

Who would have thought, that by firing a few shots at Quemoy and Matsu, that we would have created such an earth shattering storm. — Mao Zedong

Once the sun sank behind the horizon not much flew, the dark sky was virtually empty, and any blip that appeared on the scope jumped out at you. At 2000, Bravo Battery's Target Acquisition Radar operator reported a target to First Lieutenant Bob Mackintosh, the fire control officer. The aircraft that appeared on the scope had just taken off from the Chinese mainland and was headed due east across the strait.

Mackintosh rang the battalion's Army Air Defense Command Post and reported the target's coordinates, altitude, size and direction of travel. The procedure was to update the target status report once a minute. Bravo Battery was already on three-minute alert, so the Nike-Hercules missiles were up and ready to fire before the target came within range of the Target Tracking Radar.



OPERATION HURRY UP!

by Blair Case

Since the missiles had a range of about 75 miles and the Taiwan Strait was only about 80 miles wide, it took only a few moments for the aircraft to come within range.

Mackintosh phoned in more precise data to the command post. The target was a twin-engine bomber headed straight for Taipei, the capital city of Taiwan. The rules of engagement were simple; perhaps too simple. Nationalist Chinese and U.S. Seventh Fleet aircraft and commercial airliners traversing the airspace had proper identification codes. Mackintosh would order the battery's Nike-Hercules launched at any aircraft that failed to respond correctly to identification, friend or foe (IFF), interrogation.

The soldiers of Bravo Battery had spent long months in a desert half a world away training for this moment. They had complete confidence in themselves and utter faith in the lethal surface-to-air missiles poised on their launching pads. "Lock on," announced the Target Acquisition Radar operator. Mackintosh swallowed hard and initiated the countdown to launch.



Suddenly, a panicked “HOLD FIRE! HOLD FIRE!” came over his headset. The Air Force Air Defense Command System had suddenly realized that Bravo Battery, 2nd Missile Battalion, 71st Artillery Regiment, was about to start a war.

Later, the air controllers explained that the Communist Chinese and Nationalist Chinese had a “gentleman’s agreement.” An imaginary line called the “Davis Line” ran through the middle of the Taiwan Strait. Under terms of the gentleman’s agreement, Communist Chinese aircraft that crossed the line but turned around and made it back across the line before Nationalist fighter planes arrived would not be engaged. They had not warned the air defenders about the gentleman’s agreement because they had not taken Nike-Hercules’ extended range and quick reaction time into account. Bravo Battery had locked on to the approaching bomber and started its countdown before the Taiwanese had time to get their interceptors off the ground.

“I was in Delta Battery during the bomber incident,” recalled Dave O’Connell. “Each fire control van had an early warning plotting board. I manned it during red alerts. I used a set of head phones and received information such as coordinates, altitude and number of enemy aircraft. Usually they flew MiG-15s and MiG-17s off the mainland to the Davis Line (a green line on our board that was actually located in the middle of the Taiwan Straits) then turned and mostly flew up and down the line—kind of a game of chicken. On that day Delta Battery was also at red. Although we had the bogey on the acquisition radar, it was not close enough for us to acquire and lock. You could hear the cross talk on the headphones. When Bravo Battery got the lock, our fire control officer uttered a definite ‘Old Army’ expletive. We were a pretty gung-ho unit, and, of course, all the young officers wanted to be the ‘first to fire’ a Nike Hercules missile at a hostile target. When the order to hold fire came through the headset, it almost blew my eardrums out. I was 20 years old at the time,” O’Connell said, “and it was so long ago”

The stage for the incident had been set nearly a decade earlier. In 1949, the Nationalist Chinese under Chiang Kaishek were defeated on the mainland by Mao



The Army deployed Nike Hercules missiles to protect Taiwan air space against Red Chinese aircraft.

Zedong’s communist forces. The Nationalist Chinese government, the Kuomintang, fled across the Taiwan Strait to Taiwan (which Westerners then called Formosa). More than a million of Chiang’s soldiers crowded onto the island. They fully expected Mao’s victorious forces to pursue, but the United States sent its Seventh Fleet into the Tai-

wan Strait and Mao’s forces were soon bogged down in the Korean War.

The Nationalists on Taiwan still occupied China’s United Nation’s seat, and Chiang’s soldiers dreamed of returning in triumph to the mainland. During their retreat, they had managed to hold onto three small islands (Quemoy, Matsu and Wuchiu) that were located right on mainland China’s doorstep. They soon began using the tiny islands as staging areas for commando raids on the mainland. In 1958, five years after the end of the Korean War, the mainland Chinese grew impatient and began shelling Matsu and Quemoy (actually, a group of four isles that the Taiwanese call the Kinmens). Wuchiu was so small and insignificant that Mao apparently considered shelling it a waste of ammunition. To many, the bombardment seemed a prelude to an invasion of Taiwan. Since U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower had signed the 1955 Formosa Resolution, pledging the United States to protect Taiwan, it looked as though America was about to be drawn into another Asian War.

The Soviet Union sent an envoy to China who suggested that Mao might be pushing the Taiwan Strait confrontation too far. Mao replied that, should the Americans invade, his forces would retreat, drawing the Americans deep into the interior, where his forces would destroy them with nuclear weapons. Perplexed, the envoy pointed out that the Americans had nuclear weapons of their own. Mao replied that Chinese mothers could quickly make enough new babies to offset any casualties China might suffer.

Soon, the Seventh Fleet was back in the strait and plans to evacuate most or all of the 10,000 U.S. civilian and military dependents on Taiwan were underway. Military personnel, fighter wings, cargo planes and construction crews began pouring onto the island. Nuclear-capable U.S. Matador surface-to-surface mis-

siles had been on Taiwan for almost two years, and now, the Associated Press reported, although it was supposed to have been top secret, that construction crews were working around the clock to prepare emplacements for a new surface-to-air missile — the Nike Hercules.

U.S. Marine Air Control Squadron-1, which had been rushed from Japan to Taiwan, soon noticed something fishy. Communist Chinese aircraft seemed to know their IFF codes and were breezing right through the radar screen. Some members of the squadron suspected that a fellow marine named Lee Harvey Oswald, who had a reputation as a loner and often espoused leftist ideals, might be selling secrets to the Communists. But they could never prove anything, except that the IFF problems stopped when Oswald was transferred back to Japan. The marines in the air control squadron forgot about Oswald until they were called to testify about Oswald's activities before the Warren Commission following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Back in the States, the mammoth U.S. Army Air Defense Command's Nike-Ajax and newly fielded Nike-Hercules battalions were deployed around major cities such as Boston, Baltimore, Washington, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles and San Francisco. The Nike-Hercules, later deployed to Europe, Alaska and Korea, had a much longer range than the Nike-Ajax and, unlike the older system, could be armed with nuclear warheads. Other Nike-Ajax units were making the transition to Nike-Hercules systems.

Their mission was to defend the continental United States against Soviet long-range bombers, a mission that the advent of intercontinental ballistic missiles would soon make obsolete. But during a decade in which Americans dug backyard bomb shelters and elementary schools conducted air raid drills, the mission was taken very seriously. The soldiers of the Army Air Defense Command, by all accounts, were wonderful, totally dedicated soldiers whose commanders, in decades to come, would remember them with fondness and more than a trace of nostalgia.

The summer of 1958 also was the summer that the Brooklyn Dodgers became the Los Angeles Dodgers and the New York Giants became the San Francisco Giants, so Army Air Defense Command units on the west coast probably felt their mission had grown considerably in importance. "Ike" was still president and, in the Soviet Union, Nikita Krushchev had just replaced Nikolai Bulganin. *The Defiant Ones*, with Sidney Poitier and Tony Curtis; *The Young Lions*, with



Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift; and *Vertigo*, with James Stewart and Kim Novak, were playing at the movies. "Diana," by Paul Anka; "Volare," by Domenico Modugno; and "Splish Splash," by Bobby Darin were playing on the radio. Meanwhile, packages of Nike-Hercules units were in training at Fort Bliss, Texas. The Nike-Hercules trainees, a mix of draftees and professional soldiers, looked forward to completing their training and deploying, along with their wives and children, to various sites as Nike-Hercules equipment became available.

In August 1958, just as things appeared coming to a head in the Taiwan Strait, a Nike-Hercules package that would become the 2nd Battalion, 71st Artillery, was completing its training at Fort Bliss. The soldiers had already received orders to move to Alaska with their families and household goods for an accompanied tour. But in early September, the members of the package had their Alaska orders canceled and received orders for a classified, unaccompanied assignment in the Far East. Although the mission was classified, it didn't take a James Bond to figure out the battalion's destination was Taiwan.

The filler personnel for the Nike Hercules battalion primarily came from the 495th Nike-Ajax Battalion, Fort Bliss. This Nike-Ajax battalion had supported U.S. Army Air Defense Artillery School training and nuclear exercises in Nevada. They were trained for mobile Nike-Ajax strategic deployment missions. This mobile unit's experience would prove invaluable during the initial setup and laying of the batteries in Taiwan, since the cabling for the Nike-Ajax and Nike-Hercules was essentially the same. Most of the soldiers in the Nike-Ajax unit had less than two weeks notice that they would be leaving Fort Bliss.

The Army had earlier demonstrated, that C-124 Globemasters could move an entire Nike-Hercules unit, at least from White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, to Florida. With detached units of the 82nd Airborne



Chaplain Burt Webb conducts religious services for Nike Hercules soldiers on a Taiwan hillside..

Division in support, members of the 495th deployed from C-124s and fired their Hercules missiles out over the Gulf of Mexico from Santa Rosa Island. But the 2nd Missile Battalion's Nike-Hercules equipment, including 48 launchers, went to Taiwan aboard a merchant ship. An advance party flew to Taiwan to make plans to receive the equipment and coordinate activities with the U.S. Army Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG) and the construction activities. They discovered armies of laborers at work on four launch sites west of Taipei on the western slope of a small moun-

tain range between the capital city and the coastline. An American construction firm was preparing Alpha and Delta Battery sites. Bravo and Charlie Battery sites were being prepared by Chinese army engineers with the help of U.S. Army Corps of Engineer advisors.

Although newspapers such as the *China Post*, Taiwan's only English-language newspaper, were reporting that Nike-Hercules units were on the way, the Army refused to make it official. As soldiers of 2-71 Artillery boarded a troop train destined for Seattle on 16 September 1958, Major General Sam C. Russell, the Fort Bliss commander, refused to say flatly that the battalion was headed for Taiwan.

In Seattle, the soldiers of 2-71 trooped aboard a Navy transport ship named the *Breckenridge* in full combat gear. The *Breckenridge* had been scheduled to take troops and dependents from San Francisco to Korea and Japan. The routing was changed to pick up troops of 2-71 in Seattle and transport them to Taiwan before delivering the other passengers to Korea and Japan. The *Breckenridge* took a northern route to in hops of avoiding Typhoon Ida, but Ida caught up with the *Breckenridge* and forced it to use more fuel than planned. The ship had to make an unscheduled port call at Naha, Okinawa, to refuel before continuing the voyage to Taiwan.

On 15 October 1958, 15 days after leaving Seattle, the Breckenridge docked in the port of Keelung, Taiwan. The troops were met by MAAG representatives, local dignitaries and a Chinese band. A United Press International story on the front page of the *China Post's* Thursday, 9 October 1958, issue reported:

An American guided missile battalion landed today to reinforce the defense of threatened Formosa, defying repeated Communist demands for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the area. The 703 men of the 2nd Missile Battalion marched ashore at Keelung. Their Nike-Hercules missiles had already been unloaded, and their officers estimated the battalion would be ready for action in about a week. The five-ton Nike-Hercules, an anti-aircraft missile, can blast the fastest known plane out of the sky. It is capable of carrying an atomic warhead powerful enough to shatter an entire bomber fleet.

The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Bernard I. Greenberg, told reporters that his mission was to defend the airspace of Taipei in case of enemy attack. "Give us an enemy plane, and we'll get it," he said. Greenberg refused to say whether any nuclear warheads had been brought to Taiwan (none had) or to confirm rumors that the Nike-Hercules equipment might eventually be turned over to the Nationalist Chinese.

"We disembarked at Keelung in full combat gear," said O'Connell, "including full field packs and weapons. We were loaded into the backs of five- and two-and-a-half-ton trucks. Along the way, Chinese packed both sides of the road to see the Americans. Some had big signs that said, 'Take Back the Mainland.' It was exciting and scary at the same time.

"Three of us were transported to the battery sites the next night to guard equipment," O'Connell continued. "We kept running into Chinese guards, and they kept running into us. It was pitch dark and foggy. We three Americans were sure glad to see daylight come."

Facilities

Buses took the Nike-Hercules soldiers from the port to the battalion headquarters area, where they were to stay until the battery sites were ready for occupation. The battalion's headquarters, which included the Army Air Defense Command Post, consisted of concrete block buildings that previously had been occupied by a unit of the Taiwanese army. First Lieutenant Samuel Grant, the battalion's assistant S-3, had a bright future in Air Defense Artillery. He would go on to



command Hawk and Chaparral/Vulcan battalions in the United States and Europe before retiring as a full colonel assigned to the Pentagon. But he found that running the Army Air Defense Command Post in Taiwan was like taking a step back in time.

“The command post was located at the base of a mountain right outside of Taipei. It wasn’t nearly as automated as the Nike Hercules command posts back in the continental United States,” he said.

“We went back to doing things the way they did them in World War II. We used manual plotting boards. The NCOs who did the plotting stood behind the clear plexiglass and wrote backwards so that those of us in front of the plexiglass could read what they were writing.

“The room was dark except for two small desk lamps, and we sat at a dais in front of the plexiglass plotting boards. Our early warning came from the Air Force. We would plot coordinates that the Air Force gave us on the plotting boards. We watched all the traffic up and down the Chinese mainland. Sometimes planes would break off from the normal flow of traffic and head directly toward Taipei, and many times they came close to crossing the Davis Line, but they always turned back.

“We did have a couple of scares,” Grant continued. Once a plane turned away from the Chinese mainland and headed straight toward Taipei. He kept coming until he reached the Davis Line, and we were about to engage, but it turned out to be one of our recon planes that had taken off out of Japan.”

The firing batteries were carved out of existing farm land on the slope of the mountains. Alpha Battery was on the coast northwest of Taipei in Tam Sui. Bravo and Charlie Battery were adjacent to one another on mountain ridges near the Lin Kou Air Station, a U.S. Air Force electronic surveillance post. Delta Battery was further south in Young Mei, which lies between Hsin Chu and Tau Yaun.

The Operation Hurry Up veterans still argue over which battery became operational first. “According to my recollection says O’Connell, “it was Delta Battery



General Maxwell D. Taylor

Major General L. L. Doan

that was ready to fire first. The date was October 23, 1958. I have an actual black and white photograph of that sign in my possession.” After nearly 30 years, the issue is still considered highly sensitive, a topic best avoided.

Bravo Battery’s experience was typical. The battery moved into its site, a leveled-off tea field on top of a mountain, on 11 October 1958. Each firing battery had a launcher platoon and a fire control platoon. The launcher platoon had a launch control trailer and four launcher sections,

each with three launchers for the Nike-Hercules missiles. For several months into the deployment, the batteries could only have launched missiles manually from the Launch Control Trailer, since there were no cables long enough to connect the trailer to the Fire Control Van. The launcher sections were on above-ground hard-pads surrounded by berms, or revetments.

The fire control platoon manned the Integrated Fire Control System, which consisted of an Acquisition Radar, Target Tracking Radar, Missile Tracking Radar, Fire Control Van, Radar Van and Maintenance Van. Both platoons had mobile power provided by 45kw precise-power generators. The battalion headquarters operated the Army Air Defense Command Post, which controlled the activities of the firing batteries and communicated with the Air Force Air Defense System, which consisted of National Chinese F-86s and U.S. Air Force surveillance radars. Of course, there were also tactical aircraft of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits.

The site consisted of a tent complex with concrete hard pads for the missile equipment. The 12-man squad tents had wooden floors and side walls and were furnished with desks, tables and chairs made locally out of Philippine mahogany. “Bravo Battery had one eight-hole latrine for the battery,” Bob Mackintosh said, “which was periodically cleaned out by one of the local farmers with his ‘honey buckets.’”

For months, no cyclone fencing was available for security fencing around the batteries. Soldiers spent as much time on guard duty as they did on operating the

firing batteries. Some batteries had a system of 12 hours on alert, 12 hours on guard duty and 12 hours off duty. Local villagers swarmed through the site, picking tea leaves and browsing through the battery's refuse pile. Hundreds of laborers carrying dirt in two woven grass mats that hung from poles across their shoulders built the revetments.

"We had 50 guards from a nearby Nationalist Chinese division," remembers Mackintosh. "None of them spoke English. This made for a very dicey checking of the guard after night. The only sound they made as you approached was a 'click-click' as they loaded a round into the chamber of their rifle, which had a fixed bayonet. They meant business. The penalty if they did something wrong, or failed to protect their post, was death."

Enlisted soldiers stayed in squad tents. Officers at first moved into an eight-man tent with an English-speaking house boy who was supplied, it was said, by the Nationalist Chinese security agency. Later, they moved into four-man tents with potbellied stoves, inner-spring mattresses, wall lockers, foot lockers, arms chairs and small tables. There was generator power, but water had to be trucked in. House boys brought hot water for shaving every morning. The C-rations that the battalion had brought with it to Taiwan were soon replaced with meat and canned goods from the Taipei commissary. The unit purchased fresh vegetables, milk and bread on the local economy.

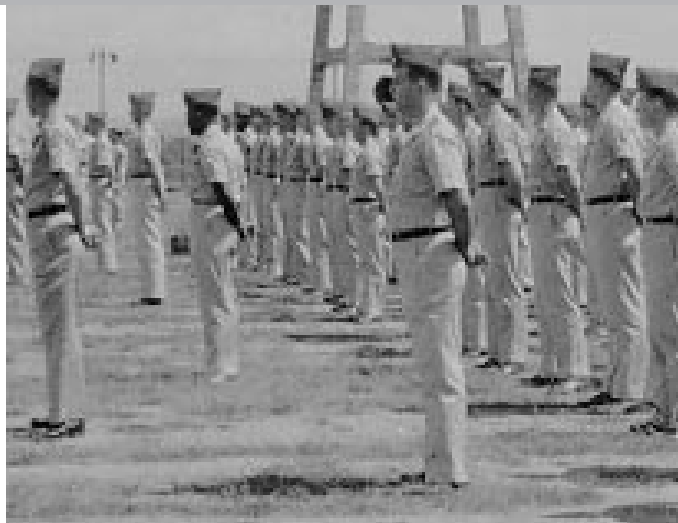
Camera crews visited Bravo Battery on 18 October 1958 to film "Operation Hurry-Up" for "The Big Picture," a popular television show broadcast back in the states. CBS sent a news team the next day, and the following day the MAAG commander, Major General Doan, showed up with 100 reporters. The stream of dignitaries continued throughout the tour. General Maxwell D. Taylor, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, and General I. D. White, Commander U.S. Pacific, visited the Nike-Hercules batteries.

On 22 October 1958, Bravo Battery granted its soldiers passes to go to Taipei for the first time. The rainy season arrived a few days later. The Nationalist Chinese helped out by supplying the Nike-Hercules soldiers with rubber boots. "You grew six inches and 20 pounds heavier walking through the area from the buildup of wet clay on the bottom of your boots," said Mackintosh.

From their mountain top, soldiers of Bravo Battery watched the rice harvest transform the little valleys below the Nike-Hercules sites. Harvesters cut and thrashed the rice and spread it out to dry. Mackintosh



took a ride in a helicopter and saw that Taiwan had been turned into a fortress. “Most of the fields were divided by bamboo bushes like hedge rows,” he said. “From the air, you could see a row of foxholes behind every row of bamboo. The whole country side was pocked with foxholes, and even downtown there were concrete pillboxes in many places, such as bridge approaches.”



Mission accomplished, soldiers of the 2nd Missile Battalion, 71st Artillery, turned their missile systems over to the Nationalist Chinese.

Living Conditions

Taiwan is a subtropical island nearly 400 kilometers long and, at it widest, about 160 kilometers across. The west side of the island, where most of the people live, is flat and fertile, but on the east side facing the mainland mountains rise straight out of the ocean. At 3,952 meters, Taiwan’s Jade Mountain is taller than Japan’s Mount Fuji. Spring is warm and mild. Summer days are hot and sticky and the rain pours down in short, torrential afternoon thunder showers. Winter is cool, occasionally chilly, and the sky is filled with heavy cloud cover and frequent drizzle. Temperatures grow much colder at higher elevations. A monsoonal wind called the *hanliu*, blows in from Central Asia, driving before it stinging sheets of rain. Temperatures plummet, and nothing seems really dry.

“The weather varied from very pleasant to hot and humid and very, very wet and windy,” recalls Mackintosh. “During the rainy season, you never dried out. The wind on the mountain blew constantly and drove the rain into you and the equipment. Western Electric engineers saw problems caused by water being driven under the radar enclosures that they had never before encountered.

“You could drive down the mountain into sunshine while the mountain top stayed in a wind-driven rain cloud,” he continued. “In February, it never got below 40 degrees, but with the wind, rain, living in tents and never drying out, it was colder than any assignment in Germany, Boston or Detroit.”

“The wildlife in Taiwan was quite a shock to the unit,” Mackintosh said, “even though we were used to West Texas rattlesnakes and scorpions—mainly because the sites were newly carved on the mountains and

their habitat was disturbed. The cobras were prevalent; we were told that the deadly krait was in the area; I don’t know if anyone ever saw one; there were scorpions and centipede. The centipedes were not deadly, but their sting was very painful. It was not uncommon to hear someone scream out in pain in the middle of the night when they tried to brush off a centipede crawling over their body as they slept. When you touched the centipede, it

would leave a welt the length of its three-inch-long body and cause excruciating pain for about 15 minutes. Of course, there were all of the other tropical insects.”

Foreign Relations

The battalion enjoyed good relations with the Taiwanese, who considered the air defense soldiers the “great protectors” of their country and wined and dined them at every opportunity. Later in the tour, when 2-71 soldiers began training Taiwanese on the Nike-Hercules equipment, the Taiwanese soldiers treated the air defenders with the traditional respect Chinese reserve for teachers.

The battalion’s relations with the MAAG, however, was very strained. “Prior to our battalion coming to Taiwan,” Mackintosh explained, “they held a special relationship as advisors to the Taiwanese. After our arrival, our battalion received most of the attention from the Chinese military and the press. Being the only Army tactical unit (there was an Air Force Matador squadron in the south of Taiwan), we received privileges that the MAAG soldiers did not. For example, the officers club in Taipei, required whites or blues after 1700. Our officers were allowed to wear fatigue uniforms.

“The MAAG retaliated by making things more difficult than necessary,” he continued. “For example, our vehicles went to town every day for supplies. They would be dirty after going down the dirt mountain roads to get to Taipei. Before the vehicles entered the city, the MAAG said they must be washed. So the vehicles had to stop alongside the rice paddies and be washed, even though there were Chinese army wash racks that could have been used as you went into town.”

Training the Chinese

Once the Nike-Hercules defense was up and operational, the United States, as many had forecast, decided to turn the equipment over to the Taiwanese. One crew was trained on site at each firing battery, while two crews and the maintenance people were trained at Fort Bliss. "The crews were handpicked and all had the equivalent of an American high school education; however, they did not speak English and we did not speak Chinese," Mackintosh said. "Each unit was provided interpreters. This made for especially tight quarters in the radar vans, with three U.S. operators, three Chinese operators and an interpreter. In Bravo Battery, the American operators soon picked up enough Chinese to give commands such as 'Search left,' 'Up,' 'Down,' and 'Lock on,' and the interpreters were asked to leave the van. We still used them when more thorough explanations were required.

"Everything the Taiwanese crews learned was by rote," Mackintosh continued, "so they quickly picked up things, but if they messed up, it was almost impossible for them to recover. Hopefully, they came to fully understand what they were doing before we left."

Rotation Home

The Taiwanese proved to be quick learners. In November 1958, the Taiwanese National Assembly issued the following message to U.S. servicemen:

On the basis of our traditional culture and friendship, our two nations have been taking a firm stand in antiaggression and anti-enslavement and fighting shoulder to shoulder for the cause of peace and justice.

Ever since Soviet Russia instigated the Chinese Communists to expand their armed rebellion and occupy the China mainland, thereby threatening the security of the whole world, your nation has heroically stood by us and resolutely supported us in the defense of Taiwan. For this we are most grateful.

The bombardment of the Kinmens and Matsu launched by the Communists is not only an imminent threat to Taiwan and Penghu but also a serious menace to the peace in the West Pacific. In pursuance of the Mutual Defense Treaty, your nation has been positively supporting us in our defense and you gentlemen come to help us in our difficult fight against Communist aggression. We hold that the offshore islands, the Kinmens and the Matsu, are the front line of Taiwan and Penghu and the key to the West Pacific.

It is indeed well said in the recent joint communique issued by the U.S. and Chinese governments that 'they believe that by their united efforts in opposing aggression



they serve not only themselves but the cause of peace.' We firmly believe that by arresting aggression through the united and concerted efforts of our two nations, we would vindicate justice and safeguard world peace.

In view of the great farsightedness and the friendly helpfulness of your nation in our common struggle, the National Assembly of the Republic of China, which exercises political powers on behalf of the Chinese people as a whole, desires to convey to you its profound respects by presenting to you this souvenir as an expression of their admirations and gratitude.

Most of the 2-71 returned to the United States on board the *Breckinridge* in August 1959. Some officers flew home and started phasing out as early as June to help set up the Okinawa Nike-Hercules defense, and a few stayed on a members of the MAAG. Many never received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal due them for their overseas tour of duty. Some thought the lack of recognition had to do with the classified nature of the orders that sent them to Taiwan; others thought it was because Greenberg, the battalion commander, committed suicide shortly before the battalion returned to the United States.

Operation Hurry Up was the first of what would turn out to be many overseas deployments for Sergeant Nat Lewis during a long career, but nearly four decades later, he still remembers the Taiwan operations as "special." "I finished up on Hawk and, after I retired, I worked on Patriot systems at Fort Bliss as a civilian," Lewis said. "But the Taiwan deployment still stands out.

"It was my first time overseas," he added, "the possibility of combat seemed very real and everything—the different cultures—seemed new and exciting. The soldiers of the battalion were absolutely outstanding. We never had a single serious disciplinary action. Looking back, that seems absolutely amazing."

The bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu lasted only a few months, but the propaganda war continued, with each side firing cannisters containing propaganda at one another. Taiwan fired its propaganda cannisters on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays; the mainland Chinese fired their cannisters on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays. Everyone took Sundays off. Each side blasted each other with enormous loud speakers.

In October 1971, Taiwan lost its United Nation seat. A further blow came in 1979 when the United States withdrew its recognition of the Republic of China and recognized the Communist regime on the mainland. Chiang Kaishek died from a heart attack in 1975, and

the Nationalist Chinese eventually abandoned their dream of retaking the mainland. Today, Taiwan officially remains a part of China and has not declared independence, a move that many fear might relight the tinderbox that nearly exploded in 1958. A movement for independence exists, but so does a sentiment for reunification with the mainland that would have been unthinkable in the 1950s.

When the Chinese conducted naval maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait in 1996, the United States reacted with declarations of support. But today, the Clinton Administration has proposed restoring China's favored nation trade status. On 1 July 1997, Chinese troops marched into Hong Kong to reclaim the glittering financial capital from the British after 156 years of colonial rule. Chinese leaders declared that the peaceful transition might pave the way for a reunification of Taiwan with the mainland. "It is an ardent aspiration of all China to settle the question of Taiwan in line with the policy of peaceful, reunification and 'one country, two systems,'" said China's President Jiang Zemin.

In the 1950s, however, reconciliation between Taiwan and the mainland seemed out of the question. Revisionists may downplay the threat that China and the Soviet Union represented to the United States during the Cold War, but documents that have become available after the collapse of the Soviet Union confirm that the threat was very real. For a few months at the height of the Cold War, American soldiers of the 2nd Missile Battalion, 71st Artillery, stood on freedom's front line, and won a small but important victory in the fight against tyranny.

"Operation Hurry Up" is based on interviews with and materials furnished by 2-71 veterans. Robert Mackintosh supplied a written narrative, documents and newspaper clippings. David O'Connell read the completed manuscript and offered corrections and suggestions. Samuel Grant contributed photos of General Maxwell Taylor, Major General L. L. Doan and Chaplain Burt Webb. Other photos used in the article are from the collection of Nat Lewis.