

STORIES OF THE
CHINESE
PEOPLE'S
VOLUNTEERS

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Foreword

This is a collection of stories about the heroic deeds of the Chinese People's Volunteers who fought in Korea. To help readers understand the contents of this book, we shall first give a brief account of how the Chinese people started the campaign to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea.

On June 25, 1950, the U.S. imperialists launched a war of aggression against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and at the same time sent the U.S. Seventh Fleet to China's territorial waters off Taiwan, thus interfering by arms in the liberation of the island by the Chinese people. The U.S. aeroplanes repeatedly intruded into the territorial air of Northeast China, killing the Chinese people and destroying their homes, while the naval vessels of the U.S. aggressive forces in Korea violated China's rights of navigation and opened fire on Chinese merchant ships on the high seas. Following their occupation of Seoul, the U.S. aggressive forces, heedless of China's warnings, crossed the 38th Parallel in October of the same year and came near China's northeastern frontier, thereby seriously menacing the safety of our country. The American aggressors in Korea lost every shred of humanity and stopped at nothing in their wholesale massacres. They openly expressed their intention of "exterminating the North Koreans." In places under their occupation, the American butchers killed the Korean people in large numbers. Whole families died at their brutal hands, not even old men, children or women with babies at their breasts having any chance of survival. As a result of round-the-clock bombings in North Korea by American planes, houses, hospitals, schools, churches and consumer goods factories were all levelled to the ground,

cities and towns reduced to ruins, and millions of people rendered homeless. In the face of such atrocities, the Chinese people naturally could not stand idly by. Korea is our next-door neighbour. Facts have proved that American aggression against Korea was aimed at aggression against China as the next step. The Chinese proverb aptly says: "With lips gone, the teeth are exposed to cold; with gates crashed, the halls are imperilled." To defend their motherland, to prevent the aggressive war from spreading to their own territory, the Chinese people had no choice but to go to the aid of the Korean people. For this purpose they sent the Chinese People's Volunteers—the finest sons and daughters of China—to Korea to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Korean People's Army against the American aggressors. After 37 months of bitter fighting, a great victory was won, and the American aggressors were forced to sign the Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953.

The victory of the Korean and Chinese peoples in their fight against aggression was achieved at a time when they were far inferior to their enemy in military equipment. Besides forcing 15 other satellite nations to join the war, the U.S. invaders mobilized one-third of their army, one-fifth of their air force and the greater part of their navy to form the main force in the war of aggression against Korea, put the entire national economy on a war-time basis, and devoted large quantities of military materials to the war. But the Korean and Chinese peoples' forces scored brilliant victories in spite of inferior equipment. In 37 months of fighting, more than 1,090,000 enemy troops were killed, wounded or captured, of whom over 390,000 were U.S. troops; more than 12,200 enemy planes were brought down or damaged; 257 enemy warships and vessels of various types were sunk or put out of action; in addition inestimable war *matériel* was destroyed or captured. With such glorious victories and heroic deeds, the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers have revealed a great truth to the world: The American aggressors

can be defeated while the people fighting for the honour and independence of their motherland are invincible.

In this collection are brought together 11 narratives, each telling of the heroic feats of a fighter of the Chinese People's Volunteers: the story of Squad Leader Lei Pao-shen, who led his men in destroying 11 American tanks without incurring any casualty among his squad; of Liu Kuang-tse, who captured 63 enemy soldiers single-handed; of airman Chang Chih-hui, who killed U.S. "ace" pilot G. A. Davis in an air battle; and of fine battalion and company commanders and scouting heroes who made surprise attacks on enemy positions. In their operations, all these heroes evinced unequalled bravery and unshakable confidence in their victory. In the most critical moments the one thing paramount in their minds was how to win the war and wipe out the enemy. In whatever they did they exercised a high degree of creativeness and initiative. They fought not only with boundless courage but also with infinite wisdom. There was close-knit solidarity and great fraternity between these heroes and their comrades.

The valiant deeds of these heroes graphically demonstrate that gone for ever is the age when the colonialists could occupy any nation in the East just by mounting a few guns on the coast, and that today any aggression by the imperialists can be smashed by the mighty force of the people.

Finally it must be pointed out that not all the heroes of the Chinese People's Volunteers have been featured in this book. During the fighting which lasted two years and nine months more than 300,000 war heroes, model fighters and meritorious soldiers emerged from the Chinese People's Volunteers. It would obviously be impossible to present all of them within the covers of one volume such as this.

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AN EAGLE AT THE FIRING-LINE

LIU CHAO-JUNG

Chang Lan-ting, a native of Lichin County, Shantung Province, was born in 1925. He joined the Chinese People's Liberation Army in September 1945, became a member of the Communist Party of China in January 1946, and joined the Chinese People's Volunteers in October 1950. He successively held the ranks of squad leader, platoon leader, company commander and reconnaissance party leader. For his brave and ingenious fulfilment of reconnaissance tasks in the First, Third and Fourth Campaigns, the CPV Command decided, on November 12, 1952, to give him a special-class merit and the title of Hero of the Second Class. The Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly of the Korean Democratic People's Republic awarded him, on different occasions, an Order of Honoured Fighter, First Class, and an Order of Military Merit.

— EDITOR

In the autumn of 1952, I went to the front positions to visit the reconnaissance party of a division. As I came near a tunnel, I heard a sonorous voice:

“For us scouts, it is more important to capture enemy soldiers alive than to kill them. When you manoeuvre in the enemy positions, you must be daring and composed. You should keep your eyes and ears open all the time and in all

directions, and act as the occasion requires. You must also be able to take advantage of the enemy's weaknesses. . . ."

It was the leader Chang Lan-ting's voice; I could not help but quicken my pace.

Chang was sitting on a bed-board close to the entrance of the tunnel. Seeing me, he stood up of a sudden and, smiling broadly, said, "Ah, Comrade Reporter, you have come at the right moment! Come and sit here." Before I could do so, he pointed to the opposite side and remarked humorously, "Have you ever heard of such a thing? He killed 'a string' of puppet soldiers!"¹

I sat down beside him. I looked round and saw a scout with bowed head sitting on an empty wooden box which had apparently been used for packing tin cans.

Chang Lan-ting then told me this strange story — the previous night, the men of our 2nd Platoon had crept to enemy positions to lay snares for enemy soldiers. In the dim moonlight, nine blackish figures were coming towards them. The scouts were highly delighted, thinking: "In order to capture a 'tongue,'² we have been lying in ambush in vain for several nights. Now at last our chance has come." When the victims were about to walk into the ambush, all the scouts held their breath, fearing the enemy might discover them and run away. But this scout, who had been newly transferred to our group, jumped up from the ground, and threw out two hand-grenades recklessly. Then he fired his automatic rifle, dashed forward, seized hold of an enemy soldier, anxious to drag him back. But, however hard he tried, he could not pull away his victim. Originally a puppet officer had tied all these fellows together one by one with an electric wire! Thus this string of soldiers were all shot and fell to the ground. Only one of them seemed not too badly wounded. The scouts had a hard time cutting him free of the wire tied around his body. But when they carried him back, he was stone dead.

¹Referring to Syngman Rhee's troops. .

²Referring to captives capable of giving information.

When Chang Lan-ting finished his story, he held out his hands with palms upwards, and said:

"These men had come our way, but we did not capture them alive with their 'tongues'; is this what a scout should do?"

"I thought that by throwing the enemy into a panic, I would surely catch one alive," the reckless scout muttered. "Who would have known that they were tied together? We have never seen such 'patrols.' . . ."

Chang Lan-ting suddenly stood up and looked at him with flashing eyes:

"To be a scout, you should be like an eagle: Your eyes should be sharp, don't you see? Just think, why didn't you wait till the enemy came nearer and then make a catch?"

"I was too impatient for success!"

Chang Lan-ting went to the scout and, patting him on the shoulder, said, "So you know your defect! All right, be cleverer next time; fire at the right moment! Now, go back to your squad."

The scout stood at attention and saluted him, and then turned round and walked out of the tunnel.

After the scout left, we again sat down together on the bed-board. We had not seen each other for over a year, but his tall figure, his long face, his thin eyebrows and his sharp, bright eyes had not changed. Only his face had become thinner, and the wrinkles seemed deeper. His leg had been wounded in several places by barbed wire and brambles, and the bloodstains had become dark. The lower part of his leg was swollen, so that when he sat on the bed-board he had to lay his leg flat.

Looking at his swollen leg I said, "You ought to take a rest."

"Take a rest? How can I take a rest? The head of the reconnaissance department and the political instructor have always been saying to me too: 'Your leg won't do! You should take a few days' rest.' I well understand their good will.

But enemy conditions are changing every day; it is necessary for us scouts to keep track of them. If I go to the rear for a rest just because I have some trouble with my leg, how could I bear to stay there? Besides, all my comrades are here, and I can't tear myself away from them. And then. . . ." He took out more than ten letters from under his pillow and placed them before me: "Look at these letters! They are from dear friends in our motherland. These are from wounded comrades who wrote while they were convalescing. In every letter are these words: 'We hope you will gain more victories, and wipe out more enemy troops.' Do you really think that I should take a rest? . . ."

"But you've got a wounded leg . . ." I interrupted.

Before I could finish my sentence, he raised up his swollen leg and said all smiles, "This is nothing. If I don't use it to run about in the enemy positions, or get it soaked in water, it may hurt me all the more!"

He spoke with much light-heartedness, and did not in the least seem to mind the wound. I changed the topic of our conversation, and we had a heart-to-heart chat about the reconnaissance party, and about himself—about his present assignments and his past fighting experiences. What I relate here is how marvellously he fulfilled his reconnaissance tasks when he first came to Korea at the very time the enemy troops were frantically advancing northward, and how he was given a special-class merit and won the title of Hero of the Second Class.

It was the afternoon of November 12, 1950. The sun was casting its oblique rays on the hillsides. The scouts who were taking a rest in the damp pine grove all got up to adjust their shoe-strings and tie up the ends of their trousers—knowing that as soon as it grew dark, there would be assignments according to the usual practice.

Just then, Regimental Commander Chiang came walking towards the pine grove. The scouts, wide-eyed, straightened themselves up. All understood: "There must be some im-

portant assignment; otherwise, why does the regimental commander come to the platoon at this time of day?"

The regimental commander walked towards them and greeted them all smiles, "Good afternoon, comrades! You must be having a hard time of it!"

"Not at all," the scouts replied loudly.

"Comrades, I'm going to give you an assignment today. You all know that our troops have been defending the north bank of the Taedong River and the Tokchon front for five or six days. But we haven't got enough information about the enemy we are facing. Tonight, before twelve o'clock, you must bring back a 'tongue.'"

To catch a "tongue" on the battlefield is an important means by which the command can get information about the enemy. The scouts could see from the regimental commander's face that the task of catching a "tongue" was very urgent, and that evidently a new attack on the enemy was being prepared. What exciting news this was!

Seeing the smiles of the scouts, Chang Lan-ting, then leader of the reconnaissance platoon, walked up to the regimental commander with big strides and said, "Be assured, Regimental Commander! We are sure to deliver a 'tongue'!"

"Look, Comrade Chang Lan-ting!" The regimental commander broke off a pine twig and, squatting beside the pine, began to draw on the ground with it. "Tonight we'll throw three detachments deep into the enemy's rear. You shall lead one squad; you are to walk through the wasteland in front of our positions, cross a dry river, and then make a detour around the enemy's front positions and penetrate into Chongnyong-ni. We calculate that you will find some enemy troops right there."

"Yes, there are; we have observed them several times."

"Though it is only six *li*¹ from here to Chongnyong-ni, it is difficult to walk in the dark, and it's not easy to steal into the enemy positions. . . ."

¹One *li* is equal to about one-third of a mile.

"Regimental Commander! Every scout has a pair of night-eyes and a couple of fast legs. If the enemy discover us, we'll fight hard and capture boldly. We'll be sure to fulfil our task in time!"

"That's good!" Then after a short pause, the regimental commander said, "This is the first time you undertake such a task. You should be brave and cautious, and judge cool-headedly whatever happens. But come what may . . ." the regimental commander spoke with emphasis, "you must fulfil your task!"

"Regimental Commander, we assure you that the task will be fulfilled!"

"That's capital! I'll be waiting for news of your victory."

Came the evening. Darkness covered the hills and fields. There was a lull after a hot battle, and only intermittent shots of cannon and bursts of machine-gun fire were heard.

Chang Lan-ting with his 6th Squad groped under cover of the night towards the enemy positions. They quickly passed the wasteland and came to the small river.

Suddenly some flashes of light appeared on the hill-top on the south bank of the river, and the whistling cold wind carried the indistinct sounds of speech to them.

"Come on," Chang Lan-ting, squatting on the river bank, whispered to the scouts behind him. The scouts immediately came up to him. "On the hill before us are the enemy. We must pass their positions quietly and quickly, and from first to last we must keep in contact with each other. Now, follow me!"

Chang Lan-ting and his scouts crossed the dry rivulet in big strides and quietly advanced towards Chongnyong-ni.

They had not walked far before they saw the lights of Chongnyong-ni. Chang Lan-ting signalled with his hand to stop and, lowering his voice, said to his men:

"The enemy must be in Chongnyong-ni; the lights are still on. Get ready! The covering group shall stay outside the village to give us cover, while the rest shall go into the village

with me. We shall fight fiercely and capture boldly, and shall get away as soon as we have made a catch."

They ran towards the houses with lights. How strange! The village was all quiet; not a breath of sound. On entering the village, they did not find a soul.

"The lights are still on. The enemy can't be far away. If not in the village, they must be somewhere around the river bridge." So thinking, Chang continued to steal southward with his men, straight towards the Taedong River bridge.

Suddenly the leader of the 6th Squad came up to him and whispered in his ear, "Platoon Leader, there is sound in the southwest corner; I think the enemy soldiers are digging defences there."

Chang Lan-ting turned round and, motioning again with his hand in the dark, whispered, "You fellows lie down on both sides of the highway. I'll go first to find out about the lay of the land and the roads, and what the enemy soldiers are doing." So saying, he took his Mauser in hand and crept stealthily towards the sound.

He groped his way to the bottom of a bluff, and saw two enemy soldiers looming up on the ridge; they were digging defences. From behind the embankment came a pucha-pucha sound. Judging from the volume, there must be no less than half a squad of soldiers at work.

What a good opportunity this was! But his men were 20 or 30 steps away; if he went back to bring them here, the enemy might discover them and all would be undone. This was a critical moment; though he was alone, he had to deal with these foes. But how? It would be hard to catch two men at one time. He had better kill the one in the front first, and then taking advantage of the situation catch the one behind. With this decision in mind, he continued to grope forward stealthily.

A mass of dark clouds floated by, and some stars appeared in the sky. Chang Lan-ting was only four or five metres from the enemy. Suddenly a fellow in a white cape discovered

Chang Lan-ting; he quickly stooped to take up the automatic rifle at his side. At this very moment Chang Lan-ting dashed forward, jumped up on the bluff, and killed the man in the front with his gun. Then, like a ferocious tiger, he leaped forward and, seizing the soldier in the white cape by the collar, kicked the rifle out of his hand, gave a twist to his collar and dragged his enemy down.

The captured soldier, who was taller and stouter than Chang Lan-ting, tried hard to stiffen his neck and stand up. But Chang pressed him down on to the ground with all his might. The fellow, after struggling three times, finally got up, and in his turn tried to seize Chang's neck. Chang was both anxious and furious, and would have liked very much to shoot the man dead. But his task was to catch an enemy alive. And if he delayed for another moment, the enemy soldiers behind the bluff would come, and things would be too hot for him. So he grasped the back of his opponent's collar tightly, and strangled him with all his might. His victim, as if hanged on the gallows, could scarcely breathe; he swung his arms and kicked his legs. At this critical moment, the leader of the 6th Squad ran up with a group of men who, lifting up the prisoner, sped away as fast as they could. The enemy soldiers behind the bluff in the meantime had become panicky; they fired at random. When they reached the top of the bluff, the scouts were already 30 or 40 metres away.

It was pitch dark, and the way was rugged. The scouts who were carrying the prisoner ran so fast that they fell into a ditch. The prisoner, frightened to death, lay on the ground like a corpse, not moving a muscle. Chang Lan-ting at once gave the order:

"Men of the covering group shall give cover while the rest carry the prisoner away, double quick!"

At once, some of the men took the prisoner by the legs, others grasped his arms, and away they went with him over the hill and across the rivulet. They ran two or three *li* at a stretch, before stopping to take a rest.

The prisoner stood up the minute he was laid on the ground. One of the scouts cried with glee:

"Aha! He is alive!"

Chang Lan-ting could not help laughing: "No bullet has hit him; how can he be dead? He was just frightened out of his wits a moment ago."

They took the "tongue" to the regimental headquarters. The comrades there surrounded Chang Lan-ting and the scouts, firing questions:

"Platoon Leader Chang, where did you catch him?"

"Hey, it's only six o'clock; still six hours before twelve. You sure do work fast!"

Chang Lan-ting broke out into a sweat; beads of perspiration as big as beans ran down his face. He stood there, smiling with reserve, not knowing how to answer. The scouts, however, gave a vivid description of the incident gesticulating profusely:

"It's really not easy to make a catch! Our platoon leader got this one out of a wolves' lair. But listen!"

Yes, sharp gunfire and roaring cannon were heard in the direction of Chongnyong-ni. The enemy troops were waging a bitter battle with the boundless dark night!

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On January 1, 1951, the Chinese People's Volunteers had already broken through what MacArthur had boasted was the lifeline of defence, the 38th Parallel, and were marching toward Seoul.

On the evening of January 2, the scouts were ordered to make a thrust into the midst of the routed enemy in order to intercept them and to give the main force a good chance to deal the blow of annihilation. The mission was an arduous one, for the enemy could easily escape in trucks while the scouts had to pursue them on foot along a by-road. At midnight when they were about to reach Sunaksan Mountain north of Uijongbu on the western front, the swift footsteps

of Chang Lan-ting were brought to a sudden halt. The highway was blocked by a dense thicket of barbed wire. The network stretched across the highway and then ran up zig-zagging along precipitous rocks on both sides; consequently the main line of communication was cut off.

Chang Lan-ting looked about from side to side. As the summit of the mountain was wrapped in deep grey, he could not find out where both ends of the wire lay. He examined the wires closely, pressing his foot against them; how firmly and compactly interwoven they were. There was no way of climbing over the net, nor going round it, and they had not brought along any tools for cutting wire. This indeed was a hard nut to crack.

Not far away from the eastern side came the rumble of cannon fire and bombardment from enemy planes. Chang raised his head to look round. Bathed in the pale moonlight, the summit was enveloped in complete silence. Knitting his eyebrows tightly, he formed his own private judgement on the situation: "The summit may be occupied by enemy troops, who at any rate will not have thought that we have arrived here so quickly. We must now contrive some way to force an opening through the net of barbed wire without disturbing the enemy on the summit." Then he said abruptly to a scout by his side:

"Fetch a canister of dynamite."

He got it and then the scout prepared to do the dynamiting. Chang Lan-ting motioned with his right hand and said in a low voice, "No hurry!"

On seeing the platoon leader absorbed in thought and observation, the scout asked, "Shall we go around the mountain?"

"No," he said, pointing toward the summit, "undoubtedly we can climb over the mountain by taking that narrow path. If our main force in the rear were to go around the mountain, the enemy would have fled long ago. They set up this net

of barbed wire just in order to prevent us from making a hot pursuit."

"What is to be done then?"

"Blow it up! We'll do so at the moment when enemy planes are dropping bombs."

"Dynamiting sends up a fiery flash which the enemy soldiers are bound to see."

"No need for worry. Don't you see the flames on the eastern side? At the precise moment when enemy bombs and shells are bursting, we'll add to the excitement." Soon after Chang Lan-ting's words, a spurt of fire flashed across the highway and a breach was made in the barbed wire network.

Chang Lan-ting judged by now that there must be enemy troops in front and a battle would soon be fought. Accordingly, he ordered the vanguard unit to penetrate the pass between two mountains swiftly and advance on the highway with fleet steps. Presently, a village loomed before them in the dark, close by the foot of the mountain, with a very steep river bank on the right while the highway along the bank went round the village and then extended straight toward the south.

As the vanguards stealthily groped their way to the village entrance, they caught a glimpse of a black shadow in front. Judging it to be the enemy's sentinel, they were on the point of dashing forward to capture him alive. But when they were only a few paces away, the sentinel became aware of their approach. "Bang," with one shot from his gun, he turned and fled. The men followed hard at his heels in hot pursuit.

They failed to capture the sentinel, whose gun report must have awakened the enemy. So the vanguards would have to strike boldly into their midst and taking advantage of the confusion crush the enemy. The time was so urgent, there was no time for hesitation. Chang Lan-ting, after consulting