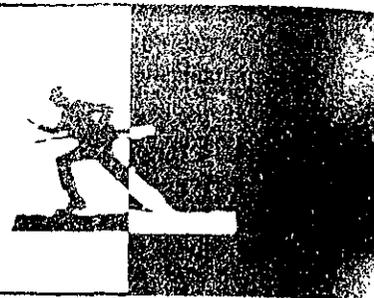


# FORUM & FEATURES



## “In Front of Them All”

MAJOR KARL W. EIKENBERRY

The United Nations Command Security Force (UNCSF), the only military unit with a continuous presence inside the Korean demilitarized zone (DMZ), is an elite infantry force whose missions are vital to the upkeep of the Korean Armistice Agreement.

Early in 1952, in anticipation of the end of the Korean War, the United Nations Command gave the Eighth United States Army certain responsibilities in connection with the establishment of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC). To comply with the overall directive, the Eighth Army commander had to establish a unit to provide security and logistical support for the MAC and other agencies engaged in executing the Armistice Agreement.

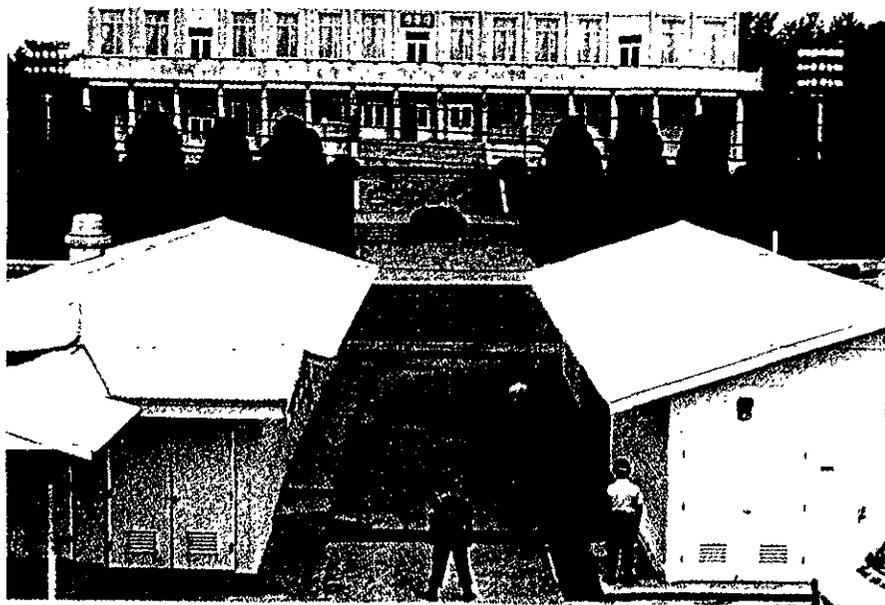
On 5 May 1952, the UNCSF — then named the United Nations Command, Military Armistice Commission Support Group (Provisional) — was organized; it had an authorized strength of five officers and ten enlisted men. The signing of the armistice in July 1953 led to a series of large-scale prisoner-of-war and refugee exchanges between the combatants. The UNCSF was expanded to 1,900 men to support these exchanges (known as Operations Big Switch, Comeback, and Rainbow), which involved the movement of more than 100,000 personnel across the military demarcation line (MDL) in the vicinity of the tiny hamlet of Panmunjom. In 1954 the Security Force was awarded the Meri-

torious Unit Citation for its outstanding performance during these politically sensitive operations.

By late 1954 the UNCSF's mission had changed to approximately its present one. Some of the details of the armistice negotiations and the eventual agreement will help explain this mission and the UNCSF's operational requirements.

A security corridor had been established in 1951 to provide some degree of safety to officials traveling to and from the armistice negotiations then being conducted next to Panmunjom. Under the terms of the armistice agreement, this corridor, now referred to as the Military Armistice Commission Head-

quarters Area (MACHA), was kept intact. The corridor's purpose was to provide safe access to personnel traveling to and from the Joint Security Area, which is now located about 600 meters from the original negotiation site. This area, about 800 meters in diameter and bisected by the Military Demarcation Line, was established as the site of the headquarters offices of the Military Armistice Commission and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC). The Joint Security Area, often referred to today simply as Panmunjom, is the site of meetings between the United Nations component and the North Korean People's Army and Chi-



nese People's Volunteers Military components of the Armistice Commission as well as official talks between the two Koreas.

The NNSC is divided into the Swiss and Swedish delegations, supported by the United Nations Command, and the Czechoslovakian and Polish delegations, supported by North Korea. The United Nations Command and North Korea have established camps for these delegations within the MACHA on their respective sides of the MDL.

Not far from the Joint Security Area is Taesong Dong, or Freedom Village. Under the provisions of the armistice agreement, the residents of the Panmun Valley (in which the village of Panmunjom is located) were allowed to remain there after the cessation of hostilities, although the area is inside the DMZ. The Republic of Korea decided to move all of the families on its side of the MDL to one location, which became known as Taesong Dong. Today, the village of about 217 residents is the only inhabited locale within the DMZ. The North Korean DMZ "village," Guijong Dong, which is impressive looking but largely unoccupied, is referred to appropriately as "Propaganda Village."

The UNCSF is an Eighth United States Army unit under the operational control of the Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command. Its command and staff structure parallels that of an infantry battalion. The unit's as-

signed strength is 350 military personnel, 40 percent of whom are Republic of Korea soldiers. The UNCSF has two companies, the Headquarters and Service (H&S) Company and the Joint Security Force (JSF) Company.

The H&S Company performs most of the unit's support missions. In addition to the usual elements found in an infantry battalion's headquarters company, H&S Company is augmented by a number of sections that perform functions unique to the armistice agreement, such as the escort section, which provides drivers and security guards for the NNSC delegations; the Taesong Dong security platoon, which protects the residents of Freedom Village against possible North Korean incursions; and tour guide section, which briefs and escorts United Nations Command and Republic of Korea guests during their trips to Panmunjom.

The JSF Company is organized and equipped like a light infantry company, except that it has four platoons rather than three, and is fully motorized. It is responsible for securing the Joint Security Area, patrolling the UNCSF's operational area, and reacting to North Korean acts of aggression against the MAC headquarters area.

In addition to fulfilling the administrative and support requirements common to any infantry battalion, the UNCSF also provides logistical support to the Swiss and Swedish NNSC delega-

tions, briefing and escorting the 90,000 or so people who visit Panmunjom each year, and supervising the administration of Taesong Dong.

The soldiers of the UNCSF are among the best in the armies of the United States and the Republic of Korea. The U.S. soldiers are screened and nominated to serve in the unit by a unit liaison NCO who reviews the records of all personnel arriving for assignment to the Eighth United States Army. To be chosen, an infantryman generally must be at least six feet tall, be in excellent physical condition, and have a spotless military record. A Korean soldier must have a working knowledge of English and a black belt in one of the martial arts. Before being permanently assigned to the unit, each prospective UNCSF soldier must successfully complete an eight-day orientation. An American soldier serves a one-year tour of duty, while his Republic of Korea counterpart serves for two and one-half years.

The infantry training conducted by the UNCSF reflects the decentralized nature of the unit's operations. Since the squad and platoons conduct "real world" operations most of the time, tactical proficiency at the small unit level within the UNCSF is exceedingly high. In addition, all soldiers receive extensive training with the .45-caliber pistol (the weapon carried inside the Joint Security Area) and the M16 rifle, and in combat-ives and Tae Kwon Do (a Korean mar-

UNCSF guards (left) stand their posts inside the JSA. In back is the North Korean building of Panmungak. At right, UNCSF soldiers patrol the UNCSF's operational area.



tial art). The unit's consistently superb performance on the Expert Infantryman Badge test speaks for the skill of the infantrymen assigned to it.

The U.S. soldiers study the Korean language throughout their assignment with the UNCSF, while the Korean soldiers continuously work to improve their English skills.

Based at Camp Bonifas, only 400 meters south of the DMZ, the UNCSF has been involved in many engagements with North Korean forces since the end of the Korean War. The most significant of these include a North Korean attack against Camp Bonifas (then Camp Kitty Hawk) in 1967, which resulted in heavy casualties; a North Korean ambush of a

United Nations Command truck in the MACHA in 1968 during which four Security Force soldiers were killed and two wounded; and the axe murder of two Security Force officers at Panmunjom in 1976. As recently as 23 November 1984, the UNCSF countered North Korean aggression when a Soviet citizen defected at Panmunjom.

The recent North-South Korean talks and exchanges at Panmunjom and in Taesong Dong, which have been unprecedented in scope and nature, have placed unusual demands upon the UNCSF. And for its support of the historical North and South Korean Red Cross exchange of relief goods, which occurred in the wake of severe flooding in Sep-

tember 1984, the unit was awarded the humanitarian service medal.

In short, the UNCSF, as the unit deployed farthest forward in the Republic of Korea, performs missions that are essential to the maintenance of peace. The United Nations Command has therefore given the unit its motto — "In Front of Them All."

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Major Karl W. Eikenberry, an Infantry officer and a 1973 graduate of the United States Military Academy, recently completed an assignment as deputy commander of the UNCSF. He has served in the 2d Infantry Division; the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment; and the 24th Infantry Division. He is now assigned as the Assistant Army Attache to the Peoples Republic of China.

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# Leaders Reaction Course

MAJOR ROBERT L. MAGINNIS

*Inside the high grey walls of the prisoner-of-war camp the sultry weather hangs around the soldiers' necks like iron weights. They have been told that two of them are to be executed later today, soon after they have completed digging the newest graves. Their only route of escape is across a wide moat circling the prison's interior and then over the high walls.*

*They have watched the guards for months, and know their routine. They also know that the slightest movement of the stagnant water in the moat will sound an alarm. The concertina wire along the inside of the prison walls is electrically charged, and the guard's catwalk is too dangerous to be used to aid an escape.*

*Nearby, the soldiers see a ladder and two ropes of different lengths. Five of them begin to formulate a plan while large brown rats scurry around the prison's recreation area.*

*The soldiers realize that loud talking and unusual movements will call attention to their plan. They also know that*

*at any moment friendly aircraft will conduct a scheduled bombing of the enemy's nearby garrison area and have decided to take advantage of the inevitable confusion caused by the bombing. Once the alarm sounds announcing the air raid, they plan to run through the moat and get over the wall as quickly as possible.*

*The friendly bombers can now be heard in the distance. One soldier signals a comrade. Cautiously, the two of them lift the ladder while one keeps the guards in view out of the corner of his eye. One of the soldiers quickly crosses the moat, as the air raid alarm sounds, the bombs burst in the garrison area and the air defense guns muffle the moat's now triggered alarm system. In a moment the soldier is perched on the ladder's top rung.*

*He finds a handhold dangerously near the wire, which is humming with its deadly electrical charge, but without a moment's hesitation he shifts his weight to that hand and then locates a hold for the other. With a burst of energy he vaults*

*and pulls himself to a position atop the wall. On the other side he finds a piece of pipe. Cautiously moving this over the wire, he is able to help his comrades over the wall. They all escape without being detected.*

This group of soldiers has just successfully completed one of the 17 challenging tasks that make up a Leaders Reaction Course (LRC), which is designed to act as a sensitive barometer of leadership skills. (See list of LRC tasks.)

An LRC has five primary functions:

- To improve soldiers' leadership abilities by giving them an opportunity to apply the lessons they learned in their formal leadership instruction.
- To help soldiers assess the degree to which they possess certain leadership traits.
- To provide soldiers with a means of evaluating their own leadership ability more accurately.
- To give soldiers an opportunity to observe the way strengths and weaknesses