechanics needed to keep engineer equipment in repair were hard to obtain through normal replacement channels, USAF on 21 November 1952 allowed FEAF to assign air-installations personnel to engineer aviation units. Equipment difficulties became exceedingly acute in the winter of 1952–53. Expedited purchase programs had provided the aviation engineers with prime earth-moving equipment such as D-8 Caterpillar tractors and LeTourneau Tournadozers, but early in February 1953 more than

TSgt. Forrest Herron, Jr. inspects aircraft parts at an Air Force salvage yard at Tachikawa Air Depot, Japan.

65 percent of the Caterpillars and Tournadozers were deadlined for want of replacement parts. Since the shortage of parts—which had not reached Korean through normal resupply and requisitions—threatened to cause the failure of airfield construction work programmed for the spring of 1953, the Fifth Air Force sent representatives to Ohio to make emergency requisitions at the Columbus General Depot. In April "Project Crash" brought many of the needed spare parts to Korea. By emergency procedures such as this, the 417th Brigade kept its machines operating, but it never found a solution for inexperienced personnel. After the war ended FEAF stated that shortages of properly qualified engineer aviation personnel had been the principal cause of engineer aviation ineffectiveness in Korea.[110]

At the same time that its construction program was beginning to provide the airfields which would permit modern aircraft to operate effectively, the Fifth Air Force was taking delivery of a full complement of modern fighter-bombers. According to USAF projections, the F-84G Thunderjet was to become the Fifth Air Force's standard fighter-bomber. This new plane was not a radical change from the F-84E escort fighter which had given such good service in Korea, but the F-84G had many improvements which especially fitted it for fighter-bomber work. In its phase-out plan for the older Thunderjets, the Fifth Air Force ruled that the 49th Wing would first equip itself with the new F-84G's, the 58th Wing would continue temporarily with F-84E's and F-84G's, and the 474th Wing would build up its strength with the F-84E's released by the other wings. In the autumn of 1952, beginning in August and completing in October, the 49th Wing secured its full complement of F-84G's, but slower than anticipated deliveries of the new aircraft after October delayed the planned one-for-one phase out of F-84E's from the 58th Wing, so that it was not completely converted to F-84G's until December 1952. In this same month FEAF withdrew the 49th Wing's 9th Fighter-Bomber Squadron to Japan for training and equipment for a delivery of tactical atomic weapons. This squadron would not return to Korea. Since the F-84E's released by the 49th and 58th Wings proved to need substantial depot overhaul, the 474th Wing's complement of these older Thunderjets shrank through attrition in the winter of 1952–53. In the spring of 1953, however, the 474th Wing was able slowly to begin to convert to F-84G's.[111]

The new-model Thunderjets increased the Fifth Air Force's combat capability, but the biggest fighter-bomber news was the proposed equipment of the 8th and 18th Fighter-Bomber Wings with F-86F Sabre air-ground attack planes. Except for bomb shackles, a modification of its gun-bomb-rocket sight, and special 200-gallon external fuel tanks, the F-86F Sabre-bomber would not be greatly different from the F-86F Sabre-interceptor. Many pilots were not completely convinced that the Sabre would be satisfactory as a fighter-bomber. "It's much too fast," some said. "It's bound to be unstable," thought others. Despite such pessimism, the Fifth Air Force planned to convert the 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing at the new Osanni Airfield, squadron by squadron, beginning in November 1952. Sometime in January 1953, after the 18th Wing had obtained its full complement of Sabres, the 8th Wing was to begin to convert its squadrons at Suwon Airfield.[112] Conversion of air wings to a radically different type of aircraft is

never an easy task, and a number of unforeseen developments made the Sabre fighter-bomber conversion program even more difficult. Slippages in deliveries of Sabres to the Far East delayed the 18th Wing's conversion and put both wings into transition at the same time. Concerned with the growth of Red air capabilities, General Barcus ordered the new Sabre wings to make their pilots proficient in fighter-interceptor tactics before beginning fighter-bombing training.[113]

The task facing Colonel Frank S. Perego's 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing was tremendous. It was expected to keep its old F-51 Mustangs in operation as long as possible while it moved to an unfinished airfield in the dead of winter and began to transition conventional fighter pilots to the "hottest" USAF jets. The conversion program was already lagging when the 18th Wing moved from Chinhae Airfield to Osan-ni on 26 December 1952. No Sabres had yet been received, but the Mustangs were so worn out that the 18th Group moved such of these as it still possessed from Hoengsong to Osan-ni on 11 January 1953. After arriving at the new base, the 12th Squadron and the attached 2d South African Air Force Squadron stood down for transition, but the 67th Squadron continued to fly Mustangs until 23 January. On this day the old F-51's—once the pride of the Air Force but now sadly obsolete old planes—were withdrawn from combat. Eight hours a day, seven days a week, a mobile training detachment trained pilots and maintenance men in the operation and care of Sabres. Following the arrival of the first three Sabres on 28 January, the 18th Wing's pilots began transition flying on 3 February, and on 25 February the 18th Wing flew its first combat mission with Sabres—a four-plane flight which tacked on to a Yalu sweep. The 18th Wing was in action, but Colonel Perego was dissatisfied with the progress that many of his conventional pilots were making. Believing that enough time had been wasted in an effort to qualify men who lacked aptitude, Colonel Perego reassigned 30 pilots to other duties in the Fifth Air Force on 4 March. With many new replacement pilots from the United States and eventual arrival of more Sabres, the 12th Squadron reached unit strength on 31 March and the 67th Squadron attained a similar status on 7 April 1953.[114]

At Suwon Airfield the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing met fewer difficulties transitioning from the old F-80C jets to the new F-86F fighter-bombers. No change of station was required, and the 8th Wing's pilots were qualified in jets. By keeping the Shooting Stars in operation to the last, moreover, the 8th Wing was able to allow many of its pilots to complete their tours in the older planes. Sabre training began at Suwon on 22 February, when the 36th Squadron stood down from combat. On 14 March the 35th Squadron also quit combat and began to train with the new planes. The 80th Squadron, whose F-86F's arrived in the theater with ultra-high-frequency radio sets and had to be retrofitted with usable communications, continued to fly combat with the old F-80's. In a daylong tribute to its old F-80 Shooting Stars, the 80th Squadron, using 20 aircraft and 29 pilots, flew 120 effective sorties tc drop 114 tons of bombs on the enemy on 24 April. Four pilots flew four missions, ten flew five missions, and two had six missions, the latter two tying the Korean record for the most sorties flown by a single pilot on a single day. This was the swan song for the rugged Shooting Stars, and the last sortie of

these faithful old planes was flown on 30 April. The 80th Squadron stood down on 1 May, and within two weeks it was operational with Sabres. On 7 April four 8th Wing Sabre pilots had already joined a Yalu sweep for the wing's first F-86 combat mission, and the 35th and 36th Squadrons were in combat with Sabres before the 80th Squadron surrendered its old Shooting Stars. The 80th Squadron continued to meet some delays in getting its full quota of Sabres, but on 4 June 1953 the 8th Wing was up to strength with the new planes.[115]

Because the Sabre transition program was running behind schedule, General Barcus amended his instruction that the wings would qualify all of their pilots in fighter-interceptor tactics before beginning fighter-bomber training. On 1 April the 18th Wing began bombing practice and the 8th Wing integrated bombing tactics with its interceptor training. On 13 April 8th Wing pilots flew the first F-86 fighter-bomber mission, and on 14 April the 18th Wing made its debut with F-86 fighter-bombers. On 27 April the 18th Wing flew the first Sabre close-support mission.[116] After a month's combat operations, General Weyland predicted that the F-86F would be an excellent fighter-bomber. "I consider it a particularly desirable improvement in our tactical force," he said, "because of its versatility in accomplishing the three phases of the tactical air-force mission: that of gaining and maintaining air superiority, interdiction, and close air support."[117] After four months in combat the Fifth Air Force described the Sabre as the most suitable fighter-bomber employed in Korea. It displayed a superior ability to survive, was a stable gun and bomb platform, had no airfield or operating problems not peculiar to other jets, and possessed satisfactory stability when carrying external ordnance at high altitudes. When fitted with 200-gallon external tanks, the Sabre could carry two 1,000-pound bombs to a radius of action of 360 nautical miles. "It is concluded," stated General Anderson, in a final evaluation, "that the ability of the F-86F to destroy tactical targets is equal to that of any other USAF aircraft employed in the role of a fighter-bomber in Korea."[118]

The arrival of additional Thunderjets and Sabres in Korea had provoked a logistical crisis earlier in the war, but the reinforcement of the Fifth Air Force with new planes in the third year of the war caused no diminution in aircraft-in-commission rates. There were at least three reasons for this. USAF was better prepared to provide supply support for the new jets than it had been in the winter of 1951–52. General Barcus also demanded that the Fifth Air Force pitch its operations at a level at which it could keep 75 percent of its aircraft contantly ready for combat. The Fifth Air Force accordingly adhered quite closely to the planning factors which dictated the number of missions which could be flown each day without exceeding the logistical support which was arriving for each type of aircraft. The diversification of targets attacked under the air-pressure strategy and the 3,000-foot minimum-recovery altitude for fighter-bomber attacks resulted in a substantial reduction of Fifth Air Force losses and damages. In the period between 1 September 1952 and 30 April 1953 the Fifth Air Force suffered 771 aircraft lost or damaged by hostile ground fire for the rate of 11.1 per thousand sorties. A 19 percent decrease in the number of hits on aircraft per sortie was attributable directly to the minimum-attack altitudes. A further de-

crease of 32 percent in the number of hits on aircraft per sortie was probably attributable to the diverse target program which confused enemy defenses.[119] By adhering to planning factors and reducing its loss and damage rates, the Fifth Air Force substantially simplified its logistical problems.

Required to wage continuous air pressure and yet keep 75 percent of their aircraft constantly ready for combat, Fifth Air Force wing commanders were compelled vigorously to prosecute aircraft maintenance and to make certain deviations from the Air Force wing-base organizational plan. In August 1951 the Fifth Air Force had directed its wings to establish rear-echelon maintenance detachments at airfields in Japan. These separate detachments made for better maintenance, but they caused a duplication of supply accounts, motor pools, shops, maintenance equipment, and personnel.* Believing that better control and efficiency could be had if one rear-area commander was made responsible for a consolidated organization, the 49th and 136th (58th) Wings on 4 April 1952 decided to try complete integration in the form of rear-echelon maintenance combined operations. The 136th (58th) Wing assumed command of the resultant rear-echelon maintenance combined operations—or REMCO—for Thunderjet fighters at Itazuke. In June the 17th Wing assumed responsibility for a B-26 REMCO at Miho. The 8th Wing managed another REMCO at Itazuke, which served F-80, F-94, and T-33 aircraft, and when the 8th Wing converted to Sabres the 67th Wing took over this organization. The 4th and 51st Wings maintained separate maintenance establishments at Tsuiki until the 51st Wing assumed controlling responsibilities in November 1952. In February 1953 the REMCO for Sabres at Tsuiki was expanded to serve all four Sabre wings. The detailed structure of each REMCO varied, but the basic functions were similar. Under the REMCO concept, all maintenance personnel, over and above those required to perform preflight and postflight inspections, emergency engine changes, one-time repair of battle damages, and simple replacements of components at Korean bases, were concentrated at the REMCO, where they comprised a periodic maintenance section. Beginning in July 1952, the Fifth Air Force also centralized its spare-parts stocks at the REMCO establishments. These REMCO bases stocked a forty-five-day supply of aircraft parts peculiar to their operations. The K-site organizational service stock accounts were limited to a fifteen-day stock level.[120]

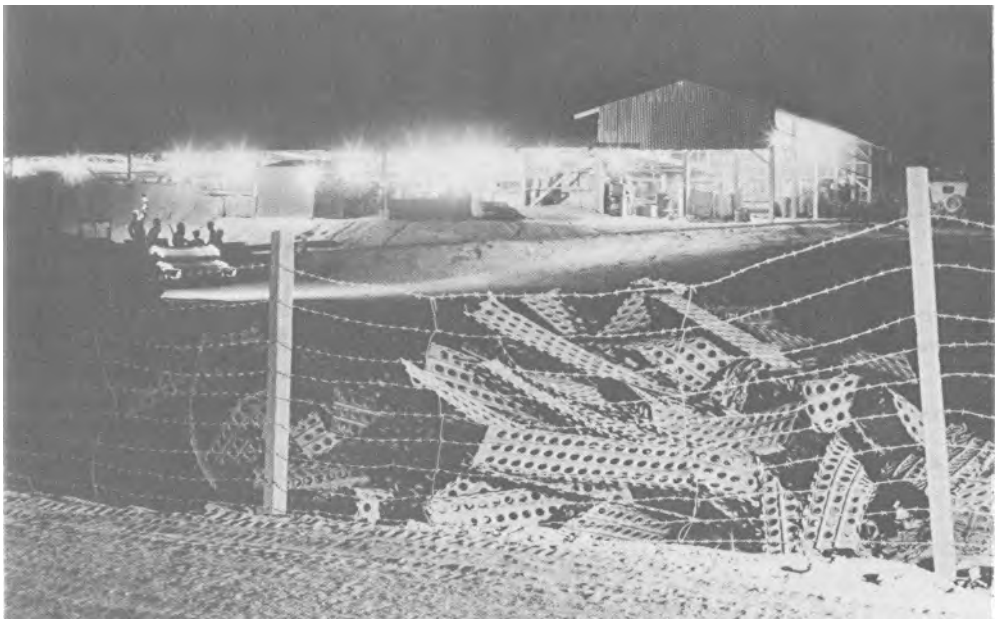
As it was eventually perfected, the REMCO system possesssed both advantages and disadvantages. To some combat commanders the whole REMCO system was repugnant since it denied them control over their maintenance. Time lost in ferrying planes to and from Japan detracted from the availability of pilots and planes. Personnel assigned to the REMCO detachments failed to identify themselves with a combat mission and had little unit pride. The concentration of maintenance and supply organizations at three airfields offered lucrative targets to enemy air attack. Since the K-sites stocked a limited level of supplies, reliable air transportation to and from REMCO base-supply offices was essential. When the 315th Air

**See* Chapter 12, pp. 397-400.

Japanese students are instructed in propeller assembly and repair during a course sponsored by the 374th Troop Carrier Wing.

Division's transports were unable to move air supplies, the Fifth Air Force's tactical units soon suffered from a shortage of support. The advantages of the REMCO system nevertheless outweighed its disadvantages. Mobility of the units at the forward "staging" bases was increased. Had the combat wings been forced to move, they would have been burdened only by a small level of spares and a limited amount of maintenance equipment. Although the REMCO establishments presented potentially lucrative targets, security was actually enhanced because heavy equipment, base supply stocks, and aircraft under repair were at some distance from the active combat area in Korea. The mechanical condition of combat aircraft improved, and at the same time maintenance work was done more quickly, more thoroughly, and more consistently. Consolidation of the technicians supporting the same type aircraft allowed closer supervision of the supply of critical parts. Finally, the rear-area establishments made good use of mechanically qualified Japanese personnel. "Under the combat conditions existing in Korea," FEAF ultimately reported, "the REMCO system of support of tactical operations resulted in a more effective method of maintaining combat aircraft." Whether such a system would prove applicable in other overseas theaters would depend upon the local situation.[121]

In the course of the Korean operations the Fifth Air Force came to believe that the USAF wing-base organizational plan created an organization which contained too much command structure for the amount of tactical air effort in the wing. The tactical situation in Korea required wings to operate from forward bases in



The pierced steel planking area of FEAMCOM's ammunition supply unit in Korea.

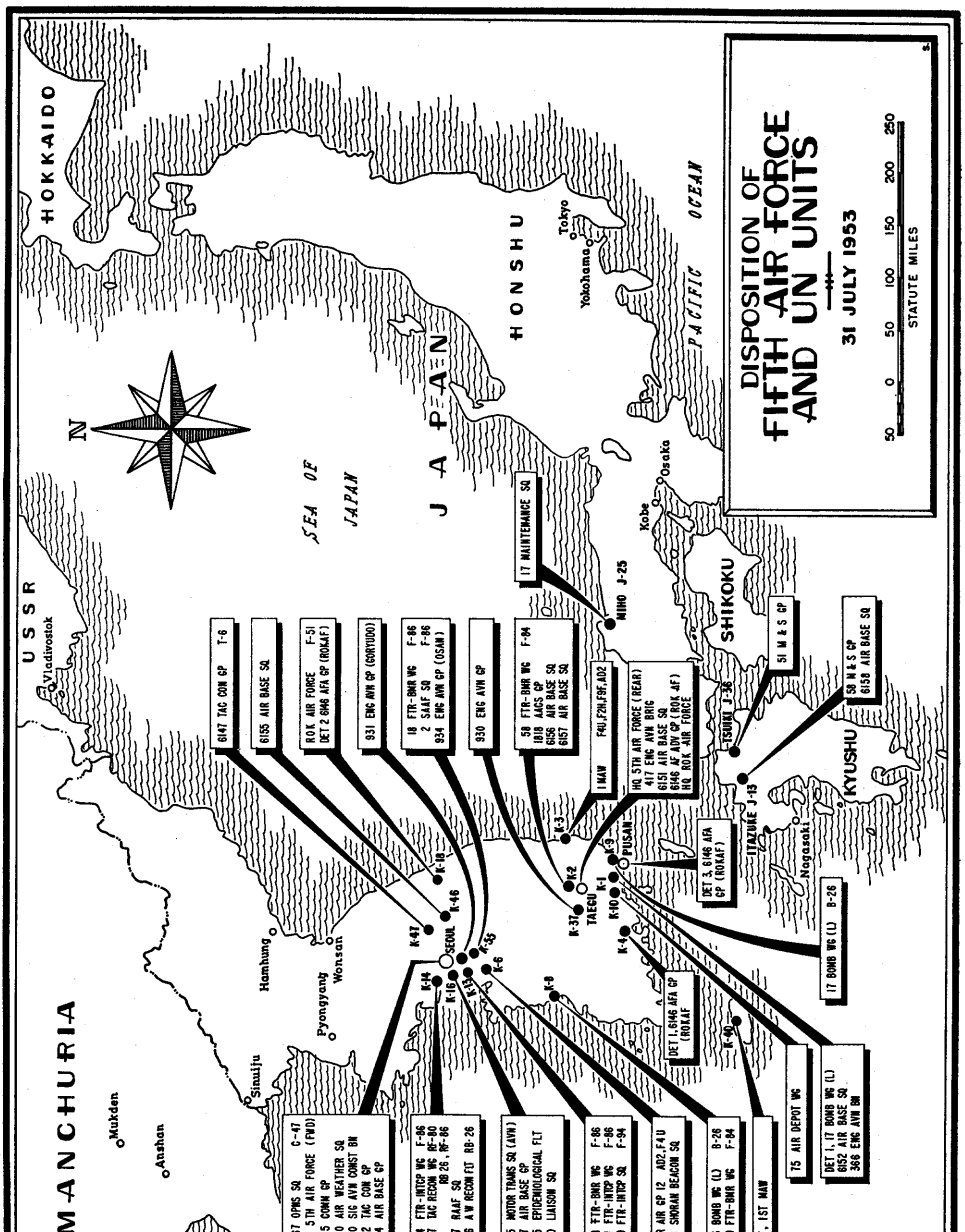
the combat area and rear bases in Japan, but one wing did not have a capability by itself to operate two bases. On 22 June 1952 Brig. Gen. Ernest K. Warburton, deputy commander of the Fifth Air Force, accordingly recommended that a reinforced wing with two tactical air groups should be service tested.[122] After much study and amendment, General Warburton's idea was finally ready for test in the spring of 1953. At this time the Fifth Air Force decided to use the two Thunderjet wings at Taegu as the subjects of the test. In brief, the plan was to keep a wing headquarters and two combat groups at Taegu, each with a supporting squadron, and to send the maintenance and supply group back to Itazuke with another supporting squadron. There was one complication to the plan, for FEAF had announced an intention to send the 49th Wing from Taegu back to Japan at some uncertain date in the future. When the plan went into effect on 15 March, the 58th Fighter-Bomber Wing (Reinforced) took command at Taegu. After remaining on a standby status for two weeks, the 49th Wing and its subordinate units were transferred on paper to Kunsan vice the 474th Fighter-Bomber Wing which came to Taegu. This was principally a paper transaction, wherein the 49th and 474th Wings exchanged stations, personnel, and equipment, but the 430th Squadron was physically transferred from Kunsan to Taegu on 16 April. The designation changes were made effective on 1 April 1953.[123]

As established in March and April 1953, the 58th Fighter-Bomber Wing (Reinforced), the 49th Fighter-Bomber Group with its 6157th Air Base Squadron, and the 58th Fighter-Bomber Group with its 6157th Air Base Squadron were located at Taegu. The 58th Maintenance and Supply Group and its

6158th Air Base Squadron were situated at Itazuke. All other table-of-organization units were put on a standby status, but the 58th Medical Group was later made active to operate the base dispensary at Taegu. The reinforced wing organization represented substantial personnel savings. Instead of the 4,650 officers and airmen of the former two wings, the reinforced wing was manned by 3,754 officers and airmen. In February 1953 the two separate wings flew 1,986 effective combat sorties, and the reinforced wing flew 2,165 effective combat sorties in March 1953. In the three months April–June 1953 the reinforced wing flew 10,422 effective combat sorties, and on 15 and 16 June it twice mounted over 400 effective sorties. These figures indicated that a reinforced wing could deliver more firepower than two separate wings. The mobility of the 58th Fighter-Bomber Wing (Reinforced) was never tested, but it was quite apparent that the movement of one of the combat groups and its air-base squadron to a separate airfield would have been impossible. At Taegu, for example, the two air-base squadrons divided air-base functions between themselves. This arrangement fractured unified command of base services, and it would have prevented the movement of one of the combat groups to a separate airfield. The Fifth Air Force test had supplied some answers for problems arising when two wings occupied the same airfield, but it had not come up with an organization which possessed the mobility requisite to a tactical air war.[124]

In the summer of 1952, when he geared the Fifth Air Force for sustained air pressure operations, General Barcus placed great emphasis upon aircrew proficiency training. Barcus not only programmed flying hours for training, but he instructed his wing commanders to increase training whenever their combat flying fell below its programmed level. During the third year of the war the Fifth Air Force used nearly 20 percent of its available flying time for training. Training in the Fifth Air Force was of two kinds: individual proficiency training for newly arrived replacement pilots and continuation training for tactical aircrews. During 1952 the Fifth Air Force received an ever-larger proportion of newly commissioned pilots from the USAF Air Training Command's combat crew training schools in the United States. By the winter of 1952–53 most replacement pilots reaching Korea were young second lieutenants, and the air wings had difficulty getting enough experienced officers to man key flying positions in their squadrons. Fortunately, many flight and element leaders volunteered to extend their combat tours until they could be suitably replaced. In order to prepare their replacements for combat, each tactical air wing utilized a provisional training flight under an experienced flight commander. Under broad directives, each wing commander was responsible for the training given in the provisional training flights. Each replacement pilot received theater indoctrination, but he received only as much proficiency flying as the flight commander considered he needed to be certified "combat ready." This training was undoubtedly necessary, but it became very burdensome toward the end of the Korean hostilities when most replacements were newly graduated flying officers.[125]

Even after they were certified "combat ready," Fifth Air Force pilots periodically underwent continuation training in their squadrons. In the course of such training new men


DISPOSITION OF
FIFTH AIR FORCE
AND UN UNITS
31 JULY 1953
STATUTE MILES
50 0 50 100 150 200 250
N
USSR
Vladivostok
HOKKAIDO
MANCHURIA
Mukden
Anshan
Sinuiju
Hamhung
Pyongyang
Wonsan
SEA OF JAPAN
JAPAN
HONSHU
PACIFIC OCEAN
Tokyo
Yokohama
Kobe
Osaka
Nagasaki
SHIKOKU
KYUSHU
SEOUL
TAEGU
PUSAN
MIHO J-25
ITAZUKE J-15
TSUIKI J-36
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K-18
K-37
K-46
K-47
6147 TAC CON GP T-6
6155 AIR BASE SQ
ROK AIR FORCE F-51
DET 2 6146 AFA GP (ROKAF)
931 ENG AVN GP (CONTUDO)
18 FTR-BMR WG F-86
2 SAAF SQ F-86
934 ENG AVN GP (OSAM)
930 ENG AVN GP
17 MAINTENANCE SQ
58 FTR-BMR WG F-94
1810 AAGS GP
6156 AIR BASE SQ
6157 AIR BASE SQ
1 MAW F4U,F2H,F9F,AD2
HQ, 5TH AIR FORCE (REAR)
417 ENG AVN BRIG
6151 AIR BASE SQ
6146 AF AOV GP (ROK AF)
HQ ROK AIR FORCE
DET 3, 6146 AFA GP (ROKAF)
51 M & S GP
35 M & S GP
6158 AIR BASE SQ
17 BOMB WG (L) B-26
DET 1, 6146 AFA GP (ROKAF)
15 AIR DEPOT WG
DET. 1ST MAW
DET 1, 17 BOMB WG (L)
8052 AIR BASE SQ
366 ENG AVN BN
3 BOMB WG (L) B-26
49 FTR-BMR WG F-94
MAR AIR GP 12 AD2,F4U
1 SHORAN BEACON SQ
8 FTR-BMR WG F-86
51 FTR-INTCP WG F-86
319 FTR-INTCP SQ F-94
5 MOTOR TRANS SQ (AVN)
6167 AIR BASE GP
5 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL FLT
10 LIAISON SQ
4 FTR-INTCP WG F-86
67 TAC RECON WG RF-80
RB-45, RF-86
77 RAAF SQ
6166 AW RECON FIT RB-26
6167 OPNS SQ C-47
HQ 5TH AIR FORCE (FWD)
5 COMM GP
30 AIR WEATHER SQ
440 SIG AVN CONST BN
502 TAC CON GP
6154 AIR BASE GP

established proficiency for flying close-support missions, night-combat missions, or day-combat missions north of the Chongchon River. Shortly after he took command of the Fifth Air Force, moreover, General Barcus noted that the accuracy of the fighter-bomber crews against the North Korean hydroelectric plants had not been up to standard. Recognizing also that the higher recovery altitudes that he prescribed for fighter-bomber attack would cause a further reduction of accuracy, General Barcus directed the fighter-bomber wings to withdraw flights from combat in rotation and put them through a dive-bombing continuation-training program at the Naktong and Kunsan bombing ranges. In the spring of 1953 the fighter-bomber wings repeated this dive-bombing continuation training.[126] This continuation training undoubtedly increased the Fifth Air Force's combat effectiveness, but for some unknown reason the combat accuracy of fighter-bombers, measured against pinpoint targets, worsened during the last year of the war. The circular probable error for fighter-bombers attacking point targets increased from 340 feet in December 1952 to 514 feet in July 1953. Operations analysts suggested that the decline in bombing accuracy might be attributed to "the scarcity of good pinpoint targets and the general character of a static war."[127]

During the third year of the Korean war the Fifth Air Force waged continuous air pressure and yet became a more modern and a more versatile tactical air force. The receipt of new resources from the United States helped, but the Fifth Air Force also profited from its adherence to good-management practices. Just as no pilot really enjoys slow-timing an airplane, many Fifth Air Force fliers found the measured pace of the air-destruction operations a little distasteful. "This is indeed a strange war," commented one fighter-bomber-group commander in August 1952, "where patience and planning are as important as courage and ability."[128] Yet this "patience and planning" allowed the Fifth Air Force to strike harder blows and still retain its capability for meeting any all-out military action which the Communists might devise. In the year ending 30 June 1953 adherence to planning factors and vigorously prosecuted maintenance enabled the Fifth Air Force successfully to maintain 76 percent of its combat aircraft always in commission. The figure would have been higher except for supply difficulties met when the Mustangs and Shooting Stars were being phased out. An average of 76 percent of possessed B-26's, 79 percent of possessed F-84's, and 77 percent of possessed Sabres were kept in a combat-ready status during the year. Good supply and maintenance, plus new fighter-bombers, made the Fifth Air Force a stronger power. On 31 July 1953 Fifth Air Force wings possessed 128 B-26's, 218 F-84's, 132 F-86 fighter-bombers, and 165 F-86 fighter-interceptors. In terms of the official planning factors, the Fifth Air Force in July 1953 had a sustained daily capability of 85 B-26 sorties, 181 F-84 fighter-bomber sorties, 171 F-86 fighter-bomber sorties, and 143 F-86 fighter-interceptor sorties. Better air facilities at each tactical airfield enabled wing commanders to launch maximum effort with a minimum of difficulty.[129] As the Communists undoubtedly learned when they sought to attack in June and July 1953, the Fifth Air Force was a far stronger air force than it had been a year earlier.

Twilight at the 8th Fighter Bomber Wing airfield.

19. *Airpower Achieves United Nations Military Objectives*

1. Communist China Seeks an Armistice

Even though Peking had refused to approve the United Nations resolution offering a solution to the prisoner-of-war question in December 1952, Communist China gave many indications that she wanted and needed a truce in Korea. Apparently Russia had been unwilling to agree to a settlement of the war on United Nations terms. In the months that followed the United Nations Command did not relax its air pressure attacks on the Reds. In Washington President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration strongly suggested that the patience of the United States was wearing thin and that stronger measures might be employed in the Far East. In his state of the union message on 2 February 1953 President Eisenhower announced that the Seventh Fleet would no longer shield Communist China from attacks by Chinese Nationalist forces on Formosa.[1] As a challenge to Eisenhower, on 4 February, however, Red China's Chou En-lai stated that China was ready for an immediate cease fire on the basis of agreements already reached and was willing to leave the disposition of prisoners of war to a postarmistice political conference.[2]

The Red Chinese "challenge" was nothing more than a restatement of Soviet proposals to end the fighting in Korea on terms favorable to the Reds, but the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff nevertheless proposed to take the initiative in truce discussions. At Geneva in December 1952 the League of Red Cross Societies had recommended that sick and wounded prisoners of war should be exchanged in advance of an armistice, and on 19 February 1953 the Joint Chiefs instructed General Clark to make such a proposal to the Communists. In a letter addressed to Kim Il Sung and Peng Te-huai on 22 February, General Clark stated that the United Nations Command was ready to repatriate sick and wounded prisoners of war and inquired whether the Communists were prepared to do the same.[3] The Reds made no immediate reply to General Clark's proposal.

President Eisenhower

While the Communists were doubtless considering Clark's proposition, the death of Joseph Stalin on 5 March 1953 shook Soviet Russia and her satellites, and when they attended Stalin's funeral Communism's leaders must have reviewed their policies toward Korea. In his oration at Stalin's

bier, the new Soviet Premier Georgi Malenkov spoke in favor of peaceful "coexistence and competition" between Communist and capitalist nations.[4] Having returned from Moscow, Communist China's leaders held a view that the Korean war should be settled. On 28 March Kim Il Sung and Peng Teh-huai fully agreed to Clark's proposal for an immediate exchange of sick and wounded prisoners, and they expressed the hope that this exchange could be made to lead to a "smooth settlement" of the entire prisoner-of-war question.[5] In a public statement issued on 30 March, Chou En-lai approved the sick and wounded exchange and additionally proposed a solution to the disposition of other war prisoners. Immediately after the cessation of hostilities, Chou recommended, both sides should repatriate all prisoners who insisted on repatriation and should hand over other prisoners to a neutral state so as to ensure a just solution to the question of their repatriation. Chou expressed confidence that a period of "explanations" would allay the apprehension of all prisoners who did not want to return home. On 31 March Kim Il Sung expressed North Korea's agreement with the Chinese proposal.[6]

Premier Chou En-lai's proposal for settling the prisoner-of-war issue was remarkably similar to the India peace plan which China had rejected in December 1952. The feeling in Tokyo was that Chou had worked out the details of the compromise at Stalin's funeral.[7] At a liaison officers' meeting at Panmunjom on 2 April the Communists asked for a speedy arrangement to exchange the sick and wounded men and also handed over copies of the statements made by Chou and Kim as an official bid for reopening armistice negotiations. In daily sessions between 6 and 11 April the liaison officers easily worked out arrangements for the beginning of the repatriation of the sick and wounded on 20 April. Since the Communists had offered a proposal for solving the prisoner-of-war deadlock which was in some degree constructive, General Clark felt that the United Nations Command should resume full delegation meetings at Panmunjom. After elaborate coordination between Tokyo and Washington as to future policy, United Nations Command representatives met the Reds on 23 April and agreed to reopen plenary armistice sessions on 26 April.[8]

The apparent capitulation of the Communists caused some hopeful optimism in the Far East. "I believe we have the Communists on the run," wrote General Fisher. "Now that 'Uncle Joe' is out of the way and Mao Tse-tung has a much larger voice in international Soviet affairs," he said, "I personally have very high hopes that this truce will go through very rapidly."[9] Meeting on 7 April, the FEAF Formal Target Committee discussed whether air pressure operations ought to be continued during the truce negotiations. The committee decided that FEAF should continue to execute its air pressure operational policy directive. The committee believed that "the damage inflicted upon the enemy as a result of this application has been the only military pressure placed on the enemy during the past months and...is probably the force which has caused the Communists to...put forth new peace overtures."[10] General Weyland agreed with the committee's recommendations, but he cautioned that FEAF must "lean over backward" and "accept temporary loss of effectiveness" in order to assure the safety of the sick and wounded prisoners whom the Reds were trans-

porting southward. In order to continue air pressure attacks, General Weyland asked for authority to mount a major Superfortress assault against a complex of buildings, barracks, and warehouses at Yangsi, 12 miles southeast of Sinuiju, on the night of 15 April. General Clark approved this attack against a "sensitive" target, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff pointed out that the Yangsi complex was too close to the route to be followed by one of the prisoner-of-war convoys. Desiring to give the Reds no excuse for reneging on the prisoner exchange, General Clark asked Weyland to defer the attack.[11]

It was well that General Clark and General Weyland had resolved against any major relaxation of the air pressure campaign, for the Communists soon showed that they were almost as intractable as ever. When the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war—"Operation Little Switch"—got under way on 20 April, the Reds were so reluctant to disclose the locations of their prisoner convoys that Weyland protested that they were attempting to curtail FEAF's operations.[12] Communist returnees, moreover, seized every opportunity to create nuisances and express defiance. When the truce negotiations began on 26 April, the Red delegation attached impossible conditions to its proposal for handling the general repatriation of prisoners. The Reds demanded that they be given unlimited access to prisoners who were unwilling to be repatriated for at least six months in order to carry on a reindoctrination program. After six

Prisoner-of-war exchange site at Panmunjom, Korea, 15 April 1953.

months, according to Red proposals, prisoners who still rejected repatriation would be retained in neutral custody pending final disposition by a political conference. Coercion was inherent in the Communist plan, since prisoners would be forced to choose between repatriation and indefinite retention.[13]

The Communists were evidently not yet ready to accept the United Nations armistice terms, and intensified air pressure operations were required. When the exchange of 6,679 Red prisoners for 648 United Nations prisoners completed "Operation Little Switch" on 3 May, General Clark signaled the Joint Chiefs of Staff that FEAF was going to step up its air attack against "sensitive" targets. "Continuing such attacks during present armistice negotiations," Clark told the Joint Chiefs on 1 May, "is strong indication to the enemy that the United Nations Command operations have not been slowed down." Air attacks against "sensitive" targets, General Clark repeated several days later, would strengthen the United Nations Command's position. "This is military pressure," he said, "which we should use to convince the Communists that the United Nations Command will continue, without letup, its military operations until an honorable armistice is obtained."[14]

2. General Barcus Turns the Sabres Loose

Throughout the months of the Korean war the Fifth Air Force Sabrejet wings had battled effectively against superior numbers of Communist MIG-15's. Thanks to the Sabre defenses, General Barcus could state that the United Nations Command possessed "unquestioned air supremacy over the North Korean homeland between the main line of resistance and the Chongchon River and complete air superiority between the Chongchon and Yalu rivers."[15] Seen from the viewpoint of the United Nations Command, the air superiority attained by the Sabres was primarily a defensive measure which permitted other aircraft to attack targets in North Korea with minimum losses. Seen from the viewpoint of oriental Communists, however, the inability of the Chinese Communist air force to protect North Korea undoubtedly represented a severe loss of face which was probably greater than a Caucasian mind could imagine. The Chinese had always scorned a "Paper Tiger."[16]

Although the Sabres had successfully maintained air superiority, FEAF had never been inclined to underrate the menace of the Communist air forces. There were too few Sabres to be comfortable, and the MIG-15 was a superior aircraft in the situation in which it was employed. In the spring of 1953 the Fifth Air Force was building up to a strength of four Sabre wings. The 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing flew its first interceptor sorties on 25 February and the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing joined a Yalu sweep on 7 April. These two wings were fighter-bomber units, but their F-86's were equally versatile as fighter-interceptors.[17] The two new

Sabre wings greatly increased the Fifth Air Force's counterair capabilities and permitted the Royal Australian Air Force No. 77 Squadron to convert to fighter-bomber work. The straight-wing Meteor-8 jet fighters flown by the Australians had powerful engines, but they had never measured up against the swept-wing MIG's.[18]

With some of the best brains of the Air Force and of the aviation industry working on the problem, the USAF Air Research and Development Command had been improving the performance and lethal power of the Sabre. Some of the developments did not work, some showed promise for future use, and one was an outstanding success. In the autumn of 1952 the Fifth Air Force tested and rejected externally attached solid-fuel rockets which were supposed to give a Sabre an extra burst for overtaking a MIG.[19] In the spring of 1953 the 4th Wing played host to a "Gun Val" project which brought eight F-86F's, equipped with 20-mm. cannon, to combat tests in Korea. The cannon showed promise for the future, but the installation was not yet ready for combat.[20] As has been seen,* the Air Research and Development Command also sought to improve the flight performance of the Sabre, and when the F-86F with its higher-thrust engine was equipped with solid leading-edge wings, the Sabre series finally reached performance capabilities which made it a highly effective MIG killer. In June and September 1952 the 51st and 4th Wings equipped two of their squadrons with the new-model F-86F's. Segregation of the planes into separate squadrons simplified logistics, but it hurt the morale of the pilots in other squadrons. In the first four months that it flew the F-86F's, the 335th Squadron scored 81 kills while the other two 4th Wing squadrons had a total of only 54 kills. In order to permit all pilots to share the victories, the 4th and 51st Wings divided their F-86F's among all their squadrons in March 1953.[21] Each month the two interceptor wings received more F-86F's as replacements for attrition, and USAF directed its Air Defense Command to ship the Fifth Air Force all its F-86F's on a one-for-one exchange for F-86E's.[22] FEAF wanted still more thrust augmentation for the Sabre, which would enable it to "obtain complete air superiority," but, thanks to the F-86F with solid leading-edge wings, Colonel James K. Johnson could tell his 4th Wing in March 1953 that the performance of the Sabre and the MIG was "practically equal" provided the Sabre was maintained in peak condition.[23] That the solid leading-edge F-86F's were in combat was one of the best-kept USAF secrets, and the modification was mysteriously mentioned in American newspapers as the "new secret device" and the "new combat device" which was giving increased MIG kills.

Assured by the larger numbers of Sabres possessed by his air force and the improving performance of these planes, General Barcus was ready for his pilots to fight it out with the men who flew the Communist interceptors. Their airplanes were costly items to the Reds, and the more destroyed the sooner the Communists would be willing to end the war. In the air over North Korea, however, the MIG's were generally safe enough, provided they flew high and picked their opportunity for fighting. As a general rule, the MIG's nearly always got the first pass,

**See* Chapter 16, pp. 509, 512.

and if the enemy did not want to fight the Sabre pilots secured few kills. In order to score peak kills, the Fifth Air Force had to make the Communist airmen mad enough to come out and fight. In cooperation with the Eighth Army, the Fifth Air Force accordingly drew up a special leaflet which asked: "Where is the Communist Air Force?" Beginning on 14 March 1953, Fifth Air Force crews dropped these leaflets on each hostile ground-troop concentration they attacked. Radio Seoul hammered the same theme in broadcasts beamed northward.[24]

Relatively favorable flying weather allowed the Fifth Air Force's Sabre wings to fly on most days in April, but the MIG's were not yet willing to fight. Only 1,622 MIG sorties were sighted, and the MIG pilots who were willing to give combat apparently knew their business. In sporadic combat the Sabres destroyed 27 MIG's and lost four of their own number. On 7 April, moreover, MIG interceptors shot down Capt. Harold E. Fischer, the double jet ace of the 51st Wing. In the heat of aerial combat Captain Fischer became separated from his wingman and apparently crossed into Chinese territory before he was shot down and captured. On 12 April the 51st Wing almost lost another of its leading aces when Captain McConnell bailed out of his crippled plane over the Yellow Sea. A 3d Air Rescue Group helicopter picked up McConnell almost immediately, and the dunking apparently sharpened his combat senses, for on 24 April he downed his tenth MIG to become a double ace. During the month Captain Fernandez of the 4th Wing destroyed another MIG to stay ahead of the field in the race to become the world's leading jet air ace.[25]

In order ot make the MIG's fight, the United Nations Command had to employ stronger medicine. On the night of 26 April two B-29's dropped more than a million leaflets along the Yalu, offering monetary rewards in Russian, Chinese, and Korean to pilots who would deliver their jet aircraft to Kimpo Airfield. All who came would receive $50,000 and political asylum, and the first man who delivered his plane would receive an additional $50,000. Thus was initiated "Project Moolah," which General Clark said was first conceived by a war correspondent in Seoul. According to another report, "Moolah" was the product of the Harvard University Russian Research Center. Whatever its origin, the project was cleared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 20 March and was approved in final form by the Far East Command's Joint Psychological Committee on 1 April. Following the first leaflet drop, another half million "reward" leaflets were dropped over Sinuiju and Uiju airfields on the nights of 10 and 18 May, and United Nations Command radio stations beamed the same offers in Russian, Chinese, and Korean language broadcasts.[26] If "Moolah" worked, the USAF hoped to get a flyable MIG-15 for testing and General Clark hoped to make the Red air commanders suspicious of the loyalty of their pilots.

Although the United Nations Command was seeking to ground the Communist air forces, FEAF had been planning a May Day attack to rile the Reds into fighting. In January B-29's had been unable to knock out the underground facilities of Radio Pyongyang, but the propaganda station had wavered and gone off the air on 15 February when B-29's had attacked a nearby communications center. Evidently the B-29's had cut the power lines to the station, and General Barcus had planned a repeat fighter-bomber

attack against the power lines to take Radio Pyongyang off the air on May Day. Unknown to higher command, General Barcus had been flying combat missions with the 51st Wing for a couple of months, and on 1 May he served as airborne commander for the Radio Pyongyang attack. While the 4th and 51st Wings screened and covered, the 8th and 18th Fighter-Bomber Wings passed over Pyongyang as if heading toward a Yalu patrol and then suddenly let down to bomb the radio station and its power supply. Surprised Red flak batteries managed to damage one Sabre, but its pilot brought it home. Circling above Pyongyang and using a radio frequency which the Reds monitored, General Barcus identified himself and promised: "We will be back every time you broadcast filthy lies about the Fifth Air Force."[27] The audacity of the Fifth Air Force attack and the insult offered by General Barcus represented an utmost loss of face to the Red air forces.

What effect "Operation Moolah" and the May Day attack had upon the Communist air forces could only be conjectured. No Red airman delivered his plane to Kimpo as a result of "Moolah," and the North Korean pilot, Lt. Ro Kum Suk, who defected with his MIG-15BIS on 21 September 1953, said that he had never heard of the $100,000 windfall he was to receive.[28] Contrary to popular report, the Red air forces did not stand down for a number of days following the "Moolah" offer. Unfavorable flying weather between 28 April and 7 May hampered the operations of both MIG's and Sabres, but on 30 April the Sabres sighted 166 MIG's and shot down three of them.[29] It is quite possible, however, that Russians may have withdrawn her pilots from combat following the "Moolah" offer. An unlocated radio transmitter quickly began to jam Russian-language broadcasts of the reward offer but did not interfere with broadcasts in Chinese or Korean. In an unusual message to North Korea's "air heroes," Kim Il Sung promised that the North Korean Air Force would have a greater responsibility for air defense and exhorted Korean airmen to strengthen their military discipline and protect their equipment.[30] During the early months of 1953 most MIG's engaged by Sabres had borne the plain red stars of Soviet Russia, but after 8 May most MIG's sighted bore Chinese Communist and North Korean insignia. The pilots who now flew the MIG's, moreover, were definitely not "Honchos." They were willing to engage in combat, but they had far more enthusiasm than ability. General Clark thought it significant that "the Communist MIG pilots who were permitted to fly after the [reward] offer was made were the worst—on their record—of the whole Korean war."[31]

For the Sabre pilots the months of May and June 1953 were reminiscent of the famed "Marianas Turkey Shoot" of World War II, when Japan's naval airmen had been blasted from the skies in phenomenal numbers. At the same time in which the MIG airmen were eager but unskilled, the Sabre pilots were always "tigers" and were displaying superior tactical and gunnery skills. Ever since the early days of combat the Sabres had emphasized high-speed cruising in the target area, but now they began to employ up to 98 percent of their power while awaiting combat. The higher speeds reduced the time the Sabres could stay on patrols, but they had important offensive and defensive benefits. If a MIG were sighted, the Sabre's rate of closure was higher, and if a MIG attacked, the MIG's rate of closure was slower. In combat between 8 and 31 May the Sabres sighted 1,507

MIG's, engaged 537 of them, and destroyed 56 of the Red planes, at a combat loss of only one Sabre.[32] In the first half of May the Sabre airmen began to appreciate how unstable a MIG could be in the hands of an inexperienced pilot. In seven instances MIG's went into inadvertent spins from maneuvers at or above 35,000 feet, and in most instances the Red pilots ejected. In still other engagements MIG pilots simply bailed out when a Sabre fired at them. "A new, inexpensive, highly efficient 'MIG Killer' technique has been found!" stated FEAF intelligence. "If the MIG pilot sees you, he bails out; if he doesn't see you, you shoot him down. What could be more effective?"[33]

As the Sabres stalked their prey in MIG Alley during May, old aces added to their strings of victories and a new ace was made. While escorting fighter-bombers on 10 May, Captain Fernandez shot down one MIG and shared credit for the destruction of another. Captain Fernandez was now leading the race for top ace with 14½ MIG kills, and his record seemed secure. In a remarkable blaze of glory, however, Captain McConnell destroyed three MIG's early in May and shot down three more on 18 May to forge ahead with 16 MIG kills. By this time McConnell had flown 106 missions and Fernandez had 125 missions to his credit, and the Fifth Air Force relieved both of them from combat on 19 May. In the continuing air combat during the month Lt. Col. George I. Ruddell, commander of the 51st Wing's 39th Squadron, destroyed his fifth MIG to become the 31st jet ace on 18 May. Several days later, on 26 May, Major Jabara was leading a flight of four Sabres when he sighted 16 MIG's crossing the Yalu near Uiju. Jabara led his flight through the center of the MIG's, causing them to scurry homeward. The battle was not over, for a few minutes later Jabara's element pounced upon two MIG's. In rapid order Jabara forced one MIG into a fatal spin and shot down another. The original jet air ace thus scored his eighth and ninth victories, and he still had more missions to fly before he completed his second combat tour in Korea.[34]

Almost always over MIG Alley the Sabre pilots had been compelled to yield the initiative to the MIG airmen, who usually possessed altitude advantages. To secure kills, the Sabre pilots had compensated for their deficiencies by outsmarting the enemy and forcing him to make mistakes once contact was initiated. In June 1953, however, this situation was reversed and Sabres were able to begin 70 out of 92 engagemets with the MIG's. What caused this reversal of circumstances was not known. On many days heavy, multilayered clouds hung over MIG Alley, and the Red pilots may have believed that they could sneak southward and assault United Nations fighter-bombers. Whatever the cause, an unusually high proportion of Sabre-MIG encounters occurred below 40,000 feet, where the Sabres were most lethal. In a month of fighting which shattered all Korean victory records the Sabres sighted 1,268 MIG's, engaged 501, destroyed 77, probably destroyed 11, and damaged 41. On one day—30 June—the Sabres destroyed 16 MIG's for a new record day of victory which exceeded previous records of 13 kills scored on 13 December 1951 and on 4 July and 4 September 1952. In this peak month of Sabre kills not a single friendly plane was lost in air-to-air combat. Most enemy pilots were pitifully incompetent. On one occasion two of them rammed together and perished while attempting to turn inside a pursuing

Sabre. Four other MIG's spun out and crashed. In other instances, as Sabres closed from behind, MIG pilots crouched in their cockpits and refused to break in any direction. Apparently the MIG airmen figured that a break would expose the cockpit to fire. In this circumstance the Sabres usually destroyed the enemy aircraft, but most of the enemy airmen ejected and saved their lives.[35]

In the air battles ranging over MIG Alley during June five Sabre pilots—more than in any other month in the war—became jet aces. From the 4th Wing, Lt. Col. Vermont Garrison became the 32d jet air ace on 5 June and Captain Lonnie R. Moore and Captain Ralph S. Parr enrolled as the 33d and 34th jet air aces on 18 June. On 22 June Colonel Robert P. Baldwin, commander of the 51st Group, won distinction as the 35th jet air ace, and on 30 June Lt. Henry Buttelmann downed his fifth MIG to become the 36th jet air ace. As if to illustrate that physical age had little to do with acedom, the June "class" of aces contained both the oldest and the youngest of the Korean aces. At the venerable age (for fighter pilots) of thirty-seven, Colonel Garrison was the oldest of the aces. In air-to-air combat in World War II, however, Garrison had already destroyed 11 German planes. Lieutenant Buttelmann, who had been a teenager during World War II, became the Korean war's youngest jet ace a few days after his twenty-fourth birthday. Buttelmann's record was unique in another respect, for he attained acedom in the twelve short days from 19 June, when he made his first kill, to 30 June, when he scored his fifth victory. As these other Sabre pilots distinguished themselves, Major Jabara was forging still more victories. In a single mission over Uiju on 10 June Jabara drove one MIG down to a fatal crash landing and blasted a second out of the air. On 18 June Jabara destroyed a single MIG. A few miles south of Sinuiju, on 30 June, Jabara shot down one MIG and hit another MIG hard in the tail section, forcing the enemy pilot to eject. Major Jabara was now within one-half kill of Captain Fernandez' record as second highest scoring jet air ace.[36]

Col. Vermont Garrison

The smashing air victories of May and June 1953 represented a marked triumph for the United Nations cause in Korea. The Sabre pilots recognized that they were maintaining friendly control of the air, effecting costly losses on the enemy, and were possibly preventing the Reds from launching an air offensive which would allow their propagandists to claim that their side was winning the war as the truce went into effect. To the Sabre men war was also personal. Everyone wanted to be an ace, aces wanted to be double aces, and even Captain McConnell's record of 16 kills might yet be surpassed.

After a Mission—Korea—1953. (Art by David S. Hall, *Courtesy Air Force Art Collection)*

Early in June, however, air-to-air combat stood still as the dank weather of Korea's monsoon season kept both MIG's and Sabres on the ground. Fifth Air Force intelligence officers now viewed the southward-moving weather with concern. The Reds had customarily timed their ground offensives to coincide with periods of bad flying weather. Now, the Reds might possibly launch a face-saving air offensive along the battlelines at a time when the Sabre bases were still socked in.[37]

Impatient Sabre pilots were at last able to fly when weather conditions became marginal on the afternoon of 10 July. Generally clearing weather after 16 July allowed United Nations fighter-bombers to carry destruction to targets along the Yalu, and the Sabres got the combat they had been wanting. "Honcho" pilots were again in evidence, and six aggressive MIG's, each armed with what appeared to be six rapid-firing cannon, ganged two Sabres at the mouth of the Yalu on 20 July and shot both of the F-86's down. Throughout July, however, the median altitude of air combat was 20,000 feet, and the Sabres were particularly effective in the encounters they initiated. In the marginal weather during the first half of the month the Sabres sighted 232 MIG's, encountered 84, and destroyed 12 of the Red planes. Between 16 and 22 July the Sabres sighted 581 MIG's, engaged 118, and shot down 20 MIG's. At a cost of two F-86's lost, the Sabres destroyed 32 MIG's in July 1953.[38]

When the Sabre pilots pushed their

Maj. John F. Bolt

luck in marginal weather on 11 July, Major John F. Bolt, a Marine Corps pilot flying with the 51st Wing, blasted down his fifth and sixth MIG to become the 37th ace and the only Marine ace of the Korean war. Late on the afternoon of 15 July Major James Jabara was finally able to score his 15th aerial victory, which made him the world's second triple jet ace and the runner-up to Captain McConnell as the ranking jet air ace of Korea. Two other 4th Wing pilots, Captain Clyde A. Curtin and Major Stephen L. Bettinger, won distinction as the 38th and 39th jet air aces by victories scored on 19 and 20 July.* Shortly before dusk on the afternoon of 22 July Lt. Sam P. Young and two other 51st Wing Sabre pilots were sweeping MIG Alley. In 34 combat missions over Korea the young officer had never engaged an enemy plane, but four MIG's cut across below his formation and he got his chance. Diving down with guns flaming, Young shot down his first MIG and destroyed the last MIG of the Korean war. On the last day of hostilities† Captain Parr would shoot down a conventional Communist aircraft, but the combat between Sabres and MIG's ended on 22 July. On the next three days nonoperational weather kept both MIG's and Sabres grounded. On 27 July Sabre patrols caught a few glimpses of MIG's at the Yalu, but the Red airmen apparently had no fight left and flew homeward.[39]

*Because of an unusual circumstance, Major Bettinger could not be confirmed as the 39th and last jet air ace of the Korean war until 2 October 1953. After shooting down a MIG on 20 July, Bettinger was himself shot down and was taken prisoner. Bettinger's wingman reported the victory, but two witnesses were required to confirm a claim, and Bettinger's victory could not be officially recorded until he was released from captivity and could appear before a claims board as his own second witness. While Bettinger was in prison camp, his secret was closely kept for fear of some Communist reprisal against him.

†*See* Chapter 19, pp. 684-685.

3. Air Defense Became Everybody's Business

United Nations air superiority and the potential air striking power of the United Nations air forces were the principal air defenses of South Korea. In context with this estimate of the situation and with its responsibility for maintaining an air defense for South Korea the Fifth Air Force recognized that its best defense was the perpetuation of air superiority, the maintenance of its striking power, and the continuing neutralization of North Korea's airfields. The Fifth Air Force nevertheless needed fixed defenses for installations in South Korea which would be capable of resisting an all-out Red air offensive and of defending against Red harassing attacks launched at night by light planes from partially operational airfields in North Korea. Recognizing that the growing Communist air strength in the Far East might tempt the Reds to risk retaliation and to try an all-out air offensive, General Everest had organized an air-defense system in South Korea and had integrated radar control and warning, fighter-interceptors, and antiaircraft artillery defenses into the system.* In the spring of 1952, however, the Fifth Air Force's formal air defenses were still marginal, and General Barcus recognized that they must be augmented as much as possible.

Except for some changes in terminology which kept pace with similar changes in the United States, General Barcus made no substantial changes in the air-defense system for the Republic of Korea. The Korean Air Defense Region, an air-defense subdivision of the Far East Command, was divided at 36° 30′ into a Northern Air Defense Area and a Southern Air Defense Area. Each area was further divided into two air-defense sectors, the northeast and northwest and the southeast and southwest. The commander of the Fifth Air Force commanded the Korean Air Defense Region and the Northern Air Defense Area, employing the senior-duty controller in the tactical air-control center at Seoul as his working representative for the area command. The commander of the 1st Marine Air Wing, working through the Marine tactical air-control center at Togudong (near Pohang), was in command of the Southern Air Defense Area. The tactical air-direction centers located at Kimpo Airfield (northwest sector), Hyangbyong-san (northeast sector), Kunsan Airfield (southwest sector), and Pochon (southeast sector) were directly responsible for sector air defenses.[40]

For the performance of aircraft warning and control functions in the Northern Air Defense Area the Fifth Air Force depended upon the electronic capabilities of the 502d Tactical Control Group. In June 1952 the 606th AC&W Squadron operated a tactical air-direction center atop a small mountain near Kimpo Airfield. The 607th AC&W Squadron operated another tactical air-direction center on Kuksa-bong, a mountain some 20 miles northeast of Seoul. The 608th AC&W Squadron operated a third tactical air-direction center on Hyangbyong-san, a mountain some 30 miles northeast of Kangnung, in eastern Korea. In order to round out their surveillance capabilities, each squadron possessed lightweight radars,

**See* Chapter 13, pp. 425-431.

Thus in February 1952 a detachment of the 606th Squadron began operating a surveillance radar at Cho-do, the small island off Korea's western coast. A detachment of the 607th Squadron already manned a lightweight radar on Paengnyong-do, another island south of Cho-do. The Fifth Air Force would have liked to move the Kimpo tactical air-direction center to Paengnyong-do, but it could not secure logistical support for a full-scale tactical air-direction center on this off-shore island.[41]

Fifth Air Force electronic officers already knew the defects of their aircraft-warning establishment, but on 21 August 1952 the unannounced arrival of four high-flying MIG's over Kimpo provided a dramatic demonstration that the radar-detection network was weak. Both because of this demonstration and of the need for ground-control interception capabilities over MIG Alley, the Fifth Air Force decided to establish limited ground-control intercept capabilities at both Cho-do and Paengnyong-do. Failing to get the additional aircraft control and warning squadron which it needed to man these two new stations, the 502d Tactical Control Group reshuffled its units. In October 1952 the 608th Squadron organized a detachment to operate the tactical air-direction center at Hwangbyong-san and moved its command post to Seoul Airfield, from which focal point it took over the management of the detachments at Cho-do and Paengnyong-do. At this time limited ground-control interception capabilities were established at both of these islands. To provide high-altitude surveillance over Seoul and Inchon, the 608th Squadron established a search radar detachment at a site on the coast southwest of Inchon near Songgum-ri. This station was integrated into the radar net on 16 November 1952.[42]

As it achieved its final deployment in November 1952, the Fifth Air Force's aircraft control and warning network was better suited to the control of friendly planes in flight than the location of hostile aircraft. In order to get best reception of the identification beacons carried by most friendly aircraft, the tactical air-direction centers located their heavy radars on high terrain. From these sites the old electronics equipment did not adequately pick up hostile aircraft, especially if the hostile planes were jets flying at altitudes above 40,000 feet. Located on high terrain, the heavy radars were equally unable to spot low-flying Red planes as they came down through Korea's valleys. In view of the speed of hostile jet aircraft, the 502d Group's radars were all too short ranged. If an enemy attack force came southward at 35,000 to 40,000 feet, the 502d Group figured it would be able to provide the Fifth Air Force with fifteen minutes' advanced warning. If the enemy planes came at altitudes above 40,000 feet, or below 1,000 feet, it was possible that the raid would not be detected by the radars at all. Pending the development of new equipment, the Fifth Air Force was admittedly vulnerable to air attack. "The deployment of radar equipment," noted the 502d Group at the war's end, "would not have been adequate...if the United Nations had not had definite air superiority."[43]

Because its radars could give only a limited amount of warning, the Korean Air Defense Region urgently needed antiaircraft artillery gun battalions for defense against high-flying planes and antiaircraft artillery automatic-weapons battalions for defense against low-flying aircraft. According to the command

arrangement in Korea, the Fifth Air Force possessed limited operational control over all nondivisional antiaircraft artillery units assigned to the Eighth Army and further assigned to the 10th Antiaircraft Artillery Group. The antiaircraft artillery units were deployed as agreed upon by the Fifth Air Force and Eighth Army and as approved by the Far East Command. These control arrangements did not define the headquarters which would issue orders if units had to be moved in some sudden emergency, but the Fifth Air Force chose to let the system work without precise definition. The tactical air-control centers and the sector tactical air-direction centers issued necessary fire-control orders to antiaircraft artillery units.[44]

Although the Far East Command frequently reminded the Joint Chiefs of Staff that antiaircraft artillery units were too few for an adequate defense, the Department of Army was never able to meet stated requirements. In October 1951 the Fifth Air Force had placed a requirement for five 90-mm. gun battalions and nine 40-mm. automatic-weapons battalions, but in June 1952 only four gun battalions and four automatic-weapons battalions were in Korea. Seeking a realistic deployment of the scarce units which would comply with the doctrine that objectives defended by flak should be well defended, a Fifth Air Force and Eighth Army conference met on 25 June 1952. The conference listed 16 installations that needed defense but resolved that only the top five—Kimpo Airfield, Suwon Airfield, the port of Pusan, Inchon harbor, and Kunsan Airfield—could be adequately defended with available units. While well down on the priority list, Cho-do and Paengnyong-do were so frequently harassed by Red aircraft that the conference agreed that the single platoons of automatic weapons already posted to these islands should be left there. After General Clark approved, the antiaircraft artillery battalions assumed the new deployment: a gun and an automatic-weapons battalion at Kimpo, a gun and an automatic-weapons battalion Suwon, two gun battalions at Pusan, an automatic-weapons battalion (less the battery split between Cho-do and Paengnyong-do) at Inchon, and an automatic-weapons battalion at Kunsan.[45] On its arrival from the United States, a new automatic-weapons battalion was assigned to Pusan. These arrangements held until October 1952, when the Fifth Air Force secured agreement from the Eighth Army to accord the new airfield at Osan-ni the third defense priority and to assign a newly arriving gun battalion and a new automatic-weapons battalion there. When General Clark approved the deployment, the gun battalion took station at Osan-ni in October 1952 and the automatic-weapons battalion moved there in January 1953.[46] Because of the intensity of Red air attacks against Cho-do, the Fifth Air Force moved the platoon of automatic weapons from Paengnyong-do to Cho-do, thus concentrating the entire battery of detached automatic weapons on this exposed island position in December 1952.[47]

When they were finally deployed in January 1953, the antiaircraft artillery battalions in Korea offered minimal defenses to the six highest-priority installations out of 17 installations requiring defense. The deployment did not actually provide adequate defenses, even for the top-priority installations. In February 1953 General Weyland told General Clark that additional automatic-weapons battalions were needed at Kimpo, Suwon, and Osan. In

All aircraft entering the Japan air defense zone are radar monitored and if not positively identified they are intercepted by one of these F-94's.

an effort to provide some protection for airfields where there were no antiaircraft artillery defenses, the Fifth Air Force procured quadruple mounts for .50-caliber machine guns and trained Air Force personnel to operate these batteries. By December 1952 two or more "quad-50" batteries were installed at Pusan East, Taegu, Seoul Municipal, and Chunchon airfields and at the tactical air-direction centers in central and eastern Korea. Since the antiaircraft artillery automatic-weapons batteries were hampered by obsolete weapons, which required gunners visually to sight enemy aircraft, the Fifth Air Force also obtained and established searchlights at Cho-do, Kimpo, and Suwon in December 1952. In May 1953 the Fifth Air Force asked that all the automatic-weapons battalions be equipped with the new radar-directed, automatic-firing 75-mm. "Skysweeper" guns which were replacing old automatic weapons in battalions in the United States. These new Skysweeper weapons would have been very useful against the Red night hecklers, but they were not made available to units in the Far East before the end of the Korean war.[48]

Despite the improvements which had been made in the air-defense capabilities by November 1952, General Barcus was still gravely concerned about the danger of Communist air attack. After reviewing the limited capabilities of warning radar, Colonel John V. Hearn, Jr., the Fifth Air Force's director of intelligence, warned that "an initial, uninterrupted strike on the crowded airdromes at Kimpo and Suwon could destroy more than half of the F-86's ...in Korea."[49] Because the Fifth Air Force's vulnerability to air attack, General Barcus first issued a plan on 28 November calling for a permanent deployment of two Sabre squadrons to Pusan Airfield (K-1) within a month. This would reduce the combat effectiveness of the Sabre wings but it would be preferable to losing the Sabre force to a possible surprise air attack.[50] Before the aviation engineers could ready Pusan Airfield for Sabre tenancy General Barcus stayed the actual movement of the squadrons but ordered the Sabre wings to prepare plans for making such dispersals on shortest notice. On 23 January 1953 General Barcus announced an even more comprehensive dispersal plan for Sabres, which was called "Doorstop." The Fifth Air Force would provide emergency servicing and replenishment stocks for Sabres at Pusan, Taegu, Pohang, Pyongtaek, Kusan, and Osanni airfields—which would be alternate Sabre bases. The Sabre wings would

keep half their combat-ready aircraft constantly on various degrees of alert, and all pilots would become qualified to supervise the servicing and arming of their planes at the alternate bases. With the completion of the stocks at the alternate bases, "Doorstop" was formally implemented in an operations order on 5 February. On 12 April "Doorstop" was replaced with a similar operational plan called "Fast Shuffle," which directed all four Sabre wings to deploy to alternate bases on short notice. These Sabre dispersal plans fortunately never had to be employed in actual combat, but the Sabre wing periodically diverted their squadrons on practice "bug-outs" to the alternate airfields.[51]

Dispersal of the all-important Sabres got top priority in Fifth Air Force planning, but General Barcus demanded that all personnel prepare for the possibility of Communist air or ground attack. Plans were made to evacuate all Fifth Air Force troops from Seoul on short notice, and in February 1953 a number of Air Force units were moved from Seoul to bases farther south. In a command letter on 5 January General Barcus enjoined all base commanders to "implement every measure both active and passive, consistent with efficient conduct of operations, which will tend to minimize the adverse effects of enemy air activity." He ordered each base commander personally to ensure that his defense program was current, realistic, and the best that could be had within operational limitations. The fighter wings subsequently emphasized fast scrambles and maintained special alerts during dawn and dusk hours. Most base commanders did not allow passive defense measures to interfere with their combat capabilities, but they built revetments for at least a part of their planes, camouflaged their fuel tanks, provided personnel shelters, and held their men in preparation for a possible air attack.[52]

Capt. Robert A. Miller directs U.N. fighters by radio to intercept unidentified planes over Korea.

The real effectiveness of the Korean Air Defense Region was never tested against the all-out Communist air attack which it was designed to counter. At sporadic intervals, however, the air defenses were employed against night air attacks made by North Korean airmen in light aircraft. Such "Bed-check Charlie" raids had been hard to oppose during 1951,* and they proved equally annoying after October 1952, when, following a respite of almost a year, the Reds began again to heckle Cho-do and the Seoul area. In the early morning hours of 13 October four Red PO-2 trainer aircraft dropped small bombs and then strafed the radar

See Chapter 9, pp. 610-612 and Chapter 13, p. 431.

A1C Edward L. Johnson, radio operator with the 19th Bomb Group, is charged with all airborne radio traffic during night air strikes over Korea.

installations on the island, wounding two Americans and killing five Korean civilians. The little fabric-covered biplanes were too elusive for United Nations night-fighters. An F-94 established radar contact with the planes on six occasions but each time the little Red planes broke the contact with violent evasive maneuvers. A Marine F4U also made a brief contact but lost it at low altitude.[53] On the night of 12 November several small Red aircraft attacked Paengnyong-do, without causing damage.[54] The Red raiders attacked Cho-do repeatedly on the nights of 26 November, 5 December, and 10 December, but the luck of one of the Red raiders ran out on the latter night when a Skynight caught the plane in its radar sight and blasted it into the sea.[55] On the night of 30 December Fifth Air Force radars tracked two slow-flying "Bedcheck Charlie" planes as they flew leisurely down over Seoul, Kimpo, and Suwon, dropping North Korean propaganda leaflets. At Suwon antiaircraft artillery fire sent all personnel to their shelters for safety against falling flak fragments but did not harm the little Red raiders.[56]

After the surprise visit to Seoul and Suwon on the night of 30 December, the North Korean hecklers were inactive over United Nations installations for several months. In this respite the Fifth Air Force attempted to bulwark its defense against the low-flying planes. The automatic-weapons platoon moved from Paengnyong-do to Cho-do, giving the latter place a full battery. Searchlights were procured and installed at Cho-do, Kimpo, and Suwon. Since Eighth Army liaison planes often flew at night and had no identification beacons, the corps fire-support coordination centers were required to establish direct communications with the tactical air-direction centers so that Army pilots could file flight plans. Antiaircraft artillery acquisition radars and ground-control approach radars at Seoul, Kimpo, and Suwon were integrated into the radar reporting net. After receiving the sets in February, the 502d Tactical Control Group deployed ten additional lightweight gap-filler radars at such locations as Munsan, Inchon, and Sokcho-ri to cover the valley approaches to vital targets against low-flying aircraft.[57]

When the North Korean night-fliers resumed their attack on the night of 15 April 1953, the Fifth Air Force had still not found a solution to these stinging air attacks. For nearly two hours before midnight on 15 April several Red aircraft attacked Cho-do, killing two antiaircraft artillerymen and destroying a weapon. Four F-94's went to the area, but the Reds kept too low to show up in the ground clutter on the airborne radar scopes. Selecting

different targets almost every night for the next two weeks, the Communist airmen employed PO-2's, LA-11's, and Yak-18's in attacks against Chunchon, Kimpo, and Eighth Army front-line troops. One of the attacks, on 23 April, caused minor damages to five parked RF-80's at Kimpo, and the front-line attacks wounded a few soldiers and killed a number of Korean civilians. Antiaircraft artillery and all-weather fighters were equally unable to engage the low-flying planes. In the early-morning hours of 3 May Lt. Stanton G. Wilcox and Lt. Irwin L. Goldberg throttled their F-94 down to 110 miles an hour to destroy a PO-2, but the Starfire crew evidently crashed after making the low-level kill. Before midnight on 6 May antiaircraft gunners at Cho-do may have downed another slow-moving plane, but the wreckage could not be found the next morning.[58]

Making still another effort to cope with Red raiders, the Fifth Air Force decentralized its defense system on 24 April. Kimpo, Suwon, and Chunchon were declared to be "gun-defended areas," and the base commanders were authorized to declare air-raid alerts and to give local automatic weapons "gun-free" orders. During hours of darkness each of these airfields was restricted to all aircraft not cleared by the local control towers. At Kimpo the base commander secured several Marine AD aircraft, a B-26 with 14 forward-firing machine guns, and armed T-6 trainer which would attempt interceptions under the direction of a controller in the ground-control approach station. Because of the loss of the Starfire, the Fifth Air Force restricted these planes from attempting to engage enemy planes flying below 2,000 feet or slower than 160 miles per hour.[59] These new gun defenses and special interception plans proved generally unsuccessful. On the night of 26/27 May some five to eight PO-2's strewed small bombs and artillery shells over the Seoul area. Except for breaking an oil line between Inchon and Yongdungpo, the enemy air attack did no damage, but the Red hecklers got away unscathed. Most of the miscellaneous interceptor aircraft were caught on the ground by the Red alert at Kimpo. A flare-dropping transport and an armed T-6 attempted an interception, but the flares merely blinded the Mosquito pilot. The antiaircraft guns at Kimpo were cleared to fire but did not report any hits.[60]

As the Red light planes continued to attack Seoul, Kimpo, or Cho-do almost every night early in June, the Fifth Air Force's defenses continued to be vulnerable. On the night of 8 June a stream of low-flying planes bombed Seoul while F-94's searched for them fruitlessly. Near Cho-do on the night of 12 June the commander of the 319th Squadron, Lt. Col. Robert V. McHale, and his observer, Capt. Samuel Hoster, were cleared to fire on a Red light plane at 5,000 feet, but they evidently crashed into the Red plane and were lost. On the night of 15/16 June nine aircraft raided Seoul and shook President Rhee's mansion with bombs. The Reds evidently planned a second raid that same night, but an AD crew destroyed a PO-2 northeast of Kimpo and broke up this second attack. On the night of 16/17 June some 15 PO-2, LA-11, and Yak-18 prop planes made the most damaging attack of the season, when they started several fires in Seoul and touched off a blaze which destroyed five million gallons of fuel at Inchon. During this attack the Kimpo tactical air-direction center was swamped with unidentified plots forwarded to it by the many early warning, antiaircraft artillery, and ground-control approach radars in its

net, and it lost control of the sector alert. At the height of the raid the tactical air-direction center's controller scrambled an AD interceptor, but the Marine crew was fired at everywhere it went by friendly antiaircraft guns, despite repeated assurances from the ground controller that all flak guns were "tight."[61]

Before another period of bright moonlight brought a resumption of the "Bedcheck Charlie" attacks the Fifth Air Force had to find some solutions to the night-heckler raids. On 17 June the Fifth Air Force relieved base commanders at Suwon and Kimpo of their authority to declare Red alerts and control the fire status of local flak guns and returned these duties to the Kimpo tactical air-direction center. To reduce the number of unfiltered plots which had swamped the Kimpo direction center, the antiaircraft artillery acquisition radars were removed from the surveillance net and the ground-control approach radars were permitted to report only such planes as were entering their restricted areas without a proper clearance. The Fifth Air Force borrowed four old Corsair F4U-5N planes and crews from Task Force 77. The Fifth Air Force also sought to learn which North Korean airfields the Reds were using to stage their hecklers forward, and toward the end of the month photo interpreters located several carefully dispersed Red aircraft hidden at Pyongyang Main Airfield. When the Reds renewed their probing raids at the end of June, the Fifth Air Force was ready. In the early morning hours of 30 June Lt. Guy Bordelon, a Corsair pilot from the carrier *Princeton,* intercepted and destroyed two bogies which he identified as Yak-18's. Shortly before midnight on 1 July Bordelon destroyed two more enemy light planes, which were either LA-9's or LA-11's. The old Corsair which Bordelon flew was just the plane for engaging the Red hecklers for it could throttle down slow enough to maneuver with them. On the night of 3/4 July a B-29 strike all but obliterated the flight surfaces at Pyongyang Main Airfield with 500-pound bombs. After the Superfortress attack, no more Red hecklers came to Seoul. In a low-level attack on 16 July Sabrejets of the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing permanently bedded down two potential "Charlies" and damaged another which had been unable to leave Pyongyang Main Airfield. Lieutenant Bordelon still continued to fly patrols, and on the night of 16 July, near Pyongyang, he destroyed his fifth hostile aircraft, said to have been a Yak-18. Bordelon thus became the first "Bedcheck Charlie" ace and the only Navy ace of the Korean war.[62] As a result of the air attacks against their staging airfields and the interceptions of their airborne planes, the Communists were unable to attack United Nations positions in South Korea during the last month of the war.

Throughout the course of the Korean war the Communist heckling raids were always more of a nuisance than anything else, but they could be damaging. The "Bedcheck Charlie" crews nevertheless demonstrated that an air-defense system could seldom be perfect, and they showed a need for dispersed air facilities and passive air defense. Since the standard jet interceptors were not able to cope with the prop-driven planes, FEAF thought that antiaircraft artillery should have been the principal defense against low- and slow-flying hostile aircraft, at least until all-weather interceptors received moving target interceptor radar. The employment of lightweight radars and the integration of ground-control approach radars into the surveillance

system had proven worthwhile against low-flying planes. Aircraft identification had been a problem: the air-defense centers required flight plans from all Army planes, antiaircraft artillery radars needed an ability to recognize aircraft identification beacons, and the tactical air-direction centers needed systematized liaison with air-route traffic control centers to reduce identification problems. In order that automatic-weapons batteries might be given "guns free" as soon as possible, only a few friendly aircraft should be allowed in an alerted area.[63] FEAF had learned some of these lessons rather late in the Korean war, but they would undoubtedly be of value in some future conflict.

4. Irrigation Dam Attacks Speed Truce Negotiations

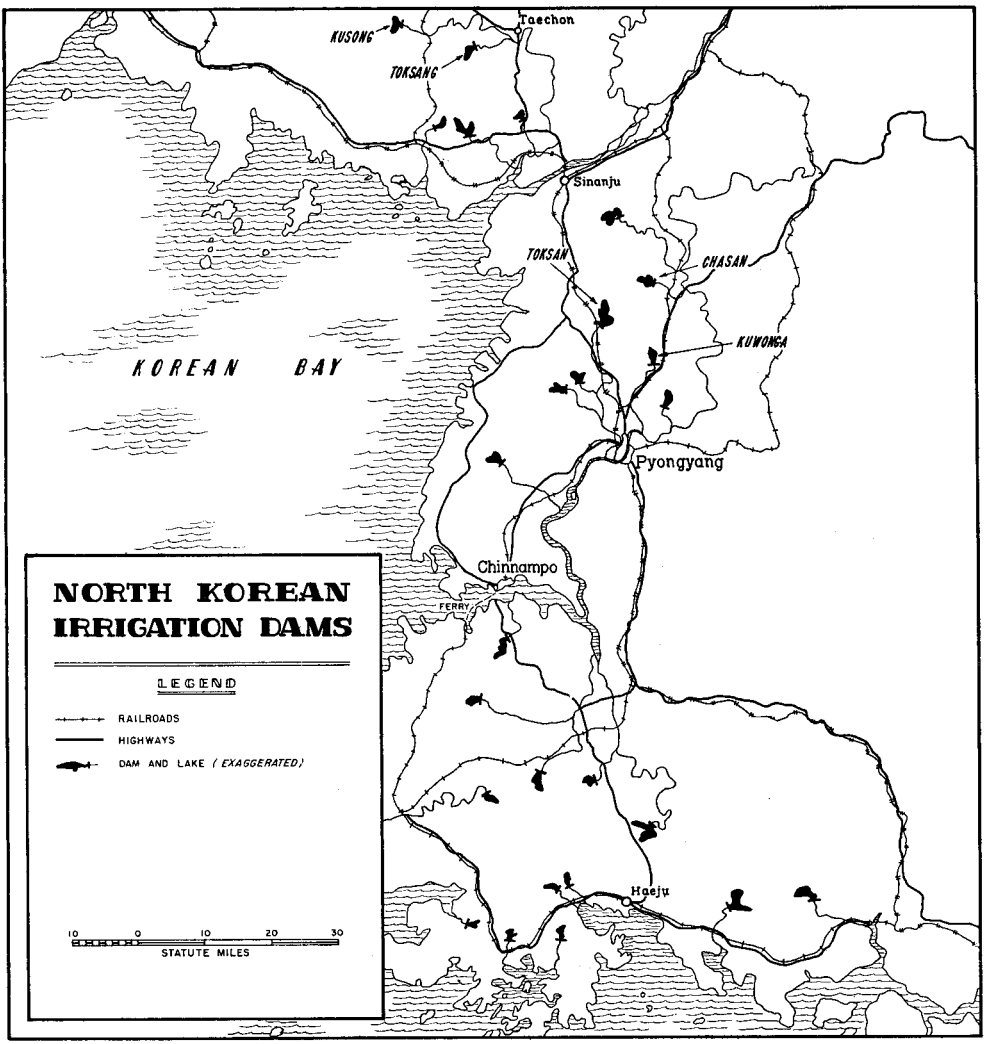
When the armistice negotiations began again at Panmunjom on 26 April 1953, the Communists revealed that they were not prepared to accept United Nations terms for ending the war. Both sides made some concessions early in May. The Communists agreed to neutral custody of prisoners of war in Korea pending repatriation, and the United Nations Command agreed to accept a neutral nations repatriation commission as the custodial agency rather than a single state. The two sides could come to no agreement on the length of the "explanation" period or the final disposition of nonrepatriates.[64] As the truce negotiations faltered, General Clark informed the Joint Chiefs that FEAF would attack the hydroelectric generating facilities at Sui-ho and a target complex at Yangsi—both being legitimate military targets in the "sensitive" area along the Yalu.[65] Because of its flak defenses, the powerhouse at Sui-ho was a difficult target, but on 10 May Colonel Victor E. Warford, commander of the 58th Wing, led a formation of eight 474th Group Thunderjets in low at Sui-ho and put at least three delayed-action bombs through the roof of the target. Pilots said that the flak was the "most intense in all of North Korea," but the Thunderjets escaped damage. Tailrace activity at Sui-ho dam nevertheless indicated that two generators still continued to work.[66] Without great difficulty on the night of 10/11 May 39 Superfortresses attacked the Yangsi target complex outside Sinuiju City and effected 63 percent destruction. On the night of 18/19 May 18 B-29's returned to complete the destruction of "one of the last large lucrative targets remaining in North Korea."[67]

At Panmunjom on 13 May the United Nations Command presented suggested terms of reference for the neutral nations repatriation commission which defined the functions of the body in such a way as to ensure that prisoners of war could accept or reject repatriation. The Communists bitterly rejected these proposals and launched into tirades of propaganda. Having failed to make progress, the United Nations delegation temporarily recessed the truce talks on 16 May.[68] Fearing the possibility of another indefinite recess in truce negotiations on 14 May, General Clark pointed out to the Joint Chiefs of Staff the military pressure which he could wage against the Reds without a change in his current direc-

tives. He could continue air attacks against sensitive targets along the Yalu, breach about 20 previously unattacked irrigation dams in North Korea, launch all-out air attacks against Kaesong after advising the Reds that they had violated the neutral status of the town by using it as a military concentration point, release North Korean prisoners of war who did not wish repatriation, and, in the autumn of 1953, United Nations Command forces could conduct a limited land and amphibious attack in the Kumsong area of east-central Korea.[69] General Clark mentioned that air operations might be launched against Manchuria and North China, but he made no recommendations on this delicate subject. Back in Washington President Eisenhower was willing to threaten the Red Chinese with extended hostilities. In conversations with Prime Minister Nehru during a visit to India beginning on 22 May, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles emphasized that the United States wanted an honorable peace in Korea. If the stalemate continued, Dulles told Nehru, the United States had decided to attack the Communist sanctuary bases in Manchuria. Secretary Dulles hoped that his warning would reach Peking, and it doubtless did.[70]

When he mentioned the North Korean irrigation dams on 14 May, General Clark revealed that he had heard about a target system which FEAF had been studying for nearly three months. If the FEAF air targets officers had not been seeking targets in context with an air pressure strategy they probably would never have noted the importance of North Korea's rice production. The first clue as to the importance of the rice crop came from the movements of Red security troops into Hwanghae and South Pyongan provinces on the western coast of Korea during the spring and summer months. These security troops were guarding the region's rice production and securing the harvested grain for the Red military effort. Further research indicated that these two provinces annually planted 422,000 acres and produced 283,162 tons of rice. Most of the rice went to feed Communist soldiers. FEAF intelligence officers reasoned that food was war materiel and they thought that it was just as legitimate to destroy a growing crop as to seek to destroy rice once it was harvested. Target researchers soon determined how air attacks could destroy the rich rice crops of the Haeju provinces. Rice production in this area depended upon impounded irrigation water from some 20 large reservoirs. By destroying the impounding dams, air attacks could release floods which would destroy a year's rice planting.[71]

The North Korean agricultural irrigation dams were an excellent target system, but many FEAF officers were troubled by the implications connected with the destruction of the irrigation dams. On 7 April several members of the FEAF Formal Target Committee doubted the wisdom of such a drastic operation, and General Weyland was reported to be "skeptical of the feasibility and desirability of destroying the North Korean rice-irrigation system." The Target committee consequently refused to accept the operation, but it recommended that FEAF intelligence prepare a detailed study of the matter for General Weyland.[72] The intelligence study developed convincing arguments to prove that air attacks against the agricultural reservoir system were suitable, feasible, and acceptable, but neither General Clark nor General Weyland thought that the time was opportune for such a severe operation as the destruction of the enemy's rice



crop. Both believed that such an operation would be an ultimate in air pressure, to be used if the Reds broke off armistice negotiations. Even though he was unwilling to authorize attacks against the enemy's rice crop as such, General Weyland was willing to approve irrigation-dam attacks where resultant floodwaters would interdict the enemy's lines of communications.[73]

In order to test the feasibility of the endeavor and develop attack techniques, General Weyland directed the Fifth Air Force to breach the Toksan dam, which was about 20 miles north of Pyongyang and backed up the waters of the Potong River. On 13 May four waves of 59 Thunderjets of the 58th Wing attacked the 2,300-foot earth-and-stone dam. At last light the dam seemed to have withstood the 1,000-pound bombs directed against it.

Sometime that night, however, impounded waters broke through the weakened dam, and fighter-bombers found the reservoir empty the next morning.[74] "The damage done by the deluge," reported the Fifth Air Force, "far exceeded the hopes of everyone."[75] The swirling floodwaters washed out or damaged approximately six miles of embankment and five bridges on the important "George" railway and also destroyed two miles of the main north-south highway which paralleled the railroad. Down the river valley the floodwaters destroyed 700 buildings and inundated Sunan Airfield. The floodwaters also scoured five square miles of prime rice crops.[76] "The breaching of the Toksan dam," General Clark jubilantly informed the Joint Chiefs, "has been as effective as weeks of rail interdiction."[77]

With one of the two main railway lines into Pyongyang unserviceable, General Weyland immediately scheduled two more dams for destruction in order to interdict the "Fox" rail line. He assigned the Chasan dam to the Fifth Air Force and the Kuwonga dam to Bomber Command. The Fifth Air Force commenced work promptly. Late on the afternoon of 15 May 36 Thunderjets of the 58th Wing dive-bombed Chasan with 1,000-pound ordnance but inflicted no significant damage. On 16 May 90 sorties in three waves of 58th Wing Thunderjets continued the dive-bombing attack. The last wave of the fighter-bombers scored a cluster of five direct hits and the hydraulic pressure of other bombs bursting in the water broke the weakened dam. Impounded waters surged southward to wash away 2,050 feet of embankment and three bridges on the "Fox" rail line. The parallel highway suffered slight damage, but secondary roads were washed out. The onrushing waters surged over field after field of young rice.[78] Bomber Command was tardy in beginning its attacks at Kuwonga and waited too long between strikes. Seven B-29's aimed 56 x 2,000-pound bombs against Kuwonga by shoran on the night of 21/22 May and scored four direct hits on the crest of the dam. The dam did not break, and the Reds had learned an effective countermeasure. They reduced the reservoir's water level by 12 feet, thus taking strain off the weakened dam and widening the thickness of the earth which the B-29's would have to breach. On the night of 29 May 14 B-29's scored five direct hits with 2,000-pound bombs. Had the water level of the reservoir been at its customary stage, this attack would have destroyed the dam. The Superfort attacks failed because the Reds had rapidly devised effective countermeasures, but the enemy had to drain Kuwonga's reservoir before repairing the dam. The Reds prevented flood damages, but they deprived adjacent rice fields of necessary irrigation water.[79]

At the end of the Korean fighting General Weyland remarked that two particular fighter-bomber strikes stood out "as spectacular on their own merit." One was the hydroelectric attack of June 1952, and the other—"perhaps the most spectacular of the war"—was the destruction on the Toksan and Chasan irrigation dams in May 1953.[80] Although they displayed their usual fantastic rapidity in restoring rail lines, the Communists did not get the "Fox" and "George" lines back into service until 26 May.[81] To the average Oriental, moreover, an empty rice bowl symbolizes starvation, and vitriolic Red propaganda broadcasts which followed the destruction of the irrigation dams showed that the enemy was deeply impressed. In an effort to

repair the damage, the Reds immediately mobilized 4,000 laborers at Toksan, but by their own admission the rebuilding of this dam required 200,000 man-days of labor. A United Nations Command covert agent who had been at Toksan said that the local population felt that the destruction of this dam caused more damage than any other United Nations air attack.[82]

During these same weeks FEAF aircraft also hammered targets in far northwestern Korea. Intensive photographic surveillance of the main supply route between Sinanju and Sinuiju turned up many worthwhile B-29 targets. On the night of 19/20 May 14 B-29's destroyed 117 buildings in the Unsan-dong complex, about eight miles due west of Sinanju and probably used for billeting coastal defense troops and as a stopover point for motor transports. On the night of 7/8 June 14 B-29's destroyed 250 buildings, or more than half of the Unhyang-po supply area, located about 20 miles southeast of Sinuiju.[83] On 30 May General Weyland asked General Clark for a blanket clearance to attack Sui-ho as often as the Reds got its hydroelectric generators working. General Clark would not give such a general clearance for repeated attacks against a "sensitive" target, but he authorized another strike. In deference to the Red fighter and flak defenses, the Fifth Air Force used its Sabre bombers in a surprise attack. The 4th and 51st Wings provided heavy covering patrols, and eight F-86F fighter-bombers of the 8th Wing flew formation with 12 F-86's of the 51st Wing to a proper point over Sui-ho and then rolled into their bomb run. Since the Sabres customarily used Sui-ho as a check point, Red flak gunners were completely surprised. The Sabres scored a number of 1,000-pound bomb hits on the northern end of Sui-ho's powerhouse and then swept away southward at low level. For several days Sui-ho was idle, but then tailrace activity again indicated that the two generators must be turning over. Until intelligence experts could establish the exact locations of these two generators in the long-reinforced-concrete powerhouse, the Fifth Air Force was unwilling to risk any more fighter-bomber attacks. As the war ended, the Fifth Air Force was trying to get some information on the subject from covert agents in the vicinity.[84]

Faced with extremely damaging air pressure attacks in North Korea and with the possibility that the Korean hostilities might be expanded, the Communist delegates at Panmunjom yielded to United Nations terms for a settlement of the prisoner-of-war question. On 25 May the United Nations Command delegates presented their final terms of reference for the neutral nations repatriation commission and then declared a week's recess, which was later extended until 4 June at the Communists' request. On 27 May General Clark sent a letter to the Communist military leaders which gave added weight to the finality of the United Nations Command's terms. When the truce meetings resumed on 4 June the Communists announced that they basically agreed with the United Nations Command terms of reference proposed on 25 May. Following some changes in wording, the United Nations Command and Communist delegates signed the approved terms of reference for the neutral nations repatriation commission on 8 June 1953. These terms marked a complete Communist capitulation and achieved the United Nations Command objective of voluntary repatriation of prisoners of war. After a ninety-day "explanation" period and an additional thirty-day

The last POW's in the U.N. exchange board a C-54 at Haneda Airfield, Japan, which will take them to the U.S., 5 May 1953.

period in which a political conference would seek to settle their disposition, prisoners who did not desire repatriation would be released as civilians. The Communists capitulation on the prisoner-of-war issue resolved the last major obstacle to an armistice, and Communist and United Nations Command military liaison officers were already discussing the exact location of the military line of demarcation which would divide United Nations and Communist forces for the duration of the armistice.[85]

Although the United Nations Command had almost achieved its objectives in Korea, the Republic of Korea's President Syngman Rhee was showing signs that he meant to balk at accepting any armistice which failed to achieve Korea's unification. Refusing the United States offer to build a ROK army of 20 combat divisions and to provide a billion-dollar economic rehabilitation fund made on 25 May, Rhee ordered the South Korean delegate to boycott the truce discussions and informed President Eisenhower that he could no longer assure his cooperation. On 4 June, when Communist acceptance of the prisoner-of-war settlement became known, Rhee told General Clark that he would feel free to take any action he deemed appropriate.[86] In the truce negotiations of early June the Communist delegates paced themselves according to a delaying schedule which puzzled the United Nations Command. At the end of May United Nations commanders guessed that the Reds would launch a last-minute ground offensive before the truce became effective. Quite probably Communist propaganda organs wanted to claim that the Reds signed the truce while they were winning, and the Reds also probably wanted to grab some additional territory before the demarcation line was officially fixed. It was possible that the Communists may have wished to aim a blow against South Korean troops which would be hard enough to show President Rhee that he could not expect to unify Korea by force. Even though the Reds had conceded on the prisoner-of-war issue, more last-gasp ground battles were in prospect before the Korean truce went into effect.

5. Defeating Communist Ground Offensives

Ever since January 1953 the United Nations Command had been awaiting renewed Communist ground attacks, and FEAF's destructive interdiction operations had been designed to weaken the Red armies before they could strike southward. Despite a conscious emphasis on general support strikes—which sought to destroy personnel and supplies—and on interdiction—which interfered with logistical resupply and made the Reds use accumulated stocks—FEAF had not slighted close support in the early months of 1953. In support of generally desultory ground fighting which flared up in battalion-sized battles for "Old Baldy" and "Outpost Vegas" between

23 and 29 March, FEAF and its attached units flew 7,665 close-support sorties in the months of January through March 1953.[87]

As spring came to Korea, the United Nations air forces gave more attention to the ground situation. During April's "Little Switch" convoys and routinely thereafter, the Fifth Air Force maintained a continuing reconnaissance surveillance over the area from the bombline north to the main supply route between Pyongyang and Wonsan.[88] As cloudy skies obscured the front lines, the Fifth Air Force gave increased emphasis to MSQ-1 and MPQ-2 radar-directed bombing. In April the Eighth Army stated that the radar-directed strikes were for destruction rather than for harassment, and the Fifth Air Force accordingly assumed responsibility for targeting the radar-directed fighter-bomber and light-bomber strikes.[89] In April 21 percent of the 3d Wing's sorties and 33 percent of the 17th Wing's sorties were flown in close or general support of ground troops. Action on the ground front was limited to routine patrolling, but FEAF and its attached units still flew 3,965 close-support sorties in April.[90] Carrier pilots of Task Force 77 continued to emphasize Cherokee attacks, and in a tactical innovation they commonly attacked aggregations of hostile troops and supplies up to three days hand running. The Navy fliers discovered that Red flak defenses generally ran out of shells in less than two days.[91]

In spite of the cloudy skies, which cloaked Communist movements in May, Fifth Air Force reconnaissance revealed that the Reds were regrouping their front-line troops and were shifting forces from the northern coasts to forward positions. To combat these movements, FEAF pilots maintained steady pressure against enemy personnel, supply dumps, and transportation routes. The fighter-bombers released impounded irrigation waters at Toksan and Chasan to flood the rail arteries to Pyongyang, and they cut rail bridges in northwestern Korea. The B-26's flew 15 bomber-stream attacks against airfields and troop concentrations, while intruder B-26's claimed destruction of 2,239 enemy vehicles. The B-29's flew 35 strikes against supply areas and troop billets.[92] At the same time that it was checking enemy movements, FEAF and its attached units devoted 5,824 sorties—25 percent of its combat effort—to the close support of friendly ground troops. Finding their Cherokee targets shrouded by weather, Task Force 77 airmen began to employ the assistance of Fifth Air Force tactical air-direction post radar on 23 May.[93]

As early as 27 May aerial reconnaissance showed that the Communists were ready to mount a ground offensive, and the United Nations air forces were ready. Starting on the night of 28 May, the Reds launched a feinting attack against U.S. I Corps outposts in western Korea, but the main Red assault was directed against the ROK II Corps on 10 June. This attack centered in central Korea, where the ROK II Corps held a bulge in the United Nations lines around Kumsong. Beginning on the night of 3 June and for three nights thereafter, Bomber Command devoted its entire effort—19 B-29's each night—to ground radar-directed support of friendly ground troops. Fifth Air Force and Navy pilots also employed ground radar guidance to attack Communist troops by day and night. When the ground situation worsened on the ROK II Corps front on 12 June, the Fifth Air Force's new

commander, Lt. Gen. Samuel E. Anderson, waived the minimum-altitude restrictions on his fighter-bombers and ordered his wings to give all-out support to the Eight Army. Keeping the carriers *Princeton, Boxer, Philippine Sea,* and *Lake Champlain* on the line for seven days, Admiral Clark ordered his pilots to team with Marine and Fifth Air Force airmen for a close-support effort exceeding anything up to that time.[94]

Once again the Communists evidently expected frontal weather to cover their ground offensives, but ground radar control allowed United Nations pilots to attack targets they could not see. On 15 June, the day that ROK II Corps defenses cracked, a temporary break in the weather allowed General Anderson and Admiral Clark to hit the Reds with everything they had. FEAF planes flew a total of 2,143 sorties of all kinds for the largest single day's effort of the war. Task Force 77 broke all records by flying 532 combat sorties; and Marine fliers and west-coast carrier pilots topped their records with 478 sorties. On this day 859 of 1,148 Fifth Air Force combat sorties hit the advancing Red ground troops. In a rare daytime support mission the 17th Wing sent four six-ship elements for a formation attack against front-line troop concentrations. "The front-line troops of the Eighth Army," said General Taylor, "join in praise of the magnificent support they received today from the planes of the Fifth Air Force."[95]

The Fifth Air Force and Task Force 77 continued to give all-out support to friendly ground troops until the Eighth Army got its lines stabilized on 19 June. Directed by day by Mosquito airborne controllers and by tactical air-control parties, or at night or in bad weather by tactical air-direction post radars, the United Nations close-support effort was at a high level all during June and was large enough to swamp all of the control facilities on 15, 16, 26, and 30 June. On these days some pilots could not remain on station long enough for air controllers to direct them to targets and had to make "free drops" against targets of opportunity behind enemy lines. During June the tactical air-direction posts of the 502d Tactical Control Group controlled 66 percent of the sorties flown by B-26's, and on the three nights following 28 June they again directed all Superfort attacks. Counting nocturnal bomber and fighter-bomber sorties as well as fighter-bomber strikes in bad weather, the tactical air-direction posts successfully controlled 2,124 bomb runs. In this month of maximum close support FEAF aircraft flew 7,023 such sorties, the Marine air wing flew 1,348 sorties, and friendly foreign aircraft provided an additional 537 sorties. In all, 49 percent of FEAF's combat effort provided close support to friendly ground troops.[96] As was routine at times of Red ground attacks, the Fifth Air Force kept a sharp watch of enemy vehicle movements during daylight hours, but it sighted very few Red convoys. Bad weather undoubtedly sheltered some enemy movements, but the Reds were also executing only a limited attack. Most Red soldiers carried three or four days' rations and ammunition with them and did not need resupply in the field. The diversion of most of the light-bomber effort to close support reduced nocturnal armed reconnaissance, and low clouds and a concentration of Red flak in the area of ground attack reduced the effectiveness of fighter-bomber armed reconnaissance missions. After losing 18 aircraft, including 12 new F-86F fighter-bombers, to hostile flak on low-level armed-

reconnaissance missions, General Anderson reinstated the 3,000-foot minimum-attack altitude on 26 June. During June the Fifth Air Force claimed the destruction of only 1,029 hostile vehicles.[97]

The Communist ground offensive of mid-June 1953 was a face-saving and terrain-grabbing expedition which cost the Reds the lives of many of their foot soldiers. While the Reds were attacking, Communist and United Nations Command military liaison officers were already drawing a new line of military demarcation for the truce, and a plenary meeting of the armistice delegates ratified this line on 17 June. Except for cleaning up the terminology of the draft armistice agreement, the work at Panmunjom was completed and everything pointed to an early signing of the completed agreement, possibly in three or four days. But President Rhee did not want a truce on United Nations terms, and in a move calculated to disrupt the armistice Rhee's government allowed about 27,000 anti-Communist North Korean war prisoners to "escape" from prison compounds during the early morning

Prisoners tatooed anti-Communist slogans on themselves to protest being returned to Communist China.

hours of 18 June. At the next plenary session at Panmunjom on 20 June Red delegates angrily demanded to know whether the armistice terms would bind the "Syngman Rhee clique," and they insisted that the United Nations Command must recapture all of the North Korean prisoners.[98] The Communist delegates were careful not to terminate the truce talks, but it was all too evident that the Reds were going to launch another ground offensive of powerful proportions.

In the camps of the United Nations Command all commanders began to prepare for the worst eventualities. To withstand the expected Red ground offensive, the Eighth Army needed more forces, and General Clark relied on air transport to get them there in a hurry. On 21 June Clark ordered the 315th Air Division to move the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team from southern Japan to central Korea. Unable to employ his grounded C-124 Globemasters, General McCarty nevertheless accomplished the task with 53 C-46 and 249 C-119 sorties. Daytime flights landed at Chunchon and night landings used the ground-control-approach equipment at Seoul Airfield. Just before dawn on 23 June the 315th Air Division completed airlifting the 187th Regiment to Korea. This lift moved 1,770.6 tons, including 3,252 paratroopers. Further to bolster the Eighth Army's reserves, General Clark now ordered the 315th Air Division to move the 19th and 34th Regimental Combat Teams of the 24th Infantry Division from central Japan to southern Korea. Amid very bad weather General McCarty used his C-46's, C-54's, and C-119's in a giant circle lift which loaded troops at Misawa and Tachikawa, flew them to Pusan or Taegu airfields, refueled and rotated crews at Ashiya, and then returned to reload at Misawa and Tachikawa. Begun on 28 June and completed on 2 July, this airlift transported 898 soldiers and 284.2 tons of cargo from Misawa and 3,039 troops and 943.27 tons of cargo from Tachikawa. Since this airlift used all of the 315th capabilities for a movement which could just as well have been made by water transport, General McCarty privately doubted that it should have been flown. Early in July, when General Clark's staff directed that the remainder of the 24th Division should be flown to a reserve position at Pusan, General Weyland got General Clark to cancel the airlift requirement and to send the troops to Korea by ship.[99]

Throughout the long months of the Korean war the Naval Forces Far East had not given the Joint Operations Center in Korea any positive control over Seventh Fleet aircraft-carrier strike forces. A naval liaison officer in the Joint Operations Center had been able to request carrier air strikes, but he had never been able to give any positive assurance that the strikes would be flown. Late in June General Anderson and Admiral Clark agreed that this situation should be changed. To effect this change in policy, the Seventh Fleet established a naval member in the Joint Operations Center whose powers were similar to those of the Fifth Air Force's director of operations. The naval member was specifically charged to select targets for naval aircraft in support of the Eighth Army, and he was directed to ensure an effective coordination of naval air with the operations of the Fifth Air Force. Each day Task Force 77's commander provided the naval member of the Joint Operations Center with his next day's intentions, and the naval member notified the task force commander of

the assignment of the aircraft to immediate and preplanned missions in the enemy's forward areas. Before this time the Joint Operations Center had never possessed adequate communications with Task Force 77, but effective on 12 July 1953 a radioteletype circuit with on-line cryptographic facilities was opened between the Fifth Air Force and Task Force 77. FEAF hailed the action whereby the Navy accepted an integral role in the Joint Operations Center as "the final step in creating the centralized control so necessary to successful tactical air operations." The joint board on air-ground operations in Korea which met at the end of the war stated that future conflicts would find a definite requirement for "the integration of all services in a manner similar to that accomplished in the last month of the Korean war."[100]

In order to blunt the force of the expected Communist ground offensive, the Fifth Air Force and Bomber Command agreed to mount cooperative attacks against railway bridges spanning the rivers in the Chongchon estuary. Task Force 77 agreed to launch attacks against rail bridges on the lines supporting the enemy's eastern front.[101] The Fifth Air Force had expected to begin these interdiction strikes early in July, and Bomber Command was going to wait until later, when the moon was dark. Marginal flying weather allowed the Fifth Air Force to get off a few rail bridge attacks on 1 July, but for eight days after this a weather front over South Korea kept the Fifth Air Force grounded. Finally, on 10 July, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers began to carry the attack to the rail bridges at Sinanju and Yongmi-dong. On the night of 10 July 16 B-29's of the 98th Wing attacked the Sinanju bridges, and on the night of 11 July 16 B-29's of the 307th Wing hit the rail bridges at Yongmi-dong. After losing a day because of weather, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers cleaned up the Chongchon estuary bridges on 12 July and also attacked road bridges spanning the Chongchon all the way up to Huichon. After more days of bad weather the Fifth Air Force renewed the attack on the Chongchon's bridges between 16 and 20 July. Night-flying day-fighters and night-intruder B-26's harassed bridge repairs, and some fighter-bombers hit bridge-span assembly points in Huichon and Sunchon. Floodwaters on the Chongchon helped the destruction effort and prevented the Reds from repairing bridge damages. On 27 July aerial reconnaissance revealed that the Reds still were unable to use the Chongchon's bridges. In eastern Korea, on 10 July, Task Force 77 planes commenced rail bridge attacks, but the Navy reported unimpressive results in poor flying weather. With help from floodwaters, however, FEAF airmen had placed a zone of interdiction along the Chongchon River which must have hindered any plans which the Reds may have had for an all-out ground offensive.[102]

The same heavy rains and low clouds over South Korea which prevented interdiction attacks permitted the Communists to prepare for another all-out ground offensive in the Kumhwa River valley of central Korea, where the U.S. IX Corps and the ROK II Corps joined flanks. With reconnaissance planes grounded, the United Nations Command was unsure where the Reds would attack, but it received a tip-off when the RF-80's brought home front-line photography on 12 July. The Reds had concentrated nearly all of their front-line flak in the sectors opposite those held by the U.S. IX Corps and the ROK II Corps.[103] On the night of 13/14 July Chinese divisions

Crash Teams! Stand-by! (Art by Jon Balsey, *Courtesy Air Force Art Collection)*

crashed against the right flank of the U.S. IX Corps and began an assault which forced the ROK II Corps to retreat. All United Nations air commanders reacted swiftly. From the night of 13 July the full power of Bomber Command, the Fifth Air Force, and Task Force 77 was at the disposition of the Joint Operations Center in Seoul. Weather was still marginal for flying, but all air units mustered all their strength when it was needed to oppose the advancing Chinese. The 6147th Tactical Control Group kept up to 28 Mosquito aircraft on station over the front lines, and, since land communications were disrupted, the airborne controllers were the best source of current battle information which the Joint Operations Center possessed. The tactical air-direction posts received more planes than they could handle on 14 and 15 July, but they directed 2,247 successful blind-bombing runs during the month. To lighten the load on the radar direction posts, Fifth Air Force targets men scanned aerial photography for objectives which would be bombed by shoran. The B-29's hit 85 of these shoran targets, and the 17th Wing employed such of its crews who had become qualified for shoran against 35 other supporting targets. In the night-bombing effort many B-29's dropped 4,000-pound air-bursting bombs, and some B-26's distributed M-83 butterfly antidisturbance bombs. Prisoners later stated that they had been highly demoralized by the butterfly bombs, which they stumbled on in the dark.[104]

The curtain of fire laid down by FEAF planes on the Communist aggressors during July 1953 utilized 43 percent of the month's combat effort in close support of ground troops. The Fifth Air Force's fighter-bombers flew 3,385 close-support sorties, while the light bombers contributed an additional 1,331 close-support sorties. The 1st Marine Air Wing and friendly foreign forces provided an additional 1,462 such sorties, and the B-29's, mostly on the nights of 13 through 19 July, flew 100 ground-support sorties. Task Force 77 aircraft swelled the volume of close support still more. Back of the enemy's lines the 3d and 17th Wings were able to fly only 453 night-intruder sorties during the month, but these sorties were highly effective and destroyed 1,379 enemy vehicles.[105] Assisted by the tremendous air-support effort, the ROK II Corps fell back to the Kumsong River in fighting order, while the U.S. 2d Division, reinforced by the 187th Regimental Combat Team and backed up by the 34th Infantry Regiment, moved to covering positions. By 20 July the United Nations lines were firm and the crisis was over. In order to take a few miles of territory, the Reds had lost more than 72,000 men—the equivalent of nine divisions from the five armies which had made the attack.[106]

While the Communist ground armies were attacking, Communist functionaries at Panmunjom continued to haggle about the escape of the North Korean prisoners. At his capital in Seoul President Syngman Rhee received world-wide criticism for his action which had held up the truce. On 11 July Rhee agreed to go along with a cease-fire in return for Washington's promises of a mutual security pact, economic aid, and augmentation of the ROK army. As soon as their ground offensive came to a halt, the Communist delegates appeared at the truce table on 19 July with an obvious determination to end the fighting as quickly as possible. When this meeting adjourned, General Clark alerted all commanders that only administrative details remained to be ironed out before the armistice would be signed.[107] According to the plan which Generals Clark and Weyland had made in May, the United Nations air forces were now expected to neutralize North Korea's airfields so completely that the Reds would be unable to reconstitute an air order of battle on Korean soil before the armistice went into effect.

6. Neutralizing North Korea's Airfields

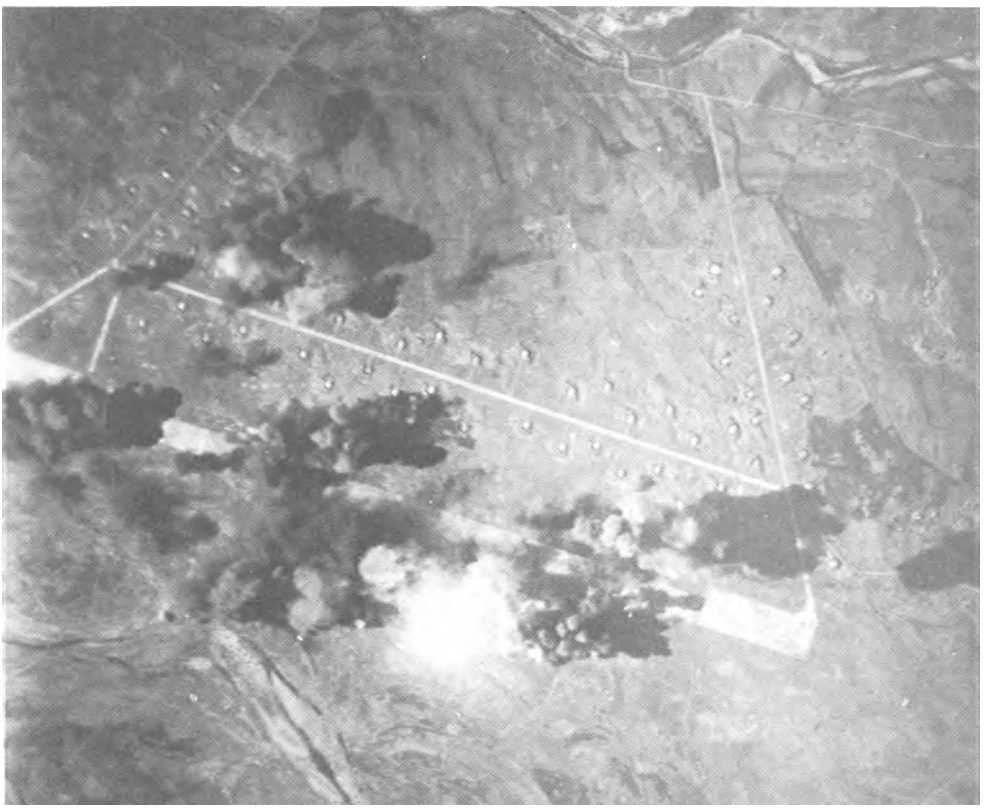
In the first weeks of the Korean war the Communists had lost control of the air over North Korea, and in the months that followed the Reds came to appreciate the fact that they could not repair airfields and reconstitute an air force in an area dominated by United Nations air forces. Unless the terms of the military armistice provided otherwise, however, the United Nations Command would automatically surrender air superiority over North Korea

when the truce went into effect. While the truce prevailed the Reds would be able to repair their airfields and reconstitute an air force on them. Then, if they wished, the Reds could break the armistice and renew the war on more favorable terms. In order to prevent the Communists from reinforcing during an armistice, United Nations Command truce negotiators long argued that both sides must agree not to build or repair airfields or bring additional forces to Korea during the military armistice. As a compromise on 28 April 1952, however, the United Nations Command had agreed that the armistice terms would make no reference to the reconstruction of airfields, but the terms continued to ban the introduction of any additional troops or equipment into Korea during the armistice.

Except for routine repairs of bomb damage at Sinuiju, Uiju, and Pyongyang Main airfields, the Communists recognized the hopelessness of their situation and made no effort to keep North Korea's airfields operational after November 1951. In April 1953, however, Fifth Air Force reconnaissance crews noted a striking increase in repair work at Sinmak, Haeju, Pyongyang East, and Hamhung West airfields, all of which had been heavily cratered and long out of use. Other repairs started at Namsi, Taechon, and Pyongyang Main. The airfield rehabilitation was evidently keyed to armistice negotiations. The Reds undoubtedly assumed that the truce negotiations were going to succeed, and, to get ready for the cease-fire, the Communists intended to repair as many airfields as possible and then, in the last hours before the truce went into effect, to rush in a maximum number of aircraft, thus establishing an air order of battle in North Korea when the armistice took effect.[108] Correctly diagnosing the Communist plan on 3 May, General Weyland listed 35 North Korean airfields which had to be kept unserviceable. The list of fields was subdivided among the Fifth Air Force, Bomber Command, and the Naval Forces Far East for continuing surveillance and neutralization. The objective was to keep runway surfaces shorter than the 3,000 feet required to land a MIG-15. Since the Reds could repair airfields very rapidly, the success of the joint airfield attack program would depend upon an accurate forecast of when the armistice would be signed. General Weyland was particularly concerned because six of the airfields—Sinuiju's two fields, Uiju, Hoeryong, Chunggangjin, and Hyesanjin—were "sensitive" targets and General Clark normally had to give the Joint Chiefs of Staff forty-eight-hours' notice before an attack against such targets could be made. On 21 May General Clark assured Weyland that he would waive the forty-eight-hour rule at such time as he gave notice that an armistice was imminent.[109]

Acting on an assumption that an armistice might be imminent and wanting to take no chances that the bad flying weather would disrupt the work, General Weyland on 8 June secured permission to attack Sinuiju and Uiju airfields two days later. On 10 June General Clark gave Weyland blanket authority to attack the sensitive airfields at the Yalu. In view of the very bad flying weather prevailing, General Weyland also secured permission to destroy two more irrigation dams at Toksan and Kusong, in order to flood the two important airfields at Namsi and Taechon. Starting with shoran attacks against Sinuiju and Uiju on the night of 10 June, Bomber Command made nightly attacks against

its assigned airfields. Hamstrung by bad weather, Task Force 77 could not deliver its airfield attacks until 13 and 14 June. Fighter-bombers and shoran-bombing B-26's policed the list of airfields assigned to the Fifth Air Force, but the attacks against the irrigation dams at Kusong and Toksan failed. The Reds were clever adversaries, and May's attacks had shown them effective countermeasurers to the destruction of their irrigation dams. Between 13 and 18 June F-84's, F-86's, Corsairs, and B-29's attacked the dams at Kusong and Toksan, but the Reds released enough impounded water to compensate for each bomb hit and when the dams became too badly battered they opened the floodgates and drained both reservoirs. Because of delays caused by weather, the joint airfield neutralization program was running behind schedule on 16 June, when it seemed that the armistice might be signed in three or four days. At this point the prospects for a speedy armistice foundered. By 23 June all North Korean airfields with the possible exception of Hoeryong were neutralized. Since the war was going to continue, General Weyland advised all commands to return to normal opera-



The high-explosive bombs of the 98th Bomb Wing Superforts slam into the Communist airfield at Namsi, 18 April 1953.


MANCHURIA
KOREA
SEA OF JAPAN
KOREAN BAY
HOERYONG
CHONGJIN
HOEMUN
KILCHU
HYESANJIN
CHUNGGANGJIN
KANGGYE
UIJU
SINUIJU NE
SINUIJU
NAMSI
TAECHON
SAAMCHAM
SINANJU
PYONG-NI
YONGDANG-DONG
YONGYU WEST
SUNAN
KANGDONG
PYONGYANG MAIN
PYONGYANG EAST
PYONGYANG DOWNTOWN
ONJONG-NI
HWANGJU NO.2
ANAK
SARIWON SE
SINMAK
HAEJU
ONGJIN
HAMHUNG W
YONPO
SONDOK
WONSAN
PYONGGANG
125
126
127
128
129
130
42
41
40
39
38
STATUS OF
MAJOR NORTH
KOREAN AIRFIELDS
27 JULY 1953
LEGEND
SERVICEABLE
UNSERVICEABLE
NOTE : AIRFIELDS ARE CONSIDERED UNSERVICEABLE WHEN LESS THAN 3000 FEET OF LANDING AREA IS SERVICEABLE.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
STATUTE MILES

tions but to continue to fly enough follow-up attacks against the airfields so as to keep them in a state where they could be neutralized in four to five days.[110]

During the first weeks of July the southwardly drifting weather front not only kept United Nations air units from making follow-up airfield attacks but prevented FEAF from knowing what progress the Reds were making in their airfield rehabilitation efforts. Only Bomber command could fly in foul weather, and on the nights of 4 and 9 July B-29's pounded Pyongyang Main, Namsi, and Taechon with 500-pound bombs. Until this time Bomber Command had used 100-pound bombs as its standard ordnance against airfields, but the Fifth Air Force had urged that heavier bombs would penetrate deeper into soggy earth and explode a crater which the Reds would find hard to repair. Earlier in the year the Reds had thrice repaired 100-pound bomb craters at Pyongyang Main without much trouble, but the 500-pounders which the B-29's dropped on 4 July put it out of action.[111] When clearing weather permitted reconnaissance photography, the Reds had made an alarming amount of progress at their North Korean airfields. At Uiju the Reds were using a sod surface for a landing field, and they had flown in approximately 43 MIG's which were dispersed in revetments. Sinuiju Airfield was operational, and 21 conventional aircraft were parked in its dispersal area. The concrete runway at Namsi had been repaired, and the smaller airfields at Pyong-ni and Hoeryong had more than 3,000 feet of serviceable runway. Chunggangjin was possibly serviceable although the Reds had given it little attention.[112]

As soon as he received General Clark's warning that the armistice was imminent on 19 July, General Weyland called on all air commands to reinstate the joint airfield neutralization program. Getting under way on the night of 20 July, Bomber Command closed out the war in what Brig. Gen. Richard H. Carmichael called a "blaze of glory." Employing 500-pound bombs, the medium bombers attacked the runways at Uiju, Sinuiju, Namsi, Taechon, Pyong-ni, Pyongyang, and Saamcham. On the night of 21 July 18 B-29's blanketed Uiju's dispersal areas with fragmentation bombs and incendiary clusters.[113] In the final five days Task Force 77 conducted three of its largest strikes against Sondok, Wonsan, Hoeryong, Hoemun, Yonpo, Hyesanjin, and Hamhung.[114] The Fifth Air Force's 8th and 18th Fighter-Bomber Wings began to attack the dispersed aircraft at Sinuiju and Uiju airfields on 18 July, and they continued to make raids against these objectives until 23 July. The attacks at Sinuiju destroyed at least six conventional aircraft, and the other planes were removed from the field. The combination of the B-29 fragmentation attacks and the Sabre fighter-bomber strikes against Uiju destroyed at least 21 MIG's. More of these planes were probably destroyed, but clouds obscured parts of the dispersal areas on the final reconnaissance photographs. On 22 July 58th Wing Thunderjets smothered runway repairs at Pyong-ni. After losing several days because of bad weather, the Fifth Air Force's fighter-bombers attacked the enemy's remaining airfields on 27 July. Thunderjets penetrated deep into enemy territory to neutralize the runways at Kanggye and at Chunggangjin, and other Thunderjets centered their bombs on the runway at Sunan Airfield.[115]

Photography flown by the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing on 27 July 1953 revealed that every airfield in

North Korea was unserviceable for jet aircraft landings. Only at Uiju was the situation a little doubtful, for the Reds might have been able to land a few planes on a taxiway after dark on 27 July. The United Nations Command joint airfield neutralization program was a technical success, but even as General Weyland recorded a successful accomplishment of the air mission he recognized that the Reds would probably reconstitute an air force in North Korea. Considering the moral fiber of the Reds, they would not likely be bound by the terms of the armistice agreement. Everyone had suspected that the Reds might use a "crate and cave" order of air battle to establish airpower on Korean soil before the truce went into effect. The Reds had done this. Under cover of inclement weather they had flown some 200 aircraft to Uiju Airfield early in July and had towed most of the planes out to dispersal points in the fields and hills adjoining the hard-surfaced highway between Uiju and Sinuiju. Most of the planes had been damaged, but they constituted an air order of battle for the North Korean Air Force. Considering the speed with which the Reds could repair airfields, it is also probable that the Communists moved some additional planes to North Korea in the few days before neutral nations inspection teams reached their assigned stations.[116]

7. The Day the War Ended

Following some realignment of the military line of demarcation to conform with the few miles of territory the Reds had purchased with wasted blood, Generals Harrison and Nam Il met at Panmunjom at 1000 hours on 27 July and promptly fixed their signatures upon the armistice agreement. Later that afternoon, at Munsan-ni, flanked by Generals Taylor, Weyland, and Anderson, and by Admirals Briscoe and Clark, General Clark signed the truce as the chief representative of the United Nations. The Communist leaders, Kim Il Sung and Peng Te-huai, who had refused to meet General Clark unless representatives of the Republic of Korea were barred, signed at their own headquarters. According to agreement, the armistice would become effective twelve hours after it was signed, or at 2201 hours on 27 July.[117]

With a full day of work ahead of them, Far East Air Forces' airmen were abroad early on 27 July. Mindful of the importance of "face" to the Communists, General Anderson used all Sabres for counterair patrols and escorts during the day. At midmorning one Sabre patrol sighted 12 dark green MIG's near the Yalu, but the Red pilots high-tailed for the river before the Sabres could engage them. This was the only sighting of MIG's during the day, but the veteran 4th Wing was not going to be denied one last victory. Shortly after noon, while flying escort to Chunggangjin, Captain Ralph S. Parr and his wingman sighted an IL-12 transport, marked with red stars, heading east. Captain Parr made two

General Clark signs the truce agreement while Vice Admirals Briscoe and Clark look on, 27 July 1953 (Orlando S. Lagmar, *Courtesy U.S. Navy).*

passes to be sure that he was making no mistake and then exploded the unfamiliar Red transport with a long burst of fire. This was the victory Captain Parr needed to become a double ace, and it was the last air-to-air victory of the Korean war.[118]

Covered and escorted by the Sabres, other FEAF crews raced against time to accomplish needful tasks before the cease fire. Flying a maximum effort, the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing secured photographs of all but four of the North Korean airfields. The four fields that the wing missed were covered by clouds.[119] The Fifth Air Force's Thunderjet fighter-bombers acted swiftly to neutralize the few airfields which the enemy might possibly use to receive aircraft in the last hours after the truce was signed. Expecting the armistice to be signed at 1400 hours, the Fifth Air Force had carefully scheduled its attacks to take advantage of the remaining hours of daylight. When the Panmunjom negotiators signed at 1000 hours, it had more time than it had expected. As soon as the truce was signed, the 58th Wing roared into action. Colonel Joseph Davis, Jr., the 58th Wing's commander, led 23 Thunderjets of the 474th Group to posthole Chunggangjin Airfield on the banks of the Yalu. At the same time 24 Thunderjets of the 58th Group attacked the runway at Kanggye. Later that afternoon 24 Thunderjets of the 49th Fighter-Bomber Wing, augmented by 12 other Thunderjets of the 58th and 474th Groups, bombed Sunan Airfield. During these attacks the 2157th Air Rescue Squadron held its helicopters

on alert and orbited SA-16 amphibians over Cho-do and Yo-do, but FEAF would lose no planes on the last day of the war.[120]

As night fell on 27 July the 4th, 8th, and 51st Wings executed a "Fast Shuffle" deployment of half of their Sabres to alternate bases. Although the Reds would not attack, General Anderson had wanted to be sure that no last-minute Communist night air attacks reduced the effectiveness of his interceptor force.[121] After dark the 319th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron and VMF(N)-513 dispatched all-weather interceptors for uneventful counterair patrols. The medium bombers of the 19th Bombardment Wing had been scheduled to make a shoran attack against Sinuiju Airfield, but this mission had to be scratched when the cease-fire hour was set at 2201 hours. Bomber Command would drop no bombs on this last night, but General Carmichael sent two 98th Wing B-29's and two 91st Squadron RB-29's over from Japan to deliver a parting volley of psychological warfare leaflets. One of these RB-29 sorties, flown by Lt. Denver S. Cook, was Bomber Command's last mission over North Korea.[122] On the last evening of combat the 3d and 17th Wings launched their night-flying B-26's according to usual schedules. Weather conditions permitted limited visibility, and not many Communist vehicles were stirring, but a 17th Wing B-26 crew was credited with the destruction of the last enemy vehicle of the Korean war. A few minutes before the cease-fire—at 2136 hours—a B-26 of the 3d Wing's 8th Squadron dropped the last bombs of the Korean hostilities in a ground-radar-directed close-support mission. This mission was doubly appropriate. As the end to a war in which airpower had provided ground troops with more support than ever before, it was fitting that the last attack should be a close-support mission. And it was also appropriate than an 8th Bombardment Squadron crew should have flown the last attack because this same squadron had flown the first combat strike into North Korea three years earlier. A few minutes before 2201 hours an RB-26 of the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing hurried southward from the last combat sortie over North Korea.[123]

At 2201 hours, on 27 July 1953, all of FEAF's aircraft were either south of the bombline or more than three miles from North Korea's coast. The armistice marked the end of the shooting war in Korea, but the Far East Air Forces' duty was not yet completed. As the battles were ending in Korea on 27 July, the United States and the other 15 nations that had fought with the United Nations Command in Korea subscribed to a joint-policy declaration concerning the Korean armistice. These nations affirmed that if the Communists renewed armed attack they would be prompt in resisting aggression. "The consequence of such a breach of the armistice," warned the United Nations supporters, "would be so grave that, in all probability, it would not be possible to confine hostilities within the frontiers of Korea."[124] From Washington the new USAF chief of staff, General Nathan F. Twining, cautioned the men of FEAF about their new mission. "Yours is now the role of watchfulness and preparedness," he said, "for you must continue to be the most vigilant and best prepared of all the forces that guard the safety of Americans and the security of the free world."[125]

To the American people, who remembered the "unconditional-surrender" slogans of earlier wars, the Korean hostilities ended on a vaguely

disquieting note of neither victory nor defeat. Political commentators and some military leaders would later recall the Korean hostilities in terms of what might have been and not in context with their nature as a limited war. From the winter of 1950 onward the United Nations and the United States had held to the military objective which required no more than the restoration of the Republic of Korea, the resistance of aggression, and the cessation of hostilities on acceptable terms. "Korea," President Eisenhower reminded Syngman Rhee on 6 June 1953, "is unhappily not the only country that remains divided after World War II. We remain determined to play our part in achieving the political union of all countries so divided. But we do not intend to employ war as an instrument to accomplish the world-wide political settlements to which we are dedicated and which we believe to be just."[126]

The Korean armistice agreement signed on 27 July 1953 marked the attainment of United Nations and United States military objectives in Korea. The truce terms established the authority of the Republic of Korea south of a northern border so located as to facilitate administration and military defense. Because of the latter consideration, the United Nations yielded the indefensible terrain of the Ongjin peninsula on the west but ran the new border far enough north of the 38th parallel in central Korea to interrupt the lateral communications lines which the Communists would require for renewed aggression. The demilitarized zone on each side of the new border and prohibitions against reinforcements of either side during the armistice were guarantees against renewed agression, although the latter provisions would ultimately be violated by the Reds and would therefore be eventually denounced by the United States. And, finally, the Communists accepted what they had said they would never accept: the principle of voluntary repatriation of prisoners of war. At one minute after midnight, on 23 January 1954, some 22,000 Chinese and Korean prisoners who were unwilling to return to their Communist-dominated homelands would be released to the Chinese Nationalist government and to the Republic of Korea. Political conferences at Panmunjom in the autumn of 1953 and at Geneva in the spring of 1954 would fail to secure Korean unity, but the United Nations' effort in Korea had not been in vain. The Republic of Korea was spared the Communist yoke, and the United Nations' courage in opposing naked aggression gave heart to all free countries of the world.

Why the Communists finally accepted the United Nations Command's terms for ending the Korean hostilities was a secret which would remain locked in the archives of Moscow and Peking. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles would declare in January 1954 that the hostilities ended "because the aggressor, already thrown back to and behind his place of beginning, was faced with the possibility that the fighting might, to his own great peril, soon spread beyond the limits and methods he had selected."[127] Although recognizing that the threat of air assaults and naval blockades against the Chinese mainland may have helped, United Nations commanders believed that the pressure of air attack within Korea had forced the Reds to accept the armistice terms. General Clark noted that the Communists yielded "only because the military pressure on them was so great that they had to yield...In the end we got the cease-fire

Anti-Communist Chinese pass through arch to freedom.

only because the enemy had been hurt so badly on the field of battle."[128] The FEAF deputy for intelligence, General Zimmerman, explained in January 1954: "We established a pattern of destruction by air which was unacceptable to the enemy. The degree of destruction suffered by North Korea, in relation to its resources, was greater than that which the Japanese islands suffered in World War II. These pressures brought the enemy to terms."[129] General Weyland summed up his own view rather briefly in February 1954. "We are pretty sure now," he said, "that the Communists wanted peace, not because of a two-year stalemate on the ground, but to get airpower off their back."[130] Whether the Reds yielded because they feared an expanding air war, or whether they quit because of the pounding pressure of air attacks against their forces in North Korea, one thing was certain: airpower was triumphant in the Korean war.

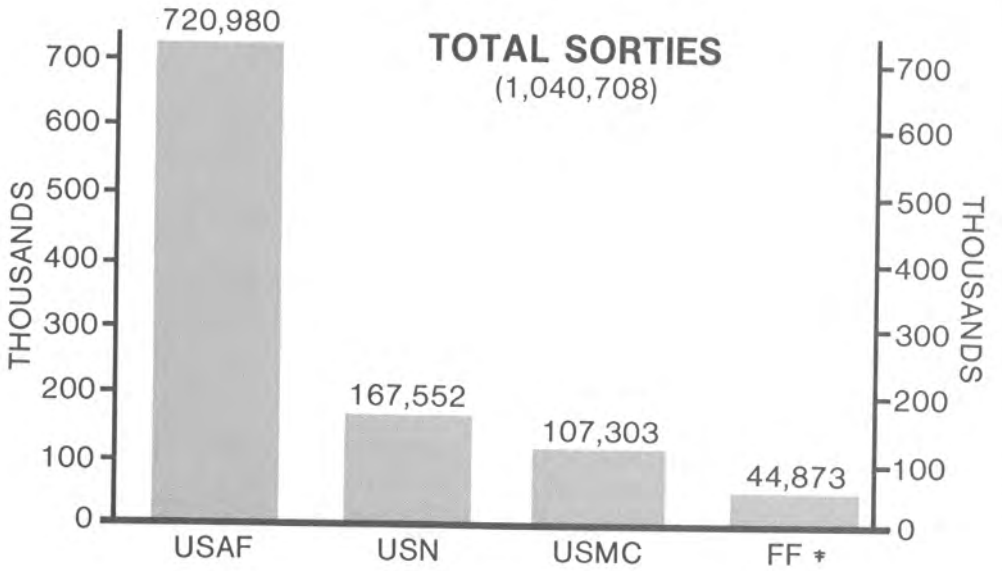
20. *Air Mission Accomplished*

1. The Far East Air Forces Record

"The Air Force is on trial in Korea," stated General Vandenberg, as the Korean war was beginning.[1] The conflict was going to test the men, equipment, and organization of the United States Air Force under fire. At the start of the fighting USAF and FEAF had much to learn in a conflict which would be a strange mixture of the last conventional air war and the first jet air war. When the shooting stopped on 27 July 1953 FEAF could look backward at an outstanding accomplishment of its mission. There was much to be learned from the experiences of combat, but nearly every lesson of the Korean conflict had to be qualified by the fact that the Korean war had been a peculiar war, which was unlike wars in the past and was not necessarily typical of the future.

The combat record of the Far East Air Forces in Korea revealed a magnitude of effort which was unequaled by similar-sized forces in previous conflicts. During the war FEAF's personnel strength more than tripled as it grew from 33,625 officers and airmen assigned on 30 June 1950 to 112,188 officers and airmen assigned on 31 July 1953. Counting an average of two groups and seven squadrons of Marines and three squadrons of friendly foreign air forces, FEAF possessed or controlled an average of 19 groups and 62 squadrons during the period between 25 June 1950 and 27 July 1953. These squadrons possessed an average of 1,248 aircraft in the thirty-seven months of combat, of which an average of 839 were kept combat ready. These wartime averages lumped together the lowest strength of FEAF and its controlled units, which was 16 groups and 44 squadrons and 657 possessed aircraft in the summer (July-September) of 1950, and the highest strength of FEAF and its controlled units, which was 20 groups and 70 squadrons and 1,441 possessed aircraft in the summer (July-September) of 1952. At the war's end, in July 1953, FEAF controlled 19 groups and 69 squadrons, with 1,536 possessed aircraft.[2]

By the standards of previous global conflicts, FEAF was never a large air force, and yet during the Korean war FEAF's units flew a total of 720,980 sorties, which included 66,997 counterair, 192,581 interdiction, 57,665 close-support, 181,659 cargo, and 222,078 miscellaneous sorties. The Marine units flew an additional total of 107,303 sorties, including 2,096 counterair, 47,873 interdiction, 32,482 close-support, and 24,852 miscellaneous sorties. Land-based friendly-foreign air units flew another total of 44,873 sorties, which included 3,025 counterair, 15,359 interdiction, 6,063 close support, 6,578 cargo, and 13,848 miscellaneous sorties. The category of "miscellaneous" sorties included such effort as reconnaissance, air control, and training. During the Korean war U.S. Navy air forces flew an additional total of 167,552 sorties, which caused the sum of United Nations air forces effort flown during the Korean war to total 1,040,708 sorties. During the hostilities FEAF planes delivered 476,000 tons of ordnance against the enemy, while the U.S. Navy forces delivered approximately 120,000 tons, the Marines approximately 82,000 tons,


TOTAL SORTIES
(1,040,708)
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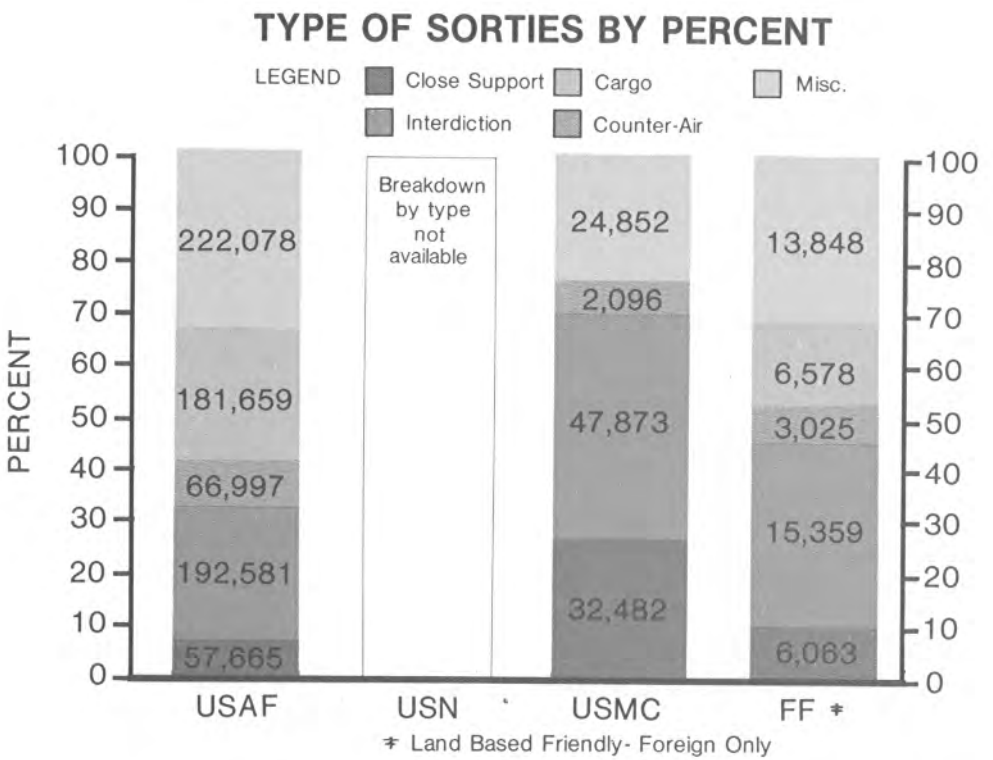
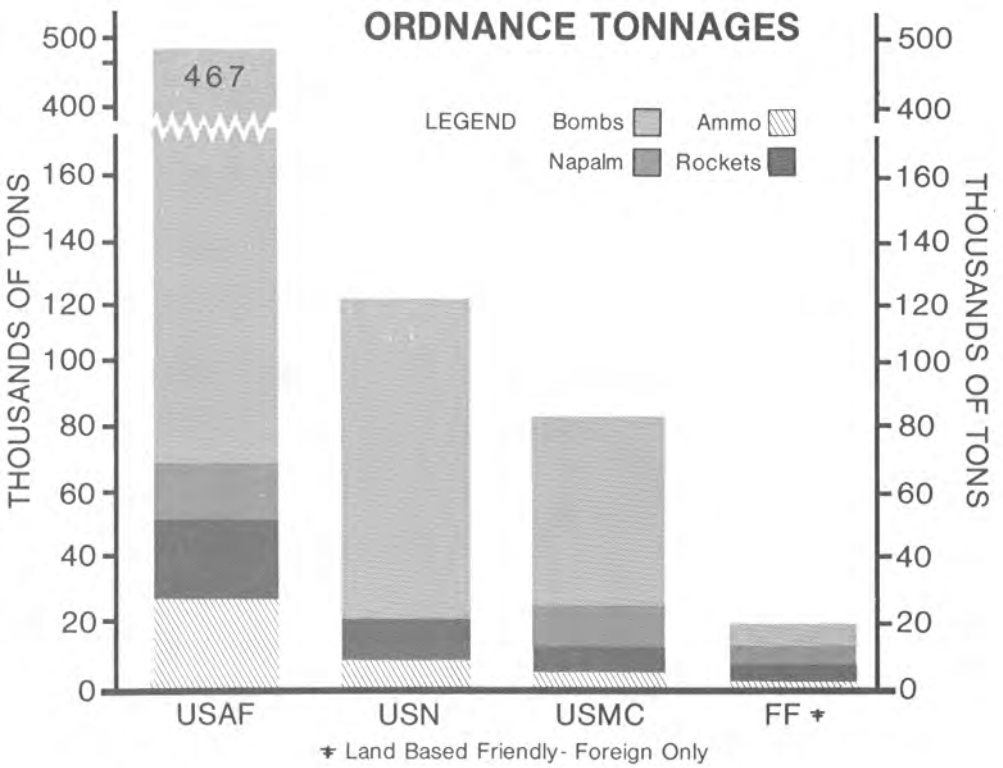
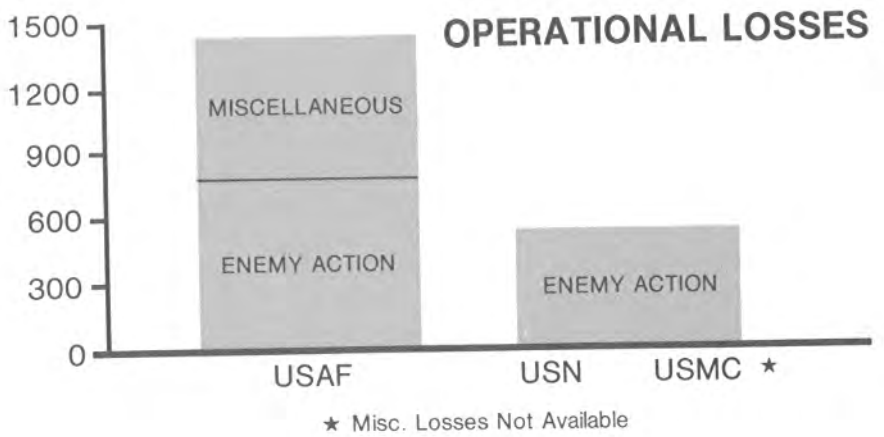
720,980
167,552
107,303
44,873
USAF
USN
USMC
FF *


TYPE OF SORTIES BY PERCENT
LEGEND
Close Support
Cargo
Misc.
Interdiction
Counter-Air
PERCENT
Breakdown by type not available
222,078
181,659
66,997
192,581
57,665
24,852
2,096
47,873
32,482
13,848
6,578
3,025
15,359
6,063
USAF
USN
USMC
FF *
* Land Based Friendly- Foreign Only


ORDNANCE TONNAGES
LEGEND
Bombs
Ammo
Napalm
Rockets
467
THOUSANDS OF TONS
500
400
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
USAF
USN
USMC
FF *
* Land Based Friendly- Foreign Only


OPERATIONAL LOSSES
1500
1200
900
600
300
0
MISCELLANEOUS
ENEMY ACTION
ENEMY ACTION
USAF
USN
USMC ★
★ Misc. Losses Not Available

and the friendly-foreign forces about 20,000.[3] The ordnance expenditures of FEAF units totaled 386,037 tons of bombs, 32,357 tons of napalm, 313,600 rockets, 55,797 smoke rockets, and 166,853,100 rounds of machine-gun ammunition.[4]

The circumstance under which the communists fought the Korean war in the face of an accomplished United Nations Command air superiority allowed the United Nations air forces to operate at a greater rate than would otherwise have been possible. Their disadvantageous lack of air superiority also cost the Communists dearly, as attested by the total combat claims of FEAF's possessed and controlled units. Between 26 June 1950 and 27 July 1953, USAF, Marine, and friendly-foreign aircrews claimed to have destroyed 976 aircraft, 1,327 tanks, 82,920 vehicles, 963 locomotives, 10,407 railway cars, 1,153 bridges, 118,231 buildings, 65 tunnels, 8663 gun positions, 8,839 bunkers, 16 oil-storage tanks, and 593 barges and boats. The aircrews claimed to have killed 184,808 enemy troops and to have made 28,621 cuts on the enemy's railroads. In most of these categories the aircrews claimed many more items as damaged.[5]

In the course of its operations against the enemy FEAF lost 1,466 aircraft, the Marines lost 368 aircraft, and friendly-foreign units lost 152 aircraft. Of the total of 1,986 aircraft lost, 945 were lost to nonenemy causes and 1,041 to enemy action, including 147 in air-to-air combat, 816 to hostile ground fire, and 78 to unknown enemy action.[6] In air operations FEAF sustained 1,729 officer and airmen casualties, including 1,144 dead, 306 wounded, 30 missing men who returned to military control, 214 prisoners of war who were repatriated under the armistice agreement, and 35 men whom the Reds continued to hold in captivity in June 1954. During ground actions of one kind or another FEAF sustained an additional 112 officer and airmen casualties, including 36 dead, 62 wounded, 8 missing who returned to duty, and 6 who were repatriated from prisoner-of-war status. As a result of air and ground operations FEAF suffered a total of 1,841 casualties during the Korea war.[7] All losses are regrettable, and FEAF lost many of its finest men, but, considering the destruction wrought upon the Red aggressors by air attack, FEAF's losses of men and planes were amazingly light.

While FEAF's combat record in the Korean hostilities was highly meritorious, such a record was not likely to be typical of future hostilities. In the autumn of 1950, when victory seemed imminent, General Stratemeyer pointed out to General Vandenberg several erroneous lessons which might be drawn from the Korean conflict. Thirty-three months of additional fighting further validated this early thinking. While FEAF gained immediate air superiority in Korea and successfully retained it, no one could assume that such a feat could be duplicated in the future. While propeller-driven aircraft were successfully employed for a time in Korea, such equipment was not suitable for global conflict in a jet air age. Although B-29 strategic bombers were freely diverted to the support of ground fighting in Korea, it could not be assumed that such a diversion superseded the real purpose of such aircraft. The Superfort bombers were used tactically because they soon destroyed their strategic targets, because they were available, and because the tactical emergency was most threatening. Because FEAF provided United Nations ground forces

with lavish close support in Korea was no reason to assume that this could be done in future wars. In the initial stages of future conflicts all air units would probably be engaged in the winning of the battle for air superiority. Although airlift was provided on a luxurious scale in Korea, the same concentration of airlift effort would be unavailable to any one theater during a global war. Because FEAF was able to win and maintain air superiority, many novel improvisations were permitted. In an all-out war, however, strategic air units would not likely be available for tactical support operations, tactical air units would be heavily engaged in a battle for air superiority, and Navy forces would have far less freedom of the seas than they had in Korea. Certainly any attempt to build an air force from the model of Korean requirements could be fatal to the United States.[8]

2. A Note on Organization and Command

The Korean hostilities indicated that costly delays might be anticipated in reaching multilateral agreements for the conduct of military operations under the auspices of the United Nations. Even though Soviet representatives were not present to impede the action of the United Nations Security Council in June 1950, initial delays in the first hours and days of the war allowed the North Korean army's attack to gain momentum and witnessed the loss of much of the manpower and practically all of the equipment of the Republic of Korea's army. Later on, when the Chinese Communists intervened in Korea, the United Nations Command required some immediate decisions which, necessitating intergovernmental discussions, could not be provided in an acceptably short time. In a jet air age moments lost in making decisions allow inordinate advantages to aggressor nations.

The Korean war was the first conflict to test the unified military forces of the United States. Although the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had directed the Far East Command to provide itself with a joint command staff adequate to ensure that the joint commander was fully cognizant of the capabilities, limitations, and most effective utilization of all the forces under his command, the United Nations Command/Far East Command operated for the first two and one-half years of the Korean war without a joint headquarters. Practically all of the interservice problems which arose during the Korean war could be traced to misunderstandings which, in all likelihood, would never have arisen from the deliberations of a joint staff. In the absence of the joint headquarters staff, the full force of United Nations airpower was seldom effectively applied against hostile target systems in Korea. That the failure of the United Nations Command/Far East Command to organize a joint headquarters staff had no tragic bearing on the outcome of the Korean conflict could be attributed only to the absence of large-scale, resourceful enemy air opposition.

3. Air Superiority Was the Trump Card

"There is little doubt in my mind," wrote General Weyland, "that the outcome of the conflict would have been vastly different had enemy domination of the air reversed the military positions of the Communists and the United Nations Command."[9] Air-superiority operations under the limited conditions of the Korean hostilities did not resemble similar air operations of the past, nor were they likely to be typical of the future. The story of how the Far East Air Forces controlled the air in Korea nevertheless provided one more historical justification for the overriding priority which USAF doctrine accords to the air-superiority mission.

During the first few weeks of the Korean war FEAF airmen easily destroyed the small North Korean Air Force. This early accomplishment of United Nations Command air superiority paid large dividends. Without hazard of hostile air attack United Nations surfaces forces could maneuver freely by day to resist the more-powerful Communist surface forces, who were able to move and to fight only at night. But the very fact that FEAF initially seized and continuously maintained air superiority over North Korea with a minimum commitment of forces could lead to a mischievous conception that the feat could be duplicated at will in some future conflict. In a war with a major power the aerial superiority which FEAF so easily attained in Korea would be dearly purchased at a heavy cost of airmen, aircraft, and an all-consuming air effort. Following the defeat of the North Korean Air Force, FEAF "owned" the air to the Yalu, but here air superiority ended because United Nations airmen could under no circumstances violate the sanctity of the Manchurian borders. From time to time the United Nations Command prescribed other restrictions designed to prevent inadvertent air violations of Communist territory and eventually erected an "artificial foul line" three miles south of the Yalu River beyond which United Nations airmen could not fly without special authority.

As they were free to do because of the United Nations Command politico-military restriction which confined air hostilities to Korea, the Communists rebuilt an air order of battle on Manchurian soil which became powerful enough to threaten the survival of United Nations forces in Korea. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff indicated that they would consider air attacks against enemy air bases outside Korea at such a time as the United Nations commander could state that Communists air operations imperiled the security of his forces in Korea,[10] but this situation never arose. What intelligence there was of enemy motives indicates that the Communists did not employ their Manchurian-based aircraft against United Nations installations in South Korea primarily because they feared reprisal attacks. Recognizing that their ground campaigns could not succeed without air support, the Communists reasoned that if they could rehabilitate or build air facilities south of the Yalu they could base air squadrons there which could attack United Nations positions in South Korea.

After November 1950 Communist MIG-15 jet interceptors attacked United Nations aircraft over North Korea, and within a year these speedy fighters hazarded slower models of

United Nations aircraft and prohibited daytime medium-bomber operations over northwestern Korea. Under the cover of MIG's flying from Manchuria, the Reds attempted periodically to build or reconstruct air facilities on North Korean soil. On occasions the Reds used North Korean fields for staging light-plane sneak attacks against United Nations positions, always at night. Mounted from partially operational North Korean airfields, these heckling attacks demanded that the Fifth Air Force devote constant attention to the air defenses of South Korea, but the "Bedcheck Charlie" raids did not constitute really effective air attacks. The Far East Air Forces recognized the significance of the Communist efforts to build North Korean airfields and periodically taught the Reds that they could not reconstitute an air force in an area over which they had lost air superiority. "The airfield neutralization program in North Korea," stated a FEAF intelligence report, "was like shooting sitting ducks."[11] While this description was a fair presentation of fact, FEAF's airfield neutralization program enjoyed certain exceptional advantages. By making shoran attacks at night, the old Superfortress bombers were able to continue to be the primary agents for airfield neutralization. The coordinated air-defense system of ground-control intercept radar, antiaircraft artillery guns, searchlights, and day-fighter aircraft, which the Reds built over northwestern Korea in 1952, seriously hampered B-29 attacks. If the Reds had possessed—or had been willing to employ—electronics-equipped all-weather fighters, they could doubtless have driven the old Superforts from the nighttime skies over North Korea. FEAF's fighter-bombers could probably have still continued the neutralization of North Korea's airfields, but FEAF would have missed the large bomb-carrying capacity of the Superfortress bombers.

Early in the Korean war FEAF airmen were able to destroy most of the North Korean Air Force on the ground at its airfields, where counterair efforts are always most effective. During the war, chiefly in the early months, FEAF crews destroyed 53, probably destroyed 25, and damaged 36 enemy aircraft on the ground. During July 1950 Navy airmen also reported destruction of 36 aircraft on the ground. Beginning in November 1950, with the entry of Chinese Communist Air Force units into combat, the air superiority task was that of air-to-air combat in a continuing battle between the swept-wing Sabres and MIG-15 jets. In aerial fights during the war FEAF airmen claimed to have destroyed 900, to have probably destroyed 168, and to have damaged 973 enemy aircraft. Land-based and carrier-based Marine pilots claimed the destruction in the air of 35 enemy aircraft, including 15 MIG's destroyed by pilots who were flying exchange tours in Sabres. U.S. Navy pilots claimed the destruction of 16 enemy aircraft in the air, including four MIG's destroyed by carrier airmen who were flying exchange duty in Sabres. Friendly-foreign pilots claimed to have destroyed three airborne enemy aircraft. Crews of almost all types of FEAF combat aircraft turned in claims of enemy aircraft destroyed, but the Sabres were the principal death-dealers and Communist MIG-15 jets were the hostile planes most frequently destroyed. In aerial combat Sabre pilots claimed to have destroyed 810 enemy planes, including 792 MIG-15 fighters. In air-to-air combat FEAF lost a total of 139 aircraft, including 78 Sabres.[12]

The Sabre pilots thus maintained a ten-to-one margin of victory over the MIG-15 jet fighters—the best planes which the Communists displayed in action in Korea.

Since the Sabrejet fighters proved to be the chief agents for maintaining United Nations Command air superiority in Korea, the peculiar nature of the combat between the Sabres and the MIG's deserves scrutiny. Victories in the highest form of air warfare—air-to-air fighting—usually go to the finest weapon system—an amalgamation of aircraft performance, aerial weapons, and pilot skills—and such was the case in Korea. "I have often been asked how the F-86 compares to the MIG-15," commented General Weyland, who then answered: "In my opinion, when all variables are balanced out, I believe the F-86 is the better airplane—at least for our purposes."[13] Judging Sabre performance in combat was complicated by the fact that three models of Sabres—F-86A's, F-86E's, and F-86F's—fought against at least two models of MIG's—the basic MIG-15 and the MIG-15BIS. In given tactical situations in Korea, however, performance comparisons involved a fundamental equation that the MIG-15 was a light airplane with a powerful engine and the F-86 was a heavy airplane with a powerful engine. Sabre pilots would have liked to have had a small, lightweight, highly maneuverable, day-fighting air-superiority fighter,[14] but since no such aircraft would be available in Korea the Sabre pilots observed the characteristics of the MIG's and adapted their tactics to compensate for their disadvantages.

In combat in Korea the MIG-15 consistently outclimbed the F-86 at all altitudes, with this characteristic becoming more apparent at the higher altitudes. As a general rule, the MIG-15 had a greater rate of initial acceleration than an F-86 in a dive, but the F-86 had a higher terminal velocity at all altitudes and consequently the advantage in a sustained steep dive. The ability of the MIG to convert speed into a high-angle "zoom" was outstanding. The F-86 appeared to enjoy a very slight speed advantage at all altitudes, and it had a slight advantage in very high-speed turning duels. Interestingly enough, neither the MIG nor the Sabre had an armament system which was suitable for air-to-air combat between jet fighters. The standard MIG armament system consisted of 23-mm. and 37-mm. cannon, combined with a gyroscopic gunsight which had mechanical range controls. This system was lethal against slow-flying bomber targets, but it was not flexible enough for combat with the Sabres. Six .50-caliber machine guns were the standard armament of the Sabres, and the various model F-86's were equipped with Mark 18, A-1CM, and A-4 sighting systems. The Mark 18 was a gyroscopic gunsight, but the other two systems were electronic sights whose functioning was not always reliable. Some Sabre aces urged that the heavy electronic sights, which were often out of order, ought to be abandoned, but later Sabre aces changed their minds and advised that the electronic sights would be necessary when counterair fighters were equipped with longer ranging weapons, which would permit more deflection shooting.[15]

Although ventures of Air Force and Navy intelligence agents behind the Communist lines in April and July 1951 salvaged parts of crashed MIG's for study, the characteristics of the MIG-15 were largely learned from aerial fights. In many respects Sabre pilots thought that the MIG was a better plane than it

actually was. At 0924 hours on 21 September 1953 Lt. Ro Kum Suk defected from North Korea and landed his MIG-15BIS at Kimpo. In subsequent flight tests of this latest model MIG at Kadena Air Base USAF evaluators determined these desirable features of the Red plane: ability to operate at altitudes above 50,000 feet; high rate of climb; rapid horizontal acceleration from relatively slow speeds; a short turning radius which was complicated by poor accelerated-stall characteristics; and short takeoff and landing-field requirements. The undesirable features of the MIG were: loss of aircraft control at high mach number; inadequate defrosting of its canopy and windshield which obscured pilot vision; poor lateral-directional stability at high altitudes; a low rate of roll; and poor aircraft control at high indicated airspeeds. The general conclusion of the USAF flight tests of the MIG-15BIS was that "the undesirable features of the aircraft heavily outweigh its good points." Lt. Col. E. M. Sommerich, a 4th Wing pilot who helped test the MIG, stated: "Although the F-86 is heavier than the MIG—and will not go as high as, nor accelerate as fast as, the MIG—it is definitely a far superior airplane."[16]

Recognizing the tactical advantages allowed to the MIG pilots by the combat situation over MIG Alley and the relative performance characteristics of the MIG and Sabre, the Fifth Air Force's Sabre wings developed tactics which enabled them to perform their air-superiority mission. Perceiving their inability to provide maximum protection to friendly aircraft by flying escort, the Sabres emphasized fighter-interceptor "screens" or "sweeps" in conjunction with small escort forces which accompanied the friendly aircraft. Since the MIG airfields were concentrated in a small geographical area in Manchuria, the Sabre sweeps and screens represented an optimum employment of interceptor aircraft. Under a different arrangement of hostile fighter bases and target complexes, as would be likely in Europe, FEAF questioned whether the screen or sweep would be an effective method of protecting friendly air operations. In Korea—the fighter screen—consisting of high-speed cruising, fluid-four flights, in mutually-supporting formations—gave the Sabre pilots the greatest chance for scoring aerial victories. On the other hand, probably because they lacked experience in air warfare, the Communist air leaders never adequately or consistently exploited the advantageous characteristics of their aircraft. The Reds consistently misused their available power by failing to exploit their numerical advantages and the superior high-altitude performance of their equipment. By a skilled application of sound and aggressive tactics the Communists might have enjoyed a certain degree of air superiority over North Korea.[17]

In the air superiority battles over northwestern Korea the personal equation ranked high in the ten-to-one victory which the Sabres scored. Knowledge of air warfare allowed the Sabre leaders to adopt tactics which enabled them to take advantage of the peculiarities of the Korean situation. Lack of knowledge of air warfare prevented the Reds from making the most of their capabilities. What was true of air leadership was also true of the caliber of the men who flew the MIG's. As a group, the Communist pilots ranged in skill from the very few "Honcho" pilots down to a predominant mass of "recruit" pilots. FEAF intelligence officers always insisted that the Sabre pilots did not need to know

the nationality of the men they fought, but Sabre pilots believed that most of the "Honcho" pilots were Russians and that the "recruits" were Chinese and North Koreans. When the Communist "trainee" pilots could be brought under attack they were apt to display utter confusion. Some forgot to drop their external tanks, others fired their guns wildly, and many ejected from their aircraft without particular provocation. Flight testing of the "Kimpo MIG" would reveal that the Red fighter was not very stable at high altitudes or high airspeeds, and this instability was apparently aggravated when panic-stricken trainee pilots threw their planes into uncontrollable spins. In the last months of the war—when the "Honchos" had apparently gone home—many MIG pilots refused to break into an attacking Sabre. The North Korean defector, Lt. Ro Kum Suk, later explained that the Red airmen knew that a break in any direction would expose their cockpit to fire and that they could escape with their lives if they absorbed a Sabre's fire in the engine and armor plate behind them. By acting the coward, these MIG pilots lost their aircraft, but the Fifth Air Force estimated that more than two-thirds of the MIG pilots whose planes were shot down successfully escaped by ejecting.[18] During the course of the Korean hostilities Communist airmen undoubtedly learned much about air war and air combat, but they never developed a first-rate pilot-plane combination capable of taking command of the air over North Korea.

Unlike the Communists, whose pilots were seldom able to exploit the outstanding characteristics of their planes, the experience of the Fifth Air Force's Sabre pilots was generally high even by USAF standards and very high when projected against the probable proficiency of average fighter pilots who would be available in any large-scale war. Many Sabre pilots were "old men" by usual youthful standards for fighter pilots, but jet combat in Korea demonstrated that a pilot's physical age was much less important than his experience and sound judgment. A FEAF statistical study made in March 1953 demonstrated that air victories were usually scored by more experienced pilots. At this time some 68 per cent of pilots who had destroyed MIG's were over twenty-eight years old, while 67 per cent of the pilots who had scored no kills were less than twenty-five years old. Pilots with MIG kills had flown an average of 18 missions in World War II, while pilots with no kills had flown an average of four missions in World War II.[19] Out of the total of 810 enemy planes claimed destroyed by Sabres, moreover, the 38 Sabre pilots who became jet air aces destroyed 305.5 planes. Whether or not a pilot was flying as an element leader and the conditions under which he sighted MIG's affected his chances for scoring victories, but the more experienced pilots apparently had the best chance for shooting down the enemy. Whether he was a wingman or an element leader, the successful fighter pilot in Korea had an aggressive desire to succeed, had the visual acuity which permitted him to see the enemy first, was capable of precision team flying within known characteristics of his aircraft, and could shoot accurately in the few split seconds of jet air combat.[20] These were the same old characteristics of successful fighter pilots in earlier wars, but jet air combat made them all the more important.

"The Fifth Air Force" stated General Anderson, "maintained air supremacy through an adequate combination of the technical capabilities of its fighter

aircraft with superior individual pilot proficiency, flight integrity, and air tactics."[21] This statement well expressed the accomplishment of air superiority in Korea, but to attribute the United Nations Command's control of the air in Korea solely to a superiority of American pilots and equipment could create a false sense of security for the future. When compared to enemy resources in Manchuria, air superiority in Korea was gained and maintained by a relatively small force. The phenomenon of a smaller Sabre force, flying planes with performance not markedly better than the enemy force, winning and maintaining air superiority must recognize that the enemy consistently misused his capabilities and lacked skilled pilots. Such an ineffective employment of enemy forces could not be used as a valid planning factor for future air operations. In its presentation of counterair lessons learned in Korea, FEAF believed that the abandonment of large fighter formations in favor of small flights which maintained high cruising speed and employed an offense in depth had validity for future jet air combat. On the other hand, the employment of fighter screens and sweeps met a peculiar combat situation in Korea which might not be duplicated in future conflicts. In generalizing on any air tactics employed in Korea, FEAF also emphasized that one must recognize that the Communists possessed a "sanctuary" in Manchuria and that they did not employ their full potential seriously to contest United Nations air superiority or the United Nations "sanctuary" in South Korea.[22]

The first shipment of Korea repatriates arrives at San Francisco, 23 August 1953 *(Courtesy U.S. Army).*

4. Interdiction Assumed New Meaning

Always facing numerically superior Communist ground forces in Korea, the United Nations Command ground forces required every assistance which the United Nations air forces could give them to prevent the enemy from massing the full potential of his men, supplies, and equipment on the battlefield. During World War II USAF officers had learned that airpower could most effectively destroy an enemy's capacity to fight by strategic air attacks against his sources of production. The Communist ground forces in Korea, however, drew most of their logistical support from sources outside Korea which could not be attacked. In view of this appreciation of the situation, General Stratemeyer ordered the Fifth Air Force and the FEAF Bomber Command to interdict the lines of communication supporting the North Korean People's Army. To the men of the Air Force, "interdiction" was a familiar employment of airpower which sought to prevent, delay, or destroy enemy men, supplies, and equipment before they reached the battlefield. To the Air Force such attacks made double sense: the enemy was easier to attack while he was concentrated en route to the front, and the more men and materiel destroyed behind the front lines the less powerful the enemy's battle effort would be. The Air Force had learned that interdiction worked best when enemy and friendly troops were locked in ground battle, and the enemy would be simultaneously drained of strength both at the front and to the rear. To achieve the best results, any interdiction campaign had to be well planned as to objectives and persistently sustained in its execution. For a time in World War II the Air Force had called this phase of air effort "isolation of the battlefield," but this term had been dropped as an unfortunate one, since the interdiction's results were seldom so completely positive as to "isolate" the battle zone, and severance of enemy supply routes far from the combat zone had also proven necessary for the accomplishment of the task.[23]

While USAF officers knew no doubt that interdiction was an extremely worthwhile employment of airpower, they were surprised to learn in Korea that many ground officers did not appreciate interdiction. Largely as a result of General Weyland's heated arguments with General MacArthur's staff, FEAF was finally permitted to effect a comprehensive interdiction program on 2 August 1950, more than a month after the war's beginning. Even though it was belatedly undertaken, the comprehensive interdiction campaign together with the heavy ground fighting on the Pusan perimeter rapidly drained the strength and effectiveness of the North Korean People's Army. During the fighting in South Korea North Korean prisoners of war estimated that air action destroyed more than 70 percent of their tanks, trucks, and artillery pieces and inflicted 47 percent of the casualties which North Korean troops sustained. That decisive air attacks against the enemy's rear and strong Eighth Army defensive actions had already destroyed the effectiveness of the North Korean army was generally overlooked, and the U.S. X Corps encircling maneuver was credited with breaking the back of the North Korean forces in South Korea. Men indoctrinated in surface strategies did not easily credit the decisiveness of air

actions in areas too remote for them to see the damages. General MacArthur himself stated: "The air alone has certain limitations as compared with ground troops....The air covers an enormous area of ground. The casualties that it imposes on the enemy are heavy and accumulative, but they are scattered. An airplane hits here, another airplane would hit here, another airplane would hit over here. So the accumulative casualties are heavy, but they do not hit in any concentrated area....It is quite evident to anybody that is acquainted with war that determined ground troops cannot be stopped alone by air."[24]

Failing to appreciate the fact that FEAF air attacks against the North Korean rear had enabled the relatively weak United Nations ground forces to advance to the 38th parallel, General MacArthur made a fateful decision in October 1950 to press forward to the Yalu. As United Nations supply lines grew longer and longer, those of the Communists would get shorter and shorter. Because of the United Nations ground advance and the politico-military restriction preventing air attacks north of the Yalu, United Nations air forces would have less and less opportunity for interdictory attacks against the rear of the Communist armies. The United Nations Command's strategy not only failed to consider the lesson that decisive air action had opened the way for ground advances in South Korea, but there were intimations as the campaign progressed—most markedly manifest in the assignments of service priorities for surface transportation to Korea—that little would be expected of United Nations airpower during the exploitative ground operations in North Korea. Because General MacArthur's strategy did not allow sufficient opportunity for air attack, it met defeat in North Korea when inferior numbers of United Nations ground troops were surprised by the sudden appearance of fresh Chinese Communist Forces. In the short time and narrow zone along the Yalu, and now additionally hazarded by MIG fighters, FEAF airmen could not manage decisive air attacks.

When United Nations ground troops retreated from North Korea and bared the "middle miles" of Korea's transportation routes to relentless air attacks, the FEAF aircrews were again able to make interdiction effective. Using conventional weapons, FEAF airmen not only greatly delayed the southward movement of the Chinese Fourth Field Army and gave the Eighth Army time to prepare defenses, but they also estimated that they inflicted nearly 40,000 casualties on the Chinese—thus decimating a force equivalent to five Chinese divisions. If FEAF had been able effectively to employ nuclear weapons against the Chinese Reds at this critical juncture an Army research study indicated that FEAF could have taken a terrible toll of enemy troops. One 40-kiloton air-burst weapon exploded over the dense enemy concentration at Taechon on the night of 24/25 November 1950 would have destroyed some 15,000 of 22,000 troops. The casualties which might have resulted from six 40-kiloton air-bursting bombs over the Communist assembly in the Pyonggang-Chorwon-Kumhwa triangle between 27 and 29 December 1950 might have destroyed half of an estimated 95,000 Reds. Had six 30-kiloton bursts been laid along enemy lines north of the Imjin River on the night of 31 December 1950, an estimated 28,000 to 40,000 of a total enemy force of 70,000 to 100,000 men, preparing for a jump-off assault against the Eighth Army, would probably have

been destroyed. On 7 and 8 January 1951 two 40-kiloton bursts against North Korean concentrations opposite the Wonju salient would have killed 6,000 to 9,000 of a total force of 18,000. Even in these critical junctures, the United States did not approve the employment of nuclear weapons in Korea. Had permission been granted to employ the special weapons, there was some reason to believe that the United Nations Command forces would not have been well enough prepared to use such weapons effectively. Intelligence did not establish the existence of the hostile concentrations at Taechon and in the Iron Triangle until they were breaking up. Nuclear attacks against the Imjin and Wonju concentrations, moreover, would have been sufficiently close to friendly positions as to inflict substantial casualties on Eighth Army troops.[25]

During the early months of 1951 United Nations air-interdiction attacks applied in the rear of the Communist armies were a decisive factor which enabled the Eighth Army to hold its positions against Red assaults and finally to force the enemy back north of the 38th parallel. With diligence and long enough periods of time, the Chinese were periodically able to concentrate stocks of supplies in widely dispersed dumps near the front lines, and with these supplies they were able to support short and intensive periods of all-out ground combat. In each case, when they mounted ground offensives, however, the Communists took heavy losses of manpower and materiel, losses inflicted by coordinated air and ground firepower. Each Red offensive dwindled for want of support before it could bring superior manpower to bear for a lasting ground decision. Having no hope for victory, nor prospect except to continue to incur enormous losses of men and materiel, the Communists requested an armistice in June 1951. Airpower had been the decisive factor in the outcome of the ground battle. It had caused the collapse of the Communist logistical system and had inflicted tremendous casualties upon the enemy's massed offensives.

At the beginning of the truce negotiations, on 10 July 1951, the United Nations air forces possessed an opportunity to demonstrate the innumerable advantages of airpower as a predominant weapon. Unlike ground forces, which are always bound to action along a narrow, one-dimensional, surface plane, and in July 1951 were limited by directive to an active defense of currently held positions, the Air Force could range far and wide over hostile North Korea and by selective destruction could cause the Reds to accept United Nations terms for ending the conflict. Unfortunately, FEAF was not to be permitted to exercise the decisive attributes of airpower for some while. Thinking in terms of a surface strategy although no land campaigns were under way, General Ridgway feared that the Communists might take advantage of the respite of truce negotiations to rejuvenate their ground armies and accumulate forward logistical stocks large enough to enable them to mount an invincible ground offensive. Since interdiction attacks at the rear of the Communist armies had prevented the Reds from overwhelming United Nations ground forces during the major campaigns of 1950 and 1951, General Ridgway wanted the United Nations air forces to continue to interdict the enemy's lines of communications.

Although General Vandenberg and General Weyland both warned that aerial interdiction of North Korea's lines of communications could hardly

prove decisive so long as the Communist ground armies had the initiative of fighting or refraining from combat—and thus of expending or saving their supplies—the United Nations air forces commenced comprehensive railway-interdiction attacks on 18 August 1951. Perceiving the limitations of the tactical situation, FEAF officially stated the purpose of the comprehensive railway-interdiction campaign as being "to interfere with and disrupt the enemy's lines of communications to such an extent that he will be unable to contain a determined offensive by friendly forces or be unable to mount a sustained major offensive himself." A few overenthusiastic air force officers in Korea believed that the all-out interdiction operations might so seriously deplete the enemy's logistics as to force the Reds to withdraw their front lines northward, and some of these same zealots called the rail-interdiction campaign "Strangle." If the Fifth Air Force's night-intruder aircraft had possessed electronic equipment which could have permitted their crews effectively to identify and attack hostile moving vehicular targets at night and in all weather, or if FEAF had possessed a "family" of denial weapons which would have lain in wait to explode at the approach of trains, troops, or vehicles, the interdiction campaign might have forced the Communists to withdraw northward. Lacking these capabilities for round-the-clock interdiction and confronting an industrious and resourceful enemy who kept his supply requirements low by controlled expenditures, United Nations airmen achieved the stated purposes of the railway-interdiction campaign but did not measure up to the idea inherent in the code name "Strangle." Judging the success of the operation by a popular appellation and not by its stated purposes, many critics of airpower stated that the railway-interdiction program in Korea had failed.

Ten months of comprehensive railway interdiction so badly shattered the North Korean railway system that it would not be able to support a sustained Communist ground offensive, but the railway-interdiction attacks—which delayed and disrupted enemy logistical support—did not place enough military pressure upon the Reds to force them to accept United Nations armistice terms. With the advent of General Clark as United Nations commander in May 1952, General Weyland was able to secure authority for an air pressure campaign which sought to make the war too costly for the Reds to continue. Some of these air pressure attacks were aimed at strategic or quasi-strategic targets which had been overlooked or had recuperated from earlier bombings, but the majority of the air pressure strikes were destructive interdiction attacks. Supply centers, concentrated transportation targets, and aggregations of hostile personnel were hit repeatedly. After a year of air pressure attacks the communists acceded to United Nations armistice terms. The air pressure attacks against their rear areas had evidently made the war too expensive for the Communists to continue.

During the three years of the Korean war United Nations air-interdiction attacks against the rear of the Communist ground armies undoubtedly had a decisive significance which was secondary in importance only to air-superiority operations. The tactical situation in Korea and the frugal supply requirements of the Reds nevertheless made for some pecularities which caused interdiction in Korea to vary somewhat from similar activities in earlier wars. Korea's peninsular

conformation and its scarcity of good transportation arteries simplified interdiction, but the relatively short distance from the front lines to the Yalu and the modest supply requirements of Red troops hindered the effort. As was the case in World War II, the best time for an interdiction campaign was when the ground situation was fluid, the fighting intense, and the enemy's logistical needs were greatest. Medium and light bombers were more effective against communications arteries in the rear than against transportation capillaries near the front. To be effective, interdiction campaigns needed to be well planned and persistently sustained. In the course of its operations FEAF found a great need for all-weather and round-the-clock interdiction capabilities. During the fluid fighting in Korea rear-area air attacks proved to be extremely destructive of the enemy's personnel and materiel. With its effectiveness magnified by the employment of nuclear weapons, airpower would likely be a primary and most economical means for resisting massed enemy ground attacks in the future.[26]

5. Air Support for Ground Forces

On the day the shooting started in Korea the Far East Air Forces faced a difficult task of converting from a defensive mission to a tactical air mission. Of the three classical missions of tactical airpower—air superiority, interdiction, and close support of friendly ground troops—the close support of friendly ground forces was the most complex since it involved an intimate cooperation of ground and air forces and an intricate system of communications. During World War II no one system for controlling close air support had been common in all theaters of war. The approved USAF-Army doctrine relating to close air support had originated in North Africa, and the techniques developed there had been elaborated in Italy and had been used as the foundation for modified procedures employed in the battles on the European continent, the most extensive air-ground battles of World War II. In the Pacific theaters other air systems had been developed. One system was common to the Southwest Pacific theater, while another had been devised to provide the heavy close air support demanded in the amphibious invasions of island objectives in the South and Central Pacific theaters. At the end of World War II officers of the Army and the Army Air Forces had jointly prepared a doctrinal manual representing the best that had been learned in the world-wide conflict. This manual was Field Manual 31-35, *Air-Ground Operations,* published in August 1946. The teachings of this manual were elaborated in detail by the *Joint Training Directive for Air-Ground Operations,* jointly prepared by the Army Field Forces and the USAF Tactical Air Command and issued on 1 September 1950. These documents represented the best knowledge regarding the cooperation of air and ground forces in a land campaign.

The doctrine and organization for air

support practiced by the U.S. Marine Corps had originated in the South and Central Pacific during World War II. The fighting in these theaters was marked by a series of short but intensive amphibious attacks against enemy strongholds which had to be subdued in a matter of days. Landing in small boats, Marine infantry forces were lightly gunned, and Marine aviation was generously provided to compensate for deficiencies in artillery. At the close of World War II Marine Corps air and ground forces had been organized for an amphibious mission. Each Marine infantry division could normally expect the support of a Marine air wing, which was actually a miniature tactical air force with its own ground-control intercept and tactical air-control squadrons as well as combat aviation. Each Marine battalion was accompanied by a forward air observer, who could call down supporting aircraft from a flight which the air wing normally orbited over the battle area. Navy high-performance aircraft normally maintained air superiority in an amphibious objective area, and Marine airmen therefore practiced air support of ground troops as a primary mission.

One of the fundamental philosophical differences between the USAF-Army and the Marine systems of air-ground operations was the degree of reliance placed by the Army and the Marine ground troops upon the supporting fire of their own artillery. Army commanders preferred to rely upon their own artillery for support within the first 1,000 yards of their fronts, for they realized that half a basic load of division artillery and mortar fire was equivalent to 900 air sorties with 500-pound bombs. When critical situations or defiladed targets demanded, the Army wanted air strikes within 1,000 yards of the friendly front lines. On the other hand, Marine ground units possessed limited amounts of integral artillery and insisted on routine close air support in the first 1,000 yards ahead of their lines. Since the Marines used air support as a substitute for artillery, they had to have forward air observers in each of their battalions. To assure an air strike within five to ten minutes, they had to have combat aircraft on "air-alert" stations over the front lines almost continually. The Army, on the other hand, preferred to employ air strikes against targets which were normally outside the range of its artillery. Even if these remote targets were moving, they could not normally be expected to reach friendly positions for some time. These more remote targets were usually too far from the front to be visible to observers on the ground. In a normal situation, the Army would have adequate time to employ the "call-type" air-support missions which were more conservative of scarce air capabilities than were "air-alert" missions. In the USAF-Army system there was also a place for an airborne tactical air coordinator, who could locate and direct air strikes against enemy targets outside the visual range of a forward air controller on the ground.[27]

Often compelled to improvise in the early months of the Korean war as it moved unexpectedly from an air-defense mission to tactical air war tasks, the Fifth Air Force speedily organized a Joint Operations Center, dispatched tactical air-control parties to Eighth Army regiments, and even provided men and equipment to operate an Eighth Army tactical air-request net. When jet aircraft, flying from Japanese bases, had difficulty remaining over the front lines long enough to attack close-support targets effectively, the Fifth Air Force organized a Mosquito airborne

control function whose tactical air coordinators flew unarmed T-6 trainer aircraft to locate air-support objectives and direct attacks against them. In October 1950 arrival of the 502d Tactical Control Group and the 20th Signal Company, Air-Ground Liaison, allowed the Fifth Air Force to effect a regular tactical air-control system and permitted the Eighth Army to operate its own tactical air-request communications between divisions and the Joint Operations Center. In the spring of 1951 the Fifth Air Force also established tactical air-direction posts to support each American corps in Korea. Equipped with MPQ-2 and MSQ-1 radars, these tactical air-direction posts could control aircraft in support of friendly ground troops at night or in bad weather. Before the war's end three full-scale tactical air-direction centers and a fourth tactical air-direction center of limited proportions at Cho-do were providing local air-control and warning services in Korea.

During the Korean war the favorable results achieved with it justified the wisdom and practicability of the USAF-Army system for managing air-ground operations. Early in the war, however, demonstrations of the Marine system of close support in cooperation with the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in the Pusan perimeter and with the U.S. X Corps at Inchon and Wonsan caused some Army officers to assert requirements for their own organic air support. General Almond, commander of the U.S. X Corps, prepared studies on 25 December 1950 and 15 July 1951 recommending that each corps commander should have operational control over a force of fighter-bombers equivalent to one group per division. General Almond also recommended that each infantry battalion should have a tactical air-control party and that a battalion commander should be permitted to send air-support requests directly to a tactical air-direction center at corps headquarters, which would order the mission flown.[28] As a test, General Van Fleet officially proposed on 20 December 1951 to take three squadrons of the 1st Marine Air Wing under the operational control of the Eighth Army and further to decentralize the system by placing one of these squadrons under each of his three corps commanders.[29] Under the situation wherein United Nations air forces exercised complete air supremacy over the battlelines, no one denied that the Marine system had worked wonderfully well in Korea, but World War II had adequately demonstrated the fallacy of attaching "penny packets" of airpower to ground units. Pointing out that comparisons of the USAF-Army and Marine systems were faulty on their premise because they were designed for different purposes, and demonstrating the terrific expense of the Marine system for supporting anything on the order of 60 to 100 divisions, General Clark on 11 August 1952 squelched demands for changes in the USAF-Army system based on the unusual combat conditions in Korea.[30]

At the same time that some Army officers were advocating far-reaching changes in it, the USAF-Army system proved able to meet requirements laid upon it in Korea. The system was flexible enough to accommodate the speeds of modern jet fighter-bombers. The chief value of the system, however, was its ability to concentrate all available firepower—of the FEAF Bomber Command, the Fifth Air Force, the Seventh Fleet, and the 1st Marine Air Wing—on the sectors of the front lines where the enemy was attacking. At the conclusion of its independent operations on 25 December 1950 the 1st Marine Air Wing

located on airfields in South Korea and placed its air-support capabilities under the operational control of the Joint Operations Center. In recognition of the fact that the 1st Marine Air Wing needed to retain its capabilities for independent action, the Fifth Air Force exercised coordination control over other activities of the Marine wing only through its commander. After some initial confusion the U.S. Seventh Fleet established a Navy liaison section at the Joint Operations Center in August 1950, and late in June 1953 the Seventh Fleet finally agreed to assume an integral role in the work of the Joint Operations Center. At the end of the Korean war a joint air-ground operations conference representing Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines met in Seoul and recommended that in future operations integration of all services should be secured by an organization and system similar to that finally developed in the last month of the Korean hostilities. The conference also pointed out the need for a joint air-ground doctrine which would encompass all services.[31]

Even though the Korean war demonstrated the validity of the USAF-Army joint air-ground operations system in the jet air age, the Korean hostilities allowed a number of peculiar developments in air-ground cooperation which would probably not be applicable to future hostilities. Absence of hostile air activities over the battle area allowed the United Nations air forces to provide far more close support than was normal. At this same time the United Nations ground forces were at first badly short of supporting artillery and were later hindered by a scarcity of ammunition, and airpower had to compensate for deficient ground firepower. Since it cost far more to deliver aerial bombs than to fire artillery shells, the routine use of airpower as flying artillery constituted a severe expense to American taxpayers. In times of emergency, working in cooperation with friendly artillery, close-support aircraft nevertheless proved very effective for breaking up the Communist human-wave ground attacks. As a result of study in Korea, the Fifth Air Force and the Eighth Army worked out techniques worthy of future emulation whereby friendly artillery could continue to fire upon the enemy during air strikes without hazarding close-support aircraft. In future wars, however, the Army would doubtless have more supporting artillery and would require less close support than was provided in Korea. At the same time the Air Force would probably be compelled to fight a battle for air superiority and would be able to provide the Army with less close-support effort than was the case in Korea.

Without reducing the luster of the achievements of the Mosquito tactical airborne coordinators, who contributed so valiantly to the accomplishment of close air support in Korea, most persons recognized the anomaly of the employment of these slow, unarmed, trainer aircraft under future front-line battle conditions. In the future airborne controllers flying high-performance aircraft would have to operate from the fighter-bomber bases. By employing "pathfinder" techniques, these more-experienced fighter-bomber pilots could lead jet fighter-bombers to close-support targets. During the course of the Korean hostilities neither the Army nor the Air Force found an acceptable solution to the problem of providing tactical air-control parties for front-line control of air strikes. Under the conditions in Korea, where rugged terrain forced the Mosquitoes to direct

most close-support strikes against objectives which a forward air controller on the ground could not observe, many forward air controllers spent their three-month tours without controlling an air strike, and the Fifth Air Force ultimately stipulated that the forward air controllers would have to control at least one strike a month to maintain their proficiency. Despite the fact that the forward air controllers on the ground could not effectively direct close-support strikes, the Eighth Army posed a requirement for a tactical air-control party with each infantry and tank battalion, regiment, and division, during periods of training as well as combat. In a change designed to simplify the support of the front-line parties the USAF and U.S. Army on 2 July 1953 agreed that the Army would provide the equipment and enlisted personnel of tactical air-control parties but that the Air Force would continue to furnish the forward air controller. Since both the Air Force and the Marines agreed that a forward air controller had to be a pilot of flight-leader proficiency, the Army requirement for fifteen forward air controllers per division would have required the Fifth Air Force to provide 364 pilots for forward air-control duty in Korea. Such a requirement—even for pilots who were not of flight-leader caliber—would have been extremely expensive in Korea.[32]

As the war closed in Korea Fifth Air Force officers were inclined to believe that close-support control in future conflicts would have to be managed by some sort of electronic equipment which had not been developed. In future conflict Mosquito controllers would not be able to hover over the front lines. In Korea, however, forward air controllers on the ground had not been able to direct air strikes against targets which they could not see. By the use of tactical air-direction post radars, the Fifth Air Force had been able to direct a blind-bombing close-support effort, and in future conflicts Eighth Army representatives said that they would like to have two tactical air-direction posts in support of each corps. In the spring of 1953 Fifth Air Force officers posed a requirement that tactical air-control parties should also be equipped with some type of highly mobile radar which would be able to provide a forward air controller with simultaneous reference to the ground and to the airborne planes.[33] The development and testing of such electronic equipment was a matter for future study and development.

6. Korea's Impact on the United States Air Force

Communist military aggression in Korea in 1950 marked the beginning of a new military policy for the United States. In the years since 1945 the United States had come to recognize a state of cold war with Communism, but the Korean aggression was positive proof that Russia and her satellites were willing to risk a general war by "brush-fire" aggressions all over the world. The limited military strength of the United States had not been a cause

for peace but had tempted the Communists to exploit war as an instrument of national policy. "The final recognition of this fact by the American people," stated Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall, "made it possible to start the rebuilding of the armed forces to the minimum strength required for the security of the United States...."[34]

Spurred on by the requirements of a shooting war in Korea and by Russia's growing nuclear airpower, the United States Air Force began to rebuild a strength which had been torn down since 1945. The USAF program had twin objectives: to increase the over-all dimensions of the Air Force in accordance with the growing Communist threat to the national security of the United States, and to procure the forces required to support FEAF's operations in Korea.[35] At the start of the Korean war USAF was attempting to maintain 48 air wings and an authorized military personnel strength of 416,314 officers and men with annual appropriations which were sufficient for only 42 combat-effective wings. In a series of decisions between July 1950 and January 1951 the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff approved an Air Force expansion to a total of 95 wings and 1,061,000 military personnel. Within a few months after the war's beginning the Air Force mobilized 22 wings of the Air National Guard and 10 wings of the Air Force Reserve and more than 100,000 individual Air Force reservists. The continuing deterioration of the world situation led the Joint Chiefs of Staff in November 1951 to authorize the Air Force to expand to 143 wings with 1,210,000 military personnel and to reach this strength by mid-1955. As of 30 June 1953, when the Korean war was ending, the USAF possessed 106 active wings, of which some 93 were considered operational. The personnel strength of the USAF at this time mustered 977,583 officers and airmen.[36] The Department of Defense's decision to expand the Air Force to 143 wings marked its departure from older policies of distributing funds equally among the three services and its acceptance of the principle of allocating military funds in accordance with the priorities assigned to the missions of the services.

The end of the Korean war caused President Eisenhower to take a "new look" at military strategy and requirements. While the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the National Security Council made studies, the Air Force goal of 143 wings was temporarily replaced by an "interim" goal of 120 wings to be attained by the end of June 1956. In December 1953 President Eisenhower approved a USAF goal of 137 wings to be reached by the end of June 1957. In his state of the union message delivered on 7 January 1954, President Eisenhower explained that the new military policies were taking account of a growing stock of nuclear weapons and of the more effective means of using them against any aggressor. The new weapons systems emphasized airpower and permitted economies in manpower. President Eisenhower called for increased armed-force mobility, larger numbers of every-ready professional officers and men, an industrial base capable of swift mobilization, and increased emphasis upon continental defense. In context with President Eisenhower's considerations, the National Defense budget presented to Congress stressed the development of airpower for the Air Force and the Navy and continued modernization of land and sea forces, which would be maintained at levels somewhat lower than during the Korean conflict.[37] In a speech delivered in New York City on

12 January 1954 Secretary of State Dulles suggested that a military policy of "massive retaliation" would deter local aggression and global conflict. "Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power," Dulles said. "A potential aggressor must know that he cannot always prescribe battle conditions that suit him...."[38] The United States had fought a war in Korea limited in bounds and in weapons, but President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles suggested that such artificial ground rules might be unacceptable for combating future Communist aggressions.

As the years of the Korean war marked acceptance of the predominance of airpower among America's armed-force capabilities, the United States Air Force was able to move toward the establishment of a more modern organization and the procurement of new jet equipment. Because of the lag time in production, few of the new aircraft ordered beginning in 1950 saw combat in Korea, but the new planes entered USAF's inventory in the immediate postwar years. In the expansion programs between 1950 and 1957 the Strategic Air Command's combat wings grew from 19 to 51, but the loss of the command's superfluous fighter-escort wings during the latter year reduced the total to 45 combat wings. Beginning in 1951 and increasingly in 1953, B-47 Stratojet bombers replaced the old B-29's and B-50's. By the end of 1954 all B-29's were gone, and by mid-1955 all B-50's were retired from medium-bomber wings. During 1955 B-52 Stratofortress jet bombers began to replace the conventional B-36's in heavy bombardment wings. In these same years the Strategic Air Command increased its mobility through the development of new overseas bases, by emphasis on in-flight refueling, and by the procurement of additional tankers, including KC-135 jet fuel carriers which could replenish bombers at speeds of 500 miles per hour and at altitudes above 35,000 feet. The Strategic Air Command planes which had gone to the Far East in 1950 had possessed only a limited ability to drop atomic bombs, but by 1957 the Strategic Air Command's bombers were able to employ both atomic and thermonuclear weapons.[39]

Under the economy programs of the pre-Korean years the USAF Continental Air Command had found itself responsible for managing the Eastern and Western Air Defense Forces and the Tactical Air Command as well as for other duties. These multifarious responsibilities of the Continental Air Command were resolved into major component parts on 1 December 1950 when the Tactical Air Command re-emerged as a major command and on 1 January 1951 when the Air Defense command again became a major command. After more than a year's study of joint-force requirements a new Continental Air Defense Command was established on 1 September 1954 under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the Air Force as executive agent. At its peak strength in 1951, the Tactical Air Command had 25 wings, but transfers to the Far East and to Europe reduced it to 21 combat wings by the end of 1953. In a realignment of strength, the Tactical Air Command lost two wings and a group of C-124 troop-carrier aircraft to the Military Air Transport Service in 1957 but gained four of the former Strategic Air Command fighter-escort wings. Even before the end of 1953 FEAF retired its old Mustangs and Shooting Stars, and the Tactical Air Command made major changes in its aircraft inventories in the years

following Korea. In 1954 supersonic F-100A fighters began to replace F-86 Sabres and swept-wing F-84F's began to retire straight-wing F-84G's. During 1955 the Tactical Air Command received the F-100C for use as a day-fighter and fighter-bomber, and in 1956 it got the more-advanced F-100D fighter-bomber. In the tactical bomber force the B-57 replaced the old obsolete B-26 beginning in June 1954, and new B-66 and RB-66 all-weather bombers joined the tactical bomber fleet in 1956. Needed to operate into unprepared airstrips where C-119's and C-124's could not land, C-123 Avitrucs and turbo-powered C-130 Hercules transports entered the Tactical Air Command inventory in July 1955 and December 1956. Most of these aircraft had been authorized for USAF procurement during the Korean hostilities. A new "family" of nuclear weapons permitted fighter-bombers to drop weapons of tremendous destructiveness, and the Tactical Air Command developed a mobility which would enable it to deploy forces on short notice to oppose local aggression anywhere in the world.[40]

Everywhere throughout the USAF the twin objectives of mobilization for resistance to the global threat of Communism and to the local aggression in Korea brought new life. To provide the trained aircrews and technicians needed by the expanding Air Force, the Air Training Command in 1951 established a Flying Training Air Force and a Technical Training Air Force, and in 1952 it set up a Crew Training Air Force. Recognizing that research and development had to be divorced from procurement and production, the USAF had already established the Air Research and Development Command in January 1950, and the new command formally took over these functions from the Air Materiel Command in April 1951. Both of these commands distinguished themselves by their support to the Korean war, and they provided the developmental and logistical support potential which USAF so vitally needed for its expanding responsibilities in the years following Korea.[41]

In retrospect, the Korean war was one more tragic example of the failure of the existing patterns of international organization to maintain harmonious relationships in a world where predatory nations were eager to plunder their weaker neighbors. Like any other resort to armed force, Korea was a world tragedy, but some good resulted from the tragic experience. The staunch United Nations' support for the Republic of Korea must have given pause to the aggressor nations. For the United States, the sudden shock of naked Communist aggression in Korea may have been providential. The American people could now clearly see that world peace would come through strength and not through weakness. To other Americans the Korean war emphasized the age-old lesson that the price of peace is eternal vigilance—vigilance to detect and halt aggression wherever it appears. From its growth and experience during the Korean hostilities the fledgling United States Air Force emerged as a power better able to maintain peace through preparedness.

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Since no history on any subject can be stronger than its sources, a word about reference materials used in the preparation of this record of United States Air Force experience in Korea is in order. Perusal of footnote citations will reveal that the narrative is principally based upon official manuscript records but that free use has been made of such published materials as have become available. Unhappily, many of the books and articles published concerning the Korean war have had some partisan leanings, for Korea was one of the most controversial of wars.

Official Records

As a history of United States Air Force experience in Korea, this volume is chiefly dependent upon the semiannual histories and historical data submitted in compliance with Air Force Regulation 210-3, as amended, by the Far East Air Forces, the Fifth Air Force, the FEAF Bomber Command (Provisional), the Far East Air Materiel Command and its successor Far East Air Logistics Force, and the FEAF Combat Cargo Command (Provisional) and its successor 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo). These histories are accompanied by selected collections of documents, which are generally of equal historical significance to the histories themselves. Great use has been made of wing, group, and squadron histories, which, prior to 1 July 1952, were submitted on a monthly basis. At this time a change in the Air Force historical regulation permitted tactical wings to prepare and submit a single consolidated semiannual history. Written some six months after the events described, often by an officer or an airman who was new in the theater, these consolidated semiannual wing histories generally lack the authenticity and operational detail found in the current reporting of the formerly monthly historical reports. Some of the semiannual wing histories were good sources, but none of them provided the rich lode of operating-level information which could be obtained from the monthly wing, group, and squadron histories.

In addition to Air Force histories, the sources of this history include many other official documents found in the files of the USAF Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, the USAF Korean Evaluation Group, the Evaluation Staff of the Air War College, the Air University Library, the USAF Historical Archives, and of the Far East Air Forces in Tokyo, where the Air Force historian and the author conducted research in the early winter of 1950. At least two document collections and reports warrant special mention. Of great value as a source of information about early air operations in Korea was the voluminous report called *An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of United States Air Force in Korea,* prepared by the USAF Evaluation Group headed by Maj. Glenn O. Barcus and submitted to USAF in January 1951. The definitive *FEAF Report on the Korean War,* printed in two classified volumes on 26 March 1954, was an important source of fact and of evaluation of air operations.

Certain official documents published by the U.S. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., are valuable and extremely informative historical sources. The 81st Congress, 1st Session, *The Natonal Defense Program—Unification and Strategy* (1949), is important for background information on roles and missions and viewpoints on strategic bombing. The 82d Congress, 1st Session, *Hearings on the Military Situation in the Far East* (1951) and kindred documents such as *Compila-*

tion of Certain Published Information on the Military Situation in the Far East (1951) are voluminous collections of testimony and other information concerning General MacArthur's relief from command as well as United Nations strategy and objectives in Korea. The 83d Congress, 1st Session, *Ammunition Shortages in the Armed Services* (1953), and the 84th Congress, 1st Session, *The Korean War and Related Matters* (1955), contain various statements by high-level commanders relative to the Korean war. The U.S. Department of Defense, *Semiannual Report of the Secretary of Defense . . .* issued during the Korean war years (1951–54) reveals the impact of the war on America's armed services. The U.S. Department of State's publications including *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945* (1955); *United States Policy in the Korean Conflict, July 1950–February 1951* (1951); and *United Nations Action in Korea under Unified Command; Report[s] to the Security Council* (1950–) furnish much official information.

Drawing upon official information, the present author prepared three USAF Historical Studies that were printed by the Government Printing Office as classified Air Force documents. These studies were: USAFHS No. 71, United States Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict, 25 June –1 November 1950 (1 July 1952); No. 72, United States Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict, 1 November 1950–30 June 1952 (1 July 1955) and No. 127, United States Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict, 1 July 1952–27 July 1953 (1 July 1956). These classified monographs contain much more detail upon subjects of particular interest to the Air Force than does the present history.

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Appendix

Major Air Commanders of the Korean War

FAR EAST FORCES

Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer
–21 May 1951.
Lt. Gen. Earle E. Partridge
21 May 1951–10 June 1951
Gen. Otto P. Weyland
10 June 1951–

FIFTH AIR FORCE
Commanders

Lt. Gen. Earle E. Partridge
–21 May 1951
Maj. Gen. Edward J. Timberlake, Jr.
21 May 1951–1 June 1951
Lt. Gen. Frank F. Everest
1 June 1951–30 May 1952
Lt. Gen. Glenn O. Barcus
30 May 1952–31 May 1953
Lt. Gen. Samuel E. Anderson
31 May 1953–

Vice-Commanders

Maj. Gen. Edward J. Timberlake, Jr.
–18 June 1951
Brig. Gen. Delmar T. Spivey
6 Aug. 1950–1 Dec. 1950
Brig. Gen. James Ferguson
18 June 1951–26 Jan. 1952
Brig. Gen. Dudley D. Hale
26 Jan. 1952–23 Sept. 1952
Brig. Gen. Edward H. Underhill
23 Sept. 1952–

THIRTEENTH AIR FORCE

Maj. Gen. Howard M. Turner
–15 Oct. 1951
Maj. Gen. Ernest Moore
16 Oct. 1951–9 Oct. 1952
Brig. Gen. John W. Sessums, Jr.
10 Oct. 1952–

TWENTIETH AIR FORCE

Maj. Gen. Alvan C. Kincaid,
–31 July 1950
Maj. Gen. Ralph F. Stearley
31 July 1950–13 Jan. 1953
Brig. Gen. Robert W. C. Wimsatt
14 Jan. 1953–7 Feb. 1953
Brig. Gen. Fay R. Upthegrove
8 Feb. 1953–

FEAMCOM AND FEALOGFOR

Brig. Gen. John P. Doyle
–10 June 1952
Maj. Gen. Paul E. Ruestow
10 June 1952–

314TH AIR DIVISION AND JAPAN AIR DEFENSE FORCE

Maj. Gen. Delmar T. Spivey
1 Dec. 1950–20 Jan. 1953
Maj. Gen. Roy H. Lynn
20 Jan. 1953–

FEAF BOMBER COMMAND (PROVISIONAL)

Maj. Gen. Emmett O'Donnell, Jr.
8 July 1950–10 Jan. 1951
Brig. Gen. James E. Briggs
10 Jan. 1951–23 May 1951
Brig. Gen. Robert H. Terrill
23 May 1951–30 Sept. 1951
Brig. Gen. Joe W. Kelly
30 Sept. 1951–15 Mar. 1952
Brig. Gen. Wiley D. Ganey
15 Mar. 1952–5 Oct. 1952
Brig. Gen. William P. Fisher
5 Oct. 1952–15 June 1953
Brig. Gen. Richard H. Carmichael
15 June 1953–

FEAF COMBAT CARGO COMMAND (PROVISIONAL) AND 315th AIR DIVISION (COMBAT CARGO)

Maj. Gen. William H. Tunner
26 Aug. 1950–8 Feb. 1951
Brig. Gen. John P. Henebry
8 Feb. 1951–26 Feb. 1952
Col. Cecil H. Childre
26 Feb. 1952–10 Apr. 1952
Maj. Gen. Chester E. McCarty
10 Apr. 1952–

Tactical Air Wing Commanders
3d Bombardment Wing (Light)

Col. Thomas B. Hall
–14 Aug. 1950
Col. Virgil L. Zoller
14 Aug. 1950–23 Aug. 1950
Col. Donald L. Clark
23 Aug. 1950–1 Dec. 1950
Col. Virgil L. Zoller
1 Dec. 1950–24 July 1951
Col. Nils O. Ohman
24 July 1951–4 Mar. 1952
Col. Marshall R. Gray
4 Mar. 1952–14 Aug. 1952
Col. Eugene B. LeBailly
14 Aug. 1952–

4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing

Brig. Gen. George F. Smith
–31 May 1951
Col. Herman A. Schmid
31 May 1951–1 Nov. 1951
Col. Harrison R. Thyng
1 Nov. 1951–2 Oct. 1952
Col. Charles W. King
2 Oct. 1952–11 Nov. 1952
Col. James K. Johnson
11 Nov. 1952–

8th Fighter-Bomber Wing

Col. John M. Price
–9 Dec. 1950
Col. Charles W. Stark
9 Dec. 1950–7 Apr. 1951
Col. James B. Tipton
7 Apr. 1951–Mar. 1952
Col. Raymond K. Gallagher
Mar. 1952–23 Jan. 1953
Col. James J. Stone, Jr.
24 Jan. 1953–29 May 1953
Col. William E. Elder
29 May 1953–

17th Bombardment Wing (Light)

Col. Albert W. Fletcher
10 May 1952–3 June 1952
Col. Glenn C. Nye
3 June 1952–7 Oct. 1952
Col. William C. Lindley, Jr.
7 Oct. 1952–10 Oct. 1952
Col. Clinton C. Wasem
10 Oct. 1952–

18th Fighter-Bomber Wing

Col. Curtis R. Low
30 Nov. 1950–1 Feb. 1951
Brig. Gen. Turner C. Rogers
1 Feb. 1951–2 Feb. 1952
Col. Ernest G. Ford
2 Feb. 1952–7 Mar. 1952
Col. William H. Clark
7 Mar. 1952–1 Jan. 1953
Col Frank S. Perego
1 Jan. 1953–15 June 1953
Col. John C. Edwards
15 June 1953–5 July 1953
Col. Maurice L. Martin
5 July 1953–

27th Fighter-Escort Wing

Col. Ashley B. Packard
–1 May 1951
Col. Raymond F. Rudell
1 May 1951–

35th Fighter-Interceptor Wing

Col. Virgil L. Zoller
–14 Aug. 1950
Col. Thomas B. Hall
14 Aug. 1950–1 Dec. 1950
Col. Frederic C. Gray
1 Dec. 1950–17 Feb. 1951
Col. Brooks A. Lawhon
18 Feb. 1951–12 May 1951
(Transferred to Japan Air Defense Force)

49th Fighter-Bomber Wing

Col. Jack S. Jenkins
–1 Dec. 1950
Col. Aaron W. Tyer
1 Dec. 1950–31 Aug. 1951
Col. Joe L. Mason
1 Sept. 1951–31 Jan. 1952
Col. David T. McKnight
1 Feb. 1952–Aug. 1952
Col. Robert J. Rogers
Aug. 1952–1 Apr. 1953
Col. William W. Ingenhutt
1 Apr. 1953–Apr. 1953
Col. Edwin A. Doss
Apr. 1953–

51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing

Col. John W. Weltman
–23 Apr. 1951
Col. Oliver G. Cellini
24 Apr. 1951–Oct. 1951
Col. George R. Stanley
Oct. 1951–6 Nov. 1951
Col. Francis S. Gabreski
6 Nov. 1951–13 June 1952
Col. John W. Mitchell
13 June 1952–31 May 1953
Col. William C. Clark
31 May 1953–

58th Fighter-Bomber Wing

Col. Victor E. Warford
10 July 1952–1 July 1953
Col. Joseph Davis, Jr.
1 July 1953–

67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing

Col. Karl L. Polifka
25 Feb. 1951–1 July 1951
Col. Bert N. Smiley
2 July 1951–4 July 1951
Col. Vincent W. Howard
4 July 1951–
Col. Edwin S. Chickering
31 Oct. 1951–13 Aug. 1952

Col. Russell A. Berg
13 Aug. 1952–July 1953
Col. Charles F. Knierim
July 1953–

136th Fighter-Bomber Wing

Col. Albert C. Prendergast
–5 Nov. 1951
Col. Alfred G. Lambert, Jr.
5 Nov. 1951–10 Nov. 1951
Col. James B. Buck
10 Nov. 1951–9 July 1952

452d Bombardment Wing (Light)

Brig. Gen. Luther W. Sweetser, Jr.
–10 May 1951
Col. Brooks A. Lawhon
12 May 1951–Sept. 1951
Col. Reginald J. Clizbe
Sept. 1951–Feb. 1952
Col. Albert W. Fletcher
Feb. 1952–10 May 1952

474th Fighter-Bomber Wing

Col. William W. Ingenhutt
10 July 1952–1 Apr. 1953

6002d Tactical Support Wing

Col. Curtis R. Low
1 Aug. 1950–1 Dec. 1950

6131st Tactical Support Wing

Col. Robert W. Witty
8 Aug. 1950–16 Aug. 1950
Col. Charles W. Stark
16 Aug. 1950–1 Dec. 1950

6133d Tactical Support Wing

Col. Virgil L. Zoller
1 Sept. 1950–1 Dec. 1950

6149th Tactical Support Wing

Col. Aaron W. Tyer
5 Sept. 1950–1 Dec. 1950

6150th Tactical Support Wing

Col. Frederic C. Gray
5 Sept. 1950–1 Dec. 1950

Medium Bomber Commanders
19th Bombardment Group (Medium)

Col. Theodore Q. Graff
–26 Sept. 1950
Col. Payne Jennings, Jr.
26 Sept. 1950–29 Mar. 1951
Col. Donald O. Tower
29 Mar. 1951–26 July 1951
Col. Adam K. Breckenridge
26 July 1951–6 Feb. 1952
Col. Julian M. Bleyer
6 Feb. 1952–8 July 1952
Col. Willard W. Smith
8 July 1952–24 Dec. 1952
Col. Harvey C. Dorney
24 Dec. 1952–1 June 1953

19th Bombardment Wing (Medium)

Col. Harvey C. Dorney
1 June 1953–

22d Bombardment Group (Medium)

Col. James V. Edmundson
(TDY Kadena Air Base, July 1950–
Oct. 1950)

92d Bombardment Group (Medium)

Col. Claude E. Putnam, Jr.
(TDY Yokota Air Base, July 1950–
Oct. 1950)

98th Bombardment Group (Medium)
and 98th Bombardment Wing (Medium)
(Advon)

Col. Richard H. Carmichael
–31 Mar. 1951
Col. David Wade
31 Mar. 1951–Sept. 1951
Col. Edwin F. Harding, Jr.
Sept 1951–Nov. 1951
Col. Lewis A. Curtis
Nov. 1951–May 1952
Col. Winton R. Close
May 1952–16 June 1952

98th Bombardment Wing (Medium)

Col. Winton R. Close
16 June 1952–26 Oct. 1952
Col. Charles B. Westover
26 Oct. 1952–17 June 1953
Col. Edgar S. Davis
17 June 1953–

307th Bombardment Group (Medium)
and 307th Bombardment Wing (Medium)
(Combat Echelon)

Col. John A. Hilger
–15 Mar. 1951
Col. John M. Reynolds
15 Mar. 1951–20 Aug. 1951
Col. William H. Hanson
20 Aug. 1951–4 Feb. 1952

Col. John C. Jennison, Jr.
4 Feb. 1952–8 May 1952
Col. Raymond L. Winn
8 May 1952–16 June 1952

307th Bombardment Wing (Medium)

Col. Raymond L. Winn
16 June 1952–Sept. 1952
Col. C. S. Overstreet, Jr.
Sept. 1952–29 Dec. 1952
Col. Austin J. Russell
29 Dec. 1952–

Troop Carrier Commanders
1st Troop Carrier Group (Medium) (Provisional)

Col. Cecil H. Childre
26 Aug. 1950–21 Oct. 1950
Lt. Col. Edward H. Nigro
21 Oct. 1950–10 Jan. 1951

61st Troop Carrier Group (Heavy)

Col. Frank Norwood
–14 Feb. 1952
Lt. Col. Hal E. Ercanbrack
14 Feb. 1952–

314th Troop Carrier Group (Medium)

Col. Richard W. Henderson
–27 Aug. 1951
Col. William H. Delacey
27 Aug. 1951–29 Sept. 1951
Col. David E. Daniel
29 Sept. 1951–1 May 1952

315th Troop Carrier Group (Medium)

Col. Kenneth W. Northamer
10 June 1952–26 July 1953
Col. Robert O. Good
26 July 1953–

374th Troop Carrier Wing (Heavy)

Col. Troy W. Crawford
–Sept. 1951
Col. Charles W. Howe
Sept. 1951–9 Aug. 1952
Col. James W. Chapman, Jr.
9 Aug. 1952–

403d Troop Carrier Wing (Medium)

Brig. Gen. Chester E. McCarty
–10 Apr. 1952
Col. Philip H. Best
14 Apr. 1952–15 May 1952
Col. Maurice F. Casey, Jr.
15 May 1952–1 Jan. 1953

437th Troop Carrier Wing (Medium)

Brig. Gen. John P. Henebry
–25 Jan. 1952
Col. John R. Roche
25 Jan. 1951–May 1952
Col. Kenneth W. Northamer
May 1952–9 June 1952

483d Troop Carrier Wing (Medium)

Col. Maurice F. Casey, Jr.
1 Jan. 1953–

NOTE: As far as possible, the status of command shown above has been determined from general orders submitted as supporting documentation to the histories of the organizations. Some organizations did not submit this necessary documentation, with the result that the exact dates on which their commanders assumed command and were relieved from command are not stated.

Glossary

AAA	Antiaircraft artillery
AACS	Airways and Air Communications Service
AAF	Army Air Forces
AC&W	Aircraft Control and Warning
ADC	Air Defense Command
ADCOM	Advance Command and Liaison Group in Korea
ADVON	Advance echelon
AF	Air Force
AFB	Air Force Base
AFFE	Army Forces Far East
AFOOP	Director of Operations, USAF
AFPMP	Director of Military Personnel, USAF
AFR	Air Force regulation
AG	Adjutant General
AHS	Air Historical Study
ALO	Air Liaison officer
AMC	Air Materiel Command
APGC	Air Proving Ground Command
ARDC	Air Research and Development Command
ARS	Air Rescue Service
ATRC	Air Training Command
A/W	All-Weather
AWS	Air Weather Service
BDA	Bomb damage assessment
BomCom	Bomber Command
C/	Chief
CAP	Combat Air Patrol
CAT	Civil Air Transport
CCAF	Chinese Communist Air Force
CCF	Chinese Communist Forces
CCRAK	Covert, Clandestine, and Related Activities in Korea
CCTS	Combat crew training school
CEP	Circular error probable
CG	Commanding general
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINCAFPAC	Commander-in-Chief Army Forces Pacific
CINCFE	Commander-in-Chief Far East
CINCUNC	Commander-in-Chief United Nations Command
CofS	Chief of Staff
ComCarCom	Combat Cargo Command
ComNavFE	Commander Naval Forces Far East
ConAC	Continental Air Command
CSGPO	Chief of Staff, G-3, Plans & Operations Div., U.S. Army
CTU	Commander Task Unit
D/	Director
DA	Department of Army
DAF	Department of Air Force
DEPTAR	Department of Army
DOD	Department of Defense
DZ	Drop zone
EA	Engineer aviation
EADF	Eastern Air Defense Force
ECM	Electronic countermeasures
EUSAK	Eighth United States Army In Korea
FAC	Forward air controller
FAF	Fifth Air Force
FAFIK	Fifth Air Force in Korea
FEAF	Far East Air Forces
FEALogFor	Far East Air Logistics Force
FEAMCom	Far East Air Materiel Command
FEC	Far East Command
FM	Frequency modulation
FSCC	Fire-support coordination center
GCA	Ground-controlled approach
GCI	Ground-controlled interception
GHQ	General Headquarters
GLO	Ground liaison officer
HVAR	High-velocity aircraft rocket
IFF	Identification, friend or foe
IG	Inspector General
INTSUM	Intelligence summary
JADF	Japan Air Defense Force
JALCO	Joint Airlift Control Organization
JATO	Jet assisted takeoff
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JOC	Joint Operations Center
JSPOG	Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group
KComZ	Korean Communications Zone
KMAG	Korean Military Advisory Group

LST	Landing ship, tank
LW	Lightweight
M&S	Maintenance and Supply
MATS	Military Air Transport Service
MAW	Marine Air Wing
MLR	Main line of resistance
MSR	Main supply route
MTO	Mediterranean Theater of Operations
NavFE	Naval Forces Far East
NKAF	North Korean Air Force
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
NMJ	Naval Member, Joint Operations Center
OCMH	Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of Army
OPI	Office of Public Information
ORO	Operations Research Office
OSI	Office of Special Investigation
OSRD	Office of Scientific Research and Development
POE	Port of embarkation
POL	Petroleum, oil, and lubricants
POW	Prisoner of war
PSP	Pierced-steel plank
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAF	Royal Air Force
R&R	Rest and recreation
RCC	Rescue Control Center
RCT	Regimental combat team
REMCO	Rear Echelon Maintenance Combined Operations
ResCAP	Rescue Combat Air Patrol
RHAF	Royal Hellenic Air Force
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKAF	Republic of Korea Air Force
RTAF	Royal Thai Air Force
SAAF	South African Air Force
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SAR	Search and rescue
SCAP	Supreme Commander Allied Powers
SCARWAF	Special Category Army Personnel with Air Force
SOP	Standing operating procedure
TAC	Tactical Air Command
TACC	Tactical air-control center
TACP	Tactical air-control party
TADC	Tactical air-direction center
TADP	Tactical air-direction post
TAPE	Tactical Air Power Evaluation
TARS	Tactical Air Research Section
TC	Troop carrier
TIG	The Inspector General
TIS	Translator and Interpreter Service
TMC	Transport Movement Control
UNC	United Nations Command
UNCOK	United Nations Commission on Korea
UNCURK	United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea
USAF	United States Air Force
USAFIK	United States Army Forces in Korea
USAR	United States Army
V/	Vice
VHF	Very high frequency
VT	Proximity fuse
WADC	Wright Air Development Center

*Index**

*Numerals in italic indicate an illustration of the subject mentioned

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