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ANALYSIS REPORT

NORTH KOREAN AIR ASSAULT FORCES (U)

JUNE 1978



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**NORTH KOREAN AIR ASSAULT FORCES (U)**

IAR-2-78

INFORMATION CUTOFF DATE: 28 NOVEMBER 1976

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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PREFACE

(U) This study is one of a series of [redacted] published by the [redacted] Directorate for Intelligence Research, Defense Intelligence Agency. These reports are published on a wide range to topics that have been exploited by [redacted] for the Directorate for Intelligence Research as direct support products, but are considered to be of sufficient interest for further distribution within the Intelligence Community. Information contained in these reports is derived primarily from analysis [redacted]

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[redacted] Information of a later date than the cutoff date of 28 November is identified as such.

(U) Addressees are requested to forward information that will supplement or correct this report. Questions and comments should be referred in writing to the Defense Intelligence Agency (ATTN: [redacted], Washington, D. C. 20301.

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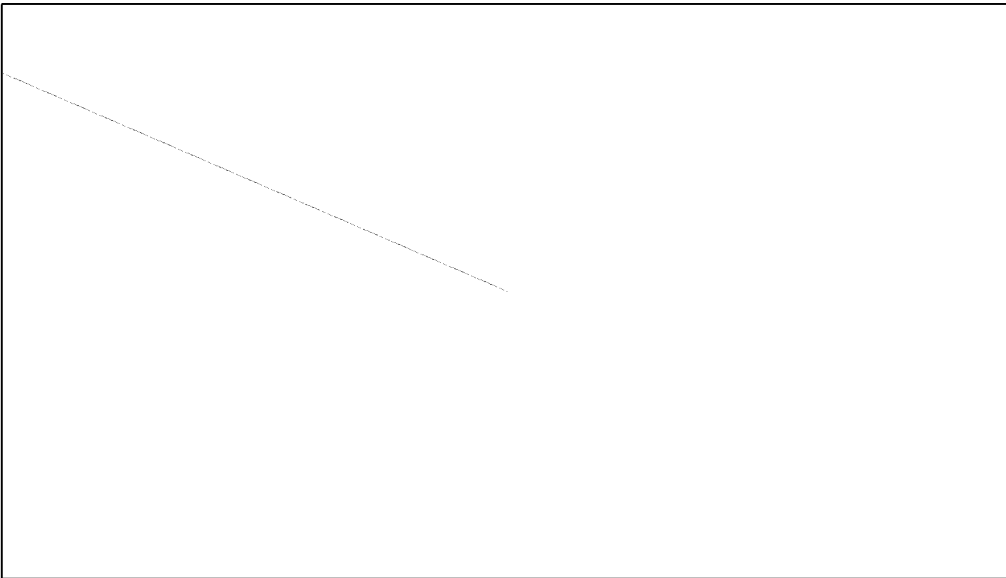
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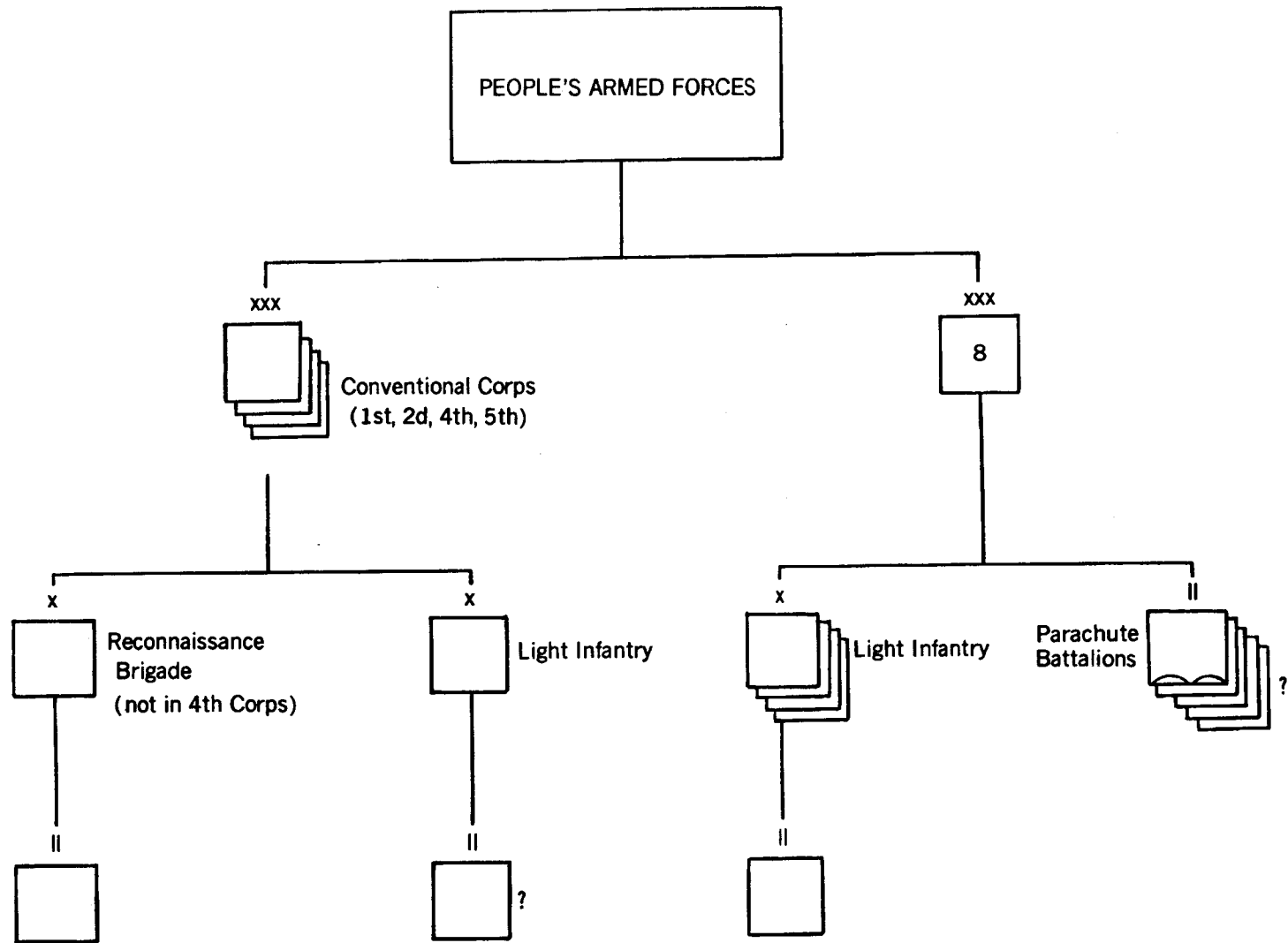
**SUMMARY**

~~TS~~ This report is an (b)(1),1.4 (c) of North Korean air assault forces, which are considered elite and formidable forces with the mission of interdiction of rear area lines of communication and the seizure and destruction of key facilities. The study explores these units and includes information on unit locations, strengths, equipment, and training facilities.

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FIGURE 1. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF RANGER/COMMANDO FORCE UNITS (U)

Ground Order of Battle, North Korea (U), Mar 77 (S/NOPORNI)

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**NORTH KOREAN AIR ASSAULT FORCES (U)**

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

~~(S)~~ The North Korean Army is currently estimated to have an airborne organization of five battalions. Each of these units is believed to comprise approximately 350 jumpers for a total of 1,750 members. These parachute battalions are subordinate to the 8th Special Corps headquartered at Tokchon in the central part of the country; however, they are all considered unlocated (figure 1). The mission of North Korean airborne units most likely includes the interdiction of rear area lines of communication and the seizure or destruction of key facilities by small assault teams (as opposed to large-unit mass drops).

~~(S)~~ Historically, the airborne force seems related to the 17th Reconnaissance Brigade, which was active in the 1960s.

[Redacted]

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

The airborne forces, aside from parachute activities, seem to train and operate in small elements [Redacted]

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

[Redacted] when deployed on the ground. Parachute training and mockup devices were [Redacted] together on 2 May 1974 at Sinchon Barracks and Training Area West, which is also the first [Redacted] field deployment of an airborne unit [Redacted].

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

**2. DISCUSSION**

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

~~(S)~~ The primary purpose of this report is to determine the disposition, strength, tactics, training, and combat effectiveness of North Korean airborne units. To accomplish this objective, four methods were used. They are: Method 1; establish [Redacted], Method 2, conduct [Redacted] of all airfields to locate any deployed parachute units; Method 3, check all known ranger/commando forces (R/CF) installations to determine whether any parachute units are collocated; and Method 4, [Redacted] other modes of air transport/assault.

(b)(1),1.4 (c)





(b)(1),1.4  
(c)

a. Method 1:

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

(b)(1),1.4  
(c)

~~(S)~~ Since complete knowledge of North Korean airborne forces [redacted] was nonexistent, various methods were established to resolve the problem. Essential [redacted]

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[redacted] were established by conducting a detailed study of the two known existing airborne installations: Taechon Airborne Training Facility [redacted] and Pyongyang Airborne Training Facility [redacted]

(b)(1),1.4  
(c)

~~(S)~~ Based on a thorough study of the above installations, numerous [redacted] items were noted that would likely indicate the presence of airborne training activities and, hence, organizations. An annotated sketch of a typical North Korean parachute training apparatus is shown on figure 3. Terminology used in the sketch is based on reference 34. The annotations are as follows:

1 - Free Tower - This is usually about 50 meters in height and may have a circular grassy area around the base. Circular worn spots under the arms are probably caused by numerous personnel attaching the student jumper's canopy to the large spreader ring prior to being hauled aloft with the canopy in the open position.

2 - Winch House - This is necessary to operate the cables and mechanisms that lift the student jumper to the top of the tower, where he is released for free descent.

3 - Mock Door Apparatus - This is a replica of the cargo/passenger compartment of a transport aircraft and is used to train personnel for interior seating arrangement, movement within the aircraft, use of anchor line cables for static lines, executing jump commands, and door-exiting procedures. Derelict aircraft fuselages are used when available. A likeness of an Li-2/CAB is illustrated.

4 - Mock Door Apparatus - This is probably a likeness of an An-2/COLT.

5 - Parachute Landing Fall (PLF) Platform - This is used to provide height for the student jumper, thereby giving him a shock effect upon making contact with the ground. The PLF is considered the method of proper military parachute landing to reduce injury and is practiced not only by new students but also by trained parachutists as a refresher. A solid construction-type platform is illustrated.

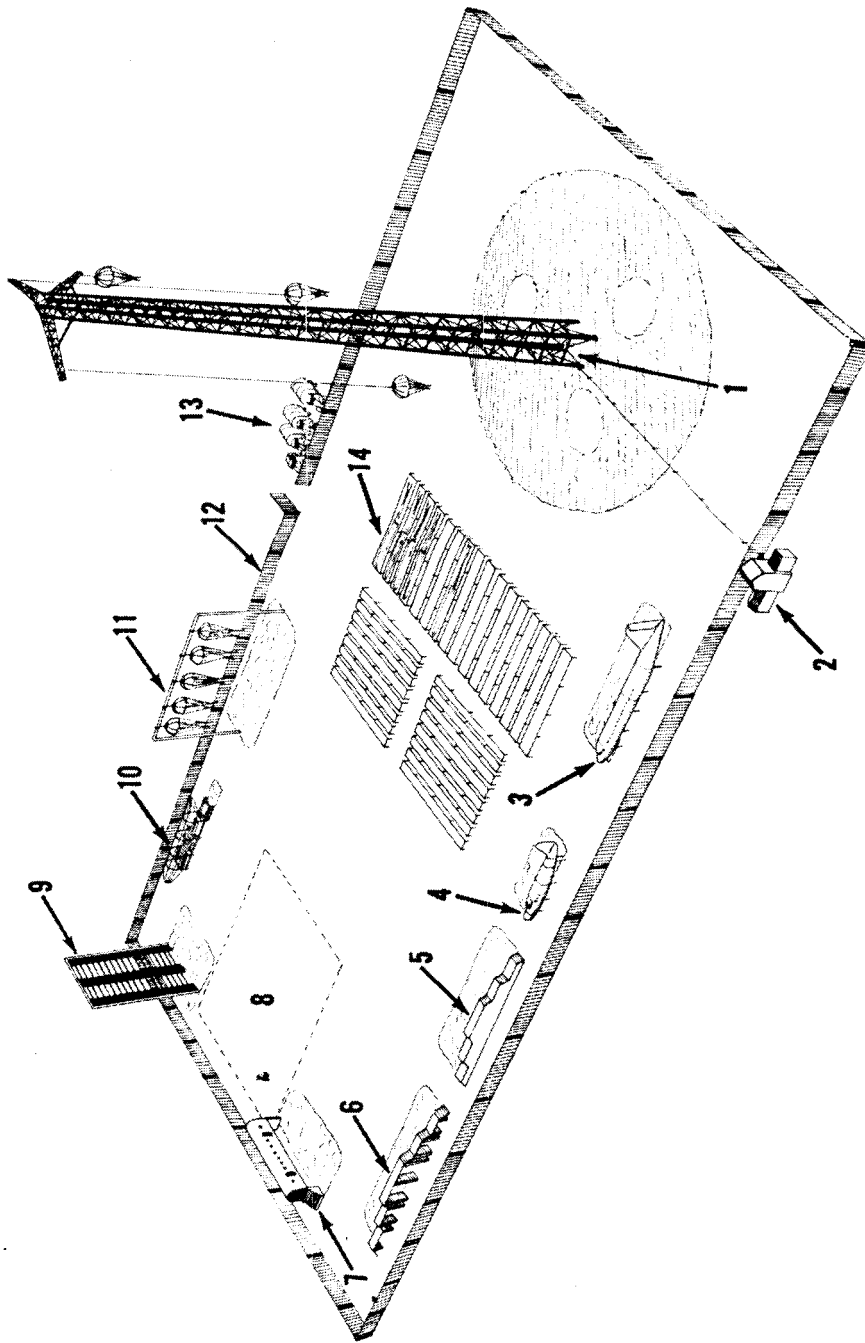


FIGURE 3. ARTIST'S CONCEPTION OF TYPICAL NORTH KOREAN AIRBORNE TRAINING APPARATUS (U)

6 - PLF Platform - Framed construction type.

7 - Mock Door Apparatus - General purpose.

8 - Cleared Area - An undetermined type of training area which may be noted by tonal differences in the soil.

9 - Scaling Wall.

10 - Mock Door Apparatus - See-through type.

11 - Suspended Harness Apparatus - This is used to teach methods for the parachutist to control his descent to the ground (sometimes referred to as a "harness rack").

12 - Fence - The parachute training area may be enclosed by a fence.

13 - Vehicles - These may be [redacted] in the area, especially when parachute canopies are evident. Presumably the jumpers and their nonpacked parachutes are trucked from the drop zone. (b)(1),1.4 (c)

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

14 - Parachute Rack - According to reference 3, tables for preparing parachutist equipment have been [redacted] in the Soviet Union. Roughly similar rectangular dark objects have been [redacted] in North Korea but it cannot be determined whether they are racks as illustrated or a type of mat. (For the sake of simplicity, they will be referred to as "racks" in this report.) Parachute canopies [(b)(1),1.4 (c)] on the racks as depicted in the sketch. Based on the [(b)(1),1.4 (c)] nearby trucks, the chutes are presumably being aired, inspected, and repacked after actual jumps. (b)(1),1.4 (c)

(b)(3):10 USC 424,(b)(1),1.4 (c)

(8) (1) The Pyongyang Airborne Training Facility is located on the southern outskirts of Pyongyang and is approximately 2 kilometers southwest of Pyongyang East Airfield (also named MIRIM, [redacted]) (figure 5). Recently COLTs, CREEks, MAXs, and sailplanes occupied the airfield. HOUNDS and HIP-Cs have been previously [redacted] there and CREEks and MAXs are still home-based there. The school itself consists of two areas: an administration/barracks area and a parachutist training area. Noteworthy training apparatus in the latter area [redacted] (b)(1),1.4 (c)

[redacted]

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

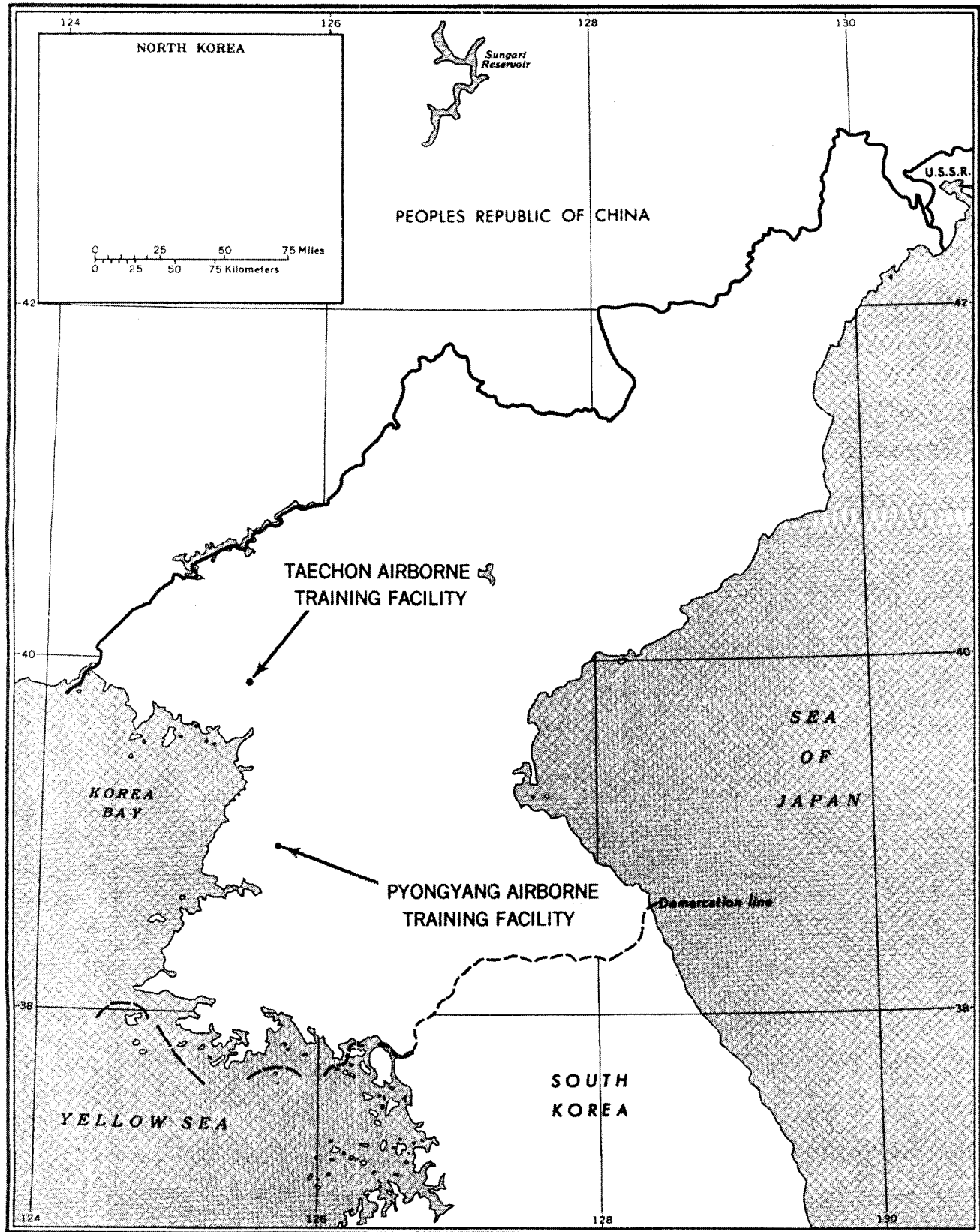


FIGURE 4. TWO KNOWN NORTH KOREAN AIRBORNE TRAINING FACILITIES (U)









(S) This training post was essentially complete and operational by at least December 1967 (and possibly since 1959 according to reference 37). However, construction of motor pools, barracks, and auditoriums, along with general improvement of buildings and grounds, continued until early 1973. Estimated troop capacity is 694. It could not be clearly determined (b)(1),1.4 (c) when actual parachute training was first (b)(1),1.4 (c) but parachutes and attendant training were (b)(1),1.4 (c) on 17 October 1969. Between that date and 22 June 1975, parachute training was (b)(1),1.4 (c) four times. Each time an average of 19 racks and 6 canopies (b)(1),1.4 (c) (b)(1),1.4 (c) but none (b)(1),1.4 (c) since then. Generally speaking, airborne training activity has been diminishing since late 1973. Between May and November 1974 the mockup aircraft was removed. Since that time only eight probable canopies have been noted (on 22 June 1975).

(S) (2) The Taechon Airborne Training Facility is located about 105 km north of the jump school at Pyongyang and about 4.2 km southeast of Taechon Airfield (b)(1),1.4 (c), which is occupied by (b)(1),1.4 (c). The installation consists of five areas as (b)(1),1.4 (c) (b)(1),1.4 (c) The auditorium indicated at (b)(1),1.4 (c) has been completed. The two-lane obstacle course (b)(1),1.4 (c) is identical to the one (b)(1),1.4 (c) at 8th Special Corps Headquarters (b)(1),1.4 (c). (b)(1),1.4 (c) (b)(1),1.4 (c) (b)(1),1.4 (c) mockup artillery pieces; the particular significance of these at this facility is obscure. Presumably, they are used for training the paratroopers in their ground combat (ranger/commando) role; however, whether this indicates the presence of an operational unit or the presence of military school training aids cannot be determined.

(S) This installation was first (b)(1),1.4 (c) under construction on 9 January 1971. At that time, both of the 50-meter free towers, one mock door apparatus (Li-2/CAB type), and a PLF platform were present but all appeared unused; only the foundation for one barracks and the messhall had begun. About 10 months later (16 Nov 71) both the barracks and the messhall appeared to be complete. Jump training had already begun, as evidenced by the worn areas beneath the free tower arms. Since that time, parachute training, ground combat training, and further construction has progressed regularly at this post. Generally speaking, since May 1974 parachutes (presumably indicating recent parachute jumping and attendant

(Continued p. 15)









