# NO PEACE AT PANMUNJOM

THREE times a week subject to cancellation without notice) a Norwegian-built bus rumbles northward out of Seoul, the South Korean capital, carrying parties of foreign visitors to a realistic lesson in War and Peace - and an In-Between State - at Panmunjom.

Panmunjom - a tiny Korean village that before the war was considered too insignificant to appear on maps - is the site where for 18 years the parties to the Korean War of 1950-1953 continue to face each other "eyeball to eyeball" in only slightly less than combat conditions.

The trip to Panmunjom, arranged by the Republic of Korea Transport Ministry, is available only to non-Koreans, who must present their passports two days before for an identification check. The United Nations Military Command watches over the bus once it enters the Demilitarized Zone bordering the North Korea frontier.

The Korea Tourist Bureau advertises the trip to Panmunjom by saying "one can see the tragedy of the division of Korea and sense to the fullest the reality of the Comstresses that the trip is military- the battleline at 10 p.m. on July escorted and perfectly safe, and in- 27, 1953, when the guns were sideed they have never lost a tourist lenced. It has slightly expanded nor has one even suffered a South Korea's post-war territory. scratch.

However, since its inception three years ago, the tour has been suspended several times, once for many months, after serious incidents had flared up between the opposing the DME. If border tension is running high, or meetings of the Military Armistice Commission ave been called to sit at Panmunon, no innocent bystanding allowed, and tours for that day are cancelled.

### Defector in Mig

We were scheduled to make the journey on the morning after two days of unusual activity across the normally quiet but tense Military before the cease-fire was reached. Koreans recently that they com- century Korean general who repel-Demarcation Line. A North Korean pilot had defected across the eastern end of the DMZ with his Mig-15 jet; this was followed by a night of firing across the Imjin River, the dividing line in the western end of the Zone. We expected our trip to be called off, but the U.N. Command was not yet ready to agree to a North Korean demand to discuss the pilot's "straying off course," and our trip went ahead as plan-

of Korea's mountainous peninsula, guns, we drove down an underbrushwe rolled through thatched-roof villages, skirting oxcarts driven by wispy-bearded farmers in puffy trousers, and passing heavy-duty trucks fresh from the docks of San Francisco, Soon the civilian traffic thinned out, and greenish-brown military vehicles dominated the road.

Signs in English on village shopfronts gave evidence of military camps nearby: "Baby Doll Record Shop," "Playboy Store," and a huge one-word placard: "WHISKY." Further on, at the entrances to military installations, another kind of sign read: "Information on North Korean agents welcomed at this gate." Still other signs in English hung outside a number of orphanages, noting the names of U.S. Army units supporting them.

We arrived at the DMZ entry checkpoint, where our identity documents were rechecked and our bus was cleared through.

We drove into the 4,000-metrewide bleak strip, overgrown with 20 years of weeds, past the barbedwire barrier meant to trap infiltrators from the North electronically. Under the Armistice Agreement the DMZ is bisected by a Military Demarcation Line which anakes its way 151 miles across the country The Line which replaced

Frostily formal truce talks, similar to those held by the Mixed Armistice Commission between Israel and the Arab states before 1967, have been going on for 20 years in Panmunjom, Korea. The talks have little real effect, but they have become a tourist attraction, writes JACK GOLDFARB, who visited Korea recently.

According to the truce terms the DMZ is limited to 1,000 "civil police" on each side of the Line. On the southern side, they are volunteers recruited for this patrol duty from U.N. Command soldiers.

Half a dozen of these tall, smartly-dressed American G.I.s met our bus as it entered their advance camp. Politely, but briskly, they ushered us into their Mess Hall for lunch.

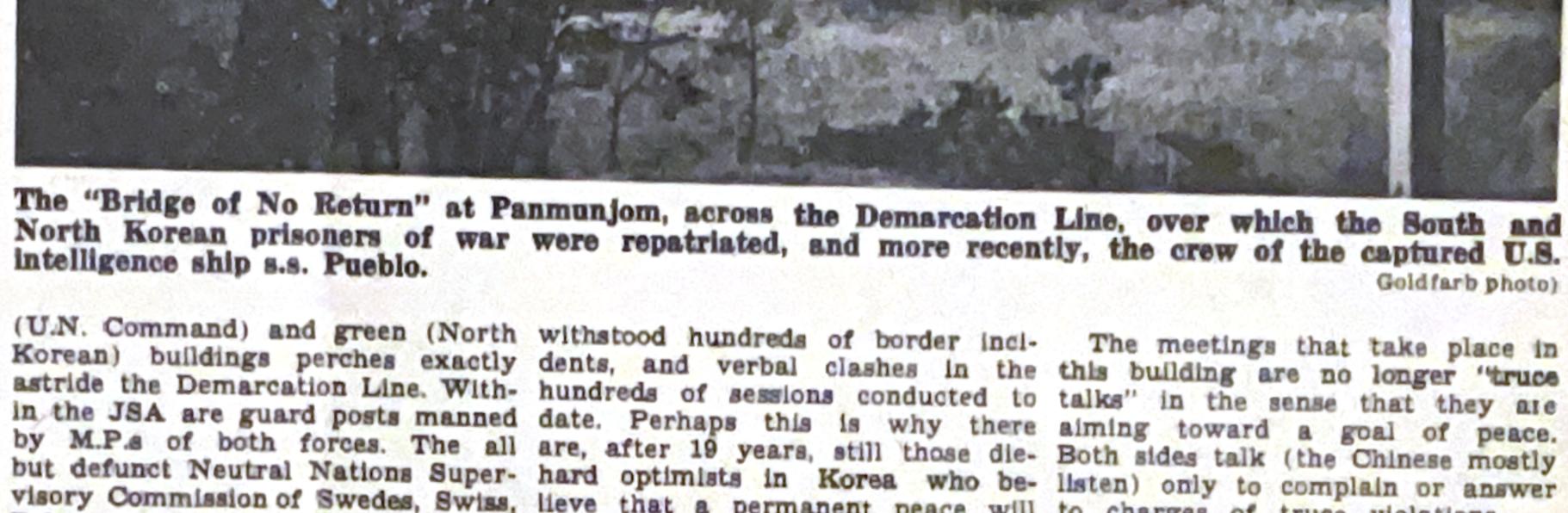
geant provided historical background and political achievements of the Re- reans. The Communists add an exon the armed truce ending the Ko- public of Korea. One of these ex- tra unauthorized building on their rean War. The negotiations took hibits, a shiny new model motor- side of the Line - the South Kotwo years and 18 million words cycle, was so admired by the North reans put up a statue to a seventh

converse with or make gestures at locked after sundown. the Communist soldiers we would encounter in the Panmunjom Area a short distance away. We then signed statements absolving the U.N. Command of responsibility in case of "hostile action."

## Machineguns

Now transferred to a U.S. Army bus, escorted by jeeps flying white Heading toward the slender waist flags and bristling with machinefringed road into Panmunjom itself.

enclave - officially called the Joint Army and the Chinese People's Vo- we are ready for the spring air passengers hijacked on Republic of



mandeered it one dark night. Since led the Chinese invaders ... The sergeant warned us not to then, Freedom House, remains

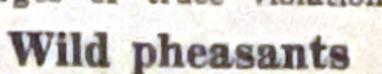
## Verbal clashes

Of the seven barracks-style bulldings straddling the Line, the one in the middle attracts the most attention. Inside this simply-furnished through the windows, we step repatriation of thousands of war structure the frostily formal meet- around to the other side of the prisoners was carried out. Once a ings of the Military Armistice Com- table into "North Korean Territo- prisoner had chosen which of the mission are held. Across the green ry" to observe a battery of Ja- two Koreas he preferred, the span felt cover on the long rectangular panese-made tape recorders used became a one-way passage. The table, the MAC members of the by the Communist side to record the bridge has been used again recently U.N. Command and the Republic proceedings of the meetings. The as a gateway to freedom for the of Korea confront their counter- austere leather and wooden chairs crew of the captured American in-Inside the circular, half-mile-wide parts of the North Korean People's add a grimness to the building and telligence ship "Pueblo," and for Security Area - a lineup of blue lunteers. The protracted truce has outside.

visory Commission of Swedes, Swiss, lieve that a permanent peace will to charges of truce violations. Poles, and Czechs still occupies in- eventually be worked out in this stallations in the Area, though their room.

investigations of truce violations have been blocked by both sides for flags of North Korea and the Uni- ly-roofed guard post of a North ted Nations, but it is immediately Korean M.P. we climb the stairs Just below the Demarcation Line noticeable that the North Korean to the top of the U.N. Observation stands Freedom House, a handsome flag stands higher and is larger. At Post. We look out over the hostile building with a pagoda-like tower, Panmunjom the aim of the game dedicated to Korea's "peaceful reu- is one-upmanship - the North Konification... under a free and demo- reans inflate their flag; the U.N. cratic government." The building assigns only six foot-tall soldiers to At a briefing afterwards, a ser- houses displays on the industrial tower above the shorter North Ko-

> of the tabletop. In actual fact this in the DMZ for North Koreans. is the Demarcation Line dividing Down below is the Bridge of No



terrain of North Korea to the distant jagged peaks on the horizon, while the Communist M.P.s watch us intently through their binoculars. A few hundred yards away a covey of wild pheasants circle over a vacant-looking hut. The North Koreans claim it is a house inhabited by farmers cultivating crops in the vicinity. But the U.N. Command G.I.s speculate on its real purpose; Conspicuous on the table are the the least sinister guess is that it black rubber microphone cords is there for propaganda purposes strung precisely down the middle to show how "normal life" goes on

country, room, table, and people. Return, the stone link across the While curious M.P.s watch us Dema cation Line over which the Korea aircraft.



North Korean prisoners of war were repatriated, and more recently, the crew of the captured U.S. Goldfarb photo) munist threat." The Bureau also the old 38th Parallel frontier, was (U.N. Command) and green (North withstood hundreds of border inci- The meetings that take place in Korean) buildings perches exactly dents, and verbal clashes in the this building are no longer "truce astride the Demarcation Line. With- hundreds of sessions conducted to talks" in the sense that they are

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