

1952 - 1953 KOREAN WAR



2506 Edgewood Road,
Columbus, Georgia 31906
11 December 1966.

Brigadier General George E. Koumanakos,
Hellenic Army,
Athens, Greece.

Dear General:

I am in receipt of a letter from Colonel Chalgren, Chief of Army Section, JUSMAG, Greece, requesting me--your former Corps Commander in Korea--to review the attached file of correspondence pertaining to your services in Korea and verify its validity. I am more than happy to do so; for I cannot perform such a duty for a more loyal, courageous, and dedicated combat leader than you proved yourself to be while a member of my command during those stirring times. Furthermore, reading this file of correspondence brought back many fond memories of our contacts in that exciting period of my life; for that alone, I am grateful for the opportunity to refresh such fond memories.

I will deal with each item in the file separately:

- a. The report of our celebration of Greek Independence published by your regimental commander, Colonel Akers--my former Corps G-3--is a true and accurate account of events, the briefly stated. I was present at the ceremony and remember Colonel Akers' published document.
- b. The letter of commendation from General George Smythe, your then division commander, on 10 May 1953 on the occasion of his relief by General Ridings is a valid document, as attested by my own indorsement thereto dated 12 May 1953.
- c. The efficiency report forwarded to the Greek General Staff by Colonel Akers on 24 July 1953 is a true and valid document ably describing the high professional esteem in which you were held as a combat leader, as attested by General Ridings' 1st Indorsement dated 6 August 1953 and my 3d Indorsement dated 21 August 1953 at which time I was commanding X Corps Group (I, II, and III Corps of the ROK Army).
- d. The copy of the citation by President Eisenhower awarding you the Legion of Merit for your services in Korea is a valid document. The original citation was prepared by your division commander, General Ridings I believe, and I approved it as your Corps Commander for the period covered.
- e. I do not have personal knowledge of the letters (personal) sent you by Generals Ridings and Lunkleberg, but I do know that the statements concerning the character of your services under them are correct and just.

f. The copy of my letter dated 1 October 1953, to General Tsigounis, is a valid and correct document. I personally wrote it and signed it. However, in line 9 of page 3 of the copy attached there is a serious typographical error. As it reads in the copy, I recommend you for promotion to General Officer Grade, as early as possible--"for which he is not fitted"; this statement should read, "for which he is now fitted" and I have so corrected the copy myself in ink. I had two reasons for writing your Chief of Staff, General Tsigounis--to thank "My Greeks" for sending me such able fighting men and leaders, and to see if there was any way to get you promoted to Brigadier General, despite Greek law and custom, upon your return to Greece--for you were fully qualified for such a promotion and had earned it and deserved it.

It might be of interest to you to know that I also wrote Marshal Papagos, then Prime Minister, with whom I had such a close relationship during those rearing days of 1948/49 in Greece, and who remained my close friend and confidant until his untimely death. I told Prime Minister Papagos that I had written General Tsigounis--especially in your behalf urging your early promotion if such could be done, for "out of turn" promotion was a common practice in my own Service. I told Marshal Papagos that I would trust with a division command even then. I do not have his reply in my files now, but I remember that he humorously reminded me of Greek custom and practices regarding promotion of officers, with which I was fully familiar.

My dear General, I shall always be grateful to you and "My Greeks" for your loyal and courageous leadership while under my command in Korea. I shall never forget you and my Greek battalion. May this letter serve you a useful purpose!!! And please be assured that my warmest best wishes and highest professional regards shall go with you always.

Faithfully yours,

REUBEN E. JENKINS,
Lieut. General, USA (Ret)

PS: Please convey my best wishes to all many friends of those exciting days of the sandit war.

REJ