YANG KYOUNGJONG

Yang Kyoungjong (March 3, 1920 – April 7, 1992) was a Korean soldier who fought during World War II in the Imperial Japanese Army, the Soviet Red Army, and later the German Wehrmacht.

Yang Kyoungjong was born in Shin Euijoo, in northwestern Korea. In 1938, at the age of 18, he was conscripted into the Kwantung Army of the Imperial Japanese Army to fight against the Soviet Union. In 1939, during the Battles of Khalkhin Gol, he was captured by the Soviet Red Army and languished for three years in a Soviet labor camp.

In 1942, the Soviets desperately needed manpower, so Yang and thousands of other prisoners were given a choice: sure death in the camp or don a Red Army uniform and fight the Germans on the Eastern Front. Yang chose to fight. In 1943, Yang Kyoungjong was captured by Wehrmacht soldiers during the Fourth Battle of Kharkov, and was then pressed into fighting for Germany. Yang was sent to Occupied France to fight in one of the battalions of Soviet prisoners of war known as the Ostbataillone (German: East Battalions).

Soviet soldiers inspecting captured Japanese equipment.

A German Panzer IV near Kharkov.

So Yang donned a Wehrmacht uniform and found himself located in Normandy, near what would become Utah Beach.

In 1944, Yang's Ostbataillon participated in the chaotic fighting with American paratroopers on the Cotentin peninsula during Operation: Overlord. He was captured by paratroopers of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. The Americans initially believed him to be Japanese in German uniform, and he was placed in a prisoner-of-war camp in the United Kingdom where it took some time to figure out he was Korean. He was freed in May, 1945 after Germany surrendered. After the war, Yang immigrated to the United States in 1947. He lived out the rest of his life near Northwestern University in Illinois, an "ordinary" US citizen, never even telling his amazing story to his children. He died on April 7, 1992.

SPECIFICATIONS

You can include Yang Kyoungjong in your Company for 15 points. Yang can only be part of an Early War Japanese Hohei Platoon, a Mid War Soviet Shtraf Company, or a Late War German Ost Grenadier Platoon. Mark one team of your respective Platoon (not the Command team) as the team that includes Yang Kyoungjong.

The marked team can use the We Surrender! special rule in addition to all its other capabilities.

WE SURRENDER!
Taking prisoners is generally a good thing. It boosts your troop's morale, it reduces the enemy's strength and sometimes you can gain information from them. The drawback is that you must spare some of your men to guard the prisoners and escort them back to the rear.

If Yang's team is destroyed, your opponent must remove one of his teams from the table that is within 8"/20cm of Yang's team at the moment it is destroyed. Your opponent can freely choose which team to remove if there is more than one available. If there are no enemy teams within 8"/20cm, none is removed.

The removed team does not count as destroyed but it does not count as a team still fighting either. It went off escorting prisoners and will not return for the duration of the game.

Yang Kyongjong (left) in Wehrmacht attire following capture by American paratroopers in June 1944 after D-Day.