

Joe's Story

May 1962 US Navy Bomber that had been retrofitted for applying spray was shot at while spraying the American Side of the 38th. The North Koreans commenced firing on the bomber and my squad returned fire on the North Koreans, protecting the bomber. No body else was allowed was allowed to fire but us. Some others have commented that they were instructed to not return fire.

August 1962 Daylight or about 5 Am we were returning home from a regular "stop and turn 'm around mission" and were walking along a ridge top. We looked down into the gully and watched a Navy plane spraying foliage above a rice paddy. The rice paddy belonged to the village where the ROK soldiers who were with us lived. The spray drifted over the rice paddy subsequently killing the rice paddy. The ROK that was with my group was VERY IRATE. That rice paddy was their food supply. Consequently we had to withdraw from the area speedily because they were going to shoot it down. We reported it when we got back to camp and Army Intel replaced the Rice Paddy. The farmer was in the middle of the rice paddy with his water buffalo or oxen when the spray hit and the oxen died a few days later and we replaced the oxen. 24 hours after the spray incident if you ask about the spraying incident or the oxen you were told that "It Never Happened" as did the other incidents that happened.

Winter of 1962 After Thanksgiving and before Christmas we went up into NK Country to look at a POW Camp. The camp hadn't been used in years. The Barbed Wire was rusty and the buildings had weeds growing up around them. This POW camp was approximately 30 miles north of the 38th. 4 or 5 Special Forces and 9 of us were dropped of from a submarine and paddled ashore and walked in. My group was stationed every quarter of a mile as a rear guard for the Special Forces group that went in. If they brought any POW'S out we were to escort them also. .

In the spring of 1963 (in early April) we took a Navy Cruiser from the South Korean coast up into North Korea. We off loaded off shore into rubber boats and went ashore. We hid the boats and walked in to shore. There were 5 or 6 Special Forces guys and 18 of us (9 ROK's and 9 US). To start with the distance from shore to the Atomic Energy Plant was miscalculated they stationed 2 men per point every 100 yard apart thinking that the atomic energy plant was closer to shore than it was. Seeing their mistake one of the Special Forces returned and gathered us up and stationed a man 150-200 yards apart inland. They proceeded to go into the Atomic Energy Plant and take pictures both inside and outside the Plant. We believe that the North Koreans knew we were coming and wanted us to see that plant because they let the Special Forces in on the West side of the plant and doors were left unlocked. They took pictures of the control room and the rods. Once they had their pictures taken the Special Forces guys "got the hell out" and everybody returned to shore. One of the Special Forces guys had a radio and called the ship and the ship returned and picked us up.

June 1963 North Korean one star General was taken prisoner by the ROK's and taken to ASCOM City. His camp was about 25 miles north of the 38th. Or about 55 miles north east of Seoul. He was one of the ones that were causing problems at the peace tables in Panmunjom. He was the master mind of the infiltration squads that were coming south causing problems.

August 1963- Sergeant and Lt. killed by North Korean regulars. These men were killed by a squad of North Korean Regular Army men. They had been camped within 100 ft. of the ambush site. Why didn't Army Intel know about this? The ambush site was on the 38th parallel about 5 miles from the coast. The ambush happened about 5:30 am. We were dropped off about 1:30 or 2:00 am. We were watching troop movement. There was a build up of troops in that area and it was my job to observe the troop movement and report back to ASCOM. This was a 72 hour mission and the Lt. and Sergeant

were on their way back to the 38th when the ambush happened. It was a ¼ mile north of the 38th on the North Korean side. They were killed by North Korean regulars.

In the spring of 1964, about February, they ask us to go back to North Korea with the same group on the East Coast of North Korea on another mission. I was a sergeant then and I told them I would talk it over with my group and we voted on it and said “NO” because we were all volunteers and we had that right. It was a good thing we declined to go because ½ of the group that went up got ambushed by the North Koreans and No Prisoners were taken because they were allowed to remove their wounded and dead. About 30 days later I was shipped home to finish out my enlistment at Ft. Lewis.

When we captured North Korean Soldiers below the 38th if they were enlisted men or NCO’S we the ROK took custody of them after we questioned them and removed all papers and maps. Any Officers that were captured were taken to ASCOM City and turned over to Army Intel. None of the North Koreans returned to North Korea alive, the ROK’s disposed of them. This I know for a fact because I witnessed one time the ROK executing North Korean Soldiers and they’re buried between Seoul and the 38th Parallel in unmarked graves. I can take you to their graves today. The North Koreans went to the UN in the early 70’s complaining about the US soldiers killing innocent women and children including a pregnant woman underneath a bridge on the 38th. I know this to be true because I was a witness to the execution of the ambush and accidental shooting of this lady because it was my group that was there

For the better part of 20 years I tried in vein to get my discharge (you know the piece of paper that hangs on the wall) and for 20 years I was given the runaround. For 40+ years I have been trying to obtain my promised benefits and someone has made sure that those benefits are non-existent. It now time for those records to be declassified and a copy provided me. I waited long enough to be compensated for the danger I faced and the injuries I have suffered. I have waited long enough for my GI loan and my Education benefits. It is not a question of “If and When” but “How soon” can this be made to happen because my fuse is getting short and soon the American Public will know what I had to endure while I was defending freedom in Korea some 42 years ago.

Addendum:

Paragraph 1-How come that incident never appeared in the news paper? Doesn’t the American public deserve to know just how dangerous Korea was in 1962? Why is the VA denying that Korea was a combat zone?

Paragraph 5- What happened to the general after we took him to ASCOM City. The North Koreans want to know what happened to him. The rumor was that he was interrogated and assassinated by Army Intel.

Are you sure that it was North Koreans infiltrators who blew up the Officers Latrine at the first Cav’s Camp in the spring of 1963? Or was some agitated GI who were ticked off at the Major because he was harassing them? What kind of a grenade was used? Where did the major go after he was transferred out of Korea? Did he go to the South Seas Island with the blond, brunettes and red heads? He was awarded a purple heart for his splintered touché.

In the Early 1970’s North Korea went to the UN complaining about the killing of innocent women and children. One of women they complained about was a pregnant lady that was killed in the summer of 1963. The incident in question happened under either Liberty or Freedom Bridge late at night. There were a group of 3 or 4 Civilians and 3 or 4 North Koreans. The North Koreans were using the Civilians as human shields. They were coming down from Freedom Village and infiltrating across the

38th. Our unit encountered them and stopped them. They were told to “Halt” and “put everything on the ground.” They were told to put their hands over their heads by the South Korean interpreter. In the process a North Korean regular pulled a pistol out of the back sash of the pregnant woman, somebody opened fire on command and the pregnant woman was killed among others. When the bodies were searched there were numerous weapons found on the civilians as well as on the North Korean Regulars. The US Army denied this incident happened at the peace table and also at the UN but I know it happened because I was there and saw it happen. Yet the VA says that in the 60’s in Korea wasn’t a combat zone? How many have to get killed and how many have to be taken POW or defect for DOD to declare a situation to be a “Combat Zone?”

Just before Thanksgiving in 1962 the 1st Recon squad, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division was ambushed and 1 of their men were killed. 1 of their men was wounded, we were called in to pursue the perpetrators and take care of the matter. The perpetrators were called “Hard Core Regulars,” they took no quarter and gave no quarter so we adopted their tactics. We sent our scouts out. They returned within a half an hour with the report of finding a trail, we followed them after dressing down in our war paint which was camouflage paint. Ours was unique because we had an American Indian teach us how to apply it. He was attached to our group. We followed this trail for about an hour and one-half. They had set up an ambush but we ambushed them before they could ambush us.

Consequently there were no survivors. We left the dead bodies for the 1st cav. to clean up. We sat on the hill side watching the 1st Cav move in. I know this to be true because we had 2 or 3 1st cav who went along with us whose buddies were killed. They brought up the rear guard and witnessed the whole thing.

If somebody is willing to pay for my plane ticket to Korea I am willing to show them where bodies of some North Korean Infiltrators are buried. I know where they are buried because I was there and witnessed their execution by the ROK’s and their burial. The ROK’s made them dig their graves before they executed them.

If I wasn’t in Korea and since Agent Orange wasn’t used at Ft. Lewis, Ft. Gordon Ft. Ord or at the Yakima Firing Range and those were the only places I was supposedly stationed at how did I get AO exposure?