AUSTRALIAN ARMY JOURNAL

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

No. 59 APRIL, 1954

Notified in AAOs for 30th April, 1954.

MILITARY BOARD.

Army Headquarters,
Melbourne
1/4/54.

Issued by Command of the Military Board.

Acting Secretary to the Board.

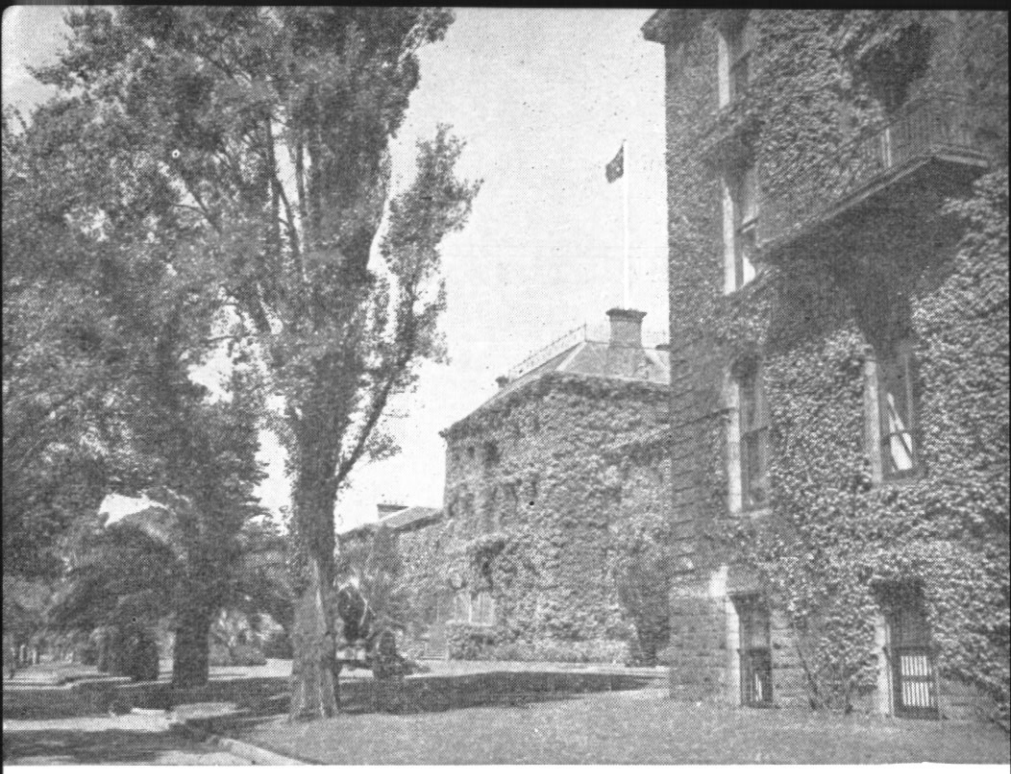
Distribution:
One per Officer, Officer of Cadets,
and Cadet Under Officer.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY JOURNAL

A Periodical Review of Military Literature

Number 59 April, 1954

CONTENTS



VICTORIA BARRACKS, MELBOURNE.

AUSTRALIAN ARMY JOURNAL

Editor:
COLONEL E. G. KEOGH, ED (RL)

Assistant Editor:
MAJOR J. G. SLOMAN, CMF.

Staff Artist:
MR. CYRIL ROSS.

The AUSTRALIAN ARMY JOURNAL is printed and published for the Directorate of Military Training by Wilke & Co. Ltd. The contents are derived from various acknowledged official and unofficial sources and do not necessarily represent General Staff Policy.

Contributions, which should be addressed to the Director of Military Training, Army Headquarters, Melbourne, are invited from all ranks of the Army, Cadet Corps, and Reserve of Officers.

CAN WE SATISFY OUR CLIENTS?

Major R. K. Fullford,
Royal Australian Artillery.

EVERY enterprise in the community provides either goods or service. The Army provides the service of preparedness for war. The people are our clients.

Like any other organisation providing a service, we depend for our existence on public goodwill, which means a satisfied clientele.

This goodwill stems from two sources—

(a) Demand; public awareness of the need for our service, and
(b) Satisfaction.

The Need for Our Service.

Today, with international tension stretched tight, and the Korean war only recently halted, perhaps temporarily, our clients are quite willing, if not eager, to retain our services. So long as this situation remains unchanged, the first ingredient of goodwill is provided by circumstances, and without effort on our part.

Satisfaction With What We Provide.

Before our client can express satisfaction with our services, he *must know*—

(a) What he requires from us, and
(b) What we are providing.

What the Client Requires.

Experience in the Second World War, and some very fine propaganda at the time National Service was re-instituted in 1951, have almost dispelled the myth that every Australian is a natural soldier. Although the public will now admit the need for preparedness—for training, leadership and equipment of the forces—it is not yet capable of appreciating these things when they are provided. In short, the people are militarily ignorant.

However, conditions at present are perfect for this to be remedied. International tension is a constant threat to peace. Every fit young man in the country is entering the Citizen Forces for part-time training, so that there is hardly a home in the land which does not have a direct link with the defence forces. *This means that the public are interested in the Army, and so are easy to reach.* It may seem to be hardly fitting for us to educate our own client to appreciate our services—it savours rather of "slick" salesmanship—but we owe it both to ourselves and to him that he be brought to demand only the best, and to recognise it when we provide it. It is nationally dangerous for

the people not to be discriminating patrons of their Army.

What We are Providing.

In order to satisfy our client, we must not merely hold ourselves prepared for war, we must also show that we are so prepared.

This sets us three tasks—

(a) To make ourselves ready for war;
(b) To show our client what readiness means; and
(c) To show him that we are ready.

Preparedness for War.

It is not the purpose of this article to examine what constitutes national preparedness for war, or even what is the Army's share of that preparedness; nor is it intended to examine here the efficacy of our present efforts to prepare ourselves. Let it be sufficient to state that our client's goodwill *must not* be sought falsely. We must provide our service.

It is left, then, to consider the remaining two tasks—educating our public to demand this service and then showing that we are providing it.

Educating the Public.

The first and easiest means of educating the public is by example. If we are providing a good service —and show it off—our client, having seen its quality, will come to demand it.

A good deal has been said lately about the Army "taking its place in the community." Our "place" in the community is in our training areas practising the arts and artifices of war.

As individuals we are also citizens and must, of course, assume our places in the society in which we exist. Indeed, the majority of our members—the CMF soldiers—are primarily civilians and only part-time soldiers.

As a Service, however, we are remote from the community until we are required in war. Our only legitimate contact in peace is to provide assistance in major disasters such as bush fire or flood—assistance which our organisation, training and equipment for the disaster of war makes us the perfect instrument to provide.

However, as individuals, we owe it to our military calling to join in our society with energy and intelligence. Here "educating the public" can begin. Let us first "educate" our own families, then our friends.

More obvious means of educating the people are the publicity media—the press, radio, films, journals and periodicals. These are by far the most effective and quickest means of reaching the public, but they are sensitive to what they consider their customers want. They have not yet realised that most families now have a member of the forces in their midst, and that Service events are thus "newsworthy."

The city press and radio are worse in this regard than their country brethren. Most of the country papers and radio stations now feature the activities of their local soldiers, and will readily devote space to Service material.

It is surprising to note that hardly a city newspaper or radio newsservice has a military expert. Could you imagine any of our large dailies sending the Society reporter to cover a football final or a race meeting? Yet they often send completely inexperienced reporters (when they send anyone at all) to cover Army events. A photographer at Singleton recently asked a

Brigadier, who was watching a CMF company digging a defensive position, to take one man's rifle and "show him how to present arms while I get a picture."

The city press will, no doubt, become aware in due course of the audience which is awaiting it. We can hasten this awakening, but we must be careful that it is accompanied by a maturing of the press's attitude to Service matters, so that its reports and articles are soundly written and present the subject in its proper light.

This raises the question of sound education in military matters. The ignorance of our press in this regard is merely a reflection of national ignorance. We soldiers pride ourselves on our mastery of the military arts, but how many of us can make valid claims to such accomplishment? The highest learning which even our professionals can acquire in this country is a pass at the Staff College. For the great bulk of the community there is nothing—even the citizen soldier has only the scanty training which his own unit and a week or so at an Army School can give him.

This general ignorance gives rise to the rubbish which is spoken in public on defence and Service problems, rubbish which is accepted without a flicker from its audience, because they know no better.

The course of the world's history has been shaped, in part by economic and political factors, but the most profound changes have been wrought by war. And yet there is no educational establishment in Australia which teaches or studies the factors which affected the outcome of the wars which wrought these changes. We must be one of the very few nations in the world who have not one University with a chair of Military History.

Apart from a smattering of patriotic "motivation" around "Anzac Day" and "Empire Day" our schools ignore the achievements and young tradition of our forces. The defence significance of world geography is also completely overlooked. Our citizens can gather at school not an inkling of the strategic significance of Australia's situation in the world and her natural resources.

Advertising Our Activities.

We need not wait until we have educated our client to a discriminating appreciation of our efforts before we begin to show him what we are providing. Indeed, part of his education should be demonstrations by us of high quality to set the standard of his taste.

Many attempts are being made today to show off our troops to the public. Most of them fail because they display the troops in unfavourable circumstances, or because they overlook the fundamental fact that our task is to prepare for war.

The public is justifiably impatient of evidence of our efforts being wasted in other ways.

Marches through city streets at lunch time on business days cause serious disruptions of traffic and inconvenience to busy people. On the other hand, the Tattoos which are now a regular event in the larger Commands provide a good opportunity to show off the troops to advantage. That the Tattoo is regarded as a "good show" is evidenced by the fact that each succeeding Tattoo in Sydney since 1949 has drawn increased crowds. However, care must be taken that the events display the troops in their fighting roles. Our discriminating

client will never be a party to the "Dance of the Toy Soldiers" type of item by his fighting men. "Instructions for Training (Provisional) 1948" is wisely aware of this fact.[1]

What our client should be shown is the troops at work. Many training activities could be open to public inspection, especially collective training at company level or higher. How many units have set aside a spectators' area and provided public address facilities with a commentator at their exercises? With very little extra effort it could be done by all units. It would not only provide the best possible type of publicity, but it would add immeasurably to the incentive of all ranks to ensure that the training was well "laid on."

It has been said that "people would not bother to come." The answer was given to that theory in Sydney in 1951 when the RAAF Air Display caused the worst traffic jam on record. The display ended at 1700 hours and cars were still trying to get away from the area 2½ hours later.

It is not intended to suggest that huge crowds will flock to watch some field squadron launch a span of Bailey bridge across a remote creek, but the RAAF example does show an eagerness on the part of the public to see their Services perform. The Navy always makes a point of inviting public inspection of its ships at convenient times, and the public, in turn, demonstrates a lively interest in what their sailors are doing and what their money is paying to buy. A similar, or perhaps better, chance could be given by the Army, if our training activities and our equipment were properly displayed.

Public Relations.

Our efforts at "Public Relations" are feeble. With the exception of the PR staffs, who naturally spend their whole time on that problem alone, how many of us are at all concerned about our standing in the public eye? Hardly any. How many of us watch for opportunities to gain public approval and report them to the PRO at Command Headquarters? Again, very few.

This laxity exists partly because at present the PR staffs are the only link through which units or formations can contact the press and other organs, so that all attempts at publicity are channelled through their already overworked hands.

Moreover, the great bulk of the Army seems unaware of the need for publicity and for good public relations generally. Here the PR service could serve the Army better. Too much of their time is consumed with the largely fruitless task of "prevention of adverse criticism of the Army and its activities, and action to minimize the adverse effects of any such criticisms which may be published."[2]

This forces us on to the defensive in our attitude to publicity. It is not true in our case that "all publicity is good publicity," but it is more nearly true than we think. Much of the adverse criticism which is levelled at the Army is ill-informed and groundless. As such, it should be contemptuously dealt with. Well-founded criticism is

1. "Instructions for Training (Provisional) 1948" states on page 46—"Before giving approval to the holding of tattoos or gymkhanas, GOCs commands will carefully scrutinise the proposed programme and their approval will normally be limited to items which are of training value . . . ."

2. MBI 168/52, paragraph 16(b).

healthy, both for us and for the nation. It behoves us to do our jobs so well that soundly based adverse criticism is extremely rare, and to educate the people to the state where groundless or unfair criticism will not be accepted.

What to Do?

Having considered a long succession of faults in our approach to real Public Relations, it is now appropriate to consider what remedies are possible. Here are some suggestions.

1. Provide Our Service.

The first and obvious requirement is to provide our service of preparedness for war—or at least busy ourselves towards that end. It is no good advertising something we do not have; no attempt at "window-dressing" is acceptable. It is no good having a well-kept training depot, with neat lawns and bright paint, if the instructors inside are slack or don't know their jobs. Remember that with a Citizen Army the public are INSIDE our depots and camps. Good appearances inevitably follow efficiency. Let our outward signs be the result of real quality, symptoms of progress, not ends in themselves.

2. Education.

We must work through every possible channel to have military matters become a topic for education. The first step should be the endowment of a chair of Military History at one of our Universities. If necessary, this should be financed, in part anyway, from the Defence budget. Strategic geography should be taught in our secondary schools, and military tradition should be included in the patriotic indoctrination of our children.

3. Display Our Troops.

Every major training activity should be open to public spectators. Each Command should stage one major display each year. It could well be a demonstration set in the phase of war being studied that year and put on chiefly for the benefit of the troops. The mere addition of a car-parking space and traffic control personnel, a commentator and a roped-off enclosure, can transform a thoroughly effective training demonstration into an equally effective public display.

Each display should include an opportunity for public inspection of the equipment in use. Provided it is not in bad taste at the time, an indication of the cost of the equipment might be given.

4. Public Relations.

This must become the close personal interest of every officer and man. The present system whereby only the PR staffs at Army or Command Headquarters may make releases to the press must be changed. Units cannot be expected to take an interest in something which, to them, is remote.

Every unit should have its own PRO, in the same way that it has its own Security Officer, Sports Officer, Education Officer, and so on. The job of the Unit PRO should be the maintenance of awareness of the value of good Public Relations within his unit, the arrangement of the PR aspects of his unit activities and the issue of news items about members of his unit to the local press in their various home towns.

The Unit PRO will need training, and this must be given at a properly established course. He should also be given a brief handbook setting out his duties and containing

information of assistance to him in performing them.

The existing PR staffs should be permitted to relax their vigilance against criticism and, instead, begin a campaign *within the Army* for better Public Relations.

The response will probably necessitate considerable additions to their ranks unless approval is also given for units and formations to deal directly with the publicity media. Surely it can be left to responsible subordinate commanders at, say, battalion level, to decide whether matter for publication meets the appropriate standards of security, truth and good taste!

5. Army Week.

We should establish Army Week on a nation-wide basis as a major social event in the community. It could be linked with some important date in our military history, such as Anzac Day, Alamein Day or perhaps the Battle of Milne Bay (Journal No. 50 of July, 1953). The Battle of the Coral Sea was not a very significant event in the Pacific War; not as significant, for example, as the Midway Island Battle or the Battle for Moresby of which the Coral Sea, Milne Bay and Kokoda Trail actions each formed part. But the Australian-American Association, by constant and well-placed propaganda, has created "Coral Sea Week" as a national occasion. (It is relevant to note here that the Australian-American Association has a full-time staff of one!)

Conclusion.

I hope I have not given the impression that our Army is not effectively preparing for war. On the contrary, I believe that during the past few years we have made tremendous advances in our preparedness. But I also believe that we are not showing off either our efforts or our progress to our clients —the People.

Of course, war should provide the ultimate test—in the full blaze of publicity, too. If we were strong, well trained, well led and well equipped we could go to war confident, not only of the best possible chance of success in battle, but also of satisfying the clients who have been paying for our services for so long.

If, however, we lose our clients' goodwill in the meantime, before war comes, we are in danger of being stood down, "sacked," and thus, in one moment, not only increase the chances of having to go to war but also of going ill prepared and foredoomed to failure.

DISCUSSION AND THE SERVICEMAN

An article prepared by the Bureau of Current Affairs, National Defence Headquarters, Canada.

SIR Winston Churchill has stated that civilization means a society based on the opinion of civilians. He went on to say that "civilization means that violence, the rule of warriors and despotic chiefs, the conditions of camps and warfare, of riot and tyranny, give place to parliaments where laws are made, and independent courts of justice in which over long periods those laws are maintained."

Now just because a civilian enlists in the armed forces of his country it does not mean that he is set apart from his fellow men or that he has renounced that "society based on the opinion of civilians." It does not mean that he is not subject to the laws made by Parliament or to the courts in which the laws are maintained. In short, he remains a citizen with all the rights and obligations that go with the status of a citizen.

True that by the mere fact of his enlistment, because of his oath of allegiance and the conditions under which he has agreed to serve in the armed forces, he has accepted certain limitations on his freedom which collectively go into the general category of discipline—necessary for the good order and efficiency of the service to which he belongs.

Do these limitations inhibit him from expressing his ideas? Only to the extent that he may not say or do anything that is contrary to his oath of allegiance and the National Defence Act. He may not, for instance, advocate the use of force to effect a change in the form of government that Canada now has. He may not take an active part in political activities though this restriction is not confined to servicemen since it applies equally to all other employees of the government. Again, he may not advocate a strike, wherein, too, he does not differ from the civilian public servant.

But these limitations do not prevent the serviceman from voting or from expressing his opinions on a political issue in conversation with other servicemen. Indeed, his obligations as a citizen require that he vote and make an intelligent attempt to appreciate the issues of the day affecting the welfare of his country.

In order that he might vote intelligently he must have an appreciation of the meaning of the issues placed before him at the time of the election. This appreciation is not something acquired overnight —

—*From Canadian Army Journal.*

something he begins to acquire when the election tocsin is first sounded and puts away after casting his ballot until another election is called.

It might be argued that he can obtain sufficient knowledge of what is going on in his own country and in the world at large simply by reading. Indeed, facilities are provided in messes and canteens to enable him to read. Besides, most servicemen read the daily newspapers. This argument, however, is, in the first place, too sweeping a generalization and, in the second place, it is doubtful that the average man knows how to read a newspaper with discrimination. This is where discussion comes in.

What is this thing called discussion?

It is definitely not an end in itself. It is a means whereby individual opinions are clarified, whereby points of view are elucidated for the benefit of others in the group, whereby an approach to common understanding is obtained. It is not the discussion itself that is so desirable as the fruits of discussion. These fruits, obtained in an organized orderly manner, represent a synthesis of the views of the group arranged and summarized by a discussion leader.

The discussion centres around an issue rather than a topic and thereby needs a disciplined approach. It aims to secure the expression of opinions without rancour and without altercation. It seeks to do this by balancing opposing opinions about the issue that is under discussion. It has form but it is not formal: it demands art but it is not arty.

If it is organized and orderly, how is it organized?

The very expression "informal discussion" most often applied to it suggests that there is very little organization. But informality is not synonymous with disorganization. A cocktail party is usually informal but it requires a certain modicum of organization if it is to receive the accolade of society's approval—it should not, at least, be a drunken brawl.

This is where the discussion leader comes in.

If the discussion leader is too formal he gets no discussion: if he is too informal he is not a leader. He has to develop that sixth sense that tells him how far he can go and how far he can let others go. He must be able to smell a red herring and prevent the discussion from wandering away from the issue. This is the quintessence of good leadership and the leader is the linchpin of such organization as there is.

The discussion leader chooses the issue to be discussed. This he must do wisely. Topics which have a personal connotation for some members of his group he will avoid. He will not, for example, debate the relative merits of one religion with those of another. He will avoid racial issues which might be embarrassing to one or more members of his group. But he will not shirk an issue merely because it is controversial. He is not a censor. He is not a propagandist. He is not there to impose his own or any official point of view. He is there to conduct and encourage discussion.

In handling the group he will encourage those with conflicting points of view to state their respective cases. He will discourage those who tend to be too verbose and who try to monopolize the proceedings:

he will encourage those of a more retiring disposition. Through the contact he has with the minds of his men he will learn more about their mental processes — which of them play hunches; which hesitate too long before making up their minds; which can be relied on in an emergency; which of them are endowed with mature and sound judgment.

He will keep in mind too that he is being assessed by the members of the group. Men are quick to detect flaws in the leader's expressed opinions: they are quick to notice a tendency towards bias, to muddle-headedness, to emotional reactions and to general incompetence in handling a group. They may not be able to define the difference between dictatorial methods and strategy in handling a situation but they assess their leaders just the same. By wise handling of the discussion group the junior officer can add several cubits to his stature. He can make or unmake the morale of his men; he can make or unmake his own reputation as a leader of men.

What of the members of the group, the NCO's, men and women? What do they get out of these discussions?

In the first place the whole idea of orderly discussion is probably new to most of them. In general, they are aware that discussions take place in Parliament and in the meetings of local government bodies and that these, for the most part, are orderly. The connection between organized discussion and democratic processes is brought home to them—all the more so when they realize that the discussion group is not a propaganda agency. They are encouraged in their belief that democracy has something to commend it. The further they progress the more they are confirmed in that belief.

They learn to respect the ideas of others even if they do not accept them. The give-and-take of discussion is a broadening and educational process that strengthens their faculties of reasoning and gives them a tolerant outlook that enables them to live in greater amity with their fellow men. This is invaluable in barrackroom life.

If sufficient interest is aroused by the leader they can be persuaded to read something more than the sports page—healthy enough in itself but an unbalanced diet—and possibly to cut down on the comic books—a noxious drug that is habit forming and stultifying.

In a democracy this is important since the serviceman in a democracy is not a mere automaton or robot that, machine like, is given orders which he is not expected to understand but merely to carry out. As long as our forces are on a peacetime basis with a possibility of expansion in an emergency, we expect to train our NCOs as future officers and our men as potential NCOs.

Again, we are sending men abroad as part of the United Nations forces in the Far East and as part of the NATO forces in Europe. There, whether we like it or not, they are constantly being compared with the troops of other countries. This comparison is made, not merely on their bearing on parade or their conduct on manoeuvres, but on their social behaviour in the cities and towns they visit when on leave. Canada wants its men to have a good reputation abroad. Social poise and discretion in casual conversation can be developed by the discussion.

THE BATTLE OF KAPYONG

ON 23 April, 1951, the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade was resting in the Charidae area (see Map 1). The Brigade comprised 1 Battalion the Middlesex Regiment, 2 Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, and 3 Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. Some miles to the north Chinese Communist Forces were heavily attacking the 6th Republic of Korea Division (6 ROK) and other South Korean formations.

During the day 27 Brigade was ordered to take up defensive positions about seven miles to the north as a precaution against a possible enemy break-through on the front held by 6 ROK Division. 3 RAR was to occupy a position in the vicinity of Chucktun-ni. The Middlesex were to reconnoitre a position north-west of 3 RAR, and 2 PPCLI were to occupy high ground to the west of 3 RAR.

On receipt of this order the Commanding Officer of 3 RAR (Lieutenant-Colonel I. B. Ferguson, DSO, MC) directed his company commanders to meet him at the village of Chucktun-ni to carry out a reconnaissance of the area to be held by the battalion.

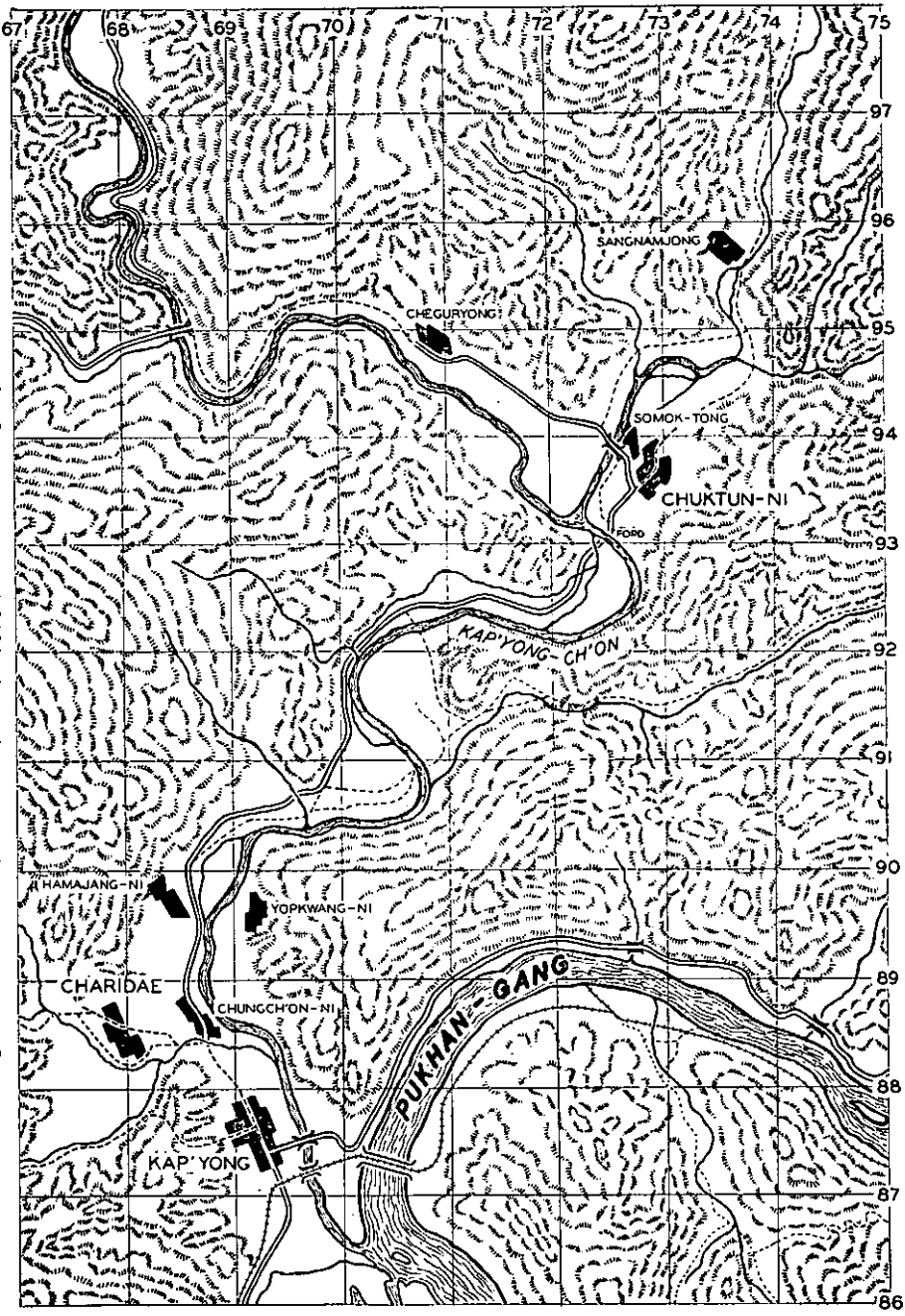
At 1500 hours 3 RAR was ordered to occupy a position which would cover the road junction at 723941 and block any enemy attempting to move south towards Kapyong. The primary role of the Middlesex and the Canadians was to block the approaches to the road junction from the north-west. However, the Middlesex were unable to reach their allotted position, and were ordered to occupy a position about two miles to the left rear of 3 RAR.

About 1700 hours the appearance of elements of the headquarters of 6 ROK Division in the brigade area indicated that an enemy breakthrough had in fact occurred. By 1800 hours, however, 3 RAR was in position and hastily digging defences before darkness fell. "B" Company (Captain D. Laughlin) was forward on a low feature which covered both valleys and the roads down which the enemy was expected to advance. (See Map 2.) With "B" Company, and included within its perimeter, were one section of MG's, an FOO from 16 New Zealand Field Regiment, an OPO from Company "B," 4.2 United States 2nd Chemical Warfare Battalion, and one platoon of Company "A" 72nd United States Heavy Tank Battalion. Another platoon of tanks from the same unit was outside the perimeter forward of "B" Company.

"A" Company (Major B. S. O'Dowd, MBE) was in position on a high, rocky spur where the digging of trenches and the making of sangars was slow and difficult.

"C" Company (Captain R. Saunders) occupied positions along a spur slightly west and to the rear of "A" Company. "D" Company (Captain N. Gravener) was responsible for the important high ground near the eastern edge of the battalion area.

With Battalion Headquarters was the LMG section of the MG platoon. Slightly south of Bn HQ, covering the ford and the valley, was one platoon of tanks from Company "A" 72 US Heavy Tank Battalion. The


67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
97
96
95
94
93
92
91
90
89
88
87
86
SANGNAMJONG
CHEGURYONG
SOMOK-TONG
CHUKTUN-NI
FORD
KAP'YONG-CH'ON
HAMAJANG-NI
YOPKWANG-NI
CHARIDAE
CHUNGCH'ON-NI
PUKHAN-GANG
KAP'YONG

Map 1

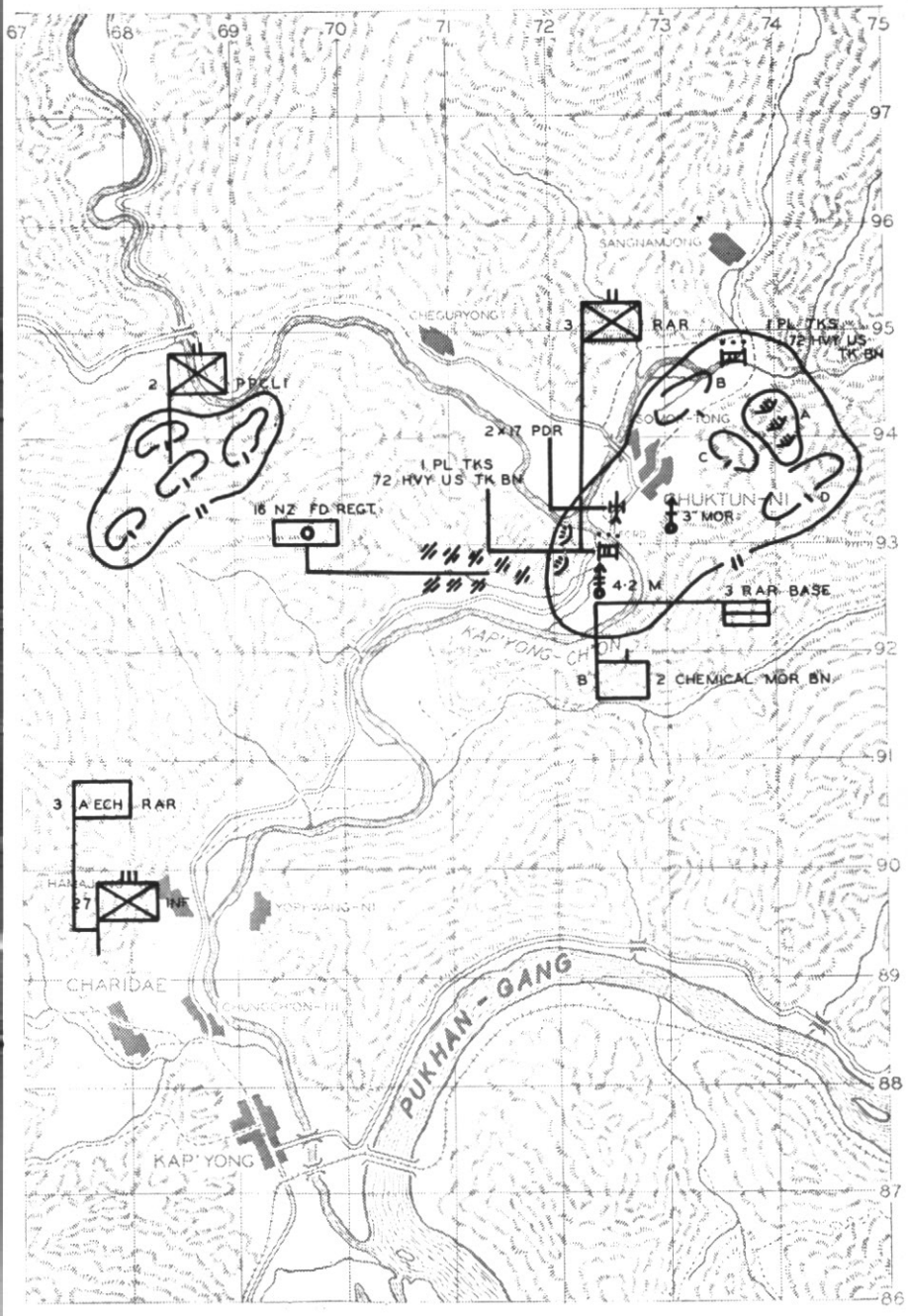
infantry protection for these tanks was provided by the regimental police and the drivers from the Signal Platoon. The Anti-Tank Platoon with two 17 pounders was slightly forward of Bn HQ covering the valley. The 3-in. mortars were set up a little to the east of Bn HQ. Company "B" 4.2 US 2nd Chemical Warfare Battalion was with the Support Company in rear of Bn HQ.

Although 16 New Zealand Field Regiment was able to provide FOO's, at this stage the regiment itself was still in support of 6 ROK Division and was stationed forward of 3 RAR on the road to the north-west. The Regiment came into position in rear of 3 RAR between 2100 and 2200 hours but, owing to a change in orders, was moved to the rear of the Middlesex. It was not in a position to support 3 RAR until the early hours of the following morning.

Battalion Headquarters was established and line communications to companies were working by 1800 hours. At 1900 hours Korean civilians and 6 ROK troops began moving in complete confusion down the road and valleys from the north. A check point was set up to sort them out with the assistance of HQ 6 ROK Division who had been ordered to establish themselves in 3 RAR area. This headquarters, however, remained only about half an hour and then withdrew further south. In the darkness it was impossible to control the panicky refugees. Mingling with the retreating Koreans, Chinese soldiers added to the confusion and kept the panic boiling by firing occasional rounds. Line communication from Bn HQ to the companies was destroyed by the milling Korean soldiers and their vehicles. Attempts to maintain communications on the Battalion wireless net were not successful owing to damage to the sets. To some extent communications were maintained through the artillery net but this was very poor and, owing to the distribution of the sets, orders could not be passed to individual company commanders. Communications were re-established at 0700 hours the following morning.

At 2200 hours it was reported at Bn HQ that Chinese troops were attacking the platoon of tanks forward of "B" Company, and at the same time MG and other small arms fire could be heard from the direction of "A" and "B" Companies. Firing also broke out above Bn HQ in the areas held by the LMG section of the MG Platoon and the pioneers. Soon afterwards a wave of Chinese troops surged across the ford and attacked the platoon of tanks, the regimental police and the signallers defending the low ground and the road just east of Bn HQ. Battalion Headquarters learned that the LMG section and the pioneers were being forced back by sheer weight of numbers. The regimental police on the road also suffered casualties as the Chinese were all around them. In the dark the enemy infiltrated through and around Bn HQ, and established a road block which stopped all movement to the rear. It was not until Lieutenant Evans, commanding the MG Platoon, told the tank commander to turn his cannon on nearby houses and the road block that issues became more evenly balanced. In one house forty enemy dead were counted after the tanks had fired into it.

By 0500 hours the Chinese, who had continually assailed the LMG section and the pioneers, succeeded in driving these troops off their posi-


67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
97
96
95
94
93
92
91
90
89
88
87
86
SANGNAMJONG
CHEGUPYONG
3 RAR
1 PL TKS
72 HVY US
TK BN
2 PPCLI
B
A
C
D
2 X 17 PDR
1 PL TKS
72 HVY US TK BN
16 NZ FD REGT
CHUKTUN-NI
3" MOR
4·2 M
3 RAR BASE
KAP'YONG-CH'ON
B
2 CHEMICAL MOR BN
3 AUST RAR
27 INF
CHARIDAE
PUKHAN-GANG
KAP'YONG

Map 2

tions, but not before every man in the LMG section had been killed or wounded and the pioneers had suffered heavy casualties. With the enemy in possession of the high ground overlooking Bn HQ in a re-entrant below, the CO ordered his HQ to withdraw to a new position at MR 702913. (See Map 3.)

Lieutenant-Colonel I. B. Ferguson, DSO, MC.

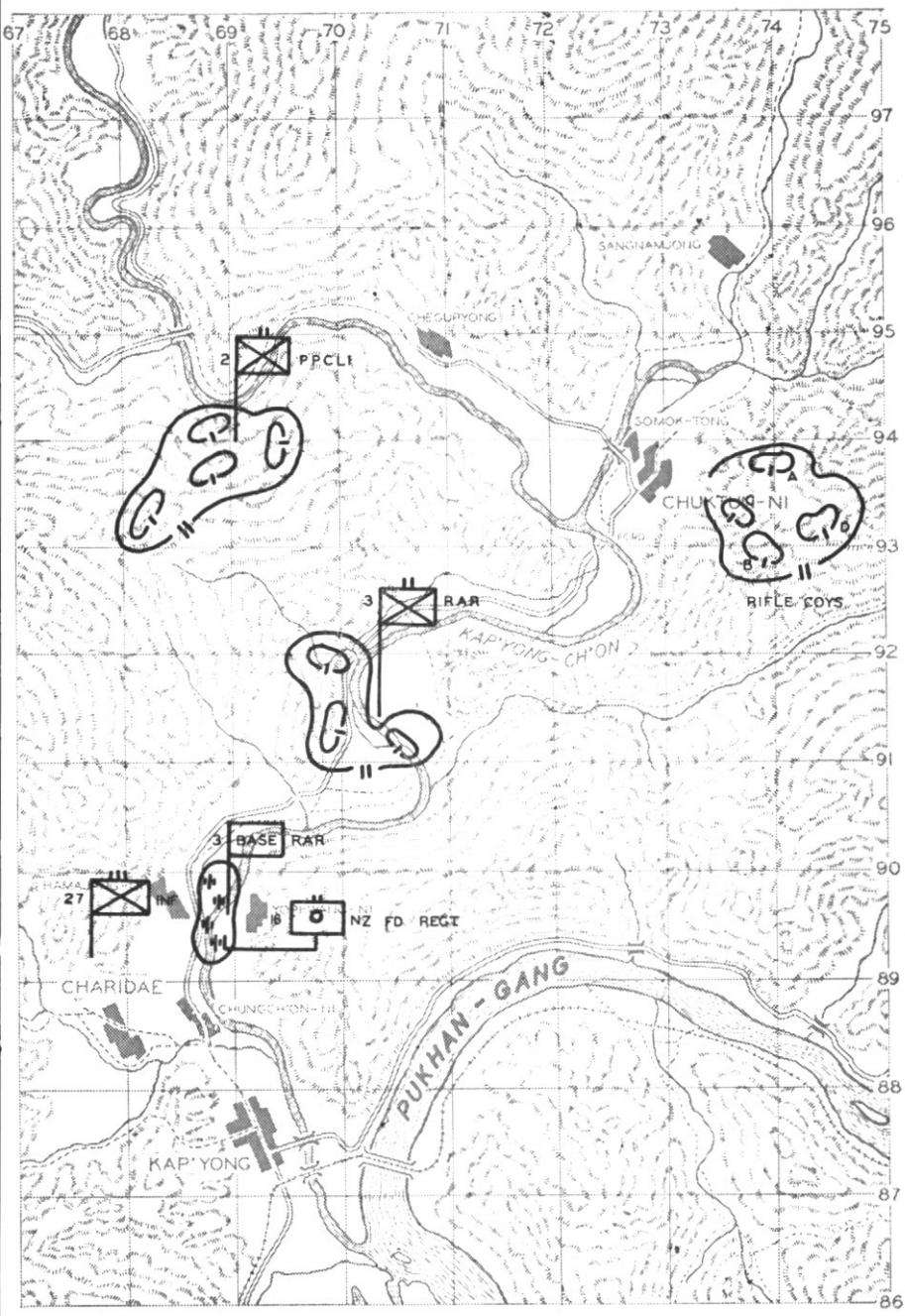
Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Bruce Ferguson was commissioned as Lieutenant in the 2/2 Infantry Battalion in the Middle East in 1940. *In* 1942 *he was promoted Captain and appointed Intelligence Officer,* 16 *Infantry Brigade, and in the following year was awarded the Military Cross. In* 1944 *he was promoted Major and became GSO2, HQ,* 1 *Australian Combined Operations Section. Later he was DAQMG, HQ British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan, and in* 1950 *he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel and appointed to command* 3 *Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, in Korea. For his services in Korea he was awarded the DSO, and he is now commanding* 13 *National Service Training Battalion.*

As the enemy also occupied the high ground west of the road running back to Kapyong and dominated every movement along the road, the withdrawing troops had to use the river bed and any available broken ground. However, by 0900 hours on 24 April Bn HQ had been established in its new position.

Company "B" of the 2nd US Chemical Warfare Battalion withdrew independently to the high ground to the east, and made their way back to Chunchon. 3 RAR Support Company, which had been in the same area as Company "B," withdrew by the same route as Bn HQ. The 3-in. Mortar, the Anti-Tank and the Signals Platoon all fought their way back to the vicinity of the new Bn HQ. All the vehicles, stores and weapons left behind by Company "B" were recovered by 3 RAR personnel.

About the same time as the attack on Bn HQ developed the enemy fiercely assailed the areas held by "B" and "A" Companies. When the first wave struck "B" Company they tried to work round the flank to the east, but encountered the platoon of American tanks. Moving around the tanks they struck "A" Company's position, and skirted it in a push for the high ground at Pt. 504. This attack actually swept into "D" Company's HQ which had been standing to in readiness for such a development. The attack was beaten off with heavy casualties.

About 0530 hours on the 24th, a sustained assault was delivered against No. 12 platoon's position. Waves of Chinese hurled themselves against the platoon. The company commander, Captain Gravener, called down artillery fire on to the ridge lines up which the enemy was advancing. After each attack failed


67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
97
96
95
94
93
92
91
90
89
88
87
86
SANGNAMJONG
HEGUPYONG
SOMAK-TONG
CHUKSAN-NI
2 PPCLI
3 RAR
RIFLE COYS
KAP'YONG-CH'ON
3 BASE RAR
27 INF
NZ FD REGT
CHARIDAE
CHUNGCHON-NI
PUKHAN-GANG
KAP'YONG

Map 3

the enemy moved back to low ground out of range and, after shouted encouragement from their commanders, launched another assault. The enemy attacked continuously along "D" Company's front from 0530 to 0730 hours, each attack being supported by 60 mm. mortars. With the help of cross fire from "C" Company terrific casualties were inflicted on the enemy and all attacks were beaten off.

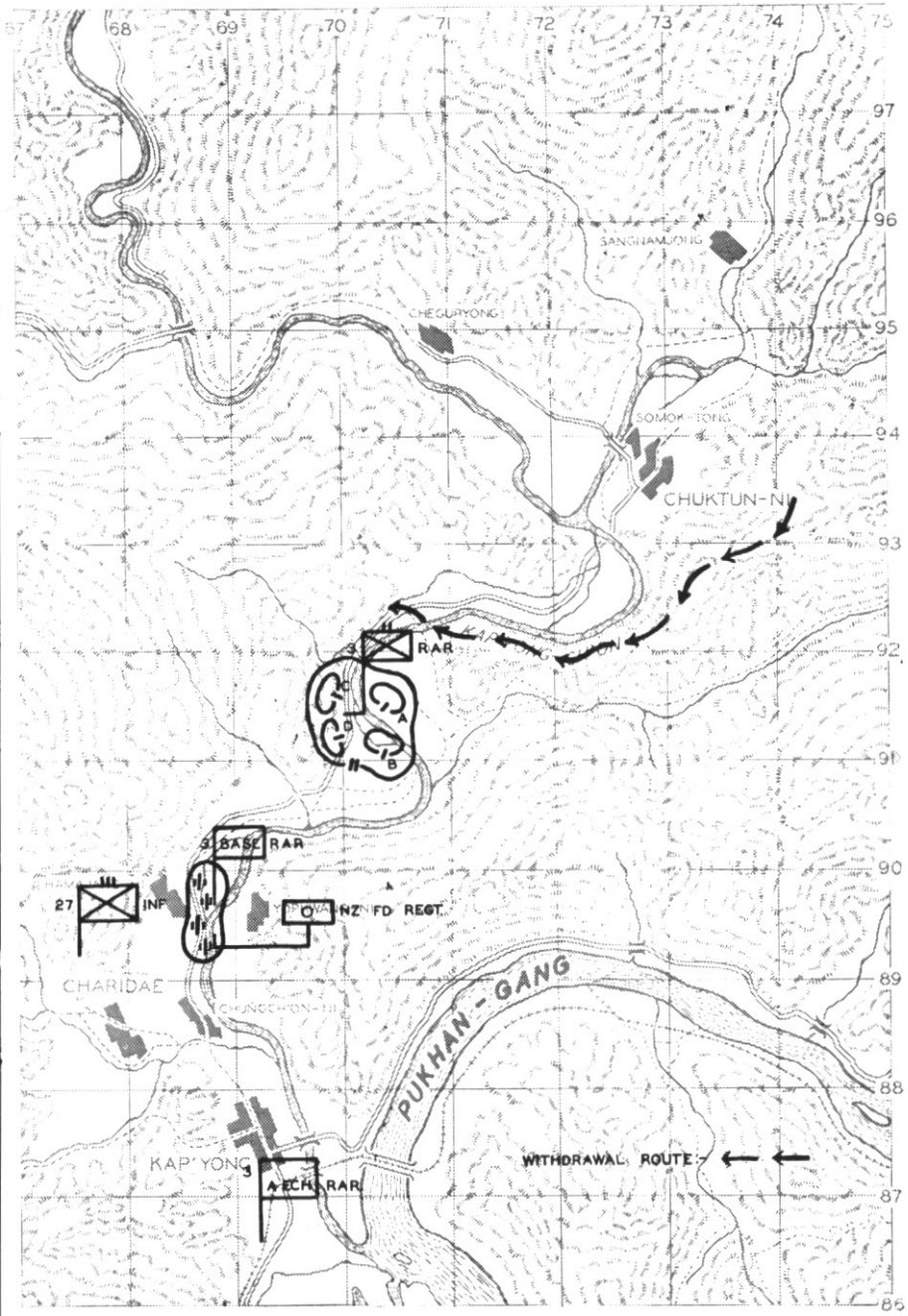
When communications with Bn HQ broke down Major B. S. O'Dowd, OC "A" Company, assumed command in the forward area. At the same time as the Chinese attacked "A" and "D" Companies they also launched heavy and sustained assaults on the rear of "B" Company, the main weight falling on No. 6 Platoon. Wave after wave of screaming Chinese hurled themselves against the position, throwing grenades and firing automatic weapons. "B" Company clung to its ground, and artillery and mortar fire came down to assist them. As soon as there was sufficient light to see their targets the tanks again came into action, and gave excellent support to the forward infantry. Their fire also played havoc with the Chinese in the open valley below. Well directed fire from "B" Company accounted for hundreds of Chinese, and the ground in the valleys leading to the north-east and north-west was littered with enemy dead and wounded.

Dawn found all the forward companies holding their ground. At 0615 hours Bn HQ established intermittent communication with "C" Company and obtained a report on the situation. As a result "B" Company was ordered to withdraw from its exposed position to within the perimeter of the other companies on the high ground south of the road. Captain Laughlin sent out a patrol under CSM. Bradley to clear the ground towards "C" Company. This patrol had several sharp encounters with the enemy and took 40 prisoners.

"B" Company began its withdrawal at about 0715 hours, No. 5 Platoon (Lieut. McGregor) and a platoon of tanks remaining in position to cover the movement. When the Company was safely inside the perimeter McGregor moved off with his platoon, the tanks remaining for a while to cover his withdrawal.

By 0900 hours "B" Company had joined the other three companies which were still being attacked. The enemy now occupied the positions vacated by Bn HQ and "B" Company, and their fire covered the ground earlier occupied by the pioneers, the 3-in. mortars and the A Tk platoon. "B" Company was ordered to clear the valley of enemy in the area of the ford and the position they had just left. In carrying out this task Lieut. McGregor's platoon came under heavy and accurate small arms and mortar fire. McGregor was seriously wounded, there were several other casualties, and two sections of the platoon were pinned down. Captain Laughlin immediately ordered Lieut. Montgomery's platoon to extricate the sections pinned down and to recover the Australian dead and wounded. Montgomery succeeded only after a fierce hand to hand fight in which his platoon killed about 80 Chinese at the cost of four killed and five wounded. The operation was not completed until 1330 hours when the platoon rejoined its company.

While "B" Company was with-


68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
97
96
95
94
93
92
91
90
89
88
87
86
SANGHAMDONG
CHEGURYONG
SOMOK-TONG
CHUKTUN-NI
3 RAR
A
B
C
D
3 BASE RAR
27 INF
NZ FD REGT
CHARIDAE
CHUNGCHON-NI
PUKHAN - GANG
KAP'YONG
3 ECH RAR
WITHDRAWAL ROUTE

Map 4

General van Fleet, Commander of the UN forces in Korea, addresses 3 RAR at the ceremony of presenting the Presidential Citation. Behind General van Fleet are, from left to right, C in C British Forces in Japan and Korea (Lieut.-General W. Bridgeford), Commander 1 Corps (Major General J. W. O'Daniel) and GOC 1 British Commonwealth

General van Fleet presents selected members of 3 RAR who fought at Kapyong with the Citation device.

drawing the enemy kept up repeated attacks on "D" Company. These attacks were supported by 60 mm. mortars, but not by machine gun fire. Towards 1130 hours ammunition began to run low, so the company commander tightened up his perimeter by withdrawing No. 12 platoon from its forward position. The Chinese immediately occupied the vacated ground from where they were able to observe "D" Company's defences and give small arms supporting fire to their attacks. These attacks gradually slackened between 1200 and 1500 hours, but the enemy appeared to be reinforcing their troops on No. 12 platoon's original position. In an effort to clear them out the company commander called for artillery fire, but this appeared to have little effect. He then asked for an air strike, which was agreed to. The aircraft were to drop napalm and to strafe and rocket the enemy position. On the arrival of the aircraft the spotter plane dropped a spigot flare on what he thought was the target area, but which was in fact the position occupied by No. 10 Platoon. As there was no direct communication with the aircraft they began dropping their napalm tanks. Captain M. Ryan immediately ran out under fire waving the panel which had been placed on the ground to mark the position of our troops. By the time the aircraft rectified their error considerable damage had been done in No. 10 platoon area. In addition to several casualties, two of them fatal, a quantity of ammunition, an LMG, three SMG's and six rifles were destroyed.

At about 1500 hours the Commanding officer issued orders for all companies to withdraw along the high ground in rear of feature 504 and take up new positions in the area now occupied by Bn HQ. (See Map 4.) With "D" Company acting as rearguard, the companies began thinning out at 1500 hours. "B" moved first, followed by "A" and "C" in that order. "D" Company, which was still being attacked, held the feature 504 until the other companies were well on their way. Then, leaving No. 11 platoon in position, "D" successfully disengaged and followed "C" Company. Finally, No. 11 platoon withdrew section by section, inflicting severe casualties on enemy groups who attempted to follow up too closely.

By 2100 hours the withdrawal was complete and the battalion was firmly planted in its new position ready to deal with anything. By this time, however, American forces had arrived and were taking up positions in readiness for an advance against an enemy weakened and demoralized by the rough handling he had received on 24th April.

Throughout the battle 3 RAR was supported by tanks of 72 US Heavy Tank Battalion, and from early on the 24th by 16 New Zealand Field Regiment.

In this brief account no attempt has been made to describe the action of 27 British Commonwealth Brigade as a whole, but merely to give in outline the story of the fighting in the sector held by 3 RAR. There is no doubt that the resolute action of the Brigade held up the enemy advance for 24 hours, and thus gave time for reserve units to move forward and stabilize the situation. For its share in the battle of Kapyong 3 RAR was awarded a Presidential Citation by the Supreme Commander of the United Nations Forces in Korea.

SPAIN

and

WESTERN DEFENCE

Captain D. N. Brunicardi, Army HQ, Eire.

THE principle involved in the idea of Western Defence is the preservation of our civilisation, such as it is, from the inroads of Communism, a blasphemous doctrine and a perverse way of life. All the western nations and the people living inside the Iron Curtain must be of one mind on this principle (which is so agreeable to our human nature created and marvellously dignified by God). The governments of Western Europe and the Americans, however, differ in the clarity with which they recognise the enemy. They differ also in the policy to be adopted for our defence, that is, to implement the principle. Many of the supporters of these governments who are merely anti-Communists, will hate Communism and Communists, Russian or other, and all things connected with either Russia or Communism. Christians, on the other hand, will go to the trouble of making a distinction between Communism, which they will detest as an offence to God and humanity, and the Communists whom they will not hate but rather pray for and convert.

—*From "Irish Defence Journal," Eire.*

Western Defence then is the safeguarding, not so much of a number of states, most of whom happen to have been on the winning side in the recent war with Germany, as of Western civilization—that group of European, American and other nations deriving from and formerly united as members of a body known as Christendom, and now, as formerly, threatened by an enemy. This time the enemy is atheistic Communism, operating on two fronts, the Eastern front with armed forces, and the home front with disturbers of the peace. Here the battle is already joined with Church and State, both at issue with forces engaged in trying to prevent us all from leading "quiet and holy lives." Here we are concerned with the Eastern front and in particular with the contribution Spain is making in the military sphere.

Declaration of Christian principle is not nowadays a common feature of pronouncements of great-power policy. In the USA, however, Mr. Foster Dulles was responsible for some statements on foreign affairs which were out of the conventional vein. Such pronouncements occa-

sionally appeal to the Law of Nature —perhaps in disguised form—and then only when it can be found to support a policy decided upon for other reasons.

As Christianity was the foundation and life of Christendom, so will western civilization, the descendant of Christendom, survive only in so far as it has recourse to those principles which first and for centuries gave it life. The great powers of the West are being gradually forced into recognition of this truth, the United States rather more readily than Great Britain or France, but in only one, Spain, is it accepted without reservation. In the defence of the West the Spanish government alone has an uncompromising single-mindedness equal to that of the rulers of Russia themselves.

In the post-war years United States diplomacy, though opportunist and unskilled, was gaining in prestige due to the country's wealth and strength. That of the British, while skilled, was losing prestige with empire; it still maintained the age-old condescension towards "foreigners."

The French handling of foreign relations, apart from the Schuman-Pleven contribution to the West European defence problem, has remained querulous and ineffective. Among the Western powers, Spain alone has been consistent, wholehearted and firm on the re-constitution of Christendom, not indeed in the old form but in accordance with the needs of today and the nature of the menace from the East.

With the advantage, therefore, of having a sound principle, a clear appreciation of the enemy and a policy well adapted to both, it was not difficult for General Franco, head of the Spanish State, and his Foreign Minister Artajo, to remain courteously insistent on what they regarded as right and just in their dealings with the other Western powers. In particular they were thus able to bide their time until they could reach on their own terms, an agreement with the United States whereby Spain is to take her place in the forefront of Western defence. Dealing with friendly America in the past eighteen months must have been child's play compared with holding Hitler, at the height of his power, to his incredible forbearance in the matter of Gibraltar and the Straits.

The Negotiations.

The growth of United States interest in Spain, leading up to the recent agreements of September 26th, 1953, began shortly after the war. The first practical indication of this interest was in the Spring of 1948 when the State Department, after some pressure from banking interests, lifted the ban on private loans to Spain. Next came the visit to Madrid of Senator Gurney, Chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee accompanied by military and naval chiefs. Introduced by Mr. Paul Culbertson, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in Madrid, these men had an interview with General Franco and Lt. Gen. Juan Vigon, Chief of the Spanish General Staff, to obtain information with which they could support their contention at home that Spain should be recognised as a considerable power in western Europe. The Senator and his party maintained that normal diplomatic relations, broken up since 1946, in accordance with the U.N. resolution sponsored by Russia, should be resumed without further delay. The State Department still stood by this

resolution but the Defence Department and Congress were increasingly in favour of Spanish military co-operation, and it was the continued efforts of these two bodies which obliged the Executive to effect a rapprochement, even in spite of British and French protest.

After Senator Gurney's visit the representatives of eight nations in Madrid called on Mr. Culbertson asking for details. To all he answered that he had no information to give and that the delegation's action did not reflect State Department policies.

General Franco's next visitor from the U.S. was Mr. James A. Farley, former Chairman of the Democratic National Committee; he too was an advocate of the resumption of normal diplomatic relations. Next to come to Madrid was Rear-Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter, Director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, making, according to the U.S. Embassy, a routine inspection, and shortly afterwards a party of five Congressmen making an inspection of their own.

Not until August, 1950, however, was a modification of the State Department position noticeable. It was Mr. Acheson who stated, during a Senate discussion, that he was not opposed in principle to a Government loan—and £35,700,000 was voted to Spain under the new Military Aid Programme. Finally, in December of the same year the State Department came back to full recognition of Spain following the rescission by the U.N. of the 1946 ban. Ambassadors were exchanged, Mr. Stanton Griffis going to Madrid and Senor José Felix de Lequerica to Washington.

In addition, during 1950, a number of Spanish airmen attended a course in the Azores for training in the operation of American machines. In September of the same year Spanish officers were present at the U.S. Army manoeuvres in Germany. A few weeks later a number of tank-carrier lorries arrived in Spain from U.S., via Portugal.

In March, 1951, the new Ambassador to Spain had exploratory talks with General Franco, but no commitments were then made on either side. In the meantime, USAF General Thomas Darch and Colonel H. Zenke came from Munich to visit General Longoria, Chief of the Spanish Air Force Staff, and a naval squadron under Rear-admiral J. J. Ballentine paid a four-day visit to Barcelona.

American Decision.

In June, 1951, the U.S. Government, as a result of the persistent advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived at the decision that Spain must be included in Western Defence; if not into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—owing to objections of Britain, France and Norway—then by way of a bilateral pact. In July, a party of eight Senators visited Madrid on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Committee and two days later the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent one of their number, the late Admiral Forrest Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations, to talk with the Spanish Chief of State and his Ministers and military chiefs, notably Admiral Ramon Estrada, Chief of Naval Staff, and Admiral Salvador Moerno.

The visit of this party followed closely on the return to Spain via Washington of General Eduardo Gonzalez Gallarza, the Spanish Air Minister, who had been inspecting establishments in America at the

invitation of the United States Air Force. Though Admiral Sherman died before he could make a personal report to President Truman, the U.S. government declared that agreement had been reached "in principle" to the use of Spanish air and naval bases. Mr. Acheson explained that, not being able to reach agreement with Britain and France on any Spanish role in the defence of Western Europe, the talks had been held to ascertain what Spain might be able and willing to contribute to Western Defence. He declined at the time to state whether these talks related to the admission of Spain to NATO or to a bilateral pact. General Bradley, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, admitted, however, that he would like to see Spain in NATO.

Both the French and British Governments of the time were prompt and outspoken in their protest at this proceeding. France deplored it on, first, political grounds, as having amicable relationships with what they regarded as an ally of the late enemy and in any case a dictatorship repugnant to democratic feeling, and, second, on practical grounds in that the granting of military aid to Spain "would be an undesirable dispersion of available military resources." The British government went so far as to recommend that the project be not proceeded with for the reason, in the words of Lord Alexander, spokesman of the Labour Government, that the bad effect on morale in Western Europe of associating Spain with the defence arrangements outweighed any military or other advantage of the proposal. The British Government was opposed not only to the admission of Spain to the Atlantic Pact but to closer association between Spain and any member of the Pact. This criticism, of course, reflected not only on the U.S., but also on Britain's historic ally, Portugal, already connected to Spain under the Lusitanian Alliance of 1946.

As in the U.S., so in France the military heads were quite in favour of Spanish participation. The late Marshal de Lattre, in January, 1950, when he was Commander Ground Forces Central Europe, described the Spanish infantry as good, and stated that he would like to have them added to his force. A year later, General de Gaulle, himself a considerable authority on things military, asserted that Spain must be included in the mobilization against Communism.

Spain is Pleased.

The very favourable Spanish attitude to the proposals was indicated by General Franco himself when, in April, 1949, he claimed that an agreement with the U.S. would be a more stable and more effective safeguard against Communism than would the Atlantic Pact, which he described as an "omelette without eggs." Again, in June, 1951—that is just before the Sherman mission—the Spanish Ambassador to the U.S. speaking in Detroit, said that his country was agreeable to an alliance and economic aid but would not ask for soldiers. Spain was willing to co-operate in the common task with peoples who were ready to build a military organization to resist aggression. His country would not seek any treaty with governments which viewed Spain's co-operation "with reserve." Apart from these statements, no official or public reference was made in Madrid to the nature of Admiral Sherman's mission, and from that time to the

conclusion of the pact two years later, an official silence on the matter was strictly maintained.

In Washington, officials pointed out that the Admiral went, not to negotiate, but to report to the Joint Chiefs. If the report was favourable, the next step would be for the Joint Chiefs to take the matter to the National Security Council, where the State Department could emphasize the diplomatic and political implications. Towards the end of the month, then, Mr. Acheson announced that the U.S. intended to give arms aid to Spain in the Military Assistance Programme in accordance with a new policy being worked out on the basis of the late Admiral's reports.

The first practical result of the talks was an arrangement for the despatch to the U.S. of a party of 20 Spanish Army Officer students, for instruction in modern weapons and in the latest American tactics and techniques. Similar training was also arranged for Spanish Air Force officers.

Survey Team.

On the diplomatic side, the Sherman talks were followed up in August by the sending of a U.S. Military Survey Team of seven officers, headed by Major-General James W. Spry, Commander of the Atlantic Division of the Military Air Transport Service. An ECA mission was sent at the same time to study industrial projects being financed with U.S. aid. The object of the Military Survey Team was still not to negotiate but to report on the capacity and condition of air and naval bases to which the U.S. would be granted access in the event of an agreement. Towards the end of the month the team was augmented by the arrival of eighteen more members from Germany.

Having carried out the detailed inspection of various air and naval bases the Survey Team returned to the U.S. in November, but the establishment of a regular military mission was forecast at the time by Ambassador Griffis.

In January, 1952, Mr. Paul Porter, acting head of the Mutual Security Agency in Europe, announced that jointly with Ambassador Griffis he had recommended to Washington the immediate establishment of a MSA mission to Spain. (It may be remembered that the MSA came into existence on the termination of ECA or Marshall Plan under which Spain had been debarred from aid.) After four months the Economic Survey Team was accordingly made a permanent body, to direct U.S. assistance into four sectors. These are—(1) Mining, especially coal and iron; (2) power production; (3) roads and railways and (4) agriculture.

Although the progress of the exploratory talks and surveys had been kept officially secret, and denials of any agreement had been issued both in Madrid and in Washington as late as January, the U.S. State Department on the 9th February, 1952, confirmed the existence of a military agreement for the establishment of bases in Spain. Further secrecy had in any case been made impossible by the speed and extent of preparatory labours carried out in Spain and by the activities of technicians in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Majorca and other places. Mr. Acheson announced that formal negotiations would begin with the arrival of a new Ambassador, Mr. Lincoln MacVeagh, on the retirement of Mr. Griffis. The arrival of the Ambassador was fol-

lowed in April by that of the Military Mission h aded by Major-General August Kissner, USAF, and Major-General Carvin, while Mr. George A. Train took over the MSA agency in Madrid. One of the Ambassador's first actions was to instruct both the Military Mission and the MSA to make no statements to the press, and as the Spanish had a similar prohibition the protracted progress of the negotiations could only be surmised up to the time of the actual signature of the agreements in September of the following year.

British Visits.

Although neither Britain nor France were concerned in these efforts to associate Spain with Western Defence, in July, Britain decided that licences for the export of arms, suspended since 1946, could be granted to manufacturers. France similarly lifted her embargo on arms deliveries. British naval visits to Spanish ports were resumed when in January, 1952, the minelayer "Apollo" arrived at Ferrol, and in September the first sizeable force to come since the war was the group under Vice-Admiral Parham, Flag Officer Flotillas (Mediterranean), in the Light Fleet Carrier H.M.S. "Glory" accompanied by three destroyers, which visited Barcelona.

In January, 1953, the U.S. Navy arrived in strength with the visit of eight ships of the 6th Fleet to Barcelona, under Vice-Admiral J. H. Cassady in the cruiser "Columbus," while smaller groups of units visited Tarragona, Castellón, Valencia, Alicante, Malaga and Palma (Majorca). In March another large British force visited Vigo and Santander under Vice-Admiral Hughes-Hallett.

The Agreements.

Three agreements between the United States and Spain providing for the construction and use of defence bases in Spain by the U.S.A., U.S. economic assistance to Spain, and U.S. military supplies to that country, were signed in Madrid on September 27, by the Spanish Foreign Minister, Senor Martin Artajo, and the U.S. Ambassador, Mr. James Dunn. The agreements, it was stressed in Washington, were executive agreements and not a treaty of alliance requiring Senate approval.

The official announcement made in Washington on the same date was worded as follows:

"The Governments of Spain and the United States today concluded three bilateral agreements designed to strengthen the capabilities of the West for the maintenance of international peace and security. The three agreements cover (1) the construction and use of military facilities in Spain by the U.S.A.; (2) economic assistance and (3) military end-item assistance . . . Under the terms of these agreements Spain becomes eligible for U.S. economic, technical and military assistance under the Mutual Security Programme, and the United States is authorised to develop, build and use jointly with Spanish forces certain military airfields and naval facilities in Spain.

"The United States will start construction to develop certain existing Spanish military airfields for joint use by the Spanish Air Force and the U.S. Air Force, and will modernise certain naval facilities for use by the Spanish and U.S. navies. The agreements also provide for the subsequent development of additional military facili-

ties as future conditions may require.

"The military areas to be used jointly remain under Spanish sovereignty and command. The U.S. Command in each case is responsible for U.S. military and technical personnel, and for the operational effectiveness of military facilities and equipment.

"To facilitate carrying out the terms of the agreements, two groups will be immediately established in Spain, under the general direction of the American Ambassador, similar to those which are normally maintained in countries receiving economic, technical and military aid from the United States. In connection with the economic and technical assistance to Spain, a U.S. operations mission is being set up. Similarly, a military assistance advisory group is being established to coordinate the military assistance programme with the Spanish authorities."

The Bases.

Whilst no details were officially given about the location of the U.S. bases, U.S. press reports stated that these were likely to include in the first instance, airfields near Madrid, Barcelona, and Seville, and naval bases at Corunna, Cadiz and Cartagena. Work on these bases, it was stated, could begin at once with special funds at the disposal of the Defence Department for the construction of overseas bases. It was also authoritatively reported that under present conditions the total number of U.S. personnel was not expected to exceed 10,000 officers and men.

The availability and modernization of Spanish naval bases in the Canary Islands, Cadiz, Cartagena and the Balearic Islands would complete, with the Portuguese Azores and British Gibraltar, a chain of naval communications from the Atlantic into the Mediterranean Sea. Corunna, Pontevedra and Ferrol in North West Spain could become additional bases for operations in the Atlantic.

Spain has already three first-class airports. Barajas (Madrid) has a 10,000 ft. runway, while those at Muntadas (Barcelona) and San Pablo (Seville) are over 5,000 ft. The airfields at Las Palmas (Canaries) and Tetuan (Morocco) can accommodate heavy bombers. Island bases have obvious defensive strength and bases near the coast have advantages for the supply of fuel by pipe-line.

For the present the Americans provide in their estimates for equipping only the following air bases and supplying them with fuel and munitions, namely, one strategic base, one fighter-interceptor base and one strategic reconnaissance base. Subsequently an extended network could be built up.

The first of the bases chosen appears to be that of Barajas-Torrejon, situated 18 kilometres from Madrid and adjacent to the commercial airport of Barajas. Development of Madrid's other aerodrome at Quatro Vientos has not, so far, been proposed. The second of the proposed new bases is at San Pablo, 10 kilometres from Seville; it has a 3,200 metre runway designed to support strategic bombers. The third is at Los Llanos, 10 kilometres north of Albacete; here as at Barajas-Torrejon, large-scale building and extension of runways will be required.

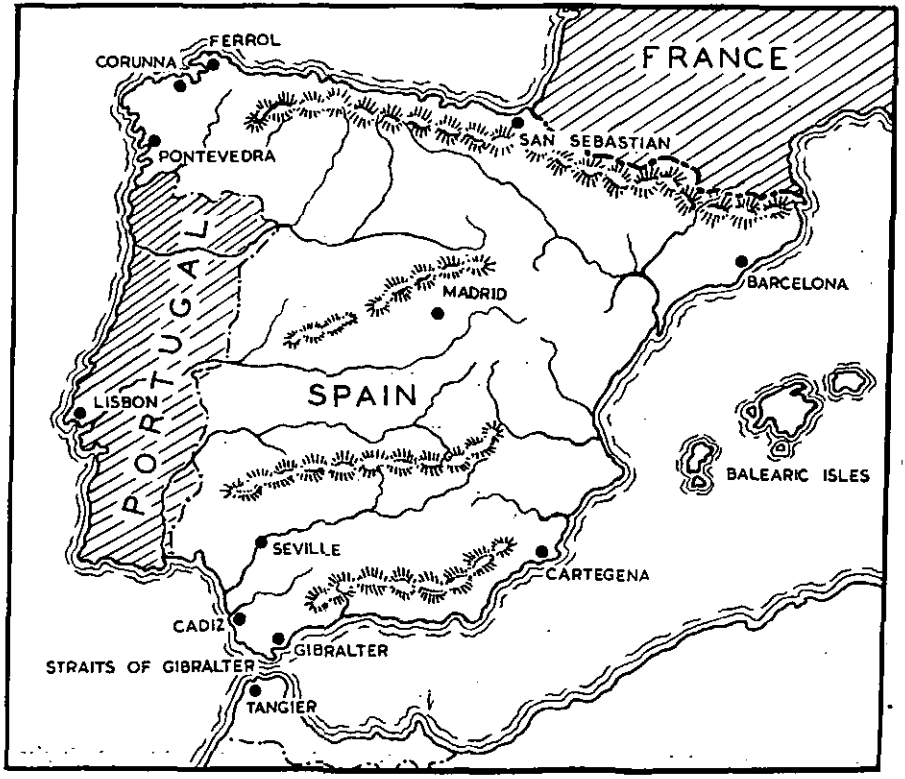
Communications.

These bases, however, will not offer full value until the Spanish road and rail systems are improved so that they can function effectively

in war, and communications are a first care in the MSA part of the recent agreement. A start has accordingly been made by the construction of a new road from the proposed naval and supply base at Cadiz to Seville. Another is to be built from Madrid to San Sebastian to link the best and most modern Spanish airport with the Atlantic coast and with France.

At the same time the Spanish state railway officials are considering plans for converting the track to the same gauge as that of the French and other Continental railways. (Spain and Russia are the only European countries still using the broad gauge.) The great growth of electric power sources has been followed by the electrification of long stretches of the Spanish railway lines, particularly in the north, and it was announced in April, 1952, that a £4 million order had been placed with English Electric for 60 3,600 h.p. electric locomotives for passenger and goods haulage. In September of the same year the Director-General of Railways stated that the plan to spend the equivalent of £120 million on modernizing the railways would allow for the electrification of nearly 1,000 miles. At that time a new electrified stretch of 288 miles had been opened linking Zamora with Corunna.

Apart from the improvemeni of



communications, other industrial developments have been undertaken, notably the building of an iron and steel works at Avilés in Asturias, the contract for equipping which, valued at £10 million, was secured by a group of British manufacturers in competition with many great Continental firms.

Moroccan Bases.

Towards the end of October, 1953, General Twining, Chief of the U.S. Air Staff, and Mr. Talbott, Secretary of the Air Forces, visited Spain and French Morocco. The purpose of the visit to Morocco was, General Twining explained, to see whether now that the agreement with Spain had been reached, the building of air bases in Morocco could be stopped. Originally five bases had been planned; three were already built, two not yet started. The fact that alternative bases can now be built in Spain, has, General Twining said, "changed the picture."

The signing of the agreements removes an American fear of getting committed deep in the Mediterranean area without having the entrance secured. They can proceed with the organization of western defence now that the long-standing strategic anomaly has been removed with Spain taking a leading place in the defence of Western Europe.

As General Franco himself said, these agreements had closed a grave gap in the defence of the west and represented an important victory which strengthened the cause of peace against Communist threats. "It is not our intention," he said, "that others shall defend us. We intend to defend ourselves, at the same time, by the preparation of our bases and by increasing our armaments, facilitating collaboration with the United States against possible aggression. Spain cannot be indifferent to the success or failure of the defence of the west."

Just as it is a very great mistake to allow our hearts always to rule our heads, and an even greater mistake to allow our heads always to rule our hearts, I feel that every now and then in the history of an individual or in the history of a race, there comes a point of time at which the heart and mind are suddenly fused by some great event. Here you have the critical periods of human life and the critical periods of racial history.

—Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, CH, Prime Minister of Australia.

STRIKING ATTITUDES

Major A. W. John,
Director of Army Education.

"History records very little in the way of mental activity on the part of the mass of mankind except a series of stampedes from affirmative errors to negative ones and back again."

—G. B. Shaw.

The subject of Current Affairs is compulsory for officers of the Regular Army seeking promotion to Captain and Major. A general syllabus is laid down in "Requirements for Promotion and Professional Advancement of Officers of the Australian Regular Army, 1952." It is essential, however, that students should supplement this field of information by reading widely and, more importantly, applying to such reading their own powers of reasoning and the knowledge gained from experience. An impartial and analytical approach should be developed, whereby propaganda, cant, catch-cries and the like can be detected to leave facts, trends and forecasts of events in their true perspective.

The ideas expressed in this article do not necessarily represent those of the Directorate of Military Training.—Editor.

WHEN we were very young we played a game called "Attitudes" which consisted of joining hands, swinging around in a circle, letting go suddenly and finishing up in a stiff posture as fancy moved.

Striking attitudes is a pleasant and harmless enough pastime for children, but its mental counterpart as practised by grown-ups is thoroughly pernicious. The mental game of attitudes excludes the painful process of reasoning. It is almost effortless. But it puts us at the mercy of the demagogue and sensation-monger. The demagogue sets the pose and the sensation-monger rushes into print. An incredible number of people strike the attitude and the facts are lost. The old saying that "the truth will out" is perhaps becoming less true as the outpourings of verbiage and print increase.

Professor Griffith Taylor has recently pointed out that for years before he went to America in 1928 the press had been criticising his conclusions as to our continent's disabilities such as that one-third of Australia is desert and another third semi-arid, leaving only one-third for notable settlement. All Australians, except for a few super-patriots and other wishful-thinkers, recognize this now, but in the 'twenties the professor was abused by multitudes who had never left the coast. The evidence was always there to back up the professor, but it was easier to strike an attitude.

Take the matter of the proposed hydrographic survey of New Guinea waters by the United States Navy. Apart from government officials and service people who had noted the negotiations in the normal course of their duties, nobody had heard of the matter until 27th January, 1954, when the press rushed it into the headlines. It was not just a case of a reporter's "story" printed in haste, but considered editorial comment, such as—"It is a surprise and also a shock to read convincing reports that the Australian Government has been *secretly* discussing an American proposal that Japanese sailors and technicians should return to New Guinea and assist in completing their pre-war task—surveying the northern approaches to Australia."

No Australian really believes that his government, whether Liberal, Labor or Country, would be guilty of acting secretly against Australian interests, as implied in the above passage. Yet newspaper comment waxed hot and opposition politicians seized the opportunity to belabour the Government. Nobody asked whether the Japanese were admirals, surveyors or cook's assistants and, apparently, did not even want to know. Here was the opportunity to strike the super-patriotic attitude and this was indulged in to such an extent that we finished up looking like the effigies in Madame Tussaud's Waxworks.

Everybody with any first-hand knowledge is aware that during the occupation things got somewhat mixed. For instance, Japanese security guards were employed by us to watch Occupation Force buildings, Japanese were employed in all units in all sorts of jobs, Japanese mechanics were employed on maintenance and repair work on Australian and American air squadrons and continued to be so employed during the Korean operations, and the United States Navy found it convenient, or economical, or both, to make up its survey teams operating in Pacific waters with some Japanese. Now that the Americans have turned their attention to other areas of the Pacific, the press is occupied with other "stories" and will not give a quarter inch on the back page to this matter, while somewhere in the background painstaking public servants are trying to straighten out the complications.

In addition to the popular prejudices, or attitudes, encouraged by the press, there are innumerable individual attitudes: one man believes in levitation, another that the earth is flat, another in flying saucers, another that the admittance of Communist China to the United Nations would provoke a third world war, another that not to admit Communist China to the United Nations would provoke a third world war, another in table-rapping, another that everybody in the Australian Army has a high education standard, another in phrenology, another in Blogg's pills, another that we were hornswoggled out of our oilfield at Roma by Yankee devilry. The people concerned never examine these things; they simply go on believing them.

There is no simple solution, but we might make a start. We could get rid of the misconception that education consists of reading, writing and arithmetic and all you need to know can be taken in at school before the age of fourteen. This misconception results in the further education of three-quarters of our population being left to the press

and the politician, a dangerous state of affairs for the press is always in too great a hurry to get the facts right (it might happen, of course, by accident) and the politician too eager to contradict the opposition to worry about accuracy. We might make a start then by raising the school age and teaching children to reason—in short, put a fourth "R" in the education process.

Since to reason means to try to reach conclusions by connected thought, you might be inclined to argue that it should be possible for everybody given the same set of facts to reach the same conclusions, but even with trained minds this does not follow. The human mind is a strange instrument. Sir Oliver Lodge was both a great scientist, which demands a mind free from prejudice, and also a believer in spiritualism. Leading theologians not so long ago preached the brotherhood of man and roasted some of their brothers alive for disagreeing on points of doctrine. Unfortunately, we have no way of checking our errors in abstract things, as we have in material things. If the engineer makes an error over breaking strains and so on, the bridge falls down. If the whole nine million of us believe a foolish error, it still remains a foolish error.

There is nothing more certain than that we shall go on falling into error, but there are certain safeguards by which we can lessen their number and duration. We could begin by learning to distinguish between education and propaganda. The distinctions have been summarized as follows: (a) propaganda influences by suggestion, but education avoids influence by suggestion; (b) propaganda presents partial facts to gain agreement, but education presents all the known facts; (c) propaganda avoids investigation, but education invites investigation and criticism; (d) propaganda works through desires and emotions, but education works through intellect; (e) propaganda demands acceptance of conclusion without evidence, but education accepts no conclusion because of authoritarian imprint or majority acclaim; (f) propaganda represents a special group or sponsor, but education represents no special group.

With those guiding principles, there will be less of a tendency to fall into error, but some people have an attitude about education. They think if it were called by some other name, for instance "training" educationists would be more successful. But let it pass; changing the meaning of words to suit our prejudices is a study in itself and would lead us into the whole field of semantics.

It is perhaps because, though things around us change, our minds stay in much the same condition that college students are so frequently at variance with their elders. The son (at any rate in Western countries and for the present) is being educated in the tradition of true scholarship which admits all the evidence and seeks truth and understanding. The father is too busy working for his son's college fees to worry about sifting his own impressions and attitudes. He may suspect some of them are false, but it is more convenient to let them lie than to submit them to examination.

During the occupation, a Japanese Liaison Officer asked to borrow some books on current affairs and modern ideologies as he wanted to coach his son for an examination, in particular to explain to him the spread of

Communism. Some weeks later he returned the books, but said that actually they were not needed. His son had passed the examination. All he needed to know about Communism was that it was bad! The examiner had told him that was the right answer. One assumes that the examiner considered it to be the safest answer.

Parroting the selected answer instead of giving evidence of having studied the subject might have sufficed in Japan under the occupation, but it will not satisfy examiners elsewhere and, in any case, leads the successful crammer up a blind alley. Mere possession of a knapsack full of precis will not turn a soldier into a field-marshal. You do not learn the use of language by swallowing a dictionary, nor acquire an understanding of history by reading a catalogue of events.

As to the study of current affairs, we must build on the basic essentials: first—a satisfactory knowledge of history and geography and at least a smattering of economics and political institutions; second—a synthesis of these subjects for the sake of perspective, and third—a course of reading with a purpose the biographies and novels which lead to understanding. You might, for instance, spend a year reading factual reports on the Union of South Africa and miss the human understanding which a novel like Alan Paton's "Cry the Beloved Country" will give.

Schooling tends to give most children the wrong attitude to history. It is looked upon as a matter of learning a mass of dates by heart. The only importance of dates is to get things in their right chronological order, but they are relatively unimportant. There is also the insular notion that all that matters is the history of one's own nation. A far better approach is to regard history as being the story of mankind, made up of innumerable life stories. Such books as Winwood Reade's "The Martyrdom of Man" and H. G. Wells' "Outline of History" give insight and understanding. But these are short cuts, everything depends on how much time can be spared in this busy modern world.

As to more recent history and background books on current events, there has been a spate of books in recent years. The main difficulty is selection. There is a tendency to scoff at the prodigious output of a writer like John Gunther, who claims to turn the world inside out, but Gunther combines graphic writing with statistical accuracy and is worthy of attention. There is no better book on the Second World War and its effects on the continent of Europe than the late Chester Wilmot's "Struggle for Europe" and if you are seeking an understanding of recent events in China, I can recommend C. P. Fitzgerald's "Revolution in China." In any case the obvious thing is to consult your librarian.

As to the march of day to day events, if we are not to have the comfort of relying on the newspaper with the largest circulation and the politician with the loudest voice, where are we to get our information? Weekly newspapers and magazines are usually, though not necessarily, more reliable than dailies. For some reason most magazines which specialize in current affairs come out fortnightly and these are obviously the best source of information. Of the many newsletters and journals, "The

Chatham House Review—The World Today," can be recommended. The difference between such a review and a magazine, say "Time," is that it is more concerned with *objectivity than with circulation.* "Current Notes on International Affairs," published by our own External Affairs Department, is a valuable compilation. The Current Affairs Bulletin maintains the highest standards, but covers the widest possible range at the rate of one subject a fortnight. A similar bulletin is produced in Canada by the Bureau of Current Affairs for the defence forces and The British Survey (Popular Series) published by The British Society for International Understanding is on something the same lines.

The most complete and reliable source of information on current affairs, in my opinion, is Keesing's Contemporary Archives. Here is a sort of continuous year book, exercising the greatest care initially, constantly adding, constantly amending, constantly supplementing and re-indexing. It is accessible in libraries but, though expensive, is worth the money of any study group.

The young officer who has read this far seeking guidance on the study of current affairs may be wondering what he is going to do for time. He might do three things —spare two hours a week to positive study of background and current events, direct his normal recreational reading (or some of it) to this purpose and seek conversation and discussion with others having the same interest. Everybody discusses current events at almost every opportunity—in the train and in the mess, for instance. At such times the surroundings become rather like a mental Madame Tussaud's. Remember that to get anywhere, discussion must be based on facts and that the object is understanding. Those who do these things will embark on the high seas and discover that the study of current affairs, the study of humanity, is the most absorbing study of all. Those who stick to the shallows of question and answer may pass an examination, but will have little understanding of what is going on in the world around them.

When you have got a thing where you want it, it is a good thing to leave it there.

—*Winston Churchill.*

INDO-CHINA

The Seven-Year Dilemma

Bernard B. Fall.

ON 19 December, 1953, the war between the French Union Forces and Ho Chi Minh's Communist-led Vietminh will be seven years old and there are but few indications at hand to point toward its possible end either through military victory or negotiation.

However, the situation has matured sufficiently to enable the military student to take stock of the various factors which might make the war in Indochina a useful example for future operations in other areas with similar climatic and terrain features.

Prior to World War II, the Indochinese Federation, as it then was called, was composed of three protected kingdoms, Laos, Cambodia, and Annam; one protected territory, Tonkin; and one French colony, Cochin China. France had consolidated her control over Indochina during the last 30 years of the nineteenth century and uprisings against French rule had been both few and completely unsuccessful. The only revolt of any consequence occurred at Yen Bay, Tonkin, in 1930. This was ruthlessly put down, and practically eliminated all major anti-French leaders—who were exiled to the penal colony of Poulo Condore Island off southern Indochina.

With the outbreak of World War II, France was compelled to withdraw her best troops from Indochina in order to use them in the European theatre. The result was that Indochina—particularly after France's defeat in June, 1940—was left wide open to ever-increasing Japanese pressures. The Japanese, in particular, sought to obtain control of the Haiphong-Yunnan railroad in order to attack Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's main supply bases around Kunming.

Indeed the armistice with Germany had hardly been signed before a Japanese military mission under General Nishihara appeared in Hanoi. On 30 August, 1940, Japan began to occupy a transit base at Haiphong and all major airfields of Tonkin. On 29 July, 1941, Japan further occupied naval and air bases at Saigon and Tourane, and shortly after Pearl Harbour, Indochina was

—*From "Military Review," U.S.A.*

in fact as much a Japanese-occupied territory as any of the other South-East Asian countries which were overrun by the Japanese forces. The only difference being that the French still maintained their internal administration and lightly-armed military forces. It is estimated that the total French military forces available in Indochina did not exceed 15,000 men. However, with the war situation turning to the advantage of the Allies, the Japanese decided to eliminate the slight threat to their communication lines which the small colonial army represented, and on 9 March, 1945, Japanese troops and secret police wiped out all French resistance. Only a few units succeeded in escaping the Japanese *coup* and succeeded in fighting their way through the jungle into Free China. Among these units was a task force of a few thousand men under the command of Generals Sabatier and Alessandri.

At the same time, all French administrators and civil servants, as well as most of the white or Eurasian civilian population, were imprisoned in various internment camps. Some of these internment camps achieved a notoriety in the Far East comparable to that of Dachau and Buchenwald in Europe.

The Vietminh.

While the Japanese eliminated the French, the various nationalist and Communist groups began to reorganize themselves in order to take over as rapidly as possible whatever regions the Japanese did not occupy. Soon, such groups controlled seven provinces in Upper Tonkin as well as large tracts of land in Annam. The elimination of the French brought about a complete breakdown of Allied intelligence which, hitherto, had mainly relied upon its French contacts and this factor favoured the activities of these groups. The new situation resulted in numerous contacts between the guerrillas and OSS as well as Chinese Nationalist intelligence groups. Many new weapons (bazookas, sub-machine guns) as well as radio sets and instructors were parachuted to them so that certain of the guerrilla units soon gained an appreciable amount of combat strength and efficiency. No distinction was made as to whether the groups in question were subordinated to a recognized liberation movement or whether they pursued aims of their own or of a particular political party. As it happens, it was the Communist groups under their Moscow-trained leader Ho Chi Minh which possessed not only the necessary strength but also the adequate purposeful leadership necessary to exploit the existing situation to the fullest.

On 6 August, the first atom bomb gave the signal of the beginning of the end of Japan's military might. On the following day, Ho Chi Minh's guerrillas became the "Vietnam Liberation Army." A shadow government, called the "Vietnam People's Liberation Committee" was set up during the following days. In the meantime, the Japanese handed over control to a newly-created "government" of their own choosing just as they had done in the Philippines and in Indonesia. However, the latter had but little chance of survival against the organized onslaught of the Communist forces, and on 20 August, 1945, the Vietminh solidly held the whole north of Vietnam (as the three coastal territories of Indochina collectively

were now called) while the Japanese quietly abandoned their puppets to shift for themselves. In fact, on 25 August, the Emperor of Annam abdicated and handed over his powers to Ho Chi Minh. On the same day, a "Provisional Executive Committee for South Vietnam," including seven Communists among its nine members, took control of Saigon. Within a fortnight after Hiroshima, the red flag of the Vietminh flew over all of Vietnam.

Return of the French.

After VE-day, the French began to plan for an eventual re-occupation of Indochina within the framework of the operations planned by Admiral Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC). The initial force set aside for that operation was composed of two infantry brigades, equipped with British material from Madagascar and the Cameroons; one United States-equipped armoured brigade from the 2nd French Armoured Division; and one composite parachute commando unit, for special missions behind the lines.

Shipping difficulties were encountered because of the impending assault on Japan which prevented an early departure of the assigned units. As a result of the Potsdam Conference it was decided that French troops were not to enter Indochina for the time being and that it was to be split into two zones along the sixteenth parallel; the northern part to be occupied by Chiang's Kuomintang troops, the southern part to be administered by the British.

This was a serious blow to the French—the more so in view of the fact that they had not been invited to the Potsdam Conference. General de Gaulle, then the Premier of the French Government, decided to send all available forces to Indochina on whatever shipping could be found. Thanks to the help of SEAC, one armoured brigade of the 2nd French Armoured Division and elements of the 9th Colonial Infantry Division were finally on their way to Indochina by the beginning of autumn, 1945. In the meantime, teams of French paratroopers and newly-appointed colonial administrators were parachuted into Indochina, in order to re-establish "law and order." These people were massacred with but a very few exceptions.

A small British force of 2,500 men under General Gracey was landed in Saigon on 25 September to occupy a territory that was slightly larger than Korea. It was clear that they could do little more than hold their own in Saigon, where the Japanese garrison alone numbered more than 5,000 troops.

On 2 October, 1945, the first French elements arrived in Saigon. One company of paratroopers of the 5th Colonial Infantry Regiment was airlifted to Cambodia and another to Laos, while the remainder established a hedgehog position around the Saigon key area. General Leclerc, Commander in Chief of the French Expeditionary Forces, knew that one element alone played in his favour—speed. He knew that he had to make the utmost of the mobility of his airborne units and of his armoured brigade (which had landed toward the end of October, 1945) so as to occupy the strategic points of the country *before* the Vietminh had had time to concentrate an appreciable number of troops around the southern key

areas. Within less than five weeks and with less than a full division (the French troops who had been detained in Japanese prisoner of war camps being too exhausted for anything but limited garrison duty), Leclerc cleared an area of about 70,000 square miles. The Vietminh dissolved its "divisions" and "regiments" in the south and returned to guerrilla warfare. The French had won the first round.

It would be useless to go into the details of the political squabbles that finally brought about the complete breakdown of negotiations between the French and Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary government, still solidly entrenched in the north under the protective wing of the Kuomintang generals. It is quite obvious that they were conducted in a spirit of mutual bad faith and incomprehension, not to speak of the various factors of the cold war that began to play their part in the matter.

Nonetheless, the Vietminh agreed to let French troops land peacefully in Hanoi and to place small garrisons of between 500 to 850 men in several important border posts. However, multiple incidents between French and Vietnamese as well as Kuomintang troops created an extremely tense atmosphere which eventually became so explosive that one spark was all that was needed to bring about a general conflagration. The case in point was a matter involving a Chinese junk which the French customs guards had impounded because it assertedly had carried illegal arms for the Vietminh. Road blocks were erected by the Vietminh in Haiphong and when a French bulldozer crew, detailed to remove the block, was attacked, the French, in turn, shelled the city. A few days later, on 19 December, 1946, the Vietminh attacked French installations throughout Indochina in a supreme effort to sweep the French into the sea. The "seven-year war" between France and the Vietminh had begun.

The War Situation.

At the outset, the position of the French seemed desperate. Hampered by thousands of European and Eurasian civilians and 14,000 miles from its supply bases, the bulk of General Leclerc's mobile troops was bottled up in many small garrisons thinly spread over an area of jungle forests and steep mountains which was four times the size of Korea. General Leclerc's principal assets were massed firepower and air transport. It was the judicious use of both that saved Leclerc's troops from annihilation. The armoured brigades swiftly swept a path from Hanoi to Haiphong; paratroopers and light bombers relieved the pressure from the small garrisons—some of which, such as Nam Dinh, were besieged for four months. Soon, most of the Red River Delta and Upper Tonkin, including the key cities of Lao Kay, Cao Bang, and Lang Son, were under French control.

The French troops, however, were already too weakened by the recent attacks and their over-extended communications lines to be able to dislodge Ho Chi Minh from his mountain strongholds. The situation slowly degenerated into a stalemate.

For the Vietminh, the stalemate proved to be a welcome respite. The

guerillas were reorganized on a battalion basis, officer training schools were established, and the eventual victory of Mao Tse-tung over Chiang Kai-shek on the Chinese mainland brought about a welcome flow of ammunition, equipment, and instructors. Soon, General Valluy, the new French commander after Leclerc's departure and death, was now faced with 30 regular Vietminh battalions under the command of Vo Nguyen Giap, while in the south, guerilla units under Nguyen Binh cut off Saigon from the hinterland and occupied the Transbassac—Indochina's rice bowl.

Despite the dangerous overextension of their lines in view of the number of troops available, the French persisted in maintaining their line of outposts along the Chinese border, in spite of the advice of General Revers, then Inspector-General of the French Armed Forces, to concentrate French forces around the vital urban and rice areas. General Revers had advocated this line of action as early as the middle of 1949, when it became apparent that the Chinese Communists would soon reach the confines of Indochina.

Giap's troops attacked in the fall of 1950, when atmospheric conditions all but nullified French air power. The French, at this time, under General Carpentier, desperately attempted to disengage their outlying garrisons by sacrificing some of their smaller posts. Nevertheless, the destruction of the forts of Lao Kay and Cao Bang—with nearly all their troops—were real disasters and French morale reached its lowest ebb.

In France, in view of the lengthening casualty lists, the public clamoured for a recall of the French Expeditionary Forces and all available ships were directed to Indochina to evacuate the 20,000 to 30,000 French civilians who remained there. On the other side, Ho Chi Minh's radio announced that he would enter Hanoi, his former "capital," on the fourth anniversary of the beginning of the war, 19 December, 1950. It was then that France decided to send General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, her best combat commander, to Indochina.

It is a controversial matter whether the sudden change for the better was the result of the new commander's presence or was the result of a crucial error in the tactics of the Vietminh—to operate in the plains where the French flat-trajectory weapons and armour could be brought into full play. Still, the fact remains that De Lattre smashed the Vietminh attempt to break through to Hanoi via Vinh Yen on 18 January, 1951, and the follow-up attempts to capture the vital port of Haiphong, North Vietnam's "iron lung"; while a third successful battle, on the Day River, assured the French of the control of the northern rice bowl.

In the meantime smaller but strong commando groups and French marine units had broken open the main communication bottlenecks in the south around Saigon, and French naval and air units in turn blockaded the Transbassac so that the Vietminh could not harvest its rice to trade on the black markets of Singapore. Cambodia and Laos, with the exception of a few guerrilla areas, were entirely in French hands. A more resolute French policy at home and stepped-up American aid increased the

strength of the French Expeditionary Force to about 250,000 men. Under the guidance of De Lattre, Vietnam began to recruit and train its own armed forces, which soon reached a total strength of about 130,000 men. Another of De Lattre's achievements was the construction of a fortified line of bunkers and concrete emplacements, supplemented by centrally located heavy and medium artillery positions, covering the entire vital northern Delta. Using this fortified Delta as a base for future offensive operations, De Lattre executed several deep stabs into Vietminh positions, using paratroopers and armoured units.

On the other side, Ho Chi Minh's Vietminh underwent one of its most severe command crises. Giap's position, for a time, seemed severely shaken, and there were even rumours that Ho Chi Minh had been relegated to the background. The truth of the matter seems to be that he was following the three basic principles for Communist warfare in Asia as laid down by Mao Tse-tung, which were:

1. Yield any town or terrain you cannot hold safely.

2. Limit yourself to guerrilla warfare as long as the enemy has numerical superiority and better weapons.

3. Organize regular units and pass over to the general counter-offensive only when you are sure of the final victory.

The Vietminh high command had mistakenly underestimated French capabilities and passed from step 2 to step 3, with disastrous results. Since a scapegoat had to be found, it was found in the person of Nguyen Binh, the Vietminh commander in the south, who had been an ardent advocate of the general counter-offensive. Nguyen Binh was ordered north to Giap's headquarters—a 1,200-mile march through the jungle—and was killed by a French Union patrol in Cambodia.

French Tactics—1952.

On the French side, the army experienced a very serious loss when Marshal de Lattre died last year shortly after his only son had been killed in action in Indochina. General Salan, who took command as acting Commander in Chief, French Expeditionary Forces, Extreme Orient, apparently let the initiative slip back into the hands of the Vietminh—a most dangerous situation, the more so in view of the existence of a fortified line behind which French Union Forces could be lulled into a state of complacency. It cannot be denied that a certain "Maginot Line" or "wall psychology" spirit had developed in the French High Command. More than 10,000 forts, bunkers, and concrete emplacements, totalling more than five million tons of concrete, were built in and around the delta. The whole tactical concept was built around the theme of *hold that line.* Costly battles were fought for the possession of these forts, while their occupation—at one squad per fort, and many have company strength—immobilized at from 120,000 to 140,000 troops. And by no means do these forts prevent the infiltration of Vietminh elements! Battles involving nearly a whole Vietminh division were fought last year well within the fortified line and conservative intelligence estimates place the number of Vietminh troops operating within the delta at around 30,000 men.

One other result of the "wall" tactics was the holding of nearly half a dozen isolated fortresses far behind Vietminh lines, some as far as 300 miles inside Communist territory. Most of those fortresses appeared in the fall of 1952, when Vietminh elements—realizing that the Delta was too well defended to be attacked through a general counter-offensive—turned towards the elimination of the remaining French posts in north-western Vietnam. Offensives were launched in the plateau area between the Red and Black Rivers, with the resulting destruction of the French garrisons at Son La and Nghia Lo. Na San, a third post, however, was fortified swiftly and provided with an airfield capable of supporting *C-47s*. As a result, about 12,000 troops with their vehicles, pack animals, and 105-mm. howitzers had been airlifted into the stronghold within a short time. The ensuing Vietminh attacks were met by the withering fire of the defenders, and Na San still holds out. The same applies to Lai Chau, near the Chinese border, to Phong Saly in northern Laos and to several smaller points. In short, the French Far Eastern Air Force constantly maintains at least three to four airlifts (see Figure 2) over distances from 120 to 400 miles inside enemy territory, not to speak of tactical airlifts to front-line troops operating in Laos. During the Na San offensive, for example, the freight turnover between Hanoi's Gia Lam airport and Na San was higher than that on Europe's biggest airport, Orly Field. It is clear that such operations are prohibitive both from the point of view of equipment as well as from that of financial expenditure. The tactical value of having about 20,000 to 30,000 excellent troops bottled up hundreds of miles behind enemy lines in the jungle cannot be justified readily. Dispersed as they are, these troops cannot operate deep break-throughs or sorties into enemy supply lines —which, by the way, have long since been using bypass routes far around the French hedgehogs. Yet these troops are a serious liability to the French supply services, particularly during the rainy seasons, and would be a most welcome tactical reserve against Communist infiltrations on the main fronts. Their value in the case of a highly problematic Franco - Vietnamese general counter-offensive could hardly justify their maintenance indefinitely.

On the other hand, by mounting an attack against Laos, the Vietminh command gave proof of a versatility and imagination which the opposing command has yet to show. Having realized that the major objective in the north, the Red River Delta, was too tough a nut to crack with the available forces, the Vietminh command veered off at a 90 degree angle to the west and invaded thinly-populated Laos—one and a half million population spread over a territory twice the size of Pennsylvania—which was held by a force of about 15,000 Laotians and a few battalions of French troops. Within a few weeks, most of northern Laos was overrun and the French Union forces around Luang-Prabang and Vientiane were fighting for their lives. Again, the French Air Force came to the rescue and a hedgehog was set up in the Plaine des Jarres—and was promptly bypassed by the Vietminh forces which soon made their appearance within a few miles of

the Thailand border. As suddenly as it had begun, the Vietminh tide then began to recede. There was no panic or air of defeat over the withdrawal. It was an orderly retreat toward their nearly impregnable jungle positions to the north.

Reports that the Vietminh attack had been a failure since it fell short of capturing the main urban centres will need additional substantiation. The fact remains that the French High Command was forced—and still is—to withdraw badly-needed troops hurriedly from other points in Indochina in order to protect Laos, and that, from now on, it will have to leave important garrisons in various Laotian key areas in order to forestall a repetition of such an invasion. In other words, by establishing a *second front* in Laos, the Vietminh command considerably softened certain other of his main objectives, and the increased rate of attacks against the Red River Delta—which began a few days after the Vietminh withdrawal from Laos seems to bear out that contention.

Of course, it is true that the Vietminh, while on the attack, is faced with a tremendous supply problem. A former Vietminh quartermaster officer told the writer that, for the Nghia Lo operation alone, a large number of coolies—men, women, and children—were used to carry the supplies for the attack force. One can imagine the hordes of supply carriers who were needed to launch the Laos offensive which, after all, was mounted by at least three Vietminh divisions of about 10,000 men each. Because of the mountainous terrain, no coolie can carry more than about 60 lb. for over 15 miles a day. On the other hand, he also has to carry his own sustenance (about 2 lb. of rice a day). Therefore, any large-scale operation far from the original Vietminh bases—such as the Laos offensive—implies the establishment of several intermediary supply depots and a huge expenditure of scarce rice for the transport of a ridiculously small "pay-load." Trucks are available in limited numbers but can only circulate during the night in view of French air superiority. It is obvious, therefore, that, in view of the lesson learned during the general counter-offensive of 1951, the Vietminh High Command will probably avoid a final showdown with the French Union Forces until such times as its Chinese Communist ally will be able to divert enough heavy equipment to fulfill Mao Tse-tung's theory of pass to the general counter-offensive only when you are sure of the final victory.

The Outlook.

As the situation stands at present —barring the occurrence of such events as the appearance of *Mig-15s* in the Indochinese sky—the military aspect there points to a stalemate similar to the one in Korea. Although slightly superior in numbers and far superior in heavy equipment, the French Union Forces seem compelled to divert the bulk of their manpower to the defence of highly vulnerable communication lines, where the Vietminh is at liberty to attack at any of the three main and several secondary fronts that exist throughout Indochina. Hopes are high that the arrival of General Henri Navarre, the new Commander in Chief, French Expeditionary Forces, Extreme Orient, and of General Cogny, the new Commanding General, North Vietnam—who com-

manded one of the hardest-hitting combat teams during the last offensives under De Lattre—will bring a "new spirit" to French tactics and get the bulk of the forces out of the bunkers. It appears that the new commander in chief might advocate the methods used by General Merrill and General Wingate during the Burma Campaign—units *without* surface communications lines operating deep behind enemy lines, resupplied by air. This would exploit to the utmost the basic French superiority in mobility in supply and manpower and would also transfer the initiative to the French.

The establishment of 54 commando-type Vietnamese battalions who are familiar with both the language and the terrain, also should contribute greatly to the eventual success of such a method of fighting.

There are those who—mindful of General MacArthur's ill-fated Yalu River campaign—fear that too much pressure against the Vietminh might bring about the appearance of several hundred thousand Chinese troops on the Indochinese battlefields. This is within the realm of possibility; however, a glance at the map of South China will indicate that such a mass appearance is unlikely—Yunnan and Kwang-Si, with their rugged terrain and wretched communications, are not like the highly-industrialized Manchurian Plains. The Soviet Union's and Red China's industrial centres are nearly 3,000 miles away, so that, for once it would be the Communists who would have to struggle with a most severe problem of logistics. On the other hand, it is obvious that a Communist jet air force with a Red Chinese sanctuary would provide a nearly insuperable problem to the French. The air "infrastructure" of Indochina, already severely taxed by the various airlifts, is far from satisfactory, and the number of airfields capable of accommodating jets now is desperately small.

In the meantime, the seven years of war in Indochina presents an ever-increasing burden to French finances. Human losses have been heavy—43,000 dead, 40 per cent. of these casualties were regular French officers and non-commissioned officers who are sorely needed for the infrastructure of the new French North Atlantic Treaty divisions.

There are high hopes for the new Vietnamese Army, under General Nguyen Van Hinh. Vietnamese units have in the past given a good account of themselves and now number seven divisions. About 30 of the 54 planned commando-battalions are expected to be ready by the fall of 1953. Nevertheless, there is little hope that an appreciable number of French troops could be withdrawn from the murderous climate of the jungle battle lines in the near future. Nor is there hope that these units, now badly needed in North Africa or France, can be withdrawn. Like Korea, there seems to be no *substitute for victory in Indochina*. Or, as a French civilian official here put it: "How do you think it feels to fight alone for seven years a war that is militarily hopeless, politically a dead-end street, and economically ruinous?"

Conclusions.

1. Contrary to general expectations, there are only a few general lessons that can be drawn from the Indochina conflict. It cannot be

considered a modern war since one of the opponents is entirely devoid of armour and air power. Both parties, however, do make considerable use of modern light armament, so that one could call the Indochinese war an *old-type war with modern weapons.*

2. A great deal of rigidity in tactical thinking has been displayed by the French High Command. Add to this the fact that the French forces have used heavy tanks and artillery, which were designed for use on the firm soils and open plains of Western Europe, in rice paddies and jungle terrain.

3. More than heavy weapons and new concrete pillboxes, the situation in Indochina requires the kind of "offensive spirit" so remarkably displayed by Leclerc and De Lattre with much smaller and poorer-equipped forces than those now at the disposal of the French High Command. No war, and particularly no guerrilla war, can be won by remaining on the defensive. The French will have to adopt Mao Tse-tung's advice and fight the war, with hit-and-run stabs.

At the present time, the entire French order of battle appears to be based on the hopeful assumption that the opposing side will *never* receive an air force or armour for it is quite obvious that under the present conditions no airlift of any consequence could be maintained in the face of enemy fighter opposition. Already the hitherto invulnerable concrete bunkers are victims of the enemy's new recoilless guns and shaped charges and increasing enemy efficiency has to be expected and reckoned with.

The future alone will show whether the recent reorganization of the French High Command in Indochina has brought about this change of spirit.