

# Prisoner of War Experiences: The Korean War

## Harry Hawksworth and Andrew Condron

### Questions to think about:

- What do these testimonies tell us about the prisoner of war experience of British soldiers during the Korean War (1950-53)?
- How are they similar/different? And why?
- Do you think that it is reasonable to say that Communist Forces did try and 'brainwash' POWs?



### **Harry Hawksworth- B Company First Gloucestershire Regiment, captured at the Battle of Imjin River in April 1951**

Hawksworth was marched at night for six-weeks to Camp Changsong, many died in these forced marches. At the camp, the prisoners were denied access to Red Cross packages which contained provisions like food and tobacco. At one point, Hawksworth escaped 20 miles from the camp and was given a week in solitary confinement with no access to sunlight.

In his testimony, Hawksworth claims that Communist Forces did attempt to 'brainwash' POWs. However, he offers little detail of the techniques used to try and indoctrinate POWs apart from noting that those who did not comply lost access to tobacco rations.

**Andrew Condron- Royal Marines, captured on 29 November 1950 during operations at the Chosin Reservoir**

Condron was first interned at Camp Ten, Chonma and then moved to Camp Five, Pyuktong. Following the Armistice in July 1953, Condron refused to be repatriated and defected to the People's Republic of China. Marrying there, he returned to the UK with his wife in 1962.

Upon his return, Condron stated that he had chosen to defect of his own free will rather than due to having been 'brainwashed'. He claimed to have made this decision after his Chinese captors convinced him that American Forces had made use of illegal germ warfare during the conflict in Korea. Upon his return, the British Foreign Office was keen to know "the state of Condron's mind". However, the only significant reflection of his experience in China that they were able to find was that his Glaswegian accent had vanished!



If you were interested in finding out more about the experiences of Harry Hawksworth and Andrew Condron, the Korean War Legacy Foundation has an extensive interview with Hawksworth on its website. The Guardian has an archive document of a newspaper article written following Condron's return available online.

**Hawksworth Interview-**

<https://koreanwarlegacy.org/interviews/harry-hawksworth/>

**Condron Article-** <https://www.theguardian.com/notesandqueries/query/0,5753,-1070,00.html>