



Ankara School



A Home of Peace and Hope

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ANKARA SUVAN
OKULU VE YETİMHANESİ
ANKARA SUWON ORPHANAGE



Refugees and
War Orphans



With Ankara School
in Their Hearts



SUWON
SPACE SERIES

⑤

Ankara School



A Home of Peace
and Hope



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Part I

Türkiye's Participation in the Korean War



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Türkiye’s Participation in the Korean War

1950–1971



1950

- 25 July**
The Government of Türkiye decided to deploy Turkish forces in response to the United Nations request.
- July–September**
The 1st Turkish Brigade was organized and trained at the training unit in Etimesgut.
- 25 September**
The first contingent departed from Iskenderun Port.
- 17–20 October**
The brigade arrived at Busan Port, moved to Daegu, and began training.
- 10 November**
The brigade departed Daegu and advanced northward toward Kaesong and Cheongdan.
- 12 November**
Under attachment to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, the brigade completed its first combat mission: rear-area guerrilla suppression and supply route security.
- 26–30 November**
The brigade took part in the Battle of Kunuri. At Wawon, Sillip-ri, and other areas, it blocked the offensive of four Chinese Communist divisions. Refusing to shrink from hand-to-hand combat, the brigade secured the withdrawal route of the U.S. Eighth Army, suffering losses amounting to 15 percent of its personnel.



1951

- 1–6 January**
Seoul fell during the New Year’s Offensive, and the brigade withdrew to Cheonan.
- 25–27 January**
The brigade took part in the Battles of Kumyangjang and Hill 151. It repelled Chinese Communist forces through hand-to-hand combat.
- 27 January**
The brigade moved to the area south of Suwon and prepared for operations advancing toward the Han River. The medical company was stationed in Seodun-dong, Suwon.
- 30 January–6 February**
Battle of Surisan.
- 16 March**
The first reinforcement contingent sent from Türkiye, consisting of 643 personnel under Lieutenant Colonel Enonu, arrived in Busan and underwent training in Suwon.
- 22–23 April**
During the Chinese Communist Spring Offensive, the brigade broke through the threat of encirclement and successfully withdrew in the Battle of Jangseungcheon.
- 17–18 May**
The brigade repelled a Chinese Communist night raid with bayonet charges.
- 13–16 June**
Fighting for Hill 507 and the occupation of the Cheorwon–Kimhwa sector.
- 2–15 July**
Personnel of the 1st Brigade returned to Türkiye in stages.
- 6 July**
The brigade received the U.S. Distinguished Unit Citation.
- 8 September**
The 2nd Brigade landed in Korea.
- 8–11 November**
The brigade completely secured Star Hill in the Battle of Star Hill.
- 16 November**
Command was transferred from the 1st Brigade under Tahsin Yazici to the 2nd Brigade under Namik Arguc.



1952

- 17–18 April**
In a raid on Hill 1052, the brigade infiltrated enemy trenches and achieved tactical gains.
- 5 June**
Colonel Nuri Pamir, regimental commander, was killed in action while inspecting Hill 1052.
- 9 June–13 July**
The commander and advance party of the 3rd Brigade landed in Busan, while personnel of the 2nd Brigade returned to Türkiye.
- 24 August**
Command was transferred from the 2nd Brigade to the 3rd Brigade under Sirri Acar. The combined cumulative losses of the 1st and 2nd Brigades reached 2,508 personnel, including 515 deaths.
- 17 September**
The brigade received a Unit Citation from the President of the Republic of Korea for its actions in the Battle of Kumyangjang.
- 14 November**
The brigade was assigned to first-line defense duties on the main line of resistance between Cheorwon and Kimhwa.



1953

- 5 May**
The brigade took over bridgehead positions north of the Imjin River near Panmunjom, including the Vegas, Elko, and Carson outposts.
- 28–29 May**
Nevada Outpost Battle.
- 27 July**
The Korean War Armistice Agreement was signed.
- 4 August**
Command was transferred from the 3rd Brigade to the 4th Brigade under Kemal Akkurt.
- August–September**
All Turkish prisoners of war returned.

1954

- August**
Command was transferred from the 4th Brigade to the 5th Brigade.

1960

- June**
The stationing of the 10th Brigade ended. Beginning with the 11th Korea Detachment (11’inci Kore Birliđi) under Major Faruk Polat, the Turkish deployment was reduced to a company-sized force of approximately 100 to 150 personnel.

1966

- July**
The deployment of Turkish combat units ended with the return of the 16th Korea Detachment. Beginning with the 1st Honor Guard Detachment under Master Sergeant Koksal Keles, the Turkish presence was reduced to a squad-sized force of around 10 personnel

1971

- 30 June**
With the return of the 5th Honor Guard Detachment, the official stationing mission of Turkish forces in Korea came to an end.



01

Brothers from a Distant Land:

A Photo Archive of Turkish Forces

in the Korean War



Toward Korea, a Distant and Unfamiliar Land



Turkish Forces Whose Deployment Was Decided by the Government of the Republic of Türkiye on 25 July 1950 (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Turkish Soldiers Bidding Farewell Before Deployment in 1950
(Courtesy of the National Archives of Korea)
The 1st Turkish Brigade was deployed to Korea with a total strength of 5,090 personnel, consisting of 259 officers, 18 civilian military employees, 4 civilian staff members, 395 non-commissioned officers, including 76 active-duty sergeants, and 4,414 enlisted soldiers.

First Official Inspection by Tahsin Yazici,
Commander of the 1st Turkish Brigade, in August 1950
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)
On 7 August 1950, the Korean Turkish Brigade moved to the garrison
of the 2nd Training Brigade in Etimesgut, Ankara.





Turkish Soldiers Greeting Their Commanders After Bayram Prayer Before Departure for Korea in 1950
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Turkish Soldiers Being Seen Off at Ankara Station on 20 September 1950
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



The 1st Turkish Brigade Arriving at Iskenderun Station on 21 September 1950
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)
Between 19 and 24 September 1950, the 1st Turkish Brigade left Ankara and moved to Iskenderun.
Along the route, citizens gave the troops an enthusiastic send-off.

Continued Hill Fighting
and Life on the Battlefield



River Crossing Training with Amphibious Vehicles(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



River Crossing Training with Small Boats (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



U.S. Artillery Units and the Turkish Brigade Crossing a River by Bridge
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

Turkish Officers Entering a Village
(Courtesy of ATASE)
A welcome message for the UN Commission
appears at the village entrance.





Turkish Soldiers Maintaining Their Weapons During Combat (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



A Turkish Soldier Observing Friendly Artillery Fire on Hill 507 in June 1951 (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)
From 13 to 16 June 1951, fierce fighting for hill positions unfolded along the Kimhwa defensive line.



Meals Delivered to Front-Line Troops in 1951
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



A Turkish Soldier Standing Guard Against a Sudden Enemy Attack
While His Comrades Eat on an Armored Vehicle Mounted with a .50-Caliber Machine Gun in 1951
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



Turkish Soldiers Resting Inside a Unit Bunker (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



A Turkish Soldier Writing Home from the Front (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



A Turkish Soldier Writing Home from the Front (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



The Turkish Brigade's Heavy Machine-Gun Position, Also Known as "the Turkish Fortress" (Courtesy of ATASE)



Turkish Soldiers Attacking Enemy Positions with a .30-Caliber Machine Gun in July 1951
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



A Concealed Position Hidden from the Enemy (Courtesy of ATASE)



Turkish Soldiers Firing on Enemy Positions near Kimhwa on 26 October 1951
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)

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The Turkish Brigade Reconnaissance Unit Resting Before Moving Out Toward Enemy Lines on 16 November 1951 (Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)
At the time, the Turkish Brigade reconnaissance unit operated under attachment to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division.

The Turkish Brigade Reconnaissance Unit Moving Out Toward Enemy Lines on 16 November 1951 (Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)

Turkish Artillery Battalion Personnel Raising a Flag
in the U.S. 25th Infantry Division Sector on 28 March 1951
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



Turkish Infantrymen Moving with a Tank
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)
As most of the Turkish Brigade's vehicles were used to transport weapons, its infantry
units had to make long marches on foot before entering combat.

Turkish Soldiers Riding on a Tank to a New Camp on 6 September 1951
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



Treating the Wounded:
The Turkish Brigade Medical Company in Action



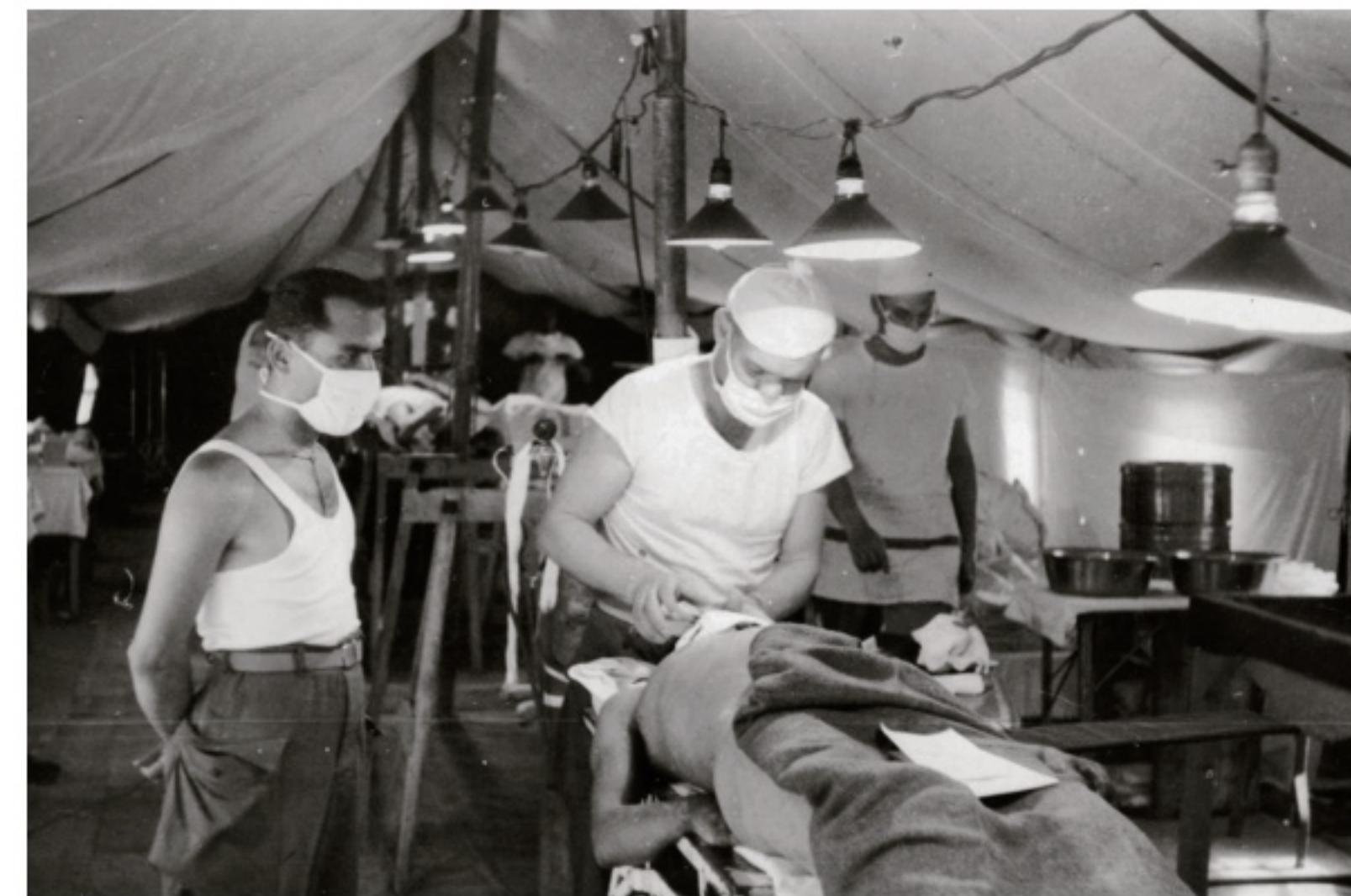
Evacuation of the Wounded from Combat (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Wounded Turkish Infantrymen Being Evacuated to an Outpost on 29 May 1953
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



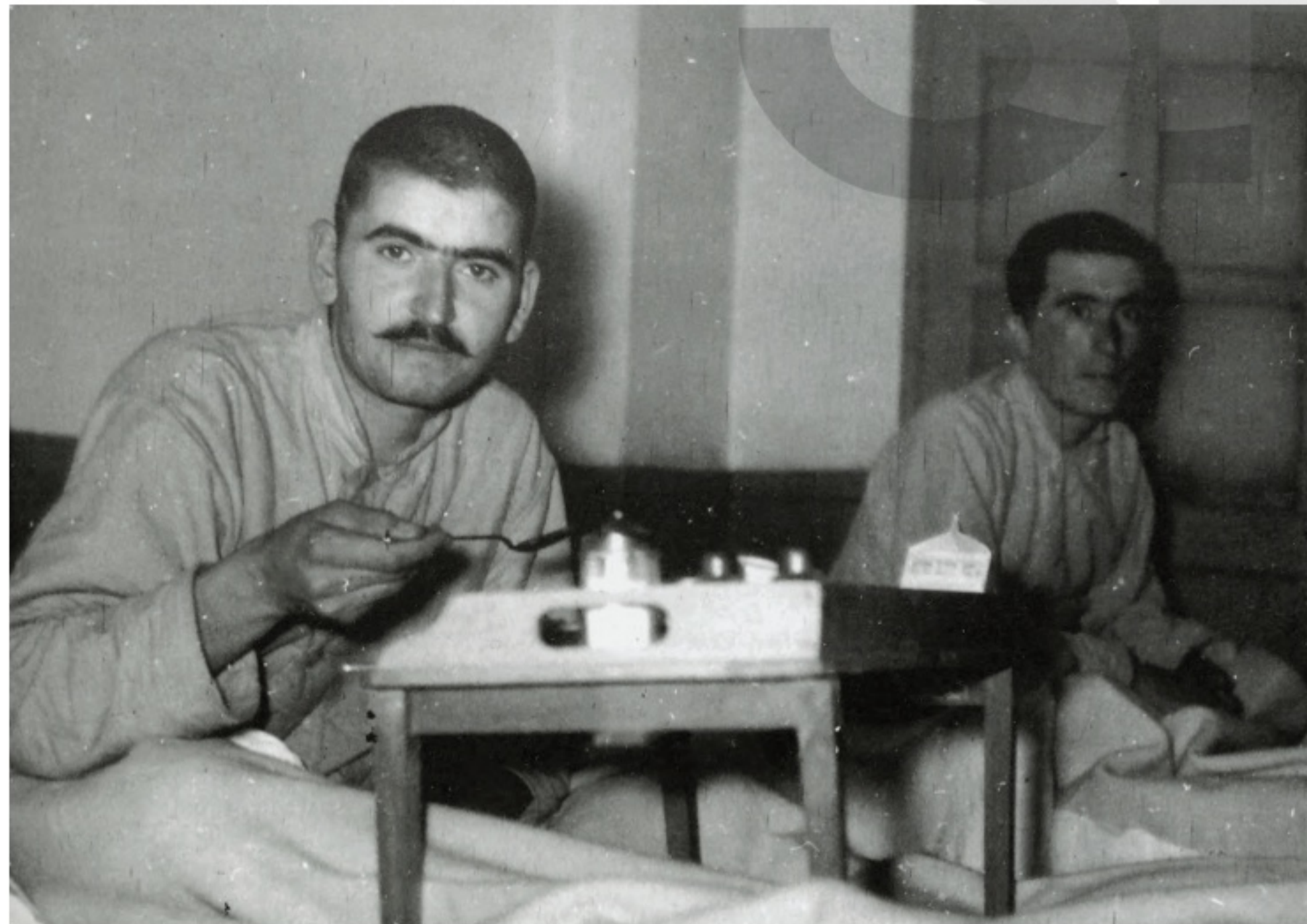
A Field Hospital Treating Wounded Soldiers (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Surgery on a Wounded Soldier (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)
Captain Cemalettin Tannöver, a military physician, observes the surgery.



Wounded U.S. Soldiers and Turkish Soldiers Recovering in a Hospital
(Courtesy of ATASE)



Wounded Soldiers Receiving Treatment at a U.S. Military Hospital in Japan
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



General Matthew B. Ridgway, Commander of the United Nations Command,
Visiting Wounded Soldiers in Hospital
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



The Turkish Medical Company Stationed in Suwon in 1951 (Courtesy of LIFE)



Funeral for Fallen Soldiers at the Turkish Medical Company (Courtesy of ATASE)



Ankara School Teachers Visiting the Turkish Fallen Soldiers' Cemetery



Ankara School Students Visiting the Turkish Fallen Soldiers' Cemetery



A Wounded Civilian Visiting the Turkish Medical Company
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Medical Company Soldiers Examining a Wounded Civilian
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

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A Medic Treating a Wounded Civilian
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Medical Company Soldiers Treating a Wounded Person
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Medical Company Soldiers Examining a Man with an Arm Wound
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



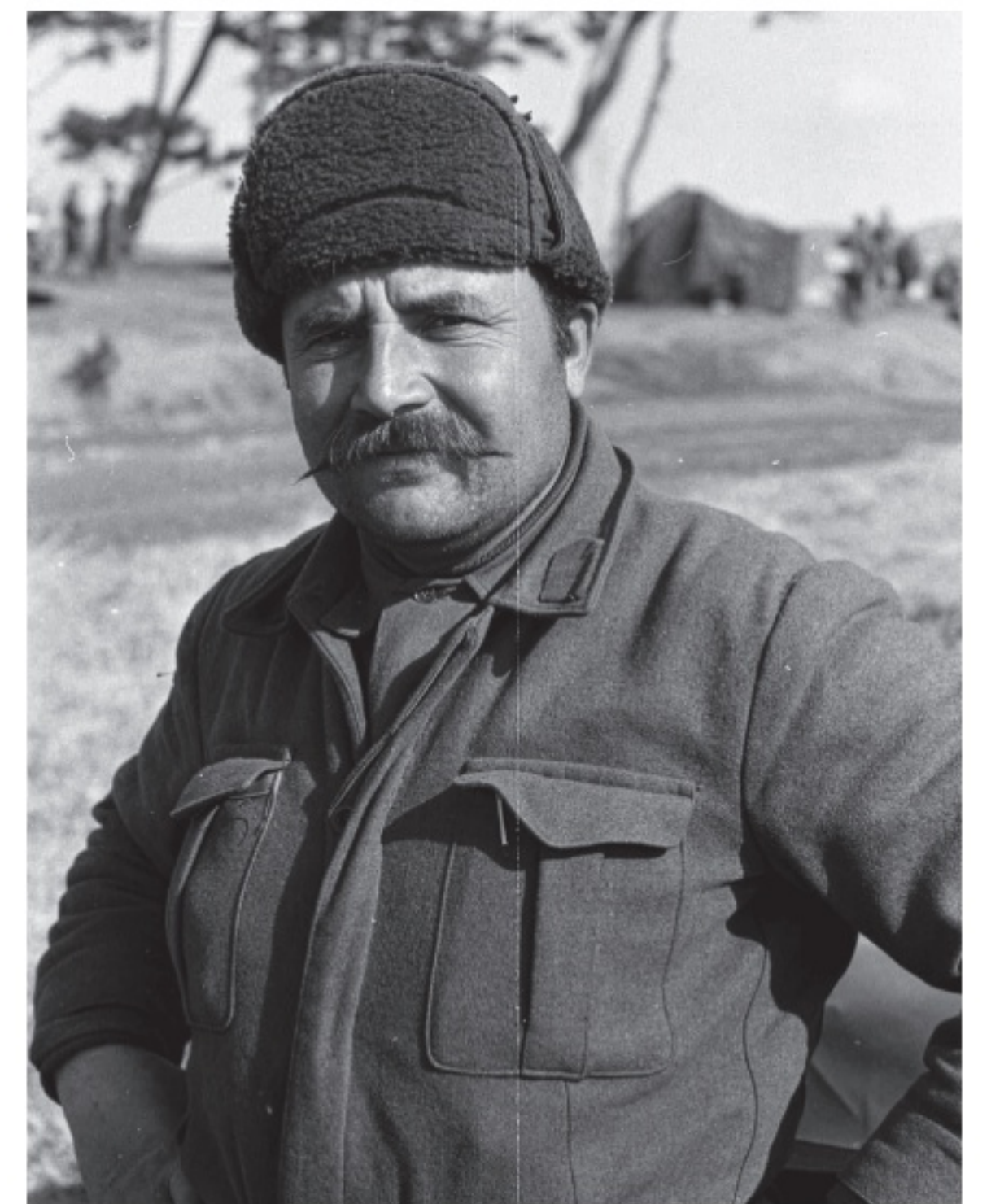
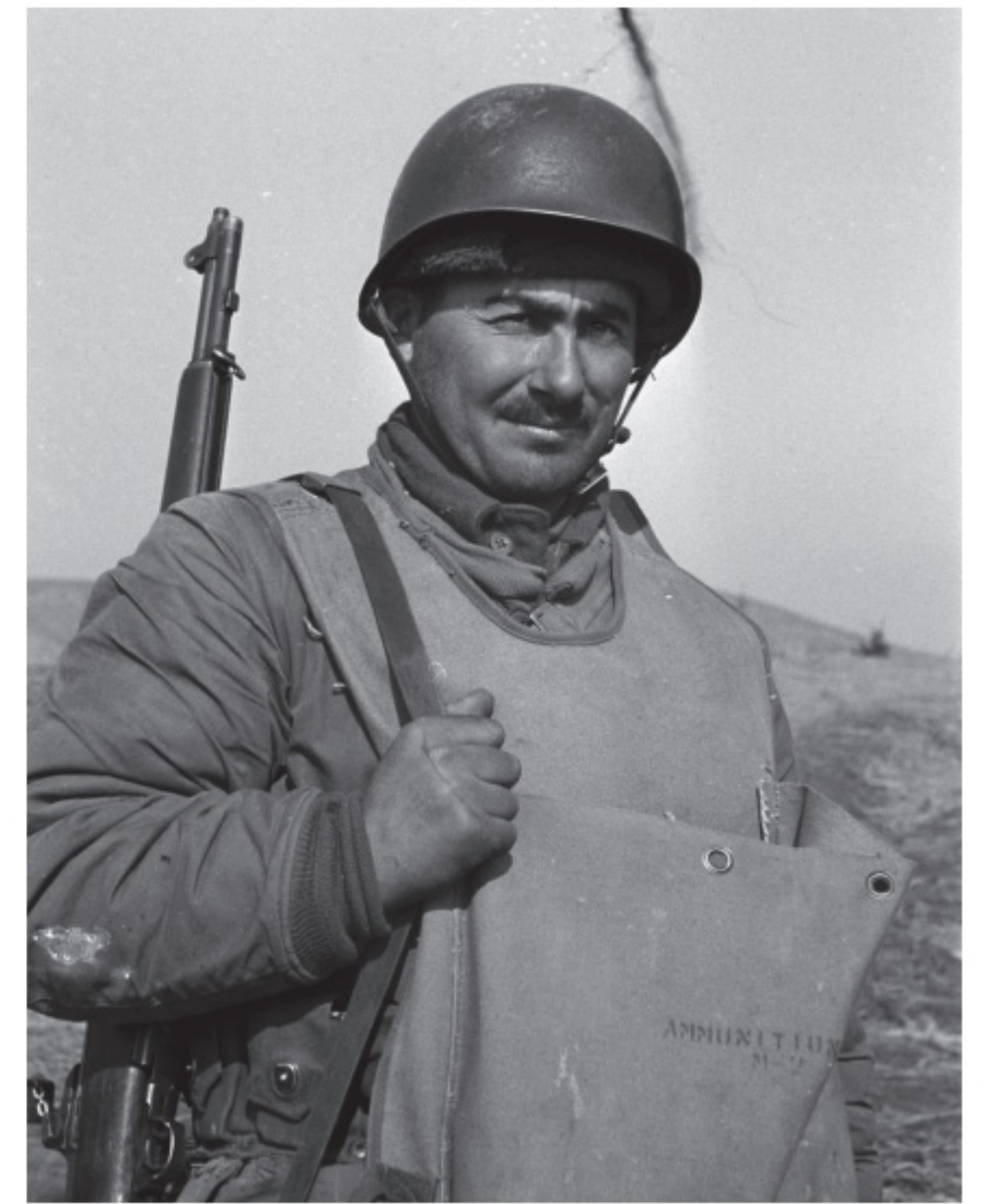
Turkish Medical Company Soldiers Treating Wounded Civilians in a Village
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)
Many civilians in the areas where the Turkish Brigade was stationed came to seek help.



Turkish Medical Company Soldiers Treating a Wounded Civilian
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

A Village in Suwon and the Turkish Medical Unit (Courtesy of *LIFE*)





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Turkish Medical Company Soldiers (Courtesy of *LIFE*)

Proofs of Courage and Devotion:
The Turkish Brigade's Decorations and Citations



U.S. Eighth Army Commander Lieutenant General Walton Walker and
Turkish Brigade Commander Brigadier General Tahsin Yazici
During a Decoration Ceremony for the Turkish Brigade on 13 December 1950
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



Officers Awarded the U.S. Silver Star for Their Actions in the Battle of Kunuri
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



A Decoration Ceremony (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Decorated Officers (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Decorated Turkish Soldiers (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

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The Turkish Brigade Receiving the U.S. Distinguished Unit Citation for the Battles of Kunuri, Hill 185, and Hill 156 on 6 July 1951 (Courtesy of ATASE)

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The Turkish Brigade Receiving a Unit Citation from the President of the Republic of Korea for the Battle of Kumyangjang and Other Engagements on 14 September 1952 (Courtesy of the National Archives of Korea)



Turkish Brigade Commander Tahsin Yazici Congratulating Soldiers on Their Promotions in May 1951 (Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)
Kazim Sariboga from Erzincan and Hyri Kurt from Izmit were promoted from corporal to sergeant.



The Turkish Brigade Color Guard Lined Up Before the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation Ceremony in June 1951
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)

Replacement Troops from Türkiye and
Combat Training



Reinforcements for the Turkish Brigade Arriving in Korea (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)
To replace losses suffered in the Battle of Kunuri and other engagements, Türkiye organized and dispatched a reinforcement unit composed of 21 officers, 14 non-commissioned officers, and 608 enlisted soldiers.



Members of the Reinforcement Unit Waiting to Depart by Train for Suwon (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Registration of Turkish Brigade Replacement Troops (Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)
Sergeant Burhan Toksoy Registering Newly Arrived Turkish Personnel.



Veteran Private First Class Mustafa Bayear Explaining Rifle Loading and Operation to Newly Arrived Unit Members
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)

Combat Veterans Lieutenant Sedat Akbulat and Private First Class Ali Namli Demonstrating Bayonet Use
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



A Veteran Soldier Demonstrating Weapon Use to Newly Arrived Unit Members
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



Soldiers Studying a Map to Learn the Terrain After Assignment to Their Unit
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



Turkish Soldiers Training with a 105 mm Howitzer against a Simulated Enemy Target
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)

Camp Life and Rest among Turkish Soldiers



Turkish Brigade Military Police on Duty at a Road Junction (Courtesy of *LIFE*)
The sign in the photograph identifies the site as the Turkish Brigade's command post and communications headquarters.
"North Star" was the code name for the Turkish Brigade.



The Turkish Medical Company Stationed in Suwon in 1951 (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



A Silk Flag Sent by Students of Balıkesir Girls' Institute to the Turkish Brigade in Korea (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Officers Discussing the Battlefield Situation (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



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Turkish Soldiers and Korean Military Police in Front of the Ruins of the Central Agricultural Research and Extension Services (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Turkish Soldiers Striking Camp (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Soldiers Checking Their Combat Equipment (Courtesy of *LIFE*)

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Soldiers Resting by a Campfire (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Turkish Soldiers Resting by a Campfire with Korean Children (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Turkish Soldiers Resting in the Snow (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Turkish Soldiers Breaking the Ice and Washing in Cold Water (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Turkish Soldiers Shaving (Courtesy of *LIFE*)

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A Turkish Soldier Getting a Haircut (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Soldiers Playing Music and Dancing Together During a Break (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Soldiers Dancing Together to the Music (Courtesy of *LIFE*)



General Sahap Gurler, Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff, Inspecting the Turkish Brigade on 30 December 1950 (Courtesy of ATASE)



General Douglas MacArthur Visiting the Turkish Brigade on 13 February 1951 (Courtesy of ATASE)



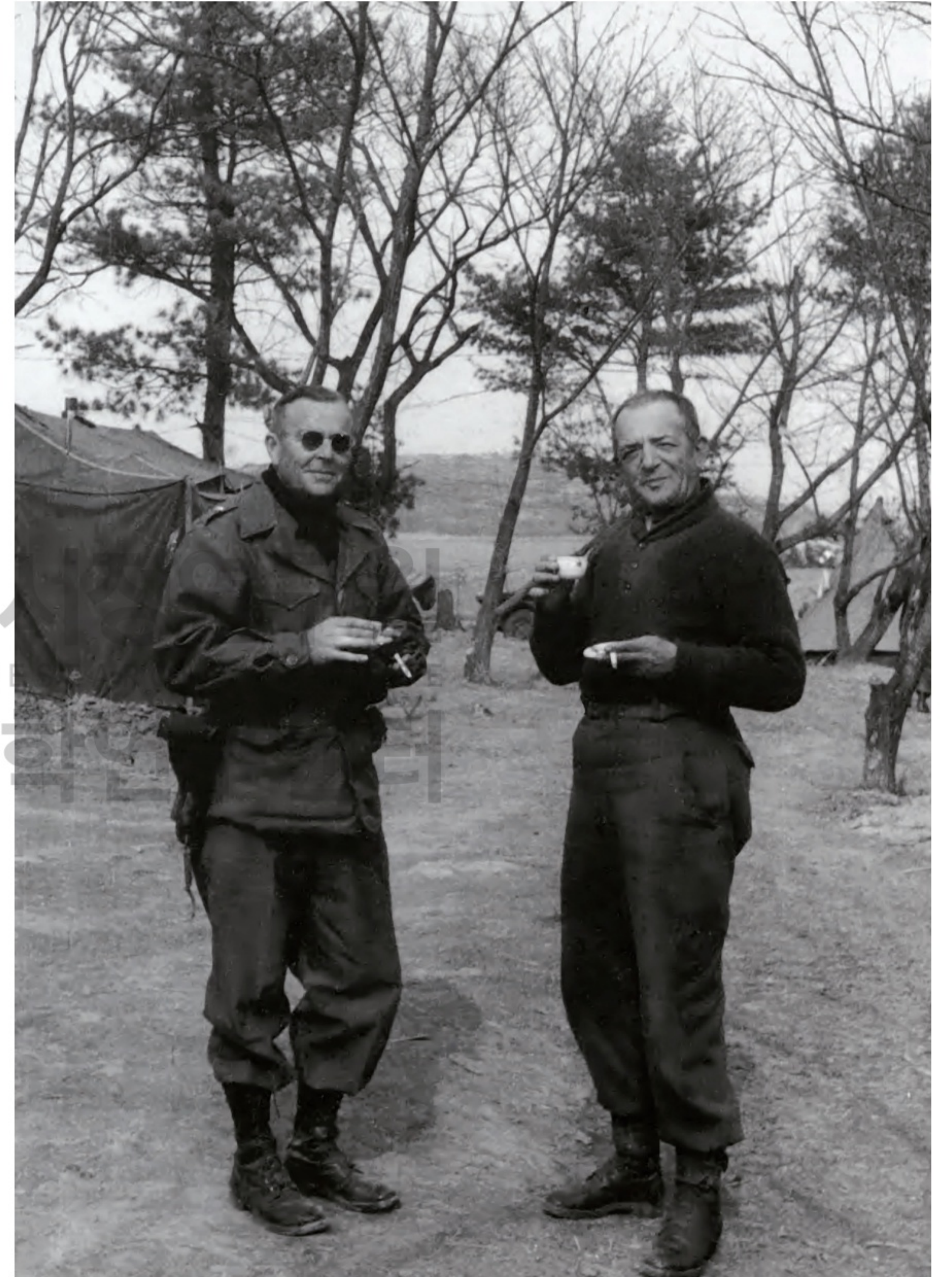
1st Turkish Brigade Commander Tahsin Yazici Welcoming General MacArthur (Courtesy of ATASE)



Turkish Brigade Soldiers Resting En Route to a Protected Area in May 1951
(Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)



Turkish Brigade Officers Taking a Brief Rest While Waiting in the Rear Area
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



25th Infantry Division Commander General Bradley and General Tahsin Yazici During a Visit to the Turkish Brigade
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



A Turkish Soldier Talking with a Korean (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



A Korean Visiting the Turkish Brigade (Courtesy of ATASE)
Koreans living near the Turkish Brigade camp
and Turkish soldiers showed considerable goodwill toward one another.



A Soldier Playfully Posing with a Village Resident (Courtesy of LIFE)

AN EVENT HELD BY
THE 5TH TURKISH BRIGADE IN 1954



A 5th Turkish Brigade Event in 1954 (Courtesy of ATASE)



5th Turkish Brigade Commander Mete Yurdakul, Wearing White, with Dignitaries (Courtesy of ATASE)
The 5th Turkish Brigade, which served from June 1954 to August 1955, supported the construction of a new dormitory building for Ankara School and the purchase of land.

Turkish Soldiers Performing
a Bayonet Drill Demonstration
(Courtesy of ATASE)





Soldiers in Traditional Clothing Playing Traditional Instruments
(Courtesy of ATASE)

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Ankara School Students Walking with the Korean National Flag (Courtesy of ATASE)



Ankara School Students Waiting to Present Flowers (Courtesy of ATASE)

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① Children Beside the Sign Reading "Ankara School (ANKARA OKULU)"
② Ankara School Students Performing



The End of a Long Journey:
Return to the Home



Soldiers Bidding Farewell at the Front Before Unit Rotation (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Soldiers Boarding Vehicles at the Front for Their Return Home
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Soldiers Bidding Farewell (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Wounded Soldiers Being Flown Home (Courtesy of ATASE)
Some wounded soldiers received treatment at U.S. military hospitals in Japan before being flown home.



A Wounded Soldier Boarding a Plane Bound for Home (Courtesy of ATASE)



Wounded Soldiers Aboard the Plane (Held by ATASE; Courtesy of the War Memorial of Korea)



USS Woodford, Which Soldiers of the 2nd Turkish Brigade Boarded at Incheon for Their Return Home in 1952
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Turkish Soldiers on Their Way Home (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



USS General W. C. Langfitt, the U.S. Transport Ship That Took the 1st Turkish Brigade Home (Courtesy of ATASE)

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Citizens Waiting at Izmir Port to Welcome Returning Veterans
(Courtesy of ATASE)





Citizens Going Out by Boat to Welcome Returning Soldiers as They Enter Izmir Port
(Courtesy of ATASE)



Citizens Welcoming Returning Soldiers at Port (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Turkish Veterans Returning Home (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Citizens Welcoming the 1st Turkish Brigade as It Returned to Izmir Port in 1951 (Courtesy of ATASE)



1 2

- ① A Wounded Soldier Returned Home Kissing His Mother on the Cheek (Courtesy of ATASE)
- ② Parents Welcoming Their Son Home from Korea (Courtesy of ATASE)





Returning Soldiers of the 1st Turkish Brigade Heading to Taksim Square for the Welcome Ceremony
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Veterans Laying a Wreath at the Taksim Monument (Courtesy of ATASE)

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Türkiye's Participation and Contributions in the Korean War



1. Decision of the Turkish Armed Forces to Participate in the Korean War and Their Deployment to the Korean Peninsula

1) Background to Türkiye's Participation

Less than five years after the conclusion of the Second World War, a new international environment characterized by the Cold War emerged, and Korea became the site of a large-scale conventional war comparable to a world war. On 25 June 1950 (Korean Standard Time), news of the outbreak was transmitted across the globe by foreign diplomatic representatives stationed in Korea as well as correspondents from major international news agencies such as Reuters, the Associated Press (AP), and Agence France-Presse (AFP). As a result, global attention rapidly turned to the Korean Peninsula, which until then had largely remained outside the interest of the international community.

The United Nations (UN), which had been established (on 24 October 1945) in response to the need for mechanisms to safeguard world peace in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, convened a meeting of the United Nations Security Council on 26 June 1950 (Korean Standard Time), the day following North Korea's invasion of South Korea. At this meeting, the Security Council adopted a resolution "recommending the cessation of hostilities in Korea." The resolution called upon the North Korean authorities to immediately



Communist Forces' Invasion of Seoul (*Hürriyet*, June 26, 1950)

halt combat operations and to withdraw their armed forces without delay to north of the 38th parallel.¹

As North Korea's acts of aggression did not cease despite the recommendation issued on 26 June, the United Nations Security Council adopted, on 28 June 1950 (Korean Standard Time), a resolution entitled "Military Assistance to Korea," which had been submitted by the United States. This resolution characterized North Korea's armed attack as a breach of peace, urged the cessation of hostilities, and recommended that United Nations member states provide assistance to the Republic of Korea.² The "28 June Resolution" was of great significance in that it constituted the first collective security action undertaken since the establishment of the United Nations, and in that it marked a turning point through which the Korean War expanded into a conflict characterized as a "war between North Korea and the United Nations."

Subsequently, on 7 July, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution to establish the United Nations Command, which had been drafted by the United States and proposed by the United Kingdom and France. This resolution delegated to the President of the United States the authority to conduct the war against the aggressor in Korea on behalf of the Security Council, and stipulated that the armed forces dispatched by United Nations member



Türkiye Decides to Dispatch 4,500 Soldiers to the Korean War (*Hürriyet*, July 26, 1950)

states would be placed under the unified command of the United States armed forces.³

On the very day the resolution was adopted, General Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief of the United States Far East Command, was appointed Commander of the United Nations forces. General MacArthur initially exercised operational control over United Nations forces through the Far East Command, and on 24 July formally established the United Nations Command (UNC). During this period, a command structure was put in place under which the Commander of the United States Eighth Army, the Commander of the United States Far East Naval Forces, and the Commander of the United States Far East Air Forces each exercised integrated command over the ground forces and the naval and air units participating in the Korean War, respectively. The Republic of Korea Armed Forces were also incorporated into this command structure following the transfer of operational command authority on 14 July.⁴

The participation of countries other than the United States was carried out primarily through consultations between the United States and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Most United Nations member states agreed that North Korea's invasion constituted an act that threatened peace.

However, there were some differences in national positions. While some countries supported the United Nations resolutions, they exercised caution with regard to the dispatch

of troops, whereas others expressed their willingness to send only very small contingents, which were subsequently rejected by the United Nations Command. Nevertheless, beginning with the participation of Commonwealth countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, a total of sixteen countries dispatched combat units, while six countries, including Sweden and India, provided medical assistance.

Among the sixteen countries that dispatched combat units, the Turkish Armed Forces sent one of the largest contingents, following those of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The Government of Türkiye, which strongly supported the United Nations resolution on military assistance to Korea, convened an emergency cabinet meeting on 18 July after receiving a request for troop contributions from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and decided to dispatch forces equivalent to one brigade. The Turkish Grand National Assembly unanimously approved the government's decision on 25 July, and on the same day Türkiye's decision to dispatch troops was formally notified to the United Nations Security Council. Türkiye's decision to deploy ground forces to Korea was the second earliest after that of the United States.⁵

Several factors underlay Türkiye's rapid decision to dispatch troops. First, it reflected a

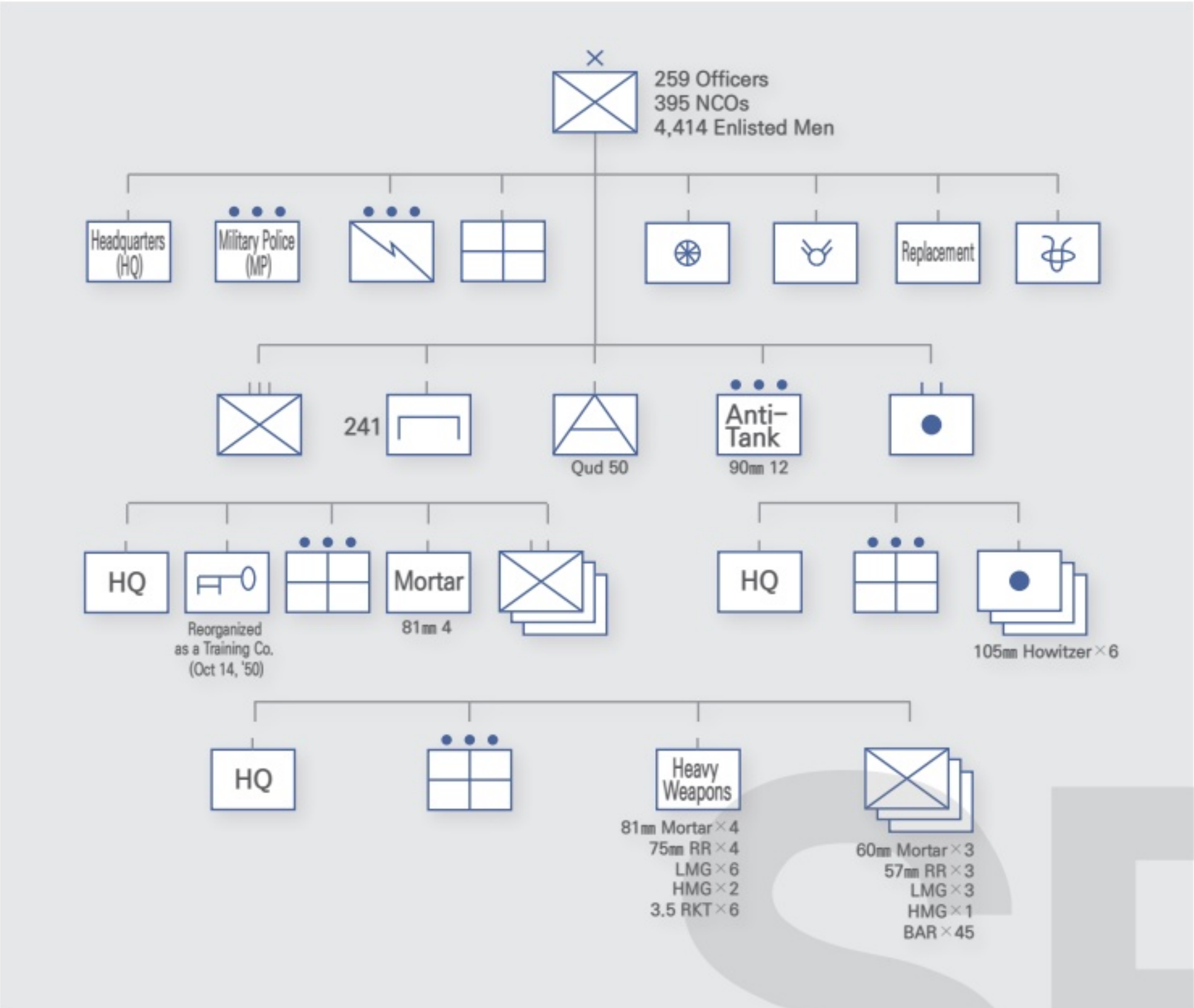
deeply rooted belief among the Turkish people that the establishment of world peace was a necessary condition for the security of Türkiye's homeland and families.⁶ Second, the decision was also shaped by Türkiye's response to the Russian threat. This threat intensified in the aftermath of the Second World War, as Russia demanded control over the Dardanelles and Bosphorus Straits and showed ambitions to annex parts of northern Anatolia. In response, Türkiye pursued a strategy of countering Russia under the umbrella of active military support from the United States.⁷ Accordingly, Türkiye expected that joining the United Nations' collective action to contain the expansion of communism in Asia would strengthen its ties with the United States and the Western bloc, and hoped that this would eventually lead to increased U.S. assistance to Türkiye. Third, Türkiye regarded its participation in the Korean War as an opportunity to realize its long-standing aspiration to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which had been established in April 1949. In fact, Türkiye joined NATO in February 1952, at the height of the Korean War, thereby becoming a key member of the European regional military alliance system.⁸

2) Organization of the First Turkish Brigade Dispatched to Korea and Its Deployment

Following the decision to dispatch forces to Korea, the Turkish Army organized a combat unit designated as the "Turkish Forces Dispatched to Korea" on 3 August 1950. This unit was formed primarily around the 241st Infantry Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division (regimental commander Colonel Celal Dora) and the 2nd Artillery Battalion of the 2nd Armored Brigade (battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Tahsin Kurtay). In addition, support units, including engineers, transportation, medical, ordnance, and communications units were drawn from the 4th Military District under the Turkish Army's 8th Corps, completing the organization of a brigade level combat force capable of conducting independent operations. On 10 September, Brigadier General Tahsin Yazıcı, then commander of the 2nd Armored Brigade, was appointed as the brigade commander, while Lieutenant Colonel Selahattin Tokay was appointed as chief of staff. This unit, designated the "1st Turkish Brigade," completed short term branch specific training by 13 September 1950 and assembled on 14 September at Etimesgut, Ankara.⁹



Turkish Soldiers Ahead of Their Deployment to Korea in August 1950
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)
Brigadier General Tahsin Yazıcı, Colonel Celal Dora, and Lieutenant Colonel Natik Poyrazoğlu attend an inspection ceremony.



Organization Chart of the 1st Turkish Brigade (Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, 2007, *형제의 나라, 한국과 터키: 터키군 6·25전쟁 참전사* [Brother Nations, Korea and Türkiye: A History of the Turkish Armed Forces' Participation in the Korean War], p. 64)

At the time of deployment, the total strength of the 1st Turkish Brigade amounted to 5,090 personnel. After completing final inspections at Etimesgut, the troops moved by train and arrived on 20 September at the port city of Iskenderun. There, the 1st Brigade was divided into three echelons, and beginning on 25 September embarked for Korea aboard U.S. transport ships.¹⁰ In the Korean War, most participating countries other than the Commonwealth nations lacked their own weapons systems and therefore relied on U.S. weapons and tactics. The 1st Turkish Brigade likewise received instruction in the operation of U.S. manufactured weapons and related tactics from American instructors who accompanied them during the voyage. After a voyage lasting 21 days, the first echelon of the Turkish forces arrived at Busan on 17 October 1950.

During the Korean War, Turkish forces entered the conflict with the deployment of the 1st Turkish Brigade, followed by the 2nd and 3rd Brigades, which were sent to the front lines



1st Brigade Commander Tahsin Yazıcı 2nd Brigade Commander Namık Argüç 3rd Brigade Commander Sirri Acar

in rotation at approximately one-year intervals. In this process, Turkish forces took part in and distinguished themselves in major engagements, including the Battle of Kunuri, the Kumyangjang and Hill 151 engagements, the Battle of Surisan, the Battle of Jangseungcheon, the Battle of Sagimak, and the Nevada Outpost Battle.¹¹ The Turkish units that participated in the Korean War and their principal commanders are summarized in <Table 1>.

Table 1 Turkish Brigade and Commanders during the Korean War

Brigade	Position	Commanders			Remarks
		Rank	Name	Period of Service	
1st Brigade	Brigade Commander	Brigadier General	Tahsin Yazici	1950. 9~1951. 12	
	1st Battalion Commander	Major	Imadetin Kuranel	1950. 9~1951. 4	
	2nd Battalion Commander	Major	Mithat Uluunlu	1950. 9~1951. 5	KIA on May 17, 1951
	3rd Battalion Commander	Major	Lutfu Bilgin	1950. 9~1951. 5	KIA on May 23, 1951
	Artillery Battalion Commander	Major	Tahsin Kurtay	1950. 9~1951. 8	
2nd Brigade	Brigade Commander	Brigadier General	Namık Argüç	1951. 8~1952. 9	
	1st Battalion Commander	Major	Tahir Alaybeyii	1951. 6~1952. 8	
	2nd Battalion Commander	Major	Enver Saltik(Atak)	1951. 8~1952. 9	
	3rd Battalion Commander	Major	Yekta Koran	1951. 8~1952. 9	
	Artillery Battalion Commander	Major	Kerim Kirtes	1951. 6~1952. 8	
3rd Brigade	Brigade Commander	Brigadier General	Sirri Acar	1952. 7~1953. 9	
	1st Battalion Commander	Major	Fahrettin Ulukan	1952. 7~1953. 9	
	2nd Battalion Commander	Major	Nizazi Bengisu	1952. 7~1953. 9	
	3rd Battalion Commander	Major	Turgut Vural	1952. 7~1953. 9	
	Artillery Battalion Commander	Major	Faruk Guventurk	1952. 7~1953. 9	

Source: War History Compilation Committee, Ministry of National Defense, *History of the Korean War: Participation of the United Nations Forces*, 1980, pp. 387–388.



Turkish Soldiers of the First Contingent Deployed to Korea Boarding a Ship in September 1950
(Courtesy of ATASE)

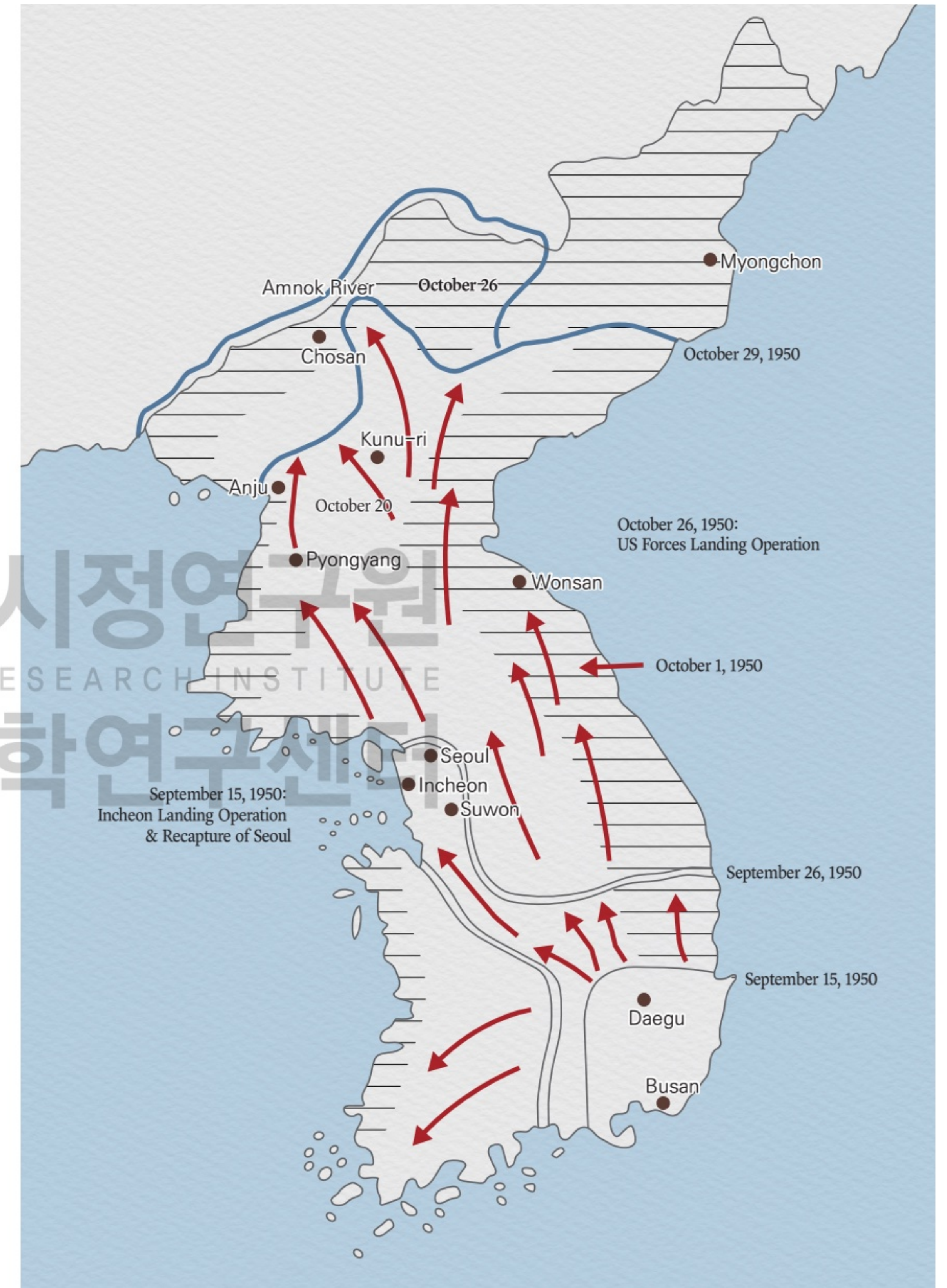
Turkish Citizens Waving Farewell to the Ship Carrying Soldiers Deployed to Korea in September 1950
(Courtesy of ATASE)



The 1st Turkish Brigade Upon Arrival in Korea (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

After arriving in Busan, the 1st Turkish Brigade moved to the UN Reception Center in Daegu and was attached to the U.S. IX Corps. Before being deployed to the front, the brigade carried out supply route security duties and received training in the use of U.S.-made weapons. During this period, the situation at the front began to change rapidly. Chinese Communist forces crossed the Amnok River on 19 October 1950 and launched their First Phase Offensive on 25 October, halting the northward advance of United Nations forces toward the river. Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, ordered the U.S. IX Corps, then operating south of the Han River, and the Turkish Brigade to advance to the front. Accordingly, the Turkish Brigade planned to reach Kunuri, north of Pyongyang, by 12 November.

However, during the preparation phase for the Turkish Brigade's initial movement to the front, parts of the operational plan were revised. As North Korean guerrilla units became increasingly active in the areas of Icheon, Pyeongyang, Cheorwon, Yeoncheon, Kaesong, and Geumcheon, General Walker, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, committed the Turkish Brigade, together with the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, to counter-guerrilla operations in rear



UN Military Operations, September 15–November 25, 1950

areas. The Turkish Brigade assembled in the Jangdan area by rail by 16 November and, until 20 November, carried out both supply route security duties and operations against North Korean guerrillas. In the course of these operations, Turkish forces suffered their first combat fatalities since entering the war, with a total of two soldiers killed in action.¹²

2. Major Battles of the 1st Turkish Brigade

1) The Battle of Kunuri (26 November-1 December 1950)

The Battle of Kunuri was a withdrawal operation carried out by the 1st Turkish Brigade during the retreat of the U.S. Eighth Army, which had launched the so-called Christmas Offensive before confronting the Second Phase Offensive of Chinese Communist forces. During this operation, the 1st Turkish Brigade came under attack in the gorge area between Kunu-ri and Sunchon by the 112th, 113th, and 114th Divisions of the Chinese Communist 38th Army, and fought its way through the encirclement while conducting a fighting withdrawal. Kunu-ri is located approximately 80 km north of Pyongyang. It was a strategic transportation hub along the Cheongcheon River, situated where the plains of the lower Cheongcheon River ended and connected eastward to the rugged mountain ranges of Myohyangsan.

The Battle of Kunuri as fought by Turkish forces does not refer solely to the withdrawal engagement in the Kunuri gorge itself, but encompasses a series of engagements that took place from 26 November to 1 December 1950. Turkish forces first clashed with Chinese Communist forces in the Wawon-ri area on the evenings of 26-28 November. From the night of 28 November to the afternoon of 29 November, they delayed enemy attacks at Sillip-ri, and from the evening of 29 November to the early morning of 30 November, they continued to check Chinese assaults along the withdrawal route from Bongmyeong-ri to Kunu-ri. Subsequently, from the morning of 30 November through 1 December, the Turkish Brigade conducted a breakout operation through the encirclement in the gorge between Kunu-ri and Sunchon, an area known as the “Gauntlet” gorge. Türkiye collectively refers to this entire sequence of engagements as the Battle of Kunuri.¹³

Turkish forces completed their movement from the Jangdan area, where they had been

conducting counter-guerrilla operations in rear areas, to the forward area of Kunu-ri on 26 November 1950. As a reserve force of the U.S. IX Corps, Turkish forces were assembling approximately 2.5 km southwest of Kunu-ri when the defensive line of the Republic of Korea II Corps along the Deokcheon-Yeongwon axis collapsed. They were consequently ordered to defend the area extending from Kunu-ri to Deokcheon. At that time, the road from Kunu-ri to Deokcheon was a rugged route running east-west across mountainous terrain exceeding 1,000 meters in elevation. In particular, the 20-kilometer Wawon-Alil Pass-Yongdeok-ri section consisted of rocky ground and steep cliffs, which severely restricted movement.

The 1st Turkish Brigade Moving Toward
the Battle of Kunuri on November 25, 1950
(Courtesy of ATASE)



At 18:00 on 26 November, in accordance with orders, Turkish forces advanced toward Wawon-ri, with the “Dora Special Task Force,” commanded by Deputy Brigade Commander Colonel Celal Dora, leading the column. They arrived there after midnight. While advancing toward Deokcheon the following day, they received a revised order near Alil Pass to halt the advance on Deokcheon and establish blocking positions in the vicinity of Yongdeok-ri. However, the brigade commander judged that, under the circumstances, it would be difficult to assemble at the location designated by the corps, and ordered the force to return to Wawon-ri.

After an approximately ten-hour forced march, Turkish forces returned to Wawon-ri and were resting when their rear elements came under a surprise attack by Chinese Communist forces. During this engagement, platoon leaders were killed in action, and a U.S. military advisor was taken prisoner. Turkish forces attempted to mount a response, but failed because of the enemy’s continued advance. Chinese Communist forces attacked both along the road and through the surrounding mountainous terrain, resulting in intense fighting. Although the 2nd and 3rd Battalions repelled several attacks and established defensive positions, a large-scale assault on 28 November caused part of the defenses to collapse. Colonel Dora personally went to brigade headquarters, located approximately 2 kilometers to the rear, to report the situation to the brigade commander and recommended a withdrawal to terrain more favorable for defense. The brigade commander assessed the enemy force as being equivalent to two divisions, designated Sillip-ri, 5 km to the rear, as the new blocking line, and issued an order to withdraw at 15:00 on 28 November.¹⁴

Around sunset, the Turkish Brigade withdrew to Sillip-ri and established defensive positions. However, isolated without friendly units on either flank, the brigade endured fear, cold, and hunger throughout 28 November 1950. At 24:00 that day, the U.S. IX Corps reassigned the brigade to the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division, but the brigade received no mission orders and remained cut off from communications. Amid these circumstances, at 00:00 on 29 November, Chinese Communist forces launched surprise attacks from both flanks, employing troops disguised as refugees and concentrating their assault on vehicles, ammunition stocks, the artillery battalion, the mortar company, and the 3rd Battalion. The defensive positions were engulfed in flames, and soldiers began withdrawing in disorder toward Bongmyeong-ri. Vehicles that should have been towing artillery pieces or transporting mortars abandoned

their guns and, packed tightly with soldiers, raced one another to escape while carrying as many soldiers as possible. In the pitch black night, soldiers unable to board vehicles attempted to cling to passing trucks and were sometimes run over, generating widespread chaos.

One hour after the Chinese Communist forces launched their surprise attack, brigade headquarters, located in a school building in Bongmyeong-ri, received reports that units were withdrawing in disorder from Sillip-ri. The road in front of headquarters was clogged with vehicles and troops, while gunfire continued to be heard from the direction of Sillip-ri. The brigade commander attempted to establish communications with the 1st and 2nd Battalions at the front but received no response. At the same time, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions east of Sillip-ri were also under surprise attack and engaged in combat. The brigade commander decided first to establish defensive positions east of Bongmyeong-ri and to determine subsequent actions once contact with the forward units could be restored. To this end, a military police platoon was deployed to restore order, soldiers riding on vehicles were ordered to dismount, and withdrawing troops were reorganized into units of approximately 150 men, which were then deployed to the eastern hills. Officers were dispatched to recover troops that had withdrawn toward Kunu-ri, and a request for support was made to the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division, resulting in the deployment of the 3rd Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, reinforced with one tank platoon, to establish defensive positions north of Bongmyeong-ri.

After restoring a measure of order, the brigade commander transferred ammunition and rations from Kunu-ri to Bongmyeong-ri and again attempted to establish communications with the forward battalions, but contact was never established. At that time, the 1st and 2nd Battalions were isolated and fighting desperately in hand-to-hand combat against successive waves of attacks by Chinese Communist forces. Within the encirclement, commanders fixed bayonets and charged at the front, and their soldiers followed, opening escape routes. In this process, the traditional valor of Turkish soldiers was clearly displayed.

Ultimately, the forward units were able to withdraw to Bongmyeong-ri only in the afternoon of 29 November. The 1st Turkish Brigade succeeded in breaking through the encirclement after blocking, for 24 hours, a large-scale Chinese Communist penetration that threatened the right flank of the U.S. Eighth Army. The cost, however, was heavy: the 1st Battalion suffered 41 casualties, including 16 killed in action, 17 wounded, and 8 missing,



Turkish Soldiers Withdrawing Under Artillery Fire on November 30, 1950 (Courtesy of ATASE)

while the 2nd Battalion sustained 18 wounded. Casualties in other units were difficult even to confirm.¹⁵

At approximately 17:00 on 29 November, a U.S. battalion responsible for the northern sector withdrew without notifying the Turkish Brigade, leaving brigade headquarters exposed. Amid intense gunfire from the direction of the road leading to Kunu-ri, the brigade commander soon saw vehicles carrying U.S. troops heading toward Kunu-ri. Judging that the current position could no longer be defended by the brigade alone, he ordered a general withdrawal. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved first, while the 1st Battalion, together with a U.S. tank platoon, served as the rearguard. From a point 900 meters west of Bongmyeong-ri, where the road wound like a serpent, enemy machine-gun fire and artillery shells poured in from both sides just as the infantry began to enter the route after some elements, including artillery units, had already passed through. The brigade withdrew in small, dispersed elements. However, the 1st Battalion, withdrawing at the rear, was unable to advance under heavy enemy fire and was forced to remain on high ground.

Around midnight on 29 November, radio communications were restored, enabling the 1st Turkish Brigade to secure its withdrawal routes with supporting fire from a U.S. artillery battalion and air support from United Nations air forces. In the early hours of 30 November, the brigade linked up with the 38th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division on the southwestern outskirts of Kunu-ri and moved to the division assembly area. During this movement, the 2nd Battalion withdrew toward Anju aboard U.S. vehicles.

Unable to delay further, the brigade withdrew alongside the main body of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division. However, as Chinese Communist forces occupying the ridgelines on both sides poured mortar and machine-gun fire onto the route, a horrific situation unfolded in the “Gauntlet” gorge. The withdrawal column rapidly lost command and control and fell into chaos. After suffering heavy losses, including the death in action of the acting commander of the 1st Battalion, Turkish forces finally broke out of the valley and reached Pyongyang on the morning of 1 December. During this process, Turkish soldiers refused to be taken prisoner, fixed bayonets, and charged toward enemy positions, demonstrating strong discipline and cohesion. However, during the seven days of the Battle of Kunuri, the 1st Turkish Brigade suffered enormous losses, losing 15 percent of its personnel and 70 percent of its major equipment, including 105 mm howitzers. Nevertheless, thanks to the desperate fighting of

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Turkish forces, the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division was able to break through the valley and reduce its losses.¹⁶

The 1st Turkish Brigade arrived at Kaesong on 5 December and reached Sosa, located approximately 18 kilometers west of Seoul, on 7 December, where it reorganized its forces. Subsequently, on 10 December, the brigade was attached to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division and assigned the mission of defending the Imjin River line west of Munsan. On 14 December, it advanced onto the Gimpo Peninsula. The brigade defended this sector until 4 January 1951, after which it moved via Suwon and Osan to Cheonan, where it was placed in corps reserve together with the U.S. 25th Infantry Division.¹⁷

2) The Battle of Kumyangjang and Hill 151 (January 25-27, 1951)

The Battles of Kumyangjang and Hill 151 took place from 25 to 27 January 1951 and were fought by the 1st Turkish Brigade, then attached to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division under U.S. I Corps. In these engagements, the brigade repelled the 447th Regiment of the 149th Division and the 448th Regiment of the 150th Division, both belonging to the 50th Army of Chinese Communist forces, and recaptured Kumyangjang and Hill 151.

Kumyangjang (present-day Gimnyangjang) is now part of Cheoin-gu, Yongin-si, while Hill 151 corresponds to present-day Bora-dong, Giheung-gu, located approximately 3 km east of Singal Reservoir. Both areas lay at a critical point along the route of advance from the Osan-Songjeon-ri line toward Suwon and Gwangju, making them tactically essential objectives. In particular, Hill 151 held extremely high strategic importance as a commanding height from which Route 1 could be controlled.

After being pushed back to approximately the 37th parallel north by the Third Phase Offensive, also known as the New Year's Offensive, of Chinese Communist forces, United Nations forces shifted to the offensive on 15 January 1951. Beginning on 25 January, they reinforced their attacking forces and initiated a phased counteroffensive. In this operation, designated Operation Thunderbolt, U.S. I Corps on the western front committed the U.S. 25th Infantry Division as the attacking force. The U.S. 25th Infantry Division organized five assault echelons and conducted a northward advance on both sides of Route 1. At this time, the 1st Turkish Brigade, assigned to the division's right flank, advanced with the objective of



Counteroffensive Operations by the ROK and UN Forces, January 12–November 27, 1951



Turkish Soldiers Crawling Toward the Hill (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Turkish Soldiers Who Captured Hill 151 on January 27, 1951 (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

recapturing Singal and Kumyangjang.¹⁸

The 1st Turkish Brigade deployed along the Anseong–Songjeon line and, in order to attack across a broad front of approximately 12 kilometers, divided its forces into two assault echelons. The 2nd Battalion was assigned to attack Kumyangjang, while the 1st and 3rd Battalions were tasked with seizing Hill 151. At the time, Chinese Communist forces had also established strong defensive positions along this line and were preparing for a decisive engagement.

On 26 January, the brigade’s offensive operations began with the 2nd Battalion’s attack on Kumyangjang. In the Battle of Kumyangjang, fierce fighting continued between Turkish forces seeking to break the stalemate and Chinese Communist forces who, acting under orders to hold their positions at all costs, offered stubborn resistance. Just before sunset that day, the 2nd Battalion, supported by close air support from United Nations air forces, charged into the center of the town and succeeded in recapturing Kumyangjang. However, it failed to break through the approximately 200-meter-wide open ground extending from the built-up area to the northern group of hills.

On the same day, at Hill 151 in Singal, located approximately 8 kilometers west of Kumyangjang, intense fighting unfolded over a period of about five hours, beginning at noon and continuing until the 3rd Battalion seized its objective. As if determined to redeem the disgrace suffered at the Battle of Kunuri, the 3rd Battalion charged toward its objective through a hail of enemy fire. As they assaulted the fortified Chinese Communist positions, the soldiers shouted “Allah” and, through close-quarters combat, succeeded in capturing the hill. The seizure of Hill 151 by the 3rd Battalion had a decisive effect on the situation at the Kumyangjang front. Following the sudden withdrawal of Chinese Communist forces, the 2nd Battalion was able, on the morning of 27 January, to recapture the northern group of hills overlooking the town.¹⁹

In the Battles of Kumyangjang and Hill 151, Turkish soldiers demonstrated to the world the true character of the “brave Turkish forces” by engaging in close-quarters combat with bayonets, reportedly killing approximately forty Chinese Communist soldiers per man. Over the three days of fighting, the number of confirmed Chinese Communist fatalities amounted to 77 in the Battle of Kumyangjang and 397 in the Battle of Hill 151, for a total of 474 killed in action. Most of the dead bore evidence of shattered jaws caused by rifle-butt strikes and

wounds inflicted by bayonets. As a United Press International (UPI) correspondent vividly reported the fighting at Hill 151 to audiences around the world, the Turkish forces received lavish praise among the participating nations, to the extent that the very term “close-quarters combat” came to evoke the image of Turkish soldiers. Their achievement was lauded as “a feat of arms that would shine forever in the history of humankind.” In recognition of these achievements, the 1st Turkish Brigade received a Presidential Unit Citation from the President of the United States on 6 July 1951, and was further honored with a unit citation from the President of the Republic of Korea in September 1952.²⁰

Following the Battles of Kumyangjang and Hill 151, Turkish forces made a significant contribution between 1 and 6 February by repelling the 150th Division of Chinese Communist forces and seizing key heights on Surisan, a mountain spanning Anyang, Gunpo, and Ansan.

3) The Battle of Jangseungcheon (22-23 April 1951)

The Battle of Jangseungcheon was a defensive engagement fought from 22 to 23 April 1951 in the Jangseungcheon area of Sinseo-myeon, Yeoncheon County. In this battle, the 1st Turkish Brigade, attached to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, held off attacks for two days by the 34th and 35th Divisions of the Chinese Communist 12th Army and the 181st Division of the Chinese Communist 60th Army.

After the Battle of Kumyangjang, the 1st Turkish Brigade remained attached to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division and continued to participate in United Nations forces’ counteroffensive operations. Advancing via Ansan, Yangsu-ri, Toegyewon, and Pocheon, the brigade reached Line Kansas by early April 1951. This line ran north of the 38th parallel and connected the Imjin River, Jeongok, Hwacheon Reservoir, and Yangyang. The advance aimed to restore prewar territory and secure terrain favorable for defense, and United Nations forces established strong defensive positions along this line with a possible armistice in mind. Meanwhile, Communist forces also organized defensive positions north of the 38th parallel and concentrated troops and supplies in the strategically vital Iron Triangle area, encompassing Pyeongyang, Cheorwon, and Kimhwa. On this basis, United Nations Command assessed that Communist forces were more likely preparing for a large-scale offensive than remaining on the defensive.



The Turkish Artillery Battalion, April 23, 1951 (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

Lieutenant General James Van Fleet, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, sought to increase the depth of defense along Line Kansas on the central front and to disrupt Communist offensive preparations. To this end, he established Line Wyoming, a new defensive line linking Yeoncheon, Mount Godae, Wasu-ri, and Hwacheon Reservoir, from which Cheorwon and Kimhwa could be controlled. He planned for U.S. I Corps and U.S. IX Corps to occupy the line. Accordingly, the 1st Turkish Brigade resumed its offensive on 5 April 1951 with Line Wyoming as its objective and advanced to the vicinity of Jangseungcheon by 21 April. However, strong Chinese resistance prevented the brigade from continuing northward. The brigade therefore hastily established defensive positions along a chain of heights north of Jangseungcheon, including Yetgogae Pass, Hill 306, Hill 350, Hill 348, and Hill 425.

On the evening of 22 April 1951, Chinese Communist forces launched their fifth offensive since entering the Korean War, the so-called “Spring Offensive.” Artillery fire began in the

early evening and intensified sharply around 19:15, concentrating on the entire sector of the 1st Turkish Brigade for approximately 40 minutes. Around 20:00, the 181st Division of the Chinese Communist 60th Army attacked along the unit boundary in an attempt to separate the 1st Turkish Brigade from the U.S. 24th Infantry Division on its right. At the same time, the 34th and 35th Divisions of the Chinese Communist 12th Army launched concentrated frontal assaults against the Turkish Brigade.

Despite being outnumbered and lacking fully prepared defensive positions, Turkish forces fought desperately to repel the Chinese attacks. The soldiers became entangled in hand-to-hand combat with Chinese troops who advanced while blowing whistles and bugles. The situation deteriorated further when artillery support was cut off. While pressing the brigade from the front, Chinese Communist forces also committed regimental-sized units along the boundaries with adjacent units on both flanks in an attempt to encircle Turkish forces. Around midnight, the commander of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division ordered Turkish forces to withdraw south of the Hantan River to Line Kansas. By that time, however, Chinese Communist forces that had infiltrated to the brigade's right had blocked Darami Pass, a key choke point along the withdrawal route, placing the brigade's withdrawal in jeopardy. Thanks to the steadfast covering action of the 3rd Battalion, which protected the withdrawing forces to the end, the main body was able to complete its withdrawal safely at approximately 02:30 on 23 April 1951.

During the withdrawal, the 9th Company, whose withdrawal route had been cut off, was surrounded by Chinese Communist forces. As it broke through the encirclement, many of its soldiers, including the company commander, were wounded or taken prisoner. In particular, the security platoon of the 1st Company, deployed at the summit of Darami Pass, a critical point on the withdrawal route, covered the main body's withdrawal until the end. It was wiped out under concentrated Chinese Communist attacks, with the entire platoon killed in action.²¹

In the Battle of Jangseungcheon, Turkish forces suffered 66 killed in action, 35 wounded, and 105 missing. Despite these losses, they effectively delayed the offensive of three Chinese Communist divisions, thereby enabling adjacent units to withdraw safely. Through this action, Turkish forces made a significant contribution to creating the conditions for later United Nations counteroffensive operations.²²

After the Battle of Jangseungcheon, the 1st Turkish Brigade continued operations at

Surisan, Toegyewon, Buramsan, Pocheon, and Kimhwa until 19 June 1951, after which it moved to Naegok-ri near Toegyewon. This period coincided with a shift in the nature of the war from mobile warfare to positional warfare, and the 1st Turkish Brigade began preparations to be relieved by the 2nd Turkish Brigade. As of 18 June 1951, the 1st Turkish Brigade had suffered cumulative losses of 423 killed in action, 1,118 wounded, and 293 missing. By contrast, it had taken 38 North Korean and 308 Chinese Communist prisoners, and had inflicted an estimated 10,000 enemy casualties. In addition, the brigade captured significant quantities of enemy weapons, including two 105 mm howitzers, three 75 mm howitzers, 26 machine guns, and 158 rifles.²³

3. Rotation of Turkish Combat Units

1) Rotation of Combat Units and Major Battles

While Turkish forces were reorganizing and conducting training at Naegok-ri near Toegyewon, the 2nd Brigade began the process of relieving the 1st Brigade, which had fought fierce battles on the Korean front for approximately eight months. The relief was carried out in three phases. The first phase began when the advance contingent of the 2nd Brigade arrived in Incheon on July 2, 1951, after which the first returning contingent of the 1st Brigade, relieved by this contingent, departed for Türkiye on July 15. The second phase took place on September 13, when the second contingent of the 2nd Brigade arrived at the Port of Incheon and adapted to local conditions while serving jointly with the remaining personnel of the 1st Brigade. The remaining personnel of the 2nd Brigade arrived at the Port of Incheon on November 18, completing the third phase of the relief.²⁴

During the period in which the 2nd Turkish Brigade was in action, armistice negotiations proceeded in parallel with battles for hill positions. When the armistice talks progressed smoothly, the front remained relatively quiet. However, when negotiations broke down or were delayed, fighting intensified. Since both sides oriented their military operations toward securing more favorable conditions at the negotiating table, combat took on the character of positional warfare rather than mobile engagements. Accordingly, the 2nd Turkish Brigade



The Turkish 2nd Brigade Arriving in Korea on February 2, 1951 (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

focused primarily on reconnaissance and defensive operations rather than large-scale engagements. On 23 February 1952, the brigade completed its defensive mission on the western front and moved to the central-eastern front, where it occupied positions stretching from the right flank of Heartbreak Ridge to the left flank of Gachilbong. The 2nd Brigade engaged in outpost fighting in this sector until it was relieved by the 3rd Turkish Brigade in June 1952, with particularly intense combat occurring at the Sandbag Castle outpost. During these engagements, Colonel Nuri Pamir, the deputy brigade commander, was killed in action.

The relief of the 2nd Turkish Brigade by the 3rd Turkish Brigade began in June 1952. The first contingent of the 3rd Brigade, composed of 90 officers and 1,364 enlisted soldiers, arrived in Busan on 15 June and began the relief process with the 2nd Brigade on 23 June. On 20 August 1952, after the 3rd Brigade had fully taken over the 2nd Brigade's missions, it continued combat operations under the operational control of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division.²⁵

One of the major engagements involving the 3rd Turkish Brigade was the so-called "Nevada Outpost Battle," fought from 28 to 29 May 1953 in the Gorangpo area near Kaesong

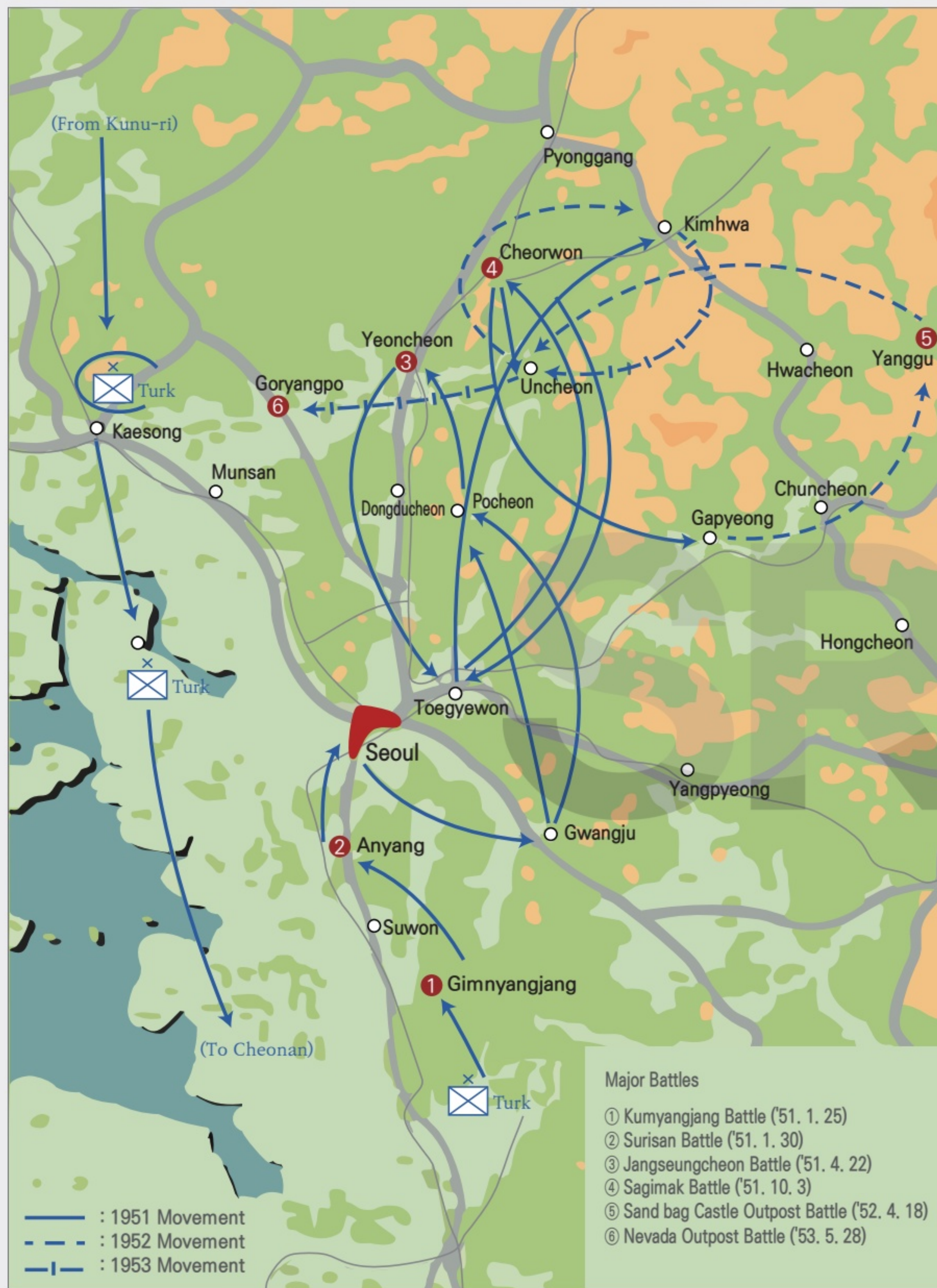
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Turkish Infantry Unit (Courtesy of the National Institute of Korean History)

against the 358th and 360th Regiments of the 120th Division of Chinese Communist forces. The 3rd Brigade moved to the Gorangpo sector on 2 May 1953, following the relief of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division by the U.S. 1st Marine Division, and fought this outpost battle during the final offensive by Chinese Communist forces. At that time, Communist forces sought to launch a final offensive within limits that would not provoke large-scale United Nations retaliation, aiming to secure as much territory as possible and thereby demonstrate, both domestically and internationally, that they had "ultimately prevailed in the war." They also devised a strategy to inflict significant losses on the Republic of Korea Army in order to weaken the South Korean government's opposition to the armistice.

The ultimate objective of Chinese Communist forces was to seize the Kumsong Salient



Map of Major Battles Involving Turkish Forces
(Son Gyu-seok, Cho Seong-hun, and Kim Sang-won, 2015, The Korean War and the UN Forces, Institute for Military History, Ministry of National Defense, p. 209)

north of Hwachcheon, which was held by ROK II Corps. As a preliminary step, beginning on 27 May, they launched the so-called “June Offensive” (27 May–16 June 1953), concentrating their attacks on the right side of the Kumsong Salient while conducting outpost fighting across the entire front through feint and diversionary operations. On the western front, where the Turkish Brigade was deployed, intense outpost fighting also unfolded following attacks by the 19th Corps of Chinese Communist forces.

At the time, Turkish forces were manning seven major outposts, including Ava, Carson, Elko, Vegas, Berlin, and East Berlin. Among them, the Carson, Elko, and Vegas outposts, named after places in the U.S. state of Nevada, were key terrain features that allowed observation and surveillance deep into the corps’ rear areas. The Nevada Outpost Battle began on the night of 28 May, when the 120th Division of the Chinese Communist 46th Army attacked these positions.

By the evening of 29 May, Turkish forces had fought an intense series of engagements over the Vegas Outpost, which changed hands five times before finally being secured. However, at the Carson and Elko outposts, they were ultimately unable to withstand the ferocity of the Chinese assaults. Although Turkish forces had secured the Vegas Outpost, they were eventually forced to relinquish it under a withdrawal order from Major General Samuel T. Williams, commander of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, in the face of sustained assaults by Chinese Communist forces willing to incur heavy losses. The division commander judged that the Vegas Outpost did not possess sufficient tactical value to justify the continued sacrifice of lives. With this decision, the Nevada Outpost Battle came to an end. Although the fighting lasted only two days, its intensity can be inferred from the losses suffered by the 3rd Turkish Brigade: 151 killed in action, 239 wounded, and 2 missing.

After the Nevada Outpost Battle, the situation along the brigade’s front entered a relative lull. Nevertheless, artillery fire and reconnaissance engagements continued, causing daily losses of three to four personnel. Subsequently, on 7 July 1953, the brigade transferred its mission to the U.S. 7th Marine Regiment and moved to Yonghyeon-ri, located approximately 5 km southeast of Uijeongbu, where it was placed in U.S. I Corps reserve. There, the 3rd Turkish Brigade conducted training while preparing to be relieved by the 4th Brigade.²⁶

4. Results of Turkish Participation and Post-Armistice Activities

During the Korean War, the Turkish Armed Forces deployed a cumulative total of 21,212 personnel, and suffered human losses of 966 killed or deceased, 1,155 wounded, and 234 taken prisoner.²⁷ During their participation in the war, Turkish forces displayed remarkable bravery in battles such as the Battle of Kunuri, the Battles of Kumyangjang and Hill 151, the Battle of Jangseungcheon, and the Nevada Outpost Battle, leaving a lasting mark on military history. The saying, “The battles of the Turkish forces end in hand-to-hand combat,” aptly captures their valor.

For its achievements in the Battles of Kumyangjang and Hill 151, the 1st Turkish Brigade received unit citations from the Presidents of both the Republic of Korea and the United States, and it also received a U.S. Presidential Unit Citation for its actions in the Battle of Kunuri. The 3rd Turkish Brigade was awarded a U.S. Meritorious Unit Commendation for its performance in the Nevada Outpost Battle. In addition, the Korean government conferred



A Turkish Unit Receiving a Citation from Walton Walker, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, on December 13, 1950 (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

Turkish Infantry Unit Receiving a Unit Citation from President Syngman Rhee (Courtesy of the National Archives of Korea)





4th Brigade Commander
Kemal Akkurt



5th Brigade Commander
Mete Yurdakul



6th Brigade Commander
Hilmi Giray



7th Brigade Commander
Cemil Uluçevik



8th Brigade Commander
Niyazi Çelik



9th Brigade Commander
Rasim Atakan



10th Brigade Commander
Fahri Öngör

upon Turkish servicemen the Order of Military Merit, Eulji on 10 occasions, the Order of Military Merit, Chungmu on 22 occasions, and the Order of Military Merit, Hwarang on 10 occasions. The United States government awarded five Silver Stars and seven Bronze Stars.²⁸

Having achieved distinguished combat records across numerous sectors of the front, Turkish forces continued to be stationed at Yonghyeon-ri near Uijeongbu even after the Armistice Agreement was concluded on 27 July 1953, carrying out security and guard duties. Even after the main force withdrew in the summer of 1954, a regiment-sized contingent remained deployed until August 1960. At the brigade level, the Turkish 10th Brigade was the last to serve. From June 1960 onward, the deployment was reduced to a company-sized force. On 6 July 1966, the last remaining company returned home, leaving behind only a symbolic ceremonial guard of one squad. With the return of the remaining 11 members of the ceremonial guard on 27 June 1971, the history of Turkish participation in the Korean War came to a close.

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03

Memories of War Across Generations: Three Wars Experienced by Three Generations of a Turkish Family



In September 1950, a young Turkish soldier set foot on the unfamiliar land of Korea. Then, 75 years later, his grandson, Major Ekrem Karadeniz of the Royal Netherlands Army, who was serving under the United Nations Command, also set foot in Korea. For Ekrem, Korea was not simply a place of deployment. It was a place where he could honor his promise to his grandfather and fulfill his “mission.”

At one point, the United Nations Command requested that the Netherlands dispatch personnel to Korea. The request was delivered to the Dutch military department responsible for overseas deployments, which then had to select the personnel to be deployed to Korea. As it happened, perhaps by chance, Ekrem had transferred from another department to that very office five months earlier. A superior who knew well the story of Ekrem’s grandfather’s service in the Korean War asked him whether he would be willing to take on an overseas deployment. Not knowing that the deployment would be to Korea, Ekrem declined.

He had grown weary of repeated overseas assignments throughout his military career, and he was satisfied with his current situation, working close to home and able to commute easily. His superior then asked him once more whether he would still refuse if the deployment were to Korea. Ekrem replied, “I can leave right now. Shall I? I even have my passport with me.” At that moment, he was given the opportunity to go to Korea, the country his grandfather had defended at the risk of his life and a place he had always hoped to visit. In this way, Ekrem became one of the three service members dispatched to Korea, arriving there on 6 January 2025.

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1. Three Generations of War and Memory

Korea holds a special meaning for Ekrem. This is because of his family’s long history of wartime military service. Ekrem comes from a family that has followed the path of military service for generations, and across three generations, his family has taken part in major wars that shaped world history.

Ekrem’s great-grandfather, Mehmet Karadeniz, was a veteran of the First World War, the Turkish War of Independence, and the Yemen Campaign. He took part in the Gallipoli Campaign, one of the major battles of the First World War, and was later dispatched to Yemen to fight against Wahhabi forces. During combat on the Yemen front, he was captured and imprisoned, but he managed to make a dramatic escape with seven comrades and made his way back to Türkiye from Yemen on foot. He later served under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and joined the Turkish War of Independence, taking part in operations to liberate western regions, including İzmir. Over the course of more than ten years, Ekrem’s great-grandfather fought on multiple battlefields and was wounded more than twelve times, yet each time he survived and returned to his family.

Although Ekrem never met his great-grandfather in person, he grew up hearing many stories from family members and elders around him about his bravery. Even when he was taken prisoner during the Yemen Campaign, he never lost his pride. When an Allied officer supporting the Wahhabi forces ordered him to bring him coffee, he pretended to comply, set the coffee

Table 1 Wartime Service Record of the Karadeniz Family

Name	Affiliation	Combat Experience	Remarks
Mehmet Karadeniz		First World War, Turkish War of Independence	Ekrem’s great-grandfather
Ismail Karadeniz	1st Turkish Brigade	Korean War	Ekrem’s grandfather
Ekrem Karadeniz	Royal Netherlands Army	War in Afghanistan, etc.	

down, and then flipped the table over. The enraged officer seized him and threatened him, but he did not yield and spat at him, shouting, “If you are going to kill me, then do it!” Another officer, impressed by his spirit, stepped in and prevented him from being punished,



Turkish Infantrymen in the Turkish War of Independence, 1922 (Collection of Milliyet)



Atatürk Delivering a Speech on the 10th Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye, 1933 (Collection of the Supreme Court of Türkiye)

and the matter was settled without any significant punishment.

Ekrem also heard a story about a battle fought in a village near İzmir during the Turkish War of Independence. A comrade who had served alongside his great-grandfather at the time later recalled, “His fighting ability was so remarkable that it was almost frightening.” As his great-grandfather’s unit was passing near a small village, they witnessed enemy soldiers abusing the village women. However, the large disparity in troop strength made an immediate attack difficult. One comrade urged them to attack at once, but Ekrem’s great-grandfather stopped the unit, saying, “If we move now, we will all die. Let us wait until they let their guard down.” As the night deepened, the enemy soldiers became drunk and fell asleep. After receiving permission to attack, he led the unit in and subdued the enemy.

Perhaps because of the toll the war had taken on him, Ekrem’s great-grandfather passed away in 1950 at the relatively young age of fifty-five. His death became the reason Ekrem’s grandfather, Ismail Karadeniz, decided to take part in the Korean War.

Ismail Karadeniz was born in 1928. In 1950, he lost his father, his wife, and his young son. Having lost three family members in the span of just five months, Ismail lost the will to live. Then, by chance, he heard on the radio that the government had decided to take part in the Korean War. In that state of despair, Ismail decided to volunteer for the Korean War. Moreover, if he went to war and was killed in action, compensation would be paid to his surviving family. With his eldest brother’s income as a barber barely enough to support the family, Ismail thought that volunteering for the Korean War might offer him a way to help his younger siblings and his mother.

Ismail immediately went to the unit commander with three friends and stated his intention to join the war. At first, however, they were not accepted. The commander told them to go back home, saying, “You do not even know where Korea is.” In response, Ismail said, “Recently, my father, who was a veteran, passed away. I, too, wish to follow in my father’s footsteps. I do not know where Korea is. But there is one thing I know clearly. It does not matter where I am. If I carry my homeland in my heart, then wherever I go, and whatever I eat or drink there, that place is my homeland. Korea is no different.” Deeply moved by these words, the commander granted permission for Ismail and his friends to join the war. In this way, Ismail joined the Turkish Brigade and boarded the ship bound for Korea.



Turkish Soldiers Carrying Their Luggage as They Board a Ship Bound for Korea
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Citizens Bidding Farewell to Soldiers Departing for Korea in 1950 (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Ismail, who served in the Korean War
with the 1st Turkish Brigade in 1950
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

2. Finding a Reason to Live Again in Korea

The Turkish Brigade departed from Ankara in September 1950, arrived at the port city of Iskenderun, and then boarded a ship bound for Korea. The voyage to Korea took about twenty-eight days. When Ekrem asked Ismail what the voyage had been like, Ismail gave a slight smile with his characteristic expression. It was the kind of smile he showed when something unpleasant had happened, so Ekrem was certain that there must have been some kind of accident or fight during the journey to Korea.

After arriving in Busan, the Turkish Brigade traveled by train to Daegu. After completing about ten days of training, the brigade passed through Ulsan, Pyeongtaek, and Suwon and headed north. Although the exact timing is unclear, this was not long after they had arrived in Korea. Even then, Ismail was still looking for a chance to be killed in action as soon as possible.

Around that time, the Turkish command was recruiting soldiers to volunteer for a dangerous mission near the front line. The mission was to approach the forward area and raise a white square plastic sheet, measuring about 100 to 115 meters, into the air. The sheet served as a signal to help pilots identify the location of friendly forces and the front line, and to guide bombing operations in the area. Because the risk of being caught in the bombing or captured by enemy forces was extremely high, the mission was, in effect, no different from a suicide mission.

Ismail believed that he was the right man for the mission and immediately put his name on the volunteer list. A few hours later, however, a soldier came to him and told him that the battalion commander was looking for him. Ismail was surprised that a battalion commander, who commanded hundreds of men, had summoned him, but he soon went to see him.

As soon as the battalion commander saw Ismail's face, he asked, "Are you Ismail Karadeniz?" Ismail answered that he was. After hearing his reply, the battalion commander looked closely at Ismail's face and fell into deep thought. He then asked where he was from, and Ismail answered that he was from Ankara. Finally, the battalion commander asked, "Do you have a family member named Mustafa Karadeniz?" Smiling, Ismail replied that this was the name of his eldest brother. At that, the battalion commander immediately slapped Ismail twice across the face and shouted angrily, "What were you thinking, volunteering for such a



Ismail (right) and a Fellow Soldier Writing Letters Home (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

reckless mission!”

The battalion commander’s name was Miktat Uluñlü, and he was the commander of the 2nd Battalion of the Turkish Brigade. In the past, when he had served in Ankara as a junior officer, the barber for his unit had been Mustafa Karadeniz, that is, Ismail’s eldest brother. Because the two had been close friends, the battalion commander, after noticing the name “Karadeniz” on the list, had called for Ismail to see whether there might be a connection. Ultimately, it was this connection that kept Ismail from being assigned to the mission and saved his life.

Later, as Ismail spent time in Korea and fought in numerous battles, his thoughts gradually began to change. Although he had initially planned to be killed in action as quickly as possible, the reality faced by Koreans caught in the midst of war was devastating, and it changed the heart of a man who had once wished to die. Their living conditions were unbearably harsh, and women and children in particular were struggling to survive without even being able to secure proper meals. Each time Ismail saw Koreans suffering in this way, his heart ached. This feeling was not his alone. The other Turkish soldiers deployed with him felt the same



Korean War Orphans in the 1950s (Courtesy of ATASE)

way. As a result, they would often leave the supplies they had received from the Americans at train stations for Koreans before departing. Having seen the suffering of Koreans firsthand, even putting that food into their own mouths felt almost sinful, and they could hardly bring themselves to swallow it.

3. The Front Line of Survival: The Battle of Kunuri

In November 1950, the 1st Turkish Brigade entered the Battle of Kunuri. As the Chinese Communist forces broke through the front line of the U.S. Eighth Army and pushed

southward, the Turkish Brigade was hurriedly committed to the front without even having time to properly assess the situation. At dawn on November 27, the battle began when the rear reconnaissance unit, while withdrawing, came under a surprise attack by the Chinese Communist forces. The reconnaissance unit fought fiercely throughout the night and bought time for the brigade to assume combat positions, but only two officers and four soldiers survived.

After that, the Turkish Brigade moved from Kunu-ri to Deokcheon while coming under continuous attack from the Chinese Communist forces. At the time, both its flanks and rear were exposed, and it had to break through the encirclement on its own, without support from U.S. forces. Moreover, there were no Turkish interpreters within the United Nations forces at the time, and information about the battlefield situation was not properly communicated.

Most units, having learned of the large-scale offensive by the Chinese Communist forces, began to retreat, but the Turkish Brigade never received that information. By the time it grasped the situation, it had already been surrounded by the Chinese Communist forces. The Turkish forces pulled out their maps and checked the positions of nearby U.S. and French forces, but the other units were nowhere to be seen. By the time they realized that something had gone seriously wrong, it was already too late.

The Chinese Communist forces committed two divisions and surrounded the Turkish Brigade's three battalions with overwhelming strength. However, the Turkish Brigade continued its unrelenting resistance, breaking through the encirclement three times. After their supplies and ammunition were exhausted, the soldiers launched bayonet charges and engaged in hand-to-hand combat, maintaining their formation by closing ranks around their commanders.

While the battle was being fought, those who suffered the greatest anxiety and anguish were the families of the Turkish soldiers back in Türkiye. At the time, the only way to learn news of family members or friends fighting in the war was through newspapers. On the first day of the battle, a Turkish newspaper carried the headline, "The Turkish Brigade in hand-to-hand combat at Wawon." Those whose fathers, brothers, or friends were taking part in that battle had no choice but to wait anxiously for the next day's news. The following day, the report read, "The Turkish Brigade engaged with an enemy five times its size; the brigade commander's fate still unconfirmed." Yet the outcome of the battle was still unknown, and



Turkish Soldiers Resting During the Battle of Kunuri in 1950 (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

the families once again spent a sleepless night waiting for the next article. Only the day after that did a report appear stating, "Brigade commander confirmed alive." Until the final article reported that the Turkish Brigade had survived, this period of waiting brought great worry and suffering to the families of the Turkish soldiers back in Türkiye.

Meanwhile, the situation on the Kunu-ri front, where Ismail was, was devastating. With everything destroyed and shattered by the fighting, soldiers from several units had gathered in the ruins of a school building. Most of them were wounded, and some were gripped by fear because of the unfavorable course of the battle. At that moment, Turkish Brigade Commander Tahsin Yazici stepped forward. He shouted, "The world is watching you. Will you become prisoners of the Chinese Communist forces, or will you become brave soldiers who remain in history?" Then, planting the flag he was holding into the ground, he asked one soldier where he was from. When the soldier answered, "Istanbul," the general replied, "Think of this place as Istanbul, and defend it." After that, he called on all the soldiers to think of the place where they stood as their own hometown and to defend it. Ismail felt at that moment that the fighting spirit of the soldiers around him had flared up again, and with that

momentum they fought fiercely through the three days of battle that followed.

Anthony Herbert, an American soldier, left an account in his memoir of the brutality of the Battle of Kunuri and the bravery of Turkish soldiers. During a unit movement, he became separated from his own forces and, by chance, joined up with Turkish troops, experiencing the entire course of the battle alongside them. Of course, they did not share a common language, but a certain degree of communication was possible by using every available means, including hand gestures and body language. On the morning after he joined Turkish forces, the Turkish soldiers, in Anthony's eyes, appeared to be resting peacefully, drinking tea as if they had come on a picnic. But once the battle began, they changed completely. They fought with terrifying intensity and did not waste a single bullet, striking the enemy with precision.

On the final day of the battle, the Turkish troops ran out of ammunition. At that moment, the soldiers began embracing one another. Anthony, an American soldier, did not at first understand the meaning of those embraces. He thought they were simply gestures of comfort, but later came to realize that they were final greetings and farewells exchanged with comrades before the hand-to-hand combat that was about to come.

After that, the Turkish soldiers fixed bayonets to their rifles and completed their preparations for battle. Given the numerical superiority of Chinese Communist forces, it would ordinarily have been standard tactics to concentrate on defense, and Anthony initially thought the Turkish soldiers reckless for attempting an attack with bayonets. However, after seeing their resolute attitude, Anthony ultimately decided to join them in the fighting.

When Turkish forces launched their attack again, Chinese Communist forces, who had not expected it, were thrown into confusion, and the course of the battle gradually began to turn. Recalling the Turkish soldiers fighting at that time, Anthony later wrote, "Whether it was the UN, God, or anyone else, I was truly grateful that I was on the same side as the Turks in that battle."

As the battle continued, the situation gradually shifted until it was Chinese Communist forces who found themselves encircled. Anthony was deeply impressed by the fearsome courage and spirit of the Turkish soldiers, and in particular by their "bayonet fighting," a combat skill he had never encountered before in his life. Their movements went beyond mere combat technique; they looked almost like the dance of Islamic ascetic monks known



Turkish Brigade Commander Tahsin Yazıcı Receiving a Medal from Walton Walker, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Army (Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)

as "dervishes." The way they swung their blades while rotating their bodies resembled a dance on the battlefield, while at the same time proving deadly to the enemy. Turkish forces' bayonet fighting proved highly effective in combat. For his brave conduct in this battle, Anthony Herbert received a decoration together with the Turkish soldiers, becoming the only American during the Korean War to receive an official decoration from the Turkish government.

At the time when Turkish forces began their fierce fighting against Chinese Communist forces, most United Nations units assumed that they had already been wiped out. The situation was desperate. The encirclement could be broken only if each soldier fought off eight to ten enemy troops, and under such conditions, expecting victory was, in reality, close to impossible. Nevertheless, Turkish forces succeeded in breaking through the encirclement, killing about 5,000 Chinese Communist soldiers while losing about 17 percent of their own strength. At the time, the American press commented that "more astonishing than Chinese Communist forces was the bravery of Turkish forces," and Walton H. Walker, Commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, stated, "Had it not been for the heroic battle the Turkish forces fought

for three days, the 2nd Division would have been annihilated.”

The Battle of Kunuri was not simply a defensive battle. It was an operation intended to delay the enemy advance at a moment when the front was on the verge of total collapse. Chinese Communist forces had broken through the line in order to encircle the main body of United Nations forces, but because of the desperate resistance of Turkish forces, the U.S. Eighth Army was able to withdraw in good order.

Thanks to the “three days” secured by Turkish forces, United Nations forces were able to avoid total encirclement, and this became a decisive turning point in the course of the war. In the end, the Turkish Brigade protected the Eighth Army’s withdrawal route and earned a lasting place of distinction in the history of the Korean War.

4. Revenge and Victory: The Battle of Kumyangjang

Following the Battle of Kunuri, the 1st Turkish Brigade completed its reorganization and was attached to the U.S. 25th Infantry Division. After the Chinese Communist forces captured Seoul and advanced south, concentrating their forces south of the Han River, the Turkish Brigade was tasked with protecting the flank of friendly forces withdrawing from the Anseong area. Subsequently, General Matthew B. Ridgway, commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, ordered a reconnaissance attack to identify the operational intentions of the Chinese Communist forces. In response, the Turkish Brigade began its advance toward Kumyangjang 24 January 1951. The main front was in the area of Hill 156, where the Chinese Communist forces committed several thousand troops and put up fierce resistance.

Ismail also took part in the Battle of Kumyangjang. Before the full-scale battle began, a Turkish unit, while conducting reconnaissance, discovered a small group of Chinese Communist troops and killed them. While searching the belongings of the dead, the soldiers found items that had belonged to comrades killed in the Battle of Kunuri. In other words, the Chinese Communist troops they encountered at Kumyangjang were believed to be from the very unit that had encircled the Turkish Brigade during the Battle of Kunuri. This further strengthened the soldiers’ resolve to fight. They regarded it not as a mere battle, but as “an opportunity for revenge,” and entered the fight resolved to win at all costs for the sake of

their fallen comrades. Recalling this battle years later, Ismail said to his grandson Ekrem, “Before going into battle, my heart pounded as if it were the day before a wedding.”

Before the Battle of Kumyangjang, a nearby U.S. tank battalion offered reinforcements to the Turkish Brigade. However, the Turkish soldiers politely declined. They believed that this battle was a fight to avenge the comrades they had lost at Kunu-ri, and that even if they were to die in battle, it was something they had to settle with their own hands.

The Turkish troops prepared for battle by carrying on their bodies the large number of grenades they had received from U.S. forces. They then crawled for several hours, closing in on the Chinese Communist positions, before launching their attack all at once by hurling grenades. Once all the grenades had exploded, the Turkish soldiers immediately charged with bayonets and entered into hand-to-hand combat. The Turkish forces pressed forward with overwhelming momentum, and the Chinese Communist forces were driven back, unable to withstand the assault.

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Turkish soldiers Taking Aim at Enemy Positions
During the Battle of Kumyangjang in 1951
(Courtesy of the Harbiye Military Museum)



Turkish Soldiers Playing music and Dancing in Celebration After Battle
(Courtesy of *LIFE*)



Later, when the commander of the U.S. tank battalion arrived at the battlefield to assess the situation, the Chinese Communist forces had already completely withdrawn, and the entire field was strewn with their bodies. According to the official U.S. tally of the battle's results, a total of 1,734 Chinese Communist soldiers were killed in this battle, while the number of wounded or captured prisoners reached 82. By contrast, Turkish casualties amounted to only 30 in total, including 12 killed in action and 4 seriously wounded. Having successfully avenged their fallen comrades, every Turkish soldier returning from the battle wore a smile on his face.

Through the concentrated assault carried out by Turkish forces in the Battle of Kumyangjang, hundreds of Chinese Communist troops were killed and many others were taken prisoner, causing the course of the battle to change dramatically. This battle was recorded as the first engagement in the Korean War in which the Chinese Communist forces experienced a clear defeat, and this victory led the United Nations forces to reconsider their withdrawal plans, maintain the front, and renew their resolve to launch a counteroffensive.

As a result of this victory, the Turkish Brigade in which Ismail served became the first non-U.S. unit to receive the Meritorious Unit Commendation from the U.S. Congress. The Turkish forces' performance made a deep impression on the nations of the free world and became an important turning point in changing the subsequent course of the Korean War. Ismail's unit, which had repelled Chinese Communist forces more than three times its size on three consecutive occasions, was recognized for this achievement and received a Presidential Unit Citation from the President of the Republic of Korea in 1951.

5. Ankara School: A Name of Hope in the Midst of War

As the Turkish soldiers fought battle after battle, they passed through many regions of Korea. In the process, whenever they encountered children bearing the full brunt of the war's devastation, their hearts ached deeply. In Turkish culture, children are regarded as sacred beings, and the sight of children left abandoned by war, unable to eat properly or wear proper clothing, came as a profound shock to them.

For this reason, whenever they found children on the roads or in the mountains, they

From early on, he had learned to play the sousaphone and belonged to the school band. He also went to perform for the troops at U.S. military bases, including the Namyang missile base and Osan Air Base. This suggests that Ankara School also made efforts to maintain ties with the U.S. military in order to secure financial support. In the end, however, even the U.S. military was unable to provide much help to the students of Ankara School in his generation. He stopped his studies after middle school and went to find his aunt, who had already left Ankara School and become independent.

Im Deok-hwan's first job was at a butcher shop in Samseon-dong, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul. However, the pay was relatively low, and he went through many painful experiences there. After enduring it for only about three months, he moved, through an introduction from his uncle by marriage, to a butcher shop in Nagwon Market. There, the pay was higher and meals were provided, among other better working conditions, so he was able to work there for about three years. Even after being discharged from the military, he continued for some time to help his uncle by marriage at butcher shops in Nagwon-dong and Seongbuk-dong. He remembered visiting Ankara School during that period and meeting Director Ji Dong-ik for the last time. However, because he was not financially comfortable, he said he was unable to visit again even before he heard the news that the school had closed.

Im Deok-hwan After I came back from the military, the last time I went there (to Ankara School) was when I met the director. I didn't have money, so (I couldn't go often), but somehow I would still end up going. I felt drawn to it. It was just like my hometown. It was good to see the place, but my financial situation... I couldn't just go whenever I wanted. It cost money, so even going there was really hard. I didn't even have money to bring anything with me. I was lucky if I had enough for the bus fare.

His work involved bringing in cattle slaughtered at the slaughterhouse, then breaking them down and organizing the meat by cut. He mainly went to markets in places such as Chungcheong-do, Gangwon-do, and northern Gyeonggi-do, where he would inspect and select cattle himself, have them slaughtered, and then receive the meat at the butcher shop. The slaughtered meat was transported to the shop in refrigerated trucks, and he personally

took charge of dividing it into cuts after slaughter. As he repeated this process over time and gained experience, he eventually became able to judge the quality of cattle simply by looking at their condition. Finally, in 1988, when Sanggye-dong in Nowon-gu was being developed, he opened a butcher shop of his own. He later moved to Sangbong-dong, but when the local commercial district did not develop as well as he had expected, he struggled there and eventually returned to Seongbuk-dong, where his aunt lived and which was also familiar to him.

He was at Ankara School during a difficult period and inevitably received a level of support that was less adequate than what the older students before him had received. Yet the reason he was able to endure without giving in to despair, despite discrimination and prejudice from society, was that he had family members he could rely on. He remains grateful to his aunt, who carried him on her back and fled with him during the war when he was still a young child. His aunt, too, cherishes her nephew, who had suffered so much from an early age, as if he were her own younger brother, and has always tried to maintain a close relationship with him. The strong affection among these family members became a source of strength that allowed them to withstand and overcome the hardships of Korean society after the war.

Im Deok-hwan What makes her most upset now is that I don't visit my aunt's family. I mean, she has all her own children, so I don't know why she relies on me so much. I feel a little sorry about that.

It is also clear that his affection for Ankara School forms an important foundation of his life. Although the school's circumstances had grown difficult, for him Ankara School was "like a second hometown," a place he deeply regretted and felt saddened to see fading from people's memories. More than twenty years ago, wanting to tell his family, "This is where I grew up," he took his son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren to Ankara Park and showed them the memorial.

8. The Ankara Brotherhood Association and Its Exchanges with Türkiye

Those who had spent their childhood at Ankara School — especially the war orphans from the school’s early years, who grew up together in the same historical circumstances and shared their meals under one roof — continued to remember one another even after leaving the school. They kept in touch, met regularly, and maintained their ties. This naturally led to the formation of an alumni group known as “the Ankara Brotherhood Association.” In fact, its beginnings can be traced to informal gatherings centered around the older members, especially the older brothers, among those who remained in contact with one another. They would regularly visit Ankara School, pool small amounts of money, and bring food or gifts with them. Oh Su-eop explained that the former war orphans had received relatively more support from the Turkish troops and Ankara School, and that, having shared the same historical background, they had a strong sense of solidarity. However, from the later generation of children who came from the nursery onward, circumstances were different, and the same sense of unity was not as strong.

Oh Su-eop The war orphans (in the early days of Ankara School) had strong solidarity. Even when we were in the military, whenever we got leave we would always go there to stay overnight, help out kids who were struggling, and so on... But these kids (the postwar intake generation) came from the infants’ home, so (the nature of) their gatherings was completely different from ours. In their time, the economy was bad. In our time, we all went out (from the School) and earned money. We were all employed (because jobs were arranged for us). The principal took care of everything (by arranging placements) and made positions for us, but in their time you couldn’t get a job anywhere. The economy was bad then. In our time, there was also government support, and the economy was good, so everyone got employed. That’s why, for Lunar New Year and New Year’s Day alike, we all went there back then.

Im Deok-hwan But for me, two days after I graduated middle school, they called me

in. They told me to go to my uncle’s place in Cheorwon. They gave me exactly just the bus fare.

Even so, it appears that during periods when life had not yet stabilized and people were busy with employment or marriage, although they maintained contact, it was difficult to hold gatherings regularly.

Interviewer When members were getting married, did the Brotherhood members pool money for congratulatory gifts?

Im Deok-hwan They did, but it was modest. Everyone was struggling to get by.

Oh Su-eop Everyone was busy just making a living, so in fact not many people could come (to weddings). Only those who were doing relatively well showed up. And we couldn’t invite many people either. (When I got married,) these kids were still very young. There was a big age gap between us. Back then, even a one-year difference made someone a senior, almost like heaven and earth. (Omitted) (Im Deok-hwan’s family) had relatives, but people who truly had no (relatives) found it hard even to come to gatherings. When we got together, those who had some financial leeway would come and even pay for the meal, but there were many more who couldn’t come. At that time, the economy was difficult, and life itself was hard. Now people are living well.

Even among those who, like Oh Su-eop, were war orphans of the same generation, women in particular were often unable to set foot in Ankara School during that period, as they married in their twenties or thirties, established households, and raised children. Im Jae-hee maintained ongoing relationships with members of the Ankara Brotherhood Association, but she was not able to participate frequently in its activities. Running a restaurant, raising children, and dealing with her husband’s health issues left her little time to attend gatherings, and since her nephew Im Deok-hwan was regularly attending the association’s meetings, she felt it was acceptable for her to step back. Instead, she provided indirect support by offering her restaurant space in Seongbuk-dong and preparing meals for the gatherings.

Im Jae-hee I didn't go when my children were young. It wasn't that I didn't want to go, but once I was married, I simply couldn't. I did want to go because I had left my nephew there, but I was too busy making a living.

Interviewer Did you meet your nephew later, after he left the school?

Im Jae-hee Yes, I had him stay at my house. I was the one who arranged his marriage. He also left for the military from my home.

Once the gatherings began, they sometimes met regularly as often as once a month, but over time the frequency gradually decreased, eventually settling into one or two regular meetings a year. Members who came together from all over the country spent precious time sharing stories, memories, and talking about their lives. At one point the Ankara Brotherhood Association did collect membership dues, but in practice it relied less on formal dues and more on voluntary contributions, such as those who were relatively better off paying for meals at each gathering. Beyond simple fellowship, the association actively participated in various public-spirited activities, including helping younger members, commemorating Ankara School, and engaging in exchange events with the Embassy of Türkiye in Korea, thereby expanding the scope of its activities. These actions can be understood as stemming from a spirit of “repaying what they had received” from Ankara School, and from a voluntary desire to give back to society.

Except for the early 2020s, when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, the Embassy of Türkiye in Korea reportedly continued to invite members of the Ankara Brotherhood whenever commemorative events were held. According to Gil Mun-ja's testimony, events hosted by the Embassy of Türkiye in Korea were mainly organized around the anniversary of Türkiye's participation in the Korean War, as well as August events (August 30, Victory Day; Zafer Bayramı), and October events (October 29, Republic Day; Cumhuriyet Bayramı). Members of the Brotherhood also attended the ceremony marking the creation of Ankara Park in 2013. They held a special affection for Türkiye and actively took part in official events, thereby also serving as a form of civilian diplomacy between Türkiye and Korea. Oh Su-eop underscored that these relationships went beyond formal greetings or ceremonial visits by recounting an episode in which the Turkish ambassador to Korea once officiated at his son's wedding. This was not merely a matter of diplomatic protocol, but rather a ritual through

which ties with Türkiye were meaningfully reaffirmed within the sphere of family life, vividly demonstrating how diplomatic cooperation and bonds between Türkiye and Korea were embodied in the life of an individual and his family. In addition, in October 2023 the Ankara Brotherhood was invited to an event commemorating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Türkiye and the 73rd anniversary of the Battle of Kumyangjang in Yongin⁵, where they joined in honoring the sacrifices of the Turkish troops.

As “not family, yet closer than family,” the Ankara Brotherhood functioned as a mutual support network connecting graduates of Ankara School across society, sustaining and carrying forward the bonds forged in childhood.

However, as time has passed, it has become increasingly difficult for the activities of the Ankara Brotherhood Association to continue as actively as before. Most of its members have entered old age, and gathering dozens of people to share meals and attend events, as they once did in their prime, has itself become a demanding task. Oh Su-eop expresses regret over the decline of the Ankara Brotherhood Association, yet regards it as a natural course of events. Even so, he continues to make efforts, within the limits of his ability, to reflect on his ties with Türkiye and to repay the love he once received. As one such example, in 2023 Oh Su-eop donated 10 million won to Türkiye, which had suffered devastating earthquake damage, in the name of the Ankara Brotherhood Association, stating that it was time to repay what he had received, the opportunity to live at Ankara School until he reached adulthood thanks to the Turkish soldiers during the Korean War. He remarked that the amount was small compared to the help he had received from Türkiye, and said that upon “hearing news of the massive earthquake” he thought, “Now it is our turn to help Türkiye.”⁶

In November 2024, the Embassy of Türkiye invited members of the Ankara Brotherhood Association to a Turkish restaurant, where they shared a meal with Turkish students, took photographs together, and exchanged gifts. Choi Jeong-ja and Gil Mun-ja, who attended that day, said that such events are held as part of efforts to remember the bond formed between Türkiye and Korea. Knowing the meaning behind these efforts, they said they try to attend whenever they are invited, as a way of expressing their gratitude in return.

Gil Mun-ja About five or six exchange students come. They speak Korean so well.

They take pictures with us and bring gifts, too. Scarves and things like that — I still have a ceramic clock they gave me. They never come empty-handed. For us, it is only proper to share a meal with them. The fact that they still invite us means that they are still living without forgetting us. (Omitted) Even if we cannot really communicate, they hold these (events) because they do not want to forget that our bond with Korea still remains, that it still exists. They know we are all old now and that our legs hurt. Even if we limp, they say they're the same and tell us they're glad to see us. And when we hug them, they say "thank you" again.

“We have received so much, so we must give back as much as we received.” This firm yet succinct remark by Oh Su-eop shows how the abstract notions of “Türkiye’s participation in the Korean War” and “support for orphans” are vividly realized at the level of real, living individuals. It is a response of reciprocity: a stranger once saved a life that could have been lost, and that life, in turn, came to save and protect other lives. The continued activities and exchanges of the Ankara Brotherhood Association are part of an effort to pass this memory and love on to later generations.

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