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Smithsonian Channel Tells An Unforgettable Story From The Forgotten War
UNCOMMON COURAGE: BREAKOUT AT CHOSIN
Premieres Memorial Day, May 31 at 8pm ET/PT

**One-Hour Special Recalls Heroic Leadership of First Chinese American
Commissioned Marine Officer Who Led Baker Company to
Key Victories in Korean War**

New York, NY, April 27, 2010 – The Korean War may be considered “The Forgotten War,” but it brought us an unforgettable hero. During the war, Lieutenant Chew-Een Lee, the first commissioned U.S. Marine regular officer of Chinese descent, battled communism, injuries, hypothermia and racism to help 8,000 U.S. Marines stave off certain capture at the hands of the enemy. Lt. Lee’s remarkable story is told in a **Smithsonian Channel** original special, **UNCOMMON COURAGE: BREAKOUT AT CHOSIN**, premiering this **Memorial Day, Monday, May 31 at 8pm ET/PT**.

Prior to the Korean War, the idea of an Asian American leading a U.S. Marine platoon on the battlefield would have been unthinkable. Just a few years earlier in World War II, Japanese Americans had been placed in internment camps and racial segregation was still the rule in most of the United States. Lt. Lee, who would eventually rise to the rank of Major, ushered in a new era in American military history. His story is more than one of breaking barriers; it is a story of courage, grit and dogged determination. Through rare archival footage of the war and exclusive interviews with Lt. Lee and the men who served with him, *Uncommon Courage* recounts the extraordinary story of one of the key moments of the Korean War, the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir.

"The heroism of the Marines at the Chosin Reservoir is one of the legendary moments in U.S. military history," said David Royle, Executive Vice President, Programming and Production, for Smithsonian Channel. "But the story of Major Lee is not only one of outstanding bravery in the face of overwhelming odds, it is also about his courage in overcoming racial discrimination. He is a true American hero from a largely forgotten war, a Chinese American whose significance transcends his military heroism and is even greater than he might realize."

The one-hour special also looks at the Chinese experience in America, examining typical American attitudes toward Asians at the time, through the eyes of Lt. Lee and his men. Their stories all come together when they meet for the first time at Camp Pendleton, California, just two weeks before shipping out to Korea. Lt. Lee was the untested Marine officer and his green recruits had never spoken with a Chinese man, much less taken orders from one.

Joe Owen, one of the Marines who served under Lt. Lee, offered this tribute: "We started out a company full of untrained reservists and misfits and at the end... we considered ourselves to be the best God-damned rifle company in the Marine Corps. And we attribute it to the example, the ideals, set by Chew-Een Lee."

After the Korean War, Lt. Lee would rise to the rank of Major and draw on his experiences to train a new generation of Marine Corps officers.

UNCOMMON COURAGE: BREAKOUT AT CHOSIN was produced by Ted Poole, with Executive Producers Bill Hunt, Vincent Kralyevich and Kristine Sabat from KPI for Smithsonian Channel.

For images from *Uncommon Courage*, go to CBS Press Express:
<http://www.cbspressexpress.com/smithsonianchannel/>

ABOUT SMITHSONIAN NETWORKS

Smithsonian Networks (SNI/SI Networks L.L.C.) is a joint venture between Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution, formed to create channels featuring programs largely inspired by the assets of the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum complex. Smithsonian Channel features award-winning original documentaries, series, and groundbreaking programs highlighting America's historical, cultural and scientific heritage. Smithsonian Channel brings the American experience home in high definition and Dolby Digital 5.1 and is currently available to customers of DirecTV, Time Warner Cable, Charter Communications, Cablevision, Verizon, AT&T, and more. Learn more at www.smithsonianchannel.com.

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