

The Interesting Military Career of Sir Michael Caine in The Royal Rifle during the Korean War (1950-1953)

Sir Michael Caine CBE born **Maurice Joseph Micklewhite**, 14 March 1933 is an internationally acclaimed English actor, producer, and author who has appeared in more than 125 films spanning 50 years. Known for his cockney accent, Caine was born in South London, where during his early childhood he and his parents lived in a rented flat on Urlwin Street, in Camberwell.

Military career: From 28 April 1952, when he was called up to do his national service until 1954, he served in the British Army's Royal Fusiliers, first at the BAOR HQ in Iserlohn, Germany, and then on active service during the Korean War. He had gone into Korea feeling sympathetic to communism, coming as he did from a poor family, but the experience left him permanently repelled. He experienced a situation where he knew he was going to die, the memory of which stayed with him and formed his character; he later said, *"The rest of my life I have lived every bloody moment from the moment I wake up until the time I go to sleep."* He detailed the incident in his autobiography, *The Elephant to Hollywood*.

Sir Michael Caine would like to see the return of national service to help combat youth violence, stating: *"I'm just saying, put them in the Army for six months. You're there to learn how to defend your country. You belong to the country. Then, when you come out, you have a sense of belonging, rather than a sense of violence."*

This audio record is an excerpt of Michael Caine's autobiography, "The Elephant to Hollywood".

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxJI7Uz8xnU&feature=youtu.be>

Below is an interesting excerpt by an American fan regarding the War in Korea:

« My dad was in Korea and it sounds like he may have been in the same area due to the reference to "no man's land." Dad talked about the smell of garlic that preceded the Chinese. He was a scout with the US Marines, and a report of smelling garlic was considered good intelligence of the near presence of Chinese. A great two-volume account of the Marines' battles against the hordes of Chinese is found in "The Outpost War."

Michael Caine described how the Chinese advanced suicidally into machine gun fire. The US Marine outposts were forward of the UN lines during the ceasefire, intended to deny the Chinese key pieces of high ground if they should decide to violate the ceasefire. Each outpost was a series of trenches leading out from a bunker covered by multiple layers of logs and dirt to survive airburst artillery. A dozen men or so would man each outpost. When the thousands of Chinese would attack they would first be met by British artillery called in from behind the UN line. Then as they got closer to the outpost they hit barbed wire and mines. Then they charged into interlocking fields of machine gun fire.

Dad described the massive mounds of dead and dying Chinese. The Marines kept killing the Chinese wholesale until they reached the trenches. Once the Chinese were about to overtake them, the Marines retreated through the trenches back to the bunker and called in airburst artillery directly over their position. The earth shook as dozens of high explosive shells went off overhead, spraying the area with deadly masses of shrapnel. When the firing stopped, it was silent. The Marines emerged, fought and killed any Chinese surviving in the trenches, and then cleared the trenches of dead Chinese and got ready for the next attack. The Chinese never took the outposts. They just advanced by the hundreds, and died by the hundreds.

The English have the poem "Charge of the Light Brigade" about the folly of sending 600 men against a fortified line in the Crimean war. I wonder if the Chinese have a poem about the folly of sending tens of thousands of men against the outposts of the US Marine Corps in Korea. It was bloody murder for their commanders to have done so. They gained never an inch. The line still holds today, as the Korean War remains officially ongoing, though an armistice is in effect. Men like my dad suffered the memories of having to kill so very many Chinese. Dad died in 2015. As he lay in hospice at home, he had the fortune of being assigned a wonderful nurse who had immigrated from Korea many years ago. I'm sure she was good to all her patients, but she spotted something on the wall in the room where Dad's hospital bed was set up. It was a certificate from the President of South Korea issued at the time to all UN forces who fought for Korea, expressing the nation's thanks. From that moment on, there was nothing too good for my dad. He died peacefully and without pain ».