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Personal Experience Paper

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Winter Warfare Training, Republic of Korea, January 1994

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### Abstract

As an advisor for United States Special Forces Detachment – Korea, to the Republic of Korea Army Special Forces Brigade I was to provide situational awareness/ground truth to Commander United States Special Forces Detachment - Korea and Commander Special Operations Command - Korea (SOC-K) thus providing situational awareness/ground truth to the United Nations Command/Combined Field Command (UNC/CFC) G-3, furthering sending up the chain-of-command to the UNC/CFC Commander. The Commander, Special Operations Command – Korea, would determine what information would have to be furthered to Special Operations Command – Pacific (SOCPAC).

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As an advisor for United States Special Forces Detachment – Korea to the Republic of Korea Army Special Forces Brigade I was to provide situational awareness/ground truth to Commander United States Special Forces Detachment - Korea and Commander Special Operations Command - Korea (SOC-K) thus providing situational awareness/ground truth to the United Nations Command/Combined Field Command (UNC/CFC) G-3, furthering sending up the chain-of-command to the UNC/CFC Commander. The Commander, Special Operations Command – Korea, would determine what information would have to be furthered to Special Operations Command – Pacific (SOCPAC).

Winter Warfare Training 1994 was chosen in order to observe training, identify equipment shortcomings to the United States Army Special Forces Detachment – Korea (USASFD-K), Special Operations Command Korea (SOC-K) Command, build rapport and maintaining my winter warfare skills.

The primary mission was to evaluate the following: Brigade, Battalion and Company Pre-mission planning, Battalion infiltration techniques, base-camp procedures, winter survival training and exfiltration. Company Pre-mission planning, infiltration, mission and exfiltration.

Pre-mission planning for the field training exercise was properly planned and coordinated for at the Korean Company, Battalion, Brigade, Special Warfare Command and at USASFD-K levels.

An Airborne Infiltration (Parachute) Mission was to be conducted, sustained airborne training, actions in the aircraft, exiting the aircraft, swing landing trainer training was sequentially conducted in a thorough fashion. After lunch, the Battalion formed up in a Battalion formation on the Battalion parade field. Final equipment inspection completed and to receive a speech from the Brigade Commander. Immediately upon completion of the speech, trucks were loaded and movement to departure airfield began. Movement to the airfield was normal: soldiers talking, soldiers sleeping, soldiers attempting to relax, soldiers smoking cigarettes. Upon arriving at departure airfield, parachute issue completed and the troops received evening chow.

Jump Master Primary Inspection (JMPI) was accomplished after the order to don equipment, rough terrain suits, parachute and equipment was given. This was followed by the landing of a Republic of Korean Air Force C-130's and a planeside brief with aircrew, jumpmasters, and, safeties being conducted. Once the planeside briefs were accomplished the aircrafts were then loaded, taxied and takeoff from departure airfield.

Night infiltration was conducted with multiple ROK Air Force C-130 aircraft into a drop zone located near the Juri-San range (San in Korean means mountain). After tactical assembly on the drop zone a Battalion administrative halt was conducted for proper parachute accountability and turn-in.

After accountability was completed, an 18 kilometer tactical foot movement began towards the training site. The movement was up spurs, down draws; up ridgelines and eventually movement included up-and-over the top of Juri-San (1800meters) proper was accomplished. Hourly tactical security halts, map checks and rest halts were conducted as planned.

Initial arrival at the Rest-Over-Night (RON) site occurred at approximately 0215 with final unit arrival occurring at 0245. Priorities of work were accomplished to include the team hot Ramón pot. Reason for this is a soldier goes to sleep with something warm in his stomach (cold weather survival training).

Early the following morning stand-to, priorities of work and RON breakdown occurred without incident prior to the final two kilometer movement into base-camp. Movement was conducted uneventfully.

Starting mid-day of day one until mid-day of day two cold weather survival training was conducted. Day two mid-afternoon, the entire Battalion by Company conducted a “Staff Ride” to learn what occurred in the Juri-San range during and after the Korean War.

The following information brief given to both Brigade soldiers and me: In September 1950 as United Nations Forces beginning their offensive operation to break- out of the Pusan perimeter, North Korean forces simultaneously were starting there offensive. The North Korean forces were repelled and began retreating as Untied Nations forces from the Pusan perimeter headed north to link-up with the bulk of United Nation forces. The United Nations forces at this time were simultaneously conducting the famous Inchon landing. North Korean forces, which were located around the Pusan perimeter, suddenly found themselves cut-off in their attempt to return to North Korea. These North Korean forces moved west into the Juri mountain range. The United Nations forces did not follow them.

From September 1950 until the Korean Armistice these North Korean Forces very successfully conducted rear area operations against Republic of Korean Army forces tying up much needed manpower and disrupting resupply operations. After the Armistice was signed, the North Korean Army did not end these particular rear area operations until they were beaten down by Republic of Korean Army in 1960.

Immediately upon returning to base-camp the Companies and RODA's (Republic of Korea Operational Detachment-Alpha) began mission planning. The RODA I was advising was to conduct a 24-36 hour mission.

On night three, the ground foot infiltration was conducted, leaders reconnaissance, and special reconnaissance for maintaining eyes on the objective conducted. Upon returning to the patrol base from the reconnaissance, information was disseminated and final mission planning was conducted. The mission accomplishment of actions on the objective, followed by a quick after action review (AAR), and ground exfiltration concluded by early morning of Day Five.

Upon returning to base-camp, priorities of work were accomplished. Prior to the implementation of a rest plan the order with timeline for wake-up, base-camp break down and line-up for movement to Brigade base-camp was received. The 30 kilometer movement to Brigade base-camp was to start Day 5 at exactly 0900 and completed No Early Than (NET) Day 5 at 2300 with a No Later Than (NLT) Day 5 at 2359 completion. Movement began on schedule, with hourly rest breaks and chow breaks. Movement to the Brigade base-camp was accomplished and completed Day 5 by 2315.

A note-able event occurred when we passed a village bus station. While passing a village bus station a middle-aged Korean man and family were in the bus station and saw an American walking with the Koreans. He then pointed this out to his elderly father who had his cane in his right hand and hunched over. Seeing me the elderly man put his cane in his left hand (leaning on it) stood straight up and saluted me. After I returned the salute he hunched back over returned his cane to his right hand and continued waiting for his bus. My instinct told me the last time this man had contact or saw an American was during the Korean War.

Sunday, I return to USASFD-K, my After Action Report (AAR) was completed and turned in to USASFD-K operations and commander with recovery/refit completed by the close of business Monday. Tuesday I returned to my Brigade with copies of my AAR which were given and I thoroughly discussed my observations with both the Brigade Commander, his staff and Battalion Commander and his staff.

With the successful completion of the Battalion FTX as Republic of Korea Brigade Advisor for United States Special Forces Detachment – Korea I observed training, identified equipment shortcomings to the United States Army Special Forces Detachment – Korea (USASFD-K), Special Operations Command Korea (SOC-K) Command, built rapport and maintained my winter warfare skills. I was also able to provide situational awareness/ground truth to Commander United States Army Special Forces Detachment - Korea and Commander Special Operations Command - Korea (SOC-K) thus providing situational awareness/ground truth to the United Nations Command/Combined Field Command (UNC/CFC) G-3.

More importantly the rapport building that occurred during the FTX solidified a deeper professional and personnel relationship with all members of the Brigade and local community that would last beyond my tenure at Special Forces Detachment - Korea.