

# STARS AND STRIPES

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## Uncle Sam wants YOU

Military faces complex problems in filling its ranks

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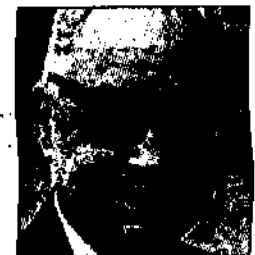
### In the States



**Grandparents' rights** to visit their grandchildren will be heard for the first time by the U.S. Supreme Court this week. **Page 8**

**Fort Gibson, Okla.,** school superintendent says companies have been contacting him hawking high-tech security systems and firearms training ever since a Dec. 6 shooting at the local middle school. **Page 8**

**Coleman Young,** mayor of Detroit for 20 years, was under FBI surveillance for roughly four decades. **Page 9**



**A Dallas man is charged with using**

# A rare look at a secretive nation

## American businessman says North Korea ripe for development

BY JEREMY KIRK  
Seoul bureau chief

SEOUL. — A tip for visitors to North Korea: It's best not to spill beer on a place mat bearing the picture of the Great Leader. And, if you do, don't joke about it.

Thomas Payne, an American businessman, who has made numerous visits to the reclusive nation, learned that bit of wisdom the hard way. After making a comment about the spilled beer, Payne learned about North Koreans' lack of humor in regard to their deceased patriarch, Kim Il Sung.

"They don't have a sense of humor for anything having to do with that," Payne said. He didn't get in trouble, but he quickly learned the bounds for interaction with North Koreans.

"They're not fascinated by Americans because it's a liability," Payne said. "They'll come up to you and want to talk, but no politics and no religion."

Payne, who sells food ingredi-

ents, is one of a few outsiders who has witnessed the small-scale free market beginnings on the border between North Korea and China.

"This (the area bordering China) is the best face that North Korea gives to the world," Payne said.

A Yalu River bridge is the link by which Chinese merchants in the city of Dandong swap goods with North Korean traders from Sinuiju. North Korea permits the trading, but it happens in quick spurts, Payne said.

North Korean trucks get permission to cross the bridge and spend and no more than an hour in China. Goods are traded and sold in a frenzy, Payne said.

Most goods are staples, such as food, cigarettes and liquor. A North Korean trader who brings a bag of flour from China has "a gold mine," Payne said, considering the Stalinist country's severe food shortages.

But in this region, Payne said North Korea's food problems are

hard to gauge. The traders seem to be much more well-off, he said, exchanging goods through family or clan channels.

"They (North Korean traders) actually are the cream of the crop," Payne said. "These are people who are able to make a little bit of money."

The Chinese and North Koreans have an affinity for American items as status symbols, Payne said.

"In northern China, they love Harley Davidsons," Payne said. "I've been told there are one or two Harley Davidsons in North Korea."

The prospects for American investment in North Korea could be good, said Jeffrey Jones, ex-officio president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Seoul.

"There are 22 million people in North Korea," Jones said. "They have an economy that is somewhat underdeveloped, and that will mean there will certainly be opportunities for U.S. companies to participate in the development process and hopefully make a buck or two."

The American Chamber is negotiating through an intermediary with North Korea to visit the country and analyze investment opportunities, Jones said. About a dozen American representatives from industries such as construction, communications and agriculture will participate, he said.

While Jones said no one has "wild aspirations" of North

nation has consistently refused to open its doors to the world, and few have been able to pierce the country's shell.

Payne entered North Korea by crossing the bridge over the Yalu River as a guest of Chinese businessmen. Hew did not reveal his nationality, and his business associates sometimes said he was from Switzerland.

"The best way to do it is to really be as low-key as possible — to be really touristic," Payne said.

But one has to be careful. Anyone who works in a public place, such as a hotel or restaurant, could be watching you, he said.

"They are trying to figure out why in the hell I am there," Payne said.

The border area between North Korea and China is beautiful, Payne said. On the Chinese side, the Great Wall ends near Dandong, and North Korea's landscape could spark a tourism industry, he said.

North Korea's capital, Pyongyang, is a clean city with wide streets and skyscrapers, Payne said. The deco architecture is reminiscent of Moscow in the 1960s, and the city is made to be appealing to outsiders, he said.

Despite its obvious lack of tourism, Pyongyang is expensive. A hotel room costs more than \$200 a night and restaurants are pricey, he said. Flash a little money at the restaurant and you could get a better seat, he said.

Turn on a TV and you may see



Stripes/Photo courtesy of Payne

Thomas Payne, an American businessman, stands on a bridge connecting the Chinese city of Dandong to Sinuiju in North Korea. Payne is standing on the Chinese side, and the characters on the bridge read "China Korea Friendship Bridge."

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tion, communications and agriculture will participate, he said.

While Jones said no one has "wild aspirations" of North Korea's economic potential, they are needs items such as agricultural equipment.

"It's a market no one has been able to get into," Jones said.

But many have been trying. South Korean companies such as Hyundai, whose honorary chairman Chung Joo-young personally visited last October with Kim Jong Il, are trying to agree with the North on a site for an industrial complex.

Many people have an intellectual curiosity regarding North Korea, Jones said. The secretive

restaurant and you could get a better seat, he said.

Turn on a TV and you may see an episode of *Cops* dubbed in Korean. The show, often featuring agitated drug addicts and trashy trailer park arrests, kind of validates their view of Americans, Payne said.

"They all think we are pretty corrupt and have problems," Payne said.

North Koreans also love professional wrestling. Mentioning a wrestler such as Jake "The Snake" Roberts can score points with a North Korean, Payne said.

"They just think it's (wrestling) the tops of culture," Payne said.

## Vietnam-era Marine commandant, Gen. Leonard Chapman, dead at 86

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Gen. Leonard F. Chapman Jr., who as commandant of the Marines oversaw the withdrawal of the corps' last combat forces from Vietnam, has died. He was 86.

Corps headquarters said Chapman, born in Key West, Fla., in 1913, died Thursday of complications from cancer in Falls Church, Va., a Washington suburb.

His career as a Marine lasted from 1935 until his retirement in the early 1970s after commanding a 300,000-member corps in 1968-1971, the height of the Viet-

nam War. The corps, the smallest U.S. armed force, now totals 172,500 Marines.

Chapman brought the last combat Marine out of Vietnam in 1971.

It fell on him, Marine headquarters said Sunday, to guide the corps "through the social upheaval and anti-military atmosphere that came to characterize the late 1970s and early '70s (to put) the organization on the path to the modern force it has become."

The current commandant, Gen. James L. Jones, said Chapman "was a gentleman and a leader, and he epitomized everything it means to be called a 'Marine.'"



Chapman