

Former Chief Of Intelligence For MacArthur Cuts Loose With Blast At US Newsmen, Accuses Them Of Distorting News Of American Battle Losses In Korea

NEW YORK, (AP)—General MacArthur's former chief of intelligence has accused six newspapers of "inaccurate, biased and prejudiced" reporting that Korean war, and charged their writings gave aid and comfort to the Communists.

The officer is retired Major General Charles A. Willoughby.

In an article in the December issue of Cosmopolitan magazine, Willoughby named the six individual newspapers and also criticized three news-magazines. He said they "appeared to go out of their way to create defeatist thought patterns and to belittle the country's armed forces."

Newspaper coverage of the war, Willoughby said, may have been the major factor in President Truman's decision to fire Gen. MacArthur.

"I am convinced the nuance of defeat created an atmosphere of tension, uneasiness and distrust between Tokyo and Washington. This is believed to have been the major cause of the MacArthur-Truman split."

NAMES NAMED

Sharp denials immediately came from the newspapers whom Willoughby identified by name.

Joseph Alsop, syndicate columnist; Hanson Baldwin, military correspondent of the New York Times; Homer Bigart, war correspondent of the New York Herald-Tribune; Hal Boyle, war correspondent and columnist of the Associated Press; Drew Pearson, syndicate columnist; and Christopher Hand, former member of the Herald-Tribune's Korea staff, was resigned.

During the most difficult days in Korea, Willoughby wrote, "these men were often inaccurate, biased, prejudiced and petulant, they confused an unhappy public. The corrosive effect of their irresponsible reporting was equal to that of calculated defeatism, even if such was not intended. Their reporting furnished aid and comfort to the enemy."

Willoughby also cited Time, New York, and U.S. News and World Report for "indefatigable, if not calculated deception of the public."

He called the newspapers "These ragpickers of modern literature... careless chroniclers... literary experts... the tickle press... the panting eagerness of a sidewalk huckster and the unctuous concern of an undertaker."

Willoughby's accusations centered, mainly, around two points:

1 That the correspondents had "belittled" the 8th army, and,

2 That they erroneously described last year's withdrawal under Chinese attack as a "defeat," magnifying its proportions, criticizing army intelligence, and exaggerating the casualty figures.

In their replies, the correspondents denied have criticized the army, as such, or the individual soldiers. They said they had criticized MacArthur, for his overall decisions, and Willoughby for his intelligence reports, on which MacArthur apparently based his strategy in Korea.

BALDWIN STORY

As an example of the "belittling" of the army, Willoughby quoted extensively from an article by Baldwin. It compared American generalship, troops and equipment with those of other countries, and said the Americans were not always the best in the world.

Willoughby described this as a "devastating surprising and telling reportorial attack."

Baldwin said the article was written before the Korean fighting began. He said it was prepared early in the spring of 1950, but was not published until after the war started. He added:

"As an intelligence officer, Gen. Willoughby was widely and justly criticized by pentagon officials as well as in the papers. His present article is as misleading and inaccurate as were some of his intelligence reports."

Bigart, cabling from Paris, said his criticisms had been directed against MacArthur and Willoughby, not the army as such. He replied: "General MacArthur and his tight little circle of advisers have never been able to stomach criticism, whether from a war correspondent or the president of the United States."

Drew Pearson made the same distinction in a statement which read:

"Gen. Willoughby is still smarting from my account of how he

immigrated to the U.S. after being forced to flee a Prussian military school and how he continued to practice Prussian swagger methods in the U.S. army. He also knows the fact that it was his faulty intelligence, not the second division's, which I criticized in the Yalu river advance."

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"The general's job was to obtain information about the Chinese and to evaluate it. I thought then, and I still think that our intelligence was tragically bad. Gen. Willoughby, naturally, feels otherwise. In this case, the events give the answer—the troops ran into a complete surprise, and were decisively beaten back. Generalities about 'bias and prejudice' cannot outweigh the hard facts of defeat and the cold statistics of losses. It was not 'bias and prejudice' that rolled the army back across thousands of square miles of lost ground."

Executives of the two magazines said they had no comment.

The events took place a year ago at this time. The sequence was this:

By early October, the North Korean army had been smashed into splinter-groups which were retreating.

In late October, the first Chinese troops were encountered. They were in small numbers, and the Chinese Red government said they were "volunteers." They halted the U.N. forward movement.

Then there was a lull for three weeks, during which the main force of Chinese disappeared.

On Nov. 20, MacArthur launched the "home-by-Christmas" offensive. It was immediately stopped. Three days later, the army was in full retreat, with some units totally cut off. It fell back to a line below Seoul before it could regroup.

War correspondents on the front in analyzing the causes of the setback, mainly blamed American intelligence. They said Willoughby had reported only 60,000 to 80,000 Chinese troops in Korea, whereas, actually some 300,000 hit the U.N. army.

In a dispatch dated November 30, which the magazine article quotes, Boyle asked:

"Why didn't the American high command know the enemy had massed such a force?"

Willoughby's article replies that his intelligence had furnished precise information on enemy strength. "The presence of 11 Chinese corps, or 33 divisions, along the Yalu was known and had been reported to Washington."

In summing up his view of the

intelligence situation, Willoughby's article said "fool intelligence was lacking—in Washington, Tokyo and at the front in Korea"—because "Washington had declared the Yalu river was a barrier for any kind of aerial flight." He added: "In other words, it forbade tactical reconnaissance for political reasons. Otherwise normal air observation would have disclosed the density of troop and vehicular movement from the great Manchurian military centers. . . . The entry of Communist China was a piece of political intelligence; it became military only at the point of collision."

Willoughby's reply says enemy agents, filtering through the lines as "refugees," supplied the information. As to U.N. efforts to obtain behind-the-lines information, he said: "The U.N. forces used all the conventional tricks—air reconnaissance, secret agents, parachutists, etc. However, one does not improvise such services overnight."

Several times, Willoughby asserted that the alleged errors in reporting were calculated.

He says, "It took on the design of a calculated system . . . was equal to calculated defeatism."

The same assertion is contained in a foreword to the article, written by Gen. MacArthur. MacArthur said: "The entire effort to distort and misrepresent the causes leading to the existing situation represents one of the most scabrous propaganda efforts to pervert the

truth in recent times."

Willoughby singled out the New York Herald-Tribune for a sweeping attack.

John O'Connell, editor of Cosmopolitan magazine, a Hearst publication, said Willoughby's article was submitted by his agent, and that it was considered for several months before publication. The agent, Miss Gertrude Algaese, said the article was part of a chapter from a book Willoughby is writing.

Willoughby appeared last night on the television program, "Douglas Edwards and the News." The army officer said the retreat from the Yalu "was not a defeat, it was not the greatest military disaster in the annals of American history."

"It was an ordinary common-sense and skillfully executed withdrawal," he said in a filmed portion of the program.

Willoughby said his article was not an attempt to defend any errors he might have made, and added that he is "completely and contemptuously indifferent to personal criticism by anybody."

Boyle, who appeared personally on the program, said he did not know Willoughby's motive for his charges.

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