

CANADIAN NAVAL  
OPERATIONS IN  
KOREAN  
WATERS  
1950 - 1955

BY  
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THE NAVAL HISTORICAL SECTION  
CANADIAN FORCES HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE  
OTTAWA 1965

## NOTE

In the writing of this volume the authors have been given full access to relevant official documents in possession of the Department of National Defence; but the inferences drawn and the opinions expressed are those of the authors themselves, and the Department is in no way responsible for their reading or presentation of the facts as stated.

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Price \$6.00

Catalogue No. DB3-9265

*Price subject to change without notice*

ROGER DUHAMEL, F.R.S.C.

Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery

Ottawa, Canada

1965

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## *Preface*

On 30 July, 1950, the three Canadian destroyers *Cayuga*, *Athabaskan* and *Sioux* arrived at Sasebo, Japan, under orders to join the United Nations forces fighting in Korea. Under the conditions that existed in the Korean theatre during almost the entire period of active hostilities, it would often have been most inconvenient to maintain the three Canadian destroyers as a single operational formation, and hence it came about that seldom did HMC ships there operate as a division under their own divisional commander.

Necessary as this arrangement may have been, it makes things rather awkward for the historian. When writing of the role of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Korean operations, instead of dealing with the activities of a single force, he must perforce, if he aspires to completeness, tell the stories of all the individual ships. Such a history would be very long and often, it must be admitted, exceedingly tedious, since much of the destroyers' time was taken up in entirely uneventful escort duties, carrier screening and inshore patrol missions. One way of solving the problem would be to make the history episodic in nature, consisting of a series of descriptions of the more noteworthy episodes in which our ships were involved. But interesting as some of the episodes might be, even a very large number of anecdotes strung together would not constitute a history of the Royal Canadian Navy's destroyers in Korea.

The logical solution of the difficulty, and the one that has been adopted, is to compromise. In the following pages an attempt will be made to provide, within the framework of a general account of the main conflict, both an episodic account of the activities of the individual destroyers, including a proportion of the routine operations, and a general outline of the history of the Destroyer Division itself.

This history of the Canadian destroyers in Korea is primarily an operational history, but of course it has been necessary to mention on occasion such aspects as administration and logistics. These features have

however been kept as much as possible in the background, and this in spite of the fact that a small naval force operating at a great distance from its home bases is inevitably faced with many problems which would not be encountered, at least in so acute a form, under ordinary conditions of service.

But one very important feature of RCN activities in Korean waters cannot be entirely neglected, and that is the problem of supply. The difficulties caused by a shortage of certain radar or sonar parts or the lack of a particular nut or bolt usually loomed much larger than such administrative problems as pay, discipline and drafting. A short chapter on Canadian naval logistics in the Far East has therefore been written and is included as an appendix.

The completed manuscript was read by a large number of persons, most of them naval officers who served in the Korean theatre, and to these we owe a large debt. Their constructive criticisms have appreciably decreased the number of errors both of fact and interpretation in the book. Those errors that remain are of course the sole responsibility of the authors.

Because the officers to whom we are indebted are so very many, it is impracticable to list them all. But the fact that we do not thank them by name does not mean that our gratitude to them is the less.

We thank also our colleagues and the clerical staff in the Naval Historical Section for the help they have given.

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## *Bibliography*

### MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

The principal sources for this account of the Canadian destroyers in Korean waters are the volumes of manuscript reports, letters, memoranda and messages held by the Department of National Defence, Ottawa.

The most useful single series of files is that containing the *Reports of Proceedings* of the individual ships, supplemented by the *Reports* submitted at the end of each tour of duty by the various Commanders of the Canadian destroyer force. The reports submitted by Captain (now Rear-Admiral) J. V. Brock, D.S.O., D.S.C., C.D., RCN, and Captain (now a retired Commodore) James Plomer, O.B.E., D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN, are particularly informative. Several general *Reports* on Korean experiences submitted by individual Commanding Officers are also of great historical value.

In addition to these sources the Korean files of such Directorates as Intelligence, Plans and Operations, and of the Supply Branch are also very useful.

As these files are not available except to certain authorized personnel, it is felt that no very useful purpose would be served by enumerating them in a bibliography. In the text of the history, the sources of direct quotations from original documents have been cited. In general, except where secondary sources are

involved, the aim of keeping the footnotes to a minimum has been adopted. The source for any statement of fact concerning the Canadian destroyers is, unless otherwise stated, the relevant *Report of Proceedings*.

### PRINTED SOURCES

For that part of the text which deals with the Korean conflict as a whole, a considerable number of printed sources have been consulted, and these are all, together with others that have come to our attention, listed in the bibliography included as Appendix J.

The bibliography of printed sources does not aim at completeness as naturally it is heavily weighted on the naval side. Little use, for instance, has been made of Army and Air Force periodicals, while naval periodicals have been extensively consulted. It is hoped however that no books or articles of major importance, whether they deal with Navy, Army or Air Force, have been overlooked.

Since the manuscript was completed early in 1960, a number of valuable books on the Korean conflict have appeared. No important changes in the text have been made as a result of these new works, but a number of footnotes have been added.

## CHAPTER I

### “THREE SHIPS WEST”

In Ottawa it was mid-afternoon, Saturday, 24 June, 1950, but in Korea dawn was about to break on Sunday, 25 June,\* when an artillery bombardment struck the little border town of Ongijin just south of the 38th parallel. Some two hours later North Korean troops supported by armour began to surge across the frontier at several key points. As the hours passed the attack continued and grew in strength, and soon it became apparent that this was no border raid but the beginning of yet another war.<sup>1</sup>

Strange as it may seem in this age of split-second communication, reliable information about the North Korean aggression was slow in reaching the outside world. So unexpected was the attack and such was its force that the South Korean defences were thrown into complete disorder. After the beginning of the initial barrage almost seven and a half hours elapsed before the United States Ambassador in Seoul, Mr. John M. Muccio, was able to collect enough seemingly-authentic information to inform his government that a major attack had taken place.<sup>2</sup> It took twice as long for the United Nations Commission on Korea, with headquarters in Seoul, to prepare a telegram notifying the Secretary General that there was a “serious situation developing which is assuming character of full-scale war and may endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.”<sup>3</sup>

Events followed quickly upon the receipt of Ambassador Muccio’s telegram in Washington at 2126 on 24 June. Top diplomatic and military leaders were called in for talks, and shortly after midnight the Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Acheson, telephoned President Truman, who was visiting his family at Independence, Missouri, to discuss what should be

done. Their decision to lay the matter before the United Nations was in accord with an earlier statement by Acheson that if an attack occurred the responsibility “must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the charter of the United Nations.”<sup>4</sup> So far the U.S. Government had taken everything very calmly; President Truman decided that it would not even be necessary for him to break his holiday. As more news began to come in, and it became clear that the North Koreans were much stronger and the South Koreans much weaker than had been thought, Acheson telephoned Truman again, and the latter decided to return to Washington.<sup>5</sup>

The Security Council meeting resulting from the U.S. request was held on Sunday afternoon, 25 June. The U.S.S.R. was not at this time represented on the Council, as she had been boycotting its meetings since the previous January in protest against Chinese Nationalist membership. Its members consequently were able to act freely without fear of a veto and immediately passed a resolution denouncing the attack on South Korea as a breach of the peace. North Korea was called upon to withdraw her army at once behind the 38th parallel, and the UN Commission on Korea was ordered to observe and report on this withdrawal. All members of the UN were called upon to assist in the execution of the resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Koreans.<sup>6</sup> The vote on this resolution was unanimous except for one abstention.<sup>7</sup>

Truman arrived in Washington that evening, and after a conference with diplomatic and military men he decided to authorize General Douglas MacArthur, the supreme commander of the allied occupation forces in Japan, to prevent the fall of the Inchon-Kimpo-Seoul triangle until all American nationals there could be evacuated. Orders were also given to begin moving American naval and air forces in the East into the

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\*The time difference is fourteen hours; thus the attack which began at 0400 on 25 June occurred at 1400, 24 June, Ottawa (EST) time. Henceforth the time and date of events will be that of the place where they occurred.

danger zone. No drastic measures were taken, but some seem to have been contemplated.<sup>8</sup> On the following morning, Monday, 26 June, Truman made a statement which was fairly innocuous; it left the solution of the problem to the UN, though of course giving assurances of full United States support.<sup>9</sup>

The Security Council marked time during the 26th to see what effect its resolution would have on the North Koreans. But bad news continued to filter in to the U.S. Government, and on the night of the 26th Truman met with his advisers and decided to take drastic action. United States naval and air forces, on Acheson's recommendation,<sup>10</sup> were ordered to go to the assistance of South Korea, and the Seventh Fleet was given the task of neutralizing Formosa. These decisions were made public next morning by President Truman.<sup>11</sup> Their toughness surprised even the U.S. State Department, but they were in general favourably received throughout the anti-Communist world.

That same day, 27 June, the U.S. representative on the Security Council, Mr. Warren Austin, informed Council members that North Korea had completely ignored the first UN resolution and that he was therefore presenting a second resolution to supplement and strengthen the first. This second resolution, incidentally, had the effect of "legalizing" Truman's action in using armed forces against the aggressors.\* It contained but one recommendation: ". . . that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area."<sup>12</sup> Though some of the UN members in their speeches endeavoured to minimize the force of this resolution,<sup>13</sup> it was in effect a declaration of war on the North Koreans. There could be no backing down now; if the resolution were not acted upon, it would probably mean the end of the United Nations as an effective organization.

Canada up to this time had nothing to do with the decision to take up the North Korean challenge, although no doubt her attitude had been made known to the U.S. and British representatives on the Security Council. Canada had no official representative in Korea, and her information about the situation there had to come through the UN or from friendly governments.<sup>14</sup> Parliament was in session, and when the House met on Monday, 26 June, the Government was questioned about Korea. Mr. L. B. Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, could add nothing to the information

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\*The first resolution, which had ordered the cessation of hostilities, had called upon all members "to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution," but it is fairly clear that the Council did not mean that its members should use force of arms to ensure the cessation of hostilities.

already in the press, but he assured the House that the safety of Canadian nationals in South Korea would be looked after.<sup>15</sup> The House does not appear to have been very alarmed by the Korean crisis. The opposition parties did not press the Government to disclose its plans, and there was no criticism of Mr. Pearson's statement that the Security Council resolution of the 25th, "I feel certain ... will commend itself to all members of the house."<sup>16</sup> The matter was dealt with quickly, and the House went on to discuss the decline in production and increase in price of cheese.

The Korean crisis inevitably crept into the debates on the following day, 27 June, as the House was discussing the estimates of the Defence Department. Preparedness was the theme of much of the discussion, and the Royal Canadian Navy was singled out for praise on that score. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. George Drew, repeated and expressed agreement with a statement of the Minister of National Defence that the navy was "nearer to being on an active service basis than any of our other forces."<sup>17</sup> The Minister, Mr. Brooke Claxton, did not state that the navy might be involved in the Korean crisis, but he did hint at the possibility when he remarked that "... if the situation continues to look serious, we certainly could not continue with plans for the [previously announced] voyage of the ships [of the Pacific Destroyer Division] to European waters ..."<sup>18</sup>

The overall picture was much clearer when the House met the following day; there was no longer doubt about the attitude of the United States nor about the intention of the North Koreans to continue their aggression. Mr. Pearson therefore was able to make a more comprehensive statement to Parliament than before. He pointed out that the Security Council had no means of enforcing its decisions and was forced to rely on "individual members of the security council acting within the terms of the charter but on their own initiative."<sup>19</sup> This the United States had done when she ordered her naval and air forces to aid the South Koreans, and the Canadian Government was prepared to support her action. When questioned about what practical measures Canada intended to take, Mr. Pearson pointed out that the Security Council resolution of the 27th had not yet been formally delivered to the Canadian Government; but, he continued, "I can assure ... [parliament] that we shall be conferring, through the United Nations, with other members of the United Nations as to what part we in Canada can and should take in any future action that may be necessary."<sup>20</sup> Before the debate ended both the Official Opposition and the CCF party expressed their approval of what had so far been done to meet the Korean crisis.<sup>21</sup>



Next day, the 29th, the opposition parties began to exert more pressure on the government to take action in support of the United States and the UN. Mr. Pearson made another statement, but he added little to his previous one except the announcement that Canada, at the request of the UN Secretariat, would be supplying two military observers to the UN Commission in Korea. The Social Credit leader, Mr. Solon Low, while agreeing in principle with Mr. Pearson's statement of the 28th, made a strong speech advocating that Canada should back the United States and the UN to the limit of her resources. Mr. Drew for the Conservatives and Mr. Stanley Knowles for the CCF both pledged support for any action taken to fulfil Canadian obligations under the UN charter. The only dissenting voice was that of Mr. Jean François Pouliot (Liberal, Temiscouata) who seems to have felt that the Korean crisis was really none of Canada's business.<sup>22</sup> That he did not speak for the Quebec members was made clear by M. Boisvert (Liberal, Nicolet-Yamaska) who asserted that "... we from the province of Quebec will be like brothers with those from other provinces in our readiness to support the government ..."<sup>23</sup>

Before the North Korean attack occurred, it had been decided to prorogue the current session of parliament at the end of the month, and the Government did not consider that the crisis was serious enough to merit keeping the House in session after regular business had been cleared up. When the members assembled on the morning of 30 June the Prime Minister himself, the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent, made a final statement on the Korean crisis. He emphasized strongly that Canada had no intention of making war on any country. If she were to become involved in hostilities against the North Koreans it would be as a member of the UN fulfilling her obligations under the Charter. Should the Security Council request military aid Canada would consider making a contribution; "It might", he said, "... take the form of destroyers to operate with other naval units of the United Nations..."<sup>24</sup> That it would almost certainly take the form of destroyers was revealed by the statement that the Pacific coast destroyers would definitely not be going to Europe as planned but instead would be moved into western Pacific waters "where the ships would be closer to the area where they might be of assistance to the United Nations and Korea."<sup>25</sup>

The Prime Minister's statement was very well received by the House. Mr. Drew made a long speech emphasizing that his party whole-heartedly supported the Government "in taking whatever steps may be necessary to preserve the peace."<sup>26</sup> Mr. Knowles for the CCF and Mr. Low for the Social Credit party both endorsed Mr. Drew's views. There was not a dissenting

voice; though obviously Mr. Pouliot had his tongue in his cheek when he rose to signify his assent to the will of his party: "... if I did not rely upon the wisdom and the foresight of my leader, the Prime Minister, I would make now a longer speech than that of the leader of the opposition."<sup>27</sup> It was obvious that the Government had the full support of the House for its plan to send three RCN destroyers of the Pacific Division, if necessary, into action with the other United Nations forces.

The reason that the Government had chosen the Royal Canadian Navy to provide Canada's initial military contribution was simply that, of the three armed services, only the RCN was in a position to provide an active service force for immediate use.<sup>28</sup> The Canadian Army was at or near its full peace-time strength and had at its disposal many well-trained units, notably an air-borne brigade. The difficulty was that these units had been specially trained for and could not be spared from their primary role—the defence of Canada. In any event none of them was so prepared that it could be packed off at a week's notice to fight in a foreign theatre 7,000 miles away. The RCAF was in a similar position. Its squadrons were fully prepared to help defend Canada; they were not prepared, nor could they be spared, to fight in Asia.\* If the Canadian Government wished to send immediate aid to the hard-pressed United Nations forces in Korea, that aid would have to come from the Royal Canadian Navy.

Following the Truman statement and the Security Council resolution of 27 June, the RCN began to take steps to put its fighting ships in the Pacific on a war footing. The three destroyers of the Pacific Division were at this time in the early stages of preparing for a European cruise with the Canadian Special Service Squadron. *Sioux* was in dry dock, where she was expected to remain until 30 June; some of the items on her "alterations and additions" list were not due for completion before 10 July. *Athabaskan* was in a fair state of readiness as she had begun preliminary storing for the European cruise, but she was in the midst of her annual leave period, and many of her key men were away, with their leave not due to expire until 6 July. *Cayuga*, the senior ship of the division, was the one best prepared to make a quick departure, though even she had but recently (21 June) come out of dry dock.

In spite of all these difficulties the Flag Officer Pacific Coast<sup>29</sup> decided, after consultation with the

\*There is always a tendency to think of air power as being exceptionally mobile, but when the area in which an air force wishes to operate is out of striking range of its planes, the mobility of that force is no greater, and perhaps even less, than that of the other two services. Carrier-based air power is of course much more mobile.

Senior Officer of the destroyer division<sup>30</sup> on the morning of 28 June, that the ships could be ready to sail in 24 hours if necessary. It is perhaps fortunate that such a rapid departure did not become necessary as an enormous amount of work remained to be done to bring the ships up to full efficiency. Some of the ships required changes in armament; some had to complete essential repairs; all of them had to bring their complements up to a war-time level,<sup>31</sup> had to take on stores and equipment, including a liberal supply of spares, and had to replenish their fuel and outfits of ammunition. Most of the Royal Canadian Navy's ships and establishments on the West Coast assisted in one way or another in the project *Three Ships West*,<sup>32</sup> but it is to the three ships' companies, to FOPC's organization, and to the staffs of the supply depot and the dockyard that the greatest share of the credit is due for the speed and efficiency with which the destroyer division was readied for war.

Though the RCN on the West Coast had been aware since 27 June that at least some of its destroyers might be ordered to the Far East, it was not until the morning of 30 June that a message arrived from CANAVHED (Naval Headquarters, Ottawa) officially cancelling the European cruise.<sup>33</sup> Two and one-half hours later the Flag Officer Pacific Coast received the message that he and all his command had been expecting:

**You are to sail "Cayuga," "Sioux" and "Athabaskan" from Esquimalt at 16 knots to Pearl Harbor p.m. Wednesday 5 July, 1950...**<sup>34</sup>

The mission for which the Pacific Destroyer Division had already begun to prepare was thus officially confirmed, and the race against time to get everything ready increased in intensity. Besides the immediate problems faced by the Pacific Command in preparing the ships for war, there were many other difficulties in this unique undertaking. It would be the first time that Canada had placed a military force at the disposal of an international organization and the first time she had placed such a force under a foreign commander in peace time. Consequently the legal aspects of the undertaking required close study.\* Then too there were logistic arrangements to be made; for as the RCN possessed no fleet train, the destroyers would have to depend upon the USN and the Royal Navy for fuel, ammunition, much of their supplies and of course base facilities.

Not all the logistic problems had been solved when the time came for the destroyers to sail, nor had the

\*There was some doubt whether the RCN would have to be placed on active service, whether a state of emergency would have to be declared, and whether the Government had the authority to place Canadian forces under a United States or even a United Nations commander.

legal status of the force been settled.† The ships sailed therefore under orders to proceed to Pearl Harbor where they would receive further instructions. It was made quite clear however what their ultimate mission would be if there were no radical change in the international situation.<sup>35</sup>

On the day before sailing, important changes of command, which had been promulgated before hostilities opened in Korea, took place within the Pacific Destroyer Division. Captain J. V. Brock, D.S.C., RCN, became Commander Canadian Destroyers Pacific and Commanding Officer, HMCS *Cayuga*, in place of Captain M. A. Medland, RCN, who had served in her since 15 September, 1949. A relief for the Commanding Officer of HMCS *Sioux*, Commander D. W. Groos, D.S.C., RCN, was also arranged, his place being taken by Commander P. D. Taylor, RCN. Commander R. P. Welland, D.S.C., RCN, who had taken command of his ship only some three months before, remained with HMCS *Athabaskan* when she sailed for, Korea.

Finally the time came to sail, and at 1500, local time, 5 July, 1950, HMC Ships *Cayuga*, *Athabaskan* and *Sioux*<sup>36</sup> formed up astern of HMCS *Ontario* (Captain H. F. Pullen, O.B.E., RCN) and sailed out from Esquimalt bound for Pearl Harbor some 2,000 miles away. As the formation passed Duntze Head the salute was taken by Rear-Admiral H. G. DeWolf, C.B.E., D.S.O., D.S.C., RCN, Flag Officer Pacific Coast.<sup>37</sup>

*Ontario* led the formation (TG 214.1) for two days, and then on the evening of the 7th after topping up the destroyers with oil she reversed course to return to Vancouver Island. The destroyers, now organized as Task Group 214.4 with *Cayuga* as senior ship, sailed on. The weather was perfect, and the ships passed the time on passage in exercises and other training activities designed to improve their efficiency and ready them for action. On the morning of 12 July they entered Pearl Harbor.

When the destroyers arrived at Pearl Harbor no further orders had been received about the subsequent disposition of the task group. Within two hours, however, the expected message arrived:<sup>38</sup>

**1. ... as from 0001Z/14 July<sup>39</sup> TG 214.4 under your command is transferred to the operational control of General MacArthur as Commander United Nations Forces Korea for operations in relation to the invasion of South Korea**

†When the destroyers sailed a commander for the UN forces in the Korean theatre had not been named, and there was technically no UN force as such operating there. It was 7 July before the Security Council authorized the U.S. to designate a supreme commander for the unified force operating under the flag of the United Nations.



*Cayuga* refuels from *Ontario* before setting course for Pearl Harbor.



View of Sasebo harbour. *Athabaskan* on extreme right, second from foreground.

only. You and all officers and men under your command shall obey operational instructions issued by or on behalf of such Commander. You shall promulgate this order in suitable form to all officers and men under your command.

2. You are to report by message direct to Commander United Nations Forces Korea Headquarters in Tokyo ... and request instructions, at the same time acquainting General MacArthur of necessity for logistic calls at Bikini and Guam and your ETA\* these ports.
3. Logistic support. Arrangements will be made on repayment basis for you to draw supplies from U.S. sources other than items peculiar to RCN for which arrangements will be made to have them shipped via U.S. transport on demand by you.
4. You are authorized to fly the flag of the United Nations at the foremasthead ...

The following day Captain Brock signalled General MacArthur, placing the RCN destroyers at his disposal and indicating an intention of joining the UN forces in the Korean theatre at the earliest possible date.<sup>40</sup> The General's reply was prompt and courteous:

**Part One.** On behalf United Nations delighted to accept force under your command for service in repelling aggression in Korea.

**Part Two.** Proposed sailing schedule indicates prompt action and readiness of the RCN. Upon arrival Guam report to COMNAVFE who will issue further instructions.

**Part Three.** C IN C PAC is hereby requested to confirm direct to you information this command logistic support required. Signed MacArthur.<sup>41</sup>

After two days at Pearl Harbor taking on fuel and supplies and effecting minor repairs, TG 214.4 sailed for Kwajalein, the next port-of-call. After an uneventful passage of six days the destroyers arrived there on 21 July, took on fuel, and departed the

\* Estimated Time of Arrival.

following day. Their next destination was Guam where the task group received orders to proceed directly to Sasebo on the island of Kyushu, Japan. Difficulties in fuelling and storing delayed the ships, and they did not leave Guam until the 27th. In an effort to make up the lost time speed was increased to 24 knots,<sup>42</sup> and at 1530, local time, on 30 July the Canadian Destroyer Division Pacific entered Sasebo harbour, ready to join in the battle for the Pusan bridge-head.

Some idea of the offensive capabilities of the Canadian destroyer force may be gained from the fact that, at this time, a *Tribal* Class destroyer such as HMCS *Cayuga* mounted six 4-inch guns and eight 40-mm. automatic Bofors guns for use against aircraft and surface targets. Her anti-submarine armament consisted of the ahead-throwing *Squid* mortar and conventional depth charges; she also carried four tubes for her 21-inch torpedoes. As to her size, though one is accustomed to think of destroyers as small ships, the average Canadian has but to think of the dimensions of the house in which he lives to realize that a *Tribal's* length of 377 feet and breadth of 37½ feet is by no means tiny.

The other Canadian *Tribals* that served in Korea (*Athabaskan*, *Nootka*, *Iroquois*, *Huron* and *Haida*) were all the same size as *Cayuga* and carried similar armament. HMCS *Sioux*, though she bore a *Tribal* name, was a former Royal Navy "V" Class destroyer, with a length of 362 feet and a full load displacement of 2,530 tons compared to a *Tribal's* 2,745 tons. *Sioux* carried two single 4.7-inch guns, an anti-aircraft armament of 40-mm. and 20-mm. guns and six 21-inch torpedo tubes. Her anti-submarine armament was the same as that of a *Tribal*.



Hoisting the UN flag in *Cayuga*.

HMCS *Crusader*, the only other non-*Tribal* to serve with the Canadian force in Korea, was a destroyer of the *Crescent* Class. She was the same size as *Sioux*, but her armament consisted of four 4.5-inch guns, six 40-mm. Bofors and four 21-inch torpedo tubes. Her anti-submarine armament consisted of two *hedgehogs*, an ahead-throwing weapon of an earlier type than the *Squid* carried by the other ships, as well as depth charges.

While the Canadian destroyers steamed across the Pacific, the war in Korea was going badly for the United Nations. Exploiting the initial advantage gained by their unexpected assault, the North Korean infantry\* advanced rapidly against little more than token resistance from a disorganized and demoralized South Korean army. Soldiers of the U.S. 24th Division were flown from Japan and hurriedly committed piecemeal in an attempt to stiffen the defeated forces, but there were simply not enough of them to play a decisive part in the battle. By the middle of July, however, the 25th U.S. Division had arrived in Pusan and was hurrying to the front, and on the 18th the First Cavalry was landed by the navy at Pohang. These troops, backed by all-out aerial support from the navy and air force, succeeded in slowing the advance, and by 7 August the First Provisional Marine Brigade, hastily scraped together and landed by the navy at Pusan a few days before, was able to launch a counter-attack against the over-confident North Koreans near Chindong-ni. When *Cayuga* led the Canadian destroyers into Sasebo, the

\*The North Korean forces enjoyed fair artillery support and also possessed a number of the formidable Soviet T-34 tanks, but these weapons were not of decisive importance; the backbone of the Communist forces, both before and after the Chinese intervention, was a superb infantry.

issue was still very much in doubt; Taejon had fallen; Taegu was endangered; and the entire Pusan bridgehead was threatened by an enemy advance east from Mokpo against the weak left flank of the United Nations forces.<sup>43</sup>

The great need at Pusan was for more ground forces, but as they were simply not available it fell to the overwhelmingly superior naval and air forces of the United Nations to try to make up for the lack. The U.S. Air Force was at a disadvantage in that, because of lack of operational air fields in Korea, its short range craft had to operate from Japan and its bombers from Japan and Okinawa. The mobile air power of the carriers<sup>44</sup> was therefore invaluable, not only in providing close support for the ground troops but in destroying strategic targets which would normally have been the responsibility of land-based planes<sup>45</sup>. Whether or not the strategic bombing had any effect on the battle for the Pusan bridge-head is very doubtful<sup>46</sup>, but there seem to be grounds for claiming that the close support and armed reconnaissance, particularly of the carrier planes, played a decisive part in the eventual victory of the UN forces<sup>47</sup>.

The role of the other naval vessels in the defence of the Pusan bridge-head was less spectacular than that of the aircraft carriers but equally important. It is virtually certain for instance that the bridge-head would have been wiped out had not the navy been available to land the First Cavalry at Pohang and the 25th Division and the Provisional Marine Brigade at Pusan. Nor should the rescue by the U.S. Navy of the trapped Third ROK Division from the beaches near Yonghae be forgotten. This division, on the day following its embarkation, was re-landed at Kuryongpo-ri some thirty miles further south to resume its task of stemming the Communist advance.

Besides these operations involving the use of naval air power and the movement of troops, UN naval forces also provided gun-fire support in an effort to impede the Communist advance. During the Pusan fighting, however, it was seldom that direct gun-fire support could be employed to maximum advantage. Most of the heavy fighting took place near the centre of the defence perimeter, and there was little activity on the extreme flanks where naval gun-fire would have done the most good<sup>48</sup>. As a result, much of the naval effort was directed towards destroying military targets well behind the lines<sup>49</sup>. After reinforcements began to arrive in force towards the end of July this programme was intensified; between the end of June and mid-September, when the Inchon landings began, the UN naval forces carried out 89 bombardments on the east coast alone<sup>50</sup>.

Close support and interdiction\* by naval gun-fire and carrier planes, the movement of troops and the escort of troop transports were only incidental to the chief task shouldered by the UN naval forces in Korea—blockade. On 4 July President Truman declared a blockade of the entire Korean coast-line;<sup>51</sup> now it remained for the navy to make it effective.<sup>52</sup> It did not take long to dispose of the small, ineffective “gunboat navy” which was all the North Koreans possessed,<sup>53</sup> and of the obsolete propeller craft that made up their air force.<sup>54</sup> Virtually all danger of enemy attack upon the UN ships was thereby eliminated. There remained however the dangers of mining and shore battery fire.<sup>55</sup>

Unfortunately, enemy action was not the only obstacle facing the blockading ships; there were also the problems created by geography, hydrography and climate. The western coast-line, for instance, is ragged and heavily indented, and the water is extremely shallow and dotted with islands, low-water mud flats, rocks and shoals. High, strong tides, of over thirty feet in some places, scour the muddy bottom, and channels are formed, obliterated and reformed with remarkable frequency. There are few harbours worth the name, and those that exist must be continually dredged to prevent silting.<sup>56</sup>

Such conditions did not make easy the task of the west coast blockade force. Firstly, they were altogether too favourable for the clandestine use of small craft. It required the utmost vigilance by surface ships and supporting carrier planes to prevent the infiltration of enemy agents, the movement of supplies and men, and even the fairly large scale transport of invading troops to and from the mainland and the many off-shore islands. Secondly, the shoal water made it very difficult for even small ships to approach close enough to the shore to provide effective gun-fire support for UN and guerilla forces and to attack the enemy’s lines of communication. Thirdly, conditions on the west coast

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\*In the dictionary sense of the word, *interdict* means to prohibit or prevent absolutely, but in the military sense it can also mean merely to hinder or obstruct.

made it easy for the enemy to lay mines, though fortunately the extreme range of the tides made moored mines fairly easy to detect.<sup>57</sup> The tides and currents, however, made the floating mine a perennial problem. Had the enemy possessed large numbers of magnetic, acoustic and pressure mines, the west coast would indeed have been a dangerous place for the blockade forces, especially in the early months of the war when minesweepers were virtually unobtainable.

The climate of the west coast does little to make up for the unfavourable hydrographic conditions. The winter is fairly cold, with occasional gales and blinding snow squalls; the summers hot and humid, with heavy rains and much fog. During the summer one can usually expect at least one typhoon, and occasionally there are as many as three; fortunately many of them do not strike the northern Yellow Sea and Yalu Gulf.

The east coast climate is much like that of the west, but the hydrographic conditions are very different. Here the water is deep, islands are few, and the coastline, except at its northern end, almost unbroken. The 100-fathom line lies close to the shore in most places, and the tidal range is very low. Along the coast is a series of narrow plains backed by high mountains, and through these plains, especially in the area between Wonsan and Chongjin, run the main railway lines and roads of North Korea. It was against these vulnerable lines of communication that the weight of UN naval attack on the east coast was thrown.

Though the east-coast naval patrols enjoyed many advantages not shared by those on the west coast, they also faced one problem which did not as seriously affect their western counterparts. For the extremely low tidal range, the absence of the fierce currents found on the west coast and the narrow width of the continental shelf between the 100-fathom line and the shore, all contributed to make the east coast ideal for the use of moored mines.<sup>58</sup> As on the west coast, the prevailing ocean currents flow from north to south, thereby facilitating the use of drifting mines. Such, then, were the conditions under which the Canadian destroyers would be operating in the Korean theatre.

## References

- <sup>1</sup>Precisely what did occur on the night of 24/25 June will probably never be determined. The relevant documents dealing with the outbreak of hostilities are to be found in Miss M. Carlyle, *Documents on International Affairs, 1949-1950*, (London, 1953); Department of External Affairs (Canada), *Canada and the Korean Crisis and Documents of the Korean Crisis*, (Ottawa, 1950 and 1951); Britain, Foreign Office, *Summary of Events Relating to Korea, 1950*, (London, 1950); and U.S. Department of State, *United States Policy in the Korean Crisis*, (Washington, 1950). Numerous competent interpretations of the Korean conflict are available and many are listed in the bibliography. The only interesting and plausible anti-Western interpretation is that of J. F. Stone, *The Hidden History of the Korean War*, which is said to have had a considerable influence, particularly on the AfroAsian members of the UN.
- <sup>2</sup>Text in *United States Policy in the Korean Crisis*, 11.
- <sup>3</sup>*Canada and the Korean Crisis*, 17.
- <sup>4</sup>In a speech to the National Press Club, Washington, on 12 January, 1950; text in M. Carlyle, *op. cit.*, 103 f.
- <sup>5</sup>Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, (New York, 1956), 332.
- <sup>6</sup>Text in Carlyle, *op. cit.*, 630-631.
- <sup>7</sup>For the resolution: the United States, United Kingdom, France, Nationalist China, Cuba, Ecuador, Norway, Egypt and India. Yugoslavia abstained from voting, though Marshal Tito at this time was on most unfriendly terms with Stalin.
- <sup>8</sup>See H. S. Truman, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-336.
- <sup>9</sup>Text in *United States Policy in the Korean Crisis*, 16-17. See H. S. Truman *op. cit.*, 334 f.
- <sup>10</sup>Berger C., *The Korean Knot: A Military Political History*, 97.
- <sup>11</sup>Text in *Canada and the Korean Crisis*, 20-21.
- <sup>12</sup>Full text in *Canada and the Korean Crisis*, 21.
- <sup>13</sup>Only Yugoslavia voted against the resolution. India and Egypt abstained because their delegates had not had time to consult their governments, but the former later ratified the resolution.
- <sup>14</sup>*Debates, House of Commons*, Session 1950, Vol. iv, 4116. Henceforth referred to as *Hansard*.
- <sup>15</sup>*Loc. cit.*
- <sup>16</sup>*Loc. cit.*
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 4120.
- <sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 4128.
- <sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 4251.
- <sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 4253.
- <sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 4252-4253.
- <sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 4387.
- <sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 4392. There was, however, a certain amount of uneasiness in the French-language press that the Government might pledge strong ground forces for use in Korea and that the question of conscription might crop up again. *Le Devoir* in particular was uneasy about this possibility. See F. H. Soward and Edgar McInnis, *Canada and the United Nations* (New York, 1956), 126.
- <sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 4459.
- <sup>25</sup>*Loc. cit.*
- <sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 4461.
- <sup>27</sup>*Loc. cit.*
- <sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 4122 f. and *Hansard* (1950, 2nd Session), 98f.
- <sup>29</sup>Rear-Admiral H. G. DeWolf, C.B.E., D.S.O., D.S.C., RCN.
- <sup>30</sup>Captain M. A. Medland, RCN.
- <sup>31</sup>*Cayuga* sailed with a complement of 15 officers and 271 men (two officers and 74 men over the peace-time complement); *Athabaskan* with 16 officers and 262 men (one officer and 84 men over peace-time complement); *Sioux* with 16 officers and 239 men (four officers and 33 men over peacetime complement).
- <sup>32</sup>A local, informal code name for the task of preparing the ships for Far Eastern operations. Mr. Symon's book, *Three Ships West*, about Columbus, had recently been published.
- <sup>33</sup>CANAVHED to CANFLAGPAC, 1800Z/30 June, 1950.
- <sup>34</sup>CANAVHED to CANFLAGPAC, 2030Z/30 June, 1950.
- <sup>35</sup>The commander of the destroyer force received, besides his orders, an *Annex* to these orders prepared by External Affairs outlining the history of the Korean crisis. He also received one copy each of the *Canada at the United Nations* publications for 1947, 1948 and 1949; copies of telegrams from the Secretary General of the UN giving the texts of the Security Council resolutions of 25 and 27 June; a copy of an External Affairs appreciation of the Korean situation dated 28 June; and copies of the statements made in the Commons by Mr. Pearson and the Prime Minister on 28 and 30 June.
- <sup>36</sup>This was the order of sailing even though *Athabaskan* was junior ship; it was probably done for sake of appearance, ships being disposed in line ahead according to tonnage.
- <sup>37</sup>He was accompanied by Major-General G. R. Pearkes, V.C., C.B., D.S.O., M.C., M.P., and by Captain M. A. Medland, RCN late of the *Cayuga*.
- <sup>38</sup>CANAVHED to CTG 214.4, 122038Z/7/50. (NS 165040, Vol. 1.) The originator was the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Rear-Admiral F. L. Houghton, C.B.E., RCN, who in the early weeks of the Korean crisis was Acting Chief of the Naval Staff during the absence of Vice-Admiral H. T. W. Grant, C.B.E., D.S.O., RCN.
- <sup>39</sup>That is, 1400 on 13 July, Pearl Harbor time.
- <sup>40</sup>CTG 214.4 message 132200Z/7/50.
- <sup>41</sup>Copy with *Cayuga's Report of Proceedings* for July 1950.
- <sup>42</sup>The destroyers steamed the 7,413 miles to Sasebo in nineteen days at an average speed of 16.2 knots.
- <sup>43</sup>See bibliography for works on the defence of the Pusan bridge-head, in particular Lynn Montross and Captain N. A. Canzona, *United States Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953*, Vol. 1.
- <sup>44</sup>The USS *Valley Forge* and HMS *Triumph* were the only carriers available until USS *Sicily* arrived on 27 July. USS *Phillipine Sea* and *Badoeng Strait* followed on 29 July and 1 August, respectively.
- <sup>45</sup>The so-called Key West Agreement of 1948, which defined the functions of the armed forces of the United States, placed "strategic air warfare" wholly in the hands of the Air Force. See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 46 f.
- <sup>46</sup>See, however, J. T. Stewart, *Airpower, the Decisive Force in Korea*, (Princeton, 1957). The early strategic bombing campaign seems to have done some harm to the UN cause by antagonizing the neutral and friendly Asian countries. See editorials in *The London Observer*, 5 August, 1950; *The Spectator*, 18 August; and *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 August. See also NS 1480-146/187, Vol. 2.
- <sup>47</sup>Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 47 f.
- <sup>48</sup>A notable exception was the battle for Yongdok on the east

coast. Here the cruisers USS *Juneau* and HMS *Belfast*, with the U.S. destroyers *Higbee*, *De Haven*, *Lyman K. Swenson* and *Mansfield*, provided very effective support fire for the forces engaged. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 287.)

<sup>49</sup>In south-eastern Korea the main lines of communication are well inland and hence not vulnerable to naval fire. The spectacular naval interdiction campaign later carried out was confined chiefly to the area between Wonsan and Chongjin, where the main rail and motor roads do run near the coast. See transportation map of Korea in *Korea, A Geographical Appreciation*, (Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Ottawa, 95L)

<sup>50</sup>Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 286.

<sup>51</sup>Though this was not publicly announced, the blockade was confined to the area south of 39° 35' N. on the west coast and 41° 51' N. on the east coast in order to avoid accidental clashes with Russian and Chinese ships. Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 281.

<sup>52</sup>Merely to declare a blockade is not enough; for a blockade to be legally binding it must be maintained by a force sufficient to prevent access to the enemy coast.

<sup>53</sup>It was virtually wiped out in the first month of the war by surface and carrier aircraft. The first and only important UN "naval action" of the war took place on 2 July, 1950, when the two cruisers USS *Juneau* and HMS *Jamaica*, supported by HMS *Black Swan*, encountered and destroyed a small force of enemy torpedo boats. (There is some doubt about the number of boats engaged and the number destroyed. See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 282, and "British Commonwealth Naval Operations during the Korean War," in *JRUSI*, May 1951, 250.) Earlier, on 25 June, the South Korean *PC 701* sank a North Korean troop transport off Pusan, thereby perhaps preventing an attack on that port which might have been disastrous to the UN cause. (J. A. Field, *History of U.S. Naval Operations Korea*, 51.)

<sup>54</sup>The strength of the North Korean Air Force at the beginning of the war is variously estimated at from 54 to 178. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 39, note; J. T. Stewart, *op. cit.*, and L. Montross, Vol. 1, 29.) The latter figure is probably the more nearly accurate, as in July alone the carrier pilots of Valley Forge claimed 38 aircraft destroyed and 27 damaged. The enemy air force was never entirely eliminated, and though the Canadian destroyers were never molested several other Commonwealth ships were bombed and strafed. When the Chinese entered the war, their air force usually avoided attacking UN ships.

<sup>55</sup>In the early stages of the war, mines were the greatest danger, and five United States ships were sunk and five damaged. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 527-531.) No Commonwealth ships were mined. After the entry of the Chinese into the war, the greatest danger to the blockade forces was a heavy and accurate shore battery fire.

<sup>56</sup>Korea has ten main ports, but only two, Inchon and Chinnampo, are on the west coast. There are six ports on the east coast, all in North Korea. In order of importance they are: Najin (Rashin), Chongjin, Hungnam, Wonsan, Songjin and Unggi. On the south coast are Pusan, the best port in Korea, and Yosu. In addition there are some twenty minor ports on the east coast and seven on the west. (NS 1480-146/ 187, Vol. 2.)

<sup>57</sup>When a moored mine was laid with a cable long enough to make the mine dangerous to ships at all stages of the tide, it would "watch", that is, show itself on the surface, at low water.

<sup>58</sup>The enemy was well aware of this fact. Of the eleven United Nations ships sunk or damaged by mines during the Korean operations, ten were mined off the east coast. All of these were United States ships. The eleventh, the ROK minesweeper JML-306, was sunk off Chinnampo on the west coast. Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 209, and 527-531.



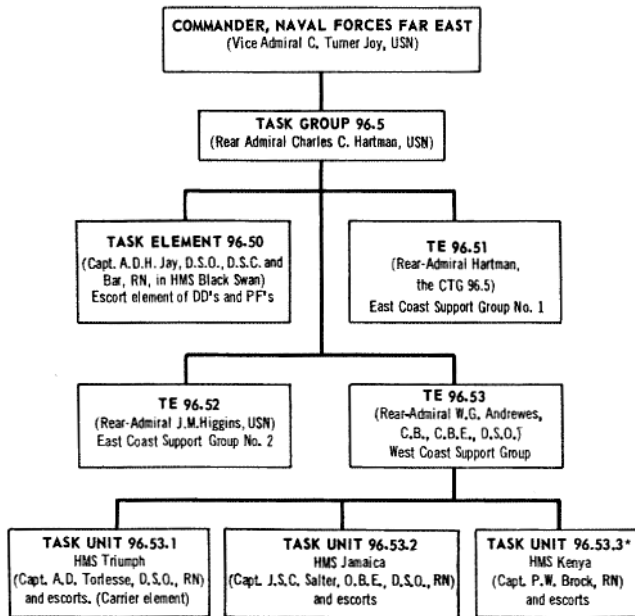


CHAPTER II

FROM PUSAN THE YALU

When the Canadian destroyers steamed into Sasebo harbour on the afternoon of 30 July, they found there a scene of hectic activity. Everyone was aware that the fate of the bridge-head around Pusan depended mainly upon how rapidly the navy could pour troops and supplies into the battle area. *Cayuga* and her consorts certainly wasted no time in idle preparations. Within 24 hours of her arrival, *Athabaskan* was out on her first operational mission with the United Nations escort forces.

The command organization of the United Nations naval forces in Korea had been revised three days before the Canadian destroyers arrived in Japan, and that part of it which concerned them was now set up as follows:<sup>1</sup>



\*TU 96.53.0 (headquarters organization of CTE 96.53 at Sasebo) and TU 96.53.4 (HMS *Ceylon* and escorts) were later added to the organization.

At the very apex of this pyramid was General Douglas MacArthur, now Supreme Commander of all United Nations forces in the Far East.

The principle incorporated in this new command organization of making the British responsible for the west coast of Korea while the United States Navy looked after the east coast was retained throughout the war.<sup>2</sup> According to Admiral Joy the reasons for this decision were

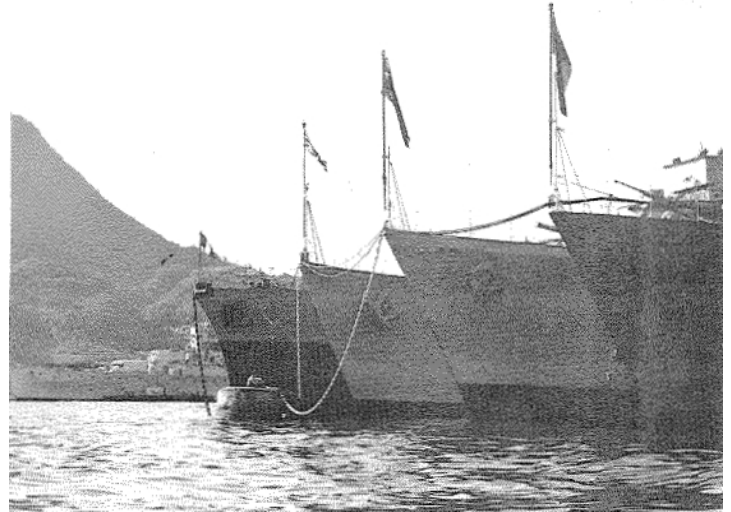
... purely tactical in nature. For one reason, the east coast with its longer coastline and more numerous accessible targets required more ships for blockade, as well as bombardment and interdiction missions, than the British could muster. Furthermore, since our fast carriers would be operating most of the time in the Sea of Japan it was thought best from the standpoint of coordination to have U.S. ships rather than British operating in the same area as the carriers.<sup>3</sup>

There was also a very important political reason for assigning the west coast to the British? Great Britain had diplomatic representatives in Red China, and should one of her ships, or a Commonwealth ship, accidentally violate Chinese "neutrality," it would be relatively simple to settle the matter through diplomatic channels. Should an American ship become involved in such an incident, however, the logical Chinese reaction would probably be to retaliate, for as the United States did not recognize the existence of a Red Chinese government she obviously could not be expected to have dealings with it. In the eyes of most members of the United Nations, such a clash between the forces of Red China and United States forces under UN command was something to be avoided at all costs. It was probably for this reason that, though United States ships often operated on the west coast they seldom penetrated deep into the Yalu Gulf, whereas when Commonwealth ships served on the east coast they operated to the very northern limits set for the eastern blockade.

As had previously been agreed between Admirals Joy and Andrewes, the three Canadian destroyers when they arrived were allocated to the British task elements, *Cayuga* being assigned to the west coast support group and *Athabaskan* and *Sioux* to TE 96.50, the fast escort element convoying ships between Japan and Pusan. Thus upon arrival in Sasebo the Canadian Destroyer Division Pacific virtually ceased to exist as a single unit for operational purposes<sup>5</sup> and, for the duration of the Korean campaign, it was only occasionally that three Canadian destroyers served together on the same operation under Canadian command. Such an arrangement was necessary under the circumstances. Had the Canadian contribution consisted of, shall we say, a carrier and a division of screening destroyers supported by a fleet train," it would have been logical to operate it as a separate group. Since the force consisted of three destroyers only, it was inevitable that to use the ships to best advantage it was often necessary to operate them as individual units. Thus it came about that, though Captain Brock would have preferred to keep his division together for operational purposes, and though Admiral Andrewes did his best to comply with his wishes, it was not often that the three Canadian destroyers served side by side against the enemy in Korea.

The first few weeks in Korea were far less hectic for the Canadian destroyers than one might have expected considering the critical state of the land campaign at this time.<sup>7</sup> A purely naval force, unless it is strong in carriers, can intervene directly and decisively in a land battle only when the front lines are within range of naval gun-fire. In the battle for the

Pusan bridge-head such conditions existed, as has been mentioned, only on the extreme eastern flank; and consequently the UN naval forces, except for the carriers, were engaged mainly in blockading the enemy coast and in ensuring the safe passage of men, ammunition and supplies to the battle area.



Ships of the UN force at Sasebo. Left to right, *La Grandiere* (French), *Cockade* (British), *Warramunga* (Australian) and HMCS *Athabaskan*.

A short survey of the activities of the Canadian destroyers will give a fairly accurate picture of the activities of the other UN destroyers on the west coast at this time. *Athabaskan*, as has been noticed, went to work almost immediately and by 1430 on 31 July had cleared Sasebo harbour en route to escort the fast troop ship *General Morton* to Pusan. This was the first of four routine convoy missions to Pusan undertaken by *Athabaskan* before she was transferred to the west coast group on 11 August. *Sioux* was much less active, as she was retained at Sasebo for rescue duties. She carried out only one seven-hour patrol in the approaches to Sasebo during the time she was attached to the escort element. On the 12th she transferred to join *Athabaskan* in TU 96.53.3 for service on the west coast.<sup>8</sup>

*Cayuga's* Commanding Officer, Captain J. V. Brock, being the Commander Canadian Destroyers Pacific, was very busy during the first few days discussing operational matters and making arrangements with the Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy for repair and maintenance facilities and for the supply of fuel, ammunition, food and other necessities for his ships. His own ship nevertheless carried out more operational assignments during this period than either of the other Canadian destroyers. On the



*Cayuga* takes on ammunition at Sasebo.

evening of 3 August she sailed from Sasebo as escort to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) *Brown Ranger* who was going out to refuel the ships of TU 96.53.3.9 After returning to Sasebo early on 8 August from this entirely uneventful mission, *Cayuga* transferred next day to the fast escort element<sup>10</sup> and carried out five routine convoy missions to Pusan between the 9th and the 24th. On the latter date she joined the blockading forces on the west coast.

It was while serving with the escort element that *Cayuga* became the first RCN ship actually to engage the enemy in the Korean theatre. At this time, in mid-August, the military position of the UN forces within the Pusan perimeter was still very precarious. Though the main impetus of the North Korean attack had been slowed, the enemy was still pushing upon the perimeter at most points, one of the more dangerous thrusts coming north-east from Yosu and Suncheon upon the weak UN left flank. The more important enemy forces were inland out of range of direct naval gun-fire, but the port of Yosu, recently seized by the North Koreans, was on the sea and therefore vulnerable. Though there was very little likelihood that the Communists could, in the face of the naval blockade, make any use whatever of Yosu as a port, there were numerous warehouses and other installations on the water-front that might be of value to their war effort. It was therefore decided to destroy them, and HMS *Mounts Bay* and HMCS *Cayuga* were detailed for the task.

When returning from an escort assignment to Pusan on 15 August, *Cayuga* joined *Mounts Bay* south of Yosu. The two ships steamed to within four miles of the port, anchored, and prepared for action as if on the practice range instead of in enemy territory. At 1742 *Mounts Bay*, having contacted the aircraft spotting for her, opened fire and began a methodical bombardment of the harbour area. About half an hour later *Cayuga* fired her first ranging shots and began to join in the destruction.<sup>11</sup> For almost two hours the ships bombarded the port, *Cayuga* herself placing 94 rounds of 4-inch high explosive upon the harbour installations before the two ships broke off the action and returned to Sasebo to continue their normal escort duties. The target was far from being completely destroyed, and perhaps the action did not have any direct effect upon the battle for the Pusan perimeter—after all, only one destroyer and a frigate were engaged—but the importance of the Yosu bombardment for this narrative is that it marked the first time since the end of the Second World War that the Royal Canadian Navy engaged the enemy. It was only the first of many such actions; in the next three years Canadian destroyers were to carry out hundreds of bombardments and hurl thousands upon thousands of

shells at the enemy as part of the Royal Canadian Navy's contribution towards the achievement of the United Nations objective "to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security" in Korea.

When *Cayuga* left the escort element to join Admiral Andrewes' blockade and bombardment force on 24 August, the other Canadian destroyers had already been serving with that organization for almost two weeks. Duty with the blockade force was generally more interesting than that with the escort group except when it included screening the British carrier *Triumph*\*. *Athabaskan*, for instance, had been having a busy time among the west coast islands, bombarding enemy batteries, observation posts, troop concentrations, and other targets and supporting landings of ROK troops on Red-dominated islands. *Sioux* on the other hand, though she too was serving with TU 96.53.3, had been involved in no noteworthy incidents. She did however carry out a minor bombardment of the town of Popsong'po (Popusompu) on 20 August.

Even when *Cayuga* joined the other Canadian ships with the west coast blockade on 24 August, the three destroyers continued to operate as individual units within British formations rather than as a division. Their duties were varied and often interesting, and each destroyer normally took her turn performing each type of assignment. For this reason it is proposed to recount in some detail the story of only one of them, HMCS *Athabaskan*, during this period, as this should give the reader a fairly accurate view of the activities of the RCN on the west coast blockade patrol in the weeks immediately preceding the Inchon landing.

*Athabaskan's* active duty with the west-coast group began on 12 August when she sailed with TU 96.53.3 from Sasebo. In company was TU 96.53.1, consisting of the carrier HMS *Triumph* and the destroyer HMS *Cornus*, with the commander of the entire west coast force, Admiral Andrewes, flying his flag in *Triumph*. The two groups sailed in company to their operating area between the Mackau and Clifford Islands<sup>12</sup> where *Triumph*, with the destroyers guarding her, began to fly her striking aircraft and reconnaissance planes against the enemy in and around Inchon, Kunsan and Mokpo. The operations against Inchon and Kunsan were of particular importance, for though MacArthur's plans had not yet been finally approved it appeared likely that the former city would be the scene of a mighty amphibious landing designed to cut

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\*Carrier screening duties were never very popular with the destroyers, for it was usually dull and monotonous work, involving constant changes of course and speed. Given the choice, the destroyers much preferred the more dangerous work of inshore patrol and bombardment.

off and destroy the enemy attacking the Pusan perimeter. Kunsan was at the top of the list if for some reason the Inchon plan had to be cancelled, and in any case it was to be the scene of deceptive operations designed to draw attention away from Inchon.

When *Triumph* and *Cornus* returned to Sasebo on 15 August, TU 96.53.3 took over inshore patrol duties from the third of the Commonwealth task units on the west coast, TU 96.53.2, which consisted of the cruiser HMS *Jamaica* and her escorts. Before leaving for Sasebo *Jamaica* carried out a farewell bombardment of Kunsan, *Athabaskan* joining *Consort* on the cruiser's screen during the action. When the cruiser had fired the last round, *Consort* handed over her patrol notes to *Athabaskan*, and the two British ships sailed towards Japan, leaving the Canadian destroyer to begin her lone patrol off Kunsan. The other two ships of TU 96.53.3, *Kenya* and *Sioux*, were in the meantime patrolling to the north between the Clifford and Te Chong Islands.<sup>13</sup>

Upon beginning her patrol, *Athabaskan* set sail for the island of Ochon<sup>14</sup> to contact the ROK\* naval forces which were to co-operate with her on her mission. The ship encountered four junks while en route and ordered them to sail independently to Ochon-to†, where their seemingly-innocent refugee passengers could be interrogated by ROK security forces. When the destroyer arrived at Ochon the Commanding Officer, Commander Welland, held a conference with the four ROK naval commanders present and received from them a great deal of valuable information concerning enemy activities in the area. Commander Welland in return did what he could to assist the ROK forces with supplies and technical assistance and detailed two of his electricians to carry out certain essential repairs to the ROK vessels which the Korean technicians had been unable to perform.

*Athabaskan* made a quick foray towards the mainland after the conference to check on reported enemy activity in the Kokunsan Islands.<sup>15</sup> The mission was uneventful, and *Athabaskan* returned to Ochon-to to recover her electricians before proceeding inshore for the night. *Athabaskan* arrived at her night anchorage south of the Kokunsan group shortly after dark, and two armed ships' boats were sent inshore to patrol the coast-line and prevent illicit traffic by junks and sampans. The two

\*Republic of Korea, whose forces were invariably referred to by the UN forces as ROK's.

† To (or Do) is the Korean word for island. To render Korean words in English is a difficult and confusing matter, and consequently one encounters a great variety of spellings in charts and books dealing with Korea. See Dr. H. Kublin's note on "The ROK Navy" in USNIP, October 1953, 1134-1135, in which he points out that Yi, Rhee and Lee in the names of, respectively, the great Korean naval hero Admiral Yi, President Syngman Rhee and the Republic's first Prime Minister Lee Bum Suk, are all rendered in Korean by the same pictograph, meaning "plum".



Canadian naval officers and their South Korean allies plan a bombardment. Captain J. V. Brock in centre; Commander R. P. Welland second from left.

boats prowled the inshore waters all night, but everything was quiet and not a vessel was sighted.

At first light, after recovering her boats, *Athabaskan* steamed towards Kunsan and saturated a battery of four 120-mm. guns located near the city with 58 rounds of 4-inch. There was no reply from the enemy, and the ship cruised northward along the coast towards the village of Taejon (Taechon)\* where a military observation post had been reported. Twenty-five 4-inch shells were hurled at the building housing the suspected O.P., and several hits were observed, whereupon the ship withdrew to seaward to patrol among the off-shore islands.



*Cayuga* seamen maintain radio contact with their ship while others inspect a lighthouse on a Korean west-coast island.

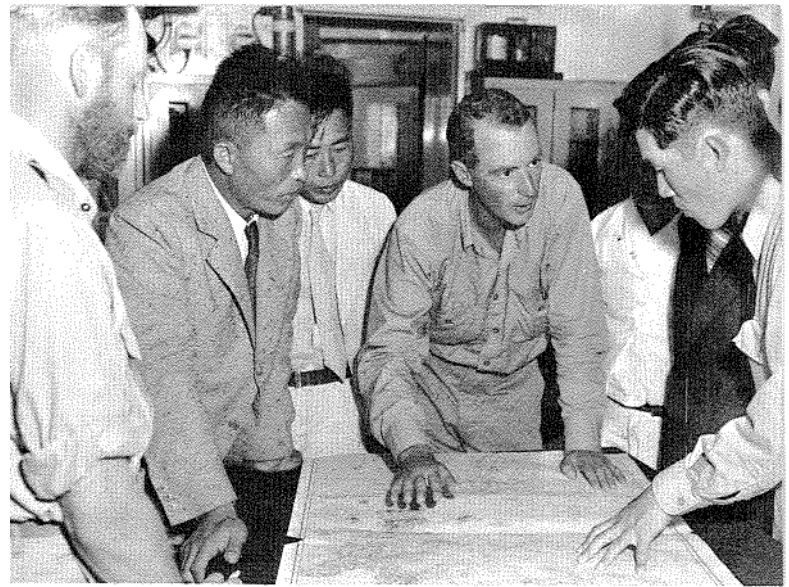
\*Not to be confused with the inland city of Taejon defended by General Dean and his 24th Division in the early days of the war.

*Athabaskan* searched throughout the day in the triangle formed by the Kokunsan Islands, Wantsun Islands<sup>16</sup> and the Ui-to Group,<sup>17</sup> meeting only one lone junk, which was loaded with destitute refugees. The ROK naval vessels Chi Ri San (PC 704) and YMS 502 were met in mid-afternoon and a conference was held with their commanders aboard *Athabaskan*. As usual the ROK's had a good deal of intelligence to impart. When night fell *Athabaskan* again steamed inshore, this time anchoring just south of Ui-to, and sent away her boats to patrol the coast. Again the boat patrol proved fruitless; there was simply no enemy or refugee traffic of any kind in the area.\*

In the morning (it was now 17 August) *Athabaskan* proceeded south along the coast and anchored off the town of Popsong'po (Popusompu) which, the ROK's had reported, was the site of a North Korean military headquarters. Forty-five shells from the main armament were fired into the town, but as it was an indirect, unobserved bombardment the results could not be properly assessed. To make up for this unobserved bombardment, the ship turned north along the coast, hugging the shore so closely that the Bofors guns were able to engage several reported machine-gun nests. *Athabaskan* put out to sea at 0950 to meet the RFA Wave Prince which had come north to refuel the ships of the west coast blockading force. While *Athabaskan* was refuelling, shortly after noon, she was joined by the other ships of TU 96.53.3, *Kenya* and *Sioux*, who had come south from their patrol off Inchon. When all the ships had refuelled, *Athabaskan* transferred her Kunsan patrol notes to *Sioux*, who was taking over, and set off north with *Kenya*.

For the next four days, from 17 to 21 August, *Athabaskan* operated under the orders of *Kenya*<sup>18</sup> in the Inchon patrol area, but only rarely were the two ships in company. When the ships arrived at their night anchorage on the evening of the 17th, Commander Welland went aboard *Kenya* for a conference with the latter and with the ROK Navy on future operations. The leader of the ROK naval forces in the area was Commander Lee Hi Yung, the Commanding Officer of *Kum Kang San* (PC 702), a most aggressive fighter, who had under his command a small force of seamen with which he was systematically mopping up the Communists on the islands in the Inchon

\*Early in August there had been a good deal of loose talk in Army and Air Force circles in Tokyo about the "ineffectiveness of the naval blockade." The theory that the North Koreans were supplying their armies by sea was based on the erroneous belief that bombing had cut their overland supply lines and on the equally invalid assumption that all sighting reports handed in to Air Force Headquarters were accurate. All reports of the movement of vast supply armadas and the sinking of 10,000-ton ships in enemy harbours, when they could be checked, were found to be without foundation. See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 292-293.

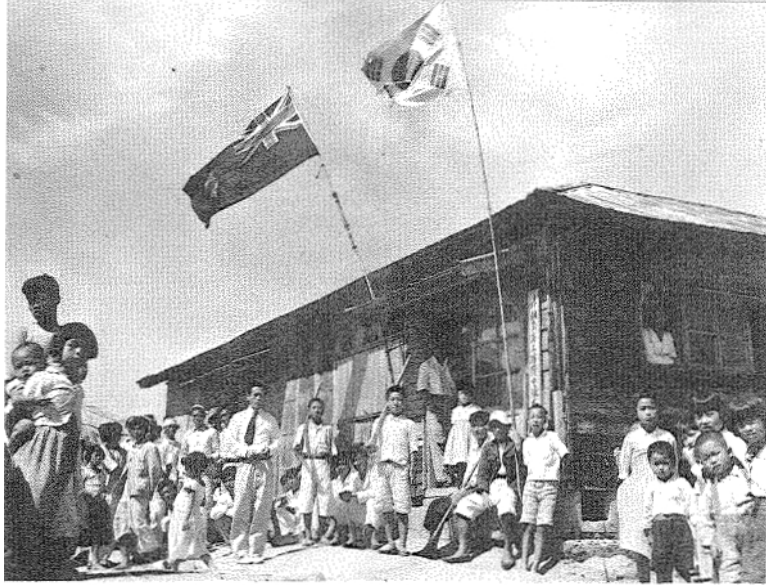


Captain J. V. Brock explains UN aims to Korean islanders shortly after Inchon landings.

area. It was decided at the conference that the island of Taku Chaku<sup>19</sup> would be next on Commander Lee's list and would be assaulted on the following morning. The planning for this amphibious assault would have brought tears to the eyes of a staff officer trained in the conduct of combined operations in the Second World War; it would not be too much exaggeration to say that the planning consisted largely of the commander of the assault forces pointing to a chart and saying something like this to the commander of the naval support ship: "I intend to land somewhere hereabouts at around 0600 tomorrow morning. I'd appreciate your sticking around to help out if we should run into difficulties."

The planning may have been somewhat informal, but the execution was faultless, and at 0600 on the morning of 18 August, 120 ROK seamen were assaulting the beaches of Taku Chaku, while *Athabaskan* methodically pounded the Communist headquarters in the island village of Supo with 94 rounds of high explosive. At 0700 *Athabaskan* landed a party of two officers and 30 men to support the ROK forces<sup>20</sup> but the support proved unnecessary as the ROK's were doing very well by themselves. Before sunset that evening the island had been taken at no cost in casualties to the attacking force. On the enemy side there were heavy casualties; there were no wounded and no prisoners among them.

*Athabaskan* remained off Taku Chaku throughout the day, ready to lend assistance if necessary. She was anchored in 33 fathoms of water, over a very rocky bottom, with a current running up to six knots, and shortly before noon the starboard cable parted, resulting in the loss of an anchor and 18 feet of cable. Nothing daunted, *Athabaskan* moved closer inshore and anchored again. As there was no need for more



Korean lads armed with wooden guns mount a guard of honour for Commander R. P. Welland during his visit to Kunsan Islands.

active participation, she concentrated on treating the numerous civilian casualties brought on board by her own boats and the ROK craft.

*Athabaskan* weighed anchor at nightfall and moved inshore to patrol near Inchon. Once again the night patrol mission proved fruitless, and the ship returned empty handed to Taku Chaku. Throughout the next day, 19 August, *Athabaskan* remained off the island working with the ROK forces in preparation for the next assault landing. Twenty Lanchester machine carbines and 6,000 rounds of ammunition were lent to Commander Lee's force, and Chief Petty Officer *Aveling*, *Athabaskan's* Chief Gunnery Instructor, went ashore to train the ROK seamen in their use, a mission that was entirely successful despite the language barrier. Besides helping in this way *Athabaskan* also aided the South Koreans by providing boats and by once again tending the civilian wounded. Commander Lee came aboard before the ship left for her inshore night patrol and concerted plans for an attack the following morning on the island of Ryanku.<sup>21</sup>

After yet another uneventful anti-shipping patrol, at 0511 on 20 August *Athabaskan* was lying at anchor north of Ryanku ready to bombard the five villages on the island, the plan being to panic the civilian population and thereby disrupt communications. At 0637 the ship opened fire with star-shell to illuminate the island and then proceeded to pound the outskirts of each village with high explosive. In this way, it was hoped, the objective would be obtained without causing unnecessary civilian casualties, and indeed that is what happened. As the first star-shell burst, the villagers took to the hills, communications collapsed and the defenders were thrown into confusion.

As the darkness faded *Athabaskan* shifted anchorage inshore to get out of sight of a heavy enemy battery



Petty Officer maintains radio contact with *Athabaskan* while landing party searches a Korean west-coast sland.

situated on the mainland nearby. She had just anchored again when two junks came into view making for Inchon. Both motor boats were immediately lowered to give chase. The junks were under full sail and making very good speed, and it looked as if they might escape entirely. *Athabaskan* thereupon took a hand with her 4-inch guns. Her aim was good, and the third shell landed some 25 yards from one of the junks. Down came all the sails, and the men of both crews began hurriedly to remove the only white garments they had—their underwear—and wave them frantically as a signal of unconditional surrender. Both craft were then seized and taken in tow for delivery to the ROK's.

The South Korean seamen of *PC 702*, many of them armed with Canadian Lanchesters, had in the meantime carried out an unopposed landing on Ryanku and were rapidly overrunning the island. It was more of a manhunt than a battle; the desperate Communists were systematically rooted out of their strongholds, and by 1800 that same day the island had been taken. Once again there were no enemy wounded or any prisoners.

After stopping the junks, *Athabaskan* turned her fire on a radio reporting station situated on the tiny island of Yo Dolmi<sup>22</sup> in the middle of the channel leading into Inchon. Her aim was deadly, and a third of the 36 rounds she fired—at a range of 7,200—yards—scored direct hits. But *Athabaskan* was not satisfied even with such shooting, and when she had disposed of her captive junks she moved to within a mile of Yo Dolmi. The island appeared to be undefended, so an armed party under Lieutenant-Commander T. S. R. Peacock, RCN, was sent in to complete the destruction of the target. The party met with no resistance, and what remained of the station was methodically de molished.<sup>23</sup>

*Athabaskan* was under orders to leave the Inchon patrol area in the afternoon and rejoin *Kenya*, but

before retiring southward she decided to pay a final call on her friends in *PC 702* off Ryanku. The call took longer than had been expected; *PC 702* was loaded with civilian wounded from the island, and the ship was delayed for some three hours while her medical staff treated the casualties. Finally she was able to join *Kenya*, and the two set off in company to rendezvous with their relief ships near the Clifford Islands. *Athabaskan* had carried out her first mission with the west coast blockade force.

During this tour of duty with TU 96.53.3, *Athabaskan* had done yeoman service in the United Nations cause. The work done by the other Canadian destroyers on the west coast blockade was similar and certainly every bit as important, but it was less spectacular, for neither ship took part in any assault landings with the ROK forces, nor did either one carry out as many bombardments. Indeed during this period there were only two bombardments carried out by these two ships, one in which both *Cayuga* and *Sioux* participated with *Kenya* in shelling the small island of Te bu Somu<sup>24</sup> on 31 August, and one carried out on 20 August by *Sioux* alone against machine-gun nests in the Popsong'po area. During the rest of the time *Cayuga* and *Sioux* were engaged in screening the carrier *Triumph* and in carrying out routine patrols in the Kunsan and Inchon areas, during which they intercepted the odd junk or sampan manned by fishermen or filled with starving refugees from Communism.

The Canadian destroyers were all together in Sasebo by 3 September, but only temporarily, as *Athabaskan* left next morning on an escort mission to the west coast. Preparations for the Inchon landings were now nearing completion, and the curtain was about to go up on MacArthur's "great gamble." Much has been written-and no doubt there is more to come-about this peculiar operation, but this narrative is not the place to discuss it in detail. It is sufficient to note that the operation was designed to land the First Marine Division (Reinforced), followed by the Seventh Infantry Division (Reinforced) and by Tenth Corps troops, at Inchon. This force, after taking the harbour, town and air-field, was then to attack east and north to take Seoul and cut the main road and rail communications supplying the enemy around Pusan. It was undoubtedly a fine plan-if it could be made to work. It was generally agreed that the operation was a gamble and that the odds were too long for comfort.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, against the almost unanimous opposition, not only of his naval and military subordinates in Korea, but also of his superiors in Washington, MacArthur won approval for his plan-and won one of the great military victories of the century.\*

The Canadian destroyers were not given a spectacular role to play in the Inchon operation. Admiral Andrewes had been appointed to command Task Force 91, which was labelled the Blockade and Covering Force and consisted of one carrier (*HMS Triumph*) one cruiser (*HMS Ceylon*), eight destroyers and 15 ROK Navy vessels.<sup>21</sup> This force was charged with several important duties: conducting special reconnaissance and covering missions prior to D-Day; providing cover for the vessels of the attacking force en route to Inchon; maintaining a naval blockade of the Korean west coast south of 39°35' North;<sup>27</sup> and performing such interdiction missions as might be assigned. To simplify the conduct of his blockade and escort assignments, Admiral Andrewes split his forces into a Northern Group (TG 91.1) and a Southern Group (TG 91.2). To the Canadian ships, now for the first time in the Korean theatre to operate as a unit under their own commander, fell the somewhat prosaic duties of TG 91.2, the Southern Group. As CTG 91.2, Captain Brock was responsible for:

1. providing escort for the logistic support group supplying the attacking force;
2. enforcing a blockade of the coast between 35° 45' and 36° 45' North; and
3. maintaining a hunter-killer group to deal with enemy submarines in the unlikely event that they made their appearance in the area.

He was given the three Canadian destroyers and a few light ROK naval vessels to carry out these duties.

The Canadian contribution to the success of the Inchon landing, it must be admitted, was small. The destroyers carried out their duties with, their customary efficiency and despatch, but since there was no opposition from the enemy to the passage of the logistic support ships and no hostile submarines to pursue, the history of RCN activities during and after the landing does not make very exciting reading. During this period, however, there was always at least one of the Canadian destroyers on the inshore blockade

\*In recent literature on the Korean conflict there has been some criticism of the Inchon landing, but all writers seem unanimous in praising MacArthur for having had the courage to force his views on reluctant superiors and subordinates. Such praise should be given, however, only if one believes that the general was an infallible military genius. Historians and military commentators who praise MacArthur for insisting on the Inchon attack might bear in mind that it was he who also insisted on the Wonsan landing; who said in late June 1950: "Give me two American divisions and I can hold Korea;" who launched the "end the war" offensive; and who, on 6 November, 1950, heaped extravagant praise on the UN commander on the western Korean front for averting "any possibility of a great military reverse" just a few days before that same military commander's forces were overwhelmed and in panic retreat. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 112-116; Marguerite Higgins, *War in Korea*, 33; Karig, *op. cit.*, 375. See also Commander M. W. Cagle, "Errors of the Korean War," in *USNIP*, March 1958, 31-35 and Harry S. Truman, *Years of Trial and Hope*, (New York, 1956) 364-367).

patrol, and this fortunate ship sometimes became involved in interesting adventures.

For a week before the new task group organization came into effect, *Sioux* had been working on the west coast blockade with HMS *Ceylon*. The patrol was not entirely uneventful, and *Sioux* took part in the interception of suspected blockade runners, investigated suspicious junks and sampans, destroyed four enemy mines and joined *Ceylon* in a bombardment of enemy emplacements on the mainland at Fankochi Point.<sup>28</sup> *Sioux* detached from *Ceylon* on 14 September and proceeded to the Kunsan area as CTE 91.22. The Canadian destroyers and their ROK colleagues, now that the new organization had been established, were responsible for the blockade of this part of the coast. *Sioux* remained on patrol off Kunsan until 17 September without seeing a sign of enemy activity, and on that day she was relieved by *Cayuga* and sailed to join *Athabaskan* for escort duties.

*Cayuga*, as her captain was also the CTG 91.2, did not remain near Kunsan but cruised the entire area for which the group was responsible. During her tour of duty, therefore, the responsibility for enforcing the blockade rested mainly on the three ROK vessels under Captain Brock's orders: *PC 704*, *YMS 306* and *YMS 307*. These small ROK craft well merited the responsibilities placed on them; not only did they perform their duties with enthusiasm and efficiency, but they also contributed much valuable information about enemy activities on the islands and the mainland.

*Cayuga* remained on blockade patrol for three rather uneventful days, cruising up and down the coastal area for which she was responsible. It was during this period that Captain Brock, horrified at the truly terrible conditions under which some of the islanders in his area lived, devised the first tentative plans for the operation, later designated *Operation Comeback*, which was to do so much towards rehabilitating the islanders on the west coast. He himself took the first step in this direction by setting up a fishing sanctuary for the Kokunsan islanders whose chief means of livelihood had been destroyed by the strict naval blockade.

*Athabaskan* arrived on 20 September to take over from *Cayuga* and begin a blockade patrol of nine days. It was a patrol which had its interesting moments, and it merits description in some detail.

A few hours after being relieved *Cayuga* returned to join *Athabaskan* on the inshore patrol, for she had found that *Sioux* had only a single oiler to screen and therefore did not require any assistance. The two ships then planned a joint attack on two bridges on a coastal road in the Beijaa Bay area,<sup>29</sup> for now that the enemy troops around Pusan had begun to retreat, it was of the utmost

importance to cut their lines of communication and prevent them from escaping northward to join their forces fighting before Seoul. A reconnaissance party from *YMS 307* was sent in to investigate, but it met with considerable enemy opposition and was forced to withdraw, not before discovering however that the bridges were being attacked by UN planes. The plan to destroy the bridges was therefore cancelled, and the two destroyers spent the morning of 22 September shooting up military targets in Beijaa Bay. That evening *Cayuga*, suffering from a defect that had caused the salinity content of her boiler feed water to rise to a dangerous level, left the Kunsan area to return to Sasebo.

*Athabaskan* moved inshore on the night of 22 September to give support to the U.S. fast transport *Horace A. Bass*<sup>30</sup>, which landed a party of ROK Marines near Nampo. This raiding party was re-embarked without incident, though *Bass* was fired on as she withdrew. On the following morning *Athabaskan*, joined by the ROK *PC 704*, entered the Poryon Po<sup>31</sup> to shoot up enemy positions around the bay. Several gun emplacements and observation posts were bombarded at point-blank range; ten warehouses sheltering troops and supplies were destroyed, and two motor junks concealed in a little harbour were blown to bits before the two ships put back to sea to plan yet more destruction.

The next major operation carried out by *Athabaskan* and *PC 704* was against two small islands at the entrance to Kunsan harbour, Piun-to and Youjiku-to<sup>32</sup>, which were believed to be held only by weak Communist police forces. On the morning of 25 September *Athabaskan* assaulted Piun-to, sending in her two motor cutters with a party of 30 specially trained volunteers under the command of the First Lieutenant, Lieutenant-Commander T. S. R. Peacock, RCN. There was no opposition to the landing; in fact all the men of military age had fled to a neighbouring islet some half a mile away. A group from the landing party pursued them to their hiding place and interrogated their leaders. No signs of arms nor of any military installations were found, so the Canadians withdrew.

In the afternoon it was the turn of the ROK's, to whom the task of reconnoitring Youjiku-to had fallen. The South Koreans were not so fortunate as the Canadians, and when the boats from *PC 704* and *YMS 306* went in to assault the island under covering fire from *Athabaskan* and their own vessels, they were met by machine-gun fire. The ROK's pressed home their attack, and the enemy withdrew inland. Satisfied that the island was occupied by Communist troops, and not being prepared to take and hold the island against strong opposition, the South Koreans themselves withdrew.



They had suffered only three casualties, all lightly wounded. A little child wounded during the landing was also brought back, but she died later aboard *Athabaskan* and was buried at sea.

When the ROK ships went inshore to support their landing parties, *PC 704* sighted a mine off the island<sup>33</sup> Next morning at low tide *Athabaskan* sent in her motor cutters with a 14-foot dinghy to investigate this sighting. One mine was found at once and marked with dan buoys for later examination, a second was sunk and another two were sighted and their locations plotted before the rising tide hid the field.

On 27 September low tide was at 0900, and *Athabaskan's* motor cutters and dinghy again set to work on the mine problem. What with the mines and the shallow water, it would have been dangerous to take the ship close enough inshore to sink the mines with the 40 mm. guns, and since it proved very difficult to sink them with rifle fire the problem was not an easy one to solve. The solution arrived at by *Athabaskan* was unorthodox, and it called for iron nerves, steady hands and expert boat handling—but it worked. The motor cutter went in towing the dinghy. When a mine was sighted the dinghy, carrying Mr. D. W. Hurl, Commissioned Gunner, RCN, the *Athabaskan's* demolition expert, would be rowed to the spot. Carefully avoiding a collision which might blow the boat and all its occupants into tiny fragments, the man at the oars would bring the dinghy close alongside the mine and hold it there while Mr. Hurl and his assistants fastened time-fused demolition charges to the mine's mooring rings. When the fuses had been lit, the dinghy would "take off" with all despatch and remain at a respectful distance until the charges exploded. Then "back to the mines" to blow up some more before the tide came in and covered them. Sometimes the charges would merely blow holes in the casing and the mine



Commissioned Officer David Hurl attaches charge to enemy mine while AB Edward Dalton holds the mine steady.

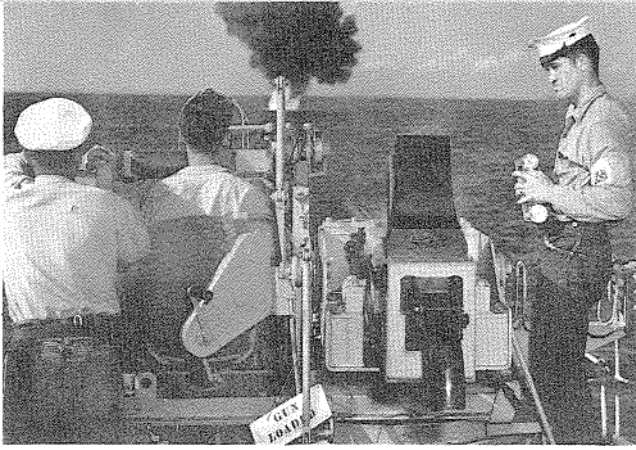
would sink, but occasionally the charge within the mine would be set off and there would be a tremendous explosion. The spectacular display was almost enough to compensate for the ticklish business of setting the charges. Working in this fashion, Mr. Hurl and his party were able to destroy four mines before the tide forced a suspension of operations.<sup>34</sup>

HMAS *Bataan* joined *Athabaskan* on the inshore patrol at noon that same day. As it had been reported that the Communists, alarmed by the ROK landing two days before, had reinforced Youjiku-to with several hundred fresh troops, the destroyers joined forces to give the island a thorough pounding. With *Athabaskan's* Ordnance Officer, Lieutenant C. A. Sturgeon, RCN, spotting from a boat close inshore and directing the fire of both ships by voice radio, the bombardment was deadly accurate, and one target after another was systematically destroyed.

*Bataan* remained in the Kunsan area that night, while *Athabaskan* moved north to the vicinity of Ammin-to<sup>35</sup> to watch for enemy coastal traffic. There was nothing moving as usual, and in the morning (28 September) the Canadian destroyer returned to Youjiku for more mine demolition work. *Bataan's* boats also joined in the good work, and another four mines were destroyed and a new minefield discovered. The two ships joined forces in the afternoon for a bombardment of the Beijaa Bay area that *Cayuga* and *Athabaskan* had shelled on the 22nd. After the bombardment *Athabaskan* sailed north again to her night patrol area. En route, several hundred civilians were sighted on Pechanko-to<sup>36</sup> obviously busy digging trenches and preparing military installations, so *Athabaskan* closed the range and prepared to disrupt their activities with her 4-inch guns. Standing orders for the UN ships stated that every effort should be made to avoid civilian casualties, and in this instance the civilians showed a commendable spirit of co-operation, displaying, as the Commanding Officer remarked, considerably more speed than dignity in clearing the area long before the first salvo landed.<sup>37</sup>

After another uneventful night searching for enemy junks off Ammin-to, *Athabaskan* left on the morning of 29 September for Inchon. Here she handed over her patrol notes to HMAS *Warramunga* who was to relieve her on the Kunsan patrol. *Athabaskan*, after taking on fuel, then embarked the commander of the blockade forces on the west coast, Admiral Andrewes, for passage to Japan. On the morning of the 30th, *Athabaskan* was back in Sasebo where she joined *Cayuga* and *Sioux*.

The success of the Inchon landing, one might say with little exaggeration, had changed the military situation in Korea overnight. Inchon had been secured on the day following the assault; Kimpo air-field fell on



HMCS *Sioux* destroys an enemy mine.

17 September; and by the 19th the UN forces had reached the Han River. For a day or two it appeared that perhaps the landing would not have the desired effect,<sup>38</sup> for the Reds held firm before Pusan until the night of 17 September. Then resistance began to weaken, and by 25 September, when the Marines were fighting in Seoul, the North Korean Army was in panic flight towards the 38th parallel.

The next problem facing the UN high command was that of the crossing of the parallel, a problem that was still being debated in the General Assembly when the Third ROK Division on 1 October surged north across the border. MacArthur had few doubts about what should be done, and on 26 September, the day after he declared Seoul had been secured,<sup>39</sup> he ordered his planners to prepare for operations to seize all of North Korea.<sup>40</sup> MacArthur's foresight was justified on the following day when the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized him to conduct operations north of the parallel, provided that before such operations began there had been no entry of major Chinese or Soviet forces into North Korea nor any threat of such entry.<sup>41</sup> The threat of entry by Chinese forces came on 30 September from Chou En-lai and was repeated by him to the Indian Ambassador in Peking on the 3rd of October, when he stated that if non-Korean troops crossed the parallel, Chinese forces would cross the Yalu. This threat, obviously designed to influence the General Assembly, did not have the desired effect, and the Political Committee on 4 October passed a resolution authorizing MacArthur to take "all appropriate steps..... to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea."<sup>42</sup> On 9 October the Joint Chiefs of Staff modified their previous instructions to MacArthur about ceasing operations north of the parallel on the threat of Chinese or Soviet entry into the war, by now stating that actual contact with such forces in strength should be the only grounds for halting the northward advance.<sup>43</sup> On that same day, 9 October, the UN forces launched their major attack across the parallel.

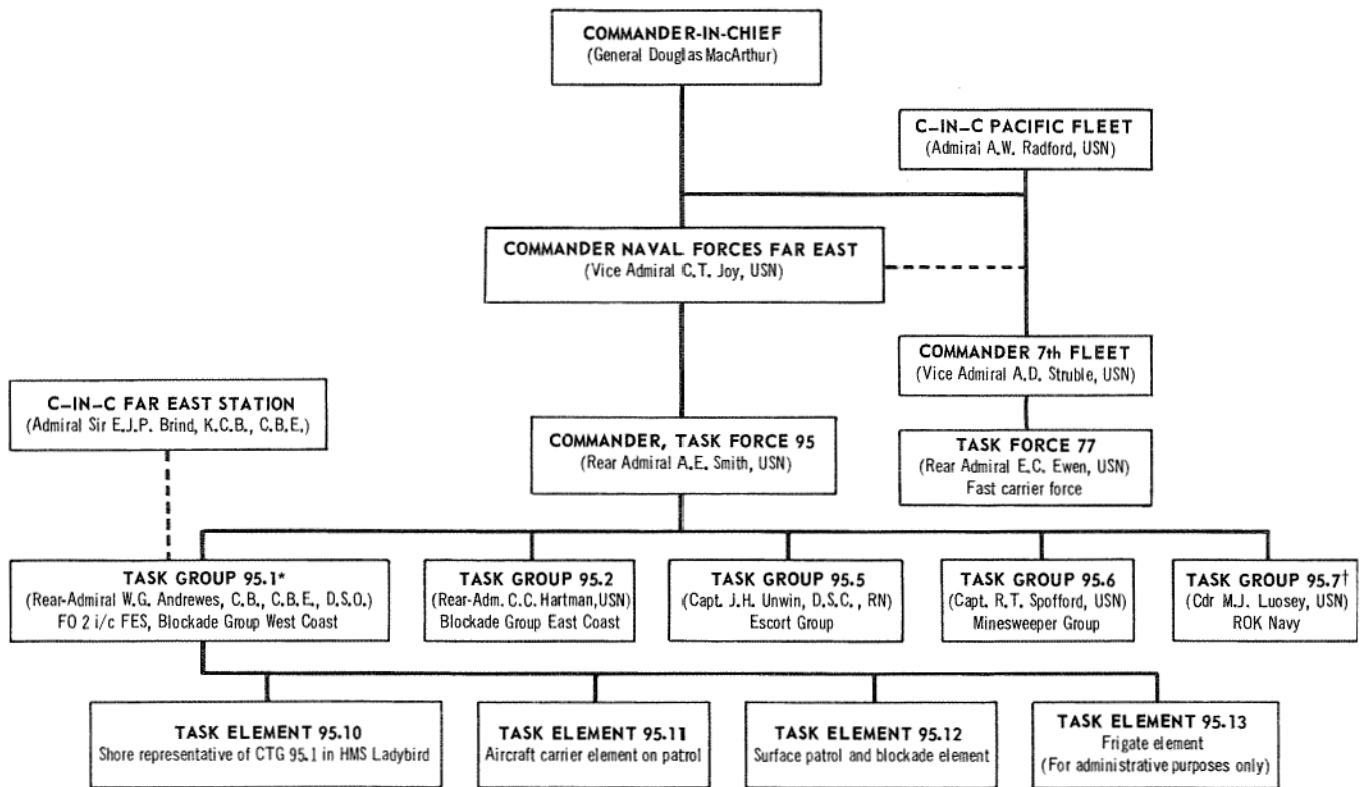
The astounding success of the Inchon adventure had encouraged MacArthur to include another amphibious

landing in his plans for the complete destruction of the North Korean Army and the seizure of the entire peninsula. With the South Korean troops attacking on the eastern front and the U.S. Eighth Army and its attached UN troops in the western sector, the North Koreans were being rapidly driven back. But MacArthur wished to destroy the Communists, not shoo them across the Yalu, and he decided to use both an airborne and an amphibious landing to cut off as many as possible. The former called for the dropping of the 187th Airborne Regiment near Sunchon, a road and rail centre some thirty miles north of the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, and it was carried out on 20 October.

The amphibious operation was a much more ambitious undertaking. Like Inchon, the Wonsan landing was the brainchild of General MacArthur, and it too was carried out against the advice of many of his senior commanders. The U.S. Navy in particular was strongly opposed to the whole enterprise. It is obvious now, as it should have been then, that the Navy was right. In the first place, it was argued, the operation was unnecessary; secondly, it would remove two of the finest divisions in the theatre from the fighting for almost a month, and that at a critical time; thirdly, it would tie up urgently needed port facilities at Inchon.<sup>44</sup> These objections were ignored,\* and the UN naval forces prepared to carry out the landing at the place fixed by General MacArthur.

While these momentous plans were being prepared, the three Canadian destroyers spent most of their time in Sasebo cleaning boilers, undergoing minor repairs and generally readying themselves for the next mission assigned to them by the Commander Task Group 95.1. Though they were now in TG 95.1 instead of TG 96.53, the Canadian ships were still under the orders of Admiral Andrewes and still serving on the west coast; only the number and official designation of their task group had changed. The new organization, which became effective on 12 September, was set up as follows:

\*Commander Cagle asserts (*ibid.* 32) that MacArthur's personal staff successfully prevented Admiral Joy, the commander of all UN naval forces in Korea, who by virtue of his position should have been one of the most important advisors at Tokyo Headquarters, from presenting the Navy's objections to the General. It is the Commander's belief that one of the chief reasons why the Wonsan landing was not cancelled was that Major-General E. M. Almond wished to retain his independent command. Incredible as it may seem, Almond was not only Commander Tenth Corps, but he also retained his posts as Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff to MacArthur. If Tenth Corps and Eighth Army had continued to operate together, the former could hardly have been allowed to remain an independent command. The Wonsan landing provided an excellent opportunity for a clean break between the two commands. The whole incredible story is told by Captain M. Blumenson, "MacArthur's Divided Command," *Army*, (a periodical published by the Association of the U.S. Arm), November 1956, 38 f.



This was the command set-up which, with minor changes from time to time, was to continue until 3 April, 1951.

When *Cayuga* returned to Sasebo for repairs late in September, Captain Brock presented to Admiral Andrewes a plan for the rehabilitation of the west coast islands. This plan envisaged the removal of the remaining Communist elements from the islands, the restoration of law and order by ROK troops and police, the donation of food and medical supplies and the establishment of fishing sanctuaries to enable the islanders to pursue their chief, and often only, industry. His plan met with instant approval, and an operational order was prepared outlining the manner in which *Operation Comeback*, as it was called, would be carried out. Captain Brock was placed in command and given *Cayuga* and *Sioux* and a number of ROK naval vessels to carry out the mission.

Before preparations had been completed to secure ROK naval support and arrange for the supplies of food and medicine which were to be distributed to the

\*Admiral Andrewes was serving two masters; as CTG 95.1 he was responsible for naval operations on the west coast of Korea; as Flag Officer Second-in-Command Far East Station, he was responsible for the defence of Hong Kong.

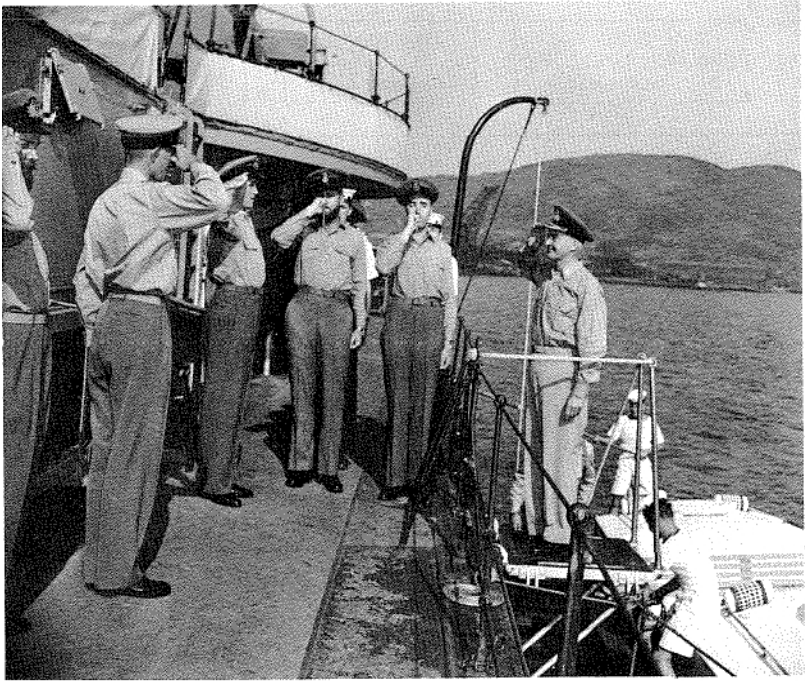
†ROKN elements on the west coast, except when special operations were involved, came under the operational command of CTG 95.1.

islanders, the Canadian Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral H. T. W. Grant, C.B.E., D.S.O., C.D., RCN, paid a visit to the Korean theatre, and Captain Brock sailed *Cayuga* to Tokyo to meet him. Admiral Grant remained with the ship, except for visits to the other Canadian destroyers and to Sasebo and Inchon, until 12 October when he returned in *Cayuga* to Tokyo.

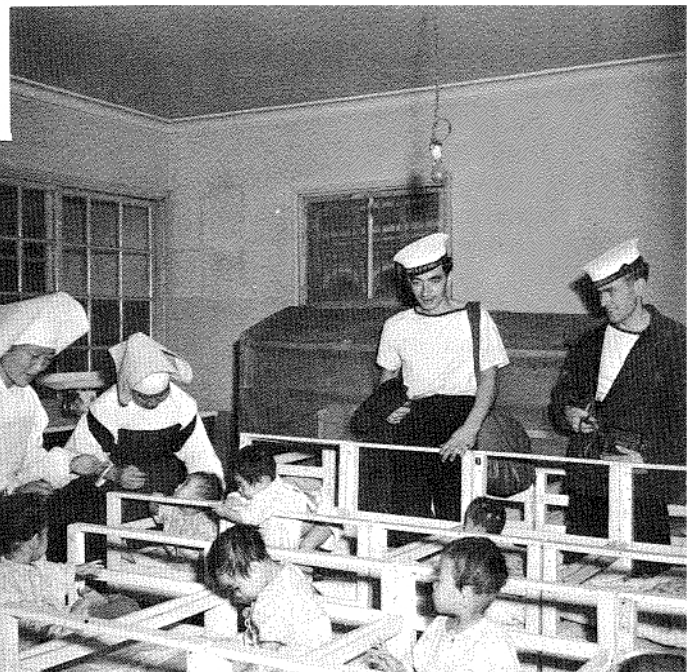
When *Cayuga* returned again to Sasebo to resume her duties with TG 95.1, the progress of events in Korea had resulted in the cancellation of the original *Operation Comeback*. The overwhelming defeat of the Communists in South Korea had rendered the presence of destroyers with the *Comeback* force unnecessary, and the operation was turned over to the ROK Navy. It is regrettable that Captain Brock did not have the opportunity to conduct this mission in person; it was a well conceived plan which did credit both to his ability and to his humanity.

Meanwhile momentous events were preparing on the east coast. The Wonsan landing was soon to take place, and the great amphibious armada was forming up for the attack. As Wonsan was well above the 38th parallel, it was considered expedient that the landing be given the character of a United Nations rather than a purely United States Navy operation, so token forces from as many of the UN navies as possible were included.<sup>45</sup> It fell to *Athabaskan* to represent Canada.

Cayuga brings food for starving Korean west-coast islanders, September 1950.



The CNS, Vice-Admiral H. T. W. Grant, is piped aboard *Sioux* during his visit to Korean waters, October 1950.



Canadian sailors watch their gifts of chocolate being distributed to children at an Inchon orphanage.

*Athabaskan* put out from Sasebo with HMS *Cockade* and HMAS *Warramunga* on 10 October to join the Gunfire Support Group (TG 95.2) of Joint Task Force 7, the organization that was conducting the landing. Junction was made on the following day, and the group<sup>46</sup> sailed to carry out its assigned bombardment missions. The first such mission was against the industrial city of Chongjin, only some 50 miles south of the border of the U.S.S.R. The bombardment was carried out on 12 October by the battleship *Missouri* and the cruisers, *Helena*, *Worcester* and HMS *Ceylon*, with the destroyers screening. The main targets were the road and rail communications system and the purely military objectives, since it was United States policy to leave all strategic targets, such as oil refineries and factories, to the Air Force. The fact that within the Mitsubishi Iron Works at Chongjin there was a large rail concentration, enabled *Missouri* to pound that particular strategic target to bits; the Air Force could hardly take offence if some of the 16-inch shells happened to miss the railway tracks.\*

The following day, 13 October, the Gunfire Support Group split up temporarily to range along the coast north of Wonsan looking for profitable targets. *Athabaskan*, acting as mine detection and screening ship, led *Worcester* and *Ceylon* to their target area off Tanchon, a small port near Songjin. As usual there was no enemy opposition, and the bombardment was successfully carried out. One mine was encountered, a floater, which *Athabaskan* promptly sank by gun-fire.

*Athabaskan* led a very humdrum life during the remainder of the Wonsan operation. As her Commanding Officer remarked in his *Report of Proceedings*, the Wonsan landing was one anticlimax after another. On 10 October, the day *Athabaskan* left Sasebo to join TG 95.2, troops of the First ROK Corps captured the city that the 250-ship armada was setting out to assault. A small makeshift minesweeping force began to sweep a channel into Wonsan that same day, and it was not long before it became all too apparent that the harbour was filled with mines. On the 12th two of the sweepers in the small force, U.S. Ships *Pirate* and *Pledge*, struck mines and went down with heavy casualties. When the ships carrying the assault troops appeared before Wonsan on 19 October, there was still no swept channel to the beaches, whereupon there began what the Marines sarcastically dubbed *Operation Yo-Yo*. For twelve hours the ships, carrying troops packed like olives in a bottle, would steam southward, reverse course, and then steam northward for another

\*After *Missouri* had ceased fire, a message came from the Commander Seventh Fleet, warning all ships to stick to military and transportation targets and leave Air Force targets alone. Karig, *op. cit.*, 336-337.

twelve hours. For six days and six nights the landing force shuttled back and forth.

On 25 October the minesweepers reported that the necessary swept channels had been prepared, and at dawn on the 26th the first assault waves went in to be greeted by grinning ROK's and jeering pilots of the First Marine Air Wing, who seemed to find the situation much more amusing than did the Marines of the landing force. Three days later the troops of the Seventh Infantry Division began landing unopposed at Iwon, a small port between Hungnam and Songjin. All the troops of Tenth Corps were back on Korean soil by the end of October, ready to take up the fight from which they had been withdrawn one month before.

*Athabaskan* meanwhile was leading a very unwarlike existence. Throughout the entire operation she did not once fire a gun at the enemy, for even when she was escorting the heavy ships on bombardment duties she was unable to take part because of the limited range of her armament. Indeed her only warlike actions, except for the sinking of enemy mines, were directed against the unoffending herring of the Sea of Japan. Twice her sonar team detected underwater contacts which she at once attacked. The explosions of the *squid* bombs produced ample evidence on both occasions that the targets had been schools of fish.

*Athabaskan* did, however, receive much valuable training in fleet work during her sojourn on the east coast. Following the bombardments carried out on 12 and 13 October, she was employed in screening the heavy units at sea until the 21st, when she took over the task of postman and courier to the fleet. Though perhaps not very exciting, this duty was not always dull. On the 21st, for instance, the Canadian destroyer was given the task of conveying Vice Admiral A. D. Struble, Commander Seventh Fleet, from the *Missouri* to the inner harbour of Wonsan and then returning him to his ship. The Admiral remained on board for several hours, and when he left he presented his flag to the ship. This blue flag with its three silver stars remains one of the prized possessions of the *Athabaskan*. Another duty the *Athabaskan* found interesting was the delivery of passengers and mail to the fast carrier force of the Seventh Fleet operating to seaward of Wonsan. It was inspiring to steam toward the rendezvous early in the morning and watch the jets, silhouetted against the rising sun, hurtling from the decks of the three carriers,<sup>47</sup> while around the force steamed the thirteen screening destroyers and above circled the five helicopters of the plane guard. Such were the duties carried out by *Athabaskan* until 1 November when she and four other destroyers left Wonsan to escort the battleship *Missouri* to Sasebo. When *Athabaskan* secured alongside the oiler in Sasebo



*Athabaskan* entering Kure harbour.

harbour on the following day she had been under way continuously for 24 days.

While *Athabaskan* was serving with the U.S. Navy on the east coast, *Cayuga* and *Sioux* continued to be employed with TG 95.1 on the west. Little was happening there at this time, the most important naval activity being minesweeping with which the Canadian destroyers were not directly concerned. Their duties involved mainly blockade patrol along the coast north of Inchon, the escorting of supply ships and the screening of the carrier HMS *Theseus*. This duty was hardly more eventful for either destroyer than was *Athabaskan's* on the east coast. *Cayuga* did have a very narrow escape on 19 October. On that day she was patrolling north of Inchon with HMS *Kenya*. With *Cayuga* leading, the two ships were steaming north towards the approaches to Chinnampo when *Cayuga's*

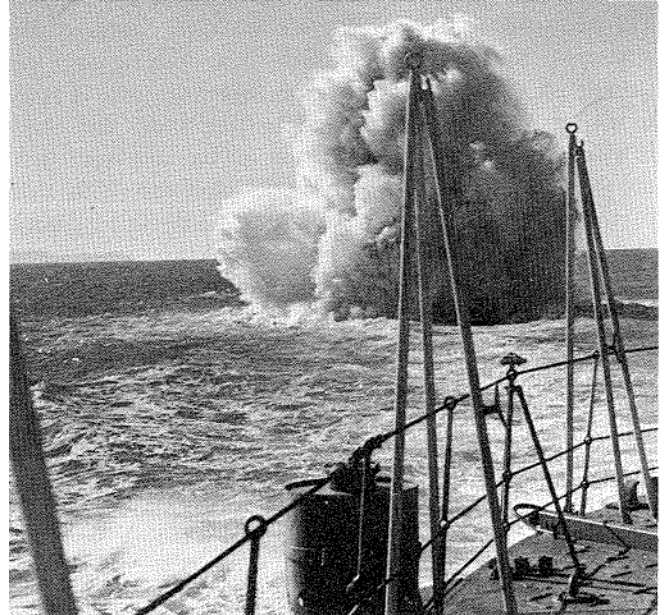
sonar operator suddenly reported mines dead ahead at a range of 400 yards. There being a known mine-field to port, *Cayuga* turned sharply to starboard, at the same time flashing an emergency-turn signal to *Kenya*. There were some tense moments as the destroyer's stern swung clear of the mine-field, but the danger had been detected in time and both ships escaped. Subsequent plotting revealed that *Cayuga's* screws could only have missed the leading mine by a few feet.<sup>48</sup>

The land war had been going rather well for the United Nations during October. Pyongyang had fallen on the 19th, and the Eighth Army continued to press northward against intermittent resistance, reaching Chonju by the end of the month. The ROK's continued to drive north along the east coast at high speed, and elements of the Sixth ROK Division reached the Yalu on the night of 26 October. UN troops striking from

LT. D. P. W. Kelly, RN, of HMS *Theseus*, forced to ditch his Sea Fury in the Yellow Sea, comes aboard *Sioux*.



Depth charge explodes close astern of *Cayuga*.



Wonsan and Iwon also made good progress against only sporadic resistance.

But the picture was not quite so rosy as it appeared on the surface nor, for that matter, as it appeared to General MacArthur himself, who before the end of the month was suggesting that the “boys” might be home for Christmas. For one thing, there was the behaviour of the Chinese Communists. Reports came in with increasing frequency after the middle of the month, indicating that more and more Chinese were fighting alongside their North Korean neighbors. Of course it was barely possible that these men were volunteers, as the Chinese Government insisted, but this was exceedingly unlikely. Certainly if anyone at Tokyo Headquarters was misled by this claim for long he must have been sadly lacking in intelligence, in both the civilian and military senses of the word. There was of course the distinct possibility that the Chinese intended only to defend the hydro-electric installations on the Yalu, which were vital to Manchurian industry, in which case it would be safe for the UN forces to continue their efforts to destroy what was left of the North Korean Army.

Because of the uncertainty over the intentions of the Chinese Reds, it seemed to some observers that there was cause for concern over the dispositions of the UN military forces. There was for instance a great gap between the Eighth Army in the west and the Tenth Corps in the east through which the Chinese, if they chose to attack in force, could pour their troops\* to attack the flanks of both armies.† Secondly, the troops striking from Wonsan and Iwon were not attacking on a single, solid front but in isolated columns whose lines of communication would be very vulnerable in the event of a strong Chinese attack. Thirdly, although the Eighth Army was advancing on a more or less solid front, it was very thinly spread out, and it had neither the depth of defence to prevent a breakthrough by a strong force nor the mobile reserves to plug the hole if a breakthrough occurred.

But if there was cause for some concern about the land campaign, there appeared to be little for the UN naval forces to worry about. There would probably not be another amphibious operation in the near future; the mining problem was being solved; there was not

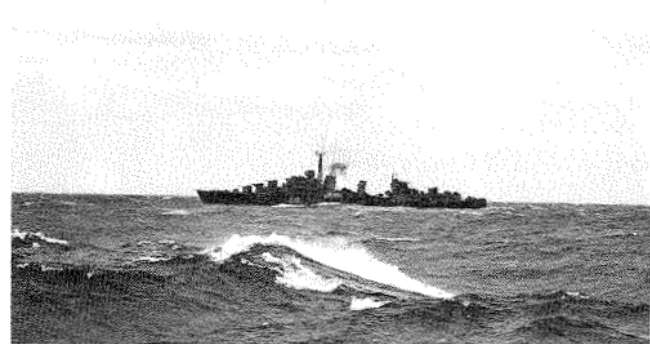
\*Major-General C. A. Willoughby, MacArthur’s former intelligence chief, has asserted (*MacArthur, 1941-1951*, 388) that the terrain in the area where this gap existed was such that there was little chance that the Chinese could drive a wedge between the two armies. This of course is palpable nonsense, as is so much of General Willoughby’s book. The Chinese and North Koreans never found it necessary to confine their movements to hardsurfaced roads.

†General Omar Bradley is said to have remarked that in the event of an attack “only diplomacy could save Walker’s right flank.” Karig, *op. cit.*, 374. General W. H. Walker was the Eighth Army Commander.

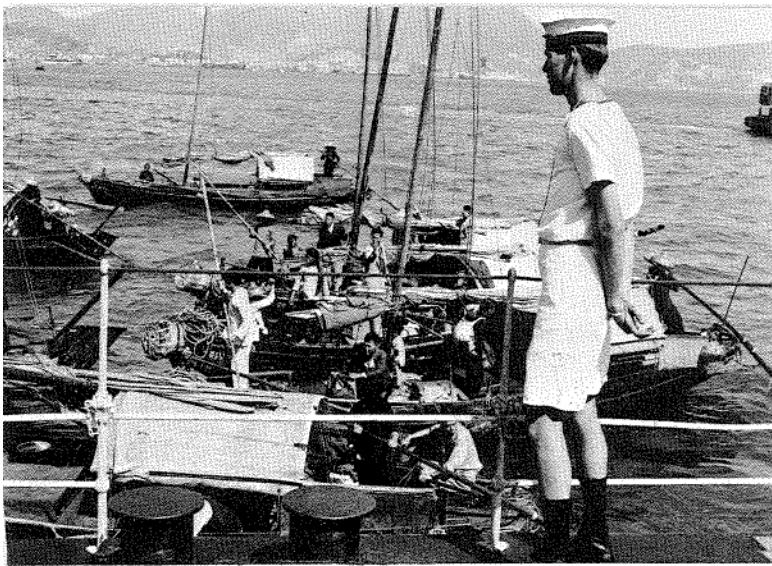
enough coast-line left in enemy hands to provide profitable targets for naval gun-fire; and there was no air, surface nor submarine opposition to contend with. It is not surprising that, under these circumstances, the men of the Canadian destroyers began to entertain hopes that at least one of the ships would be returned to Canada.<sup>49</sup> The Royal Navy was also considering at this time the possibility of reducing its commitments in Korean waters. Indeed it was quite obvious that the Commander TG 95.1 had more ships at his disposal than he required to carry out his assignments.

The Canadian destroyers, like the other ships in the United Nations force, had been working very hard for the past three months and had had little opportunity to complete their routine maintenance tasks or to give adequate leave to their ships’ companies during the short periods they had spent in harbour. Thus when the demand for ships slackened in late October, Admiral Andrewes seized the opportunity to send all three Canadian destroyers on a visit to Hong Kong.

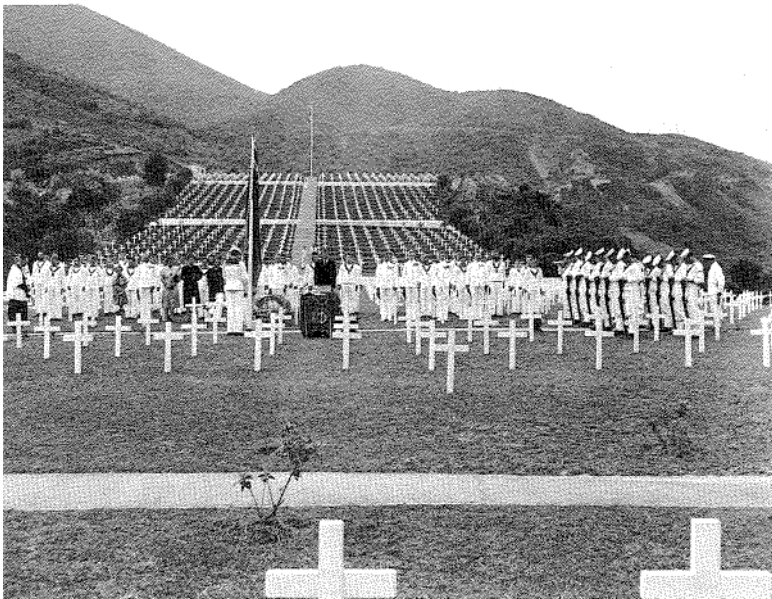
*Cayuga* and *Athabaskan*, who were both in Sasebo, left in company on 5 November for Hong Kong; *Sioux*, who was with *Theseus* on the west coast patrol, was to follow later. The two destroyers encountered heavy weather on the second day out, caused by the passage of a violent typhoon bearing the innocent-sounding name of “Clara”. Both ships suffered slight damage. The heavy seas came very near to causing a tragic accident in *Athabaskan*, when Ordinary Seaman R. E. Elvidge was washed over the side and Chaplain H. Todd narrowly escaped the same fate. Fortunately *Athabaskan*’s efficient “man overboard” procedure resulted in the seaman being recovered before he had spent fifteen minutes in the water, and he was hauled aboard none the worse for his ducking. Chaplain Todd had been badly bruised when thrown against the ship’s structure and required hospitalization in Hong Kong.



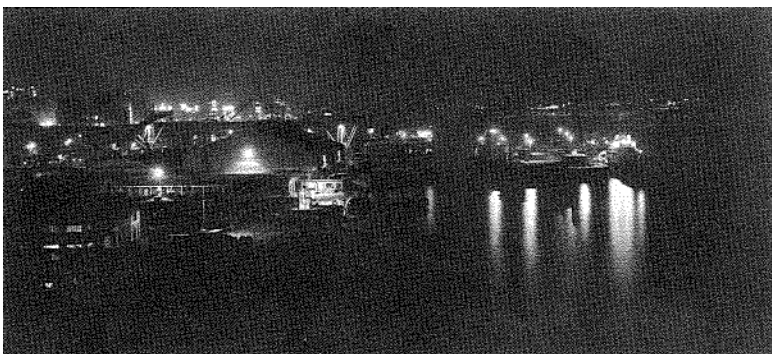
*Athabaskan* stops to pick up seaman washed overboard during typhoon “Clara”.



Water-borne pedlars besiege Cayuga on arrival at Hong Kong.



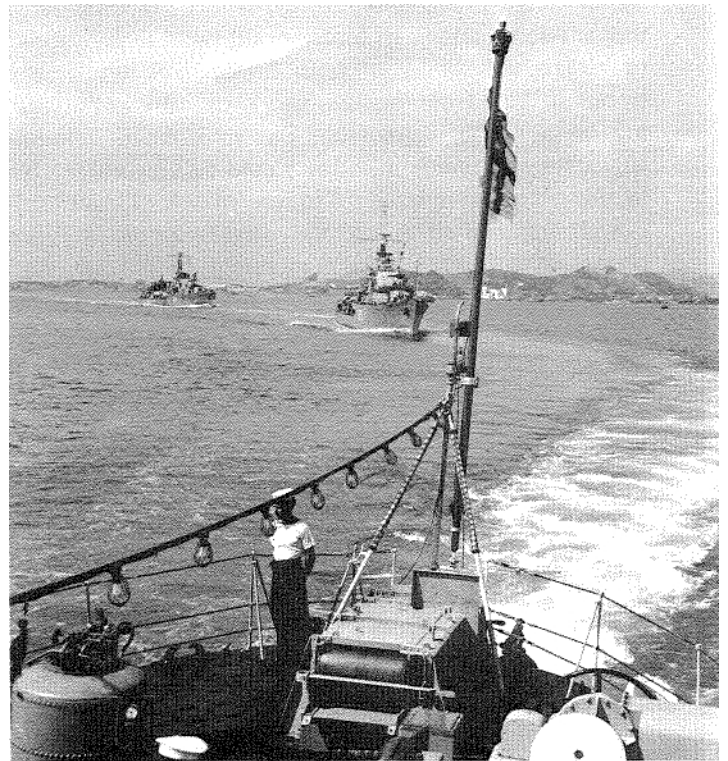
Ships' companies of Cayuga, Athabaskan and Sioux conduct a memorial service in Saiwan Military Cemetery, Hong Kong, commemorating the Canadians who fell in defence of the island.



Hong Kong at night.

*Sioux*, who left Sasebo on 8 November in company with *Theseus*, suffered more material damage from "Clara" than either of the other two destroyers. Forced to run at high speed into heavy seas in order to avoid passing near the storm's centre, *Sioux* was badly battered and suffered considerable topside damage, including the loss of a whaler and five Carley floats, before she made Hong Kong on 11 November.

The Canadian destroyers remained in Hong Kong until 16 November. This city has long been a favourite leave port for seamen of many nations, and so far as the members of the Canadian Destroyer Division Pacific were concerned it lived up to its reputation. The British authorities did all in their power to make the visit an enjoyable one, but for most of the Canadians it was enough to be able to take the first overnight leave they had enjoyed since leaving Canada on 5 July. The visit was not made solely for the purpose of providing recreation, however, and the division engaged in two exercises with ships of the Royal Navy. A great deal of repair and maintenance work was also done, and when the ships left Hong Kong practically all of the damage suffered in typhoon "Clara" had been remedied. The division sailed on the morning of 16 November to return to the war zone.



*Cayuga*, *Athabaskan* and *Sioux* leave Hong Kong for Sasebo November 1950.



## References

<sup>1</sup>After the Canadian destroyers arrived, the British Commonwealth forces in the Korean theatre consisted of some 18 warships. By the end of October 1950 the strength of the UN naval forces had grown to four fleet and four light or escort carriers, one battleship, nine cruisers, 54 destroyer types, six submarines and 16 mincraft, a total of 94 fighting ships. J. A. Field, *History of United States Naval Operations, Korea*, 365.

<sup>2</sup>This decision was first taken at a meeting on 6 July, 1950, between Vice Admiral Joy and the British Commander, Rear Admiral Andrewes.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted by Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 289.

<sup>4</sup>Captain W. Karig *et al.*, *Battle Report: The War in Korea*, (New York, 1952.)

<sup>5</sup>The Division of course retained its identity for administrative purposes, and Captain Brock continued to exercise his command as CANCOMDESPAC.

<sup>6</sup>“Train” is the term applied to the fleet of oilers, ammunition ships and other supply vessels that is required to enable a naval force to operate at sea for long periods of time.

<sup>7</sup>For a good account of the fighting in the Pusan perimeter (strictly from the point of view of the Marines), see Lynn Montross and Captain N. A. Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953*, Vol. 1. A good account of some of the early fighting may be found in Major-General W. F. Dean, *General Dean's Story*. Excellent accounts of certain individual actions are in Captain R. A. Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea*. Interesting eye-witness accounts on the early situation may be found in Marguerite Higgins', *War in Korea*.

<sup>8</sup>On 12 August TU 96.53.3 consisted of *HMS Kenya*, cruiser, and the two Canadian destroyers.

<sup>9</sup>A Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) is a supply or maintenance ship of the Royal Navy manned by a civilian complement and is comparable to a CNAV (Canadian Naval Auxiliary Vessel).

<sup>10</sup>Captain Jay in *HMS Black Swan* had by this time been replaced as Commander TE 96.50 by Captain J. H. Unwin, D.S.C., RN, in *HMS Mounts Bay*.

<sup>11</sup>The shell case of the first round fired was made into an ornamental ashtray which was later presented to the Prime Minister the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent.

<sup>12</sup>That is, between 34° 40' North and 36° 38' North.

<sup>13</sup>That is, from roughly 36° 38' North almost to the 38th parallel.

<sup>14</sup>Ochon-to is in the Conference Group, some thirty-seven miles north-west of Kunsan, in 36° 07' North 125° 59' East. On U.S. charts it is referred to as Ochong-do.

<sup>15</sup>Kogunsan-Kundo is the name given to the group on U.S. charts; it is in 35° 49' North, 126° 26' East.

<sup>16</sup>The two main islands are shown as So Wantsun and Tei Wantsun on the Admiralty charts. They are called Sangwangdung and Hawangdung on U.S. charts and are in roughly 35° 40' North, 126° 06' East.

<sup>17</sup>Shown as Wi Do on U.S. charts. In 35° 36' North, 126° 18' East.

<sup>18</sup>*Kenya* was commanded by Captain P. W. Brock, RN, a Canadian, formerly of Montreal and Vancouver.

<sup>19</sup>Called Tokchok-to on the U.S. charts; position 37° 14' North, 126° 08' East.

<sup>20</sup>A British liaison officer from *Kenya* also landed with the party.

<sup>21</sup>This island is known as Yonghung-do on the U.S. charts and is in 37° 16' North, 126° 28' East. It was here that Lieutenant E. F. Clark, USN, later set up his headquarters while he carried out his “cloak and dagger” missions prior to the Inchon landing. See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 88.

<sup>22</sup>Shown as P'almi-do on U.S. charts; position 37° 22' North, 126° 31' East.

<sup>23</sup>It was on this island that Lieutenant Clark, whose activities have previously been mentioned, discovered the workable navigation light which simplified the work of the men who had to bring the invasion fleet up the dangerous Inchon channel during the landings.

<sup>24</sup>Taebu-do on U.S. charts; position 37° 15' North, 126° 35' East.

<sup>25</sup>MacArthur himself is reported to have said that he figured the odds against succeeding at Inchon at 5,000 to 1, but that he was accustomed to taking such odds. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 76).

<sup>26</sup>HMC Ships *Cayuga*, *Athabaskan* and *Sioux*, HM Ships *Cockade* and *Charity*, HMA Ships *Bataan* and *Warramunga* and H. Neth. M.S. *Evertsen* formed the destroyer force. The ROKN forces consisted of four PC's (ex-USN Submarine Chasers) and eleven YMS's (ex-USN Motor Minesweepers).

<sup>27</sup>39° 35' North formed the northern limits of the United Nations blockade on the west coast. The dividing line between East and West Korea was set by the naval authorities as the meridian 128° East.

<sup>28</sup>In 37° 41' North, 125° 21' East. Also known as Tungsangot.

<sup>29</sup>36° 12' North, 126° 01' East.

<sup>30</sup>For a description of the raiding activities of this ship, see Karig, *op. cit.*, 152 ff., and Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 292 f.

<sup>31</sup>In 36° 22' North, 126° 32' East. It was in this area that *Bass* had made her raid.

<sup>32</sup>On U.S. charts they are shown as Piung-do and Osik-to.

<sup>33</sup>On the following day, the UN naval forces suffered their first mining casualty when USS *Brush* struck a mine off Tanchon on the east coast. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 528).

<sup>34</sup>Mr. Hurl received a Mention in Despatches for his mine demolition work.

<sup>35</sup>Anmyon-do on the U.S. charts, in 36° 30' North, 126° 22' East.

<sup>36</sup>Also called Oejanggo-do, in 36° 24' North, 126° 21' East.

<sup>37</sup>*Report of Proceedings*, HMCS *Athabaskan*, September 1950.

<sup>38</sup>On the 17th General MacArthur, thinking that perhaps he had attacked too far north, ordered Rear Admiral Doyle to begin planning an amphibious landing at the place originally favoured by the U.S. Navy, Kunsan. Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 102.

<sup>39</sup>It did not actually fall until the 28th. In the three days after the city had been thus “secured,” the Marines suffered a total of 550 battle casualties trying to capture it. (Lynn Montross, “Fleet Marine Force, Korea,” in *USNIP*, August 1953, 839 f.).

<sup>40</sup>Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 112.

<sup>41</sup>Montross and Canzona, *op. cit.*, III, 6-7.

<sup>42</sup>Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 111.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>44</sup>These were only the chief objections. An excellent treatment of the entire matter may be found in Commander Cagle’s “Errors of the Korean War,” in *USNIP*, March 1958, 31-35.

<sup>45</sup>Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France and South Korea contributed ships, but of course the overwhelming majority were USN ships.

<sup>46</sup>Now consisting of the U.S. cruisers *Worcester*, *Helena*, *Rochester* and HMS *Ceylon*, three American destroyers and the three Commonwealth destroyers. It was later augmented by the addition of *Missouri* and her escorting destroyers. Other changes during the operation decreased and increased the size of the group; at its strongest it consisted of one battleship, five cruisers and 12 destroyers.

<sup>47</sup>At this time the force consisted of *Leyte*, *Phillipine Sea* and *Valley Forge*, as *Boxer* was absent replenishing.

<sup>48</sup>Leading Seaman W. J. Roberts, RCN, who was on mine detection watch at the time of the incident, was mentioned in despatches for his skill and vigilance in detecting the minefield.

<sup>49</sup>They had good grounds for this belief. In messages passing between Canadian Naval Headquarters and UN authorities in the Korean theatre in the period 1 to 15 November, it was indicated that two of the Canadian destroyers would probably be released very soon and that the services of the third would likely be required for only a short time thereafter. (See letter, CNS to the Minister, dated 21 November, and memo. from DNPO to CNS, dated 15 December, 1950, both in NS 1650-40, Vol. 1.)

## THE CHINESE INTERVENTION

While the Canadian destroyers were at Hong Kong recruiting their forces for the next mission, preparations were being made to reduce the strength of TG 95.1 on the west coast. This reduction programme had been decided upon when it became obvious that the North Korean Army had suffered a decisive defeat, and it was based on the premise that the entire Korean peninsula would soon be in UN hands. The plan called for the closing down of the Commonwealth base in Sasebo and its transfer to Kure.<sup>1</sup> Admiral Andrewes himself intended to move back to Hong Kong with most of the heavy ships, including the carrier, leaving TG 95.1 under Captain C. F. L. J. Davies, D.S.C., RN, in *Ceylon*. With the cruiser were to remain seven destroyers and four frigates.

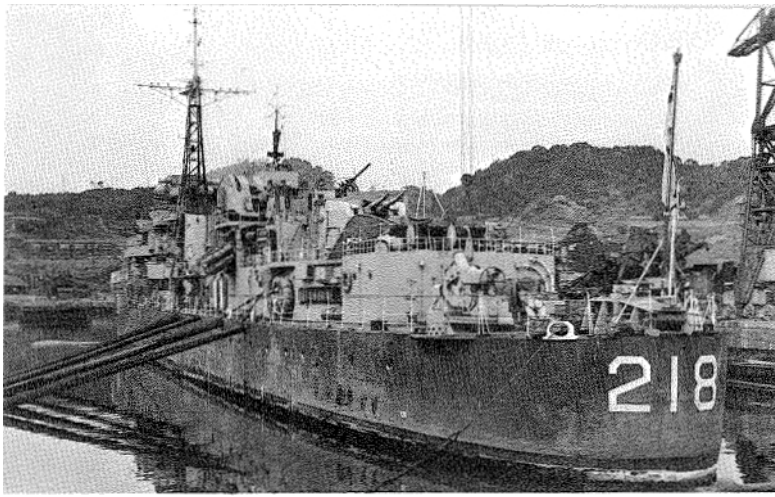
It became increasingly evident from mid-October on that the Chinese Communists were intervening in the war, but Tokyo Headquarters apparently did not consider the threat serious enough to warrant cancellation of the British reduction programme. Hong Kong in any case was less than three days' sailing from Korea, and no doubt it was felt that in an emergency the ships could be quickly recalled. The Chinese threat was nevertheless considered serious enough by Admiral Andrewes to call for the postponement of all plans for the release of the Canadian destroyers for passage to Canada, since the distance involved was too great to permit the ships to return quickly in an emergency. A message to that effect was sent to CANAVHED on 18 November.<sup>2</sup>

Thus when Captain Brock led his destroyers back into Sasebo harbour on 19 November, it was to learn that all three ships would be remaining in the theatre until their reliefs arrived from Canada. Furthermore, not only were they to remain in the Far East, but all of them were required immediately on the Korean west coast. The three ships, after hastily taking on provisions

and fuel, left on the following day, the 20th, to take over blockade duties in the coastal waters between Inchon and the mouth of the Yalu. They were organized as Task Element 95.12, and, in the absence of all but one of the British cruisers in Hong Kong, Captain Brock in *Cayuga* was placed in command.<sup>3</sup>

TE 95.12 led rather a dull life for the first two weeks of the patrol, conducting anti-shipping missions in the Yalu Gulf and assisting ships passing through the dangerous approaches to Chinnampo and Inchon. The blockade of Yalu Gulf was the primary task, for Tokyo Headquarters was once again raising the question of the effectiveness of the naval blockade. Unable to believe, in the face of Air Force claims of devastating attacks on enemy lines of communication, that the Communists could be supplying their armies by overland routes, Tokyo inferred that they must therefore be supplying them by sea across the Gulf. All three Canadian destroyers spent much time patrolling in that area, but never did they discover the slightest evidence that enemy supplies in any appreciable quantity were being moved by sea. Occasionally a junk or sampan would be sighted, but investigation always revealed it to be a harmless fishing craft or one filled with refugee men, women and children fleeing from Communism. It was obvious that the occupants of these vessels had more faith in the UN blockade than did MacArthur's headquarters; no matter what the weather, or how dark the night or what the geographical position of the vessel, whenever one was sighted it was flying the South Korean flag, fully confident that if it were intercepted it would be by a United Nations ship.<sup>4</sup>

But while the ships of the United Nations were sailing with impunity throughout the coastal waters of the entire Korean peninsula, on land the situation was entirely different. The Eighth Army on 24 November had finally launched its long-awaited offensive, only



*Cayuga* undergoing a periodic refit in a Sasebo dry dock.

to be stopped in its tracks by strong Chinese resistance and, on the following day, crushed by an overwhelming counter attack.<sup>5</sup> Forty-eight hours later, on the night of 27/28 November, the Chinese struck on the eastern front against the spear-head of the First Marine Division at Yudam-ni. Once again, as had happened after the Inchon landing, the military situation changed practically overnight, only this time the United Nations forces were on the receiving end. On the western front the Eighth Army had by 28 November been thrown into a panicky and precipitate flight which soon outdistanced the advancing Chinese but which resulted in heavy losses in men and enormous losses in equipment and supplies.\* The Tenth Corps on the eastern front was also forced to retreat, but in contrast to the flight of the Eighth Army the withdrawal of the First Marines to Hungnam was in many of its aspects a magnificent operation. Though trapped in a far more dangerous situation than any Eighth Army division, the First Marines, with the help of close support provided by Marine and naval aircraft, fought their way back to safety, bringing the bulk of their heavy equipment with them.<sup>6</sup> Not all the elements of Tenth Corps were so fortunate, and many of the units of the Seventh Infantry Division suffered dreadful casualties.<sup>7</sup> But the bulk of the Corps was able to withdraw in combat-effective condition, quite prepared to hold Wonsan and Hungnam indefinitely if called upon to do so.

\*See General S. L. A. Marshall's *The River and the Gauntlet: Defeat of the Eighth Army by the Chinese Communist Forces, November 1950, in the Battle of the Chongchon River, Korea*, which is a devastating indictment of "the lapses in planning and] destruction command in [the Second Infantry Division] which led to [its] by an Asiatic peasant force much outweighed in arms and equipment." (Review of the above work by Lynn Montross in *USNIP*, November 1953, 1253.) This book effectively disposes of the commonly-held view that the Chinese depended largely upon "human sea" tactics for their victories, a theory widely disseminated by the apologists for General MacArthur. See also R. A. Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea: Infantry, Artillery and Armor*, and J. G. Westover, *Combat Support in Korea: The United States Army in the Korean Conflict*, for vivid accounts of individual actions which took place during this first major Chinese offensive.



*Haida, Athabaskan and Crusader* alongside in Kure.

Before the first major attack by the Chinese on the Eighth Army had taken place, Admiral Andrewes with most of the heavy ships of TG 95.1 had sailed for Hong Kong. The Admiral and his staff arrived there on 28 November, but their sojourn was to be short for next day COMNAVFE sent an urgent message recalling him and all his ships to support the Eighth Army on the western coast. He embarked immediately in *Theseus* and by 4 December was back in Sasebo.

TE 95.12 meanwhile continued its routine operations on the west coast. Until the early days of December the patrol had been entirely uneventful, indeed it had "provided so little of interest or activity that the strain of maintaining enthusiasm had begun to be felt."<sup>8</sup> But events on land were now beginning to have their effect on naval operations. As the full extent of the disaster that had overtaken the Eighth Army became apparent, orders went out to evacuate the port of Chinnampo and to make preparations for a withdrawal from Inchon as

Church service aboard *Athabaskan* in Kure harbour.



well should this become necessary. Overall responsibility for this redeployment lay with the Commander Amphibious Forces Far East (Task Force 90),<sup>9</sup> and for this operation the ships of TG 95.1 were placed at his disposal.

Captain Brock's Task Element 95.12 was of course in the thick of things, since in the absence of the British cruisers<sup>10</sup> it was the strongest force available to support the redeployment. At midnight on 3 December the element was maintaining its normal patrols, with *Cayuga* and *Bataan*<sup>22</sup> operating near the mouth of the Yalu and *Athabaskan* and *Warramunga* patrolling to the south of them. *Sioux* was absent escorting the oiler RFA *Wave Laird* from Inchon to the element's replenishment area south of Chodo. Three hours later, early on the 4th, Captain Brock was notified by Admiral Andrewes:

**5 APA\* transports have been diverted Chinnampo to withdraw some troops 8th Army .... Defence of these ships is now your primary aim. Blockade is secondary.**

**.... military situation serious. Be prepared to act in fire support of Eighth Army, entering Chinnampo River swept channel as necessary....<sup>11</sup>**

Captain Brock, realizing that probably the situation would now deteriorate rapidly, made arrangements to have all the destroyers top up with fuel so that they would be ready for any emergency. He decided however that until he received further information about the overall plans for redeployment, two destroyers would be maintained on the blockade patrol. The arrival of four of the Attack Transports in the approaches to Chinnampo was reported at 1100, and shortly thereafter the destroyer USS *Forrest Royal* was assigned to reinforce TE 95.12. This reinforcement was most welcome as it enabled Captain Brock to retain the two destroyers on patrol while concentrating the remaining four in the replenishment area south of Chodo (designated as Area Shelter) to protect the APA's.

The receipt of a message<sup>12</sup> directly from Rear Admiral A. E. Smith, USN (CTG 95, and hence Admiral Andrewes' immediate superior) revealed that the situation had indeed become serious and that the APA's would probably require not covering support from destroyers stationed near Chodo but actual gun-fire support in Chinnampo harbour itself. Admiral Smith's message indicated that there was a distinct possibility that the enemy might attack Chinnampo<sup>13</sup> and that the six destroyers would then be required to enter the harbour to help in its defence. They would be joined later by *Ceylon* who was expected to arrive on the morning of 5 December to take over command of TE 95.12.

<sup>10</sup>APA is the USN designation for the ships known as Attack Transports. Actually, the five ships involved were three APA's and two AKA's (Attack Cargo Ships).

This information called for an immediate change of plan. *Athabaskan*, *Sioux*, *Bataan* and *Warramunga* were ordered to assemble near the entrance of the swept channel into Chinnampo, ready to proceed up-river in the morning. *Cayuga* intended to remain at Area Shelter with *Forrest Royal* to await the arrival of *Ceylon*, the U.S. destroyer being retained to serve as the link with *Ceylon* should *Cayuga* have to make the passage to Chinnampo before the cruiser arrived.

The passage up-river to the threatened port was not an operation one could look forward to with delight. Chinnampo, which serves as the port for the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, is situated near the mouth of the Taedong River where it widens out to become the estuary known as the Daido-ko. The channel up the Daido-ko is in places narrow, tortuous and shallow, and to add to its hazards the North Koreans had filled it with mines before their departure. The USN and ROKN minesweepers had swept a safe path through these mine-fields some 500 yards wide which they had marked with unlit buoys. Unfortunately the high tidal range and the vicious five-knot current made it unsafe to assume that the marker buoys would always be found in their original positions. Navigational conditions to seaward of the Daido-ko were little better. Through the centuries the strong current of the river has brought down countless millions of tons of mud and silt which now form a maze of islands and mud-flats far out to sea. A ship making the passage up to Chinnampo even at high tide on a fair day is thus faced with a hazardous voyage of more than twenty miles.

Captain Brock's decision not to send the four destroyers up the estuary until the morning of the 5th was firmly supported by all the Commanding Officers in TE 95.12. The USN officers of TE 95.69 who had participated in the sweeping of the channel and were all too familiar with the hazards of the passage agreed with this view and pointed out that a night passage to Chinnampo had never been attempted by a UN ship. Since the military situation at Chinnampo was still something of a mystery, a message was sent to CTG 90.2,<sup>14</sup> who was in charge of the evacuation forces there, requesting further information and asking for confirmation that the services of the destroyers would not be required that night. While awaiting Captain Kelly's reply, Captain Brock was handed another signal. Bearing the priority "Emergency," the message was from USS *Foss*, an escort vessel lying alongside in Chinnampo supplying electrical power to the port, and read:

**We are uncovered. Take necessary action immediately.<sup>15</sup>**

The wording of this message occasioned some laughter aboard the ships of TE 95.12, but the implication was clear enough that all was not well at Chinnampo. The arrival of Captain Kelly's message dispelled all doubt; he confirmed that the presence of the destroyers was required and reported that "The local situation may reach emergency basis Tuesday (5 December) forenoon."<sup>16</sup>

"That settled it," as Captain Brock later remarked.<sup>17</sup> Assuming full responsibility for this hazardous operation, he immediately ordered all six destroyers to prepare for a night passage to Chinnampo.<sup>18</sup>

The ROKN vessels under Captain Brock's command, *PC 704*, *YMS 303*, *YMS 308*, were recalled from blockade patrol in the north and ordered to protect the seaward approaches to the Daido-ko from sneak mining attacks during the absence of the destroyers. The ships of TE 95.69, the minesweeping element, had previously been stationed at the critical turning points in the swept channel, and their presence was to prove invaluable to the navigators in the destroyers.

*Cayuga* slipped from the tanker in Area *Shelter* at 2230 and made for the swept channel. One by one the destroyers formed up astern in the order *Athabaskan*, *Bataan*, *Forrest Royal* and *Sioux*. HMAS *Warramunga*, who was at anchor north of Chodo near the entrance to the channel, had already weighed and set out independently. The night was dark; indeed Commander Welland in *Athabaskan* remarked that it was "one of the blackest nights I have seen."<sup>19</sup> To add to the difficulties, the tide was almost at low ebb. Though this meant that the current would not be at its strongest, it also meant that the water would be dangerously low.

Low water was the cause of the first casualty, *Warramunga* who had gone on ahead reported herself aground shortly before midnight. She soon managed to work herself free but was forced to return to Area *Shelter* to examine her hull and screws for underwater damage, and she took no further part in the main operation. *Sioux* followed *Warramunga's* example shortly after midnight, going aground on a bank of sand and mud well within the limits of the marked channel.<sup>20</sup> She backed off easily, but as she was manoeuvring to proceed up-stream again, the starboard screw fouled the mooring wire of an unlit buoy which had drifted into the channel. It proved impossible to free the screw, so Commander Taylor, considering that his ship would now be more of a hazard than an asset to the operation, decided to return to Area *Shelter*.

Meanwhile the four remaining destroyers continued to creep up the channel. It was a nerve-racking journey for everyone concerned but particularly for the Commanding Officers and the Navigators. In *Cayuga* the Navigator, Lieutenant A. L. Collier, RCN, dashed



*Cayuga's* plot room at night.

back and forth between the radar screen and the chart table, rapidly and accurately plotting his "fixes," and relaying his information to Captain Brock on the bridge and to the destroyers astern. During the four-hour passage Lieutenant Collier made 132 fixes, most of them by radar, showing the position of the ship in relation to the channel marker buoys and nearby landmarks, and the accuracy of his navigation undoubtedly played a large part in ensuring the success of the entire operation. To the other destroyers, coming up astern at intervals of about half a mile, the information assembled by Lieutenant Collier was of some assistance, though of course it did not relieve the navigators of the task of making their own fixes. *Athabaskan's* Navigator, for instance, is said to have made the grand total of 189 fixes, and no doubt his colleagues in the other ships also had little time to twiddle their thumbs.

But it was on *Cayuga*, both as the senior ship and as the leading ship in the line, that the greatest share of the responsibility fell. Extra lookouts on the bridge and "B" gun deck peered into the blackness, intently scanning the choppy waters for those indistinct and often deceiving signs that might warn of danger. A lookout who saw, or thought he saw, an object drifting ahead in the path of the ship could never be certain that it was not a partly submerged mine, one perhaps launched further up-stream by Communist agents or possibly one that had broken from its moorings in the unswept parts of the channel and drifted out into mid-stream.\* Even if the object were not a mine it might be

\*Under international law, moored mines must be fitted with a device which automatically renders them safe if the mooring wire breaks. This convention was not observed by the North Koreans and the Chinese.

a piece of floating wreckage which, if it fouled a screw, could have serious consequences to all the ships in the element. Under such conditions the destroyers were forced to steam slowly and cautiously up the narrow channel, and it was not until 0330 on 5 December that *Cayuga* dropped anchor abreast of the main docks at Chinnampo. *Bataan* and *Forrest Royal* in the meantime had anchored near the southern entrance to the harbour, while *Athabaskan* proceeded further up-stream and anchored north of the city.

After completing a dangerous operation in which two of his ships had grounded and all six had risked an even worse fate, it was with considerable surprise and some little indignation that Captain Brock found "Chinnampo a blaze of lights and all peaceful and serene." "Uncovered indeed!" was his exasperated comment in the *Patrol Report* and it is possible that even stronger words may have been employed by some of the destroyer men of TE 95.12 that December morning.

The Commanding Officer of *Cayuga*, upon anchoring his ship, reported at once to Captain Kelly, USN (CTG 90.2), under whose operational control the task element was to come during the evacuation. Captain Brock suggested that, as commander of the gun-fire support force, he come aboard Captain Kelly's *Bayfield* for briefing. The American Captain considered that there was no great urgency and suggested instead that the Canadian commander attend a "breakfast conference" in USS *Bayfield* at 0800. There was in fact no great need for immediate action as the tactical summary now forwarded by Captain Kelly disclosed. Although Eighth Army had reported a break in the lines north of Chinnampo,<sup>21</sup> patrols penetrating as far as twenty miles north of the port could find no sign of the enemy. As an additional precaution, should a Communist column have evaded the patrols, roadblocks defended by covering batteries of artillery had been set up on all the main roads leading into Chinnampo.

At the conference in *Bayfield* at 0800, Captain Kelly decided that he would not take over full operational control of the destroyers but would give all his attention to the problems of loading and evacuation and leave the arrangements for the defence of the harbour and of the evacuation forces in Captain Brock's hands. Upon the departure of Captain Kelly with the transports, the command of all naval operations in Chinnampo was to pass to Captain Brock.

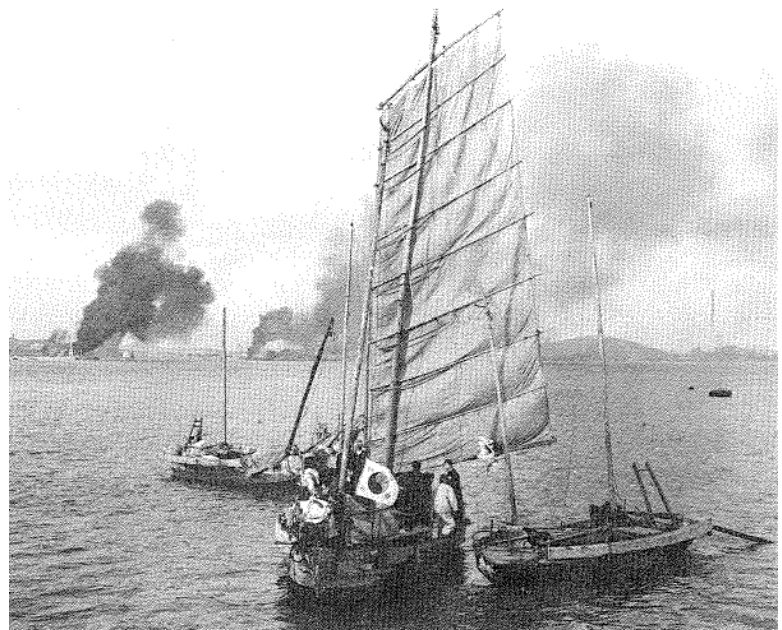
Captains Kelly and Brock conferred during the morning with the Army Commander in Chinnampo, Colonel Wilson, U.S. Army, most of whose men were engaged in loading ships, to discuss with him the final

details of the evacuation. Speed was imperative since it was considered essential that all the larger ships be clear of the dangerous swept channel in daylight. It was arranged that the army demolition squads would leave before dark in USS *Bexar*, while USS *Foss* would take off the last naval personnel remaining. Because of lack of time and a shortage of explosives, the army would be unable to complete the destruction of the huge stocks of strategic materials which had to be left behind, so the completion of this task was to be left to *Cayuga* and her consorts.

HM Cruiser *Ceylon* had in the meantime arrived in Area *Shelter* at 0900 and was most anxious to press on to Chinnampo to take command of TE 95.12. Owing to her deep draught, such an operation would have been very risky because of the low water and the consequent danger of grounding and perhaps fouling the only exit available for the transports. *Ceylon* would nevertheless have made the attempt had not Captain Brock persuaded her that all was well at Chinnampo and that there was no pressing need for her fire power. The cruiser therefore remained at Area *Shelter* with *Sioux* and *Warramunga* to provide a covering force for the transports as they arrived from Chinnampo. *Ceylon* did not take over as CTE 95.12, except for a short period in the afternoon when *Cayuga* was busy shepherding the last of the evacuation ships out of the harbour and preparing for the bombardment to follow.<sup>22</sup>

The harbour at Chinnampo was a scene of bewildering activity throughout the day, as the small

Korean craft fleeing Chinnampo during the evacuation.



Refugees fleeing Chinnampo.  
An LST is in the background.



craft scurried back and forth carrying wounded, prisoners-of-war, Korean civilian refugees and non-essential military personnel to the waiting Attack Transports and Landing Ships Tank (LST's). The greatest problem was that of the Korean refugees; there were far too many of them for the available shipping, and most of them were willing to take any risk to escape to the south. They scrambled into small, open boats and into decrepit, broken-down junks and sampans, and the harbour and the channel were full of these little craft frantically trying to make their way downstream.

It was obvious by noon that the harbour could not be cleared of all shipping in time for the destroyers to carry out their bombardment and complete the navigation of the swept channel in daylight. A conference was therefore held in *Cayuga* and plans for the night revised. *Athabaskan* was sent five miles downriver near the entrance to the swept channel to establish a defended anchorage. At the conclusion of the bombardment the other destroyers could then retire to this anchorage, as there seemed no point in hazarding the ships in another night passage.

When *Athabaskan* arrived at the site chosen for the anchorage, she proceeded to demolish three nearby pill boxes with her 4-inch guns and then sent off her motor cutters to search the innumerable junks and other civilian craft streaming down-river. It was well known that the Communists often utilized junks for mine-laying, and certainly a few well placed mines in the swept channel would have played havoc with the Chinnampo evacuation, but although a great many craft were boarded and searched no sign of enemy activity was discovered. The only untoward incident that occurred was when a boarding officer from *Athabaskan*

jerked aside a concealing tarpaulin and narrowly escaped having his face licked by a despondent but friendly cow who greeted him with a loud "Moo!"

Back at the harbour the evacuation continued. At 1400 the first two transports left, the forerunners of an exodus that continued until after dark. Captain Kelly left in *Bayfield* at 1430, his place as CTG 90.2 being taken by the Commanding Officer of the APA USS *Bexar*. The last troops were embarked shortly after 1700, and *Bexar* then ordered the remaining LST's to clear the harbour. *Bexar* herself, escorted by the destroyer *Foss*, left shortly thereafter but unfortunately grounded near the southern end of the swept channel and had to wait for high water next morning to get clear.

The bombardment began at 1735 while the last LST's were still endeavouring to clear the harbour. Targets had been assigned earlier in the day after consultation with the Army Commander at Chinnampo, and *Cayuga* with her 4-inch guns and *Bataan* with her 4.7's concentrated their fire on oil storage tanks, supply dumps, loaded freight cars, railway lines and dock installations. *Forrest Royal* with her heavier 5-inch guns had been assigned some of the sturdier, less destructible targets such as a massive brick chimney in the harbour area which even repeated hits with 5-inch shells did not weaken appreciably. Marshalling yards, rolling stock and such smaller targets proved more vulnerable, and on them *Forrest Royal's* accurate fire was very effective.

The bombardment was a spectacular affair and is vividly described by Captain Brock in his *Patrol Report*:

**The fires started by the military were sufficient, in the dusk, to indicate very clearly the target areas, and more fires were started by the opening broadsides. As darkness fell, the fires became more and more brilliant, making the**



whole waterfront as bright as day; great balls of fire rose from the explosions to dissolve into the huge pall of black smoke which was drifting slowly to the southeast. Whenever a fresh oil tank was hit, which was often, sprays of molten glowing metal were radiated in all directions, adding spectacularly to the show. Fires were observed and explosions heard until 0615(1) the following morning.

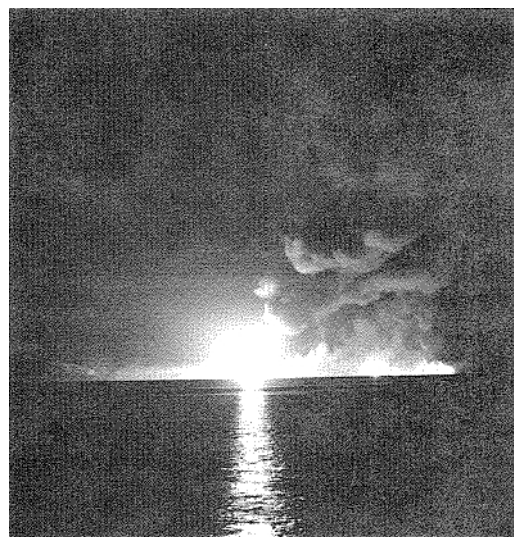
This vivid spectacle would have been watched with more appreciation by the men of the destroyer element had it not been for the presence of the Korean refugees. Huge crowds of these unfortunates had been lining the beaches and the dockyard area all day, waiting hopelessly for passage in the ships they must have known could not take even half their number. Not until the bombardment had actually begun did those on the docks give up hope and retire to the beaches. The greatest care was taken by the destroyers not to injure the refugees or destroy civilian property, and so far as is known the only casualties caused were the result of two accidental ricochets. There were still a great many junks and other small craft drawn up on the beaches, and these had been marked for destruction. Rather than deprive the helpless refugees of their last hope of reaching safety, Captain Brock decided to take the risk of the boats falling into Communist hands and gave orders that they be spared. It is pleasant to record that this humanitarian act was later approved by higher authority.

The bombardment ceased at 1845, and the three destroyers withdrew to join *Athabaskan* at the defended anchorage. Three ROK naval vessels, *YMS 301*, *302* and *306*,<sup>23</sup> who had been patrolling up-river, were with difficulty persuaded to accompany the destroyers (they felt that they stood a better chance of coming to grips with the enemy where they were), and they were employed during the night in patrolling the anchorage and checking the refugee-filled boats that were still streaming past. The decision to keep the destroyers in the river overnight had been correct; many of the LST's had run aground near the defended anchorage and others had anchored there rather than risk the swept channel in darkness.

After a quiet night disturbed only by the glare of the fires and the roar of the explosions from Chinnampo harbour, the destroyers left the anchorage at first light on 6 December. The DST's—those that had grounded and been re-floated at high water and those that had merely anchored for the night—were collected, and the long procession of destroyers and LST's, led by *Athabaskan*, set off down-river. *Cayuga* brought up the rear, encouraging the LST's to greater efforts by shouting well chosen words and phrases over the loud-hailer. All the ships were clear of the swept channel by 0945, and Captain Brock could report "Mission successfully completed."



Military installations and supplies go up in flames at Chinnampo.



Chinnampo  
in flames,  
6 December 1950.

The "Chinnampo affair"<sup>24</sup> was without a doubt the most important mission performed by the Canadian Destroyer Division as a group during the entire Korean conflict. All the ships of Task Element 95.12 performed their duties ably, and most of them showed exceptional skill in accomplishing their difficult assignments. But it is to *Cayuga*, as the senior ship, that most of the credit for the success of the operation must go. Captain Brock's handling of his task element was faultless and received the highest praise from his superiors.<sup>25</sup> As a general comment on the Chinnampo mission, perhaps the best is that of Vice-Admiral Andrewes:

**This operation was a fine feat of seamanship on the part of all concerned, and its bold execution was worthy of the finest traditions of the Naval Service.**<sup>26</sup>

It was obvious to everyone in the theatre that the evacuation of Chinnampo would be only the first

of several such operations<sup>27</sup> indeed there was considerable loose talk making the rounds about the possibility of a Korean “Dunkirk.” It is not surprising that a feeling of impending disaster hung over the United Nations forces in Korea, for this was the feeling that infected not only Eighth Army headquarters but also the very apex of the command organization, MacArthur’s headquarters in Tokyo.\* The result was that no stand was made by the Eighth Army, and by the end of December the Communists, without having to fight a single major battle, had recovered the whole of North Korea. The First Marines and the Third and Seventh Infantry Divisions on the eastern front withdrew through Wonsan and Hungnam, chiefly the latter, and concentrated in the Pusan area of southern Korea to re-organize before moving up to support the Eighth Army.<sup>28</sup>

But if there was a certain amount of hesitancy and confusion in the theatre of operations, the situation was little better back at the United Nations in New York. The Chinese intervention had played havoc with the unity and determination of the anti-Communist majority in the United Nations. A good many countries willing to resist or at least condemn North Korean aggression were not quite so willing to take on the entire Chinese nation. There had from the beginning been a strong neutralist bloc led by India which avidly desired a compromise peace, and this group gained considerable strength following the Chinese intervention. After the disastrous defeats in Korea early in December, the United States under considerable pressure from her allies let it be known

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\*According to Commander Cagle, “In Far East headquarters at this time, a degree of panic and inertia reigned. Many believed (and so stated) that the Red Chinese Army had both the capability and the intention to drive the UN forces into the sea...” (*USNIP*, March 1958, 33.) It took Tokyo headquarters a long time to get over its attack of the jitters. When the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after being subjected to a protracted and heavy bombardment of messages from MacArthur, finally informed him, on 9 January, 1951, that he would not be permitted to bomb Chinese bases in Manchuria and that he could withdraw from Korea if he thought it necessary, the General replied in a petulant telegram detailing at length all the difficulties facing him and suggesting that the command be withdrawn from the peninsula as soon as it was tactically feasible. (Berger, *op. cit.*, 132.) When this telegram was sent, General Ridgway was rapidly whipping the Eighth Army into fighting condition and was almost ready to take the offensive.

that she was ready to consider a cease-fire. This was not a propitious time for such an admission, and China, as was to be expected, set impossible conditions as her price for peace. Nothing daunted, the General Assembly set up a three-man “cease-fire committee,”<sup>29</sup> but the intransigent Chinese were not to be persuaded, and it soon became clear to all but the most determined optimists that the United Nations would have to continue the fight for an honourable settlement.

During this period of disaster and defeat for UN arms in December and early January, the ships of the Canadian Destroyer Division remained in the operational area on the west coast almost continuously. Their duties were varied but not very interesting. All of the ships took their turns on the carrier screen of HMS *Theseus*, whose aircraft were flying armed reconnaissance in support of Eighth Army, conducting antishipping patrols and acting as spotters for naval bombardments. Fortunately for the Canadians this carrier duty, strenuous and notoriously dull, was undertaken mainly by the British destroyers. When not with the carrier, the Canadian ships escorted shipping, carried out blockade patrols and provided anti-aircraft protection and general support for the forces evacuating Inchon. This latter duty was always welcomed; at least it was better than patrolling inshore among the islands, rocks and mud flats in blinding snow squalls or biting winds.

Towards the end of the year the Canadian destroyers, who had been on continuous duty on the west coast since 20 November, were beginning to feel the need for a few days in harbour to effect necessary repairs if nothing else and to catch up on routine maintenance tasks. *Athabaskan* was the first one relieved; she arrived at Sasebo on 22 December and was immediately taken in hand by the Japanese dockyard crews. *Sioux* returned to Sasebo on 2 January and spent the next two weeks preparing for her voyage home to Canada. *Cayuga*, after setting a record for the Commonwealth destroyers by completing 50 days on patrol, joined her consorts in Sasebo on 8 January for a well earned docking.

## References

<sup>1</sup>Kure is a large seaport in the Inland Sea of Japan and is situated on the island of Honshu. It is in that part of Japan which was assigned to the British Commonwealth at the end of the war and was at this time administered by Australia. It possesses large and excellent port facilities of every description and consequently was used by the Commonwealth navies in the Far East as a repair and maintenance base. Alongside berths, exceedingly rare in Sasebo, were always available at Kure. The latter was also a better leave port than Sasebo (though this is scant praise indeed), and it also possessed excellent hospital facilities ashore. The chief drawbacks of Kure, so far as the RCN was concerned, were that it was further from the operational area, and its supply facilities, particularly for food, were much inferior to those of the USN at Sasebo.

<sup>2</sup>See note above, page 28.

<sup>3</sup>HMA Ships *Bataan* and *Warramunga* and USS *Forrest B. Royal* later joined the element.

<sup>4</sup>“... the R.O.K. flags frequently have little relationship with the nationality of the boats’ occupants. But they wave the bunting with confidence.” (HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, November 1950.)

<sup>5</sup>The main weight of the attack fell on the ROK First, Seventh and Eighth Divisions and on the Second and TwentyFifth U.S. Divisions. Two large gaps were torn in the UN lines, forcing the entire army to fall back.

<sup>6</sup>See Lynn Montross and Captain Canzona, *op. cit.*, Vol. III.

<sup>7</sup>There is a fine account of the withdrawal of the First Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment (X Corps), from Hagaru-ri in Captain Gugeler, *op. cit.*, 62-86. On 1 December, when most of the survivors had reached safety, this battalion numbered only 181 out of an original 1,053.

<sup>8</sup>*Patrol Report-20th November to 6th December, 1950*, submitted by Captain Brock, D.S.C., RCN, to Flag Officer Second-in-Command Far East Station, (CTG 95.1). (Copy in NS 1926-DDE 218, Vol. 2.)

<sup>9</sup>He delegated command of west coast redeployment operations to Rear Admiral L. A. Thackrey, USN, (CTG 90.1).

<sup>10</sup>HMS *Ceylon* was at Sasebo; the others were en route to Japan from Hong Kong.

<sup>11</sup>CTG 95.1, 031424Z/December/1950. Copy in NS 1926-DDE-218, Vol. 2.

<sup>12</sup>CTF 95, 032015Z/December/1950. Copy in NS 1926-DDE-218, Vol. 2.

<sup>13</sup>The military situation in the Eighth Army area was at this time exceedingly confused. See S. L. A. Marshall, *op. cit.*, and Captain Gugeler, *op. cit.* A vivid account of the incredible confusion attendant upon the evacuation of Pyongyang may be found in Captain Westover, *op. cit.*, 133 f.

<sup>14</sup>Captain S. G. Kelly, U.S.N., in USS *Bayfield*.

<sup>15</sup>Captain Brock’s Patrol Report previously cited above.

<sup>16</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>17</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>18</sup>His decision was later approved, indeed commended, by both the Commander-in-Chief Far East Station and the Flag Officer Second-in-Command.

<sup>19</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, December 1950.

<sup>20</sup>In a tidal estuary such as the Daido-ko, particularly when the tidal range is great and the currents swift, the locations of mud and sand-banks often change with bewildering rapidity.

<sup>21</sup>This report was very misleading, and Chinnampo was in no immediate danger. For a description of conditions at Pyongyang at this time, see J. G. Westover, *op. cit.*, 133-134.

<sup>22</sup>This caused some minor confusion in Chinnampo because of the change of ships’ call signs it involved. The call sign for CTE 95.12 was “Abuse” and that of *Cayuga* was “Motorola”, and Captain Brock remarks that some of the ships in the harbour “having by now accustomed themselves to being abused by ‘Abuse’ were slightly confused at being abused by “Motorola”. (*Patrol Report* previously cited.)

<sup>23</sup>These craft were under the command of CTE 95.69, the minesweeper element in the Chinnampo area. This task element cooperated wholeheartedly with CTE 95.12 during the evacuation and rendered invaluable service throughout the operation.

<sup>24</sup>A. J. P. “The Chinnampo Affair,” *Crowsnest*, February 1951, is an interesting account of the operation, and several excellent photographs accompany the text. Norman Bartlett referred to the mission as “one of the most dangerous naval operations of the Korean War.” (*With the Australians in Korea*, 128.)

<sup>25</sup>Captain Brock received the Distinguished Service Order, and the citation refers specifically to his “courage, initiative and vigorous leadership” during the Chinnampo evacuation. His Navigator in *Cayuga*, Lieutenant A. L. Collier, received the Distinguished Service Cross for his part in the operation and for his good work during *Cayuga*’s first tour in the Korean theatre. Among the decorations awarded largely or partly for services at Chinnampo were a Bar to the D.S.C. awarded to Commander R. P. Welland, Commanding Officer of *Athabaskan*, and the British Empire Medal to *Cayuga*’s coxswain, Chief Petty Officer D. J. Pearson. Later Captain Brock, Commander Welland and Commander P. D. Taylor, Commanding Officer of *Sioux*, were awarded the Legion of Merit in the Degree of Officer by the United States Government for their services in Korea during this period.

<sup>26</sup>Letter, FO 2i/c, FES, to C-in-C, FES, dated 22 January, 1951. (Copy in NS 1926-DDE-218, Vol. 2.) The comments of Vice Admiral C. T. Joy, who was the commander of all UN naval forces in the Far East, were: “The expeditious manner in which ships under your command performed their assignments in the Chinnampo operations just completed deserves highest praise and commendation in performance of duty. We are proud indeed of all hands who took part.” (Copy in NS 1926-DDE-219, Vol. 2.)

<sup>27</sup>In fact the navy had begun to remove surplus material and non-essential personnel from Wonsan as early as 3 December.

<sup>28</sup>There has been some criticism of MacArthur’s decision to evacuate Wonsan and Hungnam (see particularly Commander Cagle’s “Errors of the Korean War,” *USNIP*, March 1958, and Cagle and Manson, *The Sea War in Korea*, 190), and certainly there is little doubt that a relatively small force, backed by strong close-support in the air and by the overwhelming fire power of the UN naval forces, could have held a beach head at Hungnam almost indefinitely. MacArthur believed however, and perhaps quite rightly, that every man of Tenth Corps would be required to contain the Chinese offensive in the south.

<sup>29</sup>The Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Canada’s Secretary of State for External Affairs, Sir Benegal Rau of India and Nazrollah Entezam of Iran were the three members of this committee set up on 14 December, 1950. Mr. Pearson did not believe that the Committee could do much good, and he was reluctant to become a member. “I was the victim of conscription,” he is reported to have said. (F. H. Soward and E. McInnis *Canada and the United Nations*, 136.)



## STOPPING THE CHINESE

The early months of 1951 were times of danger for the United Nations forces in Korea. Late in December 1950 the Eighth Army had called a halt to its retreat near the 38th parallel and was waiting apprehensively for the expected Chinese attack.\* Tenth Corps was moving out of Hungnam and concentrating in southern Korea, reforming the battalions mauled in the Chosin area and regrouping its formations before moving up to join Eighth Army in the north. Very little was known of enemy strength in North Korea, though MacArthur's headquarters was making wild guesses placing it as high as 450,000 men; but at least it was obvious that the UN forces faced a formidable foe.† Prospects for a Merry Christmas for the troops in Korea were certainly grim.

On 23 December a jeep accident took the life of Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, the Commanding General of Eighth Army,<sup>1</sup> a tragedy that, as it happened, was to have a profound influence on the future conduct of UN operations in Korea, a tragedy that—if one may be permitted to speculate on what might have been—probably changed the whole history of the Korean war. General Walker led Eighth Army with great ability during the fighting in the Pusan perimeter, but certainly he, along with General MacArthur, must bear a large share of the responsibility for the tragic reverses suffered by Eighth

Army during November and December 1950.\* At the time of General Walker's death the Eighth Army was a beaten army,† and it is not at all beyond the bounds of possibility that, had there been no change in command, the UN forces in western Korea might have gone on retreating step by step until they were forced to abandon the whole peninsula. This indeed was General MacArthur's plan.<sup>2</sup>

But such was not to be the fate of the United Nations troops in Korea, for on 26 December, 1950, General Matthew Bunker Ridgway arrived to take over command of all ground forces in the peninsula. When he arrived he had less than a week to prepare the Eighth Army for the long-awaited Chinese offensive which finally struck the UN positions in great strength on the evening of 31 December. Though Ridgway could work wonders with an army, he could not work miracles, and by the evening of 2 January, 1951, the situation had become critical; the Chinese had broken the UN lines directly north of Seoul in the sector held by the First and Seventh ROK Divisions, and there was nothing for it but to retreat back across the Han and leave Seoul once again to the enemy.

The retreat of the Eighth Army was not a rout this time.<sup>3</sup> At General Ridgway's direction, defensive positions had been prepared, largely by civilian labour, some fifteen miles south of the River Han, and to

\*"There was [in the Eighth Army in late December 1950] a definite air of nervousness, of gloomy foreboding, of uncertainty, a spirit of apprehension as to what the future held. There was much 'looking over the shoulder,' as the soldiers say." (General M. B. Ridgway, *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway*, 204-205).

†"Here the enemy was leaning right up against us, [in December 1950] but we did not know his strength, and we did not have his location pinpointed on a map. All Intelligence could show me was a big red goose egg out in front of us, with '174,000' scrawled in the middle of it." So says General Ridgway, *ibid.*, 205. This is not, however, the impression given by General Willoughby in his book on MacArthur. From it, one would gather that his department (Intelligence, for he was MacArthur's G2) knew the precise order of battle of the Chinese Army, even that part of it in Manchuria.

\*Whatever the mistakes of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the politicians and the diplomats in Washington and the UN, it would be ridiculous to place the blame on them. Indeed had not the hesitant policy of the UN forced MacArthur to pause at the 38th parallel, it is possible that the UN forces would have been even more strung out and disorganized when the Chinese struck.

†There were of course many individual units still in fine fighting trim; the reference applies to the army as an army. The remarks of General Ridgway, who as a rule is not too critical of anything connected with the U.S. Army, provide strong support for the view expressed above. "I must say, in all frankness, that the spirit of the Eighth Army as I found it on my arrival there gave me deep concern. . . . having lost their aggressiveness, their esprit, their eagerness to fight, they seemed to have forgotten, too, many of the basic, unchanging principles of war." (*op. cit.*, 204-207.)

these positions the troops withdrew in good order. This was the limit of the UN retreat. At Christmas the Eighth Army had been beaten and dispirited; one month later, under Ridgway's leadership, it was to strike back at its tormentors as an aggressive and efficient fighting force. In three successive attacks, the first launched on 25 January,\* the second on 21 February and the third on 7 March, 1951, United Nations ground forces, often against heavy resistance,<sup>4</sup> pushed the Reds back, forcing them out of Seoul<sup>5</sup> and back across the 38th parallel. By early April all of South Korea south of the Imjin had been cleared of the enemy.

The ships of the Canadian Destroyer Division did not play a particularly important part in these momentous events. The Canadian destroyers, however, were now no longer the sole representatives of Canada's fighting forces in Korea.<sup>6</sup> On 7 August, 1950, a week after the Destroyer Division first arrived in Sasebo, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent announced that Canada had decided to send a ground force to Korea. The Canadian Army Special Force, as it was called, was to consist of an infantry brigade (three battalions of infantry with their supporting arms and services) and, except for key officers, non-commissioned officers (NCO's) and certain specialists provided by the regular forces, was to be made up of volunteers enlisted for a minimum of eighteen months. When, after the Inchon landing and the subsequent UN victories, the war appeared to be all but over, the Canadian infantry contribution was temporarily reduced to one battalion.<sup>7</sup> The newly-formed 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, (Lieutenant Colonel J. R. Stone) was the unit chosen. The PPCLI arrived at Pusan on 18 December, 1950, to complete their training and by 23 February, 1951, were in the line with their comrades of the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade.

\*General Willoughby in his apologia for MacArthur has garnered for his hero all the credit for stopping the Chinese January offensive and launching the UN counter attack. Nothing could be further from the truth. As late as 10 January, when the withdrawal had been successfully accomplished and active patrolling operations to the north had already begun, MacArthur was still thinking in terms of progressive retreats. Indeed he painted so black a picture of the plight of UN arms that two of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Generals Collins and Vandenberg, flew out to Korea to see for themselves. They reported on 17 January that under Ridgway the Eighth Army was being revitalized and that there was no danger of its being driven into the sea. According to Willoughby, "MacArthur flew to Korea on January 20, nullified any suggestion that the enemy might drive our forces into the sea, and issued orders for the counteroffensive." (*op. cit.*, 407.) The facts of the matter are that by 15 January Ridgway was probing the enemy front with heavy patrols of regimental combat team strength and following them up with divisional thrusts. By 20 January, when MacArthur made his dramatic appearance, Ridgway was almost ready to launch his main offensive, which indeed began five days later. (See Willoughby, *op. cit.*, 407; Ridgway, *op. cit.*, 215-216; Berger, *op. cit.*, 132.)

Shortly before the Patricias arrived at Pusan, the status of the personnel of Canadian destroyers in the Far East underwent a change. On 8 December, 1950, the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Brooke Claxton, established the Royal Canadian Navy Special Force (RCNSF) consisting of the ships, officers and men of the RCN then serving and who in the future would serve, with the United Nations in the Far East. The creation of this Special Force had, at the time, few consequences of importance for RCN personnel in Korea<sup>8</sup> since, unlike the Canadian Army's contribution, the RCN force consisted almost entirely of regulars.<sup>9</sup> Laws were passed later to make the members of the RCNSF eligible for most of the benefits enjoyed by the short-service enlistees of the CASF. Throughout the entire Korean conflict the RCN ships serving in the Special Force were never placed on Active Service, and no distinction, except for certain benefits enjoyed by the personnel manning them, was made between ships serving in the Far East and those in home waters.

Whatever special benefits were enjoyed by the men of the RCN Special Force they were well earned, for certainly a Korean west coast patrol, particularly in the winter time, was no pleasure cruise. Fortunately for those concerned, the first three months of 1951 were less busy than the last six weeks of 1950 had been, and usually enough time was spent in harbour to allow the ships to be adequately maintained and the ships' companies to be given a reasonable amount of shore leave. Not that the Canadian destroyers were idle; far from it. *Athabaskan* for instance spent 19 days at sea in January, 20 in February and 24 in March; still, this left her a reasonable amount of time in harbour. Furthermore, considering the activity on land and the naval operations then under way on the east coast, the west coast patrols made by RCN ships at this time were relatively quiet.

View of Inchon anchorage taken from Wohni-do, December 1950.





Ship's company collects trees for *Cayuga's* Christmas festivities, 1950.

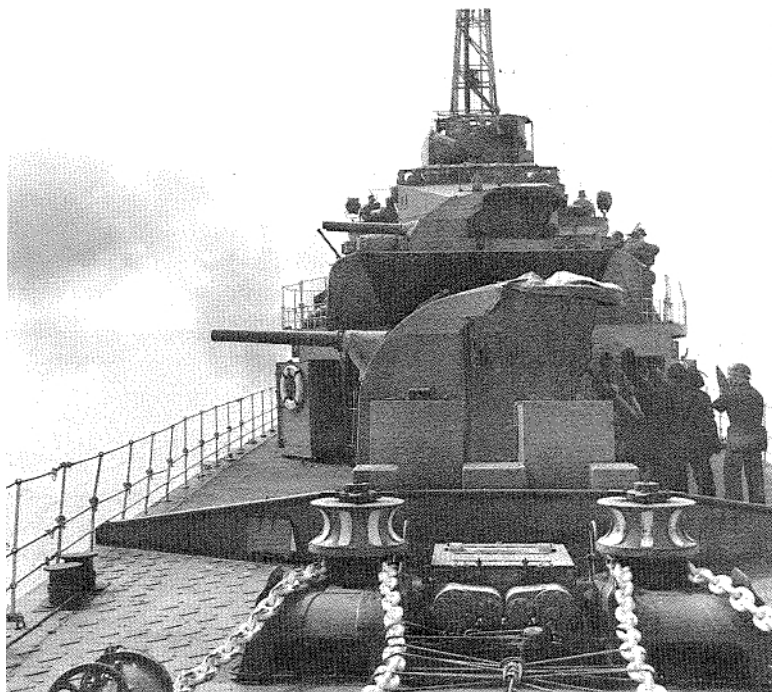
Not that there were no interesting moments for the Canadian ships during the early months of 1951. Both *Cayuga* and *Athabaskan*, though they had no important role to play as at Chinnampo, were present during the later phases of the evacuation of Inchon and witnessed the great exodus of shipping which took place during the early days of January. As at Chinnampo the most tragic aspect of the evacuation was the plight of the civilian refugees fleeing the city. The men of the Canadian destroyers, when the occasion arose, did what little they could to alleviate the sufferings of these unfortunate people. It sometimes happened that during patrols in the Inchon approaches the destroyers would have occasion to investigate a civilian craft for one reason or another, and the Commanding Officer of

Checking for contraband, LT. R. C. K. Peers of *Sioux* examines an intercepted junk.



*Athabaskan* remarked that “... the pathetic state of the occupants in the bitter cold weather brought forth showers of cigarettes and [other] trifles from the hands on the upper deck whenever a junk was brought alongside.”<sup>10</sup>

It was in Inchon harbour that the Canadian destroyers for the first time in the Korean conflict came under enemy fire. Inchon had been abandoned to the enemy on 5 January,<sup>11</sup> but later in the month cruisers and destroyers were sent to bombard enemy installations in the area in the belief that this might mislead the Reds into thinking that another amphibious assault was planned and cause them to divert troops there. HIM Ships *Cayuga* and *Nootka* (Commander A. B. F. Fraser-Harris, D.S.C. and Bar, RCN),<sup>12</sup> were



*Cayuga* fires at enemy targets on the Korean west coast.

leaving Inchon harbour on 25 January when enemy guns on Wolmi-do opened fire upon them. The Reds' gunnery was hopelessly inaccurate, but “this first positive enemy resistance was welcomed in *Cayuga* after so many months of waiting,”<sup>13</sup> and both ships turned, reversed course and closed to engage. Their 4-inch guns silenced the shore batteries, but the ships, for good measure, steamed in to Bofors range to spray the area with the short range weapons before leaving to continue their patrols.

*Cayuga* returned to Inchon two days later, this time to join the UN bombardment force in the harbour. Ridgeway's first offensive was at this time making good progress, and the ships were under orders to



View from *Cayuga* of planes taking off from HMS *Theseus* during operations on west coast of Korea.

HMS *Ceylon* and HMCS *Cayuga* seen from *Nootka*.

*Cayuga* takes on provisions by jack stay from HMAS *Warranunga*.

harass the enemy, disrupt his communications and, when it became possible, provide direct gun-fire support for the UN troops advancing up the peninsula.<sup>14</sup> Before *Cayuga* left Inchon again, she came under enemy fire for the second time when on the afternoon of 3Q January mainland batteries believed to consist of about six 75-mm. guns selected her as their target. This time the gunners were more efficient, and several rounds landed within 200 yards of the ship. But the combined fire power of two cruisers and two destroyers was more than the Red artillerymen were able to stomach, and although *Cayuga* remained at Inchon until 3 February she was not molested again.

Except for the two minor clashes with the enemy just described, the Canadian destroyers had a relatively quiet time during the first three months of 1951. *Cayuga*, *Athabaskan* and *Nootka* all spent a six-day period in Kure during February undergoing repairs and carrying out maintenance, and *Athabaskan* also enjoyed five days in Yokosuka, the port city of Tokyo, while taking part in an anti-submarine exercise with HMS *St. Bride's Bay* and U.S. Submarine *Bugara*.

Much of the time spent on operations by the Canadian destroyers during these early months in 1951 was devoted to carrier screening. Usually all three worked together under *Cayuga*, with a British destroyer making the fourth member of the screen. The British carrier on the west coast at this time was *Theseus*, who alternated with a U.S. light carrier or escort carrier (it was USS *Bataan* in early 1951) in providing the air power for TG 95.1. Aircraft from the duty carrier (TE 95.11) flew direct-support and armed-reconnaissance missions for the ground forces, provided spotters for naval bombardments, conducted anti-shipping patrols and, when required, provided air cover for UN ships on the west coast.

The usual routine for the carrier group was to operate in the vicinity of the Clifford Islands during daylight. The first aircraft would take off at dawn, beginning a hectic day during which the 34 planes in *Theseus* would fly an

average of 55 sorties. At dusk when the last plane had landed on, the ship would steam south or south-west out into the Yellow Sea, reversing course during the night in order to make a landfall on the Cliffords at dawn.

For the carrier herself, the work was strenuous but rewarding; for the screening destroyers, it was strenuous and dull. They were there chiefly to guard the carrier against air and submarine attacks, but enemy aircraft and submarines never appeared, nor was there much likelihood that they ever would appear. But that did not mean that the ships could relax; each one had her specific duty to perform, and then there was always the problem of keeping the very precise station required of a screening destroyer to avoid collisions with her neighbours.

One of the minor annoyances for the commander of the screen, particularly when his ships were *Tribal* Class destroyers of short endurance, was the fuelling problem. Every two or three days each *Tribal* would have to take on fuel either from the carrier or from an oiler. Since there were only four destroyers on the screen, these frequent absences considerably complicated the problem of maintaining efficient anti-submarine and anti-aircraft protection for the carrier.

Fuelling at sea is not a particularly inspiring operation, but the Canadian destroyers in Korea made a game of it, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say they reduced it to a science. When the Destroyer Division first arrived in the theatre, the record time for connecting up for fuelling, from the firing of the Coston gun\* to the order "Commence pumping," stood,

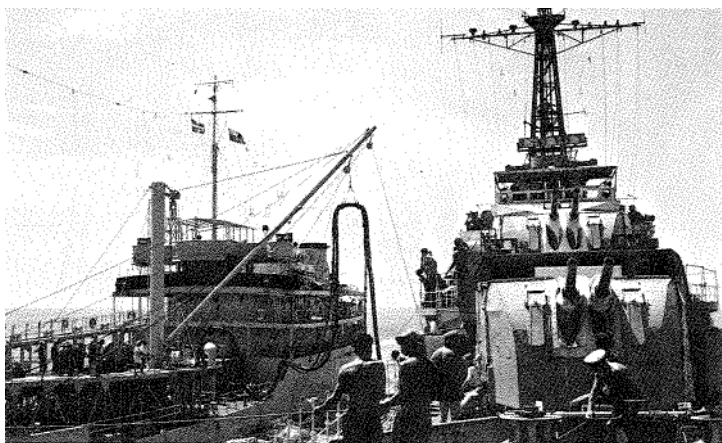
\*Normally the ship being refuelled fires a line across to the oiler. To this line is attached a heavier *heaving line*, to which in turn is bent an even stronger line called a *messenger*. The *messenger* is attached by the oiler's crew to the end of the fuelling hose which is then hauled across to the refuelling ship. The hose is then coupled to the proper connection and pumping begins. There are of course many variations in fuelling procedure; sometimes, for instance, it is the oiler that fires the first line, and sometimes the *messenger* is kept on the oiler's deck. This method substantially reduces the time required to pass the hose.



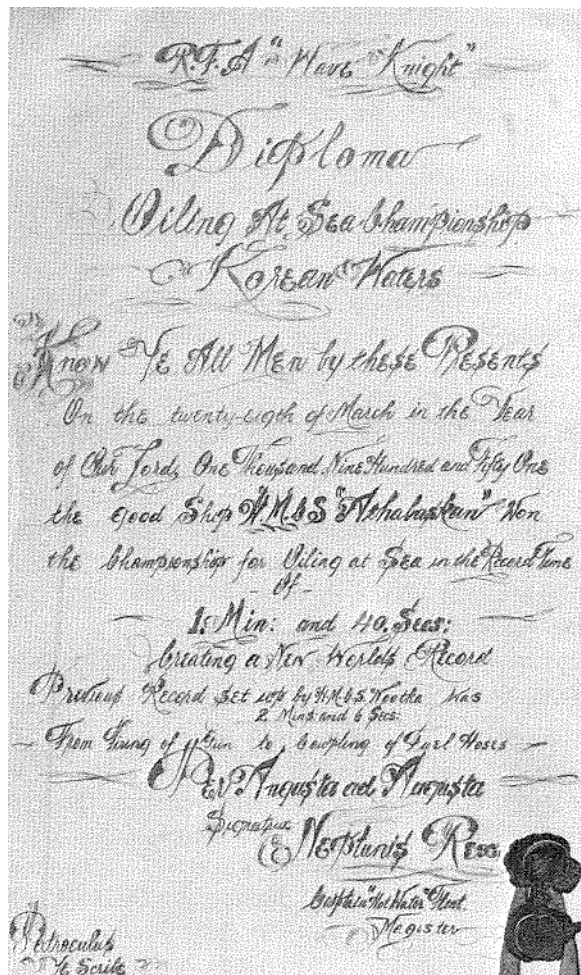
in the British Commonwealth navies, at about eight minutes. *Sioux* was the first Canadian ship to compete, and she promptly lowered the record, in fact almost cut it by half, to four minutes, 46 seconds. The record was reduced still further during the winter, *Cayuga* setting a time of three minutes, 40 seconds. But it was during March 1951, near the end of a long spell of carrier screening missions for the Canadian destroyers, that the competition really grew hot. *Athabaskan* set the pace by a time of 3:20; *Nootka* retaliated with a 3:10. *Athabaskan's* reply to this was a remarkable burst of speed which lowered the record to 2:50.

One "P.L.S.McC."<sup>15</sup> has written a very vivid and stirring account in *The Crownsnest* describing the final day of the "Yellow Sea Fuelling Stakes." It was 28 March; the weather was fine and the sea glassy calm; and *Athabaskan* and *Nootka* were both to refuel from the RFA Oiler *Wave Knight*. *Nootka* went in first, and hardly had she come to a stop near the oiler when the latter's white flag shot up indicating that pumping had begun. The time was 2:12. Great was the dismay and

*Nootka* refuels from HMS *Glory* in the Yellow Sea, while the ship's mascot (lower right) looks on.



*Nootka* refuels from RFA *Brown Ranger*.



*Athabaskan's* "Oiling at Sea Championship" diploma.



loud were the lamentations aboard *Athabaskan* when this news was announced.

But this feeling of dismay did not last for long, and soon the ship was in a flurry of aggressive excitement. The captain himself, Commander Welland, took over the handling of the ship, and when it came to *Athabaskan's* turn, he brought her so near to *Wave Knight* that CPO John Rogers, a mighty man with a heaving line, was able to drop the line right on the oiler's deck. The oiler's Chinese crew scurried frantically to bend it on the messenger which was attached to the hose. In seconds the hose was hauled aboard the destroyer, the connection made, and the order shouted to begin pumping. When *Wave Knight's* white flag shot up, indicating that her pumps had started, the stop watches recorded the incredible time of one minute and 40 seconds.

"There is a time to call off further competition—and 1 minute 40 seconds approaches it,"<sup>16</sup> as *Athabaskan's*

Commanding Officer remarked; so the Canadian ships, in the interests of safety, agreed to let the new record stand until a ship of another nation broke it. But there were some ominous mutterings in the other Canadian destroyers and rumours about bribery and corruption in high—and low—places, rumours which may have had some basis in fact judging from the remarks of “P.L.S.McC.” about “rash promises of free fluid to all if we broke ... [*Nootka*’s] record,”<sup>17</sup> and the remarks of *Athabaskan*’s Commanding Officer that to set a fuelling record it is necessary, among other things, to “develop the utmost co-operation from the oiler.”<sup>18</sup> But whatever the means used to attain it, the time for the new record, verified as it was by *Theseus* who had been fuelling on the opposite side of the oiler, had to be accepted.<sup>19</sup> The other Canadian destroyers could only take their defeat as gracefully as possible and perhaps console themselves with the words of the Preacher “that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, . . . nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.”

Though the Canadian ships spent much of their operational time during the early months of the year in carrier screening, occasionally one of them was fortunate enough to draw an assignment with the blockade and patrol element TE 95.12. *Athabaskan* for instance spent much of January in TE 95.12, and *Nootka* carried out a five-day patrol off Inchon in February. Things began to change in April; not only did the Canadians draw more “free lance” missions on the inshore patrol, but the patrols themselves became more eventful.

Several changes affecting the Canadian Destroyer Division had taken place by this time. *Cayuga* left for

VADM the Hon. Sir Guy H. E. Russell, CINC FES, chats with CDR R. P. Welland of *Athabaskan* and an unidentified member of the ship’s company.



Canada on 16 March, after being relieved by HMCS *Huron* (Commander E. T. G. Madgwick, C.D., RCN), and the departure of Captain Brock necessitated a change in command for the RCN Special Force. Captain Brock was Commander Canadian Destroyers Pacific, and as such had led the RCNSF, but he of course retained his original command and title when he left for Canada. When Commander Fraser-Harris of *Nootka* took over as Senior Officer on 16 March, 1951, he did so as Commander Canadian Destroyers Far East (short title, CANCOMDESFE). Until the RCN’s contribution in Korea was reduced to one ship, the senior Canadian naval officer there held that title, his force being known by the short title CANDESFE.

There were several changes of command at higher levels during the early months of 1951 which affected the ships of CANDESFE. Rear-Admiral Andrewes, CTG 95.1, was knighted and promoted to Vice-Admiral on 1 December, 1950, thereby becoming senior to his immediate superior in the UN organization, Rear Admiral A. E. Smith, USN, the CTF 95. Admiral Andrewes and his British superior, the Commander-in-Chief Far East Station, were both content with this situation, and for six weeks there was no change. About mid-February however orders arrived from Washington<sup>20</sup> that Andrewes should be placed in command of Task Force 95. The order arrived without any warning and did not cause any joy in British naval circles in Sasebo, since Admiral Andrewes with his small staff was really in no position to take over the running of a huge task force of some 85 ships. The problem was quickly solved, but only because of the friendly, indeed cordial, relations between the British and American organizations in the Far East. The solution was quite ingenious; Admiral

VADM Sir William G. Andrewes, FO Second-in-Command, FES, inspects some of the officers of *Nootka*.



Andrewes received the title CTF 95 but continued to exercise his command on the west coast as CTG 95.1. Rear Admiral Smith became CTG 95.9 under Andrewes but, and this was the catch, he retained operational control of all the forces he had previously controlled except TG 95.1.<sup>21</sup> Since administrative and logistic arrangements for USN ships remained in American hands, the change in command did not mean a great deal, except that perhaps Admiral Andrewes now had a little more influence in determining overall naval policy in the theatre.

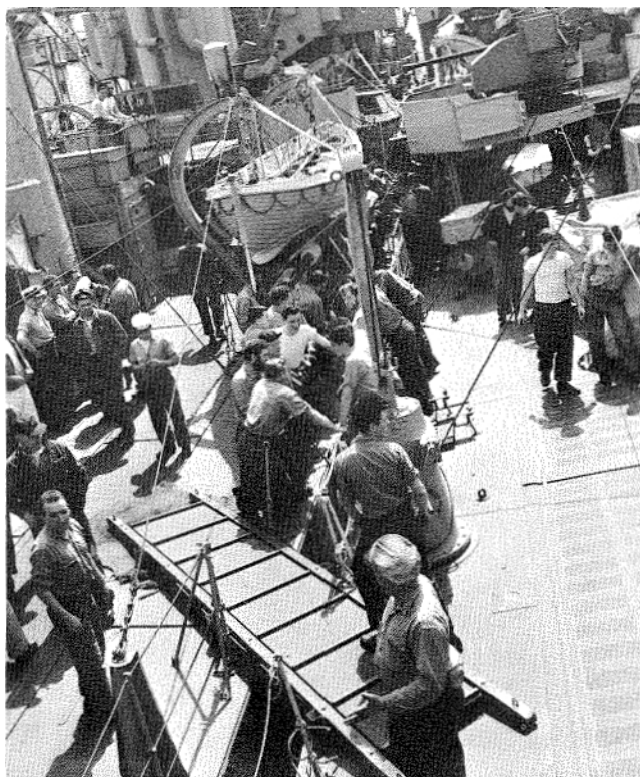
The command organization outlined above did not last for long, since, as had been planned, Vice-Admiral Andrewes was relieved on 10 April, 1951, by Rear Admiral A. K. Scott-Moncrieff, D.S.O. and Bar, and Rear Admiral Smith returned to his post as CTF 95.<sup>22</sup> The overall organization did not however revert to its original form. Difficulties had arisen on the east coast about the co-ordination of gun-fire interdiction conducted by the ships of TG 95.2 and aerial and gun-fire interdiction carried out by the fast carriers and heavy ships of Seventh Fleet. An attempt was now made to overcome these difficulties by placing TF 95 under the Commander Seventh Fleet.<sup>23</sup> The new arrangements worked fairly well; not only did they enable the closer co-ordination of the carriers and the



RADM A. K. Scott-Moncrieff, FO Second-in-Command FES, inspects *Nootka* personnel.

other ships on the east coast; they also made the whole organization more flexible, making it less difficult to rotate ships between different tasks and simplifying long-range planning for training and maintenance.

Far more important than the shuffling of commands in the UN naval force, as far as the general history of the Korean conflict is concerned, was the firing of the UN Supreme Commander, General MacArthur, on 11 April, 1951. Much has been written about MacArthur's dismissal, and it is not necessary to dwell on the subject. Few non-partisan observers will find fault with General Ridgway's remarks that one cannot "question the right of the President, as Commander in Chief, to relieve any officer with whose views and actions he



Ships' companies of *Nootka* and *Cayuga* meet during a brief stop alongside an RFA oiler off the Korean west coast.

Inchon harbour, USS *St. Paul* and two USN destroyers, January 1951.



*Athabaskan* and *Nootka* leave Japan with HMS *Theseus* for a patrol off the Korean west coast.



*Sioux, Cayuga, Athabaskan and Nootka at No. 3 Buoy in Sasebo, January 1951.*

disagrees”; nor will many deny that the “dismissal could have been handled with more grace.”<sup>24</sup>

General Ridgway became Supreme Commander upon MacArthur’s departure, and the aggressive Lieutenant-General James Van Fleet took over Ridgway’s post as commander of all ground forces in Korea.

These changes in the Supreme and the Eighth Army Commands may have had little immediate effect on the members of the RCN Special Force in Korea, but the placing of Task Group 95 under Seventh Fleet was of more consequence and, for one thing, led to the much more frequent employment of Canadian destroyers on the east coast. Of even more immediate effect was the change over in command in the Canadian Destroyer Division itself. Captain Brock had endeavoured to keep the Division together as much as possible,

but Commander Fraser-Harris took a different view. He made it clear to Admiral Scott-Moncrieff “that the three Canadian Destroyers operating in this theatre are for operational purposes three individual units subject only to ... [the Admiral’s] operational requirements.”<sup>25</sup> This change in policy, coupled with an increase in naval activity on both coasts, was to mean that henceforth the three Canadian ships were to operate together at sea, and find themselves together in harbour, even less frequently than before. But if the Canadian destroyers now seldom had the opportunity of working together, this was more than compensated for by a reduction in carrier screening duties and by greater opportunities for “free lancing” on the blockade patrols which will be described in the following chapters.



Some bearded members of *Cayuga*’s company, February 1951.

## References

<sup>1</sup>When Tenth Corps withdrew to southern Korea it again came under the command of General Walker, thereby ending the much disputed division of command imposed by MacArthur at the time of the Wonsan landings.

<sup>2</sup>See above, p. 40, footnote.

<sup>3</sup>One must except the ROK First and Seventh Divisions who panicked badly. The frequent disasters suffered by the ROK formations during the war should not be taken as an indication of any weakness or inaptitude in the individual South Korean soldier; on the contrary, he proved to be an excellent fighting man. When entire military units and formations collapse in battle the fault can usually be traced not to the soldier but to his leaders, and this was so in the South Korean Army during the Korean conflict.

<sup>4</sup>A sharp counter offensive was launched by the Chinese in the central sector on 12 February, but the initial penetration was quickly sealed off and the UN attack continued.

<sup>5</sup>Ridgway's capture of Seoul in March, 1951, compares very favourably with General Almond's capture of that city in September 1950. The tactical situations were very similar, except that Ridgway faced a stronger enemy. Almond took the city with a frontal, house-to-house, room-to-room assault, supported by heavy aerial and artillery bombardments. Much of the city was destroyed, the civilian population suffered dreadfully and the Marines who made the assault lost heavily. In fact, two-thirds of the casualties suffered by the Marines from the time they landed at Inchon until they were withdrawn to go to Wonsan were suffered in the attack on Seoul. When Ridgway faced a similar problem he outflanked the city, forcing the Reds to withdraw, and re-took it almost without losing a man, killing a civilian or destroying a house. (See Lynn Montross, "Fleet Marine Force Korea," in *USNIP*, August 1953, and R. M. Poats, *Decision in Korea*, 69.)

<sup>6</sup>On 20 July, 1950, Number 426 (Transport) Squadron, RCAF, was assigned to the U.S. Military Air Transport Service for duty on the United States-Japan circuit, but this was of course a noncombatant squadron.

<sup>7</sup>On 21 February, 1951, this decision was changed, and it was decided to send the whole brigade to Korea as originally planned.

<sup>8</sup>The only effect of any importance was that married dicers and men serving in the RCNSF became eligible for marriage allowance immediately and did not have to wait until they reached the ages of 25 and 23 respectively.

<sup>9</sup>Seven officers and men of the Reserve sailed with the first ships to go to the Far East. They were all volunteers for *Special Naval Duty*. Many other reservists served with the RCNSF

during the Korean conflict. All of these men of course received the same benefits as the volunteers serving with the CASF.

<sup>10</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, January 1951.

<sup>11</sup>It has been suggested that Inchon was abandoned needlessly, and there are good grounds for this view. Certainly a great deal of unnecessary demolition work was carried out on heavy dockyard installations which the UN forces were going to need again very soon. (Commander Cagle, "Errors of the Korean War," in *USNIP*, March 1958, 33 f.)

<sup>12</sup>*Nootka* had relieved *Sioux* on 15 January, 1951.

<sup>13</sup>HMCS *Cayuga*, *Report of Proceedings*, January 1951.

<sup>14</sup>"The progress of the Allied Armies ashore could be plainly seen by the artillery flashes, which crept up the coast day by day." (*loc. cit.*) Inchon finally fell to the UN forces on 10 February.

<sup>15</sup>Lieutenant-Commander P. L. S. McCulloch, C.D., RCN, who was then a Lieutenant serving in *Athabaskan*.

<sup>16</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, March 1951.

<sup>17</sup>*The Crowsnest*, June 1951.

<sup>18</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, March 1951.

<sup>19</sup>So far as is known the record still stands, and *Athabaskan* may take great pride in the decorative "Oiling at Sea Championship" Diploma awarded to her by the Master of *Wave Knight*.

<sup>20</sup>According to Admiral Smith (CTF 95), "This was due to the fact that Mr. Churchill was demanding a British Commander-in-Chief for the Supreme Atlantic Command." (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 301.) Mr. Attlee was still at the head of the British Government at this time, and the Conservatives headed by Mr. Churchill did not regain power until October 1951. Churchill of course wanted a British Commander-in-Chief in the Atlantic, but though he led a very strong Opposition in the House of Commons, he was in no position in early 1951 to bring any pressure to bear on Washington through the normal channels.

<sup>21</sup>A diagrammatic table showing the command organization is contained in Appendix E.

<sup>22</sup>Admiral Smith took over on 3 April, the date originally set for Admiral Andrewes' relief, but the latter did not actually turn over his command to Admiral Scott-Moncrieff until 10 April.

<sup>23</sup>A table showing these new arrangements in diagrammatic form is attached as Appendix F.

<sup>24</sup>Ridgway, *op. cit.*, 223.

<sup>25</sup>HMCS *Nootka*, *Report of Proceedings*, April 1951.



## OFFENSIVE AND COUNTER-OFFENSIVE ASHORE

From the beginning of Ridgway's offensive in late January through to late April 1951, the United Nations forces made good progress, seizing much "real estate" and, what was more important in Ridgway's view, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Strange as it may seem, in spite of this ground offensive and in spite of an all-out, virtually unopposed interdiction campaign by naval and air forces, the enemy had succeeded by mid-April in reinforcing his armies and providing them with sufficient material to launch a powerful counter offensive.

The Reds struck on 22 April and had considerable initial success.<sup>1</sup> But the Eighth Army "rolled with the punch," and the Chinese, unable to sustain a prolonged offensive, were halted, though not before the UN lines had been pushed back to the vicinity of the 38th parallel. Not all the available Red troops had been committed in the April attack, and when the Chinese had completed their logistic arrangements they prepared to renew the offensive. But while the Chinese were making their preparations so were the UN forces. The second Communist spring offensive began on 16;17 May, this time hitting the line near Hwachon in the east-central mountains. The Third ROK Corps, on whom the weight of the attack fell, collapsed, but the U.S. Marines of Tenth Corps and the Second U.S. Infantry Division stood firm while the Third U.S. Infantry was brought up from reserve to help block the enemy drive. To throw the Chinese off balance, Van Fleet began to put pressure on the western flank, and then when the main enemy offensive began to weaken he launched the Marines and Second Division on 21 May in a counter attack north-westward towards the "Iron Triangle".<sup>2</sup> Van Fleet's tactics met with complete success; enemy casualties were heavy, and for the first time large numbers of Chinese prisoners were taken. The UN advance continued, and by mid-June the Iron Triangle had been penetrated, and the enemy were

pulling back rapidly. "So in June 1951," insists General Van Fleet, "we had the Chinese whipped . . . Then we were ordered not to advance any further."<sup>3</sup>

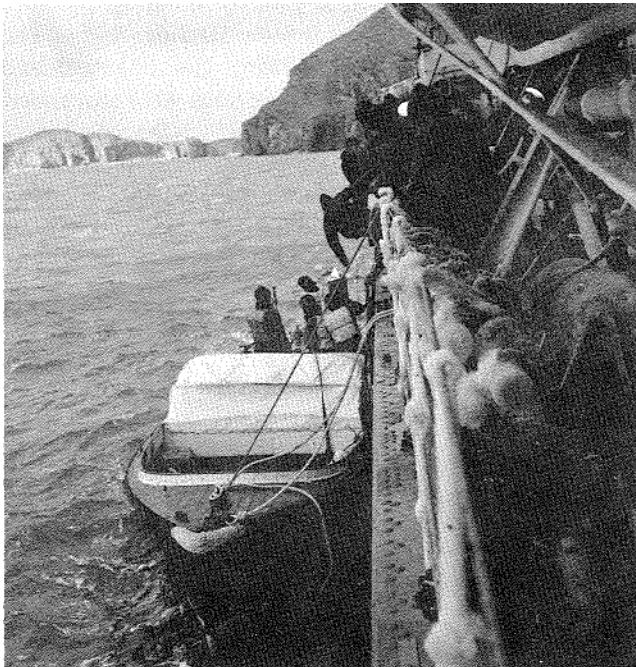
The UN high command had two main reasons for halting the UN advance when and where it did; first, the Eighth Army had reached a relatively short, strong, easily defended line which lay for the most part north of the 38th parallel; secondly, it was believed that the Chinese were prepared to negotiate in good faith for an armistice. Many of the American generals and admirals involved in the Korean conflict believed then, and still believe, that the UN made a mistake in halting its armies in late June 1951, but it is not proposed to recount their arguments for this opinion. But one thing is certain, and that is that the Chinese had nothing to lose and much to gain by initiating the truce talks which began at Kaesong on 10 July, 1951. The offer to negotiate halted a strong UN offensive and stabilized the line. When the truce talks were suspended for the first time in late August 1951,<sup>4</sup> the position of the Chinese forces was infinitely stronger than it had been in late June. The 30-day cease fire in November and December 1951 was also used to good purpose by the Communists. After this time any attempt by the UN forces, using conventional weapons, to drive the Chinese out of North Korea would have been far too costly in men and materiel even to contemplate.

To return to the history of CANDESFE, the period of offensive and counter offensive from April to June 1951 was a busy one for the Canadian ships. *Athabaskan* and *Huron* were involved, early in April, in what was to them an unusual operation when the carriers of TG 95.1, HMS *Theseus* and USS *Bataan*, together left their former haunts in the Yellow Sea to join in the attacks on the east-coast communications system in the Wonsan area. TE 95.11 on this occasion was a truly United Nations organization, for screening the British and American carriers were two U.S., one

British, one Australian and two Canadian destroyers. The carriers flew strikes against the enemy in and around Wonsan for three days with good effect. The comments of the Commanding Officer, *Athabaskan*, on the operation are interesting:

**This international force, involving ships of four countries, worked together from 8th April to the 15th April in near perfect harmony .... There were no inter-service difficulties that affected the efficiency of the operations. Communications were good, manoeuvring was rapid and correct. Fuelling and stowing was carried out from both British and U.S. logistic ships. Command relationships were excellent.<sup>5</sup>**

While *Athabaskan* and *Huron* were screening the carriers on the east coast, *Nootka* was on blockade patrol with TE 95.12 under the orders of *Kenya*. Conditions on the blockade patrol were much the same as they had been in the weeks between the Inchon landing and the Chinese intervention. There were few signs of enemy shipping, even at the very mouth of the Yalu, and there were few opportunities for effective shore bombardments. One difference however was that friendly fishermen were much more numerous and active than they had been in September and October 1950, and on one occasion during a dense fog *Nootka* had to steam at high speed through a fleet of some 50 fishing vessels.<sup>6</sup> During *Nootka*'s patrol there occurred a very unusual incident when three or four YAK's attacked the South Korean frigate *Apnok* (PF 62) while she was patrolling in the Yalu Gulf,<sup>7</sup> but fortunately this did not, as was first suspected, prove to be the beginning of a campaign by the Chinese air force



*Nootka* loading supplies into her motor cutter for delivery to a west-coast island.

against the UN blockade. The Canadian destroyer continued to find her mission uneventful, and she returned to Sasebo on 24 April.

The Canadian destroyers spent more time on the blockade patrol during May 1951 than in any month since early December 1950. By this time the blockade arrangements on both coasts had been well organized. During the withdrawal in December, the CTF 95, Rear Admiral A. E. Smith, USN, had decided on his own initiative, in the absence of direction from above, that it would be wise to retain control of certain strategically-placed islands on both coasts.<sup>8</sup> By using small ROK Marine garrisons, the UN naval forces could with very little extra effort hold islands whose possession would later be invaluable, no matter what the future course of the war, for anti-mining, intelligence, raiding, search and rescue, radar and radio installations and many other purposes. The islands selected for retention on the west coast were Chodo, Paengyong-dog<sup>9</sup> and Tokchok-to which between them covered the approaches to Inchon and Chinnampo and the only usable deep-water channel along the Hwanghae Promontory. Later, other islands were taken by ROK forces and friendly guerrillas, and for a time the UN controlled islands deep in the Yalu Gulf. From early 1951 through to the signing of the armistice the task of protecting these islands became an important part of the duties of Task Group 95.1.

There are no really large, strategically-valuable islands on the east coast, but Admiral Smith decided that



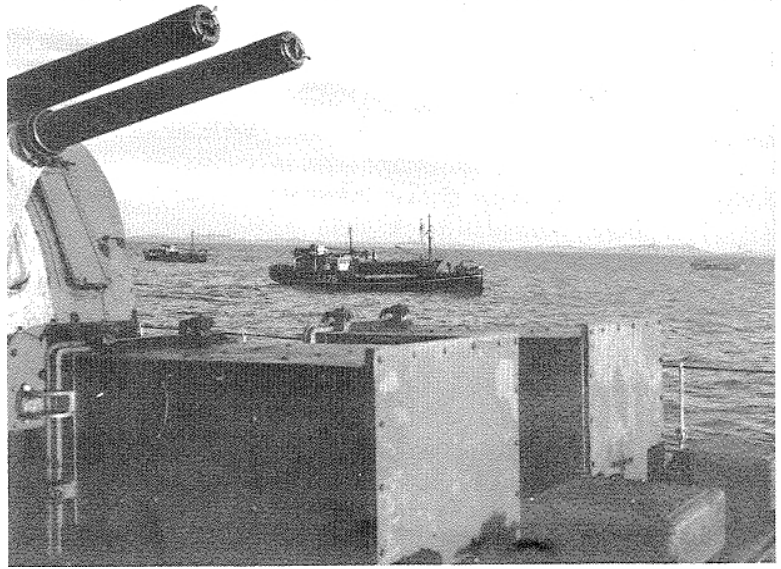
A junk comes alongside *Nootka*.



it would be worth while to hold some of the more important islands in Wonsan harbour. For some reason or other, not explained by Admiral Smith,<sup>10</sup> when the UN forces pulled out of Wonsan in December no attempt was made to retain any of these islands, and thus, when in mid-February 1951 it was decided that some of them should be occupied, it became necessary to mount a fairly large-scale operation to do so. This was the beginning of the famous “siege” of Wonsan, which was to continue throughout the war and become the main pivot around which naval operations on the east coast revolved.

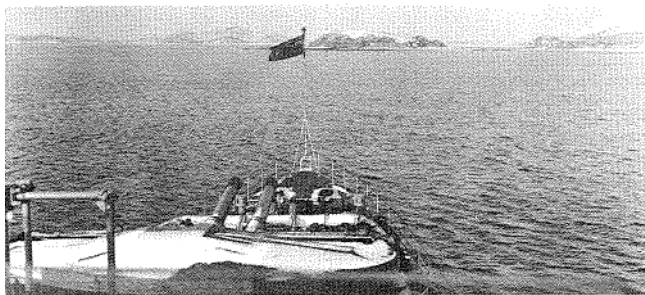
Charged with the responsibility of operations in and around Wonsan was Task Element 95.21, usually consisting of two destroyers and a few patrol craft and minesweepers. To the north, the important communications centres of Songjin and Chongjin were the responsibility of TE 95.22, with a normal strength of three destroyers, one destroyer-minesweeper and one frigate. This element was also charged with the duty of blockading the coast from Chaho to the northern limit of the blockade in 41° 50' North. A third element, the so-called “bomblines” element, TE 95.28, of varying strength, was assigned to support the ground troops on the eastern flank of the UN front line. Late in 1951 another element, TE 95.24, (usually only one destroyer) was formed to conduct operations in the Hungnam area. Most of these elements, especially the Wonsan and bomblines elements, were at one time or another temporarily reinforced by heavy ships, the cruisers and battleships of Task Forces 77 and 95. It was with one or another of these elements<sup>11</sup> that the Canadian destroyers served when they began, in the summer of 1951, to operate more frequently on the east coast.

After a carrier screening mission early in May in which all the ships of CANDESFE participated, the Canadian destroyers split up again, *Huron* remaining on carrier duty and the other two returning chiefly to blockade duties. *Sioux* (Commander P. D. Taylor, RCN) had returned for her second Korean tour (relieving *Athabaskan* who sailed homeward on 3



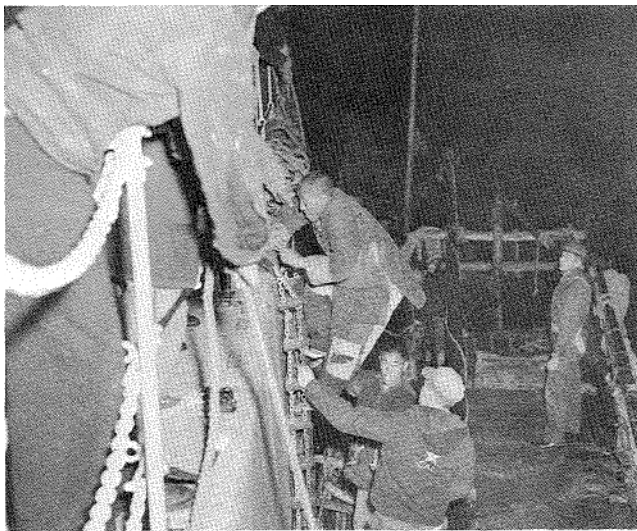
*Cayuga's* guns frame ships supplying the Eighth Army north of the 38th parallel.

May) and was very soon in the thick of things on the inshore patrol. Since the beginning of Ridgway's first offensive in January, it had been the policy of the UN naval forces on the west coast to keep continual pressure on the enemy by the threat of amphibious operations in the area between Chinnampo and Inchon. Everything possible had also been done to give “aid and comfort” to the large groups of friendly guerillas operating behind the lines on the Hwanghae Promontory. After an amphibious feint, in mid-May, it was decided to show the enemy that the UN could do more than threaten, and plans were laid to land Royal Marines from *Ceylon* and *Kenya* on the mainland opposite Chodo. *Sioux* took part in this operation which was carried out on the afternoon of 20 May. With the ships of TE 95.12 she bombarded the beaches to destroy any mines that might have been planted, shifting fire inland to the nearby villages as the Marines went in. The landing force was smaller than originally planned because *Kenya* had been called away to other duties, but the Marine detachment from *Ceylon* alone proved sufficiently strong to make the operation a success. The landing force penetrated more than a mile inland and created a great disturbance before returning to *Ceylon*. The raid itself caused no serious material loss to the enemy, but it had an even greater effect than had been expected in causing the movement of reinforcements to the area, as the Reds hastened to man the coastal defences and to move troops across the Taedong into the peninsula. The movement of reinforcements provided many excellent targets for the aircraft of TE 95.11, and the manning of the coastal defences temporarily brought more enemy troops within range of the guns of the blockading force.



Korean west coast islands seen from *Cayuga*.

Though she did not operate with *Sioux*, HMCS *Nootka* also did some service with the west-coast blockade forces during May and found it considerably more congenial work than carrier screening. One of *Nootka's* assignments in this period was the antishipping patrol in the northern Yalu Gulf which was the nightly task of one or more of the destroyers of TE 95.12. It was not unusual during this patrol to come upon Chinese fishing vessels from nearby Shantung Province or from Manchuria, and since it was suspected that perhaps some of these vessels might be landing their catches in North Korea, orders were given to seize any fishing vessels operating in the blockade zone. *Nootka* was on patrol in the Gulf on the night of 13-14 May when her Sperry radar picked up nine contacts some five miles to the west. The ship closed immediately to investigate. The sea was calm, but there was a dense fog which reduced visibility to about 100 yards. A motor boat, equipped with a radar reflector and a two-way radio, which could thus be controlled from the ship, was lowered and vectored to the nearest contact. *Nootka* had come upon a fishing fleet from China, nine junks and sampans with their fishing lines out, the crews snoring blissfully. The boat approached the first sampan cautiously, cut the fishing lines, rigged a tow and brought its catch alongside the destroyer. The Chinese crewmen must have been enjoying the proverbial sleep of the just, for none of them awoke until the sampan was well on its way to the destroyer. And so the operation went, as one after another the Chinese vessels were brought alongside and their crews bundled into *Nootka's* squidhandling room. The "junk collecting" was interrupted by the



Fishermen from one of the seven Chinese fishing craft seized by *Nootka* are taken aboard.

arrival of the Netherlands' destroyer *Van Galen*, and some time was lost while the ships established identities, but two junks, five sampans and 28 prisoners had been rounded up by the time *Nootka* had to clear the area.<sup>12</sup> The destroyers had no regrets about leaving two of the fishing vessels unmolested. The consternation of the fishermen on awakening to find their colleagues had mysteriously vanished, and their reports when they returned home would, it was thought, undoubtedly put an end to fishing in the blockade area for some time to come.

*Nootka* was transferred to the east coast later in May, and since this was the first time that a Canadian destroyer took part in the inshore blockade operations of TG 95.2 on that coast,<sup>13</sup> her activities there will be described in some detail. The destroyer arrived in the Songjin area on 21 May, taking over from HMS *Black Swan* as a unit of Task Element 95.22,<sup>14</sup> the element responsible for patrol and blockade of the coast-line from Chaho to 41° 50' North and for the interdiction of roads and railways in that area. Upon joining, *Nootka* was immediately put to work bombarding a line of boxcars in the built-up area of Songjin; she shifted fire later to various targets of opportunity in the area. She remained in the Songjin area during the night carrying out interdiction and harassing fire, while U.S. ships *Tucker* and *Sausalito* sailed to carry out the task element's nightly patrol north to Chongjin.

The Commanding Officer of *Nootka*, Commander Fraser-Harris, was not content to steam back and forth along the Songjin swept channel blasting away at bridges, tunnels and railroads which no one was even certain were being used by the enemy. He therefore recommended to the CTE that he be permitted to send in a landing party to take a look at the coastal railway, at the same time seizing the opportunity to save ammunition by blowing up some of the tracks with demolition charges. During *Nootka's* second day on patrol, while carrying out interdiction bombardments along the coast, she looked the area over carefully to find a likely spot for a landing. A suitable location was finally discovered, a steep gully between rocky cliffs which were pierced by two tunnels. Between the tunnels ran a single-span railway bridge. If the bridge could be occupied by stealth, it could easily be defended while demolitions were carried out, since the only approaches lay through the two tunnels or up a bare, rocky hillside. As it was believed that there were no enemy troops defending the bridge a plan was made to land in daylight, keeping the ship's guns trained on the tunnel entrances in case they hid enemy troops.

On the morning of 23 May the CTE turned over command of the element to his relief, Commander J. B.

Gay, Jr., USN, in *Stickell*, who at once gave permission to Commander Fraser-Harris to carry out his attack on the bridge. The day was very foggy, and it was realized that this would seriously hamper any attempt by the ship's armament to provide gun-fire support should there be opposition. In spite of this difficulty it was decided to go ahead with the landing. No real opposition was expected, and, if there happened to be armed guards around, the fog might enable the landing party to achieve surprise; should opposition be encountered, however, the landing was to be abandoned.

All arrangements had been made by mid-afternoon. A motor cutter fitted with a radar reflector and radio equipment was to be sent in, towing a 14-foot dinghy for use if the beach proved unsuitable for the larger boat. The landing party consisted of 19 officers and men under Lieutenant A. H. M. Slater, RCN; Commissioned Gunner A. A. Butchart, D.S.M., C.D., RCN, headed the demolition team of five. Six men made up the party responsible for handling the boat and looking after communications; the remainder were the guards and scouts who were to protect the demolition experts while they set their charges. The ship's liaison officer from the ROK Navy, Lieutenant S. H. On, was to act as interpreter and as a member of the guard.



*Nootka's* landing party takes to the cutter in preparation for an attack on a railway bridge near Songjin.

Because of the fog the ship was able to approach without fear of detection within a mile of the selected beach. The boats were lowered at 1530, and after checking compasses and radios the party made for shore. The sea was calm with only a slight swell, but the fog was thinning a little, and when the boats came within 200 yards of the shore the beach was clearly visible. There was no sign of movement ashore, but no sooner had the

motor cutter touched the sand than about six North Korean soldiers popped out of the rocky cliffs behind the beach and opened fire with their rifles. Though somewhat startled, the landing party was not taken unawares, and a furious volley forced the Reds to take cover. Lieutenant Slater, in accordance with the plan, immediately ordered the boats to make for the shelter of the fog.

Meanwhile back in the ship the furious gunplay ashore could be clearly heard, and on the Sperry radar the boat could be seen making for safety. The cutter reported by radio that enemy opposition had been encountered and that it was returning. When the radar scan showed that the boats had retired 500 yards from shore, the ship opened fire, plastering the beach and the cliffs with 4-inch shells. Enemy small-arms fire continued until well after the boats had been recovered, and it was hoped that in the confusion the enemy soldiers were shooting at one another.

The secondary objective of the landing, to blow up the railway, had not been accomplished, but valuable intelligence had been secured. The bridge was definitely defended by Communist troops, and the railway must therefore be in use and be of considerable importance. The landing party had suffered no casualties and claimed that it had killed or wounded at least three of the enemy; it had also spotted a couple of useful bombardment targets while inshore. Besides, some of its members thought, the landing had been a valuable and interesting experience.

The fog began to lift shortly after the boats were hoisted, and soon it was completely clear. The ship then opened fire on the bridge and on a pill-box and a look-out post, both fitted with radio masts, which had been spotted by the landing party. Both the latter targets were badly damaged or destroyed, and the bridge was lightly damaged. The remainder of the day was spent in bombarding interdiction targets and targets of opportunity along the coast. One target engaged was another bridge which later became known as the "Rubber Bridge," not only because *Nootka's* 4-inch shells seemed literally to bounce off it, but also because when it was damaged the North Korean work crews seemed able to repair it in no time.

That night, the night of 23/24 May, *Nootka* made the northern patrol, bombarding Chongjin for half an hour before returning to her daylight station off Songjin. After replenishing with ammunition from USS *Titania* off Wonsan, the ship spent the day in firing at targets of opportunity and interdiction targets. Two Corsairs from the carriers of TF 77 arrived in the afternoon to act as spotters; their help greatly increased the effectiveness of the ship's gun-fire. In the evening *Nootka* set course northward to give Chongjin its nightly shelling.

The “Rubber Bridge” in the Songjin area was becoming something of a nuisance; no matter how often or how badly it was damaged in daylight bombardments, next morning there it stood, apparently intact. Commander Fraser-Harris considered that something should be done to deal with this impasse, and on the morning of 26 May he submitted a plan to Commander Gay, the CTE, designed to “fix” the “Rubber Bridge” once and for all.<sup>15</sup> Called *Operation Squeegie*, the plan involved using *Nootka*’s motor cutters to sweep a channel close inshore so that she and *Stickell* could take the bridge under fire at practically point-blank range. Commander Gay at once gave his approval.

That morning the two cutters, with an improvised minesweeping device rigged between them, set off from the ship to clear a channel for the destroyers.<sup>16</sup> *Nootka*, as a precautionary measure, fired *squid* bombs

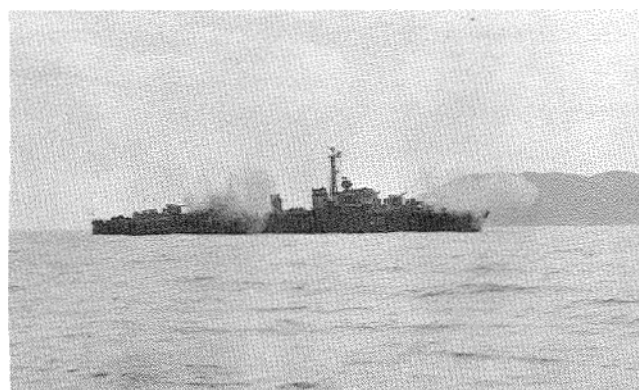


One of *Nootka*’s cutters carrying out minesweeping during *Operation Squeegie*.

ahead of the boats in an attempt to countermine; that is, set off, any mines that might be sensitive enough to be activated by the boats themselves. As the cutters cleared a passage, *Nootka* followed behind, searching with her sonar for any mines that the sweep might have missed. As the ship and the boats moved in there appeared to be great excitement ashore; parties of soldiers appeared on the beach and were dispersed with the 4-inch; another group of men disappeared into a tunnel and were pursued by several rounds of high explosive which scored direct hits on the tunnel mouth. When sweeping had been going on for about two hours the enemy were observed moving an artillery piece into position on a nearby cliff. This target was engaged and straddled, and after that no activity was seen around the gun. Pill boxes and suspected observation posts were also taken under fire. Such was the effect of *Nootka*’s fire that the motor cutters were not molested during the two and a half hours they took to sweep a channel to within 1300 yards of the beach.

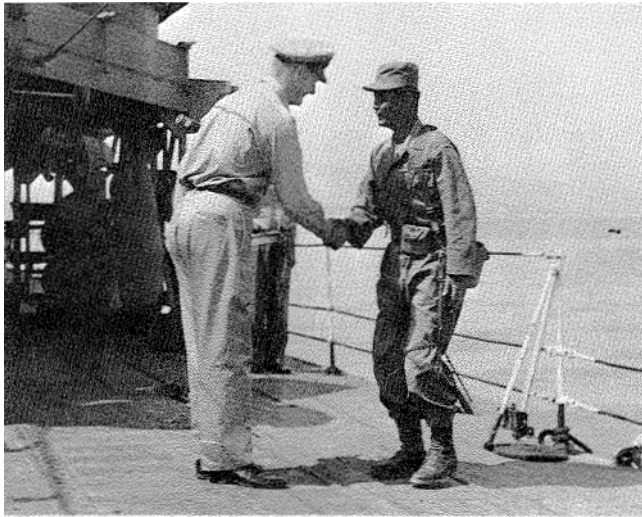
When the swept channel was ready, *Nootka* moved in within one mile of the shore and opened fire on nearby freight cars, a railway viaduct, three villages and of course the “Rubber Bridge.” She also gave the area a thorough spraying with her short-range weapons before leaving. *Stickell* had also joined in the action, and her heavier guns were able to damage the “Rubber Bridge” much more effectively than *Nootka*’s 4-inch. This operation did not mark the end of the “Rubber Bridge,” but it marked the beginning of the end. Utilizing *Nootka*’s new swept channel, *Stickell* was able to keep pounding her target until the North Koreans gave up the struggle and proceeded laboriously to fill in the ravine spanned by the bridge.<sup>17</sup> When she left that evening to begin her nightly patrol *Nootka* had reason to be proud of her day’s work, and when she recovered her motor cutters she received her reward. *Squid* bombs are lethal; sailors are very enterprising; and when the cutters were hoisted in they were found to be full of enough choice, fresh fish to feed the entire ship’s company.

*Nootka* remained in the Songjin-Chongjin patrol area for the next five days. The patrol usually followed the same routine from day to day; in daylight hours the ship cruised the Songjin swept channel, some fifteen miles long, bombarding railways, roads, gun emplacements and numerous other targets, including the city of Songjin itself; in the evening she usually set course north along the coast, pausing occasionally to take some target or other under fire, until she arrived off Chongjin which she then subjected to a bombardment of from 30 to well over 100 rounds. Fuel, ammunition and other necessities were obtained from USN supply ships lying in the task group’s replenishment area off Wonsan.



*Nootka* fires a broadside in the Songjin area, May 1951.

*Nootka* was given a new assignment on 31 May, this time with TE 95.28, the bombline element supporting the ground troops in the front line. Oddly enough *Nootka*’s service with this bombardment element

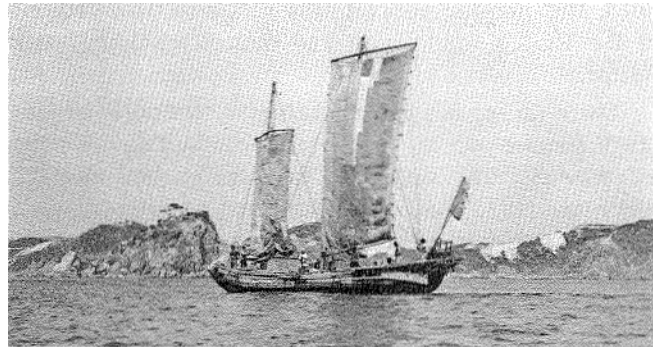


CDR A. B. F. Fraser-Harris of *Nootka* welcomes aboard Major General Paik Sun Yup, Commanding General of 1st ROK Corps.

involved at less bombardment than did service with the Songjin patrol. The senior ship in TE 95.28 at this time was a cruiser, (USS *Manchester* and, later, USS *Los Angeles*) and naturally it was the cruiser who carried out most of the important gun-fire assignments, while the two destroyers acting as her escort performed screening duties and carried out reconnaissance and intelligence missions. One of the services performed by *Nootka*, for instance, was that of keeping in close touch with the troops of First ROK Corps holding the extreme eastern flank of the UN line. The Canadian destroyer contacted the troops ashore on several occasions to collect intelligence information and to ferry liaison and intelligence officers between the cruiser and army headquarters ashore. Only once did *Nootka* carry out a bombardment, this one against enemy troop billets whose locations had been reported by army intelligence. There were in fact not many suitable targets to be found within range of a destroyer's guns in the area patrolled by TE 95.28 at this time, for the heavy fire of the cruisers, according to intelligence reports, had driven the enemy to withdraw most of his troops out of range of naval shelling. On the afternoon of 4 June *Sioux* arrived to relieve *Nootka* who then returned for a much-needed docking in Kure. She had spent a most active two weeks on the east coast as her report of ammunition expenditure clearly indicates. She had fired over 1,500 rounds of 4-inch against the enemy as well as 312 rounds of 40-mm., ten star-shells, twenty-six 5-inch rockets and 850 rounds of small-arms ammunition.

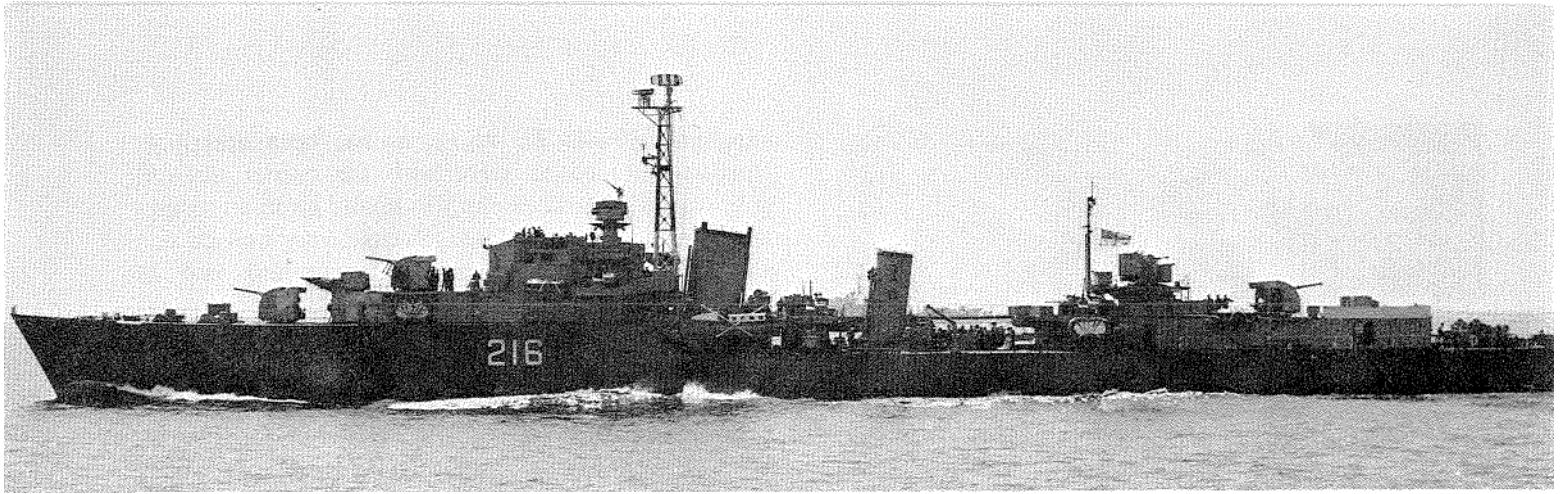
While *Nootka* was busy in the east, both *Sioux* and *Huron* remained on the west coast, the former

operating mainly with TE 95.12, as has been described. *Huron* continued to serve with the carrier element until late in May when she was finally given an assignment on the blockade force. She did very well on this assignment, capturing a large Chinese junk and its eight crew men well within the blockade area in northern Yalu Gulf. *Huron* towed the junk back to Pengyongdo, thus becoming the first UN ship to actually bring in a large Communist junk.<sup>18</sup> But on the whole the west coast patrol continued to be relatively uneventful. There were not many important bombardment targets available, and the most important task of the ships of TE 95.12 was to bar the blockade area to enemy craft, including fishing vessels. For these reasons CANDESFE welcomed the recently adopted practice of keeping one of the Canadian ships on the east coast whenever possible.



A Korean junk off the east coast.

The second Canadian destroyer to enjoy the effects of this policy was *Sioux* who joined TE 95.28 as a relief for *Nootka* on 4 June. Unlike *Nootka* she spent little time screening the cruiser on duty with the element; instead, at night she operated mainly in the swept channel providing harassing and interdictory fire on targets allocated by a Shore Fire Control Party (SFCP) which kept in constant communication with her. The SFCP normally assigned to the ship some three to six targets each night, which were then fired on at a rate of from one to five rounds an hour throughout the night. During daylight the ship cruised the coast firing at targets of opportunity, if any presented themselves, or carried out special bombardments requested by the SFCP. These bombardments were frequently controlled by aerial spotters. During periods of great activity, as during *Sioux's* patrol, the ships of TE 95.28 expended an enormous amount of ammunition in shore bombardment, but they were not firing just to hear the big bangs. The First ROK Division (of First ROK Corps) which was holding the



*Huron* on patrol in Korean waters.

eastern flank had virtually no artillery of its own, and the ships' gun-fire took its place. According to reports received from ROK officers and from U.S. military and naval officers ashore in the task element's patrol area, this gun-fire support was very effective; without it the ROK's would have had difficulty holding their sector.

Twice during her patrol *Sioux* was sent north to join Task Element 95.21, the element conducting the siege of Wonsan. The siege had been going on since 12 February, 1951, and was considered an interesting, if relatively dangerous, assignment because of the numerous enemy batteries protecting the harbour.\* The harbour itself is large, about twenty miles wide and ten miles deep, but it contains a number of islands, most of which were held by the enemy. Furthermore, the harbour is protected by two long, narrow peninsulas, like horns, called Hodo Pando and Kalma Pando, on which the enemy had sited strong batteries of field guns. The entire harbour was filled with mines except for the areas which had at great risk been cleared by the UN minesweepers. What with the islands and the mine-fields, it was rather difficult to take avoiding action when brought under fire by the shore batteries, and when a ship was assigned to bombard the city of Wonsan from the harbour her company seldom suffered from boredom.

*Sioux's* first mission to Wonsan was a short one. She joined the task element in the harbour at 0920 on 14 June, bombarded several targets including batteries on the northern peninsula of Hodo and sailed south again to rejoin TE 95.28 at 2036 that same d. A battery on Hodo Pando opened fire on *Sioux's* companion in the harbour, the USN destroyer *Frank E. Evans*, but as it ceased fire when *Evans* replied with her own guns no further action was taken. On *Sioux's* return to Wonsan on 17 June the same battery again opened fire on the

\*When *Sioux* first joined the Wonsan element, three USN ships had already suffered casualties from shore battery fire.

UN ships and was soon joined by the batteries on Kalma Pando and Umi-do. This time there were three destroyers in the outer harbour, *Brinkely Bass*, *Evans* and *Sioux*, and they went immediately into their "war dance."\* The action continued for half an hour, but none of the ships was hit. The naval gun-fire appeared to be accurate, and one of *Sioux's* salvos set off a considerable secondary explosion on Umi-do. It was exceedingly difficult to put any of the Wonsan batteries out of action however, for most of the guns were sited in caves and presented only pin-point targets. These guns, most of them ordinary artillery pieces and not regular, fixed, shore-defence guns, popped out of their caves only long enough to fire and then withdrew into the safety of their hide-outs.

After this short gun action *Sioux* and the other ships returned to their night bombardment stations. *Sioux* had rather a quiet time during that night and the following morning, for she was running short of 4.7-inch ammunition, and there was no more available on the east coast. In the afternoon (18 June), the harbour batteries decided to begin another duel with the UN ships. *Bass* was away replenishing on this occasion, but there were two other ships, the Thailand corvette *Bangpakong*<sup>19</sup> and the U.S. frigate *Gloucester*, in the harbour with *Sioux* and *Evans*. The Thailand ship wisely made for the open sea, but *Gloucester* became involved in the "war dance" being carried out at high speed by *Sioux* and *Evans*. Unable to maintain the

\*This was a manoeuvre that had been evolved to suit the peculiar conditions of Wonsan harbour. As soon as enemy batteries opened up, the ships present would increase speed to 20 to 25 knots and begin to steam around in a circle, blasting the enemy batteries in turn as the ships' guns were brought to bear on them. This manoeuvre had several advantages; it enabled the ships to bring a heavy and evenly distributed fire on all the important enemy batteries without intricate prior planning and without the need for a continual flow of orders and acknowledgements during the action; it provided the enemy with only very difficult, moving targets; and it averted the danger of collisions resulting from highspeed manoeuvring in restricted waters.

speed of the destroyers, *Gloucester* turned inward and “became the stake around which the dance was being conducted. However, as with most stakes, this position became too hot for comfort and *Gloucester* was ordered to clear the harbour.”<sup>20</sup> USS *Bass* in the meantime had dashed back from the replenishment area and joined in the “dance.” The action raged hot and heavy for over an hour and all of the ships were straddled at least once. *Sioux* had four near misses, and numerous small shell fragments hit the ship but caused neither casualties nor damage. An hour after the enemy guns opened fire, carrierbased aircraft from TF 77 arrived and joined in the fight. Their rocket and cannon fire added to the shells from the ships soon convinced the enemy that it was time to call a halt. During the action *Sioux* used up all of her 4.7-inch HEDA<sup>21</sup> ammunition except one round which was overlooked, and she had to resort to firing her scarce and expensive proximity-fused shells.

A few minutes after the gun action ended, USS *Arnold J. Isbell* arrived to relieve *Sioux*, who returned to TE 95.28 in the Kosong area. Again she spent a quiet night because of the shortage of ammunition, for the Task Element Commander gracefully refused *Sioux*'s offer to carry out a one-round bombardment with her remaining HEDA shell. HMS *Whitesand Bay* arrived next day to relieve *Sioux* who then sailed for Sasebo.

Shortage of 4.7-inch high explosive was not *Sioux*'s only difficulty on this east coast patrol, for on 15 June it was discovered that one of the superheater elements in No. 1 boiler had cracked. The engine-room staff speedily made temporary repairs, and the defect did not interfere with the ship's operational efficiency, but it was a warning of trouble to come. After spending a day at Sasebo following her patrol, *Sioux* set out for Hong Kong. While she was at the dockyard there her superheater tubes were inspected and found to be in such poor condition that they had to be replaced immediately. This was a long and difficult operation, and *Sioux* was forced to remain in Hong Kong until 24 August. During the two months she was out of action the RCN maintained only two destroyers with the United Nations force in Korea.

*Nootka* and *Huron* both carried out missions with the west coast patrol during June, and *Nootka* also served for a few days on the carrier screen of HMS *Glory*. Nothing of great interest occurred on any of these missions. Both of the ships also took time out during June to catch up on back maintenance and repairs and to give leave to the ships' companies. *Huron* spent five days in Hong Kong and another six in Kure, while *Nootka*, who was soon to return to Canada, only took the six days at Kure. For various reasons there was not

a great deal of naval activity on the west coast at this time. For one thing the Communists there were being very quiet; they undertook no offensive operations near the coast and therefore provided very few good targets for naval gun-fire. And except for a certain amount of fishing activity there was no movement of enemy shipping to interdict. The western end of the UN front line was in such a position that it was only with great difficulty that allied ships could provide direct gun-fire support for the allied troops, and besides there was very little activity on that sector of the front. Furthermore there were clear indications that truce talks would soon begin.

The first definite evidence that the Communists were ready to discuss a cease fire in Korea came on 23 June when the Soviet delegate to the UN, in a broadcast talk on the UN radio series called “The Price of Peace,” suggested that “discussion should be started between the belligerents for a cease fire and an armistice.”<sup>22</sup> An overwhelming majority in the UN was as eager to end the Korean conflict as it had been in December 1950, and on 29 June Washington ordered Ridgway to get in touch with the enemy commanders to discuss the Soviet proposal. This he did on the following day in a radio broadcast to the Communist high command in Korea. The Communist answer came in less than 24 hours; the proposal to negotiate was accepted, but the suggestion that the conference site be the Danish Hospital Ship *Jutlandia* anchored in Wonsan harbour was rejected and the border city of Kaesong near the 38th parallel was suggested as an alternative. After a further exchange of messages and a preliminary meeting between representatives of both sides, talks formally opened at Kaesong on 10 July. It was to be two years before these truce talks had any decisive result, a full 24 months of almost incessant bickering and nattering which ceased only when one side or another temporarily broke off the talks.<sup>23</sup> During these months the fighting went on, and the UN forces suffered well over 100,000 casualties while the negotiators wrangled. On land both sides dug in deeply and prepared positions of great strength, the Communists utilizing every lull resulting from the truce talks to build up their power, particularly their fire power. Offensive activity took the form of patrolling or of attacks which, though often of considerable strength, usually had very limited objectives of little apparent strategic value. Both sides continued to strengthen their positions, and soon the capturing of even a single prisoner for interrogation by the Intelligence staff became a major military operation.

The air war was affected hardly at all by the truce talks, and for the air force and naval pilots it was

business as usual. From time to time special air operations were ordered with a view to influencing the peace talks, and there were occasional shifts in emphasis in the aerial campaign, such as the shift in mid-1952 from interdiction objectives to industrial and military objectives, but on the whole the air war was not greatly affected by the negotiations. Since the enemy air force operated throughout the war almost entirely from the sanctuary of its Manchurian bases, it had no need to take advantage of truce talks in order to build up its strength.

The effect of the truce talks on naval warfare, particularly on the west coast, was occasionally quite considerable. The so-called "Han River

Demonstration,"<sup>24</sup> for instance, a lengthy, dangerous naval operation of relatively considerable magnitude, was carried out solely for the purpose of forcing the Communist negotiators to admit the obvious fact that the UN forces controlled that portion of South Korea south of the 38th parallel and west of the Imjin. Of far greater importance than the Han River affair was the campaign involving the west coast islands when they became valuable bargaining counters in the truce negotiations.<sup>25</sup> It was the defence of these islands that later became the most important and certainly the most dangerous and exciting of the many duties of the Canadian destroyers on the west coast after the truce talks began.

## References

<sup>1</sup>This offensive will best be remembered for the heroic stand of the 1st Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment, on the Imjin. Other Commonwealth units also shared in the glory of helping to stem the Chinese offensive, and both the 3rd Royal Australian Regiment and the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry received U.S. Presidential Unit Citations for their work at Kapyong. (See R. O. Holles, *Now Thrive the Armourers*; Captain A. Farrar-Hockley, *The Edge of the Sword*; N. Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*; and Army Historical Section, *Canada's Army in Korea*.)

<sup>2</sup>This was the triangle formed by the towns of Chorwon, Kumhwa and Pyonggang, (not to be confused with Pyongyang, the enemy capital); it contained the enemy's main supply and assembly area. All three towns were also important communications centres.

<sup>3</sup>Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 309, citing a personal interview with General Van Fleet.

<sup>4</sup>There were two short recesses earlier, but the Communist "walk-out" on 23 August marked the first real breakdown of the talks.

<sup>5</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report or Proceedings*, April 1951.

<sup>6</sup>"... indeed an interesting adventure not recommended to those who wish to retain either their ship or their hair," commented the Commanding Officer. (HMCS *Nootka*, *Report of Proceedings*, April 1951.)

<sup>7</sup>The frigate shot down one YAK and claimed to have damaged another. The ship herself suffered only minor damage from cannon shell and splinters.

<sup>8</sup>Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 398.

<sup>9</sup>Later the neighbouring island of Techong-do was seized. An island off Kunsan was also held, but as the Red advance was halted well north of Kunsan it was not so important an acquisition as the others.

<sup>10</sup>Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 398.

<sup>11</sup>In January 1953 the designation was changed from "element" to "unit."

<sup>12</sup>The ships of the blockade force, unless they had air cover, did not remain unnecessarily in the northern Yalu Gulf during daylight because of the danger of air attack from the enemy's nearby, Manchurian-based jets.

<sup>13</sup>*Athabaskan* served with TG 95.2 in October 1950, but she was on special bombardment duties connected with the Wonsan landings and not on the blockade patrol proper.

<sup>14</sup>Commander G. P. Rogers, USN, in USS *Henry W. Tucker*, was the Task Element Commander. The frigate USS *Sausalito* was the other member of the element at this time.

<sup>15</sup>According to Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 322-323, citing Commander Gay, the plan to destroy the bridge was devised by the latter, but this is not borne out in the *Special Report* submitted by *Nootka* to Commander Gay.

<sup>16</sup>The boats were under the command of two Royal Navy officers, Acting Sub-Lieutenants J. M. Rycroft, RN and K. R. N. Cadogan-Rawlinson, RN, who were taking their smallships' training in *Nootka*.

<sup>17</sup>See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 322-325. The version given above of *Operation Squeegie* differs in some respects from that given in Cagle and Manson. Their version is apparently based on the reports of USS *Stickell*, while the version above is based on *Nootka's Report of Proceedings* and on the special reports submitted by her to CTE 95.22 in *Stickell*.

<sup>18</sup>"British Commonwealth Naval Operations during the Korean War," in *JRUSI*, November 1951, 615.

<sup>19</sup>*Ex-Flower* Class corvette (ex-HMS *Burnet*) now rated as A/S frigate.

<sup>20</sup>*Sioux*, *Report of Proceedings*, June 1951.

<sup>21</sup>The initials stand for "high explosive, direct action." These are the shells most commonly used for shore bombardment, and they are fused to explode on impact.

<sup>22</sup>Cited in Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 310.

<sup>23</sup>For an eye-witness account of the negotiations see *How Communists Negotiate* by the head of the UN truce delegation, Admiral C. Turner Joy.

<sup>24</sup>For a description of the Han River operations see R. McKie, "Baron Murchison of Han," in N. Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea*, 241-250. The Canadian destroyers did not become involved in this operation which was carried out almost entirely by the Commonwealth frigates of TG 95.1.

<sup>25</sup>The Communists also made some attempt to capture islands on the east coast, but they did so more in an attempt to disrupt the activities of the UN naval forces there than to seize and hold the islands for their value at the bargaining table.



## THE ISLAND CAMPAIGN BEGINS

The opening of truce negotiations had no immediate effect on the Canadian destroyers in the Far East. *Huron* had sailed for the east coast to begin her first mission there on 24 June. She served with TE 95.22 in the Songjin-Chongjin area until 7 July carrying on the usual routine of bombarding the Songjin area during daylight hours and the Chongjin area at night. Little out of the ordinary occurred during *Huron's* patrol. On one occasion the ship was taken under fire by a 75-mm. gun sited near the southern end of the Songjin swept channel, but the enemy's shots fell short, and when *Huron* replied with her 4-inch the gun immediately ceased fire. On another occasion four North Korean civilians surrendered to *Huron*. They were labourers who had been conscripted to work on the railways, repairing the damage done by the UN ships and aircraft, and were most co-operative in providing intelligence about the activities of their former masters. They informed *Huron*, for instance, that the best way to hinder the repair of damaged bridges, railroads and other important targets was to use air bursts instead of ordinary HEDA when attacking the working parties at night and warned that the firing of starshell as a preliminary to such an attack greatly reduced its effectiveness, since it gave the working party ample time to take cover before the high-explosive shells arrived.

*Huron* was relieved at Songjin on 7 July by HMS *Morecambe Bay*. She had performed very creditably on this her first east coast assignment. Her gunnery department in particular was quite proud of its performance. A work train in the Chongjin dock area had been hit and damaged and much other damage done to enemy installations. On one occasion the ship's Gunnery Instructor, Petty Officer Winter, who was laying "A" gun at the time, scored six consecutive hits at 3,000 yards on the end of a girder bridge. For three days during her east coast tour *Huron* had the honour of

serving as Commander Task Element 95.22, a position she filled to the complete satisfaction of all concerned.

*Huron* arrived back at Sasebo on the morning of 9 July and left again early on the morning of the 10th, after a hectic day of preparation, to join the carrier screen of HMS *Glory* on the west coast. *Nootka* had been on carrier duty since 1 July with USS *Sicily* on the west coast. On this, the last mission of her first Korean tour, *Nootka* was under the command of her Executive Officer, Lieutenant-Commander (G) C. E. Richardson, C.D., RCN, because of the absence of Commander Fraser-Harris in Hong Kong enquiring into the cause of *Sioux's* superheater defects. Upon the arrival of *Glory*, *Nootka* joined her screen for a few hours, just long enough to exchange farewells with *Huron* before setting out for Sasebo to make preparations for her homeward passage. *Cayuga* was met at Yokosuka, and after a three-day turn-over period during which *Cayuga's* Commanding Officer, Commander J. Plomer, D.S.C. and Bar, RCN, took over from Commander Fraser-Harris as Commander Canadian Destroyers Far East, the *Nootka* sailed on 20 July for home.

*Cayuga's* second Korean tour opened with the usual carrier screening mission. The truce talks had recently begun, and it was decided to show the Communists that although the land campaign might be virtually stalemated they would not escape the attentions of the navy and air force by stalling the talks. On the west coast this naval and air offensive included the "Han River Demonstration" already mentioned and a concerted attack by both carriers of TE 95.11 on various targets in North Korea.<sup>1</sup> The carrier force consisted of HMS *Glory* and USS *Sicily*, screened by two U.S. destroyers, *Samuel N. Moore* and *Renshaw*, the Australian *Warramunga*, the Netherlands *Van Galen* and the two Canadian destroyers *Cayuga* and *Huron*. So far as the escorting ships were concerned this carrier

mission, which continued from 24 to 29 July, was uneventful. One day there was a little excitement when USS *Renshaw* made a sonar contact which was classified as submarine. USS *Moore* joined her, and the two expended all their anti-submarine ammunition on the contact. *Cayuga* and *Huron* then took over and attacked with *squid*, but after examining the contact more closely they classified it as non-sub. After carrying out a search of the area to ensure that there really was no submarine around, the ships returned to the carriers, happy to have had even a non-sub contact to break the monotony of screening duties.

A welcome break in screening duties was also provided by the so-called *Bugatti* patrol. This was a nightly patrol undertaken by each of the destroyers in turn and involved proceeding to the vicinity of the 38th parallel to maintain radar watch against a surprise night attack on the carriers. Invariably the *Bugatti* patrol proved as uneventful as the carrier screening, but at least it was a change. USS *Sicily* detached and returned to Sasebo on 29 July, but *Glory*, screened by *Renshaw*, *Moore*, *Cayuga* and *Huron*, remained on the west coast carrying out aerial strikes until 4 August before returning to Sasebo.

The only ship of CANDESFE to see any action during the remainder of August was *Cayuga*, indeed for a time she was the only Canadian ship in action in the Far East. *Huron* left Sasebo for home on 14 August; her relief, *Athabaskan* (now commanded by Commander D. G. King, C.D., RCN), did not arrive until 31 August; and *Sioux* did not complete repairs in Hong Kong until 24 August. Thus for ten days, from 14 to 24 August, the RCN, for the first time since the end of July 1950, had only one ship operating with the UN naval forces in Korea.

Throughout August *Cayuga* was employed mainly with TE 95.11 on screening and other missions for the carrier which were almost entirely uneventful, but she spent an interesting two days with the inshore patrol on 9 and 10 August. She operated chiefly in the Chodo—Sok-to area during this patrol, and since this area was to be one of the chief centres of activity for the Canadian destroyers on the west coast throughout the remainder of the war, it merits some description.\* These two islands cover the approaches to the Taedong Estuary and guard the northern end of the only deep-water channel along the north-west coast of the Hwanghae Promontory, the so-called Cigarette route. Chodo, lying in 38° 32' N., 124° 50' E., is the larger of the two and is a rocky, indeed mountainous, island some six miles across at its widest point. It is separated

\*See Chart, page 66.



View of a village on Sok-to.

from the mainland, only three and a half miles away, by a six- to nine-fathom channel. Sok-to is much smaller than Chodo and lies about seven miles to the north-east. This island is less than two miles from the mainland peninsula of Pip'a-got, which juts out into the sea between the two islands. Due east of Sok-to is another peninsula, Amgak, and lying between Amgak and Pip'a-got is a very shallow bay containing the two tiny islands of Chongyang-do and Ung-do. These latter islands were at this time held by friendly guerillas but were particularly vulnerable to attack, because at low water it was possible for enemy soldiers to cross from the mainland over the mud flats.

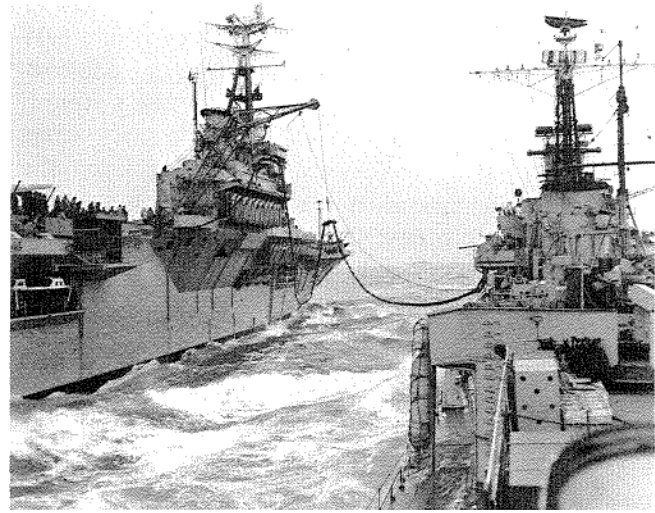
Chodo and Sok-to, particularly Chodo, were of great value to the UN forces. They provided bases from which friendly guerillas were constantly raiding the mainland to attack the enemy, to collect rice and other food supplies and to gather intelligence. Many other clandestine organizations, and there were a great many operating on the west coast,\* also found Chodo and Sok-to very useful for their purposes. In addition, the islands were a centre for the U.S. Air Force's search and rescue operations in the area. The Air Force also maintained radar, radio and SHORAN† installations on Chodo which were of great value to the UN war effort. There were numerous refugees on

\*The west coast, particularly between the 38th and 39th parallels, swarmed with secret organizations of all kinds. These were directed by departments and authorities as widely divergent as the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington and President Syngman Rhee in Seoul, and little attempt was made to co-ordinate their activities. Indeed it was not so much a case of the right hand not knowing what the left was doing as of the right thumb not knowing what the right index finger was up to, and the naval forces on the west coast often had reason to complain that operations of which they had not been informed were being carried out in waters for which they were responsible.

†Short range aid to navigation.



View of a village on Chodo.



*Sioux* replenishing with water from HMAS *Sydney*.

the islands, particularly on Chodo, many of them being dependants of the guerrillas.

Stationed on Chodo and Sok-to were small detachments of poorly equipped but well disciplined ROK Marines, usually under American command, whose chief duty it was to maintain law and order on the islands and to protect them against invasion from the mainland. They did not, however, confine themselves to defensive tactics but were most aggressive in raiding the enemy mainland. With them, but not under their command, were large bands of brave, but ill-disciplined and very poorly equipped guerrillas, nominally under American command but actually acknowledging no discipline save what they imposed upon themselves.<sup>2</sup> These guerrilla bands were of course available to help defend the islands in the event of invasion, but their favourite pastime was raiding the mainland to secure food and other supplies and, incidentally, to inflict damage on the enemy and secure intelligence for the UN forces. The value of a particular guerrilla band to the UN war effort depended largely upon the personal abilities of the American leader whose duty it was to direct its activities.\*

The ROK Marine detachments and the guerrillas could never have held the inshore islands had it not been for the strength of the UN naval forces. On the west coast the cruisers, destroyers, frigates and ROKN

\*By far the largest guerrilla organization on the west coast at this time was directed by an American officer stationed on Pengyong-do who was known by the code name *Leopard*. His island representatives, also Americans, were known as *Tognakis* or *Tognagis*, a name which was usually rendered by the UN ships as *Donkeys*. This organization co-operated very closely with the ships of TE 95.12, and the reports of the Canadian ships often mention the great value of the information supplied by the *Leopards* and *Donkeys*.

craft of TE 95.12 and the aircraft of the carrier element TE 95.11 used their fire power to discourage the enemy from concentrating in great strength on the mainland near such islands as Chodo and Sok-to, and their very presence was a strong deterrent to any enemy attempt to make large-scale amphibious landings. The task of defending islands that were close inshore was by no means an easy one for the ships of TE 95.12. Hydrographic conditions were not at all favourable for inshore operations; the navigable channels were very restricted in size, and mud and sand banks, rocks and shoals were everywhere. Strong currents and tide rips added to the hazards. The enemy did his best to augment these natural hazards by the use of field guns and mines. Wherever there was an inshore route used by the UN ships, the enemy sited batteries of field guns manned usually, in this period from mid-1951 onwards, by well trained gunners liberally supplied with ammunition. It was never a pleasant feeling for a ship's company navigating the tricky channels close inshore at night to realize that, if their ship should go aground, the morning might find her under the very muzzles of a strong battery of 120-mm. guns. The mining danger was not so great as might have been expected, as the efficiency of the close blockade made even the most restricted water very unhealthy for enemy mine-layers. Still it was necessary to maintain a force of minesweepers, usually ROKN but sometimes USN vessels, continually at work check-sweeping the more important navigable channels.

It was in this area and under these operating conditions that Cayuga found herself on the morning of

8 August, 1951, when she went to join the forces of TE 95.12. Sailing well up into Haeju Bay within easy range of Communist shore batteries, *Cayuga* made contact with the Commander TE 95.12 in HMS *Kenya*, and both ships then retired southward into safer waters to hold a briefing conference. Fully briefed on the situation in the task element's area, *Cayuga* received her orders for the next two days, including a list of targets recommended for bombardment, and set out on her first mission of the patrol, a night patrol along the coast between the 38th and 39th parallels. The night passed uneventfully, and in the morning the ship proceeded to her main operational area near Chodo and Sok-to. Four targets were engaged during the morning; one a target of opportunity consisting of some troops on the beach, the others pill boxes and observation posts included in the list of targets assigned by *Kenya*.

After the bombardments *Cayuga* held a conference at noon with the ROK minesweeper *YMS-512*. Friendly relations were quickly established with the ROK's, and arrangements were made that *YMS-512* and her companion, *YMS-511*, sweep a channel in the bay east of Sok-to which would enable *Cayuga* to come to closer grips with the enemy on Amgak and Pip'a-got. Besides promising this co-operation, the ROK's provided *Cayuga* with much valuable local intelligence. In return the Canadian ship supplied the ROK vessel with five tons of much needed fresh water and gave medical treatment to a ROK sailor.

At the conclusion of the conference *Cayuga* made for Sok-to and came to anchor just to the south of the island. Almost immediately the ship was closed by two junks from Sok-to, one of them bearing a letter from one Master Sergeant Hubert H. Frost, U.S. Army, who was the local *Leopard* representative and thus the leader of most of the guerillas on the island. The letter was a mine of useful information, so Commander Plomer sent in a boat to find Sergeant Frost and if possible bring him out to the ship for a conference. The Sergeant arrived in due course; he was familiar with every aspect of the local situation, and his information was of the greatest value to *Cayuga*.<sup>3</sup> Thus began a period of close and mutually-helpful co-operation between *Cayuga* and the *Donkey*\* on Sok-to.

*Cayuga* began to reap the fruits of this co-operation immediately. Without shifting her berth she was able to pour over 200 rounds of high explosive on several important targets pointed out by Sergeant Frost. *Cayuga* returned the sergeant to his island after the bombardment and set course for Chodo. The *Donkey* on Chodo, who happened to be an American civilian,

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\*See above, page 61, note.

was able to give very little information of any value, and *Cayuga*, familiar now with the redoubtable Sergeant Frost, was not impressed with his abilities. While the ship lay at anchor off Chodo, five junk-loads of guerillas came alongside. They were about to raid the mainland and required some information from charts in *Cayuga*'s possession, information that was the more cheerfully given because the guerilla leader appeared to be a most aggressive and energetic person.

*Cayuga* spent a quiet night off Chodo, but about 0700 the following morning (10 August) explosions were heard and smoke was seen rising from the mainland near Chonbung-ni. A considerable volume of small-arms fire could be heard from the same area about an hour later. Shortly thereafter a small motor fishing vessel arrived from Chodo with the news that the guerillas that *Cayuga* had assisted the night before had been trapped on the beach by the enemy as there was no wind to propel their junks. *Cayuga* immediately weighed and moved inshore. The enemy, reluctant to draw the attention of the destroyer's 4-inch guns, at once ceased fire, and one by one the junks were able to clear the beach and reach the motor fishing vessel to be towed to safety. One of the escaping junks was towing a live cow which was vociferously protesting its liberation from Communism.

When the junks were clear of the beach, *Cayuga* opened fire on the nearby town of Pungchon and other targets in the vicinity, including a group of soldiers crossing a mudflat, and then retired from the area to clear her condensers of the great masses of seaweed that had collected in them during the night. *Cayuga* headed north again for the Sok-to area early in the afternoon, where she met the two ROK minesweepers. The ROK's had faithfully carried out their promise to *Cayuga*, and *YMS-512* preceded the destroyer in to a position north-east of Sok-to from which she could engage the enemy at close range. Sergeant Frost had provided *Cayuga* with a list of important targets, and she spent over an hour in "plastering" troop concentrations, artillery bunkers and other targets on Amgak with 238 rounds of high explosive. Now that she was able, thanks to the ROK minesweepers, to engage at closer range, *Cayuga*'s fire was much more effective than on the preceding day.

After the bombardment *Cayuga* withdrew to seaward of Sok-to and again contacted Sergeant Frost. He was very pleased with the results of the destroyer's gunfire, but it proved to be a mixed blessing, for it aroused the enemy who now began to bombard Sok-to with 120-mm. fire. *Cayuga* remained at anchor off Sok-to during the night, proceeding in the morning to Inchon after handing over her patrol duties to HMS *Conсор*. She refuelled

from *Wave Chief* at Inchon and then escorted the tanker out to the carrier screen of TE 95.11 before setting off for Sasebo.

*Cayuga's* activities for the remainder of August were chiefly concerned with the west coast carriers. Four days of this time were spent at anchor in Inchon riding out typhoon *Marge*, which disrupted naval operations on the west coast for almost a week. *Huron* had sailed from Sasebo en route to Canada on 14 August and her relief did not arrive until the end of the month. *Sioux* sailed from Hong Kong on 24 August after completing her repairs, but she did not begin active operations on the west coast until the 31st. August 1951 was thus rather a quiet month for the ships of CANDESFE.

The Canadian ships were much more active during September. All three destroyers, *Cayuga*, *Athabaskan* and *Sioux*, put in a good deal of time on carrier screening, and *Cayuga* spent ten eventful days on the inshore patrol with TE 95.12. Among the carrier screening missions undertaken during this period by ships from CANDESFE was one involving the first attack made by TF 95 on the city of Wonsan in which the air-strike and gun bombardment were coordinated.<sup>4</sup> The striking force consisted of the British carrier *Glory*, the U.S. cruiser *Toledo* and the screening destroyers HMS *Concord*, USS *John R. Craig* and HMC Ships *Cayuga* and *Sioux*. For two days, 18 and 19 September, this force pounded Wonsan with bombs and shells, being joined on the second day by three LSMR's\* whose rockets contributed greatly to the destruction. The force dispersed on the evening of the 19th, and the Commonwealth ships retired to Sasebo to replenish before sailing to relieve the carrier on the west coast.

But the most interesting mission undertaken by a Canadian destroyer during the month of September was the inshore patrol carried out by *Cayuga* from the 2nd to the 13th. *Cayuga* arrived in the Chodo area on the night of the 2nd and, after an early morning conference with the New Zealand frigate *Rotoiti*, took over from her the responsibilities of the Chodo—Sok-to patrol. Later in the morning the *Leopard* representative on Chodo provided a long list of targets recommended for bombardment. The ship then proceeded north to the channel between Sok-to and the mainland and, after sending in a Shore Fire-Control Party to the friendly island of Ung-do, bombarded mainland villages and roads near the head of the bay opposite Sok-to.

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\*The initials stand for Landing Ship, Medium, Rocket.

The *Leopard* agent on Sok-to was then embarked, and the ship retired to the southward, anchoring for the night in the channel between Chodo and the mainland. Early on the following morning the Chodo *Leopard* also came aboard, and the ROK minesweeper *YMS-510* came alongside to request minesweeping assignments. At 0930 the cruiser *Belfast*, who was the CTE 95.12 at this time, was seen steaming up the *Cigarette* channel, firing her 6-inch guns landward as she came. *Belfast* dropped anchor nearby and the two *Leopards* were sent aboard her for a conference. *Belfast* departed at 1300, and a few minutes later *Cayuga* weighed and proceeded southward down the *Cigarette* channel. The afternoon was spent in bombarding a variety of targets on the mainland between Chodo and Choppeki Point (Changsan-got), the ship firing a total of 44 rounds of high explosive and 148 rounds of 40-mm. before returning to a night anchorage off Chodo.

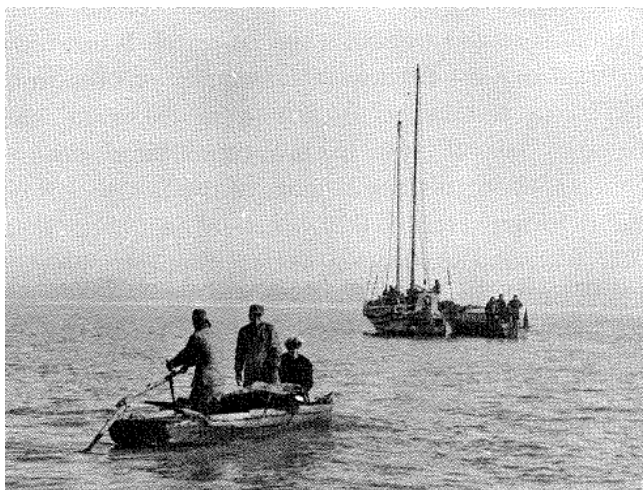
It had been discovered by friendly agents that the Communist troops on the mainland in the Chodo-Sokto area were taking to the hills in the daytime to escape the gunfire of the UN ships and were occupying their barracks only at night. To frustrate the enemy's *design*, *Cayuga* kept up an intermittent fire of high explosive and star-shell<sup>5</sup> during most of the night, considering that this would be particularly harassing in view of the heavy bombardments carried out by *Belfast* and *Cayuga* during the day.

Early on the morning of 6 September *Cayuga* sailed to fuel from the tanker that was with the carrier force. Fuelling was not completed until 1345, whereupon *Cayuga* set course north-westward for the Manchurian coast to carry out a special patrol. It had been reported that the Chinese were running supplies from Dairen to Antung at the mouth of the Yalu, and *Cayuga's* mission was to investigate these reports. Throughout the night and most of the following day, the destroyer cruised the waters of northern Yalu Gulf without encountering enemy shipping, although a fleet of 22 junks was sighted near the mouth of the Yalu. Unfortunately they were on the western shore and therefore immune from attack. On several occasions *Cayuga* encountered junks out at sea, but these were all manned either by friendly guerillas or by fishermen carrying the proper UN authorizations. Towards evening on the 7th *Cayuga* set course back to Chodo, arriving at her night anchorage east of the island at 2035.

A conference was held that evening on Chodo to discuss the part to be played by *Cayuga* in supporting a strong guerilla raid on the mainland planned for the following morning. Arrangements were quickly made,

and at midnight the *Salamander*\* agent, his interpreter and a South Korean communications expert came aboard *Cayuga* to help co-ordinate the ship's support activities during the raid. The landing force, consisting of some 200 men of a so-called guerilla "regiment," embarked in junks towed by two motor fishing vessels, crossed the strait from Chodo and went in on the beaches south of the mouth of the Namch'on. There was no opposition, and the guerillas penetrated inland in groups of 30 to 40 men after establishing a command post from which *Cayuga's* gunfire support could be directed.

The first call for support fire did not come until 0715 when the guerillas had been ashore for over four hours, but thereafter such calls became frequent and insistent. All requests for support came from the command post ashore to the *Salamander* group in the ship which relayed the information to the gunnery department. The system worked well, and at the height of the action, when the enemy were pressing the retiring guerillas closely and the ship's guns were firing as rapidly as shells could be rammed into the breeches, the shore operator's delighted shouts of "Hubba! Hubba!" could be clearly heard over the "walky-talky." *Cayuga* fired 335 rounds of 4-inch throughout the action, and it was ammunition well spent. The South Korean guerilla leader was most enthusiastic over the support he had been given, and there is little doubt but that the naval gunfire contributed greatly to the success of the enterprise.



*Cayuga's* motor cutter waits for a wounded ROK soldier being brought out from Sok-to for evacuation.

\*The *Salamander* organization, so-called from the code-name of its chief who had his headquarters on Pengyong-do, was another of the under-cover groups on the west coast. It was originally a counter-intelligence organization, and its many secret agents were particularly active among the western islands. Eventually it extended its activities to include active raiding.



Preparing to evacuate a wounded ROK guerilla from Sok-to.

The last of the guerillas had cleared the beaches by 1425 and *Cayuga* ceased fire. From all accounts the raid had been entirely successful. Like most guerilla raids this one had many objectives: obtaining intelligence for the *Salamanders*, inflicting damage on the enemy and securing food for the inhabitants of Chodo. A good deal of valuable information was obtained, and a certain amount of food was seized, but it was in the destruction of enemy troops that the guerillas secured the best results. When *Cayuga* visited Chodo a few days later it was reported that conservative estimates set the enemy losses in the raid at 150 killed and 100 wounded.<sup>6</sup> The guerilla casualties were astonishingly light; seven wounded and only three of these seriously hurt. The three seriously wounded, one of them with a rifle bullet through his lung, were treated by Surgeon Lieutenant J. C. Cyr, *Cayuga's* Medical Officer, before being transferred to *Belfast*.

*Cayuga* remained on the island patrol for another four days, but there were no more major guerilla landings, and the usual routine prevailed. At night *Cayuga* remained at anchor near Chodo or Sok-to in position to cover with her Sperry radar the routes an enemy invading force would have to use if it tried to attack the islands. During the day the ship usually carried out bombardments on targets recommended by the *Leopard* and *Salamander* agents in the area. Occasionally the ship was ordered north on a special anti-shiping patrol in the Yalu Gulf, but such patrols were usually without incident. *Cayuga* carried out one of these northern patrols on 12 September and did not sight a single vessel, friend or enemy. She returned to the Chodo area for the night and was relieved by *Sioux* at 0600 on the morning of 13 September.

The ships of CANDESFE took part in few other operations of particular interest during the remainder

of the month, except the two-day strike on Wonsan previously described. Towards the end of September the ships were honoured by a visit from the Flag Officer Pacific Coast, Rear-Admiral W. B. Creery, C.B.E., C.D., RCN. The Admiral spent a week visiting all the Canadian destroyers in the theatre, going to sea in both *Sioux* and *Athabaskan*.<sup>7</sup> On 27 September *Athabaskan*, with Admiral Creery aboard, was detached from her carrier screening duties to carry out a bombardment with HMS *Cornus* in the Sok-to area. It was a routine bombardment except that it was somewhat heavier than usual and had the benefit of an air-spot provided by planes from USS *Rendova*. One hundred and sixty rounds of 4-inch were fired, and the results were good considering that this was the first bombardment carried out by *Athabaskan* since exercising at Pearl Harbor in August. An unusual incident occurred during this operation when the ship came under small arms fire from some “trigger happy” guerillas on Sok-to. Thinking that perhaps the island might have recently changed hands, *Athabaskan* replied

with her Bofors until ordered to cease fire by HMS *Cornus*. Following the bombardment Admiral Creery was transferred to HMS *Charity* for passage back to Sasebo, and *Athabaskan* returned to her carrier screen.

The month of September had been a fairly busy one for the ships of CANDESFE. The truce talks instead of lightening the task of the naval forces had actually increased it, as the high command, finding that land operations were too costly in men, began more and more to utilize the navy and air force when it was necessary to put pressure on an enemy who was using “every trick in the book” to try to win by diplomacy and trickery what he had failed to win by force of arms. During the next three months, which will be dealt with in the following chapter, the task of the naval forces on the west coast was to become even more difficult.

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\*This is not to imply that land operations had ceased. During the summer and fall of 1951 the UN armies launched a series of limited attacks aimed at securing various strong-points and observation posts of purely local importance. Some of these battles, despite their limited objectives, were as fiercely contested and as costly as any of the engagements fought in defence of the Pusan perimeter or in the earlier spring offensives.

## References

<sup>1</sup>This air offensive was a part of the famous *Operation Strangle*, which was a concerted effort to cut the Communist armies off from their northern supply bases by severing communications in the narrow neck of North Korea between 38° 15' and 39° 15' North Latitude. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 241-243.) It was a failure.

<sup>2</sup>It was not unusual for a guerilla band to depose its chosen leader for some real or imaginary offense and substitute another. During *Athabaskan's* second Korean tour one guerilla band on Chodo had at least three “commanders,” all, incidentally, bearing the name of Kim.

<sup>3</sup>Sergeant Frost proved to be one of the most able among the many remarkable *Leopard* guerilla leaders encountered by the Canadian destroyers on the west coast. Seldom do the *Reports of Proceedings* mention

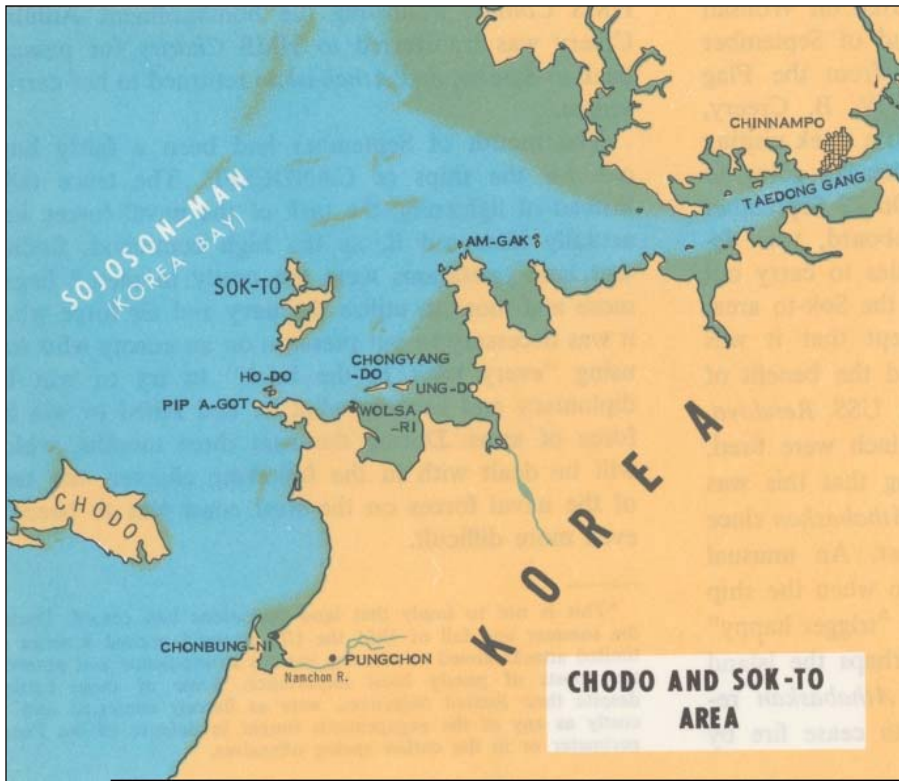
him without praising his outstanding qualities. “I cannot speak too highly of this very able and intelligent man,” remarked Commander Plomer. (Appendix “A” to *Report of Proceedings*, HMCS *Cayuga*, August 1951.)

<sup>4</sup>See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 414.

<sup>5</sup>The star-shell was set at *safe* and fired for incendiary effect, not for illumination.

<sup>6</sup>One of the guerilla groups is said to have brought back 50 sets of shoulder straps taken from the dead bodies of enemy soldiers, which may indicate that the above estimate is probably fairly accurate. On the other hand it may only mean that this particular group captured an enemy quartermaster stores which contained a good stock of uniforms.

<sup>7</sup>*Cayuga* was undergoing docking in Kure during the Admiral's visit.





## DEFENDING THE “FRIENDLY ISLANDS”

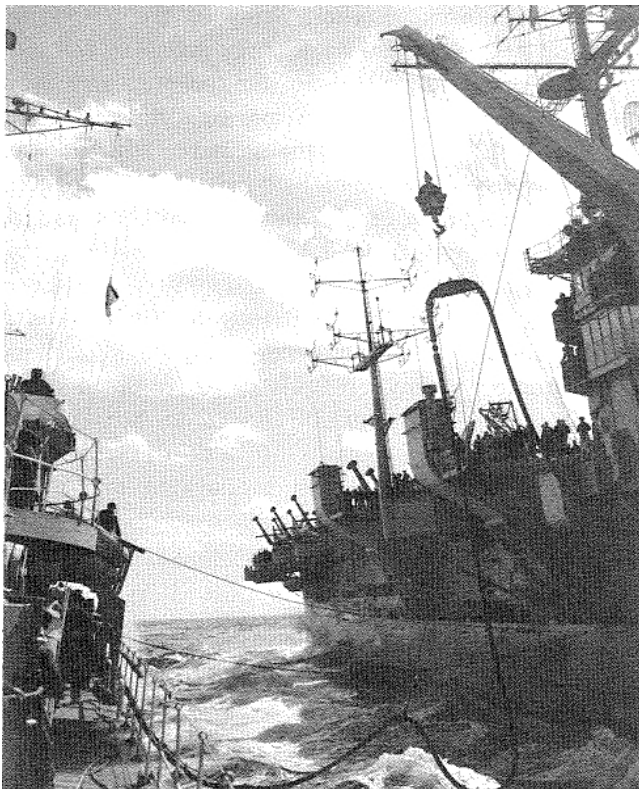
During the period covered by this chapter—October, November and December 1951—the truce negotiations finally began to make some progress. For the first few months the path of the negotiators had been far from smooth. The talks opened in Kaesong on 10 July, but the UN delegates were forced to call a three-day recess in July and a five-day recess in August to compel the Communists to respect the neutrality of the truce site. Then on 23 August the Communists called off the talks in protest against an alleged violation of Kaesong by UN

aircraft, and this time the suspension lasted for over two months. Not until 25 October did the negotiators sit down again, at a new conference site in Panmunjom, to resume their bargaining.

In the early days at Panmunjom some progress was made, and by 26 November agreement had been reached on a provisional demarcation line. It was agreed that should an armistice be signed within 30 days the existing battle line would be taken as the basis for the final truce line. There was no agreement on a cease-fire during this 30-day period,<sup>1</sup> but naturally both sides curtailed their operations, since there was little point in losing men in attempts to seize ground that would have to be returned in the event of an early armistice.

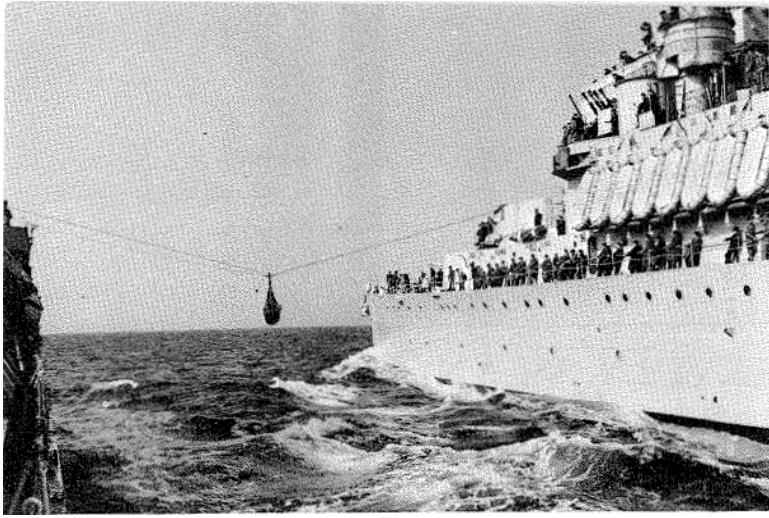
Unlike the land forces, the naval and air forces in Korea stepped up their activities during the latter months of 1951. This increased activity was more in the nature of a counter-offensive than a self-initiated programme of attack; the air force was countering a sudden increase in enemy air activity;\* the navy was resisting a determined attempt to seize some of the more important UN-held islands.† It was chiefly the western islands in the waters patrolled by TE 95.12 that the Reds wished to get their hands on, and consequently the Canadian destroyers were to become

*Nootka refuelling from USS Bataan.*



\*There was a great increase in enemy air strength during October, November and December 1951. The MIG's began to range throughout most of North Korea almost to the 38th parallel, and in early November, for the first time in the war, enemy jets were reported operating from fields in North Korea. In mid-November General Vandenberg, commander of the UN air forces, stated to a correspondent of the *London Times* that the MIG's were actually challenging allied air superiority. (NS 1480-146/187, Vol. 5.)

†The problem of disposing of the islands was not settled when agreement was reached about a demarcation line. The enemy was, however, less interested in ensuring Communist possession of the islands after the armistice—this could be achieved by diplomatic means—than in removing a dangerous military threat to his rear areas. Consequently when agreement was reached at Panmunjom in late December 1951 that an extension of the demarcation line seaward should decide which side would get the islands, the Communists did not abandon their island campaign.



Jackstay evolution; *Nootka* and HMS *Ceylon*.

closely involved in the naval campaign to frustrate the Communist design.

*Cayuga* was the only ship of CANDESFE to see action with the inshore patrol in October. *Sioux* had another long lay-off during the month. She had just completed a nine-day programme of repair and maintenance in Sasebo when she had to put to sea to ride out typhoon *Ruth*. *Ruth* did even more damage to the ship than had typhoon *Clara* back in November 1950,<sup>2</sup> and *Sioux* had to spend another fifteen days in Sasebo undergoing repairs. The result was that she spent only four days on operations against the enemy during the whole of October, all of them with the west coast carrier element.

*Athabaskan* was considerably more active than *Sioux*, spending twenty-one days at sea during the month, fourteen of them in support of the carriers. She too was at sea when typhoon *Ruth* struck but suffered only slight damage.

*Cayuga*, besides serving nine days on the inshore patrol during October, also performed two carrier screening missions. From the 7th to the 11th she was with a special task element consisting of the cruiser *Belfast*, the Australian carrier *Sydney* and five destroyers carrying out another combined aerial and gun bombardment of Wonsan. Upon returning from the east coast she sailed almost immediately to join the west-coast carrier, USS *Rendova*, with whom she remained until the 18th, thereby escaping *Ruth* which did not strike the Yellow Sea.

But it was *Cayuga's* inshore patrol that was the highlight of the month. She met *Belfast* off Taechong-do at 1007 on 22 October to receive her orders for the patrol and get the latest information about the local situation. Conditions had not changed much since *Cayuga* was last in the area more than a month before, except that it was believed that the enemy would

probably concentrate his efforts on capturing the UNheld islands in Yalu Gulf rather than the more easily defended Chodo and Sok-to.

While *Cayuga* was still in the vicinity of Taechongdo, a flight of B-29's came over the island. While those on deck watched, one of the planes appeared to go out of control; suddenly a cluster of parachutes appeared in the sky, and the plane dived sharply to disintegrate in a burst of flame and smoke on the island. *Cayuga* and the Australian frigate *Murchison* who was also in the vicinity immediately made for the scene of the crash. The parachutes were seen to land on the island, so *Cayuga* lowered a boat and sent Surgeon Lieutenant Cyr in to render assistance. All the airmen had landed safely, and after treating two of them for shock the Medical Officer returned to the ship.

During the night of 22/23 October *Cayuga* carried out a patrol in the Yalu Gulf, leaving early in the morning for Inchon to refuel. That evening (the 23rd) a conference was held on Pengyong-do with the new CTE 95.12 (*Ceylon* had relieved *Belfast*), after which the ship steamed northward to search for downed airmen off the mouth of the Taedong. *Cayuga* searched for the airmen throughout the 24th but without success, and in the evening she left to carry out a patrol in the vicinity of Taewha-do.

The island of Taewha is near the southern end of a chain of islands extending southward from the Chorusan Peninsula. Earlier, many of the islands in this chain had been held by friendly guerillas, but one by one they were falling to the enemy, and now Taewha was the only one of any importance still in UN hands. Like most of the islands, Taewha was very inadequately garrisoned by bands of ill-disciplined, poorly-armed guerillas under the nominal command of a few U.S. Army personnel. Moreover it was in a very vulnerable position, lying as it did only a few miles from Communist-controlled islands and within easy reach of the enemy's Manchurian air-fields. The proximity of these enemy air-fields made it much more difficult for the ships of TE 95.12 to help defend Taewha, as it was dangerous for a ship to cruise the waters around 39°30' North in daylight unless she had air cover.

*Cayuga*, on the morning of 25 October, was ordered to proceed to the anchorage off Taewha-do to investigate reports of an enemy bombing attack on the island. Upon arrival at Taewha the cutter was sent in. The island had indeed been attacked; two small bombers had dropped ten bombs<sup>3</sup> which inflicted eleven casualties on the defenders. The ship's

Medical Assistant Petty Officer Robert Hotchin, went ashore to treat the wounded.\*

The *Leopard* representative, or *Donkey*, on Taewha was rather disturbed over the enemy build-up which had been taking place on the islands to the north, so Commander Plomer decided to carry out a surprise bombardment to encourage the “friendlies” and perhaps disrupt the enemy’s plans. No air cover could be provided for the ship, but as there was a low over-cast with rain it was felt that the decision to risk enemy air attack was justified. Threading her way through the sand banks *Cayuga* steamed northward and came to anchor off Sogacha-do, east of the Chorusan Peninsula. The enemy had obviously not expected a UN ship to appear in that area and was totally unprepared; hence *Cayuga’s* 150-round bombardment caused numerous casualties and did considerable damage.

*Cayuga* returned to Taewha-do at 1650 and embarked her Medical Assistant, seven of the bombing casualties and a Korean doctor with his two assistants. Before leaving, it was decided to encourage the “friendlies” and discourage the enemy some more by carrying out another bombardment. The island of Suun, seventeen miles to the north-west, where there were a reported 500 enemy troops and a number of junks, was selected as the target. Closing the island, *Cayuga* opened fire at 6,000 yards and continued to fire until only a mile and a half from the beach. Enemy machineguns on the island opened fire but were immediately silenced by direct hits. Only some 55 rounds were fired, but for the amount of ammunition expended this was one of *Cayuga’s* better bombardments. According to the Commanding Officer, “From the gunnery point of view, it was by far the best shooting the Ship has ever carried out.”<sup>4</sup>

After shooting up Suun-do, *Cayuga* carried out an anti-shipping patrol during the night, making contact with *Ceylon* next day at noon off Chodo. The would-be Doctor Cyr and the destroyer’s Korean passengers were transferred to *Ceylon*, and in return *Cayuga* received five tons of stores and four passengers for Taewha. Included among the passengers was a U.S. Army officer going out to relieve the *Leopard*

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\*A message had been received in the ship on the day before stating that the Medical Officer, Surgeon Lieutenant J. C. Cyr, was an imposter. Everyone in CANDESFE who had had anything to do with “Cyr” found this information hard to credit, but further investigation proved that it was completely accurate. Apparently “Dr. Cyr” was a certain Ferdinand Waldo Demara, Jr., a United States citizen, and he had gained entry to the RCN by the unauthorized use of documents obtained from a practising physician. Following his exposure Demara was transferred on 26 October to HMS *Ceylon* for passage to Japan and subsequent return to Canada. After his return to Canada he was released from the RCN for fraudulent enlistment but no criminal charges were brought, and he was merely deported to the USA.

representative on the island. *Cayuga* arrived off Taewha at dusk on 26 October, transferred her stores and passengers into guerilla junks and sailed westward to patrol during the night.

On the morning of the 27th *Cayuga* proceeded to a position north-west of the mouth of the Taedong to act as “bird dog”, or search and rescue ship, during a heavy strike of B-29’s on the mainland. The *Cayuga’s* company had a fine view of several dog-fights between Chinese MIG’s and the bomber escorts, but no planes were shot down so she was not called upon to take any part in the operation. One MIG-15 flew over the ship at about 6,000 feet, but as there was danger of hitting friendly craft and as the Communist pilot showed no desire to attack, *Cayuga* did not open fire.

When the planes had left, *Cayuga* set out for Pengyong-do where she refuelled from *Ceylon*. The night of 27/28 October was spent at anchor off Pengyong-do, and on the following morning, as there were no immediate operations planned, the opportunity was taken to put recreational parties ashore on the island. The afternoon was spent in bombarding targets assigned by CTE 95.12. Air-spot was to have been provided by planes from *Rendova*, but after one target had been engaged the aircraft was recalled on an urgent mission. In spite of this *Cayuga* had a very successful afternoon. One of the targets assigned was described as: “new earth works, trenches, and possible emplacements, with approximately twenty troops,” and it was discovered from the chart that these lay near a high cliff. By keeping the ship close inshore and suddenly appearing out from behind the cliff, complete surprise was achieved. The enemy troops could be seen rushing to wheel out a mortar or field-piece before direct hits from the 4-inch and the Bofors blotted out the view. Fire was held for a time until the smoke and dust blew away, and then the remains of the target were systematically destroyed. *Cayuga* then carried on along the coast to engage other enemy positions.

While cruising along the shore-line on her bombardment mission, *Cayuga* sighted a group of people in a cave at the foot of a rocky cliff near Kujinni. They all appeared to be waving South Korean flags and seemed to be signalling the ship, but *Cayuga* had her assignments to complete and was unable to do more than report their location to *Leopard* and make a note to investigate at the first opportunity.

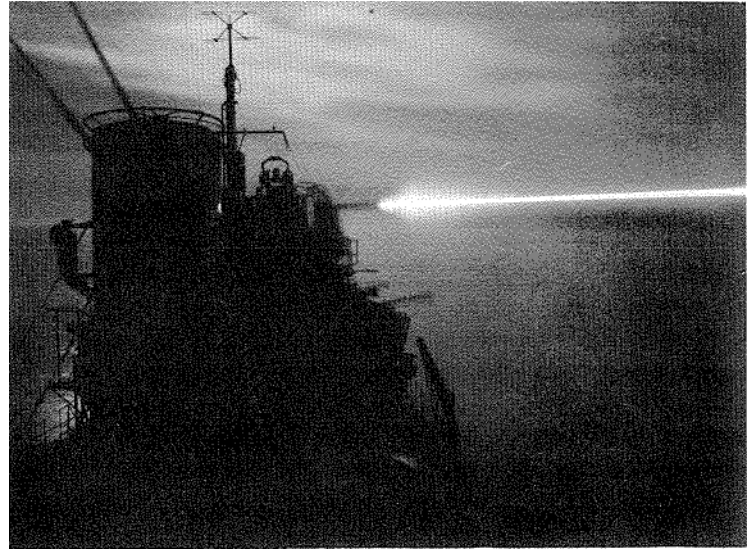
The night of 28/29 October was spent on an entirely uneventful patrol in the Yalu Gulf. A message came during the patrol ordering *Cayuga* to arrive at dawn at a position in the Taedong-man<sup>5</sup> on the south side of the Hwanghae Promontory to assist in the evacuation of friendly guerillas from the mainland. The position given was in shallow water; the charts for that area were



*Cayuga* and a group of minesweepers framed by a 40 mm gun in *Athabaskan*.

unreliable; and the tide tables were not to be trusted. To make matters worse, just as *Cayuga* was rounding Choppeki Point, the echo sounder broke down. When the ship reached shallow water a motor cutter was sent in ahead to take soundings, and with its help the ship crept in as close to shore as was prudent. The second motor cutter was then sent in in charge of Lieutenant a R. Saxon, C.D., RCN, *Cayuga's* guerilla expert,<sup>6</sup> to get in touch with the troops that were to be evacuated. Everything seemed to be very quiet ashore, and except for a burning village two or three miles inland there was no sign of any activity; but when the motor cutter began to approach the shore a heavy machine-gun opened up. The fire was accurate enough to be disturbing; some of the rounds hit so near the boat that its occupants were splashed with water. The cutter's crew tried to retaliate with the Brens, but the range was too great. The boat made it back to the ship without being hit, and then, as there appeared to be no friendly troops ashore to be evacuated and as the tide was falling rapidly, *Cayuga* withdrew to seaward.

About noon a radio message from *Leopard* on Pengyong-do reported two targets worthy of *Cayuga's* attentions. These targets were in the area bombarded by the ship on the previous day, so after saturating them with high explosive *Cayuga* stopped to investigate the people she had seen in the cave. They were still brandishing their South Korean flags and waving frantically when *Cayuga* appeared, and a motor cutter went in to find out what was troubling them. The cave dwellers, it turned out, were members of a guerilla outpost-some 30 warriors with their wives and children-and they had been waving because they feared the ship might open fire on them. Their only request was for some kerosene for cooking and heating, and this was promptly supplied.



*Nootka's* twin Bofors firing at a truck conveyer on the Korean east coast.

The ship arrived off Pengyong-do towards evening, where she conferred with *Ceylon* before leaving for her night anchorage in the channel between Chodo and the mainland. Early in the morning (30 October) Lieutenant Saxon went ashore to confer with the local *Leopard* agent and to donate to the islanders a quantity of clothing which had been contributed by members of the ship's company. According to the *Donkey* the Communists were still building up their forces on the mainland, probably in preparation for an attack on the islands of Chodo and Sok-to. It was not to be long before *Cayuga* herself received first-hand evidence of the extent of this build-up.

While the cutter was ashore, an urgent message arrived from the *Donkey* on Sok-to saying that his junks were being fired on by the mainland batteries. Without waiting to recover her motor cutter, *Cayuga* weighed and made for the channel between Sok-to and the mainland. When she arrived off the island there were no signs of enemy gun-fire as the enemy artillerymen, not wishing to reveal their positions, had ceased fire as soon as *Cayuga* came into view. The ship anchored off Sok-to and the other cutter went in to pick up Lieutenant Beaudette, U.S. Army, who had replaced *Cayuga's* old friend, Master Sergeant Frost, as the Sok-to *Donkey*. Surveying nearby Amgak through his binoculars, Commander Plomer could see many new bunkers, trenches and other installations which had not been there when the ship was last in the area. When Lieutenant Beaudette came aboard he told much the same story as the Chodo *Donkey*. The enemy, according to intelligence reports, was apparently planning for invasion; new guns were being sited; the civilians and the North Korean troops had been removed from Amgak and some 2,000 Chinese Communist regulars moved in; new offensive and defensive works were being rapidly constructed.

At Lieutenant Beaudette's request, Commander Plorer decided to try to knock out a new battery of 76-mm. guns which had only recently been mounted near the tip of Amgak, as these were the guns that had been shelling the Sok-to junks. Weighing anchor, *Cayuga* shifted to a position nearer Amgak and prepared to fire. Orders were given to prepare a buoy in case it became necessary to slip the anchor under heavy fire, and while this was being done *Cayuga* fired her first ranging shots. Before she had time to fire again there was a whistling noise and three shells, landing in a tight pattern, threw up columns of water 200 yards astern. The ship replied with two quick broadsides before the next enemy salvo arrived. Again the shells fell astern, but this time only 100 yards away. This was getting too close altogether, and orders were given to slip the cable and retire with all despatch. *Cayuga*, because of her position had only two alternatives; close the range and hope to knock out the batteries before she herself was stopped, or steam stern-first out of sight around the southern tip of Sok-to.<sup>7</sup> *Cayuga* wisely chose the latter course, and as she got under way another enemy salvo straddled her, two rounds short and one over. The "over" threw up water only 60 feet from the bridge. While all this was going on, heavier shells, thought to have been about 105-mm., were also falling around the ship, though not with the deadly accuracy of the 76's. Not until *Cayuga* had disappeared "blunt end first" around the southern tip of Sok-to did these heavier guns cease fire.

The entire action lasted only nineteen minutes, but they were a busy nineteen minutes for both sides. *Cayuga* fired 155 rounds and the enemy some 100. The destroyer observed several hits in the target area but did not claim to have knocked out any of the enemy guns. The shore batteries did very well, for though the destroyer escaped with the loss of an anchor, two shackles of cable and a motor cutter which was towed under during the withdrawal, it was only by the greatest of good fortune that she was not hit several times. The reason *Cayuga* had been trapped in such an awkward spot was that accurate shooting, as displayed by the 76's on Amgak, was virtually unknown on the west coast. Ships operating on the east coast had long been accustomed to accurate shore battery fire, but this was the first time a west coast ship had encountered it.

After her skirmish with the enemy, *Cayuga* returned Lieutenant Beaudette to his island and picked up Lieutenant Saxon and the motor cutter at Chodo. Shortly thereafter she was relieved by HMS *St. Brides Bay* who took over the inshore patrol. After spending a quiet night patrolling to seaward above the 39th parallel, *Cayuga* set out for Sasebo where she arrived

late on 1 November to complete, as the Commanding Officer remarked, "a patrol of 'full employment'."

"Full employment" was to be the rule during the last two months of 1951 as the Communists intensified their efforts to seize the western islands, and all three Canadian destroyers saw service with the island defence forces of TE 95.12 during November. On the day *Cayuga* returned to Sasebo to replenish, *Sioux* joined TE 95.12 and remained with the element until the afternoon of the 3rd. Nothing of particular interest occurred during *Sioux's* patrol.

The next Canadian ship to take part in the island defence campaign was *Athabaskan* who took over from HMAS *Murchison* in the Chodo area on the afternoon of 5 November. *Athabaskan* plunged right into the thick of things by carrying out a 40-round bombardment of the Amgak batteries, which did not reply. On completion of the bombardment, Lieutenant Beaudette of Sok-to was brought over by the motor cutter to brief the ship's officers on the local situation.

An interesting operation was planned for the morning of 6 November. *Athabaskan* was to run in towards Amgak, well within range of the batteries that had forced *Cayuga* to retire a week before and which were now proving rather troublesome to the Sok-to garrison. She would then open fire on an inland village some distance from the enemy guns in the hope that they would retaliate. In the meantime *Belfast*, with a Shore Fire Control Party on Sok-to, would be lying in wait out of sight behind the island, and a flight of planes from *Sydney* would be orbiting, also out of sight, to seaward. As soon as the enemy guns opened up on *Athabaskan* she was to retire, at the same time reporting the exact location of the battery to *Belfast*. The planes from *Sydney* and the 6-inch guns of *Belfast* would then blast the enemy position out of existence.

*Athabaskan* went in at dawn as planned, anchored under the muzzles of the 76's on Amgak, and began pounding the village of Mumbongchon. But the Red gunners were not to be fooled; warned perhaps by spies on Sok-to of *Belfast's* presence, they stayed underground and made no move that would betray their position. When *Athabaskan* had completed her bombardment of the village she shifted fire to a beached junk near the tip of Amgak. Still there was no reply from the enemy. Forced to concede that her well-laid plan had failed, *Belfast* opened up on the suspected position of the battery, and the *Sydney's* strike came in with bombs, rockets and cannon to give the tip of the peninsula a thorough going-over.

When the operation was over, *Athabaskan* rejoined *Belfast* to seaward of Sok-to and embarked from her a quantity of arms and other necessities destined for

the garrison at Taewha-do. The destroyer set out to deliver these supplies in the evening and was only some 15 miles from her destination when *Belfast* radioed that Taewha was being attacked by air and sea. As she closed, *Athabaskan* could see the island outlined in the glow of fires burning on the northern slopes and hear the crackle of small-arms fire up in the hills. Obviously all was not well on Taewha.

When the ship was making her approach, a motor junk was spotted sailing south-eastward from the island, but as it made the correct reply when challenged it was allowed to proceed. *Athabaskan* anchored less than two miles off Taewha Lighthouse which is on the north-west tip of the island, and the local *Leopard* agent, Lieutenant A. N. Allan, U.S. Army, came aboard. It was learned from him that Taewha had been bombed just after dark by nine to eleven four-engined bombers escorted by five or six jet fighters. The bombers had practically wiped out the only village on the island, destroyed an ammunition dump and set afire the island's main food dump. The raid had come as a complete surprise-it was the first enemy air raid of any size since the beginning of hostilities-and consequently civilian casualties had been very heavy. Fortunately there had been no attempt at invasion; the small-arms fire heard by *Athabaskan* probably came from jittery guerilla detachments firing at one another.



A Chief Petty Officer of the RCN shows ROK guerillas how to operate a Browning machine-gun.

Lieutenant Allan took the supplies *Athabaskan* had brought for him and returned to his base, whereupon the ship moved northward to cover the northern approaches to the island in case the enemy should attempt invasion. A list of targets on enemy-held Ka-to had been provided by Lieutenant Allan, and these were

worked over by *Athabaskan's* 4-inch guns during the night. Meanwhile *Belfast* had been steaming northward at full speed, and she came to anchor some seven miles south-west of the island to lend help with her 6-inch guns should this become necessary.

But the enemy, no doubt well satisfied with the results of his bombing, took no further action, and *Athabaskan*, on *Belfast's* orders, weighed at 0415 to clear the area before daylight. She was some five miles south of Taewha when Lieutenant Allan radioed a request that she return to evacuate casualties and pick up him and his party for passage to Pengyong-do. Though it was getting rather late, *Belfast* gave her permission and *Athabaskan* reversed course to return to Taewha-do. After some delay Lieutenant Allan, his sergeant and a ROK Army interpreter were embarked. The casualties had unfortunately been moved inland, and it proved impossible to collect them in time. It was growing light when *Athabaskan* headed southward at 32 knots to deliver her passengers to *Leopard* headquarters at Pengyong-do.

In his message to *Belfast* after leaving Taewha, Commander King requested permission to attempt the evacuation of the casualties on the next night, and the CTE not only agreed but also promised to send *Cayuga* to provide cover during the operation. When *Athabaskan* arrived at Pengyong-do, Commander King sent in his Executive Officer and Navigator<sup>8</sup> to confer with *Leopard* in the hope that he might have information of value for the planning of future operations. A plan was drawn up after the conference; *Athabaskan* was to leave for Taewha towards evening taking Lieutenant Allan and his staff and carrying arms, ammunition and supplies for the guerillas. On arrival, the wounded would be embarked and the supplies unloaded while the *Leopard* group went ashore for a conference with the guerillas before rejoining the ship for return to Pengyong-do. *Cayuga* in the meantime would detach from the carrier group to cover *Athabaskan* and to prevent a surprise landing by the enemy on the north shore during the operation.

There were a few hitches, but the plan worked as smoothly as could be expected. *Athabaskan* arrived off Taewha Lighthouse at 2139, but heavy weather to the southward prevented *Cayuga* from taking up her covering position until just after midnight. The weather was fine at Taewha with a moderate breeze blowing, yet it took some time to convince the guerilla leader on the island that the sea was not too rough to embark the wounded. Fortunately the wind dropped about 0100 (8 November), and Commander King was able to satisfy the guerillas that it was safe to bring the junk alongside. Loading finally began at 0220, and it took

only a little more than an hour to embark the 47 wounded and a South Korean nurse who accompanied them. Shortly before 0400 *Athabaskan* and *Cayuga* weighed and set course for Pengyong-do. *Cayuga's* covering operation had been uneventful; her radar had picked up two junks in the area, and one of them was thought to be enemy, but Commander Plomer decided not to open fire on this doubtful target for fear of disrupting the evacuation. After escorting *Athabaskan* clear of the danger area, *Cayuga* returned to the carrier.

*Athabaskan* arrived at Pengyong-do at 0850 and after conferring with *Belfast* carried on to land the casualties at Inchon. She returned to Pengyong-do shortly after midnight on the 9th, but her hopes for the quiet night at anchor that the CTE had planned for her were rudely quashed by a USAF bomber which crashed and burned on the northern slopes of the island just after the ship's arrival. *Athabaskan's* motor cutter was at once lowered to search for survivors, but fortunately all but one of the bomber's crew landed on the island. *Athabaskan's* Medical Officer, Surgeon Lieutenant C. A. West, RCN, was put ashore to treat the survivors.

CTE 95.12 had decided that each night at least one ship, and when possible two, should be assigned to the defence of Taewha-do, and in *Athabaskan's* absence *Cayuga* was again ordered from her carrier screening to carry out this duty during the night of 8/9 November. So after only three hours with the carrier *Cayuga* steamed northward again, conferred at Pengyong-do with *Belfast* from whom she picked up an intelligence officer from the British Army, a ROK communications officer and an interpreter and headed for Taewha. *Cayuga* came to anchor off the island at 2155 and sent in a party in the motor cutter to consult with the guerillas. The ship had been in radio contact with the island, but when the cutter approached the beach someone opened fire on it. The cutter returned the compliment with a burst from a Bren gun but was ordered to cease fire by *Cayuga*. A little strong language over the radio soon straightened out the difficulty, and the cutter was allowed to go in unmolested.

The intelligence brought back by the cutter party was not encouraging. Taewha was now the only island in the area still in friendly hands, and the situation there was desperate. The garrison consisted of some 750 guerillas without automatic weapons, with very little ammunition, and food enough for only ten days. The enemy was pressing hard; troops were occupying all the nearby islands, and the guerilla detachments there were being mopped up or had fled. Even the small islets of Pagun-do and

Sohwa-do, a scant half mile from the north shore of Taewha, were said to be in enemy hands.

Rather than remain on the defensive watching for invasion craft, Commander Plomer decided to let the enemy know that the United Nations navy was in the vicinity. Creeping up as quietly as possible to within 1,200 yards of Tan-do and Ka-do, two of the larger islands to the north, *Cayuga* lay quietly for several hours to lull the enemy into a false sense of security. Then at 0345 she opened up with all she had, plastering the troop concentrations reported by the guerillas with 268 rounds of 4-inch. The enemy reply was slow in coming, but at last searchlights began to sweep and flak to burst in the area well to the north of the ship's targets. Shortly thereafter the enemy realized that he was dealing not with planes but with a ship, and heavy flak began to burst low over the water some three miles astern of *Cayuga*. That, fortunately, was as close as the enemy gun-fire got to the ship, and *Cayuga* was never in any danger as she turned and retired, still firing from her stern mounting, to make for Pengyongdo. After reporting to *Belfast* and dropping her passengers, *Cayuga* returned to the command of CTE 95.11 at 0952 on 9 November.

Shortly before *Cayuga* arrived at Pengyong-do, Commander King of *Athabaskan* had gone on board *Belfast* to discuss future operations. It was the consensus in TE 95.12 that Taewha-do, under the existing circumstances, was indefensible and that the island should either be heavily reinforced or else evacuated. But since the higher command had not decided what should be done about Taewha, all CTE 95.12 could do was to arrange to keep one or two ships near the island during the hours of darkness in the hope that any enemy invasion force would be caught and destroyed before it reached its destination. This was a slim hope; shoal water and the danger of mines prevented a ship from covering closely the narrow channel between Taewha and Sohwa, and even the highly efficient HDWS Sperry radar of the Canadian destroyers could not be depended upon to pick up small boats drifting down on the tide to Taewha. Furthermore, spotting the boats by radar was not enough; a wooden junk or sampan is not a very vulnerable target and will take a great deal of punishment even from modern, high-explosive shells before sinking. Should any of the well-trained, armed and disciplined Chinese troops get ashore, it seemed likely that they would soon dispose of their guerilla opponents.

In the hope of disrupting enemy invasion plans, CTE 95.12 decided to send *Athabaskan* and bring his own ship, *Belfast*, north to bombard the islands near Taewha

during the night of 9/10 November. During the day, *Athabaskan*, who was responsible still for the Chodo—Sok-to area but who had lately been neglecting it because of the Taewha crisis, had more than enough to do conferring with the *Leopard* and *Salamander* agents on these islands and planning and issuing the orders for future operations to the ROKN minesweepers in the northern *Cigarette* channel. Shortly after dark, after taking care of her more urgent tasks, *Athabaskan* picked up from Chodo a British Army intelligence officer, Captain Adams-Acton, and her own Medical Officer who had been ashore treating wounded guerillas, and set off for Taewha.

Everything went as planned. *Athabaskan* arrived off Taewha, spoke with the guerilla leader, and then, when *Belfast* joined, the two ships proceeded to “work over” Tan-do and Ka-do with high explosive. As had happened during *Cayuga*’s bombardment the night before, the enemy reacted with a fine display of flak and searchlights over the mainland and the more northerly islands, causing *Belfast* to remark: “It appears that we have been mistaken for a couple of B-29’s.” Both ships set course back to Pengyong-do before daylight.

Shortly after arrival of the ships at the headquarters island there was another conference. A new *Leopard* had just taken over at Pengyong-do, and this officer decided to make an attempt to hold Taewha with the available guerilla force. To that end he proposed to return his agent, Lieutenant Allan, and his staff to the island to organize the defence, and *Athabaskan* was assigned the task of transporting the party.

This transport mission was a job for the dark hours, but during the daylight hours of 10 November *Athabaskan* was not unemployed. She set out at 0945 along the *Cigarette* channel, firing at targets of opportunity along the mainland coast. On the day before, Lieutenant Beaudette on Sok-to had requested *Athabaskan*’s help in eliminating a battery on the Wolsari Peninsula<sup>9</sup> which was troubling his garrison. With the Lieutenant spotting from a high hill on Sok-to, the ship moved in to within some three miles of the target and saturated it with 4-inch. Following the bombardment, *Athabaskan* sailed to give the ROK minesweepers based on Chodo their assignments for the next day.

*Athabaskan* returned to Pengyong-do towards the end of the afternoon to embark passengers and supplies for Taewha. Lieutenant Allan and his *Leopard* party came on board accompanied by the *Leopard* himself who wished to see at first hand what conditions were like on the island. When the ship approached Taewha that night a jittery guerilla, even braver than the one who two nights before had engaged *Cayuga*’s motor cutter, opened fire with his rifle on the destroyer

herself. The chief *Leopard* was not at all pleased at this display of initiative by one of his men, and his personal interpreter let loose on the unfortunate radio operators on the island a stream of language which sounded so colourful that the ship’s officers keenly regretted their inability to understand the Korean language.

Shortly after the rifle fire ceased, the island’s guerilla leader and a civilian “special agent” came alongside in a motor junk. After a conference on board concerning *Athabaskan*’s bombardment targets for the night, these men left, taking with them the *Leopards* and the arms and supplies brought by the ship. During the night *Athabaskan* carried out her now-familiar task of shelling Tan-do and Ka-do before returning to Pengyong-do.

It had been decided to give *Athabaskan* relief for one night from her usual Taewha patrol mission, so on arrival at the headquarters island the Commanding Officer and Navigator went aboard the relieving ship, the frigate HMS *Whitesand Bay*, to brief her on the situation. Most of the afternoon was spent in refuelling from *Belfast* and the remainder of the day in carrying out numerous routine missions connected with the Chodo—Sok-to patrol. That night, the night of 11/12 November, was spent quietly at anchor off Chodo; it was a welcome respite.

*Athabaskan* had been instructed to turn over command of the Chodo—Sok-to patrol to *Whitesand Bay* when the latter returned from Taewha, and this was done on the morning of the 12th. *Whitesand Bay* had brought back *Leopard* from his inspection tour, and he transferred to *Athabaskan* for passage back to Pengyong-do.

Now that the frigate had taken over the duties of the Chodo patrol, *Athabaskan* had a fairly easy time of it for the next two days. She still had the nightly Taewha patrol to attend to however, and the nights of 12/13 and 13/14 November were spent in Yalu Gulf. The shelling of Tan-do and Ka-do which by now had become a routine task for *Athabaskan* was carried out on both nights, and the ship was pleased to learn from the Taewha guerillas that agents who had managed to get ashore on Ka-do reported that the frequent shelling had forced the dispersal of the enemy troops into small groups living here and there all over the island. On completion of her Taewha patrol on the morning of 14 November, *Athabaskan* was transferred to TE 95.11. She remained with the carrier force for eight uneventful days before putting into Sasebo on the 23rd to replenish.

For part of the time that *Athabaskan* was absent from TE 95.12, *Cayuga* represented the RCN on the blockade patrol. *Cayuga* joined the element on the morning of 19 November when she made contact off Inchon with *Ceylon*, who had replaced *Belfast* as CTE.



Before steaming north to her patrol area *Cayuga* fuelled from *Wave Chief*, an evolution that almost ended in tragedy, when Alice, the ship's dog, whose seniority dated back to July 1950 when she was picked up at Guam, fell overboard between the tanker and the ship. Alice might well have been crushed between the two ships or even drowned, but she was no novice, having fallen overboard twice before, and she was quickly rescued. It was remarked that the pipe "Dog overboard!" evoked an even quicker response than the sounding of "Action stations!"

*Cayuga's* assignment for the first few days with TE 95.12 was to make the nightly Taewha patrol. The first night, that of 19/20 November, was uneventful, as *Cayuga* was occupied in transferring various passengers between the ship and the island and in conferring with the local authorities. On the second night, however, (20/21 November) a special bombardment was arranged. The target chosen was Uri-do, a small island some seven miles north-east of Taewha which was said to be harbouring enemy troops and junks. The *Leopard* agents on Taewha, Lieutenant Allan, and his new assistant, Lieutenant Kessering, U.S. Army, set sail in their rheumatic, old motor junk, the capital ship of what was known locally as the *Royal Taewhadian Navy*, and crept close inshore of Uri-do to direct *Cayuga's* fire. The *Leopard's* R/T set was not working well that night, and after *Cayuga* had dropped six rounds on a reported junk concentration communications broke down completely, and the bombardment had to be cancelled.

Next day while *Cayuga* was lying alongside a catamaran at Pengyong-do, two rivets gave way near the water-line, causing a leak in a fuel tank. Unfortunately one of the rivets did not break off cleanly, and it proved impossible to plug the hole completely. Thereafter, for the remainder of her patrol, *Cayuga* left a well-defined trail of oil in her wake.

That afternoon while en route to Taewha *Cayuga* ran into foul weather in the vicinity of Chodo. The incident serves as a good illustration of the kind of weather the ships sometimes met with in the Yellow Sea. She was steaming ahead at a fair clip, the weather fine with a slight breeze blowing. Suddenly she struck a "cold front;" in three minutes the temperature dropped fourteen degrees, and the wind rose to gale strength. Steadily the gale worsened, until it became obvious that it would be very risky to attempt to navigate the confined waters off Taewha-do in such a blow. Fortunately any gale that made the waters around Taewha dangerous for *Cayuga* would make them completely impassable for an invasion fleet of enemy junks, so the destroyer had no qualms about cancelling the night's patrol. It was the right decision

to make, for by midnight the wind had reached such force that it was necessary to heave to.

*Cayuga* spent the next two days quietly in the Chodo area. The night of 23/24 November she was out on patrol north of the 39th again, not off Taewha this time but as radar picket guarding against surprise attack on the carrier to the south. As usual nothing happened on this *Bugatti* patrol, as it was called, and *Cayuga* returned in the morning to Chodo. *Cayuga*, on arrival off Chodo, found the New Zealand frigates *Hawea* and *Taupo* at anchor near the northern tip of the island. *Cayuga* closed and discovered from them that the *Donkey* on Sok-to, Lieutenant Beaudette, was planning to make a guerilla landing on the mainland and would welcome naval assistance. The ship therefore sailed to Sok-to and offered her services. Arrangements were quickly made and a radio relay system organized by which the guerillas ashore could transmit their calls for fire support to the Sok-to garrison which would then relay the calls to *Cayuga* by voice radio. The objective of the raid was a recently-placed battery of 76's on the Wolsa-ri Peninsula which, if allowed to remain undisturbed, could dominate the *Cigarette* route and seriously hamper naval operations in the area.

The guerillas landed without opposition and pushed rapidly inland. The first call for fire came at 1410 as the invaders encountered the forward enemy defences. The destroyer's guns helped break this defensive position and the guerillas forged on. All told seven calls for fire support were answered by *Cayuga* before 1630, when she had to leave the area to make ready for her night mission to Taewha. The guerillas by this time had penetrated four miles inland, almost to the battery, but resistance was stiffening. *Cayuga's* fire support duties were taken over by *Hawea*, but as the frigate had only one 4-inch gun Commander Plomer suggested that it might be safer for the guerillas to withdraw before the opposition became too heavy. This advice, it was later learned, was taken by Lieutenant Beaudette, and the guerillas retired in good order but without reaching their objective.

Upon leaving Sok-to *Cayuga* took under her orders the U.S. destroyer escort *Edmonds*, who had recently arrived in the area, and the two ships set out through a driving snow storm for Taewha. There, yet another guerilla operation was being planned, an harassing attack on the enemy on Ka-do, and the two destroyers took over the task of providing gun-fire support. The operation was controlled by Taewha's two *Donkey* agents from a position ashore on the small islet of Hoedo. Actually *Cayuga* and *Edmonds* were not called upon for much support, the most difficult part of their

task being the intricate sand-bar dodging required to get into position to provide it. Fire was called for only when the guerillas were landing, when star-shell was required and again when the raiders were withdrawing, whereupon the two ships fired a 70-round covering barrage. *Edmonds* was detached at 0400 to proceed south, but *Cayuga* remained until the guerillas were safely on their way back to Taewha. The *Donkey* reported that the operation had been a success and that one prisoner had been taken. As it was now almost dawn *Cayuga* was unable to embark the prisoner for passage to *Leopard* headquarters on Pengyong-do.

*Cayuga* rejoined *Edmonds* that morning off Chodo, and after spending an hour briefing her on the local situation—for *Edmonds* was to relieve her—she continued southward to Pengyong-do. There she reported to the CIE 95.12 in *Ceylon* and then set course for Sasebo where she arrived late on 26 November.

While her two colleagues had been harrying the enemy on the west coast, *Sioux* had not spent the month in idleness. She had served only three uneventful days with TE 95.12 at the beginning of the month before going on carrier work, but she was to find the last two weeks of November somewhat more interesting. On 18 November she sailed with a special task group (TG 95.8) from Sasebo to take part in a combined aerial and gun bombardment against the east coast port of Hungnam. The force consisted of HMS *Belfast* (flying the flag of CTG 95.1, Rear-Admiral A. K. Scott-Moncrieff), the Australian carrier *Sydney* and the destroyers HMS *Constance*, H. Neth. M. S. *Van Galen* and HMCS *Sioux*, who were joined later by HMAS *Tobruk* and two LSMR's of the United States Navy. When it neared the operational area, the group split up into a carrier element and a gun-fire element which for two days, 20 and 21 November, pounded Hungnam with bombs, shells and rockets. *Sioux* drew a carrier assignment, screening *Sydney* out at sea, and consequently had a much duller time of it than the destroyers of the gun-fire element.

*Sioux* had recently been performing a good deal of carrier screening work, and everyone aboard was pleased when after the Hungnam striking force dispersed on the evening of the 21st the ship was placed under the orders of CTG 95.2 for service on the east coast. She remained with TG 95.2 until 28 November, serving with both the Wonsan-Hungnam and the Songjin-Chongjin patrol elements. Some of her time was spent on the so-called "fly catcher patrol," designed to prevent the North Koreans from fishing—and surreptitiously laying mines—in the blockade area, but most of the time she was engaged in disrupting the enemy's communications. During the

week she patrolled there, she fired almost 400 rounds of 4.7-inch at a great variety of positions, chiefly road and rail targets, along the north-east coast. Despite all this gunnery activity not much of interest occurred on the patrol; in fact it was, in the words of the Commanding Officer, "on the whole . . . a rather dull routine patrol."<sup>10</sup> *Sioux* was relieved on the 28th and arrived back at Kure on 30 November.

When *Cayuga* left TE 95.12 on 25 November, *Athabaskan* was just sailing from Sasebo to take her place. *Athabaskan* reported to *Ceylon* at Pengyong-do on the morning of 27 November and was ordered to assume responsibility for the Chodo—Sok-to area from HMNZS *Hawea*. USS *Edmonds* who had served with *Hawea* was to remain there under *Athabaskan*'s orders. After receiving turn-over notes, minesweeping charts and other such data, and after conferring with *Hawea*'s Commanding Officer and the CTE in *Ceylon*, *Athabaskan* made for Chodo.

Intelligence reports indicated that the enemy was preparing for an early attack on the islands, so Commander King planned to dispose his ships to cover the possible invasion routes, with *Edmonds* near the southeastern end of Chodo and *Athabaskan* to the north-east of Sok-to. As *Athabaskan* headed north to take up her position, she found on leaving the shelter of Chodo that a strong wind was blowing from the north-west, whipping up a sea that would make an enemy invasion attempt impossible. She therefore reversed course to get to leeward of Chodo again and anchored. It was then discovered that one of the ship's company, Able Seaman Robin J. Skavberg, was missing. He had been seen on the upper deck only about an hour before, and it seemed likely that he had been swept overboard during *Athabaskan*'s short dash to the northward. The heavy seas and the vicious currents caused by a fast ebbing tide made it very unlikely that he could have survived, but the ship weighed and searched the channel, using her searchlights and large signal projector in defiant disregard of the enemy shore batteries on Amgak. But it was a hopeless task, and the ship had to abandon the search and return to anchor. The man was never seen again.

On the following day, the 28th, *Athabaskan* and *Edmonds* bombarded two targets at the request of Lieutenant Beaudette of Sok-to. With the assistance of a spotter ashore on Ung-do, *Athabaskan* dropped 64 rounds of 4-inch on an observation post and troop position on Wolsa-ri Peninsula, while *Edmonds* plastered a gun emplacement in the same area with 48 rounds from her 5-inch guns. The remainder of the day was spent in preparation for the turn-over from *Athabaskan* to *Edmonds* scheduled for the morning.

The strong north-westerly was still blowing that night, so both ships remained at anchor in the lee of Chodo.

*Athabaskan* left Chodo early on the morning of 29 November to join the carrier element with which she served for the next two days. On the evening of 30 November *Athabaskan* was en route from fuelling at Inchon and proceeding to the *Bugatti* patrol area near the 39th parallel to act as the early radar warning picket for the carrier when she intercepted a “Flash” message from HMS *Cockade* to the CTE 95.12 which revealed that Taewha was being invaded. Anticipating the order he knew would arrive, Commander King increased speed to 30 knots and set course straight for Taewha.

*Cockade* had been on the regular Taewha patrol when the invasion began. Unfortunately she was not equipped with the HDWS Sperry-type radar fitted in the Canadian destroyers, and she did not detect the invasion force of junks and rubber boats until the first waves had reached the beaches. *Cockade* opened fire, sank one junk, probably sank another, and damaged several, but the enemy batteries on Ka-do now got the range and repeatedly straddled the destroyer, securing one hit. The shell killed one seaman but did only superficial damage to the ship. *Cockade*, however, could not take the risk of being disabled among the sand banks off Taewha where in the morning she would be a sitting target exposed to shore battery fire and the bombs and cannon of the Chinese planes stationed only a few miles away. In any case it was now too late for her to take any effective action; the enemy had got ashore and apparently had quickly overrun the defences, for early in the action the Taewha garrison’s radio went off the air. Consequently she withdrew to the south to await reinforcements.

At 0425 on the morning of 1 December *Athabaskan* sighted *Cockade*, and on the orders of *Ceylon* the two ships remained below the 39th parallel to await the arrival of air cover which was to be provided by jets of the 5th U.S. Air Force. *Ceylon* arrived under air cover from the carrier *Sydney* at 0650, and a few moments later the jet CAP\* arrived. *Athabaskan* now made for Taewha under instructions from *Ceylon* to “Make a quick dash north. Do not linger, but if you can collect any useful evacuees, do so.”<sup>11</sup> The jet CAP accompanied her and remained overhead guarding against enemy air attack throughout the operation. *Ceylon*, too large a ship to hazard among the shallows off Taewha, and *Cockade*, suffering from a mechanical defect which reduced her top speed to 17 knots, remained below the 39th ready to lend aid in any emergency.

\*Combat Air patrol.

On passage to Taewha, *Athabaskan* sighted many junks making their way south to safety. Some were stopped for questioning, but the ship had no interpreter aboard and was unable to learn from the occupants, all guerillas and their dependants, what had happened to the UN personnel on the island.<sup>12</sup> About six miles from the island the ship came upon what were obviously the remains of the *Royal Taewhadian Navy*, the rickety old motor junk which had done such yeoman service among the northern islands, floating bows up among a mass of debris. There were no signs of survivors; a few military packs fished out proved to be the standard packs carried by most South Korean guerillas.

East of Taewha are four small islets, and *Athabaskan* steamed in and anchored in the lee of the most easterly of these. From the ship, Taewha appeared a scene of confusion and disaster; fires burned everywhere; muffled explosions and the crackle of small-arms’ fire provided grim evidence that the last, desperate survivors of the trapped garrison had not yet been wiped out; small bands of troops could be seen roaming around, apparently combing the island for fugitives. One of these roving bands had the temerity to engage *Athabaskan* with a machine-gun and received four rounds of high explosive for its pains. A motor junk was sighted to the north of Taewha and was engaged with 4-inch guns and Bofors; several hits were scored and the junk set on fire.

When approaching the island, *Athabaskan* had sighted two persons ashore on the small islets east of Taewha, one on Taejongjok-to and the other on Sojongjok-to, and both had waved frantically to the ship as if calling for help. The one on Sojongjok had a small skiff near him on the beach, and Commander King decided to shift berth nearer to the islet to enable him to come alongside more quickly. It was intended to lower the motor cutter to pick up the other castaway. But while *Athabaskan* was shifting berth, an enemy battery whose location could not be spotted began to drop shells astern the ship. The enemy guns were very inaccurate at first, the shells falling some 700 to 1,000 yards away, but just after the Korean refugee had come aboard from his skiff, a Communist gunner found the range and the ship was straddled. Under the circumstances it was considered unwise to attempt to send the motor cutter in to Taejongjok to pick up the refugee; in fact it was time to “execute that classic naval manmover known as ‘getting the hell out of there’.”

*Athabaskan* returned to Pengyong-do in the afternoon, conferred with the CTE in *Ceylon* and received permission from him to return to Taewha that night to



Fires are started by *Athabaskan's* bombardment of a Red-held west-coast island.

search for survivors. So after fuelling from *Ceylon* the destroyer set course northward again.

No intelligence of any kind about the situation on Taewha was available, and it was therefore considered dangerous to bring the ship in too close to shore. It was planned instead to send out a motor cutter with a well-armed party to reconnoitre the islets in the hope of finding survivors who had managed to escape from the main island. Just after midnight on 2 December, *Athabaskan* came to anchor one mile south-east of Sojongjok-to. All had been prepared during the passage north, and the cutter, carrying an armed party of six led by Lieutenant-Commander C. A. Hamer, RCN(R), was quickly lowered and sent in.

*Athabaskan's* efforts did not meet with the success they deserved. The cutter cruised for two hours along the shore-lines, its occupants shouting loudly at intervals to attract attention. But there was no response—not even a burst of machine-gun fire—and as *Athabaskan* had other duties to attend to, the boat was recalled at 0200. Shortly thereafter the ship weighed and set course to rejoin the carrier element.

The fall of Taewha, though it should have come as no surprise, caused a furor in Tokyo and Sasebo. The UN-held islands north of the 38th were at this time one of the important items on the agenda at Panmunjom, and the more of them that fell to the Communists the weaker would be the bargaining position of the UN delegates. The result was that the high command became very “island conscious” and ordered that every precaution be taken against a repetition of the Taewha affair.\*

\*In early December 1951, on direct orders from Tokyo headquarters, island defence was given first priority on the west coast, taking precedence over all other missions, including blockade, and ships on island defence were given first call on the services of the carrier planes of TE 95.11.

But there was really very little that TE 95.12 could do to prevent further enemy successes. It is one thing to break up a large-scale amphibious landing, but it is quite another to intercept and destroy a sneak raiding force of tiny, wooden craft, practically indestructible by gun-fire, that has only a mile or so of water to cross. It would have taken ten times the number of ships available in TE 95.12 to throw an unbreakable ring around every threatened island. The obvious solution to the problem was to place adequate garrisons on the islands;<sup>13</sup> for if an enemy landing force could be contained for but a few hours, until the arrival of a naval force and carrier planes, its annihilation would be a relatively simple task. Such a plan would of course take some time to implement, and something had to be done quickly for there were many signs that Chodo and Sok-to were next on the Communists' list.

There was little CTE 95.12 could do on the spur of the moment except gather together all ships at his disposal and despatch them to the threatened area. One of the lessons learned at Taewha was that a ship on anti-invasion patrol required the very best of radar equipment in order to spot the small craft used by the Communists for such operations.\* Of the destroyers and frigates on the west coast, only the Canadian ships had such a radar, their HDWS Sperry, which time and again had proved its superiority. CTE 95.12 therefore decided that when it was at all possible at least one Canadian destroyer should be on duty in the Chodo—Sok-to area. *Cayuga* had reported to the carrier screen of *Rendova* on the evening of 30 November while the invasion of Taewha was taking place. Next day the CTE 95.12 made a “deal” with CTE 95.11 by which the carrier would get the services of the destroyer escort *Edmonds* and in return release *Cayuga* for service with the inshore patrol.

*Cayuga*, not at all displeased at her change in employment, detached from the carrier on the evening of 1 December and steamed with all despatch to Chodo. She spent the night at anchor off the island undisturbed by the enemy. A diesel launch manned by ROK's arrived from Chodo early the next morning, with the request that *Cayuga* assist in the evacuation of a guerilla force ashore in the Moa'kin area north of Choppeki Point. Taking two of the launch's occupants aboard, *Cayuga* set out to rescue the guerillas, but when she arrived in the designated area she found herself in the position of the missionary on the cannibal island—there was no one there who wanted to be

\*All the Canadian destroyers regretted that they had not been on duty off Taewha on the night of the invasion. It is not likely that they would have affected the final outcome, but it is probable that because of their more efficient radar they would have inflicted heavier casualties on the landing force.

saved. There were guerillas ashore, to be sure, but they had no intentions of leaving. Their junks were drawn up on the beach, and two Korean PC's\* were standing by to render assistance should it be necessary. *Cayuga* therefore returned to Chodo.

*Cayuga* remained in the Chodo—Sok-to area until 6 December, taking an active and important part in the organization of the naval defence of the islands. These two were the most vulnerable of the important islands and naturally received the most attention. Three and sometimes four frigates and destroyers formed the backbone of the naval defences which included, whenever possible, at least one Canadian destroyer. The ships were stationed so that they could cover with their radar and their guns the most likely invasion routes. Several ROKN patrol craft and minesweepers supplemented this force. These were usually placed between the islands and the mainland where they could give early warning of the approach of an invasion fleet if for some reason or other the radar of the larger ships failed to detect it, and they were also of great value for conducting operations in waters too shallow for a frigate or destroyer. Often a ROKN craft was assigned to serve with a particular UN ship, and usually this ship would put a party on board to assist the ROK's. The Chodo—Sok-to forces were later augmented by a fleet of four landing craft<sup>14</sup> operating from the U.S. destroyer-transport *Horace A. Bass*. Later still, two LSMR's were brought in to add to the fire power of the force.

The carrier planes of TE 95.11 also played an important part in the defence of the islands. They provided air cover during the day, carried out strikes on important targets on the mainland to disrupt the enemy's invasion preparations, conducted early-morning and late-evening reconnaissance flights to seek out enemy junks concentrations and acted as spotters for naval bombardments. The heavy bombers of the Fifth U.S. Air Force contributed their bit by powerful strikes against the invasion areas.

Steps were also taken to strengthen the land defences of the threatened islands. Mortars and machine guns, and later Bofors and Oerlikons, were set up to cover the landing beaches. After the navy had ferried in enough arms and ammunition, the chief difficulty in organizing the defence was that of man-power; there were not enough ROK regulars on the islands, and the guerillas, unused to discipline and familiar only with hit-and-run offensive tactics, were not ideal troops for garrison duties. This man-power problem was later partially solved by bringing in more ROK regulars, but there were never enough of them. A new organization was

set up with headquarters on Pengyong-do and with relatively strong detachments on all the major islands.<sup>15</sup> The old *Leopold* raiding and intelligence organization continued to exist side by side with, but subordinate to, the new island defence force, and this simplified somewhat the problem of co-ordinating the activities of the naval forces, the guerillas and the ROK garrison troops. The smaller intelligence organizations, some with their own private "armies," continued to operate independently, however, and sternly rejected any offers of co-operation that would mean the disclosure of their current plans to an "outside" organization. Similarly there was seldom really close co-operation on the west coast islands between the navy, marines and army groups on the one side and the U.S. Air Force groups on the other.

Task Element 95.12 also revised its organization to deal more effectively with the Communist threat to the islands. The Chodo—Sok-to force which has been described above was by far the strongest and was later designated as TU 95.12.1. Its CTU was usually the commanding officer of one of the RN destroyers or *Bay* Class frigates. Task Units were subsequently organized to defend the other major islands: TU 95.12.2 for Pengyong-do; TU 95.12.3 for the Han River islands; and TU 95.12.4 for Yonpyong-do. The ships of CANDESFE were to see service with most of these units in the ensuing months.

*Cayuga* was the first Canadian ship to operate in the Chodo area under the new dispensation, and she spent a hectic week after her arrival on 1 December performing a great variety of duties connected with the organization of the new defensive measures. Fortunately the enemy made no attempt to disrupt these preparations, and it was not long before all measures were in hand to give any invading force a very rough time. When *Cayuga* left Chodo on 7 December to join the carrier element, the enemy was still quiet; even the formerly-aggressive Amgak batteries appeared to be intimidated by the display of UN naval and air power and remained discreetly silent.

When *Cayuga* left TE 95.12, her place with the Chodo defence force was taken by *Athabaskan*. The latter found that conditions there had changed greatly since her last patrol, for when she arrived off Chodo on the morning of 7 December there were HM Ships *Mounts Bay*, *Whitesand Bay* and *Constance*, and U.S. destroyer escort *Edmonds*, as well as numerous ROKN craft. *Swanny Force* arrived to augment this formidable assembly on the evening of the 8th.

*Athabaskan* was also to find that conditions were quieter than they had been during her last Chodo patrol. She would lie at anchor at night in her assigned

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\*PC is the USN designation for its 170-foot Submarine Chaser.



Scanning hostile shores from *Nootka*.

position watching with her radar for enemy invasion craft, occasionally firing star-shell to illuminate the more important invasion routes, and now and again throwing the odd round of 4-inch to harass the mainlanders. During the day there was sometimes little to do; with so many ships available there were often not enough important targets to go around. *Athabaskan* managed to find some work for her gunners however, and during the patrol about 250 rounds from the main armament were fired at various targets on Amgak and Wolsa-ri Peninsula. She also spent a very busy day on 9 December helping ROK naval vessels evacuate non-combatants from Chodo. *Athabaskan* turned over her duties to the Netherlands destroyer *Van Galen* on the following day and made for Pengyong-do to report to *Ceylon* before leaving for Sasebo. At the island when *Athabaskan* arrived was *Sioux* who was en route to replace her as the HDWS-equipped destroyer in the Chodo area.

*Sioux* had not served with the inshore patrol for over five weeks, and much of this time she had been on carrier screening duty. Her company therefore looked forward with enthusiasm to a few days of interesting work frustrating the enemy's designs on the western islands. They were not to be disappointed. *Sioux* arrived in the Chodo area on 11 December and took over responsibility for the position in the southeastern approaches to Sok-to from which her radar could cover the most likely invasion routes between that island and the closest points on the mainland, Amgak and Pip'a-got.<sup>16</sup> A ROK naval vessel (*JML-309*)<sup>17</sup> was placed under *Sioux's* orders, and an armed party from the destroyer was put aboard her for liaison duties and to assist the navigation and communications departments. The ROKN vessel was very useful for patrolling shallow waters not accessible to the destroyer, for intercepting suspicious craft detected by *Sioux's* radar and as an insurance against radar failure.

The first few nights of *Sioux's* patrol were quite uneventful, and when she took up her usual station on

the evening of 15 December there was no indication that the coming night would be any different. Star-shell was used to illuminate the waters between Sok-to and the mainland until the moon came up, and then the ship turned her attention to harassing mainland mortar batteries.

Less than three miles south-east of Sok-to, in the bay between Amgak and the Wolsari Peninsula, are the tiny islands of Chongyang-do and Ung-do.\* They lie only a few hundred yards from the nearest point on the mainland and, in fact, at low tide when the mudflats between are exposed, actually become a part of the mainland. These islands were in friendly hands at this time, but their guerilla garrisons were not in an enviable position. An enemy attack was considered imminent, and should the Communists decide to attack in force across the mud flats at low tide there was little likelihood that the defenders, even with gun-fire support from the ships, would be able to hold them.

The enemy chose the night of 15/16 December when *Sioux* was on duty guarding Sok-to to make his major attack on the small islands. *Sioux* was informed at about 0345 that enemy mortars were firing on Chongyang-do and Ung-do, and a few moments later word came that Red troops were sloshing over the mudflats to attack. The destroyer at once opened fire, using star-shell to illuminate the flats and HEDA to try to break up the attacking formations. The star-shell was of great value to the defenders, but as communications were disorganized and *Sioux* was firing blindly, the main bombardment was not so effective as it would have been had there been a spotter to control the fire. No information was reaching the ship from the islands, and when dawn came there were no signs of activity on either one. There was however no way for *Sioux* to know whether this inactivity meant that the attacks had been repulsed or whether it meant that all the defenders had been wiped out.

During the action *Sioux* had moved up into the channel east of Sok-to to get into a better position to illuminate the mudflats, but her new anchorage was in full view of the batteries of Amgak, so shortly after daylight she retired southward. A boat went to Sok-to to secure information about the situation on Chongyang-do and Ung-do from the Donkey. The Sok-to command knew little about what had happened, so *Sioux*, after returning to what was her usual night anchorage, put an armed party of five under Sub-Lieutenant A. A. T. Henley, RCN, aboard *JML-301* and sent her in to reconnoitre. The *JML* found that Ung-do, the larger of the islands, was still in friendly hands but that Chongyang-do had fallen during the night. During

\*See above, pp. 60, 61.



Canadian sailors from *Sioux* chat with ROK's in a Korean patrol vessel.



*Sioux* lays a smoke screen during operations off the west coast of Korea.

the morning and early afternoon she made two trips to the former, bringing off non-combatant refugees and wounded guerillas who were taken aboard *Sioux*.

When, at about noon, the events of the night before had been sorted out and the fall of Chongyang confirmed, the CTU 95.12.1 and leaders on Sok-to decided to counter-attack at once. Troops from the Sok-to garrison would make the assault in junks and small ROKN vessels, supported by the guns of TU 95.12.1 and of *Ceylon*. Plans were quickly made, and the preliminary bombardment by the ships began at 1445. HMS *Constance*, one of the bombardment force, was lying to the north-east of *Sioux* in the channel between Sok-to and the mainland, and as soon as she opened up she came under heavy and accurate fire from the 105's on Amgak. She retired quickly, but not before suffering a hit that blew a hole two feet in diameter in her plating above the water-line but caused no casualties. The ships kept up their fire on Chongyang until 1600, covering it thoroughly with high explosive, but because of the activity of the Amgak batteries the main assault was put off until after nightfall.

*JML-301* came alongside *Sioux* at 1630, again with more wounded. During the afternoon the ROK craft had been operating off Ung-do, whose guerilla garrison had launched an independent assault on Chongyang during the bombardment. The ROK minesweeper *AMS-512* arrived at 1730 and took off the non-combatant refugees and some of the lightly wounded from *Sioux* for transfer to Chodo, but the more seriously wounded were retained on board the destroyer for treatment in the sick bay.

Fire was opened again on Chongyang-do at 1800 to prepare for the postponed assault, now scheduled for

1830. This time the landing was more successful, and the attackers secured a foothold on the island. After 1830, when fire was lifted to allow the assault party to go in, *Sioux* turned her guns on the mainland mortar batteries on Wolsari, subjecting them to slow harassing fire. The ship was so engaged when at 2207 an urgent call came from the Sok-to garrison saying that the enemy was assaulting the northern end of the island. *Sioux*, followed by *Constance*, at once set off northward, firing star-shell and rockets to illuminate the channel between northern Sok-to and Amgak. It soon became apparent that these waters were completely clear of traffic, and eventually Sokto, where there was obviously quite a bit of confusion, reported that the invasion warning had been a false alarm.

Whether planned or accidental, the Sok-to invasion alarm served as a diversion for another attack on Ung-do. This attack came as rather a surprise, for unlike the others, which had been made at low water across the mudflats, this one was made at high water by troops ferried over in junks. Fortunately *JML-301* was on hand and, thanks to the illumination provided by *Sioux* and *Constance*, was able to sink one junk and possibly sink another, thereby making a substantial contribution to the defeat of the invaders. Fortunately, too, the Ung-do guerillas had intelligent and aggressive leadership, and no sooner had the invaders been beaten back when junks and small boats were launched to carry out a counter-attack on Chongyang-do. That island was once again in friendly hands by midnight. *JML-301* provided close support for the counter-attack, and *Sioux* assisted by putting down fire on two enemy mortar batteries bombarding the friendly forces. The JML later reported

that one of the mortar positions had been silenced and the volume of fire from the other considerably reduced by *Sioux's* bombardment.

The ebbing tide forced *JML-301* to leave the vicinity of Ung-do, and she returned to the destroyer at 0230 (17 December) bringing more wounded for treatment. The JML had been fighting hard; her company and *Sioux's* armed party were very tired, and the little vessel's ammunition was almost exhausted. Although the enemy was expected to attack across the mudflats again at low water, the JML would not be able to get close enough inshore to render much assistance, and she therefore remained alongside *Sioux* for the night taking on ammunition and resting her personnel. The enemy attack came at 0300, as expected, and *Sioux* went into action again, illuminating the danger area and pounding the mudflats and the mortar batteries with high explosive until 0645 when the rising tide had covered the flats. Although *Sioux* did not know it when she left the area that morning at 0815, the enemy attack had been too strong for the defenders, and Ung-do and Chongyang-do were now in Communist hands.

All of *Sioux's* passengers, most of them wounded guerillas from Ung-do, were transferred to *Ceylon* by boat at first light. After this operation was completed *IML-301* was detached, and *Sioux* weighed to join TE 95.11. For the remainder of the month her operational duties were confined to carrier screening.

For three nights after *Sioux's* departure from TU 95.12.1 there was no HDWS-equipped destroyer in the Chodo—Sok-to area, for *Cayuga* did not arrive there until 1745 on 20 December. After her arrival she took over *Sioux's* old post in the channel between southern Sok-to and Pip'a-got, a channel which became known as "The Slot," from where she provided star-shell illumination over the invasion routes and bombarded the enemy on the mainland and on Ungdo and Chongyang-do. The Slot was now becoming a rather dangerous area because of the deadly accuracy of the gunners of the Amgak batteries, and consequently the ship stationed there had to withdraw a little southward or westward during daylight or when there was bright moonlight.

Twice during this patrol, *Cayuga* gave the enemy a spectacular demonstration of radar-controlled gun fire. On the first occasion, the night of 21/22 December, the destroyer was stationed in the Slot when a small target, presumably a junk or some such vessel, showed up on the Sperry. The target was stemming the tide, apparently making for Chongyang-do, and the range was 5,000 yards when *Cayuga* opened fire. The splashes of the exploding 4-inch shells showed up clearly on the scan, and the echo made by the second salvo merged with that of the

target. Four more twogun salvos were fired just to make certain, and when fire was lifted the target echo had disappeared. *Cayuga* gave the enemy a repeat performance on Christmas Eve. This time the target did not disappear, but as it showed up on the scan as an echo one-fifth its original size drifting slowly seaward with the tide, *Cayuga's* gunners had good reason to believe that their fire had been effective. No illumination was employed on either occasion, and the effect on the enemy, particularly if any survivors got safely to shore, must have been most demoralizing.

But these gun-fire displays were merely two isolated incidents in a very busy patrol. Besides carrying out her normal duties of maintaining a nightly anti-invasion watch, providing star-shell illumination of the invasion routes, bombarding enemy positions and providing armed boarding parties for ROKN vessels, *Cayuga* engaged in many, so to speak, extra-curricular activities. For more than two days she served as CTU 95.12.1, and twice she acted as Headquarters Ship for the OTC\* in the area. On one of these occasions the Commanding Officer of HMS *Mounts Bay*, Captain J. B. Frewen, RN, was acting as CTE 95.12 in the absence of the cruiser and on the other he was the CTU 95.12.1; and as his frigate did not possess the specialist personnel and equipment carried by *Cayuga*, he took advantage of Commander Plomer's suggestion to transfer to the destroyer for the nights of 22/23 and 27/28 December. The arrangement was of great benefit to both the OTC and *Cayuga*, the former obtaining the use of better command facilities than his own ship possessed and *Cayuga* gaining experience of great value to her specialist staff and indeed to her entire company.<sup>18</sup>

But *Cayuga's* most interesting special assignment during this patrol was as the naval OTC for guerilla landings on Ung-do and Chongyang-do. Preparations for this operation, known as *Operation Cheerful*, began on 24 December, and Commander Plomer and his staff attended several planning conferences with the CTE 95.12 and with the guerillas on Sok-to to work out the details; for though *Cheerful* was to be only a fairly large-scale guerilla raid, every effort was made to ensure that the planning and execution, of the naval side of the operation at least, would be beyond reproach. The navy had of course no authority over nor responsibility for the guerillas; their part in the operation was in the hands of the *Leopard* organization on Sok-to and of the leader of the guerilla band involved.

The landings were planned for the evening of 27 December. That morning at 0715 *JML-302* (Lieutenant Pack Cyun Do, ROKN) came alongside to take on an

\*Officer in Tactical Command.



armed party from *Cayuga*. This was the ship that had been selected to serve as *Cayuga's* "strong right arm" during the landings—for a destroyer could not operate in the shallows near Ung-do and Chongyang-do—and she had the most important and certainly the most dangerous assignment of any vessel engaged in the operation, except that of the assault junks. *Cayuga's* armed party, led of course by Lieutenant Saxon,<sup>19</sup> was to assist chiefly with navigation and communications, but one of its members was an engineering specialist who was to help keep the motors running. The party took along extra automatic weapons for the ROK's, and two of *Cayuga's* able seamen spent a good part of the day in teaching their new colleagues how to use Brens and Lanchesters. Lieutenant Saxon's party spent most of the day preparing *JML-302* for the coming operation; this was not a difficult task as she had been well maintained; her Commanding Officer was an exceptionally able man; and her company was efficient and well trained. The JML returned at 1600 to join *Cayuga* in the Slot while waiting for the operation to begin.

The preliminary bombardment began at 1600 when *Belfast* opened up with her 6-inch guns on enemy strongholds on the two islands, the Fleet Gunnery Officer spotting the fall of shot from an observation post on Sok-to. *Belfast's* fire was augmented by that of the smaller ships; *Cayuga* herself fired 46 rounds of 4-inch in the preliminary bombardment. Captain Frewen, RN, the CTU 95.12.1, came aboard *Cayuga* at 1730 to make use of her facilities during the night, but Commander Plomer was left in full charge of the naval side of *Operation Cheerful* which had been organized for the purpose of recovering the two small islands of Chongyang-do and Ung-do that had fallen to the enemy on the night of 17/18 December during *Sioux's* last patrol in the Chodo area.\*

As soon as darkness fell, the final preparations for *Cheerful* began. *JML-302* headed for the southern harbour of Sok-to at 1800 and anchored close to the beach. A control party headed by the leader of the guerillas came aboard, bringing radio equipment with which to maintain contact between the guerillas ashore and the command post on Sok-to. The four junks that were to make the assault were taken in tow by the JML at 1855 and course set for the western tip of Chongyang-do where the first two junks were to go in.

All went well during the first half of the crossing, and good communications were established with *Cayuga* who was able to direct the JML with great precision by means of the Sperry radar. The assault junks appeared to be standing up well to the tow, but

when the landing force had almost reached its destination word was passed to the JML that one of the junks had sprung a leak and become unseaworthy. This was most unwelcome news as the plan had called for two junks to attack Chongyang-do and two, Ung-do; now the latter force would have to go in at little better than half strength. There was a short delay while most of the guerillas in the leaking junk were transferred to the remaining three; a few came aboard the JML.

At 1930, when *JML-302* was 200 yards from the invasion beach at Chongyang-do, the first two junks were slipped to make their way in. *Cayuga* at this time was saturating the beaches and the surrounding high ground with her 4-inch, but there was no sign of enemy activity. After slipping the junks *JML-302*, using a hand lead line because of the shallowness of the water, edged in to within a hundred yards of the shore. When *Cayuga* ceased fire all seemed quiet and peaceful on Chongyang; indeed it looked almost as if the enemy had departed and was going to allow the guerillas to reoccupy the island without bloodshed.

But the quiet was deceptive. The moment the first junk touched the sand the whole island seemed to erupt, and mortars, machine-guns, rifles and grenade throwers poured fire on the unfortunate guerillas. The very first mortar bomb scored a direct hit on the leading junk, killing five men and holing the craft badly. Some of the survivors scrambled ashore; others, demoralized by this unexpected reception, swam over to the remaining junk. *JML-302* immediately called for fire support from *Cayuga*, and the surviving junk was able to make the beach without suffering serious casualties.

While the Chongyang invaders were trying to consolidate a beachhead, *JML-302* made for Ung-do to slip the third junk. En route however it was decided that in view of the enemy strength on Chongyang it would be suicidal for a single junk load of guerillas to try to take an even larger and probably betterdefended island, so course was reversed to return to the original landing beach.

*JML-302* and the junk arrived back at the invasion beach at 2030. The guerillas there had managed to establish a small beachhead, but they were having a very rough time. The junk with *JML-302* unfortunately possessed radio equipment, and its occupants were fully informed about the situation and not at all anxious to share the difficulties of their colleagues ashore. Hence when she was slipped and told to go in under covering fire from the JML, the junk, instead of closing the beach, crept along the shore-line in a westerly direction, presumably with the intention of sneaking back to Sok-to. *JML-302* closed to try to herd the junk in towards the beach, but she was not to be persuaded

\*See above, page 80.

and crept in between the beach and the offshore rocks where her pursuer could not follow, ignoring the pleas of the guerilla commander in the JML. Intent on this game of tag, the JML soon found herself beyond the western tip of the island and within sight of the mainland, and immediately some 40-mm. guns on Wolsari opened up on her. *Cayuga* was informed at once, and before any damage had been done the guns were silenced.<sup>20</sup>

For Lieutenant Pack, the Commanding Officer of “-302, being fired on from Wolsari was the last straw. He leaped down from the bridge and began cuffing the guerilla leader vigorously about the ears, cursing him soundly for not having better control over his men. But even with this encouragement the poor guerilla leader was unable to convince his warriors to return to the invasion beach, and there was nothing for it but to allow the reluctant junk to withdraw.

It was by now all too obvious that the landing was a failure, and the guerillas ashore were told to retire in their one remaining junk. This they did, under heavy but very inaccurate fire, but seven men who had advanced too far were unable to get back and had to be abandoned to their fate. This advance party had a radio which it was ordered to destroy with hand grenades. It was not spelled out in a signal, but it was taken for granted by the surviving guerillas that their unfortunate comrades would use similar means to ensure that they would not fall alive into the hands of the North Koreans or Chinese.

With the two surviving junks safely on their way, *JML-302* withdrew at 2335 and made for Sok-to to disembark the guerilla leader and his control party. The JML came alongside *Cayuga* at 0900, and Lieutenant Saxon and his party returned aboard the ship for a well-earned rest. Whatever had happened during the night no blame could be attached to *JML-302* and those who manned her<sup>21</sup> They had done all in their power to make the operation a success; it had simply not been enough. The enemy had been too well prepared and had fought too well; the landing force had been too weak and too poorly trained and disciplined.

Considering the nature of the opposition, the casualties in *Operation Cheerful* were surprisingly light: five killed, seven missing (presumably dead) and twelve seriously wounded. Thus, although the operation had failed, it had not been a disastrous failure. Indeed there were grounds for suggesting that it

had accomplished something of value, for as Commander Plomer quite rightly pointed out: “As long as the enemy still has the fear of landings and assault, he has always to divert a large proportion of his forces to a purely defensive role as opposed to concentrating them all in the effort to capture Soku To and Choda.”<sup>22</sup>

*Operation Cheerful* was the last event of any importance during *Cayuga*'s patrol. Captain Frewen left in *JML-302* in the morning to return to *Mounts Bay*.<sup>23</sup> During the afternoon of 28 December *Cayuga*, acting as Air Control Ship, directed air strikes on Ung-do, and towards evening she sent her Medical Officer, Surgeon Lieutenant D. V. Willoughby, and Lieutenant R: P. Morris, RCN, to accompany wounded survivors of *Cheerful* who were being taken for further treatment to Pengyong-do by the hardworking *JML-302*. That night the weather was foul, making an enemy invasion unlikely, so the Canadian ship was given a quiet billet off Chodo.

For the next two days little of interest occurred, and *Cayuga* continued to carry out routine duties in TU 95.12.1. On the morning of 31 December the ship was given, at her own request, a special assignment to take Lieutenant Beaudette to Pengyong-do.<sup>24</sup> After embarking the lieutenant, *Cayuga* spent New Year's Eve in the Slot. At midnight, instead of ringing sixteen bells in the traditional manner, the ship fired 16 twogun salvos at Ung-do as a salute to the old and new years.

On New Year's Day *Cayuga* proceeded to Taechongdo for fuel, landing Lieutenant Beaudette at Pengyongdo on her return passage to Chodo. She reached Chodo late in the evening, and turned over her duties to the Netherlands destroyer *Van Galen*. After completing the turn-over *Cayuga* shaped course for Taewha-do which she bombarded for ten minutes before turning southward towards Japan for a short spell in harbour.

The return of *Cayuga* to Kure on 4 January, 1952, marked the end of a long period during which the ships of CANDESFE had been engaged chiefly in island defence duties in the Taewha-do and ChodoSok-to areas. The island defence campaign, however, was by no means over, and in the first six months of 1952, which form the subject of the next chapter, many of the Canadian destroyers were again to be involved in repelling enemy raids, supporting guerilla landings and engaging in the multifarious activities of the inshore patrol forces.

## References

<sup>1</sup>The Western newspapers reported that Eighth Army units had been given instructions which were virtually cease-fire orders, but this was denied by Van Fleet and Ridgway, who officially repudiated any suggestion that the UN ground forces had been ordered to slow down.

<sup>2</sup>“A” gun was rendered inoperative due to the buckling of the shield, one of the forward bulkheads was badly damaged, most of the Carley floats were washed overboard and a good deal of other damage was caused. Fortunately there were no casualties.

<sup>3</sup>Two of these bombs were apparently duds, or perhaps delayed-action bombs, and the guerillas very generously offered them to the ship as souvenirs. This kind offer was politely refused.

<sup>4</sup>HMCS *Cayuga*, *Report of Proceedings*, October 1951, Appendix “A”.

<sup>5</sup>Literally Taedong Bay, but it is nowhere near the mouth of the Taedong.

<sup>6</sup>Lieutenant Saxon served in *Cayuga* during her second Korean tour. He usually managed to draw the assignments, particularly the more hazardous assignments, which involved co-operation between the ship and her Korean allies, and he rapidly gained the friendship of the Korean leaders both ashore and afloat. He later did valuable work as a Naval Liaison Officer in the island defence headquarters at Pengyongdo. For his work among the west coast islands he received the Distinguished Service Cross.

<sup>7</sup>She was in position 38° 04' N., 125° 01.2' E., in very confined waters. She was almost bow on to the enemy batteries and would have had to turn in order to retire in the conventional manner. This would have taken longer than a stern-first retirement and would have brought her nearer the enemy. If the ship had steamed straight ahead towards the batteries in order to get out of sight behind the northern tip of Sok-to, there was a possibility that with the tide ebbing as it was the ship might go aground on the shallows between Sok-to and Amgak.

<sup>8</sup>Lieutenant-Commander R. B. Hayward and Lieutenant P. L. S. McCulloch, respectively.

<sup>9</sup>Actually Wolsa-ri is a small village, but as the point of land on which it stands is unnamed on the charts the usage of the *Reports of Proceedings* in referring to the point as Wolsa-ri Peninsula will be followed.

<sup>10</sup>HMCS *Sioux*, *Report of Proceedings*, November 1951.

<sup>11</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, December 1951, Appendix “G”.

<sup>12</sup>Besides the *Leopard* team of two officers and one enlisted man, a British Army intelligence officer, a Royal Navy information officer and a Royal Navy photographer were on the island when it fell. The information officer and his photographer assistant had been landed on Taewha the night before the attack.

<sup>13</sup>This was the solution later adopted (in January 1952), when relatively large ROK Marine detachments were placed on the more

important islands to bolster the guerillas who before had made up the bulk of the garrisons.

<sup>14</sup>This was the so-called *Swanny Force*, named after Lieutenant G. A. Swanston, D.S.C., RN, of HMS *Ceylon*, who commanded the landing craft force. The craft were manned by USN personnel and Royal Marines from the cruiser *Ceylon*.

<sup>15</sup>The organization was set up in January 1952 on a task unit basis, with the CTE 95.15, a U.S. Marine Corps colonel, based at Pengyongdo. He directed the activities of five task units: TU 95.15.1 on Sok-to; TU 95.15.2 on Chodo; TU 95.15.3 on Pengyong-do; TU 95.15.4 on Yonpyong-do; and TU 95.15.5 on Tokchock-do.

<sup>16</sup>The westerly tip of the peninsula which juts out into the sea between Chodo and Sok-to.

<sup>17</sup>The JML's were ex-Japanese light minesweepers handed over by the U.S. to the ROK's. Most of them were later designated as AMC's (Auxiliary Minelayers). *JML-309* did not remain with *Sioux* throughout her patrol; she was replaced on the night of 13/14 December by *PC-702* and later by *JML-301*. (*Jane's Fighting Ships*, 1952-53).

<sup>18</sup>No deficiencies were found in either staff or equipment, but the Commanding Officer commented that “to have kept up the pace ... would [have required] a small addition to the communications staff, for the staff would have become exhausted in two or three days.” (HMCS *Cayuga*, *Report of Proceedings*, December 1951, Appendix “B”.)

<sup>19</sup>The party consisted, besides Lieutenant Saxon, of Petty Officers G. Coghill and F. Wood and Able Seamen J. Petersen, D. Campbell, and D. Pierson.

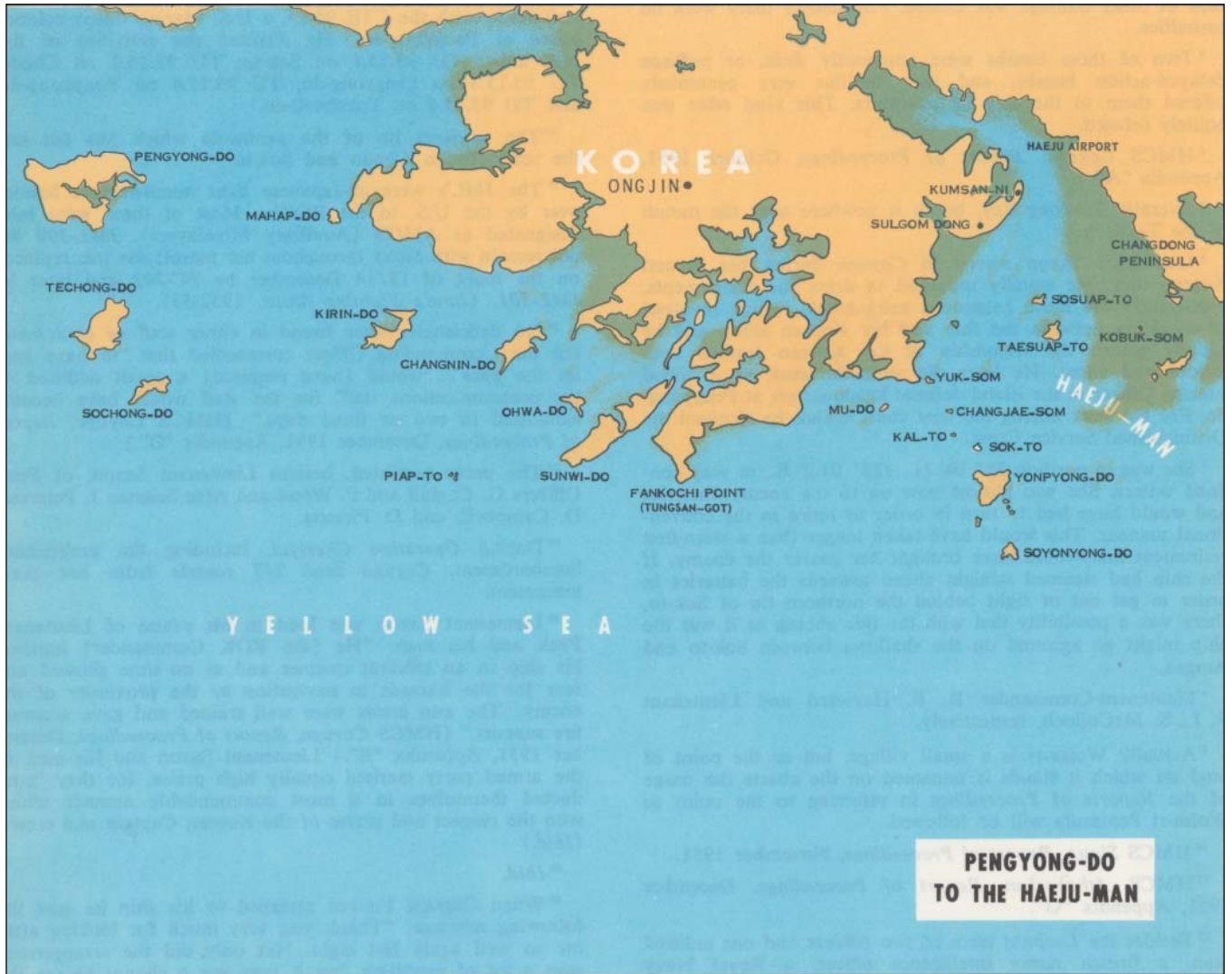
<sup>20</sup>During *Operation Cheerful*, including the preliminary bombardment, *Cayuga* fired 247 rounds from her main armament.

<sup>21</sup>Lieutenant Saxon was loud in his praise of Lieutenant Pack and his men: “He [the ROK Commander] handled his ship in an efficient manner and at no time showed any fear for the hazards to navigation or the proximity of the enemy. The gun crews were well trained and gave accurate fire support.” (HMCS *Cayuga*, *Report of Proceedings*, December 1951, Appendix “B”.) Lieutenant Saxon and his men of the armed party merited equally high praise, for they “conducted themselves in a most commendable manner which won the respect and praise of the Korean Captain and crew.” (*Ibid.*)

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>When Captain Frewen returned to his ship he sent the following message: “Thank you very much for looking after me so well again last night. Not only did the arrangement save a lot of meddling, but it gave me a chance to see the best naval shooting I've seen in a long time.” (CTU 95.12.1 Msg. 280820Z/ 12/51.)

<sup>24</sup>The lieutenant had been the Sok-to Donkey for over five months, and his had been a very difficult task. He had now been relieved by Captain Patterson, U.S. Army, and was returning to the United States.



## MAINLY IN THE HAEJU-MAN

At the beginning of 1952 the outlook in Korea was dismal. The hopes raised by the agreements reached at Panmunjom in November and early December were slowly dying as the two negotiating teams locked horns over the prisoner-of-war issue. For obstinate as had been the haggling over the military demarcation line and the detailed conditions for a cease fire,<sup>1</sup> it soon became obvious that no amount of haggling would settle the prisoner issue unless one side or the other could be forced by means other than diplomatic to make major concessions. Some little progress was made at the beginning when both sides exchanged lists of prisoners held, but it soon became clear that here agreement would end. The Communist attitude was definitely hardening, and the United Nations Command was faced with the alternatives of trying to use military means to soften it up again or of waiting patiently for one of those unpredictable policy changes sometimes indulged in by the Reds.

In January 1952 the prospects of using military pressure to force the Communists to change their mind were not good. The provisional agreement reached in November that the existing battle line would form the basis of the military demarcation line if an armistice were reached within 30 days had ended on 26 December, 1951, and no attempt had been made by either side to extend it.<sup>2</sup> This left the UN Command free to resume the offensive it had virtually stopped in its tracks some six months before, but the difficulty was that the military position was no longer what it had been in June of 1951. During the months of static warfare the Communists had not been idle; they had strengthened their defences enormously and built a miniature Maginot Line across the peninsula. There had been some increase in troop strength, but the main emphasis had been on fire power, and despite all that the UN naval and air forces could do the Reds had now a large and effective force of guns and mortars and amore than

adequate stockpile of ammunition.\* By halting its offensive in June 1951 in order to begin truce talks, the United Nations had thrown away its only bargaining asset; as long as the allies were advancing, however slowly, there was a chance of forcing the Reds to bargain for an armistice; once the military pressure had been removed,† the success of the truce talks depended upon the sincerity of the Communists' desire for peace. When it became obvious to everyone that this reliance on the sincerity of the Reds had been misguided, it was too late to resume the offensive. Any attempt to make an all-out, frontal attack on the Communist positions would have been far too expensive in men and materiel even to contemplate. There was of course always the possibility of attempting another Inchon, but even had Ridgway—and later Clark—not been restrained, it is doubtful whether the UN forces would have possessed the necessary man-power to do so. The United Nations was caught in a trap, partly of its own making, and had now no alternative but to continue an unprofitable, stalemated campaign and hope to “out-sit” and out-talk the Communists at Panmunjom. For the UN forces fighting in Korea it was not a happy situation nor one likely to inspire high morale.

No matter how the truce talks were progressing or what the situation on the land front, the United Nations ships in Korean waters, including the ships of CANDESFE, never had any unemployment problem. They had their duties of blockading the enemy coast, preventing sea-borne attack on friendly islands,

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\*The growth of Communist artillery strength is indicated by the following statistics: in July 1951 some 8,000 rounds (artillery and mortar) were fired at UN positions; in November 1951 the figure was 43,000 rounds. The figures rose sharply in 1952 from a total of 102,000 in May to a high of 655,000 in October. (*Loc. cit.*)

†That is, military pressure by land forces resulting in loss of territory. The air and naval forces of course continued to exert pressure, but though this caused heavy casualties and inflicted considerable damage it did not affect the enemy as the loss of territory would have done.

harassing the enemy's coastal supply lines and providing gun-fire support to the troops holding the seaward ends of the UN front line. When these tasks did not fully occupy their time, they engaged in offensive operations against whatever targets came to hand: industrial cities and towns, troop concentrations, field batteries, supply dumps—in fact any target whose destruction would hurt the enemy's war effort.

During the first half of 1952 the Canadian destroyers were engaged chiefly in island defence work, usually in the area south of the Hwanghae Promontory below the 38th parallel but occasionally in the familiar Chodo—Sok-to stamping ground. Incursions by RCN ships into the east-coast waters controlled by TG 95.2 were rare in this period; only *Athabaskan* and *Nootka* were given the opportunity of duelling with the sharpshooting Red gunners around Wonsan and Chongjin. Carrier screening on the west coast took up a good deal of CANDESFE'S time,<sup>3</sup> but throughout this period and indeed for the remainder of the war this duty was viewed by the destroyer men with a little less abhorrence than formerly because of the so-called *Worthington* patrol. This patrol was instituted when the problem of island defence became acute; it involved having one of the screening destroyers detach every evening to assist the ship which maintained anti-invasion patrols in the area Choppeki Point to Sunwido. Thus once every three days a destroyer could count on relief from her monotonous screening duties and on getting the opportunity of carrying out shore bombardments, supporting guerilla raids, repelling enemy invasions and engaging in the many interesting operations that fell to the lot of the inshore patrol ships.

During January 1952 the ships of CANDESFE were relatively busy, with *Sioux* carrying out two carrier screening missions, *Athabaskan* one carrier mission and one east-coast patrol and *Cayuga* one important west-coast, inshore patrol. As *Cayuga's* was the first island-defence patrol carried out by a Canadian ship in the Haeju area, and as she was responsible for the initial organization of the Haeju naval defence unit, TU 95.12.4, it is necessary to deal with this patrol in some detail.

The Haeju area† in which *Cayuga* was to serve is most difficult to describe; it is a mass of islands, most of them very small, and an even more confused mass of peninsulas which are so heavily indented that one has to look closely at the map to see what is island and what is mainland. The headquarters of the task unit, Yonpyong-do,<sup>4</sup> is not a large island; it is in fact smaller than Sok-to and lies at the mouth of the Haeju-man, the bay on which is the important city of Haeju. To the

south lie five small islets and a slightly larger one called Soyongong-do, and to the north, between Yonpyong-do and the mainland, is another series of islets: Sok-to (not to be confused with the island near Chodo), Kal-to, Changjae-som,\* Mu-do and Yuksom. To the north-east, in Haeju Bay, lie several more islets, the most important of which are Taesup-to, Sosup-to and Yongmae-do. Some seventeen miles due west of Yonpyong-do lies Fankochi Point (or Tungsangot), the southernmost tip of a long, deeply indented peninsula, and “around the comer,” as it were, from Fankochi, between that point and the Pengyong Group<sup>5</sup> of islands some 22 miles to the north-west, is yet another group of important off-shore islands. The defence of this latter group was not the sole responsibility of the Yonpyong task unit; it was shared with the Pengyong-do task unit (95.12.2), but as it was the scene of much fighting in which Canadian destroyers were often involved it is as well to describe it.

The largest island of the group is Sunwi-do, which lies only some three-quarters of a mile from the Fankochi Peninsula and had consequently been seized by the enemy. From Sunwi, along a line extending roughly north-west, are Ohwa-do, Changnin-do, Kirindo and Mahap-do, the latter lying just off the westerly tip of Yungmahap Point and due east of Pengyong-do. Each of these islands was to be the scene of fighting between friendly guerillas and Communist troops, and in the months to come the Canadian destroyers were to become very familiar with the surrounding waters.

*Cayuga's* Haeju† patrol started on 8 January, 1952, when she was ordered by CTE 95.12 to meet the Korean *PC 702* off Ohwa-do. Contact was made at 1940, and at a lengthy conference the Korean Commanding Officer, Commander Mihn, gave the Canadians an excellent briefing on the local situation. The Communists in the Haeju area were maintaining a vigorous and persistent campaign against the islands and were meeting with considerable success. Though none of the islands captured or threatened with capture were as important strategically as Chodo, Sok-to, Pengyong-do or Yonpyong-do, all were of value to the UN. Three problems faced the naval forces operating in these waters: that of defending the remaining friendly islands, helping the guerrillas dislodge the invaders from the recently-captured islands and dealing with the huge numbers of refugees fleeing before the enemy advance. When *Cayuga* arrived all of Sunwi-do was in Communist hands; the civilians from Ohwa-do and tiny

\* “Som”, like “do”, is a Korean word for island.

†Haeju area is used to refer to the waters from the eastern edge of the Haeju-man to the island of Kirin.

†See chart on page 86.



The village well on a Korean west-coast island.



View of a village on Mu-do in the Haeju area.



View of a village on Teesup-to in the Haeju area

Piap-to further to the west had all been evacuated and only a mere handful of guerillas remained to defend the islands; and Changnin-do was swarming with some 7,000 refugees waiting to be evacuated. But this area was not *Cayuga's* primary responsibility, and after the conference with Commander Mihn she set off for Yonpyong-do to take over from HMAS *Tobruk*.

*Cayuga* took over at Yonpyong early on the morning of 9 January and at once took steps to co-ordinate the naval and land defences of the area. The naval force available consisted of the Canadian destroyer and an LST with a fleet of LCVP's (a part of *Swanny Force*); the land force consisted of a garrison of ROK regulars under a U.S. Army captain and a guerilla raiding and intelligence force, similar to the *Leopards*, called the *Wolf Pack*, under a U.S. Army major. During the morning all the principals involved in the defence of Yonpyong-do came aboard *Cayuga* for a conference, adjourning in the afternoon to *Ceylon*, who had just arrived, to carry on the meeting under the auspices of the CTE 95.12. When *Ceylon* departed that evening TU 95.12.4 had been formed, with the Canadian ship taking over as CTU.

*Cayuga's* first night as CTU 95.12.4 was uneventful, but early on the morning of 10 January she was ordered to go to the assistance of *PC-702* which was covering the evacuation of guerillas and civilian refugees in the Changnin area. Apparently the Communists had seized Changnin-do, but many of the defending guerillas and a large number of civilians had been able to escape to the nearby little islet of Ponggot-to where they were being

shelled by batteries on Changnin and the mainland. *Cayuga* arrived off Changnin shortly after 0900 and, in company with *PC-702*, began to bombard targets on the island. Great care had to be taken not to hit any of the several thousand refugees who had been left behind and, according to one of these refugees who later escaped and was picked up by *Cayuga*, the destroyer's fire was very accurate. Three junks and several small boats were practically demolished; enemy troops suffered many casualties; and a large rice dump which the ship had mistaken for a sand-bagged position was completely destroyed. Besides causing all this destruction the bombardment enabled a Korean AKL\* and five junks to take off all the guerillas and refugees from Ponggot-to.

Shortly after noon, while *Cayuga* was moving into position north of Changnin to get a better view of some troops she had spotted on a hill-top, those on deck heard the sound of gun-fire. Thinking that perhaps *Ceylon* might be in action farther to the westward, *Cayuga* was going about her business quite unconcernedly when suddenly a shell exploded in the water some 100 yards to starboard. Quickly the destroyer altered course to get out of the shallows and make for the open sea, while all around her the waters were being churned up by exploding shells. The enemy gunners knew their business, and some of the shells were, in *Cayuga's* view, all too close; one exploded so near that a seaman on the quarter-deck was thoroughly drenched, and according to the Commanding Officer

\*Cargo Ship, Light.

“others were conservatively estimated as being within twenty feet”<sup>6</sup> of the ship. The location of the enemy battery—two or three guns of approximately 88-mm. sited near Upcho-ri—was pin-pointed during the withdrawal and noted for future action. The 88’s fired some 50 rounds at *Cayuga* during the engagement and did not cease fire until the range had increased to 12,000 yards.

Just at this moment H. Neth. M. S. *Van Galen* appeared on the horizon. She was under orders to take over from *Cayuga* the task of covering the now-completed evacuation of Ponggot-to, and the latter was to return to Yonpyong which was without naval support because *LST-602* was absent refuelling. Much as *Cayuga* would have liked to go in with *Van Galen* and try to knock out the 88-mm. battery, such an action could not be justified in the circumstances and the Canadian destroyer returned to Yonpyong-do.

For the rest of the day and during the night of 10/11 January *Cayuga* was very busy patrolling the waters between Yonpyong and the mainland, for in the absence of *LST-602* she had to cover a rather large area. All was quiet however and no enemy junk traffic was detected. During the night the ship fired 34 rounds of 4-inch harassing fire on various targets on the mainland.

Next day, 11 January, after a hectic, early-morning game of tag among the mudflats with a junk falsely accused by the island guerrillas of being unfriendly, *Cayuga* left for Techong-do to refuel from the tanker. Rough seas prevented the destroyer from taking on fuel, and towards evening she was ordered inshore to look for a downed airman near Changnin-do. She was unsuccessful in this mission, but since she had to remain in the area during the night she took the opportunity to pay a return call on the 88-mm. battery near Upcho-ri. Closing to 8,000 yards *Cayuga* plastered the gun position with 64 rounds of 4-inch. The enemy made no reply, but it was impossible to determine whether this was because of the accuracy of *Cayuga*’s fire, because the enemy gunners did not feel they had much of a chance of hitting the destroyer in the dark or simply because the battery had been a mobile one and had left the area long ago.

*Cayuga* dashed back to Techong to refuel early next morning and then returned to Yonpyong-do. She arrived there at noon (12 January) and spent the remainder of the day in conferring with the island’s defenders on problems relating to the land defences, the screening of junks, the evacuation of non-combatant refugees and the unloading of a light cargo ship which reached the island that day with urgently-needed supplies. The news arrived that evening that the CTF 95, Rear-Admiral G. C. Dyer, USN, flying

his flag in *USS Rochester*, had arrived in the area and temporarily assumed tactical command of operations on the west coast.

*Cayuga* carried out her usual anti-junk patrol that night and bombarded more targets on the mainland. For the first time in this area the enemy responded, opening an ineffective fire with a 40-mm. gun which was quickly silenced by the destroyer’s 4-inch. The following day, the 13th, was entirely uneventful, as was the ensuing night. Early on the morning of 14 January *LST-602* and her little fleet of landing craft left the area for a short spell in harbour, much to the regret of *Cayuga* who had found them very useful and most congenial members of TU 95.12.4.

*Ceylon* arrived off Yonpyong at noon on 14 January, and Commander Plomer went aboard her for a conference, after which she left to carry out a bombardment of mainland targets suggested by *Cayuga*. The latter’s motor cutter was used to transport a supply of hand grenades brought by *Ceylon* for the island’s defenders, and while it was away on its assignment fog and rain closed in. The cutter’s radio chose this moment to break down, and the boat lost touch with the destroyer. It took *Cayuga* half an hour to locate her errant cutter, and during the search she came upon a junk loaded with refugees which she escorted to the island.

Admiral Dyer arrived in *Rochester* that evening, and a full dress conference of all the authorities responsible for island defence in the Heaju area was held in his flagship. The Admiral had both the ability and the rank to get things done quickly, and the conference had many beneficial results. *Rochester* and her accompanying destroyer, *USS Collett*, took part in the nocturnal activities of TU 95.12.4 and joined *Cayuga* in bombarding the mainland. *LST-516* arrived during the night as a replacement for *LST-602* and was assigned to anti-junk patrol.

In the morning (15 January) *LST-742* arrived to evacuate refugees and was at once put to work. Later three United States auxiliary minesweepers arrived to begin preparing new swept channels for the task unit, and these ships were briefed by *Cayuga* and assigned their night and emergency stations. There was another conference during the morning with Admiral Dyer, who went ashore by helicopter to inspect personally the defences of Yonpyong-do before leaving in *Rochester* at 1115.

As *Cayuga* was to be relieved on the following morning, it was decided to give the enemy a farewell present that night in the form of a vigorous closerange bombardment. When darkness fell *Cayuga* moved inshore and opened up with 4-inch and Bofors; it was a spectacular bombardment, and the friendly guerrillas on



nearby Mu-do were inspired to join in with their light weapons. Evidently the Communists thought that they were faced with invasion, for special agents later reported that the enemy troops on the coast retreated inland and did not return to their positions until the following night. HMS *Cockade* arrived next morning, 16 January, to relieve *Cayuga* who then set course for Sasebo, en route to Hong Kong for two weeks of well-deserved "R. and R."\*

The next important mission undertaken by a Canadian destroyer was an east coast patrol by *Athabaskan*. She arrived off Wonsan early on the morning of 12 January, contacted the CTG 95.2 and was assigned to Task Element 95.22 which was responsible for the area Chaho to Chongjin. Conditions on the east coast were much the same as they had been in November 1951 when the Canadian destroyer *Sioux* was last in the area. Interdiction of road and rail traffic along the coast was still the most important task, since the enemy made no real attempt, beyond a little illicit fishing and surreptitious minelaying, to contest the strict U.N. blockade.

The Navy however was not entirely satisfied with the results of the interdiction campaign, and on the day before *Athabaskan* joined TE 95.22 a new programme was introduced, designed to increase the effectiveness of naval gun-fire and to co-ordinate shore bombardment with aerial bombardment by carrier planes. Under the new programme five important targets on the Songjin-Hungnam railway, all particularly vulnerable to aerial bombardment and naval gun-fire and all difficult to repair, were selected for destruction. The carrier planes of TF 77 were given the task of destroying these targets (which were given the code-names *Package One*, *Package Two*, and so on) and of keeping them destroyed. The ships of TG 95.2 were to help in this work by bombarding the *Packages* at irregular intervals every day and every night to harass the enemy's repair crews; and when, because of foul weather or some other reason, the carrier planes were unable to operate, these ships took over full responsibility for ensuring that the *Packages* were not repaired. All but *Package Five*, which was dealt with by TE 95.24, were assigned to TE 95.22.

The second half of the new interdiction programme was the sole responsibility of the blockading ships. In addition to the *Packages* another eleven targets called *Derails* were carefully chosen, all of them on the Songjin-Hungnam line and all selected for their vulnerability to naval gun-fire. Each *Derail* target was to be visited daily by one of the patrolling ships and bombarded with a certain number of rounds. It was hoped that the *Package* and *Derail* programme would

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\*Rest and recreation.

cut completely or at least reduce to an insignificant trickle the flow of supplies along the Songjin-Hungnam railway, but this was not to be. Throughout the war the Communists managed, though at enormous cost, to run trains along the north-east coastal line.<sup>7</sup>

As a unit of TE 95.22, *Athabaskan* took an active part in the early operations against the *Packages* and *Derails*, and for her the week of 12 to 19 January was one long target practice. For some reason or other the enemy batteries, usually so aggressive, were very docile during *Athabaskan's* patrol, and she was allowed to bombard a great variety of targets with 1,292 rounds of 4-inch and 5,860 rounds of Bofors without meeting any opposition. Except for the shore bombardments the patrol was uneventful, but the gunnery activity was quite enough in itself. As the Commanding Officer remarked: "The week's activities were a splendid tonic not only for the members of the Gunnery Department, who did very well indeed, but for the ship as a whole."<sup>8</sup>

After returning to Sasebo on 21 January and spending four days replenishing, *Athabaskan* set out on a carrier screening mission to the west coast with USS *Badoeng Strait*. It is an indication of how the institution of the *Worthington*\* patrol had changed the nature of a screening assignment that it can be stated that this patrol by *Athabaskan* was considerably more interesting than her recent east-coast patrol. Because of its interest and because it included some of the earlier *Worthingtons*, it is worthwhile describing this particular carrier mission by *Athabaskan* in some detail.

*Badoeng Strait*, with U.S. Ships *Radford* and *Fletcher* and HMCS *Athabaskan* on the screen, began flying operations in the Yellow Sea on the morning of 26 January. That evening after a day of uneventful screening *Athabaskan* was detached to carry out a *Worthington* in the waters north of Pengyong-do in support of the lone ship of TU 95.12.2, which at this time was the United States *LSMR-401*. The most seriously-threatened points in the Unit's patrol area during this period were the two small islands of Yuk-to and Wollae-do,<sup>9</sup> and *Athabaskan* was assigned to protect them from invasion. The enemy made no move during the night, and the destroyer occupied herself in bombarding targets on the mainland near Yuk-to, sailing at dawn to refuel at Techong-to before returning to the carrier.

On the night of 29/30 January it was again *Athabaskan's* turn to do a *Worthington*. Nothing had happened during the two nights that *Radford* and *Fletcher* had patrolled with TU 95.12.2, but the evidence was piling up that the enemy intended to attack Yuk-to or Wollae-do very soon, and *Athabaskan* spent the night

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\*See above page 88.

illuminating the waters inshore of the islands and in bombarding mainland targets to disrupt invasion preparations. Fifty-one rounds of star-shell and 110 rounds of high explosive were fired, but except for that it was a quiet night.

*Radford* and *Fletcher* took their turns on patrol, and still the enemy made no move. It was *Athabaskan's* turn on the night of 1/2 February, and in this she was fortunate, because TE 95.11 was under orders to sail far to the southward to support a convoy, and *Athabaskan* was therefore directed to remain with TU 95.12.2 until the morning of the 3rd.

The accustomed routine was undisturbed during the first night, and *Athabaskan* occupied herself in illuminating the waters between Yuk-to and the mainland with 59 rounds of star-shell and in bombarding invasion targets. After dawn she cruised the south shore of the peninsula, firing over 400 rounds of 4-inch at targets of opportunity and at troop-occupied villages near the coast. One of the targets of opportunity was a large junk drawn up on the beach, and it suffered six direct hits. At 0810 *Athabaskan* left for Techong to refuel.

After taking on fuel, *Athabaskan* had the rest of the day to put in, and the CTE 95.12 delighted Commander King by giving him the broad directive: "Continue to harass targets on the mainland."<sup>10</sup> The order was faithfully carried out, as *Athabaskan* cruised slowly along the south shore of the Choppeki Peninsula engaging every target in sight. While the ship was engaged in this task, an enemy short battery took upon itself the onus of retaliating and fired some 15 rounds of 76-mm. at *Athabaskan*. All the rounds were "overs," and the destroyer's 4-inch and Bofors soon silenced the battery.

*Athabaskan* took up her night position at dusk, one mile south-west of the southern tip of Yuk-to while her companion, *LSMR-401*, stationed herself a mile and a half to the south-east. After dark both ships began to illuminate the danger area with star-shell and to bombard nearby targets. The battery that had engaged *Athabaskan* during the afternoon was honoured by an additional 60 rounds of 4-inch.

The first untoward incident of the night occurred at 2130 when a small boat between Yuk-to and the mainland showed up on the radar scan. Star-shell was fired, followed by one round of HE, but as the boat appeared to be proceeding from the island towards the mainland *Athabaskan* made no further attempt to sink it, thinking that it must be manned by friendly guerillas or intelligence agents. The boat was kept under observation however and illuminated off and on by starshell; before reaching the mainland it reversed course and returned to the island, an act that was taken

as further evidence of its friendly status. About an hour later those on deck in the destroyer heard several bursts of small-arms' fire on Yuk-to, but no importance was attached to this incident in view of the notorious "trigger-happiness" of Korean guerillas.

For almost two hours all was quiet, and it began to look as if *Athabaskan* were in for another uneventful night when suddenly, shortly after midnight, several batteries of heavy guns on the mainland opened fire on Yuk-to and on the destroyer. The fire directed at *Athabaskan* came from her old friend of the previous afternoon, and once again the ship forced the battery to cease fire. The guns were then turned on the batteries shelling Yuk-to; the *LSMR-401* was also firing on them, and within an hour they had all been silenced.

During all this commotion something had been going on at Yuk-to, for red and green Very lights were being fired at irregular intervals. Then mysterious boats began to show up. *Athabaskan* spotted four of them heading south from the island, and *LSMR-401* detected several more moving towards the south-east. Commander King believed that these boats were probably manned by friendly guerillas attempting to evacuate the island, but the LSMR was suspicious and opened fire on them, whereupon they returned to Yuk-to.

By 0130 all was quiet again, and the LSMR received a message by voice radio from the guerilla leader on Yuk-to saying "All's well." When the rocket ship's commander relayed this information to *Athabaskan* he commented: "I wish I could believe him," to which Commander King added his judgement: "I think he lies in his teeth."<sup>11</sup> This forthright remark was fully justified; next day it was learned that the island had fallen to a sneak raiding force during the night.

Shortly after the Yuk-to action ceased, *Athabaskan's* Sperry detected four small craft at a range of 7,600 yards apparently making for Wollae-do. Thinking they were enemy invasion craft the destroyer closed at full speed, but as she neared the island the contacts faded, merging with the echo made by the island itself. Starshell illumination revealed no sign of a boat, and all appeared quiet on Wollae-do, so it was presumed, quite correctly as it turned out, that the craft were probably "friendlies" returning from a raid. *Athabaskan* therefore returned to Yuk-to, pausing on the way to spray the area occupied by the battery with which she had previously been duelling with 162 rounds from the Bofors. The remainder of the night passed quietly, and at dawn *Athabaskan* hurled another 60 rounds of 4-inch at various mainland targets before leaving to refuel at Techong prior to returning to the carrier.

*Athabaskan* spent the next two days quietly enough, screening the carrier while the U.S. destroyers took

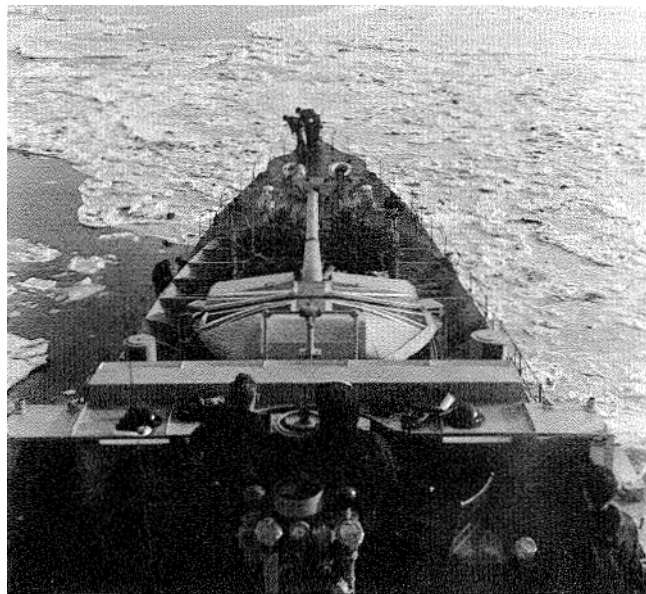
their turns ranging the waters around Yuk-to and Wollae-do. Both *Radford* and *Fletcher* spent very active *Worthington* patrols, bombarding the mainland and the recently-captured Yuk-to and supporting guerilla attempts to re-take the island. When *Athabaskan*'s turn came around again on the evening of 5 February, the status of Yuk-to was still in doubt, and when she arrived off the island she found there the Korean *AMC-303* leisurely cruising close inshore and popping away with her Bofors at the mainland. It is a good illustration of the difficulties of communications and of liaison between the various groups engaged in island defence that not even CTU 95.12.2 had any knowledge of the AMC's presence. When *Athabaskan* enquired of the vessel what she was doing the reply was: "We sentry for rescue so we are waiting," and with this information the destroyer had to be content.<sup>12</sup> Just before dark a sailing junk was seen to leave the island and join the AMC which then took it in tow and set course towards Pengyong-do. Unable to get any reliable information about the military situation on Yuk-to, *Athabaskan* interpreted this junk incident to mean that the island must still be in enemy hands, so when she was ordered to leave for a new night station off Mahap-to she gave the former a thorough spraying with 40-mm. before departing.

The island of Mahap which *Athabaskan* had now been ordered to help protect against a threatened invasion lies some nine miles south-east of Yuk-to. It is situated about twelve miles due east of Pengyong-do and is less than a mile from the mainland peninsula of Yungmahap. As with all the other little islands lying so close to enemy territory, it was virtually impossible for naval vessels to protect it against sneak raids carried out in darkness, but the attempt had to be made.

*Athabaskan* arrived off Mahap-to shortly after dark and remained all night illuminating the channel between the island and the mainland with star-shell at irregular intervals. The night passed without incident, and in the morning the destroyer refuelled at Techong and returned to the carrier. This was the final *Worthington* of the mission, for when the last plane had been flown on that evening (6 February) the carrier and her escort sailed for Sasebo. It had been by far the most eventful carrier assignment *Athabaskan* had ever carried out, certainly a far cry from the interminable, monotonous screening missions that the destroyers used to dislike so much back in 1950 and 1951.

Throughout February 1952 the situation remained much the same as in the preceding month, with limited action on land, considerable enemy air activity,<sup>13</sup> and constant pressure by the Reds against the islands south of Choppeki Peninsula coupled with a more aggressive use of shore batteries.<sup>14</sup> All of the destroyers of

CANDESFE saw action on the west-coast inshore patrol during the month, and one of them, the new arrival *Nootka*, also did a stint with the carrier. But the pressure of work was now definitely less than it had been in the last three months of 1951, and all the Canadian destroyers were given ample time in harbour for rest and maintenance.



*Sioux* makes her way through an ice field in the Chodo—Sok-to area.

*Sioux* completed her second tour on 12 February when she turned over to *Nootka* at Sasebo before sailing for home on the 14th. Her last mission had been an inshore patrol from 29 January to 11 February in CANDESFE's old stamping ground around Chodo and Sok-to. *Sioux* found this patrol somewhat quieter than her last one in the area, but it did have its moments. Mid-winter conditions of foul weather and drifting ice floes considerably lessened the danger of raids on the two main islands; and the vulnerable little islet of Ho-do, south of Sok-to and only a few hundred yards from Pipa-got, was the only one that required close watching. When weather and ice conditions were suitable for small-craft traffic, *Sioux* spent her nights illuminating possible invasion routes, bombarding enemy positions on the mainland and directing the activities of the Korean JML attached to her for anti-invasion patrol duties. There was one invasion scare when on the night of 31 January the JML spotted two small craft trying to cross from the mainland over to Ho-do, but a few rounds from *Sioux*'s 4-inch soon sent them scuttling back to safety. Occasionally mortar and artillery batteries on the

mainland began shelling Ho-do, but they always ceased fire when *Sioux* turned her guns on them.

But it was in the daylight hours that *Sioux* had her most interesting experience during this patrol. Day after day when conditions were suitable she bombarded the mainland, concentrating on troop billets and gun and mortar positions. The shore batteries did not take this treatment lying down, and on four separate occasions *Sioux* found herself the target of enemy fire. The fire was uncomfortably accurate at times, and the ship was often straddled. One of *Sioux*'s colleagues, the U.S. destroyer *Porterfield*, was hit on 3 February by a battery on the mainland opposite Chodo,<sup>15</sup> a battery with which the Canadian destroyer had more than once exchanged shots, but *Sioux* herself continued to enjoy good fortune. On another occasion *JML-304*, serving under *Sioux*'s orders, was taken under fire by enemy 40-mm. guns, but the destroyer and the Korean vessel silenced them before any damage was done.

Earlier in the patrol *Sioux* had taken the starring role in rather an unusual operation. It happened that on the afternoon of 8 February one of the members of the USAF Rescue Detachment stationed on Chodo became critically ill and required immediate medical attention. *Sioux* was unable to send a boat in with her Medical Officer because of the ice conditions, so it was decided to bring the patient out to the ship by helicopter. The man was too ill to be lowered from the aircraft in the conventional manner, and it was necessary to improvise some sort of flight deck on *Sioux*. Such an operation had never before been attempted, but it was quickly done; the deck head of the squid-handling room was shored with timbers, the top cleared of all obstructions, and there was an adequate landing platform. Everything worked smoothly; an escorting helicopter made two test landings on the new flight deck, and then the 'copter carrying the patient came in

A helicopter from USS *Rochester* approaches *Nootka*.



Helicopter prepares to take off from *Sioux* after delivering a patient from Chodo.

and landed safely, undoubtedly one of the earliest occasions when a helicopter landed on a destroyer. An examination by Surgeon Lieutenant H. D. MacWilliam of *Sioux* revealed that the man was suffering from appendicitis and required immediate surgical treatment, so the ship steamed southward with all despatch and transferred him to *Ceylon* who possessed better facilities than she did for such an operation. By the time *Sioux* resumed her station off Chodo the man had been operated on and was out of danger.

*Sioux* completed the last patrol of her second Korean tour on the morning of 11 February. Just before she weighed anchor she opened fire for one last farewell bombardment of some enemy bunkers on the mainland opposite Chodo, delivering as her Parthian shaft a 4-inch, solid, surface-practice shell inscribed in Korean and English: "Compliments of HMCS *Sioux*: Our 3,570th Shell." After delivering this message *Sioux* set course southward, arriving next day at Sasebo where, for the first time in more than a year, four Canadian destroyers found themselves together in that harbour.

This CANDESFE reunion was to be a short one, for *Cayuga* left on the afternoon of the same day, 12 February, to begin another patrol as CTU 95.12.4. She arrived at Yonpyong-do on the following day, and from that date to 8 March a Canadian destroyer served as CTU of the Haeju area. Throughout this period there was not a great deal of activity in the waters patrolled by the Haeju unit, and neither *Cayuga* nor *Athabaskan*, the other ship involved, was grossly overworked.

There were two attempted enemy raids on friendly islands during *Cayuga*'s patrol; one on Taesup-to on the night of 23/24 February and another the following night on Mu-do. On both occasions the presumably hostile craft approaching the islands were frightened off at *Cayuga*'s approach and managed to scuttle back

to the mainland before they could be intercepted or sunk. But these were isolated incidents and ordinarily *Cayuga* was occupied in more prosaic tasks: in carrying out uneventful night patrols; in helping the leaders of the ground forces put the finishing touches on their arrangements for the defence of Yonpyong and the nearby islands; in helping with the refugee problem; in providing medical treatment for UN personnel and guerillas; and in the many little tasks that fell to a CTU's ship when engaged in island defence duties. All in all it was a rather quiet patrol; so much so indeed that the Commanding Officer in a message to the CTE referred to his command as "Plomer's peaceful paradise of piety and prudence."<sup>16</sup>

*Athabaskan* took over as CTU for the period 25 February to 8 March, and her patrol was but little more eventful than *Cayuga*'s.\* There were the usual alarms and excursions of course, but they were all of minor importance. *Athabaskan* took part in one guerilla landing, an operation that promised to be more interesting than most of her current activities. This promise was not fulfilled. As an amphibious operation the raid was not impressive: a band of guerillas from Mu-do sallying forth in two sailing junks to capture the little island of Yuk-som. The raid took place at dusk on 29 February, when, with *Athabaskan* standing off and plastering the island and the mainland opposite with all her guns, the guerillas swarmed ashore on Yuk-som, their automatic weapons blazing tracer as they rushed inland. In the dusk it was a most impressive sight, but the sequel was rather anticlimactic; the enemy troops on Yuk-som had quietly absconded to the mainland just a few hours before the raid, and when the guerillas charged ashore they found the island in possession of a handful of aged non-combatants.

Aside from the raid on Yuk-to and a few other bombardments carried out by the ship, *Athabaskan*'s tour as CTU 95.12.4 provided little of interest in the way of operations against the enemy, but her otherwise quiet patrol was marred by a dreadful accident that took the lives of twelve UN personnel, including some of the key figures in the defence of the Haeju islands. Early on the morning of 3 March *Athabaskan* detached from the Yonpyong task unit in order to refuel at Techong-do, the Commanding Officer of the *LST-561* taking over the duties of CTU. Shortly after

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\**Athabaskan* had been slated for carrier duty, but when the orders for the assignment arrived from CTE 9512 Commander King replied with a short and simple message reading: "St. Luke, Chapter 22, Verse 42." ("Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.") Whether this signal influenced the CTE is not known, but *Athabaskan*'s orders were changed, and she subsequently drew the Haeju assignment.

*Athabaskan*'s departure, an LCPL\* attached to the landing ship left its station alongside the U.S. Army's *FS-351*<sup>17</sup> to investigate conditions on Mu-do. Finding it impossible to beach because of the weather, the craft returned to the Army vessel and then set out to return to its mother ship. Among those on board the LCPL for the passage were the Commander of the LST Division supplying ships for island defence on the west coast and two U.S. Army majors responsible for directing the activities of the *Wolfpack* guerillas in the Haeju area.<sup>18</sup> When the LCPL set out the sea was rough but not dangerously so; the craft's engines were working well; its radio was in operating condition—in fact all was well, and there was no cause for anxiety.

The LCPL never rejoined its mother ship. When *Athabaskan* returned at 1545 and took over command of the task unit a search had already been launched. For the next 24 hours ships and small craft of all descriptions, assisted by helicopters and carrier planes, scoured the waters around Yonpyong-do, but not a single survivor was found. A few bits of wreckage and some articles of clothing identified as belonging to the missing men were picked up, but that was all. The craft had foundered on passage or, what is more likely, had struck a rock and sunk immediately. In the cold weather the men had been bundled up in heavy clothing; once in the icy waters amid the vicious currents they would not have stood a chance of reaching shore. None was ever seen again, dead or alive.

*Athabaskan* was relieved as CTU 95.12.4 on 8 March by HMS *Cossack*, and after returning to Sasebo to replenish she set course for Hong Kong for a two weeks' visit. Apart from spending two days at a rest camp in Japan in the previous autumn, the great majority of the ship's company had not enjoyed overnight leave since the ship's call at Pearl Harbor in August 1951.

The latest member of CANDESFE, HMCS *Nootka* (Commander R. M. Steele, RCN), returning for her second tour of duty in Korean waters, was not given the carrier mission usually assigned to a newcomer for her first patrol but was sent straight out on island defence duties on 15 February. After a night patrolling the *Worthington* area off Pengyong-do, *Nootka* joined the Chodo—Sok-to task unit. The eight days she served with this unit were relatively uneventful; indeed she and her colleagues had more trouble with the pack ice in the straits between the islands and the mainland than with the enemy. *Nootka* "chopped" to TE 95.11 on the 23rd for a spell of carrier duty, serving with the element until 4 March. During this period she took

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\*Landing Craft, Personnel, Large.

more than her share of the *Worthington* patrols—six, of them—all of which were devoid of interest.

Indeed the whole of the month of March 1952 was singularly uneventful for the ships of CANDESFE. Except for *Athabaskan's* tour of duty as CTU in the Haeju during the first eight days of the month and a similar tour by *Nootka* during the last five, the Canadian destroyers spent the rest of their operational time on carrier screening. No event of any great moment occurred. The carrier screening itself was of course as uneventful and monotonous as ever, and even during the *Worthingtons* the ships put in their time in routine patrolling and in bombarding enemy targets suggested by guerilla headquarters on Pengyong-do. There is some suggestion in the reports that the Canadian destroyers may have received a little preferential treatment in the allotment of important bombardment targets, for at this time *Cayuga's* Lieutenant Saxon was the Naval Liaison *Officer* on Pengyong-do;<sup>19</sup> but even with his friendly assistance the ships of CANDESFE found their *Worthingtons* none too eventful. *Nootka's* tour as CTU in the Haeju during the last five days of March can fairly be described as routine, although there were signs that the lull might soon end. There was evidence for instance that the enemy was massing troops on Chomi-do and the Changdong Peninsula for an attack across the mudflats on Yongmae-do.<sup>20</sup> Then too, with the disappearance of the ice, the Korean fishermen were beginning to come out in force; this greatly complicated the otherwise difficult problem faced by the UN ships of checking small craft in their area and made it much less difficult for the enemy to launch successful sneak raids in small junks. However by the time *Nootka* was relieved on 10 April the Communists had launched no concerted campaign against the friendly islands in the Haeju.

If the outlook for the future was not bright in the Haeju area, it was positively dismal when one viewed the Korean conflict as a whole. The peace talks at Panmunjom had for months made no progress whatever, and there was little hope that the dead-lock would be broken in the foreseeable future. There were signs in fact that the Communists might be preparing to renew the war. It was in March that the Chinese Reds began their all-out campaign to convict the United States in the eyes of the world of the crime of using germ warfare in Korea. They had often before made vague and unspecific charges of biological and chemical warfare, but the March campaign was different, and all the propaganda resources of Red China and her allies were now brought into play to “prove” their manifestly ridiculous charges.

But if the germ warfare charges were an indication of a growing Chinese aggressiveness,\* there was other evidence to the contrary. For it was also in March that the prisoner-of-war troubles, particularly on Koje-do, began to assume serious proportions. This was fairly good evidence that the Chinese did indeed want an armistice, but that they wanted it on their own terms. By organizing riots and spilling blood in the POW compounds it might be possible to so embarrass the UN Command that it would eventually be glad to get rid of its troublesome charges on any terms. Furthermore the murderous violence of the Red leaders in the camps might possibly intimidate those anti-Communist prisoners who before had been prepared to resist repatriation.

The Chinese negotiators had been aggressive enough before, but when they were told on 19 April at Panmunjom that UN screening had revealed that only 70,000 of the 132,000 prisoners held in South Korea were prepared to return to their native land they became wholly intransigent. The Koje Island riots broke out in full strength in May, and the UN forces were forced to resort to the sternest measures to restore order; even then, after the restoration of order, it could hardly be said that the UN exercised full authority over all their prisoners of war. In June there was a general increase in the ground fighting, the Reds probing the UN lines with considerable vigour and intensifying their artillery and mortar fire. On 15 June, for instance, the largest number of rounds ever fired in one day by the Communists since the beginning of the war (some 17,600 artillery and mortar shells) fell on the UN positions.<sup>21</sup> Towards the end of the month, from 23 to 26 June, the UN Command launched its powerful and much-debated strikes against the Yalu hydro-electric stations, the first in a series of bombing raids calculated to “hit them where it hurts.”<sup>22</sup> There was certainly little reason to hope, at the end of June 1952, that the Korean war would soon be coming to an end.

During these three months of April, May and June while the situation at Panmunjom grew steadily worse and the hopes for an armistice faded, the Canadian destroyers carried on operations much as in the preceding three months. One of them, *Nootka*, served a stint on the east coast where she added to her reputation for efficiency and aggressiveness. All performed several screening missions and carried out numerous *Worthingtons*, and all served on island defence, chiefly in the Haeju area. Though their duties were the same in these three months as in the preceding three, the ships

\*The military build-up of the Reds in Korea was of course another sign that they might possibly be planning to renew all-out war.

of CANDESFE found that there was now considerably more activity on the west coast both by the friendly guerillas and by the enemy. Indeed *Athabaskan* was to find one of her Haeju patrols more hectic than any she had carried out during the first island-defence crisis back in December 1951.

*Nootka's* tour as CTU of the Haeju task unit, which ended on 10 April, has already been touched on, and it was the only Haeju patrol carried out by a Canadian destroyer during the month. *Cayuga* served with the Chodo unit during April, from the 6th to the 16th, and apparently found it rather too quiet for her taste, for there are remarks in the *Report of Proceedings* about the "pastoral calm of South Chodo," and about "catching up with sleep and back paper work." Still, the patrol had its moments, as when the CTU, on his first assignment in the area, informed *Cayuga* that she had been sent to serve with TU 95.12.1 "in order to become acquainted with the difficulties of these waters."<sup>23</sup> This remark greatly amused everyone aboard and was made all the more amusing when a few days later *Cayuga*, on direct orders from Admiral Scott-Moncrieff himself, was assigned to carry out the nightly patrol between Sok-to and Wolsari Peninsula which had been discontinued by the task unit because of the navigational hazards and the danger from enemy batteries. Even this *Hookah* patrol proved uneventful, and the only time *Cayuga* was in any danger during her Chodo assignment was when the salvage tug USS *Ute* came alongside without allowing sufficiently for the wind and the current.

Throughout the rest of April the only missions undertaken by the Canadian ships were with the carrier force of TE 95.11 on the west coast, but though these missions involved the ships in a great many *Worthington* patrols among the inshore islands no incident of any particular interest occurred.

The Canadian destroyers were active enough during May, but except for *Nootka* who drew an east-coast patrol assignment none of them was involved in any interesting or important operation. *Cayuga* carried out a patrol with the Chodo unit, the last one of her second Korean tour, from 10 to 18 May, during which she conducted the usual nightly anti-invasion patrols and shelled enemy positions on the mainland. During several bombardments she operated close inshore to try to entice enemy batteries to reveal their positions, but her challenge was accepted only once, and then only by a single gun which fired three ineffectual rounds at her. Though some of *Cayuga's* bombardments were very effective, they were rather overshadowed by those of an LSMR who was with the task unit and who while

*Cayuga* was firing a few dozen shells could saturate large areas of enemy territory with hundreds of rockets.

The Chief of Naval Personnel, Commodore J. C. Hibbard, D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN, was at this time in the Far East visiting the Canadian destroyers, and he spent several days in *Cayuga* during her Chodo patrol. He accompanied the ship as she went about her regular duties of patrolling and bombarding, but what particularly pleased the ship was that he paid an official visit to *Cayuga's* old friend, the JML-302 commanded by Lieutenant Pack Cyun Do, who had served with *Cayuga* often, and always with distinction, during the destroyer's many patrols in the Chodo area. If this friendly gesture pleased *Cayuga's* company, it pleased the ROK's even more and further cemented the already very friendly relations existing between the ships of CANDESFE and those of the ROK Navy.



CDRE J. C. Hibbard inspecting a part of the ship's company of Korean JML-302. LT Pack Cyun Do is on the Cdre's right.

*Cayuga* fired the last shell of her second Korean tour on the morning of 18 May and set out for Japan. She stopped enroute at Techong-do to refuel and turn over CANCOMDESFE files to Commander King of *Athabaskan* who was to take over command of the Canadian destroyers in the Far East from Commander Plomer when *Cayuga* left for home. The ship finally sailed from Tokyo en route to Canada on 1 June. During her second tour, as during her first, she had earned a well-deserved reputation for aggressiveness and all-round efficiency, and many and complimentary were the messages she received when she left the theatre.

Athabaskan carried out a mission during May which was unusual in that it marked the first time a Canadian destroyer performed a full patrol as CTU of the Pengyong unit, TU 95.12.2. It was a fairly active patrol, and Athabaskan was kept very busy on bombardments and anti-junk operations, but no incident of any great interest occurred.

The patrol carried out by Nootka from 28 May to 9 June was the most noteworthy of the period. Nootka arrived off Yang-do, north-east of Songjin, on 28 May to relieve HMAS Warramunga with TE 95.22, which at that time consisted of the Australian destroyer and the U.S. Ships Endicott (CTU), Fowler, John W. Thomason and Swallow. The interdiction campaign against the coastal railway was still the most important of the task element's duties, but its ships were at this time also conducting a vigorous offensive against North Korean junks and sampans, an offensive which aimed not only at stopping fishing and sneak minelaying but also at preventing a repetition of the recent (19 February) amphibious raid on the Yang-do Group. The ships on the east coast were not having it all their own way in the interdiction and anti-junk campaigns however, for the enemy coastal batteries were becoming increasingly aggressive and accurate. In March 1952 only two U.S. ships had been hit by these shore batteries; in April the figure jumped to six; and when Nootka arrived in May another seven ships had already suffered hits.<sup>24</sup> Nootka was soon to learn that these statistics, at least, did not lie, and that the tales told around Sasebo of the deadly accuracy of the east-coast shore batteries were not much exaggerated.

Nootka's first encounter with these guns came on the morning of 30 May when she sailed with Thomason to bombard targets near Kyongsong below Chongjin. Nootka had been shelling gun positions in the Kyongsong area for about half an hour and had just shifted fire to a large junk pulled up on the beach when eight guns sited along the coast opened fire simultaneously. The fire was fast and frighteningly accurate; the third salvo was on its way towards Nootka immediately following the explosions of the first rounds, some of which landed within ten yards of the ship. The second salvo was even closer, and several shells landed under the flare of the port bow, abreast of the bridge, so close that those on the bridge could not see the points of impact. The blast blew the steel helmet off the lookout in the sponson, dazing the man temporarily, and threw columns of water upon the bridge and into the director.

The moment the enemy opened up, Nootka went full speed ahead, turning and twisting to avoid the fall of shot while she made smoke to cover the withdrawal of

Thomason who was also under heavy fire. Now occurred a very fortunate accident and one which may well have saved Nootka from being hit. For as soon as the destroyer began to belch smoke the after funnel caught fire, and whenever the ship's guns let off a salvo, great gusts of smoke, flame and sparks burst from the funnel. This unseemly display served a good purpose, for the enemy was almost certainly deceived into thinking that his shells were striking home with marvelous regularity. At any rate his salvos marched along beside the ship, keeping perfect step with her movements, and Nootka steadied on a straight course, being "very loath to upset so amicable an arrangement."<sup>25</sup> All this time the range was lengthening and at 9,000 yards the enemy's salvos began to drop astern. At 12,000 yards the ship was apparently out of danger, but Nootka steamed on into a fog bank, increasing the range to 14,000 yards before reversing course and steaming back to have the last word. Though the ship decreased the range to 11,000 yards to pound the offending batteries with everything she had, they did not open fire again and Nootka was able to retire with dignity. En route to Yong-do the members of the ship's company amused themselves by collecting enemy shell fragments for souvenirs; there were shell fragments everywhere on the upper decks, and it is said that some were even found in the galley.

On 1 June Nootka again came under fire from batteries just south of Chongjin, but this was a mild affair compared with the previous action. During the daylight hours of her patrol she cruised up and down along the coast from Hungnam in the south to Chongjin in the north, pounding away at the coastal railroad, shore battery positions, beached junks and sampans and other suitable targets. At night she operated even closer to shore watching for fishing craft, delivering her nightly quota of harassing fire on the various Packages and Derails\* and occasionally engaging targets of opportunity such as truck convoys using the coastal road. It was certainly a very busy patrol, especially for the Gunnery Department, as the ship fired well over 2,000 rounds from the main armament alone.

Towards the end of the patrol Nootka was involved in a rather unusual operation. It had often happened that while carrying out regular patrols south of Songjin she had sighted fishing sampans at work in the bay between Yongdae-gap and the mouth of the Namdae River; they had never been far from shore and had scuttled in whenever the destroyer appeared. On the evening of 6 June, however, as Nootka came

\* See above page 91.



around Yongdae Point on a routine patrol, there were two little fleets, one of four and one of five sampans, fishing at a fair distance from the shore. Such a flagrant disregard of the naval might of the United Nations could not be tolerated, and *Nootka* altered course and charged at full speed into the bay. On the way in she opened fire with a single gun and with perhaps more luck than skill destroyed a sampan with her second round. When 1,600 yards from shore the ship was stopped and all boats slipped to execute "general chase." The sampans had a big lead, but the destroyer's boats persevered, and one of the sampans was overhauled when about twenty-five yards from the beach opposite the town of Yohaerin. The three fishermen in the captured sampan were a tough lot, and they had to be firmly persuaded to become prisoners of war. Meanwhile the other sampans' crews had reached the beach and had hauled their craft right into the town among the houses. The boat parties were all for landing and seizing these sampans, but it was feared that there might be mined areas along the beach, and the boats were all recalled. The damage already inflicted, it was thought, would be enough to discourage fishing in that area for some time to come; certainly *Nootka* did not again sight any fishermen in the bay.

The remainder of *Nootka's* patrol was routine, and she was relieved by HMS *Constance* on 9 June. Upon relief she sailed for Sasebo where she arrived on the afternoon of the 10th to replenish before setting course for Hong Kong and two weeks of R. and R.

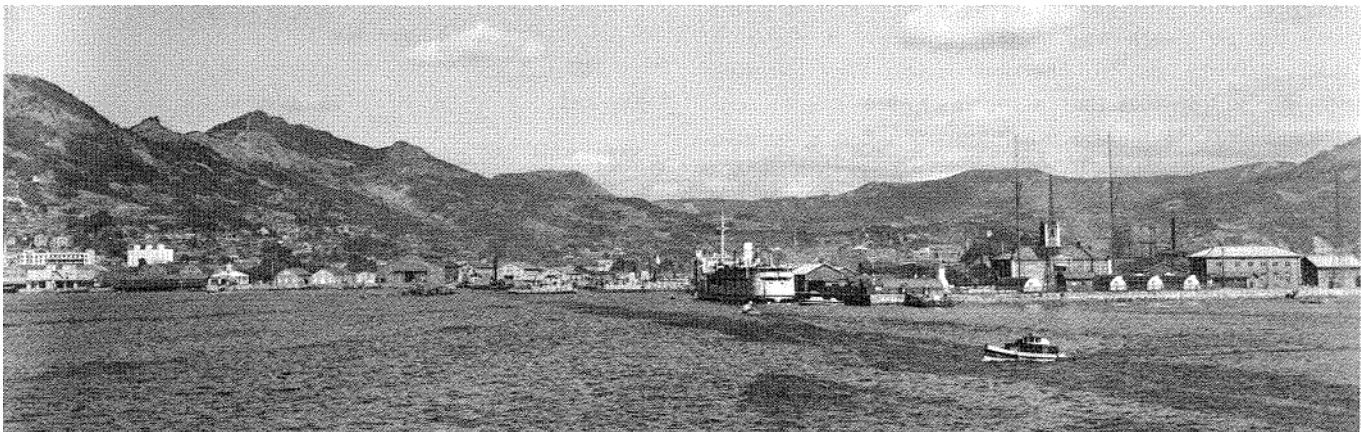
HMCS *Iroquois* (Commander W. M. Landymore, C.D., RCN) arrived in Sasebo on 12 June to take the place of *Cayuga* who had left on the 1st for Canada. *Iroquois* remained in Sasebo until 23 June and for the remainder of the month served on an uneventful patrol with the carrier on the west coast, USS *Bataan*.

Other than *Nootka's* east coast foray, by far the most interesting and eventful patrol conducted by a Canadian ship during the month was that of *Athabaskan* while she was CTU 95.12.4 from 8 to 16 June. During these eight days she was almost continually in action, repelling an enemy raid here, breaking up a "mudflat invasion" there, supporting a landing by friendly guerillas somewhere else and in general dashing about firing her guns in all directions.

The action began on *Athabaskan's* first night as CTU. The ship was lying at anchor off Taesup-to in the upper estuary when tracer fire was observed in the vicinity of Mu-do. It soon became obvious that Mu-do was being attacked by sea, and *Athabaskan*, after ordering *LST-1089* to take over the Taesup station, immediately sailed to the rescue. When the destroyer reached Mu-do, however, the attack was over, repulsed by the 40 or so guerillas on the island. The raiding force had consisted of six sailing and one motor junk, and the guerillas claimed to have sunk four of the sail at a cost to themselves of two men wounded; though *Athabaskan* rather doubted this claim, next morning a good deal of wreckage was found floating in the area. Before withdrawing, *Athabaskan* treated the mainland opposite Mu-do with 667 rounds of 40-mm. to discourage potential enemy raiders.

The following night was quiet, but on the night of the 10th the enemy tried again. *Athabaskan* was at night station east of Mu-do when at 2200 gun-fire was heard from the mainland north-west of the island and underwater explosions, as from exploding shells, were heard on the sonar. A few moments later tracer fire was seen in the direction of Yongmae, across the bay near the head of the estuary. *Athabaskan* was faced with a choice; which was the feint and which the real attack? Mu-do was very lightly defended but it could only be approached by water; Yongmae-do was strongly held

**View of Sasebo harbour.**



but it could, at the prevailing low tide, be reached by crossing the mudflats between it and the mainland. The fact that Yongmae-do was a much more important island than Mu-do tipped the scales in its favour, and *Athabaskan* set course eastward, firing star-shell over the channel separating Mu-do from the mainland as she withdrew in order to mislead the enemy into thinking that a UN ship was standing by.

*Athabaskan* could get no closer to Yongmae than the Taesuap-to area because of the low water. When she arrived there, guerilla headquarters on Yonpyong, which was in touch with the Yongmae guerillas, informed her that there was a strong body of enemy troops on Kobuksom, an island near Yongmae. Forty rounds of 4-inch dispersed these troops, but thereafter *Athabaskan* had no means of bringing her fire power to bear because of lack of spotting and communications facilities and had to content herself with illuminating the mudflats for the benefit of the island's defenders. The defenders were indeed not doing badly on their own and were putting down a terrific barrage with mortars, machine-guns and small-arms. A "fiaship"\* from the Fifth Air Force arrived at 0023 and remained throughout the night, taking over illumination duties from *Athabaskan*. By 0330 the attack had been repulsed, and the enemy troops had scurried back to the mainland to prepare for the next attempt. HMS *Cornus* arrived in the area at 0230, having been diverted from her *Worthington*, and was sent to support Mu-do. But the shelling of Mu-do had apparently been a feint, and no attack on the island developed.

On the following night, the night of 11/12 June, the persistent Reds tried again to take Yongmae. This time *Athabaskan* did not get involved, for it happened that *Ceylon* was in the area, and she provided all the naval gun-fire that was necessary to help the defenders repel the Reds. *Athabaskan* meanwhile had a ring-side seat for the fire-works from her station off Mu-do and was able to spend a relatively quiet night.

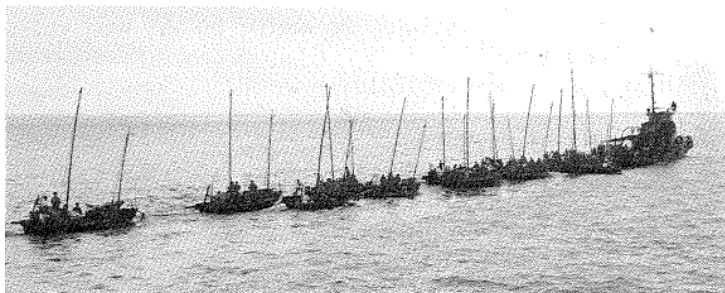
On the night of 12/13 June Yongmae was attacked for the third time since *Athabaskan's* arrival. This time the destroyer was in the ring, not at the ring side, and was able to put down some very effective fire due to the fact that a much more efficient communications link had been arranged between Yongmae, guerilla headquarters on Yonpyong and the ship. Again a flaship arrived and took over illumination duties from *Athabaskan*. This plane did an excellent job throughout the night, but the unannounced arrival of a night-fighter, two bombers and a second flaship was not so helpful. The presence of a second flaship was

\*A bomber carrying flares for illumination.

unnecessary; the night-fighter had no maps of the area and had to be sent home; and it proved difficult to provide suitable targets for the B-26's. By 0200 (13 June) the enemy attackers were beginning to withdraw and within half an hour they had all retreated back to the mainland. This was their last attempt to take Yongmae while *Athabaskan* remained in the area.

On the night of Friday the 13th *Athabaskan* took up a new station north-west of Sosuap-to, deep in the estuary. The task unit had been reinforced for the night, and *Cornus* was guarding Yongmae, the ROK *PC-701* watching Mu-do, and the ROK *AMC-301* waiting in reserve near Yonpyong-do. The reason for *Athabaskan's* forward position, so deep in enemy territory, was that the *Wolf pack* had planned a raid on the peninsula north of Sosuap-to. Some 300 guerillas under a USMC sergeant were to land near Sulgumdong, push northward to sever the peninsula, and then sweep to the right towards the beaches near Kumsan-ni where they were to re-embark. *Athabaskan* was to provide fire support during the hours of darkness, with *AMC-301* joining at first light to render close support. *Athabaskan* had also arranged for a CAP from the carrier to arrive at daybreak.

The assault force was to go in at 0300, but "due to the vagaries of tide, wind and guerilla temperament"<sup>26</sup> the landing was not made until almost 0600, well after dawn, and about a mile from the assigned beach at that. "I shall long remember," said Commander King of *Athabaskan*, "the sight of twelve sailing junks, in groups of three to five, each overflowing with troops, being towed towards the enemy coast at a rate of about 21 knots by motor junks powered with asthmatic engines."<sup>27</sup>



ROK AMC 302 tows junks returning from a night raid on the mainland in the Haeju area.

Meanwhile *Athabaskan* had been softening up the landing area while planes from the carrier circled overhead ready to crush any attempt by the enemy to oppose the assault force. *AMC-301* had also arrived and lay off a short way from the beach to lend aid with her 3-inch and 40-mm. should it be required.

The landing force reached shore without much difficulty, and the guerillas stormed inland. An enemy mortar battery which took them under fire was quickly knocked out by the alert carrier planes. All seemed to be going well. *Athabaskan* was in radio contact with the USMC sergeant leading the assault, whose code-name was *Blackjack*, and was able to follow the progress of the attackers fairly well except for two short periods when *Blackjack's* ear-phones were knocked off by a sniper and when a rifle bullet damaged the controls of his radio.

*Athabaskan*, at about 0730, noticed that the junks, which had proceeded north towards Kumsan-ni where they were to re-embark the guerillas later in the morning, were beginning to withdraw from the beach. Large numbers of guerillas were also observed dashing madly along the shore towards the junks. *Athabaskan* was at this time in touch with *Blackjack*, who was then just preparing to lead his forward group in an assault on an enemy hill-top position. He informed the ship that no retreat had been ordered and that he intended to forge ahead; but just at this moment his radio went dead, and the ship heard no more.

What happened, *Athabaskan* learned later. Apparently the invasion craft were all civilian-manned junks commandeered for the occasion; while waiting for the guerillas to return, it suddenly dawned on some of the skippers that an enemy beach in broad daylight was no place for them and they decided to leave. The guerillas had left no guards behind to watch the junks, but fortunately some of the invaders had not followed their companions inland and spotted the deserters in time. Somehow *Blackjack* got wind of the affair and hurried back to take over control, but by the time he arrived it was too late to do anything but order a general withdrawal. This was successfully carried out, although when the junks were being taken in tow an enemy battery of 120-mm. began to shell them. Neither the CAP nor the ship was able to spot the battery, but fortunately it scored no hits, and the guerillas all got away safely.

Despite the late arrival and early withdrawal, the landing was considered by the guerillas to have been well worthwhile. They claimed that *Athabaskan* and

the carrier planes had inflicted 60 casualties on the enemy and that they themselves had killed another seven. They had not been able to take any enemy prisoners, but they had "rescued" 20 friendly civilians and "liberated" two junks, 35 bags of rice and other supplies. Of much more importance was the effect of the raid in raising the morale of the guerillas and lowering that of the enemy. The total cost to the guerillas was only one man slightly wounded.

Though it was no doubt due more to the state of the tides and the weather than to the raid, the enemy made no further attacks on the friendly islands during the remainder of *Athabaskan's* patrol. As a result the destroyer spent the next two days in comparative peace, carrying out only a few routine bombardments. By the time she was relieved by HMS *Amethyst* on the morning of 16 June *Athabaskan* had fired, in the seven day patrol, a total of 1,607 rounds of 4-inch and 2,231 rounds of 40-mm. It was a fitting climax to almost ten months of active operations in Korean waters.

Crusader at Sasebo.



*Athabaskan* arrived back at Sasebo on 17 June to prepare for her passage home. On the 20th Commander King turned over the duties of CANCOMDESFE to Commander (Acting Captain) Landymore in *Iroquois*, and on the next day, after the arrival of her relief, FMCS *Crusader* (Lieutenant-Commander J. H. G. Bovey, C.D., RCN), *Athabaskan* set off for Tokyo en route to Canada. For the next few months the Royal Canadian Navy would be represented in Korea by the team of *Iroquois*, *Nootka* and *Crusader*.

## References

<sup>1</sup>Item 1 in the talks had been the agenda itself; Item 2 the military demarcation line; Item 3 the details of the cease fire (it was chiefly the problem of inspection following an armistice that was holding up agreement on this issue); Item 4 was the prisoner-of-war issue; and Item 5 dealt with recommendations to be made to the governments involved in the Korean conflict by the negotiators. Full agreement had not been reached on Item 3—the Reds wished to include the U.S.S.R. as one of the “neutral” nations on the inspection team—when it was decided to discuss Items 3 and 4 concurrently. The first Panmunjom meeting on POW’s opened on 11 December, 1951.

<sup>2</sup>General Ridgway was authorized by Washington to extend the agreement for fifteen days at his own discretion, but as the Reds made no suggestion that they wished an extension, the agreement was allowed to lapse. (NS 1480-146/187, Vol. 6.)

<sup>3</sup>“The fact that Canadian Destroyers have not done as much time at this [carrier screening] as ships of other nations, is because of their good fortune in having H.D.W.S. Radar, which has been invaluable for inshore patrols.” (Captain Plomer, *Korean War Report*, 10.)

<sup>4</sup>On U.S. Army Engineers’ charts it is called Kunyonpyongdo, and on some Admiralty charts Taeyonpyong-do, but it was usually known in TE 95.12 as Yonpyong-do.

<sup>5</sup>Consists of Pengyong-do, Techong-do and Sochong-do.

<sup>6</sup>HMCS *Cayuga*, *Report of Proceedings*, January 1952, Appendix “A”.

<sup>7</sup>For further information on *Package and Derail*, see Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 350f.

<sup>8</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, January 1952.

<sup>9</sup>North of Choppeki Peninsula, off the mouth of the Taedongman. Yuk-to is about a mile from the mainland at high water but only a few yards from the edge of the mud-flats at low water. Wollae is about six miles west of Yuk-to and about three miles due south of the nearest point on the mainland.

<sup>10</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, February 1952.

<sup>11</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, January to February 1952, Appendix “D”.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>On 10 February UN forces sighted 366 MIG’s in the air the largest number since the beginning of hostilities. (NS 1480-146/187, vol. 6.)

<sup>14</sup>There was even an attack on east-coast islands. This occurred on the night of 19/20 February when the Yang-do Group was assaulted by an amphibious force of junks and sampans. The troops that got ashore were mopped up by the U.S.-led ROK Marine garrison, while the ships of TE 95.22 accounted for the others. Cagle and Manson *op. cit.*, 428.

<sup>15</sup>*Porterfield* suffered only minor damage and no casualties were caused. She was the only USN ship hit by a west-coast shore battery. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 529.)

<sup>16</sup>HMCS *Cayuga*, *Report of Proceedings*, February 1952. Appendix “A”.

<sup>17</sup>A light cargo ship operated by the U.S. Army; she was in the area supplying the guerilla bands serving under Army command.

<sup>18</sup>Also on board were a USNR lieutenant, a ROKN lieutenant, two Royal Marine NCO’s and five USN ratings.

<sup>19</sup>Lieutenant Saxon served in this capacity from mid-February to mid-April, acting as the navy’s liaison officer to the guerillas, ROK Marines and the various UN groups on the western islands. His work was highly commended by his superiors. (Commander Plomer, *Korean War Report*, Part I, 16-17.)

<sup>20</sup>Yongmae-do is in the Haeju-man, some ten miles northeast of Yonpyong-do.

<sup>21</sup>NS 1480-156/187, Vol. 7.

<sup>22</sup>The bombing campaign which began with the raids on the Yalu power stations was termed “co-ordinated maximum effort air strikes.” It marked the beginning of a program in which air interdiction was subordinated to other forms of aerial attacks, particularly those on strategic military targets. See Cagle and Manson, 440-460.

<sup>23</sup>HMCS *Cayuga*, *Report of Proceedings*, April 1952.

<sup>24</sup>See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 529.

<sup>25</sup>HMCS *Nootk*, *Report of Proceedings*, May to June 1952.

<sup>26</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, May and June 1952.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

## STALEMATE ON THE “ISLAND FRONT”

The preceding chapter, dealing with the first six months of 1952, opened with a description of the many obstacles barring the way to peace between the belligerents in Korea. This chapter, which deals with the second half of 1952, must begin with a similar recital; for if there was little hope for peace in January, there was even less in July.

On 28 April Admiral Joy handed to the Communists at Panmunjom a document outlining a “package deal” for settling the remaining points at issue between the negotiators. But the Communists were not yet prepared to give up their insistence on forcible repatriation of all prisoners, and the “package deal” was rejected. On 22 May Lieutenant General William K. Harrison, Jr., took over Admiral Joy’s post as senior UN negotiator at Panmunjom, but by then the time for negotiation was past; all General Harrison could do was bear patiently with the propaganda speeches of the Red delegates until the Chinese could be made to realize that the UN was not going to back down from its stand on the prisoner-of-war issue. During the second half of 1952, however, it began to look very much as if the Chinese were never going to be brought to this realization, and on 8 October General Harrison adjourned the talks *sine die*. A statement by General Clark made it quite clear that the next move was up to the Reds.

The stalemate at Panmunjom had its effect on military operations. There was however little change in the situation at the front until in September when fighting flared up again and produced a series of vicious skirmishes and minor battles until the coming of winter put a damper on military operations. But bloody as this fighting was it was really of little moment except to the men actually engaged;<sup>1</sup> whether the Reds seized Sniper Ridge today and the UN troops captured Triangle Hill tomorrow chiefly concerned only the troops who were or would be holding those

sectors; it made no apparent difference to the negotiations at Panmunjom.

The lack of progress at the peace talks had little effect on naval and air warfare in Korea, since there had never been any let-up in the campaigns carried on by these two services. The tacit admission of the failure of aerial interdiction which led to the “co-ordinated maximum effort air strikes” against industrial and other military targets in North Korea has already been mentioned.\* This campaign, which began in June, continued throughout the remainder of the year, but as the supply of suitable targets began to run out it was supplemented, beginning in October 1952, by what was called the *Cherokee* campaign. *Cherokee* strikes were designed to hit the enemy targets which were near the front line yet out of range of artillery fire and outside of the area normally covered by the close support aircraft. The programme met with considerable success and, except for a lull in January and February 1953, was continued throughout the war.<sup>2</sup>

For the ships of the United Nations navy the second half of 1952 was not very different from the first. Still, there were a few changes, not the least of which was the new attitude towards shore bombardments and duelling with enemy batteries. This particular change occurred shortly after Rear Admiral J. E. Gingrich, USN, relieved Rear Admiral G. C. Dyer as Commander Task Force 95 at the end of May. Admiral Gingrich early came to the conclusion that a great deal of ammunition was being wasted, particularly on the east coast, in unobserved bombardments; and on his orders a great reduction was made in the number of shells fired at night and in unobserved, harassing fire.<sup>3</sup> Admiral Gingrich also saw little to recommend the practice of destroyers’ engaging in duels with

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\*See above, p. 102, note 22.

well-concealed shore batteries when the latter possessed all the advantages; it made little sense to him to risk a valuable destroyer or frigate in the hope of perhaps knocking out a single field-piece. Admiral Gingrich's attitude, so totally different from Admiral Dyer's policy of "hit them with all you've got, and damn the consequences," did not, however, lead to any reduction in the results achieved by the UN naval forces; it was merely a case of using different methods to secure the same objective.<sup>4</sup>

During the second half of 1952, as during the first, the Canadian destroyers continued to operate chiefly on the west coast defending the friendly islands and screening the carriers; indeed in these six months only three CANDESFE ships performed an east-coast patrol. Enemy activity on the west coast during this period varied in intensity; sometimes the Reds became quite aggressive; sometimes they were surprisingly quiet. On the whole, however, the tendency was for the "island front" to become more stable as the friendly guerillas, aided by ROIL Marines, consolidated their hold on the islands and the Communists strengthened their defences along the mainland coast. Such stabilization resulted in fewer raids by both sides and consequently less work for the naval forces in the area; it also resulted in an increase in the number of enemy shore batteries and made inshore patrolling even more dangerous than before.

During the whole of July the ships of CANDESFE performed only two inshore patrol missions; the rest of the time they were occupied in carrier screening. It was the new arrival, *Crusader*, who drew the first inshore assignment, a two-week tour with TU 95.12.1 in the Chodo area. This patrol was not very eventful. By day *Crusader* usually lay at anchor north-west of Sok-to on flak-suppression duties, keeping the batteries on Amgak quiet during the numerous air raids carried out by the carrier planes of TE 95.11. At night the ship was usually stationed between Chodo and the mainland to guard against enemy raids, but even this duty proved uneventful, and the most that *Crusader* was called upon to do during these night patrols was to fire a star-shell now and again. One reason for the seeming docility of the enemy in the Chodo area at this time was that he was being subjected to almost continuous attack by aircraft; at night the bombers of the Fifth Air Force pounded him, and during the daylight hours the carrier planes of TE 95.11 circled overhead ready to crush anything that moved with a shower of napalm and high explosive.

Occasionally *Crusader* received assignments that broke the regular routine. Twice for instance she provided gun-fire support for the USN minesweepers *Redhead* and *Swallow* while they were carrying out

check-sweeps in the Taedong Estuary and in the inshore (*Cigarette*) route from Chodo to Choppeki Point. On neither occasion did the enemy shore batteries attempt to interfere with the 'sweepers. Twice during her patrol *Crusader* was assigned to the recently-instituted *Jaguar* patrol, which was now carried out nightly in order to guard the little islet of Nap.<sup>5</sup> Neither *Jaguar* was particularly interesting; on the first one a suspicious-looking junk was intercepted; on the second *Crusader* ranged to the north of Nap-to and bombarded several of the nearby Communist-held islands without opposition.

*Crusader* was relieved on the morning of 22 July and sailed for Kure where she spent the remainder of the month. Service with TG 95.1 was not nearly so arduous now as it had been in late 1950 and late 1951. Between patrols all the destroyers were given ample time in harbour to carry out maintenance and provide recreation for the ships' companies; no longer was a ship expected to dash into harbour and replenish overnight before setting out on another arduous patrol; and no longer did a destroyer have to fear that she might remain on active operations continuously for 50 days as had *Cayuga* back in late 1950. Now, in the summer of 1952, TG 95.1 was so prosperous that it was even able to arrange for short exercise periods for its ships.

Very few incidents worth recording occurred during all the carrier screening missions, and the resulting *Worthington* patrols, performed by the Canadian ships during July. *Iroquois* came closer than any of them to coming to grips with the enemy during these patrols. On the evening of 28 July she was detached from her carrier group and joined TU 95.12.2 for *Worthington* duties. Early that night HMNZS *Taupo* (the CTU) detected a fleet of enemy junks a fair distance out to sea apparently making for Pengyong-do and managed to sink several of them before they scattered. *Iroquois* at once hurried to the scene, but although she searched all night she was unable to find a single junk and had to return to her carrier next morning empty handed. But *Taupo* had apparently inflicted a severe enough defeat on the Communists, for they never again attempted an invasion of Pengyong-do.

The second inshore patrol by a Canadian destroyer during July was carried out by *Nootka*, who from 19 July to 6 August served as CTU 95.12.4 in the Haeju area. This was a fairly eventful patrol; the enemy artillery was most aggressive and persisted in hammering the friendly islands and the UN naval ships at every opportunity. *Nootka* herself came under fire no less than seven times, but fortunately she suffered no hits. The enemy raiding forces, unlike the artillery, were

surprisingly inactive, and not a single amphibious attack was made on a friendly island during *Nootka's* tour as CTU. The UN forces on the other hand sent intelligence parties ashore practically every night and also launched an occasional large-scale raid.

*Nootka* was intimately involved in one such raid; unfortunately it turned out to be, through no fault of the UN naval forces, a sort of comic-opera affair. The operation was to have begun at 2130 on 24 July, but it so happened that the two guerilla-manned motor junks that were to tow the sail craft of the assault force had decided to leave earlier that evening to pick up some stores at Kangwha-do. Fortunately the very capable ROK Navy vessel, *AMC-302*, commanded by the redoubtable Lieutenant Pack Cyun Do, was serving with TU 95.12.4 at the time, and she was pressed into service. The operation was two and a half hours behind schedule when *AMC-302* set out from Yonpyong-do towing a long column of eleven sailing junks loaded to the gunwales with guerilla raiders.

*Nootka* in the meantime moved up into her supporting position deep in the Haeju-man. The raid was aimed at the central point of the three-pronged peninsula opposite the port of Haeju, and its objectives were to capture prisoners, destroy military installations and entice enemy troops from their inland strongholds out into the open where they would be vulnerable to *Nootka's* gun-fire and the attacks of carrier planes from TE 95.11.

While the AMC, trailing her line of junks, was slowly making her way up the channel, the destroyer's radar picked up a junk lying near the path the assault force would have to take. The American leader of the raiders asked that this threat be disposed of by gun-fire, but Commander Steele, realizing that such an action would deprive the operation of the advantage of surprise, decided instead to capture the enemy craft by stealth. A motor cutter manned by an armed party from *Nootka* was launched and conned by radar to a position between the junk and the mainland. The cutter then closed the junk to within hailing distance, whereupon *Nootka's* ROK liaison officer politely informed the enemy that he was in an untenable position and had better surrender. The crew of the junk saw the wisdom of this demand and, meekly following orders, brought their craft to within a few feet of where *Nootka* lay. A line was then passed, the junk boarded and its crew of five, armed with rifles, automatic weapons and grenades, taken prisoner.

By this time the assault force was approaching *Nootka's* position. Realizing that the whole operation might be more difficult than had been expected,

Commander Steele sent one of his officers aboard the AMC with radio gear to ensure good communications between the two vessels in an emergency. The assault force had kept well to the north of the channel, away from the landing beaches, and when course was altered to cross over to the break-off point the sailing junks slipped the tow prematurely. A strong tide was flowing, and the junks, unable to make headway against it, began to drift towards the Haeju jetties to the northward. A field gun on the mainland to the east chose this moment to enliven the proceedings by opening up on *Nootka*, but fortunately all the rounds fell far short and the gun soon ceased fire. Working frantically the AMC managed to round up her junks and again set course for the break-off position. She had barely begun to gather way when once more the tow parted. Three times in succession this happened, and each time the wind and the tide set the force a little closer to the Haeju jetties. Finally at 0315, when only an hour and a half of darkness remained, the American guerilla leader decided to cancel the landing.

But abandoning the landing did not solve all the problems. The force was only a mile and a half from the Haeju jetties, and it would have to battle a Force-4 wind and a three-knot current to reach safety. *Nootka* now broke radio silence and ordered Lieutenant Pack to split the tow into three sections, securing one aft and the others on each quarter. This plan proved successful, and eventually the whole force was brought out safely and returned to Yonpyong-do. After daylight the retiring junks were fired on by guns on both sides of the channel, but luckily no hits were scored. A post-mortem investigation of the raid revealed that the trouble with the tow had been caused by a "foreign" junk which had been inadvertently rounded up following the first, premature casting-off of the tow. This junk was manned by agents of one of the independent intelligence organizations, and these men, fully aware of what sort of opposition the raiders would meet ashore, cast off the tow at every opportunity in order to avoid going in with the assault force. Fortunately for all concerned, including the secret agents, *AMC-302* proved equal to the occasion; had she not, the results would have been disastrous.<sup>6</sup>

Another incident that occurred during *Nootka's* patrol had a happier result than the abortive raid. During the night of 30/31 July the destroyer was stationed off Taesuap-to on anti-invasion duty when at 0145 the ROK patrol craft *PC-701*, which was serving with TU 95.12.4 at the time, sent a frantic call for help, saying she was aground on a reef near the mainland north-west of Yonpyong. *Nootka* steamed to the rescue with all despatch, spurred on by successive messages

saying that the PC had floated off the rocks and was sinking, that her engines had stopped, and finally that her generator compartment had flooded and that she was completely without power of any kind. When *Nootka* arrived the PC was indeed in terrible straits, wallowing in a short, heavy swell and seemingly in a very unstable condition. Luckily she had managed to get an anchor down in good holding ground, and it was keeping the tide from carrying her back on the rocks some two and a half cables away. *Nootka* moved inshore of the craft and anchored; then using heavy hemp lines she worked the Korean vessel into a favourable position and came alongside. A damage control party at once leaped across to the Korean vessel and began to throw overboard every movable object on the upper deck and all the heavy stuff that could be brought up from below in order to lighten her. There had been no time for *Nootka's* interpreter to explain what was going on, and at first the Koreans were horrified at such waste of good materials, but when they realized what the Canadians were doing they pitched in with right good will. And there was need for haste; the PC's engine room, generator room, anti-submarine compartment, forepeak and the compartment forward of the tiller flats were all flooded.

While the damage control party worked frantically to lighten the ship and prevent more flooding, others struggled to prepare the disabled craft for towing. Normal towing procedure could not be used because of the proximity of the reef and the strength of the wind and of the tidal current, so arrangements were made for an "alongside tow" as it was imperative to get out of range of the shore batteries before daybreak. When the PC had been firmly secured with lines to *Nootka* the former slipped her cable, and the

*Nootka* salvaging ROK PC 701.



RADM E. G. A. Clifford, FO Second-in-Command FES, inspects *Nootka* personnel.

two set out for Yonpyong-do. By judicious use of wind and rudders the disabled craft was kept riding about 30 feet clear of *Nootka's* side. All went well and daybreak found the two some 8,500 yards from the enemy batteries. By this time the cruiser HMS *Belfast* had arrived to cover the withdrawal, and there was no interference from the enemy. At 0900 the Korean vessel was safely anchored off Yonpyong. Divers from *Belfast* and *Nootka* went down to try to seal the larger rents in the PC's hull, and pumps from *Nootka* and USS *Firecrest* made considerable headway in emptying some of the compartments. The fleet tug USS *Arikara* arrived that night and, after sealing off the holes and pumping out the water, towed the ship to Inchon. Before *PC-701* left, her Commanding Officer came aboard *Nootka* to give thanks for the help the Canadian ship had rendered and insisted on presenting his sword to Commander Steele. When *Nootka* passed the PC just before she was towed away, the Koreans manned ship and cheered her by.

The ill-fated raid and the rescue of *PC-701* were but two incidents in a very interesting patrol. Hardly a day went by without the occurrence of some event of at least local interest. Time and time again *Nootka* was called upon to silence enemy batteries firing on the friendly islands, and often she came under fire herself. The planes of TE 95.11 provided splendid support when the weather was suitable, and the bombers of the Fifth Air Force responded very quickly to all calls for assistance. When *Nootka* turned over her duties in the



Haeju to HMS *Concord* on 5 August and returned to Kure, she had well earned the three-week respite from active operations that she received.

The month of August was uneventful for the ships of CANDESFE. Aside from Nootka only one of them carried out an inshore patrol; the remainder of the time was taken up with carrier screening and with exercises. All three destroyers spent from four to five days during the month exercising with USN and RN ships on the east coast.

It was *Iroquois* who drew the inshore assignment and served from 30 July to 5 August with the Chodo unit, TU 95.12.1. She had a rather dull patrol during which she carried out a few bombardments, most of them on enemy islands north of Nap-to. There was hardly any enemy activity, but occasionally a shore battery would open up on lone UN ships that moved in too close to shore. HMS *Belfast* was unfortunate enough to be hit by one of these infrequent shells, but the damage she suffered was negligible.

Of the carrier screening missions carried out by Canadian ships during August, only the one performed by *Crusader* was of any interest whatsoever. *Crusader* went out with a group led by HMS *Ocean* on 7 August and remained with it until 19 August.<sup>7</sup> The screening duties themselves were uneventful as usual, but occasionally something would happen during a *Worthington* patrol to break the monotony. *Crusader* was fortunate in being assigned an extended *Worthington* from 12 to 14 August while the main element was replenishing. During the night of 12/13 August she patrolled the area Mahap-to to Choppeki Point and found all quiet. On the following day permission was received to visit the Haeju area; it was the most active area in the domain of TE 95.12, and *Crusader* wished to make herself familiar with its waters. En route to Yonpyong-do, the headquarters island of the Haeju unit, *Crusader* intercepted a very suspicious-looking junk which was manned by three men, one of them armed, and which carried an enormous amount of Korean currency. After much radio signalling back and forth between the various authorities in the area, *Crusader* was requested to release her captive. Some two hours later however the destroyer was asked to try to intercept the junk again and bring it to Yonpyong-do. *Crusader* managed to find the craft again, took it in tow and headed for the island. By skilful handling of the tow wire the junk was kept just inside the second stern wave; when in this position it planed along without trouble even when the destroyer increased speed to 18 knots. Upon arrival at Yonpyong-do the junk and its crew were handed over to the U.S. island commander.

The night of 13/14 August was spent quietly patrolling off Mahap-to, but at daybreak *Crusader* was called upon to give fire support to a large force of guerillas withdrawing from that island after a raid. HMNZS *Rotoiti* joined in, as did the planes of HMS *Ocean*, and a very effective curtain of fire was laid down to protect the returning raiders. *Crusader's* main contribution was the bombardment of a village harbouring enemy troops and anti-aircraft guns, and the CTU 95.12.2 in *Rotoiti*, who was spotting the fall of shot, paid the Canadian destroyer the high compliment of signalling that it had been the most accurate bombardment he had ever witnessed.

*Crusader's* next turn for *Worthington* duty came on the night of 16/17 August. She became involved in another junk episode during this patrol, when she intercepted a suspicious craft off Kirin-do manned by three men armed with a carbine and a Russian-made sub-machine-gun. Once again there was a long debate between the various authorities before *Crusader* was ordered to release the craft, and once again orders were later received to re-intercept it and tow it in, this time to Pengyong-do. *Crusader* succeeded in capturing the junk, but as it was a rickety, old tub that could not stand up to towing she left it anchored at sea and held its crew for delivery to guerilla headquarters. All this took time and *Crusader* barely had time to carry out a bombardment of the inland town of Ongjin before she had to return to the carrier. This was *Crusader's* last *Worthington* before she returned with *Ocean* to Japan on 19 August.

All of the CANDESFE destroyers had a share in the inshore patrolling during September;<sup>8</sup> all of them served one tour with the west-coast carrier; and towards the end of the month *Iroquois* embarked on the first east-coast patrol carried out by a Canadian ship since June. The inshore patrols were more eventful than those in the previous two months, and the destroyers were occasionally involved in fairly interesting operations; *Nootka* indeed made herself famous during the month by becoming the first and, as it turned out, only United Nations ship to capture an enemy naval vessel during the Korean conflict.

The first inshore patrol of the month was carried out by *Iroquois* who served as CTU 95.12.4 in the Haeju during the first two weeks of September. The patrol was marked by considerable enemy activity on the mainland opposite Mu-do and by some heavy shelling of the friendly guerillas on that island, but the principal event was a fairly large-scale raid carried out by guerillas from Yomgmae-do supported by *Iroquois* and *Belfast* and the planes of USS *Sicily*. Ever since the failure of the guerilla raid in August—the raid



*Iroquois* in Far Eastern waters.

supported by *Nootka* and *AMC-302*—the spirits of the *Wolf packs* had been rather low, and *Operation Siciro*,\* as it was called, was undertaken chiefly for the purpose of restoring morale. It was planned to send three guerilla companies in motor and sail junks from Yongmae across to the edge of the mud-flats opposite the Changdong Peninsula. Under the cover of *Iroquois*' guns, whose fire was to be directed by a shore firecontrol team, the raiders intended to make a quick foray inland at about 0400, retiring to their junks about 0800 with what prisoners they had been able to capture. At daybreak the planes from *Sicily* were to come over and help cover the withdrawal.

For once a guerilla raid went almost exactly according to plan. On the evening of 9 September, shortly before the preliminary bombardment was to begin, HMS *Belfast* (CTE 95.12) arrived off Yonpyong-do on a routine visit and offered to help support *Siciro*. This fortuitous accession of 6-inch gun support proved of great value during the operation.

*Belfast* and *Iroquois* opened fire at 0230 (10 September) to begin the softening-up process, and for 90 minutes their guns poured high explosive on the enemy positions in the assault area. Fire was directed by the shore spotting team and according to all reports was very effective.

At 0400 the guerillas left their junks at the edge of the mud-flats and forged inland. Throughout the assault and during the withdrawal, calls for fire support by *Belfast* and *Iroquois* were frequent and were always answered promptly and efficiently. On one occasion during the withdrawal a guerilla company was being pressed hard by a larger enemy force when two 6-inch shells from *Belfast* dropped in the midst of the attackers and stopped them in their tracks. *Sicily*'s aircraft arrived at 0620 and had a field day bombing and strafing the disorganized enemy forces. One incident that particularly delighted the *Wolf packs*, who, to put it as politely as possible, were not at all squeamish, was when an aerial bomb scored a perfect

\*So called from a combination of the names *Sicily* and *Iroquois*.

hit on an enemy bunker and produced a veritable shower of air-borne North Koreans. The landing force was in its junks by 0830, heading for Yongmae-do.<sup>9</sup>

Compared to most guerilla raids, *Operation Siciro* was a great success. The cost to the guerillas was only four men lightly wounded, and reports from friendly agents and prisoners of war set total enemy casualties in dead and wounded at about 400. In addition, several gun positions were neutralized or destroyed and the enemy defences in the area thrown into disorder. Three friendly agents who had been captured earlier were rescued from enemy hands and brought back to Yongmae. Perhaps the most important result of the raid was the effect it had on *Wolf pack* morale; in the four nights after *Siciro* they landed more agents in enemy territory than they had during the entire month preceding it. Nothing of any great moment occurred during the four days *Iroquois* remained in the Haeju following *Siciro*. She was relieved as CTU by HMS *St. Bride's Bay* on the morning of 14 September and sailed to join the screen of HMS *Ocean*.

The other inshore patrols undertaken by Canadian destroyers were in the Chodo area, where *Crusader* served from 9 to 20 September and *Nootka* from 20 to 30 September. *Crusader*'s tour proved relatively quiet, though her Commanding Officer noted that the enemy artillery was somewhat more active than during the ship's last patrol in the area. There was also a good deal of enemy air activity, and a flight of marauding MIG's shot down a USMC Corsair off Sok-to on 10 September for the loss of one of their own number. The MIGs came over practically every day, but as usual they made no attempt to molest the UN ships. Actually *Crusader* was menaced less by the enemy during this patrol than by the great masses of seaweed that drifted down among the islands from the Taedong estuary, and on one occasion while negotiating a narrow channel she came close to being swept upon the rocks when the main circulation intakes became clogged with weed and the engines lost power.

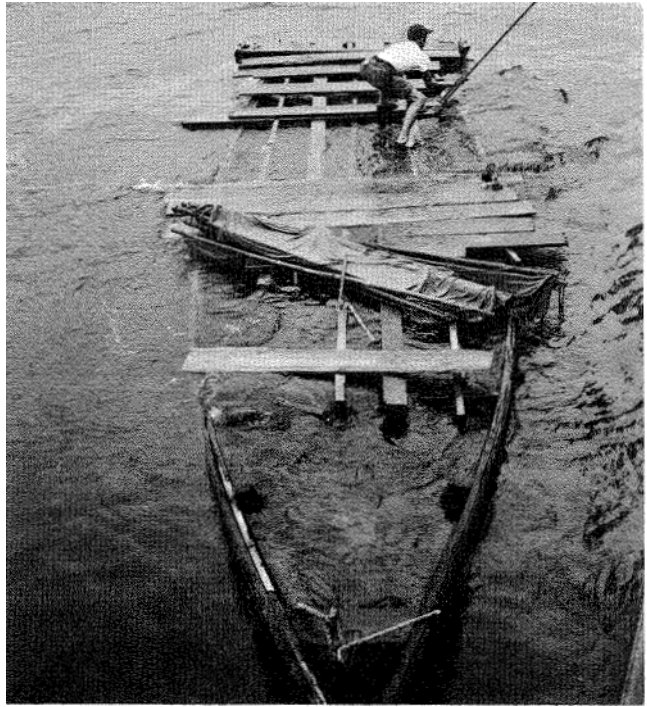
*Nootka* relieved *Crusader* with the Chodo unit on the evening of 20 September and for the first few days carried on an ordinary, routine patrol. The first untoward event occurred on the night of 25/26 September when *Nootka*, in her usual night station south-east of Chodo, detected with her Sperry radar a small craft moving north along the coast-line off Songhang-ni. The plot showed the craft alter course towards Chodo and then stop when out in the channel. Unfortunately the ship had been informed that a friendly junk would be in the area during the night, so no alarm was felt until the contact suddenly reversed course to make for enemy territory. *Nootka* immediately dashed forward to intercept, but the

unknown craft had too big a lead and was too close to the shore for the destroyer to cut it off, and it quickly gained the safety of the shallows. Commander Steele wished to capture the vessel, not destroy it, so *Nootka* did not try to sink it while it was fleeing. An attempt to drive it out to sea by firing high explosive into the cliffs under which it had taken shelter was unsuccessful.

Thinking that the stranger might have been laying mines out in the *Cigarette* channel, Commander Steele called for a minesweeper to check sweep the area. USS *Defense* arrived in the evening and after dark on the 26th carried out a thorough check; she could find nothing, and at midnight she left to carry out another assignment. As she was leaving, however, both she and *Nootka* picked up a radar contact near the place where the junk had been driven ashore on the previous night.

Commander Steele was determined not to let the craft escape a second time, and he quietly moved *Nootka* into position to intercept if it should again move out into *Cigarette*. This is precisely what it did, and *Nootka*, desiring to trap it as far out to sea as possible, waited patiently until it turned to make for shore. She then put on speed and rapidly closed what turned out to be a large junk with unusually low free-board. The dire threats of the ROK interpreter that the junk would be blown out of the water if it did not reverse course proved effective, and the craft altered around. As it did so, small dark objects began to drop from the junk's stern and float towards *Nootka*, who reversed engines and set up a wash that kept them clear of the ship. When it was found that these strange objects showed up well on the radar, *Nootka* drew off to some 1,800 yards, illuminated the junk, and put several rounds of Bofors into it at the water-

Starshell illumination, *Nootka*.



All that was left of the minelaying junk captured by *Nootka* in the Chodo area.

line in order to encourage anyone who might still be aboard to abandon ship. An armed party was set off in a motor cutter to investigate the phenomenon of the floating blobs, and as the party approached the nearest one its members saw that it contained what appeared to be a human body with its feet sticking up in the air. A flash-light was turned on, revealing a North Korean officer sitting in a large, inflated truck tube and about to open fire with a submachine-gun. The armed party was on the alert, and the antagonists opened fire together; but the Communist must have been blinded by the light in his eyes, for he missed completely and his opponents did not. He and his unconventional craft sank immediately, riddled with bullets. After this experience it was decided not to attempt to retrieve the other members of the junk's crew but to leave them floating about until daybreak. Attention was instead turned to the junk itself, which was towed out to sea for examination later.

As soon as it was light enough *Nootka* returned to pick up survivors and managed to retrieve all five, two lieutenants and three petty officers of the North Korean Navy. They had all discarded their weapons, but even so the two officers did not allow themselves to be taken without a struggle; one of them very nearly succeeded in drowning himself, but he was unceremoniously hauled aboard and resuscitated by his captors. Warm baths, clean clothing, hot rum

toddies and cigarettes worked a remarkable change in the attitude of the prisoners, and one of the petty officers in particular became very co-operative, chatting right merrily with the Canadians, through the ROK interpreter, and divulging all sorts of valuable information.

The vessel *Nootka* had captured was a large junk that had been commandeered by the North Korean Navy and converted into a minelayer. It had been cut down until it had only 18 inches of free-board when fully loaded in order to lessen the chance of visual detection, and it was powered by expert oarsmen to avoid the necessity of mounting an engine whose sound might be heard by the enemy.

It had been heavily reinforced to enable it to carry two magnetic mines, weighing approximately one ton each, which were rolled over the stern on improvised wooden rails. The junk had performed only two operational missions (on 19 and 20 September) before being detected the first time by *Nootka*. Thus at a cost of six naval personnel and a number of civilian oarsmen, and considerable expenditure of time, labour and materials, the Reds were able to lay a total of only eight mines, which were then destroyed by 'sweepers' before they could do any damage. Certainly the short operational life of the Chodo minelayer must have been a disappointment to the Communists, and apparently the North Korean Navy did not repeat the experiment.<sup>10</sup>

*Nootka* remained with the Chodo unit for two days after the capture of the naval junk, but the rest of the patrol was anticlimatic. USS *Chatterer* arrived on the 30th and, with *Nootka* standing by to prevent the enemy artillery from interfering, began to sweep for the mines laid by the junk. The 'sweeper' had already exploded one of the mines when *Nootka* had to leave on the morning of 1 October to join the carrier element.

The month of October 1952 began tragically for the Canadian destroyers in Korea. *Iroquois* had recently been assigned an east-coast patrol and had taken over from HMS *Charity* as Commander Task Element 95.22<sup>11</sup> on 28 September. The turn-over took place off Yang-do where *Iroquois* was taken under fire by shore batteries within fifteen minutes, although UN ships had been anchoring there unmolested for the past fifteen months. Fortunately all the rounds fell short.

*Iroquois* carried out routine patrols for the first few days in order to become familiar with the waters controlled by the task element. During this period she carried out several bombardments but was not herself engaged. A short time before *Iroquois* took over from *Charity* the latter had destroyed a train and a section

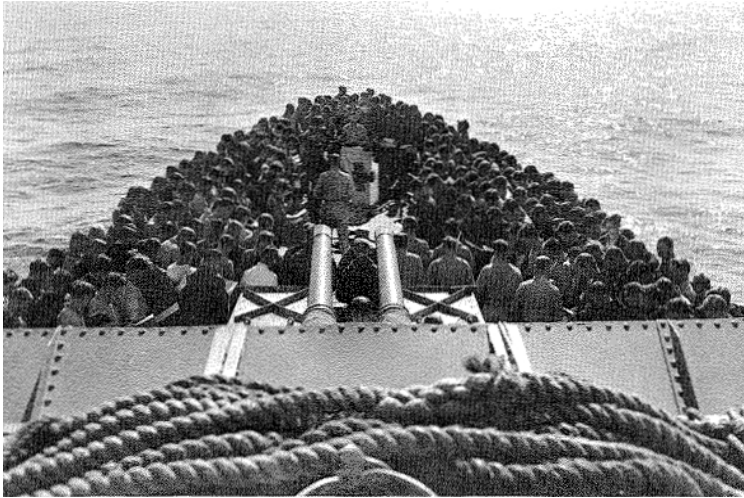
of the railway line near *Package One*, a short distance south-west of Songjin; since then the carrier planes of TF 77 and the ships of TE 95.22 had succeeded in preventing the reopening of the line by systematic shelling and bombing. On 2 October, however, Task Force 77 was replenishing and could send no planes, so the full responsibility for maintaining the rail block fell on the destroyers. USS *Marsh* spent the morning preventing the enemy repair crews from working on the cut but came under fire several times from nearby shore batteries; in the afternoon *Iroquois* was sent to help her. Twice *Iroquois* steamed in to bombard the cut, with *Marsh* in company to provide fire support should the shore batteries again intervene. The Canadian destroyer had completed her second run-in and had just turned to withdraw when the Communist gunners went into action. Two ranging shots were not dangerously close, but the third was right on the target. *Iroquois* was hit. The shell struck on the starboard side and exploded abreast of "B" gun. Lieutenant-Commander John L. Quinn, RCN, and Able Seaman Elburne A. Baikie were killed instantly; Able Seaman Wallis M. Burden was critically wounded; Able Seamen Edwin M. Jodoin and Joseph A. Gaudet were severely wounded; and eight other men\* sustained minor injuries from shell fragments and the effects of blast. Enemy shells were still bursting around the ship as she zigzagged at full speed to get out of range, but she suffered no more hits.

*Iroquois*' medical team went into action at once to treat the wounded, and the ship's doctor, Surgeon Lieutenant D. W. Brooks, and his assistant, Petty Officer Fortin, himself suffering from a minor shellfragment wound of the right leg, had no lack of willing assistants. It was at once apparent that Able Seaman Burden was in need of immediate surgical attention such as could only be provided in a well-equipped shore hospital. As weather conditions prevented his transfer to another vessel or his being evacuated by air, *Iroquois* handed over command of the element to USS *Marsh* and set course southward. The ship had not steamed many miles when in spite of all that the Medical Officer could do Able Seaman Burden died from his wounds. The other wounded were considered to be in no danger, and *Iroquois* therefore reversed course to rejoin her element.

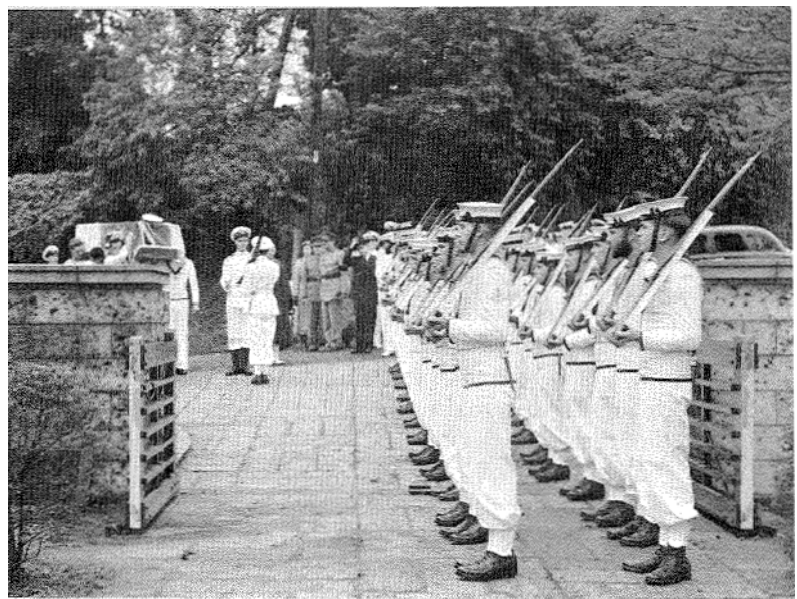
Next morning (3 October) TE 95.22 replenished at sea, and when this operation had been completed

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\*They were Petty Officers Emilien Fortin, Edward Moslin, and Gerald Jamieson, and Able Seamen Gilbert Dynna, Eugene Riley, Walter Wrigley, Waldo Bergghen and Aime Adams. All of these men remained with the ship and were back on full duty within a few days.



The ship's company of *Iroquois* holds a memorial service for their shipmates killed in action off the east coast of Korea.



Burial services at Tokyo for the members of *Iroquois*' company who were killed in action.

*Iroquois* resumed command. The dead and the two seriously wounded able seamen were transferred aboard the oiler USS *Chemung* for passage to Japan.

On 8 October, in the Commonwealth Cemetery at Yokohama, Japan, the bodies of Lieutenant-Commander Quinn, Able Seaman Baikie and Able Seaman Burden were buried with full naval honours. Officers and men from HMCS *Crusader*, led by their captain, Lieutenant-Commander J. H. G. Bovey, bore the dead to their last resting place and fired the farewell salute over the graves. The service was conducted by Chaplain John Wilson, RCN, Protestant chaplain to the Canadian Destroyers Far East. Among those attending were, besides the *Crusader* party, many representatives of the armed services and governments of Canada and Britain.

*Iroquois* remained with TE 95.22 for another eleven days after being hit and was very active in bombarding enemy gun positions and interdiction targets along the coastal railway. U.S. Ships *Marsh*, *Walker* and *Carmick* were all engaged by shore batteries during this period, but *Iroquois* was not again fired on; although, as Commander Landymore remarked, she gave the enemy "ample reason and opportunity to do so."<sup>12</sup> At noon on 14 October command of TE 95.22 was turned over to USS *Carmick*, and in the afternoon *Crusader* arrived to relieve *Iroquois* who thereupon sailed for Sasebo.

*Crusader* was to have far more opportunity than had *Iroquois* during her east-coast patrol to practise the newly-discovered and very popular "sport" of "train busting." This activity, which was confined to the east coast where conditions were suitable for it, first became popular in July 1952 when the U.S. destroyer Orleck of TE 95.22 destroyed two trains during a twelve-day period. Orleck's successes led to the formation by the Operations Officer of TG 95 of the

"Trainbusters Club," an exclusive organization consisting of those ships who could prove to the satisfaction of Task Force headquarters staff that they had destroyed at least one enemy train.<sup>13</sup> The Canadian ships entered into the spirit of this game with the greatest enthusiasm, and before the end of hostilities had destroyed proportionately far and away more trains than had the ships of any other nation.<sup>14</sup>

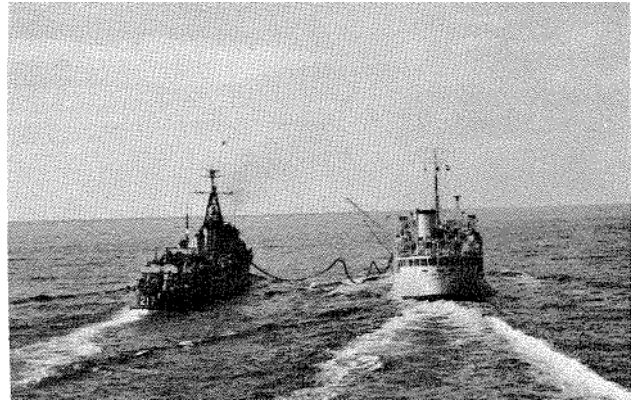
On her very first night with TE 95.22 *Crusader* spent several hours at *Package Four*, just south of Chaho, watching for trains, but neither then nor on her next two assignments at this *Package* (the nights of 16/17 and 22/23 October) did she catch sight of a possible victim. *Crusader*'s first taste of success in the train-busting campaign came on the night of 25/26 October when she was lying in wait off *Package Two*, a stretch of track between two tunnels, south of Songjin. All four guns of the main armament and the entire gunnery control system were manned and ready when at 0124 the Gunnery Officer, Lieutenant F. J. Copas, spotted a train in the *Package*. The 4.5's opened fire at once, and Lieutenant Copas and his director crew saw the two end box cars topple off the track. No one on the bridge had seen the train, let alone the hits, but the gunners were vindicated later by pilots from TF 77 who reported two box cars lying at the foot of the embankment on the west side of the track.

On the night of 27/28 October *Crusader* was again on duty at *Package Two*. It was a fine night, clear and bright, with the sea glassy calm, when at 2014 the ship glided in to stop some 3,000 yards from the target area. The company was at action stations, but it was planned to "secure" at 2020 and keep only the main armament and the director and control system manned during the night. It was at precisely 2020 when the X0<sup>15</sup> and the

Gunnery Officer were in the director discussing this plan that Lieutenant Copas spotted a cloud of white smoke at the mouth of the northern tunnel. All the guns had already been trained on this point, as it was considered more profitable to catch a laden south-bound train than an empty north-bound one, and no time was wasted in opening fire. The first salvo hit squarely and the train stopped, the freight cars filling almost the entire 220-yard length of the rail line between the tunnels. The locomotive, apparently unharmed, hurriedly uncoupled and dashed into the southern tunnel. *Crusader* checked fire, swung her guns to cover the southern end of the tunnel, and opened up the moment the locomotive appeared; but smoke from the bursting shells obscured the target, and it was thought that it had escaped. The guns were then turned on the box cars which were systematically smashed up and set on fire. USS *De Haven* was called from her patrol to give support, and she remained with *Crusader* throughout the night helping to illuminate the target and bombard it occasionally to prevent enemy repair crews from undertaking any salvage work. Four Corsairs arrived from TF 77 at dawn and bombed and “rocketed” the remains; they were followed by four Skyraiders, also from the carriers, who repeated the treatment and managed to seal off the north tunnel with a 1000-pound bomb. The aircraft reported that a locomotive lay wrecked at the bottom of the embankment on the other side of the southern tunnel; this was all that was needed to make the joy of *Crusader’s* company complete, and when the destroyer sailed south to refuel and meet her relief ship, morale had never been higher.

*Crusader* had of course not been occupied entirely with train hunting during her patrol, indeed this activity had taken up only a small portion of her time with TE 95.22. During daylight hours she had carried out a good many bombardments of interdiction targets, gun positions, villages occupied by enemy troops and many other objectives. Many of her nights had not been spent in train hunting; sometimes she had been assigned to escort minesweepers, who now did much of their work at night; sometimes her task had been to protect the Yang-do Group from enemy raiders. On one occasion she was detailed to support a raid on Songjin by a ROK intelligence team, but this operation was cancelled just before it was due to begin. All in all it had been a very successful patrol for *Crusader*; every assignment she had been given she had handled efficiently, and her gunnery work had been exceptional.

While *Iroquois* and *Crusader* were busy on the east coast, *Nootka* remained on the west coast throughout October, serving the first two weeks with the carrier

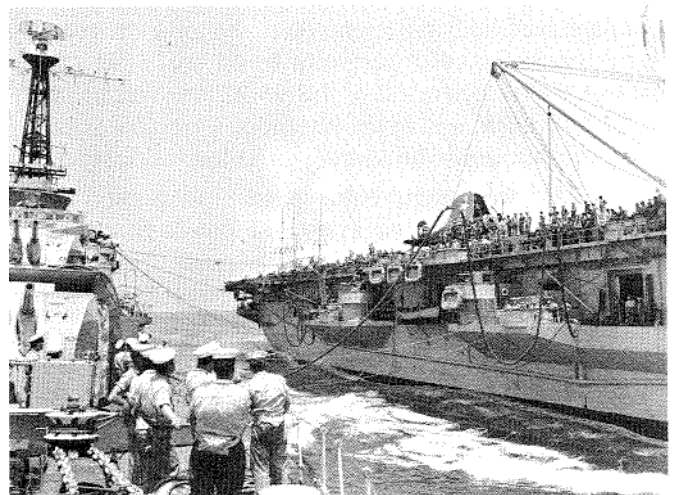


*Iroquois* refuelling from RFA *Brown Ranger*.

element and the last week with the Chodo unit. The carrier work was as usual quite uneventful, but service with TU 95.12.1 was more rewarding. On 26 October for instance *Nootka* was assigned to provide gun-fire support for the U.S. Minesweepers *Condor* and *Competent* while they swept a section of the Cigarette route south of Chodo. Sweeping began at 0830, and all was going well until at 0850 three enemy batteries opened fire on *Condor*. *Nootka* engaged at once while *Competent* laid smoke to cover the ‘sweepers. For some time the action raged hot and heavy; the battery nearest *Nootka* was soon silenced, but the other two kept up their fire until several of the destroyer’s salvos had hit quite near them. *Condor* in the meantime was dodging the enemy shells very effectively and managed to retire through the smoke screen without being hit.

That afternoon at 1515 the three ships went in again to try to complete the sweep, and this time they were

*Nootka* refuels from USS *Sicily* on the west coast of Korea.



allowed to work undisturbed for over two hours before the same three batteries opened up. Once again *Nootka* quickly silenced the nearest, and once again the other two proved most persistent; the destroyer finally silenced them with several well-aimed air bursts.

*Nootka* returned with *Condor* on the following two days, and the assigned sweep was successfully carried out. The enemy guns did not again molest them, though *Nootka* took the opportunity of shelling the positions of the two stubborn batteries. "Fireflies" from the westcoast carrier arrived on the second day and thoroughly "worked over" the area with their rockets. Except for the shelling noted above and a few minor bombardments carried out while on night-time patrols, *Nootka* had a fairly quiet time with the Chodo unit. She was relieved by HMAS *Condamine* on the morning of 30 October and sailed to Yonpyong-do to take over command of the Haeju unit.

November 1952 saw two of the ships of CANDESFE leave the theatre to return home, but otherwise it was not a particularly eventful month. *Nootka* was the first to leave. Her last mission had been as CTU's ship with TU 95.12.4 from 30 October to 5 November, a mission that involved her in several bombardments and in the support of a fairly large-scale guerilla raid. The raid was carried out on the morning of 2 November by some 200 *Wolfpack* guerillas from Sunwi-do.<sup>16</sup> The raiders landed on the small, mainland peninsula opposite the north-east corner of the island, cleared it of enemy troops and withdrew again after six hours without losing a man. Throughout the operation *Nootka* provided gun-fire support, and the planes of the westcoast carrier, USS *Badoeng Strait*, used their bombs and rockets to wipe out enemy strong-points impeding the advance of the raiders. Besides supporting the raid *Nootka* was several times called upon during her patrol to silence enemy batteries which were firing on the friendly islands and on ROK vessels attached to the unit, but she did not herself come under fire until the morning of her departure when a mainland battery, as a sort of friendly parting gesture, dropped two rounds well astern.

*Nootka* arrived back in Sasebo on 6 November and sailed three days later for Hong Kong on the first leg of her passage home. *Nootka* was the first of the CANDESFE destroyers to take the route home via Suez. After calling at many ports, including Singapore, Colombo, Aden, Malta, Gibraltar and Ponta Delgada in the Azores, *Nootka* completed her circumnavigation of the globe when she steamed into Halifax harbour on 17 December, 1952. She was but the first of many, for later several of the destroyers of the Atlantic Command serving with CANDESFE

returned to Halifax via Suez after completing their Korean tours.

The ship that relieved *Nootka* was another Halifaxbased destroyer, HMCS *Haida*, (Commander Dunn Lantier, C.D., RCN), who arrived at Yokosuka on 6 November and in Sasebo on the 12th. After a week in Sasebo storing and carrying out maintenance and minor repairs, *Haida* was assigned a west-coast carrier screening mission. This mission proved uneventful as usual, though the ship was twice detached to carry out a night patrol, once with the Pengyong-do and once with the Chodo unit. She returned to Sasebo on 29 November without having engaged the enemy.

The second CANDESFE ship to return home during November was *Iroquois*. She had spent the first two weeks of the month on an "R. and R." visit to Hong Kong, after which she sailed on 17 November to join the screen of HMS *Glory* on the west coast. She spent only one day with *Glory*, the 19th, before reporting to CTU 95.12.4 for a one-night stand in the Haeju area. For once the Haeju was quiet, and *Iroquois* left next morning to join TU 95.12.1 at Chodo. Two nights and a day at Chodo were without incident, and the destroyer sailed 22 November for Sasebo. The next few days were spent in making final preparations for the voyage home, and after the arrival of the relief ship, *Athabaskan*, in Tokyo, *Iroquois* sailed for home via Pearl Harbor. HMCS *Athabaskan*, back for her third tour in Korean waters, was now commanded by Commander J. C. Reed, D.S.C., C.D., RCN, who took over as Commander Canadian Destroyers Far East from Commander Landymore of *Iroquois*.

Only one of the Canadian destroyers carried out an inshore patrol on the west coast during December, and that was *Crusader* who served with TU 95.12.1 from 30 November to 8 December. During her patrol the weather was more of a problem than the enemy; winter was coming on and temperatures dropped to about 15° Fahrenheit causing the formation of the fog called frost smoke or sea smoke. Snow storms were frequent and there were often high winds and heavy seas. Gales, snowstorms and fog combined to make the normally hazardous west-coast inshore patrol a most unpleasant task.

*Crusader* was occasionally assigned the task of guarding the minesweepers of the Chodo unit, but it was seldom that the weather made minesweeping possible. The enemy gunners made no attempt to interfere with the sweeping; indeed they were abnormally quiet throughout *Crusader's* patrol. The one unusual incident that occurred while she was serving with TU 95.12.1 happened on the night of 5/6

December when four enemy aircraft bombed Chodo and Sok-to. The enemy planes “stooled around” for some time, and on four separate occasions *Crusader’s* radar detected them approaching the ship. She opened fire with her 4.5’s each time, and each time the planes altered away. When they had dropped all their bombs on the islands, where incidentally they caused neither casualties nor damage, the planes retired northward, apparently unharmed. *Crusader* discovered later that she had been the only ship in the task unit to open fire.

*Crusader* detached from the Chodo unit on the morning of 8 December and joined USS *Badoeng Strait* for a ten-day screening assignment. On the evening of 10 December it was *Crusader’s* turn for detached duty\* with the inshore units, and she was sent to the Chodo area for the night. Intelligence reports indicated that the enemy was massing troops on the mainland opposite the islands, and it was feared that he might try to invade either Chodo or Sok-to, but nothing happened during *Crusader’s* stay. The Canadian destroyer’s second *Whitbread* mission was in the Haeju area where she carried out an uneventful patrol on the night of 13/14 December. *Crusader* detached from the element on 18 December and sailed to Kure where she remained for the next ten days.

The veteran *Athabaskan* was assigned, for the first patrol of her third Korean tour, a screening mission with *Badoeng Strait*. She remained with the carrier from 7 to 17 December except for three *Whitbread* patrols undertaken on the nights of the 8th, 11th and 15th. All three of these inshore patrols were in the Chodo area which remained quiet throughout, the only excitement being caused by unannounced movements undertaken by guerillas and secret agents of various kinds operating between the islands and the enemy mainland. When the carrier was relieved, *Athabaskan* sailed to Kure where she arrived on 18 December.

By far the most interesting patrol undertaken by a Canadian ship during the month was that of *Haida* who served with CE 95.22 on the east coast from 3 to 20 December. Though new to the east coast, and indeed to the theatre, *Haida* quickly became expert in performing the duties of inshore interdiction and blockade. During the first few days, in order to make herself familiar with the area, she took her turn at all the routine patrols: the *Windshield* patrol from Yang-do to Chaho, the *Northern* patrol from Yang-do to the north of Chongjin and the *Sweet Adeline* patrol guarding the Yang-do Group from nocturnal raiders.

*Haida* took part in her first east-coast bombardment on the afternoon of the 6th when she accompanied USS *Moore* to shell marshalling yards at Songjin. In order to

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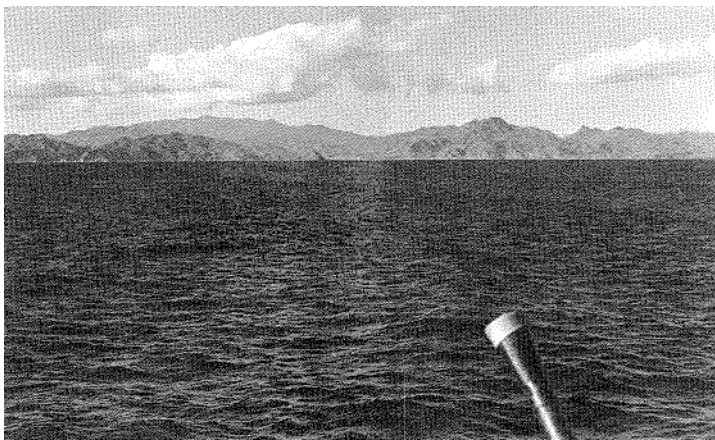
\*This nightly detached duty by a destroyer from the carrier element was now called the *Whitbread* patrol.

make their bombardment effective the ships had to approach fairly close to known gun emplacements, and when they turned away after the first run-in, a battery of 76-mm. guns opened fire. The range was some 10,000 yards, and the closest shell fell about 200 yards astern of *Haida*. The ship immediately returned the enemy’s fire with her after 3”/50-calibre gun, and the accurate corrections radioed by the alert spotting aircraft enabled *Haida* to silence the battery in short order. The Communist gunners were persistent however, and when the ships had withdrawn to 16,000 yards they opened up again; this time their fire was wildly inaccurate. Though she carried out several more daylight bombardments, *Haida* came under enemy fire only once again during this patrol. At this time the ship was returning to Yang-do after bombarding gun positions near Songjin when a battery near *Package One* opened fire. The range was extreme and the gunnery so inaccurate that no fall of shot was observed.

It was train hunting that *Haida*, like the other eastcoast ships, found the most interesting of her duties. Trains were scarce however, and the ship put in many hours of waiting before getting her first chance to become a charter member of the *Trainbusters*. Opportunity knocked on the night of 17/18 December when *Haida* was lying in wait off *Package Four* south of Chaho. The company had been three hours at action stations when a message arrived from the destroyer at *Package Two* saying that a train had just passed, travelling south. Everything was ready when the prospective victim appeared, and the gunners got off 53 rounds of 4-inch and 31 rounds of 3”/50 calibre as the train dashed through the *package*. Several hits were seen, but they were ineffective and the train continued on its way.

The next night (18/19 December) was *Haida’s* last on *package* duty, and the entire ship’s company was fervently hoping that the gunners would get at least one more chance to pick off a train. This time the ship was at *Package Two*, a good omen, as it was here that *Crusader* had destroyed her train back in October. Sure enough, at 0259 a north-bound train came into view and was immediately engaged by all the guns. The gunners were right on target, and the light of the starshells showed that the train had been stopped. For another fifteen minutes *Haida* continued to pour high explosive on her victim to ensure that nothing escaped, and then fire was lifted. When the smoke cleared a little, *Haida’s* delighted company could see eight to ten box cars littering the track and the embankment, but there was no sign of the locomotive, and it was assumed that it had escaped. *Haida* kept up intermittent fire on the wrecked train until 0516 when she had to sail to carry out a previously-assigned *Northern* patrol





A view of *Package Four* on the east coast of Korea.

with USS *McNair*. The U.S. Destroyer The *Sullivans* who kept *Package Two* under observation during the day confirmed *Haida's* estimate that there were at least eight box cars lying badly mangled on the track. However it appears that the staff of CTF 95 did not credit the ship with the destruction of a train<sup>17</sup> probably because the engine escaped, and *Haida* had

to wait a bit longer for her coveted membership in the *Trainbusters Club*. *Haida* spent her last night with TE 95.22 on the *Sweet Adeline* patrol guarding Yangdo; as usual all was quiet. Next day, 20 December, she took on fuel from a U.S. tanker and upon the arrival of her relief, HMAS *Anzac*, set sail for Japan.

Christmas 1952 was a happy occasion for the ships of CANDESFE, thanks to the foresight and thoughtfulness of the staff of Task Group 95.1, who arranged that for the first time since the beginning of hostilities all three of Canada's Far Eastern destroyers could spend Christmas together in harbour. Everyone took full advantage of this happy occasion, and there was much inter-ship visiting during the days the destroyers remained together. Unfortunately the war was still going on, and before the end of the year all but *Haida* were once more on patrol, enduring the hazards of enemy shore batteries, the dangers of inshore navigation on the west coast and the vicious unpleasantness of winter weather in the Yellow Sea.

## References

<sup>1</sup>And to their families and friends. In the period 8 August to 1 November, 1952, the regiments of the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade suffered the following casualties: Royal Canadian Regiment, 191; the Patricias, 18; and R. 22<sup>e</sup> R., 74. (*Canadian Army Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 3, 26.)

<sup>2</sup>For a good general description of the *Cherokee* campaign see Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 460-469.

<sup>3</sup>Of the 2,590 tons of ammunition expended in July 1952, some 32% was unobserved; of the 1,451 tons fired during October 1952, only 11% was unobserved. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 353.)

<sup>4</sup>See *ibid.*, 352-353.

<sup>5</sup>Nap-to (or Nap-som or Napu-somu) lies in 39° 16.5' N., 124° 43' E. and is the most southerly of the islands in Yalu Gulf. It was at this time the only west-coast island north of the 39th parallel still in friendly hands.

<sup>6</sup>Commander Steele's view was that: "The Commanding Officer *AMC 302* displayed excellent judgement, skill in navigation and seamanship, as well as sound exemplary leadership and courage, without which this force would not have been safely withdrawn." (HMCS *Nootka*, *Report of Proceedings*, July-August 1952, Appendix "B".)

<sup>7</sup>The other members of the screen were HMS *Charity* and USS *Bradford*.

<sup>8</sup>On 23 September, Rear-Admiral E. G. A. Clifford, CB, succeeded Rear-Admiral Scott Moncrieff as Flag Officer Second in Command Far East Station, and took over as CTG 95.1.

<sup>9</sup>The guerillas had learned their lesson during the raid in June when the junks had tried to leave on their own, and during *Siciro* an armed guerilla stood beside each coxswain to ensure that he obeyed orders.

<sup>10</sup>See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 204-208, for a description of the "Nootka Incident."

<sup>11</sup>The element consisted, besides *Iroquois*, of the U.S. Ships *Walker*, *Marsh*, *Thompson* and *Naifeh* and the ROK Motor Torpedo Boats 25 and 27. USS *Carmick* later joined the element.

<sup>12</sup>HMCS *Iroquois*, *Report of Proceedings*, October 1952.

<sup>13</sup>Trains had been destroyed by naval gun-fire prior to July 1952 but membership in the "Trainbusters" was only awarded to ships who "killed" their trains after the formation of the Club.

<sup>14</sup>Canadian ships were credited with eight out of the twentyeight trains destroyed after the Club was formed. USN ships, who were in an overwhelming majority on the east coast, were credited with seventeen; the RN destroyer *Charity* got two; and the Netherlands destroyer *Piet Hein* one. (See Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 360.)

<sup>15</sup>The Executive Officer was Lieutenant-Commander J. Rusher, RCN.

<sup>16</sup>This island had been captured by the enemy in their island offensive of late 1951 but had since been recaptured by friendly guerillas.

<sup>17</sup>Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 360.



## “TRAINBUSTING” ON THE EAST COAST

On New Year's Day 1953 the United Nations forces, and the Communist forces for that matter, had little reason to hope for an early end to the Korean war. No plenary session of the armistice delegations had been held since General Harrison adjourned the talks indefinitely on 8 October, and neither side had given any indication that it wished to reopen negotiations. Occasionally the liaison teams met for short, futile meetings which were usually taken up with the presentation of charges and counter-charges about the violation of the truce zone and which accomplished nothing of importance.

At the beginning of the year the front remained static. The fierce fighting that had broken out in September and October 1952 began to taper off as winter set in, and December and the first two months of 1953 were relatively quiet.<sup>1</sup> Some battalion-strength attacks were launched by the enemy in January and of course the sporadic probing continued, but there were now no signs, as there had been in the spring of 1952, that the Reds were becoming impatient about the lack of progress towards an armistice nor that they were preparing to take the offensive.

There were signs however that the UN Command was becoming impatient about the seemingly permanent state of deadlock in Korea. General Van Fleet, commander of the ground forces in Korea,<sup>2</sup> and many other high-ranking officers were of the opinion that a renewed UN offensive offered the only hope of bringing the Communists to terms,<sup>3</sup> and there was much talk of such a possibility in late 1952 and early 1953. Admiral Joy has given it as his opinion that it was the threat in the spring of 1953 of renewed UN military operations and of possible extension of the war to China that finally induced the Reds to relax their stand on the POW issue.<sup>4</sup> There is some evidence for the Admiral's view in that many enemy prisoners of

war taken in the early months of 1953 revealed that they had been warned to expect a major UN offensive when the weather improved in the spring.<sup>5</sup> There are also grounds for supposing that the Communists had another motive for wishing to end the Korean war; namely, that peace in Korea was simply part of a general “peace offensive” designed to reduce international tension while the various factions in the Soviet Union settled the question of Stalin's successor.

Whatever their reasons for doing so, the Reds seem to have finally decided towards the end of March to put an end to hostilities in Korea. On 22 February General Clark gave them an excellent opportunity to reopen negotiations, if they so wished, by sending a letter to their military leaders in Korea suggesting that although no progress was being made on the main issue it might be possible to reach agreement on the mutual repatriation of sick and wounded prisoners. The Reds did not even reply, and when Vishinski addressed the UN on 2 March he made it quite clear that the Reds had not budged an inch from their previous stand on the POW issue. Three days later Stalin died.

From now on the pace quickened. On 15 March Malenkov launched his famous “peace offensive,” and less than two weeks later, on 28 March, General Clark received a belated reply to his letter of 22 February. The Reds in their reply stated that not only were they prepared to exchange sick and wounded prisoners but that they were also willing to reopen the truce talks. The liaison teams began on 6 April to make arrangements for the exchange of sick and wounded, but the UN high command was at first rather reluctant to reopen plenary sessions at Panmunjom until there was some assurance that the Communists were prepared to negotiate in good faith and not merely use the truce meetings as a forum for propaganda speeches.

A radio address by Chou-En-Lai himself on 30 March, in which he put forward a compromise proposal to settle the prisoner issue, seemed to provide such assurance; and on 26 April, after the Communists had apparently demonstrated their good faith by beginning the actual exchange of sick and wounded,\* the truce talks opened once again.

Considering the difficulties that the negotiators had had in the past, the progress made in the next few weeks at Panmunjom was astonishing-and this in spite of President Syngman Rhee's persistent attempts to wreck the talks. The President, understandably enough, dreaded the thought of any armistice that would mean a return to the *status quo ante bellum*, and he was prepared to go to almost any lengths to prevent such a settlement. The Communists for their part, although surprisingly conciliatory at the truce table, took steps to make President Rhee see the error of his ways by launching heavy attacks on the ROK-held sectors of the front.<sup>6</sup> Mid-May saw the heaviest fighting since October 1952, and on 13 June even heavier action broke out in the central and west-central positions held by the 5th and 8th ROK divisions. Still, in spite of the fighting and of the sabre rattling by the President, the talks continued to make progress, and by 16 June it seemed as if all were over but the shouting. On that day General Harrison informed Admiral Clark that he expected an armistice within three or four days.<sup>7</sup>

President Rhee played his trump card a day later by suddenly releasing some 27,000 anti-Communist prisoners who were in the custody of South Korean troops. If this action angered the UN, it infuriated the Communists, who at once broke off the talks, and for a time it looked as if Rhee might succeed in his attempt to force the continuation of the war. For once in the long history of the truce negotiations the Communists had a legitimate excuse for stalling, but strangely enough they did not take advantage of it, and on 10 July the talks began again. The Reds continued their pressure on the front however, chiefly on the ROK-held sectors of the line, and on 13 July launched the heaviest attack made since the hardfighting days of early 1951. On that day six Red divisions struck the South Korean Capital Division and the 3rd and 6th ROK divisions holding the central front at the Kumsong Bulge. The ROK's were pushed back several miles, and the Capital and 3rd Divisions in particular were very severely mauled. The penetration was not serious, as the

\*Once again the good faith was more apparent than real, for it was later discovered that the Reds had kept back many sick and wounded who should have been repatriated. *Operation Little Switch* as it was called continued from 20 April to 3 May; 6,670 Communist sick and wounded were exchanged for 684 UN personnel.

shoulders held firm, and by 19 July the attack had petered out.<sup>8</sup> Once again the two-fold purpose of the Communist leaders had probably been to teach Rhee and his followers a lesson and to misinform the uninformed about the military strength of the protagonists in Korea on the eve of the armistice.

No matter what provocation they suffered at President Rhee's hands the Communists were determined to end the hostilities, and at the plenary session on 19 July the senior North Korean delegate, General Nam Il, announced that his side was prepared to accept UN assurances that Rhee would be held in check and that he was willing to begin final preparations for signing the armistice. There were no more hitches, and on 27 July, 1953, at 2200, the truce became effective.

During the last six months of the war, while all these events were taking place, it was "business as usual" for the ships of CANDESFE. Carrier screening and inshore patrols on the west coast took up most of their time, and usually these missions were dull and uneventful. East-coast patrols provided considerably more action however, and CANDESFE was fortunate in that each of its ships received two such assignments during this period. All of them took full advantage of these opportunities to give tangible evidence of their gunnery skill in the exciting game of "train busting."

The New Year found both *Athabaskan* and *Crusader* operating on the west coast. The two exchanged duties on 1 January, *Crusader* joining the carrier and *Athabaskan* taking her place in the Chodo unit. Life with TU 95.1.4,<sup>9</sup> *Athabaskan* found, was relatively quiet; the enemy appeared to be anxious to avoid any hostile action that might bring down upon him the wrath of the Task Unit and the carrier planes. The result was that although the ships occasionally carried out bombardments of selected targets, it was seldom that they had very much to do. *Athabaskan* remained at Chodo until 7 January when she was relieved by HMS *Crane* and returned to Sasebo.

*Athabaskan* returned for another Chodo assignment on 16 January, and the main feature of this patrol was the difficulty encountered with pack-ice. On both day and night stations the ships had to keep shifting their berths to avoid being beset in the pack which although not particularly heavy was quite capable of trapping a destroyer. Being caught in a drifting floe that might carry one under the muzzles of the shore batteries in broad daylight was not a particularly inviting prospect.

*Athabaskan* and the frigate HMS *Opossum* had an unpleasant experience with this floating pack-ice on

the morning of 18 January. Both ships were lying at anchor north of Chodo when the ice suddenly moved in on them. *Athabaskan*, after losing her starboard anchor and four shackles of cable, managed to extricate herself with great difficulty, and *Opossum*, who appeared to be hopelessly beset, had even more trouble. She finally managed to shoulder her way out of the pack by using revolutions for 15 knots. After this experience certain modifications were made in the orders for the conduct of patrol activities around Chodo while the ice remained.

The remainder of *Athabaskan's* patrol was uneventful except for her strenuous efforts to recover her lost anchor and cable. Two attempts were made and both were thwarted by the ice, but finally on the afternoon of 22 January *Athabaskan* and the fleet tug USS *Quapaw* managed to recover the lost gear.<sup>10</sup> The anchor was found just in time, for that afternoon *Athabaskan* was ordered to sail to join the screen of HMS *Glory*.

*Haida* carried out two 10-day patrols during the month of January, both of them with the west-coast carrier. While on these assignments she conducted *Whitbread* patrols with all three inshore task units at Chodo, Pengyong-do and in the Haeju, but each was as uneventful as the last in spite of occasional reports that the enemy was again preparing to take the offensive against the friendly islands.

*Crusader* carried out only one operational mission during January, serving with TU 95.1.1 from the 1st to the 11th, after which she sailed to Hong Kong for a ten-day respite. On her return she sailed to join TU 95.2.2<sup>11</sup> on the east coast.

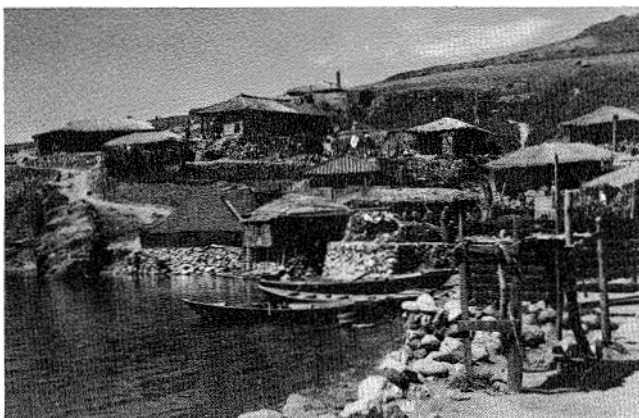
The month of February was a little more interesting for CANDESFE than January, as two of the ships were assigned east-coast missions. *Crusader* took the first



The CNS, VADM E. R. Mainguy and LCDR J.H.G. Bovey of *Crusader* chat with a US Marine Corps sergeant from a west-coast island Headquarters.

one, from 28 January to 9 February, serving until the 6th as Commander of the task unit. It was not quite so eventful a patrol as some she had undertaken on the east coast, but at least it provided more scope for action than one in the Haeju or Chodo area. Partly because she was CTU and partly because the unit was suffering from a shortage of destroyers *Crusader* had very little opportunity for train hunting; she was able to spend only a few hours watching the *packages* and did not even sight a train. Most of her time was spent on the *Sweet Adeline* patrol, protecting the Yang-do group, with an occasional foray north or south along the coast. The weather was often unpleasant, and many bombardments had to be cancelled because visibility was too low for the air spotters. Still, when she did get the opportunity, *Crusader* was able to show that her gunnery was as good as ever; on her last day with the unit she happened to spot an enemy truck hurtling down a road near the coast and, using one of her 4.5's as a sniping rifle, she quickly stopped it and dispersed its passengers with a few rounds of air-burst. *Crusader* was relieved by HMS *Cockade* on 9 February and arrived back at Sasebo next day.

One of the highlights of the month of February for the ships of CANDESFE was the visit of Vice-Admiral E. R. Mainguy, O.B.E., C.D., RCN, the Chief of the Naval Staff. Admiral Mainguy was making his first visit to the Korean theatre, and he took great pains to make it a thorough tour of inspection, spending several days with each of the three destroyers on active operations, visiting Canadian troops at the front and



View of a village on Yang-do, the headquarters island for TU 95.2.2 on the east coast.

inspecting Canadian installations ashore in Japan and Korea. To the regret of the destroyers who played host to Admiral Mainguy there was little enemy activity during his visit, but the Admiral was nevertheless able to get a very clear picture of the activities of the division in the Far East. The ships of CANDESFE, for their part, very much appreciated the interest taken by the Chief of the Naval Staff in their activities.

The second Canadian ship to carry out an east-coast patrol during February was *Athabaskan* who after embarking Admiral Mainguy at Tokyo sailed to join TU 95.2.2 on 14 February. The destroyer ranged along the coast on interdiction duties for two days, occasionally lying off various *packages* waiting for a train to appear. Nothing was moving, and *Athabaskan* had to leave on the 18th to transfer the Admiral to a fast carrier of TF 77 without having an opportunity to demonstrate the skill of her gunnery. En route to close TF 77, *Athabaskan* sighted a Panther jet crash into the sea some two miles ahead of her position. Closing at top speed she had the pilot safely aboard within ten minutes and then continued on her way. Upon reaching the task force, Admiral Mainguy and the rescued pilot were transferred to USS *Valley Forge*. It was the custom in TF 77 that when a pilot from a carrier was rescued by another ship that carrier rewarded the rescuer with enough ice-cream to feed the entire ship's company, but *Athabaskan* had to hurry back to her task unit and was unable to take advantage of this offer. The USS *Phillipine Sea* consequently remains in the debt of HMCS *Athabaskan* to the tune of several gallons of ice-cream.

When she rejoined her unit on the morning of 19 February, *Athabaskan* assumed the duties of CTU 95.2.2 from USS *Thompson* who had been ordered to another assignment. This left only *Athabaskan* and USS *Wiseman*<sup>12</sup> in the task unit, and consequently its night-time activities were confined to the *Sweet Adeline* patrol protecting Yang-do. *Athabaskan* and *Wiseman* were able to range more widely during daylight, and the Canadian ship carried out a bombardment of Tanchon on the 19th with excellent results. On several occasions both ships were able to fire a few rounds at suspected gun positions and at interdiction targets along the coast. *Athabaskan* spotted a mine on the 24th which she promptly sank with 40-mm. and smallarms fire.

Except for such prosaic incidents, the patrol passed quietly and on 27 February *Athabaskan* was relieved by HMS *Charity*. *Athabaskan's* ill luck in not even being able to sight a train, let alone destroy one, caused much concern among the ship's company, and when the destroyer sailed to join the screen of HMS *Glory* on the west coast the seamen's messes presented their

Commanding Officer, Captain Reed, with a plastic toy train, accompanying the gift with a suitable bit of doggerel. Captain Reed's reply, particularly the penultimate line, was rather well put:

**To the Seamen's Messes, thanks one and all,  
For a plastic train beats none at all.  
An enemy train is hard to get,  
But you may be sure we'll get it yet.  
Patience a virtue is, they say,  
And we'll wait for that train another day.  
"Crusader" and "Haida" may have their train,  
But our jet pilot will fight again.  
And the mine we sank's a menace no more;  
That's something we've got to even the score.  
Though trainless we are "Glory" bound,  
The Reds will know we've been around.<sup>13</sup>**

Time was to show that the captain was even better at prophecy than poetry.

Operations on the west coast during February followed the usual pattern, although there was a little excitement early in the month when Tokyo headquarters issued a general warning about possible enemy submarine activity. This report was later proved to be unfounded, but not before it had provided the screening ships with a little well-deserved excitement.

Only one of the Canadian ships carried out an inshore patrol during the month and that was *Haida* who served as CTU 95.1.6 in the Haeju from 30 January to 7 February. Her assignment there was virtually without incident, and her warlike activities consisted of a few minor bombardments of gun positions and troop concentrations opposite Mu-do. For the most part the planes of the west-coast carrier managed to keep the enemy quiet with bombs, napalm and rockets.

Very little of note occurred during the month of March 1953 as far as the Canadian destroyers were concerned, and the remark of Lieutenant-Commander Bovey of *Crusader* that the first patrol in March was "the most unwarlike of all our patrols," described fairly well those undertaken by the other ships of CANDESFE. Even the east-coast assignment drawn by *Haida*—the only one of the month for the Canadian ships—proved to be quite uneventful.

*Crusader's* unwarlike patrol was a carrier screening mission with USS *Bataan* from 6 to 19 March, and for the remainder of the month she was either in harbour or exercising with units of the USN. *Athabaskan* fared little better; she carried out two uneventful missions with HMS *Glory* on the west coast, and not until near the end of the month was she given an inshore assignment. From 26 March to 1 April *Athabaskan* served as CTU 95.1.4 in the Chodo area where she carried out several bombardments of enemy positions on the mainland. The one noteworthy event of the

patrol was a raid carried out on 30/31 March by a unit of South Korean guerillas from Chodo. These guerillas, who were known as the 1st Partisan Infantry Regiment, sneaked ashore in darkness, beat up the enemy in the area, and then retired to a small island connected to the mainland by a narrow sand spit. The enemy troops were pressing them hard and subjecting them to heavy mortar fire when *Athabaskan* was called in to help. The ship closed the range quickly and began to lay down heavy gun-fire on the enemy mortar positions and troop concentrations, calling at the same time for support from the carrier planes. The planes from *Bataan* arrived very quickly, and *Athabaskan* ceased fire while they “worked over” the area with bombs, rockets, napalm and machine-gun fire. This support proved quite sufficient, and the guerillas withdrew in their junks without difficulty. As *Athabaskan* prepared to withdraw, some exasperated North Korean gunners fired five rounds in her direction, but they all fell short. It is an indication of how quiet the west-coast area had become that this was the first time *Athabaskan* had been fired on since beginning her third tour.

*Haida's* main effort during March was an east-coast patrol with TU 95.2.2 from the 18th to the 27th. It was a routine affair, with the usual *Sweet Adeline* patrols in the vicinity of Yang-do and the usual interdiction missions to the north and south. On three occasions *Haida* spent some time train watching but with no success, although she did have one opportunity to add to her score. It was on the night of 20/21 March, and *Haida* was lying in wait off *Package Two* when a train was spotted. The guns opened up with high explosive and star-shell, and the latter revealed that the target was not a train but a single locomotive, rattling along

southward as fast as it could go. The gunners got off 27 rounds of 4-inch and twelve of 3”/50 calibre before the locomotive disappeared from sight, apparently unhurt, leaving the ship’s company muttering about “next time”! But there was to be no next time for *Haida* during this patrol; on her other *package-duty* nights the moon was too bright and the carrier planes too active for the trains to run. She was relieved by HMS *Consort* on the morning of 27 March and returned to Sasebo.

The month of April saw some very favourable developments at Panmunjom-the agreement to exchange sick and wounded prisoners and the reopening of plenary sessions-but these led to no slackening of the UN naval effort. *Athabaskan* and *Haida* confined their attentions to the west coast and found it a little too quiet for their liking. *Athabaskan's* tour as CTU 95.1.4 from 21 to 28 April was typical of west-coast inshore work at this time. Her war-like activities during the patrol were limited to six bombardments of gun positions and other enemy installations on the mainland opposite Chodo and Sok-to, during which she fired a total of 94 rounds from her main armament. The enemy made no reply and indeed remained quiescent during the entire patrol.

*Haida's* work in April was mainly confined to carrier screening, and from the 3rd to the 20th she put in a good many hours chasing the wind with *Bataan* and *Glory* in the Yellow Sea.

The high light of the month was *Crusader's* brilliant work on the east coast during what must be described as the most successful patrol carried out by a Canadian ship in the latter part of the war. *Crusader* sailed from Yokosuka on 9 April to join TU 95.2.2 and, as a portent of good fortune to come, sighted and sank a

*Haida* in Korean waters.





The Army and the Navy have a cup of coffee in a Canadian Army snack bar in Hiro, Japan.

mine before she even began her patrol. On arrival at Yang-do on the afternoon of 11 April, *Crusader* took over as CTU and spent her next four days in daylight patrols to Chongjin and her nights in defending Yang-do and supporting commando raids on the mainland. These raids were carried out by ROK paratroops under the overall command of USMC officers and had as their main objective the capturing of prisoners for intelligence purposes. The raiders were carried in two drifters which were vectored inshore by the supporting destroyer; the troops then made their way to the beach in small rubber boats. The raids that *Crusader* supported were all successful.

*Crusader* turned over her responsibilities as commander of the task unit to USS *Owen* on the evening of 14 April and set out to do some train busting. Her target for the night was *Package Three* just south of Tanchon and there she took up station at 1900. For almost six hours she waited patiently, and then at 0040 (15 April) a north-bound train suddenly appeared. All four of *Crusader's* 4.5's went into action, and the train stopped. The gunners did not let up and kept pouring on the high explosive, but in spite of heavy fire the train crew managed to uncouple the locomotive and hurry it into the tunnel at the south end of the *package*. Still, 15 cars were well and truly caught out in the open, and *Crusader* spent the night bombarding them. *Crusader's* call for assistance was answered by the carrier planes of TF 77 at *daybreak*, and the ship left them to continue the destruction while she dashed southward to fuel from the replenishment tanker.

*Crusader* returned at noon and took over from the planes the task of "interdicting the package," as it was called locally. She was lying off at 12,000-yard

range, potting at the wrecked train with a single gun in local control, when at 1300 the North Koreans decided to attempt the rescue of the remaining cars. Calling for air support, *Crusader* closed the *package* and opened fire with all guns, whereupon the locomotive which had stuck its nose out of the tunnel hurriedly scuttled back. Having foiled the would-be rescuers, *Crusader* withdrew again to 12,000 yards and continued her leisurely interdiction fire.

Nothing occurred to disturb *Crusader's* vigil until, towards evening; a train was sighted on an inland rail line to the North near Tanchon. Commander Bovey immediately closed at speed and brought his ship to the very edge of the swept channel, thereby reducing the range of the prospective victim to 14,000 yards. In spite of the range it was only seconds after the 4.5's opened up that the train was hit and brought to a halt. It had no sooner been stopped than another train appeared on the same railway line. The guns swung to cover the new target, and soon train number three lay stopped. While the main armament was wreaking this destruction, the Bofors were sinking an enemy mine that had drifted into sight. Ten minutes after the third train had been stopped a fourth was spotted, but unfortunately it was at extreme range and *Crusader* could not hit it.

It was too near dark to expect help from the carrier planes in destroying the immobilized trains, so *Crusader* kept up fire on her two inland victims until the light made spotting impossible and then turned her attentions back to the train in the *package*. In the two hours remaining to her *Crusader* demolished another four cars, two of which burned with a brilliant orange flame, and then she had to sail to join the screen of the fast carriers of TF 77. Everyone in the ship was in the best of spirits;



*Crusader*, with four trains to her credit, was now the champion of the Trainbusters Club.<sup>14</sup>

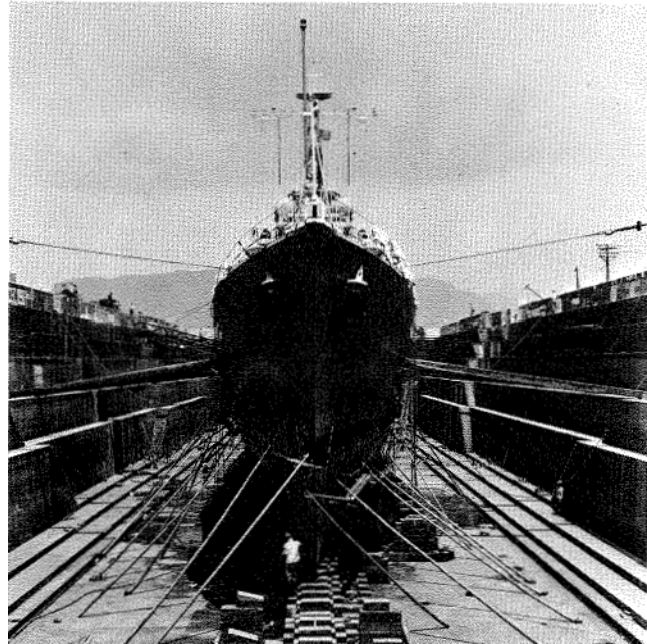
*Crusader's* reputation had preceded her, for when she approached the task force at 0430 on the morning of the 16th the Task Force Commander himself, Rear Admiral R. F. Hickey, USN, greeted her personally by voice radio, addressing her as *Casey Jones* instead of using her normal, and singularly inappropriate, callsign of *Leadmine*. The carrier force welcomed *Crusader* with open arms, and she thoroughly enjoyed her four days with the *Windchasers' Club*.<sup>\*</sup> TF 77 was a large organization and included at one time during *Crusader's* stay three fast carriers of the *Essex* Class, one battleship, one cruiser and twelve destroyers. Working with such a fleet was not only an interesting; it was also a very valuable experience for *Crusader*, who acquitted herself with the greatest distinction. Twice she was given the important task of night plane guard, and during her last night with TF 77 she was honoured by being made guide ship to the fleet. Though eager to return to her train busting, it was with some regret that *Crusader* detached on the morning of 20 April to rejoin TU 95.2.2. The ship's company was greatly pleased to receive a farewell message from the Commander Task Force 77, Rear Admiral R. F. Hickey, USN:

**Upon departing from us I want you, your officers and your men to know that you leave with the deep and profound admiration of all for your enviable performance during your stay. Your ship operated like a veteran from the beginning. I consider your alertness and efficiency in all your operations an outstanding lesson to sailormen everywhere. You were given the guide of TIT 77 as a small token of our esteem. Good luck and come back again...<sup>15</sup>**

Returning to TU 95.2.2 on the evening of the 20th, *Crusader* spent the first night watching for trains north of Tanchon, but nothing was sighted. The next day was spent in the Yang-do area, and it was late in the evening before she was ordered to "train watch" at *Package Two*. She had been there but two hours when a message arrived ordering her to steam south and relieve the cruiser USS *St. Paul* on the "bomb line." *Crusader* sailed at midnight and arrived at the bomb line at first light on 22 April.

*Crusader's* mission was to give fire support to the troops of 1st ROK Corps holding the coastal sector of the front, and during the day she spent with TU 95.2.8 she was twice called upon to carry out bombardments. *St. Paul* returned that night, and *Crusader* set course northward again, carrying out the coastal patrols of the Central Patrol Unit (TU 95.2.0) en route.

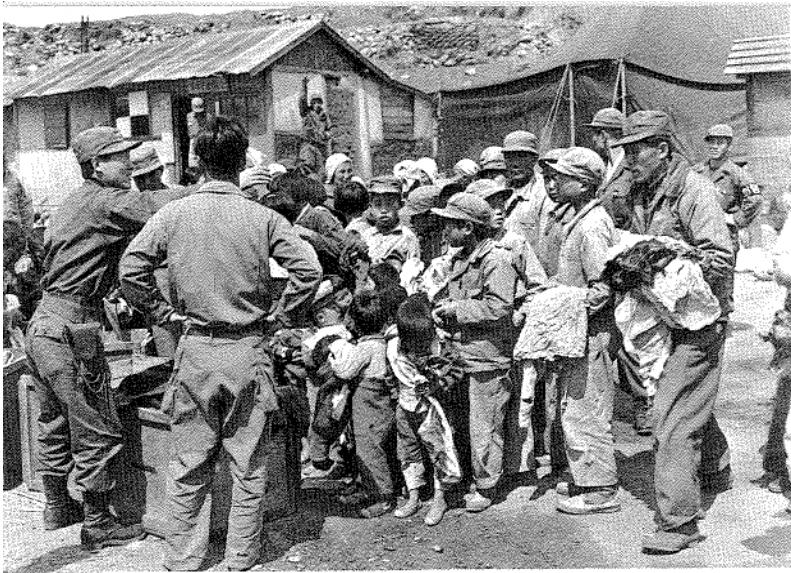
<sup>\*</sup>A carrier turns into the wind to launch and land on her planes, and of course the screening destroyers have to conform to her movements, hence the name. On the west coast the screening destroyers formed a *Corpen Club*, the initial word being a shortened form of Course Pennant and referring to the frequent changes of course and speed that the screen has to make.



*Crusader* in dry dock at Sasebo.

On the late evening of 24 April *Crusader* was once again on train-busting duty, covering *Package Four*. She had just arrived when a train suddenly dashed out of the tunnel marking the southern end of the *package* and headed towards Hungnam. Fortunately for the enemy, the rails curve sharply inland at this point, and the gunners failed to score a hit in the few moments before the train disappeared from sight. *Crusader* did not give up and quickly steamed to *Package Five* in the hope that her quarry would continue its journey southward. Evidently the train crew decided not to stretch their luck for the train did not show up at the southern *package*. At midnight however a small train, consisting of only a locomotive and two cars was sighted travelling at high speed northward. *Crusader's* guns stopped it before it even reached the *package*, and one of the hits caused a large secondary explosion in one of the cars; unfortunately it was dead calm, and the smoke and dust kicked up by the high explosive completely obscured the target. *Crusader* had to cease fire, and when the smoke cleared the train had disappeared. Hoping to change her luck the destroyer now moved to *Package Three*, but fortune was against her that night and nothing more was seen.

*Crusader* spent another two days and nights with the task unit, but all her hunting was in vain, and she did not even sight another train. The ship's Medical Officer, Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander J. S. Simpson, performed a successful appendectomy on a ROK Marine lieutenant from Yang-do on the 25th, but except for this incident nothing of interest occurred



Korean children come to receive clothing brought to them by *Crusader*.



Children of the “Eden Orphanage” on Pengyong-do entertain sailors from *Nootka* who had brought them presents.



Korean children come to receive clothing brought to them by *Crusader*.

during the last two days. HMS *Cockade* arrived on the afternoon of 27 April to relieve *Crusader* who then sailed for Japan. The entire ship's company certainly had reason to be proud of their performance during what Lieutenant-Commander Bovey modestly described as "the most interesting" of their patrols. *Crusader* had set a record which, try as they might, the other members of the Trainbusters Club were never able to equal, and as the only Canadian ship to serve with Task Force 77 during the war she had performed in a manner that did great credit to the Royal Canadian Navy and to Canada.

As *Crusader* had been the "star" in April, it was *Haida* who drew the east-coast assignment and collected the laurels in May. *Athabaskan* and *Crusader* spent nearly all their operation time in carrier screening which was almost completely devoid of incident. *Athabaskan* was honoured by being chosen to serve as CTU 95.1.2 from 3 to 6 May during the absence of the cruiser, but even this duty proved uneventful. Besides her east-coast patrol, *Haida* also carried out a mission as CTU 95.1.4 from 28 April to 9 May. Some enemy activity was expected on May Day, but this did not materialize. On 3 May however a member of the task unit, *LSMR-409*, was fired upon by batteries on Amgak, which also shelled Chodo. The rocket ship, HM Frigate *Modeste* and the carrier planes of TU 95.1.1 returned this fire with interest, and the enemy gunners did not again draw attention to themselves during the remainder of *Haida's* tour. Except for the usual bombardments carried out by the ships of the task unit, there was little activity in the Chodo area, and Commander Lantier, as the CTU, had time for several conferences with island garrison leaders to discuss plans for the evacuation of Chodo and Sok-do in the event that the peace talks might this time prove successful.

*Haida's* last war-time patrol in Korean waters, from 26 May to 8 June, was another high point in the career of a fine ship. Leaving Hong Kong on 20 May after a spell of "R. and R.", *Haida* put in to Sasebo only long enough to replenish and then set out on 25 May for the east coast. On arrival in the Yang-do area on the afternoon of the 26th she assumed the duties of CTU 95.2.2 from HMAS *Anzac*.

Towards evening *Haida* set out southward, determined that during this patrol she would get her train and her membership in the *Trainbusters Club*. By 2215 the ship was lying off *Package Two* with her company at action stations, and less than an hour later the first train was sighted just as it scooted for shelter into a tunnel. But the gunners did not have to wait long for a chance to display their marksmanship, for at 2320 a north-bound train came into sight. Immediately

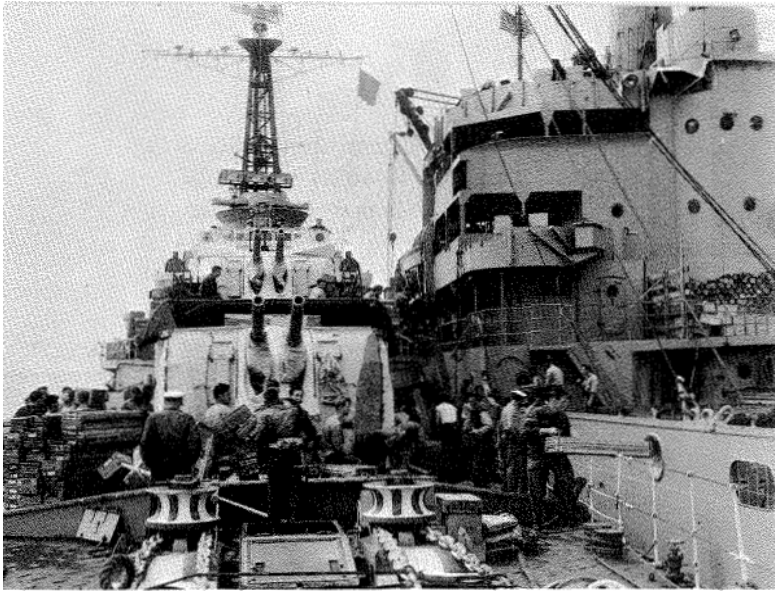
both 4-inch and 3-inch armament went into action and the train disappeared in a welter of smoke and dust. An aircraft of the USAF happened to be cruising in the area on night-interdiction duties, and in response to a call from *Haida* it dropped flares over the target area and revealed a train stopped, dead on the tracks. Just at that moment *Haida* spotted yet another train, also heading north but on a line inland from the *Package Two* area. Again the guns went into action, but this time their target escaped apparently unscathed, and attention was once more turned to the disabled train. Unobserved interdiction and harassing fire was kept up until 0300 to prevent the enemy from making emergency repairs and perhaps escaping into a tunnel, and then USS *Eversole* arrived to take over this duty until the aircraft of TF 77 could come in to complete the destruction.

When she was relieved, *Haida* returned to Yang-do where she was joined by USS *Bradford* for a daylight patrol northward to the limits of the station. It was an uneventful patrol, enlivened for *Haida* by the receipt of a message from Rear Admiral C. E. Olsen, USN, the CTF 95:

**Acknowledge receipt of your final dues to the Train Buster's Club. Life-time membership now recorded. Well done.<sup>16</sup>**

The remainder of that day and the following night (27/28 May) passed without incident with *Haida* patrolling off Yang-do protecting the islands from amphibious sneak-attacks, but by 2130 on 29 May the ship was once again train hunting. This time her station was *Package Three*, and once again her gunners had but little time to wait for a target, as at 2200 a northbound train came into view. All the guns of the main armament opened fire at once, and when the first star-shell lit up the tracks there stood a train, stopped just short of the tunnel it had been trying to reach. Fire was kept up to prevent the enemy from clearing the tracks, but the resourceful Reds worked fast, and when the area was illuminated again it was revealed that the engine had been uncoupled and secreted in the tunnel. For the next six hours *Haida* maintained an intermittent fire on the remaining box cars, the pounding of the wreckage being taken over by USS *Bradford* on her arrival shortly before 0400 on the morning of 30 May. En route to the Yang-do area, *Haida* rounded off a most satisfying patrol by sighting and sinking a mine. Another congratulatory message from Admiral Olsen, praising *Haida* for destroying her second train, was received shortly after the ship arrived at the island.

During the remainder of her last east-coast patrol, *Haida* carried out a variety of tasks: gun-fire support for USN minesweepers engaged in sweeping the bombardment channels along the coast, anti-invasion



*Nootka* takes on ammunition at sea from USS *Virgo*.

patrol off the Yang-do group, routine bombardment patrols north to Songjin and Chongjin and of course train hunting. Indeed *Haida* had three more opportunities to add to her score before leaving, but though the gunners tried their hardest the trains proved too elusive. The ship's company would have given much to be able to bag a train on 2 June, the day the coronation of the Queen was taking place in London, but though one was sighted it managed to escape. Still, *Haida* had nothing to be ashamed of when she turned over to HMS *Cossack* on 8 June and headed for Sasebo and home; for few were the ships that destroyed two trains during a single patrol.

While *Haida* was celebrating the Queen's coronation on the east coast, *Athabaskan* and *Crusader* were celebrating in more orthodox fashion at Kure and Sasebo. Coronation Day, 2 June, was a day of rejoicing for the Commonwealth ships in both these ports, and there were parades and ceremonies, dinners and receptions. At Kure there was a parade through the streets to Anzac Park by representatives of the Commonwealth armed forces in the area, with a platoon from *Athabaskan* representing the RCN. In Sasebo where it was raining as heavily as it was that day in London, the main coronation ceremonies were held in the hangar of HMS *Ocean*; a hundred officers and men from *Crusader* attended.

In June another of the ships of CANDESFE performed her last war-time patrol before returning to Canada. *Crusader*, rather disappointed that she was not to have another opportunity to add to her trainbusting score, sailed on 4 June to join the screen of the west-coast carrier (*Bairoko*, and later HMS *Ocean*), with whom she served until the 12th. Twice during this period *Crusader* was detached to carry out a *Whitbread* patrol in the Chodo area. The first *Whitbread* was an extended one from the morning of 6 June to the



*Haida* takes on ammunition at sea from USS *Buck*.

morning of the 7th, and the destroyer passed a busy day in providing gun-fire support to a minesweeper operating north of Sok-to and in assisting the Netherlands Frigate *Johan Maurits*, the Sok-to shore batteries and *Bairoko's* Corsairs in saturating Wolsari Peninsula. This heavy bombardment of Wolsari was in retaliation for two hits suffered by the task unit's LSMR just before *Crusader's* arrival, and it had the effect of silencing the enemy gunners for the rest of the day.

*Crusader's* second *Whitbread* was a normal overnight patrol which was entirely uneventful, and on the afternoon of the 12th she turned over her duties on the screen to *Athabaskan* and set course for Sasebo. As *Crusader* was bidding farewell to TU 95.1.1, HMCS *Haida* was leaving Sasebo to return to Canada via Suez, thus ending a seven-month tour in Korean waters during which she had earned a place in the select company of "two-train" ships in the Trainbusters Club.

*Crusader* remained in Sasebo until 18 June when HMC Ships *Iroquois* and *Huron*, returning for their second Korean tours, arrived to take the places of the departing destroyers. After a short turn-over and hurried farewells, *Crusader* cleared the harbour at 1300 and set course for Yokosuka en route home via the Aleutians. She had served in the Korean theatre three days short of a full year and was returning home with an enviable reputation, second to none in the United Nations naval force, not only for her gunnery, which was well attested by her championship in the *Trainbusters Club*, but also for her general, all-round efficiency. Commander Bovey certainly had every reason to feel proud of his company and his ship for their performance during *Crusader's* first and only wartime tour in Korean waters.

The new arrivals were not given much time to acclimatize themselves, as all available ships were

required in the operational area to help evacuate the islands when and if the armistice was signed at Panmunjom.<sup>17</sup> Captain W. M. Landymore of *Iroquois* (who had also commanded the ship on her first tour) barely had time to take over CANCOMDESFE duties from Commander Reed before his ship was ordered to sea on 20 June. After a briefing by the staff of CTG 95.1, the Flag Officer Second in Command Far East Station, who was himself on the west coast in his headquarters ship, HMS *Tyne*, *Iroquois* sailed to take command of TU 95.1.4. From 22 to 27 June the ship remained in the Chodo area directing the activities of the task unit. Except for firing on one of the ships of the unit the enemy remained inactive, and the persistent rain and fog that continued throughout *Iroquois*' patrol prevented the UN ships from engaging in observed bombardments of the mainland. After leaving Chodo *Iroquois* returned to Sasebo to prepare for a courtesy visit to Tokyo.

*Huron* (Commander R. C. Chenoweth, M.B.E., C.D., RCN) like *Iroquois*, had little time in Sasebo before beginning active operations, and by 23 June she was serving on the screen of USS *Bairoko*. For the next ten uneventful days she chased the wind with *Bairoko*, returning to Sasebo on 3 July.

The most eventful patrol of the month as usual was that of the ship drawing the east-coast assignment. *Athabaskan* sailed from Sasebo on 20 June and took over as CTU 95.2.2<sup>18</sup> from HMS *Cossack* on the afternoon of the following day. The first two days were spent in routine patrolling and the nights in unsuccessful train hunting. On the night of 24/25 June *Athabaskan* had her first opportunity of the patrol to get her train, and she took full advantage of it. She

was lying stopped off *Package Two* when her victim came in sight; two salvos from the 4-inch guns sufficed to stop it. Unfortunately there was low-hanging cloud over the *package* which made it impossible to illuminate with star-shell, so *Athabaskan* postponed further destruction of the train and set out to seek other targets. Shortly after midnight she returned, but cloud still hung over the derelict, and after firing a few rounds to discourage any salvage parties that might be around she again went hunting. *Athabaskan* returned with *Gurke* at first light and completed the destruction of the victim that had gained for her membership in the *Trainbusters Club*. The Seamen's Messes could now put away any plastic train models that they might have been saving for presentation to their captain at the end of the patrol.

*Athabaskan*'s next opportunity for train hunting came on the night of 29/30 June, but although she sighted a train near *Package Three* and another near *Package Two*, the best she could do was score "possible hits" on the latter. The next night proved more successful, and *Athabaskan* was able to celebrate Dominion Day by completing the destruction of a 24-car train that she had stopped with two well-aimed salvos. *Athabaskan*'s second victim brought the number of trains destroyed by the ships of CANDESFE to its final total of eight.

USS *Irwin* arrived later that day, 1 July, and took over command of the task unit from the Canadian destroyer who, relieved of her CTU duties, could now devote more of her time to her efforts to break *Crusader*'s record of four trains destroyed. But *Athabaskan*'s good fortune had deserted her. Trains there were in plenty, for the Communists were striving to replenish their stockpiles after the heavy fighting of mid-June in preparation for the offensive against the ROK's which was to begin in mid-July; but the fly in the ointment was a heavy and persistent fog that prevented the gunners from sighting these juicy targets. *Athabaskan* twice suffered the frustrating experience of hearing a train rattling along the tracks nearby without being able to see it. On the second such occasion, on the night of 4/5 July, she opened fire on the estimated position of the hidden train. Apparently the estimate was an accurate one for the train could be heard to stop; unfortunately it soon got under way again and further "blind" salvos did not succeed in stopping it. *Athabaskan*'s last chance to add to her score came during the night patrol of 6/7 July, but she was again thwarted by a heavy ground fog and returned to Yangdo shortly before midnight. Next day she was relieved by HMCS *Huron* and sailed for Kure.

During July heavy fighting flared up again on the land front when the Communists, on 13 July, launched

*Crusader* replenishes at sea from a USN supply ship on the east coast.



their punishing attack against the ROK-held sectors of the line, and many of the UN ships, particularly the carriers and the ships of the bomb-line unit, were called upon to intensify their operations against the enemy. But for the Canadian destroyers the last few weeks of the war were relatively uneventful, except that on the night of 13 July CANDESFE suffered the one serious ship casualty of the entire war, when *Huron*, who had been on patrol on the east coast since the 7th, ran aground in heavy fog on Yang-do. The ship was badly damaged but was successfully extricated and would probably have reached Sasebo under her own power had not threatening weather forced her to accept a tow for the last three days of the passage. She arrived at Sasebo on 18 July where she remained until 25 October undergoing repairs.

For the other ships of CANDESFE the Korean war did not end in any dramatic way; it simply “fizzled

out.” *Athabaskan*, after her successful east-coast patrol, joined TU 95.1.6 in the Haeju on 18 July. She carried out her last offensive bombardment on the 20th and had the satisfaction of scoring several direct hits on enemy troop billets on the mainland opposite Mu-do, but the remainder of her patrol was completely without incident. On the 24th she joined the screen of USS *Bairoko*, and there she remained when at 2200 on 27 July the cease-fire agreement signed at Panmunjom earlier that day came into effect.

*Iroquois*’ last war-time patrol was spent in the Haeju where she arrived on 15 July after carrying out a ten-day assignment with the west-coast carrier. Her Haeju patrol proved singularly frustrating for during the entire four days she spent there a heavy fog seriously hampered all activities. She was relieved by *Athabaskan* on 19 July and returned to Sasebo, and there she remained when hostilities ended.

## References

<sup>1</sup>This is best illustrated in the UN figures on Communist artillery and mortar fire. In September 1952 the Reds fired some 390,000 rounds on UN positions, and in October some 655,000. After this the totals begin to drop: November, 297,000; December, 182,000; January 1953, 161,000; and February, 133,000. (NS 1480-146/187, Vol. 9.)

<sup>2</sup>General Van Fleet retired in February 1953 and was replaced by General Maxwell D. Taylor.

<sup>3</sup>See Poats, *Decision in Korea*; Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 397; and NS 1480-146/187, Vol. 9.

<sup>4</sup>Admiral C. Turner Joy, *How Communists Negotiate*, 161-162.

<sup>5</sup>NS 1480-146/187, Vols. 9, 10.

<sup>6</sup>It is possible that these attacks were also launched in order to make it appear as if the Communists were on the offensive and that the UN was signing an armistice to avoid defeat in the field. (Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 481.)

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, 484-485.

<sup>8</sup>According to Admiral Clark, “This release of prisoners by President Rhee had prolonged the war about five weeks, during which time United Nations troops, including South Koreans, sustained 46,000 casualties while the Communists had suffered an estimated 75,000 casualties.” (Cited by Cagle and Manson, *op. cit.*, 487.)

<sup>9</sup>Effective 1 January, 1953, the system of numbering the task units on the west coast was changed, and the Chodo unit became TU 95.1.4, the Pengyong-do unit TU 95.1.5 and the Haeju unit TU 95.1.6. The carrier and cruiser elements were reclassified as units but retained their original numbers. See Appendix G.

<sup>10</sup>This incident led to an amusing exchange of signals. Immediately she had hove in her anchor *Athabaskan* radioed to

the CTU in HMAS *Anzac* the message “Luke 15, verses 8 and 9.” (“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth all her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.”) *Anzac*, not to be outdone, replied: “Mark 12, verse 11.” (“This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.”) HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, January 1953, Appendix “B”.

<sup>11</sup>These east-coast elements were redesignated task units, effective 1 January, 1953.

<sup>12</sup>Her main armament consisted of but three 3”/50-calibre guns, which limited her value as a bombardment ship.

<sup>13</sup>HMCS *Athabaskan*, *Report of Proceedings*, February 1953.

<sup>14</sup>Messages of congratulation were received from the Commander Naval Forces Far East (Vice Admiral R. P. Briscoe, USN,) from Vice Admiral J. J. Clark, USN, of the 7th Fleet, Rear Admiral C. E. Olsen, USN, Commander Task Group 95, and many others.

<sup>15</sup>Copy with HMCS *Crusader*, *Report of Proceedings*, April 1953.

<sup>16</sup>HMCS *Haida*, *Report of Proceedings*, May 1953.

<sup>17</sup>When *Crusader* entered Sasebo on 13 June she found the anchorage almost empty, as the ships had left for the operational area in the belief that an armistice was imminent. It was on the night of 17/18 June that President Syngman Rhee released the anti-Communist prisoners held by his forces.

<sup>18</sup>The unit consisted, besides *Athabaskan*, of U.S. Ships *Gurke* and *Endicott*. A ship from the east-coast minesweeping unit, USS *Pelican*, was attached for ‘sweeping duties.

## THE UNEASY TRUCE

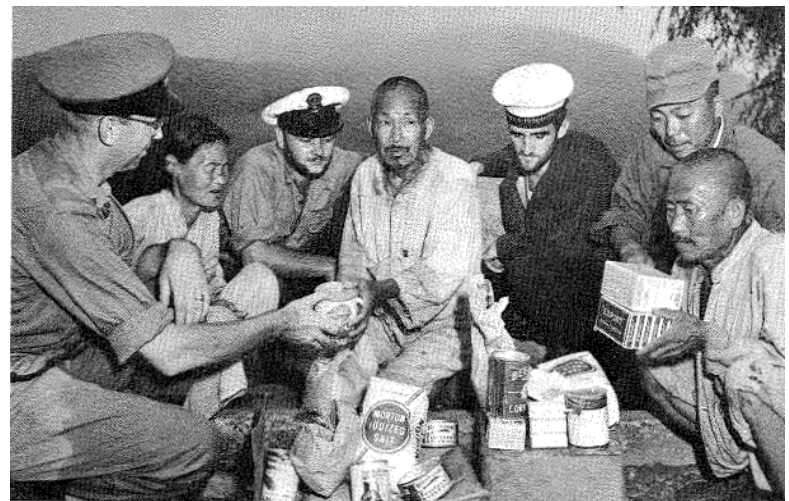
The end of open hostilities in Korea on 27 July, 1953, did not mean that the United Nations forces could now be disbanded; after all, no peace treaty had been signed, only an armistice—and a very unusual armistice at that, for neither side had been defeated in the field. Indeed it was quite possible that the fighting might break out again at any time should the always unpredictable Communists decide that such a course would be to their advantage. Furthermore there was always the danger that Syngman Rhee might suddenly brush aside the restraining hand of his allies and carry out his earlier threats to “go it alone.” Such action would undoubtedly have precipitated full-scale war, for Rhee’s forces would almost certainly have been badly beaten and the Allies would have been forced willynilly to come to their aid or stand back and see South Korea overrun again. There was yet another way in which hostilities might be renewed; if the political conference which was to be called to settle the problems left unsolved by the armistice should fail to reach agreement, the Communists might conceivably attempt to break the resulting stalemate by force of arms.

Considerations such as these made it imperative that the United Nations resist any temptation to reduce immediately the strength of their forces in Korea. Well before the signing of the armistice the UN high command had made it quite clear that there would be no sizeable reduction of forces in the event of a ceasefire,<sup>1</sup> so it came as no surprise to CANDESFE when it was announced that all three Canadian destroyers would be remaining in the Far East.

When the cease-fire came on 27 July only *Athabaskan* was on active operations, forming part of the screen of USS *Bairoko* in the Yellow Sea. HMCS *Iroquois* was in Sasebo making preparations to rejoin the west coast task units, while the unfortunate *Huron* lay in dry dock at Sasebo repairing the damage caused by her grounding.

The first major peace-time task of the naval forces in Korea was the evacuation of the islands that, by the terms of the armistice, were to be handed back to the Communists. *Iroquois* was the only one of the Canadian destroyers to be involved in this work;<sup>2</sup> it fell to her to assist HM Ships *Tyne* and *Birmingham* in the melancholy task of evacuating the familiar Chodo. Fortunately all the civilians who wished to leave the island had been evacuated in mid-June when an armistice appeared imminent and only twelve elderly persons remained; the UN ships had only to help remove the military and air force personnel and their movable material and assist in destroying the permanent installations. Before leaving the island for the last time *Iroquois* canvassed the remaining civilians and found that one couple was anxious to depart with the Allies, the wife explaining that they had been unwilling to take advantage of the first offer to leave because of the illness of her husband. The ten who

The elderly natives of Chodo who chose to remain behind when UN forces evacuated the island examine food left for them by *Iroquois*.



reiterated their wish to stay, all of them old and war weary, some of them blind, most of them ill, were supplied by *Iroquois* with liberal quantities of food and medical supplies. The evacuation was completed shortly after midnight on the night of 31 July/ 1 August, and most of the UN forces sailed away to the southward, their departure lit by the glow of fires from the fixed installations which were being destroyed by a demolition team from *Iroquois* and a similar group of U.S. Air Force personnel. Just after dawn the destruction had been completed and *Iroquois* left Chodo for the last time.

*Iroquois* remained north of the 38th parallel until 6 August, assisting in the evacuation of other islands and trying—unsuccessfully, because of persistent fogs—to observe enemy activities on the mainland. Then, the ten days allowed by the armistice for the evacuation of the UN-held islands having elapsed, the ship, along with the rest of the UN naval forces, withdrew south of the parallel. During the week that followed *Iroquois* acted as CTU 95.1.2, which was the unit designation of the Officer in Tactical Command of the west-coast blockade forces, and had more than enough to do arranging the peace-time routines and solving the many administrative and logistic problems that cropped up while the new arrangements were being worked out. The ship was relieved on 14 August by HMS *Crane* and sailed for Sasebo where she arrived next day, thus completing the first Korean post-armistice patrol by a Canadian destroyer.

The last Canadian destroyer did not leave the Korean theatre until September 1955, more than two years after the signing of the armistice, but there is little need to detail the activities of the ships of CANDESFE during this period since they were mainly of a routine nature. The operational patrols carried out by the Canadian destroyers were in most cases patrols in name only and involved lying at anchor, usually off Pengyong-do, ready to prevent any major Communist violations of the seaward extension of the demarcation line or other breaches of the armistice, while most of the actual work of patrolling was carried out by small ROKN craft. When not on operational duty—and after the armistice all the UN ships spent far less time on patrol than before—the RCN destroyers carried out exercises within their own division and with the U.S. fleet, the Royal Navy and the ships of other members of the UN. There was also more time for combined recreational-operational cruises to such places as Hong Kong, Manila and other more interesting and less familiar ports in Japan than Sasebo and Kure. Such activities kept the ships busy during their long, uneventful tours of post-



Two of *Haida's* mascots.

armistice duty in the Far East, and the morale problem, which under the circumstances might have been expected, never did arise.

Before the armistice was signed it had been agreed that there would be no immediate, mass withdrawals of the UN forces in the Korean theatre, and it was understood that when the risk of renewal of hostilities had declined sufficiently to permit reduction of forces this would only be done after consultation with all the powers involved. The Canadian Government considered the question of the eventual reduction of Canada's Korean force at a Cabinet meeting on 24 September, 1953, and decided that, when the time came to cut down, Canada would be prepared to maintain one infantry battalion and one destroyer or frigate in the UN Security Force which, it was believed, would have to be retained in the Far East for some time to come.<sup>3</sup> The unsettled conditions that followed the armistice and the long and bitter dispute over the prisoners of war who did not wish to be repatriated resulted in the postponement of any reduction of forces for some months, and when the time came for HMC Ships *Athabaskan* and *Iroquois* to return to Canada at the end of their tours of duty in the Far East (they left Sasebo on 18 November, 1953, and 1 January, 1954, respectively) they were relieved by *Crusader* (Commander W. H. Willson, D.S.C., C.D.) and *Cayuga* (Commander W. P. Hayes, C.D.).

In December of 1953 the Royal Navy completed what was in effect a minor reduction of its Korean force by returning the command of Task Group 95.1 to the U.S.N. and withdrawing the Flag Officer Second in Command Far East Station to Hong Kong. Henceforth seven RN or Commonwealth destroyers and frigates



were maintained in the immediate war area on a rotational basis, with the remainder ordinarily at Hong Kong on seven-days' notice; of the seven ships in the operational area, two were usually Canadian destroyers.<sup>4</sup> A suggestion by CANCOMDESFE that the RCN ships be withdrawn to Esquimalt with the understanding that they would return to Korea on three-weeks' notice should hostilities begin again was rejected by Canadian Naval Headquarters.<sup>5</sup> The ships were, however, ordered to reduce from war complement to operational complement by 1 March, 1954.<sup>6</sup>

The Canadian Cabinet, on 11 January 1954, again considered the question of reducing its Korean commitment. Since United States armed forces were being reduced at a fairly rapid rate, it was agreed that there was no reason why Canada should not begin to reduce gradually the total number of her military personnel in the Far East. The proposed reductions were to be confined to the ground forces; it was felt that the three destroyers would have to be maintained in Korean waters "for some time."<sup>7</sup>

During the spring and summer of 1954 negotiations between Britain and the other Commonwealth countries that had armed forces in Korea led to an agreement on the reductions to be made and on the composition of the Commonwealth contingent that would be maintained with the United Nations command for an indefinite period. As far as the RCN was concerned, it was proposed to withdraw two of the destroyers in the first phase of the troop withdrawals; this would mean that by about October 1954 there would be only one Canadian destroyer still on duty in the Far East. When this reduction programme was submitted to the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff in August 1954, the Joint Chiefs requested that only one Canadian destroyer be withdrawn during Phase "A" and the second during Phase "B", a programme that would leave the RCN with a one-ship commitment at the end of the year.<sup>8</sup>

For various reasons the RCN did not take advantage of the agreement authorizing the recall of one destroyer during Phase "A" of the troop withdrawals, and it was not until 26 December, 1954, that HMC Ships *Huron* (Commander J. C. Pratt, C.D.) and *Iroquois* (Commander M. F. Oliver, C.D.) left Sasebo for their home base at Halifax. HMCS *Sioux* (Commander A. H. Rankin, O.B.E., C.D.) was now the sole representative of the Royal Canadian Navy in the United Nations force.

There was indeed little need for even one Canadian destroyer in the Korean theatre, since there were more than enough ships available in the ROK Navy and in the regular squadrons of the USN and RN Far Eastern fleets to take care of the duties required of the United

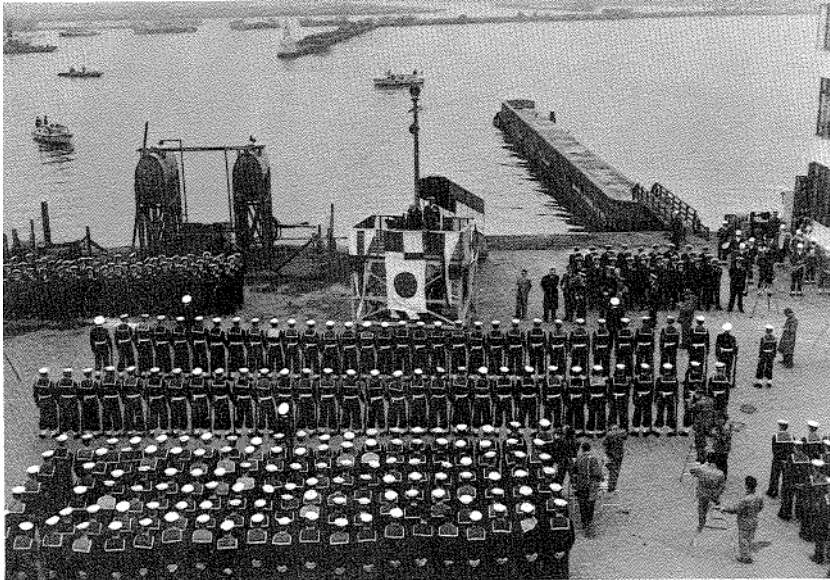
Nations naval forces. On 28 February, 1955, the Commanding Officer of *Sioux* informed the Canadian authorities that on 5 March the ROK Navy would be taking over all the patrols formerly carried out by the UN ships, that Task Group 95.1 was being dissolved and its former duties taken over by COMNAVFE and that consequently there would soon be no set employment for his ship. Certain exercises had been planned for *Sioux*, but when these had been completed about the end of March there were no prospects for further employment until June. Commander Rankin suggested that in view of these circumstances consideration should be given to the withdrawal of *Sioux* to Esquimalt without relief. The RCN could not of course act on this suggestion, as the withdrawal of any forces from the UN command in Korea was a matter of high-level policy.

The Commonwealth representatives did however consult the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff again in March 1955 about the possibility of further cutting down their Korean commitments. Under this new proposal Canada was to contribute only a medical detachment to serve with the Commonwealth Brigade Group, the implication being that *Sioux* could be withdrawn without relief. The Joint Chiefs did not concur with this suggestion, and *Sioux* remained at her station throughout the summer.

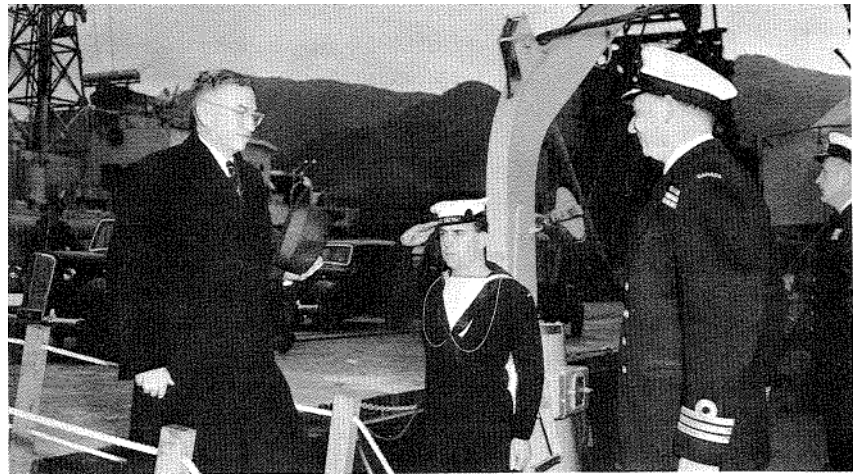
It had originally been intended that *Sioux* would complete her tour of duty in the Far East on 1 September, 1955, and Naval Headquarters confidently expected that by then the RCN would have been relieved of its Korean commitment.<sup>9</sup> But difficulties were encountered in securing the concurrence of the U.S. military authorities, and as September drew near an agreement had not been reached. HMC Frigate *New Glasgow* was therefore despatched on 21 July on a "training cruise" to Pearl Harbour with orders to remain there until it had been settled whether or not a relief for *Sioux* would be necessary.

Negotiations concerning the cancellation of the Canadian naval commitment in Korea dragged on, and finally on 5 August the Minister ordered that *New Glasgow* would not go on to Japan.<sup>10</sup> The frigate therefore sailed from Pearl Harbour on 16 August and returned to Esquimalt. In the meantime *Sioux* had been informed on 26 July that there was a possibility that she might be recalled without relief and that she should therefore make the preparations necessary for the termination of all RCN activities in the Korean theatre.<sup>11</sup> *Sioux* complied with these instructions and reported that she could be ready to leave at any time after 25 August.

On 1 September, the date originally scheduled for *Sioux's* departure from the Far East, agreement had still



Ships' companies of *Cayuga*, *Haida* and *Crusader* assembled on Tokyo wharf to meet Prime Minister the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent.



Defence Minister Brooke Claxton is welcomed aboard *Cayuga* by CDR James Plomer, the CANCOM-DESFE.



*Crusader* returns to Esquimalt from the Far East, September 1954.

not been reached on her relief. On that date *Sioux* was informed by CANAVHED that no definite information on her future movements could yet be given but that she was to remain in readiness to sail for Esquimalt.<sup>12</sup> Two days later, on 3 September, the message that the ship's company had been waiting for finally arrived; the Commander Naval Forces Far East was requested to sail *Sioux* to Esquimalt without relief as soon as convenient.<sup>13</sup> All the necessary preparations for such a move had already been made by the ship, and on 7 September, 1955, *Sioux* steamed out from Yokosuka on passage home. For the Royal Canadian Navy the Korean "police action" was over.

During the five years and more that the Royal Canadian Navy maintained a force in the Korean theatre the eight destroyers serving in that force performed valuable services in the cause of the United Nations.<sup>14</sup> It might be pointed out that the three destroyers sent by the RCN to the Far East on 5 July, 1950, represented precisely half the total number of Canadian destroyers then in commission,<sup>15</sup> and that in order to maintain these three on duty in the Korean theatre it was necessary for the RCN to set aside another two for relief duties. Thus from July 1950 to the end of 1954 the RCN had to provide five destroyers either on or preparing for Korean duty a considerable force for a navy that during this period possessed only eleven destroyers of which there were never more than nine in commission at one time.

The personnel statistics are equally impressive. During the period of hostilities, from July 1950 to July 1953, some 3,621 officers and men of the RCN served in Korean waters. If one takes into account the fact that many of these officers and men served more than one tour, it may be stated that the RCN provided personnel for 4,269 tours of duty in Korea. If the RCN contribution from the armistice to September 1955, when the last destroyer left Japan, were taken into consideration, these figures would of course be substantially higher. It might be pointed out, for purposes of comparison, that the total strength of the RCN in July 1950 was just over 9,000 officers and men and in July 1953 just over 15,500, both sea-going and shore personnel.

Statistics however give but a very inadequate picture of the services performed in the Korean theatre by

the destroyers of the Royal Canadian Navy. For over three years these hard-working little ships joined their colleagues in the United Nations force and the ROK Navy in performing a great variety of tasks: maintaining a blockade of the enemy coast; protecting the friendly islands on both coasts from amphibious assaults and sneak raids; providing support for the coastal flanks of the United Nations armies; bombarding Communist installations, gun emplacements, troop concentrations and road and rail lines along both the east and west coasts; screening the United Nations carriers from the ever-present threat of submarine and aerial attack; supporting the numerous friendly guerillas and ROK regulars in their unremitting harassment of the enemy mainland and islands; bringing aid and comfort to the sick and needy of South Korea's isolated fishing villages; and performing the countless other tasks that fell to the lot of the UN destroyers serving in the waters round Korea.

There is no need to discuss here the wider implications of the United Nations operations in Korea whether it was wise to impose restrictions on the UN high command forbidding the use of atomic weapons and the bombing of Manchurian bases; whether the opening of truce talks in the summer of 1951 was a mistake; whether the United Nations "won" or "lost" the war. But it would perhaps not be unwarranted to point out that the United Nations did not intervene in the Korean conflict in order to crush the North Koreans and unify the country by force, though no doubt many individuals of many nations may have felt that these should have been the objectives. The UN intervened solely "to repel the armed attack and restore international peace and security in the area." One would have to stretch a point to argue that "international peace and security" were restored to the area, for even now, in 1965; all is not sweetness and light in that sector of the world. But certainly the United Nations in the Korean conflict did repel the armed attack of the aggressors and restored a peace, albeit an uneasy one, which has endured now for twelve years and may well endure for many more. In this achievement, the achievement of a large number of the United Nations working together, the eight destroyers of the Royal Canadian Navy played their small but effective part.

## References

<sup>1</sup>See *The Ottawa Citizen*, 7 April, 1953. Also NS 1650, Vol. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Though *Huron* was out of action she did not miss out entirely on this operation, as several of her sailors were “lent” to HMS *Tyne*, Admiral Clifford’s flag-ship, to enable her to take part in the evacuation of the islands.

<sup>3</sup>NS 1650-40, Vol. 5.

<sup>4</sup>NS 1650-40, Vol. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Memo., VCNS to DNPO, dated 24 November, 1953. *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>Signal, *Canavhed to Canflaglant*, etc., 252251Z/1/54.

<sup>7</sup>COS memo dated 27 January 1954, NS 1650-40, Vol. 6.

<sup>8</sup>NS 1650-40, Vols. 6 and 7.

<sup>9</sup>Memo., CNS to CCOS, dated 24 August, 1955, NS 1650-40, Vol. 7.

<sup>10</sup>CANAVHED to CANFLAGPAC, etc., 051955Z/8/55 in NHS 8000 NEW GLASGOW (SIGNALS).

<sup>11</sup>CANAVHED to CANFLAGPAC, SIOUX, etc., 261501Z/ 7/55 in NHS 8000 SIOUX (SIGNALS).

<sup>12</sup>CANAVHED to SIOUX 011521Z/9/55, *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>CANAVHED to COMNAVFE, etc., 031510Z/9/55. *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>A complete list of the destroyers that served in the Korean theatre, with the dates of service of Commanding Officers, is given in Appendix C.

<sup>15</sup>Another five were laid up in reserve.

## APPENDIX A

### ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPLY OF THE RCN DESTROYERS IN THE KOREAN THEATRE

When the RCN was called upon at the end of June 1950 to despatch three of its Pacific-coast destroyers to The Far East, with the tacit understanding that these three ships would eventually be joining other United Nations naval forces in active operations in Korean waters, the Service was faced with several major problems. The least of these was the readying of the ships for war operations and perhaps the most difficult was that of supplying them once they had arrived in the theatre of war.

The RCN at this time possessed no large supply ships, and even had it possessed the necessary ships it would not have been economically feasible to maintain a fleet train for a force of only three destroyers. Nor would it have been practicable, even if the necessary facilities could have been secured from the occupying powers, to set up a separate base for the destroyer division in Japan. The Canadian destroyers with the United Nations force consequently were obliged to rely on the United States Navy and the Royal Navy for all base facilities and virtually all supply.

When the three destroyers left Esquimalt for Pearl Harbour on 5 July, 1950, they carried with them a full outfit of ammunition and as many practice rounds as possible as well as all the stores for which room could be found,<sup>1</sup> but the question of replenishment had not been settled when they set sail. Naval Headquarters was however in touch with its representative in Washington, the Naval Member Canadian Joint Staff, and by 20 July, ten days before the destroyers reached Sasebo, it had been arranged that the United States Navy would provide the Canadian ships with full logistic support in all items common to the two navies, as for example victualling stores, fuel and ammunition for Bofors and Oerlikon guns.<sup>2</sup> Payment for these materials was to be made at the Washington-Ottawa level.

Ammunition for the main armament was a more difficult problem. Originally, before the ships left

Canada, it had been planned to replenish their supply of 4-inch and 4.7-inch ammunition from Esquimalt, and the destroyers were ordered to report requirements to the Naval Armament Depot,<sup>3</sup> but such an arrangement would have been most unwieldy, particularly if ammunition expenditure proved heavy. Canadian Naval Headquarters therefore got in touch with the Commander-in-Chief Far East Station to try to arrange that CANDESPAC procure their ammunition from the Royal Navy.<sup>4</sup> Negotiations were also begun to enable Canadian ships to secure from the RN certain items of naval stores, clothing, rum and other items unobtainable from USN sources. Items peculiar to the RCN were to be shipped from Canada by sea or air. Thus, as far as supply was concerned, when the RCN destroyers arrived at Sasebo on 30 July, 1950, all the preliminary arrangements had been made to enable them to carry out active operations for an indefinite length of time.

As for organization and administration, the RCN and the destroyers concerned had no serious problem. The three ships sent to the Far East were no "scratch outfit;" they were the RCN's Pacific destroyer division (CANDESPAC) and had worked and trained together for a long time. They went over to Japan as a division, retaining their original organization under the Commander Canadian Destroyers Pacific (CANCOMDESPAC).

When CANDESPAC was ordered to join the United Nations forces under MacArthur it was made quite clear that the ships were under the Supreme Commander's *operational* control only and that "all matters of administration, including discipline, pay and allowances" remained an RCN responsibility.<sup>5</sup> CANCOMDESPAC continued to be responsible for these administrative matters to the Flag Officer Pacific Coast just as if the division were still

stationed on the Canadian West Coast, and in all routine matters, such as the submitting of the regular reports, the ships remained under FOPC. Copies of other reports required by the operational authorities in the Korean theatre were also submitted to FOPC.

Though the Canadian destroyers arrived in Japan as a division, conditions in the theatre very seldom permitted their employment on active operations as a single group, and except on a few isolated occasions in the early months of the conflict it was seldom that the three Canadian ships operated together. For CANCOMDESPAC (and later CANCOMDESFE) this splitting up of the Canadian destroyer division for operational purposes somewhat complicated the problems of administration, but no serious administrative difficulties were ever encountered. While Captain J. V. Brock was CANCOMDESPAC he endeavoured to have his destroyers operate together whenever conditions made this possible, but after his return to Canada this policy was abandoned.

The arrival in January 1951 of a Halifax-based ship, HMCS *Nootka*, to relieve *Sioux* introduced a complicating factor into the administrative arrangements of CANCOMDESPAC, for it was decided that all Canadian destroyers serving in the Far East would remain under the administrative control of their original home bases. Henceforth the senior Canadian naval officer in the theatre forwarded the reports of his ships to the appropriate flag officer, reporting on the Halifax-based ships to FOAC and on Esquimalt-based ships to FOPC.

The departure of Captain Brock in *Cayuga* on 16 March, 1951, upon relief by a second east-coast destroyer, HMCS *Huron*, necessitated a minor change in the administrative arrangements. Captain Brock had been the Commander Canadian Destroyers Pacific when the three "originals" sailed from Esquimalt and he had retained that title while in the Far East, even when *Sioux* departed and was replaced by a Halifax-based ship. He of course retained his title on his return to Esquimalt. It was decided therefore that his successor in the Korean theatre, Commander A. B. F. Fraser-Harris, D.S.C. and Bar, RCN, would be designated as Commander Canadian Destroyers Far East (CANCOMDESFE).<sup>6</sup> There was no change except that of title; CANCOMDESFE was, as CANCOMDESPAC had been, the local administrative authority for all Canadian ships in the Far East. This arrangement remained in effect until *Huron* and *Iroquois* left the theatre without relief in December 1954; since there was then only one Canadian destroyer, HMCS *Sioux*, left in the United Nations force, the title of CANCOMDESFE was abolished, effective 11 January, 1955.<sup>7</sup>

It is perhaps unnecessary to discuss the question of the operational, as opposed to the administrative, control of the Canadian destroyers in the Korean theatre as this has been touched on at several points in the text. But it might be well to give a brief description of how the RCN destroyers actually handled supply and related problems in the Far East.

The main operating base for the Canadian ships with the United Nations Korean force both before and after the armistice was Sasebo, a seaport situated on Kyushu which is the most southerly of the Japanese Islands. Sasebo has a fine natural harbour and up to the end of the Second World War was the site of a large naval dockyard; during the Korean conflict it became the headquarters and chief replenishment and repair base for almost all of the United Nations ships in the theatre.<sup>8</sup> Sasebo was in the American occupation zone and the base was controlled by the United States Navy; shortly after Korean operations began, certain facilities there were turned over to the Royal Navy, including one of the best jetties in the harbour and a few buildings ashore.

During the operations in Korea both the United States Navy and the Royal Navy employed "float supply" almost exclusively; even when the ships were in port at Sasebo they replenished from supply ships anchored in the harbour. All but major repairs and refits requiring docking could also be taken care of by USN repair ships maintained in the theatre. The system had great advantages, not only could the fighting ships be maintained at sea for exceptionally long periods of time but, had the focal point of the war suddenly shifted to another area, say the Indian Ocean or the Mediterranean, the fleets could have been shifted there at once, taking their "bases" with them. Repairs and refits for Commonwealth ships were usually performed by Japanese dockyards at Sasebo and Kure or by the RN base at Hong Kong.

From the point of view of the Canadian destroyers in the Far East, the system worked somewhat as follows. The ship would arrive at Sasebo after a tour of operations on the Korean coast and, because there was virtually no jetty space available, secure to a buoy in the harbour. The ship's Supply Officer would have his requisitions prepared before arrival, and if the requirements were being filled by the USN, as they usually were, these were then taken to the senior ship of the Service Squadron for screening. The processed requisitions would be returned with notations showing the names and locations of the supply ships which would fill them. It was then necessary to go from ship to ship, submitting the requisition for fresh-frozen provisions to the "reefer" (refrigeration) ship, the one for electronic parts to another ship and so on. The ship

on which each requisition was made checked that the items required were available; if they were, the requisition was accepted, and when the items were ready for delivery the requisitioning ship was notified to come and pick them up. When, as often happened, certain items were not in stock it was necessary to try another supply ship or, rarely, to obtain them ashore; no supplies or stores except bread and milk, and occasionally canteen stores, could however be obtained from the USN facilities ashore unless the requisitions had been cleared by the appropriate officer of the Service Squadron present.

As may well be imagined this system called for a good deal of boat work on the part of the operational ships, particularly when one considers that Sasebo harbour is some five miles long and the supply ships were usually secured at the outer and the operational ships at the inner end of the harbour. Normally it took almost 72 hours to store a destroyer, but in emergencies the time required could be drastically reduced; *Athabaskan* is said on one occasion to have completed the whole operation in four hours.

Almost all provisions for the RCN destroyers were obtained from the United States Navy, but naval stores were obtained from either USN or RN depending on convenience and availability of supply. The Royal Navy usually maintained one NSIS/VSIS (Naval Stores Issuing Ship/Victualling Stores Issuing Ship) in the operational area, and from this ship the RCN destroyers were often able to procure Admiralty-pattern naval stores. When the RN supply ship was away replenishing her stores at Hong Kong, which she had to do about once every three months, or when the items required were not in stock, requisitions could be signalled to the RN base at Hong Kong which would then forward requirements by the next Japan-bound ship. There were of course other requirements—those for items peculiar to the RCN as well as for items temporarily in short supply—which could not be filled from USN or RN sources, and these had to be obtained from Canada by sea (three to four months) or by air (up to six weeks). Freight shipments arriving in Sasebo for Canadian ships that were out on patrol were stored in a small shed provided by the USN authorities as a lay-apart store.

The ships of CANDESFE obtained fuel from both USN and RN sources. When at Sasebo the normal practice was to fuel from USN wharf-side facilities; at sea the nearest oiler was used, normally a British oiler when the ships were operating on the West Coast and a USN oiler when they were on the east.

Ammunition was also obtained from both sources. Bofors and Oerlikon ammunition was readily obtainable from the USN and when convenient the

RCN destroyers used that source. Ammunition for the 4-inch, 4.5-inch, 4.7-inch and squid was however obtainable only from the Royal Navy. Replenishing with ammunition almost invariably was done when the ships went into harbour, but occasionally an RCN destroyer serving with the USN on the East Coast would have her ammunition replenished by a USN supply ship which had picked up the required stocks from the RN in Sasebo.

The only Japanese base other than Sasebo that was used to any extent by the Canadian destroyers in the Far East was Kure. This port is situated on the main Japanese island of Honshu; it has excellent docking and repair facilities and, unlike Sasebo, ample alongsideberthing space. After the Second World War the area in which Kure lies was part of the United Kingdom occupation zone, and the administration of the port was assigned to Australia; the naval base they maintained there was commissioned as HMAS *Commonwealth*.

When the Korean conflict began Kure became the main base of the Commonwealth land forces in the theatre, including the Canadian contingent. However during the period of hostilities it never did become the main base for the Commonwealth ships, chiefly because it was much further than Sasebo from the main area of active operations and also because it was preferable to utilize the same main base as the USN. The Commonwealth ships, including the RCN destroyers, nevertheless made some use of Kure. From the point of view of the Canadian ships the chief merits of Kure were that it provided excellent facilities for having quick, efficient and cheap repairs done; that it was a much better leave port than Sasebo; that alongside berths were always available; and that it possessed medical and hospital facilities ashore that were far superior to those available in Sasebo.

The base at Kure also had its drawbacks. As a replenishment base, for instance, it did not compare with Sasebo. The Royal Navy supply ship in the theatre maintained small stocks of naval stores there, but these were not so complete nor so ample as those available at Sasebo. Provisions could also be obtained from HMAS *Commonwealth*, but the RCN ships found these to be far inferior to those supplied by the USN in Sasebo, and as a result the destroyers only took on provisions at Kure when they had no alternative.

Hong Kong was the only other Far Eastern port regularly visited by the ships of CANDESFE. It was utilized mainly as a leave or "Rest and Recreation" port, but advantage was often taken of its excellent repair facilities. Naval stores were also far more readily available at Hong Kong than from the RN supply ship at Sasebo. Almost all the provisions at Hong Kong, as

at Kure, were Australian and consequently the RCN destroyers did not use them except when necessary.

During the first eighteen months of hostilities the RCN maintained no shore staff at Sasebo to deal with the liaison, supply and other problems of its destroyers there. In these months the ships do not seem to have encountered any serious difficulties, but it was obvious that a liaison staff ashore, even if it consisted only of one officer, would be of great assistance to the CANCOMDESFE and the individual ships in dealing with problems of supply, incoming and outgoing drafts of personnel, liaison with the USN and RN and similar matters. In April and May of 1951 Commander (S) R. G. Harris, RCN, who was the Inspector of Supply and Fleet Accounting on the Canadian West Coast was despatched to Japan to report on supply activities there. He recommended that steps be taken to provide an RCN depot ship at Sasebo and that one officer, assisted by two Supply Petty Officers, be appointed there for duty ashore to deal with supply and liaison matters. His first recommendation was rejected and it was to be almost a year before his second recommendation, with which Commander Fraser-Harris who was then CANCOMDESFE concurred, was carried out in part.<sup>9</sup>

In September 1951 the CANCOMDESFE (then Commander Plomer) recommended to the Flag Officer Pacific Coast that a Supply Officer be stationed ashore at Sasebo to deal with the RCN logistic problems.<sup>10</sup> This recommendation had not been acted upon when on 3 January, 1952, Commander Plomer made another submission,<sup>11</sup> requesting that Lieutenant (SB) R. A. V. Jenkins, RCN, who was in the Far East as Naval Information Officer to CANDESFE, have his appointment extended in order that he might serve as liaison officer in Sasebo. Lieutenant Jenkins when not serving at sea with the RCN destroyers had been acting as liaison officer in Japan in addition to carrying out his regular duties. Commander Plomer suggested that, should Lieutenant Jenkins' appointment be extended, it

would not be necessary to appoint a special Supply Officer ashore at Sasebo.

In the event, this suggestion was not followed, and on 27 February, 1952, Lieutenant R. P. Morris, RCN, of *Cayuga* was appointed as Canadian Naval Liaison Officer in the Far East. Lieutenant Jenkins, when not at sea with the RCN ships, continued to perform liaison duties, assisting the CANTAVLO. Lieutenant Morris' was but a temporary appointment until a regular Supply Officer could be sent from Canada, and on 1 April, 1952, Lieutenant-Commander (S) Peter Cossette, C.D., RCN, assumed the duties of CANAVLO.<sup>12</sup>

The appointment of a liaison officer in Sasebo solved most of the RCN's supply and other problems there. CANAVLO soon acquired the necessary shore facilities (warehouse, motor shed, offices) and equipment (truck, jeep, motor cutter) to enable him to perform his duties more efficiently. He had a staff of but one petty officer from the Supply Branch and employed some five to six Japanese civilians.<sup>13</sup>

Commander Cossette served as CANAVLO until 4 November, 1952, when he was relieved by Lieutenant-Commander (S) E. Adamic, RCN. He in turn was relieved by Lieutenant-Commander B. E. Smith, C.D., RCN, on 23 November, 1953. When *Huron* and *Iroquois* left the theatre without relief in December 1954 there was little further need to maintain a liaison organization in Sasebo. Accordingly CANAVLO turned his office and warehouse space back to the USN and disposed of all his equipment and stores except one small truck, a jeep, a 25-foot motor cutter and a small quantity of portable stores peculiar to RCN ships such as clothing, rum, mechanical and electrical spares and so on. One month later, on 28 January, 1955, the CANAVLO organization officially closed down. Henceforth, until *Sioux* left for Canada on 7 September, 1955, such liaison duties as the RCN required in Japan were performed by the Canadian Military Mission in Tokyo, and supply and base facilities were provided by the ever-co-operative United States Navy at Sasebo.



## References

<sup>1</sup>Perry, Petty Officer K. A., RCN, "Logistics in the Far East," in *The Supply Mercury*, June 1951.

<sup>2</sup>CANAVHED to CTG-214.4, etc., 201902Z/7/50, in NS 1650-40, Vol. 1.

<sup>3</sup>CANFLAGPAC to COMDESPAC, etc., 302344Z/6/50. *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>CANAVHED to CINC, FES, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>CANAVHED to CTG-214.4, etc., 122038Z/7/50 and CANAVHED to CANFLAGPAC, etc., 122039Z/7/50. *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>NS 1700-102/11.

<sup>7</sup>NS 1650-40, Vol. 7.

<sup>8</sup>In October 1950 the U.S. 7th Fleet transferred its base to Yokosuka. Kure, on the Island of Honshu, was also used to a limited extent by Commonwealth ships as a rear base. See "Report on Supply Activities in Korea" by Commander (S) R. G. Harris, RCN, in DFE 1000-1 (held in NHS).

<sup>9</sup>Commander Harris' report is to be found on DFE 1000-1 (held in NHS).

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>NS 1700-176/477.

<sup>13</sup>For an account of the activities of CANAVLO, see Commander (S) P. Cossette, RCN, "Sasebo Japan," in *The Supply Mercury*, December 1952, pp. 2-9.

APPENDIX B

**SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE CANADIAN DESTROYERS IN THE FAR EAST  
1950-1955**

Appointment	Name	Ship	From	To
CANCOMDESPAC	Captain J. V. Brock, D.S.O., D.S.C., C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Cayuga</i>	30 July, 1950	16 March, 1951*
CANCOMDESFE	Commander A. B. F. Fraser- Harris, D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Nootka</i>	16 March, 1951	20 July, 1951
	Commander J. Plomer, O.B.E., D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Cayuga</i>	20 July, 1951	27 May, 1952
	Commander D. G. King, D.S.C., C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Athabaskan</i>	27 May, 1952	20 June, 1952
	Commander (A /Captain) W. M. Landymore, O.B.E., C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Iroquois</i>	20 June, 1952	26 November, 1952
	Commander J. C. Reed, O.B.E., D.S.C., C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Athabaskan</i>	27 November, 1952	18 June, 1953
	Captain W. M. Landymore, O.B.E., C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Iroquois</i>	18 June, 1953	6 November, 1953
	Commander (A/Captain) T. C. Pullen, C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Huron</i>	6 November, 1953	5 February, 1954
	Captain J. A. Charles, C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Haida</i>	5 February 1954,	12 September, 1954†
	Commander (A/Captain) J. C. Pratt, C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Huron</i>	23 September, 1954	11 February, 1955 (title abolished)

\*Dates given are those of arrival in the theatre of operations or of actual taking over or relinquishing of command. Rank given is highest attained during period of service indicated. Decorations include those awarded for services in Korea even when these were not received until after relinquishing appointment as CANCOMDESPAC or CANCOMDESFE.

†Captain Charles left the operational theatre on 12 September but did not turn over as CANCOMDESFE to Commander Pratt until 23 September 1954, while the ships were at Hong Kong.

APPENDIX C

SERVICE OF HMC SHIPS IN KOREAN WATERS†

Ship	Commanding Officer	Departed Esquimalt	Arrived Op. Theatre	Departed Op. Theatre	Arrived Esquimalt
<i>Pacific Coast Command</i>					
<i>Athabaskan</i>	Commander R. P. Welland, D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN.....	5.7.50	30.7.50	3.5.51	17.5.51
	Commander D. G. King, D.S.C., C.D., RCN .....	2.8.51	1.9.51	21.6.52	9.7.52
	Commander J. C. Reed, O.B.E., D.S.C., C.D., RCN .....	29.10.52	26.11.52	18.11.53	11.12.53
<i>Cayuga</i>	Captain J. V. Brock, D.S.O., D.S.C., C.D., RCN .....	5.7.50	30.7.50	16.3.51	7.4.51
	Commander J. Plomer, O.B.E., D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN .....	19.6.51	20.7.51	1.6.52	14.6.52
	Commander W. P. Hayes, C.D., RCN.....	25.11.53	1.1.54	22.11.54	16.12.54
<i>Crusader</i>	Lieutenant-Commander J. H. G. Bovey, D.S.C., C.D., RCN .....	25.5.52	21.6.52	18.6.53	1.7.53
	Commander W. H. Willson, AS.C., C.D., RM .....	18.10.53	20.11.53	15.8.54	3.9.54
<i>Sioux</i>	Commander P. D. Taylor, D.S.C.,.....	5.7.50	30.7.50	15.1.51	4.2.51
	Commander P. D. Taylor, D.S.C., RCN.....	8.4.51	30.4.51	14.2.52	8.3.52
	Commander A. H. Rankin, O.B.E., C.D., RCN.....	7.11.54	14.12.54	7.9.55	24.9.55
		Departed Halifax			Arrived Halifax
<i>Atlantic Coast Command</i>					
<i>Haida</i>	Commander Dunn Lantier, AS.C., C.D., RCN.....	27.9.52	6.11.52	12.6.53	22.7.53*
	Captain J. A. Charles, C.D., RCN .....	14.12.53	5.2.54	12.9.54	1.11.54*
<i>Huron</i>	Commander E. T. G. Madgwick, D.S.C. , C.D. RCN.....	22.1.51	15.3.51 14.8.51 21.9.51		
	Commander R. C. Chenoweth, M.B.E., C.D., RCN, .....	29.4.53	18.6.53	5.2.54	17.3.54*
	and Commander T. C. Pullen, C.D., RCN .....		(CO from 21 September, 1953.)		
	Commander J. C. Pratt, C.D., RCN.....	1.8.54	1.10.54	26.12.54	19.3.55*
<i>Iroquois</i>	Commander W. M. Landymore, O.B.E., C.D., RCN.....	21.4.52	12.6.52	26.11.52	8.1.53
	Captain W. M. Landymore, O.B.E., C.D., RCN,.....	29.4.53	18.6.53	1.1.54	10.2.54*
	and Lieutenant-Commander S. G. Moore, C.D., RCN .....		(from 1 November, 1953)		
	Commander M. F. Oliver, C.D., RCN.....	1.7.54	22.8.54	26.12.54	19.3.55*
<i>Nootka</i>	Commander A. B. F. Fraser-Harris, D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN .....	25.11.00	14.1.51	20.7.51	21.8.51
	Commander R. M. Steele, D.S.C., RCN.....	30.12.51	12.2.52	9.11.52	17.12.52*

† The rank given is that held by the Commanding Officer while his ship was in the operating theatre; promotions received while the ship was en route to her home base have been disregarded. Acting ranks have not been given. All decorations received for services in Korea have been included.

\* The mark \* indicates that the ship returned to Canada by way of Suez and hence circumnavigated the globe.

## APPENDIX D

### HONOURS AND AWARDS FOR SERVICE BY OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY IN THE KOREAN THEATRE, 1950-1955\*

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER (D.S.O.) Captain Jeffrey Vanstone Brock, D.S.O., D.S.C., C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Cayuga</i>
THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (MILITARY DIVISION) Captain William Moss Landymore, O.B.E., C.D., RCN Captain James Plomer, O.B.E., D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN Commander (Acting Captain) John Curwen Reed, O.B.E., D.S.C., C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Iroquois</i> <i>Cayuga</i> <i>Athabaskan</i>
BAR TO THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS Commander Robert Phillip Welland, D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN	HMCS <i>Athabaskan</i>
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS (D.S.C.) Lieutenant-Commander John Henry Gordon Bovey, D.S.C., RCN HMCS Lieutenant Andrew Lawrence Collier, D.S.C., RCN Captain Dudley Gawen King, D.S.C., C.D., RCN Commander Dunn Lantier, D.S.C., C.D., RCN Commander Edward Thomas George Madgwick, D.S.C., C.D., RCN Lieutenant-Commander Donald Roy Saxon, D.S.C., C.D., RCN Commander Richard Miles Steele, D.S.C., RCN Captain Paul Dalrymple Taylor, D.S.C., C.D., RCN Lieutenant (G) Douglas Frederick Tutte, D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>Crusader</i> <i>Cayuga</i> <i>Athabaskan</i> <i>Haida</i> <i>Huron</i> <i>Cayuga</i> <i>Nootka</i> <i>Sioux</i> <i>Iroquois</i>
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL (D.S.M.) Chief Petty Officer Albert Leo Bonner, D.S.M., B.E.M., RCN HMCS Petty Officer Gerald Edwin Jamieson, D.S.M., RCN	<i>Nootka</i> <i>Iroquois</i>
BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL (MILITARY DIVISION) Chief Petty Officer Douglas James Pearson, B.E.M., RCN Petty Officer Edward Hannford Randall, B.E.M., RCN Petty Officer Thomas Shields, B.E.M., RCN Chief Petty Officer George Charles Vander-Haegen, D.S.M., B.E.M., RCN	<i>Cayuga</i> <i>Nootka</i> <i>Athabaskan</i> <i>Athabaskan</i>
MENTION-IN-DESPATCHES Lieutenant (L) Nelson Ralph Banfield, C.D., RCN HMCS Captain Jeffrey Vanstone Brock, D.S.O., D.S.C., C.D., RCN Chief Petty Officer Harry Edward Brown, RCN Chief Petty Officer Lennox Clark, RCN Chief Petty Officer Ralph Evans Davies, RCN Chief Petty Officer Edward Victor Dear, RCN	<i>Sioux</i> <i>Cayuga</i> <i>Cayuga</i> <i>Athabaskan</i> <i>Cayuga</i> <i>Athabaskan</i>

\* Names are listed alphabetically, not in order of seniority. Rank given is that held at time of award.

Chief Petty Officer Frederick Charles Emmerson, RCN	<i>Nootka</i>
Chief Petty Officer Frederick Ewald, C.D., RCN	<i>Crusader</i>
Petty Officer Joseph Emilien Benoit Fortin, RCN	<i>Iroquois</i>
Commander Alexander Beaufort Fraser Fraser-Harris, D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN	<i>Nootka</i>
Ordnance Lieutenant Gerald Joseph Giroux, RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Chief Petty Officer Alfred Gold, RCN	<i>Crusader</i>
Commissioned Gunner (TAS) David William Hurl, RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Captain William Moss Landymore, O.B.E., C.D., RCN	<i>Iroquois</i>
Chief Petty Officer Joseph Ernest Leary, RCN	<i>Nootka</i>
Chief Petty Officer John Leonard Meads, RCN	<i>Crusader</i>
Lieutenant Paul Lancelot Steele McCulloch, RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Chief Petty Officer Henry Cecil Morgan, C.D., RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Chief Petty Officer William David Moyes, RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Lieutenant-Commander John Louis Quinn, RCN (Posthumous)	<i>Iroquois</i>
Leading Seaman William John Roberts, RCN	<i>Cayuga</i>
Lieutenant-Commander Frank Phillippo Rich Saunders, RCN	<i>Nootka</i>
Petty Officer Samuel Henry Shaw, RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Chief Petty Officer John Thornton Shea, RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Lieutenant-Commander (C) Harry Shorten, C.D., RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Petty Officer Ralph Smith, RCN Haida Able Seaman James Gordon Stewart, RCN	<i>Crusade</i>
Commander Paul Dalrymple Taylor, D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>Sioux</i>
Chief Petty Officer George Edward Vanthaaf, C.D., RCN	<i>Sioux</i>
Commander Robert Phillip Welland, D.S.C. and Bar, RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Surgeon Lieutenant Chris Alfred West, RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>
Chief Petty Officer Richard Williams, RCN	<i>Crusader</i>
Chief Petty Officer Reginald Winter, RCN	<i>Huron</i>

## HONOURS AND AWARDS PRESENTED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO RCN PERSONNEL FOR SERVICES IN KOREA

### LEGION OF MERIT: DEGREE OF COMMANDER

Commander Edward Thomas George Madgwick, D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>HMCS Huron</i>
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### LEGION OF MERIT: DEGREE OF OFFICER

Captain Jeffry Vanstone Brock, D.S.O., D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>Cayuga</i>
Commander James Plomer, O.B.E., D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>Cayuga</i>
Commander Paul Dalrymple Taylor, D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>Sioux</i>
Commander Robert Phillip Welland, D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>

### LEGION OF MERIT: DEGREE OF LEGIONNAIRE

Commander Alexander Beaufort Fraser Fraser-Harris, D.S.C. and Bar, C.D., RCN	<i>Nootka</i>
Commander Dudley Gawen King, D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>Athabaskan</i>

### DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

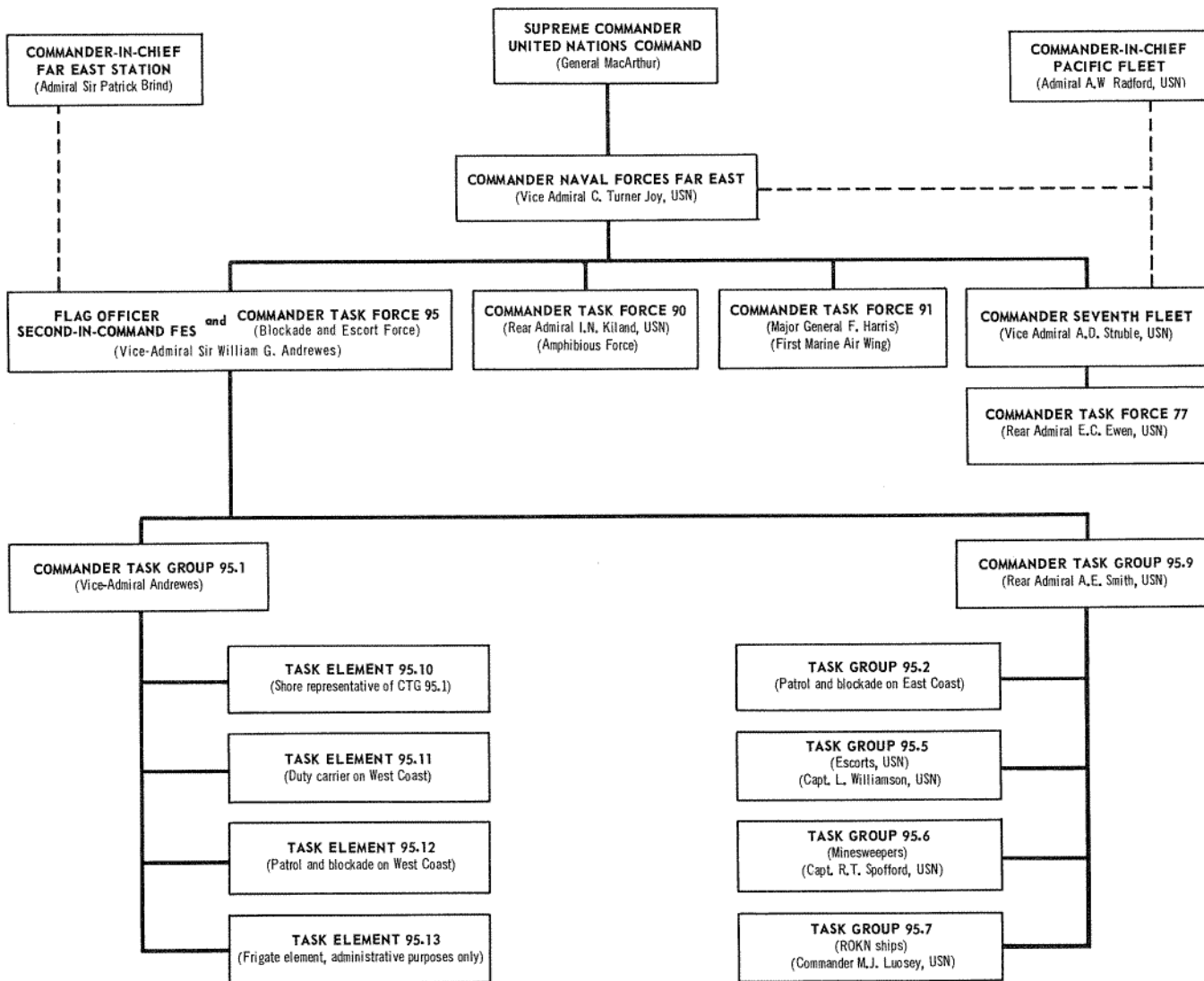
Lieutenant Joseph J. MacBrien, RCN	<i>Task Force 77</i>
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### BRONZE STAR MEDAL

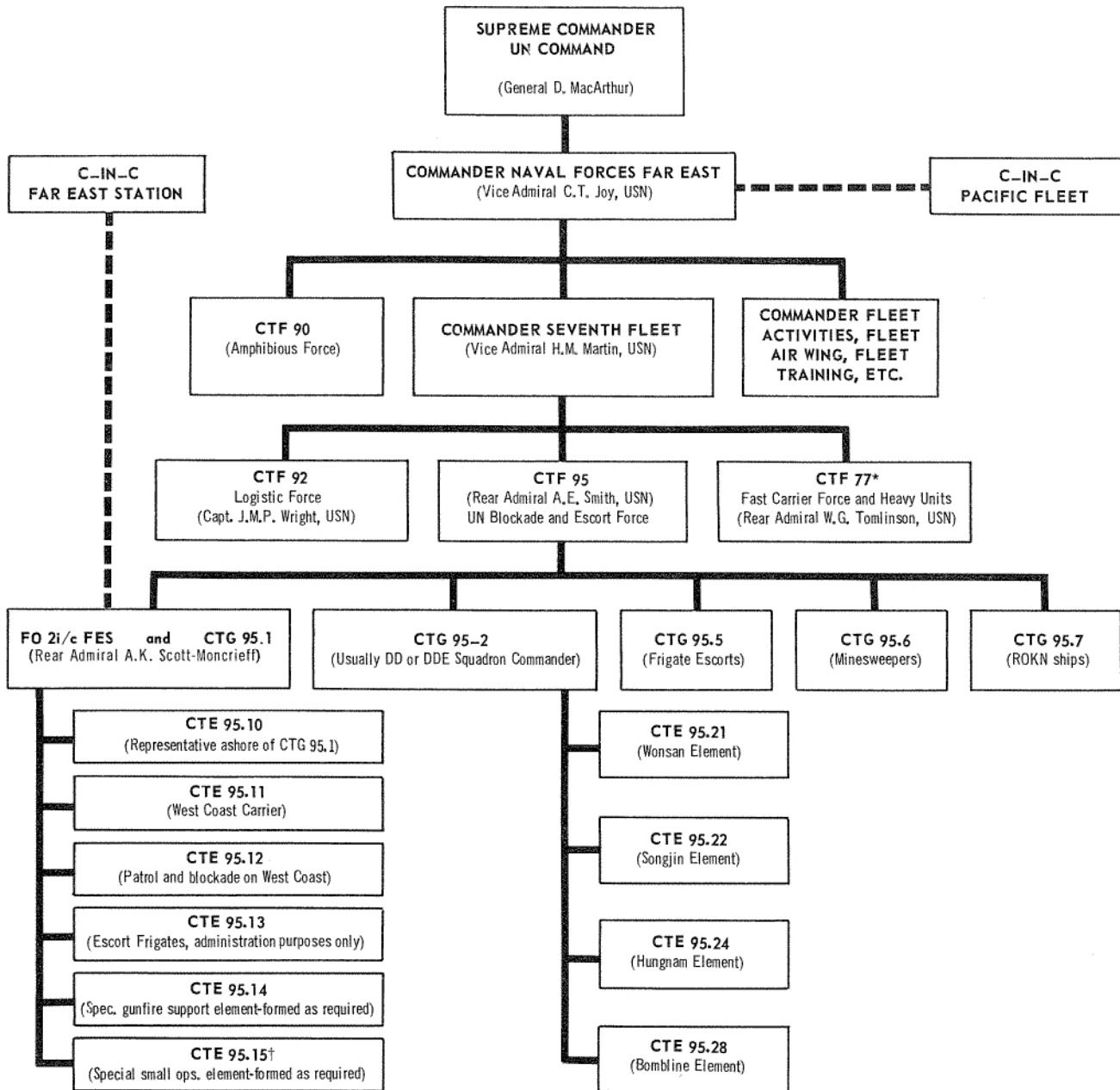
Commander John Henry Gordon Bovey, D.S.C., C.D., RCN	<i>Crusader</i>
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APPENDIX E

THE COMMAND ORGANIZATION, UN NAVAL FORCES, KOREA,  
19 FEBRUARY TO 3 APRIL, 1951



APPENDIX F  
**THE COMMAND ORGANIZATION, UN NAVAL FORCES, KOREA,  
 10 APRIL, 1951  
 (SIMPLIFIED DIAGRAM)**

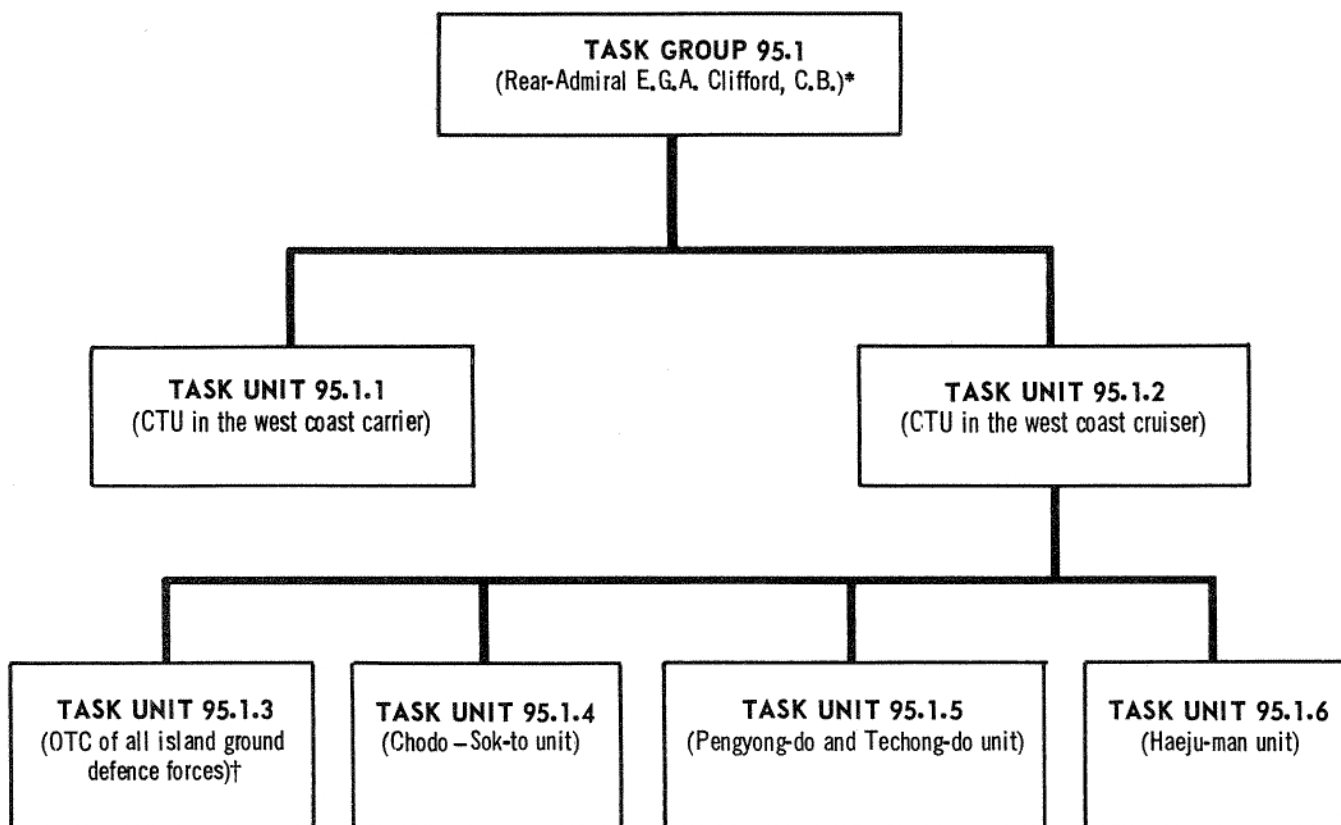


\*The command of TF 77 changed whenever the Senior Officer's carrier was relieved. During the 37 months of the Korean conflict there were 56 changes of command, involving 13 Rear Admirals in TF 77.

†Another element, TE 95.16, was sometimes formed when additional minesweeping forces were allocated to TG 95.1. These 'sweeper forces would usually also retain the element number assigned by their own commander, CTG 95.6.

APPENDIX G

**ORGANIZATION OF TASK GROUP 95.1 ON THE WEST COAST  
OF KOREA, EFFECTIVE 1 JANUARY, 1953**



\*Admiral Clifford had succeeded Admiral Scott-Moncrieff on 23 September, 1952.

†Usually a U.S. Marine Corps colonel and not under the direct orders of CTU 95.1.2 but working in close co-operation with him.



## APPENDIX H

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# RCN OPERATIONS IN KOREAN WATERS

TO AND FROM HOME PORT  
KOREAN WATERS

1950 1951 1952 1953 1954 1955  
J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S

## WEST COAST COMMAND

**CAYUGA**



**ATHABASKAN**



**SIoux**



**CRUSADER**



J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S

## EAST COAST COMMAND

**NOOTKA**



**HURON**



**IROQUOIS**



**HAIDA**



J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S O N D J F M A M J J A S



## APPENDIX J

### GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AKA	USN designation for an Attack Cargo Ship.	HE	High explosive.
AMC	Designation of ROKN light, auxiliary minelayer. Formerly designated as JML.	HEDA	High explosive, direct action.
AMS	Auxiliary minelayer. Formerly designated as YMS.	HMAS	Her Majesty's Australian Ship.
APA	USN designation for an Attack Transport.	H.Neth.MS	Her Netherlands Majesty's Ship.
CANAVHED	Canadian Naval Headquarters.	JML	Later designation of the JMS, an ex Japanese minelayer used as a mine sweeper in Korean operations. Later designated AMC.
CANAVLO	Canadian Naval Liaison Officer.	JMS	Designation of ROKN minesweeper (formerly a Japanese coastal minelayer). Later designated JML.
CANCOMDESFE	Commander Canadian Destroyer Division Far East.	JRUSI	Journal of the Royal United Services Institute.
CANCOMDESPAC	Commander Canadian Destroyer Division Pacific.	LCPL	Landing Craft, Personnel, Large.
CANDESFE	Canadian Destroyer Division Far East.	LCVP	Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel.
CANDESPAC	Canadian Destroyer Division Pacific.	LSMR	Landing Ship, Medium Rocket.
CANFLAGPAC	Flag Officer Pacific Coast	LST	Landing Ship Tank.
CAP	Combat Air Patrol.	M.C.	Military Cross.
C.B.	Companion of the Bath.	MP	Member of Parliament.
C.B.E.	Commander of the Order of the British Empire.	MSTS	Military Sea Transportation Service.
CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation.	O.B.E.	Officer of the Order of the British Empire.
CCOS	Combined Chiefs of Staff (U.S.).	OP	Observation Post.
C.D.	Canadian Forces Decoration.	OTC	Officer in Tactical Command.
CinC FES	Commander-in-Chief Far East Station. (A British command.)	PC	Designation of a Submarine Chaser.
CinC PAC	Commander-in-Chief Pacific (USN).	PO	Petty Officer.
CNS	Chief of the Naval Staff.	PPCLI	Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.
COMNAVFE	Commander Naval Forces Far East.	RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force.
COS	Chief (s) of Staff.	RCN	Royal Canadian Navy.
CPO	Chief Petty Officer.	RFA	Royal Fleet Auxiliary.
CTE	Commander Task Element.	RN	Royal Navy.
CTF	Commander Task Force.	ROK	Republic of Korea.
CTG	Commander Task Group.	ROKN	Republic of Korea Navy.
CTU	Commander Task Unit.	SFCP	Shore Fire Control Party.
DNPO	Director of Naval Plans and Operations (RCN and RN).	SHORAN	Short range aid to navigation.
D.S.C.	Distinguished Service Cross.	TE	Task Element.
D.S.M.	Distinguished Service Medal.	TF	Task Force.
D.S.O.	Distinguished Service Order.	TG	Task Group.
ETA	Estimated time of arrival.	TU	Task Unit.
EUSAK	Eighth United States Army in Korea.	USAF	United States Air Force.
FOPC	Flag Officer Pacific Coast (also referred to as CANFLAGPAC).	USMC	United States Marine Corps.
FO 2i/c FES	Flag Officer, Second in Command, Far East Station.	USN	United States Navy.
HDWS	High Definition Warning Surface. (A radar.)	USNIP	United States Naval Institute Proceedings.
		V.C.	Victoria Cross.
		XO	Executive Officer.
		YMS	Designation of ex-USN motor mine sweepers in ROKN. Later designated AMS.



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