

CONFIDENTIAL Security Information

INTERROGATION REPORT NO KG 1122 (Cont'd)

LEE was a born soldier, an excellent tactician and natural fighter but possibly not at his best above Div level. At any rate, his CCF background, under present conditions, would seem to bar him from further advancement. From the standpoint of ability, he was generally rated third among the Corps commanders.

He was said to pay little or no attention to his Soviet advisors.

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Name: CH'OE, Hyōn (崔鉉) (崔 鉉)

Nationality: Korean

Rank: Lt Gen

Position: CG, II Corps, NKA

Age: 55 Height: 1.65 m

Weight: 72 kg

Build: Obese

Complexion: Dark and mottled

Characteristics: Round, bulging face; wide brow

Marital Status: Married

Last Seen: (Location) MUNGYŌNG (平壤), KOREA Date: Oct 50

Observation:

PW first saw CH'OE in 1949 and conversed briefly with him in Oct 50 during the NKA's retreat. Information is nearly all common knowledge and hearsay. CH'OE was the subject of considerable (and often bitter) comment by NKA officers.

Family: No details.

Education and Foreign Languages:

CH'OE's education was very limited. He spoke and read Russian fluently but was barely able to read and write the Korean syllabary. His general ignorance and lack of education was at times astounding.

Background:

In the late 1920's, CH'OE went from KOREA to MANCHURIA, where he joined a guerilla-bandit force. About 1938, he went to the USSR, served in the Red Army during World War II and returned to N KOREA in 1945 as a company grade officer with the Soviet forces. Joining the NK Security Forces in 1946, he eventually became Commander of the Border Constabulary on the 38th parallel. In Jun 50, he took command of the NKA 6th Brig, which carried out an amphibious landing operation and captured KIMP'Ŭ Airfield. The 6th Brig under CH'OE had a good combat record. In Sep 50, he became CG, I Corps and in Oct 50 CG, II Corps, succeeding MU, Chong (武亭). II Corps, under CH'OE, took a severe beating on the Central front in Apr 51, suffering heavy casualties.

Character and Reputation:

CH'OE had the reputation of being the most brutal and ruthless man in the NKA. When entering N KOREA at MANP'ŬJIN with the Soviet forces in 1945, he was said to have shot and killed a Korean sawmill manager for talking back to him. During the NKA retreat in the fall of 1950, he personally killed with his pistol a number of officers who had failed to carry out orders. His manner was harsh, overbearing and gangster-like.

Despite his near illiteracy, CH'OE was very shrewd, and an acute and rapid thinker with a remarkable talent for picking brains and sopping up information. He had a tremendous capacity for work. He made up for his

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deficiencies in military knowledge by being thorough and painstaking and using the whiplash of fear to get the most out of his subordinates. He was said to be partial to guerilla-type tactics, emphasizing feints, surprises and the unorthodox, but was not so good in stand-up conventional fighting. He had a good reputation and record as a combat commander and was rated a fine tactician and among the ablest of the Corps commanders.

Aside from his shortcomings in military knowledge, he seemed to have one serious weakness - a tendency to get rattled at times under pressure. o/a 20 Sep 50, PW overheard a telephone conversation between CH'OE and KIM, Ch'aek (金策), CG of Field Hq, NKA. CH'OE had been ordered to hold a town S of SUAM BONG (水岩峯) against UN forces. During the conversation, CH'OE, apparently frantic and losing his head, demanded 500 SMGs, a quantity of weapons which he surely knew was not available.

As an outsider from the Ministry of Interior troops, CH'OE was resented by the NKA, but the Security Forces troops, especially the Border Constabulary, felt a perverse respect and pride in their old commander, who had made good in the NKA.

CH'OE had the complete trust and support of the USSR. He has shown a certain arrogance toward higher-ranking N Korean generals and officials, who both fear and hate him. One story, possibly apocryphal, had CH'OE saying to KIM, Il Song: "You're only temporary. I'd like to be Premier for a while". It is likely, however, that CH'OE has reached his peak. He was not a political figure and as a military man, his obvious lack of knowledge of strategy and higher command problems would seem to bar him from rising any higher. He could come to the fore only in the event of a hopeless last-ditch fight.

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Name: YU, Kyong Su (劉京洙) (유경수)
 Nationality: Korean
 Position: CG, III Corps, NKA
 Age: 40 (Hearsay)

Observation:

PW has never seen YU. Information is entirely hearsay.

Education and Foreign Languages:

YU was said to speak Korean with a Russian accent and is of Soviet origin.

Background:

YU was graduated from a Red Army tank school about 1938. During World War II, he was a company grade officer in a Soviet tank unit. He came to N KOREA in 1946 and in 1947 was CO of the Security Forces' 4th Regt. In 1948, he became commander of the NKA Tank Unit, continuing in command as it became a Brig and finally, the 105th Tank Div. In the early part of the war, tank units made a good showing, although the credit properly should go not to YU, but to the Soviet advisor to the Tank Command Bureau, a Soviet of Korean descent named Lt Col YUN (尹) (FNU), who was a tank expert deemed too valuable by the USSR to be released outright to the NKA. When the 105th was awarded the Guard (近衛) Unit citation and designation, YU, as Div CG, received the NKA's highest decoration, the Medal for Valor (英雄稱號 - the literal translation is "Appellation of Hero", presumably the N Korean equivalent of "Hero of the Soviet Union").