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The Sea Services in the Korean War, 1950–1953

is dedicated to the Marines, Sailors, Coast Guardsmen and attached Merchant Mariners who served in harm's way during the Korean War, and their families.

You will always be remembered.

Foreword

The Marine Corps History and Museums Division, Naval Historical Center, and Coast Guard Historian's Office, in conjunction with the U.S. Naval Institute, take pleasure in publishing *The Sea Services in the Korean War, 1950–1953,* on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Korean War.

Above all else, this collection is intended to honor our sea service veterans, and those of our allies, who contributed greatly to preserving the independence and freedom from Communist occupation of the Republic of Korea, today a strong, prosperous, and democratic member of the family of nations.

The courage, gallantry, sacrifice, and achievements of America's Marines, Sailors, and Coast Guardsmen in Korea form one of the great episodes in the annals of warfare. Naval expeditionary forces were the first to respond to the North Korean invasion. At Pusan, Inchon, Seoul, Chosin (Changjin), and during the countless actions of the "static war" that followed (from the Punch Bowl to the Nevada Cities), the Navy–Marine Corps Team distinguished itself as a cohesive, flexible, and responsive asset, decisive at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. Marines and Sailors excelled, as well, in special and covert operations throughout Korea, and in China. Coast Guardsmen performed vital navigational, meteorological, search and rescue, and port security missions, and served as advisers to what became the Korean Navy. More than 1.6 million Marines, Sailors, and Coast Guardsmen served in uniform during the Korean War. More than five thousand sea service personnel lost their lives in Korea. Total Marine killed and wounded exceeded thirty thousand. Forty-two Marines (twenty-seven posthumously), and seven Sailors (five posthumously) were awarded the Medal of Honor.

At the heart of this collection are the three works that make up the "After-Action Reports" of the naval service: the two official histories, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea* and *United States Naval Operations--Korea*, and the Naval Institute Press's *The Sea War in Korea.* While much has been (and hopefully will be) written about Korea, these works remain timeless in their authors' thorough documentation of events and observations still fresh in the minds of the participants. They remain the starting point for any serious study of the Navy–Marine Corps Team in Korea.

This collection also contains a thorough review of extant literature on the Korean War by Professor Allan R. Millett (Colonel, USMCR, Ret.), an authority on the conflict, intended to aid readers in continuing their study of the war. Further, Mr. Scott T. Price's essay on the Coast Guard in the Korean War provides timeless insights into the Coast Guard's versatility as a unique national security asset.

The Sea Services in the Korean War was conceived as a resource that would be widely accessible, in convenient form, to veteran and serving Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen, as well as to students, scholars, and the general public. To the fleet, in particular, serious study of the Korean War, fought within what remains a potential, real-world theater of operations, is a moral and professional imperative. Moreover, for all Americans, the lessons of the Korean War confirm that the United States remains a maritime nation, with a critical requirement for naval expeditionary forces that are flexible, responsive, and sustainable from the sea.

This collection would not have been possible without the efforts of many people, working as a team, whom we wish to thank here. From the Marine Corps History and Museums Division, Mr. Robert E. Struder, head of editing and design, conceived the idea of the CD-ROM as the medium of choice. Lieutenant Colonel Leon Craig, Jr., executive officer, provided essential guidance throughout the project proposal process. At the Naval Historical Center, Ms. Ruby Hughlett, contract liaison officer, provided much-needed assistance regarding the contracting process. At Headquarters Marine Corps, the able review and guidance of Julius Rothlein, Esq., of the Office of the Counsel for the Commandant, and contracting officials Mrs. Barbara L. Labriola and Mr. Jeffrey M. Non were instrumental in the timely completion of this project. At the Naval Institute Press, accomplished historian and brown-water Sailor Lieutenant Commander Thomas J. Cutler, U.S. Navy (Ret.), senior acquisitions editor, became an early believer in this project and has managed it throughout to its successful conclusion. Mr. J.

Randall Baldini, publications manager at the press, worked closely with Mr. Anthony Cowden, Mr. Leon Miller, and Mr. Joe Jackson of Sonalysts, Inc., to create a product that meets the highest editorial and technical standards. We also wish to thank our senior historians, Dr. Edward J. Marolda, Mr. Charles D. Melson, and Mr. Scott T. Price, for their input and oversight. Our special thanks, of course, to contributors to this collection Admiral James C. Holloway III, U.S. Navy (Ret.), and Colonel Millett.

Finally, publication of this collection was made possible with a generous grant from the Department of Defense Fiftieth Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee located within the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for International Affairs (DUSA-IA). The committee's primary mission is to honor those who served our nation in Korea, and their families. We wish to express our appreciation to the DUSA-IA, the Honorable Gayden E. Thompson, and to Colonel Charles P. Borchini, USA, Lieutenant Colonel James R. Fisher, USA, Lieutenant Colonel Mark R. Franklin, USA, Lieutenant Colonel Martha V. Smyth, USAF, and Lieutenant Colonel Ward E. Scott II, USMC, at the committee for their support of this project.

--Colonel John W. Ripley, USMC (Ret.), Director of Marine Corps History and Museums
--William S. Dudley, Ph.D., Director of Naval History
--Robert M. Browning, Ph.D., Chief Historian, U.S. Coast Guard

The United States of America Korean War Commemoration

The congressionally authorized United States of America Korean War Commemoration will commence on 25 June 2000 (the 50th anniversary of the North Korean invasion of the Republic of Korea) and continue through Veterans Day, 11 November 2003.

The primary purpose of the Commemoration is to thank and honor those Americans, living and dead, who fought in the Korean War, and their families, and to ensure that "A Grateful Nation Remembers" their selfless service, courage, sacrifice and accomplishments.

The Department of Defense, in coordination with other public and private organizations throughout America, will conduct and support events that commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War throughout the commemorative period. Further, the Department of Defense 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee and the individual Armed Services are producing a number of educational, historical and commemorative items for distribution as part of the Commemoration.

For more information about the official U.S. Korean War Commemoration, please contact:
The Department of Defense
Korean War Commemoration Committee
1213 Jefferson Davis Highway
Crystal Gateway 4, Suite 702
Arlington, VA 22202
(703) 604-0831 (DSN 664-0831)
http://Korea50.army.mil

Sea Services Korean War Commemoration Committee

To coordinate, plan and schedule the Korean War commemorative activities of the Sea Services, the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard have formed the Sea Services Korean War Commemoration Committee, chaired by the Director, Navy Staff. For more information about these activities, please contact the Community Relations Branches of the Navy (703-697-0250), Marine Corps (703-614-5102/5439) or Coast Guard (202-267-0929) or write: Chairman, Sea Services Korean War Commemoration Committee, OPNAV N09B, 2000 Navy Pentagon, Washington, DC 20350-2000.

The Korean War: An Introduction

Adm. James L. Holloway III,USN (Ret.)

Korea was a war America did not expect to fight and had no plans for fighting. But it was a war America had to fight.

In the following years it was known as the “forgotten war.” Today, half a century later, viewed in a broader perspective, Korea has evolved as one of this nation’s more important wars in terms of its long-term impact on American history.

The Korean War came at the beginning of a much larger and more desperate struggle that lasted for four decades. This was the Cold War, and during this epic struggle between the Western Democracies and the Communist Bloc, the very survival of the United States was at stake.

For more than thirty years, the United States as a nation and Americans as a people were threatened with annihilation by 12,000 Soviet nuclear weapons. The Joint Chiefs of Staff estimated that in a strategic nuclear exchange with the USSR between 80 and 130 million Americans would die.

In the Cold War, the United States accepted the role of leadership for the entire free world against the Soviet Union and its client states. In spite of what may have been seen as a limited victory in Korea and a stalemate in Vietnam, the United States consistently prevailed throughout these 45 years of confrontation with the Communist Bloc. During that time there was no Soviet military aggression against the NATO partners or our Japanese allies. North Korea has not again attacked South Korea. In the end, the United States won the Cold War with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Korea was the first time in the Cold War that the United States committed American troops to combat in its armed confrontation with the Communists. Had the United States not elected to fight in Korea, and been able to conclude the war with a successful outcome by driving the North Koreans and Chinese back to the line of original demarcation, the Cold War could have had an entirely different outcome, most probably to the gravest disadvantage to our country.

The United States won the war in Korea. Just as in the case of the Cold War however, it was not a clear-cut victory such as we achieved in World War II with the unconditional surrenders of Germany and Japan. Nevertheless, peace was attained on conditions acceptable to us.

The Korean War began at 4:00 am on June 25, 1950 when seven crack divisions of North Korean troops stormed across the 38th parallel without warning, to invade South Korea. The non-Communist world was caught completely by surprise.

America was enjoying the rewards of a welcome peace earned by a hard fought victory in World War II, an all-out mobilization that reached every individual American. After World War II, without a military threat on the horizon, America had dismantled its massive armies and fleets that had gained the allied victory. Armament production had been halted, material and supplies abandoned overseas, military equipment scrapped, ships and aircraft mothballed, and the citizen soldier returned to their jobs, their families and to school. By 1950, force levels of ships, aircraft and divisions had been reduced to well below pre-war totals. Of special significance was the exodus of veterans from the active duty ranks. Americans were tired of war.

The U.S. Navy, which in World War II had more than fifty aircraft carriers in the operating forces, was programmed to reduce its active inventory of fleet carriers--those capable of operating jet fighters--to five. The U.S. Army troops in the Pacific Theater were untrained for combat. Recruited largely on the promise that in the Army they would learn a trade, the young and inexperienced soldiers were enjoying duty in Japan, which in 1950 still remained an occupied country under General MacArthur's command. The troops were equipped with obsolescent weapons with which they were only marginally proficient. Neither the troops nor American leadership expected they would be exposed to real battle. They were unprepared for combat.

In spite of the country's total lack of enthusiasm for a new war, its military unpreparedness, and the lack of any tangible threat to the American people by the North Koreans, President Truman did not hesitate in reacting. In quick succession after the invasion of 25 June, he committed U.S. naval and air forces to help stem the invasion of the South, then ordered American ground forces into the conflict. At the same time he brought the United Nations, still in its infancy, into the war against the North Koreans. This was the first occasion of any international world governing body organizing a military force and conducting warfare.

Truman had made the most difficult decision a president can make, to go to war. It was especially hard in this case, as Americans had not yet recovered from the hardships and trauma of World War II. The invaders were not threatening U.S. lives or property, nor had we any long standing ethnic or social quarrels with North Korea. President Truman saw the true foe as Communism. If a line were not drawn somewhere, the totalitarian regimes would threaten most of the free world. The U.S. had to act before so many democracies were overrun, that it would be too late for the Western powers to act collectively. President Truman and his advisors saw this as the time to react with force of arms, the sooner the better.

It was admittedly not the place the U.S. wanted to stage this first showdown with forces of Communism. Secretary Acheson expressed it well: "If the best minds in the world had set out to find us the worst possible location to fight a war, the unanimous choice would have to be Korea." But the United States and its allies were not offered a choice in the selection of the initial arena for this long-term struggle for the survival of the free world. The Communists had seized the initiative with their sudden and overpowering assault across the 38th parallel. Whether the United States liked it or not, the battleground would be the Korean peninsula. The United States and its allies had collided with the forces of the Soviet Union's surrogates, China and North Korea, while the whole world watched. Were the democracies willing to go to war for their principles of human rights? Would they fight at the risk of their citizens' lives? Could they hold their own in battle against the tough Communist troops, indoctrinated to shed their blood for their greater cause? At stake was the prestige of the United States and the survivability of free nations.

For the American leadership, the difficult decision to go to war was initially eased by a general underestimation of the enemy. On hearing of the invasion, the Commander of U.S. Forces in the Far East, Five Star General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur observed, "This is probably just a reconnaissance in force. If Washington will not hobble me, I can handle it with one arm tied behind my back." The troops themselves before their first encounter with the enemy, exhibited an "overconfidence bordering on arrogance" according to General Barth of the U.S. Army's 24th Division. The GI's thought the North Koreans would break and run when they first saw American uniforms. The troops were not to blame. Ripped out of their non-combatant occupation duties in Japan, they were rushed to the front by airlift in a matter of hours without any preparation for combat in Korea.

The first major event of the shooting war in Korea for the United States occurred on 3 July 1950 when carrier aircraft from the Valley Forge struck Pyongyang in North Korea destroying much of the small North Korean Air Force. Two days later on 5 July 1950, troops from the Army's 24th Infantry Division attempted to ambush the column of tanks and infantry leading the main invasion force at Osan, only 200 miles from the southernmost port of the Republic of Korea, Pusan. The small U.S. Army force, its 540 soldiers averaging only 20 years of age, without tanks and with a total of eight anti-tank artillery rounds, faced a column of thirty Russian T-34 tanks and 5000 veteran soldiers. The Americans were routed. As U.S. reinforcements were poured into the port of Pusan, they were rushed to the front piecemeal in an attempt to slow the advance of the North Koreans and keep the entire Korean peninsula from being overrun before enough UN troops and equipment could be landed to engage the enemy on at least equal terms of manpower and equipment. Through the next sixty days, the outnumbered and outgunned Americans fell back before the North Koreans, driven by their leaders without regard for casualties, to score a quick and total victory by pushing the Americans off the peninsula.

Exploiting the momentum of their attack and the fanaticism of the troops, the North Koreans enveloped

and broke through the UN lines whenever the Americans attempted to make a stand, forcing the U.S. and ROK forces into a constantly shrinking perimeter around Pusan. Air strikes by Navy and Marine Corps planes based on carriers offshore slowed enemy forces but could not stop them. By the end of August, the Americans and South Koreans had still not been able to stop the North Korean advance. The situation was so perilous that the 8th Army commander, General Walton Walker, asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff if he should plan for an evacuation of all U.S. forces to Japan, or should he still attempt to establish a secure perimeter around Pusan and depend upon continuing reinforcements to fight off the North Koreans and maintain his foothold in Korea. With President Truman's concurrence, the JCS instructed Walker to “stand and fight.”

Then in the first week of September, the UN lines around Pusan held in spite of the human wave attacks. This was the turning point. It had been a close thing, but the U.S. was not going to be driven off the peninsula. They were in Korea to stay.

From this inauspicious beginning of a war we didn't plan to fight, in the wrong place, at a bad time, against a determined enemy which had seized the initiative of surprise to come perilously close to driving the Americans into the sea in a humiliating defeat, the Americans found a remarkable resiliency. With the courage and a fortitude to justify its qualification for the mantle of leadership for the Western world, the United States stormed back from the very edge of disaster to badly bloody North Korea and defeat its armed forces, and then to throw the Chinese communist armies out of South Korea, restore the original borders and to conclude the conflict on terms acceptable to our side. In this aspect alone, the Korean War must be viewed as an example to the world, ourselves, our enemies and our allies alike, of the great power and integrity of the United States.

From the military standpoint, the Korean War falls into five distinct phases.

The first campaign began in June 1950 when the North Koreans, without warning, crossed the thirty-eighth parallel to invade an unsuspecting South Korea, then in the sphere of the Western Powers. Against lightly armed forces of South Koreans (more of a police force than an army) the North Koreans--one third of them veterans of the Chinese Communist Peoples Liberation Army--quickly overran most of South Korea. The introduction of American troops from the U.S. Army of occupation in Japan, thrown into the battle without adequate preparation, could at first only slow the North Korean columns of armor supported infantry. In early September 1950, the UN lines stiffened and held, and the Americans poured reinforcements and supplies into the Pusan perimeter, while the North Koreans, battered and exhausted from their drive south, regrouped.

The second campaign began on 15 September 1950, when the 230-ship Joint Task Force-7 landed the 1st Marine Division at Inchon. The Marines then drove east across the peninsula to link up with the U.S. Army divisions breaking out of the Pusan perimeter from the south. This bold strategic strike caught the Communists by surprise, and the bulk of the North Korean army was caught in a massive trap, surrounded and cut off from their bases of ammunition and re-supply. Most were killed or captured and others, deserting their units and abandoning their weapons, infiltrated through the UN lines to flee to the North. As the North Korean Army disintegrated, the UN forces quickly retook Seoul, crossed the thirty-eighth parallel and pushed north. General MacArthur, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command, intended to occupy all of North Korea up to the Yalu River, the border with China. There were international murmurings that this advance would be considered as a threat by China and could only result in an armed response. In Washington as well there was a growing concern to avoid any provocation for China to enter the conflict.

By mid November, with the communist forces in a complete rout, the Americans and ROKs were racing north and a U.S. Army column actually reached the Yalu River, at the town of Hysesenjin. As the American troops paused to regroup and enjoy a hot Thanksgiving dinner in the field, General MacArthur announced that North Korea had been defeated, its armies destroyed; and that South Korea had been liberated and its borders restored. The Americans would be out of Korea and on their way home by Christmas.

The third phase of the Korean War began on November 25, 1950, when Chinese Communist armies

entered the conflict with massive attacks in depth across the UN front. The Chinese offensive came as a surprise to General MacArthur and his field commanders, in spite of the fact that in Washington and other foreign capitals, there had been a sober apprehension that China would not stand idle if the UN forces advanced to the Yalu. China had been able to infiltrate more than 200,000 regular army troops, euphemistically referred to as "volunteers," into North Korea without detection by UN intelligence, and deployed them to cut off the over-extended UN columns pushing toward the Chinese border. The surprise and the ferocity of this Chinese offensive overran and destroyed the most exposed UN forces--the American and ROK divisions in the west and the U.S. Army task force at the Chosin Reservoir--and forced the entire UN front to fall back. For the Americans, the withdrawal back was rapid--twenty miles per day--but orderly. The retiring troops were able to break contact with the advancing Chinese, but had to abandon and destroy huge supply dumps of equipment and ammunition. Again the question arose: should the U.S. evacuate its forces from Korea, rather than 10,000 miles from home attempt to fight the armies of Communist China in their own backyard. In spite of popular polls in the U.S. that by 66% favored abandoning the war, President Truman said, “stay.”

For the third time in five months the capital city of Seoul changed hands as the UN fell back to reform their lines at the narrow waist of Korea, where their available forces could fill the gaps left by the badly battered U.S. and ROK divisions and present a solid front to the advancing Chinese. In January of 1951, the UN armies reestablished and stabilized their front on a line just south of the 38th parallel and held against the Chinese advance.

Then, on 25 January, General Matthew Ridgeway, who was now in command of the UN forces in Korea following the death of General Walker in a jeep accident, kicked off the fourth campaign of the war with a full-scale offensive all along the front. The objective was to inflict heavy casualties on the Communists and drive them out of South Korea. Ridgeway’s fresh leadership and the growing battle experience of the U.S. troops were paying off. There was a palpable upswing in morale to be on the offensive again after a month of retreating. U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force planes devastated enemy troop concentrations. Seoul was quickly retaken and at the end of March the UN troops were again north of the 38th parallel, in spite of determined opposition. China continued to rush fresh troops and equipment south to the front, and in late April mounted a major offensive of their own with the main weight of the counterattack down the historic Seoul invasion corridor. The UN lines held and the Chinese were stopped outside of Seoul. A second Chinese offensive in May was thrown back with heavy losses from U.S. air and artillery. By June the UN lines were again firmly reestablished along the 38th parallel. The key city of Chorwon in the central plains controlling the invasion route to Seoul was captured and held by American forces. By midsummer, the two opposing armies had stalled and were dug in all along their fronts, which generally followed the line of the original border.

On July 10, 1951, with the opposing armies facing each other in a stalemate, along a boundary heavily fortified on both sides, peace talks were initiated at Kaesong and later at a special compound in the village of Panmunjum in no-man’s land between the UN and the Communist forces. This marked the beginning of the fifth phase of the Korean War. The original dividing line between North and South Korea had been decreed by the Allied Powers at Potsdam to lie drawn along the 38th parallel, an abstract geographical reference line. This was simply a matter of convenience, without any serious considerations of terrain or historical precedent. It was impractical as a defensible national border. The July 10th positions of the opposing forces followed the topography of defendable terrain close to, but not superimposed upon, the 38th parallel. The de facto line of demarcation between north and south was now more realistic for purposes of a natural national boundary. The final campaign, which lasted more than two years while the peacemakers bargained with threats and boycotts, saw some of the heaviest fighting of the war as the Chinese and newly reorganized North Korean divisions mounted attacks and limited offensives to frustrate the UN negotiators and seize more real estate. In these last two years, the Americans suffered more than 12,000 killed before the cease-fire took place on July 27, 1953. It was three

years, a month and two days after a carefully planned, well executed, unanticipated attack by a surprisingly well trained and equipped North Korean army of 22 divisions, crossed this same border--now restored as the DMZ--on their way south with the intention of conquering all of the Republic of South Korea and annexing the territory to the Communist nation of Korea.

Geographically the Korean War ended just as it began, along the 38th Parallel. The entire war in which more than 4 million men, women and children were killed on both sides, involved 22 nations and was fought entirely on the Korean Peninsula, a piece of land approximating the configuration of Florida but about 25% larger.

For each combatant the outcome of these three years of intense warfare was different.

For North Korea it was a clear defeat. Their objective of annexing South Korea was not attained. Their Army was defeated, their capital city, Pyongyang was largely destroyed, and more than 300,000 North Korean soldiers were killed or missing in action.

Communist China's end position can only be considered a draw. Flexing their muscles in a show to the world of their new military might, the Chinese entered the war to rescue a communist ally, North Korea, and to demonstrate that China would not tolerate any military threat near its borders. The result was that the Chinese Communists suffered losses of more than 420,000 killed and missing, and in the end, were unable to defeat the U.S. led United Nations forces, even though fighting adjacent to their own borders. In the end, China was forced to accept an armistice which simply reflected the status quo ante. The failure of 120,000 Chinese to defeat the 25,000 Marines of the First Marine Division surrounded at the Chosin Reservoir, was especially demoralizing to the Chinese leaders.

For the United States, it was a victory. To some a limited victory, but then it was a limited war. It was certainly not a defeat. The Americans did what they intended to do: prevent the armed seizure and annexation of South Korea by the Communists. In the process, the Americans threw the North Koreans out of South Korea, decimated their army, and then drove the Chinese Communist army out of South Korea to end the conflict on terms acceptable to us.

From the prospect of the United Nations, the war in Korea was a success of historic proportions. For the first time, an international peace keeping body had organized a multinational military force, exercised its command and then successfully reversed the territorial incursions of an aggressor state. Furthermore the results were lasting. South Korea has not since been attacked or invaded.

Historically, the Korean War has become a unique chapter in the annals of modern warfare, setting precedents and providing lessons which have served to guide the formulation of foreign policy and national strategy for the United States.

It defined limited war as conflicts to be fought by their own unique sets of rules.

--In Korea, America could not fight to win unconditionally. To do so would engulf the U.S. in a general war with the Chinese people on the Asian mainland.

--Nor could America lose the war. The honor, prestige and position of leadership if the free world was at stake.

--The war was limited to fighting the Asian Communists. During the entire conflict, NATO forces facing the USSR and its client states in Europe and the North Atlantic maintained posture of readiness and strength to deter a Soviet invasion into Western Europe. Considering that the Soviets had available more than 100 divisions of ground troops and were rapidly modernizing their navy, this was a formidable responsibility for the United States, in which the military might and political leadership of NATO reposed.

--Mobilization during Korea was limited; "guns *and* butter" was the policy. The American public was sensitive to casualties and the Congress concerned about the budget. Tactical operations had to be planned with careful consideration to hold down losses. This often eliminated major operations with a high potential for significant long-term military and political success. Budget pressures limited procurement of ammunition and

aviation fuel, resulting in rationing of rounds for artillery bombardments in support of the ground forces, and the marginal readiness of combat aviation units due to too few training flying hours.

--With the war limited to the Korean peninsula, the concept of politically defined sanctuaries was established. U.S. air operations north of the Chinese border were proscribed by the UN with the consent of the U.S. government. Although locked in combat with the Chinese Communist Army, UN air strikes on airfields, logistic bases and troop marshalling areas north of the Yalu were forbidden. Even the hot pursuit of communist aircraft returning to their Chinese bases after combat in Korea was forbidden beyond the Yalu. The U.S. also had its de facto sanctuaries, but these existed not by political denial, but were the result of the absolute air and naval superiority achieved by the U.S. in the theater of operations. Maritime forces operated with impunity off the coasts of Korea, launching air strikes, conducting shore bombardments, reinforcing troops and delivering combat logistics, all in support of the UN forces ashore. UN aircraft could fly virtually without concern for hostile fire at altitudes above 10,000 feet over the terrain. This was the upper limit for effective enemy AAA fire, and there were no surface-to-air missiles in North Korea.

--USAF F-86 fighters flying a barrier combat air patrol in the northwest corner of Korea, intercepted Chinese MIG-15s as they crossed the Yalu coming out of their sanctuary bases, to provide cover for the UN aircraft conducting air to ground interdiction operations to the south. The U.S. air superiority over all Korea was virtually absolute.

--Korea was the first conflict in which the U.S. had an operational inventory of nuclear weapons. The world, as well as the American people were waiting to see how the U.S. policy for the employment of these weapons of mass destruction would evolve.

In the late 1940s after World War II, the U.S. stockpile of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons rapidly grew in numbers and diversity from strategic megatonnage monsters to tactical nuclear weapons. Early during the policy formulation for the employment of nuclear weapons, they were viewed simply as an extension of conventional munitions, to be used where larger explosions were needed. Weaponeering decisions would be based on the most effective way of achieving the desired results.

--By the time of the Korean War, tactical nuclear weapons had reached yields greater than the Hiroshima bomb. The USSR by then also had the A-bomb. Concern for escalation and the resulting mutual destruction had rendered original policy for the normalization of nuclear weapons impractical. The U.S. policy on the use of “special weapons,” as they were known, hardened, and although the inventory continued to grow in numbers and effectiveness, the requirement for presidential release made it clear that their application would be reserved for those extremis situations in which national survival would be at stake.

There were occasions when field commanders in desperate situations may have contemplated the use of tactical nuclear weapons as an equalizer to limit American casualties in the face of the seemingly inexhaustable numbers of Chinese infantry. But the employment of nuclear weapons in Korea was never seriously considered. In another sense during the Korean War, nuclear weapons played a key role in our national survival. With America engaged in a full-scale war in Korea, the USSR could see this preoccupation as a weakness in NATO and an invitation to launch an attack on Western Europe. It was only the realization of America’s readiness for strategic warfare, constantly displayed by ongoing SAC operations, that served as a powerful deterrent to a Soviet temptation for an invasion across the East German plains.

--As the war in Korea crystallized our tactical nuclear weapons policy, it conversely drove home the lesson that in the future, the U.S. national defense planning must be as much concerned with conventional war fighting as with nuclear deterrence. Nuclear weapons did not deter the war in Korea, nor could they be employed tactically. American National Security Policy would, in the future, have to be prepared to fight and win conflicts by conventional arms reserving the nuclear arsenal to deter the escalation of limited wars by the introduction of Russian military forces.

The Communists may have assumed that the United States was not prepared to fight a conventional war in Asia in 1950, but they badly underestimated America's national will, the resourcefulness of its military planners and the resilience of the American character.

--At the end of World War II, America's first priority was the return of the civilian solder to his home. Millions of tons of ammunition, supplies and equipment had to be abandoned overseas. However, the greatest capital investment in major weapons systems was in ships and aircraft, all of which were fortunately mobile. Great numbers of these modern assets were brought home and mothballed, the ships in fresh water estuaries and the aircraft on desert air bases. When the North Korean invasion caught the newly established Department of Defense at its nadir, the services turned to their mothballed equipment.

--The Navy carrier force grew to 19 fleet carriers, enough to maintain four off Korea as well as two constantly in the Mediterranean for the support of NATO. P-51 Mustangs, veterans of Eisenhower's campaigns through France and Germany, became the main ground attack aircraft for the USAF and our allies. F4U Corsairs which had fought Japanese Zeroes in the Pacific, again flew from Navy carriers and Marine shore bases in support of UN ground forces. It was this air support which achieved total air superiority over the Korean battlefield and formed the third leg of the UN's combined arms triad of infantry, artillery, and air. By the Chinese Army's admission, UN air power was the equalizer which offset the Communist's vast superiority in ground forces.

--Battleships, cruisers and destroyers came out of mothballs to provide seagoing artillery to protect the UN flanks. The evacuation of General Almond's X Corps with all of its combat vehicles out of Hungnam in December of 1950, would not have been possible without the ring of fire delivered from these major combatants, and the sea lift provided by the amphibious and cargo ships.

Korea, though called the forgotten war, nevertheless contributed two unforgettable military operations to brighten the legacy of U.S. arms: Inchon and Chosin.

At the west coast port of Inchon, just 15 miles Southwest of Seoul, the U.S. Navy, in an amphibious operation conducted under the most difficult conditions of terrain and tide imaginable, put ashore 50,000 troops led by 25,000 Marines on 15 September 1950, who then drove east to link up with the Eighth Army breaking out of the Pusan perimeter to complete a massive rout of the North Korean Army. The First Marine Division made the assault landing, secured Inchon in one day, reached Seoul on the 18th and liberated the capital of South Korea five days later. By the end of September, the Americans had routed the North Koreans and reached the 38th parallel. By means of the amphibious landing at Inchon, the United Nations in just three months had accomplished what it had set out to do, "repelled armed invasion and restored peace and stability in South Korea." In the long term, Inchon was more than a boldly conceived operation, a masterpiece of technical execution, and a pivotal victory. It was an essential lesson for our new Department of Defense, that advancing technology would not necessarily make obsolete the proven fundamentals of warfare. In 1949, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar Bradley had stated in congressional testimony that amphibious landings were a thing of the past. Never again in the future would it be feasible to assemble and concentrate the shipping required for such an operation since it provided too inviting a target for atomic bombs. Bradley implied that a U.S. Marine Corps was no longer needed as part of our Defense Establishment.

Chosin was a different sort of campaign. On 25 November, when the Chinese Communist People's Liberation Army first entered the Korean conflict to catch the American intelligence and UN forces by surprise, the First Marine Division was deployed deep in North Korea, west of the Chosin Reservoir, at the end of a 78-mile two-lane dirt road winding through some of the most mountainous country of the Korean peninsula. Surrounded by 120,000 regular troops of the Chinese Communist Army, battling deep snow and temperatures down to thirty below zero, the 25,000 marines of the First Marine Division fought their way out of the trap, bringing their equipment, wounded, and dead with them, and defeating 7 Chinese divisions in the process. China was so determined to destroy the Marines--and equally sure they would be able to do so--that staggering losses

were accepted. Sixty percent of the 120,000 Chinese engaged became casualties, including 30,000 killed or missing in action. Marine losses were a thousand killed and missing, but the First Marine Division battled their way out and destroyed two Chinese armies in the fighting.

Korea became the forgotten war largely because American didn't *want* to remember. Coming so soon on the heels of World War II and with such an unsatisfying conclusion when compared to the unconditional surrenders of the Germans and Japanese in World War II, the country didn't want to think about it. Americans simply wanted to get on with their lives.

Now, fifty years of subsequent history has put Korea into its proper perspective: Korea was a victory, perhaps a limited victory but then it was a limited war. It was the first of a series of limited wars, which in the aggregate constituted the Cold War with the Communists. The U.S. won the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Korea was instrumental in our success in that larger conflict, because the commitment of American citizens to risk their lives in far off Asia in support of our promises and principles, gave a critical substance to American foreign policy: credibility.

Credibility was the watchword of the Cold War that held the Russians in check. Our threat to go to war to support our allies was believed because of Korea. So our threat to resort to nuclear weapons if necessary to protect our most vital national interests was carefully weighed by the Kremlin. This credibility, established by Korea, also prevented a Soviet misinterpretation of our intentions, a miscalculation that could have taken the U.S. and the USSR over the brink into a nuclear exchange with its resulting mutual assured destruction. That perhaps represents the ultimate contribution of the Korean War to our national security over the past half century.

--Adm. James L. Holloway III, USN (Ret.)

[Admiral Holloway was Chief of Naval Operations from 1974 to 1978. As a lieutenant commander he served in Korea from 1950 to the end of the war flying F9F Panthers from the carriers *Valley Forge* and *Boxer*. In 1953 when serving as executive officer of Fighter Squadron Fifty-Two, he took command of the squadron when his commanding officer was shot down by the Chinese over North Korea. Admiral Holloway is currently co-chairman of the U.S.-Korea 2000 Foundation, Inc. He became president of the Naval Historical Foundation in 1980 and now serves as chairman.]

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea

James A. Field Jr.

Foreword

CONTROL OF THE SEA has been one of the United States' greatest blessings. As Washington repeatedly pointed out, without superiority on the sea the American Revolution could not have been won. Three generations later seapower was decisive in preserving the Union in the Civil War, was overwhelming at sea, fundamental to victory ashore. In the twentieth century it has been indispensable for victory in the giant world wars that have shaken our times. In the Korean War it was the foundation for successes and repeated salvation against disasters.

The far possibilities inherent in control of the sea were highlighted at Inchon when General MacArthur signaled, "The Navy and Marines have never shone more brightly than this morning." Yet even the brightest victories are but a fragment of the vast and far-reaching influence of power based at sea--a power that has been growing in leaps and bounds with the growth of science and technology.

As the industrial revolution gathered momentum generations ago, it began to have profound effects upon navies. One result was the remarkable increase in power not only for operations afloat but in attack against forces ashore. Several of the many revolutions that changed navies last century, such as the internal-combustion engine, combined to make possible at about the same time both an effective submarine and a practical airplane. Thus navies began to go under the sea and into the air to gain new dimensions and potentialities unlimited. Neptune's trident had gained three prongs and become a true trident indeed.

Most of the ever-expanding technological revolutions have increased the capacity of balanced navies both to control the sea and to operate against the land. Hence the last generation has witnessed an unprecedented increase in amphibious capacity which wrote a remarkable record of consistent success against island and continent in World War II. It was America's great fortune that this amphibious capability, though mutilated in the years immediately after World War II, nevertheless by remnants and improvisation could still serve well in Korea.

Americans think of the Korean War as death and hardship in the bitter hills of Korea. It was certainly this, and for those who fought this is what they generally saw. Yet every foot of the struggles forward, every step of the retreats, the overwhelming victories, the withdrawals and last ditch stands had their seagoing support and overtones.

The spectacular ones depended wholly on amphibious power--the capability of the twentieth century scientific Navy to overwhelm land-bound forces at the point of contact.

Yet the all pervading influence of the sea was present even when no major landing or retirement or reinforcement highlighted its effect. When navies clash in gigantic battle or hurl troops ashore under irresistible concentration of shipborne guns and planes, nations understand that seapower is working. It is not so easy to understand that this tremendous force may effect its will silently, steadily, irresistibly even though no battles occur.

No clearer example exists of this truth in war's dark record than in Korea. Communist-controlled North Korea had slight power at sea except for Soviet mines. So beyond this strong underwater phase the United States Navy and allies had little opposition on the water. It is, therefore, easy to fail to recognize the decisive role navies played in this war fought without large naval battles.

The United States and the United Nations stopped aggression (and could have won clear cut victory) through the sound exercise of control of the sea. This power is, of course, only one facet of national power and itself, alone, could not assure victory in the Korean War, if in any war; yet loss of it would have assured certain defeat.

These facts stand out repeatedly in the following graphic account of the interweaving of sea based strength

in land conflicts. They point out again the old lesson to America of the importance of the sea to her destiny--an importance that grows rather than lessens with transoceanic missiles, Polaris submarines, nuclear power and space satellites.

In the writing of this history the author has been given a free hand. All of the large body of documents then accumulated in the custody of the Division of Naval History in preparation for this history, and all of any classification that could subsequently be obtained, were assembled, organized, and made available to him under the able direction of Miss Loretta I. MacCrindle, Head of the Classified Archives Branch of this Office, and after 1958 by her most capable successor, Mr. Dean Allard. In this work, they had the extremely valuable assistance of Miss Barbara A. Gilmore and Mrs. Mildred D. Mayeux. Special searches were conducted far and wide for missing documents. Microfilms of dispatches of the period were researched when they were not available in their original form. Personal papers of Admiral Joy and others were made available and leading participants were interviewed or sent pertinent portions of the manuscript for comment. Admiral A. D. Struble in particular worked hard over the manuscript and devoted many days to interviews and discussion with Mr. Field and with this office. Except for a few missing items it is doubtful that a more complete United States naval record of original sources can ever be assembled.

The manuscript was read in its various stages by Captain F. K. Loomis, Assistant Director of Naval History, and myself. We did not hesitate to make a number of criticisms, general and specific, but the author made only the changes he thought justified. Hence the book bears no censorship in any way, neither is it a Navy Department publication to express an official view. It is the work of an experienced historian given the facts to tell the story as he saw it.

Korea is but one chapter in the hot and cold war pressed by those who would destroy democracy. These pages show the influence of the sea in small and large ways throughout the Korean War. In a broader sense they reflect the state of the whole free world--a confederacy of the sea joined in united strength only if the sea is held and made one by those who love freedom.

These nations find that their life blood and liberty itself flow in the sea. In this book, the author writes that the presence of the United States Navy in the Far East has been "the alpha and omega of Korean-American relations." It has also been, and seems certain to continue to be through the unknown future, the Alpha and Omega of all United States-world relations.

--Rear Adm. E. M. Eller, USN (Ret.), Director, Naval History Division

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea

James A. Field Jr.

Preface

PERHAPS THE SIMPLEST WAY to describe the Korean War is to say that it was different, for it fell, or seemed to fall, outside the pattern of all previous American experience. It was a surprising war in a surprising place at a surprising time, and one which imperatively called for answers to neglected problems of national defense. It was begun as a police action; it developed rapidly into an undeclared war of no small magnitude; it ended as an unpopular and seemingly profitless stalemate. It was conducted, at least in theory, less as a national enterprise in defense of an easily apprehended national interest than as an exercise in collective security under the aegis of the United Nations. And while partial precedents can doubtless be discerned in battles long ago, the package was a new and unsettling one.

In addition to differences such as these in the nature of the war itself, there were others which bear upon the historian. Since the enemy had no navy, the conflict lacks the drama inherent in the clash of fleets. Since the focus of action was always on land, the three services were pretty constantly mixed up in each other's affairs, and simple single-service history becomes an impossibility. The chronology of the struggle, in which a year of violent and dramatic action was followed by two of deadlock, poses problems of selection and emphasis and makes for injustice to those who came late on the scene. The absence, in notable contrast to the situation of 1945, of any appreciable quantity of enemy records, constitutes a further obvious difficulty.

Nevertheless, an attempt to tell the story of United States naval operations in Korea has seemed worthwhile. If many of the specific lessons of the conflict are now obsolete, the general principle remains: that for those who have abjured the offensive, the main problem is how to prepare for the unexpected, or more cynically, how to be surprised at least cost. If war is to remain a political act, the Korean experience seems worth contemplating for its demonstration that the neglected problems of stalemate may at times be as important as those of advance and retreat. If the absence of contending fleets detracts from the excitement of the story, it also emphasizes the fact that since all war is an exercise in persuasion, naval activity has always been ultimately directed against the far shore. And finally, one may hope that caution will help to counteract the one-sided nature of the available source material.

To the puzzling question of how far to treat the actions of the other services, I have found no wholly satisfactory answer. I have attempted throughout to keep before the reader a general picture of the campaign, but to deal in detail with Army and Air Force operations only when they interacted with those of the Navy. But while this standard has seemed the only one possible, it should be made plain that it distorts the picture. For the Army it means that emphasis is on the hard times when help was called for, rather than on periods of prosperity when things were moving well; for the Air Force the vexed question of tactical support receives considerable attention, while the work of Bomber Command and of the fighter pilots up by the Yalu is scanted.

In some cases this procedure gives rise to questions of a certain delicacy. The Korean War took place at a time when the new defense establishment was suffering growing pains; the course of the conflict was such that divergent and strongly held views were put to the test; interpretation of the consequences is unavoidably controversial. Although I have not thought it possible to gloss over these matters, I cannot hope that my conclusions will please everyone. Perhaps, indeed, they will satisfy none: the manuscript has been read by those connected in one way or another with Army, Navy, and Air Force alike, all of whom (happily for different reasons) have disagreed with certain of the views expressed. In this connection it may be worth stating, for those who wonder how "official" this history is, that I have had full liberty to express my own opinions, and that there have been no deletions from the manuscript on security or other grounds.

One final caveat. Throughout the book I have referred to General MacArthur, and to his successors in supreme command, by their United States short title, CincFE, rather than as CincUNC, Commander in Chief United Nations Command. This usage has been employed as a matter of euphony only, and in no way indicates a desire on my part to de-emphasize the international nature of the campaign.

No one ever writes a book alone, and like all authors I have incurred heavy debts. I am grateful to those individuals, in and out of the armed services, who have been generous of their time in discussing the war and in criticizing the manuscript, and to others who on other occasions have contributed to my education in these matters. I must record my thanks to the administration of Swarthmore College for the grant of a leave of absence without which completion of the book would have been long delayed. Throughout the enterprise Rear Admiral E. M. Eller, USN (Ret.), the Director of Naval History, and his staff have been most helpful. Erwin Raisz has been both skillful and patient in working through the complex specifications for the maps which illustrate the volume. Karlene Madison's contribution went far beyond the military fortitude with which she typed and retyped. My wife and children have shown great forbearance.

--James A. Field, Jr., Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea

James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 1. To Korea by Sea

1. The Commodore's Treaty

AS THE SUN rose from behind the Korean hills all was in readiness for the assault. On the warships lying off Inchon plans and preparations were complete. As morning wore on the boats were brought alongside and the landing force was embarked. Upstream from the transport area *Monocacy* and the gunboats were already engaging enemy strong points, and toward mid-day with the flooding tide, the landing craft left the anchorage and headed north. At 1330, under cover of the continuing bombardment, the signal was given and the boats went in. By 1345 the first wave of Marines was ashore and moving forward, while the boat crews and other members of the landing force struggled to get supporting weapons through the thick Korean mud and onto hard ground. So effective had been the bombardment that initial objectives on the heights overlooking the beaches were overrun without difficulty. By 1645 the artillery had been brought up, outposts were placed, the lines tied in, and the force settled down to get such rest as it could prior to resuming the advance at first light. It was the 10th of June, 1871.

The event is of some importance, if only for its illumination of the fact that the presence of the United States Navy in the Far East has been the alpha and omega of Korean-American relations. American naval activity was responsible for the opening of this distant nation and for its incorporation into the international system. When the decline of American interest resulted in naval withdrawal, Korean independence proved short-lived. In mid-20th century the Navy's return to the Western Pacific was the precondition of Korean liberation from Japanese control; a second such return permitted the preservation of the Republic of Korea from Communist domination. Only through free access by sea can the United States wield influence upon this distant peninsula. When access is disputed only naval power can ensure it. The history of American relations with Korea has been in large degree a function of the availability of such power.

The attack on the Korean forts in the summer of 1871 was one of the last acts of pre-industrial outward-looking America, the product of a pattern of overseas activity which dated back to the earliest days of the republic. The importance of maritime trade to the young nation had led to the growth of a merchant marine second only, and barely so, to that of Great Britain, and had governed the development and activities of the United States Navy. Created to defend American commerce against the pirates of Algiers, the Navy developed into a police force for the seven seas, an instrument of scientific discovery, and a spearhead of western influence in distant places. Campaigns against pirates were fought in the Mediterranean, the West Indies, and in China seas. Exploring expeditions ranged the globe. Naval diplomats sought commercial treaties from the princes of Barbary and the Sultan of Turkey, and the Mediterranean activities of Commodores Preble and Rodgers were followed by more famous efforts on the far side of the globe. As early as 1815 Commodore David Porter had proposed an expedition to the Pacific to open Japan, China, and surrounding territories to American commerce. The suggestion was premature, and in China, at least, the merchants got there first without government help. But the voyage of Edmund Roberts in *Peacock*, the activities of Commodore Kearny in China, and Perry's opening of Japan nevertheless bore witness to a navy and commercial policy of a remarkably forward nature for what was then one of the minor powers of the world.

Although the period of the Civil War brought the effective liquidation of the American merchant marine and a corresponding concentration on internal development, the old interest in the oceans and in what lay beyond them did not immediately disappear. The decade after Appomattox, which brought the attack on the Korean forts, was an active one overseas. These years saw the purchase of Alaska in the northwest, and proposals for the acquisition of Greenland and Iceland in the eastern approaches; interest was evidenced in the acquisition of a

North African naval base; a reciprocity treaty was negotiated with Hawaii, and in Samoa an American agent became prime minister of that most beautiful of all kingdoms. *Divitis indiae usque ad ultimum sinum*, the motto of the town of Salem, had been the operating motto of American merchants and sea captains and of the American Navy, and now at the end of a century of independence the uttermost gulf had been reached. Across the Pacific, beyond the great bulge of the China coast and sheltered by the island screen that runs from Formosa to the empire of Japan, lay the Yellow Sea. On its eastern shore, at the mouth of the River Han, stood the forts which guarded the capital of Korea, last of the isolated civilizations of earth.

A generation before, Edmund Roberts had suggested that a Japanese treaty might lead to trade with Korea. In the 1840's a resolution had been introduced in Congress urging the establishment of commercial relations with both countries. But these proposals were nugatory, and in Korea, as so often elsewhere, the ultimately effective impulse to governmental action came not from home, but from the oversea activities of merchant marine and Navy. In 1866 the American merchantman *General Sherman* was destroyed, and its crew massacred, in the Taedong River below Pyongyang. The report of this tragedy brought the dispatch of a ship of the Asiatic Squadron, the U.S.S. *Wachusett*, Commander Robert W. Shufeldt, to investigate the affair, and to communicate with the King of Korea.

Shufeldt's mission proved fruitless, but the *General Sherman* incident led two successive commanders of the Asiatic Squadron, Rear Admirals Stephen C. Rowan and John Rodgers, to interest themselves in the possibility of a Korean treaty. The latter's proposal of a naval expedition, modelled on that of Commodore Perry, brought government action, and the American minister to China was designated to carry out the negotiation in cooperation with the Squadron Commander. Preparations were made, a force was assembled at Nagasaki, and on 30 May 1871 five United States ships of war, totaling 85 guns, dropped anchor off the mouth of the Han.

For this procedure the Perry expedition was not the only precedent: in just such a manner an earlier John Rodgers had extorted a favorable treaty from the contumacious Bey of Tunis. But the capital of the King of Korea, unlike that of the Bey, was upstream and beyond the range of naval guns; unlike the forces of the Bey, and indeed unlike the Japanese on the occasion of Perry's arrival, the Koreans opened fire; although Rodgers had strength enough to capture the forts, he lacked that necessary to capture a treaty. On 3 July, honor having been satisfied, the expedition withdrew.

Nine years were to elapse before congressional pressure to obtain a treaty and the ambition of another naval officer to conclude it led to a second effort. In1880 Commodore Shufeldt, who 14 years before had carried the first letter to the Korean King, returned to the Orient in the U.S.S. *Ticonderoga* with authority to treat. Efforts to communicate with the Koreans through the government of Japan were unproductive, but in mid-summer an offer of assistance came from the Chinese viceroy Li Hung-chang. China and Japan were currently at odds; as had been the case with other rulers subject to outside pressures, Li was desirous of American aid in developing his navy; in exchange for technical assistance he undertook to forward negotiations with Korea. Shufeldt proceeded to China, advice and advisors were provided the Chinese, and talks with Li were begun. In these discussions between Commodore and Viceroy may be seen some of the abiding realities of the situation: 71 years later, under very different circumstances, another American flag officer was to find himself negotiating with the Chinese concerning the future of Korea.

Two years of complicated intrigue were required before Shufeldt could attain his goal. But at last, on 22 May 1882, a treaty arranged in Tientsin by the Chinese Viceroy was signed on the Korean shore within view of the U.S.S. *Swatara*. By this instrument, which provided for perpetual peace and friendship and for the exchange of diplomatic and consular representation, American citizens were granted trading rights, extraterritoriality, and most-favored-nation treatment. The aims of commerce were satisfied and, as Shufeldt reported, the United States had brought "the last of the exclusive countries within the pale of western civilization."

The movement to open Korea, with its inevitable impact on the equilibrium of eastern Asia, has been

described as America's most important action in the Far East prior to the occupation of the Philippines. Be this as it may, it was the last such action, and as such marked the end of an era both for the Navy and for the nation. Industrialism was bringing the end of the period of free exchange of goods, the development of internal resources was replacing foreign trade as a prime source of wealth. As nations became industrialized so did their navies, and the new complexities of maintenance, together with the new fuel problem, forced the fleets of the world to retire on their bases. With the development of new nationalisms the naval function shifted from one of exploring, opening, and policing to one of fighting. Shufeldt had opened Korea, but although the Secretary of the Navy in 1884 urged the establishment of a naval station at Port Hamilton, off the southern Korean coast, and although it appears that such facilities were offered by the Korean government, nothing was done. The next important American naval action in Asiatic waters came in 1898 in the Battle of Manila Bay.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 1. To Korea by Sea
2. The American Link

The country launched by the American Commodore upon the seas of international life had dwelt for centuries in isolation. Although Europe had long traded with China and the Spice Islands, it was only with the 19th century that western ships in increasing number visited the Korean coasts. There, as earlier elsewhere, the history of exploration came to be written on the Admiralty charts of the world: Russian interest was memorialized in such places as Port Lazaref and Kornilov Bay; French designs in Eugénie Island and the Prince Imperial Archipelago; British discovery in Broughton Bay and Port Hamilton; the arrival of the Americans in Washington Gulf, Maury Island, and Monocacy Bay.

But while discoveries could be made and recorded, efforts to penetrate beyond the Korean shoreline were long unsuccessful. Within the peninsula the first important western contact was that of Christianity, which filtered in by way of China, and which in the 1830's brought French missionary priests to the Hermit Kingdom. But many were martyred, and nature as well as the natives was hostile to foreign interference. In 1846 the French frigates *Gloire* and *Victorieuse*, sent to investigate a massacre of missionaries, grounded on uncharted shoals; the extreme tidal range of the Yellow Sea left them high and dry, the crews were taken off by a passing English ship, and the frigates abandoned to the elements. In 1866, the year of the loss of the *General Sherman*, another French expedition was defeated at the mouth of the Han River, and five years later Admiral Rodgers was frustrated in his purpose. Yet the influence of the west was growing: conversions to Christianity continued, by mid-century there were some 15,000 Korean Catholics, and in the 1860's the first Protestant missionary effort was begun.

Through her centuries of isolation Korea had maintained a special, if somewhat vague, relationship with China. This relationship, which the Koreans apparently felt not disadvantageous, was conceived of in Confucian terms. Governed not by law but by standards of propriety, it required a deferential attitude, such as that of younger toward elder brother, on the part of Korea in her relations with the Middle Kingdom. Put forward by the Koreans as the reason they could have no dealings with outsiders, and concurred in by the Chinese with the proviso that Korean actions were none of their concern, this familial relationship seemed to legalistic westerners a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense. For Korea, however, it had at least the utility of providing some freedom of maneuver, and of delaying by a few years the inevitable arrival of the barbarians. Only in 1876, when Japan did for Korea what Perry had done for her, did the Hermit Kingdom accept relations with an outside power. Only with the Shufeldt treaty did she accept them with a non-Asiatic people. Oddly enough, despite Chinese assistance in both negotiations, neither treaty made mention of Korean dependence on China, and this apparent admission of sovereignty had considerable impact on the outer world. Although the Commodore's accomplishment went largely unnoticed at home, such was not the case abroad, where Britain, Germany, France, and Russia hastened to make treaties on the Shufeldt model.

Inevitably all this raised serious questions about the ancient relationship with China. But here the basic issue was the vitality of China herself, and at this point in history the Middle Kingdom was a doubtful proposition. Things being what they were in the1880's, it would have taken a very vigorous elder brother to preserve the peace of a peninsula which divides the waters between China and Japan, and which dangles from the Asiatic mainland where Manchuria and the Maritime Provinces meet. The treaty with the United States, with its emphasis on Korean independence, may have hastened the coming of trouble, but hardly more than that. Long before the treaty was concluded Shufeldt had written that "Corea would in fact be the battlefield of any war with China and Russia or Japan in whichever way these nations might confront each other," and his prediction was

speedily borne out.

Without preparation for the diplomatic rough and tumble of the outer world, situated between three stronger powers in a time of rapid change, the little kingdom found itself subjected to increasing pressures, and the winds blew ever stronger from north, east, and west. In the old Confucian family there had been the easy traditional relationship of father and son, or of elder and younger brother. In the new family of nations into which Korea had been welcomed there were three competing volunteers for a big brother role construed in more modern terms.

China was attempting to reassert her historic dominance, Russia to move southward into ice-free ports, and Japan to gain control of the peninsula as a springboard for continental expansion. All urged their chosen advisers upon the Korean King, and the triple pressure from without was reflected in serious strains within. Torn by the inevitable factionalism of a people emerging from isolation, the country found itself divided between nationalists and reactionaries, between a progressive party desirous of acquiring foreign skills and methods and a traditional pro-Chinese faction. In this situation America and the Americans, although far away and preoccupied with other things, had for the progressive group of Koreans a special meaning.

The United States had been the first of the western powers to make a treaty with Korea. It was for some time the only such power to send a minister to the Korean court. A provision of the Shufeldt treaty stated that "if other powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either government, the other will exert their good offices . . . to bring about an amicable arrangement." Together with the traditional American sympathy for a society attempting to modernize itself, all this seemed full of promise for the new era and inevitably placed the United States in a conspicuous position. The King, on the arrival of the first American minister, is reported to have danced with joy.

But in Washington, and in the United States generally, small attention was paid to Korean matters. From the viewpoint of the America of the1880's the treaty was but a last echo of the period of maritime greatness and the product of Shufeldt's personal diplomacy. Yet however little the provision for good offices may have meant to the American government, America had from the beginning given sympathy and support to the independence of small nations. It remained willing, if asked, to issue sound advice. Since, in the last analysis, self-determination means self-defense, it would provide, although dilatorily, assistance in military organization. Nor was the importance of the United States limited to the actions of its government: American businessmen would bring their skills across the sea; the American religious community would send forth missionaries bearing, along with the Protestant word, western education and western techniques. Somehow the Koreans seem to have sensed a disinterested benevolence in the distant republic, and to have founded great and indeed excessive hopes upon it: in 1897, in an audience with the American minister, the Korean King was to remark, "We feel that America is to us as our Elder Brother."

Reality, unfortunately, did not live up to expectations. The conclusion of the Shufeldt treaty had reversed the roles of Korea and the United States, and the Hermit Kingdom was now the petitioner. Desiring to consolidate his new-found independence, the King cleared out his Chinese and Russian advisers in the hope of replacing them with Americans. But the response of the American government was disappointing. Although internal disorder in 1882 brought the arrival of the U.S.S. *Monocacy* with instructions to offer good offices, and although the United States created a ministerial post at Seoul equal in rank to those at Tokyo and Peking, the instructions of Lucius H. Foote, the first incumbent, reflected the non-participating sympathy so often evident in American policy in distant places. Foote was authorized to tender advice to the King, but unless covered by specific instructions this advice was to be considered personal rather than official, and such instructions rarely came. Korean requests for advisers in foreign affairs, for military instructors, and for school teachers remained unfulfilled, and the American minister found his dispatches unanswered by a lethargic State Department and his grade reduced by an economizing Congress.

Resentful of these indignities and of the apparent indifference of the home government, Minister Foote

resigned his post. But lack of official interest in Washington did not prevent further development of non-governmental relations. As the negotiation of the treaty had been largely an individual enterprise on the part of Shufeldt, so relations between the two countries became increasingly personal and unofficial. From China came an American to be Inspector-General of Korean Customs; a former United States consul at Tientsin assumed the post of vice-president of the Foreign Office. In 1884, following the departure of Foote, custody of the legation fell to a young naval officer, Ensign George Foulk, who became deeply concerned with the future of Korea and for three years struggled to uphold both the integrity of that country and the dignity of the United States. By the time of his recall Foulk had gained the highest favor, and the desire of the Korean King to name him personal adviser in foreign affairs was frustrated only by heavy pressure from the Chinese government.

Despite this victory for Chinese influence the American connection continued strong. Munitions for the army were ordered from the United States. Under the leadership of General William M. Dye, the military mission which the King had earlier requested finally arrived in 1888. Dye, a veteran of Vicksburg and the Red River campaign who had later served in the army of Egypt, took over the military academy, published a tactical manual in Korean, and produced a body of highly trained troops. But the Korean noblemen proved unamenable to discipline, and that part of the army not subject to his personal influence continued to suffer from faction and intrigue.

In economic development, too, there was progress. With the passing of years American businessmen followed the Navy's trans-Pacific lead to found a Korean-American bank, to operate Korea's most important gold mine, and to build a street railway system for the capital. In Seoul there arose the Astor House hotel, and over the Yalu River a bridge, built by American engineers, which in the fullness of time would be knocked down by American naval aviators.

The final, and increasingly the most important link between the two countries, was that of the missionary effort. The 19th century had seen a great expansion of Protestant missions in which Americans had played a leading part. Throughout the non-European world these pioneers had been active in bringing the gospel and the gifts of western civilization to those who dwelt in darkness, and in beginning a revolutionary undermining of the static societies of Asia. Typically, although influential in worldly things, the missionaries had accomplished few conversions, but in Korea, where Christianity had already taken root, their success was greater. By 1885 both Presbyterians and Methodists had arrived from America and begun their work, profiting from the esteem in which their country was held. By the end of the decade a dozen stations had been established, running from Kanggye far in the north through Pyongyang, seven-gated Kaesong and Seoul, and southward to Taegu and Pusan.

Schools, colleges, and hospitals were established by the missionaries, in their efforts to assist the people, and in time an important Christian community developed. By 1910 there were some 72,000 Korean Catholics and almost 180,000 Protestants. Yet things move slowly in the Orient: at least as late as the First World War the missionaries in Pyongyang could enjoy the sight, at one of the city gates, of the anchor and chain from the *General Sherman*, preserved in commemoration of that successful encounter with the outer world.

Their obvious concern for Korean welfare, and their open support of Korean independence, quickly brought the missionaries into close relations with government as well as people. The medical missionary Horace N. Allen established a government hospital, was appointed court physician, and served both as a Korean emissary to the United States and as American minister at Seoul. Horace B. Underwood, translator of the gospel into the Korean tongue, became an unofficial adviser to the King, and his wife the Queen's physician. The link between missionary activity and the Navy, so strong in Ottoman regions, reappeared in Korea: when the King, despite strong Chinese opposition, moved to establish a legation in Washington, Allen accompanied the emissaries, who eluded the Chinese warships sent to intercept them by taking passage in the U.S.S. *Ossipee*. Although these intimate connections proved at times embarrassing to the American government, to the Koreans they seemed a very present help. In the dark days of 1895, following the Japanese-instigated murder of the Queen, the

missionaries rallied to the King, giving him moral support and safeguarding his food supply. In 1905 Korean confidence in the selfless strangers was again demonstrated when, in a last desperate effort to avoid Japanese domination, the Emperor secretly sent Allen and Homer Hulbert, another distinguished missionary, to seek the assistance of the United States.

Great changes came with the Japanese occupation, but in time the older pattern was repeated. In 1945 the United States Navy again sailed the coasts of Asia, and its return was followed by a new opening of Korea and a new period of American influence. Where earlier Americans like Foulk and Allen had advised the Korean King, American Military Government now supervised the creation of a new state; where American entrepreneurs had brought the techniques of the West there now came ECA aid; where General Dye had commanded the palace guard there appeared the Korean Military Advisory Group. Again the missionaries arrived, to renew their efforts, and Homer Hulbert, the American interpreter of Korean culture and the Emperor's personal emissary in the crisis of 1905, returned to end his days in this distant country.

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Chapter 1. To Korea by Sea
3. The Dominance of Japan

All this lay hidden in the future as the 19th century ended. Korea was small and far away, its opening seemed the last effort of an age that was past, and the treaty provision for good offices was to prove less meaningful than the dancing king had hoped.

For Korea the years following the conclusion of the Shufeldt treaty brought internal chaos and increasing Chinese influence. By 1894, despite the presence of American and other foreign advisers and despite the best efforts of the Japanese, Chinese dominance had been thoroughly reestablished. But the triple pressure continued, and while the Middle Kingdom could dominate her younger brother she was unable to withstand her stronger neighbor. The position so carefully retrieved by Li Hung-chang was to be suddenly destroyed by war with Japan.

In the summer of 1894 anti-foreign rebellion broke out in the southern provinces of Korea. A request from the King for the assistance of Chinese troops was somewhat reluctantly acceded to, but by the time these arrived the revolt had been put down. Japan, meanwhile, on the pretext of protecting her nationals and property, had sent troops of her own, and despite the restoration of peace continued to increase these forces until they greatly outnumbered those of the Chinese. Efforts by the American minister and others to compose the differences and secure the withdrawal of troops proved unsuccessful. There followed a coup in which the Japanese seized the King and installed his father-in-law as Regent. Chinese troopships bringing reinforcements were sunk by the Japanese, and in August war was declared.

The Sino-Japanese war, which eliminated Chinese influence in the Korean peninsula for more than half a century, was a sufficiently one-sided affair. Politically it is noteworthy as the first step in a Japanese expansion which would only be checked at Midway and Guadalcanal. Militarily it was important for the Battle of the Yalu, the first major engagement between ironclads, which marked the opening of the era in which the world's strategic pattern depended upon the new navies of industrialism. For the United States this engagement demonstrated that a policy based on a belief in self-determination may have its difficulties, and that one people's selfdetermination may be another's poison. While the Japanese Navy, victors at the Yalu River, had benefited from American advice and assistance, the Chinese battleship *Chen Yuen* was fought in this engagement by Philo McGiffin, a Naval Academy graduate of the Class of 1884.

By the Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895 Japan acquired Formosa and the Pescadores, and so gained strategic control of the approaches to North China and to Peking; the treaty also ensured Korean independence of Chinese domination. The Japanese had expected that it would ensure still more, and would give them control of Korea's foreign relations and internal communications, but their position was greatly compromised by their murder of the Korean Queen, which excited both Korean nationalism and foreign interference.

Although the attitude of the American government remained one of strict neutrality and abstention, Americans in Korea were gravely concerned by the prospect of Japanese control. This concern was demonstrated by the actions of the American minister, John M. B. Sill, who maneuvered against the Japanese; by missionary support of the King; and by an attempt of Korean patriots, with the assistance of certain Americans, to rescue the King from Japanese control. On the failure of the effort some of the Koreans were given asylum in the American legation, and Sill asked for a warship to convey them to safety. But his request was refused by the State Department and his actions on behalf of Korean independence were censured.

The resultant power vacuum was quickly filled. The King took refuge in the Russian legation, temporary Russian dominance of Korean affairs ensued, and at Russian suggestion the Kingdom of Korea was translated into

the Empire of Dai Han. But in their turn the Russians overreached themselves, and in 1898, at the request of the Emperor, their advisers were withdrawn. There followed, briefly, a period of apparent Korean independence, marked by resurgent Japanese economic penetration, by Korean misgovernment and confusion, and by tension between Russia and Japan which led shortly to a second war.

War with Russia brought further triumphs to the Japanese. A second Battle of the Yalu, fought this time on land, resulted in the first great triumph of an Asiatic army over a European one, and the repercussions of this notable event, reinforced by the naval victory of Tsushima and the course of the subsequent campaign, reached through India to the heart of Africa. Yet though the fighting was with Russia, Japanese operations were aimed at Korea. Two days before declaring war the Japanese seized the capital and the palace of the Emperor, and within a month an agreement was signed in which Japan guaranteed the integrity of Korea and the Koreans promised to take none but Japanese advice.

The vigor with which the Japanese pressed their advantages proved irresistible by the faction-ridden inhabitants of the peninsula. Korean confidence in the promise of American good offices had been strengthened by the assurances of their American friends, internal reform had been neglected, and no steps had been taken--if indeed any could have been taken--to improve the position of Korea. Seeing his country becoming a Japanese protectorate, the Emperor in September 1904 appealed for American help in maintaining its integrity, and in the next year urgent efforts were made to communicate secretly with President Roosevelt through the American missionaries and through a young Korean patriot named Syngman Rhee.

The hopes founded on the American elder brother proved delusive. Although the treaty ending this war on the Asiatic mainland was signed on the eastern seaboard of the United States, this geographical oddity reflected Theodore Roosevelt's concern with larger matters than Korean independence. Already the President had made his attitude clear, observing that "we cannot possibly interfere for the Koreans against Japan. They could not strike a blow in their own defense." And Korea's future, so far as the United States was concerned, was settled by the Taft-Katsura conversations of 1905, in which the Secretary of War expressed the view, immediately confirmed by the President, that Japanese suzerainty would contribute to the peace of the Orient.

So Korea became a Japanese protectorate and acquired a new and unwished–for elder brother. Ironically enough, when the Japanese took over the management of Korea's foreign relations, it was the United States, the country whose good offices had been promised in case of unjust treatment, which was the first to remove its legation from Seoul. But while the loss of Korean independence was distressing to those Americans, diplomatic and missionary, who were on the spot, it can hardly be denied that President Roosevelt correctly construed the feeling of the country. The victories of Japan, it seemed, proved the Japanese to be America's foremost pupils, and testified retrospectively to the importance of Commodore Perry's mission. Despite difficulties over Japanese immigration and landholding, a general admiration for the accomplishments of the Japanese nation had developed in America, as indicated by a spate of juvenile novels with such unlikely titles as *With Togo to Tsushima*, or, *Two American Boys in the Navy of Japan.*

Yet there were deeper forces affecting the conduct of the United States than the transitory admiration for Japanese progress in western ways. If somewhat absent-mindedly, the United States had also participated in the new imperialism. With the overseas holdings acquired in the War with Spain came new responsibilities. The new realism in foreign affairs, manifested in the policies of Theodore Roosevelt, was part of the price of empire.

In the development of this new realism, as in that of the New Navy which had won the victories at Santiago and Manila Bay, the writings of an American naval officer were of great influence. To Alfred Thayer Mahan, as he sat in the English Club at Lima perusing Mommsen's *History of Rome*, there had been vouchsafed a vision of the meaning of command of the seas. Building upon this vision Mahan developed a gospel of sea power and, as his evidence was drawn from the great 18th century wars for empire, his message was well suited to the new imperial age. Hailed throughout the world, and particularly by the rising naval powers of Germany and

Japan, his writings became a potent influence in burying the strategic concepts of the old Navy in which he had served so long and a strong stimulus to the navalism of the early 20th century.

Rapidly, in these years, the strategic geography of the world changed and became compartmented, and not least as a result of the rise of Japan and of Japanese adherence to the doctrines of the American naval officer. Where Shufeldt had brought Korea "within the pale of western civilization," Mahan provided a philosophic framework for Japan's effort to make East Asia her exclusive sphere. Where detachments of western navies had policed the Asiatic seas on behalf of the international commercial community, there now developed an oriental battle fleet. For the United States, with its flag planted in the Philippines some 7,000 miles from home, the development was a significant one and elicited a double response. In 1908 the Great White Fleet set forth across the Pacific on its cruise around the world; in 1910 Japan annexed Korea with the approval of the American government. The protectorate was ended, the Emperor pensioned off, and the country opened by the American commodore disappeared from the map. Where Shufeldt had seen commercial opportunity, Americans now thought of Korea, if they thought of it at all, as a picturesque and distant land of topknots and horsehair hats. All that remained of the period of independence was the missionary link, now weakened and harassed by the Japanese rulers of the peninsula, and a scattered and impotent band of Korean nationalist conspirators.

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Chapter 1. To Korea by Sea

4. Return to Asia

The lot of Korea under Japanese rule was hard. In a consistent effort to subjugate the populace the Japanese took over the administration, the control of education, and the police. A directed economy was imposed with the aim of ending Korean self-sufficiency and of integrating the country into the imperial economy of Japan. Investment in Korean plant was not inconsiderable, but the benefits flowed back across the sea, and the inhabitants of the peninsula were reduced to hewers of wood and drawers of water for their alien overlords.

Despite the best efforts of the conquerors, however, the independence movement remained alive. Those who had struggled to save their country from alien control became the nucleus of a continued resistance which made Korea the Ireland of the East. The quiet of the Land of the Morning Calm was a quiet imposed from above, but from time to time the pressures broke through in riots and uprisings, and in 1919 there came an echo of the past. In Paris President Wilson was laboring to remake the world on principles derived from the older America; his emphasis on the self-determination of peoples and the rights of small nations had repercussions even in Korea, where the resisters, hoping to draw attention to their country's plight, issued a Proclamation of Independence.

But Japan had fought with the Allies. The Proclamation got no response, the protesters were driven underground or into exile, and the sole accomplishment of their effort was the formation of a Korean Provisional Government at Shanghai. Yet even here there were traces of the American connection: the presidency of this government was conferred upon Syngman Rhee, who had been educated by American missionaries, who had studied at Woodrow Wilson's Princeton, who on returning to Korea had escaped arrest through the assistance of a missionary bishop, and who was living in Hawaii.

Yet while the influence of American ideas was still potent, American policy remained one of continuing abstention. Japanese annexation of Korea had not been questioned. American participation in the League of Nations was defeated by the Senate. When crisis threatened with Japan the solution was found in the Washington treaties, which by restrictions on warship construction and on base development effectively trisected the Pacific Ocean and left the Japanese unchallenged in their sphere. A growing inclination to disengage from the Orient brought the grant of prospective independence to the Philippines.

This retirement from the outer world, which culminated in the extreme isolationism of the late thirties, was ended by the new dictatorships. For while these did not immediately menace the security of the country, they did endanger the continued existence of that minimum degree of world order which seems necessary to the United States. With Munich the withdrawal stopped, while the fall of France and the threat to Britain brought a forward diplomacy in the Atlantic and a sizable rearmament program. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor new emphasis was placed on the Pacific. There followed, in due course, a second advance to the shores of Asia, and one in force such as had never before been seen. The United States Pacific Fleet, which by summer of 1945 was dominant in Japanese home waters, was a far cry from the five ships and 85 guns with which John Rodgers had attacked the Korean forts.

To the captive Koreans the outbreak of war in the Pacific brought new hope. Repeated efforts between the wars to gain the attention of the powers had met with no success. Various uprisings in the thirties had been repressed, and in 1940 an organized non-cooperation movement had been vigorously put down. In China the advance of the Japanese armies forced the Korean Provisional Government to flee inland to Chungking. But Pearl Harbor changed the shape of things, and on 11 December 1941 the government in exile declared war on Japan.

Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, despite the ancient friendship and the missionary link, the Korean

question remained long neglected by the United States. The Provisional Government was ignored, and attempts by Syngman Rhee to win recognition gained no countenance from the State Department. By 1943, however, American thinking with regard to Korea had advanced to the point of contemplating that liberation from Japan would be followed by an international trusteeship. The communiqué of the Cairo Conference promised Korean independence "in due course," and both at Yalta and at Moscow discussion of the trusteeship idea resulted in apparent general agreement.

But while agreement on trusteeship came easily in talk and in paper planning, the realities of the Korean situation remained much as before. Geography, at least, had not changed. The Japanese elder brother was facing expulsion, but Russia and China were still much in the picture, and so, once again, was the United States. Although Korean nationalism was undiminished, the strains which had beset the Korean kingdom persisted and the independence movement was itself a divided one. Syngman Rhee, the President of the Provisional Government, was in the United States, where important Korean groups existed in Hawaii and in Washington. In China, and under Chinese Nationalist influence, was the greater part of the Provisional Government, along with some army divisions supported by the regime of Chiang Kai-shek. The other China of Mao Tse-tung boasted its own Korean adherents, and as early as 1939 had created a so-called Korean Volunteer Army. Large numbers of Koreans had taken refuge in the Soviet Maritime Provinces, and many had served in the Russian armies. And finally, Koreans of all factions urgently desired immediate independence, and took a poor view of qualifying phrases such as "in due course."

In this situation events took charge. The sudden end of the war in the Pacific found the United States unprepared, its attentions focused on the projected invasion of the Japanese homeland. Hasty efforts in Washington to cope with the issues of Japan's surrender resulted in a directive which provided, with Soviet concurrence, that Japanese forces in Korea north of the 38th parallel would surrender to the Russians, and those south of that line to the United States. In time, of course, this decision on the mechanics of surrender was to divide Korea in rigid and illogical fashion, but it also saved the southern half of the country from Communist control. On 12 August, with American forces still 600 miles and almost a month away, Russian troops entered Korea against negligible Japanese resistance.

The moment of victory in the Pacific found the United States suffering from a shortage of sea power in the midst of plenty. The defeat of Japan was one thing; the simultaneous occupation of key points all along the Asiatic littoral was quite another. Since all available amphibious lift was needed for the occupation of the Japanese islands, peripheral areas had to wait. But in time ships did become available. Lieutenant General John R. Hodge's XXIV Corps was embarked at Okinawa, and on 8 September 1945 a group of Seventh Fleet transports steamed up the Inchon approaches and prepared to land the troops. The second coming had taken place. The wheel that Rodgers and Shufeldt had set in motion had come full circle.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea

James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 2. Policy and Its Instruments

1. Divided Korea

IN ONE IMPORTANT sense the second coming of the Americans resembled the first. Again the arrival marked the culmination of a great thrust overseas; again, even as the shores of Korea were reached, the tide was beginning to turn. Shufeldt's treaty had been greeted with massive disinterest by an America absorbed in internal development; by the time Hodge led his corps ashore at Inchon demobilization had begun and domestic concerns were again uppermost in the American mind. For the next five years American policy in Korea would be dominated by the desire to fulfill the wartime commitments as quickly and economically as possible, and to get out and go home.

The Cairo Declaration had promised a unified, free, and democratic Korea. The 38th parallel, however, promised some difficulties in the achievement of these aims. Although originally proposed as an administrative convenience to facilitate the surrender of Japanese forces, this arrangement soon acquired other overtones. In view of the interallied frictions which had already developed in Europe, the dividing line seemed to derive virtue as a barrier to further Soviet advance, as a cover for the American position in Japan, and as providing the United States with a position of strength from which to press for Korean independence. In this last context, a country which habitually saw the resolution of political disputes as a function of voting strength could look with satisfaction on the fact that almost two-thirds of Korea's thirty million inhabitants lived south of the parallel.

But whatever the virtues of the 38th parallel, division of the country between the two new elder brothers created a situation which called for serious diplomatic preparation. This, however, seems not to have been forthcoming. In the State Department the question of the divided peninsula appears to have been looked upon as little more than a minor nuisance, while for American public opinion the question hardly existed. The democratizing of Japan under the shining leadership of General MacArthur effectively monopolized the public consciousness; compared with this the liberation of Korea by a simple corps commander excited little interest.

No political guidance and little information had been provided General Hodge. No military government teams were available to accompany his corps. Whether the Koreans were to be regarded as liberated friends or as the inhabitants of a corner of a conquered empire remained obscure. In this situation Hodge and his officers had to improvise policy as best they could, maintain order, and somehow administer the country, while awaiting directives from home. American Military Government was consequently imposed on South Korea, and a successor Korean government which had sprung up in the wake of the Japanese defeat was refused recognition. But this policy, reminiscent of the wartime trusteeship proposals, antagonized important native elements and made the position of the American command more difficult.

The end of the war found Korea approaching economic collapse. The country was beset by a spiralling inflation, and by acute shortages of raw materials, tools, and capital. A generation of Japanese occupation in which all managerial posts had been retained in the hands of the conqueror had resulted in a woeful lack of administrative personnel. To add to the difficulties of an exploited economy, now suddenly bereft of its managerial staff, the division at the 38th parallel had separated fields on the south from fertilizer in the north, and the larger cities and the majority of the population from the sources of hydroelectric power and of coal.

Obvious first steps in reconstruction were to permit freedom of movement between the two zones, and to unify at least the administration of the Korean economy. Proposals to this effect were made by General Hodge, but the Russian commander was unresponsive. The problems of unification were perforce transferred to a higher plane, and at Moscow, in December 1945, a joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. committee was established to prepare, in

consultation with the Koreans, for a democratic government of Korea. At the moment, perhaps, this step appeared promising; in fact it merely marked the disappearance of the Korean question into those proliferating procedural jungles which, in the post-war period, so obfuscated points at issue between Russia and her western allies. The details of the work of the Joint Committee need not concern us here: suffice it to say that disputes over terminology concerning the proposed trusteeship led to adjournment in May 1946. Some progress had by this time been made by the two military commands in accomplishing a limited exchange of certain commodities. But on political matters progress was nil and Korea remained divided.

It was possible of course to consider that the Korean question should be settled on its own merits. Such presumably was the view of the Koreans, such had been the viewpoint of Americans in the eighties and nineties, and such was the attitude of General Hodge and of others on the spot. But Korea was but one facet of the world-wide problem of adjustment between the Soviets and the West which followed the collapse of Germany and Japan. Difficulties had developed even before the shooting stopped, as in the problem of the Polish boundary; as the months went by the situation was exacerbated by squabbles over German reparations and the communization of the Balkan states; internal strife in China made it evident that the defeat of Japan had not ended the war for East Asia. In March 1946, the month that the Korean Joint Committee convened to begin its deliberations, the darkening picture was dramatically presented in Winston Churchill's speech at Fulton, Missouri. In these circumstances only an extreme optimist could conceive of a resolution of the Korean question in simple local terms.

Throughout the year interallied relations remained difficult, and spring of 1947 came in an atmosphere of increasing crisis. The month of March brought the breakdown of the Moscow Conference and the signing of the Treaty of Dunkirk. It brought also, as a result of Soviet pressures on Turkey and of Communist guerrilla warfare in Greece, the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine. In June the depressing possibilities presented by the economic dislocation of western Europe produced the Marshall Plan for cooperative reconstruction with American support. One month later an influential American periodical published a disillusioned article on "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" under a pseudonym carefully selected to make unmistakable the official nature of the analysis.

In such an atmosphere of hardening American policy it was unlikely that much would come of bilateral discussion of Korean problems. Following a second abortive effort by the Joint Committee in the summer of 1947 the United States proposed a four-power conference on Korea, and advanced procedural suggestions which were extremely sensible if considered simply from the Korean point of view. But the Russians declined to cooperate. The fact that the great majority of the Korean population lived within the American zone, that South Korea had the votes, had come to mean that unification on any democratic basis would be equivalent to an American victory and to a retreat of the Soviet frontier. If a way existed of compromising this question while maintaining a decent regard for the Koreans themselves, it was not discovered. With Russian rejection of the American proposals, all serious effort to reach a solution through negotiation came to an end.

But to the United States the occupation of South Korea was a costly and troublesome business. The expenses of relief were high; the continuation of military government lent itself to propaganda about fascism and colonialism. In September 1947 a Joint Chiefs of Staff study concluded that Korea was of little strategic importance, and that in view of the current shortage of operating forces the divisions locked up in the peninsula would be better employed elsewhere. As in the earlier period of Foote and Foulk and Sill, the cost of a forward policy in Korea seemed greater than any promised reward, and as frustration increased, the search for a solution to Korea's problems gave way to an attempt to disengage.

The upshot was a new departure in American policy, and a decision to transfer the Korean question to the United Nations. This step, part of a developing effort to use this organization to mobilize pressure against the Soviets, was in some respects highly appealing. It promised to divest the United States of an expensive and onerous burden and to focus attention on Russian obstruction of Korean unification; it put those countries critical

of the American administration of South Korea in a position where they would have to take some responsibility. Like so many American decisions in the years following the Second World War it appeared to answer the felt needs for economy while maintaining at least verbal adherence to previously stated goals. But unless one seriously believed in the effectiveness of "world public opinion," the transfer of the Korean question to the U.N. hardly represented a harmonizing of ends and means. No serious effort was made to gain Soviet approval of an agreed procedure, or to develop a program acceptable to all concerned. Yet the Soviets had clearly demonstrated their concern, and Russian forces still occupied North Korea.

On 17 September 1947 the United States placed the question of Korean independence on the agenda of the General Assembly, and in the next month discussion began. The trusteeship concept had by this time disappeared, and had been replaced by a plan for United Nations midwifery of an independent nation. The American proposal called for the creation of a U.N. commission to supervise the organization of an all-Korean government with representation on the basis of population; in reply the Soviets insisted that representatives of North and South Korea should participate in these discussions as equals. The General Assembly, having taken up the question under American initiative, in November adopted a modification of the American plan. A Temporary Commission on Korea was established composed of representatives of nine countries, including the Ukraine but not the United States, which would observe elections, assist the elected representatives in the formation of a Korean government, and help to arrange the withdrawal of the occupying powers.

In January 1948 the Temporary Commission, less its Ukrainian representative, reached Seoul to be greeted by cheering crowds. But no cheers came from north of the parallel, and the inability of the Commission to secure Soviet cooperation, or even to gain access to North Korea, raised the question of whether to hold elections in South Korea alone. This prospect, generally opposed by Korean politicos, was supported by the American military command. It was also supported by certain Korean leaders, of whom Syngman Rhee, now returned to his homeland and chairman of the National Association for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence, was most prominent.

Doubtful both as to its mandate under these conditions and of the possibility of free elections in South Korea, the Commission sought counsel of the General Assembly's interim committee. Despite large scale riots organized by Korean Communists it was decided to proceed with supervised elections, and with the formation of a National Assembly in which one-third of the seats would be reserved for a North Korean delegation. This decision, which promised to bring closer the time of possible evacuation, and to liquidate the military commitment without abandonment of the political aims, was gratifying to the United States.

Elections in South Korea were consequently scheduled for May. The preparatory tasks of the Temporary Commission were complicated by more riots in March and April, by ostentatious firing exercises and fortification building along the northern side of the 38th parallel, and by "unification conferences" staged by the North Korean authorities in a further attempt to undermine the electoral procedure. Nevertheless the elections went off on schedule, with large popular participation and few noticeable irregularities. Four days later the reply from the north arrived as the Communists pulled the switches on the power lines, a move countered by the dispatch of two U.S. Navy power barges to furnish electricity until the output of South Korean steam plants could be increased.

There now followed, in both zones, a race to set up governments. On 1 May 1948 a new constitution had been promulgated in North Korea. In the south the National Assembly chose Syngman Rhee as chairman at the end of May, drafted a constitution and elected him President in July, and completed the formation of a government in early August. On 9 August President Rhee requested the occupation authorities to turn over the administration of South Korea and on the 15th his wish was granted. Ten days later an election was held in North Korea, observed only by the occupying power, and was followed by rapid ratification of a constitution. On 7 September the government of the People's Republic was established under a person calling himself Kim Il Sung, and on the 19th the Soviets announced that Russian forces would be out by year's end. Below the parallel,

withdrawal of American troops began in September, but this movement was shortly halted as a result of representations by President Rhee, and a regimental combat team was retained in South Korea until June of 1949.

With the establishment of an independent and freely elected South Korean government, it could be argued that the decision to refer the Korean question to the United Nations had been largely justified. On the other hand, it was at least possible that disengagement and the withdrawal of occupying forces had increased rather than diminished the danger of conflict. If North Korea was a Soviet puppet, South Korea depended for its continued existence upon the United States, and there was no guarantee that these antagonistic client states would prove as responsible and as restrained as their protectors. Saber-rattling had already gone on in the north, while below the parallel, President Rhee had not been backward in expressing his willingness to unify by force. The Korean situation, always an inflammable one, was now certainly no less so. Where Korea's geography had made it the oriental equivalent of the Low Countries, and its resistance to Japanese rule had given it the aspect of an Asiatic Ireland, its new situation, to those who could remember the 1930's, gave some promise that it would become a far eastern Spain.

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Chapter 2. Policy and Its Instruments
2. Unified Defense

The year 1948 opened with the United Nations overseeing the birth of the Republic of Korea and the Russians that of the North Korean People's Republic. Elsewhere the new year brought a series of crises in the relations between east and west which seemed even more dangerous than those of the previous spring. In Czechoslovakia, a country closely linked in its origins with the United States, and one whose abandonment at Munich had profoundly moved Americans, the government was taken over by the Communists, and the coup shortly followed by a second defenestration of Prague. Following close upon this tragedy an ominous dispatch from General Lucius D. Clay, USA, the American commander in Germany, reported a new atmosphere of menace in his dealings with the Russians. Where economic dislocation in Europe and civil war in Greece had earlier seemed susceptible to treatment by financial grants and military missions, these events raised the specter of full-scale war.

Bestirring itself to counter the threat so dimly foreseen, the government found that the national defense cupboard was bare: the reasoning which had impelled the Joint Chiefs of Staff to urge withdrawal of Army units from Korea was reemphasized in the discovery that a call for more than one division would require partial mobilization. Faced with this situation, President Truman on 17 March 1948 called upon the Congress for an immediate increase in armed strength. But the summons to arms was complicated by the issue of universal military training and by lack of any firm program: only as the congressional debate began did the armed services, now six months unified in the new National Military Establishment, undertake for the first time since the war a serious consideration of the relation between policy and its instruments.

Three years earlier the United States had possessed the greatest military machine in history. Across the Atlantic, in the spring of 1945, its ground forces were reaching far into Europe; on the far side of the Pacific they were landing in strength on the island of Okinawa. Over Germany and Japan American bombers with long-range fighter escort penetrated almost at will. On the seas the United States operated an irresistible navy, which had destroyed its Japanese adversary and had demonstrated its ability to land troops against whatever opposition. But by spring of 1948 all this had gone. The armed forces had done their job too well. Since human institutions are created to answer human needs, the most successful are presumably self-obsoleting, and the American people had paid their Army and Navy the supreme compliment of assuming that the requirements which had called them into being had been fulfilled. As the shooting ended, demobilization became the order of the day, and with the same vigor with which they had fought the war the armed services proceeded to disband. Within a year there was very little left.

Yet while disarming themselves along with their former enemies, the American people also undertook to reorganize their armed services in the interests of efficiency and economy by a unification of these forces in a single department of defense. Much of the pressure for this change came from the long-held Army belief in the efficacy of a single command, much from the desire of the Army Air Force for equal status, but there were other factors at work. The failure of intelligence and coordination at Pearl Harbor had led many to see a solution in terms of command unified in Washington as well as in the field; there was a widespread impression that unified procurement and planning would produce appreciable economies. In any event the pressures were strong, and the apparent lessons of the immediate past were given great, perhaps too great weight. It is proverbial that generals always prepare for the last war, but in this instance the generals had strong popular support. With the enactment of unification legislation in 1947, the presumed dominance of the heavy bomber in the Second World War was

institutionalized in an independent Department of the Air Force.

This step, seemingly so natural and right, and which as a practical matter was surely unavoidable, had large implications. Although the greatest wartime successes of the air weapon had been tactical in nature, the doctrinal emphasis, based on formulations a generation old, continued to stress the centrality of strategic air warfare. Yet while emphasizing the long–range bombing function, with its implication of the separateness of air war, the theorists also insisted on the indivisibility of air power. This situation, deriving from a long standing equation of means and ends, of vehicle and mission, presented interlocking technical and administrative problems.

Revolutionary advances in military technology, the product of Mars' forcing-house, had brought the piloted bomber close to the end of the road. If World War II was not "the last war of the pilots"--the phrase was General Arnold's--it was pretty close to it, for the bomber fleets which darkened the skies over Germany and Japan ended the war in double jeopardy. At the home base the threat was of replacement by guided missiles, of which the V-2 was but the early forerunner; over the target the danger came from new antiaircraft weapons and from the jet interceptor. For a time, doubtless, it would still be possible to produce an airplane that could get through, though at a cost which could only be justified, for the bomber no less than for the prospective long-range missile, by the employment of nuclear weapons.

While technology was undermining the theory of war based on the piloted bomber, the unitary nature of that theory posed difficulties in the organizational sphere. Indubitably there were areas of aircraft employment--reconnaissance, tactical operations with ground and naval forces, air transport--where discrimination as well as guidance was necessary, and where the pilot was less easily replaced by the gadget. But while these operations, interlocking with those of the surface forces, were precisely those in which the advocates of separate air war were least interested, the monopoly theory which lumped all activities of winged vehicles together still seemed to require their assignment to the separate air force.

Clearly there were puzzles here. Improvements in air defense had made the future of strategic bombardment, and so implicitly that of the independent air force, dependent upon the use of a weapon which the United States was attempting to place under international control. The monopoly theory posed serious problems for the Army, bereft as it would be of control over instruments vital to its mission; if followed out strictly it would raise great difficulties for the Navy as well. And finally, as the development of the missile gained momentum, Army and Air Force would face difficult metaphysical questions as to the precise range at which this ceased to be the analogue of an artillery shell but became, for administrative purposes, an airplane.

If the future was thus replete with paradox, so was the path to unification. Within the military it was the Army, which had never wholly succeeded in integrating its air and ground components, which led the parade. The Army's desire for a single staff and a single command as an extension of its own organizational practices was natural enough, but its willingness to divest itself of its air arm is more difficult to understand. Some, indeed, opposed this move: in 1945 a board of Army officers recommended against the abandonment of tactical and transport aviation. But history had passed them by: a generation of Air Corps pressure for autonomy had been capped by a four year partnership with the RAF, with concomitant representation on the Joint and Combined Chiefs of Staff; the genie was out of the bottle, and the proposal was overruled.

The attitude of the Army Air Force, both traditional and understandable in that unification promised its best hope of independence, was perhaps extreme, calling as it did for triplication in the name of unity and for the creation of a separate service whose cardinal strategic principle was that of freedom from outside control. The Navy, historically the most successful in the coordination of diverse forces, and which had operated surface and undersea components, aviation, and the Marine Corps in reasonable harmony and with great success, approached the wedding with reluctance.

The ardent agreement between Army and Army Air Force, earlier so long at odds, as to the desirability of unifying first and facing the problems afterward, was unnerving to the Navy. Widespread rumors that the Army

hoped to abolish the Marine Corps were not reassuring. Evidence of Air Force desires to absorb naval aviation raised the frightening possibility that the fate which had overtaken the Royal Navy in 1919, and which had proved so costly when war came again, might be repeated here. To some, at least, in the naval establishment, questions of intelligence, procurement, resources planning, and the integration of military and diplomatic policy seemed of primary importance, and not simply soluble by the establishment of a single command. But the basic reason for naval reluctance lay in the fear expressed by Admiral King that the contemplated organization would permit the reduction of American "sea power" by those unfamiliar with its potentialities. Since the reorganization provided for two services whose primary concern was with war on and over great land masses, the fear was perhaps not wholly unreasonable. Since representatives of one of these services, from the time of General Mitchell, had gone repeatedly on record regarding the inutility of navies, apprehensions were not diminished.

A further reason for these apprehensions, and one largely the fault of the Navy itself, stemmed from a serious failure in communications both with the public and with the other services. Somehow, it seemed, the Navy had never fully succeeded in putting its case across, and in explaining itself and its needs even to those who were, or ought to have been, its best and most sympathetic customers. Those who, in Admiral King's phrase, were unfamiliar with these matters had been permitted to remain that way. The silent service had been too silent for its own good.

To a degree this fact is understandable, for naval warfare is to some extent mysterious. An image, of a sort at least, of land or air war is easily put before the public: the advance of the armies is visible on the map; the flattening of cities is easily understood. But on the ocean there are no frontiers, negative results may be as valuable as positive ones, and the operations which maintain and exploit control of the seas are frequently invisible. That the presence of armies in a foreign theater and of aircraft in foreign skies testifies to a completed naval task is not always appreciated. Great successes are often obtained by a minimum of fighting, though with a maximum of effort, but to dramatize and explain this effort is a sophisticated and difficult problem. Regrettably, in an age of violence, such commodities as pressure and movement and maneuver have less public appeal than shock.

As in all human affairs there was in the unification controversy a mixture of wisdom and foolishness, and of selfishness with disinterested patriotism. If there were cannibals in the Army and Air Force who cast hungry eyes at the Marine Corps and at naval aviation, there were also naval officers who saw all future conflict in the image of the war against Japan. Nevertheless, in due course, a compromise was reached and an act was passed. And while the fact of unification reflected the initiative of those outside the Navy Department, the form of the legislation was in considerable degree the product of those within. The services, now three in number, were federated rather than merged; the same act that reordered the military establishment also created the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Resources Board. In the autumn of 1947 the Secretary of the Navy, James V. Forrestal, became the first Secretary of Defense.

The passage of the National Security Act of 1947 did not, of course, solve all problems of form and function. Not all gears could mesh at once. There were, for example, important differences in the systems of staff and command. The Army and Air Force, conditioned to large-scale continental operations, had developed highly centralized systems of management of forces in the field. But while Air Force doctrine placed the locus of command at the highest possible level, and while the Army's basic tactical unit was the division, to the Navy the part was almost as important as the whole. Naval operations were far more atomistic, and called now for a large fleet, now for a small force, now for a single ship. The lack of shipboard accommodations for large managerial organizations, the need to maintain radio silence at sea, and the necessity for continual separation and reassembly of various units for various tasks made necessary a delegation of responsibility and a decentralization of authority on the basis of agreed doctrine. And both in Washington and in the field these morphological differences had serious implications for the planning and conduct of joint operations.

Nor was this all. Under the new roof there dwelt not only different services and different practices, but also different histories. All services, in the years following the war, faced an unavoidable problem of rethinking roles and missions, and in some ways this was hardest for the Navy. The Army had gone through its period of reorientation in the late thirties, when the Nazi threat brought an end to the concept of hemispheric defense. Now, with their recent experience of the war against Germany, Army commanders made an easy transition to the new policies of coalition, containment, and the defense of Europe. The Air Force, enjoying its original monopoly of the nuclear weapon, was enabled to renew its ancient promises of quick and decisive war. But the Navy's experience was dominantly that of the war against Japan; Pacific veterans held the top positions in the Navy Department; and while the Navy's performance in the Pacific had on the whole been brilliant, that war was perhaps not the most obvious source of precedent for the situation of mid-century. It is, after all, hard to reach Moscow by boat.

Finally, in a sense, the successes of wartime came to tell against the Navy in peace. No strong hostile navy presented an obvious menace. To commanders who had crossed the seas as passengers, the passage and the amphibious assault presented no great difficulty, but were simply the prelude to the real campaign; to those whose responsibility it was to get them there the situation appeared otherwise. As in the Second World War, certain leaders of the RAF had never fully understood their dependence on victory over the submarine, so now American ground and air officers would willingly deploy their forces overseas with little thought as to how their support could be assured should the new weapons not produce a quick decision. Busily at work on the superstructure of strategy, they could either neglect or assume its foundation. Concentrating as they did on the defense of Europe, possibilities elsewhere could be ignored.

In these divergent attitudes there was nothing fundamentally irreconcilable. But under the conflicting pressures of strategic need and budgetary possibility, the interservice differences became increasingly acute. In January 1948 the first budget subsequent to unification was sent up to the Congress, with a request for $11 billion for the National Military Establishment. But February, when the hearings began, was also the month of the Czech coup and of the discovery that the Army had but one uncommitted division, and March brought the telegram from General Clay. With the President's appeal for more armed strength, the military, already deeply involved in the complexities of reorganizing their vast establishment, found themselves faced with the problem of expansion. But since neither in the armed services nor in the State Department was there agreement as to the armaments needed for the support of policy, competition for the new appropriations inevitably developed. Such competition, of course, had always existed, but in the time of separate departments it had gone on in the light of day, in hearings before congressional committees. Under the new dispensation, the service chiefs had to deal not with the Congress but with each other; across the table the legislator had been replaced by a competitor; the triangular nature of the new establishment promised great rewards from an alliance policy which would set two services against one.

In this situation the Navy was at a disadvantage. In the Joint Chiefs of Staff it was the minority member: although there were differences a-plenty between Army and Air Force, they were successfully plastered over. In strategic formulations based on the threat to Europe it seemed to have little more than a supporting function. Increasingly it found itself forced back on the defense of its organizational integrity. And as the Air Force pressed steadily for the dominant role in the military establishment, and as competition for funds became competition for public support, open quarrelling broke out in the public press. In an attempt to head off the in-fighting, the Secretary of Defense convened a conference of the Joint Chiefs at Key West in March 1948. But although he there persuaded the sovereignties to recognize each other's legal existence, no real meeting of minds was gained in the areas where functions and weapons interlocked, and the high command of the Air Force remained opposed to the existence of naval aviation. Outside the military there had also been interest in these matters, and the report of the President's Air Policy Commission on "Survival in the Air Age," which effectively equated the future of

warfare with the large-scale delivery by the Air Force of weapons of mass destruction, had further exacerbated the situation. Thus early in 1948 the argument was already off center, and had focussed on the air question, with emphasis on nuclear bombardment, to the detriment of any rounded approach to the development of instruments of policy. After a fashion, at least, the problems of a short and big war were being faced, but those of a small and long one had been forgotten.

Where wisdom lay among these conflicting viewpoints is doubtless a matter for the philosopher rather than the historian. At all times, inevitably, differing service preconceptions give rise to different strategic views, and a changing world will emphasize the virtues first of one outlook and then of another. But what can be noted, and indeed almost postulated as a law, is the tendency for the minority view to become the correct one. Defense planning is, after all, merely a preliminary form of strategic deployment, and strategy is a two-sided game. This fact, too often forgotten, ensures that whatever the formulations of the moment the enemy will work to circumvent them, and in time may make progress in this effort.

Despite all difficulties within the Defense Department, a program of a sort was worked out and presented to Congress at the end of March. This program, greatly scaled down by Secretary Forrestal from the original desires of the service chiefs, and dissented from by the Air Force, called for an increase of $3 billion in expenditures over the $11 billion already budgeted for the coming year. In the end, after the services, the Congress, and the Budget Bureau had all had their say, the decision was made by the President. No program would be undertaken which would bring future annual costs above $15 billion.

Under this presidential ceiling, in the autumn of 1948, the planning for fiscal 1950 was begun. But by now the military had begun to worry. Even allowing for the human tendency to pad the budget, the first estimates from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which called for $30 billion, would have seemed to indicate that capabilities and intentions were out of phase. By September, however, the Joint Chiefs had developed a war plan, and had painfully reduced their requests by almost half. Down to about the $20 billion mark agreed, solutions were forthcoming, both in allocation of funds and in strategic planning, but at lower figures these were not obtainable. The final request for $16.9 billions, which was accompanied by the statement that the presidential limit would support only an atomic counteroffensive from the British Isles and would entail abandonment of the Mediterranean in case of war, was the product of a split vote. In this difficult situation the Secretary of Defense, who had thus far displayed a notable concern for balanced forces, now turned to concentrate upon strategic air. Under the circumstances this was wholly logical, for if the air riposte was all that could be managed, it was surely desirable to strengthen it as much as possible. But the budget ceiling remained firm, and a request for additional funds for the Air Force was refused.

This presidential decision was of great importance. What had begun as a year of crisis was ending as an election year, and the complications overseas were fading from the public mind. Except for the reenactment of Selective Service, the proposed expansion of the armed forces, trumpeted in the spring of 1948, was over by fall without having proceeded very far. American military capabilities, vis-a'-vis the Soviet Union, remained limited to the atomic counteroffensive; American capabilities in other contexts had hardly been considered. But the rigidity of this military posture, so out of line with diplomatic policy, was disguised by the still sizable dollar sums allotted the Army and Navy, which while insufficient for serious wartime operations preserved a mobilization base and some appearance of a balanced establishment.

By mid-summer of 1948 two facts had become obvious. The first was that rearmament would be severely restricted by the President in terms of dollars. The second was that in the competition for these dollars the Air Force, with its long-range nuclear bombing function, enjoyed the larger measure of public and congressional support. Yet June 1948 saw the commencement of the Berlin blockade, a maneuver not easily countered by strategic bombing. It was clear that the outside world remained both dangerous and unpredictable. It was less clear that the weapons best suited to win the battle of the budget were those most useful in support of other

aspects of national policy.

Throughout the year, as the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs grappled with their problems, the interservice propaganda war continued with the Air Force well in the lead. Although the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations were committed to the support of Forrestal's program, the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force remained vigorously partisan, calling at every opportunity for special treatment. Since the justification for such treatment rested upon the nuclear weapon, Navy claims to share in its delivery did nothing to calm the atmosphere. In the fall the Air Force Association, tile civilian auxiliary, violently attacked the whole concept of naval aviation, and in reply an aviation admiral attacked the Air Force. Throughout these months a series of articles, bitterly critical of the Navy and of naval aviation, were being prepared with Air Force cooperation for publication in a national magazine; these would appear between November 1948 and April 1949, at the time the 1950 budget was scheduled to come before the Congress. In this atmosphere of tension the new year began, and in April the House Appropriations Committee reported out a bill providing large sums for the Air Force and reduced support for the Navy.

Increasingly, as the months passed, the defense establishment was developing along lines unsuited to a maritime strategy and alarming to senior naval officers. Increasingly, also, military policy was diverging from that of the Department of State. In diplomacy the effort was toward an ever closer grouping of alliances, especially with regard to Europe. In military matters the emphasis was tending toward the development of a capability for independent action by investment in intercontinental bombing at the expense of ground and naval strength. But to suggestions from State that this overlooked the chance of localized conflict, the reply was returned that increased surface forces were financially impossible.

In the spring of 1949 Secretary Forrestal left the Military Establishment and was replaced by Louis Johnson. There was now a firm, tactless, and economical hand at the helm, and a bill in Congress to amend the National Security Act promised that the hand would become firmer. In April, less than a month after the arrival of the new Secretary, the ax first hit the Navy, with cancellation of the construction of the aircraft carrier *United States*, a step supported by Army and Air Force, but on which neither the Secretary of the Navy nor the Chief of Naval Operations was consulted.

It would have been hard to think of a more dramatic blow at the naval establishment. This first post-war carrier had been designed, on the basis of wartime experience, in anticipation of the newer and heavier aircraft coming into operation, and with an eye to the use of the new weapons. Its construction had been approved by the Congress, and other projects had been abandoned to permit it to go forward under the budgetary limitations. But although the impact of the cancellation within the Navy was tremendous, it was little felt outside. The Secretary of the Navy resigned at once in vigorous protest, but Congress and public seemed little disturbed.

Once more the Navy had failed to make its case. Whatever its primary purpose, the usefulness of the great carrier would far transcend the single function of strategic bombing. But the debates on military policy had become so centered on this type of operation that the ship had been drawn into the quarrel, and suspicion of an intent to invade Air Force prerogatives was increased by a symbolism which some read into the name *United States*. The subject, indeed, was raised in congressional hearings, where the naval witnesses unfortunately failed to remember that a frigate of the same name had been one of the first ships of the old Navy. There was also, perhaps, a failure of subtlety here, for among the early frigates there had also been a *Congress* and a *President*, either of which names, it would seem, might have served as better defensive armament.

Within the naval establishment the fact and manner of the cancellation revived the fears that the transfer of naval aviation to the Air Force and the abolition of the Marine Corps were imminent. These apprehensions were compounded by the events of the next few months. In July a new ceiling of $13 billion was placed over the defense budget, and the scalpels of the economizers were soon poised over the carriers of the *Essex* class, of which the Navy wanted to maintain eight in operation, the Army considered four sufficient, and the Air Force

wished all mothballed. In August the Secretary of Defense halved the strength of naval and Marine aviation by ordering a reduction of operating carriers from 8 to 4, of carrier air groups from 14 to 6, and of Marine Corps squadrons from 23 to 12. This was followed by efforts to prepare for the next fiscal year by a reduction of current expenditures, and in September the Navy was instructed to trim its current budget by $353 million, a step possible only through drastic cutbacks in the procurement of new aircraft.

By this time the tension between the services had reached an extraordinary pitch. Although the Air Force, riding the tide of success, now moderated its propaganda activities, bitterness within the Navy continued to grow. Having been abused in the press, having been consistently outvoted in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, finding themselves subjected to an antagonistic Secretary of Defense and to a doubtfully sympathetic Secretary of the Navy, many senior naval officers felt that their worst fears of unification were coming true. It seemed, as Admiral King had prophesied, that American sea power was being reduced by those who did not understand it, and the country's safety committed to an unsound theory of war.

These interservice tensions led in the latter part of 1949 to some remarkable developments. An anonymous document, produced in the Navy Department, which alleged that Air Force procurement policies were dominated by the financial interests of those in authority, was brought to the attention of the Congress. The Secretary of Defense charged in a speech at the National War College that the Navy was waging a "campaign of terror" against unification. There were reports in the press of naval officers being shadowed by detectives hired by the Department of the Air Force. In September a well-known naval aviator declared publicly that the Navy was being purposely eliminated as a factor in the defense establishment. In October the press received through unorthodox channels a copy of a letter in which a prominent flag officer expressed to the Secretary of the Navy his fear that the country's security was being jeopardized by acceptance of the theory of quick victory through strategic bombing, stated that "the morale of the Navy is lower today than at any time since I entered the commissioned ranks in 1916," and urged a congressional investigation of the fundamentals of national security. Publication of the letter forced the investigation.

In October 1949, in an atmosphere somewhat sobered by the report of an atomic explosion within the Soviet Union, the congressional hearings were begun. In these hearings the Navy labored under serious handicaps. Its new secretary was hostile to the dissidents' case, while the Chief of Naval Operations, in this extremely difficult situation, was endeavoring to mediate between his subordinates and higher authority. Preparation of the Navy brief consequently lacked official sanction and the assistance that such sanction could give, while the emotional involvement of the naval witnesses made it difficult to identify the enemy and to plan a coherent campaign. The result was that the naval testimony was somewhat scattered and uncoordinated, imperfectly prepared, and at times tactically ill-advised.

Although the basic issues went far deeper, the October hearings were an outgrowth of an earlier investigation of procedures used in procurement of the B-36 intercontinental bomber, and the B-36 remained prominent as a subject of discussion. Whatever the technical merits or demerits of this giant of the skies, it had become a symbol of current difficulties, and to most naval officers seemed to have grown horns and a tail. Yet the approach to the question was a narrow one, with too much of the naval case concentrated on the B-36 as airplane and too little on the B-36 as symbol--symbol of a strategy, symbol of domestic propaganda, and symbol of future budgetary troubles. On the other hand much naval testimony seemed retrospective, centering on the war against Japan, while clarification of the current implications of naval and amphibious capabilities was hampered by general acceptance of the concept that Russia was the one possible enemy and Europe the one possible theater. The result was that to many the arguments seemed either a disagreement of experts on technical matters or a simple case of hurt feelings; it was even possible to suggest that the Navy was aggrieved merely because the Air Force had developed a bomber of astonishingly long range. Nevertheless the hearings presented an impressive and disturbing spectacle: as the congressional committee observed, nearly the entire high command of the United

States Navy appeared to protest the current policies of the Department of Defense.

Two points emerged fairly clearly from the testimony of the naval witnesses. The fact that the type of armed force embodied in the Navy and the Marine Corps was being whittled down to a dangerous level, emphasized in the testimony of three major fleet commanders, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Chief of Naval Operations, was forcefully developed. A second point, repeatedly made, was that the Navy was not accepted as an equal partner in the unification process, and while the documentation was unnecessarily weak, this contention received strong if surprising confirmation in the bitter and partisan rebuttal delivered by General Omar N. Bradley, USA, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Some matters of central importance, however, were not made wholly clear. The fact that the budget ceiling imposed by the President on the defense establishment was too low to permit effective support of the commitments assumed by the President and the State Department was obscured by the attack on the Air Force. Perhaps the point could not have been well made under any circumstances. It is difficult to take issue with civilian judgment without seeming to attack civilian control; an outright appeal for funds opens the military man to undesirable accusations; in their economic thinking the military incline to the conservative, and to unquestioning acceptance of statements that the economy can only stand so much. In any event it was the members of the congressional committee, rather than the military witnesses, who showed the most concern over the adequacy of appropriations.

A second subject which remained somewhat obscure, and one always difficult to explain clearly, was the relationship between armament and foreign policy, and between types of armament and strategic flexibility. The discussion did indeed involve the importance of relating strategy to war aims, of differentiating when dealing with tyrants between the rulers and the ruled, and of maintaining insofar as possible the fabric of civilization in the interest of the post-war world. The implications of an intercontinental bombing strategy for a diplomatic policy of alliance, and the inconsistencies implicit in simultaneous efforts to create a North Atlantic Treaty Organization and a weapons system independent of foreign bases were touched on. Salutary emphasis was laid on the need for tactical air strength to attack enemy forces in being and their lines of communication, and for immediately available forces, with ground and air components trained and packaged together, ready for quick deployment. But the course of the hearings was such as to deprive these matters of their merited consideration.

Consideration, nevertheless, would soon be given them, although less as the result of the efforts of naval officers than of those of the North Korean People's Army. For this unforeseen war in an unexpected theater was to pose in excruciating form the strategic and tactical problems the defense establishment had not been permitted to meet. As if to emphasize the problems of balanced forces and limited war brought forth in the hearings, the Korean conflict would see the naval witnesses occupying crucial posts: Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Commander of the Fast Carrier Task Force in Korean waters and Chief of Staff and acting Commander Naval Forces Far East; Commanding General of the First Marine Aircraft Wing. The nature of the war would raise an imperative but unanticipated need for close interservice cooperation, and would keep the problem of roles and missions, so long a bone of contention in Washington, steadily to the fore. And finally, the course of the struggle on that distant peninsula would do much--at least temporarily--to redress the military imbalance of 1949.

For the moment, however, the "revolt of the admirals" was inconclusive. The rebuttal testimony of representatives of the Army and Air Force was generally moderate in tone: controversial issues were skirted, sin was denied, and the Navy chided for not accepting unification. In the sequel the Navy lost one Chief of Naval Operations with the removal of Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, and gained another in the person of Admiral Forrest P. Sherman. The escape of steam during the hearings diminished pressures inside the Pentagon and produced a period of comparative interservice moderation. The report of the congressional committee was in many respects a model discussion of a highly complex matter: whatever the public thought, and despite the diffuseness of the

naval presentation, the members had not missed the points at issue. Within the National Security Council, where the Russian atomic explosion had led to a review of military policy, the naval arguments may have had some weight. But so far as the all-important question of the budget was concerned, the hearings were of no effect. The ceiling for fiscal 1951 remained at $13 billion, reduction of naval strength continued apace, and even the Air Force found its plans cut back. Within the House of Representatives efforts were begun to provide the Navy with funds for new construction, although not for a new *United States*, but the attitude of the executive branch remained unchanged.

Yet what in retrospect seems most striking about the hearings of 1949, and what presumably would have most impressed an observer from beyond the Iron Curtain, was less the evidence of difficulties between the services than the emerging picture of American strategic thought. Almost all witnesses, of whatever service, agreed that there was but "one possible enemy." Almost all focussed their attention on the defense of Europe. Just as some of the naval testimony was nostalgic in nature, so was that of the dominant Army Air Force wing, although with a different bias stemming from a different past. The next war, it seemed clear beyond peradventure, would begin like the last with a massive enemy surprise attack; just as in World War II, except for the use of bigger and better weapons, the reply would take the form of a strategic air offensive; the end would come on the ground with a new V-E Day. Whether the Russians were equally convinced of this was a question raised by none.

Repeated emphasis on "the" strategic plan and on the importance of long-range nuclear bombardment, together with the contemplated reductions in naval and amphibious capabilities, promised a steady diminution in ability to reply to pinpricks, or to police non-Russian aggression, or to act with strength and speed outside the European theater. The capabilities and intentions of the United States were plain. There had grown up, in effect, a mirror-image concept of strategy: the United States thinks Europe is important and has created NATO; therefore the Russians must think Europe important, and be planning to invade it. An equal rigidity on the part of the enemy was assumed, all capacity for subtlety or maneuver was denied him, and the upshot would seem to have been an invitation to war by proxy in distant places.

The situation which the hearings thus exposed was a remarkable one even for a nation not noted for flexibility or sophistication in strategic thought. The lack of clarity in the area of grand strategy evinced by the naval witnesses can doubtless be explained as a result of their immediate troubles, and of the intellectual difficulties they faced in trying to harmonize a traditionally more flexible outlook with the rigidities of the agreed strategic plan. Implicit, if not explicit, in some of their testimony, there can be found a very different point of view. But to account for the attitude of those within the military establishment who professed themselves satisfied with the situation is more difficult, for they were wrong on any reading of history. Essentially, it would seem, the fact that able and devoted men could agree along such lines stemmed from the fear of defeat by bankruptcy, and the historian of this episode must conclude that if war is too important a matter to be left to the military, it is also too important to be subjected to the budgetary treatment of 1948-50. Those skilled in the mysteries of economics had told the service heads that their country could spend no more in time of peace, and peace presumably existed until the shooting began. The President had imposed a firm ceiling, and orders were orders. Accepting the $13 billion limit and the force that this could purchase as the nation's maximum capability, the dominant members of the Joint Chiefs could think only as they did. In no other way could they continue to carry their heavy responsibilities. A broader outlook on possibilities was too agonizing to be endured.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 2. Policy and Its Instruments
3. The Estimate of the Situation

In contrast to the alarms and crises of preceding years the early months of 1950 brought an appearance of stability in the world at large. Within the Defense Department things were quieter. In Europe Tito's defection from the Russian bloc had been followed by termination of the civil war in Greece. The Berlin blockade had ended, West Berlin remained free, and the development in the autumn of 1949 of two German governments amounted to an acknowledgment that for the foreseeable future the German question would remain insoluble. In Asia the Chinese civil war was over, the Mandate of Heaven had been withdrawn from Chiang Kai-shek, the Generalissimo with his remaining forces had retired to Formosa, and the Chinese People's Republic had been proclaimed. In Korea, as in Germany, agreement to disagree had been institutionalized in the formation of two governments. Although the state of the world was not one to bring entire satisfaction to American policy makers, things appeared to be settling down.

In many respects, moreover, it could be said that the United States had responded brilliantly to the challenge with which it had been faced. Far from withdrawing from a degenerate outer world, the American government had reacted with extraordinary fertility of imagination, and had accomplished some notable acts of statecraft. The Truman Doctrine had marked the turning point, and had signaled a determination to face up to the problems of mid-century, but the Truman Doctrine by no means stood alone. The vision of Secretary Marshall's Harvard speech had borne fruit in the European Recovery Program, which began operations in the summer of 1948. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the diplomatic reply to the Czech coup and the Berlin blockade, became operative in 1949, as did a Mutual Defense Assistance Program designed to give arms to those who manned the frontiers of freedom. Enactment of the Point Four program, intended to make freedom worth defending where needs were more material than conceptual, seemed in early prospect. Progress in rationalizing the defense establishment had been less obvious, but it could be maintained that the military had met with great success their only test of strength: the work of the Air Force, assisted by Navy and RAF transport squadrons, in maintaining the Berlin airlift, had not only led to diplomatic triumph but had presented to the world a picture of a United States that was determined, restrained, and possessed of extraordinary operational capabilities.

Nevertheless it should be noted that the successes of American policy were largely European: in Asia the settling dust revealed a situation at variance with all earlier hopes. The principal effects of Communist success in China were perhaps two: to increase the importance of Japan as the pivot of American policy in the Orient and, since Europe seemed more amenable as well as more important, to reemphasize the European orientation of diplomacy. Two countries, Germany and Korea, were divided by the frontiers of the divided world, yet while American divisions were held in Germany, the last American troops were withdrawn from Korea in June 1949. That the defense of South Korea was now a matter for the South Koreans themselves could be assumed from the tendencies in American military policy brought out in the October hearings, as well as from speeches by General MacArthur and Secretary of State Acheson which drew the American strategic frontier through the Korean Strait.

Despite the transfer of responsibility for Korean unification to the United Nations and the withdrawal of American troops, the Republic of Korea remained a problem for American policy makers. Since 1945 American aid to Korea had annually exceeded the sum of $100 million, and the economy of the Republic was wholly dependent on congressional appropriation and the ECA. Similar circumstances doubtless obtained above the parallel, but the steady southward flow of refugees, which did nothing to simplify the economic problems of the Republic, gave evidence of a less tactful and less generous protecting power.

There was also a military problem. In the north the Russians had set up a military academy in 1945, and three years later had activated the North Korean People's Army, three divisions strong. In the course of time the North Koreans were provided with Soviet tanks; by 1949 three more infantry divisions had been activated; a rapid expansion in the spring of 1950 raised NKPA strength to ten infantry divisions, a number of infantry regiments, and an armored brigade. An aviation unit had been created in 1946; in 1948 the obsolete Japanese aircraft used for training began to be replaced by newer types received from Russia; by 1950 the number on hand was approaching the hundred mark. The People's Republic boasted a navy of some 45 small craft, including a few 60-foot aluminum-hulled Russian torpedo boats; at Najin, in the northeast, the Russians administered a training program for Korean naval personnel; there and at Chongjin and Unggi the Soviet Navy enjoyed the use of base facilities.

In the Republic of Korea the situation was otherwise. Following the withdrawal of American fighting forces the United States had provided, at the request of the Korean government, a small Korean Military Advisory Group, and military supplies for a force of 50,000 men were left behind. But while an impressive quantity of small arms, vehicles, ammunition, and artillery was transferred, along with some 20 training planes, and while further deliveries were scheduled under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, the capabilities of the South Korean Army remained somewhat limited. As a result of the belligerence of Syngman Rhee, who seemed quite prepared to attempt a forcible unification of the peninsula, this army was given no tanks, no medium or heavy artillery, and no military aircraft.

By 1950 the strength of the ROK Army was approaching the 100,000 mark and eight divisions had been organized. Small unit training had made good progress, but experience in large-scale maneuvers was lacking and there had been no training in defense against tanks. Nevertheless, the Military Advisory Group was optimistic, and its confidence that ROK forces could handle the threat from the north was apparently accepted on the higher levels.

The Republic's navy, somewhat larger than its northern counterpart, had been established in 1948 on the foundation of the coast guard set up during the American occupation. Its strength in 1950 was something over 7,000 men; its headquarters were in an office building in Seoul and its principal base facilities at Chinhae on the south coast; its ships were largely ex-United States YMS types and ex-Japanese minesweepers and picket boats. Some advice and assistance had been provided in the early years by former United States Coast Guard personnel attached to the KMAG, but money and material had been sadly lacking, ships had been kept in operation only by cannibalizing, morale had been low, and defections had taken place. In 1949, however, prospects had brightened with the receipt of a shipment of spare parts from the United States, and Rear Admiral Sohn Won Il, ROKN, the Chief of Naval Operations, had gone to America to bring back four ex-U.S. Navy 173-foot steel-hulled PCs. Something, too, had happened to morale, for the money to purchase one of these vessels had been provided by subscription of the officers and men, an unusual event in any navy.

So the Far East still presented problems, and not only in Korea. The Communist success in China had become a major subject of domestic political dispute; a large proportion of American ground strength remained on occupation duty in Japan; inevitably the American posture in the Orient was kept under review. General J. Lawton Collins, USA, the Army Chief of Staff, had visited Japan in the autumn of 1949, and June of 1950 saw a renewal of high-level travel to the Far East. The Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff flew to Manila for discussions with Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble, Commander Seventh Fleet; John Foster Dulles, consultant to the Secretary of State, paid a visit to Korea; all then proceeded to Japan for talks with General MacArthur. While at Seoul Mr. Dulles had addressed the Korean National Assembly, and had assured his audience of the strength and resolution of the free world and of the support of the American people. Intended as a diplomatic counter to North Korean threats, the speech proved unsuccessful, and photographs of Mr. Dulles peering across the 38th parallel were shortly featured in the Communist press as it hailed him as the strategist of South Korean aggression.

By the time these visitations took place the ostentatious military preparations in the north had alarmed the Rhee government, and had led the U.N. Commission to establish a system of border observers. For some time, also, reports of increasing North Korean strength had been available to the intelligence section of the Far East Command in Tokyo. An appreciation of December 1949, which considered it axiomatic that the Russians would be unwilling to permit the survival of a non-Communist Korean state, had commented on the arrival of reinforcements from Manchuria and suggested that spring would bring a period of danger. In January it was reported that March and April had been designated as the time for an attack on South Korea. In March it was noted that recent evidence pointed to an invasion in June. Subsequent information indicated that the inhabitants were being evacuated from the border zone north of the parallel, and that North Korean regular divisions had been deployed along the dividing line. In the last weeks of peace word was received of minor clashes along the parallel, of conferences of North Korean commanders, of guerrilla infiltration of South Korea, and of North Korean receipt of Soviet aircraft. But all this information received negative evaluation in the Far East Command: the March report of a prospective June invasion was forwarded with the comment that civil war was unlikely, although the reasons for this view remained unstated, and this judgment was repeated in subsequent appreciations.

One of the principal conclusions of the Pearl Harbor investigating committee had concerned the failure of evaluation and action despite the availability of intelligence, and this aspect of that tragedy had provided one of the chief arguments for postwar efforts to coordinate diplomatic, military, and intelligence activities. Yet this war like the last was to begin with a failure of intelligence, and if the immediate damage to the United States was less, the performance of the new apparatus seems if anything to have been worse than that of the old. Once again the information was available, this time in even more detail, but the ability to use it was still more notable in its absence. Once again it was clear how imprisoned men are in their own frames of reference, and how difficult it is to believe in unpleasant possibilities. Again, perhaps, there can here be seen the influence of the agreed strategic plan. Whatever the secret agents say, the evaluating authorities will believe only what they wish to believe.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea

James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 3. War Begins

1. The Decision to Intervene

ON 25 JUNE 1950, at 0400 in the morning, the North Korean People's Army, with seven infantry divisions and one armored brigade in the line, and with two more infantry divisions in reserve, struck south across the parallel. In Korea it was Sunday, a favored day for starting modern wars.

In Washington, half a world away and half a day behind in time, it was the middle of a summer Saturday. President Truman was out of town, visiting his family in Missouri. In the offices of government, in the State Department in Foggy Bottom and in the Pentagon across the river, only duty personnel were at work. As evening came, press rumors of a Korean crisis drifted into the State Department, and then, at twenty-six minutes past nine, a dispatch reporting the invasion was received from Ambassador John J. Muccio in Seoul. Around the town the telephones began to ring. Echelon by rising echelon the officers of the Department of State were summoned. Before midnight came, the Secretary of State had reached the President by telephone, and the Secretary General of the United Nations had been notified of the emergency.

Sunday in Washington was a day of frenzied activity. Two hours after midnight Secretary Acheson again telephoned the President, the decision to seek action of the Security Council was made, and at three in the morning the request was formally presented to Secretary Lie. Hastily summoned, the members of the Security Council met at three that afternoon, but with the Soviet delegate in self-imposed absence. By this time a report of the invasion had been received from the United Nations Commission on Korea, and the United States had prepared a resolution on this breach of the peace which called upon the North Korean People's Republic to desist from aggression. By a vote of nine to nothing, Yugoslavia alone abstaining, the resolution was approved.

While these measures were in train at Lake Success, the United States government was in emergency action. Throughout the morning the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Army, and the military chiefs were in conference at the Pentagon. In the afternoon, in response to another call from Secretary Acheson, President Truman flew back to the capital. In the evening the President and his military and diplomatic advisers held a meeting at Blair House which began with dinner and which lasted until 11 o'clock. Here the first decisions leading to American commitment in Korea were taken.

The situation which confronted the United States that Sunday evening was sufficiently obscure. Aggression had been committed. The cold war had become hot. But the aggression was local, the general emergency had not begun, and along the rest of the cold war's battleline prospects were unpredictable. At Blair House the discussion ranged from Korea to Formosa, to the implications of the invasion for Japan and the Philippines, and to the strength of Russian forces in the Far East. The possibility of Russian or Chinese intervention in Korea was raised, but to those present seemed remote. Over and above these concrete questions, to which concrete answers could at least be hazarded, there weighed heavily on the minds of all the memories of the 1930's. All present had lived through the agonizing series of crises which had marked the world's descent into the second great war, and whose very names--Manchuria, Ethiopia, the Rhineland, Munich--had become emotional symbols. If, as seems quite possible, Stalin was encouraged in the Korean venture by memories of democratic impotence in the Manchurian crisis, he overlooked one factor of central importance: his principal antagonist in 1950, the man from Missouri, was also a student of history.

In the light of these memories, and with the overpowering feeling that aggression, once unchecked, might sweep all before it, certain preparatory decisions were taken. American civilians and dependents were to be evacuated from Korea by sea and air; to cover this evacuation air and naval action in defense of the Korean

capital, of the harbor of Inchon, and of Kimpo airfield was authorized. The Seventh Fleet was to be started north from the Philippines so as to be more readily available should things get worse. Shipment to Korea of ammunition and of military hardware under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program would be expedited by all available means. Shortly after eleven the meeting broke up, and the military chiefs hastened to the Pentagon to communicate the decisions to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, USA, Commander in Chief, Far East Command.

Monday the 26th was another day of action. Around the world, outside the Iron Curtain, the news of the invasion of South Korea had shocked governments and peoples alike. But although feelings were both indignant and apprehensive, few saw any likelihood of direct action; the salvation of the Republic of Korea was up to the South Koreans. In the morning President Truman announced the decision to expedite arms aid to the Rhee government under the MDA Program, but no mention was made of the movements of American armed forces. In the evening a second conference of the military and civilian chiefs took place. On the far side of the globe, as the meeting began, ships and aircraft were evacuating Americans from Korea and the Seventh Fleet Striking Force had sortied from its bases in the Philippines and was steaming north.

The decisions taken at this second Blair House meeting were far-reaching. The Secretary of State had come with positive recommendations. His suggestion that air and naval support be given the Republic of Korea under sanction of the Security Council resolution of the day before, that increased military aid be extended to the Philippines and Indo-China, and that Formosa be neutralized, met with general approval. The need for rapid action made this use of force appear imperative; the continuing overestimate of the ROK Army, and the confidence that neither Soviets nor Chinese would intervene, made it appear sufficient. Little thought seems to have been given the question of whether to commit ground forces. The recommendations were accepted by the President, and a directive was at once sent General MacArthur authorizing him to use his air and naval forces against the invading army south of the 38th parallel, and instructing him to neutralize Formosa by the use of the Seventh Fleet.

This news was made public at noon on Tuesday the 27th. Following an earlier meeting with congressional leaders at the White House, the President announced that pursuant to the action of the Security Council he had ordered naval and air support of the Republic of Korea, and that he had instructed the Seventh Fleet to prevent either an attack on Formosa from the mainland or an invasion of China by the forces of Chiang Kai-shek. The mood of other governmental bodies matched his own: the House of Representatives extended the Selective Service Act by a vote of 315 to 4; in the Senate the action was unanimous. In the afternoon the Security Council met again at Lake Success to vote on an American-sponsored resolution which called upon members of the United Nations to assist the Republic of Korea in repelling the attack. Action was for a time delayed while the Indian and Egyptian delegates sought vainly to obtain instructions from their governments, but in the evening the vote was taken and the resolution passed.

Following so rapidly upon the President's announcement of American action, this move by the United Nations led to an extraordinary rise in spirit throughout the western world. For the first time within memory the democracies seemed to have produced a leader who would stand fast in time, and little heed was paid to Soviet denunciation of the U.N. action as illegal. But while hearts were high the news was increasingly bad: the forces of the Republic of Korea were disintegrating, the invaders were advancing almost unopposed, the capital of Seoul had fallen. On Thursday the 29th the gloom increased. The armies of the Korean Republic were proving weaker than anyone had expected and those of North Korea stronger; the threat of American air and naval action was dearly ineffective. In the afternoon the National Security Council met at the White House; inevitably, since the show of force seemed to have accomplished nothing, the discussion turned to the question of whether to commit ground troops. Here, in unexpected form, was the prospect of that war on the mainland of Asia against which all military authorities had warned. For such a war there were no plans, no detailed estimates of the forces required.

These, indeed, could only be guessed at, although doubtless it was still possible to postulate a distinction between policing a minor power like North Korea and warring with a more serious opponent. Although the discussion seems to have drifted in the direction of commitment, decision was deferred pending the receipt of further information from General MacArthur, who had flown to Korea for a personal reconnaissance of the battle front.

Shortly after midnight the report from the Supreme Commander came in. In a telecon discussion in the first hours of Friday morning General MacArthur stated that the line could not be held without American help, and recommended the immediate movement of one regimental combat team to the Korean front as nucleus for a possible build-up to two divisions for early offensive action. This in time would prove a notable underestimate of the required force, but the view that the invaders would cease and desist, once confronted by U.S. Army contingents, was shared in Washington. In any event the highest authority on the spot, the man who would be responsible for conducting the campaign, had spoken. The decision could not be deferred. A little before five in the morning the Secretary of the Army telephoned the President to tell him what General MacArthur had reported. The President said to send the troops.

Here was the full commitment, although its ultimate magnitude was as yet unforeseen. On the morning of Friday, 30 June, after meeting with the Secretaries of State and of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and congressional leaders, President Truman made public the new decisions. General MacArthur was authorized to bomb north of the 38th parallel as governed by military necessity, a naval blockade of North Korea would be proclaimed, and "certain supporting ground units" would be committed to action.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
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Chapter 3. War Begins
2. The Far East Command

Despite optimistic statements issuing from the upper levels, the readiness of the United States for war in the summer of 1950 was very doubtful. For the war with which the country found itself confronted, this was the more the case. The Army had a total of ten combat divisions, all but one understrength. The Marines had two, both undermanned. The Navy was in the process of being cut down and even the Air Force, despite public and congressional favor, had been forced to narrow its focus and channel its capabilities.

The interaction of budget ceiling and strategic plan had led to emphasis on long-range bombardment and the European theater, an emphasis reflected in the deployment of American strength. The ground forces were divided between the continent of Europe, the continental United States, and occupation duty in Japan. The Navy's larger half was in the Atlantic. The weight of the Strategic Air Command and of other Air Force units lay at home and in the forward European bases. On the assumption that the first and most important Communist objective was Western Europe, it may be said that this deployment proved itself. No war came there. But for the war that did come this posture was more than a little awkward.

American forces in the Orient in 1950 were organized into the presumably unified command of General MacArthur, Commander in Chief Far East Command, who was also, as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, responsible for the occupation of Japan. Occupation responsibilities bulked large at Headquarters, but in addition to these duties General MacArthur was charged with the defense of Japan, Okinawa, the Marianas, and the Philippines. To enable him to carry out these missions, forces of all three services had been assigned CincFE. Click here to view table

Notwithstanding the European orientation of strategy, the needs of the Japanese occupation had brought a large proportion of American ground strength to the Far East. On paper, Army Forces Far East was not unimpressive: its four divisions--the 7th, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, and the dismounted 1st Cavalry Division--organized as the United States Eighth Army, were commanded by Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, USA, who had been one of Patton's corps commanders in France. But all of Walker's divisions were understrength, with only two battalions to a regiment, and were undertrained and underequipped as well. No Army theater headquarters had been established, but the functions of such an organization were carried out by CincFE's staff.

The Far East Air Forces, the air component of General MacArthur's command, were commanded by Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer, USAF. In June 1950 FEAF contained five fighter and two bomber wings, a transport wing, and miscellaneous support units making up a total of some 1,200 aircraft. The principal mission of the Far East Air Forces, the air defense of Japan, Okinawa, Guam, and the Philippines, was reflected in the order of battle: of the 553 aircraft in organized units, 365 were F-80C jet fighters. These aircraft, which had recently replaced the piston-engined F-51 Mustang, had, as befitted their intended purpose, comparatively high performance. But their combat radius without external fuel tanks was limited to100 miles; with external fuel no bombs could be carried, and their operation required sizable modern airstrips. The efficiency of General Stratemeyer's command suffered from certain deficiencies of material, its engineering support was inadequate, and training had been restricted by budget cuts.

Joint training by the Army and Air Force in Japan had been minimal, in part owing to the defensive nature of their missions, in part to the emphasis in all American military planning on strategic rather than tactical air operations. The Air Force, it should be said, had indeed proposed some exercises at the division level which

would involve a working out of the mechanics of air support, and had suggested the creation of a Joint Operations Center. But occupation duties and the lack of suitable maneuver areas had adversely affected ground force readiness, and the Army, not wishing to sacrifice its program of small-unit training, had declined the offer. The result was that such joint exercises as were held were small in scale, and formal and cut and dried in nature.

Despite these limitations, the main strength of the Far East Command lay on the ground and in the air. Only a little over a third of the Navy's active strength was in the Pacific, only a fifth of that was in the Far East, and the naval component under Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy was very small. But although Naval Forces Far East was largely a housekeeping command, ComNavFE did control, in Task Force 96, a small amount of fighting strength, and in Task Force 90 the nucleus of an amphibious force.

The combat units of Task Force 96, Naval Forces Japan, were fast and able ships, but none mounted anything larger than a 5-inch gun. Juneau, Captain Jesse C. Sowell, flagship of Rear Admiral John M. Higgins' Support Group, was a younger sister and namesake of the light antiaircraft cruiser sunk by a Japanese submarine in 1942 while retiring after the Battle of Guadalcanal. With a designed displacement of 6,000 tons, she had a speed of better than 33 knots and mounted a main battery of 16 5-inch dual purpose guns. The four ships of Captain Halle C. Allan's Destroyer Division 91-Mansfield, De Haven, Collett, and Swenson--were 2,200-ton, 35-knot ships of the Sumner class, completed in 1944 and mounting six 5-inch guns each.

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In addition to this small fighting force, ComNavFE controlled a variety of auxiliary ships. The most important of these were those of Amphibious Group 1, Rear Admiral James H. Doyle: the command ship *Mount McKinley*, the attack transport *Cavalier* and the attack cargo ship *Union*, *LST 611*, and the fleet tug *Arikara*. This group, which held the tactical designation of Task Force 90 in the Naval Forces Far East organization, had recently arrived in Japan to conduct a program of amphibious training with units of the Eighth Army.

A third category of force at Admiral Joy's disposal consisted of the units of Mine Squadron 3, which were engaged in check-sweeping World War II minefields. Minron 3 contained six 136-foot, wooden-hulled, diesel-engined craft, and four I84-foot, twin-screw *Admirable* class AMs; but three of the latter were in caretaker status and the fourth, *Pledge*, in reduced commission. Finally, ComNavFE controlled a number of Japanese-manned ships belonging to the Shipping Control Administration, Japan--Scajap--which were employed in logistic support of the occupation and in repatriation of former Japanese prisoners of war from the continent of Asia.

The activities of Admiral Joy's headquarters, like those of the forces it controlled, had been limited to the peaceful routine of an occupation force. The staff totaled only 28 officers and 160 enlisted men. There were four officers in the operations section, five in plans, four in communications. Since the activities of naval aviation in the Western Pacific were centralized at Guam, the NavFE staff had no air or aerology departments. Although two officers qualified in mine warfare were authorized, none was aboard. Like everyone else in the armed services, Commander Naval Forces Far East had based his plans on the assumption of a major conflict with the Soviets which would be centered elsewhere. The operation plans in effect in June of 1950 were concerned with such matters as passive defense, security under air attack, and the evacuation of American citizens in emergency.

Naval base facilities in Japan were minimal. There was no logistic command, no representative of Service Forces Pacific Fleet to plan, coordinate, or procure. At Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, there was a minor ship repair facility which could perform routine upkeep, but which lacked specialized shops for torpedoes or for electronics repair; a supply section adequate to the support of the roughly 5,000 naval personnel and dependents in Japan and Japanese waters; an ordnance facility with some 3,000 tons of ammunition; and a naval hospital whose capacity had recently been reduced to 100 beds. At Sasebo in western Kyushu, where the Imperial Japanese Navy had formerly maintained a major base, there was an excellent harbor with extensive drydocking facilities. But other equipment was at a minimum, and the on-board complement was only 5 officers and 100 enlisted men. And neither Yokosuka nor Sasebo was well supplied with the material for underwater harbor

defense.

The single naval air base in Japan was the Naval Air Facility, Yokosuka, which supported two or three flying boats loaned by the Seventh Fleet for search and rescue missions. NAF Yokosuka had been but recently commissioned, rehabilitation of the buildings was still underway, only about five percent of the area of the former Japanese seaplane base was Navy-controlled, and Eighth Army was using the landing strip as a park for vehicles. As for land-based naval aviation, its total strength in Japan consisted of one target tow plane for antiaircraft gunnery training.

Fortunately, however, Task Force 90 and Task Force 96 were not the only naval units in Asiatic waters. Based in the Philippines, 1,700 miles to the southward, and under the command of Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble, there lay the Seventh Fleet, the principal embodiment of American naval power in the Western Pacific. Yet while rejoicing in the title of fleet, Struble's command, in Second World War terms, amounted to little more than a few small task units. There was a carrier "group" with its screen, a submarine group, the two patrol plane squadrons of Fleet Air Wing I, an evacuation group concerned with the safety of American citizens in emergency, and a variety of minor supporting units. The logistic group, which contained a small station reefer, a destroyer tender, and an oiler on shuttle service, constituted the total mobile fleet support in the Western Pacific, and was hard pressed to supply even the small Seventh Fleet.

Click here to view table

The Fleet's principal base of operations was on the island of Luzon, where the Navy, following the war, had developed new facilities at Subic Bay and an airfield at Sangley Point. Peacetime operations of the Seventh Fleet were under the control of Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet, Admiral Arthur E. Radford, but standing orders provided that, when operating in Japanese waters or in the event of an emergency, control would pass to Commander Naval Forces Far East. There were, however, certain problems implicit in this arrangement: Admiral Radford's area of responsibility included potential trouble spots outside the limits of the Far East Command; lacking an aviation section on his staff, the control of a carrier striking force and of patrol squadrons would present problems for ComNavFE; Admiral Struble was senior to Admiral Joy.

Although early postwar policy had called for the maintenance of two aircraft carriers in the Western Pacific, the reductions in defense appropriations had made this impossible: for some time prior to January 1950 no carrier had operated west of Pearl; current procedure called for the rotation of single units on six-month tours of duty. In these circumstances Admiral Struble's Seventh Fleet Striking Force, Task Force 77, was made up of a carrier "group" containing one carrier, a support "group" containing one cruiser, and a screening group of eight destroyers. The duty carrier in the summer of 1950 was *Valley Forge*, an improved postwar version of the *Essex* class, completed in 1946, with a standard displacement of 27,100 tons, a length of 876 feet, and a speed of 33 knots. Flagship of Rear Admiral John M. Hoskins, Commander Carrier Division 3, *Valley Forge* had reported in to the Western Pacific in May, at which time her predecessor, *Boxer*, had been returned to the west coast for navy yard availability. The 25th of June found *Valley Forge*, with the destroyers *Fletcher* and *Radford*, in the South China Sea, one day out of Hong Kong en route to the Philippines. Admiral Struble was in Washington; Admiral Hoskins, upon whom command of the Seventh Fleet had devolved, was at Subic Bay; the carrier's commanding officer, Captain Lester K. Rice, was acting as ComCarDiv 3.

The air group of *Valley Forge*, Carrier Air Group 5, Commander Harvey P. Lanham, was the first in the Navy to attempt the sustained shipboard operation of jet aircraft. Its complement of 86 planes was made up of two jet fighter squadrons with 30 Grumman F9F-2 Panthers; two piston-engined fighter squadrons equipped with the World War II Vought F4U-4B; and a piston-engined attack squadron of 14 Douglas Skyraider AD-4s. Over and above these five squadrons the group contained 14 aircraft, principally ADs, which were specially equipped and modified--"configurated" in current Navy jargon--for photographic, night, and radar missions. The fighter squadrons had enjoyed considerable jet experience prior to receiving their Panthers and moving aboard ship; the

group as a whole had conducted extensive training in close support of troops with the Marines at Camp Pendleton, California.

The submarine force under the operational control of Commander Seventh Fleet, administratively organized as Task Unit 70.9, consisted of four fleet submarines and a submarine rescue vessel; its principal activity had been in antisubmarine warfare training exercises with units of the Fleet and of Naval Forces Far East. One of the four boats, *Remora*, was at Yokosuka on loan to ComNavFE; *Cabezon* was at sea en route from the Philippines to Hong Kong; *Segundo*, with Commander Francis W. Scanland, the task unit commander, was at Sangley Point in the Philippines; *Catfish* was at Subic Bay. The submarine rescue ship *Florikan* was at Guam, where she was about to be relieved by *Greenlet*. No submarine tender was stationed in the Western Pacific, but limited quantities of spare parts and torpedo warheads were available from the destroyer tender *Piedmont* at Subic Bay.

Patrol plane activity in the Western Pacific, another Seventh Fleet monopoly, was centralized at Guam under control of Commander Fleet Air Wing I, Captain Etheridge Grant, who served also as Commander Task Unit 70.6 and Commander Fleet Air Guam. For long-range search and reconnaissance in the theater Captain Grant had at his disposal two squadrons of patrol aircraft. Patrol Squadron 28, a heavy landplane squadron with nine P4Y-2 Privateers, the single-tailed Navy modification of the Liberator, was based at Agana, Guam. At Sangley Point, Luzon, Patrol Squadron 47 operated nine Martin PBM-5 Mariner flying boats. In addition to these two squadrons and their supporting organizations, Fleet Air Wing I had a small seaplane tender, *Suisun*, which on 25 June was moored in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan.

For Captain Grant the impending crisis would not prove wholly unfamiliar, for the outbreak of war in December 1941 had found him commanding a seaplane tender in the Philippines. But his situation on 25 June was a somewhat scrambled one, for a second Mariner squadron, VP 46, was moving into the area as relief for VP 47, and the take-over process had already begun. Homeward bound, their tour in distant parts completed, the PBMs of VP 47 were widely dispersed. Two were at Yokosuka on temporary duty with Commander Naval Forces Far East, two were at Sangley Point, two were in the air and on their way, and three had already reached Pearl Harbor.

Such then was America's Western Pacific naval strength in June of 1950. Combat units assigned to ComNavFE and Commander Seventh Fleet totalled one carrier, two cruisers, three destroyer divisions, two patrol squadrons, and a handful of submarines. Not only was this a limited force with which to support a war on the Asiatic mainland: its southward deployment, with the principal base facilities at Guam and Luzon, made it ill-prepared for a campaign in Korea.

Yet if forces, bases, and plans alike seemed inadequate to the challenge of Communist aggression, there were certain mitigating factors. To employ force, whether for police action or for war, on the far side of an ocean, is to conduct an exercise in maritime power for which fighting strength, bases, and shipping are essential. Unplanned for though the emergency was, a sufficient concentration was still possible. The occupation forces in Japan contained a large fraction--four of ten Army divisions--of American ground strength. FEAF's air strength was by no means inconsiderable. Naval forces in the Far East could be reinforced, from the west coast in the first instance, in time from elsewhere. Limited though the fleet bases were in the narrow sense, in the larger context the base was Japan, and the metropolis of Asia offered many advantages in the form of airfields, staging areas, industrial strength, and Skilled labor. Additionally, and by no means least, there existed and was available a sizable Japanese merchant marine, which could help to provide the carrying capacity without which control of the seas is meaningless, and which could be employed to project the armies and their supplies to the far shore.

The war in Korea, moreover, was in a sense a suburban war, and one must go back to 1898 to find in the American experience a parallel to this proximity of base and combat areas. The distances between Key West and Cuba and between Sasebo and Pusan are much the same. It could be argued, perhaps, that Admiral Joy's situation presented certain parallels to that of Admiral Cervera, but there was at least one notable difference: in 1950,

despite the withdrawal of the entire occupation force, the populace of Japan proved reliable; in 1898, despite the presence of a Spanish army, the populace of Cuba did not. Doubtless to the Communists Korea seemed the most promising spot for aggression. In many ways it was also the area where the United States could best extemporize a reply.

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Chapter 3. War Begins
3. First Days of Naval Action

The main thrust of the Communist invasion, three infantry divisions with armored and air support, was directed initially toward the capital at Seoul. Poorly disposed for defense and considerably outnumbered at the scene of action, the Army of the Republic of Korea broke under the weight of the attack; the government fled to Taejon; Seoul fell. As the enemy pressed southward down the road toward Suwon, the South Korean Army appeared to be in the process of dissolution. On 30 June, after describing its heavy losses of supplies and equipment, General MacArthur had concluded that it was no longer capable of united action, and that only by commitment of American ground forces could the Han River line be held.

At sea the invasion was accompanied by a number of small unopposed landings along the east coast, which were magnified by rumor both as to number and as to location. These maritime efforts, which extended as far south as Samchok, would end with the arrival of United Nations naval forces, but in the first crucial hours of the war they were confronted only by the Navy of the Republic of Korea.

This Navy had its principal establishment at Chinhae, just west of Pusan, where the Japanese during their occupation had developed a considerable naval base with docks, barracks, petroleum storage, and a marine railway. Next in importance was the base at Inchon, seaport of the capital city, and rudimentary facilities had been established at Mukho and Pohang on the east coast, at Pusan and Yosu on the south, and at Mokpo and Kunsan on the shore of the Yellow Sea. At Inchon, on 25 June, there were four YMS, two steel-hulled ex-Japanese minecraft (JML), and the ROK Navy's single LST. At Mokpo, at the southwestern tip of the peninsula, there were two YMS and some small craft. Nine YMS were in the Pusan–Chinhae area along with some small craft, as was also the recently arrived *PC701, Bak Du San*, purchased by subscription of naval personnel. Three other PCs had been obtained from the United States, but these were still in the Hawaiian Islands, and so was the Chief of Naval Operations.

With all ships on the western and southern coasts, no strength was immediately available to oppose the east coast landings. Nevertheless the ROK units at once put to sea, and on the evening of the 25th there took place the most important surface engagement of the war. Northeast of Pusan *PC 701*, Commander Nam Choi Yong, ROKN, encountered a 1,000–ton armed steamer with some 600 troops embarked, and sank it after a running fight. Since Pusan, the only major port of entry available for the movement of supplies and reinforcements to South Korea, was at the time almost wholly defenseless, the drowning of the 600 was an event of profound strategic importance.

In Tokyo the 25th of June found the headquarters of Naval Forces Far East settled down for a normal peacetime weekend. Then the telephone rang, and when the Lieutenant Colonel of Marines who was Staff Duty Officer that day picked up the receiver he found himself talking to the Military Attaché at Seoul. This conversation put an end to holiday routine. Within minutes the headquarters had shifted to a state of readiness, and overnight it became clear that war, at least of a sort, was at hand.

The unexpected nature of the Korean involvement and the speed with which the crisis broke meant that most NavFE planning, like that of other military headquarters, had to be thrown out the porthole. But it was at least possible to salvage so much of it as was concerned with the evacuation of American citizens. On the 25th, as American civilians and their dependents were ordered out of the Seoul area by Ambassador Muccio, ComNavFE instructed Admiral Higgins to send *Mansfield* and *De Haven* to cover the exodus from the port of Inchon. The evacuation was an interservice affair: on the 26th, as the destroyers were steaming west to cover the departure

from Inchon, Air Force fighters orbited over the harbor; on the 27th loading of refugees was also commenced at Pusan, FEAF transport aircraft began to fly personnel out of the capital's airfield at Kimpo, and Air Force fighters destroyed seven enemy aircraft in the area of Seoul.

After getting the civilians out the next step was to get some ammunition in, under the accelerated MDA Program ordered by President Truman on the 25th. During the days of their imperial greatness the Japanese had talked of constructing a tunnel under the Korean Strait, but this grandiloquent scheme never reached the stage of action and the road to Korea remained, as in the days of Hideyoshi, a sea road. Ammunition from stocks available in Japan was therefore hastily loaded onto two ships bearing the agreeably symbolic names of *Sergeant Keathley* and *Cardinal O'Connell*. The operation order covering this movement was sent out by Admiral Joy's headquarters in the early hours of the 27th, and in the course of the next two days sergeant and prelate sailed forth to war.

The decision to give air and naval assistance to the Republic of Korea was made at Blair House on the evening of Monday the 26th, Washington time, midday of the 27th in the Far East. At 2015 that evening Admiral Joy's Operation Order 5-50, the basic order of the Korean naval campaign, was issued. In this dispatch ComNavFE informed his forces that President Truman had ordered the fullest possible support of South Korean units south of the 38th parallel "to permit these forces to reform," and had instructed the Seventh Fleet to take station to prevent either a Communist invasion of Formosa or the use of that island for operations against the mainland. Task Group 96.5, composed of *Juneau* and the four destroyers of Desdiv 91, was designated the South Korea Support Group, instructed to base at Sasebo, and ordered to patrol Korean coastal waters, oppose hostile landings and destroy vessels engaged in aggression, provide fire support to friendly forces, and cover shipping engaged in evacuation or in carrying supplies to South Korea. Five and a half hours later the order was amplified to designate as primary targets for the attention of the task group the coast and off-lying islands from Tongyong, west of Pusan, to Ulsan on the east, and the east coast sector between Samchok and Kangnung.

On the evening of the 27th, when ComNavFE's operation order was promulgated, Admiral Higgins' Support Group was widely dispersed. The flagship *Juneau*, with the task group commander embarked, was leaving Sasebo to investigate a reported North Korean landing on the island of Koje Do, southwest of Pusan; in the Yellow Sea *De Haven* was escorting a Norwegian freighter with the first evacuees from Inchon, while *Mansfield* awaited the sailing of a second load in a Panamanian ship; *Collett* and *Swenson* had been ordered down from Yokosuka to Sasebo. Early on the 28th *Juneau* anchored off the southeastern shore of Koje Do, a party was sent ashore by whaleboat, difficulties in communication with the inhabitants were somehow surmounted, and the fact established that the island remained peaceful and undisturbed. Following this check on his southern area of responsibility, Higgins headed north, and in the afternoon put the landing party ashore at Ulsan with similar result. With evening Juneau again got underway, and continued up the coast to patrol the area between Samchok and Kangnung, which was reported to have been occupied by the enemy.

In Korea the situation was shrouded in uncertainty, and available intelligence was both fragmentary and confusing. False reports had caused the investigation of Koje Do and Ulsan, and a more tragic instance of misdirected effort was now to follow. At 0203 on the morning of the 29th, in 37° 25' N, *Juneau* detected two groups of surface ships by radar. Since the South Korean Navy was reported to have retired south of 370, fire was opened, one target sunk, and the others dispersed. But the information, unfortunately, was in error: the ROK retirement was still in progress, the sunken target was the South Korean *JML 305*, and the action gave rise to Korean reports of a Russian cruiser in the Samchok area.

On the 29th, as *Juneau* continued her patrol, Admiral Higgins ordered *Swenson*, which had now reached Sasebo, to rendezvous with *Mansfield* in the Yellow Sea. During the day *De Haven* joined the flagship, and at 2311 *Juneau* commenced firing the first bombardment of the war. At Mukho half an hour's deliberate shooting, conducted with searchlight illumination and with target advice from an ROKN lieutenant, brought the expenditure against enemy personnel of 16 rounds of influence-fused 5-inch and more than 400 rounds of 5-inch antiaircraft

common, with what were felt to be excellent results.

The invasion of South Korea found Admiral Doyle's Amphibious Group busy with its training duties. On the morning of the 25th Task Force 90 got underway from Yokosuka, with elements of the 35th Regimental Combat Team embarked, to conduct landing exercises outside Tokyo Bay. Although operations were carried out on the 26th and 28th, in accordance with the training order, the attention of both teachers and pupils was progressively distracted by reports of happenings in Korea. During the second landing observers from the Far East Air Forces were ordered back to their stations; on completion of the exercise the ships returned at once to Yokosuka to debark the troops. On 30 June, as a movement of ground forces into Korea appeared increasingly probable, all ships of the Amphibious Group were placed on four-hour notice for getting underway.

No reports of enemy mining had as yet come in, although in time there would be plenty, but there was no lack of tasks for the small ships of Minron 3. The eight AMS were at once deployed on picket duty, harbor defense, and convoy escort. In this they were joined by *Pledge*, the only operational AM, while at Yokosuka the work of activating the other ships of Mindiv 32 was at once begun.

It was late on the 30th, Tokyo time, that President Truman approved the commitment of American troops. Early the next afternoon Admiral Joy's headquarters issued its Operation Order 7-50 assigning 16 Scajap LSTs to Admiral Doyle, and instructing him to lift the 24th Infantry Division, Major General William F. Dean, USA, from Fukuoka and Sasebo to Pusan. Pursuant to this order CTF 90 got underway at once with *Mount McKinley*, *Cavalier*, and *Union*, escorted by HMS *Hart*, and headed for Sasebo. The uncertainty which still existed as to the dimensions of this war was not diminished during the journey. Two doubtful sound contacts on submarines were reported by *Hart*, depth charges were dropped, and at midday of the 3rd, while rounding the southwestern tip of Kyushu, visual sighting of a surfaced submarine was made.

Admiral Doyle's ships reached Sasebo on the afternoon of the 3rd, only to find that the 24th Division had already begun its move. Two infantry companies with supporting artillery had been flown to Pusan on the 1st, and the rest of the division was hastily loading in locally available shipping to follow by sea. Since the situation seemed under control, the ships of Task Force 90 were retained at Sasebo for other employment.

While the few American naval units in Japanese waters were being committed to the support of the Korean Republic, Admiral Joy's command was increasing in size. Following the decision at the first Blair House meeting to start the Seventh Fleet toward Japan, a dispatch from the Chief of Naval Operations had directed its commander to send his carrier striking force, his submarines, and necessary supporting units, to report to ComNavFE at Sasebo. This order reached Admiral Hoskins on the 26th as the *Valley Forge* group was entering Subic Bay. At 0515 on the 27th, after emergency replenishment, the Striking Force sortied, accompanied by *Piedmont* and *Navasota*, and headed north. On the afternoon of the same day Admiral Joy assumed operational control, but feeling that Sasebo, in the rapidly developing circumstances, was a little close to the Russian air concentration at Vladivostok, diverted the force to Okinawa.

ComNavFE's Operation Order 5-50, issued that evening, instructed the Seventh Fleet to conduct surface and air operations to neutralize Formosa. On the morning of the 29th, pursuant to these instructions, Admiral Hoskins made his presence felt by flying 29 F4Us and ADs up Formosa Strait. At 0630 in the morning of 30 June Task Force 77 reached Okinawa and dropped anchor in Nakagusuku Wan, now known as Buckner Bay in honor of the commanding general of the Tenth Army, killed in June 1945 in the moment of victory. At this base, strategically located between Korea and Formosa, the fleet did have the protection of distance, but there were no antisubmarine defenses other than those provided by the force's own destroyers, and no stocks of ammunition.

The Seventh Fleet submarines, in the meantime, were also moving northward. *Segundo* and *Catfish* took on full loads of torpedo warheads from *Piedmont* at Subic Bay on the 26th, and on the next day sailed for Sasebo. *Cabezon* made a fast turnaround at Hong Kong and joined with the others on the 28th off the northern tip of Luzon. Revised orders from Commander Seventh Fleet changed their destination also from Sasebo to Okinawa,

and there they arrived on 30 June, to be joined next day by the submarine rescue vessel *Greenlet* from Guam. At Buckner Bay new orders were received, and on the 3rd *Greenlet* and her three charges sailed in company for Yokosuka.

The hasty redeployment of the Seventh Fleet also affected the patrol planes, and the homeward voyage of Patrol Squadron 47, so recently begun, was destined not to be completed. The two Mariners at Yokosuka were at once assigned to local antisubmarine patrol; those en route and those which had reached Pearl Harbor were recalled to the Western Pacific. One plane was lost in an accident at Guam, when it missed its buoy, grounded, and sank, but by 7 July six PBMs were operating out of Yokosuka. Two for the moment remained in the Philippines, but these would shortly fly north to Japan, as aircraft from the incoming VP 46 reached Sangley Point and Buckner Bay.

With the transfer of Seventh Fleet forces to his operational control, Admiral Joy acquired all immediately available American naval strength. Considering the unpredictable responsibilities of his situation this was little enough, and a most helpful addition soon came in the form of British Commonwealth units commanded by Rear Admiral Sir William G. Andrewes, KBE, CB, DSO, RN, Flag Officer Second in Command, Far Eastern Station. On 29 June, following the vote of the Security Council for military assistance to the Republic of Korea, the British Admiralty placed Royal Navy units in Japanese waters at the disposition of ComNavFE; on the next day similar action was taken by the Australian government; in Canada three destroyers were ordered to prepare to sail; from New Zealand came promise of the early dispatch of two frigates.

Commonwealth naval strength in Japanese waters was by no means inconsiderable. Andrewes' command included *Triumph*, a 13,000-ton light carrier, completed in 1946 and operating about 40 aircraft; two 6-inch gun cruisers, heavily armored *Belfast*, the largest cruiser in the Royal Navy, and *Jamaica*; three destroyers and four frigates. The hospital ship *Maine*, soon to be added to the force, was for some time to be the only such vessel available for the evacuation of casualties from Korea. In the absence of American naval air bases in Japan the Royal Australian Air Force seaplane base at Iwakuni on the Inland Sea, which was at once made available, was to be of great assistance.

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On the evening of the 29th ComNavFE requested Admiral Andrewes to send *Jamaica* and the frigates to join Admiral Higgins' Support Group, and to proceed with his flagship *Belfast*, the carrier *Triumph*, and the two British destroyers to Okinawa and report to Commander Seventh Fleet. Early in the morning of the 30th Admiral Joy assumed operational control of Andrewes' forces, and in the evening modified Operation Order 5-50 to include the Commonwealth units for Korean operations only, thus exempting them from the neutralization of Formosa and the Pescadores, which remained a purely American affair.

With these augmented but by no means extravagant forces Admiral Joy confronted his tasks. He was required to evacuate American citizens, support the Republic of Korea, blockade the North Korean coastline, and at the same time to remain prepared for the unpredictable in connection with Formosa, the protection of his flanks, and a possible expansion of the conflict. And as his responsibilities and his forces grew, further difficulty was presented by the inadequacy of his staff and of those of subordinate commands. The total strength, officer and enlisted, of the NavFE staff at the end of June was 188; by November it would have reached 1,227. But in the first weeks, before reinforcements arrived, the job had to be done with what was on hand. Rarely in the history of 20th century warfare can so many have been commanded by so few.

It was not done without effort. The Plans Section went to heel and toe watches, 12 hours on and 12 off. The Operations Officer moved in a cot and did such sleeping as he could in his office; his people found themselves working a 12-hour day, with an additional four-hour night watch four days out of five. For Communications the situation became a nightmare as high-precedence traffic skyrocketed; in the first days the load of encrypted messages went up by a factor of 15, and was further complicated by great quantities of

interservice and United States-British dispatches.

Somehow they made do. Even as anguished requests were sent off to Washington for more personnel, the round the clock efforts of those on the spot were accomplishing the reorganization and redeployment of available naval strength. To Naval Forces Japan had now been added the Seventh Fleet and British Commonwealth units; with these accessions Admiral Joy had gained all that would be available until reinforcements could come from afar. This strength was organized in three principal groups: Naval Forces Japan, the Seventh Fleet, and the Amphibious Force.

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Of these, Admiral Doyle's Amphibious Force Far East, Task Force 90, had been moved forward from Yokosuka to Sasebo, where it was awaiting instructions. Under the direct control of ComNavFE, Task Force 96, Naval Forces Japan, was engaged in various tasks. The long range aircraft of VP 47 had been organized as the Search and Reconnaissance Group, Task Group 96.2, under Captain John C. AIderman, Chief of Staff to Commander Fleet Air Guam, who had been on leave in Japan at the onset of hostilities and found himself shanghaied for this purpose. In Korean waters the Support Group, Task Group 96.5, originally consisting of *Juneau* and Destroyer Division 91, had been reinforced by *Jamaica*, *Shoalhaven*, and *Black Swan*, and *Alacrity* was about to join up. Although Admiral Andrewes' ships had received the designation of Task Group 96.8, these for the moment were divided between the Support Group and the Seventh Fleet Striking Force, which had reached Okinawa on 30 June. Joined on the next day by Triumph, *Belfast*, *Cossack*, and *Consort*, Task Force 77 remained for the moment poised between Korea and Formosa.

No less difficult than the problems of concentration and control of forces were those of their support. The shore activities of Naval Forces Japan had been centralized at Fleet Activities Yokosuka, with the secondary base at Sasebo in what approximated caretaker status. But although the workload at Yokosuka was at once increased, as activation of reserve minesweepers and frigates was begun, war in Korea soon reversed the roles of the two bases. Sasebo is more than 500 miles closer to Pusan, a fact of obvious importance and one emphasized by the original orders from the Chief of Naval Operations to the Seventh Fleet. At Sasebo an immediate expansion was undertaken, and effort made to provide more personnel; the lack of antisubmarine defenses brought urgent action to provide at least a token patrol off the entrance, and this was accomplished on the 29th.

Two more organizational problems faced Admiral Joy in the first hectic days: the provision of some sort of escort for shipping en route to Pusan, and the establishment of the blockade of North Korea, recommended by the Chief of Naval Operations on 30 June and ordered by the President next day. These matters were dealt with by ComNavFE in Operation Order 8-50 promulgated on 3 July and effective on the 4th, which made further refinements in the organization of Task Force 96.

Escort of shipping between Japan and Korea had so far been on a wholly catch-as-catch-can basis: *Arikara* and *Shoalhaven* had been so used on 1 and 2 July, *Jamaica* and *Collett* on the 3rd. But now provision was made for an Escort Group, Task Group 96.1, with a commander and units to be assigned when available. Shortly the job would be turned over to the frigates under Captain A. D. H. Jay, DSO, DSC, RN, commanding officer of *Black Swan*.

Blockade and inshore work south of latitude 37° was assigned the ROK Navy, shortly to become Task Group 96.7, with such assistance as might become available from the Far East Air Forces and from any NavFE units that happened by. For the coastline north of 37° separate East and West Coast Support Groups were established: in the east the job was entrusted to Admiral Higgins' Task Group 96.5, in the west to the Commonwealth units of Task Group 96.8. The northern limits of the blockade were set at 41° on the east coast and at 39°30' in the west, well south of the northern frontiers, and the precaution implicit in these boundaries was emphasized by a specific admonition to all units to keep well clear of Manchurian and Russian waters. Important though this statement of policy was, it remained for some time of purely academic importance, for emergency

calls for gunfire support along the coast were such as to limit the blockading forces to only intermittent sweeps north of the 38th parallel.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 3. War Begins
4. Air Strikes, Coastal Bombardment, Flank Patrols

With supplies and troops on the move, and with gunnery ships converging on the Korean coast, it remained to reach inland by air. Air strikes could destroy the North Korean Air Force. Air strikes could harass the invading formations, interrupt their supply, and so help in the ground battle which was about to be joined. Air supremacy, indeed, seemed the key to modern war: without it victory was impossible; with it victory followed as the night the day. Its attainment was a matter of utmost urgency.

The Far East Air Forces had been committed, along with the Navy, to the support of thc Korean Republic on 27 June; like the Navy they had already seen action. On the first day of the invasion Air Force fighters on patrol over the Sea of Japan had been fired on south of the parallel by a small North Korean convoy; two days later transport planes had flown American nationals out of Kimpo and fighters covering the evacuation had destroyed some enemy aircraft; the first missions in support of the ROK Army had been dispatched on the 28th.

Like the rest of the defense establishment, FEAF had planned on a different war. The 19th Bombardment Group at Guam, the only such unit in the Far East, was trained for strategic attack. The equipment and training of the fighter groups stationed in Japan had been tailored to the mission of air defense, a responsibility which the coming of war in Korea did little to diminish, and which, for a time, it promised perhaps to emphasize. Nevertheless the decision to commit American forces was followed by a rapid movement of the bombers to Okinawa, whence they flew their first missions against the invader, and by concentration of available fighter strength in the Fukuoka area in Kyushu, where the Fifth Air Force, Lieutenant General Earle E. Partridge, USAF, set up an operations center. But although these Kyushu airfields were the closest available to Korea, the limited endurance of the F-8oC permitted it to remain only very briefly in the target area, and effective operations waited upon the establishment of Korean bases, the manufacture of new wing tanks, or a change in aircraft type.

Lack of target information for the bombers and the limited capabilities of Air Force fighters placed great premium upon carrier-borne aviation. Never, perhaps, had the virtues of free movement upon the face of the waters shone so brightly, even to those who had long derided this instrument of war. On 29 June, as his Seventh Fleet Striking Force was approaching Buckner Bay, Admiral Struble flew into Tokyo from Washington. By presidential proclamation and NavFE operation order the mission of the Seventh Fleet was the neutralization of Formosa, but the rapid deterioration of the situation in Korea raised pressing questions concerning its employment there. Early on the 30th Struble queried his staff by dispatch as to how soon *Valley Forge* and *Triumph* could conduct a first strike in the area of the 38th parallel, and in a conference with General MacArthur, Admiral Joy, and General Stratemeyer, the decision was reached to strike objectives in the Pyongyang area. First emphasis would be given to the airfield complex of the North Korean capital, second priority to the railroad yards and to the bridges over the Taedong River. Following these discussions Struble flew on to Okinawa to rejoin his force, and early in the evening ComNavFE promulgated Operation Order 6–50 governing the employment of the carrier striking force.

The prospect of operating this mixed force presented some problems, owing to the differences between British and American aircraft types and to the fact that *Triumph's* maximum speed of 23 knots was 10 knots slower than that of *Valley Forge*. But the British were eager to go; many of their officers had had experience in joint operations in the Second World War and the two forces had recently held joint maneuvers; the advantages outweighed the difficulties. Although obscurity still surrounded the intentions of Communist submarines, Seventh Fleet forces had already reported two contacts, one some distance off Okinawa, one at the entrance of Buckner

Bay; the Seventh Fleet submarine commander was therefore drafted as antisubmarine warfare adviser to ComCardiv 3. On the evening of 1 July Task Force 77, now enlarged to two carriers, two cruisers, and ten destroyers, sortied from Buckner Bay and headed northwest and north toward the launching area in the Yellow Sea.

Along the Korean coastline, following the Mukho bombardment of the evening of the 29th, *Juneau* and *DeHaven* had continued on patrol. The British cruiser *Jamaica* had reported to Admiral Higgins by radio at 1940, and had requested a rendezvous, and on the next day *Black Swan* also checked in by dispatch. But radio communications had become clogged, owing to the sudden expansion of high-precedence traffic, and communications with the British were for the moment worst of all: the instructions for a rendezvous never reached the British ships, and his allies had to seek out Admiral Higgins by intuitive means.

Nevertheless the clans were gathering. On the west coast, where *Swenson* had joined *Mansfield* on 30 June, the patrol of areas Yoke and Zebra continued without contact with the enemy. On the east coast, following conferences with southbound ROK naval personnel, *Juneau* returned to Mukho to expend a further 43 rounds of 5-inch VT against troop positions and a shore battery. *Collett* came up from Pusan, where she had embarked ROK interpreters, signalmen, and liaison officers for distribution throughout the force, and at 2200 *Jamaica* joined. On the 1st, *Alacrity* and *Black Swan* arrived, and the day was spent in patrolling the coast and reorganizing the Support Group. *DeHaven* and *Collett* were detached to Sasebo to fuel and to escort troopships to Pusan; *Alacrity* was ordered into the Yellow Sea to relieve *Mansfield* in Area Yoke; *Juneau*, *Jamaica*, and *Black Swan* continued on east coast patrol.

On the morning of 2 July the South Korean Support Group returned to action. At 0615 bow waves were sighted close inshore, and investigation disclosed four torpedo boats and two motor gunboats heading north from Chumunjin, whither they had escorted ten motor trawlers loaded with ammunition. As the cruisers put on speed to intercept the enemy, the torpedo boats, with more bravery than discretion, turned to attack. Fire was opened at 11,000 yards, and by the time the range had closed to 4,000 one PT had been sunk and one stopped, a third was heading for the beach, and the fourth was escaping seaward. The final score of the engagement was three torpedo boats and both gunboats destroyed, and two prisoners taken by *Jamaica*. Following this first engagement with the North Korean Navy, also in effect the last, the cruisers bombarded shore batteries at Kangnung, and late in the day *Jamaica* was sailed for Sasebo to fuel.

The 3rd of July saw a number of dispersed skirmishes around the Korean coastline. Along the convoluted western shore Communist activities had extended far south of the formal battleline, and in the evening the ROK *YMS 513* caught and sank three small boats unloading military supplies at Chulpo. On the east coast *Juneau* finished off the ammunition trawlers at Chumunjin, and the British frigate *Black Swan* was subjected to the first enemy air attack of the war.

Although the North Korean Air Force, in the first days of conflict, had performed useful services in demoralizing ROK troops, its strength in any serious terms was small. Estimates of its composition as of the outbreak of hostilities varied between some 75 and 130 aircraft, none of very recent types. But on 2 July ComNavFE had alerted the Support Group against possible air attack, and at 2012 on the 3rd two enemy fighters, thought to have been Stormoviks, came in on *Black Swan* from over the land and out of the haze, inflicted minor structural damage, and escaped without being hit. Fortunate in their evasive action, these pilots were doubly fortunate in their assignment that day, for their colleagues back at Pyongyang had just received a thorough working over by the aircraft of Task Force 77. In any event such attacks were not to be soon repeated: the efforts of Seventh Fleet and Fifth Air Force fighters and the airfield attacks by Bomber Command speedily demobilized the North Korean Air Force. *Black Swan's* experience remained for some time unique, and not until 23 August did another U.N. ship undergo attack from the air.

Since the evening of 1 July Task Force 77 had been steaming north from Buckner Bay, and by early

morning of the 3rd Admiral Struble's Striking Force had reached the designated launching point. There, in the middle of the Yellow Sea, the force was some 150 miles from the target area, but only 100 miles from Chinese Communist airfields on the Shantung Peninsula and less than 200 miles from the Soviet air garrison at Port Arthur. The air defense problem, therefore, was potentially somewhat larger than the size of the North Korean Air Force would indicate; like the submarine situation, it required a certain investment in defensive measures. At 0500 *Valley Forge* launched combat and antisubmarine patrols; beginning at 0545 *Triumph* flew off 12 Fireflies and 9 Seafires for an attack on the airfield at Haeju, and 15 minutes later *Valley Forge* commenced launching her strike group. Sixteen Corsairs loaded with eight 5-inch rockets each, and 12 Skyraiders carrying 1,600pound bombloads were launched against the Pyongyang airfield. When the propeller-driven attack planes had gained a suitable headstart, *Valley Forge* catapulted eight F9F-2 Panthers, whose higher cruising speed would bring them in first over the target area.

No serious opposition was encountered by the American jets as they swept in over the North Korean capital. Two Yaks were destroyed in the air, another was damaged, and nine aircraft were reported destroyed on the ground. For the enemy, this sudden appearance of jet fighters more than 400 miles from the nearest American airfield was both startling and salutary. Quite possibly, as one American commander observed, it may have deterred a sizable commitment of aircraft to North Korean bases.

Following the Panthers in, the Corsairs and Skyraiders bombed and rocketed hangars and fuel storage at the airfield. Both at Pyongyang and at Haeju enemy antiaircraft opposition was negligible, and no plane suffered serious damage. In the afternoon aircraft from *Triumph* flew a second strike, and a second attack was launched by *Valley Forge* against the marshalling yards at Pyongyang and the bridges across the Taedong River. Considerable damage was reported inflicted on locomotives and rolling stock, but the bridges survived this effort.
Click here to view map

In view of the Formosan commitment, the carrier strikes had been originally planned as a one-day affair. But this had been modified during the approach, owing to the "rapidly deteriorating Korean situation," and General MacArthur had authorized the attack to continue as practicable beyond the first day. Targets for the second day, selected by CincFE, were designated by dispatch on the night of the 2nd, with first priority given the railroad facilities and bridges in the neighborhood of Kumchon, just north of the parallel on the main line from Pyongyang to Seoul, second priority to similar installations at Sariwon, halfway between the two capitals, and third priority to those near Sinanju, where the main road and rail lines from Manchuria cross the Chongchon River.

With a fine disregard of these instructions Task Force 77 celebrated the Glorious Fourth with further attacks on Pyongyang. This time a break was made in one of the Taedong River bridges, some locomotives were destroyed, and some small ships in the river were attacked. Antiaircraft opposition had increased somewhat over that of the previous day, four ADs were damaged, and one, unable to lower its flaps, landed fast and bounced over the barrier, destroying three planes and damaging six more. With completion of flight operations the Striking Force retired southward. On the 5th Admiral Andrewes, with *Belfast*, *Cossack* and *Consort*, was detached to join the blockading forces in compliance with orders from ComNavFE, Admiral Struble flew to Tokyo by carrier plane, and Task Force 77 continued on to Buckner Bay. There it arrived on 6 July, and there it was retained until the 16th.

On the east coast, on 4 July, *Juneau* and *Black Swan* worked up and down the shore between Samchok and Chumunjin, firing on bridges and on the coastal road. On the 5th *Jamaica* returned from Sasebo, *Juneau* retired to replenish fuel and ammunition, and for the next few days the bombardment duty was left in the hands of the British.

The 5th of July, which saw Task Force 77 retiring southward and *Juneau* completing her second tour of firing at coastal targets, saw also the beginning of the ordeal of the American foot soldier. As early as 27 June an

Advance Command Group under Brigadier General John H. Church, USA, had been established at Suwon, some 25 miles south of Seoul, to help in reorganizing ROK forces and to expedite logistic assistance. But events soon demonstrated the optimism of this assignment, and on 30 June, with the arrival of the North Korean People's Army momentarily expected, this group was withdrawn to the southward. As ADCOM was retiring the first units of the 24th Infantry Division were being flown into Korea, and as the rest of the division was hastily embarking in Japan this advanced element, two infantry companies with supporting artillery under Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith, USA, began its northward movement from Pusan. On the 5th Task Force Smith made contact with the enemy at Osan, south of Suwon, where it ran into an entire North Korean infantry division with armored support. From 08oo to 1500 the fight went on, at which time the survivors, outmaneuvered, outflanked, and most of all outnumbered, withdrew with the loss of all equipment save small arms. Twelve miles back down the road a larger force underwent the same fate, and the Americans were forced back on Chonan, where they would hold to 8 July.

The war was now ten days old. American citizens had been evacuated; a carrier air strike had been made against the enemy capital and the enemy air force; the east coast invasion route was under fire from naval guns. In the air the Far East Air Forces were putting forth their best efforts. On the ground the Army had engaged the enemy. Across the Korean Strait a stream of shipping was flowing into Pusan where, prior to the arrival of an Army port company, the unloading of 55 ships with 15,000 troops and 1,700 vehicles was handled by two ECA employees, Alfred Meschter and Milton Nottingham. In Korea the situation was being dealt with to the limit of the abilities of the forces available. There remained the problem of the northern and southern flanks.

What the dimensions of this problem might be, no one knew. If the invasion of South Korea had surprised the United States, and had shown how wrongly intelligence had been evaluated, what faith could be put in estimates of Communist intentions elsewhere? Suddenly capabilities became important. The State Department had warned all hands on 26 June of the possibility that Korea was but the first of a series of coordinated moves; the military forces of the United States had gone on world-wide alert; in the Mediterranean the Sixth Fleet had put to sea. In the immediate theater of operations, no less than on the world scene, possibilities were unpleasant and visibility poor. The Joint Chiefs, it is true, had estimated that there would be no Soviet or Chinese intervention, but there was plenty of history, including a day at Pearl Harbor, to teach the outpost commander that estimates make poor weapons.

What of the northern neighbor, whose airfields at Vladivostok and Port Arthur flanked the Korean peninsula and were less than two hours flying time from Japan? What of the estimated four-score submarines based in the Vladivostok area? For the air threat, which had caused Admiral Joy to divert the Seventh Fleet to Buckner Bay, FEAF's fighter strength provided some counter, but the submarine situation was less satisfactory. The excitement of the first week of conflict had brought forth eight reports of submarine sightings, ranging from Okinawa to the Sea of Japan, and while most were doubtless in error they at least posed serious questions. Harbor defense equipment was lacking in the Far East, and the shortage of antisubmarine units was acute: of the three American destroyer divisions in the theater, two were needed to provide a minimum sound screen for *Valley Forge*. Of necessity, therefore, the patrol planes of VP 47 were employed on local antisubmarine patrol and in the escort of shipping, and long range search had to await the coming of reinforcements.

What were the intentions of the Communist Chinese? In Korea their capabilities could for the moment be largely disregarded, but ComNavFE had been instructed to use the Seventh Fleet to neutralize Formosa, and to prevent attack in either direction across Formosa Strait. Here Chiang's forces presented no problem, but the Communists had the capability, and both the Generalissimo and Admiral Struble thought an August effort wholly possible. The implications of such a development, added to the situation in Korea, greatly outweighed Admiral Joy's new accretions of force, and he may well have wondered what tools he was supposed to use to do this job. Some show of muscle, at least, had been made by *Valley Forge* as she steamed north, when she flew an air parade over Formosa Strait and the city of Taipei. But the chance that more would be required, as well as problems of

logistic support, had made it necessary, following the Pyongyang strikes, to return Task Force 77 to Okinawa.

If Formosa was to be defended, coordinated planning was obviously necessary, and the state of Nationalist morale was such as to require stiffening. Arriving in Tokyo on the afternoon of 5 July, Struble had proposed a prompt resumption of carrier strikes, this time from the Sea of Japan. But decision on these was delayed, the talk turned to the Formosa problem, and the suggestion of a visit to that island was approved by General MacArthur. On the 6th, Commander Seventh Fleet flew back to Buckner Bay, and on the next day boarded a destroyer for a high-speed run to Taipei and two days of talks with the Generalissimo and the Nationalist military. Another few days would see the Formosa Strait under reconnaissance by planes of Fleet Air Wing I, but the question of a surface patrol was more difficult. With the gunnery ships committed up to their ears in Korea, and with the situation there calling ever more urgently for Task Force 77, all that remained were the submarines of the Seventh Fleet. On 18 July *Catfish* was sailed from Yokosuka for a reconnaissance of the China coast, and was followed on the next day by *Pickerel*.

Finally, the northern sector, so great in undisclosed potentialities, was also brought under surveillance. On 7 July the first patrol plane reinforcements reached the Far East, and the long range P2V Neptunes of VP 6 were at once assigned to search in the Sea of Japan. On the 23rd the submarine *Remora*, escorted by *Greenlet*, headed north from Yokosuka for a patrol of La Pévrouse Strait.

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Chapter 4. Help on the Way
1. The Strategic Problem

ON BOTH SIDES of the Pacific the invasion of South Korea was followed by a period of violent activity. Along its western rim the forces of the Far East Command, so suddenly committed, were bending every effort to evacuate friendly nationals, to support the Republic of Korea, to check the North Korean invaders, and to guard the flanks. Far to the eastward the government of the United States, hastily gathering reinforcements and preparing to move them across the world's largest ocean to the scene of action, girded itself for an effort to influence history by sea power.

For this effort, however unexpected, there was no lack of precedent: if less all-embracing than some of its disciples have thought, the influence of sea power has still been one of profound importance. Seven-tenths of the earth's surface is wet, and the capability of moving goods and services, including armies, across this surface, and of restricting such movements on the part of others, is a very considerable one. Since most civilized activities involve the movement of goods, the history of civilization is in large degree the history of transport routes, and of those who have controlled them. Through their private Mediterranean and their unmatched roads the Romans controlled the ancient world; through their domination of medieval trade routes the castle d barons placed their impress upon their times; in recent centuries much history has revolved around the story of the oceans.

With the development of sailing ship technology the states of western Europe entered upon a great age of competitive expansion, which by the 18th century saw the nations of the Atlantic littoral locked in struggle for control of overseas wealth. The upshot of these wars was the dominance of Great Britain, an island nation difficult to invade, located to windward across the western approaches to the continent, and with bases scattered at the narrow places of the extra-European world. So situated, the British could withstand all comers, and could bring down mighty enemies through policies of alliance and subsidy, assisted by the freedom of action conferred by sea control which made possible descent at will along the European coastline. It is a commonplace that the peaceful world order of the 19th century rested in large measure upon the Royal Navy.

But the influence of history upon sea power has also been profound, and even as this classic period was celebrated by its historian the foundations were shifting. With the improvement of land communications the inner regions of Europe developed rapidly in population, wealth, and power. Effective and economical movement of goods was no longer a maritime monopoly, and land transport increasingly approximated that in a fluid medium. In Europe there followed an inward displacement of the disturber of the peace, from Napoleon to the Kaiser, from Hitler to Stalin, while across the oceans new power centers, arose with the new industrialization of the United States and of Japan. These developments led to the new strategic formulations of the 20th century, while at the same time the developments of the new technology powerfully modified the nature and conduct of war.

In place of the world of the sailing ship there developed a world based on the possibilities of coal and oil. In place of overseas empire internal development was emphasized. In place of the single European power center there now existed three, and in warfare there developed a third dimension. Faced in these changing circumstances by threatening new rivals, and struggling to maintain the world they knew, the maritime powers of Europe now looked overseas for essential supplies and reinforcements, and to the New World to redress the balance of the Old. Off the coast of Asia the adaptable, prolific, and xenophobic Japanese gazed southward toward the resources of the Indies. If the changes of the industrial age had downgraded the oceans as the source of commercial wealth and had produce new inland concentrations of power, they gave added emphasis to ocean high ways as sources of salvation construed in mundane terms of money, men, and oil. As defense of the rimlands against the interior

superseded the struggle for distant colonies, the unique importance of the battle fleet was modified, the set-piece battle declined in importance, and the far shore replaced the enemy fleet as the focus of operator. But the continuing struggle for the control of ocean routes remained the most important of all. It became also one of the costliest: between 1939 and 1945 more than 72,000 lives were lost in the Battle of the Atlantic.

To the western powers, therefore, the two wars with Germany fell in the same strategic mold: initial resistance to the prepared aggressor while strength was mustered in the rear and preparation made to fight things through. The time required for this evolution had, of necessity, to be bought by those on the line: by Britain's contemptible little army and the taxis of the Marne, by the RAF and the Royal Navy, and in both wars, be it said, by mighty Russian formations on the eastern front. In some senses the war against Japan was different, yet this last great struggle for overseas empire followed the same sequence of expansion, containment, and return. For the nations of the west, for those who liked the world as it was and resisted violent change, this pattern clearly posed three requirements. The line had to be held against disaster; control of the seas had to be gained and maintained; these things having been done, it was necessary to mobilize and move in the reserve. Failure in one of these requirements meant failure in all.

There was thus imposed upon the west a maritime strategy in which final victory on land resulted from the exploitation of the seas. Even in the second war this remained true. Hitler's advance stopped at the Channel; Rommel's African operations were a function of the struggle for the central Mediterranean. Control of the seas gave access to the resources which sustained and the reinforcements which strengthened Great Britain. British and American maritime power kept Russia in the war, forced the Germans to disperse their defenses, and delivered a concentrated and irresistible assault. Naval force severed the Japanese from their essential resources, brought the bombers to Saipan, and prepared the invasion it made unnecessary.

The end of the second war found the United States the dominant maritime power of the world. In many respects its position approximated that of Great Britain in the 19th century. It possessed the world's largest navy; it maintained bases and forces in being at various points about the globe. If the American flag merchant marine was not, like that of Britain at an earlier date, the world's greatest, Americans controlled a very large tonnage sailing under foreign flags and had access for emergency use to most of the world's shipping. Along with these trappings of power the United States had also inherited the responsibilities, together with such lessons concerning the conduct of these affairs as history seemed to teach.

Chief of these lessons, it seemed, was that of the chronic unpreparedness of the western powers. Minimum forces in the line, inadequate naval strength, and unmobilized reserves had twice brought them close to catastrophe. The appearance of a new aggressor, therefore, had been followed by the deployment to the Mediterranean of the Sixth Fleet, reinforcement of the Strategic Air Command, and the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. On one side of the world, at least, and within the limits of presumed budgetary capabilities, it seemed the lessons had been learned. So far as the peninsula of Europe was concerned the defenses were going up.

Then, shockingly, the same strategic problem was presented on a smaller and more distant peninsula. Once again the race was on to manipulate the variables of space, time, and movement capacity so as to check the invader and turn defeat into victory. Once again, after the first few days of optimism, the outcome of the race seemed unpredictable. The North Koreans had tanks and aircraft, the South Koreans did not. The North Koreans, their armies loaded with veterans of the Chinese Civil War and with even a few who had fought at Stalingrad, had experienced combat leadership; the South Koreans did not. The Communist powers of Asia had military stockpiles far exceeding those available to the government of Syngman Rhee. Yet even these stockpiles were not limitless: the industrial base of Communist aggression lay far to the west in European Russia, and the capacity of the trans-Siberian railway was only some 17,000 tons a day, less than that of the port of Pusan, much less than that of Pacific Ocean shipping.

Having taken up the challenge of the 25th of June, the maritime world for the third time in a century faced excruciating problems of time and distance. From the 38th parallel north of Seoul, where the main invading force came down across the border, the airline distance to Pusan is some 225 miles. From Pusan to San Francisco by the great circle route is 4,914 miles, and by way of Pearl Harbor a thousand more. The task which faced the United States in mid-summer 1950 was that of equalizing these distances.

It was on this mission of equalization that Task Force Smith flew to Pusan and entrained for the north. It was not an impressive force: two companies of infantry, one company of field artillery, two mortar platoons and one of recoilless rifles, six rocket launching teams. The emergency which brought it to Korea was one for which it had neither planned nor trained. Others, however, had gone before it on a similar errand. Like the British Expeditionary Force of another generation at Mons, like the RAF in the September sky ten years before, like the Americans and Filipinos at Bataan, the navies in the Java Sea, and the carrier pilots at Midway, Task Force Smith and those who followed were put in to hold the line. Whether this commitment would be justified depended on the speed with which help came. To come, it had to cross the seas.

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Chapter 4. Help on the Way
2. Troops and Supplies

The troops and supplies, so urgently needed in Korea, could come in the first instance only from within the Far Eastern theater. In the first days of war, ammunition had been sent in on the *O'Connell* and *Keathley*, and Admiral Doyle's Amphibious Group had been ordered down to Sasebo. On 1 July, as Task Force Smith was flown to Pusan, the rest of the 24th Division had begun a hurried embarkation, at Sasebo and Inland Sea ports, in vessels belonging to the Shipping Control Administration, Japan. Escort for the priceless cargo carried by these Scajap ships was provided by the fleet tug *Arikara*, a somewhat limited screening force to represent the greatest naval power on earth.

The Scajap fleet, Japanese manned and Japanese supported but operating under occupation force control, held the designation of Task Group 96-3 in the organization of Naval Forces Japan. In the emergency of 1950 its 12 freighters and 39 LSTs were to prove a priceless asset, and beginning with the movement of the 24th Division the Scajap ships would be used to the limit in intra-area lift. But the principal responsibility for over-water transportation, both by statute and by order of CincFE, fell upon the Military Sea Transportation Service.

The Military Sea Transportation Service is a unified logistic organization, established within the Navy Department to provide, under a single authority, the necessary sea transport for Defense Department l cargo and personnel, save only that handled by the fleet itself. As such it had absorbed the old Naval Transportation Service and the ships and seagoing functions of the Army Transportation Corps. Headed by a vice admiral responsible to the Chief of Naval Operations and administered through a naval command structure, but staffed largely by civil service personnel, the Service was designed to function both as a scheduling and as an operating agency. In the first capacity MSTS chartered from commercial operators the space required for the greater portion of Defense Department sea lift. In the second, in addition to its commissioned and Navy-manned (USS) and civil service-manned (USNS) transports and cargo ships, MSTS came to own and control a tanker fleet operated under contract by private companies for the Military Petroleum Supply Agency, the unified petroleum procurement agency of the Department of Defense. In emergencies for which space charter and the MSTS fleet were together inadequate, the Service could resort to time charter of merchant shipping.

MSTS had been created in October I949 by directive of the Secretary of Defense, pursuant to the National Security Act of 1947. In the following months it developed into a world-wide operating agency, with major area commands in London, New York, San Francisco, and Tokyo. The first Deputy Commander for the Western Pacific reached Tokyo in January 1950 to organize his command, activation of which was scheduled for 1 July. On that date, in accordance with plan, Captain Alexander F. Junker assumed his responsibilities as DepComMSTS WestPac to find himself faced by an emergency of wholly unexpected dimensions.

The first problem was to find the shipping for an immediate large scale lift of troops and supplies. That under Captain Junker's own control—the MSTS "owned" shipping in the area—was initially limited to 25 intra-area support ships inherited from the Army. Not all of these were of types useful to the task, but there were ten 175-foot, 500-ton capacity cargo ships (AKL)of Army design, the two 340-foot coastal transports(T -APc) *Sergeant Keathley* and *Sergeant Muller* each normally carrying 100 troops, and six LSTs. Three LSTs and two AKLs had been inactivated, but work on them was quickly put in hand, and the LSTs were operating by the 8th.

A second source of shipping was, of course, to be found in the Scajap fleet, which was immediately made available and which continued to be employed in close connection with MSTS. A third expedient was to retain and employ MSTS transports and cargo ships which, like the aircraft transport *Cardinal O'Connell*, had reached

the Far Eastern theater on normal trans-Pacific runs. Finally, most fortunately and most importantly, there was the possibility of charter of Japanese merchant ships.

By 10 July the MSTS-controlled fleet in or en route to the Western Pacific had risen from 25 to 70 vessels, not counting the 50-odd ships belonging to Scajap. But not all had reached the Far East and some, for reasons of size or type or availability, were unsuited to the work at hand: of the total of 70 vessels, 52 were available for emergency movements to Korea. Of these, Japanese vessels on charter on 10 July accounted for 29 bottoms and 74,000 measurement tons; five days later this number would have increased to 40. In addition to the *Marus* and to the ships inherited from the Army, Captain Junker had two AKAs and three T–APs which had reached Japan and which had been retained to lift men and material to Pusan.

The 24th Infantry Division had completed its movement to Korea by 6 July. Hard on its heels the 25th Division began to move, its first elements loading at Moji on Shimonoseki Strait on the 8th, and subsequent echelons at Inland Sea ports and at Sasebo; for this movement Japanese time-chartered ships were extensively used. The third major Army unit to be lifted from Japan was the 1st Cavalry Division, and this, since handling facilities at Pusan were clogging from overload, was put in over the beaches. This movement was accomplished by Admiral Doyle's Amphibious Group, temporarily augmented by the loan from MSTS of two AKAs, three T–APs, one ocean tug, five LSTs, and four time-chartered Japanese *Marus*. Late in July the final intra-theater movement of the initial phase brought in two battalions of the 29th Infantry Regiment from Okinawa. On the 16th MSTS assigned two Japanese passenger vessels and a cargo ship to this lift, and on the 24th these troops were landed at Pusan.

Thus the job was done. By mid-July all Army forces in the Far East had been committed or were scheduled for commitment, with the single exception of the 7th Division, held back to provide a skeleton garrison for Japan. And while the emergency movements within the Far Eastern theater were going on, others were in preparation elsewhere. In Hawaii the Mid-Pacific branch of MSTS was assembling shipping to lift the 5th Regimental Combat Team west. On the west coast planning for the movement of the 2nd Division was in progress, and urgent efforts to project supplies forward across the ocean highways were underway.

In the United States the logistic agencies of all three services were struggling with a flood of emergency requisitions for medical and hospital supplies, for equipment in general, and above all for ammunition. All along the west coast naval ammunition facilities which had been operating in reduced or maintenance status were expanded. In June, Port Chicago in San Francisco Bay had a normal weekly handling capacity of 1,250 tons of naval ammunition. On the 28th CincPacFleet called for operations on a three-shift basis, extra personnel was laid on, and within a month Port Chicago was outloading more than 9,000 tons a week for both Navy and Army. On 8 July activation of facilities at Fallbrook and Seal Beach, California, was begun, and Bangor Annex, at Keyport in Puget Sound, was made available for the outloading of Army and Air Force ammunition.

For all services requirements skyrocketed. The planned overseas movement of Army ammunition alone was to rise from zero to 77,000 tons for the month of August, a growth paralleled by increased calls for general stores, refrigerated provisions, and for personnel. The Military Sea Transportation Service had prepared for a predicted movement of 66,000 tons of cargo to the Far East in July; in fact it ended up moving 312,000 tons and 30,000 passengers. More tonnage was urgently required and was being hastily assembled by Captain William R. Thayer, Deputy Commander MSTS Pacific; by the third week in July the transports under his control had increased from 20 to 31, and 12 commercial vessels had been taken on under time charter.

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Chapter 4. Help on the Way
3. Fighting Ships

Like all conflicts, that in Korea had its strange and unpredictable characteristics. One of these was the fact that, so far as control of the seas was concerned, the war started with the exploitation phase . It was never necessary to fight the convoys through. But of this no one could at first be sure, and with men and supplies in very large quantity committed to the ocean highways, and with the extent of opposition doubtful, insurance was necessary. To maintain sea control, should new enemy forces choose to dispute it, further combatant strength was needed.

Yet almost all the fighting ships west of the continental United States had already been committed. Statistically speaking, the division of the Pacific Fleet in June between ships operating in home waters and those to the westward was roughly an even one. One hundred and twenty-five naval vessels of all types were based on the west coast while another 128 were scattered between Alaska, the Hawaiian Islands, the trust territories, and the Western Pacific. But the statistics are deceptive, including as they do auxiliaries, small craft, and local forces, and the distribution of major combatant types was very different. Of 86 active units, three-quarters were based on the west coast of the United States.

Of the three large aircraft carriers in the Pacific Fleet , one was with Task Force 77 and two were in the San Diego area, where the Fleet's two escort carriers also based. The Fleet contained no active battleship. Two cruisers were already at work in Far Eastern waters and the remaining four were on the west coast. Of a total of 57 destroyer types and 30 submarines, 12 and 6 respectively were operating outside of continental waters, 12 and 4 were operating under ComNavFE. Quite clearly any naval reinforcement had to come a long way.

The first forward movement concerned the long-range patrol planes. On 26 June the seaplane tender *Gardiner's Bay*, which had completed fitting out for a tour in the Western Pacific, sailed from San Diego for Yokosuka, where she arrived on 12 July. On 28 June Patrol Squadron 6, a medium landplane squadron operating nine P2V-5 Neptunes, was deployed forward from Barber's Point, Oahu. By the 7th the squadron had reached Japan where, in the absence of any suitable naval air station, it operated out of Johnson Air Force Base at Tachikawa.

The two heavy *Baltimore*-class cruisers of Cruiser Division 3, moored in Long Beach when the Korean War broke out, had arrived only two weeks before from an eight-month cruise in the Western Pacific. These ships, *Helena* and *Toledo*, completed in 1945, had a standard displacement of 13,600 tons, a speed of 33 knots, a main battery of nine 8-inch guns and a secondary battery of twelve dual-purpose 5-inch . Alas, the delights of civilization were to be but briefly tasted, and the expected period of rest, recreation, and upkeep was to be brutally cut short. On 29 June the division commander, Rear Admiral Charles C. Hartman, received orders to prepare to head back west again with a departure date a week away. All leaves were at once cancelled by telegram, emergency repairs were hastened, and supplies quickly loaded aboard.

At San Diego there were two *Essex*-class aircraft carriers: *Boxer*, Captain Cameron Briggs, back from her tour in the Western Pacific, was waiting to enter a navy yard for repairs; Philippine Sea, Captain Willard K. Goodney, had just arrived from the Atlantic Fleet and was preparing for an October departure for the Far East as relief for *Valley Forge*. The air group designated for this deployment, Carrier Air Group II, Commander Raymond W. Vogel, was similar in composition to Air Group 5, being composed of two F9F jet fighter squadrons, two squadrons of F4Us, one of ADs, and a mixed bag of specially configurated Corsairs and Skyraiders. Its training, however , was considerably less advanced than that of the *Valley Forge* group. The jet squadrons had been

handicapped by shortage of aircraft and the pilot situation was highly unstable: many of the younger officers had received orders for separation on 30 June, and many of their replacements were not yet up to fleet standards. Difficult as the situation was, it would have been much worse had the North Koreans appreciated the strategic importance of accounting periods and delayed their attack until the end of the fiscal year. As it was, emergency action by the Bureau of Naval Personnel made it possible to avoid forced separations from the service and to minimize dislocation.

With the outbreak of hostilities in Korea all plans and schedules were scrapped. Loading for the Western Pacific was put on a high speed basis, considerable gear was transferred from *Boxer* to her sister carrier, and the air group was embarked under emergency orders. On 6 July *Philippine Sea* got underway from San Diego for Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on the 14th to commence a ten-day period of accelerated training exercises.

The remaining carrier strength of the Pacific Fleet, Carrier Division 15, consisted of the escort carriers *Sicily*, another recent immigrant from the Atlantic, and Badoeng *Strait*. These were ships of the postwar CVE 105 type, modelled on the old *Sangamon* class of converted tankers which had seen so much service in the war against Japan. Based at San Diego and normally assigned to antisubmarine warfare duty, the ships of Cardiv 15 were also from time to time employed to give carrier refresher training to Marine fighter squadrons from El Toro. The outbreak of war found *Badoeng Strait* en route to Pearl Harbor on a summer training cruise, with a Marine fighter squadron, 223 reserve midshipmen, and five visiting professors of disciplines ranging from economics to forestry on board.

All this was quickly changed and the division disassembled to solve some urgent problems. *Badoeng Strait* landed her professors at Pearl and returned hastily to San Diego, where she disgorged the trainees and began loading more Marine aircraft and aircrews on a 24-hour basis. *Sicily*, alerted on 2 July, was sailed on the 4th for Pearl Harbor and Guam, to strengthen the antisubmarine capabilities of Western Pacific forces. The division commander, Rear Admiral Richard W. Ruble, was ordered forward with his staff by air to help handle the rapid build-up of naval air strength in Japan. On 10 July admiral and staff reached Tokyo, and two days later Ruble took over command of Task Group 96.2, Naval Air Japan.

The three Canadian destroyers, earlier alerted, sailed from the west coast on 5 July. On the 6th, in accordance with his orders of a week before, Rear Admiral Hartman sortied his cruisers from Long Beach, joined up with four fleet oilers, six destroyers, and five submarines, and headed for Pearl Harbor. This westward deployment of submarines had been ordered by CincPacFleet as a precautionary measure, in view of the possible commitment of Russian naval units to the Korean conflict. But this fear was to prove groundless, none of these boats was moved west of the islands, and submarine strength in the Western Pacific was increased only by the submarine transport *Perch*, requested by the Marines for special raiding purposes.

Admiral Hartman's force was only a day out of Long Beach when *Toledo* was ordered forward at best speed, and two days later *Helena* and Destroyer Division III were detached from the task group with orders to hurry onward. Thus scattered by the need for haste the ships steamed west: Toledo reached Pearl Harbor on the 9th and left on the 11th; the *Helena* group arrived on the 11th and left on the 13th; the tankers, the submarines, and the two remaining destroyers pressed on behind. For destroyers en route to the Far East the distances west of Pearl posed problems of fuel consumption: steaming at 24 knots would save a day in transit, as compared to steaming at economical speed, but would also necessitate refuelling. But the oilers with which they had left the coast were far behind, none was available at Pearl for forward deployment, and the facilities at Midway Island, on the direct route westward, had been deactivated in May on instructions from the Department of Defense.

The budgetary ceiling had thus affected not only the strength of the Pacific Fleet but also its mobility in time of crisis. Reactivation of Midway was clearly in the cards, but for the moment extemporization was necessary. Two chief petty officers, recent graduates of the Service Force Petroleum School, were rounded up and embarked on the first destroyer as it was leaving Pearl Harbor. On arrival at Midway the chiefs activated the

fuelling system and replenished two of the destroyers from the oil which remained in the tanks, while Helena refueled the others.

With the war still in its second week very considerable reinforcements were on their way. Three days after American troops first entered action, naval fighting strength equal to the original Western Pacific deployment had set sail from the continental United States. But the departure of these units from the west coast found the Pacific Fleet approaching the bottom of the barrel. On 8 July, in order to provide some slight reserve for new contingencies, the Chief of Naval Operations authorized the activation of certain units of the mothball fleet.

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Chapter 4. Help on the Way
4. Naval Logistics

The westward movement of so large an increment of naval strength posed urgent problems of logistic support. The naval population of the Western Pacific, which on 25 June approached 11,000, was to more than triple in the space of five weeks. To plan and organize in one month's time for the support of such a force 6,000 miles from home is no mean problem, the more so when, in addition to food and clothing, these individuals are busily consuming fuel, ammunition, equipment, and spare parts at an accelerated rate.

Overseas stocks of the countless items needed to support a modern fighting force were limited. At Pearl Harbor a supply officer could find everything, or almost everything, but to the westward the situation was spotty. At Yokosuka, by good fortune, there were fairly sizable supplies of general materials and nucleus stocks of technical spares. But Guam, which had supported very large naval forces during the war against Japan, had nothing: the island's mission of fleet support had been cancelled in 1947. At Subic Bay in the Philippines there were small quantities of various items, but Subic, originally planned as a major fleet base, had been reduced to partial maintenance status in January. All this had been done in the name of economy; it had been rationalized by the stated intention of providing mobile support for any forces west of Pearl Harbor; such support was now called for with a vengeance.

The concept of mobile support for the fighting ships of the U.S. Navy has a long history. In its origins it dates back to the War with Tripoli when the frigate *John Adams*, with reduced armament, was assigned to shuttle service between the Chesapeake and the Mediterranean carrying drafts of men and shipments of supplies for Commodore Preble's squadron. But provision of the spare spars and cordage, the pease and salt meat, which the *Adams* brought out, was simplicity itself compared to the problem of supporting a modern navy. Long before the electronic age the progress of technology had threatened to restrict the radius of fleet action, in the first instance in the fundamental question of fuel.

The fuel problem and the other logistic complications which came with mechanization first faced the United States in connection with the Civil War blockade of Gulf coast ports. They arose again following the War with Spain, as the immense distances of the Pacific came to be realized, and were emphasized over the years by increasing possibilities of trouble with Japan. As early as 1904 Civil Engineer Andrew C. Cunningham had put forward the idea of a floating base; efforts at mobile support of naval forces in Europe had been made during the First World War; and by the middle twenties the concept of the mobile base had become the accepted one for support of the fleet at sea. Following Pearl Harbor performance caught up with precept, and in the later stages of the Pacific War great fleets of tenders, repair ships, and floating drydocks moved westward from atoll to atoll in attendance on the striking forces.

The concept of mobile support had abundantly proved itself as both economically sound and strategically effective. But its wartime embodiment, the vast collection of men and material which made up Service Squadron 10, was no more. The total roster of Service Force ships assigned to the Western Pacific on 25 June consisted of one destroyer tender, one reefer, a fleet oiler on shuttle duty for the Seventh Fleet, a fleet tug, and an LST on loan to Task Force 90 for training purposes. There had been no prior planning for a minor war, or indeed for anything short of full mobilization. In the sphere of fleet logistics, as elsewhere, the response to the North Korean invasion was to be an exercise in extemporization.

Responsibility for the logistic support of the Pacific Fleet and of other Pacific naval activities lay with the Service Force Pacific Fleet, commanded by Rear Admiral Francis C. Denebrink, whose headquarters were at

Pearl Harbor. Like everyone else the Service Force had felt the impact of the fiscal year just ending. Not only in the Western Pacific had mobile support been reduced to a bare minimum: the only hospital ship and the only fleet stores issue ship in the Pacific Fleet had been decommissioned, and the lone dock landing ship in Admiral Denebrink's command had escaped this fate only as a result of the requirements of Operation Greenhouse, the atomic test series then pending at Eniwetok.

The total strength of the Pacific Fleet Service Force, as of the end of June, came to 91 auxiliaries of various types. The largest share of these mobile support units, 47 ships, was organized in Service Squadron 1, Captain Bernard L. Austin. This command was responsible for the logistic support of fleet units in the Eastern Pacific, including Alaska; most of its units were located in west coast ports. At Pearl Harbor, under the direct control of ComServPac, were the 26 auxiliaries of the Logistic Support Group, whose area of responsibility included fleet units and bases in the Western, Central, and South Pacific. The 18 remaining units were assigned to Service Division 51, a subordinate echelon of the Logistic Support Group, located at Guam and charged with the administration of Service Force responsibilities in the Marianas and Carolines.

In the first days of hostilities uncertainty as to the identity of the enemy and the extent of the underwater threat had led ComNavFE to call for additional small craft for offshore patrol. In response to this request Admiral Denebrink recommended to CincPacFleet the reactivation of the three mine-sweepers in caretaker status at Yokosuka, and of five subchasers and three fleet tugs. At the same time the Service Force staff turned its attention to the urgent problems of logistic support for the forces going into action in the Far East.

Ammunition came first. At Yokosuka, under the control of Commander Fleet Activities Japan, there was a small stock of some two or three thousand tons of various types, but with one surprising deficiency: there was no antisubmarine ordnance in Japan. Ammunition in the Philippines was negligible; at Guam there were some 6,000 tons. Necessarily, therefore, the supply of items lacking at Yokosuka and Guam, and the replacement of expenditures from these stocks, had to be made from the Hawaiian Islands, more than 3,000 miles away, where there were wartime leftovers in massive quantities. To lift ammunition to the forward area, ComServPac had available a single ammunition ship, *Mount Katmai*, at Port Chicago, and an assortment of cargo types which, with special sheathing of the holds, could be made to do.

Lacking word from Admiral Joy as to the pattern of anticipated needs, and lacking also a subordinate Service Force commander in the forward area to coordinate requirements, the staff at Pearl Harbor undertook at once, by deduction and by intuition, an estimate of what was required. This work was expeditiously done. The estimate was ready by the night of 26–27 June in the form of a revised loading plan for *Mount Katmai*, and was at once promulgated by dispatch for comment. Within two days the views of the operational commanders concerned had been received and integrated and a detailed loading list was on its way by air to the west coast.

But *Mount Katmai*'s arrival was weeks away, and in the next few days, as special requests came in from ComNavFE, ammunition was moved forward from Guam by cargo ship. In the absence of underwater ordnance in Japan, and with the submarine problem still unclarified, depth charges were given priority: on 13 July a shipload reached Yokosuka, followed on the next day by another of 5-inch and 40-millimeter ammunition. By this time also a load of 8-inch cruiser ammunition was at sea en route from Guam to Sasebo, and another ship had been sailed for Buckner Bay with aircraft ordnance for Task Force 77.

The second problem of immediate and overriding importance was that of fuel. In the Pacific the responsibility for petroleum supply was a divided one: Commander Service Force, as logistic agent for CincPac, was responsible for the Pacific Area outside of General MacArthur's command, while the Area Petroleum Office at CincFE's headquarters was charged with procurement for the forces of the Far East Command. Throughout the Pacific POL inventories were low, in consequence of directives based on budgetary restrictions; this situation was potentially most dangerous in aviation gasoline, production of which is inelastic and not susceptible to rapid expansion. Anticipating a rapid increase in consumption, ComServPac's Petroleum Office made early requests for

larger allocations, and fortunately so. The timely arrival of these from the continental United States would provide adequate stocks for the trans-Pacific pipeline, and make it possible to help out the Far East Command, where serious shortages developed owing to lack of similar foresight.

The need for aviation gasoline was matched by that for black oil for the naval forces moving westward. Of the ten fleet oilers assigned to the Service Force, two were on shuttle duty serving the Seventh Fleet and the mid-Pacific, eight were in west coast ports. Four of these—*Cimarron*, *Cacapon*, *Caliente*, and *Platte*—were immediately ordered forward and sailed in company with Admiral Hartman's cruisers and destroyers. Three were routed onward from Pearl to Okinawa and Japan, while *Caliente*, on 24 July, discharged 65,000 barrels of fuel oil at Midway Island to keep that newly reactivated base in business.

The emphasis on floating support for fleet units, made necessary by the limited base facilities in the Western Pacific, was desirable for other reasons as well. A prime virtue of naval power is its mobility; if the bases can also move this virtue is increased. For reasons of economy, and to obviate the need for an extensive shore establishment in Japan which would itself be logistically costly and complicating, mobile support was also desirable. But complete floating support for the fleet was well beyond the capabilities of the Service Force as then constituted, or indeed under any circumstances short of pretty complete mobilization. Again it is worth emphasizing how fortunate it was for this campaign that the resources and productive facilities of the Japanese base were close to hand. In the Second World War almost complete support for forces overseas had been provided from the continental United States. But now at midcentury the effort was made to live off the land, and the foraging party reappeared, not in the form of the sergeant with his squad, but in that of the supply officer armed with contract and fountain pen.

Yet however helpful, the Japanese economy could not support the war alone, and two questions called for immediate answers from Admiral Dene-brink and his staff. What Service Force units would be required in the operating areas to support the fleet? What shipping would be necessary, over and above that provided by MSTS, to keep the 6,000-mile Pacific pipeline full? A study of anticipated needs led to requests on 5 and 8 July for the activation of two gasoline tankers and the assignment of another ammunition ship, and then on the 9th the full bill was presented in a memorandum to CincPacFleet which called for the activation of 58 auxiliaries in 16 categories ranging from destroyer tenders down to tugs.

By this time the redeployment of Service Force units was well underway. Seven auxiliaries were headed north from the Marianas and the Carolines, six were on their way from Pearl Harbor, and another seven from the west coast of the United States. This very considerable movement into the forward area consisted of two destroyer tenders, two reefers, three cargo ship types, three fleet oilers, two gasoline tankers, two repair ships, five fleet tugs, and a dock landing ship. So much activity required a coordinating authority and so, at ComServPac's request, the Chief of Naval Operations on 10 July established Service Squadron 3 as the Navy's principal logistic agent in the Western Pacific. Captain Austin was transferred from Service Squadron I to take command of this new force, which was gathering at Buckner Bay.

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Chapter 4. Help on the Way
5. The Marine Brigade

The first few days of combat had made it evident that the North Korean People's Army was not going to be frightened home again either by United Nations resolves or by the intervention of token American forces. Shortly it seemed doubtful whether the commitment of all available Far Eastern strength would stop the invaders. Further reinforcements became increasingly urgent, and these, necessarily, had to come from outside the theater. Although foreign help had been promised, its arrival was some time off. But in Hawaii the Army was preparing a regimental combat team for sailing, on the west coast a division had been alerted, and MSTS was assembling the shipping for these lifts. And the Marines, too, were on their way.

In addition to the ten Army combat divisions in existence in 1950 the United States could also call on the two divisions of the Fleet Marine Force. Total Fleet Marine Force strength at this time was about 28,000 men, of whom 12,000 were in FMF Pacific, in the 1st Marine Division and its attached 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and the balance of almost 16,000 in FMF Atlantic, the 2nd Marine Division and MAW 2. Headquarters of the Fleet Marine Force Pacific were at Pearl Harbor; the 1st Marine Division was at Camp Pendleton, California; Marine Air Wing I was at nearby El Toro. Like all branches of the armed forces the Marines had suffered from austerity: all units were understrength, and the 1st Marine Division was operating with two platoons to a company and two companies to a battalion.

The United States Marines have landed on many foreign shores since Lieutenant O'Bannon and his immortal six set out from Alexandria to march on Tripoli. But in the middle of the 20th century their special claim to fame, and the basis of their mission as defined in the National Security Act, rested on their development of the techniques of amphibious warfare. The success of the Corps in developing workable techniques for assault from the sea against defended objectives, considered by some the most far-reaching tactical innovation of the Second World War, was achieved in the face of overwhelming expert opinion that such attacks were no longer possible. Contemplating the sad spectacle of Gallipoli, a distinguished naval historian of the interwar period had commented that while Great Britain might perhaps survive another war, she could never survive another Churchill. In fact, however, she did both, while the Navy and Marines destroyed the presumed basis for this judgment by spearheading the amphibious advance from Guadalcanal to Okinawa, an advance in which they suffered no single check.

The United States now found itself confronted with difficulties in Korea, a peninsula with a long shoreline and located on the far side of an ocean. A priori, one would assume this a made to order theater for the Marines, and the responsible Commander in Chief had already shown his interest: early in 1950, in connection with his mission of defending Japan, General MacArthur had requested instructors to train his occupation forces in amphibious warfare. Navy and Marine training specialists had consequently been provided, along with Admiral Doyle's Amphibious Group, and had just begun to hold school in Japan when the invasion broke.

Yet amphibious warfare, in 1950, was out of favor with many due to strategic preconceptions, and the Marines with others for other reasons. In the congressional hearings on the unification troubles the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had described the amphibious landing as a thing of the past, and had observed that anyhow he had taken part in the two greatest amphibious operations of history and the Marines had not. The prediction awaited the test of time; the statement, certainly correct, might well have been amplified to point out that the Army troops which stormed the beaches of Europe did so in accordance with doctrine developed by the Marine Corps and the Navy. Even in war the pen and the guiding brain are at times as significant as the sword.

Quite apart from their amphibious specialty, there were other advantages to be derived from the commitment of the Marines to Korea. What was needed was needed fast; the Corps lives with its bags packed. While the requirement to go anywhere at short notice had made the Marines mobile, the requirements of the assault from the sea had led to the development of an extremely powerful package of strength. Man for man there was probably no more powerful force in existence anywhere. The ground elements made up a heavily armed and highly professional outfit in which every individual could handle a rifle. The air-ground team, long hoped for but delayed by World War II requirements, had by the end of that war become a fact, and the Marines had no need to wheedle their necessities in the upper regions out of a separate force with separate preoccupations. All their pilots had had infantry training; all were carrier qualified, and could operate from decks offshore until airstrips became available. With these capabilities, and with this understanding of the requirements on the surface of the earth, they commanded and deserved the confidence of the riflemen below.

Again, the Fleet Marine Force was well trained. As a small organization, the Marines had found it possible to maintain recruiting without recourse to trade and travel propaganda; since their withdrawal from North China they had been able to attend to business without the distractions of occupation duty. Between December and June the units of FMF Pacific had gone through two field exercises of regimental size or larger, an amphibious demonstration, and various lesser drills involving submarines, helicopters, and the seizure of San Nicholas Island by an airlifted battalion.

A further factor of importance, and one again suggestive of the realism of the Corps, was its readiness for movement. Naval movement plans, it is true, are almost automatic, but for other forces preparations are necessary, and the Marines appear to have been the only people in the armed services with concrete arrangements for anything less than that Armageddon euphemistically known as a "general emergency." In I948 plans had been worked out for the rapid movement of a regimental combat team and a Marine air group from the west coast to any point in the Pacific, and the materiel bureaus of the Navy Department were on ten-day notice to provide the necessary mounting-out equipment.

Finally, Marines are volunteers both in fact and by temperament. Their inbred highly competitive attitude had been strengthened by the post-war atmosphere within the Pentagon, with its repeated rumors of plans for the abolition of the Corps or for its limitation to guard duty. At Corps headquarters, where there hangs a painting of the Korean landing of 1871, there was little question as to involvement in this war, and on 28 June the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Clifton B. Cates, USMC, recommended to the Chief of Naval Operations employment of the Fleet Marine Force in Korea. Three days later Admiral Sherman queried CincPacFleet as to the time necessary to move out a battalion landing team or a regimental combat team. Admiral Radford’s reply, received on Sunday the 2nd, stated that a BLT could be loaded in four days and sailed in six, and an RCT loaded in six and sailed in ten. CNO at once advised Admiral Joy by dispatch that a Marine regimental combat team could be made available to CincFE if desired, and this offer, relayed to General MacArthur by ComNavFE in person, was accepted with enthusiasm. Before this busy Sunday was over the 1st Marine Division had been alerted and Admiral Sherman, with JCS approval, had ordered CincPacFleet to move an RCT with appropriate attached air strength to the Far East for employment by CincFE.

Three days after these orders to Admiral Radford, Fleet Marine Force Pacific issued its operation plan. This prescribed the task organization of the force, designated the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (Reinforced), which was to be built around the 5th Marines from Camp Pendleton and Marine Aircraft Group 33 from El Toro. Command of the brigade was assigned Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, USMC, assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division, while Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman, USMC, deputy commander of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, became both deputy brigade commander and commanding general of the wing’s forward echelon. In an age of specialization this flexibility, which could be matched by no other ground force in any country, is worth remark: the routine step of making the aviator the second in command of the brigade was another promise

of close teamwork between ground and air.

From the time of the warning order, division and wing staffs had been hard at work on the problems of mounting out the brigade. The task of bringing the various components up to authorized war strength was complicated by the fact that the summer period of leave and transfer had begun, and by a directive of 3 July from the Commandant of the Corps which required that all sergeants and below whose enlistments would expire before March be transferred and left behind. But leaves were cancelled and transfers rescinded, and not all of the enlisted personnel were willing to accept this high-handed treatment by headquarters.

By 7 July, when the brigade was formally activated, shortages were being filled by personnel from the Marine Barracks at Camp Pendleton and from west coast stations. Supplies and gear were moving from Pendleton and from the storage center at Barstow in the California desert to the staging areas. The time from receipt of the alert had been well employed, but the speed with which the brigade moved out owed much to earlier planning, and to the ten-day readiness stocks of material which had been maintained for both ground forces and the air group. By the 9th, when the first ships became available, embarkation plans had been completed and loading could be begun.

The brigade had been built around the infantry strength of the 5th Marines, with 132 officers and 2,452 enlisted men. The next largest ground component, the artillery, was provided by the 1st Battalion of the 11th Marines, 44 officers and 474 enlisted men. To these were added motor transport, medical, shore party, engineer, tank, and amphibious tractor companies; detachments of signal, ordnance, service, reconnaissance, and military police units; an amphibious truck platoon; and the organic observation squadron, VMO 6, with eight OY observation planes and four H03s–1 Sikorsky helicopters. The air strength of the brigade, the forward echelon of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, was made up of MAG 33's two day fighter squadrons, totaling 48 F4U–4B aircraft, and one night fighter squadron of F4U-5Ns.

The responsibility for producing the shipping to lift the Marine Brigade fell upon Rear Admiral Francis X. McInerney, acting commander of the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet. To provide this lift, a supply expedition which was preparing to sail for Point Barrow, Alaska, was hastily modified, and its commanding officer, Captain Louis D. Sharp, Jr., was designated Commander, Provisional Transport Group. All available ships were incorporated in the Transport Group, and the capacity thus made available was almost enough. Except for some motor transport everything was taken along, but this deficiency would be remedied on the far shore, by capture from the enemy or the Army.

Ground forces of the brigade embarked at San Diego in the three attack transports of Captain Sharp's Task Group 53.7, *George Clymer*, *Henrico*, and *Pickaway*; in the attack cargo ships *Whiteside* and *Alshain*; and in the LSDs *Gunston Hall* and *Fort Marion*. Air group personnel and equipment boarded the transport *General A. E. Anderson* and the attack cargo ship *Achernar* at Terminal Island; aircraft and aircrews were embarked on *Badoeng Strait*. On 12 July, exactly ten days after the receipt of the warning order, the LSDs sailed from San Diego with the tanks and the amphibious tractor companies, and two days later the rest of the convoy followed.

General Craig and General Cushman had remained behind to tidy up administrative detail. On the 15th they departed by air from El Toro to Japan, where they arrived on 19 July. Another Marine, however, had preceded them to Tokyo. The Commanding General of the Fleet Marine Force Pacific, Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., USMC, had flown west on the 7th, and on the 10th conferred with General MacArthur. On the same day, as a result of this discussion, CincFE asked the Joint Chiefs for the entire 1st Marine Division.

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Chapter 4. Help on the Way
6. Air Transport and Air Reinforcement

No aspect of armed force has received more emphasis in our time than the military employment of the airplane. First conceived of as a means by which the commander could tell what was going on on the other side of the hill, aircraft have had their principal impact in two other areas: as long-range gun, extending the distance at which blows may be aimed and delivered, and as flying vehicle, capable of the rapid movement of goods regardless of obstacles on the surface of the earth. With ground and surface reinforcements headed westward, it remains to consider the air aspect of the transoceanic deployment in support of the Korean campaign.

This, it need hardly be said, was no independent phenomenon. The use of the air is intimately connected with the course of affairs below. In reconnaissance as in transport, whether of explosives, troops, or supplies, the mission of the airplane is defined by the course of events on land and sea. And while in all these functions the airplane has developed tremendous capabilities, in all it depends on surface logistic support. If, as has so often been said, communications dominate war, the aerial capability has both solved old requirements and imposed new ones in this controlling field.

Command of the air, so essential to western-style war, depends in a transoceanic theater on command of the seas. Like the Army, the Air Force is projected, supported, and sustained by surface shipping. In some sense this fact has been neglected as the result of what may be described as optical illusion. Aircraft in flight, indeed, resemble air theorists on paper in their apparent independence of logistic problems. But although the flexibility of the airplane is extraordinary, within its limits of range and performance, it is equally true that the logistic requirements of a modern air force are immense. Where bases do not exist they must be constructed; where they do exist they must be supported; the appetite for fuel and ammunition, spare parts, shops and tools, runway surfacing, buildings and personnel, which is evinced by any considerable deployment of air strength is a very impressive one. The plane in the air on its mission is the end product of an elaborate, costly, and highly developed organization.

Yet given the base facilities and the aircraft, it is possible to deliver across great distances not only ammunition to the ultimate consumer but much else besides. In the Second World War the possibilities of airborne operations were dramatically demonstrated by the German conquests of Norway and Crete, and by the Allied airdrop into Normandy in 1944. Equally if not more important were the logistic feats accomplished through air supply: in Burma the British planned a whole campaign around this capability; in France, although insufficient air tanker capacity halted Patton's tanks in 1944, the final advance into Germany saw the airlift bringing up half a million gallons of gasoline a day. Nothing so colossal was to supervene in Korea, although air supply would prove a priceless asset, but from the beginning air transport was called on to assist the overseas deployment.

Since air transport offered the quickest method of alleviating critical shortages, the call for help was urgent. From all services requests came flooding in for vitally needed gear and personnel. For Naval Forces Far East, communicators to handle the dispatch load, boat crews for undermanned amphibious shipping, individuals of all ranks and rates were hurried west to build up personnel to something approaching wartime complement, to staff the expanding base facilities, and perhaps most urgent of all, to staff the staffs. The result of this overwhelming demand was to force an extremely rapid expansion upon the air transport facilities of the armed services, the Military Air Transport Service and the Fleet Logistic Air Wing.

The Military Air Transport Service, operated by the Air Force, is the aerial counterpart of MSTS. Established as a unified logistic organization pursuant to the National Security Act, MATS operates what is in

effect a scheduled airline between major traffic generating points around the world. To supplement this schedule by providing feeder service to dispersed naval activities, the flexibility of non-scheduled operations, and something to fall back on in a general emergency when MATS would be pretty well mortgaged to other activities, the Navy had set up its Fleet Logistic Support Wings. Of these there had originally been two, one on each coast, but the passion for centralizing which had afflicted the Defense Department had led to their merger, despite objections from the fleet commanders, into a single Fleet Logistic Air Wing, responsible to the Chief of Naval Operations and with headquarters at Patuxent River, Maryland.

At the outbreak of hostilities three Navy air transport squadrons were employed in the Pacific to supplement the regular MATS schedule. One, under the operational control of CincPacFleet, was operating six R5Ds from Barber's Point, Oahu; the second was flying four JRM Martin Mars flying boats out of Alameda; the third, with five R5Ds and two R6Os was at Moffett Field. This capacity was speedily to prove inadequate.

On 28 June CincPacFleet asked the Chief of Naval Operations for operational control of the west coast squadrons, and two days later the request was granted. On 1 July, in his capacity as CincPac, Admiral Radford requested the commander of the Pacific Division of MATS to double his lift within ten days. On the 4th, as CincPacFleet, he ordered the Commander 14th Naval District to establish facilities for transport aircraft at Midway, and called upon Patuxent River for an additional increment of planes. Three more R5Ds were at once assigned the Moffett Field squadron, but backlogs were piling up on the west coast, more were urgently needed, and on the 7th the Fleet Marine Force Pacific was asked to contribute ten more transport aircraft.

All this was little enough. Air transport is not always the economical way of moving men and goods, but its expediency in time of crisis creates irresistible pressures. Despite the transfer of additional equipment to the Pacific run, and despite creation of a west coast coordinating office to make some sense out of priorities inflated beyond all meaning, the jam increased. By mid-July personnel awaiting transportation totalled nine times FLAW's maximum weekly lift, the cargo backload was seven times maximum, and MATS, in a similar situation, was chartering commercial planes. Nor had the theoretical virtues of centralization held up in the emergency: Patuxent River was too far away, and before the month was out CNO had established the Fleet Logistic Air Wing Pacific under the control of CincPacFleet.

By the end of July all available Navy and Marine R5Ds in the continental United States had been appropriated, some had been taken off the Port Lyautey run, and the number flying the Pacific had increased from 11 to 56. This build-up, while speeding vital cargoes, brought its own problems of surface logistics in the need for fuel, parts, and administrative personnel along the route westward through Oahu, Johnston, Kwajalein, and Guam, and in the requirement for the reactivation of facilities at Midway.

In Korea, in the meantime, the air war had begun. Like the war at sea, it began in the exploitation phase. But while command of the air was not seriously contested, there were still logistic and operational problems to solve. To ensure uninterrupted maintenance, both of air transport and air action against the enemy, ComServPac had already requested increased allocations of aviation fuel. To keep the Air Force bombers supplied with ammunition the west coast loading facilities had been reactivated. Happily, there was no need to construct bomber fields in the Far East. The capacity of Air Force bases in Japan and Okinawa exceeded the forces available, and shortly after the commencement of hostilities two B–29 bombardment groups were flown out from the United States to make up, with the 19th Group already there, the Bomber Command of the Far East Air Forces.

Unfortunately the Superforts, so rapidly deployed, were not the weapons best suited to repel the North Korean invasion. Major General Emmet O'Donnell, USAF, who headed up the Bomber Command, wanted to "go to work on burning five major cities in North Korea to the ground, and to destroy completely every one of about 18 major strategic targets." Here once again was the ancient belief, so often disproven and so often reaffirmed, that the flattening of cities will speedily end a war. But the burning process, vetoed in Washington, was somewhat inconsistent with the early concept of police action, and only a confirmed North Korean booster could have

discovered 18 major strategic targets in that country. In this war the supplies came from over the border, while the target of priority was the invading army.

Yet if the B–29 was not the ideal weapon to provide what was required, the jet fighters assigned to the defense of Japan were, in the first instance, hardly better. The cycle of strategic planning and weapons design, predicated upon the big war, had all but priced the Air Force out of the kind of operations which were now so urgently needed. Emphasis on the Sunday punch, natural enough under budgetary restrictions which meant that something had to go, had largely eliminated the workaday measures of limited war. But once again, under pressure of emergency, the Air Force demonstrated its notable ability to act with vigor in time of crisis against all its peacetime preachment. In the first week of July the crucial needs of the ground forces brought the decision to reconvert back again, and to abandon the jets for the F–51 Mustang with its superior endurance, lifting capacity, and ability to operate from rudimentary Korean airstrips. The next step was to get more planes.

The obvious imminence of increased aircraft attrition had led the Chief of Naval Operations to include, in his orders of 8 July to the Reserve Fleet, instructions to activate two transport aircraft carriers. But to get these moving would take time, and while there were a few Mustangs in Japan, FEAF's need for more was urgent. *Boxer*, recently returned from the Western Pacific and awaiting overhaul, had the capacity and the speed, and was ordered into the breach. After emergency repairs at San Diego, she sailed for Alameda, where on the 8th she began to load. The Air Force got the planes to the docks and on the 14th, carrying 145 F–51s and six L–5s for the Air Force, 19 Navy planes, a Marine GCA unit, and a capacity load of fuel, ammunition, and personnel, *Boxer* steamed out the Golden Gate and headed west.

By mid-July the waters of the Pacific and the air above them were again bearing westward a great burden of military traffic. Fighting ships and their numerous auxiliaries, Army troops and the Marine Brigade, planes for the Air Force, food, fuel, and ammunition for all were converging upon the Far Eastern theater. Hour by hour the 6,000-mile distance was decreasing. If a line could be held into August a wholly new order of force would be available to stem the Communist aggression. But distances in Korea were decreasing too. By 15 July North Korean forces had covered half of the 225-mile journey to Pusan. The foothold was not yet secure. Whether it could be held depended on the course of events in the Korean hills, in the Korean air, and along the Korean coasts.

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Chapter 5. Into the Perimeter
1. The Korean Theater

ALTHOUGH the conduct of war is always, in large measure, an exercise in applied geography, in Korea this was more than usually the case. On land, at sea, and in the air, the movements of forces and the employment of weapons were greatly affected by the nature of the arena.

The Korean peninsula, divided by the fortunes of international politics, itself divides the Yellow Sea from the Sea of Japan. S-shaped, and with its long axis oriented generally north and south, the country lies between the parallels of 34° and 42° North, and spans the latitude between Los Angeles and central Oregon, or between North Carolina and the southern New Hampshire border. Although Korean territory extends for almost 600 miles from north to south, the distance between eastern and western coasts nowhere exceeds 200 miles, and in places is little more than half that distance. One consequence of this geographical configuration is of striking military importance: with a total area of some 83,000 square miles, or of 85,000 if all the islands are included, only a small strip along the northern border is more than 100 miles from the sea.

But although Korea is surrounded by sea, its situation to leeward of the greatest of continents has given it a climate of extremes. While summer in the north is temperate the mountain winter is extremely bitter: even on the seacoast the mean January temperature at the Russian border is but 15° Fahrenheit. In southern Korea, by contrast, the climate is warm enough to permit the growing of cotton; summer temperatures reach the nineties, and the rains of June and July produce an exhausting combination of heat and humidity; at the peninsula's southwestern tip, winters are frost-free and the August mean is 8o°. Summer is also the season of typhoons, which form in the Marianas and move northwestward toward the East China Sea. Typically, they recurve in time to pass over southern Japan or through the Straits of Tsushima, with only their fringes affecting southeastern Korea; sometimes, however, they recurve late and cross the peninsula; always their approach brings problems for the navigator and the strategist.

For five years prior to the outbreak of war the 38th parallel had divided Korea into roughly equal parts. But the division was an illogical one, resulting in such oddities as the isolation of the Ongjin peninsula in the west, and the separation of the city of Haeju from its port facilities; still more important was its separation of the populous and agricultural south from the complementary industrial economy of the north. Yet the parallel was not the country’s sole internal barrier, for long before geographers drew lines on maps, nature had divided this peninsula and subdivided it again.

Much of Korea is mountainous. In all the peninsula there are no true flatlands or plains. Like Italy with its Alps, Korea is protected from the continental land mass to the north by high mountains which fill the triangular area above the mouth of the Yalu River, and extend beyond the border to the Manchurian plain. Much of this triangle lies above 3,000 feet; peaks of over 6,000 feet are not uncommon; only along the coast does the altitude drop below 1,500 feet. The Yalu and Tumen Rivers, which separate Korea from Manchuria and from the Russian Maritime Provinces, have their origins in the Pai Shan range, which towers above 9,000 feet and is capped by perpetual snow.

Only three significant routes of access to the peninsula penetrate this formidable terrain. Of these the most important is the western corridor, along the lower reaches of the Yalu, through which the Japanese advanced in 1905 against the Russians and through which Communist Chinese forces would move against the United Nations. But there is also a gap in the mountains in central North Korea, formed by the valleys of the Tongno and Chongchon Rivers, while in the extreme northeastern corner of the country, narrow valleys and a coastal strip lead

down from eastern Manchuria and the Vladivostok region.

From the northern mountain mass a rocky cordillera runs southward, paralleling the eastern coast; along this shore, except in the embrasure at the head of the Korean Gulf between the seaport cities of Wonsan and Hungnam, the mountains descend steeply to the sea. North of Wonsan the coast is somewhat indented, with a number of harbors and towns; to the southward it is almost unbroken and the Korean divide, running within ten miles of the Sea of Japan, hems in a narrow and isolated ribbon of land where population is sparse, towns are small, and ports are few. Behind the coastal range the mountain spine recurves to the southwest, diminishes for a time in altitude, and then rises again in the south central region to form an isolated massif with peaks of five and six thousand feet. From the axial range, throughout the length of the peninsula, razorbacked spurs run off to west and southwest, compartmenting the country.

These mountain spurs and isolated masses divide the populous western part of Korea into a series of river basins, draining into the Yellow Sea and the Korean Strait, which in earlier times formed the principal geographic and economic units of the country. Although not navigable by ocean-going ships, these rivers remain of considerable internal importance: the principal Korean ports lie at their mouths, and the capitals of North and South Korea only a short way upstream. Five of these rivers, two north and three south of the 38th parallel, deserve the attention of the student of the Korean War.

The Chongchon River, northernmost of the strategically important west coast streams, is blocked to ocean shipping by drying mud banks which extend far offshore. But the central rail and road route to the north runs down its valley; the town of Sinanju, near the river's mouth, is important as the junction of the western and central routes from Manchuria; and the bridges across the river are vulnerable to air attack.

Sixty miles to the southward the Taedong River, scene of the massacre of the crew of the *General Sherman*, empties into the Yellow Sea. Near its mouth lies Chinnampo, a city of some 90,000, seaport of the important northern mining and industrial region. Fifteen miles upstream the city of Kyomipo contains Korea's largest iron and steel works; 30 miles to the northeastward lies the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. Once the ancient capital of the country, Pyongyang contains the tombs of long-dead monarchs, including that of Kija, legendary inventor of the topknot. In the Sino-Japanese War it was the scene of considerable fighting; early in the century it became the last abode of the deposed emperor. Under the Japanese it developed into a considerable manufacturing city, with industry based on the neighboring coal mines, and in due course, as the largest city in the north, became the capital of the People's Republic. Like the bridges over the Chongchon at Sinanju, those which cross the Taedong at Pyongyang are of strategic significance.

Most important of Korea's rivers is the Han, whose basin extends 150 miles from north to south and half that distance from east to west. With its principal tributaries, the Imjin and the Pukhan, the Han drains a major portion of the country on both sides of the 38th parallel. Rising only a few miles from the east coast, these streams wind through the central mountains before joining to pass the capital of Seoul and empty into the Yellow Sea near the principal west coast port of Inchon. For some 60 miles above its estuary the lower Han runs in a more or less east-west line, cutting the western lowlands and forming a potentially important and defensible military position. Click here to view map

South of the Han basin and west of the coastal range the country is drained by two important rivers. Some 90 miles below Inchon the Kum descends from the central massif to empty into the Yellow Sea; at its mouth lies Kunsan, a principal shipping center for the agricultural regions of southwestern Korea. In the southeastern corner of the peninsula, between the coastal range and the central highlands, the Naktong River flows southward for 100 miles or so, then east, then south again to empty into the Korean Strait. Near the mouth of the Naktong is the excellent harbor of Pusan, second city of the country and port of ingress from Japan. To the north the Naktong basin is divided from that of the Han by mountains more than 3,000 feet high; on the west it is separated from the Kum by the southern massif. Between these mountain masses the divide between the Naktong

basin and those of the Han and Kum diminishes in altitude; through this gap runs the main line of Korean communications, linking Japan and Pusan with the areas of heaviest population and agricultural production and with the capital at Seoul.

The geography of Korea, in sum, is dominated by three main features: a north blocked by high mountains; an east coast strip isolated by the mountain spine; and a broken piedmont to the west and south divided into a series of river basins. Upon this pattern industrial man, in the person of the Japanese, imposed his own geography. But although railroads, like faith, can sometimes move mountains, in Korea this movement was only a partial one. A traffic pattern could be developed which would unite the river basins, but the linking of eastern and western provinces remained incomplete. The mountain framework, broken, jumbled, and forbidding, continued to dominate the life of the country and to impose a north-south orientation which made division at the 38th parallel the more painful.

The first Korean railroad, built early in the century by the Japanese, linked the port of Pusan with the capital at Seoul. Although its construction required 99 bridges and 22 tunnels, it was completed by the time of the Russo-Japanese War. During that war its northward extension, from Seoul to Sinuiju on the Yalu River, was rushed to completion for strategic purposes. But a decade elapsed before the coasts were linked by a line through the mountain gaps between Seoul and Wonsan, and still longer until the construction of the east coast railroad, leading south from Siberia, began the transformation of fishing villages into industrial towns.

By 1950 the main structure of rail and road communications had assumed an X-shaped pattern, with the crossing at Seoul. From Manchuria in the northwest a line of double track spanned the Yalu at Sinuiju and ran southeast to Sinanju. There it was joined by a line which crossed the border below the Suiho reservoir, and by one coming from the upper reaches of the Yalu by way of the Tongno-Chongchon gap. From Sinanju, where these lines merged, the double track ran south to Pyongyang, Seoul, and beyond. On the far side of the mountain masses, widely separated from this west coast network, another rail line came south from the Vladivostok complex. One coastal spur extended from the lower Tumen River to Najin near the Russian border; farther inland, the main line ran south to Chongjin, along the shore to the new manufacturing cities of Hungnam and Wonsan, and on through the mountains to Seoul. On the east coast south of Wonsan the track extended as far as Yangyang, just above the 38th parallel, but from Yangyang to Pohang, 65 miles above Pusan, movement depended on road and sea.

The routes from the north thus converged at the Korean capital. Below this hub the railroad lines spread out again through South Korea. Two ran southeastward to the Pusan area, one leading directly from the valley of the Han into that of the Naktong, while the main line, now doubletracked, passed westward through Taejon in the Kum basin. From the latter, branches extended to the southwestern ports of Kunsan, Mokpo, and Yosu, but there was no south coast line, and rail traffic between Pusan and the southwestern ports had to be detoured northward around the central mountain massif.

To this extent the mountains remained unconquered. The lack of lateral communication remained the dominant feature of the transportation nets, road and rail alike. Of intercoastal rail links there were but two, one running north and south between Seoul and Wonsan, and one east and west, connecting the Wonsan-Hungnam region to Sinanju and Pyongyang. The Korean transport system thus rested upon three focal points, the Wonsan area on the east coast, the Pyongyang-Sinanju complex on the west, and Seoul. This situation sufficiently explains the strategic importance of these regions, for while the Korean road net was much more extensive than that of the railroad, and permitted access to most of the mountain regions, the roads were generally poor, unimproved, and unsuited to heavy mechanized equipment, and the anatomy of the highway system followed that of the rail lines.

Inevitably the scheme of maneuver adopted by the North Korean army for the conquest of this corrugated country was governed by the orientation of transport routes. The war had begun with a four-pronged invasion. The principal attack, delivered by the North Korean 3rd and 4th Infantry Divisions and the 105th Armored

Brigade, and with two more divisions in reserve, was aimed south toward Seoul along the valley line from Wonsan. To the west the North Korean 6th Division overran the isolated Ongjin peninsula, and then joined with the 1st Division to move southeast, along the main line from Pyongyang, through Kaesong to the capital. In the central mountains the 2nd and the newly organized 7th Divisions attacked southward to Chunchon, terminus of a branch rail line from Seoul, after which the 2nd Division moved southwesterly down the railroad toward the capital while the 7th marched southward over mountain roads toward Wonju and the eastern of the two rail lines to Pusan. On the east coast beyond the divide, in a theater all its own, the North Korean 5th Division advanced southward along the shore road, leapfrogging ahead with small-scale amphibious operations.

Four prongs became three as the mass of the invading troops converged upon the capital's transportation nexus. In this second phase the 5th Division continued its independent operations east of the mountain spine, while in the central mountains the 7th Division, supported by constabulary troops, threaded its way southward through Wonju in the direction of Andong. But the overwhelming bulk of the North Korean army, five first-line infantry divisions, two divisions of recent conscripts, and the armored brigade, had to be funneled through the Seoul complex. Once through the capital three divisions were peeled off to the southeast, and sent by rail and road to Wonju and Chungju to join the troops coming south through the mountains, while the remaining five moved down the main road. It was the advance guard of this massive force that Task Force Smith had run up against on 5 July.

By the end of the second week of war the American 24th Division had been driven out of Chonan and was retiring on Taejon. Somewhat surprisingly, despite its overwhelming numerical strength, the North Korean army now slowed its advance: a full week was to pass before the battle of Taejon began. Although not apparently appreciated at the time, this was the first evidence of the logistic limitations which forced the enemy to conduct his offensives in a series of massive lunges, and which prevented the maintenance of continuous pressure during an advance. Only on 20 July, after a bitter three day fight in which General Dean, the division commander, was captured, was Taejon lost and the 24th Division forced once again to retreat.

By this time the invasion was again a four-pronged affair. Unknown to the Americans, the North Korean army had split its main force a second time, and had sent the 6th Division with attached troops southward to Kunsan, which it entered on the 16th, and toward the southwestern tip of the peninsula. In pursuit of the retiring 24th Division the enemy main body, now seven divisions strong, pressed southeastward from Taejon along the main road and rail line toward the saddle which gives access to the Naktong Basin. Five divisions were moving through the mountains to the Andong area, while on the east coast the 5th Division continued its solitary southward course.

Although this east coast threat was opposed only by the ROK 3rd Division, it was accessible to bombardment from the sea. ROK forces were also operating on the northern mountain front in the Andong-Chungju area, and the U.S. 25th Division was moving up from Pusan to Hamchang, north of Taegu, to block this enemy advance. It was the plan of General Walker, who assumed command of all ground forces in Korea on 13 July, to employ the 1st Cavalry Division to reinforce the 24th Division on the main enemy route of advance, and to push the 29th Infantry, which was coming from Okinawa, west from Pusan to a blocking position south of the central hill mass. But by mid-July North Korean forces had covered more than half the distance to Pusan, and had occupied the line Chonju-Taejon-Yongjin-Yongdok, while the 1st Cavalry and the 29th Infantry had not yet arrived.

As Korean physiography and the Korean transportation net governed the land scheme of maneuver, so the hydrography of the area profoundly affected naval capabilities. The Korean coastline, generally straight along the Sea of Japan but deeply convoluted on south and west, has a length of some 5,400 miles. The steepness of the east coast, where the mountains rising from the sea confine road and railroad to a narrow coastal strip, has its underwater counterpart: except in the Gulf of Korea, off Wonsan and Hungnam, the 100-fathom curve runs close

to shore, coastal shipping is exposed, and warships can get within gun range of land communication facilities. But in the south and west conditions are very different, and the countless islands and deeply indented bays which mark the disappearance of the mountain ranges into the sea provide shelter for coastal traffic. The operations of major fighting ships are restricted, and effective supervision of coastal shipping calls for small craft of shallow draft. On the western shore further complications arise from the extraordinary hydrographic conditions of the Yellow Sea: whereas the tidal range in the Sea of Japan is of the order of a foot or two, here it ranges from 20 to 36 feet; currents are considerable and the water turbid; nowhere are there depths greater than 60 fathoms, and the 20-fathom line runs ten miles offshore. Extending far from land and exposed at low tide, the mud banks which trapped the French frigates a century ago remain a hazard for the unwary.

These hydrographic facts of life and the very limited forces available combined to dictate the early activities of the Navy. Task Force 77 had been withdrawn to Okinawa, and the period from 5 to 17 July saw naval effort concentrated on the movement of troops and supplies into Pusan, gunfire support of ROK forces resisting the enemy east coast advance, and the planning of future operations.

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Chapter 5. Into the Perimeter
2. 5-17 July: East Coast Bombardment

Off Korea's eastern shore, on 5 July, *Jamaica* relieved *Juneau* of her bombardment duties, and Admiral Higgins' flagship headed for Sasebo to replenish. On the same day the British cruiser, accompanied by *Black Swan*, fired on the road and bridge in 37° 16' N, where the coastal route runs close to the sea, and on the 6th shot up oil tanks, bridges, and shipping, and silenced a shore battery at Chumunjin. On the 7th, as *Black Swan* was relieved by *Hart*, the British cruiser destroyed an oil tank north of Ulchin, cruised northward firing at the cliff roads, and ended the day with an effective bombardment of Yangyang, the end of the coastal rail line from the north, where more oil tanks were destroyed.

While *Jamaica* was at work, the reinforcement and reorganization of the South Korea Support Group was underway in accordance with ComNavFE's Operation Order 8–50. These instructions had been promulgated while the carriers were striking Pyongyang, and as Task Force 77 retired southward Admiral Andrewes was detached to join the Support Group; with *Belfast*, *Cossack*, and *Consort*, he proceeded to Sasebo where *Juneau* was replenishing. On 6 July Higgins and Andrewes flew to Tokyo to consult with Admiral Joy on the reorganization of the force and on problems of coordination with the Army in Korea and with the ROK Navy. An additional matter of importance, which had formed the subject of a dispatch from ComNavFE the previous day, was the question of the rail line on the northeast coast of Korea between Chongjin and Wonsan. Interruption of this line, both vital and vulnerable, would force the enemy to move rail traffic from the Vladivostok region by a circuitous route through Manchuria and down the west coast. Such interruption was urgently desired by Admiral Joy.

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On the east coast 8 July saw *Jamaica* and *Hart*, now joined by *Swenson*, operating in the neighborhood of 37° There, where the highway skirts the water's edge, road traffic was taken under fire, enemy shore batteries were engaged, and the British cruiser received a hit from a 75-millimeter shell which killed four and injured eight. Late in the day an alarm from Pohang brought *Jamaica*, *Hart*, and *Swenson* south at speed, while *Mansfield* broke off her escort duties and *Juneau* got underway from Sasebo. All five ships joined off Pohang on the morning of the 9th, but although the situation ashore was serious it was not yet out of control.

Since the threatened encirclement of the Korean forces north of the town remained only a threat, *Jamaica* was relieved and ordered to Sasebo, the destroyers were left to provide fire support, and *Juneau* proceeded to Pusan. There Admiral Higgins spent the day in conference with Korean and U.S. Army authorities, and in attempts to round up more interpreters and to obtain some solid information on the situation ashore. With evening the cruiser proceeded north again, and from 0200 to 0330 of the 10th bombarded the port of Samchok, following which she headed south to check once more on the situation at Pohang. But another more northerly mission was now brewing.

On the 10th a dispatch from ComNavFE instructed Higgins to extend his blockade as far north as practicable, and reemphasized the importance of the coastal tunnels on the Chongjin-Wonsan railroad. With these targets in mind equipment had already been procured and plans worked out to land a demolition party, and following another night on coastal patrol and a dawn bombardment of Yangyang and Sokcho, *Juneau* and *Mansfield* headed north for the region between Tanchon and Songjin.

At 2000 on the 11th the ships slowed and the demolition party, a lieutenant and four enlisted Marines and four gunner's mates, led by Commander William B. Porter, *Juneau*'s executive officer, transferred from the

cruiser to *Mansfield*. Moving onward through the darkness the two ships reached the target area, ten miles south of Songjin, at midnight. *Mansfield* closed to within 1,000 yards of the beach, hove to and lowered her whaleboat, and the demolition party went on in. The landing was without incident, no opposition was encountered, and after considerable scrambling around the precipitous terrain the party managed to locate the tunnel and rig two 60-pound charges for detonation by the next train.

Although the results of the enterprise were unobserved, later reports of broadcasts by the North Korean radio seemed to indicate that the scheme had worked. By 0330 Commander Porter's party was back aboard, safe and sound, and with the distinction of having been the first members of the armed forces of the United States to invade Korea north of the 38th parallel. With their mission completed *Juneau* and *Mansfield* headed south again, and by noon of 12 July had rejoined Swenson on patrol between 37° and 38°.

The North Korean 5th Division had by this time reached south of the 37th parallel, and on the 12th the Army called for naval bombardment of the cliff road in 36°50'. On the 13th *De Haven* came up from Pusan with an artillery major for Admiral Higgins' staff and, although air and ground observers were still unavailable, communications were established with the 25th Division artillery detachment which was supporting the eastern front. Coastal fog on the 13th made targets hard to distinguish, but *Juneau* and *De Haven* nevertheless spent a busy day shooting at the cliff road in response to the Army request, at troops in Ulchin, at Mukho, at a railroad yard on the local line which leads back into the mountains, and at POL storage in the harbor of Samchok. The shooting was good, but the distressing ineffectiveness of 5-inch shells against roads and bridges made the arrival of 8-inch gunned cruisers from the United States appear increasingly urgent.

No requests from ashore were received on the 14th, and visibility remained poor, but with evening *Juneau* let off a few rounds against truck headlights on the road south of Ulchin. On the 15th, however, the cruiser and *De* Haven had a big day on the 20-mile stretch between 36°34' and 36°52' where the road runs generally close to the sea. For the first time an Army liaison plane was available to provide air spot, and a total of 645 rounds of 5-inch ammunition, expended against troops, shore batteries, and other targets, included a little night work against road traffic with the aid of star shell illumination. Joined by *Mansfield* on the next day, Higgins covered the coast between 36°30' and 37°15', and the three ships fired 173 rounds against targets of opportunity along the highway.

The 17th found *Juneau* fueling at Pusan while Admiral Higgins conferred with representatives of the Korean Navy. In the absence of the flagship, *Mansfield* and *De Haven* fired more than 400 rounds at miscellaneous targets in the same coastal area, and the British returned to the business of coastal bombardment with the cruiser *Belfast* and the destroyer *Cossack*. All this was useful, but the next day brought wholly unprecedented activity along the east coast in the form of an amphibious landing and a strike by the Seventh Fleet carrier force.

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James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 5. Into the Perimeter
3. 3-30 July: The Pohang Landing

In the course of the first week of July American infantrymen had made contact with the enemy, the 24th Division had completed its movement to Korea, and the 25th Division had begun its embarkation. The Air Force had carried out attacks against the invading army and against targets of opportunity. A carrier strike had been flown against the North Korean capital, and the gunnery ships of Naval Forces Japan, augmented by British units, had continued their bombardment of the enemy's east coast invasion route. This week saw also the commencement of planning for the first amphibious operation of the campaign.

Admiral Doyle had brought his ships into Sasebo on 3 July only to find that his prospective passengers had already departed. Next day, on orders from Admiral Joy, he flew back to Tokyo with members of his staff to work on a plan for the landing of two regimental combat teams of the 1st Cavalry Division on the west coast of Korea. For this operation CincFE's preferred objective was Inchon, seizure of which would give access to the Seoul transportation complex and would cut the enemy's main supply route; alternatively, it was proposed to land the cavalrymen at Kunsan, at the mouth of the river Kum, whence they could strike inland toward Taejon and the enemy's right flank. The concept of a landing at Inchon was certainly strategically appealing, and was the germ of the operation which in September would put the enemy to ignominious flight. Its proposal in early July was evidence of early confidence in the efficacy of American intervention. But a few short days sufficiently demonstrated the visionary aspects of the idea, and even Kunsan, a much more modest alternative, was soon seen to be an impossibility. Almost at once the problem came to be not one of throwing the 1st Cavalry Division against the enemy's flank, but of getting this force into Korea while there remained some Korean territory to get into.

For four days Doyle's staff struggled with the Inchon and Kunsan problems. But although these objectives were discarded on the 8th, the work was not wholly wasted, for the need for an amphibious operation remained. Not only was it necessary to get the troops into Korea at the earliest possible moment, but to do so if possible without putting them through Pusan. By 6 July that port had handled 55 ships, more were on the way, and although the Army had set up a Pusan Logistical Command on the 4th, the port facilities were overloaded and in danger of being swamped.

Thus the situation called for a landing on the southern or eastern coast. The problem was to find an objective with easy access to the interior, north or west of Pusan and south and east of the advancing enemy. On 10 July Admiral Doyle's suggestion of Pohang was accepted, planning proceeded at an accelerated rate, and the activity was legalized on the 12th when Commander Naval Forces Far East issued his Operation Order 9-50 . The affair was christened with the code name "Bluehearts."

The town of Pohang, which would shortly receive these visitors from overseas, had some 50,000 inhabitants. Located about 65 miles north of Pusan, it lies on the western shore of Yongil Man, a bay about six miles wide. To the southeast Yongil Man is protected by a high peninsula; on the west it is bordered by dunes, with sand hills beyond; the bottom affords good holding ground. At Pohang there were two long jetties with ten feet of water alongside where landing craft could unload; from Pohang, rail and road communications ran south to Pusan and, more important for the purpose of the moment, west through the mountains to Taegu; there was an airstrip of sorts nearby. All in all, the choice of objective was both obvious and sound.

The speed with which the operation was planned and mounted was remarkable. Normal lead time for an amphibious operation is measured in weeks if not in months, but this objective was selected on 10 July, the

expedition sailed on the 14th and 15th, and the landing was made on the morning of the 18th . Such an unprecedented schedule gave little time to collect information and to plan, train personnel, and assemble and modify gear. That these dates were met must be reckoned a considerable feat.

There were, it is true, certain favoring circumstances. The Amphibious Group was a good outfit, and knew its business; although t he 1st Cavalry Division lacked amphibious experience its men were willing and put their backs into the work. As a consequence of CincFE's plan for amphibious training of occupation troops there were present in Japan, in addition to Doyle's ships, detachments from the Pacific Fleet Amphibious Training Command, including an Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company or "Anglico, " which could be assigned to the Cavalry Division's staff to help with the conduct of the operation. All concerned, Army and Navy alike, were cheek by jowl in Tokyo, so that written communications could be eliminated and the business got on with by high-speed conversation.

But there were also major problems. The first of these, and one which would recur throughout the war, was the problem of intelligence: nobody knew much about Pohang. If one proposes to put landing craft up on the beach in order to get troops ashore it is desirable to know the underwater characteristics of the objective area, but although American forces had occupied South Korea, and had undertaken to conduct a mapping program, Korean beach gradients and much else remained a mystery. This, it may be observed, was no new experience; the same situation had prevailed in the Philippines after 40 years of American occupation. In January 1945, when American attack forces set forth for Lingayen Gulf and the reconquest of Luzon, information concerning those beaches, which other Americans had previously defended against the Japanese, was conspicuous by its absence. Yet experience had not taught convincingly the need for basic intelligence studies, and so far as South Korea was concerned the lack of information, as Admiral Doyle remarked, "was appalling."

Fortunately there was a solution. Pohang was still in friendly hands. On 10 July U.S. troops were reported guarding the airstrip, an aviation engineer unit was landed by LST, and Fifth Air Force was preparing to move in a fighter squadron. On the 11th some officers from the Amphibious Group and Cavalry Division staffs were flown to Pohang, to return two days later with useful and previously unavailable information. On the 15th a second group flew across to make such preparations for the landing as were possible, and to keep the command informed of enemy progress down the coastal road.

There was also a problem of shipping. The Amphibious Group had been sent westward for training purposes, and the four vessels available—a command ship, an attack transport, an attack cargo ship, and an LST--were wholly inadequate to the contemplated task. Fifteen more LSTs were procured from Scajap, and two attack cargo ships, *Oglethorpe* and *Titania*, were borrowed from the Military Sea Transportation Service for the assault phase. For the follow-up echelons shipping was also provided by MSTS, in the amount of three transports, a dozen Scajap LSTs, and four Japanese time-charter vessels.

Although *Oglethorpe* and *Titania* had retained the classification of AKA while assigned to MSTS, their equipment and personnel had been radically reduced. The first problem was met by Fleet Activities Yokosuka, where landing craft, boat fittings, and much miscellaneous gear including slings, nets, and the like were installed. At the same time an emergency air movement of boat crews and other specialized personnel from the west coast helped to strengthen the crews, but the two ships were still below peacetime complement when the force set sail, and far below that of wartime.

The load imposed on Fleet Activities Yokosuka in preparation for "Bluehearts" was not limited to the modification of the AKAs. To assist in unloading at the objective half a dozen LSUs were reactivated; the proposal to tow these to Pohang by LST superimposed a requirement for the manufacture of towing gear. Both in this high-speed shipyard work and in the loading of the Attack Force there was reason to be grateful for Japanese facilities and Japanese labor. The larger ships, which carried an average of 138 vehicles and 575 tons of bulk cargo, were loaded in little over a day, and the vehicle-laden LSTs in only four hours. Despite all difficulties the

sailing date was somehow met.

The employment of Scajap LSTs in both the assault phase and the follow-up echelons, and the use of chartered Japanese merchant ships, created an unusual situation. Seldom, indeed, do men embark for war in ships manned and navigated by enemy aliens. Since control of the Scajap fleet was exercised through the Civilian Merchant Marine Committee, an agency of the Japanese Government, its administration was somewhat unwieldy. Always, of course, there was the language problem. But the most important complications were of a military nature. If sailed independently, the only contact with these ships was through Japanese radio channels, cumbersome and presenting difficult questions of security. Even when sailing in company, problems arose in communicating with units which could not be issued classified publications. Placing of Navy radiomen and quartermasters aboard, while answering some difficulties gave rise to others, not least in the manifestation at meal time of cultural differences between east and west. Yet these problems, if not overcome, were mitigated by various expedients, and the Scajap LSTs gave yeoman service throughout the war.

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Although the Pohang operation was a comparatively small one, and although plans and preparations were made in record time, the organization of the Attack Force followed standard amphibious practice. The landing force, commanded by Major General Hobart Gay, USA, consisted of the 5th and 8th RCTs of the 1st Cavalry Division, an artillery group of three battalions, and minor attached units. These were transported to the objective area in the large vessels of the transport group, in the 16 LSTs of the tractor group, and in follow-up shipping. The Attack Force also included a minesweeping group of one AM and six AMS; a gunfire support group made up of *Juneau*, the American destroyers *Kyes*, *Higbee*, and *Collett*, and the Australian *Bataan*; and units assigned for reconnaissance, control purposes at the objective, administration of the beaches, and the like. Deep air support was the responsibility of the Air Force, which by this time had a fighter squadron on the Pohang air strip; close air support at the objective, should the natives prove unfriendly, would be provided by the Seventh Fleet, which was coming up from Okinawa for the occasion.

On the 14th, as the minesweepers started work in Yongil Man, the tractor group of LSTs, towing the LSUs and with two fleet tugs as escort, sailed from Tokyo Bay, to be followed on the morrow by the transport group. The route was south along the coast of Japan, then north by Bungo Strait through which *Yamato*, mightiest battleship in the world, had sortied on her final cruise in vain attempt to strike the American fleet off Okinawa. Turning westward through the Inland Sea, the force steamed past Shimonoseki, where almost a century before the U.S.S. *Wyoming* had engaged the forces of the Daimyo of Choshu, and into the Korean Strait. Early in the morning of the 18th, tractor and transport groups joined, and the ships moved into Yongil Man. Fighting had been reported only a few miles north of Pohang, but the ROK 3rd Division still held the road, and at 0559 Admiral Doyle made the signal to "Land the Landing Force" in accordance with the plan for an unopposed operation. Task Force 77 and *Juneau* were released from their support commitments, and only a small combat air patrol from *Valley Forge* was retained overhead to protect the shipping of the Attack Force.

Although peaceful, the scene at Pohang on the 18th was a busy one. From the ships of the transport group at anchor in Yongil Man, troops and vehicles were shuttled ashore. Nine of the LSTs disgorged their cargo along the jetty wall and on the beaches of Yongil Man, along with the smaller landing craft; seven were ordered out to Kuryongpo around the point to unload vehicles. Landing was begun at 0715; general unloading commenced at 0930; except for *Cavalier*, all major ships had been emptied by midnight, while the LSTs had discharged all personnel, all vehicles, and more than half their bulk cargo. More than 10,000 troops and 2,000 vehicles, and almost 3,000 tons of cargo had been put ashore.

There is no landing better than an unopposed landing. Since the ROK troops were still holding out to the northward, the cavalry division had been greeted at Pohang not by the enemy but by General Walker, and by trains ready-formed to carry them to the front. To some, however, this came as a disappointment. As the first

sizable planned naval operation of the war, "Bluehearts" had drawn the attention of the press, and 26 correspondents were embarked in the command ship *Mount McKinley*. At Pohang the lack of correlation between public interest and strategic worth, always a problem for the armed services in a democracy, reappeared in the report of the public information officer that "the fact that the landing was unopposed detracted a great deal from the news value." But however saddened the scribes, the bloodless and expeditious nature of the operation was to the military a matter for rejoicing.

At noon on the 19th General Gay assumed command ashore. In the afternoon, with unloading completed, ships of the Attack Force shifted to heavy weather anchorages as Grace, the first typhoon of the season, was reported heading for Korea Strait. On the 22nd Grace came up the coast, bringing gusts of 50 knots to Yongil Man and delaying the arrival of the second echelon of shipping. This had been scheduled to come in on the 21st, but the MSTS units reached Pohang only on the 23rd, and the chartered Japanese freighters the next day. The LSTs of the third echelon arrived on the 26th and 29th.

For a variety of reasons, unloading of the follow-up shipping was somewhat slow. The MSTS transports suffered from their shortages of personnel; the Japanese freighters lacked trained hatch crews and unloading gear, and the ever-present language problem complicated supervision; after two days of continuous labor the shore party was getting tired. Nonetheless the work proceeded. On the 23rd the commanding officer of a Navy LST was directed by Admiral Doyle to take over the duties of senior officer present, and late in the evening the force commander sailed in *Mount McKinley*, with *Union*, *Kyes*, and *Diachenko*, for Tokyo. A week later it was all over, and CTFO was able to report the completion of operations at Pohang and the withdrawal of all shipping from Yongil Man. But this report was by way of formality, for the strategic rewards of the operation had long since been apparent. On 22 July, four days after the initial landing, the 1st Cavalry Division had relieved the battered 24th Division southeast of Taejon.

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Chapter 5. Into the Perimeter
4. 10-31 July: Seventh Fleet Operations

At Buckner Bay, 600 miles to the southward, Admiral Struble's staff had been working on ways to deal with the Seventh Fleet's Formosan responsibilities while planning with Admiral Hoskins for further carrier strikes in Korea. In Formosa, where some expected an invasion attempt before mid-August by a force of up to 200,000, rivalries and dissension on the upper levels and low morale below raised the prospect of rapid collapse in the event of a landing in strength. Seventh Fleet control of the Strait was consequently the crucial factor; with the Seventh Fleet involved in Korea, warning of attack was essential; on 10 July, therefore, as Struble returned from his visit to Taipei, redeployment of the Seventh Fleet patrol planes was begun. VP 28, a P4Y squadron, was moved up from Guam to Okinawa; VP 46, a Mariner squadron with units at Sangley Point and Buckner Bay, was ordered forward to the Pescadores along with the tender *Suisun*; Commander Fleet Air Wing I was relieved of responsibilities at Guam and instructed to advance his headquarters to Okinawa.
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These movements were expeditiously completed. Captain Grant had his wing headquarters in operation at Naha Air Force Base by the 15th; on the next day VP 28 began daily patrols of the China coast and northern Formosa Strait; by 17 July VP 46 was flying searches in the southern sector. On the basis of this forward deployment Commander Seventh Fleet proposed on the 16th that General MacArthur announce the imminent commencement of naval air reconnaissance of Formosa Strait. The proposal was approved the same day, and having brandished the weapon of publicity against the Chinese Communists, Admiral Struble sailed from Buckner Bay to employ his Striking Force against the North Koreans.

In Korea his presence was urgently desired. On 9 July General Dean, then commanding all Army units in Korea, had inquired hopefully about the possibility of carrier air support. In response Struble next day advised Admiral Joy of his willingness to help out either with close support or with further strikes on west coast targets, while noting that until ammunition reached Okinawa on the 18th he would be limited to two days of close support operations. For effective work in support of troops the front line communications problem was governing: if the Tactical Air Control Squadron from *Mount McKinley* could be made available, all would be well; if not, Seventh Fleet could supply a small control team, although equipment would have to be provided it. Subject to these considerations Struble proposed to sail from Buckner on the 11th for operations on the 13th and 14th.

The offer, however, was not accepted. Admiral Joy's reply stated that he knew of no plans for carrier close support, and that the Tacron was not designed for shore employment. The limitations on Seventh Fleet endurance, moreover, made him want to hold it in reserve to cover the landing of the 1st Cavalry Division, and on the 12th a dispatch operation order instructed Admiral Struble to provide objective air cover at Pohang, support of the landing force, and such additional effort as might be directed. Two days later Struble again flew to Tokyo for talks with Admiral Joy and General Stratemeyer; a schedule was worked out which called for two days in support of the landing and in northward strikes against the enemy, a day for replenishment, and two more days of operations; an east coast area was cleared with FEAF for strikes on the 18th and 19th. On 16 July, as the Seventh Fleet started north to cover the Pohang landing, Admiral Joy issued Operation Order 10–50 governing the conduct of carrier attacks against the North Korean forces.

The planning for these operations had seen the emergence of the first of a series of problems concerning carrier employment which was to trouble naval commanders throughout the campaign. So far as support of the Pohang landing was concerned there was no difficulty: this was a conventional naval task in which all hands felt

quite at home. But attack on the North Korean forces and installations beyond the beachhead raised problems of coordination with the Air Force. Subsequent to the first carrier attack on Pyongyang, General Stratemeyer had requested the Seventh Fleet to confine its further strikes to northeastern Korea, north of the 38th parallel and east of I27° E, with target priorities beginning with rail and highway cuts and running down through petroleum facilities to airfields. Yet such an employment of carrier aviation, however desirable in the situation of the moment, was certainly not envisaged in the existing unification agreements. The roles and missions papers for the armed forces, worked out during the painful period of unification, made interdiction of enemy land power and communications an exclusive Air Force function in which the Navy could participate only after a complicated bureaucratic procedure of authorization. The fact that naval air was not to be so used had been one of the reasons advanced in support of the cancellation of construction of the carrier *United States*.

It had, of course, been recognized that in an emergency the instruments at hand and the urgency of the situation would take precedence over paper agreements. But there was the further difficulty that the employment of carrier aviation in interdiction was not contemplated in current naval thinking. On the one hand the interdiction of land communications calls for continuous effort; on the other, it was felt that logistic considerations and the dangers of air and submarine attack made it undesirable for carriers to operate for more than two days in the same location. By autumn, when concern over air and submarine opposition had greatly subsided and when underway replenishment had improved, the carriers would be operating for protracted periods in the same locality. But autumn was far away, and in the intervening period of emergency things would become worse before they became better.

This triple conflict between legislation, doctrine, and the exigencies of the situation was to prove the less manageable owing to difficulties in coordination with the Air Force. Although these, stemming both from doctrinal differences and from technical difficulties in communication, were never to be completely solved, some steps had already been taken. On 8 July General Stratemeyer had advised CincFE that it was essential that he have "operational control" of all naval aircraft in the theater. To the Navy, quite apart from doubts as to FEAF's technical capability to handle this effort, the implications of the request appeared excessive, involving as they did the authority to control carrier movements as well as to assign targets, and after some discussion a CincFE letter of the 15th delegated "coordination control" to the commanding general of FEAF. It was on the basis of this agreement that Struble had cleared with FEAF his plans to strike northward from Pohang and that Joy issued his operation order of 16 July.

Morning of the 18th found *Valley Forge*, *Triumph*, and their screening ships in the southern Sea of Japan, some 6o miles northeast of Pohang. At dawn local antisubmarine and combat air patrols were launched by *Triumph*, and *Valley Forge* sent off a target combat air patrol and a support group of attack planes to assist the landing. No alternative targets seem to have been given the support group; the location of the front line and the needs of the ROK 3rd Division were apparently unknown; and when the landing proved unopposed and the task force was released from its air commitments the support group jettisoned its load.

Except for the requirement of a combat air patrol over Pohang, the *Valley Forge* air group was now available for attacks on North Korean targets. On the 18th and 19th, therefore, strikes were flown against railroad facilities, industrial plants, and airfields from Pyonggang and Wonsan north through Hungnam and Hamhung. In the two days of attacks two aircraft were lost, but both pilots were recovered. About 5o grounded aircraft were sighted, of which more than half were destroyed and the remainder damaged, while flights north along the railroad on the 19th exploded four locomotives. But the biggest explosion was at Wonsan.

This seaport city, located at the head of the Korean Gulf and at the east coast focus of Korean rail communications, had grown rapidly under the Japanese regime. Its population, now of the order of 150,000, had tripled within a generation. It was the site of a number of manufacturing plants, and the center of a considerable complex of petroleum installations, developed to support Japanese continental expansion, which included the

largest refinery in Korea. Following the arrival of the Russians in 1945 this refinery had for some time been inactive, but in 1947 a joint Russian-North Korean enterprise had been formed to operate it, Soviet supervisors had been provided, and late in the next year crude oil began to arrive in Soviet tankers for processing.

On the afternoon of the 18th *Valley Forge* jets reported that the refinery appeared in full operation, and at 1700 a strike group of 11 Skyraiders and 10 Corsairs was launched, the former armed with 1,000 and 500-pound bombs and the latter with high velocity aircraft rockets. As the group came in over the city the Corsairs went down first, firing their rockets and 20-millimeter guns, and were followed by the ADs with their bombs. The results were spectacular, with large fires and so much smoke that photographic damage assessment was difficult. On the next day a *Valley Forge* flight passing in the neighborhood observed the refinery still burning vigorously, while the smoke, rising to 5,000 feet, was visible to the force at sea.

The attack on the Wonsan refinery gave rise to an interservice conflict of claims. Air Force planes had attacked the city between 6 and 13 July. There then followed the carrier attack of the 18th, on the basis of which the Navy reported the destruction of the refinery. On 10 August another heavy raid was made by B–29s, after which a FEAF communique claimed total destruction of the refinery, which had been attacked on the basis of "reconnaissance photographs [which showed] that only a small portion . . . had been damaged in the previous small air strikes."

Interrogation of supervisory personnel by Marine Corps officers in the autumn elicited the statement that although the early raids had had adverse effects on employee morale, and had stimulated the removal of bulk petroleum products, no bomb had hit in any vital area. The *Valley Forge* attack of the 18th was reported to have destroyed 12,000 tons of refined products, saturated every vital area in the refinery, and caused it to be declared a total loss. What remained of the plant had been flattened by the bombing of 10 August, and in early October, as ROK forces approached Wonsan, the Russian supervisors had headed north for the border.

Apart from the question of who hit what, the strikes of 18 and 1 July raise questions as to target selection in a police action. The objectives were, of course, in accordance with the desires expressed by FEAF concerning attacks by Seventh Fleet aircraft on North Korean targets. But the aspect of strategic air warfare which emphasizes attack on industrial plant is slow to have effect at the battleline; the real strategic targets were outside Korea, and destruction of North Korean facilities as of this date would seem merely to have promised difficulties in reconstruction, assuming U.N. success in the campaign. Overshadowed though it was by the refinery quarrel, it seems probable that the destruction of grounded aircraft by the *Valley Forge* air group was the most important result of the two-day operation; together with some similarly successful sorties by Air Force jets on the 19th, this pretty well liquidated the North Korean Air Force. But habits are hard to break, and just as the carrier commanders were reluctant to undertake continuous operations in the same area, so others found it difficult to divest themselves of strongly held notions on air warfare; on 31 July a message from the Joint Chiefs urged the strategic bombing of North Korean industrial targets.

It may be conceded, in this context, that the case of the Wonsan refinery is not entirely clearcut. Despite the handcarrying nature of the North Korean army the destruction of 12,000 tons of petroleum products may have had valuable consequences, so great is the importance of oil to modern war. And inevitably, the course of the Korean conflict being what it was, the policeman's attitude developed into that of the warrior. But in these early weeks, at least, it would seem that the police action should have been conducted as such. Rioters are quelled with nightsticks, not by turning off the gas and water at their homes. Had it been possible in the early days to deliver, in accordance with Army desires and naval capabilities, well-controlled and well-coordinated close air support at the front, the effect on the ground situation would have been more immediate. It was on the ground that the emergency lay.

Two days of east coast strikes had gone off well, but nature now intervened to change the schedule. Concerned by the time involved in commuting between Okinawa and the scene of action, Commander Seventh

Fleet had been expediting arrangements for underway replenishment and was contemplating a shift of base forward to Sasebo; the plans of the moment called for the force to fuel at sea on the 20th in preparation for two more days of operations. But the approach of Typhoon Grace forced postponement, and with completion of flight operations on the 19th all ships set Typhoon Condition One and prepared for the worst in the way of weather. On the 20th, in winds of up to 40 knots, the force cruised the Sea of Japan, and late in the day headed south through Tsushima Strait to get clear of Grace's skirts and gain an operating position off the west coast of Korea. On the 21st *Triumph* was detached with *Comus* for a ten-day period of availability at Sasebo.

Admiral Struble had advised ComNavFE on the afternoon of the 20th that he hoped to conduct a one-day strike on west Korea on the 22nd, spend a day in refueling and rearming his force, and return on the 24th and 25th for further attacks against west coast targets. But this schedule depended on factors beyond his control, on weather and on the availability of replenishment ships. The tanker *Navasota* was by this time on hand to fuel the force, but for rearming the situation was less clear, and depended on whether the AK *Grainger*, which had reached Okinawa on the 18th with a load of aircraft ammunition from Guam, could rearm the force at sea. Failing in this it would be necessary to proceed to Sasebo, with consequent delay.

At dawn on the 22nd, from a location in the Yellow Sea northwest of Kunsan, *Valley Forge* launched her air group. Although his force was now down to a single carrier, Struble undertook the double mission of support of troops and attack on northern targets: the propeller-driven ADs and F4Us were sent off to the eastward to work under airborne controllers from Fifth Air Force in close support of the ground forces; the jets headed north to attack targets beyond Seoul. The air support mission, first of the Korean War, went awry as the strike aircraft, unable to reach the controllers on the prescribed radio frequencies, resorted to attacks on secondary targets in the area of the capital. In the afternoon a second effort met with similar results, and after recovery of the strike group the force headed southward to rendezvous with *Navasota*. By this time *Valley Forge* was down to a little less than a one-day supply of aviation gasoline.

Rendezvous with the tanker was made late in the morning of the 23rd to the southward of Cheju Do, but *Grainger* and the ammunition were not there. On completion of refueling, therefore, Task Force 77 headed for Sasebo where it arrived on the morning of the 24th. The delay in resuming operations, which Admiral Struble had feared, had been forced upon him.

In the meantime the events of the 22nd had prompted a review of the mission of the Seventh Fleet. The waste of effort consequent to the inability of his strike groups to reach the controllers had led Struble to look for more profitable employment elsewhere. Casting his eyes northward, he proposed to ComNavFE a change of schedule which would call for two days of strikes against east coast targets from Chongjin southward, coupled with cruiser and destroyer bombardment between 40° and 41°, and asked for detailed target information. But by this time a new emergency was developing in Korea. The Pohang landing had been successful, the main front had been reinforced, but west of the central hill mass the advance of the North Korean 6th Division had continued unopposed. The entire southwestern region had been overrun, and the invaders were moving eastward with nothing to block their path. On the 23rd, while *Valley Forge* was refueling, an emergency dispatch from Eighth Army advised all major commanders that an "urgent requirement" existed for the employment of naval air in the west coast area beginning that very day, and requested information as to naval capabilities in close and general support.

From both Joy and Struble this dispatch brought prompt reply. The former observed that subject to the primary mission of the neutralization of Formosa, and to the undesirability of protracted operations in one spot, no great difficulty was expected in coordinating Seventh Fleet and Air Force operations, provided only that successful joint communications were established. But to Commander Seventh Fleet the situation appeared more complicated. While observing that Eighth Army's urgent requirement could be met beginning on the 26th, he emphasized the fact that present methods of coordination were unsatisfactory, and that in addition to the

communications problem there was an urgent requirement for personnel trained in the control of close support aircraft. To fill this need Struble repeated his proposal of 10 July that either the Tactical Air Control Squadron from Admiral Doyle's Amphibious Group be sent to Korea, or that the Seventh Fleet itself supply a small but experienced control team.

The need for some competent control group to handle close support had already received consideration. Four days earlier EUSAK—Eighth U.S. Army in Korea—had requested that the Anglico which had been attached to the 1st Cavalry Division for the Pohang landing be assigned on completion of that operation to assist the Joint Operations Center in control of naval gunfire and naval air. The request had been approved by Admiral Joy's headquarters, and Admiral Doyle was so instructed on the 20th. But by then the Anglico was returning to Yokohama by sea, and by the time of its arrival it had come to seem more profitable to retain it in Japan to train Army and Air Force personnel.

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So things stood when the crisis in the west and Eighth Army's call for help led Struble to renew his suggestion for the employment of the Tacron or of a Seventh Fleet control party. These proposals also were to prove abortive. The plan for the Seventh Fleet tactical air control party, worked up at Buckner Bay, had contemplated a pooling of *Valley Forge* and *Triumph* material and personnel, but the sortie on the 16th had interrupted preparations. The recommended employment of the Tacron was vetoed at the instance of Admiral Doyle, who felt its personnel would be spread unprofitably thin. The upshot was that efforts to increase the yield of carrier operations in close support were limited to attempts, themselves badly needed, to improve radio communications between the Seventh Fleet Striking Force and the JOC.

At Sasebo rearming of *Valley Forge* had begun on the morning of the 24th. But replenishment was to be cut short by the rapid deterioration of the ground situation in the west. Early in the afternoon an emergency dispatch was received from ComNavFE, cancelling existing plans and assigning Task Force 77 the area south of the Kum and west of the line Kunsan-Chonju–Namwon-Kwangju. This region was believed to contain a major concentration of North Korean forces according to the dispatch the "total area is considered enemy." Commander Task Force 77 was adjured to search carefully and to destroy all armor, bridges, traffic, troop concentrations, and barges up to the limit of his capabilities. The only restrictions on his operations were to beware of Korean Navy YMS types operating inshore, and to "hit only military targets" at Kunsan, where preservation of port facilities seemed desirable in view of possible future amphibious operations. As the dispatch emphasized the critical situation of the ground forces and urged immediate efforts, *Valley Forge* broke off her rearming before completion, and *Triumph*, whose yard period had barely begun, rejoined the force. At midnight on the 24th Task Force 77 was again underway from Sasebo, headed north.

The carriers launched at 0800 on the 25th from a position south of Korea, and for the remainder of the day maintained planes in the air over the front line. Once again, however, results were disappointing pilots returning from the morning strikes reported that air controllers had more planes than they could handle and that radio channels were overcrowded; these factors, together with the lack of common charts and procedures, had prevented controlled attacks, with the result that the "free opportunity" area assigned in the west had been liberally used to dispose of ammunition.

Early in the afternoon Admiral Struble reported that owing to lack of targets the morning sweeps had been of very minor effect. In point of fact it appears that ComNavFE's intelligence was stale, and that the North Korean 6th Division had by this time passed through the country assigned the carriers and was concentrated about Sunchon. The region so menacingly described in the emergency dispatch from Admiral Joy turned out to be a peaceful agricultural area populated principally by donkey carts and men working in rice paddies. Although he announced that he would continue with afternoon attacks, the effort seemed unfruitful to Commander Seventh Fleet, and once again he emphasized the need of proper communications with commanders in the field.

In view of the unproductive nature of the day's work the *Valley Forge* air group had flown pilots to Taegu to arrange for targets and communications for the 26th. The result was an assignment to close support at the front, attack on miscellaneous targets as directed by the Joint Operations Center, and deep support strikes in the region between Taejon and Seoul. In the evening these intentions were reported by Commander Seventh Fleet to ComNavFE, and the Striking Force turned northeast and headed for the Korean Strait and for a morning position off Pohang.

Admiral Struble's dispatch stating his plans for 26 July produced an immediate howl from Tokyo. No new area for carrier operations had been arranged with FEAF headquarters in Japan, and Admiral Joy requested immediate information as to Commander Seventh Fleet's intentions. Prior to the 25th arrangements for carrier strikes had been made on the upper levels, between ComNavFE and the commanding general of FEAF, on a basis of general area coordination, but with the commencement of efforts to use carrier planes in support of troops this system began to break down. Struble's reply described the arrangements which had been made directly with EUSAK and JOC, and since difficulties were still being experienced in direct communication, followed up with a request that ComNavFE clear with FEAF for operations as far north as Suwon. On the 27th a message from ComNavFE implicitly endorsed the procedure of coordinating operations with the JOC in Korea, and from this time on such coordination was increasingly attempted.

Within the force, morning of the 26th was marked by an extremely convincing submarine contact, but the early strikes led to little more than the destruction of some trucks on the enemy main line of communications. But in the afternoon, despite congestion of aircraft in the target area, one flight of four ADs at last found adequate control. The result was the reported destruction of 70 percent of Yongdong, a junction town just west of the saddle where two highways and the railroad come together, and two later flights of eight Corsairs applied more effort to this pressure point by striking troop concentrations in the region between Yongdong and Taejon.

On conclusion of the operations of the 26th, which at least represented some improvement over earlier efforts in support of Eighth Army, the task force withdrew to refuel. CincFE had expressed his enthusiasm over the effect of the carrier air attacks, and on the 27th the Fifth Air Force JOC, after politely describing the attacks of the 26th as "invaluable and much appreciated," inquired as to their results, requested information as to future operations, and stated it could handle as many flights as could be provided. But a report from Admiral Doyle on the state of Army and Air Force control of tactical air seemed to indicate a need for basic reorganization and training before adequate standards could be obtained, while the Seventh Fleet, despite the compliments, remained unsatisfied with the results of its work.

By now, too, there were signs that a crisis was making up in Formosa Strait. On the 21st a reported sighting of between 500 and 1,500 junks by the master of a British merchantman had led to special searches by Fleet Air Wing I. These proved negative, but on the 26th a VP 28 patrol plane was attacked by two fighters in the northern part of the Strait. In this situation, and as continuation of the support effort seemed of doubtful value, Struble recommended to ComNavFE that the Seventh Fleet move south to the Buckner-Formosa area for a possible sweep of the Strait.

This proposal, however, was disapproved. The needs of Eighth Army remained paramount, other units were dispatched to the southward, and on 28 July Task Force 77 returned to the attack, operating in the area northwest of Mokpo. The strikes of propeller-driven aircraft on the 28th were again concentrated around Yongdong, and in the neighborhood of Hamchang at the northwest corner of the perimeter. Attacks were made on troop concentrations, trucks, and tanks, and although one jet flight to the Naktong River front failed to contact a controller and returned without result, control arrangements were reported somewhat improved.

In an attempt to make them even better, by improvement of communications between the task force and the JOC and by simplification of the complicated control procedures then in effect, another mission was flown to Taegu. This visit bore fruit in the establishment of a direct communications link, and helped to minimize some

operating problems by making JOC personnel aware of what the carrier force could and could not do. The previous overloading of airborne controllers was partially rectified by the assignment, for the 29th, of a defined section of the front line and of specific Mosquito aircraft to the planes of Task Force 77. Within the force, with similar ends in view, another move to organize a tactical air control party with *Valley Forge* and *Triumph* personnel had begun, but the early permanent detachment of the British carrier was to prevent fruition.

On the 29th the Corsairs and Skyraiders shifted their efforts to the Hadong-Sunchon region of the south coast, from which a battalion of the 29th Regiment, moved west from Pusan to block the passage south of the central hill mass, had just been driven by the North Korean 6th Division. Here pilots reported destruction of a score or more trucks and a couple of tanks and damage to bridges and rolling stock, and described control procedures as varying from very good to very bad. To the northward, on the Naktong River front, a morning strike of eight Panther jets found a controller who was at least frank to admit that he was overloaded and could not work them; four were detached on armed reconnaissance to the northward while the others, although unable to make radio contact, showed their initiative by following an F–8o flight in a strafing run on enemy troops.

With the end of the day's operations the Striking Force retired. Carrier operations during July, limited though they were by logistic problems and frustrated by difficulties in control, had been reasonably successful, but they had not been free from cost. In addition to the aircraft destroyed in the deck crash of 4 July, two F9Fs, three F4Us, and a helicopter had gone into the water, and on the 22nd an AD had crashed and burned, taking its pilot down with it. Most downed personnel, however, had been fished out of the sea by screening ships; one pilot had been recovered 8o miles from the force by *Triumph*'s amphibian plane; another, shot down behind enemy lines, had been picked up by an Army helicopter which in turn had gone down from fuel exhaustion, but both pilots ultimately had made contact with friendly forces. Perhaps the most remarkable loss of the period had occurred on the 28th when a *Triumph* fighter pilot on combat air patrol, vectored out to investigate a radar contact which showed unfriendly, had somewhat absentmindedly closed a B—29 only to find himself shot down west of Anma Do in the Yellow Sea. But he too was recovered by a destroyer.

Following the operations of the 29th five ADs were launched with pilot passengers to pick up replacement aircraft which had reached Japan in *Boxer*; *Triumph* and *Comus* were detached to Japan for further assignment to the west coast blockading force; Admiral Struble boarded a destroyer and headed for Sasebo in anticipation of a flying trip to Formosa with CincFE; *Valley Forge* and her screen steamed south for Buckner Bay. There they anchored on the 31st and there, on the next day, Task Force 77 received a welcome accession of strength with the arrival of the carrier *Philippine Sea*.

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Chapter 5. Into the Perimeter
5. 7 July-2 August: Patrol Planes and Gunnery Ships

Through the hectic weeks of July, as the U.N. Command struggled to stem the enemy advance, naval operations fell into three interrelated categories. To support the campaign in the peninsula a steady stream of shipping was flowing into Pusan, while the Pohang landing, carried out by Task Force 90, permitted the rapid reinforcement of the front by the previously uncommitted 1st Cavalry Division. At the same time Task Force 77, the U.N.'s long-range weapon, worked over North Korean air strength and communications, attacked targets of opportunity like the Wonsan refinery, and attempted to support the western front against the pressure of the numerically superior enemy. As troops and supplies were fed into Korea, and as Struble's force struck northward and struggled with problems of communications and control, the units of Naval Forces Japan were busy on both sides of the peninsula. While patrol planes covered the maritime flanks, the gunnery units escorted shipping, bombarded enemy positions, and gave fire support to the ROK forces holding the east coast road.

Like everyone else, the Fleet Air Wing I detachment had more jobs than it could easily handle. To perform the multitudinous duties of antisubmarine patrol, escort of convoy, weather reconnaissance, and shipping search, Captain Alderman had a total of eight PBM Mariner flying boats and nine P2V Neptunes. Shortly after their arrival in Japan the PBMs of VP 47 moved from Yokosuka to the RAAF base at Iwakuni, near Hiroshima on the Inland Sea. Messed, housed, and supported by the hospitable Australians, the squadron managed to extemporize a seadrome and to maintain an antisubmarine patrol of the Korean Strait, and on the 15th the arrival of the seaplane tender *Gardiner's Bay* brought more ample logistic assistance.

Meanwhile the Neptunes of VP 6, which had reached Japan on 7 July and were operating out of Johnson Air Force Base at Tachikawa, were flying daily reconnaissance of the Korean east coast between 37° and 42°, and of the Yellow Sea and west coast as far north as 39°30'. But the lack of enemy seaborne traffic made the flights unproductive, while coordination with surface units was hindered by the remoteness of Johnson AFB from other naval activities. There were also certain difficulties in communications: on 20 July a VP 6 pilot spent three hours inside Typhoon Grace looking for a convoy he had been instructed to escort, only to discover on his return that the weather had kept the ships in port. On the 29th, however, the opportunities open to the Neptunes were enlarged by authorization to attack enemy shipping and installations, and two at once complied by destroying, with rockets and 20-millimeter fire, a train on the east coast line near Chongjin.

The arrival of Rear Admiral Ruble, Commander Carrier Division 15, and of his staff, enabled Admiral Joy to rationalize his air command. The Search and Reconnaissance Group was united with the other naval aviation activities in a new command, Naval Air Japan, which assumed responsibility for squadrons, aircraft, logistics, and bases. But while this improved the administrative situation, it in no way lightened the load for the 17 patrol planes and their crews, and when at the end of the month three RAF Sunderland flying boats reached Iwakuni from Hong Kong, they were most welcome.

On the east coast, day after day, bombardment of the enemy invasion route continued. Coordination with the troops ashore was improving steadily, Korean interpreters had been assigned the ships, an artillery officer had been attached to Admiral Higgins' staff, and spotting planes were at least intermittently available.

On 18 July, as the 1st Cavalry was landing at Pohang, Mansfield and *De Haven* were working the coastal road in the vicinity of Samchok, while Belfast and *Cossack* were patrolling at the 38th parallel. In the morning, as *Juneau* was released from her support commitments, the others came south to join the flagship off Yongdok, where the day was spent firing on targets of opportunity and where a reported "full-scale" enemy offensive was

broken up. In the afternoon, parties of American and British naval officers went ashore to confer with the KMAG group attached to the ROK 3rd Division and to pass out radio sets in the interest of improved communications. That evening Admiral Higgins instituted a new technique, and while the main body operated off the battleline a single destroyer was detached nightly to prowl northward along the coast, seeking out and shooting up promising targets.

For the next two days *Juneau*, *Belfast*, and the destroyers operated off Yongdok, between 36°17´ and 36° 30´, and although the spotting planes were grounded by the passage of Grace, the gunners' efforts met with great success. Two days of shooting up the valley at troop concentrations in Yongdok cost the ships some 1,300 rounds and got them a radio station, more than 400 enemy troops "by actual count," and enthusiastic reports from the shore fire control personnel.

But at Yongdok, as all around the perimeter, pressure continued to be severe, information scanty, and communications inadequate. The forces defending the town had lost contact with General Walker's headquarters: a EUSAK message advising that the general situation was critical and that the line had to be held reached the Army ashore only after relay by *Juneau*. Admiral Doyle, too, was in the dark, and on the 20th, with his second echelon scheduled to reach Pohang the next day, asked for information on the situation and prospects at Yongdok. Again the whaleboat was called away, and information brought back from shore indicated that landing operations could be safely continued, and that the ROK forces were planning the recapture of Yongdok on the morrow.

Temporarily, at least, this operation was successful. At 0600 on the 21st, after a 15-minute bombardment of the town, two star shells from *Juneau* gave the signal for the attack, and by 0717 the South Koreans had overrun Yongdok. Firing in support of the advance continued throughout the day, and *Juneau*, *Belfast*, and the destroyers expended more than 800 rounds. In the afternoon *Belfast* and *Mansfield* retired to Sasebo while *Juneau*, with *Swenson* and *Higbee*, continued close off Yongdok. On the 22nd, in preparation for further advance, 243 rounds were fired by the cruiser, but this time things went badly. The enemy counterattacked in force, the artillery observer was forced to retire, communications broke down, and weather had again grounded the spotting planes. On the 23rd, as the southward retirement of friendly forces continued, the responsibility for fire support was turned over to the destroyers and Higgins sailed for Sasebo, where early on the 24th *Juneau* moored alongside a new arrival, the heavy cruiser *Toledo*.

The growing strength of Naval Forces Japan had already brought changes in the organization of Task Force 96. ComNavFE's operation order of early July had been modified by the addition of Task Group 96.7, the ROK Navy, and of Task Group 96.9, the submarines acquired from the Seventh Fleet. With the arrival of Admiral Ruble all aviation activities had been consolidated into Naval Air Japan, Task Group 96.2. Logistic support at Sasebo was shortly to be improved by the establishment of Service Division 31, Captain Joseph M. P. Wright, with the designation of Task Group 96.4. But before this last event took place the arrival of new gunnery strength from the United States made possible a reorganization of the Support Groups.

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The first of the units sailing from the west coast reached Japan on 23 July as Rear Admiral Hartman, Commander Cruiser Division 3, arrived at Yokosuka with *Helena* and Destroyer Division III, while *Toledo*, which had been ordered ahead, entered Sasebo. On reporting to ComNavFE, Admiral Hartman was instructed to take over command of all naval forces engaged in escort, support, and blockade, with the exception of the ROK Navy. Pursuant to these orders *Helena* and the destroyers sailed at once for Sasebo, where they arrived on the 25th and where not only *Toledo*, but *Belfast* with Admiral Andrewes and Juneau with Admiral Higgins were awaiting them.

At Sasebo, on the 25th, a conference was held between Admirals Joy, Hartman, Higgins, and Andrewes, and other officers of the force. The Support Groups and the Escort Group were reorganized and consolidated into Task Group 96.5, the Japan-Korea Support Group, under command of Com-Crudiv 3. On the basis of Admiral

Higgins' reports of the ineffectiveness of 5 and 6-inch gunfire against reinforced concrete bridges it was decided to use the 8-inch cruisers for bombardment and fire support; *Juneau* was scheduled for transfer to the Seventh Fleet, and Higgins shifted his flag to *Toledo*. The new organization of Task Group 96.5, as here worked out, involved the creation of four subordinate units: two rotating East Coast Support Elements were set up, one under Admiral Hartman with *Helena* and Destroyer Division III, the other under Admiral Higgins with Toledo and Desdiv 91 Captain Jay was given command of the Escort Element, to which the four frigates were assigned; command of the West Coast Support Element, composed of British Commonwealth ships and the Dutch destroyer *Evertsen*, remained with Admiral Andrewes. In addition to his responsibility for Yellow Sea and west coast operations, Admiral Andrewes was charged with the supervision of all non-American United Nations naval forces, for which purpose he set up an administrative headquarters in a frigate at Sasebo.

Early on the morning of the 26th Admiral Hartman assumed command of the Support Group, sortied from Sasebo with Cruiser Division 3 and Desdiv III, and headed north to bombard the Korean coast. But his plans were to be rudely interrupted by the developments to the southward which had concerned Admiral Struble. At 1500 a dispatch came in ordering Hartman to proceed with *Helena* and the destroyers to Formosa at best speed. These instructions placed ComCrudiv 3 in a somewhat complicated situation, for he now found himself commanding two task groups in two different fleets, and charged with two missions separated by 15 degrees of latitude.

Operational control of Korean affairs was turned over to Admiral Higgins in *Toledo*, who was ordered to join the fire support ships off Yongdok; *Helena* and the destroyers reversed course and disappeared over the southern horizon; *Toledo* continued onward alone. But although only one of the heavy cruisers reached Yongdok, the arrival of 8-inch guns with their greater hitting power was helpful. From the 27th to the 30th, in rainy, windy weather, *Toledo*, *Mansfield*, and *Collett* operated off the battle line. Troops and other targets made for good shooting, and both shore and air spot were available; starshell illumination by the ships aided the artillery ashore; the destroyers continued to alternate days' duty in running north along the shoreline to bombard targets between Yongdok and the parallel. By month's end the pressure was diminishing.

The arrival of reinforcements and the reorganization of Task Group 96.5 greatly increased the strength available for operations in the Yellow Sea, where in the early days *Alacrity* had patrolled alone. Although Admiral Andrewes had assumed command of the West Coast Support Group in early July, the greater needs and opportunities of the east coast situation had made heavy demands upon his ships. Now, however, he had under his control the light cruisers *Jamaica*, *Kenya*, and *Belfast*, the British destroyers *Cossack*, *Cockade*, and *Charity*, the Australian *Bataan*, and the Netherlands *Evertsen*. On 30 July his command was further enlarged by the arrival of the three Canadian Tribal class destroyers, *Cayuga*, *Athabaskan*, and *Sioux*, and on 8 August the West Coast Element acquired its own air strength when *Triumph*, her yard period completed, reported in with *Comus* to Andrewes' control. The availability of *Triumph* was of particular importance in view of the hydrography of the west coast, which restricted the movement of heavy ships and so made aircraft the more useful. Destroyers and cruisers could bombard, and could check traffic passing around the headlands, but the important inshore patrol had thus far been largely left to the ROK Navy.

This force had done good work. The action off Pusan at the outbreak of war had been of profound importance, and other engagements had followed. On the east coast, on 2 July, the Pohang Naval Base Detachment exterminated a small enemy force that had landed near Ulsan. In the west, where the invaders were attempting the forward movement of supplies and personnel by sea, *YMS 513* sank three enemy small craft off Chulpo, south of Kunsan.

But invasion had brought disorganization: Admiral Sohn, the Chief of Naval Operations, had not yet returned from the United States, and naval headquarters at Seoul had been quickly overrun. Since a functioning Korean Navy was of prime importance, both for its resources of local knowledge and for its monopoly of types

capable of inshore operations, ComNavFE moved quickly to restore cohesion. Arriving by air from the United States, Commander Michael J. Luosey found himself designated Deputy Commander, Naval Forces Far East, and put on the first plane for Korea. On 9 July, with Lieutenant David C. Holly and five enlisted men, Luosey arrived at Pusan and assumed operational control of the Korean Navy. Six days later President Rhee formally turned over command of the ROK armed forces to General MacArthur, and on 17 July Admiral Sohn arrived with the other two PCs.

Luosey's first days were spent in extemporizing logistic support at Pusan for U.N. ships, in establishing liaison with the Army, and in gaining the confidence of the Koreans. On the 15th, inshore patrol sectors were established along both coasts south of 37° and a detachment of Korean Marines was sailed for Kunsan by LST in an attempt to hold that port. On the next day the Marines were landed, and a large store of government rice evacuated, but possession of Kunsan was brief. Heavily engaged on the 17th by an entire North Korean regiment, the 600-odd Marines were lifted out two days later to begin a minor epic of landings, forced marches, engagements, and retreats, which by the end of the month had brought the survivors to Chinju.

Little by little order emerged from chaos. By late July coordination with the British west coast element had been established and the Korean Navy was back in effective action. On the 22nd *YMS 513* repeated her earlier exploit by sinking three more enemy vessels off Chulpo, and the next day YMS 301 had a brush with small craft in the same area. On the 27th a more important encounter took place to the northward as the newly acquired *PCs 702* and *703* bombarded Palmi Do and Wolmi Do in Inchon harbor, and then, during their retirement, encountered a flotilla of southbound sampans loaded with ammunition and proceeded to sink 12 of them.

The increased strength of the West Coast Support Element now permitted more ambitious efforts. On 1 August Admiral Andrewes took *Belfast* and *Bataan* into the Haeju Man approaches to bombard the shore batteries guarding this potential source of enemy seaborne supply. And by this time ComNavFE had ordered a bombardment of the Mokpo area by British warships, with patrol plane spot from Naval Air Japan.

Such a bombardment is no child's play, for it involves a 30-mile approach through a constricted and tortuous channel where the currents at ebb and flood exceed ten knots. But on the 1st a promise of big business arrived, with a report from FEAF of large ships and many small craft in Mokpo harbor, and on the next day the destroyers *Cockade* and *Cossack* steamed in to the attack. Docks and railroad sidings were bombarded with satisfactory results, but the FEAF dispatch appears to have been in error: after an hour over the target the spotters in the VP 6 Neptune reported that one sunken steamer constituted the only shipping present.

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Chapter 5. Into the Perimeter
6. 23 July-6 August: The Marines Arrive

In the spring of 1950, when war in Korea was still just a war of nerves, the North Koreans had put forward a unification scheme which called for all-Korean elections on 5 August. In Moscow, *Izvestia* had informed the Communist world that the unification of Korea was expected to take place in time to permit elections on that date. On 25 June, in military array, large numbers of would-be voters had crossed the 38th parallel headed south. But contrary, doubtless, to plan, this one-sided enlargement of the electorate had not continued unopposed. Non-Communist guardians of the polls had been hastily sent forward by sea, and as July ended and the scheduled date drew near, the Far Eastern theater had been considerably reinforced.

Boxer had reached Yokosuka on 23 July with her cargo of Mustang fighters for the Fifth Air Force, having established a new trans-Pacific record by steaming from San Francisco to Tokyo Bay in eight days and 16 hours. The carrier *Philippine Sea* had left San Diego on the 6th; after ten days concentrated training in the Hawaiian area she had steamed westward at speed to reach Buckner Bay on 1 August. Admiral Hartman's cruisers and destroyers had reported in to ComNavFE, and although *Helena* and the destroyer division had been sent to Formosa, this detachment was only temporary. Since 8-inch guns were more useful in action in Korea than on patrol in Formosa Strait, Admiral Struble formed Task Group 77.3, composed of *Juneau*, the destroyers *Moore* and *Maddox*, and the oiler *Cimarron*, and sent it south to relieve the *Helena* group. On 1 August, after five days in the Formosa area, Admiral Hartman headed north again, and on the 7th was bombarding the North Korean coast.

In still other categories the situation was improving. As an offshoot of Captain Austin's Service Squadron 3, a second logistic command had been created in Service Division 31, which opened for business at Sasebo on 1 August and which would steadily grow in strength. And other United Nations ships were coming in: in addition to those incorporated in Admiral Andrewes' west coast element, one French and two New Zealand frigates arrived on 1 August to reinforce the escort group.

By now, too, the air and ground components of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade were approaching the theater of action. The ships of Task Group 53.7, which had been assembled by the Pacific Fleet Amphibious Force to lift this contingent, had sailed from southern California ports on 12 and 14 July. During the following two weeks, as fighting in Korea increased in intensity, the task group had steamed steadily westward across the Pacific. Steadily, that is, except for a pair of near-serious mishaps. One day out of San Diego the well deck of the LSD *Fort Marion* had accidentally flooded, and salt water had damaged a number of tanks and a quantity of ammunition. The transport *Henrico* had developed serious mechanical difficulties and had been forced to put back to Oakland for repairs. Three days of urgent effort were required to put *Henrico* back in commission, but on the 18th she steamed out the Golden Gate and headed west at best speed in the hope of overtaking the task group.

With the brigade on its way, General Craig and General Cushman flew westward, reaching Tokyo on 19 July. There in conference with the Commander in Chief they learned the plans for their employment. It was the hope of CincFE to mount an amphibious counterstroke, and by a September landing at Inchon to seize the Seoul transportation complex and sever the invaders from their source of supply. To carry out this plan he had asked for the entire 1st Marine Division. The brigade would be held in Japan until the rest of this force arrived.

Headquarters had intended to base the ground elements of the Marine Brigade at Sasebo, and the air echelon near Kobe, some 350 miles to the eastward on the Inland Sea. In his interview with the Supreme Commander, General Craig had placed special emphasis on the importance of maintaining the integrity of his air-ground team, and had secured the promise that it would remain intact. To keep it so, and to avoid the

administrative and training problems which dispersion would impose, the Marine generals proposed to base the entire force in the Kobe-Osaka area, and on the 23rd secured approval of this arrangement. But the 23rd was also the day of EUSAK's emergency call for carrier air support, and the developing crisis made it impossible to retain the brigade for the September landings. In the north the enemy was already inside the Naktong basin; the central front was under heavy pressure; on the west the North Korean flanking movement had reached Hadong, only 75 miles from Pusan. Nothing could now be held back. All available force had to be committed. The ships containing the Marine air echelon would continue on to Kobe to unload, but on the 25th orders went out to Task Group 53.7 to land the ground force at Pusan.

If the Marine Brigade was to be committed at once the air group had to be quickly made operational, and this required some unscrambling. The escort carriers of Cardiv 15 had been separated at the start of the emergency: *Sicily*, with her antisubmarine squadron, had been ordered to Guam, while *Badoeng Strait* had embarked the aircraft of MAG 33 and sailed in company with the transports carrying the ground personnel. *Sicily* reached Guam on 20 July; as the submarine menace had not materialized she there disembarked her squadron and sailed for Yokosuka, where she arrived on the 27th. Four days later, on 31 July, *Badoeng Strait* and the transports entered Kobe.

With the arrival of his carriers Rear Admiral Ruble was relieved of his temporary chores as Commander Naval Air Japan and began a fancy juggling act. On the 31st he put his staff aboard *Sicily* at Yokosuka and sailed her for Kobe to rejoin her consort. There she loaded ground personnel, spare parts, and ammunition for VMF 214, and on the afternoon of 1 August sailed for the southern tip of Kyushu to rendezvous with the destroyers *Doyle* and *Kyes*. On the same afternoon *Badoeng Strait* got underway from Kobe to fly off aircraft to the Itami airbase; this was completed the next day, whereupon the carrier returned to port to replenish. On the 2nd, as *Sicily* was joining her escorts in Van Diemen Strait, Admiral Ruble went aboard *Badoeng Strait*. On the 3rd the Corsairs of VMF 214 took off from Itami, landed aboard *Sicily* early in the afternoon, and then, as the ship steamed toward Tsushima Strait, flew off their first air strike in support of ground forces in Korea. *Badoeng Strait*, with the division commander on board, also got underway on the 3rd, escorted by destroyers *Endicott* and *Thomas*, to spend the next two days in refresher training for her squadron, while *Sicily* moved into the Yellow Sea to strike targets on the Korean west coast.

While the units of Carrier Division 15 were performing these gyrations, efforts were being made to provide the communications and control facilities so essential to the effective cooperation of air and ground components. Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 2 was split, the air defense section moving to Itami, where the night fighters of VMFN 513 were to base, while the air support section was sailed for Pusan by LST, along with ground personnel of the observation squadron. On the 2nd, four helicopters and four spotting planes of VMO 6 were flown from Japan to Pusan, and then onwards to Chinhae on the 4th, as the LST with the ground crews reached Pusan.

In the meantime the ground forces were arriving. *Henrico*, the tail-end transport, just made it. On the morning of 2 August she overtook the rest of Task Group 53.7 in Tsushima Strait, and in the afternoon the ships carrying the Marine Brigade steamed into Pusan. Around the Korean perimeter the situation was so bad that decisions were being made on a minute-to-minute basis, and it was not until almost midnight that General Craig learned his destination. An all-night effort by all hands got the supplies ashore and deposited with the Pusan Base Command, additional transport was borrowed from the Army, and by 0700 the troops were moving toward the perimeter. By evening of the 3rd the Marines were deployed defensively west of the town of Changwon.

By 5 August communications had been established between the brigade's air support control personnel and the escort carriers at sea. On the 6th *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* rendezvoused off the southwestern tip of Korea, Admiral Ruble's staff joined him by breeches buoy, and air and ground forces were ready to operate as a unit.

It was high time. Changwon is less than 30 miles from Pusan. Six miles or so beyond Changwon lies the town of Masan, and beyond Masan was the North Korean 6th Division. Distances in Korea, in early August, were very small.

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Chapter 6. Holding the Line
1. The Perimeter Takes Form

AUGUST opened in an atmosphere of crisis. All early estimates of the Korean problem had been invalidated, anticipations of speedy victory were dead, and the U.N. Command faced the excruciating question of whether it would be able to hold on the Korean peninsula, or whether its forces would be thrown into the sea. Space had been previously traded off for time, but both commodities were now in short supply. One natural defensive line remained, the line of the Naktong River. When this was reached it would be time to turn and fight.

There were now available to General Walker five reconstituted ROK divisions, the better part of four U.S. Army divisions, and the Marine Brigade. Although contemporary estimates gave the North Koreans a heavy numerical superiority, it appears in fact that U.N. combat strength already slightly exceeded that of the enemy. But it was the estimates that formed the picture, and in any event there was a critical shortage in reserves: where the North Korean People's Army, holding the initiative and with victory in sight, could afford to accept heavy losses in exchange for important gains, for EUSAK any loss was a matter of grave concern.

Only at sea and in the air did the U.N. have important advantages. If proper employment of Air Force, Navy, and Marine aircraft, and of the fire support ships could offset the enemy's presumed superiority of numbers, it was possible that with skill and bravery the line could be held. To accomplish more was for the moment out of the question. Even the holding mission seemed problematical enough. Yet while to those in the line the problem of chasing the enemy home again was for the moment of no concern, on higher levels it was being given active consideration.

To General MacArthur it seemed that a landing at Inchon followed by seizure of the Seoul area, the hub of the Korean communications network, promised the best hope of a speedy decision. To carry out this landing, and to amputate the invaders from their sources of supply, amphibious shipping and a trained amphibious assault force were required. Repeated requests by CincFE for the early dispatch of the 1st Marine Division were finally answered in late July; the division would sail from the west coast in mid-August. But while this marked a considerable step toward the desired goal, other difficulties remained.

The objective on which General MacArthur had set his heart, however desirable strategically, presented serious tactical difficulties. The tidal range of the Yellow Sea and the hydrography of Inchon Harbor were limiting factors: to bring in and beach LSTs with supplies for the assault force required a tidal range of 29 feet, and spring tides of such a magnitude are limited to one three-day period a month. Thus strategy depended upon astronomy, and the future of the war upon the phases of the moon. One period of high tides would come in mid-September, and this date set the double problem for the United Nations Command. The Korean foothold had to be held for the intervening six weeks. The Marine Division had to arrive in time.

By early August the perimeter in which Eighth Army was to make its stand had assumed pretty much its final form. Through the latter part of July the North Korean invaders had continued their four-pronged advance, with one column in the east coast strip, two moving southeast along the main routes from Seoul, and a flanking force on the right skirting the central hill mass. Tardy discovery of this last movement, which was opposed only by small ROK detachments, had brought the misdirected call for carrier strikes in the region east of Kunsan, and the movement of a battalion of the 29th Regiment westward from Pusan to Hadong on the south coast.

The week from 29 July to 5 August saw the American and ROK forces retiring on all fronts. In the northwest the Communist armies advanced some 35 miles, streaming over the mountain wall and down into the Naktong Valley, to reach the river opposite Waegwan. In the northern hill sector the enemy pushed forward 15 to

20 miles, from Yongju to Andong on the upper Naktong. In the south, at Hadong, affairs went badly; the American battalion and associated ROK troops were overrun and, while about 100 survivors were evacuated by ROK small craft from the Chinhae Naval Base and others escaped overland, casualties exceeded 50 percent.

At the start of the week United Nations positions had run northward from Hadong to the divide between the Kum and Naktong basins, northeasterly to Yongju, and southeast to the coastal town of Yongdok. As the week ended U.N. forces held only about a seventh of the territory of the Republic of Korea, and had been compressed into an area measuring some 100 miles from north to south, and slightly more than half of that from east to west. From Chindong-ni on the south coast the line ran north along the Naktong River, and east through Andong to Yongdok, where ROK forces supported by naval gunfire still held fast.

Although the withdrawals of the previous week had diminished the area to be defended, they had complicated the problems of the defenders; paradoxically, the shrinkage of the perimeter had extended the fighting front. During the retreat phase the tactical problem had been to slow the North Korean advance along the principal communication routes. But now, with the enemy well inside the Naktong basin, his spearheads were no longer constricted by the hill masses and his freedom of maneuver was increased. In the north the advance to Andong, which brought him down into the lowlands and to an east-west highway leading to Yongdok, was followed by the eastward movement of the 12th Division to strengthen the attack on Pohang. In the northwest the descent from the saddle toward Waegwan opened lateral communications east of the central hill mass, and permitted a southward displacement of Communist strength which brought pressure along the whole Naktong River line. It also posed a serious threat to Taegu, where the South Korean government had established itself, where there was an important airstrip, and where the Fifth Air Force had set up its Joint Operations Center. With the enemy inside the landing circle the Air Force was obliged to remove its planes to Japan and the JOC to Pusan, with all the complications in communication and control that such movements entail. How agreeable a prospect this situation afforded when viewed from the north is evidenced by a North Korean I Corps operation order of 3 August, which called for the capture of Taegu and Pusan by the 6th.

In this the enemy was to be disappointed. But the more extensive road system now available permitted him to redeploy his strength and, as August wore on, to exert heavy pressure at four points around the perimeter. Two of the crucial areas were inland, at Waegwan on the main line of communications, and on the Naktong front west of Yongsan. Two were on the flanks, at Pohang on the eastern shore, and in the south between Masan and Chinju. It was in this southern area, where the enemy flanking movement seemed to pose the most immediate threat to Pusan, that General Walker planned his first counteroffensive. It was for this spoiling attack that the Marine Brigade had been ordered forward, and had been combined with two RCTs of the 25th Division into Task Force Kean.

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Chapter 6. Holding the Line
2. 26 July-13 August: Coastal Bombardment, the Problem of Carrier Air, and the Southern Spoiling Offensive

While this southern counterattack was in preparation, U.N. naval and air forces pressed their efforts against the enemy's lengthening lines of communication. Carried on by coastal patrol and blockade, by bombardment from the sea, and by air attack, this work would continue in increasing strength. Air Force as well as naval reinforcements were coming in, and FEAF's daily sorties were rapidly increasing in number. In the last days of July General Stratemeyer persuaded CincFE to release some of his bombers from work below the parallel, and the B–29s were preparing to strike north against the enemy's urban complexes and against his transportation net.

As July ended Task Force 77 retired to Okinawa for logistics, and naval responsibility for air support of the perimeter devolved upon the escort carriers. Of these *Sicily* was first in action. On 2 August she picked up her screening ships south of Kyushu, and on the next day the aircraft of VMF 214 arrived on board from Itami. That afternoon a first strike was flown off against North Korean troop concentrations near Chinju in the south and on the central Naktong front. On the 4th further strikes were flown against the enemy in the Chinju area, and with evening the *Sicily* group steamed into the Yellow Sea and headed northward.

There on the 5th an international three-dimensional evolution took place. Screened by Charity and Cossack, the cruisers *Belfast* and *Kenya* steamed up the hazardous approaches to Inchon, where with spot provided by a Neptune from VP 6 they bombarded oil storage, factories, warehouses, and gun positions. Fighter cover for the spotting plane was given by some of *Sicily*'s Corsairs, while others attacked transport and industrial facilities in the Inchon-Seoul region. The Marine Brigade was not yet in action and close support activity had not begun, but close reconnaissance was now put into practice. His suspicion aroused by the antiaircraft defenses of an Inchon factory, one pilot buzzed past at 50 feet, peered in the windows to observe a concentration of vehicles, and returned to deal with the situation by putting a napalm bomb into the building. On the 6th the *Sicily* group moved southward to strike targets at Kunsan and Mokpo and troops on the south coast, and to rendezvous with *Badoeng Strait* and her attendant destroyers.

On the east coast the last echelon of Pohang shipping was completing its unloading when Admiral Higgins arrived with *Toledo* on 26 July. There the arrival of the heavy cruiser proved a useful addition to the destroyers on duty offshore, and to the field artillery battalion and the F–5i fighter-bomber squadron which had already reinforced this isolated theater. For the aviators, as for the contending ground forces, these east coast operations constituted a private war: lacking communications with the JOC at Taegu the squadron operated from the Pohang airstrip on its own. Despite all difficulties coordination with the east coast naval forces was reasonably good, but there were still surprises: in August *Helena*'s helicopter and a destroyer would fish two downed F–51 pilots out of the Sea of Japan, neither of whom was aware that the ships off Yongdok were friendly.

On 27 July 8-inch guns were used for the first time against the invading army, as *Toledo* fired on troop concentrations, supplies, and revetments by day, and by night illuminated the battleline with star shell. By careful conservation of ammunition this support was continued for 11 days, and so effective was the shooting of the cruiser and the destroyers, assisted by a 24th Division fire control party and by air spot, that only here did the battleline remain stable. Cruising generally some 7,000 yards offshore, exchanging liaison personnel with the forces ashore by whaleboat, covering the seaborne arrival of supplies for frontline troops, and making arrangements for possible evacuation, the ships of Higgins' element found their days full. On 4 August good work

was done at a village near Yongdok in cooperation with rocket-firing Air Force fighters: troops were dispersed, large fires were started, and when clearing smoke revealed the fire-fighters at work the process was repeated. On the 5th, after shooting with air spot at enemy front line positions, gratifying compliments were received from both ground and airborne spotting personnel.

By this time, indeed, the situation seemed sufficiently stabilized so that Admiral Higgins, who felt 8-inch gunfire somewhat wasted in harassing troops, could request and receive permission to look for something better. The 7th of August was therefore spent 70 miles to the northward, in the neighborhood of Samchok, where the task element ranged along a 25-mile stretch of coast, firing on targets selected from aerial photographs. A bridge across a small river was destroyed, road junctions were plowed up, embankments were knocked down across the highway, and two tunnels sealed by bombardment and landslide.

Admiral Hartman's *Helena* group had meanwhile been cruising Formosa Strait, where it was joined by *Juneau* on 30 July. Two cruisers and a destroyer division are a small force with which to prevent a large-scale invasion, especially one embarked in a fleet of almost unsinkable junks. But the issue did not arise, and in any case the Seventh Fleet Striking Force remained on call. On 1 August the task group was dissolved, Admiral Hartman headed his ships back northward, and after three days at Sasebo for logistics sailed once again for the northeastern coast of Korea, where air sightings had reported a thousand railroad cars in the region between 40° and 42°N. This time he got there.

The bombardment of the town of Tanchon in 40°28°, carried out by *Helena* and Destroyer Division III on 7 August, marked the furthest north for U.N. surface forces since *Juneau*'s early raid. Located a couple of miles up an estuary at the point where two rivers join, Tanchon offered tempting rail and highway bridge targets, a marshalling yard, and some minor industrial facilities. With a VP 6 spotting plane overhead, the force shot up boxcars in the yard and the town power plants, and inflicted a satisfactory 75 percent damage on the railroad bridge. The only excitement of the day was provided by the late arrival of a four-plane combat air patrol from Fifth Air Force, which showed no IFF and was only identified visually after batteries had been released. Having applied this pressure to the northeastern artery, the Helena group came southward during the night, and on the next day dropped a highway and a rail bridge near Sokcho, just above the 38th parallel. This work completed, Admiral Hartman relieved Admiral Higgins of his fire support responsibilities off Yongdok, and the *Toledo* group headed for Sasebo to replenish.

Click here to view map

On the west coast of Korea Admiral Andrewes' element, now divided into three rotating sections of a cruiser and two or more destroyers each, was carrying out its duties of bombardment and blockade. Here the land war had swept past and no fire support was required, but the numerous islands and the shoal waters which fringe the coast made the interdiction of communications a sufficient task. On the 5th, on instructions from ComNavFE, the British commander established three barrier stations off the western headlands, between 38°8´ and 36°45´, which were kept manned as availability of ships permitted. Inshore work steadily improved as cooperation with the reviving ROK Navy was developed, and the blockade became increasingly effective.

In the south, however, new problems were arising. There on 28 July CincFE had ordered a round-up of small craft to deny them to the invader, and on 1 August, in consequence of the enemy advance and the defeat at Hadong, ComNavFE had instructed Admiral Higgins' task element and Commander Luosey's ROKN units to harass and disrupt land and water movement in the neighborhood of Namhae Island. On the 8th the importance of this task was emphasized by high level estimates which indicated that the enemy had reached the end of his supply line, that he was especially short of gasoline for tanks and trucks, and that efforts at seaborne supply were to be anticipated.

The Korean Navy, however, was already fully occupied in the west. On 3 August the ROK *YMS 502* sank seven sailboats which were loading off Kunsan; four days later and 30 miles to the northward she sank two

motor-boats, while other Korean units destroyed four small junks in the Haeju Man approaches above Inchon. On the 9th an important step was taken in support of west coast operations as an LST was sailed for Ochong Do, an island 40 miles off Kunsan, to establish an advanced ROKN supply base which would eliminate the 300-mile round trip to Pusan.

Since the Koreans were busy elsewhere, U.S. and Commonwealth units were made available in the south. On 2 and 3 August the destroyer *Higbee* patrolled the Namhae area but encountered no enemy movement. On the night of 4–5 August underwater demolition personnel from the fast transport *Diachenko* attempted to blow bridges north of the railroad town of Yosu, a natural jumping-off place for enemy shore-to-shore movement. But the landing force was repelled by a North Korean patrol, which arrived inopportunely by handcar, and *Diachenko* had to content herself with a 40-minute bombardment of the railroad yards. Four days later an imaginative B–29 report of heavy junk concentrations near Yosu brought the Canadian destroyers *Cayuga* and *Athabaskan* on a flank speed sweep of the south coast, but with negative results. On the 12th the destroyer *Collett*, from Admiral Higgins' task element, steamed into Yosu Gulf to bombard the town.

For the first few days of August, while these coastal activities were in progress, the Seventh Fleet Striking Force lay at anchor in Buckner Bay. During this interval Admiral Struble visited Formosa, in company with General MacArthur, to perfect planning and liaison against the chance of a Communist invasion; the carrier *Philippine Sea* arrived from the United States, and Rear Admiral Edward C. Ewen, Commander Carrier Division I, flew in from Pearl and reported aboard. In Tokyo, in the meantime, further efforts were being made to accomplish a workable coordination of the operations of the Air Force and of naval air.

The first step toward meshing naval and Air Force activities had been taken when FEAF requested strikes in northeastern Korea. A second shortly followed, with General Stratemeyer's request for "operational control" of all aircraft in the theater and with CincFE's letter delegating "coordination control" to the commanding general of FEAF; by early August further measures were in train. On the 3rd, while General MacArthur and Admiral Struble were in Formosa, a conference was held in Tokyo in which FEAF deployed four generals and a colonel to face one captain, two commanders, and two lieutenant commanders. The result was a memorandum providing that first priority for carrier operations would be in close support, second priority would go to interdiction south of the 38th parallel, and third priority to strikes on Bomber Command targets beyond that line. Coordination for attacks south of 380 was to lie with Fifth Air Force; attacks on Bomber Command targets required clearance from FEAF. Six plans, designated by letter, were devised for carrier employment, and the peninsula divided into six corresponding operating areas. Plans A through C called for the use of half the available aircraft in support of troops and half in interdiction in the designated area; plans E and F involved area attacks alone; plan D called for everything on close support.

This emphasis on the support of troops inevitably meant that the operations of carrier aircraft would fall in large degree under the control of FAFIK, Fifth Air Force in Korea, and of its Joint Operations Center. On the face of it there was nothing illogical about the arrangement, which would presumably have been successful had it only worked, and similar conditions were shortly laid upon the escort carriers by ComNavFE. But just as the problem of interdiction had raised command problems on the upper level, in the question of operational versus coordination control, so the commitment to close support was to bring almost insoluble difficulties in the tactical handling of aircraft over the lines, as doctrinal differences and the inadequacy of control mechanisms combined to frustrate the best efforts of the Striking Force. Close support turned out to work best when least needed, and when the Seventh Fleet could most profitably be employed against northern bridges and other communications targets; in times of crisis around the perimeter it worked poorly or not at all. Faced with so wasteful an employment of his very considerable strength, and not having been consulted regarding the agreement, Admiral Struble declined to accept its definition of roles and missions, and the Seventh Fleet was soon attempting to break away from the perimeter. By mid-month the primacy of close support had become a dead letter; the movements of the Seventh

Fleet were being designated by periodic dispatches from CincFE; and the concepts of plan and area, set forth in the memorandum of 3 August, were tending to separate, with the letter designation indicating only the area to be attacked.

For the moment, however, the effort was to be in support of the front. On 4 August Admiral Struble issued an operation order which called for strikes on targets previously selected and coordinated with FEAF, instructed the carrier task group to establish direct communications with the JOC at Taegu and attack enemy troops and targets in the forward areas, and established a fueling rendezvous with the oiler *Cacapon* for the 7th. Late in the afternoon of the 4th the strengthened Seventh Fleet sortied from Buckner Bay and headed north once more "to conduct air operations in support of ground forces."

On the morning of the 5th the force launched from a position south of Korea. Pilots from *Philippine Sea*, entering action for the first time, were assigned specific targets in southwestern Korea, with the emphasis on the rail and highway bridges at Iri, east of Kunsan, where cuts would hamper movement of supplies to the enemy's southern flank. *Valley Forge* planes were sent off on close support missions, and while the weight of effort was concentrated on troops, supplies, and bridges in the dangerous northern sector, two Corsairs attacked enemy personnel west of Taegu and five ADs inflicted heavy casualties on troops behind the central front. But these Sky-raiders reported poor control, and an eight-plane jet sweep never did succeed in reaching its assigned controller.

Dissatisfied with the operation of control procedures, Admiral Hoskins now sent four *Valley Forge* pilots to Taegu, for liaison purposes and to help in the direction of support aircraft. In the hope of reducing congestion the front was divided into four sectors, each of which was provided with both an Air Force and a Navy airborne controller. Although the original intention of having Navy controllers handle Navy flights gave way under pressure, and all hands took whatever came along, the sharing of the burden and the increased number of radio frequencies which resulted from the use of Navy planes led to considerable improvement. But periods of saturation continued, as incoming flights arrived in large batches instead of scheduled driblets, and while this congestion was particularly difficult in the case of Air Force planes, operating at maximum range from their Japanese bases, it affected the work of the carrier aircraft as well.

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The 6th of August saw the task force still south of Korea, attacking objectives assigned by air controllers and bridge and highway targets from Yosu north to Hwanggan. Once again *Philippine Sea* concentrated her efforts on transportation facilities, while *Valley Forge* flew 24 Corsair and 22 Skyraider sorties under JOC control. The emphasis, as on the previous day, was on the Chinju assembly area and on enemy lines of communication behind it; but attacks were also made on troop and transportation targets behind the central Naktong front, in the Waegwan area, and in the important neighboring junction town of Kumchon. Claims for the day included destruction of a large supply dump, five trucks, two jeeps, and a tank, damage to a number of bridges, and many troop casualties; the distribution of effort represented a useful attempt at close interdiction, if not at close support of troops in combat.

With the day's work completed and with pilots' reports at hand, the situation was discussed by Admiral Struble and his carrier division commanders. To Admiral Ewen the results of the effort in close air support appeared quite simply "negligible." Admiral Hoskins felt the work handicapped by the cumbersome centralization of JOC control, which required excessive expenditure of time in checking in and securing target assignments, and by the tendency of Eighth Army to call for maximum effort and so bring saturation of control facilities. The upshot of the discussion was a pair of dispatches from Commander Seventh Fleet to ComNavFE, in which he reported an urgent request from JOC for "close support" of ground operations on the next day, expressed his doubts as to the value of such an effort, proposed that the escort carriers be given the whole job on the 8th, and stated his desire to strike the important west bridge at Seoul.

During the night the force moved into the Yellow Sea, and on the 7th, from a position west of Mokpo,

swept airfields and flew strikes against bridges, warehouses, rail yards, and vehicles in the region south of the 38th parallel. The realities of civil war were emphasized this day when the fleet, steaming some 70 miles offshore, passed through water containing many floating bodies, tied together in bundles and with their hands lashed behind their backs. At mid-day, in response to the JOC request, an effort at support of the perimeter was made by eight Corsairs and nine ADs flown in from *Philippine Sea*. These planes found a controller who had two tanks as a target, but who was unable to turn them over to the Navy flight as some F–80s from Japan required immediate handling. No controlled attacks, whether in close support or in interdiction, were therefore made.

The apparent wastefulness of these efforts in support of the perimeter, together with the availability of the escort carriers, now led both ComNavFE and Commander Seventh Fleet to consider springing the force loose for strikes to the northward. An afternoon dispatch from Admiral Joy suggested that, subject to especially urgent need for close support, the carriers strike coastal targets in Area F, between Chongjin and Hungnam, where many trains and much rolling stock had been recently reported, and where *Helena* was currently shooting up Tanchon. This message crossed one from Admiral Struble in which he reported that after fuelling on the 8th he hoped to strike northward in Area E on the 9th, returning to Area B the next day; should however the Army require support at the perimeter, the force would fly missions in Area B on the 9th and in A on the 10th.

These hopes, however, were to be deferred by a dispatch from ComNavFE, received on the afternoon of the 8th as the force was fuelling from *Passumpsic* and *Cacapon* to the south of Cheju Do. Concern for the safety of Eighth Army had led CincFE to order the entire carrier air effort placed on close support and close interdiction from 8 to 17 August. With this order the southward displacement of Seventh Fleet operations, developing ever since FEAF's first request for attacks in the northeastern quadrant of Korea, reached its ultimate conclusion. For the next ten days, it appeared, the carriers were to be frozen in support of the perimeter. Close support, in this context, meant support of Army units under JOC control: the Marine Brigade, with its organic Tactical Air Control Squadron and with its own aircraft operating from the escort carriers, was well cared for. But the Army needed everything it could get: the North Koreans had forced the Naktong, and had a regiment across the river at the big bend west of Yongsan.

Admiral Struble's plan to hit targets in Area E was now perforce abandoned. The 9th of August again found the carriers west of Mokpo, flying strikes against the Inchon-Seoul area. There, for the first time, antiaircraft fire of moderate intensity was encountered; there, at Air Force request, the three-span bridge over the Han at Seoul was attacked and hit with 1,000-pound bombs. West of Taegu a four-plane flight, sent in to the perimeter from *Valley Forge*, discovered adequate control and destroyed a tank. At sea the larger sphere of relations between east and west was illustrated when a screening destroyer recovered five friendly floating Koreans, one of whom claimed U.S. citizenship.

On the 10th, operations continued in the same pattern, with continued emphasis on interdiction of the Inchon-Seoul complex. This was *Philippine Sea*'s day in close support, and 4 six-plane flights were sent in at three-hour intervals. But all were forced to attack targets of opportunity, none was used in support of troops, and two failed entirely to contact a controller owing to overloaded radio channels.

Within the force the search went on for ways and means of improving the close support situation. On the 8th, on the basis of reports from liaison pilots returning from Taegu, Admiral Hoskins identified the principal problems as the "understandable" ignorance of carrier capabilities at Fifth Air Force headquarters, the inadequate communications set-up there, and the Seventh Fleet's desire to maintain radio silence when possible. As remedies he proposed the immediate assignment of a captain aviator, experienced in carrier and close support operations, as liaison officer with Fifth Air Force in Korea, and the establishment of communications channels which would permit, and of policies which would ensure, a continuous two-way flow of information. On the next day Admiral Ewen listed as major deficiencies the absence of reliable communications, both between the carriers and JOC and at the scene of action, and the oversaturation of aircraft at the objective. Stating that less than 30 percent of the

fleet's potential was being used in close support, he suggested that Admiral Struble tell ComNavFE "the whole story," and urged the assignment to the air control function of aircraft with adequate endurance and reliable radio gear, and the employment of the *Mount McKinley* air support party to improve communications in the perimeter.

Commander Seventh Fleet told "the whole story," or at least a good deal of it, on the night of 9–10 August in a message to ComNavFE with information copies to CincFE, EUSAK, FEAF, and Fifth Air Force. This dispatch pointed out the "urgent and continuing need of air support for our ground forces," described the problems of control of aircraft at the objective, and reported "only partial employment" of aircraft sent in to Taegu. Recognizing that the air controllers were operating under great difficulties, and that the Navy ought to assist in any way it could with officer personnel and communications arrangements, Admiral Struble noted that the Seventh Fleet remained prepared to contribute control aircraft as it had previously done, and once again suggested that "possibly" *Mount McKinley* air control personnel could help out.

Although no specific mention was made of the problem of interforce communications, or of Hoskins' proposed assignment of a qualified and senior liaison officer, there were possibilities here if only they were acted on. But none of the commanders to whom the dispatch was addressed seems to have followed it up, and ComNavFE's response was not entirely helpful. Apparently as a result of semantic confusion, Admiral Struble's report had been interpreted not as "partial employment" in close support, but as indicative of failure to expend ordnance, and the reply observed that this was "not understood" in view of the number of interdiction targets available in the south. Employment of the *Mount McKinley* Tacron was refused on the ground that it was engaged in training operations, and the other suggestions were passed back to the operating commanders. Commander Seventh Fleet was instructed to furnish airborne controllers as arranged with JOC; the Commanding General Fifth Air Force was invited to state any needs for personnel and communications assistance.

This exchange of generalities seems merely to have strengthened Admiral Struble's desire to get away from the perimeter and strike northward. For although he at once requested information on interdiction targets from all hands, his revised intentions for the future called for strikes in Area B on the 12th, followed by a move north to attack the region between Sinanju and Pyongyang. This dispatch elicited a request from Fifth Air Force, received on the 12th as the carrier bombers struck marshalling yards near Seoul and as jet fighters swept airfields and communication lines, which indicated that all effort was still wanted in Area B. Although undertaking to comply if necessary, Commander Seventh Fleet observed in reply that he had been cleared by GHQ to strike northward the next morning, and would do so if his efforts could be spared. Apparently they could. The prospective ten-day freeze had actually lasted five, and on the 13th aircraft from both carriers ranged north of the parallel, attacking transportation targets at Pyongyang, Chinnampo, Haeju, and way stations with good results, especially in the destruction of locomotives. On conclusion of this day's operations the force retired southward, passed *Triumph* and her escorts who were steering north to take over the Yellow Sea duty, and headed for Sasebo to replenish.

While the Seventh Fleet Striking Force was struggling with the problems of close support of the perimeter, the Marine Brigade had begun its first offensive. To contain the enemy's south coast advance, General Walker had decided to attack westward from Masan, toward Chinju, some 30 miles beyond. Army forces were to move west along the main highway; the Marines were assigned the task of cleaning out the left flank along the coastal road through Kosong and Sachon. On the 5th, as aircraft from the fast carriers struck enemy forces near Chinju, orders were issued for an attack to begin on the 7th.

On that day, the eighth anniversary of the landing on Guadalcanal, the Marine Brigade attacked westward. In this peninsula, as on that island, the weather was hot, humid, and exhausting. Three days of heavy and confused fighting followed while the hills controlling the road junction at Chindong-ni were cleared. But coordinated employment of brigade artillery and of Marine aircraft commuting in from the escort carriers broke up the enemy formations and chased them back into the hills. Tanks, vehicles, and guns were destroyed by the

aviators from Admiral Ruble's task group, and napalm and strafing helped to clear the heights. By evening of the 9th the Marines were on the move, with orders to capture Paedun-ni, five miles down the coastal road, before daylight.

On the 10th General Craig pushed his brigade down the road to the southwest. *Sicily* had retired to Sasebo for two days, but *Badoeng Strait* did the work of two with 44 sorties. Paedun-ni was seized early in the morning, and indications of enemy confusion brought orders to press on with all speed. In early afternoon, a couple of miles beyond the town, the van entered an ambush at Taedabok Pass. Tanks were brought forward, the Corsairs reported in, and the pass was cleared; the force bivouacked for the night on the far side of the cut and two-thirds of the way to Kosong, the first major objective. Elsewhere, however, things were more ominous: on the 8th, during the fighting at Chindong-ni, the North Koreans built up their Naktong bridgehead to regimental strength, and by the 10th the enemy 4th Division was across the river.

At 0800 on the morning of the 11th the advance on Kosong was resumed. A few shells lobbed into the town flushed an estimated hundred vehicles which headed westward out of town at high speed. Overhead a division of Corsairs from *Badoeng Strait* observed trucks retreating so fast that some missed the turns and rolled down the embankments; making the most of this agreeable opportunity with rockets and 20-millimeter fire, the aviators piled up rolling stock in wholesale quantity. By 1000 the town had been taken, a hill to the southward was shortly secured, and the Marines headed onward toward Sachon with their observation planes and Corsairs overhead and their tanks out front.

By this time things were going well for the brigade. The enemy roadblocks had been broken, momentum had been gained, enemy casualties were estimated as approaching the 2,000 mark, and the North Koreans appeared increasingly disorganized. Marine air and ground forces were working in harmony, and the advance was being paralleled in the third element. A Scajap LST and some ROKN landing craft had been brought forward from Pusan to issue supplies and receive casualties, and General Craig had requested a destroyer to provide call fire in support of the coastal advance. But in other sectors the situation was degenerating. To the northward American counterattacks had failed to eliminate the Naktong bulge, while in the Marines' rear the enemy had reemerged from the hills at Chindong-ni, and had cut the main supply route for Army troops advancing on Chinju. At noon on the 12th, as the Marines were nearing Changchon, the brigade was ordered to return one battalion and a battery of artillery to clean up this road block.

Afternoon of the 12th saw the Marines fighting on two fronts for the first, if not for the last time in this war. At Changchon the 1st and 2nd Battalions encountered another ambush, but the attempted envelopment brought heavy casualties to the enveloper. While this fight was going on the 3rd Battalion was being trucked back to Chindong-ni, where it arrived in late afternoon and where before dark it carried its first objective, a hill ridge commanding the main supply route.

This singular situation, in which two of the brigade's battalions were fighting at Changchon while the third was engaging 25 road miles to the rear, was ended by orders to withdraw. On the 13th, as the 3rd Battalion continued its clean-up of hills around Chindong-ni, the others disengaged and headed back to rejoin. Although it was disappointing to be pulled back after an advance of 26 miles in four days, and after inflicting heavy damage on superior forces, there were serious reasons behind the decision. The situation in the Naktong bulge was very nearly out of control.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 6. Holding the Line
3. 6-20 August: East Coast Interdiction, Pohang, and First Naktong

For the moment, at least, the threat to the southern end of the perimeter had been ended by the advance of Task Force Kean. On the coast the Marines had repelled the enemy with heavy loss; inland the 35th Infantry had briefly regained the heights along the Nam River east of Chinju. In this region North Korean units now faced difficult problems of reorganization and reequipment, and their long supply line was suffering increasingly from the cumulative effects of interdiction strikes.

As the second week of August was ending, the critical sectors of the perimeter were on the Naktong front west of Yongsan, in the northwest beyond Taegu, and on the east coast in the vicinity of Pohang. The response to this altered situation was quickly evident in the redeployment of U.N. naval forces. Admiral Joy had been directed to carry out demolition raids on the Korean coast, and as the Marine Brigade moved northward to the Naktong bulge the weight of naval effort shifted to the northeast and to the enemy's coastal line of communications with the Soviet Maritime Provinces.

North of the 40th parallel the Korean coastline is precipitous, with mountains rising steeply from the sea. Constricted by this geography, the railroad for more than 40 miles runs close to the shore, and is thus accessible to naval gunfire and to landing parties. Here in the first weeks of war *Juneau* had carried out her raid; this vulnerable area was now to be brought under all forms of naval attack.

Execution of this work was facilitated by the arrival from San Diego of the fast transport *Horace A. Bass*, Lieutenant Commander Alan Ray, a destroyer escort conversion carrying four LCVPs and with a capacity of 162 troops. On 6 August a group of underwater demolition and Marine reconnaissance personnel was assigned to *Bass*, and the resultant package designated the Special Operations Group. Two days later a new weapon became available for raids from the sea as the submarine transport *Perch*, a conversion capable of carrying 160 troops and with a cylindrical deck caisson providing stowage for landing equipment, reached Yokosuka from Pearl Harbor. A British offer of a squad of Royal Marines provided *Perch*'s raiding personnel, and brought immediate preparations for attacks on the east coast transportation line.

To this planned schedule of raiding activity Admiral Joy now added carrier strikes. On 7 August he had noted that reports of enemy rail traffic promised useful employment for Task Force 77 in Area F; a week later, as the task force was returning to Sasebo, the continued influx of such intelligence brought similar recommendations from Fifth Air Force Headquarters in Korea. Pressure on the northern front, naval and Air Force intelligence which emphasized the importance of the east coast route, and the suggestions of the naval liaison officer led on the 13th to a request from FAFIK for carrier interdiction of Area C on the 16th, to be followed by attacks on rail and other transport facilities in Area F, between Wonsan and Chongjin.

After obtaining the views of the naval commanders CincFE ordered the execution of this plan. Task Force 77 was to strike from the Sea of Japan on the 16th and 17th, refuel on the 18th, and strike again for two days. In order further to reduce the pressure on the northern front, FEAF was instructed to put its maximum bomber effort on the Waegwan area on the 16th, while the carrier planes were striking Area C. On the 17th, as proposed by Fifth Air Force, Task Force 77 would move northward to operate against Area F.

In the meantime Admiral Joy's surface forces had begun to converge on North Korea's eastern shore. On 7 August the *Helena* group, en route to relieve off Yongdok, had bombarded Tanchon. On the 13th, in response to reports of enemy shipping at Wonsan, Admiral Hartman established blockading stations in 39°50´ and 40° 50´. Enemy movement on shore was also receiving attention: between 13 and 16 August, while the ship employed the

daylight hours in bombardment of rail targets, the raiders from *Horace A. Bass* carried out three night landings between 41°28´ and 38°35´ which resulted in the destruction of three tunnels and two bridges. In anticipation of future attacks by *Perch*, ComNavFE had by this time established a joint zone for surface and submarine operations, Area 7, between 40° and 41´ on the Korean east coast. On the 14th, as Perch and her Royal Marines began their training program, the submarine Pickerel was sailed to procure periscope photographs of selected objectives.

But while these preparations and efforts to saw up the coastal supply line were being made, a crisis had developed at Pohang. There the ROK 3rd Division had done well. With its KMAG liaison group, with artillery and fire control personnel from the 24th Division, and with the support of naval gunfire and the Pohang-based F-51s, it had held the road longer than might have been expected, and long after the cavalry division had landed and moved inland. But by now the fire control party had been transferred to another sector, while to the westward the enemy advance had uncovered lateral communications between the North Korean 5th Division and units on the inland front.

Such an eventuality had been foreseen, and preliminary planning for a water evacuation of Pohang was underway. Three LSTs were ordered up to take out Air Force ground personnel, and on the 8th the removal of heavy equipment from the Pohang airstrip was begun. By 10 August the ROK 3rd Division, outflanked on its landward side, had been forced to hole up at Chongha, ten miles north of Pohang, where it was surrounded. Having bypassed the South Koreans, the enemy advance now gained momentum, and on the 11th heavy demands were made upon the fire support ships south of Yongdok. *Helena* got four tanks this day, as her helicopter was flying KMAG personnel to Pohang to confer with General Walker, but naval gunfire was not enough. On the 12th, tank-led troops of the North Korean 5th Division fought their way into the town, where they were joined on the next day by elements of the 12th Division, switched eastward from the northern mountain front.

Little beyond naval gunfire and strikes by Air Force planes remained available for the defense of Pohang. Yet although the former was handicapped by the withdrawal of fire control personnel ashore, and although the latter were preparing to evacuate that very day, the intensity of these efforts forced the enemy to retire temporarily on the afternoon of the 13th. But so serious was the Communist threat that an emergency call was made for reinforcements. To defend the airfield American tanks and infantry and an ROK regiment were hurried north; to prevent a major breakthrough, much of EUSAK's scant reserve was ordered up to Kyongju. But the advancing columns became entangled on the way with infiltrators disguised as refugees, and progress was slow.

Such, however, was the importance attached to the east coast railroad that, in the midst of the Pohang crisis, *Helena* and two destroyers were withdrawn to bombard the bridges and tunnels at Sinchang in the north. There on the 14th the expenditure of 170-odd rounds of 8-inch and 100 rounds of 5-inch by *Helena* and *Chandler* destroyed a train and damaged two bridges. But further word on conditions at Pohang, and rumors of an enemy landing at Kuryongpo, brought Admiral Hartman back at 25 knots.

On 15 August, following reports from KMAG of the critical condition of the ROK 3rd Division, General Walker ordered its evacuation by sea. To permit the ROKs to hold their little perimeter until shipping could be assembled, fire support was essential. This support was effectively given by the *Helena* task element, which also provided medical supplies by helicopter, and motor gasoline, brought up by destroyer from Pusan, by whaleboat. Further assistance to the besieged division came from Task Force 77, which got underway once more from Sasebo on the afternoon of the 15th, and during the night steamed north to the Sea of Japan for its scheduled operations against Areas C and F.

The first strikes on the morning of the 16th were sent off, as planned, against bridges and supply dumps in Area C. But increasing pressure on the big perimeter around Taegu and on the little one at Chongha led to a switch to close support. A morning strike of eight ADs and seven F4Us from *Philippine Sea* was diverted in the air, only to have communication problems frustrate all efforts to provide the desired services. At 1115, at the

request of Fifth Air Force, all strikes were put on close support. At 1445 information on the scheduled Chongha evacuation was received on board, the major objective became the protection of the ROK division, and although two later *Valley Forge* flights destroyed trucks, supplies, and gasoline in the Taegu area, the weight of effort was at Pohang. A noon flight of 15 planes from Philippine Sea bombed and strafed North Korean troop concentrations, and between 1230 and 1730 *Valley Forge* flew 12 AD and 11 Corsair sorties into the Pohang area.

There remained some difficulties in control. In late afternoon an 18-plane strike from *Philippine Sea* aborted, owing to inability to reach an air controller, and *Valley Forge* pilots returning from the Pohang region reported that their controller seemed inexperienced. But if all was not perfect the results were good enough: the attacks against targets beyond the range of naval gunfire continued throughout the day, the ROK division maintained its perimeter, and by evening, when the Striking Force turned north, the evacuation had been organized.

On the chance that rescue shipping might not reach Chongha in time, Admiral Hartman had prepared an evacuation plan which contemplated removing the Korean troops on rafts towed by whaleboats and transferring them to naval vessels offshore; fortunately such heroic measures proved unnecessary. At Pusan Commander Luosey had managed to rustle up four more LSTs, one manned by Koreans and three by Japanese. These reached the evacuation area on the evening of the 16th, and were met and led in by the destroyer *Wiltsie*, to beach with the aid of jeep headlights ashore. Throughout the night, as embarkation proceeded, the support ships maintained a planned schedule of harassing fire, and beginning at 0415 the LSTs cleared the beach. By breakfast time all 5,800 ROKs, the members of the KMAG liaison group, and 1,200 civilian refugees had been evacuated, along with some 100 vehicles.

This first amphibious operation in reverse of the Korean War was thus a signal success. The ROK 3rd Division, following its ordeal, was treated to a relaxing 30-mile sea voyage to Kuryongpo, where Admiral Doyle's LSTs had landed Cavalry Division gear a month before, and where in the afternoon the rescue ships beached to put the Koreans back in the fight. By this time relieving forces from the south had fought their way through the pseudo-refugees, ROK and American units went over to the offensive, and on 18 August the enemy was again chased out of Pohang.

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While all this was in progress at Pohang, activity was being stepped up in the north. By the 17th, when the ROK division was taken out of Chongha, *Bass* had completed her three raids and had departed the area. But *Pickerel* now arrived to begin her photographic work; the *Toledo* group, on its way to relieve off Pohang, stopped by to bombard; for the first time in a month Task Force 77 had a chance to strike northeastern Korea.

With *Mansfield*, *Collett*, and *Swenson* as screen, with patrol plane spot, and with a combat air patrol from Task Force 77, *Toledo* cruised the 40-mile stretch of coast, from Songjin south to Iwon, where the railroad runs close to the sea. Targets were plentiful, and the 297 rounds of 8-inch HC expended against three railroad bridges and several hundred freight cars were considered to have been profitably invested. At the same time the two carriers of Task Force 77 were flying strikes against rail facilities and such minor coastal shipping as could be discovered between the 38th and 42d parallels; in the course of this work one jet sweep found an ammunition train, and exploded it so effectively as to bring back tangible proof in the form of fragments embedded in the fighters' wings. On conclusion of the day's operations both carrier and gunnery forces headed southward, Admiral Higgins to relieve the fire support group off Pohang, and the carriers to pass through Tsushima Strait en route to their fuelling rendezvous south of Korea.

Some semblance of order had by now been reestablished at Pohang, but elsewhere the perimeter was under heavy pressure. Although the close support efforts of Task Force 77 on the 16th had been concentrated in the east, a fair number of sorties had been sent to the Waegwan front northwest of Taegu. This area had also benefited from the attentions of the FEAF Bomber Command, which on orders from GHQ had put 850 tons of

explosives into enemy assembly areas in a carpet-bombing operation reminiscent of Saint Lo. But despite all efforts heavy enemy attacks on the 17th penetrated the ROK lines north of Taegu, and only the quickest of countermeasures succeeded in restoring the situation.

The Marine Brigade in the meantime had been moving north, first to Miryang and then westward to Yongsan, to confront the crisis in the Naktong bulge. Seven miles west of Yongsan the river curves to the westward, then south, then east again toward Pusan, to enclose an area some three miles in each dimension, commanded by a central hill mass, and protected on the eastward by ridges running north and south across its entrance. Having crossed the river on 6 August, the enemy in the space of four days had expanded his lodgment to include the larger part of the 4th Division, the unit which Task Force Smith had run up against on 5 July. Counterattacks on the 11th and on the 14th and 15th had failed to dislodge the three North Korean infantry regiments which, with artillery and tank support, now held the eastern ridges and were debouching onto the Yongsan road.

The danger was great. If the penetration could not be contained the lowland river valley route to Pusan would lie open to the enemy. The three Army regiments in the bulge, less than half-strength at the time the enemy crossed the river, had been heavily engaged for ten days. Nor were the Marines in much better case. To confront the crisis and restore the balance, three under-strength battalions were to be committed against perhaps twice their number; no replacements had reached the brigade since its arrival in Korea; the losses suffered in the Kosong offensive had not been made good; the battalions still lacked their third companies. But one British observer, watching the Marines as they moved up through Miryang, was emboldened to hope, though with "no valid reason," that the tragedy which threatened the entire Korean foothold might yet be averted.

Army units already in the area included a battalion in blocking position on the left, two battalions north of the Yongsan road, and two regiments under orders to attack from the northeast. The Marines, on their arrival, were ordered to attack westward along the road at 0800 on the 17th, with Obong-ni Ridge, running northwest-southeast across the entrance to the bulge, as their first objective. Shortage of transport had delayed the arrival of the brigade and had adversely affected the artillery preparation; a misunderstanding with the Army unit on the right led to a lack of flank support; the air strike from the escort carriers was 15 minutes late, so that the 18 Corsairs had only half their intended time to work over enemy positions. The advance uphill, against a numerically superior and entrenched enemy, was carried out with great bravery but at heavy cost: of the 240 men of the 2nd Battalion which led the attack, 142 had become casualties by mid-day. But the enemy, too, was suffering, and with the commitment of the 1st Battalion at 1300 the forward movement continued. By evening the northern end of the ridge had been taken and a counterattacking tank force destroyed; north of the road Army troops had moved up to parallel the brigade’s advanced position; in the northern hills troops of the 24th Division had reached their objectives.

Strong enemy counterattacks during the night brought bitter fighting along Obong-ni Ridge, but the North Koreans proved unable to exploit their gains, and with morning the advance was resumed. Held up by a heavy machine gun nest less than 100 yards ahead, the Marines called for help from the air. Under ground control a dummy run, a target marking run, and a strike were completed within nine minutes, and a 500-pound bomb, deposited squarely upon the nest, eliminated this obstacle and panicked enemy troops. By 0830 the ridge had been cleared.

Already the crisis had been passed. Even before the ridge line had been taken the failure of his night counterattack had led the enemy commander to order withdrawal across the river. This movement was expedited by the Marines’ seizure of their second objective, a commanding elevation half a mile to the westward, which was taken shortly after midday. With the North Koreans in disorganized retreat, artillery fire was directed at the river crossings, fighters from the escort carriers strafed troops on the banks and in the water, and the muddy Naktong ran red with blood.

While this notable slaughter was in progress the 3rd Battalion pressed forward toward the final objective, the dominating height within the bulge. Well advanced when operations were halted for the night, this attack was resumed at dawn. At 0645 on the 19th the hill was taken and the bulge secured, while west of the Naktong spreading waves of confusion, radiating outward from this setback, were expanded by attacks of strike groups from *Philippine Sea* against troop concentrations and supply dumps between Hyopchon and the river. Its task completed, the Marine Brigade was detached on the next day, assigned to Eighth Army reserve, and moved back to the Masan area. There the infantry bivouacked in a bean patch, and undertook a training program for Korean Marines, while the artillery was sent back to work at Chindong-ni, where enemy pressure had again begun to be apparent.

In the three days fighting in the bulge the Marines had captured 22 pieces of artillery and large amounts of other materiel; estimates of enemy personnel losses varied between 2,500 and 4,500. Marine casualties, in contrast, totaled 345, of whom 66 were killed and one missing, an extraordinary disproportion which testifies to what professionalism can do, and to what command of the air can accomplish when exploited by a unitary air-ground force. For the invaders the elimination of the Naktong bulge and the destruction inflicted on the 4th Division constituted the greatest defeat thus far. For the U.N. the time gained by the action was beyond all price: ten days were to go by before the enemy succeeded in reestablishing this bridgehead across the Naktong.

While the forces of the United Nations were grappling with the crises at Pohang and on the Naktong, the southern end of the perimeter remained quiescent. The Kosong spoiling attack had been a success, and the enemy was licking his wounds. But while land action had diminished, activity in coastal waters was on the rise: the increasing unpleasantness of highway travel had stimulated diligent efforts by the Communists to improve their seaborne logistics, and between 13 and 20 August the Korean Navy fought five engagements in the arc between Kunsan and the peninsula's southwestern tip. The most considerable of these took place on the 15th, a day of widespread action on western and southern coasts, when *YMS 503* encountered 45 small craft in the gut between the end of the peninsula and the offshore islands, captured 30, and sank 15.

Much of this overwater movement seemed to originate at the port of Kunsan, attacks against which had been earlier prohibited by CincFE with a view to the preservation of harbor facilities. But these restrictions had by now been lifted, and on 15 August the cruiser *Jamaica*, returning from patrol, bombarded factories and docks with satisfactory results. On the same day a third blow was struck against enemy south coast capabilities when Yosu, previously attacked by *Diachenko* and *Collett*, was bombarded so thoroughly by HMS *Mounts Bay* and HMCS *Cayuga* that no worthwhile targets were deemed to remain.

By this time the activities of ROK naval forces were no longer limited to inshore blockade. Evacuation of refugees from the south coast, and by raft and barge from the Naktong Valley, was calling forth a major effort, and on the 17th, 600 Korean Marines were landed on the Tongyong peninsula south of Kosong. There, by seizing and holding the isthmus north of Tongyong city, the ROK Marines effectively bottled enemy troops in on the landward side, and prevented their movement across the narrow water to the island of Koje, below Chinhae. And concurrently, at ROKN headquarters, plans were being made to carry the war back north.

At sea, meanwhile, the Seventh Fleet remained busy. After helping out at Chongha the carriers had moved north on the 17th to strike Area F. On the next day, prior to giving similar treatment to the west coast, Task Force 77 fuelled from *Passumpsic* and *Cacapon*, and rearmed from *Mount Katmai*, the first ammunition ship to reach the Far East. The 19th saw Admiral Struble's force again in the Yellow Sea, giving support to the perimeter and striking targets in Areas A and B, while *Triumph*, operating independently, sent her aircraft against objectives to the southward. *Philippine Sea*'s interdiction strikes this day were concentrated on the vital railroad bridge at Seoul, which had survived repeated attacks by FEAF and carrier aircraft. Nine ADs with two 1,000-pound bombs each and nine F4Us with 500-pounders were sent against this target; the job was done, and photographs showed a span resting in the water, but at the cost of the loss of Commander Vogel, the air group

commander.

Close support duty on the 19th also fell upon *Philippine Sea*, and the morning launch of 18 planes brought satisfactory results. Although radio channels continued crowded, tactical air controllers were contacted as planned, and effective attacks ensued. In five separate areas between Hyopchon and the front lines large fires were started with gratifying effect, as numerous personnel ran out into the open where they could be strafed. This exploitation of the success in the Naktong bulge also accomplished the destruction of six troop-laden trucks, and of two command cars which were chased into a warehouse and there burned.

On the next day the force had another chance at the type of operation favored by Admirals Joy and Struble. From a launching point west of the Tokchok Islands strikes were flown against transport facilities and warehouses along the line Sinanju-Pyongyang-Kaesong in Area E On the evening of the 20th the carriers turned southward and headed for Sasebo, where they arrived at 1400 on the 21st.

However satisfactory to the naval commanders, this northward diversion of carrier effort was only reluctantly accepted by EUSAK. So frequent and urgent, indeed, had been the calls from Eighth Army and the JOC that Admiral Joy had asked CincFE to remind all interested commands of the complex chain through which the services of the Seventh Fleet were properly to be requested. On the 20th, in denying an Eighth Army request for permanent assignment of one of the fast carriers to the defense of the perimeter, CincFE spelled out the intended employment of naval force. *Triumph* and the gunnery strength of Task Group 96.5, and the escort carriers of Task Group 96.8, were at EUSAK's disposition. But except in great emergency the large carriers were not to operate singly; future plans made necessary a replenishment period for Task Force 77; its subsequent employment would be communicated when known.

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Chapter 6. Holding the Line
4. 21-31 August: Coastal Operations and Carrier Strikes

In the last ten days of August a lull descended upon the Korean perimeter. Repulse in the south and defeat in the Naktong bulge had forced important North Korean units to break off and reorganize, and enemy losses had also been heavy in the fighting around Waegwan and Pohang. But by now Communist preparations to renew the attack were faced with circumstances of increasing difficulty. A campaign planned for ten days was approaching the end of its second month, the informal logistic procedures of the invaders were becoming increasingly inadequate, and attempts to live off the country were producing a half-starved soldiery. Supply of more specifically military items, unavailable through confiscation, had broken down as a result of naval and Air Force attacks on lines of communication. Despite resort to hand carriage, horse and ox transportation, and movement by night, the enemy's best efforts were insufficient to permit the maintenance of the offensive. Not only was he checked in his advance but his morale was suffering, and the growing effectiveness of U.N. operations was evidenced by the increasing number of prisoners taken.

By now, too, the question of who was encircling whom had become meaningful. In Korea there had developed the extraordinary spectacle of two contending armies, each nearly surrounded by hostile forces and each nourished from afar. For while the enemy controlled by far the greater part of the Korean peninsula, the sea around him and the air above remained the uncontested domains of the U.N. While he pressed against the Pusan perimeter, his own flanks and communications were under continuous attack. Night and bad weather were the happiest times for the NKPA, but U.N. soldiers could walk upright by day; the supply lines to the north were suffering, but Pusan was a booming port.

In this situation both sides were racing against time. To the invaders the arrival of U.N. reinforcements, with more in prospect, meant that they must win quickly or they would not win at all. For the U.N. the problem was to hold its own perimeter until the counterstroke could be prepared, and then to draw the noose and explode the Pusan beachhead. The last ten days of August, which saw the North Koreans feverishly attempting to solve their logistic problems, were marked in Tokyo by important high level decisions, followed by all-out efforts to mount an amphibious attack at Inchon by the time of the September tides. General MacArthur had taken the advice of the psalmist, to strike the enemy in his hinder parts and put him to perpetual reproach. But delivery of the blow depended upon the timely arrival of the 1st Marine Division, and upon the speed with which it could be committed.

Throughout this period of lull the work of the blockading forces continued unabated. Neither the lessened tempo of action around the perimeter nor the problems of preparing the counterstroke affected the operations of east and west coast groups and of the ROK Navy. Off the front line at Pohang fire support continued, with a heavy cruiser and a destroyer division always on duty, and with the nightly northward dispatch of a destroyer to shoot up enemy supply dumps in the rear. Yet while this work went on the coastal supply line was not forgotten, two destroyers were maintained on northern blockading stations, and the attack from the sea against enemy communication centers was again extended northward by a bombardment of the iron and steel center of Chongjin.

This city of 200,000, fifty miles beyond the northern limit of the blockade and an equal distance south of the Soviet frontier, is one of the key strategic positions on the western shore of the Japan Sea. Located on a bay which opens to the southward, Chongjin had inner harbors protected by breakwaters and equipped with railroad sidings, cranes, and warehouses. In 1945 it had been captured by Russian marines in the only amphibious assault of the Soviet's short war against Japan; current information indicated that it was frequently visited by Russian

ships, that Soviet naval units were stationed there, and that the port was a Soviet restricted area. Now, however, its prior exemption was cancelled out and Russian security regulations were breached. On the 19th Chongjin was bombed by FEAF B–29s, and on the 20th the destroyer *Swenson*, from the northern barrier patrol post, arrived offshore and put 102 rounds into iron works, harbor installations, railroad yards, and radio stations, starting flames that were visible for 18 miles to seaward.

Two days later the destroyer *Mansfield* shot up Songjin, just south of 41°, and in a night bombardment inflicted apparently severe damage on the docks, railroad facilities, and bridges of this mineral and lumber export center. The 23rd saw *Mansfield* off Chongjin, compounding with 180 rounds of 5-inch the damage previously inflicted by *Swenson*. On the 24th Admiral Hartman, with *Helena* and four destroyers, arrived off Tanchon, undisturbed since the *Toledo* group's bombardment of the 7th. Railroad cars and warehouses were worked over with the aid of helicopter spotting, after which the group proceeded northward to Songjin, where on the next day heavy damage was inflicted on marshalling yards and railroad cars.

Back on the line at Pohang a period of comparative quiet was followed, on the 22nd, by increased enemy pressure. On the next day a conference with Army representatives on board *Toledo* led to improved procedures in air spotting. These paid off on the 24th, as the cruisers' gunners had the gratifying experience of putting an 8-inch shell in one end of a tunnel reported to contain a supply dump, and of observing smoke come out of the other. The 25th was a day of variety as enemy tanks and guns were taken under fire, and as the North Koreans in their turn attempted an amphibious movement against the town by the use of motorboats and sailboats. But this effort was beaten off by small units of the ROKN, and when Admiral Hartman and the *Helena* group arrived to relieve next day Pohang was still in U.N. hands. Aircraft from Task Force 77 took off some pressure on the 26th, reinforcements were again moved in by EUSAK, and from the 28th to the 31st close support was provided by the Marine airmen from *Sicily*. The last day of August saw friendly forces making sizable gains.

In the Yellow Sea, throughout this period, Admiral Andrewes' units continued to man the west coast barrier stations and to interdict enemy traffic around the headlands. Here the principal excitement was the appearance of two enemy aircraft, the first in more than a month, one of which surprised and damaged the British destroyer *Comus* on the 22nd and the other an ROK vessel the next day. The attack on *Comus* produced a call for air cover from the escort carriers, which otherwise spent most of their effort during the latter part of the month in close support of Army forces on the perimeter. Despite the difficult hydrographic conditions in the west, the blockade here, as in the east, appears to have been effective: no traffic was moving south around the headlands patrolled by British units, and on 28 August Admiral Andrewes conducted a photographic reconnaissance of the entire coastline with satisfactorily negative results.

But while the enemy had abandoned his endeavors to bring supplies down from the north by sea, in the south and southwest he was vigorously attempting the forward movement of materiel and troops by small boat. This effort to improve the logistics of his southern flank led to a crescendo in the inshore operations of the ROK Navy.

Off Chindo, the island prolongation of Korea's southwestern tip, the ROK *YMS 503* found considerable activity on 20 and 21 August. Three enemy motorboats of between 30 and 100 tons were engaged, and one captured, one sunk, and the third damaged. For a few days there were only minor contacts, but the 25th brought seven engagements with enemy coastal shipping. At Pohang the North Korean attempt at a landing was repelled. Twenty miles off Inchon *PC 701* sank a large sailboat. In a small estuary east of Chindo *YMS 512* sank one 100-ton motorboat and another of 70 tons, and drowned full loads of enemy troops on both. Off Namhae Island on the south coast *YMS 504* damaged 14 of 15 small sailboats encountered. But the big work of the day was done by *YMS 514*, which in three separate engagements in less than three hours sank three enemy vessels and damaged eight. Once again excitement diminished for a time, but on the 31st *PC 702* sank two large motorboats and damaged another near Chindo.

Together with increasing enemy activity on the southern front, and with ComNavFE's previously expressed concern about inshore traffic near Namhae Island, these south coast actions led to the inauguration of a new fire support station in Chinhae Man, a bay which, reaching in to Chindong-ni and Masan, gave water access to the southern end of the perimeter. On 26 August the destroyer Wiltsie was assigned to duty there in support of the 25th Infantry Division, and this service was continued by various ships in rotation until late September. Since the 25th Division had trained fire control parties, in contrast to the somewhat catch-as-catch-can arrangements at Pohang, this Chinhae effort paid off handsomely.

From 21 to 25 August, while the perimeter continued generally quiet and the coasts busy, Task Force 77 was replenishing at Sasebo. On the 22nd Admiral Sherman, the Chief of Naval Operations, and Admiral Radford, Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet, arrived by air, following a brief trip to Pusan, to visit the force and to apprise Commander Seventh Fleet of his appointment to command the Inchon operation. On the 25th, as Admiral Struble left the fleet, command of the Fast Carrier Task Force devolved on Rear Admiral Ewen, Commander Carrier Division I.

Inevitably, this period in port involved further consideration of fast carrier employment. ComNavFE had by now switched over completely to the semi-strategic party and on the 22nd, in a dispatch to CincFE, argued that best results would come from strikes north of 38°, where many extremely lucrative and profitable targets" existed, even though the effect at the front would be felt with "some delay." This recommendation was accepted by General MacArthur, and a new schedule was promulgated which called for a sequence similar to that of the previous sortie: two days on the east coast commencing on the 26th, a day in fuelling and in transit, and two days of attacks in the west. On each coast the effort of the first day would be divided between close support and interdiction; throughout the operation first priority in interdiction would be given to railroad and other transportation targets. This dispatch was followed by another in which CincFE, "in view of current planning," expressed concern about a possible enemy air buildup, as evidenced by the attack on *Comus*; FEAF and Task Force 77 were adjured to emphasize interdiction of air facilities, and while avoiding damage to runways, to refuse the enemy the use of airfields south of 39°. Finally, a request from FEAF for cooperation in the destruction of specified North Korean bridges was approved by ComNavFE, insofar as not inconsistent with previous arrangements.

Some consolation was provided EUSAK by the assignment of a quarter of the total effort to the support of the perimeter. But the autonomy of the carrier force was emphasized in a ComNavFE dispatch of the 24th, which reported CincFE's decision to give freedom of action in the northern areas, both as to date of attacks and as to targets, to the task force commander. Thus by the end of August the frustrations of the perimeter and the attractions of interdiction had had their combined effect. Except in situations of real emergency, close support had been abandoned by the fast carriers, and within the context of the Korean conflict Task Force 77 had become an independent striking force.

Shortly after noon on 25 August Admiral Ewen sortied his ships from Sasebo for operations in the Japan Sea. As another consequence of the *Comus* episode, antiaircraft practice was conducted during sortie, but a submarine contact, later evaluated as false, brought an abrupt termination of the exercise. On the 26th enemy lines of communications were swept, attacks on targets of opportunity were carried out, and another attempt was made to provide support for the ground forces.

Three *Valley Forge* flights of F4Us and ADs attacked troops, tanks, and trucks with good results, and two reported that despite crowded radio channels the work of the controllers was satisfactory. For Air Group II in *Philippine Sea* the day started with a jet sweep which attacked troops in a tunnel north of Pohang, which was followed up by a strike of Corsairs and Skyraiders on a vehicle concentration west of the Naktong. It ended with another jet sweep led by Commander Ralph Weymouth, the air group's new commander, which reported good results: in the hills northwest of Pohang an attack in battalion strength had been broken up by strafing; west of the

town a competent airborne controller had directed rocket and strafing runs within a hundred yards of friendly forces. Air operations were thus successfully routine, but as the force cruised the neighborhood of Ullung Do the sonarmen on the destroyers were kept jumping by numerous contacts attributed to the whales which frequent the neighborhood of that island.

Click here to view map

During the night the carriers steamed northward, and on the 27th launched against transportation and other targets in the Wonsan-Chongjin coastal strip and shipping in Wonsan harbor. These strikes were described by the task force commander as more profitable than the previous day's work in support of troops. Quite possibly they were, but the comments on the support effort appear to have stemmed largely from memories of earlier chaos: although pilot reports indicated improved results in routine support missions, the effort was characterized as ineffective, owing to inadequate communications, poor radio discipline, and poor control.

On the 28th, as Task Force 77 was fuelling south of Korea and recovering replacement aircraft flown out from Japan, another list of bridges was received from FEAF and a schedule for future operations from ComNavFE. The planned activities on the west coast would now be but the start of a second sequence: fuelling on the 31st would be followed by two more days of strikes, a day in replenishment, and strikes on 4–5 September.

The trend away from the perimeter was continuing. Where CincFE's dispatch of the 23rd had called for such close support on the 29th as was desired by JOC, ComNavFE's new message called merely for strikes on that day. In fact, no support missions were flown, and the attacks of the 29th were directed against railroad bridges, airfields, and highways in the Seoul-Inchon region and to the southward. FAFIK had hoped for more than this, and had requested four-plane sorties at 20-minute intervals throughout the day, but its dispatch, delayed by communication failure, was received too late to permit compliance. On the 30th, still enjoying their new-found freedom, the fast carriers attacked bridges, docks, shipping, and the water-works at Chinnampo and Pyongyang, and road and rail targets to the northward, and on conclusion of these operations steamed south to refuel and rearm off southwestern Korea.

Along the perimeter the operations of the 31st were on a diminished scale, as both sides continued to prepare for the future. Increased strength and diminishing pressure had permitted General Walker to relieve the 24th Division for a well-earned rest. In the bean patch at Masan the Marine Brigade was enjoying its tenth day of respite from combat, and was busying itself with the training of South Korean marines and with preparations for the next operation. At sea, activity was of a routine nature: the fire support ships at Pohang and Chinhae remained busy, the ROK Navy was fully engaged, but bombardment of the northeastern supply line had temporarily ceased. Air strength available for the support of the perimeter had also declined, as a result both of decreased enemy pressure and of the requirements of the planned invasion of Inchon. The Fifth Air Force was still operating from Japanese bases, and its daily total of support sorties had dropped well below that of early August; *Sicily*, after four days in support at Pohang, was en route to Sasebo, whither *Badoeng Strait* had preceded her and where both were scheduled to remain until 5 September; Admiral Ewen's plans for Task Force 77 contemplated spending the next four days on railroad targets in the northwest in order to isolate the future battlefield.

But all the plans were changed and all the schedules scrapped by the development of the biggest crisis so far.

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Chapter 6. Holding the Line
5. 1-5 September: The Enemy's Big Blast

Late on the night of 31 August the enemy launched his greatest effort. Around the entire perimeter from Pohang to Haman heavy attacks began, very great forces were committed to the Naktong River front, and almost at once it was obvious that a major emergency was at hand. All troops were ordered out of reserve, all air support was urgently called for. At 0810 in the morning of 1 September the Marine Brigade was alerted, and shortly after ten o'clock the Joint Operations Center got off an emergency message to Task Force 77:
"MAJOR ENEMY ATTACK LAUNCHED ACROSS RIVER FROM TUKSONGDONG SOUTH TO COAST X ALL AVAILABLE EFFORT FOR CLOSE SUPPORT REQUIRED SOUTHERN SECTOR IMMEDIATELY x SITUATION CRITICAL X REQUEST ARMED RECCO FROM BEACH NORTH TO TUKSONGDONG TO DEPTH OF TEN MILES WEST OF BOMB LINE X REQUEST IMMEDIATE ACKNOWLEDGMENT."

Two hundred and seventy-five miles to the northwest, in the center of the Yellow Sea, the carriers had launched that morning at 0800 against transportation facilities in the Seoul complex and to the northward. *Valley Forge* aircraft had dropped a span of the rail bridge below Sariwon and had attacked transportation targets near Hwangju and on the Ongjin peninsula; *Philippine Sea*'s bombers had struck the Pyongyang railroad bridge and marshalling yards, and cars and equipment along the tracks to the northward; the sighting in the course of this activity of flatcars loaded with steel girders gave evidence of the effectiveness of previous bridge attacks. At 0935 jet sweeps from both carriers had been sent against airfields in the Seoul-Suwon region and against the harbor of Chinnampo. The fighters returned aboard at 1120, just after a second propeller strike group was flown off against North Korean bridges and marshalling yards.

Fifteen minutes after the fighters had been landed aboard, the JOC's scream for help was received. The response was immediate. Admiral Ewen at once turned his force to the southeast and built up speed to 27 knots. Strike missions in the air north of Seoul were recalled at 1 155, and the combat air patrol was vectored out to help them find the fleet in its new position. At 1233 Commander Task Force 77 advised the JOC by flash message that his first strike would be on station at 1430, and at 1315 the planes began to lumber off the decks: 12 ADs carrying three 1000-pound bombs apiece, and 16 Corsairs, each with one 1,000-pounder and four rockets. Ten minutes later the aircraft that had been recalled from the north were landed on. At 1344 a second flash message to JOC described the composition of the first strike group, and advised that it would be followed an hour later by a second of identical composition and armament.

As the task force drove southeastward, and as the strike group flew toward the perimeter, the Marine Brigade was moving north to Miryang and to the Naktong bulge. Higher levels were also bestirring themselves: at 1231 CincFE had ordered all-out support for Eighth Army, and as the carriers were completing their preparations for the second launch a dispatch relaying this information was received from ComNavFE. In Tokyo, in the course of the afternoon, FEAF informed Admiral Joy's headquarters that as of 1245 the critical situation was in the 2nd Division sector at the Naktong bulge, asked emergency action to put both the aircraft of Task Force 77 and *Badoeng Strait*'s squadron, then shore-based at Ashiya, on close support, and suggested sending any required liaison officers to the JOC at Pusan and the operation of Navy control aircraft from Taegu.

At 1630 ComNavFE passed these suggestions on to Admiral Ewen; ten minutes later the Marines were ordered to deploy *Sicily*'s squadron to Ashiya next day to reinforce the effort in Korea. At 1800 FEAF was advised by courier that the fast carrier aircraft were already in action and that all else had been provided for. In the meantime another emergency call from JOC had requested all available effort on the 2nd against continuing

enemy pressure on the Naktong front, and shortly after 1900 Admiral Joy instructed Admiral Ewen to comply.

Within the perimeter, in the meantime, the old troubles in control had again arisen to plague the close support effort. On its arrival over the lines the 14-plane strike group from *Philippine Sea* was instructed to attack a tank concentration east of the bombline; the flight leader made a preliminary low pass, observed white stars on the vehicles and no attempt to take shelter by the personnel, and called off the attack; the group then foraged for targets on its own and attacked troop concentrations and a bridge on the Naktong River. *Valley Forge*'s aircraft, instructed to orbit because the controller had no targets, spent 45 minutes circling while the Mosquito called in a flight of F—51s on an enemy troop concentration. Deprived of this target, so suitable to their 1,000-pound instantaneous and VT-fused bombs, the group was finally directed to attack villages along the Naktong front.

Both carriers had launched again at 1430. This time the planes from *Valley Forge* did useful work on the 25th Division front, destroying much of the town of Haman, burning trucks on the road nearby, and flattening an enemy-occupied ridge west of the town. But *Philippine Sea*'s group again failed to find a controller and was obliged to seek its own targets along the river. Both ships launched jet sweeps at 1615 and again at 1745 with similar results: *Valley Forge* fighters, failing to find controllers, attacked small boats in the river and trucks along the roads; those from *Philippine Sea*, equally uncontrolled, returned without firing a shot.

The response to the all-out emergency was thus in large part wasted, and conditions over the perimeter were back to what they had formerly been. Not a single plane from *Philippine Sea* had been used in controlled attacks, and of a task force total of 85 sorties, 43 had attacked without positive control. JOC's emergency call had received an emergency response, but the total of about 280 Air Force and Navy sorties flown on the 1st in support of the emergency along the Naktong was more than could be handled, and by afternoon, when the carrier planes reported in, the system had been overwhelmed and had collapsed. Intentions had been good, and the effort commendable, and at 1800 ComNavFE sent the force a "well done" for its prompt response and for its support of the 25th Division. Equally, however, the situation was susceptible of improvement, and the suggested dispatch of liaison officers worth acting upon. The last event of the day within the force was the launch of a night aircraft, with Commander Weymouth, *Philippine Sea*'s air group commander, embarked as passenger for Pusan.

The difficulties over the perimeter had greatly exasperated Admiral Ewen, with the result that he ordered his pilots to spend no more than five minutes in attempting to gain contact with JOC or with control aircraft before proceeding to pre-briefed targets outside the bombline. Fortunately, however, the need for this procedure was considerably diminished by the efforts of Weymouth and the JOC personnel to improve communications and control: the Navy would supply the controllers for the 2nd Division front, and so get a clear radio channel; the Air Force would waive the requirement of checking all planes in through JOC. On the next day, despite deteriorating weather, the carriers sent in 127 close support sorties, to which Fifth Air Force and the Ashiya-based Marines added 201. Ninety-nine of the carrier sorties received positive direction, and the troubles of most of the other 28 were attributable to a morning ground fog over the target area.

Once the fog lifted things went well. *Valley Forge* aircraft destroyed 3 tanks, 12 trucks, and 3 barges, and successfully attacked 7 troop concentrations; *Philippine Sea* strike groups claimed 2 trucks and a tank, and many casualties in attacks on 11 troop concentrations. Communications with control planes were good, the controllers were complimentary about the attacks, the commanding officer of *Philippine Sea* reported that "the operation was a success," and the pilots were cheered by the thought that they were getting into the war. The last strike of the day was directed against enemy troops retreating across the Nam River south of the bulge, and in this sector at least things seemed to be looking up.

The Marine Brigade, in the meantime, had been on the move, northward to Miryang on the 1st, and westward to Yongsan on the 2nd, prior to attacking once more into the Naktong bulge. There the situation was even worse than a month before: the better part of two Communist divisions was now across the river, and the enemy had broken out of the bulge and advanced about four miles eastward along the Yongsan road. Local Army

commanders wanted the Marines to attack at once, but General Craig, not wishing to commit his force until all troops had reached their assembly points or until his air control personnel had arrived, resisted an afternoon advance.

Not only were the controllers unavailable on the afternoon of the 2nd but the whole air situation was somewhat problematical. Fifth Air Force had asked ComNavFE to continue all available effort between Tuksongdong and the coast, but Sunday the 3rd was fuelling day for the task force, which was scheduled to meet the replenishment group west of Mokpo, and both of the escort carriers were now at Sasebo. At 2205 a dispatch from FAFIK informed Admiral Ruble that the Marines desired his air effort on the 3rd and inquired as to his availability; the message was forwarded with emergency precedence to Ashiya Air Base where both VMF 214 and VMF 323 were now located. But Typhoon Jane was nearing Japan, and at Ashiya the weather was very bad.

At Yongsan the enemy struck first on the morning of the 3rd, and a heavy attack launched at first light penetrated the Marines' intended line of departure, a ridge occupied by the 9th Infantry about a half mile west of the town. As the brigade detrucked and moved forward the North Koreans were coming through the American lines, snipers were encountered as the troops marched through Yongsan, and as they emerged west of the town the Marines came under moderate enemy fire.

As the Army troops pulled back, heavy fire by Marine artillery, tanks, and automatic weapons halted the North Korean advance. The brigade then began to press westward from Yongsan, to clear the hills controlling the road junction and the road leading onward to Obong-ni Ridge and to the bulge. The terrain was difficult and fighting was hard, but by noon the initial objectives were in hand.

But there was no Marine air overhead for close support: Jane was centered over southern Honshu, and the fighter squadrons at Ashiya were weathered in. At 1231 General Craig sent an urgent message to ComNavFE: "NO REPEAT NO CAS A/C FROM 0900 TO 1200 X REQUEST NAVAL A/C 5UPPORT THIS COMMAND X NEED EIGHT ON STATION VICINITY YONGSAN."

Eighth Army, too, was in trouble, and at 0935 had called directly upon CincFE for the earliest possible return of the fast carriers. At 1342, in response to this plea, ComNavFE instructed Task Force 77, then refuelling and rearming southwest of Mokpo, to give all practicable support to the Army since the Marine planes had been grounded by weather; at 1404 General Craig's message was relayed to the force. Once again all hands on the carriers doubled to flight stations, and at 1547 Admiral Ewen reported that his first strike would be off in an hour, with arrival over the lines at about 1745.

Although their arrival had not been anticipated by Fifth Air Force, these flights, like those of the 2nd, found comparatively good communications and control. Twenty-two planes from *Philippine Sea* worked over troops in the Masan area in close proximity to American positions. *Valley Forge* sent in 24 aircraft in four flights, some of which attacked Kwangju and Samchonpo, and some of which, despite bad weather, had considerable success under Marine control near Masan, where six Corsairs destroyed 2 tanks and 15 fieldpieces, damaged 2 other tanks, and strafed troops.

At Yongsan, despite the absence of air support, the Marines had continued their advance westward on the afternoon of the 3rd. By nightfall the originally scheduled line of departure had been gained or surpassed and the enemy, disorganized by the shock of this unexpected engagement, was retiring. But the front was a long one, recurving into a deep salient north of the road, and the night was made miserable by cold, driving rain.

At sea, despite the improved results in close support, the task force was again trying to shake itself loose. In preparation for the proposed landing at Inchon Admiral Struble had established and ComNavFE had promulgated a new series of carrier aircraft operating areas, M through Q, along the west coast of Korea, and had called for operations in Areas P and Q, north of 380, on the 4th, and in 0 and P, between 37° and 39° on the 5th. Pursuant to these instructions Admiral Ewen's dispatch reporting his launch on the afternoon of the 3rd had stated that unless otherwise directed he intended to operate north of the parallel next day.

Within the perimeter, however, life was still hard, and all possible support was desired. At 2201 on the 3rd General Craig evinced his concern in another emergency dispatch in which he reported the "situation intense," and in view of the state of affairs at Ashiya requested eight carrier planes on station throughout the 4th. But ComNavFE had already confirmed the proposed operations in Areas P and Q, and although he instructed the task force to be ready to provide support on order, his answer to General Craig reported a favorable weather forecast for Japan and stated that the fast carriers were committed to other areas.

Fortunately, the fighting on the 3rd appears to have turned the tide west of Yongsan. Although fresh from garrison duty, the North Korean 9th Division, which led the advance, was deficient in training in comparison with the enemy's original front line units and was unable to stand up to the Marine Brigade. Early morning attacks along the road to the bulge moved rapidly forward, resistance was slight, and groups of fleeing Communists were cut down by artillery and Marine air. By mid-day the advance had covered a mile and a half, much destroyed and abandoned equipment had been overrun, and much U.S. gear recaptured. Further advance was authorized, afternoon brought the gain of another mile, and by evening the Marines were dug in on the hill from which, 18 days before, they had launched their first attack in the first battle of the Naktong.

Action on the 5th started with an enemy counterattack against Army troops north of the road, which was dissolved by automatic weapons fire. Preparations were then made to continue the move westward, and during the morning, despite heavy rain and fog which hampered air operations, the Marines moved out into position for an attack on Obong-ni Ridge. But at mid-day the attack was cancelled. Although the bulge had not been cleared the situation was vastly improved; D-Day at Inchon was approaching and the brigade was needed there. On receipt of this order the Marines formed up defensively along ridges south of the road, and during the evening were relieved by elements of the 2nd Infantry Division. Shortly after midnight the brigade marched back through the rain to load into trucks and move to the Pusan staging area.

While the Marines were pressing westward from Yongsan, Task Force 77 had moved north again into the Yellow Sea. This body of water, from the viewpoint of a carrier force commander, is a somewhat restricted one. As a result of the commanding position of the Shantung Peninsula, no part of the Yellow Sea is more than 200 miles from a Communist shore; above the latitude of Seoul the operating area, less than 100 miles from Shantung, comes within progressively easier bomber range of the Soviet-occupied Port Arthur Naval Base Area. And for a carrier force dependent on the lee gauge, geography is compounded by meteorology: the prevailing light summer winds, of a mean velocity of six knots and from the northerly semicircle, do nothing to help the commander fight his way out if brought to action.

The approach to this area, therefore, had necessarily been somewhat tentative. Early strikes on North Korea had been launched from south of 37°, and operations against southern targets had been conducted from the waters west of Mokpo. But the tendency had been northward: on 20 August aircraft had been flown off in about 37°, and now on the night of 3 September Admiral Ewen took his force into the pocket, through the narrows between the Shantung Peninsula and Korea's western tip, to launch on the morning of the 4th from a position on the 38th parallel against targets in the Pyongyang-Chinnampo region.

Morning operations were routine, but the day was to offer its full share of excitement. At 1329 the destroyer *Herbert J. Thomas*, on picket duty some 60 miles north of the force, made radar contact on unidentified aircraft closing from the direction of the Russian base, and reported this to *Valley Forge* planes passing overhead. Shortly the carrier herself made contact at a range of 60 miles, controllers on *Fletcher* were ordered to intercept, and a division of Corsairs which was orbiting northeast of the force was vectored out. The raid was by now estimated on course 160°, speed 180 knots, altitude 12–13,000 feet; as the fighters turned to meet it, it separated into two parts, with one retiring in the direction whence it came. Six minutes later and 30 miles north of the force the Corsairs intercepted the closing bogey and split into sections to box it in.

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Here the intruder made a mistake. On sighting the fighters he nosed down, increased speed, and began evasive action, but in turning away turned eastward toward Korea rather than westward toward China. As the division leader, Lieutenant (j.g.) Richard E. Downs, flew over him in an attempt to identify, and reported a twin-engined bomber with red star markings, the intruder made a second mistake and opened fire. This was reported to base; permission to return the fire was granted. From his awkward position over the bogey the division leader made his run and missed; turning in from the starboard, his wing man made his and hit; as the port section in its turn began to roll inward a wing came off the bomber and it went down burning in a flat spin.

By now the force had gone to general quarters and was launching more fighters. On *Thomas*, where the bogey had been tracked southward and the merged plot then followed east and north, topside observers sighted an explosion and column of smoke in the sky followed shortly by a second explosion on the surface. Proceeding to the spot, the destroyer recovered the body of a Russian aviator, but artificial respiration continued for a full hour brought no sign of life.

Before the implications of this startling event could be digested, another emergency supervened. *Thomas* was still picking up debris from the downed aircraft and tension within the force was still high when another urgent call for help was received from the Joint Operations Center, asking 100 sorties a day and offering decentralized control and two VHF radio channels. Once again all strike groups were recalled, the force was turned to the southeast, speed was increased, and preparations were rushed to launch missions in support of the perimeter. But this time the emergency was cancelled out by higher authority, as ComNavFE informed the JOC that CincFE had committed the fast carriers to other business, and that the Navy was unable to provide more support than that given by the Marine squadrons at Ashiya. Late in the afternoon a second flash from Fifth Air Force requested, with the concurrence of EUSAK, 100 sorties on the 5th and 50 percent of naval air effort until further notice, and asked for a representative from the task force to assist in the coordination and planning of close support. But the reply from ComNavFE to this second appeal merely referred the originator to his earlier answer to the JOC.

On the 5th, as an early morning weather flight disclosed unfavorable conditions over North Korea, Admiral Ewen turned his force southward and headed for Japan. *Sicily* was still in the yard at Sasebo, but *Badoeng Strait* was getting underway for the Yellow Sea. On the east coast a new crisis was developing with heavy enemy pressure against Pohang. At 1120 the KMAG detachment ashore asked the fire support unit to call for Navy air support to check an attack which had reached within half a mile of the town; an emergency dispatch to this effect reached ComNavFE shortly after noon and was at once relayed to Task Force 77, to Admiral Ruble, and to FEAF, with the request that all practicable help be given. But the fast carriers were 300 miles away, and bad weather left behind by Jane prevented flight operations by *Badoeng Strait*.

The immediate threat was checked by the fire support ships. Five-inch rapid fire from Toledo and De Haven broke up a tank attack and destroyed enemy artillery, while the destroyer provided further help by vectoring Fifth Air Force aircraft onto useful targets. But heavy enemy attacks continued, Pohang was lost again the next day, and by the 7th North Korean forces had gained the Hyongsan River south of the town, although still failing to reach the airfield. Further inland, things were still more threatening, and a North Korean thrust which reached almost to Kyongju forced the commitment of 24th Division units from EUSAK’s strained reserve.

But while fighting was still heavy as the first week of September ended, the forces of the Far Eastern theater had done the job. Only in the north, in the region farthest from Pusan, had the enemy’s all-out offensive made important gains; although there were still North Korean units east of the Naktong and south of Pohang, pressure was again diminishing. By the second week of September it was clear that CincFE’s first essential had been accomplished. Despite all difficulties Eighth Army had succeeded in holding the perimeter. All now rested upon the landing at Inchon.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 7. Back to the Parallel
1. 10 July-11 September: Preparing the Counterstroke

FROM THE first days of war General MacArthur had hoped to deliver a counterstroke directed at the Inchon-Seoul region, the strategic solar plexus of Korea. Early in the fighting he had conceived the idea of landing the 1st Cavalry Division at Inchon, and from 4 to 8 July the staff of Amphibious Group I had grappled with this problem. But the rapid advance of the enemy, which forced abandonment of this scheme in favor of the decision to land the cavalrymen at Pohang, made it plain that translation of idea into actuality would involve an assault landing, and posed a requirement for amphibiously trained troops. Not unnaturally, therefore, the 10th of July, the day the Pohang landing was decided upon, was also the day of CincFE's first request for an entire Marine division.

Twice repeated in the days that followed, this request bore fruit on 20 July, with JCS approval of the movement to Korea of the 1st Marine Division, Major General Oliver P. Smith, USMC, with an arrival scheduled for November or December. But on the next day a most urgent request from CincFE for a reconsideration of this date was accompanied by his statement that its arrival by 10 September was "absolutely vital . . . to accomplish a decisive stroke." And on the 25th General MacArthur was informed that the 1st Marine Division, with attached air but less one RCT, had been ordered to prepare for a departure between 10 and 15 August.

That this commitment was met was in itself an extraordinary administrative accomplishment. Starting with a total Fleet Marine Force strength of 28,000, less than half of which was in FMF Pacific, it took some doing to provide a division of more than 20,000 men, not to mention the 4,000 or so additional personnel of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, without complete disorganization of the Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, and of the supporting establishment. Only the President's decision of 19 July to call up the Marine Corps Reserve enabled the Joint Chiefs to promise the division; only Marine confidence that an expedited arrival was both desirable and feasible produced the advanced departure date; only the availability of sufficient amphibious lift permitted this confidence. By such interlocking circumstances CincFE was enabled to plan for a mid-September operation, but late July and early August was inevitably a time of controlled frenzy at Camp Pendleton, as security detachments, personnel from FMFLant, and reserves were processed and integrated into the violently expanding force. Difficult enough in itself, this work was further complicated by the need to provide replacements for the brigade in Korea, a requirement which was met beginning in mid-August by a series of troop movements flown west by MATS. Yet despite all obstacles loading of the division was begun on 8 August, two days ahead of schedule.

Up to this time the division promised General MacArthur consisted merely of a second RCT, the 1st Marines, plus supporting and headquarters troops and the balance of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. But on 10 August, as the brigade was attacking through Taedabok Pass and as the second embarkation was beginning at San Diego, the third RCT was provided and a third mobilization begun by orders to activate the 7th Marines.

The arrival of this regiment in the theater of action would constitute a striking demonstration of what can be accomplished by a force with a high degree of readiness when provided with advanced forms of transportation. One-third of the regimental strength was taken from the 2nd Marine Division on the Atlantic Coast, one-third was made up of Marine Corps Reserves summoned to active duty, and the remainder was provided by a battalion of the 6th Marines, then in the Mediterranean, and by personnel from miscellaneous posts throughout the United States. Five weeks and two days after its formal activation on 17 August, this regiment was in contact with the enemy, and the convergence upon Camp Pendleton of personnel from all over the United States had been followed by a convergence through 26° of longitude, westward from the Atlantic coast and eastward from Crete,

upon Inchon. The critical days of mid-August which saw the Marine Brigade rushed northward toward the Naktong, the departure from the west coast of the first elements of the division, and the flight westward over the Pacific of the division commander and his staff, saw also the sailing from the Mediterranean of the AKA *Bexar* and the APA *Montague* with the 7th Marines' prospective 3rd Battalion.

By now some intellectual order had been made out of the Korean chaos, at least on the upper levels of command, by the imposition of a three-phase concept upon the operations in the peninsula. The first of these phases involved the halting of the North Korean advance, the second the reinforcement of U.N. forces in the perimeter to permit offensive action, the third the amphibious counterstroke. Yet these phases were not wholly separable: planning for phase three had to begin before the success of phase one was assured; the requirements of the first two phases had serious implications regarding the availability of forces for the Inchon landing.

This had been conceived of as a two-division operation, with the 1st Marine Division leading the assault. The timely presence of this unit in the Far East now seemed certain, but one of its RCTs was fully committed within the perimeter and one would not arrive in time for the initial landings. Given the continued shortage of forces in the theater, certain specific problems required solution before the planning could go forward. The availability of the Marine Brigade had to be assured; another division had to be found to follow the Marines across the beaches; a corps headquarters was needed to supervise the post-assault conduct of the campaign.

As to the first requirement, release of the brigade was promised by CincFE and the bad news communicated to General Walker. The follow-up assignment was given the 7th Infantry Division, Major General David G. Barr, USA, the last of the pre-war divisional units of the Far East Command, which had been first skeletonized to fill the ranks of units committed to Korea and then strengthened by the integration of some 8,600 South Korean recruits. To solve the command problem it was proposed either to borrow a ready-made organization from the staff of Fleet Marine Force Pacific, at Pearl Harbor, or to create a provisional corps headquarters from personnel available in Japan. Although the Marines were eager, the decision of CincFE was that the organization of a provisional X Corps Headquarters would be accomplished locally; command of the corps would be entrusted to Major General Edward M. Almond, USA, Chief of Staff of the Far East Command.

With the landing force provided for, it remained to get it there and put it ashore. This would be the job of the naval components of Joint Task Force 7, the combined force of which X Corps formed a part, command of which was assigned to Admiral Struble. The mission of Commander JTF 7 was to land the X Corps on D-Day at H-Hour on the west coast of Korea in order to seize and secure Inchon, Kimpo airfield, and Seoul, and sever North Korean lines of communication. This accomplished, the harvest would follow as X Corps, in conjunction with a planned offensive by Eighth Army and with the help of theater air and naval forces, would destroy the North Korean Army south of the line Inchon-Seoul-Ulchin.

Much of this preliminary planning was water over the dam by 22 August when the commander of the 1st Marine Division reached Tokyo. CincFE had published his directive for "Chromite" on the 12th, and ComNavFE's derivative operation plan had been issued on the 20th. General Smith had previously heard only rumors of his task, but now he got the word. Two hours after his arrival, following a hasty fill-in by the Navy planners in Tokyo, the Marine commander had an audience with General MacArthur at which CincFE communicated his vision of the inevitable victory.

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There followed two days of conferences of an extraordinary nature. Two members of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Sherman and General Collins, had flown out from Washington; Admiral Radford and General Shepherd had flown in from Pearl; Admiral Joy and Admiral Doyle were there, along with numerous high-ranking officers from CincFE's headquarters. In these discussions it speedily became clear that in Tokyo the amphibious techniques which Navy and Marines had brought to high perfection, and which dominant Washington opinion considered obsolete, were held in the greatest esteem. The situation, indeed, was almost embarrassing, for without

denying the strategic importance of Seoul or the desirability of its capture, naval and Marine planners could not forget the extraordinary tides and currents of the Yellow Sea, the mud banks which restricted and the islands which pockmarked the long approach to Inchon, and the absence of suitable landing beaches at the objective. Not since Admiral Rodgers sent them against the Han River forts had the Navy or Marines undertaken such a maneuver; Rodgers, at least, had not sent his landing force into the heart of a city; the last such effort, the British raid on Dieppe, had not proven an experience of a sort to inspire confidence in this type of assault.

Although the rule book says that what is tactically impossible can never be strategically desirable, the doubts of the experts were of no avail. The Commander in Chief was firm, both as to the amphibious assault and as to the objective, while the headquarters staff, seeing the strategic desirability clear, seemed to feel that tactical obstacles could be solved by the issuance of orders. Naval reservations were brushed aside, and increasingly the conferences took on the air of the attack on stout Horatius, when

"those behind cried, 'Forward!'

"And those before cried, 'Back!'"

Navy doubts about the proposed operation had developed well before General Smith's arrival, and had led ComNavFE's staff to investigate some possible alternatives. In the search for a better objective the fast transport *Horace A. Bass* had been sent into the Yellow Sea and provided with fighter cover by *Badoeng Strait*; there between 20 and 25 August, and despite the presence of a full moon, her raider and UDT group had conducted night reconnaissance of possible beaches north and south of Kunsan, and of one in Asan Man, 38 miles below Inchon. But these efforts came to naught. Although preliminary plans had been developed for Kunsan, and although Admiral Sherman and General Collins both favored a landing in this area, the suggestion was ruled out by CincFE. Even General Shepherd, whose early support of Inchon had helped in the materialization of the Marine Division, had by now developed second thoughts, but his plea for the Asan Man alternative suffered the same fate.

Having felt themselves somewhat in the dark, the dignitaries from Washington had come out to see what was going on. Now they knew. At the final conference the best that Admiral Doyle could say about Inchon was that it was "not impossible." There the situation rested. None would gainsay CincFE. And while formal approval of the Joint Chiefs had still to be obtained, Admiral Sherman's agreement to support the plan and the appointment of Admiral Struble to command the operation had already shifted the emphasis from debate to action.

At Sasebo, having learned of his large impending responsibilities, Struble had been expanding his staff. A squadron commander was lifted from the destroyers, an air planner from Admiral Hoskins' staff, and on the 25th, leaving his flagship to follow him, Commander Seventh Fleet flew to Tokyo. There, where all principal commanders were now united, there was plenty of work for all. The west coast contingent of the Marine Division was expected to reach Kobe on the 29th. The first elements of the Attack Force were scheduled to sail on 9 September. D-Day was only 20 days away. But the Amphibious Group's studies of Inchon provided a basis for planning, the Marine Division staff had already moved aboard *Mount McKinley*, and with the arrival of the commander of the joint force decisions could be made.

With no time for rehearsal, with only the minimum time for combat loading, Joint Task Force 7 was responsible for the execution of an extremely audacious plan. Far larger forces had been committed to far smaller objectives during the war against Japan: at Iwo three divisions had been employed and at Okinawa four; and while the opposition on those islands was of course far stronger than that anticipated at Inchon, naval strength had made it possible to isolate the objective and to deny the enemy all hope of reinforcement. At Inchon some measure of isolation of the battlefield was indeed possible, as a result of command of the sea and air and of the effort previously expended in the knocking down of bridges. But while trains and ships and even trucks might be excluded, there was no guarantee that large numbers of unfriendly pedestrians might not be concentrated by night marches against the beachhead.

Eighty years earlier Admiral Rodgers had estimated that 5,000 troops would suffice to capture a treaty. Since then things had changed. Where formerly the only signs of habitation had been the scattered fishing huts of Chemulpo there had now developed a sizable city, while the events of the preceding weeks had sufficiently demonstrated that the enemy had modernized his military techniques. The task of the 1st Marine Division, which with attached Army and Korean units would reach a D-Day strength of 25,000, was to land in and capture a city with a population of some 250,000 souls, and then advance without loss of momentum to seize Kimpo airfield, 12 miles inland, by D plus 2. The area involved was roughly comparable to that of Saipan, where three divisions had been committed to the attack with another held in reserve, where there were no great cities, where hydrographic difficulties were slight, and where the flanks of the assault force were protected by the vastness of the Pacific Ocean and the power of the Pacific Fleet.

Reinforced, beginning on D plus 2, until it would attain a strength of almost 70,000, X Corps was to press onward to capture Seoul, capital and largest city of the country, and then hold until contact was made with Eighth Army forces coming up from the southward. How long this would take was problematical in view of the great depth of the turning movement. The distance between the point of landing and the beleaguered forces in the perimeter was some 140 miles airline, roughly comparable to that from Philadelphia to Washington, more than twice that at Anzio beachhead where the link-up took four months.

Although the risks inherent in the introduction of so small a force into so large a land mass at so great a distance from supporting units could perhaps be discounted, given the wear and tear inflicted on the North Korean People's Army and its commitment far to the south, the Inchon landing still presented some appalling tactical problems for the naval forces which had to bring it off. These difficulties stemmed principally from the extraordinary hydrography of the objective region and from the configuration of Inchon harbor. Shallow water at Inchon limited the date of a possible attack to a short three-day period each month; the rise and fall of the tide limited the time of attack to two short periods each day; the narrow and tortuous entrance channels restricted the movement of shipping for the last 34 miles of the approach, made daylight entry almost imperative for vessels of low power and poor maneuverability such as transport, cargo, and LST types, and prevented the normal night retirement of amphibious shipping from the objective area.

These hydrographic conditions had limited the development of this Korean Piraeus. Although the second port of South Korea, Inchon's ability to sustain an army corps was marginal. The navigational hazards of the approach and the tidal silting which had bordered the city with drying mud flats had kept its cargo handling capacity small: where Pusan could handle 25,000 tons a day, Inchon could manage less than half of that. Piers were lacking, and the five berths in the tidal basin compared unfavorably with the 30 alongside berths at Pusan. Nor was the outer anchorage of a sort that could conveniently accommodate an invasion armada: at Inchon this measures about seven miles from north to south and a mile or less from east to west. Only some 50 ships can anchor here; a tidal current of two to three knots sets in and out along the long axis.

Yet before the problems of post-assault logistics could be faced, some means had to be found to get the troops ashore. This too was difficult: not only did the lack of maneuvering room within the harbor complicate the ship-to-shore movement and restrict the possibilities of the fire support ships, but there was a notable absence of suitable assault landing points.

Of these only two could be found which were in any sense adequate, Blue Beach in the southeastern section of the city and Red Beach on its western shore, and they could be called beaches only by courtesy. Located at opposite ends of the town, they were separated by a four-mile water distance; lined with piers and seawalls, their assault required scaling ladders; reentrant in contour, they were subject to enfilading fire. Nor was this the sum of the difficulties, for from between these landing points there protruded from the Inchon waterfront a causeway leading to the small island of Wolmi Do, known anciently as Isle Roze in commemoration of the French admiral whose unsuccessful assault on the forts marked the first arrival of western civilization. This

island, which with its smaller satellite Sowolmi dominated and divided the Inchon outer anchorage, was known to have been fortified by the Communist invaders. Before an assault into the city could be contemplated its capture was essential.

The necessity of first reducing this strong point and the constricted nature of the entrance channels ruled out a night approach by the transport groups and eliminated the possibility of surprise. Since an attack in two phases was required, it was decided to send a small force in on the morning tide to seize Wolmi Do and then, after the waters had receded and risen again, to bring in the main part of the Attack Force for a late afternoon assault into the city. Nor was the warning to the enemy limited to this inter-tidal period. The need for pre-invasion bombardment of Wolmi's fortifications, which would extend the alert period, reemphasized the fact that the attack was being directed not against an isolated island but against an area which could be reinforced.

The final impact of the Inchon tides appeared in the planning for logistic support. Only small craft could negotiate Blue Beach at the southern edge of the city; only at Red Beach in the north and at Green Beach on Wolmi Do could LSTs be brought in, and there only during the high tides between D-Day and D plus 2. At low tide nothing could be landed, and behind its ramparts of yielding ooze the city lay secure. To supply the assault forces during the night of D-Day, it was decided to run LSTs ashore at Red Beach and leave them through the inter-tidal interval, accepting the possible loss of these vessels in the interests of adequate troop support. For the LSTs, high and dry and with cargoes composed largely of explosive and inflammable materials, the prospect was not enviable, but a scheme of maneuver was worked out which emphasized the fastest possible clearing of Red Beach in order to ensure, so far as possible, the survival of these ungainly vehicles and of their priceless contents.

Such were the known generalities of the situation, but again, despite American occupation of Korea, intelligence was lacking and the specifics were unknown. Would the mud banks of Inchon support tracked vehicles? The answer was available in Rodgers' report of 8o years before, but this was safely filed in the National Archives and no recent information was at hand. How high were the seawalls? What were their implications for the lowering of ramps of landing craft, or for troops attempting to get ashore? Would scaling ladders in fact be necessary? Which piers, if any, would support heavy vehicular traffic? In the effort to acquire reliable information Army personnel who had served in Inchon were rounded up and quizzed, photographic missions were laid on, the Air Force flew some photo interpreters out from the United States, and on 1 September a naval officer, Lieutenant Eugene F. Clark, was put ashore with two interpreters, a radio, and some small arms on the friendly-held island of Yonghung Do, 15 miles below Inchon.

In the meantime, and on the basis of such intelligence as was available, the work of the planners continued. On his arrival in Tokyo Admiral Struble was briefed by Doyle's staff on the problems of Inchon, issued orders for concurrent planning, and undertook to give oral decisions as needed as the work went on. The flagship *Rochester*, on her arrival, was berthed alongside *Mount McKinley* to keep the staffs in close proximity. On the 30th Andrewes, Ruble, Higgins, and Austin flew up from Sasebo for a conference of prospective task force commanders. And while the planning proceeded the preliminary operations were begun: new operating areas and operating schedules, intended to ensure adequate preparation of the objective without an overconcentration which would alert the enemy, were made up by Struble's staff for broadcast by ComNavFE to the carrier forces at sea.

So the concept of the operation took form. In early September, and again in the days preceding the landing, the three carrier units of Joint Task Force 7—Admiral Ewen's fast carriers, Admiral Ruble's escort carriers, and the British light carrier *Triumph*—would work over the west coast with their efforts gradually converging toward Inchon. Prior to D–Day a destroyer and cruiser bombardment of Wolmi Do would be carried out. On the early morning tide of 15 September a battalion landing team of the 5th Marines would assault Wolmi in order to secure that commanding position. On the afternoon tide, at about 1700, the main attack into the city would be carried out by the 5th Marines' remaining two battalions and by the 1st Marines. While the two Marine

regiments moved rapidly to expand their holdings to Kimpo airfield and the Han River line, the 7th Infantry Division (Reinforced) and corps troops would be landed administratively and would then operate as ordered by the corps commander. Throughout the operation bombardment and fire support would be provided by cruisers and destroyers, and air cover, air strikes, and close support by carrier aviation. So far as the air was concerned Joint Task Force 7 was self-sufficient: complications of coordination or control during the landing phase were fended off by the proviso that except at the request of Admiral Struble no FEAF aircraft would operate in the objective area subsequent to D minus 3, while for the later stages of the campaign X Corps was provided with its own Tactical Air Command, composed of Marine aircraft and commanded by a Marine brigadier general.

Such was the plan for the operation as worked out by the staffs of Seventh Fleet, the Amphibious Group, and the Marine Division. For Inchon, as for Pohang, the planning was necessarily carried out in violation of all the rules and in record time. By 2 September, when the Joint Task Force operation plan and the Amphibious Group's operation order were issued, Marine planning was nearing completion, and on the next day Admiral Doyle and General Smith sailed in *Mount McKinley* for Kobe, where the bulk of the Marine Division had just arrived from the United States.

This speed in planning, essential as it was, also brought its problems. There was no time for joint training, no possibility of rehearsal. Division and Attack Force staffs had to plan for lower echelons without benefit of comment or opinion from the subordinates, and completed plans made their appearance as hand-outs to the regimental and task unit commanders involved. The risks of high speed concurrent planning for so complex an enterprise were illustrated by difficulties in shipping allocation: owing to lack of information on the characteristics of available vessels, the 34 transport and cargo types which MSTS WestPac had been requested to nominate for the invasion turned out to be too few, and on 9 September, D minus 6, Captain Junker was called upon for a further 11 ships. Yet despite the necessarily authoritarian nature of the procedure, and the pressures under which it was carried out, there were few mistakes. On 7 September Admiral Struble flew to Sasebo and Kobe to confer with his principal subordinates and to tidy up loose ends. The most important of these, an overly ambitious commitment of the fast carrier air effort, was rectified in the 40-minute briefing which was all that could be given Admiral Ewen on his part in the operation.

Click here to view table

Although two divisions were a small force with which to enter a large enemy-controlled land mass, the Inchon landing was nevertheless an operation of a certain magnitude. To transport, protect, and put ashore a force of this size calls for a considerable investment in shipping and in personnel, and "Chromite," despite the expected absence of air and sea opposition, placed a heavy load upon the Navy. The total strength of Joint Task Force 7 amounted to some 230 ships of all shapes and sizes, from APDs of 2,100 tons full load displacement to transports of ten times that size. Except for a few gunnery ships held back to support the flanks of the perimeter, it included all combatant units available in the Far East. Fifty-two ships were assigned to the Fast Carrier, Patrol and Reconnaissance, and Logistic Task Forces; the remainder went to make up the Attack Force, Task Force 90, under Admiral Doyle. Of these, more than 120 were required to lift X Corps, while the rest were involved in gunfire and air support, screening, minesweeping, and miscellaneous other duties.

That so sizable an amphibious lift could be so rapidly assembled was remarkable, the more so in view of the preexisting policies of economy and of down-grading the amphibious function. In 1945 the assembly of such a force would have seemed simple enough; by 1952 it would have become quite feasible; but 1950, the year that it was needed, was the year of the drought. Inevitably, therefore, the armada that eventuated was a somewhat heterogeneous one, and of the 120-odd units assigned to lift X Corps less than half were commissioned vessels of the U.S. Navy. Thirty of the LSTs assigned the operation were Scajap ships, manned by the hardworking and loyal enemy aliens, and, of the vessels collected by MSTS WestPac, 13 were MSTS-owned, 26 were American cargo ships on time charter, and four were chartered Japanese *Marus*.

With completion of the planning phase, a stage in the operation had ended. Shipping was available, and a movement schedule had been worked out to lift X Corps to the objective area; a scheme of maneuver had been developed to overcome the natural difficulties of Inchon; supporting forces were on hand to deal with foreseeable contingencies. One minute after midnight on 11 September the Joint Task Force 7 plan was placed in effect for operations. Some of the slower shipping had already set sail.

But any military plan is based on certain assumptions, and "Chromite" was no exception. Underlying the basic concept were not only the postulates that phases one and two of the Korean campaign would be completed, but also that there would be no important change in the disposition of enemy forces, and that the greater portion of the invading army would remain committed to the Pusan perimeter. That this should be the case was fundamental to CincFE's plan, which could be described in the words of Wee Willie Keeler as to "hit 'em where they ain't," or in the more martial analogy employed by General MacArthur himself, to follow the example of Wolfe in his approach to the Plains of Abraham.

By early September these assumptions appeared to have been fulfilled. The perimeter was holding, Eighth Army had been reinforced, and the North Korean People's Army was deep in South Korea. Large and effective though this force had proven itself to be, it possessed the defects of its virtues. Chief of these was an inflexibility in the realm of movement and logistics, which had by now been greatly accentuated by the effect of air and naval attacks on the Communist supply lines. The North Koreans could still push hard against the perimeter, but the problems of rapid and flexible redeployment were almost insuperable.

Last and in some ways most important of CincFE's assumptions was the postulate that the enemy would receive no important reinforcement. In Korea the intervention of the United Nations had wholly changed the strategic picture, and had first delayed and then threatened with frustration a campaign planned as a walk-over. The assumptions of the invader had already proven false, and agonizing reappraisal had been thrust upon the planners in North Korea, and in the regions beyond the Yalu and the Tumen. To press on with the offensive, in the hope of driving the U.N. armies into the sea before the situation could be stabilized, had been the natural first reaction. But the arrival of important naval forces and the known amphibious capabilities of the U.S. Navy must necessarily have raised the specter of a landing in the rear, forced a review of the situation, and emphasized the desirability of further assistance from the Communist elder brothers.

There was thus at least a possibility that these, in their turn, would raise the struggle to a higher level, by providing the North Koreans with ground reinforcements, or with air or submarine strength. As regards the former, however, Russian ground intervention seemed hardly probable, while the concentration of Chinese Communist Forces opposite Formosa had left them poorly deployed for rapid action. And while air and submarine strength was available in quantity in the Soviet Maritime Provinces, its employment was fairly plainly fraught with risk. In the air, perhaps, the Far East Command's air and naval contingents could have withstood a Communist offensive, but with regard to undersea warfare the situation was very different. Given the length of the seaborne supply line and the shortage of escort vessels, a serious submarine offensive would have faced the United States with a choice of accepting defeat or resorting to high-yield weapons. Quite possibly this situation was appreciated by the other side.

Since no such step was taken by the Communists, this problem was not posed, and CincFE's assumptions were almost totally borne out. The enemy offensive was not weakened to guard against an amphibious counterstroke; although the Chinese had begun a northward redeployment, no ground reinforcements were provided the North Koreans; no aerial or undersea auxiliaries made their appearance. But on a lower level, and unknown to the U.N. commanders, a rapid reaction had already taken place in the form of a minelaying campaign designed to threaten U.N. naval forces and make Korean coastal waters untenable.

As early as 10 July shipments of mines were rolling southward down the east coast railway from the Vladivostok region. One week later Soviet naval personnel had reached Wonsan and Chinnampo and were

holding mine school for their North Korean friends. This reaction, which wholly justified Admiral Joy's concern with the northeastern railroad route, was sufficiently rapid to get the mines through before the limited Seventh Fleet and NavFE forces could be brought to bear. Some 4,000 mines were quickly passed through Wonsan, and by 1 August mining had been begun at that port and at Chinnampo. In time Russian naval officers ventured as far south as Inchon, shipments of mines were trucked down from Chinnampo to Haeju, and before the bridges were knocked down consignments had reached Inchon, Kunsan, and Mokpo by train.

This effort to counteract U.N. control of the sea went undetected. In mid-August search planes had reported enemy barges and patrol craft at Wonsan and Chinnampo, but while in retrospect these were believed to have been engaged in minelaying, the intelligence was not so interpreted at the time. The operation plans of ComNavFE, Commander Seventh Fleet, and Commander Attack Force, while crediting the enemy with limited mining capabilities at Inchon, stated that available information indicated no mine-fields in that area.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 7. Back to the Parallel
2. 15 August-21 September: North to Inchon

While "Chromite" was still in preparation the return to the north had begun. Although heavily engaged along the coast and busy with refugee evacuation, the ROK Navy had been able to mount offensive operations. Commander Luosey, who as CTG 96.7 operated this inshore fleet, was not privy to the Inchon planning, but the basic strategic situation was as clear to those in Pusan as it was to those in Tokyo, and the increasing probability that the perimeter would be held emphasized the value of deep flanking positions, whether for raids, landings, or the infiltration of agents. On 15 August, therefore, CTG 96.7 advised ComNavFE of his intention, if not otherwise directed, of seizing the Tokchok Islands in the Inchon approaches as a base for intelligence activities and future operations.

No countermanding instructions were received, help was promised by the west coast Commonwealth units, and on the 17th Operation Lee, named for the commanding officer of *PC 702*, was begun. With two YMS in company Lee, put a 110-man force ashore on Tokchok To; on the next day *Athabaskan* turned up to support the effort and the island was secured. On the 19th Lee's force landed on Yonghung Do, in the Inchon approach channel, and in the days that followed expanded its control to other islands in the west coast bight. On the 20th a landing party from *Athabaskan* destroyed the radio gear in the lighthouse on Palmi Do at the mouth of Inchon harbor. By 1 September, when Lieutenant Clark arrived at Yonghung Do, considerable information concerning the defenses of Inchon had been collected by intelligence teams under Lieutenant Commander Ham Myong Su, ROKN. And reports from the British indicated that the seizure of Yonghung Do had caused the enemy to shift forces southward to guard against a possible mainland landing.

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So far, so good, but on 1 September, as the invasion plans were moving to completion, there came the enemy's last and greatest effort to crush the Korean beachhead. In this hour of crisis Eighth Army needed all the help that it could get, and again phase one threatened to interfere with phase three. Not only did enemy pressure bring emergency calls for the retention of Task Force 77 in close support; it also threatened to make the Marine Brigade unavailable for the Inchon landing. Previous orders to release the brigade on 4 September were cancelled on the 1st, and for the second time the Marines were committed to the Naktong front.

Faced with the danger that EUSAK's needs might prevent the release of the brigade, General Almond proposed to replace it at Inchon by a regiment of the 7th Division. To the Navy and Marine commanders the assignment of this unit, untrained in amphibious operations and with a large infusion of South Korean recruits, would force abandonment of the two-beach assault for one in which the infantry would be landed in column behind the 1st Marines, with all the implications that this might have for the success of the operation. But the issue was fortunately resolved by Admiral Struble who, while insisting on the release of the brigade, observed that Eighth Army's need for a reserve could be met by embarking a regiment of the 7th Division and moving it to Pusan, where it could be either landed in support of the perimeter or sailed to rejoin its parent organization at Inchon.

On this basis it was settled. Release of the brigade was rescheduled for evening of the 5th. The requests for Task Force 77 were turned down by ComNavFE. For all of its magnitude the Communist offensive had succeeded neither in breaking the perimeter nor in diverting important forces from the impending counterstroke.

Although the fast carriers had withdrawn to Sasebo on 5 September, following the strikes against the Pyongyang area, naval activity continued along Korea's western shore. Between Kunsan and the 38th parallel,

aircraft from *Triumph* and *Badoeng Strait* scoured the land, concentrating on railroad bridges, rolling stock, and electrical transformer stations. While continuing to interdict coastal traffic, Admiral Andrewes' surface ships found opportunity to bombard Inchon on the 5th and Kunsan the next day. On the 7th, *Triumph* departed to the east coast for two days of operations off Wonsan, but with the arrival of *Sicily* on the 8th two-carrier operations were resumed. On the 10th, the last day on station prior to departure for replenishment, Admiral Ruble's Marine squadrons were ordered to burn off the western half of Wolmi Do. Double loads of napalm, to a total of 95,000 pounds, were ferried in during the course of the day, with resultant destruction of 90 percent of the top cover in the designated area, and presumable discouragement of the garrison.

It might be thought that an attack of such unprecedented nature against a terrain feature of such localized strategic importance would have alerted the enemy to what was in prospect and given him five days for emergency redeployment. Perhaps it did, but his capabilities in this direction were limited, and in any case the larger security picture for the Inchon landing was problematical at best. In Japan, where there were plenty of enemy agents and no censorship, the situation was a highly compromising one, and the arrival of the Marines and the assembly and loading of troops were matters of common knowledge.

Some efforts to delude the Communists were indeed carried out. *Triumph* was briefly shifted to the east coast. After dropping a bridge on the 9th at Kanggu Hang, below Yongdok, *Helena* and her destroyers ran north to 40° to shoot up shipping and trenches at the island of Mayang Do. At Pusan the Marine Brigade was lined up and given a semi-public lecture on the hydrography of Kunsan; after replenishment at Sasebo, *Triumph* would concentrate her efforts in the vicinity of that port, as would the Fifth Air Force; in this region, where *Bass*' earlier beach survey had been detected by the enemy, a raid was scheduled by an Anglo–American force embarked in HMS *Whitesand Bay*. But the basic cover and deception appears to have been accomplished by CincFE himself, by his insistence on so improbable an objective and by his pressure for speed. The enemy, it would seem, concurred in the views of those who questioned the depth of the turning movement and the hydrography of Inchon. South of 38° the heaviest days of his mining effort were at Mokpo and Kusan on the west coast, and in the neighborhood of Chumunjin in the east. At Inchon the effort was too little and too late.

In Japan, meanwhile, the skill and devotion of the implementers had succeeded within the allotted time in matching the vision of the strategist. While Wolmi Do was burning on the 10th the slower elements of the Attack Force were getting underway. A portion of the pontoon movement group, with gear for the expansion of Inchon's port facilities, had already departed Yokohama, as had the rocket ships which would bombard the beaches. The tractor movement elements of LSTs and accompanying ships were getting underway from Kobe. At Kobe, at Sasebo, and at Pusan, the transports were preparing to set sail in accordance with the movement schedule. Shipping from Yokohama and Kobe would pass south around Kyushu and then steer to the northwest, to be joined south of Cheju Do by units from Sasebo and Pusan. Passing through predetermined points at predetermined intervals, the pieces that made up Task Force 90 would be reordered and reshuffled, moved onward into the Yellow Sea, and funneled into the Inchon approaches according to a rigidly determined plan. Once begun, so elaborate an operation is difficult to postpone or modify, and at Inchon the tides forbade delay. No delay, it is true, was anticipated from hostile action, and in any case precautions against such interruptions had been taken. What could not, however, be planned for was the hostility of the elements.

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From a meteorological point of view, a war in Korea presents a problem to the maritime power, for most of the peninsula's weather is manufactured over the continental land mass. Yet there is some compensation in the fact that the typhoons which afflict the area, and which provide the greatest single threat to military operations, are of oceanic birth, and can be tracked in their passage northwestward from the Marianas. Their season, which begins in June and extends to mid-September, had thus far precisely coincided with the war. Grace, who had caused some difficulties at the time of the Pohang landing, had been followed by two milder sisters, but

September brought more trouble. On the 3rd, Jane had forced the evacuation of patrol squadrons from Japan to Okinawa, and had slashed through Kobe bringing gusts of up to 10 knots, damaging ships and gear assigned to the Marine Division, taking a full day from an already tight loading schedule, and depriving the brigade of air support from Ashiya. One week later, as the Attack Force was preparing to sortie, Kezia was reported moving up from the Marianas, with a predicted arrival in Tsushima Strait on the 12th or 13th, just as the amphibious shipping was scheduled to cross her path.

Since the loss of the Duke of Medina Sidonia's Armada, the influence of weather on great naval operations has profoundly affected the history of the west; in the Orient an equally illustrious precedent is provided by the Kamikaze, the Divine Wind of 1281, which threw back the second Mongol invasion of Japan. That modern fleets are also vulnerable to such hazards was made evident in the Second World War: in the invasion of North Africa Admiral Hewitt had to balance advice from his force meteorologist against pessimistic reports from afar; the landings in *Sicily* were complicated by weather; "Overlord" itself had to be postponed; and two typhoons caused serious trouble for Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet. Now the same question faced Admiral Struble, and in even more excruciating form: Admiral Hewitt had been provided with alternative invasion beaches inside the Mediterranean, but here there were no alternatives; General Eisenhower had been able to put off "Overlord," but the Inchon tides permitted no postponement. On the assumption, perhaps better on the hope, that the storm would recurve, Struble ordered the assault shipping out of Kobe a day ahead of schedule, and in the early morning darkness of the 11th sortied in *Rochester* from Yokosuka. Later in the morning Admiral Doyle sailed from Kobe in *Mount McKinley* and headed southwestward for Van Diemen Strait. In the evening, while passing east of Kyushu in heavy seas, Doyle learned that the Transport Group had reversed course to the eastward; this was promptly countermarched again in order to outrun the storm, while *Mount McKinley* headed for Sasebo to pick up CincFE and the other GHQ spectators. Prospects were still unclear, however, for on the morning of the 12th the light cruiser *Manchester*, proceeding singly from the United States, located the typhoon center 150 miles south of Kyushu, and radar tracking showed it moving at seven knots in the direction of the Yellow Sea. But fortune favored the brave. Kezia did indeed recurve, and by the time she passed over the southeast corner of Kyushu on the afternoon of the 13th the Attack Force was well clear.

The departure of the escort carriers after the burning of Wolmi Do had left the waters off Inchon tenanted only by Commonwealth and ROK blockading forces, and by a single patrol plane which, being relieved on station, maintained 24-hour supervision of the Yellow Sea. But the ROK Navy remained busy: Operation Lee was continuing; *PC 703* sank a mine-laying sailboat off Haeju on the 10th, and on the 12th got three more small craft in the Inchon approaches. And now, as the Attack Force plowed forward through heavy seas and the Marines in the troop compartments cursed their fates, the tempo of operations in the objective area began to increase.

Even here Kezia had made herself felt, for the Japan-based patrol planes had been evacuated to Okinawa, and where plans called for increased antisubmarine search around the approaching Attack Force, no such sorties could in fact be flown. But the 12th, D minus 3, saw Task Force 77 back at work in the Yellow Sea, operating in an area 120 miles west by south of Inchon. On the 12th and 13th strikes designed to seal off the objective area were flown against ground installations and lines of communication in Area 0, while the jets swept airfields to the northward. On the 13th, D minus 2, a special combat air patrol was provided for the Wolmi Do bombardment group.

On the 14th, as Transport and Tractor Groups were approaching the objective and as the bombardment of Wolmi Do continued, carrier-borne aircraft were in operation and on call along the entire western coast of South Korea. *Triumph* was working over the Kunsan region while maintaining four fighters ready for immediate launching as combat air patrol for transports south of 36°. Carrier Division 15 was back on station, and in addition to keeping fighters on call to cover shipping north of 36° was providing spotting aircraft and combat air patrol for the Wolmi Do bombardment ships. From the middle of the Yellow Sea the fast carriers maintained a tactical air

coordinator over the Inchon area from dawn to dusk, and provided him with three strikes, morning, midday, and afternoon, of 16 ADs apiece.

The little island of Wolmi Do, the object of much of this solicitude, forms an equilateral triangle slightly more than half a mile on a side, with its eastern edge running north and south, and with a spit extending from the northern corner. From the base of the spit a 900-yard causeway leads northeastward to the Inchon shore; from the western corner another of roughly equal length runs southward to the islet of Sowolmi. Wolmi Do was known to be defended by enemy artillery, and was thought to be heavily so. Although much of the top cover had been burned off by the Marine pilots of Cardiv 15, and although very considerable air strength was available to support the assault, preparation by naval gunfire was deemed essential.

If the war in the Pacific had demonstrated anything, it was the virtue of naval gunfire in preparation for an assault against a defended objective. Given the nature of Japanese island fortifications, no substitute existed for slow, deliberate, aimed fire directed at specific targets and delivered at short-range, and from Tarawa on progress in this technique was notable. So far as the assault troops were concerned, the longer the preparation the better, but in any given operation the time available for such preliminaries was subject to various and often conflicting considerations. At Inchon this was again the case: in view of the mainland nature of the objective it was at least possible that more time in preparation would mean more resistance subsequent to landing. A preliminary decision for a single day of effort was followed by further discussion among the parties concerned, and on the 10th Struble modified his operation plan by dispatch. Bombardment would commence on D minus 2, and would be repeated the next day if necessary.

The operation plan assigned the responsibility for this bombardment to Admiral Higgins' Gunfire Support Group, Task Group 90.6; the narrow waters of Inchon harbor placed the main burden on Captain Allan's destroyers. Hydrographic conditions also led to the decision to come in with the flooding tide and anchor, so that the ships would lie head to sea during the bombardment, and retirement in the event of damage would be simplified. At 0700 on the 13th the destroyers started up the channel in column, *Mansfield* in the lead, followed by *De Haven*, *Swenson*, *Collett*, *Gurke*, and *Henderson*. Behind the destroyers came the cruisers: *Rochester* with Admiral Struble embarked, *Toledo* with Admiral Higgins, *Jamaica*, and *Kenya*. Overhead there orbited a combat air patrol from Task Force 77, while to seaward that force was preparing to launch a strike which would hit the island shortly before the arrival of the destroyers. At 1010 the Support Group entered the approaches to Inchon outer harbor.

The decision to come in on the flooding tide proved advantageous in more ways than one, for at 1145 a string of watching mines was sighted off the port bow, in the area from which the British cruisers had bombarded the port ten days before. Here was a threat for which the bombardment group was ill-prepared. The first positive mine sightings had been made on 4 September, southwest of Chinnampo, by the destroyer *McKean*; three days later British units heading north through these same waters had encountered many floaters; on the 10th the Korean *PC 703* had sunk a mine-layer off Haeju and had reported that the mouth of Haeju Man had been mined. In Tokyo, on that same day, Admiral Struble had discussed the mine problem with CincFE: if contact mines had been placed in the Inchon approaches, it was the opinion of Commander Joint Task Force 7 that the Attack Force could be pushed through; if the approaches had been salted with modern influence mines the situation was more doubtful; all that could be done was to go on up and see. A conference with ComNavFE led to a recommendation to CincPacFleet for the earliest possible reactivation of more AMS; on the next day Admiral Radford passed this request to CNO and himself started additional sweepers to the Far East.

But reinforcements would be long in arriving, the invasion had to go forward, no sweep had been planned, and the seven minesweepers present in the theater were two days astern with the Transport Group. Before nightfall they would be ordered to the objective area at best speed, but for the moment the best that could be done was to make do. There might be more mines further up the channel; there was no way of knowing.

Henderson, the tail end destroyer, was detached to sink as many as she could by gunfire before the tide covered them, and the other destroyers continued on toward Wolmi Do.

It was just past noon, and the air strike was still on, as *Mansfield* and her followers moved through the harbor to their assigned positions, some less than half a mile from the fortified island. Anchoring at short stay, the ships swung around to head southward, into the flooding current, and trained their batteries out to port. There was boat traffic in the harbor, activity in the city was visible, but on Wolmi Do there was no sign of life.

Shortly before 1300 the five destroyers commenced deliberate fire on the island's batteries and on the Inchon waterfront. Some minutes of undisturbed bombardment followed, and then the enemy batteries opened up. Communist fire was concentrated on *Swenson*, *Collett*, and *Gurke*, the ships nearest the island, and in the course of the next 20 minutes scored on all three. *Collett* received the heaviest damage, taking nine 75-millimeter hits, one of which disabled her computer and forced her to fire in local control. Three hits were made on *Gurke*; a near miss killed an officer on *Swenson*; total casualties were one killed and five wounded. For nearly an hour the engagement continued until at 1347, after the expenditure of about a thousand 5-inch shells, the destroyers weighed and proceeded down channel. Five minutes later the cruisers opened from the lower harbor against the Wolmi batteries, and with one intermission for an air strike continued shooting until 1640, when the task group retired seaward.

The bombardment had been a destructive one. On the other hand the enemy had been alerted: during the day U.N. headquarters had intercepted a North Korean dispatch which reported the bombing of Wolmi Do, the approach of naval vessels, and "every indication that the enemy will perform a landing." The response of Wolmi's defenders had been vigorous, and the island's gunners were still firing as the destroyers departed. For Captain Allan's ships this persistent opposition merely implied another trip in next day for a repeat performance, but for some in the higher echelons news of the enemy reaction proved unsettling. On board the command ship *Mount McKinley*, now steaming northward through the Yellow Sea, one highly placed observer noted that among those who had counted on an unopposed or lightly opposed landing "a certain measure of pessimism appeared."

Up front, however, the problems were problems of detail. In the evening Higgins and Allan went aboard *Rochester* for a conference with Admiral Struble. The decision was taken to do it again the next day. *Collett* was detached because of her damage, and told off along with the tug *Mataco* to finish the destruction of the mines. Some crystal trouble with aircraft radios, which had made difficulties for air spotting and air coordination, was dealt with by a change in the frequency plan. Otherwise all was routine, and in the morning the other four destroyers, joined by *Henderson* and supported by the cruisers, again filed up the channel.

At 1050, as an air strike against the Wolmi Do and Inchon gun emplacements was beginning, the cruisers anchored in the lower bombardment area. Twenty minutes later they commenced firing on Wolmi Do, and shortly after noon the destroyers were deployed to their anchorages in Inchon harbor. There, following another air strike, they began their pointblank bombardment of the island, firing from 1255 to 1422, and expending some 1,700 rounds. Another strike from Task Force 77 came in as the destroyers moved down channel; for another hour the cruisers continued their work. Enemy fire, this time, was late, sparse, and inaccurate, and no ship was hit. Air spotting had been considerably improved, and the itemized claims of destruction and damage inflicted by the two-day effort were encouraging. Together with the work of Task Force 77, the gunfire appeared to have done the job. Wolmi Do was ready for the Marines.

Two approaches from the Yellow Sea lead inward to Inchon, So Sudo or Flying Fish Channel to the westward, and Tong Sudo or East Channel close inshore. Although its currents are the stronger, reaching four and a half knots on a rising tide and almost seven on the ebb, So Sudo offers fewer hazards to navigation, and had been selected as the route of approach for the Attack Force. Shortly after midnight on the 15th the Gunfire Support Group again entered So Sudo and headed north, accompanied this time by the Advance Attack Group, Captain Norman W. Sears, with the 3rd BLT, 5th Marines, embarked. Following the destroyers came the LSD

Fort Marion, with three tank-loaded LSUs in her capacious maw, and the fast transports *Bass*, *Diachenko*, and *Wantuck*; the cruisers, now joined by *Mount McKinley*, again brought up the rear.
Click here to view map

As the ships coasted in on the flooding tide, navigating by radar up the tortuous passageway, the light at the harbor's mouth went on: having found the beacon on Palmi Do still operative, Lieutenant Clark had heeded the Oriental proverb that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. Offshore in the pre-dawn gloom, Task Force 77 flew off the first of the combat air patrols, barrier patrols, and deep-support strikes which it was to provide throughout the day, while Admiral Ruble's group launched ten Corsairs for the pre-landing attack on Wolmi Do. The gunfire spotter, the combat air patrol, and the deep support group were all on station by 0528, when the first strike group reported in to the Air Direction Center in *Mount McKinley*.

By this time the Advance Attack Group had reached its destination in Inchon inner harbor, and Wolmi, no longer a menace, was put to constructive use: anchoring with the island between them and the city's shore batteries, Captain Sears' ships were able to boat their troops undisturbed. The signal "Land the Landing Force" was executed at 0540, and by 0600 the assault troops had been embarked and the landing craft were circling while awaiting the coming of L-Hour. High overhead the leader of the first air strike rolled his plane over and started down.

L-Hour, set for 0630, was preceded by 45 minutes of bombardment. To the north of Wolmi Do *Mansfield*, *De Haven*, and *Swenson* fired on the island and on the northern shore of Inchon; south of the island *Collett*, *Gurke*, and *Henderson* concentrated on Wolmi, Sowolmi, and on the city's southern shore. From the southern fire support area *Toledo* and *Kenya* divided their efforts between northern Inchon and the Blue Beach area, while *Rochester* and *Jamaica* took the region behind Blue Beach and on the right flank. Any enemy reaction at the Inchon end of the Wolmi Do causeway would be dealt with by *De Haven* and *Collett*, who were assigned to cover this region with VT-fused ammunition.

While the bombardment continued Marine Corsairs from the escort carriers bombed and rocketed the island. At 0615, L minus 15, the three rocket ships, each with an allowance of 1,000 5-inch spin-stabilized rockets, moved past Green Beach on Wolmi's northern tip and let go. At 0628, as the three LSMRs moved clear, the first wave of landing craft crossed the line of departure and headed in, while the cruisers and two of the destroyers ceased fire to permit the pre-landing beach strafe by the Corsairs.

At 0633 the first troops were ashore in a scene of smoke, dust, and devastation, and were moving forward against negligible resistance. Thirteen minutes after the first wave had touched down, the three LSUs from *Fort Marion* reached the beach with supplies for the assault force, and began to disgorge their ten tanks. Thirty minutes after the initial landing the northern half of the island was controlled by the Marines.

Admiral Struble was just going over the side for a small boat reconnaissance of the situation when a visual signal was received: "The Navy and the Marines have never shone more brightly than this morning. MacArthur." Pausing only to relay the message to the fleet, the force commander boarded his boat, stopped by at *Mount McKinley* to pick up CincFE, and proceeded into the inner harbor to survey Wolmi Do. The day was warm and pleasant, everything was going well, no action was needed. By 0807 the dominating heights on Wolmi had been secured; before mid-day Sowolmi had been assaulted across the narrow causeway and had been taken with the aid of an air strike from the orbiting Corsairs. Total Marine casualties were 17 wounded; the small price paid for this essential objective, with its 400-man garrison and its fairly elaborate system of defensive works and armament, reflects the effectiveness of the advance preparation.

By noon, then, the objective had been secured and fighting had ceased. By noon, too, the waters had receded. On Wolmi Do, in the September sunshine, the Marines gazed across the half-mile causeway and the mudflats toward the silent city and its invisible garrison. In the approach channels the Transport and Tractor Groups were moving in, bearing the forces for the main assault. But until the moon brought back the tides no

further advance was possible.

Yet though ground action had been halted by the intertidal lull, the supporting arms were still at work. In the outer harbor the hastily summoned minesweepers were busy checking the anchorage areas. Over the harbor, from dawn to dusk, circled two tactical air observers from the escort carriers, keeping the commanders informed. Throughout the day, at 90-minute intervals, eight Marine Corsairs reported in to process the Inchon defenses with napalm and 500-pound bombs. From the fast carriers there arrived, again at 90-minute intervals, 12-plane deep support strikes which, after delivering their armament, relieved their predecessors as barrier patrol. To this effort, in the two hours preceding the landing, Task Force 77 would add three formidably armed strikes, each composed of eight ADs. In one flight the aircraft would carry three 500-pound bombs, in the second three 1,000-pound bombs, in the third two 500-pounders plus a napalm tank, and all had maximum loads of high velocity aircraft rockets.

Fire support was also an all-day proposition. The interval between the morning and afternoon landings had been divided into two periods, the first extending to H minus 25 and the second to H minus 5, for which roughly equivalent ammunition allowances were provided. Target assignments were similar to those of the morning, but with the weight of fire shifted inland: *Toledo*'s main battery was responsible for northern Inchon, *Rochester* had the area north of the tidal basin and Blue Beach, *Kenya* and *Jamaica* were given the region to the south and east of the zones assigned their sisters. From the enfilading peninsula north of Red Beach through the tidal basin, the salt pan, and on beyond Blue Beach, the water front was assigned to the destroyers and to the cruisers' secondary batteries.

Not least of the problems stemming from the decision to land at Inchon was the difficulty of avoiding non-military damage to the city and injury to the population. Destruction of necessity there was, but Admiral Struble had enjoined the utmost accuracy and had warned against unnecessary devastation. All air strikes were controlled; within the areas assigned the fire support ships, the known military targets had been conspicuously marked, and only these were to be fired on without air spot and positive identification.

Slowly the waters rose again. By 1300 the transports and the LSTs were standing in, and as afternoon wore on they began to boat their troops. At sea Task Force 77 had been reinforced by *Boxer*, that veteran oceanic commuter, who after delivering her load of Air Force F–51s had returned to the west coast, embarked an air group which had been flown across country from the Atlantic Fleet, and again recrossed the Pacific. Having fought her way through Kezia, *Boxer* now arrived, accompanied by *Manchester* and two destroyers, in time to launch for the beach preparation strikes. But three fast ocean crossings had taken their toll, the long-promised yard period had been indefinitely postponed, and that very morning a reduction gear failure had limited the carrier to steaming on three shafts.

At 1615 the strike groups from the fast carriers reported in and began the beach preparation work. By 1700, as the bombardment was about to begin again in earnest, more than 500 landing craft were churning the waters of Inchon harbor. Rain squalls drifting across the water mingled with smoke from fires in the city to diminish visibility as the armored LVTs with RCT I started in for Blue Beach, the faster LCVPs with RCT 5 headed north past Wolmi Do to the Red Beach boat lanes, and the DUKWs with two artillery battalions moved toward Wolmi Do. Then at H minus 25 the three rocket ships once more came into action. *LSMR 403*, with a load of 2,000 rockets, fired on Red Beach and the flanking area to the left while the others, with similar allowances, bombarded the tidal basin, Blue Beach, and the right flank area. Here the LVTs were set northward by the flooding tide, and *LSMR 401* was forced to fire over some of the boat waves, an operation both impressive and discomforting to the embarked Marines. At 1725, as scheduled, the bombardment ceased, the strafing planes came down, and the boats went in.

At Red Beach the two battalions of the 5th Marines got ashore on schedule to be opposed by scattered rifle, automatic weapon and mortar fire. Enemy resistance delayed clearing the beach area for a time, but in little

more than an hour it had been overcome, the Marines were working their way in through the town to the dominating high ground, and tanks and troops from Wolmi Do were crossing the causeway to join in. At Blue Beach vigorous mortar fire had greeted the approaching LVTs, and before being silenced by *Gurke* and the rocket ships had destroyed one LVT by a direct hit. Congestion caused by the difficult entries to the landing areas converted the first wave into a column, while diminished visibility from smoke, rain, and approaching sunset caused some confusion in the follow-up waves and some dispersion along the shoreline. But here too the landing force advanced inland without serious difficulty.

As the Marines disappeared from the beaches into the darkening city they were not forgotten by the supporting arms. Air spot remained available for an hour or more, and call fire in direct support of the landing force was provided by the gunnery ships. For post-landing gunfire support *Toledo*'s batteries were at the disposal of division headquarters, the 5th Marines controlled *Rochester* and the 1st Marines *Jamaica*, while each battalion was assigned a destroyer with which it was in direct communication. Night illumination fire, which had proven extremely valuable during the Pacific War, was limited on D-Day by the configuration of the harbor: the destroyers were too close in for satisfactory employment of star shell and the cruisers too far out. But on subsequent nights this situation did not obtain, and illuminating missions were most successful.

Within the city fighting continued through the hours of darkness, but by midnight the landing force had reached its initial phase lines. The 5th Marines controlled the hills commanding Red Beach, and thus the source of their logistic build-up, and had advanced southward as far as the tidal basin; the 1st Marines had reached the designated high ground north of Blue Beach and commanding the main road to Seoul. The price of D-Day was 174 casualties, including 20 killed in action, 1 missing, and 1 dead of wounds.

As had been expected, Inchon was not strongly garrisoned. Enemy strength within the city amounted only to some two thousand men of the 226th Marine Regiment, a comparatively new and ineffective unit. Weak to begin with, the forces defending the objective area had been further weakened by their southward displacement in response to Operation Lee and the ROKN landing on Yonghung Do. This move culminated, on the day of the Inchon landings, in a classic blow in the air, as a North Korean force was landed on that island and the outnumbered ROK garrison was taken off by *PC 701*. Next day the Communists woke up to what was going on to the northward, and departed hastily for the mainland.

With the Inchon assault successfully accomplished the problem of the Attack Force was to maintain momentum for the advance inland, and this was inevitably a matter of logistics. Armies still march upon their stomachs; problems of supply, though often hidden by the smoke of battle, are always governing; at Inchon their impact was more than usually immediate. To support the landing force during the intertidal darkness LSTs had to be brought in; to bring in LSTs the landings had to be made at the height of the spring tides; to protect these ships Red Beach had to be cleared with all possible speed. An estimated six LST loads of ammunition, water, rations, vehicles, and fuel were needed; eight had been provided in the hope that six would survive. Recently recommissioned, outfitted with pick-up crews, in poor material condition and prone to breakdown, all eight had nevertheless reached Inchon, and beginning at H plus 60 went in at five-minute intervals. On Red Beach rifle and machine gun fire still continued, and the LSTs came in shooting, not always accurately; one had a minor collision with an ROK PC during the run in, and some were hit and holed by enemy fire. But all eight made it, and four more were put up on Green Beach on Wolmi after the DUKWs had landed the artillery and withdrawn.

Historically, some of the most vexing problems of amphibious warfare had been those concerned with the organization and administration of beachhead areas, and with the handling of assault supplies. In the course of the Second World War the employment for these purposes of details of combat troops, and of sailors from the amphibious shipping, had early proved unsatisfactory. The result had been the organization of commissioned Naval Beach Groups, and of Marine Shore Party Battalions, which while exacting the costs of specialization in terms of administrative overhead and shipping space had by now developed a considerable expertise. At 1840, H

plus 70, Commander Naval Beach Group 1, Captain Watson T. Singer, landed in *LST 883* and set up his command post on Red Beach. All through the night his men and the Marines of the 1st SPB labored to empty the LSTs so they could retract with the morning tide and make room for others to be brought in. At the same time another all-night exercise was taking place on Wolmi Do, where the Beach Group's construction battalion was installing a pontoon dock, and where the supplies from the Green Beach LSTs were being unloaded for further delivery by way of the causeway. No effort was made to put important amounts of cargo in through Blue Beach owing to its inferior hydrography and intractable approaches; there material for immediate consumption only was sent in by small craft, and the beach was closed at 2100 on D plus 1.

Despite all geographic and hydrographic complications, the logistics of the assault phase turned out well. The early morning tide of the 16th saw all first echelon LSTs retracted and nine more run up on Red Beach; on the evening tide seven more were withdrawn and six put in; by 2100 almost 15,000 personnel, 1,500 vehicles, and 1,200 short tons of cargo had been put ashore. On D plus 2 Rear Admiral Lyman A. Thackrey, Commander Amphibious Group 3, who had just arrived from San Diego in the AGC *Eldorado*, was put in charge of port operations, and moved ashore with members of his staff. There his presence proved helpful in coordinating the efforts of the undermanned Beach Group in its three non-contiguous unloading zones, in setting up an unloading schedule, and in getting the inner harbor into operation. Here speed was essential, for with the end of the spring tides on D plus 3 the beaches would become inaccessible to LSTs, and here speed was obtained. On the 16th heavy cranes were landed on Wolmi Do, and moved across the causeway to the tidal basin, where unloading began on D plus 2, far sooner than had been anticipated.

All first echelon shipping had been emptied by D plus 4. Three days later 53,882 persons and 6,629 vehicles were ashore, and the 25,512 tons of cargo unloaded more than doubled the X Corps target figure for that date. Figures like these doubtless make arid reading; it takes an act of the imagination to translate tonnage into ammunition, water, rations, and plasma; but figures like these also make for victories. By the time the Army's 2nd Engineer Special Brigade assumed control of the Inchon port area the limitations on the supply of the front, far from being hydrographic, were a function of the availability of motor transport.

There were, of course, logistic problems afloat as well as ashore. The movement of the Attack Force to Inchon and the extended and extensive activities of the other units of Joint Task Force 7 placed new loads upon the Service Force organization. In the weeks prior to the invasion the resupply of combatant ships had been increasingly concentrated at Sasebo, which by now had taken on the characteristics of a major fleet base. But with the transfer of so large a portion of theater naval strength to the west coast of Korea, the job of backing up at Sasebo was turned over to Captain Wright's Service Division 31, and Servron 3, which had moved up from Okinawa in early September, was deployed forward to the objective area.

Four task groups had been created for the logistic support of "Chromite." To meet the needs of Task Force 77 a Mobile Logistic Service Group with two oilers, a reefer, and *Mount Katmai*, still the only ammunition ship in the Far East, was on station in the Yellow Sea. For towing and salvage work the tug *Mataco* and the salvage vessel *Bolster* were ordered up to Inchon, along with the oiler and five cargo ships of the Objective Area Logistic Group with fuel, ammunition, food, and stores. For follow-up resupply and maintenance ComServron 3 brought forward the Logistic Support Group: one oiler, one gasoline tanker, two destroyer tenders, two repair ships, two more cargo types, and a reefer. In-port nourishment of the Attack Force was complicated by the crowding of the anchorage, the tides and currents which made alongside loading of ammunition risky, and the shortage of lighters which made transfer by boat a time-consuming affair. Hard work was required of both the givers and the receivers, but everything necessary was accomplished and nobody went short.

From D plus 1 the campaign for Seoul moved rapidly forward. By the end of this day the Force Beachhead Line, some seven miles inland from the landing points, had been secured, In Inchon the Korean Marines were mopping up the last defenders. On the main road to Seoul five oncoming enemy tanks had been

destroyed, two by Corsairs from *Sicily*, three by the 1st Marines. The transfer of control from ship to shore was underway: an observation plane strip was in operation, shore tactical air control parties had begun to take over some of the business previously handled by the Tactical Air Direction Center in *Mount McKinley*, and at 1800 the division command post displaced forward from Wolmi to Inchon and General Smith assumed control of operations ashore. Marine casualties for the first two days totalled 222, of whom 22 were killed in action, 2 were reported missing, and 2 had died of wounds; as against these figures, far below those anticipated by the medical planners, some 300 prisoners had been taken and an estimated 1,350 additional casualties inflicted on the enemy.

Although the North Koreans were by now reacting vigorously, D plus 2 was also a day of rapid progress. After repelling heavy early morning counterattacks the 1st Marines, supported by Corsairs from *Sicily*, pushed eastward along the Seoul highway toward the village of Sosa. Four tanks were destroyed during the advance, but resistance continued strong, and at 1415 the tactical air people put out an emergency call for all possible support. *Badoeng Strait* was fuelling destroyers, but with *Sicily*'s aircraft already committed she turned to, cast off her customers, and had all planes airborne by 1558. By evening the 1st Marines were within 1,500 yards of Sosa, while the 5th Marines had gained a great strategic prize. Turning left off the main highway behind the 1st Marines, RCT 5 had barrelled up the road toward Kimpo airfield, with support from the air and from cruiser gunfire, and by nightfall had occupied the high ground east of the field and had pushed troops out onto the landing area itself.

Behind the front, reinforcements were beginning to arrive and transfer of control ashore continued. At Inchon the 32nd Infantry, first of the 7th Division's units to reach the objective area, arrived on D plus 2 and at once began its administrative landing. At 1800 that evening the shore-based TADC assumed control of all close air support, and next day the division Fire Support Control Center took over responsibility for the integration and control of air support, artillery, and naval gunfire.

For the next three days the 1st Marines pressed eastward against stubborn opposition. At Sosa, on the 18th, there was more heavy fighting, but the objective, a commanding hill northeast of the town, was gained with the help of the escort carriers' aircraft and of the cruisers' guns. Here was the half-way mark between Inchon and Yongdungpo, the industrial suburb of Seoul which lies on the south bank of the Han, and here enemy organization began to improve and enemy artillery was first encountered. Nevertheless the advance continued: by morning of the 20th the regiment controlled the high ground overlooking Yongdungpo and the Seoul-Suwon corridor, and had swung left to reach the banks of the Han, while the 32nd Infantry was moving up along the right flank.

For some reason the enemy had chosen to defend Yongdungpo in force. Air strikes from *Badoeng Strait* and artillery fire were called down upon the town, but when the attack was launched on the 21st the Marines met heavy resistance. Forward elements, finding themselves overextended, were forced to disengage under cover of strafing and bombing by *Sicily*'s Corsairs, some of which was directed within 30 yards of the front lines. But Communist counterattacks were beaten off, and the end of the first week of fighting found the 1st Marines 16 miles inland from their landing point, with one company deep in Yongdungpo making trouble for the city's defenders, and with the rest of the regiment preparing for the final assault into the town.

While RCT I was advancing on Yongdungpo the 5th Marines were preparing for the attack on Seoul. Having overrun Kimpo airfield, RCT 5 fanned out on the 18th and 19th, sending patrols along the banks of the Han and eastward toward Yongdungpo, and clearing terrain features overlooking the river. An attempted night surprise crossing of the Han aborted when the first swimmers encountered enemy forces on the far shore, but early on the morning of the 20th the 3rd Battalion crossed in LVTs against only light resistance. Covered by Marine aircraft from *Sicily*, the other battalions followed apace, and the regiment moved southeast along the railroad track toward Seoul. By the 21st the 5th Marines had reached within a mile and a half of the capital, and were approaching the ridges that guard its western border.

The seizure of Kimpo airfield on the evening of D plus 2 had been promptly exploited. On the afternoon

of the 18th, with enemy artillery still within range and with enemy dead still unburied, the engineers reported the field ready to receive aircraft. On the 19th General Cushman, the X Corps Tactical Air Commander, set up his headquarters at Kimpo; the Corsairs of VMF 212 and the F7FNs of VMFN 542 were flown in from Japan; the aircraft of FEAF's Combat Cargo Command began a notable effort in lifting in aviation gasoline and ammunition. Thus within four days of the landing the air strength of X Corps had been increased by two new squadrons, one with a night capability, handily based within ten miles of the front lines on the best airfield in Korea.

Air support, air strikes against approaching enemy columns, and air cover for shipping were still being provided by the carriers, and the Kimpo-based squadrons began operations on the 20th. The only enemy air reaction in the entire operation had come on D plus 2 in a dawn attack by two Yaks directed against *Rochester* and *Jamaica*, anchored in their fire support positions south of Wolmi Do. One 100-pound bomb bounced off *Rochester*'s aircraft crane and failed to explode, and seven others were near misses; one man on board *Jamaica* was killed by strafing, and one of the Yaks was shot down by the British cruiser.

With the artillery in full operation, and with air support increasing, naval gunfire had begun to decline. By D plus 3 the destroyers had been outranged, and while the cruisers had supported the fighting around Sosa, the crossing of the Han and the advance toward Yongdungpo had taken the Marines beyond the range of 8-inch guns. But both cruisers and destroyers continued to provide support for operations against bypassed enemy units on the Kumpo peninsula, north of Inchon, which were being pressed by an Army airborne battalion and by one of Korean Marines.

Unloading of 7th Division and of corps troops meanwhile continued steadily. The 32nd Infantry Regiment had landed on the 18th, the 31st Infantry came ashore on the 20th, and the 17th Infantry, earlier designated as the floating reserve at Pusan, was soon to follow. At 1700 of D plus 6, with the 1st Marines entering Yongdungpo, the 5th Marines on the western borders of Seoul, and with units of the 7th Infantry Division advancing on the southern flank, General Almond assumed control of the land campaign and Joint Task Force 7 was dissolved. At Inchon, their various travels completed, the 7th Marines were coming ashore from transports and cargo ships which a month before had been part of the Atlantic Fleet, and were moving forward to the Kimpo area. With this arrival the 1st Marine Division at last acquired its full complement of three regimental combat teams. The deployment begun with the July sailing of General Craig's brigade had been completed.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 7. Back to the Parallel
3. 12 September-7 October: The Clearance of South Korea

Within the perimeter, 140 miles to the southeast, the tide had turned. The invading army, already suffering from serious logistic difficulties brought on by unexpected opposition and by attacks on its supply lines, now found the supply spigot turned hard off. The weeks of Air Force and naval effort had taken heavy toll; the occupation by the aircraft of Joint Task Force 7 of the airspace over the main Korean transportation nexus had pretty well brought things to a halt; the Inchon landing demanded the local concentration of all available Communist strength. If the effect of supply shortages on this hand-carrying austerity-type Oriental army was less immediate than it would have been upon a western force, the end result was nevertheless the same. Having come close to *Triumph*, the North Korean People's Army now faced irredeemable disaster.

Behind the Naktong front phases one and two of the Korean campaign, strengthening the defense and building up for the counterattack, had proceeded concurrently, aided in the final stages by Kezia, whose rains had flooded the Nam and Naktong and isolated the North Korean spearheads from their support west of the rivers. As the enemy threat subsided, the Eighth Army, now composed of two ROK and two U.S. corps, and with the latter including both British and Korean troops, made ready to take the offensive. The attack was scheduled to begin on D plus 1.

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Despite the great naval investment in the Inchon landing some fire support remained available for the flank forces in the perimeter. On 12 September, pursuant to a suggestion from Admiral Sherman, the various task groups operating under ComNavFE had been consolidated, and the Korea Support Group, Task Group 96.5, upgraded into Task Force 95. Overall command of the United Nations Blockading and Escort Force was assigned Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith; the West Coast Support Group, now Task Group 95.1, continued under control of Admiral Andrewes, and east coast operations under Admiral Hartman. In preparation for Eighth Army's offensive, and as a diversionary move coordinated with the Inchon landing, Hartman's ships bombarded Samchok on 14 and 15 September, where on the latter date *Helena* and *Brush* were joined by *Maddox* and by *Missouri*, first battleship to reach Korean waters. Five years before, as one of 23 active battleships in the U.S. Fleet, *Missouri* had lain in Tokyo Bay to receive the surrender of an empire; five weeks before, the single active unit of her class, she had been lying at Pier 88 in the North River with a load of midshipmen on a summer training cruise. Now in a different hemisphere she was demonstrating the demolition capabilities of the 16-inch gun, and with the expenditure of 52 HC shells destroyed one Samchok railroad bridge and damaged another.

In anticipation of the impending offensive ROK Army units below Pohang had been again provided with fire control parties. But help from the sea was curtailed during the first days of the operation as a result of an abortive amphibious landing independently undertaken by Eighth Army. An attempt on 15 September to land ROK guerillas at Changsadong behind the enemy lines, went awry: the Korean merchant marine LST broached and was holed while landing; the troops, after seizing their first objective with the help of extemporized fire support from *Endicott*, retired upon their stranded vessel and called for help. Not until the 19th could rescue ships be obtained from Pusan, and to prevent the destruction of this force in the interim required a considerable bombardment effort from Admiral Hartman's force.

On the 16th, as planned, Eighth Army attacked all along the line. The North Korean radio had been conspicuously silent on affairs at Inchon, but the U.N. Command made every effort, by leaflet drop and otherwise, to give the enemy the word. Early progress, however, was negligible, and Communist resistance

remained strong. On D plus 2, fearing that "Chromite," despite its tactical brilliance, had failed in its strategic purpose, General MacArthur directed Admiral Doyle to begin planning for a second landing at Kunsan. But if CincFE's mercurial temperament was for the moment cast down, the southern offensive soon began to roll, and as things turned out the only naval consequence of this order was a beach reconnaissance, carried out by *Bass*' UDTs on the 22nd, at the mouth of Chonsu Man north of Kunsan.

On the east coast, on 17 September, ROK troops crossed the Hyongsan River south of Pohang with the help of 298 16-inch persuaders from *Missouri*, captured the city, and pressed onward toward Yongdok. Two days later Struble began morning and evening air reconnaissance of the roads south of Seoul, and alerted Task Force 77 to the possibility of a big strike against forces retiring northward from the perimeter. On the 20th, D plus 5, the North Korean II Corps, which manned the northern sector of the perimeter, began its retirement. By the end of the first week the pursued of July had become the pursuers of September as the 24th Division forced the Naktong and started up the road to Seoul. On the south coast, by this time, U.N. forces had advanced halfway to Chinju, and the Chinhae fire support destroyer had finally been released. On 25 September, D plus 10, orders were issued by the enemy for a general withdrawal.

In the north, however, resistance to the advance of X Corps had been stiffening, as Communist reinforcements were rushed down from Wonsan, Chorwon, and Sariwon. Despite all efforts at interdiction some six or seven thousand troops had reached the capital by the 20th, to reinforce an original garrison of perhaps 10,000. And although these newcomers lacked much of their heavy equipment, hard and costly fighting was taking place in Yongdungpo and in the outskirts of Seoul.

Appropriately enough, despite its situation in the western lowlands and on the estuary of the Han, the capital city of Korea is surrounded by its country's omnipresent hills. From a peak five miles to the northward a ridge descends to the 2,000-foot level, then divides east and west to end in wooded 1,000-foot outcroppings which cover the northeastern and northwestern approaches to the city. From the northwestern foothills broken ridges, some 300 feet in height, run south to the Han, guarding the city against intrusion from downstream. On the southeast, between the city and the river, South Mountain rises to an altitude of 1,000 feet. Within this eastward-facing amphitheater the ancient city arose, protected by walls connecting peak with peak and enclosing an area about five miles by three. But by the latter 19th century these ramparts had been outgrown, and Seoul had begun to sprawl outward, southward between the western ridges and South Mountain and eastward between South Mountain and the northern hills.

By 22 September the 5th Marines had reached the western ridge line and were knocking at the back door to Seoul. Here the enemy had established his main line of resistance, and here heavy opposition was encountered. Despite close support from the escort carriers and the Kimpo-based Marine squadrons, the advance was slow and costly. Progress through the ridges was measured in yards, the enemy fought bitterly and launched numerous counterattacks, and heavy air and artillery concentrations were replied to by artillery, phosphorus, and mortar fire.

The 1st Marines, in the meantime, were battling their way through Yongdungpo. Having reached the banks of the Han opposite the capital, they were ordered on the 23rd to throw two battalions across the river in the rear of RCT 5. This movement, accomplished by midday of the 24th, was followed by the crossing of two battalions from RCT 7. By afternoon the 1st Marines were moving southeastward, to a position on the right flank between RCT 5 and the river, while the 7th Marines were deploying on the left.

On the 25th, with this accretion of force, the enemy's main line of resistance was broken. Attacking into the southwestern corner of the city, the 1st Marines gained a mile and a half in house-to-house fighting; in the center RCT 5 broke through the ridge line, killing almost 2,000 of the enemy in the process; in the north the 7th Marines patrolled the covering hills to prevent the arrival of enemy reinforcements; to the southward the noose was tightened as the 32nd Infantry crossed the river and climbed South Mountain. For this attack the close support effort was carried to a high pitch: *Badoeng Strait* was loading ammunition in Inchon harbor, but *Sicily* provided

five aircraft on station every two hours, and VMF 212 at Kimpo set a new record for combat sorties. But the 25th was a bad day for the X Corps TAC: three squadron commanders were shot down and one, Lieutenant Colonel Walter E. Lischeid, USMC, of *Sicily*'s squadron, was killed.

On 26 September the advance inside the city continued against house-to-house resistance. An evening order from X Corps directed a night attack against enemy forces thought to be fleeing Seoul, but the presumption proved erroneous: the darkness was fully occupied in repelling strong enemy counterattacks backed up by self-propelled guns and tanks which had been brought down from Wonsan. By morning, however, these had been disposed of, and the Marines pressed on through road blocks and sniper fire deep into the burning city. Although progress remained slow the enemy was noticeably weakening, and the city had been declared secured by X Corps. On the 28th organized resistance in the capital was finally broken, although small pockets of enemy troops remained to be dealt with and enemy counterattacks continued on its outskirts.

The 7th Division, in the meantime, had moved forward on the right flank to Osan, where 12 weeks before Task Force Smith had engaged the invading army. There on the 27th it made contact with a small force of the 1st Cavalry which had raced northward along the main road. On the 29th General MacArthur turned the capital back to President Rhee. All that remained was to seal Seoul off from the north, and this was done in the early days of October as the 1st and 5th Marines took blocking positions northeast and northwest of the city, and as RCT 7 was advanced northward to Uijongbu.

By this time the ground situation was both fluid and favorable in the extreme. The last days of September saw the collapse of enemy resistance in South Korea, as Communist troops were herded into prisoner of war pens or dispersed into the hills. As the U.S. I Corps moved northwest toward Seoul, the IX Corps crossed the peninsula from east to west, driving a column to Kunsan, where cut-off enemy troops had been shelled by *Athabaskan* and *Bataan*. In the central mountains the ROK II Corps was moving northward; in the east the ROK I Corps pressed rapidly up the coastal road. Here the advance was paced by Admiral Hartman's fire support ships, but their efforts were seldom required and then only against minor resistance. Paying the fire support group the ultimate compliment, the enemy had abandoned the shore road and was retiring along inland tracks: in its move north to the parallel the ROK I Corps bypassed three North Korean divisions.

Throughout this period the Korean Navy remained active along the coastline. In the west, following the Inchon landing, Operation Lee had continued. From Kunsan in the south to the Sir James Hall Archipelago on the 38th parallel, the clearance of islands was pressed, with the result that when on 2 October higher authority got around to implementing Operation Comeback for the recovery of these positions, the job had in effect been done. On the south coast ROK naval forces cooperating with Eighth Army took Namhae Island on the 27th and Yosu on the 29th, and on 3 October a landing at Mokpo, supported by *PC 703* and some smaller units, secured that important port.

North of the parallel in Communist country the east coast naval units were also busy. On 23 September the submarine *Segundo* carried out a special mission in Area 7 on the northeast coast. On the 25th the submarine transport *Perch* sailed from Japan with its force of British Commandos to conduct demolition raids on enemy communications in this zone. But with the ground war in the exploitation phase, the sea war became suddenly costly as the enemy's countermeasures began to take effect.

On 26 September the destroyer *Brush*, patrolling in company with *Maddox* off Tanchon, hit a mine; 13 members of the crew were killed, 34 wounded, and the ship was badly damaged. Two days later the ROK *YMS 509* was mined off Yongdok, with 26 killed or missing and 5 wounded. Two more days had gone by when *Mansfield*, nosing her way into the harbor of Changjon in search of a downed Air Force pilot, struck a mine which blew off most of her bow and wounded 28 of her men. While sweeping near Yongdok on 1 October the AMS *Magpie*, recently arrived from Guam, hit a mine, blew up, and sank with the loss of 21 of a crew of 33. On the 2nd the Korean *YMS 504* was mined at Mokpo.

The loss of one ship and heavy damage to four, not to mention the casualties to personnel, made this the most costly week of the war for the U.N. naval forces. For the enemy it was profitable well beyond the damage inflicted. Serious problems were raised regarding future operations, the East Coast Support Group was instructed not to operate inside the 100-fathom curve, and *Perch*, en route to strike the North Korean line of communications, was ordered to stay outside of 50 fathoms and to limit her efforts to a single raid.

This attack was carried out on the night of 1–2 October. With the destroyer *Thomas* bombarding an adjacent target as a diversion, and with *Maddox* backing up, *Perch* sent her raiders against a section of the railroad line in 40°21´, where two tunnels adjoin. Some enemy resistance was encountered, and one Royal Marine was killed by rifle fire as the landing party was reembarking, but a culvert was destroyed by demolition charges and both tunnels were mined.

At Inchon Joint Task Force 7 had been dissolved on the 21st, as control of the land campaign passed from Admiral Struble to General Almond. Original plans had then called for Seventh Fleet units to revert to their normal organization, and for the reconstitution of remaining naval strength into the Naval Support Force under Admiral Doyle. But Struble, reluctant for reasons of interservice comity to seem hasty in departure, decided to assume the job himself, and as Commander Support Force remained in the objective area until 1 October. Naval effort in this period continued intense, with heavy movements of X Corps supplies into Inchon, logistic support of the fleet, fire support of such friendly troops as remained within range, and air operations from the carriers offshore.

Missouri had reported in from the east coast on the 19th, and next day was moved as far as possible upstream, to a berth from which her 16-inch guns could interdict the Seoul-Wonsan road, some 28 miles away. But the front was moving so fast that her effort was limited to 11 ranging rounds in four days, and the principal activity of the gunnery ships was by this time taking place elsewhere. ROKN units had reported a concentration of enemy troops on Tungsan Got, the peninsula west of Haeju Man, and on the 27th a bombardment of this region, designed to encourage belief in the imminence of another landing, was carried out by *Manchester* and four destroyers, assisted by a strike from *Boxer*'s air group. Two days later the British cruiser *Ceylon* put a landing party ashore on Taechong Do, in the Sir James Hall group, only to find that the reported enemy garrison had packed up and departed.

Offshore the carrier air effort had remained vigorous throughout the month. *Triumph* had worked over targets in southwestern North Korea until 25 September, at which time she was relieved by her sister ship *Theseus* and departed the area. While replenishing at intervals from Servron 3 in Inchon harbor, Admiral Ruble's escort carriers continued until 2 October to contribute to the work of X Corps Tactical Air Command. Since the arrival of *Boxer* Admiral Ewen had been able to keep two fast carriers active in daily flight operations, while the third moved south to take on food and drink from the Mobile Logistic Service Group; with the capture of Seoul, Task Force 77 switched from deep support of X Corps to attacks on enemy lines of communication which continued until its withdrawal on the 3rd.

By 4 October no targets remained within gunnery range, all gunfire ships were released by X Corps, and Admiral Higgins sortied the last of his Support Group from Inchon. With customers running short Captain Austin sailed in *Hector* on the same day, leaving behind a reduced logistic force. On the 5th the Fifth Air Force took over from General Cushman's Tactical Air Command, and on the 7th the last X Corps troops were relieved by units of the Eighth Army. The campaign was over.

Admiral Doyle had already departed. This officer, who with his staff had done so much to prove that "Inchon is not impossible," had been relieved by Admiral Thackrey on the 27th, the day of the ground force link-up south of Suwon, and had sailed for Tokyo to start work on the next operation.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 8. On to the Border
1. 27 September-15 October: Planning the Wonsan Landing

THE TRIUMPHANT events of September had changed the entire Korean picture. With the reconquest of Seoul, the northward sweep of Eighth Army, and the collapse of North Korean resistance, unification of the peninsula, long the aim of the United Nations and even longer the hope of the Koreans, seemed imminently possible. There were, it was true, certain legal questions to be answered and certain policy decisions to be made by the United Nations and the United States before the armies could go north, but so far as one government was concerned the decision was not in doubt. During the dark days of July President Rhee had announced his intention of unifying his country by military action, and four days after the landing at Inchon he affirmed that with or without the assistance of the United Nations his forces would continue the battle.

The objectives heretofore assigned CincFE had been more limited in scope. In August, when General Collins and Admiral Sherman had come out to talk about Inchon, General MacArthur's goal had been the destruction of North Korean armed forces. But it had also been agreed that pursuit of this aim would not necessarily be limited by the 38th parallel. In mid-September permission was granted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to plan for operations in North Korea, and on the 27th CincFE was authorized to carry out such operations in order to complete the destruction of the armed forces of the aggressor.

This permission reflected the view of the government in Washington that the Security Council resolution of June provided a sufficient legal authority for crossing the parallel. Equally, however, the message from the Joint Chiefs demonstrated the government's determination to keep the conflict localized, both to prevent a world-wide shooting war and to avoid, within the framework of the existing world-wide war of maneuver, an over-commitment of forces to the Far East. If Chinese Communist units were encountered south of the parallel, CincFE was instructed to continue action so long as success seemed probable. But the authorization to go north was qualified by the proviso that no major Soviet or Communist Chinese forces should have entered North Korea, or have announced their intention of entering North Korea, or have threatened military action. Under no circumstances were U.N. forces to violate the Manchurian or Russian borders; none but Korean ground forces were to be employed in the border region.

One day before this authorization was received, General MacArthur instructed his planners to come up with a concept for future operations, modeled on that of "Chromite," in which Eighth Army would make the main effort on one coast while X Corps carried out a second amphibious envelopment on the other. The request found the planners prepared. Dusting off some earlier staff studies, they produced on the 27th, the day of the U.N. link-up south of Suwon, a tentative operation plan. In mid-October, as soon as the necessary logistic build-up could be accomplished, Eighth Army would move northwestward from Seoul against Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. X Corps, in the meantime, would reembark and sail for Wonsan on Korea's eastern shore, 115 miles north of Seoul and 95 miles east of Pyongyang. There, following an assault landing, General Almond's units would attack westward across the narrow Korean waist, link up with Eighth Army, and encircle enemy forces retreating from the south. This operation was christened "Tailboard."

Although this plan involved the occupation of half of North Korea, and the better half at that, it also reflected the caution so evident in the Joint Chiefs' message of the same date. Occupation of territory was incidental to the liquidation of the enemy's remaining strength; the assumption that neither Communist Chinese nor Soviets would intervene, openly or covertly, was explicit; a restraining line was drawn below the 40th parallel, from Chongju in the west to Hungnam in the east, beyond which no non-Korean forces would advance.

On the 28th a brief of the plan was sent the Joint Chiefs, accompanied by the comment that there were no present indications of the entry into North Korea of major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces.

On 29 September, the day of liberation ceremonies in Seoul, General MacArthur outlined the new plan to the commanders of Eighth Army, X Corps, NavFE, and FEAF. Shooting was still going on in the capital and Eighth Army had not arrived, but CincFE was still driving his people: the D-Day of 20 October which he set for the Wonsan landing was but three weeks away, and left even less time for preparation than had been available for Inchon.

Over and above the shortage of time, the idea of another two-coast operation raised some serious difficulties. The capacity of Pusan and Inchon, the only major ports available, remained critical, and the mounting out of "Tailboard" was to require remarkable feats of planning and preparation. Despite the obstacles of nature, X Corps had succeeded in getting in through Inchon, but the competition of incoming supplies for Eighth Army made it harder to get out. In this situation it was decided to transfer some of this competition ashore, and to send the 7th Infantry Division south by road and rail for embarkation at Pusan, while the Marines went aboard ship at Inchon. But even this division of effort required further modification, for the 7th Division's tanks and heavy equipment could not be moved overland, and had to be loaded at Inchon and sent down by LST.

Even with the decision to send the 7th Division south by land, the preparations for the Wonsan landing put Eighth Army and the Fifth Air Force in a serious logistic bind. General Walker was scheduled to attack northward before the landing at Wonsan took place, and had to accumulate supplies for this new movement; in order to support these forward operations Fifth Air Force was struggling to bring up its squadrons and supporting organizations. But road and rail communications north from Pusan, attacked throughout the summer by U.N. aircraft, were not what they used to be, and were also carrying southbound 7th Division traffic; the embarkation schedule required that the Marines be given priority in the use of Inchon's limited facilities. To top it all, the pressure of time was increased to an almost ludicrous degree as General Almond attempted to move the Wonsan D-Day forward to the 15th.

These complications raised the question of an overland approach to Wonsan. Some Army commanders preferred this route, although General Almond was firm in his belief in the superior economy of water lift. Admiral Joy and some of his senior officers opposed the amphibious operation, although this time on grounds of necessity rather than of feasibility. But the case, if debatable, does not appear clear-cut: the corridor from Seoul to Wonsan is narrow and mountainous, there were hostiles in the hills, and the idea of supporting a two-pronged advance on Pyongyang and Wonsan from the Inchon-Seoul area raised a whole new set of logistic problems. And in any event it appears that none ventured to dispute the matter with CincFE.

With acceptance of the new concept by the Joint Chiefs, things began to happen. As October opened the mimeographs were whirring and the plans were flowing forth. ComNavFE issued his operation plan on the 1st; the U.N. Command's overall operation order appeared the next day; on the 5th Joint Task Force 7 was reactivated and Admiral Struble published his orders for preliminary operations. Elsewhere in the world other statements of intention were also beginning to multiply. General MacArthur had been authorized to call upon the enemy for surrender; on 1 October the message was broadcast, but answer came there none. One day earlier Chou En-lai, foreign minister of Communist China, had observed that his government would not tolerate the crossing of the 38th parallel, and "would not stand aside" if North Korea were invaded. On the 3rd Chou was reported by the Indian Am*Bass*ador at Peking as stating that if non-Korean forces crossed the parallel the Chinese would send in troops.

This thunder out of China was of no effect. In the U.N. General Assembly a debate on Korean policy ended with a vote that since "unification. . . . has not yet been achieved" all appropriate steps should "be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea." If the language was a little vague this resolution was of great importance, for it signalled a change in the mission of the U.N. forces from repelling aggression, and inferentially

destroying enemy forces even if north of the parallel, to one of uniting Korea by force of arms and ensuring stability by territorial occupation. The point was emphasized by General MacArthur's statement that if cooperation in establishing a unified Korea was not forthcoming from the north, military action would be taken "to enforce the decrees of the United Nations." And on the 9th the Joint Chiefs went some distance to qualify their earlier caution concerning threatened Soviet or Chinese intervention. The threat, it would appear, had now been made, but a message of the 9th merely rephrased previous instructions concerning possible contact with the Chinese: should such forces now be met with "anywhere in Korea," CincFE was to continue the action so long as success seemed probable.

For the amphibious half of the new encirclement, the responsibility again fell upon Admiral Struble, as Commander Joint Task Force 7. For the Wonsan landing the planned course of events was very similar to what it had been at Inchon. As in September the arrival of the Attack Force in the objective area would be preceded by the activities of the patrol planes, of carrier aviation, and of the gunfire and minesweeping units. Once again Joint Task Force 7 had its own organic air force, both afloat and ashore, and its private theater of air operations. Within a line run inland from Kosong at the southern end of the Korean Gulf, north along the mountain spine, and eastward to enclose Hungnam, the carriers of JTF 7 and the shore-based aircraft of X Corps Tactical Air Command would operate without disturbance from FEAF, except for air transport and specially requested missions.

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But while the externals were similar, the internal organization of the joint task force was considerably modified. The upgrading of the mine menace, following events at Inchon, made it essential to extend the preparatory period of the operation, and to send the sweepers and their supporting ships in well ahead of the Attack Force. A jelling command structure and the diminution of enemy pressure made more commanders and staffs available for the planning phase. The consequence was the separation of the Advance Force and of the Escort Carrier Group from the Attack Force, in conformity with more usual practice, and a sharing of the planning load. While *Doyle* and his staff concentrated on the landing itself, the directives for the Covering and Support Group were written by Admiral Smith, and the minesweeping plan was worked up in Tokyo under the supervision of Admiral Struble.

The new objective of Joint Task Force 7, the city of Wonsan, occupies one of the most important strategic positions on the Sea of Japan. This location had long made it an object of international interest, a fact reflected in the more than oriental splendor of place-name confusion which afflicts the charts and sailing directions for the area. Of this problem in geographic nomenclature, a hazard both to military planner and to historian, the following may serve as example.

The approach to Wonsan leads through the Japan Sea and into the Korean Gulf, once Broughton Bay, then Chosen Kaiwan, and now known as Tongjoson Man. At the southwestern extremity of this body of water lies Yonghung Man, sometime Yunghing Bay or Eiko Wan, the northern entrance point of which is Taegang Got (ex-Nan Kaku, ex-Desfosses Point) at the end of the Nakhimova Peninsula (later known as Koto Hanto and now as Hodo Pando). South of this point two islands obstruct the mouth of Yonghung Man: of these Ung Do (or Ko To, or Kuprianova Island) should be left to starboard, and under no circumstances confused with Yo Do, formerly Rei To, which may be passed on either hand (or indeed with Song Do, or An Do, or Sa Do, or Worhyon Am [also Woreniru To, Getsuken Gan, and Orupyon Pao] which lie immediately beyond). Once past these obstacles to sanity and navigation, the mariner may head north to anchor in capacious but shallow Port Lazaref, subsequently Shoden Wan and now Songjon Man, or southward to Genzan Ko, now known as Wonsan Hang, the objective of the X Corps planners.

Seen from the sea, the Wonsan shore appears precipitous. But although the coastal plain is small there does exist, in the delta of the Namdae River east of the city, a sufficient area for an amphibious lodgment. The

port itself is perhaps the best on Korea's eastern coast. Silting between a harbor island and the southern shore had led to the formation of Kalma Pando, a two and a half mile long peninsula with a rocky head and a flat body, which protects a harbor three miles wide at the mouth with the city at its southwestern corner. Despite the bombings of the summer the Wonsan docks remained to all intents undamaged, and these facilities, protected by Kalma Pando on the east and by a breakwater to the north, included a 900-foot concrete wharf with sheds, railroad sidings, and cranes, and with four fathoms or more alongside, as well as piers for smaller vessels. The town had rail and road connections with the east coast route, with the Seoul corridor, and with Pyongyang. And as a final bonus the base of Kalma Pando held an excellent airfield, originally developed as a Japanese naval air station. Taken together, the facilities of Wonsan constituted a prize that any military planner would value.

At Uijongbu, on the far side of the peninsula, the last units of the Marine Division were relieved on 7 October and moved to the Inchon assembly area. There they began loading on the next day, under the direction of Commander Amphibious Group 3, Rear Admiral Thackrey, and while embarkation progressed planning was expedited. A scheme of maneuver was worked out which called for a landing on the seaward side of Kalma Pando, where there was an excellent beach handicapped only by a shallow gradient which placed the two-fathom curve some 300 yards offshore. No help in beaching could be expected from the tides: in notable contrast to Inchon, the tidal range at Wonsan is about one foot.

For the Wonsan landing planning was both concurrent and dispersed. The troop commanders were in Korea, but Struble, *Doyle*, and Smith were working up the naval side of things in Japan. Once again much of the problem involved the rapid assembly of the necessary shipping: before Admiral *Doyle* could concern himself with routing and loading of ships these had to be procured from Scajap and MSTS by way of NavFE headquarters. On 30 September a first call was made upon MSTS for 20 APs and 25 AKs; by D-Day the requirement had been increased to a total of 66 vessels which, with the Amphibious Force units and the Scajap LSTs, proved sufficient to do the job. But no sooner was the X Corps lift provided for than a further transport problem arose: CincFE had originally designated the 3rd Infantry Division as theater reserve; now a decision to employ it in eastern North Korea brought instructions to CTF 90 to employ his shipping, once unloaded at Wonsan, to bring this reinforcing unit in from Japan.

Beginning on 4 October the lift for the Wonsan invasion was assembled at the two Korean ports of embarkation. At Inchon the Marines embarked in assault shipping, APA and AKA types, LSTs and LSDs, filled out with six time-charter vessels. At Pusan the 7th Division was loaded in transports and cargo ships while its heavy gear—tanks and the like—was brought down from Inchon by sea in Scajap LSTs. Although Admiral *Doyle* was still at work in Tokyo, he had sent his flagship *Mount McKinley* back to Inchon to embark the headquarters staff of the Marine Division. On the 11th he followed by air and relieved Admiral Thackrey of his Inchon responsibilities, whereupon the latter proceeded to Pusan to oversee the 7th Division movement.

By this time the question of D-Day had settled itself. General Almond had based his choice of the 15th on the assumption that X Corps would be relieved on the 3rd, but although the 7th Division had started south to Pusan by that time, the Marines had been held in the line until the 7th. Subsequent preparations were handicapped by shortages of maps and other intelligence material, by a shortage of motor transport ashore created by the requirements of the overland movement to Pusan, and by the complications of embarking the Marines while unloading high-priority incoming cargo in a port where activity was restricted to short bursts at periods of high tide. In the event, therefore, although pressure for speed continued, the best that could be done was to stick with the original date, and to schedule the assault for the 20th.

But just as the date was settled, the objective became uncertain and the entire concept of the operation became subject to review. Although three North Korean divisions had survived the debacle in more or less organized form, their respect for U.N. naval gunfire and air activity had led them to hole up in the mountains south of Wonsan and make no attempt to dispute the coastal road. ROK forces on the east coast consequently

moved forward almost unhindered, crossed the parallel on 1 October, and by the 7th were within a few miles of Wonsan.

This development led CincFE to propose changing the objective of the Marine Division from Wonsan in the southwest corner of the Korean Gulf to Hungnam in the northwest. But while this scheme promised to catch more enemy troops, it also modified the original strategic concept by placing the division further from the intended junction with Eighth Army. This was, of course, a problem for the highest level, but there were other difficulties of immediate naval concern. Maps, intelligence material, and time were critically short for so considerable a change; there were insufficient minesweepers to clear two harbors at once; the 7th Division was loading in large transports which could not be accommodated at the Wonsan docks, and its landing plans had been predicated on the availability of the amphibious craft which accompanied the Marines. Although these difficulties were expounded by Struble and *Doyle* to ComNavFE, and by ComNavFE to General MacArthur, they were at first of little effect. CincFE was always a hard man to argue with, but in this instance Joy persisted, and on the 10th the decision to land the entire X Corps at Wonsan was confirmed.

These revolutionary last minute propositions were still being put forward and evaded as the operation entered its preliminary stages. East coast activity had begun, even before the relief of the Marines, with two night raids on the northeastern coastal railway by the fast transports *Bass* and *Wantuck* with their Royal Marine Commando, supported by the destroyer *De Haven*. The first of these attacks, on the night of 6–7 October, was directed against a tunnel in Kyongsong Man, less than 20 miles south of Chongjin; the target of the second was a tunnel and bridge four miles below Songjin. Both were apparently successful, and the demolition charges were seen by the retiring raiders to explode.

While the raiding group was approaching its first objective the mine-sweepers of JTF 7, Task Group 95.6, departed Sasebo with a scheduled arrival off Wonsan on the 10th. On the 8th the PBM patrol planes which had been hunting mines in the Yellow Sea shifted their activities to the east coast. On the 9th the carriers *Leyte*, Captain Thomas U. Sisson, and *Philippine Sea*, the former a recent arrival from the Mediterranean by way of Norfolk and the Panama Canal, sortied from Sasebo in company with *Manchester* and 11 destroyers, and headed north to provide air support. On the 10th Admiral Hartman departed with *Helena*, *Worcester*, and *Ceylon*, and on the next day Admiral Struble sailed in *Missouri*, accompanied by *Valley Forge* and screening destroyers.

Early on the morning of the 10th the Minesweeping Group reached the objective area and began its work. From their operating area a hundred miles offshore, *Leyte* and *Philippine Sea* sent in a combat air patrol for the sweepers and aircraft for interdiction strikes and preparation of the objective. Possible military installations on the island of Yo Do in the harbor entrance were worked over repeatedly, and some useful support was provided the advancing ROK troops, who entered the city this day and who captured the airfield on the 11th.

On the 12th Admiral Struble arrived off Wonsan in *Missouri*, joined up with Admiral Hartman's cruisers, and headed north for a bombardment of Chongjin. With a screen composed of one Canadian, one British, and one Australian destroyer, and with combat air patrol and air spot provided by the fast carriers, *Missouri* and the cruisers conducted a deliberate and sustained bombardment of warehouses, rolling stock, and marshalling yards. Although the spotting provided by the carrier pilots was less than wholly satisfactory, owing to a lack of common grid charts, an absence of specialized training, and some serious communication difficulties, the bombarding ships reported the results as excellent.

The offensive naval strength deployed off Korea's eastern coast, three carriers, a battleship, some cruisers, and numerous destroyers, had by now reached a very respectable level. Of the Far East Air Forces and of the Army in the peninsula, the same could be said. Taken together with the collapse of the North Korean People's Army, this prosperity raised the question of how to end the war without redundant fighting. To this question, one of the most difficult of modern times, World War II had offered no apparent answer, and the war against the Axis had been fought out to its destructive conclusion. No ready answer was apparent in Korea either, and here the

problem was still more difficult: where the Axis nations had been led by irresponsible dictators, the enemy in Korea was a dictator's front man only doubtfully possessed of authority to treat.

FEAF, in its approach to this problem, had wished to give authority to CincFE's call for surrender by burning down Pyongyang, the enemy capital, in an all-out early morning incendiary attack. But the proposal was rejected by higher authority, and this approach to the problem of surrender seems in any event to reflect a misunderstanding of the anatomy of Communist society. Even assuming they were masters in their house, the North Korean bosses could be presumed to be comparatively indifferent to burning citizens, yet it was on the bosses that pressure had to be exerted.

A more specifically military effort to bring pressure on the enemy was, however, carried out by CTF 95. Admiral Smith had recommended that the Chongjin shoot be followed by public announcement of the next day's targets, and on Friday the 13th the list was attacked as scheduled. In the Yellow Sea Admiral Andrewes' ships bombarded Haeju while *Theseus* flew strikes against the city of Chinnampo. On the east coast Admiral Hartman's group, joined by *Toledo* and the destroyer *H.J. Thomas*, separated to shoot up five coastal targets along a 120-mile stretch south from Chongjin. Together with the work of the aviators of the U.N., this seemed a sufficient demonstration of the fact that while the Communists might still control some mountain real estate, their writ no longer ran along their coasts or in the air above. But the political impact, so far as could be told, was nil.

Although the Attack Force had not set sail, and although minesweeping had barely begun, the capture of the Kalma Pando airfield by ROK troops had opened a door to Wonsan. On the 13th, therefore, Major General Field Harris, USMC, the X Corps Tactical Air Commander, flew in, and after looking things over ordered up two Marine fighter squadrons. These arrived the next day and at once began operations in support of the ROK I Corps, while being themselves supported by Marine transport aircraft, by the planes of FEAF's Combat Cargo Command, and by a USO troop led by Bob Hope. At sea as well as on shore the air strength available for east coast operations was increasing: *Valley Forge* had arrived on the 12th, and two days later, after docking at Yokosuka to have her frozen propeller removed, Boxer also reported in. For the first time since 1945 four *Essex*-class carriers were operating in a single force, and on the 15th Admiral Ewen celebrated by sending forth 392 sorties to press the northern offensive and harry the enemy in the hills.

In the west, in the meantime, Eighth Army had begun its advance, and had crossed the parallel north of Kaesong. Enemy resistance in the hills beyond that town, together with continuing logistic difficulties, slowed progress for a few days, but by mid-month the jam was beginning to break. At Inchon, at the same time, the problems of outbound traffic had been surmounted, and the LSTs of the Wonsan Attack Force sailed on the 15th. By 0800 of the 17th the last transport was clear and *Mount McKinley*, with the big brass embarked, was getting underway. If the departure seemed anticlimactic, in view of the previous capture of the objective, it was still necessary. The need for an assault landing no longer existed, but the need for X Corps in eastern North Korea was undiminished.

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Chapter 8. On to the Border
2. 11 September-30 November: The Opening of Wonsan and Chinnampo

The campaign of October, like that of the previous month, involved large-scale operations by both Eighth Army and X Corps. But unlike the period of the Inchon landing and the breakout from the perimeter, the obstacles to movement were now primarily those of space and time, geographic and logistic rather than military. The sporadic resistance of the remnants of the NKPA was never dangerous, but problems of resupply at times seemed well-nigh insurmountable. All supplies for Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force had to pass the bottlenecks at Pusan and Inchon, and the restrictions of port logistics were compounded by those of land transport. Korean roads, never good, had been made worse by war, and throughout the summer rail and highway bridges had been favored objects of air attack. North of Seoul important bridges were down, and everything sent forward by rail had to be trucked around these breaks in the line.
Click here to view map

These difficulties of land transport reemphasized the need for seaborne supply, and the extent to which war in the peninsula depended on the use of the surrounding sea. For although the North Korean Army had penetrated far into South Korea without benefit of coastal traffic, such an advance was much more difficult for the forces of the United Nations. Over and above the problems of victualling and munitioning, the complex requirements of the highly mechanized American contingent imposed a heavy load, and the tremendous demands for movement of heavy equipment, petroleum products, electronic gear, spare parts, ice cream, and comic books were reinforced by the national disinclination to walk when riding was possible.

Theater naval forces were consequently faced with an urgent requirement for expansion of the available port facilities and for the opening, on both coasts, of new ports to the northward. But at the same time the events of September had signalled a new problem: the discovery of contact mines in the Inchon entrance channel had been followed by the discovery of magnetic mines ashore, and between 26 September and 2 October five ships had been mined. As both ComNavFE and Commander Seventh Fleet noted in their operation plans for Wonsan, it seemed highly probable that the Communists had worked to deny their ports to the U.N. by a vigorous mining campaign.

Historically it was wholly appropriate that the Korean conflict should have come to involve mine warfare, for it was in Far Eastern waters that the submarine mine, an American invention, was first used with significant success. In the Russo-Japanese War the navy of the Czar lost important vessels to sea mines; that of the Mikado lost two battleships, four cruisers, and three other ships. These successes, in effect their only successes in that war, were not lost upon the Russian Navy, which whatever its politics had in the following half century placed heavy emphasis on mine warfare.

But however apt historically, the circumstance was operationally awkward for the United Nations' naval forces. Although in the First World War the United States Navy had conceived and largely executed the enormous project of the North Sea mine barrage, in the interwar period the problems of oceanic conflict with Japan had relegated mine warfare to a position of unimportance. During most of the Pacific War the mine was little used, although the seeding of Japanese home waters, with mines provided by the Navy and dropped by Army Air Force B–29s, had proven extraordinarily effective.

In the European theater it had been otherwise. There the belligerents were in close proximity, the British Isles depended wholly on overseas supply, and the Germans ran a considerable coastal traffic along the shores of occupied Europe. In this context, not dissimilar to the Korean situation, the mine had from the start proven a

devastating weapon. German mining forced Great Britain to sustain a very large minesweeping effort; the British, for their part, employed mine warfare with conspicuous results. Of this success one example will suffice: in the first half of 1942 the RAF sank three times the enemy tonnage by mining as it did by direct attack on ships, and this with 40 percent of the sorties and at 40 percent of the cost in aircraft. Impressive as these statistics are, they by no means show the total impact of the mining campaign, for such an effort, even if it sinks no ships, dislocates maritime transport, overloads alternative routes, and imposes a requirement for costly and complex countermeasures.

Like all American military activities, and indeed more than most, the mine warfare branch of the Navy had suffered from the postwar stringencies. The type command, Mine Force Pacific Fleet, had remained in existence for a year and a half after V–J Day, with a flagship and a reduced force; among its commanders was Rear Admiral Struble. This situation was ended by the budget for Fiscal 1948, which forced dissolution of the type command and further decrease of active minecraft. The lack of a coordinating authority and the strategic dispersion of the remaining mine-sweepers had adverse effects on readiness, and materiel and training fell below par. In the fleet at large, paravanes had been abandoned; degaussing, the method of reducing to a minimum the magnetic field beneath a ship to guard against magnetic mines, had not been kept up to date; there was no degaussing range west of Pearl Harbor.

The minesweeping force available to ComNavFE on the outbreak of war in Korea consisted of the six wooden-hulled AMS of Mindiv 31 and of the four steel-hulled AMs, one in commission and three in reserve, of Mindiv 32. These ships were grouped in Minron 3, Lieutenant Commander D'Arcy Shouldice, a unit which enjoyed a high state of training and readiness as a consequence of the mine situation in Japanese waters. Other than these units the Pacific Fleet contained a dozen active minesweepers, of which the two AMS of Mindiv 52 were stationed at Guam and the remainder were divided between Pearl Harbor and the west coast.

Activation of the AMs in reserve in Japan had been approved early in the conflict. Nothing could be done about *Mainstay*, owing to unavailability of replacement parts, but by mid-August *Pirate* and *Incredible* were in operating condition. Ordered out from the west coast, the destroyer mine-sweepers *Endicott* and *Doyle* had reached Far Eastern waters in late July, but in the absence of enemy mining they had been diverted to other duties, in the first instance as screen for Cardiv 15 and subsequently in fire support. In August Admiral Joy had asked for a further increase in minesweepers, but the request was denied on the ground that other types had higher priority.

With the discovery of enemy mines all this was changed. On 11 September CincPac started the three AMS of Mindiv 51 west from Pearl Harbor. Four days later the Chief of Naval Operations revised the schedule for activation of mothballed ships to include nine AMS. From Guam, on the 16th, *Magpie* and *Merganser* of Mindiv 52 were sailed for Korean waters, where the former was promptly mined and sunk and the latter incorporated into Mindiv 31. On 2 October *Thompson* and *Carmick*, the two remaining DMS of the Pacific Fleet, were ordered west from the continental United States, and the remaining three AMS of Mindiv 53 were sailed from the west coast for Pearl Harbor. In late October these reinforcements would reach Sasebo, and in time the ships ordered for activation would become available. But the immediate need for assault sweeps and harbor clearance placed a heavy overload on theater forces, while the emergency reinforcement of the Far East had brought the transfer of every available active unit, and had denuded Guam, Pearl Harbor, and the west coast of all protection.

There were, it is true, an estimated 213 minesweepers in Asiatic waters belonging to other member nations of the U.N. But almost half of these, including 50 ex-U.S. motor minesweepers, belonged to the Soviet Navy, whose current role was as provider of mines rather than of sweepers; as for the others, no offer of their services was received. Still, there did exist one ray of sunshine from an outside source. The mining of Japanese home waters, so successful as to keep the Japanese sweeping ever since, now paid an unexpected dividend as ComNavFE obtained authority from General MacArthur, in his capacity of Supreme Commander for the Allied

Powers, to employ 20 contract Japanese sweepers (JMS) for work in Korea, initially below the 38th parallel.

Faced with the need to open North Korean harbors, Admiral Joy now found his force increased by the two activated AMs, by one AMS from Guam, and by two DMS from the west coast. For the opening of Wonsan these units had been assigned to Joint Task Force 7 and organized into Task Group 95.6, the Minesweeping and Protective Group, with *Diachenko*, the repair ship *Kermit Roosevelt*, and eight contract Japanese sweepers. Command of the task group, to which four U.N. frigates and some ROKN YMS would in time be added, was assigned to Captain Richard T. Spofford, who had relieved Shouldice as ComMinron 3 in August, and who was embarked in the destroyer *Collett*.

In addition to the units of Spofford's own task group, a considerable amount of supporting force was at hand. Admiral Higgins was offshore with *Rochester* and some destroyers to provide gunnery support, and *Rochester* had a helicopter available; the aircraft of the fast carriers were on call; the mine search efforts of the PBMs had been shifted to the east coast, and the seaplane tender *Gardiner's Bay* was preparing to establish an advanced seadrome at Chinhae. But the coordination of these diverse forces had not been wholly solved by the time the sweep began, and a considerable amount of time was consequently to be expended in trial and error.

The nature of the situation at Wonsan remained unknown. Clearance of an approach from the 100-fathom curve to the beaches on Kalma Pando called for the sweeping of a 30-mile lane, and of an area of more than 50 square miles. ComNavFE's operation plan had noted the "strong probability" that North Korean ports and landing beaches had been mined; on 1 October he had called for the sweep to begin on D minus 5. Struble's estimate of the situation, which assumed the existence of fields of moored Russian mines, possibly supplemented by more modern types, envisaged the possibility of clearance within five days; alternatively, if bad weather were encountered, or if influence mines had in fact been laid, postponement of the scheduled D–Day might prove necessary. On the 6th he advanced the date for beginning the sweep to D minus 10.

The first problem which faced the minesweepers was to select the route. Six miles out from the landing beaches the sentinel island of Yo Do guards the harbor entrance. Although the Sailing Directions permit Yo Do to be left on either hand, it was known that Russian practice had been to use the northern entrance, and some thought was consequently given to conducting the sweep in that channel. But the final decision was to take the direct route south of the island, and on the morning of 10 October work was begun, with the three AMs in the lead, the AMS buoying the swept area astern, and *Rochester*'s helicopter searching ahead. By late afternoon good progress had been made, a ten-mile channel had been swept to the 30-fathom curve, and 18 mines had been destroyed. But the general feeling of satisfaction was suddenly dashed when the helicopter reported first one, then two, and finally five lines of mines directly ahead of the sweepers.

This discovery cancelled out the whole day's work and raised again the possibility that the sweep could not be completed within the allotted time. In an effort to turn the flanks of the mine lines the direct route to the beaches was abandoned, and on the 11th work was begun in the Russian channel, with a new emphasis on the search function. Overhead a PBM from VP 47 circled, seeking out the mine locations, which were then plotted and communicated to the forces below. From *Diachenko*, UDT personnel were sent in to Yo Do and Ung Do to scout for evidence of controlled minefields. Personnel in Wonsan were urged to seek out charts of the minefield and individuals who had assisted in the lay. Arrangements were made with Task Force 77 for a countermining effort by bomb drop from carrier aircraft. Sweeping went well on the 11th, and a lane was cleared and buoyed to within about four miles of the entrance islands.

Early on the next morning the attempt at countermining took place, as 39 carrier planes, armed with 1,000-pound bombs fused to explode at a depth of 20 feet, flew in to bomb a five-mile lane past Yo Do. For the pilots the exercise was a novel one: proper spacing of the bombs proved difficult owing to lack of control procedures and malfunction of smoke floats, and the results, although spectacular in the amount of water thrown up, were only briefly encouraging. Following the drop, the sweepers headed on through the bombed area for the

turn around Yo Do toward Kalma Pando. In the lead, echeloned to port in normal sweep formation, were *Pirate*, *Pledge*, and *Incredible*. No paravanes were streamed since there were none to stream, there had been no small boat exploration ahead of the sweep, and the searching helicopter could communicate with the sweepers only by relay through the DMS *Endicott*. At 1112 unswept waters were entered; as the sweepers came left around Yo Do many mines were cut and bobbed to the surface; at 1200 as the helicopter reported three lines ahead, underwater contacts were obtained on *Pirate*'s sound gear.

Then came the blow. At 1209 *Pirate* hit a mine, blew up, capsized, and sank in four minutes. *Pledge*, the second ship, slowed and stopped, cut loose her gear, and lowered a boat to pick up survivors. In this awkward situation fire was opened on the sweepers from previously undetected batteries on Sin Do, and was replied to by *Pledge* and *Endicott*. As rescue operations were pressed the gunnery duel continued, while overhead the circling PBM spotted the gunfire and called on Task Force 77 for an air strike. Ten minutes had gone by when at 1220, in an attempt to turn back into cleared waters, *Pledge* came left out of the swept lane, and in her turn hit a mine and began to sink. Two ships had been lost, 13 men were missing or dead, and 79 wounded. The rest of the day was spent in picking up the pieces and trying to decide what to do next.

When news of the sinkings reached the bombardment forces off Chongjin it brought impressive reinforcement, as Admirals Struble and Smith boarded the destroyer *Rowan* and steamed southward at best speed. But admirals cannot do the work of minesweepers, and with no replacements for the lost ships, safe sweeping had become essential. Further emphasis was laid on searching, by patrol plane and helicopter, to permit a route of approach that would turn the mine lines. Mine disposal was accomplished by strafing and by UDT personnel from *Diachenko*, assisted by the inhabitants of Ung Do, who were rewarded for their enthusiasm by the issue of rations and by medical assistance. In this wise, progress continued, the channel was cleared of contact mines, and on the 14th magnetic sweeping was begun. How long this would take was anybody's guess.

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By 18 October, D minus 2, the sweepers had reached the beaches of Kalma Pando. The only further incidents had been the loss of one JMS off the southern shore of Yo Do, and damage to a small ROK freighter which took an unauthorized shortcut through the minefields. Although four days of magnetic sweeping had brought only negative results, information from prisoners ashore on the 16th indicated that ground mines had been laid. Next day this report was contradicted, but on the 18th confirmation was gained both by land and sea. Ashore a sample coil was recovered from the railroad station master; off the beaches two detonations arose astern of the minesweepers, and then, in a great explosion, the ROK *YMS 516* disappeared in a cloud of water and smoke. Faced with this proof of the presence of influence mines, and with further sweeping obviously necessary, Admiral Struble recommended postponement of D-Day, and his view was concurred in by higher authority. Although it proved possible, beginning on the 19th, to beach landing craft with urgently needed supplies for the Marine squadrons on Kalma Pando, it was another week before the channel could be declared clear for the Attack Force.

One must credit the Russian naval personnel who had been assigned to mine Wonsan with the achievement of a considerable success. Prior to their departure in early October, these gentlemen had not only held mine school for the North Koreans but had assembled the magnetic mines, planned the minefields, and supervised their planting. The effort had been an extremely economical one. Barges towed by motor sampan had been employed as minelayers, and local labor used both to load the barges and to roll the mines off the stern. With this negligible investment in training, equipment, and personnel, more than 2,000 of a planned 4,000 mines had been planted in the harbor, four ships had been sunk, and a delay of six days imposed upon the Attack Force.

Arduous though it had been, the opening of Wonsan was but part of the job which faced the minesweepers. Other east coast ports demanded clearance, while in the west the need for seaborne supply was urgent. There the advance of Eighth Army, although only lightly opposed, had been carried out under circumstances of considerable logistic difficulty. Daily requirements were on the order of 1,500 tons; the rail and

truck shuttle above Seoul could produce only half that figure; and as the best efforts of the airlift could not make up the deficit, every mile of northward movement increased the troubles of the overworked quartermasters.

So far as capabilities permitted, efforts to open west coast ports had already begun. Returning from Inchon in early October, one AM and six AMS had stopped by at Kunsan, and in the course of a sweep to the docks had destroyed four mines and located another two score. In mid-October, as Eighth Army was moving on Pyongyang, the Japanese contract sweepers were ordered to clear the entrance to Haeju, an operation which would make available a 2,000-foot quay with four fathoms alongside and with road and rail connections to the north. By 1 November the work was done, but by this time the front had reached the Chongchon River, and with the Army's needs increasing, the effect was marginal. Autumn comes suddenly in North Korea: at Pyongyang the monthly mean temperature drops from 40° in October to 23° in November, and the nights are cold. Short of rations, short of fuel, and with both men and machinery urgently in need of winterizing, Eighth Army was under heavy pressure from CincFE to expedite its advance. In this situation, and in the absence in the north of suitable LST beaching sites, anguished cries arose from EUSAK for the opening of the port of Chinnampo.

Situated ten miles up the tidal Taedong River, Chinnampo is to Pyongyang as Inchon is to Seoul. Like Inchon it suffers from the disability of its location on the eastern shore of the Yellow Sea. For 30 miles or so islands and drying mud banks line the approach; inside the headlands the channel shrinks to a mere quarter of a mile in width in the narrows of Pido Sudo; tidal currents in the river reach three and a half knots on the flood and four a half on the ebb. The port itself had a dredged basin which could accommodate a few ships, along with railroad spurs and some unloading equipment; there were beaches which could take a few LSTs. But damage had been suffered from air strikes, there was an extreme shortage of lighterage, and the maximum capacity of the port was less than half that of Inchon. Still, with all its faults, Chinnampo was unique. No alternative existed. Its opening was mandatory.

The appeals from Eighth Army for the opening of Chinnampo were sympathetically received by Admiral Joy. But his slender force was fully committed at Wonsan, and although on 21 October he promised to commence the clearance at the earliest possible date, his estimate of the time required for completion was a pessimistic three weeks. But, even if forces are unavailable, orders can always be issued, and ComNavFE had already ordered Admiral Smith relieved of his duties at Wonsan in order to prepare plans for the earliest possible sweeping of Chinnampo. On the afternoon of the 22d, CTF 95 was so released.

Although the disposable force immediately available to Smith consisted of himself, it was soon to be augmented. Two visiting officers, Commanders Stephen M. Archer and Donald N. Clay, who had come out from CincLantFleet and CincPacFleet headquarters to look over the mine situation, were put to work. Clay was at once constituted an intelligence team, and sent off to Chinnampo to investigate the enemy lay; Archer was ordered to Sasebo, where CTF 95 was attempting to scrounge a sweeping force.

In point of fact prospects were not as bad as they seemed at first sight. On the 22d the two remaining Pacific Fleet DMS, *Thompson* and *Carmick*, reached Japan, to be followed on the next day by the three AMS of Mindiv 51 from Pearl Harbor. These were at once ordered forward to the Yellow Sea: *Thompson* and *Carmick* sailed on the 27th, to be shortly followed by the AMS and by the destroyer *Forrest Royal*, a new arrival from the Atlantic Fleet which Smith had obtained as Archer's flagship. Together with various later acquisitions these units made up Task Element 95.69 which was to do the job.

With Wonsan open the PBMs were switched back to west coast mine hunting, assisted by the RAF Sunderlands. Efforts in the Yellow Sea were complicated by the many large jellyfish, four feet or more in diameter, gray in color, and floating a few feet below the surface, which gave rise to numerous false alarms. But despite this distraction good work was done. Three days of search brought 34 mine sightings, and 16 sinkings by strafing, and a subsequent attempt to blow magnetic mines by depth charging met with some slight success, although at a considerable cost in ordnance. On 29 October the air effort was strengthened by *Worcester*'s

helicopter, tem- porarily based on the British carrier *Theseus* which also provided combat air patrol. And in due course the work of the patrol planes was simplified, and more time on station made possible, with the reestablishment of the Inchon seadrome by *Gardiner's Bay*.

Since the entire Yellow Sea is of mineable depth, the point of origin of the sweep was arbitrarily located some 30 miles off the channel entrance and 69 miles from the docks. The approach sweep was begun on the 29th, as *Thompson* and *Carmick* headed in from the west and turned south inside the outer mine line to reach the channel entrance near the island of Cho Do. On the 31st Commander Archer arrived in *Forrest Royal*; on 1 November the three AMS turned up, along with *Bass* and her UDT detachment, two ROK YMS, and a Scajap LST which would relieve *Theseus* as helicopter base. By 2 November Commander Clay and Lieutenant (j.g.) Hong, ROKN, had discovered the pattern of the minefield: 217 moored and 25 magnetic mines were reported to have been laid, with five lines across the main channel north of Sok To and one across the passage south of that island. Although this southern channel, Sok To Myoji, is a shallow draft affair with a least depth of two and a quarter fathoms at low water, its lighter protection made it for the moment the channel of choice. Here the effort was pressed.

The predominant lesson of the Wonsan experience had been to search before you sweep. At Chinnampo, where this lesson was faithfully followed, the hunt was simplified by the tidal characteristics of the Yellow Sea, which tended to expose mines at low water. Searching at low tide by patrol plane, helicopter, small boat, and swimmers was emphasized; sweeping was done at high tide with the aim of clearing a not too devious route around rather than through the fields; on 3 November a Korean YMS made a safe passage into Chinnampo. Two helpful arrivals took place on the 4th and 5th in the form of high winds, which shook loose some of the moored mines, and of the LSD *Catamount*, which after unloading Marines at Wonsan had been loaded at Sasebo with small boats and extra gear and sent west to act as mother ship. On the 6th an ROK YMS took a convoy of tugs and barges in the Sok To channel, five small *Marus* were put through the next day, and with the arrival on the 10th of a Scajap LST the western approach and southern entrance could be considered clear.

With Sok To Myoji opened, Commander Archer's force shifted its effort to the deep water entrance and to Cho Do Sudo, the coastal route of approach from the southward. A dozen Japanese sweepers had by now arrived, accompanied by two mother ships, and were checksweeping the already opened channels. By 17 November 14 ships had reached Chinnampo; three days later 40,000 tons had been unloaded and the opening of the deep channel celebrated by the arrival of the hospital ship *Repose*. Already the Army's logistic situation had been greatly improved, and General Walker was looking forward to a resumption of the northward advance. By month's end unloading had reached a rate of 4,800 tons a day, and the sweepers were working north along the coast to clear a channel for possible use by fire support ships or by LSTs supplying the northern front.

Like so many things in human life the opening of a mined harbor is easier the second time. At Chinnampo, in contrast to the events at Wonsan, no lives had been lost and no ships damaged. Of the 80 moored mines swept or destroyed, 36 were credited to patrol planes and 27 to the underwater demolition personnel; 12 had been broken loose by storms; only 5 had been cut by sweepers. Better and earlier intelligence, different tidal conditions, and experience had all been helpful.

Yet if the sweep had been successful, so once again had been the mining; as at Wonsan, considerable delay had been imposed. Shallow draft shipping had been put in to Chinnampo within ten days, but for larger vessels ComNavFE's estimate of three weeks had proven accurate. The result of these experiences, and of the promise of more trouble in the future, was to give mine warfare, for the first time in years, a high priority in U.S. naval thinking.

The continuing shortage of sweepers now brought a speed-up in their activation: on 16 October the Chief of Naval Operations gave overriding priority to the nine AMS previously scheduled for recommissioning, and added four AMs to the list. The history of the Wonsan sweep, begun in one channel and completed in another, and

carried out first by large sweepers, then by small boats and swimmers, and finally by the minesweepers again, showed the need both for improved tactical organization and for better procedures in mine location and mine clearance. In the United States a research and development program was begun. In Japan steps were taken to provide a suitable mother ship by conversion of an LST to carry supplies, accommodate small boats, and serve as helicopter platform. In the administrative sphere ComNavFE in late October had recommended the reestablishment of the Mine Force type command, and had urged that pending this step a flag officer be assigned to administer mine warfare in the Far East. These recommendations were approved, and on 11 November the Minesweeping Force Western Pacific was activated under the command of Admiral Higgins.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 8. On to the Border
3. 19 October-20 November: Operations in Eastern North Korea

"The neighborhood of Wonsan," says the old guide book to North China and Korea, "heavily forested and with mountains rising from the sea, is extremely picturesque. To the southwest lie the Diamond Mountains, whose watercourses, forests, and famous monasteries have earned them the appellation of the Jewel of Korea. Here tiger, leopard, bear, wolves, and wild boar may still be found, as well as various species of deer, pheasant, and bustard. The natives, hardy in the chase, employ falcons in their pursuit of small game."

Having prepared for their assault into this tourist wonderland, the Marines, embarked in the ships of Task Force 90, had left Inchon in time to make the 20 October D–Day. But the capture of Wonsan by ROK forces made the assault landing unnecessary, and eased the problem of introducing X Corps into northeastern Korea. Although the forests hid more dangerous game than tiger or bear, in the form of sizable North Korean units moving along the inland mountain tracks, no really serious opposition was anticipated, while the Kalma Pando air strip and the decks of the carriers at sea held larger and more lethal birds than falcons.

While the dangerous and tedious work of minesweeping went forward, the ships of the Attack Force were moving south through the Yellow Sea and east through the Korean Strait. At Pusan the 7th Division and corps contingents were preparing to sail. But on the 18th the discovery of influence mines off the Wonsan beaches brought the decision to delay entrance until a thorough magnetic sweeping could be accomplished. Admiral Thackrey was instructed to hold the later echelons in port, and the projected movement of the 3rd Division from Japan to Korea was postponed.

On the afternoon of 19 October the Transport and Tractor Groups arrived in the Korean Gulf. The flagship *Mount McKinley*, with the Attack Force and Marine Division staffs embarked, moved in and anchored in the swept channel, but the rest of the force was ordered to reverse course and so maneuver as to return at daylight of the 21st. Further delay brought repetition of these instructions, and until morning of the 25th the Attack Force steamed back and forth, first south and then north again, through the Sea of Japan. This evolution, designated Operation Yo–Yo by the crowded and disgruntled Marines, had some serious implications: food threatened to run short; ideal conditions were presented for the spread of epidemic disease. Only a few days earlier, dysentery had hit the crews of two cruisers of the Formosa Patrol; during "Yo–Yo" it broke out in epidemic form on the MSTS transport *Marine Phoenix*, afflicting 700 of the 2,000 embarked troops and a like proportion of the crew. But terms in purgatory are by definition limited, and "Yo-Yo" in due time came to an end. Beginning at 1500 on the 25th the ships of the Attack Force moved in column through the swept channel to drop anchor in southern Yonghung Man.

Five LSTs were beached at once with engineer and shore party materiel, and at daylight on the 26th general unloading began. In accordance with the original assault plan the 1st Marines went in across Yellow Beach and the 7th Marines across Blue Beach, with RCT 5 following on the next day. As a result of the shallow gradient, landing craft grounded some distance offshore, personnel had to wade the last few yards, and the rapid handling of inanimate objects waited on the construction of ramps and causeways. But work was pushed: of the more than 25,000 men in the division and attached units, well over half were ashore by evening of the 26th, along with more than 2,000 vehicles and 2,000 tons of cargo, and five days later the operation was completed. While the Marines were coming ashore over the Kalma Pando beaches and deploying outward, the mine-sweepers had moved on into the inner harbor. Although local information indicated that this had not been mined, nobody wanted to take chances. But the informants proved correct, and by 2 November the port was pronounced clear.

The landing had been delayed six days. First on to so many beaches, the Marine Division had this time been preceded by its Aircraft Wing and by a USO troop. But except by the mining effort and the Sin Do batteries, the operation had been unopposed, and so economical. A major port had been seized and opened, an important force was ashore in eastern North Korea, and more was on the way. For the Marines the only casualties were those 84 dysentery victims who had to be hospitalized, and even when the losses of the minesweeping force were reckoned in, the bill in military terms was small.

Throughout the period of Operation Yo-Yo Eighth Army had been advancing in the west. In the central mountains the Korean II Corps had continued northward. Moving onward from Wonsan, ROK troops had entered Hamhung and Hungnam on 17 October; by the time the Marine Division came ashore the front was more than 5o miles to the northward, and was still moving. On the 17th *Helena* and *Worcester* had bombarded transportation targets at Songjin, but from that time on the work of the gun-fire ships was largely limited to standing by. Since its preinvasion strikes in the Wonsan region Task Force 77 had been sending its flights northward, in support of the South Koreans and in attacks against a diminishing number of targets beyond the bombline; soon the fast carriers would be withdrawn to port. On the entire coast the only really busy units were the minesweepers and the ships of the Amphibious Force, on whom devolved responsibility for opening new ports, bringing in more forces, and providing logistic support for X Corps as it sprawled out over eastern North Korea.

In these circumstances General Almond's force found its mission changed. The speed of advance into North Korea had obviated the need for a westward thrust by the units of X Corps; the U.N. resolution of early October had shifted the emphasis of the campaign from the destruction of the enemy army to the pacification of North Korea. A new scheme of maneuver had consequently been developed by GHQ, and five days before the Wonsan landing X Corps received orders to advance to the north.

On 25 October, with Wonsan at last open to the invasion fleet, Struble, Almond, and *Doyle* met to consider the implications of this change for the operations of the Joint Task Force. To speed the northward movement it was decided to land one or more of the regiments of the 7th Division at Iwon, 90 miles to the northeast, on the coastal strip which had been the summer target of NavFE surface forces. North and south of this small administrative center the bombardment ships had carried out their work, and landing parties from *Juneau*, *Bass*, and *Perch* had gone ashore to raid the railroad. But Iwon, and its port town of Kunson, had remained undisturbed, and between 25 and 27 October *Endicott*, *Doyle*, and one AMS swept an 18-mile channel and an anchorage area without discovering any mines.

The landing of the 7th Division at Iwon was entrusted to Admiral Thackrey. Having supervised the operation of the port of Inchon and the early stages of the reembarkation of the Marines, ComPhibGroup 3 had since 11 October been administering the loading of 7th Division and corps troops at Pusan. On the 26th he arrived at Wonsan in *Eldorado*, and next day sailed for Iwon, where debarkation began on the 29th. The lack of amphibious craft in the 7th Division convoys, the absence of local lighterage, and the need to improvise a beach party made the operation a slow one; everything in the transports and cargo ships had to be offloaded into LSTs and smaller craft, a process which resulted in considerable superficial topside damage owing to swell in the unprotected anchorage. But by the 30th one regiment had landed all its personnel and vehicles and much of its gear. By 8 November the entire lift of 29,000 men had been put ashore, and the division was backtracking down the coast in preparation for its move to the north.

Although it too was shortly to move northward, the Marine Division, following its landing at Wonsan, found, itself for the moment involved in blocking and protective missions. One battalion was moved in over the mountains to cut off enemy troops retiring up the Imjin valley road, while a second was ordered to Kojo, some 30 miles back down the coast to the southeast. The assignment to the Kojo area, where the situation map showed a patchwork of North Korean and ROK units, was not wholly unexpected. On the 21st, while the Marines were still cruising the Sea of Japan, General Almond had asked for the immediate landing of a battalion there to ensure the

protection of an ROK supply dump. The request had been denied by Admiral Struble, owing to the possibility of unswept mines, but on the 24th the task was reassigned to the Marine Division. Since a Marine air strike in this region had discovered and attacked an estimated 800 enemy troops, the idea seemed a reasonable one.

On the 24th, in preparation for this move and to ensure the possibility of support from the sea in the event of an enemy descent upon the coastal road, the fast minesweepers *Endicott* and *Doyle* swept and buoyed a channel into Kojo, and two days later a battalion was sent down from Wonsan by train. At Kojo all seemed peaceful on arrival: the sea was blue, the town undamaged. But on the night of the 27th the battalion was surprised and hit hard by troops of the North Korean 5th Division, and a call for helicopter evacuation of casualties, for air and gunfire support, and for tanks quickly brought forth a miniature example of standard amphibious support procedures.

Sicily and *Badoeng Strait* had arrived off Wonsan on 18 October and had been covering the minesweeping operations. Now, in concert with the squadrons on Kalma Pando, they stepped up their sorties against enemy troops, and heavily attacked the town of Tongchon, reported to contain the enemy headquarters. Helicopters were provided to fly out the more seriously wounded, and the fast transport *Wantuck* was ordered down from Wonsan with a surgical team. The destroyers *Hank* and *English* took the enemy troops under fire, *LST 883* got underway from Wonsan with a load of tanks, a reinforcing battalion was sent down to Kojo by rail, and the situation was soon under control. The whole affair was a somewhat confused one, for the supply dump which provided the rationale of the operation turned out to have been removed before the first contingent of Marines arrived. But in any event the Kojo effort was shortly terminated: on the 31st a battalion of Korean Marines arrived from Samchok by LST to take over the job of policing the area.

As the Koreans were relieving at Kojo a second minor amphibious operation was getting underway. Sixty miles below Wonsan, at the southern end of the Korean Gulf, sizable and aggressive guerilla forces were reported operating in the hills behind Kosong. Under the supervision of Captain Robert C. Peden, Commander Tractor Group, Korean troops were loaded into two LSTs, and sailed on 1 November for this area. The two destroyer minesweepers made a sweep which discovered no mines, and on the morning of the 3rd an unopposed landing was successfully executed. A few days bushwhacking brought the situation under control; on 8 November two LSTs were sent down to bring the Koreans back again, and by the 10th they had been returned to Wonsan.

There more strength was now arriving to take over the responsibility for local defense and to relieve the Marine Division for its move to the north. With the Wonsan landing completed, and with the 7th Division going ashore at Iwon, Admiral *Doyle* had sent six ships to Pusan to bring back one of the regiments of the 3rd Infantry Division. Units of this group began returning to Wonsan on 5 November, and by the 8th the movement was completed and the regiment was ashore. In the meantime a larger task element, composed of nine transport and cargo types, some MSTS shipping, and some LSTs, was formed and ordered to Moji, on Shimonoseki Strait, to lift the balance of the 3rd Division.

All troop movements were now provided for, but there was still work for the Navy, for the northward reorientation of the campaign required both a reshuffling of forces already ashore and the opening of another port. General Almond had selected the city of Hamhung as the site of X Corps Headquarters, the Marines were moving north from Wonsan, and the new problem for the minesweepers, who had opened Wonsan to the southward and Iwon to the north, was to clear the neighboring harbor of Hungnam in anticipation of a consolidation of east coast logistic activities there.

The city of Hungnam, manufacturing center as well as seaport, lies in the northwestern corner of the Korean Gulf near the delta of the Songchon River. Although Hamhung, its inland satellite, is an important road and railway center, Hungnam is the larger of the two, with a population in 1950 a third again that of Wonsan. The bay on which the city lies is open to the south, but the inner harbor is protected by a 2,200–foot wharf' with four fathoms of water and by a breakwater. Other smaller wharves existed, as did heavy loading equipment, developed

to handle the products of the city's chemical industry As at Wonsan, the 100, fathom curve runs 30 miles offshore, and the approaches are easily mined.

Since intelligence reports indicated that over a hundred moored mines had been planted at Hungnam, a serious sweeping effort was required. A destroyer minesweeper, seven AMS, and supporting units were made available, and on 7 November clearance was begun. Small boat and helicopter search was employed to the utmost; an approach was chosen which would detour the minefields by passing close under the eastern point; so successful was the reconnaissance that the only mines swept were well clear of the entrance lane. A sweep was made for magnetic mines, but none was discovered, and the port was declared open on the 11th. On the 14th Admiral *Doyle* turned affairs at Wonsan over to Commander Transport Group, Captain Samuel G. Kelly in the attack transport *Bayfield*, and sailed for Hungnam in *Mount McKinley*.

One more harbor clearance was necessary to provide the desired ac-cessibility to eastern North Korea. To simplify the logistic support of ROK troops advancing up the coast, General Almond on 3 November had requested the opening of Songjin, 35 miles beyond Iwon. On completion of the job at Hungnam the sweepers were ordered onward, and between 16 and 19 November the seven AMS swept a channel and an anchorage area at Songjin without discovering any mines. This, for the moment, completed the minesweeping task. In time, it is true, the continuing northward progress of Korean troops would bring a call for the opening of Chongjin. But for reasons beyond the sweepers' control this request would not be implemented.

For the ships of Task Force 90 and for Captain Spofford's sweepers the weeks following the Wonsan landing had been busy ones. Three divisions had been put into North Korea through two ports; support had been provided for two small operations against remnants of the North Korean Army; five harbors had been swept for mines. By mid–November pressure was decreasing, but there remained some chores to be performed. Although the personnel of the Army's 2nd Engineer Special Brigade, which was to operate the port of Hungnam, had been moved down from Iwon by rail, some of the heavy equipment could not pass the tunnels and had to be reloaded and brought down by sea. A considerable amount of X Corps cargo, initially landed at Wonsan but now needed at Hungnam, also required water transport, and this movement was accomplished by LST shuttle service in the closing days of the month. So far as the movement of forces into eastern North Korea went, however, a terminal date could be assigned, for on 20 November the final elements of the 3rd Infantry Division reached Wonsan from Moji. This day was also made memorable by the landing on the Wonsan airstrip of the Secretary of the Navy and an inspection party. Apprised of this prospect, Admiral *Doyle* had sailed down from Hungnam the day before to meet the distinguished visitors and to welcome them aboard his flagship. There, in the course of a short speech delivered to the ship's company, the Secretary observed that this was the first visit he had ever paid to any ship of the U.S. Navy.

Much game has been made by later writers of the incumbent of this office during the Grant administration, who was said to have been surprised by the discovery that ships were hollow. The events of the 20th on *Mount McKinley* should perhaps also be recorded as a footnote to history, and as memorializing a Secretary who, in office for more than a year and a half, had never bothered to find out.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 8. On to the Border
4. 15 October-24 November: New Plans and New Problems

For all but the minesweeping crews afloat and those with logistic responsibilities ashore, October had been a happy month. On land, at sea, and in the air it was a harvest time, a period of exploitation of a great victory, in which the steady advance of U.N. forces brought visions of a speedy end to hostilities. On the 15th, having found time to fly to Wake Island for a conference with the President of the United States, CincFE opined that organized resistance would end by Thanksgiving. The likelihood of Russian or Chinese intervention, a matter of concern at Washington and Lake Success, was very small; if the Chinese did attempt to enter Korea it could only be with comparatively small forces which would be "slaughtered" by U.N. air strength. With the war over by Thanksgiving, Eighth Army could be withdrawn to Japan by Christmas, while X Corps remained as an occupation force for the month or two necessary to prepare and hold elections throughout Korea.

The military situation, as of the moment, went far to bear out CincFE's optimistic picture. Resistance on the ground, steadily decreasing, had by mid-month practically ended. On 19 October, as the Marine Division was rounding the Korean peninsula, Eighth Army entered Pyongyang, to the pleasure of the acquisitive American soldiery who liberated quantities of red flags, portraits and busts of Stalin, and other desirable impedimenta. Entrance into the capital was followed by a parachute drop in regimental strength 30 miles to the northward, and the drop by a CincFE statement to the press that the war was coming to an end. Shortly the forces of the U.N. pushed on across the Chongchon River, and on 26 October ROK troops reached the banks of the Yalu.

While the armies advanced almost at will, the navies of the United Nations cruised undisturbed along the Korean coasts. Across the vast Pacific transports and cargo ships steamed without let or hindrance, bringing the necessities and luxuries of war. Step by step, as sweeping progressed and ports were opened, the ends of the seaborne supply line closed up on the advancing front, to lighten the burdens of the logisticians.

In the air, too, the war was uncontested, and U.N. air strength was moving forward. At Wonsan, 70 miles above the parallel, Marine squadrons were ashore; at Yonpo, near Hungnam, a second modern airfield was available; in the west Fifth Air Force had advanced its JOC to Seoul and was preparing to activate northern airfields; in the Yellow Sea and in the Sea of Japan the carriers still sent forth their planes. But increasingly the air-men of all services found themselves hard up for targets, and as the month wore on the sortie rate diminished.

Already the cheerful prospect of an imminent end to the fighting had been reflected in the activities of Naval Forces Far East. This change was first apparent in the activities of the planners, whose working day embraces future time, and even before the Wonsan Attack Force sailed, Admiral Joy's staff had turned its attention to post-war redeployment. Estimates were made of desirable post–hostility force levels in the Far East, and of the size of the shore establishment in Japan; planning was undertaken for future assistance to the ROK Navy and Marine Corps. So far indeed had things progressed that Operation Plan 114–50, which listed naval missions in support of the pacification of North Korea and contained an annex on the homeward movement of forces, was issued on 19 October, the day of entry into Pyongyang, and plans for the redeployment of the Marine Division reached General Smith while he was still en route to Wonsan.

Nor were the operating forces unaffected. Although the minesweepers were working overtime, and although Task Force 90 still had plenty to do in getting X Corps ashore, elsewhere the tempo of the campaign diminished. With less and less to shoot at, some of the fire support ships were returned to port, while the functions of the remainder were reduced to patrolling and covering operations. From the west coast the British carrier *Theseus*, with no more targets in hand, was sailed for Sasebo for onward routing to Hong Kong. Off Korea's

eastern shore a major redeployment of naval strength was begun.

More carrier strength was now available than could be profitably employed. With elimination of the Joint Task Force's Wonsan objective area by advancing ROK troops, there again arose the question of the assumption by FEAF of operational or coordination control of carrier air. The always present possibility of a new intervention from the north posed questions as to the readiness of antisubmarine forces. To meet or minimize these problems a reduction and modification of theater naval strength seemed desirable: on 22 October *Philippine Sea* and *Boxer* left the operating area for Yokosuka; one week later *Valley Forge* and *Leyte* retired to Sasebo. On her arrival in Japan *Boxer* was routed onward to the continental United States for navy yard overhaul; *Valley Forge* was scheduled to return to the west coast in late November; plans were made to withdraw the escort carriers from Korean waters, and to send *Eldorado* to Guam to reembark her antisubmarine squadron. On 28 October Admiral Struble forwarded his appreciation to ComNavFE: recent experience showed that the Seventh Fleet should not revert to the status of a one-carrier force, but should remain a balanced fleet with amphibious and minesweeping capabilities; to emphasize the mobility of naval forces, and to strengthen the impact on the doubtful of the United Nations' success in Korea, he proposed at the earliest moment to take his command to southeast Asian waters to show the flag and to conduct training exercises. Three days later Joint Task Force 7 was dissolved, and the flagship group retired to Sasebo.

Only Admiral Higgins' minesweeping groups and the Military Sea Transportation Service continued to grow in strength. Reinforcements for the former were still arriving as November came, while the latter had not yet reached its peak. Having entered business on 1 July as the proprietor of 25 small ships, Captain Junker's command had undergone an explosive expansion, until by the time of the Wonsan landing it controlled 243 vessels. The requirements of the advance to the north brought a further slight increase, and the week of 8 November saw 263 ships under MSTS WestPac control. But then, with X Corps well established ashore, the decline began, and by mid-month the total would be down some ten percent. Similar considerations affected the Amphibious Force, but by mid-November Admiral *Doyle* could contemplate a redeployment of his hard-worked shipping for respite and training in Japan.

The diminishing activity of Naval Forces Far East was quickly reflected in reduced expenditure of important commodities. Naval consumption of aviation gasoline, which had reached a peak of 187,000 barrels in August, was down in October to 130,000. Ammunition expenditure, more than 2,100 short tons in the week of 19 September, had declined by October's end to less than a sixth of that amount. Navy cargo lifted from the west coast, POL excepted, had fallen radically from the 107,000 measurement tons of the week of 21 August; in October it dropped steadily from 29,000 tons per week to a mere 11,000. What the naval effort had amounted to in terms of transfer of force may be seen from the extraordinary expansion of NavFE–supported personnel, U.S. and U.N., which from a mere 11,000 in June had reached 40,000 by early August, 69,000 in late September, and 79,000 by mid–October. But there it stopped, homeward deployment was begun, and the coming of November saw the total naval population down to 75,000.

Not only had intensity of effort diminished, following the defeat of the North Koreans, but the entire concept of operations had been changed. The late September plans for the encirclement of retiring enemy remnants had called for a landing at Wonsan, followed by a westward thrust of X Corps to a junction with Eighth Army in the neighborhood of Pyongyang. Completion of this movement would have resulted in control of the Korean waist south of the restraining line, and of the Pyongyang-Sinanju-Hungnam–Wonsan quadrilateral. Here the axial range is lowest, the mountains rarely rise above 3,000 feet, and here are found the best transverse communications in the entire peninsula. Harbors on both coasts are useful to a force sustained by sea, and the area's industrial towns are linked by a road net of considerable density in Korean terms, and one at least marginally adequate for western forces.

But the successes that had crowned his arms, and the U.N. mandate for Korean unification, had caused

General MacArthur to lift up his eyes unto the hills. On 17 October, following his return from Wake, CincFE had issued orders that if Pyongyang fell before the Wonsan landing was completed, X Corps should no longer strike westward across the peninsula, but instead continue on to the north. The restraining line, beyond which non-Korean forces were not to pass, would be swung to the northwest, and parallel zones established, separated by the central mountain range, through which Eighth Army and X Corps would advance. With the capture of Pyongyang, entered by Eighth Army on the 19th and declared secure two days later, these new orders became effective.

With this change the forces of the United Nations faced the task of occupying a very different geographical province. The new restraining line, moved forward in the east some 6o miles, now lay in the watershed of the Yalu, beyond the northern divide, and in its course from east to west crossed mountains towering above 8,000 feet. In this sparsely populated high and craggy country planners could draw lines on maps, but implementers could not man the lines. Indigenous forces, lightly armed and durable, might perhaps maneuver here with some facility, but for motorized armies it was another matter. Only a handful of north–south routes existed; except in the western lowlands only narrow columns could push forward through the twisting defiles. Mutual support under such conditions was hardly a possibility, and even radio communication would be made difficult by the intervening mountains.

For a scant week this concept stayed on the books, and then on 24 October, with the bulk of Eighth Army stalled above Pyongyang by shortage of supplies and with X Corps still awaiting the clearance of Wonsan, the restraining line was abolished altogether and more trackless wastes and frozen peaks were marked for conquest. Since the September authorization of operations above the parallel had stipulated that "no non-Korean ground forces will be used in the northeast provinces . . . or . . . along the Manchurian border," this action caused some stir in Washington. But General MacArthur’s reply to a query from the Joint Chiefs described the decision as based on "military necessity," and stated that "tactical hazards might even result from other action." And once again CincFE had his way.

Whatever the nature of the "military necessity" that General MacArthur had in mind, the proposal to push through to the border with the forces available seems explicable only on the assumption that no serious resistance was anticipated, a view reflected in the diaspora now imposed on X Corps. In its entire zone only three routes led to the northern border, the coastal route by which Korean forces were advancing, and two roads through the inland mountains. Of these the eastern route, from Sinchang north through Kapsan to Hyesanjin, was assigned the 7th Division; the other, 50 miles to the westward, from Hungnam over the mountains and down the Changjin Valley to the Yalu, was given to the Marines. As if this were an insufficient dispersion, the Marine Division came ashore with orders to prepare for a move to the Manchurian border, to make ready a battalion for a possible landing at Chongjin, and at the same time to provide local security in the Wonsan region and at Kojo.
Click here to view map

Such was the situation when, in the last week of October, there came sudden signs of increased enemy activity. Large concentrations of fighter planes were reported on the airfield at Antung, on the Manchurian side of the lower Yalu, and Air Force pilots flying down the valley reported antiaircraft fire from the far shore. ROK troops which had reached the Yalu in the Eighth Army zone were roughly handled and driven back. At Unsan the 8th Cavalry Regiment was hit hard by a force which ominously included Chinese. Thirty miles above Hamhung, in the X Corps sector, ROK troops suffered a check in an action in which they captured Chinese prisoners. From Marine night fighters flying out of Kimpo came reports of extensive enemy vehicular traffic across the Yalu bridge at Sinuiju. Soon the available Chinese prisoners were talking freely, affably describing the units to which they belonged and the story of their movement into Korea. On 1 November Fifth Air Force had a tentative report of Russian MIG-15 jet fighters, a report which would soon prove only too true. Two days later a Nationalist Chinese source reported that the level of military activity in North China and Manchuria indicated an imminent

all-out effort, and expressed fears that the forces of the U.N. were in grave danger. On the 5th a PBM patrol plane disappeared in Formosa Strait. Suddenly it seemed as if the party might be getting bigger.

In the X Corps zone the Chinese captured by the ROK forces were seen on 31 October by a Marine patrol, whose report constituted the first information on the new intervention to reach Washington. Queried at the request of the President as to his assessment of the situation, CincFE observed on 4 November that it was as yet impossible to appraise the "actualities of Chinese Communist intervention," put forward a variety of possible explanations, discounted the probability of a full-scale effort, and suggested the avoidance of hasty conclusions. But the reassuring tenor of this message was in contrast to the action undertaken in Korea.

In the west, where Eighth Army's logistic deficiencies still waited on the opening of Chinnampo, the discovery of Chinese soldiers was taken seriously. General Walker at once recalled his probing columns and formed his army up along the south bank of the Chongchon River, there to remain until the general offensive became possible. On the east coast, on 7 November, Admiral *Doyle* issued orders to expedite the movement of the 3rd Division from Moji to Korea by sailing ships independently as soon as they were loaded.

While these precautions were being taken on the ground, General MacArthur called upon FEAF and NavFE for their best efforts in the air. On the afternoon of 4 November CincFE's headquarters instructed Admiral Joy to apply the "immediate maximum air effort of your forces . . . in close support of ground units and interdiction of enemy communications, assembly areas and troop columns." Although the escort carriers were still at sea, supporting the 7th Division's northward advance, this unexpected order found the fast carriers in port in Japan. Action was immediate: Cardiv 15 was transferred from Admiral *Doyle*'s control to that of Admiral Struble; the prospective return of *Valley Forge* to the United States was cancelled; task force personnel were rounded up from the pleasure spots of Japan, and on the morning of the 5th, with Commander Seventh Fleet in *Missouri* in company, Admiral Hoskins sortied *Valley Forge* and *Leyte* from Sasebo. Although winds to 50 knots were met en route, the next day found them back at work in the Sea of Japan, where they were joined on the 9th by Admiral Ewen in *Philippine Sea* from Yokosuka. They were to be there a long while.

A similar maximum effort was called for from FEAF, which on 5 November was instructed to fly its crews "to exhaustion if necessary" in a two-week effort "to destroy every means of communication and every installation, factory, city and village" below the Yalu River, the hydroelectric complex only excepted. So important was this effort deemed to be that the prohibition of incendiary attacks on inhabited areas, effective since the beginning of the conflict, was now rescinded.

Faced with the requirements of this offensive, and with the increasing probability of jet opposition, General Stratemeyer on 7 November urgently requested reinforcement of his fighter strength by something with higher performance than the F–8o. On the next day he was promised a wing of F–84s and one of F–86As; on the 14th these began loading at San Diego on the escort carrier *Bairoko* and the light carrier *Bataan*. By 6 December some of these high-performance fighters were flying Korean missions, and once again the availability of carrier decks had made possible a demonstration of the "inherent mobility" of air power.

In Washington the news of the maximum air effort and of a projected B–29 attack against the Yalu bridges had caused another flurry. An order from the Joint Chiefs to suspend attacks within five miles of the border was coupled with a request for the reasons behind the air offensives. The reply elicited by this dispatch was couched in very different terms from CincFE's message of the 4th, which had discounted the likelihood of full-scale Chinese intervention. Now on the 6th General MacArthur reported "men and material in large force" pouring across the Yalu bridges and threatening "the ultimate destruction of the forces" under his command. Cancellation of the bridge strike might "well result in a calamity of major proportions"; the sole means of preventing enemy reinforcement was destruction of these bridges and of "all installations in the north area

supporting the enemy advance."

Next day, however, the alarm was muted. In response to a request for an estimate of the situation, CincFE on 7 November struck an average of his previous messages. While emphasizing the importance of Communist air operations from beyond the Yalu, and requesting instructions which would permit him to deal with this development, General MacArthur observed that his early belief that the Chinese were not intervening on a major scale had been confirmed. In reply to these dispatches the Joint Chiefs authorized attacks against the Korean ends of the Yalu bridges, and against other targets up to the river's bank, while reemphasizing the necessity of avoiding violation of Manchurian territory or airspace.

Winter had now reached the Sea of Japan. There, back on location, Task Force 77 was maneuvering to avoid snow storms, sweeping and drying the carrier decks with the blast of jet engines, and putting forth its best efforts in interdiction of the area east of 126°40´E and south of a line five miles below the Manchurian border. At midday on the 8th a new priority target was added, as a flash message from ComNavFE informed Admiral Struble that CincFE had determined to destroy the first overwater span on the Korean side of all bridges leading to Manchuria. Since FEAF's Bomber Command was fully committed to attacks on the downstream bridges at Sinuiju, those at Chongsongjin at the lower end of the Suiho Reservoir, where Air Force pilots had reported heavy vehicular traffic, had been assigned the Navy. Consistent with instructions from Washington, these strikes were to be carried out under restrictive ground rules: the target was the first over-water span, and that only; Manchurian air space was not to be violated; the hydroelectric plants and associated facilities were to remain untouched. Two days later the assignment was generalized by instructions to Task Force 77 to destroy the seven major bridges from Sinuiju eastward, through Chongsongjin, Namsan-ni, and Manpojin, to Hyesanjin at the headwaters of the Yalu.

These were extremely difficult targets. Since the approach had to be made either up or down stream, all attacks had to be carried out through predetermined airspace and subject to unimpeded antiaircraft and fighter opposition from the Manchurian side. To hit a single span, while crossing the narrow dimension of the bridge, was difficult for horizontal bombers owing to the intervals within their sticks of bombs; since crossing the bends in the river was forbidden, it was difficult for the B–29s to get a satisfactory aiming run. For the dive bombers this approach meant that any error in range, normally greater than that in deflection, would ensure a miss, while the attacks involved flights of over 220 miles, across high mountains and through winter weather, which called for the most accurate navigation.

Nine B–29s attacked the Sinuiju bridges on 8 November, while 70 more destroyed 60 percent of the town; next day the carriers flew strikes against the bridges there and at Chongsongjin. Three more days of carrier plane attacks were followed by a day of rest; on the 13th and 14th both B–29s and Task Force 77 returned to the fray. The week of the 15th brought four more carrier strikes, and in the last ten days of the month seven B–29 raids were mounted against the bridges.

The bridge attacks by carrier planes were made by groups of upwards of eight ADs, armed with one 2,000-pound bomb or two 1,000-pound bombs apiece, accompanied by Corsairs with VT-fused bombs and rockets to discourage antiaircraft fire from at least the Korean side of the river. For top cover, necessitated by the newly invigorated Communist air opposition, eight or more Panthers accompanied the attack planes. From their launching point in the Korean Gulf the piston-engined aircraft crossed the mountains at 10,000 feet with the Corsairs on top, climbed to 13,000 feet for a high-speed approach, and then, overhauled and joined by the jets some 6o miles short of the target, started their run in. At the objective the Corsairs went down first, to strike the defending gun emplacements, and were followed by the heavyweight ADs, while the F9Fs stepped down to protect against attacks from the rear.

This protection was needed. The enemy jets were real. On the 8th, in the first all–jet air battle of history, an Air Force F–80 fighter pilot had destroyed a MIG; on the 9th, during the attack at Sinuiju, a Navy pilot

duplicated the feat, as Lieutenant Commander W. T. Amen of *Philippine Sea* chased one from 4,000 to 15,000 feet and down again before the enemy spun in. No more than the Air Force F–80s could the Navy fighters match the agile MIG in speed, maneuverability, or rate of climb, but training and gunnery worked to outweigh these adverse factors.

Faced with the double problem of aerial opposition and of antiaircraft gunfire from the sanctuary across the river, Admiral Ewen recommended that members of the U.N. Korean Commission, together with representatives of the Soviets and of the Communist Chinese, be sent up in a transport plane to orbit over and observe the border, and that permission be obtained for hot pursuit of unfriendly aircraft and for attacks on Manchurian batteries which opened fire. Nothing was to come of these suggestions, but the problems which gave rise to them remained, and on the 18th two more MIGs were shot down by pilots from *Valley Forge* and *Leyte*.

So far as it went the result of these engagements was encouraging, but the purpose of the strikes was to destroy the bridges, and here the bombing was spotty and the results disappointing. The carrier pilots succeeded in dropping the highway bridge at Sinuiju and in taking out spans at Hyesanjin; the B–29s broke one or two more. But the Communists demonstrated great vigor and ingenuity in improvising repairs, and as November wore on the Yalu ice was thickening to the point where even heavy equipment could be moved across it.

As the airmen in Korea were flying against the bridges, and as the capitals of the world were considering the implications of Chinese intervention, headquarters estimates of Chinese forces in Korea were on the rise. On 2 November the estimated total was 16,500; by mid–month, when 12 divisions had been identified, it was of the order of 100,000. Total enemy strength, including North Koreans, was estimated at about 145,000 as of the 15th, a figure which was adhered to with little change until the 23rd when it developed a considerable spread, postulating either a minimum of 142,000 or a maximum of 167,000. Whether one accepted the minimum or the maximum or struck an average, this still implied a lot of Chinamen, and their presumed presence in the mountains of central North Korea brought further modification to the mission assigned to General Almond's forces.

These, since early November, had been pressing forward toward the Manchurian border. After concentrating in the neighborhood of Hamhung, the Marine Division had moved out to the north along the narrow road which leads to the Chosin Reservoir. One brisk fight with Chinese forces took place at Sudong, following which, as in the west, the opposition had disappeared. By the 10th the Marines were over the pass and had reached the headwaters of the Changjin River at Kotori; five days later they had gained the reservoir at Hagaru. To the eastward the advance had been still more rapid. ROK forces moving up the coast were approaching Chongjin. The 7th Division had captured Kapsan on the 12th and was moving toward Hyesanjin on the Yalu; although narrow mountain roads and subzero temperatures made progress arduous, no Chinese had been encountered.

Here in the northern mountains, 90 miles above the Wonsan–Pyongyang corridor, the concept of X Corps assistance to Eighth Army was revived by a directive of 15 November, which instructed General Almond to reorient his attack to the westward so as to facilitate the advance of General Walker's force. Instead of continuing north to the Manchurian border, the Marines were to strike west for 40 miles against the enemy's supply line. In the works for ten days, the orders for this flattering operation, in which one division was to clear the way for an army, were issued on the 25th, and required the Marine Division to move west from the reservoir to Mupyong-ni, and thence north through Kanggye to the Yalu.

By this time Admiral *Doyle* had finished off his east coast job. The harbors were open, the logistic situation was satisfactory, and the X Corps rear, firmly based upon the sea, was secure. Rather less, however, could be said for the advanced units, for the Yalu River towns of Manpojin and Hyesanjin, the ultimate objectives of the Marines and of the 7th Division, are 120 miles by air, and perhaps half as much again by mountain road, from the Hungnam base. The concept of the operation is a puzzling one, for while the reorientation of the Marines' thrust was predicated on the need to help Eighth Army, its extent implied an expectation of non-

resistance, and seemed based less on assumptions regarding Chinese capabilities than on assumptions of intent which, if correct, would make the effort hardly necessary.

In the west, since first contact with the Chinese, Eighth Army headquarters had entertained serious doubts about the future. Early in November Admiral Joy had begun to fear that the war would last out the winter; by mid-month he had come to feel that the Chinese had the manpower to expel the U.N. from Korea, and was keeping his fingers crossed against a third World War. Dubious of this winter campaign, General Smith had earlier suggested holding merely the territory covering Hamhung and Wonsan, and even the ever–sanguine Almond had been concerned. But at GHQ, where the strategic art was cultivated in its pure form, optimism appeared to have returned, and lack of contact with the Chinese to have brought the belief that they would fade away. On 18 November General MacArthur concluded that the all-out air effort had isolated the battlefield and restricted enemy supply; this and the logistic improvement which had followed the opening of Chinnampo led him to fix the 24th as the date for Eighth Army's offensive.

At sea, as on land, this was a period of contradictions. Following the strikes against the Yalu bridges the airmen had again found targets short: on the 18th the escort carriers were withdrawn; on the 19th *Valley Forge* and two destroyers were detached and ordered to the United States for overhaul. On the 22nd, as the day for the advance approached, Commander Weymouth flew to Seoul to confer with Fifth Air Force on the desired employment of the air groups of the remaining two fast carriers. This was not much. No close support was wanted, whether for Eighth Army or for X Corps. Seventh Fleet aircraft, with those of FEAF's Bomber Command, were to concentrate their efforts on bridges and communications within a 15-mile strip along the Yalu.

To Commander Task Force 77 the proposal for interdiction flights in western Korea from carriers in the Sea of Japan seemed uneconomical. As a better employment of available force, he suggested that he assume responsibility for supplemental close support of X Corps. But the proposal was turned down.

On 19 November, Moscow broadcast promises of a great offensive which would destroy the U.N. armies. On the 20th CincFE issued orders regarding the etiquette for U.N. forces at the border. Its sanctity was to be meticulously preserved; only small elements would be advanced to its immediate neighborhood; the hydroelectric plants, which served both North Korea and Manchuria, would be kept in uninterrupted operation. On the 24th the opening of the offensive was announced in confident terms. Again it appeared to some that the war was about to end, if not by Thanksgiving at least by Christmas.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea

James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 9. Retreat to the South

1. 24 November-6 December: Defeat in the West

IMPORTED, sustained, brought forward, and now at last supplied by sea, the multinational ground forces of the U.N. made ready for the final offensive. On 24 November, as Chinese Communist representatives were arriving at Lake Success to complain of American aggression in Formosa, Eighth Army attacked north from the Chongchon River. On the left the II Corps moved forward through the coastal plain; in the center the IX Corps, with the 2nd Infantry Division on its right, advanced northward up the valleys of the Kuryong and the Chongchon; at Tokchon in the central mountains the ROK II Corps, under General Walker's command although not part of Eighth Army, was under orders to establish contact with X Corps to the northeast. The advance of the Army was supported by Fifth Air Force, while aircraft of Bomber Command and Task Force 77 patrolled a 15-mile strip below the Manchurian border. Progress on the 24th was satisfactory all along the line.

Across the peninsula to the northeast, supported by the fighter squadrons of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and by an Air Force fighter-bomber group, General Almond's X Corps was again preparing to act as the right arm of the pincer. Up in the high country, 65 mountainous miles from Tokchon, the 7th Marines were moving west from Hagaru to Yudam–ni, where they arrived on the 25th after meeting only light opposition, and where next day they were joined by RCT 5. No more than their predecessors did the 5th Marines have trouble on the road, although interrogation of Chinese prisoners and information from local inhabitants indicated that three Chinese divisions had reached the area. In compliance with the revised plan for X Corps operations General Smith intended to pass the 5th Marines through RCT 7, and to attack westward from Yudam-ni on the morning of the 27th.

But while operations at the reservoir were of a routine nature, things were happening in the west. There on the 25th heavy pressure had developed on the right at Tokchon, and the 2nd Division had been engaged by Chinese Communist forces. By the next day the ROK II Corps had broken before the CCF assault, the right flank was exposed, and the Turkish Brigade and the 1st Cavalry Division were ordered up to bolster the threatened IX Corps. Before the westward thrust from Yudam-ni was scheduled to begin, Eighth Army's offensive had been stopped.

On the morning of the 27th, following a night of zero temperature and high winds, the 5th Marines nevertheless led out to the west. But the advance was limited to less than a mile by strong Chinese forces entrenched in the hills overlooking the road. With darkness very heavy attacks were launched by two Chinese divisions against the 5th and 7th Marines, while east of the reservoir three Army battalions were assaulted by a third. At Yudam-ni, where violent fighting continued throughout the night and into the morning, the enemy was ultimately repelled. But casualties were heavy, and in the rear, between Yudam-ni and Hagaru, the Chinese controlled the road, and had cut off and surrounded two companies. Further advance was out of the question, and in the afternoon General Smith issued orders halting the movement to the west.

Across the peninsula in the western lowlands things were even worse. On 27 November, as enemy pressure increased, advanced forces on the coastal plain were ordered back across the Chongchon. By the next day Eighth Army was in full retreat and the 2nd Division was desperately trying to extricate itself from a position of the gravest peril. With evening of the 28th Generals Walker and Almond were summoned to Tokyo for a conference with CincFE who, after authorizing Eighth Army and X Corps to withdraw, reported to Washington that the U.N. Command had met "conditions beyond its control and its strength," that he had gone over to the defensive, and that "we face an entirely new war."

Subject only to the deletion of the adjective "entirely," the statement appears correct. Once again an intervention from outside had changed the scale of the Korean conflict, and had removed control of their destinies still further from the inhabitants of the peninsula. The original elder brother had returned, and his forces, it was now sufficiently clear, were not limited to a sprinkling of volunteers but included important components of two field armies. Shortly some 30 Chinese divisions would be identified in North Korea, totalling perhaps 250,000 men, and the imaginative expansion of the NKPA remnants to a strength of 180,000 which was quickly accomplished by GHQ intelligence was not necessary to the proposition that the enemy was once again formidable. In the air the situation had also changed, and fighter planes of very advanced design were operating from the Manchurian fields across the Yalu River. Unlike the situation in June the prospect of U.N. reinforcement was dim: the commitment of very considerable forces to the theater of action had left practically nothing in reserve; the greater part of the Pacific Fleet was in the forward area and Army strength in the continental United States was down to a single division.

Yet not everything was new and different; in some respects the pattern was familiar. The new enemy, like the old, was based on the Asiatic mainland; the forces of the United Nations were still sustained by sea. Again intelligence had been available, again there had been surprise. As had been the case five months before, rapid enemy successes brought rapid retirement by the ground forces of the U.N. At sea, where enemy strength was still conspicuous by its absence, Naval Forces Far East retained the responsibility for any necessary evacuation of friendly nationals, a responsibility now greatly enlarged. As before, enemy offensive efforts in the air were negligible; as before, the full employment of U.N. air strength was hindered by circumstance. In July the problem had been one of range, and the lack of advanced airfields had placed a premium on available carrier strength; in November a dearth of identifiable targets had limited the effectiveness of Air Force and naval aviation alike; in December the forced abandonment of forward bases would bring the range problem back to the fore. Once again a period of emergency would raise problems of Navy-Air Force coordination. New war, in many respects, was just old war writ large.

Even before General MacArthur had reported his shift to the defensive, the Navy had begun to react. At Admiral Joy’s headquarters, where the possibility of a general emergency had been kept steadily in mind, the first appearance of the Chinese had caused concern. Planning had been expedited, and Operation Plan 116–50, laying down procedures for an emergency evacuation of U.N. forces from Korea, had been issued on 13 November. Enunciating the concept that any such operation "should be based upon the principle of an ‘assault in reverse,’" this plan provided detailed hydrographic and loading information for Korean and Japanese ports, gave figures on troop capacity of both commercial and combatant shipping, and established a command structure in which CTF 90, supported by other theater naval forces, would control naval and air operations in evacuation areas. Rarely, it would seem, have the routine precautions of the planners proved of such immediate value. At 1534 on 28 November ComNavFE alerted Admiral Doyle for a possible general emergency which would require redeployment of the ground forces from Korea to Japan.

On receipt of this dispatch CTF 90 and his staff at once worked out preliminary plans for the deployment of half the Amphibious Force to west coast operations under Admiral Thackrey and half to the WonsanHungnam area. Next day the operation order was promulgated, all ships were alerted to the possibility of air attack, Task Force 90 was placed on six—hour notice, amphibious shipping in Korean waters was held there, and all units at Yokosuka were ordered down to Sasebo.

As the first steps were being taken to prepare for the ultimate emergency other action was underway to prevent its development. On the 28th, in response to a Fifth Air Force request, Task Force 77 had expanded its area of armed reconnaissance southward, and throughout the day *Philippine Sea* and *Leyte* had kept eight Corsairs and six ADs over the newly enlarged border strip. But reports of the apparent crisis which confronted EUSAK led Admiral Ewen to feel that more could and should be done, and that circumstances called less for armed

reconnaissance than for support of troops. On conclusion of operations on the 28th he proposed to Admiral Struble that the six flights scheduled for the next day be routed to check in with the Fifth Air Force Tactical Air Control Center and offer their services in close support before proceeding to the border zone, and that consideration on the highest level be given the assignment to EUSAK of Marine tactical air control parties for the handling of available naval aircraft. In the evening Commander Seventh Fleet passed the first of these suggestions to Fifth Air Force.

For the present this offer of assistance by the two Seventh Fleet fast carriers was all that could be done to provide increased support to the armies in the peninsula. For the future, despite the heavy deployment to Far Eastern waters, some further accretions of force could still be called for. To the British at Hong Kong went an urgent call to hurry back, and on 1 December Andrewes sailed for Sasebo in *Theseus*, to be shortly followed by *Kenya*. From Formosa Strait the cruiser *Manchester* was ordered up to Korean waters. Destroyer Division 31, en route to the west coast for overhaul, was ordered to reverse course. The sailing of the APA *Bexar* for the United States was cancelled. *Sicily* and her antisubmarine squadron had just reached Japan from Guam; once again she was directed to unload in order to embark Marine fighter planes. The light carrier *Bataan*, with her load of high-performance Air Force jets, was just arriving at Yokosuka, and the escort carrier *Bairoko* was on the way; shortly ComNavFE would request permission to retain these ships so as to have decks available for more Marines should the Wonsan and Yonpo airstrips be overrun. First of the carriers to see action in the summer war, *Valley Forge* was now halfway across the Pacific on her way home; she was instructed to expedite her movement to the United States, exchange her air group for that of *Boxer*, and return at once.

This evolution, however, would take time, and for the moment Task Force 77 contained only two carriers. That earlier reinforcement would prove possible was due to the existence of the mothball fleet, and to the reactivation program previously begun. On 25 July the Chief of Naval Operations had ordered the activation of the fast carrier *Princeton*, then in reserve at Bremerton. Recommissioned on 28 August, under command of Captain William 0. Gallery and with a crew largely composed of recalled reservists, *Princeton* had completed her period of shakedown training, had embarked Rear Admiral Ralph A. Ofstie, Commander Carrier Division 5, and had sailed from the west coast in early November. On the 25th she departed Pearl Harbor for the Western Pacific; on the 27th, on orders from CincPacFleet to proceed at maximum safe speed, she went up to 30 knots; on the 30th ComNavFE instructed her to proceed directly to the operating area.

On 29 and 30 November Eighth Army continued its retreat across the Chongchon River. On the left disengagement proceeded without great difficulty, but there was trouble in the center, and on the right the situation was very bad. The Turkish Brigade, moved forward following the ROK collapse, was roughly handled, while the 2nd Division, after a difficult crossing of the Chongchon, became entangled in a five-mile roadblock north of Sunchon. Cut off and cut up, swept with fire from the hills along the road and blocked by its own vehicles, the division became disorganized, and in a two-day ordeal lost some 40 percent of its personnel and most of its guns and gear.

That these losses, great though they were, were not still greater, was due in considerable part to an all-out effort by Fifth Air Force against the attacking Chinese, an effort to some degree assisted by the air groups of the fast carriers. On the morning of the 29th, pursuant to his suggestion of the previous evening, Admiral Ewen sent seven Corsairs and five ADs across the peninsula to offer their services in close support. Passed from hand to hand for a time, they were finally instructed to circle Kunu-ri in the 2nd Division trouble zone; there, after a 25–minute wait, they were directed onto a troop concentration north of the town. This qualified success, together with Air Force acceptance of his offer of the 28th, led CTF 77 to route all armed reconnaissance flights for the 30th through a point in 39°30 N 126° E, near the big bend in the Taedong and just east of the pass in which the 2nd Division was engaged in dubious combat, to offer their loads for close support to any controller they could reach. But by the time these instructions were issued new claims on the fast carriers had developed.

Up on the plateau, following the attacks of the 27th and 28th, comparative quiet reigned, but the enemy controlled the roads and Marine and Army units had been separated into a series of isolated perimeters. In this situation General Harris, the Marine air commander, had strongly recommended to ComNavFE a sustained effort by the fast carriers in the X Corps zone, and had stated that Fifth Air Force concurred in this proposal. But an evening dispatch from FAFIK on the 29th indicated that such concurrence applied only to that day's operations, and asked, in view of the "critical condition" in the EUSAK area, a divided effort for the next few days. And a message from ComNavFE, confirming that close support had priority over all other commitments, prescribed such distribution of carrier air effort.

The sorties of the 30th were consequently so divided, and the schedule of operations stepped up by the addition of five jet flights of four planes each. Thirty–nine sorties were sent up to the reservoir while 74, including 23 jet sorties, were dispatched on armed reconnaissance with instructions to report en route to any available Air Force control agency. As always in emergencies there were difficulties. In X Corps zone, communications were overcrowded and radio discipline poor, but the coherence of Marine units had not been broken and most flights found control. In the west, by contrast, the state of affairs was chaotic: the Fifth Air Force had already been forced out of its forward staging fields at Sinanju on the Chongchon, some advanced control parties had been overrun, irreplaceable control equipment had been lost, and evacuation of the Mosquito control planes from the Pyongyang airfields was in progress.

The effects of this situation were apparent in difficulties of aircraft control. Of four jet flights to the EUSAK zone three made no contact. Of the heavily-armed strike groups of Corsairs and Skyraiders that were dispatched to the west, one was weathered out, one failed to find a controller, and one found good control. There were delays, and when one flight came across to the west, after failing to make contact in the X Corps area, the ADs were incomprehensibly detached from attack to road reconnaissance. But control once gained was fair to excellent: the two propeller strikes which did make contact put 14 Corsairs and 5 ADs with more than 14 tons of napalm and 5 of bombs onto troop concentrations in the crucial 2nd Division area; the jet flight, after being directed against entrenched troops south of Tokchon, ran the roads north to Manpojin.

Considering the conditions under which advanced Air Force units were working this was not too bad a performance, but to Admiral Ewen, lacking detailed information on the state of affairs in the west, it seemed that the situation of early September was repeating itself. At 2230 on the 30th he informed Commander Seventh Fleet that while all missions sent to X Corps had been successful, about two-thirds of the effort in the EUSAK zone had been wasted, and asked him to pass the word to Fifth Air Force. This Struble did in a midnight emergency dispatch in which he reiterated his desire to help, stated that in view of unsatisfactory control in the west he would adjust his distribution of effort, and asked to be advised when the situation improved.

By now the successes of the Chinese had ended all possibility of coordinated effort by Eighth Army and X Corps, and in the two theaters of action very different types of operations were developing. In the west, as December opened, the remnants of the 2nd Division had at last reached Sunchon, and Eighth Army was disengaging and moving south toward Pyongyang. But in the X Corps zone, where the Marine Division had been fragmented and cut off, the situation was one of beleaguered strong points. On the plateau maximum air support was needed; across the peninsula, movement requirements took precedence over those for firepower.

These conditions governed the distribution of Task Force 90. On the 30th, with the ground situation steadily deteriorating, Admiral Doyle put all ships in port on two-hour notice and began to deploy his shipping to Korea. Transports were divided on a 50—50 basis, with four APAs and two AKAs being ordered to Inchon and a like number to Wonsan. But the apparently more critical situation of Eighth Army, together with the problems of handling large ships in west coast ports, led to the assignment of two-thirds of other amphibious types to Admiral Thackrey's Task Group 90.1. Thackrey himself had flown to Inchon with General Walker on the 29th to inspect and advise on port operations. On the next day two members of his staff went up to Chinnampo to look things

over, and the APA *Bexar*, the LSD *Catamount*, and two LSTs were added to his command. On 1 December, as Thackrey reported aboard *Mount McKinley* at Hungnam to confer with Admiral Doyle and to plan for the future, his flagship *Eldorado*, two more LSDs, and the fast transport *H. A. Bass* were ordered west, along with ten Scajap LSTs.

In eastern North Korea, where the ground battle was still developing, X Corps on 1 December ordered a retirement upon Hungnam. Since only the forces on the plateau had been engaged, the concentration of the other units from such widely dispersed points as Wonsan, Hyesanjin, and Chongjin would be successfully accomplished by routine land and sea movement. But while no requirement for emergency evacuation as yet existed, the situation of the Marine Division and of the Army battalions at the reservoir was such as to cause the greatest concern. The division which had been moved forward to aid the advance of an army was now surrounded, and the army was in no position to return the favor. With the MSR cut, with supplies running short and casualties accumulating, air supply, air evacuation, and the maximum possible air support were urgently required.

Although retirement rather than advance was now the order of the day, the Chinese attack had put X Corps back in the kind of beachhead situation that had existed at Inchon and had been planned for at Wonsan. The collapse in the west had forced Fifth Air Force back to fields at Seoul and beyond, and local air support depended upon the two east coast air strips and upon embarked aviation. Recognizing this situation, FAFIK on 1 December cut existing red tape, gave General Harris autonomy in the conduct of air operations in support of X Corps, and instructed him to proceed without reference to Fifth Air Force except when reinforcements were needed. And the first days of December saw a steady shift of the fast carrier effort toward complete concentration in the X Corps zone.

Commander Seventh Fleet's relay of Admiral Ewen's complaint had elicited an emergency reply. On the morning of the 1st, Fifth Air Force reported that many of its TACPs appeared to have been lost to enemy action in the fluid situation then prevailing, that every effort was being made to provide replacements, and that instructions had been issued to give naval flights priority of employment. And as had been proposed by someone in one or another service in every crisis since early July, the Air Force now suggested that for better coordination CTF 77 should provide a representative at the JOC and should establish a direct radio link.

Click here to view map

In part for technical reasons, in part because of the complex structure of the U.N. Command, communications between Fifth Air Force and the fast carriers had long presented a problem. But somewhere, in some corner of the JOC, there did in fact exist a direct CW radio circuit, activated on 6 November at the persistent urging of the task force communication officer, over which for two days drill messages had passed with gratifying speed. What was wanted by the Air Force, however, appears to have been a voice circuit rather than a manually-keyed one, and this was provided a few days later, by which time Commander Weymouth had once again been flown in to the JOC. And once again, under the lash of necessity, coordination began to improve.

On 1 December the weather over eastern Korea was very bad. Morning flights from the carriers met a solid overcast over the plateau and were diverted to the EUSAK area, where three missions totalling 23 aircraft found satisfactory control, successfully attacked large concentrations of enemy troops and abandoned friendly equipment, and blew an ammunition dump at Sinanju. But the weather which had altered their employment also prevented their return to base, for the task force had been obliged to cease flight operations late in the morning. Unable to get home, the aircraft landed at Wonsan, were kicked out again owing to rumors of a deteriorating ground situation in the neighborhood, and finally spent the night at Kimpo.

Next day the fast carriers again split their efforts, sending 28 sorties to EUSAK and half again as many to the Chosin area. In the west two flights with 10 aircraft had good success, while three totalling 18 found no controllers. But these were the last sorties sent to the western front, where EUSAK had by now disengaged, and

where fears of being outflanked and forced back upon Chinnampo had ended all thoughts of holding a line at the waist along the Pyongyang-Wonsan road. On 3 December, as the Fifth Air Force was completing the first stage of its redeployment to South Korea and to Japan, General Walker's command post displaced from Pyongyang to Seoul, and service units began packing up for the move south. Two days later the North Korean capital was abandoned to the enemy.

The rapid southward movement of Eighth Army, which threatened momently to leave Chinnampo uncovered, called urgently for the evacuation of that port. The urgency was nothing new, for in five months of war in Korea emergencies had become routine. Surprisingly, however, the sequence of planning and execution, although often greatly condensed, had not previously broken down; the organizational framework had remained intact, and operations had tested the technical competence of juniors in the execution of orders rather than their initiative in crisis when orders failed to come. Now for the first time the collapse in the west, and the short interval between defeat on the Chongchon and retirement from Pyongyang, put the job up to those on the spot.

In the course of the movement of amphibious shipping to Korea, Transport Squadron 1, Captain Kelly in *Bayfield*, had been assigned to Task Group 90.1 and ordered to Inchon. On 30 November and 1 December these ships—the APAs *Bayfield*, *Bexar* and *Okanogan*, and the AKAs *Algol* and *Montague*—had sailed independently from Japanese ports. On the afternoon of the 3rd, while heading northward into the Yellow Sea, Kelly intercepted a message from ComNavFE to CTG 90.1 which reported an urgent EUSAK request for the dispatch of these ships to Chinnampo, but which expressed doubts as to the possibility of loading and protecting so many large units there. But Admiral Thackrey was still on his Korean travels, his flagship was at sea, and his staff was slow to act. For five hours, as Bay-field steamed northward, Captain Kelly puzzled over the tone of ComNavFE's message and the lack of implementing instructions. At 2200 he decided to wait no more but to sail to the sound of the guns, and ordered his dispersed units to join him off the Chinnampo swept channel in the morning.

Others were swinging into action too. At 0330 on the 4th *Bayfield* intercepted a message from Admiral Smith to Thackrey which reported that the six west coast destroyers of TE 95.12, Captain Jeffrey V. Brock, RCN, in *Cayuga*, were available to protect the transports, and that *Ceylon* was being started from Sasebo for the west coast. Unknown to Kelly, still more help was on the way, for Admiral Andrewes, after a hasty return from Hong Kong to Sasebo, was preparing to sail with *Theseus* and four destroyers for the Yellow Sea.

Naval units already at Chinnampo consisted of the DE *Foss*, Lieutenant Commander Henry J. Ereckson, which was providing the city with electric power, and a small Korean naval base command with three motor launches; off the mouth of the Taedong River the minesweeping group was still at work. These too were standing to their posts. Offshore the sweepers took station to guide incoming ships along the tortuous channel. At 0236 of the 4th Ereckson reported that the situation in Chinnampo was shaky, but that he would keep the power on as long as possible, evacuate Eighth Army personnel, and then at the last, if still senior officer, would form a convoy and get the shipping out. Shortly the Korean base commander advised his superiors that EUSAK had ordered him to redeploy at once, and that with 100 sailboats and 50,000 refugees on hand he would try to send 30,000 out by sea and the remainder overland.

Through the night the transport group steamed on. By 0425, when orders to proceed to Chinnampo were finally received, Kelly's initiative had gained him more than six hours, and by 0930 all but *Bexar* had reached the outer end of the 84-mile swept channel and were standing in. Despite requests for information no word had been received on the size and shape of the units to be evacuated, the tactical situation ashore, the availability of ground or air support, or on who was to command the operation. But they had their orders, they believed that beleaguered army units were awaiting them, so on they went. At noon Kelly issued his operation order: man all guns, lower all boats, commence loading at once, keep steam up to the throttles. And then, at last, dispatches began to arrive: Brock's destroyers were heading his way; *Theseus* would have air cover there next day; he was in charge.

The anchors went down, the boats were launched. The call for help had been answered. Having thrust

their heads into the lion's mouth it was discouraging to the transport crews to discover that the only EUSAK units in the Chinnampo area were the 1,700 men of the port logistics group, that these had their own shipping on hand, and that while perhaps 6,000 Koreans—wounded soldiers, government workers, military and political prisoners, police and boy scouts—had some official claim on transportation, the number was hardly enough to fill the transport group. There was no need for *Bexar*, who had reached the entrance channel at 1830, but it was too late to stop her: her commanding officer had smelled powder too, so single screw, low power, and all, in she came through the dark and snow.

All transports were now in and loading was in progress. The remaining problem was to get out. Quite apart from the hazards of navigation, Chinnampo is a poor place to be caught in, for the reverse slopes of the hills that front the harbor are within mortar range of the anchorage. Word from the Army ashore indicated an 80-mile gap in the lines to the north, the enemy was reported in Pyongyang and heading for Chinnampo, no combat forces were available, and the service troops manning the road blocks were to be withdrawn at midnight. In this situation a dispatch from Captain Brock, inquiring as to the state of affairs and offering to come in in the dark if needed, was very welcome, and the offer was accepted. Off the mouth of the Taedong the destroyers got the word at 2100 and started in at once, and this time the passage took its toll. *Warramunga* grounded but got off later with little damage; *Sioux* fouled a screw in a buoy cable and turned back; but by 0240 of the 5th *Cayuga*, Athabaskan, *Bataan*, and *Forrest Royal* were anchored with their guns trained on the Chinnampo waterfront.

With the destroyers on hand things looked better. Throughout the morning, as loading continued, sailboats packed with refugees slipped down the river. *Foss* kept the power on, the ROKN shore party guarded the docks while their small boats patrolled the harbor, and in the afternoon aircraft from *Theseus* appeared overhead. Beginning at 1230 the transports were sailed independently, and by 1430 the beach was being cleared. A late influx of refugees had left 3,000 at the docks, but their problem was providentially solved by the unexpected arrival of an MSTS vessel which had failed to receive notice of its diversion to a safer destination. *Ceylon*, now standing in the entrance channel, was ordered to stay outside, and at 1730 *Bexar*, last of the transports, headed downstream escorted by *Foss*. In the harbor the LSTs with the port logistics personnel anchored for the night, and the destroyers bombarded oil storage, harbor cranes, and railway equipment. One final emergency developed when *Bexar*, having made both inward and outward voyages in darkness, grounded north of Sokto. But she got herself off without damage, and with morning the destroyers and LSTs made an uneventful downstream passage to reach Cho Do at noon and anchor in a blinding snowstorm.

As in the first days of the summer war, a west coast port had been evacuated. As in July the armies were retiring and the situation was a gloomy one. General MacArthur had earlier planned to remove Eighth Army from Korea by Christmas, leaving X Corps as an occupation force, and in an unanticipated fashion it seemed that much of this plan was coming true. Eighth Army was almost clear of North Korea, and consideration was already being given to the abandonment of Seoul and the fortification of the Naktong River line; the X Corps area of occupation, however, was a diminishing one, and the Marines were still outnumbered, surrounded, and far from the sea. Again, as in the summer, visibility was poor, and none knew what would happen next. On 29 November CTF 95 had warned west coast units of the possibility of air attack from across the Yellow Sea; on the next day a special antisubmarine patrol had been instituted off Sasebo. At NavFE headquarters the intervention of the Chinese had expanded planning responsibilities from matters of postwar redeployment to problems of more pressing concern, and from Korean waters to the entire coast of Asia. Momentarily an invasion of Formosa seemed imminent as a Navy patrol plane reported a fleet of junks heading eastward from the mainland. An unconfirmed intelligence report indicated that the Soviets were preparing an all-out air attack against Japan. On 6 December, in view of possible contingencies, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent out a general alarm to American forces throughout the world.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 9. Retreat to the South
2. 14 November-10 December: The Campaign at the Reservoir

Fifty miles north of Hungnam, at an altitude of 3,400 feet, lies the Chosin Reservoir. For 13 miles from north to south and 8 from east to west its narrow arms extend into the mountain valleys. At Yudam-ni at the western extremity there are a few square yards of flat land; at Hagaru at the southern tip there is rather more; but in general the shores are steep, and the hills which rim the water's edge are ringed at a distance of five or ten miles by mountains rising 3,000 feet above the reservoir. The country is barren and sparsely populated; the vegetation a none-too-plentiful mixture of fir, aspen, and brush. Between Hungnam at the sea and Hagaru, where the Marine Division had established its advanced base, a single road, narrow, twisting, inadequate to heavy traffic, and with bridges of only light construction, provided the MSR.

On their way up-hill the Marines had encountered two new enemies, the Chinese and the cold. Between 2 and 7 November vigorous resistance had been offered in the neighborhood of Sudong by CCF units with tank and artillery support; there was evidence that two more Chinese divisions were operating to the westward; a further build–up was suggested by pilots' reports of troops approaching from the northwest and north. But with air support the Chinese roadblocks were broken, Koto-ri was entered on 11 November and Hagaru on the 14th, and aerial reconnaissance indicated that the enemy was straggling to the northwest. Yet if the Chinese had for the moment gone, winter had come. Intermittent snowfall, encountered during the advance up-hill, had by now blanketed the plateau. As early as mid-November canteens were freezing and bursting, while by December night temperatures would at times reach 25° below zero. Climatically, at least, the Marines did face a new war.

Through this extreme cold, which brought frostbite and respiratory disease to personnel, adversely affected the operation of weapons and equipment, and made foxhole digging in the frozen earth a six to eight-hour affair, the northward advance had continued. By late November the entire Marine Division was strung out along the 75 miles of road from Hungnam to Yudam–ni. Two regiments were in the Yudam–ni area, division headquarters and an infantry battalion were located at Hagaru, while on the MSR the villages of Koto-ri and Chinhung–ni were garrisoned by something more than two battalions. A total of about seven days' supply had been dumped on the plateau. Against this force, divided and far from base and with a strength of slightly more than 25,000, there would be committed during the next two weeks eight divisions from three Chinese Communist armies whose strength totalled some 60,000 men.

Chinese movement into Korea had begun in mid–October, as the Eighth Army was approaching Pyongyang, with the passage of the Yalu by leading elements of the Fourth CCF Field Army, General Lin Piao. As he deployed to oppose General Walker's advance, Lin had detached his 42nd Army to cover his left against the intrusions of X Corps; this unit had been the source of the opposition against which the Marines had run up at Sudong. Following the movement of the Fourth Field Army, the 9th Army Group of General Chen Yi's Third Field Army had crossed over into Korea to oppose X Corps; Lin's units had retired to the westward, and had been replaced at Yudam–ni by four divisions of the 20th Army. The intention of this force, according to prisoners, was to bypass the advancing Marines and cut the MSR to the east and south.

Other Chinese movements were also in progress. As the 20th Army approached from the northwest, two divisions of the 27th Army moved down on the reservoir from the north and there divided, with one moving onward against Yudam-ni and the other coming down the eastern shore. With completion of these movements in the last days of November the two Marine regiments at Yudam-ni found themselves engaged by two divisions, one from the 20th Army and one from the 27th; a second division from the 27th Army had attacked the three

battalions of the 7th Infantry Division east of the reservoir; bypassing the American forces, the three remaining 20th Army divisions had moved onward to cut the road east of Yudam-ni, to attack the advanced base at Hagaru, and to operate against the Hamhung road in the neighborhood of Koto-ri.

On the plateau, as in the west, Chinese tactics were to permit, indeed to encourage, a maximum extension of U.N. forces, and then to cut the MSR, press against the column from all sides, fracture, fragment, and destroy it. Such procedures had been effective on the Chongchon River, but although the Marines were far deeper in enemy country, and had a far more precarious line of communications, the success was not to be repeated. Rather than extending itself along the road, the Marine Division formed the modern equivalent of the square and, with firepower maintained through air supply and multiplied by air support, accomplished the extrication of its units and the destruction of its enemies. By night the Marines, concentrated and dug in in tight perimeters, presented heavily-armed strong points on which the Chinese impaled themselves in the attack. By day, with close support aircraft on station and with flanking forces clearing the heights along the road, they formed moving fortresses which brushed the Communists aside, while over the hill, beyond artillery range, the extension of fire power by Marine and Navy aircraft kept the enemy down.

The coming of the Chinese onslaught had found the fast carriers still committed to armed reconnaissance. On 28 November the forces available to General Harris consisted of MAG 12 with two fighter and one night fighter squadrons at Wonsan, MAG 33 with one fighter and one night fighter squadron at Yonpo and a fighter squadron in *Badoeng Strait*, and the Air Force's 35th Fighter-Bomber Group at Yonpo. There were plenty of calls on the services of these units. At Chinhung-ni, in the southern sector of the MSR, Chinese probing attacks had begun on the 26th; west of Koto-ri, next day, Marine patrols had encountered the new enemy; on the night of the 27th heavy fighting had broken out in Yudam-ni and east of the reservoir. On the 28th liaison pilots reported that the enemy controlled the road between Yudam-ni and Toktong Pass, between the pass and Hagaru, and between Hagaru and Koto-ri, and in addition to thus segmenting the Marine Division into four groups had surrounded the Army forces east of the reservoir. In all these areas enemy pressure continued, but the central problem, on which the future of all units on the plateau depended, was the defense of Hagaru.

At Hagaru there were located three irreplaceable commodities. There the Marine Division had set up its command post, there supplies had been laid down for the developing campaign, and there, on one of the few flat pieces of ground in North Korea, was an incipient airstrip, begun on the 18th with the intention of providing facilities for twin–engined transport aircraft, which by the 27th was about a quarter completed. But the defensive force available for the protection of this investment was very limited, and consisted merely of one rifle battalion, two batteries of artillery, and service and division troops. General Smith had ordered reinforcements up from Koto–ri, but the Chinese did not await their coming and on the night of 28–29 November committed two regiments against the perimeter. Violent fighting continued throughout the frozen darkness and the line was more than once broken, but the enemy proved unable to exploit his gains. Although pressure remained heavy on the 29th the first crisis had been surmounted.

With Hagaru still holding out, the second phase of the campaign began. Control of the Army forces at the reservoir was passed to General Smith, who was directed to concentrate all units at Hagaru in anticipation of a further move to the southward. Pursuant to these instructions the forces at Yudam-ni were ordered to fight their way back, and on the afternoon of 1 December, after a day of preparation, the 5th and 7th Marines disengaged and started south for Hagaru.

Orders from X Corps had contemplated the employment of one of these regiments to bring out the beleaguered 7th Division units from Sinhung-ni on the eastern shore of the reservoir. But some time would elapse before this would be possible, and no other forces were available for this task. The reinforcements ordered up from Koto-ri had had a difficult time of it on the road, only a part had managed to get through, and the night of 30 November brought further heavy attacks at Hagaru and against the Army battalions. On the morning of 1

December, therefore, the Army troops were ordered to break out to the southward at the earliest possible time, and were advised that while no troop assistance could be given, owing to the situation at Hagaru, maximum air support would be provided.

The air strength available for the support of X Corps had by this time been considerably increased, as a result of the eastward shift of the fast carrier effort. On the 30th, following General Harris' first request for carrier air, Task Force 77 had sent 39 sorties to the reservoir, of which 14 struck at Chinese troops surrounding the isolated Army units while 25 attacked the enemy in the hills about Hagaru. By bad luck, however, the next day brought bad weather both at the reservoir and in the Sea of Japan. Although aircraft from *Badoeng Strait* and Marine shore-based squadrons got through to napalm the Chinese enemy, the early flights from Task Force 77 were weathered out of the reservoir, and in late morning the force was obliged to cancel operations. At midday the Army troops began their southward movement with 20 fighters overhead, but in the course of the afternoon a combination of heavy attacks and enemy roadblocks fragmented the column, most officers and key NCOs became casualties, and as darkness fell the force dissolved. It had almost made it in: the disintegration took place only four and a half miles from Hagaru; but although a number of stragglers was brought in across the frozen reservoir, total casualties reached almost 75 percent.

Tragic though it was, this was to be the last such enemy success. It was not only in the eastward movement of carrier effort that the support situation was improving. A plan on the part of the patrol squadrons to provide air supply and evacuation by flying boat had been abandoned when the first flights disclosed that the reservoir was frozen solid. But air drops had been begun on the 28th by Marine and Air Force transport planes, and Combat Cargo Command, by notable efforts, had by 1 December increased deliveries from 70 to 250 tons a day. Despite the violent Chinese attacks, work on the Hagaru airstrip had been pressed around the clock; almost half-completed by the 1st, it was consequently declared operational, and four Air Force C–47s flew in with supplies. On the same day MAG 12's three fighter squadrons moved north from Wonsan to Yonpo, thus concentrating nearer the area of action. On the 3rd the Fifth Air Force would offer its entire light bomber effort for the support of the campaign.

The 2nd of December was the last day on which the carriers split their effort between eastern and western theaters. As the 5th and 7th Marines continued their move toward Hagaru, Task Force 77 put two-thirds of its sorties into the reservoir area, attacking troop positions at Toktong Pass and to the southward, and providing fighter cover to transports flying supplies into Hagaru. Although hampered by excessive radio chatter, and by a difference in scale of grid charts held by controllers and controlled, the day's work seemed generally successful. Following a Marine request for night hecklers over the Yudam-ni road, where many thousands of Chinese were reported active, the work was continued on into the darkness.

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Chinese attacks on the moving column continued heavy throughout the night and into the next day, but without disorganizing the advance. The Marines, by contrast, had a considerable impact on their enemies, as did the very large amount of air support provided. Throughout the 3rd, observation planes circled over the column, warning of enemy positions ahead; a total of 117 sorties flown by the five Marine squadrons at Yonpo and the sixth in *Badoeng Strait* were devoted to support of the movement; Task Force 77 put an additional 80 sorties into the reservoir area. The 45 flights of 197 aircraft made available to the close support section of MTACS 2 at Hagaru were parcelled out as needed among the various control agencies, most of them at the battalion level. Of the carrier aircraft involved 32 attacked the enemy near Yudam–ni and in the rear of the column, 23 struck targets along the flanks from Toktong Pass to Hagaru, and 25 worked over Chinese forces east of the reservoir and south of Hagaru. Once again excessive radio chatter was reported, but despite this, and despite snowstorms in the objective area, the desired results were obtained, and by evening the lead elements of RCT 7 were inside the Hagaru perimeter. On the 4th the weight of air support increased still further as 68 flights of 238 aircraft came up

to the reservoir. By afternoon the entire Yudam-ni movement was in.

The first step in the concentration had thus been successfully accompushed, but the campaign had hardly begun. Others beside the Marines were heading for Hagaru. On 4 December a morning flight from *Leyte* sighted and attacked an estimated thousand troops at the northern end of the reservoir; in the same area, later in the day, another *Leyte* flight reported troops moving south on all trails. But whatever these newcomers might intend, it was reasonably clear by now who was in charge. General Almond had earlier authorized General Smith to destroy any equipment which would delay his withdrawal, but the Marine commander had observed that he intended to bring out all that he could. On the 5th, Major General William H. Tunner, USAF, whose Combat Cargo Command had done such vital work in air supply and casualty evacuation, flew into Hagaru with an offer to lift the troops out, only to discover that the Marines held different views and had been flying in replacements. If movement was not impeded by anything more than Chinese forces, and if air support and air supply continued as before, the Marine Division could operate at will. Still, it was a long and slippery downhill road that stretched from Hagaru to Hungnam.

General Harris had flown up to Hagaru on the 4th and had watched the Yudam-ni Marines come in. That night, in a dispatch to Admiral Ewen, he observed that they could not have made it without air support, and asked for all possible help in covering the downhill march, front, flanks, and rear. Next day MAW 1 brought out its air support plan designed to accomplish these ends. From dawn to dark, 24 close support aircraft would be on station over the column, while the surplus worked the hills flanking the roads; through the hours of darkness, night hecklers from the carriers, from Marine F7F squadrons, and from Fifth Air Force, would harass the enemy.

By this time the concentration of fast carrier effort in the X Corps zone had been made official. FEAF, on 2 December, had asked a resumption of attacks against the Yalu bridges, but the request had been turned down by Admiral Struble in view of the pressing need for air support on the plateau. In effect, if not in form, this marked the end of fast carrier support to Eighth Army's withdrawal, for although two flights were instructed to proceed to the EUSAK area if not urgently required at the reservoir, all were in fact employed in the north. On the 3rd, as ComNavFE confirmed that close support remained the primary responsibility of Task Force 77, General Harris made another try, and "urgently" recommended the assignment of the main carrier effort to the support of the Marine Division. On the 4th FEAF concurred in this recommendation.

In other ways supporting strength continued on the rise. Although the Air Force fighter-bomber group had redeployed south from Yonpo by air and by LST, General Almond had put in a bid for B–29 strikes against command posts and troop concentrations in towns outside the immediate zone of action. *Sicily* was expected momentarily, and on the morning of 5 December an important reinforcement took place as *Princeton*, escorted by four destroyers, joined Task Force 77 and began launching aircraft. The result was a record 248 sorties controlled by the close support section of MTACS 2 at Hagaru.

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As quantity was important, so was quality. The presence of the fast carriers provided types of force not otherwise available. Only the carrier air groups operated the heavily-armed AD whose load, greater than that of the World War II Flying Fortress, made it the outstanding attack plane in Korea. Defensively, too, the Seventh Fleet's contribution was unique: with no Marine jets yet in Korea, and with the nearest Air Force squadrons 200 miles away at Kimpo, only the fast carriers could attempt to provide a jet combat air patrol over the area of operations. This CAP, a precautionary measure of some importance in view of the MIG concentration across the Yalu, had been earlier discontinued in the interest of fuel economy and sustained flight operations, but with the arrival of *Princeton* it was reinstituted.

On 6 December the Marines started south over the winding road. Disengagement at Hagaru required hard fighting, for the troops previously sighted to the northward had now arrived, and two divisions of the Chinese 26th Army had taken up position on the eastern side of the MSR. Morning air operations were prevented by a

ground fog, but this in time lifted, and the hundred offensive sorties sent up by *Princeton*, *Leyte*, and the Marine squadrons provided strikes against troops in ridges along the road as well as a jet CAP. All day and throughout the night the march continued; in mid-morning of the 7th, as the rearguard was preparing to move out from Hagaru, the lead elements entered Koto-ri. For a brief period the convoy extended over the entire 11-mile distance between the towns, but air support kept the Chinese under control until the movement was completed.

By now the exigencies of the situation had led to innovation in the form of an airborne close support control center. At the suggestion of the MTACS personnel with the Marine Division, whose work would be made difficult with radios packed for march and shielded by the surrounding hills, a Marine R5D had been hastily modified for this task. An extra radio, a chart board, and a situation map were installed; extra oxygen and cabin fuel tanks gave both personnel and plane the required endurance; three controllers were flown out from Hagaru to man the aircraft. From dawn to dusk from 6 to 10 December this very large Mosquito orbited over the moving column to provide, in addition to the basic necessity of reliable VHF communications, the bonus of sustained visual observation of the entire area of action.

On the 7th the three fast carriers continued operations, and *Badoeng Strait* was joined by *Sicily*. In the course of the day, and despite bad weather in the afternoon, *Philippine Sea*, *Princeton*, and *Leyte* put 125 offensive sorties into the Koto-ri area, more than half the day's total of 216. Of the 49 flights handled by the airborne control center, one was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division and eight to the control parties of the 5th Marines, notably to the 2nd Battalion, rearguard during the disengagement at Hagaru. The remaining 40 were employed on search and attack missions against troops in the hills along the road, troops and horses east of the reservoir, and villages in the hills near Koto-ri.

These villages had by now become prime targets. The discrepancy between infrequent air sightings of the enemy and persistent reports from local inhabitants of vast quantities of Chinese had been resolved by the discovery that the CCF soldiers had been crowding by day into all available housing for shelter both from air attack and cold. Reports from the dispossessed Koreans of this invasion of their homes had been followed by requests for the destruction of their villages, and thus of the invader. Once begun, these attacks produced eruptions of surprising numbers of Chinese soldiery, and bombing and frostbite multiplied enemy casualties.

The Marines had reached Koto-ri on the 7th. But the roughest stretch was still to come, in the march across the divide and down to Chinhung-ni. On this route, described by General Shepherd as "a defile through which no military force should ever have to fight," cliff sides are steep, with drops of more than a hundred feet from the road's edge; the road itself abounds in hairpin turns; opportunities for road blocks are unsurpassed. Midway through the gorge there was a bridge, three times blown by the enemy and twice restored by Army engineers, on whose further replacement depended the division's ability to bring out its vehicles. On the 6th a request for airdropped treadway bridge material had been made to Combat Cargo Command, and the next day this unprecedented operation was successfully accomplished.

The move south from Koto-ri began on 8 December, while a battalion of the 1st Marines attacked up-hill from Chinhung-ni to gain control of the lower half of the road. The bad weather which had limited carrier operations on the afternoon before had now really arrived: the attacks were begun in a swirling snowstorm, throughout the day zero visibility prevailed, the carriers were unable to operate, and of 5 flights of 15 aircraft which got off the ground at Yonpo only one reached the zone of march. But on the 9th, with the fast carriers back at work, X Corps sorties mounted to a record 479, half of which were assigned to the airborne control center. This abundance of riches permitted large diversions to search and attack; a wide area east and north of the reservoir was covered, and in addition to numerous troop concentrations the bag of targets included such unlikely items as switch engines and a horse corral. On the ground the chasm was successfully bridged: by great good fortune the enemy had blown only the bridge and not the road, and by afternoon of the 9th the division trains were leaving Koto-ri.

On 10 December, two weeks to the day after the Chinese onfall at Yudam-ni, the leading elements of the Marines reached Chinhung-ni and the command post was flown down to Hungnam. At a cost to the enemy immeasurably greater than that to itself, the Marine Division, under its canopy of Marine and naval air, had been extricated from an impossible situation. The Chinese were still hovering on the flanks, and there were minor reverses in the rear that night; but from Chinhung-ni it was all downhill, and on the 11th all units reached the staging area at Hungnam. After reaching the sea, according to a later chronicler, the Marines set up a trophy and sacrificed to Hermes. Doubtless some of them did, if only metaphorically, but they might better have devoted their offerings to Poseidon. The division had received harsh treatment from the god of roads, but once again in touch with the friendly sea all things were possible.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 9. Retreat to the South
3. 30 November-13 December: Concentration in the East

The 2nd Division was still in the gantlet, the Marines were still up on the hill, and the deployment of Task Force 90 to Korea was just beginning, when on 30 November General Almond's headquarters issued orders for a retirement upon Hamhung. For the next ten days, while Eighth Army retired southward and the Marines fought their way down from the reservoir, the concentration of X Corps in the Hamhung–Hungnam area continued by land and by sea.

The instructions of 30 November found Almond's command widely dispersed. Three battalions of the 7th Infantry Division were with the Marines at the Chosin Reservoir, while the rest of the division was stretched out along the road to Hyesanjin. From its base at Wonsan the 3rd Division was expanding its holdings westward across the narrow part of Korea. On the eastern flank the ROK I Corps had a division at Hapsu and another on the coast, near the outskirts of Chongjin, where its advance was being supported by Commander Cruiser Division 1, Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, in *Saint Paul*, with the destroyer *Zellars*.

Implementing orders went out the following day. At the same time that the Marines were instructed to concentrate at Hagaru, the 3rd Division was ordered to reassemble at Wonsan, and the 7th Division to withdraw southward from the Manchurian border to Hamhung. Up the coast to the northeast the ROK I Corps was ordered to retire on Songjin, and to prepare for further movement by land or sea. On 2 December, after firing night harassing missions north of Chongjin, *Saint Paul* and *Zellars* moved south to Kyongsong Man to support the withdrawal of the ROK Capital Division.

No serious pressure was to be exerted against the ROK corps. Except for the battalions at the reservoir the retirement of the 7th Division was unhindered by the enemy. But at Wonsan apprehensions of enemy attack had prevented the aircraft from Task Force 77 from staying the night of 1 December, and X Corps reported that road and rail communications with Hungnam had been cut. Since here, if anywhere, it seemed that an emergency evacuation might be necessary, Admiral Doyle requested Commander Seventh Fleet to order *Saint Paul* and *Zellars* down for fire support. The message got a rapid response, and although the destroyer was held in the north until a relief could be provided, Admiral Hillenkoetter at once headed southward. By mid-day of 3 December *Saint Paul* had anchored in the harbor of Wonsan.

There she was shortly joined by a transport group of four APAs, two AKAs, and an APD, Captain Albert E. Jarrell in *Henrico*, which had previously been ordered forward from Japan. On the afternoon of the 3rd, Doyle instructed Jarrell to commence loading the 3rd Infantry Division on arrival, advised Admiral Joy's headquarters of his estimate of shipping requirements for the lift, and himself sailed for Wonsan to supervise the out-loading. But the emergency had been somewhat exaggerated: loading had begun by the time CTF 90 arrived on the 4th, but no enemy pressure was in fact being exerted; most of the division was already moving north to Hamhung by road and rail, and only an estimated 4,000 men and 12,000 tons of gear remained to be removed.

This situation permitted a downward revision of the Wonsan requirements and freed some shipping for use elsewhere. On the 5th Captain Michael F. D. Flaherty in *Noble* was detached from the Wonsan group with a couple of merchantmen and ordered to Songjin to outload elements of the retiring ROK I Corps. Unlike the harbor at Iwon, Task Force 90's previous farthest north, the mineral and lumber export center of Songjin had reasonable loading facilities: behind a sheltering peninsula an 1,800-foot quay with depths of more than 27 feet permitted large ships to lie alongside. At Songjin the transports were joined by one Scajap and one Korean LST, everything went according to the book, and on the 9th, as the destroyers *Moore* and *Maddox* arrived to cover his departure,

Flaherty finished loading up his task element and sailed his ships for Pusan.

At Wonsan, in the meantime, embarkation of the 3rd Division remnants continued, assisted by a Marine shore party battalion. On the 5th one Army battalion and two of Korean Marines formed a defensive perimeter, and *Saint Paul*, *Zellars*, *Hank*, and *Sperry* fired a short mission against a reported enemy troop concentration. But although the ships continued throughout the operation to provide night harassing and interdiction fires, little opposition developed. While loading was in progress Captain Jarrell carried out a search for enemy installations on the principal harbor islands; on Yo Do an observation post was destroyed, while Sin Do produced four 76-millimeter guns and a couple of ammunition dumps.

Except for one ROK Marine battalion, assigned to cover the removal of MAG 12 equipment from Kalma Pando, all friendly forces were clear by the 7th. There remained one empty Victory ship, and into this, during the day, Korean refugees were jammed to a total far in excess of normal capacity. With covering fire from *Saint Paul* and the destroyers, the final withdrawal took place on the evening of the 9th, and by 2215 the beach was clear. Everything had been taken out, no destruction of supplies or gear had been necessary, and the total Wonsan lift—3,800 troops, 7,000 refugees, 1,146 vehicles, and 10,000 tons of cargo—exceeded that removed from Chinnampo. On the morning of the 10th, as the last transport cleared the harbor, Admiral Hillenkoetter headed *Saint Paul* and *Hank* back to the northward, to provide fire support at Hungnam. All that remained at Wonsan was a salvage group in the outer harbor working over the hulks of *Pirate* and *Pledge*.

For ten days divers from the rescue ship *Conserver* had been attempting to remove classified gear from the sunken minesweepers. But the work had been hampered by heavy swells, by the bottom mud which partially covered the hulks, and by water temperatures in the cool low 50's. On 5 December *Diachenko* was placed in charge of the operations, and next day the decision was taken to demolish what remained of the minesweepers. Covered by *Zellars* and *Sperry* the work continued, depth and demolition charges were used to dismantle the wrecks, and on the 13th the job was done.

Two east coast evacuations had by now been completed, and a third was shaping up. General MacArthur's first reports of the emergency created by the Chinese intervention had limited themselves to a description of the "new war" and to a request for Chinese Nationalist reinforcement, but on 30 November he had forwarded to Washington his strategic concept for dealing with the altered situation. As was perhaps natural for a commander whose devotion to a maritime strategy had forced through the Inchon and Wonsan landings, this called for the retirement of Eighth Army on Pyongyang and Seoul, and for the concentration of X Corps in the Hamhung–Wonsan region, where it would present a flanking threat to a Chinese southward movement.

At Tobruk, in the North African campaign of 1941, the British had for eight months held a lodgment against heavier metal than the Chinese could be expected to bring forward. During his withdrawal from the reservoir General Smith had expected that a perimeter would be formed and maintaned in the Hamhung region; General Almond felt that a position on the coast could be defended throughout the winter; Admiral Doyle and others held similar views. But this possibility seems to have fallen victim to the larger scene. The usefulness of such an advanced position depends largely on the moves in prospect for supporting forces, and these were for the moment retrograde. Impressed by CincFE's description of the emergency, oppressed by their world–wide responsibilities, the Joint Chiefs on 1 December bad pointed out the dangers of the central mountain gap, and had instructed General MacArthur to withdraw X Corps and coordinate it with Eighth Army. And a second dispatch from CincFE, in which he declared himself unable to hold the line at the waist of Korea, brought orders to consolidate his forces into beachheads.

The crisis in Korea had by this time produced another trans–Pacific migration of the high command. General Shepherd had come out from Pearl, and on his arrival on the 6th had found CincFE's demeanor "not optimistic;" General Collins had been flown out from Washington. On the 7th discussions were held in Tokyo between Generals MacArthur, Collins, and Stratemeyer, Admirals Joy and Struble, General Shepherd, and others,

concerning the proposed new U.N. plan, which called for holding Seoul as long as possible prior to retirement upon Pusan, and for ferrying X Corps back south and integrating it into Eighth Army.

Since General Walker's command had already reached the area of Seoul, action was for the moment required only of X Corps. Following the Tokyo discussions the responsible conferees adjourned to *Mount McKinley* at Hungnam, where Joy, Shepherd, Struble, Doyle, and Higgins considered both the problem of defending a perimeter and the more probable alternative of withdrawal. But the uncertainty was ended on the 9th by JCS approval of General MacArthur's revised plan, and by announcement of the decision to redeploy to the southward. On his arrival from Koto-ri next day, General Smith learned that the Marines would go out first, and embarkation was begun.

For the previous week CTF 90 and his staff had been preparing for contingencies. To enlarge usable harbor space and to provide lanes for fire support ships a second minesweeping operation had been undertaken at Hungnam. Plans had been sketched out both for the defense of a perimeter and for the evacuation, not only of X Corps, but of west and south coast ports as well. Now, with the decision to withdraw, Admiral Doyle had to halt all operations in support of X Corps, put his organization into reverse and accelerate again. A shift to seaborne logistics was at once commenced: floating dumps of POL and ammunition were established, along with a floating evacuation center and a floating prisoner of war camp. A large order was put in for life jackets, cargo and floater nets, debarkation ladders, and the like, and once again a redeployment of Amphibious Force shipping was begun. Admiral Thackrey was directed to send all available APAs and AKAs together with one LSD from Inchon to Hungnam; Admiral Joy was requested to provide ten empty cargo ships daily at Hungnam until further notice; the instructions of the Wonsan and Songjin evacuation groups were altered.

At Wonsan Captain Jarrell had originally been ordered to sail his ships to Pusan for unloading. On the 9th, however, this directive was modified by orders to transport Marine shore party and MSTS shipping control personnel to Hungnam for service in another evacuation. Some reloading was required to consolidate these units in a single LST, but this was accomplished in routine fashion. At Songjin the situation was more complicated.

Captain Flaherty had also been directed to send his ships to Pusan, and had done so on the afternoon of the 9th. But as midnight approached, nine hours after his two LSTs had departed for the south and six hours after the transports had got underway, a message was received changing the destination to Hungnam. Ordering his merchant ships to proceed there independently, Flaherty began to search the ocean darkness for the vanished LSTs, and in time managed to find one by radar and to raise the other on 500 kcs. On arrival at Hungnam one ROK RCT and the Capital Division's artillery were offloaded to strengthen the defenses of the perimeter, and the task element then continued to Pusan.

The events of 9 December marked the beginning of what later became known, following the concept of ComNavFE's operation plan, as an amphibious operation in reverse. The image is a useful one, and one can envisage the proceedings in terms of a film run backward. On shore, supplies are packed up, moved down to the beach, and lifted out to the anchored cargo ships; from the steadily shrinking perimeter the troops retire on the embarkation points; the landing craft return to the transports; the transports put to sea. But in two ways, at least, one of which complicated and one of which facilitated the operation, things were different.

On the debit side this backwards operation involved great problems in the compression of space and time. Troops and supplies that had reached the theater through three ports and troops that had arrived overland now had to be funneled out a single harbor; personnel and gear that had come in over a period of two months were to be removed in the space of two weeks. With a winter campaign in prospect, General Almond had been authorized a 30 day supply level for his forces, and while this had not yet been achieved, X Corps was considerably oversupplied for an evacuation. The extension of operations from Wonsan to the Manchurian border had led to a dispersal of supply dumps; some tergiversation regarding the employment of the 3rd Infantry Division had complicated administrative procedures; air operations at Wonsan and Yonpo had brought the

accumulation of large stocks of gasoline and aviation ordnance. Initial estimates of the task at hand called for the removal of between 110,000 and 120,000 men, some 15,000 vehicles, and about 400,000 measurement tons of cargo. No such lift had been required since Okinawa, and although here the distances were fortunately shorter, the limited amount of available shipping necessarily called for multiple turnarounds.

On the credit side, however, there are advantages to the amphibious departure. In contrast to an arrival from the sea, control organizations can be established before work is begun, and without the complications of enemy action. At Hungnam the problem of matching outgoing troops and supplies with incoming ships was accomplished by two such organisms, one ashore under Colonel Edward H. Forney, USMC, Deputy Chief of Staff of X Corps, and a special organization set up in Task Force 90 by Admiral Doyle.

As control officer, Colonel Forney, with his staff, selected the units to be loaded on the basis of available tactical and administrative information, and assigned shipping in consultation with the operations section of Task Force 90. Port operating units were then advised of dockside requirements, the loading section ground out its plans, the movement section got the traffic down to the water, and the rations people laid down these useful items alongside.

While the outbound units were moving to the docks, shipping from over the horizon was being put in to meet them by the Task Force 90 control group. Two frigates in the offing guided vessels through the swept channel to the control ship near the harbor entrance. There they were boarded and their characteristics ascertained for relay to the operations section, and there they were instructed, as conditions warranted, either to anchor in the outer harbor or to continue in. Here too shipping was separated by category: APA and AKA types from the Amphibious Force were anchored close in for loading by small craft from the beach, while merchant ships and LSTs were sent on into the inner harbor.

Click here to view map

Inside the main pier and breakwater there were beaching slots for 14 LSTs, while four concrete wharves provided seven workable alongside berths. Bad winter weather, which restricted lighterage outside the sheltered area, brought the expedient of double-banking cargo vessels and loading the inboard one from the wharf and the outboard one by lighter. The result was that twice as many ships could be worked, whatever the state of the sea, the run from the loading beaches was greatly reduced, and men could be marched from the wharves across the inboard vessels to those on the outside.

At the docks and on the beaches outgoing soldiers and incoming shipping met. The port was operated by the Army's 2nd Engineer Special Brigade, reinforced by elements of the Marine shore party battalion which had been brought up from Wonsan. Winch operators were provided by the ESB and stevedoring by 1,200 Japanese, who had arrived in late November and who were housed in the mother ship *Shinano Maru*. It would be hard to imagine a more joint or combined operation: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Merchant Marine, Americans, Koreans, and Japanese worked expeditiously together and to excellent purpose. During the Second World War there had been some unedifying exhibitions on the part of merchant mariners in forward areas, but none developed here, and the performance of the crews of the time-charter vessels was uniformly excellent.

Administrative arrangements had been pretty well completed by 10 December, when the Marines began to arrive, and although no corps operation order was as yet available, the Marine Division began to load at once. In planning for the evacuation General Almond had been faced with the problem of whether to conduct a simultaneous withdrawal of elements of all units from their pie–shaped sectors of the perimeter, or a retirement by divisions which would require side–slipping the remaining units to fill the emptied gaps. But the choice turned out to be largely illusory; the decision was forced upon the corps commander, both by his instructions, which called for the earliest possible outloading of the ROK Corps, and by the battleworn condition of the Marines. As promulgated, therefore, the plan called for the immediate evacuation of the Marines, followed in order by the Koreans, and by the 7th and 3rd Divisions. And step by step, as troops were taken out and the perimeter

diminished, responsibility for the foothold would be transferred to the Navy.

With embarkation planning under control, it remained to erect defenses against possible enemy attack. Unlike the amphibious entrances into Korea which had preceded it, this amphibious exodus was conducted without the organization of a Joint Task Force, and indeed the command arrangements, derived from the NavFE Op Plan of 13 November, were rather odd. The possibility that Soviet intervention would follow upon that of the Chinese, which had already led Admiral Joy to reinstitute the submarine patrol of La Pérouse Strait and to intensify his air search, made him feel that the Seventh Fleet should be kept free to move upon an instant's notice. The result was to place Commander Seventh Fleet in a supporting role: Admiral Struble was to provide air and gunfire support as feasible, while continuing carrier operations against the enemy in coordination with Fifth Air Force. Admiral Doyle's instructions, by contrast, were very far-reaching, and charged him not only with the responsibility for Korean redeployment, but for control of air and naval gunfire in embarkation areas, gunfire support of friendly units, protection of shipping, and maintenance of the blockade. And a final complication was provided by the presence of General Shepherd, Commanding General Fleet Marine Force Pacific, as ComNavFE representative "on matters relating to the Marine Corps and for consultation and advice," and, as he later described the situation, with oral instructions from both CincPacFleet and ComNavFE to take command of the naval phase of the evacuation should he consider it desirable. But if the possibilities for confusion here were infinite, the individuals involved were fortunately able to make things work.

At sea the enemy remained quiescent. No submarine threat developed, and shipping was sailed independently in steady procession from Hungnam to Pusan and back again. But on land, as from the beginning, and now also in the air, the enemy had capabilities which deserved consideration. The attentions of the supporting naval units were consequently focused on the perimeter, on the mountainous hinterland behind Hungnam, and on the airstrips beyond the Yalu.

Large numbers of high-performance jets were now operating from these Manchurian fields; quite possibly advanced types of attack planes had also been made available to the Chinese. The large quantities of troops and shipping concentrated at the Hungnam beachhead offered an inviting target, and it was at least conceivable that the enemy's success on land might tempt him to offensive action in the air. Against this threat X Corps and its supporting naval forces were on their own; no help could be expected from Fifth Air Force, whose nearest fighter group at Kimpo was as far away as were the Antung MIGs. So long as Yonpo airfield remained operational the Marines would provide combat air patrol, and on the 10th this defensive effort was strengthened as the first Marine jets to reach the Orient flew in from Japan. But shrinkage of the perimeter would uncover the airstrip and force their departure three days later, from which time Admiral Ewen's F9Fs would form the mainstay of the defense against air attack.

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In the absence of an overall commander, the air plans were drawn up in consultation by representatives of Task Force 90 and Task Force 77, and Commander Seventh Fleet was advised of what was required of his carriers. Air support duties imposed upon the escort carriers called for four fighters on station throughout the day for close support, and for the provision of tactical air observers and airborne controllers. The fast carriers were assigned responsibilities in air defense, deep support, and interdiction, and for night heckler missions and night combat air patrol. This last requirement amounted to something of an overload, but as congestion in the harbor area and the all-night air traffic at Yonpo made defense by antiaircraft gunfire undesirable, the task force undertook to do what it could. Since air control was complicated by the hills north of Hungnam, which blanketed the radars of ships in harbor, the destroyer *Duncan* was assigned as radar picket ship and stationed 50 miles to seaward. All arrangements were completed by the 11th, at which time Admiral Doyle assumed responsibility for air defense of the Hungnam embarkation area.

Estimates of enemy capabilities indicated that the Chinese could throw between six and eight divisions

against the perimeter, all of which, however, were thought to have been seriously weakened in their encounters with the Marines. Against this threat Task Force 77 would fly offensive strikes upcountry, and in emergency would augment the escort carrier effort in close-in work. The embarkation plan was designed to leave as much artillery on shore as long as possible. Fire support ships were assigned to reinforce the corps and regimental guns, and their efforts, with those of the close support aircraft, were tied in through the Corps Fire Support Coordination Center, a dominantly Marine-staffed outfit with a naval member as gunfire officer.

Fire support planning was also tidied up on the 11th, in a conference between General Almond, Admiral Hillenkoetter, and a representative of Task Force 77. Stations for the fire support ships were established in the swept channel, which by now extended ten miles on either side of the port; the defensive positions ashore were laid out to permit naval gunfire to bear upon an attacking force; control of. Gunfire was assigned to Anglico and Marine personnel attached to the 3rd and 7th Divisions. In addition to his flagship *Saint Paul*, and the destroyers and LSMRs of Task Group 90.8, Admiral Hillenkoetter had the services of *Rochester*, Admiral Higgins' flagship, and of two destroyers from Higgins' group. On the 16th the planned total of two cruisers, six destroyers, and three rocket ships was met, as *Zellars* and *Sperry* reported in from Wonsan.

Although the ship in which he hung his hat was doing duty in the fire support group, Admiral Higgins' responsibilities lay elsewhere. Upon him and upon the remaining units of Task Groups 95.2 and 95.6 lay the multitudinous responsibilities of blockade, control, escort, and minesweeping, which among other tasks involved maintaining two destroyers on coastal blockade to the northward, a frigate patrolling off the Wonsan swept channel, and three more handling traffic in and out of Hungnam.

The directives for these supporting operations, originally issued separately, were consolidated on the 13th in Admiral Doyle's Operation Order 20-50. The arrangements had been made, the forces deployed, the evacuation was already underway. That these defensive preparations were in the end hardly required would seem to prove their wisdom. No serious effort was made against the perimeter by the Communist enemy, whose casualties had been very great, and at Hungnam, as on other occasions in history, the availability of arms made their employment largely unnecessary.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 9. Retreat to the South
4. 11 December-24 December: The Evacuation of Hungnam

By 11 December, when the Marines reached Hungnam, amphibious and MSTS shipping had begun to arrive. Having off–loaded at Pusan following his evacuation of Chinnampo, Captain Kelly had been ordered back to Inchon; no sooner had he reached that port than new orders flowing from new decisions directed him to Hungnam, where he arrived on the 11th to take charge of the movement of the Marine Division. By the 14th the Marines had loaded in one APA, one AKA, 3 APs, 13 LSTs, 3 LSDs, and 7 time-chartered merchant ships, and next morning Kelly sailed his convoy for Pusan. As soon as the Marines were clear the loading of the 7th Division was begun, to continue through the following week.

While these evolutions were in progress Admiral Doyle and his staff found themselves faced with a requirement for a small amphibious landing. In order to block the east coast route General Almond had requested that the ROK I Corps be put ashore in the area of Samchok, 40 miles below the parallel, where *Juneau* had carried out the first bombardment of the war. The undertaking was accepted, and on the basis of corps' estimates shipping was assigned to lift 12,000 men and a few trucks, an allocation which in the end had to be more than doubled as 25,000 ROKs and 700 vehicles turned up. Preparation for the operation involved intelligence studies and photo reconnaissance; the port of Mukho, just north of Samchok, where break-waters enclose a small harbor area, was selected as the landing site. Between 15 and 18 December Captain Spofford's ships swept and buoyed a channel in from the 100–fathom curve, and on the 16th the operation was turned over to Captain Jarrell, who had by now returned from Pusan. In addition to *Henrico*, one APA, one AKA, three chartered merchantmen, and two LSTs were included in the movement group, while reports of Chinese penetrations south of the parallel brought the assignment of the DMS *Endicott* and the destroyer *Forrest Royal* for fire support. At noon of the 17th Captain Jarrell sailed for Mukho, the landing was uneventful, and this important position was quickly secured. By the 20th the destroyers were back on station at Hungnam.

There loading had continued day and night, hindered only by the vagaries of nature. Bad weather inland on the 16th, which limited fast carrier offensive sorties to a mere 41, reached Hungnam on the following day; the temperature dropped below freezing and the sea worked up. As westerly winds reached 40 knots, four LCMs went adrift and were blown out into the minefields, and from 1700 until after midnight small boat traffic had to be halted. This was the worst day, but throughout the operation the continuing cold created problems for materiel and personnel alike: working around the clock and exposed to cold, spray, and wind, many of the coxswains had to be carried aboard their ships after returning from long trips.

It was the hope both of those ashore and of those afloat to get everything out; not just personnel and loaded vehicles, but everything, and they very nearly did. To deprive the enemy of salvage possibilities even broken-down vehicles were outloaded, a lift of inoperative machinery which in the end filled four Liberty ships. In the bulk categories of POL and ammunition Colonel Forney found his responsibilities steadily increasing: an original count of 5,000 drums of POL ended up in the outloading of 29,500 drums, with 200 left behind; almost 9,000 tons of ammunition was taken out, and of the 1,000 tons remaining, half was frozen dynamite too dangerous to handle. Ultimately, in any event, these left-over commodities were put to use in the final demolition of the port.

On water as on land, salvage problems presented themselves. Considering the amount of traffic at this small port, at all hours and in all weathers, mishaps were extraordinarily few, but three which did occur well illustrate the importance of the salvage organization. Standing out of harbor late on the night of 10 December the

Enid Victory, a chartered MSTS vessel, cut the eastern point too close and ran aground. Here the one-foot tide of the Sea of Japan, otherwise so agreeable, proved disadvantageous, but by next afternoon the ARL *Askari*, the fleet tug *Tawakoni*, and two harbor tugs managed to get her off, and she continued to Pusan. A more intractable proposition had been presented a few days earlier when *Senzan Maru*, a Japanese time-charter laden with 50,000 bags of flour, missed the entrance channel in the morning darkness and hit a mine. Damage was serious, but although flooded forward, eight feet down by the head, and with only two feet of freeboard remaining, she made it in, whereupon divers from Askari investigated the damage and the ship doctors prescribed. The flour paste was jettisoned from the forward hold and the rest of the cargo shifted, bulkheads were shored up and flotation provided by filling the hold with empty oil drums, and after ten days work *Senzan Maru* was sailed in company for Moji where she arrived safely.

Last and most difficult of these problems was that presented by a Korean LST, which fouled a shaft with manila line and was unable to retract from the beach. The snarl was cleared and repairs to the main engines were provided by personnel from the rescue ship *Conserver*, after which the LST docked again and on her second attempt to get underway fouled both shafts. By this time her troubles were snowballing: more engine repairs were needed and the gyrocompass had broken down; there were eight turns of 11 8-inch wire around the port shaft and many of 8-inch manila around the starboard one; a food and water shortage had developed, which was the more serious in view of a reported 7,400 refugees on board. Despite difficulties from the cold, the port shaft was freed by divers from *Conserver*; Askari contributed 26,000 gallons of water; 1,500 loaves of bread and a quantity of cooked rice were procured from other ships in harbor, and eight tons of food from Army sources ashore. There was no time to do more, and on 19 December the invalid was sailed for Samchok, accompanied by *Diachenko* and another Korean LST, both rigged for towing. She got there.

As in all overseas operations, but more visibly than in most, the key problem at Hungnam was the availability of shipping. Here the time of turnaround was crucial. At Pusan, where scant notice had been received of the impending arrivals, unloading capacity proved for a time unable to match the rate of outloading in the north, and the resulting congestion brought diversions to Japan, where progress was even more leisurely. In this situation, and as reports from Eighth Army indicated that evacuation of Inchon might become necessary before Hungnam was cleared, Admiral Joy twice found himself obliged to call upon CincFE to prevent ships being sent east of Moji for unloading, to order port authorities to work ships 24 hours a day, and to have idle shipping in Japan emptied to provide reserve.

There was also, as in any amphibious operation, the special problem of the availability of LSTs. These for a time were scarce. Counting Scajap and Korean vessels, a total of about 40 ultimately became available, but some were slow in arriving, 13 had sailed with the Marine Division, and 2 more had been committed to the ROK lift to Mukho. Bad weather and congestion at Pusan had delayed the return of those which had lifted the Marines, and the resultant shortage had slowed the outloading of engineer troops and gear. But by the 18th they were beginning to arrive again, within two days a score had been loaded and sailed, and again the problem of availability arose. With an estimated 22 needed to lift the last elements from the beachhead, and on the basis of an assumed five-day turnaround between Hungnam and Pusan, Forney began stockpiling LSTs on the evening of the 20th. By this time the port of Pusan was operating in high gear, unloading was also in progress at Masan and Ulsan, and Liberty and Victory ships as well as LSTs were being emptied in time for a second run. In the end enough LSTs became available, and indeed there were a couple to spare.

In the air the defenses of Hungnam grew steadily stronger. Through the period of concentration and outloading, the Marine squadrons were conducting a complicated series of redeployments and more carriers were mustering offshore, with the remarkable result that air strength in the Hungnam area, far from diminishing as the evacuation progressed, actually increased. On 1 December the three fighter squadrons at Wonsan had moved up to Yonpo. On the 3rd the Air Force fighter-bombers left for the south, and next day one of the Corsair squadrons

was flown out to Itami for embarkation on the light carrier *Bataan*, but these deficits were more than made up by the arrival of *Princeton* on the 5th. On the 6th *Sicily* reached Hungnam, loaded the personnel and gear of VMF 214 in an all-night evolution, and took the planes aboard in the course of the next day's operations. On 10 December the Yonpo air garrison was reinforced by a squadron of Marine Panther jets, which had come out along with Air Force fighters in the escort carrier *Bairoko*, and which operated from the shore strip until the 13th, when they were flown south to Pusan. After unloading her cargo of Air Force fighters at Yokosuka, *Bataan* proceeded to Kobe, embarked VMF 212, and sailed for the Sea of Japan where she joined Task Force 77 on the 16th.

On the 14th the three Marine squadrons still at Yonpo were flown to Itami. Following this departure CTF 90 relieved the Marine Aircraft Wing of air control within a 35-mile radius of Hungnam, and General Harris' headquarters moved aboard an LST, to assume on the 17th the duties of standby Tactical Air Direction Center. On 22 December *Valley Forge* arrived from the United States and the evolution was complete.

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The virtues of the movable floating air base and of carrier training for Marine pilots had again been demonstrated. Where embarked aviation had at first been limited to two fast carriers and one escort carrier, much more was now on hand, and the total of Navy and Marine squadrons operating in the X Corps area had risen from 15 on 1 December to 22 as the evacuation was ending. For a brief moment Task Force 77 reached a peak strength of 4 attack carriers, one battleship, 2 cruisers, and 22 destroyers, and except for snow on deck and ice on the forecastle it began to look like old times.

Throughout the period of embarkation carrier air operations continued. Over Hungnam the jet combat air patrol was maintained, but with gaps: owing to the limited endurance of the F9F and the spacing of task force launching times it proved impossible to relieve patrols on station. For the rest, the focus of air operations narrowed steadily from the northern hills to the embarkation area. In mid–December, as outloading was begun, attacks were being flown against troops and horses along the reservoir road, abandoned equipment in the Songjin area, and targets near the Fusen Reservoir. A tunnel on the narrow gauge railroad leading up to Hagaru was hit with 11–inch Tiny Tim rockets; to the westward armed reconnaissance flights struck at enemy troops moving south across the Wonsan–Pyongyang road. Ten days later, as the date of final departure approached and with a perimeter which covered only the city of Hungnam, the situation was very different. Although lacking in armor and artillery, enemy troops had reached the suburbs in sizable numbers; and while perhaps a third of the sorties were still employed upcountry, the greater part was used within the 35–mile circle. Troop movements on the roads approaching the town were hit; fuel drums and a rocket dump, overlooked in the sweeping-up process, were attacked and destroyed; an enemy command post in Hamhung and buildings on the western edge of Hungnam were bombed. And by this time the guns of the fire support ships had come into play.

Admiral Hillenkoetter began shooting on the night of the 15th, as *Saint Paul* commenced 8-inch call fire for deep support and for interdiction of enemy movements. On the 17th *Rochester* took the 8-inch duty, and nightly thereafter cruisers and destroyers delivered prearranged harassing and illumination fire, while responding to requests from ashore by day. To supplement the flat–trajectory fire of the cruisers and destroyers, and to put plunging fire on reverse slopes, the three rocket ships had been maintained on station; on the 21st they let go their first barrage against a reported troop concentration in the hills along the eastern flank.

Gunfire support more than met all tests, although these, it should be said, were not severe. There was some difficulty with control arrangements resulting from an unfortunate choice of radio channels, and from intervention by X Corps in the assignment of missions to specific ships. The success of the departing artillery battalions in using up the local ammunition oversupply had imbued commanders ashore with large ideas; the resultant pressures led to an extravagant volume of fire, and this in turn, given the limited capacity of ships' magazines, to a replenishment problem. But the needs were met by the Logistic Support Group, which kept an AKA and an LST loaded with ammunition on station in Hungnam harbor, with delivery to the firing ships

accomplished by off-loading into the AKL *Ryer*, one of the small cargo vessels which MSTS had inherited from the Army. By these expedients the impressive total of 18,637 rounds of 5-inch and 2,932 of 8-inch was fired during the evacuation phase, an increase respectively of about 70 and 27 percent over expenditures in the Inchon landing. The investment was perhaps excessive, in view of the paucity of targets, but it was written off as a contribution to troop morale.

By now the perimeter had diminished to a radius of about 5,000 yards from the center of town, outposted for another thousand yards, and the evacuation was entering its final stage. On 18 December Captain Kelly returned from the south, and was placed in charge of the shore-to-ship movement of the remaining corps and 3rd Division troops. Early on the afternoon of the 19th Major General Robert H. Soule, USA, commander of the 3rd Division, took charge of the ground defenses; General Almond and his staff moved aboard *Mount McKinley*; and responsibility for the defense of Hungnam passed to Admiral Doyle. Next day the 7th Division completed embarkation, and at first light on the 21st was sailed to the southward. On shore there remained three RCTs with their tanks, six battalions of artillery, and three antiaircraft battalions. Loading of corps and division troops was being pressed; the tempo of naval gunfire was going up as artillery began to be withdrawn; and D-Day had been tentatively set for the 24th.

One aspect of the operation which had by now developed wholly unanticipated proportions was the problem of the Korean refugees. In a sense this problem was not new. In July, as the North Korean armies pressed southward, the countless civilians fleeing before them had created grave difficulties for the U.N. forces. In late October the combination of ROK and Marine forces at Kojo, and of Communist units in the hills, had produced a similar if smaller phenomenon, as thousands of Koreans had descended from the hinterland upon the port. With the intervention of the Chinese and the reverses of the U.N. the spectacle of displaced masses of humanity again developed.

In the first week of December thousands of North Koreans, fleeing the Chinese armies, had sailed from Chinnampo. At Wonsan, where Captain Jarrell had arranged a screening of civilians so that those whose lives would be endangered by the Communists could be removed, an anticipated thousand refugees had multiplied beyond belief. With 7,000 aboard, and with the ships filled to capacity, the transport crews had been confronted with the tragic sight of another 20,000 trying to break through the barbed wire barriers, and had concluded that about twice the population of Wonsan had gathered there in the hope of escape. At Hungnam it was still worse.

For the inhabitants of North Korea the miseries of war had been compounded by the arrival of an alien army from across the Yalu. Villagers on the Chosin plateau, their houses taken over by the Chinese, had requested the Marines to call down air strikes upon the invader; their wishes had been granted them, and their villages had been burned from the air. Thus twice dispossessed, and preferring the invader from overseas to the invader from the north, the tide of humanity flowed southward toward Hungnam. As the Marines moved down from Hagaru the thousands of civilians followed, huddling outside the perimeter by night and moving onward when the march resumed, presenting both tragic spectacle and military menace.

At Hungnam an original estimate of 25,000 refugees requiring evacuation had quickly to be abandoned. Early in the operation Colonel Forney found himself with 50,000 in hastily constructed camps and more pouring in; at Hamhung more than 50,000 had attempted to board the last refugee train for Hungnam. In the light of these numbers the few vessels furnished by the Republic of Korea were wholly inadequate, and other shipping had to be committed at an early date. The exodus involved an incredible packing of humanity: LST loads were never less than 5,000, and in one case reached 10,500; a total of about 14,000 was taken out in the chartered *Meredith Victory*. On the 23rd, as preparations to close down were being completed, a temporary surplus of shipping developed, and Forney brought in three Victory ships and two LSTs on which he loaded 50,000 Koreans. In the end the record showed 91,000 taken out, not counting children in arms, in knapsacks, or in utero. If this was a remarkable accomplishment no one congratulated himself overmuch, for, as the report concludes, "at least that

number had to be left behind for lack of shipping space, and riot among these was only prevented by subterfuge."

Heavy Chinese pressure had been expected from about the 20th, but although from time to time night probing attacks were reported, the perimeter remained generally quiet to the last. With loading ahead of schedule, and with sufficient shipping on hand, 4,000 tons of ammunition and 13 boxcars were added to the scheduled lift. On the 22nd the 3rd Division began loading everything but the infantry and artillery, while excess transport from these units was put on board during that day and the next. As zero hour approached, air support was increased, and the offensive sorties from Task Force 77 went up from 105 on the 21st to 161 on the 23rd. General Almond had repeatedly suggested bringing in *Missouri* from Task Force 77, and Struble had planned to do so for the final phase. So in she came on the 23rd, as the last battalion of corps artillery was being taken off. That night naval gunfire increased by a factor of three.

The 24th of December dawned clear, and by 0800 all was in readiness. To lift the remaining 9,720 personnel, LVTs had been put up on the flanking beaches, and seven LSTs along the Hungnam waterfront. During the morning the gunfire ships maintained a zone barrage covering a mile-wide area outside the 3,000–yard perimeter. At 1100, as the troops began to pull back, embarkation was begun. Everything went as planned. The enemy made no appearance. The only difficulties were caused by an accidental explosion of an ammunition dump, which destroyed some landing craft and resulted in a number of casualties. By 1405 all beaches were secured. At 1410 Admiral Doyle ordered the UDT personnel to blow the place, demolition charges were set off, and the piers, cranes, and walls of the inner harbor disappeared in an eruption of smoke and flame.

By 1436 all hands were off and Captain Kelly was preparing to sortie the amphibious shipping. Overhead in the cold sky there orbited the last combat air patrol from the fast carrier task force. Along the docks the explosions had stopped, but fire was licking at the ruins, and from the harbor of Hungnam, briefly one of the world’s busiest ports, a column of smoke rose high into the air. Three miles inland, as the gunfire ships were getting underway, some Chinese troops were observed coming over a hill, and a few Parthian salvos were let go at these individuals, who by their temerity thus achieved the distinction of receiving the last rounds of the campaign.

The statistics of the evacuation are worth noting: 105,000 U.S. and Korean military personnel, 91,000 refugees, 350,000 measurement tons of cargo, 17,500 vehicles. The available shipping had proved sufficient, although most vessels had to make two trips, some made more, and the loads involved totalled 6 APAs, 6 AKAs, 13 T–APs, 76 MSTS time-charters, 81 LSTs, and 11 LSDs. As for comparisons with other operations, none seems very fruitful. Dunkirk comes first to mind, but circumstances there were very different: 338,000 troops were taken out, but many remained behind, hardly any equipment was saved, and the ships involved suffered grievously from air attack. But such questions concerning the degree of enemy opposition and the size of the lift tend to obscure the central point, that freedom to come and go depends upon control of the sea. The Athenians at Syracuse, Cornwallis at Yorktown, the Axis forces in North Africa lacked this control. In those armies no one escaped captivity.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 9. Retreat to the South
5. 7 December 1950-25 January 1951: The Second Chinese Offensive

Evacuations, doubtless, can hardly be counted victories, but the conduct of the December campaign in northeastern Korea was nevertheless impressive. Despite the suddenness of the Chinese onslaught, the extraordinarily exposed position of the Marine Division, and an enemy numerical superiority of more than two to one, the situation never quite escaped from control, and from the time the Yudam–ni Marines reached Hagaru there was little question as to who held the initiative. Under the severest possible conditions the march to the sea was successfully accomplished; only the barest minimum of equipment and supplies had to be destroyed; the evacuation, with no air or submarine opposition and with little pressure on the ground, was a deliberate, orderly, and controlled process.

This is not to say that the campaign was cheap. With a strength slightly exceeding 25,000, the Marine Division between 27 November and 11 December suffered 556 killed, 182 missing, 2,872 wounded, and 3,648 non-battle casualties, the last largely from frostbite. But for the Chinese Third Field Army the campaign was a disaster. The 60,000 men of the eight divisions committed by the 9th Army Group were later estimated by the Marine Corps to have suffered 37,500 combat casualties, a little over half inflicted by the ground forces and the rest by air attack. Of estimates such as these everyone must be his own judge, but the order of magnitude appears not far from the mark. Total casualties, indeed, would seem to have been still greater, for the Chinese had been engaged not only with the Marine Division and with naval and Marine aviation but had also had to fight the cold, and for them General Winter proved a more redoubtable enemy than for the Americans. Poorly clad, poorly fed, without hospitalization or air evacuation, the Chinese froze to death in quantities: the CCF 27th Army, which had put in two divisions at the opening of the campaign, alone complained of 10,000 non-combat casualties.

Whatever the precise figure of their losses, doubtless also unknown to them, it seems fair to say that in forcing the Marine Division down off the plateau the 9th Army Group committed military suicide. Much concern, following the evacuation, was evinced in U.N. command circles over the possibility that Chen Yi's divisions might move south to reinforce the Fourth Field Army, and on 2 January Commander Seventh Fleet and CTF 95 were urgently instructed to report all information on the location and movements of this force. But not until mid–March, three full months later, was the 9th Army Group again identified in action.

In the west, in contrast to the campaign at the reservoir, action had been brief. Contact with the Chinese was broken in the first days of December, as Eighth Army retired rapidly on Seoul; for more than three weeks the ground forces were out of touch; and the only war in progress was that carried on by Fifth Air Force, whose attacks inflicted heavy casualties and soon forced the enemy to confine his movement to the hours of darkness. But the fact that Communist success against Eighth Army was limited to the first days of combat, and that the march to the sea and the evacuation of X Corps were handled in masterly fashion, should not operate to conceal the effects of the Chinese onslaught. Strategically and psychologically the enemy's success was great. In the long run Chinese intervention would entail abandonment of the objective of Korean unification, and a return to the original U.N. aim of repelling aggression; for the moment, however, it seemed that it might force the evacuation of Korea. Since a concern for the integrity of China had been a major plank in American foreign policy for more than half a century, and a fundamental reason for the embroilment of the United States and Japan, this accomplishment of the new Chinese regime ranks high among the ironies of history.

Throughout December the planning of the U.N. Command was retrograde to a degree; having suffered one reverse it prepared rapidly for more. The plan of 7 December had envisaged resistance in the area of Seoul,

with subsequent retirement upon Pusan, and the results of this concept were manifest in efforts to fortify the Naktong line and in the assignment of Navy underwater demolition teams to a survey of beaches in South Korea, Tsushima Island, and western Japan in preparation for an emergency withdrawal. At Inchon Admiral Thackrey was scouting the Tokchok Islands as a possible refuge in an emergency redeployment; on 6 December, with the evacuation of Kimpo in prospect, he had asked Admiral Struble for carrier air support; on the 7th, two days before X Corps was ordered to redeploy south from Hungnam, he was instructed to start the removal of Army supplies from Inchon. Soon Eighth Army would pose a requirement for naval gunfire support along the entire western coast of South Korea.

On 8 December there came an astonishing report from EUSAK of a 20-ship Chinese convoy en route from Shanghai for a landing in Korea; by the 12th this had grown to a fleet of 100 ships headed for Ongjin; on the 14th *Theseus* was held back from replenishment by a report of 20 AKs approaching Sinanju. But these shortly shrank to fishing boats, and the convoy never appeared. By midmonth air raid alarms were a daily occurrence in the Seoul area; on the 14th a Navy helicopter was attacked by MIGs which had ventured south to within a few miles of Haeju. Four days later FEAF closed down its electronic navigational installation on Tokchok To, and men and gear were taken out by LSU. As yet there were no positive indications that the Chinese would cross the 38th parallel; equally, there was little evidence of a firm intention to defend the capital. President Rhee and his government had refused to leave for the southward, but by the 20th Eighth Army headquarters had been withdrawn to Taegu, where it was joined by Fifth Air Force on the 22nd.

In these gloomy circumstances General Walker was killed in a road accident, like General Patton before him, and Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway, USA, was ordered out from Washington to take over Eighth Army. Both in the capital from which he departed, and in the peninsula which was his destination, it might have seemed that Ridgway was being appointed receiver in bankruptcy: CincFE's early dispatches had produced an atmosphere of depression in Washington; the Truman-Attlee talks of early December concerned themselves, among other things, with the question of seeking a cease-fire; and U.N. efforts in this same direction ended only with Chinese rejection of the terms proposed. Efforts to increase the nation's armed strength were redoubled, and on 15 December the President declared a state of national emergency. But results would take time, and the available reserve within the continental United States remained at one Army and one Marine division.

Unable, in the circumstances, to honor General MacArthur's request for reinforcements for the defense of Japan, the Joint Chiefs began to consider withdrawal from Korea to the Japanese islands. These deliberations resulted in a new directive of 29 December, which may be taken as a measure of the Chinese Communist success. The safety of the U.N. Command and of Japan were given precedence over support of the Republic of Korea, the enemy was conceded the capability of forcing a U.N. evacuation, and instructions now called for defense in successive positions and for the infliction of maximum damage on the Communists.

Of this estimate of Chinese capabilities, as seen through the dark glass of CincFE's dispatches, time would be the test. But if General Ridgway had indeed been nominated as receiver in bankruptcy, he acquired upon his arrival in Korea certain welcome assets. The Fourth Chinese Field Army, victor in the battle of the Chongchon, was suffering in its southward progress from logistic inadequacy and from the efforts of the Fifth Air Force. Completion of the Hungnam evacuation had provided a considerable Christmas bonus, and the land and naval forces which had demobilized the Chinese 9th Army Group were now available for the defense of South Korea.

On Christmas Day the command of Task Force 77 changed as Admiral Ewen, after four months of strenuous operations, was relieved by Admiral Ofstie, and sailed with *Philippine Sea* and *Leyte* for Japan. Fifty days had passed since CincFE's alarm had summoned the Seventh Fleet from port, and throughout that time, in bitter winter weather, an intense air effort had been maintained, without return to port, and with all needs cared for by the mobile replenishment groups. Two fast carriers now remained on the line, voice and CW

communications with the JOC were at last functioning effectively, and on the same day Admiral Struble advised Fifth Air Force that his ships would resume air operations on the 28th, and would provide from 75 to 100 Corsair and Skyraider sorties daily. On the 27th, in a conference between FEAF and NavFE, it was agreed to use the carrier aircraft in support of the eastern front, with pilots pre—briefed for armed reconnaissance should no CAS targets be available. On the next day operations began as scheduled, directed principally against troops and troop shelters in the central mountains along the 38th parallel.

On 26 December, as General Ridgway arrived in Korea, X Corps was integrated into Eighth Army. At Pusan the last of the Hungnam forces were going ashore. On the east coast the sweepers were hard at work clearing an inshore lane for the destroyers, now back at their summer's task of supporting ROK units on the coastal road. At the western end of the line, where an enemy drive on Seoul was momently awaited, reinforcements from Hungnam were also arriving. In response to earlier requests from Admiral Thackrey, *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* had started west on Christmas Day; on the 27th they relieved *Theseus* in the Yellow Sea operating area and began to fly missions in support of Eighth Army. On the 29th Admiral Hillenkoetter arrived at Inchon with, to join *Ceylon* and the Australian destroyers *Warramunga* and *Bataan* in the support of forces on the Kumpo peninsula.

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As yet, however, the Chinese had not resumed the attack, a situation which raises some interesting problems in relative motion. The Fourth Field Army had entered Pyongyang on 5 December while the Marine Division was still up on the hill at Hagaru. By the time the Chinese had covered the ninety miles from Pyongyang to the parallel, X Corps had been concentrated, evacuated, and relanded in South Korea, and ships which had covered the evacuation had rounded the peninsula to help confront the expected western offensive. These facts say something about floating weapons systems, most notably perhaps in the case of embarked aviation, for while the Air Force was shortly to be forced out of Kimpo and Suwon, and by 5 January would have no operating base forward of Taegu, the carriers were now working off both ends of the battle line. They say something also about the rudimentary nature of Chinese logistics, the effectiveness of Fifth Air Force's December effort against the advancing enemy, and the validity of the estimates which conceded to the Chinese the ability to throw the U.N. armies into the sea.

With orders to defend important positions, inflict maximum damage, and preserve its major units, Eighth Army awaited the enemy on a line running from the Han Delta up the Imjin, and eastward through the razor-backed mountains of central Korea, to Yangyang on the Sea of Japan. Here, in the northern basin of the Han, strategic virtue lies not in the western coastal plain but in the valley routes of the interior. With the water barriers of the Yesong and the Imjin, the road from Pyongyang is easy to defend, but to the invader from the north all streams flow onward to the Han and all roads lead to Seoul. Once at the headwaters of the northern tributaries, movement is all downhill: south from Chorwon to the capital, southwest from Chunchon to the Pukhan Valley, through Hongchon to the Han Valley road, west from Wonju to take the capital in the rear. In the presence of so many flanking routes, the defense of Seoul depends less on holding the west coast road than on plugging the valleys to the northeast; failing in this the position becomes untenable.

The enemy arrived with the New Year. On the left three Chinese armies pushed down the northern approaches to the capital; in the center another heavy thrust was delivered north of Wonju. Further retirement seemed necessary, and on 4 January Seoul was abandoned, the Han bridges were blown, and the army started south again. At Inchon all ships were put on one-hour notice, and on orders from ComNavFE the destruction of the port was begun.

There, as the enemy offensive broke, Admiral Thackrey had at his disposal his flagship *Eldorado*, one AKA, two APAs, two LSDs, one APD, two U.S. Navy and nine Scajap LSTs; in Japan MSTS was holding 15 empty Victory ships and transports as a reserve. Although Eighth Army intended to retire by land rather than

redeploy by sea, the staff of Task Group 90.1 had worked up plans for all contingencies, including an emergency outloading of up to 135,000 troops by shuttle service to the off-shore islands. But these precautions proved unnecessary, and the principal withdrawal from the Seoul area was carried out, as planned, by road.

The sea lift from Inchon was nevertheless a sizable one. The original estimates from EUSAK, which had called for the sailing of between 3,000 and 5,000 personnel, had been surpassed by 18 December, and the total lifted out during the month amounted to 32,000 troops, more than 1,000 vehicles, and 55,000 tons of cargo. Completion of the Hungnam evacuation brought six more Scajap LSTs together with some MSTS vessels, and the advent of the Chinese speeded the work. On 5 January port facilities were blown, somewhat purposelessly, it would seem, in view of U.N. control of Korean waters, and as the Chinese entered the town Thackrey sortied his shipping. In these last five days a few hundred more vehicles, a few thousand more tons of supplies, and another 37,000 military personnel had been taken out. In vehicles and cargo the Inchon evacuation was far smaller than that at Hungnam; in personnel, however, the addition of 64,200 Korean nationals to the 69,000 military yields a not unimpressive figure. But the accomplishment had to be its own reward: of the large number of press correspondents currently accredited to the U.N. naval forces, all but one had elected to cover Hungnam.

As in the previous summer, major ports were now in short supply. With Inchon gone only overloaded Pusan remained, and there the larger ships were sailed. But there was still the problem of supporting the western flank without overwhelming the Pusan port organization and the rail and road systems, and this time it was met by the opening of a seaport where none had existed before. Twenty-five miles north of Kunsan, at the mouth of Chonsu Man, the town of Taechon lies at the head of a drying bay; from Taechon a road and single-tracked railroad run northeast, joining the main line at Chonan, behind the new-formed front. Here in September CincFE's momentary apprehensions about Inchon had brought the UDTs from *Bass* to seek a second landing place; here in December, as a precautionary measure, Thackrey had swept a major anchorage area; here in January, following a check-sweep by *Carmick* and *Swallow*, the Inchon LSTs were beached and their men and stores unloaded. On the 8th, a convoy came up from Ulsan with artillery and tanks of the 3rd Division, and between the 9th and 12th this support was continued by 13 Scajap LSTs, which brought POL and other urgently needed cargo from Pusan to Taechon and Kunsan.

Throughout the period of retirement the naval forces of the U.N. did what they could to help stem the Chinese tide. On the east coast the destroyers worked to help the ROK defenders, while Admiral Ofstie's carriers flew strikes against enemy concentrations in the central mountains and westward to the area of Seoul. At Inchon *Rochester*, *Kenya*, and *Ceylon* supported the withdrawal across the Han and the evacuation of the port, and bombarded Kimpo airfield. From the Yellow Sea the Marine fighter pilots embarked in *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* flew in to provide protective patrols, strike the advancing enemy, and burn quantities of abandoned supplies at Kimpo. On 1 January EUSAK's wish for more support brought a request for increased carrier strength, and two days later *Bataan* arrived to join the west coast group. For a brief period, from 30 December to 3 January, the possibility of a diversionary landing at Haeju was under active consideration.

In the Sea of Japan on 7 January *Philippine Sea* and *Leyte* returned to action; but while *Princeton* retired to Sasebo for upkeep, such was the magnitude of the Communist offensive that *Valley Forge* was held on station. For the next two weeks three carriers were kept on the line, working in the triangular pattern which permitted daily operations by two while the third replenished. But their effectiveness, as indeed that of all supporting forces, was severely limited by the January foul weather, which on 12 days brought winds exceeding 30 knots. On the 7th, in a snowstorm, the Thai frigate Prasae went aground on the east coast, behind the enemy lines, and despite prolonged attempts at salvage had ultimately to be destroyed. From 6 to 10 January low clouds and heavy snow prevented carrier operations; on the 10th things were so bad that all land-based aircraft were grounded; and from the 11th to the 13th Task Force 77 was forced to operate south of the peninsula where the visibility was somewhat better.

The coming of the bad weather coincided with a shift of enemy pressure to the central front. In the west on 7 January U.N. patrols had moved north without opposition to the neighborhood of Inchon, but in the center very heavy fighting continued, infiltrating Chinese forces reached south to the 37th parallel, and reviving North Korean guerrillas raided supply lines inside the Naktong Basin. On 9 January the Marine Division was ordered out of Army reserve and moved up to prevent enemy penetrations south of the Andong-Yongdok road. On the 11th, with clearing weather, aircraft from Task Force 77 attacked large troop concentrations southeast of Wonju, at Kangnung on the east coast, and as far south as the headwaters of the Naktong.

As snowstorms swirled through the mountains of central Korea, where the battle for Wonju was in progress, the weather was bad in other high places as well. To a CincFE message of 29 December, which had posed the alternatives of expanding the war or evacuating Korea, the Joint Chiefs on 9 January replied with a repetition of earlier instructions to defend, inflict maximum damage, and withdraw if the safety of the command and of Japan so required. On the next day CincFE reiterated that lacking either reinforcement or an expansion of the war the position in Korea was untenable, and urged, in the absence of overriding political considerations, as rapid a withdrawal as possible. This view, together with his observations that his troops were embittered and that the defense of a beachhead would be costly, led to more gloom in Washington and to a new directive. On the 12th, while emphasizing their desire for time to permit military and diplomatic consultations, the Joint Chiefs accepted the view that holding for a protracted period was infeasible. At Lake Success a second effort at a cease-fire was begun on the basis of a plan which, in exchange for a U.N.-approved administration of a unified Korea, would include the government of Communist China in an agency designed to settle the issues of Formosa and of Chinese membership in the United Nations. But in turn the Chinese now overreached themselves, and insisted that admission to the United Nations and the commencement of Korean negotiations precede any cease-fire.

By the time this diplomatic fumble took place the Korean balance was beginning to tilt the other way. On the west coast, behind enemy lines, carrier aircraft had reported ROK flags flying in the coastal villages, and the governor of Hwanghae Province had asked for ammunition; on 13 January CTF 95 recommended to ComNavFE the arming of the estimated 10,000 patriotic volunteers in this area. At EUSAK, far from looking over his shoulder toward Pusan, General Ridgway was directing his gaze northward. On the 16th a reconnaissance in force had penetrated as far as Suwon; soon diminished contact in the center would bring more ambitious efforts. By the 20th General MacArthur was demonstrating a qualified optimism. By the 23rd ground fighting was limited to bushwhacking in the south, where the Marines were rounding up guerrillas. On 25 January the northward movement of Eighth Army began against only slight resistance. Ten days later the Chinese commander had decided to retire beyond the 38th parallel.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 10. The Second Six Months
1. February 1951: Back to the Han

BY LATE JANUARY the immediate crisis was over, but as the armies started north again it was still a new war. Not only had the arrival of the Chinese made it difficult to see the conflict as a mere police action against a minor league aggressor; it had also forced the United Nations and the United States back to the original aim of repelling aggression, and in doing so had changed the nature of the fighting. Avoidance of defeat at the Pusan perimeter had been followed by a resort to an amphibious strategy and to larger goals, and by four months of rapid movement up and down the peninsula. But this was history. By January the objectives had been revised, no plans for great amphibious operations existed, X Corps had been integrated into Eighth Army, a more or less continuous front now stretched from sea to sea. Although the focus of action had always been on land, the campaign in Korea in the first half of 1951 was more than ever a ground war.

Depending upon one's preconceptions, one could look at the Korean War as a land campaign with amphibious aspects or as an amphibious war with resemblances to a continental struggle. Whatever the precise nature of this hybrid conflict, which indeed varied with the passing of time, it posed difficult problems of marrying the divergent histories of the Pacific and European theaters of operations, and of coordinating forces which postwar military doctrine had attempted to separate. These difficulties had been briefly apparent during the defense of the perimeter in the previous August; inevitably, with the coming of a stabilized front, the question of how to integrate a naval force into a land campaign again arose. This question had implications for almost all the subdivisions of Naval Forces Far East.

The fate of the Marine Division, designed, trained, and so far largely employed as a force to bridge the gap between control of the sea and large-scale operations ashore, was paradoxical. The postwar years had seen the Marines repeatedly accused of trying to develop a "second army," and much effort had been expended within the Defense Department to reduce the corps to guard functions and to prevent its again developing a force of the size and sort so useful in the war against Japan. Now, however, in the existing stringency of Army units, the Marines were integrated into Eighth Army along with the rest of X Corps; after a period devoted to guerrilla-chasing in the neighborhood of Andong they would find themselves committed by higher authority to sustained land combat. Although there was no question of their competence to perform such duty, this continued employment on inland work made it difficult to maintain their special skills, divorced as they now were by distance from the Amphibious Force and naval gunfire support, and by doctrine from their Aircraft Wing.

In July CincFE had promised General Craig that the integrity of the Marine air-ground team would be preserved. But circumstances alter cases, and this situation did not outlast the Hungnam evacuation. With a single front in existence, and with ground commanders eager to share the benefits of Marine close air support, MAW I was absorbed by the Fifth Air Force and employed in accordance with Air Force doctrine. The wing's commanding general found himself bypassed in the operational chain of command, and efforts by the division to have their own planes assigned to their support were turned down. The long history of cooperative training and the great fund of recent experience acquired at Inchon and at the reservoir were to a considerable degree sacrificed, and so far as air support in the line was concerned the Marines now had to take pot luck with everyone else.

The Amphibious Force, perhaps the most important single weapons system of the war so far, and the one whose capabilities had governed both advance and retreat, was still on hand, but commitment of the landing force to the ground front had greatly limited its future possibilities. As the new year opened, the principal activity of

Admiral Doyle's units was in preparation for a possible large-scale emergency evacuation of the Korean peninsula. Surveys of Korean and Japanese beaches, begun in anticipation of a forced and hasty departure, were continuing at a rapid rate, and by June would have provided essential information on some 40 miles of strategically located shore line. The single untoward incident to mar this operation occurred on 19 January, halfway between Kunsan and Mokpo and far south of the battle-line, when some apparent civilians, previously engaged in conversation with *Bass*' survey party, produced concealed weapons, killed two, and wounded three.

This hydrographic work, however, required the participation of but a fraction of the force. The greater part of Task Force 90 was consequently divided into three roughly equal groups, and an employment schedule worked out which assigned one to amphibious training of Army troops in Japan, and one to upkeep and maintenance at Yokosuka, while the third remained on call for services to the forces in the peninsula. On 15 January the job of transporting refugees and prisoners to Koje Do and Cheju Do was assigned CTF 90, and five days later an AKA lifted the first load of refugees from Pusan. This was the last task imposed upon Admiral Doyle. At Pusan, on the 24th, he was relieved by Rear Admiral Ingolf N. Kiland, in a ceremony which numbered CincPacFleet, ComNavFE, and Commander Seventh Fleet among those present.

Along the coastline matters were less changed, and in both Yellow Sea and Sea of Japan the Blockading and Escort Force continued to perform its duties. If fire support of amphibious operations was no longer required of the gunnery ships, the blockade remained important, and there were coastal targets to bombard. In the east, where the enemy had been checked at Mukho, the front was still susceptible of support by naval gunfire. But the fighting was less intense than in the previous summer, and as both sides increasingly concentrated their weight of effort in the central mountains, the pace of action on the coastal road diminished.

For the minesweepers, however, nothing had altered. Their work continued as before, and their tasks remained arduous, uncomfortable, and dangerous. The short winter daylight hampered operations; the winter weather, with high winds and freezing spray, made small ship work particularly uncomfortable. There was always the chance of new minefields or of the replenishment of those previously swept; the continued possibility of influence mines increased the load; intelligence reports indicated that the enemy was preparing a new mining campaign. Minesweeping capabilities, nevertheless, had been increased, and something better than the shoestring force of the previous autumn was now on hand. The four DMS, oversized for their task, had proven only marginally useful, and two were shortly to be returned to the United States, but 13 AMS and 2 AMs were now available, and 2 more of the latter were en route. Although the LST conversion to headquarters ship and helicopter base was still in the works, the force was profiting from the support of the LSD *Comstock*. In the naval establishment at large the efforts in updating and improving mine warfare, begun following the unpleasant experiences at Wonsan, were being pressed. Technological development was being expedited, and the coordinated tactical employment of patrol plane and helicopter search and of underwater demolition teams was moving forward. With the reestablishment early in the year of the Mine Force Pacific Fleet, and the appointment of Admiral Higgins as type commander, the sweepers at last acquired a home of their own and an administrator who cared.

In January, in addition to routine checks of vital areas like the Chinhae entrance channel, the main effort of the minesweeping forces was devoted to the clearance between 36° and 38°40´, of an inshore lane, for the east coast fire support ships. This work, which permitted more effective support of the ROK I Corps on the coastal road, was completed by early February, but again at a cost. On 2 February the AMS *Partridge* hit a mine about a mile off Sokcho, just north of the parallel, and sank in ten minutes with a loss of ten killed or missing and six severely wounded.

With the completion of this sweep, fire support activities were stepped up. Along the eastern coast four of the eight destroyers of Task Group 95.2 were continuously on station, with one pair patrolling the 100-fathom curve north to the limit of the blockade, while the second provided fire support to the Korean troops. At Mukho,

and at Yongchu Gap to the southward, ROKN forces had established minor operating bases, from which their small craft sortied to collect intelligence from behind enemy lines, and to tighten the blockade through control of North Korean junk traffic and of South Korean fishing.

Although the hydrography of Korea's western shore greatly limited the possibilities of naval gunfire, Task Group 95.1 was also active. In the west the prevalence of islands permitted the establishment of useful advanced bases, and the advance of 1950 had brought possession of holdings off Inchon and Haeju, of the Sir James Hall Group near the 38th parallel, of Cho Do and Sok To off the Taedong estuary, and of islands in the Yalu Gulf. Most of these islands were informally controlled by guerrilla groups, and employed as bases for intelligence activities and for raids behind enemy lines. But responsibility for three of them—Ochong Do off Kunsan, Tokchok To in the Inchon approaches, and Taechong Do off the Ongjin peninsula—had been assigned to Admiral Andrewes' West Coast Group, and these islands had been given ROKN garrisons in January. Inshore patrol of the shallow coastal waters was provided by four groups of Korean ships, supported as necessary by Andrewes' surface units, which otherwise continued to maintain their designated blocking points, patrol northward into the Yalu Gulf, and bombard targets of opportunity.

For the carriers of Naval Forces Far East the deployment of January was little changed. With stabilization of the front and the passing of the emergency a reduction of Seventh Fleet strength from four carriers to three seemed feasible, and arrangements for regular maintenance desirable. *Leyte*, present in the Far East on loan from the Atlantic Fleet, was consequently headed homeward late in January, and a rotational schedule established which would send a third of the force at a time to Yokosuka for a ten-day stay. Taken together with the similar deployment of the ships of Task Force 90, this made for a considerable eastward shift in the logistic center of gravity, and for a corresponding reorientation of Service Force effort from Sasebo to Yokosuka.

The departure of *Leyte* left the Pacific Fleet with four fast carriers, *Valley Forge*, *Philippine Sea*, and *Princeton* in Korean waters, and *Boxer* under overhaul at San Francisco. But the reactivation of mothballed ships was proceeding apace, and more were coming. *Bon Homme Richard* and *Essex* were on the way, with arrivals in Far Eastern waters scheduled for May and August; shortly *Antietam* would be removed from the Reserve Fleet for arrival in October. By autumn the Pacific Fleet would contain seven operational fast carriers, compared with the three of the preceding June, and units on duty in the forward area could be rapidly and heavily reinforced.

Although *Badoeng Strait* and *Sicily* had left the Yellow Sea following the evacuation of Inchon, and had subsequently off–loaded their squadrons and sailed for the United States, west coast carrier operations did not lapse. The work of *Triumph* and *Theseus* had shown the need for carrier aircraft to enforce the blockade, to provide air strikes, aerial photography, and close support, and to spot gunfire for west coast surface units. On 7 January, as the escort carriers departed, *Theseus* again assumed the load, and following representations by Admiral Andrewes a continuity of effort was assured. The CVL *Bataan*, which had operated with the escort carriers during the critical period of the Inchon evacuation, was assigned by Admiral Struble to Task Group 95.1, and began to alternate ten–day periods of duty with *Theseus* as the principal unit of Task Element 95.11.

Something new had by now been added in the field of embarked aviation with the activation of an antisubmarine warfare task group, established by ComNavFE in view of the possibility that the intervention of new armies might be followed by an intervention of new weapons. An antisubmarine squadron was embarked in *Bairoko*, the escort carrier which in December had brought Air Force and Marine jet fighters to the Far East, and two destroyer divisions were added to make up Task Group 96.7, operating out of Yokosuka under the control of ComNavFE. Since enemy submarines did not in fact appear, this Hunter–Killer Group confined itself to training duties with the destroyers that were rotated through it from the other forces in Far Eastern waters.

Yet while the deployment of carrier strength remained the same, the problem of optimum employment was again much to the fore. Having been used first in long-range interdiction and emergency close support, and then in two landings and an evacuation, Task Force 77 now found itself faced with the long haul. In January its

work had been principally in support of the battleline and in attacks on southward moving Chinese forces, a function of great importance in view of the withdrawal of shore–based squadrons to Japan. But as the ground situation stabilized, and the move back north began, the question of the relative usefulness of close support and interdiction arose once more.

For both these types of operation Task Force 77 had certain advantages not shared by other U.N. forces. Historically, naval aviation had been more sympathetic to close support than had the Air Force; the tradition was reflected in pilot training and doctrine, in tendencies in aircraft design which permitted heavier loads and more time on station, and in techniques of accurate dive bombing derived from a generation of training for attack on maneuvering ships. Although the communications problem, central to the close support difficulties of the early months, still remained, the Army's situation was so far improved that the normal air request net worked adequately in periods of relative inactivity, if not in time of crisis. Coordination of the carrier effort with that of Fifth Air Force had also shown some progress: daily by noon the air plan for the morrow was passed to JOC, while problems arising from crowded radio channels and last minute changes were reduced by the dispatch of a communications relay plane ahead of each strike, to shop for a controller and then brief the strike leader on a clear channel. All things considered, air support was going reasonably well.

Yet in interdiction, which in the context of the moment meant primarily the destruction of rail and highway bridges, the carrier air groups also had solid advantages. Even when based in Korea and modified by tip tanks, the F–80 Shooting Star, for the moment the standard Air Force fighter-bomber, lacked sufficient range and lift to accomplish much north of the Pyongyang-Hungnam radius, while from Japanese bases its load rarely exceeded two rockets and a tank of napalm. The F–51 Mustang had excellent lift and endurance, but was considered too vulnerable to the increasing threat of jet fighters for employment far to the north. The B–26 and B–29 had the lift and range, but were unsuited to attacks on small targets and were vulnerable, respectively, to antiaircraft and fighter opposition. Such opposition, of course, presented problems to the carrier planes as well, but approach routes and attack tactics were more flexible than those of horizontal bombers, the movable base and the built-in range of its aircraft permitted escorted strikes to the uttermost ends of Korea, and the load and accuracy of the AD made it uniquely effective against bridge targets.

As to the choice of employment one could find all opinions in all services. Although as a result of the earlier campaigns there had developed a strong Army school, particularly within X Corps, which favored the Navy-Marine system of close support, Admiral Struble's Christmas Day offer had elicited a request from EUSAK for interdiction of the northeastern transportation network. Doubtless a doubled carrier force, with half assigned each function, would have suited the Army best, but the postwar military establishment had not been designed with an eye to this. In its absence, and as operations went on, there ensued a period of debate and discussion which lasted through February.

In December, following the Chinese intervention, FEAF had prepared a new interdiction plan; in January, reports of rail activity in the northeast had led General Stratemeyer to inquire about the capabilities of the fast carrier task force in this regard. If the effort in close support were not to be diminished these capabilities were limited: only in the presence of *Valley Forge*, whose lack of jet squadrons was made up by a surplus of F4Us, could a two-carrier force take on the added load; with *Valley Forge* present, or with all three carriers in the line, two strikes a day could be sent northward on interdiction missions without prejudice to the support of the battleline. In response to FEAF's inquiry such an effort was begun, although both ComNavFE and Commander Seventh Fleet reaffirmed their view that given only suitable control facilities, close support was the most effective contribution the carriers could make, and urged that it remain the primary function. But in reply FEAF again put forward the need for interdiction to forestall a renewed Chinese offensive.

On 18 January the issue was discussed in a meeting at Taegu between Admiral Struble, the other major commanders in Korea, and the Army and Air Force Chiefs of Staff, out once again from Washington. Whatever

the views of the other services, the Navy remained on the side of close support. After conferring with his carrier commanders, following his return to the fleet, Admiral Struble observed that an assignment to armed reconnaissance would be executed to the best of his capability, but reiterated his opinion that support of the line was more effective, and was punishing the enemy more severely, than was generally realized.

By this time the Chinese had broken contact and, following the reconnaissance to Suwon, General Ridgway had ordered a two-divisional advance toward the Han River. To assist this operation, known as "Thunderbolt," Yellow Sea forces were strengthened by the dispatch of *Saint Paul*, escorted by two destroyers, to provide 8-inch gunfire at Inchon. On both coasts, as the armies moved forward, the carrier air groups continued to contribute to the support of troops in the line.

With planning for the future still in flux, with the Marines chasing guerrillas in the southern mountains, and with Task Force 90 dispersed, there was no possibility of a flanking amphibious operation. Yet intelligence indicated an extreme Chinese concern with the landing in the rear, and if no such stroke was possible one could always pretend. As Eighth Army advanced and as ROK forces on the eastern shore were also moving forward, Admiral Smith conceived the notion of assisting their progress by an amphibious feint in the Kansong–Kosong area, some 50 miles beyond the front lines, where a slightly expanded coastal plain and a road through the mountains to the central front provided a logical objective for an assault from the sea. For this enterprise, Operation Ascendant, CTF 95 borrowed two AKAs, two LSTs, and a couple of rocket ships from the Amphibious Force, secured a promise of assistance from the fast carriers, and set sail on 29 January in his flagship, the destroyer tender *Dixie*, with his gunnery ships in company.

At 0700 on the 30th the bombardment group, *Missouri*, *Manchester*, and their screening destroyers, opened a vigorous fire on the Kansong area, and throughout the day the minesweepers, landing craft, and rocket ships went through their paces. After retiring seaward during the night, the force reappeared next morning off Kosong to repeat the bombardment effort. If the effectiveness of these maneuvers on enemy troop dispositions was largely unassessable, the operation was at least unique in the presence of a destroyer tender as flagship and participant in beach bombardment. Since such an event may never recur, let the record show that at 1400 on the 31st *Dixie* commenced firing on the beaches at Kosong, and expended 204 rounds.

At Inchon, where *Saint Paul* had arrived on 25 January, a second deceptive operation was scheduled to follow. There Admiral Hillenkoetter had been greeted by some short salvos from Wolmi Do, but with the assistance of an air strike from *Theseus*, and gunfire from *Ceylon* and some destroyers, the Wolmi batteries were neutralized and the Kimpo-Kumpo area subsequently kept under intermittent bombardment. On 6 February Admiral Andrewes sailed from Sasebo in *Belfast* to administer the pretended landing, and two days later, after some shooting in support of ROK troops at Kangnung, *Missouri* was started west.

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Captain Kelly reached Inchon on the 8th, with two AKAs and an LSD, to simulate pre-landing operations; on the next day *Missouri* arrived and began to bombard enemy positions; a demonstration involving two transport divisions was planned for the afternoon tide of the 10th. But the affair was cancelled as a result of successes ashore: enemy resistance in the west, which had stiffened at the start of the month, gave way suddenly on the 9th, and the Chinese retired from the area; on the afternoon of the 10th Inchon was occupied by a party of ROK Marines from Tokchok To, and by nightfall American troops had reached the banks of the Han.

The reoccupation of Inchon was more than welcome. For the past month, as in the previous summer, Pusan had been a madhouse, as the difficulties of supplying the armies through a single port were compounded by the need to plan a complete and to accomplish a partial evacuation of Korea. Unfortunately, however, the advantages of a second port could not at once be realized. Not only would operations necessarily remain limited until the security of Inchon could be assured, but the demolitions of the previous month had to be cleared, a situation which raised some questions as to the wisdom, for the side which enjoyed command of the sea, of the

policy of "blow and go" which had governed the evacuations. To accomplish the necessary restoration of facilities, and to get the port in working order, Admiral Thackrey had sailed from Yokosuka on 10 February with an amphibious task group carrying the Army's 2nd Engineer Special Brigade. He arrived on the 15th just as a new emergency was developing.

The advance to the Han and the recovery of Inchon had been followed by hard fighting in the center. There the move north from Wonju had begun on 5 February, and there, while giving way in the west, the enemy had reinforced his defenses. On the 11th the Chinese pushed a heavy attack down the valley north of Wonju, punched a hole in the ROK lines, and brought about a local collapse in which for four days large gaps existed in the front. One river valley to the eastward, similar difficulties arose from a thrust aimed south at Chechon, while between Wonju and Seoul an enemy column struck southwestward toward Suwon. Such was the pressure in the center that on the 14th the Marine Division was relieved of its anti-guerrilla efforts in the south and ordered up to Wonju, while in the west the threat to Suwon brought an alert from Eighth Army for a possible evacuation of Inchon.

As a result of this alert, received just as the effort to open the port was beginning, Admiral Thackrey decided to avoid drying out LSTs on the mudflats, and to limit his rate of unloading so that no more would be put ashore than could be packed up inside of 12 hours. With time the situation improved, but for the rest of February a truck shortage limited EUSAK's acceptance of cargo to a mere 500 tons a day, while a 48-hour withdrawal notice remained in effect for a full month. Considerable congestion resulted, as the ships of Task Group 90.1 being used to work the port and those held against the possibility of evacuation were joined by new arrivals with supplies for Eighth Army, and by early March, Thackrey was crying "Hold, enough!"

Prompt reinforcement of the menaced sectors checked the mid-February threat, and by the 18th the Communists had given up and were retiring. General Ridgway now resumed his advance with Operation Killer, a move forward by IX and X Corps in the center which would bring them abreast of the line in the west, and would clear the Wonju-Kangnung road. On 21 February the Marine Division led out from Wonju, and for the remainder of the month Eighth Army moved forward against varying resistance and through abominable terrain, its movement hindered by the beginning thaw and by heavy rains which turned all roads into mudholes. By the end of the month, however, the Marines were approaching Hoengsong and the objectives of "Killer" were in hand, while on the Sea of Japan the maritime flank had been pushed forward in a great bound.

There Admiral Smith had had his eyes on the strategic islands north of the parallel, and in his concept of operations for February had noted that their occupation would be "of inestimable value," both for control of enemy junk traffic and minelaying and to provide potentially valuable staging areas. In order to undo, at least to some extent, the effects of the abandonment of northeastern Korean footholds, he proposed a heavy bombardment of Wonsan, to take place with or immediately after that at Inchon, and to be accompanied if possible by seizure of the islands of Yo Do and Ung Do which guard the harbor entrance. The idea seemed good and the execution proved better, when enemy reaction to the bombardment stimulated the seizure of an island even further in.

At sea February was a rough month, and on 13 days the blockading ships found their operations seriously hindered by foul weather. On the 12th, nevertheless, the minesweepers went in to check the Wonsan channel, and four days later two destroyers entered to bombard the port. On the 18th, in a return engagement, the destroyer *Ozbourn* was hit by artillery fire, apparently originating from the island of Sin Do, two miles off the tip of Kalma Pando. The result of this impudence was an air strike from Task Force 77 that very day, a bombardment by *Belfast* on the 19th, and the appearance on the morning of the 24th of two destroyers, a frigate, and an ROK LST with an assault party of 110 Korean Marines. Lacking a shore fire control party, the arrangements to support the Sin Do landing were somewhat complex: the Koreans had been given a portable radio, but the only interpreter was on the cruiser *Manchester* offshore, and messages to the supporting destroyers had to be relayed; *Manchester*'s helicopter, which provided aerial observation, was in communication with the destroyers but not the

landing party. But all went well: two hours of bombardment were followed by an unopposed landing, and the island was soon declared secure. United Nations forces were back at, if not in, Wonsan.

With these February operations the tempo of naval gunfire began a rapid rise. Where ammunition expenditures in December at Hungnam had set a new record, those of January had plummeted. But with clearance of the coastal fire support lane and with seizure of the Wonsan islands there came a radical increase, and by March the expenditure of 5-inch ammunition had become phenomenal. That this fluctuating consumption imposed heavy problems upon the logistic agencies may be seen from the statistics in Table 15.
Click here to view table

For the Seventh Fleet carriers February was a period of transition. Close support of the battleline continued, as did intermittent strikes against transportation targets, but the generalized nature of FEAF's basic request for interdiction led to duplication of effort with Bomber Command. Yet the problem remained and, following repeated reports of heavy movement on the Hoeryong-Wonsan line, FEAF directed Fifth Air Force to attack a group of bridges in the northeast. But to ask this was to ask too much. On 15 February General Stratemeyer advised Admiral Joy that the withdrawal from forward air bases had made operations in northeastern Korea difficult for Fifth Air Force, occupied as it was by commitments to the support of Eighth Army, to bomber escort, and to interdiction in the northwest. Stating that "naval air could greatly assist interdiction" by covering the northeastern route, he requested a ten-day effort against important bridges and proposed, if this were agreeable, to reschedule the work of Bomber Command, both to prevent duplication in the northeast and to improve coverage in the northwest. The proposition was accepted by ComNavFE, and Commander Seventh Fleet was instructed to apply his principal effort for the next ten days to the Hoeryong-Wonsan railroad.

As this work began the Chinese again disappeared from the front, and Eighth Army resumed the advance. The generalized chaos and the very large number of dead that U.N. troops discovered on their way north from Wonju went far to bear out Admiral Struble's feeling that close support had hurt the enemy more than was generally appreciated. On the other hand the altered ground situation emphasized the desirability of cutting the flow of supply and reinforcement, so as to prevent Communist recuperation. On 20 February Admiral Joy moved to coordinate the efforts against the east coast transportation line by providing the carriers and gunnery ships with a list of rail and highway bridges accessible to naval gunfire, 13 in the Wonsan area, 23 in the north on the shores of Kyongsong Man, and 25 in the region south of Songjin which had been the target of earlier attacks by raiders from *Juneau*, *Bass*, and *Perch*. As the dispatch went forth it was already being implemented, for *Missouri*, now returned from her west coast bombardment duties, was dispensing 16-inch shells against the multiple bridges which span the double river at Tanchon. On the 22nd and the 23rd this enterprise was continued, and the expenditure, with helicopter spot, of an average of 166 rounds a day effectively subdivided these overwater structures.

The assignment of the fast carriers to rail interdiction had originally been scheduled to run through 25 February; on that date ComNavFE ordered it continued; by month's end it had become the primary task. To Admiral Ofstie it so commended itself, in view of the preoccupation of Fifth Air Force in the northwest and of the greater effectiveness of Bomber Command in attacks on marshalling yards and supply areas; on 28 February he proposed that his force apply its main effort to interdiction, set up a schedule for future operations, and made recommendations for more effective coordination with the work of the bombardment ships.

Essentially this shift from close support to interdiction was the result of differential capabilities, deriving in large measure from the existing air base situation. For the United Nations, at this time, Korea formed a large beachhead, in which inward or outward deployment followed the fortunes of war. The retirement of the armies from North Korea and the redeployment of the greater part of land–based air strength to Japan had returned the peninsula to the stage which, in a normal amphibious operation, precedes the introduction of garrison air. In these circumstances Fifth Air Force found itself obliged to abandon the interdiction function, and on 26 February, as

Task Force 77 began its extended stint in the northeast, the responsibility for northwestern Korea reverted to the B–29s of Bomber Command.

Difficult though the situation still remained, it was about to improve. The Army had started north the latter part of January; as March opened, the objectives of "Killer" were in hand and the U.N. line, both stable and relatively straight, extended eastward from the lower Han through Hoengsong, and thence northeasterly to Chumunjin. In these circumstances it was possible to return evacuated air units to Korea: in early February the Marines had moved three fighter squadrons in from Japan, and by month’s end Fifth Air Force squadrons and supporting units were preparing to return. At Wonsan in the east, and from Inchon to the Yalu in the west, U.N. forces held islands off the enemy shore. Along both coasts, from the battleline to the northern limits of the blockade, the surface units of Task Force 95 patrolled and bombarded. The effort of the fast carriers had shifted northward, and was focussed on the rail lines leading down from Manchuria. Eighth Army was preparing a new offensive.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 10. The Second Six Months
2. March-April 1951: On to the Parallel

On 2 March the Marine Division, spearheading the drive up the center, captured Hoengsong. With the aims of "Killer" accomplished, EUSAK now planned a further advance, Operation Ripper, which by pushing onward through Hongchon to Chunchon would outflank Seoul, and gain a line in the neighborhood of the 38th parallel. This new move would take General Ridgway's armies through the region of the enemy's January offensive, and as it had for the Communists, so now for the United Nations the topography of the area would pull the armies to the right and away from the axis of the peninsula. As Eighth Army moved onward through the central hill country the valley roads would lead not toward Pyongyang but north through the mountains to Kansong, Kojo, and Wonsan on the eastern coast. In this situation, and as the battleline had now acquired a national compartmentation with U.N. and Chinese forces in the west and center, and with the eastern flank remaining an all-Korean affair, it was hoped to split the Chinese off from their indigenous subordinates. Finally, as in the operations of February, General Ridgway intended to inflict maximum attrition on the enemy, and by keeping the pressure on to inhibit his preparation of a new offensive.

To assist the planned advance EUSAK had again asked for an amphibious demonstration in the Yellow Sea. Feeling that the speed of earlier efforts had not given the sluggish enemy sufficient time to react, Admiral Andrewes now planned for deliberate fraud. Beginning on 27 February the air activities of *Bataan* were increased and localized; for two days the DMS *Carmick*, the frigate *Alacrity*, and two Korean YMS swept northward along the coast and into the mush ice of the Taedong estuary; there followed a cruiser and destroyer bombardment. On 3 March the amphibious element of three APAs and two AKAs appeared, escorted by two destroyers, to steam northward along the shore. Half way to Cho Do the transports reversed course and retired to Inchon, whence they made an ostentatious departure on the 5th to continue the effort at mystification.

After a heavy artillery preparation, Operation Ripper was launched on 7 March, and began a steady progress up the center of the peninsula. Seoul this time was captured not on the beaches of Inchon but on the Pukhan: as the 25th Division forced the Han near its junction with that river and moved on to the north the capital was outflanked, and on the 15th was reoccupied without a fight. But two conquests and two liberations had taken a frightful toll, and hardly a tenth of the city's original population still skulked amid the ruins.

On the east coast, as "Ripper" began, the destroyers continued to provide fire support; at Inchon the heavy cruiser *Saint Paul* remained on station, her 8-inch guns closely tied in with I Corps artillery. But with the flanks holding and the center advancing, and with Task Force 95 concentrating on the disruption of enemy transport and supply, gunfire support was for the moment of secondary importance and the trend of naval activity continued northerly. Task Force 77 was working over east coast transportation targets; east coast bombardment efforts were centered at Wonsan and Songjin; in the northwest *Belfast*, *Kenya*, and associated light units shot up enemy positions at the mouth of the Taedong estuary.

Since 16 February Wonsan had been under siege, and of the 31 days of March found itself subjected to gunfire on 31. As April opened, all important harbor islands had been occupied by the U.N., the record for continuous naval bombardment, established at Vicksburg almost a century before, had been surpassed, and a long and uninterruptedly difficult future lay ahead of the town. Enemy response to these operations involved a build-up of artillery and garrison forces, and a persistent if small-scale effort to remine the harbor: of the 28 mines swept in March—some of them new and shiny—20 were swept at Wonsan. Despite frequent and increasing artillery opposition, the sweepers worked persistently to enlarge the bombardment lanes, while the gunnery ships,

beneficiaries of the effort, supported them by counterbattery fire and bombardment. On 1 March Korean agents reported that the enemy was unloading Soviet mines at the Kalma railroad siding, and on the 7th a bombardment of this target by the light cruiser *Manchester* brought a gratifying high order detonation of a boxcar full.

The precaution of arranging for east coast intelligence sources proved rewarding in other ways. On 15 March, in response to reports from ashore of enemy troop concentrations, a special event was laid on. Rapid fire bombardment of reported assembly areas in the neighborhood of Wonsan by *Manchester* and the destroyer *Lind* brought reports of 6,000 and 2,000 casualties respectively, and follow-up information from agents ashore indicated that the civilian population had fled the city and that morale among the military was not good. Pressure from the sea nevertheless continued undiminished: an enemy effort to land by sampan on ROKN-occupied Tae Do, off the end of Kalma Pando, was repelled; on the 24th a fire control party was put ashore on Tae Do by the destroyer *English*, with beneficial results in the spotting of bombardment.

At Songjin, 120 miles to the northeast and halfway to the Siberian border, a similar if less intensive siege had meanwhile been commenced. Mine reconnaissance of Songjin, carried out in the first days of March, was followed by daily bombardment of the port and of rail bridges neighboring the town, and in the first week of April a major minesweeping effort was undertaken to provide increased maneuvering room for the firing ships.

In addition to the work at the bombline, and at Wonsan and Songjin, intermittent bombardment of bridge targets was conducted in Kyongsong Man to the northward. On three days in mid-March, from the 14th to the 16th, *Missouri* was in action against east coast transportation targets in the Chongjin area, after which she moved southward to fire on the coastal rail line in the neighborhood of 40° and to shoot up Wonsan.

By this time the efforts against enemy transportation targets were beginning to develop into a concentrated and coordinated campaign. The Communists, of course, had long since lost the use of the sea; seaborne import of useful objects from Vladivostok or from China ports had been eliminated, along with coastal traffic, in the first days of war. Enemy logistics therefore depended on the two principal land transport nets, the western rail and road complex, in which the lines from the lower Yalu and from Manpojin joined in the area north of Pyongyang, and the eastern route, in which the tracks south from Hoeryong and southeast from Hyesanjin met at Kilchu and continued down the coast to join the transpeninsular line below Hungnam. In the west the mission of interdiction had been assumed by Bomber Command; the eastern rail and road lines, more distant from U.N. bases, became the responsibility of the Navy.

These tasks would of course have been far simpler had only the position at Wonsan been maintained. Given the topography of east central Korea, and the resulting configuration of the rail and road net, such a foothold would have blocked enemy supply of the eastern front, while Marine fighter-bombers based on Kalma Pando would have had the entire transpeninsular line and a major portion of the western transportation system within the 100-mile circle. As it was, however, the evacuation of X Corps, the result of fears for Eighth Army rather than of doubts as to the feasibility of holding a perimeter, led to the imposition for the remainder of the war of a heavy and continuing burden upon the carrier and gunnery forces.

In the circumstances, however, it was fortunate these forces existed. With them, in the continued absence of air and submarine opposition, targets 400 miles from the nearest U.N. airstrip could be kept under dive bomber attack, and coastal targets 300 road miles behind the lines subjected to naval gunfire. The importance of such action had been emphasized in early 1951 by intelligence of a strenuous impending enemy logistic effort on the east coast route, by the knowledge that some reorganized North Korean divisions were scheduled for rail movement south from Hoeryong, and by expectations of an important secondary traffic from Manpojin through Kanggye by rail, across to the Chosin Reservoir by truck, and thence down to Hamhung. It was in the context of this intelligence that ComNavFE had accepted FEAF's request to put the fast carriers on interdiction, and had moved to shift the efforts of Task Force 95 from control of the sea approaches to the interruption of land transport by providing the list of rail and highway bridges.

Such target information was most helpful, but for a number of reasons effective interdiction of Communist supply lines remained extremely difficult. This was so in the first instance because of the enemy's logistic austerity. As compared with a figure of 50 pounds per day for the individual in the U.S. Eighth Army, and of 64 pounds per man-day with the Fifth Air Force in Korea's heavy logistic requirements figured in, the best available estimates indicated that the Communists subsisted on a supply basis of ten pounds per man per day. Measured against this requirement, which worked out at about 50 tons per day per division, the North Korean transportation net was more than adequate, although its peacetime capacity had been gravely diminished by damage to rails and rolling stock and by limitation to night movement. In early March the capacity of the west coast rail line was estimated at between 500 and 1,000 tons per day, and that of the east coast railroad at about 500, while highways in the west and east were capable of transporting 1,000 and 500 tons per day respectively. In these circumstances it appeared that the enemy could support half a million troops, with something over a third dependent on the east coast rail and road nets.

Interdiction of these routes depended, at least in the first instance, upon bridge demolition, and modern reinforced concrete bridges, hard to hit and hard to destroy, requiring the hitting power of battleship or heavy cruiser main battery fire, or of the AD attack plane. Experience gained as the campaign progressed showed force requirements of about 60 rounds of 16-inch gunfire or of 12 to 16 AD sorties per bridge destroyed, so that for battleship and carrier alike, two a day was the average capability. Knocking down the bridges was therefore well within the realm of possibility, but while the rail net could be thus fragmented the effect on highway travel was less decisive: a truck can be detoured more easily than a train, and the supply of trucks from north of the border was a continuing one.

In his dispatch of 28 February Admiral Ofstie had proposed to rotate the efforts of his force between the area north of Hamhung, the complex south and west of Hamhung-Wonsan, and the route between Hamhung and the Chosin Reservoir, and had observed that better coordination with the gunnery ships would be helpful to the enterprise. The proposed procedure for Task Force 77 was approved by Admiral Struble; with reference to the comments on naval gunfire, however, Commander Seventh Fleet somewhat sourly observed that coordination between Task Force 77 and Task Force 95 was in the hands of ComNavFE. Passing upward through the chain of command, CTF 77's plan received the blessing of NavFE headquarters; arrangements for exchange of information between Bomber Command and the carriers were worked out; and the force set to work in the area east of a line drawn south along 127°E, and thence through Yangdok to Kumwha. Ultimately the coordination with Task Force 95 would also come.

Within the carrier task force the campaign was carefully planned. Since the 395 major bridges in eastern North Korea afforded a surplus of targets, a research effort was undertaken which cut the list to 48 "key bridges," structures in difficult terrain which were hard to bypass, and which once destroyed would have to be rebuilt. Attack on these key bridges was to be supplemented by track breaking, by destruction of minor bridges in areas where no key structure existed, and by surface gunfire at specific points along the coast, of which Kyongson Man, Songjin, and Iwon were of primary importance. The backbone of the striking force was provided by the ADs, lifting three 2,000–pound GP bombs apiece, and accompanied by F4Us for fighter cover and flak suppression, each with a 1,000–pound bomb for added striking power. The entire campaign was backed up by a comprehensive and continuing program of aerial photography. Maximum economy of effort was derived from careful briefing, and no pilot was sent off without one or more photographs of his target.

Click here to view map

Through March and into April the carrier planes ranged over northeastern Korea, covering the four degrees of latitude from the 38th parallel north to beyond Chongjin. As the three complexes named by CTF 77 were attacked in regular succession, the box score grew and the impact upon the enemy became severe. The effectiveness both of the bridge strikes and of Communist efforts to undo the damage may be seen in the history

of the most famous of east coast structures, the bridge below Kilchu, where the railroad crosses what came to be known as Carlson's Canyon.

Of the valley named in his honor, Lieutenant Commander Harold G. Carlson, commanding officer of VA 195 in *Princeton*, was the Vespucci rather than the Columbus, exploiter rather than discoverer, for the bridge that crossed it was first sighted by a shipmate, Lieutenant Commander Clement M. Craig, while flying homeward on the morning of 2 March from a strike on Kilchu. Eight miles southwest of that town the rail line, tunnelling through the hills, emerges briefly to span a gully and then disappears again underground. Twin tunnels had been dug in preparation for double tracking, and two sets of piers erected, but only a single track had been thrown across the chasm on a six–span bridge, 650 feet long and 60 feet high. The tunnels made it difficult to bypass; its height made it difficult to repair. That afternoon a strike was flown off which damaged the southern approach.

Next day Commander Carlson led a second flight of ADs against the bridge. As a result of this event one span was dropped, a second damaged, two more shifted out of line, and the site rechristened by Admiral Ofstie in honor of the strike leader. Four days later, on 7 March, a follow–up attack dropped the northernmost of the previously shifted spans.

The attacks on the railroad bridges quickly resulted in pile–ups of supplies at breaks in the line, in concentrations of vehicles to truck material past the choke points, and in energetic efforts at repair. By 8 March the Corsairs were loading with 100 and 250-pound bombs for employment against these accumulations of supplies and vehicles, while the ADs and the heavy ordnance were reserved for the interdiction targets proper. At Carlson's Canyon the vigor of the enemy effort was revealed on the 14th by photo plane inspection which showed rough but effective repairs in the form of wooden cribbing, built up to replace the missing spans. Strike 4 followed the next day, knocked down all new construction, dropped another span at the southern end, and damaged the northern approach; but within two days large piles of wooden ties had been assembled in the gully preparatory to re-reconstruction. The extraordinary persistence of this engineering effort, paralleled at all important broken bridges, testified to the importance of the east coast rail net, demonstrated the availability of repair crews and materials, and imposed upon the task force the requirement of rephotographing all key targets at four-day intervals.

Following the strike of 15 March Admiral Ofstie recommended to ComNavFE that Bomber Command be asked to inhibit repair activity by seeding the gully with long-delay bombs. In spite of JOC concurrence FEAF's first reaction was adverse, but a study of photographs provided by the task force showed the site to be a prime objective for this combination of naval and Air Force capabilities; on the 24th a B–29 was sent out with a bomb load fused for long and varying delays, and three days later the effort was repeated.

Despite this useful contribution, the enemy continued to press the work with great determination. On 20 March photographs again revealed large piles of construction material. By the 30th, cribbing of the four central spans and the northern approach had been completed, transverse members had been installed, and only the rails were lacking. On 2 April, therefore, Admiral Ofstie sent off Strikes 5 and 6 which destroyed the whole works, knocking down all rebuilt cribs and spans and leaving only the concrete piers.

If it did not discourage the enemy, this destruction at least forced him to change his plans. Reconstruction of the bridge was abandoned and the labor force put to work on the building of a four-mile serpentine which would bypass bridge and tunnels alike. This bypass required eight new bridges of its own, but all were short and low; although a number were knocked out in April, the new simplicity of repair made the site no longer an attractive one, and the attention of the force was shifted southward to the area of Songjin. There, after first breaking some low bridges north of the city, CTF 77 turned to the area south of the town, where the bridge-tunnel-bridge sequence was three times repeated close to the water's edge, and where gunfire from the besieging destroyer could delay the rebuilding of structures taken out by air attack. Already once destroyed and once repaired, these bridges began to receive the concentrated treatment on April Fool's Day, and here through June

the same sequence of destruction, cribbing, destruction, and bypassing would take place.

On 4 April, after 38 days of concentrated effort in interdiction, Admiral Ofstie turned over tactical command of the force, and *Princeton* sailed for Yokosuka for an overdue period of rehabilitation and maintenance. In this period 54 rail and 37 highway bridges had been rendered inoperable, 44 more had been damaged in varying degree, and the railroad tracks had been broken in more than 200 places. For much of the Korean War, pilots' claims are difficult to assess, and statistics of attacks against such evanescent targets as personnel, rolling stock, and guns must be taken as approximations only. But of these bridges it is possible to speak with some confidence, for in Task Force 77 "inoperable" meant that photographs showed one or more spans destroyed.

Click here to view table

Enemy response to this extremely destructive campaign was not limited to the effort in reconstruction. Antiaircraft defenses of key points were rapidly increased, and there developed an extraordinary increase in truck traffic which brought April air sightings of vehicles to more than four times the January total. Since trucks and antiaircraft, unlike bridges, were available on requisition from the north in practically unlimited quantity, it was soon apparent that interdiction could hardly be absolute, and that to maintain its effectiveness would require continuous effort. Nevertheless the work of the fast carriers had been fruitful: the east coast rail system, which had carried two-thirds of North Korean traffic in February, in March moved less than half the total and in April less than a third, and east coast enemy road transport was likewise proportionately reduced.

Click here to view table

Despite the virtues of modernity, as exemplified in bombing and bombardment, it remains true that the surest way of getting explosives where you want them is the old-fashioned one of putting them there by hand. With this sometimes forgotten truth in mind, ComNavFE in mid-March had conceived the idea of assisting the interdiction of the east coast rail line by a commando raid. A special task organization, Task Force 74, was set up under Admiral Hillenkoetter; 250 men of the Royal Marine Commando were embarked in the LSD *Fort Marion* and a UDT detachment in the APD *Begor*. Following rehearsals at Kure these ships set sail for Sorye Dong, eight miles south of Songjin, with a somewhat elaborate supporting force composed of *Saint Paul*, two destroyers, and six minesweepers.

The operation took place on 7 April. Owing in part to the directive, and in part to limited communications facilities in the participating ships, command arrangements were rather unorthodox. The landing itself was the responsibility of Captain Philip W. Mothersill, commanding officer of *Fort Marion* and Commander Amphibious Group, and Admiral Hillenkoetter controlled only the supporting ships. Instead of awaiting an expression of readiness on the part of the landing force commander, transfer of control ashore was to take place automatically the moment the troops hit the beach, although, oddly enough, fire support and air control personnel were to remain subordinate to the Amphibious Group. Shore fire control personnel from a Marine Anglico had been offered but declined; the SFCP, composed of ship's company from *Saint Paul*, was inexperienced in troop fire support and lacked direct communications with the landing force.

To the distress of the landing force commander, who felt that it would reveal intentions and gain him a warm welcome ashore, a conspicuous minesweeping effort had been arranged. The landing itself, scheduled to take place in the pre-dawn darkness, was to be preceded by UDT beach reconnaissance, but pea soup fog frustrated the latter and delayed the former until 0800. Beach intelligence, based on few photographs and faulty interpretation, had promised a sandy shore with suitable exit for tracked vehicles; in fact no exit existed and the beach was fouled by boulders which, but for the fortunate absence of swell, would have ripped the tracks off the LVTs.

In these circumstances it was well that opposition was negligible. Operations proceeded deliberately, the demolitions were satisfactorily accomplished, and by 1600 the landing force had reembarked. But the whole

comedy was labor lost: the point of attack was just south of some of Task Force 77's favorite bridges, the rails were red with rust, and local inhabitants reported that for 40 days and 40 nights no train had passed through Sorye Dong.

By this time the ships, the commanders, and the crews who had carried the burden during the early months of the war were being rotated homeward. Hoskins, Hartman, Higgins, and Doyle had already moved on to new commands, and as spring came more and more new faces blossomed in Korea. Naval reservists, who had earlier come forward in drafts and as individuals, now began to arrive in organized units: the first weekend-warrior aviation unit, a PBM patrol squadron, had reached Japan in mid–December; in late March the first reserve air group arrived when *Boxer*, her long-delayed overhaul at last completed, returned to relieve *Valley Forge*. Also embarked in *Boxer* was Rear Admiral William G. Tomlinson, Commander Carrier Division 3, whose impending arrival at last permitted Admiral Ewen to go home. But *Philippine Sea*, his long–time flagship, remained, and her flag quarters were taken over on 25 March by Vice Admiral Harold M. Martin, who three days later relieved Admiral Struble as Commander Seventh Fleet.

This shift in the principal naval operating command was followed, in early April, by changes in subordinate echelons and by a major structural revision of Naval Forces Far East. Admiral Andrewes, who following promotion to vice admiral earlier in the year had for six weeks commanded Task Force 95, was relieved by Rear Admiral Alan K. Scott–Moncrieff, RN, and command of the Blockading and Escort Force reverted to Admiral Smith. Service Force units, previously organized in separate Seventh Fleet and NavFE groups, were consolidated into Task Force 92; with the departure of Captain Austin, who had run the logistics for Inchon, Wonsan, and Hungnam, command of this force devolved upon Captain Wright, formerly ComServDiv 31. And with these changes Admiral Martin got something that Struble had repeatedly sought without success, when on 3 April Task Force 92, Task Force 95, and all U.S. Navy destroyers in the Far East were assigned to his operational control.

With this consolidation only the patrol planes, the submarines, the Hunter–Killer Group, and the Amphibious Force remained directly under ComNavFE, and these would be assigned to Seventh Fleet as need arose. One result was a considerable simplification of command relations and of the associated communications problem as between Eighth Army, Fifth Air Force, and theater naval forces; another was an improved coordination of carrier and gunnery units in the east coast interdiction campaign. Admiral Ofstie had earlier commented on the economy of effort to be derived from such coordination, then requiring action at the NavFE level, and while exchange of information had been improved the results were not yet wholly satisfactory. Following the reorganization of 3 April, however, Commander Seventh Fleet assumed responsibility for the interdiction campaign. All heavy ships were absorbed into Task Force 77, while Task Force 95, composed of two U.S. destroyer divisions, the ROK Navy, and units of other U.N. member nations, became in fact as in name the Blockading and Escort Force. Shortly Admiral Martin would delegate responsibility for east coast interdiction, gun-fire as well as air, to CTF 77, and by instructing him to make recommendations for supplementary commando raids ensure that there would be no more Sorye Dongs.

Through March, while the aviators were breaking down the bridges, Operation Ripper had continued, with U.N. forces pressing onward through the razor–edged mountains and precipitous valleys of central Korea. Although winter had ended, the spring thaws and heavy rains continued to make movement difficult, while to the delays imposed by nature were added the delaying operations of small enemy groups. Only in mid-month was variety provided by a singular operation in which the remnants of the North Korean 10th Division, which the Marines had earlier been chasing through the upper Naktong Basin, moved northward, fought their way through the ROK lines from the rear, and disappeared into the distance.

The escape of these people was regrettable, but was compensated for by more important developments. The advance of IX and X Corps in the center had freed the flanks for rapid movement, and in the west, following

the reoccupation of Seoul, the I Corps moved rapidly to the Imjin River. There by month's end the line had been pushed forward to the 38th parallel, while on the east coast ROK forces had again crossed into North Korea.

In the west, too, the logistic situation was easing. At Inchon, by mid-March, the MSTS representative had opened his office ashore, and on the 17th EUSAK lifted its 48-hour evacuation notice. On the 25th, with the Army engineers ashore and with unloading proceeding at a rate of over 3,000 tons a day, Admiral Thackrey closed down his operations and departed. Although the delay had been considerable, it was less than that in exploitation of the neighboring strategic prize, for Kimpo did not become fully operational until May.

With the armies of the U.N. astride the 38th parallel, the question of how far to press the advance again presented itself, this time to be answered on tactical grounds. For some time intelligence had indicated that the Chinese intended to hold at the dividing line, while preparing for a major offensive in May. Since there was plenty of evidence, not least the Communist diligence in bridge repair, to show that these preparations were being earnestly pressed, this intelligence was taken seriously. To hinder the enemy build-up and to maintain pressure on the Communist armies, EUSAK had planned a further move. The Imjin River would remain the western anchor, but the remainder of the front would be advanced across the parallel, to shorten the line and to provide a labor-saving ten-mile water frontage at the Hwachon Reservoir. This movement, Operation Rugged, began on 5 April.

In the air, too, the enemy was growing stronger. In late March Communist air strength was estimated to have reached a total of some 750 aircraft of all types, and B–29 attacks on northern targets were meeting heavy MIG opposition. Ominously, on 29 March, a twin-jet bomber was sighted over central North Korea; equally ominously, efforts were underway to rehabilitate the North Korean airfields.

This threat found the forces of the United Nations in an extremely vulnerable position. Nine months of exemption from the dangers of air attack had taught bad habits. On shore, camouflage discipline was nonexistent, housing and equipment were disposed in orderly rows about the Korean landscape, stockpiles were open and conspicuous, aircraft were parked in close formation on unrevetted airfields. Along both coasts blockading ships operated without air cover, which in any event could hardly have been provided, and skills in air defense had rusted. For the naval forces the danger was emphasized on 15 April, when the ROK frigate *Apnok*, straggling in somewhat undisciplined fashion from a force returning from the Yalu Gulf, was attacked by three enemy propeller-driven aircraft. *Apnok* fought back well, and shot down one of her attackers, but her topsides were chewed up by strafing and near misses, and there were numerous casualties among the crew.

FEAF, in the meantime, had been watching the Communist airfield reconstruction, and on 13 April began a neutralization campaign which, for the balance of the month, would see a dozen B–29s sent off daily to crater the runways and seed them with delayed–action bombs. As a further precautionary measure, an agreement had been concluded between FEAF and NavFE which provided that in the event of an emergency the air defense commander would have control of all shore-based naval and Marine fighter planes. For the Air Force, still desirous of gaining operational control of naval air, this seemed little enough, and the exemption of embarked aviation as "an integral part of the fleet" from this prior commitment was disappointing. But reasons for retaining this freedom of action shortly became apparent.

The commitment of the Marine Division to the mountain front had limited the offensive capabilities of the Amphibious Force to the conduct of feints and demonstrations. This, however, was a game at which two could play, and resurgent Communist activities in the Formosa area now had impact on Korean naval operations. Since the summer of 1950 the Formosa Strait patrol had been continued by long-range search planes and by a small destroyer force. But with the new year intelligence of troop and junk concentrations in mainland ports suggested the possibility of an invasion attempt when the April good weather came. In mid-February Struble had again visited Formosa, and an improved and expanded Formosa defense plan had been prepared. Late in the month ComNavFE took cognizance of the situation, and inaugurated a series of experiments to determine the optimum choice of weapons against a junk fleet.

In warfare between forces of radically different technological capabilities the advantages are not all on one side. In Korea the virtues of primitivism in conflict with technology had been clearly demonstrated in the difficulties that had beset Eighth Army, mechanized, heavily equipped, and road-bound, when locked in combat with the lightly armed, ridge-running levies of North Korea and Communist China. The difficulties of successfully interdicting the supply lines of an army whose logistic requirements per man were about a sixth of those of U.S. forces had reinforced the lesson, which promised also to apply to action between naval air and gunnery forces and fleets of wooden junks.

Such fleets present numerous small targets, hard to hit, impossible to sink, and whose destruction may prove excessively costly in ammunition expenditure. On 24 February, therefore, with the Formosan question in mind, ComNavFE directed Admiral Thackrey to provide some samples at Yokosuka for practice purposes. Eight 60-foot Korean junks Were salvaged at Inchon and brought across in the LSD *Tortuga*; a sunken Chinese 100-foot 600-tonner presented more difficulties, but in time was floated, beached at Wolmi Do, and embarked in the LSD *Colonial* for delivery to Japan. In March and April extensive tests were conducted under the direction of Rear Admiral Edgar A. Cruise, commander of the Hunter-Killer Task Group. But his report on ordnance selection was not completed until May, by which time the Communist build-up in Formosa Strait had already had strategic effect.

The intelligence from the south and the coming of the invasion season made a show of force appear in order. On 8 April, therefore, with Admiral Martin in *Philippine Sea* and Admiral Tomlinson as OTC in *Boxer*, Task Force 77 left Korean waters and steamed southward through the East China Sea. On the 13th Admiral Martin flew in to visit the Generalissimo at Taipei, and an air parade was flown over Formosa to strengthen Nationalist morale; two days earlier a similar demonstration had been made along the three-mile limit off the Chinese mainland *pour encourager les autres*; on both days high-altitude photography of selected coastal staging areas was carried out. On the 14th the force again headed northward and on the 16th resumed its efforts in interdiction of the northeastern transportation net. But while the demonstration may have had value in Formosa, it had proven costly in Korea: although *Bataan* and *Theseus* had been shifted from the Yellow Sea to the east coast, their weight of effort had proven insufficient, and the eight-day hiatus in fast carrier operations had left the interdiction program almost out of hand.

Important though they were, these workaday problems were for the moment overshadowed by events on a higher level, for following a series of public and private disagreements concerning Far Eastern strategic aims President Truman on 11 April relieved CincFE of his commands. Where the military had already had to adjust to an Amphibious Force without a Marine Division, to a Marine Division without its Aircraft Wing, and to a United Nations force shorn of its amphibious capability and limited in strategic aim, the world now faced the problem of adjusting to a Far East Command without General MacArthur. "New war" had required a new commander.

The manifold responsibilities of Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Commander in Chief United Nations Command, Commander in Chief Far East Command, and Commanding General, U.S. Army, Far East, now devolved upon General Ridgway, who was in turn relieved at Eighth Army by Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet, USA. Having been concerned with the implementation of the Truman Doctrine in Greece, a country also in large part surrounded by sea and troubled by visitors from beyond the northern mountains, General Van Fleet found himself in a not unfamiliar strategic situation. Under its new commander Eighth Army continued its northward advance, while preparing, in anticipation of a CCF offensive, for a fighting retirement which would inflict maximum punishment on the enemy. By the third week of April the Hwachon Reservoir had been reached, and from the Imjin to the Sea of Japan the line ran some ten miles north of the parallel.

At sea as on land, operations continued in routine fashion. On the east coast the sieges of Wonsan and Songjin went on, with daily bombardment and daily minesweeping. For the sweepers, life had been eased by the arrival of *LST 799*, whose conversion to minesweep tender and helicopter base had been completed; her presence

also proved a boon to U.N. pilots, who could now ditch damaged planes in Wonsan harbor in confidence of expeditious rescue. In early April a new technique was developed by the Wonsan besiegers when an Air Force night intruder pilot employed his previous experience in the artillery to coach ships' gunners on to targets they could not see. This happenstance was followed by a visit of the Task Force 95 gunnery officer to the pilot's parent squadron, and by a developing coordination of gunfire illumination with air bombardment, strafing, and spotting, which was limited in its prospects only by the number of available intruder aircraft.

In the northeast, where the interdiction campaign was now the sole responsibility of Task Force 77, the fast carriers had resumed their effort, and while the rotating emphasis on different sections of the transportation net continued, the focus, with Carlson's Canyon bypassed, was on the bridges south of Songjin. In the Yellow Sea the carrier element worked over western Hwanghae Province, the surface ships continued their missions of bombardment and patrol, and guerrilla raiding forces were put ashore. In all services all hands had been alerted to the impending attack, which indeed the enemy had advertised, in his press and on his radio, as one designed utterly to destroy the forces of the U.N. This time, at any rate, there would be no surprise.

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James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 10. The Second Six Months
3. April-May 1951: The Communist Spring Offensive

The enemy offensive broke on the evening of 22 April with a thrust down the center by the Chinese 20th Army. South of Kumwha the ROK 6th Division collapsed under the weight of the attack, and as the enemy poured through the gap between the Marines and the 24th Infantry Division, General Van Fleet ordered a withdrawal. Four days went by before the assault was checked, and in this interval, with the enemy out in the open and moving, more than a thousand close support sorties by Fifth Air Force and carrier-based aircraft inflicted very heavy casualties.

The attack in the center and the U.N. retirement which followed had opened the valley of the Pukhan and the Chunchon-Seoul road. On the 26th, therefore, the Communists launched their main effort in an attempted double envelopment of Seoul, in which one prong was pushed down the Pukhan valley, while in the west an attempt was made to ferry troops across the Han onto the Kumpo peninsula. Both moves failed. The eastern threat to the capital was checked by the 24th and 25th Divisions, while on the Han a busy day of strafing by aircraft of the West Coast Carrier Element limited the arrivals to a number easily dealt with by the ROK Marine battalion defending the Kumpo peninsula. In the end the enemy advance in the west central sector reached a maximum of about 30 miles; east of the Hwachon Reservoir the Communists captured the town of Inje on the Hongchon-Kansong road; on the east coast they moved forward some five miles. But despite casualties estimated at ten times those of the U.N. no decisive advantage had been gained, and by the 29th the front was stabilized once more.

Once again the enemy offensive brought an immediate response from U.N. naval forces. On 23 April Task Force 77 began a ten-day sustained effort in support of the battleline. On the next day the first of a series of amphibious feints was carried out. On the 26th the threat to Seoul brought another evacuation alert at Inchon: cruiser *Toledo* was sent in to provide 8-inch gunfire support and once again Admiral Thackrey was ordered up to take charge. By the 1st of May, as redeployment shipping was beginning to arrive, some 200,000 refugees had clustered in the Inchon area.

The Chinese breakthrough in the center posed urgent requirements for air support, but the Korean airbase situation remained difficult. In April, in addition to the 5 Marine squadrons in Korea, only 3 of the 18 Air Force groups committed to the conflict could be based in the peninsula; in May runway difficulties at Taegu forced the closing of that field and the return of its F–80s to Japan. Over and above the airbase problem the operations of both carrier and land-based squadrons were complicated by the seasonal bad weather. Fog was reported at sea on 17 days in May, rain and low ceilings were prevalent, and visibility in the combat area was further restricted by smoke haze from brush fires set by the enemy for protection against air attack.

These circumstances called for the immediate shift of fast carrier operations from interdiction to close support, and for the greatest possible weight of effort. To avoid the loss of a day in four in refueling and rearming, Admiral Ofstie on 24 April began a schedule of daily replenishment. For ten days the force joined the logistic ships in late afternoon to load until midnight, and while this made for a long working day, it also made it possible to keep pace with the high rate of expenditure of aviation gasoline and ordnance.

To this shift in carrier employment and this intensification of operations there was also added an increase in strength. On 1 May, as *Boxer* returned from Yokosuka, the retirement of *Philippine Sea* was delayed, and for three days three carriers were kept on the line. On the same day, as the result of pressure in the west, *Bataan*'s replenishment period was cut short, her pilots were recalled from leave, and she was sailed from Sasebo for the Yellow Sea. There she joined HMS *Glory*, recently arrived as relief for *Theseus*, and there from 2 to 6 May the

two ships worked together to strengthen the west coast effort.

Although close support was for the moment the primary task, the most striking carrier operation of the period was the attack on the Hwachon Dam, which by impounding the waters of the upper Pukhan both provided a barrier to movement and held back water usable for tactical purposes. In January, in the hope of impeding enemy progress, Eighth Army had asked FEAF to hole the dam, but an attack by a couple of B–29s with 6-ton guided bombs had failed of success. On 9 April, as Eighth Army was moving northward, the enemy had turned the trick, and by opening the gates had flooded the Pukhan and decommissioned some bridges. Two days later a small and hastily organized force of cavalrymen and rangers failed in an attempt to capture the dam; on 21 April the KMC Regiment had seized it, only to be ordered back as the Chinese broke through the line on the left. Now at April's end, as the Chinese lunge expended itself, EUSAK again developed the desire to break the dam, wet down the Communists, and prevent them from using the water as a weapon.

On the afternoon of 30 April Admiral Ofstie received a photograph of the dam, with a notation requesting that two or more sluice gates be knocked out, and was informed that EUSAK was the requesting agency and wanted it done at once. At 1600 six ADs were flown off with two 2,000-pound GP bombs apiece, accompanied by five Corsairs for flak suppression, and a dive bombing attack was carried out which produced a hole in one gate. A request from EUSAK for another try and a night's consideration led to a change in ordnance selection: on the next day eight ADs were launched with torpedoes set for surface run, and at 1100 the Skyraiders went in on this now unfamiliar mission. One torpedo was a dud and one erratic, but the remaining six ran true. One flood gate and the lower half of a second were removed, the dam's western abutment was holed, and the enemy deprived of control of the waters.

Click here to view map

By April's end the offensive had been contained, and in the first two weeks of May, as Eighth Army probed northward and the enemy prepared for a second try, U.N. aircraft renewed their efforts in interdiction. This interlude brought a temporary expansion of the work of the fast carriers as the result of a request from the Joint Operations Center for help in the interdiction of the western rail lines. In response Rear Admiral George R. Henderson, who had just relieved Admiral Ofstie as CTF 77, advised the JOC that on 11 May he would strike railroad bridges in the triangle which connects Pyongyang, Sunchon, and the transpeninsular line to the east. On the morning of the 11th 32 ADs carrying two 2,000-pound bombs apiece, and accompanied by 32 F4Us for flak suppression and 16 F9Fs for top cover, attacked four of these bridges and dropped spans in three. This success elicited a further request from Fifth Air Force for the destruction of bridges in the rail quadrilateral which links Pyongyang with Sinanju, Kaechon, and Sunchon.

In reply to this message Admiral Henderson observed that while he would be glad to help out from time to time, existing obligations prevented his assuming any permanent responsibility. But the request for such a "substantial and continuing commitment" of the fast carrier effort brought ComNavFE to his feet, and on 16 May he informed Commander Seventh Fleet that such proposals should pass through appropriate service channels for action by higher authority. But by the time this dispatch was on its way the enemy was on the move again: on the 18th, EUSAK called for maximum effort in close air support, and when interdiction again came to the fore the situation had changed.

The failure of the Communists' first attack, and their evident intention to try again, raised the question of the possible employment of new weapons and brought steps to guard against surprise. Where the first five months of war had produced 80 reports of possible submarine contacts, the second five months had brought a mere 16, a change which could be interpreted as either a threat or a promise. In the air, by contrast, there was no question as to the magnitude of the Communist build–up across the Yalu, nor as to the earnestness of the effort to rehabilitate North Korean airfields. Although no air commitment had accompanied the April offensive, the possibility remained, and on the 29th Commander Seventh Fleet again warned of the chance of surprise air or submarine

attack.

For the carrier force, which could operate from beyond MIG range and fight off attacks from other aircraft types available to the enemy, the submarine presented the major hazard, but for the units of Task Force 95 the air question was the serious one. Admiral Smith had alerted his force in April; now on 10 May he advised his ships that the next ten days would be critical with regard to enemy commitment of air strength, credited the Communists with a capability of 300 offensive sorties a day, issued instructions as to procedures to be adopted under attacks of varying weight, and instructed replenishment vessels to avoid anchoring in forward locations.

In the event, although subsequent evidence indicated that the Chinese had hoped to provide their armies with air support, neither menace developed. FEAF's attacks on North Korean airfields had kept the rehabilitation effort down, and on 9 May, following reports that 40 fighter planes had been sighted at Sinuiju, on the Korean side of the Yalu, Fifth Air Force sent up 250 Air Force and 56 Marine aircraft to deposit more than 40 tons of bombs on the airfield. In the air, despite promises to his troops, the launching of the second spring drive found the enemy no better off than had the first.

The weight of the April thrust toward Seoul had led General Van Fleet to bolster his forces in the western lowlands. Contrariwise, while this movement was in progress, the Chinese were shifting eastward to the central mountains, where on the night of 15 May they attacked in strength. On the Soyang River, southeast of the reservoir, the brunt of the attack was again borne by ROK divisions; again these dissolved, and in the exploitation phase the Communists advanced 25 miles down the valley and across into the upper waters of the Hongchon. To the eastward, in the Sorak Mountains, enemy units overran the ROK III Corps and filtered down to the southeast; on the coast the ROK I Corps withdrew south to Kangnung. In the west Chinese divisions crossed the Pukhan below Chunchon, and on the 17th opened a drive down the valley toward the Han.

As the ground forces struggled to check the attack the supporting arms again stepped up their action. Fifth Air Force increased its effort in close support; on the 17th, after being weathered out for two days, Task Force 77 began another stint of operating by day and replenishing by night; following an appeal from EUSAK for all possible support, *Princeton*delayed her departure for Yokosuka to permit another period of three-carrier operations. At Inchon, where the enemy was again within range of *Toledo*'s guns, the drive down the Pukhan brought another redeployment alert, and Admiral Thackrey, who had retained some Scajap LSTs for such a contingency, put in a request for further shipping against the chance that he would have to evacuate the city and the Kumpo peninsula.

This precaution proved unnecessary. In the center the 2nd Division, which had come a long way since the hard times on the Chongchon River, did what was necessary: although under pressure on three sides it maintained its integrity, held while so instructed, reopened its supply line, and retired on order, with minimum casualties to itself and maximum to the enemy. Three days of violent fighting in the Pukhan Valley saw the Chinese thrust turned back by the 25th Division. In the Sorak Mountains, some 20 miles below the parallel, the enemy was checked at Soksa by the 3rd Division, rushed eastward from Army reserve. By 21 May the Communists had been stopped all along the line. Despite a gain of 30 miles in the eastern mountains, and a considerable penetration in the Pukhan valley, nothing decisive had been accomplished, and the price had been higher than before. On the 23rd Admiral Thackrey began to release shipping from Inchon; on the 25th the evacuation alert was ended, all restrictions on stockpiling ashore were removed, and *Toledo* was at last relieved of her fire support duties.

The Communist spring offensive had brought about a sudden spate of simulated pre-landing operations by units of Task Force 90 and Task Force 95. The first of these, carried out on short notice on 24 April, consisted of a two-hour bombardment of Kosong by *St. Paul*, *Helena*, *Manchester*, and four destroyers. Five days later, on the 29th and 30th, *Helena*, *Manchester*, four destroyers, two attack transports and an attack cargo ship made a demonstration in the Kojo area, in the hope of taking pressure off Eighth Army. On the evening of 4 May General Van Fleet asked for another such affair on the 6th and 7th at Kansong; ComNavFE passed the word to Seventh

Fleet to do what it could on short notice, and on the 5th Kosong was added as a target at the request of CincFE. On the desired date *Helena* and four destroyers bombarded as requested; fortuitously, their arrival coincided with a heavy enemy attack, and the bombardment, according to KMAG's flatteringly redundant description, saved the ROK forces from "complete annihilation." On the 13th Eighth Army called for another demonstration at Kosong on the 18th and 19th; this request was cancelled two days later, but a west coast event already underway continued to its conclusion.

Feeling, as had his predecessor, that previous demonstrations had been too short and too transparent to produce the maximum reaction, Admiral Scott-Moncrieff planned this with some finesse. Rumors of an impending landing were spread by agents of Leopard Force, a west coast guerrilla organization, and so successfully that aircraft from *Glory*, flying cover for the minesweepers, reported a large sign near the landing area which read "Welcome, U.N. Army." By 20 May the preliminaries had been completed and *Toledo* and Commonwealth ships were on hand to provide fire support. In the afternoon a dozen LCVPs, three loaded with Royal Marines and the others empty, were put up on the beach opposite Cho Do, and the Marines made a brief unopposed excursion inland prior to reembarking.

The popularity of these small demonstrations with Army commanders, and the frequency with which they were requested, led to some study of their actual effectiveness and of measures which might make for greater realism. That the enemy, after the events of the previous autumn, was fully aware of the amphibious capabilities of the United States Navy was unquestionable: information from various sources indicated that special pains were taken to keep track of the movements of the Marine Division. But with the Marines in the line, and given the slow reaction time of the Communist armies, there remained the question of whether much was actually accomplished. Admiral Andrewes had been skeptical; after the operation of 20 May Admiral Scott-Moncrieff remained dubious, feeling that enemy communications were so poor that two or three days might pass before headquarters got the word. EUSAK, on the other hand, estimated that the Inchon feint in February had fixed two Communist divisions, and that the March operation off the Taedong had moved one; following the Cho Do affair in May reports were received of troop movements across the Taedong River into previously undefended areas of Hwanghae Province. Although it seems unlikely that enemy response to any particular demonstration was very impressive, their repetition did serve to emphasize existing possibilities, and to reinforce a real concern about a possible major assault in the Wonsan area. With the passage of time it also brought an increasing concentration of defensive force along the coasts, opposite Cho Do in the west and between Kojo and Hungnam in the east.

This concentration was heaviest at Wonsan, where day after day the siege continued. Uninterrupted bombardment and frequent air attack had obliged the Communists to commit large numbers of personnel to defense and to repair work and had curtailed enemy transport, but although the railroad had been stopped, road traffic was harder to inhibit, and some 500 trucks were thought to pass through nightly. Attempting to take the pressure off, the enemy moved in increasing amounts of artillery and the Wonsan garrison stepped up its shooting; in late April an unsuccessful attempt was made to recapture one of the ROK-held harbor islands. Whether this enemy reaction amounted to a good return on the effort invested was another matter. CTF 95 had earlier advocated emplacing artillery on the harbor islands, but no such step had been taken and the responsibility for dealing with the shore batteries remained entirely upon the ships; additionally, the original offensive purpose of the siege had been undercut by the decision not to attempt a return to Wonsan. The absence of any very clear objective and the size of the commitment proved disturbing to Commander Seventh Fleet, who felt the entire concept of the operation needed some rethinking. Pending such clarification the cruiser previously assigned the Wonsan task unit was withdrawn, and the garrison situation rationalized by the assignment of a Marine officer to Yo Do as commander of the island's defenses.

As the enemy's second offensive slowed, the harassment of his seaward flanks was stepped up, and the Cho Do raid was followed by activity in the east. At Wonsan, following vigorous efforts by enemy artillerists

which had damaged a destroyer and bounced a shell off one of the turrets of the recently arrived *New Jersey*, the rocket ships were sent in for two night bombardments of known gun emplacements. Plunging fire of 7,700 rockets delivered by *LSMR 409* and *LSMR 412* on 23 and 25 May had impressive results: intelligence agents reported that the enemy was clearing the harbor area of personnel; for three weeks the batteries remained silent. In the north, too, the pressure was maintained: in an interval between bridge bombardments in Kyongsong Man the, destroyer *Stickell* destroyed a 70-foot motor junk, and followed up by putting a landing party ashore to blow three more with hand grenades.

Even before the second Chinese push was halted General Van Fleet was preparing his reply. On 18 May he ordered all forces from the Marine Division westward to prepare to attack to the north; next day, with the situation in the eastern mountains improving, he included X Corps in this planned general advance across the parallel. On the 22nd the battle of the Soyang River entered its offensive phase as the Marines and the 2nd Division attacked to the northeast against vigorous resistance. In the west, at the same time, I Corps moved steadily northward toward the so-called Iron Triangle, the important and heavily defended area bounded by the towns of Chorwon, Kumwha, and Pyonggang. Since seizure of the Iron Triangle would open the corridor to Wonsan, this movement held great possibilities.

The advance up the Soyang valley toward Inje threatened to cut off the Chinese in the Sorak Mountain salient, and opened the possibility of a thrust through the mountains to Kansong which would trap the enemy forces on the coastal strip. To provide logistic support for such a move some Scajap LSTs, released from Inchon, were assigned to meet the advance at Kansong and establish an advanced supply base. But the threat at Inje made the operation unnecessary, the enemy pulled back, and on 29 May, with minesweeping completed and gunfire about to begin, ROK forces regained control of the Kansong area. By the end of the month the armies of the U.N. were back at the Hwachon Reservoir, and in firm possession of the line from which they had been dislodged by the attacks of April.

The two Communist thrusts and the U.N. counteroffensive had brought the enemy out into the open, and had provided profitable targets for air attack. The response to this opportunity had been vigorous: Fifth Air Force had stepped up its sorties in support of Eighth Army; Task Force 77 had shifted to continuous operations and daily replenishment; in times of crisis all three fast carriers and both light carriers had been put on the line. The statistical results were impressive: the Air Force claimed 21,536 enemy personnel "destroyed" in April and May; Task Force 77 aircraft claimed 1,400 killed on 29 May; on 4 June, following attacks by carrier planes, the advancing ground forces counted more than 1,000 dead.

Whether all this effort, indubitably severe in its effects on the enemy, amounted to efficient close air support was another matter. In his report for this period Admiral Martin observed that while three fast carriers had been employed at Army request, the calls for close support had never exceeded the capacity of two, the controllers had once again been swamped, and much ordnance had been dumped. Nor were the Marines more satisfied. In the later phases of the battle of the Soyang River the division, advancing at a rate of three miles a day against continuing stiff resistance, wanted and needed support from the air, and on two days requested all available aircraft. But advance requests, submitted on the previous day conformably with Air Force practice, were only about half–fulfilled. And while the use of special emergency requests produced a sortie total approximating that originally called for, processing delays were such that time from request to receipt of aircraft averaged 95 minutes.

Such delays, varying unpredictably from one to two hours, have obvious effects on the momentum of attack and on the health of the attackers. To those accustomed to getting strikes in 10 to 20 minutes from aircraft orbiting on station, they were unacceptable, and led to loss of confidence in air support on the part of front line commanders. On 31 May the division commander made the inadequacies of the situation the subject of an official report to X Corps, and such was the feeling within the division as to bring an investigation by the Commanding

General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, once again in Korea on an inspection tour. After working through the numerous and sometimes contradictory allegations, and attempting to separate fact from fancy, General Shepherd concluded that the JOC processing time, the remoteness of airfields from the front lines, the struggle between Mosquito aircraft and ground parties for control of strikes, and the unwieldy nature of the Army–Air Force system, which forced communications to parallel the chain of command all the way to the top and back again, added up to excessive and unacceptable delay. In March he had raised the subject with Fifth Air Force, but to little purpose; now he went to the top, and on 24 May discussed the close support question with CincFE. With General Ridgway's view that it was improper for Marine air to support the Marine Division exclusively, General Shepherd concurred; for this problem, inevitable when a division with a private air force specializing in troop support was operating in company with air-starved Army units, no other answer was possible. But the basic difficulty was less the identity of the aircraft than the nature of the system, with all its built-in delays.

In June, as the Marine Division continued on the offensive east of the Hwachon Reservoir, two changes were made. Permission was secured from Fifth Air Force to keep four Marine aircraft on alert at an advanced airstrip, and to notify them of requirements by messages paralleling those to JOC. But direct communication with the airfield remained prohibited, the policy of scrambling and reporting was not permitted, and takeoff still had to await word from JOC. At the same time, in view of the radical discounting of routine requests in May, the Marines adopted a policy of submitting special requests only. But this proved self–defeating, as the resultant saturation of JOC communications facilities tended to offset other efforts to diminish delay time. This indeed was decreased in June to an average of 81 minutes, but the percentage of requests fulfilled dropped from 95 to 74 in good weather, and to 65 for the month as a whole, and nobody was much the happier.

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Chapter 10. The Second Six Months
4. June-July 1951: North to Kaesong

By the 1st of June the ground forces had regained the line of the Hwachon Reservoir. Only in the eastern mountains, where the desired front turned sharply northward, were the Marines still fighting hard for their objectives, and there the drive up the valley of the Soyang was completed in mid-month. Since instructions from the Joint Chiefs had by now limited the advance to the neighborhood of this line, although permitting local action to gain more commanding terrain, General Van Fleet prepared to fortify his positions while at the same time pushing forward I and IX Corps into the Iron Triangle.

This operation continued throughout the first half of June. By the 11th both Chorwon and Kumwha at the base of the triangle had been taken, and two days later Eighth Army briefly entered Pyonggang at the northern apex. Northeast of Kumwha IX Corps units moved up to Kumsong, where the enemy was attempting to establish defensive positions, and in mid-month attempted to outflank the town on the east, a move which in the absence of JCS limitations might have opened the Wonsan road and liquidated enemy forces to the eastward. Given these restraints, however, the effort was not pressed, and Kumsong remained in enemy hands. Except on the shores of the Sea of Japan, where ROK divisions moved onward to the outskirts of Kosong, this June advance to Pyonggang and Kumsong marked the farthest north for the remainder of the war.

As before, operations on the east coast were assisted from the sea. As the forward movement of the ROK I Corps took it into the difficult hill country at the mouth of the Nam River, gunfire support became extremely active. On 4 and 5 June the heavy cruiser *Los Angeles*, a recent arrival in the theater, provided support at the bombline; on the 6th, joined by *New Jersey*, she bombarded enemy positions in the vicinity of Kosong; on the 7th, as the result of an emergency call from the KMAG party ashore, received while she was replenishing, she had the interesting experience of loading 8-inch ammunition from an AKA over one side while unloading it out the guns over the other.

In the east as in the west, the long Korean coastline invited efforts to make trouble in the enemy rear. For some time the APD *Begor* had been putting agents ashore by night along the northeastern coast, and while security was imperfect—on one occasion the ship's departure from Pusan was announced by the North Korean radio the same evening—all the landings were successful. These nocturnal enterprises ranged from Chongjin in the north to Kojo, south of Wonsan, where on the night of 2–3 June *Begor* and her UDT complement landed 235 ROK guerrillas on an islet less than half a mile from the northern arm of the harbor. But this cloak and dagger business was a two-way street: 30 miles back down the coast, at the same time that the guerrillas were going in at Kojo, an ROK intelligence team, surrounded and hard-pressed by the enemy, was departing Kosong under cover of gunfire from an ROK PC and the destroyer Rush.

As the end of the U.N. offensive approached and the intensity of ground action diminished, the attentions of the gunnery forces shifted northward and fire support again gave way to bombardment. The communications centers of Wonsan and Songjin remained daily on the receiving end of gunfire from everything from LSMRs up to the battleship *New Jersey*. Far in the north the blockade of Chongjin was maintained, and the road and rail bridges leading south from that city subjected to frequent bombardment. On 8 June the efforts of the light ships were supplemented as Task Force 77 sent in *Helena*, now on her second tour of Korean duty, for three days work on transportation targets in the Songjin, Iwon, and Kyongsong Man areas, and ten days later *Toledo* gave Songjin a repeat performance.

In the operations of Task Force 77, where *Bon Homme Richard* had relieved *Philippine Sea* on the 1st of

the month, a similar shift was apparent. Although support continued to be provided for the Marines east of the reservoir and for Army forces in the Iron Triangle, interdiction again became the primary task. A sufficient effort was committed to the northeastern rail bridges to keep them broken down, and an ambitious new inter-service effort, Operation Strangle, was begun.

Admiral Ofstie's spring campaign had pretty well stopped the eastern railroad. But despite the efforts of Navy, Air Force, and Marines alike, truck traffic had continued to increase, and the daily average of North Korean vehicle sightings had risen spectacularly from 236 in January to 1,760 in May. Analysis of these sightings indicated that the enemy possessed some 20,000 trucks, a tenth of which arrived nightly in the combat zone, and suggested the difficulty of interdicting this logistic effort; it also brought a request from General Van Fleet to Fifth Air Force and to Task Force 77 to make the attempt. The importance of the problem was emphasized in early June by a GHQ announcement of the record vehicle sightings of the preceding month and, despite some skepticism within the Air Force as to its feasibility, the program was accepted on an experimental basis.

In the planning for "Strangle" the main north-south road routes behind the enemy lines were identified and parcelled out among the services. Three routes south and southeast of Pyongyang were taken by the Air Force; the two central routes, from Yangdok down the upper Nam and from Majon-ni south along the upper Imjin, went to Task Force 77; the Marines were assigned the roads running down from Wonsan and Kojo. Where defiles or watercourses made bypassing difficult, "Strangle Areas" were set up for cratering and for seeding with delayed-action and antipersonnel bombs.

From the very start the task was difficult, owing to the greater ease of bypassing by truck than by train, and to the fact that while almost all enemy movement was now night movement, all services were very limited in night capability. All hands nevertheless did their best, although the force requirements to keep the "Strangle Areas" strangled turned out to be somewhere between twice and five times those necessary to maintain an equal number of rail cuts. Dawn and dusk sorties were flown by the carriers, in addition to their normal daytime load, and the Air Force kept its B–26 intruders busily on the job. Best of all, perhaps, was the ingenious system evolved by the Marines, which teamed their night fighters with flare-dropping Navy patrol planes, and although these operations were extremely hazardous, owing to the restricted maneuvering room inside Korean valleys and the effect of the flares on night vision, good work was done. But in mid-June, after 13 days of "Strangle," a preliminary Air Force assessment indicated that while movement past the cut-points had been almost entirely stopped, and the enemy inconvenienced by being forced onto secondary roads, total north-south vehicle sightings remained about the same and arrivals in the front line area showed little ascertainable change. The conclusions were hardly encouraging, but as no obvious alternative presented itself "Strangle" was continued on into the summer.

Naval operations during the period of the enemy spring offensive and the United Nations advance to the north had not been without cost. The increasing strength of enemy antiaircraft was being felt: combat losses from April through June totalled 3 F9Fs, 8 ADs, and 19 Corsairs, and on 18 May Task Force 77 had its worst day of the war thus far when 6 planes failed to return. Enemy coastal batteries were also increasing in number, and not only in Wonsan. On 7 May the frigate *Hoquiam* was hit off Songjin, and on 14 June the DMS *Thompson* met trouble in the same area: having closed to 40–millimeter range of the beach and slowed to search for targets, *Thompson* was surprised when the enemy suddenly wheeled four guns out from under cover, opened fire, and scored 13 hits before the ship got clear.

The continuous efforts of the sweepers had by now largely conquered the minefields, but the threat remained, and on 5 May the first loss since February took place when the ROK *JML 306* was sunk off Sok To. More serious than the anchored fields was the problem of drifting mines: not only were the Russian moored mines fused to remain armed after breaking loose, but many had apparently been launched as drifters, to take advantage of prevailing southerly currents. Increasing reports of floating mines came in from the Sea of Japan and from the

North Pacific; in June the destroyer *Walke*, steaming some 60 miles offshore as part of the carrier task force screen, ran upon a floater which exploded on the port side aft, inflicting serious damage and killing 25; by autumn more than 300 mines would have been recovered on Japanese shores.

For the U.N. divisions in Korea the bill had of course been higher, although ground force casualties in April and May were less than half those of November and December, less even than those of January and February. But for the armies of Communist China the spring offensive had proved disastrous. United Nations' estimates of casualties inflicted on the enemy claimed 70,000 for the April push, 90,000 for the week ending 23 May, and 147,000 for the two-week period from 20 May to 3 June; GHQ intelligence summaries estimated a total for April and May of 283,000, with 72,000 more in June. Figures like these do not, perhaps, inspire complete confidence, but unquestionably Communist losses were extremely severe, and while the impact of this bloody attrition on the manpower of China was minimal, its impact on the available total of trained military personnel was not. There was also a perceptible effect on morale, and prisoners began to surrender in unprecedented numbers: 3,000 Chinese were taken between 16 and 22 May and another 10,000 in the following week.

As the defeated Communists retired northward, with Van Fleet's armies hard on their heels, command changes continued throughout the forces of the U.N. Subsequent to the attack on the Hwachon Dam, Admiral Ofstie had been relieved of command of Task Force 77 by Admiral Henderson, and on 17 May had taken over as Chief of Staff to ComNavFE. In April Major General Gerald C. Thomas, USMC, had relieved General Smith in command of the Marine Division; late in May General Cushman, who had come out with the brigade, succeeded General Harris in command of the Aircraft Wing, to be himself relieved two months later. With the ending of the threat to Inchon Admiral Thackrey went home; in June, Task Force 95 got a new commander in the person of Rear Admiral George C. Dyer. In the other services the same was true: the Army command had changed in April; in June command of FEAF was assumed by Lieutenant General Otto P. Weyland, USAF, previously vice-commander for operations; at Fifth Air Force, General *Partridge* was replaced by Major General Frank P. Everest, USAF. Of major force commanders present in the Far East when the troubles began, only Admiral Joy remained, and he was shortly to receive some temporary additional duty which would occupy his whole attention.

At home, meanwhile, the United States had resumed its peculiar custom of conducting foreign policy by congressional hearing. In 1949 the unification investigation had demonstrated, through its exposition of military capability and strategic intent, that the only war contemplated by the United States was a big war in defense of Europe, and had opened the door to aggression by proxy in Asia. Now in the MacArthur hearings the details of strategic planning were again spread upon the public record, to reaffirm beyond a shadow of a doubt that the United States, unwilling to become fixed in a secondary theater, neither intended to expand the war in Asia nor to attempt the forcible unification of Korea. This separation of the political aim of Korean unification from the military objective of repelling aggression was reaffirmed by the President in May, and by the Secretary of State and the Secretary General of the United Nations in early June.

Since the United States did not propose to advance farther into North Korea, and since the Communists were in no condition to advance southward, an agreement to disagree seemed possible, which, while leaving the world and Korea divided much as before, would at least liquidate the fighting. On 23 June the Russian representative at the Security Council, whose fortuitous absence a year before had permitted U.N. action, made a radio address in which he indicated that the chief string-pullers would look favorably upon negotiations for an armistice.

Soundings in Moscow confirmed the official nature of these views, and the offer was taken up. General Ridgway was instructed to invite the Communists to meet with U.N. delegates on board the Danish hospital ship Jutlandia in Wonsan harbor for discussion of an armistice. With the selection of Admiral Joy as senior delegate for the United Nations, Admiral Ofstie took over in Tokyo as acting ComNavFE, and Naval Forces Far East were alerted to support the armistice discussions. On 30 June the invitation was broadcast to the enemy.

The reply came the next day: while agreeing to meet for talks, the Communists suggested that the location be changed to the city of Kaesong, 35 miles northwest of Seoul. This counterproposal doubtless reflected the symbolic difference between a meeting in one of Korea's historic cities, within Communist lines yet south of the 38th parallel, and one at sea on board a United Nations ship. Since the progress of negotiations would impede military action in the immediate neighborhood, it may also have indicated a desire to block the main road to Pyongyang. Possibly the Communists merely wanted the last word. The suggestion was quickly accepted, presumably in anticipation of an expeditious settlement, but in time the U.N. Command would regret this easy complaisance. On 8 July, following further communications, there was a meeting of liaison officers, and on the 10th, ComNavFE and his delegation confronted the Communists at Kaesong.

To the peoples of the non–Communist world the commencement of armistice discussions was heartening. Although Syngman Rhee went at once on record against all compromise, and demanded a continuation of the war for unification, elsewhere the hope that rational solutions would be quickly found produced a lifting of the spirit. These hopes were doubtless highest among the Americans, with their inbred belief in the value of the spoken and written word and their congenital distrust of the gloomy lessons of history. But even in the United States there were perhaps some whose experience encompassed negotiations with the Communists, and who could see the omens in the meeting at Kaesong.

The presence at the conference table of Chinese generals and an American naval officer called to mind the earlier discussions between Shufeldt and Li Hung-chang concerning the future of Korea, a future which intervening decades had done little to clarify. The antiquity of American concern with the welfare of the Koreans was recalled in the persons of the American interpreters, Lieutenants Horace G. Underwood, USNR, and *Richard* Underwood, AUS, grandsons of that Underwood who 66 years before had founded the Presbyterian mission to Korea. If these echoes of the past did not sufficiently suggest the intractability of the Korean question, and a likelihood that no speedy settlement would be reached, a contemporary incident, passing almost unnoticed, could have served as evidence that wars do not end all at once. On 30 June, on a little island in the northern Marianas, 19 Japanese soldiers and sailors, who for six years had refused to believe that their war was over, finally surrendered to the U.S.S. *Cocopa*.

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Chapter 11. Problems of a Policeman
1. The Unexpected Face of War

IN A SMALL bronze shrine in the forum of ancient Rome the image of Janus, god of beginnings and endings, looked both east and west. It was the custom of the Romans, upon the outbreak of war, to throw wide the doors of this temple, and to shut them up again with the return of peace. In the summer of 1951 the commencement of Korean armistice talks seemed to promise an imminent end to the fighting, and a return of the struggle to the diplomatic plane. It seems a propitious moment to emulate the two-headed god, and to look, before the doors are closed, forward and backward in time, and east and west toward distant horizons.

In a year of Korean fighting the forces of the United Nations, with those of the *United States* in great preponderance, could be said to have won two wars. Successively, following initial surprise and early reverses, the armies of North Korea and of Communist China had been defeated. But the policy adopted following the second victory differed strikingly from that of the autumn before: rather than press on to the northward, and to possible involvement with yet another previously uncommitted force, it was decided to stabilize the situation, and to abandon the aim of a military unification of Korea. Yet though success was therefore limited, and though the cost had not been cheap, fulfillment of the original aim of repelling invasion made the *Enterprise* worthwhile. Those mindful of earlier unchecked Axis aggressions who had taken the momentous decision to intervene could properly feel themselves justified, the more so in view of the implications of the fall of an undefended South Korea.

That so much had been accomplished, given the unexpected nature of the conflict, appears remarkable. If war, as someone has said, is a matter of surprise and movement, the first year of fighting in Korea certainly qualifies. The invasion of South Korea had come as a decided and unpleasant surprise to the *United States*; the intervention of the Chinese surprised the U.N. Command. Equally, it may be presumed, the rapidity of American diplomatic and military reaction in the summer of 1950 surprised the enemy, as did the recovery of the Eighth Army after the low point of the winter campaign. Most surprised of all, perhaps, were the members of the prevailing school of American military thought, with their emphasis on single-weapon single-theater strategy. War had come but not in Europe, nor, at least formally, with the "one possible enemy." Despite the view that held the assault from the sea to be a thing of the past, the pattern of the conflict had been shaped, not by the heavy bomber with its atomic weapon, but by the Amphibious Force and its projectile, the Marine Division.

For this there were a variety of reasons. The agreed and publicized strategic plan had found, hardly surprisingly, an enemy intelligent enough to circumvent it. Despite the impact of budgetary considerations on defense planning there remained, if narrowly, enough conventional force to permit a descent from fancy to fact and the conduct of a land war supported by sea and air. The nature of the theater, the ground rules which came to govern the campaign, and the importance of collective action all militated against employment of the atomic bomb and in favor of rational warfare. And lastly, the choice between accepting defeat and employing nuclear weapons was never finally posed.

In any event the atomic art, in those far-off days, was still somewhat primitive. Only eight nuclear explosions had been set off by the *United States*, and none since 1948. There had been no development of low-yield tactical weapons. In the Air Force the delivery of the bomb still rested on the capabilities of piston-engined aircraft: the first production B–47 only took the air the day the North Koreans crossed the parallel. In the Navy only the three large carriers—*Coral Sea*, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*, and *Midway*—had any kind of atomic capability, and all were assigned to the Atlantic Fleet.

The Russian explosion of the previous year had, it is true, expedited work on both the hydrogen bomb and tactical weapons, and the coming of war in Korea spurred the effort. Preparations for new tests at Eniwetok were underway at the time of the invasion of South Korea, and 1951 saw 16 U.S. explosions which, with two more by the Soviets, doubled the total of the preceding years. While the threat to the perimeter was at its height, and again in the dark days of December 1950, there was some talk of tactical use of existing atomic devices; some training runs were carried out in the course of the war by the Air Force, and by the Navy after the arrival in 1952 of the converted *Oriskany* and *Kearsarge*. But that was all. The war was fought to its end with conventional weapons. The Strategic Air Command turned out to be the shield rather than the sword of strategy, and as a limiting rather than an expanding agent wholly justified, if in an unexpected manner, its great cost.

As things worked out, therefore, the war in Korea developed as a classic exercise in sea power reminiscent of earlier times. The similarity, it is true, was to some extent concealed by differences in the society that supported the campaign, for to Americans of the mid-20th century the struggle was confusing and at times distressing. If a war, it was one which had never been declared by Congress; if a police action, it was of a magnitude without precedent since the affair with Tripoli; for those whose lives had spanned periods of presumed peace punctuated by world-wide conflict, the concept of limited war took some getting used to. At home, life went on as usual, with no restrictions on civilian consumption, with no apparent all-out national effort, and with administration policy subjected to increasing criticism. But however limited the war, for the individual in the armed forces—regular, recalled reserve, or draftee—there was no limit on the strain, hazard, or boredom of the conflict. Although mitigated by a purposeful program of rapid rotation, this situation, acceptable in 19th century wars fought by regulars, inevitably created problems of morale for those on the fighting line, as shown by conduct after capture by the enemy. Inevitably, too, it created serious tensions at home, which were not diminished by the cooperative nature of the U.N. effort, with its incumbent need to defer to allies whose contribution at times seemed minimal.

Back of all this, however, the historic pattern remained. As in earlier days the entire *Enterprise* rested on control of the ocean highway, by which the troops were transported from the metropolis to the theater of action, and there supplied, supported, and assisted by the Navy. But here too time had wrought its changes. Where in the expeditions to Mexico and the Crimea, to the Sudan and South Africa, free use of the seas had been the prime enabling factor, in Korea the nature of the theater and the development of modern weapons gave the Navy important influence throughout the conflict. For the first year of war, above all for the first six months when the elements of surprise and movement were most apparent, this influence was so great as to be almost described as controlling.

The maritime aspect of the campaign first showed itself in the concentration of forces to meet the unexpected emergency, a concentration so rapid as to surprise friend and foe alike. To MSTS lifts of Army units from Japan, Okinawa, and the continental *United States*, to the Amphibious Force's management of the Pohang landing and the trans-Pacific movement of the Marine Division, to the high–speed delivery of Air Force fighter-bombers by aircraft carrier, and to logistic support of the entire U.N. effort, there was added a rapid and extensive reinforcement of naval fighting strength.

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This speed of concentration was vital, given the shortage of force which in the summer of 1950 affected all services alike. Although the Army was to commit almost everything it had to the narrow Korean front, and although numerically large ROK contingents were available, it was necessary to employ the Marine Division as an infantry force throughout the war. From beginning to end the Air Force felt itself operating on a shoestring, with limited strength, obsolescent types, and a very marginal supporting organization. For the naval forces of the U.N. the situation was the same. While the speed and size of reinforcement were impressive, base facilities in the Far East were marginal; and while all available ships were committed to the Korean theater, these proved no more

than sufficient for the war that did develop. Delayed deployment would have meant the loss of the Korean foothold; further opposition would have meant a very different war.

So speed of movement to a large degree made up for shortages, and weakness on the ground was counterbalanced by supremacy at sea and in the air. Together with the work of the Air Force, the northern strikes by Task Force 77, the close support provided by both fast and escort carriers, the blockade of the Korean coast, the bombing and bombardment of enemy transportation facilities, and the gunfire support of the ends of the perimeter made it possible for Eighth Army to stabilize a chaotic situation. This done, the forces of the U.N. assumed the initiative, and with the landing at Inchon commenced three months of rapid movement up and down the peninsula. The two landings and the evacuations of this period of triumph and tragedy demonstrated that in a theater of combat washed by the sea the forces of the West possessed a flexibility, a speed of movement, and a strategic freedom for which the enemy had no answer. Yet while this rapid movement derived entirely from naval capabilities it should be noted that the Navy, skeptical of the proposed amphibious operations, sailed somewhat reluctantly to glory.

Of the decision to invade Inchon, pushed through by General MacArthur in the face of generalized doubts, it seems profitless to inquire whether it was in fact strategically sound. A success of such a magnitude would seem to justify even unjustifiable risks, and in any case once the decision had been made the risks, as always, began to seem smaller. But regarding the argument that the landing was unnecessary and that a better solution would have been for Eighth Army merely to shove against the perimeter, some comment may be in order. Doubtless this unimaginative strategy would have worked in time, but a victory so won would have been more costly, less elegant, and less decisive, and America at that moment had great need of a decisive victory. One should, it would seem, play from strength: so long as the U.N. fought its own kind of war, and used its advantages at sea and in the air, in sophisticated control systems, and in more efficient transport, the enemy was at a disadvantage. When these factors were neglected, and the North Koreans and Chinese given time to play it their way, the consequences were less happy.

Criticism has also been directed against CincFE’s decision for a second amphibious landing. Both at the time and since, the overland movement by way of the Seoul-Wonsan corridor has been urged as the preferable alternative, and the anticlimactic nature of the Wonsan operation has seemed to lend weight to this view. But the fact that South Korean forces got there before the Marines appears less an indictment of "Tailboard" than testimony to the extraordinary effectiveness of "Chromite." If some in both Army and Navy urged the overland route, it was still true that the road was a difficult one, and that, as the affair at Kojo showed, there were enemy forces in the flanking hills. It is, of course, undeniable that the reembarkation of X Corps wrought considerable confusion in the logistic sphere, and slowed the preparations of Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force for the advance on Pyongyang. Equally, however, the problem of supporting both X Corps and Eighth Army through Inchon and Seoul would have been far from child’s play. And whatever the decision as to the route, the harbor of Wonsan, strategically essential, had to be swept and opened to shipping before further moves could be undertaken.

As X Corps was floated up first one side of the peninsula and then the other, and as Eighth Army pressed on to seize the enemy capital, none foresaw the impending disaster. Yet it was in their response to the Chinese onslaught that the forces under Admirals Joy and Struble made perhaps their greatest contribution. The size of the attacking Chinese forces, the collapse in the west, and the widely dispersed condition of X Corps combined to bring about a major emergency and to return the initiative to the other side. But the crisis was met, and previous conscientious staff work was implemented with zeal and competence, to assist the retreat of Eighth Army, to help the Marines down from the hill, and to accomplish the redeployment of X Corps. Indeed the work of the Marine Division, of the Marine and naval aviators, of the gunnery ships and of the Amphibious Force may well have done still more, for one may wonder whether in the event of a major tragedy in northeastern Korea the war could have been kept limited. It is at least conceivable that the enemy, as well as the U.N., had in this instance cause to be

grateful for the capabilities of the *United States* Navy and Marines.

Thus in the space of six months a scheme of maneuver made possible by rapid overseas deployment and based on the maximum use of naval capabilities had halted one invasion, defeated one enemy, and saved the day when a second intervened. But the period of a dominantly maritime strategy ended with the old year. The numerical strength of the new enemy required the retention of all ground forces in the line, and when the armies of the U.N. again moved north it was without benefit of the amphibious encirclement.

Yet while land operations henceforth held the center of the stage, the strategic situation was little changed. Korea was still a peninsular war, and supporting naval action was still of prime importance. On both coasts the blockade continued, while the lessons of history were brandished before the enemy in a series of amphibious feints. In the east, as it had from the beginning, naval gunfire continued to support the movements of ROK troops. In the interdiction of enemy transportation routes and along the battleline the work of naval air remained essential. Pusan port was still the basis of the campaign; the reopening of Inchon had greatly eased logistics in the western lowlands; in forward coastal areas and on the offshore islands, ground forces were supplied by LST. Underlying all was the Pacific Ocean supply line, by which rations, rounds, and gaiter buttons reached the free world's Asiatic toehold. Whatever the specific reasons for his selection, the choice of Commander Naval Forces Far East as chief of the U.N. Armistice Delegation was symbolically wholly appropriate.

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Chapter 11. Problems of a Policeman
2. Operating Problems

Seen in the large, therefore, the struggle in Korea greatly resembled the classic overseas campaigns of previous times. But within this framework the Korean War, like all wars, was unique, and the questions that faced those charged with its prosecution were questions of the moment. Daily, as is always the case in war, problems presented themselves, their nature governed by the immediate situation, and were faced, solved, evaded, or lived with as the ingenuity of man permitted.

In Korea the collective nature of the effort to repel the aggressor led, in notable contradistinction to most small wars of the 19th century, to the development of international forces on land, at sea, and in the air. Although the *United States* provided by far the largest part of the U.N. naval contingent, and although the second contribution derived from Britain and the British Commonwealth, units from the navies of Colombia, France, the Netherlands, and Thailand also took part. And special notice should be taken of the accomplishments of the ROK Navy and Marine Corps in developing, in circumstances tragic for them and amidst almost indescribable difficulties, into forces of considerable size and efficiency.

Within the structure of the U.N. Command the Korean Navy remained a separate task group. All other foreign units were assigned for administrative purposes to Rear Admiral Andrewes' West Coast Group, and at an early date that commander was confiding to his war diary his need for the gift of tongues, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, and his relief at not having acquired, at least as yet, any recruits from Phrygia or Pamphilia. Inevitably some "very original problems" arose owing to language difficulties, the absence of common codes, varying degrees of training and expertise, and differing dietary preferences. Yet to the credit of all participants no insoluble difficulties developed, workable solutions were invariably thrashed out, and command relations remained excellent.

The rapid assembly of sufficient strength made the waging of a campaign possible. The nature of the campaign was largely governed by that of the assembled force. For the navies of the U.N. the lack of new construction, the limited funds available for modernization, and the restricted aircraft procurement programs made it inevitable that the war would be fought with ships, gear, and personnel largely left over from World War II. This situation, generally applicable to first-line units, was emphasized with time, as aging ships were removed from the mothball fleet, hastily refurbished, and deployed forward manned by aging reserves.

In all areas of naval operations, although in varying degree, problems of obsolescence presented themselves. Radar capabilities had not kept up with advances in aircraft performance; the limitations of World War II sonar were becoming critical; the unloading rates of APA and AKA types had fallen behind the needs of the times; everywhere maintenance was becoming an increasing problem. But it was in the carrier forces that the pressures of change and progress were most acute.

There the march of events was dramatized in the operation, side by side and throughout the war, of the first jet fighters, the last and finest of the piston-engined attack planes, and the F4U Corsair, in active service ever since the campaign in the Solomons. Continued dependence on this ancient aircraft was made possible by the existence of large numbers of preserved leftovers; in the circumstances prevailing in Korea it gave excellent service, eased the problems of transition, and made possible the useful work of escort and light carriers throughout the war. Yet even with the F4U, operational requirements pressed against the limits of the capabilities of these smaller ships: the low wind conditions of summer in the Yellow Sea made the speed limitations of the escort carrier critical; although the CVL had the speed, its limited bunker capacity restricted the fuelling of

screening ships and limited endurance. And in the fast carriers, despite the cushioning effect of the presence of these old friends, the advent of new types presented difficulties.

The takeoff and landing characteristics of the newer aircraft posed needs for more powerful catapults and for improved arresting gear. The advent of the jet fighter, essentially a flying gasoline barrel which paid for increased performance in phenomenal fuel consumption, raised difficult logistic problems, as did the great lifting capacity of the AD: each jet sortie cost the parent ship a minute in replenishment alongside a tanker; each three-ton bombload that left the deck meant a couple of minutes alongside an AE. And month by month these difficulties became more pressing, for as the efficiency of carrier operations increased, as the jet complement grew from one squadron to two, and as the jets in turn began to be launched with bombs, full-scale operations could exhaust certain types of ammunition in a day and use up the aviation gasoline of a non-converted carrier in less than two.

Thus the problems consequent to the introduction of new aircraft, while impinging directly upon the carriers and their crews, radiated outward to affect the work of their replenishment and screening ships. A more general difficulty, particularly apparent in the carriers owing to the complex nature of their operations but affecting all ship types, was the congestion brought about by new equipment: larger catapult machinery and magazine spaces in the carriers, more elaborate electronic and communications gear in all ships. Such installations take up space, but shipboard space is finite; their operation calls for personnel; with less space and larger crews comes undesirable crowding, or a diminution of military capabilities, or both. For this generalized tendency of modern war toward greater and greater complication the obvious theoretical answer was newer and larger ships; a more immediately practical one was the modification of existing hulls. This, for the fleet carriers, took place in stages: a first modernization of units of the *Essex* class brought various improvements, most notably more powerful catapults and larger fuel capacity, but at the cost of space for five aircraft; the second stage, reached late in the war, produced the "converted" *Essex* carrier with additional aviation fuel capacity, reinforced flight decks, and other new developments. There remained the angled deck, which began to appear after the Korean armistice, but this marked about the limit of what could be done with old hulls, and further progress waited upon new construction.

These tendencies toward specialization, elaboration, size, complexity, and cost, apparent throughout the fleet, placed a great premium upon versatility, and emphasized the value of any multipurpose instruments that might come along. Two of these, one new and one old, were of such importance as to deserve special mention. These were the helicopter and the LST.

The helicopter, here receiving its first test in combat, proved of transcendent value as plane guard for carrier operations, as platform for observation and for gunfire spotting, in the location of underwater mines, in providing courier and transport service between ships at sea and across difficult terrain ashore, in the rescue of pilots down behind enemy lines, and in the rapid evacuation of the wounded. The aging and awkward LST, with its ability to beach where ports were lacking and to load and discharge by the bow without the need of winchmen and stevedores, was wholly indispensable. In addition to filling their primary amphibious role, and so greatly speeding both advance and retreat, Scajap and Amphibious Force LSTs provided logistic support across the beaches to units dispersed along the length of the peninsula and among the outlying islands. In December 1950, in a report to the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Joy expressed his belief that the 38 Scajap ships had made the difference between holding and losing the Pusan beachhead, and observed that "the LST has possibly made the greatest single contribution to the success of the U.N. forces in Korea."

Within the operating forces the demonstrated versatility of both helicopter and LST led quickly to insatiable demands. For the minesweeping groups the marriage of these two instruments produced an unmatched combination of reconnaissance base, headquarters, and small boat mother ship. From all ships of sufficient size arose appeals for the installation of helicopter landing platforms. From numerous commands came urgent

recommendations for the construction of new and improved LSTs.

Interacting with these problems of technological change and suitability were those posed by the nature of the theater and the actions of the enemy. Of these, one never before encountered on any scale and looked forward to with some apprehension, was that of cold weather carrier operations. But winter in the Sea of Japan proved no great obstacle, and despite low temperatures, stormy seas, and snow and ice on the flight deck, the carrier force continued as before with but a slight reduction in sortie rate.

Night carrier operations, however, were another matter, for in the air, as elsewhere, western-style war had been generally unable to adapt to the hours of darkness. In the war against Japan no permanent solution had been found, and the Pacific Fleet had wavered between employment of special night detachments and the assignment of individual carriers to night work only. In Korea the enemy's predilection for night attacks, and his dependence on nightly truck convoys for logistic support, raised the problem in an acute form for the aviators of all services.

In the Navy the handful of specially-configurated carrier aircraft soon proved inadequate, and from the beginning of the conflict carrier commanders commented on the lack of night capabilities. At home, by early 1951, the Chief of Staff of the Operational Development Force was urging the assignment of a fleet carrier to night work. In April 1952 Admiral Ofstie observed that "until effective techniques for night attacks are available, interdiction will be at best only marginal." But since carrier decks were in short supply and techniques left much to be desired, the deficiency remained for the duration, in embarked as in shore-based aviation.

With the single exception of the mining campaign the enemy made no effort at sea. But this stroke hit where economy had been compounded by disinterest, and the difficulties at Wonsan demonstrated the outstanding naval deficiency of the conflict. Despite all efforts to improve the situation the mine remained a most effective weapon, costly in time and effort, and one which would have been more so had the Soviets chosen to commit advanced types. As it was, the lessons of previous wars were reaffirmed, the importance of the mine reemphasized, and a research program of considerable magnitude undertaken for the development of efficient methods of detection and removal.

Two other areas of potentially serious trouble went untested by the enemy. Without question a Communist submarine offensive would have changed the entire nature of the war. Harbor defense installations had enjoyed a low priority in planning and were but tardily completed; destroyers and frigates were in short supply. Although the early efforts to provide minimum cover for convoys in Tsushima Strait were soon terminated, and the escorts assigned to blockade duty, the total number of antisubmarine types was never more than sufficient to provide a minimum sound screen for the carrier task force and to meet the requirements of blockade. No effort was ever made at trans-Pacific escort of convoy, and this was perhaps just as well, for the half-dozen oilers and escort carriers and the hundred–odd escort types needed for such an *Enterprise* were nowhere to be found.

Almost equally, a determined enemy air offensive would have raised grave problems, at sea as well as on shore. Here too the destroyer shortage was important, limiting as it did the strength of antiaircraft screens for major vessels and the employment of radar picket ships. Against propeller-driven attack planes the fast carriers could doubtless have given a good account of themselves, but operation within the range of enemy jets was complicated by various factors. Since the World War II electronic identification devices were known to the Russians, and since newer systems were only gradually becoming operational, there was a serious recognition problem. Shipborne radar capabilities were inadequate, owing both to postwar concentration on resolution rather than range, and to the concurrent arrival of the jet airplane, in which higher speeds and operating altitudes accompanied a reflecting surface greatly diminished by absence of a propeller. To cap all there was the lack, at the outset not peculiar to the Navy, of a plane which could meet the MIG on anything approaching even terms. But although in late 1950 the Air Force received, in the F–86 Sabre, a fighter of comparable performance, no such

carrier-based jet was to appear in Korea.

The questions thus far considered have been principally of a technological nature. But armaments themselves are neutral, only their users give them meaning, and among the complex problems posed by war in Korea was that of personnel. In June 1950 the Pacific Fleet was manned slightly below peacetime level, and the naval population of the Western Pacific was of the order of 11,000; within the space of six months this total was to be multiplied by six, and the need for so rapid an increase raised pressing questions of where to find the men.

Finding them involved a series of emergency actions. All hands were recalled from leave, overseas tours of duty and enlistments were indefinitely extended and ship-to-shore rotation halted, shore stations were stripped of all that they could spare and more. But despite all, the situation in the early weeks was often critical, especially in the Amphibious Force. Both at Inchon and at Wonsan ships were manned well below operational requirements, and in some cases even below peacetime allowances; some of the LSTs for Inchon were recommissioned a bare two weeks before the event with but 30 percent of complement on board, and with the majority of the crews and even some of the commanding officers lacking previous experience with this type.

Great difficulties also developed in providing the staff personnel needed to direct the operations of the expanding naval force. ComNavFE's staff had been designed for occupation duty, Admiral Higgins' was tailored to show the flag, and others were in a similar fix. In some areas nothing existed and drastic action was necessary, as when the need for a shore-based air command brought the shanghaiing of Captain Alderman and the borrowing of Admiral Ruble. Most dramatic of the staff problems was that which afflicted Admiral Smith upon his arrival from the United States to assume command of Task Force 95: on 12 September 1950 Smith broke his flag on a tender in Sasebo with no staff at all, a condition of lonely splendor in which he continued for two weeks before anyone reported in, and for more than a month before his principal assistants were all on board.

Over and above the resources made available by emergency measures the only personnel stockpile lay in the Naval Reserve. This was immediately levied upon, both to increase existing complements and for fleet expansion. Here again, in another context, the timing of the Korean War may be said to have been fortunate: a few more years and the capabilities of the dominantly World War II Reserve would have been very doubtful.

Selective recall of reservists was at once begun, but the remedy, as always, brought its own problems. However willing to take part in a major national emergency, those recalled could hardly avoid a feeling of double jeopardy while some of their fellows, and others who had never served in uniform, remained uncalled upon. Like the population at large, the Reserve doubtless contained a handful of the politically disaffected: at one point a suspicion of sabotage on one of the fast carriers brought an investigation and the precautionary transfer of a few hands to other duty. But no serious problems ever developed, and despite the strains imposed by prosperity and lack of interest at home, morale remained generally excellent.

By the end of 1950 the personnel situation was satisfactory in total numbers, but the distribution of regulars and reserves, hastily accomplished, was extremely unbalanced. The training of many reserves was below standard. There were acute shortages in certain categories of commissioned personnel and in a number of crucial ratings. The selection and detail of those recalled to active duty suffered from the nature of mobilization planning, where once again the concept of the one big war had proven costly. In the years after 1945 an emergency service rating structure had been set up, predicated on prospective full mobilization, which divided the normal ratings into specialized subcategories to which individual reservists were assigned. But since Korea did not qualify as a general emergency no shift to the new structure was made, and reservists were called up in their general service ratings. Within these larger groupings there was ample room for misassignment, but while some of the results were sufficiently dramatic to excite attention the situation never reached gross dimensions.

Most of these difficulties could be cured in time, but in some areas famine was endemic: certain rates were short throughout the war; with the release of reservists in 1952 the shortage of reliable and experienced petty officers became increasingly acute. In November 1951 CincPacFleet warned of this impending scarcity; in

February 1952 both ComServPac and CincPacFleet felt the situation presented a serious threat to combat readiness. By the end of the year it was expected that allowances would on the average be only some 40 percent filled, and would drop as low as 25 percent in those crucial specialties—yeoman, radarman, radioman, and electrician's and machinist's mate—in which the armed forces were competing directly with American industry.

Dangerous though these shortages were, they seem never to have seriously affected combat readiness. A questionnaire circulated among ships in the Western Pacific, inquiring if damage or casualty had resulted from personnel shortage, produced a majority of negative answers, although a number of replies reported minor maintenance difficulties and a continued shortage of deck watch standers and of radiomen. This rating, indeed, despite the establishment of a special school at Sasebo, remained most critical of all, and these people were perhaps the real heroes of the Korean War: in many ships, particularly destroyers, a six–hour watch-and-watch schedule was the rule for weeks on end. It is, of course, a truism that burdens are never equally distributed in time of crisis, but the effect of loads like this on the inclination to reenlist needs no elaboration.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 11. Problems of a Policeman
3. Logistic Support

No one can fight unsupported. Without timely and adequate logistic backing the finest strategy is only a paper plan. In Korea, as in any overseas theater, land strategy was a function of port facilities, and the campaign developed as a series of movements based on Pusan, Inchon, Wonsan, Hungnam, and Chinnampo. At sea, as always, the capabilities of the fighting forces were similarly dependent on the effectiveness of the supporting organization. The importance of seaborne supply to the war in the peninsula has already been touched on; it remains to consider the administration of naval logistics.

Here too affairs were complicated by the absence of plans for other than major hostilities, and by the resultant need to improvise. In the Far East the lack of a naval logistic command, the general shortage of staff personnel, and the pressure of operations hampered logistic planning. Since most Pacific and Far Eastern base facilities had been either inactivated or reduced to an austerity level, support for the Korean effort had to be projected in one bound from the west coast. Lacking both high-level guidance and detailed requests from the theater of operations, Admiral Denebrink's Service Force had, at the start, to fight its war intuitively.

With the outbreak of war the immediate problem was to provide a flow of consumer's goods for the expanding Western Pacific naval force, a problem calling both for estimates of needs and for action to fulfill them. In such items as rations, clothing, and small and general stores, where usage is closely related to population, prediction is simple enough, and in any case fleet units can live off their fat for a time. In these categories all that was required was a rapid expansion of overseas shipments. But in ammunition and petroleum products, where usage varies unpredictably with the tempo of operations, more complicated questions arise.

The first steps in ammunition supply have been noted earlier. Until late August, when the pipeline from the United States became filled, ammunition was hurried forward from stocks at Guam and Pearl Harbor. By mid-November some 66,000 tons had been delivered to NavFE and Seventh Fleet, of which only about 15,000 tons had been expended, and except for intermittent and unpredictable spot shortages this problem was under control for the duration.

In petroleum, the lifeblood of modern war, the situation was less satisfactory. Jurisdiction over POL had been centralized in Washington in the Armed Services Petroleum Purchasing Agency, and overseas in the theater commanders. In July, as consumption skyrocketed, Service Force oilers and gasoline tankers were pressed into duty and MSTS expanded its contract tanker fleet. In the Pacific Area, despite the drain from increased transoceanic sea and air movement, petroleum stocks were adequately maintained, but in the Far East there developed a series of potentially dangerous shortages.

Although adequate storage capacity was available in the theater, the supply on hand in the summer of 1950 was not what it should have been, and the planners failed adequately to anticipate the increase in demand. In the grade of aviation gasoline used by the Navy, stocks remained relatively constant, but by October increased consumption had brought local shortages which had to be made up by shipments from the Pacific Area and from the Philippines. In Air Force grade aviation gasoline and in Navy fuel oil the situation was worse: supplies of the former declined steadily from the start of the war, and monthly from August to November there came periods of crisis; in black oil, increased usage coupled with inadequate requests produced a serious December shortage which required rapid transfers from the Pacific Area. Except for some restrictions on airlift, the fighting forces were fortunately never affected, but the margin was too close for comfort. No safety factor existed, and the loss of a single tanker from whatever cause would have seriously curtailed operations.

In two other areas of fleet support, shortages and delays developed, although again happily without ill effect. Plans for emergency establishment of harbor defenses were lacking, and materiel was in short supply: the laying of an antisubmarine net at Sasebo, although stimulated by a submarine alarm within the harbor in mid-August, was begun only on 3 October. Similar troubles affected the provision of degaussing facilities, where construction of a range at Yokosuka, begun as a routine project, was raised to the highest priority with the first evidence of enemy mining. But here fate intervened: en route to the California port of embarkation a truck loaded with instruments for this installation rolled off the highway, outloading was not completed until 9 November, and not until eight months after its authorization did the Yokosuka range become operational.

As supplies and gear were hurried west, and as the Service Force moved to assume its administrative responsibilities, service units were deployed forward to provide the maximum in floating support and to minimize the need for expanded shore facilities. The establishment in July of Service Squadron 3 and of Service Division 31 eased planning problems and implementing responsibilities for both Seventh Fleet and Naval Forces Far East. In the following weeks the expansion of Service Force strength in the forward area was expedited to provide underway replenishment of operating forces, salvage services, and in-port replenishment and maintenance at Sasebo and at amphibious objectives. By September, when this procedure received formal ratification in an exchange of dispatches between CincPacFleet and the Chief of Naval Operations, its implementation was well underway. Its dimensions may be appreciated from the tabulation of supporting units present in the theater.
Click here to view table

Appreciable though it was, to those involved this reinforcement seemed only marginal, as did the projected growth of Service Force strength as a whole. The plans for naval expansion which developed over the summer called for an increase of service vessels from 46 to 67, a growth of less than 50 percent, while the active strength of the Pacific Fleet was slated to rise from 259 ships to 492, thus nearly doubling. With more than 90 fighting ships in the Western Pacific this allowance of repair vessels and tenders promised to be adequate only so long as battle damage remained small, while in other logistic types day-to-day requirements threatened to exceed the capacity of deployed units. The availability of oilers was marginal: despite the proximity of the operating area to the Japanese base, the demands of underway replenishment were such that in-port fuelling was dependent upon British and Scajap tankers. The lack of ammunition ships forced early recourse to the use of AKAs with specially sheathed holds, an expedient which fortunately worked out acceptably. And of course there were never enough LSTs.

Despite the shortage of oilers and ammunition ships, replenishment at sea was quickly begun. Unavoidably, in the first days of action, naval units refueled and rearmed in port, the Seventh Fleet at Buckner Bay and Sasebo, NavFE ships at Sasebo and at Pusan. But the need to keep the carriers on the line brought a shift to underway resupply at the earliest possible date, and on 23 July Task Force 77 first fueled at sea to the south of Cheju Do. For the rest of 1950, the expansion of the carrier force and the high rate of consumption at Inchon and in the December crisis kept this a shoestring operation. By year's end, nevertheless, ComServron 3's fleet oilers, in 72 meetings, had accomplished 100 carrier, 11 battleship, 50 cruiser, and 546 destroyer fuelings at sea, while *Mount Katmai*, the reactivated *Paricutin*, and the sheathed AKAs had rearmed the force on 54 occasions. Transfers during these exercises were not limited to the 1,750,000 barrels of fuel oil, the 171,000 barrels of aviation gasoline, and the 7,665 short tons of ammunition which were delivered, but included numerous passengers and an infinite variety of miscellaneous commodities and fleet freight. And the supply of urgently needed items had been speeded by the institution of a daily air delivery service from Japan to Seventh Fleet carrier decks carried out by war surplus TBMs.

For the rest of the war the deployment of underway replenishment ships remained largely unchanged. One oiler was maintained at Keelung to fuel the Formosa Strait patrol; Yellow Sea units were serviced by independently sailed ships; to meet the larger needs of forces in the Sea of Japan two tankers and one or two

ammunition ships were kept on station, joined as necessary by storeships and reefers. By 1952 it had become possible to replenish the entire fast carrier task force in the space of nine hours, and the impact of logistics upon operations was being further diminished by resort to the hours of darkness. Night-time replenishment, once considered so dangerous as to be impracticable, now became increasingly routine as a realistic appreciation of the possibilities of radar detection brought a relaxation of darken-ship requirements and the use of screened lights. By 1952 this evolution had become standard to the extent that the first ships were alongside the tankers before daybreak. In the last months of war nightly replenishment became the rule, and the force was meeting requirements which would have seemed wholly visionary in the war against Japan, or indeed in the summer of 1950.

At no time did the underway replenishment force have much leeway. The lifting ability of the ADs and the fuel consumption of the jets strained the capacity, not only of the parent carriers, but of ammunition ships and oilers as well. One result of these steadily increasing requirements was a variety of ingenious improvisations and modifications to the equipment for transfer of POL and ammunition. Another was a vigorous debate on the future of the art, which centered on the need for replenishment vessels with more speed and longer hulls, to keep the force moving and improve handling characteristics alongside, and on the desirability of developing composite replenishment ships which could issue more than one commodity at a time.

In-port logistic support, by contrast, remained comparatively routine once the early period of improvisation was over. Replenishment and repair were handled as practicable by the floating base at Sasebo and by its smaller sister at Yokosuka, while overload requirements were contracted out to Japanese shipyards. Of the 640,000 items of material required to support a modern naval force, some 83,000 high-demand articles, enough to supply 90 percent of fleet needs, were stocked by the Service Squadron; supplies of very large items such as propellers and radar antennae were maintained ashore; more exotic objects were procured on special order, locally or from the United States. The use of Japanese sources of supply, encouraged both by price differential and by elimination of shipping costs and time, rapidly became extensive; for the Navy this reached a peak of over $1,750,000 in June 1951, and although subsequently diminishing, owing to Japanese inflation and to some instances of poor quality or delayed delivery, remained of importance throughout the war.

The value of the Japanese base, indeed, went far beyond the opportunities it afforded for offshore procurement. Although floating support was employed to the utmost, some things, inevitably, had to be done ashore. At the outbreak of hostilities ComNavFE had been faced with the immediate need to convert Sasebo from stand-by status to major operating base, and to provide some airbase facilities in Japan. The first of these requirements called for a rapid expansion of ammunition and cargo-handling capacity and of storage space; the second, urgent in view of the needs for cargo, mail, and passenger services, for carrier aircraft replacement pools, and for patrol plane bases, was solved in the early weeks through negotiations with FEAF.

But such growth tends to snowball. These new and expanded supporting activities came in due course to require support of their own, in expansion of the supply department of Fleet Activities Sasebo and of the Naval Supply Depot at Yokosuka. And in time further steps proved necessary, as needs developed for the enlargement of NavFE headquarters, of naval hospital facilities, and of ship repair capacity.

That these requirements did not make the personnel problem wholly unmanageable was owing to the availability of Japanese labor. At Sasebo, by mid-November 1950, more than 100,000 man-days of Japanese stevedoring had been used in ammunition handling alone, a contribution equivalent to that of a thousand-man labor battalion; at Inchon, Wonsan, and Hungnam, Japanese stevedores were also employed. At Fleet Activities Yokosuka, and elsewhere, nine-tenths of the jobs in the supply and similar organizations were filled by Japanese civilians. In the course of time the staffing of the Yokosuka Ship Repair Facility came to involve about 3,900 Japanese, with some 350 U.S. naval personnel engaged in supervisory work.

In all aspects of logistic support the early days were unavoidably hectic, but from November 1950 quality

and quantity improved steadily, both afloat and ashore. Indeed there were triumphs: the possible need for cold weather clothing was anticipated in midsummer, and prompt procurement and shipment met all requirements of the winter campaign. There were also, of course, crises: the embarkation of X Corps in December pretty well stripped the Far East of tobacco, candy, and writing paper and required, among other things, an emergency order for a million candy bars. But by spring of 1951 the situation was well under control: underway replenishment was meeting all demands, floating support in Japan had been expanded by the arrival of reactivated repair ships, shore-based activities were running smoothly. If it had required almost ten months to assemble a well-rounded logistics command, no major crisis had developed at any point in the chain. The affair had been so managed that support of Central Pacific trust territories and preparations at Eniwetok for the forthcoming atomic tests had suffered only minor delays. And once the basic military requirements had been satisfied the American standard of living came to attract the solicitude of supply officers, and a growing proportion of correspondence to be devoted to requisitions for beer, baseballs, boxing gloves, phonographs, pinochle sets, and the like.

What this surplus implied in operating terms became apparent in August 1952, following a hangar deck fire which caused major damage to *Boxer*. Although no great military urgency existed, it was decided to make repairs locally rather than sailing the ship ahead of schedule to the United States. Needed material was ordered by dispatch and assembled at Yokosuka or flown out from the United States while *Boxer* was returning from the operating area. Following an all-hands evolution by the Yokosuka Ship Repair Facility, the repaired and refurbished carrier was back on the line 19 days after the fire, and completed five more days of flight operations before heading homeward.

Thus far the discussion has concerned only the naval side of the war. But before leaving the subject of logistics some notice should be taken of the work of the Military Sea Transportation Service in providing the trans-Pacific lift on which the entire campaign depended. With the decision to intervene in South Korea the expanding needs of Army, Navy, and Air Force brought an immediate doubling of the load for MSTS Pacific: in contrast to a westward lift of 812,000 measurement tons and 71,000 passengers in the second quarter of 1950, the period from July through September saw 1,984,000 tons and 136,000 passengers carried forward. But to double the lift, in view of the length of the supply line, the time required for the round trip, and the need for simultaneous increase of intratheater movement, required far more than a doubling of assigned shipping: the 25 MSTS vessels in or en route to the Western Pacific on 1 July had increased to 117 by 1 September and to 263 by 1 November.

Such an expansion inevitably had its growing pains. In Japan the recently opened Western Pacific headquarters of MSTS was acutely short of personnel, and the first weeks were rough ones. In the San Francisco Bay area the recruitment of merchant marine crews for contract vessels suffered some delays, while an overestimate of requirements by continental commands resulted for a time in idle shipping. Some administrative inefficiency developed in the Far East when CincFE, having failed to assign Army and Air Force personnel to the MSTS Joint Space Assignment Board, complicated communications and planning by interposing a GHQ staff section between Captain Junker and his customers. The peak loads which accompanied the Inchon, Wonsan, and Hungnam operations strained the capacity of MSTS to the utmost.

Some questions were also raised in the course of 1950 concerning the efficiency of utilization of MSTS shipping by the Far East Command. Here speed of cargo handling at destination is the crucial factor, and here, despite the best efforts of theater port commands, the first months saw considerable delays. Where estimated required port time was of the order of two weeks, the average ship reaching the Far Eastern theater spent almost a month in harbor, and the cumulative losses worked out to such considerable equivalents as an entire month's lift to Korea, 32 ships assigned to the trans–Pacific run, or $8,000,000 in time charter hire. But this wastage seems ascribable more to tactical and geographical factors than to ineptitude in the Far East Command: port time analyses for Japan, and for Pusan, Wonsan, and Iwon, show a utilization close to maximum; the big losses came in the autumn at Inchon, where tidal and other limitations of the harbor were compounded by the mounting out of

X Corps units for Wonsan.

With time these difficulties were overcome, and with time operations became routine. They were also impressively large, for the Korean War absorbed the major portion of the activity of MSTS, by now the largest shipping organization in the world. What is needed to support a modern transoceanic war of even limited dimensions may be indicated by a few figures. For World War II the average monthly Pacific outbound cargo came to 1,085,000 tons; in 1953 it fluctuated between 880,000 and 1,400,000 tons. In World War II the monthly average of westbound passengers was 49,200; in 1953 this figure varied between 39,000 and 58,000. As for the shipping requirements which such loads impose, it may be noted that MSTS operated more than three-score ships within the Far Eastern theater, moving 626,000 tons and 74,000 persons a month, while the trans-Pacific figures, in "notional" ships of standard types, reached the totals indicated in Table 20.

Click here to view table

Beyond these problems of logistic administration two factors in the Korean situation deserve attention. The first relates to the problem of petroleum procurement, and to the extent to which the ability to make war may be subject to developments independent of the belligerent's control. The second concerns the nature of the theater of operations, and its influence upon the magnitude of military effort.

Although the POL to support the Korean campaign came, in the first instance, from American stocks, the passage of time brought increasing reliance on the Middle East. Beginning in 1952 a considerable proportion of the jet fuel used in the Far East originated in the Persian Gulf. At a fairly early date the procurement of motor gasoline was divided between U.S. and Persian Gulf sources, while at intervals recourse was had to Aruba in the Dutch Antilles. From the latter half of 1951 the sources of both diesel oil and Navy standard fuel oil were almost entirely Middle Eastern. In the last months of conflict the Persian Gulf provided the United Nations with all its black oil, about a third of the jet fuel, a quarter of the motor gasoline, and more than half the diesel oil; aviation gasoline alone remained a wholly American product. This Middle Eastern procurement afforded a considerable economy in tanker turnaround time as compared to the U.S. Gulf coast, but it also gave hostages to fortune. In the disturbed political state of the area, emphasized in these years by the quarrel between Britain and the Mossadegh regime in Iran, there was little assurance from one month to the next that this source would remain open.

While the ability to prosecute the war thus depended in uncomfortable degree upon the continuity of Middle Eastern oil supplies, the size of the military effort was in large part a function of port capacity. Throughout the war, despite the opportunities offered by the long Korean coast line, United Nations forces remained heavily dependent upon Pusan and Inchon. Such dependence placed a rigid if theoretical limit on the size of the forces that could be supported: a study of the shipping situation in 1951 demonstrated that, in view of the physical limitations of these ports and of Yokohama, a doubling of shipping assigned the Korean run would augment deliveries by a mere 31 percent, and an infinite increase by only 37 percent.

The implications of the study are of interest, applying as they do not only to Korea but to the Indo-China crisis that followed, and indeed to any theater of operations where ports are few. It may be granted that the use of a few large ports is more efficient than a resort to many small ones. But the multiplication of forward unloading sites provides offsetting advantages in economy of land transport, as shown by the difficulties of the post-Inchon advance, and in spreading of risk, as illustrated by the beach surveys of the winter of 1950-51, motivated in part by the possibility of nuclear attack against Pusan.

This whole question of the support of a campaign in a coastal area where ports are few and communications primitive would seem to pose heavy contingent responsibilities upon the Navy. Had it been desired to increase the effort at the front beyond the capacity of Pusan and Inchon, certain steps were theoretically possible. A reallocation of resources to the ground forces might have been accomplished by the shift of Air Force units to island sites, Ullung Do in the east and Tokchok To in the west, for example; an increase in the proportion of embarked aviation, which carries its own port facilities in the form of the Service Squadron, would have had

similar results; an expansion of over the beach supply would have been helpful. But none of these solutions was easily available. The rugged topography of the Korean islands was uninviting, and the islands themselves lacked ports: indeed, a Fifth Air Force desire to set up a Tactical Air Direction Center on Paengnyong Do went unsatisfied owing to presumed logistic impossibility. As for an increase in embarked aviation and in over the beach supply, such measures would have required more carriers and more LSTs, and these were not available.

These questions, however, are speculative. So far as needs and desires dictated, maritime logistics appear to have been well handled. For all forces MSTS did its job; for the Navy the system of mobile logistic support, backed by limited base development in Japan, proved adequate to all demands while obviating the need for extensive construction ashore. If the outbreak of this unexpected war had imposed sudden and sizable logistic problems upon the armed forces of the United States, the impact had not been wholly one-sided. Reports from the submarine patrols in La Pérouse Strait indicated a volume of traffic inbound for Vladivostok which greatly exceeded previous estimates, and which was on the increase.

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James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 11. Problems of a Policeman
4. Interservice Coordination and the Air Problem

Throughout the Korean War, routine interservice problems were solved with little difficulty. The evacuation of casualties and the allocation of air and sea lift crossed service bounds. Joint planning for amphibious operations was effective. Logistic cross-servicing was generally satisfactory, as Marine aviation was provided with scarce engineering talent by the Air Force, deficiencies in Marine transport were made up by the Army, and aviation materiel was traded back and forth between the Air Force and the Navy. But there was one great exception to this generally harmonious picture.

The exception, of course, concerned the question of the proper employment of tactical aviation, a problem of very long standing and one for which no agreed solution had ever been developed. In the United States a generation of impassioned doctrinal controversy and the experiences of the Second World War had resulted in a reorganization of the armed forces in which the Army was shorn of its aviation and the Army Air Force transmuted into a separate service, while the Navy and Marines retained their organic air components. This reorganization, and the conflicting philosophies and practices which it embodied, met its first test in Korea.

Less than a year before, in the congressional hearings on "Unification and Strategy," the ancient controversy between the schools of separate and of integrated air war had reached its moment of greatest bitterness. With the invasion of South Korea the dollar aspect of the problem disappeared, but in place of budgetary pressures there developed those exerted by an enemy apparently unimpressed with air theory. The locus of tension between the services shifted from Washington to the theater of operations, where difficulties reappeared in conflict between Navy and Air Force over the control and employment of aircraft, and in controversy between Army and Air Force as well.

Given the history of the air question the reappearance in Korea of controversy and tension was hardly surprising. Nor, indeed, should the importance of these conflicts be overestimated. So much, in recent years, has been blamed on service rivalries as to raise the suspicion that some of the talk is used by civilians, whether taxpayers or administrators, to camouflage their own derelictions. And it should be remembered that equally vigorous if less publicized controversies exist within the individual services. In the Navy there was friction between surface and air, and disagreement as to the proper structure of the command organization. In the Air Force such matters as the control of airlift, the coordination of Bomber Command, and authority over service units provided bones of contention for FEAF and Fifth Air Force. Doubtless the Army had its problems too. Nevertheless the interservice difficulties deserve some comment, if only because the greatest tactical surprise of the Korean War was its demonstration of the limited effectiveness of "air power."

The argument that strength in the air is the sufficient precondition of victory, and that an air force which commands the skies inevitably commands all below, had in the years since World War II commended itself to many. Yet although in some respects persuasive, this argument had been less than wholly substantiated by the experience of the wars with Germany and Japan, to say nothing of the Italian campaign. In Korea it was to be quickly refuted.

In the first six months of war, although enjoying almost complete command of the air, the aviation of the U.N. was unable to prevent reverses on the ground, deny the enemy the use of his own territory, isolate the battlefield, or detect the assembly of large enemy forces. The defense of the perimeter had been a very close thing; in the disastrous battle of the Chongchon and the subsequent retreat to the south every aircraft in the sky was friendly; in the later stages of the war a costly and sustained effort to isolate the battlefield by the interdiction

of enemy supply lines was to fail of its anticipated success.

Yet where proper control procedures were available the employment of aircraft in direct support of troops had tremendous military effectiveness, as was amply demonstrated by the operations of the Marine Brigade along the Naktong, by the campaign for Seoul, and by the movement of the Marine Division from the reservoir to the sea. In a different context the essential interdependence of air and surface activity was reaffirmed when the failure of interdiction was attributed by air commanders to the diminished enemy consumption which followed stabilization of the front. Paradoxically indeed, the first test of the new service concerned with air war pure resulted in a striking reaffirmation of the great degree to which, in a non-nuclear environment, success in the air depends on events below.

For this lesson the services were unequally prepared. The divergent histories of Air Force and naval aviation had by 1950 produced very different patterns in training, equipment, and control mechanisms. The geography of the plains of North Africa and Europe and the ideology of independent air power had made that "inherent flexibility" of which enthusiasts prated a macroflexibility. For the conduct of the air campaign, control was centralized at the highest possible level and preplanned operations were the rule, with the result that while a large effort could be switched from day to day along an extensive battle front, control at the target had been neglected. From this structure had developed a communications system with large capacity for routine transmission of orders and reports between central command post and operating air bases, but with limited provision for tactical communications at the scene of action.

The Navy and Marines, by contrast, accustomed to attacks against such easily defined targets as fleets and airbases, and to operations within the constricted beachhead, tended to rely on doctrine supplemented by brief orders, and on delegation of control to those on the spot. Provision of tactical aviation in ground warfare was looked upon as a service to the forces involved rather than as part of a separately controlled campaign, as *a la carte* rather than a *table d'hote* proposition. The consequence was a command communications system of high reliability but comparatively small capacity, lacking in such automated devices as the radioteletype, but balanced by an emphasis on discrimination at the objective expressed in liberal provision of ground controllers and in the design of tactical communications equipment. As compared to the four VHF channels in the radios of Air Force fighter-bombers, the sets in naval and Marine aircraft had ten.

The incompatibility of these systems was forcefully demonstrated in Korea. As in the Southwest Pacific in the war against Japan, Air Force verbosity in communications swamped the less capacious naval circuits, and indeed, at times, FEAF's own: an extreme example was the grandfather of all radio messages, received by Task Force 77 in November 1950, which took 8,000 encrypted groups to set forth the air plan for one day, and which required over 30 man-hours for processing. Contrariwise, scene of action requirements for precise and deliberate control of aircraft in situations tightly packed in the air and fluid on the ground went far beyond the capacity of Air Force tactical communications. Both services, in a sense, were right in this matter, and both wrong: the land campaign, if only from problems of target description, is unavoidably wordier than war at sea; the compression of space and time brought about by the speed and power of modern weapons has made all tactical situations increasingly approximate the tightly-packed beachhead.

In the months before the war some efforts at improvement of joint communications had been made by Seventh Fleet. With an eye to the need for cooperation in a possible emergency, a series of drills and exercises with Western Pacific Air Force units had been attempted. But success had been only moderate, and the reports had emphasized the "real and urgent" need for action at the Washington level in the interest of efficient interservice communications. Somewhat similar conditions existed in Japan, where Air Force efforts at joint exercises and Air Force tentatives toward establishment of a Joint Operations Center had met little response from the Army. The whole situation points up a failure at Department of Defense level to place sufficient emphasis on joint matters, a failure apparently consequent not only to budgetary pressures and to the primacy in planning for

war in the North European plain, but also to the well-meant efforts to prevent "duplication" by writing down exclusive rather than cooperative roles and missions.

With the arrival of the Seventh Fleet in Korean waters the problems of coordination assumed immediate practical importance, and on 8 July General Stratemeyer asked CincFE for operational control over all naval aircraft operating from Japan or over Korea. But this request, which involved authority to select carrier operating areas as well as targets, was resisted by Admiral Joy. Quite apart from the echoes of Air Force imperialism and from technical questions of capability, the felt hazards of Communist submarines and the contingent responsibility of Seventh Fleet for the defense of Formosa made the proposal undesirable, and after a meeting of interested parties the phrase "coordination control" was substituted. Although the term had enjoyed some use in prior planning for analogous situations, the Air Force was later to profess itself unsatisfied with such limited authority. But difficulties deriving from phraseology were less important than those arising from the structure of the Far East Command, and from incompatibilities of doctrine, equipment, and training.

While the early employment of Task Force 77 on northern strikes posed few problems, the air situation, as General Shepherd noted in July, was full of paradox. As a result of the pressures of the moment, B–29s were employed on tactical targets to the dissatisfaction of all concerned; jet lighters, with a fuel restriction limiting them to 15 minutes in the combat zone, were assigned to troop support; despite a wealth of close support opportunities carrier aircraft were committed against semi-strategic objectives. With the passing of time, however, the imperative needs of the perimeter brought a steady southward displacement of carrier operations which culminated with CincFE’s order of 8 August to put everything on close support. This development made necessary the coordination of Seventh Fleet operations, not only with FEAF, but with the Air Force and Army commands in the peninsula as well. On paper the question was dealt with by FEAF and NavFE representatives in the 3 August memorandum on "Proposed Target Arrangements with Navy." In actuality it had hardly been faced.

Arriving in circumstances of great emergency to lend a hand, the carrier aviators found themselves faced with difficulties which frustrated their best efforts. Common maps and common grids were lacking, so that location and designation of targets on an interservice basis was almost impossible. The command structure, presided over by the distant genius of the Dai Ichi Building and overcentralized in Tokyo, made no provision for a field commander charged with the coordination of forces, and little for direct dealing between Eighth Army, Fifth Air Force, and Seventh Fleet. But perhaps the greatest problem was that of communications.

In the first days of fighting, requests for air support had gone through GHQ and FEAF; only on 7 July did Stratemeyer gain CincFE’s permission to have the Army in Korea call directly upon Fifth Air Force. The entry of the carriers into support of the perimeter led to further complications, and in late July, in the hope of bringing order into chaos, Admiral Hoskins sent a representative to Taegu to establish communications with the Joint Operations Center. But incompatibility of facilities limited the success of this effort, as did the command structure, since direct dealing was authorized only for "coordination of air operations previously scheduled by higher authority." What this meant, in terms of emergency calls for close support, was that a dispatch originating at battalion level was supposed to travel normal infantry channels to Army at Taegu, thence to JOC, thence by relay to FEAF in Tokyo, and there from FEAF to NavFE for broadcast to Commander Seventh Fleet.

Under such restrictions it seems unlikely that the most elaborate communications system could have done the job, and the net that actually existed was rudimentary. On 15 July FEAF set up a circuit linking its Tokyo headquarters with FAFIK and with Seventh Fleet; ten days later Admiral Struble was still having difficulty in direct communications with FEAF; on 4 August, as a result of the pressure of other needs, FEAF was obliged to secure this circuit, thus further complicating an originally marginal situation. And even in the autumn, when circuits had been successfully established, slow internal handling of messages on the part of shore-based commands continued to impose delays.

In the air over Korea communications also presented difficulties. Confronted by the requirement of

converting a defensive fighter force into one which could participate effectively in the land battle, Fifth Air Force had begun an heroic effort in improvisation. Two tactical air control parties were in the field by the end of June; a small combat operations section reached Taejon in the first week of July; late in the month a Joint Operations Center of sorts had become operational at Taegu. But by this time attrition of the TACPs had forced resort to airborne control of support strikes, while saturation of inadequate Army communications had encouraged the relaying of requests for air support through the orbiting Mosquito control planes.

This practice made a bad situation worse. Of the four VHF channels to which most Air Force planes were limited, only two were common to the various types of aircraft in the theater and to the jeep–mounted radios of tactical air control parties. Since Air Force procedures required incoming flights to report to JOC for assignment, and then to be passed through division to a regimental TACP or Mosquito, a considerable amount of talk was involved. As a result of this insistence on the part of JOC on acting as control as well as scheduling center, channels were so jammed that to drown out competing chatter a reporting aircraft had to come within 10 or 15 miles, a situation which at times imposed as much as 200 extra flight miles on carrier planes coming in from the west. Over the lines, meanwhile, the passage of information between attacking aircraft, Mosquito control plane, and ground party was confined to a single channel on which more than a dozen controlling centers were talking simultaneously, all this against a background buzz of conversation between the JOC and other flights. When to these circumstances was added a general indiscipline in voice communications, the difficulties encountered became quite understandable.

Both at command and tactical levels, therefore, the communications system proved inadequate to effective joint operations. One result was uncertainty in Task Force 77 as to the real nature of the emergency when calls for help came in, and in commands ashore as to its availability for support; a second was the frustrating inability of aviators to gain adequate control over the battleline. In time this situation would lead to attempts to break away from the perimeter, and to find more constructive employment for the air groups of Seventh Fleet; more immediately, it brought a number of unsuccessful efforts to short–circuit the established system. On 23 July an urgent plea from EUSAK for carrier support led to protests from Fifth Air Force, which had failed to receive its copy of the message. Two days later an attempt by Admiral Struble to bypass the Tokyo echelon and operate in consultation with EUSAK and the Joint Operations Center brought reproaches from ComNavFE. In early August a move by the commanding officer of *Sicily* to avoid the communications jam and gain more time over target by sending flights directly to the front was slapped down as "not acceptable." Late in the month, in an effort to reduce direct calls for naval air and gunfire from the forces in the field, ComNavFE got CincFE to remind all hands that any request involving changes in naval planning, or action against Bomber Command targets, had to be arranged through Tokyo.

In this situation effective control of close support proved impossible to attain. While the forces defending the perimeter could hardly have managed without the support they got, its quality, judged by any serious standard, was generally poor. The exception to this generalization, which shone the brighter in contrast to the general confusion, was in the support of the Marine ground forces by Marine and naval aviation, where the complexities of integration of ground and air were competently solved. In the southern spoiling offensive and in the battles on the Naktong the Marine aircraft from the escort carriers, exempted from the requirement of reporting in through JOC, checked in directly with their own people and did the job they had been trained to do; in the operations of Joint Task Force 7 at Inchon and of X Corps in northeastern Korea a similar situation prevailed. Much of the credit for these successes was due to pilot training based on a long history of air-ground cooperation; still more, perhaps, to effectiveness of control.

Here some statistics may be in order. Of 668 "close support" sorties sent in from the fast carriers between 26 July and 3 September, 28 percent were not controlled; for 299 such sorties at Inchon the proportion was 2 percent. In the crisis of 1 September some 280 sorties were put into the Naktong front between Tuksongdong and

the south coast, an effort beyond the capacity of the JOC control system and which resulted in its collapse. On D–Day at Inchon, by contrast, the Tactical Air Control Squadron in *Mount McKinley* handled 302 Navy and Marine sorties without difficulty. On 3 December, with a daylight working period three and a half hours shorter than that of early September, X Corps' Marine controllers at Hungnam processed 359 sorties; of these 197 were passed on to the tactical control section at Hagaru, where four-fifths were employed in the ten-mile sector between Hagaru and Yudam-ni under the direction of six ground parties. On 23 December the *Mount McKinley* Tacron handled 247 sorties in close and deep support of the shrunken Hungnam perimeter. If none of these figures matches the amphibious set-pieces of the latter part of World War II, in which upwards of 60 aircraft an hour were fed into restricted beachhead areas, they nonetheless reflect the virtue and the necessity of sophisticated and decentralized control systems.

The failures of air support in the summer of 1950 had sizable repercussions. The operations of the Marine Brigade and of Marine and naval aircraft had shown Eighth Army some of the possibilities in this area; in the campaign for Seoul and in northeastern Korea the Army units assigned to X Corps had their education continued; within the Air Force there was considerable soul-searching. In Korea this led to an influx of dignitaries from Washington to study the situation, to the convening of various boards of investigation, and to a discussion of the proper relationships between air and ground forces which lasted throughout the war. In the United States the Tactical Air Command reappeared as a major functional unit of the Air Force. In the Defense Department rumors were afoot that General Collins was contemplating an attempt to recover Army control of tactical aviation, a possibility which, in view of the nature of the earlier Collins Plan for reorganization of the armed forces, was not devoid of humor.

In the end this ferment was to have certain constructive results. For the short term, however, and under the tension of the campaign, the effects were exacerbating. In late August the troubles reached the press, with publication in the Baltimore *Sun* of a news story supported by editorial comment based on the views of the frustrated aviators of Task Force 77. One result was a dispatch from the Chief of Naval Operations and a memorandum from ComNavFE adjuring naval personnel to keep their criticisms inside the family and out of the newspapers. Another was a rejoinder from a nationally syndicated columnist who alleged that, far from being of superior effectiveness, the Navy and the Marines had been lying down on the job in Korea, and that their air support system was good only for butchering friendly troops.

This last effusion brought a letter from General Stratemeyer, expressing his regret for such unwarranted criticism and assuring Admiral Joy that the staff of FEAF was not responsible; earlier, in the flurry caused by the *Sun* articles, he had inquired of ComNavFE whether, in his opinion, the derogatory allegations about the Air Force were true. In reply, while regretting that accounts of "these deficiencies" had reached the press, Admiral Joy observed that with regard to air-ground cooperation he thought they were, but that allegations that the Air Force was unreceptive to suggestion were wholly false; to Stratemeyer's expressed desire that problems be thrashed out between the two of them, ComNavFE replied that tactical air was a difficult problem and that perhaps they should have got together sooner on it.

With this conclusion we may leave the subject. While the failure to provide adequate support for the Army in the perimeter was undeniable, it would seem that more help might have been given by the Navy. The analyses of the situation by Struble, Hoskins, and Ewen, and the remedies that they proposed had been perceptive, but despite an apparently hospitable attitude on the part of FEAF toward naval participation in close support and the use of Navy controllers, their implementation was never pressed. Requests from the Army in Korea and recommendations from the Seventh Fleet for the commitment of the Anglico and of the Tactical Air Control Squadron from *Mount McKinley* were denied; assignment of Navy planes to share in the control function was the exception rather than the rule; although all services would have benefited from strong naval representation in the JOC, and although the visits of Weymouth and others had proved helpful, no serious attempt to make this a truly

joint *Enterprise* took place.

To some degree the atomistic nature of the Tokyo command, where General MacArthur had retained his World War II structure despite directives to establish a unified staff, can be held responsible; to some degree instructions from Washington limited the freedom of action of local commanders in all services. Within the forces afloat there seems to have been insufficient understanding of the appalling difficulties under which Fifth Air Force labored, not all of which were due to faulty doctrine, and some failure to give credit where credit was due, as in the rapid increase of jet fighter bombloads. Not fully appreciating the necessarily deliberate nature of close support, the pilots of Task Force 77 were at times overly impatient of delay. And finally, there existed at certain levels of the naval command a distrust of the Air Force and a desire to keep at a distance not wholly explicable by the submarine problem and the Formosan responsibility, and this defensive attitude, however understandable, was perhaps the saddest consequence of the interservice battles of the preceding years.

With the movement to Inchon and the separation of naval and Air Force operations, relations became easier, and by early 1951 things had improved. Communications between Task Force 77 and the JOC were at last working effectively; air group commanders from the fast carriers were being sent in in rotation to handle the liaison function; in due course a permanent assignment would be made. With the passage of time and the discounting of the submarine, Task Force 77 had taken permanent station in the Sea of Japan and was no longer puzzling Air Force officers by its mobility. From this time on division of labor was to be largely geographical, with operations coordinated by JOC on the basis of daily submission of the task force air plan. In this favorable situation cooperation developed by natural growth: by war's end the installation of radioteletype had enabled the carriers to master the communication load, while the replacement at JOC of the naval liaison officer by a full-fledged naval member, the so-called NMJ, confirmed the joint nature of the enterprise.

In the controversial question of close support doctrinal differences remained. Overcentralization at JOC, where aircraft allocation was controlled and where all requests had to be approved, kept the system vulnerable both to enemy action and to communications saturation at times of peak activity. Air Force unwillingness to assign forward air controllers below the regimental level left this function largely in the hands of the Mosquitos, most effective in the stable situations in which least needed. But with calls for close support diminished by the static nature of the front, and with the carriers committed to interdiction, the problems inherent in the system could be ignored, and only in the final weeks of war did there develop a repetition of the confusion of August 1950.

In August 1953, 12 days after the signing of the Korean armistice, an interservice board assembled at Seoul to consider the problems of joint air-ground operations. The conclusions of the board reflected adversely on the rigid administrative procedures which in Korea had limited the effectiveness of air in fast-moving tactical situations. The need for better communications, both in the request net and at the scene of action, was emphasized. The excessive delays resulting from reliance on ground alert aircraft for attack against fleeting targets were noted; the employment of flights orbiting on station or diverted from preplanned missions was urged; and it was made clear that the Mosquito was no substitute for ground control of strikes against targets close to the MLR. For effective joint action in future comparable situations the establishment of a Joint Operations Center, 1953 model, was recommended, and the proposal, dating back to the summer of 1950, that the Navy provide a quota of forward air controllers was revived. This report marked a real step toward a meeting of minds in this complex and vital area: only in the question of providing air controllers at battalion level did the Air Force members disagree with the representatives of the other services. And all hands agreed on the "urgent requirement" for an established joint air support doctrine and procedure.

But Korea was far from home, and the victories of peace are different, if no less renowned, than those of war. Pursuant to the urgent recommendation of the conference the job of developing an agreed joint doctrine for air support of ground forces was quickly undertaken. On 28 August, only a week after adjournment of the Seoul

meetings, this task was assigned the Joint Tactical Air Support Board "as a matter of priority," but with the proviso that if "inter-service divergent views" were encountered, these should be referred to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force for resolution at department level.

The hint, if hint it was, was quickly taken. The Air Force members of the board broadened the discussion to discover areas of difference, insisted that joint action take place on the highest rather than the lowest echelon, and looked with disfavor upon joint activities below the level of the area commander. The separateness and co-equality of air was stressed at the expense of integrated action, the need for joint task force organizations for airborne or amphibious operations was denied, the concept of joint planning conferences was evaded, and heavy emphasis was placed on the necessity of adhering to "the operational procedures which have worked with outstanding success in World War II and in Korea."

The Army, Navy, and Marine Corps members, for their part, while attempting to keep the discussion on the track, expressed some doubt as to the "outstanding success" of existing methods, and urged that development be not restricted by a blind adherence to the past. But agreement between the representatives of these three services was of no avail. In December 1953 the split report was forwarded to Washington for resolution at department level and there, presumably, suitably interred. In any event there is still no joint doctrine.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 11. Problems of a Policeman
5. The Larger Picture

Despite its violence and drama the struggle in Korea was but one aspect of a larger whole. While the tide of battle flowed up and down the peninsula, the war of maneuver, diplomacy, and subsidy continued all along the frontiers of the divided world. Unquestionably there were great differences between the operations in the Korean sector and the course of affairs elsewhere: as General MacArthur, who felt this most keenly, observed, "here we fight Europe's war with arms while the diplomats there still fight it with words." But words are weapons; the aims and stakes were everywhere the same; Europe remained of primary importance and the boundaries of the shooting war subject to change.

For the armed forces in the Far East, most of all, perhaps, for the Navy, the existence of Communist nations on both flanks, the commitment to defend Formosa, and the international nature of the high seas obscured the borders of the conflict. Of the possibilities inherent in the conduct of operations in an area flanked by unfriendly powers, both possessed of military air forces and one with a sizable submarine fleet, the most dramatic example had been the destruction of the Russian bomber in September 1950. But while the chance of similar incidents was ever present, it was with regard to the submarine that the question of when properly to engage an unidentified intruder was most puzzling.

Early in the conflict Admiral Joy had advised his forces that "unidentified submarines may be attacked and driven off by any means available in self-defense or when offensive action against our forces is indicated," and that "continued submergence of an unidentified submarine in position to attack . . . is considered to indicate offensive action." Since submarines can detect an approaching surface force before being themselves discovered, and so enjoy a period of time in which to make their presence known, "continued submergence" was narrowly interpreted and sound contacts were invariably attacked at once. Such attacks were frequent in the first months of fighting, both in Korean waters and in the Ryukyu—Formosa area, but most targets were ultimately evaluated doubtful and some as positively non-submarine.

The air action in the Yellow Sea was not repeated, and no submarine attacks developed. But there remained, most notably in the Formosa area and along the patrol plane tracks in the Yellow and Japan Seas, the possibility of chance encounters with Chinese Communist or Soviet forces. In the Yellow Sea, except for the loss of a patrol plane to North Korean antiaircraft, no incidents took place until summer of 1952, when two PBMs were attacked and damaged by Communist jets. In the Sea of Japan, however, in November 1951, a P2V failed to return from a northerly search, and subsequent information indicated that it had been shot down off Cape Ostrovnoy by Soviet fighters. Here in the north the Air Force also engaged in reconnaissance, and with similar results: in October 1952, a year after the loss of the P2V, a B–29 was shot down off Hokkaido by Soviet fighters; in March 1953 an RB–50 was attacked, although without damage, over the sea to the east of the Kamchatka Peninsula.

In Formosa Strait, the region of Seventh Fleet's contingent responsibility, the situation remained generally quiescent. The alarm of late July 1950 had brought the hasty diversion of Helena and a destroyer division from Korea, followed within a few days by *Juneau*. Early in August Admiral Struble formed *Juneau*, two destroyers, and an oiler into Task Group 77.3, based at Keelung and shortly to be reinforced by *Worcester* and another destroyer from the Mediterranean. By month's end Rear Admiral Thomas H. Binford, who in 1942 had commanded the old four-stackers in the Java Sea fighting, had arrived from the *United States* in the heavy cruiser *Saint Paul* to assume command of the Formosa Patrol. Although the crisis of December brought the surface units

north the task group was shortly reconstituted, and throughout the war surveillance of the strait was continued by Seventh Fleet surface units and by patrol planes.

Here, too, as in the north, long-range naval aircraft working the area from their bases in the Pescadores, at Buckner Bay, and on Luzon, had intermittent brushes with the Communists. As early as 26 July 1950 a P4Y was attacked by fighters in northern Formosa Strait, but escaped without damage; ten days later a PBM was fired on by antiaircraft batteries in the neighborhood of Amoy. On November a PBM failed to return from southern Formosa Strait, and although searches were persistent they were also negative and the cause of loss remained unknown. Two generally peaceful years followed, but in the autumn of 1952 there developed a number of antiaircraft actions with shore batteries and small warships, and on two Occasions patrol aircraft were attacked by MIGs. But no plane was lost until January 1953, when a P2V was shot down by gunfire from a coastal island and a Coast Guard PBM, sent to rescue the crew, itself crashed and sank while attempting takeoff in heavy seas.

So despite all hazards the war remained circumscribed. Although planning for larger things had followed the intervention of the CCF, the blockade of mainland China was never implemented and mainland target folders stayed on the shelf. The intensity of action diminished rapidly with distance, and except for minor incidents shooting was limited to Korea and to Korean waters. In the northern Sea of Japan the units of the Soviet Far Eastern Fleet maneuvered, undisturbed and undisturbing. Through the waters of the Western Pacific, Soviet and Chinese Communist merchant ships continued on their way, subject only to the photographic efforts of search planes and submarines. But while the area of actual combat remained small, related events of great importance were taking place throughout the world.

In the United States, in September 1950, a controversial career ended as Louis Johnson, in part the architect and in part the victim of the Truman administration's defense policies, departed Washington, and General Marshall, again recalled from retirement, reigned in his place. Already, however, the policies had changed. With the invasion of South Korea the $14 billion ceiling vanished overnight, and budgeting and planning officers labored to keep up with administration willingness to approve and congressional readiness to appropriate. In the fiscal year 1949–50, the year of interservice quarreling and the B–36 hearings, naval appropriations, originally voted at slightly over $5 billion, had been cut by the Johnsonian ax to less than $41/2 billion. For 1950–51 they totaled more than $12 billion, and in the following fiscal year monies appropriated for the Navy alone would exceed the earlier three-service ceiling, while the total defense budget would approach $60 billion.

It is, of course, easier to appropriate than to spend, and the events of immediate significance were less the dollar votes than the recall of reserves, the expansion of selective service calls, and the reactivation of fleet units and base facilities. But with the passing of time expenditures also rose dramatically: the $14 1/2 billion spent by all services in fiscal 1950 rose to $38 1/2 billion in 1952; for the Navy alone the increase was from $4.1 billion to almost $10 billion. The effects on the national economy were not disastrous.

For the Navy's operating forces two principal consequences followed this dollar flood: an immediate expansion of the fleet through reactivation of mothballed ships, and its subsequent strengthening by conversion of existing units and by new construction. Reserving the latter subject for later treatment, it may be noted here that fleet expansion took place in all categories from attack carriers of the *Essex* class down to yard craft and liberty boats. The extent and speed of this expansion may be inferred from a tabulation of major combatant ships in active service in June and October 1950.

Click here to view table

The 50 percent expansion of the Pacific Fleet, while sufficiently impressive, is perhaps less remarkable than the fact that the Atlantic Fleet should have expanded at all, while at the same time contributing heavily to the increase of Far Eastern naval strength. From this Fleet, by way of the Suez and Panama Canals, there came in the early months a battleship, a fleet carrier, a light cruiser, a destroyer squadron and an escort destroyer division, a

hospital ship, three attack transports, three attack cargo ships, and two LSDs. This was no inconsiderable contribution, yet it was dwarfed by that of the Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, which for a time almost disappeared as a result of the need to reinforce the 1st Marine Division for Inchon. In the period between June and mid-August, when FMFLant hit its low point, on–board personnel, officer and enlisted, diminished from 18,470 to a mere 3,196.

Notable as was this westward shift of force, it was controlled and limited. Great though they were, the exigencies of the Korean situation were not permitted to overthrow the broad lines of accepted strategy. The defense of Europe remained the primary task; the larger portion of the Navy remained in the Atlantic. And as a precautionary measure, since none could read the future, the outbreak of fighting in Asia was soon followed by a forward deployment on the other side of the world.

In the Mediterranean Sea, where geography affords the opportunity to reach behind the Iron Curtain and to sustain the independence of the nations of Southern Europe and the Near East, the Navy maintained its Sixth Fleet. This fleet, lineal descendant of the Naval Forces Mediterranean of World War II days, had received its current designation in early 1950. Its existing deployment dated from the previous year, at which time the Atlantic Fleet had organized three carrier task forces, one of which was at all times kept on station in the Mediterranean, along with an amphibious element embarking a Marine battalion and miscellaneous supporting units. Spring of 1950 had seen this force, built around the carrier *Leyte* and the cruisers *Salem* and *Worcester*, engaged in routine exercises. With the invasion of the Republic of Korea its strength was to be more than doubled.

Escorted by a division of destroyers, the large carrier *Midway*, which already enjoyed a limited nuclear capability, was speedily sailed for the Mediterranean, where she arrived in mid-July and where she was joined shortly by her sister *Coral Sea*. With the striking force thus strengthened, *Worcester* and a destroyer division were detached to the Far East by way of Suez, followed in mid-August by *Bexar* and *Montague* with the Marine battalion, while *Leyte* was returned to the United States for further transfer to the Far East by way of Panama. There remained in the Sixth Fleet the 2 large carriers, 3 cruisers, and 14 destroyers, and in September the force was further strengthened by an antisubmarine group formed about the escort carrier *Mindoro*. But with the period of triumph in Korea the crisis seemed to have been surmounted, tension diminished, and Sixth Fleet was cut back to normal size.

The reduction, like the triumph, was to prove short-lived. As the emergency which followed Chinese intervention in Korea brought a second hasty reinforcement of the Far East, so too it governed movements in the Atlantic. In January a new augmentation of the Sixth Fleet was begun, as a light carrier, a destroyer division, and two fast minesweepers were ordered forward. With the apparent imminence of a major spring crisis the scheduled May relieving group of one large carrier, 11 destroyers, and ancillary units was sailed to reach the Mediterranean in March; at the same time an amphibious task element with a Marine battalion was sent forward to provide, for the first time since the previous August, a limited amphibious capability. Following the arrival of these reinforcements the ships already on station were kept on through early May, with the result that these months saw the largest concentration of American naval power in the Mediterranean since the end of World War II.

The expected crisis did not come, but little relaxation resulted. Over and above the necessity of strengthening its striking force in Mediterranean waters, and of contributing to Far Eastern naval strength, manifold responsibilities weighed upon the Atlantic Fleet. During the warm months resupply convoys had to be sent up to the Arctic. Spring of 1951 brought the need to transport and land the newly established Iceland Defense Force. An arduous and continuing schedule of training in convoy work, mine warfare, amphibious operations, and air defense had to be maintained. The strains of rapid expansion, brought about by reactivation of mothballed ships and the activation of new aviation units, imposed a heavy load in personnel training and administration as on-board complement expanded in the space of two years from 107,575 to 235,426. Nor was non–shooting war without its costs: the greatest single tragedy of the period of the Korean conflict took place in the Atlantic, when

in April 1952, in the course of night air operations, the DMS *Hobson* got in front of the carrier *Wasp* and was run down and *Sun*k with a loss of 176 lives.

So war in Europe, if still in CincFE's phrase only a war of words, absorbed large quantities of naval strength. And in diplomacy, as in the military establishment, the sense of urgency deriving from aggression in Korea was employed to strengthen the defenses of the West. This process was most notable in the fleshing out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, where the treaty of April 1949 had been followed by requests for American military assistance and these, in October, by the Mutual Defense Act. More paperwork and negotiation followed, but in March of 1950 shipment of materiel began with the sailing of a load of naval aircraft on the French carrier *Dixmude*, a vessel of appropriately international background which, begun as an American merchant ship, had been converted to an auxiliary aircraft carrier, lend-leased for wartime service to Great Britain, and ultimately transferred to the French Navy.

The NATO powers had by now agreed on broad strategic concepts, and the wheels of implementation were grinding. The pace, however, remained leisurely: Russian forces in the satellites outnumbered those available for the defense of Europe by perhaps five to one, and the latter, of widely varying quality, were maldeployed, malsupported, and without a coordinating command structure. But Korea changed all this. In the new atmosphere came new effort, and on 15 September, as the Marines were going over the seawalls at Inchon, the North Atlantic Council voted to create an integrated force under centralized command. In December the call went out for General Eisenhower to return to the scene of his earlier triumphs; in January the organization of a headquarters was begun; on 2 April 1951 SHAPE assumed operational control of NATO forces.

Although much remained to be done, General Eisenhower's hand had already been strengthened by the arrival of new Army and Air Force contingents, as well as by expansion of the Sixth Fleet. Following the invasion of South Korea an increase of jet fighters and B–50 bombers had trebled Air Force strength in the United Kingdom. In the course of 1951 the Air Divisions there and in Germany were expanded into Air Forces, the southern flank was strengthened by acquisition of North African airbases, and four more Army divisions reached Europe to join the two already there. There was also reinforcement from within: in Europe as in America defense expenditures rose steadily, and while the American contribution continued to predominate, the outlays of European NATO members more than doubled between 1949 and 1952.

While the defenses were going up in Europe the right flank was pushed forward through the Mediterranean. Here geography and naval power permitted both the development of advanced airfields in Tripoli and Saudi Arabia and the extension of NATO planning to include Greece and Turkey. These were hardly Atlantic states, and their accession was consequently opposed by some, but the sea road that connected them with the Atlantic made possible their support against pressure from the north. These facts of life were emphasized and western power made tangible in the summer of 1950 by the appearance of the Sixth Fleet at Phaleron Bay, just east of the Piraeus; by amphibious exercises in Crete; and by an aerial demonstration staged over Lebanon at the request of the Lebanese government. Late in the year Greece and Turkey were invited to associate themselves with NATO planning, and in early 1951 the Sixth Fleet again called at Phaleron Bay. In May the United States proposed formal NATO membership for these countries, and in July *Coral Sea* and her attendant ships dropped anchor at Istanbul. In the fall the formal invitation to accede was issued, and early in 1952 the transaction was consummated.

Naval diplomacy was by this time in full swing, and the fleet was showing the flag in a new area. The adherence of Greece and Turkey to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization greatly emphasized the importance of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Army. Here cooperation had been facilitated by the end of civil war in Greece and by Tito's break with Russia. Subsequent to these developments crop failures had forced this Communist country to turn westward and, despite many protestations to the contrary, to start edging into the position of a constructive member of NATO. By early 1951 Yugoslav preparations to receive assistance were in progress and in February

food and credits began arriving. In April former German military equipment was provided by France and Britain, to be followed, with poetic justice, by Russian gear captured in Korea. Before the year was out military missions had been exchanged with the United States, and in December Sixth Fleet units visited a Yugoslav port. In 1952 this developing cordiality brought a task force built around *Coral Sea* to Split, finest of Adriatic harbors, where Marshal Tito was himself embarked and edified by a demonstration of flight operations.

By early 1952 the NATO naval command structure had been completed, and arduous efforts in the coordination of multinational forces were beginning to flower in large-scale naval exercises. In November a six-nation operation was carried out; in the following March a large NATO maneuver was held in the Western Mediterranean; in the autumn of 1953 the Sixth Fleet would sortie to the North Atlantic, to join the forces of that ocean in the greatest combined exercise to date.

So in Europe, as in Korea, the line was held, and even slightly improved. As always the imperfect world contained sufficient difficulties: despite SEATO and the Baghdad Pact, the unsettled conditions of Southeast Asia and the Near East continued to resist treatment. Still, it could be said that the events set in train by the invasion of South Korea had reacted, on balance, to the detriment rather than the advantage of the Communist world. The North Korean People's Army had been destroyed and the forces of Communist China heavily punished. Japan had been protected; the Republic of Korea had been liberated; Formosa had not fallen. In Europe NATO had been built up. The United States, keystone of the entire structure, was to a considerable degree rearmed.

All this, of course, had been accomplished by way of reaction. That so much had to be credited to the North Koreans rather than to the conscious and purposeful initiative of the West was perhaps cause for philosophical regret. But the response, for the moment at least, had been a notable one.

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Chapter 11. Problems of a Policeman
6. Into the Future

The fighting in Korea was accompanied, for those who had ears to hear, by ominous rumblings offstage, as the nuclear powers labored to perfect and expand their arsenals. The explosions of 1951 marked but the start of a period of accelerated development in which tests were carried out by the United States at Eniwetok and in Nevada, by the British in Australia and in the Pacific, and by the Soviets within the Asiatic land mass. Before peace came to the embattled peninsula a whole new spectrum of weapons had been developed: at one end there lay the hydrogen bomb, with its appalling implications for victim, neutral, and user alike; at the other the need for an explosive return proportionate to the rising costs of delivery was bringing warheads for missile, artillery, antisubmarine, antiaircraft, and infantry use.

The possibilities of the world struggle and the actualities of Korea, so important in forwarding the nuclear research and development programs, had important results in other spheres. The shock effect of the North Korean mining campaign gave mine warfare an unaccustomedly high priority, both in research and in the Navy's building program. The immediate response to the emergency involved the installation of underwater search gear in a number of infantry landing craft, to permit their use as mine locators, and the conversion of four motor launches to shoal-water sweepers. But these expedients, like the many World War II minesweepers, had been largely obsoleted by the magnetic mine. Subsequent development of the mine-hunters involved the conversion of wooden-hulled YMS and the construction of wooden-hulled minesweeping boats, while the need for larger sweepers led to the construction of new non–magnetic types. Of these, three were developed: the MSO, an ocean minesweeper, 171 feet in length and of 750 tons full load displacement; the MSC, a somewhat smaller coastal minesweeper, 144 feet overall; and the MSI, a 112-foot inshore minesweeper.

The building of truly non-magnetic ships is no simple matter, involving as it does, in addition to wooden hull construction, the design and procurement of much special equipment including engines of non-magnetic stainless steel alloys. Yet, despite the complexities of the task, production was not inconsiderable. Of the MSOs, which began launching in 1952 and commissioning in the next year, more than 100 were projected, while almost 150 MSCs and about 50 inshore sweepers were planned. Such quantities, of course, were more than enough for the U.S. Navy, but the United States was now supplier to the whole free world. With the anti-Communist alliance dependent on the uninterrupted use of the seas, and with a mine threat which knew no geographical limitations, something more than half this new construction was slated for transfer, under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, to countries along the entire maritime arc from Norway in the west through the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific and Japan.

In amphibious warfare, too, the Korean experience had consequences for new construction. The extraordinary usefulness of the LST resulted in an immediate program for 15 of the 1156 series, a development of earlier experimental types, longer (384 as compared to 328 feet), faster (15 as opposed to 11 knots), and of larger capacity than their elder sisters; these began launching in mid–1952. The next step came two years later with the laying down of the first of seven *Suffolk County* class LSTs–442 feet overall, 7,100 tons full load displacement, 17 knots—which would carry 20 amphibious vehicles and 700 troops in air-conditioned spaces.

This, it appeared, was about as far as the type could go, despite the enthusiasm of some officers who, on the basis of Korean experience, appealed for clouds of these ships to replace rather than supplement the APA and AKA types. Since problems of design placed unavoidable limits on beaching ability, further progress tended toward the elaboration of the dock landing ship, also of great use in Korea. Eight new LSDs of the *Thomaston*

class were undertaken and these, like all new construction, were larger (11,270 tons full load as against 8,700 tons) and faster (24 knots as compared to 151/2) than their World War II predecessors. The direction this development was taking became apparent a few years later with the completion of plans for the LPD, a transport designed on the *Thomaston* hull, in which the increased troop and cargo space gained by the use of a smaller well gave a capacity approximating the AKA or APA.

Other than the LST, the most prominent all-purpose workhorse of the Korean War had been the helicopter. So necessary had these contraptions suddenly become that landing platforms sprouted throughout the fleet and were designed into all possible new construction, while their further implications for amphibious warfare attracted the interest of the Marines. As the tactical possibilities of vertical envelopment were clarified, there came proposals for the conversion of escort carriers to helicopter work and the projection of the helicopter amphibious assault ship (LPH), which would carry a Marine battalion, its supplies, and the helicopters necessary to land it. And a final contribution to the welfare of those who have to land on beaches came in late 1952, with the laying down of *Carronade*, the first rocket ship specifically designed for the purpose.

While the virtues of flexibility of movement over the beaches and over the hills were being worked out, through development of LST and LSD types and of helicopter employment, concurrent advances took place in more conventional areas. Since in addition to the problems of minefields and beaches the Korean War had emphasized those of supply, a share of new construction was allocated to logistic support units. Early in the conflict three 20-knot passenger ships, already building for the American President Lines, were taken over and completed as troop transports for MSTS, which also acquired some new cargo types with roll-on roll–off loading systems and with hulls strengthened for use in ice. Under the stimulus of war the Maritime Commission undertook the construction of a number of 20-knot Mariner class cargo ships, of which one was early acquired by the Navy for conversion to an AKA and others in due course for conversion to attack transports. The shortage of reefers in Korea brought the inclusion of two 18-knot vessels in the post-Korean construction program. The problems of underway replenishment and of accelerated consumption of fuel and ammunition led to experimental work with an ex-German U—boat supply ship to test the theory of one-stop replenishment, and to planning for a composite type which would carry ammunition, petroleum products, and miscellaneous cargo as well. But this development would take time, and more immediate help came from the construction of six new 20-knot fleet oilers, 100 feet longer than any previously available, of which the first was launched in late 1953, and from the five new ammunition ships of the *Suribachi* class, built from the hull up for this purpose, and providing higher speed, new methods of storage, and new and faster handling machinery.

Essential though they were, these advances in mine and amphibious warfare and in logistic support of overseas operations were overshadowed by developments in the striking forces. In carrier aviation the lessons of Korea, the availability of more money, and the implications of the future led to a dramatic reversal. In July 1951, only two years after cancellation of the supercarrier *United States*, a contract was awarded for the first of six vessels of the *Forrestal* class, ships more than 1,000 feet in overall length and with a full load displacement almost twice that of the *Essex* carriers. On these colossal hulls, in addition to machinery for speeds upwards of 33 knots, the new class of carrier provided larger fuel capacity, larger hangars, more powerful catapults, more elevators, and an angled deck layout which would permit the handling of almost 100 of the larger and higher performance aircraft soon to become available.

As construction of these behemoths was getting underway an extensive conversion program for existing aircraft carriers was begun. Here the most significant new step was the incorporation of the angled deck, a British development, which permitted simultaneous launching and landing and at the same time removed the hazards of the barrier crash. With success of an experimental installation on *Antietam*, other *Essex*-class ships were put into the works to emerge in due time with the new deck configuration, modernized elevators, new steam catapults, and other improvements, and in 1954 similar modernization of the three *Midway*-class carriers was begun.

What all this implied in terms of aircraft performance may be seen by a few comparisons. For the Korean war the best available Navy fighters were the Grumman F9F Panther and the McDonnell F2H Banshee with maximum speeds of something over 600 miles an hour; the AD attack plane, last and finest flower of the piston-engined line, lumbered along at a mere 365 miles an hour. But as the war was ending the Douglas F4D Skyray, a supersonic fighter capable of speeds up to about 750 miles an hour, was commencing its fleet trials. The A3D twin-jet heavy attack plane, with a top speed roughly equivalent to the F9F, was already in production. The prototype of the still faster A4D light attack plane was building and a contract had been let for the Chance Vought F8U–2, an advanced fighter which on completion would set some records with speeds exceeding 1,000 miles an hour.

Paralleling these advances in fighter and attack aircraft, the continuing trend toward complexity of equipment and size of vehicle was bringing multi-engined antisubmarine aircraft to the fleet. These larger planes required larger decks: in 1953 half the *Essex* class was assigned to antisubmarine warfare, and with this step the light carrier and the escort carrier reached the end of the road. After a short period in training duty the last CVL followed her sisters into inactivity, while those CVEs not destined for the scrap heap were reclassified as aircraft transports or as helicopter carriers.

The advent of new high-performance aircraft and the proliferation of nuclear weapons inevitably revolutionized the air defense problem. To increase the range of radar detection, early warning aircraft and radar picket submarines were given high priority. In fighter planes the machine gun gave way to the target-seeking missile, while aboard ship the antiaircraft gun began to disappear. Although the first group of post-Korean destroyers—one of which was to be christened *Turner Joy*—mounted new 3-inch automatic antiaircraft batteries, this was but a brief transitional phase. In 1955–56 the heavy cruisers *Boston* and *Canberra* were modified to carry two twin launching mounts for Terrier, a beam-riding antiaircraft missile with a ten-mile range. The next step was the conversion of the destroyer *Gyatt* to carry a Terrier mount, and of six *Cleveland*-class light cruisers, three to carry Terrier and three Tabs, a larger missile with a slant range of up to 65 miles. And in due course there followed a program for guided missile destroyers of new design.

Although in Korea the submarine had been only a threat, new developments promised it a considerable future. In the years before 1950 some new construction and conversion had been undertaken with an eye to increased submerged speed, and some of a specialized nature for antisubmarine work. But the great developments came in the course of the Korean conflict, with the construction of *Albacore*, a wholly streamlined boat which compensated for awkward handling on the surface by extraordinary speed and maneuverability in the depths, and with the laying of the keel of the nuclear submarine *Nautilus*. Marriage of the speeds possible with the new hull form and the almost unlimited endurance bestowed by nuclear propulsion was to give wholly new dimensions to undersea warfare, while with the advent of the offensive guided missile the submarine gained awesome potentialities for action against land targets.

Naval development of the surface-to-surface guided weapon, begun shortly after World War II, first took operational form in 1951 with the flight of Regulus I, a subsonic missile with a range of 575 miles. Designed originally for launching by submarine, Regulus proved versatile, and in the course of time was embarked in aircraft carriers and cruisers as well. By 1958, when production ended, a supersonic longer–range successor was on the way, and submarines specifically designed for missile work were under construction.

While much had been said of push–button warfare in the years after World War II, all this, when war came to Korea, was still largely talk. But before the decade had ended changes of a truly revolutionary nature had indeed developed. Nuclear-powered submarines were in operation and more were building; nuclear-powered cruisers and frigates were in contemplation; surface ships as well as submarines were carrying long–range missiles; as an outgrowth of the *Forrestal* class an even larger carrier was under construction.

This was *Enterprise*, 1,100 feet long and with a flight deck 252 feet wide, displacing 85,000 tons full

load, defended by missiles, powered by eight nuclear reactors. This new dispensation in propulsive machinery would give her a maximum speed of 35 knots and an estimated endurance of five years; by eliminating the need for oil storage and stacks it would provide twice the aviation fuel capacity of her largest predecessors and permit the installation, on the sides of the island structure, of fixed radar antennae of advanced design. This astounding vessel marked the culmination of the Navy's development of shipboard aviation, a development begun within the service lives of many still on active duty with the conversion, in 1922, of the old 15-knot collier *Jupiter* into the *Langley* as an experimental aircraft carrier. But *Enterprise* was not alone in manifesting the possibilities of the new technology, for work was simultaneously going forward on a series of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, whose displacement would approximate that of a small light cruiser and whose armament had a projected range of 1,500 miles.

What these developments of Promethean man promised for the future of warfare was by no means clear, least of all for the kind of limited war that had taken place in Korea. Despite a change of administration at home and ultimate agreement on a Korean armistice, military policy was to continue much as before. At the Pentagon the bad old chiefs departed and the good new chiefs came in, a change chiefly significant for the promulgation of the "New Look" which, with its emphasis on the size of the bang, harked back to pre-Korean days. On the level of higher policy the concept of "massive retaliation," with its promise of converting all small wars into big ones, seemed a denial of all Korea had stood for and a return to the position of 1949. With the end of the Korean fighting, the Bureau of the Budget regained its ascendancy in military affairs, dollar problems returned to harass and divide the services, and the only difference was that this time it was the Army, which had borne the heat of the day in Korea, that suffered most.

Yet however predestined, all this was in the future in July of 1951 as the delegates gathered for the commencement of Korean armistice talks. At 1100 on the morning of the 10th Admiral Joy led his colleagues into the teahouse at Kaesong to confront the emissaries of the enemy. Among the correspondents present to observe proceedings, bets were being made on how long it would take to close the gates of the temple. The pessimists thought six weeks.

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Chapter 12. Two More Years
1. July 1951-February 1952: Stabilized Front and Peripheral War

AT KAESONG the first few days of talk were not auspicious, occupied as they were by U.N. efforts to control Communist propaganda activity, by argument over the administration of the neutral area, and by procedural disputation. Nevertheless, in the course of little more than two weeks, an agenda was adopted and the delegates proceeded to address themselves to the question of a cease-fire.

Although hostilities were to continue until agreement had been reached, the commencement of negotiations made for optimism, and ComNavFE thought it necessary to warn of possible acts of treachery. Ground action, nevertheless, continued to diminish: six months of grinding frontline warfare had ended, the battleline had been stabilized on favorable ground, and except in the Iron Triangle and on the Soyang River, United Nations activity was limited to patrolling and to the improvement of defensive positions. But since the enemy was busily engaged in bringing down new units to replace those chewed up in the spring offensives, and was bending every effort to improve his logistic position, interdiction perforce continued. For the next two years, as hopes of peace continued to be frustrated, the burden of offensive action was to lie principally upon the Air Force and the Navy.

The prospect of an early armistice had already been reflected in the movements and composition of the Amphibious Force. With the departure of Admiral Thackrey in June the number of Amphibious Force flag officers in the Western Pacific dropped from two to one; at the end of the month a recommended reduction in the Far Eastern deployment of larger PhibPac ships to one AGC, seven APAs, and two AKAs had been approved by CincPacFleet; in time the allowance of LSTs would also be cut down. Concurrent with this diminution of strength, however, there arose the requirement of supporting the U.N. armistice delegation, and a special task element of one AGC, one APA, and an LST helicopter base was formed and stationed at Inchon to provide logistic and communications services. And at the same time other units of Task Force 90 were assisting in a special operation to the northward.

This affair, of the greatest importance for technical intelligence, involved the recovery of a downed Russian MIG. For although U.N. aviators were by now well acquainted with this high–performance fighter, Communist reluctance to engage in combat far from base had prevented acquisition of a specimen for closer examination, and a previous search by west coast ships for one reported on the sandbars of the Yalu Gulf had proved fruitless. On 9 July, however, word was received from JOC that a MIG was down in shoal water off the mouth of the Chongchon River; *Sicily*, back again in the Far East as relief for *Bataan*, was ordered to search, and the American officers in charge of west coast underground activities, "Leopard" on Paengnyong Do and "Salamander" on Cho Do, were instructed to alert their people. But the reported position was 15 miles in error, the weather was foggy, and the aircraft, awash only at low water, was hard to see; not until the 11th did planes from *Glory* find the MIG a couple of miles offshore and 33 miles north of the Taedong estuary.

This location, less than 10 minutes flying time from the enemy's Antung airfields, was both risky and navigationally difficult. But photographs indicated that recovery might be practicable, every effort was ordered by ComNavFE, and the commanding officer of *Ceylon* worked out a plan. On 18 July an LSU equipped with a special crane was borrowed from CTF 90 and sent up to Cho Do in the LSD *Whetstone*. The next day's effort ended with the LSU fast on a sandbar, but on the 20th, with air cover from *Glory*, with *Belfast* stationed to warn of air attack, and with *Cardigan Bay* on hand for fire support, a U.S. Navy helicopter operating from the British carrier buoyed the site and *Glory* aircraft led the LSU through the sandbars. By evening the engine had been

recovered and the major portions of the air-frame located; next morning the pieces were loaded on the LSU. In the afternoon *Sicily* pilots sighted 32 MIGs heading for the area, but foggy weather prevented contact, no trouble ensued, and on the 22nd the LSU and its precious cargo were embarked in the LSD *Epping Forest* and the MIG brought back to Inchon.

Along both coasts, as talks began, action continued. On the western shore British Commonwealth, ROK, and U.S. units carried out a number of Small bombardments and raids. At Wonsan in the east, activity increased as the enemy worked to expand his truck traffic and to develop his coastal defenses: reports from agents within the city made frequent mention of the presence of Soviet advisors, of the massing of troops, of possible shore-based torpedo firing facilities, and of the installation of batteries of impressive size, including a "Stalin gun" said to have been hauled out to Hodo Pando by 12 horses. Sufficient credence was placed in these reports to produce the "Wonsan Special" of 5 July, in which Task Force 77 helped out the bombardment group by devoting its entire day and 247 sorties to the city. And further confirmatory evidence was soon forthcoming.

At 1637 on the afternoon of the 17th, shore batteries opened on the destroyers *O'Brien*, *Blue*, and *Cunningham* from three sides of the Wonsan swept area. The ships at once went into the War Dance, an evasive maneuver originated in May by *Brinkley Bass* and *Duncan*, steaming in an ellipse at 22 knots and firing on batteries in each sector as their guns came to bear. As enemy fire continued heavy, Task Force 77 was called upon for air support; at 1650, and again an hour later, an LSMR was brought in from the outer channel to deliver a long-range rocket barrage against enemy gun positions. By 1830 the batteries on Hodo Pando, Umi Do, and the tip of Kalma Pando had been silenced or had checked fire, but a new group of emplacements at the base of Kalma Pando presently opened up. By this time *Helena* and *New Jersey* had been started in from Task Force 77, and HMS *Morecambe Bay*, en route to Songjin, had been diverted to Wonsan. At 2000 in she came to join the dance, and for another hour, until darkness descended, shooting continued. Despite many very near misses no ship had been hit, and the single casualty was treated by the application of a Band-Aid, but the more than 500 splashes observed and the far larger number of rounds returned made the so-called "Battle of the Buzz Saw" a very respectable engagement. Late that night *Helena* reached the outer channel, to be followed by *New Jersey* in the morning, and since something heavier than 5-inch gunfire seemed needed, both ships stayed on for two days of heavy–gun bombardment.

Prospects nevertheless seemed warm, and future policy deserving of consideration. To the Seventh Fleet staff the value of the Wonsan foothold seemed dependent on the future intentions of CincFE, a view which was communicated to the higher levels for comment. But there, owing to the commencement of armistice talks, planning was largely in abeyance, and answer came there none. In the absence of guidance from above, Admiral Martin decided, as an interim measure, to hold the harbor islands for bargaining purposes. It was to prove a long interim.

Offshore, despite the hindrance of the July fogs, Task Force 77 continued to provide aircraft for close support, armed reconnaissance, and interdiction. Since requests from JOC for support of the battleline seldom exceeded 30 sorties a day the main effort was invested in a continuation of Operation Strangle, the attempt to cut truck traffic between 38° 15´ and 39 15´, and in a return to bridge breaking. Here foggy weather, increased antiaircraft, and the recent emphasis on close support had worked in favor of the enemy; the bridge cuts south of Songjin had been eliminated, and few breaks existed in the line. But by month's end things were again under control, and a new program of systematic photography was underway to provide information for a new key bridge list.

At Kaesong, following agreement on the agenda, the delegates in late July took up the question of a demarcation line. Here the Communists, who by now had suffered a net loss of territory, insisted on the 38th parallel. But since an armistice would bring an end to the blockade, and to air and naval action against enemy territory, the U.N. negotiators, for their part, sought compensation in a line north of the existing front. From this

discussion there soon arose the question of who in fact controlled the territory of the Yonan and Ongjin peninsulas, south of 38° and west of the Imjin River.

Largely untouched by war, and but lightly held by the enemy, the coastal parts of Hwanghae Province were subject at any time to descents from the sea, or to raids by partisans operating from the offshore islands. At the end of June ROK guerrillas with naval support had landed south of Yonan to destroy two ammunition dumps; in the following weeks raids were carried out against the mainland opposite Cho Do. On the evening of 24 July, as the question of the demarcation line arose, CTF 95 received a message from Admiral Joy asking for a show of strength in the Han River estuary as close as possible to Kaesong. Admiral Dyer at once committed all but one of his west coast frigates to this operation, *Glory* was ordered from Sasebo to join *Sicily*, and a check sweep of the entrance to Haeju Man was undertaken to permit the entry of heavy bombardment ships.

Two-carrier operations were carried out from 26 to 29 July; from the 27th to the 29th the heavy cruiser *Los Angeles* shot up targets on the western shore of Haeju Man; in the Han the Commonwealth frigates bombarded the northern bank. For these operations in the estuary the finest kind of seamanship was necessary: U.S. and British charts of the area differed widely, and none showed any very reassuring depths; the liquid medium in the Han, brown soup rather than clear water, was lined with rocks; currents reached eight to ten knots, and so poor was the holding ground that on one occasion *Comus* dragged while steaming to both anchors.

Although targets for bombardment, obtained from JOC and from the Leopard organization, were generally unprofitable, and although enemy reaction was for the moment nil, the demonstration was more concerned with capabilities than with accomplishments. By early August, despite intermittent groundings, the bombarding ships had succeeded in penetrating upstream to fire on Yonan from the southeast and northward up the Yesong River; on the 17th three of the frigates found 400 enemy troops along the river bank and gave them a thorough shelling. Late in the month, on the urging of Admiral Scott-Moncreiff, a survey of the river was begun by a UDT detachment in the APD *Weiss*, and the channel was buoyed by the fleet tug *Abnaki*.

By this time the optimism which had accompanied the opening of armistice talks was dead. In early August negotiations had been briefly suspended by General Ridgway in protest against Communist violations of the neutral zone; late in the month, following an incident apparently fabricated to suggest that U.N. aircraft had bombed the conference site, the Communists in turn refused to talk; only in late October, with transfer of the conference site to Panmunjom, were plenary sessions resumed. These events governed the progress of the fighting. In mid-August General Van Fleet launched a limited offensive on the eastern coastal strip; with the breakdown in negotiations he ordered a larger effort east of the Hwachon Reservoir in X Corps zone.

Once again fire support was needed on the coastal road. On 17 August a special bombardment group, Task Group 95.9, was formed to assist the ROK advance into the difficult hill country south of Kosong; composed initially of *New Jersey*, *Toledo*, and two destroyers, this group continued through various changes of ships and of designation to support the eastern end of the battleline through August and into September.

Once again, also, an amphibious demonstration was called for to assist the forward movement. On 27 August a minesweeping group composed of three AMS and the LSD *Whetstone* moved into the objective area at Changjon, to be followed in due course by *Helena*, three destroyers, and an LSMR, and on the 30th by *New Jersey* and another destroyer. On the 30th and 31st the beach and adjacent troop and gun positions were bombarded and subjected to air strikes; offshore, where the transport group lay to, the boats were lowered, formed into waves, and headed for shore, before being recalled and hoisted in. But although the demonstration was more elaborate than its predecessors, it remained questionable what diversionary impact had been created, or whether anything over and above the bombardment damage had been accomplished.

The main effort, however, was inland, and there on the 31st the attack began as the Marine Division, fresh from a six–week rest, pushed northward up the Soyang Valley, while the 2nd Division pressed forward on its left. By 18 September the Marines had reached their objectives, as did the 2nd Division in mid-October. West

of the Hwachon Reservoir, IX Corps was also pressing forward, and by 21 October was looking down upon Kumsong. Seventh Fleet planners had by this time produced a follow-up plan, known as "Wrangler," which involved withdrawing the Marines from X Corps, embarking them at Sokcho, and landing them in assault at Kojo to link up with the advance of IX Corps. But on 24 October, after a month of haggling by liaison officers, the Communists asked that talks be resumed, and "Wrangler" never came off.

The northward advance of the Marines since their February commitment to the Wonju front had brought them steadily closer to the Sea of Japan. Late September found the division on the upper waters of the Soyang River where its right, though still west of the Korean divide, was less than ten miles from the sea. This proximity to tidewater raised possibilities of naval gunfire and maritime logistics which were quickly embraced.

In this extremely mountainous country the enemy, deeply entrenched on the reverse slopes, was hard to reach. Since artillery could not touch him, and since air support was in short supply and unpredictable in quality, resort was had for the first time in a year to naval gunfire. On 20 September *New Jersey* was sent in to provide support; on the 23rd, after liaison officers had been sent out by helicopter and radio communication had been established, ranging rounds were fired; on the next two days, and again on 2 and 3 October, 16-inch fire was called down upon the backsides of the enemy with destructive and demoralizing effect. On 17 October *New Jersey* returned to the task, and for five days late in the month support was provided by the heavy cruiser *Toledo*. Intermittently throughout the winter this work continued, with the ships firing at ranges of 11 to 16 miles, their shells sailing over 2,000—foot mountains and across the Nam River valley to embed themselves amidst the enemy's supply concentrations and command posts.

The proximity of the sea also held logistic promise. In contrast to the ROK I Corps on the coast, always largely supported by sea, the Marines in September were dependent on their railhead at Wonju, 91 bad road miles away, a situation which required greatly increased allowances of motor transport, communications gear, and heavy engineer equipment. Now, however, encouraged by the prospect of "Wrangler," a road was cut through the mountains to the sea, Sokcho in the ROK zone was pressed into use as a supply port, and an adjacent airstrip was employed as division airhead. The impressive consequence of this shift to seaborne supply was the addition to the division's monthly potential of an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 combat man-days.

In somewhat similar manner Marine air units attempted to base themselves on the sea. MAG 12, with its main base at Pusan West, had been increasing its output and decreasing commuting time by staging through a forward field near Wonju; in July this field was closed, and in August forward operations were shifted to a coastal strip near Kangnung. But Kangnung has no harbor, and although use of this strip greatly improved the sortie rate, the exposed nature of the coastline complicated logistics. Original plans to bring supplies in across the beaches foundered when the broaching of an LST showed the beach to be unsatisfactory. Resort was next had to unloading at Chumunjin, but at the cost of a 17-mile trucking requirement over inferior roads. In early September the construction of a pontoon causeway near Kangnung eased the situation until its destruction by winter weather necessitated further recourse to Chumunjin.

Still, if the complications of beach logistics forced the working hands to a variety of expedients, the support provided by MAG 12's neighbors was unsurpassed. The broaching of the LST, with its vital load of POL and ordnance, brought an immediate response from the population of nearby fishing villages. Sampans were lashed together to form a causeway, and then overlaid by pierced steel planking across which the cargo was manhandled ashore. Twenty–four hours of continuous effort finished the job, and as no pay would be accepted by the Koreans the best the Marines could do was to set up a fund for the families of fishermen lost at sea.

Click here to view map

Day after day throughout the summer the fast carriers continued the effort at interdiction. On 22 August a new face appeared in the Far East with the arrival of *Essex*, first of her class to enter World War II and first also to reach Korea following modernization to provide more powerful catapults, larger elevators for planes and bombs,

and most importantly a larger gasoline capacity and an improved fueling system to cope with the insatiable demands of jet aircraft. Embarked in *Essex* was Air Group 5 with one squadron of ADs, one of F4Us, one of F9Fs, and one of the McDonnell F2H Banshee, an excellent twin-jet fighter, larger, heavier, and superior in performance to the F9F, although still, like all U.S. aircraft except the F–86, inferior to the MIG in speed and maneuverability.

Essex's first month in the theater was one of developmental progress. Operationally a new first in interservice cooperation was effected when 23 F9F and F2H fighters escorted 35 B–29s in a strike against Najin, a Communist storage center on the northeast coast beyond the range of Air Force fighters and but 17 miles from the Soviet boundary. In materiel also an advance took place, following a serious accident in which a damaged F2H floated over the barriers and into parked aircraft, causing a gasoline fire which destroyed 4 planes, killed 7, and injured 27. Lacking propellers to catch the barricades, floating jets had always been hard to stop, and the ultimate solution of the angled deck was still some years away; but the *Essex* incident brought an effective interim measure in the installation of a ten-foot barrier of wire and nylon tape as a last-resort midships arresting device.

For the most part, however, the work went on, day after day, in routine fashion. "Strangle" operations against the North Korean road net continued into September, as did attacks on key rail bridges. Across the peninsula Fifth Air Force also continued its efforts against road traffic, but with a progressive tendency to shift to a new concept, still under the rubric "Strangle," which called for the destruction of railroad trackage in the optimistic hope that this would force the enemy to wear out his motor transport. In this effort, officially begun on 19 August, the carriers soon joined; a month later, on orders from CincFE, all close support was halted to permit full concentration on interdiction; on the last day of September, following a conference between Air Force and Navy commanders, it was decided to emphasize rail cutting supplemented by the destruction of a Small number of key bridges. The Navy's part began fast with 131 track cuts in the first three days of October, and as the enemy's repair parties were poorly deployed to meet the new tactic, both Air Force and carrier airmen managed to stay ahead while the flying weather remained good.

At intervals throughout the fall the work of the fast carriers in the Sea of Japan was augmented by the Commonwealth light carrier. On 18 and 19 September, at the suggestion of Commander Seventh Fleet, CTF 95 put on a special two-day air, gun, and rocket effort against Wonsan, in which the air strikes were provided by HMS *Glory*. On 10 and 11 October a similar operation against the Kojo area, with air strikes from HMAS *Sydney*, and with a mixed U.S., British, and Canadian screen, was carried out by Rear Admiral Scott-Moncreiff in *Belfast*. Late in November Scott-Moncreiff returned again with *Belfast* and *Sydney*, and with a screen still further internationalized by the addition of a Dutch destroyer, to spend two days in banging up Hungnam.

In the east, along the 300 miles of enemy coast, the ships of Task Force 95 continued to provide fire support, to patrol and bombard, and to besiege the cities of Wonsan and Songjin. In July the Royal Marine Commando, whose varied experiences had taken it under the sea in Perch, up to thc reservoir with the Marines, and into enemy country near the mouth of the Taedong River, had arrived at Yo Do for a six month's tour of duty; after some practice raids against the Wonsan mainland the Royal Marines began a series of autumn operations, landing from an APD to attack targets along the northeastern coast. On 5 September, on orders from Seventh Fleet, CTF 95 instructed the minesweepers to clear a lane between Wonsan and Hungnam to bring the western shore of the Korean Gulf within gunfire range. One month later, as the job was being finished, *New Jersey*, *Helena*, and some destroyers bombarded the Hungnam area for the first time since the X Corps evacuation, destroying an oil refinery and some ammunition dumps. But although the clearance of Hungnam had been successful not everyone had heard the details, and on 7 October the destroyer *Small* got outside the swept area and was mined with considerable damage and heavy casualties.

The efforts at interdiction by Fifth Air Force in the west and Task Force 77 in the east, together with surface ship bombardment of accessible coastal pressure points, had placed a heavy load upon the Communists.

Their Department of Military Highway Administration, charged with road repair, had grown to a total of some 20,000 men, and the railroad repair organization was estimated of equivalent size. But despite all, it still seemed impossible to cut the flow of supplies below the enemy's requirements. Persistence and diligence in repair, a determination to get supplies through, and the Small logistic requirements of Communist forces had resulted in continuous improvement of the enemy's front line logistic situation: his soldiers were better fed than ever before, his number of tanks had increased, and his expenditure of artillery ammunition had risen from 8,000 rounds in July to 43,000 in November. For one side, at least, negotiation had proven profitable.

Not only were supplies getting through, but some 500 heavy antiaircraft guns and almost 2,000 automatic weapons had by now been emplaced in North Korea, and U.N. aircraft were suffering increasing losses. The increase in coast artillery, first noted at Wonsan, had extended along the shore, with the result that U.N. vessels could no longer move close in or lie to while firing. At sea the possible submarine threat continued to preoccupy naval commanders, while in the air enemy strength continued to grow.

Steadily increasing totals of MIG sorties were being reported by Air Force fighter pilots on northern patrols—18o on 2 October, more than 300 On 29 November—while the availability of light bombers and propeller-driven attack planes was no longer a matter of question. Following an Air Force query as to carrier jet capabilities in the northwest an F2H sweep was sent off to MIG Alley; no contact was made, and this maximum-range effort was not repeated, but the menace remained. Noting the increase in Communist air strength and the concurrent effort to activate North Korean airstrips, ComNavFE in early November informed his command that enemy aircraft had been sighted south of Pyongyang, and directed heavy ships not to operate north of Wonsan without air cover. On 27 November a flight from *Bon Homme Richard* was attacked by MIGs near Wonsan, and on subsequent occasions contrails were sighted high overhead. In early December, as the Amphibious Force began an interchange of Army units between Hokkaido and Inchon, CincFE instructed FEAF and the West Coast Carrier Element to provide cover for all troop movements in the Yellow Sea.

Nevertheless, despite the enemy's increasing material prosperity, the movement of the battleline had continued northward, the U.N. retained command of the air over most of North Korea, the U.N. navies controlled the coasts, and bombardment at Wonsan, Songjin, and in the Han River estuary remained a daily affair. On 28 September CTF 95 made an inspection trip up the Han in the Australian frigate *Murchison*, only to be opened on by mortars, Small arms, and light field guns. Contemporaneously with this first instance of the long-awaited enemy reaction, indications that the Communists were about to abandon their insistence on the 38th parallel brought requests from the U.N. delegation and from EUSAK for more gunfire.

Admiral Dyer at once ordered the Han River operation intensified. The Yellow Sea carrier was directed to bomb the northern banks daily and to provide air spot and CAP for the bombarding frigates. On 3 October *Black Swan* steamed up the river to draw enemy fire, whereupon 13 F4Us from *Rendova* attacked the gun positions; and for the balance of the month, as carrier aircraft burned off the cover on the northern bank, the noise of the bombardment was wafted to the negotiators at Kaesong. By October's end an effort originally scheduled for a few days had lasted a hundred, and like the destroyers at Wonsan the frigates in the Han estuary had become fixed.

On 25 October, as the enemy returned to the truce table, the U.N. negotiators proposed the establishment of a four-kilometer demilitarized zone based generally on the existing line of contact. On 5 November the proposal was accepted, together with a U.N. proviso that the line be that existing when final agreement was reached. A week later General Ridgway directed Eighth Army to cease offensive operations and commence an active defense of existing positions. By the 27th the front had been mapped and accepted by both sides, and a bait provided for the Communists by a U.N. undertaking to accept this line should the armistice be concluded within a month.

With this agreement, frigate bombardment in the Han River was terminated and ground action again

diminished. Along the entire front, from the Imjin to the sea, the Communists pressed the fortification of defensive positions. But as the ground battle tapered off into patrolling, the enemy commenced an offensive effort in a new sphere, and the seat of war was transferred to the offshore islands.

These islands, acquired during the U.N. advance in late 1950, had since that time been employed as bases for raids and for intelligence activities. On the eastern shore the picture was a fairly simple one: except for those in Wonsan harbor only four islands of importance lie along this coast, and of these the two largest, Mayang Do on the 40th parallel and Hwa Do off Hungnam, were enemy controlled. Northeast of Songjin, however, the Yang Do island group, two miles offshore, accommodated intelligence personnel moving in and out of North Korea, and in time would become an ROKN PT operating base; off the bomb line on the 39th parallel the little island of Nan Do was employed as a base for Task Force Kirkland, a EUSAK unconventional warfare organization.

In the west the situation was more complex. On Tokchok To, off Inchon, the Air Force navigational equipment evacuated in December had been reinstalled in February, and similar gear had been emplaced on Paengnyong Do on the 38th parallel. Along the southern shore of Hwanghae Province, from the Han estuary to Korea's western tip, numerous coastal islets were employed as bases by partisan groups, of which Leopard Force was the most notable. Off the Chinnampo approaches, the important islands of Sok To and Cho Do supported guerrilla and clandestine operations, and an Air Force desire to install radar facilities and rescue helicopters on Cho Do waited only on improved security. To the northward in the Yalu Gulf a group of islands, seized by the ROK Navy in November 1950, contained numerous anti-Communist guerrillas.

The number of independent agencies on these islands led at times to situations of considerable complexity. In August 1951 one observer noted that Yo Do in Wonsan harbor was crowded with uncoordinated delegations from nearly every organization operating in Korea, and that the masses of amateurs commuting to and from the mainland created hazards for the skilled agents. In the west a FEAF outfit which operated its own private navy, and the organizations controlled by Leopard at Paengyong Do and by Salamander at Cho Do, cooperated well with the blockading force. But other groups, too mysterious to mention, were less considerate, and when NavFE headquarters proved unable to influence the state of affairs, Admiral Scott-Moncreiff ordered the apprehension and detention of all unidentifiable travellers. By autumn this particular situation had improved, but by this time the enemy was showing interest in the islands, while the armistice talks had adversely affected the morale of anti-Communist North Korean guerrillas.

Giving thought to their future status in the event of a cease-fire, many of these now became double or triple agents, or went over to the Communists. At Sok To a mutiny of the garrison and landing force was caught in the nick of time by Leopard, and 300 prisoners were removed to the southward. On 30 August Royal Marines and stokers from *Ceylon* made a descent upon a west coast target designated by Leopard Force; Leopard himself accompanied the raiders and no trouble was expected, but someone had leaked and the opposition was waiting. On Cho Do, in early September, an attempt on the life of Salamander was made by one of his own ex-agents. But not all developments were adverse. On 24 September, supported by gunfire from *Comus*, Leopard's Sok To agent led a Small raid against the Amgak peninsula, and returned with nine prisoners including a North Korean colonel and his concubine. The colonel, recently transferred from Wonsan, reported that he was fed up with the war; the comments of his lady have unfortunately not been preserved.

In this situation of tension and uncertainty the enemy, in early October, began to exert pressure. On the 9th, 600 invaders from the mainland landed on the large Yalu Gulf island of Sinmi Do, and although the garrison held for a time with support from *Cossack* and *Ceylon*, reinforcements arriving across the tidal mud flats forced withdrawal on the 12th. On the 30th Cayuga reported receiving a hundred rounds of artillery fire from the Amgak peninsula opposite Sok To; in the Yalu Gulf the island of Taehwa Do, where friendly forces had concentrated, was attacked by aircraft on 6 November in the first confirmed enemy employment of light bombers in Korea. That night Ka Do and Tan Do, two of the Smaller northern islands, were seized by the Communists in a night

amphibious attack.

Since the U.N. delegation hoped to use the islands as counters to trade off against the Kaesong area, these events served to stimulate some interest. From Commander Seventh Fleet came a request for an inventory of west coast islands, and from EUSAK a hope that Taehwa Do would be held. Although he felt the northern islands were not worth the effort required to defend them, Admiral Scott-Moncreiff on 9 November ordered a destroyer to patrol the area during the hours of darkness. Shortly Commander Seventh Fleet appeared in the Yellow Sea on an inspection tour; on the 12th, with air spot from HMAS *Sydney*, his flagship *New Jersey* fired her final Korean bombardment and her 3,000th 16–inch round of the war at troop concentrations reported by Leopard Force.

Winter by now had come again bringing strong winds, cold, and the first snows to the northern Yellow Sea. Nightly, nevertheless, ships of the blockading force went up to Taehwa Do; in the course of the month guerrilla raids supported by naval units were conducted against enemy–held islands in the Yalu Gulf; but the proximity of these positions to enemy airfields prevented daylight surface support or carrier air patrol. On 27 November the subject of the offshore islands came up for discussion at Panmunjom, and at once the Communists stepped up their efforts.

Although the enemy carried out a successful raid against Hwangto Do in Wonsan harbor on the night of the 28th, his principal effort was in the west. On 30 November, as CincFE warned that the islands had become critical to the negotiations and adjured his island commanders to make preparations for defense, Fifth Air Force fighters intercepted a formation of 12 twin-engine bombers heading for Taehwa Do with an escort of 16 propeller fighters and 50 MIGs, and destroyed the greater part of the bomber force. Nevertheless the island was lost that night to a well-planned amphibious assault supported by artillery from Ka Do, and of some 1,200 guerrillas and inhabitants only about a quarter got out. This affair was followed almost immediately by further enemy shore-to-shore attacks which seized six Small coastal islets in Haeju Man, and by reports of extensive troop movements in Hwanghae Province. These events brought a review of the island situation.

Responsibility for island defense was at this time somewhat obscure. Tokchok To and Paengnyong Do had for almost a year been charges of CTG 95.1; other islands where U.S. intelligence activities or equipment were operative were under the control of CincFE; the Korean-occupied islands were pretty much on their own. The loss of Taehwa Do had brought increased patrolling by west coast ships and a request for reinforcement of the Cho Do, Sok To, and Paengyong Do garrisons; on higher levels various proposals for the institution of Small boat patrols, reinforcement of the islands by air, and the like, were bandied about; in the south ROK Marine units were alerted for movement to the threatened islands. On 7 December Admiral Dyer received the loan of *Manchester* from Commander Seventh Fleet, and followed by *Ceylon* proceeded west at speed to Cho Do. But the attitude of higher echelons remained obscure, no reinforcements were available from EUSAK, and Commander Seventh Fleet was reluctant to become too deeply involved.

At Cho Do and Sok To, Admiral Dyer found morale improved by the news that the islands would be defended, but the situation was still precarious, Island commanders, intelligence officers rather than Marine or Army line, were inexperienced in organizing defenses; since the guerrillas were all natives of North Korea, security was inherently poor; conversation with Leopard indicated the great desirability of getting the refugees out and the ROK Marines in as fast as possible. An LSD and some AMS were brought in to keep the Sok To anchorage swept and to strengthen the Small craft patrol, and arrangements were made for the LSTs bringing up the ROK Marines to remove the refugees. With this much accomplished, and with an apparently growing Small boat menace to the Wonsan harbor islands, CTF 95 proceeded to the east coast.

Hardly, however, had he reached Wonsan when word was received of attacks on two Small islands inboard of Sok To, and between 16 and 18 December, despite support from U.N. ships and aircraft, an enemy force of about 600 overran these positions. With the situation apparently still deteriorating, CTF 95 again headed west, and on the 18th took over as officer in tactical command on the west coast. By the 20th the ships on anti-

invasion duty near Cho Do included *Manchester*, *Ceylon*, and two destroyers, and the question of responsibility for island defense was at last beginning to jell.

Despite the fact that all islands north of 38° were conceded by the U.N. negotiators on 21 December, failing an armistice agreement the defensive requirement remained. On 6 January responsibility for the overall defense, local ground defense included, of designated islands on both coasts, was assigned the Navy and delegated to CTF 95. So far as east coast islands were concerned only Nan Do, off the bombline, had not previously been a naval responsibility; in the west, however, Sok To and Cho Do in the Chinnampo approaches, Taechong Do in the Sir James Hall group, and Taeyongpyong Do south of Haeju were added to the list. On the 9th an Army-Navy-Air Force island defense conference was held aboard *Wisconsin*, following which the West Coast Island Defense Element was organized with a U.S. Marine officer in command, with headquarters on Paengnyong Do, and with two battalions of ROK Marines distributed among critical islands.

Already the LSTs of Task Force 90, which had brought the defenders in, had begun to evacuate refugees: by 22 December about 9,000 had been lifted out and by late January some 20,000 had been transported south to Kunsan. Constant patrolling of the threatened areas was undertaken, and an LST with armed Small boats was provided for inshore work. In mid–January, in an effort to suppress the artillery effort against Cho Do and Sok To, CTF 95 went north in *Rochester* to bombard the Amgak peninsula in coordination with a Marine air strike from *Badoeng Strait*. By early February the enemy had retired from a number of the captured islets in Haeju Man and off the Ongjin peninsula, in part apparently owing to bombardment by rocket ships, in part to inability to support his forces. By March these islets were being reoccupied by anti-Communist partisans and a number of enemy efforts to attack across the mud flats had been thrown back by naval gunfire.

The period following naval assumption of responsibility for island defense brought two actions of some importance. On the northeast coast, after a month of careful preparation, the North Koreans mounted a raid on the Yang Do group by some 250 troops boated in sampans. Shortly after midnight on 20 February the New Zealand frigate *Taupo*, the DMS *Endicott*, and the destroyer *Shelton* were patrolling to the northward when an emergency dispatch reported Yang Do under fire from the mainland and invasion apparently imminent. Steaming at flank speed the ships reached the islands to discover bombardment continuing and fighting in progress ashore, but by this time radio contact had been broken. With daylight, however, the island commander came back on the air: all invaders on Yang Do had been either killed or captured, those on East Yang Do were departing for the mainland. There followed a spirited engagement in the two-mile strait in which *Taupo* and *Endicott* engaged some 15 sampans, destroying 10 and damaging the rest, and were themselves engaged by artillery from the mainland, while *Shelton* put up counter-battery fire. This was all very well, but on the west coast the enemy fared better, and in a successful assault on the night of 24 March seized a Small island between Cho Do and Sok To and eliminated its defenders.

Although reports of enemy offensive plans continued to come in, and although artillery fire was persistently directed against Cho Do, Sok To, and their supporting ships, as well as against the islands at Wonsan, the enemy island offensive was limited in its success to the elimination of the foothold in the Yalu Gulf. At Cho Do improved defensive arrangements were followed by the installation of radar and antiaircraft weapons in February, and in March by a helicopter detachment; these facilities, together with naval patrol of the surrounding waters and a rescue B—29 which orbited overhead, made the Cho Do area a useful bail-out and rescue zone for pilots from the Yellow Sea carrier and from the Fifth Air Force. Elsewhere the offshore positions continued to provide bases for intelligence and guerrilla activity, while at Wonsan possession of the harbor islands paid an unexpected dividend. Some concern had been caused the U.N. Command by events such as the Sok To mutiny, and by reports that guerrillas were surrendering in response to an enemy offer of amnesty. But at Wonsan, on 21 February, reassurance was gained when at 0630 in the morning Brigadier General Lee II, NKPA, reached Tae Do in a stolen sampan, with a briefcase full of top secret papers, a head full of top secret plans, and a strong desire to

make himself useful.

As the war continued among the islands, along the coasts, and in the air over North Korea, so did the talks at Panmunjom. There, with agreement on the demarcation line, discussion had turned to arrangements for a cease-fire and to the question of prisoners of war. December and January brought abandonment by the U.N. of the northern islands, of the right to air reconnaissance over North Korea, and of a previously proposed limitation on Communist rehabilitation of airfields. But with the New Year the sticking point appeared in the question of forced repatriation of prisoners. Despite further U.N. concessions all progress ceased, while continued enemy pressure against the islands was indicative of no speedy peace.

Through the winter cold and winds and snow, naval and air operations went on. The Amphibious Force was engaged in further troop lifts between Korea and Japan. The units of Task Force 95 continued as before, the monotony interrupted only by a brief resumption of the Han River patrol, by rumors of a Soviet submarine in the northeastern coastal area, and by the loss with all hands of an ROK PC, presumably by mining, at Wonsan. On the east coast the detachment of the ROK Capital Division to chase guerrillas in the southern mountains imposed additional burdens at the bombline, but the assignment of a heavy ship and of another destroyer to duty there enabled the remaining forces to hold the road while the extermination campaign went on. The load of the minesweepers was increased by the decision of CTF 95 to sweep the east coast from Kansong to Songjin every two weeks. As for the aviators, they were still working on the railroad.

Click here to view table

In the north the frugal and ant-like enemy continued to accumulate supplies and, as the table shows, to maintain with roughly half the logistic means of the U.N. a larger military establishment. At year's end total U.N. strength in Korea was of the order of 600,000, and that of the Communists a third as much again, while EUSAK credited the enemy with the ability to launch a general offensive with a force of more than 40 divisions.

So spring came.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 12. Two More Years
2. March 1952-February 1953: Stalemate

Watch after watch, day after weary day, the war went on. The cold of winter passed, to be followed by the thaw and rains of spring, the haze and fog and steaming heat of summer, and the clear days of early autumn. In steady succession carriers and their air groups crossed the Pacific to take their tour of combat and depart; from the west coast of the United States destroyers crossed the ocean and from the Atlantic coast the world, operated for their allotted period, and returned again. In the Atlantic and Mediterranean the larger half of the U.S. Navy was also working on an accelerated schedule in a situation that was neither peace nor war. Throughout the establishment and on both sides of the world effort was called for from all hands, and particularly from the career personnel, laboring to accomplish an acceptable minimum of training while watching the steady disappearance of rated men and qualified reserves into the welcoming arms of American industry.

Stalemate existed, but stalemate brought no rest. Readiness had to be maintained; crews had to be trained; the enemy, ensconced in the northern half of the peninsula, had to be harassed, and if possible brought to terms. Day after day the F–86s went up to the Yalu, Air Force fighter-bombers and carrier aircraft ranged over North Korea, the gunnery ships continued on patrol, mines were swept. But month after month went by, and increasingly the question of what leverage to employ upon the enemy became more puzzling and more frustrating. Click here to view map

For the supporting forces and for the NavFE shore establishment, as well as for those on the line, life continued arduous under the twin pressures of operational load and Parkinson's Law. The hazards of the sea continued to manifest themselves in run-of-the-mill casualties and breakdowns calling for the attention of the Service Force, while April brought a major tragedy when an explosion in *Saint Paul*'s forward 8-inch turret took 30 lives. In some areas, however, appropriate savings were effected: to economize on pilots and aircraft, pull-out altitudes were raised and passes over a target limited; to economize on fuel and ammunition Commander Seventh Fleet would soon restrict speed in transit and unobserved gunfire. Expenditure of aviation ordnance, however, continued apace, aided by the load-carrying characteristics of the AD, with the surprising result that by May 1952 Navy and Marine usage in Korea equalled their total for the entire war against Japan. In communications, too, economy was hard to come by, and multiplied circuits and augmented personnel struggled bravely but vainly against the loquacity of the human animal. The message count of late 1950, when great operations were afoot, was up by half again in 1952 though all remained routine; in the autumn an amphibious feint would double the peak reached during the amphibious strokes of two years before.

For the enemy, too, the war went on, the seasons passed. To a country hardly worth more devastation, and to men whose lives held little value for their rulers, U.N. aircraft and ships and artillery brought destruction and death. What the Communists thought they were accomplishing remains unknown. Their inability to deal with the situation in constructive terms, either for themselves or for the world at large, remained unimpeachable.

Once more in 1952 the coming of spring brought changes to the Far East. In Europe General Eisenhower gave up his command at SHAPE, and returned home to begin a career in politics. Summoned to succeed him, General Ridgway was in May relieved of his commands by General Mark W. Clark, USA, who had struggled in Italy with the problems of peninsular war and in Austria with those of negotiating with the Communists. This change at the top of the U.N. Command was paralleled throughout the echelons of Naval Forces Far East: the Marine Division and the Marine Aircraft Wing received new commanding generals; with the arrival of Rear Admiral Burton B. Biggs the Logistic Support Force got a flag officer at its head; in April the first of a new

generation of carrier division commanders arrived in the person of Rear Admiral Apollo Soucek; in May Vice Admiral Joseph J. Clark become Commander Seventh Fleet and Rear Admiral Frederick W. McMahon, for four months ComCarDiv 5 in *Valley Forge*, relieved Admiral Ofstie as Chief of Staff of Naval Forces Far East.

Although rotation and relief had brought multiple changes in most Far Eastern billets there remained two commanders who had seen it all. Now, at long last, replacements for these veterans arrived. On 1 June Commander Luosey, who since the earliest days had administered the ROK Navy, was relieved. In May, after ten months of negotiations, Admiral Joy was succeeded as head of the truce team by Major General William K. Harrison, Jr., USA; in June, after nearly three years in peace and war as Commander Naval Forces Far East, he turned over his Tokyo command to Vice Admiral Robert P. Briscoe.

As the faces changed so did the problems faced. In mid-March the command structure of the Western Pacific was modified by presidential order, and military responsibility for the Philippine-Formosa-Marianas area transferred from CincFE to CincPac; local responsibility, however, remained with Commander Seventh Fleet, in his capacity as Commander Formosa Defense Force, and standing orders dating from Struble's time, to proceed to Formosa at best speed in the event of a serious invasion threat, continued in effect. In April the Japanese peace treaty became effective and that war, at least, was formally over. For Naval Forces Far East this had a variety of implications. Along with their sister services in Japan they had to transmute themselves from occupation forces into guests, a process facilitated by war in Korea which both demonstrated the virtues of available force and provided a sizable infusion of dollars for the Japanese economy. With the peace treaty came also the disestablishment of Scajap, the Navy-administered Japanese-manned shipping concern which had performed such yeoman service in support of the Korean campaign, and the transfer of its LSTs to MSTS contract operations. For the future, ComNavFE acquired new responsibilities in helping the Japanese to organize a Coastal Security Force, and in supervising the transfer of frigates and landing craft to Japanese control.

Within Korea, spring of 1952 brought a change of some importance in the move of the Marine Division from the Soyang River sector to the Imjin front. On the tactical level this shift was occasioned by concern at EUSAK for the defenses in the west; strategically, it reflected the final abandonment of plans for an east coast amphibious envelopment. For most of the troops this 160-mile movement across everyone else's supply lines was carried out between 18 and 25 March by road, but the tanks, amphibian tractors, and much of the engineering equipment were lifted out from Sokcho by two AKAs, three LSDs, and ten LSTs from Task Force 90. The arrival of the Marines west of the Imjin, where they relieved the ROK 1st Division, made it for the first time possible to hold this position against determined attack, while their transfer to a coastal sector produced an extra dividend as an amphibious retraining program, conducted throughout the summer in the Tokchok Islands, was apprehensively observed by the enemy.

The continuing amphibious threat, together with U.N. occupancy of islands off the enemy's shore, had by now brought the assignment of three North Korean corps and three CCF armies to coast defense. In March and April, enemy raids across the mud flats of Haeju Man against Yongmae Do were repulsed by gunfire from Commonwealth naval units; on the east coast enemy batteries on Mayang Do fired on minesweepers and patrolling ships. U.N. forces, for their part, continued to exploit the islands for their opportunities in evasion and escape, and as bases for guerrilla operations. Attacks by APD-borne detachments against the east coast rail line were resumed, but with diminishing dividends; in the west, coastal raids and incursions into the Haeju area were supported by the Yellow Sea carrier and by gunnery ships.

At Cho Do and Sok To, which with their valuable radar, weather, and helicopter detachments had become the Wonsan of the west, a series of intermittent engagements took place between ships, carrier and Fifth Air Force aircraft, and enemy coastal batteries. In July there was a brief flurry in the Yellow Sea as an island close to the tip of the Ongjin peninsula was invaded by a North Korean force embarked in junks and outboard motor-boats. As *Belfast* and *Amethyst* converged to assist the defenders, and as Marine fighter planes from *Bataan*

answered the call, other west coast ships manned anti-invasion stations off Cho Do and Sok To; within two days only 5 of the 156 invaders were missing and unaccounted for. More trouble-some than the enemy were outbreaks of typhus on Cho Do and Paengnyong Do, but the epidemics were quickly controlled by a naval medical unit.

With the front remaining relatively quiet, the most conspicuous ground action of early 1952 was the campaign of Koje Do. On this island, 30 miles southwest of Pusan, camps had been erected to hold the more than 100,000 prisoners of war. Early in the year a screening program, intended to separate civilians from bona fide soldiers, had culled out some thousands of the former, who were then lifted by LST to mainland ports; it had also been violently resisted by organized prisoner groups. With the commencement of a second screening cycle, designed to separate those desiring repatriation from those who would resist it, disorder and violence increased; within the Communist-controlled pens the prisoners reigned supreme, and by their riotous activity provided grist for enemy propaganda mills. In May the capture of the camp commander by his charges provided embarrassing evidence of a need for reinforcement.

Five ROKN Small craft were ordered to Koje to prevent escape by water; elements of the 187th Airborne Regiment were hastily flown from Japan to Pusan and lifted out by LST, while the rest of the regiment with its heavy gear was brought across by sea. For Task Force 90 the sudden calls resulting from the crisis on Koje Do meant that scheduled maintenance had to be foregone and training schedules modified, but in due course the campaign was won. New island sites for camps were selected by aerial reconnaissance, beach surveys for LST slots were carried out by the UDTs, Army engineers and equipment were lifted to the new locations to construct new compounds. On 10 June a new camp commander imposed control upon his intransigent wards, and in July Task Force 90 carried 37,000 prisoners to their new decentralized homes.

At Panmunjom no progress remained the order of the day. Enemy insistence on freedom to reconstruct the North Korean airfields, on a limitation on rotation of forces in Korea, and on crippling restrictions for the proposed Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission sufficiently impeded agreement. But the insuperable barrier to progress, which no concession could apparently move, was the reluctance of Communist prisoners to return home and the insistence of their governments on forced repatriation.

Behind his fortified front, his stubbornness in negotiation, and his vigor in propaganda, the enemy continued to increase his strength. In March, interrogation of prisoners indicated that great operations were impending. On 1 April the biggest air battle of the year occurred when 186 F–86s took on some 350 MIGs. Late in the month piles of construction material at the Pyongyang airbase evidenced continued intentions of rehabilitation. In May an unparalleled 4,000 vehicle sightings a night betokened an extremely active logistic effort. In the weeks that followed, increased aggressiveness brought the MIGs south as far as Sinanju.

On the east coast, as well, the growth in enemy capabilities was apparent. There, where the ships of Task Force 95 continued to patrol, bombard, and besiege, enemy gunfire steadily increased. From Kojo north to Chongjin the installation of radar, together with such devices as anchored ranging buoys, led to continued improvement in Communist fire control. March brought the heaviest shooting since the previous July, and April’s fall of shot was double that of March. Reports from captured and defecting personnel, which suggested that an assault against the Wonsan islands was in preparation, gained at least superficial confirmation from the discovery that the boatbuilders of the area had been mobilized, and that the bays west of Hodo Pando contained a large and increasing number of small craft.

By June the greatest troop and supply accumulations of the war were in evidence behind Communist lines, and intelligence indicated the imminence of a general offensive. There was also a rumor circulating, derived from POW interrogation, that the enemy proposed to kidnap the U.N. armistice delegation on the 25th, the second anniversary of the outbreak of war. No one can feel very safe when dealing with such people: as far back as April the Marines had formed a covering force to protect the truce team should the talks break down, and the new rumors brought further preparations. But June passed without difficulty and the anticipated offensive never came.

The naval siege of Wonsan was now well into its second year. Begun in order to take some pressure off Eighth Army and to get the gunnery ships on the offensive, it had by now become institutionalized: the officer in tactical command afloat enjoyed the additional honorific title of Mayor of Wonsan, and with changes of command there passed also a large gilt key to the city. But here too the passage of time, the size of effort, and the difficulty of damage assessment led inevitably to questioning. Certainly the extensive installation of shore batteries and antiaircraft, and the reported presence in the neighborhood of almost 80,000 troops, gave evidence that the effects had been considerable. On the other hand a sizable force was required to maintain the siege, defend the islands, and prevent remining of the harbor: in addition to four or five minesweepers, their tender and a tug, two or three destroyers were maintained permanently on station, and the expenditure of ammunition, much of it unobserved and unspotted, had been heavy. Demonstrable damage to the enemy hardly made up for this investment, which could only be justified by the argument that it held down large enemy forces, and by such incidental advantages as the flow of information gained through the infiltration of agents. Some now came to argue that the siege should never have been undertaken, but its long history made it difficult to abandon without apparent admission of defeat.

But the enemy, too, was concerned about Wonsan. One indication of the extent of his worries was provided by captured records of a war game conducted by North Korean division commanders in early 1952. This problem was concerned with a defense against a four-divisional assault at Wonsan, accompanied by subsidiary landings at Kojo and Hungnam, and by a northward thrust of Eighth Army through the Iron Triangle and the eastern mountains. Against this hypothetical maneuver, which bore a not too remote resemblance to U.N. planning, there were available to the North Koreans the two mobile artillery brigades which manned the Wonsan shore, three infantry divisions in the near neighborhood, and Chinese forces further inland. Interestingly, the exercise conceded inability to prevent a U.N. lodgment, and the scheme of maneuver emphasized an all-out counterattack on D plus 4. Interestingly also, and showing that spies are everywhere, the problem included among the assaulting units the 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions which, at the time the exercise was prepared, had just finished amphibious indoctrination in Japan and were preparing to be lifted to Korea.

Since the Navy, like it or not, appeared to be committed, steps were taken to improve the position at Wonsan. Island fortifications were strengthened; a clear statement from CTF 95 defined the primary mission of ships at Wonsan, as at Yang Do and Nan Do, as the defense of those positions; construction of an emergency airstrip on Yo Do was undertaken. This enterprise had been suggested the previous autumn, when the increased effectiveness of Communist antiaircraft had forced a number of damaged planes to ditch in Wonsan harbor. In the absence of a regular naval construction unit in the area the proposition had been put up to the Army and Air Force, in whose custody, in view of the continuing hopes of an armistice, it had languished for six months. In May 1952, however, permission was secured for the employment of Task Force 90’s Amphibious Construction Battalion, and ComNavFE obtained the approval of CincFE. On 9 June a detachment of 3 officers and 75 men from ACB I was landed by LST, and began work under intermittent bombardment from Hodo Pando and Umi Do. The planned 2,400-foot runway had been estimated to be a 45-day project, but the Seabees did better than the planners, and in 16 days the strip was finished. The commanding officer of the construction battalion had predicted that salvage of one plane would more than offset the expense of the project, and if his cost accounting was correct the dividends were enormous: eight Corsairs from Task Force 77, damaged or low on fuel, were brought in safely in July, and in time twin-engined transports would arrive bringing the sinews of war and lady war correspondents. This success stimulated jealousy in the west, where the condition of the emergency beach strip on Paengnyong Do was such as to cause frequent damage in landing, and from the commanding officer of *Badoeng Strait* came a request for the provision of separate but equal facilities.

Along the familiar stretch of coast from Hungnam to Songjin the campaign against the east coast rail line continued. The effort had been simplified, early in the year, with the designation of 16 target areas, 5 of which

were to be dealt with initially by carrier air and then kept out by surface gunfire, while the rest were assigned to heavy gun bombardment. As before, the targets were principally bridges, vulnerable tunnel entrances, embankments, and slide areas along the precipitous shore. As previously, the effort was comparatively successful: in the first half of 1952 less traffic passed along this stretch of railroad than along any other line north of Pyongyang–Wonsan. With time, however, and as the employment of Task Force 77 shifted from interdiction to strikes against strategic targets, the responsibility devolved increasingly upon the gunnery ships, while in the interest of economy in ammunition expenditure the shooting up of trains replaced the shooting up of track.

By now, indeed, the interdiction campaign had become the despair of all concerned, and at Air Force headquarters the publicity given the code name "Strangle" was bitterly regretted. Rails could be broken, trains shot up, bridges knocked down, and truck formations harassed, but the enemy continued, largely through night movement, to accumulate supplies in the forward areas. In this situation the inadequacies of U.N. night air capabilities rose again for discussion, and new efforts were undertaken to improve night work.

In May, Task Force 77 put on a series of night attacks, Operation Insomnia, in which six aircraft were launched at midnight and six more at 0200 for a time this tactic permitted unopposed attacks on heavily defended areas; on one occasion 11 locomotives were trapped for later destruction by day strike groups. By July, in an effort to provide all-night operations without overloading ships' companies, three teams of hecklers were being launched at dusk, of which one worked until midnight while the others landed ashore for later takeoff. But by autumn the lack of personnel to man key posts on a 24-hour basis, and the view of Commander Seventh Fleet that unless a special night carrier could be provided the emphasis should be on daytime operations, had led to diminished effort. Owing to the world situation and the shortage of operating carriers no such ship was ever made available, although an abortive attempt was to be made at war's end to do this locally, and the lack of night capabilities remained a major U.N. deficiency.

Through the spring of 1952 Task Force 77 had drifted slowly away from rail interdiction. Although in March the force was still averaging 133 rail cuts per operating day, increased attention was being given to Small boat demolition so as to inhibit attempts to recapture offshore islands. In April a series of coordinated air-gun strikes on coastal cities was begun: at Chongjin on the 13th, 246 sorties from *Boxer* and *Philippine Sea* deposited 200 tons of bombs while *Saint Paul*, escorted by three destroyers and with spot from the carrier planes, kept up a daylong bombardment. In May a three-day effort, equally divided between Chongjin and Wonsan and supported by *Iowa*, was conducted in two installments when the original plans were frustrated by sea fog. But deserving targets were limited, and in June the work of the carrier air groups was shifted inland beyond gun range.

Diminishing and discouraging returns from interdiction and disillusion with the progress at Panmunjom had also led the staff of FEAF to seek alternative employment. Since the enemy was now amply supplied for offensive action, and since any offensive would bring him into the open and subject him to heavy damage, FEAF's planners proposed to concentrate on maintaining air superiority in MIG Alley while maximizing the cost of war to the other side. In May, therefore, in a move somewhat parallel to the air–gun strikes by Task Force 77, Fifth Air Force sent large fighter-bomber attacks against concentrations of supplies, facilities, and equipment in the enemy rear.

This attempt to maximize enemy costs inevitably raised the question of the hydroelectric complex, the one important untouched target system in North Korea. These generating plants and their related distribution facilities had been brought to high development during the period of Japanese occupation. At Suiho on the Yalu River the world's fourth largest hydroelectric plant, with an output of some 300,000 kilowatts, supplied power both to Korea and Manchuria; up in the mountains, in what had once been X Corps territory, the Chosin, Fusen, and Kyosen Reservoirs together produced an even larger quantity for the cities of the eastern coast. In the summer of 1950 proposals to attack the power complex had very sensibly been turned down on the ground that the bill for reconstruction would fall upon the American taxpayer; subsequently, in the effort to avoid Chinese intervention,

the importance of the Suiho plant to Manchurian industry had led these targets to be placed off-limits. But as the armistice negotiations stretched out into 1952 the question was again raised by FEAF, as on a lower level by CTG 95.2, who was desirous of turning off the lights at Wonsan by shooting up the substation.

The timing was appropriate. In late April, in an effort to compose remaining differences at Panmunjom, Admiral Joy had offered to waive restrictions on airfield rehabilitation if the Communists would accept voluntary repatriation of prisoners and the exclusion of the U.S.S.R. from the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. But this offer was violently rejected, all progress ceased, and the meetings degenerated into propaganda about POW riots and bacteriological warfare. In this situation, comparable to the period in World War II when water barriers separated the principal belligerents, a turn to attritional bombardment, the slowest of all methods of war, was almost inevitable.

Early in June, FEAF put the proposition up to General Clark, and was given permission to plan the destruction of all hydroelectric plants except Suiho, which was still off-limits without JCS approval. But with the Chinese carrying the burden of the war for the enemy, the earlier rationale had disappeared, and since damage to Suiho offered a method of making trouble in Manchuria without crossing the border, approval from Washington was forthcoming. In Tokyo a date was selected which would permit the maximum carrier contribution and on 18 June FEAF alerted Fifth Air Force for strikes on the 23rd or 24th, weather permitting.

Since late January, four fast carriers had been present in the theater, working in teams of two. For the power plant attacks, arrivals and departures in the operating area were overlapped to provide, for the first time since December 1950, four on station at once. In another way the situation was a reminiscent one, for not since the strikes on the Sinuiju bridges in November of that year had the carrier attack planes crossed Korea to hit targets in MIG Alley. Joint planning between Task Force 77 and Fifth Air Force was begun at JOC on 21 June; on the 22nd flight schedules and ordnance plans were made up and navigational details worked out. The Suiho strike was to be a joint operation in which the carrier pilots had the place of honor; the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was given the two Chosin installations; the Kyosen plants were assigned to other task force strike groups; those at Fusen were divided between the Navy and Air Force. Since Suiho, where heavy MIG opposition was expected, was the critical target, the other attacks were timed to follow it by a few minutes.

Early on the 23rd *Boxer* and *Princeton* were joined by *Bon Homme Richard* and *Philippine Sea*. Preparation for the launch was halted when the Air Force put off the strike owing to anticipated adverse weather. But in the course of the day the operation was rescheduled, H-Hour was set for 1600, and at 1410 the force began launching 35 ADs with 4,000 and 5,000–pound bombloads for the Suiho attack. Forming up at 5,000 feet, the Skyraiders crossed the coastline at Mayang Do and then, keeping low to the mountains to avoid radar detection, headed straight for the target. Fifty miles from Suiho they were overhauled by 35 F9Fs which had taken off 50 minutes later. Eighteen miles from the target the group commenced a climb to 10,000 feet, with one jet squadron going up to 16,000 feet as combat air patrol. Two miles from the target a high–speed approach was begun.

At 1600, precisely on schedule, the first squadron of Panthers dove on the gun positions on the Korean bank, closely followed by the ADs and by the other flak-suppression jets. Release altitude was at 3,000 feet and pull-out at 1,000; within a space of two and one half minutes the attacking aircraft delivered 81 tons of bombs. At the power house which was the main target red flames filled the windows, secondary explosions were reported, and photographs taken by the last ADs to drop showed smoke pouring from the roof. The antiaircraft batteries had opened as the attack began, heavy weapons and automatic fire was moderate and machine gun fire intense, but the defenses were overwhelmed. No plane was lost, and the only Skyraider to suffer serious damage made a successful wheels–up landing at Kimpo. Everyone else was back aboard by dinner time.

As the carrier group departed the attack continued with interservice cooperation of a high order. Beginning at 1610, 79 F–84s and 49 F–80s of Fifth Air Force, which had come up from the south to continue the pummeling, added a further 145 tons of bombs. Downstream, between Suiho and Antung, a total of 84 Sabre jets

gave top cover against enemy MIGs. But while the Antung field is only 35 miles from Suiho, none of these gentlemen put in an appearance, and of 250 reported on the ground by Air Force pilots, two–thirds disappeared into interior Manchuria during the attack, a tactic for which, on the U.N. side at least, no firm explanation was ever devised.

While the attacks at Suiho were in progress the Chosin plants received the attentions of 75 aircraft from the Marine Aircraft Wing, a second group of 90 planes from Task Force 77 hit the Fusen plants along with 52 Air Force F-51s, and 70 carrier aircraft went in on Kyosen. These efforts were followed up the next day by carrier, Air Force, and Marine attacks on all three complexes, and on 26 and 27 June the Air Force returned to Chosin and Fusen. Then the picture taking and the photo interpretation began, but in North Korea and Manchuria the lights had already gone out.

The results appear to have been first-class. Something in the neighborhood of 90 percent of North Korean power production had been disabled; for two weeks there was an almost complete blackout in enemy country; even at year's end a power deficit remained. But if liaison between the Air Force, Navy, and Marines was well nigh perfect, on the upper levels someone had forgotten to pass the word. The British had not been advised of the contemplated attacks, and in Parliament some ructions developed among the opposition.

Admiral Briscoe had requested a detailed breakdown of the strikes, and ten days later his operational intelligence officer provided it. The extent of the naval contribution revealed by this tally was such as to give ComNavFE cause for pride. Total Task Force 77 sorties against the plants on 23 and 24 June exceeded those of Fifth Air Force and Marines together, as did the weight of bombs dropped. On a service basis breakdown, Navy and Marine sorties were of the order of 700, as compared to some 400 by the Air Force, and Navy and Marine bomb tonnage amounted to more than two-thirds the total. These figures, however, are in a sense delusive, for they take no account of the F—86 top cover provided at Suiho, nor of the later Air Force attacks at Chosin and Fusen. Since FEAF had performed the preliminary planning, and since final preparations had been joint, it seems proper to conclude that all hands had done a good job to excellent purpose.

In the course of the summer of 1952 three more large interservice air operations took place. On 11 July 822 Air Force, Marine, and Navy planes, led by 106 from *Bon Homme Richard* and *Princeton*, struck Pyongyang gun positions, supply and billeting areas, and factories. Although weather prevented the carriers from launching more than one strike group and hindered shore-based operations, the demolition of designated targets was extensive, and encouraging reports were received of direct hits on a Communist brass hat air raid shelter. On 20 August a sizable combined Navy-Marine-Air Force effort was conducted against a large west coast supply area, and nine days later the enemy capital was subjected to the largest air attack of the war.

The seven weeks since the first joint strike on Pyongyang had seen renewed movement of troops and guns into the North Korean capital. To get these targets, as well as to provide food for thought in Moscow where Chou En-lai was conferring with the Soviets, another attack was laid on. On 28 August warning leaflets were scattered over Pyongyang, and on the next day 1,080 aircraft descended on the luckless city. Everyone and his cousin got into the act this time, for in addition to aircraft from Fifth Air Force, Task Force 77, and the Marine Aircraft Wing, the British carrier and the ROK Air Force also took part.

Over and above these cooperative efforts, the work of the fast carriers during the summer consisted principally of maximum-effort strikes against targets in eastern North Korea. These, insofar as possible, were directed against objectives which, like the hydroelectric system, had importance on both sides of the North Korean border. In July strikes against the Small Funei complex near Musan, the Smallest grid in North Korea, finished off the power plants within the Navy's zone. Late in the month the Sindok lead and zinc mill, reportedly a considerable exporter to Iron Curtain countries, was three-quarters destroyed, and the magnesite and thermoelectric plants at Kilchu heavily damaged by *Princeton* strike groups.

The course of the war by this time had brought a northward displacement of remaining North Korean

industrial facilities, and a concentration of new development along the Manchurian and Russian borders. In early August Rear Admiral Herbert E. Regan, ComCarDiv 1, had commented on the build-up of new industry near Aoji in the far northeast, and had urged attack upon these targets. One month later, in response to this request, the Joint Chiefs suspended for a single event their rule against air operations within 12 miles of Soviet territory. On 1 September, in the biggest all–Navy strike yet, morning and afternoon deck loads from *Essex*, *Boxer*, and *Princeton* went up to the north, and while the jets worked over oil storage and an iron mine at Musan and targets at Hoeamdong, the attack planes destroyed synthetic oil production facilities at Aoji. Other attacks in the far north followed at the border town of Hoeryong, at the Yalu bridge town of Hyesanjin, and on a munitions factory near Najin. On three days in October task force aircraft teamed with B–29s in strikes against North Korean objectives. By winter most known targets had been eliminated.

Taken in connection with the increasing boldness of enemy fighter pilots, the northward movement of carrier operations raised the prospect of collision. On the west coast, during the summer, aircraft from the British carrier and the American CVE had clashed repeatedly with MIGs; during the west coast strike of 20 August *Princeton* F9Fs had an inconclusive skirmish south of Sinanju; on 10 September a Marine flyer had made history by becoming the first pilot of a piston-engined aircraft to shoot down an enemy jet. On 13 September a two-carrier strike against Hoeryong, though unopposed, produced large numbers of bogeys orbiting 50 miles to the eastward over the Siberian border. On the 26th MIGs were sighted over eastern Korea, and in the first week of October two Corsairs were lost in the course of a series of engagements south of Hungnam.

This situation led to some excitement on 18 November as *Kearsarge* and *Oriskany* were again striking Hoeryong. The force was operating in 41°30´, about 100 miles south of Vladivostok, with the cruiser *Helena* and a destroyer on search and rescue station halfway in to Najin. During the morning *Helena* tracked numerous high–speed radar contacts to the north-ward, which seemed to be flying a barrier patrol under ground control. At 1329 Raid 20, estimated at 16 to 20 aircraft, was approaching from the north, distant 35 miles. This contact or a part of it, estimated at eight aircraft, was also detected by *Oriskany*, and a four-plane division of F9Fs, which had descended to 13,000 feet owing to fuel pump failure in the leader's aircraft, was vectored out with instructions not to engage unless attacked.

Having overshot its mark the patrol was turned back to the southwest while the bogey, in its turn, reversed course to close. At 1336, 45 miles north of the force, Lieutenant E. Royce Williams, leader of the second section, reported seven vapor trails high overhead and identified the aircraft as MIGs. As the jets passed over to the northeast they turned, split, came down below the contrail level, and were lost to sight; ordered upstairs by *Oriskany* controllers, Williams' section of F9Fs reversed course to the northeast and began a full-power climb. Turning again at 26,000 feet, the section leader sighted four aircraft approaching from ahead and to port; as they opened fire he rolled into them in a hard turn, came out to find the trailing MIG in his sights, fired, and saw the adversary smoke and spiral downward.

All seven MIGs had now joined the fray, the two Americans had become separated, and from below a third Panther was climbing to join them. But just as help was arriving Williams' plane was hit: with a MIG on his tail and able to maneuver only by zooming, diving, and popping his brakes, he headed for an undercast ten miles to the southward while his partner, ammunition exhausted, flew wing on the enemy in the hope of scaring him off. Coming out of a turn the pilot from the section below sighted this extraordinary procession and dove toward it, was engaged by another head-on attacker, and after a brief engagement saw a plane going into the water. Far below a flash of silver indicated another target, and he dove, only to find a parachute which he orbited and reported to base.

Williams, by this time, had reached cloud cover. The MIGs had broken off. Return to base was uneventful. But within the force, which was now at general quarters, some tension had apparently developed, for as the section leader brought his cranky plane in over the screen one of the destroyers briefly opened fire on him.

Considering the disparity in aircraft performance and number, and the fact that the Americans allowed themselves to indulge in an uncoordinated melee, the results of the engagement—two MIGs down and one damaged in exchange for damage to one friendly aircraft—were highly gratifying. Control and communications in the force were adjudged good, although with less justification: *Helena*'s attempts to report the approaching raid had been unsuccessful; the effort to fix the parachuting pilot met with no success; two divisions of airborne CAP were not vectored into the fight. For the next hour the force had almost constant radar contacts in the northerly quadrant at ranges down to 40 miles, and at 1510 a slow-speed bogey in the general area of the engagement suggested the presence of a rescue plane. Twice again fighters were vectored out as contacts closed; one sighting was made but the MIGs turned away; by 1625 the screen was clear.

In addition to the strikes against northern industrial areas, some routine attacks on seacoast cities, and a minor continuing interdiction effort, summer and fall of 1952 brought a few operational novelties. In the latter half of July Admiral Soucek took *Philippine Sea* and *Essex* to the Formosa area for air parades over the island and along the China coast, and for some high-altitude photography. In North Korea the expansion of the enemy radar net stimulated efforts by the carrier airmen to locate and demolish these installations. Some experiments were run with guided missiles in the form of war–surplus F6F drones, explosive-laden and guided by television, which were flown against a variety of targets in an inquiring frame of mind. In the west the Yellow Sea carrier took steps to salt up the rice paddies by bombing sluice gates on the Yonan peninsula. In September a new technique of rail interdiction was introduced in which, after a full deckload had beaten up a mile or two of track, a two-plane CAP was employed by day and ship's gunfire by night to inhibit repairs.

Like the earlier interdiction programs, the maximum-effort strikes soon reached the stage of diminishing returns, and with the approach of autumn the activities of Task Force 77 returned gradually to the bombline. No support of ground forces had been provided by the fast carriers in the first six months of 1952. By August, however, an average of 12 sorties a day was being flown in support of X Corps and the ROK I Corps on the eastern front, and with increasing ground action this contribution was to grow. Mid-summer had seen some enemy raids, September brought assaults on U.N. outposts and increased artillery expenditure, and with October came the hardest fighting in more than a year. On the 6th the Chinese commenced a week of heavy pressure in the area west of the Iron Triangle, the next day brought 93,000 rounds of artillery and mortar fire into U.N. positions, and the last half of the month saw bitter action in the hills above Kumwha. With these developments what had originally been undertaken as a training exercise gained operational importance, and by October the effort was averaging 22 sorties a day. With the emphasis on support of troops there came again complaints about inadequate control, and the situation was further obfuscated by the development of the so-called Cherokee Strike.

This operation, the brain child of Commander Seventh Fleet, and so christened in celebration of Admiral Clark's descent from that civilized tribe, was developed to fill the vacuum left by the abandonment of interdiction and the elimination of industrial targets. Having observed exposed U.S. supply dumps, and reasoning that the enemy must be similarly vulnerable, Clark, on 5 October, put his main effort on the destruction of supplies, artillery, and troops behind the enemy lines. Four days later, after arrangements with X and IX Corps, 91 aircraft were launched against troop and supply areas just beyond artillery range. They could not have come at a more confusing time.

Ground force discontent with Air Force support procedures had been simmering since the early days of the Korean conflict. Following a request by General Almond in June 1951 for a reexamination of the system, General Van Fleet had attempted to persuade Fifth Air Force to place fighter-bombers under corps control, and had subsequently asked CincFE to explore the advantages of decentralization of air. With the departure of General Ridgway these problems were inherited by his successor, with the result that on 11 August 1952 there appeared a CincFE discussion of air–ground operations in which, at one and the same time, criticism of the system was described as inadequately justified, current doctrine was upheld as sound, and numerous methods of improving

matters were put forward, including some non–doctrinal experiments in delegation of control after the Marine fashion. To these proposals, as to Van Fleet's earlier request, the reaction of the Air Force was strongly adverse, and the debate was further complicated by the development of the Cherokee Strike, a method of supporting the battleline which differed from Air Force techniques in that arrangements were made directly with corps, from the Navy and Marine system in being pre–briefed and remote from the line of contact, and from both in being uncontrolled. The touchy question, however, was that of direct negotiation with corps, and there followed a minor eruption.

By November, however, agreed procedures had been worked out which pushed these strikes back beyond the bombline and into the category of deep or general support. From late autumn through January the Cherokee Strikes absorbed more than a third of the Seventh Fleet air effort, concentrated in heavy blows against enemy supplies and equipment. A large bomb tonnage was ferried in, many explosions resulted, and as one carrier division commander observed, the strikes "can't help but be doing a lot of damage." Doubtless not, but target selection and damage assessment were difficult, and any verdict as to the results was largely a matter of faith. It was a strange type of warfare in which naval aviation was now engaged. The close support control system could not handle a large effort in proximity to friendly forces; the enemy's antiaircraft strength made deliberate individual attacks costly; interdiction had been tacitly abandoned by its most ardent protagonists; industrial targets were now notable by their absence. For want of something better to do the carrier air groups were hauling explosives in and dumping them in the general neighborhood of the front. Volume had been substituted for accuracy, and the only indisputable dividends were the approval with which the Army greeted the effort, and the morale boost provided the frontline troops by the noise and smoke which rose from the enemy's back yard.

Elsewhere at sea patrolling, minesweeping, and bombardment continued in arduous but monotonous routine. The number of ships damaged by enemy action diminished from 23 in the first half of 1952 to 19 in the second six months. But in August, for the first time since February 1951, a U.S. ship was lost when *Sarsi*, a fleet tug, was mined and sunk at Hungnam, an event followed by discontinuance of the bombardment unit off this marginal target port. Three weeks later the problem of armed drifters was again emphasized when the destroyer *Barton*, steaming in Task Force 77 some 90 miles east of Wonsan, hit one which blew a five-foot hole in her side, killed five, and wounded seven. No further losses to this agency would be sustained, but with war's end the feeling that the floaters were no accident, strong since the first sightings in September 1950, was confirmed. In contrast to frequent reports of loose mines while fighting was in progress, the five months following the armistice produced but one.

One exception to the tedious routine came in September when HMCS *Nootka* captured an enemy "naval vessel," a 25-foot sampan propelled by oarsmen, which had been laying magnetic mines in the swept channel south of Cho Do. Another, which brought together in momentary reunion the gunnery ships, the Amphibious Force, and the aircraft carriers, was a major amphibious demonstration. Conceptually an outgrowth of "Wrangler," and staged off Kojo in mid-October, this affair was the last and biggest of the war, and stemmed from the suggestion by CTF 90, Rear Admiral Francis X. Mclnerney, that routine troop movements between Japan and Korea might be employed for training and deception. With approval of the scheme by General Clark, Commander Seventh Fleet was designated Commander Joint Amphibious Task Force 7, and in mid–September planning was begun. Two alternative assault plans were worked up, one for a landing by two divisions in column and one for an attack by a single RCT. The wide discrepancy in scale complicated the paperwork, and as only the highest echelons knew that a bona fide operation was not intended, the troubles of the planners were real. In little over a month, nevertheless, all was in readiness, and the amphibious ships carrying the 8th Cavalry Regiment sortied from Hokkaido. On 12 October, D minus 3, a rehearsal was carried out at Kangnung, hampered by winds of 25 knots which led to the loss of four LCVPs after broaching on the beach.

While the rehearsal was going on, the Advance Force, similarly handicapped, appeared off Kojo to

sweep and to bombard. One battleship, two heavy cruisers, and a batch of destroyers worked over the landing area; four fast carriers operating in the Sea of Japan provided air strikes, including a remarkable 667 sorties on D minus *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* were both on hand, the former for air spot while the latter, as Hunter-Killer carrier, cruised the area in search of submarines and briefly thought she found one.

By this time the demonstration had become an interservice affair. FEAF and Fifth Air Force stepped up their operations, a mock parachute landing was set up, and on the night of 13–14 October Eighth Army launched a two-battalion attack near Kumwha. By dawn of D-Day, the 15th, more than a hundred ships were off the Kojo beaches, and control procedures were getting a serious test. The aerologists, however, had already failed theirs, for the weather had continued to degenerate: poor visibility and low clouds delayed the bombardment, while winds freshening to 50 knots kicked up high seas. At 1400, nevertheless, seven waves of landing craft were sent in from the transport area to pass the line of departure and then retire, seaward. Owing to the heavy seas no troops were boated; owing to the skill of the coxswains no boats were lost or seriously damaged. But two mine-sweepers had been hit by shore fire and five carrier planes lost to antiaircraft.

So ended what some proclaimed to have been the largest-scale fraud in military history. Again a deception ended with a question as to who had been deceived. No troop movements of magnitude had been detected ashore, although in the weeks that followed some shifts were noted in the KojoWonsan area. What was certain, however, was that most of the participants had been fooled, and when the true nature of the operation became known some were very angry. The feeling that at last the war was getting off dead center had produced a tension and degree of effort that made the let-down in morale the greater, and one carrier commanding officer strongly protested the internal secrecy which had led his pilots to take risks of a sort appropriate to a landing but not to an exercise. Of Kojo, as of earlier and Smaller demonstrations, it seems proper to conclude that an enemy incapable of quick response cannot be very profitably hoaxed.

The Kojo feint had been planned prior to the enemy’s October pressure, on which, indeed, it had little apparent effect. But this Communist ground activity proved both limited and temporary, and the war continued much as before. Since in the circumstances of the fighting in Korea neither side could inflict unacceptable damage upon the other, the locus of decision had long since come to lie elsewhere. At Panmunjom, following a summer of deadlock, the U.N. negotiators had declared the meetings indefinitely recessed. At the United Nations, efforts to break the stalemate were renewed, and the Indian government busied itself with the attempt to provide the Communists with a face-saving solution to their prisoner of war problem. In the United States an election campaign was underway which interacted with the campaign in Korea: in America the Republican candidate undertook to visit the scene of action; in the Far East electioneering seems to have motivated the enemy’s autumn effort. In addition to heavy fighting in the area of the Iron Triangle, September and October brought an increase in incidents around the periphery, in a rash of antiaircraft actions between Chinese gunboats and Navy patrol planes in Formosa Strait, and in the loss of a B–29 to Soviet fighters off Hokkaido. But following election day the pressure decreased rapidly, and the record 93,000 rounds of artillery fired on 7 October had a month later diminished to a mere trickle.

In the United States the elections of November were followed by a change of administration in January. In the next month President Eisenhower "unleashed" Chiang Kai-shek, a measure of very limited effect on the Formosan situation and on the operations of the Formosa Patrol. No similar change took place in Korean policy, which remained one of willing-ness to settle on almost any basis that would not require forced repatriation. But as all other possible concessions had long since been made, deadlock continued, and again it was made clear that while one side can start a war it takes two to make a bargain. Progress toward such a bargain remained impossible pending another change in administration, which took place on 5 March 1953 with the death of Joseph Stalin.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Chapter 12. Two More Years
3. March-July 1953: Progress, Crisis, Conclusion

Not since the war with Tripoli, a century and a half before, when year after passing year Dale and Morris and Preble maneuvered their squadrons off that other distant shore, blockading and bombarding an enemy they could not reach, had Americans fought a war like this. And as 1953 began, and stalemate still continued, it seemed increasingly possible that this war would outlast that one. In February, however, General Clark moved to break the jam on the repatriation question by proposing an immediate exchange of sick and wounded personnel. The answer was delayed, doubtless owing to difficulties in Moscow concerning the devolution of power, and the interval between letter and reply was marked by heavier than usual enemy pressure. But on 28 March an answer was received which both accepted the proposal and indicated a disposition to proceed further.

The enemy's March doings produced an increasing effort in troop support, both by the West Coast Carrier Element and by Task Force 77. There were, of course, diversions: *Oriskany* in mid–March put on a big effort against a mining complex up-country from Songjin; on the night of the 27th three volunteer Corsair pilots made a moonlight attack on the Hamhung highway bridge, one of the most heavily defended targets in Korea, and dropped the center span before the enemy could open fire; the Wonsan batteries, the city of Songjin, some residual power plant targets, and a number of militarized villages also received attention. Pilot morale was boosted by a strike on a North Korean rest camp, which reportedly accommodated heroes of the Communist forces credited with shooting down U.N. planes, and by the accomplishment of two night hecklers who chased two trains into opposite ends of a short and single-tracked tunnel, to be rewarded by gratifying amounts of steam from both entrances. A pleasant custom, instituted early in the year, involved the rotation of one carrier at a time to Hong Kong, to provide both a show of force to the southward and a new liberty port. Late in April the force celebrated Boy–San Day, on which the airplane drivers picked their own targets without interference from higher authority.

Nevertheless the emphasis was on the bombline. In March almost half the offensive sorties were assigned to Cherokee Strikes and troop support, and while this figure dropped in early April it subsequently rose again. Repetition of Cherokee Strikes against the same area over a period of days was now the custom, a measure felt both to limit the effectiveness of antiaircraft and to result in greater destruction of targets. As always, damage assessment remained the problem, but POWs reported results in excess of the pilots' estimates and Eighth Army officers were high in their praise.

For the Amphibious Force the early months of 1953 were occupied by routine training exercises, minor troop lifts, and logistic support work. For the gunnery ships, however, as for the soldiers in the line, March and April brought increased action. The number of mines encountered rose radically, from 14 in March to 31 in April, and as usual most were floaters. Increased artillery fire directed against the minesweepers required special attention to the employment and positioning of gunfire support ships. Interdiction of train traffic along the eastern shore continued. Off the bombline, destroyers and heavy ships continued to keep the enemy down and, through their ability to fire upon him from the rear, forced him to keep his targets defiladed both from artillery and from the sea. But the principal problem of the spring months was the need to keep the duty heavy cruiser or battleship on notice at all times for immediate movement to Wonsan.

There pressure against the harbor islands continued to increase. In December a CincPacFleet appreciation had foreseen a Communist attempt to recapture these positions, and this prospect was emphasized by the events of early spring. The record 523 rounds which fell upon the islands in March doubled in April, while another 553

were aimed at U.N. ships. The volume did not compare with the Battle of the Buzz Saw, but accuracy was up: from March through May five destroyers and the cruisers *Los Angeles* and *Bremerton* were hit, and casualties were incurred both by their crews and by the island garrisons.

In the west the situation was similar. The two rounds fired at Cho Do and Sok To in February by the Wolsa-ri and Amgak batteries, and the 16 rounds of March, increased in April to 440, while ships of the blockading force observed more work in progress on the Wolsa-ri cliff positions. Small-caliber counterbattery fire remained of slight effect; a strike from *Glory* and a series of Air Force sorties accomplished little more; and a moonlight attempt by the frigate *Cardigan Bay* to eliminate the guns after closing to within 1,000 yards of the shore proved unsuccessful.

These events brought further reconsideration of the island problem. At Wonsan the commanding officer of *Saint Paul* recommended an invasion of Hodo Pando, to eliminate the threat of gunfire from the north. At Cho Do the commanding officer of *Cardigan Bay*, fearing that the Wolsa-ri batteries might force abandonment of the anchorage and relocation of the island's radar station, suggested a raid to seize the peninsula for 24 hours while guns were spiked and gun positions destroyed. Neither suggestion was approved by higher authority, but taken in conjunction with a proposal by CTF 95 to abandon Yang Do in the northeast, on the ground that the defensive investment was out of proportion to the profit from intelligence activities, they indicate the imminence of a crisis. But for whatever reasons the crisis never quite came.

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On the west coast, April bombardments by the British cruisers *Newcastle* and *Birmingham* knocked down chunks of the Wolsa-ri cliffs and silenced the guns for a month, but the Amgak batteries overlooking Sok To continued lively. To counter this pressure 90-millimeter guns were brought in and emplaced on Sok To and on Cho Do, and in late May *New Jersey* was sailed around from the east coast to bombard. At Wonsan Communist artillery remained active, and with the coming of an enemy ground offensive in June the bombardment ships found themselves extremely busy. Between the bombline and Wonsan harbor ruts were worn in the sea, as the heavy ships steamed back and forth in response to emergency calls. Gun strikes by *New Jersey* and *Bremerton* in May were followed up in June by *Saint Paul* and *Manchester*; and although for a time it seemed that the destroyers might be driven out, the position was maintained. On both coasts, at the end of June, enemy harassment of the island footholds markedly declined.

For the islands, in any event, the days of U.N. occupation were numbered by the approaching armistice. The resumption of plenary sessions on 26 April, which followed the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners and ended a recess of 199 days, ushered in a period of progress which, in comparison with what preceded, could only be described as extremely rapid. By 8 June the thorny question of repatriation had been settled and hopes again rose high.

Since the armistice would prohibit further removal of the inhabitants of the northern islands, CincFE on 12 June directed the outloading of all civilians and all excess supplies from the Wonsan islands and from Yang Do. On the west coast, following the updating of plans, the evacuation of partisan forces, their dependents, and other refugees from islands north of the parallel was begun. In the east the dimensions of the problem were Small, but in the Yellow Sea this last tragic displacement brought the departure, after their cattle had been slaughtered and their dwellings razed, of 19,425 persons from the islands above the demarcation line.

Although the line mapped and agreed to in November 1951 remained acceptable to the United Nations Command, the Communists insisted on renegotiation. Reasons for this attitude had for some time been evident in continued enemy troop and vehicle movement and in ostentatious stockpiling of supplies, and on 10 June anticipations were fulfilled as a heavy attack was pushed down the valley of the upper Pukhan against the ROK II Corps. The local collapse which followed required a considerable reshuffling of units on the part of Lieutenant General Maxwell D. Taylor, USA, who in February had relieved General Van Fleet at Eighth Army. But by the

18th the front had been stabilized, at the cost of a few miles of inhospitable terrain above the Hwachon Reservoir and of a little ground on the east coast. As the Chinese impetus declined hopes rose again, only to be dashed by an entirely unexpected development.

At Panmunjom General Harrison and his aides had for months been walking the knife edge between Communist obduracy and South Korean intransigence. Chinese and North Korean disinclination to admit reluctance on the part of their nationals to return to the Communist paradise found its counterpart in the unwillingness of the Rhee government to accept any armistice at all and so forego the last chance of forcible Korean unification. The signing on 8 June of the final agreement on repatriation had been followed by threats and fulminations from the ROK government, and by a period of tension in its relations with the U.N. Command.

In this crisis President Rhee found himself in a strong position. Not only did he control the territory of South Korea, the theater of U.N. operations, but he also controlled, in the ROK Army, the largest single contingent of anti–Communist forces, well–trained, well–equipped, 15 divisions strong, and manning two-thirds of the battleline. Given his fierce opposition to an armistice, the possibility that he might order these forces to attack, independently and in defiance of the U.N. Command, raised the specter of a three–cornered conflict within the peninsula, and of a situation of almost unimaginable complexity.

This he did not do, but on 18 June, without warning and despite prior assurances, the Korean government engineered a mass escape of upwards of 25,000 anti-Communist prisoners, in the apparent hope of causing a Communist break-off of negotiations. The result was an interruption of plenary sessions at Panmunjom, an embarrassing period of Communist harangues, uncertainty as to the security of U.N. forces in Korea, and apprehension as to what might happen next. Again, as on the outbreak of war three summers before, more strength was urgently needed. Again help came by sea.

To the normal commitments of Task Force 90, spring had added a variety of tasks. In April the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners had been carried out; in May two landing exercises had been held, beach surveys continued, preparations for island evacuation begun, and a lift of LCVPs made to the French in Indo-China, where another war was in progress and where, a year later, another demarcation line would be drawn. These responsibilities were increased in June as the result of floods in southern Japan, which imposed requirements for evacuation, relief, and for shipping to replace disrupted land communications. At the same time the apparent imminence of the armistice made it necessary to be ready on short notice to repatriate large numbers of enemy prisoners.

In preparation for the movement of almost 100,000 enemy personnel, a task group of 2 APAs, 6 AKAs, 20 LSTs, and minor units had been assembled, although at the cost of delaying the scheduled return of a number to the United States. On 12 June Task Force 90 was alerted for this operation, all units were placed on 24–hour notice, and ships were ordered to Pusan for installation of wood and wire cribbing which would permit the movement of fractious prisoners in manageable groups. Eleven LSTs and one AKA had been fitted with these cribs when there arose the wholly new requirement of a major emergency troop movement.

On 21 June, three days after the ROK release of prisoners, CincFE ordered the immediate airlift of the 187th Airborne RCT to Korea; two days later 2,100 soldiers and 1,500 tons of gear had been flown in by the Air Force and three LSTs and two LSMs were bringing in the heavy equipment. On the 26th orders were received to lift the equipment of one RCT of the 24th Infantry Division from Japan to Korea; shortly CincFE alerted the entire division for movement by air and sea; by 2 July some 4,000 troops had been flown across, other units had been added to the planned movement, and the emphasis had shifted from air to surface transport. In anticipation of instructions to redeploy the division, Rear Admiral Walter E. Moore, CTF 90, now ordered the removal of security cribs from his amphibious shipping; on 3 July, following receipt of orders, he dispatched three task units to Japanese embarkation ports.

These operations coincided with the centenary of a memorable event, for it was in July 1853 that

Commodore Perry had entered Tokyo Bay to attempt the opening of Japan. For the Black Ships Festival, staged by the Japanese in celebration of the anniversary, Task Force 90 dispatched an AKA to Shimoda, long the residence of Townsend Harris, first American consul in Japan, and an APD to Kurihama, where Perry first set foot on Japanese soil. But even this limited representation was hard to spare, for the 14th of July, the centenary of Perry's reception at Kurihama by the Prince of Idzu and the Prince of Iwami, found his descendants in the gray ships of the Amphibious Force working under heavy pressure.

The movement of the 24th Division, so suddenly called for, required not only the diversion of all available amphibious shipping but the requisitioning of LSTs and cargo ships from MSTS; numerous modifications to CincFE's plan had brought confusion and a communications overload; weather and the lack of adequate harbor facilities forced some extemporization in loading; at one port difficulties with Japanese customs officials bizarrely delayed embarkation. By 9 July, nevertheless, one RCT was in Korea and the others were loading, when suddenly the situation was complicated by a whole new series of directives.

The double requirements of the Korean crisis and of the impending armistice, with its prohibition of further reinforcement, now produced an eruption of orders from Supreme Headquarters. On 13 July CTF 90 was instructed to transport the Army's 2nd Amphibious Support Brigade, an amphibious tank battalion, and elements of Naval Beach Group I from Japan to Korea. Two days later, as embarkation of these units was beginning, came orders for the movement of a regiment from Pusan to Koje Do. On the 16th, as this lift was commenced, as the last elements of the 24th Division were sailing for Korea, and as loading of other units was continuing in Japan, transfer of a second regiment from Koje up the coast to Sokcho was ordered. On the 17th there came an emergency call to move a battalion from Cheju Do to Inchon, and on the next day, to complete this planner's nightmare, there arose the possibility of further redeployment of elements of the 24th Division.

One day before the anniversary of Perry's landing, and while these hasty maritime movements were in progress, the Chinese attacked again, in greater strength than in the month before. Whether this second blow had been long planned, and coordinated with peace table procrastination, or whether it was an afterthought intended to chastise a belligerent Syngman Rhee remained obscure. Again the blow fell on ROK forces, this time in the area south of Kumsong and just west of the June breakthrough, where four divisions were thrown against the junction of IX Corps and the ROK II Corps. Again there came collapse, followed by the development of a fluid situation and accompanied by pressure on the east coast strip. In response to the new emergency General Taylor moved two American divisions into the gap and brought reinforcements forward from Pusan; by 17 July U.N. forces were counterattacking; by the 20th some lost ground had been regained and a new line established which would be held until the armistice. Again some miles of mountain territory had been given up, again Chinese casualties were thought to have been extremely heavy. But the weight of the attack and the temporary disorder which ensued had brought a final period of frantic activity on land, at sea, and in the air.

Fire support off the eastern shore had been stepped up in early June when Communist seizure of Anchor Hill, a key ROK position south of Kosong, ushered in a period of heavy fighting. Two destroyers and the heavy cruiser *Saint Paul* were busily at work, and *New Jersey* was sent in to provide, for the first time since February, 16-inch gunfire at the bomb-line. Although the war against the railroad continued, as did the operations at Wonsan, the center of action in the final weeks was at the battle–line, where one destroyer remained permanently on station, backed up for 13 days by *New Jersey*, and at other times by *Manchester*, *Bremerton*, or *Saint Paul*, Ammunition expenditure off the bombline in July totalled more than 6,000 rounds.

So, as the end approached, the gunnery forces on the eastern shore were back where they had been at the beginning, and the task that fell upon Rear Admiral Clarence E. Olsen, CTF 95 for the last five months of the war, was the task that had faced Admiral Higgins. The emphasis on interdiction of supply and transportation, strong during the period of stalemate, had given way at the last to the requirement of again supporting ROK forces on the coastal road.

For the naval aviators, as well, a cycle had been completed, and war's end found them back at the job that had once confronted *Valley Forge* and *Triumph*. Again the enemy was attacking; again the carriers, now four *Essex*-class ships plus a light unit in the Yellow Sea, were supporting the ground armies under the control of JOC. Some differences had indeed come with the passage of time: representation at JOC had been institutionalized and communications improved; movement from coast to coast and retirement for replenishment had long since been given up; the risks of air and submarine attack had been accepted, the advantages of mobility and surprise forgone, and the force, with its replenishment ships, was operating as a permanent air base in 39°N 129°E.

Upon this air base, upon its flying personnel, and upon the Logistic Support Force, the events of the final weeks imposed severe demands. Early in June Eighth Army called for 48 close support sorties a day, and for a large additional effort in Cherokee Strikes. On the 6th orders were received to put the entire piston-engined effort into the support of ground forces, while dividing the jets between Cherokee Strikes, road sweeps, and reconnaissance. Late in the month the lull between Communist attacks brought a limited revival of interdiction, but on 14 July Commander Seventh Fleet put all propeller planes back into support of the armies. In the last five days three very large raids were made against seven enemy airfields in the eastern half of North Korea.

With this final period of emergency there developed the most intense flight operations of the war. On 11 June, the day after the opening of the first Communist offensive, *Princeton* joined *Philippine Sea* and *Boxer* on the line, and two days later *Lake Champlain*, fresh from the Atlantic Fleet, reached the operating area. Four-carrier operations were continued through the 19th, and three carriers were kept on station until the 27th. On 14 July, with the second enemy breakthrough, a third carrier joined the force, and on the 17th the fourth, and so it continued until the end of the war.

Flight operations were hindered by the usual weather difficulties of the Korean summer. In the interior mountains the monsoonal air masses condensed into heavy fog and rain; at sea, fog and low overcast prevailed. For Task Force 77 the period was marked by a continuous search for clear areas, and by the conduct of full-scale operations with ceilings down to 100 feet and visibility of only a mile and a half. Despite this remarkable performance a large proportion of scheduled sorties was weathered out; despite these cancellations new marks for carrier operations were repeatedly set. The June record of 554 sorties flown on the 13th went by the board in July, with 592, 600, and 746 on three successive days. Total sorties rose steadily from 4,343 in May to 6,423 in July; close support sorties went up from 256 to 1,690; aircraft ordnance delivery rose from 2,835 tons in May to 4,606 in the final month.

So massive an offensive called for hard work from all hands, and for an heroic effort on the part of the Logistic Support Force. On 9 June fueling days were abolished, and from that date nightly replenishment, carried out in a mixture of fog and darkness that often required the use of towing spars and searchlights, continued to the end of hostilities. Owing to the coming of the jet airplane and to the increased bomb-carrying capacity of carrier attack planes, the requirements far exceeded anything accomplished or even contemplated in World War II. The increased expenditure of ordnance strained the capabilities of the ammunition ships; the consumption of aviation gasoline, which for a time reached 9,000 barrels a day, forced the recall of an oiler from other scheduled operations. Yet somehow all needs were met.

On men and machinery alike the strain of these final weeks began to tell, until as time went on bad weather came to seem almost a godsend. For the aviators the working day was a long one: good weather or bad, flying or not, they were on the alert and under strain; when the weather was operational the average jet pilot spent some four hours flying and another five in preparation, while propeller-plane pilots were airborne almost seven hours a day. When twilight brought an end to the long flight schedule it was time to go alongside the waiting replenishment ships, pass lines and hoses, and fuel and load far into the night. Here the immediate impact was on the ships' companies, who after arduous days had to manhandle and stow large quantities of stores and ammunition, but the pilots suffered too, their sleep disturbed by the clanking of handling machinery on the hangar

deck.

Under such pressure, maintenance suffered and gear began to fail. Electronic equipment became temperamental, *Lake Champlain* experienced breakdown of both catapults, *Princeton* was out for a few days with shaft vibrations, and *Philippine Sea* had similar troubles. These casualties to her sister ships made it necessary to hold *Boxer* on the line long after her scheduled date of departure, with the result that on 23 July she set a new fleet record with her 61,000th landing.

In this situation something had to give, and what gave was a plan for intensified night work which had been developed in May. At long last it had seemed possible to put air operations on a 24-hour basis, by transferring all night-configurated aircraft to *Princeton* and providing her with a Small screen for independent night operations. But the May casualty to her shafts forced postponement of the scheme, and the subsequent need for maximum effort prevented the assignment of a carrier to night work only. So heavy, indeed, was the daytime schedule, that ordinary night heckling was first diminished and then discontinued, and the hours of darkness were conceded to the enemy.

Nevertheless night brought one *Triumph*. Beginning in April the Communists had cast further doubt upon the virtues of modern design by the employment of fabric-covered training planes—Po-2 biplanes, or Yak-18 monoplanes—in a series of night air raids against the Inchon-Kimpo-Seoul area. Employed either singly or in masses of a half-dozen or so, these ancient 80-knot floaters, too low for antiaircraft fire and too slow for jet interceptors, for two months flew with impunity through the interstices of the air defense organization, damaging parked aircraft, burning a fuel dump, shaking up the residences of the President of Korea and of the gentlemen of the press, and causing generalized confusion and frustration. But in June a detachment of Corsair night fighters was sent in from the fleet, and within a month Lieutenant Guy P. Bordelon had disposed of five of the intruders, to become not only the first ace in this particular category but the Navy's only ace of the Korean War.

The enemy offensive of June and July gave the close support control system its first real test since the beginning of the stalemate. As before, the system of pre-planning strikes proved useless in emergency; as before, requests for help could not be promptly answered. Although communications capacity far exceeded that of 1950, this improvement was more than offset by the vastly increased sortie capability: the close support request net clogged almost at once, and despite resort to extemporized and non-doctrinal direct communications, strikes followed requests by as much as 17 hours. Again, as in the summer of 1950, the control system collapsed as JOC duty officers, remote from the situation but wishing to help, rammed aircraft in large numbers into the threatened sectors. Once more the lack of forward air controllers below the regimental level put the main responsibility on the Mosquitos which, in the fluid situation, once more demonstrated their inability to keep track of friendly positions and important targets. In-evitably, therefore, rather than hitting troops in the open and on the move, close support and Cherokee Strikes attacked supply and billeting areas, gun positions, and trenches, and much waste ensued through jettisoning of ordnance.

These difficulties, experienced for the first time by the personnel involved, although not for the first time in Korea, were compounded by the adverse weather. Large-scale Cherokee operations, sufficiently problematical in themselves, were forced by reduced visibility to operate under ground radar control. In June 577 sorties, some 30 percent of Task Force 77's support effort, were so employed, bombing in level flight from altitudes between 10,000 and 15,000 feet, and by July this was the rule rather than the exception. In their turn the radar facilities became overloaded, and many flights had to be diverted to secondary targets, or directed to dump their loads somewhere north of the bombline.

This situation, which would have scandalized the explosive Ewen, surprisingly seems to have brought little complaint from Navy commanders. A year on interdiction had been followed by a time of only token close support, and this, taken with the rotation of carrier and air group personnel, had permitted interests to change and skills to wither. With strike results unavailable or unassessable, the magnitude of the effort tended to be

emphasized, and maximum support of Eighth Army became a trucking operation in which, as often before in air warfare, statistics of sorties flown and ordnance dropped acted to conceal the central question of whether the drops hit anything worthwhile.

Only the Marines still chafed under a system, incapable of effective operation in the fluid situations where it was most necessary, whose failures were then used to support the doctrinal position that close support was an uneconomic use of air strength. But this chafing was largely theoretical. No very heavy attacks were thrown against the division which, with the bulk of its support supplied by the Marine Aircraft Wing and controlled at battalion level, found itself in a reasonably satisfactory situation, and good use was made of the final months in working out techniques for searchlight-directed night close air support.

For the Wing, too, the situation was improved. Relations between the Marine liaison officers and their Air Force colleagues at JOC had become exceptionally harmonious, and in February the Commanding General had at last regained operational control of his own squadrons. But the Marines' final views on the Korean situation made no bones about the inadequacy of prevailing concepts, the inferior quality of close support rendered the armies, and the unwieldy, inflexible, and unsatisfactory methods of control which resulted from over-centralization, inadequate communications, and the lack of forward ground controllers. Still, the Marine Aircraft Wing had done its best, and if it had been unable to make experience prevail over theory, it had solid accomplishments to show. Throughout the war the Army had demonstrated its great appreciation of such Marine support as it could get; Marine night fighters had proven in certain respects superior to all others in the theater; a Marine pilot on exchange duty with the Air Force had become a jet ace; following the armistice the MAG 12 softball team became the champions of the Fifth Air Force and subsequently, disguised in Air Force uniforms, went onward and upward to become FEAF champions in September.

So, with the emergencies of the final weeks, the war had come full circle, and the ships and aircraft of Naval Forces Far East were back at the tasks of 1950. Within the naval service at large another cycle was also ending. In the expansion of the past three years, priority had been given the operating forces; the shore establishment had remained undermanned, and ComNavFE had long been hoping for an increased allowance of personnel. But here the truth expounded by Clausewitz, that war is but the extension of politics, was once again brought home. As the Chinese were mounting their last offensives, proposals were being made in Congress for reduction of the armed forces, and a May dispatch from CNO had directed a 10 percent reduction in complement for shore activities.

But at last the end was at hand. On 19 July, with the halting of their final offensive, the Communists again evinced a willingness for progress, and on the morning of the 27th the armistice was signed to take effect that evening. The final line of contact ran from west of the Imjin River northeastward through the Iron Triangle, east to the headwaters of the Soyang River, and thence northerly to the coast below Kosong. On both shores, according to the agreement, islands beyond the demarcation line were to be evacuated by the U.N., with the exception of Paengnyong Do and the others of the Sir James Hall Group, and of Yonpyong Do and U Do off the mouth of Haeju Man.

For Task Force 77 the final day involved strikes on northern airfields; at Wonsan *Bremerton* and *Saint Paul* fired the last missions; the Amphibious Force busied itself in preparation for the repatriation of prisoners. At 2200, as the troops came out of their holes across the Korean peninsula, the ships in Wonsan harbor turned on their lights. On the harbor islands, on Yang Do and Nan Do in the east, and on Cho Do and Sok To in the west, the garrisons began to demolish their installations and pack their bags. Three years, one month, and two days after the North Korean People’s Army had burst south across the parallel the war was over. Aggression had been repelled; Korea, like the rest of the world, remained divided.

If armistice there was, it was an uncertain one. Communist violation of provisions regarding reinforcement commenced almost at once; beyond the demarcation line the Neutral Nations Supervisory

Committee was frustrated in its activities; men's lives were still at hazard. Up by the Yalu on the last day of action an Air Force fighter pilot had destroyed a twin-engined transport. The aircraft turned out to have been Russian; the event shortly produced a diplomatic protest, and still more quickly a reaction in another sphere. At 0615 on the 29th an Air Force RB–50, flying an easterly heading over the Sea of Japan, was shot down by Soviet MIGs some 30 miles south of Cape Povorotnyy. All but one of the crew parachuted into the sea, where during the afternoon several were sighted by low–altitude search planes, as were a number of Soviet ships and aircraft. In the afternoon Navy assistance was requested, and at 1745 Task Force 77 launched 13 aircraft to search to the northeast. At 1900 rescue ships were called for and a force composed of *Bremerton* and five destroyers headed north at speed. At 0300, as this group was approaching the area where survivors had been sighted, two night fighters were sent up from the carriers, to be followed by other aircraft throughout the day. Spread out in scouting line and with a helicopter on each flank, *Bremerton* and the destroyers swept the waters off the Russian doorstep throughout the 30th, covering an area of 3,300 square miles. But despite all efforts only a single survivor could be found.

So ended in a shaky truce America's first 20th-century war for limited objectives. To some in the armed services, Army, Navy, and Air Force alike, this ending, with little permanently resolved, was less than satisfactory. Something seemed to have been forgone when truce negotiations with a beaten enemy had been commenced; the repeated concessions at Panmunjom had appeared unnecessary; and while none, perhaps, could satisfactorily define the victory he would have liked to gain, the Communist employment of negotiations as a shield for reinforcement and a forum for vituperation seemed infinitely repugnant.

But for this too there was a precedent. To the first John Rodgers, the peace of 1805 which ended the war with Tripoli was so distasteful that he offered to ransom the prisoners with funds raised from the officers of the squadron, if only the war could go on. Yet it may be that such an attitude, whether in Korea or in Tripoli, reflects an excessive emphasis upon the paper provisions of a settlement and an underestimation of the more substantial factors which govern the relations among nations. Unsatisfactory the Treaty of 1805 may well have been, but throughout the 19th century the United States maintained, in its Mediterranean Squadron, a body of armed force appropriate to the situation, and little more was heard from the Bashaw of Tripoli.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

A Note on Source Materials

THIS ACCOUNT of the Korean War is based largely on official records of the U.S. Navy, supplemented by those of the other armed forces and by published material. The most important sources are discussed below; there then follows a listing by chapter and section of items of particular relevance to any given phase of the campaign.

By all odds the most important single source for the history of Naval Operations in Korea is the series of six Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, "Interim Evaluation Reports," the product of an unprecedented effort in large-scale concurrent evaluation of Naval Operations. This project was conceived by Rear Admiral Ralph A. Ofstie in August, 1950; recruitment of personnel had commenced by early September, while U.N. forces were still struggling to hold the Pusan perimeter; the evaluation group was officially constituted by an order of 20 September from the Chief of Naval Operations to the Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet; by mid-October the group was at work in the Western Pacific under the direction of Rear Admiral Lucian A. Moebus.

Admiral Sherman's letter had directed CincPacFleet to conduct a continuing evaluation of combat techniques, weapons employment, and logistics; to submit conclusions and recommendations for current training and Operations or for desirable new developments; and to prepare an analysis and record of Naval and Marine combat Operations. More specifically, the evaluation group was directed to concern itself with all types of air Operations, antisubmarine warfare, blockade and escort work, gunfire support, amphibious Operations, joint aspects of ground warfare, and logistic matters.

This was a large order. Interpreting this directive, Admiral Moebus' group set itself the task of recording in detail the happenings within the various operational and administrative commands, of identifying the various difficulties and problems as well as the successes which developed, and of undertaking detailed staff studies of functional components of the Navy and of naval weapons systems with a view to recommendations for improvement. The first result of its efforts, "Interim Evaluation Report No. 1," covering the period from 25 June to 15 November 1950, was completed in early 1951, and was described by Admiral Moebus as "awesome in size." So it was, extending to 3,292 pages, with 928 pages of project studies on various forms of naval action supported by more than twice that amount of narrative annexes from both operational and administrative commands. The results were doubly fortunate: without the prodding of the evaluation group it seems certain that much of the record of the early days of crisis would have never been set down; as a result of the wide net cast by the CNO directive, much material was included for which the normal naval reporting system makes no provision. Special note, in this connection, should be taken of the annexes to the first Report which deal with the Operations of Commander Air Force Pacific Fleet, Commander Service Force Pacific Fleet, Commander Western Sea Frontier, the various Pacific MSTS offices, and the Marine Corps administrative commands, without which the narrative of the assembly and movement of force, so central to the entire campaign, would be almost impossible to develop.

The second Evaluation Report, covering the period from 16 November 1950 to 30 April 1951, was also sizable, but the format was considerably changed. Here the chronological narratives of the various commands have disappeared, to be replaced by extensive excerpts from action reports and from various special studies (notably of close air support and interdiction) by sundry groups and boards within the several services. By this expedient the work was reduced to 1,874 pages. By the time of the third Report, routine had been well established, procedures had been institutionalized, and from this time on the product, while still of first importance, becomes less interesting to the historian. But then, of course, so does the war. The end product of the

enterprise, six Reports totalling almost 10,000 pages, remains a mine of information, preserving much that would otherwise be lost or inaccessible. As perhaps the only individual to have read the entire work, I owe a personal debt of gratitude to Admiral Moebus and his colleagues.

It might be thought that so sizable a compendium would prove a sufficient source for the history of the war. But since, except in the appendices to the first Report, the approach is analytical rather than narrative, resort is necessary for the chronology of day-today activity to the Operation Plans, Operation Orders, Command Reports, Action Reports, and War Diaries at all levels from CincFE and Commander Naval Forces Far East down to the single ship or squadron. These items, stored in the custody of the Director of Naval History, total something over 50 file-cabinet drawers.

This material suffers from two principal weaknesses. Owing to the pressure of Operations on the undermanned ships and staffs, the record of the crucial early months is often scanty. Owing to the nature of the Navy's reporting system, these reports are too frequently arid and uninformative. This reporting system, in Korea as in World War II, called for the submission by all operating commands of a War Diary, a running account of day-today movements, supplemented after battle by an Action Report. But Korea was a War Diary war: there were no important naval engagements, and except for the landings and evacuations of the first six months, no large set-piece Operations. In such a situation the instructions for preparation of the War Diary left much to the initiative of the individual commander, and while some rose to the situation, expanding and contracting their Diaries with the varying tempo of action, many did not. And the American tendency toward the depersonalized report (or, alternatively, the overwritten press release) leaves the historian to infer the atmosphere of any given period from a simple record of movements, orders, and ammunition expenditures. The sense of urgency, the rising hopes, the dashed anticipations of war rarely appear.

In this our British cousins appear to have the advantage of us, especially as regards the reports of commanders of task group level and above. In the Second World War no American reports from commanders of whatever service provide a satisfactory equivalent to those dispatches of British commanders published in the *London Gazette*. Similarly in Korea, the Reports of Proceedings by the Flag Officer Second in Command Far Eastern Station (Commander Task Group 95.1) are in many respects the most informative command reports of the war. This was noted by Admiral Dyer who, while commanding Task Force 95, forwarded FOSICFES' "Report of Proceedings" for September 1950–November 1951 with the suggestion that U.S. Navy procedures might be modified to approximate the British. The historian can but reiterate this recommendation.

The limited coverage of the early months, while wholly understandable, also presents problems. At the level of command reports, nothing was forthcoming from the hard-pressed staff of Commander Naval Forces Far East until nine months of warfare had gone by. Information on the course of events in Tokyo in July and August is limited to a scanty annex to the first CincPacFleet Evaluation Report. By March 1951, however, it proved possible to produce a report covering the previous December; this was followed by reports for the early months of 1951, and from May of that year to the end of the war regular monthly reports are available. But July and August 1950 remain unrecorded, while the report covering the crucial months of September through November 1950 was not prepared until 1954. These ComNavFE "Command and Historical Reports," on the order of 70 to 80 pages each, provide summaries of the month's air and surface Operations digested from Action Reports and War Diaries, together with comments on personnel, logistics, aerology, communications, shore activities, and medical matters. Though rather cut and dried in nature, they are nonetheless useful for chronology and statistical information.

For Seventh Fleet, the principal command afloat, the story is much the same. Throughout the period of Admiral Struble's command, the staff was undermanned and overworked, and although by July 1951 Action Reports had been submitted for Inchon, Wonsan, and for the period of the evacuation of northeastern Korea, one could wish for more. For the latter part of the war the reports of Admirals Martin and Clark, which summarize the

Operations carried out under their command, are generally adequate.

On the next level down things were not quite so difficult. Since the Operations of the Amphibious Force Far East were necessarily intermittent, time was available between events to write the story down. One useful result was the detailed historical narrative of events from 25 June 1950 to 1 January 1951, in ComPhibGru I's "Report of Operations," included as Appendix AA to CincPacFleet "Interim Evaluation Report No. 1." The War Diary of Task Force 95, the Blockading and Escort Force, although of variable quality, is important for the period from late 1950 through into 1952.

But the early period is the bad period, for the historian as for those who were on the job. Most fortunately, therefore, the Carrier and Cruiser Division Commanders, whose work was so important in the first weeks, kept reasonably full and complete War Diaries, and in addition two notable documents were produced in widely different and complementary spheres.

The first of these is Commander Carrier Division I (Rear Admiral E. C. Ewen), "Report of Task Force 77 Operations During the Korean Campaign (25 June 1950 to 19 January 1951)." This report of 616 pages (also available as Appendix R (Vol. 13) of CincPacFleet's "Interim Evaluation Report No. 1") contains a narrative of Operations, a detailed analysis of the close air support situation as seen from the sea, a discussion of communications problems, and 303 pages of appendices which reproduce dispatches, bombline maps, orders, memoranda, and reports for the entire period, few of which are easily available elsewhere.

The second document of particular importance is the War Diary of the Republic of Korea Navy (Task Group 96.7/95.7), which provides a careful and detailed narrative of the campaign as viewed from Pusan and Chinhae. Although primarily important as the single source of information on the ROK Navy and its inshore Operations, this War Diary is also a unique repository of information on the organization of naval support of the perimeter, the arrival of ground forces, logistic arrangements, intelligence of enemy movements, and such matters.

Over and above the periodic reports of participating units, some other naval records have proven useful. The Office of Naval History has a considerable body of miscellaneous material from the files of the Chief of Naval Operations and of Commander Naval Forces Far East, which includes occasional material of importance. The personal papers of Admiral Joy and of Admiral Ofstie, deposited in the Office of Naval History, contain some useful items. Various summaries and statistics can be found in the OpNav publication "Combat Activity of Naval Aviation," which appeared monthly from October 1950 to June 1951, and quarterly thereafter. There are some scattered articles of interest in the monthly *Review* of the Office of Naval Intelligence.

The principal lacuna in the naval sources, and one which is reflected in the narrative, concerns the control and direction of the naval campaign. For Korea, as for the Second World War, information on such evanescent matters as the availability of intelligence, estimates of the situation, concepts of employment of own forces, and relations with the other services and with allies, must be sought in the dispatch traffic between the flag officers involved. But this remains an unexplored field. Although the availability of all pertinent naval sources was a condition of my undertaking this history, I have been unable to gain access to this material.

Doubtless it has never been possible to write naval history in isolation; certainly this is the case for the Korean War, where the various arms of the defense establishment were so intimately and continuously associated. Equally, however, the problem of unified history is a difficult one, and the attempt to produce a "Report from the Secretary of Defense to the President of the United States on Operations in Korea during the period 25 June 1950 to 8 July 1951," ultimately bogged down. This effort, nevertheless, did give rise to a "Secretary of Defense Committee Final Draft," a mimeographed document of 265 pages containing a large amount of usefully summarized information on all services. At the level of the U.N. command in Tokyo, I have made intermittent use of the CincFE-CincUNC monthly Command Reports, which have all the usual large-scale virtues and defects of major headquarters compilations. And GHQ Tokyo also produced a useful "History of the North Korean Army."

At the individual service level the following may be noted. The Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, has published two preliminary narrative volumes, *Korea 1950* (Washington, 1952), and *Korea 1951–1953* (Washington, 1956) on which I have relied heavily. A number of detailed studies are in progress, of which the first, Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* (Washington, 1961) was published while this book was going to press. To Stetson Conn and John Miller, Jr., Chief and Deputy Chief Historians of OCMH, I owe thanks for perceptive criticism and helpful suggestion.

For the Navy, two published works are available. Walter Karig, Malcolm W. Cagle, and Frank A. Manson, *Battle Report, The War in Korea* (New York, 1952), a continuation of the popularly written series of World War II, takes the story through the evacuation of Hungnam. A follow-up effort by the last two named authors, *The Sea War in Korea* (Annapolis, 1957), deals with the entire period of the Korean conflict. The files of the United States Naval Institute *Proceedings* are worth investigation.

Of a projected five volumes on Korean Operations, the Marine Corps has published three. These volumes, *The Pusan Perimeter*, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, and *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, by Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona, are detailed and painstaking studies, extremely useful for the period covered; surprisingly, however, in view of Marine organization and doctrine, they devote little attention to the Operations of Marine Corps aviation and to its interrelations with the ground forces.

For the Operations of the Air Force in Korea I have relied on the three volumes of *U.S. Air Force* Operations *in Korea* (U.S.A.F. Historical Studies 71, 72, and 127), publications of the U.S. Air Force Historical Division, Air University, Maxwell Field. From these basic studies the author, Robert F. Futrell, has distilled an unclassified history of Air Force Operations, which I have been privileged to read in manuscript form. And I am under further obligation to Mr. Futrell for courteous and helpful response to requests for information and amplification. Various aspects of the Air Force experience in Korea have been discussed in the Air University *Quarterly Review*; some of these articles are reprinted in J. T. Stewart (ed.), *Airpower—The Decisive Force in Korea* (Princeton, 1957).

For the conduct of foreign relations in the period of the Korean War the two volumes of basic documents published by the State Department, *American Foreign Policy 1950—1955* (Washington, 1957) are useful. On military and diplomatic policy, the records of two congressional hearings are crucial. The tensions in the Defense Department, and the nature of military planning in 1949, are considered in the hearings of the House Committee on the Armed Services, 81st Congress, 1st Session, on *Unification and Strategy*; how it all turned out may be seen in the hearings of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, *The Military Situation in the Far East*. In connection with the subject here at issue I have profited from the use of two draft studies of the 20th Century Fund Project on Civil-Military Relations: Paul Y. Hammond, "Missions of the Services" (to be published as "Super–Carriers and B–36 Bombers: Appropriations, Strategy, and Politics"), and Martin Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back," which were most generously made available by Harold Stein, the project director, and by the authors.

So much for sources of a specialized nature. There exists, of course, in the public domain, a large literature on problems of current foreign policy, the cold war, and national defense, much of which is in one way or another germane to this study. Works of a historical nature are necessarily fewer, but some are of particular importance. For the unification of the armed forces, Walter Millis (ed.), *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York, 1951), is important. Material on the Korean War and on subsequent developments in the Department of Defense appears in Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier* (New York, 1956), James M. Gavin, *War and Peace in the Space Age* (New York, 1958), Maxwell D. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York, 1960), and John B. Medaris, *Countdown for Decision* (New York, 1960). Naval officers, it appears, do not commit themselves to paper on these matters; the pre-Korean views of the Air Force may be traced through the pages of the *Reader's Digest*, December 1948—April 1949. The historical background is well treated in Walter Millis, *Arms and Men* (New York, 1956); assisted

by others, the same author has grappled with the recent scene in *Arms and the State* (New York, 1958). Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War* (Chicago, 1957) has some perceptive comments on the Korean experience.

The position of the Commander in Chief is set forth in the two volumes of Truman's *Memoirs* (New York, 1955–56). On General MacArthur one may take one's choice between Courtney Whitney, *MacArthur, His Rendezvous with History* (New York, 1956), and Richard H. Rovere and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The General and the President* (New York, 1~5 1); a reading of Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington, 1953), will develop historical parallels which offer food for thought. R. M. Poats, *Decision in Korea* (New York, 1954), is a good contemporary history of the Korean War. On the armistice negotiations, see C. Turner Joy, *How Communists Negotiate* (New York, 1955) and William H. Vatcher, Jr., *Panmunjom* (New York, 1958). For those concerned with recent military developments, Brassey's *Annual* is extremely useful; for those interested in naval matters, Jane's *Fighting Ships and All the World's Aircraft* are essential.

On the fighting in Korea, and how it seemed to those involved, six books come to mind: S. L. A. Marshall, *The River and the Gauntlet* (New York, 1953) and *Pork Chop Hill* (New York, 1956) are concerned with Army small unit actions; James M. Michener, *The Bridges at Toko-ri* (New York, 1953), is a saccharine treatment of carrier aviation; Andrew Geer, *The New Breed* (New York, 1952) takes the Marines from the Pusan perimeter up to the reservoir and down again, as do the photographs in David D. Duncan, *This is War!* (New York, 1951); Martin Russ, *The Last Parallel* (New York, 1957) is the personal narrative of a member of the 1st Marine Division.

Chapter 1. To Korea by Sea

Of the large bibliography concerning American relations with the Orient the following have been most useful:

Tyler Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia* (New York, 1922); C. 0. Paullin, *Diplomatic Negotiations of American Naval Officers* (Baltimore, 1912); M. F. Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia* (Baton Rouge, La., 1945); F. H. Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese* (Madison, Wis., 1944); G. M. McCune and J. A. Harrison, *Korean–American Relations* (Berkeley, Cal., 1951); L. M. Goodrich, *Korea: A Study of U.S. Policy in the United Nations* (New York, 1956). The account of the engagement with the Korean forts is derived from Rodgers' reports in "Letters of the Commanding Officer of the Asiatic Squadron to the Secretary of the Navy," National Archives.

Chapter 2. Policy and Its Instruments

1. *Divided Korea*

Goodrich, *Korea*; Carl L. Friedrich, *American Experience in Military Government in World War II* (New York, 1948); E. Grant Meade, *American Military Government in Korea* (New York, 1951); Truman, *Memoirs*; Secretary of Defense, "Report to the President of the United States on Operations in Korea."

2. *Unified Defense*

Millis, *The Forrestal Diaries, Arms and Men, Arms and the State*; Truman, *Memoirs*; House Committee on the Armed Services, Hearings on *Unification and Strategy*; Hammond, "Missions of the Services." S. P. Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," 80 U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings 483—93*, has some interesting comments on the theoretical difficulties of the period.

3. *The Estimate of the Situation*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 7, Intelligence); Truman, *Memoirs*; Goodrich, *Korea*; Montross and Canzona, *U.S. Marine* Operations *in Korea* (hereafter USMC Operations), I.

Chapter 3. War Begins

1. *The Decision to lntervene*

Secretary of Defense Report; Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees, Hearings on *The Military Situation in the Far East*; Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back"; Truman, *Memoirs*; Department of State, *American Foreign Policy 1950–1955*; A. L. Warner, "How the Korea Decision was Made," *Harper's Magazine*, June 1951.

2. *The Far East Command*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USAF Histories; USMC Operations, I; War Diaries of CarDiv 3, CruDiv 5.

3. *The First Days of Naval Action*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations; Annex A, ComNavFE Staff History); Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USAF Histories; NavFE Operation Orders 4–50, 5–50, 7–50, 8–50; Seventh Fleet Operation Order 6–50; War Diaries of ROK Navy, CarDiv 3, CruDiv 5, *Juneau*, *DeHaven*, *Mansfield*; Action Reports of *Juneau* (24 June–6 July), *Suisun*.

4. *Air Strikes, Coastal Bombardment, Flank Patrols*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations; Annex A, ComNavFE Staff History; JJ, ComSubPac Submarine Operations); Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USAF Histories; NavFE Operation Order 6-50; Seventh Fleet Operation Plan 1–50, Operation Orders 6-50, 7–50; War Diaries of CarDiv 3, CruDiv 5, *Juneau*; ComCarDiv 1, Report of Task Force 77 Operations During the Korean Campaign (hereafter ComCarDiv 1 Action Report); Action Report of *Juneau* (24 June–6 July).

Chapter 4. Help on the Way

2. *Troops and Supplies*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Annexes FF, ComWestSeaFron Narrative; GG, DepComMSTSPac Report; HH, DepComMSTSWestPac Report); Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*.

3. *Fighting Ships*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Annexes T, U, ComAirPac Reports; EE, ComServPac Evaluation); War Diaries of CruDiv 3, *Helena*, *Badoeng Strait*, *Sicily*.

4. *Naval Logistics*

CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 7, Logistics; Annex EE, ComServPac Evaluation), II.

5. *The Marine Brigade*

CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Annexes V, ComAdComPhibPac Narrative; Z, FMFPac Report; DD, 1st MarDiv Report); USMC Operations, I; War Diary of *Badoeng Strait*.

6. *Air Transport and Air Reinforcement*

Secretary of Defense Report; USAF Histories; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Annexes T, U, ComAirPac Reports; W, FlogAirWingPac Report; FF, ComWestSeaFron Narrative); *Boxer*, Overall Report of Activities, 1 July–31 December 1950.

Chapter 5. Into the Perimeter

1. *The Korean Theater*

In hydrographic matters, here and throughout the book, I have relied on *Sailing Directions for the Southeast Coast of Siberia and Korea* (Hydrographic Office Publication 122B, Washington, 1951) and on the relevant H.O. charts; for Korean topography I have used the maps of the Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers, to the scales of 1:1,000,000 and 1:250,000. Korean place names have been employed throughout, with but a single exception: up in the high country I have followed the Marines in referring to the Chosin (rather than the Changjin) Reservoir, and in calling the town Hagaru (instead of Changjin).

Secretary of Defense Report; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC Operations, I.

2. *East Coast Bombardment*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations); War Diaries of CruDiv 5, *Juneau*, *Mansfield*; Action Report of *Juneau* (7–23 July).

3. *The Pohang Landing*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 5, Amphibious and Ground Operations; Annexes AA, ComPhibGru I Report; HH, DepComMSTSWestPac Report); USAF Histories; NavFE Operation Orders 9–50, 10-50; War Diary of PhibGru I.

4. Seventh Fleet Operations

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 3, Naval Air Operations; Annex B, ComSeventh Fleet Narrative); USAF Histories; NavFE Operation Order 10–50; Seventh Fleet Operation Orders 9–50, 11–50, and Operation Plan 9–50; War Diaries of ROK Navy, CarDiv 3, Fleet Air Wing 1; Action Reports of ComCarDiv 1, Carrier Air Group 5 (18–19 July).

5. *Patrol Planes and Gunnery Ships*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 3, Naval Air Operations; Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations; Annexes D, ComFairWing 6 Report; H, VP 47 Report; Q–2, ComCruDiv 3 History); NavFE Operation Order 12–50; War Diaries of ROK Navy, CruDiv 3, CruDiv 5, *Helena*, *Juneau*; Action Report of *Juneau*.

6. *The Marines Arrive*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Annexes B, ComSeventh Fleet Narrative; S, ComCarDiv 15 Narrative; CC, 1st MAW Report; DD, 1st MarDiv Report); USMC *Operations*, I; NavFE Operation Order 14–50; War Diaries of *Badoeng Strait*, *Sicily*; Boxer, Overall Report of Activities (1 July–31 December).

Chapter 6. Holding the Line

1. *The Perimeter Takes Form*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, I, II; GHQ, FEC, "History of the North Korean Army;" War Diary of ROK Navy.

2. *Coastal Bombardment, The Problem of Carrier Air, and the Southern Spoiling Offensive*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPac Fleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 3, Naval Air Operations; Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations; Annexes Q–2, ComCruDiv 3 History; DD, 1st MarDiv Report); USMC Operations, I; USAF Histories; Seventh Fleet Operation Order 13–50; War Diaries of ROK Navy, CarDiv 3, CruDiv 3, CruDiv 5, *Badoeng Strait*, *Sicily*, *Diachenko*; Action Reports of ComCarDiv 1, *Diachenko* (4–5 August).

3. *East Coast Interdiction, Pohang, and First Naktong*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 3, Naval Air Operations; Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations; Annexes JJ, ComSubPac Submarine Operations; Q–2, ComCruDiv 3 History); Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, I; USAF Histories; NavFE Operation Orders 11–50, 13–50; War Diaries of ROK Navy, CarDiv 3, CruDiv 3, CruDiv 5, *Badoeng Strait*, *Sicily*, *Horace A. Bass*; Action Reports of ComCarDiv 1, *Horace A. Bass* (12–16 August).

4. *Coastal Operations and Carrier Strikes*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 3, Naval Air Operations; Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations); Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USAF Histories; Seventh Fleet Operation Order 14–50; War Diaries of ROK Navy, CarDiv 3, CruDiv 3, CruDiv 5, *Sicily*; Action Report of ComCarDiv 1.

5. *The Enemy's Big Blast*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (as above); Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, I; USAF Histories; War Diaries of CarDiv 3, CruDiv 3, CruDiv 5, *Badoeng Strait*, *Sicily*; Action Report of ComCarDiv 1. For the affair of the Russian bomber, ComCarDiv I (CTF 77) Special Action Report of 6 September 1950, and enclosures; War Diary of *Herbert J. Thomas*; New York *Times*, 5–9 September 1950.

Chapter 7. Back to the Parallel

1. *Preparing the Counterstroke*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 3, Naval Air Operations; Vol. 5, Amphibious and Ground Operations; Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations, Mine Warfare; Vol. 8, Intelligence; Annexes B, ComSeventhFleet Narrative; AA, ComPhibGru I Report); NavFE Command and Historical Report, September–November 1950; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, II; USAF Histories; Senate Hearings on *The Military Situation in the Far East*; NavFE Operation Plan 108–50; Seventh Fleet Operation Plan 9–50; Amphibious Group I Operation Order 14–50; War Diaries of Amphibious Group 1, *Badoeng Strait*, *Horace A. Bass*, *McKean*; Action Reports of Seventh Fleet (JTF 7), *Horace A. Bass* (20-25 August).

2. *North to Inchon*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 3, Naval Air Operations; Vol. 4, Marine Air Operations; Vol. 5, Amphibious and Ground Operations; Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations; Vol 7, Logistics; Annexes AA, ComPhibGru I Report; DD, 1st Mardiv Report); NavFE Command and Historical Report, Sept.–Nov. 1950; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, II; USAF Histories; Flag

Officer Second in Command Far Eastern Station, Report of Proceedings, 1–14 Sept. 1950; War Diaries of ROK Navy, Amphibious Group 1, Transron 1, Fleet Air Wing 1, LSR Division 2, *Horace A. Bass*, *Manchester*, *Sicily*, *Badoeng Strait*; Action Reports of Seventh Fleet (JTF 7), ComCarDiv 1, Advance Attack Group, Naval Beach Group 1, Tacron 1, Minron 3.

3. *The Clearance of South Korea*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 6, Surface and Covering Operations, Mine Warfare; Annexes Q–1, ComUN Blockading and Escort Force Evaluation; Q–2, ComCruDiv 3 History; AA, ComPhibGru I Report); NavFE Command and Historical Report, Sept.–Nov. 1950; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC Operations II; USAF Histories; GHQ, FEC, "History of the North Korean Army;" Flag Officer Second in Command Far Eastern Station, Consolidated Report of Proceedings, Sept. 1950–Nov. 1951 (hereafter FOSICFES Report); War Diaries of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, ROK Navy, CruDiv 3, Amphibious Group 1, *Horace A. Bass*, *Missouri*, *Manchester*; Action Report of Seventh Fleet (JTF 7); *Perch*, Report of Raid.

Chapter 8. On to the Border

1. *Planning the Wonsan Landing*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report I (Annexes B, ComSeventh Fleet Narrative; AA, ComPhibGru I Report); NavFE Command and Historical Report, Sept.—Nov. 1950; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, III; USAF Histories; Senate Hearings on *The Military Situation in the Far East*; Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back ;" Goodrich, *Korea*; NavFE Operation Plan 113–50; Seventh Fleet Operation Order 16-50, Operation Plan 10–50; Amphibious Group 1 Operation Order 16-50; Commander D. N. Clay, Trip Report, 18 Oct. 1950; War Diaries of *Bass* and *Wantuck*; Action Reports of Seventh Fleet (JTF 7), ComCarDiv 1.

2. *The Opening of Wonsan and Chinnampo*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 6, Mine Warfare); NavFE Command and Historical Report, Sept.–Nov. 1950; FOSICFES Report; War Diaries of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, ROK Navy, Minron 3, *Forrest Royal*; Action Report of Seventh Fleet (JTF 7); *Pirate* and *Pledge*, Reports of Sinking.

3. *Operations in Eastern North Korea*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, I (Vol. 5, Amphibious and Ground Operations; Vol. 6, Mine Warfare; Annexes AA, ComPhibGru I Report; DD, 1st MarDiv Report); NavFE Command and Historical Report, Sept.–Nov. 1950; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, III; USAF Histories; War Diaries of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, ROK Navy, Minron 3; Action Reports of Seventh Fleet (JTF 7), Amphibious Group 3, Tacron 3.

4. *New Plans and New Problems*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, I (Annex AA, ComPhibGru I Report), II; NavFE Command and Historical Report, Sept.–Nov. 1950; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, III; USAF Histories; Goodrich, *Korea*; Truman, *Memoirs*; Senate Hearings on *The Military Situation in the Far East*; Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back;" FOSICFES Report; War Diaries of ROK Navy, *Philippine Sea*, Bataan, *Badoeng Strait*, *Sicily*; Action Reports of Seventh Fleet (1 Nov.–26 Dec. 1950), ComCarDiv 1, *Valley Forge*, *Philippine Sea*; Joy Papers.

Chapter 9. Retreat to the South

1. *Defeat in the West*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, I (Annex AA, ComPhibGru I Report), II; NavFE Command and Historical Report, Dec. 1950; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, III; USAF Histories; Senate Hearings on *The Military Situation in the Far East*; NavFE Operation Plan 116-50; FOSICFES Report; War Diaries of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, ROK Navy, Amphibious Group 3, Transron 1, *Forrest Royal*; Action Reports of Seventh Fleet (1 Nov.–26 Dec. 1950), ComCardiv I.

2. *The Campaign at the Reservoir*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, I (Annex DD, 1st MarDiv Report), II; NavFE Command and Historical Report, Dec. 1950; USMC *Operations*, III; USAF Histories; War Diary of CarDiv 1; Action Reports of Seventh Fleet (1 Nov.–26 Dec. 1950), ComCarDiv 1, Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 2 (in Action Report of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Wonsan–Hungnam).

3. *Concentration in the East*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, I (Annex AA, ComPhibGru I Report), II; NavFE Command and Historical Report, Dec. 1950; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*; USMC *Operations*, III; USAF Histories; Seventh Fleet Operation Order 18–50; War Diaries of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, TransDiv 2, *Noble*; Action Report of Seventh Fleet (1 Nov.–26 Dec. 1950).

4. *The Evacuation of Hungnam*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, I (Annex AA, ComPhibGru I Report), II; NavFE Command and Historical Report, Dec. 1950; USMC *Operations*, III; USAF Histories; NavFE Operation Plan 116-50; Amphibious Group I Operation Order 20-50; War Diaries of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, ROK Navy, Transron I; Action Reports of Seventh Fleet (1 Nov.–26 Dec. 1950), ComCarDiv 1, Tacron 1.

5. *The Second Chinese Offensive*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, II; NavFE Command and Historical Reports, Dec. 1950, Jan. 1951; Department of the Army, *Korea 1950*, Korea 1951–1953; USAF Histories; Senate Hearings on *The Military Situation in the Far East*; Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back ;" Truman, *Memoirs*; Whitney, *MacArthur*; Seventh Fleet Operation Orders 19–50, 20–50; FOSICFES Report; War Diaries of Seventh Fleet, U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, Amphibious Group 3, *Horace A. Bass*; Action Reports of ComCarDiv 1, Amphibious Group 3.

Chapter 10. The Second Six Months

1. *Back to the Han*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, II; NavFE Command and Historical Report, Feb. 1951; Department of the Army, *Korea 1951–1953*; USAF Histories; FOSICFES Report; War Diaries of Seventh Fleet, U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, Amphibious Group 3, CruDiv 1, *Horace A. Bass*.

2. *On to the Parallel*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, II; NavFE Command and Historical Report, March, April, 1951; Department of the Army, *Korea 1951–1953*; USAF Histories; Truman, *Memoirs*; Senate Hearings on *The Military Situation in the Far East*; NavFE Operation Order 3–51; FOSICEES Report; War Diaries of Seventh Fleet, U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, Amphibious Group 3, *Missouri*; Action Report of Seventh Fleet (28 March 1951–3 March 1952), CTF 74 (Sorye Dong).

3. *The Communist Spring Offensive*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, II, III; NavFE Command and Historical Report, April, May, 1951; Department of the Army, *Korea 1951–1953*; USAF Histories; FOSICFES Report; War Diaries of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, Amphibious Group 3; Action Report of Seventh Fleet (March 1951–March 1952), *Princeton* (on Hwachon Dam).

4. *North to Kaesong*

Secretary of Defense Report; CincPacFleet Evaluation Report, III; NavFE Command and Historical Reports, June, July, 1951; Department of the Army, *Korea 1951–1953*; USAF Histories; FOSICFES Report; War Diary of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force; Action Report of Seventh Fleet (March 1951–March 1952); *Walke*, Report of Mining.

Chapter 11. Problems of a Policeman

1. *Operating Problems*

The functional organization and the systematic arrangement of conclusions and recommendations in the CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports make these the most useful single source; some of these reports have extensive special sections on personnel problems. The NavFE files and the papers of Admirals Joy and Ofstie contain relevant items.

2. *Logistic Support*

Logistic sections of CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, I–VI; information from W. H. Marlow, Principal Investigator, Logistics Research Project, The George Washington University.

3. *Interservice Coordination and the Air Problem*

The most inclusive sources are the CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, especially I (for close support), II (for interdiction), and VI; the classified and unclassified Air Force Histories; and the Action Report of ComCarDiv 1. The NavFE files contain a series of letters and memoranda on the close support question, as do the papers of Admirals Joy and Ofstie. The action reports of Tacron 1 for Inchon and Hungnam, and of Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 2 for the Chosin Reservoir campaign are important. The end of the story may be investigated in: "Report on Joint Air-Ground Operations Conference held at Headquarters, Fifth Air Force, Seoul, Korea, 8–22 August 1953," and in Joint Tactical Air Support Board, Fort Bragg, N.C., "Special Report Pertaining to Project No. 2–53 ‘To Establish Joint Doctrine and Procedures Governing Command, Employment, and Control of Tactical Air Forces in Support of Ground Forces.’"

4. *The Larger Picture*

On the Formosa patrol: Seventh Fleet Operation Order 15–50; War Diaries of ComCruDiv 1, *Juneau*, Fleet Air Wing 1. For the submarine problem, see the CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports; the NavFE files contain reports of ASW actions and correspondence on this subject. For patrol plane Operations see the relevant sections of CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports. On the other side of the world, Annual Reports of CincLantFleet; H. L. Ismay, *NATO, the First Five Years, 1949–1954* (Paris? 1954?); Cinc- NELM, Report of Operations, 1 July–1 November 1950. The Office of Naval History has compiled a chronology of Mediterranean Naval Operations subsequent to World War II.

5. *Into the Future*

Almost all this information on ship and aircraft development is available in unclassified sources, notably Jane’s Fighting Ships and All the World’s Aircraft. The Joy and Ofstie papers contain some correspondence on the implications of the Korean experience for new construction.

Chapter 12. Two More Years

The important general sources for the entire chapter are the 4,612 pages of CincPacFleet Evaluation Reports, III–VI; the ten file–drawer inches of monthly NavFE Command and Historical Reports, July 1951–July 1953; and the Reports of the two Seventh Fleet commanders, Admirals Martin and Clark, covering the periods 28 March 1951–3, March 1952 and May 1952–July 1953. For the other services, Department of the Army, *Korea*

1951–1953, and the USAF Histories. For the armistice negotiations, Vatcher, *Panmunjom*.

1. *Stabilized Front and Peripheral War*

War Diaries of U.N. Blockading and Escort Force, ROK Navy, Transdiv 13, *New Jersey*; FOSICFES Report; 41st Independent Commando, Report of Proceedings; Ofstie papers; Joy notes on armistice negotiations. On the Battle of the Buzz Saw, Action Reports of ComDesDiv 132, *Blue*, *Cunningham*, *O'Brien* (17 July 1951).

2. *Stalemate*

The NavFE files contain a study of the interdiction question of 28 April 1952, made in response to a CincFE query of 12 March; material on interdiction also exists in the Ofstie papers. On the transfer of the Marine Division, War Diary of Amphibious Group I; on the Kojo demonstration, Action Report of Amphibious Group 3; on the engagement with the MIGs, Action Reports of *Oriskany*, *Kearsarge*, and *Helena*, and an account in the ONI *Review*, February 1953.

3. *Progress, Crisis, Conclusion*

On the last minute redeployments, War Diary of Amphibious Group 1; on the loss of the B–50, War Diary of CruDiv 3, Action Report of ComCarDiv 3 (27 July–1 August 1953), Department of State, *American Foreign Policy 1951–1955*.

History of United States Naval Operations – Korea
James A. Field Jr.

Glossary

1. Ships

The designations of the various types of U.S. naval vessels are derived by compounding an initial letter indicative of general category (thus A, auxiliary; C, cruiser; D, destroyer; L, landing; P, patrol) with one or more modifiers descriptive of the particular species (thus C, command or craft; D, destroyer or dock; E, explosive or escort; H, hospital or helicopter; 0, oiler or ocean; P, transport (i.e., personnel); T, tracked, tank, or torpedo; V, aviation). Type designators employed in this book are as follows:

AD	Destroyer tender
AE	Ammunition ship
AF	Refrigerated stores ship
AGC	Amphibious force flagship
AH	Hospital ship
AK	Cargo ship
AKA	Attack cargo ship
AKL	Light cargo ship
AM	Fleet minesweeper
AMS	Motor minesweeper (formerly YMS)
AN	Net tender
AO	Oiler
AOG	Gasoline tanker
AP	Transport
APA	Attack transport
APD	Fast transport (destroyer escort conversion)
ARG	Internal combustion engine repair ship
ARH	Heavy hull repair ship
ARL	Landing craft repair ship
ARS	Salvage vessel
ASR	Submarine rescue vessel
ATF	Fleet tug
AV	Seaplane tender
AVP	Small seaplane tender
BB	Battleship
CA	Heavy cruiser
CL	Light cruiser
CLAA	Antiaircraft light cruiser
CV	Aircraft carrier
CVE	Escort aircraft carrier (merchant ship hull)
CVL	Light aircraft carrier (cruiser hull)
DD	Destroyer
DE	Destroyer escort

DMS	Fast minesweeper (destroyer conversion)
DUKW	Amphibious truck (manufacturer's designation)
JMS	Japanese minesweeper (YMS type)
LCVP	Vehicle and personnel landing craft
LPH	Helicopter amphibious assault ship
LSD	Dock landing ship
LSMR	Rocket ship (medium landing ship conversion)
LST	Tank landing ship
LSU	Utility landing ship
LVT	Tracked landing vehicle
LVTA	Armored tracked landing vehicle
MSC	Coastal minesweeper (non-magnetic)
MSI	Inshore minesweeper (non-magnetic)
MSO	Ocean minesweeper (non-magnetic)
PC	Submarine chaser
PCEC	Amphibious control vessel (patrol escort modification)
PF	Frigate (patrol gunboat or corvette)
PT	Motor torpedo boat
T-AP	Transport assigned to MSTS
T-APc	Small coastal transport assigned to MSTS
YMS	Motor minesweeper (World War II designation)

2. Aircraft

Aircraft of the U.S. Navy are designated by a first letter indicative of functional category and by a second which identifies the manufacturer; to distinguish second and subsequent designs in the same category by the same company an intervening number is employed. Suffixed numbers and letters indicate changes to the basic model and special uses and configurations. Important categories of aircraft are:

A	attack
F	fighter
H	helicopter
U	utility
P	patrol
PB	patrol bomber
R	transport

Relevant manufacturer's designators are:

D	Douglas
F	Grumman
H	McDonnell
M	Martin
O	Lockheed (former)
S	Sikorsky
U	Chance Vought
V	Lockheed (current)

Y Consolidated

To illustrate, the AD is the first naval attack plane produced by Douglas after the Attack designation was set up by the Navy in September 1946; the F9F is the ninth Grumman-designed shipboard fighter; the F4U-5N is the night-configurated version of the fifth modification of the fourth naval fighter plane designed by Chance Vought.

In the Air Force a different series of letter prefixes is used to indicate function (B, bomber; C, cargo and transport; F, fighter; L, liaison; R, reconnaissance, and so on); these letters are followed by numbers running consecutively in each category, and in the event of model changes by a letter suffix. Thus, for example, the F-86A Sabre is the first modification of the basic design of the eighty-sixth in the sequence of Air Force fighters.

Soviet aircraft, regardless of type, are referred to by the designer's model number: thus MIG for products of the establishment presided over by Artem Mikoyan and Mikhail Gurevich; Yak for Aleksandir Sergeivich Yakovlev.

3. Miscellaneous

ACB	Amphibious Construction Battalion (Navy)
ADCOM	Advance Command and Liaison Group (Army)
Anglico	Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (Navy-Marine)
AP	Armor-piercing
BLT	Battalion Landing Team
CAP	Combat air patrol
Cardiv	Carrier Division
CAS	Close air support
CCF	Chinese Communist Forces
CincFE	Commander in Chief, Far East Command
CincLantFleet	Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet
CincPac	Commander in Chief, Pacific
CincPacFleet	Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet
CincUNC	Commander in Chief, United Nations Command
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
Com	Commander (in compounds), as
ComNavFE	Commander Naval Forces Far East
Crudiv	Cruiser Division
CTF	Commander Task Force
CTG	Commander Task Group
CW	Conunuous wave
Desdiv	Destroyer Division
ECA	Economic Cooperation Administration
ESB	Engineer Special Brigade (Army)
EUSAK	Eighth U.S. Army in Korea
FAFIK	Fifth Air Force in Korea
FEAF	Far East Air Forces
FEC	Far East Command
FLAW	Fleet Logistic Air Wing
FMF	Fleet Marine Force
FOSICFES	Flag Officer Second in Command, Far Eastern Station (British)
F/S	Fire Support

GCA	Ground control approach
GHQ	General Headquarters
HC	High capacity
IFF	Electronic identification device
JapLogCom	Japan Logistical Command
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JOC	Joint Operations Center
JTF	Joint Task Force
KMAG	Korean Military Advisory Group (U.S. Army)
KMC	Korean Marine Corps
Lant	Atlantic (in compounds)
MAG	Marine Aircraft Group
MATS	Military Air Transport Service
MAW	Marine Aircraft Wing
MDA(P)	Mutual Defense Assistance (Program)
Mindiv	Minecraft Division
MLR	Main line of resistance
MSR	Main supply route
MSTS	Military Sea Transportation Service
MTACS	Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron
NAF	Naval Air Facility
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NavFE	Naval Forces Far Fast
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
NMJ	Naval Member, Joint Operations Center
OCMH	Office of the Chief of Military History (Army)
OpArea	Operating Area
OPLR	Outpost line of resistance
OpNav	Office of Naval Operations
OpPlan	Operation plan
OTC	Officer in tactical command
Pac	Pacific (in compounds)
PhibGru	Amphibious Group
POL	Petroleum, oil, lubricants
POW	Prisoner of war
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
RN	Royal Navy (Gt. Britain)
RNZN	Royal New Zealand Navy
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROKN	Republic of Korea Navy
Scajap	Shipping Control Administration, Japan

SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
ServPac	Service Force, Pacific Fleet
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe
SPB	Shore Party Battalion (Marine)
TAC	Tactical Air Command
TACP	Tactical air control party
Tacron	Tactical Air Control Squadron (Navy)
TADC	Tactical air direction center
TE	Task Element
TF	Task Force
TG	Task Group
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
UNC	United Nations Command
USNS	U.S. Naval Ship ("in Service", i.e. non-commissioned vessel of MSTS nucleus fleet)
VHF	Very high frequency
VT	Variable time (radar-controlled) fuse
VMF	Marine Fighter Squadron
VMFN	Marine Night Fighter Squadron
VMO	Marine Observation Squadron
VMR	Marine Transport Squadron
VP	Patrol Squadron

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Foreword: The Navy's Role in Limited War

When the Communists invaded Korea on 25 June 1950, the United States was neither expecting nor prepared to fight in that remote area. They apparently had analyzed United States willingness, readiness, and ability to fight and concluded that we would simply watch and complain, but not fight. The Communists apparently saw an opportunity to seize some additional free world territory with little risk and at little cost.

The United States Army had no troops in Korea, the United States Air Force had only a few wings in the Far East, and the United States Navy had only one cruiser, four destroyers, and a few minesweepers in the Sea of Japan.

With so few combat forces initially available, control of the seas (taken for granted as is too often the case) was a prerequisite in implementing the United Nations decision to resist aggression against the Republic of Korea. *Without* the capability to use the seas, the decision to intervene on a rocky peninsula half-a-world away would have been meaningless and unenforceable. *With* control of the seas, the decision was sound and reasonable.

Once the decision was made, ships of the free world navies converged on Korea from every one of the seven seas—combatant ships, oilers, supply ships, ships loaded with troops, ammunition, guns, tanks, and aircraft; ships from the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, the Atlantic, and from the far-away Mediterranean.

Control of the seas gave the United Nations the advantage of mobility—the opportunity to consolidate and combine the free world's economic and military strength. Seapower brought American troops, first from Japan, later from the United States. Seapower defeated the initial aggression with the classic amphibious assault at Inchon. Seapower made it possible to redeploy the U.S. forces from Hungnam. Seapower helped to limit the conflict.

Use of the seas was denied to the Communists. This placed serious limitations on their ability to build up military power in Korea. It exposed the land flanks of the North Koreans (and later the Red Chinese). It denied them easy resupply by sea.

The Communists' attempt to seize Korea by military action was a failure. But this failure does not mean an abandonment of military adventures by the Communists. They will try again whenever other means fail or when they see a weakness they can exploit or find a vacuum they can fill.

The Communists have stated repeatedly that any means may be used to attain their goal of world domination, including war. The most important tenet of Communism—the one given most stress in their doctrine—is that Communism must continuously strive to possess all power, and conversely to destroy all rival power. This proposition is basic to Communism. It must be borne in mind constantly when dealing with Communists. Their tenet and their goal do not change.

There are many other explosive areas in the world. They are explosive because of this standing threat and this goal of Communism.

While the Korean War was unusual in many respects, it nevertheless has great meaning and significance for the future. In 1957 terminology, it would be called a "limited war." In the thermonuclear age, as major nations of the world improve their capability to wreak mutual destruction upon one another, the probability of all-out nuclear war is diminished. The probability of limited war is increased. It is important that the Korean War receive careful study. It is the first limited war the United Nations have fought against Communist totalitarianism.

The naval history of the Korean War is outlined in this book in great detail. The authors have distilled from it the lessons, results, and significance of the Korean War. This effort should be of great interest and benefit to every student of international or military affairs.

Of the many lessons of the Korean War, three stand out above all others:

1. The military forces of the United States must be vigilant and ready to defeat aggression in any area and in any form, whether it be large or small, atomic or conventional. Our hope, of course, is that our visible, vigilant strength will discourage Communist aggression. To do so, we must be capable of effective counteraction, ranging from the use of a squad of Marines to the use of atomic-tipped ballistic missiles. Our Navy must have many different arrows in its quiver.

2. Control of the sea is prerequisite to victory in modern war, whatever its size, type, or scope.

3. The Korean War was a limited war. A limited war is the type of war most likely to occur in the thermonuclear age.

--Adm. Arleigh A. Burke, USN, Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C., 1 May 1957

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Preface

Four years have passed since the end of the Korean War. Other international emergencies have come and gone, and some are still with us. The period from June 1950 to the present has been one of intense pressure upon every conscientious naval officer in the Fleet. Ships have toiled long hours, days, weeks, and months, to raise and maintain the readiness of the Fleet. Only in the war colleges, and to a restricted degree there, has it been possible for even the career officer, who makes the study of war his life's work, to assimilate the many lessons and the deep significance of the Korean War.

In passing time, as the U.S. Navy moves away from the Korean War, it becomes increasingly obvious how that war wrought tremendous changes upon naval thinking, naval developments, naval strategy, and naval policy. In every field—amphibious, logistical, aviation, operational and planning—the impact was monumental. Korea was a naval proving ground. Its lessons, some still undigested, and its significance, yet largely unappreciated, are still unconsciously erupting, and disrupting the Fleet.

Yet, strangely, there is a tendency in military circles to dismiss the Korean War as one so artificial, anachronistic, unorthodox, and hedged with restrictions that any study of it is unprofitable, and more likely to impress the student with wrong conclusions than right ones. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is indeed true that the Korean War was artificial and unique in many respects. So, indeed, is every war. None is standard. To accept the Korean War as a standard pattern for future war would be as imprudent as it would be to prepare solely for an atomic-blitz type war.

The Korean War taught many lessons of the highest significance; it initiated progress in the field of amphibious warfare which had been stalled by between-the-wars events; it revitalized naval aviation; it reemphasized the importance of mine warfare.

This book is not written as history alone. The authors hope it is also, and more importantly, history *plus* significance, a form of rigorous introspection and self-analysis. Only by measuring the lessons of the past can we forge a yardstick for the future. Only by interpreting the lessons of the Korean War can we logically prepare for the future wars.

This book seeks to distill the essence of the naval portion of the Korean War in a readable, concise, and interesting manner, with three objectives in mind: First, to teach and transmit the many naval lessons of that war; second, to record and preserve the splendid accomplishments of the United States Navy in the seas surrounding that beleaguered peninsula; third, to document the conclusion that the advent of the atomic age, whether it brings large or small wars or an indefinite period of tense preparedness, has not diminished, but rather has *increased*, the need for a strong and adequate Navy.

This book is therefore dedicated to all the officers and men of the United States Navy, who, in their service in Korea, advanced the Navy's skill, and who are today maintaining the Navy strong, vigilant, and ready in the continuing task of keeping our beloved country safe and secure.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 1: Gathering War Clouds
The Diplomatic Background of the Korean War

War was to erupt suddenly in the remote Land of the Morning Calm on 25 June 1950, not because of any local or long-standing differences between North and South Koreans, but as a result of an ideological struggle being waged between two global camps of adversaries, the freedom-loving nations versus the Soviet dominated countries—a struggle over which the Koreans themselves had little control. As the curtain for a fantastic tragedy was about to rise on the macabre stage of war, neither North nor South Korea was to be a major player.

After emerging from 35 years of Japanese occupation, the unfortunate people in North Korea found themselves completely engulfed beneath a Red sea of communism. The people of South Korea, on the other hand, were similarly overwhelmed by the freedom and responsibilities of a democratic system which was new and unfamiliar.

The war between North and South Korea was not merely a civil clash. On top of it was piled an international war which involved 25 nations, and which brought five million men from around the globe to a small Asian peninsula. In no sense was it a "small" war; rather, in the words of Vice Admiral Struble, "it was a major war confined to a small area." The conflict was outwardly ignited by a few North Korean political puppets whose strings were actually responsive to Soviet hands. These same hands also held numerous other strands both east and west of the Russian periphery. Thus, the Korean battlefront was but a small wedge in an arc of global conflict that had developed between the victorious allies of World War II.

To bring into focus the sea struggle as sailormen were to see it, it is first necessary to take a long-glass view of the international events which preceded the war.

The Communists of Russia are skilled in speaking from both sides of their mouths at once. From one half, they announce that their avowed purpose is to dominate the world. From the other half, they contend that it is *they* who are the peace lovers, that it is *they* who are under siege, and have been for more than 250 years. The most recent example of this never-ending siege, they say, is the tide which only subsided when Hitler's armies were pushed out of Stalingrad and from the very doors of Leningrad and Moscow.

Leaders of the free world agree that a siege is on, to be sure, but that it is the *free world* which is standing on the defensive against a series of planned aggressions in the Soviet's seemingly interminable master plan for world conquest. To support this thesis, they point to a map of the world. Except for sections of Korea and Indochina, the Communists had expanded their frontiers to control the entire Pacific coastline of the Asian continent. On the other side of the world, from Stettin in the Baltic to Albania in the Adriatic, the piratical hands of Stalin and his heirs had drawn a political line that virtually isolated East from West.

Within these hemispheric arcs lay all the capitals of central and eastern Europe's states as well as the ancient cities of the Orient. Such cities as Berlin, Prague, Shanghai, Warsaw, Vienna, Peiping, Budapest, Pyongyang, Bucharest and Sofia had been enclosed within the Soviet sphere of influence, all subject to control from Moscow. Additionally, Communist fifth columns were established in every country in the world, working in complete harmony with and obedience to transmissions from the Kremlin.

Stalin, with astonishing defiance, blithely disregarded many of his Yalta promises almost before he had made them. For instance, he bluntly repudiated his pledge to permit Allied airmen the wartime use of certain airfields near Budapest; he denied free elections to the Poles. On the very day (27 February 1945) that Prime Minister Churchill told the British House of Commons that it was his Yalta impression that the Soviet leaders wanted to live in honorable friendship with the Western democracies, Stalin issued a two-hour ultimatum to

Rumania's King Michael to dismiss his Prime Minister, General Radescu. Subsequently, on 3 March—the day President Roosevelt brought Congress an optimistic report on Yalta—Stalin ordered King Michael to appoint Patru Groza, the Rumanian Communist leader, as the new Prime Minister.

So flagrant were the Soviet dictator's violations of Yalta that President Roosevelt, 12 days before his death, cabled Stalin that he could no longer conceal his concern for the lack of progress being made in carrying out the Yalta decisions. He stated that even if a thinly-disguised Communist government continued in Poland, the American people would consider Yalta a failure.

Stalin, of course, ignored President Roosevelt's objections; his military-political offensive rolled on unabated. While the Western nations, spurred by Soviet-inspired propaganda, demobilized their military forces, the Soviet Union, in startling contrast, maintained her armed forces at full strength, and, in fact, began to expand her navy.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Government tightened her political web inside the Baltic and Balkan countries. In May of 1946, Stalin's forces crassly overthrew the legally constituted government of Czechoslovakia.

At this point, the Western Powers took heedful note.

In an historic step which must mark the point when the tide of international communism commenced to recede, President Truman obtained Congressional approval for the Marshall Plan to bolster the economic fronts of Western Europe. The Treaty of Rio de Janeiro was signed in 1947, committing the United States to resist any attack upon her neighboring republics to the south. European regional alliances began to take shape. Such national groupings as Benelux[1] and the Western Union[2] were born.

Stalin retaliated by blockading all highways and rails leading to Berlin from Western occupation zones. By 24 June 1948, he had blockaded every communicating link except the one corridor he could not close without gunfire: the international airways. Two days later, the Berlin airlift was organized by the United States and Great Britain. For 15 months (until 30 September 1949), the airlift operated with such psychological and military success that the Soviets reluctantly withdrew the blockade. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Berlin blockade was the fact that it alerted the Western Powers to the aggressive and militant nature of the Soviet Government and the imminent gravity of the Soviet threat. Even before the blockade was lifted, the Western Powers had signed, on 4 April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO)[2A] in Washington.

In this treaty, the NATO members stated that an armed attack against any one member would be considered as an attack against all. This was followed by various military assistance bills being extended to practically all of the NATO countries, and to many countries in South America and Asia, through which medium the United States agreed to extend commercial credits, provide new military equipment, and modernize old Allied equipment in areas where it could be most profitably used.

The Mutual Defense Bill, passed by the U.S. Congress on 6 October 1949, specifically authorized that military equipment, technical and trained assistance, machine tools, and industrial equipment could be sent to Allied areas.

It was during this period of Allied build-up in Western Europe that the Soviet Union made the decision to open an active battlefront on the Korean peninsula. It seems reasonable that the Soviet shift of the scene of action from West to East was largely intended to counteract and negate the embryonic plans of the free nations of NATO.

At Potsdam, on 26 July 1945, the representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of China had pledged, as they had similarly done at Cairo in 1943, that Korea would become a free and independent country, ending more than three decades of Japanese occupation.

Upon entering the war against Japan in 1945, the Soviet Government had publicly declared its intention of adhering to the Potsdam Declaration. An official USSR news release on 8 August 1945 stated: "Loyal to its Allied duty, the Soviet Government has accepted the proposal of the Allies and has joined in the declaration of the

Allied Powers of 26 July."

Later, on 27 December 1945, in Moscow, the Soviet Government reaffirmed this pledge in a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the United States and the United Kingdom. The Soviet Government agreed that a provisional democratic government should be established for all Korea until the Koreans themselves could permanently organize an independent and united country. This was yet another of those solemnly written promises made by the Soviet Government which was to be broken.

The 38th parallel[2B]—a boundary line that was to become as famous as the Chinese Wall and the Iron Curtain—was first given official prominence on 11 August 1945, in connection with the surrender of Japan. On that day the Secretary of War of the United States submitted to the Secretary of State a draft of a surrender document that was to be known as General Order Number One. By this order General Douglas MacArthur, as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, would supervise the surrender of the Japanese Government to Allied forces.

Following approval by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and President Truman, General Order Number One was telegraphed to General MacArthur in Manila on 15 August 1945. Simultaneously, it was radioed to the British Government, and to Generalissimo Stalin. Stalin suggested certain amendments to the General Order, all of which were acceptable to the United States; but he made no mention of its provisions having to do with the surrender in Korea which stated that, as a matter of convenience, Japanese forces north of the 38th parallel would surrender to the Soviet Commander and forces south of that line would surrender to the American Commander. General Order Number One was issued by General MacArthur on 2 September 1945, three weeks after Soviet forces had first entered North Korea.[3]

With the 20-20 hindsight that is conveniently available to historians, it is clear that the Soviet Union actually tipped its hand on its future interest in Korea at the Potsdam Conference. It was there (according to General T. S. Timberman's testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs) that the Russians asked the Americans to cooperate with them in the reduction of Japanese forces in Korea.[4] General Marshall replied that this would be impossible since the United States would require its total military strength in capturing the Japanese homeland. The Russians then asked if the Americans would assist them with an amphibious operation in Korea. Again General Marshall demurred, stating that all U.S. amphibious lift would be needed in the invasion of the Japanese homeland.

Under these circumstances of demonstrated Soviet interest and actual Soviet troop deployments, Soviet forces might very well have occupied the entire Korean peninsula before the arrival of U.S. troops on 8 September 1945. The nearest U.S. military forces had been bivouacked at Okinawa, 600 miles from Korea, and in the Philippines, some 2,000 miles distant. It seems very probable, therefore, that the establishment of the 38th parallel for surrender purposes may have kept the southern half of Korea free, saving two-thirds of its population from immediate Communist domination.

In any event, the Allies neither envisaged the 38th parallel as anything more than a convenient line of surrender, nor did they foresee that it would give rise to a permanent split in the political and economic life of Korea. The 38th parallel was merely a fortuitous line brought about by the exigencies of the war.

Even though little importance was attached to the 38th parallel by United States officials, it was soon apparent that the Soviet forces occupying North Korea considered it much more than a "line of convenience." The Reds quickly hung a "no trespassing" sign on the 38th parallel and prohibited passage across it except by the express permission of the Soviet military commanders. Thus, with signs, a very complex international problem was created.

The physical division of the Korean peninsula at parallel 38 made it abundantly clear that Red Army commanders had been ordered to create a permanent delineation between the two military zones. Henceforth, the 38th parallel assumed increasingly ominous significance.

Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, the American occupation commander, fully realizing that such a physical barricade which neatly divided the industrial north from the agrarian south would eventually paralyze any future chance for uniting Korea, continued to urge his opposite number, Soviet General Chistiakov, to remove the barrier. Unless this was accomplished, as both the United States and the Soviet Union had solemnly promised, he said, Korean unity and Korean freedom were doomed. The Reds remained synthetically sympathetic, always willing to discuss the situation but never agreeable to doing anything which might ameliorate the problem which they themselves had created.

In accordance with terms of the Moscow Agreement of 1945, the Soviet Government had agreed to establish a joint United States-Soviet commission to work out a temporary four-power trusteeship for Korea as a prelude to the development of democratic self-government and the establishment of national independence for Korea. Among the rather general instructions issued by the three ministers in Moscow to the joint commission was a provision "that the Joint US-USSR Commission consult with Korean democratic parties and social organizations in preparing their proposals to their respective governments concerned." Whether such loosely-worded instructions were deliberately written into the Commission's instructions by the Communists is not known. In any event they served the Soviet purpose of reaching an impasse.

In the joint commission the Soviet delegation took the position that the occupying powers should confine consultations to those Korean groups who had agreed fully and consistently with the Moscow declaration. This was tantamount to showing favor to the representative of the communist groups.

The Soviets took the position that before any Korean "political or social organization" could qualify and be considered acceptable for consultation with the Joint Commission, the party or organization had to be acceptable to them. Secondly, the Soviets hotly disputed the definition of what constituted "a social group." Thirdly, without bringing specific charges, the Soviets arbitrarily accused *all* non-communist Korean political parties of bad faith in that all of them were opposed to the trusteeship idea.

The United States, on the other hand, took the position that all Korean parties were innocent until indicted and proven guilty; that their present attitude was more important than their past record; furthermore, if the Joint Commission restricted its consultations to the degree insisted on by the Soviets, the Commission would never get a fair sampling of Korean opinion; it would therefore lack the rudimentary knowledge for making recommendations to the Four Powers concerned.

The difference was composed by a formula which limited consultation to those groups which were democratic in principle and which agreed to uphold the aims of the Moscow declaration and also abide by the Commission's decisions.

Then the Soviets raised a new objection: they insisted upon barring consultations with any individuals *who had expressed opposition* to the Moscow trusteeship provisos. The United States delegation said that such a restriction was at odds with the ostensible purpose of the commission to establish a democratic government.

Thus went Soviet-United States deliberations for some twenty-four months—words, words, words—*ad nauseam, ad infinitum.* Meanwhile, legal passage across the 38th parallel remained as restricted as ever.

Finally, the United States recommended in a letter of August 26, 1947, since she and the Soviet Union could not end their stalemate with regard to the functioning of the Joint Commission, that secret elections be held in both North and South Korea to form provisional legislatures in each zone. Representatives from these legislatures would constitute a national provisional legislature which in turn, would meet in Seoul to establish a provisional government for a united Korea. This recommendation might have been acceptable to the Soviets had it not included what the Reds thought was a joker; the United States proposal specifically provided that representatives of the United Nations should be invited to watch the balloting to assure the world and the Korean people "of the wholly representative and completely independent character of the action taken."

Molotov, Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R., politely tabled the free election idea in a note signed 4

September 1947, and stepped forward with a counterproposal. The US-USSR Joint Commission, he said, was still far from exhausting all its possibilities for working out agreed recommendations; and besides, such elections would only further divide Korea, and this would be contrary to the vital task at hand: “the establishment of a single, even though provisional, organ of authority.”

On 9 October 1947, about a month after Molotov had, in effect, accused the United States of trying to further divide Korea by holding free elections, he came up with still another proposal. Since the United States delegation in Korea had made impossible the formation of a provisional Korean democratic government, Molotov suggested that both the American and the Soviet troops get out of Korea and let the Koreans organize a government for themselves. Soviet troops, he promised, would be ready to leave simultaneously with the Americans.

By now it was plain to the United States Government that further bilateral talks with the Soviets were futile. The alternatives were weighed. The United States had these choices: (1) she could apply military pressure against the Soviet Union for her refusals to carry out her diplomatic promises; (2) she could abandon all of Korea to the Soviets; (3) she could establish what might amount to a United States’ protectorate over South Korea; or (4) she could provide the South Korean people with assistance and guidance so that they, through their own efforts, might progress toward their goal of freedom and independence.

After weighing the alternatives, the United States chose the last course. This course would permit the South Koreans at least to start laying the foundation for a free and independent country. At the same time it would permit the United States to reduce progressively her Korean commitments of manpower and resources in accordance with the necessities of her own contracting military strength.

Meanwhile, on 17 September 1947, the United States Government placed the Korean question before the United Nations General Assembly in order that the inability of the two powers to reach an agreement should not further delay the early establishment of an independent, united Korea.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union made their recommendations to United Nations.

The United States proposed the following: “(a) Elections in the two occupation zones of Korea by March 31, 1948, under observation of the United Nations ‘as the initial step leading to the creation of a National Assembly and the establishment of a National Government of Korea’; (b) creation of a national security force by the Korean National Government immediately upon its establishment, early transfer to that Government of the governmental functions exercised by the occupying powers, and early arrangements between it and the occupying powers for the withdrawal of their forces; (c) creation of a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea to oversee the elections and to be available for consultation on each of the steps proposed for developing self-rule in Korea and the end of occupation in that country.” [5]

The Soviets opposed the United States recommendation. They reiterated the position that the United States alone had violated the Moscow agreement and had blocked the independence of Korea. They viewed the Korean question as one concerning the peace terms and, therefore, beyond the jurisdiction of the United Nations. They offered a counter proposition for mutual withdrawal of occupying troops as the first step and organization of a national government as the second.

Although it was to have little practical effect, the UN General Assembly decided—on 14 November 1947—to approve the United States’ recommendation that the Korean question was a matter for the Korean people themselves to decide, that the matter could not be resolved without the full participation of representatives of the indigenous population. The UN Assembly passed a resolution that the Korean people should have the opportunity to elect representatives, draft a democratic constitution, and establish a national government. To insure that this was done properly, they decided to send a UN Temporary Commission with representatives from Australia, Canada, China, El Salvador, France, India, Philippines, Syria, and the Ukrainian Socialist Republic. The Temporary Commission, minus the Ukrainian delegate, arrived in South Korea 8 January 1948, and held its

first meeting four days later. The Soviet Union protested that a matter such as the establishment of a Korean government did not fall within the jurisdiction of the United Nations. Furthermore, she would not permit the Temporary Commission to enter North Korea. The Soviet military commander even refused to receive a communication from the Commission proposing a courtesy call. After meeting numerous rebuffs from the Soviet commander, the Temporary Commission referred the matter back to the UN.

What next?

On 26 February, the United Nations instructed the Temporary Commission to proceed to carry out the UN program "in such parts of Korea as are accessible to the Commission."

As a consequence, the only free election and free government established in Korea would of necessity be confined to the southern half.

The first election was accordingly held 10 May 1948, and the government of the Republic of Korea was established 15 August 1948.

The new government of South Korea was recognized by the United States and 31 other nations. It was accepted by the UN as the legally elected and lawful government. It was *not* recognized, however, by the Soviet Union, who created in North Korea what it termed the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea." This puppet regime was proclaimed 8 September 1948. Claiming jurisdiction over the entire country, it was destined to live as it was created: in complete defiance of the United Nations.

Such is the diplomatic history of an ethical government trying to deal with distortionists on the single issue of Korea.

During the years of 1948 and 1949, the Soviet-controlled North Koreans did everything possible to promote disorder and confusion along and south of the 38th parallel. Subversives infiltrated southward in great numbers. Communist terrorists made threats, incited rebellion, and actually participated in armed raids across the border.

By the fall of 1948 the security of the Republic of Korea was endangered. A riot in the port of Yosu in October involving 3,000 people, including a regiment of the Republic of Korea Army, cost the lives of 500 loyal police and army troops and left the city in ruins.

Meanwhile, the North Koreans took the diplomatic initiative by requesting troop withdrawals by both the United States and the Soviet forces. This was agreeable to the United States; and on 1 July 1949, the Department of the Army announced that all U.S. troops had been withdrawn from Korea after nearly four years of occupation. Of the 50,000 United States troops that had originally been in Korea following VJ-Day, a scant 500 were left as a provisional military advisory group.

Following withdrawal of the U.S. troops, North Korean subversive agents stepped up their operations. In two years of guerrilla warfare the South Koreans lost an estimated 500 dead. Between 9 and 20 September 1949, intensive fighting took place near the 38th parallel, with casualties on both sides.

On 4 August, North Korean forces invaded the Ongjin peninsula but were repulsed after heavy fighting. In mid-October, a new offensive was begun by North Korean forces in the Ongjin peninsula, and severe fighting continued for several days. So violent did the raids become that, in March of 1950, the UN Secretary General ordered eight UN representatives then in Korea to observe the guerrilla actions along the 38th.

"I always believed," said Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, Commander Naval Forces, Far East, "that the guerrilla activities and raids were deliberately planned and directed by the North Korean Government to promote unrest and disorder in South Korea with a view toward eventual Communist control of the entire peninsula through civil war."

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 1: Gathering War Clouds
The Evolution of U.S. Military Strategy, 1945-1950

Against this ominous diplomatic backdrop in Korea, the United States was developing a post-World War II military strategy, the validity of which was soon to be tested in the Korean War. Before any study of the naval portion of the Korean War can be made, therefore, an analysis of what this military strategy was, and how it had been reached, is necessary, so that in a final chapter a judgment of that prewar strategy can be rendered in the light of wartime experience.

After the end of World War II, the goals which the United States set for itself, while commendable, were actually beyond realization within the self-imposed limits. The United States was trying to maintain a military posture, assimilate the lessons of World War II, accommodate the facts of the atomic age and jet propulsion, and simultaneously reduce military forces to peacetime levels despite *expanding* overseas commitments.

As the national strategy took shape, some of it was old and some of it was new. It was old in the sense that it preserved the basic rights of the individual as well as the sovereignty of the United States without impinging on the rights of other nations. It was new in the sense that the Government of the United States had determined that it could no longer be insulated from world events; that by virtue of its greater moral and physical strength, it must play a strong hand in organizing, unifying, and leading the political, economic, spiritual, and military efforts of all freedom-loving nations. Only by combining the several resources of free nations could freedom be preserved and encouraged to spread and flourish among less fortunate peoples.

If the United States was ever to succeed in such a noble mission, it was patent that she herself must unify her strength in a practical plan that would accommodate her aspirations. Never again could she afford the prodigal military wastage that had characterized her World War II efforts. In the future she must carefully evaluate her preparedness for conflict and know both her assets and liabilities. She must evaluate every aspect of her national strength: her industrial productivity and potential, her access to and the availability of raw materials, her educational needs (particularly in the fields of science and engineering), and her manpower levels. The military program which resulted would have to dovetail neatly with the political and economic realities of the postwar world.

Altogether, these factors called for military unification—unification of national resources and national strengths. The trouble with unification came in the military sphere. How could it be accomplished most effectively? What military weapons and strategy would best implement the national policy? What roles and missions should be assigned to the individual military services? What type of defense organization would most likely assure the United States of a peaceful and secure future?

All military leaders initially favored unification of the Armed Services; both Army and Navy officials supported this view in the findings of a joint board headed by Admiral James Otto Richardson which had been ordered to study the problem of postwar defense.[6] Before any laws were passed, however, many outstanding naval leaders began to voice serious doubts as to the wisdom of military unification. Many thought that merger of the Armed Services would stultify competition and progress. The heart of naval doubt was found in a statement made by Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King in October 1945: “Sea power will not be accorded adequate recognition because the organization contemplated would permit reduction of the sea power by individuals who are not thoroughly familiar with its potentialities. . . .”

After considerable naval opposition and much heated Congressional debate, the National Security Act of 1947 was passed and signed by the President on 26 July of that year. This new union continued to find, in the

words of a subsequent report rendered by the House Armed Services Committee, “a Navy reluctance . . . an overardent Army, a somewhat exuberant Air Force.” [7]

The concept of the first unification law was federation, not merger, of the Armed Forces. It had created, in effect, a coordinator of three executive departments: a Secretary of Defense and a Defense Department.

The first Secretary of Defense, Mr. James Forrestal, stated in his first annual report to the Congress: “I would be less than candid . . . if I did not underline the fact that there are still great areas in which the viewpoints of the Services have not come together.” He went on to state, “It is out of the competition inherent in the division of the total funds allocated to the National Military Establishment that the controversies arise.” More specifically, Mr. Forrestal pointed out that “balancing of these two aspects of air power (Air Force and Navy), and seeing to it that adequate, but not unnecessary, funds are allocated to each, is one of the most difficult tasks of the Secretary of Defense.” [8]

Meanwhile, the interservice struggle intensified—both in private and in public—principally between the Navy and the newly-created Air Force. Books and magazine articles with such provocative titles as *Disaster Through Air Power, The Strategic Bombing Myth*, and *The Case Against the Admirals* appeared in public print. Influential editors and publishers took sides in the highly emotional controversy. Many military officers continued to voice their convictions publicly and before Congress. It was only natural that the nation’s military leaders, who had fought vastly different wars in different parts of the world, should hold basic differences on matters involving weapons systems and techniques for their employment. But as General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower pointed out when he was asked for his views: “We are dealing with distinguished Americans, people who have their country’s good at heart, and, therefore, we should not be too critical or too ready to call names on either side; above all, we should not be too ready to question motives.” [9]

By the summer of 1949 the controversy had reached a climax. Governmental leaders, both in the executive and legislative branches, were now offering opinions; industrialists, specialists, and neo-experts joined the arguments in everything from weapons design to tactics.

The fireworks actually began 23 April 1949, when the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Louis A. Johnson, announced that work on the Navy’s new aircraft carrier, the USS *United States,* would be discontinued. This decision was made while the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. John L. Sullivan, was out of Washington. Three days later Mr. Sullivan resigned. He stated that he could no longer serve as Secretary in view of the manner in which the decision had been made.

By April’s end, unofficial reports were circulating that the Marine Corps’ integral aviation was to be transferred to the Air Force; that naval air was to be further cut and perhaps also transferred to the Air Force. Rumors that the Marine Corps was to be abolished and the Navy reduced to a convoy-and-escort force became so widespread in the spring of 1949 that Mr. Carl Vinson, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, queried the Secretary of Defense. [10]

Secretary Johnson replied on 28 April 1949 that these things could *not* be done under the National Security Act, that they had not been contemplated; and furthermore, before any such steps were seriously considered, he would ask permission to discuss the matter with Congress. [11]

Charges and countercharges mounted, some of them involving political matters, until eventually a full-scale Congressional investigation was ordered. [12]

In the subsequent twelve days of testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, the differing viewpoints of the postwar military strategy of the United States emerged.

As the Armed Services Committee hearings opened, Chairman Vinson stated: “These disagreements involve such basic subjects affecting the national defense that this committee could not properly ignore the situation.”

What should the national defense program of the United States be? What strategy should it follow? What

kind of wars would be fought in the future? Would there be global wars, peripheral wars, limited wars, atomic or non-atomic wars? What weapons would be most effective in fighting such wars?

It could scarcely be expected that dedicated professional men with varied wartime experiences, varied strategic concepts, a myriad of interests, and varied technical knowledge would agree on what they saw as they gazed into the crystal ball of future war.

The Air Force concept was expressed by Secretary of the Air Force W. Stuart Symington: ". . . the Air Force believes that the atomic bomb plus the air power necessary to deliver it represents the one most important visible deterrent to the start of any war." Mr. Symington repeated a statement once made by General Hoyt Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff: "The only war you really win is the war that never starts".[13]

"Secondly," continued the Air Force Secretary, "if war comes, we believe that the atomic bomb plus the air power to deliver it represent the one means of unloosing prompt, crippling destruction upon the enemy, with absolute minimum combat exposure of American lives. If it is preferable to engage in a war of attrition, one American life for one enemy life, then we are wrong. That is not our way. That is not the way in which the mass-slaughter of American youths and invasion of Japan was avoided. . . .

"We can hope, but no one can promise, that if war comes the impact of our bombing offensive with atomic weapons can bring it about that no surface forces ever have to become engaged. Disregarding such an illusory hope, we do know that the engagement of surface forces will take place with much greater assurance of success and much fewer casualties to the United States and its allies if an immediate, full-scale atomic offensive is launched against the heart of the enemy's war-making power."[14]

Mr. Symington said that the United States should continue to "concentrate on America's greatest asset—quality of product, superior weapons capable of development, and mass production in our system of free economy—weapons like the B-36 with its intercontinental bombing range without refueling, and other modern bombers and planes with their projected intercontinental range with refueling."[15]

General Hoyt Vandenberg followed the Secretary, and his testimony included his military estimate of what types of weapons were most needed to perform such future military jobs as could be foreseen from his vantage point. The Air Force Chief of Staff said he was "in favor of the greatest possible development of carrier aviation to whatever extent carriers and their aircraft are necessary for fulfillment of a strategic plan against the one possible enemy we may have to face. Less than this would be unsound. More than this would be an unjustifiable burden upon the American taxpayer. . . ."

General Vandenberg said he was "not only willing but insistent that the types of carriers which can help meet the threat of an enemy submarine fleet shall be developed fully and kept in instant readiness. The sea lanes must be kept open. There is no dispute on this matter." He went on to say, "I do not believe there is justification for maintaining large carrier task forces during peacetime unless they are required by the strategic plans of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In my judgment they are not required by those plans. . . .

"My opposition to building it[15A] comes from the fact that I can see no necessity for a ship with those capabilities in any strategic plan against the one possible enemy.

"Any war we may have to fight in the future will obviously be unlike the Pacific war against Japan. It will tend to resemble the war against Germany, though with certain differences. There will be the same problem of killing submarines. . . . There will be the same problem of protecting Atlantic Ocean supply lines, although the threat to our shipping will come almost wholly from the submarine, since the potential enemy has no surface units of the character of the *Bismarck* and the *Tirpitz*. There may or may not be amphibious landings, but if there are, they will not be like the landings in North Africa and Normandy, and probably unlike most of the landings in the Pacific islands.

"Finally," said General Vandenberg, "the industrial heart of the potential enemy lies not on any seashore, not on any island, but deep inside the Eurasian land mass. It is to that type of war we must adapt all of our forces,

including larrier aviation."[16]

All of the witnesses, including naval men, were agreed that air supremacy was vital to future military success, but the unity-splitting question was *how* to achieve air supremacy.

Protagonists of the Air Force felt that the B-36 (the long-range, land-based bomber) and the just-cancelled aircraft carrier *United States* were duplicative; that both of them were designed to accomplish the same purpose: strategic air warfare. They felt that United States taxpayers could not afford the heavy expenditures involved in providing two similar weapons systems.[16A]

Since the Air Force had been assigned the mission of strategic air warfare, they felt it was the sounder procedure for most of the money to be budgeted into the Air Force's plan of accomplishment. By so doing, they claimed, the United States could assure itself of the best possible deterrent to war, and, if war came, the cheapest and the easiest victory. The Air Force backers argued for a strategy based on hitting the heartland of the most probable enemy with intercontinental land-based bombers, on the logic that this was the best possible means at this particular time of getting there "fustest with the mostest" atom bombs.

The Army position in the hearings was stated by General Omar Bradley, who spoke both from his Army background and from his position as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Bradley agreed with the Navy that he did not believe our country should rely solely on strategic bombing or on atomic weapons. Properly balanced land, air, and sea forces were required. However, he doubted there would ever be any campaign similar to the Pacific campaign. He also doubted that there would ever again be large-scale amphibious operations.[17] General Bradley also recalled his own participation in two of the largest amphibious landings in history—in Sicily and Normandy—and that in neither were there any U.S. Marines.

As far as national military strategy was concerned, General Bradley pointed out that "our basic concept for defense includes protection of the United States and this continent, in case we are attacked. It provides for early retaliation from bases which we hope to have ready at all times.

"This concept includes a decision that we shall have to be ready to seize other bases that we may need and hold those bases against enemy attack, so that we may attack the enemy country at shorter ranges, and, at the same time, deny him bases close to this country from which he could attack us.

"Ultimately, however, we will have to carry the war back to the enemy by all means at our disposal. I am convinced this would include strategic bombardment and large-scale land operations."

General Bradley went on to say, "In addition to the concept I have just outlined, we must go back to the realization that the first prize for any aggressor in the world today is Europe, with its industrial potential and its market for goods."[18]

Naval strategists, led by Admiral Arthur W. Radford, then Commander in Chief, Pacific, and destined to relieve General Bradley as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, opened the Navy's case by stating that the major issue of the investigation "deals with the kind of war for which this country should be prepared."[19] He pointed out that it was difficult, in fact impossible, to predetermine a fixed concept for fighting a war. Admiral Radford testified: "An aggressor nation can set the time and place for initial military operations, and hence may strongly affect early defense measures."

Further, he pointed out: "A potential enemy can be expected to make sound estimates of our military strength. He does not depend entirely on what he reads in the papers. If the armed forces of this Nation are unsoundly organized and improperly equipped, they will not be fully effective as a deterrent to aggression. They even invite it."[20]

Radford went on to say that the issues were much broader and much more important than the B-36 program, that a strategy—atomic retaliation—was being overemphasized, a strategy which most military men did not accept as sound.

In discussing future war, Radford stated that "at some critical phase of future war—and that phase may

come early—the security of our country may substantially depend on a mobile air power required to insure control of the air in vital areas.

"We have in the United States developed mobile air power to such an extent that we can project it anywhere in the world where there is enough water—and that is quite a large part of the world—and no other country can do that. As I told you, air power is the key to victory in any military operation from now on—all kinds of air power. The United States has the unique capability to project air power to get control of the air in vital areas of operation. No one else has it. The Navy today must be built not to meet an enemy navy but with the idea, after evaluation, of the need for air power in theaters of war and parts of the world where we can't get air power any other way."[21]

The testimony of another Navy witness, Captain "31-Knot" Arleigh A. Burke, whose future seemed foreordained to be as exciting and challenging as his past, had strong appeal to the nations of such coalitions as NATO, whose bonds were no stronger than the sea catalyst which brought them all together.

"If war develops," said Captain Burke, "one of the first duties of our maritime country will be to gain and hold command of the sea. We must do that before we can send assistance to our allies and our overseas forces and bases. If we fail to command the seas, we cannot support our war effort overseas. In such a case, all forces operating from bases which must be supplied by sea would be cut off from adequate support." In other words, every U.S. airfield and U.S. division stationed overseas was a vote of confidence in the U.S. Navy's ability to supply and maintain it.

"The United States needs a navy which can prevent the enemy from denying us the oceans in which we want to operate."

If the Navy could not assure the safe arrival of raw materials from overseas, the U.S. economy, both civilian and military, would quickly perish. Specifically, Burke testified, "Whatever it takes to exercise that command of the sea, I think that this country must have it because we are a maritime nation. We must import materials, we must get our forces overseas. If we can't do that, we will fight our wars in this country. . . ."[22]

General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, reinforced the Navy's position in forceful language.

". . . Without a well-trained landing force, the Fleet is not a balanced implement of warfare," said the Commandant. Marine forces, he said, "are possessed of great utility in augmenting the national defense—if they are permitted to do so."

Discussing future war, the Commandant said: "In view of the enormously increased scope of this Nation's international responsibilities, I am convinced there is even greater likelihood of a recurrence of need for such emergency forces (the Marines) poised and ready to proceed in company with the Fleet, to the scene of crisis. . . . We are confronted with the possibility of a war in which our opponent would hold the initiative. We must prepare to meet his moves with promptness and with whatever force we can muster."

The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, pointed out that naval forces could help discourage aggression either on a large or a small scale: ". . . The presence of our Fleet in the eastern Mediterranean has effectively contributed to keeping local conflicts from degenerating into global war."[23]

He pointed out further that "operations of carrier task forces, through application of the principle of mobility and surprise, have repeatedly demonstrated the ability to concentrate aircraft strength at any desired point in such numbers as to overwhelm the defense. No other force and no other nation possesses this capability to a like degree.

"We have a lead of more than a quarter of a century over any probable enemy. Let us not squander it for any false doctrines—any unsound concept of war. That would be the real extravagance.

". . . The Navy's ultimate function in war is to exert the steady, unrelenting pressure of our Nation's military might against the homeland of an enemy." He went on to say, "The Navy must be organized in peacetime

as a balanced force capable of . . . underseas warfare . . . amphibious warfare . . . including many highly specialized groups . . . underwater demolition teams, high-speed minesweeping groups, teams to control air and gunfire support, joint communications and many others.

". . . The properly balanced Fleet must have as a major component a Fleet Marine Force of combined arms, including its close-support tactical aviation. The inclusion of such a force permits a fleet commander a degree of initiative and flexibility in his operations not otherwise obtainable. He can seize advanced bases as required by the development of the campaign, or, if the situation dictates, be assured of adequate defenses for those bases already in his possession."

Little did Admiral Denfeld, who was soon to be relieved as Chief of Naval Operations, realize that within less than a year his words would read like prophecy.

Another Navy witness to put his finger on the core of the problem was Vice Admiral Robert B. Carney, at that time head of naval logistics, and later to become Chief of Naval Operations.

Admiral Carney pointed out that "To settle on a concept of sustained intercontinental bombing or a program of procuring costly intercontinental bomber types could only be justified by overriding considerations of the greatest urgency, because, logistically, in terms of treasure and effort, there are better ways of conducting strategic bombing."[24]

He stated that the only basis for the country's relying on intercontinental bombing would be "absolute assurance of its decisive character," and he cautioned that it should not be pursued to the point that other elements of the military machine were starved into impotence.

The issue, concluded Admiral Carney, is for the nation to decide "whether the American Air Force power in its present form is needed to the extent of accepting deterioration and inadequacy of other essential components of the military team. I believe that is today's Number One military problem."

The naval concept of future war thus boiled down to this: The United States could not anticipate *what* kind of a war would be fought or *where*, or *when*, nor could she safely predict *what weapons* would prove most effective. These matters were of necessity to be determined by time, the enemy and by circumstance. Naval leaders thought that the national strategy should avoid a fixed concept of future war; that the country should be prepared to fight in many differing areas, with many types of weapons. They thought it folly for this nation to arbitrarily restrict itself either in concept or in method. Fleet Admiral Halsey summarized the Navy's views about a future war when he said: "It will be started by a foreign aggressor—at the time, at the place, and in the manner he desires."[25]

The United States, argued the Navy, should retain flexibility and balance in her armed forces; she should retain the mobility, versatility, built-in defenses, the concealment, and the qualities of concentration, dispersion, and surprise inherent in the Navy's floating airfields; for the Navy held that no single Service or no single weapon would ever win the war.

Naval officers contended that "the Nation's long-range objective is a stable world society—and that this objective must underlie the Nation's preparations for war and govern the methods by which it wages war; otherwise, according to the testimony, the Nation may thwart its objectives, although winning the war waged to achieve those objectives."[26]

As the Congressional hearings progressed, there was much heated debate. At times the hearings were less strategic in nature than technical and tactical. At times tempers flared. One distinguished soldier suggested that "this is no time for 'fancy-dans' who won't hit the line with all they have on every play, unless they can call the signals."[27] One Congressman told a witness that he had been "farther back under my barn hunting for eggs than some generals have been away from home."[28]

The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Carl Vinson, said at one point in the hearings that one of the troubles had been that the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force had not been around Congress very much recently.

"We hardly know what is going on," said the Chairman, "and it is not often that we and the country have the benefits of such statements as are being made right now. . . . I think these hearings are going to help the Services. I think they are going to let the country know something about what the Services stand for and what the Services represent." The Chairman voiced a popular sentiment among the Congressional committee when he stated that he "did not want any strategy drafted . . . which is going to deny to the country an efficient and effective arm to play its proper role in the defense of the country. We don't want to keep one strong member of the team sitting on the bench too long."[29]

To summarize the two viewpoints, the Air Force held the view that warfare in the atomic age gave overriding importance to air power. The missions of ground and naval forces, in their view, had been relegated to collateral tasks. The safest way to prevent a future war was to concentrate preponderant strength in atomic weapons and superlative aircraft to deliver them.

The Navy, on the other hand, held the view that while it was indeed true that air power held the key to victory, our potential enemy held the power of initiative and could choose the time, the place, the size, and the scope of a future war. Our national military forces, therefore, should be mobile, balanced, and flexible, capable of handling a variety of military contingencies. Ground and naval forces were quite as vital in the age of the atom as they had ever been in the past.

These conflicting views which emerged in the House Armed Services Committee hearings were in only nine months to be tested by the war in Korea.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 1: Gathering War Clouds

The Military Background of the Korean War

Why Soviet leaders ordered the commencement of a war in Korea is a mystery still locked inside the walls of the Kremlin.[29A] The most logical explanation, perhaps, is that Soviet leaders miscalculated the American reaction. Any analysis or poll of our national attitude toward the Far East during 1948-49 would have reached the same conclusion that the Soviets must have made: America would stand idly by as Korea was invaded. This estimate was fortified by such public announcements as the one that our defensive perimeter no longer included Korea. On 12 January 1950, the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Acheson, speaking before the National Press Club in Washington, D. C., defined a United States defensive perimeter in the Far East which did not include either South Korea or Formosa.

The defensive perimeter, said Secretary Acheson, "runs along the Aleutians to Japan and then goes to the Ryukyus . . . from the Ryukyus to the Philippine Islands. . . . So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack. But it must also be clear that such a guarantee is hardly sensible or necessary within the realm of practical relationship."[30]

Secondly, Soviet strategists certainly noted that the U.S. Government had not only removed occupation troops from Korea, but had earlier removed its U.S. Marines from the Shantung peninsula in China, U.S. military forces were obviously withdrawing from the Asian mainland. Any military move by the Communists into South Korea would probably be unopposed.

Thirdly, any military men, including the Soviets, could deduce from the just-completed Navy-Air Force debate before a Congressional committee that the U.S. military strategy was drifting toward preparation for only one kind of war—a global atomic one. The constant reduction being made in both the U.S. Army and Navy made it a calculated and acceptable risk to the Soviet leaders that the U.S. would not—or could not in time—interfere in a local, ground-type war in Korea.

In a speech before the American Legion convention at St. Louis on 2 September 1953, the United States Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, gave his opinion of why the Korean War started:

"The Korean War began in a way in which wars often begin," Secretary Dulles said, "—a potential aggressor miscalculated. From that we learn a lesson which we expect to apply in the interests of future peace.

"The lesson is this: If events are likely which will in fact lead us to fight, let us make clear our intention in advance; then we shall probably not have to fight.

"Big wars usually come about by mistakes, not by design. . . . It is . . . probable that the Korean War would not have occurred if the aggressor had known what the United States would do.

"The Communists thought, and had reason to think, that they would not be opposed, except by the then small and ill-equipped forces of the Republic of Korea. They did not expect what actually happened."

At a press conference on 2 February 1955, President Eisenhower stated that the Korean conflict started because we failed to make clear to the Soviets that we would defend South Korea.

That a military invasion of South Korea by the North Korean puppet government was possible or even imminent was evident in the intelligence despatches coming into Washington:[31]

"8 December 1949: North Korean government and their Chinese allies are under complete domination of Russia. Soviets will not permit the indefinite existence of a noncommunist state in the Korean peninsula. . . . Patterned on the master plan, the North Korean government is merely a puppet of Soviet Russia. Acting as an overseer is a Soviet mission of 300 persons in Pyongyang. . . . The army is composed of four to eight divisions

and Inf. Brigades and possesses normal infantry weapons, howitzers of 76-mm. and 122-mm. calibers, 30 to 40 tanks, model T-34, and 36 to 70 aircraft. All equipment is of Soviet origin. Recent influx of Chinese communist troops makes up an (unidentified) divisional unit. . . . Capitalizing upon (the) weakness of the democratic system, the Communist-dominated South Korean Labor Party is the instigator of practically all civil disturbances (in South Korea). . . . North Korean sponsored guerrilla forces are creating fear and unrest in the South Korean populace. . . . To the Communist, an armed invasion of South Korea is probably considered as the final resort to gain control of the peninsula. . . . With the conclusion of the Chinese Communist campaign in China, more troops and supplies may be channeled into North Korea. (The) danger to the Southern Republic will mount at that time. . . . Climatic conditions have passed (December). (The) next favorable period for (any such) action will occur in April and May 1950.

"5 January 1950: North Korea has set March and April 1950 as the time to invade South Korea. Such threats should be viewed in relation to military activities. By this criterion, the movement of the 3rd North Korean Division into the western 38th parallel, the arrival of Chinese Communist personnel, the southward displacement of the North Korean 2nd Division and expansion of Border Constabulary seem significant in terms of military action in the spring.

"10 March 1950: North Korean People's Army will be prepared to invade South Korea by fall or possibly by spring of this year (1950) as indicated by armed forces expansion and major troop movements. . . . Soviet intentions in Korea believed closely related to the Communist program in Southeast Asia. If checked in their operations in these countries, Soviets may divert their efforts to Korea. . . . Latest reports received that the North Korean People's Army will invade South Korea in June.[31A]

"15 April 1950: In mid-March, the Communist government ordered evacuation of all civilians residing in an area within three miles of the 38th parallel. Vacated housing in latter area then occupied by troops and guerrillas. Purpose reported as 'preparation for war and to interfere with South Korean Intelligence operations.'

"25 May 1950: National Inspection teams have completed field inspections of all units of the armed forces in North Korea (as preparatory war measures). Positive identification of seven Army divisions. . . . Note the existence of several regular Army divisions, located roughly in a cross-country belt between the 38th and 39th parallels. . . . Previous evidence of the entry from Manchuria of trained Communists of Korean ethnic origin would furnish the necessary manpower (for additional divisions). In addition, there is continuous compulsory recruitment; estimates indicate as many as 100,000 to 150,000 of North Korean youths."[32]

Despite such despatches, coming in from various intelligence agencies throughout 1949 and the first half of 1950, there was, in Secretary Acheson's words, agreement that the outbreak of war "did not appear imminent."

The Korean War actually commenced without warning at 0400 of 25 June 1950. A 45-minute artillery bombardment by North Korean batteries across the 38th parallel was followed by rapid assaults of Communist infantry and armor, composed of six North Korean divisions of infantry, three Border Constabulary Brigades, supported by approximately one hundred Soviet-made T-34 and T-70 tanks, ample heavy artillery, and the North Korean Air Force. The total strength of the attacking units was later estimated at 100,000. The North Korean Army rapidly advanced against light forces of the Republic of Korea which were unprepared and ill-equipped for any such assault.[32A] Along the east coast, a Border Constabulary Brigade, numbering 10,000 troops, carried out two amphibious landings at Kang-nung and Samchok.

On 26 June, two more North Korean divisions moved south across the parallel, and on 28 June the enemy entered Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea, without effort. In four full days of almost unimpeded Communist success, the Republic's forces were driven steadily down the peninsula without being able to rally even for temporary resistance along the Han River, 32 miles from the 38th parallel.

First official word of the assault, a report from Ambassador Muccio in Seoul made at 11:25 a.m. of 25 June in Korea, reached Washington at 9:26 p.m. on 24 June.

"According to Korean Army reports which are partly confirmed by Korean Military Advisory Group field adviser reports, North Korean forces invaded Republic of Korea territory at several points this morning. Action was initiated about 4 a.m. Ongjin was blasted by North Korean artillery fire. About 6 a.m. North Korean infantry commenced crossing the (38th) parallel in the Ongjin area, Kaesong area, and Chunchon area, and an amphibious landing was reportedly made south of Kangnung on the east coast. Kaesong was reportedly captured at 9 a.m., with some ten North Korean tanks participating in the operation. North Korean forces, spearheaded by tanks, are reportedly closing in on Chunchon. Details of the fighting in the Kangnung area are unclear, although it seems that North Korean forces have cut the highway. I am conferring with Korean Military Advisory Group advisers and Korean officials this morning concerning the situation.

"It would appear from the nature of the attack and the manner it was launched that it constitutes an all-out offensive against the Republic of Korea. (Muccio)"

The war was now seven hours old. The United Nations was informed immediately. At 3 a.m., 25 June, Washington time, the United States Government requested a meeting of the United Nations Security Council in the following words:

"Dear Mr. Secretary-General: I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the message which I read to you on the telephone at three o'clock this morning, June 25, 1950.

"Will you be good enough to bring the message to the immediate attention of the President of the United Nations Security Council.

"Faithfully yours,

"Ernest A. Gross (Deputy Representative of the United States to the United Nations)"

When this meeting took place at 2 p.m. that day, a report of the invasion sent in by the United Nations Commission in Korea was at hand.

"Government of Republic of Korea states that about 04:00 hours 25 June attacks were launched in strength by North Korean forces all along the 38th parallel. Major points of attack have included Ongjin Peninsula, Kaesong area and Chunchon, and east coast where seaborne landings have been reported north and south of Kangnung. Another seaborne landing reported imminent under air cover in Pohang area on southeast coast. . . .

"At 17:15 hrs. four Yak-type aircraft strafed civilian and military air fields outside Seoul, destroying planes, firing gas tanks and attacking jeeps. Yong-dung-po railroad station on outskirts also strafed.

"Commission wishes to draw attention of Secretary-General to serious situation developing which is assuming character of full-scale war and may endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. It suggests that he consider possibility of bringing matter to notice of Security Council. Commission will communicate more fully considered recommendation later. (The United Nations Commission to Korea to the Secretary-General.)"

By a vote of 9 to 0—with one abstention, and with the Soviet representative absent, as he had been since January 1950—the Security Council took action by resolution, as follows:

"The Security Council,

"Noting with grave concern the armed attack upon the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea,

"Determines that this action constitutes a breach of the peace,

"I. Calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities, and

"Calls upon the authorities of North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the thirty-eighth parallel;

"II. Requests the United Nations Commission on Korea

"(a) To communicate its fully considered recommendations on the situation with the least possible delay;

"(b) To observe the withdrawal of the North Korean forces to the thirty-eighth parallel; and

"(c) To keep the Security Council informed on the execution of this resolution;

"III. Calls upon all members to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution and to refrain from giving assistance to the North Korean authorities. (Resolution Adopted by the Security Council, June 25, 1950.)"

On the evening of the same day, as a result of a Blair House[32B] meeting of the President with representatives from the State and Defense Departments, the Joint Chiefs of Staff notified General MacArthur: "Assist in evacuating United States dependents and noncombatants (names to be furnished by the United States Ambassador in Korea). MacArthur authorized to take action by Air and Navy to prevent the Inchon-Kimpo-Seoul area from falling into unfriendly hands."

General MacArthur was also told to furnish to the Korean Government additional military supplies under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program, and to dispatch a military survey group to Korea to obtain first-hand information on the assistance required by the Republic of Korea to meet the Communist attack.

By 26 June it was apparent that the North Koreans had the capability of taking Seoul within a short time and that their advance might interfere with the completion of the evacuation task. Another conference of representatives of the State and Defense Departments was held at Blair House with the President presiding. Following this conference, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised General MacArthur: ". . . at the direction of the President, the Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE) is authorized to utilize Navy and Air Force elements of the Far East Command to attack all North Korean military targets (troop columns, guns, tanks) south of the 38th parallel in order to clear South Korea of North Korean military forces. . . . he is authorized to use naval forces of the Far East Command in the coastal waters and sea approaches of Korea without restriction. . . ."[33]

The following day, 27 June, the United Nations Security Council adopted a second resolution:

"The Security Council,

"Having determined that the armed attack upon the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea constitutes a breach of the peace,

"Having called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, and

"Having called upon the authorities of North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the 38th parallel, and

"Having noted from the report of the United Nations Commission for Korea that the authorities in North Korea have neither ceased hostilities nor withdrawn their armed forces to the 38th parallel and that urgent military measures are required to restore international peace and security, and

"Having noted the appeal from the Republic of Korea to the United Nations for immediate and effective steps to secure peace and security,

"Recommends that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area."[34]

On this same day, President Truman issued a statement:

"In Korea the Government forces, which were armed to prevent border raids and to preserve internal security, were attacked by invading forces from North Korea. The Security Council of the United Nations called upon the invading troops to cease hostilities and to withdraw to the 38th parallel. This they have not done but on the contrary have pressed the attack. The Security Council called upon all members of the United Nations to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution. In these circumstances I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support.

"The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security. In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the

Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area.

"Accordingly I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa. . . ."

On 7 July, the United Nations Security Council adopted a third resolution:

"The Security Council, having determined that the armed attack upon the Republic of Korea by forces from North Korea constitutes a breach of the peace, having recommended that members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area,

"(1) Welcomes the prompt and vigorous support which governments and peoples of the United Nations have given to its resolutions of 25 and 27 June 1950 to assist the Republic of Korea in defending itself against armed attack and thus to restore international peace and security in the area;

"(2) Notes that members of the United Nations have transmitted to the United Nations offers of assistance for the Republic of Korea;

"(3) Recommends that all members providing military forces and other assistance pursuant to the aforesaid Security Council resolutions make such forces and other assistance available to a unified command under the United States;

"(4) Requests the United States to designate the commander of such forces;

"(5) Authorizes the unified command at its discretion to use the United Nations flag in the course of operations against North Korean forces concurrently with the flags of the various nations participating.

"(6) Requests the United States to provide the Security Council with reports, as appropriate on the course of action taken under the unified command."[35]

Seven countries voted for the resolution: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, Cuba, Ecuador and Norway.

Three countries abstained: Egypt, India and Yugoslavia.

One country was absent: the Soviet Union.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan
Holding the Bridgehead

The war which neither the American people nor the United States Navy expected to fight—and, for that matter, the war which neither the Russians, Chinese Communists, nor the North Koreans expected us to fight—found the following ships of the United States Navy in the waters around Japan on 25 June 1950:
Click here to view table

In Tokyo, the staff of Commander Naval Forces, Far East, Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, numbered 29 officers.

In an interview at Tokyo in October 1950, Admiral Joy said:

"My main peacetime mission had been largely one of promoting the recovery and rehabilitation of Japan. Operations involving the U.S. Navy were relatively minor. Instead, my staff supervised the mine clearance work and the Japanese merchant marine and shipbuilding program. My staff also supervised the naval stations at Yokosuka and Sasebo.

"The one cruiser, four destroyers, and six minesweepers assigned to me had a variety of peacetime tasks: patrolling the Tsushima Straits to prevent smuggling between Korea and Japan; periodic patrols around Hokkaido; the showing of our flag in the various Japanese ports; various training operations; and patrols along the Ryukyus to prevent smuggling by the Chinese pirates.

"When the word of the invasion of South Korea reached me, I felt that we should oppose the aggression, but I didn't think we would. Consequently, when the United Nations took action, and American forces were ordered into Korea, I was quite surprised. This was the general impression among all of us in Japan.

"General MacArthur was likewise surprised, and commented that this action was a complete reversal of our Far East policy. He and I agreed that opposing the invasion was the correct action, but we were surprised that it happened. As a consequence, we had no plans for this type of war.

"At first, the Army estimated that Korea would be overrun within six weeks. Also, there was great concern lest the civil war in Korea prove to be merely the starting point for World War III.

"For this reason, I ordered the Seventh Fleet into Okinawa rather than Sasebo. Sasebo was too near Russian airbases."

General MacArthur told the authors that the United States-United Nations decision to intervene in the Korean conflict was a surprise, and added: "The military policy of the United States as communicated to me up to that time was to avoid action on the Korean Peninsula—and I was not consulted with regard to the decision to intervene before it was taken."

The units of the Seventh Fleet were divided among Sangley Point, Subic Bay, and Hong Kong. Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble, the Seventh Fleet Commander, was in Washington, and Rear Admiral J. M. Hoskins, Commander Carrier Division Three, was acting.

Seventh Fleet (VADM A. D. Struble)
ComCarDiv 3 (RADM J. M. Hoskins)
1 CV: *Valley Forge* (CAPT L. K. Rice)
1 CA: *Rochester* (CAPT E. L. Woodyard)
8 DDs: *Shelton* (CDR C. B. Jackson, Jr.)
Eversole (CDR C. E. Phillips)
Fletcher (CDR W. M. Lowry)

Radford (CDR E. C. Ogle)
Maddox (CDR P. B. Hines, Jr.)
S. N. Moore (CDR R. H. Wanless)
Brush (CDR F. L. Sheffield, Jr.)
Taussig (CDR W. C. Meyer)

The Fleet's peacetime mission had largely been that of showing the flag around the Orient; in fact, the planes of Air Group Five had flown in parade over Inchon and Seoul on 5 April from the decks of the *Valley Forge*. A few days later they had appeared over Hong Kong.

"At the end of May, the Seventh Fleet had held large scale exercises between China and the Philippines," said Admiral Struble later.[1] "These Fleet exercises had taken place during the turn-over period when a greater number of ships were present, and when Admiral Joy's forces could be present. For the rest of the summer, I planned to have the Fleet pay a visit to Manila on 4 July, then a visit to Hong Kong, and a summer trip to Japan.

"In mid-June, I flew up to Manila to confer with the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Louis Johnson, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Bradley. We talked about many problems: the Huk problem in the Philippines, and the many probabilities of what might happen in other areas—Formosa, Indo-China, and Japan. Although Korea was in the Seventh Fleet area of responsibility, the subject of that country was not brought up.

"On 18 June I left Manila for Pearl Harbor and Washington for talks with Admiral Radford and Admiral Sherman, and to attend the wedding of my daughter.

"Therefore, I was in Washington on Sunday, 25 June, when the Korean War started. I raised the question of my departure time, and Sherman told me to wait until the next day after conclusion of the talks he was having with the President and other senior officials.

"I did so, and upon my departure Admiral Sherman assured me that U.S. forces would definitely be committed in Korea."

The free world could consider itself fortunate that the Seventh Fleet and the NavFE (Naval Forces, Far East) ships were within fast cruising distance of Korea, and that they were well prepared and in a high state of readiness. The *Valley Forge*, with Air Group Five aboard, was the number one carrier and jet-trained air group of the Pacific Fleet. Cruisers *Rochester* and *Juneau* were likewise well trained. The ships of the Destroyer squadron and division were old hands in the Orient.

Two other circumstances proved fortunate as the war intensified. First, Amphibious Group One (RADM James H. Doyle, USN, aboard the *Mount McKinley*) was in the area conducting amphibious training exercises in Japanese waters. It was, perhaps, the most seasoned group of amphibious experts in the Pacific Fleet. Second, Mobile Training Team Able of the Troop Training Unit, Amphibious Force, Pacific (Officer in Charge Colonel Edward H. Forney, USMC) was engaged in indoctrinating the U.S. Eighth Army in Japan.

The presence of these naval ships, the amphibious group, and the Marine training team were of critical importance to the maintenance of a toehold in Korea. The first eighty-two days of the Korean War—from 25 June until the Inchon landing on 15 September 1950—were a retreat to a defensible perimeter and a desperate holding action. All military efforts—Army, Navy, Air Force—in these critical days were devoted to a single objective: maintaining a Korean bridgehead around the port of Pusan and preventing South Korean and American soldiers from being overrun, outflanked, cut off, captured, or eventually thrown into the sea.

With this perspective, the naval history of the early days of the Korean War can be divided into four principal efforts: the flights of the carrier aircraft of Task Forces 77 and 96 on close air support, armed reconnaissance, and interdiction missions; the naval gunfire support and bombardment efforts of the cruisers and destroyers along the east coast; the timely amphibious landing at Pohang, and the amphibious evacuation of the Third ROK division in July and August, respectively; and the timely arrival of the U.S. Marines.

None of these efforts can lay exclusive claim to the salvation of the peninsular toehold by the UN forces.

In combination, however, these several naval events powerfully contributed to holding the Pusan perimeter. Had these naval events *not* been successfully executed, Korea could certainly *not* have been held.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan

Initial Orders to an Assembling Fleet

On Sunday, 26 June, Washington time,[1A] in a teletype conference between the principal military figures in Tokyo and Washington, the following orders regarding U.S. naval forces were issued:

". . . CINCFE is authorized to take such action by air and Navy to insure safe evacuation U.S. dependents and noncombatants. . . . Seventh Fleet is ordered to proceed immediately to Sasebo and report to ComNavFE for operational control. . . . While the foregoing decisions are geared to the protection of dependents and noncombatants, further high-level decisions may be expected as military and political situations develop. . . ."

Simultaneously, in a despatch from the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, to Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, the order to ready other ships for duty in the western Pacific was issued:

". . . In an orderly manner and as soon as practicable organize another task group plus appropriate support for the western Pacific. . . ."

At 0800, 27 June, Rear Admiral J. M. Hoskins sortied the Seventh Fleet from Subic Bay and Hong Kong, and headed for Sasebo. En route north in the vicinity of Formosa, *Valley Forge* planes (which had departed Hong Kong 24 June) flew through the Straits of Formosa and over the city of Taipei on 29 June. For the first few days of the Korean War, the sole task of the Seventh Fleet was the neutralization of Formosa in accordance with the Presidential order.

As the Seventh Fleet steamed northward at high speed, Vice Admiral C. T. Joy, Commander Naval Forces, Far East, ordered Hoskins to pull into Buckner Bay, Okinawa, rather than Sasebo, Japan. Here the Fleet would be close to Formosa, it would be close to Korea, and yet not too close to either Soviet or Chinese air bases. In the hectic initial days of the Korean War, no one knew whether or not the eruption was the first evidence of a local war or a global one. The news of the "incident" in Korea was only hours old when Secretary of State Dean Acheson alerted both diplomatic and military circles in Washington with the following despatch:

"Possible that Korea is only first of series of coordinated actions on part of Soviets. Maintain utmost vigilance and report immediately any positive or negative information. . . ."[2]

No orders to the Fleet had yet been received from General MacArthur's headquarters, and no authority to attack *north* of parallel 38 had been issued from Washington. At this early stage, there was even some hope that the mere prospect of involvement of American airplanes and ships in accordance with the UN resolutions might cause the North Korean People's Army to cease and desist.

Meanwhile, on 27 June, Vice Admiral Joy ordered Rear Admiral Higgins to take his flagship Juneau and the destroyer *De Haven*, and patrol the coastal waters south of the 38th parallel and oppose any hostile landings. *De Haven* and *Mansfield* had just completed the Navy's first task, the evacuation of American nationals from Inchon and Pusan. *Juneau* and *De Haven* had also escorted the ammunition ship *Sergeant Keathley* from Tokyo to Pusan, while *Collett* and *Mansfield* were escorting the *Cardinal O'Connell.* Both the *Keathley* and the *O'Connell* were carrying badly needed ammunition and military supplies to Korea.

With so many tasks to perform, and so few ships with which to accomplish them, the receipt of a message from Admiral Sir Patrick Brind, RN (Commander in Chief, Far East Station, Hong Kong) on 28 June was most heartening and welcome to Admiral Joy:

"I shall be very glad to know of any operations in which my ships could help," Brind radioed. "Present dispositions are Task Group 96.8 in South Japan under Rear Admiral Andrewes consisting of *Triumph, Belfast,*

Jamaica, two destroyers and three frigates. . . ."[2A]

The Australians and New Zealanders were equally prompt:

"Her majesty's Australian ships in Japanese waters are placed unreservedly at your disposal as you wish."

"Two New Zealand frigates will be ready to leave Auckland 3 July. Further ships later."

Joy replied that these ships were needed very badly indeed. The carrier, cruiser, and two destroyers could join the American Striking Force, the other ships the escort and blockade force.

The naval preliminaries were thus completed. American nationals and noncombatants had been evacuated from Korea. Urgently needed military supplies requested by the South Koreans had been delivered. Fighting ships had assembled. The ships of the blockade force were joined by British and Australian ships. The Seventh Fleet in Okinawa's Buckner Bay was joined by the British cruiser *Belfast* (flagship of Rear Admiral W. G. Andrewes, RN), carrier *Triumph*, and destroyers *Cossack* and *Consort.*

"Upon my arrival in Okinawa from my conference in Tokyo," said Admiral Struble subsequently, "RADM Andrewes reported to me, saying that he was very anxious to have his ships join the first expedition into the Yellow Sea. Although the *Triumph* was slower than the *Valley Forge*, and there were other operating difficulties, these were successfully solved. I decided to include them in the Task Force 77 organization."

And lastly, orders for the offensive employment of the assembling fleet north of the 38th parallel were received by General MacArthur from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington:

"The Seventh Fleet is assigned to your operational control. You are authorized to extend your military operation into North Korea against . . . purely military targets if and when in your judgment this becomes necessary."[2B]

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan
The Pyongyang Strikes (3-4 July 1950)

Upon his arrival in Tokyo on 29 June, Vice Admiral Struble immediately conferred with Admiral Joy and Generals MacArthur and Stratemeyer. Where could the striking power of the carrier *Valley Forge* best be utilized? After consultation and study, the military targets in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang were selected: principally, the airfield and aircraft upon them; secondly, the Pyongyang railroad yards and bridges, over which a major portion of the enemy's munitions were being transported into South Korea.

Task Force 77 sortied on the evening of 1 July for the west coast of Korea with Pyongyang as its objective. As the combined British-American fleet steamed northward, the benefits of previous combined US-UK (United States-United Kingdom) training were noted by RADM Andrewes.[3]

"During the passage of Okinawa," recorded the British Admiral, "United States tactical signals were brought into force on 30 June. A large proportion of our commanding officers and communication personnel had, of course, had previous experience of United States procedures during World War II, but the combined exercises with the United States Fleet in March 1950 proved of value. As a result of these exercises, we were already in possession of the United States books and many of us had had recent experience with their use. . . . It all seemed familiar, joining up in Formation Four Roger, as it was just what we had done so often during the exercises in March with very similar forces. We didn't feel out of things. . . . "

Task Force 77 Tactical Organization
TF77 Striking Force[3A] (VADM A. D. Struble, USN)
TG77.1 Support Force (RADM W. G. Andrewes, RN)
HMS *Belfast* (CAPT Sir Aubrey St. Clair-Fox, Bt, RN, DSO)
USS *Rochester*
TG77.2 Screening Group (CAPT C. W. Parker, USN)
Shelton
Eversole
Fletcher
Radford
Maddox
S. N. Moore
Brush
Taussig
HMS *Cossack*
HMS *Consort*
TG77.4 Carrier Group (RADM J. M. Hoskins, USN)
Valley Forge (CAPT L. K. Rice, USN)
HMS *Triumph* (CAPT A. D. Torless, DSO)

As the task force steamed northward, a series of messages from Commander Naval Forces, Far East, was received:

"CINCFE authorizes you to continue strikes past the first day in view of the rapidly deteriorating Korean situation. Highest priority to be given to rail facilities in vicinity of Kumchon, Sariwon, and Sinanju. . . ."

In the pre-dawn of 3 July, commencing at 0545, the *Triumph* launched twelve Fireflies and nine rocket-

loaded Seafires for attacks upon hangars and installations at the Haeju airfield with railway traffic and bridges as secondary targets. The flight returned at 0815 without casualty except minor flak damage.

Valley Forge's attack group—sixteen F4U Corsairs from VF-54, led by Lieutenant Commander D. K. English, and twelve AD Skyraiders from VA-55, led by Lieutenant Commander N. D. Hodson—were off at 0600. The Corsairs were loaded with eight 5-inch rockets, the Skyraiders with two 500-pound bombs and six 100-pounders.

Shortly thereafter, eight F9F2 Panthers were catapulted from *Valley Forge* led by air group commander Commander Harvey P. Lanham. Although the jets (being used in combat for the first time by the U.S. Navy) departed behind the propeller-driven strike group, they would overtake and climb above them, and arrive just ahead in order to catch North Korean planes on the ground.

While the en route weather was poor, the weather over Pyongyang was good. The jet sweep's first pass across the Pyongyang field accounted for three planes: Commander Lanham's guns fired a transport plane on the ground, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Leonard Plog and Ensign E. W. Brown, Jr., each destroyed an airborne YAK fighter.[4] The second pass accounted for two more aircraft on the ground—one by Lieutenant (junior grade) Donald L. Christianson, the other by the U.S. Air Force exchange officer, Major Edward F. Connor, USAF.

Concurrently, while the jets were igniting the hangars, ammunition dumps, and revetments, the propeller strike group arrived overhead. The twelve ADs made a high-speed approach, and a final pushover from 7,000 feet, closely followed by the Corsairs.

The pattern of the bombs and rockets was excellent, and little of the Pyongyang airfield's installations escaped damage. One bomb was a direct hit on the field's fuel storage farm; all three of the hangars were demolished; the runways were liberally cratered.

The enemy antiaircraft fire was meager and inaccurate, and no hits on the naval aircraft were reported.

The afternoon flights were similar, with the Pyongyang railyard and rail and road bridges across the Taedong River as primary targets. Rockets and bombs exploded in the roundhouse, the repair sheds, the station house, and the tracks; fifteen locomotives were destroyed, ten others damaged; many boxcars were bombed, strafed, and set afire. Although several bombs were close enough to qualify as "hits," the bridge was left standing.

However, Hodson's VA-55 pilots destroyed a span on the 4 July Independence Day attacks, as well as destroying ten locomotives. Small ships in the nearby river (thought to be gunboats because of their return fire) were also attacked and put out of action. Four aircraft, all Skyraiders, were struck by antiaircraft fire during these attacks but all succeeded in returning safely to the "Happy Valley." One of the damaged ADs, unable to reduce speed by lowering its flaps, made a high and fast approach, took a cut, landed wheels first and bounced over the protecting barriers into the planes parked forward. One AD and two F4Us were totally destroyed while three ADs, one F4U, and two F9Fs were damaged.

The initial two days of carrier strikes on the airfields and rail facilities of North Korea's capital city had been highly successful. The American-British fleet had worked together with the greatest harmony, and Struble congratulated Andrewes' ships. In addition to wrecking the city's rail center, dropping a span of the key Pyongyang bridge, and demolishing the airfield and its installations, the Seventh Fleet aircraft had destroyed eleven enemy aircraft and had damaged one.

In the month of July, as a matter of fact, *Valley Forge* pilots claimed thirty-eight aircraft destroyed and twenty-seven damaged, all except two on the ground. This performance was undoubtedly a major reason for the failure of the North Korean air force[4A] to play an important role in the subsequent fighting.

As Rear Admiral E. C. Ewen recorded later:

"It is quite possible that the early appearance of the Panthers (the F9F-2 jet aircraft) over northern Korea on 3 July had a quieting effect on Russian and Chinese plans to provide North Korea with large numbers of obsolescent propeller-type aircraft."

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan

The Landing at Pohang

To appreciate the contribution and timeliness of the Pohang landing in holding the Pusan perimeter, a brief résumé of the ground fighting is needed. The map on page 40 illustrates the rapidity of the North Korean drive southward.

On 7 July, only seven hundred-odd men of the U.S. 24th Division were in action. These had been hastily flown from Japan to Korea. General MacArthur summarized the desperate situation thus:

"The immediate problem presented is that of blocking the advance of enemy ground and flanking units now advancing on every highway and trail in Korea from coast to coast. Our estimates continue that the North Koreans are employing a total force of nine divisions supported by attached armor. The morale of their forces is extremely high and is being spurred by a continuous advance southward. Nothing that we have been able to do currently has sufficed to take the edge from the victorious ardor of the North Koreans."

On 10 July, the badly-outnumbered American and Korean troops in Korea took up defensive positions in front of Taejon, a city of 37,000 and an important communications center. Four enemy divisions, supported by heavy artillery and tanks, waded the Kum River on 14 July, attacked advanced elements of the U.S. 24th Division [5] (commanded by Major General William F. Dean), and drove toward Taejon from several directions.

The thin ranks of the 24th Division, committed piecemeal into action, were shredded by the heavy pressure. Each of the 24th's three infantry regiments had only two battalions instead of the standard three, making the defense of so wide a front impossible. The 24th was also short of artillery, having only two instead of three batteries in each artillery battalion. And the few American tanks which were available were light ones, badly outnumbered, and no match for the Soviet T-34s. In addition, the American 2.36-inch bazookas proved ineffective against the Soviet tank armor.

Click here to view map

The enemy, moreover, refused to attack in conventional patterns. His high state of training was demonstrated on the night of 16 July when a coordinated night attack struck the 24th. The attack was four-pronged—a strong frontal attack and an enveloping attack on each flank, plus infiltrating attacks from the rear. Large numbers of Red troops, disguised as refugees and with disassembled weapons hidden in innocent-looking bundles, passed through the UN lines, assembled in the rear areas, and began to harass the 24th Division from the rear.

With the ROK (Republic of Korea) forces all but collapsed, the salvation of Korea depended on getting the maximum number of American troops into action in the shortest possible time. However, getting troops from Japan to Korea was no easily-solved problem. Only limited amphibious lift was available, the main port of Pusan was already congested and confused, and the roads from Pusan to the front lines were horribly jammed by traffic and refugees, mostly southbound.

On 18 July, the prospects for holding the peninsula were ominously poor. Despite a series of brilliant rear-guard actions, the 24th Division could not hope to check the coordinated attacks of four enemy divisions in its front. Fortunately, the 25th Division was arriving, having been sea-lifted by a Military Sea Transportation Service shuttle from Kyushu to Pusan, and was getting into action. But even its hastily-arriving strength was insufficient.

The swollen, refugee-jammed dirt roads from Pusan to Taejon could accommodate no more troops or trucks. If Korea was to be saved, other reinforcements had to come by sea—and quickly.

In retrospect, it is clear that the unspectacular and unpublicized amphibious landing at Pohang-dong on 18 July did as much to preserve the perilous Korean toehold as any single event.

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan

The Selection of Pohang

By good fortune, on the day the North Koreans smashed across the 38th parallel, Rear Admiral James H. Doyle, USN, was ordering his Amphibious Group One ships to get under way from Yokosuka, Japan, to conduct amphibious training exercises with the embarked troops of the 35th Regimental Combat Team (25th Infantry Division) on Chigasaki Beach, Sagami-Wan.

Thus, a program of amphibious familiarization for the Eighth Army troops had been begun in May. While the Army units were not thereby prepared or well trained, certain rudiments of the amphibious art had been transmitted. The brief training given to the Army units would be of later value in the several amphibious landings in the next six months of the Korean war: Pohang, Inchon, Wonsan, Iwon, and Hungnam.

More important, however, was the on-the-spot availability and know-how of Amphibious Group One's amphibious shipping for rushing Army troops to Korea.

The selection of Pohang was one of simple expediency. In early July, Doyle and seven selected members of his staff had been ordered to Tokyo for consultation with Joy and MacArthur's staffs in connection with the planning of an offensive amphibious operation with the First Cavalry Division. Following these conferences, MacArthur had directed that plans be made to land the division at Inchon, or, alternatively, at Kunsan on the west coast. Planning to do so went forward until 9 July. In the words of Doyle's planning officer, CDR John V. Noel, Jr., USN: "The nine days between 4 July and 13 July were controlled pandemonium. The expression used at the time was that Inchon would be the 'anvil' upon which the First Cavalry Division would land, hammer, and destroy the North Koreans. These rosy dreams were quickly shattered by the rout of the South Koreans. . . .''

The rapid deterioration of the ground fighting in Korea made it apparent that another landing site, one on the *east* coast, had to be found for the defense of the Pusan perimeter. Doyle suggested Pohang as the most likely objective. This was accepted on 10 July.

The village of Pohang, 15,000 inhabitants, lay 70 miles north of Pusan. On 10 July it was still a safe distance from the advancing front, thanks in great measure to the sharp-shooting efforts of Rear Admiral Higgins' cruiser and destroyer naval gunfire support. The city had a useable airfield, fair anchorages, and a thousand-yard strip of sandy beach which would facilitate an amphibious landing. Better still, a single track railroad ran westward into Taegu, thence northwestward to Taejon; this could rapidly transport the First Cavalry to the central front.

While Pohang looked ideal, much vital data was needed before a landing there could be sensibly planned. Accordingly, reconnaissance group flew into Pohang on 11 July. The party consisted of three men from Amphibious Group One staff (LCDR Jack Lowentrout, CAPT Vincent J. Robinson, USMC, and LTJG George Atcheson, III), plus members from Major General Hobart Gay's First Cavalry Division staff. This reconnaissance party returned on 13 July with valuable information on the conditions of the proposed beaches, depths of water, unloading facilities, and general capabilities of the port.

The urgent need to deposit the First Cavalry Division in Korea at the earliest moment disclosed other problems. The first of these was the shortage of suitable amphibious assault shipping. Two former Military Sea Transportation Service ships, *Oglethorpe* (AKA-100, Captain Paul D. Heerbrandt) and *Titania* (AKA-13, Captain Frank D. Giambattista) were rushed into Yokosuka and fitted with hastily pre-fabricated boat skids. Other needed equipment, such as boat servicing gear, towing bridles, and boat and vehicle slings, was quickly manufactured.

In addition to getting the so-called AKAs ready, six LSUs were reactivated at Yokosuka. These six ex-

Japanese vessels, under the command of Doyle's Chief of Staff, Captain Norman W. Sears, would perform the lion's share of the unloading work at Pohang.

Click here to view map

The final shortage was personnel; boat crews, hatch crews, and communication personnel were particularly short. This problem was solved by the Amphibious Base at Coronado, California, which rushed additional personnel westward by the first available air transportation.

The assault forces for Pohang were underway from the Tokyo-Yokosuka area on 15 July to the strains of an Army band playing "Anchors Aweigh." As the Fleet sailed, no one was certain whether the fighting front would be *north* or *south* of Pohang upon their arrival. The troops might have to fight their way ashore, or they might be able to debark unopposed. Situation reports coming into the *Mount McKinley* told of a battle along the coastal road only seven miles north of Pohang. Could the Third ROK Division hold the town until the First Cavalry got there? One hopeful harbinger came from the ships of Mine Squadron Three (LCDR D. V. Shouldice) which had swept the approaches and harbor on 15-17 July. No mines were present.

With the departure of the ships, an advance party from the staffs of Admiral Doyle and General Hobart Gay, commanding the First Cavalry, flew to Pohang in order to furnish last-minute intelligence on the enemy situation and to make all possible preparations for the landing.

The naval forces arrived in Pohang's harbor at 0500 on 18 July after dodging a capricious typhoon called "Grace." All was well. The battleline was still *north* of Pohang.

Accordingly, at 0558, Doyle hoisted the signal, "Land The Landing Force," and executed his alternate "No Opposition" landing plan. Ships anchored in the inner transport area, and began landing men and equipment at the docks in the inner harbor. "This was very fortunate," said CDR Noel, "because the beaches we had planned to land on were not at all satisfactory."

Troops and vehicles unloaded as rapidly as possible. As the first soldiers stepped ashore, they were heartily welcomed by Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, Commanding General, Eighth Army. Trains were standing by to rush them and their equipment to the front.

By midnight the same evening, 10,027 troops, 2,027 vehicles and 2,729 tons of bulk cargo had been unloaded. At noon the next day, General Gay had his command ashore and had assumed responsibility for them.

Less than forty-eight hours later, the first units of the First Cavalry Division had joined the landing force; and a week later, this Division was blunting the enemy's drive down the Taegu-Pusan highway.

"I do not believe the perimeter could have been held without the timely reinforcement of our forces by the First Cavalry Division," said VADM Joy.

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan
The Wonsan Oil Refinery Strikes

By the early morning of the 18th, it was apparent that the amphibious landing at Pohang would be administrative (i.e., unopposed). Accordingly, shortly before H-hour, Admiral Doyle released the Seventh Fleet aircraft from their support role.

Admiral Struble ordered the Seventh Fleet northward into the Sea of Japan.

"While I was in Tokyo discussing the Pohang operation," said Admiral Struble later,[6] "I had several long conferences with General Stratemeyer and his FEAF staff.

"It was understood that the Seventh Fleet would cover the Pohang landing. That was our job. Even though the Air Force had planes operating from northern Kyushu, it was recognized that they didn't have the communications.

"During the course of our discussions, I told General Stratemeyer that after the landing I was going to take the Fleet and conduct air strikes north of the 38th parallel, striking targets of opportunity. If we found anything appropriate, we'd hit it. There was no objection and no mention made of what we should or shouldn't hit."

The *Valley Forge*, therefore, launched planes to strike targets in North Korea. A morning flight of seven Panthers, led by Commander A. D. Pollock, commanding officer of VF-51,[7] swept up the northeast coast past the harbor of Wonsan. Prominent along the curving shoreline on the south side of the city was an oil refinery which looked untouched and in operation.

At 1700, twenty-one planes from the *Valley Forge* were launched. The eleven AD Skyraiders, each carrying one 1,000-pound bomb, one 500-pound bomb, and two HVAR[7A] rockets were led by LCDR N. D. Hodson (Commanding Officer, VA-55). The ten F4U Corsairs, each carrying two rockets and full belts of 20-mm. ammunition, were led by LCDR W. R. Pittman (Commanding Officer, VF-53).

"The oil refinery," recorded LCDR Pittman, "stood out like a sore thumb. It was a tremendous installation, and we all recognized it immediately. My Corsairs started firing their rockets in pairs from 4,000 feet, with LT Carl E. Smith's team taking the southeast side and my four the northeast side. . . .

"Hodson followed us down and spaced his planes so as to cover the whole refinery. His squadron's bomb pattern was excellent. . . .

"When the attack was finished, it was difficult to see the target or to distinguish portions of the plant that were not destroyed due to the tremendous clouds of belching smoke from the refinery. . . . There were constant explosions as the fires steadily spread to the unbombed areas. The entire coast appeared to be on fire.

"As we went back to the 'Happy Valley,' from an altitude of 3,000 feet we could still see the smoke of that attack 60 miles away. In fact, it was still burning the next day (Note: It actually burned for four days, and it gave all our pilots an excellent navigation aid.)."[8]

After the capture of Wonsan in October 1950, the president of the Wonsan Oil Refinery Factory, Mr. Cho Byung Kwi, his chief accountant, and four of his engineers were interviewed. The six North Koreans told how the refinery had been attacked by aircraft five times *prior* to the *Valley Forge's* strike on the 18th of July. On these attacks, only three bombs had fallen inside the refinery in a storage area. The remainder had dropped without damage in nearby fields. No bombs had hit any vital area, and production had not been affected.

Regarding the naval air strike of July 18th, however, the group told how this attack had started fires which covered the entire area, both factory and storage. Direct hits and near misses saturated every vital area. The

refinery engineers stated that further operation of the plant after July 18th was impossible, that it was turned into a mass of twisted steel and rubble. Twelve thousand tons of refined products had gone up in smoke. Not one building was fit for occupancy. Streets throughout the plant were running six inches to two feet deep in oil following the attack; many roads were impassable because of rubble. The main power plant, the water tanks, the storage building, the cracking plants, the boilers, air compressors, and coke furnaces were virtually all destroyed.

In retrospect, the attack on the Chosin oil refinery (the biggest in Korea, having an estimated annual production of 1,700,000 barrels) was a target for "strategic warfare," according to the roles and missions which had been given the Armed Services in 1948 by the Key West Agreement.[8A]

However, in the tension and confusion of the Korean fighting, when American lives were at stake and everything possible was being done to halt and hurt the Communists, the academic question of *who* was supposed to do *what* received scant consideration. On many occasions during the war, in fact, the Navy was asked to perform tasks which, according to the Key West Agreement, were not among its primary responsibilities. General MacArthur's request that the Navy strike the Yalu River bridges (November 1950), the request that the Navy assume the responsibility for the interdiction of northeast Korea (January 1951), the several emergency requests for "close air support" by Task Force 77 (July-August 1950), the destruction of the Yalu River hydroelectric plants (23-24 June 1952), and the Aoji oil refinery strike (1 September 1952) are cases in point.

The destruction of the Wonsan Oil Refinery was the first instance which illustrated the inherent flexibility displayed by the Navy during the Korean War.

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan
"Close Air Support" at the Pusan Perimeter

On 23 July 1950, as the heavily-outnumbered UN forces were pushed slowly and steadily backward toward Pusan by the savage and cunning attacks of the Communists, an urgent plea for close support help from the carriers was received.

Eighth Army's dispatch, tagged with that awful precedence prefix "emergency," was multiple-addressed to every major commander in the Far East theater: MacArthur, Joy, Struble, and Stratemeyer.

"Request information as to possible naval air employment in close and general support role in Korea. . . urgent requirement exists west coast Korea commencing 23 July. . . ."[9]

This sudden request for naval air assistance commenced a two-month period of participation by Task Force 77 in a "close air support" effort which, until the Inchon landing, would occupy the major portion of the aircraft carriers' time and energy.

This period would also highlight a fundamental difference of opinion and disparity in doctrine regarding close air support between the Navy and Marines on the one hand, and the Air Force and Army on the other.

But most important, the air support rendered by the Task Force 77 carriers would prove a major factor in the salvation of the Pusan perimeter.

Before commencing the narrative of this effort in behalf of the Pusan perimeter, however, it is first necessary to define and describe "close air support," for this term had a different meaning for each of the main parties in Korea.

In the military lexicon, "close air support" is defined as "air action against hostile surface targets which are so close to friendly targets as to require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces."[10]

In laymen's language, close air support is simply the use of the armament of an airplane in behalf of, and near to, the soldier on the ground.

Simple definitions notwithstanding, the concepts and technique of providing close air support can be exceedingly complex and difficult, as will be seen. The close air support system developed and perfected by the Navy and Marines (the system least used in Korea) was substantially different from the system developed by the Air Force and the Army (the system most used in Korea).

To achieve a better understanding of how close air support influenced the course of the Korean war, and particularly the outcome of the battle to save Pusan, it is helpful to know how, why, and under what conditions the two differing systems were developed.

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan

Navy-Marine System of Close Air Support

The seed of close air support, as practiced by the Navy and Marine Corps, was planted in the 1920's during Marine Corps action in Nicaragua, Haiti, and Santo Domingo. In these Caribbean countries, airplanes and infantry functioned as a team for the first time in military history.

As an outgrowth of these primitive efforts, serious consideration was first given by Marine and naval planners in the mid-thirties for using the airplane in conjunction with the then-developing art of amphibious warfare to strengthen a weak link in the amphibious assault chain. At the vital moment when the first wave of Marines was charging across a hostile beach, naval gunfire had ceased and artillery was not yet ashore. Could not the firepower of the airplane strengthen this critical period when an amphibious assault was at its most delicate stage? Might not the guns and bombs of the airplane take the place of artillery during the initial landing?

This simple need—to contribute to the success of an amphibious assault—was the genesis of the Navy-Marine system of close air support.

The actual Navy-Marine system of close air support was perfected during World War II. In the early days of the Pacific campaign, it was recognized that properly controlled air attacks would be a major asset, even a necessity, in the successful prosecution of an amphibious advance across the Pacific. Navy and Marine officials believed that airplanes could be a valuable "supporting weapon" to help ground troops advance against the Japanese.

The Navy-Marine doctrine of close air support had its battle test during the Tarawa campaign in November 1943. For the first time in combat, front-line units were accompanied by air-liaison parties whose main duty was to assist unit ground commanders in selecting suitable targets and in transmitting this target information and instructions for attack to the airplanes overhead. At Tarawa, also, liaison aircraft were flown by senior experienced aviators who were conversant with the ground plan, and who were in radio contact with the close air support airplanes.

Following Tarawa, the Navy-Marine system was further improved under fire at Iwo Jima. The final innovation, however—the direction of attack aircraft by frontline ground units—was not extensively used until the Battle of Okinawa, at which time sufficient portable radio communication equipment made air-ground communications reliable.

Thus, by the end of World War II, the Navy-Marine system of close air support had been fully developed and battle-tested. The Navy-Marine system had proved itself time and time again—at Guam, in the Philippines, at Iwo Jima, and especially in Okinawa. Naval and Marine aircraft, under the control of foot soldiers, had learned to quickly and effectively deliver their bullets and bombs upon "close" targets (50 to 200 yards distant) directed by trained parties in the front lines.

This system was available and ready for use at the outbreak of the Korean war.

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan

Air Force Close Air Support

The system of close air support developed by the Army-Air Force and used in Korea was engendered against a different background and under a different set of conditions.

Before the European war began, the Army Air Corps, struggling even then for independence, was reluctant to embrace any concept which would tie them closer to the parent organization. The suggestion that their airplanes be used to supplement or increase the firepower of ground arms, or to support ground forces, was, if not anathema, very unpopular. Even the word "support" was displeasing since it had a subservient connotation. "Coordination" was a much preferred word since it implied equality.

Furthermore, the airmen strongly felt that any organization or employment wherein foot-soldiers exercised command over airplanes was "an attempt to shackle the air to the ground, and therefore, a failure to realize the full capabilities of air attack."[11]

In the mid-1930's, therefore, "close air support" in any size, shape, or form was an unpalatable concept to the embryonic Army Air Corps.

As the European war unfolded, the Army Air Corps watched Hitler's armies stab across Poland and speed across the Lowlands and France, spearheaded by the famed dive-bombing Stukas of the German Luftwaffe. Here, airplanes were coordinated with tanks and infantry under the Luftwaffe doctrine of allowing planes to be placed under the operational control of ground commanders.

Studying the German technique, U.S. Air Force planners quite accurately saw a serious fault. The Luftwaffe was tied too closely to the ground forces as a supporting weapon. As a consequence, the Luftwaffe's ground support aircraft had not been designed to live in the air, as well as to assist the ground fighting. To avoid this fatal error, the U.S. Air Force—and Britain's Royal Air Force as well—concluded that tactical airplanes must *not* be given to ground forces. Instead, tactical air power should be *centrally* controlled and applied en masse for the over-all objective of gaining control of the air. Only after the air had been swept clear of the enemy's planes and "interdiction of the battlefield" commenced, should tactical air be permitted to perform the secondary role of close air support.[12]

As for the mechanics of providing close air support, the Air Force system depended on *airborne* controllers. A light liaison-type plane would circle the frontlines area to spot enemy targets and to direct the bombs and gunfire of other planes upon them.

Two other factors were present in World War II which had their effect upon the differing systems of close air support that were developed.

The first of these was the differences in geography and terrain. The war in Europe was fought across a continent where rapid movement was common and, except in Italy, where battlelines were fluid. In contrast, the Pacific war was fought across an ocean, from one island group to another. The terrain of these islands was rugged and limited and made large movements of ground forces unnecessary.

The second influence which contributed to two different systems was the difference in the enemy. In the European war, the enemy was the German soldier, fighting a Western-style war. In the Pacific, however, a fatalistic, even suicidal enemy had to be blasted from his defending positions, foxhole by foxhole, cave by cave, and from one line of resistance to the next line of resistance. Such a war demanded "close" air support at its best.

When the Korean War began, the Air Force system of close air support was not immediately ready, for two reasons. The first and fundamental reason was that an earlier high-level decision reached in Washington

(discussed in Chapter I, “Gathering War Clouds”) had given far greater importance and priority to Strategic Air than to Tactical Air. The second reason was the fact that the mission to train for close air support types of operations was not included in either Far Eastern Air Force or Eighth Army missions. The Fifth Air Force in Japan had as its primary mission the *air* defense of Japan, while the Eighth Army’s primary responsibility was the *ground* defense of Japan.

For these reasons, prior to the start of the Korean War, there had been no effort made in Japan to erect a tactical air control system, to train ground liaison officers, to stockpile equipment, or to conduct training operations in which air-ground operations were stressed or employed.

One of the early naval missions, in fact, was a special trip by the USS *Boxer* to Japan on 23 July to bring 145 F-51 prop-type aircraft for the Far Eastern Air Force. *Boxer* made the transpacific run in eight days and seven hours.

Thus, the start of the Korean War saw two different systems of close air support in being.

The Air Force system had largely been developed in the European theater. There, the exercise of command over aircraft was not given to frontline units; employment of aircraft was jointly coordinated at the Army level by two officers—one air, one ground. Strike planes did not orbit the battlefront, but were assigned to a particular mission as approved by the joint operations center (JOC). Upon arrival at the scene of conflict, planes would be directed and controlled by airborne, liaison-type aircraft, not by ground parties. Close air support targets were considered to be those within the immediate battle zone, as much as ten miles away.

At the time of the outbreak of the Korean war, this system was not immediately ready.

The Navy-Marine system, on the other hand, had largely been developed in the Pacific war as an indivisible part of an amphibious assault. A certain number of aircraft were committed for use and control by the ground commander, who could use their services as and where he saw fit. A few planes constantly orbited the battlefield, ready to strike “close air support” targets that were within 50 to 200 yards of the immediate front lines. The pilots received guidance and information for their attacks from a trained crew directly in the front lines.

At the outbreak of the Korean war, this system was ready.[13]

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan
Eighth Army Endangered

The shrinking perimeter around Pusan was threatened with encirclement and collapse in late July as the first elements of the Sixth North Korean Division swept into Mokpo, the South Korean naval base at the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula. Travelling mostly at night, enemy troops had rapidly infiltrated south. So skillfully was this flanking movement conducted that Republic of Korea police reported the movement merely as a movement of guerrilla forces. On 24 July, U.S. naval air reconnaissance reported large movements of unidentified troops to southwest Korea.

The Eighth Army now realized that regular North Korean army units were involved and that it was in danger of encirclement and isolation. Between the enemy and Pusan, a scant 150 miles, there were few United Nations ground forces to stop the encirclement.

It was this situation which compelled General Walker to query Tokyo about close air support from the Seventh Fleet.

"The first word of the encirclement reached me at my desk . . . ," reported Rear Admiral A. K. Morehouse, Chief of Staff to Admiral Joy. "The call came from Brigadier General Jarred V. Crabbe of the Air Force. He told me that the ground situation was desperate, and that the Navy's help was needed at once . . . . It was obvious we had to help, even though I had a lot of personal misgivings. In the first place, I knew there were too few trained ground control parties available at the front. Air-ground communications were bound to be crowded. Numerous details essential to a job like that just had to be forgotten—things like arrangements for marking our front lines, and using the same maps with identical co-ordinates. But our forces were in such a desperately bad way that naval air had to come to their rescue the best way they could."[14]

Admiral Struble answered the Eighth Army's emergency message for help in fifty-one minutes flat. The Seventh Fleet commander replied that his naval aircraft, as soon as refueling and replenishment of ammunition was completed, would be available. However, Struble cautioned that the successful use of the carrier planes for close air support missions was predicated on the establishment of "satisfactory communications and control." As a minimum requirement for any successful air-ground support, Struble suggested that either Commander Amphibious Group One's Tactical Control Squadron be despatched to Korea immediately with their equipment, [14A] or that a small seven-man party from the Fleet experienced in ground control operations be sent ashore.

Admiral Joy, in answering the EUSAK (Eighth U.S. Army in Korea) emergency despatch, sounded the same note:

"In the coordination of naval air with the Fifth Air Force, no great difficulty is anticipated. However, coordination, which has been delegated to CG, Far-east Air Force, depends absolutely on successful joint communications. . . ."[15]

Joy also despatched Struble that the dangerous and desperate situation on the ground in Korea demanded that the fast carriers participate at the earliest possible time:

"'. . . The calculated risk of damage to friendly forces must be accepted,' he told Struble. 'The ground situation is so critical that commencement of operations on 25th is highly desirable. . . '."

At midnight 24 July, the Seventh Fleet weighed anchor and headed for the east coast of Korea to participate in the first close air support strikes of the Korean War.

Planes from the *Valley Forge* were launched at 0800 the next morning, with orders to report to the U.S. Fifth Air Force's advanced headquarters, Joint Operation Center (JOC), Taegu.[15A] The British carrier *Triumph*

supplied the majority of the combat air patrol in order that every available *Valley Forge* plane could be sent over the battle zone. In twenty minutes the naval planes were over the frontlines.

The pilots, having been briefed that the Eighth Army was in desperate straits and in sore need of every bullet and bomb which could be delivered to their defense, circled the JOC, trying to report their presence.

However, the too-few communication channels were jammed, and the too-few "Mosquito" plane controllers were overloaded.[15B] Proper maps were lacking, and circuit discipline was non-existent.[15C] In some instances, while Skyraiders and Corsairs circled the frontlines trying to establish communications with the liaison aircraft, F-80 jets from Japanese bases, some carrying two rockets, others only machine gun ammunition, were called in for strikes. After varying periods of trying to contact the "Mosquito" controllers, the naval pilots flew westward searching the roads and trails for military targets of opportunity. Some aircraft found targets; others did not; a few pilots jettisoned their loads in the sea before returning to the carrier.

Struble's early afternoon despatch reported this first close air effort:

"The results of the morning sweeps and strikes were very minor due to a dearth of targets. No rolling stock seen, only a few donkey carts plus men in rice paddies. On the whole, the area is one of peaceful agriculture. Seven trucks strafed did not burn. Four trucks strafed and burned. Will continue afternoon strikes, but under above conditions, the prospects appear poor. Consider it mandatory that proper communications be arranged. . . ."

The *Valley Forge* planes flew close support on the 26th of July, again with limited success. Few of their heavy loads could be delivered, and none of it in the Naval-Marine technique of close air support. However, several flights found enemy targets. Pittman, leading ten VF-53 F4Us, got five trucks; Hodson, leading six VA-55 ADs, got two more; Barker, leading seven VF-53 F4Us, got two more; Ramsey, leading four VA-55 ADs, got another, damaged a railroad bridge, and fired a village concealing troops.

Because of deteriorating weather conditions, the Fleet moved during the evening of the 26th to the west coast of Korea, refueling en route.

Admiral Joy summarized the initial efforts in a despatch to Admiral Sherman:

"Even though MacArthur and Walker express enthusiasm over the effect of carrier air assigned to close and general support missions, the results were disappointing. . . . Investigation of Army and Air Force tactical air in Korea indicates need for reorganization and training before minimum Navy standards can be attained. Air Force appears receptive to Navy's suggestions, but training will take time. The critical situation continues at front and overrides any consideration of whether the missions given our naval forces are optimum. In view of the situation, we must do everything within our capabilities. . . ."

In Tokyo, meanwhile, an effort was made to alleviate the air-ground communication problem. Admiral Joy had attached to his command part of an ANGLICO[15D] Company, OinC LT E. B. Williams, a unit specifically trained in the control of both naval gunfire and naval aircraft on shore targets. If Army-Air Force personnel could be provided and radio equipment assembled, this ANGLICO might quickly train frontline teams for controlling the attacks of the Air Force and naval aircraft. Joy sent the following proposal to the headquarters of MacArthur and Stratemeyer:

". . . Suggest the most profitable use of the ANGLICO detachment is to conduct training in the Tokyo area, preferably at Johnson Air Force Base. Admiral Doyle will assume responsibility for the training. In three days time, the ANGLICO can train six tactical air control parties, each party consisting of one officer and five enlisted, including one technician. Please advise me if this training is desired. I am ready to begin now. . . ."[16]

The Fleet, meanwhile, was also considering remedies. Successful close air support hinged on air-ground communications. Without a good link between ground and air, the full power of the naval aircraft could not be exploited.

First, Admiral Hoskins called a three-way huddle: his own staff, the *Valley Forge*, and the Britishers

from HMS *Triumph.* What could be done? Well, the Royal Navy officers replied, they had a radio jeep, and one army major and one captain trained in the close support control of airplanes; could *they* be used?

They certainly could. *Valley Forge* offered to supply the technicians and other personnel to form a complete tactical air control party. Even *one* more experienced ground control party in Korea would be a big help.

Admirable as was the intent of this suggestion, it never came to pass. On the 29th of July the *Valley Forge* returned to the battleline, the British carrier was detached from the American task force to join the British task group and never returned.

The second thing Hoskins thought of to increase the Navy's contribution to holding the Pusan perimeter was to send a personal representative to the Joint Operation Center, Korea. He discussed the problem with Vice Admiral Struble on the TBS radio. The task force commander authorized Hoskins to send a representative to JOC, Korea. On 27 July, therefore, LCDR C. H. Gates of CAG-5 was catapulted off *Valley Forge*.

Gates' visit to the JOC proved valuable. He arranged for the establishment of a direct communication channel between the JOC and the Fleet. He briefed the JOC personnel on the capabilities and limitations of a carrier and its airplanes. He explained the disparity in maps.

The naval aviators were using World Aeronautical Charts (WAC), whereas the Air Force pilots were using coded and gridded charts.[16A] To give directions to naval pilots meant that the Air Force controller flying in his Mosquito airplane would have to locate the target on his gridded chart, convert the target's co-ordinates to latitude and longitude, and pass these to the naval pilot. This laborious conversion, while adding to the already-strained communication channels, had to be accepted. Gates also arranged an armament loading code, and was able to induce the JOC to divide the burden of control among the controllers and to reduce the orbit time of the naval airplanes.[17]

Gates also brought back to the Fleet the first accurate description of the desperate ground situation.

The next effort to improve the Fleet's close air support contributions took place on 3 August while ships replenished at Sasebo. At a conference in Tokyo between FEAF and COMNAVFE officers (VADM Struble, the Fleet Commander, was not present, then being in Formosa with General MacArthur), a memorandum of agreement was prepared which made close support the first priority task for the Seventh Fleet carriers "under direct control of the Fifth Air Force."[17A] (However, close air support was provided only upon request of FAFIK (Fifth Air Force in Korea) and *after* approval by COMNAVFE; at other times, the carriers were free to operate in other areas of Korea.) Second priority targets were interdiction targets south of the 38th parallel; and third priority targets were the B-29 targets. This memorandum allowed little leeway for the avoidance of bad weather. This informal memorandum, which Struble had not concurred in, was later abrogated in part by Admiral Joy on 24 August.

Philippine Sea (CAPT W. K. Goodney) arrived on the first of August.[17B] At long last, the "Happy Valley" had a teammate. On the 5th, the two carriers headed for Korean waters to perform close support over the front lines. Once again an attempt was made by the Navy to reduce the control and communications bottleneck. Liaison pilots from both *Valley Forge* and *Philippine Sea* were despatched ashore to Taegu to perform the dual role of liaison and to control the attacks of naval planes. The plan was for one pilot to return to the Fleet daily so that he could present the existing ground and intelligence picture. The other planes would supplement the too-few Mosquito aircraft. Five such liaison planes were sent in on the 5th and 6th, six planes on the 7th, and one plane on the 8th.

As a result of these visits, the frontlines were divided into four sectors, each one having an airborne Air Force controller, plus a naval aircraft controller. The naval planes were supposed to control only naval strikes—but it became quickly apparent that the naval planes would have to control anything and everything that came into their area.

This temporary expedient helped to reduce the confusion and resulted in diminishment of the

communication snafus. Controlled by the Mosquitos, LCDR Hodson, CO, VA-55, led 5 ADs from *Valley Forge* to attack and kill many enemy troops near Korysong; the next day, Hodson did a repeat, bombing, rocketing, and napalming more troops and destroying a supply dump. LTJG Billy Glen Jackson, leading four *Valley Forge* Skyraiders, destroyed two trucks, one jeep, and one tank in an attack near Kumchon.

Notwithstanding these successes, close air support was still not what it might have been. Many of the naval aircraft assigned for close support could not be directed and were diverted to armed reconnaissance missions along the roads approaching the battlefront. Lightly-loaded flights of F-80 Shooting Star jets from their Japanese bases arrived over the battle zone, and because of their short endurance, had to be used immediately. As they were sent in by the Air Force Mosquitos to make attacks, the naval aircraft were often ordered to "stand by" or to "stand clear." To the naval pilots circling with their heavy loads,[17C] it was disappointing to be told to wait while a succession of lightly-loaded jets, some with only five minutes to spend over the target, were called in for strikes.

Moreover, in the minds of the naval pilots, the circuit discipline of some of the Air Force aviators was poor. There were many long-winded discussions between them and the Mosquito pilots about the targets, their location, the terrain, the mission, the weather, and the ordnance—and the results. In a few isolated occasions, as naval aircraft orbited, F-51 aircraft from other areas were ordered to strike the same sectors that naval aircraft had been circling.

The ground situation worsened during the 7th and 8th of August. General MacArthur, fearful lest the Eighth Army be overwhelmed, directed that during the period 8-17 August *all* of the air effort, including that from the carriers of Task Force 77, be devoted to close air support and interdiction. *Valley Forge* and *Philippine Sea* were directed to stagger their withdrawals for resupply in order to maintain continuous pressure on the frontlines.[17D]

"Immediately after my trip to Formosa with General MacArthur," said Vice Admiral Struble, "I commenced Seventh Fleet operations on as intensive a schedule as possible, in order to apply a steady and unremitting pressure upon the North Korean ground forces. I ordered the support force of the Seventh Fleet to transfer its base of operations from Okinawa to Sasebo in order to increase the amount of time that the carriers could spend on the line."[18]

Reports from leaders of the carrier strikes indicated considerable results:

"10 Aug: LT S. Dalzell, Jr., leading two F4Us and two ADs from *Philippine Sea*: 'Incendiary and GP bombs were used against barracks—results good, although attacks were not controlled.'

"16 Aug: LT M.D. Gallagher, leading 5 ADs from *Valley Forge*: 'Destroyed 8 trucks, one jeep. Damaged 3 trucks, one village. Mosquito controller appeared inexperienced. We assisted in spotting targets and frontlines.'

"16 Aug: LCDR L. W. Chick, leading 8 ADs and 8 F4Us from *Philippine Sea*: 'Enemy troops were hit in 9 villages by bombs and strafing, and in 3 orchards by rockets and strafing. 2 trucks strafed.'

"16 Aug: LT C. E. Smith, leading 4 F4Us from *Valley Forge*: 'Burned supply and gasoline dump and 4 villages near Taegu.'

"19 Aug: LCDR E. T. Deacon, leading 10 F4Us and 8 ADs from *Philippine Sea*: 'The Mosquito controller was contacted on the assigned channel, and although all channels were very crowded, it was possible to maintain good contact . . . Troop concentrations and supply dumps east of Hypochan were bombed with depth bombs and frags. Large fires resulted in five separate areas. The burned area was between Hypochan and the frontlines along the Naktong river. When these concentration areas were set on fire, personnel ran out into the fields where they were strafed. Two trucks were blown up and three others possibly destroyed. Approximately 30 troops were killed and a like number were probably wounded by the frags and 20-mm. shells. Two command cars were caught driving into a warehouse to hide. The warehouse was set on fire and the vehicles destroyed'."

"As the Fleet retired to Sasebo following this considerable series of operations," said VADM Struble, "a

temporary lull in the ground fighting had been reached. It was at this time that I was informed that I was to command the Inchon invasion. I immediately assembled a few staff officers and departed for Tokyo in order to commence the top command planning for Inchon."

Commenting on the close air support, Rear Admiral E. C. Ewen, who had taken command of Task Force 77, evaluated the carriers' efforts:

"A continuation of the present method of providing close air support," he recorded, "is both wasteful and ineffective. It is my opinion that less than 30 percent of this Fleet's potential close air support air power has been used in 'Taegu-type' close air support operations."[19]

Admiral Hoskins commented that better results would have been obtained if the Fleet had only been asked to provide four to eight planes on station continually over the battleline instead of a "maximum all-out effort."

The simple fact was that there were too few trained control parties on the ground, too few "Mosquito" planes in the air, and too little equipment to handle the numbers of aircraft over the battleline.

While it was irritating to some and regretful to all that the full striking power and the precision skill of the naval planes in the close air support mission could not be delivered in behalf of the Pusan perimeter, the contributions of the carriers were nonetheless substantial.

A close air support flight flown by *Valley Forge* aircraft on 10 August will illustrate the frequent daily accomplishments made during this period. By comparing this strike with a Marine strike on page 64, the reader will note the differences of the two close air support systems in actual practice.

Four F4Us from *Valley Forge* (VF-53), led by Lieutenant Clarence E. Smith, reported to the JOC at Taegu and were ordered to contact the U.S. Air Force liaison airplane "Mosquito Wildwest 7," airborne over Chinju.

Smith did so and reported his loading: four aircraft, each with one 500-lb VT-fuzed bomb, eight 5-inch rockets, and full machine gun ammunition.

"Mosquito Wildwest 7" directed the naval fliers to destroy a small bridge west of the village. The pilots circled the bridge, noted the wind, and climbed for altitude. The dive-bombing was precise: two direct hits, two near misses from four bombs. The bridge was demolished.

"Mosquito Wildwest 7" then directed that the planes follow the road northward. About a mile from the city of Chinju, he said, troops and vehicles were reported. The pilots were ordered to find and destroy them if they could.

At flat-hat level, the four Corsair pilots combed the road. A mile or so away, hidden in the trees, a wooden house was discovered, with vehicles concealed nearby, and an oil dump. These were destroyed with rocket and machine gun fire.

Such damage by a single flight of four planes, multiplied hundreds of times, had heavy attrition effect upon the fighting. But to the naval pilots it was armed reconnaissance or "deep support," not "close air support."

The hard, bloody, and bitter ground fighting to hold the Pusan perimeter had already produced two emergency requests for all-out close air support assistance from the carriers. These requests from Fifth Air Force headquarters in Pusan had been transmitted directly to the Seventh Fleet, bypassing the COMNAVFE headquarters in Tokyo.

On 19 August, to allay any possible misunderstanding regarding the employment of Task Force 77's services in support of the Fifth Air Force mission to furnish close air support, Admiral Joy sent a despatch to General MacArthur, with copies to Generals Walker, Stratemeyer, and Partridge (CG 5th Air Force Korea):

"All requests regarding employment or modification of schedules involving naval forces should be addressed to either CINCFE or COMNAVFE X CINCFE indicates the general type, time, and area where naval air effort is desired X His decision may be influenced from recommendations or requests from other activities X

COMNAVFE implements CINCFE's desires, or if not expressed, determines the what, when, and where instructions. . . ."[20]

In late August also, Joy sent the following message to General MacArthur in an effort to have the primary mission of the carriers changed to strikes on lucrative enemy targets in North Korea:

". . . North Korea contains a multiplicity of very lucrative and profitable targets which are well suited to carrier strikes, whereas, in the south, targets are few and well hidden. After 25 August I strongly recommend that Task Force 77 be employed north of the 38th parallel. . . ."[21]

On the 25th, however, in a direct "flash" message to the Seventh Fleet, the Fifth Air Force again requested further Navy close air support strikes. The Communists were preparing to launch an all-out attack across the Naktong River, and "close air support" was the most urgent role the carriers could perform.[21A]

At 1101 on 31 August, still another emergency call came from JOC Pusan: ". . . all available effort for close support." The North Korean Army's full-scale and long-awaited attack upon the Naktong defense line had commenced, and the situation was described as "critical."

Upon receiving this despatch, Ewen recalled his airborne planes (then attacking targets in the Seoul-Inchon area), and turned the task force southeast at high speed. Planes on deck were hastily respotted and armed for a close air support strike.

The on-rushing Fleet flashed a message to JOC at Pusan:

"The Fleet's close air support strikes will start at 1430. First strike will be 12 Skyraiders each with three 1000-pound bombs. Also, 16 Corsairs, each with one 1000-pound bomb plus four rockets and full cannon ammo. Second similar flight follows at 1530. More coming."[22]

The first close air support launch from *Valley Forge* and *Philippine* Sea left the decks at 1315 on 1 September.

The following excerpts are taken from action reports of the *Valley Forge* and the *Philippine Sea* for that afternoon:

"*Valley Forge*: . . . At 1315, fourteen planes flew across Korea on close support missions. Armed to the teeth with 1000-pound bombs, contact-fuzed, they were told to orbit by the controller as he had no targets for such bombs. During the 45 minutes in which they orbited, the controller called in a flight of F-51s to strafe and rocket an enemy troop concentration. . . . The Corsairs were finally directed to bomb five villages near Kaepyodong which they destroyed. They also damaged a supply dump by strafing. . . .

". . . The six ADs were directed to hit three villages . . . which they destroyed. . . . These villages were reported to be military concentrations. Nearby, three trucks were also burned. . . .

". . . At 1430, eleven more planes went into the battle area for close support. The six F4Us completely destroyed one third of Haman after TAC (the Mosquito controller) had directed them to do it. They were told that the town was loaded with troops. On the road running west from town they burned eight trucks and damaged twelve more. . . .

". . . The five ADs were directed to bomb a ridge just west of Haman where their fourteen 1000-pound bombs leveled the entire ridge. . . . At Chugam-Ni, they destroyed three buildings supposed to contain vehicles with 100-pound bombs. . . .

". . . Eight jets were launched at 1615 for close support. Due to the number of planes over the area, they could not raise any controller. Four planes circled the two TAC (Mosquito) aircraft but still could not raise one of them due to cluttered circuits. These same four planes exploded one locomotive and damaged another. Vehicles with white stars on the top were seen. . . .

". . . At 1745, a final launch of eight jets went in on close support. The controller was too busy to control the flight so they split into two four-plane divisions. The first division damaged about ten small boats which were on the east bank of the Naktong River. . . The other division, an artillery emplacement. . . ."[23]

The *Philippine Sea's* action report for that same afternoon commences:

"This was to be a hectic day. . . .

". . . The event at 1312 sent out a four-plane CAP plus a standard offensive strike group (8 F4Us and 6 ADs) whose mission was close support. The launch was made 200 miles from our frontlines. The group proceeded in to the bombline but was unable to get an air controller to work them. They did receive orders to make one attack on a tank concentration located well to the east of the bombline. Fortunately the flight leader from VF-113 (LT Donald G. Patterson) made a low pass first to identify the target which turned out to be U.S. equipment. The group had to find their own targets. Troop concentrations were attacked . . . a bridge was bombed and one span knocked out. . . . The last attack was on twelve rafts south of the bridge which were strafed. . . . three were sunk. . . .

". . . The next event at 1430 sent out a standard offensive launch plus two additional F4Us, one of which aborted the flight. This flight had no more success than the earlier close support group. They, too, were unable to get a controller. They, too, attacked troops concentrations and warehouses. . . .

"The result of this attack was the destruction of one warehouse and one small fuel dump and considerable damage to two villages in which troops were concentrated. The effectiveness of this flight was curtailed due to lack of controlled support. . . .

". . . The next event was a jet sweep. . . . They were unable to get contact with a controller. They did not fire a shot.

". . . The next event was another jet sweep; again, the jets were unable to get a controller. The flight also did not fire a shot. . . .

". . . The last event of the day was a launch of one AD4N (with CAG-11 as a passenger) and one F4U5N which proceeded into Pusan for the purpose of establishing better working liaison in the matter of close support. . . ."[24]

These action reports are from The total 263 sorties which Task Force 77 delivered to help stop the enemy's full-scale attack.

While the Fast Carriers of Task Force 77 were flying close air support as practiced by the Air Force, the escort carriers *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* (TF 96.8, RADM R. W. Ruble, Commander Carrier Division 15) with Marine Squadrons VMF-323 and 214 aboard, were demonstrating the Navy and Marine doctrine of close air support in behalf of the First Provisional Marine Brigade, the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions, the First Cavalry Division, the ROK First and Second ROK Corps, and the ROK Marines.

"During the early days of the war," said Lieutenant General Shepherd, "I spoke to General MacArthur and General Stratemeyer about the Marine Wing. I explained to them that Marine Air was an integral part of the Marine team, that they were trained to function as a unit, and that they should be permitted to function as they had trained. General MacArthur agreed."

No other naval staff saw such varied duty in such a short time as Carrier Division 15. The war was only a week old when Admiral Ruble's escort carrier division (based at San Diego with the peacetime role of carrying out antisubmarine warfare Hunter-Killer operations) was given air-priority-one orders to report to COMNAVFE for temporary additional duty. The presence of Ruble's staff would provide Admiral Joy with an advisory group familiar with aircraft operations, particularly with close air support and antisubmarine warfare, as well as provide additional and sorely-needed communication personnel.

Ruble and his staff arrived in Tokyo by air and reported to Joy on 10 July. On 12 July Ruble was given the title "Commander Naval Air Japan," with the duty of providing logistic support to all naval aircraft in the theater, plus getting the groundwork laid for the arrival of the two Marine fighter squadrons then enroute aboard his jeep carriers.

Badoeng Strait (Captain Arnold W. McKechnie), with VMF-214 and VMF-323 embarked, arrived at

Kobe, Japan, on 31 July. The small carrier was chock-a-block with personnel, equipment, and planes—70 F4Us, 8 OY observation planes, and 6 HO3S helicopters. *Sicily* (Captain J. S. Thach), in the meantime, had arrived on 27 July after disembarking AntiSubmarine Squadron 21 at Agaña airfield, Guam. On the 31st, *Sicily* embarked the remainder of Ruble's staff, less the admiral himself, and joined the *Badoeng Strait* at Kobe, where ground elements and equipment of VMF-214 were hurriedly loaded aboard. Thach was designated as CTE 96.23, comprising the *Sicily*, *Kyes* (DD-787), and *Doyle* (DMS-34); he was given hurry-up orders to provide close air support to the beleaguered Pusan perimeter. Thach had *Sicily* underway for the battlefront next day, recovering aircraft of VMF-214 (Lieutenant Colonel Walter E. Lischeid, USMC) on the afternoon of the 3rd of August, and launching an eight-plane strike at 1638 the same afternoon.

Upon reporting to JOC, the Marine fliers were ordered to shoot at anything west of the Naktong River, and to pay particular attention to the recently captured city of Chinju.

Badoeng Strait, meanwhile, completed replenishment, took aboard Admiral Ruble (who had now been relieved as Commander Naval Air Japan), and Marine Squadron VMF-323. *Endicott* (DMS-35) and *Taussig* (DD-746) were designated as escorts. By breeches buoy, Ruble's staff transferred from *Sicily* to *Badoeng Strait.*

The little task group was again together and operating, a scant month after leaving San Diego.

Task Group 96.8
Carrier Division 15 (RADM R. W. Ruble)
Badoeng Strait (CAPT Arnold W. McKechnie)
VMF-323 (MAJ Arnold Lund, USMC)
Sicily (CAPT John S. Thach)
VMF-214 (LTCOL Walter E. Lischeid, USMC)
Endicott (CDR John C. Jolly)
Doyle (CDR Charles H. Momsen, Jr.)
Kyes (CDR Fran M. Christiansen)
Taussig (CDR Wm. C. Meyer)

Although the Marine airmen aboard *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* flew several interdiction hops prior to 8 August, including some preparatory strikes in the Inchon area, and furnished a few days' close air support as practiced by the Air Force, the task group's primary duty during this period was the furnishing of close air support to the First Provisional Marine Brigade.[24A]

On 7 August, the just-arrived First Provisional Marine Brigade was committed to action in the Pusan perimeter, first in the area southeast of Chinju as part of Task Force Kean.[24B] VMF-214 and 323 were ordered to furnish close air support for the Task Force. The personnel in the Marine ground tactical air control parties were the same people with whom the Marine fliers had been rehearsing close air support at Camp Pendleton a few weeks earlier.

For the next six days, the Marine brigade attacked to the westward, covered by the Corsairs of VMF-323 and 212, demonstrating the intricate team-work of the Navy-Marine system of close air support. Approximately six aircraft were kept over the Brigade during daylight hours. The Corsairs' average load consisted of either a 500-pound bomb or a napalm tank, eight rockets, and a full load of machine gun ammunition.

"10 Aug *Badoeng Strait:* Strike George attacked a large roadblock three miles north of Kaesong at 1500. Steep dive bombing rocket and strafing runs were made on enemy troops on the hillsides, destroying 75% of the enemy position. After these attacks, Marines of the First Marine Brigade were able to stand up and walk through the roadblock, continuing their advance on Kaesong.

"11 Aug *Badoeng Strait:* Third Battalion standing by to attack Kaesong. Preparatory Marine artillery fire landed in the town. Suddenly, as the Marine artillerymen watched through their binoculars, a column of enemy vehicles, numbering almost a hundred, were observed, preparing to make a dash for safety. Circling overhead was

a VMF-323 flight of four F4U4B aircraft (led by their commanding officer, Major Lund). The ground controllers immediately directed Lund's attention to the column of motorcycles, jeeps, and troop-filled trucks.

"The Corsairs made an immediate low-level strafing run in an effort to bring the column to a halt. The Marine airmen spewed rockets and bullets into the column. Vehicles crashed into one another or piled up in the ditch while enemy troops scrambled for cover. Soviet-made jeeps and motorcycles were stopped or abandoned by the rockets and 20-mm. fire. Return fire from enemy's guns on the low-flying aircraft seriously damaged two Corsairs; LT Doyle Cole ditched in a nearby bay to be rescued by the helicopter carrying the Brigade Commander, BGEN Edward A. Craig; Captain Vivian Moses crashlanded in a rice paddy and was killed. Four additional Corsairs of VMF-323 relieved Lund's flight to continue the destruction of the column."

The second task given the Marine Brigade was to help eliminate an enemy-held bridge in the Pusan perimeter near Yongsan.

The Communist main line of resistance lay to the west of Yongsan along a rugged ridge, Obong-ni (also nicknamed "No-Name" Ridge). The ridge consisted of six knolls; the Marine Brigade was ordered to take them. Six Corsairs were kept on station during daylight hours.

The Marines attacked during the morning and afternoon but were repulsed. In the late evening, after bloody fighting, the Marines succeeded in capturing two hills of the ridge. Throughout the night, despite enemy attacks using automatic fire and hand grenades, the Marines grimly held their positions.

By the early morning of 18 August, the enemy had infiltrated additional strength onto the ridge to the south of the Marines and were making preparations to recapture the two knolls they had lost.

But the 3rd Platoon, Able Company, Fifth Marines, led by LT George C. Fox, attacked first at 0700. As Fox's platoon, reduced to 20 effective men by the previous day's fighting, moved forward, a nest of four Red machine guns opened up on them and pinned them to the ground. Captain John R. Stevens, Company A commander, spotted the nest and asked for an air strike.

Strike planes were already circling overhead, having flown in from *Badoeng Strait.* The tactical air coordinator was LTCOL Norman W. Anderson, and the four Corsairs were led by Major Arnold A. Lund from VMF-323. The Corsairs were briefed on the situation by LT James W. Smith, the forward tactical air controller. The enemy gun nest was only 50 yards in front of the attacking Marines. After receiving the description of the target, LTCOL Anderson decided to use a single plane and to use a 500-pound bomb. Lund designated his section leader, Captain John P. Kelley, to make the attack.

First, however, Anderson himself made certain of the target's location, and then fired a smoke rocket at it to mark it for Kelley. Kelley observed the rocket, spotted the nest, and climbed for dive-bombing altitude. Carefully noting the wind, Kelley made his attack. His markmanship was precise: the 500-lb bomb fell squarely into the four machine guns. The entire area was completely obliterated, and the shock to the nearby Marines was intense.

The attack had taken less than five minutes. With the sound of the bomb blast still reverberating from the rocky hills, the Marines rushed forward and with gathering momentum swept the enemy from the main line of resistance.

"From that moment," General Craig reported in his special action report, "the issue west of Yongsan was no longer in doubt. A routed enemy fled westward, racing desperately from the continuing combined ground and air assault of the Marines, who, before the day was over, accounted for the destruction of more than 4,000 enemy troops."

The rout was continued on 18 August, as the Leathernecks dissolved the Naktong bulge and hurled hundreds of the fleeing Reds into the river.

"18 Aug *Sicily:* The first flight attacked the ridge ahead of the advancing Marines near a bend in the Naktong river at Sinnam-ni. Two tanks and a fieldpiece were attacked; one tank was dismantled by a 500-pound

bomb, another destroyed with rockets. The fieldpiece was obliterated with rockets. At this time, Marine ground forces, aided by our close-air support, drove the retreating enemy into the Naktong river. While several thousands of these were attempting to swim across, this flight commenced to attack, strafing with 20 mm. explosives and incendiaries. The enemy was killed in such numbers that the river was definitely discolored by blood."

There can be little doubt of the terrible efficiency displayed by the Marine aviators in support of the Pusan perimeter. Pound for pound of TNT, and hour for hour of effort, their destructive efficiency left little to be desired. The box score for TG 96.8 for the period ending 14 September 1950 was as follows:

Sicily: 688 sorties

Badoeng Strait: 671 sorties

Flying 24 planes from each jeep carrier, averaging a splendid aircraft availability of 92 percent, the Marine pilots achieved the following damage on behalf of the troops of the Pusan perimeter:

Tanks: 13 destroyed, 7 damaged
Boxcars: 35 destroyed, 121 damaged
Vehicles: 197 destroyed, 11 damaged
Buildings: 73 destroyed, 13 damaged
Guns: 72 destroyed, 10 damaged
Bridges: 23 destroyed, 15 damaged
Fuel dumps: 10 destroyed
Supply dumps: 1 destroyed
Ammo dumps: 5 destroyed, 1 damaged

Despite the difficulties and shortages, the contributions of the naval and Marine aircraft to holding the Pusan perimeter cannot be minimized.

From 5 August until 3 September 1950, Task Force 77 launched 2,481 strikes against the enemy under the control of the JOC and in the close air support style practiced by the Air Force. Of these, 583 were actually controlled by the Mosquito liaison planes; the remaining 1,888 missions were flown in the immediate battle zone against Communist troops, tanks, and supplies in "armed reconnaissance" missions.

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These 2,481 strikes by naval aircraft and the 1,359 sorties of the Marines resulted in great damage to enemy personnel and equipment at and near the frontlines, and in decelerating the enemy's advance toward Pusan. The enemy was forced almost totally to abandon daylight attacks and daylight work of all kinds.

The Air Group Commander of Air Group FIVE recorded the effective support rendered by the naval aircraft:

". . . The heavy ordnance loads carried by the Corsairs and Skyraiders were always welcomed heartily," wrote Commander Harvey P. Lanham. "As one air controller put it to his counterpart in the frontlines, 'I'm coming over with a bunch of Navy planes, and brother, they're really loaded.' On another occasion, the Navy liaison pilots at Taegu heard glowing praise of the Navy pilot who had wiped out a complete company of enemy troops by tossing a napalm bomb into the mouth of the tunnel in which they had sought refuge. Navy liaison officers in Taegu in August, heard the results of Prisoner-of-War (POW) interrogation at the JOC. To the question 'Which U.S. weapon do you fear the most?', the answer was 'the blue airplanes.' "[25]

The Sea War in Korea

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan

Marine Line Backers

As mentioned in the opening lines of this chapter, the retention of a Pusan beachhead was in large measure due to several naval events—the timely Pohang landing, the air support and interdiction efforts of the naval aircraft of Task Force 77 and Marine aircraft of Task Group 96.8 (just described), the naval gunfire suport supplied by the ships of Task Force 96 on the eastern terminus of the battlefront (see Chapter IX "The Seaborne Artillery," page 281), and finally, the back-stopping efforts of the First Provisional Marine Brigade.

Early in July, before the loss of the entire Korean peninsula became a distinct probability, it was General MacArthur's intention to disembark the First Provisional Marine Brigade at Kobe, Japan, and have it prepare to make an amphibious assault in the enemy's rear as soon as the position of the Eighth Army could be stabilized. However, the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Pusan bridgehead made it imperative that the Brigade be committed in that area at once.

Accordingly, on 2 August, the Brigade sailed directly into Pusan and commenced unloading. Five days later, on 7 August, the Brigade was ordered to attack to the westward and seize Chinju in order to relieve pressure on the Eighth Army lines along the Naktong River. In this first operation lasting six days, the Marine Brigade made a 20-mile advance, the first successful counter-attack by American troops since the Korean War began. During this period the Marines routed an enemy force estimated as a motorized regiment, captured or destroyed the complete armament and vehicles of at least one battalion, and destroyed 1,900 enemy troops. Even more important than this military contribution to the holding of the Pusan bridgehead, perhaps, was the spiritual uplift in morale which the Leathernecks gave to all the forces in Korea.

Twice more, in August and early September, the U.S. Marines played a vital role in the defense of the perimeter.

After the enemy's flanking movement had been squelched in the south by the Marines as part of Task Force Kean, the North Koreans increased their pressure in the central area of the perimeter in the vicinity of Yongsan. Elements of the North Korean Fourth Division forded the Naktong River on the 5th of August. By 6 August one battalion of the enemy's 4th Division was across the river. A major effort to force the river at this point was obviously coming. Any major penetration in this area would seriously endanger the security of the bulk of the Eighth Army and its supply line to Pusan. Despite heavy and effective opposition by U.S. and ROK forces, the North Koreans succeeded in ferrying two regiments across the Naktong and held a bridgehead area measuring six by eight miles.

The First Provisional Marine Brigade and two regiments of the 24th Division were given the task of eliminating this dangerous bulge and driving the enemy back across the river.

After a fast march northward the Brigade led the coordinated attack on 17 August. Objectives were captured in 48 hours. The crack North Korean 4th Division (which had captured Seoul early in the war) was destroyed or driven back across the river, and large amounts of enemy material captured. Enemy casualties were estimated to be 2,500. (A typical close air support strike of this action has been described on page 64.)

On 3 September, the Brigade performed its third mission in holding the perimeter. As part of a coordinated attack, the First Provisional Marine Brigade again made a deep penetration of the enemy's defensive position along the central front. A great amount of enemy ordnance, engineer, signal, and other equipment was captured. Vast numbers of enemy dead were observed in this area, and after the engagement it was estimated that enemy casualties were at least 4,500.[26]

The initial preparations for the amphibious assault at Inchon were now being made. Doyle's operation order called for the First Provisional Marine Brigade to lead the way. Accordingly, a despatch was sent to General Walker advising him that "future operations require withdrawal of Marine Brigade from Korea in September, date to be determined. Brigade will be combat-loaded for amphibious landing."

In view of the still delicate situation at the front lines, General Walker was reluctant to release the Marines unless suitable reserve forces were given to him.

"At our meeting with General Almond relative to the release of the Marines," said Vice Admiral Struble, "the issue boiled down to the need for an Eighth Army reserve. I suggested that a regiment of the Seventh Infantry be embarked and moved to Pusan as a reserve to be landed in an emergency as a substitute for the Marines. This solution was accepted."

"We had considerable difficulty in breaking the Brigade loose," said Major General Oliver P. Smith. "Along with Admirals Struble, Joy, and Doyle, I finally called on General Almond on the afternoon of 5 September, to ask him to spring the Brigade. Joy said that unless they were made available, he would be impelled to despatch Washington. Struble told Almond that if the Fifth Marines weren't made available, Inchon *would* be impossible. Whereupon, Almond went in to see General MacArthur, and when he came back, the Brigade was released."[27]

The same evening, in a heavy rainstorm, the Marines left the front lines and marched back to Pusan.

The final naval contribution to the salvation of the Pusan perimeter occurred on 16 August 1950. This was the unpublicized rescue of the 3rd ROK Division by sea after it had been surrounded and cut off by enemy forces near Yonghae.

For five days, ably supported by Rear Admiral Hartman's Task Group 96.51, this division had blocked the enemy's advance down the coastal road while a new defense line north of Pusan was being readied.

The Third ROK Division had held fast while inland units were withdrawn. As a result, this division was isolated and in danger of annihilation. General Walker requested the Navy to evacuate the Third ROKs.

On the night of August 16th, the cruiser *Helena*, with escorting destroyers and four landing ships, took station off-shore.

Covered by naval gunfire from *Helena* and the destroyers, Captain J. R. Clark, Commander Destroyer Squadron Eleven aboard *Wiltsie*, ordered the four LSTs into the pre-arranged beach, guided by the lights of jeep headlights ashore. The LSTs beached, and the ROK division began an orderly embarkation. Before daylight broke, the LSTs had loaded six officers and seventeen men of the Korean Military Advisory Group, 327 officers and 5,480 troops of the ROK Third Division, 1,260 civilian evacuees, and 100 vehicles without loss of personnel or equipment.

The next day, the Third ROK Division was re-landed at Kuryongpo-ri, and was back in action.

To these troops, "control of the sea" assumed a fresh, new meaning.

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Chapter 2. Retreat to Pusan

Significance of Initial Operations

Two general results are perceivable from a study of the early period of the Korean war from 25 July 1950 to the invasion of Inchon on 15 September 1950.

The paramount result was to demonstrate the fact that *without* the American Navy, the bridgehead in Korea could never have been held. The gunfire support supplied at the eastern anchor of the battlefront, the timely landing of the First Cavalry at Pohang, the rescue of the Third ROKs, the air strikes of Task Force 77 and Task Group 96.8, and the three counteattacks by the First Provisional Marine Brigade, were of decisive importance in holding Pusan. In addition, the logistic link connecting Korea to Japan and the United States was a bridge of ships bringing personnel and munitions of war.

"It is not an exaggeration to say that without the Navy the Pusan perimeter could never have been held," said Vice Admiral Joy. "The unspectacular role of carrying personnel and supplies to Korea was perhaps the Navy's greatest contribution. Next in importance was the Navy's support of the 8th Army by bombardment, interdiction and close air support missions, as well as the timely landing of the 1st Cavalry Division at Pohang. The vital role played by our carriers in this connection cannot be overemphasized. As General MacArthur said to me at the time: "Had you not employed the carriers as you did in sustained support of the 8th Army, Congress would think twice about further appropriations for the construction of aircraft carriers."

Click here to view map

The commanding general personally acknowledged the vital role played by the Navy. Asked by the authors if he considered the naval assistance vital to holding the Pusan perimeter, General MacArthur replied: "Naval forces in a peninsula campaign, such as Korea, are always a vital factor, for they alone can effectively interdict enemy coastal movement and amphibious operations. Furthermore, in Korea I knew that if our meager forces were impelled to fall back to Pusan proper, the Navy could hold open our lines of supply, and under its guns we could hold a beachhead indefinitely."

Regarding the services rendered by the four carriers in holding the perimeter, General MacArthur wrote: "The Navy carriers were a vital factor in holding the Pusan perimeter, especially until our land bases were developed effectively to handle the air phase of the campaign. Even then they provided a powerful adjunct to the land-based aircraft supporting our ground operations."

The second result of the battle to save Pusan was to spotlight a Navy-Air Force disparity in the doctrine and technique of close air support.

The dissection of this disparity is extremely difficult, technical and involved, but nonetheless a meaningful and necessary study for the student of naval warfare.

The Battle of Pusan revealed three fundamental differences between the Air Force system and the Navy-Marine system of close air support:

1. A difference in philosophy over use of air power.
2. A difference in techniques.
3. A difference in semantics.

The root of the disparity is one of concept. First of all, the Air Force believes the proper place to apply air power is first and foremost upon the sources of the enemy's war-making potential, and second, in the immediate battle area. *Isolation of* the battlefield, in their view, takes precedence over air strikes *in the battlefield.* And control of aircraft, they believe, must never degenerate to individual ground commanders whose limiting

perspective cannot result in the most effective theater-wide use of the airplanes' potential.

As for the Navy, the validity of the strategic bombing concept has never been fully accepted, in the sense that it is the sole and only arbiter of modern warfare. Neither is there any firm belief that "strategic" targets can be neatly separated from "tactical" targets. In the accomplishment of any given military objective, it is the Navy's view that sufficient force of the proper type should be applied to the enemy to attain any given objective. Close air support is regarded as a vital and indispensable tool for defeating an enemy's ground forces.

The second major difference is one of technique. The Navy-Marine system of close air support requires that pilots be trained to recognize terrain features and to appreciate the capabilities and limitations of ground arms in order that strikes can be performed very close to friendly forces. Marine pilots are especially well trained in this respect, naval pilots less so. Air Force pilots do not receive the same degree of training.

In the matter of control, the crux of the difference of the two systems, the Marines have thirteen Tactical Air Control Parties in a division: one for each battalion (total of nine), one with each regiment (total of three), and one for the division itself. Any or all of these control parties are capable of requesting and directing the delivery of "close" air support.

In contrast, the Air Force system only provides one Tactical Air Control Party per regiment, or a total of *four* for a division, as compared with thirteen in the Marine division. The greater number of control parties for a Marine division is to provide for the anticipated *critical* situation during the amphibious operation, a contingency that the Army division in the field need not anticipate.

But the difference in numbers of TACPs is only a reflection of the real difference in the concept of control. The Marines admit that wartime manpower restrictions would make it impractical for an Army division to have the same number of TACPs as is required for their division in an amphibious assault. However, even if the Marines had fewer TACPs, their *method of control* would be no different; for it is the Marine Corps' view that the frontline commander should be able to make his request direct to the supplying agencies, with no interference or delay from intervening agencies. One of the basic presumptions is that unless close air support is immediately available (within 10 to 15 minutes), its value to the frontline commander is questionable or considerably reduced. The Marine system places the controller *in the frontlines with the troops*, while the Air Force-Army doctrine places the air controller of the Tactical Air Control Party aloft in a liaison-type aircraft. By so doing, the close personal contact with the ground commander is lost, and the centralization of authority in Air Force commands is emphasized.

The final difference is semantical: the definition of "close air support." Each Service believes itself to be providing close air support; yet, each Service defines close air support differently. This misunderstanding is compounded by the vague definition of "close air support": "Air action against hostile ground or naval targets which are so close to friendly forces as to require detailed integration of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces."[28]

What is meant by "close"? To the Navy-Marines, "close" is considered to be that area *immediately* in front of friendly troops—50 to 200 yards. The Air Force on the other hand, considers "close" to mean within several thousand yards of the front line . . . the distance to which field artillery pieces would effectively reach.[29]

Thus, what the Army-Air Force defines as "close" air support is given another description by the Navy and Marines: "deep support." Generally speaking, the Air Force did not and does not perform what the Navy calls "close" air support.[30]

All these differences were later succinctly summarized by Lt. General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, as a result of his visit to Korea in 1951:

"We believe in providing for a small number of on-station planes; the Air Force does not. We believe in continuous direct communication between the frontline battalion and the controlling air agency; the Air Force does not. We believe that close air support of the frontline troops should take precedence over routine interdiction

missions; the Air Force does not."

In appraising and studying close air support in Korea, the naval student must recognize the special, unusual and favorable circumstances which prevailed. First of all, there was no effort made by the North Koreans to contest UN control of the air. Had they done so, the propeller-driven close air support aircraft of both Navy and Air Force certainly would have had greater difficulty in giving close air support. Not having to fight for control of the air over the battlefield freed a great many more UN planes for close air support missions which otherwise would have been impossible.

Secondly, the uncontested control of the seas meant that carrier task forces could move in closely to shore, almost becoming immobile. Never again, perhaps, will these two special circumstances be duplicated.

The Marines, whose close air support doctrine requires a minimum of one aircraft squadron for each Marine battalion, had available, at times, almost *double* that amount of close air support in Korea. During the battle for the Pusan perimeter, for example, with only one battalion in assault, the Marines often had *two* squadrons of close support aircraft (averaging 40 effective airplanes) supporting them.[30A] This abundance of close air support, while seldom in excess,[30B] must not leave the impression that such abundance is necessary or will always be available. When other supporting weapons such as artillery, tanks and mortars are available and effective, the more expensive airpower weapon must take a lower priority. In Korea, however, there were many times when more economical means were either unavailable or unable to handle the support task. In these cases, the abundance of effective close air support was able to meet the need.

In other wars in other places, against air and sea opposition, and under poorer weather conditions, it must be recognized that the rather luxirious condition of close air support which existed in Korea—no air opposition and extremely close carriers—will probably never happen again.

Results

The Battle of Pusan spotlighted but did not resolve the close air support problem. Two major campaigns which followed—Inchon and Hungnam—amply demonstrated the merits of the Navy-Marine system. After Hungnam, however, the Navy did not again raise the close air support question. Not so the Marines, whose First Marine Air Wing was thereafter detached from the Marine Division.

Neither the Air Force nor the Navy-Marine Corps changed their systems. Both the Navy and the Air Force considered their own system adequate and effective, and that of the other not wholly suitable to its respective needs.

"The Army made an investigation of the merits of the two systems in the combat zone and concluded:

. . . it would be illogical if not dangerous in the long run to substitute the Marine system for the Ground Forces-Air Forces system."[31]

The Navy also made a study and concluded:

"The Marines and Navy should continue to adhere to their system until a better system can be developed. Under no circumstances should the present system employed by the Air Force be adopted by the Navy and the Marines."[32]

There was one other result. The controversy brought about the reestablishment of the Tactical Air Command in the U.S. Air Force and its restoration to a position of importance if not equality. The tactical airplane saw a rebirth. On 1 December 1950, the U.S. Air Force established the Tactical Air Command under the command of Lieutenant General John K. Cannon, with the basic mission of training and developing tactical aviation "in cooperation with Army Field Forces."

Thus, the dispute over close air support leveled the heavy unbalance of pre-Korean days when the preponderance of our nation's air power was being devoted to the strategic bombing role.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 3. The Magnificent Gamble: The Amphibious Assault at Inchon

Introduction

As far as the U.S. Navy is concerned, the one single operation of the Korean war which in history must receive transcendent importance is the Inchon assault.

For eighty-two days, the UN ground forces had been constantly on the defensive and often at the brink of disaster. Ridge by ridge, and mile by mile, the U.S. and ROK armies had retreated from the 38th parallel to a tiny perimeter around the port of Pusan, bloodily punishing the Communists with every backward step. The issue in the perimeter hung in balance for almost a month.

On 15 September 1950, with the shattering suddenness of a bursting shell, the course of the Korean war was reversed by the Inchon landing. In ten swift days the North Korean People's Army, which had been hammering at the threshold of victory, was broken and beaten. The landing at Inchon and the capture of the capital city of Seoul had won the war.

History records no more striking example of the effectiveness of an amphibious operation.

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Chapter 3. The Magnificent Gamble: The Amphibious Assault at Inchon
Conception

The credit for the conception of making an amphibious assault at Inchon can only be given to one man: General Douglas MacArthur. It was he who conceived it, who fought for it over the intense but unpublicized opposition of many and the reluctance of most military leaders in the Far East and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[1] The heaviest opposition came from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Omar Bradley, and from Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins.[2] Lesser objection was raised by the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman. Collins and Sherman had flown to Tokyo in mid-August to confer with MacArthur about the forthcoming operation.

Of Generals Bradley's and Collins' objections, General MacArthur wrote the authors: ". . . I believe that Generals Bradley and, probably, Collins were fundamentally opposed to amphibious operations as an acceptable technique to modern war. General Bradley some time before publicly had so expressed his professional judgment. General Collins based his objection more upon the depth of the turning movement which, of course, was essential if the operation was to be effective."[3]

According to Vice Admiral Joy, Admiral Sherman initially objected to the site of Inchon because of its hydrographic hazards. "At no time did I hear any naval officer tell the General that Inchon was impossible," said Vice Admiral Joy, "but we were all anxious to point out the obvious dangers."

"*Not impossible*" was the general attitude of the Navy in the Far East. Rear Admiral James H. Doyle's concluding remarks at the 23 August briefing for the benefit of General MacArthur: "General, I have not been asked nor have I volunteered my opinion about this landing. If I were asked, however, the best I can say is that Inchon is not impossible."[4]

Vice Admiral Joy has described General MacArthur's 45-minute talk at this final briefing, wherein General MacArthur gave a glowing testimonial of his confidence that the Navy would make Inchon a success. The Navy had never let him down, he said. He recognized the undertaking as a gamble, quoting its odds at 5,000-to-l, but said he was accustomed to taking such odds.

Vice Admiral Joy said that after listening to the General's eloquent and passionate soliloquy, "My own personal misgivings about Inchon were erased. I believe that the General had persuaded me, and all others in the room—with the possible exception of Admiral Sherman—that Inchon could be successful. Admiral Sherman was almost persuaded. Nevertheless, he retained some slight misgivings. In fact, the next day he spent one and one-half hours alone with General MacArthur, and upon coming out of this conference, was won over to the General's position. He said to me, 'I wish I had that man's confidence.' "[5]

Of Admiral Sherman's objections, General MacArthur wrote the authors: "During his discussions on the matter I sensed that Admiral Sherman's objections to the Inchon movement were largely animated by a sense of duty which necessitated the presentation in their most naked form of all professional difficulties and objections which could be foreseen."

After the return of Sherman and Collins to Washington, the Inchon operation was approved by the then-Secretary of Defense, Louis A. Johnson.

". . . General Collins—maybe the censor will want to strike this out—did not favor Inchon and went over to argue General MacArthur out of it," Secretary Johnson testified. "General MacArthur stood pat. I backed MacArthur."[6]

General MacArthur credits Admiral Sherman for final approval of the decision.

“I am sure he must have been largely instrumental in influencing the ultimate solution to accept my own point of view and approve the project,” he wrote.

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Chapter 3. The Magnificent Gamble: The Amphibious Assault at Inchon
MacArthur's Choice of Inchon

MacArthur's selection of Inchon as the point of assault was a blend of his strategic, psychological, political, and military reasoning. As the Reds drove the UN forces southward, he made frequent reference to their over-extended supply lines, most of which passed through Seoul. If Inchon, only fifteen miles away, could be seized by sea assault, the enemy's supply lines would be quickly severed. "The history of war," he said, "proves that nine times out of ten, an army has been destroyed because its supply lines have been severed." A successful landing at Inchon would shorten the war, save unnumbered casualties, and possibly obviate a winter campaign.

Psychologically, the General felt that a successful landing at Inchon would not only reverse the course of the war but would rescue the Western world's falling prestige throughout the Orient. In addition to checking the aggression of the North Koreans, it would capture the imagination of the Far East and halt the expanding course of Communism.

Strategically, MacArthur insisted that an amphibious landing should be made deep into enemy-held territory. "The amphibious landing is the most powerful tool we have," he said, "To employ it properly, we must strike hard and deeply into enemy territory."[7] Inchon, he added, would be the anvil on which the UN forces would drive northward out of the Pusan perimeter to crush the North Korean enemy. The other recommended points, near Pyongyang, Posung-Myon, and Kunsan, were too far and too close to the battlefront, he said. The beaches opposite Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, were well above the 38th parallel and therefore too distant, while those near Kunsan were too close to the Pusan perimeter. A landing at Kunsan, he thought, would not succeed in trapping the North Korean People's Army. The Reds would merely retreat a few miles to negate and contain the landing.

General MacArthur's Inchon strategy is revealed in his own·words: "The deep envelopment, based upon surprise, which severs the enemy's supply lines," he wrote, "is and always has been the most decisive maneuver of war. A short envelopment, which fails to envelop and leaves the enemy's supply system intact, merely divides your own forces and can lead to heavy loss and even jeopardy."

Politically, MacArthur felt that a successful landing at Inchon and the capture of Seoul would reap gains equal to the military one. On the first meeting of Major General Oliver P. Smith, USMC, and General MacArthur, the latter stated: "The landing of the Marines at Inchon will be decisive. It will win the war, and the status of the Marine Corps will never again be in doubt."[8]

Also motivating MacArthur's selection of Inchon was his confidence that it would not be strongly defended. This was merely the extension of his South Pacific World War II experience and military philosophy to "hit 'em where they ain't."[9] The North Koreans, he said, would consider a landing at Inchon impossible and insane, and would be taken by surprise.

Again, MacArthur was right, for enemy opposition to the landing was only nominal. On the first two days of the Inchon landing (15-16 September) the First Marine Division had the following battle casualties: 22 KIA, 2 DOW, 2 MIA, 196 WIA;[9A] total 222.

(Subsequent to the landing, however, several events proved that the race to invade at Inchon had been a photo-finish, for a mine-laying effort to seal Inchon had commenced a few days before the actual landing took place.)

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The Objectives and Hazards of Inchon

Perhaps the principal and most sobering hazard which every naval and Marine planner who examined the charts of the Inchon area found was the miserable geography. The tides of Inchon (33 feet at their maximum; 23 feet at average spring tide) were among the greatest in the world, and certainly the worst in the Orient. Moreover, these extreme tides reached their peaks in approximately six hours, producing a five-knot current.

The tidal approach to Inchon channel was generally eastward. Over the centuries, the tides had deposited vast mudbanks near Inchon which at low water extended some 6,000 yards to seaward.

The approach channel to Inchon, poetically called "Flying Fish Channel," was narrow, tortuous, and difficult even for a daylight passage. With the absence of navigation lights and the possibility of enemy gunfire and mines, the navigation of an invasion fleet through such a channel was made extremely dangerous. So narrow was the channel that, if a ship foundered in the final approach to Inchon, the vessels ahead of it would be trapped, particularly at low tide. By chance, the destroyer *Collett* had been in Inchon harbor just before the war started; Commander Robert H. Close was one of many who knew from recent and firsthand experience the difficult navigation of Flying Fish Channel.

Click here to view map

The final effect of the tides was that they controlled the invasion date. To make a large scale amphibious assault at Inchon demanded at least 29 feet of water to insure that the LSTs would have sufficient water beneath their keels to reach the selected landing beaches. On only four days a month were such high tides available. The date for any landing in the fall of 1950, therefore, had to be September 15, October 11, or November 3, give or take a day or two. Obviously the enemy could punch tide tables with as much accuracy and ease as we ourselves could. Moreover, the tides not only dictated the day but even the hour—the time of high water. Thus, there was little leeway in the selection of an assault date. The tides predetermined both day and hour to the detriment of those elements so essential to the success of an amphibious assault—surprise and flexibility.

The next hazard was the strategic location of the city, with its protecting seawalls, and the related island of Wolmi-do. Never before had U.S. Marines made an amphibious assault into the heart of a large city, or across a so-called "beach" protected by stone seawalls. The oriental city would give excellent cover to enemy troops and defense forces, and there would be little room for the Marines to maneuver, once they were ashore. Moreover, there was only limited space for beaching the vital LSTs which had to accompany the troops, bringing in the necessary supplies, food, and ammunition. Inchon, while South Korea's best west coast harbor, was only mediocre. It had, for example, only ten per cent of Pusan's capacity. Its inner harbor had a single dredged channel, twelve to thirteen feet deep. Its pier space was restricted; its unloading areas were several miles apart, and its cargo-handling facilities were inadequate.

The island of Wolmi-do was yet another geographic handicap. This oyster-shaped, pyramidal island lay in the channel off Inchon and only 800 yards distant, and was connected to it by a narrow causeway. The island's topography and location gave it excellent command over the sea approaches in every direction. Wolmi was suspected to be heavily armed, although a great deal of intelligence of its exact defenses and their locations was not known.

The potentially impregnable location of Wolmi demanded that it be neutralized before any attempt to capture Inchon was made; otherwise, it would stand in a flanking position to thwart the Marine assault upon the Inchon beaches. This necessity for neutralization meant that some of the element of surprise had to be sacrificed.

For when the two-day bombardment effort necessary to neutralize Wolmi was made, the enemy might logically conclude that UN forces planned to land at Inchon.

The necessity for reducing Wolmi-do and other Inchon strong points commencing two days before the assault further highlighted a serious and oft expressed objection to Inchon: surprise, that most valuable ingredient of an amphibious assault, might thereby be lost.

In addition, however, there were other factors related to the element of surprise. The principal one was that the U.S. Navy would be building up and loading out from an insecure base. In every landing of the Pacific war, the U.S. forces had operated from a secure base where the knowledge of a forthcoming landing could be rigidly controlled. In the case of Inchon, however, the operating and assembly area was Japan; and Japan was known to be alive with spies and Communist sympathizers. It was unlikely that the assembly of a huge fleet, the gathering of supplies, and the loading of two divisions of troops, could be concealed from the enemy.[9B] The only hope of success was to keep the point of landing a secret from the enemy.

In Tokyo, the imminent invasion was referred to as "Operation Common Knowledge." Official statements hinted of something afoot. Syngman Rhee said, "We are about ready to go." General Walton H. Walker, when asked when UN forces would take the offensive, replied, "In a very short time."

As has been stated, Army leaders objected to the Inchon operation because, as General MacArthur stated, they believed the depth of the turning movement was too great; also because it would denude the Eighth Army of all its reserves. In the unhappy event that the Inchon landing miscarried, no reserve troops could be sent to Korea for at least four months. General Walker, it must be recalled, had vigorously opposed releasing the Marine Brigade for this very reason.

The senior naval and Marine officers who objected to an amphibious assault at Inchon did so solely because of the amphibious obstacles of Inchon itself.

No naval or Marine officer who had studied the military problem had any quarrel with the need for an amphibious assault. Nor did any naval or Marine officer question the strategic logic, the psychological wisdom, or the political promise of an amphibious landing at Inchon. Most of the naval and Marine experts who examined the problem of a west coast amphibious assault held the view that *all* of General MacArthur's objectives could be achieved by landing at *other* places which offered *fewer* natural hazards than Inchon. MacArthur listened, but firmly rejected the alternative locations. It had to be Inchon.

"We drew up a list of every conceivable and natural handicap—and Inchon had 'em all," said LCDR Arlie G. Capps, the gunfire support officer of Task Force 90.

"Make up a list of amphibious 'don'ts,' " said CDR Monroe Kelly, Doyle's communication officer, "and you have an exact description of the Inchon operation. A lot of us planners felt that if the Inchon operation worked, we'd have to rewrite the textbook."

In summary, therefore, General MacArthur's choice of Inchon, in spite of the physical hazards, the organized resistance, and the well-founded doubts which had been expressed, was one of military genius and calculated daring. The choice was his alone, and to him full and unfettered credit must be given.

The naval officer who would command the Joint Task Force Seven—Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble—had this to say, "General MacArthur deserves full and complete credit for three things: his conception of the operation; his determination to carry through with the operation; and his full, personal acceptance of the many hazards in the operation."

Major General Oliver P. Smith, USMC, commented as follows regarding the concept of Inchon: "There is no doubt but that the concept was MacArthur's, but the concept of a water-borne envelopment is inherent in amphibious operations. The Navy made many water-borne envelopments during World War II. What the general public is left unaware of is that the concept would have been valueless if the execution had been faulty."

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Planning

After the final briefing of General Collins and Admiral Sherman in Tokyo on 23 August, the decision to land at Inchon was firm, except for the formal approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which arrived a few days after the two JCS members had returned to Washington. The three officers who would be responsible for formulating the plans for the operation, and executing them, were Commander Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble; Commander Amphibious Group One, Rear Admiral James H. Doyle; and Major General Oliver P. Smith, USMC, Commanding General First Marine Division. Struble would determine the broad plans; Doyle would handle the amphibious planning; Smith the landing force plans. For the Inchon assault, Struble would have an additional title: Commander Joint Task Force Seven.

The presence of Struble, Doyle and Smith in the Far East for the forthcoming Inchon operation was fortuitous. Struble had participated in or had supervised twenty-two amphibious operations, including Normandy, Leyte, Ormoc Bay, Mindoro, and Corregidor, during World War II. Moreover, he had worked closely with MacArthur in the latter's South Pacific campaign, and Struble's experience and reputation were well known to the General. Doyle had had experience in amphibious warfare during World War II on the staff of Commander Amphibious Forces South Pacific, seeing action at Guadalcanal and Tulagi during the Solomon Islands campaign and later as commanding officer of the cruiser *Pasadena.* He had been Commander Amphibious Group One since January 1950. Smith, one of the Marines' top amphibious experts, had commanded a regiment at Cape Gloucester, and had participated in the Peleliu and Okinawa operations.

No more experienced senior officers in the field of amphibious warfare could have found in the American Navy.

It was also fortunate that Doyle's staff had commenced their study of a landing at Inchon in early July.

"On 4 July," said Doyle, "I received orders to bring a number of my staff to Tokyo by air for temporary additional duty in connection with the planning of amphibious operations in loading the First Cavalry Division for an amphibious landing somewhere in Korea. Inchon on the west coast was tentatively selected. At this time, only an administrative landing at Inchon was planned for the purpose of bolstering the retreating and sorely pressed ROKs. This was then changed to Pohang. The studies we did of Inchon in July, however, were the basis of amphibious planning which followed two months later."[10]

Struble was at sea with the Seventh Fleet during the several conferences which discussed the point of landing, including the final briefing of 23 August. "Upon returning to Sasebo on August 25th," said Vice Admiral Struble, "I received word that I was to command the Inchon invasion. I immediately assembled a few staff officers and departed for Tokyo to commence the top planning for Inchon.

"On my arrival in Tokyo, I was apprised of the decision to land at Inchon on 15 September—less than three weeks away. After a personal study of the problem, I could appreciate why General MacArthur had chosen Inchon: it was the prize gem if we could take it. After a careful study, and after the plans had been completed, I was convinced we *could* take it. I also formed the impression that our chances for a fair amount of surprise at Inchon were good. It was my job to organize the operation so that it *would* be a success.

"The next few days saw a number of conferences between my small staff, Admiral Doyle and his planners, and General Smith and his planners. On 30 August, I had a conference with Admirals Andrewes, Ruble, and Higgins, and Captain Austin, who flew up from Sasebo; Admiral Doyle and Admiral Henderson also attended.

"On 7 September, I flew to Sasebo for another conference with Andrewes, Ewen, Higgins, and Austin. After that one, I flew to Kobe for another one with Almond and Smith.

"These conferences served to rapidly coordinate the final planning of the various forces and greatly facilitated the coordination of later operations. Many of my decisions had to be transmitted orally to Admiral Doyle and General Smith and others in order to expedite the writing of their detailed amphibious and landing force plans."

The plan of operations was soon promulgated and contained the following concept:

"(1). An initial landing will be made on Wolmi-do to secure the island prior to the major landing. This step is essential because of the commanding position of the island in relation to the Inchon shoreline. On D-day at L-hour, one battalion of Marines will land in assault on Wolmi-do to seize the island prior to additional landings. L-hour will be on the early morning tide about 0630.

"(2). After the Wolmi-do landings, the principal landings will be made on RED, YELLOW, and BLUE beaches at Inchon by the First Marine Division (less one RCT) (Reinforced) landing in amphibious assault. H-hour for these landings will be on the afternoon high tide about 1700. This division will then seize a beachhead in the Inchon area.

"(3). The beachhead will be expanded rapidly to seize Kimpo airfield and the Han River line war of Seoul. The advance will be continued to seize and secure the city of Seoul, the terrain commanding Seoul, and an area to the south. The Seventh Infantry Division reinforced plus Tenth Corps troops will land administratively from second and third echelon convoys in the city of Inchon at a time to be designated after D-day and then carry on combat operations as directed by the Commanding General Tenth Corps.

"(4). Bombardment and fire support in connection with all these operations will be provided by cruisers and destroyers. Air cover, strikes, and close support will be provided by fast carrier and escort carrier aircraft within the objective area.

"/s/ A. D. Struble, Vice Admiral, Commander Joint Task Force SEVEN and Commander Seventh Fleet"

There was the basic plan: neutralize Wolmi, invade Inchon, seize the major airfield at Kimpo, and capture Seoul.

As the concept of the operation was finalized in 'round-the-clock conferences, the details of the amphibious force and landing force plans were determined and written down.

The dovetailing of the fleet, amphibious and landing force plans was accelerated by the close proximity of the naval and Marine staffs.

Major General Smith's command group and advance planning staff (23 officers and 12 enlisted men) had arrived in Tokyo from Camp Pendleton, California on 22 August and had established an advance command post aboard USS *Mt. McKinley.* The remainder of the Marines moved into General MacArthur's headquarters in the *Dai Ichi* building in downtown Tokyo. It was an ideal situation in view of the extreme urgency. "It was possible to employ the quickest and most informal method of doing business," reads Doyle's operational report. "Telephone conversations and oral directives were used in place of despatches, letters, and formal directives."

In a matter of days the detailed plans were ready.

Thus, the planning of this vast and complex operation was completed in only 23 days[10A]—a record which seems likely to stand in military history. This speed is a tribute to the ability and skill of the planners and to the soundness and solidity of the amphibious doctrine.

The principal forces for the Inchon assault were:

Attack Force (RADM J. H. Doyle)

Landing Force (10th Corps) (MAJGEN E. A. Almond)

Patrol & Reconnaissance Force (RADM G. H. Henderson)

Blockade & Covering Force (RADM W. G. Andrewes, Royal Navy)

Fast Carrier Force (RADM E. C. Ewen)
Logistic Support Force (CAPT B. L. Austin)
Advance Group (added after original plan was put out) (RADM J. M. Higgins)
Flagship Group (CAPT E. L. Woodyard)

The principal duties of these forces were as follows:

(a) The *Advance Group,* including the Flagship of 7th Fleet, would conduct a reconnaissance in force of the Inchon Area on 13 September. The primary purpose would be to locate and silence gun positions on both Wolmi-do and the adjacent Inchon area which might threaten the success of the landing. Six destroyers would be sent up the channel to anchor in a fan-shaped ring around Wolmi-do Island to draw its fire and to silence its gun positions. At the same time, two American and two British cruisers would conduct a long range bombardment of the Inchon area with air spot, to reduce strong points and positions. Coordinated with the cruiser-destroyer fire would be heavy air attacks from the carriers. This neutralization operation by the advance group would be repeated on 14 September.

(b) The *Attack Force* under RADM Doyle would make the assault landing and control the close air support and the naval gunfire support for the assault troops. The attack force would continue to provide support of the landing force after they had accomplished their landing.

(c) The *Landing Force* (10th Corps) would land on the designated beaches in the Inchon area and carry out the ground plan. Smith's Marine division would carry the assault and seize the beachhead. The Seventh Division, inexperienced in amphibious warfare, would follow Smith's Marines ashore administratively.

(d) The *Patrol and Reconnaissance Force* under RADM Henderson would provide long range reconnaissance and other aircraft patrols covering the whole area of operation.

(e) The *Blockade and Covering Force* under RADM Andrewes, Royal Navy, would conduct special reconnaissance missions and provide for covering of units of Attack Force en route to the objective area. Andrewes was also assigned specific interdiction missions and was to maintain a naval blockade of the west coast of Korea.

(f) The *Fast Carrier Force* would conduct air operations to maintain air supremacy in the objective area and for the isolation of the objective area. The carriers would also provide air cover and support for the actual attack landing operations.

(g) The *Logistic Support Force* would provide refueling and reammunitioning facilities in the objective area.

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Preparation

Preparation by the U.S. Marines for the Inchon landing unknowingly began the day the war started in Korea. For the first few days, the Marines had no specific orders—only precedent. But 177 years of precedent was good enough, and was to prove consistent in this case. The first order directing the First Marine Division to prepare to embark a reinforced regimental combat team came on 2 July. Five days later, the First Provisional Marine Brigade was activated, and between 12 and 14 July this brigade sailed.

While this Marine Brigade was fitting out, it became obvious that it was only a matter of time before every available marine would be en route to Korea. General MacArthur, in the first thirty days of the war, sent a total of six despatches to the Joint Chiefs of Staff requesting the Marines. But large scale participation by the Marines was not possible with the reduced peacetime size of the active forces. Accordingly, Marine Reserves were recalled on 19 July and replacements were ordered to the First Marine Division from the Second Marine Division.

From posts and stations all over the world, Marines charged into Camp Pendleton. From the desert supply depot at Barstow, California, came the jeeps, the DUKWs, and the amphibian tractors to complement the rapid build-up.

"The magnitude of the task accomplished by the Marine Corps in the first ten weeks of the conflict may be judged by the fact that on 30 June, the First Marine Division (Reinforced) at Camp Pendleton had an active strength of 641 officers and 7,148 enlisted," reads General Shepherd's report on the activities of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. "From this initial Strength, the First Provisional Brigade (266 officers and 4,503 men) was taken. Yet, by 15 September, the First Marine Division had been expanded to 26,000—an expansion, augmentation, and movement without parallel in American military history."

An amphibious assault is often compared to a chain—a series of interlocking operations, each one dependent on the others. One link breaks and the whole chain fails.

The Inchon operation placed exceedingly difficult stresses on the amphibious assault chain. The shortage of time, the lack of rehearsal, the shortage of trained personnel complicated the always-difficult problem.

"So many times during an amphibious attack, the little guys in the little boats need more knowledge of the big picture," said Admiral Doyle. "This was especially true at Inchon. I considered it vital that every key man be given the most recent data available. As there was no time prior to Inchon for a rehearsal, I held a briefing on board the flagship for all commanding officers, loading officers, control officers, and all those actually concerned with making the assault. I told them that since there was no time for rehearsal, I wished all CO's to personally instruct boat crews and coxswains what they were to do, why they were to do it, and how their individual tasks fitted into the overall picture. I wanted the cox'ns to have all this background information so that they could react in the event of unforeseen developments. We have such high-type enlisted men in the Navy that I knew with proper instructions, they would prove resourceful in the event of trouble."

One of the urgent needs prior to the Inchon landing was intelligence. Despite the fact that South Korea had been occupied by American forces for more than two years, and that Inchon had been one of the main harbors in use, there was an incredible lack of information regarding the harbor.

Pictures were poor. Maps were wholly inadequate. The close air support charts used at Inchon were hastily made into books by the U.S. Army's 64th Engineer's Base Topographic Battalion. The charts were mostly monochrome, and in some cases reproductions of World War II Japanese maps. "Considering the extremely short

time allowed," reported CDR J. T. Moynahan, after a special inspection for the Hydrographic Office, "it is a miracle that the books were produced at all." There was little late information on the condition of the mudflats, the height of the seawalls, the tractional qualities and the gradient of the mudflats.

One of the most helpful sources of information on Inchon was Captain Thomas F. Brittain's World War II report of the landing of American occupation forces in Korea in 1945.

From unusual sources and by unorthodox methods, frantic efforts were initiated to obtain the needed intelligence.

These methods and efforts took three forms. First of all, an Army officer, Warrant W. R. Miller, was loaned by the Second Transportation Medium, Yokohama, to ComPhibGruONE. Miller had spent more than a year handling LSUs and LCMs in Inchon, and he had had recent and firsthand experience with Inchon's tidal conditions and unloading problems. "His knowledge and advice was accurate and invaluable," said CDR H. W. McElwain, the intelligence officer of Task Force 90.

To determine the seawall heights which the attacking Marines would be forced to scale, a special team of one officer and two civilians who were in the area from the U.S. Air Force's Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, were made available to PhibGruONE; Colonel Richard W. Philbrick, USAF, and Mr. Amrom H. Katz and Mr. Donald J. Graves. From aerial photographs taken by RF-80 jet aircraft flying at 200 feet, these gentlemen determined the heights of the seawalls at various tidal stages within a few inches of their actual height, corroborating the information available from other sources.

The third source of information would come from a small behind-the-lines intelligence party led by Lieutenant Eugene F. Clark, USN. Clark, an ex-chief yeoman, had fought through the Pacific war, including duty on Okinawa with the Army's Military Government Group. After the war he served aboard an AKA, had commanded an LST running the China coast, and had also commanded the USS *Errol*, an attack transport which received the Battle Efficiency Pennant under his command.

At the outbreak of the Korean War Clark was assigned to MacArthur's headquarters GHQ staff. His previous experience ideally fitted him for the most unusual of missions for a naval officer. Clark's party, consisting of himself and two specially picked South Koreans, was to land on one of the small harbor islands near Inchon, and to send back to Tokyo the missing details of the needed intelligence.

On 31 August, Clark and his two interpreters sailed from Sasebo aboard the British destroyer HMS *Charity*, and transferred the next morning to the South Korean frigate *PC-703*. By nightfall that evening, Clark's party was ensconced on Yong-hong-do island, a scant 13.8 miles from Inchon itself. The island, six miles long and three miles wide, was typical of the hundreds of small islands dotting the west coast. The Yong-hong-do islanders were friendly and helpful. Clark commandeered the only motorized sampan on the island; he also organized the teen-aged boys of the three-hundred-odd inhabitants into coast-watching parties. Two machine guns were set up facing the nearby island of Taebu-do, which was occupied by enemy troops.

For two weeks Clark clung to his perilous roost, fighting sampan battles with North Korean vessels from the adjacent islands, and capturing infiltrators who crossed from Taebu-do at low tide to dislodge him from his stronghold. Nightly, Clark sent into Inchon missions composed of young loyal South Korean boys who were instructed to measure the mudflats and the heights of the seawall, to count the defending troops, and to chart the positions of the hostile guns, observation posts, and trench implacements. Clark personally rowed into Inchon harbor one moonless night and wallowed about on the mudflats to prove that not even an amphibious Marine, much less a tank, could negotiate the spongy gumbo.

In his nocturnal prowling in the waters south of Inchon itself, Clark succeeded in capturing some 30 small vessels, most of them carrying civilians in transit between Inchon and the harbor islands. Occasionally, however, Clark captured a sampan with policemen or soldiers who were able to contribute to the over-all intelligence picture.

His most valuable contribution to the Inchon landing, Clark thought, was his discovery that one of the main navigation lights of the difficult Flying Fish Channel, located on Palmi-do, could be lit. The Reds had not entirely destroyed it, merely damaging the rotation mechanism and extinguishing the wick; otherwise it was intact. Clark reported these facts to Tokyo by radio and was instructed to light this important navigational light at midnight on 14 of September. This aid made the invasion fleet's passage up Flying Fish Channel a great deal faster and easier on the morning of 15 September 1950.[11]

It was an exceedingly dangerous mission exceedingly well accomplished. For his bravery and accomplishment Lieutenant Clark was awarded the Navy Cross.

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Wolmi—The Cork in the Bottle

As stated previously, a successful landing at Inchon demanded that the island of Wolmi-do be captured first. In the planning stages there was much discussion on how best to do this. Could the island be sufficiently neutralized by a bombardment on the morning of the invasion? If so, the critical element of surprise might be preserved until the very moment of landing. The experts who examined the island's position and studied its defenses thought not. The lessons of other Pacific island pre-invasion bombardments were too plentiful and too recent. To assume that Wolmi might be neutralized in a single morning would be dangerously optimistic.

"A series of balanced operations were planned for the neutralization of Wolmi-do commencing 10 September," said Vice Admiral Struble. "First, Admiral Ruble's Marine airmen of Task Group 96.8 would burn the island with napalm. The Advance Force attacks on 13 and 14 September would follow. Finally, there would be another bombardment on the morning of the assault.

"In all the planning, it was my intention to so balance the air operation on the west coast that the finger of suspicion would not be heavily pointed at Inchon. To accomplish this, I had the carriers not only strike Wolmi and the Inchon area, but also the Kunsan area to the south[11A] and the Pyongyang area to the north. I also ordered an amphibious feint in the Kunsan area on 7 September.

"I felt that if we could keep the point of our landing concealed until the first bombardment of 13 September the enemy would not reach the conclusion that Inchon was to be invaded until it was too late."

In planning the destroyer bombardments of Wolmi, the question of whether or not to bombard at night was raised.

"One thing we all agreed on," reported Rear Admiral John M. Higgins, commanding the Gunfire Support Group, "was the desirability of making the attack on Wolmi in broad daylight despite the fact that this forced us to give up the surprise element and made us better targets. But if we went up there at night and hit heavy opposition, there'd be a lot of confusion in that narrow channel."[12] Making the attacks in daylight would also diminish any danger of collision, and in case one or more ships became immobile from enemy fire, the towing task would be less difficult.

It was planned that the destroyers would operate close enough to Wolmi to tempt the hidden guns to open fire.

"The 'sitting duck' concept was carefully discussed and agreed upon in advance," said Vice Admiral Struble, "as a means of drawing enemy fire and thereby revealing the locations of their gun positions."

Finally, the decision was made to anchor near Wolmi in order to counteract the five-knot current; further, the destroyers' time of anchoring would be adjusted so that they would ride the *flooding* tide, and thereby *face* the incoming tide. By keeping their anchors underfoot to steady ships' head and position, the destroyers would be headed out of the channel and ready for a fast exit in case the return fire from the island was too heavy. Riding the flood tide would also place the destroyers broadside to the island, thus allowing all guns to bear.

The destroyers, meanwhile, were making preparations for the bombardment. In his action report, the skipper of the *Gurke*, CDR Frederick M. Radel, described his crew's efforts to repel boarders—a rare precaution in the age of atom bombs, supersonic airplanes, and guided missiles:

"About the only preparations we made," said Radel, "were to prepare ship for towing, to rig fenders for going alongside a damaged or stranded vessel, and to brief and arm repair parties to repel possible boarders." The destroyers, if disabled, would be so close to the enemy island that boarding across the mudflats became a distinct

possibility.

De Haven took a bizarre step to invite the enemy's attention. Since the destroyers would be as close as 800 yards to Wolmi, where individuals on deck would clearly be visible, might not *De Haven* attract Wolmi's fire by setting dummies on the open deck? CDR Oscar B. Lundgren thought it worth the effort and approved his crew's plan of placing several straw and rag-filled dummies on the forecastle.

Extra 40 mm. ammunition was stacked on deck, for the ship's magazines were already full.

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The Neutralization of Wolmi-do

The neutralization of Wolmi-do was commenced on 10 September by Rear Admiral Richard W. Ruble's Carrier Division 15 aircraft. The Marine aircraft of VMF-212 and 323 dropped 95 tanks of napalm in a systematic pattern all over Wolmi. Photo reconnaissance the next day showed 39 out of 44 buildings in the warehouse area destroyed, the entire dwelling area burned out, and buildings on the north peninsula 80 per cent destroyed. Periodically, over the next two days, a pattern of air strikes to soften the island's defenses was delivered.

The pre-invasion bombardments of Wolmi-do commenced at 0700 on 13 September.

Gunfire Support Group Six—cruisers *Toledo, Rochester,* HMS *Kenya,* HMS *Jamaica,* and destroyers *Mansfield, De Haven, Lyman K. Swenson, Gollett, Gurke,* and *Henderson*—started up Flying Fish Channel. The weather was clear, the sea calm.

A few miles south of Inchon, as the channel narrowed, the cruisers dropped out of the column and anchored in their bombardment stations.

The destroyers continued northward.

Shortly before 1145, *Mansfield,* the leading destroyer, reported what appeared to be a string of mines. *De Haven's* skipper, CDR Lundgren, confirmed the sighting. The order for open fire was given and both cruisers and destroyers opened fire on the enemy mines. The first mine was hit by *Gurke* at 1146.

"The mine menace was in the general vicinity of Palmi-do," said Vice Admiral Struble, "and had apparently been placed in this location because of a bombardment fired at Inchon about a month earlier by two British cruisers and two destroyers.[13]

"Fortunately, due to our decision to come in at low tide, the mines were uncovered, discovered, and generally destroyed by gunfire."

Destroyer Squadron Nine's commander, Captain Halle C. Allan, detached *Henderson* to remain behind temporarily to destroy as many of the mines as possible, and then when the rising incoming tide hid them from view, to rejoin at high speed. Except for a few mines, most of this minefield was destroyed by the cruiser-destroyer fire.

The destroyers boldly sailed past the doomed island, then under heavy air attack from Task Force 77 carrier aircraft. *Gurke* anchored first at 1242, only 800 yards from Wolmi. Behind her, the other destroyers halted in their assigned positions.

Hundreds of eyes aboard the American destroyers scanned Wolmi-do's surface trying to detect the telltale humps of concealed gun positions. For several minutes nothing happened, and the destroyers rode to their anchors in the terrible silence.

Captain Allan two-blocked his signal: "Execute assigned mission."

De Haven opened fire first, shortly before 1300, followed by *Collett.* Not until 1303 was there any fire returned from Wolmi, and it was concentrated on the three destroyers nearest the island: *Gurke, Swenson,* and *Collett.* The first enemy shots were over, then short; at 1306, *Collett* took her first hit. She was struck again at 1310, again at 1320, and again at 1329. The last shell was a 75 mm. armor-piercing shell which broke into two pieces, one piece going into the engineroom and fracturing a low-pressure steam line, the larger half plowing into the plot room, where it broke the firing selector switch and wounded five men. *Collett* shifted to individual control and shifted her anchorage on which at least one enemy gun had found the range.

Gurke was hit next in two places, neither seriously. The *Swenson* took a near miss which instantly killed

LTJG David H. Swenson and wounded ENS John N. Noonan.

"As the first hits were reported to me," said Vice Admiral Struble, "I directed Captain Woodyard to heave short and have the *Rochester* stand by to enter the narrow channel to Inchon in order to support the destroyers if it developed that they would be unable to handle the problem themselves." But the bombardment proceeded without further casualty, the *Mansfield* being narrowly missed during the retirement.

The destroyers steamed out of the anchorage at 1400, having blasted the island for more than an hour, supported by shellfire from the cruisers in the lower bay. As the destroyers steamed clear, the planes from Task Force 77 resumed the air attacks.

"After the bombardment," said Vice Admiral Struble, "the entire advance force departed from the area off Inchon and proceeded down Flying Fish Channel to produce the illusion, if possible, that we were retiring.

"After we were well clear, I ordered the task force to stop for a conference aboard the *Rochester*. Admiral Higgins and his staff officers and Captain Allan of the destroyers were present.

"After a discussion of the first bombardment, I decided to re-orient the carrier attack from south to west, and to accept the attendant risk of bombs dropping on the causeway between Wolmi and Inchon. At the request of the Marines, I had previously ordered this causeway spared so that the Marines who captured Wolmi on the morning of the 15th could use it to cross to Inchon and join the main assault.

"I also took action to improve the next day's air spotting for the cruiser fire, which had not been satisfactory."

The reduction of Wolmi was resumed in similar fashion the following day. Prior to standing up Flying Fish Channel, the advance force hove to, half-masted flags, and conducted burial-at-sea ceremonies aboard the *Toledo* for the late LTJG David H. Swenson.

Only five destroyers (*Collett* having been detached) entered the channel. As *Henderson, Mansfield, De Haven, Swenson,* and *Gurke* steamed northward, a small portion of the previous day's minefield was seen and again taken under fire.

The remaining five destroyers resumed their positions around Wolmi and commenced fire. Wolmi's batteries were slow to answer, and indeed, for the first forty minutes, not a shot from the island splashed around the destroyers. For seventy-five minutes the bombardment group earthquaked the tiny island. As the ships retired, this time unharmed, not a shot was heard in retaliation from the wounded island.

In retrospect, the bombardment of Wolmi in such a manner and under such circumstances was extremely audacious. That it was so successful is a tribute to the aggressive spirit of the U.S. Navy, which has always accepted great risks where there is great promise. History must record this bombardment as a heroic and daring action.[14]

Silenced and shrouded in smoke, Wolmi was now ready for capture. The Marines made last-minute preparations to remove the Wolmi cork from the Inchon bottle.

The advance attack force, Captain N. W. Sears, consisting of three APDs and one LSD[15] steamed up Flying Fish Channel in the darkness on the early morning of the 15th, guided by the flames of still-burning Wolmi-do and the light from Palmi-do island, atop of which sat LT Eugene Clark, shivering inside his blanket, watching the invasion fleet steam past in the darkness. Ahead of these ships were the destroyers *Mansfield, De Haven, Swenson;* and, following them, the LSMR division of three rocket ships (*401, 403,* and *404*), plus the *Southerland, Gurke, Henderson, Toledo, Rochester, Kenya, Jamaica, Collett,* and *Mataco.*

At 0545, the bombarding ship opened fire on Wolmi, and again the F4U Corsairs from Carrier Division 15, ten of them, sprayed the landing beaches. At 0633, LTCOL R. D. Taplett's Third Battalion (Fifth Regiment) landed from seventeen LCVPs and three LSUs on the shattered isle.

There were two waves of LCVPs of eight boats, each carrying troops, and one wave of three LSUs carrying a total of nine tanks. The first wave of LCVPs was re-employed as Wave Four. The resistance was

generally light, for many of the 500-odd enemy troops defending the island had been reduced to dazed inaction by the three days of air and surface bombardment. Some of the defending troops—elements of an artillery regiment and an independent marine regiment—had slipped back across the causeway to Inchon during the night. The U.S. Marines stormed up the hilly slopes, and in forty-two minutes the American flag was flying from Wolmi-do. However, for several hours more, the Marines rooted the defenders out of their holes. The enemy suffered 120 dead and 190 captured, to the 20 wounded of the U.S. Marines. The rest of the day was spent by these Marines getting emplacements ready for two battalions of light artillery which would be landed on Wolmi with the main attack, to support the Inchon invasion. The tanks were also made ready to cross the causeway to join the attack upon Inchon.

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Inchon Invasion: Across the Seawalls

The actual invasion of Inchon commenced at 1730 on the evening of 15 September. There were three unusual features of the assault. First of all, the U.S. Marine Corps had never before made an assault into the heart of a large city, against the prospect of heavy opposition from warehouses, buildings, and other cover. Nor had they ever landed on seawalls.

After observing the Reds' response to the Wolmi bombardment, General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, said: "There clearly remained little further justification for anticipating an unopposed or lightly opposed landing. . . . The size of the task force, clearly visible to the Communists," continues Shepherd's report, "left no doubt that the Wolmi-do landing must be only a preliminary, and evidence of hurried enemy preparations to move into the Inchon area were detected by our aircraft and appropriate attacks launched. Nevertheless, the initial shock and surprise which forms a valuable part of most amphibious attacks was largely anticipated, and the enemy was alert for the evening landings."[16]

The second undesirable feature was the fact that the landing had to take place just prior to darkness, which meant that the Marines did not have a daylight period in which to get set for the night.

A third undesirable feature of the landing across the Inchon seawalls was the necessity of having LSTs right behind the assaulting Marines: because of the tides and the late hour of the landing, sufficient supplies—3,000 tons—had to be beached simultaneously with the invading Marines in order to guarantee logistic support during the night and until the next high tide would permit replenishment.

"One of the toughest decisions I had to make during the planning for Inchon," said Admiral Doyle, "was the decision to leave the LSTs on the beach during that first night of the landing. It is easy to imagine what would have happened to me if something had gone wrong; I especially worried about the possibility of having a United States Navy ship captured.

"However, the Marines asked that the LSTs be left on the beach for their support; they said they'd protect them. I had complete reliance and confidence that they could do it. Once the decision was made, I worried no more about it."

Doyle and his planners were well aware of the risks—and were frank to admit that these LSTs, as never before, would be "large slow targets" and fortunate if half survived. The Pacific Fleet evaluation group summarized this dilemma in their report:

"The possible sacrifice and loss of eight LSTs had to be accepted in order to insure logistic support to troops ashore at Inchon during the night. . . . Dried out on the mudflats by the receding tide, these eight LSTs were helplessly vulnerable to enemy fire, and with their explosive inflammable cargo were subject to loss."[17]

Perhaps it was the high expectancy of loss which necessitated the choice of the eight LSTs for this hazardous but necessary phase of the assault. At any rate, the eight LSTs which made the assault landings were amongst those that had been turned over to the Army and SCAJAP[17A] after World War II. For five years they had been used, misused, unused, and abused for cargo work around the Japanese harbors. When recommissioned into the U.S. Navy, it was found that much of their original equipment had been altered, stripped, or damaged. Their overhaul and upkeep during the five years had almost been nil. As a result, Commander Tractor Squadron Three (CAPT R. C. Peden) estimated that each of these LSTs would ordinarily have required at least four months of refitting and overhaul in a U.S. shipyard to bring them up to a minimum condition for operations. Another of the SCAJAP LSTs, in fact, was in such uncertain material condition that it was towed to Inchon.

Almost as bad was the lack of experienced people to man these vital LSTs. To take an LST into Inchon harbor, against its fast-flowing current, gunfire, mudflats, and in darkness, ordinarily would have demanded handpicked skippers with special training. Instead, LT R. M. Beckley, skipper of *LST-898,* who had made two previous landings in an LST, and LT Trumond E. Houston, skipper of *LST-799,* who had made none, were typical of the commanding officers.

"On 13 July 1950," wrote Houston, "I received immediate detachment orders from my duty station at the U.S. Naval Training Center, Recruit Training Command, San Diego, California, to report to Commandant, Twelfth Naval District, for air priority class one to Japan to take command of an undesignated LST.

"Upon arrival in Japan, I found I was one of ten prospective commanding officers of LSTs which had been operating with Japanese civilian crews since 1946 and were at that time being assembled at the U.S. Naval Repair Facility, Yokosuka, Japan, for repair, fitting out, and recommissioning in the U.S. Navy. My ship, the *LST-799,* arrived about the same time in Yokosuka as I did. What a revelation! It was stripped, dirty, stinking, and generally in a horrible operating condition (all LSTs were the same).

"My crew and officers arrived piecemeal. Some came by surface, some by air, some were from local commands. The crew, numbering sixty men and five officers, could be broken down roughly in three parts. One third was regular Navy, one third was recruits from training centers, and one third was recalled reservists, most of whom had been at home only ten or twelve days before.

"We were a motley, ragtag crew. Three days before commissioning, we descended on the *799,* directed the Japanese crew to retreat within a half hour, and took over.

"We were commissioned on 28 August, about 0930. At 1000, we had orders to get under way for a berth shift. I had never handled an LST before.

"During the ensuing few days, all hands did everything possible to make our ship ready for sea. Material needs were the most critical. Even a day prior to getting under way, we had no sextants, bearing circles, special signal flags, and many other very necessary items of equipment. We had no wardroom equipment: linen, silver, dishes, and blankets. We used Japanese equipment wherever it was available.

"On the third day after commissioning, we were on our way to Kobe, Japan, where Marine elements were deployed for loading for the assault at Inchon, Korea. We arrived in Kobe, rode out a typhoon there where the eye of the storm passed directly overhead; eventually we were re-routed to Pusan, Korea, for loading of Marine units and equipment.

"We picked up the convoy from Japan off southern Korea and continued together for Inchon. On the evening of 15 September 1950, *LST-799* was the last of eight LSTs to land on Red Beach, landing on the extreme left flank.

"This was my own and my crew's first beaching. We had had no training or practice time. I shudder as I remember how green and inexperienced the entire ship was. Only the basic knowledge of mechanics so many of our young Americans acquire, their inquisitive and exploring minds, their 'can-do' attitude can explain how we ever arrived at the beach at all."

Upon such vessels and such men did the success of the landing at Inchon depend.

"My orders were to get as many of the eight ships into the Red area and unloaded as was humanly possible, no matter what the cost," said LCDR James C. Wilson who commanded the LSTs.[18]

The final afternoon bombardment of the Inchon beaches lasted for forty-five minutes, with rocket ships, destroyers, cruisers and airplanes all joining in the large and tremendously powerful bombardment.

Vice Admiral Struble's orders to the bombardment forces clearly specified that there should be no promiscuous firing at the city itself or at civilian installations. To achieve this, the entire objective area had been divided into 60 sub-areas. Known military targets had been previously assigned, and those which offered the greatest potential hazard to our landing troops were circled in red. It had been agreed that any ship could fire into

a red-circle area with or without a "spot." In the uncircled areas, however, firing was permitted only if definite targets were found and an air spot was available. This differentiation between types of areas was adopted to reduce destruction of nonmilitary targets to a minimum, to save the city of Inchon for occupation forces, and to avoid injury to civilian personnel. "The Seoul-Inchon area is inhabited by our South Korean Allies," said Struble in an order to his forces, "and our forces plan to utilize facilities in this area. Unnecessary destruction will impede our progress. Bombing and gunfire will be confined to targets whose destruction will contribute to the conduct of operations—accurate gunfire and pinpoint bombing against specific targets, rather than area destruction, is contemplated."

Belting Inchon's harbor area was a large, grey, heavy stone seawall. Four lengths of this harbor wall had been selected as the landing "beaches," though certainly the word "beach" was a misnomer in every case. "Red" beach was to the north, 1,000 feet long, with a 15-foot seawall. It lay beneath a protecting hill atop of which was a Korean cemetery. It was to prove a troublesome spot. The other main beach, "Blue," lay to the south of the city, relatively clear of the urban area, and in such a position that the Marines could sever the city's communications from the rear. Green beach and Yellow beach (not used until D+1) were on Wolmi and the tidal basin of the inner harbor, respectively. The latter two were logistic beaches only, Red and Blue being the assault beaches.

The assaults on Red and Blue beaches were simultaneous, roughly an hour before sunset and high tide. Twenty-three waves of LVTs made the Red beach assault with the eight LSTs. In each LVT was a pair of scaling ladders—some metal, some wooden—with hooked ends designed to catch the seawalls. As the first wave of boats touched the seawall, the tops of these seawalls were still four feet above the boats' bows. In some cases the ladder hooks were too small to fit the wall, and the Marines leap-frogged over one another. The first wave tumbled ashore with relatively little opposition, but the enemy fire picked up as Waves Two and Three approached.
Click here to view map

The LSTs, led by *859*, started in one by one at five-minute intervals at 1830, one hour after the first Marine wave. These vessels seemed to draw the fire of the defending Reds, enabling the Marines ashore to move forward. Despite the smoke, dust, haze, and the approach of sunset, the eight LSTs succeeded in making the beach, although not in the order originally planned.

Just as *LST-973* (LT R. I. Trapp) beached, it was hit by a mortar shell that could have meant disaster. The shell struck among gasoline drums parked topside; raw gasoline gushed down the deck, into the ventilator and crew compartments. Quick work on the part of the damage control party prevented a fire which, spreading to the abundant ammunition nearby, might have caused a major accident. *LST-914*, fourth in line, was struck by enemy gunfire and set afire, but the blaze was soon under control. LSTs *857* and *859* were also hit.

The seawall proved troublesome. Some LSTs bounced off it, others found the wall too high to lower their ramps.

"It was almost dark as we headed for the beach," said Lieutenant Houston. "Due to heavy sky, light rain, and smoke from burning buildings ashore, visibility was extremely poor. Sporadic mortar and small arms gunfire was being received from ashore. While this was our first beaching, it was going to be a good one. We hit the seawall at about six knots. The ship shuddered and bounced for several minutes before hanging onto the quay. It was well that we had hit hard, for we shattered the quay wall, enabling us to commence immediate unloading of heavy equipment.

"Bulldozers went out first and immediately commenced covering the slit trenches along the waterfront from which enemy small arms were being received. Additionally, they helped break up the quay in order that other LSTs could get their bows in a position to commence unloading.

"Two Marines seriously wounded by mortar fire at the bow door entrance were brought aboard. Both died on board and were transferred to an adjacent hospital LST.

"Unloading continued throughout the night as ships remained dried out on the mudflats."

The Marines continued to press forward, and in about one hour and a half had secured the hill near Red beach.

On Blue beach, 15 waves of LVT(A)s and LVTs and 6 waves of LCVPs took the Marines ashore. Again, the seawall was a problem. Dynamite was used to blast openings, and one charge almost blew up Vice Admiral Struble and General Almond

In the afternoon Vice Admiral Struble went past the *Mount McKinley* and picked up General Almond of the Tenth Corps to observe the afternoon landing. Struble had recognized that the approach in connection with Blue beach was very difficult, and that the conduct of the ship-to-shore movement here might well have difficulty; he also thought it desirable for General Almond, who had little or no previous amphibious experience, to actually observe the conduct of a difficult ship-to-shore problem.

Struble and Almond approached the seawall in the barge, with about the second or third wave, to the left of the landing area. As the two officers approached the seawall, a sergeant of the Marines hollered out in an irate fashion, “Boat there! Get the hell out of here!” Recognizing the urgency of his voice, Struble ordered the coxswain to get out in a hurry. After the barge turned, a large explosive charge blew up and destroyed the nearby seawall. The sergeant was making a breach in the seawall in order that the boats in following waves could go into the breach and the men could get across the top of the wall quicker and better.

The pre-bombardment smoke, combined with the dust and haze, lowered the visibility to less than 100 yards. A 24-inch searchlight was trained on the desired beach to assist the boatmen taking the Marines ashore, and this was a great help. Nevertheless, part of Wave Sixteen became lost and was deposited to the north of Blue beach on the salt beds. (Later, these troops were reembarked and relanded on Blue beach.) Fortunately, resistance was light in this area, and the Marines pressed inland in the fast-falling darkness.

On 16 September, the ground forces advanced against light resistance on an arc radiating five miles from Red beach. The Korean Marines mopped up resistance in the town of Inchon. Air interdiction in the vicinity north and south of the objective area was successful in preventing effective enemy reinforcement. The waterfront unloading, which was very slow at first, improved on D+1 Day, and henceforth unloading proceeded on schedule. Many enemy tanks, vehicles, and mortars were strafed and rocketed on the Seoul-Inchon road. General unloading commenced at 1030 as transport types were moved to berths close off the harbor entrance. Development of unloading facilities commenced in the inner harbor. A causeway on the west side of Wolmi-do was completed, but because of the tidal current, only one LST could be berthed alongside. Commander Amphibious Group Three (RADM L. A. Thackrey, USN) arrived in *Eldorado* and was placed in charge of unloading operations ashore. *Consolation* arrived and commenced embarking casualties. At 1800, Commanding General, First Marine Division, assumed command of the landing force elements ashore. The Gunfire Support Group continued deep and close support fire missions with good results.

At 0550, 17 September, two enemy aircraft, believed to be YAK-3s, made bombing runs on *Rochester*. The first drop of four bombs missed astern, except for one which ricocheted off the airplane crane without exploding. The second drop missed close aboard on the port bow and shrapnel did minor damage to electrical equipment. There were no casualties. The first plane to make a bombing run also strafed the *Jamaica* and was shot down by that ship. *Jamaica* suffered three casualties.

The First Marine Division continued to advance against light resistance, although the enemy resistance stiffened on the flanks. During the morning, two hundred enemy troops and five tanks attacked the Fifth Marine Regiment six miles southeast of Inchon. Results: all tanks destroyed and enemy troops annihilated. Kimpo airfield was secured by 2005.

Much traffic was observed moving into Seoul from the east and north. From 500 to 1,000 enemy troops were observed 12 miles south of Munsan, moving toward Seoul. These troops were wearing white clothing over dark; they turned and walked in the opposite direction when U.S. aircraft approached.

U.S. 7th Infantry Division commenced administrative landing at 1400.

The Inchon assault must be recorded as an audacious gamble. That it succeeded so notably and brilliantly enhanced the military reputation of the one man who said it could be done—Douglas MacArthur. It also reflects great credit on the three principal naval and Marine officers—Struble, Doyle and Smith—who planned and carried it off.

Admiral W. F. Halsey's telegram to the General said as much: "It was," said Halsey, "the most masterly and audacious strategic stroke in all history."

Rear Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, the Deputy Chief of Staff to Commander Naval Forces Far East, footnoted the operation: "This operation really shows the greatness of that man."

General MacArthur saluted the Navy and Marines on the morning of the 15th, in a message to Vice Admiral Struble: "The Navy and the Marines have never shone more brightly than this morning. MacArthur."

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Chapter 3. The Magnificent Gamble: The Amphibious Assault at Inchon

Significance of the Inchon Landing

That Inchon was a magnificent gamble grandly taken by General MacArthur, and that it also was brilliantly conducted by the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, there can be no doubt.

In researching the multitudinous reports of the Inchon campaign, frequently found are such words as "fortunately," "phenomenal," "in spite of," "unique," "unorthodox," and "improvised." It was "fortunate," says an Amphibious Group One report, "that the staff of ComPhibGruONE had commenced its research on an Inchon landing in July." "It was fortunate," says the First Marine Division report, "that a Marine Mobile training team was in the Far East when the war began," "It is phenomenal," says the *Pacific Fleet Interim Evaluation Report,* "that the LSTs were able to perform their assigned missions only fifteen days after commissioning." "It was fortunate that the typhoons Kezia and Jane didn't interfere," said Admiral Albert K. Morehouse, Chief of Staff to Commander Naval Forces, Far East.

It should not be inferred, however, that the planning or the execution of the Inchon landing was haphazard or that its success was due solely to good fortune. Quite the contrary is true. The planning and execution of the Inchon landing in record time, and with a minimum of casualties, despite the considerable hazards, is a tribute to the skill, training, readiness, and courage of the men of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps who made it possible.

The results of the Inchon operation were notable in many fields: the effect it had on the war; the effect it had upon the Chinese; the effect it had upon the Navy and the Marine Corps; and the effect it had upon our national military policies and programs.

The immediate military effect upon the Korean War was instantaneous and decisive. The Commanding General himself had a brief but erroneous moment of doubt that the intended purpose of the landing had not been realized. On the 17th of September, with the Marines plunging toward Seoul, there was still no evidence that the landing had resulted in any relaxation upon the Pusan perimeter. General Walton H. Walker's U.S. Eighth Army was still in its positions.

On the *Mount McKinley,* General MacArthur sent for Rear Admiral Doyle, and expressed his fear that the landing had not achieved the results he had hoped for; and thereupon, he directed Doyle to commence planning another amphibious landing, this time at the point the Navy had originally chosen, near Kunsan. When Doyle asked what troops he should plan on using for the new assault, MacArthur suggested the First Cavalry Division.

In a few hours, however, a despatch from General Walker reported that resistance in his front had weakened, and by that evening it was apparent to all that the great gamble had paid off.

The Inchon landing can be credited with ending the North Korean aggression, for in a matter of days the entire half of the peninsula below the 38th parallel had been recaptured by the UN forces, and the North Korean Army was a beaten and broken army.

Admiral Doyle credits one fortuitous circumstance with having a direct bearing on the success of the 8th Army breakout from the Pusan perimeter as a result of the Inchon operation: the death of their number one general, General Kang Kun. "The death of their number one general," said Doyle, "greatly influenced the deterioration of the North Korean Army in the Pusan perimeter. He was a very good general and even General MacArthur conceded his ability. His successor did not have the ability to hold the North Korean Army together."

To the naval student, the results of the Inchon landing are many and varied. The immediate lesson is that

Inchon demonstrated afresh the incalculable value of amphibious operations. Completely contravened was such a statement as the one made only nine months earlier, in Ocober 1949, by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Omar S. Bradley: “I predict,” said the General, “that large scale amphibious operations will never occur again.”

An excellent condensation of the results of Inchon are found in Admiral Doyle’s action report:

“The target date which was designated, 15 September 1950, did not give adequate time by normal standards for joint planning between the Commander, Attack Force and the Commander, Landing Force. There was no time available for the joint training of the landing forces involved, or for holding rehearsals for the Marines, ships, planes and landing craft which participated in the operation. Many naval and Marine units arrived in Japan with barely sufficient time to combat load in accordance with loading plans.

“The successful accomplishment of the assault on Inchon demanded that an incredible number of individual and coordinated tasks be performed precisely as planned in the face of almost insuperable difficulties. The fact that the assault was successful is a matter of history.

“Under the circumstances I have briefly mentioned above, it is my conviction that the successful assault on Inchon could have been accomplished only by United States Marines. This conviction, I am certain, is shared by everyone who planned, executed or witnessed the assault. My statement is not to be construed as a comparison of the fighting qualities of various units of our armed forces. It simply means that because of their many years of specialized training in amphibious warfare, in conjunction with the Navy, only the United States Marines had the requisite know-how to formulate these plans within the limited time available and to execute these plans flawlessly with-out additional training or rehearsal. To put it another way, I know that if any other unit of our armed forces had been designated as the landing force for the assault on Inchon, that unit would have required many, many months of the specialized training, including joint training with the Navy, which is a regular part of the Marines’ everyday life.

“All these facts emphasize the soundness of our national policy in entrusting to the Navy and Marine Corps the specialization in, and the development of, amphibious warfare. Conceivably, in the future, we may be required to execute many amphibious landings on many fronts.”

Vice Admiral Struble subsequently made the following observations:

“General MacArthur’s choice of Inchon for the landing demonstrates his great military sagacity. Inchon-Seoul was a strategic target of the greatest value, and his decision as Commander-in-Chief to face the many amphibious difficulties was indeed courageous.

“The critical ground situation in the Pusan perimeter, and the necessity for a landing with the higher high tides on September 15th, or waiting until October 13th, made action by the earlier date of vital importance. Hence the time available to prepare and issue the instructions to seven major forces and arrange for the coordination between them was very limited. That the many varied operations went off like clockwork, despite a typhoon, indicates the high intelligence of the commanders concerned.

“Their names should be mentioned: Rear Admiral Higgins and the Sitting Duck Destroyers under Captain Allan for their mighty bombardment of Wolmi and Inchon. Rear Admiral Ewen and Rear Admiral Ruble for their powerful, accurate air attacks, which stunned the North Korean defenders of Inchon and harassed the supporting forces trying to reinforce the city. Rear Admiral Doyle and Major General Smith, USMC, who successfully landed the First Marine Division in the courageous assault that captured Wolmi-do and Inchon. Major General Almond, U.S. Army, whose Tenth Corps captured Seoul in short order. Rear Admiral Andrewes, Royal Navy, Rear Admiral Henderson, and Captain Austin, whose forces strongly supported the assault.

“Their aggressive action and splendid teamwork carried out the operation with a precision and effectiveness which were wonderful to behold and which are now a matter of record.

“The landing demonstrates the great power of an assault from the sea. Such an operation requires the

maximum of coordination to attain that great power. Naval training after World War II, despite great budget difficulties, had prepared naval amphibious forces and Fleet Marine Forces that could produce the precise coordination required for an amphibious assault. The Navy and the Marines were ready for the call.

"The continued development of amphibious warfare by the Navy and Marines will make this powerful tool in modern clothing available to the next American commander who needs another Inchon on short notice to defeat the forces of aggression."

The landing at Inchon also had significance and bearing upon the continuing dispute over effective close air support. As related in an earlier chapter, the Navy felt its efforts to assist the hard-pressed UN troops holding the Pusan perimeter had been "woefully ineffective," with a wastage of 70 per cent of the close air support sorties. The largest part of this difficulty was traceable to the lack of proper communication facilities, air-to-air and air-to-ground; to the lack of maps common to all; and to the lack of cross-education, common doctrine, and training in the close support of troops.

The logic and proof of the Navy's arguments regarding close air support of troops was beautifully demonstrated during the Inchon assault and the capture of Seoul. So effective and so smoothly did the close air support go that it, in the words of Admiral Ewen's report, "left little to be desired."

The Tenth Corps commander, General Almond, sent warm praise to Admiral Struble on 27 September:

"Air support by your command for the 10th Corps attack on Seoul 25 September was outstandingly effective, comprehensive, and timely. Please pass to Admiral Ewen and his men my congratulations and appreciation for this splendid effort which markedly furthered the capture of Seoul."[19]

Congratulatory messages and letters also were received from other commands: Brigadier General H. W. Kiefer and Major General D. G. Barr of the Seventh Infantry Division, as well as General MacArthur himself.

The Inchon landing taught no new lessons about amphibious techniques. None were used, and none were needed. What was demonstrated was that for traditional warfare the doctrine and command relationships and tactics of World War II were still effective and still decisive.

General MacArthur was lavish in his praise of the naval and Marine officers who had planned and executed Inchon. In a letter to the authors, the General stated: "Admirals Struble and Doyle and General Smith delivered a performance in planning and execution which not only sustained our country's great naval tradition, but which in ultimate effect is probably unexcelled in the history of warfare."

One of the most important, delayed-action lessons of Inchon was the realization that the shipping and troop concentrations of the traditional amphibious landing had to be modified to obviate the danger of the atomic bomb. The Inchon assault spurred future thinking and planning for the use of assault helicopters instead of landing craft, and for the need of new amphibious-type vessels which would have greater speed, not only for avoiding submarines en route but for greater, faster, and more automatic unloading capabilities at the beachhead. Inchon demonstrated that our APA and AKA types were obsolescent; that the threat of the atomic bomb would no longer permit the slow discharge of cargo in a confined harbor. As General MacArthur had indicated to General Smith, the result of the Inchon landing was to make certain the permanence of the Marine Corps in the United States military establishment. The incomparable achievement of the Marines at Inchon demonstrated in clearest terms the need of an adequate and ever-ready Corps.

Another result of Inchon was the demonstration of our appallingly poor tactical intelligence. Why maps were inadequate, photography nonexistent, and intelligence sources undeveloped is beyond comprehension. The Navy would do well to learn that no matter what the announced national policy objectives, intelligence collection by the Navy regarding areas of potential amphibious, or other, operations should be worldwide.

Any analysis of Inchon, like any judgment of the naval aspects of the Korean War, must recognize the unique and peculiar circumstances which obtained. First of all, there was no submarine opposition—indeed, with the exception of a few mines, no naval opposition of any kind. Secondly, there was no air opposition. Thirdly, the

actual opposition of the landing was light.

These three factors, had any or all been introduced, would have made the assault more difficult and costly; but, in the opinion of VADM Struble, would not have altered the successful outcome. Any future amphibious campaign, however, must reckon with these three missing components. Even when measured in terms of traditional warfare, and omitting the atomic bomb, the success at Inchon, therefore, cannot blindly be accepted as a standard for any future amphibious venture. Inchon must be a guide, not a criterion.

The effects of the Inchon landing on our national military planning were immense. First of all, the U.S. Marine Corps, which in the eyes of many had been largely relegated to garrison tasks, was revitalized. MacArthur's prediction to Smith, "the future of the Marine Corps will never again be in doubt," was accurate. Secondly, the adaptation of doctrine and technique of amphibious warfare to the atomic age, which had largely stagnated between the wars, was resumed. The assault at Inchon had been a textbook repetition of the Pacific war. The experience and cogitation of first five years of the atomic era, 1945-1950, convinced the naval and Marine experts who witnessed the Inchon assault that never again could the concentration of troops, ships, and munitions be permitted in amphibious warfare. New methods, new doctrines, new techniques, and new equipment had to be developed. Inchon provided the spark which revitalized the art of amphibious warfare, and gave birth to the technique of "vertical envelopment."

Finally, far from being *passé,* as many post World War II amateur and professional strategists had predicted, naval forces, including Fleet Marine Forces, were a solid and practicable means for implementing the national strategy of the United States.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
The Mopup of the North Korean Army

By September's end, the shattered North Korean Army was in full retreat. Entire Communist divisions had completely disintegrated and were spread over the Korean countryside in disorganized units. Enemy lines of communication and supply had been completely severed, and escape routes, except for the mountainous areas, were in United Nations hands. Many enemy troops were trapped in the peninsula's southwest corner. In their haste to escape, the enemy had abandoned both arms and equipment; tanks, mortars, artillery, and small arms littered the roads, rice paddies, and ditches of South Korea.

Without hope of replenishment or reinforcement, unable to travel or communicate with impunity, and completely blockaded at sea, the remaining Communist soldiers who had not been captured or who had not surrendered were forced to hide, to organize guerrilla bands, or to sneak over the mountainous areas toward their homeland.

Within a matter of days following the Inchon landing, the North Korean military effort that had reached the very doorstep of Pusan was now struggling frantically to reassemble and redeploy for defense of the territory north of the 38th parallel.

The United Nations ground forces, meanwhile, advanced rapidly on all fronts. On the east coast, the Republic of Korea First Corps, four divisions strong, lined up near the 38th parallel, awaiting orders to drive toward the ports of Wonsan and Hungnam. The South Korean Third, Sixth, Eighth, and Capital Divisions were poised and eager to capitalize on the enemy's desultory status.

West of the First Corps, the forces of the U.S. Tenth Corps fanned out of the Seoul area in hot pursuit of enemy stragglers. The First Marine Division, supported by the Marine Corsair pilots of Task Group 96.8, pushed northward to take Uijongbu, a vital road hub twelve miles north of Seoul, which had briefly served as temporary headquarters for the retreating North Korean Army. Simultaneously, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team commenced a mopup of the Inchon peninsula.

Eastward from Seoul, the U.S. Seventh Division pushed 25 miles to capture the important rail junction of Osan and to close other retreat avenues for the Reds.

In South Korea, the Eighth Army reoccupied territory held captive since the war's beginning. The U.S. 25th Division entered Kunsan, a west coast port; the U.S. 24th Division and the South Korean First Division mopped up South Central Korea, clearing out enemy pockets around Taejon, Yong-dong, and Kumchon. Before these Eighth Army divisions could actually renew the offensive, however, they would have to transit the lines of the Tenth Corps.

As the complexion of the war on the peninsula shifted from the defense to the offense, from positional warfare to pursuit, UN naval forces kept the enemy under constant blockade, surveillance, and bombardment whenever possible. However, only a few of the ships were fortunate enough to have shooting assignments. Canada's destroyer *Athabaskan* and Australia's destroyer *Bataan* took potshots at enemy hideouts in the Kunsan area. *Missouri* anchored in Inchon channel south of Wolmi-do and fired missions against enemy troop concentrations on the road leading north from Suwon. The cruisers *Toledo* and *Rochester,* from a position in the Inchon channel north of Wolmi-do, heavily shelled troop concentrations and strong points in the Seoul-Kimpo area.

Early in the morning of 27 September, a particularly heavy bombardment was commenced by the cruiser *Manchester* and destroyers *Ozbourn, Hollister, McKean* and *Frank Knox.* Five thousand enemy troops had been

reported bivouacked on Fankochi Point. At eleven minutes past seven, the five-ship armada opened fire and shelled the area continuously for forty-nine minutes with five- and six-inch fire. Following this bombardment, thirty-three rocket- and bomb-loaded Corsairs and Skyraiders roared in from *Boxer's* Air Group Two (CDR Donald M. White, USN) to attack the Communist defenders.

For four days, the pilots of Task Force 77 contributed to the reduction of enemy forces and military targets on Fankochi Point.

The only incident of the entire bombardment happened to Ensign Claude E. Dorris of Fighting Squadron 23, who was hit by antiaircraft fire during a bombing run. Dorris crash-landed ten miles south of the North Korean capital city of Pyongyang. It was a 60-mile flight for a Kimpo-based Marine helicopter (from VMO 6). In an adventurous flight by helicopter (flown by Captain Victor A. Armstrong, USMC), a successful pickup of Dorris was made in about two hours, but the 'copter ran out of gasoline in the vicinity of the Han River. Fortunately, the emergency landing occurred in friendly-held territory.

In the post-Seoul mopup, Task Force 77 lost six aircraft and suffered damage to twenty. One man had been killed in action. The Seventh Fleet carriers struck eight railway bridges, destroying five. Twenty-four highway bridges were attacked and eight destroyed. Also reported destroyed in the free-swinging offensive were three aircraft, two hundred and three trucks and vehicles, twenty warehouses, nine locomotives, ten gun emplacements, fifty-two railroad cars, four tanks, and one hundred and forty-three oxcarts.

After operating in the Yellow Sea from 21 September through 3 October, Task Force 77 departed for Sasebo, Japan. Rear Admiral Edward C. Ewen stated that the carriers had supported the UN forces with both close- and deep-support air strikes and by serving as target air coordinators and by spotting for naval gunfire. Ewen reported that targets below the 38th parallel had been reduced so effectively and rapidly after the recapture of Seoul that carrier aircraft were out of targets. The American Navy was now ready and eager to carry the war back into the territory of the North Koreans who had initiated it.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
The UN Debates the Decision to Cross Parallel 38

As the North Korean People's Army scurried back across the 38th parallel, Communist diplomats in the UN now sought to win with words what they had failed to win by arms.

Obviously, the North Korean forces were hopelessly defeated. The only chance of salvaging the situation for the hard-pressed North Koreans was to forestall the victorious UN armies from pursuing the North Korean People's Army across the border until the forces of Red China were ready to intervene.

Most UN members felt that the 38th parallel, always unrealistic, had ceased to exist the moment the North Koreans violated it on 25 June. UN naval and air elements had fought north of the 38th from the war's beginning. President Truman personally felt that the UN forces had every legal basis for engaging the North Korean People's Army north of the 38th parallel. President Syngman Rhee of the Korean Republic had strongly held this opinion from the very beginning. Nothing less than full sovereignty and capitulation was acceptable to him.

Communist delegates in the General Assembly of the United Nations at Lake Success, New York, led by President Andrei Vishinsky, took violent exception. If UN troops crossed the 38th, thundered Vishinsky, the United Nations Forces would become aggressors.

Surprisingly, the Soviet delegate's argument found one sympathetic ear in the person of India's Jawaharlal Nehru, a man whose political philosophy for peace was scarcely in consonance with that of Vishinsky and his Communist supporters.

Although the debate at Lake Success was to last less than a week, every day the military movement north of the 38th parallel could be delayed by the Communist verbal barrage would be critically important to the rescue of North Korea.

Much of the Soviet harangue fell on deaf ears. The majority of the non-Soviet delegates felt that General MacArthur's original authority was sufficient to bring peace and security to all of Korea. No orders to march across the parallel were needed.

Sensing that his verbal battle was being lost, Vishinsky tried still another stall; he recommended that both North and South Koreans be invited to the UN headquarters to tell their story to the General Assembly.

To those experienced in the devious doubletalk of the Reds, this proposal was pathetically flimsy. Vishinsky was stalling, grasping for time—time for the North Koreans to rest, regroup, replenish; and, more than anything else, time for Chinese Communist troops to reach the front so that the fighting could be resumed.

The U.S. delegate to the UN, Ambassador Warren R. Austin, recommended that if the Soviets were sincerely interested in halting the conflict, they accept his eight-point proposal:

"1. Establishment of a free, independent, and united country.

"2. Creation of a United Nations Commission empowered to devise and recommend the unification process.

"3. Free elections under the auspices of the United Nations Commission.

"4. Consultation with the thus-established government of Korea in all matters pertaining to the united republic's future.

"5. The United Nations to assist in Korea's reconstruction and development.

"6. Retention of United Nations forces in Korea only as long as necessary to achieve these objectives.

"7. Elimination of special privileges for any nation and the development of friendly relations with all.

"8. Admission of Korea to the United Nations and assumption by her of the obligations, duties, and privileges of membership."

Vishinsky promptly countered with a seven-point proposal:

"1. That the belligerents cease hostilities. (The UN had voted a cease fire on June 25, but Communist Korea had refused.)

"2. That United Nations troops be withdrawn to permit the Korean people the sovereign right to settle 'freely' their internal affairs. (The UN had already voted against return to the pre-June 25 status.)

"3. That all-Korean elections be held to establish a unified, independent government. (The Soviet had refused to permit such elections in 1948.)

"4. That the North Korea Assembly and the National Assembly of South Korea elect a commission of delegates from each to organize and conduct free elections. (This required recognition first of the North Korean puppet government.)

"5. That Red China and Russia be members of UN committee observing the election. (Russia had consistently refused to participate in any previous UN commission on Korea. The price now was recognition of Communist China.)

"6. That a unified and independent Korea be given economic aid through the UN. (All agreed.)

"7. That after the establishment of the all-Korean government, the Security Council consider admitting Korea to the UN. (The records to date: Russia vetoed admitting South Korea to the UN and the United Nations had voted against admitting North Korea.)"

In essence, Vishinsky wanted the UN to surrender and to apologize for starting the war.

On 4 October, the UN General Assembly's Political Committee passed the following resolution:

". . . That all appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea;

"That all constituent acts be taken, including the holding of elections under the auspices of the United Nations, for the establishment of a unified, independent, and democratic government in the sovereign state of Korea;

"That all sections and representative bodies of the population of Korea, south and north, be invited to cooperate with the organs of the UN in the restoration of peace, in the holding of elections, and in the establishment of a unified government;

"That United Nations forces should not remain in any part of Korea otherwise than so far as necessary for achieving the objectives specified;

"That all necessary measures be taken to accomplish the economic rehabilitation of Korea; and,

"That a commission drawn from Australia, Chile, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Turkey, and one other nation be established to achieve the listed objectives."

Noble ideas all—but unfortunately none of them would resolve the problems existing on the battlefield.

The Sea War in Korea
Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
The Decision to Land at Wonsan

In the Far East, meanwhile, General MacArthur was making his own tentative plans to cross the parallel.

Two members of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, USN, and General J. Lawton Collins, USA, while in Tokyo in late August to discuss the Inchon landing, had agreed that the ultimate military objective was the destruction of the North Korean military forces. They also agreed that ground operations would be extended beyond the 38th parallel as necessary to achieve that goal. This Tokyo agreement took the form of a recommendation that was placed before the U.S. Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall on 7 September.[1] A week later, while en route to the Inchon beaches, MacArthur received a JCS despatch stating that while President Truman had approved certain conclusions relating to the Korean conflict, these early "conclusions" were not yet to be construed as final. Although President Truman approved the plan to push north of the 38th, MacArthur was told to make plans, but to take no implementing actions without explicit permission. [2]

That General MacArthur anticipated authority to cross the 38th parallel was evident on 26 September. On this day the General directed his Joint Special Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG) to develop a plan for operations north of the parallel. MacArthur stated his belief then that the Eighth Army should make the main effort either on the west or the east coast. Once this matter was resolved, he felt there should be an amphibious envelopment on the opposite coast—either at Chinnampo or Wonsan, or elsewhere.[3]

The next day, 27 September, General MacArthur received from his G-3 (operations officer), Brigadier General Edwin K. Wright, Operations Plan 9-50. This plan made two assumptions: first, that the bulk of the organized North Korean People's Army had already been destroyed; and secondly, that neither the USSR nor Red China would enter the conflict. This plan provided that General Walker's Eighth Army should attack across the 38th parallel directing its main effort along the Kaesong-Sariwon-Pyongyang axis, this drive to be undertaken in mid-October; and that General Almond's Tenth Corps should concomitantly land amphibiously at Wonsan, on the east coast. Almond's Corps, after landing, would continue westward through the Pyongyang-Wonsan corridor and link up with General Walker's Army in North Korea, thereby trapping the remainder of the North Korean People's Army. The plan further envisioned that these two commands, after uniting, should advance north to the Chongju-Kunuri-Wongwon- Hamhung-Hungnam line, a line measuring fifty to one hundred miles *south* of the Yalu River marking the border between Korea and Red China. Only ROK troops would be allowed to proceed *north* of this line.

Although the plan to make an amphibious landing at Wonsan was first proposed to COMNAVFE in Tokyo shortly after the Inchon landing, it was not until 29 September that General MacArthur himself outlined the plan to subordinate commanders. This was done on the second floor of Seoul's capitol building, following the ceremonies in which he gave Seoul back to the government of the Republic of Korea. General MacArthur described to those present, including Vice Admiral Joy, Lieutenant Generals Walker and Stratemeyer, and Major General Almond (plus representatives from the Eighth Air Force and Tenth Corps), how he planned to end the war with another amphibious envelopment.

Click here to view map

On 20 October, he said, the Tenth Corps would land at Wonsan. The Marines would be outloaded at Inchon, and, because of Inchon's limited port facilities, the Seventh Division would be embarked at Pusan. While the Tenth Corps made a seaborne run-around-end, the Eighth Army would push directly toward the North Korean

capital of Pyongyang.

After landing at Wonsan, he continued, the Tenth Corps was to move northward between the sea of Japan and the Taebek Mountain Range, turning westward through passes in the mountains to link up with the Eighth Army.

The reasons motivating a seaborne landing at Wonsan were later explained by General MacArthur. “The Eighth Army’s lines of supply were already taxed to their maximum capacity to sustain the day-to-day minimum requirements of its troops in the line,” he said. “Furthermore, the dispatch of Tenth Corps by sea was intended as a flanking movement against enemy remnants still trying to escape from the south to the north, and as an envelopment to bring pressure upon Pyongyang should the attack upon that enemy capital result in a long drawn-out siege.”[4]

General Almond started to implement the Wonsan plan immediately following the MacArthur conference in the Seoul capitol building on the 29th. Almond called his Tenth Corps commanders together that same afternoon for a second conference at Ascom City, near Inchon.

There, Almond stated that he hoped it would be possible to land at Wonsan by 15 October, advancing by five days the D-day deadline set by MacArthur.[4A] Almond believed that the Eighth Army should be able to pass through and relieve Tenth Corps by 3 October, on which date the shipping would start arriving in Inchon for loading.

To the naval planners 15 October seemed extremely optimistic. As late as 29 September, the First Marine Division was still fighting north of Seoul; on 2 October, in fact, the Marines had 16 killed and 81 wounded in heavy fighting at the front. Moreover, should the first vessels not arrive at Inchon until 3 October, and if five days were required to load, as had been estimated by JSPOG, plus four more days to steam from Inchon to Wonsan, then only two of the original six days would be left for unloading the landing force in the objective area.

In early October the Marines did not know how many ships or what type would be made available for transporting the division. Moreover, they had no maps of the Wonsan area, and there was little intelligence.

As events unfolded, Almond’s desire that Tenth Corps should be relieved by 3 October was accurate as far as the Seventh Division was concerned.

As a matter of fact, elements of the Eighth Army began relieving the Seventh Infantry Division on 2 October, and General Almond ordered this division to begin moving toward Pusan by motor and rail.[5]

Despite his lack of planning information, Major General Oliver P. Smith, the Marine Commander, established a tentative task organization composed of three regimental combat teams (RCT) and issued his operation order. In it he earmarked the First and Seventh Marines to launch the Wonsan amphibious attack. Each regiment would employ two battalions in assault. All Marine units would combat-load out of Inchon. General Smith did not welcome the probability of splitting his division, once ashore, in mopping-up operations.

Next day, 4 October, General Almond issued Tenth Corps Operation Order No. 4. This ordered the Seventh Infantry Division to outload at Pusan for the landing at Wonsan and the First Marine Division to report to the Attack Force Commander of the Seventh Fleet as a landing force for the Wonsan amphibious assault. The Marines were to seize the Tenth Corps’ base of operations at Wonsan, to secure the Wonsan airfield, and to furnish logistic support until relieved by the shore party.

On 5 October the Fifth Marines were relieved. On the 6th and 7th, the First and Seventh Marines were relieved. On 7 October, the First Marine Division command post at Inchon was transferred aboard Admiral Doyle’s flagship, the USS *Mount McKinley*. Marine outloading at Inchon began 8 October.

For the first several days, an amphibious landing at Wonsan was not questioned by the Navy. Both Admiral Joy and Admiral Struble recognized the military need for an assault, as well as the logistic urgency for capturing an additional logistic port.

The naval planning for an amphibious assault at Wonsan was a near duplication of the preparation for

Inchon. Admiral Struble issued his preliminary plan on 5 October and his final plan on 9 October. The tasks given by Admiral Struble to his forces were several: (1) To maintain an effective naval blockade of the east coast; (2) to furnish naval gunfire and air support to any east coast Army units in addition to those to be landed at Wonsan; (3) to conduct pre-D-Day bombardments; (4) to load and transport the Tenth Corps to Wonsan; (5) to seize Wonsan by amphibious assault; (6) to occupy and defend a beachhead; and following the successful accomplishment of all this, (7) to provide naval gunfire, air, and initial logistic support to the Tenth Corps.

The major elements of Admiral Struble's task organization included:

CTF 90 Attack Force (RADM James H. Doyle)
CTF 92 Tenth Corps (MAJGEN Edward M. Almond)
CTF 95 Advance Force (RADM Allan E. Smith)
CTG 96.2 Patrol and Reconnaissance Group (RADM George R. Henderson)
CTG 96.8 Escort Carriers (RADM Richard W. Ruble)
CTF 77 Fast Carriers (RADM Edward C. Ewen)
CTF 79 Logistics Support (CAPT Bernard L. Austin)

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Advance into North Korea Approved

As the planning and preparation to invade Wonsan went forward, a message was received from the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorizing General MacArthur to proceed north of the 38th parallel:

"Your military objective is the destruction of the North Korean armed forces. In attaining this objective you are authorized to conduct military operations, including amphibious and airborne landings or ground operations, north of the 38th parallel in Korea, provided that at the time of such operations there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces, no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea. . . ."[6]

From this despatch it was apparent that although the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff did not want to expand the war, they did not discount the possibility that the Soviet Union and Red China *might* intervene.

The JCS despatch further instructed MacArthur:

". . . under no circumstances will your forces cross the Manchurian or USSR borders of Korea and, as a matter of policy, no non-Korean ground forces will be used in the northeast provinces bordering the Soviet Union or in the area along the Manchurian border. Furthermore, support of your operations north or south of the 38th parallel will not include air or naval action against Manchuria or against USSR territory. . . ."

Two days later, 29 September, General MacArthur was further instructed in a despatch from Secretary of Defense Marshall ". . . to feel unhampered tactically and strategically"[7] in proceeding north of the 38th parallel.

Thus General MacArthur now had sufficient latitude to carry out his Wonsan plan which he had submitted to the JCS for final approval on 28 September. Additionally, he told the JCS:

"There is no indication at present of entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces."[8]

JCS approved the MacArthur plan three days later.

On 9 October, the JCS amplified its instructions to the Commander in Chief as follows:

"Hereafter, in the event of open or covert employment anywhere in Korea of major Chinese Communist units, without prior announcement, you should continue the action as long as, in your judgment, action by forces now under your control offers a reasonable chance of success. In any case you will obtain authorization from Washington prior to taking any military actions against objectives in Chinese territory."[9]

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Red China Replies to MacArthur Call for Surrender

During the preparations for the Wonsan landing, General MacArthur twice called on the enemy to surrender.

His first appeal, issued on 1 October, was addressed to the North Korean commander in chief, Kim Il Sung, who was also the Premier of North Korea. The appeal was broadcast by radio and showered from aircraft in leaflet form:

"The early and total defeat and complete destruction of your armed forces and war-making potentials is now inevitable.

"In order that the decision of the United Nations may be carried out with a minimum of further loss of life and destruction of property, I, as the United Nations Commander in Chief, call upon you and the forces under your command, in whatever part of Korea situated, forthwith to lay down your arms and cease hostilities under such military supervision as I may direct and I call upon you at once to liberate all United Nations prisoners of war and civilian internees under your control and to make adequate provision for their protection, care, maintenance, and immediate transportation to such places as I indicate.

"North Korean forces, including prisoners of war in the hands of the United Nations command, will continue to be given the care dictated by civilized custom and practice and permitted to return to their homes as soon as practicable. I shall anticipate your early decision upon this opportunity to avoid the further useless shedding of blood and destruction of property."[10]

Kim Il Sung made no direct response to the surrender request. Instead, a reply in the form of a warning came indirectly from another source two days later. Red China's foreign minister, Chou En-lai, informed K. M. Pannikar, the Indian ambassador at Peiping, that China would intervene in the event United Nations forces crossed the 38th parallel. Chou En-lai stated further that China would *not* intervene if only ROK *troops* entered North Korea.[11]

On the same day, in an 11,000-word speech, Chou En-lai also warned that Red China would not "supinely tolerate seeing our neighbors being savagely invaded by 'imperialists.' "

General MacArthur issued his second surrender ultimatum on 9 October, less in the expectation of a response than as a forewarning to the North Koreans that further military action was contemplated. The second surrender message was again addressed to the Premier and government of North Korea:

"In order that the decisions of the United Nations may be carried out with a minimum of further loss of life and destruction of property, I, as the United Nations Commander in Chief, for the last time call upon you and the forces under your command in whatever part of Korea situated to lay down your arms and cease hostilities."

MacArthur added:

"And I call upon all North Koreans to co-operate fully with the United Nations in establishing a unified independent and democratic government of Korea, assured that they will be treated justly and that the United Nations will act to relieve and rehabilitate all parts of a unified Korea. . . .

"Unless immediate response is made by you in the name of the North Korean government, I shall at once proceed to take such military action as may be necessary to endorse the decrees of the United Nations."

The second surrender request also met with silence.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
The Wonsan Landing Decision Debated

As North Korean defenses on the east coast collapsed and the ROK Army's northward advance accelerated, the question arose in early October if it would not now be wise to take Wonsan's harbor by an overland drive, rather than by an amphibious landing. Most military and naval commanders in the Far East were in solid agreement that in order to destroy all the North Korean forces in North Korea, the remarkable victory at Inchon had to be followed quickly with a prompt and vigorous pursuit. As the ROK's rapid advance up the east coast proceeded, the question of whether to travel by *land* or by *sea* was debated on the Service command levels and in the press.

Most Army men favored a sea assault on Wonsan, although there were Army dissenters even among MacArthur's staff. Generals Doyle O. Hickey and Edwin K. Wright felt that Tenth Corps could best be incorporated into Eighth Army at the close of the Inchon-Seoul phase of the operation. Brigadier General George L. Ebberly, MacArthur's G-4 (Logistics Officer), thought Tenth Corps could be more easily supplied if it was made a part of the Eighth Army.

As the situation ashore was changing, the original reasons which motivated a sea-borne landing at Wonsan were still compelling. First, by landing the Tenth Corps at Wonsan, the heavy supply load on the port of Inchon would be relieved, as an additional harbor would thus be opened for the direct supply of the Tenth Corps. Secondly, the Tenth Corps would be strategically located to operate as an enveloping force against the enervated North Korean People's Army as it opposed the U.S. Eighth Army's drive toward Pyongyang.

The Army's arguments for a sealift to Wonsan were well stated by the Tenth Corps commander, Major General Edward M. Almond. On 17 October 1950, aboard *Mount McKinley*, he told the author that "from a tactical point of view, it's cheaper to go to Wonsan by sea." Going overland, he said, was simply out of the question. "Half of our heavy equipment—bulldozers, big guns, and heavy trucks—would have been left in ditches by the side of the road." Almond said that the terrain in North Korea made an overland movement inadvisable. Moreover, there was poor lateral communication between east and west above the 38th parallel.

Paradoxically, while recognizing the urgency for having the Tenth Corps on the eastern half of the peninsula, most Navy men looked with disfavor on a sea movement to Wonsan.

"None of us at COMNAVFE could see the necessity for such an operation," said Admiral Joy, "since the 10th Corps could have marched overland to Wonsan in a much shorter time and with much less effort than it would take to get the Corps around to Wonsan by sea."

Naval preference for an overland movement stemmed from several reasons. First, if the entire Tenth Corps outloaded at Inchon, the use of the comparatively small port with its swift tides would seriously interfere with the offloading of *incoming* supplies for the Eighth Army. If more than half of Inchon's facilities were used for outloading Tenth Corps, Eighth Army was certain to be in short supply and its forward advance hobbled. Second, shipping and amphibious craft were in limited supply. To assemble all the sealift for a major invasion would seriously restrict the support that could be given to UN forces operating in other areas. Third, commencing 10 October, reports were received from the minesweepers that they were encountering more mine interference than expected. A landing delay at Wonsan might happen.

The Marines, after hearing about the rapidly advancing ROKs, did not anticipate with avidity the prospects of invading a beach likely to be in friendly hands in a matter of days or even hours. As reports came into the headquarters in October, they progressively indicated that the First ROK Corps, spearheaded by the naval

gunfire support of Admiral Smith's ships, would soon hold Wonsan before any amphibious seizure could be affected. The "Rambling ROKs" were averaging about 14 miles per day from their jumpoff on 1 October.

The naval preference for an overland movement to Wonsan was succinctly stated by Rear Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, Deputy Chief of Staff to Commander Naval Forces Far East: "As events had developed, we objected to an amphibious assault as being unnecessary," said Burke.[12] "It would take a lot of troops out of action for a long time when the enemy was already on the run. We felt that the same objective—to seize the port of Wonsan—could be achieved by marching the Tenth Corps up the road leading from Seoul to Wonsan."

One other Army officer who agreed with the Navy was Major General David G. Barr, Commander of the Seventh Division. Barr told Admiral Doyle that it was his preference "to take the high road" from Seoul to Wonsan.

Despite the debate and discussion the original MacArthur decision to land from the sea in Wonsan, was never reopened with the General himself. "I was never apprised of any Navy objection to the seaborne landing at Wonsan," he later told the authors.[13]

COMNAVFE made his objections known to MacArthur's chief of staff, General Hickey, shortly after the operation was proposed. The advantages of going overland were all brought out. The Chief of Staff was sympathetic but said that the General had made up his mind about the landing and there was no use trying to talk him out of it.

"In retrospect," said Admiral Joy, "it must be said that the landing was to pay dividends for the Navy. Had it not been undertaken we might never have become fully alerted to the menace of mine warfare nor profited from the lessons we learned about mine sweeping."

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
MacArthur Considers a Landing at Hungnam Instead of Wonsan

While the decision to make an amphibious landing at Wonsan was never changed, General MacArthur *did* consider a plan to invade at Hungnam rather than at Wonsan. On 8 October, he confided to Admiral Joy that if the First ROK Corps took Wonsan prior to D-day, he was considering landing the Seventh Division administratively at Iwon. In this case the Seventh Division could drive west-southwest to join the Eighth Army on the west coast. At the same time, said the General, the First Marine Division could make an assault landing at Hungnam, instead of Wonsan, to cut the enemy's lines of communications through Hamhung. Vice Admiral Struble told Joy that a landing on Iwon could probably be made on short notice "because of the limited mine problem and the satisfactory landing beaches in that area." He added "Iwon was an open beach. We could have taken chances at Iwon and made an assault there."

Landing the Marines at Hungnam, however, was a more complicated problem, and Joy pointed out to General MacArthur that because of mines, early and easy entry might be impossible; that there were insufficient landing craft to land simultaneously at *two* places; that the timetable for the operation was already critically tight; there was no time to shift ships, rewrite plans, and all the rest. But the most important deterrent, he reminded MacArthur, was there were far too few minesweepers to clear even one area, let alone *two.*

On 9 October, Admiral Joy informed Admiral Struble by dispatch that he was trying to prevent a change in plans, but that because the General was personally sponsoring the Hungnam assault, his efforts might prove unsuccessful. Joy said it appeared probable that unless the ROK Army soon captured Hungnam, MacArthur might order the Marines and the Seventh Division to land at Hungnam, or the Marines to land at Hungnam and the Seventh at Wonsan.

Admiral Struble was in full agreement with Joy that no Hungnam change should be tried. "If anything," he told the authors after the war, "Hungnam represented a potentially longer minesweeping problem than Wonsan. Because of the very considerable lack of minesweeping forces and experienced personnel available, only one mined area could be cleared at a time."

With the support of Struble and Doyle, and in view of all factors, Joy persuaded MacArthur to continue the original Wonsan plan.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Historical Background of the Communist Mining Campaign

Before commencing the narrative of the problems encountered by the U.S. Navy's minesweepers at Wonsan, it will help the reader's understanding if the Russian interest in mine warfare is documented and a brief description is given of the hydrography of Korea, which in many ways was an ideal location for the use of mines.

Historically, Russia has long been noted for her interest and success in mining—more so perhaps than with any other naval weapon in modern times. Russia used the mine effectively in the Crimean War, in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 and '78, and in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and 1905. In the latter conflict, for example, the Russian Navy sank two Japanese battleships off Port Arthur, in southern Manchuria, with moored contact-type mines of a type very similar to those that were to be used at Wonsan nearly a half century later.[13A]

Initially the Soviet mining effort in North Korea was probably undertaken to keep UN ships out of North Korean harbors and to limit UN naval offensive capabilities. As it turned out, Korea provided the Soviet Navy an ideal opportunity to test the United States Navy's ability to cope with mines in the western Pacific as of 1950. At the same time Soviet Russia could help her North Korean satellite delay the advance of the UN ground forces.

Actually, the Korean peninsula was almost ideally suited for an experiment in defensive mine warfare. After the UN's entry into the war, the Communists could foresee that U.S. naval forces would take every advantage of their amphibious warfare specialty to move northward. The landings at Pohang and Inchon were eloquent testimony of this special skill. Moreover, the Communists recognized the vulnerability of Korea's eastern coast to amphibious assault, and also to bombardment from the sea. The waters off the east coast were deep and the coastal plains narrow. The coastline was reasonably straight, and the 100-fathom curve lay fairly closely to shore. Off the good harbors of Wonsan and Hungnam, there was a large shelf of shallow water which made mine planting exceptionally effective.

On the opposite shore, Korea's western coastline was a honeycomb of shallows, with the Korean rivers emptying into the Yellow Sea. Nowhere in the Yellow Sea was the water more than sixty fathoms deep; mean tidal range was twenty-one feet. While not ideal, the west coast was certainly mineable.

Thus, the Soviets could once again make full use of mines—to forestall further amphibious assaults by planting minefields off every suitable beach area, and to make coastal bombardments hazardous by the use of offshore moored minefields.

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The Modern Mine

To properly understand the complexity and severity of the mine problem faced in Korea by U.S. naval forces, a brief description of the modern mine is necessary.

Mines have been employed in naval warfare for more than 350 years. Until about 1880, sea mines were known as "torpedoes." Admiral Farragut's famous order at Mobile Bay, "Damn the torpedoes, Four bells!" was made in regard to the crude sea mines built and used by Confederate forces during the Civil War.

Until the advent of World War I, the sea mine was a simple but effective weapon. A large charge of gunpowder or TNT, encased in a suitable container, was chained to the floor of the ocean by an anchor so that the mine itself bobbed beneath the surface some 10 to 20 feet. Several triggering "horns" protruded from the mine container. If a passing ship made contact with one of these horns, the mine's firing circuit was closed and the mine exploded—usually with fatal consequences to the contacting ship.

In sweeping such a minefield, these mines are cut by streaming sweep cables from the stern of the small sweeper with "depressors" and "otters" to hold the cable—with cutting gear attached—at proper depth as well as to force the cutting cable to plane *outboard* of the sweep vessel. Floats or "pigs" keep the cable from running too deep.

Commencing with World War I, however, this simple type of contact mine was joined by the first of several other types of mines. During World War I, mines were developed that could be controlled by an electrical circuit from the beach. The British also developed and used the first *magnetic* mine.

In World War II, still more treacherous mines were developed—ones that would lie on the ocean floor and wait to be exploded by the noise of a ship's propellers, by the reduction of water pressure caused by a passing ship's hull, or by the shifting of the lines of force of the earth's magnetic field as a ship's steel hull passed by—or by a combination of these influences.

The first of the modern mines is the *magnetic* mine, first used by the British but perfected by the Germans in World War II. Unlike the contact mine, the magnetic mine does not have to be chained to an anchor, but can be sown freely on the ocean floor.

When the Nazis first began use of the magnetic type mine in 1939, they made two mistakes. Instead of waiting until enough of them were ready so that all British ports could be mined simultaneously, the Nazis employed them in driblets. The second Nazi mistake was inadvertent. A Luftwaffe pilot dropped one of the new magnetic mines on a mudbank in the Thames estuary instead of in the ocean, and the Royal Navy promptly disassembled it and discovered its secret.

"The Nazis were able to employ these mines in limited quantities and only in a relatively few ports," said Captain N. B. Atkins, officer in charge of the U.S. Navy's mine warfare section in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations when the Korean war started. "Had larger quantities of German magnetics been available to permit a more widespread and continuing use, the employment of this weapon might have forced the capitulation of England. This was a serious German blunder and leads to one of the major considerations in the introduction of new types of mines in modern war. New mines should never be introduced until sufficient stocks are on hand to insure full exploitation of the new mines' effectiveness. If this is not done, the expense and effort devoted to the mine's development may be wasted."

Another reason for the failure of the German magnetic mine effort was Great Britain's success in the field of countermeasures. "Great Britain had countermeasures to the magnetic mine largely worked out and 'on

the shelf' in advance of its use by the Germans," said Atkins. "They had developed a system of degaussing ships (neutralizing the ship's magnetic field) and had built crude magnetic sweeps. Neither of these countermeasures had been placed in service by the Royal Navy because of the cost and copper involved."[14]

To sweep the magnetic mine, minesweepers must duplicate the influence to which the mine itself responds. The magnetic sweep gear consists of two large cables—a short "leg" and a long "leg"; these cables are lowered into the sea from the minesweeper's stern. Floats known as "pigs" keep the cables buoyant. The long leg is allowed to drift astern of the sweeping vessel for some 1,200 feet. At the end of each leg is a copper electrode.

When the electrical cables are in position, a powerful generator aboard the sweeping vessel is turned on. This transmits a powerfully pulsed current which passes through either a closed loop of cable or through the cables and a water path between their electrodes kept safely astern of the sweeper. Thus, a strong magnetic field is created, capable of detonating any mines within the cables' influence.

As will be seen, magnetic mines were present in the Wonsan minefield.

The second type of modern mine is the *acoustic* mine, which can be detonated by the machinery or propeller noise of a passing ship. Like the magnetic mine, it can also be planted on the floor of the sea. The acoustic mine utilizes a simple hydrophone or "artificial car" that is set to "hear" a ship's engines or propellers. When it does, its diaphragm vibrates and closes the fatal switch. Acoustic mines are destroyed by duplicating the noise of a ship's propeller. The equipment for doing so is called a "hammer" or a "bumblebee" that rumbles as it is dragged through the water.

The third type of modern mine is the *pressure* mine. In the evil lexicon of mine warfare, pressure mines are even more unsweepable and diabolical than either acoustic or magnetic mines. In a pressure mine, the negative pressure of a passing ship sucks a diaphragm upward, closing the firing switch. Consequently, to sweep pressure mines, the minesweeper must endeavor to duplicate the change in water pressure produced by a passing ship. This requires that either an underwater hull like that of a ship, in both size and shape (called a "guinea pig" ship), be pulled through the minefield, or some other means be found to induce the same kind of pressure change in the water. The pressure mine is generally used in combination with a magnetic or an acoustic mechanism.

Fourthly, the toughest type of modern mine is the *combination* mine—one that combines one or more of the above types in the same carcass: a magnetic-acoustic, or a pressure-magnetic mine. This combination type mine will explode only when the sweepers employ two or more of the disturbing forces.

To make the problem even more complicated, "ship counters" can be built into the firing circuit of nearly any type mine. These counters can be pre-set so they will explode only after five, ten, or more ships have passed safely by. Thus, a minesweeper can sweep a channel a predetermined number of times, declare the channel "clear," and still have the mine explode beneath the next passing ship.

Finally, there is the deadly, but rarely used, electrically-controlled mine that is wired to and activated by a switch on the beach.

These are the modern types of mines which naval science had devised at the time of the Wonsan landing. They are passive weapons which complement other naval weapons in controlling the seas. They can deny access to harbors, approaches, and ocean areas (where the water depth will permit), to friend and foe alike.

The United States Navy would have found command of harbors and minable waters in the Korean theater much easier to maintain if adequate mine sweeping forces and experienced people had been ready before the war commenced.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
U.S. Navy Mine Warfare Retrenchment, 1945-1950

The job of the minesweeper is specialized, dangerous, and difficult. There is little glamor and less publicity accompanying the task.

The attitude in the U.S. Navy toward mine warfare—general until October 1950, and occasional since—has not been unlike the bitter sentiment against mines expressed in 1806 by the British Admiral, Earl of St. Vincent, to Prime Minister Lord Grenville. The British Ministry had given encouragement to Robert Fulton to build a mine from a gunpowder keg.

"Why should we who depend utterly on command of the sea," asked the British Admiral, "seek to develop a weapon which we do not need, and which, if perfected, would deprive us of that command?"

During World War II, the U.S. Navy's Pacific minesweeping fleet had varied between 525 and 550 ships. When the Korean War began, the U.S. minesweeping force in Far Eastern waters consisted of only four 180-foot, steel-hull, fleet minesweepers (three of them in a caretaker status), and six wooden auxiliary minesweepers.

Ninety-nine per cent of the U.S. Navy's mine personnel during the Pacific war were Reserves. Between 1945 and 1950, this reservoir of trained officers and men had dwindled to the vanishing point due to budgetary cuts and a lack of naval interest and emphasis on mine warfare. There was little effort made toward improving minesweeping gear or toward developing new minesweeping techniques. The excellent minesweeping forces of World War II had literally dissolved.

To trace the cause of the U.S. Navy's minesweeping inadequacies in Korea, which the five-day delay off Wonsan brought into sharp focus, it is helpful to review a series of the historical events between the end of World War II and the opening of Korean hostilities.

In March of 1946, the headquarters of Mine Force, Pacific Fleet was transferred from the command ship in Japanese waters to Treasure Island, San Francisco. The allocation of minesweepers was largely placed in the hands of the Chief of Naval Operations. All minelayers (as distinguished from minesweepers), except for four which were transferred to the Atlantic Fleet Mine Force, were put in mothballs. All mine locator ships, except for three transferred to the Atlantic Fleet Mine Force, were scrapped. All minesweep tenders were inactivated and later sold or scrapped.

The heaviest blow to the Navy's mine warfare readiness came in January 1947, at which time the Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, dissolved the mine warfare command in the Pacific and further reduced the Atlantic and Pacific mine warfare forces, in order to meet further 1948 budgetary limitations imposed on the Fleet forces.

Minesweeper strength in the Pacific Fleet was further reduced in subsequent months, and what was left was divided up between two type commanders: Commander Service Force, Pacific Fleet, and Commander Cruisers-Destroyers Force, Pacific Fleet. Only three officers from the original Mine Force, Pacific Fleet staff with its wealth of operating experience were left to perpetuate the continuity of mine warfare in the Pacific Fleet. Commander Donald N. Clay was given over-all responsibility as CINCPACFLT's Operations and Readiness officer. Clay had two key assistants. One was the Readiness Training officer (CDR George C. Ellerton, USN), who reported to Commander Service Force with logistical responsibility to maintain minesweeping gear. The other was the Readiness Plans officer (CDR Richard D. Hugg), who reported to CINCPACFLT staff to maintain a continuity of policy and plans. "This was the best possible solution at the time," said CDR Clay.

The Navy Department directed that the mineman rating be abolished in 1948, but rescinded the order

prior to its effective date.

These severe reductions were inevitably accompanied by a de-emphasis of training and a diminishment of the importance given to mine warfare. It became increasingly difficult to keep qualified personnel to promote mine research or to maintain any kind of a training program. Because of the concurrent severe destroyer and high-speed tug shortage, the destroyer-type minesweepers were employed more and more as antisubmarine warfare and towing ships. Those of AMS[14A] type (except for the six stationed in Japan) were distributed at Pearl Harbor, Guam, and San Diego for protection of strategic ports. Meanwhile, Commander Service Force was conducting an orderly rollback of minesweeping equipment to Pearl Harbor and to the continental United States.

As far as the general service attitude in the Navy was concerned, mine warfare was regarded as a task which virtually any line officer could perform when the time came. Numerous papers and strategic studies by the too few younger experts were written on the subject, but at command levels, mine warfare was not generally appreciated to be the kind of warfare that required a lot of training, experience, or research. Consequently, the mine as a modern naval weapon became more and more neglected as a serious threat to control of the seas.

Paravanes were no longer installed on naval vessels as protection against the moored contact-type mine. Degaussing test facilities were limited in the Pacific. Although the discovery had been made near the end of World War II that destroyers' sonars could be modified to detect moored mines, the possibility had not been implemented. Ships actually designated for minesweeping were limited in their training by the lack of realistic drill mines. Minesweeping training had been sacrificed to make time for more antisubmarine work and target-towing services.

On 25 June 1950, there were two divisions of destroyer minesweepers (DMSs), two divisions of fleet minesweepers (AMs), twenty-one minesweepers (AMSs), and two new minesweeping boats (MSBs) in active service in the U.S. Navy. However, there was no mine type commander in the Pacific. Minesweeping types and responsibilities had been split between Commander Service Force Pacific, who had the AMs and AMSs, and Commander Cruisers-Destroyers Force, Pacific, who had the DMSs. CINCPACFLT had twelve minesweeper type ships under his command: four DMSs in West Coast yards for overhaul and refresher training, and three AMSs for port protection; three AMSs at Pearl Harbor for port protection; and two AMSs for port protection at Guam.[14B]

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Preparations in the Far East

When the Korean War began, COMNAVFE had six AMSs and one AM in active commission, three AMs in a caretaker status, and twelve Japanese minesweepers under contract, making a total of twenty-two ships available in Far Eastern waters. These vessels were charged with the task of check-sweeping Japanese harbors and channels in which bottom-influence mines had been planted by the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II.

Directing Far Eastern minesweeper operations at the outbreak of hostilities was Commander Mine Squadron Three (LCDR D'Arcy V. Shouldice), whose flagship, the *Pledge* (LT Richard O. Young), served also as tender and logistics supply ship.

In addition to his flagship, Shouldice's force included the following ships:
Partridge (AM-31) (LTJG Robert Fuller) (CoMinDiv-31)
Kite (AM-22) (LTJG Nick Grkovic)
Osprey (AM-28) (LTJG Philip Levin)
Redhead (AM-32) (LTJG T. R. Howard)
Chatterer (AM-40) (LTJG James Patrick McMahon)
Mocking Bird (AM-27) (LTJG Stanley P. Gary)

"These ships had been engaged in check-sweeping operations since the termination of World War II," said Shouldice. "This meant that by 1950, they had five years of active minesweeping behind them—and five years of age.

"We were operating on a shoestring," Shouldice continued. "Our type commander was COMSERVPAC, and our operational commander was COMNAVFE.

"The NAVFE staff was itself a very small organization at the time. They too were operating on a shoestring. We worked directly under NAVFE's operations officer, Commander E. S. Burns, who gave us our broad directives and left the minesweeping details up to us.

"Our most recent directive before the Korean War was to check-sweep the Inland Sea of Japan from Kobe to Kure for influence mines. We had hoped to finish this by early December 1950, before winter weather set in.

"The organization to support us was the most elementary and primitive of any I have ever known. 'Pitiful' is the word. It was a hand-to-mouth proposition. This is not intended as criticism of anybody. It's just the way it was.

"Our biggest prewar bugaboo was water in the fuel oil. It was not uncommon to see a minesweeper belch a puff of white smoke and stop dead in the water. This meant that water had been injected into the engines and probably had damaged them.

"Consequently, our usual request when we went alongside a tug or a SCAJAP LST to refuel was 'Give it to us from the top of the tank.' This helped to limit the amount of water and residue piped into the sweepers' tanks."

Shouldice said that his sweepers' communication gear was obsolescent and needed standardization so that all the minesweepers could talk to each other on the same radio circuit.

"Instant communications are a 'must' in the minesweeping game," said Shouldice. "If you can't warn the ship astern, or if you can't change your tactics immediately as required by unforeseen developments, it may be

fatal."

Despite material and logistic deficiencies, the minesweepers in Japanese waters were in a good state of training; however, their training had not included the sweeping of live-contact or drill mines.

"Each ship had a minimum requirement of forty hours' sweeping a week," said Shouldice. "I left it up to my skippers when they got their forty hours in. If they preferred to sweep by moonlight, it was okay by me.

"The ships were able to get under way in a minimum period of time. They steamed smartly in and out of harbors in perfect formation, at a 10-knot clip. Off Hokkaido, they swept through blizzards, snowstorms, and rough water. They continuously encountered such items as fish nets and uncharted rocks to foul their sweep gear. Yet, none of the sweepers ever failed their commitments by reason of material failure or breakdown."

As the war on the Korean peninsula intensified in July-August 1950, the mine warfare problem which was to arise in late September and October could not be foreseen. First priority for the reactivation of ships, therefore, had been given to amphibious types, carriers, and escort ships. Rear Admiral F. C. Denebrink, Commander Service Force, Pacific (COMSERVPAC), ordered the three AMs in caretaker status at Yokosuka reactivated. On 14 August, *Pirate* and *Incredible* were placed on the active list. The third ship, *Mainstay*, remained inactive for a time because of material shortage. COMSERVPAC also sent the AMSs *Merganser* and *Magpie*, then at Guam, and the AMSs *Pelican*, *Gull* and *Swallow*, then at Pearl Harbor, to the Korean theatre.

Just before the minesweeping problem became first priority, Captain Richard T. Spofford was ordered to duty as Commander Mine Squadron Three. Spofford had had much experience in the mineplanting side of mine warfare.

"I assumed command on 3 August," said Spofford, "and immediately told LCDR Shouldice, who took Commander Mine Division 31, to take our sweepers over to Pusan and keep that port open. Shortly thereafter, I reported to Admiral Joy that my squadron was not adequate to conduct assault sweeping operations against a major combatant power. I emphasized to Admiral Joy that there was negligible intelligence on enemy mines and mine-laying vessels; that I had insufficient ships to carry out an assault sweep against a well-planned minefield, particularly a mixed-type of minefield.

"Also, there were shortages of all types of materials, including training materials, as well as shortages of personnel."[15]

In late August, Joy relayed Spofford's comments to Admiral Sherman, who was in the Far East at the time, and asked him about the possibility of increasing minesweeping types. The Chief of Naval Operations said that because of the higher priority of other type vessels, minesweepers could not be activated for the time being.

Sherman's views were concurred in by Admiral Radford.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)

Beginning the Minesweep at Wonsan

On 2 October, Vice Admiral Struble, riding at anchor at Inchon aboard his flagship *Rochester*, ordered Joint Task Force Seven reformed for the Wonsan amphibious assault. Simultaneously, he ordered all Seventh Fleet minesweepers under way for the Wonsan area as soon as possible. An experienced mine warfare officer, [15A] Vice Admiral Struble had very little to warn him of the impending enemy mining effort other than isolated bits of evidence which, when added to intuition, provided less than an optimistic picture. Admiral Struble viewed the possibility of mines in Wonsan as a calculated risk. He thought that the sea approaches to Wonsan were mined; that the minefields might consist of moored mines of Russian type, probably of magnetic and controlled mines; that acoustic and pressure mines might be found in the area; and that, in addition to the mines, opposition could be expected from emplaced artillery in the Wonsan approaches.

Vice Admiral Struble was reasonably certain that if there was to be any future naval threat from the Communists, it must come from their use of sea mines. The North Koreans still retained the capability to plant mines and to launch “drifters” from the many junks and sampans. This fact had been early recognized by Joy as well as Struble long before Inchon. First of all, much of the Korean coastal area was shallow—ideal for minefields. Secondly, the muddy waters offered near-perfect concealment. Thirdly, ocean currents in both the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea were of such a nature that floating mines launched at any North Korean port would traverse the entire length of the peninsula within 15 days. Thus, the drifter mine itself presented a constant danger to surface vessels.

Vice Admiral Struble had recently received several reports of mines sighted and mines destroyed. Altogether, more than 300 mines had been sighted around the Korean coastline. Enemy sea mines had been reported by the U.S. destroyer *McKean* (CDR Harry L. Reiter, Jr.) at the entrance to the North Korean harbor of Chinnampo on 4 September, 11 days before the Inchon landing. On 7 September, HMS *Jamaica* sighted and sank a floating mine 25 miles north of the Changsangot area, in the sea area off Chinnampo. Another was almost immediately seen and exploded by HMS *Charity*. There was some doubt at first whether the mines were moored or drifting, but the Britishers concluded that the mines were drifters, having been set loose in the hope of catching some of the blockade ships. At Inchon, on the morning of 13 September, destroyers *DeHaven* and *Mansfield* of DesDiv 91 had spotted a minefield in Flying Fish Channel.[16]

Altogether, from the period of 4 September to 30 September, UN ships and aircraft sighted mines on 54 separate occasions, most of them in the shallow Yellow Sea, between Chinnampo and Inchon.

To make matters even worse for the Seventh Fleet Commander, more than 25 floater contact-type mines had been sighted *on the surface* in the high seas around Korea. It was assumed that these drifter mines were contact-type mines which had become detached from their moorings and were floating on the surface. Whether the fact that these mines lacked self-scuttling devices[16A] was intentional or whether the devices were merely omitted for reasons of simplicity and economy was not known.

Obviously such a mine situation would be a considerable threat to ships engaged in fire-support missions. Support ships would either be confined to operating in swept channels or they would have to remain outside the 100-fathom curve.

Brush (CDR Fletcher L. Sheffield, Jr.) was the first U.S. Navy ship to be mined. On 26 September 1950, while steaming 1,000 yards astern of the destroyer *Maddox* (CDR Preston B. Haines) as the two ships prowled along Korea’s northeast coast in search of enemy shore batteries, *Brush* struck a mine.

The destroyer was instantly rendered helpless. Thirteen men were killed and thirty-four others were seriously wounded. One of *Brush's* firerooms, the messing compartments, and the Chiefs' living quarters were open to the sea. Her bow rode a full fathom low; her plotting room was completely demolished and flooded. A flash fire which was described by one of the officers, Ensign Charles Cole, as being bright red, had swept through three deck levels. The forward steering gears were destroyed, forcing the skipper to conn his ship by telephone relay to the helmsman in the steering engineroom aft.

To make the situation even more critical, the nearest safe port was in Sasebo, Japan, about 470 miles distant. During World War II, the destroyer *Meredith* had been similarly damaged during the invasion of Normandy and had sunk before she could negotiate the short but choppy English Channel.

The salvation of *Brush* was a ticklish undertaking for Commander Sheffield, but it was a success. Escorted by the cruiser *Worcester* (Captain Harry H. Henderson), the destroyer *DeHaven* (CDR Oscar B. Lundgren) and soon augmented by the salvage tug *Bolster*, the *Brush* limped into a Sasebo drydock on 30 September. On that same day the destroyer *Mansfield* (CDR Edwin H. Headland) struck a contact mine while searching inside the North Korean harbor of Chosen, 60 miles north of the 38th parallel, for a downed Air Force B-26 pilot.

Mansfield was hit in the bow. Her damage, less severe than that to *Brush*, would still require stateside repairs. The explosion occurred just beneath the hull number on the bow, 728. Numbers "2" and "8" had been blasted away, leaving number "7," which could hardly be considered as lucky. However, of 28 casualties aboard the *Mansfield*, none were killed; and besides that, the crew was now due to get stateside pre-Christmas leave.

A third U.S. warship, the 136-foot, wooden-hulled minesweeper *Magpie* had no luck at all when a mine escaped her sweeps on 1 October. While she and a sister ship, *Merganser* (LTJG Alvin L. Short), both recently arrived from Guam, were sweeping a channel two miles off Chuksan, 30 miles north of Pohang, her starboard bow nudged the horn of a floating mine. Of her 33-man crew, only 12 survived, every one of them injured. They were picked up by *Merganser* and taken to Pusan for treatment. Among the 21 lost with the *Magpie* was the captain, Lieutenant (jg) Warren Roy Person.

And on the same day, approaching Mokpo on Korea's southwestern tip, a fourth ship, the South Korean *YMS-504*, was severely damaged when her starboard propeller whirled into a moored mine, causing sympathetic explosions from two other nearby mines. Although only five men were hurt in the explosions, *504's* engines were wrecked and her hull was sprung and taking water.[17] Her skipper, whose name unfortunately was not attached to his blithe reply to offers of assistance, signaled that *YMS-504* would "soon be ready again to kill more Reds." Another ROK ship, *YMS-509*, had struck a mine on 28 September that knocked off her bow but left her engines operating. Chinhae Naval Base reported that one small commercial vessel had blown up in the area after striking a mine.

On 27 September, a normal contact mine[17A] was sunk a few miles directly east of Wonsan. The mine was unblemished, shiny with new paint, and from all appearances had been in the water a very short time.

Mine sightings, although plentiful, had not yet revealed any concentration on the east coast near Wonsan or Hungnam. However, as Admiral Struble pointed out, "this could not be construed as indicating a lack of concentration of moored minefields in either the Hungnam or Wonsan area." Except for one prisoner-of-war report which stated that mines had been laid around the Chongjin lighthouse in North Korea, and ten unassembled influence mines[17B] found in oxcarts on Wolmi-do shortly afterward, the Navy's mine intelligence was based on what friendly forces had seen for themselves in the water.

"When they said 'go' on the Wonsan operation, mines were our biggest headache," said CDR Harry W. McElwain, Intelligence Officer for Task Force 90.

Hoping for the best, the little ships of Mine Squadron Three began departing Sasebo for Wonsan on 6 October 1950. Lt. C. E. McMullen's ill-fated *Pirate* (AM-275) was first to leave. Rear Admiral Smith gave orders

for *Pirate* to rendezvous with CTG 95.2 (RADM Hartman) in Worcester; McMullen[18] was underway three hours later. McMullen said he left Sasebo without an OpOrder and, as far as he knew, the remaining sweepers were still in Sasebo making preparations to get underway as quickly as possible.

When Captain Richard T. Spofford and his small flotilla arrived off Wonsan in the chilling gray-green dawn of 10 October to commence sweeping operations, he knew little about Wonsan's harbor except its geography and bathymetry. Only three fragments of mine intelligence were available. First, the location of the normal navigation channel published by the Soviets was known. Second, a report had been received from the cruiser *Worcester* concerning the location of an offshore minefield near Wonsan, which had been spotted by the ship's helicopter on 9 October. And third, the earlier discovery of minefields in both Inchon and Chinnampo was indicative that Wonsan too was mined. How extensive, and what type of "cabbage patch" the Communists had planted in the harbor of Wonsan itself, was largely conjecture.

Nor did Spofford have information concerning the military status of the numerous islands in the harbor. Were they occupied by North Korean troops? Did the islands have artillery to oppose minesweeping efforts? Had the city yet been captured by friendly troops? As for the minefields themselves, Spofford lacked even fragmentary information of how many mines had been planted in the harbor, what types they were, or where they might be located.

Had someone gratuitously handed Captain Spofford the information that the Wonsan minefield covered 400 square miles, that it numbered more than 3,000 mines, and that it was a "mixed bag" of magnetic as well as contact mines, his task of sweeping the expansive Wonsan minefield would still have been an exceedingly hazardous one.

The biggest handicap was a shortage of minesweepers. During World War II, the amphibious assaults against Okinawa had been preceded by more than 100 sweepers; at the invasion of Normandy by 300. At Wonsan, Spofford's Mine Squadron Three commenced its work on 10 October with only *six* minesweepers.

"My first inclination," said Captain Spofford, "was to start work in the regular navigation channel which the Soviet naval forces had been using, on the assumption that it would have been subjected to a faster and more careless mining effort because of the hasty retreat of the Soviet satellite forces."

After careful consideration, with the 20 October landing date in mind, Spofford decided to risk a direct-approach sweep, sending his ships, led by the two "big steel jobs,"[18A] *Pledge* and *Incredible*, on an exploratory run straight from the 100-fathom curve to the landing beaches by the shortest and most direct route. "If it worked," said Spofford, "there was a chance we could meet the D-Day deadline."

Shortly after sunrise on the morning of 10 October, the minesweeping task got underway. The officer in tactical command, LCDR Bruce Hyatt, was riding the *Pledge*, since his flagship *Pirate* had not yet rejoined front conducting exploratory minesweeping chores in behalf of the gunfire support ships south of Wonsan.

The *Pledge* began the sweep directly from the westward tongue of the 100-fathom curve in a direct line for the landing beaches where the troops were scheduled to go ashore in only 10 days. Astern of *Pledge* steamed the *Incredible*, *Osprey* and *Mocking Bird*, each ship streaming its sweep gear. Two additional minesweepers followed the formation—the *Chatterer*, dropping orange-colored conical "Dan buoys"[18B] and *Partridge*, "riding shotgun," to destroy by gunfire any mines brought to the surface by the other minesweepers.

To assist and expedite the sweeping, a helicopter from the USS Worcester hovered to shoreward of the minesweepers, attempting to spot mines beneath the surface of the water. This would be the first instance in naval warfare of an organized and combined effort between surface ships and a helicopter to locate a minefield. Patrol aircraft and lighter-than-air ships were used in some instances and with varying degrees of success during World War II.

The helicopter had only recently entered the mine-hunting business, and this quite by happenstance. In September, the USS *Helena's* helicopter, flown by LT Harry W. Swinburne, while searching in the vicinity of

Kokoko for survivors from the sunken *Magpie*, had discovered two moored mines. Swinburne took photographs of the mines and submitted them to the Board investigating the sinking. Soon after, helicopters were used on regular dawn-to-dusk mine search patrols around their own ships of Cruiser Divisions Three and Five.

On 3 October, *Worcester's* "copter" pilot, Chief Aviation Pilot B. D. Pennington, sighted several moored mines in the Wonsan area. From that day onward the helicopter had a welcome place on the mine warfare team.

"It didn't take long to discover the value of the helicopter as a mine-hunting platform," said LCDR J. R. Beardall, Jr., *Worcester's* gunnery officer. "If the sea was not rough, if the direction of the sun rays was right, and if the water was clear, you could see the mines very easily."

By late afternoon of the first day's sweeping on 10 October, a 3,000 yard wide channel had been swept from the 100-fathom curve to the 30-fathom curve, a distance of about 12 miles. Twenty-one contact mines had been cut and destroyed without casualty.

"We were pleased and optimistic as the first day's effort was about to end," said Captain Spofford. "If the combination of Mine Squadron Three's skillful seamanship and good luck held, I felt that we might not even need the entire time that had been allotted to clear the channel."

But good luck did not hold.

In the late afternoon of the 10th, the *Worcester* helicopter suddenly dipped, lifted slightly, dipped again and again. The voice of Chief Aviation Pilot B. D. Pennington rang out the bad news: "One mine line directly ahead of *Pledge* . . . Another line just beyond that . . . Another . . . ."

Altogether, Pennington could see five distinct lines of mines inside the 30-fathom curve, directly in the assault path to the beach. Within a few moments all the minesweeps had verified the presence of dozens of mines from sonar echoes.

As dusk fell, when the sweepers filed out of the channel and anchored in swept waters near the 30-fathom curves, every officer and man was weary and somewhat taken aback by the discovery.

In a summary despatch to Admirals Struble and Smith, Captain Spofford was most gratified in our sweepers' ability to come through the first day unscathed, "assisted by adroit handling and highly effective use of sonar— and God's blessings."

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Efforts to Clear a Channel

"After receiving the information about the extensive minefield," said Captain Spofford, "I decided to shift our sweeping effort to the Russian navigation channel. It could not be much worse and the numbers of mines *might* be fewer than we had found on the 10th."

By this time Spofford had the advice and assistance of two mine experts from Mine Forces, Atlantic, CDR S. M. Archer and LCDR Don DeForest, and Mr. Howard Naeseth from the Mine Countermeasures Station, Panama City, Florida. They had been hastily flown to the Korean theater from the east coast of the United States. [19]

During the morning of 11 October, Spofford augmented the examination of the minefield by the use of "frogmen"[19A] from the destroyer transport *Diachenko*. The "Ute's" were ordered to skim along the surface of the harbor looking for mines—or their absence—from their shallow-draft LCPRs. Spofford also requested and received help from Commander Fleet Air Wing One in the form of patrol planes to augment the air search. Patrol Squadron 47 (CDR J. H. Arnold) was directed to assign a PBM for daytime search. Rear Admiral A. E. Smith, CTF 95, sent a message to his naval beach group ashore (CTE 95.22):

"If there is a small naval craft in Wonsan harbor, it may have a chart of the swept channel and the minefield. Encourage KMAG[19B] and others ashore to make thorough search in order to get in their logistics and ice cream."

During the previous afternoon of 10 October, the minesweeping force had been augmented by the arrival of the *Pirate*, *Redhead*, and *Chatterer*. These three were despatched to the Russian navigation channel. Here, sweeping went so smoothly that at a midnight conference, 11-12 October, attended by his staff and all commanding officers, Captain Spofford determined to make an all-out effort the next day in the Soviet navigation channel with the hope of beating the landing date deadline now only eight days away.

The frogmen, under the command of LCDR William R. McKinney, were ordered to reconnoiter the two outlying islands of Ung-do and Yo-do in search of any mine cables which would indicate the presence of electrically controlled mines. McKinney later reported "no control mine cables present."

Spofford also decided to try a rarely used technique to clear the minefield: a countermining aerial strike by Task Force 77. Could carrier aircraft carrying regular bombs drop them into the minefield?[19C]

The Task Force 77 operators studied the problem. If the mine experts felt that such an effort might help, certainly the Seventh Fleet planes could drop the bombs. Upon hearing of the plan, Admiral Struble approved the attempt, but with little hope of its success.

During the early morning of 12 October, minefield-strike aircraft from *Philippine Sea* and the *Leyte* arrived over Wonsan harbor. AD "Skyraider" aircraft were scheduled to perform the major portion of the effort. Each AD carried three 1,000-pound general purpose bombs. F4U Corsair fighters each carried one 1,000-pound general-purpose bomb. The bombs were all fuzed hydrostatically to detonate at 25 feet.

The carriers' pilots planned to drop two 5-mile lanes of bombs 200 yards apart, with a 200-yard distance between bombs in the lanes. To solve the problem of making a bombline on the open sea, one AD under radar control flew directly above another AD loaded with smoke floats. Upon signal from the control aircraft, the smoke floats were dropped at half-mile intervals.

The strike group itself was composed of two columns of aircraft. The right-hand column consisted of fourteen AD aircraft and eight F4U aircraft; the left-hand column consisted of seventeen AD aircraft.

After both columns of aircraft had cleared the target area, eight additional Corsairs with similar loading were called in by the air coordinator to fill obvious “holidays” in the bombline.

Execution of the aerial countermining strike revealed numerous problem areas. For one thing, not one of the smoke floats functioned. Channel buoys and visual reference on two islands in close proximity had to be used instead. It was extremely difficult for the pilots to maintain an accurate distance between aircraft. They used their gun sights to check distances on the planes ahead. But the fact that a slipstream was present and that aircraft were strung out in a column five miles long was to cause unavoidable gaps in the bomb pattern. This problem was further aggravated by the fact that drops were made on voice signal.

The time interval between the air coordinator’s transmissions and the individual pilot’s reception and execution produced further irregularities in the pattern.

Results of the countermining effort are unknown. Next day, as *Pirate* swept through a line that had been bombed, she swept only one mine in her port gear and five in her starboard gear, which indicates the bombing may have made a gap in the line. Since two ships, *Pirate* and *Pledge,* were sunk the same afternoon in the nearby vicinity, it appears doubtful that the countermining effort was a success.

It was an admirable innovation and effort, but it is not definitely known that mines were destroyed. Later, FEAF’s General Stratemeyer offered to lend his B-29’s in a countermining effort. In view of the carrier aircraft experience, and because of his own World War II aerial countermining experience, Admiral Struble rejected any further bombing of the minefield as impracticable. Captain Spofford had calculated that, to be successful, each bomb had to explode within thirty feet of a mine itself. Such accuracy could scarcely be expected.

If there was any better way to sweep mines than the minesweeper, it had not been found. The conventional bombing of a minefield was not the answer. Nor did Spofford or Shouldice think in retrospect that an underwater atomic charge would have done the job. Both felt it would only have contaminated the entire area without solving the problem.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
The Sinking of *Pirate* and *Pledge*

Because of the novel air strike of Task Force 77 aircraft, the minesweepers did not get underway at their usual hour—sunrise—on 12 October.

Following the air attack, the minesweepers proceeded on a westerly course toward the harbor at a speed of six knots. Ahead of them were three islands: Yo-do on the left; Ung-do on the right; and Sin-do, where the former Japanese fortress had been located, almost dead ahead. Protecting the sweepers and ready to give them gunfire support were *Diachenko, Doyle* and *Endicott.*

As in previous occasions, the "big steel jobs" were in the van on the fateful October 12th. LCDR Bruce Hyatt led the formation in his flagship *Pirate,* with *Pledge* and *Incredible* following astern. Laying Dan buoys astern of the *Pirate* was the *Redhead,* with *Kite* on shotgun duty astern of the *Incredible;* her 3-inch muzzle bared, *Endicott* steamed close astern of the sweep formation.

After passing through the Russian navigation channel, the sweepers altered course to port in order to pass between the two islands of Yo-do and Ung-do.

At 1112, the minesweeping fleet entered unswept waters.

Three minutes later, *Pirate's* ready boxes were undogged and her 3-inch gun manned as a precaution against possible enemy shore battery fire.

Then, as quickly as it is written here, things began to happen. Two mines, their cables severed by *Pirate's* sweeping gear, popped to the surface. Four more followed. The mines were 50 yards apart, and lay on a north-south line between Yo-do and Ung-do islands. Three minutes later, *Pledge,* maneuvering astern through the mines already cut by *Pirate,* swept three more with her port gear. *Incredible,* still in formation, got herself into the thick of things by cutting still another four.

"Just about this time," said LCDR Hyatt, "I received information from the helicopter pilot that a large 'cabbage patch' lay dead ahead, and that at least three more lines of mines were in the vicinity of my sweepers. The pilot told me that the lines were bounded by the islands of Ung-do, Yo-do, Mo-do, and Sin-do. The exact position of the mine lines was not indicated, nor the angles at which they lay.

"I made a quick decision to abandon the original plan to turn south, and to continue in the reported Russian-swept channel instead."

Both Hyatt and *Pirate's* commanding officer, LT C. E. McMullen, considered a turn at this critical point more dangerous than continuation on course. Any turn now would in all likelihood expose the *Pirate* to a mine while in the turn.[19D]

Pirate's first definite sonar report came a moment later—when the range was only 100 yards. Within seconds the *Pirate's* starboard bow lookout reported a shallow mine close aboard the starboard bow. McMullen threaded his way gingerly through the treacherous field.

A few seconds later, *Pirate's* stern rose from the water, exposing her propellers, then fell back into a boiling sea of muddy spray. The explosion of a mine directly underneath had broken *Pirate's* main deck into two parts. The ship lurched to starboard, then back to port, quickly taking a list. Within four minutes the *Pirate* had capsized.

Pledge, commanded by LT Richard O. Young, immediately cut her sweep gear, hove to, and put her motor whaleboat in the water. To add to the confusion, as *Pledge's* whaleboat was being launched, previously undetected shore batteries on the island of Sin-do opened fire on the sinking *Pirate* and those of her crew already

in the water. *Pledge* responded with her single 3-inch gun, whereupon the enemy fire shifted to *Pledge*. While this was happening, 13 loose mines lay floating on the surface, and nearby, countless others lay undetected beneath the surface.

"My first thought," said LT Young, "was to rescue the *Pirate's* survivors and continue to sweep."

He was soon to decide otherwise, however, in view of the concentration of shore battery fire, plus the fact that he could not pass through *Pirate's* minesweeping gear without enmeshing his own vessel. Young ordered all battle stations manned as quickly as possible to counter not only the concentration of fire that was coming from Sin-do but additionally small caliber fire from Rei-to island as well. Young made a quick radio call for air support, and ordered his minesweeping gear cut.

For a moment the *Pledge* lay to and continued to fire until all her ready 3-inch ammunition had been expended.

By now, Sin-do's shore battery had bracketted *Pledge;* and although *Pledge's* gunners had knocked out at least one enemy gun,[19E] Young knew his position was fast becoming untenable. Enemy shells had now begun to find their target on *Pledge,* which was being slowly set to seaward toward the *Pirate.*

With the hope he might make a turn back into waters that had already been swept, Young ordered "Left full rudder; starboard engine, ahead two-thirds." The ship had turned approximately thirty degrees when she struck a mine. The time was 1220.

Pledge had been mined amidships on the starboard side near the forward engineroom. Damage throughout the ship was extensive. Decks and bulkheads were ruptured from the keel to the open bridge. The starboard side of the hull was split beneath the waterline, and water was rushing into the rupture.

When Young, who had been temporarily knocked out by the blast, regained his senses and saw the status of ship and crew (all persons in his view were seriously injured), he gave the order to abandon ship.

The mine-hunting patrol plane overhead, a PBM Mariner flown by LCDR Randall Boyd, executive officer of VP-47, had discontinued its search the moment the *Pirate* commenced to receive surface fire.

"I noticed gun flashes from the beach," said LCDR Boyd, "and splashes around the *Pirate*. I radioed the *Endicott* and told them I would spot their fire onto the enemy guns. For the next several minutes I acted as communication observer and spotter, and also kept the *Endicott* informed of the location of survivors. The *Endicott* directed her boats into the area to pick the survivors as we coached her fire on the northern coast of Cho-do island.

"As I made circle after circle over the enemy territory, I noticed several slit trenches running parallel to the beach, and also several small blockhouses. My gunners were able to keep these trenches unoccupied while the *Endicott* was doing a nice job of demolishing the blockhouses and tunnels. We also flew over Sin-do, and were able to distinguish reinforced concrete gun emplacements on it. Although our strafing would accomplish little, I ordered all guns that could bear to strafe them.

"Meanwhile, I had relayed the word back to the carriers of the mining of the two sweeps and of the enemy gunfire, and had requested an aircraft strike. I suggested the planes carry 500-pound bombs, rockets, and napalm.

"We continued strafing each enemy-held island and spotting survivors for the *Endicott* boats as well as spotting her surface fire until the F4Us and ADs from the *Leyte* arrived overhead.

"On our way home the tail gunner of my plane came forward and asked if I had heard him report over the intercom that we were being shot at by AA fire while we were circling Sin-do. I told him yes, but since all the tracers were being sucked aft, I hadn't worried about the small stuff. Whereupon he told me that he wasn't talking about the *small stuff* but about those big black bursts of AA directly astern of our plane and at the same altitude. Apparently, each time we circled Cho-do island, we received about twenty rounds of big stuff which I hadn't noticed at all. I suppose the 'Commie' gunners thought I was nuts, coming by again and again. At any rate, we

didn't get a scratch."

With *Pirate* down, and *Pledge* sinking, *Incredible's* radio suddenly blared forth: "Dusty, Dusty, my engines are dead." At the worst possible moment *Incredible* had experienced complete engine failure. This meant that all the "big steel jobs" were out of action. The only ships left to do the sweeping were LCDR D'Arcy Shouldice's "chicks."[19F]

Ordering his ships to the rescue, and using enemy gun flashes as point of aim, Shouldice's small wooden minesweepers were joined by the *Endicott's* gunners in taking the enemy batteries under fire with their single 40-mm. and their two 20-mm. guns.

All *Pledge's* officers, with the exception of her engineering officer, LTJG E. A. Miller, Jr., had been seriously wounded by the mine blast, but all were rescued. Miraculously, Miller had only been slightly wounded as he was tossed over the side by a geyser of oil and water.

Altogether, there were 92 casualties from the two sunken vessels; of these 12 were missing in action and one died from wounds after his rescue. Hyatt, McMullen, and Young were among those rescued.

Two attempts to open a path through the minefield had failed—a direct sweeping run to the beaches where the landing was to be made had encountered heavy and well-laid minelines. Had this plan not failed, it would have been the best solution. Nor could the attempt to open the Soviet navigation channel be considered a successful experiment. And the deadline for landing the Marines was now only seven days away.

"I was aboard the *Missouri* with the heavy bombardment forces off Songjin, North Korea, when news came about the sinking of the *Pirate* and the *Pledge*," said Admiral Struble. "I jumped in a destroyer, picked up Admiral Smith, and headed south at best speed where I could take direct charge."

Even worse news was soon to be discovered—the presence of *magnetic* mines as well as the contact type.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Discovery of Magnetic Mines at Wonsan

The message that rocked the Pentagon came from Rear Admiral Allan E. "Hoke" Smith, who, as Advance Force Commander, was the officer directly over Spofford, responsible for conducting the minesweeping operations. His message, addressed to the Chief of Naval Operations opened with words the U.S. Navy never hoped to read: "The U.S. Navy has lost command of the sea in Korean waters. . . ."

The Navy that was prepared to defeat a Communist air or submarine attack, to sink an enemy's fleet of ships, to do precision bombing, rocketing and gunnery, to support troops ashore, and to blockade a hostile shore, had encountered a massive field of more than 3,000 mines laid off Wonsan under the direction of Soviet naval experts.

As a result, the strongest Navy in the world was to steam about in the Sea of Japan while a few minesweepers struggled to clear a channel into Wonsan.

Two men to agree with Smith's estimate of the situation were Admiral Joy, and the Navy's Chief of Naval Operations, the late Admiral Forrest P. Sherman. "Let's admit it," he said in conversation with his columnist friend, George Fielding Eliot. "They caught us with our pants down. Those damn mines cost us eight days' delay in getting the troops ashore and more than two hundred casualties. That's bad enough. But I can all-too-easy think of circumstances when eight days' delay offshore could mean losing a war.

"Hoke's right; when you can't go *where* you want to, *when* you want to, you haven't got command of the sea. And command of the sea is a rock-bottom foundation of all our war plans. We've been plenty submarine-conscious and air-conscious. Now we're going to start getting mine-conscious—beginning last week."[20]

With the three AMs out, two permanently and one temporarily for engine repairs, safe sweeping practice assumed paramount importance.

After reviewing with his predicament, Captain Spofford made the decision to marshal as many small boats and frogmen as he could, and they, with helicopters and PBMs spotting from above, would undertake the tedious search. Under personal supervision of LCDR DeForest, the small boat crews took to the mine field like children at an Easter-egg hunt.

A few sympathetic North Korean fishermen joined the hunt.

After two days searching, the channel had been sufficiently explored and marked that sweepers could enter it with relative safety.

Additionally, Captain Spofford ordered the destroyer transport *Diachenko* to cautiously probe her way down the channel, using the long fingers of her antisubmarine sonar in search of any additional underwater charges.

Finally it appeared that the Wonsan channel was all but swept; the sweepers *Mocking Bird, Chatterer, Redhead,* and *Kite* were making their last few penmanship ovals near the beaches, when *Redhead's* skipper, LTJG T. R. Howard,[21] reported that "the whole ocean started to erupt amidst the sweepers."

The first 250-foot geyser about 400 yards astern of *Redhead* had not subsided when a second blast occurred six seconds later, very similar to the first and not more than 100 yards away from the first. So far no damage had been done, except to the jangled and exhausted nerves of the sweep force themselves. But the third explosion, under the keel of ROK *YMS-516,* blasted that small ship into bits and pieces.

In all probability, these new-found mines were the same influence type that had been found unassembled on ox-carts at Wolmi-do one month earlier.

At this point “Dusty” Shouldice admitted that he was frightened, “plain scared, and disappointed, too. It was the disappointment of a lifetime to be within an hour of a completed mission, and then find influence mines. Everything went into a tailspin—all our plans—we didn’t know what type mine we had triggered—we didn’t know where—we didn’t know how many. We were back where we started.”

Commander Task Force 95, Rear Admiral Smith, summed it up in a despatch to Admiral Joy, thusly:

“. . . Army is calling for support by sea through Chinnampo, Kunsan, Haeju on the west coast, . . . Hungyong, Wonsan, and several other spots on the east coast. All these harbors are mined and many more smaller ones. There is adequate proof of the quantity of mines. Two thousand to four thousand in the Wonsan approaches, fifty to one hundred magnetic in Wonsan alone. Task Group 95.6, after fighting and cutting its way through for 25 miles, and within an arm’s length of Blue-Yellow beaches, had three ground mine explosions.”

This meant that now the AMSs must methodically form a line parallel to the landing beaches about three miles out and edge toward the landing beach by making pass after pass over virtually the same track. It was to be a very slow and nervewracking business.

Not until the following morning, 19 October, were Shouldice and his frightened “chicks” to learn what type of mines they had triggered the night before. Then, during one of the most dramatic conferences, Captain Spofford announced that the cloud of influence mines hanging over Wonsan had been dissipated.

“We know that there are magnetic miles,” said Spofford. “We know at least one magnetic line has been planted, and we know their position quite well, thanks to the work of DeForest.”

DeForest, after completing his supervisory task of buoying those con-tact mines that could be seen from the surface, had set out to the beach in search of some of the mine intelligence that was sorely needed when the operation started.

After much searching, sniper fire, and hairbreadth escapes, DeForest was led to an old strawstack under which he found a new Soviet-built search coil—the “eyes and ears” of a magnetic mine. Additionally, DeForest had found North Korean personnel who had helped to assemble and lay the mines, so that when he returned to Captain Spofford, he had much of the vital information that would be needed in order to finish the sweeping job.

Although Captain Spofford now held the combination to the Wonsan mine field, it still would require seven more days of arduous sweeping before he would have it open.

On the evening of 25 October, Shouldice reported to Captain Spofford that Wonsan had a swept channel “clear of mines.” A total of 15 days had been required to complete what was supposed to have been a five-day sweep. Of approximately 3,000 mines which had originally been planted in Wonsan, only 225 had been swept and destroyed. Probably that many or more had broken their moorings and had become floaters. But the majority of the mines, probably 2,000 or more, were still anchored in place in the mine-fields. “These 2,000 were no longer dangerous to our operations,” said Struble, “as we knew where they were, and cleared channels to the Wonsan beach had been swept.”

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
North Korean Mining Tactics

From an examination of the available records, it is concluded that the Communist mining campaign in Korea commenced no earlier than 10 July. There is no evidence of any mine shipments or minelaying prior to that date. It is Admiral Struble's view that the decision to commence mining was not made prior to North Korean's initiating the war. His belief is further supported by the fact that North Korean forces were initially supplied with other types of weapons and war materials, not mines. Moreover, it is concluded that had the Communists anticipated U.S. naval opposition, undoubtedly the mining campaign would have commenced immediately on outbreak of war in order to deny as much water as possible to our naval forces.

Post-Wonsan assault intelligence reports indicated that the mining of Wonsan and Chinnampo began around August 1. This program was intensified after the fall of Inchon.

It is further concluded, based on an examination of recovered shipping labels and an examination of captured mines, that all the mines used in the Korean campaign originated from Soviet stockpiles. Most of them arrived in Korea during the period 10-20 July 1950 by rail, although there is evidence to indicate that a few were shipped by sea. Interrogation of railroad personnel at Wonsan after its capture verified the fact that about 4,000 mines passed through their hands, mainly for use in Wonsan itself but also for use at points further south. At Chinnampo, it was learned from the interrogation of prisoners that mines were shipped to Haeju by truck, and that other mines were shipped to Inchon and Kunsan by rail.

It was to be later discovered that the Soviet Union had not only provided the North Koreans with mines, but with torpedoes and depth charges as well. On 16 October, fourteen Soviet-built 21-inch torpedoes were found in a tunnel near the Wonsan airstrip. With warheads attached, the torpedoes were about 24 feet long, and similar to the type used by the Germans in World War II. Twenty-nine depth charges weighing 300 pounds each, and 40 depth charges weighing 50 pounds each were found. In addition 167 contact-type mines were found.[22] More than 600 sea mines were later discovered ashore in the Wonsan area.[23]

North Korean prisoners stated that in some instances Russian naval officers operated as far south as Inchon; that Soviet naval instructors gave mine technical training and supervised assembly of the mines in both Wonsan and Chinnampo between 16 July and 17 August; that they made the adjustments on the magnetic mines that were laid in the Wonsan minefield; and that Soviet military personnel actually participated in the laying of magnetic mines. Later, at Pyongyang, one officer and three men—all North Koreans—were given training in magnetic mines.[24]

Because of the excellent mine patterns laid and their close integration with the North Korean coastal defenses, it is also concluded that Soviet personnel supervised the preparation of the Wonsan minefield.

As far as the contact mines were concerned, the evidence indicates that North Koreans did most of this work. The minelaying procedure and equipment was very simple, even primitive, in sharp contrast to U.S. Navy equipment and doctrine. Wooden barges, of a type normally used in river and coastal traffic, were equipped with iron or wooden tracks and fitted to carry ten to fifteen mines. The mines were man-loaded on the barges and towed by tugboats into pre-determined areas where, on signal, the mines were rolled off the stern of the barges at intervals of one to one-and-one-half minutes.

In this manner, about 3,000 mines were laid off the city of Wonsan in a period of three weeks.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Marine Air Comes to Wonsan

The initial planning for Wonsan had assumed a similar operation to the Inchon assault: the landing was to be followed by capture and rapid exploitation of a nearby airfield. During the assault phase, two Marine fighter squadrons would participate—VMF-214 and VMF-323, aboard CVEs *Sicily* and *Badoeng* Strait—to furnish close air support. As soon as the Wonsan airfield was seized, Marine Air Group 12 would land and operate therefrom. MAG-12's headquarters, service squadrons, and heavy equipment were to be surface-lifted from Japan. Two other fighter squadrons, VMF-312 and VMF(N)-513, were to come in by air. The other night fighter squadron of the group, VMF(N)-542, was to remain at Kimpo.

But the rapid advance of the "Rambling" ROKs negated all these plans. Major General Field Harris, Commanding General, First Marine Air Wing, and Tactical Air Controller for the Tenth Corps, flew to Wonsan on the 13th, two days after the ROKs had captured the city. After inspecting the airfield, he determined that flight operations could be initiated immediately. He ordered VMF-312 to leave Kimpo the next day. To facilitate flight operations, the Far East Air Force Combat Cargo Command started to bring in aviation gasoline in 55-gallon drums. Bombs and rockets were loaded on Corsairs of VMF(N)-513 at Kimpo and air transported to Wonsan.

According to original plans, VMF-312 was to be supported by airlift for only three days, pending the opening of the Wonsan port, when the surface echelon was due to arrive. But because the harbor was not cleared of mines until 25 October, flight operations had to be supported entirely by airlift for twelve days. The arrival of VMF(N)-513 on 17 October added to the logistical burdens.

For twelve days, two Marine air squadrons were entirely dependent on airlift for all their supply. Fuel in 55-gallon drums was rolled along the ground a distance of one mile from the supply dump to the flight line, and then pumped by hand from the containers into the aircraft. Operating with one jeep and eight bomb-trailers, the ordnance sections unloaded the transports, assembled the bombs and rockets, and reloaded them on planes. With muscle substituting for machines, flight operations were maintained.

In this manner Marine airmen gave direct support to the First ROK Corps advancing northward to Hamhung. As an example of their effectiveness, a flight from VMF-312 attacked 500 enemy troops near Yangdok on 19 October and killed approximately 100 of them. This same squadron caught a body of 800 men on the road near Kansong on the 24th and caused about 200 casualties.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Wonsan Taken—By the ROKs

Except for a few hot and hectic hours in the city's southern suburbs, the capture of Wonsan by the First ROK Corps on 10 October was a routine operation. As ROKs met stubborn resistance that morning, Admiral Ewen's Task Force 77 aircraft fortuitously appeared overhead to begin routine pre-invasion aerial bombing. The ROKs radioed an urgent call for help, and planes from *Leyte's* Air Group 3 went to work, striking gun positions, slit trenches, and tanks as directed by ground controllers.

By mid-afternoon, the South Korean troops had swept into Wonsan and out again, continuing their trek northward. Only security troops remained behind to establish local order.

With Wonsan in friendly hands, General Almond's problem was no longer one of assaulting a hostile beach and fighting in the streets. The remaining problem was simply to land his Tenth Corps as quickly as possible and to join the offensive.

The jam-packed amphibious shipping carrying the First Marine Division had Indian-filed out of Inchon's Flying Fish Channel between 15 and 17 October. In Admiral Doyle's troop-crowded flagship, USS *Mount McKinley*, were the staffs of both Generals Almond and Smith.

Upon arrival at Wonsan, 19 October, General Almond and Admiral Doyle immediately proceeded to Admiral Struble's flagship, the battleship *Missouri*, anchored in Wonsan's outer harbor.

"The purpose of the conference," said Admiral Struble recently, "was to acquaint General Almond and other commanders with the actual situation existing at Wonsan, and to give them my best estimate of when the troops would probably be landed. The decision had been reached by that time that the tactical situation ashore did not require early landing of the forces."

Vice Admiral Struble stated that Captain Richard T. Spofford's minesweeping Task Group 95.6 had started sweeping 10 October. They originally had expected to finish the sweeping within five days, but due to the presence of influence mines, the sweeping would not be finished for a landing on 20 October. Struble estimated that at least three more days would be needed to clear a path through the influence minefield.

General Almond was disturbed by the prospect of delay. He was anxious to get ashore in order to direct operations of the fast-moving First ROK Corps, which had been placed under his command. He therefore decided to proceed ashore by *Missouri's* helicopter, taking part of his staff with him. The remainder of his staff (plus a liaison group from Amphibious Group One) were ordered to come ashore in small boats the same afternoon.

As a result of the 19 October Commander's conference aboard *Missouri*, and in view of the minefield, Admiral Struble directed Admiral Doyle to issue retirement orders to the tractor and transport groups.[24A] They were to retire along their routes of advance beginning at 1700 on the 19th. The convoys were to reverse course again in time to arrive off the channel entrance by Wonsan by the 21st of October.

Thus began what the Marines called "Operation Yo-Yo"—steam northward twelve hours, steam southward twelve hours.

Actually this process of march and countermarch was to last until 25 October, when the troop ships were finally ordered to enter the swept channel of Wonsan. Leathernecks and GI's were so sardined into the amphibious shipping during their five-day parade up and down the Korean coast that some of them contracted severe cases of gastroenteritis and dysentery. Aboard one merchant ship, the *Marine Phoenix*, 750 men were stricken.

With Wonsan in friendly hands, Admiral Doyle issued instructions on 18 October for a non-assault

landing. He directed that the LVTs and LCVPs be despatched to the beach when loaded. Time schedules were to be disregarded. All ships were directed to familiarize themselves with the procedure for transiting a minefield, and to remain outside the 10-fathom curve until it was safe for them to enter the swept channel. As they entered, the tractor group, loaded with cargo and vehicles, was to proceed in two columns, with an interval of 750 yards between ships and at a distance of 600 yards between columns. The personnel-carrying transports were instructed to enter in a single column, with 1,000 yards between ships, and at speed of not over ten knots.

Jeering placards of welcome greeted the Marines as they stepped ashore at Wonsan—one from the First Marine Air Wing, and another from the enthusiastic ROKs. All such greetings struck the Marines as being somewhat excessive. But Major General Oliver P. Smith summed up the Wonsan landing very philosophically: “History just got ahead of us for once.”

Once ashore, the Marines—22,000 strong—started moving north in strength, and they fanned out with rather formidable patrols to the south. Marine trucks and tanks started rolling northward toward the twin cities of Hamhung and Hungnam. From this area the Marines would strike northwestward toward the northern border. This trek would take the Marines through some of Korea’s highest mountains, where the Communists were reported to be preparing a “national redoubt” for a winter guerrilla campaign.

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Chapter 4. The Battle of the Mines (Part I—Wonsan)
Seventh Division Lands at Iwon

On 29 October, the Seventh Division was landed at Iwon administratively after the fast minesweepers *Doyle* and *Endicott* had found no traces of mines in that harbor. Nor was there any trace of the enemy since the ROK Capital Division had moved through the city four days before.

When the first troop-laden LCVPs from the Seventh Division reached Iwon's shore at 1120 on 29 October, they were greeted by the outstretched hands of their commanding officer, General Barr, and by Admiral Thackrey.

General Barr said at the time that his division would go to the Manchurian border, destroying any enemy it found in its path. Manchuria was only 75 miles away.

By nightfall of the first day, more than 27,000 Seventh Division troops had dug in for the night in the frostbitten hills and rice fields around Iwon. Supplies came ashore during the night as jeep and truck lights illuminated the beach area. Sherman tanks rolled ashore as nonchalantly as if on Fourth of July parade. Carrier planes droned overhead in constant patrol, and the destroyer *Borie* (CDR Merle F. Bowman) cruised offshore ready to open fire at moment's notice.

By the night of 31 October 1950, most of the Tenth Corps was once again on Korean soil. Some units had been at sea for nearly three weeks.

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Chapter 5. The Battle of the Mines (Part II—Chinnampo)

The Need for Chinnampo

While the Marines were being landed administratively at Wonsan, the ROKs, against practically no opposition, were speeding toward the Yalu. Hamhung and its port city of Hungnam were captured on the 18th of October. By 24 November, the ROK Capital Division, supported by the interdiction fire and gunfire support of Task Group 95.2, was approaching Songjin, nearly 100 miles north of Wonsan.

In the western half of Korea, meanwhile, against stiffer resistance, the U.S. Eighth Army had occupied the North Korean capital of Pyongyang on 19 October, and General Walker was busily consolidating his positions for a push toward the North Korean boundary marked by the Yalu and Tumen rivers. On 20 October, 110 FEAF cargo aircraft airdropped the 187th Airborne Regiment—2,800 paratroops—thirty miles north of the enemy capital, near the road junctions of Sukchon and Sunchon, to add to the rout of the broken North Korean People's Army.

The progress in the west made mandatory and urgent the opening of Pyongyang's port city of Chinnampo for Eighth Army's logistic support. But Chinnampo, like Wonsan, was known to be heavily mined. General Walton H. Walker made an urgent call for minesweeping help at Chinnampo. Winter was coming soon, he said, and his entire Eighth Army, both its men and its motors, required winterization. The Army was already in short supply of fuel.

Approach of winter, shortage of fuel, and the poor condition of the much-bombed road and rail communications leading northward from South Korea—these factors made the job of opening the port of Chinnampo one of top military priority.

The urgency of Chinnampo sweeping operations was fully understood and appreciated by the Navy. General Walker's plaintive messages that his motor vehicles were being held up and that his troops were reduced to two rations per day underlined the Eighth Army's crucial need of supplies. On 21 October, therefore, Admiral Joy radioed General Walker the following message:

"Navy recognizes serious supply difficulties and extensive logistics support for your hard-fighting Eighth Army. Difficulties overland and desirability of supply from sea are known. I am doing everything possible to alleviate this situation. Haeju harbor being swept at maximum rate possible. Sweeping slow due to few minesweepers, high tides, and well-laid minefields. Wonsan is also critical, and all U .S. sweeps have been committed there since October 7. U.S. sweeps cannot be diverted from that port until it is safe for ships' entry. Sweepers are en route from States but will require instructions and training. Cannot estimate time for clearance of Chinnampo. If it is as well mined as Wonsan, it will require more than three weeks from the time we start."

The minefield problem at Chinnampo differed from the one at Wonsan largely because of the wholly different hydrographic conditions. The direct seaward approach to the port of Chinnampo, unlike the deep-water channels at Wonsan, was blocked by islands and delta-like areas formed over the years by heavy deposits of silt carried down the swift-currented Taedong River into the Daido-Ko estuary.

In further contrast to Wonsan's clear, almost tideless, and currentless harbor, Chinnampo's muddy tide rose a minimum of twelve feet and the current moved as fast as five knots. Two navigation channels approached the harbor.

The southernmost channel was extremely shallow—only 15 feet at high tide. The northern channel was almost twice as deep. Both were mineable. To further complicate the problem, according to Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith,[1] the latest charts held by UN forces were dated 1922-24. Many changes could take place in 26 years.

The sweeping would have to start 69 miles from Chinnampo and proceed through a delta which was still about 33 miles from the dock.

"With three days to go before the channel was put through to the beaches of Wonsan, came a call from the Army and a command from Joy," said Admiral Smith. "I was to sweep into Chinnampo, the port of Pyongyang. The Army said they could no longer supply their advance by land and had to supply by sea.

"Sweep Chinnampo? Sweep with what?" Smith continued. "No organization, no personnel, no plans, and no ships at the moment. Three small wooden minesweepers were scheduled to arrive in Sasebo within a few days. All the available minesweepers in Korea and most of the minesweeping gear in the Western Pacific were already committed to the east coast sweeping operations at Wonsan and Iwon.

"I scratched my head all right! I sent a despatch to COMNAVFE asking if an intelligence team could head for Chinnampo and obtain any information on mining there. Then I remembered that two mine observers had recently called on me—one from CINCPACFLT and one from Mine Forces, Atlantic Fleet. I sent the CINCPACFLT officer, Commander Donald N. Clay, to Chinnampo in search of advance mine intelligence and placed the Atlantic observer, Commander Stephen Morris Archer, in charge of Chinnampo sweep operations."

In brief summary, Smith's orders to Archer were to sweep Chinnampo "soonest-safest." Archer was to concentrate first on opening the southern shallow-water channel to permit the early entry of LSTs and other shallow-draft types. After this channel had been opened, the northern deep water channel was to be cleared to permit the passage of large cargo and troop transport-type ships.

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Chapter 5. The Battle of the Mines (Part II—Chinnampo)
Assembling the Sweep Force

Commander Archer was observing Wonsan sweep operations aboard the U.S. destroyer transport *Diachenko* (APD 123) when he received Smith's radio messages to clear the Chinnampo channels.

"What forces are available to me?" Archer asked by return despatch.

"None at the moment," said Smith, whose flagship, the destroyer tender *Dixie* (AD 14), was riding at anchor in the Sasebo channel. "Suggest you come to Sasebo where you are free to commandeer any suitable ships you can find."

Recruiting the Chinnampo sweep forces was that informal. Archer's first recruit was his colleague, the mine warfare expert from Atlantic Fleet Mine Headquarters, LCDR Donald C. DeForest, who likewise had been flown out to the far east with Archer to observe, and if possible, to assist combat sweeping operations.

Archer and DeForest went quickly to Sasebo where they began a recruiting drive from Smith's flagship. With binoculars from *Dixie's* navigating bridge, the two officers watched the channel traffic for any type of ship with minesweeping potential.

Two 40-foot motor launches that had been left by the recently-departed *Boxer* were the first self-propelled units to pass in front of the two channel cops. It was DeForest's suggestion that these launches be taken with the hope that they could pull light sweep gear in shallow water. Later, the USS *Carmick* (DMS 33) (LCDR R. K. Margetts) and USS *Thompson* (DMS 38) (LCDR W. H. Barckmann) steamed past and were "designated" volunteers. Neither of these ships had previously participated in Korean minesweeping duty. Next came three small AMSs[1A] (MinDiv-51) just arrived from Honolulu: USS *Pelican* (AMS 32) (LTJG H. V. Cronk) (ComMinDiv-51), USS *Swallow* (AMS 36) (LTJG J. Roberts), and USS *Gull* (AMS 16) (LTJG C. E. Nimitz). Next to join the force was an LST which would serve as a logistics base as well as a helicopter platform. Finally, the destroyer *Forrest Royal* would serve as flagship.[1B]

While the ship and officer larceny was in progress, Archer was also assembling his staff. DeForest would be operations officer and troubleshooter; CDR William H. Shea, borrowed from the staff of Commander Service Division 31, would be his planning officer. From the Royal Navy's *Theseus* came LCDR W. E. H. Rodwell, RN; from Australia's destroyer *Warramunga* came LCDR G. H. Gladstone, HMAN; and from CINCPACFLT'S staff came CDR Donald N. Clay, the intelligence officer.

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Chapter 5. The Battle of the Mines (Part II—Chinnampo)
Sweeping Chinnampo

Intelligence was the key to success at Chinnampo—good intelligence, prompt intelligence. Long before the sweeping operations began, Admiral Smith had sent Commander Clay to Pyongyang to seek advance mine intelligence. Smith had also requested the Eighth Army to seize and retain all Chinnampo boat captains, river pilots, and captured minelaying personnel as well as mine plans, ships' logs, and hydrographic notes.

By the time actual channel sweeping commenced on 2 November, CDR Clay's intelligence mission had paid rich dividends. Clay had located North Koreans who had personally sailed on the North Korean minelaying ships. He now knew that North Koreans had planted both moored and ground magnetic-type mines at Chinnampo. Although swift currents and extreme tides might have caused some movement, Clay knew approximately where each line had been planted; and the general areas that had to be swept were laid out and charted.

It is certain that this intelligence, more than any other single factor, reduced the duration of the Chinnampo sweeping operation and undoubtedly was responsible for the total lack of casualties from mines, either to personnel or to ships employed in the operation.

This fact underlines and re-emphasizes the great value of naval intelligence and the reason why naval intelligence must always work closely with the other intelligence agencies. A fragment of intelligence which might seem insignificant to one Service or agency often proves vital to another.

Chinnampo sweeping operations, although jury-rigged until the last moment, included practically every weapon in the naval arsenal: surface sweeps, aircraft, and helicopters.

A component of naval air began the mine clearance task on 28 October when PBMs from FAirWing Six, tendered by the USS *Gardiners Bay* (AVP-39) anchored at Inchon, began daily mine search patrols in the Chinnampo area. PBM "Mariners" from Patrol Squadrons 42 and 47 and "Sunderland" flying boats from RAF Squadrons 88 and 209 were continuously engaged in anti-mine operations from 29 September through 15 November. During this period, the aircraft sighted 340 mines in the Yellow Sea area; 44 were exploded and 9 were sunk by machine gun fire.

In late November, patrol planes were utilized to drop depth bombs on magnetic mines off Chinnampo. On the 28th, thirty-two 325-pound depth bombs were dropped. Only one mine was exploded. Operations the next day were slightly more successful. P2V "Neptunes" dropped sixteen bombs and destroyed three mines. The patrol planes had one distinct advantage over the small minesweepers: they could operate without regard to rough seas.

Helicopters, flying from the Royal Navy aircraft carrier *Theseus*, were a vital adjunct to the Chinnampo operation. *Theseus* provided an early base for HutRonTwoDet.[1C] The *Theseus'* "egg-beater" flew a daily search of the minefield; the remainder of the British carrier aircraft provided a daily combat air patrol to protect the minesweeping force from either enemy air interference or shore batteries. The damage or possible loss of minesweepers to enemy gunfire was thus forestalled.

To insure maximum safety and to prevent the loss of any of the all too few minesweepers, the utmost use of all intelligence, knowledge, and experience had to be made. Archer and his staff sat down to second-guess where the enemy minefields might be. Next, they worked out a plan to circumvent and/or sweep those fields blocking entrance to the port. The aim, in view of the shortage of ships, was to *go around* minefields wherever possible. "Sweeping *through* was to be a last resort and for final clearance," wrote Archer. "No losses were acceptable."[2]

As it worked out, subsequent intelligence confirmed on the spot by helicopter observations, proved the

mining guesstimate substantially correct. It was necessary to sweep *through* only one minefield in clearing the initial channel to the docks.

Sweeping at Chinnampo began at an arbitrary point in the Yellow Sea, thirty-nine miles west of the line where mines were actually suspected. In actual fact, any starting point in the Yellow Sea outside the probable minefields was as good as another as all of it was shallow and mineable.

Two DMSs, the *Carmick* and *Thompson*, started the sweep of the so-called "end run" channel the morning of 29 October. This type could only be used in such a limited manner. "The DMS is neither fish nor fowl. It is neither a good destroyer nor a good minesweeper—too large, too costly, and too hard to maneuver as a minesweeper, too little fire power as a destroyer."[3]

Before beginning surface sweep operations in the channel itself, Archer called all his skippers together, brought them up to date on intelligence and plans, and issued final instructions.

The plan for the first afternoon, 2 November, he said, would put all ships into action except the two DMSs. The three AMSs—*Pelican*, *Swallow*, and *Gull*—were to start the initial sweep two hours after their arrival in Chinnampo. Ahead of the AMSs would go the helicopter and the frogmen. The ROK vessels and the *Bolster* would follow astern, performing shotgun and danning duties.

One of the young AMS skippers, LTJG C. E. Nimitz, nephew of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, described the Chinnampo sweep thus:

"It was good duty, but uneasy duty, especially those first few days when our intelligence hadn't been authenticated. The uncertainty was bad enough, but that swift current compounded the problem. Sometimes, in turning, we found ourselves 1,000 yards out of position.

"We discovered something else on the morning of November 4: that a Chinnampo cyclone came up faster than a 'Texas Twister.' When the wind whipped up, it really whipped. Reveille had sounded only a few minutes before and most of us were sitting down to breakfast when suddenly we heard our ship banging against the steel hull of *Bolster* tied up alongside.

"Before I could make it to the bridge, two of our lines had parted and slight damage had been done to our rail. The seas were running high. Seventy-knot gusts sent gray murky water splashing against our pilothouse. We had learned our first lesson at Chinnampo—never to nest alongside another ship even in a dead calm, for ten minutes later the entire Yellow Sea might be standing on end."[4]

The storm lasted almost twenty-four hours-abating as quickly as it came. With all it wrath and fury, the storm had its blessings. Four enemy contact mines had broken their moorings and surfaced, and were later destroyed by air and surface gunfire. At the storm's height, the *Catamount* (LSD-17) (CDR Kenneth Loveland) steamed into Chinnampo. As the last unit to join Archer's force, *Catamount's* arrival was a historic event in naval warfare. She was the first LSD to participate in minesweeping operations.

Compared to the pint-sized and bobbing AMSs, the 4,960-ton *Catamount* with 458-foot keel and her 72-foot beam rode the heavy seas gracefully. She was an odd-looking mine ship with her blunt, stubby bow and high freeboard. She had a massive bridge and a squared stern that opened to the sea as her bowels flooded to take aboard and disgorge baby minesweepers. Altogether *Catamount* had brought with her 12 LCVPs, plus all the spare minesweeping gear available in Yokosuka and Sasebo.

In performing duties as an LCVP mothership, an LSD's boat operations are somewhat similar to an aircraft carrier's flight operations. Launching and recovery of the small boats, as with aircraft, must be carefully timed and supervised. As the aircraft carrier must be brought into the wind preparatory to takeoffs and landings, so must the LSD head into the sea prior to flooding the well deck for boat operations. The LSD's boat control officer is required to perform duties comparable to those of the carrier's landing signal officer.

The arrival of the *Catamount* with her LCVP sweepers strengthened Archer's minesweeping force. The tiny boats were capable of both moored and magnetic sweeping; they could sweep very shallow areas beyond the

reach of larger minesweepers; and, in deeper waters, they could open shallow paths for the larger minesweepers to follow.

According to Archer, the intelligence mission of CDR Clay to discover the location of the Chinnampo minefields made the sweeping task much easier and less dangerous. Moreover, the staff's "guesstimates" of the location of the enemy minefields were confirmed by Clay's reports.

"By November 6," said Archer, "most of our guesses had been confirmed. With Commander Clay embarked in a North Korean tug, he and his North Korean pilots threaded their way from the Chinnampo dock to the open sea, checking the location of each mine line."

Click here to view map

Once the tug had been safely navigated to the open sea, it was decided to make a return trip for the purpose of precisely plotting the minefield. The ROK *YMS-503* became the first UN ship to enter Chinnampo. Aboard her was *Forrest Royal's* navigator, Ensign Robert R. Munroe, who had volunteered to do the piloting. The safe passage of this ship was again confirmation of the valuable intelligence that had been obtained.

Altogether, 212 enemy mines had been planted in the harbor. The main entrance channel was thoroughly blocked by five moored lines and one magnetic line.

"In addition," said Archer, "the approach to Chinnampo from the north was blocked by three lines of moored mines. But the southern channel, the one where we thought for certain that the enemy *would* have mines, was apparently open. Actually, we think the enemy had intended to mine it, but planes from the British aircraft carrier *Theseus*, by sinking what they believed to be a mine-carrying barge, had interrupted the enemy's plan. Later on we found a sunken enemy barge where the British said it should be in the southern approaches. Fifteen mines were still aboard it.

"Once all the mine intelligence had been compiled," stated Archer, "we were able to plot a channel which permitted our initial sweep to avoid all but one minefield. That was why it was possible for us to sweep seventy miles in ten days without a casualty of any kind."

Otherwise, sweeping operations at Chinnampo were quite similar to those at Wonsan. A night conference always preceded the issuance of the next day's sweep plan. "Minesweeping would run a punctual guy nuts," said Archer. "You can't figure out what you will do tomorrow until you find out what you have done today." Archer, Shea, and DeForest listened to each skipper's progress report—Archer thinking in terms of over-all accomplishment, Shea of tomorrow's plan, and DeForest in his role as chairman of the ways and means committee.

A typical sweep day at Chinnampo read as follows:

"*Pelican* and *Swallow* under way by 0500. Proceed to Item line, stream gear, and make moored sweep along swept channel to Chinnampo. On arrival reverse course and return to Item line. UDT team and helicopter reconnoiter Item and Jig lines. Locate and buoy. Investigate mines on north beach of Soku-to. Render safe any located. Two LCVPs recheck swept areas. Four LCVPs follow with magnetic sweep. Under way approximately 0600."

In these few words was a full, hard day's work for all hands. No more detailed instructions were necessary, so well did every man know his own specialty.

"Because of Chinnampo's swift tidal currents," said Archer, "all the mines had to be cleared out in order to render the area fully safe. There was always the possibility that the swift current would cause the mines to 'walk' out into the swept channel.

"But the sweepers were given maximum protection at all times. By using the helicopter and small boats at low tide, we double-checked our intelligence and we double-checked the possibility of tide and current moving the mines into a swept area. As an additional precaution, after we located a minefield, underwater demolition teams in LCPRs used empty 5-inch powder cans to buoy the mines at low tide. Moreover, the AMSs always

swept at high tide; and, weather permitting, they were preceded by the helicopter."

With the danger factor considerably reduced, sweeping became a dull and monotonous procedure.

"To give you some idea of the monotony," said Lieutenant Nimitz, "we always passed about a half dozen bodies floating with the tide—always the same bodies, for before they could get out to sea, the tide reversed itself, bringing them in again. We named one of the bodies 'Herman' because he was so easily identified. His hands had been tied behind his back. Herman was the main topic of conversation. Where would Herman be the next morning?"

In addition to an occasional storm, the coming of cold weather to Chinnampo brought added burden to all the minesweepers, but particularly to *Catamount* and her small boats. On icy mornings, steam was used to unfreeze the big ship's ballast valves in order to flood the well-deck and lower the stern gate. Steam also had to be applied to the LCVP boat engines after a freezing night. Despite the ice, there were some compensations which accrued to *Catamount's* crew—compensations that could not be matched by any other ship in the Navy. After she had deballasted, it was a rare occasion if the crew did not find some choice fish flopping around in the docking well. Fresh fish cooked to taste was a welcome reward to the sweep crews in payment for their long hours of cold, rough-water sweeping in an open boat.

Before the Chinnampo sweeping effort was finished, thirteen Japanese contract sweepers, including one mother ship and one "guinea pig" ship with padded decks and remote controls, had joined the sweep force. The Japanese sweepers, while not permitted to operate in unswept waters, did relieve United States sweeps from the monotonous duty of check-sweeping.

As early as 7 November, after ten days' sweeping, shallow-draft vessels began to enter the port of Chinnampo. The first ship to enter was *LSU-1402.* Word that one ship had safely entered Chinnampo caused others to arrive, all bringing much-needed supplies to the Eighth Army.

Archer's message to Admiral Smith as the first line from the LST hit the dock was in the clear: "Mission accomplished."

Only shallow-draft vessels were initially permitted to enter the swept channel, and then only when they were conned by a member of the Chinnampo's Pilot's Association. This was a newly formed group of all available UN navigators and quartermasters, under the supervision of LCDR G. H. Gladstone, RAN.

"After the minesweeping chores are finished," said Archer, "the most worrisome duty is harbor control and pilotage. In spite of the fact that others may be given port and pilotage authority, everyone feels, and I guess naturally, that the minesweep commander really knows the harbor best. Consequently, the conscientious commander feels personally responsible for all the ships going in or out. He will feel the necessity for supplying pilots and, in general, for being guardian angel of the port. This, when combined with language difficulties and the Oriental philosophy, was the most nerve-wracking of all my Korean experiences."

The first LST was piloted into Chinnampo on 10 November by CDR Clay. "It seemed appropriate," said Archer, "that this event should occur on the eve of the ROK Navy's fifth anniversary. I therefore despatched all ROK ships present that it was a pleasure to present the open port of Chinnampo to the Navy of the Republic of Korea on its birthday."

Archer ordered all U.S. Navy men-of-war to dress ship in honor of the occasion.

The deep water channel was declared open on 20 November, and Captain Charles H. Perdue's hospital ship *Repose* was the first deep draft vessel to enter. In fact, she was three times larger than any ship which had previously entered the channel. *Warramunga's* LCDR Gladstone piloted the big white mercy ship with less than a foot of water under her keel. Archer, who was more worried about the ship grounding than being mined, sent a note of congratulations to Gladstone on the successful passage, and regretted that Gladstone would have to stay aboard the *Repose* overnight. The wise-cracking Australian radioed back that he could stand fifty nurses for one night!

In summary, Archer stated that Chinnampo would have been a much tougher job both for the sweeping operation and later for the redeployment if there had been enemy resistance. “We would have required constant air cover, and we could have expected losses.

“As it was, our greatest danger was the navigation hazards. We constantly took advantage of all available breaks to protect ourselves from mines. But we had to worry constantly about tides and uncharted shoals.

“It was fortunate, also, that the Commander Seventh Fleet, Admiral Struble, had once been Commander Mine Force, Pacific. He understood the mine problem. There was no breathing down the neck of the minesweep commander.”

Ship performance, with exception of *Boxer’s* two 40-foot motor launches, whose engines were inadequate, was excellent. The LCVPs, used for the first time in Korea, worked fine and were credited with sweeping five moored mines. The LST provided an ideal base for the helicopter. “Two helicopters can base on an LST easily,” said Archer. “She makes an ideal tender and supply ship for small sweepers. She carries a large quantity of diesel oil; she can carry provisions and spare sweep gear. Her tank deck is ideal for laying out replacement sweep gear.”

The LSD provided the only means for attending small boat sweeps. She was excellent in heavy weather, as well as being a good supply ship and a black oil tanker. At Chinnampo, for instance, the *Catamount* carried sufficient oil to fuel the DMSs, the APD, and the destroyer. When the fleet tankers came, the LSD and the LST made it possible to effect a quick turn-around. Had there been enemy opposition, this would have been a great advantage.

Additionally, the LSD had served as a schoolship for ROK naval personnel, both officers and men, who were the first to train for minesweeping operations and to actually see the work done. This contingent was a part of the ROK sailors from six Korean YMSs being converted for minesweeping at Sasebo. During the evening, after a full day in the boats or on AMSs, these ROK naval men studied USN minesweeping manuals and discussed their project with great enthusiasm. On their return to Sasebo, they would man their own ships and be trained in minesweeping work at sea.

By November’s end, 200 miles of channel had been swept at Chinnampo, and 80 mines[4A] had been destroyed.

Still the Chinnampo sweep force was not finished. United Nations ground forces had continued to advance northward. They might need fire support or an amphibious lift along the flanks. Accordingly, on Thanksgiving Day, 1950, Archer’s force started sweeping north toward the Chongchon River.

“We felt there would be no mines,” said Archer, “but we wanted to make sure that fire support ships and LSTs could get in if needed. The AMSs made the sweep to Yongmi Dong on Thanksgiving Day. The DMSs and the destroyer were used as navigational guides, and the APD was used to carry the sweeping boats.

“We swept to within three miles of the beaches that were in Communist hands and far beyond the frontlines of UN ground forces. From our sweeps, we could see B-29s bombing Chonju, which was the far point of our advance to the northwest.

“After we had completed this sweep, we withdrew to our shelter area in Chinnampo and awaited further developments. When the Chinese attack came, we didn’t know whether there would be a Dunkirk at Yongmi Dong or whether the UN ground forces would be able to successfully withdraw south of the Chongchon River and perhaps reach Chinnampo. As soon as the APAs and AKAs started arriving at Chinnampo, our final chore developed.

“The entry of UN transports and covering destroyers had to be made at night. I stationed an AMS, a ROK frigate and my flagship at the critical turning point in the channel to serve as radar markings.

“During the night, one transport went aground and one destroyer caught a buoy in one of her screws. But the transport was refloated at next high tide and the destroyer cleared her screw next day.

"The Chinnampo evacuation was a complete success; the entire port logistic command as well as many civilians were safely evacuated. The deep channel surely paid for itself in this operation. Again there were no casualties. This is perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Chinnampo operation. The job was completed without the loss of a single life or a single ship.

"Many things contributed to this record, but the outstanding source of satisfaction to me," Archer concluded, "was the complete and thoroughly enthusiastic teamwork of all hands—Americans, British, ROKs (and Japanese)—in our Task Element. Vice Admiral Andrewes and his *Theseus*, Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith and his staff, the logistic and moral support we received from Sasebo—everyone worked together with a will and enthusiasm to get this difficult task completed in spite of weather, few ships, language problems and a random assortment of ships, personnel and equipment."[5]

After five years of obscurity, the October-November minesweeping operations in Korea dramatized once again the fact that minesweeping demands a tremendous expenditure of logistic support. It requires painstaking coordination and much training; it requires a variety of equipment: tenders, motherships, flagships, buoy ships, [5A] small-boat facilities, helicopter bases, mine disposal units and underwater demolition teams. In Korea, fire support ships were also needed.

By the end of November 1950, minesweeping had become a problem of major significance to the United States Navy.

Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith summed it up this way:[6] "The Russians apparently have everything we have and everything the Germans had in mining techniques. . . . The United States must put minesweeping on the same priority level as antisubmarine and carrier warfare."

The Sea War in Korea

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Chapter 6. The Hungnam Redeployment
Triumph and Tragedy

By October's end, a total United Nations victory over the North Korean aggressors seemed assured and imminent. General MacArthur stated that United States troops might be home by Christmas. The North Korean Army was crushed; their divisions were in complete rout. Thousands of enemy troops had surrendered and hundreds more were deserting their arms.

On Korea's west coast, elements of the Eighth Army were nearing the Yalu River. On the east coast, likewise, elements of the Tenth Corps were sweeping to the Manchurian border.

Unlike the Eighth Army, which attacked frontally all along the western perimeter, General Almond's Tenth Corps, consisting of five divisions (First Marine Division, Seventh Infantry Division, Third Infantry Division, and the two ROK divisions—Third and Capitol), attacked northward in four columns with the exception of the U.S. Third Division, whose last elements were offlanding in Wonsan on 20 November. The First Marine Division was sent northwest, the U.S. Seventh Division went north. Third and Capitol Divisions of the ROK First Corps were advancing far up the eastern shoreline. General Almond's plan was to dominate all the main arteries of transport and communication in northeast Korea as quickly as possible.

The optimistic horizon in late October was clouded by only one storm, but one which in less than a month was to grow to hurricane proportions. Would the Red Chinese intervene? The Peking radio had said they would. On 16 October, in fact, intelligence revealed that Chinese Army units had crossed the Yalu River. Were they only, as the Peking radio had said, "volunteer forces"?

On the western front, toward the end of October, the Eighth Army was advancing toward the Manchurian border against spotty resistance, reaching Chongju on 30 October. Elements of the 24th Division fought their way into Kusong.

In the eastern half of Korea, the Seventh Regiment of the ROK Sixth Division, after reaching Chosan on the Yalu River on 26 October, found itself surrounded by enemy forces and its line of communication severed. Relief elements of the ROK Second Corps also suffered strong attacks by Chinese troops in the vicinity of Ongjon and Usan.

To make the future more ominous, units of the First Cavalry Division were surprised and suffered severe casualties during the night of 1-2 November when a strong contingent of Chinese horsemen attacked their positions.

From captured prisoners, four Red Chinese armies could be identified.

The sudden appearance of Chinese units in Korea momentarily halted the advance in the west, while the Tenth Corps in the east proceeded more cautiously.

On 5 November, General MacArthur informed the UN of the presence of organized Chinese units in Korea. It was still not clear whether the Chinese troops had joined the North Korean People's Army to prevent its annihilation and to prolong its resistance, or whether a large-scale intervention by Red Chinese was forthcoming.

It was at this point that the carriers of Task Force 77 were asked to destroy the Korean side of the Yalu River bridges across which Chinese troops, supplies, and equipment were seen and known to be streaming.[1]

As Task Force 77 commenced its work on the Yalu bridges and as General MacArthur's announcement was recorded at UN headquarters at Lake Success, the entire battlefront in North Korea became ominously quiet. Little action was seen in the Eighth Army sector.

On the east coast U.S. Marines pushed northwestward up a winding dirt road toward the Chosin reservoir

area. From there, it was planned that they would attack northwestward to link up with elements of the Eighth Army.

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Chapter 6. The Hungnam Redeployment
The Chinese Challenge

In their advance to the Chosin reservoir area, the Marines had thus far met little opposition. The worst pocket of resistance had been encountered on 2 November when the 124th Chinese Communist Division challenged Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg's Seventh Marine Regiment south of Chinhung-ni. Fighting between this Marine regiment and the Chinese Division continued for five days.

On the night of 7 November, the Seventh's 3rd Battalion commander, Major Maurice E. Roach, sent word to Colonel Litzenberg that he was meeting very heavy opposition and requested artillery fire.

"That night," said Colonel Litzenberg, "we fired artillery into forty-five concentration areas, points we thought the enemy most likely to hold. That night, also, the Chinese General threw a fresh new regiment against the Marines; but by 0400 he was forced to withdraw his division in such a crippled state that it would not fight again for five months."[2]

Aside from the Seventh Marine Regiment's initial encounter with the Chinese, the primary source of Marine concern came from reports of pilots ranging north and west of the column that numerous small groups of Chinese soldiers were spread throughout the North Korean countryside. Many of these groups were in the open; others, when observed, took refuge in houses and huts. In addition to actual troop sightings, pilots saw thousands of footprints in the snow. Were enemy forces encircling the First Marine Division?

On 15 November, the Seventh Marines arrived at Hagaru-ri, the village at the southern tip of their first objective, the Chosin Reservoir. The Fifth Marines followed closely behind. Pilots and North Korean civilians continued to report Chinese enemy troop activity to the north and west of the Marines.

To strengthen their position, the Marines decided to move the tactical air direction center (TADC) to Hagaru-ri, where it would be in a centralized position for the close support control of Marine and naval aircraft. At the same time, construction of an air strip at Hagaru-ri was begun, big enough to accommodate C-47 type aircraft. The Marines' foresight in both these decisions was to prove extremely beneficial in the fighting that lay ahead.

On 21 November, Colonel Herbert B. Powell's 17th Regimental Combat Team of the Seventh Army Division reached the Manchurian border at Hyesanjin, a deserted village known as the "ghost city of broken bridges."

So far as the occupation of enemy territory was concerned, this was the highwater mark of the Korean war.

On orders from U.S. Tenth Corps, Major General Oliver P. Smith, Commanding General First Marine Division, resumed the Marines' advance on 22 November towards Yudam-ni, a village and road center on the west-central shore of the Chosin reservoir. From there, the Leathernecks would push north and then west toward the Communist stronghold of Kanggye for the link-up with the Eighth Army and the final advance to the Yalu.

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Chapter 6. The Hungnam Redeployment
The Red Chinese Army Strikes

Late in the morning of 24 November, the Eighth Army in the east began an offensive. The enemy defenses were a series of roadblocks and obstacles to hold up the advance of wheeled vehicles and tanks. During the first few hours, enemy opposition was light. Enemy positions were not strongly defended, and gains from two to twelve miles were made.

By sunset, 25 November, however, the Red Chinese had commenced a strong counterattack which penetrated the positions of the ROK First Division in the Taechon area, forcing some of its units to withdraw several miles and exposing the 24th Division's right flank.

Night infiltrations by the enemy followed the strong daytime counterattacks.

The most powerful blow fell on the right flank of Eighth Army in the mountainous area northeast of Tokchon. The Communists struck the ROK 7th and 8th Divisions in regimental strength, infiltrating between UN positions during the night. Organized withdrawal became impossible.

The first tip-off of the impending Chinese attack against the Marines came on 25 November from a Chinese private who was captured by the 7th Marines' 1st Battalion.

The private said that as soon as the two Marine regiments arrived at Yudam-ni, two Chinese corps (six divisions) would begin the attack. Three divisions would attack and surround the two Yudam-ni regiments, one from the north, one from the west, and one cutting the road to the south behind the Marines. A fourth Communist Division would attack Hagaru-ri and would sever the road between that village and Koto-ri; a fifth division would attack Koto-ri, surround it, and break the road between Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni.[3]

That a Chinese peasant private would know the maneuver plans of two Chinese Army corps hardly seems plausible. Yet, his incredible story was to be verified during the next few days of actual battle.

As the Red Chinese attacked in the north central Korean mountains, splitting the Eighth Corps and Tenth Army, thousands upon thousands of Red Chinese soldiers poured through the open lines.

On 27 November the Fifth and Seventh Marines were in Yudam-ni. The First Marines had been left behind to protect the main supply route, which was some 60 miles long. Single battalions guarded the villages of Hagaru-ri at the southern tip of the reservoir, Chinhung-ni, at the base of the 3,400-foot plateau, and Koto-ri midway between the two.

On the night of 27 November, the Chinese armies struck, hurling at least 60,000 and possibly as many as 100,000 troops against the First Marine Division in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir. Although not ideally positioned by any means, the Marines' defensive posture was better than other units of the Tenth Corps, who were stretched out from Wonsan all the way to the Manchurian border, a distance of some 100 miles.

At 2200 the night of 27 November, wave after wave of Chinese attacked the Marines' Yudam-ni defense perimeter.

For some reason, unknown to the Marines, the Chinese elected to hit the 2nd Battalion of Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray's Fifth Marines first.

"This particular battalion, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Roise, had gained about 3,000 yards during the day," said Colonel Murray, "and was in a good position to defend itself. The Fifth Regiment's other two battalions were in assembly areas and outposted for local defense. Under the circumstances the Second Battalion was better able to receive the shock of the first massed attack."[4]

Massed attack is correct phraseology. At first the Chinese attacked by squads. As these small groups

were chopped down, the attacks were stepped up. Enemy platoons, and, in some instances, companies, charged the Marine lines. Soon the entire front blazed with shellfire. Coordinated with the frontal assault, the Chinese also attempted to encircle the Marines at Yudam-ni by cutting the main supply route southward to Hagaru-ri.

Although the Chinese succeeded in establishing a roadblock south of Yudam-ni, their effort proved to be a costly one. They encountered Seventh Regiment's Fox Company, which Colonel Litzenberg had outposted behind the advance atop a mountain pass to guard the supply route from Hagaru-ri.

Since the heroic attack by the U.S. Marines "in the opposite direction" has been fully covered by official Marine historians in *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea*,[5] no attempt will be made herein to chronicle the First Marine Division's fighting withdrawal from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri, to Koto-ri, to Chinhung-ni, and to Hungnam, where U.S. Navy transports and combatant vessels awaited their arrival. Only the highlights of the close air support rendered by naval and Marine aircraft will be recorded.

Courageous and tough fighting men that they are, it is certain that the First Marine Division could not have extricated itself as a unit from the clutches of six Chinese divisions without the close air support which was to come from Navy and Marine pilots. Nor would the job have been as easy nor as many of the injured saved without the air logistics and rescue support that was to come from the U.S. Air Force.

When morning came on 28 November, Marine pilots from the escort carrier *Badoeng Strait* and from Yonpo airfield at Hungnam, arrived over Yudam-ni expecting to support their comrades on their scheduled push toward Kanggye, had no inkling of the savage and sanguinary battles which had been fought during the night.

By radio, now, they were briefed on what had happened.

Three of Seventh Regiment's companies had been heavily hit. Easy Company had been completely overrun; a platoon commander, First Lieutenant Robert Bye, was now in charge of the company. Dog Company had been driven from the crest of the terrain it was holding three times; and three times it had returned. Dog Company's commander, Captain Milton Hull, and fourteen men were all that remained of the original company, 200 strong. Captain Hull had fourteen wounds. Fox company had been completely cut off. Reports funneled through to regiment that Fox's commander, Captain William E. Barber, had been seriously wounded and was directing his defense from a stretcher.

The Fifth Regiment, still in comparatively good shape, had been damaged as much by the severe cold and frostbite as by enemy gunfire and hand grenades.

Marine tactical air controllers on the ground instructed all pilots that the contemplated push northward on 28 November had been cancelled; instead, would the airmen survey the Yudam-ni area for Chinese troop concentrations and take appropriate action?

If Marines were shocked and stunned by the night action of 27 November, no less so were the Chinese. They were unable to concentrate for a second assault until two days later, 30 November, when aerial observers from the First Marine Air Wing reported that at noon an estimated 2,000 enemy troops were cautiously grouping north of the Marines' perimeter.

Marine aircraft immediately began to blanket the area with rockets, bombs, and napalm. By the time the enemy jumped off at 1500, his estimated 2,000 strong had been slashed to an estimated five hundred.

What had promised to be a fullscale attack was now a piecemeal venture. Nevertheless, to the accompaniment of the usual cacophony of bugles, whistles, and shouts, the Reds swept down the slope of the ridge facing the Marines. Pilots in their cockpits overhead could not hear the noise made by the enemy troops as they approached the Marine perimeter, but they needed little coaching from the forward air controller on the ground.

Peeling off at 5,000 feet, four napalm-loaded Corsairs howled down to make "on-the-deck" runs. All four napalm tanks struck the first attacking wave, scoring direct hits which tore large holes in the enemy forward wall. As the last plane dropped its ordnance, the first was back, tailed by others, to attack the faltering enemy with

strafing runs. The enemy's assault lost momentum and the Reds soon had enough. They broke into disorganized flight to escape the rain of 20-mm. shells. Marine aircraft had broken the back of this enemy assault. Of the 500 enemy who initiated the attack, Marine Corsairs were credited with killing approximately three hundred.

Elsewhere on the Marine defense perimeter, planes from Task Force 77 appeared and rendered similar support. Skyraider and Corsair pilots from the USS *Philippine Sea* were told by the Marine Tactical Air Controller that their attacks for that day had been "very good. The enemy has been stopped."

Full participation by Task Force 77 in support of the embattled Marines was urgently requested 29 November in a "flash" message from Commanding General First Marine Air Wing to COMNAVFE. Major General Field Harris strongly recommended "a sustained effort by Task Force 77 in the Tenth Corps zone of action."

On this same day, carrier pilots from the USS *Leyte* (CV-32) reported their inability to contact tactical air controllers in the Eighth Army area because of the heavy traffic. However, they reported excellent results from the flights that had been flown in support of Tenth Corps.

Philippine Sea's pilots had similar experiences. Of ten flights flown in support of Eighth Army, only three were able to contact tactical air controllers and these pilots had been instructed to jettison their napalm alongside the road. The same troubles which had been so evident during the battle for Pusan had reappeared.

On the other hand, all three flights in support of the Tenth Corps had been directed upon lucrative targets, mostly enemy troop concentrations.

Following the results of the 29th, Commander Task Force 77, Rear Admiral E. C. Ewen, in a despatch to Admiral Struble, estimated that 60 per cent of Task Force 77's aircraft had not been profitably employed in the Eighth Army area due to the saturation of the area by friendly aircraft and due to communications difficulty with the tactical air controllers. He reported 100 per cent effectiveness in the Tenth Corps area.

Admiral Struble therefore notified Fifth Air Force Headquarters that because of the stack-up of UN aircraft and unsatisfactory communications in the Eighth Army area reported by Task Force 77 pilots, he was directing Admiral Ewen to adjust the percentage of air effort directed between east and west as control capabilities appeared to warrant.

In reply, General Timberlake said that:

". . . due to the fluid ground situation, it is impossible to determine the exact status of tactical air control parties in the Eighth Army area. Many of them may have been lost or made inoperative due to enemy action. Every effort is being made to determine status of TACPs and to make replacements."[6]

Meanwhile, Fifth Air Force issued instructions giving naval flights priority of employment as soon as they reached the target area. Fifth Air Force further stated that due to critical condition in EUSAK area, the "effort of CTF-77 should be divided during the next few days."

Admiral Struble answered that in view of the cut-off position of the First Marine Division and their urgent need for air assistance, *all* fast carrier flights for the following day, 3 December, would report initially to the Tenth Corps. Thereafter, some flights would be directed to proceed on to the Eighth Army area if they were not urgently required by Tenth Corps.

On 3 December, Major General Harris again sent a despatch to Admiral Joy urgently recommending that the "main fast carrier effort be made in support of First Marine Division. Navy aircraft particularly desired by First Marine Division, because of familiarity with their report system. Desire Marine shore-based air and ship squadrons operating continuously this area."

Admiral Joy was kept informed of developments and concurred with Struble and Harris as did Lieutenant General Timberlake, who on 4 December in reply to General Harris' request sent the following despatch:

"Concur main effort fast carriers in support First Marine Division during critical period of withdrawal."

Once again, as during the Inchon assault, Marine and naval airmen would perform close air support for

the First Marine Division, using Navy-Marine doctrine.

The Sea War in Korea

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Chapter 6. The Hungnam Redeployment
The Breakout Begins

At 0705, on 2 December, convoys of the trapped Fifth and Seventh Marines, loaded with their wounded and their equipment, prepared to move out from Yudam-ni. Before them and their immediate destination of Hagaru-ri lay fifteen miles of tortuous, icy roads, through mountains literally swarming with Chinese Red troops. Flights of close support aircraft from *Philippine Sea, Leyte, Badoeng Strait,* and Marine flights from Yonpo headed toward the cut-off Marines to spearhead the breakout.

As soon as the planes of Task Force 77 appeared over Yudam-ni, the Marines commenced their long march to the sea—distance, sixty miles.

Marine rifle units flushed enemy snipers from the nearby hills and seized the high ground on the flanks of the long column. Supporting weapons and vehicles formed the center of a moving perimeter. Overhead, 20 to 50 aircraft circled the long column, ready on a second's notice to deliver rockets, napalm, 20-mm. shells, or 500-pound bombs. Indeed, during daylight operations, the Chinese divisions who were embarked on an offensive mission were forced to take the defensive.

For instance, when the Marines encountered their first heavily-defended roadblock in the late afternoon of 2 December, 22 Navy and Marine aircraft, following an artillery barrage, pounded the enemy position with bombs and napalm tanks.

Close on the heels of the air strike, the Leathernecks jumped off in assault. The Chinese who survived the aerial attack were quickly despatched and set running by bayonet-wielding Marines in hand-to-hand fighting.

Throughout the day of 2 December, as many as 40 to 60 tactical aircraft constantly circled the Fifth and Seventh Marines.

Click here to view map

Planes from *Leyte* and *Philippine* Sea spent most of their time blasting small buildings around Hagaru-ri that housed enemy troops.

"Occasionally we caught the white-uniformed Chinese troops in the open," said the commanding officer of *Leyte's* VF-33, Commander Horace H. Epes. "I vividly recall catching a couple of Red soldiers hotfooting it down the road carrying a long pole with a big kettle of what looked like soup—that no one ever drank."

At the same time, heavily-laden Air Force C-119s dropped cargoes of ammunition, medical supplies, water, food, gasoline, and C-rations in multicolored parachutes; observation aircraft cork-screwed through the falling chutes; helicopters fluttered down to pick up the seriously wounded.

When darkness came, however, and the planes went back to their bases, the Marines were left to their own resources. As a result of the 2 December fighting, however, the enemy had been so badly mangled that he was unable to seriously threaten the Marine column during the night.

On 3 December, the pattern of the previous day was repeated. The Marines continued their advance, employing the deadly combination of air and ground attack. By 1900 on 3 December, the head of the Marine column had reached Hagaru-ri. The rear elements of the column did not arrive in the village until mid-afternoon of the next day.

On 4 December, the commanding general of the First Marine Aircraft Wing sent the following despatch to Commander Task Force 77:

"I was up on the hill today (at Hagaru-ri) and saw the Fifth and Seventh Marines return. They thanked God for air. I don't think they could have made it as units without air support. The next job is to get them off this

hill. I want to be able to cover their flanks and rear one hundred per cent, and to blast any major resistance to their front. Can use all the help you can give me until they get down. Tell your pilots they are doing a magnificent job."

On 6 December, the First Marine Division departed Hagaru with 45 miles to go. Its objective—the next way station, Koto-ri.

There were some innovations in the close air support procedure for this movement. The Marine column moved out three battalions abreast. Forward air controllers were placed with each flanking battalion, and tactical air coordinators flew ahead of the columns' flanks. The air coordinators' mission was to seek out enemy forces beyond the visual range of forward air controllers.

A further step to improve the control of close air support was the use of an airborne tactical air direction center. For this purpose a four-engined R5D transport provided by VMR-152 was hastily equipped with additional communications equipment.

By 6 December, the "Flying TADC" was ready for flight operations. From its orbiting station directly above the Marine column, this novel control agency was able to communicate to all flight leaders and ground units simultaneously. In mountainous terrain, where some types of radios were limited in range, this new airborne link made a significant contribution to the air support effort.

The column had advanced only 2,000 yards when it was suddenly stopped by a concentration of enemy fire coming from a ravine 100 yards east of the road.

Friendly troops were pinned down within 75 yards of the enemy gun positions. One of the Marine forward air controllers, who was riding in a jeep immediately behind the lead tank of the column, contacted an airborne tactical air coordinator, briefed him on the enemy concentration, and directed him in on a dummy run. When the tactical air coordinator had definitely located the target, the forward air controller ordered a live run with 20-mm. fire and napalm.

Meanwhile, other Navy and Marine aircraft monitored the radio net to familiarize themselves with the target. At this time, *Leyte* had eight planes and VMF-214 had eighteen Corsairs on station. These planes were divided into three flights of eight aircraft orbiting at eight thousand, nine thousand, and ten thousand feet respectively.

A flight of eight planes from VMF-214 attacked first with rockets and proximity-fuzed 500-pound bombs. The second flight from VMF-214 was then called in and asked to use a new technique. In an effort to conserve ammunition and to keep armed aircraft on station as long as possible, every other plane was asked to make a dummy run. The second VMF-214 flight did so, but this plan worked no better than the first; pilots were thereupon asked to resume firing on every run.

An hour went by, and still the column was pinned down. Koto-ri was eight miles away and the precious daylight hours were dwindling. After a hurried conference with one of his forward air controllers, Colonel Litzenberg directed his three battalion front to move forward as the aircraft made firing runs perpendicular to the line of advance. The enemy guns were only 100 yards from the Marines.

Pilots of the next flight were the planes from the *Leyte*. They were informed of Colonel Litzenberg's decision and ordered to attack.

"My F4Us were fully loaded," said CDR Epes, "and at 5,000 feet there wasn't much margin of power. It was cold as hell in the airplane, but it was colder on the ground—25 degrees below zero, with one foot of snow. The long Marine column was preparing to attack when we arrived.

"A ground controller called me by voice radio.

"'I'm in the lead jeep; I have a fluorescent panel marker on my hood. Fly over me and rock your wings. I see you,' he said. 'Now come over me on a heading of 180 degrees. Now push over; now commence firing.'

"Our empty cases fell among the Marines, our bullets and light bombs landed on the Chinese 50 yards ahead of them.

"Then the ground controller said, 'Come back with napalm.' That really worried us. Sometimes napalm spreads for a block. We were afraid we would burn up our own troops, but we complied. After the first Corsair's napalm dropped, the ground controller snapped, 'Move it closer.'

"We dropped napalm bombs on the sides of the hills, with Marines all along the road directly beneath. If the temperature hadn't been 25 degrees below, I don't believe the Marines could have stood the heat. Maybe it felt good.

"That sort of bombing spelled out close air support for the Marines. They pinpointed the target, told us exactly where to drop."

While planes from *Leyte's* VF-33 made firing runs, ground troops commenced firing. Eighty-one millimeter mortar shell trajectories arced higher than the low-flying attack planes. As an attacking plane would pass, Marine mortarmen aimed at the plane's tails, and by this improvised rule-of-thumb they effectively lobbed in their shells before the next airplane made its run.

Under this cloud burst of shellfire, enemy gunners at last took cover and the column's point again moved southward. New flights of close support aircraft from the carriers reported and took up the attack; aircraft control was passed rearward along the column from one forward air controller to another. By this continuous aerial bombardment, the Marines were able to neutralize and pass the enemy batteries south of Hagaru-ri.

Throughout the Marines' withdrawal to Hungnam, Chinese troops were never able to effectively counter the Navy-Marine system of close air support. The communists' best defensive weapons were their rifles and light machine guns.

Two carrier pilots were lost due to enemy action—*Leyte's* Ensign Jesse L. Brown, while flying a close support mission near Hagaru-ri on 4 December; and LCDR Ralph Maxwell Bagwell, commanding officer of Attack Squadron 35, on 12 December. Squadron pilots saw Bagwell crawl free of his inverted aircraft and take refuge beneath a nearby railroad bridge. But before a friendly helicopter could reach Bagwell, *Leyte* pilots witnessed his capture by a group of 20 enemy soldiers.[6A]

Ensign Brown, the first Negro pilot to fly for the Navy, had been forced to make an emergency landing in a mountainous area northwest of Chosin Reservoir. Pilots circling overhead observed that Brown was alive but apparently unable to free himself from the wreckage. They observed also that his plane was beginning to burn slowly. The temperature was below freezing, darkness was approaching, the terrain was unfamiliar, and Brown was down five miles behind enemy lines. With complete disregard for such hazards and without hesitation, LTJG Thomas J. Hudner decided to go to Brown's assistance. After making a successful wheels-up crash landing, Hudner found that Brown's leg was caught in the buckled fuselage and it was impossible to extricate the injured man from his cockpit. Hudner packed snow around Brown's fuselage in an attempt to extinguish the fire. Returning to his own plane, whose radio was still operative, Hudner requested cutting tools, along with a rescue helicopter. The helicopter, flown by LT Charles Ware, arrived shortly, but even with the cutting equipment provided, Brown could not be rescued from the wreckage before he died. Hudner was returned to safety by the helicopter.

For his selfless efforts in behalf of his friend and fellow pilot, President Truman later presented LTJG Hudner with the nation's highest military honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

It took twenty-two hours for the Marine column to cover the nine-and-one-half-mile road from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri. The trip had cost the Marines 600 wounded, all of whom were deposited in Koto-ri's hospital tents for air evacuation.

The temporary airstrips at Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri proved invaluable for the air evacuation of wounded and frostbite cases. Marine engineers had bulldozed the airstrip at Hagaru-ri during late November in anticipation of a sharp increase in supply requirements for Tenth Corps elements in this sector. When the Red Chinese attacked, the airfield was usable by C-47 type aircraft. The shorter Koto-ri strip was improved solely for the air evacuation

of wounded.

Casualties had also been air evacuated from Yudam-ni by helicopter and light aircraft to Hagaru-ri. A low, solid overcast usually hid the peaks rising above the Chosin plateau. At all of these improvised fields, aircraft operated under the most hazardous of flying conditions. From the short air strips hacked from the frozen and rocky terrain by Marine bulldozers, 21 Air Force C-47s from FEAF combat cargo command operated. The Koto-ri strip was so short, in fact, that one of the forward air controllers, who was also a qualified carrier landing signal officer, guided the planes in much the same manner as if they were landing aboard an aircraft carrier. From these strips Air Force C-47s and Marine R4Ds airlifted a total of 4,675 Marine and Army wounded to safety. Light observation planes, helicopters, and three TBM aircraft contributed, flying out 163 casualties during the first ten days of December.

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Breakout Completed

On the morning of 8 December the withdrawing Marine column departed Koto-ri, moving down the slippery, ice-covered mountain road toward Chinhung-ni. Chinese troops were still resisting every foot of the way. Thirty-six miles to go.

One third of the distance had been covered when the column encountered a blown bridge. Only a new bridge could prevent the abandonment of all the Marines' heavy equipment, much of which had been protected at great human sacrifice. Because of the steep cliffs rising on either side of the road, no vehicles, tanks, or artillery could bypass the gorge.

Eight Air Force C-119s were immediately despatched to Koto-ri, where each "flying boxcar" dropped a two-ton span. While under intense fire, Marine engineers built two treadway bridges which enabled the Leathernecks to cross the abyss on 9 December and thus avoid what might have been one of the most serious setbacks to the withdrawal.

At dusk on 9 December, lead elements of the Seventh Regiment attacking south joined elements of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, attacking north from Chinhung-ni. The men of the two Marine Regiments joined hands on a nameless ridge.

The breakout had been achieved. And in that achievement one thing stood out clearly: air-ground cooperation had reached a degree of perfection that would stand as a classic in the history of close air support.

During the Marines' withdrawal, more than 200 aircraft were frequently employed daily to attack enemy troops and installations blocking the southward march to the sea.

The amount of close air support furnished the Marines reached a pinnacle on 4 December when 239 individual close support sorties were controlled by the air support section of Marine Air Tactical Control Squadron Two. Of these flights, 128 were flown from the fast carriers, 34 by the escort carriers, and 77 were flown by the Yonpo-based Marines.

The effectiveness of the air contribution given the First Marine Division is best summarized by the report of General Oliver P. Smith, Commanding General First Marine Division:

". . . During this phase, reliance upon support by Marine and naval tactical aircraft was stressed more than ever before. This fact was largely the result of the over-all nature of the operation which, in the final analysis, was characterized by its being beyond the range of naval gunfire support. As a result, during daylight hours, air was the predominant supporting arm throughout the period. . . . As a result of utilizing the same aircraft day after day, and committing them to support of front-line units during their time on station, the majority of pilots in the First Marine Aircraft Wing had the qualifications desired of an airborne tactical air coordinator. These pilots knew the tactical situation through daily contact with it; they knew the position of each unit and could accurately judge those localities where targets were most likely to appear and what type of target it would be. This unity between ground and air elements became nearly ideal during the advance from Yudam-ni to the south, and it is no exaggeration to state that the successful conclusion of this operation would have been nearly impossible without the amount and quality of close air support that was provided. It was an ideal combat example of the ultimate perfection of the air-ground team needed to defeat an aggressive determined enemy."[7]

Tenth Corps' Seventh Division Commander, Brigadier General Homer W. Kiefer, tried to parallel as nearly as possible the Marine's system of controlling close air support. Kiefer stated that this system permitted him to place tactical air control parties within each infantry battalion. Such placement proved to be the ideal and

gave the battalion commander a means of controlling and coordinating the close air support he received. General Kiefer considered it worthy of note that "in 57 days of combat, 1,024 sorties were flown by Marine Corsair aircraft in close support of the division, without a single casualty among our own troops due to friendly air action.

"This record I attribute to the fact that adequate control was available with frontline units," wrote General Kiefer. "In many instances, Marine planes were bombing and strafing within two hundred yards of our frontlines. . . . The Marine system of control, in my estimation, approaches the ideal, and I firmly believe that a similar system should be adopted as standard for Army divisions."[8]

Credit for the Marines' successful withdrawal from the Chosin trap might be attributed to many interlocking factors—the Marines' discipline, fighting spirit, and firepower, the close air support rendered by Navy and Marine aircraft, the air logistics and rescue support by the United States Air Force.

Once again, the mobility, flexibility, and firepower of the mobile air base had been demonstrated. The carriers of Task Forces 77 and 95 had been able to move quickly to the danger area, and to supply the abundant and accurate close air support which, as General Smith stated, was vital in extricating the First Marine Division from North Korea.

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Chapter 6. The Hungnam Redeployment
Preparations for the Pull-Out

In early November, a vague premonition that all was not well in North Korea had begun to disturb several of the senior naval officers in the Far East theater. The isolated reports of the presence of Red Chinese forces, the absence of serious enemy resistance, the gap between Eighth Army and Tenth Corps, the threats of impending action by the Peking radio, presaged trouble to some.

Following the Wonsan landing, Admiral Joy invited Admiral Doyle to return to Tokyo, but, said Doyle, "I did not go because I was uneasy. A short time later Joy came out to visit me, bringing with him the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Francis P. Matthews, and Senator Claude Pepper."

The visitors lunched aboard Doyle's flagship *Mount McKinley*, and afterwards they were taken into the chart room to look at a map of Korea.

"We pin-pointed our own forces ashore," said Doyle, "and explained as much as we knew about the location of enemy forces. At this time, I pointed out that we were uneasy about the division between the Eighth Army and the Tenth Corps. We didn't know what lay between them. There had been no link-up."[9]

The first precautions were taken on 28 November. Admiral Joy alerted Admiral Doyle to be prepared for redeployment of UN forces out of North Korea. Doyle was instructed to prepare either for an administrative operation or for emergency measures, and told that he would exercise over-all control of any redeployment. He was also informed that he would direct any amphibious efforts on either the west or the east coast. Doyle in turn asked Rear Admiral Lyman A. Thackrey, CTG 90.1, to direct any west coast redeployment.

The following day, Admiral Joy again despatched Doyle advising him that the military situation in North Korea was deteriorating rapidly. Joy considered it desirable that all ships of Task Force 90 be placed on six hours' notice. This alert was applicable to all ships, both in Korean and Japanese waters, for at this time much of Task Force 90's amphibious shipping was in Japan for upkeep and replenishment.

Admiral Joy also requested the recall of the *Boxer* (CVA-21) and other ships because of, as Admiral Joy put it, "the critical and rapidly deteriorating situation of the Eighth Army and the desperate situation of the Tenth Corps. I felt the ground forces needed all the help the Navy could give them in the way of air and gunfire support."

Although some objected to returning the *Boxer* immediately to Korea, CNO Sherman, when acquainted with Joy's request, directed their return.

"The uncertainty of the future and the possibility of Soviet intervention were factors in Sherman's decision," said Joy.

The military situation continued to worsen. On 30 November, accordingly, all Task Force 90 ships were ordered underway for Korea.

From early despatches, it appeared that Eighth Army was in the most critical condition. Because of the limited port facilities on the west coast, Doyle considered that the Army would have to be under extreme hardship before it would call for a sealift from the small harbors that were available on North Korea's west coast.

"At the most, they might redeploy a few remnants by sea," said Doyle, "but not the entire Eighth Army with all its supplies and equipment. I therefore sent mostly small, shallow draft ships to the west coast and made preparations to conduct large-scale redeployment operations in the Hungnam area." The anchorage area of the Hungnam harbor needed to be expanded and the minesweepers had to clear gunfire support channels. "When this was accomplished," said Doyle, "Hungnam was an ideal port for redeployment."

In a conference on 8 December aboard the *Mount McKinley*, Joy told Struble and Doyle that in view of Eighth Army's fast movement south, no major sealift effort was now needed on the west coast. Instead, the major effort would be made on the east coast at Hungnam.

The selection of Hungnam as the port of embarkation and evacuation was logical for several reasons. It was only four miles away from General Almond's Tenth Corps headquarters at Hamhung; it was approximately the same distance from Yonpo airfield which could serve as the air control center until operations were transferred to the Fleet after the airfield was abandoned. Hungnam was tactically feasible as an assembly and loading point for the Tenth Corps units which had fanned northward out of Wonsan and Iwon. And lastly, Hungnam was ideal because of its port facilities. Although small, the port was excellent and well protected. The tidal range was less than a foot and berthing space was available alongside the docks for seven ships. By double-banking ships, four additional ships could be simultaneously loaded. Other beach areas of the port were suitable for LST operations.

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Hungnam Redeployment Orders Issued

On 9 December, General MacArthur issued orders specifying General Almond's mission for withdrawal: Almond was to be lifted from North Korea as he had come—by sea. After his arrival in South Korea he was to assemble his units in the Pusan-Usan-Masan area in South Korea and report to the Commanding General Eighth Army. The First ROK Corps was excepted from this order and it was to be released upon arrival at Samchok to report to the ROK Army.

COMNAVFE now assigned complete responsibility for the east coast redeployment operation to Commander Task Force 90, Admiral Doyle. He was given control of all air and naval gunfire support. He was made responsible for the protection of shipping en route to the debarkation ports and for coordinating all withdrawal movements with the Commanding General Tenth Corps, General Almond.

In contrast to the command arrangement for Inchon and Wonsan, Hungnam had no joint task force commander assigned.

Commander Seventh Fleet would provide Commander Task Force 90 with aircraft support and gunfire support ships on a "when and if they could be spared from carrier task forces" basis. The responsibility for coordinating naval air operations with the Air Force remained with Commander Seventh Fleet.

The decision for this arrangement was Admiral Joy's and it was based on the overall threat confronting Naval Forces Far East.

"It must be remembered," said Admiral Joy, "that the Chinese intervention put a new aspect on the Korean war as well as the global situation. The future was cloudy to say the least. Some sources of information even felt that it marked the beginning of World War III with Soviet participation. A Chinese attempt to capture Formosa was another possibility. I therefore felt that the 7th Fleet should be free to leave the confined waters of the Sea of Japan at a moment's notice to proceed to any more seriously threatened area in the Far East.

"It was also felt that the Hungnam evacuation could be handled satisfactorily if necessary without the support of the 7th Fleet since heavy enemy opposition was not a probability."

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The Navy's Three-Ring Circus (Inchon—Wonsan—Hungnam)

As Admiral Doyle completed plans to redeploy Tenth Corps from Wonsan and Hungnam on Korea's east coast, Rear Admiral Lyman A. Thackrey, Commander Amphibious Group Three, began to redeploy elements of the Eighth Army at Chinnampo and Inchon. Redeployment of 1,800 Army and Navy port personnel and 5,900 ROK troops was completed at Chinnampo on 5 December.

The Chinnampo evacuation was carried out by five British Commonwealth destroyers (three Canadian and two Australian) and one U.S. destroyer when, in darkness and through the swept channel of a minefield, they navigated 30 miles of the shallow water of the Daido Ko estuary to cover the withdrawal of civilians, non-essential military personnel, and wounded from the Pyongyang area.

The evacuation force was led by HMCS *Cayuga* (CAPT J. V. Brock, D.S.C., RCN) with HMCS *Athabaskan*, HMCS *Sioux*, HMAS *Warramunga* (CAPT O. H. Becher, D.S.C., RAN), HMAS *Bataan*[9A] (CDR W. B. M. Marks, RAN) and the USS *Forrest Royal* (CDR O. O. Liebschner). The five ships plowed through heavy seas and snowstorms to the mouth of the Taedong River, with orders to provide necessary gunfire support and anti-aircraft fire during the loading of casualties and port personnel.

During the operation, Sea Furies and Fireflies from the British light fleet carrier HMS *Theseus*, flag of Vice Admiral W. G. Andrewes (who had just been promoted), flew air patrols over the flotilla.

It had been Captain Brock's intention to transit the estuary in daylight rather than face a night passage of the area with its treacherous shoals and minefields. However, on receiving a despatch that the withdrawal program at Chinnampo was ahead of schedule, Brock decided to risk a night voyage up river.

Slowly, the six ships began the passage of the twisting swept channel through the minefield which in many places was only 500 yards wide. Visibility was almost nil, and it was three o'clock in the morning before lookouts of the four ships that completed the journey (*Cayuga, Bataan, Forrest Royal, Sioux*) could make out dock buildings dimly in the darkness. Captain Brock took up position, and his ships were at action stations waiting for dawn and possible enemy air attack.

"Everything was quiet," said CDR Marks, "with members of ships loading under the full brilliancy of the arc lights."

That day the transports were loaded with wounded Republic of Korea civilian refugees, and military personnel. Altogether about 7,700 personnel were evacuated from Chinnampo without interference by the enemy.

When the last transport had left the port, Captain Brock decided to remain at anchor for another night in the dock area, and next morning, after ordering the remaining civilian population out of the military area, his ships shelled oil storage tanks, dock and harbor installations, and supply dumps. The commercial and civilian parts of the town were left untouched.

On 7 December, the outloading of all Army stores at Inchon began. By 31 December, 32,428 personnel, 1,103 vehicles, and 54,741 tons of cargo had been outloaded.[10]

Inchon's port was not to be closed until 5 January. As at Hungnam, important port facilities were then destroyed to prevent their use by the enemy. By this time a grand total of 68,913 personnel, 1,404 vehicles, and 62,144 tons of cargo were redeployed from Inchon to Taechon and Pusan.[11]

At Wonsan, outloading of UN personnel and material at the port area began on 3 December 1950.

Covering fire was furnished by the cruiser *St. Paul* (CAPT Chester C. Smith) and the destroyers *Charles S. Sperry* (DD 697) (CDR Robert M. Brownlie) and *Zellars* (DD 777) (CDR Fred D. Michael). Shellfire from

these three ships effectively isolated the city from enemy attack during the day, and at night they fired star shells to illuminate suspicious areas. Their effectiveness is testified to by the fact that no enemy attack developed either during the day or the night.

The methodical and unhurried loading at Wonsan is well described in the action report of Commander Transport Division Eleven (CAPT Albert E. Jarrell):

"We commenced loading Korean civilians aboard the *SS Lane Victory* at anchor at 0500 on December 7. We had previously made arrangements with the local police to screen the civilians to be evacuated. Specifically, only those persons whom the North Koreans might classify as "enemy"—with all the finality which that word implies—were to be taken out. Originally, we'd expected about 1,000 civilians, but it became quickly apparent that this number would be greatly exceeded.

"That excess produced another neuralgic pain—if we refused asylum to any of those selected, our refusal would be two strikes against them after we left. I therefore gave orders to continue loading to capacity. By midnight, 7,009 people—many of them women and children—were embarked. There were many more than that still left. I estimated that the entire population of Wonsan (75,000) plus an equal number from outlying towns, wanted desperately to leave. About 20,000 were still clambering about the barbed wire and tank barriers long after we were chockablock with passengers."[12]

In addition to the 7,009 Korean civilians, the outloading at Wonsan included 3,834 military personnel, 1,146 vehicles and 10,013 bulk tons of cargo.

The Wonsan operation, in addition to clearing UN forces out of the Wonsan area, had another beneficial effect. It had produced a miniature dress rehearsal for the Hungnam show soon to follow.

At Wonsan, naval gunfire had held the North Korean forces at such a respectable distance from the UN perimeter that UN troops were never seriously threatened. The entire operation was completed without either the loss of a single life or the necessity to sacrifice any of UN's valuable equipment.

In the Hungnam operation Rear Admiral Doyle exercised control through various control stations: an operations unit aboard his flagship, *Mount McKinley;* a control vessel, a beachmaster, a port director, an embarkation control liaison officer, and an MSTS control board.

The flagship's operations officer coordinated all shipments, assigned anchorages, issued docking instructions, prepared and issued sailing orders for all Navy and SCAJAP vessels, and supervised the operations of all the other control stations. The beachmaster controlled LST operations, the port director berthed the ship, and the embarkation control liaison officer linked the staffs of Doyle and Almond. MSTS office handled MSTS shipping. It was a well-coordinated team of experts who knew their amphibious doctrine backward as well as forward.

These control stations went into action the moment an arriving ship entered the outer harbor. The several control stations were interconnected by radio and could speak to one another. The operations officer told the port director what berth the incoming ship was to occupy. The ship was then ordered to proceed from its anchorage and await the harbor pilot near the breakwater. The harbor pilot, with the assistance of tugs, then docked the ship. Whereupon, Task Force 90 and Tenth Corps officers went to work to load the ship and assign it a "chop" time for departure from the dock.

Ships arriving in Hungnam were directed to be ready for immediate movement on sudden notice, and to maintain a 24-hour visual watch for sailing signals. Each commanding officer or master was supplied the latest hydrographic information.[13]

The control officer in charge of redeployment operations ashore, representing General Almond, was Marine Colonel E. H. Forney, whose headquarters was a shed near the dock area. Forney was responsible for continuous operation of the Hungnam port; for the withdrawal to staging areas of Tenth Corps elements; for the loading of troops on assigned shipping; and for the evacuation of refugees and the removal of all material.

Practically all cargo, with the exception of ammunition, was loaded alongside the dock on the LST beaches. Personnel were loaded into the APAs and AKAs at anchorages as close to the beach as possible. To assist the loading operation, the USS *Foss* (DE 59) was placed alongside the dock to supply electrical power. The *Shimano Maru* served as mothership for 1,200 Japanese stevedores, who helped with the outloading of supplies and equipment.

As a unit ashore became alerted for embarkation, Forney's loading section issued instructions; the movement section directed traffic to the assigned area for staging out; and the rations section supplied the needs of the troops awaiting their turn in the tent city which had sprung up near the dock area.

General Almond's operation order called for the First Marine Division and the ROK regiments to embark first. They would be followed by the Seventh and Third Infantry Divisions in that order. Thus, Third Infantry would have final responsibility for the Hungnam defense perimeter.

Marines started to load aboard waiting transports as soon as they arrived in the Hungnam area on 10 December. It was their fourth embarkation within five months. Marine embarkation officers could load now by sight without the aid of stowage diagrams.

Marine drivers were embarked with their vehicles; troops were billeted in the cargo spaces of commercial ships. Between 4,500 and 5,500 Leathernecks were embarked on each of the three APs. Seven commercial cargo vessels, thirteen LSTs, three LSDs, an APA, and an AKA were also assigned as lift for the First Marine Division.

The task of loading the Marines was completed by the evening of 14 December, and on the morning of the 15th the last ships with elements of the First Marine Division sailed for Pusan.

The ROK regiments departed Hungnam on 17 December, the U.S. Seventh Division on 21 December, and the U.S. Third Division on 24 December.

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Wall of Fire Around Hungnam

On 11 December, the Navy made final plans to lay down an aerial canopy and a curtain of steel around the Hungnam perimeter—a canopy of naval aircraft from seven carriers, plus a steel curtain of shellfire from thirteen ships.

Rear Admiral E. C. Ewen's Task Force 77 had grown from two to four fast carrier by early December: *Philippine Sea* and *Leyte* (both of which had been supporting the troops ashore from the Sea of Japan since early November); and now *Valley Forge* (hastily recalled from the United States with Air Group Two embarked) and *Princeton* (with Air Group 19, CDR Richard C. Merrick, aboard). CVG-19 first saw action on 5 December.

In accordance with Commander Seventh Fleet's operation plan of 12 December, the fast carriers were given the task during daylight hours of flying close air support and air cover for forces inside the embarkation areas. Outside the embarkation area, Task Force 77 aircraft were ordered to interdict enemy supply lines, support friendly ground operations, and provide air cover for the escort carriers and the shipping to and from the embarkation area. In company with aircraft from Fifth Air Force, they were also to provide heckling missions at night.

Rear Admiral Richard W. Ruble's escort carrier group (TG 96.8), originally composed of *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait,* was now augmented by the light carrier *Bataan.* This force added additional air cover for the ground forces and the armada of ships in the Hungnam port area.

In charge of providing gunfire support was Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, USN. Before the evacuation task was finished on 24 December, Hillenkoetter's force included the battleship *Missouri,* the heavy cruisers *St. Paul* and *Rochester;* the destroyers *Forrest Royal, Norris, Borie, English, Lind, Hank* and *Massey;* and the rocket ships, LSMRs *401, 403,* and *404.* The ships of this Hungnam gunfire support group were stationed where they could deliver emergency support to the Tenth Corps, and at the same time provide protection in the event of enemy air attack.

No naval gunfire was requested until 15 December. On that date Hillenkoetter's gunfire support group commenced "deep" support fire at ranges up to ten miles delivering both 8-inch interdiction and harassing gunfire as well as 5-inch illumination at night. For this gunfire the ships were deployed to preselected stations at sea and in the swept channel. The recently swept fishing areas allowed the bombarding ships to maneuver in an area ten miles to the north and ten miles to the south of Hungnam.

As the operation progressed and the perimeter contracted, fire support ships were moved closer ashore to obtain better firing positions. LSMRs blasted the reverse slopes near Hungnam. On two occasions the three rocket ships were used to fire barrages on the right flank, onto the high ground overlooking Hungnam where enemy troops were reportedly concentrating.

Missouri began main battery fire on 23 December at road targets between Ori-ri and Hungnam. "Though we didn't really need her firepower," said Doyle, "General Almond kept suggesting that we call in the *Missouri.* So I called for her and gave her a target selection. She quickly got a hit on an enemy troop shelter, and the air spotter reported that the Chinese Communists were running out of it in all directions."

In addition to her main battery fire, *Missouri's* 5-inch batteries contributed harassing and illumination fire in covering the withdrawal of the last ground elements.

As Tenth Corps artillery was loaded aboard ships and withdrawn between 22 and 24 December, naval gunfire took over observed firing and close support. The shore fire control parties reported the naval gunfire as

"very effective" and credited it with "destroying large numbers of enemy troops." In at least one instance, naval gunfire was reported to have broken up an enemy attack of larger than company size.

"Gunfire support was an around-the-clock daylight activity," said Captain Bruce C. Wiggin of CTF 90's staff, "and a precautionary measure at night. Illumination was vital and necessary beyond the defensive perimeter, especially during the darkness.

"Ships received their target instructions from specific requests ashore and from the flagship. We were never sure of the amount of opposition that might develop, although we never expected an all-out Chinese attack on the perimeter. After all, the enemy was not stupid. Nevertheless, we made preparations for the Dunkirk-sort of thing.

"In retrospect, it seems probable that the Chinese knew they could not interfere with the redeployment. Their losses would certainly have been greater than those they could have hoped to inflict. Fire power from the sea would have dwarfed what they had already absorbed during their attack on the Marines at Chosin."[14]

Doyle was quite disturbed about the North Korean civilians pouring into Hungnam. "If the Chinese had ever made a severe attack—and they might have," said Doyle, "there could have been mass slaughter of many of the civilians in the area. Military men very often have to make tough military decisions of this nature, and I am very happy that I did not have to make that one."

For the final D-day of withdrawal, 24 December, a concentrated naval gunfire barrage was maintained in a strip approximately 2,500 yards wide and 3,000 yards from the beaches and harbor. The only enemy troop movement to be observed on the final day was seen by Admiral Doyle and General Almond from the flagship *Mount McKinley* at the final withdrawal. "As we pulled out with all friendly troops embarked," said Doyle, "Almond and I, through our binoculars, saw Chinese Communist troops coming over the ridge behind Hungnam, only three or four miles away. I asked my gunfire support officer CDR Arlie Capps to direct some gunfire in the direction of the approaching troops."

Destructive bombardment of the port area itself was also begun. Ships' gunnery officers concentrated on the destruction of railroad cars and locomotives. Demolition crews ashore blasted everything of military value.

At no time did the enemy attempt to interfere with the Hungnam evacuation either from the air or from the sea.

"It is a mistake, however, to say there was *no* opposition at Hungnam on the ground," said Admiral Doyle. "Although the First Marine Division had rendered seven Chinese Communist Divisions ineffective, attacks were made on our perimeter every night during the period of withdrawal. Our ships were constantly called on for gunfire, rockets and star shells."

The gunfire support ships' only casualty occurred at 0645 on 24 December aboard USS *St. Paul* (CA-73) when a projectile from one of her 5-inch twin mounts hit one of her identical mounts, making it inoperative. Shell fragments ripped off one foot of a gun barrel, punctured numerous small holes in *St. Paul's* superstructure, severed one of the radars, and slightly injured four members of the crew.

From 7 to 24 December, the gunfire support ships of Task Force 90 fired a grand total of 162 rounds of 16-inch; 2,932 rounds of 8-inch; 18,637 rounds of 5-inch; 71 rounds of 3-inch; 185 rounds of 40-mm. and 1,462 rockets.

By way of comparison, approximately 800 more rounds of 8-inch, and 12,800 more rounds of 5-inch were expended in defensive fire support at Hungnam than had been expended in support of the Inchon amphibious assault.

"It should be borne in mind," said Doyle, "that Inchon only lasted a couple of days while our fire support effort at Hungnam lasted from the 15th to the 24th of December. All of it was 'call-fire' as requested by the troops. Our logistic forces deserve great credit for doing a magnificent job keeping us supplied with ammunition."

On 15 December, Admiral Doyle assumed control of all air support operations within a 35 mile radius of

Hungnam. This included both the close and deep support efforts of the carriers of Task Force 77 and Task Group 96.8, the night hecklers from both FAFIK and Task Force 77, and all reconnaissance and transient aircraft flying over the area. In conjunction with the naval gunfire, the mission of the aircraft was to prevent interference with the evacuation.

The contribution rendered by air is typified by such reports as that of CDR W. F. Madden on 10 December: his flight of seven Corsairs had "strafed, rocketed, and napalmed enemy troops . . . ;" by CDR Epes whose four Corsairs strafed and bombed one hundred horses and unnumbered enemy troops; by LCDR H. H. Osborne's three Skyraiders and four Corsairs, who reported destruction of stacks of fuel drums and a supply dump.

Philippine Sea's CDR E. T. Deacon reported that on the early morning of 15 December his flight of six Corsairs attacked troop concentrations. LT Krause's six Corsairs had attacked troops concentrated in a small valley near Hungnam. *Princeton's* pilots reported the destruction of oxcarts, trucks, gasoline drums, warehouses, and railroad tunnels.

From 15 to 24 December, a total of 1,700 sorties were flown inside the Hungnam perimeter. Many additional missions were flown outside the area.

The last pilot to fly over Hungnam was *Princeton's* LT R. B. Mack, who described the night as ". . . cloudless, cold, and unfriendly. Haze was everywhere," said Mack. "The artificial haze of war—one part hate, one part frustration, stirred to an even pall by high explosives.

"I was flying the last launch of the day as one of two F4U-5Ns, Detachment Fox of VC-3 from *Princeton.*

"After a dusk lauch, I received orders to proceed to Hungnam as target combat air patrol for the withdrawal of our forces from that port. After a very lonely trip, I arrived about 1900 and reported to *Mount McKinley.* The fighter director stationed me over Hungnam at 15,000 feet altitude. I had a grandstand seat for the most dismal and distressing sight I had ever witnessed.

"Below, the last of the troops and supplies had been loaded on board the LSTs and other evacuation craft and were pulling away from the dock areas. There were fires everywhere throughout the area, and, as I watched, flames broke out around the docks, growing and spreading until the whole waterfront seemed ablaze. Whatever had been left behind was being made useless for the Reds.

"As the LSTs cleared the beaches, several of our destroyers moved in and did their bit to ruin the real estate for future Communist use. I circled Hungnam until 2045. The ships below formed up single file, nose-and-tail like circus elephants, and headed seaward and then south to Pusan.

"As I took departure for *Princeton,* I called for the *Mount McKinley* and we exchanged greetings. 'Merry Christmas,' we said, for it was Christmas Eve 1950. . . ."

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Chapter 6. The Hungnam Redeployment
The Lesson of Hungnam

Hungnam was a brilliantly executed maneuver. The time was short, and putting all the parts together and making them work was extremely complicated. However, the Hungnam evacuation was not opposed either by air or by submarines or by armor and artillery equipped ground forces. Had such opposition occurred, Hungnam would not have been so successful, and there would have been losses.

Undoubtedly, under the existing conditions, the Hungnam area could have been held indefinitely, had there been a strategic need to do so. While no one in Korea believed a line across Korea ending near Hungnam was either feasible or practicable, many felt a new line across the narrow neck of Korea (ending in the vicinity of Wonsan on the east coast) could and should have been held. General Van Fleet thought so, as did Admiral Doyle.

"U.N. forces could have held Hungnam for a long period of time," said Doyle, "but I felt then and I still feel that with the Navy's surface and air power available we should have held the Wonsan area indefinitely."

The significance of the Hungnam operation was that it was an amphibious operation in the reverse. No corresponding operation in military history exists. It was different from Dunkirk and it was different from Gallipoli, for both of those operations were carried out under enemy pressure.

The value of UN firepower from the aircraft carriers and surface ships contributed to the high morale of troops ashore. As far as killing the enemy is concerned, it was of questionable value.

The value of rail transport was dramatically demonstrated at Hungnam. The rail line between Wonsan and Hungnam was kept open with the help of Korean laborers; and on the four or five hundred freight cars assembled by the Tenth Corps control organization, some 8,900 tons of Class "V" ammunition were among the supplies moved to Hungnam by rail to be loaded aboard ships.[15]

Air transport also played a vital role. One hundred twelve Air Force planes and ten Marine planes airlifted 3,600 men, 196 vehicles, 1,300 tons of cargo and hundreds of Korean refugees from the Yonpo airfield. In spite of bad weather, the Flying Boxcars sometimes took off at three-minute intervals. The field was used as long as it could be defended within the receding perimeter.[16]

The importance of sea transport was never more self-evident as the statistics will verify. When the operation was finally concluded, 105,000 U.S. and ROK military personnel and 91,000 civilian refugees—nearly 200,000 in all—had been embarked. Refugees were loaded in incredible numbers: 12,000 in one APA and 8,400 in one LST were the records.

It was Admiral Doyle's opinion that if UN forces had had the shipping, every person in the Hungnam area of North Korea could have been evacuated. "We could have completely evacuated the entire area," said Doyle, "for they all wanted to leave. As we left, in fact, refugees with bundles under their arms were still pouring in for a sealift south. The Army did a magnificent job ashore with the refugees. Since Hungnam was wrecked and there was little shelter and it was terribly cold, I ordered all ships with baking capacity to bake extra bread and cook rice. Every ship with a bake shop baked to capacity. We distributed rice to all the ships to help keep the people alive."[16A]

The statistics of supplies and equipment removed from Hungnam were equally impressive. 17,500 vehicles, 350,000 measurement tons of cargo had loaded out on 6 APAs, 6 AKAs, 12 TAPs, 76 time-charter ships, 81 LSTs and 11 LSDs.

Although there was no opposition, the command relationships worked well. In his action report Admiral Struble made the following comment:

"During the Hungnam operation, Commander Seventh Fleet was in a supporting role to Commander Task Force 90 who retained responsibility for redeployment operations. Based on my experience in the Inchon, Wonsan, and Hungnam operations, I consider that the formation of a joint task force under the fleet commander is a better solution to the command problem involved. Such a solution provides a unified command afloat for the thorough coordination of the various task forces engaged in related operations."[17]

Admiral Doyle disagreed. "The command relationship was a deviation from previous ones," he said, "but circumstances warranted it. The Hungnam redeployment was conducted in a very small area. It involved only one amphibious group. If, for example, there had been two amphibious groups—one at Wonsan and one at Hungnam—there would have been definite need for a joint commander to coordinate the two."

Under the circumstances, however, the command arrangement at Hungnam worked smoothly. Had serious difficulties arisen or had the withdrawal been heavily opposed, one must conclude that there might have been greater need of a joint task force commander.

The major lesson of the Hungnam redeployment was that all the basic principles of U.S. Navy and Marine Corps amphibious doctrine were sound, and that they worked in reverse as well as they worked forward.

Admiral Joy summarized Hungnam thus: "The Hungnam evacuation showed that a well-trained and well-led amphibious force can carry out an amphibious operation in reverse as effectively as the conventional type. It again emphasized the importance of having adequate amphibious forces in being and in a state of full combat readiness."

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
A New Look at the Mine Problem

The defeat and collapse of the North Korean Army did not end the battle of the mines in the fall of 1950. Rather than ending the mine struggle, the entry of the Chinese and the southward shift of the frontlines marked the beginning of a new phase of the UN countermine effort.

From the war's beginning, in contrast to action in the air and on the ground, no self-imposed restrictions had been placed on UN naval operations other than to observe the blockade limits.

However, as 1951 commenced, the Chinese Communist enemy was again in complete possession of the entire North Korean coastline. His opportunities for improving defenses against UN naval bombardment forces were considerably increased. Now he could re-mine his harbors and his coastal areas. He could emplace his coastal guns.

As a consequence, minesweeping problems for 1951, in addition to being magnified, were considerably different from those encountered during 1950.

First of all, *time* was less critical in 1951 than it had been in 1950. Throughout the fall of 1950, sweep missions were usually urgent—a few hours to clear Inchon; a few days to open Wonsan, Chinnampo, Iwon, and Hungnam. Either troops or supplies, and sometimes both, were urgently needed ashore. By 1951, in contrast, amphibious operations had been curtailed, and fewer deadlines faced the sweepers.

Second, whereas in the fall of 1950 sweep crews were relatively inexperienced, by 1951 they had become old hands at the trade.

Third, in 1950 the sweepers lacked repair facilities; they lacked spare parts; and they were few in number. By early 1951, many of these difficulties had been overcome.

Finally, the policy in 1950 had been to sweep where the mines *weren't.* In the spring of 1951, the sweepers were ordered to sweep where the mines *were.*

"This change in policy was necessary to gain more maneuvering room for the fire support ships when under attack by shore batteries," said Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, then CTF 95. "Also, the closer the ships could get to the beach, the better their gunnery."

To illustrate the results of Dyer's new policy, 186 mines were swept at Hungnam in early 1951. In preparation for the siege of Wonsan, initiated 16 February, 325 mines were swept.

From 1 May 1951 to 31 December 1951, the minesweeping task group swept a total of 683 enemy mines. Included in this number were nine Soviet ground magnetic types, five of which were detonated by *Merganser* (AMS-26) (LTJG Einer May, USN).

As has been stated, by the spring of 1951 the mine problem had lost much of its urgency and deadliness. There was now sufficient time to care for mine ships and to provide some recreation for their crews. Repair ships *Luzon* (ARG-2) and *Kermit Roosevelt* (ARG-16) were alternately available to provide routine upkeep at Sasebo.

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
The 1951 Mine Mission Defined

Despite ominous whispers of re-mining and of long range coastal guns being brought into North Korea from Manchuria, Captain Richard C. Williams, who had relieved Captain Spofford in March 1951, had cause for optimism. He had inherited a going concern to carry out his new minesweeping mission which he visualized as follows:

"First, the primary purpose of minesweeping in 1951 was to permit United Nations gunfire support to get close inshore along the North Korean coast and interdict communications; to destroy troop concentrations, gun emplacements, and supply dumps.

"The second purpose of our minesweeping was to provide tactical deception; to force the enemy to redeploy troops and equipment to counter the threat of invasion. By so doing, we would relieve enemy pressure against UN ground forces.

"Third, the minesweepers would increase the effectiveness of UN naval blockade and bombardment forces operating in the Wonsan-Hungnam-Songjin areas by providing more direct mine-free routes between these ports. This would permit more flexible fire support in the event of emergency.

"Fourth, the minesweepers would reduce, by sweeping and disposing of moored mines, the threat of floating mines to UN ships.

"Finally, the minesweepers would open new 'targets of opportunity,' particularly around the rail hub of Hamhung through which a large percentage of supplies flowed to the enemy."

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
Minesweeping 1951 Style as Seen from *LST-799*

One officer who was a continuous participant in Korean minesweeping operations during 1951 was *LST-799's* commanding officer, LT T. E. Houston.[1] His observations for that period contribute to a better understanding of actual operations.

"We had ComMinRon-3 aboard in early 1951," said Houston, "having taken him and staff aboard in Sasebo.

"At this time, the minesweeping family was a heterogeneous but closely knit group. It consisted of my LST carrying one or more mine-hunting helicopters, a steel hulled sweeper, several 'chicks' or AMSs, occasionally South Korean AMSs, and often a tug that anchored out at the 100-fathom line for geographical reference purposes.

"My LST generally proceded with our sweepers during the day, staying a few hundred yards in the 'safe' area from the sweep line. From this position, we ran a sweep plot, controlled sweep movements, assisted in picking up lost minesweeping gear—pigs, dan buoys, etc.—and helped to destroy swept mines by gunfire.

"All ships recovered sweep gear and moored each night prior to darkness, usually alongside the LST.

"At first, we swept only during daylight. Later on, as we cleared the whole bay of Hungnam and both coasts, we were forced to sweep at night and to stay farther and farther offshore because of enemy gunfire.

"Moored mines were cut almost every day. The sailors of *799* engaged in their destruction whenever possible. Approximately one out of every seven mines destroyed by gunfire 'blew.' Others filled with water and sank after the mine cases were holed. This destruction livened the daily humdrum existence of a support ship, and boosted morale of the men.

"The enemy's minelaying patterns were peculiar; Some mines seemed to have been laid like the spokes of a wagon wheel, all mine lines radiating out from the hub. Other lines were at random locations. None of the patterns resembled U.S. minelaying doctrine.

"There was little pattern to the movements of our group. The amphibious force made a few dummy landings, and our sweeps always preceded them. The helicopter went first, then the small boat sweeps, followed by the AMSs and AMs. We also swept areas off the bombline and in Wonsan harbor before large ships were brought in for gunfire support and bombardment. And we moved to any area where minelaying activities were reported.

"In some places, such as the Wonsan approaches ('Tin Pan Alley' and 'Muffler') off Songjin, and over on the west coast, north of Inchon (in the area called 'Cigarette') we made daily check sweeps.
Click here to view map

"To assist the sweeping, my LST carried on the tank deck four small LCVP-type sweep boats (MSBs). This arrangement, while novel in concept, did not prove practical. The LST's bow yawed too much, making it difficult to re-embark the LCVPs. The system was too complex and dangerous to use except in the mildest of weather. After a trial, we went back to housing all the MSBs aboard *Comstock* (LSD-19).

"The 'copters' aboard *LST-799* were initially mine spotters. Rescue work was a secondary mission, and done only on request. This 'copter mine spotting was fairly simple. The 'egg-beaters' hovered ahead of the lead sweep ship and radioed the word on any mines that were spotted in the sweep path.

"On a few occasions, 'copters destroyed floating mines by rifle fire from the plane, but this practice was stopped after one helicopter made a bull's eye on a floating mine, which, by sympathetic explosion, caused the

detonation of four other mines. Needless to say, the ’copter was almost lost.”

Sweep commanders confirmed the helicopter’s usefulness.

“In good weather, the helicopter proved an invaluable aid to the minesweeper,” said LT C. W. Coe, whose *Redstart* (AM-378) swept eighty large mines, captured five enemy sampans, and destroyed two self-propelled guns and one light tank during the Korean War. “The helicopter pilot was, in effect, the long range eyes of the *Redstart*.”

Helicopters were also effectively used to reconnoiter areas in advance of actual minesweeping. They assisted the sweep commanders to predetermine the presence and the type of mines, the direction of the mine lines, the existence of shore batteries, and the availability of prominent land marks for navigational purposes.

“Because of the ’copters,” said Coe, “it was possible for sweep operations to be more intelligently and safely planned in advance.”[2]

In some cases helicopters actually led trapped sweepers out of a minefield, according to LCDR I. M. Laird, *Dextrous’* commanding officer.[3]

“From the air, they could see them when we couldn’t,” said Laird. “A ’copter hovered over *Dextrous’* bow when she was caught in a minefield, and the ship was conned by radio throughout the minefield and into clear water.

“The helicopters had many friends in the minesweeps.”

Clearing the Coast for Bombardment Ships

Orders to start sweeping north of Wonsan were received on 30 March 1951.

“All the minesweeping forces at Wonsan sortied for Songjin at that time,” said Captain Richard C. Williams, ComMinRonThree.

Williams’ force included his flagship, *Comstock* (LSD-19) (CAPT E. T. Goyette), with LTJG Waiter P. Sheppard’s minesweeping boats embarked. It also included ComMinDiv-32 (LCDR T. L. Cleaver) in *Incredible* (LT E. F. Flinn), *Osprey* (LTJG P. Levin), *Merganser* (LTJG D. J. O’Neill), *Chatterer* (LTJG J. P. McMahon), *Pelican* (LT Richard Cross), *Mocking Bird* (LTJG Stanley Gary) and the salvage vessel *Grasp* (ARS-24) (LT S. J. Brown).

This sweeping force, under the over-all tactical command of Rear Admiral R. H. Hillenkoetter in *St. Paul* (CA-73) (CAPT Chester C. Smith), had orders to clear a stretch of presumably safe water extending from Songjin about 20 miles to southward so that ships could get closer to the coast to bombard and blast targets of opportunity.

“On the first day of sweeping,” said Captain Williams, “about fifteen moored mines were ‘cut’ near Songjin’s harbor entrance. The sweeping operations brought the Communist defenders out of their surrounding hill positions, apparently to defend their coastline against amphibious attack. Many of them were observed and blasted as they converged on Songjin.

“Later the LSD, *Fort Marion*, was moved near the point of shore about 15 miles south of Songjin, and her embarked Royal Marines went ashore to dynamite a strategic rail line and tunnel. The British commandoes met negligible resistance and accomplished their mission.[3A]

“The night the sweepers returned to Wonsan, *Comstock’s* radar operator reported an unidentified and mysterious ‘pip’ moving near the island of Yo-do. The ‘pip’ was confirmed by the destroyer patrol. Although subsequent starshell and searchlight illumination failed to reveal the target, I ordered *Osprey, Chatterer, Pelican* and *Merganser* to sweep the suspicious area at first light. They did so, and by 0630 the following morning, 15 mines had been swept and destroyed.

“Had these mines remained unswept, *St. Paul* would have passed dangerously close to them when she stood in at about 1100 that same morning.”

In a further effort to confuse the Communist coast defenders and sweep mines at the same time, the minesweepers were ordered to conduct a tactical feint at Kojo during mid-April 1951. Starting at the 100-fathom curve, the shallow-draft minesweep boats cut a channel to within 5-inch gun range of the beach which was later expanded by the larger sweepers.

Although the minesweepers swept and sank only about a dozen mines," Captain Williams said, "they encountered the most menacing shore fire with which the sweepers had then been confronted."

Check-Sweeping Korea's West Coast

While east coast clearance and channel-widening operations to join the Kojo and Wonsan sweep areas were in progress, another operation was suddenly made necessary in early May 1951. The British forces operating on Korea's west coast requested that a check sweep be conducted in the Chinnampo area along Chinnampo's "Cigarette" route that had been originally cleared by Commander S. M. Archer's force in November 1950.

"Check-sweeping increased in importance," said Captain Williams, "because a swept area stayed safe only so long as it was watched. Because of the distances involved, it was impossible to watch everywhere at once, and therefore we had to conduct monthly check-sweeping off both coasts."

Usually, a *check-sweep* involved as much effort as a *clearance* sweep. The check-sweep of "Cigarette" in May of 1951, for instance, involved the use of the minesweepers *Curlew, Gull, Swallow* and *Mocking Bird,* and the fire support ships HMS *Concord,* HMCS *Sioux,* and HMS *Amethyst.* It also required the use of an LST, six MSBs, one LSD (the *Comstock*, whose crew replaced center-line gas buoys in the channel) and two YMSs from the Republic of Korean Navy: *YMS-501* and *YMS-515*. The sweepers checked both for magnetic and moored mines, but found nothing along the entire 20-mile trek.

The May 1951 re-sweep of "Cigarette" reemphasized the growing usefulness of the helicopter.[4] The helicopter was valuable not only for reconnoitering the area ahead of the sweepers, but also to drop hand grenades along each section of the channel in the hope of neutralizing any acoustic mines present.

(The necessity of constant check-sweeping underlines the fact that actual mines need not *exist* in order to provoke a great minesweeping effort. The mere *threat* of the mine is sufficient.)

The check-sweeping effort in Korea was reduced by a tactic described by the operations officer of MinRon 3.

"The sweepers developed a faster method of check-sweeping the coastal areas," said CDR Emory B. Myers. "Two, three, or even more ships ran abreast through an area. If no mines were cut, we assumed that the area had not been re-mined.

"This method proved much faster than sweeping the entire area. But it was not foolproof. If current or tide walked a mine into a swept area, the entire area still had to be swept as a precaution against the possibility of re-mining."

Sweepers Add New "Salt-Water" Real Estate

"Upon completion of the Chinnampo check-sweeping operation," said Captain Williams, "work on the east coast commenced in earnest. The coastal area from Suwan-dan to Wonsan yielded almost 200 mines during the quarter ending 30 June."

During this period, the sweep forces were re-enforced by two AMs—*Redstart* (LT Carl W. Coe) and *Dextrous* (LCDR I. M. Laird)—and two AMSs—*Condor* (LT G. D. Morin) and *Waxbill* (LT F.J. Crozier).

Meanwhile shore battery fire was becoming considerably more of a problem. Everywhere the sweeps went, enemy artillery followed. More and more artillery pieces appeared on hills, in valleys, and in caves

overlooking the areas where the sweepers were working.[4A] Although the accuracy of these guns left much to be desired, the density of their fire made occasional hits inevitable.

"Throughout the summer of 1951," continued Williams, "the sweepers gradually cleared the coastline as far north as Hungnam.

"At the same time, the MSBs widened the sea room in Wonsan harbor, permitting our ships to come closer and closer to the enemy guns on Hodo Pando and Kalma Gak. They accounted for 138 mines there during the summer months—more than any other three divisions had swept in any comparable period of time. Their crews, led by such fearless men as LT Walter P. Sheppard, LT Allen L. Peek, LT Louis J. Compomenosi, and LT George R. Smith, were ably conned by Desnoyers, Beaver, Schultz, Polackowitz, Lunemen, and others."

By 10 September 1951, the MSBs had completed their job at Wonsan. All that remained was a check-sweep by the AMSs. Accordingly five AMSs were readied: *Mocking Bird* (LT Sidney Smith), *Kite* (LT Lee Hadaway), *Redhead* (LT Kevah Kirshenbaum), *Gull* (LT Douglas Tuel), and *Heron* (LT E. S. Roth). LT Dale Schemerhorn in *Mocking Bird* was OTC.

The AMS sweep was commenced at first light and resulted in checking a path over 1,000 yards in width from the western tip of Sin-do, three miles farther west. This sweep was greeted by a thunderous bombardment from Communist shore batteries to the north, west, and south. The only damage during this foray came when *Redhead* struck the submerged mast of a lugger which had been sunk earlier northwest of Sin-do. *Redhead'*s starboard propeller was damaged. Fortunately she was able to recover gear and to limp out of the harbor.

The four undamaged sweepers turned for another pass. The Reds held their fire, allowing the small ships to come closer and closer. Not until the four reached the western end of their run, three miles from the nearest lee, did the Communists open fire. Sea water from the splashes drenched the sweepers. Turning eastward, the skippers "chased" the splashes to avoid hits, and escaped damage until near the sheltering lee of Sin-do Island.

Suddenly the voice radio of Heron called, "Starboard side hit."

Still the thunderous bombardment continued. *Mocking Bird* at last had the western end of Sin-do abeam, and the other ships followed her to comparative safety.

The ordeal had ended. Four mines had been swept. *Heron* had been hit on the starboard side of her bulwark by a 75-mm. point-detonating, fuzed projectile. It had showered the overhead, bulkhead, and deck with shrapnel. A few feet higher, and the 40-mm. gun crew on the forecastle might have suffered heavily. As it was, damage was insignificant.

(Later, it was learned that the Communists had thought the intensive sweeping into Wonsan was a prelude to another amphibious attack, and, as a result, had reinforced their gun batteries, evacuated civilians from areas near likely landing beaches, and redeployed some troops to meet the attack.)

Sweeping continued northward in the fall of 1951 to the relatively heavily mined harbor of Hungnam. More and more mines were swept and destroyed. And more and more enemy artillery appeared on the shore to interfere with the sweeping. Despite the heavy shore fire, as many mines were swept from 1 July to 30 September 1951 as had been swept in the whole Korean War up to that time.

"Luck, experience, and planning all played an important role," said Captain Williams.

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
Sweeping Close to the Bear's Tail

One of the most difficult clearance sweeps of 1951 was conducted from 3 November to 10 November 1951, at Chongjin, on North Korea's eastern coast, 75 miles south of Vladivostok.

"Our primary mission at Chongjin," said Captain Williams, "was to remove the mine danger inside the 50-fathom curve in order to permit bombardment ships to operate in that area at closer ranges.

"Intelligence reports concerning Chongjin painted a grim picture of the area. Beach-controlled mines were reported to be in the area, and radar contacts of high-speed patrol boats had been reported. Furthermore, the operating area was within range of enemy air—and against aircraft, the sweepers lacked adequate armament, fire control, and speed. In addition, to complicate this problem, winter with its high winds, its severe cold, its ice, and its rough seas was fast approaching."

The Chongjin sweeping operation commenced on 3 November. Twenty three contact mines were swept, eighteen of them sunk by rifle fire. One detonated as it was swept, and the remaining four were probably destroyed by 40-mm. fire, as the helicopter could find no trace of them.

"On 6 November," continued Captain Williams, "*Heron*'s sonar operator discovered a new mine line in an area that had been cleared only three days before. Eight mines were swept from previously swept waters. This was a surprise. It meant that re-mining was being done right under our very noses.

"After sweeping three days inside the 50-fathom curve and then discovering that the enemy had very recently re-mined areas previously swept, we decided to concentrate farther to seaward between the 50- and the 100-fathom curve.

"At Chongjin, the LSD *Comstock* (CDR William Winter) and the helicopter again proved indispensable; but the helicopter's effectiveness was greatly reduced by mist and sleet. It failed to spot the newly laid minefield on 6 November. The MSBs also had trouble due to rough weather. In the higher latitudes their sweeping operations should be conducted only when periods of good weather can be expected. The two DMSs—*Doyle* (DMS-34) and *Endicott* (DMS-35)—proved valuable as supporting ships at Chongjin, both because they could help to guard against re-mining and because they could make a rapid check-sweep of the area."

Despite all the hazards and difficulties encountered at Chongjin, that area was cleared of mines from the 50-fathom curve to seaward—at least temporarily.

The most significant aspect of the Chongjin sweep, however, was the clear indication that North Korean mine*layers* were endeavoring to keep pace with the UN mine*sweepers*.

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
Mine Intelligence (1951-1953)

Concrete evidence of enemy mine replanting in the Hungnam-Songjin area came on 19 November 1951 when *Ptarmigan* (LCDR Harold Durham) swept two new contact-type mines near Hungnam. Later, on 3 December 1951, *Pelican* sank a shiny new mine in the same area. Because of the newness of these mines, it was self-evident to Captain Williams that they were recent re-plants.

Such sporadic finds gave UN commanders their most dependable clues regarding enemy mining activities. Never during the course of the war was it possible to make or keep an up-to-date chart of the enemy's mining and re-mining operations. Ships were too few, intelligence too sketchy; coastlines were too extensive, the nights too black; the enemy's mining campaign was too local. Nor did the mine experts of the U.S. Navy have more than "guesstimates" of the Communist mine stockpile.

However, it was believed that the enemy had sufficient mines "to mine extensively all the ports and harbors of Korea," and that he had "built depots at Chinnampo, Chongjin, Songjin, and Hungnam."[5] It was also generally believed that his mining campaign had a two-fold purpose: first, to deter UN forces from making another amphibious landing; and second, to hamstring the operations of UN naval bombardment forces.

Intelligence reports from North Korean guerrillas, escapees, defectors, and captured fishermen were usually skimpy and had to be verified. All of the reports, however, indicated that enemy mining was being done at night, utilizing such craft as sailing junks, fishing sampans, power junks, and MTBs. One ex-Soviet minelayer was reportedly in use, but this was never verified.

Captured sampans, which had been used as minelayers, revealed that special racks constructed of heavy timbers were placed athwartship so that mines could be housed and manually rolled over the side with ease. Despite the primitive design and small payload of the sampans (even a small sampan, however, could carry two to four mines), it was possible for the enemy to pose a mining threat against a composite of the most powerful and up-to-date navies in the world.

Typical intelligence reports received by UN commanders in the spring of 1951 are reproduced from CINCFE's intelligence summaries:

"3 January: Extensive mining operations reported in Taedong channel and along shore vicinity of Chinnampo.[6]

"1 March: Enemy reported unloading Soviet sea mines from freight cars vicinity Kalma railroad station. . . .

"7 March: Kalma Railroad station reported effectively hit by fire from U.S. cruiser *Manchester*. One boxcar loaded with sea mines exploded.

"28 March: Motor boat planting mines vicinity of Wonsan. Mines planted in north-south line.

"31 March: UN naval units fired on possible mining boats in vicinity of Wonsan. COMNAVFE reports strong evidence exists that the enemy is making a determined effort to re-mine areas that have been previously swept.

"10 April: One black MTB, 13 meters long, observed in the vicinity of Chinnampo. Boat believed to be laying mines during darkness. Enemy ships reported to be laying mines vicinity 38-45N, 125-29E."

Prisoners captured by the *Douglas H. Fox* (DD-779) told a typically confusing and contradictory story of enemy minelaying activities.[7]

Information from prisoners captured on 2 May 1952 was the occasion of a report: "Mines were being

laid in April 1951 from Sinch'ang-ni to the southwest for a distance of about 2,000 yards. Prisoners rather indefinite about the number of mines, using the word 'many'."

Four days later, on 6 May 1952, prisoners captured by *Fox* stated, "There are no mines in the Sinch'ang-ni area."[8]

On 7 May, captured prisoners told *Fox*'s skipper, Commander James A. Dare, that mines were planted in Hamhung harbor. Three days later, 9 May, captured prisoners stated, "No minelaying noticed in Hungnam harbor."

Few such reports were confirmed or confirmable, but they typify the fragmentary intelligence that filtered in from South Korean guerrillas, civilian refugees, prisoners-of-war, fishermen, and defectors throughout 1951-1953.

Occasionally an intelligence report proved accurate. A North Korean Navy defector from Kojo stated: "Most mines now being laid are said to be of the anti-landing craft type. It is said that these mines are being laid in a section of the east coast where invasion is possible."

This fragment of intelligence was verified on 2 March 1952 when a new type of enemy anti-boat mine was discovered at Wonsan. Moored to explode from 18 inches to 8 feet beneath the surface, and containing 44 pounds of TNT, this comparatively small contact-type mine (only 21 inches in diameter) created the necessity for additional helicopter searching and underwater reconnaissance in suspected areas.

Positive evidence of an east coast mining effort was discovered on 18 June 1952 when *Curlew* (AMS-8) (LT R. O. Snure) recovered a mine with self-planting mechanism in Wonsan harbor. With this device the enemy apparently was using the river current to float mines into the harbor buoyed by oil drums, logs, and kegs. The mine release was a pelican-hook type mechanism that was released by a soluble washer. This discovery caused Commander Task Force 95 to declare the area near the river mouth unsafe for navigation.[8A]

The North Korean prisoners volunteered a sad story about their own navy. They said it had dwindled to nothing more than a token force, with virtually no duties to perform. In fact, large numbers of naval personnel had been transferred to the Army. None of the prisoners knew of the existence of any North Korean naval craft.

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
The *Nootka* Incident

In late September, 1952, HMCS *Nootka* (CDR Richard M. Steele, RCN), a Canadian *Tribal* class destroyer, was to have the signal honor of capturing a North Korean minelayer, the only enemy ship captured at sea during the war. On the night of 22 September, *Nootka* was southeast of Cho-do island near the Chinnampo approaches, making a patrol known as "Blackburn."

At 0223, *Nootka's* radar detected an unidentified vessel on a northerly course close inshore near Chin'-gang'-po. When off the headland to the north of this, the vessel turned and set course for the southeast tip of Cho-do. Although suspicious and worth watching closely, the radar blip was thought probably that of a friendly reconnaissance ship returning to anchorage from a nocturnal patrol.

When the unidentified vessel reached the swept channel, it changed its heading toward a customary anchorage for the "Blackburn" patrol destroyers. But its action now appeared strongly to be that of searching, and Captain Steele ordered his ship to close the suspicious craft. *Nootka* turned to give chase, and the blip on the radar screen immediately showed a new course toward the mainland. A direct chase would take *Nootka* over the area recently traversed and possibly mined by this craft, and as this seemed most unwise to Steele, *Nootka* was put on course to pass to southward and round up to intercept her.

Nootka's 29 knots did not permit interception, however, before the enemy craft had reached the protection of waters too shallow for the destroyer.

"A fruitless attempt was made to drive the vessel to seaward by firing with *Nootka's* main armament at the cliffs over their heads," said Steele. "This vessel was now fully considered to be enemy, but it was felt that its crew were much more valuable as captives than as corpses floating in the sea.

"An attempt was next made to try and capture them by armed boats, but the enemy travelled too fast and made their escape.

"By this vessel's actions and the tracks of its courses, we concluded that it was engaged in mining operations, and that the area it had worked probably contained mines.

"In reply to my signal requesting that this area be check-swept, a U.S. minesweeper (USS *Defense*) (AM-317) arrived and did a magnetic check-sweep of the area, commencing at dusk on the 27th. At midnight she messaged 'negative results' and departed for Wonsan."

Forty-six minutes later *Nootka* established contact a second time well up in the Nam-chon River. Captain Steele moved her south quietly and slowly around the end of the suspect area and closed the coast to seek any deeper darkness that the loom of the land might offer and thus prevent, as long as posible, the enemy vessel's seeing her.

When the enemy craft was well out into route "Cigarette" in the position Steele felt was the farthest she would venture, *Nootka* closed at over 30 knots and succeeded in cutting off a good-sized vessel which was frantically attempting to reach the land.

"We closed right in with a rush to try to psychologically dominate the situation in order to prevent the enemy's fighting," said Steele. "We spoke to them in Korean, informing them that any move on their part would result in their being blown to bits.

"As we drew near, we couldn't decide what we had found. It looked like a junk, but it was different. Its silhouette was low, it was whistling along at a pretty good clip, and it was making very little if any noise.

"*Nootka* was then stopped about a half cable from the enemy, and in the darkness large black objects

could just be made out dropping from her stern and floating towards us. These were assumed to be floating mines, so we backed up and put several Bofors shells into her waterline, and we then sent away our boats with assault parties. They reported the vessel deserted, and turned toward the floating objects which were then realized to be small craft containing the absconding crew.

"When close in on the first of these, *Nootka's* number one boat, using a tactic which had previously proved very successful, shone a high-powered narrow-beamed light immediately in the enemy's eyes. It disclosed a North Korean naval officer lying on a raft made of large black rubber truck tubes, with his machine gun trained on *Nootka*. Both parties opened fire together; however, with the advantage of light, number one boat had no casualties, and the Korean retreated *downward*."

The *Nootka's* boats were recalled, and the remaining enemy rafts watched on radar.

Nootka went alongside the enemy minelayer, and rather than risk sending men below in the darkness, secured several wires to a section of the vessel's deck. Then, using her 44,000-horsepower, *Nootka* ripped this section adrift to ascertain if further mines or men remained. The ship was empty. *Nootka* secured lines to her and towed her off to the westward clear of the mined area so that she might be examined at daylight.

Nootka maintained watch on the remaining crew members, and at daylight, steamed in and picked them up.

When *Nootka* closed to pick up the prisoners, they broke up their rafts and sank the tubes, and some of them tried to drown themselves. Each had been armed with a machinegun, a pistol, and a dozen grenades, which they discarded at *Nootka's* approach. Among the prisoners were two lieutenants and three chief petty officers of the North Korean Navy.

"An interesting sidelight," said Steele, "was that the first grapple we threw into the minelayer didn't hold and skidded back over the side of her bulwark. When hauled back on board *Nootka*, it was found to be hooked into a bag full of very shaky-looking hand grenades; these were very gently dropped over the side."

Later, a considerable amount of information was obtained from one of the prisoners concerning not only this mine field but also another field located considerably to the southward.

"In this instance and others where prisoners were taken by *Nootka*," said Captain Steele, "it was interesting to note the psychological reaction brought about in these men by good and kind treatment, when they expected torture. A bath, hot coffee, hot food, and other refreshment resulted, in each case, in at least one of the men becoming very talkative.

"It was noted, however, that in almost every case their first hours of evidence proved much more reliable than the stilted, revised version given by them later and which always reverted to the theme, 'I am not really a Communist. The circumstances and my environment forced me to accept the part.'"

The enemy prisoners volunteered the information that they had renewed their mining efforts on a small scale on the night of 13 September 1952, after they reactivated the mine and torpedo section at the Chinnampo Naval Base.

The torpedo section consisted of four officers and twenty enlisted men. The North Korean naval officers had received about one month's training in mine warfare at Rashin. The training syllabus consisted largely of lectures by Korean naval officers based on Korean translations of a Soviet mine manual.

The mining crew used at Chinnampo consisted of a senior lieutenant, as political officer-in-charge, plus a navigator, a junior grade lieutenant mining officer, and a half-dozen enlisted men selected for their ability to row a boat. This crew had set out from Chinnampo to the coastal port of Mongumpo, not far away, to repair a badly damaged 25-foot junk (the one *Nootka* captured) to use as a minelayer.

Nootka's prisoners stated that they had tried to build a minelaying craft that could not be heard nor seen, even by radar. Therefore, they had decided to substitute cracking good oarsmen for the junk's engine, and to reduce the junk's freeboard to within eighteen inches of the waterline, in the hope this would reduce both visual

and radar detection. Wooden longitudinal supports were installed as minelaying rails.

Actual mining operations had begun six nights later, on the night of 19 September, when two magnetic mines were laid. On the nights of the 20th, 26th, and 27th, six additional magnetic mines were planted, without benefit of navigational instruments. The navigator had taken “seaman’s eye” bearings on shore promontories by moonlight, and had assumed the speed of his craft to be about one knot.

This episode was fair proof that the Communists recognized that the west coast’s tidal range and swift currents were better suited for magnetic mines than for contact types.

A few days later USS *Chatterer* arrived in the Chinnampo area and commenced sweeping the northern mine area on 2 October.

The first mine was exploded with a great geyser of water at eight minutes past noon on that day.

The field was swept not without difficulty, for the enemy wheeled in artillery batteries and took the sweepers under heavy fire on a number of occasions.

“To watch the little sweepers lumbering out of the welter of fire at six or seven knots, retaining their invaluable sweep gear instead of slipping it,” said Captain Steele, “was inspiring to us Canadians, and built a deep respect for the tenacity and ability of the U.S. Navy’s fighting men that will long remain.

“Some of the American leaders in these sweeps were Reserves called back from comfortable, safe jobs where they had been attempting to build homes and catch up on some of the time lost in World War II—men past the age where fighting is exciting adventure.

“The vigorous actions of these men must be counted among the finest examples of leadership and patriotism, and I hope that their civilian associates have a full appreciation of how much such men contributed.”

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
UN Ships Suffer Mine Damage

Despite the enemy's constant mining and re-mining, mines caused comparatively little damage to UN naval forces from the spring of 1951 until the armistice in 1953.

On 2 February 1951 while sweeping near Yong-yang southeast of Wonsan, *Partridge* (AMS-31) (LTJG B. M. Clark) struck a floating mine and sank in less than ten minutes. Two officers and six enlisted men were killed, one officer and five enlisted men were seriously injured. *Partridge* was the fourth and last United States sweeper to be lost in the Korean War.

Sarsi (ATF-111) was sunk by a mine while on patrol off Hungnam the night of 30 August 1952. Two men were lost.

Two destroyers struck mines near Hungnam: the *Walke* (DD-723) (CDR M. F. Thompson) on 12 June 1951 and the *Small* (DD-838) (CDR F. C. Snow) on 7 October 1951. Both ships suffered extensive damage. *Walke* suffered 26 deaths; *Small* had 9 killed.

Another destroyer, the USS *Barton* (DD-722), struck a mine on 16 September 1952 approximately 90 miles east of Wonsan, while serving in the screen of Task Force 77.

Barton's skipper, Commander H. B. Seim, believed that this mine had broken loose from the Wonsan minefield when Typhoon "Karen" had blown past that area on 18 August. Vice Admiral Clark, Commander Seventh Fleet, reported 40 mines around his ships in the next several weeks. Other mines had also appeared on the surface in Wonsan harbor, and some had even washed up on the beaches.

"There were some peculiar aspects to the *Barton* mining," said CDR Seim.[9] "*Barton* was the northernmost ship of the task force, which was southbound. It was necessary for both the carriers and the destroyers directly ahead of us to steam close aboard that mine before we hit it. When the explosion came, I had just finished reading a report on a ship's vulnerability to floating mines. The report concluded that a ship making ten or more knots was safe, since the bow waves would push a floating mine aside. However, the bow wave failed to protect *Barton*, for the task force was steaming at fifteen knots!"

"The mine hit at 2115," continued Seim. "It fractured the shell plating from keel to the main deck. The forward fireroom was completely gutted and flooded. A hole 40 feet long was opened to the sea. All five men in the forward fireroom were lost. Engineroom personnel working next to the destroyed fireroom were seriously burned."

Two ROK ships were mined during this period: *JMS-306*[9A] on 6 May off Chinnampo, and *PC-704* off Yo-do island, Wonsan harbor, on the night of 26 December 1951. Twenty bodies were later recovered in the vicinity of Yo-do. ROK naval records positively state that "*PC-704* hit a mine and sank while conducting operations on east coast inside Wonsan harbor area."[10]

In company with *JMS-302*, *YMS-502*, and PF-61, ROK *JMS-306* was sent to Chinnampo to investigate enemy minelaying activities. On the morning of 6 May 1951, as soon as the thick morning fog cleared away, *JMS-306* began her reconnaissance patrol. Twenty minutes later, at 0920, she struck a mine. The blast flooded her engineroom, killed 6 of her 36-man crew, and wounded 18.

For 72 minutes, the 12 uninjured crew members fought to control the ship's flooding. Meantime, two friendly sailing vessels were called alongside for salvage of everything portable, including, said a ROK report, [11] "a considerable amount of office paper." The ship sank at 1032. Surviving crew members were transferred to *PF-61* for return to Pusan.

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
Red Artillery Versus Minesweepers

Beginning in the fall of 1951 and continuing throughout the remainder of the Korean War, more UN minesweeps were damaged by shore batteries than by mines.

"Many times," said CDR Emory E. Myers, "enemy batteries would fire at a sweep until it looked like they could not miss getting a hit with the next shell—and then for no apparent reason they would stop. This 'stop' and 'go' firing might last all day. When Red gunners got too hot, our sweepers simply cleared the area and waited for them to cool off. As a result of being frequently under fire, hardly a sweeper in Korea avoided getting hit, or having a near miss and flying shrapnel."[12]

One of the most frequently hit minesweepers was *Osprey* (AMS-28) (LT D. T. Wieland, Jr.). She caught two shells on 29 October 1951, one puncturing the top of her stack, the second striking the hull above the waterline. Only one man was seriously wounded.

Again on 23 April 1952, *Osprey* was hit by a Songjin shore battery while she and *Swallow* (AMS-36) (LTJG D. A. Rostan, USNR) spotted trains for their big steel sister, *Murrelet* (AM-372). "Night train busting, as well as being destructive, grew to be quite a sport for the little sweepers," said CDR Myers. "At night they would move in close to the beach and relay information to the larger ships as enemy trains came out of tunnels and ran along the beach. Minecraft helped knock off a number of trains in this manner."

Osprey was hit on a third occasion on 13 October 1952 as she participated in Kojo amphibious demonstrations,[12A] taking numerous fragment hits and a near miss which wounded the executive officer and three enlisted men.

The only other minesweeper to be hit as often as *Osprey* was the destroyer minesweeper *Thompson* (DMS-38). She too was hit on three separate occasions.[12B]

Other sweepers damaged were *Heron* (AMS-18) (LTJG E. S. Roth), which took one hit about six feet above her waterline on 8 September 1951, and *Competent* (AM-316) (LCDR E. A. Grant), which received near misses from an estimated 100 rounds of 122-mm. shells from a 4-gun battery on 27 August 1952. Only superficial damage was done to the latter ship and no crew members were hit.

Kite (AMS-22) (LT R. G. Zimmerman) was the target for 47 rounds of 76-mm. fire while sweeping at Wonsan on 19 November 1952. Shell fragments wounded one officer and four enlisted personnel—none seriously.

During March of 1953, three UN minesweepers were slightly damaged by enemy shore batteries near Songjin: USS *Gull* and USS *Swift* and ROK *YMS-510.*

Despite the excitement of being frequently under fire, the minesweepers logged the duels with Communist shore batteries with brevity and nonchalance. LT A. C. Sharp made the following entries in *Firecrest's* (AMS-10) log:

"1445: Ship under fire from shore battery. All engines ahead full.

"1504: Received hit on starboard side . . . shell entered messhall . . . tore up part of the deck . . . passed through lower part of refrigerator . . . glanced off ship's ventilation system . . . passed through port bulkhead into the sea.

"1505: Shell did not explode and no casualties resulted."

Firecrest's damage was subsequently repaired by the *Gunston Hall* (LSD-5) (CAPT G. T. Baker). The meddlesome enemy shore batteries were later blasted by battleship *New Jersey* (CAPT David M. Tyree) and the

destroyer *Epperson* (DDE-719) (CDR C. H. Mead).

LCDR I. M. Laird, the *Dextrous'* commanding officer, made the following entries in his log:

"1243: Manned the 3-inch gun.

"1309: Ship taken under fire from shore batteries. All hands to General Quarters. Captain took the conn.

"1310: Commenced evasive zig-zag courses at flank speed, 16 knots. Took direct hit on starboard bow.

"1312: Took direct hit on top of mast.

"1314: Numerous air bursts and near misses. Commenced dropping smoke pots (to camouflage position).

"1318: Cut loose minesweeping gear. Casualties one dead and two wounded.

"Two holes in ship—one about 12 inches in diameter and another about 6 inches in diameter. Much damage to electrical gear, radio antennas, radar, signal halyards, and the port truck light missing."

LCDR Laird's defensive maneuver was basic doctrine for minesweepers. When possible, they opened fire on enemy shore batteries, calling for fire support when this was available. They cranked on flank speed; they cut their sweep gear, zig-zagged, and used smoke to complicate the enemy's target solution.

"One more maneuver might be added," said Laird. "When a flash from a shore battery showed us that one was on the way, we changed course immediately—and then spent 20 or 30 seconds, depending on the range, hoping we hadn't zigged when we should have zagged."

Smoke was particularly effective when produced in sufficient quantity to conceal completely the minesweeper's evasive maneuvering.

Merganser's skipper, LT E. A. May, developed a smokemaking experiment that was promptly adopted by all the sweep skippers. May inducted diesel oil directly into the main engine muffler, which caused heavy white smoke to pour out of the stack. "The beauty of making smoke in this manner," said LT May, "was that it involved only one motion to open one valve in the engineroom, and smoke poured out when it was needed."

While this procedure was never approved by the Bureau of Ships, Captain Williams recommended that it be allowed as an emergency measure. Sweepers continued to use the "May method" when in desperate circumstances, concluding that the oil would do less damage to their engines than might be done by the shore batteries. Actually, no ship ever had a fire or damage to its engines, even though the method was used many times.

BuShips prescribed a smoke-making procedure for minesweepers involving the use of small smoke pots that could be quickly lit off and either carried on the stern or dumped over the side. The sweepers, however, found the pots too slow in producing smoke. By the time the smoke became effective, the ship was either out of danger or had been hit.

The accuracy of enemy shore batteries highlighted the importance of counterbattery gunfire support. Few destroyer skippers had experienced minesweeper support duty prior to their Korean assignment, and no prescribed method for gunfire support of sweepers existed at the outbreak of the Korean war.

Zeal's commanding officer (LT F. H. Sonntag) stated the problem succinctly in his action report.[13] "There is no basic doctrine in regard to gunfire support by destroyer types when supporting minesweepers in areas where there are known shore batteries. The decision at present seems to rest with the commanding officer of the ship providing support. This officer has seen support ships follow the inshore minesweep float . . . and thus be closer to the beach than the minesweeper. Other vessels remain . . . to seaward of the sweeper. It is recommended that a study be made of the best support positions when various combinations of vessels are involved. Fire support ships should also be apprised of the fact that in an emergency they can pass between the minesweeper and its float without fouling."[13A]

Each fire support skipper positioned his ship in accordance with his best judgment. Some ships gave excellent fire support by following in the wake of the minesweep and then positioning themselves between the enemy shore batteries and the friendly minesweep. Other fire support ships kept well out to sea beyond the

minesweepers, and in some instances the minesweepers were caught between the fire support ships and the shore batteries. Understandably, the minesweepers preferred to have the fire support ships as close as possible to the target.

One destroyer skipper whose ship supported the minesweepers for 33 days inside Wonsan harbor was *Barton's* CDR H. B. Seim.

Seim believed it was a sounder policy for the destroyers to steam abreast but *outboard* of the minesweepers rather than try to trail them. "This was particularly true inside Wonsan," said Seim, "where maneuvering room was restricted both for the minesweeper and for the destroyer. All we could do was 'figure-eight'. We wound up our batteries on one loop and unwound them on the next."

A similar fire support plan was used by the skipper of USS *Douglas H. Fox* (DD-779) (Commander James A. Dare), whose results were enthusiastically endorsed both by the minesweeper *Murrelet* and by Commander Mine Forces Pacific.

Following *Fox's* smothering fire[14] in support of *Swallow* (AMS-36) and *Murrelet* (AM-372) northeast of Lighthouse point at Hungnam, *Murrelet* sent the following message:

"'From USS *Murrelet:* Action USS *D. H. Fox:* 13/0542Z: All gunfire support ships could take lessons from you X It has been a real pleasure to work with you BT.'

"*Fox* answered: 'From USS *D. H. Fox:* Action USS *Murrelet:* 13/0555Z: Thank you X Your three-inch gunner is the sharpest I have seen X Will swap you even for one gun department BT'."

Fox's skipper, Commander Dare, explained that "this burst of mutual admiration followed several days of sweeping the area from Cha-ho to Hung-nam in which we had a few altercations with shore guns. Our sweep support plan went like this: First, the senior sweep would deliver his overlay of the swept area so we would both be using the same ground rules. I would then put the *Fox* in a position about 400 yards ahead and 10° relative to seaward of the leading sweep. *Fox* probed ahead with 5-inch and inshore with three barrels of single shot 40-mm. (or one 5-inch when ranges were over 3,000 yards). The sweeps would each take inshore targets with 3-inch and 20-mm. This worked well inasmuch as the *Fox* always drew any fire received, and the sweeps could turn across our wake to get sea room.

"When we operated this way, steaming along the coast, I always felt like one of the bad guys in a western movie riding into town with pistols banging in all directions. By looking ahead with the 20-power binoculars you could actually see North Koreans running for the hills and tunnels."

Dare's support plan had the hearty endorsement of Commander Mine Forces Pacific, Rear Admiral J. A. Snackenberg. In a dispatch to *Douglas H. Fox* on 14 May 1952, ComMinPac stated, "I have been informed by my ships that you have consistently supported them with extremely close and effective gunfire. I would like to extend to the officers and men of the *Douglas H. Fox* the appreciation of both myself and Mine Forces Pacific."

Despite the harassing effect and threat of enemy shore guns, all the sweepers continued to do their work cheerfully and aggressively, nor did they lose their sense of humor.

For example, when Mine Squadron Three's flagship, the USS *Cabildo* (LSD-16), was hit inside Wonsan harbor while recovering her small sweep boats, Captain Herald F. Stout issued a purple heart to the ship. In the citation, Captain Stout stated:

"While recovering minesweep boats with her back flap down, the enemy directed approximately ten rounds at her middle body in a most unsporting and ungentlemanly manner, scoring one direct hit which penetrated her number two deck level causing unauthorized ventilation of decks, stacks, living spaces and personal effects. Coolly disregarding this affront to the dignity and personal privacy, by an unseen but not unfelt foe, *Cabildo* went through in good order and with excellent speed."

Captain Stout postscripted the citation by stating that "the facts set forth in the enclosed citation are personally known to me and only too well." The enemy shell had landed above the well deck within a few feet of

Commander Mine Squadron Three.

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
Minesweeping by Moonlight

The importance of night minesweeping was greatly increased in Korea on 15 October 1952 during the amphibious feint at Kojo, an east coast city 25 miles southeast of Wonsan and 35 miles north of the battlefront.

The minesweepers arrived off Kojo on D-minus-three Day, but due to high winds and heavy seas they were unable to commence operations until morning twilight of 13 October.

Five shallow-sweep boats made the initial run. As they closed to within 1,500 yards of the beach, heavy shore battery fire was received. So intense and accurate was the enemy's artillery and machinegun fire that only the three leading sweeps were able to complete the first pass. The two boats bringing up the rear cut their sweep gear and scampered for the open sea.

Later in the day, the three AMSs, with the direct gunfire support of two U.S. destroyers, tried to sweep the area once again.

Although the destroyer gunfire support was reported as "excellent", it was not sufficient to silence the enemy guns. Both minesweeper *Osprey* and destroyer *Perkins* were lightly damaged. *Perkins,* in fact, suffered one killed and 17 wounded from two near misses which sprayed the destroyer with shrapnel.

At sunrise the next day, 14 October, the three AMSs once more tried to clear a channel. Once again heavy gunfire drove them away, this time before they could reach the sweeping area. So concentrated and accurate was the enemy gunfire that on 15 October daytime sweeping was declared a failure. If any further sweeping was done at Kojo it would have to be accomplished under the cover of darkness.

Only one more night—14-15 October—remained, but the sweep was finished that night. Fortunately, no mines were found.

The daytime failure at Kojo, and the ever increasing enemy gunfire along the northeast coast, pointed up the need for night minesweeping. Henceforth much, if not all, minesweeping in Korean waters would have to be done at night. Night sweeping had been done during World War II, but the technique had not been practiced since. There was urgent need, therefore, to become familiar again with the doctrine of night sweeping—particularly for formation sweeping prior to amphibious assaults.

The skipper of the minesweeper *Shoveler* (AM-382) (LT C. J. Casserly) recommended: (1) that night minesweeping doctrines be restudied and more fully developed; (2) that a positive means of determining mine contact with sweep wire be investigated; and (3) that methods of illumination or marking location of mines swept at night be investigated.

He further suggested that such things as underwater pyrotechnics, night-visible dye and grapnels might help in locating mines, once they had been swept.

But night minesweeping, although in less danger from enemy guns, was more difficult than day operations for numerous reasons:

First, navigation at night was more difficult, as was accurate charting of areas swept. Tide and current might cause either sweeping holidays or duplication of sweeping.

Second, mine destruction and mine buoying were more difficult at night.

Third, minesweeping at night increased the hazard to all ships following astern the lead sweepers.

Fourth, dozens of fishing sampans frequented the Korean coasts at night. There was always the danger that one of them might be involved in more than fishing.

"As the Korean war drew to a close, the AMs were doing all of their inshore sweeping at night,"[15] said

LCDR E. E. Hollyfield, Jr., commanding officer of the USS *Symbol* (AM-123). “On the east coast the AMs were responsible for check sweeping the coast from the bombline to just north of Yang-do, a distance of approximately 227 miles. We streamed our gear out of shore battery range at dusk and then just at good dark we closed the beach and commenced sweeping. We swept parallel to the coast in one direction as far as we could get before daybreak the following morning, usually a distance of about sixty to seventy miles. Sometimes during the night our tracks would come within five hundred yards of the beach. Just prior to daybreak we would proceed to seaward to recover our gear out of shore battery range. With any sea at all, we never knew what, if anything, we had swept during the night. Therefore, after daybreak, we would run a fast surveillance patrol back through the area we had swept. Floaters were found from time to time in the swept areas indicating either that we had cut mines or that some had broken their moorings during the night.

“The worst night minesweeping problem north of the 38th parallel was the sampans always ahead of us,” continued Hollyfield. “We knew the North Koreans were starving and needed to fish; yet, we never knew whether the blacked-out sampans ahead were loaded with fishing gear or with mines.”

On such check-sweeps, Hollyfield strongly recommended against sweepers making reverse passes at night for fear of running into mines that might have been cut.

“Not only did the AMSs sweep closer inshore,” said Hollyfield, “but often they reversed course at night and that is a tricky business even for experts.”

Another AM skipper, LCDR A. G. Russillo, commanding officer of USS *Toucan* (AM-387), said, “The difficulty with night sweeping was that we never really knew how well we were doing. After we cut them, we had a destruction problem. In rough water our radar couldn’t find them. A swept mine on the surface that can’t be seen is as dangerous as a mine that still holds its moorings. We didn’t know if we were endangering and complicating the problems of the sweeper following us. It was really a tough proposition on the west coast, with all its navigational hazards. The ‘J’ factor increased terrifically at night. Yet, as far as we know, night sweeping *was* effective.”

“But Korean night sweeping with all its headaches was never as bad as night sweeping at Anzio,” said CDR Myers, who had skippered minesweeper *YMS-13* during that World War II operation. “At Anzio,” said Myers, “we were opposed both by accurate shore batteries and constant aerial attack. Had we confronted the Anzio type of opposition in Korea, both our sweeping problems and our support problems would have been multiplied.”

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
Minesweepers Prove Versatile

In addition to their Korean minesweeping chores, which by the end of hostilities had accounted for a grand total of 1,088 mines swept, mine craft made other significant contributions to the over-all military effort.

By May of 1952 the minesweepers had been given duties other than sweeping port approaches, harbors, channels and island defense areas, gunfire support areas, coastal patrol and gun interdiction areas. They had been directed to perform such varied tasks as providing "flycatchers"[15A] to safeguard swept areas, making continuous studies of enemy mining methods, gathering and disseminating mine intelligence, training Republic of Korea naval minesweeping forces, and training Republic of Korea naval liaison officers how to render sea-air rescue assistance.

As their sweeping ended, mine craft performed pilot rescue missions comparable to those performed by U.S. submarines during the late phases of World War II. *Symbol* rescued a friendly pilot near Hungham on 19 June 1953, and *Dextrous* picked one up in the same area on 23 May 1953. *Ruddy* rescued three airmen from a ditched B-26 near the west coast island of Cho-do on 1 July.

Capturing enemy sampans and prisoners also provided minesweepers a welcome break in the sweeping routine. On 7 May 1952, the *Ptarmigan* (AM-376) reported the capture of five sampans and twenty-five prisoners between Hungnam and Mayang-do.

On 10 May 1952, *Murrelet* (AM-372) reported the capture of a total of six sampans and twenty-six North Korean prisoners. The "prisoner" ages ranged from 41 to 57. All were fishermen from the village of Kwandong-ni and reported they had very little food and that influenza, for which there was no medicine, existed among the children. The prisoners also stated that civilians were not permitted to travel between towns, and that no trains had been heard on the coastal line for some months.

The destroyer minesweeper *Endicott* (DMS-35) achieved distinction by scoring heavy damage against several trains during the train interdiction operation. This performance elevated *Endicott* into the distinguished membership of the "Trainbuster's Club."[15B]

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)
Check-Sweeping Replaces Clearance Sweeping

In June 1952 the decision was made by Admiral Gingrich to limit anti-mine operations to check-sweeping areas already cleared, and to discontinue clearance sweeping of new areas. Hereafter, minesweeping operations became stable and routine.

Minesweepers continued to move up and down both Korean coasts, checking anchorages, bombardment areas, and channels for renewed mining efforts.

On the east coast, the anti-mine ships regularly swept the bombardment area from Suwon-dan, near the southern tip of Korea, to Musu-dan, near the Manchurian border. East coast minesweepers kept an estimated 270 square miles of harbor and anchorage areas mine-free, and swept all mineable waters to seaward of a coastal sweep line about 300 miles in length.

On the west coast, the Chinnampo channel was one-and-a-half miles wide and an estimated 70 miles long. The Haeju estuary channel was 73 miles long. Inchon's Flying Fish Channel was 61 miles in length, Mokpo nearly 73 miles. Counting channels, anchorages, and ports, west coast sweepers had to continuously check-sweep more than 337 square miles of water.

The decision to discontinue clearance sweeps and henceforth to limit the antimine effort to check-sweeping, diminished the mine menace during the remainder of the war.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)

Post-Armistice Minesweeping

After the armistice on 27 July 1953, minesweeping on the east coast was discontinued. On the west coast, however, minesweeping continued on a routine basis in the areas around Inchon, Haeju, and Gazan until 10 September 1953.

In place of sweeping, the minesweepers served as patrol ships on both coasts in order to survey enemy coastal traffic, to maintain surveillance over the large POW camps on Cheju-do, and to protect friendly shipping and fishing from piracy south of the demarcation line.

Commander Task Force 95 (Rear Admiral C. E. Olsen) took stringent precautions against any possible enemy allegations that UN ships were violating the truce terms. He directed that:

"(1) All ROK naval vessels remain south of the demarcation line; and after 15 August 1953, all UN ships remain south of the demarcation line;

"(2) No suspicious looking craft be visited or searched;

"(3) All UN ships take evasive action rather than return the fire of enemy guns."

At the time of the armistice, it was not known whether the Communists planned to clear the minefields they had planted or not. On 9 October 1953, however, a Joint Armistice Team reported that North Koreans had started to sweep north of the demarcation line. Even so, the danger of Soviet-built mines in Korean waters was destined to remain for some time. In August of 1953, Vice Admiral Robert P. Briscoe, COMNAVFE, issued a mine warning in the form of a Hydropac[15C] that waters north of the demarcation line had not been swept since 27 July. Ships entering this area would do so at their own risk. Briscoe also stated that moored mines had a pronounced tendency to walk seaward, and that heavy weather caused mines to part their moorings and become "floaters." Furthermore, he pointed out that there was always the possibility that the enemy would decide to re-mine some of the swept areas north of the demarcation line.

From 27 July 1953 until 1 January 1954, only one mine was encountered—an old floater estimated to have been in the water for about two years.

The sudden absence of floating mines following the armistice seemed to indicate that some of the floating mines encountered during hostilities actually were "drifters"—drifting by *design* rather than by *accident.*

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Chapter 7. The Battle of the Mines (Part III—1951-1953)

Significance

The mine war in Korea is rich with significance and lessons.

One of the most important results of the three-year anti-mine war was to highlight the importance of intelligence.

The relation and importance of good intelligence to effective mine countermeasures is, as demonstrated in Korea, of immeasurable value. Mines that can be located and destroyed *prior* to planting do not require sweeping. Similarly, the destruction of minelaying facilities limits the number of mines that can be planted. Accurate intelligence as to location and composition of minefields makes the mine countermeasures problem relatively simple. It may permit avoidance of the minefield if conditions are not favorable for minesweeping.

Prompt intelligence and *accurate* intelligence are prerequisites of successful mine warfare operations.

The Korean war taught much with regard to U.S. Navy minesweeping *ships* and minesweeping equipment. All types of minesweepers were employed in Korea. The DMS proved useful in waters along the northeast coast, but remained of dubious value as a versatile minesweeper. The most capable all-around sweeper, despite her limited cruising radius, inadequate communication, and critical stability, was the 136-foot wooden AMS. She could sweep both in deep and shallow areas, and she offered a small target to the enemy; she was durable and economical to operate. The 220-foot AM proved invaluable for off-shore sweeping. She was fast. She provided a stable gunnery platform and carried good navigational equipment; she had ample space accommodations to function as a lead ship and flagship. Since only two such vessels, the *Redstart* and *Dextrous,* were in the Far East in the spring of 1951, their schedules were arranged so that one of them could be in the combat area at all times.[16]

The use of an LST as a logistics support ship, helicopter platform and mining headquarters greatly enhanced the mobility of the minesweeping task group. However, the LST did not make as good a mothership as the LSD. Launching and recovery of boats via the LST's ramp were extremely slow and, except under the most favorable weather conditions, hazardous both to crews and boats. In its place, the LSD proved to be ideal both as a mothership for small boat sweeps and as a means of supplying and supporting the larger sweepers.

Innovations to countermine warfare developed during Korean operations were the minehunting helicopters and patrol squadrons (PBMs) and the aerial bombing of the minefield.

In regard to *equipment,* the same underwater object-locator gear and the same type of sonar used in World War II to detect moored mines were used again during the Korean war. The equipment for sweeping moored mines and detonating magnetic and acoustic mines had not been improved.

Regarding the U.S. Navy mine *operations* in the Korean war, there was no significant change in technique from World War II methods. The mine countermeasures we used in Korean waters in 1953 were of 1943 vintage.

The virtually unsweepable pressure, pressure-magnetic, and pressure-acoustic mines remained the same serious threat as in World War II. Therefore, it is concluded that UN forces were fortunate in that, except for the use of the magnetic mine, the enemy employed only World War I and World War II type mines, and these were mainly simple contact types. Had they used even combination magnetic-acoustic mines, the task of minesweeping would have been increased one hundred fold.

It must be concluded, therefore, that in the perpetual race between the development of mines and mine countermeasures, the mine has maintained the commanding lead that it gained during World War II.

The Korean War also gave new insight into the capability of the Communists in the mine warfare field of naval operations. The Soviet-sponsored minelaying in Korea alerted the U.S. Navy to the need of research, development, and production of adequate countermeasures. In recognition of this fact, the mine type command was reestablished at Pearl Harbor under Rear Admiral John M. Higgins on 3 January 1951.

Shortly after taking command, Admiral Higgins made a statement with regard to the Korean mine operations that should be read frequently by the officers and men of the U.S. Navy.

"It is obvious from the mine warfare we have been engaged in during the Korean action," said Higgins, "that these deadly weapons can and will be effectively employed by any enemy we may face in the future.

"It is a basic fact that any small maritime nation, with only elementary transportation facilities, little technical experience, and a minimum of improvised equipment, can deny the use of its ports and the shallow waters along its coast to a large, modern naval force at little cost to itself, simply by the extensive laying of even elementary types of mines."[17]

By 22 August 1953, the United States Navy had ordered 125 new minesweepers of various sizes, shapes, and descriptions. Many were wooden-hulled to minimize their magnetic field. It may seem curious that the nation then in the process of building the world's first nuclear-powered submarine was at the same time building wooden fighting ships of laminated white oak—but such is the nature of modern naval warfare.

There was one residual result of the mine war in Korea. It was to make mine warfare a more dependable career specialty in the United States Navy. For, as Rear Admiral Charles B. Momsen stated: "Of one point we can be sure; if war comes, the enemy will use mines on us on a big scale. No nation in history has ever used enough mines of the right kind."

A most significant conclusion about mine warfare in the Korean war is the fact that the Communist enemy, by the use of obsolescent moored mines and magnetic mines laid by primitive means, was able to cause considerable damage to UN ships and interference to UN operations. The enemy's mining effort was entirely defensive in character, limited and local. Even so, the danger of mines kept UN vessels outside the 100-fathom curve "except in swept areas." Had a full-scale enemy offensive and defensive mining effort, using the latest type mines and the most modern methods of planting mines, been made, the task of prosecuting the war in Korea would have been vastly more costly and difficult.

The transcendent mine warfare lesson to be learned in Korea was the continuing need for battle readiness. The U.S. Navy lacked readiness on 25 June 1950. As the war progressed, readiness improved.

Prior to May 1951, about 200 mines were swept at a cost of 5 sweepers sunk. From May to December 1951, 700 were swept with no loss of sweepers. This proves that with more equipment and increasing experience, the U.S. Navy developed better techniques, effectiveness, and safety. At the same time the enemy got a good look at U.S. countermeasures. His successful use of mines in Korea portends use elsewhere.

The U.S. Navy must prepare itself for future mine threats.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle

Introduction

In early November 1950, as the Chinese entered the war in force, the aircraft carriers of Task Force 77 were given a unique and unfamiliar role: to participate in a campaign to isolate a battlefield. Specifically, the Navy was given two initial tasks: (1) to destroy the six major Yalu River bridges of the seventeen which linked Manchuria and North Korea; and (2) to perform armed reconnaissance[1] in the eastern half of northeast Korea (specifically, east of 127° E).

This was the beginning of twenty months of effort by the aircraft carriers of Task Force 77 to strangle the supply lines of the enemy. Throughout this campaign, the striking power of carriers supplemented that of the surface ships and escort carriers of the blockade force, the aircraft of the U.S. Fifth Air Force in Korea, the First Marine Air Wing, and the other segments of the UN air forces in Korea. In effect, the task of air power—both land and sea-based—during these twenty months was to sever the Korean peninsula at the Yalu and Tumen rivers, to undercut the peninsula, and to float the entire land mass out into mid-ocean where interdiction,[1A] in concert with a naval blockade, could strangle the supply lines of the Communists and thereby force their retreat and defeat.

The problem for the carriers of Task Force 77 was simply this: How could they, operating an average of 150 naval aircraft in the northeast area of Korea three days out of four, hinder (and if possible prevent) the movement of enemy supplies through an area the size of the state of Minnesota, opposed by an energetic and ingenious enemy operating some 6,000 to 8,000 trucks and hundreds of trains, dispersing and camouflaging his supplies, working only at night and opposing our air attacks with the ever-increasing antiaircraft fire?

The account of this heruclean effort, the successes attained by the Navy, and the ingenuity and energy which our aviators displayed, plus an analysis of why air power failed to isolate the battlefield, are profitable studies for every student of naval warfare and military operations.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
The Naval Air Attacks Upon the Yalu River Bridges (8-30 November 1950)

During the month of October 1950, disturbing and increasingly frequent reports were received at UN headquarters in Tokyo regarding the entry of Chinese Communist forces into Korea. More than 400,000 Red Chinese troops were reported to be on the Manchurian side of the Yalu River; some Chinese Army units were known to have crossed the international boundary as early as 16 October, although how many and for what purpose was not known. Some thought the Communists were only sending enough "volunteer" troops into North Korea to permit the retreat and rescue of the badly-shattered remnants of the North Korean Army, or perhaps to protect the Yalu hydroelectric plants. Others believed that full-scale Chinese Communist intervention was imminent. The Chinese radio in Peking had said as much, warning that their forces would enter Korea if UN forces crossed the 38th parallel.

The northward advance of UN forces across the 38th parallel began on 7-8 October. Enemy resistance at first was light and sporadic. By 24 October, however, determined resistance was encountered all along the front, especially by ROK units in the east. The Seventh Regiment of the ROK Sixth Division, after reaching the Yalu River at Chosan, suddenly found itself surrounded and cut off on 26 October. Relief elements of the ROK II Corps met strong attacks near Onjong and Usan by forces including Chinese troops. If further evidence of the intervention of Chinese forces was needed, the First Cavalry Division was surprised and suffered severe casualties on the night of 1-2 November when a strong contingent of Chinese horsemen[1B] attacked its position. From captured prisoners, four Red Chinese armies were identified.

In the air, meanwhile, reconnaissance revealed that Communist reinforcements and supplies were steadily streaming across the Yalu River bridges into North Korea. On five occasions, antiaircraft guns on the Manchurian side of the river fired at UN aircraft. Russian-built MIG-15 aircraft appeared over the Yalu for the first time on 1 November and fired at UN aircraft.

In the face of this evidence of Chinese Communist intervention and intent, an earlier JCS directive which had forbidden air attacks within five miles of the international boundary was rescinded. Attacks on the temporary North Korean capital, Sinuiju, and on the Korean terminals of the Yalu River bridges were now authorized.[1C]

Vice Admiral Struble received the following despatch from Vice Admiral Joy in the early hours of 8 November:

"General MacArthur considers it urgent that the first overwater span on the Korean side of all international bridges along the Yalu and Tumen Rivers be destroyed because of the heavy use by the enemy to supply their forces in Korea. The Manchurian territory and air space under no circumstances must not, repeat *not*, be violated. You have been assigned the mission of attacking the two bridges near Chongsongjin. The Air Force is fully committed in the area of Sinuiju."

Had there been time for reflection, the assignment given the carrier task force on 8 November 1950 to destroy the Yalu River bridges would have given satisfaction to those naval aviators who had long contended that the United States had vital need of the inherent precision of the fast carrier task force. Here was a request from an Air Force command asking for assistance in destroying strategic-type targets which required the delivery of large bombs with low-level, pinpoint accuracy. General MacArthur's orders to VADM Joy had been limited. He was not to attack the bridges, but only the first overwater *span* of the bridges *on the Korean side*. Many of the Yalu bridges, therefore, could not be attacked by B-29s; to do so would force the high-flying planes to violate the Manchurian sanctuary. Moreover, high-level bombing required a "run-in" of sufficient distance to obtain a

bombsight solution. In obtaining it, the B-29s would have to fly across some of the loops and bends in the winding Yalu, part of each bend and loop being Chinese territory. For the same reason, fighter protection could not be given to the B-29s even by day; and night-bombing attacks against such precise targets were out of the question. It was too much to expect that some of their bombs might not accidentally fall on the wrong side of the river.

The imposed restrictions did not increase the effectiveness of the naval aircraft attacks, either. Each pilot was personally read Admiral Joy's despatch which ordered that "zeal in prosecuting these attacks shall not result in border or air space violations." The naval pilots were ordered *not to fly over Manchuria;* furthermore, they were ordered *not to fire upon or bomb the antiaircraft guns on the Chinese side of the river*. And most certainly they could *not pursue an attacking MIG* back over Chinese territory ("hot pursuit").

The effect of these restrictions was to require that the naval aircraft make their dive-bombing runs *perpendicular* to the bridges rather than *parallel* to them as good tactics would require. The prospect of a hit was thereby greatly reduced. Psychologically, too, the condition of being under fire and unable to fire back was not conducive to the best marksmanship. To many of the airmen, attacks on the Yalu bridges were closely akin to running a gauntlet.

Admiral Joy summarized the problem in a despatch to all the aviators:

"The hazards involved in employing aircraft in precision attacks on small targets protected by intense, well-directed antiaircraft fire which cannot be attacked, as well as by enemy planes flying in the haven of neutral territory, except when the enemy chooses to attack, are tremendous. These factors were gravely considered by General MacArthur before he requested the Navy to take out the bridges. We all recognize that enemy reinforcements and supplies are coming over those bridges now, and will continue to pour into North Korea until the bridges are down. Carrier aircraft alone can make these precision air attacks. Our Government has decided that we cannot violate the air space over Manchuria or attack on Manchurian territory regardless of the provocation. If such attacks were made, the world might be thrown into the holocaust of a third world war. Our naval pilots have been given a most difficult task. May God be with them as they accomplish it."

Despite all the restrictions and hazards, the attacks of the naval aircraft were to prove effective—as will be seen.

The winding Yalu River (not to be confused with China's Yellow River), forms three-fifths of the boundary between Korea and Manchuria. It has its origin in the Chang Pai Mountains in Manchuria. From its source the Yalu runs 30 miles southward to the vicinity of Hyesanjin, thence southwestward for 450 miles through heavily forested hills to the Yellow Sea.

At its mouth, the river is more than 3,000 feet wide, and at average low tide its channel is 12 feet deep. In spring, summer, and early fall, the river is navigable by ships of under 1,000 tons as far as the Sinuiju-Antung area; but in wintertime, from late November to early April, the entire river freezes solid, except its salt water mouth.

Along both banks of the Yalu River in prewar days were lumber, paper, and iron mills, in addition to the large hydroelectric plant near Antung and other industries.

But the key military targets of the Yalu were the 17 bridges crossing the river, 6 of them major ones. The most important two were the twin 3,098 foot long railroad and highway bridges connecting Antung and Sinuiju. The highway bridge, a structure built by the American Bridge Company in 1910, consisted of 12 spans set on stone piers. The double-tracked rail bridge, only 1,000 feet to the north, was built by the Tokyo Yokogawa Bridge Company and the Osaka Train Manufacturing Company. Other important bridges were located at Manpojin, Hyesanjin, Chongsongjin, and Kanggu.

Click here to view map

For carrier aircraft operating from Korea's *east coast* to strike the main bridges at Sinuiju on the *west*

coast would require an overland, long-range flight (225 miles) above treacherous mountains, with the additional handicap of the oncoming bad weather of winter.

These were the Navy's targets.

Three carriers were available to make the Yalu bridge attacks: *Valley Forge, Philippine Sea,* and *Leyte;* the latter lately arrived from the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean on 3 October 1950, after an 18,500 mile journey at an average speed of 22 knots to demonstrate afresh the mobility of the carrier base and the rapid concentration of naval power.

The strike group of each carrier for these bridge attacks would be a basic element of 8 AD Skyraiders, each of them carrying two 1,000-pound bombs (although occasionally one 2,000-pound bomb), plus full belts of 20-mm. Ammunition. The F4U Corsair fighter-bombers would carry various loads: eight 5-inch rockets or eight 100-pound bombs (for flak-suppression of the enemy guns on the Korean side of the river); or a 500-pound bomb and six 5-inch rockets (a few carried the large 11-inch Tiny Tim rocket). As few as 8 or as many as 16 Corsairs would be scheduled for each ship's strike group.

As for the F9F2 Panther jets, there would be at least 8 of them, and frequently as many as 16 per strike group, to give high cover protection above the bombers and fighter-bombers.

Thus, each strike group from the carrier consisted of at least 24 aircraft, although many consisted of 40 aircraft.

Because of their faster speed, the jets would take off separately and later. The jets would depart the carriers in three flights—the first flight 50 minutes after the "props,"[1D] the second and third at subsequent 15-minute intervals. Well before the bridges were reached, the first relay of jets would overtake and accompany the props in; the second flight would give protection while over the target; the third would escort the strike group out.

Between the 9th and 21st of November, naval aircraft made a total of 593 sorties on the Yalu River bridges, dropping 232 tons of 500-pound, 1,000-pound, and 2,000-pound bombs.

For the purposes of description, the comments of the commanding officer, VF-53, *Valley Forge* (LCDR W. R. Pittman) are recorded for one of the first strikes on the Sinuiju bridges, on 12 November 1950:

"The *Valley Forge* attack group was composed of 16 F4U-4Bs, 12 ADs, and 8 F9Fs. I was strike leader, and had been ordered to follow the attack of *Philippine Sea's* strike group. The *Leyte's* group would follow us.

"As we neared Sinuiju, our F9Fs, led by LCDR H. J. Boydstun (VF-52) reported by radio that he would be overhead in five minutes. LT M. R. Gallaher, of VA-55, led the Skyraiders.

"Our target was the southern Sinuiju bridge, Korean side. The weather was poor, visibility low, and overcast conditions prevailed along our entire route from the east coast to the target. Fortunately, over Sinuiju itself it began to clear.

"Since the *Valley Forge* group arrived prior to the two other carrier groups, I was ordered by the target coordinator to continue in first. Our jets took a position ahead and well above us. At this stage of the war, we propeller pilots were increasingly thankful (and not a little envious) of the jets. They were our only protection against the MIGs.

"The coordination proceeded smoothly. We reached our pushover point, which had been selected so as not to cross the border. During the entry into the dive, I saw four MIGs take off from the nearby field of Antung, which was clearly visible.

"The plan was for the first eight Corsairs to strike the Korean AA positions, followed by eight additional F4Us dropping 500-pound VT-fuzed bombs. Then the Skyraiders were to drop their loads of bombs on the bridge. We had always been very successful in knocking out the AA mission by this method (by this time every pilot in my squadron had fifty missions over Korea).

"Our entire group went through this plan, and good hits were observed."[2]

The three carriers sent off attacks on the Yalu bridges on 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 21 November,

with a few additional flights until the end of November. The pilots began to notice that the antiaircraft fire from the Manchurian side of the river was increasing, while that on the Korean side was diminishing.

"With no elation," said LCDR H. M. Sisk, executive officer of VF-33, "our photo intelligence revealed that the enemy guns were being moved from the *south* side of the Yalu River, where we *could* hit them, to the north side, where we *couldn't.* The Reds were alert to recognize and take advantage of our self-imposed restriction. We even noticed that while the guns on the Korean side of the river were well camouflaged, the ones on the Chinese side were not.

"The *Leyte's* attack aircraft achieved several hits," said Sisk, "but I believe we might have done even better if we had used more of the larger bombs. As it was, it was frustrating to penetrate the flak, get a direct hit—and then discover your bomb had knocked out only a few supporting bridge members."[3]

It was during the Yalu bridge attacks that naval pilots first succeeded in downing MIGs.[3A] On the initial attack on 9 November, a pilot from the *Philippine Sea,* LCDR W. T. Amen, commanding officer of VF-112, was credited with the destruction of the first MIG. The second kill was credited to a pilot from *Valley Forge,* LCDR William E. Lamb, commanding officer, VF-52; and the third to Ensign F. C. Weber, VF-31 of the *Leyte.* Not a single naval jet was lost or damaged.

The initial engagement with the MIGs produced one of the best stories of the war. Commander A. D. Pollock, Commanding Officer of VF-51, a *Valley Forge* Panther squadron, was surrounded by his pilots upon his return to the ready room.

"Were you nervous about those MIGs, Dave?" his pilots queried.

"No, I was just keeping an eye on them," replied Pollock.

"Then why did you report *20,000* MIGs coming in at *five* feet?" his pilots asked him.

The Panther pilots reported that the MIGs had a better rate of climb, greater speed, a shorter turning radius, and better maneuverability than our own planes—but the superior training, teamwork, and marksmanship of the naval airmen more than eradicated these enemy advantages.

While the attacks of the carriers upon the Yalu bridges were considered successful, especially so in the face of the imposed restrictions (the highway bridge at Sinuiju and the two bridges at Hyesanjin were dropped and four others were damaged), and undoubtedly slowed the enemy's advance, the subsequent heavy attacks by the Chinese armies upon the UN forces, commencing on 24 November 1950, made it obvious that the Chinese, with ample forces, equipment, and supplies had been able to enter North Korea.[3B]

On 29 November, therefore, the primary mission of the carriers was changed to close air support. The preliminaries for the Hungnam evacuation were on, and the First Marine Division, deep in North Korea, was in need of the aid of the firepower of every airplane that could be brought to its support.

And by now the Yalu River was beginning to freeze. Even if the carriers had been able to continue the bridge attacks, the Chinese would soon be able to cross the river at any point on the heavy ice.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle East Coast Bridge Busting

On Christmas Day 1950, as the UN forces departed Hungnam, Vice Admiral Struble dispatched Major General E. E. Partridge, Commanding General, Far Eastern Air Force, to propose that the services of the fast carriers be utilized in close air support missions on the eastern flank of the Eighth Army.

Partridge replied on the 29th of December that General Ridgway desired the Navy to interdict the "east coastal road from the bombline as far north as practicable."

This role of interdiction for the carriers was further spelled out on 15 January 1951 when General Partridge requested that naval aircraft undertake the cutting of rail lines and recommended "attacks on key bridges and destruction rolling stock currently reported scattered along route between Hamhung and Susong."

Vice Admiral Struble tried to convince his superiors that close air support, of the type just performed during the Hungnam evacuation, and not interdiction, was the Navy's most profitable employment. On 23 January 1951 he despatched Generals Ridgway and Partridge as follows:

"Without detracting from the value of armed reconnaissance and interdiction in some measure to prevent the transportation of troops, equipment and supplies to the enemy front lines, previous experience here in Korea has demonstrated that under the conditions existing, the results to be obtained from such operations are only partial. In my opinion, strong close air support . . . will do more to hurt the enemy potential than any other type of operation in which we can participate at this time."[4]

But these appeals did not succeed. Intelligence reports had been received which indicated that the enemy planned to make heavy use of the eastern rail net. It was known that at least one division of North Korean troops would be moving down that route.

Accordingly, on 29 January 1951, the carriers of Task Force 77 commenced the interdiction of the east coast bridges. The bitter Korean winter weather, with its low temperatures, snow, sleet, and ice, became a major problem for both ships and aircraft.

Admiral Joy's description of the task ahead in a despatch to Admiral Struble epitomized the resolution and purpose with which the naval forces of the Far East turned to in their efforts to obliterate the rail lines of northeast Korea:

"Rail route northeast coast between Wonsan and Chongjin is of continuing value to enemy as a major route over which supplies, equipment, and troops are being transported to immediate battle areas. The enemy's known capability for quickly effecting temporary repairs to the damaged portions of this route can be seriously impaired by *deliberate*, *methodical*, *total* destruction of all piers, spans, approaches and embarkments of each vital bridge in each critical area. The enemy cannot accomplish makeshift repairs when nothing remains upon which to make them. Naval air and naval gunfire are good weapons to accomplish this job. . . ."[5]

Before beginning the story of Task Force 77's lengthy and concentrated efforts to eradicate the rail system of northeast Korea, an explanation and description of the Communists' supply networks and their logistic problems is required in order that the reader may appreciate the immensity of the unique task which had been assigned to the carriers.

First of all, the logistics of the Korean War favored the Oriental soldier, who needed far less in the way of supply than did our own. The Chinese and North Korean soldier was inured to simple diet, to a bare minimum of necessities, and was independent of such Western delicacies as hot food, showers, movies, PX supplies, and twice-weekly mail from home. The production centers supplying him with food and munitions were but a few

hundreds of miles distant *overland.*

In contrast, the UN's production centers were *thousands* of miles distant *overseas.*

Thus, the enemy's supply problem was much more manageable than our own. The average Chinese soldier required only 10 pounds of supplies per day, in contrast to our own soldier's requirement of some 60 pounds per day. A Chinese division of 10,000 men needed only 50 tons of supplies per day to keep it in action. [5A] With never more than 90 divisions in Korea, and approximately 58 divisions in the frontlines, only some 3,000 tons of supplies had to get through from Manchuria to the battlefront every day.

How could this relatively small tonnage be moved? The Communists had four general transportation systems: rail, road, footpath, and sea. (See end-sheet maps.)

The rail system in North Korea was divided naturally by the mountainous backbone of Korea into two principal zones: the eastern and the western networks. A total of six rail lines crossed the Yalu and Tumen Rivers southward from Manchuria—three on each side of the peninsula.

On the western side of Korea, the three lines from Manchuria led single-track to Sinuiju, where double-tracking commenced, thence southward to the capital of Pyongyang and the battlefront. The peacetime capacity of the double-tracked portion below Sinuiju had been estimated to be 9,000 tons per day, while the three single-tracked lines from the border to the rail junction at Sinuiju could handle a total of 6,000 tons. Later, as a result of damaged tunnels, bridges, roadbed, and track, and with Communist logistical operations confined to nighttime or inclement weather, it was conservatively estimated that the Communists could deliver approximately 500 to 1,500 tons per day to the battle area on the western rail net.

The eastern rail network of North Korea also originated in Manchuria, where three lines crossed to join in the vicinity of Kilchu, thereafter becoming a single line southward to Kowon. Here the rail line split, one line running westward to Pyongyang; the other continuing south to Wonsan. Below Wonsan, the rail net split again, one branch following the east coast, the other line continuing southward toward Seoul and in effect bisecting the peninsula.

This eastern network (to be the scene of the Navy's long interdiction effort) included 1,140 miles of track, 956 bridges and causeways, and 231 tunnels. This very large number of bridges and tunnels (one bridge for every 1.2 miles of track and one tunnel for every 5 miles of track) was required by the mountainous terrain of North Korea. The average tunnel length was 1,200 feet.

The peacetime capacity of the eastern rail net had been calculated to be some 5,000 tons per day. Later, as a result of the Navy's interdiction efforts, the capacity of this eastern net was reduced to less than 500 tons per day—and in certain periods, to almost nothing.

Thus, even during the period of heaviest attack upon the North Korean rail network by the several UN air forces, the Reds by the regimentation of mass labor to repair bridges and breaks, by shuttling trains between breaks, and by use of the system only at night or in inclement weather, could still transport between 1,000 to 2,000 tons over the entire east and west rail systems every day. In other words, despite an all-out UN air effort by the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Marines, and by various UN air units, the Communists could supply approximately half their needs by rail alone.

The second supply network available to the Communists was the highway system. While none of the Korean roads could have been rated good by Western standards (none being hard-surfaced, and all being either rough gravel or dirt), the network was to prove an even more difficult target system than the rail network. In fact, the very primitiveness of the roads was an advantage to the enemy and made them unprofitable targets to air assault.

North Korea's road network, generally speaking, paralleled the rail net, but as can be seen in the endsheet diagram, the entire area was crisscrossed with roads wherever the mountains permitted. Two thousand miles of road were estimated to be in each half of North Korea. With the fighting front at the narrow waist of Korea, the

logistical capacity of this network had been estimated by road engineers to be more than 1,500 tons nightly, and probably a great deal more.

The third supply system was the animal and manpower system. With horses, mules, and even camels available, plus unlimited coolie-manpower using A-frames,[5B] uncounted additional tons of equipment could reach the front, using trails and paths instead of the highways and rail lines. The ubiquitous A-frame on the back of a sturdy Oriental peasant was to be the one logistic system that modern air power could not effectively counter.

The fourth system—the sea—had long since been securely closed by the blockade efforts of Task Force 95.

Thus, the UN faced an almost impossible task of isolating the battlefied by air. But, as will be seen, the assignment of the interdiction task to Task Force 77 was either the most profitable employment which could be found or else was justified on the basis of urgency.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
The Battle of Carlson's Canyon (The "Bridge of Toko-Ri")

The vigor, tenacity, and ingenuity displayed by Task Force 77 against the coastal rail lines of northeast Korea during the period from January to June 1951 can best be described in an account of the destruction of a single bridge over "Carlson's Canyon," near Kilchu, and the subsequent efforts of Task Force 77 to maintain cuts along this coastal railroad. The repeated attacks on this bridge, and the enemy's repair efforts, became the repetitious story of similar and simultaneous attacks on dozens of other bridges throughout the year of 1951.

After the decision had been reached that the primary mission of the carriers was to be interdiction, Rear Admiral Ralph A. Ofstie, then Commander Task Force 77, ordered his reconnaissance aircraft in February to make a complete photographic survey of the east coast rail system in order to find the most profitable targets along it. Photographs of the entire east coast rail net were taken. The intelligence officers of *Princeton* and of Commander Carrier Division Five—LCDR G. M. Douglass and LCDR B. H. Fisher—made flak analyses, terrain studies, and target selections based on this photography in order to determine the targets most likely to interdict the rail traffic and to hurt the enemy the most.

On the morning of 2 March 1951, a perfect target was discovered by the commanding officer of Fighting Squadron 193, LCDR Clement M. Craig. Craig was returning from a strike on the Kilchu bridges when he spotted *the* bridge.

"We had just been bombing other bridges along the route, and were heading south when I saw this one," said Craig.[6] "The bridge was long and high, measuring 600 feet in length and having a maximum height above the terrain of 60 feet. Five concrete piers supported six steel spans across the canyon. Adjacent to this operable bridge were an additional five piers of a companion but incomplete bridge."

Craig also noted tunnels at each end of the bridge—*two* tunnels, in fact, to eventually allow through traffic in both directions. Best of all, the target was *south* of Kilchu, at which point three rail lines from Manchuria joined. Thus, if this bridge could be interdicted—and *kept* interdicted—the flow of southward traffic over the eastern net from China could be seriously impeded.

Craig, upon landing aboard *Princeton*, personally reported this bridge to Admiral Ofstie. Craig's description impressed the admiral that a vital target had been found—one which the Communists would find exceedingly difficult to either bypass or repair.

Not a moment was lost. On the afternoon of 2 March the bridge was taken under attack, but only minor damage to the bridge approaches resulted.

The following morning, however, the bridge was demolished by *Princeton's* aircraft. Leading eight Skyraiders from his squadron, VA-195, LCDR Harold G. ("Swede") Carlson's pilots dropped one span of the bridge, damaged a second, and twisted two others out of horizontal alignment.

The bridge spanned what became known, in his honor, as "Carlson's Canyon."

The bridge was attacked again on 7 March 1951, and this time another span was dropped.

Promptly, the Communists commenced their repair campaign, working mostly at night. Using interlocking wooden beams, called "cribbing," temporary piers were quickly constructed to replace the two missing spans and to support the damaged one. The askew sections were straightened.

On 14 March, the systematic reconnaissance taken by *Princeton's* photo pilots, led by LT C. A. Hooper, revealed the status of the reconstruction progress. The frantic efforts of the Communists to get the bridge back in operation were apparent, and it was obvious that the bridge would be in commission again in a few days—unless

something were done about it.

On the next day, therefore, a carrier group again struck Carlson's Canyon, this time with napalm. In this attack, not only were the new wooden cribbing structures beneath the originally damaged spans obliterated, but, in addition, a third orginal span was destroyed and a fourth seriously damaged. Of the original six spans, only two now remained standing.

During the month of March, meanwhile, the carrier aviators were blasting on both sides of the railroad north and south of Carlson's Canyon to cut the track at as many other points along the route as possible. Similar havoc was being made in the other portions of the rail network.

March 1951 saw "tunnel-busting" added to "bridge-busting." "Tunnel-busting" was a misnomer, for the carrier airmen had learned from previous experience that collapsing a tunnel, even with a big bomb, was highly improbable. Even Army demolition teams, during the evacuation at Hungnam, had failed to destroy a tunnel. Hence the approved tactic was for time-delay fuzed bombs to be thrown into the ubiquitous tunnels to destroy trains, personnel, and supplies stored therein, not the tunnel itself.

"We considered many different plans to get the key tunnels," said VADM J. J. Clark, later Commander Seventh Fleet. "One suggestion was to put raiding parties ashore and capture a tunnel long enough to drill a hole down from the top of the tunnel, set charges, and blast the roof in. But the railroad experts said it wouldn't do much good—that the damage would only cause the Communists a few hours' work. Since most of the tunnels were dug out of solid rock, detonating charges inside them only had a shotgun effect out of each end of the tunnel."

The more numerous the bridge breaks and tunnel damage, the more frequent would be the enemy's shuttle efforts to use the coastal line, and the more interdicted the network would be. Of this period, LCDR Carlson recorded: "Bridges were hit and destroyed from one end of North Korea to the other. Successful bridge strikes were the rule, and missed or just-damaged bridges were the exception."

Meanwhile, too, the Communists were concentrating upon repairs at Carlson's Canyon. Rear Admiral Ofstie's reconnaissance aircraft made careful and frequent checks of the repair activity, and night-heckling aircraft from the carriers did their best to harass and hamper the nocturnal labor. Ofstie suggested to Admiral Joy that the Communists' repair work would be further delayed if Far East Air Force aircraft would sprinkle long-delayed-action bombs on this target. A B-29 did so on 27 March.

Despite delay-action bombs and nocturnal harassment, however, the serious damage caused at Carlson's Canyon by the attacks of 15 March was almost fully repaired in two weeks by the patient and steady efforts of the Communists. Accordingly, on 2 April, Task Force 77 struck the bridge again in two lethal raids. So severe were the attacks and so concentrated the damage on these occasions that *none* of the original spans remained standing.

To the Communists, who must have looked in dismal disappointment at the naked and blackened bridge abutments standing in the pock-marked canyon, it was clear they were on the end of a losing battle. The bridge could *never* be kept open against such determined attacks. The only solution for the Communists was to build a bypass *around* the bridge on low ground which could be easily repaired by them and which would be profitless for the blue airplanes of the American Navy to attack. If traffic were to move again, a bypass of Carlson's Canyon *had* to be built.

The results of the savage attacks of the Task Force 77 aircraft on the northeastern Korean rail systems began to be visible in early April 1951.[6A] Rear Admiral Ofstie reported that initial gaps in all major sections of the northeast coastal rail net had now been made, and that, as a result, enemy trains were operating in only a few short sections of track, supplies were moving only by laborious and frequent shuttling, and troops were moving only on foot.

The night-flying reconnaissance aircraft of FEAF corroborated the growing stricture that naval aircraft had placed on the east coast rail system. Nightly sightings of the B-26s showed that the percentage of rail traffic

in this sector fell from 65 per cent in February 1951 to only 32 per cent in April of 1951. Reports from POWs and raiding parties added further evidence of the disruption caused by the air attacks. When the amphibious raid at Sorye-dong below Songjin took place on 7 April,[6B] the British commandoes interrogated civilians in a nearby village. The North Korean civilians reported that not a single train had passed through their area in *forty days*.

However, two events that now transpired were to negate these splendid results.

The first was an alert in the Formosa Straits (for which the Seventh Fleet still held basic responsibility). From 2 April until 15 April, the carriers of Task Force 77 were not available to operate in northeast Korea because of some possibility that the Red Chinese might assault Formosa during this period.

The second event was the two-phase spring offensive of the Chinese armies. The first phase started at 2000 on the night of 22 April. The front-lines suddenly became alive with activity and action as the ROK 6th Division was routed. The First Marine Division stemmed, then smashed the Chinese attack, which was attempting to turn the left flank. By early May, however, UN forces had counterattacked to stabilize the battlefield.

A second enemy attack was obviously being readied. Air reconnaissance and other intelligence reported intense enemy activity and preparation. Thousands of vehicles were reported moving south as fresh Communist divisions were apparently relieving those which had been decimated in the first-phase attack.

The result of the first Chinese offensive was to divert the striking power of Task Force 77 from interdiction to close support efforts in behalf of the endangered Eighth Army.

As a consequence, there was a lapse in Task Force 77's interdiction effort upon the northeast coast rail net. For a period of almost a month, the Communists took advantage of the lull to repair a large part of the damage which their eastern rail net had suffered in February and March.

The carrier planes returned to the interdiction campaign on 1 May, and for the next thirteen days the bridges again received full attention. Thirty-one bridges and all bypasses were knocked out by the *Boxer*,[6C] *Princeton* and *Philippine Sea* aircraft. Eleven highway bridges and bypasses were also demolished.

During this period Rear Admiral G. R. Henderson (who had relieved Rear Admiral Ofstie on 6 May) received a request from CDR A. L. Downing, the senior naval representative on duty at the JOC at Taegu. Downing said that the Fifth Air Force had asked informally if the carrier aircraft could help them interdict the *west coast* rail lines from Pyongyang northward.

Rear Admiral Henderson directed his staff to make a study of the area and to determine what assistance his carrier forces could give. Only three carriers were available to Admiral Henderson, and in effect, with replenishment every third or fourth day, only *two* operating carriers. And two carriers, with only 150 aircraft, were not even sufficient to interdict adequately the eastern rail net, much less interdict the west coast lines.

Anxious to lend a hand, however, Rear Admiral Henderson's staff selected four rail bridges in the western net; and on 11 May 1951, 32 Skyraiders (each carrying two 2,000-lb. bombs) and 32 Corsairs (each carrying eight 100-lb. or 250-lb. flak-suppression bombs), plus 16 Panther jets, struck the selected four bridges.

Three of the four were knocked out, and the fourth damaged.

Rear Admiral Henderson informed CDR Downing at Fifth Air Force headquarters that his own commitments in the east coast area precluded any permanent assistance to the FAFIK (Fifth Air Force in Korea) campaign on the west coast. RADM Henderson said he would be glad to help them in attacks such as the one of the 11th on an assistance basis only. The Navy simply did not have enough aircraft carriers to attempt interdiction of both east and west coast rail nets.

The expected second-phase Communist attack began on 16 May under a blanket of fog and rain which hampered United Nations defensive action. Task Force 77 assistance was again needed for close air support strikes at the battleline.

After four days of bitter fighting all along the front, pressure by the attacking Chinese slackened. Despite fog and rain which turned streams into torrents and which kept most airplanes grounded, a UN counteroffensive

was started in the west on 19 May and in the central sector on 21 May. This counterattack slowly ground northward until 2 June. In this fighting the Chinese losses were estimated to be 40,000 men. Fifty-five artillery pieces, 900 automatic weapons, and 22,400 artillery shells were captured.

But with the Navy's carrier planes being thus diverted to support the ground forces, another breathing spell was granted to the Communists in North Korea to repair the heavily damaged rail network in the Navy's area of responsibility.

On 2 June, the carriers were able once again to concentrate on their interdiction targets. In the following 9 days, 24 rail bridges and bypasses and 6 highway bridges and bypasses were completely destroyed.

After the Communists succeeded in building the bypass around Carlson's Canyon in June, making further carrier attacks there unprofitable, the carrier airmen turned their interdiction attention to other key targets along the Kilchu-Hungnam rail net.

A railroad bridge north of Songjin was chosen, and repeated strikes were made on it. This bridge was low, and while repeatedly destroyed by the naval air strikes, the damage was quickly repairable by the Communists. On one occasion after it had been demolished, the bridge was again in operation in only 42 hours. And, as at Carlson's Canyon, the Communists built an even easier-to-repair bypass adjacent to the original bridge.

Next, the aviators turned to a series of three coastal bridges south of Songjin. These bridges were high, hence difficult to repair, and could also be taken under fire by the ships of Task Force 95. (The northernmost bridge of the three was later to be known as "Package 1.") In the target complex were six tunnels (useful to the Communists for hiding shuttle trains during the daylight hours, and for serving as storage centers for the bridge and track repair efforts).

The northernmost bridge, while small, stretched across a 25-foot embankment. Almost the length of 1,000 feet of open track between the tunnels, the embankment, and the bridge were exposed to observation from seaward, and to carrier attacks. The original bridge and the bypass then under construction had been damaged in mid-February.

While Carlson's Canyon was still out of action, Ofstie's railbusters commenced work at this Songjin bridge. Two attacks by jet aircraft struck on 1 April 1951. Four direct hits with 250-lb. bombs, by LCDR G. B. Riley, Commanding Officer, VF-191 and LT Arthur R. Hawkins *(Princeton),* demolished the repair effort on the latter date.[6D]

As at Carlson's Canyon and elsewhere, the Communists promptly commenced repair work, despite the irritating and destructive harassing fire of the surface ships of Task Force 95. Stacks of material, rails, and equipment were concealed in the nearby tunnels. Antiaircraft guns and coastal guns were emplaced around the site.

Twice again in the next month the bridge at Songjin was destroyed. Twice again it was repaired.

The destroyers of Task Force 95 lobbed shells into the area every night and every day that the weather was unflyable or when the carriers were engaged in replenishment.

Similar destructive attacks were simultaneously being made at many other bridges and tunnels in the area; the bridge and its bypass at Pukch'ong, 45 miles south of Songjin, were taken out on 25 June and again on 28 June. The bridge at Ori-ri, on the rail line north of Hungnam, was destroyed on 21 June 1951. Several bridges at Kowon, on the western line connecting Wonsan and T'yong'yong, were demolished in the period 20-25 June. The rail line south of Wonsan was broken in two places.

The carrier airmen of Task Force 77 literally combed the east coast rail lines, wrecking every bridge a bomb or rocket could possibly reach.

Throughout this period, the Task Force 95 ships added their weight to the destruction. In addition to the nightly harassing fire of the destroyers at many of the exposed coastal bridges (see Chapter 9, "The Seaborne Artillery"), the cruisers and battleships contributed to the havoc.

Between 14 and 19 March, the *Missouri* was credited with the destruction of eight railroad bridges and seven highway bridges in northeast Korea.

Helena's gunfire collapsed a span on the rail bridge below Songjin on the night of 27 July.

Thus did the traffic and rail net of northeast Korea feel the lethal lash of the U.S. Navy's striking power.

By June 1951, however, it was apparent that in spite of the destructive and widespread attacks of the carrier aircraft in the Navy's northeastern area, the battlefield was *not* being interdicted. If the enemy had been able to mount two large-scale offensives within a month, it was obvious that supplies, troops, and equipment were getting through from China to the frontlines in North Korea in abundance. The naval airmen knew that they had choked off a great part of the flow over the *east coast* rail net. Rail traffic along this line had been brought to a virtual halt through the systematic destruction of key bridges and track breaking.

How, then, were the Chinese getting their supplies through?

The answers were plain. First, the bulk of the enemy rail traffic had simply been shifted from the *eastern* to the *western* networks. Unfortunately, the Fifth Air Force in Korea lacked aircraft which could deliver a 2,000-pound bomb—the best weapon for attacking bridges—with pinpoint accuracy. Second, the western network was larger. Third, the Chinese were placing more and more dependence on truck transport. The vehicle count of enemy trucks had jumped from 7,300 in January 1951 to 54,000 in May 1951. Fourth, practically everything was travelling at night; and fifth, the skillful and highly-organized repair efforts of the enemy were matching the rate of destruction.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle

The Attack on the Hwachon Dam

The only time that torpedoes were used during the Korean War was on 1 May 1951, at the Hwachon reservoir.

Early in April the Communists had tried without success to block the path of the then-advancing UN forces by opening the gates of the 250-foot high dam of the reservoir. Their intention them was to flood portions of the Han and Pukhan rivers and thereby make the northward progress of UN forces more difficult.

In late April, the enemy again seemed ready to use the waters of the Hwachon reservoir to his advantage. If another advance of his own was planned, he could *close* the sluice gates of the dam and thereby *lower* the water level in the Pukhan and Han rivers to fording depth. In the event of a *UN* attack, on the other hand, he could *open* the *sluice* gates and impede the UN advance across the Pukhan and Han rivers.

To forestall either possiblity, the U.S. Eighth Army in Korea requested the carriers to destroy the sluice gates. Earlier high-level bombing attacks by B-29s on the 20-foot high, 40-foot wide, and 2½-foot thick gates had not been effective.

The EUSAK (Eighth U.S. Army in Korea) message was received aboard Task Force 77 at 1440. The dam-busting task was given by Admiral Henderson to *Princeton*—specifically to VA-195, LCDR Harold G. Carlson, USN. Torpedoes were obviously called for, but it would take a few hours to get them ready. In the meantime the Skyraiders could have a go at the dam by a dive-bombing attack.

Attack Squadron 195's first attack was launched in less than three hours from the receipt of the EUSAK message. At 1600, 30 April, six ADs, each carrying two 2,000-pound bombs and accompanied by five Corsairs from VF-193 led by LCDR E. A. Parker for flak-suppression, struck the dam. Although one hole was punched in the dam, the sluice gates were unscathed.

The next day, the torpedo attack was delivered. The terrain made a torpedo attack difficult and hazardous. The reservoir was surrounded by high hills limiting the attack to a two-plane section run-in, while the remainder of the strike orbited overhead. The straightaway was very short, and the problem of controlling the airspeed for the torpedo drop was acute, requiring extremely precise flying. The run-in was made over the high hills into the water area, where the point of torpedo drop had to be accurate, in order that the "fish" would not strike bottom; moreover, the point of drop had to be precise to insure a sufficient arming run. Added to these difficulties were the enemy aircraft batteries surrounding the dam.

Eight ADs led by CDR R. C. Merrick, CVG-19 and LCDR Carlson, each carrying a torpedo set to run at surface level, and accompanied by twelve *Princeton* fighters from VF-192 and VF-193 carrying 100-pound and 500-pound VT-fuzed bombs for flak-suppression, struck the dam shortly after 1130 on 1 May. Merrick weaved his attack group through the antiaircraft fire to pushover point, and the Skyraiders dived in for the torpedo run.

The desired results were achieved. Six of the eight fish ran true. One flood gate in the center was knocked completely out and a ten-foot hole punched in the second flood gate. The impounded waters of the reservoir were released.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
Operation Strangle

During the last days of May 1951, General Ridgway's headquarters proposed a scheme by which the battlefield might be interdicted. Why not draw a line across Korea behind the Chinese lines, assign portions of it to the various air forces, and ask them to destroy every vehicle, every bridge, and every target in their section?

This was the genesis of "Operation Strangle" under which the Navy would operate from 5 June until 20 September 1951.

The "belt" interdiction idea had appeal and logic on paper, although there was now great skepticism that *any* interdiction effort could be made effective *within* the Korean peninsula. But since the system in use had achieved only limited success, why not try one which was primarily concerned with the *highways*? The highways, not the railroads, were now carrying the vast preponderance of supplies.

Accordingly, a one-degree strip of latitude across the narrow neck of North Korea—from 38°-15' N to 39°-15' N—just above the battleline was selected. The traffic networks within this belt were studied and divided into eight routes: the Fifth Air Force in Korea would take the three western-most routes; the carriers of Task Force 77 would take the two central routes; and the First Marine Air Wing would take the three eastern routes. (See diagram on page 242.)

In each zone, at selected defiles and passes along the important highway routes, certain areas were designated as "strangle areas" or "choke points." In addition any bridge, embankment, tunnel, or other construction within the zone would be considered a target.

Special efforts would be made to impede enemy movement at night. Aircraft would use searchlight and flares.[6E] Night-heckling aircraft were to increase their activity. Delayed-action bombs, set to explode in periods from six to seventy-two hours, would be dropped at every important choke point to impede progress and to delay repair work. Task Force 77 aircraft made an air drop of a half-million leaflets on 20 June along the route between Chongjin and Songjin. The illustrated leaflets warned that unexploded bombs were in the ground.

Certainly, it was worth a try.

Click here to view map

For the first several weeks, in addition to their work on the northeast rail net, the carrier airmen tackled the highway routes in the mountains of central Korea, plowing craters in roadbeds, knocking out highway bridges and passes, firing rockets into tunnels, sowing delayed action and "butterfly" bombs in every choke area, and searching for the hundreds of trucks which, like ubiquitous kitchen cockroaches, were hiding by day in order to perform at night. The turbulent mountain winds complicated bombing accuracy.

Night-heckling activity also increased, and a greater number of enemy trains and trucks were frequently caught and destroyed at daybreak. Night reconnaissance efforts of "Operation Strangle" also increased, and a close watch was kept of the results. Marine Fighter Squadron 513, operating from Pusan's airfield, was credited with the nighttime destruction of 420 vehicles in a 30-day period.

At the end of two weeks, however, the total results were disappointing. Reconnaissance B-26s reported that the number of enemy trucks moving at night in each direction was unchanged. Some of the main roads had been blocked with delayed-action bombs, and several bridges had been knocked out; but these achievements had only caused the trucks to detour the main routes and to use other less-important and more difficult-to-hit secondary roads.

Nevertheless, "Strangle" went on, with the Air Force, Navy, and Marines working as an integrated team

in closest harmony.

The Communists' resistance also intensified. At important points along the key roads, flak increased until the risk of making attacks often exceeded the expectation of gain. The cross-Korea highway west of Wonsan became so infested with antiaircraft guns that it was given the title "Death Valley." Enemy road repair activity also increased, and gave evidence of efficient organization. Communist crews hunted out the butterfly bombs with detectors and destroyed them with rifle fire. On other occasions the buried delayed-action bombs were simply ignored with oriental fatalism.

By late summer it was apparent that "Operation Strangle" had failed. The reasons were simple: a bomb crater on an unpaved road could not stop a truck. The hole could be too quickly filled in or bypassed. Even a damaged highway bridge was no impediment. A simple bypass could be built, or a ford made across the usually summer-dry streams. And in comparison to the rail networks, there was greater flexibility and greater area in the highway networks to make air attack more difficult.

The carriers intensified their work on the railroads.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
The Raid on Rashin

From time to time in the interdiction effort, the carrier airmen had an opportunity to perform other missions. One of these was the attack on Rashina[6F] in August of 1951.

The Korean peninsula stretches a long finger northeastward toward the Asian mainland, forming a neck of land which is separated from both Manchuria and Russia by the Tumen River. Along this narrow neck of North Korea and only 17 miles from the Soviet frontier lay the port city of Rashin. In fact, Rashin was less than 110 miles from the Russian city of Vladivostok. The two cities were connected by rail, road, and sea.

Rashin having been bombed once by B-29s in August 1950, the wisdom of making other attacks upon it was raised by the U.S. State Department in a letter from the Acting Secretary, Mr. James Webb, to the Secretary of Defense, Louis A. Johnson. Because of its nearness to Chinese and Russian territory, Rashin was ordered spared from attack by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 8 September 1950 at the insistence of the Department of State. The danger of an incident with Russian aircraft or a possible error in navigation which might cause UN aircraft to fly *over* or UN bombs to fall *on* the Russian side of the Tumen River were the main reasons for the decision to declare Rashin out of bounds.[6G]

As a result of this ruling, the Communists had taken advantage of Rashin's sanctuary status and had increased its use as a rail hub and stock point for the transhipment of supplies.[6H]
Click here to view map

During February 1951, noting the continuing logistic build-up and heavy rail traffic in Rashin, MacArthur's headquarters again requested permission to resume bombing Rashin but this was again denied on 21 February. MacArthur, before a Joint Congressional Committee in May 1951, described the importance of Rashin in these words: "I was very anxious to bomb Rashin. . . . It is a great distributing point from Manchuria down the east coast of Korea. Its usefulness to the enemy is self-evident. Great accumulations, depot accumulations were made there. It was a great distributing center. . . . The Soviets could run stuff from Vladivostok right down there. We asked to bomb that and we were forbidden."

By August of 1951, the immunity granted Rashin had enabled the Communists to build that port city into the most important supply point in northeast Korea. The concentration of rail traffic was particularly heavy. Passing this intelligence to Washington, CINCFE made a further request to strike the city's warehouses, railroads, and marshalling yards. The Far East Air Force insisted that it could destroy Rashin's legitimate targets without violating either the Manchurian border or the Soviet frontier.

This time, the request was approved.[6I] However, certain restrictions were tied to the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Superforts must bomb on a southeasterly heading, passing over Rashin from northwest to southeast. (This stipulation was designed to prevent any violation of Russian territory.)

Second, the bombing attack should take place only in clear weather, in order to minimize any possible error in navigation or bombing.

Third, the bombers should take care to avoid any damage on a known POW camp less than a mile from the Rashin railroad station.

And, of course, at no time should any plane pass *north* of the Tumen River.

The restriction regarding the direction of bombing, and the admonition not to fly across the Tumen River, complicated the bombing mission. From Rashin northwestward to the frontier was only 34 miles. Subtracting a few miles in order to insure no violation of the border, and a few more miles to complete the high altitude turn

onto bombing course, plus the distance from the Rashin targets to the bomb release point, left barely sufficient air room for the bombers to steady down and get a bombsight solution. Moreover, the specification that bombing should take place on a southeasterly heading forced the B-29s to make their *inbound* flight over the North Korean coastline far south of Rashin, and thereby give ample alert to the radar defenses of the area. The MIGs from either or both Russian and Chinese territory would certainly be alerted, and it was reasonable to expect that their opposition to an attack upon Rashin would be intense.

Obviously, then, the B-29s would need heavy fighter escort. But where would it come from? The F-86 Sabres, even flying from the most northerly fighter bases in South Korea and carrying detachable fuel tanks, lacked the endurance to escort the B-29s at this range.

Far East Air Force planners turned for help to the Navy. Could the jets aboard the carriers of Task Force 77 escort the B-29s on the Rashin attack?

The request was passed through JOC to Commander Seventh Fleet and thence to RADM John Perry, Commander Task Force 77.

Certainly, replied Perry by despatch. How many jets, what time, and where?

For the next three days the details of rendezvous, altitude, radio frequencies, and escort pattern were exchanged between Navy and JOC. The Navy jets would meet the B-29s at a point 80 miles south of Rashin at 25,000 feet, take them in, over the target, and out again.

On 25 August, in CAVU[6J] weather, the mission was launched from *Essex*. Commander M. U. Beebe, CVG-5, leading 11 F9Fs from VF-51 (LCDR E. Beauchamp) and 12 Banshee F2H2s from VF-172 (CDR M. E. Barnett), catapulted off.

"We climbed out together," recorded CDR Beebe,[7] "and met the 29 B-29s at the designated rendezvous point. It was perfect coordination, for my planes didn't even have to make a circle. We took escort stations promptly, the Banshees taking high cover and the Panthers low cover. Base altitude was 25,000 feet on the way in. Of course we weaved back and forth on top of the Superforts in order to keep all sectors covered and to maintain a combat speed.

"After passing the coastline, we were all set for the MIGs. But none interfered. As planned, we made the turn toward Rashin. The B-29s bombed in three waves, each plane dropping ten tons of bombs.

"All the while we kept rubbernecking for the MIGs, but we never saw a single one. And there was no antiaircraft fire, either.

"The B-29s did a beautiful job of bombing, making the final run in at about 19,000 feet. It was a fine, clear day, and their bomb pattern was clearly visible. I don't remember seeing a single bomb off-target.[7A]

"The homeward flight was very routine. We peeled off and left them after we got close to *Essex*.

"Afterwards, CTF 77 received several despatches from the Air Force telling us what a fine escort job we did."

The photo aircraft which followed the strike took pictures which revealed that 97 per cent of the bombs had fallen on the Rashin marshalling yards. A turntable, a roundhouse, a railroad bridge, and approximately 75 of the 136 freight cars present were destroyed.

(Rashin's munitions factories and transportation facilities were struck a third time on 10 December 1952 in an all-Navy attack by Task Force 77 aircraft from *Bon Homme Richard* and *Oriskany*. On this occasion, twelve buildings were destroyed [including two railroad repair shops, the roundhouse and turntable] and five others damaged. While the Skyraiders and Corsairs were dropping their bombs, the protecting jet fighters spotted several MIGs just north of the border. The *Bon Homme Richard*'s action report reads: "The MIGs made threatening maneuvers in an apparent but unsuccessful effort to draw the target CAP across the border. Neither side violated the frontier.")

For both the B-29s and the Navy fighters, the attack on Rashin had gone without a hitch. The naval

action reports, histories, and war diaries of the period mention this mission in the most routine fashion, with the single elaboration that "it is believed this is the first instance in the Korean War when Navy carrier fighters have escorted Air Force bombers."[7B]

The significance of this mission far exceeded its bombing accomplishments. Here was yet another instance of closely integrated air effort by Air Force and Navy; second, it was an instance where naval airmen demonstrated the validity of their oft-repeated statement that many times, in many places, the mobile air power of the aircraft carrier might be essential, necessary, and helpful to the Air Force itself. In fact there might be times when naval air power would be the *only way* of accomplishing a task.

The Sea War in Korea

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle

Track Busting

The interdiction effort of the carrier task force was now to enter its third phase. The first phase (breaking the Yalu bridges and the bridges of the northeast rail net) had achieved success within the northeast net. The second one (breaking the highways) had not. An effort would now be undertaken to destroy railroad *tracks* as well as the bridges themselves.

To give the carriers greater interdiction freedom, TF-77 was relieved of all responsibility for frontlines close air support missions on 20 September 1951.

The change of emphasis from bridge-breaking to track-busting had occurred for a very simple reason: increasing evidence of re-use by the enemy of the northeast coastal railroads. Moreover, American railroad engineers estimated that it would be harder for the Communists to repair multiple rail cuts than to repair certain key bridges.

While the carriers had been employed during the summer months in either giving close air support to the frontlines or participating in “Operation Strangle,” the Reds had taken advantage of the respite—first, to repair a great part of their fractured rail system; and second, to make ever-increasing use of “shuttle” trains between the broken bridges.

U.S. reconnaissance aircraft photographed or reported on several occasions as many as 300 railroad cars in the various marshalling yards. Naval aircraft themselves reported attacking and destroying or damaging 1,900 boxcars and 17 locomotives in a 30-day period between mid-August and mid-September.

Rear Admiral W. G. Tomlinson, ComCarDivTHREE and now CTF-77, following a coordinating conference aboard the *Bon Homme Richard* on 30 September 1951, with Major General Frank F. Everest (Commanding General FAFIK), made the decision to alter once again the pattern of the carriers’ attacks. Hereafter, attacks would be conducted over as wide an area as possible, striking isolated rail areas at about one mile intervals in order to force the enemy to disperse his repair crews and to reduce the effectiveness of his constantly-growing antiaircraft defenses.

A list of key highway and rail bridges was prepared which reduced the number to twenty-seven: ten rail bridges and seventeen highway bridges. In addition to striking these bridges on a systematic basis, a concentrated effort would be made to cut the tracks in as wide an area as possible.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
The Kapsan Strike

Information on potential Communist targets in North Korea occasionally came from bizarre sources. Escapees often volunteered information; fishermen captured or defecting from North Korea added to the total information picture; and South Koreans who penetrated into enemy territory were still another source.

One of the Navy's most spectacular air attacks—the Kapsan Strike—was based on such intelligence.

"Upon my arrival in Korea in the fall of 1951," said VADM J. J. Clark, "carrier planes were ranging the eastern half of Korea, searching for interdiction targets. While we were concentrating on bridges, trains, and the rails, we willingly accepted any worthwhile target.

"My flag lieutenant, LCDR J. A. Scholes, happened to be a graduate of the Army Parachute School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and, while there, had met a number of trainees in undercover warfare. Some of his friends were on duty at Army headquarters at Pusan. LCDR Scholes and his Army friends arranged a system of target information which we immediately put to good use.

"Groups of guerrilla bands, mostly South Koreans, were operating in certain areas of North Korea, supplying intelligence information by portable radio to their headquarters in South Korea. This information, giving the location and the nature of worthwhile targets for Navy carrier planes, was then relayed to the flagship. The selected targets were attacked at opportune times and the results of the naval air attacks reported by on-the-scene guerrillas.

"This arrangement was most beneficial, and through it many excellent targets were destroyed. Among these were the mines at Komdok, which produced lead and silver, and which were supervised by Russian technicians. On that attack the guerrillas reported that the naval air strike destroyed many installations and killed 116 men, including one of the Russian engineers.

"Another of these raids was at Pukchong, where the undercover agents had discovered an automobile shop and ammunition factory. In a series of strikes both of these targets were demolished and 100 North Korean Army personnel were reported killed.

"At Hong-gun ni, which was an electric power supply, a surprise raid caught three North Korean Army battalions at breakfast and obtained direct hits on the building housing them. Heavy casualties were reported by ground observers."

But the most successful raid based on information supplied by guerrillas was the 29 October raid on a concentration of Communist commissars and party officials in the city of Kapsan which resulted in the death of more than 500 Red personnel.

"On 29 October 1951," said CDR Paul N. Gray, Commanding Officer, VF-54, "Admiral John Perry received a request from the Eighth Army to make a raid on the headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party at Kapsan, in North Korea. Guerrillas had reported there was to be a meeting of all high-level party members of the North Korean and Chinese Communist forces at Kapsan at 0900. This city was located about 60 miles northwest of Songjin, in very mountainous terrain.

"On receiving this request, Admiral Perry ordered photos made from a high altitude by our photo reconnaissance planes. The photography was done at high altitude in order that the enemy would not become aware of our intentions.

"The target itself was a compound slightly east of the city of Kapsan. In this compound was a records section which contained all Chinese and North Korean Communist party records, a security police headquarters,

and a barracks. The meeting of high-level Communists was scheduled at nine o'clock. We were ordered to strike between nine-fifteen and nine-twenty to be sure that all members had reached their seats.

"The armament carried on the flight was as follows: two 1,000-lb. bombs, of which one had a proximity fuze and the other an instantaneous fuze. Each plane carried one napalm bomb and eight 250-lb. general purpose bombs. The 20-mm. machinegun ammunition was half incendiary and half high explosive.

"The pilots were myself, LTJG Shugart, ENS Aillaud, ENS Masson. The second division was led by LT Evans, with LTJG Gollner, ENS Strickland, and ENS Kelly. (LTJG Gollner and ENS Kelly were both killed on later strikes.) We requested no fighter escort because we felt the fewer number of planes involved would give us the maximum possibility of surprise.

"On the morning of the strike the weather was clear and cold.

"We were launched about 100 miles east of Wonsan, at 0730. After rendezvous, we proceeded to the coast, staying as low as possible all the way. From a study of the maps we found valleys available all the way to Kapsan in which we could fly and thereby avoid radar detection.

"As we flew farther and farther north, the height of the mountains increased and the terrain became extremely rugged. Directly east of Kapsan was a 6,000-foot range of mountains. We approached from behind this range, made a rapid climb to 8,000 feet, crossed over the top of the mountains, and commenced our attack.

"At approximately 0913, eight proximity-fuzed 1,000-lb. bombs exploded above the compound of Kapsan. We rendezvoused in a climbing turn, made another attack and dropped the 1,000-lb. instantaneous fuzed bombs. All eight of these again landed within the compound. On our next run half the planes dropped napalm and the other half strafed. Most of the compound was set aflame by the napalm bombs, and those portions that were not ignited were set afire on the next run when the remaining four napalm bombs were dropped.

"The remainder of the attack consisted of strafing the compound and pinpointing the 250s on those sections that had not been completely destroyed. The final runs were made by our camera planes at treetop level to bring back post-strike pictures.

"When we left the target, there was nothing left but a smoking mass of rubble. Pictures showed every bomb except one inside the compound, and there was only one wall left standing.

"Any antiaircraft located at Kapsan evidently was destroyed on the first attack by the proximity fuzed 1,000-lb. bombs, because no reports of accurate antiaircraft fire were received and no planes received damage. We returned to the ship without incident, although extremely low on fuel due to the long hop and the long time spent on the target.

"Within two days an Army report was received from one of the guerrillas, who had been posted on the side of the hill overlooking Kapsan and who had watched the whole attack. He reported 509 high-level Communist party members were killed in the raid, and that all records of the Communist party in North Korea had been reported destroyed.

"The remarkable thing which the post-strike pictures showed was that no part of the city had been damaged, except the compound itself.

"This raid must have really hurt the Chinese and the North Koreans, because the next week the North Korean radio put a price on the heads of all the members of the strike and called us 'The Butchers of Kapsan'."

By mid-October 1951, the three aircraft carriers (*Bon Homme Richard, Essex and Antietam*) were emphasizing rail cutting. In the first three days of October, 131 track breaks were made. Between 18 to 31 October, the rail–lines were cut in a total of 490 places.

Within a month, over 1,000 individual breaks had been made in the rail tracks. The steady attrition of this naval air effort became apparent as new enemy car sightings decreased. Further evidence of the campaign's effectiveness was seen in the enemy's cannibalization of rails. Photographs revealed that a great part of all double-tracking, spurs, and marshalling yard rails had been removed for use at more essential places. Also, the

pattern of antiaircraft opposition changed, increasing along the routes and becoming less intense at the bridges.

In November 1951, 922 track cuts were claimed and 44 rail bridges reported destroyed, despite increasingly difficult flying weather.

Jet aircraft of Task Force 77 proved to be ideal vehicles for the track-busting task. Their speed, silent approach, and bombing steadiness made them ideal for such precision work.

Also by now strike groups had learned to make more efficient use of their bombs. Big ones were used for bridges; small ones were saved for the tracks.

Track-breaking, however, was not as simple as it first appeared. In the first place, the width of the track—only 56 inches—made a small target indeed. Only a hit *directly* on the tracks was effective. Second, pilots had to compensate carefully for the effect of any cross wind. Third, the pilots soon found that a "seaman's eye" correction had to be made for the offset distance from the cockpit of the plane to the bombrack itself. Otherwise, the bomb would explode harmlessly on either side of the rail-bed.

In the first nine days of December, 937 track cuts were made. Between 29 December and 9 January 1952, Task Force 77 averaged 116 track cuts per day. And in the 24 operating days between 28 December and 1 February 1952, the fast carrier pilots claimed 2,782 cuts in the track.

In this same period, 141 bridge or bridge bypasses were also destroyed.

Admiral John Perry's action report for this period concludes: "An almost complete interruption of eastern rail line movement was accomplished by this effort."

Although rarely mentioned in war diaries and action reports, one of the most difficult tasks of the interdiction campaign to carrier division commanders, air group, and squadron commanders was the maintenance of high pilot morale. The unchanging routine of the interdiction missions, the increasing danger of being shot down by enemy gunfire, and the often invisible results of the effort, all tended to lower the level of pilot morale. Click here to view map

"One of my toughest jobs," recorded CDR M. U. Beebe, Air Group commander of *Essex*'s Air Group Five, "was the constant battle to keep pilots' morale up.[8] Day after day, for weeks on end, pilots had to fly over the same area of Korea, bombing bridges or punching holes in railbeds. The antiaircraft fire over Korea grew steadily heavier, more accurate, and more intense. In comparison to what Air Group Five's experience had been during its first Korean tour in the fall of 1950, my second-tour pilots estimated that the enemy's antiaircraft fire had increased on the order of ten times. In fact, by the time we left the area, we estimated that the concentration of antiaircraft guns in certain target areas of Korea was *double* the number the Japanese had at specific targets in Japan at the end of World War II. As an indication of this, Air Group Five went through *two* sets of airplanes because of the heavy operating schedule and damage received from antiaircraft fire which was not repairable on board. From 22 August until 30 November 1951, Air Group Five's aircraft were struck 318 times, resulting in 27 aircraft losses and the loss of 11 pilots.

"A pilot would go out one day, do a first-rate bombing job on a bridge or leave several craters in a railbed, and come back the next day and find that all the damage had been repaired overnight. It was hard for him to see how his efforts were having any effect on the course of the fighting.

"For the second-tour pilots, the situation had drastically changed between November 1950 and mid-1951. The lucrative rail, supply, and individual targets had generally been destroyed. The grubby stacks of supplies, the trucks, and the bridges no longer piqued the pilots' interest. We found then what every naval aviator discovered during the last two years of the war: that any pilot could bomb a factory, but that it took an expert to knock out a truck speeding down a road or to drop a rail span supported by ties and cribbing timbers. The Reds were adroit at rapid concealment. It took a keen and skilled eye to spot the vehicles and supplies beneath the straw, vegetation, foilage, or even refuse. By the time a pilot spotted something, made a turn and armed his guns, rockets, or bombs, the target would ofttimes have been concealed.

"Any pilot could scour an undefended section of the countryside, avoiding the flak areas. But in places like 'Death Valley', west of Wonsan, it required a skillful and courageous pilot to weave his way through a maze of well-defended antiaircraft positions and still get a hit. This type of war was a new challenge.

"Generally speaking, the war in Korea demanded more competence, courage, and skill from the naval aviator than did World War II. The flying hours were longer, the days on the firing line more, the antiaircraft hazards greater, the weather worse. There was less tangible evidence of results for a pilot to see. The public appreciation and understanding of the pilot's work was less. On top of this, pilots had to know more than they did in World War II: their search and rescue points, panel marker codes, recognition signals, and their primary and secondary targets.

"The combination of these factors—the routine, the danger, the lack of visible results—made it difficult to convince the pilots that results being achieved were worth the risk. This was increasingly true after four or five months on the firing line.

"As a result, Admiral Perry and his staff tried very hard to work the air group into as many different missions as possible—such hops as strikes on Rashin, a hop into MIG Alley, or 'close air support' at the frontlines, and special targets such as the raid on Kapsan and Pukchong."

The anniversary of the first year of the naval interdiction program gave opportunity to assess the damage. In 12 months the combined attacks of the naval air and surface forces had accounted for the destruction or damage of 2,379 bridges, 4,519 vehicles, 7,028 boxcars, and 4,674 rail cuts.

Commenting on this impressive record, Rear Admiral Ofstie (now Deputy ComNavFE) said:

"These one-year figures clearly show that our naval assaults have cost the Communists heavily in vehicles, rail lines, bridges, and munitions. The enemy has had to double and triple his efforts to get supplies through to the frontlines. In addition, he has been forced to divert a considerable amount of his effort and materials toward large-scale counter-interdiction effort of his own. Historically, it is significant to note that this has been the first employment of sustained ground interdiction by naval forces."[9]

Said Vice Admiral J. J. Clark: "I don't know how we could have done any better on the east coast."

As 1952 was ushered in, it was nonetheless obvious from pilots' observations, photographic intelligence, and reports received from ashore, that the enemy's highly integrated and carefully dispersed repair organization had succeeded in matching the UN's interdiction efforts over the whole of North Korea. Individual rail cuts were quickly and simply repairable, and there were ample supplies of lumber, unused rails, and, of course, manpower.

Accordingly, carrier tactics were altered once again. Instead of scattering rail and road cuts over *wide* areas, a plan to concentrate them at selected points was adopted. Rather than crater a roadbed with one bomb for every mile of track, entire stretches of railbed were torn up. At these points crater overlapped crater, totally destroying the roadbed for distances of one-half to two miles.

In 24 days of air operations in the period of 28 December 1951 to 1 February 1952, some 2,782 cuts were made and 79 railroad bridges and 50 bridge bypasses were destroyed. Temporarily, at least, the new attack plan proved too much for the enemy's repair organization; in some places damage remained untouched for eight to ten days.

Still closer integration of naval air and surface effort against the northeast coastal routes was commenced in January 1952 in order to achieve semipermanent interdiction, regardless of weather and visibility conditions. Attack points along the northeast coast—known by the code names of "Package" and "Derail"—were selected by photographic reconnaissance. These targets were chosen so that breaks could be made and maintained by either air or surface bombardment. Against the five "Package" targets, aircraft established the initial break and planted radar buoys by which surface forces could locate, identify, and hit the target regardless of visibility conditions. At the eleven "Derail" points, responsibility for breaking the lines was assigned to the surface forces. These points would be bombarded with the aid of air spot by carrier aircraft.

As time went on, the success of both “Package” and “Derail” operations was minimized by the lack of sufficient surface bombardment units for continuous surveillance of the chosen points.[9A]

The concentration of air attack on selected areas of track continued through February 1952, when 1,037 cuts were made in the first twenty days. The major effort was applied to the main north-south and east-west rail-lines in and around the junction point at Kowon, 22 miles northwest of Wonsan. So successful were the carriers’ effort that the line from Kowon to Wonsan was kept inoperable for the entire period of 1 February to 5 March. The line linking Kowon, Hamhung, and Hungnam was cut often enough to prevent through traffic. At the same time, the rail and highway bridges west of Yangdok were under periodic attack.

In March 1952, there was another welcome break in the monotony of the rail and bridge strikes which did much to boost pilot morale. An enemy attempt to re-take the UN-held island of Yang-do, off Songjin, on 20 February met retaliation in the form of carrier aircraft attacks on small boat concentrations all along the nearby coast.[9B] Carrier sweeps from Wonsan to Songjin destroyed 300 small boats and damaged another 500—sampans and junks which might be used in another invasion attempt. The tedium of interdiction was further relieved on 13 April when the first of many combined air strikes and surface bombardments hit Chongjin.[9C]

To reduce the threat of invasion of Yo-do, the UN-held island in the besieged harbor of Wonsan, carrier aircraft made regular strikes on the enemy guns on Hodo Pando peninsula and also furnished periodic spotting services to the bombarding ships.[9D]

Everywhere the railbusting campaign continued with unabated fury. During April, May, and June 1952, over 7,000 sorties were flown, achieving in the first month-and-a-half another 3,000 rail cuts and the destruction of 80 bridges and 100 bypasses.[9E]

Once again the enemy responded to the naval air attack by modifying his repair pattern and intensifying his antiaircraft fire. And once again Task Force 77 changed its tactics. The number of aircraft in each group was increased, flak-suppression fighters attacked the enemy guns prior to the appearance of the bombing planes, and repeated passes were avoided. Pull-outs were higher. The inherent ability of the carrier to make sudden, heavy attacks on widespread targets was fully utilized.

But whatever the pattern of attacks, the purpose of the naval airmen was the same—to maintain a stranglehold on the east coast rail system.

One night-heckler pilot waxed poetical in his assessment of the interdiction effort:

“It weren’t no fun in 51
Tried and True in 52
Still out to sea in 53
Don’t want no more in 54
Still alive in 55
Amidst the blitz in 56
Almost to Heaven in 57
No homecoming date in 58
Remain on the line in 59
Pack up your ditty in 1960
To hell with this poem
We want to come home.”

While interdiction missions were flown for the remainder of the war, the month of June 1952 saw the interdiction campaign de-emphasized. Hereafter, interdiction would take the form of massed attacks on rail and transportation centers, manufacturing areas, and supply centers, with the hope that the enemy would thereby be forced to make concessions at the truce table.

In this 20-month naval effort to strangle the supply lines of the enemy by air, fast carrier aircraft had

made more than 13,000 cuts in the rail lines and had destroyed 500 bridges and 300 bridge bypasses in northeastern Korea. The destruction and damage to hundreds of locomotives, railroad cars, trucks, and motor vehicles, and to the supplies and munitions being carried, added to the effectiveness of the damage inflicted on the rail route itself. This destruction had undoubtedly slowed the movement of goods and forced the enemy to organize a tremendous resistance. It had forced him to divert a large share of his manpower and to expend large quantities of repair materials.

But the struggle to strangle the enemy's supply lines throughout Korea, by all air forces, including Navy, did *not* isolate the battlefield. The volume of supplies reaching the static front seemed adequate for the enemy's needs. There was a growing conviction that aerial interdiction of the land lines of communication could not be entirely effective over an extended period of time unless there was coordinated *ground* action to force the enemy to increase his rate of supply expenditure.

Admiral John Perry's action report summarized the interdiction effort in one pithy sentence:

"Operations resolved themselves into a day-to-day routine where stamina replaced glamor and persistence was pitted against oriental perseverance."

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
Air Interdiction at Night

By their effective and incessant daytime attacks upon the bridges, tunnels, and tracking of the northeastern rail net, the carrier aviators of Task Force 77 were able to restrict its use severely. While the sun was up, the Communists were unable and unwilling to move. The flow of supplies by daylight was choked off to a thin trickle, and Chinese and North Korean trains and trucks operated at almost suicidal peril.

But at night, and in bad flying weather, the enemy desperately repaired his bridges, filled in the hundreds of holes punched in his roads and railbeds, and straightened or replaced his bent tracking; and by laborious but plentiful hand labor, he shuttled from train to train and truck to truck the munitions of war across the dozens of broken bridges and tracks. Nighttime and inclement weather brought a measure of immunity to the harassed Communists.

Concurrent with their day labors, the hardworking carriers of Task Force 77 also toiled at night throughout the entire interdiction campaign, and did their limited best to staunch the flow of supplies and to delay the repair effort. With no night carrier available, the need for the day carriers to work ’round the clock proved a heavy burden on the flight deck crews; but the burden was willingly accepted in order to increase pressure on the enemy.

The task of flying interdiction missions over Korea at night was both difficult and hazardous, although most of the night pilots felt that the danger of flying over Korea at night was considerably less than by day. In many ways, flying at night was easier. There was much less flak. Targets were much more numerous and easier to find. On dark nights, moving traffic could be identified by headlights. In bright moonlight, the enemy could move trucks and trains successfully without lights. This forced the hecklers to concentrate on the stationary interdiction targets.

However, the mountainous terrain of Korea was more of a hindrance by night than by day. Making an attack upon a bridge or a train compressed between the steep Korean hills, or on a truck concealed beside a forested road, required first-rate airmanship even in broad daylight; to perform the same job at night was even more difficult and demanding.

Despite their limited numbers, and despite the difficulties of weather, darkness, and terrain, the night flyers of Task Force 77 inflicted a great amount of damage and did much to slow down the enemy’s nocturnal movement of supplies.

The typical hop for the hecklers was for each pair to be assigned to one route or road so as to cover a distance of about 150 miles. The routes were generally through the mountains or along the coastal road. On arrival in the target area, one pilot would descend to low-altitude searching of the road, looking for headlights or blacked out traffic. The other pilot remained high. When a target was spotted, the high plane initiated the attack, dropping flares as necessary. The low plane, meanwhile, climbed and made his attack.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
Early Night Operations

As the interdiction campaign by the carriers in northeast Korea commenced in early 1951, the night flyers aboard *Princeton* (VC-35 Night Team 3, LT Franklin Metzner, OinC) made contact with the enemy's transport system with pleasing and pyrotechnic results:

"1 Feb 1951: '. . . LT Atlee F. Clapp and LTJG Lawrence G. Rodgers destroyed the first of seventeen locomotives destroyed by this team. . . .'

"22 Apr 1951: '. . . LT Franklin Metzner and ENS John D. Ness destroyed one locomotive and severely damaged five others in a marshalling yard west of Kowon. Other flights from the carriers and the Air Force later the next morning bombed and napalmed the yard—one locomotive escaped into a tunnel, but a special strike that afternoon exploded him out of the tunnel.

"The engine proceeded out of control down the track into the marshalling yard where it ran into the wreckage of the destroyed train, exploded and overturned—seven locomotives were definitely destroyed in this day's operation. . . .'

"18 July 1951: '. . . LT Wickenheiser and LTJG Oliver disrupted enemy traffic by attacking a convoy of vehicles in the vicinity of Kowon—4 vehicles were set ablaze. . . .'

"22 July 1951: '. . . LT A. F. Borysiewicz and ENS Colvin interrupted the advance of light enemy vehicles as they were moving through a precipitous pass twenty miles south of Songjin. From the blast of the 260-pound frag bombs, it was observed that approximately two trucks were destroyed. . . .'

"16 Oct 1951: '. . . One train composed of one locomotive and fifteen box-cars was sighted and severely damaged by LCDR Callis of VC-3 (aboard *Antietam*) with the assistance of LT Stixrud. . . .'

"8 Nov 1951: '. . . LTJG Warfield of VC-3 destroyed two enemy trucks while LTJG Donahoe and ENS Sybeldon of VC-3 each destroyed one truck. . .'."

During this period of operations, the night hecklers developed a few practical thumb rules for their work. The darker the night and the colder the night, the better the night pilot's chances of finding and destroying trucks. The darkness forced the enemy drivers to use lights in order to remain on the twisting highways, while the cold weather usually forced them to close their windows to keep warm. In so doing, the drivers could not hear the approaching aircraft or the warning shots fired by the road sentries stationed along the highways at short intervals.

On moonlit nights, some of the pilots found the use of binoculars helpful. But whatever the degree of darkness, once a truck convoy was located, pilots found it essential to make their initial attacks with engines throttled back in order to keep the noise level low and to avoid alerting the vehicles.

"Strange as it may seem," said LCDR F. E. Ward, Officer in Charge of Night Attack Team Mike, "the night pilots dreaded the bright moonlight nights for it made them excellent targets for antiaircraft guns, and forced them to fly closer to the ground in order to locate targets."[10]

As for weapons, a great many pilots preferred their 20-mm. cannons. Others preferred the napalm tanks. Whereas a bomb could be counted on to destroy only one or two trucks, a well-placed napalm tank could do away with as many as ten trucks, besides furnishing excellent illumination for subsequent attacks. Later in the war, the 2.75-inch folding fin rocket, normally an air-to-air weapon, was tried and proved successful.

The night pilots were quick to observe the enemy's typical reaction to nighttime attacks. Trucks in a few observed convoys were equipped with bright headlights on the rear of the trucks shining backward, and only dim lights pointing forward. By this stratagem the Reds hoped to delude the hecklers into believing that *this* convoy

was an “empty” moving north, rather than a “full” one heading toward the battlefront.

On occasion the pilots also observed a flashing-light warning system in certain sectors along the coastal road. On approach of a plane these mountaintop lights would blink a warning for all trucks to take cover. Trains on the exposed tracks would head for the nearest tunnel.

Pilots also noted, especially on very dark nights, that strings of simulated headlights would be placed in certain very mountainous terrain. The line of lights would be so placed that if a pilot was deceived and made a low level attack on them, he would crash his airplane into a steep, nearby hillside. None of the hecklers took the bait.

Despite the various systems used by the enemy to warn of approaching airplanes, the mere presence of the heckling aircraft achieved the desired psychological result. Communist trucks and trains scampered for concealment whenever an aircraft engine was heard. The hecklers forced the trains and truck convoys to scatter and stop, thereby halting and slowing the nighttime traffic.

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"Moonlight Sonata" and "Insomnia"

In early 1952 a night heckling operation against railroads having the lyrical code-name "Moonlight Sonata" was begun. The purpose of this operation was to take advantage of the winter snowfall and moonlight, at which time the Korean hills, valleys, and rail lines stood out in bold relief.

The operation commenced on 15 January 1952, and continued through mid-March, at which time the snows began to melt. On each flyable night during the winter period, five 2-plane sections were predawn launched at 0300 each morning. Each section of aircraft was assigned a 50-mile stretch of track; pilots were briefed in advance on the locations of the best targets within that area. At the least, the presence of the hecklers would halt traffic and disrupt the rail-repair activity. If the hunting was good and trains were found, the night flyers were ordered to decommission the locomotive and then to cut the track on each side of the train so that the day flight, standing by in alert status on the carrier decks, could come in at the first light to finish the destruction of the stranded trains.

"Sonata" was partly successful, resulting in five locomotives being found, two destroyed, and three damaged. However, the periods of night which combined moonlight, good weather, and snow on the ground, plus targets, were rare.

The next special night operation was code-named "Insomnia" and commenced on 13 May 1952. This operation had one feature which some of the earlier night missions had lacked. On several occasions in the past, pilots flying the first night hops had reported that trains and trucks could not be found during the early hours of their patrols; however, just as they were *leaving* the area, the trucks and trains began to appear. Obviously, the Communists had noted the time pattern of the night aerial patrols and were withholding train and truck movements until the naval planes were homeward bound.

Accordingly, "Insomnia" launching schedules were re-shuffled and planes left the carriers at midnight and 0200.

During the spring period, 16 locomotives were sighted, and 11 of them were trapped by cutting the rail lines ahead and behind. Of the trapped 11, nine were destroyed at first light the next morning and the other two heavily damaged. Additionally, night pilots found good shooting on such occasions as:

"18 April 1952: '. . . LT A. R. Kreutz and ENS P. J. Weiland (VC-35 Team Able—*Boxer*) had extremely good luck on a night heckler hop, destroying 8 trucks, 2 warehouses plus one ammunition dump, and damaging 12 more trucks and numerous troops with 20-mm. strafing attacks. . . .'

"23 April 1952: '. . . LT C. H. Hutchins and LT D. G. Creeden destroyed a railroad bridge and four trucks, damaged six others with 20-mm. fire and left one warehouse burning. LT Creeden was hit by small arms fire, returning unharmed but with a shattered canopy. . . .'

"12 May 1952: '. . . LT R. L. Bothwell, LT H. D. Knosp and LTJG M. D. Avery were launched from *Valley Forge*. They scored direct hits on two rail road bridges, destroyed a truck convoy, bombed a train, cutting the rail lines fore and aft. This all-night operation was extremely successful in disrupting the transportation schedules, as the early morning strikes destroyed the trains that were isolated at daybreak. . . .'

"9 June 1952: '. . . Two night hecklers were launched. LT Bothwell and LT Knosp destroyed a locomotive and three cars south of Songjin and completely burned a fully loaded train in the yards at Kilchu with a half hour bombing and napalm attack. . .'."

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
The Use of Night Carriers in Korea

During the latter part of World War II in the Pacific, the U.S. Navy had developed special air groups and carriers *Enterprise* and *Saratoga*) to operate exclusively at night. From the military and operational standpoint, this development was one of the major innovations and accomplishments of that war. The results achieved by the night carriers against the Japanese in both attack and defense were generally agreed to have been effective and successful.

During the Korean War, however, no night carriers were used, although a plan to do so (Operation "No Doze") was formulated and briefly placed in effect during the last few days of the war. *Princeton* was now designated for operation "No Doze"; she was given three destroyers for plane guard, and all night fighter and night attack aircraft of TF-77 were to be transferred to her. It was planned for the night hecklers to strike important junctions with both regular and delay-fuzed bombs, so that TF-77's morning flights might have lucrative targets. However, "No Doze" was postponed when *Princeton* went to Yokosuka for boiler repairs; upon her return to the fleet, the final days of the war were under way, requiring the all-out close air support of all carriers.

The proposal to employ night carriers was first raised during the early phases of the interdiction campaign in Korea. There were many persuasive reasons for doing so. First of all, a regular day carrier could not operate continuously both by day and by night. Even the task of operating eight night fighter and attack aircraft from a day carrier was an extra heavy burden on the carrier's flight deck, hangar deck, and ordnance crews. The use of a night carrier would certainly diminish the day carrier's burdens.

Second, those naval airmen who analyzed the interdiction campaign in Korea realized that its primary weakness was the lapse of effort during the night and the respite thus given the enemy. Operating approximately eight night aircraft from the day carriers could do little more than harass, heckle, and hamper, much less halt the Chinese nocturnal traffic to a significant point. Admittedly, a single night carrier could do a great deal more, although there was substantial doubt that *one* night carrier could slow down the enemy's traffic to any vital degree. Those in favor of a night carrier also believed that fliers could tighten the *surface* blockade by detecting the movement of small craft operating close inshore.

Third, the equipment for night flying, both aboard carrier and airplanes, was much better than during World War II—radar, night lighting, control procedures for the ship, all-weather equipment, electronic equipment, and automatic pilots for the planes. Korea, said the night flyers, was a golden chance to learn more and to further perfect the all-weather art.

The pilots who had flown over Korea both by day and by night were convinced that the task at night was easier, less dangerous, and more productive. Little or nothing moved by day. But at night, North Korea crawled with activity. The night pilots were certain that the same number of trained pilots by night could accomplish much more than the same pilots by day—and at less risk of damage or loss to themselves.

The other side of the problem contained compelling evidence. One night carrier would be helpful but certainly not decisive. To bottle up northeast Korea by night would require *many* carriers and hundreds of planes. And for each night carrier on the line in Korea, there had to be at least one other carrier and air group training on the West Coast. The time to fully train a night pilot was 50 per cent greater. There was also the Navy-wide limitation of funds, of personnel, and the problem of priorities. Would a night carrier be more damaging to the enemy than a battleship or a squadron of destroyers?

In the operational sense, too, there was no reason to suspect that the normal enthusiasm and elation which were inherent in every returning strike pilot's report were not equally applicable to night pilots. Often there was no way of judging, measuring, or photographing the claims of the night pilots. Under the stalemated conditions in Korea, many naval airmen felt that a carrier operating by day would hurt the enemy more than a carrier by night. Moreover, a survey made early in the war showed that the night pilots were expending 67 per cent of the ordnance in twilight and daylight periods; on the other hand, the usual time of launching hecklers during these early months—near dawn and dusk—contributed to this high percentage.

The use of a night carrier was thus debated and re-debated. But the night carrier was destined not to appear during the Korean War.

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Night Heckling (1952-1953)

The night heckling by the day carriers, contributing to the over-all damage to the enemy in Korea, went steadily on. By now the airmen had developed the night attack work into an art. The flight over a 40-mile stretch of track or road might consume an hour's zigzagging back and forth, as each curve and embankment was observed for traffic. Locomotives were hardest to see, as they rarely used headlights or made smoke. But careful, tedious searching paid off:

"15 July 1952: '. . . night heckling aircraft from *Princeton* stopped a train near Tanchon and eighteen propeller planes were launched by the *Bon Homme Richard* at 0915 to finish it off. . . . '

"22 July 1952: '. . . the night hecklers destroyed three trucks and damaged thirteen north of Wonsan. . . . '

"23 July 1952: '. . . the night hecklers, surprising a convoy of trucks, damaged fifteen, leaving a path of flame and rubble. . . . '

"24 July 1952: '. . . the hecklers as usual had their choice of targets, sighting at least two hundred trucks within a thirty mile radius of Wonsan . . . at least three definitely destroyed and 21 damaged. . . . '

"27 July 1952: '. . . at 0330 dawn hecklers left to attack rails northwest of Tanchon. VC-4 detachment (LCDR E. S. Ogle) found a moving train, cut the rails in front and behind, and damaged the locomotive before expending all the ammunition and bombs. A destroyer later destroyed the train by shelling. . . . '

"28 July 1952: '. . . again the hecklers trapped a locomotive and three cars.

"Following the prescribed doctrine, the rails were cut and the trains attacked. Direct attacks on the boiler stopped the engine, leaving it stalled for a later *Princeton* flight to destroy. . . . '

"1 Aug 1952: '. . . the night hecklers reported the destruction of eleven and damage to fifteen trucks in the Wonsan area. . . . '

"3 Aug 1952: '. . . the hecklers found choice targets in trucks in the Wonsan area. Bombing and strafing vehicles pinpointed by flames, the night flyers destroyed at least nine and damaged 25 trucks. . .'."

As the daytime interdiction effort was de-emphasized, beginning in June, the enemy made increasingly bold use of his highways. The night flyers of TF-77, in the month of November, were credited with the destruction of 206 trucks and damage to 274.

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Types of Night Heckling Aircraft

Throughout the Korean War there were two airplanes exclusively used for night work: the F4U5N Corsair and the AD4N Skyraider. Each carrier had four of each type assigned to its air group, these units being attached to the appropriate attack and fighter squadron.

The Corsair fighter aircraft were night defense aircraft charged with the protection of the task force at night. Since there was no enemy aerial opposition, these aircraft were released for attacks in Korea. The parent squadron of the F4U5N pilots and aircraft was VC-3, located at Naval Air Station, Moffett Field.[10A]

The Skyraider aircraft came from VC-35, located at Naval Air Station, San Diego. The pilots and planes from this squadron were assigned to and especially trained in the night attack role. For this mission the Skyraider was an ideal vehicle. The usual load for a night heckling AD Skyraider was one 500-pound bomb, six 250-pound bombs, six flares, and full ammunition for their four 20-mm. cannon.

"The combat aircrewmen of VC-35 had to be the best trained and the most courageous type of men," said LCDR Ward. "It takes a particular brand of courage to participate in protracted night operations, sitting in the back end of a plane, unable to see either ship or target."

"The AD4N planes were ideally suited for the night interdiction mission," said LCDR W. C. Griese, Officer in Charge of *Valley Forge's* VC-35s Baker team. "The provision of extensive electronic equipment and stations for two crewmen to operate the gear made this aircraft approach a true all-weather airplane and allowed us to effectively complete many missions which would otherwise have been impossible. The ability of this airplane to carry a sizable ordnance load with a good endurance factor also endeared it to the hearts of the night people.

"When we first arrived on the line aboard *Valley Forge* in January 1953, our job after locating enemy locomotives was to cut the tracks ahead of and behind the locomotives and let the day boys knock it off the next morning. . . . We conscientiously did as we were told until discovering that the locomotives that we stranded at night often weren't there the next morning due to the Commies' amazing ability to fill bomb craters and repair rails within an hour or two. We then decided among ourselves that the best place to cut the tracks was directly *beneath* the locomotive—and then we started to do some good.

"Although we evaluated many types of ordnance for our missions, we finally concluded that the best weapon we had was the 20-mm. gun. One round of 20-mm. high explosive incendiary in the gas tank or engine of a truck would completely and permanently knock it out, and a few rounds through the boiler of a locomotive could stop it very effectively. Also, with this weapon, we didn't have to worry about minimum safe altitudes in the run, and each shell hitting at night gave a good flash which made for very easy correcting, and our accuracy became very good.

"Our most effective single mission," continued LCDR Griese, "was on the night of 13 February 1953. It was a pretty miserable night, with ceilings at about 700 feet and a light freezing rain falling. Apparently the enemy didn't think we'd be out in weather like this, and they were moving gasoline tankers in convoy on the coastal highway about 20 miles south of Hamhung. Of course, we didn't know for sure what we were attacking, since all we could see when we began our run were the headlights; but after the first round of incendiary found the gasoline there was no doubt about it! We burned *seven* of the tankers (and damaged three others) and we had no further use for flares in that area for the rest of the night! It was quite a sight to see a large tanker truck scream down the highway, trailing burning gas for a mile or more, and finally erupting in a big column of flame.

"This particular incident pointed out the fact that, in general, the worse the weather was, the better the hunting!"

Imaginative planning and persistence by *Valley Forge's* night hecklers paid off on a mission flown the night of 3 May 1953 against the Chosin reservoir hydroelectric plant.

"Chosin No. 1 power plant had been attacked several times by large groups of our aircraft during daylight hours," stated LCDR Griese, "despite the extreme concentration of enemy antiaircraft of all types, Since this target was right on one of our night recco[10B] routes, we were flying directly over it almost every night, at low altitude, practically on a schedule, and we never got a buzz out of any protective AA. It occurred to us, of course, that we could attack this target, and we so proposed to the planners. We were initially refused, however, on the basis that it would be too dangerous. (The intelligence people had told us that there were probably a dozen or more heavies and thirty to forty 37-mm. automatic weapons around that power plant.) We persisted, however, and finally got a crack at it in the early morning hours of 3 May. We had three of our ADs loaded with one 1,000-pound GP and one 1,000-pound SAP[10C] bomb apiece. We briefed carefully and were catapulted at 0300. The lead plane made a landfall on radar and hit the enemy beach just south of Hungnam. We had no difficulty locating the target even though it was in a deep valley and completely blacked out. The lead plane immediately pulled up and dropped a flare which illuminated the target beautifully and allowed the following planes to commence immediate glide bombing attacks. As each flare approached the ground, it was replaced by another; thus a blinding light was kept continually between the attacking planes and the enemy gunners, who, after about four minutes, finally got the word and commenced shooting wildly with everything they had. Despite this fire we stayed over the target for a total of seven minutes, and each pilot made two deliberate bombing runs plus additional flare runs. No plane suffered damage from the enemy's intensive fire. Of the six bombs carried, one GP (general purpose bomb) hung up, one hit right alongside the plant, setting off great electrical fire-balls, and one landed fifty feet beyond the target. All three SAPs (semi armor-piercing bombs) released, but since they penetrated deeply before exploding, no results could be observed.

"The lesson from this incident lies in the fact that night pilots in night airplanes successfully navigated inland, found, illuminated, and attacked a heavily defended enemy target with comparatively little risk. It was an optimum military situation."

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The "Mighty Mouse" Rocket Used at Night

During the night interdiction campaign, one new type of ordnance was tried in Korea which proved highly successful: the 2.75-inch folding-fin aircraft rocket, which had the nickname "Mighty Mouse." Developed initially as an air-to-air weapon, this small rocket found peculiar but suitable use as a night interdiction weapon late in the Korean war.

The "Mighty Mouse" rockets were carried in packages of seven; and six pods or packages were carried on each AD Skyraider, with flares and 250- or 500-pound bombs on the remaining stations. Each package of seven was fired in a ripple, with a split second between each rocket.

The initial fleet testing and evaluation of the 2.75-inch folding-fin aircraft rocket on ground targets had been accomplished at Inyokern, California, in early December 1952, by the executive officer of VC-35, CDR Frank G. Edwards. So pleased was Commander Edwards with the test results that he convinced his superiors that a war trial over Korea was in order. In April 1953, therefore, Night Attack Team Mike aboard the *Philippine Sea* (CAPT Paul H. Ramsey) conducted "Mighty Mouse" rocket attacks on interdiction targets:

"7 April: 'CDR Edwards and LCDR Ward were launched as late evening hecklers. Edwards broke the ice when he made a fine run on a truck and burned it with seven rounds. . . .'

"8 April: 'LT Harmon nailed four trucks on one run with two packages, burning all four, with secondary explosions observed.'

"13 April: 'Encountering what appeared to be lights on a road, Ward made several passes at the head of the column without firing. During each pass the lights went out until finally, on the last pass, the truck lights were left burning and Ward continued the attack, firing all six packages (42 rockets) down the length of the column of approximately twenty trucks from a quartering direction. Several secondary explosions resulted and at least four large fires were left burning down the length of the column. The local "hero" medal was transferred to Felix upon his return to the ship. . . .'

"26 April: 'The hecklers had their best night—Sullivan got at least five trucks with two rocket packages; fires in supply buildups in two villages; Ward burned half the village of Soho-ri with a four package attack; DeSmet burned at least four trucks and damaged two with three packages, silenced an automatic weapon near Wonsan, burned three or four buildings in a village; Erickson burned two buildings and silenced an AA position. . .'."

"The destructive ability, the accuracy, the ease of handling and using the rockets was proved. Captain Ramsey reported that "the rockets were extremely effective weapons against trucks or similar targets." Rear Admiral R. E. Blick, ComCarDiv-3, recommended a rapid increase in output, so that general Fleet usage in Korea could be accomplished.

"The use of the 'Mighty Mouse' rockets against ground targets was very successful," said CDR F. G. Edwards. "Using them was like going after a bug with a flyswatter instead of trying to stab him with a pencil."

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Significance

Despite unusually favorable conditions, and despite the costly, vigorous, and prolonged effort just described, UN air power failed to isolate the Korean battlefield. Perhaps only the use of the atomic bomb against sources of supply and against the stockpiles in Manchuria could have accomplished this isolation; but this effort was never made.

Air power was denied the attempt to isolate the peninsula from the mainland by making attacks upon the Manchurian sanctuary. Thus, the air interdiction of the Korean battlefield took the only course which remained — that of attacking the supply system *in Korea*—the rail lines and highways (and the traffic upon them) which carried the enemy's strength into his frontlines.

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Responsibility for the Interdiction Campaign and Its Coordination

In analyzing the Navy's role in the interdiction campaign in Korea, it must be remembered that the conduct of interdiction upon land was the primary responsibility of the U.S. Air Force as laid down in the Functions Paper.[10D] The Navy's responsibility for interdiction on land was purely collateral. Throughout the Korean war, therefore, the general supervision of the interdiction campaign was exercised by the U.S. Air Force, through the Joint Operation Center at Taegu, under the command of the Fifth Air Force in Korea.

At no time during the Korean War were the interdiction efforts of the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force upon the Korean peninsula coordinated at the theater level.[10E] For the first six months of the war, coordination was not necessary, because of the fluid state of the ground fighting. After the evacuation of Hungnam, and especially after the ground fighting became positioned, there still was no coordinated plan for the centralization of interdiction effort, the priority of targets, or the choice of best available weapons. This lack showed up in such variances as in bridge reconnaissance by Air Force and Naval aircraft in a certain east coast area. Based on their reconnaissance pictures, the Air Force reported 36 rail and highway bridges out of commission. The Navy's report, for the same day and for the same area, reported only six bridges out.

Lack of theater coordination also showed up in varying criteria used by Air Force and Navy. In the first months of the war, the Air Force considered that a successfully attacked bridge would normally be out of action for 30 days. The Navy's experience showed that a bridge successfully attacked might only be out of action for two days—or even a matter of hours.

Further evidence of the lack of coordination was indicated by the fact that there was no written or formal assignment of areas of effort between the Air Force and the Navy. In the absence of such an agreement, one grew to be understood and accepted: the Navy had primary (but not exclusive) responsibility for the east coast rail and highway systems of North Korea, while the Air Force had primary (but again not exclusive) control over the western rail and highway networks. This division of effort grew and came to be understood and accepted.

The division of responsibility for interdiction was first provided on 7 July 1950 after the naval air attacks on Pyongyang. General Stratemeyer told Admiral Struble in a dispatch that "if you participate in further air strikes, request you confine activities to area north of 38° and east of 127°."[11] The east coast assignment was further spelled out on 5 November 1950 when Task Force 77 was assigned the area *north* of the immediate battlefront, and *east* of the line of longitude of 126°-40'E, but remaining five miles *south* of all Manchurian territory.

These assignments, plus the subsequent long days of effort by Task Force 77 in the immediate area of the Hungnam redeployment, the shortage of U.S. Air Force bases in South Korea, and the fact that the Air Force could effectively reach the upper parts of northeast Korea only with B-29s, were the several factors which resulted in the allocation of the east coast area to the Navy.

Several months later, on 15 February 1951, the division of North Korea was further solidified when FEAF headquarters informed COMNAVFE that interdiction of the northeast coastal area was difficult for them because of the distance from their bases. FEAF requested that the Navy cover the northeast coastal route until 25 February. On the latter date Admiral Joy ordered TF-77 to continue the interdiction campaign until further notice.

Certainly, one of the lessons of the prolonged interdiction campaign in Korea was that theater control and coordination of such a costly and major effort must be effected if success is to be achieved.

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Reasons for Failure of Interdiction

Notwithstanding the heavy damage inflicted by naval air, the over-all air interdiction campaign in Korea had only partial success. Even when the attacks of Task Force 77 were added to those of the Marine Air Wing and the Fifth Air Force, the combined destruction did not succeed in restricting the flow of the enemy's supplies to the frontlines, or in achieving "interdiction of the battlefield." The attrition caused the enemy to triple and re-triple his efforts to supply the frontlines; it laid a terrible and costly burden upon his supply organization; it caused him the most widespread damage and loss. But no vital or decisive effect could be observed at the fighting front. Throughout the campaign, the enemy seemed to have ample strength to launch an attack if he wished. His frequent heavy artillery barrages upon our frontlines were evidence that he did not suffer from a shortage of ammunition.[11A] Captured prisoners said they had plenty of food, clothing, medical supplies, and ammunition for their small arms.

"The interdiction program was a failure," said VADM J. J. Clark, Commander Seventh Fleet. "It did *not* interdict. The Communists got the supplies through; and for the kind of a war they were fighting, they not only kept their battleline supplied, but they had enough surplus to spare so that by the end of the war they could even launch an offensive."[12]

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Communist Reaction to the Interdiction Campaign

It must be grudgingly admitted that one of the key reasons why isolation of the battlefield could not be achieved in Korea was the surprising tenacity, determination, and ingenuity displayed by the Communists to keep their rail and highway networks in operation. In spite of incessant daylight attacks and night-time harassment, despite the necessity of working at night, of using old equipment, of having long, exposed, and vulnerable supply lines, the Chinese were able to maintain and even increase the flow of supplies to the battlefront.

In addition to patience and determination, however, the Communists had method and organization for the maintenance and repair of their road and rail networks.

The responsible agency for highway maintenance was the North Korean Department of Military Highway Administration. It was charged with the repair of tunnels, bridges, and roads, and for construction of necessary bypasses. This organization, numbering some 20,000 personnel, was divided into 12 regiments of three or more battalions each. Each battalion (about 500 men) was assigned to a section of North Korea. At important points within each section, platoons of road repair personnel were stationed at two-mile intervals. Their equipment was simple but effective: shovels, sandbags, wicker baskets, picks, axes, and other hand tools. At key bridges and tunnels, in times of emergency, local labor might also be drafted. On such occasions as many as 1,000 laborers, including many women and children, would be used to repair a single bridge or tunnel.

The railroad repair system was equally extensive and equally well organized. The responsible agency was the North Korean Railroad Recovery Bureau, consisting of three brigades and numbering some 26,000 personnel. These brigades were further subdivided into repair teams of 300 people per team. In addition to the simple hand tools mentioned above, each team was equipped with horse and wagon units for the hauling of heavy timbers and rails. Moreover, specialized equipment such as welding equipment, surveying equipment, jacks, levers, and cranes were assembled at key repair points. Prefabricated wooden bridges and prefabricated metal spans, as well as timber, rails, cement, and other building materials were also stockpiled, much of it kept in the thousands of caves and tunnels.

The rapidity of the Communist repair effort is indicated by the fact that of one stretch of track near Wonsan, 400 feet were destroyed on 4 April 1952; yet on 5 April the track was repaired and in operation. All along the northeast coast, cuts made in the morning would be repaired by the afternoon.

In the struggle to keep their rail traffic moving, the Reds did two other things to foil our interdiction attacks: (1) they constructed bypasses, and (2) they shuttled rail traffic between breaks.

The construction of a bridge bypass was a simple but effective counter. Most of the rivers in Korea were shallow and fordable. When bridges across such streams were destroyed, with their piers and abutments damaged, the Reds merely laid a temporary bridge across the stream bed itself rather than attempting to repair the nearby bridge. At key locations where the terrain would not permit this simple solution, the Reds would undertake the laborious construction of a lengthy bypass to circumvent the bridge entirely. The bridge at Carlson's Canyon was such an effort.

The Communist response to the hundreds of breaks made in their trackage was the shuttling system. At night, a train would operate as far south on a particular segment of track as possible—12 miles per night was not an unusual average. Its load would then be shifted, usually by truck but often by hand, across the broken bridge or damaged rail bed, to another train. This train would proceed southward as far as possible, hiding in rail tunnels by day, and would again shift its load to another train when it reached an impassable or unrepaired break in the line.

While the rate of moving supplies was seriously hampered, a certain amount of supplies went steadily through.

The Reds also invented and exploited every possible method of concealment, deception, and camouflage. Whenever a truck convoy had to be left exposed, it was always covered with straw or foliage, driven beneath the trees, concealed in caves or beneath bridges, or, if in wintertime, covered with white canvas. Along the road between Wonsan and Pyongyang, often referred to by the airmen as “Death Valley,” were many well-concealed revetments in which a truck could be hidden quickly. As for locomotives and boxcars, the hundreds of tunnels were excellent hideouts, and there was room inside them for some 8,000 cars—enough room to accommodate every train and locomotive in North Korea. At times, locomotives were deceptively placed in the center of the train rather than in their usual position at the front or back.

Damaged trains and trucks were left in plain view and often painted bright colors to invite attack; operating trucks carried oily rags, which, in the event of an attack, the drivers quickly lit to leave the impression of destruction. Trucks were often concealed near churches, schools, and hospitals, so that an attack on them must also involve danger of striking these buildings as well. Trucks were often concealed in bombed-out buildings. On other occasions, truck hoods were left open and the truck wheels removed, to give the appearance of being “not-serviceable”; but these same vehicles were quickly made serviceable after nightfall.

The use by enemy trucks of our own flags and markings or even the International Red Cross emblem was occasionally reported by our airmen. Trucks moved in convoys, as many as twenty in a column. Spotters were stationed along the roads at every mile to fire their rifles upon approach of one of our planes. Flashing lights along the mountain tops for warning the trains and trucks of an approaching plane were also reported by our observers.

Rail breaks were simulated by strewing debris, mud, and straw across sections of track. Exposed locomotives were covered with foliage or straw, and, in the marshalling yards, supplies were never left uncovered. Wide dispersal and small stockpiles were standard Communist procedure. Around the logistic supply center of Yangdok, for example, were twelve supply storage areas and numerous vehicle parking areas, spread out over an area approximately two and one-half by five miles with the whole area heavily defended by automatic radar-laid guns.

Flak traps were plentiful in North Korea. An open parachute hung on a tree would be visibly exposed to lure an unwary pilot. Dummy trains, trucks, tanks, and even troops (made of straw and cardboard) were exposed at key points to welcome an attack. Tracks suggesting heavy traffic would be made leading to an important looking but empty building. Steel cables were stretched across the narrow valleys into which our planes would sometimes fly. Each of these flak traps was ringed with well-placed and well-concealed guns.

And there were many occasions of the Communists using our radio channels to give pilots false information. This latter trick was usually the least effective, for when the enemy radio was asked to authenticate, he would invariably go off the air.

Perhaps the most effective deception was the Reds’ practice of making both bridges and tracks usable by night and unserviceable by day. After the end of a night’s work, a crane would lift out a portable span and deposit it in a nearby tunnel until the next day. At those bridges spanning a river, a section of bridge would be floated clear, moored downstream, and camouflaged during the daylight hours. At such bridges, piles of construction material would be left visible to leave the impression of work in progress.

As for the rails, sections of track would be hand-carried into the nearest tunnel and concealed there during the daylight hours, leaving gaps in the lines which, to the pilots, gave the appearance of an unrepaired break.

“Their repair work was simplicity itself,” said VADM J. J. Clark. “The minute darkness came, they would lay down the track. They didn’t prepare the roadbed; they just laid the cross ties in the mud, and as long as the cars would run, it was all right.”

In addition to their organized repair systems and their clever use of concealment and camouflage, the

Reds also responded to UN attacks upon interdiction targets with antiaircraft fire. The principal heavy gun was the Soviet 85-mm., a highly mobile and accurate gun mounted on four wheels, firing a 20-pound projectile to an effective altitude of 25,000 feet at the rate of 15 to 20 rounds per minute. The principal automatic weapon was the 37-mm. gun, also a four-wheel mobile unit, firing a 1.6-pound projectile at a rate of 160 rounds per minute.

The number of enemy antiaircraft guns increased steadily in direct ratio to the intensity of our attacks. In May of 1951, the number of heavy guns and automatic weapons in North Korea was estimated to be 925. By March of 1953, the Reds had increased this to 1670 heavy and automatic weapons (37-mm., 76-mm., and 85-mm.) and several thousand of smaller automatic weapons (12.7-mm.). The greatest part of these guns were known to be Soviet, including gun-laying Soviet radar. Some of the latter were mobile radar units which were constantly moved from area to area as the pattern of the UN attacks was varied. In “Death Valley,” west of Wonsan, VA-75 reported in August 1952 that during one attack, 350 to 400 bursts could be counted in the air.

The lower pilots carried their attacks (and in many cases only an on-the-deck delivery could insure the needed accuracy), the greater became the danger of flak damage. As in World War II, the majority of flak damage suffered by our airplanes was from small arms. It is interesting to note that while most of the propeller driven AD and F4U pilots (affectionately called “Able Dawgs” and “Hawgs” respectively) never realized the intensity of the small arms fire they were attracting because of engine and propeller noise, the jet pilots in their more silent cockpits were frequently able to hear the intense small arms fire from the ground. This was also confirmed by pilots shot down and later recovered.

To appreciate this growing flak problem, the experience of Air Group Five in 93 days of operations in 1951 is typical: its aircraft were hit 284 times.

From May until December 1951, the Navy lost 74 aircraft (but only 39 pilots); the Marines lost 39 aircraft (32 pilots) on interdiction missions. The number of aircraft struck by enemy fire was as follows:

Mar. 1951–Oct. 1951: *Boxer, 202* aircraft struck
Aug. 1951–Mar. 1952: *Essex,* 318 aircraft struck
Dec. 1951–June 1952: *Valley Forge,* 551 aircraft struck
June 1952–Dec. 1952: *Bon Homme Richard,* 97 aircraft struck

This table indicates the steady rise in the number of aircraft struck by antiaircraft fire from March 1951 until June 1952.

“This heavy build-up of enemy AA batteries,” said RADM John Perry, “also tied up many enemy personnel. In the seven months we were on the line, the increase was around 200 per cent—and it continued.”[13]

The last figure in the above table shows a sharp falling-off in the number of struck aircraft, due to several reasons. In August of 1952 Rear Admiral Apollo Soucek, CTF 77, ordered that future attacks upon interdiction targets south of Wonsan should not be carried below a minimum altitude of 3,000 feet.

Second, the naval aircraft changed their attack tactics. Wherever there were heavily defended targets (and by mid-1952 all of the key interdiction targets in North Korea were heavily defended), the invariable rule was to attack the guns themselves in conjunction with the interdiction target itself. Flak-suppression became standard procedure. Moreover, larger flights of planes were used, and the number of runs on the targets was reduced. Such countering tactics caused a rapid falling off in the damage being received by our aircraft.

Two conclusions follow from a study of the Communists’ reactions to the interdiction campaign. First, the tactics employed by the Reds, and the patience and persistence they displayed, were successful in Korea and may be expected to be seen again. Secondly, the primitiveness of the battle area with regard to its communication network was an advantage to the defenders.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
The Weapons of Interdiction Used in Korea

The isolation of a fixed battlefield (using every method short of physical occupation) is a difficult task in any terrain, and under the accepted restrictions in Korea, the attempts at isolation proved to be unprofitable and unsuccessful.

It is appropriate now to determine why interdiction in Korea was unprofitable and did not succeed in "isolation of the battlefield."

First of all, the means available to UN forces for the accomplishment of interdiction were varied and adequate. Three weapons systems were available: the airplane, the naval gun, and the raiding party.

The UN's airplanes ran the gamut from the large B-29 to the Mosquito L-19; the naval gun from the 16-inch to the 20-mm., the bombs from 2,000-pounders to 100-pound delayed-action bombs. Air attacks could be massed and concentrated on key targets or they could be small and widespread among many targets. In addition, UN forces enjoyed the elements of surprise, initiative, and target selection.

In the inventory of UN aircraft, the precision instrument of naval aviation was to prove itself the most effective and versatile weapon of air interdiction. In particular, the AD Skyraider was to be the most successful airplane of the 37-month war. Only the Skyraider could carry and successfully deliver the 2,000-pound bomb with dive-bombing precision against the targets of interdiction: the bridge abutment or span, the tunnel mouth, and the cave entrance. The AD's versatility and weight-lifting capacity (as much as 5,000 pounds on an average carrier mission) made it the war's outstanding performer.

As the war progressed, jet aircraft became capable of carrying bombs, and they too proved to be very effective interdiction weapons, especially as the enemy's antiaircraft efforts intensified. The jets' silent approach, their speed and their steadiness as a weapons platform made them ideal interdiction weapons. Combat losses for the jets were only one-fourth those of the propeller types.

As for the naval gun, the venerable 16-inch gun demonstrated its effectiveness once again. No other size of shell could so effectively blast a coastal interdiction target as the old 16-inch. After such targets as bridge and tunnels had been demolished, the 5-inch guns of the destroyers could usually keep them inactivated; but the smaller naval guns could not profitably effect the initial destruction.

Thus, the means for accomplishing interdiction were obviously adequate. The failure in Korea cannot be laid to a lack of them.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
The Target Systems of the Communists

Next, it is necessary to examine the target systems of the Communists' logistic networks.

Broadly speaking, there are three main parts to any logistic system: (1) the sources of raw materials; (2) the points of manufacture; and (3) the distribution system.

During the Korean war, two of these three, and part of the third, could *not* be attacked and destroyed because of the UN's own decision.

Thus, one of the chief reasons for the failure of the interdiction campaign in Korea was the fact that the UN could not attack the most vulnerable parts of a supply system—the sources and the points of manufacture. Only the exposed portions of the supply system *in Korea* could be attacked.

Having been limited to the supply system in Korea, the UN forces had their choice of four types of interdiction targets. First, there were the supply routes themselves: the bridges, tunnels, tracks, roadbeds. Second, there was the rolling stock: locomotives and boxcars, trucks, wagons and carts. Third, there were the personnel who repaired and operated the supply networks; fourth, the stockpiles of materials and supplies in transit or in dumps.

Two of these four target systems were unprofitable for systematic air attack. Obviously, with unlimited manpower available to the Koreans and Chinese, attacking the personnel operating or repairing the supply routes was infeasible. As for attacking the supplies themselves, either in transit or in dumps, this would scarcely have decisive effect for two reasons. First, the *origins* of the supplies were untouchable. Second, the Communists' ability to hide, camouflage, and disperse supplies in the hundreds of caves, tunnels, and huts was acknowledged.

Thus, only two target systems in Korea were left for attack: the rolling stock and the routes themselves. Attacks upon the rolling stock had the disadvantage, once again, of not being able to touch the sources. There was an almost limitless source of trucks and trains in Manchuria; those vehicles and rolling stock destroyed or damaged in Korea need only be replaced. For an interdiction effort to be effective on this target system, the attacks on rolling stock had to inflict damage at a rate exceeding the enemy's capacity for replacement—a highly unlikely performance.

The remaining target system was the route itself. At first glance Korea's looked ideal, choked as it was with bridges, tunnels, and the mountains crowding and twisting the roadbeds and rail lines into devious routes. On the other hand, with the limited number of airplanes available, not every one of the 956 bridges could be demolished, not every one of the 231 tunnels blocked.

Three patterns of attack could be followed: (1) key bridges could be cut, and kept cut; (2) a belt across Korea could be selected and every supply route and target within it destroyed; and (3), widespread damage could be effected upon the roads and rail lines themselves.

This analysis indicates that true isolation of the battlefield, under the UN's self-imposed restrictions, was never achievable in Korea. Of this effort, General Mark Clark wrote: "The Air Force and the Navy carriers may have kept us from losing the war, but they were denied the opportunity of influencing the outcome decisively in our favor. They gained complete mastery of the skies, gave magnificent support to the infantry, destroyed every worthwhile target in North Korea, and took a costly toll of enemy personnel and supplies. But as in Italy, where we learned the same bitter lesson in the same kind of rugged country, our airpower could not keep a steady stream of enemy supplies and reinforcements from reaching the battle line. Air could not isolate the front."[14]

The U.S. Navy can take great pride that it came as close as it did.

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Chapter 8. The Struggle to Strangle
Summary

For naval men, interference with an enemy's logistical system has been a traditional occupation throughout history by naval blockade and by direct attacks upon enemy shipping at sea. However, the interference with an enemy's *land* supply in his own territory is a relatively new factor in warfare introduced since the advent of the airplane. Not until World War II did interference with an enemy's logistical system by air reach a significant scale of effort. The ultimate of land logistical interdiction—strategic bombing—was extensively used during World War II in an effort to destroy the opponent's logistical systems in enemy territory.

In modern war, the factor of logistics has come to be an equal partner with strategy and tactics. Strategic bombing, in the broadest sense, is as an interdiction effort—*distant* interdiction to be sure, as opposed to the commonly understood definition of interdiction as meaning isolation of the *immediate* battlefield. But wherever interdiction is applied, near the zone of the battlefield or distantly from it, it is still logistical interference.

The failure of air power, through interdiction, to stop the fighting in Korea follows a historic pattern. Except in a few isolated instances during World War II (such as the Normandy landings), there is much evidence to show that an air effort to interrupt an enemy's supply system *has never been wholly successful*. In World War II, the Luftwaffe failed to starve Britain; the Anglo-American air offensive against the Nazi war-making machinery did not prevent an increase in military production even as late as July 1944. Air interdiction of the battlefront failed in Italy, on a peninsula and in terrain that was prophetic of Korea. There, in the spring of 1944, an intensive air effort had been made to sever the German supply lines and to reduce German supply levels in order to force their retreat. Despite great efforts which achieved limited successes (at times all the Po River bridges were out of commission), the air interdiction campaign in Italy was never decisive upon the conduct of ground operations.[14A] It harassed, it hurt, it impeded the enemy; but it did not have critical results upon the ground fighting.[14B]

In the Pacific, the B-29 bomb and fire-bomb attacks on Japan's industrial cities critically damaged that nation's war-making potential. But there is ample evidence to show that the Japanese were already fast becoming prostrate from the strangulation of the prolonged naval blockade.

Thus, the failure of air power to interdict a battlefield in Korea was not the first time.

On 6 April 1955, almost two years after the truce in Korea, the Red Chinese in a broadcast over the Peking radio, stated that the United Nations "mobilized more than 2,000 military aircraft and still failed to cut off the supply line to tiny North Korea."[15] Regretfully, though their arithmetic was wrong, their conclusion was right.

For many months—from early 1951 through 1952—almost 100 per cent of the offensive effort of the carriers, 60 per cent of the offensive effort of the shore-based Marines' aircraft, 70 per cent of the offensive effort of the Fifth Air Force, and 70 per cent of the blockading efforts of the ships along the east coast was devoted to interdiction. These percentages fluctuated from month to month, and in the last year of the war, as has been recorded, interdiction had less emphasis. Nevertheless, these percentages generally reflect the weight and scale of effort which was made to isolate the Korean battlefield. In the first eighteen months of the interdiction campaign, Task Force 77 flew 20,567 armed reconnaissance and interdiction flights; the Marines ashore flew 25,266 reconnaissance and interdiction flights; the FEAF (Far East Air Force) flew 126,702 reconnaissance and interdiction flights; and Task Force 95 fired 230,000 rounds of ammunition on interdiction missions.

Despite this effort, the enemy was never kept from supplying his needed requirements. At no time—

except locally and temporarily—did the enemy limit his combat effort because of supply considerations.

By every index, in fact, the Communists were able to steadily increase their flow of supplies to the frontlines. Total over-all rail sightings held steadily throughout the war. Antiaircraft fire increased. Vehicular sightings increased from month to month.

All these facts are made more significant when it is appreciated that the enemy forces at the front were supported by long supply lines which were confined to a closely blockaded peninsula, and which were under constant, largely unopposed, attacks by considerable air strength. At the same time, our own supply pipeline was never under attack.

However, because of the limitations imposed which forced airpower to confine interdiction to only a small part of the weakest element of the enemy's logistical system, it does not follow that, having failed in Korea, interdiction must always fail. The full effects of atomic weapons upon an interdiction campaign cannot now be foretold.

In summary, six major reasons are given as to why airpower failed to interdict the Korean battlefield. If these problems are not encountered in a future conflict, or if they are solved, then isolation of a battlefield may yet be effected.

First, interdiction failed because of the ability of the Communists to absorb widespread and heavy punishment, and, through use of unlimited manpower, to keep their highways and rail lines operating.

Second, interdiction failed in Korea because UN forces could not attack the sources and fountainheads of the supply lines.

Third, interdiction failed in Korea because of our inability to find and destroy at night, and in inclement weather, the small individual targets of interdiction which we were able to destroy in daylight.

Fourth, interdiction failed because of the stalemated war. Had the fighting been fluid, the Communists' rate of usage would have increased greatly. Then they would have been forced to use the rails and roads by day. "After my first month on the line with TF-77," said RADM John Perry, "I never believed that complete interdiction was possible with the tools we had available. I did believe—and still do—that in a fluid, as opposed to the existing static campaign, we could cut down enemy supplies to the point where he could not long sustain a major forward move."[16] In the words of General James Van Fleet: "If we had ever put on some pressure and made him fight, we would have given him an insoluble supply problem. Instead, we fought the Communist on his own terms, even though we had the advantages of flexibility, mobility, and firepower. We fought *his* way, which was terrible. We both sat, and dug in, and he was the superior rat. He was small; he could dig holes faster; and if he lost a hundred people in a hole, he'd just go out and find another hundred.

"We might have interdicted the battlefield if we'd attacked, using our advantages and superior weapons. Then we would have made him use up his supplies faster than he could supply himself."[17]

Fifth, interdiction failed because of the very primitive nature of the enemy's exposed supply network.

Sixth, interdiction failed owing to our inability to use the one weapon—the atomic bomb—in our arsenal which might have severed Communist supply lines in Korea.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Establishment of Blockade

On 4 July 1950, the following broadcast was made to all shipping in the Pacific Ocean:

"The President of the United States, in keeping with the United Nations Security Council's request for support to the Republic of Korea in repelling the Northern Korean invaders and restoring peace in Korea, has ordered a naval blockade of the Korean coast."

While this broadcast did not mention the limits of the blockade, they were 39°-35' N on the west coast, and 41°-51' N on the east coast. These limits were established to keep all sea forces well clear of both Russian and Chinese territory. [1]

The imposition of a blockade of Korea was not without legal difficulties. The Soviet Union and Communist China both denounced the blockade and refused to acknowledge its existence or legality although both observed it. Early in July 1950, Admiral Joy queried Admiral Sherman: Were Soviet or Chinese merchantmen to be barred from North Korean ports? Admiral Sherman's reply was in strict accord with International Law. All *warships* not under United Nations command, he said, including Russian, would be permitted to enter North Korean ports, except of course, North Korean. All *other* type ships were barred.

As the war opened, the forces for establishing a blockade were meager:

Click here to view table

Such as it was, this small force set the blockade.

On 29 June 1950, the first shore bombardment of the war was fired by *Juneau* at Okkye on the east coast. The target was enemy personnel, and four hundred and fifty-nine 5-inch shells were fired at them. Twenty-seven casualties were reported. Okkye was again a target for *Juneau's* guns on 30 June.

The initial United States naval action of the war took place on Sunday, 2 July, when *Juneau* (in company with *Jamaica* and *Black Swan*) sighted four North Korean torpedo boats in the vicinity of Chumunjin, on Korea's east coast. The four torpedo boats, escorting a small coastal convoy of ten trawlers, were steaming southward when the two groups sighted each other shortly after sunrise.

As the three UN ships turned toward them, the four North Korean torpedo boats made a gallant but futile attack, firing their small guns but failing to launch torpedoes because of VT-fuzed shells exploding around them. The first UN salvo blew up and sank one torpedo boat, halted and burned a second, while the remaining two raced off in opposite directions. One of these two beached itself and was destroyed by gunfire; the other, heading seaward and zigzagging violently, managed to evade the pursuing *Black Swan*. Small-caliber enemy shore guns fired a few rounds at the three UN ships, one shell landing near *Juneau's* port quarter, but achieved no hits.

The next morning, the *Juneau* discovered the ten trawlers which had taken refuge in Chumunjin, and, according to later reports, sank seven of them.

These two episodes were the opening actions in a blockade and bombardment effort which was to stretch on for more than three years—an effort unique in American naval history. In many respects it was a "crazy, mixed-up" naval blockade, where trains and trucks on land were chased by ships at sea; where Communist troops almost 20 miles from the oceans felt the shock of naval gunfire.

Hereafter, there would be no active surface opposition, no submarine opposition, and practically no enemy air opposition to the blockade. UN naval forces, led by the U.S. Navy, would have complete control of the entire five-hundred-odd miles of the North Korean coastline.

Notwithstanding these facts, the imposition of a blockade of the Korean coast was neither easy nor

simple. The geography of the peninsula was a handicap. The western coast, with its 30-foot tides, was a network of embayments, estuaries, and hundreds of off-lying islands, vast mudbanks, numerous shoals, and uncharted rocks. The east coast was precipitous, largely barren, and suitable for mining in many areas. The current on both coasts, and the several Korean rivers emptying into both the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan, lent themselves to the use of “drifter” mines. These physical features made the application of a blockade difficult.

Second, the blockade was imposed thousands of miles from the American mainland.

Third, the number of ships for blockading and bombardment purposes was never plentiful.

Fourth, the legal requirement for an effective blockade required that every portion of the blockaded coast had to be under surveillance once every twenty-four hours by ship (not by air).

The enemy was destined to resist the naval blockade and bombardment cunningly and to the limit of his ability. The thirty-six months which followed saw him make great use of mines; he also opposed the blockade and bombardment with coastal and shore defense batteries so well hidden and so deeply tunnelled into the rocky hills of the Korean coast that they were often able to defy the UN’s naval strength.

That this naval blockade around Korea was a success, that it hampered, embarrassed, and hurt the enemy, there can be no doubt. The ingenuity, aggressiveness, and persistence displayed by UN naval forces in imposing a resolute blockade at a distance of 5,000 miles from the American continent is worthy of record as well as of tribute.

Minesweepers, frigates, destroyer escorts, destroyers, cruisers, and battleships of the U.S. Navy, and units from seven other navies of the UN, plus the ROK Navy, were destined to fight a bitter, unglamorous, and seemingly futile war along the coastlines of Korea. Many ships were to be hit; an unlucky few were to be sunk. By and large, the headlines of the war would not recognize these surface forces. Their work would largely go untold and unrewarded. VIPs would come and go in a steady parade through the Korean theater—to visit the frontlines, to witness operations aboard carriers and battleships, but only rarely to observe the smaller ships of the blockade and bombardment force in action.

Click here to view map

To the “small boys” especially, it was a dreary and often dangerous campaign of constant blockade and bombardment, essential to the war effort and necessary to the support of the fighting ashore.

The Sea War in Korea

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The First Landing of U.S. Forces in Korea

The USS *Juneau* had the honor of conducting both the first landing and the first raiding party in Korea.

"When the war began," said CAPT W. B. Porter,[1A] *Juneau's* executive officer, "the *Juneau* was anchored in Kagoshima Harbor. We were having an official party—the first one since the end of the war—honoring the local Japanese officials. During the afternoon, we commenced receiving messages announcing an 'incident' in Korea, and telling us to stand by. As unobtrusively as possible, we discontinued the party and sent the Japanese guests ashore.

"The *Juneau's* orders," said Captain Porter, "were to proceed immediately to investigate landings on Kojo-do island. We arrived there the next morning (28 June) shortly before dawn.

"On arrival, the question arose, 'How does one commence an investigation of 'landings' when no amphibious forces (as we know them, but only sampans) were used?' Admiral Higgins decided to send me ashore to investigate.

"I took four Marines with me in the whaleboat. We carried along a large American flag tied to a boat hook. I also had a walkie-talkie radio and one of those 'how to' instruction books for learning Japanese in three weeks. My orders were to investigate, but not to do any shooting except in self-defense.

"We ran into the harbor and went ashore, and after a cautious parade down the muddy village street, sighted a Korean who was marching back and forth with a carbine over his shoulder. At this time the big problem was to distinguish a *South* Korean from a *North* Korean. They all looked alike. However, the villagers soon commenced to bring us tea and hard-boiled eggs. We knew then that they were friendly.

"With hand signals and the aid of the language book, I was able to make it clear to the sentry that I wanted to contact someone of importance. About 11 a.m., we managed to get Pusan on the phone and I talked to the American Consul there. He said that the only landings that he knew of were reported to be at Munsan.

"Whereupon we went back to the whaleboat and back to the *Juneau* which all this time had been covering us with her guns.

"The *Juneau* got under way again, and steamed up to the vicinity of Munsan. This time we had to lie offshore quite a distance, and it took our whaleboat about an hour to get my party ashore.

"Once again, we weren't certain whether or not the spot we were landing was in enemy or friendly hands. We simply walked inland until we came to a road. I posted Marines on each side of the road in the underbrush. Pretty soon, along came a truck. The Marines jumped out onto the road, halted the truck, ordered out the occupants (who seemed to be civilians), and we turned the truck around and drove back into Munsan.

"We went to the police station and contacted the chief of police. He spoke some English and was able to tell us that the only enemy landings he had heard about had taken place near the village of Samchok.

"That was the way we got our information during the first few hours of the war."

The important point for record is that the first Americans ashore after the declaration of war was a group of U.S. Marines led by a naval officer from the USS *Juneau*.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Helping to Hold Pusan

As described in earlier chapters, the period between the commencement of the war on 25 June 1950 and the Inchon landing on 15 September 1950 was one of retreat to a defensible perimeter around Pusan. Four elements of naval support proved vital in the salvation of Pusan:

(1) The amphibious landing at Pohang

(2) The air strikes of naval and marine aircraft

(3) The effective and timely operations of the First Provisional Marine Brigade

(4) The bombardment fire of naval ships along the east coast of South Korea.

In the first three months of the Korean war, with sea forces limited and the ground issue in Korea much in doubt, the task of *blockade* was relegated to secondary importance. Every enemy soldier who could be killed or wounded by naval gunfire, every train or truck that could be stopped, every pound of supplies that could be demolished, would relieve pressure on the endangered Pusan beachhead. The firepower of the Navy's blockading forces was used for the twin tasks of supporting the ground forces with naval gunfire, and the destruction of as much of the enemy's forces and equipment, then enroute to the front, as possible.

Destruction along the enemy's logistic routes was accomplished by the blockade force in two ways: by gunfire and by raiding parties.

Between 29 June and 15 September, inclusive, the ships of the blockade force bombarded strictly military targets along the enemy-held east coast 89 times. Thousands of tons of projectiles destroyed and damaged bridges, warehouses, troops, railroads, tunnels, pillboxes, marshalling yards, factories, oil dumps, and guns. Never again were enemy targets so plentiful. Never again was the enemy's retaliation so light.

For one entire month, until the arrival in the area of the ships of Task Force Yoke on 21 July, the original ships of the Far East Navy had the Korean coasts exclusively to themselves. *Juneau, Mansfield, De Haven, Swenson,* and *Collett,* like hungry dogs in an unattended butchershop, had more than they could handle.

Rear Admiral Higgins' eastern Korean Support Group made an impressive contribution to the eastern anchor of the endangered and shrinking battleline of the Pusan perimeter in mid-July 1950 near the vicinity of Yongdok. Around this village the Korean mountains halted abruptly and fell precipitously into the sea, and the cliffside roads were compressed against the seashore conveniently exposed to naval gunfire.

At this time in this area, the Third ROK Division was stubbornly retreating before the stabbing attacks of several North Korean divisions. The ROK's only artillery support was that supplied by the ships.

"The situation ashore was still obscure," said British Admiral Andrewes,[2] "the communications with the Army almost nonexistent. So my fleet gunnery officer with an officer from the USS *Juneau* and the Royal Artillery bombardment liaison officer were landed with the object of finding out what was happening. They established communication with an American battalion ashore and arranged a system of wireless communication by giving the Army one Navy wireless set and taking from the Army one Army wireless set for HMS *Belfast* and USS *Juneau.* The party returned on board their ships at about 2130 in a ROK warship of some antiquity."

The evening of 19 July found *Juneau, Higbee, De Haven, Swenson,* and *Mansfield,* with the British cruiser *Belfast,* close ashore to Yongdok. The Korean Military Advisory Group, Lieutenant Colonel Rollins S. Emmerich, USA, senior officer, was attached to the Third ROK Division. Emmerich had earlier radioed instructions for naval targets and would spot the naval ship's fire.

At 1900, the two cruisers and four destroyers opened fire upon the designated targets: troop

concentrations, road junctions and artillery emplacements. *Belfast* fired nine-gun salvoes with controlled spots; *Juneau's* fire was deliberate, also using controlled spots. The destroyers joined in, as well as supplying night illumination fire. Two hundred and ninety-seven shells struck the entrenched enemy in Yongdok.

Admiral Higgins reported that the village was destroyed, that large fires were started, and that smoke was still visible to the ships some 12 hours later.[3] Rear Admiral Higgins congratulated Captain St. Clair-Ford's fast-firing *Belfast* crew, saying that her guns had spoken "with authority."

U.S. Army observers on the battleline spotting the fire of the naval ships were effusive. Major V. W. Bennett, U.S. Army, stated that "naval cooperation was of a superior quality." LTCOL Emmerich added ". . . This coordination and use of naval gunfire caused the largest proportions of the Fifth North Korean Division casualties. . . . The naval bombardments were terrific."[4]

Commander Robert A. Schelling of *Swenson* wrote in his war diary for 24 July 1950:

"Report from ashore spotters: 'Fire on enemy personnel in large numbers southeast of Yongdok inflicted heavy casualties. Best day yet.' I interrogated a North Korean prisoner who stated: 'Your artillery is hell. Every time you fire you kill or wound many soldiers. . . .'"

Higgins reported to Joy the results of his east coast gunfire support work in these words:

". . . By directly supporting our hard-pressed forces ashore, the enemy's advance on Pohang was definitely slowed. In the past 24 hours our ships have broken up enemy attacks, silenced enemy batteries, destroyed their observation posts, interdicted their traffic and troop concentrations, and made Yongdok untenable for their forces with heavy personnel losses at Yongdok."

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Reinforcements Arrive

By late July, additional ships had sailed into Korean waters in answer to the United Nations' appeal for sea forces: three cruisers *(Helena, Toledo,* HMS *Kenya),* four U.S. destroyers (from DesRon-11), two British destroyers, one Australian destroyer, three Canadian destroyers, two New Zealand frigates, and one Dutch destroyer.[4A]

Upon arrival of these additional forces, Admiral Joy promulgated a new operation order placing all blockade and support ships in a single task force (96.5) under the command of Commander Cruiser Division Three, Rear Admiral C. C. Hartman.

The task of blockading Korea was divided between east and west coasts. The west coast of Korea was assigned by Admiral Joy to the British forces under Rear Admiral William G. Andrewes, RN (TE 96.53) while the east coast was assigned to U.S. forces in two elements: TG 96.51, under Rear Admiral C. C. Hartman, USN, aboard *Helena* (who, in addition to being in tactical command of a task group was also in administrative command of the task force), and 96.52 under Rear Admiral John M. Higgins, USN, who had transferred his flag to the USS *Toledo.*

"The main factors contributing to my decision to assign the U.S. Navy to the east coast and the British to the west coast were purely tactical in nature," said Vice Admiral Joy. "For one reason, the east coast with its longer coastline and more numerous accessible targets required more ships for blockade, as well as bombardment and interdiction missions, than the British could muster. Furthermore, since our fast carriers would be operating most of the time in the Sea of Japan it was thought best from the standpoint of coordination to have U.S. ships rather than British operating in the same area as the carriers."

Higbee (DD-806) (CDR Elmer Moore) was the first destroyer from Task Force Yoke to see action. Joining cruisers *Belfast* and *Juneau* on 21 July near Yongdok, *Higbee* squeezed off forty-six 5-inch shells. *Higbee* had the satisfaction of hearing that her fire assisted the ROK troops in briefly recapturing the town.

The cruisers *Toledo* (CAPT Richard F. Stout) and *Helena* (CAPT Harold O. Larson) were the first heavy augmenting ships to arrive. With *Collett* and *Mansfield, Toledo* was in action near the now enemy-occupied city of Yongdok on 27 July. Her 79 shells of 8-inch high-capacity fire were directed upon troops and military targets.

Helena fired the first of the thousands of shells she was to expend during the course of the Korean war at the railroad marshalling yards, trains and power plant near Tanchon on 7 August 1950. Altogether, *Helena* fired one hundred and eighty-five 8-inch shells at these targets.

August 8, 1950 saw *Toledo, Helena* and *De Haven* get two important east coast bridges.

With exactly 100 rounds, *Toledo* and *De Haven* demolished the bridge at Samchok.

Helena dropped a bridge near Chongjin, but with more difficulty.

"On 8 August, I carried LT R. F. Noble, USMC, as a bombardment spotter," recorded LT Harold W. Swinburne, Jr., *Helena's* helicopter pilot. "It was the first time a helicopter had ever been used for this sort of work. Our orders were to pick out suitable targets for the main batteries of the USS *Helena.* We selected a railroad bridge. On the first firing run, the ship fired numerous salvos, but only minor damage was done. After coming about to a new firing course, we asked that only one gun be fired for spotting purposes. The first shell was a direct hit and the bridge dropped into the water. The experiment was a success!"[5]

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The First Raid

The USS *Juneau* also had the distinction of putting the first raiding and demolition party onto the Korean peninsula.

"On 6 July," said CAPT Porter, "the *Juneau* received a despatch from COMNAVFE addressed to Admiral Higgins saying that if we could disrupt the east coast rail line in the vicinity of Rashin, we could force the Reds to re-route all the rail traffic to the west coast network.

"We got the charts of the area out and chose an appropriate target that looked to be right on the beach. The target was one of the numerous rail tunnels, and it was our plan to rig demolition charges inside and thereby inactivate both the tunnel and the track.

"Before the *Juneau* left Sasebo, I had managed to secure from Fleet activities several Army-type demolition charges, plus detonators, walkie-talkie radios, and the other equipment. I had organized a small commando outfit in a ship which I commanded during World War II, so I was not a complete amateur, although I was far from being a demolition expert. Lieutenant Johnson, the *Juneau's* junior Marine officer, had also had some experience.

"The *Juneau* proceeded to the target area, arriving during the night hours of 11-12 July. We transferred to the destroyer *Mansfield* at 1945, about fifteen miles off the coast, and the latter destroyer took us in to about two miles off the beach. Then we transferred to the *Mansfield* whaleboat.

"Each man in my party[6] was carrying quite a load. I personally had 50 pounds of explosives, a carbine, a box of detonators, a chart, a compass, and a walkie-talkie radio.

"As we approached the beach, it was about 2 a.m. The night was very black and very dark, but the sea was calm. It was difficult in the darkness to estimate distance. A moderate surf was running, and as we neared it (about 30 yards distant, we judged), I asked the coxswain of the whaleboat if he knew how to beach a whaleboat, using a stern anchor. He said no. Just as I commenced explaining to him how to do it, he tossed the anchor over the side.

"We paid out 45 fathoms of line, then attempted to take soundings with paddles, but were unable to touch bottom. We bent on more line to the anchor line, since we still had an estimated 20 yards to go to reach the beach. About this time, the anchor line got fouled in the screw, so we cut it loose and paddled into the beach.

"Just before landing, we heard—and then saw—a locomotive pulling three or four boxcars crossing a cut directly ahead of us. It went into one tunnel, out again, and into a second.

"At any rate, I ordered the landing party out of the boat, and I jumped into the water, carrying my own load. The water was just over my head, and it was a tiring struggle to get ashore. I left two marine guards on the beach, and the rest of us started inland.

"Contrary to our maps, which indicated that the area was flat, the area where we had landed was very hilly and at the beach almost precipitous. It had a 60-degree grade, and was faced with loose rock. This made the upward climb very slow, and there was danger of the party being carried to the bottom under an avalanche of rock. Moreover, there was no rail line near the beach. A collection of fishermen's huts was on our left, about a quarter-mile distant. We trudged inland, leaving our whaleboat crew making repeated dives to clear the fouled propeller.

"For about an hour and a half we worked our way inland over the very hilly and rocky terrain. In the pitchblack darkness I navigated as best I could, using my Army compass and chart.

"Finally, we spotted the lights of a train behind us, and then realized we had gone over the *top* of our target and *past* the rail line. (Later I figured we had gone about three miles inland.)

"We worked laboriously back to the rail line, and found the tunnel. It was about 150 yards long. At the south end of the tunnel there was a large trestle over a deep ravine. I posted one of my two remaining Marines at the north end of the tunnel and the other Marine at the south end of this trestle. The Marine officer, LT Johnson, looked after our security while we worked.

"The four gunner's mates and I started shoveling a trench crosswise beneath the rail line in the middle of the tunnel. We dug a trench about one foot deep and five feet long, planted the charges, and put in several detonators each way along the track. After the charges were rigged, I sent one gunner's mate up to get the Marine at the north end of the tunnel and I proceeded in the darkness down the other direction to notify the other Marine. As I walked along the trestle I lost my footing in the darkness and slipped beneath the ties, dropping the walkie-talkie and my compass. My elbows caught the ties and prevented my fall, but I got skinned up in the process.

"The rest of the mission was without further incident and we walked back to the beach. During our absence the whaleboat crew had succeeded in clearing her screw. We shoved off immediately, and as we neared the *Mansfield*, we heard a train coming from the north. A few seconds later, we saw the flash of our demolition charges as the train tripped them.

"Two days later, the Air Force took pictures of the tunnel area and confirmed the destruction of the train. In the pictures you could still see it sticking out of the tunnel."

On the 6th of August, following this success, a special operations group was established aboard the USS *H. A. Bass* (APD-124) (LCDR Alan Ray, USN) composed of elements of the Marine First Reconnaissance Company (Major Edward P. Dupras, USMC) and Underwater Demolition Team No. One (LCDR David F. Welch, USN). This group would operate under the command of Comtransdiv-111 (CDR S. C. Small, USN) to make a total of six raids (three on each coast) between the 12th and 25th of August, for the purpose of destroying enemy railroads and bridges, and to obtain needed intelligence.

The 14 August attack was typical of the destruction accomplished by these raids. Shortly before midnight, the *H. A. Bass* approached the east coast area at Iwon, 41 -20' N. The target, code-named "King," was a 200-foot stretch of railroad track between two tunnels. Lying offshore in the darkness, *Bass* lowered her LCPR (Landing Craft, Personnel, Reconnaissance) and put aboard the raiding party. Directed by radio to a point within 500 yards of the beach, the party then disembarked into rubber boats. The Marines paddled through the surf to reconnoiter and secure the objective area; when this was done, the demolition crews were called to come in. The "Utes" rigged charges on both tunnels and on the track itself.

Returning to their boats and paddling clear of the beach, the raiding party was rewarded with the sight of seeing the objective area obliterated as the heavy charges exploded.[6A]

The result of these raids was to retard the advance of the Communists down the coastal road to Pusan.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Doubts Raised of Naval Blockade's Effectiveness

In early August 1950, with the Communists pressing relentlessly toward Pusan, questions were asked as to whether the naval blockade was effective. Air power had taken credit for making the enemy's rail lines inoperable, especially during daylight. All over Korea, roads, bridges, locomotives, and rolling stock had been reported as destroyed. It was axiomatic that an advancing army of 140,000 Communists needed vast quantities of munitions, supplies, personnel, and food, and that all of it could not be hand-carried. How were the Communists supplying themselves?

To some who struggled with this problem, it was an easy jump from an erroneous premise to a false conclusion. If the rail lines were inoperable, obviously the supplies were being moved by sea, perhaps at night. Hadn't aircraft often reported groups of ships, as many as a hundred in a group, all along both coasts? One mission report, typical of others, reported the destruction of a 10,000-ton ship in Inchon harbor. Wasn't this proof of the sea-lifting tactics of the Reds?

"During this period," said Vice Admiral Joy, "I was frequently asked to intensify my naval blockade of Korea. Many felt that the Reds were getting a large proportion of their supplies by water, possibly in small leap-frogging operations at night. The west coast, with its hundreds of islands, made this supposition easy to come by.

"Frequent aircraft reports were received during this period that large numbers of junks or other ships had been sighted, here one day, there another. Immediately it was assumed that these fleets were supply armadas, and I was so informed. I had conferences with my commanders—Rear Admiral Higgins, Rear Admiral Hartman of our east coast blockade forces, and Rear Admiral Andrewes, the British west coast blockade commander.

"All of us agreed that while a small amount of sea traffic might be moving, it was very slight and not significant. Admiral Andrewes offered to employ his aircraft from HMS *Triumph* to photograph every port and inlet on the west coast to corroborate that the supplies were not coming by sea. I accepted his offer."

The admiral also asked the patrol squadrons to check the reports of the "supply armadas." Invariably the reported fleets were investigated and photographed and found to be fishing fleets. The 10,000-ton freighter reported bombed and sunk in Inchon harbor could not be found the following day by Admiral Andrewes' bombardment ships.

"Through our night and day patrols, both radar and visual," said CDR A. F. Farwell, Commanding Officer, Patrol Squadron SIX, "I was able to assure COMNAVFE that the enemy's supplies were *not* coming by sea, even in minute quantities. We then set out to get positive information on how the Reds *were* supplying themselves; we succeeded in getting photographs of camouflaged bypass railroad tracks around the ruined bridges, running over crude log caissons placed in the stream beds. We made photographs of tunnels which showed smoke coming out of trains which were hiding in them, waiting for nightfall.

"Thus, emphasis was shifted back to the railroads. Then when the enemy commenced running trucks at night, the flare-dropping technique was born."[7]

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Task Force 95 Established

On 12 September 1950, a change was made in the composition of the blockading and bombardment forces. Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith, USN, broke his flag in USS *Dixie* (AD-14) (CAPT J. M. Cabanillas, USN) at Sasebo and assumed command of the new Task Force 95.[7A] Henceforth, TF-95 would carry on until the end of the fighting as the "United Nations Blockading and Escort Force."

While this history concerns the U.S. Navy, no record of the blockade and bombardment effort in Korea can be made without recording the valuable contributions of the combatant vessels of nine other nations: Australia, Canada, Colombia, France, Thailand, Great Britain, Netherlands, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea.

Ships of the naval forces of these nations served with credit and effectiveness in the blockade and bombardment effort. This common effort raised many problems: logistic, communication, tactical, operational, and doctrinal. How could a New Zealand destroyer refuel from a U.S. tanker? How could communication and phraseology be standardized? How could recognition signals and signal difficulties be solved? Could olive oil for baking Turkish bread be supplied—or small foul-weather clothing for the men of the Thai frigate?

The solution of these day-by-day problems made significant progress in teaching the naval forces of the free world to work together smoothly and as a team.

So effective was the co-operation and harmony of the forces of the UN Navy that RADM George C. Dyer, the fourth officer to command CTF-95, was prompted to say that "Without any reservations, the association of all these navies together has not only been a very cordial and profitable one on an official basis, and at the highest levels, but on the unofficial and ship's company levels. There has been no major difficulty."

As has been stated, Task Force 95 had the official title "United Nations Blockading and Escort Force." A major part of this force, Task Group 95.1, patrolling Korea's west coast, was commanded throughout the war by a British Rear Admiral. On the east coast, the elements of Task Group 95.2 were frequently commanded by naval officers of the other nations of the UN Navy.

The west coast blockade group, Task Group 95.1, contained three principal elements: the carrier element, the surface blockade and patrol element, and the west coast island defense element.

One United States and one British or Australian carrier furnished the air coverage in Task Element 95.11, relieving each other on a ten-day rotation basis. Flying from the American CVE or CVL was a U.S. Marine squadron. One of the main tasks of TE 95.11 was the harassment of junk traffic in the Taedong River estuary. Task Unit 95.11 also flew interdiction and close air support missions over Eighth Army's left flank.

The patrol and blockade by Task Group 95.1 of Korea's west coast differed from that of the east coast in many respects, principally due to dissimilar hydrographic and geographic conditions. The west coast was a honeycomb of islands; it was an area of high tides, of mud banks, shallows, and difficult channels. Many of the Korean rivers emptied into the Yellow Sea. Nowhere was the water more than 60 fathoms in depth. And within 10 miles of the shore, the depth was less than 20 fathoms. As a consequence, large vessels could not operate as close inshore on the west coast as was often possible on the east coast. The bombardment effort, therefore, was not as great.

In further contrast to the east coast, the more numerous islands made the guerrilla problem on the west coast much more difficult. In the last 18 months of the war, there was a contest with the Communists for control of key islands above the 38th parallel. On some of these captured islands, UN forces had placed radar stations for

the control and direction of the UN air forces' aircraft. Some west coast islands served as search and rescue stations for parachuting airmen whose aircraft had suffered damage over "MIG alley." Other west coast islands served well as intelligence outposts. Supporting the west coast islands, therefore, was a much greater part of the over-all task than on the east coast.

The mine menace on the west coast was also different—"better" in the sense that the range of the tides often exposed mines at low water; "worse" in the sense that the enemy could plant mines with greater ease.

Finally, the blockade problem on the west coast was more difficult because of the navigation hazards posed by fast currents, mudbanks, and high tides. Numerous rocks and shoals made a close approach to the mainland hazardous and in many places impossible.

Throughout the blockade of the Korean coasts, the ships of the UN Navy acquitted themselves ably and with distinction. American ships, operating with the carriers, cruisers, destroyers, and frigates of other navies, learned many valuable lessons and techniques from their UN sailing partners that would prove of great value in subsequent years.

Admiral Sir Roderick McGregor, GCB, DSO, RN, following an inspection trip to Korea, had these words of praise for the UN Navy: "I have been much impressed by the way in which the navies of so many nations are co-operating in the Korean War. In spite of differences in language and customs, warships of different navies are operating as one against the common enemy."

Admiral Joy was also laudatory.

"I have only the highest praise for the manner in which our allies contributed to the war effort of the UN Navy," he wrote. "Their co-operation was all that could be desired and they performed every task assigned them, no matter how difficult, with zeal and ability that always evoked my admiration."

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Restriction of Fishing by the Blockading Force

One of Rear Admiral Smith's first acts after taking command of TF-95 was to issue an order restricting fishing by North Koreans. Until September 1950, there was no formal interference with fishing activities.

Fish was the main staple of the Korean diet.

In 1939, for example, the Korean fishing industry had ranked third in the world. Along the peninsula's 11,000-mile coastline, where warm and cold water currents joined, were 75 kinds of edible fish, including shrimps, clams, oysters, sardines, crabs, cod and abalones. Other Korean sea food was seaweed, sea slugs and whale meat. In peacetime, approximately 300,000 tons of fish were consumed annually by the Koreans.

Rear Admiral Smith took the attitude that this sea food was legitimate contraband and should be stringently denied the Communists. The restriction of fishing by the UN blockading force would seriously add to the Communists' logistics problems ashore, and force them to import fish from Chinese and Russian sources. The restriction would also be a psychological inducement for the North Koreans to turn against their Communist masters. Moreover, as the war progressed there was conclusive evidence that many "fishing" boats were really *mining* boats, laying a few or even a single mine nightly in blockaded waters. This mine-laying had to be squelched.

The language of the leaflets distributed to the North Korean fishermen was simple and straight-forward:

"The Communists brought this terrible war down upon you. You cannot fish from your boats until the Communists are killed or thrown out. The United Nations Forces are human and do not desire to harm innocent victims of the war, but if you try to fish again before the Communists are completely defeated, you must suffer the consequences. A legal blockade has been declared and is enforced by United Nations Forces."

Ships patrolling north of the 38th parallel were ordered to pass out these leaflets, and thereafter to send fishing boats back into port to spread the word. Leaflets were also delivered by airplanes. If the fishermen returned and tried to fish, their boats were to be confiscated or destroyed and the fishermen returned to the beach.

Maddox (DD-731) and *Herbert J. Thomas* (DD-833) delivered a quantity of leaflets to 137 sampans and junks in the week starting 22 September. Delivery was made either by boarding, or calling the vessels alongside. At every interception, the vessels were thoroughly inspected for mines, even to the extent of removing their floor boards.

Because of the order forbidding U.S. naval ships to operate inside the 100-fathom curve on the east coast, unless in swept waters, the largest share of the responsibility for the prevention of fishing by the North Koreans fell upon the small ships of the Republic of Korea Navy who were able to navigate close to the shore where the fishing took place. (Later, in January-June 1952, after the east coast had been swept to the 10-fathom curve as far as Songjin, the destroyers and frigates gave the anti-fishing campaign a high priority.)

The anti-fishing campaign fell into two areas: offshore and inshore. The offshore fishing could be eliminated with comparative ease by the use of patrol ships and patrol aircraft. But squelching the inshore fishing, especially on the west coast with its heavy tides and numerous islands, would be very difficult.

"We started with very limited resources in patrol boats, patrol craft and gunboats," said Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, who was later to command Task Force 95. "Our anti-fishing resources never increased to the desired level.

"Moreover, the complete elimination and control of inshore fishing was an impossibility. Our whaleboats and smaller ships could chase the fishing sampans ashore, and then land a party to blow them up. But blowing up

a toughly built sampan wasn't easy. A hand grenade wouldn't do it for long, for the damage could be patched in a few days. Gasoline poured over a sampan would burn it, but unless you stayed and kept pouring gasoline on the sampan until the last piece of timber was burned, the fisherman-owner would put out the fire with sand from the beach.

"The most certain method of controlling the inshore fishing was to confiscate the enemy's fishing boats—and that wasn't simple."

Notwithstanding the hazards and difficulties, the anti-fishing campaign was to prove successful, as will be seen.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The Abortive ROK Landing at Samchok

After dodging several typhoons, the USS *Missouri* (CAPT Irving T. Duke, USN) arrived in Korean waters in the late evening of September 14th after a full-speed run from the east coast of the United States.

"When I was informed that the *Missouri* would join TF-95," wrote RADM Smith, "I planned to use her, the *Helena,* and several destroyers as a diversionary effort on the east coast, on the same day as the initial Marine landings on the west coast at Inchon. By so doing, I hoped to hold back some enemy troops from Inchon and to create an enemy hesitation. I chose Samchok for the diversionary bombardment.

"However, it was difficult to know the exact time of *Missouri's* arrival because of several typhoons which were in her path."

The "Big Mo" celebrated her arrival by firing fifty rounds of 16-inch fire at a bridge near Samchok, using a helicopter spot. The results were excellent.[7B]

Missouri also arrived in time to join a bombardment effort to relieve the stranded ROK *LST-667* at Samchok.

This minor naval amphibious operation had been initiated at Eighth Army Headquarters in Korea, unknown to naval headquarters in Tokyo. The intent of the mission was to land a 700-odd man detachment of ROK troops in the enemy's rear, near Pohang. The detachment's mission was to blow bridges, establish road blocks, and generally hamper the retreat of the North Korean forces as the Eighth Army broke out of the Pusan perimeter.

Since this operation was undertaken without the knowledge of either Admiral Joy or Admiral Smith, the first word that it had aborted came to Admiral C. C. Hartman (ComCruDiv-3) when ROK *LST-667* frantically messaged that she had broached in landing, bashed in her side, and was under heavy enemy fire from mortars and artillery.

Missouri, Helena, Maddox (CDR Preston B. Haines, Jr.), *Herbert J. Thomas* (CDR Sibley L. Ward, Jr.), *Endicott* (CDR John C. Jolly), *Doyle* (CDR Charles H. Morrison, Jr.), and six auxiliary ships were diverted from their primary mission of furnishing naval gunfire at the frontlines in order to rescue the stranded ROK personnel aboard the LST. With much labor, and loss of equipment and precious time, the rescue was finally accomplished on 18 September. Seven hundred and twenty-five South Koreans were rescued, 110 of them wounded, but 81 ROK troops had been killed, captured, or drowned in the process, and a sorely needed LST lost.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the civilian ROK LST skipper had chosen the one rock-ribbed stretch of beach on the otherwise sandy coast. Moreover, he had failed, in three beaching attempts, to cross the surf line properly.

Admiral Joy sent a despatch to Rear Admiral Smith, who had jurisdiction over the ROK Navy, to direct that future ROK amphibious operations, even minor ones, be entrusted to those experienced in such matters.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Missouri Assists the Breakout From the Perimeter

Following the fiasco at Samchok, the *Missouri* continued pounding the east coast positions of the North Korean forces. The Third ROK Division was opposed by the North Korean Fifth Division, the North Korean Seventh Division, and the 101st Security Regiment, all entrenched in the city of Pohang.

The Third ROK Division took up kickoff positions on the south side of Pohang's Hyong-san River. The north side was strongly held by the enemy. Until the ROK troops could cross this stream and gain the coastal road leading north, the UN advance up the east coast was halted.

Missouri answered the KMAG's[7C] request for gunfire support. After the shore fire control party took refuge in a large crater, LTCOL Rollins S. Emmerich, USA, commenced spotting the *Missouri's* fire onto enemy positions across the narrow river a scant 300 yards away. The range from *Missouri* to target was approximately nine miles. The battleship fired 280 high-capacity 16-inch shells which landed with earthquake effect on the northern river bank.

Of this assistance, LTCOL Emmerich recorded: "On the 17th of September we broke the river dike and headed north. The *Missouri's* fire was really demoralizing to those Red troops. We practically waded across that river standing up. The ruins along the river south of Pohang and in the city proper will bear out the effect and accuracy of naval gunfire."[8]

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Results of Blockade Forces Against North Korean Forces

The contribution of naval surface forces to the salvation of the Pusan perimeter and defeat of the North Korean army between 25 June and 15 November 1950 is indicated by the following boxscore damage:

Aircraft: 1 destroyed
Ammunition dumps: 2 destroyed, 1 damaged
Artillery positions: 44destroyed, 8 damaged
Bridges: 14destroyed, 14 damaged
Buildings: 16 damaged
Fuel dumps: 2destroyed
Fuel tanks: 2 damaged
Junks and sampans: 62destroyed, 14 damaged
Locomotives: 1destroyed
Mines: 323 destroyed
Motor boats: 22destroyed, 5 damaged
Observation posts: 4destroyed, 2 damaged
PC Boats, YMS: 2destroyed, 4 damaged
Pill boxes: 3destroyed
Radio stations: 1destroyed, 1 damaged
Radio towers: 1destroyed
RR cars: 19 destroyed, 26 damaged
RR yards: 6 damaged
Supply dumps: 7destroyed, 5 damaged
Tanks: 7destroyed
Transformer stations: 1destroyed
Troop concentrations: 663 damaged
Troops: 387 destroyed, 81 taken prisoner
Trucks and vehicles: 28destroyed, 15 damaged
Tunnels: 6 damaged
Warehouses: 12destroyed, 23 damaged

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The New War Begins

The period following the successful assault of Inchon and the landing at Wonsan found the blockade and bombardment forces of TF 95 moving farther and farther northward. The enemy coasts were covered as closely as possible while observing the "Stay outside the 100-fathom curve" order. Having denied the Communists the freedom of *advancing* southward by sea, the task was now to prevent them from *retreating* northward by sea.

Aboard the ships off the Korean coasts, few people knew that the original war was ending and that a new war was beginning—a war with Communist China.

On the peninsula in early November, however, it was apparent that the Chinese Communists had intervened. On 24 November their armies commenced a full-scale attack which succeeded in opening a wedge between the Eighth Army on the west coast and the Tenth Corps on the east coast. Hordes of Chinese poured through the gap. Disaster seemed probable and imminent. All available ships in Japan and several ships already enroute back to the United States were hurriedly recalled and rushed to Korea to stand by to support the evacuation of UN forces. If the onslaught of the Chinese forces could not be contained, it was planned to evacuate the UN forces from Korea via the ports of Inchon, Hungnam, Wonsan, and Pusan. If this proved necessary, every available ship would be required.

On 2 December, the First Marine Division, deep in North Korea, was ordered to withdraw to the area of Hamhung. The surface forces of Task Force 95, operating under the amphibious commander, took up gunfire support stations in Hungnam harbor. (The Hungnam redeployment is fully covered in Chapter 6.)

On the west coast, the ships of the blockade force (TF 95.1) supplied much-needed gunfire and air support to the Eighth Army as it was evacuated from Chinnampo to Inchon.

By mid-January, the UN ground forces had re-established a firm line in South Korea, and the danger of being forced off the peninsula abated.

The original war against the North Korean Communist had now ended. A new war against the Chinese Reds, which would fully occupy Task Force 95 for more than 30 months, had commenced.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Sitzkrieg Blockade

The redeployment of UN forces from North Korea was followed by a period of buildup of personnel, supplies, and equipment in order to resume the offensive.

On 1 January 1951, Rear Admiral William G. Andrewes, Royal Navy, was knighted and promoted to Vice Admiral. For six weeks the British vice admiral continued serving under the American rear admiral.

"This is undoubtedly the first time a vice admiral in the Royal Navy has ever served under a rear admiral in the United States Navy," recorded Admiral Smith,[9] "Both Admiral Brind, Royal Navy, Commander-in-Chief in Hong Kong, and Vice Admiral Andrewes himself stated that they did not desire any change; that he was to remain under my command, even though senior.

"About 12 February 1951, Admiral Joy received a message from Admiral Sherman directing that Vice Admiral Andrewes be made a task force commander. This was due to the fact that Mr. Churchill was demanding a British Commander-in-Chief for the Supreme Atlantic Command. In this situation my objective was to prevent a breakdown in the organization of Task Force 95 and the *esprit de corps* that both Andrewes and I had worked so hard to gain. I recommended to Joy that I become the deputy and Andrewes the commander of TF 95. This was the accepted solution, and so for the next month and a half Andrewes was Commander Task Force 95. . . ."

Smith resumed command of Task Force 95 on 3 April 1951 after Andrewes departure from the theater. At this time, also, the operational command of Task Force 95 was shifted from COMNAVFE to Commander Seventh Fleet.[9A]

During this period of change of command and reorganization, Admiral Smith issued a new operation order which determined TF 95's missions in approximate order of priority to be these:

1. Blockade Korea
2. Deliver gunfire support to UN troops on east coast
3. Bombard
4. Conduct anti-mining
5. Escort
6. Conduct anti-submarine warfare
7. Control coastal fishing
8. Obtain intelligence.

The division of Korea into two blockade forces under CTF 95 was continued:

Click here to view table

Also under the CTF 95 was the escort group (TG 95.5), the minesweep group (TG 95.6), and the ROK naval forces (TG 95.7). (In October 1952, a new group, 95.3, was organized as a patrol group in South Korea.)

Smith directed that the east coast blockade commander (CTF 95.2—Rear Admiral Roscoe E. Hillenkoetter, USN) keep at least four ships on patrol, operating in pairs from the 38th parallel to the blockade boundary above Chongjin 41°-50' N, in order to fulfill the requirements of international law regarding a blockade. The ROK Navy Force (CTG 95.7, Commander Michael J. Luosey) was to establish two check stations on South Korea's east coast for surveillance of coastal traffic. Except in swept waters, it was again specified that ships would remain outside the 100-fathom curve to lessen the danger from mines.

As for the west coast blockade, Task Group 95.1 (RADM A. K. Scott-Moncrieff, RN), the British and American carrier element with their aircraft, would take station near the 39th parallel in order to render close

support ashore to the western end of the battleline, as well as to help maintain the blockade. The surface blockade and patrol element (TE 95.12) would maintain a one-ship anti-junk patrol off Chinnampo, and close-in shore patrols near the coast from the northern limit of the blockade to the south.

Smith's shrewd foresightedness and "can-do" attitude are reflected in his war diary of that period. He believed that heavy naval bombardments should be made as soon as possible in the Inchon area. If nothing else, they would deceive and confuse the enemy and force him to divert some of his ground strength to defend the area. Inchon's recapture, of course, would return a valuable port and supply base to the UN forces.

On the east coast, Smith was equally sure that bombardments should take place in the Wonsan area, and, if possible, some of its harbor islands seized. This operation would further confuse the enemy, capitalize on his fear of amphibious assaults, and cause him to wastefully deploy forces in anticipation of another landing at Wonsan. Moreover, the harbor would be a useful point for harassing the main east coast roads and rail lines. (Here, then, was the genesis of the siege of Wonsan.)

Click here to view map

Smith believed that by an unremitting naval bombardment of northeast Korea's exposed transportation complex, day and night, fair weather and foul, ". . . we would get 75 per cent or 80 per cent stoppage of traffic, and certainly a great slowing of traffic."[10]

Smith believed that naval power could not only draw the blockade at sea ever closer (a primary Navy mission) but would also contribute to the interdiction of land communications (a collateral naval mission).

As the UN forces withdrew from Hungnam to re-assemble and resupply themselves for a resumption of the offensive, the Communists were kept guessing how their exposed coastlines would be used against them by the blockading forces of the U.S. Navy.

There were five ways. The first way would be by amphibious feints and demonstrations. From the September 1950 landing at Inchon, the enemy was well aware how decisive and how dangerous an amphibious assault could be. For the remainder of the war he would remain acutely sensitive and apprehensive that another such lightning blow might come at any place and at any moment.

To take advantage of the enemy's sensitivity to amphibious assault, the first of many-to-come amphibious demonstrations was made on 30-31 January 1951 on the east coast near Kansong. RADM Smith, in flagship *Dixie* (AD-14), supervised the feint, which included bombardment and prelanding minesweeping. The USS *Montague* (AKA-98), USS *Seminole* (AKA-105), and several LSTs simulated landing activities.

Ten days later, on 10 February 1951, another fake landing was planned for the Inchon area. The *Missouri* prepared the way with bombardment fire on 8 February, but further operations were cancelled because of the rapid advance of UN ground forces (then engaged in a limited offensive known as "Operation Thunderbolt"), which had outflanked and forced the evacuation of the Inchon area. (In retrospect, it seems certain that the prospect of a second invasion at Inchon made the enemy's evacuation of the area more urgent and rapid).

The second way the enemy would see his exposed coastline used against him was by surprise commando and guerrilla raids such as the one below Chongjin on 7 April 1951. Under the command of Admiral Roscoe E. Hillenkoetter (Commander Cruiser Division One), and covered by the fire of cruiser *Saint Paul* (CA-73, CAPT Chester C. Smith, USN), and destroyers *Wallace L. Lind* (DD-703, CDR Edward B. Carlson, USN), and *Massey* (DD-778, CDR Ed R. King, Jr., USN), 250 men of the 41st Independent Royal Marines landed from the *Fort Marion* (LSD-22) and the *Begor* (APD-127) to destroy the exposed coastal rail line eight miles south of Chongjin. Minesweepers *Incredible*, *Osprey*, *Chatterer*, and *Merganser* cleared the nearby beach, with tile salvage vessel USS *Grasp* (ARS-24) standing by. There was no enemy opposition. Demolition charges destroyed 100 feet of track, the nearby tunnels, and the railroad embankment to a depth of 15 feet.

Raids similar to these were to harass the enemy for the remainder of the war. (One result of this particular raid was to implant the idea that the ideal way to conduct such raids would be by helicopter).

The third way the exposed enemy coastline would be used against the Communists was by laying siege to his coastal ports.

By mid-February, a night and day siege had begun in Wonsan harbor. (This historic siege is covered in Chapter 12, “The Siege of Wonsan”.) Songjin also was to feel the burden of a naval siege, commencing on 8 March, initially set by *Manchester* (CL-83), *Evans* (DD-754), *C. S. Sperry* (DD-697) and Hr.Ms.[10A] *Evertsen* (DD). Still later, on 26 April 1951, the port of Hungnam was placed under siege.

The fourth way the enemy would find his exposed coastlines used against him was at each end of the fighting front. For the rest of the war, American naval guns would fire at enemy troops on each flank of the battleline. In many cases, this fire would be crucially important and locally decisive.

(Each evening, before dusk, UN ground forces would conduct a reconnaissance along the frontlines to observe enemy troop concentrations, armament emplacements, and supply dumps. These infantry patrol reports were assembled and transmitted to the bombline support ships with requests for a certain number of rounds per hour on each selected target).

And finally, the enemy’s exposed coastlines were to feel the unremitting sting of bombardment at every point of military value along his coasts. That these bombardments hurt, both physically and psychologically, is demonstrated by the steady rise in the enemy’s use of coastal guns to protect himself.

The battleship *New Jersey* (Captain David M. Tyree) returned to war action on 20 May 1951. She was the second of four battleships (*Wisconsin* would be third; *Iowa* would be the fourth) to appear in the Korean theater.

The “Big Jay’s” baptism was memorable for her crew. After a bombardment at Kangsong on 20 May, the *New Jersey* moved to Wonsan to participate in the siege. Here on the 22nd, she took one hit and one near miss. The striking shell hit Number One turret, causing little damage, while the near miss killed one man and wounded three who were exposed topside.

The one hundredth day of the sieges of Wonsan, Hungnam, and Songjin came and went, with the enemy fire increasing in accuracy, intensity, and persistence. Early in July frigate *Everett* took a hit which did little material damage but which killed one man and wounded seven. Cruiser *Helena* reported firing her 10,000th round of the war, *Brinkley Bass* reported firing 3,315 rounds in a single two-week period.

Thus, the application of naval power to the Korean battlefield was steadily increased.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson

Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Change of Command and Sit-Down

During the late winter and early spring months of 1951, a series of engagements between UN and Chinese ground forces was taking place. The United Nation forces started their first limited offensive, "Operation Thunderbolt," on 25 January 1951. Naval forces intensified inshore patrolling along the west coast and carried out additional fire missions in support of the advance. During the first few days only light resistance from Chinese Communist outposts was encountered. UN forces advanced 15 to 20 miles to positions north of Suwon, Inchon, and Yoju without serious difficulty. At the beginning of February the enemy made several counterattacks to defend Seoul. The United Nations' advance now developed into a full-scale attack. Carrier-based aircraft subjected the enemy to constant strafing and napalm bombings and established close surveillance of all Han River crossings.

On 10 February, the enemy suddenly vanished from the front. By nightfall of that day Inchon and Kimpo airfields were again in UN hands, as well as the industrial suburb of Seoul, on the southern bank of the Han River.

In the central sector, "Operation Roundup" was launched, again with the objective of inflicting major losses on the enemy. The offensive opened on 5 February, and for the first three days UN troops moved forward without encountering major resistance. A Chinese counterattack developed during the night of 11-12 February which used both mass attack and infiltration tactics. Despite some loss of terrain, the UN forces had now learned to roll with the punch. The main line of resistance was not penetrated, and heavy casualties were inflicted upon the attacking Chinese. By 19 February the enemy's advance in the central sector had come to a standstill.

On 21 February the Eighth Army launched still another limited offensive known as "Operation Killer." As its name implied, the objective was to destroy as many enemy forces as possible. Operation Killer proceeded during the first few days to gain up to ten miles a day as the enemy's rear guard was swept aside by the First Marine Division, which seized the high ground overlooking Hoengsong on 24 February. The Communists fell back along the entire 60-mile front, having suffered serious casualties.

While Operation Killer was eliminating a Chinese salient in the central sector, a limited offensive had been opened early in March in the area east of Seoul. This operation was known as "Operation Ripper," and had the objective of outflanking the enemy and forcing him to abandon the capital city of Seoul. Despite some enemy counterattacks, patrols of the ROK First Division entered Seoul during the early morning hours of 15 March and found it almost empty of enemy troops. Seoul had changed hands four times in the course of nine months.

Toward the end of March, UN forces once more approached the 38th parallel along the entire front. A proposal to the enemy by General MacArthur on 23 March to cease hostilities and negotiate a truce in the field was ignored by the Communist high command.

During the first days of April the Eighth Army gradually pushed closer to the enemy's main supply and assembly area in the "Iron Triangle," between Chorwon, Kumhwa, and Pyongyang. In the central sector a major battle developed for the Hwachon reservoir.[10B] The U.S. Marines entered the town on 18 April.

By mid-April it was apparent that the Communists were preparing an other major offensive. For many weeks, reconnaissance aircraft had reported very heavy southbound traffic in enemy rear areas. New enemy units were identified in ever greater numbers within supporting distance of the front. More than 70 Communist divisions were estimated to be south of the Yalu River.

"I arrived in Korea to take command of the Eighth Army only eight days before the Chinese offensive of 22 April," General James Van Fleet told the authors. "Everybody in the Far East was talking about the

forthcoming Chinese offensive, some a little fearfully. I even had one plan submitted to me that said when the Reds struck, UN forces should fall back ten miles I said no, we're not giving up Seoul. I told all my division and corps commanders to get ready to fight, that we were going to mow them down. On the western side of Korea in the Seoul area, the country was open and fairly flat. We knew this terrain. I told my division and corps commanders they'd never find a prettier battlefield for killing Communists.

"I missed an opportunity after the first Red offensive on 22 April. After three or four days I could tell that their attack was fairly shallow and not well supported logistically. The Chinese Army wasn't a mobile Army. I should have assembled reserves and struck. I failed that time.

"But on the next Chinese push, 16 May, I had everything set. After three days I ordered a counterattack toward the 'Iron Triangle', spearheaded by the First Marine Division and Second Infantry.

"I had the First MarDiv and some Korean Marines set for a shore-to-shore operation, leapfrogging up the east coast—almost administrative landings. At that time the east coast did not have a big buildup of defensive forces, and we could easily have made landings there. The Navy could have shot us ashore and kept us ashore as we built up. We could have built up faster than the enemy could have managed.

"With those landings, the Chinese couldn't have met it. They're not flexible enough. The Chinese armies had no conception of fast moves; they had no communication system; they had no logistical support.

"In fact, there have been only two armies in the history of the world that have been able to move any direction at any time. That's the American Army and the German Army.

"So in June 1951, we had the Chinese whipped. They were definitely gone. They were in awful shape. During the last week of May we captured more than 10,000 Chinese prisoners.

"It was only a short time later that the Reds asked for a truce.

"Then we were ordered not to advance any further."[11]

In all this intense ground fighting in the spring of 1951, the U.S. Marines' First Division was in the forefront, and often in the van. Despite being separated from the Marine Air Wing and denied its customary close air support, the division won fresh laurels by its aggressiveness and tenacity.

Two events of this period, not directly connected with the naval actions of the Korean war, must be briefly described, for both of them were to have great effect upon the remaining two years of the naval war.

The first of these was the replacement of General Douglas MacArthur. While the UN forces had undisputed control of both the sea and the air, and while the revitalized UN forces were advancing under the aggressive leadership of Generals Ridgway and Van Fleet, the realization came to most of the military leaders in Korea that under existing conditions a stalemate was approaching. It was obvious that the Chinese could not now achieve their oft-vaunted claim to drive the UN forces into the sea. It was equally clear to the UN command that if the fighting was to be confined solely to the Korean peninsula, and no effort made to destroy the sources of Chinese fighting and logistic power elsewhere, then the UN goal of uniting Korea by force was equally futile.

It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss the circumstances of the relief of General MacArthur. It is sufficient for a naval study of the Korean war to say that MacArthur believed that victory *in* Korea could only be achieved by extending the military conflict *beyond* Korea, as he wrote the authors—"against the nerve center of the Chinese ability to sustain his operations in Korea."

Accordingly, on 11 April 1951, General Matthew B. Ridgway succeeded Generals Douglas MacArthur as Commander in Chief, United Nations Command.

The second event which was to affect the campaign at sea transpired on 23 June 1951 when the Soviet delegate to the United Nations, Jacob A. Malik, proposed ceasefire discussions between the protagonists. General Ridgway suggested that the meeting take place aboard the Danish hospital ship *Jutlandia.* Eight days later, the Communists accepted the proposal but insisted that the discussions take place in Kaesong between the tenth and fifteenth of July.

Actual armistice discussions commenced on 8 July. The Chief of the UN Delegation was Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, COMNAVFE. The other U.S. Navy delegate was Rear Admiral Arleigh Burke.

The combination of these two events—MacArthur's dismissal and the commencement of the armistice talks—produced the fighting sit-down which followed. Thereafter, the war on the ground was to become positional, and neither side was to make more than local and limited efforts to change the situation. By mid-June the front had stabilized along the general line between Munsan and Kosong. The flexibility and mobility which naval forces could give to land forces hereafter was not to be used. The firepower and mobility of the UN armies was not to be exploited.

Henceforth, the American Navy would have to content itself with performance of collateral roles for the remaining two years of the war.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The Truce Talks Begin

The first indication that the Communists wanted a truce came on Saturday, 23 June 1951, during a nation-wide broadcast by Mr. Jacob Malik, the Russian delegate to the United Nations, on the United Nations program series entitled, "The Price of Peace."

Malik's talk included the following paragraph:

"The peoples of the Soviet Union believe it possible to defend the cause of peace. The Soviet peoples further believe that the most acute problem of the present day—the problem of the armed conflict in Korea—could also be settled. This would require the readiness of both parties to enter on a path of peaceful settlement of the Korean question. The Soviet peoples believe that as the first step, discussions should be started between the belligerents for a cease fire and an armistice providing for the mutual withdrawal of forces from the 38th parallel. Can such a step be taken? I think it can, provided there is a sincere desire to put an end to the bloody fighting in Korea."

While it is not the purpose of this book to cover the truce talks, a brief discussion of the factors which produced the 24 months of truce talks and a first-hand account of the opening of the talks will be beneficial.[12]

Following Malik's speech, General Ridgway, Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, proposed on 30 June 1951 that a conference for discussing this Soviet armistice proposal be held. Accordingly, a radio broadcast was transmitted to the Commander in Chief of the Communist Forces in Korea. As previously stated, General Ridgway proposed a meeting aboard the Danish hospital ship *Jutlandia*, anchored in Wonsan harbor.

There were many advantages for holding any armistice talks aboard *Jutlandia.* She was a hospital ship, and therefore neutral, and would have ample living accommodations as well as adequate conference, working, and communication facilities. Commodore Kai Hammerich, the Danish commanding officer, was very pleased to offer his ship for this purpose, and was anxious to provide the very best facilities.

On 1 July, however, the North Korean premier, Kim Il Sung, accepted Ridgway's proposal but rejected the *Jutlandia.* Instead, Kim proposed the place of meeting in the city of Kaesong, on the 38th parallel.

The exact reasons why the Communists rejected the hospital ship *Jutlandia* in favor of Kaesong are not known, but it is reasonably certain that the Reds wanted a conference site on the 38th parallel to reinforce their demands in establishing that line as the truce line. Commencing the talks at Kaesong would also allow them to appear as the truce "hosts," and to foster the illusion that the United Nations were asking for an armistice out of military necessity.

Why had the Communists, through the Soviet delegate to the UN, requested a truce? Many times previously, they had rejected overtures to end the fighting. They had done so on 6 December 1950, again on 9 December, on 22 December, on 12 January, and on 18 January 1951. Why were the Chinese now willing to consider a truce? One of the two U.S. Navy delegates to the talks and the Deputy Chief of Staff to COMNAVFE gave the following reasons:

"At the time of the Malik proposal," said Rear Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, "United Nations forces were confident that they could repel any attack launched by the enemy. As a matter of fact, it was hoped that the enemy *would* attack because the enemy's casualties would be much greater and ours much less than if *we* attacked. Also we did not want to advance north any more than necessary to keep contact with the enemy. By advancing north, we shortened the enemy's supply lines and reduced the number of enemy targets, especially transportation targets, for our air and naval power to work on. The farther north we drove the enemy, the less difficulty he would have

logistically and the more his relative strength increased.

"Therefore, it was then a question of striking a balance. In June 1951, the United Nations command had reached in its northward movement a line which ran generally northeast from the vicinity of Kaesong towards the northern edge of the now-famous Iron Triangle and reached the east coast in the vicinity of Nam River, about 40 miles north of the 80th parallel. The line was relatively short, was firmly anchored by our Navy at each end, and was highly defensible throughout its length. The UN had adopted the tactic of holding such a line and letting the enemy grind itself down against it, and it had worked very well. After falling into the trap with disastrous results several times in April and May, the Reds decided they had had enough.

"From their entry into the war in October 1950, the enemy had boasted that he would drive the United Nations command into the sea. He now knew that this was not going to happen. The enemy was losing men, he was losing equipment, he was losing ground. Time was working against him. Winter was coming on. The trend of military events in Korea was not auspicious for the Communists. In short, they were losing the war.

"It was apparent that if the enemy wanted to retrieve anything from his aggressive venture in Korea, he either would have to do it at the conference table or he would have to get and use all the modern equipment, such as airplanes and tanks, that his allies could spare. This second alternative depended on the scope of outside assistance and could lead to another world war. It would be a matter of starting a big fire in order to call the fire department away from a small fire.

"However, the Communists may have had other reasons for suggesting a truce.

"The Chinese might have come to the conclusion that they had been led down the garden path. They were fighting and losing a war which was not theirs. They must have known from the beginning that the United Nations had never been any threat to them across the Yalu; perhaps the average Chinese 'man in the street' was commencing to realize that fact.

"Another possibility was that they were preparing for a really big push in a couple of months, and a phony armistice conference would serve the double purpose of giving them a breathing spell and lulling the UN forces into lethargy and a false sense of security. During a lull, they could accelerate a build-up of personnel, weapons, and supplies, and strike heavily with more chance of success. They had used these tactics successfully several times before in China, the most notable occasion being in 1946.

"Another possibility was that Communist China wanted to be the sole power in Asia. She could not aspire to this if she continued to pour all of her resources and all of her men into a futile war. She was losing face in Korea, as well as resources and men. Perhaps she thought that it was time to pull out of this ill-considered venture, and concentrate her activities on increasing internal strength and expanding in other more lucrative areas.

"Still another possibility was that much Russian equipment was being lost—equipment which they might prefer to use in other more critical areas. Lost equipment would pay no dividends. Perhaps the Soviet Union told the Chinese and North Koreans that they would get no more equipment after a specified date, and that they should settle their affairs before that date as best they could.

"It was also possible that the Communists realized that they could never dominate all of Korea by military methods, whereas they might achieve domination by other means. If a military armistice were achieved, perhaps they could infiltrate later into the government of the Republic of Korea. Perhaps they felt that their many agents and guerrillas already in South Korea could so dominate elections in the Republic of Korea that the country would eventually go communistic. Perhaps they believed they could sometime in the future contaminate the officials of the Republic of Korea government so that the people would grow tired of that type of government and elect Communists in a period of frustration. In short, perhaps the Communists thought that since they could not gain their ends by military aggression, it would be wiser to try political aggression.

"In any event, not the least likely possibility was the desirability of enticing the western nations to slow down the rearmament that the Soviet Union's aggressive moves had set in motion. A conference to discuss an

armistice might cause enough indecision and internal bickering among UN forces to reduce defensive potential and alertness to a low level.

"Still another factor in asking for a truce was the increasing disaffection in the Chinese Communist armies. More and more Chinese wanted to surrender, and desertions mounted.

"Which one of these possibilities instigated the Communists' proposal for armistice on the first anniversary of the Korean War? It will probably never be known. It is more likely that each of them had some influence. The Communists had nothing to lose and everything to gain by suggesting an armistice conference. If the negotiations failed, her propaganda machine could attempt to place the blame on the United Nations for the failure."

In the time interval between the proposal by General Ridgway and the answer by Kim Il Sung, plans were made for the meeting to be held aboard ship under a special task force commanded by Rear Admiral I. N. Kiland. This special task force would be composed of a cruiser, an AGC, an APA,[12A] and a division of destroyers. It was intended that this special task force could furnish adequate communication facilities, logistic support, and living quarters to the truce delegates, UN officials, reporters, etc.

After Kaesong was designated as the conference site, the opinion was voiced that because the talks would be held ashore instead of aboard ship, the logistics support for the UN truce delegation should be shifted from the Navy to the Eighth Army. There was also considerable discussion as to whether the senior delegate should not be an Army officer. General Ridgway decided that Admiral Joy, already designated, should remain as the senior delegate for two reasons: first, Joy had become acquainted with the problems involved; and secondly, General Ridgway did not desire any of his corps commanders or General Van Fleet to lead the discussions since it might tend to weaken the combat effectiveness of the Eighth Army.

Upon the UN's acceptance of Kaesong, some of the U.S. Navy ships which were originally scheduled to be in Wonsan were ordered to Inchon to render logistic support if that became necessary. It was thought that the correspondents would require additional facilities, both in housing and communications.

The Sea War in Korea

Malcolm W. Cagle, CDR, USN and Frank A. Manson CDR, USN

Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The Truce Teams Meet

The first meeting of the main truce delegations was scheduled for 1000 on 10 July 1951. The day dawned cloudy and damp. Helicopters carrying the UN delegation flew north at a few hundred feet altitude above waving white-clad[12B] Koreans working in the rice paddies.

"We landed on a level field near the Kaesong Methodist missionary compound," said Admiral Burke. "As we stepped out of the 'copters, we were met by the North Korean liaison officer, a Colonel Chang. Communist photographers and newsmen gathered around. As we got into our United States Army jeeps, which were prominently marked by white flags, the Communists took movies and motion pictures. Armed Chinese troops lined the sides of the landing site. There were also half-a-dozen enemy jeeps on the field, some of them Russian jeeps. Others were captured United States jeeps, still with their United States markings. One of these had two bullet holes in its windshield, which had probably accounted for the ill-fated United States soldier who had painted 'Wilma' on the hood.

"All of this was a staged act to demonstrate to us their domination of the situation.

"Colonel Chang mounted his jeep and led our convoy on the ten-minute ride to the house assigned to us. Later this house was christened the 'United Nations House'. The short jeep ride did nothing to dispel our forebodings. Along the way, the road was lined with armed guards and photographers. The United Nations house itself was surrounded by armed guards, prominently stationed with burp guns. Going up the steps to the house I found it necessary to push to one side the muzzle of a machinegun held by a young North Korean lad.

"We entered the house. It had been stripped, but the Communists had placed tables and chairs in two rooms so we could use them as conference rooms. After what we had experienced, our trust was not at a high level.

"The staff of our United Nations delegation had earlier proceeded by motor convoy that morning to Kaesong and were already in the United Nations House. LT Horace Underwood, USNR, our Korean interpreter, informed us that the Communists were using a different time than we. In other words, ten o'clock *our* time was nine o'clock *their* time, so we had to wait an hour before the meeting was to start. During the delay, we discussed our communication facilities. We also commented on the large number of Communist newsmen and photographers and the display of armed force with which we had been met.

"About 1050, we proceeded in jeeps to the conference site. As at the UN House, there were many armed guards near the conference house. All the guards were North Koreans. All of them were rather officious in stopping our cars and in directing us where to go.

"We were escorted into a small room of the old one-time splendid house. The center of the room contained a small table on which rested beer, candy, and cigarettes. The five-man enemy delegation was standing. Admiral Joy, followed by the rest of the delegation, proceeded quietly into the tension-filled room. We didn't know the enemy delegates. One of them said, 'I am Nam Il'. Admiral Joy nodded and replied, 'I am Admiral Joy'.

"Before we went to Kaesong, we had been informed that the enemy would have only four delegates; now there were five—three North Koreans and two Chinese. The North Korean delegates were in Russian-type uniforms with good-looking, gray, red-piped blouses with Russian shoulder marks, and very big blue trousers. As is their custom, the Chinese delegates were in woolen khaki uniforms with no insignia of any kind.

"The enemies' uniforms were of two grades: resplendent or very poor. Delegates and a few staff officers were resplendent, the others were very poor.

"Our own delegation and party all wore khaki. It was a meaningful paradox. All the members of the United Nations party—both officers and enlisted men—were clothed alike. This was one more indication of our side practicing the words we preach, while the Communists used the same words but practiced something entirely different. A man could learn much about class distinction by studying the enemy delegation.

"The senior delegate was General Nam Il. He was Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, North Korean Army. Nam was about 38 years old, and in his youth had graduated from a university in Manchuria. Nam was an ardent, clever Communist standing high in Soviet favor; he was Russian-trained and dominated, and spoke Korean with a foreign accent.

"Major General Lee Sang Jo, the next senior North Korean delegate, was Chief of Staff, Front Headquarters, North Korean Army. Lee was about 38 years of age, born in South Korea, but went to China as a boy and was there graduated from the Whampoa Military Academy. Lee became a Communist in 1940 and was instrumental in establishing an underground contact between the Yenam faction and the Kim Il Sung faction of the North Korean Communists for the Korean Independence League in Manchuria.

"The third Korean delegate was Major General Chang Pyong San, North Korean Army, about 35 years old, Chief of Staff of the First North Korean Corps. There were reports that Chang had been an enlisted man in the Soviet Army at one time.

"The senior Chinese delegate was Lieutenant General Tung Hua, deputy commander of the Chinese Communist forces in Korea. He was about 51 years old, an old-line Communist, having been political officer of the First Army in 1930.

"The other Chinese delegate was Major General Hsieh Fang.

"The Communists must have had a difficult time in deciding whether the fifth delegate should be North Korean or Chinese. After a few of our meetings, it was apparent that they had added Chang to the list as a mere nonentity to fill a vacancy. Chang very seldom paid much attention to the proceedings, and still less often contributed anything. Practically all consultations were between the other four delegates.

"As the meetings opened, everyone was nervous and everyone was under a strain. The two delegations looked at each other like circus animals let loose in an arena. At 1105 Admiral Joy suggested that we go to the conference room. The first meeting convened in a rather small room with the delegation facing each other across a green, felt-covered table. Interpreters sat behind their respective delegations. The Communist staff and stenographers were on one side of the room, ours on the other. When the meeting opened, there was a United Nations flag on a small standard in front of Admiral Joy.

"During the first meeting, Communist photographers came streaming into the conference room and took a great number of pictures. We protested, and it was mutually agreed that photographers and newsmen would be excluded from the conference room. This agreement was kept. However, there were large numbers of Communist photographers all around the conference site getting many photographs which would be published in Communist newspapers. In addition, there was an unknown number of Communist newsmen in the area. Our own press was rightly vexed at this one-sided affair.

"Even more important than the indignation of our own press was the obvious result of such an arrangement. All on-the-spot news would be distorted by the Communists, and our own news agencies would have no personal knowledge of the true state of affairs.

"Our delegation finally flatly stated that we would bring 20 members of the press to the conference site. At first, this was agreed to. After Nam Il thought it over, however, he said he could not grant permission for the press at this time unless he received orders from his seniors. He might not have had the authority so we requested him to obtain such permission and notify our liaison officer the next morning. We also informed him that we intended thereafter to receive courteous equitable treatment, and that we would insist upon bringing about 20 newsmen and photographers into the conference site the next morning.

"The next morning, on 12 July, our convoy with 20 newsmen was embarked, but it was not permitted to go on with the newsmen. This was the straw that broke the camel's back.

"The controversy over newsmen and photographers proved to be the first of many. After an exchange of notes between Kim Il Sung and General Ridgway, the matter was finally resolved, and the truce talks got underway.[12C]

"During the subsequent negotiations, crisis followed crisis. In all of them, our UN delegation had two possible courses of action. One was to try to placate the Communists and to take conciliatory measures so the Communists would not break off the conferences. This course of action had been tried in other conferences without much success. The Communists had always taken such an attitude to mean appeasement, and took aggressive action to control the situation because they thought we were weak and impotent and would sacrifice a correct position to gain agreement.

"The other course was the direct, forceful approach. This method had not been overly used in the past. It was early decided by General Ridgway, with the hearty concurrence of the delegation, that this course was the only possible way to obtain equitable terms of a military armistice. *Power* and *strength* were terms the Communist understood, and they were not influenced by much else. Consequently, we always tried to choose a sound, vigorous course of action and state it forcibly. In doing this, special care was taken to insure that these statements were reasonable and could be accepted by reasonable, unbiased men.

"It was reassuring to find that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other officials at home felt the same way we did about the chosen course of action."

On 15 July, the delegates turned to the question of a truce, starting first with the number one item: the agenda. After much haggling, an agenda was formally adopted on 26 July. The next task would be to fix a military demarcation line. Following that, concrete arrangements were to be made for the cease fire and the armistice. The next item was arrangements relating to the prisoners of war. The fifth item involved recommendations to governments of countries concerned on both sides.

Despite the fact that the Communists had reached a military stage where they were steadily losing—a stage where they could gain virtually nothing on the battlefield, and perhaps lose everything by continuing the war—the Communists came to the truce parley fully expecting United Nations delegates to accept the terms which had been laid down by Malik in his radio speech.

"Such terms," said Admiral Burke, "would have meant the restoration of the situation which existed before the attack by North Korea—just as if there had been no aggression. This solution would have ignored the UN positions in areas north of the 38th and would have meant the resumption of a boundary which could not be defended from the south. It would have meant that the ROKs would be placed in jeopardy again just as soon as the last UN soldier sailed away. It would have paved the way for Communist political conquest of the Republic of Korea—a feat they had been unable to accomplish on the battlefield. But important as were all these factors, there was one even more important factor—it would have shown all Orientals that the Communists had won the victory, and that UN forces were anxious to leave the area they had come to defend; that we would accept terms less than honorable, less than reasonable, in order to get out of more fighting. That would have meant the loss of confidence by other small nations in the strength and stamina of the UN.

"The Communists at the conference table had some reason to believe we would accept those terms, and they insisted that we should accept them. All logic, all arguments, all reason were of no avail as they sat stiffly and said, 'We are unshakable, your propositions are untenable, you must accept our terms.'

"The Communists, as always, were patient. They had lots of time, and they were not averse to wasting time in the belief that we would become impatient and eventually give in on important points just for the sake of agreement. Only this time, that waiting procedure did not work as successfully for the Communists as it had in the past. Finally, UN *military pressure* convinced them that we had no intention of settling on anything but fair and

reasonable terms, and they resumed the conferences.

"They then proposed a solution of the 38th parallel, with a line on a map which looked attractive, if a man did not read the words that went with the picture. It was so foolish that even they were embarrassed by having to support it. Eventually they proposed a line not far from the battleline at that time as the military demarcation line. The military pressure was still on, the battle line was slowly but inexorably moving north against the Communists. Their proposition wasn't good enough. At last they proposed, and we accepted, the current battle line as the military line of demarcation.

"All that took five months. Five months of haranguing, of argument, of ceaseless talking; but mark this well, five months of combat in which our side was winning. That was the reason for their acceptance of the reasonable military line of demarcation. It was *military pressure, not reason,* that persuaded them to be reasonable.

"By accepting that line of demarcation, they relieved themselves of much of the military pressure that had been exerted against them. Again they became recalcitrant as we began to discuss Item 3, the details of the cease fire, and Item 4, prisoners of war."

Thus went the truce talks *ad infinitum.* All the UN delegates grew weary but no less wary as the talking was continued. South Korea's General Paik Sun Yup probably had the most difficult position of all.

Said General Paik: "As a soldier fighting under the UN command I was of course obligated to accept the idea of participating in the truce talks. Yet as a soldier of the Republic of Korea I was also representing a government which did not approve of the parley. However, even though I was in close contact with my government virtually every day, at no time was I advised to do other than to fully cooperate. As a passing suggestion for any such future coordinated parleys, it might be well for the governments concerned to reach full understanding and accord before a joint delegation attempts to present a single policy.

"Translation, I recall, was a very serious obstacle. My government did not like the word 'Chosen,' for example. The North Koreans did not approve of the word 'Hankuk'. It seemed a trivial matter, but it actually was highly important because of the implications inherent in the final selection of the word.[12D]

"We found early that we had to be patient. That was the secret of our somewhat limited success. We wouldn't quarrel. Just be patient. On the outside we would show a smile and look serene. But inside we had to remain firm and unbending. For power is all that the Communists fear and respect.

"I believe that when the truce talks began, the Communists really wanted to have a cease fire. However, even that was difficult to determine accurately. While Nam Il was senior delegate for the Communists and made some minor decisions, for the greater part he had to turn to the Chinese delegate and get his opinion before he would answer a question or make a statement. Of course, behind the Chinese delegate was, and still is, the Kremlin. So it is very difficult to say with any certainty that the Communists did or did not want an armistice. Nobody can know that for sure except the Kremlin.

"Some of the meetings did border on the humorous. I recall one such meeting during which we sat completely silent for 45 minutes, neither side saying a single word until both sides finally got up at the same time and left the tent. Because both delegations merely represented their governments, it was necessary to recess whenever neither delegation had anything new to offer in order to give the respective governments time in which to produce some new proposal with which to try to break the deadlock.

"When the Communists agreed on a demarcation line I was frankly somewhat optimistic and thought that perhaps we might eventually arrive at complete agreement. But now I can see that in too many cases it was the UN delegation which had to give in. The Communist delegation does not give in or arbitrate. Perhaps one of the reasons why this is so, is because the United States was in a very difficult position by virtue of the fact that it was taking such an active leadership in the war itself. Russia, on the other hand, was in a much easier position because it was still supposedly a somewhat disinterested spectator and could exert influence from behind the scenes.

"I suspect that the single event which made me the most angry occurred when one of the North Korean delegates wrote on a small piece of paper the words, 'Imperialist dog is worse than food given to beggars at a funeral home.' However, I realized that such things only pointed up more vividly the wrongness of their cause, their desperation. They had to resort to such personal slander because they did not dare to discuss the issues at stake candidly and truthfully.

"I am convinced that if a truce is finally signed, and the UN troops are withdrawn from Korea, it will be but a short time before we have another and far more disastrous aggression. And the next time the Communists will make complete preparations so that they will not fail. I hope and pray that UN troops will remain in Korea. Not just for the sake of Korea, but for the sake of the free nations of the world. Korea today stands as a symbol of a willingness and a determination to fight aggression wherever and whenever it may appear. For the free nations of the world to back down even once might prove to be disastrous in the extreme."

General Paik Sun Yup's letter to the authors was dated 12 September 1952.

The truce talks were not to end until 27 July 1953, ten months later.

First Year Boxscore for Surface Ships, 25 June 1950—30 June 1951
Aircraft: 2 destroyed
Ammunition dumps: 11 destroyed, 3 damaged
Artillery positions: 128 destroyed, 52 damaged
Bridges: 31 destroyed, 125 damaged
Buildings: 311 destroyed, 300 damaged
Junks and sampans: 213 destroyed, 147 damaged (plus 9 captured)
MG and mortar positions: 33 destroyed, 15 damaged
Mines: 700 destroyed
Motor boats: 22 destroyed, 6 damaged
Pillboxes: 12 destroyed, 9 damaged
PT boats: 3 destroyed
Land mines: 83 destroyed
Railroad cars: 74 destroyed, 101 damaged
Supply dumps: 22 destroyed, 16 damaged
Tanks: 9 destroyed, 3 damaged
Troop concentrations: 2 destroyed, 150 attacked
Troop casualties: 12,476
Trucks and other vehicles: 134 destroyed, 64 damaged
Warehouses: 33 destroyed, 46 damaged
(Also 537 POWs)

The Sea War in Korea

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The Second Year

Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, USN, relieved Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith, USN, as CTF 95 on 20 June 1951. This change of command had nothing at all to do with the fact that in five days the first anniversary of the Korean War would take place. Anniversaries notwithstanding, the Navy's work must go on for 25 more months.

Dyer ruled that this work not only must go on but that it must be intensified. The more the Navy could do from the sea to hurt and embarrass the enemy on land, the better would be our chances in the negotiations at the truce table.

The Combative Spirit

For destroyer skippers especially, the naval war along the Korean coastline was a fertile field for the exercise of initiative and the display of command, and what Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, CTF 95, referred to as "the combative spirit." Especially after the truce talks began, a blockade assignment could either be a monotonous patrol or an action-packed opportunity, depending on the initiative and aggressiveness of the individual commanding officer.

Patrolling ships had specific tasks: the blockade was to be maintained, fishing suppressed, enemy coastal traffic interdicted, mines swept, rescue performed, and the captured islands supported. Those commanding officers who were also element commanders had additional command duties. From them, a nicety of judgment was required to weigh the current situation, balance and apportion the assigned forces, and establish time schedules for replenishment, as well as fight the war. These duties and tasks could be performed routinely, or they could be performed with imaginative aggressiveness.

"Korea was an opportunity to discover and uncover those commanding officers who had a combative spirit," said Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, "An otherwise outstanding naval officer, who might be the best engineer, shiphandler, and administrator in the Service, might also not have that extra quality of combat aggressiveness and pugnacity which is the mark of the victorious naval officer. As a matter of fact, few military leaders have this inner fire and this love of battle which has been traditionally vital to the success of our Navy. The naval war along the Korean coast gave ship skippers the chance to reveal whether or not they had such a combative spirit."

In Admiral Dyer's opinion, many of his ships exhibited a combative spirit, doing more than was expected of them. A typical one of these was the destroyer *Stickell* (DD-888, CDR Jesse B. Gay, Jr.).

The *Stickell* had joined the Northern Patrol (TE 95.22) off Songjin on 16 May 1951. On 24 May, Gay assumed Task Element command.

"I decided that the most effective means of disrupting coastwise rail communications was to knock out a railroad bridge readily observable from sea," said Gay, "and then keep it unusable. I selected for destruction a small bridge between two tunnels south of Songjin. To conserve ammunition and increase gunfire accuracy, the Canadian destroyer *Nootka* (CDR A. B. F. Fraser-Harris), using her whaleboats and a small minesweeping rig, swept a channel inside the 100-fathom curve to within 2,500 yards of the beach. After this, the *Stickell* destroyed the bridge with single gun 'short-range battle practice'."

Thus commenced the "Battle of the Bridge," which would continue until 28 June.

The North Koreans began immediate repairs, using stacked railroad ties for foundations (called

"cribbing")—repairs which were discouraged by intermittent air bursts night and day from blockade ships in the vicinity.[12E] At two to three-day intervals, whenever repairs appeared near completion, and after dusting off gun positions in the nearby hills with 40-mm. fire, the *Stickell*, covered by ships of Task Element 95.22, proceeded in the swept channel and destroyed the cribbing.

After *Stickell's* gunfire had demolished the Communist repairs several times, the North Koreans gave up trying to repair the trestle, and, being unable to bypass it due to the terrain, laboriously commenced filling the 30-yard ravine, still harassed by the blockading ships.

On 14 June, *Stickell* landed a group of South Korean soldiers from two small sampans in the area of the besieged bridge. Two prisoners were captured, one of whom was lost when a near miss from a mortar shell capsized one of the two sampans during retirement.

The surviving prisoner stated that he was the boss of a repair gang brought from a town near the Manchurian border to assist in the repair of the bridge. He also revealed that his party had travelled the entire way by train, but that numerous trains were now held up in the tunnels awaiting repairs to the Songjin bridge. The next day the prisoner pointed out various real and fake gun emplacements in the area, and also the police station in a village area south of Songjin, which was taken under fire and destroyed.

For two more weeks, the blockading ships kept the rail line inoperable. Finally, with the bridge gap almost filled with rock and dirt, the *Stickell* chose another bridge a short distance to the north of Songjin and commenced a second "destroy-repair-destroy" cycle.

"The presence of some fifteen South Korean marines and an English-speaking Korean naval lieutenant on board provided excellent opportunities to conduct beach raids," said Gay, "in addition to the routine around-the-clock interdiction and bombardment fire at Chongjin. Great credit is due to the brave Korean marines, who several nights every week went cheerfully ashore onto hostile beaches. Sometimes they went ashore during a thick fog, guided by radar; on other occasions, they went in during bright moonlight, armed with rifles and Browning semi-automatic rifles and carrying hand grenades and a couple of handbags of clips. Their discovery and progress on the beach could always be followed by the clatter of small arms fire.

"On one occasion, after a reconnaissance in the Chuuron-jang area south of Chongjin, our landing party reported several large sampans on the beach which were being armored with heavy iron plating on the inside. As intelligence reports had also been received of a Communist plan to recapture the islands held by our forces in Wonsan harbor, using armored sampans, we made plans to destroy the reported sampans at our first opportunity.

"Two nights later, the *Stickell* steamed into Kyojo-wan an hour before sunset, ready to destroy the sampans by gunfire. While approaching the desired firing position, a radar target was picked up which was identified as a large motor schooner fleeing to the safety of the Chuuron-jang River. We opened fire at 10,000 yards and hit it at 8,500 yards just as it entered the river. The schooner burst into flames from bow to stern, ran on the beach, and burned for the remainder of the night. Prisoners we captured later revealed that this schooner was manned by North Korean naval personnel and was carrying arms, fuel, and supplies.

"We now returned our attention to the armored sampans.

"On reaching the 100-fathom curve to seaward of them, we discovered that they were protected from our direct fire by large stone masses. I made the decision to land the Korean marines, retiring until after dark and providing gun cover as necessary.

"The ship's motor whaleboat, with Ensign J. B. Farrell, USN, as boat officer and spotter, left the ship about four miles off the beach, towing a sampan filled with the Korean marines. A thousand yards from the selected landing spot, the sampan was cast off to proceed alone, and the spotting party prepared for action.

"As the sampan approached the beach, it was taken under small arms fire from the nearby cliffs, but our call-fire quickly drove off the defenders and the boat landed safely.

"The Koreans located three large armored sampans and destroyed them with hand grenades before being

pinned down by mortar fire from a nearby village. Illumination from the *Stickell* permitted the spotter in our whaleboat to locate the enemy mortar and it was promptly silenced, permitting the Korean marines to withdraw without incident under covering fire."

Stickell's landing force performed another type of operation on the night of 14 June when Gay decided to seize one of the Communist-held Yondo Islands about ten miles northeast of Chongjin. The *Stickell's* Korean marines were disembarked from two sampans at the closest point of the 100-fathom curve. Again, the destroyer's whaleboat was used to tow the sampans close to the beach. The marines landed undetected on the one inhabited island of the group. Local opposition did not develop. Considerable intelligence information was gained from the natives. The natives revealed that an official North Korean delegation was due to visit the islands the following day.

"I ordered our landing party to remain ashore to greet the dignitaries," said Gay.

"Unfortunately, the movements of the *Stickell* in the general vicinity of the Yondo Islands aroused suspicions of the North Koreans that something was amiss, for the scheduled visit failed to materialize."[13]

On the departure of *Stickell* from the theater, on 29 June, the following message was received from Commander Seventh Fleet:

"I have followed *Stickell's* exploits in Songjin during the past two weeks with great interest. The effects of your aggressive spirit and initiative will be remembered by the enemy. Well done. Vice Admiral Martin."

On 29 June 1951, the new ComCruDiv-5, Rear Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, had gone ashore on the east coast near Pohang to witness ROK troop maneuvers as the guest of the Eighth Army Commander, Lieutenant General James Van Fleet. Van Fleet asked Burke to accompany him to a certain area by jeep. Burke suggested it would be easier and quicker to go by helicopter, and that, afterward, Van Fleet could return with him to the cruiser *Los Angeles* for a dish of ice cream.

As the helicopter, piloted by Chief Aviation Pilot C. W. Buss, approached the *Los Angeles* about 1535, the wheels touched the life nets, followed by an RPM loss, and the 'copter crashed on the fantail, dumping both passengers on deck unceremoniously but uninjured.

"With the helicopter out of action," said General Van Fleet "the question arose how I was to get ashore. Burke told me we'd have to make it by boat. We did so without incident, but I didn't know until long after the war that the boat coxswain had not previously had experience in navigating through breakers, and that Burke himself had taken personal charge of the boat and made the landing himself."

On 12 July the *New Jersey* (Captain David M. Tyree, USN) was at the bombline with the destroyer *Leonard F. Mason* (DD-852)(CDR J. B. Ferriter). The battleship's fire that day killed 129 enemy troops. On 18 July, she returned to Wonsan to initiate an intensified bombardment plan known as "Operation Kick-Off." For days and weeks hereafter, ships would fire at known and suspected positions of enemy harbor defense guns in Wonsan with both delayed-burst and air-burst shells.

The no-fishing rule was enforced more rigidly than ever in northeastern Korean waters. The 6th of August saw USS *Carmick* (DMS-32) destroying four fishing sampans near Changjin and taking their 13 occupants into custody. Eight days later, the USS *William Seiverling* (DE-441) (LCDR W. C. Cole) captured nine more poachers off Tanchon. The 19th of August found USS *Thompson* (DMS-38) (LCDR W. H. Barckmann) capturing two fishermen at Tanchon.

The Han River Demonstration

On 26 July 1951, as the truce delegates at Kaesong began what would be a four-month wrangle over the establishment of a military demarcation line, a special naval demonstration was commenced in the Han River.

The reason for this special patrol was to counteract the Communists' immediate claim made at the truce

table that the 200 square miles *south* of the 38th parallel and *west* of the Imjin River (including the Ongjin peninsula) were in their hands.

This territory was actually patrolled by UN guerrilla forces. Furthermore, since the city of Seoul was located at the headwaters of the Han River, it was important to insure that any cease fire agreement would provide that the maritime approaches to Seoul were not under Communist control.

It was therefore deemed urgent and prudent to demonstrate visibly to the Communists that this vital area was in UN hands.

On 28 July, accordingly, the USS *Los Angeles* (CA-135, CAPT R. N. McFarlane) entered the swept channel of Haeju-man to commence a shore bombardment of enemy frontline positions, assisted by plane spot. The Communists were caught by surprise; the Reds obviously did not consider that such a large ship could get so far into this shallow and mined sea area and bring guns to bear on the front lines. *Los Angeles* fired forty-four 8-inch rounds and sixty-six 5-inch rounds into frontline positions and received a "well done" for her work.

"The Han River demonstration was a very difficult naval operation," said Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, CTF, who was in charge of its establishment.

"The Han River is a small-sized Yangtze, and its currents run from four to ten knots. The channel shifts rapidly from one side of the river to the other. Ther are no water-borne navigational aids, and the tides run from twelve to twenty-five feet.

"The first thing we had to do was to survey the channel. This survey work in the Han River was done most capably and energetically by the navigators of the frigates of the British Navy.

"The United States Navy supplied the anchors and buoys and the tugs to handle them.

"The survey work was conducted in power boats which could only work for a period before and after slack water, since at other times their speed of six to eight knots was either just equal or less than the speed of the current.

"The sequence of events was: (1) the small boat survey, (2) the small mine sweepers, (3) the tug with the buoys, and (4) the frigates. Up-river progress was at the rate of about three miles a day until we reached Kyodong Island.

Click here to view map

"My hat is off to the British Navy and the Commonwealth Navies for the courage, tenacity, and high degree of seamanship they showed in accomplishing this job.

"When they reached the Kyodong Island area, we established an anchorage there, and commenced taking the enemy under fire.

"The survey then proceeded both westward and eastward. However, the only navigable channel found was one that went westward along the north of Kyodong Island, then turned north at Inson Point and proceeded to the eastward.

"As soon as we showed up north of Kyodong Island, the enemy started constructing batteries at Ayang Point and at the mouth of the Yesong River.

"There was a railroad line that ran from Yenan to Kesong, and a ferry across the Yesong River. There was heavy traffic on this ferry. To shell it regularly, the frigates had to get up to the mouth of the Yesong. The enemy would plant machine guns and mortars in the rice fields at night, and when the frigate came along in the morning, would shell the frigate, and there would be a close fight."

Dyer happened to be on board HMAS *Murchison* (LCDR A. N. Dollard, RAN) for a tour of the estuary during one particularly hot action on 28 September 1951.

"About 1600," recorded LCDR Dollard, "unsuspected batteries of 75-mm. guns, 50-mm. guns, and mortars opened fire on us from the north bank of the Han. We had just reached the Yesong River and had dropped our anchor to let the current turn us around when the first mortar hit."

The Australian frigate picked up her anchor and maneuvered clear, with all guns blazing. The *Murchison's* 4-inch fire scored several hits and silenced all opposition.

This Han River demonstration lasted until 27 November 1951, at which time the negotiators agreed upon a provisional cease fire line.

The disputed territory was recognized as in UN hands.

The Sea War in Korea
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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Naval Gunfire at the Bombline

At the bombline in September, 1951, several naval ships had an opportunity to display their gunnery prowess. *Los Angeles* fired all batteries at enemy troops and gun positions near Kojo on 3-4 September. One hundred and ninety-seven rounds of 8-inch and 123 rounds of 5-inch fire were expended. The shore party controlling her fire was commendatory:

"Many enemy casualties. Explosion observed with considerable smoke and spreading fire. . . . Rounds flushed enemy troops who began fleeing inland. Fire landed among them. In one incident, troops began running back over a small hill, and as they reached the top of the hill, a series of eight-inch air bursts exploded about twenty-five feet above their heads. . . . Your firing destroyed at least three enemy gun positions and caused an untold number of casualties."

The *New Jersey* had a chance to work at the bombline intermittently from 23 September to 3 October 1951.[13A] The naval gunfire liaison party that spotted for her made the following comments:

"24 September: '. . . 27 rounds of 16-inch were fired with good effect on Hills 1190 and 951, with many bunkers destroyed, others revealed, and many casualties inflicted on the enemy. . . .'

"2 October: '. . . four missions were fired, expending 136 rounds on Hills 802 and 951. Air observers and enemy POWs reported 25 counted enemy bunkers destroyed, 45 estimated destroyed; 200 killed, 400 wounded. . . .'

"3 October: '. . . *New Jersey* fired 81 rounds on Hills 796 and 802 with good effect. . .'."

The cruiser *Los Angeles* also was credited with saving the First ROK Corps on the night of 21 November.

"In early November," said VADM J. J. Clark, then Commander Task Force 77, "intelligence sources indicated a strong buildup of enemy forces, with increased artillery and automatic weapons fire in the Kojo area. During the night of 21 November I received an urgent call for assistance to the First ROK Corps, then on the line near Kojo. General Van Fleet's headquarters reported that the enemy was breaking through the Korean lines, and had captured a hill on which an important outpost was located. The First ROKs had run out of ammunition, and the enemy was mauling them very badly. Could we send a ship down there?

"The location of the break-through was beyond the range of destroyer fire. The only heavy ship I had was the heavy cruiser *Los Angeles.*

"I proposed sending her, but my staff called attention to a standing order requiring that one heavy cruiser or battleship be kept with the fast carrier task force at all times to provide AA protection in the event of an air attack. Another reason for this requirement was in case any of those Russian cruisers came out of Vladivostok and ran down into our area during the night.

"These seemed like pretty worthless reasons just then, so I overrode the requirements and ordered the *Los Angeles* to get down there at high speed.

"She arrived off Kojo about 0230 and her 8-inch guns turned the tide of battle. Her 91 rounds of 8-inch fire drove the Communists back and gave the First ROK Corps a breathing spell until morning, when they were able to replenish their ammunition supplies."[14]

The last month of 1951 saw destroyer *Beatty* (DD-756, CDR Means Johnston, Jr.) patrolling the east coast north of Hungnam—"firing at any target worth our ammunition."

During a Sunday patrol southward from Cha-ho, *Beatty* spotted but could not positively identify lines of black dots across all the harbors and inlets along the coast. They appeared to be buoys and were estimated to be

supports for anti-landing nets.

Reporting this information to Commander Task Group 95, *Beatty* received the following order: “Put a whaleboat in the water and have a closer look-see.”

Beatty complied, selecting the large harbor of Yangwa.

Beatty’s whaleboat, manned by a crew of volunteers commanded by Ensign Hugh H. McCreery, USN, was lowered into the water shortly after dawn and proceeded on its mission deep inside the enemy-held harbor. Since the boat crew could not comply with their mission of determining the nature of the objects until there was sufficient light, they remained inside the harbor for over two hours in broad daylight.

When about 1,500 feet off the beach, the whaleboat was suddenly caught in a crossfire from three machine gun nests. Ensign McCreery later estimated more than 100 rounds near the whaleboat, with the bullets walking by as close as five feet.

Over the “walkie-talkie” radio the ship could hear the rat-tat-tat of the machine guns. “I asked Ensign McCreery if he was firing at the enemy or was he being fired upon,” said CDR Johnston. His reply was ‘Affirmative to both.’ Almost simultaneously I asked him if he wanted the *Beatty’s* 5-inch guns to commence firing. I ordered my gunnery officer, LT Walter W. Schwartz, USN, to use white phosphorous ammunition which had proved very effective in counterbattery fire.”[15]

The whaleboat was directly in the line of fire as the first round was fired. McCreery (also *Beatty’s* assistant gunnery officer) radioed spot corrections. The first correction was almost on, and the second resulted in a direct hit on the first machine gun nest. On the third spot, fire was shifted to another nest with another direct hit. Several rounds were fired at the third, which was quickly silenced, although its destruction could not be confirmed. The crew of the whaleboat was simultaneously firing on the enemy with machine guns and even pistols.

The *Beatty’s* whaleboat returned unscathed, with a very detailed drawing of the buoy arrangements.

The lines of black dots proved to be anti-landing nets, illustrating the Communists’ inbred fear of another amphibious assault.

The Sea War in Korea

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Tightening the Noose

At the beginning of 1952, the war ashore had assumed all the aspects of a stalemate. Ground action was sporadic, and consisted mainly of probing raids and patrols, varying in size and violence.

Despite the intense and combined efforts of air and naval forces, it was apparent that interdiction of the enemy's supply lines in Korea was not being achieved. The Communists were succeeding in steadily building up their military strength all along the battlefront, and their flow of supplies, while hampered and harassed, was not being interrupted to a critical degree.

The enemy's amazing and rapid capacity for repairing his roads, tunnels, and bridges plus his unlimited manpower, and his protected supply bases north of the Yalu, required greater effort and more efficient interdiction of the blockade forces if the supply networks were to be closed off to an effective degree. The Navy had to draw the blockade and bombardment noose a few notches tighter.[15A]

What more and what else could be done to hurt and harass the Communists?

To Admirals Joy, Martin, and Dyer, there was little new that *could* be done. With the number of ships available, and the political and military restrictions imposed upon the conduct of the war, only an intensification of effort and improvements in technique could increase the Navy's contribution to the war.

In *this* sense, several things *could* be done.

First of all, the surface ships operating with the carrier and blockade forces could be more frequently used for bombardment and interdiction, especially during replenishment and bad weather. As a calculated risk, escort and heavy supporting ships around the carrier task force could be absent from the task force on a one-day-at-a-time basis for gun strikes. The escort of convoys could be reduced.

Secondly, the closer the co-operation between Task Forces 77 and 95, the greater would be the damage inflicted upon the enemy. Commander Task Force 77 was therefore given the task of coordinating the interdiction campaign by air and naval gunfire.

Third, still closer liaison could be established with the U.S. and ROK troops at the bombline, so that naval gunfire at the battlefront might be improved in its effectiveness.

Fourth, the spotting of naval gunfire must be increased; better control would mean greater accuracy and greater damage.

Fifth, additional areas close inshore could be swept clear of mines, and more patrols established to completely eliminate any enemy attempts to short-haul supplies by junk or sampan.

And lastly, a better scheme for the coordination of the air and ground interdiction campaign could be worked out. It was this objective which brought into being the "Package" and "Derail" operations, described on page 349.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Deep Naval Gunfire Support for the Marines

After relieving the First ROK Army Corps, the First Marine Division had taken up positions on the eastern end of the battleline. On their right flank was the First ROK Army, adjacent to the sea. However, the Marine division itself was still within the long-range reach of either cruisers or battleships.

In November 1951, the Marine division requested again that naval ships be made available to support them. Both Tenth Army Corps and COME-USAK approved this request, and a schedule of naval ships to support the division was drawn up.

In the four months which followed, it became standard practice for a new ship, reporting to the Marine Division to perform gunfire support for the first time, to send representatives to a liaison conference. At this meeting the Marines would furnish the necessary maps and overlays of the frontlines and bombline, would explain the terrain topography and targets, and would furnish information regarding voice calls and frequencies. In return the ship's gunnery officer would present information on ammunition availability, times on station, expected periods of replenishment, and other problems. These exchanges always proved invaluable.

During this period on the eastern front, the Marines were facing a deeply entrenched enemy whose main fortifications had been erected on the *reverse* sides of the steep mountains, away from the Marines. (See drawing on page 284.) These positions had proved invulnerable to all but the heaviest ordnance, namely, the naval gunfire of cruisers and battleships.

Major General John T. Selden, USMC, emphasized the importance of naval gunfire in a despatch request for continued gunfire support addressed to Vice Admiral Harold W. Martin, Commander Seventh Fleet.

"Since September the First Marine Division has blasted the majority of enemy's trenches and firing positions on forward slopes. The enemy now mans these with only a sentry force. The majority of his troops remain on the reverse slopes in areas protected from our tank and artillery fire. These down-slope positions are so constructed as to be invulnerable to all but the heaviest ordnance. Artillery ammunition is limited and in general cannot destroy the desired targets. Close air support is not available in quantity. High level bombing rarely hits such targets. Naval gunfire is the only ordnance available which can be effectively employed to destroy these targets, which include regimental command posts and other enemy strongpoints. Request that naval gunfire be continued to hit maximum number these targets."[16]

Vice Admiral Martin concurred, ordering that the maximum practical support be given to the Marines by Task Force 77's and 95's cruisers and battleships.

The assigned task for them was not an easy one. The average range to target would be 10 miles for the cruisers, and 16 miles for the battleships. In the very mountainous terrain, with variable and often unpredictable wind conditions, there was lubberly doubt that naval gunfire could be sufficiently accurate to destroy such small targets as artillery pieces, bunkers, and shelters. The naval gunner's were certain they could *hit* the targets, but not so sure that the expenditure of ammunition might not be extravagant.

Click here to view map

For two-and-a-half months, the bombline ships fired at the enemy's front-lines. On 7 April 1952, General Selden passed out the report cards to Admiral Martin.

(1) *Wisconsin* had fired 977 rounds of 16-inch caliber projectiles in 43 missions at an average range of approximately 16 miles. This fire had killed an estimated 70 and wounded 359. Three artillery pieces had been destroyed and 7 damaged, 81 bunkers and shelters had been destroyed, and 105 damaged.

(2) *St. Paul* and *Rochester* had fired 1,661 rounds of 8-inch caliber projectiles at an average range of approximately 11 miles. This fire had killed 239 enemy troops and wounded 47. It had destroyed 2 artillery pieces and damaged 3. It had destroyed 116 bunkers and shelters and had damaged 127.

(3) *Manchester* had fired 470 rounds of 6-inch caliber projectiles at an average range of 11 miles. This fire had killed 163 enemy troops and wounded 47. One artillery piece had been destroyed and 8 damaged; 28 bunkers and shelters had been destroyed and 20 damaged.

Was such naval gunfire worth the effort and expense? The answer could only be yes. In General Selden's words, "The support rendered during this period was both effective and justified."

With an average expenditure of between 15 to 23 rounds per mission, naval gunfire was destroying targets for which the expenditure of 50 to 60 rounds of artillery fire was not uncommon. And the deleterious effect on the enemy's morale was immense even if not fully measurable. The Communists had supposed their reverse slope entrenchments impervious to gunfire; consequently, the destruction of their bunkers, command posts, and artillery positions by the flanking and enfilading fire of the cruisers and battleships was totally unexpected.

Reports of the excellent results of naval gunfire came not only from spotters observing the ships' fire but from captured enemy prisoners as well. One prisoner reported that *Wisconsin*'s fire on 25 January had hit his divisional command post, and that half the personnel in it were casualties. Another prisoner confessed that he had been induced to surrender after surviving a heavy naval bombardment, during which his unit had suffered severe casualties. In fact, one shell had landed near his position and had failed to go off. As he looked at the size of the 16-inch shell, he became convinced that it was time to surrender.

Still another prisoner reported that his battalion political officer had explained that the huge craters made by the 16-inch shells were made by atomic artillery.

General Seldon summarized the naval gunfire: "In view of the unusual circumstances confronting the First Marine Division, it is felt that the fire support ships have played a valuable and unique role in applying pressure against enemy military positions and morale."

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Communist Resistance to Blockade

Time after time the blockading destroyers would fire at the same coastal targets and provoke no fire in reply. On other occasions, without warning one or more enemy batteries would open a hot, intense, and accurate fire upon the tormenting ships. In several instances the enemy guns would remain purposely silent in order to entice the patrolling ships closer and closer inshore.

The USS *Thompson* (DMS-38, LCDR W. H. Barckmann) was an early example of how ships were often enticed close ashore by silence.

On 14 June 1951, while searching for lucrative targets in the vicinity of Songjin, the *Thompson* closed the beach to less than 3,000 yards. Suddenly, out of camouflage, four 3-inch mobile batteries commenced a hot and heavy fire on her. The *Thompson* increased speed and headed seaward, while returning the surprise fire. However, before moving clear, she had been struck 13 times, had suffered 6 casualties (3 killed and 3 wounded), and had received extensive damage to her director, radio equipment, and radars. *Thompson* acquitted herself with an equally intense fire on the four guns, forcing them to cease fire.[16A]

The USS *James C. Owens* (DDR-776, CDR Robert B. Erly, USN) was another destroyer to receive a sudden and heavy attack from enemy guns. On 7 May 1952, the *Owens* was interdicting enemy coastal traffic in the vicinity of Songjin and had destroyed two railroad cars and a truck when she received information of activity in the Songjin railroad marshalling yards.

Moving the *Owens* to within 3,000 yards of the target, Erly opened direct fire on the marshalling yards, demolishing a switch engine and eight railroad cars.

At this point, approximately ten enemy guns opened a savage and accurate fire upon the *Owens*. The first salvos straddled immediately. For eleven minutes the enemy's fire was intense and rapid, resulting in six direct hits and much shrapnel from many near misses. Three separate fires broke out in the *Owens* 40-mm. ready-service magazine and two ready-service ammunition racks.

The *Owens* counterbattery fire was equally intense. Two of the enemy guns were seen to explode, and several others silenced.

As the *Owens* left the harbor, she had the satisfaction of continuing the fire several minutes after the enemy guns had quit.

Three *Owens* men had been killed and five wounded. The after officers quarters had been wrecked; cables to the after 40-mm. mounts had been severed. *Owens* made her own repairs, transferred her dead and wounded, and resumed normal operations and was again under fire at Hungnam in less than twenty-four hours.

The USS *Cunningham* (DD-752, CDR A. A. Clark, USN) was likewise to find herself in a hornet's nest of enemy gunfire. After a week of unchallenged inshore patrolling near Tanchon on 19 September 1952, the *Cunningham* had closed to within 3,500 yards of the beach while firing at a repair crew driven into the railroad tunnel.

"At 1430," said Clark,[17] "the enemy batteries opened fire and scored a direct hit with their first salvo. We immediately increased speed, turned to open the range, and started chasing splashes. Within about two minutes we took four more direct hits and about seven to eight air-bursts close aboard. One direct hit ruptured four depth charges, splattering burning TNT over much of the deckhouse aft, the dense smoke making fire control difficult. The leadership and professional skill of the mount captains and after Director Officer were magnificent. The guns which would bear—the after 5-inch mount, and after twin 3-inch/50—countered with 118 rounds of 5-

inch/38 and 36 rounds of 3-inch/50 in spite of dense black smoke through mount 51 and air bursts over mount 33.

"Thereafter we weren't hit, although the shore guns kept firing at us all the way out to 16,000 yards, expending an estimated 125 rounds of 75 to 155-mm. The five hits and near misses cost us thirteen casualties (none killed), besides disabling our SG radar and demolishing a forced-draft blower in the forward fireroom."

Clark was fairly certain that the airbursts near *Cunningham* were VT-fuzed, as there were no airbursts away from the ship.

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Spotting

Better liaison, better coordination, and *better spotting*—these were the improved techniques which would increase the effectiveness of naval gunfire upon the enemy.

Of the three, perhaps the most important was *spotting*, whether air spot (airplane or helicopter) or the actual observation and control of gunfire by spotters on the ground. However it was done, all hands agreed that the effectiveness of the naval gunnery would be in direct proportion to the amount and quality of the spotting.

The first west coast blockade commander, Rear Admiral W. G. Andrewes, RN, had appraised the value of non-spotted fire in these words: "Unobserved fire is useful for morale purposes, both from the point of view of our own forces and of upsetting the enemy," he said.[18] "Apart from that, it is of little real value, and many thousands of shells must have fallen harmlessly on the barren hills and rocks along the east coast of Korea."

Helicopter spotting was a new gunnery technique, first used in combat by the *Helena* in August of 1950. Opinion was unanimous that a ship using its own helicopter and carrying its own spotting officer possessed one of the best assists to accurate marksmanship that a ship could have.

But helicopter spot had its drawbacks and limitations. In the first place, only certain of the cruisers and battleships had helicopters. Helicopter spot was only rarely available to the destroyers, which expended approximately 90 per cent of the bombardment ammunition fired in the Korean War. Secondly, helicopters were very susceptible to enemy gunfire, even small arms. If there was any enemy opposition, the use of helicopters was extremely hazardous. In Wonsan harbor, for example, helicopters were available, but their primary tasks were minehunting and search and rescue; their use for spotting purposes in that besieged city was highly dangerous because of the heavy enemy antiaircraft fire.

Air spot by regular airplanes had its limitations, too. The first limitation was training. The majority of the spotting pilots, both U.S. Air Force and Navy, were well trained in the technique and doctrine of gunfire spot. In a few instances, however, a lack of training, sometimes humorous, was reflected in the use of non-standard phraseology. The British Admiral in command of Task Force 95.1, Rear Admiral A. K. Scott-Moncrieff, RN, reported in April 1952 that the Dutch ship Hr. Ms. *Piet Hein* (CDR von Freytag Drabbe) became completely bewildered by the use of incorrect procedure by an airborne spotter. "Fortunately," wrote Admiral Moncrieff, "the shoot was prevented from being abortive by the presence of a liaison officer from my staff who was able to translate the vernacular into simple English."

The use of jet aircraft for spotting later in the war revealed the limitations of these aircraft: limited endurance and their need to fly at fairly high altitudes in order to maintain a satisfactory rate of fuel expenditure.

As for propeller-type spotting planes, their value was occasionally diminished by the presence of enemy antiaircraft fire in certain areas such as Wonsan, which forced them to such altitudes as to make their spotting efforts questionable.

Aside from these practical limitations, the use of air and ground spot increased steadily for the remainder of the war. Never was there enough. Requests for spotting assistance always exceeded the capacity for giving it. But the maximum available was hereafter used to increase the effectiveness of naval gunfire on enemy targets.

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Whaleboat Operations

As already described, one of the tactics used to advantage by the blockading ships of Task Force 95 was the use of ship's whaleboats for the detection of targets along the coasts or in harbors, as well as for the direction of the ship's gunfire and the capture of enemy sampans and junks.

One outstanding whaleboat operation was conducted by the destroyer USS *Halsey Powell* (DD-686, CDR Francesco Costagliola, USN) on 18 January 1952, near Hungnam. This operation, to neutralize an enemy supply buildup where a destroyer's gunfire could not reach, came to be known as "Chicken-Stealer."

"Shortly after I arrived in the Hungnam area to be Commander Task Element 95.24," wrote CDR Costagliola,[19] "all ships of the blockade force received a despatch from Admiral Dyer. In essence this despatch pointed out that on many occasions recently, ships had reported *destroying* single junks. Admiral Dyer stated that in his opinion we should show more dash and enterprise in *capturing* junks, which were useful for intelligence purposes, rather than sinking them. This operation had the code name 'Junket'.

"This despatch was received about 13 January 1952. Since I had a shipload of eager lads, we accepted Admiral Dyer's despatch as a direct challenge. We did not think we had much chance of encountering a junk offshore in our area, but in addition to planning for such an eventuality, we thought there was a good possibility there might be some behind such islands as Mayang-do in our area. My executive officer, operations, gunnery, communications, and shore fire control party officers were particularly active in working up a plan to steal a junk. My crew nicknamed our two boats 'Hawk' and 'Falcon'.

"Having received intelligence to the effect that there were many small boats in the harbor of Sam-ho, and since Sam-ho was within enemy gun range from the sea but obscured by a promontory, we requested aircraft spot from CTF 77 for 1000 on the 18th of January. No planes showed up. We decided to try our boats. The spotting boat directed ships' fire on jetties, boats, and a warehouse.

"Upon their return, the boat crew reported the Sam-ho warehouse gutted, jetties damaged, and many of the small boats riddled with shrapnel. The whaleboats had been fired on by a shore battery but escaped damage.

"On 19 January, in the Hungnam area, close scrutiny of the shore line through binoculars revealed a man standing at the entrance to a large cave facing us on the island of Hwa-do. We also observed seven or eight workmen with digging tools enter the cave. The information we had on the island was not clear as to whether or not it was in friendly or enemy hands. Certainly, the cave looked suspicious. Despatches to our immediate superior. ComDesRon-17 (CTG 95.2, CAPT C. E. Crombe) and the local minesweeper commander, confirmed that there were no friendly forces on that island.

"On establishing the fact that the island was enemy, we opened fire on the cave and managed to get one or two rounds into the entrance.

"Following this, a large hand-propelled barge was observed to leave Hungnam harbor and proceed along the shore in the direction of Hwa-do island. This too was taken under fire. At least one casualty was observed among the barge personnel as they worked their way laboriously back into the harbor.

"In the early afternoon, considerable activity could be discerned on the mainland almost directly behind Hwa-do. It appeared that at least a hundred people were loading supplies into small boats, presumably to ferry them to Hwa-do. A few rounds dispersed that activity.

"All this activity on Hwa-do really roused our curiosity. But from our position (which we could not vary very much) we knew something was afoot. The only way to see was to use our whaleboats. On this day, however,

the seas were rough and conditions were not considered suitable for launching and loading boats.

"The decision was made therefore to remain in this location until morning, with our anchor 'underfoot' to help keep the ship from drifting.

"Next morning, Sunday, January 20, 1952, the seas were calm. We started putting the boats over at 0630. Although it was only about 8,000 yards from the ship to Hwa-do, the two boats had to travel about twice that far in order to get behind it and do it surreptitiously. Although risky, I decided to keep my ship in the same spot it had been for the last twenty-odd hours, because it was the only one where we could stay close to the island and also observe the section of beach where all the activity had been observed the day before.

"About 0745, the boats were in position, ready to spot our fire. The ship opened fire, one round at a time, as directed by Ensign James Winnefeld, the spotting officer in the first boat. Lieutenant Theodore Curtis, my operations officer in charge of the second boat, kept a few hundred yards away to provide support to the first boat if needed.

"The ship had only two 5-inch mounts manned, as the crew had not quite finished breakfast. Just at eight o'clock we were startled by an explosion about 50 feet off the starboard bow. Water splashed all over the bridge. Within seconds we were backing out of there emergency full. Shells seemed to be falling all around us. Our anchor was still underfoot, but fortunately it did not snag on anything and came along with us.

"At least four guns on Sohojin Point, located about 9,000 yards north-northeast of our position, were shooting at us. Needless to say, we were at General Quarters, shooting back with all our mounts, in very short order. Although we were straddled several times, the ship was not hit and the enemy shells began to fall consistently short, then ceased.

"The boats, meanwhile, were still behind Hwa-do to the west, reconnoitering and encountering no opposition. We returned to a point about 2,000 yards south of our former location, out of range of the enemy battery, and resumed shooting at Hwa-do targets. Unfortunately, a good proportion of possible targets were on a steep reverse slope where the ship could not get at them.

"However, Ensign Winnefeld reported all houses in three small villages had been covered with shrapnel, and four houses completely gutted. Boats along the beach were sprayed with shrapnel. One was destroyed and one was sunk.

"When it became apparent that not much more could be done without the expenditure of a great deal more effort, I recalled the boats. The next couple of days and nights, Hwa-do continued in our plans and operations as a target to receive harassing fire.

"Shortly after this operation, the thought was generated that a bazooka would be a very useful weapon in stepping up the wallop of the whaleboats. On the afternoon of 22 January, the *Halsey Powell* (DD-686) was relieved as TE 95.24, and proceeded to Sasebo for upkeep. There, through Rear Admiral George C. Dyer and the assistance of CMD R. M. Hill (OinC Naval Ordnance Facility, Yokosuka) and the local Army unit, we obtained two 3.5-inch bazookas and a 75-mm. recoilless rifle, with ammunition for both types.

"Upon our return to the Hungnam area on January 30, the weather was bitterly cold and the boats wouldn't start. The engineers worked 'round the clock to get them going. Between rough weather and the severe cold, it wasn't until the afternoon of 6 February that both boats were again running and the sea was calm enough to get them in the water to take a look at the situation on Hwa-do. Finally, at 1430, we got them in the water. One boat had the 75-mm. recoilless mounted on a platform in the bow. The other boat included a 3.5-inch bazooka. Once again, Ensign Winnefeld commanded the 75-mm. boat and Lieutenant Curtis the 3.5-inch.

"The ship went to General Quarters about 1530, ready for any eventuality, and commenced a slow bombardment to keep the enemy occupied.

"About 1545, the boats reported in position and began to direct our fire. As before, however, because of the reverse slope, we were not doing much damage. Permission was requested and granted for the boats to try

their luck with the bazooka and recoilless rifle. I gave them permission and the ship ceased fire. The whaleboats took turns, one standing off for support while the other went in to shoot at close range.

"Meanwhile, aboard ship, I nervously looked at the clock. It was 1625. I decided to issue the recall order at 1630. Just then a not very clear communication was received from one of the boats indicating some sort of difficulty. Our first impression was that one of the men had gotten singed on his backside from being too close to the back blast of the recoilless rifle. The next thing we got was a frantic call for fire on a certain area of the island.

"We were a little hesitant to open fire because we couldn't see the boats and were using indirect fire. However, we started pouring out the 5-inch until we heard from the boats again. The boats reported that one man—Donald Flaherty, DC2—was injured and would require the attention of a medical officer. He had been shot in the ankle and the groin. We had no doctor aboard.

"While the boats were making their slow trek back to the ship we radioed our immediate superior in Wonsan, CTG 95.2, Captain C. E. Crombe, for medical assistance. He dispatched the *Twining* (CDR M. C. Osborne) which was also at Wonsan, and which had a medical officer embarked, to meet us.

"It was nearly dark when we finally got the two boats aboard and ran south to rendezvous with *Twining*. We did not have to go very far, however, for she had been steaming at high speed in our direction. Flaherty was soon safely transferred.

"After retrieving the two boats, we got the full story from the boat crews. While shooting at the various targets on the beach, they had spotted a couple of sampans which they thought they could capture (one had fresh fish in it). When the sampans were secured in tow, the two whaleboats started back to the ship, but were taken under small arms fire by the enemy. This was when Flaherty was hit. The radioman in the other boat—William Harrison, RM2—had a bullet graze his head which severed the headband of his earphones. Arthur Talley, BM3, was steering his boat lying on the bottom, using a rifle as a stick to guide the tiller. They still had the sampans in tow when some bigger guns, probably 75-mm., opened up with considerable accuracy and forced them to abandon the prizes.

"Fortunately, the ship's fire managed to stifle the enemy's guns before any more damage was done.

"After Flaherty[19A] was transferred, we returned to the vicinity of Hwa-do Island and Hungnam about 2200. There was a bright, red glow over Hwa-do indicating that fires the boats had set with their shooting in the afternoon were still burning brightly."

Capturing Sampans

On the night of 17 February 1952, minesweeper *Murrelet* (AM-372) was steaming independently on blockade and anti-mining patrol between Hungnam and Cha-ho. Near Songdo Gap, radar contact in the direction of the beach was made at a range of 10,000 yards. *Murrelet* changed course to close the range and to get between the target and the beach in order to prevent escape. It was dangerous but exhilarating work.

At a range of 400 yards, *Murrelet* illuminated the target with her 12-inch signal searchlight, and the light disclosed a large two-masted sampan with all sails set. *Murrelet* fired one 20-mm. burst through the rigging, severing and dropping both sails of the sampan. *Murrelet* came alongside, threw over two grappling hooks, and secured the junk. Just as *Murrelet* prepared to put her boarding party aboard, six North Koreans crawled from below decks, raised their hands, and surrendered. The sampan was taken in tow and delivered to the ROK Navy.

"The *Murrelet* got the armed whaleboat idea from Admiral Dyer's 'dashing' and 'aggressive' despatch," said LCDR J. W. O'Neil. "We procured walkie-talkies, built a radar reflector screen for the whaleboat, and then called for volunteers. Almost the entire crew stepped forward. The crew selected was LTJG W. F. Gillen, USNR; ENS Suh In Byuk, ROK Navy; Frank H. Kennon, Jr., BM1; Brown, TN; Cluke, SN; French, SN; Beaugard, QM2; Sherer, RD3; and Chance, FN. A few daylight practice runs proved that we could operate the boat

effectively three or four miles from the ship.

"Our method of operation was quite simple. On our night patrols, if a sampan was detected in swept water, the capture would be effected by the ship. If the sampan was detected in unswept water, we would get as close as possible, stop, and put the armed boat in the water. The radar reflector in the boat made a good target and we were able to vector them to any contact very effectively. The whaleboat would approach the sampan and ENS Suh would call on them in Korean to surrender. Then the sampan and occupants would be towed back to the ship.

"This plan met with success the instant it was put in operation. The whaleboat was vectored out on contacts six times and captured six sampans and twenty-six prisoners.

"The seventh time did not work out too well. The whaleboat was vectored about 3.5 miles into Hongwon Roads to a double contact we had picked up. They were successful in making an undetected approach and called upon five North Koreans in each sampan to surrender. The occupants stood up with their hands in the air. The whaleboat took one sampan in tow and started to go alongside the other. So far everything was routine and a carbon copy of the other raids.

"Suddenly one of the Koreans threw a hand grenade into the after compartment of the whaleboat. The explosion killed Kennon, the coxswain, wounded Brown and Cluke, and blew a three-foot hole in the port quarter. Our remaining crew members immediately opened fire with rifles and sub-machine guns, and after a brief but intense fire-fight, killed the occupants of both sampans.

"LTJG Gillen was then faced with the prospect of getting the badly damaged whaleboat back to the ship. The hole was plugged with life jackets, but it was necessary to bail continuously with helmets to stay ahead of the incoming water. Meanwhile, on the *Murrelet*, we listened to the reports of the action via walkie-talkie and were helpless to assist. The ship could not be taken into mined waters. It took the whaleboat about twenty-five minutes to make the return trip. *Murrelet* then ran at top speed to Wonsan and obtained medical attention for the wounded men."

Shore Battery Dueling

One of the most successful ships in dueling with the enemy's coastal guns was the destroyer *Douglas H. Fox* (DD-779, CDR James A. Dare). This ship worked up a procedure especially adapted to the Communist defenses.

"One lesson that I taught my crew which I had learned from World War II," said CDR Dare, "was that if you wanted to make *good* gunners out of *mediocre* gunners, simply take them under enemy fire. Also this procedure seems to have a remarkably good effect on morale.

"In the Korean blockade and bombardment work, every ship had to choose between the evil of long periods at General Quarters, the increasing strain in Condition II; or the relative lack of gunnery coverage in Condition III.

"The *Fox* solved this problem by calling away two sections of Condition III when we were in fairly dangerous territory. This always provided a fore-and-aft 5-inch mount and complete 40-mm. coverage, plus an augmented engineering watch to man the smoke generator and to keep a man in steering aft. Since we could choose the time and duration of these extra stints, it provided fairly easy strain on all concerned.

"The coastal guns of northeast Korea, for the most part, were field artillery pieces. They had no modern control equipment or automatic computers. In my opinion, when the Commies fired at our ships, and ships *opened* the range and ceased counterbattery fire too soon, it gave the Reds confidence and courage. I feel that if the *Fox* had done this, the Communists would have fired on us every time we came in range, probably with more accuracy each time.

"Our system, instead, was to approach a known enemy gun position, probing it with single shot,

deliberate fire. When the enemy gun answered, we *closed* the range and commenced a heavy barrage to smother the battery. After we silenced the gun, we shifted to deliberate fire again to destroy it.

"In dangerous areas, I usually kept one 5-inch mount in reserve, one barrel loaded with white phosphorous and the other with VT-fuzed common. A few salvos of this mixture silenced the enemy fire completely (and usually for several days.)"

A typical result of *Fox's* doctrine was the destruction of an enemy battery on Mayang-do, on 7 May 1952.

At 1155, *Fox* received 12 rounds of fire from the enemy three 76-mm. gun battery. Half of the rounds were white phosphorous. The opening salvo was 20 to 50 yards away, and other straddled within 100 yards. *Fox* closed the range and commenced a rapid, smothering fire, forcing the enemy guns into silence.

Four nights later, in the same area, *Fox* captured eighteen fishermen, of whom nine lived on Mayang-do. The prisoners reported that *Fox's* fire had destroyed both the gun and the housing of one large 105-mm. gun. The gun chief and five gunners were killed, and another gun dismounted.

"The Mayang-do battery never fired on us again," said Dare.

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Anti-Fishing Expedition

Destroyer *Douglas H. Fox* was also to have her name recorded very often in action reports during the spring of 1952. In a period of four weeks, *Fox* made the North Korean fishing industry exceedingly unprofitable.

"Our anti-fishing campaign was carefully worked out and centered about our whaleboat raiding party," said CDR Dare. "Since all raiding would be done at night, we put corner reflectors on staffs in the bow and stern of the whaleboat which permitted us to follow it out as far as 14,000 yards on the SG radar.

"In addition to small arms and radio, the whaleboat crew carried hand grenades, demolition charges, hack saws, axes, bolt cutters (for destroying fishing nets), and an engine repair kit in case the whaleboat engine ever failed. Part of the time the whaleboat also carried a 75-mm. recoilless rifle, with about 15 rounds of HC and 15 rounds of white phosphorous. The 'Willie-Peter'[19B] was wonderful for establishing a reference point on the beach from which to direct ship's gunfire.

"The selection of a crew for the whaleboat required careful attention. Not every officer or enlisted man is the right type. My boat cox'n, Shepard, was the kind who could steer by the seat of his pants once he was given a compass course. He was tough and slightly reckless.

"The officer in charge of the boat, LT William R. Doran, was a very good leader, having all the better command virtues. He was also adept with all sorts of small arms; he was the ship's assistant gunnery officer and therefore knew what type of fire support he could get from the ship.

"The ROK naval officer, Ensign Un Soo Koo, was a bright, extrovert type. On many occasions he managed to get information from the captured prisoners in about 30 seconds, which was then transmitted to the ship by radio. One time, he convinced two prisoners, caught 30 minutes earlier, to help spot gunfire on the loading piers and warehouses behind Mayang-do. (I am not certain the prisoners weren't spotting our fire onto their creditors' homes.)

"The other men in the boat crew were the rough and ready 'can-do' type.

"Since I felt rather keenly the risks being taken by my men in the whaleboat raiding party, I always ran the bridge plot of their track and controlled them personally from a portable radio mounted on top of the pilot house. Obviously it was important never to lose track of the whaleboat when sending it 5 to 7 miles away from the ship into the midst of a harbor or into a group of 15 to 20 sampans. In order to intercept the relatively immobile sampans, we usually vectored our whaleboat *inshore* of the targets; the whaleboat would then herd the fishermen to seaward.

"Capturing fishermen required some thoughtful procedures. Invariably, every craft brought alongside was thoroughly searched beforehand. The whaleboat party, therefore, had to do everything to guarantee the ship's safety as well as their own. They did this by going alongside and boarding, searching both sampan and prisoners on the spot, by the light of battle lanterns. After this the sampan would be towed back to the ship *alongside,* rather than astern, so that all guns in the boat could bear. I didn't want an accident like the tragic one which happened to *Murrelet.*

"After capturing sampans, our whaleboat always took care to identify itself on its approach to the ship by pointing a battle lantern toward us until we were quite certain there could be no mistake."

The very successful, one-month anti-fishing campaign which *Douglas H. Fox* conducted while patrolling "Engine Block" and at the bombline is outlined in *Fox*'s war diary. Here, incidentally, the historian's problem is reflected with clarity, for the brief and official words of action reports and war diaries do not contain the colorful

and memorable details so important for reader understanding and interest. Accordingly, each entry from *Fox*'s war diary is supplemented by remarks from her commanding officer obtained later by correspondence and interview:

War Diary: 30 April 1952. ". . . *Fox* raiders in motor whaleboat investigated small radar contacts inshore of rendezvous area at 0217. . . ."

Commanding Officer: "The radar contacts proved to be Dan buoys left by the minesweepers, but were not indicated on my charts. As soon as this was ascertained, we sent the boat in to the small rock island which lies in the mouth of Hungnam harbor. The raiding party planted an American flag on the island, plus a sign with surrender instructions printed in Korean, and a white flag on a short staff to wave at us. The raiding crew also painted the *Fox*'s name rather prominently on both sides of this rock."

(Note for history readers): The next day, 1 May, would be the Reds' May Day celebration. When the Communists began their festivities the next morning, they would do so in sight of the *Stars and Stripes.*

War Diary: 6 May 1952: "At 0200, raiders suspended operations after having captured three sampans and 15 North Korean fishermen in the vicinity of Chang-ho ri. *Fox* hoisted two sampans aboard, cut third adrift, and resumed southern patrol . . . at 1148 proceeded to Wonsan to transfer prisoners and sampans to TE 95.23 at Yodo. . . .USS *Ptarmigan* (AM-376) and USS *Toucan* (AM-387) conducted night anti-sampan patrol. At 2315, *Fox* raiders captured 23 North Korean fishermen and one 32-foot sampan in vicinity of Paegan-dan. . . ."

Commanding Officer: "This was the first night the raiders investigated the harbor closure net off Sin 'Chang-ni. They reported it to be a 4-inch hemp cable supported by oil drums, and that the net dropped from it was fairly old and rotten.

"The 23 fishermen off Paegan-dan were nearly their total fishing population. We never again observed more than one or two boats there, and these were very close inshore."

(Note for history readers): Upon being questioned, the fishermen were able to locate a 122-mm. gun at Kajin-ni, which they said was serviced by a company of North Korean soldiers who lived nearby in underground caves. They further reported that the gun was positioned so that only the barrel protruded, and that it had taken four horses to move this gun to its hilltop position. The fishermen also revealed that they had no motorized sampans in their area, that food was scarce, and that soldiers checked them in and out on the hours of 2000 and 0400.

War Diary: 8 May 1952: "*D. H. Fox* raiders cut and destroyed 6,600 feet of fish net and sank 130 main floats of Communist dual-purpose fishing and harbor closure nets off Sin 'Chang-ni."

Commanding Officer: "These nets were formed into interior and exterior traps at both ends. Our Korean ensigns estimated they would provide food for 500 or 600 people. The nets were destroyed by the raiders by first cutting the bolt rope in seven or eight places, towing the sections apart to rip the nets all the way down, and then sinking the whole mess. We doubted that they could be usefully recovered thereafter."

War Diary: 9 May 1952: "*D. H. Fox* raiders conducted close-in search of Hungnam harbor, capturing 12 North Korean fishermen and two junk-type boats with sails. At 0335 completed raiding operations and fired on numerous factories in Hungnam. . ."

Commanding Officer: "This was the morning that the officer in charge of the raiding party, LT Doran, made me think back to LT Stephen Decatur. Doran was motoring about in Hungnam harbor in the midst of 30 to 40 sampans. He sized up the two biggest ones, stopped them, searched them, forced them to hoist sail, and escorted them out of the harbor. The sun was almost up as they sailed back into the swept area."

(Note for history readers): The destroyer *Fox's* initiative and aggressiveness during a one-month period resulted in the capture of 120 fishermen and 29 boats, and the destruction of 24,000 lineal feet of fish traps and nets. The captured fishermen also furnished valuable military intelligence.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Air-Gun Strikes

On 4 April 1952, Vice Admiral Joy gave Task Force 77 an additional mission: to coordinate its air strikes with simultaneous gun strikes by the blockade forces. Such a system would increase the damage inflicted, and it would enhance training. Fire from the surface ships would help reduce the enemy antiaircraft fire upon the naval aircraft. In return, the naval aircraft could spot the surface fire of the ships.

These combined strikes were to take place until the end of the war.

The coordination of the fire power of surface ships and the lethal power of a carrier task force's airplanes commenced with the 13 April air-gun strikes on Chongjin.

Philippine Sea (CVA-47, CAPT Willard K. Goodney) and *Boxer* (CVA-11, CAPT John B. Moss) would furnish the air strikes, while the USS *St. Paul* (CA-73, CAPT Roy A. Gano), *Hanson* (DDR-832, CDR W. J. Henning), *T. E. Chandler* (DD-717, CDR T. H. Wells), and British destroyer HMS *Concord* would furnish the gun strikes.

The Chongjin targets were choice ones, especially for the carrier airmen, whose appetites had long been dulled by the steady menu of interdiction targets. Chongjin's Japan Rayon Company and Mitsubishi Iron Works would be primary targets. In addition, the city's numerous warehouses, gun positions, supply buildings, fuel tanks, and barracks would receive attention.

Each carrier launched its entire air group twice during the day; *Boxer*'s Air Group Two (CDR A. L. Downing) at 0600 and 1200; *Philippine Sea*'s Air Group Eleven (CDR J. W. Onstott) at 0800 and 1600. Each strike numbered from 52 to 58 planes, and 200 tons of heavy ordnance were pin-pointed on the Chongjin targets.

"My planes flew 132 sorties and dropped 119 tons of ordnance," recorded Commander Downing. "I led the early morning hop, while CDR G. A. Sherwood, the commanding officer of VA-65, led the afternoon flight. Our targets included buildings, large cranes, a loading platform, a drydock, and five fuel tanks, as well as the rayon and iron factories.

"Although it was difficult at the time to assess damage because of the smoke from the fire and explosions, we achieved excellent results, as determined by post-strike photography. We only had one F4U, one AD, and one F9F sustain minor damage because of flak, largely because we sent the Panther jets in ahead on flak-suppression runs and they effectively silenced the AA.

"Fire and explosions shook the city during the attacks," said Downing, "and reports of troop casualties and damage came in from outside sources for days after the strike."[20]

Rear Admiral Apollo Soucek, Commander Task Force 77, had another observation:

"As the air-gun strikes were planned and conducted," he said, "the pilots' enthusiasm was observed to swing upward."

The surface ships were equally pleased with the new system. The coordination of the firing with the bombing improved the accuracy of each while reducing the danger of all.

On 25 April, the USS *Iowa*, accompanied by USS *Duncan* (DDR-874). USS *McCoy Reynolds* (DE-440), and HMAS *Warramunga* (CDR J. H. Ramsay, RAN), was joined by four strikes of 50-odd planes each from Task Force 77 to plaster the industrial targets of Chongjin. It was the second time a battleship had operated so far north. [20A]

"We arrived and fired the first shot at 0530 in the most beautiful dawn you can imagine," recorded Captain W. R. Smedberg, III. "The sea was flat calm—mirror like—and the temperature a balmy 68°. The sun

was bright, there was not a cloud in the sky, and a soft breeze was just sufficient to move the dust and smoke away from our targets and our line of fire.

"However, the beautiful dawn didn't remove a feeling of tension. Since Chongjin was the most important industrial and rail transportation center in North Korea, only 48 miles from the Russian border, we had reason to be worried. I couldn't understand how the Reds could sit and watch us wreck that city, with their own planes just across the border. We could see the Russian planes take off on our radars, but they never came closer than 20 miles from us.

"During the day we had grandstand seats for the four hour-long 50-plane carrier strikes that were nicely coordinated with our firing. A total of 200 planes dropped some 230 tons of bombs and napalm. We fired 213 tons from this ship alone. The DDs probably contributed another 25 tons, with approximately 800 rounds of 5-inch.

"Three large steel and iron works, a sprawling rayon factory, three large power and transformer stations, a big roundhouse, two marshalling yards, and a boat repair shop which included eight huge Gantry cranes and one big hammer head or traveling crane were our targets. We had the most fun getting the ship into a spot where we had five of the big cranes enfiladed; we capped the 'T' on them, as it were, and then just started mowing them down. The task force, some 40 or 50 miles away, did a beautiful job of keeping constantly in the area two spotting planes for this ship, so we had a combination of plane and direct spot of the many targets on the waterfront, and excellent plane spot with perfect radio communication for the deeper targets.

"At noon, during the bombardment, we intercepted a short range radio broadcast from Peking, which said that American ships were shelling women and children in the densely populated city of Chongjin. At 3 p.m., we heard another broadcast saying that three of the four ships had been sunk."

After this strike, the *Iowa* proceeded south on 27 May to fire at coastal bridges south of Songjin. The battleship fired 98 rounds of 16-inch fire at them and succeeded in damaging all the bridges and closing all the tunnel entrances.

"The remarkable thing about the bombardment work by the battleships in Korea," said Smedberg,[21] "was the most careful supervision of its delivery. Whereas in World War II our BBs fired many nine-gun salvos in bombardment, in Korea we rarely fired anything except single shots. Moreover, most of the battleship fire was spotted. I would also like to emphasize that none of our planes or ships ever shot into villages or residential areas."

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
"Packages and Derails"

As has been explained in Chapter 8, entitled "The Struggle to Strangle," there was no effort made during the course of the Korean war to coordinate the interdiction campaign in Korea at the theater level. However, within its own area of responsibility (the northeast coast of Korea), the Navy performed its own coordination. On 24 April 1951, Vice Admiral Joy approved the proposal of Rear Admiral Ofstie and directed that the interdiction efforts of surface and air be coordinated. For this purpose Task Force 95 was placed under the operational control of Task Force 77. The senior cruiser division commander (CTG 77.1) henceforth served as CTG 77's representative for the surface gunfire. His duties included the maintenance of an up-to-date list of worthwhile gunfire targets, recommendations for and conduct of the necessary gun strikes, and the periodic evaluation of the program.

In late 1951 Rear Admiral F. Moosbrugger, Commander Cruiser Division Five, summarized the experience of Task Force 95's interdiction efforts by saying that the only effective fire from surface forces was deliberate fire with air- or groundspot. Non-spotted fire might have psychological or harassment effect, he said, but its actual damage to the enemy was limited. A strip of railroad track, or even a bridge, was a very small target, and unless naval gunfire was both accurate and controlled, the ammunition was largely wasted. Admiral Moosbrugger also called attention to the need for better and more complete intelligence on what the blockade and bombardments were accomplishing.

A further step to increase the effectiveness of naval gunfire and to coordinate it with the air strikes of Task Force 77 was instituted on 11 January 1952 by the introduction of two programs known as "Package" and "Derail."

"Package" was a shoreline target suitable both for ships and airplanes. Five points along the main Songjin-Hungnam railroad were carefully chosen (see chart), and given the code name "package," plus a number. At three of the five "packages," the targets included bridges. Radar reflector buoys were planted off each one to assist navigation and gunfire accuracy. At night, ships could get as close to the five targets as 1,500 to 2,000 yards, in most cases.

The "package" targets were also ones which would be difficult for the enemy to repair. And all of them were along the main east coast supply route. If these "packages" could be interdicted, the flow of enemy supplies from the Manchurian sanctuary would be seriously impeded.[21A]

The initial plan called for the cutting of the "packages" by air strikes. Thereafter, air reconnaissance would reveal the enemy's progress in repairing the damage and reopening the rail-line. When the Communist repair effort was about complete, other air strikes would destroy the target again.[21B] However, when the carriers were replenishing, or when bad weather prevented air strikes, the surface forces of Task Force 95 were to take over and keep the "packages" destroyed by gunfire. In addition, patrolling ships were to fire a specified number of rounds (at irregular intervals) every day and every night to hamper and destroy the enemy's repair efforts.

Click here to view map

The second program was code-named "derail." The "derail" targets were ones to be kept destroyed solely by naval gunfire. A study of the northeast coast was made, and eleven rail targets chosen.

Like the "packages," the "derail" targets were along the coast, accessible to naval gunfire, and on the main Chongjin to Hungnam railroad. At each "derail," patrolling ships would fire a limited number of shells into

them during each 24-hour period.

By thus concentrating and coordinating both naval air strikes and naval gun strikes upon the “package” and “derail” targets, it was hoped that the Reds’ logistic efforts along the route could be reduced to a trickle—perhaps even brought to a standstill.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Rear Admiral Gingrich Takes Over Task Force 95

The 31st of May 1952 saw the sixth American naval officer take command of Task Force 95. Aboard the USS *Dixie* Rear Admiral John E. Gingrich, USN, relieved Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, USN.

At the time of this change of command, the bombardment and blockade forces of Task Force 95 had been ranging the Korean coasts unchallenged except for coastal gunfire for 23 months. Added to the hundreds of air strikes conducted on the coastal communications by the carriers of Task Force 77 were the hundreds of gun strikes by the surface ships of Task Forces 95 and 77. By now, every worthwhile target within reach of naval gunfire along the enemy-held coast had been repeatedly under siege, and had been hit repeatedly, time and again.

"Reports of destruction, when added together from every source," said Rear Admiral Gingrich,[22] "were such an array of bridges and tunnels, locomotives and trucks, that there was scarcely room in Korea for all of them."

Opportunities for firing at fresh targets were almost non-existent, and there was little reason to waste ammunition on targets that were already untenable or destroyed. In fact, there was some suspicion that the Oriental enemy was purposely planting worthless targets in the oft-shattered areas of northeast Korea simply to invite our ships to waste ammunition on them. Moreover, there was still a great lack of information on precisely what damage our gun strikes were actually achieving.

To Admiral Gingrich, the same conditions which had long existed on the battlefront—stalemate—had now become equally applicable to the war at sea. The war in Korea—in the air, on the ground, and on the seas—was a war of attrition. It seemed to Gingrich that the expenditure of every naval shell had to have some real expectation of damage or it should not be fired. The phase of shooting just to be shooting was over; when targets were ample, it was the only policy an offensive-minded American Navy could follow. Henceforth, thought Gingrich, every bullet and every shell ought to have some Communist's name on it.

"The cost of a 5-inch shell at the end of the Korean pipeline was approximately $200," said Rear Admiral Gingrich. "Unless it did that much damage, we were hurting ourselves more than the enemy."

Moreover, naval gunfire had to be tailored to the target. Five-inch and 3-inch fire was known to be far less effective upon railroad tracks than large caliber fire. The most efficient use of destroyer fire was not to destroy, but to keep the enemy from repairing the track damage. Moreover, rather than shooting in a flat area, it would be better to shoot at the tracks where there were hills and embankments. Any "over" shell which missed the track itself might cause landslides to block the track.

Furthermore, there was little logic in thin-skinned destroyers under the command of "hairy-chested" skippers dueling with enemy coastal batteries simply for the sake of dueling. What gain was there in firing one hundred rounds back at a cavemouth from which a single or half-dozen rounds had been fired? The fire of the Communists was steadily increasing along the coasts in both accuracy and intensity; fuzed projectiles were now being used; some even thought that enemy radar-controlled guns were in evidence. Would the severe damage or even loss of a destroyer be warranted just to silence a single enemy gun manned by perhaps a dozen men?

Gingrich was no less anxious than his predecessors to bring every ounce of his naval strength to bear upon the enemy, but the naval war, he felt, had entered a new phase. If the Korean war was one of attrition, then the UN surface forces must insure that the Communists were more attrited than we.[22A]

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The Blockade Pinches

The life of a fisherman in North Korea, even before the war, was a very difficult one. As the farmers had been forced to sell their rice to the Red government at fixed, low prices, so fishermen had to sell their fish at government prices. Quantity quotas were established. If a fisherman met his quota, it was increased. If he did not, his license to fish was revoked. Not long after the war started, the North Korean government enforced a "Fishing Union" which exercised complete control; unless he was a member of the union, a fisherman could not obtain hooks, nets, floats, and other essential equipment.

The northeast coast of Korea was dotted with fishing villages at almost every place where adequate boat shelter could be found. Traditionally, the coastal Koreans rarely bothered with agriculture, and did not maintain rice paddies. Their dependence upon fish was even more complete than that of the inland Koreans.

The inexorable pressure of the tight naval blockade along the northeast coast made the fisherman's life ever more unbearable. This was evident from the steady stream of escapees and defectors from North Korea. So numerous were the refugees that special UN internee camps had to be established on the islands of Yang-do, near Songjin, and Yo-do, in Wonsan harbor. These two islands became collection points for the hundreds of men, women, and children who left hardships and retaliation by their Communist village overseers, who risked the hazards of the open sea in small boats, who accepted the risk of being mistaken for minelaying personnel while escaping, and who braved these dangers despite the Communists' warning that the Americans automatically killed any North Korean they captured.

The principal reason for so many refugee North Koreans was simply starvation. Fishing had become almost impossible.

Daytime fishing was suicidal because of the carrier and patrol planes and ships patrolling every section of the coast constantly. And at night, when the sampans of a fishing village put out to sea for a catch of pollack or sardines, they could often expect either a warning star shell over their heads, followed by gunfire to drive them ashore, or perhaps an armed whaleboat manned by eager American destroyer or minesweeper sailors, to capture them.

In an effort to break the tight blockade, the Communists organized each coastal village with one or more overseers, who endeavored to prevent the North Koreans from escaping seaward or southward, and who forced the fishermen to fish despite the dangers. The Red procedure was simply to herd the fishermen into their sampans, place guards with machineguns and hand grenades in several of the boats, and at gunpoint, force the fishermen to sea. Any sampan which ventured further than a prescribed distance from the rest of the group was fired upon. On some occasions, entire villages banded together, killed or captured their overseers, and escaped southward by sea en masse.

At some points along the east coast, such as the choice fishing grounds at the island of Mayang-do, the Communists installed radar to warn of the approach of a blockade ship. A system of flashing lights from the radar station would warn the fishermen to return ashore. At other places, warning sirens were installed which howled a warning on the approach of ships. Telephone calls were made from one fishing village to another to warn that a blockade vessel was headed their way.

Click here to view map

"The enemy had an excellent alarm system," said Rear Admiral George C. Dyer. "The east coast of Korea had thousands of Point Lomas and as soon as one of our ships would heave into sight, the word would

spread in the vicinity, and the fishermen would head for the beach. Gradually, the enemy built up radar defenses for night alerts against our marauders.

"Rough weather, or weather in which open whaleboats could not operate, limited our operations to about 50 per cent of the days and 35 per cent of the nights.

"It took great intestinal fortitude on the part of our young boat officers and men to engage in this campaign, and it soon separated the men from the boys. The anti-fishing campaign called for the seagoing and small boat talents that were in existence in the earlier days of our Navy."

The flight of civilians from North Korea attested to the success of the anti-fishing campaign. "On 26 September 1952," said CDR A. A. Clark, commanding officer of the USS *Cunningham*, "my ship carried seventy-one refugees south from Yang-do to Yo-do for interview and for further transportation to South Korea.

"Through our ROK naval officers who were aboard for training, we were able to talk to these people, many of whom were women and children—entire families, in fact. These people had been starving, as evidenced by the way they ate the food we prepared on board for them. They also told us that they understood the reason why we had curtailed fishing in North Korea.

"As for my own ship's company, we had lost our feeling of compassion about the hardness of the anti-fishing campaign on the civilian populace when a fishing boat dropped a floating mine for us on 19 September. We sank it with rifle fire."

The blockading ships frequently found small sampans far out at sea, some with only fishermen aboard, some with a single family; and on one occasion, a sampan with a group of young teen-aged boys. Destroyer *Fox* picked up an open boat with three families on 2 May; of the eighteen aboard, nine were women, including five children, aged one to nine. The escapees had planned an escape for three months and had purposely selected the night of the Red May Day celebration to make their way to freedom.

The refugee flow was heaviest during the good weather months. Even so, the hazard of escaping in a small sampan with only six to eight inches of freeboard was great. Whenever refugees were encountered, the blockading vessels took the refugees aboard, hoisted their sampans aboard or took them in tow, and on their next patrol past either Yang-do or Yo-do, sent them ashore to the internee camps for interrogation.

The sailors of the blockade fleet, upon seeing the desperate condition of the refugees, invariably gave them old clothing, food, candy, and money. Many ships adopted "mascots" and took up collections for the orphanages where some of the younger refugees were taken.

"The internee camp on Yo-do was just to the south of the tiny village of Yodo-ri," said LCDR A. Christopher, intelligence officer of TG 95.2, whose post was on Yo-do island in Wonsan harbor. "It was located on the south side of the air strip, and had the usual barbed wire barricade. The refugees—who averaged 60 to 70 in number—lived in caves which we dug out for them; one cave was a gigantic one which held about 90 people comfortably by Korean standards. These caves were necessary to protect the refugees from the sporadic gunfire which the Communists in Wonsan fired at the air strip.

"Each morning, the KMC[22B] guards ladled out their rations and rice which the refugees cooked themselves. It was my job to interrogate them and to get any useful information they might have. We questioned everybody, including the kids. In fact, one ten-year-old boy told us the location of a mine storage. After interview, the refugees would be transported south to the main camp at Chumunjin.

"From hundreds of interviews of refugees, it was plain that the 'no-fishing' rule had given the Communists extra burdens. The Reds had to try to replace the fish the North Koreans couldn't get with imported fish from Manchuria and China; and because of the battering our planes gave the roads and railroads, this wasn't easy.

"So tight was the naval blockade, in fact, that some of the refugees told me that they had been reduced to eating bark. They couldn't even get fishhooks. As a consequence, they made fishhooks from the bits of metal they

could find. Even so simple an item as cordage was unavailable, and therefore the fishermen had no way to repair their nets. As more and more Koreans escaped, and more and more sampans were demolished by ships' fire, the availability of sampans became acute. One group of fishermen that I interviewed said that the blockade was so tight that they had been reduced to spearing sting-rays to keep from starving."[23]

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
"Train-Busting"

An elite fraternity of blockade ships was organized in July 1952, called the "Train Busters." To become a member of this exclusive organization, a ship had to receive confirmation of a train's destruction. The first member of the club was the destroyer *Orleck.*

"On July 5th, 1952," wrote CDR E. L. Yates, "my destroyer, the USS *Orleck*, was assigned to the northern patrol—from Yang-do Island to Chong-jin. This run was always made during daylight.

"Our routine instructions required that we provide harassing fire at Chongjin, the northern terminus of the patrol. After sending four 6-gun salvos into certain military targets in the town of Chongjin, we headed south to register on and harass some reported shore batteries located on a ridge 13 miles south of Chongjin.

"We opened fire on the batteries while on a southerly course and were turning back north for a second firing run when the batteries opened up on us. Their opening salvo was a straddle at 10,000 yards—amazing accuracy!

"Needless to say, we immediately performed that classic naval maneuver known as 'Getting the Hell out of There'. The enemy guns continued to hold us under fire to an estimated 14,000 yards, but their accuracy diminished rapidly. Inspection of shell fragments, picked up about the decks, indicated that 105- and 155-mm. guns had been used. No damage was sustained and only one man was slightly wounded by a shell fragment. My engineering officer later reported that he was making over 24 knots on two boilers without superheat! This sort of performance in a long-hull destroyer is distinctly frowned on by BuShips.

"Our Patrol Instructions also required that we interdict the 'packages'. The normal procedure was to proceed south from Yang-do, and, on arrival at a 'package,' throw a few rounds in for track damage, then proceed to the next 'package,' and so on to the end of the patrol route; then return to Yang-do.

"In itself, firing at the 'packages' was just another chore. A great many of us had doubts about the value of these bombardments, for we never saw trains in the daytime, nor any lights at night. Yet all the intelligence reports insisted that the rail system was being used at night.

"The 'package' bombardments gave us the idea that by careful planning and preparation, we might catch one of these 'ghost' trains. First of all, we made careful visual inspections of the five 'packages' during daylight from positions as close as safe navigation would permit. We concluded that if we were to trap a train, it could not be done by the rare coincidence of ship and train arriving at the same 'package' at the same time, but rather in the normal manner of catching a train anywhere—just going to the station and waiting for one. And the best time to do so was obviously at night.

"We chose 'Package Two' as our 'station'; the railroad line was within a few hundred feet of the water's edge, and several conspicuous rocks offshore provided excellent radar fixes.

"Setting our train-trap presented a few problems, however. For example, we needed to get as close to the rail-line as possible for both good observation and accurate shooting. But getting closer than 5,000 yards meant that we couldn't use our star shells, because at less than 5,000 yards the parachutes on the illuminating candles were supposed to rip out and drop the flare like a lead balloon. We solved this one by ignoring the BuOrd warning. (It is of interest to note that only about ten per cent of the parachutes failed at 2,500 to 3,000 yards range.)

"Our gunnery problem was solved by designating one 5-inch mount as a destructive mount and the other Condition III 5-inch mount as the illuminating mount. In this manner rapid destructive fire and illumination could

be provided with a minimum of flail or warning to enemy observers.

"All methods and techniques having been solved, the *Orleck* on the afternoon of 14 July proceeded from Yang-do on the southern patrol, and arrived at 'Package Two' about sunset. Six or eight registering rounds were fired, and at dusk the *Orleck* continued south into the darkness to return an hour or two later. It was hoped that this feint would lull the track repair crews living in the tunnels into the belief that we wouldn't be back that night.

"On July 15th, the *Orleck* crept in to about 3,000 yards from 'Package Two'. Our topside blowers were secured and the ship was lying quietly to.

"At 0100, the OOD, LT P. H. Klepak, USN, heard the sound of a train approaching from the north. He illuminated immediately and simultaneously opened fire, aiming for the northern tunnel.

"We hit the last car—a caboose—and knocked it athwart the tracks, stopping the train. Further illumination disclosed 15 cars trapped between the tunnels; only the locomotive and tender were able to reach shelter in the southern tunnel.

"The rest of the night was devoted to the systematic and leisurely destruction of this prize: five gondola cars loaded with ten heavy field pieces, a flat car with a tank embarked, and about nine boxcars containing explosives. The exploding of these latter cars made for a completely satisfying night's work.

"Our success that night stirred a competitive spirit between my OOD's—and this competition was 'waiting at the station'—again 'Package Two'—for a train. At 2200, LT Richard P. Carson, USNR, the OOD, spotted a flickering light moving from south to north between the tunnels. He immediately gave orders to illuminate and commence destructive fire. The results were a locomotive, one tender, and one boxcar destroyed. This train was northbound, and the flickering light apparently was from the firebox.

"As a result of these successes we received two very pleasing despatches:

"'CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DESTROYER ORLECK, TRAIN SMASHER. DESTROYING TWO ENEMY TRAINS IN 12 DAYS IS SUPERB FIGHTING. THE EIGHTH ARMY IS PROUD OF YOU AND YOUR SHIP'S COMPANY. VAN FLEET.'

"And the second one from Vice Admiral Clark:

"'CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FIRST OF THE NEW TYPE DESTROYER TRAIN SMASHER ORLECK. WELL DONE.'

"I believe that the destruction of these two trains dispelled any lingering doubts other destroyers may have previously entertained (including ourselves) concerning the nighttime use of the east coast railroad by the Communists. Our own success in this respect was quickly followed by similar successes by other destroyers, and led to the establishment of the 'Trainbusters Club'."[23A]

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
"The Rails Are Rusty"

Destroyer *Hollister* (DD-788, CDK Hugh W. Howard, USN) was in several scrapes in July 1952, and generally could call herself a lucky ship.

"This was *Hollister's* second cruise in Korea," wrote Howard,[24] "having been in action from Inchon to Hungnam in 1950-1951. On the first cruise I had had a veteran crew. On the second I had almost a new complement, except the leading petty officers. I also had fourteen new ensigns. However, the entire crew was an eager lot.

"On Thursday, 10 July, we were proceeding along the Hodo Pando-Hungnam-Cha-ho route—we called this area 'The Boulevard'—when we were suddenly taken under accurate enemy gunfire. We responded with counter-battery fire, going to twenty-five knots and making smoke. As we fired, we weaved in towards shore, presenting both a small deflection target and a fast-changing target in range. Then we retired through our smoke, using our after battery in indirect fire. We counted thirty-two splashes around us, some of them close enough to soak our bridge, but there were no casualties.

"That night we returned and bombarded Mayang-do and Hongwan. During the bombardment we noted an unidentified blip on the radar screen slowly closing us in the vicinity of Mayang-do. We approached cautiously with our depth charge K-guns manned to protect against small craft treachery. Out of the darkness we could make out a sampan, and we closed it. The armed guard on our deck threw grappling irons over, and in moments we had three prisoners.

"The three were only youths about 16 years old. We took them into our head, scrubbed them, put them into dungarees, and then turned them into a temporary 'brig' we had rigged in the boatswain's locker forward. With the aid of our ship's artist, who made sketches of mines, guns, caves, troops, pillboxes, etc., we extracted the information that there were five guns secreted in caves firing at the *Hollister*, and that these guns were fitted onto tracks and could be rolled out for firing, and rolled back into the caves for protection.

"Having this information, and in the spirit of ingenuity and initiative urged by Admiral Gingrich, I asked for volunteers to form a landing party. Following the drawing of straws, the selection was narrowed down to one officer and five men, one of whom was my quartermaster, Buckmaster. The officer was young Ensign J. W. Kline, USNR. Kline had developed a theory during all our interdiction fire at the east coast rail line. If we could only have a *look* at the rails, Kline said, and if they were *rusty*, we could save a lot of ammunition. His theory sounded logical to me.

"They immediately started to get their equipment ready, including a rubber boat, a radar reflector (which they made from a five-gallon milk can), a walkie-talkie radio, and a compass. Using this makeshift equipment, we would be able to vector the rubber boat into the beach.

"At 2000 we were off Hongwan. There was no moon, and as the recon party in the rubber boat departed the *Hollister* and headed into the beach only 1,500 yards away, I told them I would return at 2400 to pick them up in the same spot. We shoved off to do some bombardment farther north, while they headed into the harbor of Hongwan.

"On the dot of 2400, I had the *Hollister* back at the assigned rendezvous, but there was not a pip on our scopes and there was complete quiet ashore. I have never gone through three more agonizing hours as that long wait offshore, lying-to and fearful of dawn, yet not willing to leave my men.

"At about 0230, after what seemed hours, a small pip finally appeared on the radar scope which indicated

that a target was closing us from the shore. As the target came closer we challenged it, and to our great relief they answered. I went to the quarterdeck as the party came alongside. With a sickened heart I suddenly realized there were only *four* men in the rubber boat. Kline and my quartermaster were missing.

"Meanwhile, my radar operators reported another pip slowly closing the ship from the north. We immediately locked on this target ready to open fire. As it came closer, we could make out a sampan, from which an apparition rose, calling out not to shoot. It was Ensign Kline and the quartermaster. In the darkness they had become separated from the others, but Kline came back with his answer. 'The rails are rusty,' he proclaimed.

"In addition the raiding party established the location of lines of prepared trenches and pillboxes, spotted a new sampan anchorage, and discovered the existence of an antiboat boom.

"This raid made a crew out of my ship overnight."

Reporting this raid to Commander Task Force 95, Admiral Gingrich informed *Hollister* that such a raid wasn't a normal part of a blockading destroyer's duties.

On the 13th of July, *Hollister* again was taken under fire near Sinch'ant by three guns which made 108 splashes near the destroyer. *Hollister's* answering fire scored a direct hit on one gun and silenced the other two. As before, the *Hollister* went unscathed.

Two days later, again at Mayang-do, *Hollister* was taken under fire for the fourth time in less than a week. Again the enemy's fire was very close, but again the *Hollister* suffered no hits.

Despite the repeated bracketing by enemy gunfire, the *Hollister* did not qualify for combat pay, as a ship had to be taken under fire *six* times in a period of a month in order to make the grade.

"We joked about our failure to qualify for combat pay," said Howard, "as it appeared that the Communists had read the AlNav and deliberately ceased fire after the fifth day just to thwart us!"

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Package One Blocked For Twelve Days

Shortly after midnight on 12 October, 1952, the USS *Walker* (DDE-517, CDR M. C. Walley, USN) patrolling at Package Two, received the following message by voice radio from HMS *Charity* at Package One:

"Have succeeded in stopping train, but need assistance as I am almost out of star shells."

Steaming northward at high speed, the *Walker* joined the British destroyer, which was also experiencing difficulties with her fire control system.

"Since there was only a single track rail line from the Manchurian border to Hungnam," said Walley,[25] "it was apparent that if we could keep this line blocked, nothing could move by rail in either direction. We therefore set about damaging the caboose and engine ends of the train sufficiently to prevent its removal, and attempted, with only minor success, to cut the track ahead and astern of the train. We also maintained harassing fire to prevent repair crews from working.

"After a couple days of this, the *Iowa* (CAPT J. W. Cooper, USN) showed up and we asked that she cut the roadbed for us. This she accomplished quickly and effectively with her 16-inch high-capacity shells. She also hit the locomotive, and dished out a huge hunk of that from the boiler. Returning strikes from Task Force 77, which had unexpended ordinance, were also sent over for our control to assist in maintaining the block.

"During daylight hours the *Walker* lay offshore at a range of 7,000 to 8,000 yards and from time to time lobbed in a shell or two to harass the enemy repair crew as much as possible. In their white clothing they were plainly visible to us.

"One day during this period, my junior officer of the watch, Ensign Dennis O'Connor, got an idea how we might harass the Reds and hold up the work without even firing a shot. O'Connor had noticed that whenever we fired a round, the repair crews would scamper for shelter even before the shell hit. Obviously the Reds had a lookout posted, who, as soon as he saw the flash of our gun, sounded a warning to the repair crew so that in the approximate ten seconds it took for the projectile to reach the tracks and explode, the repair crews had taken cover. So, O'Connor asked my permission to light off our 24-inch searchlight, and I said, 'O.K.'

"We all lined the bridge with binoculars to see what would happen. Sure enough, as O'Connor trained the searchlight in their direction and snapped the shutter open and shut, the repair crews dropped their shovels and ran like hell. Of course, we had a big laugh, and after that it became standard practice for us to use the searchlight every now and then just to save firing a shell. Package One was thus blocked for twelve full days.

"At night the *Walker* moved in to the 100-fathom curve, about 2,500 yards off shore, while another ship would lie-to farther out and furnish illumination fire. This hampered but did not completely stop the Communists' effort to clear the tracks.

"After about a week, apparently realizing that they were not going to roll the cars away, the Communists began doing what we had carefully avoided all this time—one by one the railroad cars were dynamited clear out of the roadbed, and in a few more nights the track was cleared and patched and the 'Red Ball' express was rolling again."

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Communist Coastal Defenses

The steady increase in the number of coastal defense guns which the enemy employed in North Korea gave evidence of the effect of the blockade and bombardment effort. If the attacks were *not* wreaking damage and slowing the movement of supplies, why should the Communists bother? The expense of building gun emplacements, the cost of ammunition, the drain of personnel, all added to the enemy's burdens.

More and more often the rocky coasts of North Korea were to see coastal guns installed at points where the roads and rail lines were exposed, or where amphibious attacks might come in. These guns were cleverly placed and almost impervious to gun attack.

Caves were dug in the face of the cliffs either from the front or from the reverse side of the hill. Usually the caves were in groups of three, although single caves were fairly common. The openings were small, only large enough to give the gun a reasonably wide arc of fire, and in no case larger than eight feet square. The entrances of these caves were usually covered with yellow-green cloths, tree limbs, or woven mats—or, in the time of snowfall, by white drop cloths. As a result the entrances were difficult to see, and even more difficult to hit. In fact, the expenditure of ammunition on them rarely succeeded in more than superficial damage.

Most of the guns in these caves were simple field artillery pieces, 75-mm. or 105-mm. On other occasions, tank guns and self-propelled guns were used by the Communists. In a few instances, the wheels would be removed from artillery pieces and the pieces secured on railroad flatcars. The flatcars would then be wheeled into a nearby tunnel until ready for use.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
The Third Year

The third year of war, which began 25 June 1952, found the blockade and bombardment operations more standard and routine than ever, but nonetheless arduous and dangerous. Enemy shore-battery fire increased in accuracy as well as amount. The Communists' ability to score hits on our ships at slow speeds and at close range showed steady improvement.

On the ground in Korea, both the Communists and UN forces were digging ever deeper into caves, bunkers, and trenches, laying minefields and stringing barbed wire. Little movement of the frontlines had been seen in over a year, and fighting was largely confined to small-sized but bloody clashes.

At Panmunjom, under a drab circus tent, the UN and Red truce teams remained deadlocked on the thorny problem of prisoner exchange. There was little prospect for a truce; and in fact, the truce talks were recessed in October 1952 for nearly seven months.

Ships of the U.S. Navy were completing their second and third tours of duty in Korean waters, many of them having accumulated eighteen or more months in the theater. An unlucky few ships would spend their fourth Christmas in Korean waters. Personnel aboard ships who had served one previous tour numbered more than seventy-five per cent; and one quarter of the officers and men of the American Navy in Korea had seen *three* full tours in the battle zone. A measure of relief had been introduced as Atlantic Fleet ships appeared for combat service more frequently.

Action reports and war diaries of this period reveal the routine nature of the naval war. Many entries in war diaries simply read, "No Comment," and a few action reports state, "Nothing to report." The feelings of many were summarized by the skipper of *De Haven* (CDR T. C. Siegmund): "We had learned to live with an unsatisfactory situation and still do a good job, no matter how dull it was."

Even the enemy occasionally took a callous and indifferent attitude toward the war. Night-heckling pilots occasionally reported that despite their attacks on truck convoys, the drivers would not extinguish their lights. Ships firing at Wonsan reported the same thing.

The tedium and monotony, however, did not diminish the stringency of the blockade.

The increasing coastal fire from the Communists—which doubled from July 1952 to January 1953—had two immediate results: first, ships increased their patrolling speeds, changed their courses more frequently, and opened their patrolling range to the beach; secondly, ships tried to make sure that every shell fired was a winner. The enemy seemed to have very few radar-controlled *coastal* guns,[25A] which meant that in nighttime, blockading ships could move closer ashore for their intercepting and gunnery efforts, with far less danger from enemy counterbatteries.

The oft-tried tactic of manning a whaleboat with a reconnaissance party, and dispatching it close aboard the designated beach for target observation, still paid dividends from time to time. The whaleboat crews would lie to, waiting, watching, and listening for trains, maintaining communications to the parent ship by walkie-talkie radio.

In many instances they were successful. The effort on 14-15 August 1952 by destroyers *Jarvis* (DD-799) and *Porter* (DD-800) was typical. In this case, in addition to whaleboat parties, the two destroyers were assisted by at ROK torpedo boat. Lying approximately 3,000 yards offshore south of the Songjin area, *Porter* succeeded in damaging two trains while *Jarvis* was getting one.

The sailors of the U.S. Navy, in their ships off Korea, had little to complain about in comparison with

their countrymen in the trenches and dugouts of Korea. At sea, at least there were no fleas, no flies, no bunker life. Still, while there was less danger of injury or death than during the Pacific war, and little to be feared from enemy aircraft or submarine torpedoes, the sailormen had an irritating, uncomfortable, and unpleasant existence.

When in range of enemy guns, ships stayed “buttoned up” and personnel were forbidden to expose themselves topside. During the hot summers of Korea, temperatures below decks were stifling, and rest was impossible for the many who found the irregular gunfire too regular for sleeping. The constant jarring of the gunfire caused the glass wool insulation of many ships’ overheads to shake loose; no one could sleep in the top bunks from the irritating effect of the glass fibers.

Winters in Korean waters brought the chill and biting Siberian winds, heavy seas, and sub-zero temperatures. Ships’ superstructures were frozen beneath tons of ice, locking the forward mounts in azimuth and freezing depth charges in their racks. The icy wind had such a razor’s bite that refueling and replenishment often took place on a down-wind course.

But to most of the sailormen, worse than either the blistering summer heat or the biting winter cold was the tedious routine of the war.

The destroyers assigned to Task Force 95 could predict the statistics of a tour in Korean waters with precision: a typical tour would require 110 underway replenishments; the average ship would burn more than 3,000,000 gallons of fuel oil while in the theater. And it would see the expenditure of an average of 2,360 5-inch rounds and 1,341 3-inch rounds.

The endless siege of Wonsan, Hungnam, and Songjin went on and on. Ships patrolled “Taillight,” “Engineblock,” and “Windshield” day after day after day. Minesweepers in Wonsan made another circuit of “Muffler,” and the minesweeps at Songjin went round the harbor once again. The air-gun “Cobra” strikes increased.

In this manner, 1953 arrived.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Finale

In January of 1953, a bitterly cold month at sea, six American ships[25B] were taken under fire by Communist batteries, but none was hit. On 27 January one destroyer reported tracking a "skunk" by radar for nearly an hour and a half with plotted speeds as high as twenty-five knots. Did the Communists at last plan to oppose the strangling blockade with torpedo boats?

February 12, 1953 saw the seventh change in Commander Task Force 95 as Rear Admiral Clarence E. Olsen relieved Rear Admiral John E. Gingrich.[25C]

A change was also made in the Task Force 95 organization. Hereafter, the cruiser division commander serving with Task Force 77 as CTG 77.1 would also have additional duty as CTG 95.2, relieving the destroyer squadron commander who had performed this duty.

At the armistice conference table, meanwhile, the peace talks were still suspended. Liaison officers met occasionally, but neither side was willing to alter its position.

At sea, the blockading ships increased their activity as winter relaxed its grip.

On 6 March, the destroyer *Laws* (DD-558), near Hungnam, joined hands with Task Force 77's airplanes to damage several railroad cars despite heavy enemy counterbattery fire. Five days later, *Trathen's* (DD-530) guns damaged several rail cars of a train near Package Four. The Red engineer detached his locomotive from the train and fled into the closest tunnel.

As March passed, and the muddy and slippery roads of Korea dried out, patrolling ships reported increasing numbers of truck convoys along the coastal road. Approximately 500 vehicles were seen on the night of 15-16 March. They were taken under fire, but no estimate of damage could be made.

Along with the enemy's increased coastal defense fire and truck activity, the mine activity increased too. USS *Epperson* (DDE-719) was able to sink five in one day.

The advancing spring saw two ships—one American, one Canadian– clobber trains. HMCS *Crusader* shelled and stopped three trains at Package Three on 15 April. USS *Endicott* (DMS-35) got three out of four on 11 May, also at Package Three.

April saw a sharp upturn in the enemy's counterbattery fire, especially in the vicinity of Wonsan. Four American ships were hit during this month: *Los Angeles, Manchester, Maddox,* and *Kyes.*

For the remainder of the war, destroyer *James E. Kyes* (DD-787, CDR R. A. Thacher) was to receive more than her share of enemy attention. She first reported being shot at near Songjin on 16 March. Ten days later, in the same area, *Kyes* was again taken under fire, this time escaping damage from some fifty rounds of fire. Two days later, accompanying sweeper *Waxbill* near Hungnam, *Kyes* observed ten splashes in their vicinity.

By now the Communists should have learned that American destroyers can be pushed too far. On 1 April, *Kyes* loaded her boat with a reconnaissance party and dispatched them to the area of Cha-ho to watch and listen for trains. Sure enough, one was spotted, but it was in such a position that *Kyes'* guns could not bear. Rather than let the train escape, *Kyes* contacted a night-heckling Fifth Air Force B-26 and vectored him to the area. *Kyes'* initiative was rewarded by hearing the Air Force pilot report "several box-cars destroyed."

April 4 saw *Kyes* under fire again, this time near the island of Mayang-do. *Kyes* got even on the 18th, near Cha-ho, and fired at an enemy train. The enemy's counterbattery fire was rapid and more accurate than usual, and *Kyes* was forced to open range. She would return.

On 17 May, in company with USS *Brush* (DD-745), *Kyes* supported a ROK raiding party above the

battleline near Kojo. The ROK troops reported the destruction of two automatic weapons and fourteen sampans.

But *Kyes* did her best night's work on the 19th of May while in company with *Eversole* (DD-789). At Cha-ho, where enemy guns had fired upon her so often and *Kyes* herself had fired at trains several times, *Kyes* and *Eversole* at last succeeded in hitting and stopping a nocturnal train. Illuminating the area with 128 star shells, the two destroyers pumped 418 rounds of 5-inch shells into the doomed train.

This time there could be no doubt of a train's complete destruction.

In late April, at long last, there was a break in the armistice talks, and on the 20th, the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners commenced in "Operation Little Switch."

This break in the negotiations reflected a new atmosphere regarding a truce. To all concerned, it was now apparent that under the imposed political and military limitations, the present two-year stalemate in Korea could not be broken, except at prohibitive cost and the full-fledged extension of the war to the mainland, and perhaps even the use of atomic weapons. Otherwise the war in Korea might continue indefinitely. One GI summarized the conflict in these succinct but bitter words: "The war we can't win, we can't lose, we can't quit."

It was obvious that the Chinese could never win, and it was equally obvious that unless and until the UN changed the framework of its fighting, neither could the UN.

For psychological reasons, however, the Chinese wanted to give the impression that *they* were winning the war during the last few days. The Chinese high command ordered an intensification of the fighting everywhere to create this illusion.

Accordingly, pressure at the frontlines increased, and the Chinese made several herculean efforts to penetrate the UN main line of resistance. At one or two points in the First Marine Division sector, the Communists succeeded in gaining some terrain of little value but at fantastic cost to themselves—16,300 killed or wounded and 81 prisoners taken. Since the objectives themselves were certainly not worth this blood, it was concluded that by these pyrrhic victories the Chinese would claim that the UN was signing an armistice in order to keep them from "winning" the war.

Along the coasts, the enemy's coastal gunfire increased in intensity and accuracy, keeping pace with the activity at the front. Patrolling ships were equally aggressive in matching this enemy fire. The USS *Chandler* (DD-717), assisted by USS *Wiltsie* (DD-716), did her part by destroying one train near Tanchon on 3 June.

At Hungnam, on 12 June, while *Manchester* (CL-83) and the USS *Carpenter* (DDE-825) were bombarding harbor targets, sixteen rounds of enemy fire were observed.

On the 25th of June (the third anniversary of the war), near Tanchon, the USS *Gurke* (DD-783) was taken under fire by heavy enemy guns. Two direct hits and several minor ones were received. Fortunately, no one was killed and only three minor personnel casualties were received.

On the morning of 8 July, ten miles south of Songjin, the USS *Irwin* (DD-794, CDR G. M. Slonim) took a shrapnel explosion in her mainmast from an estimated 80 rounds, which seriously wounded Captain Jack Maginnis (Commander Destroyer Squadron 24) and four other personnel. All electrical and electronic cables on the mast were cut.[25D]

During this final period, the battleship *New Jersey* supported by heavy cruisers *Saint Paul* and *Bremerton* and light cruiser *Manchester*, plus twelve destroyers, stood guard at the east coast bombline. It was the first appearance of a battleship for naval gunfire support at the bombline since *Iowa* in October 1952.

The sixteen ships rotated in three groups (CTU 95.28, 77.1.8, and 77.1.9) at the bombline to give constant support to the eastern anchor of the line. Thirteen thousand rounds of 5-inch, 2,800 rounds of 8-inch, 700 rounds of 6-inch, and 1,774 rounds of 16-inch were poured into enemy positions during the last two months of the war.[25E]

A large part of the credit for preventing the enemy's frantic efforts to advance along the east coast during the final days of the war was due the naval sharpshooters. When the demarcation line was finally set, there was a

definite northward curve on the east coast where the battleline was ahead of the rest of the front.

Vice Admiral Briscoe congratulated the bombarding fleet on 19 June: “Your straight shooting of the past 12 days will not soon be forgotten by the enemy. You knocked him off Anchor Hill, ripped up his frontlines and supply routes, and added another chapter to the lesson that the way of the aggressor is hard.”

Thus the longest blockade and bombardment effort ever imposed by the U.S. Navy came to an end.

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Chapter 9. The Seaborne Artillery
Significance

The revised "Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff" assign, as one of the *primary* functions of the Navy, this duty:

"A.1(a) To seek out and destroy enemy naval forces and to suppress enemy sea commerce."

A *collateral* function of the Navy reads as follows:

"B.1. To interdict enemy land and air power and communications through operations at sea."

Any study of the blockading efforts of the United States Navy in Korea must conclude that the naval blockade imposed during the Korean War was both effective and successful. Three of the enemy's five main supply lines were blocked: (1) his deep-water shipping along the east coast; (2) his shallow-water coastal shipping on the west coast; (3) his deep-water shipping routes to the Asiatic seaport cities in China, Manchuria, and North Korea. The enemy was denied the use of the sea for military movements, for the transportation of supplies, and for fishing. In normal times, thousands of junks and numerous steamers moved hundreds of thousands of tons of supplies by sea. The imposed naval blockade of the UN was almost 100 per cent effective. Only an exceedingly small trickle of sea traffic—and that coastal and nocturnal—succeeded in escaping the tight barricade thrown around the peninsula.

This blockade was imposed, however, under very special circumstances, and any conclusions based on the blockading operations in Korea must take into account the almost total absence of enemy air opposition and active enemy naval opposition. Had either or both of these elements been introduced, a totally different blockading operation would have resulted. The siege of the ports of Wonsan, Songjin, and Hungnam might not have been continuous. To have imposed a blockade against vigorous enemy air and submarine opposition would have required many times the numbers of vessels that Task Force 95 was operating. However, even against enemy air and naval opposition, a naval blockade could have been established and made effective, although it doubtlessly would not have been as airtight as was the case, and it would have been infinitely more costly to both Chinese and American forces. Certainly, the pattern and tempo of operations, the weapons used, and the area of operation would have been much different. This blockade had further significance because of the fact that it was the first blockade applied by the U.S. Navy since the Civil War. The British had established a blockade in World War I, and the U.S. Navy had assisted. But this effort was relatively minor and passive. The blockade of the Korean peninsula, therefore, gave the U.S. Navy training and experience for the application of a blockade in other areas.

The effectiveness of the naval blockade, and the enemy's failure to oppose it actively, opened both the Korean coasts for the application of a bombardment and interdiction effort which had known no similar parallel in American naval history. Naval gunfire, designed primarily to attack targets at sea and to support amphibious landings, was given three novel roles: (1) the support of fixed positions at the battlefront (as contrasted with the fluid targets of an amphibious assault); (2) the task of securing both flanks of the UN battleline; (3) the interdiction of rail and road lines along the northeast coast.

The first of these tasks was performed in a highly creditable manner. At every stage of the war, the accuracy and volume of naval gunfire (even at maximum ranges) given to support friendly frontline positions elicited the highest praise from both U.S. Army and the U.S. Marines, and, for the most part, compared most favorably with artillery fire. The devastating effect of the naval seaborne artillery was indicated by the fact that near the coast, the UN frontlines were invariably ahead of the main line of advance.

Generally speaking, the greater the caliber of the naval gun, the greater its effectiveness upon enemy

targets at the frontline. If further proof was needed, the 16-inch guns of *Iowa*, *Missouri*, *Wisconsin*, and *New Jersey* demonstrated that pound for pound they were the most efficient rifles in the Korean War. While no effective liaison or standard doctrine existed between the Army and the Navy for the use or control of naval gunfire in the first part of the war, these were quickly established, and proved to be effective for the duration. In the words of Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith, the first commander of the "United Nations Blockading and Escort Force," "There were no ready communications between ships and troops in the initial phases because of the prewar attitude that amphibious landings were antiquated and naval gunfire obsolete."[26]

Had the UN forces on the ground been engaged in an offensive war of movement rather than a sit-down war of stalemate, the pattern of naval blockade effort might have been different and the contributions of the blockade forces greater. It was the opinion of Rear Admiral A. K. Scott-Moncrieff, RN, the British west coast blockade commander, that a more aggressive blockade policy, heavily pointed and sustained over 7- to 10-day periods, might have caused the enemy more inconvenience than a steady tempo of operations along both coasts. Admiral Scott-Moncrieff also opined that the UN's failure to make additional amphibious landings had enabled the enemy to build up his defenses all along the coasts, possibly liberating a number of troops.[27] A more offensive blockade policy could not have been taken independently of the ground action, however, but would have been related to offensive action on the ground and in the air as well.

Whether or not naval gunfire could have been as effective or as much used in the face of enemy air and surface opposition must remain a moot question. More active enemy opposition would undoubtedly have expedited the development and use of sea-to-shore missiles fired from distant ranges. The excellent gunfire support supplied by the battleships under the existing artificial conditions in Korea was not sufficient to warrant retention of large rifled guns in the U.S. Navy.

The second task given naval gunfire—security of the flanks—was one of the most important contributions made by the naval blockade forces. "Never in history," said Rear Admiral Allan Smith, "has an Army had its flanks so firmly secured as in the Korean War by our Navy. In March 1951, Admiral Struble and I visited General Ridgway in Taegu. His subordinate generals had kept telling him that the enemy could outflank our western front troop line because of the shallow waters and sometimes dry land. He was assured that our Navy would *not* let this happen; and Ridgway replied that he would give the matter no more concern.

"This mobile artillery and naval air power on both flanks enabled our Army commander to concentrate his strength where such would put the greatest pressure on the enemy. Imagine an Army commander being relieved of concern about his flanks!"[28]

Regarding the third novel task, the collateral one of interdiction, the Navy did *not* succeed in denying either the east coast rail or road systems to the enemy despite the most intense, prolonged, and ingenious efforts to do so. As described in the chapter, "The Struggle to Strangle," neither could the air attacks on the UN's air forces. At no time during the course of the war did either the UN's surface or air interdiction efforts succeed in stopping the flow of enemy supplies from Manchuria to the front to a decisive degree. The gun strikes of the ships of Task Forces 77 and 95 hampered, hurt, and harassed, it is true; but they had neither direct nor decisive effect upon the course of the ground fighting in Korea.

The significance of this failure is to point up the need for balanced forces in the U.S. military establishment. Assuming that the war *had* to be confined to the peninsula, there was only one way to have stopped the steady and constant movement of enemy trains and trucks within North Korea: the physical occupation of the ground, and physical force applied by armed men attacking and holding the routes themselves. Because of the terrain, paucity of suitable targets, and character of the enemy, it is doubted that even the local use of atomic weapons could have isolated the battlefront of Korea.

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Chapter 10. The PatRons

Introduction

The first-syllable-accented word "patron" is defined in the dictionary as an "upholder" or "supporter." While this word has no direct connection to the naval aviation term "PatRon," (an amalgamation of the two words "Patrol" and "Squadron"), it haply has an indirect relationship in meaning.

Operations by the Navy's patrol squadrons in the Korean War, like those of the submarines and the Service Force, were usually neither glamorous nor newsworthy. Rather, the PatRons were the upholders and supporters of the Korean War. The routine tasks and accomplishments they performed in the Far East were more important and essential in a negative or defensive sense than in a positive or offensive sense. To naval strategists during war, negative information is as vital as positive information. There are *no* enemy ships in the area, there are *no* typhoons or other weather reported which will interfere with the blockade, carrier operations, or an amphibious operation. There is *no* evidence of fishing or mining activities. The enemy is *not* concentrating his shipping forces for an invasion of Formosa.

Such essential information was supplied by the patrol squadrons throughout the Korean War despite weather, night, or the constant danger of enemy fighter opposition.

One of the major duties performed by the patrol squadrons during the Korean War was the careful and constant surveillance they kept over Formosa. In the physical sense, the Seventh Fleet, charged with that island's protection, could not be in two places at once. In the strategic sense, however, it *could* be, thanks to the PatRons. The ceaseless flights of the patrol squadrons droning back and forth through the Formosan Straits made it impossible for the Chinese to attack Formosa so quickly or unexpectedly that the Seventh Fleet could not speed from Korean waters to its defense.

In Korea proper, the flights of the patrol squadrons added to the effective naval blockade. One of the primary missions was the surveillance and photography of merchant shipping. North Korean fishing efforts were constantly under observation by the patrol squadrons. The mere presence of the VP squadrons in the area was a deterrent to the enemy against any use of submarines. Additionally, the weather reconnaissance flights on behalf of the carrier forces, the search for and destruction of mines, and flare-dropping flights were missions whereby the PatRons contributed to the Navy's over-all effort in Korea.

This chapter records the vital part played in the Korean War by the Navy's patrol squadrons, land and sea.

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Chapter 10. The PatRons
Division of Patrol Squadron Operations

For ease of understanding and explanation, patrol squadron operations during the Korean War are divided into two areas according to the geography of the operating zone in the Far Fast—Korea and Formosa.

In the Korean area, one Fleet Air Wing staff was assigned to control the three to five squadrons, plus tenders, based in the Japanese-Korean area (usually three land-based squadrons and two seaplane squadrons).

To protect Formosa, another Fleet Air Wing, consisting of one land-based squadron, one seaplane squadron, and one tender, was assigned to control patrol squadron operations in that area.

Fleet Air Wing Six was the patrol squadron command in the Japanese-Korean area, while Fleet Air Wing One was the staff controlling patrol operations in the Formosan Straits.

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Chapter 10. The PatRons

Korea: Organization of the PatRons

When the war began, there were 8 patrol-type airplanes in the immediate area of Korea: five PBM Mariner seaplanes from Patrol Squadrons 46 (LCDR M. F. Weisner) and 47 (CDR J. H. Arnold) operating from the Naval Air Facility, Yokosuka, supported by a detachment of Fleet Aircraft Service Squadron 119, and 3 additional VP-46 aircraft at Sangley Point, Philippine Islands. There was no Fleet Air Wing staff, no tender, and no land-based aircraft in the immediate area of Korea. VP-46 was in the process of relieving VP-47. During its 6-months' tour in the Far East, VP-47 had also maintained detachments of aircraft at Hong Kong and, occasionally, at Buckner Bay, Okinawa.

On 25 June 1950, Patrol Squadron 47, having completed its normal half-year's tour, was just being relieved. Three of its homeward-bound planes were already at Pearl Harbor, a fourth was at Guam, and a fifth was in the air between Guam and Hawaii. These aircraft were hurriedly recalled and ordered to report to Yokosuka. By 7 July, Arnold's squadron had reassembled and was in action.

One of this squadron's first tasks, commencing 15 July, was the antisubmarine coverage of the convoy travelling from Japan to Pohang to make the amphibious landing of the First Cavalry Division at that point. Another of its early missions was to assist the U.S. Air Force in the rescue of aviators in Korean waters.

Upon the transfer of the Seventh Fleet to General MacArthur's operational control, a detachment of Fleet Air Wing One (based in Guam) was established in Japan. Captain John C. Alderman, Fleet Air Wing One's chief of staff (who happened to be on leave in Japan), was given command of this detachment. This temporary command was known as Fleet Air Wing One Detachment, Japan. Assigned to assist Alderman in the subsequent hectic days of July were CDR D. C. Higgins, CDR D. J. Omeara, LCDR J. L. Burge, LT W. E. Davis, and LT J. B. Black. Alderman's tasks were not only to operate the patrol aircraft assigned to him, but also to take care of all other naval aviation matters of supply and logistics in the Korean area.

By 12 July, thanks to the arrival of Rear Admiral R. W. Ruble, USN, Commander Carrier Division Fifteen, and his staff, it was possible to reorganize and expand the naval air organization. A new command, Naval Air Japan, was established. As best it could, this interim staff dealt with the ever-rapidly increasing demands being made upon naval air for support and coverage.

On the 4th of August 1950, Fleet Air Wing Six was commissioned. This wing would operate and control the patrol squadrons in Korea in lieu of Fleet Air Wing One Detachment, Japan. Fleet Air Wing Six was given control of all American and British patrol squadrons operating in the Japanese-Korean area.

By 9 August 1950, Rear Admiral George R. Henderson, Captain W. E. Gentner, and Captain Joseph Murphy had arrived to form the nucleus of the Fleet Air Japan staff, a naval aviation area command which would function for the remainder of the war.

While these organizational changes were being made, other U.S. Navy patrol squadrons were arriving in the area. VP-6 (CDR A. F. Farwell) flying P2V3 Neptunes,[1] had arrived in Japan on 7 July and commenced operations initially from Johnson Air Force Base, near Tokyo, and three weeks later from Tachikawa Air Force Base.

The next squadron to arrive was VP-42 (CDR G. F. Smale). This squadron's PBM5 Mariner aircraft landed at Iwakuni, Japan, near Hiroshima, on 21 August 1950.

In addition to these U.S. Navy patrol squadrons, two Royal Air Force squadrons operated under the command of Fleet Air Wing One Detachment, Japan, and later under Fleet Air Wing Six. RAF Squadron 88

(Squadron Leader M. Helme) flew from Hong Kong with four Sunderland aircraft, and had begun its patrols on 1 August. A second Royal Air Force squadron, 209 Squadron, commanded by Squadron Leader P. LeCheminant, commenced flight operations (flying four Sunderlands) on 10 September 1950 from Iwakuni.

During the early period of the Korean War, the missions given Fleet Air Wing Six were several: antisubmarine patrol along both coasts of Korea, search and reconnaissance, convoy escort, and weather reconnaissance to assist the operating combat ships. In addition, other missions such as search and rescue, anti-mine, photographic missions and various logistic flights were assigned.

In the first months of the war, the patrol squadrons were able to corroborate the fact that the naval blockade of Korea *was* effective. Numerous, often vague reports were being received in Tokyo that the North Korean Army was being supplied by sea in its advance on Pusan. These reports, often sightings by high-flying bomber aircraft, were proven false by the patrol squadrons whose visual, photographic, and radar surveillance of the coasts showed the “supply” fleets actually to be “fishing” sampan fleets.

Daily patrols were flown along the western shores of Korea in the Yellow Sea and in the Bay of Korea, on the east coast of Korea in the Japanese Sea, as well as in the Tshushima Straits. Whenever the carriers of Task Force 77 were replenishing, an ASW patrol was maintained over them at all times. In addition, a nightly weather reconnaissance mission was flown for the benefit of the carrier task force. The weather information was also beneficial to the shore-based Marines and Air Force aircraft in Korea.

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Spotting

In addition to the routine antisubmarine patrols, weather and coastal reconnaissance, there were several unique and unusual missions performed by patrol squadrons during the early period of the Korean War. The first of these was the spotting of naval gunfire.

On 2 August 1950, a VP-6 aircraft conducted a spotting mission for the bombardment of Mokpo by HMS *Cossack* and HMS *Cockade.* So successful was this mission that a second mission was conducted by VP-6 on 6 August, using two P2Vs, when spotting services were furnished to British cruisers *Kenya* (CAPT T. W. Brock) and *Belfast* (CAPT Sir Aubrey St. Clair-Ford, Bt, DSO), the two British destroyers *Cossack* and *Charity,* and the Dutch destroyer *Evertsen* (LCDR D. J. VanDoorninck). The targets were military installations in Inchon. The USS *Sicily* provided four Marine Corsairs from VMF-323 as escort for the two spotting Neptunes. Heavy antiaircraft fire was expected, but none was seen. The P2Vs were piloted by LT George D. Anderson and LT John W. Stribling; the spotting pilots were Britishers—Royal Artillery Captain Thompson from the fleet combined operations bombardment unit, who spotted for *Ceylon,* and Royal Navy Lieutenant Handley (a Seafire pilot from HMS *Triumph),* who spotted for *Kenya.* The bombardment group fired many salvos into the Inchon railroad station, the Jinson Electrical Works, and the oil storage tanks on the northeast side of the city. The spotters described the results as excellent.

On 7 August, a third spotting mission was conducted by aircraft from Patrol Squadron Six for a bombardment of Tanchon by the USS *Helena* and four destroyers.

Later in the Korean War, a patrol aircraft was called upon for some emergency naval gunfire spotting. On 12 October 1950, while searching for mines in Wonsan harbor, a VP-47 PBM flown by LCDR Randall Boyd was present when the sweepers *Pirate* and *Pledge* were sunk.[1A] Also present was the destroyer minesweeper *Endicott.* The Wonsan batteries opened fire on the sweepers *Pirate* and *Pledge,* and in attempting to dodge the gunfire, *Pirate* struck a mine and sank. Before *Pledge* could move out of range, she suffered the same fate.

Lieutenant Commander Boyd flew over the stricken vessels to give support and to draw the fire from the Wonsan batteries. Air support from the carriers was requested. Meanwhile, the PBM continued to circle the area, spotting the gunfire of DMS *Endicott.* The enemy's surface batteries were effectively silenced.

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Interdiction

For the first month after VP-6's arrival, this squadron made many attacks on North Korean targets. The P2V3 Neptunes were capable of carrying a heavy load of either bombs or rockets, in addition to their six bow machine guns. Since VP-6's coastal patrols along the northeast shore of Korea paralleled the rail network, targets along this part of North Korea were frequently seen.

On 29 July 1950, two P2V3s, piloted by LCDR R. L. Ettinger and LT William J. Pressler, were on a coastal reconnaissance patrol near Chongjin. The two Neptunes sighted a railroad train, an appropriate target for their 16 HVAR rockets. The train was quickly destroyed with rockets and 20-mm. fire from the bow guns.

On 13 August, in a flight led by VP-6's executive officer, LCDR E. B. Rogers, two Neptunes attacked several camouflaged power boats and barges at Chinnampo which were engaged in minelaying (although this fact was not then recognized). Three of these boats and two barges were sunk in the attack. Rogers' plane took six holes. On the same day, camouflaged Communist ships and patrol craft in the Wonsan area (believed later to have been laying mines) were attacked by other VP-6 aircraft. Two surface craft were damaged in this attack.

A similar attack on 16 August, on the west coast of Korea, on similar surface craft resulted in the loss of the first P2V. The plane, piloted by ENS William F. Goodman, had completed an attack on a small patrol-type enemy vessel in the Chinnampo area when the crew observed fire in the starboard engine. Ensign Goodman made a successful ditching a short distance from the enemy shoreline and the plane's entire crew was later rescued without casualty by the British cruiser *Kenya*.

As a result of the loss of this Neptune, orders were issued that henceforth patrol aircraft squadrons should not be assigned to attack missions. Specifically, the order read: "Aircraft of this force will normally not attack surface or land targets unless specifically directed to do so."

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Aerial Mine Spotting and Destruction

One of the most unusual tasks performed by the patrol squadrons during the Korean War was the spotting and destruction of mines. This task commenced in late September 1950 and became increasingly important. After the amphibious assault at Inchon, two PBM aircraft from VP-42 were flown to Inchon harbor and tendered there by the USS *Gardiners Bay*. Their task was to fly low over the approaches to Inchon and Chinnampo, and to spot the anchored mines for the surface sweepers.

The two VP-42 aircraft arrived at Inchon on 2 October and commenced mine search operations the next day. Many minefields were located and reported, as well as numerous drifting and floating mines. A number of these were sunk or destroyed by gunfire by the PBMs.

This initial operation was successful because low tide left the mines exposed or "watching."

In anticipation of the amphibious landing at Wonsan, VP-42 changed its operating locale to Wonsan in early October, joining with the aircraft of VP-47 in the search for mines. In this task, the Mariners teamed with helicopters and surface ships to clear a path through the minefields for the amphibious forces. During this period, VP-42 was credited with the destruction of eight mines.

Mine hunting in a large, slow seaplane was not without its hazards. The Wonsan shore batteries were frequently active. One VP-42 aircraft received two bullet holes from rifle fire north of Wonsan on 28 October. And the destruction of a mine by aircraft machine gun fire required skill and accuracy. The circling pilot had to bring his aircraft close enough to the mine to permit accurate gunfire—but not too close, in order to avoid the subsequent five- to six-hundred-foot geysers of water sent up by the mine's explosion.

An aerial mine search was as tedious and difficult as a search for a periscope feather. Even when a minefield's general location was known, the search demanded excellent and trained eyesight, good surface and water conditions, and, most of all, patience. The surface of the sea could neither be rough nor muddy; the elevation of the sun had to be right. Mine lookouts found that a slightly overcast sky furnished the best type of suffused light for spotting submerged mines.

In regard to mine hunting, the commanding officer of VP-42, Commander G. F. Smale, recorded:

". . . The quality of patience on the part of the plane commander and crew is as important in the search for mines as it is for submarines . . . Lookouts succeed only after many hours of negative results. . . . "[1B]

The patrol aircraft of FleetAirWing Six succeeded in destroying 54 mines during the months of September and October—31 of these in the Chinnampo area.[1C]

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Logistic Operations by the PatRons

Another of the important collateral tasks performed by the patrol squadrons in the Korean area during the early part of the war was the many logistic and liaison flights flown. Since there were no adequate landplane fields at either of the Fleet bases at Yokosuka and Sasebo, the seaplane patrol squadrons performed a very vital function by linking the naval command in Tokyo and the two major Fleet operating bases.

An outstanding example of this role was the occasion after the Inchon landing when an aircraft of VP-42 carried a cargo of 75 cases of whole blood, weighing 7,000 pounds, from the Naval Air Facility at Yokosuka to the fighting forces at Inchon on 7 October 1950.

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Flare Missions

Early in 1951, still another unique mission, code-named "Firefly," was given to the patrol squadrons: flare-dropping missions. This coordinated action of flare and attack aircraft was a distinctly new application of a air power in support of ground operations.

As has been recorded in Chapter 8, "The Struggle to Strangle," a principal reason for the failure of air power to isolate the battlefield was the limited ability of airplanes to locate and destroy enemy trains and trucks at night. Uncontested air-sea control made it very difficult for the Chinese and North Koreans to move their supplies and munitions by day. By night, and during bad weather, however, the enemy moved his supplies and replenished his needs with little hindrance.

In an effort to hamper and harass the enemy's nocturnal movements, Admiral A. W. Radford, while on an inspection trip to Korea, suggested the use of P4Y2 aircraft as flare planes. Major General Field Harris, Commanding General of the First Marine Air Wing (then operating a night-flying squadron of F4U4N Corsairs and a night-flying squadron of F7F3N Tigercats) formally requested the assignment of appropriate naval aircraft to assist his heckler aircraft by carrying a large number of flares and accompanying them over the roads and rail lines north of the battlefield. Marine All Weather Fighter Squadron 513 had already developed flare tactics using transport-type (R4D) aircraft. However, these planes lacked both self-sealing tanks and armor protection, and the antiaircraft hazard was great.

No specially trained pilots or suitably equipped planes were available for carrying and dropping highly-dangerous magnesium flares. The only possible aircraft that could be modified for the task was a World War II aircraft, the P4Y2 Privateer. (The Air Force used C-47s and C-46s for the flare task.) Two such squadrons were available: VP-772 (CDR D. D. Nittinger) and VP-28 (CDR C. S. Minter, Jr.). It was decided to modify one P4Y2 to carry and drop flares, and to evaluate its performance in Korea.

Accordingly, one P4Y2 aircraft and crew from VP-772 (first reserve patrol squadron in action in Korea) was assigned to the Marine Wing. This aircraft was modified for flare missions by squadron personnel who removed the bomb-bay gasoline tanks and certain electronic equipment so that the aircraft could carry 150 to 250 flares, depending on their size and weight. The squadron also rigged flak curtains around them. On 12 June, this aircraft reported to Pusan, Korea.

The initial evaluation flights proved "excellent," according to Major General Field Harris. The controlling observer, riding in the nose of the P4Y, had good visibility and could make the flare drops more accurately than from a transport. Commencing on 29 June, flare missions were alternated between VP-772 and VP-28, with four aircraft assigned.

"When the P4Ys were first used for the flare dropping operation," said CDR Minter, "the Marine Air Wing was based at K-1, a field near Pusan. Our operations were normally conducted along the road complex leading south from Wonsan, although the area was frequently changed because of weather or other factors. The flare planes and the Marine intruders[1D] did not depart in company from K-1 since the VP plane cruised at a slower speed than the fighters (though not much slower when the bomb and rocket load was as big as the Marines liked to carry). Rendezvous was accomplished in the target area either by the night fighter picking up the flare plane on radar and homing in, or by the flare plane dropping a flare and having the fighter home on it. A flare mission normally lasted for approximately six hours, one plane having the sunset to midnight session, and a replacement having the midnight to sunrise stint.

"Each plane was scheduled to work with a total of four fighters, which came on the scene individually, spaced approximately one-half hour apart. If a fighter had to abort for some reason, the flare plane frequently was able to work with other planes for illumination purposes for bombing runs or anything else that might be required. The arrangement was obviously quite flexible and was quite interesting for the VP boys, who were accustomed to long, monotonous hours of overwater flying. This seemed almost like legalized flat hatting."[2]

The flare-dropping task called for the patrol aircraft to depart after sunset with a two-ton load of flares and to fly over Korea accompanied by several Marine night-intruder aircraft. (Sometimes as many as seven attack aircraft would utilize the P4Y2's flares for a single flight, although the average was three to four.) Such missions required the most careful and complex teamwork on the part of these planes. First of all, the flare-carrying P4Ys (called "Lamp Lighters") had to make a rendezvous with the night-attack aircraft. When this had been done, a search for enemy truck lights was commenced by the intruder and the flare plane. Upon finding a suitable target, a string of four to seven flares would be dropped to illuminate the target area. The attacking pilot might also ask for the flares to be dropped on a certain heading, and for repeated runs.[2A]

Once the area had been illuminated, the attack pilot searched the ground and attempted to locate targets while the VP plane kept the area illuminated. The Marine intruder pilot had to make his search quickly before the enemy trucks had time to conceal themselves beneath trees or other cover.

These flare-dropping flights proved to be very popular and effective, and were continued by VP-28 and later by VP-871.[2B]

The historical part of Commander McAfee's report reads: "The operation was conducted on a large scale . . . the outstanding fact was that it was one of simplicity and ingenuity. The turning of night into day was realized."

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Weather Reconnaissance

One of the most important duties performed by patrol squadrons during the Korean War was the task of weather reconnaissance flights flown each night on behalf of Task Force 77 operating in the Sea of Japan. Weather flights were flown in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea to estimate and evalute the next day's weather for carrier operations.

During the winter months, this service was especially helpful when the bitter Siberian weather with its sudden fogs and lowered visibility conditions might hamper the carrier task force's operations. In July 1951, a similar weather service was inaugurated by the planes of Fleet Air Wing Six for the west coast escort carriers of Task Force 95.2.

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Chapter 10. The PatRons
Incidents With MIGs

The latter part of the Korean War saw two incidents between patrol aircraft and enemy MIGs. The first occurred on 11 May 1952 when a VP-42 PBM reconnaissance patrol over the Yellow Sea near the Korean coast was attacked by two enemy fighters. One 20-mm. hit in the wing did only minor damage, and the plane returned safely to Iwakuni.

The second attack occurred on 31 July 1952 when a Mariner assigned to VP-731 (CDR W. T. O'Dowd) was attacked by two Chinese MIG aircraft. At the time of this attack the plane was on a reconnaissance mission over the Yellow Sea off the west coast of Korea. Without warning, the two attacking MIGs made a firing run from astern, killing Aviation Machinist's Mate H. G. Goodroad, the tail gunner. The PBM, piloted by LT E. E. Bartlett, Jr., dived to 250 feet and turned toward Japan. The two MIGs made several more firing runs. During the second run, a 37-mm. shell exploded in the PBM's turret hatch, killing Airman Claude Playforth and wounding the starboard waist gunner, Aviation Ordnanceman Third Class R. H. Smith. On the third run, Airman Apprentice H. T. Atkins was injured from exploding 23-mm. projectiles. The Mariner, while seriously damaged, was able to land at the island of Paengnyong-do, off western Korea, for temporary repairs.

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The Formosa PatRons

At the outbreak of the Korean War, there was one Fleet Air Wing in the Pacific, with headquarters at NAS Agaña in Guam. The Fleet Air Wing commander, CAPT Etheridge Grant, was also Commander Fleet Air Guam. On 25 June 1950, CAPT Grant's command consisted of one land-based patrol squadron (VP-28, CDR C. F. Skuzinski—nine P4Y2s) based at Agaña, Guam; and a seaplane squadron (VP-46, LCDR M. F. Weisner—nine PBMs) based at Sangley Point, Philippines. One tender, the AVP *Suisun* (CAPT H. G. Sanchez), was in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan.

Upon the outbreak of the war, Fleet Air Wing One was given the task of preventing any attack upon Formosa. In view of this assignment, Captain Grant was relieved of his duties as ComFairGuam in order to give his full attention to the protection of Formosa.

A daily reconnaissance of the northern sector of the Formosan Straits was begun on 16 July by VP-28, operating from Naha, Okinawa. Patrol Squadron 46 commenced daily reconnaissance patrol of the southern sectors of the Formosan Straits and the China Coast on 17 July, tendered by the USS *Suisun*.

For the remainder of the war, Fleet Air Wing One operated in the Formosa area the land-based patrol squadron at Naha, Okinawa, while the seaplane squadron based in the Pescadores during the summer months shifted its operations to the Philippines during the typhoon season. These two squadrons maintained a continuous 24-hour patrol of the Formosan Straits and the China coast, supported by ready-duty destroyers from the Seventh Fleet maintained in constant readiness in Formosan waters. A round-the-clock coverage of the China coast was maintained with two flights of landplanes of seven to eight hours' duration during the daylight hours and one seaplane patrol during the period of darkness. The area covered was in international waters from south of Swatow to north of Shanghai. The destroyers were occasionally supplemented by cruisers from the Seventh Fleet or the blockade forces operating in Korea.

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Chapter 10. The PatRons
Operating in the Formosa Area

On 26 July 1950, only a few days after the Formosa reconnaissance patrols had been established, a VP-28 aircraft (CDR C. F. Skuzinski) was attacked in the northern part of the Formosan Straits by F-51 type enemy planes with North Korean markings. The attack did no damage, but it was the first of several such attacks which were to occur.

On 7 December 1950, there was an alert in the Straits. In the early morning darkness, a patrolling VP-46 aircraft, piloted by LTJG R. C. McGuffin, showed an unusual number of targets on its radar scope. McGuffin turned directly toward the blips and passed overhead at 1,000 feet. None of his crew was able to see lights below, but the radar picture showed hundreds of targets in a systematic formation headed eastward toward Formosa. Perhaps this was the first wave of a Chinese assault on Formosa. Perhaps it was only another fishing fleet.

McGuffin turned his Mariner aircraft around and reduced his altitude to 100 feet to make a low-altitude approach across the unknown formation. As McGuffin closed the target, he illuminated it by searchlight. Hundreds of junks in close formation were revealed. They showed no lights and were all headed eastward. The best estimate McGuffin's crew could make was 500 junks.

If this were an invasion attempt, this group would not be alone, certainly. Expanding his search, McGuffin turned northwestward. Approximately 70 miles from the first group, an additional group of approximately 250 junks was contacted. Like the first group, this formation of junks was also on an easterly course.

Could this be an invasion attempt? McGuffin radioed his base and alerted the patrolling destroyers. He then returned to cover and trail the first group.

By this time the ships had reversed course and were sailing westward toward China.

It was never known whether this sighting was a feint, a possible full-fledged attack on Formosa, or merely an incidental meeting of two large formations of fishing vessels.

If either a feint or a full-fledged attack, the Chinese Communists discovered that there was little hope of catching the U.S. Navy off guard.

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Chapter 10. The PatRons
Attacks by Enemy MIG Aircraft

During mid-1952, several contacts between the aircraft patrolling the Formosan Straits and Communist Chinese MIGs occurred. There were other incidents of surface vessels firing at the patrol airplanes. On 9 September, one of VP-28's planes was fired upon by a Chinese Communist LCI-type vessel. A week later, a similar attack occurred. The next day, a third attack was made; but in all three cases, no damage was received.

On and 20th of September, and first enemy action near Formosa by MIG aircraft occurred. On that day, in the sea near Shanghai, a VP-28 P4Y piloted by LT Harvey R. Britt was attacked by two MIGs. Although five firing passes were made, there was no damage to the P4Y.

On the 22nd of November 1952, a second incident with a MIG occurred. In the sea off Shanghai, a VP-28 P4Y was attacked by one MIG. The Chinese MIG made eight firing runs during a fifteen-minute period, while the P4Y was at an altitude of 200 feet over the ocean on an easterly course. The weather was good, although there were cumulus clouds at 2,500 feet. The MIG was first identified by the tail gunner, who spotted it coming in astern at a range of five miles. The MIG came under the tail of the P4Y, opened his dive brakes, and flew formation alongside the port wing for proximately ten seconds. Obviously, the Chinese pilot was trying to identify this large blue airplane. As for and MIG, the P4Y pilot and his crew were positive of its identity. A large and a small red star were visible on the side of the fuselage, with Chinese characters alongside.

Satisfied that this was an enemy plane, the MIG peeled off to port, commenced a climb to about 1,000 feet and then began his attack. As he did so, the pilot of the big P4Y turned his plane into the MIG and brought his five turrets into action. For the remaining seven runs, the MIG alternated from side to side, starting his runs about three miles away and pressing them home. His gunnery was atrocious, spoiled by the skillful airmanship of the P4Y pilot and his crew. There was no damage to either plane.

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Significance

Of the three elements of naval aviation in Korea—carrier, marine aviation, and patrol—the patrol squadrons had the most routine operations. This does not mean that their operations were without contribution or significance to the war effort. Patrol squadrons increased the effectiveness of the blockade by their reconnaissance flights, the search for and the destruction of mines, and the surveillance of enemy fishing activity. Patrol squadrons furnished up-to-date weather information for the carrier forces which was always helpful and frequently vital. The patrol squadrons performed the unique and unusual mission of providing flare illumination for the Marine night-intruder pilots. They obtained reconnaissance of the coastal areas of Korea, and kept surveillance over merchant shipping in the immediate area of Korea. The seaplane squadrons provided certain logistic and transport functions which could not be supplied by landplane types. The mere presence of highly trained, antisubmarine squadrons in the Korean area discouraged the use of submarines by the enemy. Lastly the patrol squadrons minimized the danger of any invasion of Formosa by the Communists.

In Korea, the land-based patrol airplane proved more efficient than the seaplane. The landplane squadron had greater endurance, greater self-protection and greater operational versatility. For the first time in the history of naval aviation, it saw greater use than did the seaplane. For every nine seaplane sorties, the patrol landplane flew twelve. During World War II, the ratio was reversed.

However, the landplane squadrons required more shore support and provoked sovereignty and basing problems. While seaplane squadrons were more mobile and could operate more flexibly, their operations were not as economical. Seaplane operations in Korea and Formosa highlighted the need for the development of new types of tenders.

To both the seaplane and the landplane, the war in Korea ushered in the electronics era.

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Chapter 11. The Amphibious Threat (1951-1953)
"Korea Is a Peninsula"

The value of amphibious operations was well understood by the United Nations' high command in Korea: MacArthur, Ridgway, Van Fleet, and Clark. This fact is illustrated by the initial remark made by Lieutenant General Van Fleet to Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, soon after the latter had reported for duty in Korea as Commander Task Force 95.

Van Fleet and Dyer had first become acquainted during the Greek Civil War in 1947 when Van Fleet was in charge of the U.S. Military Mission to that country. At the time Dyer was Commander Cruiser Division Ten.

"At our meeting in Greece in 1947," said Dyer, "I stressed the fact that Greece was a peninsula. Its geography made the application of naval power particularly appropriate. Her coastlines were vulnerable both to amphibious assault and naval bombardment."

Admiral Dyer further pointed out to General Van Fleet that Greece had a small but first-rate Navy, and it was his belief that these naval units could be very helpful against the Communists. Van Fleet never forgot the discussion.

Four years passed before Van Fleet and Dyer met again in Seoul, Korea, in June 1951. There, as Dyer was being ushered into Van Fleet's office, the three-star general rose from his chair, threw his arms skyward, and exclaimed, "Korea is a peninsula!"

Generals Ridgway and Clark also knew the value of amphibious attack and took advantage of every opportunity to keep the UN amphibious threat alive to the enemy. They ordered amphibious training exercises conducted both in Japan and Korea. Marines of the First Division performed landing exercises in Hwachon Reservoir in plain view of Communist observation posts.

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Chapter 11. The Amphibious Threat (1951-1953)
Communist Vulnerability to Amphibious Attack

The complete control of the air by UN air forces over the battleline forced the Communists to burrow ever deeper into the ground. As a result, their frontline defenses became increasingly immobile and vulnerable to amphibious attack. By the fall of 1951, in fact, fighting on the Korean peninsula had degenerated into trench warfare reminiscent of the Civil War siege of Richmond, or Flanders in World War I. Conventional weapons—artillery, close air support—were at best only partially effective.

By the summer of 1952, the Communists had taken advantage of the stalemate to build as strong a defense line as military history had ever seen. General Maxwell D. Taylor, who had helped to crack Germany's Siegfried line during World War II, considered the Chinese defenses along the 150-mile Korean front even more formidable than the Siegfried Line.

Essentially, the Communist defense was a honeycomb of underground tunnels stretching from one coast of Korea to the other. A single tunnel might extend for miles. Many of the tunnels and fortifications were so deep and strongly built that they were impervious to bombs and artillery fire. Not only had the Communists reverted to trench warfare, they had been forced to glorify it—largely because of the threat of UN firepower from air, land, and sea.

As soon as the Reds retreated to a new hill, the hole-boring began. First, they dug on the protected side near the top; then they gophered their way around to the side facing the UN lines. Gradually, transections were dug linking all the tunnels together in a spiderweb of passages, bunkers, observation posts, and gun positions. To U.S. Marines who had fought at Tarawa, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa during World War II, the defensive trench system in Korea was more elaborate, although not as formidable.

At the same time the enemy was rat-holing at the front, he was also strengthening his coastal defenses.[1] The Communists had been caught napping at Inchon and they were already too much committed on the stalemated battleline to be caught flatfooted a second time. With Pohang, Inchon, Wonsan, Iwon, and Hungnam as constant reminders, the Communists knew and feared the United States amphibious capability.

General Mark Clark aptly described the Communists' fear of amphibious assault: ". . . The enemy had an overwhelming preoccupation with the defense of his coastline. He had tasted the whip of our amphibious techniques at Inchon and was afraid of it. He did everything he could, particularly on the beaches around Wonsan on the east coast, to prepare for a possible new assault from the sea by our amphibious infantry units. And he knew that every one of our American divisions had been, or could easily be, trained to wage amphibious warfare.

"Hundreds of thousands of North Koreans built and manned the beach defenses along every stretch of coastline that conceivably could be used for an amphibious invasion. Behind them were Chinese Communist forces in reserve positions from which they could move quickly to bolster the defenses at any beach under attack.

"The defense system along the beaches, like the defense system at the front, was very deep and depended in large measure on underground installations for its effectiveness. But in addition to the underground works there were lines of open trenches spreading back from the beaches so that any troops attacking from the sea would be forced to attack one line of trenches after another, once they attained their foothold on dry land. Barbed wire was strung along the water's edge. Minefields were plentiful. Large areas of rice paddy land were flooded to make them giant tank traps which would mire our equipment in mud. Preparations were made to flood other areas during an invasion so that flood waters themselves could be used as a defensive weapon."[1A]

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Chapter 11. The Amphibious Threat (1951-1953)

UN Amphibious Planning

For the final two years of the war, United Nations commanders continuously considered the feasibility of amphibious attack against both the east and west coasts of Korea. For example, it was once proposed by Vice Admiral Clark to make an amphibious assault north of Wonsan, just above the Hodo Pando peninsula. The idea was not to permanently hold Hodo, but to seize the land long enough to locate and spike the vexatious guns of that area. Other full-scale assaults were proposed and considered at various times.

"On the west coast, the Haeju peninsula looked the most promising," said Vice Admiral Robert P. Briscoe, who was then COMNAVFE. "Tentative plans were made for a corps landing in that area in the event the truce negotiations fell apart.

"We gathered all the advance intelligence that was needed, estimated the size of forces required, and defined the major problems that would most likely be encountered.

"It developed that the major problem of an amphibious assault at Haeju was not the assault itself, but how we would get our heavy equipment across the rice paddies to high ground, once we were ashore. The Haeju problem was further complicated by the lack of reserve troops in the area. To make a landing in Corps strength, we would have needed two Army divisions and one Marine division from the United States."

On the east coast, the most promising site for an amphibious operation was the Kojo peninsula just south of Wonsan; from there, UN forces could move down the valley to the southwest and cut off communications between the North Korean and Chinese armies.

"Neither of these amphibious assaults was ever conducted," said Briscoe, "because we simply did not have the troops available in the Far East. We had sufficient shipping, we had the necessary gunfire and air support for a landing, but we simply did not have the troops. After the stalemate developed, we never had more than two reserve divisions in the Far East area at any given time. One of these was kept in Japan, and the other was held in reserve in Korea."

Had General Van Fleet been permitted to do so, he would have broken the stalemate with an amphibious landing.

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Chapter 11. The Amphibious Threat (1951-1953)

The Kojo Feint

A plan to land at Kojo was first proposed in mid-1951 by Rear Admiral T. B. Hill while Chief of Staff to Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. Hill envisioned an amphibious end-around landing on Korea's eastern coast, in the vicinity of Kojo. Once ashore, the troops would drive southwestward to link up with the Eighth Army and thereby cut off the North Korean Army from its source of Chinese supply.

"This plan was known as 'Wrangler'," said Vice Admiral Clark, "and it appeared to have excellent chance of success.

"It had the approval of the Commander in Chief Far East, General Ridgway, and also General Van Fleet, Eighth Army. But very soon after I arrived in October 1951, General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited the Eighth Army headquarters in Korea and disapproved the plan, stating: 'We want no more of the enemy's real estate.'

"For more than a year I heard no more about Kojo," Clark continued, "until October 1952, when I was Commander Seventh Fleet. At that time Admiral Radford arrived, in company with Vice Admiral Briscoe, to inspect the Seventh Fleet. Radford remained overnight in the flagship, and visited Task Force 77 the next day. Briscoe had proposed feinting an amphibious demonstration in the Kojo area in an attempt to draw enemy troops from their underground frontline positions. It was never intended to land any of our troops, but it was hoped that the enemy would react to the demonstration by sending his troops to the defense of Kojo, and that the Navy and Air Force could then destroy the enemy as they moved. General Mark Clark approved the idea, and designated me as Commander Joint Amphibious Task Force Seven, placing under my command various amphibious forces, including units from the Sixteenth Corps, the First Cavalry Division, and 118th Regimental Combat Team. Major General Anthony Trudeau was in command of the troops, and Rear Admiral Francis X. McInerney commanded the amphibious group."

The Kojo operation, known as "Operation Decoy," had the following concept in the operation plan of Commander Joint Amphibious Task Force Seven:

"This force, supported by coordinated joint action, will seize by amphibious assault, occupy and defend a beachhead in the Kojo area with the Eighth Cavalry Regimental Combat Team in order to:

"a. Create an enemy psychological reaction favorable to the United Nations.

"b. Draw enemy reinforcements to defense of the objective area

"c. Fully exploit the enemy's physical and psychological reaction."[2]

A noteworthy feature of the Kojo plan was that it made no mention that the operation was to be only a demonstration landing.

"For deception purposes," said Admiral Clark, "knowledge of the demonstration aspect was confined to only the highest echelons of command."

The subordinate commands, including the carrier and the minesweeper commanders, were unaware that the operation would be a feint.

October 15th was tentatively chosen for D-day. In accordance with Clark's orders, Joint Amphibious Task Force Seven prepared and distributed plans on 25 September both for a Corps landing and for a Regimental landing. On 4 October, General Clark authorized execution of the Regimental landing plan.

The existence of two plans caused little inconvenience at the Army Corps and Division and the naval task force levels; but on the lower levels, where movements actually had to be made, ships' capacities determined,

boat assignment tables[2A] developed, and command relationships and liaison established, there was considerable difficulty in separating the two operations.[3]

Commander Seventh Fleet agreed that the requirement for the development of two plans did cause some confusion, but the most complicating factor was the short planning time. Admiral Clark considered it remarkable, in view of this disadvantage, that the plan was resolved so satisfactorily.[4]

Ship movements for the Kojo operation began on 1 October. Troop-loading operations commenced 6 October at Muroran, Otaru, and Hokkaido, where the Eighth Regimental Combat Team was located. Troop transports —Task Group 76.4 (ComTransDiv-14) in the *Bayfield* (APA-33)—began departing Hokkaido for the rehearsal area at Kangung, Korea, on 9 October.

Rehearsal operations were conducted on D-minus-three day, 12 October, under most adverse weather conditions. Winds in excess of 25 knots caused a two-hour delay in the H-hour rehearsal time. Four LCVPs broached during landing operations and were lost. Another was lost as it was being lowered into the water. Because of the dangerous surf conditions, the ship-to-shore movement was discontinued after the fifth wave. High winds and heavy seas prohibited the planned minesweeping for that day.

"At sunrise on the morning of the 14th," said Admiral Clark, "my flagship, the USS *Iowa*, joined the other ships in a bombardment of Kojo in a realistic softening-up process preparatory to the mock landing—but the Communists still did not know it was to be a mock landing. Every effort was made to give them the impression that another invasion such as the one at Inchon was impending."

The *Iowa*, the cruisers, and the destroyers continued shelling the beaches all night, until H-hour the next morning. The only ships to receive heavy counterbattery fire were the minesweepers, which were operating within visual range of enemy gunners.

"The transports held reveille at three A.M. the morning of D-day," said Commander Paul J. Hidding,[5] executive officer of the U.S. transport *Mountrail* (APA-213, CAPT William H. Farmer). "As dawn broke, the clouds were so heavy and visibility so poor that the enemy could not possibly have seen us. Therefore, he could not have been fooled into thinking we were really going to land.

"As a consequence, the announcement of H-hour was postponed until about 1130, at which time we were told that H-hour would be at 1400.

"Our transport, which was 23,000 yards offshore, immediately started lowering boats and loading troops. The troops were re-embarked aboard ship, however, before the boats departed for the beach. At this time the weather was fairly calm. But in the 45 minutes it took them to reach the turnaway line, 5,000 yards from the beach, the wind whipped up to 35 or 40 knots. The enemy also lobbed a few shells at the incoming boat waves without causing damage. By the time the boats got back to the ship, the wind had intensified to 55 knots. Ours was the only transport to send all its boats ashore. With the winds at gale force, we had quite a time picking up 26 boats, particularly the LCMs. One of the transports—*Okanogan* (APA-220)—had four boats completely destroyed during recovery. Thanks to excellent seamanship, all of the other boats were recovered without serious casualty by 1630. The transport group then departed for Pohang-dong to disembark the Eighth Regimental Combat Team."

"Naval air and gun bombardment continued throughout D-day in spite of high winds and heavy seas," wrote Captain P. W. Watson, commanding officer of *Bon Homme Richard*.[6] "Both props and jets smashed at the beaches and their approaches in anticipation of a landing. In addition to pummeling strong points, the flyers destroyed 12 buildings, blew up an ammunition dump, and caused a large secondary explosion in a fortified area. Meanwhile, the landing craft headed for the beach, but on reaching a point 5,000 yards out, they reversed course and returned to the ships. Shortly thereafter, the operation was officially termed an exercise. One Skyraider received a direct hit in the wing from medium flak but was able to ditch safely. The pilot, LTJG Walter Alt, was picked up in good condition by the helicopter of the USS *Iowa*.

"Having no indication whatsoever that the projected 'landing' was not genuine, the *Bon Homme Richard* and Air Group Seven spared no effort to make the Kojo operation a success. Consequently, when the real nature of the operation was disclosed, many of those concerned felt let down."

Air and naval bombardment continued throughout D-plus-one day, 16 October. At 1900 Joint Amphibious Force Seven was dissolved and all naval units returned to their routine assignments.

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Chapter 11. The Amphibious Threat (1951-1953)
Significance

Except for the manning and activation of formerly unoccupied gun positions at Kojo, after D-minus-three day, there was actually little evidence of enemy reaction to the Kojo feint.

A U.S. intelligence agent who landed at Kojo on the night of 13 October reported enemy beach defenses had been evacuated, and that only a small number of troops were seen in the objective area. The intensified shore-battery fire later encountered by our minesweepers and the fire support ships indicated that these guns were manned, possibly by troops already in the immediate areas.

On D-minus-three day, pilots from Task Force 77 reported sighting approximately 1,000 enemy troops passing through the objective area. The cause of this troop movement was never determined.

In his action report,[7] Commander Task Force 77 reported that only ten enemy troops were killed by air attack in the period from 12 to 18 October. If the Kojo demonstration had brought any large number of enemy troops into the open, it was only at night.

Intelligence reports disclosed, however, that in the three months following the Kojo feint, the enemy relocated both North Korean and Chinese Communist reserve divisions from interior positions to coastal areas around Wonsan and Kojo. Although there is no indication that such a plan was afoot before the demonstration, it cannot be concluded that this change resulted from the demonstration. “The actual effect of the Kojo amphibious demonstration is difficult to determine,” said Vice Admiral Briscoe, “except that the immobility of the Communist forces was strongly indicated.”

As far as damage inflicted on the enemy during the aerial and surface bombardment, Commander Seventh Fleet drew the following conclusions:[8]

“*Aircraft Operations*. It is impossible to draw a direct comparison of damage between the two periods, due to the diversified nature of the targets; however, it will be noted that the destruction achieved by aircraft in the 1–5 October period was, in general, slightly greater than that achieved in the 12–16 October period, with slightly less tonnage of bombs and considerably fewer sorties. This is attributed to the fact that the former period was devoted primarily to prebriefed and coordinated heavy strikes, while by contrast the amphibious operation required a much greater percentage of non-attack missions. . . . It is concluded that less damage was done by aircraft, with a greater expenditure of effort, during the Kojo demonstration than during a normal operating period.

“*Ship Bombardment*. It appears that considerably more damage was done by naval gunfire during the period of the Kojo demonstration than during the earlier period. This opinion is reinforced by the fact that a greater percentage of unobserved and unevaluated fire occurred during the operation than during normal periods of deliberate gunfire. Considering these factors, it is estimated that approximately three times as much damage was done by naval gunfire during the Kojo demonstration as during a normal 5-day period; however, the expenditure of ammunition was about five times the normal.

“Another factor to be considered in arriving at a cost analysis of this operation is the interruptions of upkeep schedules of ships which were mobilized for the operation. This is particularly applicable in the case of destroyers, which are in short supply, as always. The operation required 128 destroyer days which would otherwise have gone into much-needed upkeep.

“The foregoing is not intended to belittle the value of the demonstration as a training maneuver. Such training is invaluable, and cannot be measured in the light of cost. However, it is considered that the concept of

drawing the enemy into the open in order to inflict severe losses on him was not realized and, in retrospect, had very little possibility of succeeding under the existing conditions of stalemate and limited United Nations resources."

Perhaps the most serious deficiency encountered in the Kojo demonstration was the lack of a means for early and positive identification of aircraft. Numerous instances occurred when unidentified aircraft appeared over Wonsan and in the objective area during the actual operation. Although no enemy air attacks were made on either ships or aircraft, lack of early warning and positive identification was a source of much worry.

In his action report, Admiral Clark stated, "Air defense was the greatest weakness of advance force operation, due to the difficulty of locating and identifying bogies. The ships' radars experienced considerable interference due to proximity to land so that blind alley of approach existed. . . . A contributing factor also was the presence of numerous Air Force aircraft and their reluctance to respond to calls for identification."[9]

Subordinate commanders, particularly the carriers and minesweepers, commented adversely on not knowing the true nature of the Kojo operation. Until the night before D-Day, only the highest echelons knew that the landing was to be a fake. Some of the lower echelon commands considered the risks taken and the casualties sustained were not justified.

"On the other hand, if Kojo was to fool anybody, we had to make it look real," said Admiral Briscoe. "Then, too, there was the possibility the landing would actually be made, and it was not decided until after the troops were loaded that it would be a feint."

In summary, the Kojo operation was designed to bring the enemy out into the open, to expose him to attack, and to throw him off balance in the belief that a major amphibious assault was in progress. It did not achieve all that was hoped for. However, the operation did prove that the United Nations forces would have been able to land at Kojo against very little opposition and with few casualties. Communist prisoners of war stated later that the Communists had planned to wait until our troops had landed at Kojo before making any countermoves.

Regarding the probable result of any major amphibious assault in enemy territory, the principal Navy and Army commanders were emphatic.

"An amphibious assault behind enemy lines would have broken the back of the Chinese Communist forces at any time," said Vice Admiral Briscoe, "due to the concentration of Communist forces near the battleline. An attack against their rear would have cut their line of supply and brought them out into the open where our superior firepower would have been decisive.

"But an amphibious assault would have required more troops—and we did not have the troops."

General Van Fleet believed an amphibious assault might have been decisive, but that the war could have been won without one.

"The Navy could have shot us ashore," said Van Fleet, "and kept us ashore as we built up. We could have built up faster than the Chinese could have met our attack.

"In fact, the Chinese could not have met us at all. He was not flexible enough. He had no method of movement or control. He had no concept of fast moves, he had no communication systems, he had no mobility, he had no logistics support system to maintain his momentum, as we have.

"This was the Chinese Communist Army's greatest weakness. He could not sustain an offensive—nor could he long hold out against a sustained offensive. The enemy didn't have the means of logistic support, he didn't have the 'know how,' he didn't have the schooling. It takes a long time to learn about supporting a moving army.

"If UN forces had opened up an offensive all along the front and continued to push" said General Van Fleet, "we would have put such a strain on his logistic supply line, forcing him to work in the daytime as well as night, that he would have been given an insoluble logistic problem. In short, if United Nations forces had utilized their inherent advantages of mobility, flexibility, and firepower, we could not have been stopped. We could have

won the war at any time. Instead of doing that, we fought the war on the enemy's terms and according to his rules. The war was never stalemated. It was a sit-down on our part.

"Winning the war was not our job. Our job was to sit on the battleline and let air drop in and punish him in the hope it would subdue him enough to sign on the dotted line. It was a sit-down by order of the United Nations. It was a self-imposed loss, because we could and should have won it."

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
Conception of Siege[1]

The American naval siege in Wonsan harbor, which grew to be the longest in modern American naval history, was begun on 16 February 1951.[1A]

On the day the operation began, there was no plan to lay an indefinite or constant siege to Wonsan. The "siege of Wonsan" was progressive, originally conceived by Rear Admiral Allan E. Smith, during the period of the Hungnam evacuation as part of a plan for capturing certain islands on both coasts, including at least one in Wonsan harbor.

At the time Smith proposed his plan, UN forces were in retreat from the initial onslaught of the Chinese Communist armies. During the confusing days of December 1950, UN forces faced not only the prospect of being forced off the Korean peninsula, but also the possibility that World War III was beginning.

Smith's immediate evaluation was that his blockade and bombardment forces had to get back on the offensive; that if they had something tangible to accomplish, they could contribute to the stabilization of the land fighting.

"My evaluation," Admiral Smith recorded,[1B] "showed that it would be good naval warfare to hold certain strategically-placed islands. The first one I chose was Cho-do, in the entrance of Chinnampo. The next one was Paengnyong-do, just south of Changsangot Peninsula. The third one was Tokchok-to, at the entrance to Inchon. The fourth one was off Kunsan (not needed as the frontline held to north of it). And the fifth was the island group in Wonsan harbor.

Smith's plan was to put on these islands 150 or 200 South Korean Marines. This he did, equipping them only with rifles, though later they were issued a few burp guns and hand grenades. Thus when the Eighth Army came north again, these positions would have been retained, and we would not have to recapture all those hundreds of islands on the west coast.

Smith proposed this plan to COMNAVFE and it was approved.

It is thus clear that the "siege of Wonsan" was originally only a plan to seize one or more of the dozen-odd islands in the harbor until the UN forces again fought their way northward to capture North Korea, including Wonsan itself. The prospect that the war would stalemate in a few months across the narrow waist of Korea *south* of that port was not then a matter for consideration.

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
Harbor of Refuge

To appreciate the extraordinary nature and the importance of the 861-day naval siege of Wonsan, a description of that city and the geography and hydrography of its harbor are needed for the reader's understanding and interest.

The city of Wonsan, strategically located on Korea's east coast in the relatively tideless Sea of Japan, was the principal seaport of North Korea. The harbor was large—three hundred square miles—and naturally protected from storms. In a part of the world often plagued with typhoons, the Japanese had named the port the "Harbor of Refuge" because it was rarely in a storm's track.

Unlike other ports to the north, Wonsan was ice-free in winter. Its anchorage had a mud bottom over good holding ground in six to eight fathoms of water.

These were the features which, in 1880, caused the Japanese (who had just been granted use of the harbor) to begin its maritime development. In that year Wonsan was only a small, sleepy, and isolated village.

In 1950, the city of Wonsan had grown to be a thriving and modern seaport by Oriental standards. It was a strategic rail center, a naval base, a road transportation hub, and an industrial complex. The city's estimated population was 100,000.

Wonsan was the terminus of the cross-peninsular rail and road line to the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. It was also a pivotal location for the north-south rail line, and for highways in both directions.

The principal industry centered around its huge petroleum refinery—a plant covering 4,000,000 square feet, with an annual capacity of almost 2,000,000 barrels. Before the Korean War commenced, it was believed that the Wonsan refinery was supplied by ships from the Russian wells on Sakhalin, the long and rugged island adjoining Siberia.[1C]

In addition to the refining industry in Wonsan, several other industries were located in or near the city. The Korean Railroad Company maintained a modern plant in Wonsan for the construction, repair, and maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock. A lead smelting company, a steel pipe company, a coke plant, a flour mill, a shipyard, a fishing cannery, and a "sake" brewery were also numbered among the Wonsan industries. Wonsan was also the center of great fishing activity.

Wonsan's seaport had excellent facilities. A 900-foot concrete wharf in the inner harbor was equipped with warehouses and railroad sidings. A large 40-ton travelling crane was reported in use on this wharf. At either end of the wharf were several quays and piers for small vessels. The oil refinery had its own pier several hundred feet in length.

These features and industries, therefore, as well as the importance of the harbor, were the factors underlying the establishment of the naval siege.

The physical features of Wonsan made it a location of great beauty. The islands dotting the harbor, the mountains which rose up within and behind the city and to the north on the peninsula called Hodo Pando, and the picturesque curve of the bay, had made Wonsan a summer resort center.

This was the city which would see the longest siege in modern naval warfare.

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
Difficulties and Advantages of Siege

To besiege Wonsan's inner harbor actively and at close range involved risks and dangers. First, the harbor was landlocked, and enemy gunfire from all sides could be expected. Second, much of the old minefield was still present, and it was safe to assume that the Communists had refreshed the swept areas since December 1950, and would try to re-mine the harbor at every opportunity. This could be, and was, done surreptitiously at night from the small, ubiquitous fishing sampans. Third, the siege of Wonsan would be hazardous because of the restricted navigation. In addition to mines, the numerous islands and shoals in the harbor would complicate navigation and gunnery.

On the other hand, there were many advantages in besieging Wonsan, in holding its harbor and capturing its islands. First, the enemy would be forced to divert large numbers of troops to protect himself against a second invasion—troops which might otherwise be in or supporting the battlefront. Second, by holding and clearing the Wonsan minefields, UN forces would be able to invade whenever it suited their purposes. Any movement of UN ground forces north of Wonsan would demand the opening of an additional port for logistic support of the armies. Third, as has been stated, the city of Wonsan was an important Communist transportation center, lying astride the main rail and road arteries between northeast Korea and the frontlines. It was also the terminus of the only east-west railroad in North Korea. Naval gunfire could bring these important transportation routes under fire. Fourth, by holding the harbor, the best port in North Korea would be securely closed; fishing activity therein could be controlled by establishing a checkpoint on one of the nearby harbor islands. Fifth, the harbor could be an effective base from which to obtain enemy intelligence and conduct guerrilla operations. Sixth (although this reason was not initially apparent), Wonsan harbor could be an important search and rescue point for our aviators and aircraft.

And last, to be able to lay siege to the main port in North Korea, to hold its islands, and to bring gunfire to bear on its military targets, would have demoralizing effect upon the Communists, and be of great psychological value to the United Nations.

These were the reasons why it was essential to lay siege to Wonsan.

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
Initial Operations

After a path through the minefield had again been swept by MinRon Three commencing 12 February, the initial siege operations in Wonsan were begun by the destroyers USS *Wallace L. Lind* (DD-703, CDR E. B. Carlson) and USS *Ozbourn* (DD-846, CDR C. O. Akers) on 16 February 1951.[1D] Rear Admiral Smith, the blockade commander, was on hand, embarked in the cruiser *Manchester*.

The two destroyers bombarded the harbor's military installations, but the swept area was so small and navigation so difficult that the two destroyers fired the bombardment at anchor.

Two days later, again at anchor, and at the conclusion of a snowstorm, *Ozbourn* received from Sin-do Island, the first Wonsan counterbattery fire, which wounded two men. Dragging her bottomed anchor, Ozbourn got underway toward the outer harbor. Her Mark 56 director was damaged, her after deckhouse holed, her starboard searchlight demolished. She was the first U.S. siege ship to be struck in Wonsan.

It was obvious that if a siege was to be effective, Wonsan's harbor islands had to be captured or neutralized.

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
The Harbor Islands (1951)

Of the numerous islands in the Bay of Wonsan, UN forces eventually occupied and used seven: Yo-do, Mo-do, Sa-do, Sin-do, Tae-do, Ung-do, and Hwangto-do.
Click here to view map

The first island captured was Sin-do. Enemy troops as well as enemy guns had been reported on Sin-do. To prepare the island for capture, therefore, two destroyers and two frigates, under the command of Commander Destroyer Division 112 (CAPT B. F. Roeder), commenced a two-hour bombardment at 0700 on the morning of 24 February, with spotting furnished by *Manchester*'s helicopter. Three hundred fifty-eight 5-inch and two hundred and fifty-nine 3-inch shells blasted the island at 0900. Following this bombardment, a detachment of 210 Korean marines went ashore. The landing was unopposed and the island was reported secure at 1018. Sin-do, lying only 4,000 yards from Kalma Gak, would provide a fine observation post for spotting naval gunfire and for observing the train and truck traffic in Wonsan city.

The next island occupied was Yo-do, the largest island. There was no opposition or interference, and the occupation by 210 Korean marines was without incident.

Yo-do was approximately 2,500 yards long and 1,500 yards wide, with an elevation of 377 feet. One cove and beach, suitable for landing, were located on the western side of the island. Nearby was the tiny fishing village of Yodo-ri, with a population of some 70 men, women, and children. The town consisted of several huts and one school. The size, location, and topography of Yo-do made it an ideal base for implementing the siege.

In mid-March, the Communists made an attempt to make a sampan landing on Tae-do, but were driven off by gunfire from the destroyers.

Three days after this attempt, 24 March 1951, the U.S. destroyer *English* (DD-696) (CDR R. J. Toner) landed a shore fire control party on Tae-do. Except for a leper colony of one hundred fifty people, Tae-do was not occupied. The island was also the site of a former Japanese fort, and lay even closer to Wonsan. On the following day, the cruiser *Saint Paul* and four destroyers, including the *English*, fired on targets in Wonsan with good results, their gunfire being corrected by the spotters on Tae-do.

Operating from Yo-do, the Korean marines gradually expanded control over several other islands in the bay: Mo-do, So-do and Hwangto-do. The latter island was the best spotting and observation post of all.

The first naval officer assigned to the Wonsan harbor islands was LT James S. Lampe, Jr., an intelligence officer from the staff of Commander Task Force 95. Lampe, the son of Presbyterian missionary parents, spoke fluent Korean, having been born in Korea and having lived there for eighteen years.

"I landed on the island of Yo-do on 13 June 1951, with orders to report to CTG 95.2," said Lampe. "At this time, we held and were using five of the harbor islands: Yo-do, Hwangto-do, Sa-do, Mo-do, and Sin-do. By far, the most important were Yo-do, our base island, and Hwangto-do, our naval gunfire spotting island.

"I lived on Yo-do. It was the best island for a base and was far enough out in the harbor to be reasonably safe from enemy guns, and in a good position where our ships could support us in case of a counterinvasion.

"Before I arrived, the Korean marines, in March or April 1951, had installed a large 4-foot searchlight on the top of the hill on the north side of Yo-do, just above the village. Power for the light was furnished by a gas engine, and it was manned by a crew of Korean marines. In case of invasion, this light was to be used to illuminate the beach in front of the village; otherwise we used the searchlight at night to give our planes a checkpoint. (Incidentally, this searchlight drew a great deal of fire from the Wonsan batteries—almost every day

after a night's use. However, no direct hits were ever received up till the time I left (August 1952), although there were near misses several times.)[1E]

"For several months, I lived in a tent near the small village of Yodo-ri. On 14 July 1951, the island of Yo-do became the headquarters for units of the 41st Royal Independent Commandos, commanded by LTCOL D. P. Drysdale, MBE, Royal Marines. The next day, the U.S. Marine who was to command the Wonsan islands, LTCOL Richard G. Warga, established his new command on Yo-do (CTE 95.23).

"There were several tents in our 95.23 camp—four for living quarters, one for a messhall, and one for an outhouse. They were placed on a little slope near the village and in the trees. During my fourteen months on Yo-do, I tried unsuccessfully to get a toilet seat from one of the destroyers for our outhouse; we did our best to sand and whittle the seat to make it more comfortable, but it never was.

"Our group of tents made a nice target. Many times when the Hodo Pando batteries fired at the ships near Yo-do, a few rounds would strike near our tents. Although there were many close hits and fragments, luckily, no casualties were suffered from this fire."

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
Shore Fire Control Parties on Hwangto-do

Perhaps the most useful of the Wonsan harbor islands for the siege ships was the island of Hwangto-do, one of three islands used for the spotting of ships' gunfire. The barren and rocky island, without a single tree, had an elevation of 160 feet, and was only 3,000 yards from the shore, and therefore closest to enemy guns and mortars. Hwangto-do was also closest to the city of Wonsan, to the much-battered Wonsan airfield, and to the important road running southward to the front through the Anbyon Valley. This road was the enemy's main supply route in the eastern sector. From the observation post atop Hwangto-do, spotters could look directly upon Wonsan, the Anbyon Valley road, and several important bridges along this railroad and highway.

Until June 1951, Hwangto-do could only be approached in sampans because of the mine danger. Sampans were not endangered because the mines were anchored six to ten feet beneath the sea surface and below their keels. Because of the island's proximity to enemy gunfire, all movement to and from this island was at night. A Korean Marine Corps LCVP was used to carry food and other supplies to the other "friendly" islands but had not been used to supply Hwangto-do.

"In July," said LT Lampe, "we were told by a prisoner that the minefields protecting the eastern beach of Kalma Gak were in two rows, and that a boat could go safely from the middle of Tae-do to the western tip of Hwangto-do without crossing a mine line. Since the garrison platoon on Hwangto-do had been asking for food, ammunition and additional men, the situation warranted trying to take the LCVP to the island. That particular day, a strong westerly wind made it impractical to try to send the usual sampans. It would have been necessary to scull all the way from Yo-do, a trip that would have taken all night.

"Therefore I loaded the LCVP with all the things Hwangto-do needed, and I headed for the island following the route recommended by the POW. The trip was without mishap and turned out to be the first of many. Thereafter, I took all the supplies into Hwangto-do by LCVP, always at night.

"In early July 1951, Captain W. L. Anderson, USN, was CTG 95.2, embarked in USS *Blue* (DD-744). While discussing the effectiveness of the ships' gunfire with the captains of the *Blue* (CDR R. S. Burdick) and the USS *Frank E. Evans* (DD-754, CDR G. L. Christie), it was brought out that the fire might be more effective with a Shore Fire Control Party stationed close in to the targets. I assured them that the island of Hwangto-do could be used for this purpose and would be an ideal location.

"We made out a list of the things the party should take with them. Included was all the food they would use, the kind of clothing and bedding, the kinds and numbers of weapons, and the amount of ammunition and the radio gear most suitable. A volunteer party was picked, and a night chosen to go in. Volunteers were requested because the party could expect to be under close, accurate enemy artillery and mortar fire, and, of course, there was the ever-present threat of an enemy landing. Raiding sampans coming out from the south couldn't be detected by radar from the siege ships, and the ships would be unable to take them under fire when they were close to the island. Even so, everyone wanted to volunteer.

"On the night of 5-6 July 1951, I took them in to Hwangto-do in one of the destroyer's whaleboats and got them 'squared away'. The whaleboat carried a radar reflecting screen, and the ships kept a close watch on our progress. We landed on the only beach on the island. This beach was on the west side of the island and was very exposed to enemy fire. The rest of the island coast was rough rock and couldn't be approached because of underwater rocks. Nearby was a cluster of ten fishing huts.

"The shore fire control party holed up in one of the fishing huts. The Korean Marine Corps garrison

platoon was most happy to have them on the island.

"The results achieved by the *Evans* and the *Blue*, using this shore fire control party, were extremely good. As I recall, they fired at a torpedo station and supply buildings in Wonsan. The team stayed on the island for three or four days and I brought them out. From time to time, other ships' teams took their place. The ships' interdiction and bombardment fire was materially improved."

This employment became more frequent with many other siege ships landing their own SFCPs on Hwangto-do. A small party of U.S. Marines was posted to Hwangto-do on 19 July 1951, and remained there for the rest of the siege, the personnel being rotated every four months.[1F]

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Siege Procedure

As has been stated, one of the main purposes of laying siege to Wonsan, in addition to being able to bombard the enemy's main road and rail lines leading to the front, was to clear the enemy minefields still remaining in Wonsan, and to prevent the enemy from planting others. This was no easy task. Minesweeping had to be continuous. In a single day the Communists could re-mine the swept areas, using a few of the always-plentiful sampans. Even a small sampan could carry as many as four mines.

"During my period in Korea as CTF 95," said Rear Admiral George C. Dyer, "most new mines were laid during periods of rainfall, snowfall, or winds strong enough to raise the waves in Wonsan to the 'high chop level'. During such periods, with the radars in our ships it was impracticable to detect sampans laying mines. None were laid during actual typhoons because the winds and sea currents caused the enemy to know that the mines would probably be wasted, and they had none to waste."

To clear the minefields, four or five minesweepers were assigned to the Wonsan task group, two of them operating every day sweeping the harbor and its approaches. Since these small vessels lacked the means of fully defending themselves from Wonsan's shore batteries, it was the duty of two (sometimes three) assigned destroyer types patrolling Wonsan to suppress enemy fire upon them.

By the end of April the sweepers had sunk or exploded 29 mines in the harbor of Wonsan. March 30th was the big day when *Thompson*, *Pelican*, *Chatterer* and *Merganser* had swept and destroyed 15 mines.

At this early stage of the siege, a typical day's routine can be described as follows:

The minesweepers, supported by destroyers, would make a daily sweep in an assigned area. If the sweeps were fired upon, the destroyers would retaliate. During a day's patrol, the destroyers would also have certain bombardment missions. And whenever lucrative targets were spotted in Wonsan (either by ship spotters, naval gunfire parties on the islands, or aircraft) they would be taken under fire by the destroyers.

At night, alone or in conjunction with night-heckling and reconnaissance aircraft from the carriers or the Fifth Air Force in Korea, the destroyers would fire at assigned or observed targets, in most cases with the spotting assistance of the shore fire control parties stationed on the "friendly" islands.

From time to time, the siege would be augmented by the rocket attacks of the LSMR division,[1G] by the air strikes from Task Force 77, and by heavy gun strikes. During mid-March 1951, the first of many cruiser and battleship bombardments to strike Wonsan during the siege was conducted. *Manchester* (CL-83, CAPT Lewis S. Parks) accompanied by *Lind* (DD-703, CDR Edward B. Carlson) made a surprise raid on enemy troop barracks in Wonsan on 17 March. Intelligence reports later stated that more than 6,000 casualties had been inflicted. On 19 March, the first battleship to participate in the siege, the USS *Missouri*, blasted enemy gun positions with her 16-inch fire.

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Wonsan Bombardments by Night

In early April 1951, an interesting experiment was initiated between the bombarding ships of Task Force 95 and the aircraft of the Twelfth Reconnaissance Squadron, Fifth Air Force. Already, as the result of both air and gun strikes on their supply lines, the Communists had suspended efforts to move supplies by day. All resupply through the Wonsan transportation complex was done at night. Reconnaissance aircraft of the Air Force had the mission of photographing the road and rail lines of North Korea every flyable night so that a check could be kept on the number and amount of supplies getting through to the enemy frontlines. Other night-flying aircraft of the First Marine Air Wing (F7F Tigercats and F4U Corsairs) and Fifth Air Force (largely B-26s) were out upon every occasion to damage and destroy as much of this night supply work as possible. In this effort, the attacking Navy, Marine, and U.S. Air Force aircraft were ably assisted by flare-dropping P4Y2 Privateers from Fleet Air Wing Six.[1H]

At Wonsan, the night-heckler and night-attack aircraft found the siege ships willing teammates. Star shells fired by the destroyers enabled the attack aircraft to locate targets more easily and make attacks upon them. The aircraft, in return, spotted the bombardment fire of the destroyers and increased its effectiveness.

The work of DesRon One ships *Floyd B. Parks* (DD-884), *Agerholm* (DD-826), and *John R. Craig* (DD-885) on the night of 5 May 1951 was typical of this work.

"This was the *Parks'* first of two 30-day periods in Wonsan," recorded CDR H. G. Claudius, USN.[2] "Two of my officers, LT Harold A. Bres, USN, and LTJG Urban G. Whitaker, Jr., USNR, worked out an excellent procedure for working with our own Task Force 77 planes during the day and with Air Force planes at night. Many Air Force planes checked in with us at night looking for targets. We gave targets to these planes, and in addition to vectoring them in, we assisted them to locate the target area with star shells. On their arrival in the area we would illuminate the target for them to make their runs and drop their ordnance. We continued illumination to assist them in evaluating their attack.

"After unloading their bombs, the planes usually had thirty to forty minutes they could remain in the area, and they were generally glad to use this time to spot for us. During this night bombardment work, the planes kept clear of our fire but remained in a position where they could spot our fall of shot, using illumination provided by star shells fired from another mount. The spotting ability of these pilots varied but was generally considered good, and in the case of some Air Force pilots who had had some Navy spotting indoctrination was excellent. Nearly all the pilots we worked with were most enthusiastic, with the result that the Reds in Wonsan got little rest or freedom of movement day or night."

With the *Agerholm* illuminating, the B-26 spotting plane directed the fire of *Parks* and *Craig* on a Wonsan bridge. The two destroyers fired ten rounds and made two direct hits. After demolishing a new supply building, the attention of the spotting plane was called to a truck convoy moving through Wonsan. While the destroyers furnished illumination, the B-26 attacked and destroyed several of the trucks.

Later the same night by the light of the destroyer's star shells, a second B-26 damaged a chemical factory and demolished four storage tanks.

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Brinkley Bass Suffers First Casualty

On the 95th day of the Wonsan siege, 22 May 1951, an enemy shore battery succeeded in bringing death aboard one of the blockading ships.

"When we arrived for our first two-week tour in Wonsan," wrote CDR A. F. Beyer, Commanding Officer, USS *Brinkley Bass*,[3] "everything appeared to be quiet. Enemy shore batteries were relatively inactive, and our ships would anchor during daylight as well as at night, providing a sitting-duck situation for the enemy but a simplified fire control problem for us. Shortly after arrival we were fired upon and lost our anchor in the hurry to maneuver clear. We quickly learned to provide a moving target during good visibility, but we continued to anchor at night. We also learned other important survival techniques, such as keeping men clear topside, wearing as much protective clothing as possible (we would have welcomed some of those flak suits used later on during the war), wearing Kapok life jackets, etc.

"On 20 May 1951 we were left alone in Wonsan. The other ships were on other assignments or were receiving logistic support. At one time during the day we were at our battle stations and close enough to the enemy beaches at Umi-do so that we could spray the area with 40-mm. fire. . . . Not many hours later we were on the receiving end of their shells. Rapid maneuvering and heavy counterbattery fire kept us from receiving any direct hits; however, we were finally sprayed with shrapnel as a result of a 120-mm. near miss to starboard. This resulted in ten personnel casualties (we were at General Quarters and manning our 40-mm. guns) and superficial structural damage. Three of the casualties were serious, and one man, Fireman Apprentice John D. Bryan, died later. After that day we decided not to man our machine guns but to keep the personnel involved below decks. Later the same afternoon, the *Manchester* and several destroyers returned. We transferred our wounded to the *Manchester* and continued firing on assigned targets.

"Every day thereafter we could expect some enemy action, especially late in the afternoon, because the setting sun favored the shore batteries due west of the swept areas. Knowing this, the situation was never dull and all hands kept themselves ready to come to General Quarters on a moment's notice. It was almost a relief when we returned fire in an effort to destroy the enemy's gun emplacements. At least we lost some of the tense feeling.

"Moreover, there was enough humor aboard to keep us on an even keel. For example, we continued to show movies in the messhall and in the wardroom. One picture was a World War II battle action story. At the exact moment when General Quarters was sounded in the movie, our own G.Q. announced the fact that we were again under fire. For a brief second there was some confusion, but not for long."

Two days before the *Bass* suffered her casualty, the battleship *New Jersey*, while bombarding Wonsan targets, took a hit atop Number One turret. This shell did little damage, but a subsequent near miss killed one man and wounded three.

On 24 May, cruiser *Manchester* and destroyer *Brinkley Bass* detected targets south of Hodo Pando islands and opened fire. A Communist sampan formation was broken up and four sampans captured, each of them reinforced for carrying four mines.

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Results of First 100 Days of Siege

At the completion of the first 100 days of the Wonsan siege, 27 May 1951, Admiral Smith reported that it had cost the enemy the following:
107 trucks destroyed, 238 damaged
8,195 troop casualties
149 buildings destroyed, 466 damaged
34 bridges destroyed, 83 damaged
63 railroad cars destroyed
3 tunnels damaged
11 locomotives damaged
54 small boats destroyed, 238 damaged

Despite flurries of enemy gunfire and a few hits, the cost of wreaking this damage upon the Chinese and North Korean enemy had been small.

As on the railroads in North Korea, the Communists in Wonsan had been forced to organize a repair effort for the city's road and rail lines as a result of the destructive attacks of UN ships and aircraft.

On several occasions during this period, the enemy's fire had suddenly picked up as the Communists made determined efforts to drive the siege ships out of the harbor. Following a heavy Task Force 77 strike of 270 sorties on 6 July, the Reds retaliated with an especially heavy bombardment on 17 July 1951; more than 500 splashes were counted in the water around *O'Brien* (DD-725, CDR C. W. Nimitz, Jr.), *Blue* (DD-744, CDR R. S. Burdick), and *Cunningham* (DD-752, CDR L. P. Spear). In return, the three destroyers pumped out 2,336 rounds of 5-inch fire, in a four-and-a-half hour exchange. The Communist bombardment was continuous and well coordinated from three areas—Umi-do, Kalma Gak, and Hodo Pando—but inflicted no more serious damage than spraying two LSTs near Yo-do with fragments.

"This exchange was known as 'The Battle of the Buzz Saw'," said RADM Dyer. "After this date I made it compulsory that at all times in daylight, and for all bombardments, either night or day, ships should be underway."

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The Enemy Defenses of Wonsan

As the siege of Wonsan was laid, there were few enemy batteries around the bay of Wonsan. As the siege lengthened, however, the number of guns defending the harbor rose steadily.

Likewise, the enemy shore defense system in Wonsan, which in the beginning was limited, was steadily strengthened. As UN minesweeps swept "Broadway" and "Lower Broadway" ever closer to the shore, the enemy's entrenchments were expanded to include the beaches nearest the swept areas. Shore entrenchments were also positioned at other places where the Communists thought the UN forces might land—the beaches near Wonsan city and on the south coast of the bay and, later, in the western portions of the bay.

The Communists' shore batteries were placed so as to cover both the ship operating areas and to sweep the potential landing sites: heavy machine guns and mortars were positioned near the probable landing beaches, and 76-mm. batteries in the nearby hills. The harbor's heavy guns (122-mm. and 155-mm.) were located farther back from the shoreline and positioned to take the ship operating area under fire.

In the early months of the siege, the enemy's batteries were located as follows:

All harbor guns were of the field artillery type, as distinguished from naval or regular fixed shore defense guns. With few exceptions, these guns were hidden in caves or tunnels, cleverly camouflaged, and were rolled out for firing and rolled back inside for protection, for the Communists soon learned that an exposed gun was certain to be destroyed.

In the early months of the war a great many empty gun emplacements, caves, and tunnels were in evidence. Two reasons are likely. First, in case one position became too hot, a gun could be moved to a new position. Second, empty gun positions often attracted fire from planes and ships. By the end of the second year of the siege, however, there were few empty gun positions, as more guns were brought into the area.

"Most of the low, near-to-the-water gun positions in the Wonsan area had a single entrance," said LT James S. Lampe, the intelligence officer assigned to Yo-do. "This entrance was for the gun itself, and it was always as small as possible. Only a few of the gun caves—usually the big ones—had a personnel entrance. These came in from the back side of the hills, permitting the crews to man their guns without being exposed to our fire.

"Most of the heavy gun positions had large rooms for ammunition storage as well as crew's quarters. The Communists did not seem concerned about having their ammunition and gun crews in the same hole.

"In addition to the field artillery pieces, there were two other types of guns used against our siege ships: tanks and rail-mounted guns.

"Tanks were positioned at several points around the bay, but were most prominent at certain positions on 'Sugar Loaf', a small hill on Kalma Gak, plus other tanks on Kalma Gak proper. Two of these tank positions were set-up so that the tank could fire through 'gunports' located at the very base of the hill. The tank itself was never exposed, but was moved forward until the gun barrel protruded from the port. Another tank often came around the north end of 'Sugar Loaf' to fire, but beat a hasty retreat whenever it was taken under fire.

"In the latter part of 1951, four rail-mounted guns appeared in the bay. "Three of these were north of the city, not far from the beach. These, too, were retractable into caves.

"As far as I could determine from the refugees who fled to the islands from Wonsan, all of the harbor defense guns were North Korean manned. It is doubtful that the Chinese manned any of the guns. North Korean Army units manned most of the harbor guns except the Hodo Pando batteries, which were manned by a North Korean Navy unit.

"In regard to their control procedures, they zeroed-in certain positions where they were most apt to catch a ship with little maneuvering room. In many of the firing positions, the Communists hacked a circular groove in the hard-packed ground, into which the wheels of the gun carriage fitted snugly. Around this circular track various points were marked to zero-in selected points with rapidity. The Red gun crews learned to work as teams, and even developed a definite plan of coordination between the widely-spaced batteries. Spotting stations equipped with plotting boards were established and splash information was passed by telephone to a fire control station. The fire control station would calculate corrections and phone them to the batteries. The Reds had no automatic machines or computers, but nonetheless they became fast and accurate. They also reported ships sunk from time to time. One destroyer was reported sunk three times, and when it appeared the fourth time in the bay, they claimed we had changed the numbers on a new ship.

"The presence of our siege ships and minesweepers inside the harbor was definitely a severe irritant and worry for the Communists. During the first year of the siege of Wonsan, there were four occasions when the Reds believed a landing was imminent. These scares usually followed a maximum air strike by Task Force 77 or a heavy bombardment by a battleship, or a combination of the two. They were kept continually on their toes and never dared to leave the harbor lightly defended."

The increase of enemy gunfire resulted in six ships being hit in July: *Everett* (PF-8); *LSMR-409; LSMR-525; O'Brien* (DD-725); *LSMR-412;* and *Helena* (CA-75). In August, the siege ships were untouched. In September, two were hit: *William Seiverling* (DE-441); and *Heron* (AMS-18).

"The limited area available to the ships in Wonsan made it extremely difficult for our ships to maintain their positions when subjected to fire from the shore batteries," wrote RADM George D. Dyer, the blockade commander. "In order to provide them with more advantageous positions, the sweeping of additional areas between the islands and the providing of so-called escape routes from the inner harbor were undertaken in mid-June 1951. This extremely hazardous operation was pressed in the 'Lower Broadway' area with vigor. Upon completion of the initial sweeping in late August 1951, sweeping was started on 2 September in the new 'Muffler' area. This latter area permitted a much closer approach to the city."

If the enemy hoped to lift the siege with increased gunfire, however, and provide himself an opportunity for re-mining the swept areas and recapturing the harbor islands, he failed.

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Doubts Raised Regarding Continuance of Siege

While none of the ships of the UN Navy had yet been lost or even seriously hit, there began to be some doubt as to whether the siege was worthwhile. In the first 180 days of the siege, approximately 50,000 naval shells had been pumped into the city's targets. The doubts were expressed largely because there was no accurate way of determining precisely *what* the bombardment was doing to the enemy's over-all capability and to his morale.

Outwardly, a little speculation was in order. It was evident, after six months of the siege, that neither the bombs from aircraft nor the gunfire from ships, even in combination, had succeeded in halting the steady flow of material through Wonsan at night. The daytime flow had been effectively dammed, however, and a great deal of damage had been done in six months:

Guns: 262 destroyed, 230 damaged
Trucks—Vehicles: 178 destroyed, 348 damaged
Junks—Sampans: 89 destroyed, 299 damaged
Bridges: 36 destroyed, 100 damaged
Tunnels: 15 damaged
Railroad cars: 66 destroyed, 80 damaged

But at night, as the observers on the friendly islands could plainly see, the enemy trains and trucks rolled steadily southward despite the gunfire and harassment. In view of this heavy nocturnal traffic, was the known and estimated damage sufficient to justify the risks being taken? The risk to the destroyers and minesweepers in the harbor was already great and was still growing. It was easy to imagine the tragedy which might occur if a lucky hit in a steering mechanism should veer a speeding ship into the minefield or aground on one of the numerous islands.

Risk to the siege ships was accepted. Damage to the enemy, however, was only one criterion of the value of the siege. The very fact that enemy resistance was on the increase was evidence that the siege was hurting. Also, it was known that large numbers of enemy troops were bivouacked near Wonsan to defend the area from an amphibious assault. One intelligence report said that 79,200 troops were stationed in the vicinity of Wonsan to counter an invasion. Several American aviators—Air Force, Navy, and Marine—had already been rescued from the harbor where they might have been captured or lost. And by what yardstick could the psychological value of this thorn-in-the-side siege be measured?

"The question of the desirability of continuing the Wonsan siege was raised at least twice during my tenure as CTF 95," said Admiral Dyer. "The best brains in the Army and Navy—Forrest Sherman, MacArthur, Ridgway—were all convinced of the necessity of the siege."

The siege was therefore continued and accelerated.

A heavy gunstrike by surface forces *(New Jersey* and *Toledo)* pounded Wonsan targets on 2 July 1951. On 18 September 1951, the first coordinated air-gun strike by Task Force 95 was conducted in Wonsan commanded by Rear Admiral George C. Dyer aboard USS *Toledo* (CAPT Hunter Wood). Other ships included HMS *Glory,* USS *Parks,* USS *John R. Craig,* USS *Orleck,* and USS *Samuel N. Moore.* The same ships repeated the bombardment next day, joined by the three rocket ships, *LSMR-409, 412,* and *525.*

The air-gun bombardment was repeated on 10 October. For this strike, a British task force, under the command of Rear Admiral A. K. Scott-Moncrieff, participated, led by the Australian light aircraft carrier *Sydney* [3A] (CAPT D. H. Harries, RAN) and supported by cruiser HMS *Belfast* and destroyers HMS *Concord,* USS

Colahan, HMCS *Cayuga*, HMS *Comus*, and USS *Shields.* A large enemy troop center had been located in Wonsan, and heavy damage was done to this concentration.

A third heavy bombardment, led by *Wisconsin*, struck military targets in the besieged city on 20 December.

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The Helicopter Ship *(LST-799)* in Wonsan

The value of holding the harbor of Wonsan for rescue purposes is revealed by the fact that *LST-799* (the first ship of the U.S. Navy to serve as a helicopter carrier in wartime) rescued twenty-four aviators between March 1951 and November 1952, most of them while operating in or near the Bay of Wonsan.

"After the Hungnam evacuation," said LT T. E. Houston, skipper of the *LST-799*, "we returned to Yokosuka for a conversion which was designed to make us into a helicopter base for minespotting helicopters and a tender and supply ship for minesweeping boats and ships. We had space and facilities topside to handle three helicopters, although we frequently had but two aboard, and more often only one.

"The planned use for our helicopters was originally that of minespotting, not rescue; but as time went on, our 'copters got more and more into the role of rescue."

After conversion, *LST-799* arrived in Wonsan on 20 March 1951 to serve as a harbor headquarters for ComMinRon Three (Captain Richard C. Williams, USN) and a floating helicopter and minesweeping boat base.

"On our arrival in Wonsan," said Houston, "we anchored on the leeward side of Yo-do. At this state of the siege, we weren't concerned about shorebattery fire; and our helicopter pilots in March and April of 1951 had quite a lark. They used to fly around the city of Wonsan quite freely and unharmed. The North Koreans and Chinese would wave at them and seemed not to care.

"By mid-summer, however, the honeymoon was over, and the Reds were no longer hospitable to sight-seeing helicopters. I was told that this unfriendliness on their part was attributable to the practice of some helicopter pilots' dropping hand grenades in the general vicinity of the North Koreans while they were enjoying their toilet."[4]

LST-799 effected its first rescue in Wonsan on 5 April. The rescued pilot was Ensign M. S. Tuthill.

"It was a beautiful spring afternoon," recalled Houston, "and we had just finished an emergency rescue drill. The alarm sounded, and the boatswain passed the word, 'Away the rescue party, away!' Our rescues were usually performed by helicopter, but we also kept an LCVP ready.

"Dashing out on deck, I joined the rest of my crew topside watching a parachuting figure whose plane was just crashing into the ocean.

"The LCVP was away first, and the helicopter soon after. But the 'copter reached the downed pilot first, and as it often happened, the helicopter crewman had to jump into the water and assist the downed pilot into the hoisting sling. While the helicopter returned the pilot, the LCVP picked up the crewman. Except for a chill, both were in good shape. This was Ensign Tuthill's second dunking and helicopter rescue; he understandably had a high regard for the whirley-birds.

"The majority of our rescues were performed while underway," continued Houston, "and most of them were over land. If a rescue call came in while the 'copter was flying a mine spot mission, the 'copter would return, refuel, assemble all the information, and take off again. I would head the LST to the nearest safe spot to landward to close the distance as much as possible.

"The rescue missions themselves were carried out independently by the helicopter unit. They did the job as they saw fit."

One of the most tragic helicopter rescue attempts took place on 3 July 1951 from Wonsan harbor. *LST-799* temporarily left the harbor, and the MinRon-3 helicopter unit was based aboard the relief helicopter ship, the *LST Q-009.*

The helicopter pilot was LTJG John Kelvin Koelsch, who had recently completed a full tour of combat rescue duty flying from the USS *Princeton.* Upon the return *of Princeton* to the United States in late May 1951, Koelsch volunteered for an additional combat tour, and was assigned to ComMinRon-3 in early June.

Koelsch had given an outstanding account of himself aboard *Princeton,* rescuing at least two of his shipmates. He had also developed a type of floating sling that came to be adopted by others, and he had personally engineered and developed several safety devices for the operation of helicopters in cold weather.

"Koelsch was based on *LST-799* for just a few weeks," said LT Houston, "and he impressed me as being a very quiet, reserved person who was always ready for any rescue mission, no matter how dangerous, and he let this be known. If anything happened, he wanted to be a part of it. While on board, he rescued Ensign M. D. Nelson, near Yo-do, on 22 June."

On the late afternoon of 3 July, about an hour before darkness, a "Mayday" call was received aboard *LST Q-009* saying that a Marine pilot had been shot down twelve miles west of Kosong, a small town thirty-five miles south of Wonsan. Despite the late hour, and the worsening weather, LTJG Koelsch and his crewman, George M. Neal, AM3, volunteered to make the pickup.

Covered by a flight of four Corsairs, Koelsch proceeded to the rescue area, but because of a nearly solid overcast of low clouds, was forced to leave his protective escort. Koelsch was last seen descending through a break in the low overcast about 1810.

Koelsch first located a parachute, then proceeded to search the surrounding area in the gathering darkness. This area, the Anbyon Valley, was the enemy's main supply road leading to the battlefront from Wonsan. Accordingly, this road was infested with AA guns and automatic weapons.

A few moments later, the circling pilots heard Koelsch's radio message that he had found the downed pilot and was heading for the pickup.

This was the last word of Koelsch, Neal, and the Marine pilot (CAPT James V. Wilkins, USMC) until the end of the war. In December 1954, as a result of an award recommendation by Captain Wilkins, the subsequent events of the rescue and the captivity of Koelsch were laboriously pieced together.

Despite intense ground fire which had struck his helicopter in one place, Koelsch had pressed on to make the pickup. Of this fire, Captain Wilkins later said: "He found me, after two passes into the most intense small-arms fire I've ever witnessed."

As Captain Wilkins secured himself in the hoisting sling, a burst of AA fire struck the helicopter, and it crashed against the mountainside. Of the three, the only one who suffered injuries was Captain Wilkins, who was seriously burned on the legs.

For nine days the three men avoided capture. Captain Wilkins was unable to walk, and Koelsch and Neal made a crude pallet and were attempting to carry him to the coast.

On 12 July, having reached the beach, the three were captured while Koelsch was attempting to obtain food and water from a village. Koelsch's subsequent conduct and example in prison camp elicited the highest praise from his fellow prisoners.

A few months later, LTJG Koelsch died of starvation and dysentery. For his gallantry and heroism during the rescue attempt and his subsequent captivity, he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on 3 August 1955.

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Air-Surface Teamwork

By mid-summer 1951, the siege ships assigned to Task Group 95.2 in Wonsan harbor for thirty-day periods had learned to whet air-surface teamwork and coordination to a razor sharpness. Task Force 77 periodically assigned aircraft to the bombarding vessels for spotting duty in order to increase the effectiveness of the naval gunfire. The ships themselves sent shore fire control parties to Hwangto-do, Mo-do or Tae-do islands to assist the naval gunfire liaison parties spot the ship's gunfire.

The alacrity and effectiveness of the teamwork developed between naval ships, shore fire control parties, and planes is illustrated by an event recorded by CDR H. G. Claudius, commanding officer of the USS *Floyd B. Parks,* during September 1951:

"We had a shore fire control party from the ship on Hwangto-do, who spotted for us during the day and sometimes at night. One afternoon we had two Task Force 77 planes spotting our bombardment on Kalma Gak. At the same time, two of our AMS-type minesweeps in formation were sweeping just off the south beach of the harbor. We received a hurry-up call from our shore fire control party on Hwangto-do that they could see the Reds were working two guns out from caves to open up on the minesweeps, who were probably only about 4,000 yards from the gun positions. We immediately vectored the two TF 77 planes, who still had rockets, to the enemy guns. All in a couple of minutes, and before the enemy guns could get off a shot at the minesweepers or return to the cover of their caves, the planes had been vectored in to where they could see the guns and plaster them with a full load of rockets. Through the alertness and instant action of the shore fire control party, the ship's CIC and gunnery team, and the TF 77 pilots, our minesweepers were probably saved from casualties and damage and two enemy guns were damaged or destroyed."[5]

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
The Second Year

The first anniversary of the Wonsan siege—16 February 1952—found the destroyers *Rowan* (DD-782), *Twining* (DD-547), and *Gregory* (DD-802) pounding the Wonsan targets with the usual harassing and interdiction fire.

The mineswept areas of the harbor had been gradually increased to the west and southwest, enabling the ships to get closer and closer to targets ashore. The swept areas were marked with yellow buoys to delineate the edge of the minefields. Near these buoys, and in the close-ashore portions of the swept areas, the siege ships soon learned to be especially alert and mobile, for the Communist gunners had carefully "zeroed-in" the marker buoys, and used them for spot correction of their gunfire.

While sweeping mines in "Ulcer Gulch" on 5 March 1952, USS *Pelican* (AMS-32) and USS *Curlew* (AM-8) were taken under fire by the Kalma Gak batteries. Both ships lit off their smoke generators and escaped being hit. The use of smoke to cover the retirement of the sweepers always proved helpful and became standard practice.

The enemy guns continued active in March. *Manchester* (CL-83), *Kyes* (DD-787), *McGinty* (DE-365) and *Douglas H. Fox* (DD-779) were on the receiving end of a heavy and accurate outburst on 13 March, but aided by a Task Force 77 strike, succeeded in silencing the enemy guns. On 20 March *Wiltsie* (DD-716) and *Brinkley Bass* (DD-887) came under fire. *Osprey* (AMS-28) was the next day's target; while on the 22nd of March, *Brinkley Bass* (DD-887) and *Stickell* (DD-888) were under fire.

On 24 March, the enemy guns achieved a direct hit on *Brinkley Bass* amidships, just aft of the torpedo tubes, which seriously wounded one man and caused injuries to four others.

On 28 March, the frigate *Burlington* (PF-51) was straddled.

April 1952 was to see even greater efforts made by the enemy to cripple or sink a ship. On 18 occasions the patrolling minesweepers, destroyers, and ships of the Wonsan element were fired upon. Only three were hit, however—destroyer *Leonard F. Mason* on the 2nd of May (no casualties) and *Cabildo* (LSD-16) on the 25th of May (two personnel casualties).

During April and May, the fire of the bombarding ships took a steady toll of guns, junks, trucks, tanks, bridges, and buildings in Wonsan harbor. On the last day of April *Maddox* (DD-731) and *Laffey* (DD-724) damaged ten boxcars of a nocturnal train.

This period saw *Maddox* (CDR H. A. Hanna) and *Laffey* (CDR H. J. Conger) on the receiving end of one of Wonsan's longest and heaviest bombardments. The two destroyers were supporting two sweepers, one working in "Tin Pan Alley" with *Laffey*, the other in "Muffler" with *Maddox.* Shortly afterwards, the Hodo Pando guns opened the duel. *Maddox* and *Laffey* increased speed to 25 knots, opened fire, commenced the "war dance"[5A] and turned to make a fast changing target in deflection.

"We were intermittently under fire from Hodo Pando, Kalma Gak and the Umi-do area," said CDR Conger. "I personally saw about 200 splashes around us, although some thought they counted as many as 300. One hit close enough to throw a handful of shrapnel on our bridge, one chunk knocking out one of the bridge windshields."

For six hours, the two destroyers made figure eights between Ung-do and "Ulcer Gulch."

"I feel certain our counterbattery fire did a lot of damage to the Hodo Pando batteries," said Conger. "This duel took place on the second day of our thirty-day tour in the harbor, and those particular guns never fired

on us again.”

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
The "Mayor" of Wonsan

The siege of Wonsan during this period can be illustrated by the typical experiences of one of those who held the title "Mayor of Wonsan."[5B] A non-political office, this honorific title was conferred, beginning in May 1952, upon those who held the command of Task Unit 95.2.1. The evidence of the title was a large, gilded wooden key.

The creator of the title "Mayor of Wonsan" is unknown to the authors despite considerable research.[5C] However, the symbolic "Key to the City of Wonsan" was originated in May 1952 by CDR R. J. Ovrom, then Commander Escort Squadron Nine.

Commander Ovrom had the gilded key made at Ship Repair Facilities, Yokosuka, Japan, by a Japanese craftsman; on one side was the inscription, "Welcome to Wonsan"; on the other, "The Bay of Eternal Prosperity." This key was passed from one CTU 95.2.1 to another until the end of the war, when the key was sent to the U.S. Naval Academy museum for safekeeping.

Captain R. D. Fusselman, as Commander Escort Destroyer Division Thirteen, aboard the USS *Jenkins,* held the title during the period of 16 September to 6 October 1952.

"Being the 'Mayor of Wonsan'," said Captain Fusselman,[6] "gave me the task of running the activities within the harbor itself; to supervise the minesweepers working in the western end of 'Muffler' and in the southern end of 'Tin Pan Alley'; to furnish covering destroyers and destroyer escorts; to work closely with our naval personnel, Marines, and the Koreans on the friendly islands; to coordinate and work with the ships of the outer harbor blockade; and of course, to keep CTF-95 (Admiral Gingrich) informed.

"By the time I assumed the job, the Communists had added shore defense guns all around Wonsan harbor, so that it was necessary for the patrolling ships to maintain a good speed, about fifteen knots, and never to stay on one course too long. By this time, also, the enemy gunfire had gotten so accurate that we no longer anchored at night.

"The enemy guns, for the most part, were practically invisible. Most of them were dug into caves in the hillsides and could be retracted for protection. Others were on the reverse slopes and couldn't be seen. Still others were mobile, and the Communists changed their locations every so often. The only way you could spot them was by the flashes and smoke of their fire. Sometimes, you couldn't see the flashes because of the sun, and many of their guns didn't put out a lot of smoke.

"It was a common chuckle among our ships that the Communists had a gunnery school right in Wonsan city, and that one of our primary jobs was to serve as suitable targets for the training of artillerymen.

"At any rate the enemy's gunnery improved constantly and kept us on our toes. Personally, I think my ships were lucky not to be hit. The only reason they weren't was because of our evasive tactics. Whenever the enemy guns opened up on us, our ships cranked on speed, started the 'war dance', and made themselves a rapidly moving target.

"The minesweepers had the toughest job, having to work close to the beach and in constant danger of gunfire. The sailors on the destroyers realized this and often contributed their ice cream ration to those fellows.

"Over-all, I believe that the siege of Wonsan was very worthwhile. We did a lot of damage on the MSR [6A] and to military installations in Wonsan. Also, with the harbor kept free of mines, our Navy posed a constant threat of invasion.

"But more important, perhaps, was the excellent training our ships and people received. Wonsan taught

us not to forget basic gunnery doctrines and techniques; it taught us the value of knowing how to use optical control and of having a good director setup, and not to depend entirely on our electronic equipment.

"The 30-day duty in Wonsan gave all hands a boost in morale, pep, enthusiasm, and efficiency. There was a noticeable buildup in unit pride, and a visible determination not to have a machinery breakdown that would force a ship off the firing line.

"Most of all, the duty at Wonsan gave all hands a feeling of mutual interest and interdependence. To those who served there, Wonsan pointed up the need for balanced forces *within* our Navy—forces which intimately know each other's capabilities and limitations."

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
The "Bald Eagle" of the *Essex*

The naval aviator of the Korean War most rescued from the harbor of Wonsan was Commander Paul N. Gray, commanding officer of VF-54, a Skyraider squadron aboard the *Essex*. To him especially, and to the dozens of other pilots who ditched and parachuted to safety there, the occupation of Wonsan harbor was justified as a collecting point for disabled airmen and aircraft.

"My first misfortune" wrote Gray,[7] "occurred on 7 September 1951, while dive bombing a bridge at a place called Majon-ni. I was hit in the engine and I had a tense flight of about 50 miles as the oil ran out. I watched the pressure drop to zero about five miles short of Wonsan but was able to glide to the harbor, where a South Korean patrol boat picked me up.

"The second misfortune, and probably the closest of all, happened while strafing a train in the railyard at Wonsan. I sustained a direct hit by heavy enemy antiaircraft fire. A later count showed 57 separate holes in my plane. I landed at an emergency strip in South Korea, and after plugging the most essential hydraulic lines, took off again and flew the plane back to the *Essex*, where it was used as a source of spare parts. The date was 28 October 1951.

"From this time until January 1952, I avoided further emergency landings mainly because the AA fire missed the vital parts of my plane. However, on 22 January, my luck changed and I was hit again by a 37-mm shell directly in the engine. At the time I was leading a bombing hop on the rail line north of Wonsan, about 25 miles from the harbor. The plane immediately caught fire and the engine quit. Apparently three or more cylinders had been blown off by the explosion. Largely because of my loud prayers, the engine caught again and ran intermittently until I got to the water just off the beach at Wonsan. The USS *Gregory* fished me out of the very cold water more frozen than I ever care to be again.

"Later, on 30 January 1952, while bombing a rail line south of Kowan, I was again presented with another 37-mm. hit in the engine. This one blew off a blade of the propeller, and before I could cut the mixture, the engine almost vibrated itself off the airplane. By alternately opening and closing the mixture control, I again nursed the plane just off the beach at Wonsan, and was picked up by the USS *Twining*.

"Upon returning to the *Essex*, RADM John Perry told me that the Navy could take no more chances on my getting 'smoked', and restricted me thereafter to flying antisubmarine patrol missions in the vicinity of the task force."

During these episodes, the pilots of VF-54 posted a sign in the squadron ready room in honor of their bald-headed skipper: "Use caution when ditching damaged airplanes in Wonsan harbor. Don't hit CDR Gray."

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The Emergency Airstrip on Yo-do

As the air interdiction campaign to cut the Communists' rail and road supply lines in 1951 and 1952 intensified, there was a rise in the damage and loss of naval aircraft.[7A] Many damaged planes had ditched alongside the siege ships in Wonsan harbor in similar fashion to Commander Gray, although not as frequently. This fact highlighted the need of an emergency airstrip on one of Wonsan's captured islands.

To illustrate this fact, the helicopter ship, *LST-799,* had rescued 24 aviators—U.S. Navy, South African, U.S. Marine, and British—the majority of them in the vicinity of Wonsan. The following are summaries of most of these rescues:

"15 May 51 at Chinnampo. Rescued LT J. A. Winterbotham, attached HMS *Glory.*

"30 September 51 at Hungnam, rescued CAPT J. W. Tuttle, USMC, pilot delivered to LSD5. (Helicopter flown by LT J. M. Farwell and J. E. Kincaid, AD1.)

"3 October 51, rescued 2nd LT A. M. Muller attached Second Squadron *Bon Homme Richard,* delivered to LSD 5. Intense small arms fire in the pickup area. As helicopter ascended, several riflemen popped up from underbrush and opened fire. (Helicopter flown by Chief Aviation Pilot C. W. Buss and R. O. Sherrill, AD3.)

"3 October 51, rescued 2nd LT A. M. Muller attached Second Squadron South African Air Force, 55 miles west of Wonsan. Heavy small arms fire encountered. Pilot delivered to LSD 5. (Helicopter flown by LT J. M. Farwell and crewman W. H. Williams, AD2.)

"6 October 51, rescued ENS W. C. Bailey, USN, 507924, attached VA-923, *Bon Homme Richard,* effected from Wonsan. Downed pilot fifteen miles northeast Hungnam. (Helicopter flown by Chief Aviation Pilot C. W. Buss and S. W. Manning, AT3.)

"22 October 51 at Wonsan, rescued CAPT Edward N. Lefarvie, 30579, USMC, from behind enemy lines 40 miles southwest of Wonsan. Antiaircraft and small arms fire encountered throughout the mission. (Helicopter flown by LTJG G. Hamilton and crewman D. J. Cowser, AD3.)

"29 January 52 at Wonsan, rescued LT S. B. Murphy, 428338, USN.[7B]

"3 February 52 at Wonsan, rescued LT Robert J. Geffel of VF-653.

"3 February 52, LTJG N. J. Johnson of VF-794 rescued south of Hamhung by LT J. W. Ross, returned to *LST-799* where treated for shock and exposure.

"20 March 52 at Wonsan, rescued ENS E. B. Bernard, 506693, USN, attached to VF-653 USS *Philippine Sea.* (Helicopter flown by LT C. R. Severns and crewman T. C. Roche, AD2.)

"30 March 52 at Wonsan, rescued ENS H. E. Sterrett, 538313, USNR. (Helicopter piloted by LT C. R. Severns and crewman T. C. Roche, AD2.)

"12 May 52 at Wonsan, rescued LT J. Newendyke, 471388, USNR. (Helicopter piloted by ADC(AP) W. L. Dunn and crewman C. H. Cooley, ADC.)

"29 May 52 rescued ENS Glen M. Wicker, USN, 507908, attached to USS *Philippine Sea.* (Helicopter piloted by ADC(AP) W. L. Dunn and crewman E. Stewart, AD2.)

"9 June 52 at Wonsan, rescued ENS F. Lofton, USN, 507764, attached to USS *Princeton.* (Helicopter piloted by LT B. F. McMullen and crewman T. C. Roche, AD1.)

"10 June 52 at Wonsan, rescued ENS R. N. Hensen, from USS *Princeton.* (Helicopter flown by LT C. R. Severns and crewman T. C. Roche, AD1.)

"10 June 52 rescued LCDR Cook Cleland, 99640, USNR, attached VF-653 from USS *Valley Forge.*

(Rescued by LT B. E. McMullen and W. R. Moore, AL2.)

"13 June 52 rescued LCDR Leonard Robinson, commanding officer VF-64, USS *Boxer*.

"13 June 52 rescued LTJG W. F. Moore, USN, 508222, attached VF-193, USS *Princeton.*

"13 June 52 rescued LTJG C. K. Afford, 460904, USNR, VF-193, USS *Princeton.*

"16 June 52 rescued LTJG W. A. Buttlar, 494638, USN. (Helicopter flown by LT B. E. McMullen, crewman R. A. McDaniel, AD3.)

"18 June 52 rescued LTJG A. Zimmerly 507754, USN, VF-63, USS *Boxe.*, (Rescued by LT B. E. McMullen and crewman Decker.)

"The *799's* total pilot recovery score," said LT Paul D. Drummond (who had relieved LT Houston as its skipper in November 1951), "was twenty-four, two of which were by boat and twenty-two by helicopter. Our big rescue day was 13 June 1952.

"At about 1300 we received a 'Mayday'. Lieutenant Birton E. McMullen, the helicopter pilot, took off with his crewman, R. A. MacDaniels, AD3, in the direction of Hodo Pando. Information received via radio indicated that there was a pilot down about ten miles inland and that a CAP[7C] was orbiting him.

"McMullen proceeded to the scene and located the downed pilot. Because of ground fire and rough terrain, the pickup had to be made by hoist on the run.

"The CAP did a good job of strafing during the pickup, with some of the pilots making dry runs because they were out of ammunition. The downed pilot, who turned out to be LTJG C. K. Alford, was in good shape, with only slight burns on one hand and one on the side of his face.

"Alford's plane had caught fire, and he had bailed out. During his descent, he was fired upon, and returned the fire with his own pistol. Upon reaching the ground, he discarded his parachute. Three armed soldiers approached his hiding place. When they were within fifteen feet, Alford opened fire, dropped two, and the third soldier fled.

"During the course of the return trip," continued Drummond, "one of the escort airplanes spotted a dye marker. This pilot was LTJG W. F. Moore, who had been hit by AA fire and had ditched just east of Hodo Pando. LT McMullen located Moore and picked him up. This made four people in a 'copter designed to carry only three.

"For this reason we on the ship were concerned lest the helicopter's heavy load make landing aboard hazardous.

"However, McMullen reported that since he was almost out of gas, his load wasn't excessive.

"When the copter got close enough for us to see, it looked like four people were riding in the front seat of a Model T Ford. I doubt if a helicopter ever brought back a more satisfying load."[8]

Two famous aviators—one Navy and one Marine—were rescued by *LST-799* from Wonsan. On the 10th of June 1952, LCDR Cook Cleland was rescued. Cleland was skipper of reserve squadron VF-643 from *Valley Forge*. He was the aviator who had won the Thompson Trophy race at the National Air Races in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1948.

The famous Marine aviator whose life was saved by a helicopter from *LST-799* was Colonel Robert E. Galer, USMC, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner of World War II.

"The 'May Day' came in about 1700," said LT Drummond. "The report stated there was a pilot down about sixty miles in a straight line southwest of Wonsan, and about all of this distance inland. This 120-mile round trip was just about maximum for a rescue helicopter. It was also very late in the afternoon, and there was doubt that enough daylight remained to effect a rescue. Flight after sunset was extremely difficult because the horizon was often not visible. Moreover, the flight had to be made over a circuitous route to skirt known gun positions. And to make the rescue even more ticklish, the rescue would be made at a height near the helicopter's ceiling.

"It was decided to give it a try, however. The helicopter pilot was LT E. J. McCutcheon, who had been

aboard only a few days, and who, except for one or two mine reconnaissance missions, had had little time to acquaint himself with the area. McCutcheon took off and headed for the coast where the CAP of two Corsairs were waiting to lead him in.

" 'Mac' was fortunate in that the weather was clear, and after sunset he had a beautiful full moon, which permitted him to see the horizon.

"The helicopter arrived at the pickup position while there was still light enough for him to find LTCOL Galer, and he commenced making the pickup. This had to be done 'on the run' to retain enough 'lift' to keep from crashing the helicopter on the hillside. As it turned out, the 'copter did slide off and dragged LTCOL Galer through the underbrush before 'Mac' lifted him clear of the ground. Control was recovered before anything more serious occurred, and the 'copter cleared the area for the trip home.

"As soon as we heard he was on the way home, we made a beeline for the point where he was expected to cross the coastline. By this time it was dark, and McCutcheon's fighter escort was low on fuel. There was a 'Dumbo' (amphibian) in the air to relieve his escort in the vicinity of the coastline and to assist in guiding the 'copter back to the ship. We lighted ship, lining the edges of the main deck with battle lanterns laid on their backs, turned both signal search lights vertically, and fired flares every few seconds.

"The 'Dumbo' contacted 'Mac' and got him headed in our direction. Just about the time McCutcheon was starting to throw gear overboard to lighten his load, he spotted us. He arrived on deck about 2030 with approximately ten gallons of gas and a great sense of relief. Other than bruises and one or two possible cracked ribs, COL Galer was in good condition."

There was little doubt that the siege of Wonsan proved worthwhile for the rescue of UN aviators.

To the Naval and Marine officers who were living on Yo-do during this period, the value of having an emergency airstrip was easy to recognize.

The naval officer assigned to Yo-do, LT James S. Lampe, Jr., also a naval aviator, has recorded how the idea of an airstrip on Yo-do originated.

"The credit for proposing an airstrip on Yo-do belongs to LTCOL Richard G. Warga, USMC, the Commander East Coast Defense Element (CTE 95.23)," said Lampe. "He and I were billeted together in our tent camp on Yo-do when the idea was broached. We had seen several planes ditch in the general area of Wonsan during the summer of 1951 and we had talked to most of the pilots. Winter was approaching, and ditching planes in that frigid water would make survival even more difficult.

"One morning in August, LTCOL Warga was hunkered over our Coleman burner on the floor of our tent, frying the eggs I had scrounged from a destroyer the previous day. Warga asked me, as an aviator, if it wouldn't be possible to crash land a plane on one of the Yo-do beaches, rather than ditch it in the harbor. I told him no, it wouldn't, because no beach of the island was long enough and the curvature of the beaches wasn't right. We then got to wondering if a plane could crash land in the 'valley' portion of Yo-do.

"As far as I know that was how the idea to build an airstrip on Yo-do germinated. After breakfast, COL Warga and I walked from one end of the 'valley' to the other several times, estimating its usable length, how much leveling would have to be done, and how much equipment would have to be moved ashore. We estimated that two bulldozers could make a 'crash' strip in a couple of weeks, and, with additional time, a short landing strip. The possibility looked good to us.

"COL Warga sent a dispatch to CTF 95 recommending the project—not without misgivings, however. We both knew how close the airstrip would be to enemy artillery fire."

Of the several friendly islands of Wonsan, Yo-do was the only one suitable for an airstrip. Even so, the strip would be short and would accommodate only propeller-type planes—no jets. By running the emergency field completely across the island in the "valley" from northeast to southwest, a runway length of some 2,400 feet could be obtained.

But many obstacles to building an airstrip on Yo-do were evident. Could it be kept operational in such close proximity to the Wonsan shore batteries? The Kalma Gak batteries were 13,500 yards distant. The batteries on Hodo Pando were 10,000 yards distant. And the batteries behind Umi-do were closest of all—only 8,000 yards. Building a strip under the muzzles of these guns might be difficult. And after it was built, could it be operated? Perhaps the enemy guns could keep the strip so pocked with holes that it would be useless for landing aircraft.

There was also some opposition to building a field on an island above the stagnant battlefront which, if a truce were ever signed, would have to be evacuated. Why build an airfield and later have to donate it to the enemy?

Finally, there was the consideration that the island of Yo-do might be recaptured. In Wonsan itself, the memory of the 28-29 November 1951 raid on Hwangto-do was still fresh. On the west coast of Korea, the Communists succeeded in recapturing one of the ROK-held islands in the Yalu Gulf (the island of Taehwa-do). On the east coast near Songjin an enemy raid had been carried out on the Yang-do islands, a tiny three-island group about five acres in area, on 19 February 1952. Thirty sampans had attacked the little island of Kil-chu at 0130. Destroyer *Shelton* (DD-790, CDR Stephen W. Carpenter), the New Zealand frigate *Taupo* (LCDR K. A. Cradock-Hartoff, MBE, RN), and the USS *Endicott* (DMS-35, LCDR L. W. Barnard) helped break up the attack. Two waves of enemy troops succeeded in getting ashore, but a stout defense by the defending 83rd ROK Marine Corps Company (led by former all-American halfback First Lieutenant Joseph Bartos, USMC) killed or captured the attackers. Of the 86 enemy raiders who had landed, 80 were killed and 6 were wounded. A simultaneous raid on the nearby island of Myongchon by 15 sampans was broken up, the ships sinking 10 sampans and inflicting heavy casualties in the remaining five. A near miss punctured *Taupo's* engine room and *Shelton* suffered 15 casualties from three shore battery hits.

Building an airstrip on Yo-do might invite its capture.

The Seventh Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Robert P. Briscoe, took all these factors into consideration, but when considered in the light of how many Seventh Fleet aircraft might have been saved and might be saved in the future, the dangers and obstacles were readily accepted. In fact, the salvage of a single plane would be worth the effort. The mental comfort such a field would give to Task Force 77 pilots was yet another factor in favor of the airstrip.

"We made an effort to talk to each pilot who ditched in Wonsan," said Lampe, "and without exception every one said that such a strip would be a great help and a great comfort when they were striking in the Wonsan area."

The Seabees of ACB-1 (Naval Beach Group One, Officer in Charge, CDR Wm. C. Bowers, CEC) were confident that if the Marines could *hold* it and the Navy *operate* it, they could *build* it.

With typical enthusiasm and zest, the Seabees (3 officers and 75 men) sailed from Japan aboard *LST-692* on 3 June 1952, debarking on Yo-do and commencing work on the airstrip on 9 June.

"The LST arrived at Yo-do with a long pontoon strapped to each side," said LT Lampe. "Each of these pontoons ran almost her entire length. Because of this, and because our only beach had a very shallow gradient, I anticipated some trouble in getting her close enough to the beach to offload equipment.

"However, the Seabees had it all worked out. Before beaching, the pontoons were dropped in the water, strapped together, and then pushed onto the beach with the bow of the LST. The Seabees were offloading their heavy equipment in jig time."

Engineers had estimated that 45 days would be required to construct a 120 × 2,400 foot strip. Despite annoying gunfire on two days (13 and 21 June), the Seabees finished the job in one-third the estimated time, reporting the runway operational on 25 June. By removing rock from one end of the field, the Seabees managed to widen the strip to 200 feet, and improved one end of the runway by adding ramps to the water's edge in order to

facilitate the removal of dud aircraft by barge.

The strip was first used on 15 July 1952 when seven Corsairs of VF-193 *(Princeton)*, ran low on fuel after an afternoon's fruitless search for their downed comrade, LTJG Harold A. Riedl, who had been shot down 30 miles northwest of Hungnam. Three of the searching Corsairs refueled on Yo-do and returned to *Princeton*. The other four spent the night, and returned safely to their carrier the next day.[8A]

Although the Communists tried many times to neutralize the field with gunfire, they never succeeded.

In honor of the officer who had ordered it built, Vice Admiral R. P. Briscoe, now COMNAVFE, the airstrip was named Briscoe Field.

Briscoe Field was to prove of immense value the final year of the war, as it became the rescue point for many pilots and aircraft.

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
Patrolling "Muffler" and "Tin-Pan Alley"

To the destroyer-minesweeper teams besieging Wonsan's harbor day after day, the duty was routine but never monotonous. Even in the swept areas of "Muffler" and "Tin-Pan Alley," there was constant danger not only from enemy gunfire on three sides, but from drifting mines and surreptitiously planted moored mines as well.

"The Chinese needed only a few hours and they could have re-mined Wonsan," said Rear Admiral Gingrich, CTF 95. "Our intelligence revealed how the Communists would tie mines to logs and float them down the Namdae Chon River into the harbor to try and drive us out.

"First they used plain logs and timed their passage from the launching points out into the swept areas of 'Muffler' and 'Tin-Pan Alley', watching them with binoculars. After they had established the time pattern, they would lash contact mines to other logs, using a pelican hook with a soluble washer. This soluble washer was timed to dissolve and deposit the mine in the swept area."[9]

The accuracy of the enemy guns steadily improved, and they were able to achieve hits with fewer and fewer rounds. USS *Lewis* (DE-535, LCDR G. B. Hawkins) was struck twice on 21 October 1952. The first shell struck the forward fireroom and disabled the number one boiler, but fortunately it was a dud. The second shell struck *Lewis'* fantail, doing minor damage. *Lewis'* casualties were seven dead and one wounded.

"Nowhere was the primitiveness of the Korean War more evident than in Wonsan harbor," said Commander Sheldon H. Kinney, commanding officer of the USS *Taylor* (DDE-468). "We only had to worry about mines and shore guns; not aerial, naval, or submarine opposition. Even so, these two were enough to keep us on our toes.

"There were several thumb rules which were pretty generally accepted by the destroyers that worked in Wonsan. One was that if you got close to the corners of the swept areas, especially those close inshore, your chances of being fired upon were increased, because these positions had been zeroed-in. Second, if two or more ships were operating in the same area close together, the probability of receiving enemy fire was greater. The Communists fired often because the swept areas were fairly small and in maneuvering the ships to stay clear of their gunfire, the danger of collision or running into the minefields was greater. Third, the Communists usually fired late in the afternoon when the sun was in position to make *us* excellent targets and to make it very difficult to locate the offending battery. Somebody even coined a phrase for this, 'the Wonsan cocktail hour.'

"During the entire period my destroyer was in Wonsan harbor, we followed the usual procedure of being in a modified Condition III. At no time did we ever sound General Quarters. We kept one mount of our 3-inch and two 5-inch mounts manned with control and plotting crews on station. A senior gunnery department officer on watch was free to conduct indirect call fire from CIC or direct fire from the MK 37 director. This arrangement permitted prompt fire when required. Below decks, we set Condition Able continuously.

"Our most interesting and busy day in Wonsan," continued CDR Kinney, "occurred on 18 September. On this particular day, *Taylor* was 'riding shotgun'[9A] on the USS *Heron* (AMS-18) (LTJG Dixon Lademan), which was conducting a routine minesweeping operation in 'Tin-Pan Alley.'

"About 1130 that morning, both ships commenced to receive very accurate and heavy enemy fire estimated to be 155-mm. in size. The first salvo bracketed both ships. We checked the surrounding land areas but were unable to see where this fire was coming from. The *Heron* immediately cut loose her heavy magnetic minesweeping gear and commenced a retirement in a northeasterly direction towards Yo-do island.

"I rang up 22 knots and commenced making a smoke screen with both fog generator and fireroom

smoke, laying it in between the *Heron* and the firing batteries. This smoke proved very effective in screening *Heron*, and *Taylor* then doubled back to enjoy the immunity from observation. The enemy fire ceased.

"A spotter on one of the friendly-held islands reported to us that the probable location of the guns was in the hills to the south of the city, and that their range was too far from us to permit reaching them with our 5-inch fire. Not being able to return the enemy fire irked us.

"Several days later, however, we got even. On the 26th of September the visibility was particularly excellent. At this time the island spotters were able to make a very good count of visible gun positions in the surrounding hills. They counted about thirty guns. We fired at several things during the day—sampans in the harbor; boxcars and flatcars in the marshalling yards, using air spot from Air Force Mustang aircraft; and enemy gun batteries.

"Early in the afternoon, the crew of the main battery director detected smoke from an enemy battery on a hill behind the city. The range was 16,600 yards. We plotted the guns in and determined that these were the same guns that had fired on us but a few days before. We closed in to the very edge of the southwest corner of 'Muffler' in order to come within range. Then we opened fire. 'Fire for effect' was followed by a direct hit which sent a billowing cloud of white smoke towering into the sky. The gun was silenced, and it was later verified by the island spotters that a large supply of ammunition had been detonated."[10]

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
The Harbor Islands

By the fall of 1952, seven islands in Wonsan harbor were in UN hands—Yo-do, Mo-do, Sa-do, Tae-do, Sin-do, Ung-do and Hwangto-do. The rest of the numerous small islands had been rendered untenable by the raids of the Korean Marine Corps. After the leper colony from Tae-do had been evacuated by UN forces to an island off South Korea, that island was used as a gunfire spotting post. Ung-do had been garrisoned to prevent its capture and use by the Communists.

The largest island, Yo-do, continued to serve as harbor headquarters for CTE 95.23, commanded by a colonel or lieutenant colonel, U.S. Marines, with 12 U.S. Marines. Also, the island was headquarters of the Seventh KMC battalion, approximately 700 marines, who had the mission, under CTE 95.23, of protecting all the "friendly" Wonsan harbor islands. Atop Yo-do, 377 feet high, was an observation post which commanded a good general view of the entire harbor.

Three of the friendly islands were utilized as spotting posts for ANGLICO[10A] shore fire control parties: Mo-do, Tae-do and Hwangto-do.

The island of Mo-do was closest to the Hodo Pando batteries, approximately 6,000 yards distant. Although many of the 40-odd Hodo Pando guns were on reverse slopes, the flash of their fire could be seen from Mo-do, and bearings taken. Simultaneous bearings on the Hodo Pando guns were also taken from Yo-do, to accurately position the location of these batteries.

With an elevation of 236 feet, Mo-do also commanded a good view of the enemy batteries which had the nickname "Ink Spots" (see chart). These guns were heavy batteries (155-mm.) and could reach all the harbor islands, including Yo-do. The "Ink Spots" were also in a position to defilade the entire swept channel of "Muffler," and were a constant irritation to the sweepers working in that area.

Mo-do was the usual post of one naval officer and three men of the ANGLICO, whose duties, in addition to spotting naval gunfire, were to maintain a plot of worthwhile targets, of the Hodo Pando batteries and the "Ink Spots," and to maintain a nightly count of truck traffic moving south. Whenever the siege ships were firing into Mo-do's area, the naval gunfire spotting team would correct the ships' fire.

The island of Tae-do was closest to the Kalma Gak batteries, and was the duty post of one naval officer and three men of the ANGLICO.

Still the most important and hazardous island was Hwangto-do. Assigned to this island was a U.S. Marine Officer and three spotters, plus a contingent of Korean Marines to protect the island from nocturnal sampan raids. As at Mo-do and Tae-do, the duty was four months in duration.

Life on Hwangto-do was a cave existence of C-rations, noise, and darkness. The occupants could come outside only at night. A light or a fire at night drew heavy mortar fire. Daylight meant constant danger from mortar and machine gun as well as artillery fire. The shore fire control parties dug bunkers on the north side of the island, where they lived, and a lookout bunker at the top of the island for observation purposes. The island was without water, except for one small well. Additional water, food, ammunition, and supplies had to be brought in at night across a small landing beach which faced Wonsan.

On clear nights, the enemy truck traffic moving south from Wonsan was visible from the Hwangto-do observation post. The number of trucks whose headlights could be counted averaged 300. On occasions, the south-ward-moving truck count rose as high as 700. For every truck in convoy whose headlights could be seen, three or four without headlights could not be seen. Whenever the truck count out of Wonsan was above normal,

increased activity along the battlefront could be expected a few days later.

The senior naval officer ashore on the harbor islands was the intelligence officer of Commander Task Group 95.2, a destroyer or destroyer escort squadron commander, who was afloat.

"I arrived on Yo-do on 16 July 1952 as the relief of LT James S. Lampe, Jr.," said LCDR A. Christopher, "remaining on Yo-do until March 1953. Lampe met me at the just-finished airstrip in a jeep, and we started up to the camp. We hadn't gone fifty feet when a 155-mm. shell exploded about 250 yards away. Before we got to the camp near the top of the hill, three or four more lit around the road. That was quite a greeting!

"The campsite was protected by a forty-yard-wide land minefield which surrounded the site. Only the road and one guarded path passed through the minefield. The land mines were a mixture of trip-wire mines and regular mines. We also had a few machine gun posts around the site.

"All of the Americans on Yo-do lived in this tent camp. Later, we dug ourselves more comfortable bunkers. The camp had been well placed on a reverse slope so that the enemy's artillery fire couldn't reach us too well. Once in a while, however, we took some tree bursts on the ridge behind us that shook us up. Below our camp was a bluff, which fell some 100 feet almost vertically to the sea.

"Near our tents were slit trenches where we retired whenever the Reds were shooting at us; also available was a communal privy.

"My companions numbered three other intelligence officers: LT Joseph B. McNeill, Jr., USN; an Air Force officer, 1st LT John Intorcia; and my South Korean assistant and interpreter, LT Chiang Jung Taek.

"Our worst night, I suppose, was during Typhoon Karen, which passed just south of Wonsan on 18 August 1952. It blew like hell, and during the night our tents took off. Every few minutes a tree would fall down, or a limb would be torn off and fall into the land mines, causing them to explode. From one explosion, a few fragments of shrapnel went through my tent.

"The rest of the night we were wet, cold, and miserable. But the thing which really set our nerves a-jangle was to have an enemy mine break its moorings, hit the rocky beach below us, and explode.[10B]

"Mostly we ate canned food, although the destroyers and heavy ships were always generous about giving us fresh food whenever we went aboard. Later on, we established a better messing system. All water had to be chlorinated.

"I had several duties on Yo-do. Among other things, I served as intelligence officer for CTG 95.2 and kept a situation plot for the island defense element commander. I also did all the interrogations of the North Korean refugees and prisoners of war.

"Each morning I assembled all the information from the shore fire control parties who were assigned to Mo-do, Tae-do and Hwangto-do—truck counts, target information, active gun positions and the like.

"Whenever I received word that one of our cruisers or battleships was coming in for a bombardment of Wonsan, I would make a trip to the other islands where we had shore fire control parties, getting the best and latest target information.

"When the 'heavy' came in, I would meet her in the outer channel, go aboard, and give her the target information. Once aboard, my first job was to get the 'heavy's secondary battery all lined up on the Hodo Pando guns, so that they could be taken under fire as the ship entered the inner harbor. I assisted optical control in spotting the exact caves in which the guns were located.

"After orienting the secondary battery, I commenced briefing the main battery plot on their targets.

"I think the Wonsan bombardments which were set up in this fashion did a lot of damage. Our shore fire control parties on Mo-do, Tae-do, and Hwangto-do were sharp and experienced. When they gave a 50-yard spot correction, it *was* fifty yards.

"One excellent bombardment took place on 23 September 1952, when the *Iowa* had General Mark Clark, Admiral Briscoe, and Vice Admiral J. J. Clark aboard. We had late target information on some of the Hodo Pando

guns, and when the ‘Big Mo’ opened up on them she got a magnificent secondary explosion from an ammunition storage for that battery. The smoke went several thousand feet in the air. These particular guns were permanently silenced.

“In my opinion, the siege of Wonsan was very worthwhile for a number of reasons. It was valuable as an intelligence outpost. It was valuable as a rescue point for aviators and airplanes. And it was a thorn in the side to the Communists, who could never be sure we wouldn’t make a landing some place in the area.”[11]

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
Third Year of Siege

The start of the final year of the siege saw destroyers *De Haven* and *Samuel N. Moore* on guard in Wonsan. For the remaining five months there was little change of pattern, although there was a constant increase in Communist effort to drive the American Navy out of the harbor. The Communist gunners seemed determined to sink at least one American ship to compensate for the 861-day long siege.[11A] The enemy's ammunition, which from time to time had been rationed, was used liberally as a truce approached. April, May, and June witnessed the heaviest volume of enemy fire as the Communists fired approximately sixteen hundred, thirteen hundred, and eleven hundred rounds respectively—more than half of them at the siege vessels.

The "friendly" islands, too, received a steady increase in the enemy fire, particularly the island of Yo-do.

"I lived on Yo-do for the last four and one-half months of the war," said LCDR William L. Thede,[12] assigned to COMNAVFE Special Support Group, TG 96.8. "I lived in a bunker near the airstrip, and from time to time helped to control the fire of the siege ships.

"Commencing in February 1953, we noted increased fire from the Won-san batteries, both on the islands and at the siege ships. One of these batteries was on Hodo Pando, and we believed it to be a battery of Russian Naval 107-mm. guns. We dug up several duds from one of the Yo-do rice paddies from this battery. The shells were new, definitely of that odd size, and Russian. However, I have no reason to think the guns were manned by other than North Koreans.

"But the worst and most frequent fire on Yo-do was 90-mm. fire which came from the Umi-do area (we called this area 'Little Eva') and from the hills behind Wonsan city (an area we called the 'Shooting Gallery'). We also took a lot of fire from Kalma Gak and other areas of the bay.

"On many days, as the end of the war approached, we received as many as two or three hundred bursts in the Yo-do area in a single day.

"The purpose of this fire, in my opinion, was to neutralize Briscoe airfield, although they never did it. Occasionally, the guns seemed to be shooting for the FS-type[12A] ship which occasionally anchored off Yodo-ri, bringing our supplies. The Wonsan guns rarely fired at night, although I do remember one occasion when the 'Little Eva' battery kept firing until 2130, 'walking' shells up and down the strip. That day we had several planes—four or five—land on the strip, and apparently they were trying to hit them. After they completed firing at the strip, we would destroy the duds, and the Seabee Detachment would repair all strip damage during the hours of darkness. The strip was never inoperable as a result of enemy fire.

"With all their fire on Yo-do, the Communists never made a direct hit on any planes while I was there, although several were hit with shrapnel while on the strip. The Air Force C-47s from Seoul which landed on the Yo-do strip bringing our supplies never stayed long. They would taxi up to the seaward end of the strip, unload as quickly as possible, keeping their engines running, and then take off immediately.

"As for our carrier planes, we rarely had more than two or three on the field at any one time. We had three revetments on the seaward end of the strip, and these positions gave pretty good protection to any planes parked there.

"The worst damage that Yo-do took from the Wonsan guns happened in May 1953. At this particular time we were in the process of moving into a new area, and were building an ammunition bunker; temporarily, we had stored a batch of 30- and 50-caliber machine gun ammunition, some land mines, C-3 explosive, and hand grenades in a pit at the far end of the airstrip. Just before lunch a lucky round made a direct hit on this storage, and

for 45 minutes, we had quite a noisy, smoky mess on our hands. No one was hurt, however.

"As for the ships, the fire on them increased steadily, and the ability of the Reds to get hits with fewer and fewer rounds improved. Also, the Reds made much greater use of air burst shells in the last months of the siege. In my opinion, the Reds were using a 'barrage' or area type of fire, where they would 'zero-in' a particular area, or spot, and then fire a barrage at that general spot with a certain number of rounds whenever a ship was close to it. Maneuvering ships, instead of receiving a steady volume of fire, went through *areas* of gunfire. We drew two lines on our charts toward the 'Little Eva' batteries. Outside these lines ships would not be taken under fire; but if they crossed them, they would almost invariably be taken under fire by the 'Little Eva' batteries.

"In my opinion, the siege of Wonsan was well worthwhile. At one time, in 1951, as many as 60,000 troops were reported in the Wonsan area to guard against an amphibious landing. By holding the harbor we forced the Chinese to defend it with guns and troops which otherwise could have been used at the front, or elsewhere."

Five times in each of the months of April, May, and June, the Wonsan batteries succeeded in hitting an American ship. The cruiser *Los Angeles* was lightly damaged twice in a week—the last time on 2 April.

Most of the other hits were on the patrolling destroyers, causing only superficial damage to the ships, but not always so in personnel casualties. *Maddox* had three casualties from a direct hit on the main deck on 16 April. *Kyes* had nine casualties from a fantail hit on 19 April.

"The opening salvo was so far off we weren't even sure they were firing at us," said Commander R. A. Thacher, *Kyes*' commanding officer, "but they quickly spotted on. They must have estimated our speed correctly at 25 knots, which was the speed most destroyers went to for counter-battery fire. Since we couldn't go faster with two boilers, we slowed to 15 knots, and most of the following salvoes were over's. I believe firmly that if we hadn't slowed, we would have been hit several times around the bridge area."[13]

Accompanied by cruiser *Bremerton*, and destroyers *Twining* and *Colahan*, the battleship *New Jersey* fired 115 rounds into Wonsan on 5 May. Her first salvo destroyed a main observation post. Sixteen-inch shells also struck and exploded a concrete ammunition bunker. The "Big Jay" also fired at an enemy battery at Hodo Pando, collapsing the cave mouths and obliterating the firing tracks. For almost three weeks this battery was silent. Again on 11-12 July, the "Big Jay" plastered the Hodo Pando guns. These 164 rounds silenced the battery for the rest of the war.

USS *Brush* had nine casualties on 15 May; USS *Wiltsie* took a single hit on 11 June as the result of 45 rounds of 105-mm. fire; on 14 June the heavy cruiser *Bremerton* counted four rounds in the seas around her. On 15 June, USS *Lofberg* (DD-759), USS *John A. Bole* (DD-755) and USS *Current* (ARS-22) were on the receiving end of more than 100 rounds of large caliber fire, but none of the three was hit. On 17 June, *Henderson* (DD-785) received superficial damage from 80 rounds from the Wonsan batteries.

On the 18th of June, a bad day for the siege ships, cruiser *Saint Paul* was under fire. USS *Irwin* (DD-794) took a main deck hit which caused five casualties. The hardest hit was *Rowan* (DD-782). Forty-five rounds of shellfire bracketed her, five striking. One shell, thought to be a 155-mm., punched a two-foot hole on her starboard side at frame 209, a scant eight inches above the waterline. Another shell demolished the Mark 34 radar. Several other holes were visible in her side. Nine people were wounded, two of them seriously.

Gurke had three casualties on 25 June. The daylight patrol movements of the ships were somewhat restricted during June and July, but there was no intention of abandoning the siege, even for an instant.

Minesweeper *Symbol* (AM-123) and destroyer *Wiltsie* (DD-716) drew fire on 7 July. The same day *Lofberg* (DD-759), *John W. Thomason* (DD-760) and *Hamner* (DD-718) received 300 rounds, *Thomason* being slightly damaged by straddling air bursts. On 11 July, cruiser *Saint Paul* was hit by one 105-mm. shell at her 3-inch/50 gun mount, but no personnel were injured, as these guns were not manned. On the 23rd, she was again under attack, some of the shells falling as close as ten yards; but this time, there was no damage.

The Red gunners in Wonsan were to succeed in neither of their missions: they could neither sink a ship

nor could they drive the American Navy out of the harbor.

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Chapter 12. The Siege of Wonsan
The Siege Ends

On the last day of the war, 27 July 1953, amidst preparation to abandon the harbor in accordance with the truce, the siege ended as it had begun, with minesweepers sweeping and the destroyers patrolling, taking the Wonsan targets and guns under fire. Destroyers *Wiltsie* and *Porter*, and cruiser *Bremerton* fired salvoes at Wonsan targets until a minute before the 2200 deadline. The smaller harbor islands were abandoned on the day of the truce. Yo-do, with its more extensive installations, took longer to evacuate; equipment had to be removed, storage dumps emptied, fortifications destroyed.

The last two ships to leave the harbor—the cruiser *Bremerton* and destroyer *Cunningham*—did so on the late afternoon of 1 August, after a day of pleasant swimming in the harbor which had felt the fury and stricture of a full-scale siege.

The siege of Wonsan had demonstrated the courage and tenacity of the American Navy. The important rail and highway center, with its many industries, once a city of 100,000 and now half that size, was a mass of cluttered ruins. So important had this city been as a transportation hub that the Communists had been forced to great effort to repair and rebuild the almost daily damage. Hardly an undamaged building was visible. Many industries had gone underground.

In a land-locked harbor which had been heavily mined and which the enemy had sought constantly to re-mine, where shallow, shoal-filled waters abounded, and despite the most intense enemy opposition, a siege of 861 days had been imposed with skill, determination, and success by a tireless and efficient team of American sailormen.

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Chapter 13. On the Line

Introduction

Only rarely during the height of the interdiction campaign (on such occasions as the Hwachon Reservoir attack in May 1951 and the raid on Rashin in August) was the mission of Task Force 77 varied. Commencing with the air-gun strike on Chongjin on 13 April 1952, however, and definitely after June, the missions given the carrier airmen of Task Force 77 turned more and more toward strikes on industrial, military, and frontline targets, and less and less to interdiction and armed reconnaissance flights. As was described earlier, there was plentiful evidence that the interdiction campaign was a failure. For the next six months of the final year of the war, the carriers' efforts would strike primarily industrial targets in North Korea. For the last six months of the war, Task Force 77 would give the bulk of its support to frontline troops.

This shift of emphasis and employment was heartening and pleasing to all hands, planners and pilots alike. To the carrier division commanders and their staffs, such attacks were more in keeping with the inherent ability of a carrier task force to employ surprise and concentration. To the pilots, such attacks were happy respite from the dangerous and dreary interdiction and armed reconnaissance missions. As to accomplishments, the sudden onslaught of combined carrier strikes upon an oil refinery, a manufacturing installation, or a supply concentration point meant greater destruction and damage, with less risk of damage or loss to our own forces.

Such employment also kept the enemy off balance. The initial strikes in June 1952, on the enemy's hydroelectric plants, for example, brought on little antiaircraft fire; the same attack a few weeks later provoked AA fire of greater intensity and accuracy. The intervening time had allowed the enemy, anticipating repeated attacks, to rush guns to that location for its protection. A few months after the Suiho attack, for example, photo analysis revealed that the number of heavy and automatic guns surrounding the dam had increased from 71 to 167. Meanwhile, the carriers had shifted their offensive power to other targets.

By thus avoiding a rigid and unchanging routine, the naval aviators were able to inflict heavier damage at lesser cost. Too often in the Korean War, the conflict became rigidly set in fixed patterns: the enemy could be fairly certain that our night flyers would appear over the coast a few minutes after sunset or three hours before daylight; he could be certain, if he saw a colored-smoke rocket or our troops laying down their colored frontline panels, that a close air support strike was enroute; from previous attacks he could often anticipate what the direction of dive-bombing approach would be, and thus better emplace his AA defense weapons in preparation.

The final year of the Korean War saw a definite trend toward more flexible employment of the carriers. While the interdiction effort continued until the end of the war (the plan was to strike the rail lines and bridges at least once every three weeks), it received less emphasis. Bridge and track-busting strikes were employed only to keep the enemy's AA dispersed and his repair organization tied down.

In the final twelve months of the war, the carriers attacked a variety of targets, from hydroelectric plants to zinc mills, more than forty times, and developed a new type deep support air mission (termed the "Cherokee" strike).

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Attack on Suiho (23 June 1952)

The ceaseless and unspectacular attacks upon interdiction targets during months on end had a welcome climax on 23 June 1952, when, as an explosive finale to the first two years of war, the Navy, Marines, and Fifth Air Force in Korea began a two-day series of attacks upon the thirteen major electric power plants in North Korea.

For twenty-four months, these hydroelectric power plants had been ordered spared from destruction.[1] In the early months of the Korean War, this had been done partly in hope that the war would be won, North Korea occupied, and a costly and needless destruction avoided. After the Inchon landing, the hydroelectric power system had not been molested lest it give the Chinese Communists an excuse for entering the war. Later, after the Chinese Communists' entrance, there was some thought that attacking the power plants might prejudice the course of the armistice negotiations.

By June 1952, however, after nearly a year of wrangling at the truce table, it was clear that there was little immediate hope either of negotiating a cease-fire or of capturing all of Korea by force. Continuing to spare any legitimate military target in North Korea for fear of prejudicing the armistice talks no longer was justified.

The truce talks, in fact, were destined to drag on for another year. Key military leaders in the Far East had consistently held that the North Korean hydroelectric power plants were legitimate military targets, that their continued operation directly contributed to the enemy's war effort. These power plants furnished the Communist radar network with electrical power; they operated the MIG-15 air complex near Antung. It was known that many small, isolated and underground factories making war material in North Korea used this electric power. Moreover, a large portion of the system's electrical capacity was transmitted to Manchuria for such arsenals as the Anshan steel industry, the Antung aluminum plant, and the Fushun coal mines.

"The spark to attack the North Korean hydroelectric power plants was struck by the Navy," said LCDR Nello D. S. Andrews, USNR, intelligence officer, Staff, Commander Task Force 95.[1A] "In April 1952 I had briefed Admiral Dyer on the report of an interrogation of a North Korean Brigadier General of Artillery by the name of Lee Il, who had escaped to the Wonsan harbor island of Tae-do on 21 February 1952. He told us that the Communists were aware that UN forces had a policy not to hit their power installations. According to him, this policy was a source of great comfort to the Reds, for the electrical power provided heat for their buildings and power for their underground factories.

"Upon hearing this, Admiral Dyer immediately requested by despatch to CINCFE that the ban be lifted. A few days later CINCFE advised us that the matter was under study.

"Approximately a month later, during the turnover period when Admiral Gingrich was relieving Admiral Dyer, it seemed appropriate to bring up the matter again. That morning, I had just received a Task Force 77 press release concerning the preceding day's operations, which included mention of damage to an electrical transformer in the Wonsan area. I explained to Admiral Gingrich the long-standing prohibition against bombing or bombarding the hydroelectric system, part of which was exposed along the east coast in our area of responsibility. Admiral Dyer asked me to leave the briefing and get copies of our exchange of despatches recommending that we lift this restriction.

"Immediately after the briefing, Admiral Gingrich and Admiral Dyer helicoptered from our cruiser to the *Missouri* to have lunch with Vice Admiral J. J. Clark, who had recently relieved Vice Admiral Briscoe as Commander Seventh Fleet.

"Admiral Clark gave the proposal his enthusiastic approval, I was told, and personally took the matter up with Admiral Briscoe (COMNAVFE) and General Mark Clark (CINCFE), who in turn referred the matter to the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

General Mark Clark has described before a Congressional subcommittee how the authority to strike the North Korean power complexes was obtained:

". . . When I went to the Far East, I looked around to see what can I do on my own responsibility within my sphere of authority, what can I do in Korea over here to make the Communists realize that we are still fighting . . . . These hydroelectric plants which were turning out the power for Manchuria, for their industry, it seemed to me, should be destroyed. I was denied the right to hit the Suiho, the big one, so I sent a message to the Joint Chiefs of Staff just telling them that I was going to attack the following places, and I told them how I was going to attack them, with what kind of planes, with what kind of bombs, and gave them a certain number of hours notice that if they wanted to stop me, they would have time.

"I did not ask for permission. Much to my surprise, that came back approved and saying 'We delegate to you the authority to bomb the Suiho dam . . .'."[2]

The Navy's part in the raid was laid on personally by Vice Admiral J. J. Clark.[3]

"I was aware," said VADM Clark, "that General Clark had informed the JCS that he was going to bomb the hydroelectric plants. It happened that I was on a visit to Tokyo and sitting in the office of Rear Admiral McMahon (Chief of Staff, COMNAVFE) when the JCS's approval despatch came in.

"I told McMahon that bombing the big Suiho dam was a job for the Navy, and he commented that the Air Force would probably be glad to have us. I told him to offer them 36 ADs, each of them loaded with 5,000 pounds of bombs, and he wrote up a message to FAFIK to that effect.

"On my way back to the operating area aboard the *Philippine Sea* two days later, I decided to go directly over to Seoul and discuss the Suiho mission in person with LTGEN Glenn O. Barcus, Commanding General, FAFIK. In the interval, there had been a flurry of despatches between General Barcus and Admiral Soucek, and the Navy's contribution had been reduced to only 20 divebombers.

"Later, I learned that the Suiho hop was almost cancelled at this stage because of the serious MIG interference potential near the Suiho dam. In fact, General Barcus had a despatch all written up ready to send to FEAF and to General Clark recommending cancellation of the strikes on Suiho.

Click here to view map

"It was at this moment that Barcus got my departure report saying I was headed for Seoul to see him. When he received it, he told his staff to hold up the Suiho cancellation despatch until I got there, for he had guessed why I was coming.

"After going over the problem with General Barcus, I told them I didn't see any reason we couldn't hit Suiho. I said that we could get in and out of there without too much trouble. I noted that the strike plans called for only 20 Navy divebombers; I said that 20 weren't enough, that we ought to send as heavy a strike in there as possible and really clobber that dam. I offered him 36 divebombers, and he accepted that."

Like the 1950 attacks upon the Yalu bridges, an attack upon the Suiho installation would be difficult. The fourth largest power plant in the world (about 400,000 KW, the same as U.S.'s Bonneville), the power plant lay on the North Korean side of the Yalu River within sight of the untouchable Manchurian territory, only 35 miles from the Antung air complex loaded with more than 250 MIGs. Because of the importance of this installation any strike in that vicinity would probably arouse intense Communist fighter opposition. The site was heavily defended—28 heavy antiaircraft guns and 43 automatic guns, some of them radar-controlled—and many of them on the Manchurian side of the river. Moreover, the Chinese had taken advantage of our "holy land" restrictions against over-flying Manchuria and had emplaced their batteries to better cover the only directions of attack. From long experience in "MIG Alley" above Suiho, it was known that the fire from these guns was intense and

accurate.

The location of the hydroelectric plant at the western mouth of the Yalu River meant that an attack upon it by the Seventh Fleet's aircraft would require a long, cross-Korea flight. Unless skillfully planned and executed, this would give the enemy's antiaircraft and fighter defenses an ample alert period. And like the Yalu bridge attacks, the necessity of avoiding Manchurian territory predetermined the choice of attack courses. (This strike would be the first time that naval aircraft had operated in "MIG Alley" since the attacks on the Yalu bridges in the fall of 1950.)

The active planning, which had begun at the JOC at Seoul two days before the strike, included general target assignments and allocated attack forces, not only for Suiho, but for the twelve other hydroelectric dams in North Korea. Early in the planning, it had been decided not to use B-29s for the Suiho attacks. The "Superfort" bombers were not considered suitable because of the necessity for surprise, the heavily-defended nature of the target, and the need for pinpoint bombing (concentrating on the powerhouse, transformer yards, and penstocks on the North Korean side of the river, and *not* the dam itself). B-29s had proven too vulnerable to MIGs in daylight attacks, and there was no assurance that they could make the strike without violating the Manchurian sanctuary in their bombing runs, or without having some of the bombs released at high altitude fall on the wrong side of the river. Instead, the fighter-bombers of the Navy, Marines, and Air Force were selected to strike Suiho, although there was some doubt whether, since the B-29s had been unable to penetrate the alert MIG defenses, the Skyraiders of the Navy could do so. The carrier aircraft of the west coast carrier, under Commander Task Force 95, who would join the attacks, had to be carefully coordinated with the others.

H-hour of 0930 June 23 was chosen for the attack.

The day before the attack, Admiral Apollo Soucek's staff and the flight leaders, supervised by the strike leader, CDR A. L. Downing, USN, worked 'round the clock preparing the details of the strike: the ordnance loadings, the fuzing, the flight schedules. Intelligence materials were assembled and distributed, and pilot briefings held. Strike leaders busily worked out the details of navigation, rendezvous, fuel consumption, order of attack, direction of attack, and direction and route of recovery.

"The strike planning was done aboard the *Boxer* under CDR A. L. Downing's supervision," said CDR Neil MacKinnon, Commanding Officer, VA-195.[4] "Although we had to anticipate that the hop into that heavily defended area of 'MIG Alley' would be rough, we still welcomed a change of pace from bombing the railroads."

"Our attack plan was very tight," said CDR Downing. "We had a plus or minus one minute to get on target and three minutes to attack and clear the target. Arrival too soon and killing time over the target would not be popular, nor would a melee with the F84s that were to follow us be a pleasant exercise."

Early in the morning of the 23rd, H-hour was postponed on account of weather, the Fifth Air Force saying that a 48-hour delay might be needed. Shortly before lunch, however, another message flashed into the *Boxer*, flagship of Admiral Soucek, then Commander Task Force 77. The weather outlook over the target was improving. Attack on Suiho was re-scheduled for 1600.

"When H-hour was being kicked around that morning," said Downing, "me and my plotting board were in a sweat trying to figure out the new launch times so we could all arrive at the proper time over the target."

During the morning, while this rash of despatches concerning the possible cancellation of the strike was being exchanged, *Bon Homme Richard* and *Philippine Sea* joined with *Boxer* and *Princeton*. For the first time in 18 months, a full carrier task force of four carriers would be operating together. The attack from their decks was to be the biggest to date of the entire Korean War.

At 1400, with the Fleet into the wind, launching for the Suiho attack commenced. Thirty-five AD Skyraiders rendezvoused from VA-65 (CDR G. A. Sherwood, USS *Boxer*), VA-195 (CDR Neil MacKinnon, USS *Princeton)*, and VA-115 (CDR C. H. Carr, USS *Philippine Sea*). Thirty-one of these Skyraiders carried two 2,000-pound bombs and one 1,000-pounder each; the remaining four, in addition to two 2,000-pounders, carried a

survival bomb[4A] for dropping to anyone unfortunate enough to be shot down.

Shortly after the 35 Skyraiders passed the North Korean coast, the jet fighters joined up. These 35 planes were flown from VF-24 (LCDR William A. Jernigan, Jr., USS *Boxer*), VF-191 (CDR John Sweeny, USS *Princeton*), and VF-112 (CDR James V. Rowney, USS *Philippine Sea*). Twenty-four of the F9Fs were each carrying two 250-pound general purpose bombs, and all carried full trays of ammunition for their guns. (The jets not carrying bombs were the target combat air patrol planes, which required extra fuel.)

The weather over Korea was improving to the naval airman's advantage. The route and the vicinity of the target still were reported clouded, but the area near the Suiho dam was reported clear. This meant that the pilots could use cloud cover for surprise *before* and concealment *after* the raid.

The attack group skimmed among the clouds and past the highest mountain tops of North Korea, then commenced a slow let-down to remain below radar detection height. The route chosen across Korea was over isolated territory in order to minimize the possibility of ground spotters detecting and reporting the group.

Already circling the Yalu in "MIG Alley" were eighty-four F86s whose task it was to provide continuous cover for the naval group. Eight minutes before the scheduled time of attack, the Sabre pilots reported to CDR Downing that more than 200 swept-wing MIGs were visible, parked on the airfields in the Antung complex.

When would they come up?

At 1555, only five minutes from the target, the attack group from Task Force 77 commenced a high-power climb to reach dive-bombing altitude. If surprise had not been achieved, the MIGs from Antung and the guns surrounding Suiho would soon be working them over; but as the group came in sight of the huge dam, it was obvious that surprise had been achieved.

Commander Downing ordered the attack to begin. The Panthers commenced their flak-suppression dives. The ADs, meanwhile, reversed their course and commenced their runs. Downing led the *Boxer* dive-bombing planes in; on his tail was MacKinnon with the *Princeton* divebombers; and following him, Carr led the *Philippine Sea*'s ADs.

"Our target was not the dam itself but the Suiho powerhouse," said CDR MacKinnon, "and it was an excellent aiming point. It was a building 80 feet by 500 feet housing the generators, transformers, and switching equipment. There was a fair crosswind blowing north to south which complicated our bombing, but which cleared the target of the smoke and dust of the exploding bombs. I saw a few puffs of AA fire as we were in our attack, but it was not enough to hinder us."

Other targets were the transformer yard and the penstocks. Each Skyraider salvoed its bombs at 3,000 feet, simultaneously firing its machine guns to keep enemy heads down, and levelling from its run by 1,500 feet altitude.

The antiaircraft fire was now coming up, and pilots later reported it as "intense machine gun fire, plus moderate, continuous predicted fire from heavy weapons and automatic antiaircraft fire." Bursts were accurate at all levels up to 10,000 feet. As expected, most of the fire was "out of bounds" from across the river in Manchuria.

As the last Skyraider entered its dive, the final flights of flak-suppression F9Fs dove on the defending guns on the North Korean side of the river. Of their work, LT T. G. Dreis later said: "The flak suppression was terrific. The AA looked rough when the jets first went in. After they made their runs, there was nothing to it. They really did a job."

In less than 180 seconds, the entire Navy attack, having dumped ninety tons of bombs on Suiho's installations, was up and away, streaking to the southeast.

"The majority of the bombs were on target," said Vice Admiral Clark, "and post-strike photography showed no misses."

Two or three secondary explosions were observed to follow from inside the powerhouse, and all of the pilots could see dense smoke and dust roiling from the powerhouse, thousands of feet high. Of the attack CDR

Downing said: “The bombing was excellent; the powerhouse looked like a volcano erupting.”

Despite the large number of enemy guns surrounding the dam, only five of the Navy’s planes were hit by antiaircraft fire. One Skyraider from VA-115, flown by LTJG M. K. Lake, was seriously hit and set on fire in the starboard wheel well; but with his wingman, Lake was able to reach Seoul’s Kimpo airfield, where a successful wheels-up landing was made. Considering the concentrations of guns protecting Suiho, the flak-suppression efforts of the jets had been highly effective.

“It was obvious that we had caught them flatfooted,” said CDR MacKinnon. “I attribute our success to the excellent planning and leading by CDR Downing, to our mountain-top approach, and to the sudden, last-minute climb to bombing altitude. The strike, which we had anticipated would be a rough one, turned out to be a textbook hop. The timing was perfect, we hit every checkpoint on schedule, and the bombing was excellent.”

“Although we only had one briefing with the strike leaders,” said CDR Downing, “the entire exercise went off as though we had been doing it for years. By my own timing, the last man was out of his dive and on retirement course in two minutes flat from the first flak-suppression pass—a real tribute to the superb work of the flight leaders of the following elements.”[5]

As the naval aircraft concluded their runs, the U.S. Air Force’s attacking F84 Thunderjets—124 of them—appeared in a well-coordinated second strike. Interservice teamwork was excellent. If any reprisal was to come from the MIGS across the Yalu, surely the moment had come; but by now, the high-circling Sabres could see less than 80 airplanes instead of the more than 200 observed a few minutes earlier.

Where were the MIGs? Had they assumed that industrial targets in Manchuria were to be hit and flown off to cover them? Or was an attack on the Antung air base complex itself expected and the planes hastily flown clear? Or were the Red pilots simply without orders, unready or unwilling to interfere?

Whatever their reasons, the expected stiff aerial opposition never materialized, and the remainder of the U.S. Air Force attack blasted the Suiho plant opposed only by the defending guns. Concurrent with the Suiho attack, twelve other power complexes in North Korea received similar treatment.

The next day, the Suiho plant was still smoking, and North Korea’s electric power was seriously reduced. The capital of Pyongyang was without power; factories on both sides of the Yalu were paralyzed, and lights all over Korea and Manchuria were going out.

The attack on the North Korean power plants had done several things, not the least of which was to rekindle enthusiasm among the naval airmen, sated by the monotonous routine of interdiction. The strike had shown the Navy’s flexibility to surprise and accurately hit a heavily-defended target. It had also shown the harmony of effort and precision which the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force could effect, which prompted General Barcus to say “My hat’s off to the Navy for a terrific job. We must get together again sometime.”

The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William Fechteler, congratulated the Seventh Fleet Commander and the pilots of Task Force 77:

“It is with great pride that I read the despatch and news reports of the magnificent accomplishment of your forces in the superb attacks upon the North Korean power installations. The excellent performance of duty and high combat effectiveness demonstrated by your forces and particularly the pilots involved in the actual combat are deserving of the highest praise and inspiration of your own people and a warning to the enemy of his inevitable defeat. Well Done.”

The surprise assault certainly caused extensive damage[5A] to the electric system of North Korea and Manchuria. The strikes forced the relocation of enemy AA guns all over Korea. Rear Admiral H. E. Regan, Commander Carrier Division One, only a month later was able to report the successful destruction of several bridges which, prior to the hydroelectric power raids, had been too well defended to attack.

Finally, the Communists were left in doubt as to the future targets and locations which might be attacked. [5B]

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Strike on Pyongyang (11 July 1952)

The highly satisfactory results achieved by the carrier strike on 23–24 June not only inflicted severe damage to the hydroelectric system of North Korea, but the attacks were also visible demonstration to the Communists that a new corner in the Korean War had been turned. The psychological effect was pronounced, both at the Panmunjom armistice table and in the North Korean capital. The Pyongyang radio denounced the missions as "sneak attacks," adding that "anyone with common sense knows that a hydroelectric power station is a project of peaceful construction devoid of all military significance."

But even more impressive strikes were now being scheduled. A plan was developed at Far Eastern Air Force headquarters in Tokyo to attack military targets in the North Korean capital city of Pyongyang. Its 40-odd military targets—warehouses, bridges, troop barracks, factories, and Army headquarters—had been spared for months for the sake of the armistice talks. But now there was even less reason to withhold attacks upon the capital city's military targets than there had been for withholding attacks on the hydroelectric plants.

Attacking Pyongyang's military installations, however, would be a difficult and demanding task. Many planes had been lost over Pyongyang, and pilots generally considered the city one of the worst "flak-traps" in North Korea. Photographic interpretation showed 48 heavy antiaircraft guns and more than 100 smaller automatic guns ringing the North Korean capital. The enemy's antiaircraft opposition was certain to be both intense and accurate. Moreover, there were prisoner-of-war camps in the environs of the city, and these had to be avoided in the bombings.

Two carriers were scheduled to make a full-scale, full-day contribution: *Princeton* and the *Bon Homme Richard*, the latter recently arrived in Korean waters for her second tour, with Air Group Seven aboard.

"This was the first time in our six months' tour that my Air Group joined with another one for a combined strike," said CDR G. B. Brown, Commander Carrier Air Group Seven.[6]

"The strike on Pyongyang was scheduled for 11 July. Since our ship was carrying Admiral H. E. Regan, then CTF 77, and his staff, the *Princeton* air group commander, CDR William Denton (CVG-19), flew over to our ship a couple of days prior to the attack, bringing some of his squadron commanders, and we laid our plans for the strike.

"Our plans followed the now-standard strike procedure: the jets being launched some time after the props, joining us a few miles from the target, and preceding us down in our dives in order to knock out the enemy guns. The props, both Corsairs and Skyraiders, would follow them, and after their recovery, the jets would again cover our retirement." the launch began at 0831 on 11 July with a single mishap. Ensign E. B. Conrad, a VF-72 pilot flying an F9F-2, lost power after the catapult shot and ditched. Conrad was unhurt, and was quickly rescued by the *Princeton* helicopter.

Bon Homme Richard launched 45 aircraft; *Princeton*, 46. The combined strike group, led by Commander Denton, CVG-19, rendezvoused over the island of Yo-do in Wonsan harbor. Brown, leading the *Bon Homme Richard* aircraft, and flying an AD himself, joined above and behind the *Princeton* strike group.

"The weather at the time of launching was pretty good," said Brown, "although there was only a very small spread between the wet and the dry temperatures.

"Our course to the target took us directly over the enemy town of Yongdok, a supply storage site which had been on the receiving end of dozens of naval air attacks. On this occasion, even though we were flying along at approximately 18,000 feet, the Yongdok guns opened upon us, and shrapnel from one burst hit one of my

Corsairs—not seriously, however, and it was able to continue. But it was a prelude of what was to come."

The carrier aircraft had been chosen to make the initial attacks and to strike several targets in Pyongyang on the southeast side of the city, the ones nearest the POW camps: an ammunition storage area, a vehicle camp, a headquarters and troop billeting area, a factory, a railroad locomotive repair shop, and a railroad roundhouse. Other target areas had been assigned to aircraft of the U.S. Fifth Air Force, the U.S. Marines, the Australian

Air Force, and aircraft from HMS *Ocean* (CAPT G. L. G. Evans, RN), the British carrier operating under Commander Task Force 95. These elements of the UN air force were scheduled to relieve each other in an all-day, all-out attack on the city's military targets.

As the carrier aircraft sped toward the target, the Sabres of the Fifth Air Force were taking off from their South Korean bases to form a barrier patrol in "MIG Alley," and thereby prevent MIGs from interfering with the attacks on Pyongyang.

"The weather over Pyongyang was good," said Brown. "Exactly on schedule, our flak-suppression jets from the task force joined up and took high cover; we picked up speed during the run-in. Each one of my ADs was carrying three 1,000-pound bombs; the Corsairs, one each.

"As we neared the city, which was very prominent because of its location in a big bend of the Taedong River, the AA commenced. It started at Sonchon and followed us all the way in. It was as heavy and accurate as anything I saw during World War II; moreover, much of this stuff came from *radar*-controlled mounts, something we hadn't worried about during the Pacific war.

"The flak-suppression dives of the jets were effective and timely. Later, we gave them credit for destroying five guns and silencing two more. Despite their good work, however, some of my boys were hit. LT E. P. Cummings and his observer, L. L. Tooker, AT1, took a direct hit which blew off part of the AD's tail surface. We saw their plane go straight in and crash about a mile from the target.

"Two other *Richard* aircraft were hit prior to the commencement of our bombing runs. One Corsair, flown by LTJG G. G. Jeffries, took a direct hit by heavy AA in the leading edge of his port wing, but the shell passed on through without exploding; even so, Jeffries pressed home his attack despite the damage.

"The *Bon Homme Richard's* targets were the railroad roundhouse, the locomotive repair yard, and the ammunition storage area. LCDR F. H. Ervin, LCDR W. M. Harnish, LTJG J. A. Ryes and ENS P. G. Merchant made direct hits on the large rail repair shop. LCDR W. E. Teufer and LT W. L. Harris made direct hits on the roundhouse. As for the ammo' storage area, all bombs fell within the assigned area, and it looked well battered."

The bombing by the *Princeton* strike group was equally effective. During the dive LCDR L. F. Dutemple, flying an AD from VA-195, was hit and lost to AA fire, and his aircraft was seen to crash nearby. Two Corsairs from VF-193 were also hit, but landed at friendly bases in South Korea.

Photographs taken after the strike showed that the roundhouse was 60 per cent destroyed, including two locomotives therein, while the railroad repair shop was 50 per cent destroyed.

"This mission was one of the most accurate attacks that my air group made," said Brown. "The antiaircraft fire we encountered from Pyongyang's radar-controlled heavy guns, and the fire from their medium and automatic weapons was the heaviest and most accurate we encountered during our entire tour."

The *Princeton* pilots agreed.

"It was the heaviest flak we saw," recorded LCDR N. W. Boe, commanding officer of VF-193. "It was so thick we could have dropped our wheels and landed on the stuff."[7]

As the naval aircraft recovered from their attacks and headed homeward, the high-flying jets soon picked up radio reports from the Fleet. The weather in the Sea of Japan and along the east coast of Korea had suddenly worsened, fog had formed, and ceilings were down to 200–300 feet, with visibility reduced to less than 500 yards.

"The jets in our strike group, on hearing this, decided to land at Suwon and Kanghong," said Brown. "The rest of us—all props—kept heading homeward. We vectored into the Fleet by YE,[7A] and let down

through a 5,000-foot overcast division by division, at two-minute intervals. Upon breaking out of the stuff at about 300 feet, and being vectored in to the carrier, we couldn't see across the task force. However, with the aid of our 'hooker' control atop the *Bon Homme Richard* bridge, we all got aboard without further incident."

The remainder of the carrier strikes against Pyongyang had to be cancelled because of the weather.

The strikes on the capital city, less Task Force 77 aircraft, continued the rest of the day. A total of 1,400 tons of bombs and 23,000 gallons of napalm were delivered upon Pyongyang's targets during an 11-hour period by 1,254 aircraft.

For two days the Pyongyang radio was off the air. When a weak signal was again emitted, the North Koreans called the day's strikes "brutal," adding that they had been ordered as retaliation for the failure of the armistice talks.

The Pyongyang radio also stated that 1,500 buildings had been destroyed and 900 damaged. One bomb had made a direct hit on a large air raid shelter, causing large casualties among high Communist party members. [7B]

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Chapter 13. On the Line

The Sindok Mine Strike (27 July 1952) and Kilchu Magnesite Plant Strike (28 July 1952)

The success of the raids on Suiho and Pyongyang, which had cost the enemy so much and the Allied air forces relatively little, was accepted as good evidence of the wisdom of de-emphasizing the interdiction program.

True, there were only a few targets in all of North Korea like the hydroelectric plants and the military concentrations in Pyongyang worthy of massed air attacks. But this more flexible pattern of air attack meant greater damage inflicted in proportion to losses sustained.

From June until the end of 1952, naval air conducted a series of attacks which took the formidable title "coordinated maximum effort air strikes." On twelve days of July 1952, Task Force 77 aircraft struck a variety of industrial targets, ending with an attack on the Sindok lead and zinc mill and the Kilchu magnesite plant on 27 and 28 July.

The zinc mill had been processing and shipping 3,000 tons of zinc and lead to Russia via China every month. Destroying it would certainly cost the Communists more than another hundred breaks in the rail lines.

In the now well-established pattern, the jets struck the antiaircraft guns first and last, allowing the propellered ADs and F4Us to saturate the area with 500-pound, 1,000-pound and 2,000-pound bombs.

"*Bon Homme Richard* 27 July; Sindok: '. . . Flak suppression was effective, accurate bombing and strafing runs taking its toll in Communist gun positions. The ADs dropped all their bombs in the target area, destroying or badly damaging the main plant and heavily damaging the transformers and other buildings in the vicinity. . . '

"*Princeton* 28 July; Kilchu Magnesite Plant: '. . . A total of thirty-eight aircraft (25 F4Us and 13 ADs) in two strike groups dropped forty tons of bombs and rockets resulting in 60 per cent destruction of the magnesite plant; complete destruction of a thermo-electric plant which furnished power to the magnesite plant; major damage to a barracks area; also three to five cuts in the main railroad bridge leading south from Kilchu'."

All planes but one returned safely from the strikes. LTJG E. M. Crow of VF-193 bailed out and was rescued by *Helena's* helicopter during the Kilchu strike.

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Raid on Changpyong-ni (20 August 1952)

The year 1952 saw the "air task group" concept tested in the Korean War. Two such groups, Air Task Group One[7C] (CDR C. H. Crabill, Jr., aboard *Valley Forge)* and Air Task Group Two (CDR J. G. Daniels, III, aboard *Essex*) saw action and both groups performed excellently.

The air task group concept had arisen during the early days of the Korean War, during the time when the largest single attack group launched from the carriers rarely exceeded 12 to 16 planes. Only on the most infrequent occasions had the carrier air group commanders functioned in their designed role of tactical airborne coordinator. During the first 18 months of the war, even squadron commanders found few missions for leading their entire squadrons at one time. Squadrons had as many as four or five officers who were qualified and experienced to lead the usual four to twelve planes launched on close air support, interdiction, or armed reconnaissance missions.

With this pattern, obviously, the airborne duties of the air group commander in the Korean War bore little resemblance to similar duties in World War II.

However, there were other reasons for the air task group idea. The principal advantage was that a carrier's complement of aircraft could be tailored to suit the mission at hand. If the mission was attack, the aircraft could be predominantly attack types. If air defense was the mission, all fighters could be carried. And for such hostilities as those in Korea, a balanced group could be placed aboard.

Whatever the carrier's airplane complement, a senior naval aviator of the rank of commander, supported by a small staff, would be assigned as Air Task Group Commander. There would be no administrative organization; the designated squadrons would simply report to the Air Task Commander for *operational* control.

"There were some misgivings about the air task group concept at first," said Commander Daniels ATG-2 commander. "The principal reservation was that such a grouping of squadrons might lack the traditional sense of pride, unity, and loyalty that comes with belonging to any organization. However, in actual practice in Korea I believe there was as much fierce pride among my pilots for belonging to Air Task Group Two as there was in any air group.

"Actually the air task group is analogous to an air group except that the air task group commander doesn't have to contend with the petty administrative details of the chain of command. He simply has an air group without paper work. His primary job is to get the group in fighting shape.

"In my opinion, the tours of ATG-1 and ATG-2 in Korea certainly proved the merit of the air task group concept."

Typical of the performance of Air Task Group Two was the 20 August 1952 attack on Namyang-ni, a large supply area located south of the Yalu River, on the west coast of Korea.

"This was another of the several mass attacks of this period," said Daniels, "similar to the ones on the hydroelectric power plants and the two attacks on Pyongyang in July and August. This particular mission was at extreme range for the jets, and it demanded the most careful timing and integration, not only among the planes of the *Essex* but between the various other elements of the UN air forces."

Since the target was only a few miles from the Yalu River, and almost directly beneath "MIG Alley," it was expected that fighter opposition would be heavy.

"Our flight was made up of 43 planes from the *Essex* and 62 from the *Princeton*," said Daniels. "The weather over Korea was good, with only a few scattered clouds over the mountains.

"I was leading the *Essex* Panther jets, so we took off quite a bit later than the props. We joined them on schedule northwest of Wonsan.

"As we neared the target, we could see the Yalu River. I had good voice communications with the Air Force F86s who had set up the usual barrier patrol in 'MIG Alley'.

"We arrived at the push-over point exactly on time, and went in just ahead of the props. The Air Force had given us the intelligence on the location and number of the enemy AA guns, and I must say that their information was excellent. On an attack such as this, its success depends on accurate knowledge about the guns; if their *exact* locations are known, the flak-suppression aircraft can really do a job on them. Otherwise, if you are not sure of their whereabouts, all you can do is strafe the general area, and that's not too effective."

The flak-suppression runs of the *Essex* and *Princeton* aircraft were precise, and the Corsair and Skyraider pilots later reported the flak as light and inaccurate.

"None of the *Essex* planes were hit," said Daniels, "and our entire attack was completed in less than two minutes. As we cleared the targets, a strike of Fifth Air Force F84 fighter bombers came right in behind us. It was beautiful coordination.

"As we climbed for altitude, I got a jolt. The Sabre jets patrolling above us near the Yalu River said that twelve MIGs had broken through and were heading our way.

"We climbed as rapidly as possible for altitude to protect the props. We had gotten back up to about 12,000 when my section leader, LT Hal Crumbo, tally-hoed four MIGs.

"Their pass was simply one quick 'whoosh' high above us, with no one exchanging a shot. I don't think they spotted the prop planes below us."

Flying high cover at 16,000 feet with 12 *Princeton* Panther jets. Commander John Sweeny (Commanding Officer, VF-191) had also spotted the MIGs.

"We had radio contact both with the Air Force radar station on Cho-do island, and with the Sabres above us," said Sweeny, "so we had ample warning that they were coming.

"My three divisions were in step-up formation, with my team on top and staggered to the north. There was about 1,000 feet between divisions.

"I first spotted two MIGs jumping us front abeam. We immediately went to 100 per cent power, and at the right time turned into them, when they broke off and climbed away. Immediately after, three MIGs came up on our tail, so we reversed course to take them head-on. At this, they pushed over to pass beneath us. I got my sights on the lead plane, but he was so far below me that there was no reason to waste the ammunition. As we reversed to base course, two more MIGs started a run from the other beam, but again broke off when we turned into them. They simply put on full power and left us. The speed and rate of climb of those MIGs impressed all of us. They were painted green and brown, and their red stars were plainly visible. But I certainly wasn't impressed with either their formation flying or their flight discipline.

"At no time did they come close enough for us to get a shot, yet all the while they were shooting wildly at nothing.

"All considered, it wasn't much of an engagement, but it was the only time in my tour that we got close to MIGs. However, that small episode gave my pilots a lift, for it was quite apparent that the airmanship and teamwork of the MIG pilots were as bad as their gunnery.

"After this hop we kept hoping to get back into MIG territory and suck them down to low altitude where we could turn inside them. But it never happened."[8]

The homeward flight of the strike group was uneventful.

"Of the nineteen buildings in the supply area," said Daniels,[9] "photo reconnaissance showed ten of the buildings completely destroyed, while the other nine had up to 70 per cent damage.

"The significance of this strike was its split-second timing and coordination, the beautiful teamwork that

was achieved with the other Air Force and Marine planes attacking the same target, and the effective flak suppression which permitted almost casual bombing with excellent accuracy by the Skyraiders and Corsairs.”

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The *Boxer* Drones (28 August 1952)

On 28 August 1952, the Navy began a series of guided missile operations by Guided Missile Unit 90 aboard the USS *Boxer*. Pilotless radio-controlled World War II "Hellcats" (F6F5) converted to guided missiles, equipped with a television guidance system, and loaded with high explosives, were conducted to the target by control planes.

Between 28 August and 2 September, six guided missile attacks were launched against selected bridges.

This marked the first use of the guided missile in combat from carriers. Several missiles found their targets, and only one was abortive due to faulty control.

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Destruction of the Aoji Oil Refinery (1 September 1952)

One of the few targets in northeast Korea suitable for a massed carrier air strike was the oil refinery at Aoji, a synthetic oil producing center in the far northeast corner of Korea, only eight miles from Russian territory and four miles from the Manchurian border.

Here was a target that *only* the Navy could strike under the accepted ground rules which specified "no flying" over the Manchurian arsenal-sanctuary. This tip of northeast Korea was beyond the effective reach of land-based fighters; and it could not be touched by B-29s without their overflying one or both of the borders. But from the mobile air bases of the Navy, the target was only a skip and a jump.

"Aoji was one of the main sources of gasoline for the Communists in Korea," said VADM J. J. Clark, Commander of the Seventh Fleet.[10] "This huge petroleum center had been long spared because of its location. I knew that naval air could knock it out.

"I went to General Mark Clark, the Commander in Chief of the United Nations Command, and asked authority to strike it.

"After referring the problem to the JCS, General Clark gave me the go-ahead."

Three carriers—*Essex, Princeton,* and *Boxer*—furnished two large coordinated strikes to smash the Aoji refinery on 1 September 1952. *Essex* launched 29 planes from ATG-2, *Princeton* launched 63 planes from CVG-19, and *Boxer* launched 52 planes from CVG-2.

Simultaneous naval air strikes were also directed upon an iron works near Munsan and the thermoelectric plants, transformers, warehouses, and supply buildings in Chongjin.

The strike on the Aoji refinery was routine and almost leisurely. No antiaircraft fire or MIG opposition was encountered, permitting repeated runs on the target.

The destruction of the refinery was complete, as indicated in these excerpts from the reports of the strike:

"*Princeton*: '. . . extensive damage to the refinery with smoke and flames visible to a great distance. . . .'

"*Essex*: '. . . completely successful with 100 per cent coverage and damage on all targets assigned. . . .'

"*Boxer*: '. . . No opposition was offered and *Boxer* planes inflicted heavy damage. . .'."

The total absence of antiaircraft fire from Aoji proved conclusively that the Communists had taken advantage of this "restricted" area's nearness to Manchuria and Russia. By building industrial plants in this northeast corner, the Communists believed them to be inviolate.

This largest all-Navy air attack of the Korean War proved them wrong.

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Raid on Kowon (8 October 1952)

The second instance of the Navy's escorting B-29s during the Korean War occurred on 8 October 1952 (the first had been the raid on Rashin in August 1951).

"One of the worst flak traps in northeast Korea was the rail center at Kowon," said Captain Ray M. Pitts, USN, operations officer of Commander Seventh Fleet.[11] "Every time we sent a strike in there, we ran into trouble, and dozens of pilots had been lost or suffered damage from the intense antiaircraft fire which surrounded Kowon.

"It occurred to our Seventh Fleet staff that a joint raid could be worked up by the Air Force and the Navy for hitting Kowon. On one of my trips to Tokyo, I went over to FEAF headquarters and told them about the Navy's plan.

"Our idea was to send an escorted group of B-29s over Kowon. The Superforts would be loaded with 500-lb. VT-fuzed bombs.[12] Their bombing targets would be the antiaircraft guns around Kowon. Immediately after their attack, while the Reds were all torn up by the effect of this bombing, the Navy would send in a low-level strike right behind the Superforts. The Navy's targets would be the marshalling yard and the supply and storage areas of Kowon. I offered to furnish Navy fighter escort for the B-29s."

The plan was accepted. On 8 October 1952, a combined Air Force-Navy strike walloped Kowon.

Twelve F2H2 Banshees, led by Commander Denny P. Phillips, Commanding Officer, VF-11, from the USS *Kearsarge*, rendezvoused with ten Superforts over South Korea. The B-29s' base altitude was 21,000 feet, with the three levels of Banshee cover at 25,000, 30,000, and 35,000 feet.

The Superfort attack was without incident, except for one brief moment during the approach to Kowon when a group of fighters was tally-hoed in the distance. Prompt recognition of the planes by LT Jack O'Donnell as F-86 Sabres, not MIGs, settled the pilots' nerves.

The marksmanship of the ten B-29s was precise, and CDR Phillips recorded his squadron's praise: "The Air Force was to be commended, both for perfection in carrying out the scheduled rendezvous and the excellence of their bomb drop."

Four minutes after the B-29 attack, a large strike group from Air Groups 19 and 101, and Air Task Group 2, numbering 89 aircraft in all, bombed and rocketed Kowon. The rail, communication, troop, and supply facilities were successfully bombed and rocketed, with much reduced interference from the Kowon gun.

The Navy's opinion of the attack system was high. Rear Admiral R. F. Hickey reported that the joint attack "opened the door to future coordination highly desirable in certain areas of enemy territory."

The strike on Kowon, however, proved to be the last instance during the Korean War of the Navy escorting B-29s.

"The Kowon coordination was a great success," said Captain Pitts, "but unfortunately, we were not able to do it again.

"It was my understanding that at this time our Air Force bombers were shifting to a 'jet-stream' type of single-plane, night-time bombing attack; they told me that putting any large groups of B-29s over Korea for a daylight attack wasn't possible."

The successful attack on Kowon and the teamwork between Air Force and Navy was summed up by a VF-11 historical report:

The raid was highly successful and all aircraft returned safely.

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Cherokee Strikes (9 October 1952 to July 1953)

As the interdiction campaign dwindled, and the carrier strikes such as those just described blasted the few industrial targets in Korea, it was appreciated that a more fruitful employment for naval air power ought to be found. Under the self-imposed ground rules, it was obvious that the war might continue indefinitely unless some new way could be found to make the enemy return to and be more amenable at the truce table. October 1952 had seen an indefinite suspension of the truce talks, a recess which would last for 199 days (until 26 April 1953).

But a new target system or even a worthwhile *old* one for naval air power was hard to find. "Strategic" type targets had never been plentiful in North Korea, even in peacetime. The few that had existed had been hit repeatedly. After two years of war, new or worthwhile strategic targets did not exist. "Maximum air effort" targets, such as Chongjin, Aoji, Wonsan, Suiho, and Pyongyang, were few and had been frequently hit. The transportation networks, in the waning interdiction campaign, had been demonstrated to be unproductive target systems. Standard close air support missions (which had been resumed on 13 July 1952) were often disappointing along the stalemated and stagnant battleline. The Communists were so deeply and solidly entrenched that strafing attacks and the delivery of light bombs and rockets had little effect.

What, then, could the carriers do?

The answer was found by Vice Admiral J. J. "Jocko" Clark, the Seventh Fleet's commander.

"In May 1952, shortly after I had taken command of the Seventh Fleet," said VADM Clark, "I visited Korea at the invitation of General Van Fleet, and remained with him at his headquarters for several days. He arranged trips for me to visit the battlefield. On 30 May I visited Major General J. T. Selden, commanding the First Marine Division, at his headquarters south of Panmunjom. General Selden flew me up and down the frontlines in his helicopter and then took me to individual command posts in the frontlines by jeep.

"While flying behind our frontlines, I noticed many concentrations of our own forces that were not underground. These included supply concentrations, personnel housing, medical centers, truck parks, and ammunition dumps. As I flew over these areas, it occurred to me that if the enemy had the same air power and air supremacy that *we* enjoyed at the battleline, it would be impossible to have so much of our material freely exposed and in the open. I then reasoned that the enemy could not fight a kind of war he was fighting and still have *all* his forces, supplies, and equipment underground. *Some* of his stocks of supplies had to be above ground, out of sight and out of range of our artillery.

"On returning to the Seventh Fleet on 31 May, therefore, I asked Rear Admiral John Perry, Commander Carrier Division One, to obtain aerial photographs of the territory behind the enemy's frontlines which was out of reach of artillery.

"Later, after the photos had been assessed, Perry reported a multitude of worthwhile targets all along the front.

"In the pictures, many underground tunnels were visible, and in some cases the enemy had even dug tunnels all the way through the mountains. Of course these fortifications and the stagnant condition of the frontlines made regular close air support strikes ineffective. But even though he might have a lot of his war supplies buried in the hills, a lot of it was exposed which would make excellent targets for the concentrated, surprise and pinpoint attacks of naval aircraft."[13]

This was the origin of what came to be known as the "Cherokee Strikes," named in Clark's honor because of his Cherokee ancestry.

"The decision to call the new system 'Cherokee' may have sounded whimsical to some," said Captain Ray M. Pitts, "but there was a definite reason for choosing it. We thought first of giving the system a name that would have tactical significance—like 'carrier tactical strike.' But we decided against that for we wanted a name that would mean something totally different from 'close air support.' You can't hang an argument on a word like 'Cherokee.'

"After Admiral Clark germinated the idea, the rest of the staff set to work to translate it into action.

"I made a trip through the lines in Korea to see if the general concept was workable. First, I checked with the key officers of our First Marine Division. I also made a swing around several battalion command posts discussing the proposed 'Cherokee' system with them.

"Next I went to Seoul to the JOC to clear the concept with the Fifth Air Force on the working level. There was nothing in writing.

"Then I went to Tenth Corps headquarters and talked to them.

"Everybody was enthusiastic and thought the 'Cherokee' plan would work and that it deserved a try.

"My own opinion was that the *best* place for our naval air power to destroy enemy supplies was at the front, not somewhere back in North Korea. At the front, every bullet, every round of artillery, every pound of supplies was twice as expensive to the Reds as it was crossing the Yalu. In my opinion, we could do more harm in a stalemated war by destroying the enemy's logistics at the battleline.

"Upon my return, Vice Admiral Clark and I went over to Rear Admiral Hickey's flagship. His operations officer (CDR Louis Hurd) and air intelligence officer (CDR R. P. Fuller) took a look at all the maps and photos I had brought back and they agreed we had found a worthwhile new target system.

"That was how the 'Cherokee' system got underway."[14]

The first Cherokee strikes were flown on 9 October 1952. Three strikes, totalling 91 aircraft, were launched from *Kearsarge, Princeton* and *Essex* on troop and supply areas beyond the range of Tenth Corps artillery.

To the carrier aviators, the first Cherokee strike was simply "one more hop," and there is little in either ship or squadron records to distinguish the day of 9 October. VF-821's report mentions the day in one brief sentence: "Flak-suppression hop of eight F9Fs led by CDR D. W. Cooper." Another *Essex* squadron history, VF-871 says simply, "eight planes hit troop bunkers." CDR L. W. Chick's squadron, VA-55, records the results of two missions that day without embellishment: "Twelve ADs destroyed eight mortars, three 37-mm. gun positions, 400 feet of trench, eight bunkers, and started two fires;" and "eight ADs destroyed two artillery positions and three bunkers while covering 90 per cent of the target area." *Kearsarge's* Skyraider squadron, VA-702, recorded that "eleven aircraft hit a supply area twenty miles north of the Punchbowl."

"By mid-October," continued Vice Admiral Clark, "Task Force 77 had gradually shifted a large proportion of its strike effort to the Cherokee program until about 50 per cent of its air attack potential was being devoted to this type mission. General Van Fleet enthusiastically approved the program and authorized the division commanders to move their bomblines temporarily to include worthwhile targets for the duration of the strike."

Especially happy was the foot soldier in the line. To him, the various concepts of close support, its mechanics, and its methods of control, were meaningless. To him, also, the sight of a large number of planes, from whatever source, demolishing enemy targets with heavy bombs was an exhilarating tonic.

After the first few Cherokee strikes, however, there was confusion at the JOC and concern at Air Force headquarters. The Fifth Air Force in Korea looked on the new missions as regular close air support, while the Far East Air Force headquarters was concerned lest the new system jeopardize Air Force control of air power over the frontlines.

Lieutenant General Otto P. Weyland, FEAF, informed Vice Admiral Clark that he did not believe that the FAFIK controllers were capable of handling large numbers of strike aircraft loaded with large bombs on missions

so close to friendly lines. He added that in recent months, there had been seven cases of unidentified but friendly aircraft inadvertently dropping bombs on the friendly side of the front. None of these was definitely attributable to the Navy, he said, but such accidents did emphasize the need for proper liaison and control.

"The initial confusion," said Vice Admiral Clark, "was one of simple misunderstanding. My only objective in originating and planning the Cherokee hops was to utilize the striking power of the Seventh Fleet for the infliction of the greatest possible damage upon the enemy with the least cost to our own forces.

"The misunderstanding was due to two things: first, the basic difference between a 'Cherokee' type strike and a regular close air support mission; and second, the method of controlling them."

The Cherokee strikes were different from close air support strikes in several respects. In the case of close air support, missions were not pre-briefed, the planes carried a standard bomb loading, and only eight planes could be handled over any particular target at one time. No flak-suppression planes accompanied the close air support aircraft. Moreover, the close air support aircraft were required to remain on call for considerable periods of time. The flights checked in with the frontline control parties and were often controlled by the light Mosquito aircraft who spotted their targets and directed their attacks. Finally, close air support targets were those limited to the area between the main line of resistance and the bombline. Good visibility was required to identify targets and deliver close air support.

The Cherokee strikes, on the other hand, were heavy air power missions outside of the bombline. They were pre-briefed, pre-arranged strikes, carrying weapons specially selected for the target. The number of planes over the target was unlimited because no individual control was needed. The target was selected from intelligence or photographic interpretation, and at the pre-briefing all pertinent information available was given to the pilot. The Cherokee strike aircraft used jet aircraft loaded with antipersonnel bombs for flak-suppression. Artillery, when available, was also used to augment the flak-suppression. The Cherokee strikes proceeded to the target as an organized unit, and the timing of the attacks called for delivery immediately upon arrival, with a minimum of time on station.

The misunderstandings of Cherokee were satisfactorily resolved on 17 November at a conference between Eighth Army, Commander Seventh Fleet, and Fifth Air Force. It was agreed that close air support missions would continue as before, that the Cherokee strikes *were* different, and would not interfere with them. However, the Cherokee strikes henceforth would be coordinated through FAFIK, would check in and out with the TACP[14A] of the Army Corps in the area, and would use Mosquito type aircraft to mark the targets. Eighth Army also agreed to move the bombline position closer to the frontlines on specific occasions in order to permit the naval aircraft to strike. In some cases the bombline was moved as close to friendly troops as 300 yards—a rare tribute to the accuracy of the naval airmen.

The use of the Cherokee strikes at the battleline reached its peak in November and December, with the Air Force joining the Cherokee campaign.

The opinions of the pilots of Task Force 77 with regard to the Cherokee program ran to each end of the enthusiasm-apathy scale. Those who were fortunate enough to see tangible evidence of their attacks could appreciate why the "ground-pounders" in the frontlines were enthusiastic. Those who saw or heard no results of their work—and pilots often saw little because of the smoke and dust—were unimpressed. VA-702 recorded this opinion: "Much enemy flak was encountered on these missions, and pilots usually considered a Cherokee strike as 'hot'. The strikes are very effective in knocking out enemy artillery pieces."

On 22 November, the *Essex* and *Kearsarge* teamed up for two coordinated Cherokee missions in the Kumwha sector of the front witnessed by a distinguished group of observers: General Hoyt Vandenberg, Commanding General U.S. Air Force; Lieutenant General O. P. Weyland, Commanding General Far Eastern Air Force; Lieutenant General Glen O. Barcus, Commanding General FAFIK; and Lieutenant General James Van Fleet. This enemy sector had come to have the name "Artillery Valley" because of the intense AA fire which was

frequently poured into UN lines. Lieutenant General R. H. Jenkins, Ninth Corps Commander, moved the bombline south about 5,000 yards to permit the Task Force 77 aircraft to strike.
Click here to view map

The first strike on "Artillery Valley" was credited with destroying three artillery pieces and five enemy bunkers, and damaging four artillery pieces and five enemy bunkers. The second strike destroyed twenty-five personnel shelters and damaged ten more. The frontline controllers reported that ninety per cent of the Navy planes' 1,000-pound bombs were on target.

"It was impressive to see those divebombers and fighters dive so steeply," said General Van Fleet. "The heavy bombs they carried (2,000 lbs.) were really mountain busters, and even from our distance the whole earth shook."

After watching the strikes, General Van Fleet radioed the Fleet:

"I witnessed two magnificent strikes totalling thirty-six aircraft at approximately 1500 today. Present were Generals Vandenberg, Weyland, and Barcus. Congratulations on the accurate and breathtaking performance. Hope all pilots and planes returned safely. Van Fleet."

"By a combination of Navy and Air Force Cherokee strikes and Army artillery efforts," said Vice Admiral Clark, "the enemy's gun potential in the Kumwha area was reduced to about 10 per cent of what it had been."

The new strike program steadily grew in proportion until more than half the naval air effort—approximately 2,500 sorties per month—was being applied along the frontlines—either as close air support missions (nicknamed "Call Shot") or as pre-briefed strikes (nicknamed "Cherokee"). The period from 2 November to 25 November was typical: 522 Cherokee missions, and 212 Call-Shot sorties.

"On several occasions," said Captain Ray M. Pitts, "the Cherokee program was credited with disrupting several major buildups and attacks by the Communists north of the bombline in the fall of 1952.

"On one occasion, I was attending a briefing at First Marine Division headquarters. During the briefing, it was revealed that there was an enemy buildup in their area, and they had reports of a limited Communist push.

"This enemy concentration seemed an ideal target for a Cherokee, so I copied down the coordinates of the area and fired a priority despatch to Commander Seventh Fleet for information of Commander Task Force 77.

"Admiral Clark verified the mission to CTF 77 by voice radio. Next morning at first light, a Navy jet photo plane took pictures of the area.

"The developed pictures corroborated the buildup; by 1030 that same morning, a heavy Cherokee strike was on its way.

"Later, our forces captured some prisoners who told us that this raid had taken a heavy toll; that the Chinese were burying their dead the rest of the night, including their general."[15]

The table of total damage by the Task Force 77 aircraft for this period was as follows:

Supply Areas: 5 destroyed, 3 damaged
Bunkers: 56 destroyed, 102 damaged
Trenches: 680 yards destroyed, 435 yards damaged
Mortars: 40 destroyed, 15 damaged
Artillery: 34 destroyed, 31 damaged
Personnel Shelters: 34 destroyed, 7 damaged
Troop Casualties: 59
Caves: 1 destroyed, 5 damaged
Buildings: 6 destroyed
Rail Cuts: 6 destroyed
Railroad Cars: 1 destroyed, 4 damaged

Usually, only estimates of damage to the enemy fortifications could be given, except on the occasions when a hill or a section of the enemy line was captured. The Communist entrenchments were well constructed and deeply tunneled into the rocky Korean hills. As many as six openings led from bunkers. The bunkers were strongly built, usually fifteen feet in diameter.

On such deeply-dug entrenchments, only the heaviest bombs proved effective. Light bombs, even napalm, did little damage to the tunnels, bunkers, and dugouts. The 1,000- and 2,000-pounders carried by the Corsairs and Skyraiders, however, often collapsed the tunnels and bunkers, burying alive the Communist soldiers therein. On other occasions the terrific blast of these bombs was sufficient to kill. Dead Communist soldiers were sometimes found with their brains oozing from their ears as a result of the heavy blasts.

The Cherokee strike pilots also dropped heavy bombs fuzed for delays of up to twelve hours in order to harass and hamper the enemy for long periods during the nights.

"On one day in early December in the 'Iron Triangle' area," said CDR R. P. Fuller, Air Intelligence Officer of Carrier Division Five, "TF-77 planes had twenty-seven secondary explosions from Cherokee strikes. One ammo storage blew so high that the smoke rose up to 2500 feet."[16]

As the year 1953 commenced, the Cherokee program hit a snag.

"The danger of bombing friendly troops in the Cherokee program was always recognized," said Vice Admiral Clark, "and every reasonable precaution was taken to prevent it. Target location and identification was very difficult because of the similarity of terrain, the profusion of ridges, ravines, canyons and streams along the battlefront. This problem was intensified by the snows and fog of wintertime."

During January to September 1952, there had been no less than 63 instances of bombs having been dropped behind friendly lines. Of the 63, the Fifth Air Force was responsible for 39 and the Marines 18, and the Navy was thought accountable for the six unidentified flights.

"In December and January," continued Admiral Clark, "bombs were dropped on four occasions inside friendly lines. Newspaper correspondents happened to be on the scene and published detailed accounts of the mishaps. One of them occurred on 21 December, when a CTF 77 airplane accidentally released a bomb on Republic of Korea troops. One man was killed and four injured. Again on 17 January, two bombs were dropped by early morning night-hecklers which killed three ROK Army soldiers and wounded eight others.

"In view of the publicity, General Clark activated an inter-Service board to investigate the incidents and to assign Service responsibility.

"Since the Fifth Air Force in Korea was charged with the sole responsibility for the prevention of friendly bombings," said Admiral Clark, "a campaign was immediately instituted by them to prevent recurrence. The Fifth Air Force instituted a policy that any air group commander whose planes were involved would be relieved, and the pilots involved recommended for court-martial. As a result, Fifth Air Force's participation and interest in the Cherokee strikes dwindled, and to some extent the Navy's did also. This was unfortunate, because it slowed down the use of Cherokee strikes at the battleline for several weeks."

By March 1953, however, control procedures, careful briefings, and improving weather permitted a return to heavier emphasis on Cherokee support to the frontlines. Planes with missions at or near the frontlines were controlled by radar until they were definitely north of the bombline.

Cherokee targets were selected jointly by the Commander Task Force 77 planning officer and Headquarters Eighth Army in a new attempt at closer liaison and control.

On 1-10 March, Admiral Hickey and his staff toured the frontline areas to obtain the Army reactions to the Task Force 77 attacks.

The general Army opinion of the heavy Cherokee strikes continued to be excellent. The strikes, they said, usually demolished the targets. While the results were not always visible or measurable, the program was undoubtedly hurting the enemy and reducing his attack potential. In fact, several of the Cherokee missions had

blunted and even prevented enemy attacks.

"I was on this frontline inspection trip," said CDR R. P. Fuller, "and every single Army man and Marine we spoke to, from private to general, praised the Cherokee strikes. 'Can you imagine', they would tell us, 'what *our* reaction would be if the Reds had *their* airpower striking us here in the frontlines?'

"The best evidence that the Cherokee program was hurting the enemy was his AA reaction," continued Fuller. "The Communists never wasted ammunition, yet they often exhausted their local stores of ammo trying to counteract the Cherokees."[17]

The Army suggested that naval flight leaders, in addition to bringing their own jet fighters for flak suppression, might want to request friendly artillery fire to keep the Communists' heads down. The *Philippine Sea's* pilots were quick to recognize that the antiaircraft suppression effect of artillery fire, when it could reach a Cherokee target, often was superior to that of the jet fighters.

Lieutenant General James Van Fleet, Eighth Army's commander, had an excellent opinion of the effectiveness of the Cherokee program. Indeed, the General visualized it as having a potential for something more than defensive strikes in defense of a static front.

"The Cherokee strikes really clobbered the enemy," said General Van Fleet, "and would have been better if we had just put on a ground attack with them. The Cherokee program was a system which, properly used, could have broken the sit-down; they were heavy strikes of concentrated effort delivered over a short period. If followed up by ground action, they might have caused a break-through or caused the enemy to react violently to restore his lines, consuming his reserves of manpower and ammunition until he was exhausted over a period of a week to ten days. Then the ground armies could have been released to produce a war of movement instead of a war of digging in."

The Cherokee strike program continued for the remainder of the war.

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Chapter 13. On the Line
Panthers Tangle with Russian MIGs

One of the most dramatic incidents of the Korean War happened on 18 November 1952, when U.S. Navy pilots encountered Russian MIGs.

On this day, Task Force 77 (under the command of Rear Admiral R. F. Hickey) was operating in far northern Korean waters, engaged in a two-day "maximum air" strike effort on targets in North Korea, principally against industrial targets in Chongjin, Kilchu, and Hoeryong, a city on the Yalu River. On the previous day, Task Force 77 had launched five coordinated air strikes on Chongjin, and the coastal city had also been bombarded by the battleship *Missouri* and the heavy cruiser *Helena.*

On the 18th of November, as on the day before, the task force was operating southeast of Chongjin (approximately 90 miles from Vladivostok), striking Hoeryong. The task force was in the same sea area that it had used on many previous occasions.

Cruising at 13,000 feet above the task force, centered around the carriers *Oriskany, Essex,* and *Kearsarge,* was a team of four F9F5 Panther aircraft[17A] from *Oriskany's* VF-781 Pacemaker squadron (LCDR S. R. Holm).

The Panther pilots were:

LT Claire R. Elwood—Team Leader
LTJG John D. Middleton—Wingman
LT Elmer R. Williams—Section Leader
LTJG David M. Rowlands—Wingman

Because of a fuel boost pump failure in LT Elwood's plane, the four Panther aircraft had descended from normal combat air patrol altitude to the 13,000-foot level.

Shortly after noon, various groups of unidentified aircraft crossing ahead of the task force from northwest to northeast were detected by the task force on radar at distances of from 40 to 100 miles.

At 1335, however, a group of unidentified aircraft, estimated at eight, was plotted on a direct approach toward the task force.

The *Oriskany's* air controller alerted the CAP and ordered a vector and climb toward the unknown aircraft.

Because of his malfunctioning engine which forced him to remain at a lower altitude, Elwood detached his second section (LT Williams and LTJG Rowlands) to make the contact. Williams and Rowlands continued the climbing vector. At approximately 1350, upon reaching 15,000 feet, Williams tally-hoed seven condensation trails high above him. The aircraft were MIGs. At the time of contact the planes were approximately north of the task force, 45 miles away. The fight which followed lasted a furious and confused eight minutes.

In a loose, abreast formation, the seven silver-colored MIGs passed high above the two Panther pilots, made a descending turn, and split into two groups—one four-plane group and one three-plane group—in an attempt to box in the two Navy planes.

"At this point," said LT Williams,[18] "we lost sight of the MIGs because their contrails had stopped. However, we continued our climb to 26,000, and upon levelling off I spotted four MIGs making a flatside attack on us from the ten o'clock position.

"As the four came toward us and reached firing range, I turned hard left into them, spoiling the effectiveness of their run, even though neither Rowlands nor I was able to bring our own guns to bear.

"The four MIGs recovered to our right, in a sort of strung-out formation, with the fourth MIG especially far back.

"I continued my wrapped-up turn, and came on around for a tail shot at this last MIG. I commenced firing from 15° off his tail.

"My first burst sent him into an uncontrolled spiral. Dave Rowlands followed this crippled MIG down to 8,000 feet, where he left it smoking in a deep graveyard spiral. Later, gun camera film confirmed the kill of this MIG.

"Meanwhile, the other three MIGs pulled up and away from me, and split into a pair and a single in an attempt to get on each side of me.

"The pair of MIGs then made an attack. I rolled into a sharp turn, and got a head-on burst at the second one.

"I kept turning into subsequent attacks," continued Williams, "and on several passes, I was able to reverse my turn in time to get a shot at an overshooting MIG. In one such counter I scored some hits, for in the gun camera film which was later developed, parts could be seen flying off. Either by my gunfire or this pilot's deliberate action, the MIG ran out his dive brakes and decelerated so rapidly that I had to pull away sharply. I only missed a collision with him by a narrow margin."

As Rowlands rejoined the fight from below, a MIG promptly made a head-on attack on him. The dogfight became a melee. At some unknown time during the dogfight, the three other MIGs joined the battle.

"This MIG started firing at me from 'way out," said Rowlands,[19] "and then broke off his attack in a steep-climbing turn. By now, there seemed to be MIGs all around me.

"I countered each attack as best as I could. On one of them, I succeeded in getting a MIG in my sights and fired a long burst. He started smoking, but a split second later my attention was diverted by another MIG making an attack on me. He and I wound up in a tight circle across from each other, and neither of us able to get on the other's tail. Finally, the MIG simply leveled his wings and climbed very rapidly away from me."

Until now, despite all the flying bullets, the two naval aircraft had not suffered a hit. Both Williams and Rowlands were operating their engines at 100 per cent power.

"At this point," continued Williams, "I succeeded in getting another MIG burning. I stayed on his tail, trying to finish him off, when I spotted another MIG coming up *my* tail. As I rolled into a hard right turn, I felt my plane shake."

A high explosive shell had struck Williams' plane, severing the rudder control and knocking out the aileron boost. With the MIG still on his tail, Williams dived his crippled plane for the clouds, 10,000 feet below.

"The MIG stayed right behind me in a tight trail position," said Williams, "and continued to fire at me even as we went into the clouds. My only evasive maneuver was a series of zooms—applying hard forward and back pressure on the stick control."

Meanwhile, a third Navy Panther was climbing to join the fracas. At his request, LTJG Middleton was detached from his leader, LT Elwood, and climbed to join the scrap involving his two squadron friends.

Upon reaching the fight, a MIG made a head-on run at Middleton. Simultaneously, Middleton saw Williams, a MIG, and Rowlands diving for the clouds. Rowlands, out of ammunition, had fallen in alongside the MIG, flying a loose wing position on it in an effort to draw him away from Williams.

"The most unbelievable part of the incident," said Middleton, "was the sight of Rowlands sitting so close on a MIG's tail with the MIG firing away like mad at Williams."

While Middleton dove toward his teammates to render aid, a second MIG attacked him, but his shots missed.

Following this attack, the MIG reversed its course and the pilot either lost Middleton in the sun or became engrossed in getting ready to make an attack on Rowlands. In either case, Middleton was now in position

for a full-deflection shot at his attacker. He commenced firing from far out, and continued firing as the MIG's superior speed left his Panther tailing behind. Middleton saw the enemy pilot bail out, and the MIG crashed into the sea.

"After watching the enemy pilot land in the water," said Middleton, "I orbited around him with my emergency IFF on, as I was convinced he would be of more benefit to us alive than dead."[19A]

"I am convinced that Middleton saved my life," said Rowlands, "as the MIG he shot down was making a run on me."

After reaching the safety of the clouds, the three Panthers were given a radar steer to return to the task force. All three pilots landed aboard *Oriskany* without further difficulty.

As the task force retired toward the south at the conclusion of the two-day effort, all ships in Task Force 77 were a buzz of activity and talk. Radar plots and logs were exchanged; Williams, Rowlands, and Middleton were pumped for observations, opinions, and comments.

That the MIGs were Russian ones from the Vladivostok complex there seemed little doubt.

"Every time we had taken the task force up that far north before, or even just a battleship, we got some kind of reaction in the form of airplanes rising up from the vicinity of Vladivostok," said VADM J. J. Clark, Commander Seventh Fleet aboard *Missouri*. "This was plain from many radar plots. Usually, they seemed to be just flying some sort of barrier patrol as protection for their own area.

"On this occasion, however, there were about 60 or more images on the radar scope at various times during the afternoon. The bunch which tangled with our planes were headed straight for the Fleet, and only 35 to 40 miles away when the initial contact was made. I can only surmise that they had orders to attack."[20]

Said the Air Intelligence Officer of ComCarDiv-FIVE, CDR R. P. Fuller, "At the time of this melee, there was one division of F9F2s and one division of F2H2s from the *Kearsarge* Air Group airborne and less than two minutes away. Why *they* were not vectored into the scrap, I'll never know."

Both Williams and Middleton were convinced that the MIG pilots had not used the superior points of their aircraft to advantage.

"The poor showing of the MIGs was not wholly due to inexperience," said Williams, "although that was a factor. They seemed to use good offensive tactics, but their gunnery was not good. Part of their failure to shoot us down was no doubt wild shooting. But I believe another reason for their poor marksmanship was the inferior gunsight with which the MIG was equipped."

Rowlands was in agreement with his team leader.

"The pilots of VF-781 concluded that we were very fortunate to have come back with our whole skins," said Rowlands. "The MIG pilots were inexperienced and sacrificed their aircraft's advantages without hesitation. As for their gunnery, theirs was about like mine—wild. All of them fired too far out for accuracy."

The Navy-MIG incident was still a conversation piece during the visit of the newly-elected U.S. President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, to Korea in early December, three weeks later.

"On 3 December," said Vice Admiral Clark, "I was invited by General Van Fleet to his headquarters in Seoul to meet the President-elect, Dwight D. Eisenhower. At the suggestion of Admiral Briscoe, I took along in my plane the three *Oriskany* pilots—Lieutenants Williams, Middleton, and Rowlands—who had fought the Russian MIGs so that they would be available in case Mr. Eisenhower might wish to see them. As it happened, he did.

"When we arrived in Seoul at the Eighth Army Headquarters I told General Van Fleet I had brought them along, and he said he'd tell 'Ike' they were present. The President came out, shook hands, and invited them into his private suite. Present were the Secretary-designate of Defense, Mr. Charles E. Wilson, Admiral Radford, Admiral Briscoe, General Van Fleet, and myself.

"While the three officers were telling their story to the President, in walked General Weyland,

commanding the Far East Air Force, and Lieutenant General Barcus, commanding the Fifth Air Force. It was at once realized by everybody present that the Navy had stolen the show."

The naval pilots were impressed by the knowledge of air warfare that the President displayed, and his desire to know what the pilots wanted in their combatant aircraft.

"President Eisenhower congratulated us," said Rowlands, "and was quite interested in just where the fight started and who had started it. He also wanted a firsthand account of the fight."

"The President's reaction to our story was one of elation," said Williams, "but what impressed me most was his desire to get our opinion and evaluation of our present aircraft and what we pilots wanted in performance of future aircraft."

Later that evening, Vice Admiral Clark took LT Williams and his wingmates to Admiral Radford's quarters for a further interview.

"Admiral Radford was critical of our pilots becoming separated during the dogfight," said Vice Admiral Clark, "because, according to accepted combat doctrine, it is basic that fighter planes stick close together for mutual protection. I had to agree with Admiral Radford, except for the final score; *that* was in our favor."

Minor though it was, this encounter had several results and repercussions. It had demonstrated the definite superiority of the MIG over the most advanced Navy fighter then operational in the Fleet: the F9F5. Only the superior training and better marksmanship of the naval pilots had evened the score. Official records credit Williams and Middleton with the destruction of one plane each, Rowlands with one damaged. This is undoubtedly conservative. Later compilations of radar plots and pilot interviews indicated a strong possibility that only one or possibly two of the original seven MIGs returned to base. Five or perhaps even six were either shot down directly, damaged so severely as to crash, or ran out of fuel on the way home.

Another result of the incident was to re-emphasize the basic purpose of the fighter: air-to-air combat. The peculiar nature of the Korean War and the usual employment of Navy fighters had unconsciously subordinated their primary function to bombing, rocketing, and flak-suppression.

Also, the scrap had partly counterbalanced two recent Task Force 77 losses to enemy MIGs. On 4 October 1952, LT Eugene F. Johnson, a VF-884 Corsair pilot aboard *Kearsarge*, had been shot down by a MIG near Wonsan. Johnson's was one of seven F4Us attacking Yongpo. While in a dive, he had been attacked by four MIGs, and his plane was seen to crash.

Three days later, a second Navy pilot had been lost to MIGs. On 7 October 1952, near Hungnam, a *Princeton* F4U pilot, ENS John R. Shaughnessy, VF-193, had been set afire and shot down by a MIG. Shaughnessy had succeeded in parachuting clear of his burning Corsair, and been picked up by the USS *Boyd* (DD-544). While in the water, Shaughnessy had become entangled in his parachute shroud lines and been nearly drowned when rescued. He expired on board the *Boyd*.

"These MIG attacks followed no special pattern," said VADM Clark. "Each time they appeared, the Task Force would send our jet combat air patrol out to catch them, but when our jets were on station, the MIGs failed to appear. Indications pointed to the fact that the Communists were using radar control for these MIGs. As a result of these attacks, Task Force 77 began a program of destroying these enemy radar stations which continued through the rest of the war as the opportunity afforded."

To many of the naval airmen, the destruction of the MIGs on the 18th of November had partially evened the score.

Finally, the battle had tested the air defense capability of a carrier task force.

In the official report of Commander Carrier Division Five, Rear Admiral R. F. Hickey reported that the task force communications and radar performance had been "excellent" and the "coordination between ships' CIC's (Combat Information Centers) highly efficient."

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The "Bedcheck Charlies"

During the last several months of the Korean war, the Communist enemy adopted a tactic which long went uncountered—the use of "Bedcheck Charlies."[20A]

The Bedcheck Charlies were antique aircraft of two types—YAK-18 Soviet-built training planes (a low-wing, single-engine aircraft with a cruising speed of 100 knots and a cruising radius of approximately 200 miles); or PO-2s (a Russian-built wood and fabric bi-plane with a top speed of 110 mph). Each of these aircraft was capable of carrying one or two small bombs.

At odd intervals on dark nights, singles or small groups of YAK-18 or PO-2 aircraft would fly from grass fields in North Korea over the battleline or to the Seoul area, flying as low as possible to reduce the possibility of radar detection. Their wood and fabric construction made radar detection difficult. Buzzing low over the city in the darkness, these raids succeeded in arousing the sleeping city. Air raid alarms would be sounded; in most cases searchlights would be lit off; and during the course of these nocturnal maraudings, the Bedcheck Charlie would drop one or two small bombs. The damage was usually trivial and often nonexistent. But the harassment and nuisance value was far from insignificant.

In May and June, the Reds became increasingly bold and succeeded in doing some damage.

On 3 May, a group of Bedcheck Charlies dropped nine bombs in the X Corps and I ROK Corps areas along the battleline, but no casualties were reported. Shortly after midnight, 26–27 May, a group of Bedcheck Charlies (estimated at six PO-2s) succeeded in dropping four small 100-pound general purpose bombs and eight 50-pound artillery shells on K-14 airfield near Inchon, puncturing the gasoline pipeline. On the night of 2 June a group of Bedcheck Charlies was reported over K-6 airfield (near Pyong-taek, 30 miles south of Inchon), obviously feeling for the neat lines of parked airplanes. This was the greatest danger of these raids—the possibility that the Bedcheck Charlies might locate and inflict severe damage to aircraft parked on the South Korean airfields, some of which had little or no suitable AA defenses for low, slow-flying, wooden training planes.

The night of 8 June saw a nine-plane raid on Seoul which, according to newspaper reports, killed two persons and injured eight. The first bomb hit only 1,000 feet away from President Syngman Rhee's residence, while a second hit a school building 400 yards away. Another bomb struck in front of the Seoul press billets, and flying glass slightly injured a *Life* magazine photographer.[21] Many thought the attack on Rhee's residence was an attempt to make the ROK President more amenable to the impending truce.

On the night of 16 June, a 15-plane Bedcheck Charlie raid succeeded in bombing a petroleum, oil, and lubrication dump near Inchon, torching 52,000 gallons of petroleum products. The raid commenced at 10:30 P.M. and continued for two hours, as searchlights and AA fire criss-crossed the skies. Smoke and flames from the burning 40-acre area were visible the next day for 40 miles. It was the Seoul area's fifth raid in nine nights.[22]

To combat these raids, there were not available either to the Fifth Air Force in Korea or the First Marine Air Wing planes which were slow enough to destroy these trainers and which were also equipped with the necessary night-fighter electronic equipment to detect them. The jet-type night fighters employed (FAFIK was flying F-94s; the Marines, F3D Skyknights) could not slow down sufficiently to engage the Bedcheck Charlies. On a few occasions a team of flare-dropping aircraft and a T-6 "Texan" trainer had been launched while a Bedcheck Charlie raid was in progress, with the hope that they could illuminate and destroy the pestiferous planes; but the system never worked.

"When I learned about these enemy night raids," said VADM J. J. Clark, Commander Seventh Fleet, "I asked my staff if there wasn't something the Navy could do to lend the Air Force a helping hand.

"The operations officer for CarDivOne, CDR John P. Conn, suggested that we send Corsair F4U5N night fighters ashore to assist in combating these nuisance raids. Since our planes were Corsairs, and the Marines had an airfield at K-8 from where they operated Corsairs, the F4U5Ns could be based at that airfield, which was 35 miles south of Seoul.

"Without further ado, and not waiting for him to accept, I sent a message to Lieutenant General S. E. Anderson, commanding the Fifth Air Force, advising him that a detachment of Corsairs from the Fleet was on its way to report to him in an effort to knock out these Bedcheck Charlies. Two F4U5Ns were sent in from each carrier.

Click here to view map

"The Navy night pilots (all from VC-3) received a week's familiarization. On the night of 29 June, LT Guy P. Bordelon, attached to *Princeton*, shot down two of the Bedcheck Charlies.

"Admiral Briscoe told me about this when I arrived in the office on the 30th for a routine visit," said VADM Clark. "I immediately decided to award LT Bordelon a Silver Star Medal for his feat, and since I was scheduled to fly back to Korea that night, I decided to go to K-6 to witness the operations of our night fighters and to lend encouragement to their efforts.

"As we approached the field at about 2230 that night, we were ordered to land at K-3 because of an air raid. We turned around and flew to K-3, but that field was blanketed by heavy fog. We finally landed at 0130 next day at Taegu.

"Afterwards we learned that the reason for the alert at K-6 had been another enemy raid. LT Bordelon had shot down two more night fighters. Then and there, I decided to present him with a gold star in lieu of a second Silver Star.

"Accordingly, I flew to General Anderson's headquarters in Seoul. Both the feats of LT Bordelon had been confirmed by the radar track kept by the Air Force, although no wreckage of the downed planes was ever found. I then flew to K-6 where luncheon was given in honor of LT Bordelon by Major General McGee, USMC, under whose immediate jurisdiction the feats had been accomplished, and who had flown over for the occasion from K-3. Bordelon told us that when he had made contact with the enemy planes, each of them began to take violent evasive action.

"In a traditional ceremony I presented Bordelon with both awards at the same time, promising him, or anyone else who shot down five planes at night, a Navy Cross.

"On the night of July 17th, Bordelon succeeded in bagging his fifth enemy plane. Since his operations were conducted under General Anderson, commanding the Fifth Air Force, after obtaining authority from the Secretary of the Navy, I asked the General to make the presentation of the Navy Cross at once. This he did at an appropriate ceremony at Fifth Air Force headquarters.

"LT Bordelon had attained for himself the distinction of being the first and only night ace in the U.S. Navy. As a result of his effort, enemy night raids on Seoul ceased, and the city was able to sleep once more."

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Truce Talks Resumed

During the winter months of 1952-1953, the stalemated war dragged on in the same monotonous pattern, with little change in the battleline, with little ground action other than patrol activity, and with little hope for an end to the bleak and bitter war.

January at Panmunjom saw occasional meetings between liaison officers, at which the Communists made false charges about overflights and bombardments of the neutral zone. The fighting along the front consisted only of harassing probes and limited objective offensives. By Presidential order, the island of Formosa was de-neutralized.

February saw little change, with continued limited activity along the front. Late in the month, there was a pickup in close air support by Seventh Fleet aircraft. Typical of this work was a mission on 21 February 1953. Six *Valley Forge* VF-54 ADs, led by their skipper, CDR Henry J. Suerstedt, Jr., were diverted from a routine close air support mission and put to work on a hill in Ninth Corps area where UN troops were attempting to regain control of the crest. Communist troops were dug in on the defilade side of the crest and artillery could not reach them. Suerstedt's ADs made runs parallel to the front of the UN troops, dropping 500- and 1,000-pound bombs on the Communist side of the ridge at distances reported by the "Mosquito" as only 75 yards from the UN troops. Following these runs, three of the ADs strafed. The ridge was reported as taken. The "Mosquito" reported 100 per cent accuracy and ordnance effectiveness: sixteen bunkers destroyed or severely damaged, and two caves destroyed, along with many enemy troops.

March saw a die-hard Communist riot in the POW compounds at Yongcho and Koje Islands, and several hard attacks by the Reds, but with no exchange of real estate, however.

April and springtime, however, brought new developments.

The major event was a resumption of the deadlocked truce talks. To a UN invitation to exchange seriously sick and wounded prisoners in accordance with the Geneva Convention, the Communists surprised the world by saying "Yes." On 6 April, therefore, talks were commenced at Panmunjom which led to agreement on 11 April. "Operation Little Switch" commenced on 20 April. Six thousand six hundred and seventy Communist personnel and 684 UN prisoners (149 of them U.S.) were exchanged.

Spurred by this speedy agreement, steps were taken to reopen the main truce talks.

On 26 April, following the exchange of sick and wounded, the 199-day recess of the armistice negotiations was ended. Prospects that an end to the stalemated conflict might be imminent suddenly became brighter.

At sea, April Fool's Day began with Task Force 77 repeating the oft-repeated tasks once again. The rail lines from Kilchu to Tanchon were hit. Close air support was given to U.S. IX Corps. Naval gunfire spot was furnished for still another bombardment of Songjin. Targets in Wonsan, including the harbor guns, were struck. One F9F5 from VF-51 (flown by LT E. J. Thabet) was hit by flak. Thabet parachuted to safety over Wonsan, being rescued by LST helicopter.

On 13 April, the beleaguered city of Chongjin was battered in another maximum air-gun strike. One hundred and nineteen sorties from *Philippine Sea's* Carrier Air Group Nine and *Oriskany's* Carrier Air Group Twelve hit the city's transportation network and its mining and ordnance areas. Pilots reported the destruction of a communications center in a harmless-looking bank building.

April 21st was "Boy-San Day," when the pilots of *Princeton* and *Oriskany* struck targets of their own

preference. Two hundred and twenty-three sorties were flown. Even so, the targets were much the same—the supply and industrial areas of northeast Korea, the Hodo Pando guns of Wonsan, a jet sweep past Pukchong, and naval gunfire support and Cherokee missions. The best result, perhaps, was the fact that no pilots were lost.

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Big Push

As the main armistice talks were reopened, there was only one major obstacle to a truce: what to do with the 114,500 Chinese and 34,000 North Korean prisoners who refused to return to their homeland. The Communists insisted they had to be returned—using force if necessary. The UN's position was that no prisoner who refused repatriation should be returned to Communist control against his will. The government of the United States refused to compromise on this cardinal principle. ". . . The principle that force shall not be used to compel resisting prisoners to go home excludes every form of coercion. We cannot, consistently with that principle, create a situation where such persons are offered no alternative to repatriation other than indefinite captivity or custody."

For weeks, the truce talks pivoted on this thorny issue. At the resumption of the plenary sessions the Communist negotiators made a proposal that all prisoners not directly repatriated be sent to an agreed neutral state where, for the succeeding six months, representatives of the states to which they belonged would "explain" to them matters related to their return. The disposition of any remaining nonrepatriates after the six months had passed would be referred to the political conference called for under the draft Armistice Agreement. Subsequent negotiations centered upon three matters: the choice of a suitable neutral state; the question whether the prisoners who did not accept repatriation should be turned over to the neutral state outside Korea, which the United Nations Command considered a difficult and unnecessary operation; and the length of time the nonrepatriates should remain in neutral custody, after which the UN Command insisted they must be released to civilian status.

On May 7 the Communist representative submitted a revised proposal providing for establishment of a neutral commission, to be called the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission and to be composed of the four states already agreed upon as members of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission—Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland—plus India. This proposal provided that the Commission would take custody of the prisoners in Korea. It further provided that the nonrepatriates would remain in neutral custody for four months, and that thereafter the dispsition of any remaining prisoners would be referred to the political conference.

On May 13 the United Nations Command presented a counterproposal providing for the release of all Korean nonrepatriates immediately after the armistice, sending only the Chinese nonrepatriates into neutral custody where India alone would provide the necessary military forces for their control, and shortening to two months the period during which the non-repatriates would remain in neutral custody.

This proposal was immediately rejected by the Communists.

Optimism plummeted once again.

To further complicate the truce negotiations, President Syngman Rhee announced on 25 May that his Republic of Korea government would not accept any armistice that would leave Korea divided; his government further threatened to withdraw all ROK divisions from the UN command and use them independently to continue the war if a truce was signed. On the same date the UN team issued a counterplan, which provided for the transfer of all nonrepatriates to neutral custody for 90 days. However, the guarantee that no prisoner would be forced home against his will remained. This was followed by a ten-day recess.

On 4 June, the much-recessed armistice talks were resumed, and another attempt was made to settle the repatriation issue. Rhee ordered his ROK truce team member to boycott further meetings. The Communists agreed to accept an "explanation" period after the armistice, during which time, under the Five Power Commission's supervision, they could interview each Chinese and Korean prisoner who refused repatriation and try to induce him to return to Communist homeland.

With this stumbling block removed, the single issue obstructing a truce was the readjustment of the military demarcation line on which the armistice was to be based.

As before, whenever the truce prospects brightened, the enemy increased his efforts to gain ground along the MLR (Main Line of Resistance). Several outposts changed hands repeatedly, but no major change had yet occurred in the location of the frontlines.

"The pattern of enemy offensive activity intensified early in June," said VADM J. J. Clark. "The UN command received reports of troop movements toward the front, and many concentrations of Communists armies in the forward area were noted. Attacks along the line increased, ranging from company to division size. The heaviest concentration was in the eastern sector.

"All this activity on the part of the Communists was simply a question of 'face', which is all-important to the Oriental mind. At the time of the armistice, the Reds wanted to appear in an offensive role. They seemed determined to seize enough ground for propaganda purposes so they could say that UN forces were signing an armistice to avoid a military defeat."

On the eastern sector, after a bitter struggle, Anchor Hill and Hill 812 passed into enemy hands in late May and early June. This was followed by heavy action in the central sector, where the Communists attacked the Ninth U.S. and Second ROK Corps in division strength. Heavy concentrations of enemy artillery and mortar fire preceded all attacks. In the Second ROK Corps sector, Communist forces succeeded in pushing back the main line of resistance, capturing Capitol Hill, Finger Ridge, Outpost 'Texas', and portions of Christmas Hill.

"Noting this heavy enemy activity," continued VADM Clark, "I visited General Taylor's Eighth Army headquarters. On 6 June, I ordered Task Force 77 and Task Group 95.11 to exert maximum carrier air effort in support of the United Nations troops at the battleline."

During this final period of the war, Task Force 77 saw a new burst of activity. Four carriers operated on the line almost continuously, despite poor weather. Many operating records were smashed: total sorties flown, tonnages of armament delivered, total days at sea. Underway replenishment at night—of a magnitude never before known (27 times in 49 days)—became routine.

The following are excerpts from reports of the period:

Boxer: (CAPT Marshall B. Gurney; Air Task Group One, CDR L. A. Whitney)

"11 June 1953: 130 sorties. The ADs proved exceptionally effective in a close air support mission on the central front. The Mosquito controller reported 500 yards of trenches destroyed, 15 mortar positions destroyed, and 12 secondary explosions . . . .

"14 June 1953. 131 sorties. Jet Cherokee strikes hit supply buildings near the eastern frontline near Anchor Hill. ADs and jets were both used in close air support on eastern and central MLR. 1625 yards of trench, 8 mortar positions, and 9 gun emplacements were destroyed by close air support missions. . . .

"15 June 1953: 147 sorties. Today's strikes were part of the maximum effort put out by Task Force 77 in support of a counteroffensive by UN forces to retake ground lost the previous week in the vicinity of 'Anchor Hill'. In the effort, 650 yards of trench, 3 machine gun positions, 7 mortar positions, and 73 buildings were destroyed. 'Well Done's' were received from CG 8th Army, ComSeventhFlt, CTF 77, CincPacFlt, and ComNavFe. . . ."

Lake Champlain: (CAPT George T. Mundorff, USN; CVG-4, CDR John Sweeny)

"15 June 1953: Props again rendered close air support to United Nations troops, and jet strikes were directed to billeting and supply targets in the Cherokee area. One hundred forty-seven sorties were flown, dropping 103 tons of ordnance. The *Lake Champlain* (which had commenced combat operations two days earlier) received the following from CTF 77: 'You amateurs turned in a veteran performance today X We are proud of you X'."

Philippine Sea: (CAPT Paul H. Ramsey; Carrier Air Group Nine, CDR T. D. Harris)

"15 June 1953: The heaviest naval air blow of the conflict was struck today. . . Today was an all-Navy show for strikes in support of the ground forces to regain 'Anchor Hill.' At the end of the day's operation, 'Anchor Hill' was referred to by Air Group pilots as 'Anchor Valley.' The hill was regained by friendly ground forces and the operation was praised by General Lee of the ROKs and General Taylor of the Eighth Army. . . ."

Princeton: (CAPT O. C. Gregg; Carrier Air Group Fifteen, CDR John E. Parks)

"15 June 1953: The combat sortie record for aircraft carriers is believed to have been broken when 172 and 184 sorties were launched during 2 single-day operations (14 and 15 June)."

On 14 and 15 June, Task Force 77 had delivered 300 and 403 frontline missions respectively. Admiral Clark described the Seventh Fleet's contribution to the Anchor Hill operation.

"After conferences with Lieutenant General H. K. Lee, who commanded the First ROK Corps, I ordered a concentrated surface gunfire and carrier ir strike to support the recapture of Anchor Hill and its surrounding terrain. My flagship, the *New Jersey,* and the cruiser *St. Paul* would join the shoot.

"Carrier planes, assisted by the *New Jersey,* and the *St. Paul,* began an intense bombardment and bombing of the area on the 14th which continued throughout the morning of the 15th.

"Accompanied by Rear Admiral Harry Sanders (Commander Cruiser Division One) and Captain Herschel A. House of my staff, I flew by helicopter to an outpost near the scene of action. There I witnessed the attempt to re-occupy the lost territory.

"Supported beautifully by Seventh Fleet's planes, General Lee's troops had no difficulty in recapturing two of the hills, but on the main peak of Anchor Hill the enemy held out stubbornly until after four o'clock in the afternoon."

The battleship *New Jersey* laid down one of the heaviest bombardments of the war to assist in the capture of Anchor Hill. (This was the first use of a battleship at the bombline since *Iowa* had been so employed in October 1952.) The "Big Jay" reported 44 bunkers destroyed, 20 heavily damaged, 2 caves closed, 610 yards of trench torn up, 13 gun positions destroyed, and 13 others damaged.

"I have never seen a greater display of courage than that of the ROK troops in climbing the mountainous terrain of Anchor Hill," said Clark. "The ROKs would climb a few steps, only to be picked off by machine gun and artillery fire which was deadly accurate. Other ROKs would take the place of their fallen comrades. There was a large bomb crater about halfway up the hill in which several men had taken shelter from the blistering barrage. As I watched with binoculars, the enemy dropped a mortar shell into the crater, and men could be seen rolling part way down the steep slope until they stopped and lay still. They were dead. Again, farther up the hill, other ROK soldiers reached rocky terrain which offered some protection for a time, but the enemy again waited until twenty or thirty troops were concentrated among the rocks, then he delivered a heavy artillery barrage in their midst.

"Despite the enemy's intense opposition, the ROK Fifth Division troops reached the summit about four o'clock, supported by Seventh Fleet planes and ships. The entire complex was captured. The Communist enemy had suffered more than 3,000 casualties, while the First ROK Corps casualties were only 200 killed and 300 wounded. Lieutenant General Lee credited the carrier aircraft and the naval gunfire support for making it possible for his forces to seize Anchor Hill.

"Unfortunately," said VADM Clark, "the enemy regained the main peak later that night due to faulty leadership and supply arrangements. The enemy offensive on the eastern front was crushed, however, and fighting in that area subsided."

Congratulatory dispatches for the naval support came from many commands. General Taylor said in his despatch:

"Today has been a costly one for our enemies. The frontline troops of Army Eight were in praise of the magnificent report they received from the planes of the Seventh Fleet and the gunfire of the ships at sea. . . ."

Lieutenant General Lee radioed:

"Please accept my deepest thanks and appreciation for the magnificent effort of your naval air and surface forces in support of the Corps' operation. I have never seen a better performance. . . ."

For 700 days, Communist intransigence had opposed the truce. Ironically, on 16 June, as a truce agreement was finalized at Panmunjom, a sudden and unexpected action on the part of President Syngman Rhee came close to ending the truce talks once and for all.

At lunch that day, Lieutenant General William K. Harrison, Jr., the senior UN negotiator, had confided to Vice Admiral Clark that the last remaining adjustment of the demarcation line was about to be made and that he expected an armistice within three or four days. At four o'clock in the afternoon, in fact, Harrison telephoned Clark to say that all remaining points of discussion had been agreed upon and that it was only necessary to translate the terms into the various languages before the armistice would be signed. In four days, Harrison told Clark, the actual signing could take place.

It was at this stage of the negotiations that President Syngman Rhee dramatically released the 27,000-odd anti-Communist prisoners in his custody. Rhee also declared martial law throughout the Republic of Korea and recalled his army officers stationed in the United States, saying that the armistice meant suicide for South Korea, and that if the United States signed the armistice, it would be an act of betrayal and appeasement.

At Panmunjom, the Communists hotly denounced the action of Rhee, accusing him of freeing the prisoners so they could be enlisted in the ROK Army, and further accused the United States of complicity in the release. The Communist negotiators demanded that the released POWs be recaptured—a manifestly impossible task.

For several anxious days there was deep concern in UN circles, particularly among the Allies who had contributed forces to the UN command, lest the unilateral action by Rhee break up the truce negotiations, re-kindle the war, and perhaps even expand its scope.

In late June, the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, sent Mr. Walter S. Robertson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, to Korea to confer with Mr. Rhee.

Upon Robertson's arrival, 26 June, a series of demonstrations took place throughout South Korea. President Rhee repeated that it was South Korea's desire not to sign an armistice, but to fight on to the bitter end. On 25 June, speaking to 300,000 Seoul citizens on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Korean War, President Rhee asked that his country ". . . be allowed to decide our own fate."

The Communist response to these demonstrations and announcements was one of the heaviest attacks of the war. The Chinese attack was directed at the Second ROK Corps, commanded by General Chung Il Kwon, in what many considered to be a punishment attack to belittle the ROK Army and to persuade President Rhee to agree to a truce.

The Reds struck in force on the night of 13 June. Six enemy divisions, numbering 13,000 men, assaulted the Second ROK Army Corps sector of the battleline. When their administrative allotment of artillery ammunition had been expended, the Second ROK Corps withdrew in good order to a distance of six to eight miles, fighting a delaying action. On the right flank the ROK Capitol Division, commanded by General "Tiger" Song, gave ground slowly and successively, withdrawing its artillery safely, and bloodily punishing the enemy.

For the next six days the carriers of Task Force 77 stood by the endangered sector. Vice Admiral Clark directed on 14 July that until further notice, all Task Force 77 air effort would support the battlefront.

Lake Champlain (CAPT L. B. Southerland; CVG-4, CDR J. R. Sweeney)

"15 July 1953: . . . inclement weather limited flight operations to 23 sorties. . . concentrated on close and deep support of hard-pressed UN troops along the east central front. The Tactical Air Controller of one of the Cherokee missions reported that their drop on an ammunition dump, which resulted in five secondary explosions, was 'the best run in weeks'."

Boxer (CAPT M. B. Gurney; ATG-1, CDR L. A. Whitney)

"16 July 1953: 111 sorties were flown, almost all in the bulge area of the front near Kumwha. . . . Two Cherokee strikes . . . destroyed 35 personnel shelters, 20 bunkers, 400 yards of trenches and an artillery position. Three secondary explosions resulted. Other Panther flights of the day destroyed eight trucks, cut five bridges, and damaged storage and staging areas."

To quell the attack, Eighth Army also requested that armed reconnaissance flights along the enemy's main supply routes be increased. To advance, any Chinese offensive must be supported logistically, and by daylight.

By chance, one *Lake Champlain* squadron commander had driven over the same roads and across the same bridges in June that he would be bombing in July.

"To the novice in Korea, a particularly good way to distinguish North Korea from South Korea was by the quality of roads and bridges," said CDR W. W. Kelly, commanding officer of VF-62. "In South Korea, the roads looked like clean white ribbons from the air. The bridges were wide, white, and conspicuous-looking. In contrast, the North Korea roads and bridges were small, damaged, and unused-looking.

"On 16 July, I was leading an armed recco hop when the main controller called on the radio, diverted my flight, and ordered us to bomb all the bridges in a certain area.

"We quickly plotted the coordinates and found that the targets were in friendly territory. I could identify this particular area personally because, a few days before, I had been on a board of investigation and had driven over it in a jeep.

"I immediately thought this might be a fake enemy transmission since the sender was diverting my flight and asking us to bomb our own territory. After he authenticated, however, he told us that the Chinese forces had broken through in this area, and we were to knock the bridges out to slow them down.

"Unfortunately, we were not armed for bridge-busting. We did our best with our 250-pound bombs, and I think it kept the enemy slowed down. Just as we were leaving the target, my air group commander came along with eight *Lake Champlain* Skyraiders. They had 2,000-lb. bombs, and I personally saw CDR Sweeney's bomb blow a section of bridge high in the air."[23]

For the remaining two weeks of the war, the four carriers pounded the enemy forces, setting new records for sorties flown on three successive days—24 July, 598; 25 July, 608; 26 July, 649. Seven thousand five hundred and seventy-one offensive sorties, half of them at the bombline, were delivered in an all-out effort to stabilize the front.

"As it turned out," said Admiral Clark, "the Chinese Communist Army was not prepared for a general offensive. Most of the Communist soldiers had only two or three days' rations in their pockets, and they couldn't move fast enough.

"By the 19th of July, the full weight of the enemy onslaught had subsided and friendly counterattacks gradually reduced the extent of his frontal penetration.

"This release of prisoners by President Rhee had prolonged the war about five weeks, during which time United Nations troops, including South Koreans, sustained 46,000 casualties while the Communists had suffered an estimated 75,000 casualties."[24]

Vice Admiral R. P. Briscoe, Commander Naval Forces Far East, despatched his congratulations:

"Please pass to all units of your Fleet my congratulations upon the superb effort they have put out during the past few weeks. In spite of almost impossible operating weather, they have prevented the enemy from capitalizing on his advantage and have added immeasurably to the destruction of his resources. A hearty well-done to all of you."

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Chapter 13. On the Line
The Last Day

The last day of the war began like the ones before. Task Force 77 aircraft destroyed and damaged 23 railroad cars, 11 railroad bridges, one railroad tunnel, 69 buildings, 100 yards of trench and 9 highway bridges. Forty rail and three highway cuts were made.

Philippine Sea:

"The day had a fast start with 49 sorties launched before the truce . . ."

Boxer:

"On 27 July, 77 sorties were flown. Missions consisted of strikes, armed reconnaissance, and interdiction. At 1000, the cease-fire agreement was signed at Panmunjom which became effective twelve hours later. At 2200, all hostilities ceased, but until that time F9Fs hit airfields at Yonpo, Koeman, and Hamhung West."

Lake Champlain:

"On 27 July, in conjunction with the signing of the truce, a leaflet drop was conducted on major cities along the east coast of Korea. Simultaneously, strikes were made to render all airfields in North Korea non-operational at the time of the signing of the truce. Close air support missions were carried out by the props before the truce was signed—124 sorties flown, 61 tons dropped."

To some pilots of Task Force 77 the last day was unusual only in the sense that targets were plentiful but couldn't be hit. To others it was a last chance to qualify for an Air Medal.

"My flight was assigned the airfield at Hyesanjin," said CDR W. W. Kelly. "Our orders, which we had acknowledged receipt of in writing, were to hit *only* the airfield, and if for any reason we couldn't do it, we were to jettison our loads at sea.

"Our flight of eight Banshees hit the coast at Kilchu, staying under a low overcast as we headed up the valley. Here, in the same places we had often looked in vain for fruitful targets, and where if we found a train or a truck we'd fight among ourselves to see who would get a shot at it, we suddenly saw large piles of material—one large pile of what looked like telephone poles; larger crates of material, lumber, etc.

"Then to complete our sense of frustration, we saw a train chugging down the valley very conspicuously. We couldn't and we didn't shoot it up, but went on to our target at Hyesanjin."[25]

At sea, the blockade and bombardment work went on as before. The cruiser *Saint Paul* (CAPT C. W. Parker, USN) fired the last round of the war at sea at 2159.

On the harbor islands of Wonsan the day was no different either, although the tempo was less. At the designated time of cease fire—2200—the east coast islands' defense forces commenced the destruction of the islands' fortifications.

Ashore, the front was generally quiet, although a few rounds of enemy mortar and artillery fire were received in the First Marine Division's area until 2153, when five rounds of 82-mm. mortar landed in the First Korean Marine Corps Regimental Combat Team's area.

Some U.S. Marines reported Chinese policing their front a full thirty minutes before the agreed-upon hour of 2200. Chinese troops could be seen looking for souvenirs. Some of the enemy troops waved lighted candles, flashlights, and banners in celebration.

On "T-Bone Hill", the Communists erected an arch of tree limbs and called out for UN troops to "come on over and we will walk through the arch as brothers."

On "Old Baldy," North Korean girls could be seen singing and dancing, while the Red soldiers waved

large papier-mâché Picasso peace doves as the hillside microphones blared out an invitation to “come on over and talk.”

On “Arsenal Hill” a man’s voice invited the UN soldiers to join him in the song, “My Old Kentucky Home.” Other Chinese soldiers danced and sang, banged pans together, and erected huge signs proclaiming the signing of the Armistice.

One group of Chinese soldiers approached a Marine listening post, asked for water, and tried to carry on a conversation. Still others hung up gift bags and shouted, “How are you? Come on over and let’s have a party!”

It was a strange ending to the strangest war the United States Navy had ever fought.

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Chapter 14. Conclusion

At 2200, on the night of 27 July 1953, an uneasy truce settled along the battleline in Korea. The 37-month-and-2-days war had ended. It had cost the United States 142,091 casualties[1] and almost twenty billion dollars.

What had been gained by this expenditure of blood, time, and treasure? Had the United Nations and the United States won or lost the Korean War?

A single, simple answer to that question cannot be given as this book goes to print, for there still are two diametrically opposed views, which cause continued and bitter argument. One view, although not wholly accepted in political and diplomatic circles, is that the Korean war represented a victory for the West since the Free World was able to demonstrate the real value of collective security; and furthermore, it was able to accomplish what it set out to do: to localize and punish aggression, to drive the invader back to his lair, and to notify him that future forays would be met with even greater force.

This viewpoint is summarized by a 12 February 1956 editorial in the Washington *Post*.

"President Truman, for the United Nations, fought the war for a limited objective, and this he achieved. He achieved a successful result, moreover, without damaging our dominion in world strategy. Actually, that dominion was improved, and in the process Mr. Truman kept the Russian intervention limited with his atomic deterrent."

This point of view also holds that any expansion of the Korean War, inside or outside Korea, might have brought Russia into the conflict; and since neither the Free World nor the United States was then militarily prepared for a larger conflict, the risk of involving the Soviets was not to be taken.

The other view, generally prominent in military circles, is that the Korean War was a loss, militarily as well as psychologically. Even though the means for defeating the enemy were available, they were not used; and our failure to defeat the aggressor was an invitation to future aggression and truculence.

These views were reflected in such statements as General Mark Clark's, "We lacked the determination to win the war"; and by Admiral J. J. Clark's remark to the authors: "You shouldn't be in a war if you don't want to win it"; or in General Van Fleet's answer to the authors' question, "Under the accepted conditions of war, could the Korean War have been won without too great a cost?" General Van Fleet's reply was that the Chinese Communists were beaten in June 1951 when a truce was first requested, and they could have been beaten "any time" in succeeding months. These views were certainly held by General MacArthur. When asked by the authors, "With forces available in the Far Eastern theater, what strategy should have been followed after Chinese entry?", General MacArthur replied: "It was fundamental that the only strategy to be followed in such a situation was to apply maximum power of our naval and air arm in support of our hardpressed ground forces. This means: to have directed our attack against the nerve center of the Chinese ability to sustain his operations in Korea."

This point of view holds that Russia would never have dared to intervene in Korea.

To the question, "Did the United States win or lose the Korean War?" therefore, no answer can now be given. For if the United Nations (or the United States) had taken military action to defeat the Red Chinese either under the MacArthur formula (blockade China, bomb across the Yalu, use Chiang's troops)—or the Van Fleet plan (decisively defeat the Chinese on the Korean peninsula itself)—or the "Jocko" Clark format (drop just one A-bomb anywhere in North Korea)—no one can say now whether the Soviets might have intervened. As Admiral Clark said, "The only man who can say if such actions would have expanded the war or not is Stalin—and he's dead."

Leaving this question to future historians to answer, one thing nevertheless remains plain. Without command of the seas between the Free World and Korea, and in the waters adjacent to that beleaguered peninsula, the Korean War, as fought, most certainly would have been *lost* both militarily and politically with a finality that would now be plain to every American. Operations by ground and air forces were completely dependent on a steady flow of personnel and supplies, the bulk of which came across the vast Pacific ocean.

This conclusion is substantiated by these factors:

a. Six of every seven people who went to Korea went by sea.

b. Fifty-four million tons of dry cargo, 22 million tons of petroleum products went to Korea by ship.

c. Every soldier landed in Korea was accompanied by five tons of equipment, and it took 64 pounds every day to keep him there.

d. For every ton of trans-Pacific air freight, there were 270 tons of trans-Pacific sea freight. For every ton of air freight, four tons of gasoline for the airplanes had to be delivered across the Pacific by ship.

No war involving the United States exemplified the value of sea power better than the Korean War. The need of a strong, balanced, and adequate U.S. Navy for controlling the oceans for our purposes and for denying them to an enemy was made elementarily clear.

General Van Fleet's opinion of the Navy's work in Korea was direct and to the point: "We could not have existed in Korea without the Navy," he told the authors. "The sea blockade was so complete that it was taken for granted. And at the same time the enemy could not supply himself by water. Naval gunfire on both east and west coasts added to his burden; and had the Eighth Army wished to go on the offensive, naval gunfire on the flanks would have made it much easier. Freedom from enemy air and naval attack left us free to operate in the open."

Without seapower, certainly, the United States could never have gotten her soldiers and their equipment, her airmen and their aircraft, to the scene of conflicts, nor supplied them once there. Nor could the weight of this nation's strength have been applied upon the enemy without the American Navy.

One principal result of the Korean War was to validate the naval concepts about future war which had been revealed in the B-36 Hearings before Congress in the fall of 1950: that the United States must have flexibility, mobility, and balance not only in its military planning but in its military machinery. The "modern" military school of thought that had thrived between 1945 and 1950—that a Navy's use in any future war would only be that of convoy and patrol—was proved fallacious.

Concerning what Korea had proved about the future of the Navy and the Marine Corps, two leading Generals of the U.S. Army were emphatic. General Van Fleet, asked if a Navy was necessary in the atomic age, said abruptly, "The need of a Navy is a self-evident fact." General MacArthur was equally certain: "Naval supremacy," he wrote, "is essential to the conduct of any insular campaign." Regarding the need and use of the U.S. Marine Corps in the event of future Korean type conflicts, General MacArthur said: "Any campaign of this type at once calls for the employment of amphibious maneuver for which, by virtue of its training and integration with sea-borne operations, the Marine Corps is far better adapted than any other military unit."

Vice Admiral C. T. Joy, the naval theater commander for the first two years of the war and the chief of the UN Command Truce Delegation Team, made the following cogent summary upon his departure from the Far East:

"The Korean War may not go down in history as a major war or as a war that appreciably changed the maps of the world. But it nevertheless is a war of deep significance. It has been a war to prevent a larger war by serving notice on a ruthless enemy that he can go so far and no farther. From the standpoint of national preparedness we have been awakened to the danger that surrounds us. Let us hope that we remain awake. From the standpoint of battle effectiveness, the Korean War has re-emphasized lessons which were almost lost sight of in the years that closely followed World War II. We know now that there is no quick, easy, cheap way to win a

war. Sole reliance for our security cannot be placed in any one weapon or in any one branch of the Services. We cannot expect the enemy to oblige by planning his wars to suit our weapons. We must plan our weapons to fight war where, when, and how the enemy chooses. The choice of time, place, and circumstances rests with him.

"We need balance between the Services and balance within the Services. In the Navy, for example, we have learned that we cannot ever again neglect our minesweeping force. We cannot neglect our air arm. Inchon and Hungnam have again forcibly emphasized the vital need for our amphibious force. We cannot write off the naval gun as obsolete; the Korean War has again proved its worth. We have found a pressing need and full use for all of our naval weapons. And while the Navy's role in the war has gone unpublicized for the most part, it is sufficient to know that but for the Navy the war in Korea would come to a sudden halt. The job of getting the troops there and keeping them supplied is just as essential as it ever was, whether it makes interesting reading or not.

"During the last ten months of my tour in the Far East I was fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to face our common enemy across the conference table. If there are still those in the Free World who believe that the enemy can be moved by logic, or that he is susceptible to moral appeal, or that he is willing to act in good faith, those remaining few should immediately disabuse themselves of that notion. It was a mistake to assume, or even hope, that the enemy was capable of acting in good faith. Future textbooks can set down the maxim that the speed with which agreement is reached with the Communists varies directly as the military pressure applied, and that the worth of any agreement is in proportion to the military strength you are able and willing to apply to enforce it.

"As for the future, it should be clear that there is nothing inevitable about the onward and upward progress of the United States or the United Nations. In fact there is nothing inevitable about our survival. History is littered with the graves of civilizations that assumed all is well. All is *not* well. We will survive and progress to the extent that we are aware of the enemy who threatens us, and to the extent that we stay strong enough to meet him in the arena of his choosing. Nothing can erase the tragedy that is Korea. But if Korea has taught us that in unity lies the strength that will preserve our freedom, then Korea has not been in vain. . . ."

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The Pusan Perimeter

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Foreword

AN ABILITY TO furnish skilled forces to meet emergency situations on short notice has long been a hallmark of the Marine Corps. When the call came for such a force to be dispatched to Korea on 2 July 1950, the Corps was handicapped by the strictures of a peacetime economy. Nevertheless, a composite brigade consisting of a regiment and an air group was made available within a week's time.

With a reputation built largely on amphibious warfare, Marines of the 1st Brigade were called upon to prove their versatility in sustained ground action. On three separate occasions within the embattled Perimeter—south toward Sachon and twice along the Naktong River—these Marine units hurled the weight of their assault force at the enemy. All three attacks were successful, and at no point did Marines give ground except as ordered. The quality of their performance in the difficult days of the Pusan Perimeter fighting made them a valuable member of the United Nations team and earned new laurels for their Corps.

Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps

The Pusan Perimeter

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Preface

THIS IS THE first volume of a planned series dealing with United States Marine Operations in Korea during the period 2 August 1950 to 27 July 1953. Volume I is designed to give the military student and the casual reader an accurate and detailed account of the operations in which Marines of the 1st Provisional Brigade and Marine Air Group 33 participated during the fighting in the Pusan Perimeter, from the date of their landing on 2 August until their withdrawal on 13 September 1950, in preparation for the Inchon landing.

Since this is primarily a Marine Corps story, the activities of other services during this period are not described in detail except to present a proper background to the overall account.

Many officers and men who participated in this campaign have contributed to the preparation of the book by answering inquiries, submitting to interviews, and commenting on the preliminary manuscript. Their assistance has been invaluable. Special acknowledgment is also extended to the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Pacific Section, and particularly Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Appleman, USA, for enemy intelligence material; to the Marine Corps Board Study: *An Evaluation of the Influence of Marine Corps Forces on the Course of the Korean War* for its interpretations and conclusions; and to *Life Magazine* for courtesy shown in permitting use of Korean photographs made by Mr. David D. Duncan. Maps included herein were prepared by the Reproduction Section, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Va. United States Army, Navy and Marine Corps photographs have also been used to illustrate this monograph.

--Brig. Gen. T.A. Wornham, USMC, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3

The Pusan Perimeter

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Chapter 1. Korea, Doorstep of Strategy

IT MEANT LITTLE to most Americans on 25 June 1950 to read in their Sunday newspapers that civil strife had broken out in Korea. They could hardly have suspected that this remote Asiatic peninsula was to become the scene of the fourth most costly military effort of American history, both in blood and money, before the end of the year. Yet the danger of an explosion had been present ever since the end of World War II, when the United States and the Soviet Union rushed into the political vacuum created in Korea by the defeat of Japan.

The Korean question came up officially for the first time at the Cairo Conference of December 1943. With Soviet Russia not yet being represented as a belligerent in the Far East, the United States, Great Britain and China agreed that "in due course Korea shall become free and independent.[1]

Any discussion of this issue had to take into consideration Korea's status as a Japanese possession since 1910. Government, industry, commerce, agriculture, transportation—every phase of Korean life had been administered by Japanese for the benefit of Japan. As a consequence, the 25,000,000 inhabitants of the peninsula were woefully lacking in experience to fit them for the responsibilities of independence.

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Syngman Rhee, the elderly Korean patriot, had long been clamoring for recognition of his Korean government in exile. The United States hung back because of reluctance to offend Joseph Stalin, the Soviet dictator, at a time when Russia was a powerful military ally. Moscow had a strong bargaining point, moreover, in the prospect of giving military aid to the United States in the fight against Japan. Such an alliance was particularly desirable from the American viewpoint early in 1945 because of the losses resulting from Japanese *kamikaze* tactics. In the belief that active Soviet participation might shorten the war and save thousands of American lives, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was disposed to compromise with Stalin.

The two agreed informally at the Yalta Conference of February 1945 that Korea should be independent ". . . and that if a transition period were necessary, a trusteeship should be established," according to James F. Byrnes, United States Secretary of State. He added in his memoirs that "a desire to help the Koreans develop the skills and experience that would enable them to maintain their independence was the inspiration for President Roosevelt's acquiescence in the trusteeship idea."[2]

The Soviet dictator made a plea at Yalta for historical justice. Although Czar Nicholas II had been execrated as a tyrant and warmonger in Communist doctrine, Stalin demanded that the "wrongs" resulting from the Russo-Japanese War be righted 40 years later. The price of Soviet military aid against Japan, in short, was the restoration of Russian territory in the Far East that had been lost in the defeat of 1905.

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Chapter 1. Korea, Doorstep of Strategy
The Historical Background

It was inevitable that the fate of Korea would be involved in any such readjustment. Korea is one of those tragic areas of the earth's surface which are destined in all ages to be a doorstep of strategy. As the focal point of the China-Russia-Japan triangle, the peninsula offers each of these powers a threshold for aggression against either of the other two. Possession of Korea has been for centuries an aim of aspiring conquerors in the Far East, and all three rival nations have had a turn.

China was first. From ancient times down to the last quarter of the 19th century, the Chinese Empire held a loose suzerainty acknowledged by the Koreans. Japan won a brief foothold in the 16th century under the great war lord Hideyoshi, only to learn the painful lesson that control of the sea is requisite to a seaborne invasion of a peninsula. Naval victories by the Koreans cut Hideyoshi's line of comunications, and he withdrew after frightful devastations which left an enduring tradition of fear and hate. Both Japan and Korea then entered upon a period of self-imposed isolation lasting until their political hibernation was rudely interrupted by Western nations clamoring for trade.

The United States took the lead in inaugurating a new era in the Far East. Commodore Perry and his American warships opened up Japan to commerce in 1853. Several persuasive bombardments of coastal cities by American, British and French naval guns were required to end Japan's seclusion; and in 1871 an American squadron was sent to Korea after the destruction of an American merchant ship and massacre of its crew. United States Marines and bluejackets stormed Korean river forts defended by cannon. All objectives were taken and heavy casualties inflicted, but it remained for Japan to open up the "Hermit Kingdom" to trade 4 years later with the threat of war.

Russia had not been a disinterested bystander during this era of cannon-ball diplomacy. Her participation in Far Eastern affairs dated back to the 17th century and had once extended to the North American mainland. The sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867 indicated a renunciation of this phase of expansion, but Russia had no intention of abandoning her ambitions in the Far East. Shortly after Japan compelled Korea to sign a treaty of amity, the Russians offered to train Korean officers and lend military aid to the faction-ridden kingdom.

At this point China took a hand. Suspecting that the two rival nations were dabbling in Korean affairs for purposes of their own, the Celestial Empire attempted to restore her suzerainty.

This policy was bound to lead to a collision. Western nations were not surprised when Japan and China resorted to arms, but few observers expected the supposed dwarf to beat the giant with ease. Japan's well led army, equipped with the best modern weapons, landed at Chemulpo (Inchon) and captured the Chinese fortress at Pyongyang in northwest Korea. Sweeping across the Yalu into Manchuria, the invaders overran the strategic Liaotung Peninsula, taking Port Arthur and Dairen.

It was all over in a few months. When the Empire proper was threatened with invasion, the Chinese government sued for peace in 1895.

The Japanese terms were more than severe, they were humiliating. They included: (1) a large indemnity; (2) the cession "in perpetuity" of the Liaotung Peninsula as well as Formosa and the Pescadores group; and (3) Chinese recognition of what the Japanese were pleased to call "Korean independence."

But the victors had overdone it. Russia, Germany, and France formed the Triple Intervention which compelled Japan to relinquish the Liaotung Peninsula. The three European powers preferred that this strategic bastion remain in the possession of China, which was ripe for despoiling at the convenience of the Western

nations.

Russia now assumed the role of a friend binding China's wounds. The secret treaty of alliance signed by the two empires in 1896 was aimed like a pistol at Japan. In return for promises of support in the event of further Japanese aggressions, China gave Russia the right to extend the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Vladivostok across Chinese territory in Manchuria.

Click here to view map

The precept was not lost upon other European nations. England, Germany, and France also established spheres of influence in China after forcing the government to lease territory or grant special privileges. And Russia added to former gains by a 25-year lease of the Liaotung Peninsula.

China's Boxer Rebellion of 1900 interrupted the march of events, but two treaties in 1902 indicated that Japan and Russia would soon be at each other's throats. Japan acquired an ally in England, as a result of that nation's alarms over Muscovite designs, so that the neutrality of European powers was practically assured. Russia and China drew closer meanwhile with a new treaty of alliance. The stage was set for a fight to the finish in the Far East.

Possession of the Philippine Islands had given the United States a new interest in Far Eastern affairs since the Spanish-American War of 1898. John Hay, Secretary of State, realized that the American "open door" policy was imperiled by the situation in Asia.[3] But he admitted in April 1903 that nothing short of the threat of armed force could have checked Russia's encroachments.

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Chapter 1. Korea, Doorstep of Strategy
The Russo-Japanese War

A candid comparison would reveal a striking similarity between the aggressions of Czarist Russia in the early 1900's and those of Soviet Russia half a century later. The expression "cold war" was not current in 1903, but the account of Russia's threats, seizures and violated agreements has a dismally familiar aspect to the modern reader. Rudyard Kipling paid a bitter tribute at the turn of the century to these techniques of the Russian Bear in his lines:

"When he stands up like a tired man, tottering near and near;
When he stands up as pleading, in wavering, man-brute guise,
When he veils the hate and cunning of his little swinish eyes;
When he shows as seeking quarter, with paws like hands in prayer,
That is the time of peril—the time of the Truce of the Bear!"

Following the Sino-Japanese War, the truce between Russia and Japan in "independent" Korea was broken by both nations whenever a favorable opportunity arose. Both of them intrigued constantly at Seoul. For a time, indeed, the Korean government was directed from the Russian legation with the backing of Russian troops.

Twice, in 1896 and 1898, Russia and Japan signed agreements reaffirming Korea's independence and promising anew to withdraw their forces. These pacts were promptly violated by both contestants for power, but Japan prepared more realistically for the forthcoming struggle. On a February night in 1904, without the formality of a declaration of war, a Japanese squadron attacked the Russian warships anchored at Port Arthur. This surprise blow was followed shortly by the landing of Japanese troops at Chemulpo. They advanced to the frontier and defeated the Russians in the battle of the Yalu—a victory that has been compared with the battle of Valmy in the French Revolution as a landmark of history.

Certainly the West was made aware that an Oriental nation had risen to the stature of a world power for the first time in modern history. The value of Korea as a strategic springboard was demonstrated when Japanese land and sea forces isolated the fortresses on the Liaotung Peninsula. Port Arthur fell after a bloody siege of 6 months. Next, the Japanese invaders of Manchuria defeated an army of 350,000 Russians and inflicted 150,000 casualties in the four-week battle of Mukden. This was the decisive clash on land; and in the one-sided naval battle of Tsushima, Admiral Togo annihilated the Baltic fleet which the Czar had ordered on the long voyage to the Pacific.

The end came abruptly in the summer of 1905. In the Treaty of Portsmouth, signed on 5 September, Russia ceded the southern part of Sakhalin Island to the victors while recognizing their "paramount" interests in Korea. All rights in the Liaotung Peninsula went to Japan as well as important concessions in Manchuria. Not much was left to Russia in the Far East except a precarious foothold in northern Manchuria.

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Chapter 1. Korea, Doorstep of Strategy

Korea as a Japanese Colony

For 5 years Japan kept up a pretense of a protectorate in Korea. Then, in 1910, came outright annexation.

Europe's "balanced antagonisms" soon flared up in World War I, leaving Japan free to exploit Korea as a colony. Western observers might have noted such evidences of modernization as new docks, railroads, factories and highways. But they were administered by Japanese overseers as Koreans sank to the level of coolies without a voice in the government.

Although Japan joined the fight against the Central Powers in World War I, her military efforts were made against allies as well as enemies. Using Korea as a beachhead, she attempted to enlarge her empire on the Asiatic mainland at the expense of Russia, then in the throes of revolution. Three years after the Armistice, a Japanese army still occupied the Vladivostok area; but the United States took such a firm diplomatic stand that Tokyo backed down.

This retreat was only a postponement. During the next decade Japan set up a strategic shield to the east and south by fortifying the mandated islands of the Pacific, awarded to her after the war. Treaties and agreements were violated whenever convenient, and in 1931 she turned westward again to satisfy her appetite for Russian and Chinese territory.

The time was well chosen. With the Western nations in the depths of an industrial depression, Japan began a series of aggressions against the Chinese in Manchuria. The gains were consolidated in a puppet state known as Manchukuo, comprising a fertile and populous area as large as California. China was unable to offer much resistance, and Soviet Russia could not risk a major war in the Far East. Even so, some of the Soviet border clashes with the Japanese in time of "peace" were actually battles fought with tanks and planes.

In 1937 came the Japanese invasion of China proper. Germany and Italy were launching aggressions of the same stamp in Europe and Africa, and the world was to know little stability until all three totalitarian states had been crushed in World War II.

Soviet Russia had a grim struggle for survival while resisting the full tide of Nazi invasion. But at the time of the Yalta Conference, Stalin was in a position to ask a stiff price for military aid in the Pacific. The United States agreed that the Port Arthur area and southern Sakhalin should be returned to Russia to redress the "wrongs" of 1905. Concessions were also made in Manchuria and outer Mongolia.

Stalin, for his part, consented to sign a treaty of friendship with Nationalist China as an ally of the United States. Later events made it evident that he had no intention of keeping his pledges. On the contrary, Soviet policy already visioned a Communist empire in the Far East which would include China as well as Korea.

The Yalta Agreement was stridently criticized in the United States after Stalin's duplicity became apparent. But the War Department took a realistic view as early as the spring of 1945:

"The concessions to Russia on Far Eastern matters which were made at Yalta are generally matters which are within the military power of Russia to obtain regardless of United States military action short of war. . . . The Russians can, if they choose, await the time when United States efforts will have practically completed the destruction of Japanese military power and can then seize the objectives they desire at a cost to them relatively much less than would be occasioned by their entry into the war at an early date."[4]

This was precisely what happened. Moscow waited to declare war until 8 August 1945—6 days before the imminent collapse of Japan. Soviet forces fought only a few actions in Siberia with a Japanese army stripped of planes for home defense. As a consequence, Russian propagandists found it hard to paint a convincing picture

of “the heroic deeds of our brave Far Eastern warriors.”[5] Obviously they had met little resistance while overrunning Manchuria and northern Korea to accept the surrender of nearly 600,000 Japanese troops, including 148 generals. These prisoners were sent to Siberia for years of servitude; and the “conquerors” despoiled Manchuria of heavy machinery, turbines, dynamos and rolling stock.[6]

The value of this booty has been estimated at a billion dollars, and the forced labor of Japanese war prisoners during the next 5 years was worth at least another billion. Not satisfied with these spoils, Moscow also demanded a share in the occupation of Japan. This design was balked by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, supreme Allied commander, who made it plain that he needed no such assistance.[7]

Even after the guns fell silent, there was no peace. One enemy had been exchanged for another, since Soviet Russia took advantage of war-weary allies to follow in the footsteps of Germany and Japan. There was the same familiar pattern of encroachment both in Europe and the Far East. There were the same violations of treaties, the same unfriendly acts falling just short of hostilities. The cold war had begun.

Oppression at home and aggression abroad—this had been the policy of Russia’s czars, and it became the policy of Russia’s dictators. Despotism had been replaced by Communism, but there was little difference. Communism proved to be an old tyranny presented as a new ideology, and Joseph Stalin succeeded where Nicholas II failed. Circumstances were kinder to Stalin, and he gobbled up territory in Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Rumania, Mongolia and Manchuria.

Never before had one man ruled so much of the earth’s surface. Yet there was something neurotic and fear-ridden about the Kremlin’s outlook which success could not cure. It has long been a historical theory that this psychosis may be traced back to Russia’s bondage in the Middle Ages under the Mongols and Tartars. At any rate, victory and enormous spoils did not give Moscow a sense of security in 1945. Buffer state was piled upon buffer state, and thousands of World War II prisoners were enslaved behind the “iron curtain” to build new Soviet military installations.

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The Partition of Korea

The importance of Korea in the Soviet scheme of things was indicated by the haste with which Russian troops crossed the frontier on 12 August 1945, three days after the declaration of war. They were the vanguard of an army numbering a quarter of a million men led by General Ivan Chistyakov, a hero of the battle of Stalingrad.

The surrender terms called for a joint American and Soviet occupation, with the 38th parallel serving as a temporary line of demarcation. Not until 8 September, however, did Lieutenant General John R. Hodge reach southern Korea with the first American troops.

By that time the Russians had gone through their usual routine, and the machinery taken from northern Korea was estimated at 30 to 40 percent of the industrial potential. Looting by Soviet troops went unpunished, and regular supplies of food for the huge army were demanded from an impoverished people just freed of the Japanese yoke.[8]

The Russians had a tremendous advantage over United States occupation forces. Since World War I more than a million Koreans had found a refuge from Japanese bondage on Russian or Chinese soil. Thousands of men had been indoctrinated with Communist principles and given military training to aid the Chinese Reds fighting the Japanese invaders of China. Thus in 1945 the Russians could count on the efforts of Korean revolutionists to establish Communist rule in their homeland behind a façade of democracy.

Click here to view map

The United States forces, on the contrary, did not even have enough interpreters. They impressed the Koreans at first as being alien occupation troops setting up a military government. Meanwhile, the Russians had installed an interim civil government at Pyongyang. Korean Reds filled the key positions, and Stalin's portraits and the hammer and sickle emblem were seen at political rallies.

Koreans of all persuasions opposed the division of their country into two zones on either side of the 38th parallel. The Reds at Pyongyang contrived to lay the blame on the Americans. They made a further appeal to Koreans on both sides of the boundary by announcing a land reform in the northern zone. Ever since 1905 a Japanese landlord had been the hated symbol of oppression. Pyongyang won a great propaganda victory, therefore, by announcing the confiscation of all large estates, Korean as well as Japanese, and the division of the land among the peasantry.

The bait was so tempting that the hook did not become apparent until too late. Then the beneficiaries of the Agrarian Reform discovered that they could neither sell nor rent the land, nor could they use it as security for loans. If anyone ceased to work his holding, it reverted to the People's Committee, which allocated it to some other family. The State retained possession, in short, and the peasant remained as much of a serf as ever. Worse yet, the taxes disguised as "production quotas" eventually amounted to 60 percent of the total crop, which was more than the Japanese had extorted.[9]

This is a sample of the methods used to reduce North Korea to a police state, just as similar states were being organized in occupied lands of Europe by local Reds doing the bidding of Moscow. In the Soviet zone of Korea all banks, factories and industries of any consequence were nationalized by the so-called People's Committee.[10] Military training for offensive warfare was given to men armed with captured Japanese weapons. Pressure was put upon these recruits to "volunteer" for combat service with the Chinese Reds waging a civil war against the Nationalists.[11]

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Red Victory in China

Moscow was secretly backing the Communists led by Mao Tse-tung in their efforts to wrest China from the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek. Such activities, of course, were in violation of the treaty of friendship and alliance with Nationalist China which Stalin had signed on 14 August 1945. But agreements were never allowed to interfere with Soviet ambitions, and Moscow aimed to create in Asia a bulwark of Communist puppet states extending from the Arctic to the tropics.

Asiatic soil was peculiarly suited to the growth of such institutions. Although Communism derived originally from the theories of a German revolutionist, Karl Marx, it was adapted by Lenin and Stalin to the political climate of Asia. Human lives and liberties have always been held cheaply in the East, and absolutism has been the rule in government. Communism, as it developed in Russia after the revolution of 1917, would probably have been better understood by Genghis Khan than Marx. For it is significant that no Western nation has ever embraced this political faith voluntarily, even though it has attracted a minority of radicals and malcontents in nearly every country.

Asia was ripe for change after World War II. In spite of Japan's defeat, that nation had made a good deal of progress with its "Asia for the Asiatics" propaganda. The Far East seethed with unrest in 1946, and Communism spread ominously through a China weakened by three decades of invasion, revolution and civil war.

While Nationalists and Communist armies contended for the ancient empire, an undeclared war went on in the background. This was the cold war between the United States and Soviet Russia as they supplied arms and munitions to the opposing forces. Russia also supplied troops and laborers. For it has been estimated that no less than 250,000 North Korean Reds were induced to serve in various capacities with the Chinese Communists in Manchuria.[12] There the soldiers completed their military training in actual combat, with veteran Chinese officers as instructors.

By 1948 there was no longer much doubt about the outcome in China. In the battles of Tsinan, Changchun and Mukden, the Nationalists lost 33 divisions, totaling more than 320,000 men, in killed, wounded and missing. Losses of equipment included 250,000 rifles and vast quantities of other arms and equipment. During the four and a half months following the fall of Tsinan in September 1948, the Nationalist losses were estimated at a million men and 400,000 rifles. Even planes of United States manufacture were captured by the Reds, who also acquired a cruiser that the British had transferred to the Nationalists.[13]

"The unfortunate but inescapable fact," concluded the United States State Department in 1949, "is that the ominous result of the civil war in China was beyond the control of the Government of the United States. Nothing that this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of those capabilities could have changed that result; nothing that was left undone by this country could have contributed to it. It was the product of internal Chinese forces, forces which this country tried to influence but could not. A decision was arrived at within China, if only a decision by default."[14]

As a result, Mao Tse-tung's forces could claim a sweeping victory by the end of 1949. Only the island of Formosa was left to Chiang Kai-shek and his battered remnants. Meanwhile, it grew increasingly plain that Korea was destined to be the scene of the next great tug-of-war between Communism and the free nations.

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Civil Strife in Korea

Not only had the Russians made the 38th Parallel a political boundary in Korea; they had also resisted all American attempts at unification. This meant that economic recovery was badly handicapped. For the mines, heavy industries and hydroelectric plants were located in the north, while the south had most of the agriculture. Products once exchanged with mutual benefit now had to be imported from abroad.

Trusteeship was hotly resented by all Koreans, even though few of them had gained administrative or technical experience under the Japanese. This prejudice was exploited by Soviet propagandists who denounced the "undemocratic" American policy of bringing in administrators, technicians and educators. As a consequence, the United States military government made a poor showing at first in comparison to the puppet government of Communist-trained Koreans installed at Pyongyang by Russians pulling the strings behind the scenes. Anti-American propaganda won converts to the south as well as north of the 38th Parallel, with General Hodge being accused of maintaining a harsh military rule.

At the Moscow Conference of 1945 the Soviet Union had agreed with the United States that the whole of Korea was to be given a democratic government after passing through the trusteeship phase. A Soviet-American Joint Commission was to meet and make recommendations for this purpose; but as early as 1946 it became evident that the Soviet representatives had been instructed to sabotage any attempt to create a united Korea with its own government.

After the failure of the first year's efforts, Hodge ordered the establishment of an Interim Legislature at Seoul as the counterpart of the People's Assembly at Pyongyang. Of the 90 seats, half were to be filled by popular vote and the remaining 45 by Korean appointees of the Military Government. The election was a triumph for the American-educated Dr. Syngman Rhee and the rightists. Hodge tried to give the other South Korean factions a voice by appointing moderates and liberals, but the Interim Legislature had no solution for the discontent in Korea as the economic situation went from bad to worse in spite of American aid.

Although the Americans on the Joint Commission did their best, they were blocked by all manner of Soviet-contrived delays and obstacles. Finally, in 1947, the United States submitted the question to the United Nations. After long discussion, the General Assembly resolved that all the people of Korea be given an opportunity in the spring of 1948 to elect a national assembly for the entire country.

A commission representing nine member nations was appointed to visit Korea and supervise the voting. But the Russians not only refused to participate in the election; they went so far as to bar the commissioners from entering North Korea.

The new National Assembly elected in May 1948 by South Korea had the task of forming a government. On 17 July the first constitution in 40 years of Korean history was approved by the deputies, who elected Syngman Rhee to a 4-year term as president.

It was an eventful summer south of the 38th Parallel. The Republic of Korea came into being on 15 August, and on that day the American military government ended. John J. Muccio was appointed by President Truman to represent the United States in Korea with the rank of ambassador. Plans were made to withdraw the 50,000 United States occupation troops during the next 8 months, leaving only 500 officers and men as military instructors for the training of a Republic of Korea security force.

In the northern zone the Communists organized demonstrations against the United Nations Commission. Strikes and disorders were fomented south of the 38th Parallel, and 200,000 North Koreans marched in protest at

Pyongyang.

There was an air of urgency about such attempts to prevent the election in South Korea. The exposure of the Agrarian Reform as a fraud had hurt the Communists, and the disinterested spirit of the United States occupation was gaining recognition throughout Korea in spite of initial blunders. Pyongyang could not afford to let South Korea take the lead in forming a government, and July 1948 dated the creation of a Communist state known as the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. After adopting a constitution modeled after that of Communist Bulgaria, the Supreme People's Council claimed to represent all Korea. In justification it was charged that "American imperialists carried out a ruinous separate election and organized a so-called National Assembly with the support of a traitor minority and with the savage oppression of the majority of the Korean people."[15]

The Russians announced in December 1948 that they were withdrawing all occupation troops. It was no secret, however, that they would leave behind them an NK army that far surpassed the ROK military establishment.[16] Kim Il Sung, the Red Korean prime minister, referred to it pointedly as a "superior army" in an address at Pyongyang.

"We must strengthen and improve it," he declared. "Officers and men must establish iron discipline and must be proficient in the military and in combat techniques."[17]

Numbers at the end of 1948 were estimated at 60,000 regulars in addition to constabulary, railroad guards, and trainees. These troops were equipped by the Russians with captured Japanese weapons, and Russian arms were shipped into northern Korea to meet the needs of an expanding army.[18]

It was a military force of an entirely different character that American officers organized on the other side of the 38th Parallel. The new ROK army was strictly a defensive force, trained and equipped to maintain internal security and guard the border and seacoast. Neither tanks nor military planes were provided by the Americans, who leaned backward to avoid any suspicion of creating an instrument for offensive internecine warfare.

Raids by Red Korean troops across the border became a frequent occurrence throughout 1949. One of these forays, supported by artillery, was a large-scale NK thrust into the Ongjin Peninsula. Heavy fighting resulted before the invaders were driven back into their own territory.

Having failed to prevent the formation of a democratic Korean government—the only government in Korea recognized by the United Nations—the Reds at Pyongyang were making every effort to wreck it. Since 80 percent of the ROK electric power originated north of the frontier, they were able to retard economic recovery by cutting off the current at intervals. There was no other unfriendly act in the Communist bagful of tricks that Pyongyang neglected to employ while its radio stations blared forth a propaganda of hatred.

Early in 1950 the situation grew more tense daily as thousands of veterans returned to North Korea after serving in the Communist armies which overran China. When Radio Pyongyang began making appeals for peace that spring, it should have become obvious to practiced observers of Communist techniques that preparations were afoot for war. On 10 June 1950 the Pyongyang government announced a new plan for unification and peace after branding the top ROK officials as "traitors." The motive behind this proposal was apparently the usual Communist attempt to divide an enemy on the eve of an aggression. For the long-planned blow fell at 0400 (Korean time) on Sunday morning, 25 June 1950. Russian-made tanks spearheaded the advance of the NK ground forces across the 38th Parallel, and Russian-made planes strafed Seoul and other strategic centers.

Captured NK documents offer proof that the invaders had already set the machinery of aggression in motion while making their plea for peace. This evidence included the written report of instructions given by one Lieutenant Han to a group of picked men on an intelligence mission. On 1 June 1950 they were to proceed by power boat to an island off Inchon, where confederates would help them make their way to the mainland. "Our mission," explained Han, "is to gather intelligence information concerning South Korean forces and routes of

advance ahead of our troops. We will perform this task by contacting our comrades who are scattered throughout the length and breadth of South Korea."[19]

The lieutenant explained that the forthcoming attack on South Korea was to be the first step toward the "liberation" of the people of Asia. And his concluding remarks leave no doubt as to the complete confidence with which the Korean Communists began the venture:

"Within 2 months from the date of attack, Pusan should have fallen and South Korea will be again united with the North. The timetable for this operation of 2 months' duration was determined by the possibility of United States forces intervening in the conflict. If this were not so, it would take our forces only 10 days to overrun South Korea."[20]

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Chapter 2. Red Aggression in Korea

IT WAS AN army of veterans that broke the world's peace in Korea. There were thousands of veterans of the Chinese civil war and Manchurian guerrilla operations. There were even a few scarred warriors who had served with the Soviet forces in such World War II operations as the defense of Stalingrad.

Practically all the commissioned and noncommissioned officers were battle-hardened, and a majority of the rank and file had seen action. The origins of this army were deeply rooted in Asiatic soil. During World War II an endless stream of Koreans escaped from Japanese bondage and found a refuge in Soviet or Chinese territory. Some of them took to banditry, others were absorbed into the Soviet or Red Chinese armed forces. These refugees dreamed of a united and independent homeland; and at Yenan, China, the Chinese Communists encouraged this movement as early as 1939 by supplying arms to a force known as the Korean Volunteer Army. During the first month alone the KVA attracted 3,000 recruits, and at the end of the war an advance column marched back to Korea under a leader named Kim Mu Chong.[1]

Although the heads of the KVA had been thoroughly impregnated with Communist doctrine at Yenan, they were coldly received by General Chistyakov and the Russian occupation forces. It was a Soviet puppet state that the Kremlin wished to see established in Korea, not a Red-tinted independent Korean government. Communist right-thinking did not save Kim Mu Chong and his KVA troops from the humiliation of being stopped at the frontier in September 1945 and disarmed.

The Russian commander piously justified his decision on grounds of upholding international law. But he offered to return the confiscated arms if the Korean Reds would retrace their steps and join the CCF fight against the Nationalists. He promised that after the struggle had been won, the KVA would be welcomed back to Korea. [2]

Accepting these terms, Kim Mu Chong marched into Manchuria to aid the Chinese Reds. His force numbered nearly 20,000 the following spring, but the KVA lost its identity when the men were mingled with Chinese and Mongolians in the CCF Northeast Democratic United Army. Most of the officers and NCO's of the former KVA were organized into teams to recruit and train Korean volunteers both in Manchuria and Korea. As combined military instructors and political commissars, they created an integrated Communist force out of such oddly assorted material as peasants, guerrillas and bandits. Used first as security troops and later welded into a regular army structure, these thousands of Korean Reds undoubtedly had the principal part in "liberating" Manchuria from the Chinese Nationalists.

Meanwhile, the Russian occupation forces did not neglect the conversion of North Korea into a satellite state. One of the first steps was the establishment of a military academy at Pyongyang in the autumn of 1945. Founded ostensibly for the training of police, it had as its primary purpose the instruction of army officers. Graduates of the first and second classes became teachers when branches of the academy were set up at Nanam, Sinuiju and Hamhung. These offshoots, known as the Peace Preservation Officers' Schools, turned out the cadres which were later activated as the 1st, 2d and 3d Divisions of the new North Korean army. For more than 2 years, however, the fiction was maintained that graduates were to patrol rural areas, protect railroads and guard the frontier.

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Units of North Korean Army

Not until 8 February 1948 did the "North Korean People's Army" come into official being with the activation of the 1st, 2d and 3d Infantry Divisions. At that time there were some 30,000 troops and 170,000 trainees in North Korea, according to later United States Army intelligence estimates.[3]

The 4th Infantry Division was formed in 1948 from trainees plus a veteran regiment transferred from the 2d Division. Two new infantry divisions, the 5th and 6th, were organized the following year when Korean veterans of the 164th and 166th CCF Divisions returned as units with their arms and equipment.[4]

It is probable that the leaders of the North Korean state were committed early in 1950 to the invasion of the Republic of Korea. At any rate, the training and organization of new units was accelerated during the spring months. From February to June nine new divisions were activated—the 7th, 8th, 9th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th Infantry Divisions, 10th Mechanized Infantry Division and 105th Armored Division.[5]

Two factors combined to hasten the NKPA aggression. It had undoubtedly become evident to the Kremlin in 1949 that the Republic of Korea could never be brought into the Communist fold by propaganda, subversion, incitation of disorders or any other means short of a victorious civil war. Moreover, a successful war of invasion was equally desirable as a cure for political discontent at home. Not only was the Agrarian Reform resented everywhere in North Korea, but taxes had gone up as high as 60 percent of the crops to maintain the top-heavy military structure and pay for tanks, planes, howitzers and other arms supplied by the Soviet Union.

Although most of the heavy industries of Korea were located north of the 38th Parallel, they included no arms plants with the exception of a small factory capable of turning out submachineguns and ammunition. North Korea was also able to produce 80 percent of its own POL products for military purposes and some of the army uniforms. Other supplies, all the way from the Tokarev semiautomatic pistol (adapted from the U.S. .45 Colt) to the T-34 tank, were imported from the U.S.S.R.[6]

Most of the weapons were old models of recent manufacture. The heaviest load came by rail from Siberia through Manchuria via Antung and crossed the Yalu into Korea at Sinuiju. As many as three freight trains a day rumbled over the bridge between those cities and continued along the west coast to Pyongyang. Supplies were also received from Vladivostok by water to Chongjin or by the east coast rail line to Wonsan.[7]

It must also be remembered that thousands of Korean veterans of the Chinese civil war returned with their arms and equipment, including American-manufactured weapons surrendered by the Nationalists. The NKPA was second only to the Soviet Army itself in the spring of 1950 as the best armed and equipped military force of its size in the Far East.

The U.S.S.R. did not limit its aid to arms. Lieutenant General Vasilev and a group of Soviet military instructors arrived at Pyongyang in 1949 to train NKPA staff and line officers for offensive warfare. About 3,000 promising NKPA candidates were sent to Soviet schools that year for courses in such specialties as artillery, air and tank tactics.

Of the original 14 NKPA divisions, the first 6 were composed largely of well trained troops. The 12th Division, like the 5th and 6th, consisted of Korean veterans of the Chinese civil war. Constabulary troops made up the 8th and 9th, while the 7th, 13th, 14th, and 15th Infantry Divisions and the 10th Mechanized Infantry Division were formed of conscripted trainees for the most part.[8]

The picture grows confused in the spring of 1950, with 8 new divisions being organized in 5 months. Many of the recently drafted men received only the most sketchy training; and some of the older units were

weakened by drawing off well trained men to stiffen the new outfits. All accounts agree, however, that the NKPA leaders anticipated an effort of only a few days, ending with the destruction of the ROK army. This was not an unreasonable assumption, since a swarm of NKPA spies had brought back accurate reports of unpreparedness. Not only was the Republic of Korea weak militarily, but a bad economic situation had been made worse by increased population due to immigration.

Altogether, Pyongyang could put nearly 100,000 fairly well-trained and armed troops in the field, with about half of that number in reserve as replacements, occupation troops or constabulary. But the problem of man power did not worry Communists who were not squeamish about violations of international law. For the aggressors planned to make war nourish war by conscripting both soldiers and laborers in invaded regions of the Republic of Korea. It was an old Asiatic custom.

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Chapter 2. Red Aggression in Korea
NKPA Command and Leadership

With few exceptions, the North Korean war leaders proved to be willing and able instruments of policies formulated in Moscow. Kim Il Sung, the prime minister and commander in chief, was an imposter named Kim Sung Chu who made a bid for popular support by taking the name of a dead Korean resistance hero. As a youth he had fled from Korea and joined the Communist party in Manchuria. There he distinguished himself in guerrilla operations against the Japanese. In 1938, after rising to the stature of a corps commander, he met military reverses and found a refuge in Soviet territory. Legend has it that he attended a Soviet military academy and took part in the battle of Stalingrad. However this may be, he returned to Korea in August 1945 as a 35-year-old captain in the Soviet army of occupation.[9]

South Korean descriptions of Kim Il Sung as an uneducated ruffian were doubtless prejudiced, but certainly he was a ruthless guerrilla leader who showed an uncommon aptitude for politics. His rise in the new North Korean state was spectacular, for in September 1948 he became the first prime minister. The following year he went to Moscow for conferences at the Kremlin, and nine days after the outbreak of civil war in Korea he was appointed commander in chief of the invading army while retaining his position as prime minister.

In contrast to this rough diamond, Marshal Choe Yong Gun cut a reserved and dignified figure as deputy commander in chief and minister of national defense. Born in Hongchon, Korea, at the turn of the century, he had the equivalent of a high school education. In 1925 he went to China and is believed to have attended the Whampoa Military Academy at Nanking and the Yenan Military School. At Yenan, after being converted to communism, he became a political instructor and later served in the 8th Route Army. Choe was commander of the Korean Volunteer Army in 1941 and fought against the Japanese in Manchuria. Returning to Korea in 1945, he commanded the Cadre Training Center until 1948, when he was named the first commander in chief.

Even Choe's enemies in South Korea credited him with a high order of intellectual capacity and moral courage. Despite his Communist party membership, he opposed the invasion of the Republic of Korea. He was cool, moreover, toward Lieutenant General Vasilev and the other Soviet advisers who reached Pyongyang in 1949 to prepare the Korean armed forces for an offensive war. This attitude probably explains why he was sidetracked in March 1950, when Vasilev took charge of the combat training and re-equipment program. Although Choe was not on good terms with Kim Il Sung at this time, he was regarded as a superior strategist and administrator. And after being bypassed temporarily, he continued to be respected as a leader by the North Korean army and peasantry.

Nam Il stood out as the most cosmopolitan and polished of the North Korean war leaders. Born in 1911, he was Kim Il Sung's schoolmate in Manchuria and the two remained lifelong friends. As a young man, Nam Il made his way across the U.S.S.R. to Smolensk and attended college and a military academy. He entered the Soviet army at the outbreak of World War II and is said to have participated along with Kim Il Sung in the Stalingrad defense.

Both of them returned to Korea with the rank of captain in the Soviet army of occupation, and both entered upon successful Communist political careers. In 1948 Nam Il was elected to the Supreme People's Council and became vice-minister of education in charge of military instruction. The most Russianized of the North Korean leaders, he took pains to cultivate the good will of the Soviet advisers. Speaking English, Russian, and Chinese as well as Korean, he held an advantage over his North Korean rivals in such contacts. He also made a better appearance, being tall for an Oriental and always well turned out in a meticulously pressed uniform and

gleaming boots.

A major general without an active field comand at the outbreak of war, he was rapidly advanced to the rank of lieutenant general and chief of staff. His stern demeanor, while seated stiffly in his black Chrysler driven by a uniformed chauffeur, soon became one of the most impressive sights of Pyongyang. But his talents remained more political than military, and he never won the respect which the army accorded to Choe Yong Gun.

Among the corps commanders, there was none more able than Lieutenant General Kim Ung. About 40 years old at the outbreak of war, he had graduated from the Kumchon Commercial School in Korea and the Whampoa Military Academy in China. As an officer of the 8th Route Army, he won a reputation for daring in 1939 by tossing hand grenades into a conference of Japanese generals at Peiping and escaping after inflicting numerous casualties. Returning to Korea in 1946, he started as a regimental commander and made a relatively slow rise because of his CCF background. But after lining up with the Soviet faction in the army, he was promoted to the command of the 1st Division in 1948 and of I Corps during the invasion.

The rapid ascent of Lieutenant General Yu Kyong Su to the command of III Corps would indicate that promotion was sometimes due to political influence. A graduate of a Red Army tank school in 1938 at the age of 33, Yu served throughout World War II as a company grade officer in a Soviet tank unit. After his return to Korea, he married Kim Il Sung's sister and shot up from the command of an NK tank regiment in 1948 to the rank of corps commander late in 1950. During the first few weeks of the invasion, he was awarded the highest NKPA decoration, the "Hero of the Korean Democratic People's Republic," with a concurrent award, the "Order of the National Flag, 1st Class."

On the other hand, the career of former Lieutenant General Kim Mu Chong, ex-commander of II Corps and ex-chief of artillery, was blasted by the opposition of Kim Il Sung and Nam Il. A CCF veteran, Mu had served under Mao Tse-tung on the "Long March" as one of 30 Koreans to survive the ordeal. He commanded a Chinese artillery brigade and was rated the best CCF artilleryman. In 1945 he came back to Korea and conducted a speaking tour stressing the desirability of cooperating with Red China and omitting any reference to the Soviet Union. This lapse explains his failure in North Korean politics, but in deference to his high military reputation he was given command of II Corps in June 1950. The poor showing made by his units on the central front was ascribed by Mu to the fact that Kim Il Sung picked him for missions which could not succeed. Although he did not lack for support in the army, Mu was relieved of his command and other positions in the late summer of 1950. Expulsion from the North Korean Labor Party followed after Kim Il Sung denounced him in a speech for disobedience of orders.

Mu's downfall was only one chapter in the bitter struggle for power waged by two opposing tactical schools in the North Korean army from 1948 to 1950. Veterans of CCF campaigns against the Japanese and Chinese Nationalists upheld a system of large-scale guerrilla warfare refined into a military science. Approach marches under cover of darkness, infiltrations, probing night attacks—these were the basic tactics employed by Mao Tse Tung's forces for the conquest of China. Although mobility was the keynote, a rigid tactical system allowed little latitude of decision to officers below the regimental level. School solutions were provided for every military problem that could be foreseen, and many of the North Korean officers had graduated from the CCF military academy at Yenan.

Another group of officers advocated the tactics learned at Soviet military schools and in Soviet campaigns of World War II. This system, of course, made the CCF tactics seem primitive in comparison. For the Russians placed much more dependence in armor and artillery as preparation for infantry envelopments. Such tactics called for more supplies and ammunition than could have been provided by the elementary CCF logistics.

The CCF veterans seemed to have the upper hand in the North Korean army early in 1948. But a survey of NKPA officers' careers during the next 2 years indicates that their opponents triumphed. Thus, at the onset of civil war, most of the key positions in the army were filled by men who had hitched their wagons to the red star of

Moscow, both militarily and politically.

This does not mean that CCF tactics had been put aside entirely. On the contrary, these methods had evolved out of military poverty and were admirably adapted to an Asiatic peasant army. The North Korean forces, being compelled to import arms, were never able to afford enough planes, tanks, and artillery to make the best of the Soviet system. And it was inevitable that heavy losses of such equipment in combat would cause a reversion to CCF tactics.

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Chapter 2. Red Aggression in Korea
The NKPA Infantry Division

No child ever bore a more striking likeness to its parent than did the NKPA to the Soviet organization of World War II.

The army as a whole came under the overall control of General Headquarters at Pyongyang, which planned and directed the invasion of ROK territory. As the troops advanced, a Front Headquarters was set up to control corps operations. This organization of Soviet origin was the highest tactical echelon of command. Normally including three or four corps of several divisions each, it resembled an army group in military establishments of other nations. Front Headquarters had only a wartime mission and could be disbanded in time of peace.[10]

Next to the corps in the chain of command was the infantry division, the basic tactical formation, modeled after that of the Red Army in World War II. Of triangular design, numbering some 11,000 men, it was reported by POW's to consist of a headquarters, three rifle regiments, an artillery regiment, a signal battalion, an antitank battalion, a training battalion, a reconnaissance troop, and such division rear services as medical, veterinary, transport, and supply units.[11]

Division Headquarters, with about 120 men, included the commander, a major general, and officers of the division and special staff. Closely associated with the CG, and possessing almost as much power and responsibility, was the division political deputy, usually a senior colonel, who supervised politico-military activities and reported any deviations from doctrine. This was a peculiarly Communistic institution, of course, and it was the duty of the deputy to see that officers and men of the division remained well indoctrinated.

The NKPA rifle regiment, with a T/O strength of about 2,500 men, consisted of 3 rifle battalions and supporting artillery. Each of these battalions, numbering some 650 officers and men, included 3 rifle companies, a heavy machinegun company, a mortar company, an antitank gun platoon and an antitank rifle platoon in addition to signal, medical, and supply platoons.

An NKPA rifle company, which had a T/O strength of about 150 men, was made up of a headquarters, 3 rifle platoons and a heavy machinegun section. The rifle platoon had 4 squads and a T/O strength of 45 men. Squad weapons were said to include a light machinegun, a sub-machinegun and Soviet M1891/30 rifles. Two hand grenades were carried by each rifleman.

An army patterned after the Soviet system was certain to emphasize artillery, and the NKPA artillery reserve at the outset of the invasion consisted of 3 regiments—1 attached to GHQ, and 1 to each of the 2 corps operating at that time. But shortages of equipment and logistical problems made it necessary in actual combat for the NKPA to concentrate most of its artillery potential within the rifle division.

The organic artillery support of each division included a regiment with a T/O total of approximately 1,000 men. Two 76-mm. gun battalions, a 122-mm. howitzer battalion and a headquarters company numbered some 250 men each. A battalion consisted of 3 firing batteries with 12 artillery pieces each, and personnel carried M1938 carbines.

There was also a self-propelled artillery battalion made up of 3 gun companies, a signal platoon and a rear services section with a total of 16 SU-76 pieces. A lieutenant colonel commanded this unit, which had a T/O strength of 110 officers and men.

The other major components of the NKPA infantry division were as follows:

SIGNAL BATTALION. — a wire company, radio company and headquarters company, making a total

of 260 officers and men.

ANTITANK BATTALION.—about 190 officers and men in three 45-mm. antitank companies and an antitank rifle company.

ENGINEER BATTALION.—T/O of 250 officers and men carrying M1944 rifles and equipped with picks, shovels, axes, saws and mine detectors.

TRAINING BATTALION.—About 500 officers and men charged with the responsibility of training NCO's for the division.

RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY. — an estimated strength of 4 officers and 90 enlisted men equipped with 80 submachineguns, 20 Tokarev pistols, 4 telescopes and 5 pairs of binoculars.

REAR SERVICES.—a medical battalion, a transport company, a veterinary unit and a supply section. Of the 200 personnel in the medical battalion, about 60 were women, according to POW testimony. The transport company, with some 70 men, was composed of 50 2 ½-ton trucks, 6 or 7 motorcycles and 10 horse-drawn wagons.[12]

The NKPA infantry division, in short, was a faithful copy of the World War II Soviet model. But it must be remembered that the foregoing T/O and T/E statistics represented the ideal more often than the reality. Owing to the speeding up of preparations in anticipation of an easy victory, many NKPA units lacked their full quotas of men and equipment at the outset of the invasion.

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Chapter 2. Red Aggression in Korea
NKPA Air and Armor

POW interrogations revealed that NKPA military aviation evolved from the North Korean Aviation Society, founded in 1945 at the Sinuiju Airfield by Colonel Lee Hwal, a Korean who had served in the Japanese air force. The organization consisted at first of about 70 students and 17 pilots who were veterans of Japanese air operations. Equipment included a few aircraft of Japanese manufacture and several gliders.[13]

In 1946 the Society was required to transfer its aircraft and trained personnel to the Aviation Section of the Pyongyang Military Academy. Soviet-trained Korean officers were placed in positions of responsibility under the command of Colonel Wang Yun, a former captain in the Soviet air force who replaced Lee Hwal.

The Aviation Section numbered about 100 officers, 250 enlisted men and 500 students by November 1948. Estimates of aircraft are contradictory, but one source reported 7 Japanese trainers, 6 Japanese fighters and a Japanese twin-engine transport. Shortly afterwards the first Soviet aircraft were received, and the NKPA Air Force was created from the Aviation Section and moved to the Pyongyang air base.

The final phase of development came in January 1950 with the expansion of the air regiment into a division under the command of Wang Yun, promoted to major general. Strength of the unit in April 1950 was estimated at about 1,675 officers and men, including 364 officers, 76 pilots, 875 enlisted men, and 360 cadets. The receipt of more Soviet planes at this time brought the number of aircraft up to 178, including 78 YAK-7B fighters, 30 PO-2 primary and YAK-18 advanced trainers, and 70 Il-10 ground attack bombers.

Captured documents indicate that the aviation training program was speeded up along with other NKPA activities during the last few months before the invasion. In June 1950 each pilot was required to fly 40 training missions and attend 40 hours of lectures. As preparations for the invasion neared completion, a forward displacement of tactical aircraft was put into effect.[14]

The North Korean armored division, a copy of its Soviet counterpart, had only about half of the overall strength. Thus the NKPA 105th Armored Division, comprising some 6,000 officers and men, included 3 medium tank regiments, the 107th, 109th, and 203d, with 40 tanks each. Organic supporting units were the 206th Mechanized Infantry Regiment and the 308th Armored Battalion equipped with self-propelled 76-mm. guns. POW reports also mentioned reconnaissance, engineer, signal, ordnance and medical battalions and a mixed unit identified as the 849th Antitank Regiment, attached to the division after the invasion started.[15]

All reports indicate that the division was split in combat, with each tank regiment being assigned to an infantry division. Even the training of the regiments had been conducted separately, and there is no evidence of prewar maneuvers on the division level.

Each tank regiment had an estimated T/O strength of about 600 officers and men. The three medium tank battalions were supported by a regimental submachinegun company, a supply and maintenance company and a headquarters section in addition to engineer, signal, reconnaissance, and medical platoons. Forty T-34/85 medium tanks were divided into 13 for each battalion and 1 for the headquarters section, which also rated a CAZ/67 jeep.

Responsibility for the indoctrination of the regiment rested with a political section headed by a lieutenant colonel. As assistants he had 2 officers and 3 sergeants.

An NKPA tank battalion included a headquarters section and three 25-man companies. A company contained three platoons, each of which was assigned a medium tank. The standard crew consisted of the commander, usually a senior lieutenant, the driver and assistant driver, the gunner in charge of the 85-mm. rifle, and the assistant gunner operating the 7.62-mm. machinegun. The usual ammunition load was 55 85-mm. shells

and 2,000 rounds of machinegun ammunition.

Not much was known about the 206th Mechanized Infantry Regiment, but it was believed to consist of three motorized infantry battalions, a 76-mm. howitzer battalion, a 45-mm. antitank battalion, a 120-mm. mortar battalion, a signal company, and an NCO training company.[16]

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Chapter 2. Red Aggression in Korea
NKPA Officer Procurement and Conscription

Officer procurement problems were solved in large part by the fact that thousands of North Koreans had seen combat service with the CCF forces. Many of these veterans were qualified as junior officers or NCO's without further training. Remaining vacancies for company-grade officers were filled by officer candidate schools or the commissioning of qualified NCO's.

The West Point of the NKPA, located at Pyongyang, turned out an estimated 4,000 junior officers from the time of its activation in 1946 to the beginning of the invasion. Courses normally ranged in length from 6 to 10 months, but were abbreviated to 3 months during the autumn of 1949 in anticipation of the invasion. After hostilities began, the need for replacement officers became so urgent that one entire class at the Pyongyang academy was commissioned wholesale on 10 July 1950 and sent to the front after 20 days of instruction.[17]

Three Soviet officers, a colonel and two lieutenant colonels, reportedly acted as advisers to a faculty composed of NKPA majors. The five departments of the Academy were devoted to infantry, artillery, engineering, signaling, and quartermasters' duties.

A second military academy at Pyongyang specialized in subjects which Communists termed "cultural." So much importance was attached to political indoctrination that graduates of this school were commissioned as senior lieutenants and given unusual authority in their units. Although a 2-year Russian language course was offered, most of the candidates took the standard 9-month term.

Branches of the Pyongyang military academy were established as officer candidate schools in Hamhung, Chinnampo, Chorwon, Mesanjin, Kaechon and Kanggye. Applicants were required to have an acceptable political background and a 6-year minimum of schooling, though the last was sometimes waived.

A command and staff school at Pyongyang offered advanced tactical and administrative courses at the battalion and regimental level to selected officers. At the other extreme, NCO schools were located at Sadong, Sinuiju, Sinchon and Nanam. Tactical instruction was given at the platoon and squad level with emphasis on weapons courses. NCO training was accelerated in preparation for hostilities, and 4,000 veterans of CCF service in Manchuria completed 2-month courses at the Sadong school alone in the spring of 1950.

Technical training in aircraft, artillery, tank and engineering specialties was offered in schools for junior officers as well as enlisted men. But it appears that most of the officers above the company level received their instruction in Soviet schools.[18]

Conscription, according to POW accounts, was introduced as early as 1948. In the rural districts each *myon* (a political subdivision smaller than a county but comprising several villages) was given its quota of recruits to be furnished between the ages of 18 and 35. The village chiefs then assembled all the men in this age group and made their decisions on an arbitrary basis. Selectees had little or no hope of appeal, but were assured that provision would be made for their families during the 3-year term of service.[19]

The system was much the same in North Korean cities, which were divided into sections for conscription purposes. Sometimes the leaders in urban areas called for volunteers. If the response was lacking in enthusiasm, men were singled out and requested to "volunteer." This method was invariably successful, since a man who refused could be deprived of employment.

The conscription program was speeded up along with other preparations as invasion plans neared completion. About 12,000 men were inducted from March through May 1950 and given 6 weeks of basic training at such camps as the No. 2 People's Training Center at Sinuiju.

In some communities the men eligible for military service were requested to attend a meeting. Upon arrival, they were taken in trucks to a training center and compelled to enlist.

Harsh as such methods might seem, they were gentle as compared to the forced conscription of ROK civilians after the invasion got underway. Both men and women in captured cities were crowded into school buildings, given political indoctrination and forced to learn Communist songs. After a week of this curriculum, the men were inducted both as combat recruits and laborers. And though the women were told that their service would be limited to duty as nurses or clerks, some of them were coerced into carrying out reconnaissance or espionage missions.[20]

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Chapter 2. Red Aggression in Korea
The NKPA Order of Battle

The transition from a cold war to a shooting war in Korea should not have surprised anyone familiar with the events of the past 2 years. For several hours, indeed, there was a reasonable doubt on the historic morning of 25 June 1950 whether an undeclared war had begun or merely another large-scale NKPA raid across the frontier.

But this time it was the real thing. Commencing at 0400, 7 infantry divisions and an armored division swept across the 38th Parallel, with 2 infantry divisions in reserve. From right to left, the NKPA order of battle was as follows:

The 6th Infantry Division along the west coast, sealing off the Ongjin Peninsula and moving on Kaesong; the 1st Infantry Division advancing on Kaesong and Seoul; the 4th and 3d Infantry Divisions and 105th Armored Division attacking in west-central Korea and converging on Seoul; the 2d and 15th Infantry Divisions driving toward the Hwachon-Chunchon axis in east-central Korea; and the 5th Infantry Division taking the route along the east coast. Following close behind were the two reserve infantry divisions, the 13th and 15th.[21]

There was no question as to the outcome in the minds of observers who knew the composition of the ROK army. The very name was misleading, for it might more accurately have been described as a large constabulary in process of being converted into an army. Given another year of training and added arms and equipment, the Republic of Korea would perhaps have built up an adequate defense establishment. But the enemy took good care to strike while this development was still at the blueprint stage.

In June 1949, at the conclusion of the occupation, the United States forces turned over arms and equipment to the value of about $110,000,000. These supplies included 100,000 small arms (rifles, pistols and machineguns) and 50,000,000 rounds of ammunition; more than 4,900 vehicles of all types; about 2,000 2.36" rocket launchers and 40,000 rounds of ammunition; and a large number of 105-mm. howitzers, 37-mm. and 57-mm. antitank guns, and 60-mm. and 81-mm. mortars, together with 700,000 rounds of ammunition for those weapons. Twenty training planes (L4 and L5 types) were transferred as well as 79 light naval craft suitable for patrolling the coast.[22]

It is noteworthy that this list was limited to light arms for a constabulary of about 50,000 men. Tanks, military aircraft and medium or heavy artillery were significantly lacking.

At the request of the ROK government, a Korean Military Advisory Group remained in South Korea after the conclusion of the American occupation. Composed of 500 United States Army officers and enlisted men, the KMAG took on the task of directing the training of a ROK constabulary. The group was under the control of Ambassador Muccio, since General MacArthur's responsibility for the defense had ended along with the occupation.[23]

After the NKPA invasion, the United States was severely criticized in some quarters for failing to provide the Republic of Korea with arms and training equal to those of the enemy. American reluctance was due in some measure to indiscreet declarations by that fiery old Korean patriot, Syngman Rhee. The ROK president, 74 years old at the outbreak of civil war, did not shrink from advocating the unification of Korea by armed force. On 20 February 1949 he predicted that his troops "could defeat North Korea within 2 weeks" if the U.S.S.R. did not interfere. Eight months later, on 7 October, his confidence had increased to the point where he was "sure that we could take Pyongyang in 3 days."[24]

Such remarks placed the United States in an uncomfortable position. If aid to the Republic of Korea were to include tanks, military aircraft and training for offensive warfare, Americans would be open to the charge

of inciting civil strife. Communist propagandists would scream that accusation in any event, of course, but there would be grounds for the suspicion of other members of the United Nations. Ambassador Muccio made sure, therefore, that United States assistance did not extend beyond the legitimate needs of ROK frontier defense and internal security.

The triangular ROK infantry division was modeled after the United States unit but numbered about 9,500 troops. Eight divisions and a regiment had been organized and partially trained by June 1950. They were the 1st, 2d, 3d, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and Capital Divisions and the 17th Regiment.[25] Only 4 of these divisions, the 1st, 2d, 6th, and 7th, had their full complement of 3 regiments. All the others had 2 except the 5th, which had 2 and a battalion.[26]

ROK military strength was estimated at 98,808 troops by the KMAG in June 1950. About 65,000 of them had been given unit training for combat. They were fairly proficient in the employment of small arms and mortars, but their instruction had not included defense against tanks. Command and staff work were still at a rudimentary stage, and both officers and NCO's needed seasoning.

The ROK Army of June 1950 had made good progress, in short, when it is considered that most of its components had been activated within the past year. But it was no match for the Red Korean columns which attacked at dawn on 25 June 1950. The ROK order of battle, if such it could be called, consisted of a regiment and four infantry divisions ranged from left to right across the peninsula—the 17th Regiment and the 1st, 7th, 6th, and 8th Divisions. The remaining divisions were dispersed for purposes of internal security: the Capital at Seoul; the 2d at Chongju and Taejon; the 3d at Taegu; and the 5th at Kwangju.

Click here to view map

The ROK frontier forces were not well disposed for defense in depth. Taken by surprise, they put up an ineffectual resistance despite brave fights here and there against odds. On other occasions the sight of an enemy tank or armored car was enough to scatter ROK riflemen, and the progress of the invading columns resembled an occupation rather than an attack.

Before sundown on the day of invasion it appeared that NKPA leaders had not erred in allowing a timetable of 10 days for overrunning the Republic of Korea. The question now was whether the conflict could be confined to that Asiatic peninsula. Communist aggressions were no novelty, to be sure, either in Asia or Europe. But in the past there had always been some show of peaceable intentions, however hypocritical, or some shadow of legality. This was the first time that a Soviet puppet nation had been permitted to go as far as open warfare. Matters had come to a showdown, and it could only be interpreted as a challenge issued by Communism to the free nations of the world.

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Chapter 3. The Marine Brigade

AT THREE O'CLOCK in the morning of 25 June 1950 the telephone rang in the New York suburban home of Trygve Lie, secretary-general of the United Nations. He was informed that North Korean forces had crossed the 38th Parallel to invade the Republic of Korea.

The news had just been received by the United States Department of State directly from Seoul. Ambassador Muccio had emphasized that this was not one of the large-scale North Korean raids into ROK territory which had become an old story during the past 2 years. For his report concluded:

"It would appear from the nature of the attack and the manner in which it was launched that it constitutes an all-out offensive against the Republic of Korea."[1]

The implications were disturbing. Every middle-aged American could recall the failure of the League of Nations to halt Japanese, Italian, and German aggressions of the 1930's with moral suasions. Even when economic sanctions were invoked, the aggressors went their way defiantly without respect for anything short of armed force. And now history seemed to be repeating itself with dismaying fidelity as new aggressors challenged the new union of nations striving to maintain peace after World War II.

There was even an ominous parallel in the fact that another civil conflict in another peninsula had been the prelude to Armageddon in the 1930's. For it might well have been asked if the Korea of 1950 were destined to become the Spain of a new world war.

The answer of the United Nations was prompt and decisive. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon on 25 June 1950, a meeting of the Security Council was called to order at New York. A dispatch had just been received from UNCOK—the United Nations Commission on Korea—reporting that four Soviet YAK-type aircraft had destroyed planes and jeeps on an airfield outside of Seoul. The railway station in the industrial suburb of Yongdungpo had also been strafed.[2]

By a unanimous vote of nine member nations (with the U.S.S.R. being significantly absent and Yugoslavia not voting) the blame for the aggression was placed squarely upon the North Korean invaders. They were enjoined to cease hostilities immediately and withdraw from ROK territory.

The United Nations had no armed might to enforce its decisions. But the Security Council did not intend to rely merely upon moral suasion or economic sanctions. At a second meeting, on 27 June, the Council proclaimed the NKPA attack a breach of world peace and asked member nations to assist the Republic of Korea in repelling the invasion.

For the first time in the war-racked 20th century, a group of nations banded together for peace had not only condemned an aggression but appealed to armed force to smite the aggressor. On the same day that the Security Council passed its historic resolution, the United States announced that it was giving immediate military aid to the Republic of Korea.

President Truman, as commander in chief, ordered American naval and air forces into action. Fifty-two other members of the United Nations approved the recommendations of the Security Council. Their pledges of assistance included aircraft, naval vessels, medical supplies, field ambulances, foodstuffs and strategic materials.

Only 3 of the 56 nations responding to the Council were opposed to the majority decision. They were the Soviet Union and her two satellites, Poland and Czechoslovakia, which had been brought into the Communist orbit by compulsion after World War II.

On 29 June President Truman authorized General MacArthur to send certain supporting United States ground force units to Korea. An American naval blockade of the entire Korean coast was ordered, and Japan-

based Air Force planes were given authority to bomb specific military targets north of the 38th Parallel.

These decisions were upheld by the wholehearted approval of nearly all Americans, according to contemporary newspapers.[3] Virtually the only dissenters were such left-wing extremists as the 9,000 who attended a “Hands off Korea” rally held early in July 1950 under Communist auspices in New York.[4] Barring such rule-proving exceptions, Americans had long been smoldering with indignation at Soviet cold-war tactics. They applauded the resolute stand taken by the United Nations, and they were proud of their country for its response. Unfortunately, they did not anticipate that anything more serious than a brief “police action” would be necessary to settle affairs. Never in their wildest imaginations had it occurred to them that an Asiatic peasant army might be more than a match for all the United States ground forces in the Far East.

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Chapter 3. The Marine Brigade
NKPA Gains of First Week

It was by no means a contemptible army, judged even by Western military standards, which ripped through ROK defenses after crossing the 38th Parallel. The major effort was the two-pronged attack on Seoul, conducted with precision by the 1st NKPA Infantry Division, advancing through Kaesong and Munsan while the 4th and 3d united south of the frontier with elements of the 105th Armored to proceed by way of the Yonchon-Uijongbu and Pochon-Uijongbu corridors.

On the right the 6th Infantry Division made short work of overrunning the isolated Ongjin Peninsula and thrusting eastward toward Kaesong. On the left the offensive was covered by the drive of the 2d and 12th Infantry Divisions on Chunchon while the 5th made rapid gains along the east coast.

In this area the North Koreans initiated the first amphibious operations of the war with four Soviet-manufactured torpedo boats. Built entirely of aluminum, of about 16 gross tons displacement when fully loaded, these craft measured slightly over 19 meters in length and were powered by two 10-cylinder engines rated at 850 horsepower each. With a crew of 8 men, a cruising speed of 20 to 25 knots and a range of 15 hours, the boats carried 2 torpedoes and were armed with a 12.7-mm. heavy machinegun and 2 submachineguns.[5]

During the first 5 days of the invasion, the 4 torpedo boats escorted convoys which transported NKPA troops down the east coast for unopposed landings as far south as Samchok. But on 2 July 1950 the tiny North Korean “navy” was almost literally blown out of the water when it encountered UN Task Group 96.5 off Chuminjin while escorting 10 converted trawlers. With more bravery than discretion, the small North Korean craft accepted battle with the American light cruiser *Juneau* and two British warships, the light cruiser *Jamaica* and the frigate *Black Swan*. Evidently the enemy hoped to score with a few torpedoes at the cost of a suicidal effort, but the U. N. guns sank 2 of the aluminum craft and drove a third to the beach, where it was soon destroyed along with 7 of the convoy vessels. The North Koreans were credited with “great gallantry” in the British dispatch after the fourth torpedo boat escaped.[6] But it was the last naval effort of any consequence by an enemy strangled in the net of the UN blockade.

On land the NKPA columns advanced almost at will during the first 4 days. Nearly a hundred tanks and as many planes were employed by the two main columns advancing on Seoul, and on 27 June 1950 the ROK seat of government was removed to Taejon while Far East Air Force planes were evacuating United States citizens. ROK fugitives, winding southward in an endless stream of humanity, choked every road and multiplied the difficulties of the defense. To add to their misery, one of the bridges across the river Han was blown prematurely when masses of Koreans were crossing.

The fall of Seoul on the 28th ended the first stage of the offensive as the NKPA forces halted for regrouping. Chunchon had surrendered in east-central Korea, so that the invaders held a ragged line stretching from Chumunjin on the east coast through Chunchon, Kapyong and Seoul to the port of Inchon on the west coast.

The beaten and in some instances shattered ROK forces were meanwhile falling back through Suwon in the hope of establishing new positions of defense.

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Chapter 3. The Marine Brigade
Early United States Decisions

A strategy of delaying actions was the only course open to General MacArthur for the time being. One of his first decisions led to the establishment on 27 June of the GHQ Advanced Command Group at Suwon under the command of Brigadier General John H. Church, USA. This group had as its primary mission the reorganization of the demoralized ROK forces, which were already reporting thousands of men missing in action. Secondary missions were to keep Tokyo informed as to military developments and expedite the delivery of supplies. As early as 27 June, 119 tons of emergency supplies had been sent to Korea by air, and an additional 5,600 tons were being loaded on ships in Japan.[7]

American naval and air forces lost no time at getting into action after President Truman's authorization. United States Naval Forces in the Far East, under the command of Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, had as their principal element the Seventh Fleet, commanded by Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble. Its tactical organization, Task Force 77, immediately clamped down a blockade on the Korean coast after wiping out enemy naval opposition. Other warships of the Seventh Fleet were meanwhile blockading Formosa to guard against the possibility of Chinese Communist intervention by means of an attack on the last Nationalist stronghold.

The United States Far East Air Forces, commanded by Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer, USAF, consisted of eight and a half combat groups responsible for the defense of Japan, Okinawa, Guam and the Philippines. Primary missions assigned to the fighter and bomber squadrons were the elimination of NKPA air opposition and the retarding of enemy ground forces by means of interdictory air strikes on bases and supply routes.

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Chapter 3. The Marine Brigade
Geography of Korea

Geography being a first cousin of strategy, maps of Korea were almost literally worth their weight in diamonds both in Tokyo and at the Pentagon. For that matter, they were nearly as rare as diamonds, and it became necessary in many instances to work with outdated Japanese maps.

On the map of Asia the Korean peninsula resembles a thumb dipping down into the Yellow and Japan seas. For centuries it has been the sore thumb of Asiatic power politics, so that trouble in Korea resulted in a twinge being felt in the capitals of Europe. But small as Korea appears on the map, it is actually about 575 miles in length—a peninsula resembling Florida in shape but having about the area of Minnesota.

Variations in climate are comparable to the gradient from Maine to Georgia along the Atlantic seaboard of the United States. Extremes ranging from summer weather of 105° F. to winter temperatures of 40° below zero have been recorded. A monsoon season of floods is to be expected in July and August, followed by a period when typhoons are a possibility. Altogether, it is a climate which can contribute no little to the difficulties of a mechanized invader.

It would be almost an understatement to say that Korea is mountainous. Few areas of the earth's surface are so consistently rugged. Bleak cliffs seem to thrust themselves dripping out of the sea on the East Korean littoral. The peaks become higher and more perpendicular as they march inland, until altitudes of 9,000 feet are reached.

The principal chain of mountains extends from the Yalu in the north along the east coast to the Pusan area. Just south of the 38th parallel a spur branches off diagonally to southwest Korea in the region of Mokpu. The remainder of the peninsula consists largely of smaller ranges and foothills.

The few broad valleys are found chiefly on the west coast, which has a good many indentations and estuaries. Here also are most of Korea's large rivers, flowing west and south. Of little aid to navigation, these streams are broad and deep enough to hamper military operations; and in the monsoon season, floods become a menace.

As if the west coast were paying a penalty for being less mountainous, mud flats and islands hamper navigation. And here the tides are among the highest in the world, with an extreme range of about 30 feet existing at Inchon in contrast to unusually moderate tides along the east coast.

The west and south are the agricultural areas of Korea. Nothing is wasted by peasants who till every inch of the lowland flats, rice paddies, and terraced hills. Due to their back-breaking toil rather than many natural advantages, Korea was able to export as much as half of its two food staples, rice and fish, under the Japanese administration.

The population, estimated at 25,000,000 in 1945, increased both by immigration and a high birth rate during the next 5 years until as many as 29,000,000 inhabitants were claimed. Seoul was a capital of a million and a half residents, and the two leading seaports, Pusan and Inchon, had not far from a quarter of a million each. Modern office buildings, factories and street railways were found in combination with muddy streets and thatched huts on the outskirts.

A standard-gauge rail network, built largely by the Japanese, linked the principal cities and connected in the north with the Manchurian railways. The highway system was good for an Asiatic country but inadequate for the purpose of an invader on wheels and tracks. Hard-surfaced roads were few and far between, and the ordinary earth roads were churned into bogs during the monsoon season. Air transportation was limited to only a few large

airfields and emergency landing facilities.

Altogether, Korea promised to be a tough nut to crack, when it came to geography, for the officers poring over maps in Tokyo.

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Chapter 3. The Marine Brigade
United States Ground Forces in Korea

The United States ground forces in the Far East comprised the understrength 7th, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry (dismounted) Division of the Eighth United States Army, which had been stationed in Japan since the end of World War II. These divisions had only about 70 percent of their personnel, the regiments being limited to two battalions.

The explanation of these deficiencies goes back to the end of World War II. Popular clamor for the speedy discharge of the victorious United States forces had resulted in American military sinews becoming flabby during the next few years. Strenuous recruiting had been necessary to maintain the small army of occupation in Japan at part strength, and it was no secret that many of the men were attracted by the expectation of travel and light occupation duties. The possibility of battle had scarcely been anticipated when the invasion began, and combat readiness left a good deal to be desired. Training on the company level had been good on the whole, but both officers and men were handicapped by the lack of maneuvers for units larger than a battalion.

Shortages in equipment were equally serious. There were not enough mortars, recoilless rifles and other weapons even if there had been enough maintainance parts and trained maintenance technicians. Most of the arms, moreover, consisted of worn World War II equipment which had seen its best days. Finally, the divisional armored units had been provided with light M24 tanks, instead of the heavier machines normally employed, because of the weak bridges in Japan.[8]

Click here to view map

It was, in brief, an unprepared and ill-equipped little army of occupation which represented the first line of United States defense in the Far East.

On 2 July the advance elements of the 24th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General William F. Dean, were flown from Japan to Korea. Two days later, on the American national holiday, the first contact of the United States ground forces with the enemy was made near Osan, about 8 miles south of Suwon.

The American force consisted of 2 infantry companies, a battery of artillery, two 4.2" mortar platoons, a platoon of 75-mm. recoilless rifles, and six 2.36" rocket-launcher teams. Named Task Force Smith after its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith, the first United States contingent collided on the morning of 5 July with a whole NKPA division supported by 30 T–34 tanks. Despite the odds against it, Task Force Smith put up a good delaying fight of 4 or 5 hours before pulling out with the loss of all equipment save small arms.[9]

On 7 July, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for a unified command in Korea, and President Truman named General MacArthur as commander in chief. Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, who had been one of Patton's best officers in World War II, was appointed commander of the Eighth United States Army in Korea (EUSAK) on 12 July, and 4 days later he assumed control of all ROK ground forces.

The ROK army, as might be supposed, was badly battered and much in need of reorganization. At the end of the first week of invasion, the ROK missing in action had reached a total of about 34,000. Whole battalions had been scattered like chaff, yet it speaks well for the spirit of the troops that most of the missing eventually returned to their units.[10] The odds against them had made it a hopeless fight, but these Korean soldiers would give a good account of themselves when they had better training and equipment.

The United States forces were finding it hard sledding, for that matter. The remaining units of the 24th Infantry Division were in action by 7 July, having arrived by sea from Japan. They were followed by the 25th

Infantry Division, commanded by Major General William B. Kean, which completed the movement to Korea on 14 July.

These first outweighed United States forces had no choice except to trade space for time in a series of delaying actions. Although the units had to be employed piecemeal at first, they slowed up the main thrust of the enemy—the advance of three NKPA divisions, well supported by armor, down the Seoul-Taejon axis.

Seldom in history have American forces ever endured a worse ordeal by fire. Unprepared morally as well as materially, snatched from soft occupation duties in Japan, they were suddenly plunged into battle against heavier battalions. The “Land of the Morning Calm” was to them a nightmare land of sullen mountains and stinking rice paddies. There was not even the momentary lift of band music and flag waving for these occupation troops, and they were not upheld by the discipline which stiffens the spines of old regulars.

Considering what they were up against, the soldiers of the 24th and 25th have an abiding claim to a salute from their countrymen. They fought the good fight, even though they could keep militarily solvent only by withdrawals between delaying actions.

Officers as well as men were expendables in this Thermopylae of the rice paddies. Because of the large proportion of green troops, colonels and even generals literally led some of the counterattacks in the 18th-century manner. Colonel Robert R. Martin, commanding the 34th Infantry of the 24th Division, fell in the thick of the fighting while rallying his troops. General Dean stayed with his forward units, personally firing one of the new 3.5” bazookas until the enemy broke through. He was reported missing for months, but turned up later as the highest ranking United States military prisoner of the conflict in Korea.

American light tanks could not cope with the enemy’s T–34’s; and even when the first few medium tanks arrived, they were equipped only with 75-mm. guns against the heavier NKPA armament. Not until the third week of ground force operations, moreover, did the United States artillery units receive 155-mm. howitzers to supplement their 105’s.

There was nothing that the ground forces could do but withdraw toward the line of the river Kum. Here a stand was made by 24th Division units at Taejon, an important communications center. But the enemy managed to establish bridgeheads, and the fall of the town on 20 July marked the end of the first phase.

Two days later the 24th Division, now commanded by General Church, was relieved south of Taejon by Major General Hobart R. Gay’s 1st Cavalry (dismounted) Division, which had landed at Pohang-dong on the 18th. And on 26 July the separate 29th Infantry RCT disembarked at Chinju on the south coast after a voyage from Okinawa.

The reinforced Eighth Army was still too much outnumbered to vary its strategy of delaying actions with sustained counterattacks. While the new American units and the 25th Division fell slowly back toward the line of the Naktong, the regrouped ROK divisions were assigned sectors toward the north and east, where a secondary NKPA offensive threatened Pohang-dong. Meanwhile, the exhausted 24th Division went into Eighth Army reserve.

The ground forces would doubtless have been in a worse situation if it had not been for hard-hitting United States naval and air support. Major General Emmett O’Donnell’s B–29 Superforts of the FEAF Bomber Command took off from Japanese bases to fly strikes on enemy supply routes, communications hubs, marshaling yards and other strategic targets all the way back to the Yalu.

Task Force 77, ranging along the west coast, gave Pyongyang its first large-scale bombing on 3 July. Gull-winged F4U Corsairs, leading off from the *Valley Forge* flight deck with 5-inch rockets, were followed by AD Skyraiders and new Douglas dive bombers. Bridges and railway yards were destroyed by raiders who shot down two YAK-type planes in the air and destroyed two on the ground.

Along the east coast the *Juneau* and other warships of the Anglo-American blockading force patrolled the enemy’s MSR, which followed the shoreline. Salvos from the cruisers, fired at the sheer cliffs, loosed

avalanches of earth and rock to block the highway. Railways were mined and tunnels dynamited by commando parties landing from ships' boats.

The combined U. N. efforts inflicted heavy material and personnel losses while slowing up the NKPA offensive. But it is a testimonial to Soviet and Red Korean preparations for aggression that the army of invasion kept on rolling. There was even some prospect late in July that the enemy would yet make good his boast of being able to take Pusan within 2 months in spite of United States intervention.

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Chapter 3. The Marine Brigade
Requests for United States Marines

Upholding their long tradition as America's force-in-readiness, the Marines have usually been among the first troops to see action on a foreign shore. Thus it might have been asked what was holding them back at a time when Army troops in Korea were hard-pressed.

The answer is that the Marines actually were the first United States ground forces to get into the fight after completing the long voyage from the American mainland. There were no Marine units of any size in the Far East at the outset of the invasion. But not an hour was lost at the task of assembling an air-ground team at Camp Pendleton, California, and collecting the shipping.

The spirit of impatience animating the Marine Corps is shown by an entry on the desk calendar of General Clifton B. Cates under the date of 26 June 1950. This was the day after the news of the invasion reached Washington, and the Commandant commented:

"SecNav's policy meeting called off. Nuts."[11]

On the 28th General Cates had his first conference with Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations. He noted on his calendar the next day: "Recommended to CNO and SecNav that FMF be employed." Two days later General Cates "attended SecNav's conference." And on 3 July his calendar recorded more history:

"Attended JCS meeting. Orders for employment of FMF approved."[12]

The steps leading up to this decision may be traced back to the conference of 28 June, when Cates gave Sherman a summary of the strength of the Marine Corps. Along with other branches of the service, it had taken cuts in appropriations since World War II, so that total numbers were 74,279 men on active duty—97 percent of authorized strength. The Fleet Marine Force had a strength of 27,656—11,853 in FMFPac (1st Marine Division, Reinf., and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing) and 15,803 in FMFLant (2d Marine Division, Reinf., and 2d Marine Aircraft Wing).[13]

Neither of these understrength divisions, General Cates pointed out, could raise much more than an RCT of combat-ready troops with supporting air.

Admiral Sherman asked CinCPacFlt on 1 July how long it would take to move (*a*) a Marine BLT and (*b*) a Marine RCT from the Pacific Coast. Admiral Radford replied the next day that he could load the BLT in 4 days and sail in 6; and that he could load the RCT in 6 days and sail in 10.[14]

Next, a dispatch from CNO to Admiral C. Turner Joy announced that a Marine RCT could be made available if General MacArthur desired it. COMNAVFE called personally on the general, who had just returned from a depressing inspection of the invasion front. Not only did CINCFE accept immediately, but he showed unusual enthusiasm in expressing his appreciation.[15]

Sunday 2 July was the date of the message from General MacArthur requesting the immediate dispatch of a Marine RCT with supporting air to the Far East. CNO acted that same day. With the concurrence of JCS and the President, he ordered Admiral Radford to move a Marine RCT with appropriate air to the Far East for employment by General MacArthur.[16]

Later, when General Cates asked CNO how the historical decision had been accomplished, Admiral Sherman replied cryptically in baseball language, "From Cates to Sherman, to Joy, to MacArthur, to JCS!"[17]

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Chapter 3. The Marine Brigade

Activation of the Brigade

Even at this early date there was talk both in Washington and Tokyo of forming an entire Marine division after mobilizing the Reserve. For the present, however, it sufficed to organize the RCT requested by General MacArthur. There could be little doubt that the assignment would be given to an air-ground team built around the two main West Coast units, the 5th Marines and Marine Aircraft Group 33. They were activated along with supporting units on 7 July as the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, senior officer at Camp Pendleton. The air component, consisting of three squadrons of MAG–33, was placed under the command of Brigadier General Thomas H. Cushman, who was named deputy commander of the Brigade.

Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., commanding general of FMFPac, and a G–3 staff officer, Colonel Victor H. Krulak, had been ordered on 4 July to proceed immediately to Tokyo and confer with General MacArthur. Before leaving, Shepherd found time to recommend formation of third platoons for rifle companies of the 5th Marines, and CNO gave his approval the following day.[18]

Unfortunately, there was not enough time to add third rifle companies to the battalions of the 5th Marines which had been training with two companies on a peacetime basis. Camp Pendleton and its neighboring Marine Air Station, El Toro, hummed with day and night activity as the Brigade prepared to sail in a week. Weapons and clothing had to be issued, immunization shots given, and insurance and pay allotments made out. Meanwhile, telegrams were sent to summon Marines from posts and stations all over the United States.

Among these Marines were the first helicopter pilots of the United States Armed Forces to be formed into a unit for overseas combat service. Large-scale production of rotary-wing aircraft had come too late to have any effect on the tactics of World War II, though a few Sikorsky machines had been used experimentally both in the European and Pacific theaters toward the end of the conflict. But it remained for the United States Marine Corps to take the lead in working out combat techniques and procedures after organizing an experimental squadron, HMX–1, at Quantico in 1947.

Seven pilots, 30 enlisted men and 4 HO3S–1 Sikorsky 2-place helicopters were detached from HMX–1 on 8 July 1950 for service with the Brigade. Upon arrival at El Toro, these elements were combined with 8 fixed-wing aircraft pilots, 33 enlisted men and 8 OY planes to form the Brigade's air observation squadron, VMO–6.

This is an example of how units were assembled at Pendleton and El Toro. Major Vincent J. Gottschalk, appointed commanding officer of VMO–6 on 3 July, had orders to ready his squadron for shipment overseas by the 11th. Thus he had just 48 hours, after the arrival of the Quantico contingent, in which to weld the elements of his outfit together. Among his other problems, Gottschalk had to grapple with the fact that there were not enough OY's in good condition at El Toro. He found a solution by taking eight of these light observation planes overseas with a view to cannibalizing four of them for parts when the need arose.[19]

There was not enough time in most instances for weapons familiarization training. Company A of the 1st Tank Battalion had been accustomed to the M4A3 Medium tank with either the 75-mm. gun or the 105-mm. howitzer. Activated on 7 July for service with the Brigade, the unit was equipped with M–26 "Pershing" tanks and 90-mm. guns. Captain Gearl M. English, the commanding officer, managed to snatch 1 day in which to take his men to the range with 2 of the new machines. Each gunner and loader was limited to 2 rounds, and the 90-mm. guns were never fired again until they were taken into combat in Korea.[20]

Support battalions were cut down to company size, generally speaking, for service with the Brigade.

Thus Company A of the 1st Motor Transport Battalion numbered 6 officers and 107 men; and Company A of the 1st Engineer Battalion (reinf.) totaled 8 officers and 209 men.

The largest unit of the ground forces, of course, was the 5th Marines with 113 officers and 2,068 men commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray. Next came the 1st Battalion (reinf.) of the 11th Marines, numbering 37 officers and 455 men under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Ransom H. Wood.

Altogether, according to a report of 9 July 1950, the Brigade ground forces reached a total of 266 officers and 4,503 men.[21]

On this same date, the Brigade's air component amounted to 192 officers and 1,358 men. The principal units were as follows:

VMF–214: 29 officers, 157 men, 24 F4U4B aircraft.

VMF–323: 29 officers, 157 men, 24 F4U4B aircraft.

VMF(N)–513: 15 officers, 98 men, 12 F4U5N aircraft.

VMO–6: 15 officers, 63 men, 8 OY and 4 HO3S–1 aircraft.[22]

Adding the ground force and air figures gives a grand total of 6,319—458 officers and 5,861 men—on 9 July 1950. Before sailing, however, the activation of third rifle platoons and the last-minute attachment of supporting troops brought the strength of the Brigade and its air components up to 6,534.

Most of the equipment came from the great Marine supply depot at Barstow in the California desert. Here were acres of "mothballed" trucks, jeeps, DUKW's and amphibian tractors dating back to World War II. It has been aptly remarked, in fact, that "there were more veterans of Iwo and Okinawa among the vehicles than there were among the men who would drive them."[23]

Rail and highway facilities were taxed to the limit by the endless caravan of equipment moving from Barstow to Pendleton and El Toro after being hastily reconditioned and tested. Not all the arms were of World War II vintage, however, and the Marines of the Brigade were among the first American troops to be issued the new 3.5" rocket launcher.

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Chapter 3. The Marine Brigade

Brigade Leadership

It appeared to be a scene of mad confusion at Pendleton as Marines arrived hourly by train, bus, and plane. But the situation was kept well in hand by General Craig, who had seen many other departures for battle during his 33 years in the Corps. Born in Connecticut and educated at the St. Johns Military Academy, Delafield, Wis., he was commissioned a Marine second lieutenant in 1917 at the age of 21. Throughout the next 3 decades he served with distinction both as a line and staff officer, and both as student and instructor at the Marine Corps Schools.

During World War II he was executive and later commanding officer of the 9th Marine Regiment, which he led in the landing at Empress Augusta Bay on Bougainville and the recapture of Guam in the Marianas. Awarded the Bronze Star and Navy Cross for gallantry in these operations, Craig became operations officer of the V Amphibious Corps in time to help plan the Iwo Jima operation. After the war he returned to Guam for 2 years in 1947 to command the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, Fleet Marine Force, before becoming ADC to Major General Graves B. Erskine, CG 1st Marine Division, in 1949.

The white hair and slender, erect figure of the dynamic Brigade commander would soon become a familiar sight to every platoon leader at the front. His assistant, General Cushman, was born in St. Louis, Mo. in 1895 and attended the University of Washington. Enlisting in the Marine Corps shortly after the outbreak of World War I, he completed flight training and was designated a naval aviator. Subsequent tours of aviation duty in Haiti, Nicaragua, and Guam were varied with assignments as instructor at Pensacola and administrative officer with BuAer in Washington. Cushman was a wing commander in World War II and was awarded a Bronze Star and Legion of Merit while serving in that capacity and later as chief of staff to the CG of Marine Aircraft Wings, Pacific. After the war he became commander of the Marine Corps Air Bases and CG of Aircraft, FMFPac.

Lieutenant Colonel Murray, CO of the 5th Marines, was born in Los Angeles in 1913. He graduated from Texas A. and M. College in 1935 and was commissioned a Marine second lieutenant. After prewar service in China and Iceland, he became a troop leader in three of the hardest-fought Marine operations of World War II—Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Saipan. Awarded the Navy Cross, two Silver Stars, and the Purple Heart medal, Murray made a name for heroism that was noteworthy even in Marine circles.

This was no light achievement, for both CMC and CG FMFPac—General Cates and General Shepherd—had distinguished themselves as Marine combat leaders. Both were wounded in Marine operations of World War I, and both won later honors during Caribbean actions of the Marine Corps.

On 11 July, as Brigade preparations for sailing neared a climax, General Shepherd sent the first report of his visit to Korea. He and Colonel Krulak had held conferences with General MacArthur, Admiral Joy and Rear Admiral James H. Doyle, commanding Amphibious Planning Group 1. The commander in chief, said Shepherd, already envisioned a great amphibious operation with a complete Marine division and air components as his landing force. Not only was he “enthusiastic,” about the employment of Marines, but he believed in the necessity for employing them as an air-ground team.[24]

MacArthur was “not sanguine” about the situation in Korea. He felt that the nature of enemy resistance, combined with the rugged terrain and the possibilities of Soviet or Red Chinese intervention, threatened to protract operations. Thus he favored a Marine amphibious landing far in the enemy’s rear to cut off and destroy the North Korean columns of invasion.[25]

General Shepherd’s report made it seem likely, just before the Brigade sailed, that its units would

probably be absorbed soon into a Marine division with an amphibious mission. For the present, however, it was enough to start the movement from Pendleton and El Toro to San Diego, where the convoy awaited. MAG–33 had orders to embark in the transports *Anderson* and *Achernar* and the carrier (CVE–116) *Badoeng Strait.* The ground forces would make the voyage in the LSD's *Fort Marion* and *Gunston Hall*, the AKA's *Alshain* and *Whiteside*, and the APA's *Pickaway*, *Clymer* and *Henrico*.[26]

General Cates was on hand at the docks from 12 to 14 July when the Brigade sailed. His long cigarette holders were famous, and no second lieutenant in the Corps could throw a more military salute. As he eyed the ground forces filing past, the Commandant could only have felt that Marine traditions would be upheld. A good many of the PFC's, it is true, were too young to have seen action in World War II, though nearly all had been well grounded in fundamentals. Perhaps at the front they might become victims at first of their own over-anxiety. But they would doubtless grin sheepishly about it afterwards and become combat-hardened in a short time.

A glance at the NCO's, the platoon leaders and company commanders of the Brigade could only have brought a gleam of pride to the Commandant's battlewise eye. With few exceptions, they were veterans of World War II who could be relied upon to get the best out of their men. And it may be that the Commandant was reminded of the remark attributed to General William T. Sherman during the Civil War:

"We have good corporals and sergeants and some good lieutenants and captains, and those are far more important than good generals."[27]

Nobody could give a more smooth and eloquent talk than General Cates before a Washington audience. But when it came to saying farewell to the Brigade troops, he addressed them in the language of Marines.

"You boys clean this up in a couple of months," said the Commandant, "or I'll be over to see you!"[28]

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Chapter 4. The Advance Party

AS THE SHIPS of the Brigade vanished over the horizon, Generals Craig and Cushman rushed to complete final administrative details at their respective West Coast bases. Then, in the early morning of 16 July, the advance party, consisting of the two commanders and parts of their staffs, boarded a transport plane at the Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, and began the long journey westward.

The first stop was Pearl Harbor, T. H., island "Pentagon" of America's vast defensive network in the Pacific. On arrival, Craig and Cushman immediately reported to General Shepherd. In company with him, the two visitors called briefly on Admiral Radford. Later, Shepherd, his staff, and the advance party met at Fleet Marine Force Headquarters for a conference on the problems incident to the Marine commitment in combat.[1]

The Brigade commander painted a vivid picture of his provisional fighting force, stressing both its potential and its handicaps. He repeatedly emphasized the necessity for the addition of a third rifle company to each infantry battalion. With equal fervor he spoke of the need for two more 105-mm. howitzers in each battery of his artillery battalion. He told how the Brigade had been forced to leave behind much of its motor transport because of limited shipping space, and he requested that replacement vehicles be provided as soon as possible.

His presentation was not falling on deaf ears; for combat-wise officers knew only too well how such shortages would restrict the maneuverability, firepower, and mobility of the Brigade. Finally, Craig repeated his earlier request that steps be taken immediately to provide for monthly replacement drafts of 800 men. If the peace-strength Marine unit were committed to combat in the near future, he said, it could ill afford to watch its already thin ranks dwindle indefinitely.[2]

Leaving behind a maze of support and reinforcement problems for FMFPac Headquarters, the Brigade advance party boarded its plane and set out for Japan. On 19 July the big aircraft discharged its passengers at the Haneda Airport, near Tokyo. General Craig immediately reported to his naval superior, Admiral Joy. Later the Brigade commander, General Cushman, and the other officers of the advance party, assembled at General Headquarters, Far East, where they would get their first glimpse of the war through the eyes of the United States Army.

They conferred first with Major General Edward A. Almond, USA, and Brigadier General Edwin K. Wright, USA. The former was Chief of Staff to General MacArthur, while the latter served as G–3 on the staff. After Almond and Wright had received a report on the organization and capabilities of the Brigade air-ground team, they ushered the two Marine generals into the office of MacArthur.[3]

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Chapter 4. The Advance Party
Conference With CINCFE

The commander in chief greeted his visitors cordially and expressed his pleasure at having Marines in his command again. He commented briefly on the excellence of the 1st Marine Division and certain Marine air units which had served under him during World War II. The general smiled as he mentioned a rumor to the effect that he had been prejudiced against Marines during the Pacific War. Sweeping aside this tale as being unfounded, he said that he had always held the greatest admiration for the Corps and would welcome its units to his command any time.[4]

Following this reception, MacArthur meticulously briefed Craig and Cushman on the critical situation in Korea, where the war was already entering its fourth week. The commander in chief disclosed his tentative plans for commitment of the Marines: he would hold the Brigade in Japan as a force in readiness until an entire Marine division could be assembled. If he could have this division by September, he intended to launch an amphibious assault against the port of Inchon on the west coast. Striking deep in the Communist rear, he would sever the long lines of communications linking North Korean bases to the Communist invaders at the front. Thus isolated, the latter would quickly wither, and Walker's Eighth Army could smash out of the Pusan Perimeter.[5]

When MacArthur concluded, he and Craig discussed the organization of the Brigade. The Marine general emphasized that his command was an air-ground team; and though few in numbers, the Brigade had a powerful potential if its air arm remained integral. MacArthur assured him that the Marine combination would remain intact, unless some emergency dictated otherwise.

Craig next mentioned that the infantry and artillery units of the Brigade were at peace strength. MacArthur was surprised to learn that each battalion had just 2 rifle companies, and each battery only 4 guns instead of 6. He was even more surprised to find that each of the 6 infantry companies had 50 men less than the number called for in Marine war tables. The Army leader had been aware of certain shortages when he sent a message to the Pentagon on 10 July, requesting the Joint Chiefs of Staff to authorize expansion of the Brigade to a full war-strength division.[6] He believed at the time, however, that the Brigade itself would be formed on a wartime basis. Now, confronted with reality, he ordered his chief of staff to prepare another dispatch to the Joint Chiefs, asking that the Brigade be expanded to full war strength and reiterating his request for an entire division.[7]

MacArthur concluded the conference by informing Craig that the Marine fighting team would remain in Japan under operational control of Joy's headquarters. This was good news to the Brigade commander. Being attached to the Naval command meant that his Marines would be free to train and otherwise prepare for their future amphibious mission; whereas an assignment to the Eighth Army's rear echelon might have entailed time-consuming occupational and administrative duties.[8]

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Chapter 4. The Advance Party

The Washington Scene

Although the solution to Marine Corps problems had seemed simple enough in MacArthur's office, it was quite another story on the other side of the world in Washington. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had rendered no decision on the general's 10 July request for a Marine division. Nevertheless, General Cates ordered his staff to draw up detailed plans for expansion so that immediate action could be taken if authorization were forthcoming. As a result, Plans Able and Baker were prepared, the one designed to augment the Brigade to war strength, the other to explore the requirements for creating a full division. To cover these possibilities together with the Corps' other irrevocable commitments throughout the world, Marine planners were drawn more and more toward a single basic conclusion—if President Truman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff granted MacArthur's request, the Marine Corps Reserve would have to be mobilized at once.

When the Joint Chiefs received the message which MacArthur had dictated in General Craig's presence, they requested an estimate from the Marine Corps on how long it would take to form a war-strength division. General Cates summed up his case: the Marine Corps, numbering only 74,279 officers and men,[9] was committed on a global basis. There was a brigade on its way to Korea, a peace-strength division on the Atlantic Coast,[10] and a battalion landing team permanently assigned to the Mediterranean Fleet. There were detachments of Marines assigned for domestic security, shipboard duty, and overseas security. Moreover, in order to carry out any expansion program on a sound basis, it would be necessary to maintain cadres of experienced personnel in various training centers. The Commandant's presentation made it clear that any immediate expansion would, as proved by simple arithmetic, be dependent upon mobilization of the Reserve.

Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended to President Truman that the Organized Marine Corps Reserve be called to active duty. That same morning, 19 July, Admiral Sherman notified General Cates of this decision. The Commandant lost no time at ordering his staff to alert all Reserve units. His grounds for haste were well founded; for in the afternoon a presidential proclamation announced that the "citizen-Marines" would be mobilized. The following day Cates called CNO and submitted Plans Able and Baker, the proposed procedures for building both the Brigade and 1st Marine Division to war strength.

In the meantime JCS had notified MacArthur that his request could not be granted until late fall "without unacceptable weakening {of} the Fleet Marine Force Atlantic."[11] When the U. N. commander received this message, he countered immediately with the reply:

". . . Most urgently request reconsideration of decision with reference to First Marine Division. It is an absolutely vital development to accomplish a decisive stroke and if not made available will necessitate a much more costly and longer operational effort both in blood and expense.

"It is essential the Marine Division arrive by 10 September 1950 as requested. While it would be unwise for me to attempt in this message to give in detail the planned use of this unit I cannot emphasize too strongly my belief of the complete urgency of my request. There can be no demand for its potential use elsewhere that can equal the urgency of the immediate battle mission contemplated for it.

"Signed MacArthur"[12]

On 22 July the gears of mobilization were already enmeshed. Taking this into account along with the urgency of MacArthur's last communication, the Joint Chiefs showed the first signs of relenting in their reply to Tokyo. This time they informed the Army general that they were reconsidering his problem, but added that he must advise them of the proposed employment of the Brigade up to 10 September and the possibility of adjusting

that deadline. The same message carried the encouraging news that a directive had already been issued to bring both the Brigade and its air group to full war strength.[13]

In answer, MacArthur stated his intention to retain the Brigade in Japan, unless a more critical situation developed in Korea prior to 10 September. He described his operation planned for mid-September as an amphibious landing in the rear of the enemy's lines. This seaborne attack, he added, would be designed to envelop and destroy the Communist invader in conjunction with an offensive from the south by the Eighth Army. The General concluded his message on notes of conditional optimism and grave warning:

"Although exact date of D-day is partially dependent upon enemy reaction during month of August, I am convinced that an early and strong effort behind his front will sever his main lines of communications and enable us to deliver a decisive and crushing blow. Any material delay in such an operation may lose this opportunity. The alternative is a frontal attack which can only result in a protracted and expensive campaign to slowly drive the enemy north of the 38th parallel."[14]

On 25 July these exchanges came to a climax when the Pentagon directed the Marine Corps to build its 1st Division to full war strength.

At this point the change of heart among the Joint Chiefs of Staff is pertinent because of its direct effects on the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade. As previously noted, the Pentagon on 22 July approved the Marine Corps' plan Able which provided for the expansion of the Brigade to war strength. General Cates immediately set machinery in motion to bolster the ranks of that unit. With the approval of Admiral Sherman, he cut into the rosters of Marine security detachments throughout the United States and arranged for the personnel thus released to be channelled to Craig's command. It was also possible now to implement an earlier plan relating to casualty replacements for the Brigade. As far back as 14 July, the Commandant had ordered activation of the First Replacement Draft, fixing its departure for Korea at 10 August.[15] Thus Craig could be assured of early reinforcement by more than 800 officers and men if the course of the war necessitated a premature commitment of his Brigade.

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The Advance Party in Japan

Generals Craig and Cushman were meanwhile assigned a large office in General Headquarters, Tokyo. There they cleared away much administrative detail which accumulates in the path of every military operation.

On 20 July the two commanders called on General Stratemeyer. Marine Air was the focal point of discussion as they again explained the organization of their fighting team. When they informed Stratemeyer of MacArthur's decision to keep the Brigade intact, the air officer gave them further assurance that MAG–33 would always be available to support the Marine ground force.[16]

Originally, the Army planned to base the Marine ground elements at Sasebo, Japan, and the air group 400 miles away at Itami Field, near Kobe. Craig and Cushman realized that the resulting large gap would give rise to problems in liaison, training, and supply. Hoping to change such an undesirable arrangement, the Brigade staff carefully studied the layout of available land and facilities. Armed with the results of this research, Craig proposed to General Headquarters that all Marines be based in the Kobe-Osaka-Kyoto area. After he outlined the advantages of keeping the Brigade and its supporting aviation close together, Wright responded encouragingly to the recommendation.[17]

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Confident that the suggestion would be favorably considered, the advance party flew to Itami on 21 July and made a detailed reconnaissance of debarkation, billeting, and training sites. While Craig inspected the area and prepared a report, Cushman examined the air base facilities and established his headquarters according to the initial plan. The Marine officers then returned to Tokyo 2 days later to push the request for getting both air and ground forces located in the same area. To support his proposal, Craig submitted a complete "floor plan" not only for the Brigade but also for the entire 1st Marine Division. MacArthur's staff promptly approved.[18]

On the 25th the advance party again set out for Itami, this time to prepare for the arrival of the Brigade. Their plane was a scant 20 minutes out of Tokyo when an urgent message from General Headquarters directed their return to that city at once. The big aircraft roared back to the field, and a few minutes later the Marines were driving through the Japanese capital.

At headquarters, Wright summed up the most recent reports from the front. The American forward wall was crumbling under continuous hammering. A wide envelopment had just netted the whole southwestern tip of the peninsula for the Communists, who were now pressing in on Pusan from the west as well as north. Lacking sufficient troops to defend its broad frontage, the Eighth Army was falling back. If the Red tide continued unabated, there was imminent danger of losing Pusan, the one remaining major port in American hands. Should this coastal city fall, South Korea would be lost.

Wright told Craig that all available troops had to be thrown into the line to meet this threat. Therefore, General MacArthur had diverted the seaborne Brigade from Japan to Korea, where it would join General Walker's beleaguered forces.[19]

Obviously, the Marines were not far from a fight.

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Voyage of the Brigade

At sea the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was unaware of the decisions and difficulties developing on higher levels. Nevertheless, that tactical organization was having enough trouble of its own. On 12 July, Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, and the 1st Amphibious Tractor Company departed San Diego on board the LSD's *Fort Marion* and *Gunston Hall*. Designated Task Unit 53.7.3, the twin amphibious ships sailed 2 days before the rest of the Brigade and were scheduled to join the main convoy, Task Group 53.7, before crossing 160° east longitude. [20]

At noon on 13 July, the well deck of the *Fort Marion* accidentally flooded, the water rising to a height of 5 feet among the Brigade's M–26 tanks. An hour passed before the ship's pumps could drain the compartment, and briny water damaged 14 of the new armored vehicles, 300 90-mm. projectiles (then in critical supply), and 5,000 rounds of .30-caliber ammunition.

When news of the flood damage reached Brigade headquarters, then still at San Diego, the message was rushed to Craig. He immediately sent a dispatch to Captain English, authorizing him to jettison the ruined ammunition. He added that replacement armor would be requisitioned from the Barstow depot without delay. Craig then contacted the supply base and was promised that 14 M–26's would be commissioned and on their way to San Diego within 24 hours. The Brigade commander was preparing to request additional shipping for the vehicles when messages from the *Fort Marion* reported that 12 tanks could be restored to operating condition at sea. The remaining two would require new parts and 72 hours of repair work upon debarkation.[21]

As already noted, the Marines were placing heavy reliance on their armor, confident that it was a match for the enemy's Russian-built T–34 tank in Korea. Consequently, Craig's staff reacted to the flood reports with concern. Headquarters FMFPac was asked to include four M–26's in its first resupply shipment to the Brigade; arrangements were made for new parts to be flown to the port of debarkation, and ammunition to replace that damaged in the flood was loaded on board the larger convoy.

Misfortune struck again a few hours after Task Group 53.7 steamed from San Diego on 14 July. The transport *Henrico* developed a serious mechanical failure and was declared temporarily unseaworthy. This ship was carrying Lieutenant Colonel Murray, his regimental staff, and the entire 1st Battalion Landing Team.[22] After Murray and his headquarters transferred to the APA *Pickaway* off San Clemente Island, the *Henrico* limped back toward California with about one-third of the Brigade's fighting force. The vessel docked at the United States Naval Supply Depot, Oakland, on the 16th. Repairs were started in urgent haste, since there was no other ship available. For security reasons, the Marines were forbidden to leave ship except for training on the dock. On the nights of the 16th and 17th, they sat on deck and gazed longingly at the beckoning lights of San Francisco. Twice during this time the *Henrico* weighed anchor and passed westward under the Golden Gate bridge; twice it was forced to return for additional repairs. Finally, on the evening of the 18th, the vessel steamed under the great bridge for its third attempt. This time it kept going, but it would not overtake the convoy until the morning of the very day the ships reached their destination.

During the voyage, strict wartime security measures, including radio silence, were enforced on all ships. While the North Koreans were believed to have no warships left afloat, their naval capabilities remained hidden from the outside world by a blur of question marks. No one realized more than the commander of Task Group 53.7[23] that it was much too early to take Soviet Russia for granted.

The *Henrico*, now travelling independently, had a spine-chilling experience during her second night out

of Oakland. The ship's radar picked up two "unidentified submarines" which appeared to be converging on the stern of the lone vessel. General Quarters was sounded. While sailors peered into the darkness from their battle stations, several hundred Marines joked weakly in the troop compartments below the waterline. After an anxious hour, the persistent spots on the electronic screen vanished.

Shipboard life for the Brigade was otherwise uneventful. The troops took part in physical drills as vigorously as the limited confines of vessels would allow. Daily classes and conferences emphasized those subjects most relevant to the news reports trickling back from the front. Success of North Korean armor stimulated keen interest in land mines and the new rocket launchers. Press commentaries on the battleground's primitive environment made even field sanitation a serious matter. Since there was no military intelligence available on the North Korean forces, officers and NCO's turned to publications on Russian tactics and weapons.

As previously noted, Sasebo, Japan, was the original destination of the ships transporting the Brigade's ground elements. The *Achernar*, *Anderson*, and *Badoeng Strait* were bound for Kobe with MAG–33. When Craig's proposal for consolidation was approved by General Headquarters, the entire convoy was ordered to Kobe. Then, on 25 July, Colonel Edward W. Snedeker, Chief of Staff, received the dispatch sending the ground force directly to Pusan.

This announcement came as no surprise to the majority of officers and men. Day by day, news reports had been outlining the course of the war. The shrinking perimeter of Walker's army was traced on maps and sketches throughout every ship. After the Communist "end run" in southwest Korea, Marines began to wonder if there would be any front at all by the time they arrived. In the captain's mess of the *Pickaway*, senior Marine and naval officers were giving odds that the Brigade would reach the South Korean port only in time to cover a general evacuation of the peninsula.[24]

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The Advance Party in Korea

With the Brigade well beyond the halfway point in its Pacific voyage, Craig and his staff could not afford to waste a minute. At 1700 on 25 July they left Tokyo by plane for Korea. En route they landed at Itami, where the Brigade commander and Cushman made hurried adjustments to meet the new situation.[25]

Leaving Itami on the 26th, they flew to Fukuoka, Japan. There they transferred from their 4-engine Marine aircraft to a smaller Air Force plane which could be accommodated on the primitive landing fields of Korea. On the last lap of their journey, they reached Taegu at 1400.

Taegu was a dismal place during this crucial phase of the UN delaying action. Hastily chosen as a headquarters by General Walker, the ancient town gave the appearance of a remote outpost. Its airstrip was crude. The fewness of the airmen and soldiers among the handful of transport and fighter planes served only to emphasize the critical situation of the UN forces.[26]

General Craig reported to General Walker immediately, while the Brigade G–3, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L. Stewart, met with his Eighth Army opposite, Colonel William E. Bartlett. Later, Walker's chief of staff, Colonel Eugene M. Landrum, assembled all the Marine officers for an official briefing. He explained that the Brigade had not been earmarked for any specific mission. The battle situation was too fluid for firm plans. Information from the field was sketchy and unreliable, as outnumbered Army forces slowly retreated. From the time of first contact by American units, the front had been more of a blur than a distinct line. Landrum concluded by saying that the Brigade must be prepared to move anywhere after debarkation—and on a moment's notice.[27]

After he and his officers had been assigned rooms in a temporary barracks, Craig requested permission to reconnoiter the combat zone.[28] Walker assented, providing his own plane and pilot for the trip. Accompanied by Stewart and Lieutenant Colonel Arthur A. Chidester, his G–4, Craig flew first to Pusan, where he checked harbor facilities, roads, and railways. There he conferred with Brigadier General Crump Garvin, USA, to initiate preparations for the Brigade's arrival.[29]

Leaving Pusan, the Marine officers flew over Chinhae, which they discovered to be a suitable base, if necessary, for VMO–6 and the Brigade's air support control unit. Cruising westward, they passed over Masan, then continued toward Chinju. From the latter vicinity, the enemy's envelopment was then threatening the western approaches to Pusan. Veering northward, the reconnaissance party paralleled the Naktong River. The pilot, who was familiar with the ground, briefed his passengers along the way. By the time the plane returned to Taegu, the Marines had a broad picture of the critical areas most likely to become Brigade battlefields.[30]

General Craig and his ground officers remained at Taegu 4 days. Attending daily briefings of the Eighth Army staff, they acquired a sound knowledge of the tactical situation. At a conference with Major General Earle E. Partridge and his Fifth Air Force staff,[31] the Marines were brought up to date on the disposition of aviation and its policy for supporting UN ground forces.[32]

In the fight for time, ground force units in line were frequently withdrawn and shuttled to plug gaps in the sagging front. Reports from the battlefield more often were food for the imagination rather than fact for the planning room. All of this created confusion among Eighth Army staff officers.[33]

In the Taejon area the 24th Infantry Division had lost 770 officers and men during the single week of 15–22 July. Of these casualties, 61 were known dead, 203 wounded, and 506 missing in action.[34] Among the missing was General Dean, and the wounded included a regimental commanding officer, a regimental executive officer, and a battalion commander.[35]

Following this ordeal, the 24th had been relieved by the recently arrived 1st Cavalry Division, which went into line alongside the 25th Division in the Kumchon area. ROK divisions held to the north and east, where NKPA forces were driving toward Pohang-dong.

The shape of strategic things to come was indicated late in July when two NKPA divisions completed a much publicized “end run” past the open UN left flank to the southwest tip of the peninsula, then wheeled eastward for a drive on Pusan.

General Walker reacted promptly to the danger by recalling the 24th Division from Eighth Army reserve and moving it southward from Kumchon to block the enemy near Hadong. With the recently landed 29th Infantry attached, the division totalled only 13,351 officers and men.[36] Its front extended from the southern coast near Hadong to the town of Kochang, 40 miles north.[37] In addition to manning this mountainous line, the 24th had troops in action at Pohang-dong, more than 100 miles away on the east coast. There some of its units fought as Task Force Perry, under direct control of Eighth Army headquarters.[38]

The 24th Division and 29th Infantry had no more than deployed when they found themselves plunged into a confused 5-day fight. Although they sold ground as dearly as possible, the Army units were compelled to give up Hadong and fall back toward Chinju.[39]

As the threat to Pusan grew more serious, the Eighth Army commander shifted units. In order to protect the approaches from Chinju to Pusan, he pulled the 25th Infantry Division back across the river Naktong near Waegwan and moved it from the northern to the southern front in 48 hours. The next day saw the 1st Cavalry withdrawing across the Naktong in the Waegwan area and blowing the bridges.

After being relieved in the south by the 25th Division, the 24th joined the 1st Cavalry withdrawal to hastily organized defensive positions east of the Naktong. ROK divisions continued to defend the northeast approaches, while the 25th Division stood guard to block any enemy move toward Chinju.[40]

At this juncture General Craig became increasingly concerned about prospects of maintaining the Brigade’s integrity as a Marine air-ground team. He and his staff were aware that elements of the 29th Infantry had been rushed from their ships directly into combat in the Chinju area, and some units were badly mauled. Craig took occasion, therefore, to remind Army leaders once more of the Marine tactical concept of the indivisible air-ground team.[41]

MAG–33, said Craig, would have to unload its planes and prepare them for action; and the control squadron would need an interval to set up co-ordinated tactical air support.[42]

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Crisis of Eighth Army

As July drew to an end, the situation both on the northern and southwestern fronts was developing into a crisis. Hourly it grew apparent that the Eighth Army's perimeter would have to shrink even more, so that defenses could assume some depth in sensitive areas. Landrum indicated for the first time that the Brigade was being considered primarily for a mission on the left flank.[43] Guided by this possibility, Craig and his staff officers devoted a day to drawing up a flexible operation plan. The purpose of this directive was to advise the Brigade's subordinate commanders of possible commitment in the Chinju, Kochang, or Kumchon areas, in that order of probability. Also included were detailed instructions for movement to forward assembly areas, broad missions for supporting units, security measures to be taken, and a general outline of the situation ashore.[44]

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The advance party extracted from the plan a fragmentary warning order suitable for radio transmission. This message was delivered to Eighth Army headquarters with a request that it be sent immediately to the Brigade at sea.[45] Now Craig assumed that Snedeker and Murray would have a reasonable impression of the situation awaiting them.[46]

At an Army briefing on the 29th, the Marines learned that the UN left flank was collapsing. An air of uneasiness pervaded Taegu, and Eighth Army headquarters began preparations for displacement to Pusan. Craig was told that the Brigade definitely would be committed in the southwest, unless a more critical situation suddenly sprang up elsewhere. Again the Army officers added that the Marine unit actually must be prepared to move in any direction on short notice.[47]

With the approval of the Eighth Army, the Brigade commander immediately sent a message to COMNAVFE requesting that the Marine air group be made available to support the ground force by 2 August, and that VMO–6 be transported to Korea as quickly as possible.[48] Time was drawing short.

On 30 July, General Craig had a final conference with Generals Walker and Partridge. This time, Walker himself told the Marine leader that the Brigade would be sent to the southwest; and that the unit, once committed, would be free to push forward without interference from Eighth Army.[49] Partridge interjected that his planes would be available to support Craig's ground troops if Marine air did not arrive in time.[50]

Immediately after the conference, the Marine officers set out for Pusan by jeep. While their vehicles bounced southward on the ancient road, army headquarters in Taegu was sinking to new depths of dejection. Chinju had just fallen, and the Red column was pounding on toward Masan.[51]

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Chapter 5. Prelude to Battle

AFTER THE ADVANCE party reached Pusan, General Craig established a temporary command post in the headquarters building of General Garvin's Base Command. Then the Marine officers plunged into the final phase of planning and preparation for the Brigade, although they were still handicapped by the undisclosed secret of the convoy's arrival date. Staff gears were meshing smoothly by this time, with solutions being ground out for one problem after another.

On the night of 30 July, Lieutenant Colonel Stewart and other staff officers were discussing whether MAG-33 would be able to get its planes airborne in time to support the Brigade in its initial combat. Acting on a hunch, Stewart picked up a telephone in the slim hope of placing a call through to Japan. The long shot paid off. After some wrangling by startled operators, he managed to contact Itami Air Force Base and talk to Colonel Kenneth H. Weir, Cushman's chief of staff.

Stewart briefed the Marine aviator on the latest developments, emphasizing that the Brigade would undoubtedly get into the fight soon after arrival. He asked Weir to send the Air Support Section and helicopters to Korea by LST as quickly as possible after unloading in Japan.[1]

Craig received a radio message that same night from FMFPac, informing him that the replacements for the Brigade would not be sent directly to Pusan, as requested. They were to be assembled at Camp Pendleton for travel with the 1st Marine Division, and this meant a delay which could be critical. Craig immediately insisted that the reinforcements be sent to Pusan to replace Brigade battle losses and form the third rifle companies.[2] The Marine leader's determination in this instance proved to be a blessing a few weeks later.

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Reconnaissance by Jeep

On the morning of 31 July, Craig and Stewart set out by jeep to reconnoiter the rear areas of the crumbling southwestern sector. Kean's 25th Division, having just replaced the 24th in line, was now blocking the threatened western approaches to Pusan. Since all indications pointed to the Brigade's commitment in this area, Craig wanted to walk and ride over the terrain he had previously scouted from the air.[3]

He returned to Pusan just in time to receive a telephone call from Colonel Landrum of Eighth Army Headquarters. The chief of staff told him of General Walker's intention to attach the Army's 5th Regimental Combat Team, newly arrived from Hawaii, to the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade. With two regiments under his command, Craig would be assigned a vital area of responsibility along the Nam River, near its confluence with the Naktong north of Masan.[4] Unfortunately, the Brigade reached Korea 1 day too late. When the 5th RCT debarked at Pusan on 1 August, it was earmarked for the 25th Division and placed in Eighth Army reserve.[5]

Also debarking on the 1st was the Army's skeletonized 2d Division. This unit cleared Pusan and hurried to the hard-pressed Taegu area where it also passed into Eighth Army reserve.[6]

During the last hours before the Brigade's arrival, Lieutenant Colonel Chidester was diligently engaged in the task—or art—of procurement. It has already been explained why the Marine ground force would debark for combat with little more than what its troops could carry on their backs. In order to offset partially the deficiencies, the G-4 successfully negotiated with Army authorities for 50 cargo trucks, several jeeps, some radio vans, and various other items of equipment. Officers of the Pusan Base Command reacted to all of Chidester's requests with as much generosity as their meager stocks of materiel would allow.[7]

Not until the morning of 2 August did General Craig learn that Task Group 53.7 was scheduled to dock at Pusan that very evening. The last-minute disclosure relieved him of considerable anxiety, but he was still disturbed for want of specific orders concerning departure of the Brigade from Pusan. His instructions from General Walker were to debark the ground force immediately and have it prepared to move forward by 0600 the following morning. The same orders advised him that a specific destination "would be given later."[8]

"Later" did not come soon enough for the Marine commander. As the long column of ships steamed into Pusan Harbor in the early evening, he still did not know where he would lead his Brigade the next morning.[9]

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Chapter 5. Prelude to Battle
Brigade Air Lands

When Task Group 53.7 entered Far Eastern waters, the ships transporting the forward echelon of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing veered toward Japan, while the others continued to Korea. The Brigade's air arm arrived at Kobe late in the afternoon of 31 July.

Within three hours debarkation had been completed and unloading was in full swing. A waiting LST took on Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron Two and the ground personnel and equipment of VMO-6. By the next morning it was steaming toward Pusan, carrying the vital link in General Craig's air-ground team. Cushman and Weir were making good their promises.[10]

Since harbor facilities at Kobe were unsuitable for offloading aircraft, the *Badoeng Strait* stood out to sea on 1 August and catapulted 44 of its Marine fighter planes into the air. The aircraft sped to the field at Itami, where they were quickly checked by pilots and crews for their imminent role in combat. On the following day, the other 26 fighters left the carrier and joined the first group ashore for maintenance and testing.[11]

To achieve maximum mobility and striking power, Marine and Navy commanders agreed to base VMF's 214 and 323 aboard aircraft carriers for initial operations over Korea. After only 1 day of refresher flights at Itami, the pilots of VMF-214 landed their planes aboard the U.S.S. *Sicily*. Two days later, on 5 August, Major Arnold Lund led his VMF-323 back to the *Badoeng Strait*.[12]

The squadron of night fighters, VMF(N)-513, was land-based. Having been assigned to the Fifth Air Force, it would be controlled by the Itazuke field for night heckler missions over Korea. This unit had time for only a few night training flights before being committed to combat.[13]

Kobe's waterfront was the scene of feverish activity around the clock. The light observation planes and helicopters of VMO-6 were unloaded, assembled, and—to the amazement of local Japanese—flown from the very streets of the city to the base at Itami. There they were hurriedly checked by mechanics and prepared for the short ferry flight to Korea.[14]

Headquarters and Service Squadrons of MAG-33 were left with the task of unloading supplies and equipment from the *Achernar* and *Anderson.* Since the three fighter squadrons were farmed out to the carriers and Air Force, Group headquarters turned its attention to administrative and maintenance matters. For the next month it would be hard-pressed to keep the carrier squadrons supplied with spare parts while providing replacement aircraft for the sea-borne units, handling a variety of airlift requests with its lone transport plane, and making arrangements for the support of VMF(N)-513 at Itazuke.[15]

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Landing of Ground Force

The hapless *Henrico* finally overtook Task Group 53.7 in the Tsushima Straits on the morning of 2 August. A few hours later the Marines of the Brigade got their first glimpse of Korea's skyline. Seen from a distance, the wall of forbidding, gray peaks was hardly a welcome sight to men who had been broiled and toughened on the heights of Camp Pendleton.

For reasons unknown, neither Colonel Snedeker nor anyone else had received the operations plan which Craig had sent via Eighth Army at Taegu. Although every Marine in the convoy realized the gravity of the situation ashore, there could be no specific preparations by troop leaders whose only source of information was an occasional news broadcast.

Having heard nothing from his superiors, Lieutenant Colonel Murray was thinking in terms of a purely administrative landing. Had he known what awaited his 5th Marines ashore, he would have had his troops draw ammunition and rations while still at sea. Throughout the sleepless night that followed, he had ample time to reflect sourly on the fortunes of war.[16]

Shortly after 1700 on 2 August, the first ship steamed into Pusan Harbor. As it edged toward the dock, Leathernecks crowding the rail were greeted by a tinny and slightly tone-deaf rendition of the Marine Corps Hymn, blared by a South Korean band. Army troops scattered along the waterfront exchanged the usual barbed courtesies with their webfooted brethren aboard ship, and old salts smiled while noting that tradition remained intact.

When the *Clymer* approached its berth, Craig waved a greeting to Snedeker and shouted, "What battalion is the advance guard?"[17]

The chief of staff registered an expression of astonishment.

"Did you get my orders?" Craig called to Murray when the *Pickaway* slid against the dock.

"No, sir!"[18] replied the CO of the 5th Marines.

Craig ordered a conference at 2100 for the Brigade staff, Murray, battalion commanders, and the leaders of supporting units. When the officers entered the wardroom of the *Clymer* at the specified time, the last ship of Task Group 53.7 was being moored in its berth.

After introductory remarks by the general, his G-2, Lieutenant Colonel Ellsworth G. Van Orman, launched the briefing with a grim narrative of the enemy situation. Next came Stewart, who outlined tentative operations plans. The Brigade would definitely begin moving forward at 0600 the next morning, although a specific destination had yet to be assigned by the Army. Travel would be by road and rail. The necessary trains were already awaiting in the Pusan terminal, and the 50 trucks procured by Chidester were standing by, complete with Army drivers.[19]

Craig then summed up his earlier discussions with Walker. The Army leader had voiced a strong desire to use the Marines in an attack, for he felt it was high time to strike back at the Red invader. Employment of the Brigade as an offensive force was a natural conclusion to its commander, and he told his subordinates how he had won assurances for the integrity of the air-ground team. This was an encouraging note on which to close one of the strangest combat briefings in the history of the Corps. The leaders of over 4,000 Marines rushed from the ship to alert their units for movement into a critical tactical situation. They would leave in a few hours, but didn't know where they were going.[20]

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Chapter 5. Prelude to Battle
Bedlam on Pusan Waterfront

It is not surprising that the Pusan waterfront turned into a bedlam. As darkness settled, thousands of Marines poured onto the docks. Cranes and working parties unloaded vehicles, supplies and equipment, while a chorus of commands and comments was added to the roar of machinery. Supply points were set up under searchlights, and long lines of Marines formed on the docks, in buildings and along streets. Armfuls of C-rations, machinegun belts, grenades, and bandoleers gave men the appearance of harried Christmas shoppers caught in a last-minute rush.

The activity and din continued all night. Few men could sleep through the noise, crowding, and shuffling. Before dawn, new lines began to form in reverse as groggy Marines filed back aboard ships to get their last hot meal for many a day.

After the conference aboard the *Clymer,* Brigade headquarters resumed its efforts to obtain specific information from Taegu. Finally, at 2325, Landrum telephoned Craig and announced Walker's decision—the Brigade would go westward to the vicinity of Changwon, where it would remain for the time being in Eighth Army reserve. Only Walker himself could order any further move. If some extreme emergency arose and communications with Eighth Army were lost, the Brigade would then come under the control of the CG, 25th Infantry Division.[21]

The long-awaited message gave added impetus to the unloading operations. Major William L. Batchelor's shore party company devoted one of its principal efforts to the big howitzers and vehicles of 1/11, while English and his tankmen struggled to get their steel monsters ashore from the LSD's. Engineer heavy equipment, mobile maintenance shops of the Ordnance Detachment, fuel, ammunition, and medical supplies swung from decks to docks, where waiting Marines rushed them off to staging areas around the waterfront.

Altogether, 9,400 tons of supplies were unloaded, and the vast majority were turned over to Army quartermaster authorities in Pusan. Four officers and 100 men of Major Thomas J. O'Mahoney's Combat Service Detachment were designated as the Brigade rear echelon. This group would remain in the port city to handle logistical and administrative matters. Supplies were moved into Army warehouses, where they became part of the common pool shared by all units at the front. This led to confusion later, when the Brigade requested its own Class II and IV items, only to discover that they had already been issued to other outfits. But the Army divisions had already been fighting for a month in a war which caught the nation unprepared, so that the Pusan Base Command had no alternative but to issue supplies on the basis of immediate need, not ownership.[22]

The Brigade was prepared to travel light. Not only the bulk of supplies but also all personal baggage was left behind in Pusan, to be stored and safeguarded by the rear echelon. When dawn broke on 3 August, each Marine carried only his pack, weapon, ammunition, and rations.[23]

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Chapter 5. Prelude to Battle
The Brigade at Changwon

Despite the tumult of the sleepless night at Pusan, Lieutenant Colonel George R. Newton's 1st Battalion set out for Changwon shortly after 0600 on 3 August. As advance guard for the Brigade, it made the 40-mile trip in Marine and Army trucks, reaching a point 1 mile west of the town at 1400. There the battalion took up defensive positions astride the Changwon-Masan road in order to cover the arrival of the remainder of the Brigade.[24]

Although he had orders to bivouac at Changwon, General Craig decided to deploy the Brigade defensively to the west of the town. This decision was prompted by the enemy situation west of Masan, which was a scant 6 1/2 miles from Changwon. Then, too, the Marine commander saw the layover as a final opportunity to check the field discipline of the Brigade.[25]

Between 0630 and 0700, the main body of the Marine ground force moved out of Pusan by road and rail. Vehicles over 2 1/2 tons, all heavy equipment, and the M-26 tanks were transported on flatcars.

The roads were narrow and bumpy, and the churning wheels of the trucks threw up clouds of stifling dust that hung in the air and painted Marines and equipment a ghostly gray. Aboard the primitive trains, which frequently jolted to stops for no apparent reason, men tried vainly to fit themselves to miniature wooden seats constructed in perfect right angles. And always, the troops inhaled that characteristic odor drifting in from well-fertilized rice paddies.

By 1600, all combat and support elements of the Brigade, with the exception of one tank platoon, had arrived in the Changwon area. Southwest of the city the 1st Battalion was relieved of its responsibility on the left side of the Changwon-Masan road, when 3/5 occupied the high ground in that area. Newton was then able to extend his right flank farther along the towering ridge north of the road.[26]

South of the MSR, a wide rice paddy stretched between 3/5's positions and the town. Almost in the center of this low ground was a hill commanding a good all-around view of the entire area. It was on this dominating height that Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Roise deployed his 2d Battalion. Behind Roise, General Craig established his CP in a small basin among hills in the immediate vicinity of Changwon. Close-in protection for his headquarters was provided by the engineer company and various headquarters units. Throughout the interior of the bivouac area were tank platoons and the batteries of Lieutenant Colonel Wood's artillery battalion.

As night settled on 3 August, an army of phantoms invaded the Brigade perimeter and drove to the very fringe of Craig's CP. The reaction of green troops was typical of men new to combat. Shortly after 2200, a rifle shot cracked. Many Brigade Marines had never heard a weapon fired in combat, so they concluded that likely targets were present in the perimeter area. As nerve-taut men stared fixedly into the blackness, forms that had been harmless bushes and rocks took on the guise of Communist infiltrators.

The first shot was soon followed by others. Toward midnight, the firing developed into a continuous crackle, particularly in the immediate vicinity of the Brigade CP. Palpitating hearts pounded even more strenuously when two Marine machineguns began chattering in positions occupied by Brigade headquarters troops.

Anxiety also spread to the foxholes of the 5th Marines. In 2/5's area one man was shot. The 1st Battalion suffered 2 casualties, 1 resulting from mistaken identity during challenging, the other inflicted when a weapon discharged accidentally.[27]

The commotion finally died down around 0300, after cursing NCO's convinced the military novices that

they had been firing at delusions of their own overwrought imaginations.

Although such a reaction is not uncommon among untried troops, this realization was no balm to a wrathful Brigade commander at dawn on 4 August. Craig called in leaders of the most obvious offenders and severely reprimanded them. He made it known in no uncertain terms that such conduct would not be tolerated again; and from that time on, every man in the Brigade took him at his word.

The remainder of the stay at Changwon was relatively calm. On one occasion a group of seven unidentified persons was spotted atop a mountain overlooking the Brigade area. Closer scrutiny disclosed that the individuals had radios and were carefully observing all activity within the Marine perimeter. A platoon of infantry was dispatched to destroy what was apparently an enemy observation post; but by the time the rifleman scaled the height, both intruders and radios had disappeared.

The climb caused a number of heat prostration cases within the platoon, for Korean terrain and heat were giving Marines their first bitter taste of a crippling combination. Brigade helicopters, flown to Pusan on 2 August, set a combat precedent by delivering rations and water to the infantrymen on the mountain, and by evacuating the more severe heat casualties.[28]

While Craig's ground force spent its time patrolling and training around Changwon, VMO-6 and the Air Support Section (MTACS-2) were readying themselves. Accompanying the 4 HO3S helicopters in the flight to Pusan from Japan on 2 August were 4 of VMO-6's OY-2 observation planes. The other 4 light aircraft remained in Japan, to be used as spares. On 4 August the LST which had been dispatched by Cushman and Weir also arrived at the South Korean port. While two helicopters flew to Changwon to operate from Craig's CP, the others, together with the rest of VMO-6 and the Air Support Section, moved to the airfield at Chinhae. By 5 August, MTACS-2 had established communications with the *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* and was ready for business.

The Pusan Perimeter

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Chapter 5. Prelude to Battle
The Pusan Perimeter

The big picture, militarily speaking, was outlined in somber colors during the first few days of August 1950. Only the southeast corner of Korea was left to the Eighth Army and its battered ROK allies. Space had been traded for time until there remained in effect merely a UN beachhead about 90 miles long and 60 wide.

Unremitting enemy pressure throughout July had pushed the UN forces back to positions stretching raggedly from Pohang-dong on the east coast to Masan on the south coast by way of Taegu in the center. The logistical lifeline extended from Pusan to Taegu both by road and rail, and some 300,000 tons of supplies were moved in July by the Pusan Logistical Command.

The vital seaport had to be held if the UN forces were to retain a foothold in the peninsula, and the enemy was already threatening both Pohang-dong and Masan, each within 50 miles. Only by courtesy could the irregular chain of UN positions have been called a line. Gaps were the rule rather than exception, and an entire enemy corps might have driven through the mountainous area between Andong and Yongdok without meeting serious opposition. Nor was this the only spot where the dangerously stretched UN forces had to depend on the terrain for support. Yet the time had come to make a stand, and this final UN beachhead has gone down in history by the name of the Pusan Perimeter.

From Taegu in the center to the eastern coast, five depleted ROK divisions were arrayed during the first week in August. East of the Naktong, from the Taegu-Waegwan area southward, the 1st Cavalry and the 24th Infantry Division held defensive positions. This left the southern sector to the 25th Division, reinforced by the Army 5th RCT and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade.

The principal enemy units pressing toward Masan and Pusan in the southern sector were identified as the NKPA 6th Infantry Division and the 83d Motorcycle Regiment. Composed entirely of Chinese civil war veterans in July 1949, the 6th Division had at that time been the 166th Division, 56th CCF Army, which later entered Korea as a completely equipped unit. Its three infantry regiments, the 13th, 14th, and 15th, were distinguished throughout the invasion for a high esprit de corps. After capturing Yongdungpo, an industrial suburb of Seoul, the 6th had pushed southward and won fresh honors by forcing the river Kum and taking Kunsan by storm.[29]

On the eve of the Kunsan operation, according to a captured enemy document, troops of the 6th were informed that they were facing a United States Army regiment. “Since this unit is planning to advance to the north, it is our mission to envelop and annihilate it. . . . We are fully prepared and confident of success in this operation.”[30]

A numerical superiority as well as good combat discipline enabled the initial assault waves to cross the Kum in pneumatic floats and establish a bridgehead before noon on 16 July 1950. Half of the town of Kunsan was occupied before nightfall, and the United States and ROK defenders withdrew under cover of darkness.

Next came the “end run,” with 6th Division units racing toward the capture of Namwon, Kwangju, Yosu, and Mokpu in the southwest corner of the peninsula. No opposition awaited except ineffectual delaying actions by ROK constabulary troops. After mopping up a few small pockets of resistance, the 6th Division pushed eastward to lead the North Korean drive toward Pusan.

The capture of Sunchon gave the division an assembly area for the attack on Chinju. And on 28 July the commander, Major General Pang, issued a message to his troops:

“Comrades, the enemy is demoralized. The task given to us is the liberation of Masan and Chinju and the annihilation of the remnants of the enemy. We have liberated Mokpu, Kwangju and Yosu and have thereby

accelerated the liberation of all Korea. However, the liberation of Chinju and Masan means the final battle to cut off the windpipe of the enemy. Comrades, this glorious task has fallen to our division! Men of the 6th Division, let us annihilate the enemy and distinguish ourselves!”[31]

Up to that time the division’s total casualties had been remarkably few. Only 400 killed and wounded were reported from 25 June until after the capture of Kunsan, and the 6th had met scarcely any opposition since that action. It was just prior to the assault on Chinju, moreover, that the 83d Motorcycle Regiment was attached to reinforce the drive toward Pusan.

This unit had been part of the 105th Armored Division until June 1950, when it was given a separate existence. Equipment consisted of motorcycles with sidecars and jeeps of Soviet manufacture. Fixed machineguns on both types of vehicles were operated by the crews in addition to submachineguns. Not much is known about the numbers of the 83d at this time, but it had experienced little combat since the beginning of the invasion.[32]

During the advance on Chinju the NKPA column ran into elements of the United States 24th Infantry Division and was stopped by machinegun fire at Hadong. All three regiments of the 6th Division had to be committed before this halfway point could be secured, and the 83d Motorcycle Regiment was blooded in the attack. More hard fighting awaited on the road to Chinju, but the two NKPA outfits battled their way into the town on or about 30 July 1950.

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Chapter 5. Prelude to Battle
Brigade Air Strikes First

These North Korean units were destined to become the opponents of the Brigade a few days later. Before the Marine ground forces could get into action, however, the air components struck the first blow.

When Lieutenant Colonel Walter E. Lischeid's VMF-214 landed on board the *Sicily* on 3 August, eight of its Corsairs were immediately refueled and armed. At 1630, the initial Marine offensive action of the war was launched as the fighter planes roared up from the carrier's flight deck. Minutes later their incendiary bombs and rockets were hitting Red-held Chinju and the village of Sinban-ni. A series of strafing runs concluded the Marines' greeting to the North Korean People's Army.[33]

While the 2 Red bases were erupting in smoke and flame, 2 other pilots of the squadron flew from the *Sicily* to Taegu to be briefed on the broad tactical situation. They returned from their visit with maps and intelligence material for guidance in future operations.[34]

The squadron flew 21 sorties on 4 August against enemy bases controlling the pressure on Eighth Army's southern flank. Racing in from the sea, gull-winged Marine planes struck at bridges, railroads, and troop concentrations in the Chinju and Sachon areas.

On 5 August, the *Sicily* steamed into the Yellow Sea. Marine planes descended on Inchon, Seoul, and Mokpo, battering airfields, factories, warehouses, railroads, bridges, and harbor facilities. The same pattern of destruction was repeated the following day.[35]

On 6 August came a thundering bid for fame by VMF-323, as its sleek Corsairs streaked toward Korea. Operating from the deck of the *Badoeng Strait*, the squadron flew 30 sorties in deep support forward of Eighth Army lines. Carrying the mail with 500-pound bombs, 20-mm. cannon and 5-inch rockets, Marine pilots struck at Communist troop concentrations, vehicles, supply dumps, bridges and railroads.[36]

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Chapter 5. Prelude to Battle
Planning the Sachon-Chinju Offensive

As early as 3 August, during the Brigade move from Pusan to Changwon, General Craig and Lieutenant Colonel Stewart had flown by helicopter to Masan for a conference of troop commanders. There they joined General Walker and General Kean at the latter's 25th Division command post. Also present was Brigadier General George B. Barth, artillery officer of the 25th.[37]

Craig suggested to the Eighth Army commander that some ROK army trainees be attached to the Brigade. There were thousands of such Korean recruits, and a few serving as scouts, interpreters, and rear-area guards would be of great value to the Marines. Walker agreed to provide the native troops and arm them as well. [38]

The Army leader confirmed the previous night's telephonic orders which had caused the Brigade's move to Changwon. After the four generals had discussed the tactical situation on the southern flank, Walker directed Craig to have the Brigade prepared for commitment to combat any time after the evening of 5 August.[39]

This schedule worked out perfectly from Craig's point of view. The Air Support Section at Chinhae had just established communications with the two carrier-based squadrons. Army-Navy-Marine co-operation thus enabled the Brigade commander to lead his entire air-ground team into battle.

On 5 August Craig and Stewart flew to Masan for a final meeting with Walker and Kean. The Eighth Army commander outlined his plans for the first UN counteroffensive. In forceful terms, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the course of the war up to that time. He announced that the strategy of trading space for time had come to an end, and he did not mince words in referring to past UN defeats. With firm conviction in the cause, he had ordered all units to stand to the death. The Eighth Army could not and would not lose more ground or equipment.[40] Advances had been made by the enemy with such rapidity that he had extended his supply lines almost to the breaking point, concluded Walker. The time had come to strike back[41]

To the 25th Division, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, and 5th RCT would go the honor of launching the counterattack from Chindong-ni, a small coastal village 8 miles southwest of Masan on the road to Chinju. In its effort to roll up the southern UN flank, the NKPA 6th Division was exerting heavy pressure on Chindong-ni from both the west and north.

A few miles west, the irregular coastline takes a sharp turn to the south to form a stubby peninsula about 25 miles wide and 15 miles long. Near the western base is the important town of Sachon. About 10 miles above this western junction of peninsula and coast lies Chinju. Both Sachon and Chinju were the targets of Walker's counteroffensive.

Approximately 3 1/2 miles west of Chindong-ni is the tiny thatched–hut hamlet of Tosan, an unimpressive road junction which could be easily overlooked. The western fork is merely the continuation of the main route leading directly to Chinju, some 25 miles distant. The other fork branches south from Tosan and also goes to Chinju; but it skirts the coastline of the peninsula just described, passing through the communication hubs of Paedun-ni, Kosong, and Sachon. Thus, while both roads lead to Chinju, the southern or peninsular route is 17 miles longer.

Since it was known that enemy forces were present on the small peninsula, any UN thrust astride the main road to Chinju would be exposed to a constant flanking threat from the left. To eliminate this danger, Walker had decided to send the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade around the southern route from Tosan to Sachon. After the peninsula was secured, the 5th RCT would strike out for Chinju along the main road, while the 35th

Infantry of the 25th Division guarded its right flank in the mountains to the north.[42]

Craig and Stewart opposed this plan, arguing that the Brigade itself would be exposed to flanking danger on the right, if it made the initial advance alone.[43]

After further discussion, it was decided that all three units would attack simultaneously along the routes already designated. However, the 5th RCT was given a preparatory mission of uncovering the Tosan junction before the Brigade began its advance.[44] D-day was scheduled for 7 August. All participating units were to be part of Task Force Kean, so named after the 25th Division commanding general who would exercise overall control.

Craig hurried from the conference to alert the Brigade. In a past military age a general might have sprung into the saddle, but the Brigade commander had discovered a steed that covered more ground. He and Stewart climbed into a HO3S-1 helicopter piloted by Lieutenant Gustave F. Lueddeke of VMO-6, and a few minutes later they landed at Lieutenant Colonel Murray's CP to brief him on the forthcoming action.

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Chapter 6. Action on Hill 342

ON 6 AUGUST 1950 the Brigade was attached to the 25th Infantry Division and ordered forward to Chindong-ni. The area from that village westward toward the Tosan junction was occupied by thinly spread elements of the 5th RCT and the 27th Infantry. While the former took over front line positions preparatory to launching the main attack on the next day, the latter was gradually displacing rearward to go into Eighth Army reserve.[1]

Click here to view map

To facilitate the early relief of the 27th Infantry, Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Taplett's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, departed from Changwon at 1040, 6 August, and arrived at Chindong-ni less than 2 hours later. The infantry unit was accompanied by the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines; the 2d Platoon, 75-mm. Recoilless Guns; and the 3d Platoon, Company A Engineers. After assembling in a schoolyard north of the village, 3/5 relieved the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, on and around Hill 255.[2]

One and a half miles out of Chindong-ni, the road from Masan takes a sharp turn so that it is running generally north and south before it enters the village. Hill 255 borders the west side of the road, rising from the valley floor just above Chindong-ni and climbing northward to its summit in a series of prominent steps. Its ridgeline is narrow, with the eastern slopes falling steeply to the Masan route while its western wall plunges sharply to the valley and road connecting Chindong-ni and Haman.

Taplett set up his CP, headquarters units, and weapons company along the first step of the hill. Higher up, at the top of the second rise, Captain Joseph C. Fegan deployed Company H in defensive positions facing generally north. Forward, a long narrow plateau stretched for 250 yards before the third step of the ridge rose abruptly to the second highest peak on the hill. Noting the advantages of the commanding ground to his north, Fegan requested permission to move his company forward to that area. Since this would have placed him 500 yards from the nearest 3/5 unit, the request could not be granted.[3]

The battalion commander intended to keep his defenses as tightly knit as possible in order to discharge his mission of blocking the approaches to the Masan-Chindong-ni MSR. Despite vigorous patrolling by 25th Division units in the mountains between the coastal village and Haman, intelligence reported increasing numbers of enemy troops, heavy weapons, and equipment in the area to the north. It appeared that large NKPA forces were slipping through and descending on Chindong-ni to "cut off the windpipe" of Walker's southern flank.

First Lieutenant Robert D. Bohn, commander of Company G, deployed his 2d and 3d Platoons on Hill 99, to the west and across the valley from 255. He arranged his defenses to block the approaches from the high ground on his north (actually an extension of Hill 99) and from the valley to the west, separating him from massive Hill 342.[4]

On a small knoll at the base of Hill 255 was deployed Company G's 1st Platoon, commanded by Second Lieutenant John H. Cahill. With the 75-mm. recoilless gun platoon attached, this unit guarded the Haman road 600 yards from Chindong-ni.[5]

On high ground east of the MSR and beyond the village sat the 2d Platoon of Company H, with the mission of defending against infiltration from the direction of the sea and the mountains southeast of the road to Masan.[6]

This completed the infantry deployment. Company H had its three platoons spread over 1,500 yards, while those of Company G ranged at least an equal distance. Due to the lack of a third company, Taplett had no reserve other than a handful of headquarters troops. Thus 3/5 got its taste of things to come in a strange war of

mountains and men.

As the riflemen were digging their hilltop holes with traditional distaste, other supporting elements of the Brigade and 5th Marines began to arrive at Chindong-ni and set up for business. These included the Brigade Reconnaissance Company and a platoon of the regimental 4.2-inch Mortar Company.[7] All Marine units in the area temporarily came under control of 3/5's Battalion Commander. Taplett was given the added responsibility of handling all area requests for tactical air support.[8]

For the time being, the 3d Battalion itself was under operational control of Colonel John H. Michaelis, USA, commander of the 27th Infantry "Wolfhounds." Verbal instructions from Major General Kean on 6 August had given the Army officer control of all troops in the Chindong-ni area. When a second Marine battalion arrived in the locale, command would then pass to General Craig.[9]

By 1600, Taplett had reported his command post location and defensive positions to Michaelis. Immediately afterwards he ordered mortars and artillery to lay registration fires on the northern approaches to Chindong-ni.[10] Having left the phantoms of Changwon far behind, the Marines of the reinforced battalion settled down for the night.

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Chapter 6. Action on Hill 342
First Platoon Fight

Shortly after midnight, the 3d Battalion received an unexpected message which precipitated the first Marine infantry action of the war. Colonel Michaelis radioed Taplett and passed on a directive from 25th Division, ordering the Marine battalion to commit immediately one reinforced platoon for the defense of Hill 342. He explained that this unit was to relieve a beleaguered Army company being slowly eaten away in a private war of attrition. Taplett informed the regimental commander that he could ill afford to spare 1 of his 6 rifle platoons, but was told in return that General Kean had ordered 342 held at all costs.[11]

Tagged with the ominous sounding name "Yaban-san" by Koreans, this hill resembles a huge molar whose roots rise from the MSR west of Chindong-ni and lead to a tremendous mass about 2,000 yards north of the road. There the ground climbs sharply, culminating in a peak 1,100 feet high. Beyond, a long saddle extends a few thousand yards northwest, connecting 342 with a height of almost 2,000 feet. The latter was a stronghold of NKPA 6th Division elements, making a determined bid to carry 342 and cut the MSR.

Assigned the mission of making the Brigade's first ground contact was young Lieutenant Cahill of Company G. His 1st Platoon was reinforced with a machinegun squad and SCR-300 operator before he led it from 3/5's perimeter.

Moving westward on the MSR, the platoon reached Michaelis' CP, located near the bridges south of Hill 99. Cahill was told that he would be met by a guide at a road junction 700 yards farther down the MSR. From this point the platoon followed a soldier who escorted Cahill to the CP of the 2d Battalion, 5th RCT. This headquarters was situated just north of the road, on the tip of 342's eastern "root," 1 of the 2 long ridges leading to the hill itself.

The Marine officer was told to relieve the Army company on the summit and hold the hill with his platoon. Following a quick briefing, Cahill and the guide led the column northward from the CP, skirting the western base of the ridge. A few hundred yards along the way, the guide discovered that he had miscalculated in the darkness. More time was lost while the platoon descended to resume the correct route.

As the men threaded their way along the unseen trail, a few enemy artillery shells burst nearby. The column reached the end of the valley separating the two long spurs of 342, and a volley of rifle fire cracked in the darkness. Two of Cahill's Marines were painfully wounded.

Since the column was still in friendly territory, the guide advised Cahill not to climb 342 until dawn shed light on the mystery. It was then 0500, 7 August, and the Marine platoon had marched 3 miles from its original position.

Shortly after first light, it was discovered that soldiers of the 2d Battalion, 5th RCT, had fired on the Marines, not realizing that friendly units were moving within the area.

As the sun rose in a cloudless sky, Cahill took the lead. First, he climbed the high ground joining 342 with its eastern spur, then crossed over and continued toward the peak from a southeasterly direction.
Click here to view map

The platoon made good progress at the outset, but the heat became stifling; and all the while the slopes of 342 stretched ahead like a continuous wall. Stumbling, gasping for breath, soaked with perspiration, every Marine reached the point at which he barely managed to drag himself up the steep incline. There were choked curses as men gained a few feet, only to slip and fall back even farther.

Water discipline collapsed as canteens were quickly emptied. Marines began to drop along the slope,

some unconscious, others doubled over and retching. The tactical formation of the platoon became ragged, but Cahill and his NCO's urged the men upward.

Accompanied by Sergeant Lee Buettner, Cahill set out to contact the Army company commander on the summit and reconnoiter the area. Seventy-five yards from the top, he was fired on from the eastern slopes. Since he was in sight of the Army troops on the crest, it was obvious that the North Korean People's Army had officially greeted the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade.

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Chapter 6. Action on Hill 342

The Perimeter on Hill 342

Convinced that he was encountering only sniper fire, Cahill ordered Buettner to stay behind and keep the platoon moving up a draw affording cover. Then, ignoring enemy marksmen, the young officer climbed up to the crest and entered a grim little company perimeter under constant rifle and machinegun fire from its front and both flanks.

It was 0830 when the Army company commander greeted Cahill and explained his defenses. It had been customary, he said, to man a broad front during the day and draw back into a tight perimeter at night. But the intense enemy fire of the previous night had not diminished after daybreak, with the result that his men still occupied their night perimeter. The Army officer added that he had returned his mortars to the base of the hill, since they had drawn too much fire to be effective. Deployed around a triangular perimeter conforming to the shape of 347's peak were the remnants of his three shattered platoons.

While Cahill appraised the situation, his platoon labored up the hill under prodding by Buettner and other NCO's. Well up the southeastern slope, the column suddenly came under automatic weapons fire from invisible enemy positions. The exhausted Marines set up weapons along the hillside and fired at area targets. Despite the blistering sun and whine of bullets, NCO's led their fire teams and squads up toward the peak.

When the Marines reached Cahill, he learned that 1 man had been killed and 6 wounded, including Staff Sergeant Robert Robinson, platoon sergeant, and Sergeant Thomas Blackmon, platoon guide. A number of heat casualties were recuperating far down the slope, and one Marine had suffered an emotional collapse. Blackmon, despite a mortal wound, had been so intent on joining his platoon leader at the crest that four weary men were required to carry him down the hillside to safety. Three other able-bodied Marines also had to assist wounded men down the hill.

Of the 52 men who had set out the previous night, only 37, including those recovered from heat sickness, finally reached Cahill. As they assembled on the reverse slope of 342, a group of soldiers on the crest broke under a heavy volume of enemy fire and bolted from the perimeter. The Army company was on the verge of panic until a young Army lieutenant restored order and led the men back to their foxholes.

Cahill and his remaining NCO's crawled around the perimeter to insert Marines in positions among those of the Army troops. This psychology was sound, for each infantryman, eyeing his Army or Marine neighbor, prided himself on setting a high standard of military conduct. From that time on, every man discharged his responsibility in a most exemplary manner.

Two more Marines had been killed instantly while being led to their positions by Sergeant Jack Macy. These casualties brought the platoon's total to 3 KIA and 8 WIA.

It is not likely that Cahill's men were interested enough in historic dates to recall that it was the eighth anniversary of the Marine landing on Guadalcanal in World War II. For at noon, the fight on Hill 342 took on aspects of a siege. Swarms of North Koreans inched upward toward the crest, taking advantage of cover and concealment as they kept a steady stream of rifle and machinegun fire cutting across the hilltop. Despite the visual handicap resulting from the enemy's use of smokeless powder, the Marines and soldiers returned the fire with determination.

Due to the urgency of the situation on 342, the 2d Battalion, 5th RCT, ordered its company to remain on the crest with Cahill's platoon. Plans were already underway for a larger Marine force to clear the high ground.

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Chapter 6. Action on Hill 342
Call for Artillery Fires

In the meantime Cahill used his initiative to improve the situation. With his SCR-300, he called for Army artillery fire to silence the Communist mortars. When the first shells were fired for registration, he searched the perimeter and located an artillery forward observer. Accurate bursts were laid on likely looking mortar OP's in enemy territory, yet the Communist tubes continued to fire.

With ammunition and water in critical supply, the Marine officer radioed 3/5's CP and requested an air drop. Taplett's Tactical Air Control Party relayed the message to the Brigade Air Section, and an Air Force R4D transport flew over the restricted drop area atop Hill 342. The precious supplies tumbled from the big plane—into enemy territory. A single recovered packet contained carbine cartridges, the one type not needed.

The Brigade Air Section then turned the mission over to VMO-6. Every 5-gallon water can owned by the squadron was donated, and the more maneuverable OY-2's were able to drop them within the confined perimeter. Unhappily, the containers burst upon striking the ground, so that the parched hill defenders were able to salvage only a few mouthfuls of water apiece.

Sergeant Macy reacted with vigor. With Cahill's permission, he organized a few volunteers into a patrol to search for water. Descending the perilous southeastern slope under fire, the little group struck out for the village of Taepyong-ni, located along the base of 342's eastern spur and facing Hill 99 across the valley.

As the afternoon wore on, the Army-Marine defenders clung to their precarious perch, despite swollen tongues and Communist fire. The enemy had succeeded in surrounding the entire peak with a ring of fire. Several more casualties were inflicted on the infantry company, and a Marine machinegunner was killed instantly by a sniper who had worked his way to the south of the perimeter.

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Chapter 6. Action on Hill 342
Task Force Kean Stalled

Although the night of 6–7 August had been uneventful for 3/5's front lines around Chindong-ni, Taplett's CP near the base of Hill 255 came under sporadic shelling between 0100 and 0400. The first messages from Cahill, received about 0600, caused anxiety over the fate of his platoon.[12]

At 0200 that morning, a long column of trucks had set out from Changwon, carrying Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Roise's 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. The head of the convoy reached Chindong-ni about 0500 and entered the truck turn-around in a schoolyard at the base of Hill 255.[13] As 2/5 unloaded, the turn-around became a bottleneck of vehicles, men, and equipment which slowed movement on the MSR itself almost to a standstill. To make matters worse, the heavy traffic gradually pounded the schoolyard into a quagmire, so that trucks bogged down and added to the confusion.

While Roise was assembling his battalion, the entire area came under heavy mortar and artillery fire from the north. The sudden shelling, which caused 2/5's first battle casualties, brought all traffic on the road from Changwon to an abrupt halt.

Although the Marines of the 2d Battalion were well covered behind Hill 255, bursts from shells striking the trees high on the ridge filled the air with fragments. Before the enemy mortars ceased, 1 Marine had been killed and 11 wounded, including Captain George E. Kittredge, Jr., commander of Company E.[14]

Lieutenant Colonel Murray, whose headquarters was behind Roise's unit in the convoy, was still north of Chindong-ni when the column slowed almost to a standstill. He radioed 2/5's commander and told him to keep the trucks moving despite the shelling. Roise replied that the muddy schoolyard, not enemy fire, was the main cause of the delay. Thus Murray received the first of many object lessons in Korean geography. He sat patiently in his jeep, while the column inched into Chindong-ni.[15]

After the regimental commander arrived in Chindong-ni, the 3d Battalion, less Cahill's platoon, reverted to his control. Because of the battle in progress on Hill 342 and enemy activity to the north of the village perimeter, Murray ordered 2/5 to occupy and defend an expanse of 255 above Company H's positions. He directed 1/5 (following his headquarters in the column from Changwon) to occupy Hill 99, thus relieving Company G to bolster Taplett's lines on lower 255.[16]

General Craig arrived at Chindong-ni shortly after 0700, just in time to be warmly greeted by the enemy shelling as he stepped from his helicopter. Since the Brigade attack scheduled for 7 August hinged on the 5th RCT's success at the Tosan junction, Craig quickly arranged for a telephone line to that unit, so that his CP would be in constant contact.[17]

News from the front was not good. At 0630, after air and artillery preparations, the 5th RCT had jumped off on schedule. Just beyond the line of departure, it came to a sudden halt as a result of increased enemy activity north of the road. Elements of the NKPA 6th Division, paying little attention to the plans of Task Force Kean, had launched an attack of their own above the MSR.

The situation on Hill 342 kept the entire 2d Battalion, 5th RCT, tied down in a fight to hold the Chinju road open. With the help of Cahill's platoon on the crest, this mission was being accomplished; but the battalion was temporarily lost to its regiment, and the road itself was choked with men and vehicles unable to move.[18]

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Chapter 6. Action on Hill 342
General Craig Assumes Control

The Brigade was ordered to provide a battalion for the relief of the Army unit on Yaban-san, so that the 5th RCT could strike harder at the road junction 2 1/2 miles to the west.[19]

Just as 2/5 was ascending Hill 255, Lieutenant Colonel Murray received word from Brigade of the Marine commitment. The 5th Marines commander canceled Roise's orders and directed him to relieve both Cahill's platoon and the 2d Battalion, 5th RCT, and to seize the remainder of Hill 342.[20]

At 1120 on 7 August, General Craig received a telephone message from General Kean directing the Brigade commander to assume control of all troops in the Chindong-ni area until further orders. With this overall responsibility, Craig went forward to observe the 5th RCT in action. He ascertained by personal reconnaissance that enemy resistance was light, although few friendly gains were being made because of the scattered and confused nature of the fighting.[21] The MSR between Sangnyong-ni, at the base of Hill 342's spurs, and the vital Tosan junction was jammed with men, vehicles, and equipment, while infantrymen probed the surrounding high ground in an effort to weed out snipers and infiltrators.

When 2/5 reached the road junction at which Cahill had been met by the Army guide during the night, Lieutenant Colonel Roise ordered Company D to move up the north fork, tracing the base of 342's eastern spur, and seize both the spur and great hill itself. Company E, now commanded by 1st Lieutenant William E. Sweeney, was to pass behind Sangnyong-ni and seize the west spur. Such a deployment would leave the battalion spread thinly, but Roise's orders were to protect the wide valley formed by the two long ridges. This could be done only by occupying both spurs and 342 itself.[22]

Outside of Chindong-ni, Major Morgan J. McNeely, 2d Battalion S–3, had picked up Captain John Finn, Jr., CO of Company D, and the two officers drove ahead by jeep to the village of Taepyong-ni at the eastern base of Hill 342. The staff officer informed Finn that Dog Company was to relieve a 5th RCT unit on the high ground above the clump of thatched huts. Both McNeely and an Army guide said that the Marines would meet no organized resistance in their climb.[23]

Having spent a sleepless night on the road from Changwon to Chindong-ni, Finn's infantrymen were fagged. It was now midafternoon, and the heat began to take its toll of Dog Company.

Just as the leading elements reached Finn at Taepyong-ni—30 minutes after McNeely's departure—the column came under rifle and machinegun fire from the high ground above the road and from the hamlet of Tokkong-ni across the valley on the right. The Marines thought they were being shot at by Army troops, but the chatter of Communist "burp guns"[24] soon convinced them that they were meeting enemy resistance.[25]

Finn ordered his men into the rice paddies bordering the road. Calling his platoon leaders, he told them that there was no real intelligence, but that the fire from Tokkong-ni would be ignored due to the company's mission on 342. He assigned routes of ascent to each platoon. The 2d, under Second Lieutenant Wallace J. Reid, would push through Taepyong-ni and on up the hill at its juncture with the spur. On the left, Second Lieutenant Edward T. Emmelman would lead his 3d Platoon to the top of the spur. The 1st Platoon, commanded by Second Lieutenant Arthur A. Oakley, would hold the right flank and ascend the southern slopes of 342 itself.[26]

Company D met scattered opposition. By the time it moved over the crest of the spur, five Marines had been wounded. The sun, however, had been more effective; for twelve men were completely unconscious from the 100° heat, and the rest of the company had neared the point of exhaustion.

Finn ordered his executive officer, First Lieutenant Robert T. Hanifin, Jr., to set up headquarters and the

60-mm. mortars on the high ground directly above Taepyong-ni. It was already early in the evening when Hanifin established a thin perimeter of headquarters personnel to safeguard the CP.[27]

In the meantime, Finn was leading his three rifle platoons up the same southeastern approach to 342's summit which Cahill's platoon had scaled 12 hours earlier. The company commander could no longer overlook the combined effects on his men of heat and overexertion. A few hundred yards from the summit, he radioed Roise that Company D was exhausted. During the halt, Lieutenant Oakley climbed to the summit to contact the Army and Marine defenders. He returned just before dark with Cahill and the Army company commander.[28]

In the hurried conference that followed, the Army officer advised Finn against finishing the rugged climb and assured him that his soldiers and Cahill's platoon could defend the peak through the night. Informed of this by radio, Roise allowed Company D to hold its present position and relieve at dawn.[29]

Earlier in the day, Lieutenant Sweeney had led Company E up the lower tip of 342's western spur, then along the ridgeline toward the large hill mass. At intervals the company came under long range, ineffectual machinegun fire. But, as in the case of Finn's unit, the heat and terrain were more damaging than enemy bullets. At dusk, Company E had reached the midway point along the ridge, and there it dug in for the night.

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Chapter 6. Action on Hill 342
Enemy Attack at Dawn

Under cover of darkness, Red Korean troops wormed their way around the little perimeter on the summit of Hill 342. Just before dawn the soldiers and Marines were greeted by bursts of short-range rifle and machinegun fire. The defenders returned the fire and hurled grenades down the slopes, but a small force of North Koreans succeeded in crawling close enough to launch an assault against the northeast leg of the triangle.[30]

A fierce hand-to-hand struggle ensued at the point of contact, and the Communists were thrown back down the hill. One of Cahill's men died of bayonet and gunshot wounds, and another Marine and several soldiers were wounded.[31]

Finn's men struck out for the summit shortly after daybreak on 8 August. With three platoons abreast along the southern face of 342, Dog Company pushed upward swiftly, brushing aside light resistance. Upon reaching the perimeter, the Marines came under a storm of fire from NK positions which ringed the northern half of the hill.[32]

The relief was effected, nevertheless, and Cahill's thinned squads descended Hill 342 together with the shattered Army company. The Marine platoon had lost 6 killed and 12 wounded—more than a third of the 52 men who had set out from Chindong-ni.[33] But its determined stand with the beleaguered Army unit had saved the height and frustrated the Communist attempts to establish a bastion overlooking the MSR.

Company D fared no better than its predecessors at consolidating the crest of 342 and clearing upper slopes which were crawling with North Koreans. Finn's unit took several casualties in the fire fight that accompanied and followed the relief of the original defenders. Two of those killed in action were Second Lieutenants Oakley and Reid. The only surviving platoon leader, Lieutenant Emmelman, received a serious head wound as he was pointing out targets to a Marine machinegunner.[34]

Captain Finn, seeing Reid's motionless form lying ahead of the company lines, crawled forward to recover the body. Having moved only a short distance with his burden, the company commander himself was struck in the head and shoulder by enemy bullets Barely conscious and almost blinded by blood, Finn crept back to his lines on his hands and knees.

A corpsman administered first aid and Company D's first sergeant helped the officer down the steep slope.[35] On the way the pair met Lieutenant Hanifin, who was leading company headquarters and the mortar section to the high ground from their positions of the previous night. Finn informed the executive officer that he was now in command of the company.[36]

Reaching the summit, Hanifin had just enough time to reorganize his defensive positions and emplace the 60-mm. mortars before the Communists launched another attack. Again Marine rifles, machineguns, and grenades scorched the northern slopes. Again the enemy was beaten back, leaving the hillside littered with dead. But Company D's casualties had mounted meanwhile to 6 killed in action and 25 wounded.[37]

About 1130, as the fire fight slackened, Roise phoned Hanifin from his OP on the eastern spur. The conversation had no sooner begun when the company commander collapsed from heat exhaustion. A veteran NCO and a young officer promptly filled the command vacuum. Company D's gunnery sergeant, Master Sergeant Harold Reeves, assumed control of the three rifle platoons with the confidence of long experience. Second Lieutenant Leroy K. Wirth, a forward observer of 1/11, took responsibility for all supporting arms, including the planes of MAG–33 circling overhead. The NCO of almost 30 years service and the young officer repeatedly ranged forward of the front lines to spot enemy positions for air strikes and make new appraisals of the situation.

Company D remained steady, and never again did the North Koreans seriously threaten the hilltop.[38]

The 2d Battalion, 24th Infantry, was scheduled to relieve 2/5 on Hill 342 during the afternoon of 8 August; but the Army unit was unable to reach the area for reasons to be explained later. Informed of the change in plans, Roise kept his battalion busy with consolidation of positions and evacuation of casualties.

Company E moved forward a few hundred yards along the western spur of 342 and dug new foxholes. Captain Andrew M. Zimmer reported from regiment, where he had been an assistant S–3, and took command of Company D.[39]

Although the North Koreans continued to harass the “iron triangle” on the crest, there was no more hard fighting. A few additional casualties were taken by Zimmer’s company, most of them occurring while Marines tried to retrieve airdropped supplies which had fallen wide of their mark.[40]

During the fighting on 342, Major Walter Gall, commander of 2/5’s Weapons Company, had dispatched a small patrol to eliminate the enemy machineguns in Tokkong-ni. After a brief fire fight which cost three friendly casualties, the withdrawal of the patrol left the Communists still entrenched in the village. When the Marines returned to Weapons Company lines on the eastern spur, First Lieutenant Ira T. Carr turned his 81-mm. mortars on Tokkong-ni and brought the enemy fire to an end.[41]

The night of 8–9 August was relatively quiet on 342. Obviously weakened by casualties, the enemy gave the Marine positions a wide berth. NKPA harassing fires consisted of periodic bursts from long-range machineguns and antitank guns.[42] There was desultory sniping during the morning of the 9th, but Brigade intelligence reported a gradual withdrawal of the enemy northward.[43]

That afternoon Company D was relieved by an Army unit when 2/5 turned over responsibility for the hill to the 2d Battalion, 24th Infantry. The fight had made veterans out of the men Zimmer led down to the road, but the company paid with 8 dead and 28 wounded.[44]

Documents taken from enemy dead disclosed that the defenders of Hill 342 had been opposed by elements of the 13th and 15th Regiments of the NK 6th Division. Lieutenant Cahill qualified his report of 150 enemy dead as “conservative,”[45] and 2/5 set the total at 400 after its fight.[46] The actual number of fatalities inflicted by Marine-Army infantry and supporting arms probably lies somewhere between these two estimates.

At any rate, the Red Korean commander had committed at least two rifle companies supported by machineguns, mortars and artillery. The force thrown against Yaban-san could be estimated at 500 to 600 troops, and they had failed in their attempt to cut the MSR.[47]

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Chapter 7. Advance to Kosong

WHILE 2/5 AND the 1st Platoon of Company G were fighting the enemy and weather on 7 August, Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's 3d Battalion sat out an ominous calm at Chindong-ni. From their positions on Hills 255 and 99, Captain Fegan and Lieutenant Bohn periodically called for supporting fires to check enemy movement in the northern approaches to the village.

At 1015 Second Lieutenant Lawrence W. Hetrick and his 3d Platoon, Company A Engineers, completed the laying of the first Marine minefield, located across the Haman road a half mile above Chindong-ni.[1]

Lieutenant Colonel Newton's 1st Battalion reached the village in the afternoon of the 7th and relieved Company G's two platoons on Hill 99. Bohn took his company back across the valley and deployed on the lower slopes of 255 facing the Haman road. These positions were hit by close-in sniper fire during the night of 7–8 August, and at dawn the Marine infantrymen were startled to discover four NK soldiers emplaced less than 100 yards away in the valley. Both the enemy position and its occupants were quickly destroyed.[2]

Shortly after daybreak on 8 August—while Cahill was being relieved on Yaban-san—the Marines of Company H noted a column of troops climbing Hill 255 from the direction of the Haman road. Believing the newcomers to be ROK soldiers, Fegan's men watched as the long file reached the high peak beyond the plateau forward of the Marine positions. When the group set up facing Company H, Fegan became skeptical enough to alert his riflemen and machinegunners. His precautions were timely, for the visitors immediately opened fire on the Marines.[3]

This surprise attack had a critical effect on the Task Force Kean sector. In possession of the high ground above 3/5, the North Koreans were able to block the Masan-Chindong-ni stretch of the MSR, leaving most of the American ground forces out on a limb for supply and reinforcement purposes. Thus when the 2d Battalion, 24th Infantry, advanced from Masan to relieve both 3/5 and 2/5 on their respective hills, it was driven off the fire-swept road north of Chindong-ni.[4]

Upon being informed of the enemy's presence, Taplett ordered Company H to attack and destroy the Communist position. Fegan called his two platoon leaders[5] while the Marine infantrymen in the line exchanged shots with the enemy across the plateau. After a quick briefing, Second Lieutenant John O. Williams led his 1st Platoon to the long tableland.[6]

Echeloned to the right, the skirmish line pushed aggressively over the open area, firing on the enemy as it moved forward. The platoon closed to within 30 yards of the Communist-held peak, but showers of hand grenades and continuous machinegun fire pinned down the attackers. Fegan sent a message forward, directing Williams to work around the enemy's left flank. Although one fire team succeeded in reaching the rocks below the NK positions, the flanking maneuver failed.

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Chapter 7. Advance to Kosong
Heavy NKPA Resistance

The 3d Platoon had taken several casualties. Marines still in the open area were unable to advance, while those who had attempted the envelopment could only cling to the steep slopes above the MSR. When some of this group were struck by enemy fire, the impact sent them rolling helplessly down the sharp incline.

Convinced that Williams could not carry the peak, Fegan ordered him to pull his platoon back toward the line of departure and reorganize. While the withdrawal was in progress, the company commander ordered the 3d Platoon to pass through the 1st and continue the attack. There was no response to the order.[7]

Fegan realized that the men were momentarily unnerved after witnessing the failure of the first attack. The company commander, therefore, assumed control and personally led the 3d Platoon forward on the plateau. Halfway across the open area, the new skirmish line passed through Williams' outfit as it was reforming.

The Marines of the 3d Platoon responded with confidence to Fegan's leadership. They crossed the tableland in a wedge formation with 1 squad at the apex and the other 2 slightly withheld. Air strikes and artillery preparations had little effect against the rocky crag beyond the plateau, so that the final assault was fought to a finish with small arms and grenades.[8]

Staff Sergeant John I. Wheatley, one of the prime movers, fell wounded along with several of his men. Sergeant Edward F. Barrett, shot in the elbow and hip, lay helpless, exposed to enemy fire, until Captain Fegan carried him back to safety.

The 3d Platoon gained the rocky summit and worked its way through the NKPA position, a foxhole at a time, while the enemy resisted to the death. Corporal Melvin James[9] hit the Red Korean left flank with his squad and drove deep into the enemy position. The NKPA right flank was rolled up by a vigorous assault sparked by Technical Sergeant Ray Morgan and Private First Class Donald Terrio[10] as each knocked out a Communist machinegun and its crew.

Having wiped out the main enemy position, the 3d Platoon advanced northward about 200 yards to a gulf where the high ground fell away abruptly. Beyond this depression rose the highest step of the ridgeline's rugged staircase: Hill 255 with a height of more than 800 feet above the MSR. The three squads held up here to await further orders.

How Company's fight up to this time had cost the Marines 6 dead and 32 wounded.[11]

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Chapter 7. Advance to Kosong
Assault on Hill 255

A column of NKPA reinforcements bound for Hill 255 was spotted during the action by Company G from its positions facing the Haman road. The enemy platoon struck out across the valley from the high ground north of Hill 99, then attempted to ascend 255 via the same route used by comrades at dawn.

The Marines of Company G and their supporting arms cut loose with a hurricane of fire. And after scattering in panic, the enemy survivors scuttled back to their starting point.[12]

Lieutenant Colonel Murray, upon being informed of the progress made by How Company, directed Taplett to halt the attack and dig in for the night. While Fegan's men were carrying out this order under NKPA artillery and mortar fire, MAG–33 and the Marine artillery roared into action. The saddle north of How Company's lines was pounded so mercilessly that the enemy pulled back from Fegan's immediate front. Throughout the night of 8–9 August, 1/11 and 3/5's mortar platoon dropped a steel curtain across the battalion front, with the result that no enemy activity was noted.[13]

The systematic reduction of enemy positions on Hill 255 the next morning was a triumph of supporting arms. Marine artillery shells led off at 0825, followed by Marine air which worked the enemy over with the first close-support payload of napalm recorded so far in the Korean conflict. And four minutes before Company H launched its final attack on the hill, airborne TAC reported the objective neutralized.[14]

Fegan's men scaled the peak against negligible opposition. Two knocked-out machineguns and a few enemy dead were all that remained at the summit.[15]

The plan for eliminating the threat to the MSR called for a Marine advance along Hill 255 to grid line 1350. North of this boundary, the ridge would be cleared by Army troops approaching from Masan.

Company H sighted soldiers of the 24th Infantry at 1125 as they moved southward to the grid line, and the long ridge was considered secure. It had been no light price, however, that 3/5 paid to open the MSR. Casualties on Hill 255 totalled 16 dead and 36 wounded, and since nearly all had been taken by Company H, Fegan's outfit was reduced by 25 percent.[16]

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Chapter 7. Advance to Kosong
Confusion at Tosan Junction

On the whole, Task Force Kean's scheduled drive on Chinju and Sachon had not met with much success during the first 48 hours. The only advance was made on the right, where the 35th Infantry seized its first objective and inflicted an estimated 350 casualties on the enemy.[17]

In his capacity as provisional commander of all units along the Masan-Chinju axis, General Craig was directing the Army operations at the front and in the rear areas of the Task Force sector. Thus on 8 August he ordered the 5th RCT to continue its attack and take Tosan, so that his Marines could make progress on the road to Sachon.

After preparatory fires, the Army regiment again pushed forward toward its immediate objective. Enemy resistance was much heavier than on the day before; nevertheless, some gains were made from the starting point near the village of Singi. The attack was also slowed by the narrow MSR carrying the entire traffic load for the Task Force. Heavy fighting above the road on Hills 255 and 342 added to the congestion and confusion on the vital artery.

Lieutenant Colonel Newton's 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, had been ordered to move forward from Chindong-ni at 0600, 8 August, with the mission of attacking along the south fork of the Tosan junction preparatory to seizing a regimental objective which would be designated later.[18]

Leaving its positions on Hill 99 at the assigned time, the battalion was stalled immediately at the bridges on the MSR below. The road was still clogged with soldiers and Army vehicles, making it impossible for the Marine unit to proceed.[19]

General Craig, who was in the vicinity, told Newton to hold up until the situation at the front became clarified. Company B, commanded by Captain John L. Tobin, was ordered back up on the hill it had just descended; and the battalion waited, three miles from its line of departure.[20]

Finally the word came to move up. While 1/5 worked its way along the crowded road, Newton walked ahead and reached the CP of the 1st Battalion, 5th RCT, located on a hillside between Singi and Oryong. There he learned that the Army unit's companies were already on the high ground all around the junction and that the rice paddies between the battalion CP and these companies were full of North Koreans. The Army commander considered his subordinate units cut off.[21]

Shortly afterwards, at about 1400, the head of 1/5's column reached Newton and again came to a halt, a mile and a half from its line of departure.

Arriving on the scene at this time was a dispirited Army staff sergeant, dripping with mud and water. He said that he had just returned from Hill 308, south of the road junction, where his unit was heavily engaged with the enemy. And he added that Communist machineguns covering the wide rice paddy between 308 and the MSR had forced him to crawl almost the whole distance.[22]

Lieutenant Colonel Murray, while driving from Chindong-ni to the front, was stopped on the road by Major General Kean himself. The 25th Division commander directed the Marine officer to arrange for a night relief of the 1st Battalion, 5th RCT. Kean stated that he would inform Brigade headquarters of this change in plans as soon as possible.[23]

It had become a question as to whether Task Force Kean or the NKPA 6th Division controlled Tosan. Newton radioed the 5th Marines commander and asked for enlightenment. Murray, having just finished his conversation with General Kean, ordered the battalion commander to postpone the jumpoff until nightfall.[24]

After withdrawing to the outskirts of Sangnyong-ni, 1/5 went into an assembly area beneath the western spur of Hill 342. There the battalion commander received specific orders to relieve the 1st Battalion, 5th RCT, on positions southwest of Tosan at midnight, 8 August, and secure the troublesome road junction once and for all. [25]

Newton was to have his battalion at the Army CP no later than 2300, when it would be furnished guides to lead the way across the broad rice paddy to Hill 308. As it proved, the Marine unit actually reached the designated rendezvous at 2200. But even though an hour early, Newton discovered that the soldiers on 308 were already withdrawing. Moreover, no guides had been provided.[26]

The Marine battalion continued westward through Singi and stopped on the MSR about a half-mile short of Tosan. Here a narrow dike branched south from the road, and the soldiers were returning along this trail from Hill 308 to the MSR. Since the footpath was pointed out as Newton's route of approach, he had little choice but to wait until the Army troops made the crossing. This was accomplished shortly after midnight, and the column of Marines was left alone in the night on unfamiliar ground reported to be crawling with enemy.[27]

The promised guides reported for duty at this time. They turned out to be two South Korean civilians. Without further ado, the advance on Sachon was launched when a long single file of skeptical Marines fell in behind two unknown natives whose loyalty had to be accepted on faith.

Following the 1,200-yard trail in the darkness was time-consuming as well as nerve-chilling. A misstep on the narrow, slippery dike usually meant a spill into the muck and filth of the paddy for some hapless infantryman. Not only would he delay all those behind, but he would not be as fragrant as a rose in the nostrils of his comrades when he regained the dike.

Finally the head of the file reached the base of Hill 308, having encountered not a single enemy on the way. As more and more men threaded their way in from the paddy, tactical integrity was slowly regained. Dawn of 9 August was already breaking when the rear of the column completed the crossing.[28]

Daybreak brought a radio message from Murray, directing 1/5 to continue the attack to the southwest immediately and seize Hill 308. With Tobin's company leading, the battalion ascended the northern slopes in a long column. The climb took the Marines more than 1,000 feet upward and 2,000 yards to the south. Before the summit was reached, the relentless sun and terrain had taken its toll of Newton's infantrymen. Fortunately, enemy resistance amounted to mere sniping; and by noon, 9 August, the massive terrain feature belonged to the Brigade. [29]

At 1700 that afternoon Craig's operational control of all troops in the area came to a close. At the end of the 54-hour period of the Marine general's overall command, the road junction had been cleared, and both Army and Marine columns were making progress toward the objective.

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Chapter 7. Advance to Kosong
Brigade Artillery in Support

Nearly all the infantry actions of the first 3 days owed a good deal to the support of the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines. Consisting of three 4-gun batteries, Lieutenant Colonel Ransom M. Wood's outfit had relieved the 8th Field Artillery Battalion at Chindong-ni on the eve of D-day. Since the terrain afforded no suitable alternate areas, the Marine gunners moved into the positions vacated by the Army artillery, partly in the village and partly on the outskirts.

A total of 87 rounds were fired that first night in support of the 5th Marines, with the FO's reporting good results. Before long, however, enemy counterbattery fires searched out friendly positions in the village. Early the next morning a Marine battery took a direct hit from an NKPA 122-mm. shell. Two men were killed and 8 wounded by a blast which destroyed a 105-mm. howitzer. Thus, reversing the usual rule, the artillery suffered heavier casualties than the infantry at the jumpoff of the Brigade attack.[30]

The gunners needed no further admonitions to dig foxholes, gunpits and ammunition pits. During the confused fighting around Chindong-ni, it was not unusual to have one battery laid on an azimuth generally east, another west, and a third to the north.

"I think that this is one of the most important lessons we learned in fighting infiltrating troops," commented Wood; "artillery must be able and always prepared to fire in any direction on a moment's notice."[31]

From 7 to 9 August, with the battalion displacing forward as the infantry advanced, 89 missions and 1,892 rounds were fired. Targets consisted largely of enemy mortar positions. The terrain offered some knotty problems in firing close support missions, due to steep slopes; but the OY's of VMO–6 did a good job of spotting.

Fifty ROK policemen were attached to 1/11 at this time to be used as security troops. Wearing bright green uniforms and rubber shoes upon arrival, they became the responsibility of the battalion to feed, equip and train in marksmanship, sanitation and ammunition handling. The rice-eating Koreans turned up their noses at American food for a few days, but soon they could compete with any chow-hounds in the outfit. [32]

Another difficulty was experienced in convincing the newcomers that NKPA prisoners were to be brought in alive. Many personal scores remained to be paid off in war-torn Korea, but eventually the ROK's learned to control their hatred for the invaders.

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Chapter 7. Advance to Kosong
Encounter With Japanese Maps

As the men of 1/5 were consolidating their hilltop and searching for water to relieve heat prostration cases, Murray radioed Newton to withdraw his unit to the road below and continue the attack to Paedun-ni. The regimental commander was determined to speed up the advance to the south, since intelligence had reported no enemy on the high ground south of Hill 308.[33]

With almost half of Companies A and B stricken by heat sickness, Newton had no choice but to leave them in position on the high ground for the time being. He descended the hill to form a tactical column with Headquarters and Weapons Companies and an attached platoon of tanks.

Reaching the low ground northwest of Hill 308, the battalion commander discovered that his Japanese maps, as usual, bore only a slight resemblance to the actual ground.

During the early weeks in Korea, the map situation was a thorn in the side of every tactical commander. Not only were maps of local areas extremely scarce, but the few available were of early Japanese vintage, almost consistently at variance with the terrain. Grid systems were confusing, villages misnamed and misplaced, and roads either not illustrated at all or else plotted inaccurately. Lack of contouring left the conformation and extent of ridges entirely to the imagination of the map reader. These shortcomings were a constant source of concern; for troop leaders often were misled, even to the extent of getting completely lost.

On the ground itself, there is an intersection called Oso-ri some 600 yards south of the Tosan junction. The routes leading both south and west from this crossroads go to Paedun-ni. An unimproved road, the southward passage is more rugged, while the other, being good by Korean standards, follows a smoother course through the town of Taesil-li.

Newton s map showed only the latter improved road, so he formed his column and headed it toward Taesil-li, a thousand yards west of the intersection.[34] Murray's map showed both roads, but in this case the southern route was erroneously drawn in as the better road. It was thus Murray's intention that 1/5 use this avenue of approach. And since he had spoken of it as the "improved" road, Newton was misled into choosing the route to Taesil-li.[35]

The quickly formed column of tanks and infantry had gone only a few hundred yards when the point stopped at a stretch of road littered with land mines. A call went out for a demolitions team. From his CP near Chindong-ni, Captain George W. King dispatched his 1st Platoon, Able Company Engineers. Arriving at the scene, the Marine troubleshooters discovered the obstacles to be merely American antitank mines, apparently spilled on the road from an Army vehicle.

About this time, Lieutenant Colonel Murray arrived at Oso-ri and informed 1/5's commander that he was on the wrong road. Newton reasoned that his unit was following the correct route. After comparing the conflicting maps, the regimental commander studied the terrain and directed Newton to pull his column back and take the road to the south. Then Murray returned to Sangnyong-ni, climbed into an observation plane, and was flown over the route to confirm his decision.[36]

There was no small amount of confusion as the long column of tanks, infantrymen, and engineers pulled back along the narrow road to the intersection. And it was unfortunate for 1/5 that General Craig reached the area while the milling was at its worst. Unaware of what had taken place earlier, the Brigade commander did not refer to the delay and congestion in the most soothing terms.[37]

While the column was being reformed on the southern road, villagers from Taesil-li informed the

Marines that a badly wounded American was lying in the hamlet. Craig's jeep driver sped to the clump of thatched huts and returned with a soldier who was more dead than alive, having been left behind by retreating NKPA forces. The man was rushed to the rear for medical attention, while Craig stayed forward to supervise the attack. [38]

The long file of Marines and tanks began moving southward along the winding road below Hill 308. Newton had notified his company commanders of the change, so that they could meet him by descending the western slope of the high ground.

About a mile south of the confusing intersection, the point of 1/5's column rounded a sharp curve. It was greeted by a lone North Korean machinegun hidden in a native hut at the center of the bend. While a Marine brigadier watched with professional satisfaction, a team of infantrymen with a rocket launcher closed on the hut and quickly destroyed the enemy position.

It was late afternoon as the column resumed its march to the south. Covering several hundred more yards without incident, it reached the top of a 400-foot pass where the road knifed between Hills 308 and 190. There Newton was joined by Companies A and B from Objective One.[39] The 1st Battalion was ordered to hold up and take defensive positions astride the pass.

Thus, the drive toward Sachon had finally taken shape, and the Brigade was entering its own zone of responsibility. As darkness fell on 9 August, 1/5 was in position 2 miles south of the Tosan line of departure, and General Craig had already set in motion plans for a night attack.

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Chapter 7. Advance to Kosong
Ambush at Taedabok Pass

On 9 August the Brigade commander was convinced that the absence of resistance in 1/5's path indicated unpreparedness on the part of the enemy. To exploit the advantage, he ordered Murray to execute a night attack and capture Paedun-ni before daylight, 10 August.[40]

At 1600 on 9 August, the Brigade was relieved of mopping up duties in the Chindong-ni area, leaving 2/5 immediately available to the 5th Marines commander. The 3d Battalion was delayed overnight by several hours of security duty until Army units could take over.[41]

Lieutenant Colonel Roise's battalion, having been relieved on Hill 342, entrucked at Sangnyong-ni in the evening and reached its assembly area near Hill 308 at 2100. Two hours later the unit marched southward on the new MSR to make the night attack on Paedun-ni. Passing through 1/5's lines at 0115, 10 August, the weary Marines pressed on toward their target against no resistance.

The point of the column included three M–26's of First Lieutenant William D. Pomeroy's tank platoon. At 0500, with the advance elements only a short distance from Paedun-ni, the lead tank crashed through a concrete bridge. The badly damaged vehicle proved to be wedged immovably between the two abutments.

The second tank, while attempting to negotiate a narrow bypass next to the bridge, threw a track in the center of the stream and stalled the long column behind. Two hours elapsed before the advance could be resumed. South Korean laborers constructed a bypass for light vehicles next to the bridge, and an engineer tractor-dozer arrived to build a detour for heavy trucks and tanks.

Click here to view map

Reaching Paedun-ni at 0800, 2/5 reconnoitered the town and found it clear of enemy. By 0930 the battalion column was reformed and pounding the dusty road south.

Murray decided to shuttle troops by truck from Paedun-ni to Kosong, since the 8-mile stretch was believed to be free of enemy. The heavier vehicles being tied up at the collapsed bridge, some delay resulted in motorizing the first increment of 2/5.

General Craig arrived on the scene by helicopter in mid-morning. Not satisfied with the progress of the advance, he ordered Murray and Roise to march on Kosong with "all speed." When the infantry column was a short distance out of Paedun-ni, the 5th Marines commander managed to get five 2 1/2-ton trucks forward to help transport the first serial to the target.

A motorized column was formed of 4 lead jeeps carrying a Reconnaissance Company detachment, followed by part of Company D aboard 6 more jeeps and the 5 trucks. Owing to the shortage of vehicles, Captain Zimmer's first echelon included only the 1st and 2d Platoons, the 60-mm. mortars, an assault squad, and one machinegun section.

Lacking either air or artillery support, the column rolled southward with orders to occupy Kosong and coordinate a defense of the city with its mayor. The remainder of 2/5 continued on foot until more vehicles could be provided

The road makes a sharp turn 2 1/2 miles southwest of Paedun-ni to climb through Taedabok Pass, a defile about 1,000 yards long. Just beyond, at the village of Pugok, a sharp turn to the left skirts the base of a large hill overlooking the entire length of the pass.

The first jeep of the reconnaissance detachment was almost abreast of Pugok at 1500 when NKPA machineguns opened up from the big hill at the bend. Enemy automatic weapons on the high ground above the

pass raked the vehicles filled with Dog Company men.

As the Marines were taking cover in roadside ditches, a Communist antitank gun opened fire from the large hill and hit one of the jeeps. The reconnaissance troops gradually withdrew from their exposed positions and fell back on Zimmer's group. After sizing up the situation, the Company D commander ordered his 1st Platoon to seize the high ground on the right side of the road about midway through the pass. No resistance was met, so that the Marines set up their weapons quickly and returned the Communist fire. Meanwhile the 2d Platoon moved up on the right after clearing small enemy groups from the high ground on both sides of the road at the entrance to the defile.

Zimmer had spotted the location of the enemy's antitank gun, and Marine 60-mm. fire put an end to this nuisance. The effort used up all the mortar ammunition, and the Company D commander decided to wait in position for Brigade supporting arms. Two tanks arrived at 1630, and their 90-mm. guns drove the enemy into hiding.

While Marine tanks and air were working over the hill, 3/5 reached Paedun-ni after being relieved of its final security mission in the Chindong-ni area. Murray ordered Taplett to be prepared to pass through 2/5 and continue the attack.

The 3d Battalion reached the entrance to Taedabok Pass in trucks shortly after the arrival of the 2d Battalion troops who had followed their motorized column on foot. Some confusion resulted on the narrow road after Murray's arrival while he waited to confer with Taplett. Unable to find Roise, the two officers climbed the high ground on the left. From this vantage point they could see Kosong, 5 miles away. The regimental commander ordered Taplett to pass through 2/5 immediately and continue the attack.

Company G had already crossed the line of departure and was deploying to assault the hill at the road bend when Murray located Roise in Zimmer's area to the right of the road. The exact location of enemy positions remained in some doubt. In order to clear up the uncertainty, Major McNeely volunteered to lead out a patrol. About 1730, therefore, Roise's S/3 took off in a jeep with a radio operator and a fire team from Dog Company.

By this time, Taplett had a fairly accurate picture of the situation in mind. From his OP on the high ground to the left of the road, he saw that McNeely was headed for danger. The 3/5 commander radioed Bohn to stop the jeep, but it was too late. McNeely and his men vanished from sight around the bend where the road skirted the large hill, and the Marines heard a furious clatter of machinegun and small arms fire.

The fate of the patrol remained in doubt as Company G moved out to the attack, with First Lieutenant Jack Westerman's platoon in the lead. Communist fire held up the advance, but Bohn sent Second Lieutenant Edward F. Duncan's platoon on a sweeping envelopment to the right which outflanked the enemy and drove him from the high ground. Westerman was then able to reach the crest with his platoon. From this position he could see McNeely's bullet-riddled jeep, but that officer and his five men were stretched out motionless on the ground beneath and behind the vehicle.

Click here to view map showing Paedun-ni & Taedabok Pass
Click here to view map showing Kosong

At great risk, Westerman made a dash to the jeep and brought back McNeely, mortally wounded. Enemy fire prevented further rescues, but it was ascertained that 3 men had been killed outright and 2 severely wounded. These survivors could only continue to take cover behind the wrecked vehicle until 3/5 troops advanced.

When Company G jumped off again, the men were held up by two concealed machineguns at the far end of the road bend. Taplett committed How Company on the left side of the MSR, and Fegan seized the hill opposite Bohn's position. It was almost dark before the Marines could silence the 2 enemy machineguns around the bend, and at 2015 Murray ordered 3/5 to secure for the night and defend the 2 hills already occupied. On the premise that the enemy had prepared an ambush for rescue parties approaching the wrecked jeep, it was decided to wait until morning to bring back the wounded men.

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Chapter 7. Advance to Kosong
The Seizure of Kosong

The night passed quietly except for scattered rifle fire along the 3d Battalion's 700-yard front. To carry out General Craig's orders for 11 August, the two rifle companies prepared to continue the attack on Kosong at first light.[42]

The enemy had different plans. At the crack of dawn a small force of North Koreans emerged from the fog and charged recklessly into Company G's front. There was a furious hand-to-hand clash as the attackers converged on Bohn's OP in the center of the line. The company commander directed the defense amid grenade explosions, one of which drove a fragment into his shoulder. At his side Staff Sergeant Charles F. Kurtz, Jr., called down effective 60-mm. mortar fire on the Reds while throwing grenades and ducking submachinegun bursts.

The melee ended after a half hour with Company G driving the battered remnants of the NKPA platoon back down the hill. Despite his wound, Bohn stayed with his company and reorganized it for the attack on Kosong. He also had the satisfaction of overseeing the evacuation of the two wounded survivors of McNeely's ill-fated patrol.

At 0800, the Brigade moved out in a route column, with 3/5 as the advance guard and Company G in the role of advance party. Bohn's point consisted of Second Lieutenant John D. Counselman's 3d Platoon, whose leading element, under Corporal Raymond Giaquinto, was on the MSR with flank guards slightly withheld on each side.

The Brigade column moved swiftly. About a mile beyond the line of departure, Giaquinto braked his roadbound unit in the face of doubtful ground ahead. Simultaneously, the flank guards surged forward and wrapped around the suspected area. Then Giaquinto's force raced down the road, and the 3 prongs of the point converged on an enemy machine-gun emplacement, killing the 5 occupants before they could fire a shot.

With Bohn calling the shots and Giaquinto setting the pace, the point swept aside three more enemy positions along the route. The effective combination of limited frontal attacks and envelopments brought the head of the column to the bridge north of Kosong at 1000. Here Company H passed through on the road and pushed into the town.

Using 1 rifle platoon and 2 tanks, Fegan easily cleared northern Kosong of light resistance. Then he gradually wheeled his force to the right, tracing the road to Sachon. His other two platoons continued southward with the mission of seizing a high hill below Sunam-dong.

General Craig reached Kosong by jeep just as Taplett was setting up his CP in a schoolyard north of the town. A small group of enemy snipers suddenly opened up from positions in and around the schoolhouse, and the Brigade commander observed sniper teams of 3/5's headquarters spring into action and destroy the North Koreans.

Shortly after Fegan entered Kosong, Bohn swung his company to the southwest from above the town, drove through the western suburbs and launched an attack against Hill 88 below the Sachon road. Approaching the hill, Company G sustained a few casualties while eliminating a stubborn Communist pocket in the low ground on its right flank.

MAG–33 preceded the attack on Hill 88 with a thundering air strike on 100 enemy entrenched along the crest. This attack coupled with a thorough shelling by 1/11, shattered the Reds' will to fight, and Company G found only evidence of a hasty flight when it reached the summit at 1330.

General Craig ordered Taplett to cancel all further missions around the captured town and attack toward Sachon immediately. Company G was quickly recalled from Hill 88; the high ground above Sunam-dong was ignored, and Fegan assembled his unit at the western edge of Kosong preparatory to leading the attack.

Just as Company H was reforming, a jeep ambulance driven by Corps-man William H. Anderson raced into the area to pick up casualties from Bohn's earlier skirmish below Hill 88. Passing through Fegan's troops, the vehicle failed to make the turn southward and sped toward Sachon. Two enemy antitank guns lying in wait west of Kosong blasted the jeep as it rounded a bend, killing Anderson and spilling two passengers out of the wrecked vehicle.

Fegan led two M–26 tanks to the bend, and Technical Sergeant Johnnie C. Cottrell quickly destroyed the North Korean position. Three rounds from his 90-mm. gun wiped out the last NKPA opposition in the area, and the 3d Battalion moved out for the drive on Sachon.

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Chapter 8. Fight on Two Fronts

MARINE AIR AND artillery had a field day on 11 August 1950 that the rifle companies will never forget. The occasion was known as “the Kosong Turkey Shoot,” and it was a victory won entirely by supporting arms.

It happened just as 3/5 was about to enter Kosong. As a preliminary, 1/11 was called upon just before noon for preparatory fires. Shells from the 105’s landed in the town, sending up geysers of rubble in the bright sunlight. Then, suddenly, the Marine artillery flushed out a column of enemy vehicles making a frantic dash for safety.

This flight explains the light resistance which the Marine infantry met in Kosong. But the enemy could hardly have chosen a less propitious moment, for he had merely escaped from the frying pan into the fire. Overhead, to his sorrow, was a division of VMF–323 planes from the *Badoeng Strait*, which the forward TACP had sent on a search and attack mission just beyond the town.[1] Major Lund and his pilots were thus presented with a fabulous target of opportunity—an estimated 100 vehicles of the NKPA 83d Motorcycle Regiment, including jeeps, motorcycles and troop-carrying trucks.[2]

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Chapter 8. Fight on Two Fronts
The Kosong Turkey Shoot

The Corsairs came screaming down in low-level strafing runs the entire length of the column for the purpose of bringing it to a halt. Vehicles crashed into one another or piled up in the ditch while enemy troops scrambled out for cover. The Soviet-made jeeps and motorcycles were now sitting ducks for F4U's which worked over individual targets with rocket or 20-mm. fire. After the Marine planes had set about 40 vehicles on fire, they were relieved by another flight of VMF–323 machines and Air Force F–51's which added the finishing touches to the picture of destruction.[3]

Under the circumstances the enemy put up a creditable fight. Lund and his low-flying pilots encountered fierce small arms and automatic weapons fire. Two of the four Corsairs in the first flight were badly damaged and had to try for emergency landings. Lieutenant Doyle Cole ditched into the bay just as General Craig was making a tour of inspection by helicopter; and the Brigade commander operated the hoist which pulled the dripping flier up to safety.

Captain Vivian Moses was not so fortunate. While putting his crippled plane down in enemy territory, he was thrown unconscious from the cockpit and drowned in a rice paddy a few minutes before a VMO–6 helicopter arrived. Only the day before, this gallant Marine pilot had been rescued by helicopter, after being shot down behind the NKPA lines, and flown back unhurt to his carrier. Despite this experience, Captain Moses volunteered for duty on 11 August, when he became the first death casualty of MAG–33.

Several hours later, after securing Kosong and resuming the attack toward Sachon, the Marine ground forces caught up with the scene of chaos left by the F4U's. Among the twisted and charred vehicles were some that the enemy had abandoned in perfect condition. Tolerant NCO's relaxed discipline for a moment while their men tried out the motorcycles with sidecars and the sleek, black Soviet jeeps, most of which had gone into the attack practically new. Almost identical in design to American jeeps, these vehicles were found to be powered by familiar Ford-type engines—a throwback to United States Lend Lease to Russia in World War II.

Generals Craig and Cushman surveyed the wreckage from a helicopter next day. This strike, however, was only one of the more dramatic examples of the Brigade air-ground team in action. MAG–33 aircraft were constantly orbiting on station over the front line as the ground forces advanced. Flown by infantry-trained pilots briefed on the local ground situation, the Corsairs were available for employment on short notice. It was a simple and flexible system; and the fact that VMF–214 and VMF–323 were based on the two carriers meant that they could arrive on station with more fuel and ordnance for strikes as compared to Japan-based squadrons.[4]

Overall control of tactical air operations in Korea was exercised by the Fifth Air Force. Marine aviation units, as components of an integrated Fleet Marine Force, operated in support of the Brigade as their highest priority, and in support of other UN forces as a lower priority. After checking in with Fifth AF TACC at the Joint Operations Center (JOC), Marine aviation units came under Marine operational control when supporting Brigade ground forces. When providing tactical air support for other UN forces, Marine air units operated under the Air Force-Army system for tactical air support.

The Brigade control organization included 3 battalion TACP's and 1 regimental TACP, each consisting of an officer and 6 enlisted men, and each equipped with a radio jeep, portable radios and remoting equipment. MAG–33 provided a Brigade control agency consisting of the Air Support Section of MTACS–2. Other Brigade units associated with control of aircraft were:

(1) The Air Section of the Brigade Staff, consisting of the Brigade Air officer and six enlisted men

responsible for planning as well as tactical control and coordination of supporting aircraft;

(2) The Brigade observation section, consisting of the tactical air observer, three gunnery observers, and the OY and rotary-wing aircraft of VMO–6.

Carrier-based Marine aviation units maintained a TAC and one or more flights of aircraft on station during daylight hours. Night heckler and intruder missions of VMF(N)–513 from Itazuke reported to the Fifth AF TACC and were routed by that agency to the Air Support Section (MTACS–2) with the Brigade. During the early Brigade operations, with the Air Force TACC located at Taegu, delays of incoming flights reporting to JOC were caused by overloaded communications nets. An improvement resulted when such flights by-passed JOC and reported directly to the Air Support Section of Brigade. And when JOC moved back to Pusan, improved communications resulted in incoming flights reporting first to JOC again.

The Brigade control agency (Air Support Section) made use of the following communications for the control of tactical air operations:

(1) TAR net connecting battalion TACP's, the regimental TACP, and the Air Support Section, and monitored by the Brigade Air Section. This was an HF net.

(2) TAD net connecting above-named agencies as well as TAC flights of support aircraft and on occasion the TAO. This was a VHF net of four frequencies used to brief and control aircraft reporting for support missions.

(3) TAO net connecting observation aircraft, the Brigade CP (Air Section) and the Air Support Section. This was an HF net.

(4) An administrative (HF) net connecting the Air Support Section and the carriers *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait.*

The workings of the control organization of the Brigade air-ground team in the Pusan Perimeter have been described as follows in the survey of the Marine Corps Board Study:

"Battalion TACP's made requests for air support missions direct by TAR net to the Air Support Section. The regimental TACP and Brigade Air Section monitored this net. The Brigade control agency having received a request for a mission, contacted the TAC and the Flight Leader (FL) of the aircraft orbiting on station awaiting a mission. The TAC and the FL were then directed to the vicinity of the TACP from whom the request had originated.

"The TACP controlled the execution of the mission in accordance with the wishes of the battalion commander. The TACP gave the location of the target to the TAC. The latter designated the target to the FL and his flight of supporting aircraft. The unit being supported marked its front lines. The TAC directed the attacking aircraft in making attacks on the target. His directions related to the technique of attacking specific targets with aircraft. Control of the attack was exercised by the ground unit being supported.

"In many instances the TAC or the TAO would locate targets not yet located by ground units. This was often done in response to a request from ground units. Both the TAC and TAO located targets beyond the vision of ground units, and both were capable of, and did, designate these targets to flights of supporting aircraft and directed attacks on such targets, when requested to do so by ground units. Conditions favored delegating control to forward TACP's beyond convenient VHF range between them and the Brigade (Air Support Section). Brigade attack formations frequently consisted of battalions in column. The forward battalion was free to employ air support at a moment's notice."

This was the situation on the afternoon of 11 August 1950 as the 3d Battalion of the 5th Marines attacked toward Sachon, followed by 2/5 in trace. Overhead a flight of VMF–323 Corsairs orbited on station, and OY observers reported the enemy to be pulling back rapidly toward Sachon.

How Company led the Marine attack, with lead tanks employing reconnaissance by fire. At 1800, after the column had covered several miles, a lone enemy machinegun in a valley on the left held up the advance by wounding three Marines. By the time the tanks silenced the weapon with .50-caliber fire, it was decided to halt.

Taplett deployed his battalion on two hills north of the road, and the infantrymen settled down for a quiet night.

The gravel crunchers could thank air and other supporting arms for an impressive demonstration of power that day. There was even the suggestion of an amphibious operation in the Brigade advance, for an LST followed the column and anchored near the fishing village of Tanghong-ni after the securing of Kosong.

This was LST QO119, a supply ship manned by Team No. 1 of Major William L. Batchelor's Company A, 1st Shore Party Battalion. Team No. 2 set up forward dumps along the MSR as the infantry advanced, while No. 3 unloaded supplies and equipment at the Masan railhead. Shore Party personnel also assisted in salvage operations, which were conducted mainly at Changwon.[5]

LST QO119 was not only the workhorse of normal Shore Party missions; it served also as an improvised hospital ship. For the Medical Section and Company C, 1st Medical Battalion, had an extra responsibility these sweltering days in caring for victims of heat prostration as well as the wounded. Thus it may have set some sort of a record when casualties were evacuated at one time by land, sea and air—motor ambulance, LST and helicopter.

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Chapter 8. Fight on Two Fronts
The Changchon Ambush

At sundown on 11 August, as Taplett's battalion dug in for the night on the road to Sachon, the enemy seemed to be disorganized if not actually demoralized. For the first time since the invasion began, a sustained Eighth Army counterattack had not only stopped the Red Korean steamroller but sent it into reverse.

With the Marines a day's march from Sachon, the Army 5th RCT was running a dead heat on the shorter Chinju route to the north, where opposition had been light the last 2 days. It might even have appeared on the evening of the 11th that the combined operation had turned into a friendly rivalry between two outfits racing toward their final objective by parallel roads. But any such assumption would have been premature, as General Craig and his staff well realized. They looked for further resistance and were not disillusioned. Within the next 48 hours, in fact, Craig's men were destined to carry out one of the most astonishing operations in the history of the Marine Corps—simultaneous BLT attacks in opposite directions on two fronts 25 miles apart.

There was no hint of any such development at 0630 on the morning of 12 August, when the 1st Battalion of the 5th Marines passed through the 3d Battalion with a mission of seizing Sachon. If anything, the front was too quiet to suit veteran NCO's, who suspected the enemy of being up to no good. The column moved out behind a 15-man detachment of Recon Company acting as the point under the command of Captain Kenneth J. Houghton. Next came Baker Company with the 1st, 2d, and 3d Platoons in that order. Two Marine tanks were sandwiched in between the 1st and 2d Platoons, and three more M–26's brought up the rear of Captain Tobin's company, followed by the main body of the battalion.

No opposition awaited the column. This unnatural calm continued for 4 1/2 hours as the Marines advanced about 11 miles. At noon, with Sachon only 4 miles away, Houghton and the point rounded a bend into the thatched-hut hamlet of Changchon. The first enemy soldiers of the day were sighted when two skulking figures took cover. Several Marines opened fire, and in reply the hills on both sides of the road erupted into flame. [6]

The enemy had obviously planned to allow the entire column to come within range. But the trap was sprung prematurely as NKPA machine-guns blazed away from the high ground in front and on both flanks. Captain Tobin immediately sent the 1st Platoon to the aid of the point. First Lieutenant Hugh C. Schryver led his men forward along the roadside ditches, and at the cost of three casualties they reinforced the thin line of Recon troops returning the enemy's fire.

Next, the company commander ordered First Lieutenant David S. Taylor's 2d Platoon to move up behind three Marine tanks. The M–26's were unable to maneuver off the road because of the danger of bogging down in rice paddies, but as mobile fortresses they added to Marine fire power.

Click here to view map

Tobin's whole company became more or less pinned down when the 3d Platoon and headquarters, farther back on the road, received automatic weapons fire from Hill 250 on the right. Newton immediately requested the battalion air controller, First Lieutenant James W. Smith, to call for a strike in this area. This was the only supporting arm available at the moment, since the mortar and artillery crews were just setting up their weapons in hastily selected positions.

After the Corsairs worked over Hill 250, Tobin ordered Second Lieutenant David R. Cowling's 3d Platoon to attack the high ground. A rifle platoon and machinegun section had been sent forward from Able Company by the battalion commander, and Newton gave these reinforcements the mission of seizing Hill 301,

also on the right side of the road.

As Cowling's men were crossing the open rice paddy, the Marine tank guns and mortars added their fires to the air strike. But enough enemy machineguns survived to catch the 3d Platoon in a crossfire which forced it to fall back with 1 man killed and 4 wounded. The Able Company contingent occupied Hill 301 meanwhile without meeting any resistance.

During the course of these actions, the FAC reported to Newton that 2 of the Corsairs overhead had 5 minutes of time left. The battalion commander directed that they search for targets of opportunity along the road leading from Changchon to Sachon. The result was a repetition on a small scale of the Kosong turkey shoot, for the Marine planes surprised a little column of enemy vehicles and personnel. After the Corsairs unloaded their remaining ordnance, the road was strewn with twisted and burning vehicles.

The 3d Platoon fell back on Hill 301 as Newton ordered Captain John R. Stevens to secure the nearby high ground on the right side of the road with the rest of his Able Company troops. This left Hill 250 as the center of enemy resistance on the right. A total of 113 Marine mortar rounds were delivered on these positions, followed by a second air strike. The concentration of fire finally silenced the enemy's remaining machineguns, and the Baker Company right flank was secured.

The other two Baker Company platoons and Houghton's men had their hands full meanwhile on the left flank. They kept up a brisk fire fight from the roadside ditches until the Marine artillery took charge of the situation. One enemy position after another was knocked out in this quarter as Newton called for three more air strikes. These preparatory fires enabled the 1st and 2d Platoons to attack on the left after a laborious crossing of an intervening rice paddy.

The Marines proceeded to clean up the remaining NKPA positions methodically. A climax was reached when Lieutenant Taylor spotted an enemy group approaching the crest of Hill 202 from the reverse slope. He sent Technical Sergeant F. J. Lischeski with a squad to prepare a welcome. The veteran NCO coolly formed a line along the ridge and directed his men to wait until the enemy came within 75 feet before opening fire.

It would be hard to find a more striking example of Marine infantry firepower. Of the 39 men in the NKPA group, all were killed outright in a matter of seconds except a single officer. This survivor was so badly wounded that he died on the way to the regimental CP.

The fight had lasted all afternoon, and darkness fell before Company B could complete its movement to the high ground on the left side of the road and set up a perimeter of defense. It was estimated that an enemy company was operating in the area, covering the retreat of sorely battered elements of the NKPA 6th Infantry Division and 83d Motorcycle Regiment.

Marine losses were 3 killed and 13 wounded. After the securing of the high ground to the right, casualties were evacuated by road on the lee side of slowly moving tanks which provided shelter from enemy fire on the left.

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Chapter 8. Fight on Two Fronts
Marines Ordered to New Sector

The Marines of 1/5 anticipated that the next day's advance would take them to Sachon. At midnight on 12 August, however, Lieutenant Colonel Newton received orders from the regimental commander to form the battalion on the road at 0630 in preparation for a lift by trucks to another sector, where the Marines were to reinforce Army units.

While Newton's men were fighting at Changchon, the Brigade commander had come up against a most unusual command situation. It began late on the morning of the 12th, when General Craig received orders from CG Task Force Kean, directing him to move a reinforced Marine rifle battalion back to Chindong-ni. General Kean emphasized that the shift be made without delay. Infiltrating enemy forces had penetrated far back in the rear to overrun positions of Battery C, 555th ("Triple Nickel") Field Artillery Battalion and Headquarters and Able Batteries, 90th Field Artillery Battalion, supporting the 25th Division. The MSR being endangered, Marine reinforcements were urgently needed for a counterattack.[7]

At 0800 that morning Craig had set up his CP at Kosong. It was his custom to keep a terse and factual record of events from day to day, and the following chronological account is derived from entries in the Brigade commander's field notebook:

"1130—Received telephonic orders from CG 25th Div. stating that enemy was attacking in force across our MSR near Chindong-ni. He directed that I send one reinforced battalion to rear at once to give assistance to 24th Infantry engaged in that area and to recapture artillery pieces.

"1200—Proceeded by helicopter to CP 5th Marines to give necessary instructions. Made two landings en route to gather trucks for troop lift.

"1300—The reinforced 3d Bn., 5th Marines, now on way to Chindong-ni area.

"1330—Sent my G–3, LtCol Stewart, and LtCol Taplett, CO of 3/5, by helicopter to bridge indicated by CG 25th Div. to reconnoiter and formulate plans prior to arrival of battalion. Marines to operate directly under 25th Division for this action.

"1400—We are out on a limb with only two battalions left and Sachon still to take. Went to leading elements to check. They were engaged in a heavy fire–fight at an attempted ambush position. Air brought to bear and helped, plus artillery. Enemy positions taken by 1/5, which dug in on high ground while 2/5 was disposed to protect rest of Brigade column.

"1730—Returned to Brigade CP at Kosong and received orders to proceed via helicopter to Masan to confer with CG 25th Division.

"1815—On flight to Masan I detoured to Chindong-ni area to make sure by air observation that 3/5 had arrived and apparently was not having any trouble.

"1830—Arrived Masan and was directed by General Kean to commence a tactical withdrawal from Sachon.

"1945—Returned by helicopter to my Kosong CP in early darkness and issued necessary orders."

The preparations for withdrawal lowered the spirits of Marines who believed that they had broken the back of enemy resistance in the Sachon area. This reaction may even be noted in the first paragraph of the Brigade withdrawal order:

"1. GENERAL SITUATION. Following Brigade rapid advance from Chindong-ni to Sachon in which this Brigade attacked, overcame, and pursued the enemy, the 25th Infantry Division has directed the withdrawal

of this Brigade in order to hold a defensive position and mop up enemy resistance in the zone of action of elements of the 25th Division."

Click here to view map

It would later be known that the basic reason for the Brigade withdrawal was a decision by the Eighth Army command and staff. The enemy had crossed the river Naktong, the last natural barrier of the Pusan Perimeter, and this emergency had caused the Marines to be pulled back in readiness for a counterattack in the Naktong bulge.

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Chapter 8. Fight on Two Fronts
Attack of 3/5 to the Rear

The foregoing chronology makes it evident that General Craig could never have handled this situation in an afternoon without helicopter transportation. Jeeps could not have reached so many destinations over narrow, twisting roads choked with traffic; and fixed-wing planes, even the adaptable OY's, could not have landed wherever the Brigade commander willed. Marine helicopters set a good many precedents in Korea, and the events of 12 August 1950 established the usefulness of these versatile machines for command and staff flights.

Early that afternoon, as Craig had directed, Stewart and Taplett flew back to the Chindong-ni area for reconnaissance and planning prior to the arrival of 3/5. The Brigade commander had been able to give them very little initial information. About 2,000 to 2,500 enemy had infiltrated to the vicinity, according to Army estimates. The two Marine officers were instructed to fly to a bridge over a dry stream bed, where they would be met and briefed by a 25th Division liaison officer awaiting them in a jeep with a red air panel on the hood.[8]

Stewart and Taplett found the bridge, though no jeep was in sight. After landing in the stream bed, they discovered a camouflaged Army light tank; but the officers of the armored company could not offer any enlightenment.

A number of wire lines lay in the roadside ditch, and the Marine officers checked them, one by one. At length, by a process of trial and error, they found a line leading to the 25th Division CP and talked to the G–3. He instructed them to "look the situation over" and decide upon a course of action to eliminate enemy activity in the area and provide security for the remaining artillery unit—a battery of the 159th Field Artillery Battalion which had been attached to the 555th. Then the Marine officers were to report to General Barth, ADC of the 25th Division, upon his arrival in the area to take the overall command.

Ever since the jump-off of 7 August, the operations of Task Force Kean had been distinguished for informality. Oral orders were the rule rather than exception, with unusual latitude of decision being permitted to officers in the field. After their telephone conversation, Stewart and Taplett made a helicopter reconnaissance of the area, followed by a flight back over the MSR to locate 3/5. Upon their return, they encountered Colonel John Daly, USA, CO of the 555th Field Artillery Battalion. Battery C of that unit, he informed them, had been surprised the night before, along with two batteries of the 90th, and completely overrun about 3,000 yards up the stream bed. They were destroyed as a fighting force, though scattered survivors and wounded men remained in the area. Daly briefed the Marine officers as to the location of enemy forces; and they decided to seize two key ridges commanding the MSR, which ran parallel to the stream bed. The troops of 3/5 were just then piling out of the trucks at the debarkation point, and Taplett ordered them to attack without waiting for Barth, since it would soon be dark.

These Marines, contrary to standing operating procedure, had turned their backs on the roar of battle at Changchon early that afternoon and ridden away in the opposite direction. Then, to complete the mystery, they traveled 25 miles to the rear to assault a ridge which was supposedly secured. How Company jumped off with George following in trace. Colonel Daly provided a 15-minute artillery preparation, though he had no orders, and Taplett's FAC managed to summon a flight of Corsairs with partial loads aboard, including napalm. No one had any idea of the enemy's strength, and after receiving some fire from the ridge, Captain Fegan picked the locations for an air strike. How Company moved in rapidly afterwards against such light resistance that the Marines seized the first position without a single casualty. Only one casualty was inflicted upon the enemy, who apparently had put up a rearguard fight while withdrawing.

At 1900, when General Barth arrived, he asked when the Marine battalion would be ready to attack. Taplett replied that he already had one company on the first objective, and the 25th Division ADC congratulated the Marines on their promptness. He approved Taplett's course of action and gave his sanction for the seizure of the rest of the dominating high ground the following morning.

Again the Marines received the most cordial cooperation from the Army. General Barth ordered several light tanks and three M–44 armored personnel carriers to support the attack at 0700 on 13 August. The same Army artillery battery was assigned to the operation, and Battery C of the 11th Marines took part after arriving the night before. As it proved, the infantry needed little assistance to seize the remaining objectives against negligible resistance. By 1000 the Marine rifle companies were in full possession of the two commanding ridgelines. No casualties were suffered or inflicted.

Despite the lack of opposition, the enemy had not pulled out of the area. When Lieutenant Colonel Murray made a helicopter flight to drop a message to survivors of the 555th, his helicopter was ambushed in a defile by NKPA marksmen concealed on both sides. Only the pilot's skillful maneuvering got them out safely, and they were unable to complete their mission.

A plan for the Marines to advance to the west across the valley floor while the Army 5th RCT attacked rearward to meet them was considered by the 25th Division. Taplett's battalion would have been accompanied by 2/5, then on the way to the Chindong-ni area. But this scheme of maneuver was canceled, and the 2d Battalion of the 5th RCT relieved 3/5 on 14 August. By that time, as will be related later, other elements of the Brigade were on the way to an assembly area at Miryang in preparation for an operation in another sector.

At least the attack by 3/5 enabled elements of the 25th Division to rescue survivors of the artillery batteries who straggled back. Both Taplett and Stewart believed that enemy numbers in the area had been much smaller than the original Army estimate of 2,000 to 2,500 men. The 3/5 commander wanted to complete his mission by attacking to recover the howitzers and other lost equipment while the opportunity still existed. But he was unable to accomplish this aim because of orders for Brigade withdrawal, and the artillery pieces were never recaptured. Air strikes were called to destroy them after the relief of the Marine battalion, and the area itself was abandoned a few days later when 25th Division units fell back before renewed NKPA attacks.

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Chapter 8. Fight on Two Fronts
Enemy Dawn Attack at Changchon

On the other Marine front, 25 miles distant, 1/5 had a return engagement before dawn on 13 August with the enemy in the Changchon area. Company commanders had received orders the night before to alert their units at 0400 for the withdrawal. General Craig's Op Order 10–50 was a complete and well planned field order, despite the need for haste; but the enemy interrupted with a surprise attack launched from concealed positions occupied under cover of darkness.[9]

Baker Company's defense setup for the night on Hill 202 consisted of the 3d, 1st, and 2d Platoons tied in from left to right in that order. The action began at 0450 with enemy automatic weapons fire. Marine 60-mm. mortar illuminating shells revealed an NKPA infiltration on the right in the area of the 2d Platoon.

This effort soon proved to be a diversionary attack for the purpose of masking the main blow. At 0455 3 enemy flares went up, 2 red and 1 green. They were the signal for an assault on the left flank at the other end of the Baker Company position. The enemy, as a wounded Marine NCO put it afterwards, was "right on top of the 3d Platoon in a few seconds" with grenades and burp guns.[10]

This was one of the occasions when the Marines were painfully reminded that the NKPA 6th Division had been made up originally of veterans of the Chinese civil war, conditioned by experience for the rigors of night fighting. Marine security had not been at fault, yet the enemy had managed to creep forward in uncanny silence to positions within grenade-throwing distance.

In an instant the Marine position was overrun, with the machinegun section being wiped out except for two men. Communication troubles added to the confusion. Platoon radios had been rendered inoperative by mud and water while crossing rice paddies, and telephone wires were believed to have been cut. Two runners were killed during Tobin's efforts to maintain contact with the hard pressed troops on the left flank. A third runner got through with orders for the remnants of the platoon to fall back within the perimeter of the adjacent 1st Platoon.

The troubles of Baker Company were compounded at this stage when the enemy turned two of the Marines' own machineguns against them.

Click here to view map

During the next hour the fight became a slugging match. When the first gray light of dawn permitted some visibility, Baker Company 3.5" rocket launchers knocked out the two Marine machineguns being fired by the enemy. The left flank was holding well when the 60-mm. mortars ran out of ammunition. To make matters worse, the artillery FO's radio took destructive hits from machinegun fire just as the enemy changed the direction of his attack. Now his main effort was being channeled up the draw between the 1st and 2d Platoons for the obvious purpose of splitting the company and beating it in detail. The attackers had been bled white by casualties, however, and Tobin's men had little difficulty in beating off the new assault.

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Chapter 8. Fight on Two Fronts
Breaking Off Action

Battalion orders were received through Able Company to disengage at 0630 and pull down from the high ground to the trucking point at Newton's CP. Tobin was now depending on Company A radios for 4.2" and 81-mm. mortar support which slowed up enemy efforts. As his first move toward breaking off action, he ordered his 3d and 1st Platoons to withdraw into the perimeter of the 2d.[11]

By this time the enemy had fallen back toward the lower levels of Hill 202. Small arms fire had slackened but the Marines still received mortar bursts.

Tobin ordered his executive officer, Captain Francis I. Fenton, to take the wounded across the rice paddies to the road with the 3d Platoon and Headquarters troops. The company commander remained on the hill to cover this movement with the other two platoons. After Fenton got well underway, Tobin ordered the 2d Platoon down to the road. Then, a squad at a time, the remaining Marines disengaged; and the Baker Company commander came off Hill 202 with the last squad at 0815. The entire movement had been accomplished with precision, and a final air strike kept the enemy quiet at the climax.

Considering the fury of the fighting on Hill 202, a Marine casualty list of 12 KIA, 18 WIA, and 8 MIA was not as large as might have been expected. The idea of men missing in action is always disturbing to Marine officers, but it was considered a moral certainty that the eight casualties of this type were killed when the enemy overran the machinegun section on the Baker Company left flank.[12] Before leaving Hill 202, Captain Tobin asked permission to lead an attack for the purpose of recovering the bodies. He believed that he could retake the lost ground in an hour, but his request could not be granted at a time when the battalion was belated in carrying out Brigade withdrawal orders.[13]

It fell to the engineers and armor to cover the rear after the infantry pulled out. Midway between Sachon and Kosong, the MSR is joined by a road from Samchonpo, a minor seaport on the tip of the peninsula. In order to block this approach to the Brigade's southern flank, General Craig ordered the engineers to mine the road. First Lieutenant Nicholas A. Canzona was assigned to the task with a detachment of his 1st Platoon of Able Company, 1st Engineer Battalion. After laying an extensive field, this officer discovered to his embarrassment that he had erred in arming nearly half of the mines with wrong fuses, so that they were harmless. Apparently the moral effect was enough, however, to keep the enemy at a distance.

Lieutenant Hetrick's 3d Platoon of the engineer company brought up the Brigade rear on the morning of 13 August to crater roads, lay anti-tank minefields and destroy bridges and culverts. Personnel left behind for such missions had the privilege of riding the rearmost tank to catch up with the column.[14] Thus the withdrawal proceeded systematically and was completed without enemy interference.

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Chapter 9. The Battle of the Naktong

THE MOVEMENT OF the Brigade to Miryang was completed by rail, LST and shuttling trucks on 15 August. For the infantry, it meant the first hot meal in Korea, and the bivouac area seemed a cool, green paradise as compared to the sun-scorched hills the men had been climbing under fire this past week. A grove of stately trees provided shade; and thanks to the frugality of peasants who picked up every twig, the grass and moss were like a well-swept carpet. There the troops of the Brigade slept under the stars that night and swam in the nearby Miryang river. It was a veritable reunion for Leathernecks who swapped tales of experiences in the recent combats

Being Marines, they realized of course that this was merely an interlude between operations. The Brigade had passed under operational control of the 24th Infantry Division upon arrival in the Miryang area. And on the 15th General Craig reported to General Church's CP to be briefed on the situation in the Naktong Bulge, where the next assault would be launched.

The ability of the Russians to cross the widest rivers in World War II, using only determination and field expedients, constantly amazed *Wehrmacht* generals with much better equipment.[1] This know-how seemed to have been passed on to the NKPA, judging by the crossings of the Han and Kum Rivers early in the Korean conflict. On 6 August 1950, the Red Koreans gave a repeat performance when they forced a 1,000-man bridgehead across the Naktong river, thus breaching the last natural barrier protecting the lifeline from Pusan to Taegu.

The 24th Infantry Division was unsuccessful in its immediate attempts to dislodge the enemy.[2] Wading through chest-deep water by night, pulling crude rafts loaded with vehicles, heavy weapons and supplies, the North Koreans placed an entire reinforced regiment on the east bank by 8 August. Termite tactics during the next 2 days broadened their foothold until the Naktong Bulge was overrun by most of the NKPA 4th Division.

Consisting of the 5th, 16th, and 18th Infantry Regiments and strongly supported by artillery and armor, the 4th Division was among the most distinguished of the major Communist units. With the 107th Tank Regiment attached at the outset of the invasion, it had breezed through Uijongbu before sharing in the capture of Seoul. On 5 July 1950, the 4th became the first NKPA outfit to tangle with the newly arrived United States Army forces. Task Force Smith delayed it a few hours near Osan, despite the Reds' great advantage in numbers and armor. Later, after capturing Nonsan and aiding in the reduction of Taejon, the unit was selected to spearhead the assault over the Naktong.

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Chapter 9. The Battle of the Naktong
Task Force Hill Organized

In an effort to plug the hole in the Pusan Perimeter, General Walker attached the 9th Infantry (2d Infantry Division) commanded by Colonel John G. Hill, to the 24th Division. In turn, General Church placed Colonel Hill in control of all units in his southern zone and ordered a counterstroke against the Naktong Bulge.

Task Force Hill attacked on 11 August but lost its momentum in a confused situation which found the enemy attacking at the same time. Reinforced to a strength of three infantry regiments, Hill's provisional unit again struck out against the bridgehead on 14 and 15 August. After encountering a stone wall of resistance, the task force was ordered to cease the attack and defend the ground it occupied east of the enemy pocket.[3]

This was the situation as outlined to General Craig at the planning conference, and he was also briefed on the topography of the target area. The Naktong Bulge west of Yongsan results from a bend in the river resembling a stubby thumb pointing westward. Bounded on three sides by the stream, with its inland border formed by a long valley, the bulge is an isolated terrain feature—a fortress of mountains topped by Hill 311, the key height.

As the Yongsan road reaches the Bulge from the east, it turns southwest, winds around Hill 311, and stops at the tip of the "thumb" where a ferry links it to the road west of the river.

Guarding the eastern approach to the natural fortress are two hills astride the Yongsan road—Finger Ridge to the north and Hill 207 to the south. The former is set off on the east by a deep gully containing the village of Tugok. Eastward from Hill 207 and directly below Tugok is Obong-ni Ridge—so called because of a village by that name at its eastern base.

Not only had the NKPA 4th Division overrun the Naktong Bulge; it had pushed on along the road to Yongsan, seizing Hill 207, Tugok, and both Finger and Obong-ni Ridges. These latest gains and the Bulge itself were being consolidated by elements of all three regiments.

Although units were somewhat depleted, at least 6 infantry battalions occupied the area, supported by 4 mortar companies, over 100 machineguns, and several artillery pieces. There were 4 or more T34 tanks within the bridgehead, and a signal and engineer company for overall support. As the spoils of earlier victories, particularly the one at Taejon, enemy arms were generously augmented by a number of American carbines and two 105-mm. howitzer.[4]

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Planning the Next Operation

It was decided by General Church and General Craig at their conference of 15 August that the entire 24th Division, Reinforced, would assault the enemy bridgehead at 0800, 17 August, after strong air and artillery preparations. The 19th and 34th Infantry would converge on the Bulge from the northeast. In the center, the 9th RCT and the Marine Brigade would strike frontally astride the MSR, the former on the north of the road and the latter on the south. The 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, was to hold blocking positions in the south to protect the left flank of the Brigade.[5]

On 15 August, front lines in the center of the zone were on Hill 125 and Observation Hill, both defended by the 9th RCT. A thousand yards to the rear, the 34th Infantry occupied Cloverleaf Hill and adjacent high ground. Before the attack, the Brigade was to relieve the 34th on position so that the Army unit could move to the north for its assigned mission. Then, at H-hour, the Marines would jump off from Observation Hill and seize Obong-ni Ridge—Objective One. Simultaneously, the 9th RCT would drive forward through Tugok and take Finger Ridge, from which it was to support the Brigade's advance. The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, would be under operational control of the 24th Division artillery commander, and priority for all supporting fires would go to the Marines.[6]

During the planning, General Church emphasized that Cloverleaf Hill must remain occupied and defended until Brigade Objective One was seized. He considered this hill of utmost importance in blocking the MSR to the 24th Division CP and Miryang. This collateral responsibility would tie up a number of Brigade troops and have strong influence on the tactics used against Obong-ni Ridge.[7]

Before the conference closed, Church promised Craig that 145 Army trucks would be available the next day to transport the Marines from their Miryang bivouac to an assembly area near the line of departure.[8]

At 1900, 15 August, Craig briefed his staff and unit commanders. The next morning the Brigade commander flew by helicopter to Church's CP and received the actual attack order, which was identical with the planning of the previous day.[9]

Later on the 16th, Craig drove to the front to reconnoiter the area marked for the Brigade jump-off. He visited the 9th RCT command post where Colonel Hill informed him that the Army unit was in good condition as it stood by for the great attack.[10]

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Reconnaissance of Terrain

After Craig's reconnaissance, Lieutenant Colonel Murray arrived at the front to discuss the tactical plan with the 9th RCT Commander. Although Colonel Hill spoke confidently of his outfit's readiness for the attack, Murray observed that the ranks of soldiers on Observation Hill and Hill 125 were thin and the men obviously wearied by the fighting of the previous 5 days.[11]

With this impression in mind, the 5th Marines commander studied the terrain soon to be his regiment's battleground. Between Observation Hill and Obong-ni Ridge, a 300-yard rice paddy was flanked to the north of the road by the 9th RCT positions on Hill 125. Across the MSR from the northern tip of Obong-ni Ridge was the congested village of Tugok. West of the hamlet and northwest of Brigade Objective One was long, low Finger Ridge, target of Hill's RCT.[12]

Murray quickly concluded from the terrain that both regiments should not attack together and become exposed simultaneously in the low ground ahead. Since Obong-ni Ridge was closer than the Army objective and dominated both Tugok and Finger Ridge, Murray suggested that the 5th Marines jump off alone at 0800, 17 August. If the 9th RCT would support him by fire from Hill 125, he would take Obong-ni Ridge and return the courtesy while the Army unit cleared Tugok and seized its objective. And though offering his plan on a tactical basis, Murray also took into consideration the condition and numbers of Hill's troops.[13]

The 9th RCT commander agreed, and the responsibility of delivering the first punch lay with the 5th Marines.[14]

Time and chance were against the Brigade throughout 16 August and the following morning. Banking on the use of 145 Army trucks, Craig and Murray hoped to move quickly on the 16th, in order to have one infantry battalion take over Observation Hill and the other two available for the attack on the 17th. Unfortunately, only 43 trucks were actually provided, with the result that time schedules were thrown off and troops forced to march long distances the night before the attack.[15]

At 1900, 16 August, Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's 3d Battalion entrucked at Miryang and rode to the 5th Marines CP about 3,000 yards behind the front. Dismounting, 3/5 marched to Cloverleaf Hill and relieved the 34th Infantry on position. Control of the area south of the MSR passed to Taplett at 0445, 17 August.[16]

The 2d Battalion proceeded on foot to its assembly area near Cloverleaf Hill at 0130 on the 17th, and Lieutenant Colonel Roise's men got little sleep as they prepared for the jump-off a few hours later. Owing to the shortage of trucks, the 1st Battalion arrived at the forward assembly area several hours later than planned.[17]

Overloaded trucks had shuttled Lieutenant Colonel Wood's artillery battalion forward on 16 August. Although registration fires were completed by evening, the haste of the displacement and the doubtful information at the front left much to be desired from the standpoint of accuracy.[18]

While Obong-ni Ridge was known to be heavily defended, it was generally thought that Hill 207—Brigade Objective Two—would be the hard nut to crack. And the potential of Objective Three, towering Hill 311, was by no means minimized in preattack estimates.[19] Later events proved these assumptions to be the reverse of reality, but Marine planners could do no better with the meager intelligence then available.

The regimental commander and General Craig concluded that a frontal assault on Obong-ni Ridge with a column of battalions was the only answer to the problems posed by the terrain and situation.

Since the Brigade commander had been specifically charged with the security of the MSR, it was necessary that 3/5 remain in position on Cloverleaf Hill until Objective One was taken. Taplett's battalion had a

second responsibility in guarding the Brigade's left (south) flank, because Craig considered the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, too far out to provide the required close-in protection.[20]

The Brigade commander, unaware of Murray's arrangement with Colonel Hill, could not have envisioned an approach to the enemy's left through the 9th RCT zone. He expected the Army unit to advance side by side with the Brigade and give supporting fire as directed by General Church. On the other hand, an envelopment of the enemy's right seemed out of the question. Using the southern approach to Obong-ni Ridge would have created a gap of several thousands yards in the center of the critical area, and the low, barren marshland to the left would have impeded the movement of tanks and the employment of the 5th Marines' integral supporting arms.[21]

Lieutenant Colonel Murray's reasoning closely paralleled that of his superior. He did not visualize an envelopment from the north because he expected a comparable effect from supporting fire by the 9th RCT. An attempt to flank the North Korean right would have placed the attacking unit far from the power consolidated along the MSR. The enemy situation in the hills and swamps to the south was unknown, and the Marine regimental commander did not relish the thought of one or two of his battalions becoming isolated in that remote area. Then too, the southern peaks on Obong-ni Ridge were considerably higher and more rugged than those nearer the MSR. So it seemed logical to Murray to retain depth and strength by striking frontally, quickly gaining a foothold on the lower, northern reaches of the ridge, then exploiting the penetration rapidly and vigorously.[22]

When asked about his tactical plan by General Craig, he stated that the 5th Marines would attack in a column of battalions, 2/5 seizing Objective One, 1/5 passing through to take Hill 207, and 3/5 completing the reduction of the bulge by following with an assault on Objective Three. [23]

The Brigade commander voiced his concurrence, and the plan was put in motion.[24]

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Chapter 9. The Battle of the Naktong
Air and Artillery Preparation

Obong-ni Ridge sprawled across the Marine front like some huge prehistoric reptile. Its blunt head overlooked the MSR below Tugok, and the elongated body stretched to the southeast more than 2,000 yards before losing its identity in a complex of swamps and irregular hill formations. The high, narrow spine was marked by a series of peaks, beginning with Hill 102 at the neck, followed by 109, 117, 143, 147, and 153. There were still other peaks to the southeast, but so small and irregular as to be almost indistinguishable.

A procession of steep spurs, separated from one another by pronounced gullies, ran down from the numbered peaks to the rice paddies far below. At the top of a gully extending down from the saddle between Hills 109 and 117 was a fault caused by erosion of the red clay and shale. Gaping like an ugly wound, the raw blemish inspired one of the ridge's first names— "Red Slash Hill." It was also dubbed "No Name Ridge" by some of the newspaper correspondents.

Click here to view map

Marine air and artillery were to pound the ridge on 17 August from 0725 to H-hour, 0800, after which MAG–33 would strafe the hill to cover the advancing infantrymen.[25] Brigade artillery fired its preparation as planned; but due either to the hasty registration of the previous day or to error on the part of observers, the shelling was not effective against the enemy on Objective One. It was so inacurrate, in fact, that many officers of 2/5 thought there had been no preparation at all.[26] To make matters worse, air attacks scheduled to begin at 0725 did not materialize until 0740; and the 18 Corsairs assigned to the job had time for only one strike before H-hour.[27]

The two rifle companies of the 2d Battalion jumped off abreast at 0800. On the right was Captain Zimmer's Company D, emerging into the open from the road cut between Hill 125 and Observation Hill.[28]

Zimmer ordered the 2d Platoon into reserve on the southern spur of Hill 125 and established his OP there. The 3d Platoon, commanded by Second Lieutenant Michael J. Shinka, stepped from the road bend below the spur into the rice paddy. Advancing behind this unit were the 1st Platoon and a rocket section, the latter stopping in positions along the road bend to protect the MSR.

Halfway across the rice paddy, Staff Sergeant T. Albert Crowson led his 1st Platoon to the right from behind the 3d, and both units approached the base of the ridge on line. On Shinka's left was the 2d Platoon of Company E. An eerie silence pervaded the front while the assault platoons crossed the wide open area unmolested.

Providing covering fire from its positions on Hill 125, Technical Sergeant Sidney S. Dickerson's 2d Platoon was hit by long-range machinegun bursts from Hills 117 and 143 on Obong-ni. Company D's first two casualties were taken.

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Chapter 9. The Battle of the Naktong
Company D on Objective

While General Craig watched from the road cut, and Lieutenant Colonel Roise from his OP on Observation Hill, Company D's assault platoons began to ascend the objective. Gradually turning its back on the village of Tugok, Crowson's unit traced the draw on the right of the spur leading to Hill 102, while Shinka led his 3d Platoon up the gully on the left. The infantrymen were almost halfway up the slope when a battalion of the NKPA 18th Regiment opened fire with dozens of machineguns.

Despite the hail of lead, Shinka and Crowson edged their units upwards. The fire from Hills 117 and 143 finally became so intense, however, that the 3d Platoon was momentarily unable to emerge from its gully. Almost simultaneously, enemy machineguns poured it into the 1st Platoon, pinning that unit down and inflicting heavy casualties.

Again pushing upward despite mounting casualties, the 3d Platoon attempted to assault Hill 109 about 1000. Communist automatic weapons and a shower of hand grenades from the crest sent the thin skirmish line of Marines reeling back down the barren slope.

As the 3d Platoon came under increasing machinegun and mortar fire from Hills 117 and 143, Zimmer decided to commit his reserve. Realizing the apparent futility of pressing the attack up the 3d Platoon's gully, he ordered Dickerson to attempt an assault through the draw in which the 1st Platoon was pinned down.

The 2d Platoon crossed the rice paddy, following the route used earlier by the 3d. Reaching the draw in which the latter was regrouping after its abortive assault, Dickerson led his men over Hill 102's spur, attempting to gain the avenue of approach being used by Crowson's unit. In the process he came under heavy automatic weapons fire from both flanks—Hills 117 and 143 on the left, and the hillside north of Tugok across the MSR.

At this time the company commander spotted North Korean positions above the village and realized why his pinned-down 1st Platoon was taking so many casualties. From their vantage point in the 9th RCT zone, the Communists were firing on the flank and rear of the Marines along the northwest approaches of Objective One.

Zimmer requested that 2/5 lay supporting fires on Tugok. When he got no response, his forward observer, Lieutenant Wirth, transferred the mission to 1/11. But the 105's had scarcely begun firing when they were cut off because the impact area was in the 9th RCT's zone. The company commander turned his own 60-mm. mortars on the enemy machineguns, only to discover that the target lay beyond effective range.

Zimmer had more success with supporting arms when the enemy posed another threat. Practically all the machinegun fire had been coming from the north and south of Hills 102 and 109, while the enemy on these summits relied on rifles and vast numbers of hand grenades. Then, apparently shaken by the 3d Platoon's tenacity, the Communists tried to wheel a heavy machinegun into position on the saddle between the northernmost peaks. Twice the mounted weapon was hauled up, and twice pulled back under heavy Marine fire. By this time Zimmer had requested battalion to use a 75-mm. recoilless rifle on the target. When the persistent North Koreans wheeled the machinegun onto the saddle a third time, one round from a Marine 75 obliterated gun and crew.

With only 15 men left in his platoon, Shinka prepared for a second assault on Hill 109. Following an air strike at 1100, the Marines stormed the high ground and overran enemy positions on the crest. Only a squad of North Koreans could show similar determination on the reverse slope, but the enemy's small-scale counterattack was stopped cold by Company D's riflemen.

One of the few Marines who reached Obong-ni's summit during 2/5's attack and lived to tell the story, Shinka later related the events following his seizure of Hill 109:

"Fire from Hill 143 was gaining in intensity, and they had observation over our position. Fire was also coming from the hill to our front [Hill 207]. I reported the situation to Captain Zimmer. A short time later phosphorus shells were exploding in Hill 143. This slowed the fire but it never did stop.

"My resupply of ammo did not arrive. Running short of ammo and taking casualties, with the shallow enemy slit trenches for cover, I decided to fall back until some of the fire on my left flank could be silenced. I gave the word to withdraw and take all wounded and weapons. About three-quarters of the way down, I had the men set up where cover was available. I had six men who were able to fight.

"I decided to go forward to find out if we left any of our wounded. As I crawled along our former position (on the crest of Hill 109), I came across a wounded Marine between two dead. As I grabbed him under the arms and pulled him from the foxhole, a bullet shattered my chin. Blood ran into my throat and I couldn't breath. I tossed a grenade at a gook crawling up the slope, didn't wait for it to explode, turned and reached under the Marine's arms and dragged him as far as the military crest.

"Another bullet hit my right arm, and the force spun me around. I rolled down the hill for a considerable distance before I could stop myself.

"I walked into my lines and had a battle dressing tied on my face and arm. I learned that the ammo was up and that a relief was contemplated; and then I walked back to 2/5's aid station where they placed me on a jeep and took me to regimental aid."

Lieutenant Shinka was later awarded the Bronze Star for this action.

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Chapter 9. The Battle of the Naktong
Attack of Company E

At 0800 Lieutenant Sweeney had ordered his 1st and 2d Platoons of Easy Company into the attack from their line of departure on the southern portion of Observation Hill. Although the boundary separating the zones of Companies E and D extended from the left of Hill 109 and down through the red slash, Sweeney centered his advance on the village of Obong-ni, directly below Hills 143 and 147.[29]

The leading platoons encountered nothing more than scattered shots crossing the rice paddy. Before they could gain a foothold on the slope of the objective, however, heavy fire from the village ripped into the skirmish line.

In the center, Second Lieutenant Nickolas A. Arkadis led his 1st Platoon through the hail of bullets and drove through the village to the slopes of the ridge. On the right the 2d Platoon faltered and lost its momentum. Then a number of North Korean machineguns poured in flanking fire from Hills 147 and 153.

Sweeney, from his OP on the southern slope of Observation Hill, tried to get an artillery mission on the two dominating peaks, but his forward observer was unable to contact the rear. Nor could the 4.2 mortar observer be located.

Faced with the necessity of giving his assault elements some protection, the company commander committed 2d Lieutenant Rodger E. Eddy's 3d Platoon, sending it to the spur on the left of the village. Working its way up the nose which led to Hills 147 and 153, Eddy's unit was able to concentrate its fire on the enemy-held peaks and relieve pressure on the other two platoons.

With enemy fire gradually increasing from new positions on the lower slopes of the ridge to the south of the village, Sweeney ordered the mortar section and all of his headquarters personnel into the valley to block the southern approach through the rice paddy. Leaving this flank guard in command of his executive officer, First Lieutenant Paul R. Uffelman, the company commander rushed to the base of the objective. Every single man in his unit was now committed.

Sweeney found the 2d Platoon leaderless and disorganized. The 1st had fought its way well up the slope, aided by excellent supporting fire from 2/5's 81-mm. mortars. As that dogged group of Marines neared the crest, it was stopped when a friendly artillery barrage fell short, searing the skirmish line with white phosphorus.
Click here to view map

Late morning found part of the company closing on the crest; but shortly before 1130, the attackers were ordered to pull back in preparation for an air strike by MAG–33. The planes came in quickly, and some of Company E's men, within 25 yards of the summit, were caught in the strafing.

During the hammering by the Corsairs, the 3d Platoon slipped back 100 yards, leaving the critical left flank open to enemy-infested peaks 147 and 153. This time the hail of enfilade fire from Communist machineguns caught the remnant of Easy Company rifleman exposed on the higher slopes, and the Marine advance crumbled.

By noon on 17 August, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines was wobbling. In 4 hours of fighting it had lost 23 dead and 119 wounded, practically all of the casualties being taken by the 2 rifle companies. Every officer in the Brigade could lament the lack of a third company in each battalion; for just when 2/5's assault needed the added punch of a reserve unit, the outcome of battle had to rest on the failing strength of six depleted rifle platoons. The ridge could not be taken.

This was unfortunate, since there was clear evidence that the NKPA 4th Division was weakening. Although not apparent to the men of Companies D and E, their repeated attempts to carry the ridge had torn gaps

in the enemy's defenses. Bodies, weapons and wreckage were strewn along the entire northern crest.[30]

Marine air and artillery, having settled down after a fumbling start, not only blasted the North Korean lines, but also wrought havoc throughout the entire bridgehead. A large number of enemy mortars and field pieces were knocked out, troop concentrations cut down or scattered while trying to reinforce the front lines, and supply points obliterated. There were definite signs of increasing confusion in the enemy's rear.[31]

General Craig had become alarmed at the lack of activity in the 9th RCT's zone, resulting in the enemy being left free to pound the Brigade's right flank from the Tugok area. When he inquired concerning the Army's supposed failure to advance on schedule, he first learned of the prebattle agreement reached by Murray and Hill. It was then that he requested the village be taken under fire.

Deeply concerned himself over the situation on the right, particularly since no supporting fire at all had been received from the 9th RCT, Murray tried to contact Hill and request that he commit his regiment. Unable to get the message through immediately, he was forced to leave the matter dangling while directing the conduct of the battle.[32]

About 1300 the 5th Marines commander ordered the 1st Battalion to pass through the 2d and seize Obong-ni Ridge. While Newton moved his unit forward from its assembly area, MAG–33, 1/11 and Able Company tanks laid down devastating fires on the blackened objective.

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Chapter 10. Obong-ni Ridge

SHORTLY AFTER 1330, WHILE reporting his situation to the battalion commander, Captain Zimmer was wounded by enemy machinegun fire which ripped into his OP and caused several other casualties. Crawling to the company CP on the reverse slope of the spur, he turned his command over to Lieutenant Hanifin, who went forward. Zimmer then joined the steady stream of casualties returning through the road cut to the battalion aid station.[1]

On the way, he met Captain Tobin leading Company B forward for the attack, and paused long enough to warn him about the enemy guns in Tugok.

Company D, its part in the battle having come to an end, prepared to withdraw to positions on Observation Hill. The long list of wounded for 17 August included the names of Dickerson and Wirth.[2]

Newton established his OP near that of Roise on Observation Hill. The 1st Battalion CP and aid station were set up with those of 2/5 immediately behind the road cut, while farther back Major John W. Russell placed 1/5's Weapons Company in position.

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Chapter 10. Obong-ni Ridge
Company B to the Attack

Tobin deployed his 3d Platoon and machineguns on the forward slopes of Observation Hill to support Company B's attack. The 1st and 2d Platoons, the latter on the left, crossed the rice paddy and at 1500 passed through Company D on the slopes of the objective. Lieutenant Schryver led his 1st Platoon toward Hill 102 along the same avenue used by Crowson before him, while Lieutenant Taylor moved the 2d Platoon up the gully leading to the saddle between 102 and 109.

On Observation Hill Captain Tobin noted the rapidity of the advance and called his executive officer, Captain Fenton, preparatory to joining the two assault units. While briefing his assistant at the road bend, he was felled by a burst of machinegun fire. Fenton directed the evacuation of the seriously wounded officer, then took command of the company and joined the attackers on the ridge.

By this time both assault platoons had been pinned down, the 1st about two-thirds of the way up the slope, the 2d only half that distance. The latter was taking heavy casualties from Communist guns on Hills 109, 117, and 143, Taylor himself sustaining a mortal wound.

Fenton and his gunnery sergeant, Master Sergeant Edward A. Wright, were stalled with the 2d Platoon. Since Schryver's unit was also held up, the company commander radioed Observation Hill and committed his 3d Platoon.

Schryver realized that the main obstacle to his advance was the fire hitting his flank from Tugok, and he requested a fire mission from 1/5's Weapons Company. As 81-mm. mortar shells rained down on the village, the 1st Platoon worked westward to the spur above the MSR and outflanked the NKPA 18th Regiment. A quick assault carried Hill 102 at 1710.

With Schryver's men driving down from the south and Company B's machineguns pouring fire on peaks 117 and 143, the 2d Platoon barreled its way up the draw and seized Hill 109 at 1725.

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Chapter 10. Obong-ni Ridge
Advance of Company A

Leaving the line of departure from the southern reaches of Observation Hill, the 1st and 2d Platoons of Company A crossed the rice paddy while Marine air and artillery savagely blasted the forward and reverse slopes of the objective. The two assault units, each with a machinegun section attached, passed through Company E at 1500 and scrambled up the scarred hillside. [3]

Sweeney's battle-worn company withdrew, carrying its dead and wounded back to Observation Hill. The list of casualties included Lieutenant Arkadis, wounded while spearheading the unit's advance.

As Company A's assault wave passed the halfway point of ascent, it met only sniping fire from the crest and forward slopes of Obong-ni Ridge. But any delusions that the enemy had quit were soon shattered when the summit suddenly came alive with Communist machineguns.

Intense fire poured down on the attackers, and Marines pitched forward to roll limply down the hillside. First Lieutenant Robert C. Sebilian, leading the 1st Platoon up the draw between Hills 109 and 117, ignored the storm of steel and urged his men forward. Standing fully exposed while pointing out enemy positions to his NCO's, the young officer was struck by an explosive bullet which shattered his leg. Technical Sergeant Orval F. McMullen took command and resolutely pressed the attack.

The 1st Platoon reached the saddle above the draw just as Company B was taking Hill 109. When McMullen tried to advance southward to 117, he and his men were pinned down by a solid sheet of Communist fire.

On the left, North Korean guns had already cut Second Lieutenant Thomas H. Johnston's 2d Platoon in half. The pint-sized platoon leader proved to be a giant in courage. He pushed doggedly up the draw between Hills 117 and 143, but casualties bled his skirmish line white and finally brought it to a stop.

Marines watching the battle from Observation Hill saw Company A's attack bog down, despite the ceaseless pounding of Hills 117 and 143 by Brigade supporting arms. Startled, the observers noted a lone figure who bolted forward from the 2d Platoon's draw and stubbornly scrambled up the hill. It was Johnston attempting a single-handed assault on the core of enemy resistance.

The astonished onlookers saw him reach the saddle north of Hill 143. That he survived to this point was remarkable enough, yet he continued to push forward. Then, at the base of the blazing peak, the little figure sagged to the ground and lay motionless.

Technical Sergeant Frank J. Lawson immediately took over the platoon, displaying outstanding leadership in his attempt to continue the attack. Communist guns and grenades prevailed, however, and again the line of infantrymen stalled. The 2d Platoon now consisted of a squad.

Captain Stevens radioed Lieutenant Colonel Newton from his OP and requested permission to commit his 3d Platoon, then deployed on Observation Hill as battalion reserve. The request granted, First Lieutenant George C. Fox led the platoon forward into the rice paddy just as a heavy mortar barrage fell in the area. One of Fox's men was killed outright.

Moving quickly to Obong-ni Ridge and ascending the slope, the 3d Platoon was joined by Lawson and the remnants of Johnston's outfit. The skirmish line passed the critical halfway point, and again enemy machineguns and grenades opened up.

Twice Fox attempted to develop an assault, failing both times to get his platoon through the curtain of fire above the gully. While Technical Sergeant Stanley G. Millar was reorganizing the skirmish line, the platoon

leader and Private First Class Benjamin C. Simpson of the 2d Platoon made an attempt to reach Johnston.

The pair climbed to a point above the gully from which Simpson could see the fallen officer. Assured now that Johnston was dead, and unable to recover the body because of interlocking machinegun fire across the area, Fox and the rifleman slid down the draw to the 3d Platoon lines.

By this time Stevens had moved to the base of Obong-ni Ridge, but he had lost radio contact with the three units high on the hillside. He could see the combined 2d and 3d Platoons; but the 1st was out of sight, leaving the company commander unaware of a limited success that could have been exploited.

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Chapter 10. Obong-ni Ridge
Defeat of Enemy Tanks

Shortly after 2/5's jump-off on 17 August, the M–26's of the 3d Platoon, Able Company Tanks, moved forward of the road cut and supported the advance by 90-mm. and machinegun fire. The Marine armor, led by Second Lieutenant Granville G. Sweet, concentrated on heavy NKPA weapons along the crest of Objective One and knocked out at least 12 antitank guns and several automatic weapons. In return, 1 M–26 withstood 3 direct hits by enemy mortars, and the 4 vehicles combined were struck by a total of 23 antitank projectiles. Neither tanks nor crews were bothered appreciably, and only one man was slightly wounded.[4]

After the 1st Battalion had passed through 2/5, a section of tanks moved forward on the road and blasted several North Korean positions in Tugok. When Company B seized the northern tip of the objective, Sweet led all his vehicles back to the tank CP, 1,000 yards east of Observation Hill.

At 2000, while still refueling and replenishing ammunition stocks, the tankmen learned that four enemy T–34's were approaching the Brigade lines on the MSR. The Marine armor was clanking toward the front within a matter of seconds. About 300 yards from the road cut, the tankmen had to jump from their vehicles to remove trucks blocking the MSR. Then, approaching the narrow defile, Sweet ordered his 1st Section to load with 90-mm. armor-piercing shells.

Company B, consolidating its positions on Hills 102 and 109, had first noticed the four NKPA tanks and a column of infantry moving toward its lines at 2000. Corsairs of MAG–33 screamed down immediately, destroying the fourth armored vehicle and dispersing the Red riflemen. The first three tanks came on alone, passed Finger and Obong-ni Ridges, and approached the road bend at Hill 125.

Preparing a reception for the T–34's were the 1st 75-mm. Recoilless Gun Platoon on Observation Hill, and the rocket section of 1/5's antitank assault platoon on Hill 125. As the first enemy tank reached the bend, it took a hit in the right track from a 3.5" rocket. Shooting wildly, the black hulk continued until its left track and front armor were blasted by Second Lieutenant Paul R. Fields' 75's. The enemy vehicle burst into flame as it wobbled around the curve and came face to face with Technical Sergeant Cecil R. Fullerton's M–26.

Still aimlessly firing its 85-mm. rifle and machinegun, the T–34 took two quick hits from the Marine tank's 90-mm. gun and exploded. One North Korean got out of the burning vehicle but was cut down instantly by rifle fire. He crawled beneath the blazing wreckage and died.

The second T–34 charged toward the bend, taking a 3.5 rocket hit from Company A's assault squad. Weaving crazily around the curve, with its right track damaged, the cripple was struck in the gas tank by a rocket from 1/5's assault section before meeting the fury of Field's recoilless rifles. It lurched to a stop off the road behind the first tank, and the 85-mm. gun fired across the valley into the blue yonder.

By this time a second M–26 had squeezed next to that of Fullerton on the narrow firing line, and the two Marine tanks blasted the T–34 with six 90-mm. shells. Miraculously, the Communist vehicle kept on shooting, although its fire was directionless. Marine armor poured in seven more rounds, which ripped through the turret and exploded the hull.

Before the kill, one Red tankman opened the turret hatch in an effort to escape. A 2.36" white phosphorus round, fired by a 1st Battalion rocket man, struck the open lid and ricocheted into the turret. The enemy soldier was knocked back into the tank as the interior turned into a furnace.

The third T–34 raced around the road bend to a stop behind the blazing hulks of the first two. Marine tanks, recoilless rifles, and rockets ripped into it with a thundering salvo. The enemy tank shuddered, then erupted

in a violent explosion and died.

Thus the Brigade shattered the myth of the T–34 in five flaming minutes. Not only Corsairs and M–26's, but also every antitank weapon organic to Marine infantry had scored an assist in defeating the Communist armor.

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Chapter 10. Obong-ni Ridge
End of the First Day

Throughout 17 August the evacuation of dead and wounded had been a major concern of every Marine, from fire team leaders up to the Brigade commander. Men risked their lives dragging casualties off the blazing slopes of Obong-ni Ridge to relative safety at the base. Litter bearers plodded back and forth across the fire-swept rice paddy, and a steady stream of wounded passed through the 1st and 2d Battalion aid stations behind the road cut. Medical officers of the two battalions, Lieutenants (jg) Bentley G. Nelson and Chester L. Klein, worked tirelessly with their corpsmen.

In the rear, Lieutenant Commander Byron D. Casteel had to commandeer every ambulance in the area—including 16 Army vehicles—to evacuate wounded to and from his 5th Marines aid station. So acute was the shortage of hospital corpsmen that the Brigade's Malaria and Epidemic Control Unit was used to reinforce the regimental medical staff. Even so, the hospital tents were busy for a straight 18 hours.[5]

The small number of deaths from wounds attested to the speed and effectiveness of helicopter evacuations; for the pilots of VMO–6 were ferrying the more serious casualties from the regimental aid station to the Army's 8076 Surgical Hospital at Miryang, some 20 miles away.

While medics toiled to save lives, the spiritual needs of casualties were filled by the inspiring labor of the 5th Marines' naval chaplains, Lieutenant Commander Orlando Ingvolstad, Jr., Lieutenant William G. Tennant, and Lieutenant (jg) Bernard L. Hickey. A familiar figure at the front, frequently exposed to enemy fire as he administered to fallen Marines, was Lieutenant Commander Otto E. Sporrer, beloved chaplain of 1/11.

Two serious obstacles to the various missions behind the front were the dud-infested area east of Observation Hill and a section of collapsed MSR in the river bed occupied by the 5th Marines CP. First Lieutenant Wayne E. Richards and his 2d Platoon, Able Company Engineers, spent most of 17 August at the tedious task of removing unexploded missiles from the forward assembly areas. The engineers' 1st Platoon had to tear down part of an unoccupied village for material to reinforce the sinking road over which the jeep ambulances and supply trucks were struggling.

As the sun dropped behind Obong-ni Ridge, activity on the MSR continued unabated, although the battle for Objective One had diminished to a crackle of rifle fire and occasional machinegun bursts.

Company A had been unable to take Hills 117 and 143, still bristling with enemy automatic weapons. At 2030, shortly after the smashing victory over North Korean armor, Captain Stevens contacted his 1st Platoon and learned that it was on the saddle between peaks 109 and-117. Although tied in on the right with Company B, the platoon was separated by a 100-yard gap from Stevens' other two platoons on the slopes to the left.[6]

The company commander called Fox, Lawson, and McMullen together near the base of the ridge to consult them on continuing the attack. All platoon leaders advised against it, since darkness was falling and their units needed rest, food, water, and ammunition. Moreover, the enemy's bold tank attack had convinced the infantry leaders that a larger counter-stroke by the Communists was imminent, and they wanted time for preparation.[7]

Stevens informed Newton of the situation by radio, and the battalion commander ordered him to discontinue the attack and tie in with Fenton's unit for the night. It was already dark when the 2d and 3d Platoons shifted to the right from their positions below Hills 117 and 143.

Company B had been busily consolidating its high ground since the seizure of Hills 102 and 109 earlier in the evening. While Fenton's machineguns dueled with those of the Reds on 117, his 1st and 2d Platoons

deployed defensively on the forward slopes of the two captured peaks, and the 3d went into reserve on the reverse slope.[8]

Company A's front extended left from the southern part of Hill 109—where the 1st Platoon was linked to Fenton's unit—to the center of the saddle toward 117. There the line bent down in an arch, formed by the 2d Platoon, to the spur below the enemy-held peak. Able Company's left was actually perpendicular to the ridgeline, for Fox's 3d Platoon was deployed up and down Hill 117's spur.[9]

To complete the Brigade front, Headquarters Company of 1/5 was to have extended across the rice paddy from Observation Hill and tied in with Company A's left flank. Due to the casualties and workload of the headquarters troops, this connection was never made, with the result that Fox's platoon remained dangling.[10]

When General Craig returned to his CP near Yongsan on the night of 17 August, he was not unduly concerned about the tactical situation. Although the Brigade had been thinned by heavy casualties, Murray's disposition in depth across a narrow front gave the Marines the advantages of concentrated strength and firepower. If the enemy attempted his usual night envelopment, both 2/5 and 3/5 could strike back from their reserve positions on Observation and Cloverleaf Hills.[11]

Across the MSR, the 9th RCT had launched its attack earlier in the evening, clearing Tugok and seizing Finger Ridge against negligible resistance. By darkness, the 19th and 34th Regiments were also sitting on their objectives to the north, leaving the 4th NKPA Division clamped in a vice. To the southeast, the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, was holding its blocking position with no difficulty.[12]

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Chapter 10. Obong-ni Ridge
Enemy Counterattack on Ridge

Late on 17 August, when the attack on Obong-ni Ridge ceased, General Craig sent a message to his subordinate commanders, directing them to ". . . consolidate positions for night, account for location of each individual and be prepared for counterattack; carefully prepare plan of fires for night to include plans for fires within and in rear of positions; wire in where possible in front line elements."[13]

Long after nightfall, the weary Marines of both front line companies were still digging foxholes and organizing their defenses. While this work continued in spite of sporadic Communist fire from Hill 117, the South Korean laborers were transporting supplies to the ridgeline or carrying casualties back to the rear.

Captain Stevens established Company A's command post at the top of the draw leading to the saddle between Hills 109 and 117. His 60-mm. mortar section set up its weapons in the gully itself.

Shortly before 2200, the telltale whine and rattle of mortar shells cut through the darkness and the men of Able Company crouched in their holes. The explosions were followed by a shower of fire as white phosphorus enveloped the center of the company area. Almost every man in the gully was painfully wounded, leaving Stevens without a mortar section. The edge of the barrage hit the 3d Platoon's area, wounding Fox and several of his men. Two riflemen had to be evacuated, but the platoon leader and the others applied first aid and remained in the line.

After this brief flurry the front settled down to an ominous quiet interrupted only occasionally by North Korean guns to the south.

At 0230 on 18 August, the Marines of Company A heard enemy movement on Hill 117. Suddenly there was a hail of bullets from Communist machineguns on the peak, and hand grenades began to roll down into the Marine positions. A North Korean platoon made a few bounds from the high ground and landed almost literally on top of Stevens' depleted 2d Platoon.

Simultaneously, Company B's position on Hill 109 was struck hard by two platoons advancing up the draw to the west. Heedless of illuminating shells fired by 1/5's 81-mm. mortars, the enemy assaulted methodically by alternately throwing small groups of grenadiers and submachinegunners against Marine positions. The NKPA infantrymen were covered by a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire pouring down from Hill 117.

An enemy squad emerged from the gully west of the saddle between peaks 102 and 109, attempting to divert strength from Fenton's main defensive effort to the south. Failing in this effort, the group fell back to fire harassing shots.

Company A's 2d Platoon slugged it out with three times its own numbers for a full half hour. This stand was due largely to the courage and leadership of Lawson, who stuck to his guns and refused evacuation, though wounded three times. About 0300, with Marines on the right devoting more attention to the heavier attack against Hill 109, the exhausted survivors of the 2d Platoon were overrun and the Brigade line penetrated.

For some unknown reason, enemy troops did not pour down the eastern slopes after the breakthrough. Only one squad drove through, and it split Company A in half by invading Stevens' CP, directly behind the 2d Platoon's lines. The company commander and his headquarters were slowly forced down the draw by the methodical grenade and submachinegun fire from above.

The remainder of the North Korean platoon which had hit Company A remained on the crest for a joint effort with the larger force striking Hill 109. Stevens' 1st Platoon, with its left flank now exposed on the saddle, gradually fell back and curled around the southern face of 109.

Although Company B's left front held firm against the two-platoon assault, a few Reds slipped by the

Marine foxholes and charged into Fenton's CP on Hill 109. Rocket gunners, mortarmen and clerks responded to the challenge and quickly eliminated the attackers.

When Fenton became aware that the saddle south of Hill 109 had been taken, he tightened his left flank by drawing it in to his 3d Platoon's reverse slope positions. This portion of his defense now took the shape of a football, and successfully withstood pressure from the south.

By 0400 Stevens had temporarily lost control of Company A, although the situation looked worse than it actually was. While the company commander stabilized his center near the bottom of the draw, his executive officer, First Lieutenant Fred F. Eubanks, Jr., made single-handed forays up the gully. He was eventually aided in his private war by the company's machinegun officer, Second Lieutenant Francis W. Muetzel. After the breakthrough, the latter had been wounded and left for dead in his foxhole behind the 2d Platoon. Upon regaining consciousness, he made his way down the draw, fighting it out with enemy soldiers until he reached the Marine lines. Company A's 3d Platoon along the spur below Hill 117 enjoyed a seemingly illogical immunity during the counterattack. Although isolated after the penetration and deployed ideally from the enemy's point of view, Fox's men had only occasional brushes with Red infantrymen who displayed a remarkable lack of interest. After the platoon leader learned of the situation on his right, he redeployed into an elongated perimeter which included a few survivors of the 2d Platoon.

Click here to view map

Lieutenant Colonel Newton, when notified of Company A's withdrawal on the left front, called down such a tremendous volume of artillery fire on enemy approaches that 1/11 asked him to conserve a few shells for the Brigade attack scheduled for 0700. The battalion commander replied that the Brigade would be fighting to retake Objective One at 0700 if his beleaguered companies did not get maximum supporting fire. While the artillerymen continued to pound Obong-ni Ridge, Newton's 81-mm. mortars, strengthened by 2/5's entire stock of ammunition, added to the hot metal thrown at the enemy. It can only be conjectured why the NKPA thrust against the Brigade lines never developed above the company level, but Newton's generosity with high explosives probably did not encourage Communist aspirations.

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Chapter 10. Obong-ni Ridge

Obong-ni Ridge Secured

By dawn of 18 August, the North Korean attackers had spent their strength, leaving Company B in undisputed control of Hills 102 and 109. As if in frustration, enemy machineguns on 117 spat angrily at the Marines while the few surviving Red infantrymen withdrew to their lines.

Stevens prepared at first light to complete the unfinished business of the previous day. Thanks to the heroism of his wounded gunnery sergeant, Technical Sergeant Paul A. Hodge, the company commander had regained contact with Fox before dawn and was able to prepare for an attack. At 0700, after moving forward to the 3d Platoon's area and clearing with Newton, he ordered Fox to continue the attack and seize Hill 117.

The platoon leader shouted to his men who arose as a body to begin the ascent. When a lone Red machinegun broke the silence on 117, Stevens spotted the weapon immediately and called for an air strike. Within seconds a Marine fighter plane glided over the 3d Platoon and dropped a 500-pound bomb squarely on the enemy position. The response from Marine air had been so prompt that every one of the attackers was knocked off his feet and one of Fox's automatic riflemen was killed.

While the echoes of the shattering explosion were still reverberating through the morning haze, the thin skirmish line of Marines scrambled up the slope and carried Hill 117. McMullen's 1st Platoon drove in from 109, and the North Koreans fled in panic from the crest and reverse slope positions. A full company of Reds raced down the western slope, with Stevens' riflemen and machinegunners firing from the crest to rip into the enemy groups.

Capitalizing on a psychological advantage, Company A wheeled southward to sweep the crest. Fox, using a skirmish line of only 20 men, assaulted Hill 143 and took the peak against light resistance. A quick call to Newton brought Stevens immediate permission for maximum exploitation.

The 3d Platoon attacked Hill 147 vigorously, and though a few Red soldiers fought to the bitter end, the majority again chose to flee. The high ground was taken easily.

As the Marines moved over the crest of 147, they saw 150 enemy troops in formation halfway down the western slope. The withdrawal commenced in an orderly column of fours but the formation broke down quickly under Marine fire and turned into a routed mob.

Fox turned his attention to Hill 153, Obong-ni's crowning peak, reasoning that it would be the logical place for the enemy's last-ditch stand. But it was the same old story when the 3d Platoon rushed to the summit—abandoned weapons and equipment, a few scattered dead, and blasted foxholes. There was a variation, however, when a supposed clump of scrub pines arose from the reverse slope and rushed downward in headlong flight. The Leathernecks were reminded of Birnham Wood in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as the camouflaged North Koreans disappeared with the agility of mountain goats before Marine marksmen could score more than a few hits.

While the 1st and 2d Platoons consolidated the central peaks, the 3d combed the southern reaches below Hill 153 without incident. The 1st Platoon, Able Company Engineers, patrolled the swampland south of the ridge and secured Fox's left flank with a minefield extending from the southern crest to the valley below and eastward across the swamp. By midafternoon all of Obong-ni Ridge belonged to the Brigade.

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Chapter 10. Obong-ni Ridge
Supporting Arms Clear the Bulge

At midnight, 17 August, Lieutenant Colonel Murray had issued 3/5 a warning order for continuing the attack on the 18th. Shortly after dawn, Taplett and his two company commanders, Fegan and Bohn, visually reconnoitered Hill 207—Objective Two—from vantage points north and south of the MSR. Then, while the battalion commander set up his OP on the northern part of Obong-ni Ridge, Companies G and H advanced to an assembly area at the base of the Ridge.[14]
Click here to view map

Taplett called down heavy artillery, air, and mortar preparations on Objective Two. Occasionally he shifted fires to blast large groups of enemy fleeing to Hill 207 from Company A's advance on Obong-ni Ridge.

Directly south of Finger Ridge, two large spurs form the northern approach to Hill 207. Company H emerged into the open at 1000 from the MSR between Obong-ni and Finger Ridges and attacked up the eastern spur. Following Fegan's unit was Company G, which veered to the right and advanced up the western spur. The two infantry units slowly ascended, separated by a deep gully, while the 3d Platoon of Able Company tanks fired overhead and to the flanks from its positions in the valley.

When Fegan's unit was halfway up the eastern spur, the Marine tankmen saw a platoon of North Koreans attempting to flank the attackers. Machinegun and 90-mm. fire from the M–26's killed or dispersed the Reds at a range of 300 yards.

As Lieutenant Williams worked How Company's 1st Platoon close enough for an assault of the summit, several NKPA soldiers rose from their holes and threw down hand grenades. The Marines hit the deck until the missiles exploded, then bounded up and rushed the crest. Unnerved by Williams' perfect timing, most of the North Koreans fled southward along the ridge. The remainder died in their positions during a brief but bitter fight.

Moving up on Fegan's right, Bohn's men pushed over the western half of the objective, finding only a handful of enemy who were quickly destroyed. Company G's assault completed the seizure of Objective Two at 1237.

During the last minutes of the fight on Hill 207, the entire Naktong Bulge suddenly swarmed with panic-stricken remnants of the 4th NKPA Division. What had been a retreat of small forces now became a widespread rout. Enemy troops poured down from Objective Two, some scurrying up the slopes of Hill 311 across the MSR, others making for the Naktong River.

Air, artillery, and mortars were now offered a profusion of targets by an enemy who ordinarily did not reveal himself during daylight hours. MAG–33 plastered the suspected CP of the 18th NKPA Regiment on a peak south of 207, shattering communications equipment and weapons. Other Marine planes alternated strafing runs with 1/11's continual artillery barrages along the river banks, where enemy troops were gathering by the hundreds.

Victory turned into slaughter when the Brigade supporting arms concentrated on the masses of Communists plunging into the river. All artillery having been turned loose on the river crossings, Taplett used his mortars, machineguns, and the supporting tanks to cut down targets in the valley and on Hills 207 and 311. He requested permission to attack the latter immediately, but was told to remain on Objective Two while the Brigade gave all of its attention to the astounding situation at the river.

At 1530 Companies G and H descended Hill 207. They were met at the bottom by First Lieutenant Pomeroy's 1st Platoon of tanks and escorted across the valley to the base of Hill 311—Objective Three. In

advance of the infantrymen, MAG–33 scorched the high ground with napalm while artillery, mortars, and 75-mm. recoilless rifles worked over the slopes.

Again Fegan and Bohn moved up companion spurs which converged on their target, the 1,000-foot height. Progress was good until Company H came within 200 yards of the crest. Then a volley of rifle fire from the summit and forward slopes forced the Marines to the ground. Although confronted by only a platoon, Fegan was at a disadvantage. Scrub growth not only concealed the Communist riflemen, but also prevented the use of Company H's machineguns. Maneuver to the right or left was impossible, since the steep draws on either side were well covered by camouflaged enemy positions. Several Marines who tried to advance frontally were cut down by rifle fire.

The enemy platoon's defense was not based on the usual machinegun fire and grenade throwing. With calm, business-like efficiency, NKPA riflemen kept Company H pinned to the ground, finally wounding Fegan himself as the officer attempted to regain the initiative. After his evacuation, the attack bogged down completely.

At 1730, Company G had reached the southern portion of the long, narrow crest by brushing aside light resistance. Turning its attention northward, the company entered into a small-arms duel with the Communist force opposing Fegan's unit. When supporting arms failed to dislodge the enemy rifleman, Bohn enveloped the troublesome pocket by sending Cahill's 1st Platoon around to the left (west).

The young platoon leader completed the maneuver just before nightfall and overran the Reds on the northern half of the summit. But the enemy on the forward slopes facing Company H suddenly showed fight. The 1st Platoon, pushed rearward a short distance by the surprise resistance, slugged it out at close quarters.
Click here to view map

With darkness closing in and the platoon so far beyond Marines lines, Bohn ordered it to withdraw. Cahill, wounded himself, reported on his return that the platoon had suffered 10 casualties, including 2 killed.

Taplett ordered the two companies to deploy defensively in their present positions. Thus, during the quiet night of 18–19 August, Companies G and H faced the enemy pocket at right angles to each other.

Earlier on the 18th Lieutenant (jg) Robert J. Harvey, 3d Battalion surgeon, had the unpleasant task of examining an abandoned Army aid station under the bridge near the tip of Finger Ridge. The improvised hospital had been overrun during Army reverses a week before; and about 30 dead found by the Marines bore mute evidence of the enemy's brutality in dealing with captured wounded and medical personnel.

At 0610 on the morning of 19 August, 3/5's 81-mm. mortars prepared the way for the final drive on Objective Three. Following close in the wake of the mortar bursts, Second Lieutenant Thomas P. Lennon led Company H through evacuated enemy positions. He reached the northern part of Hill 311 without meeting any opposition.

This last Brigade objective was secured at 0645, leaving 1/5 atop Obong-ni Ridge, 2/5 on Hill 207 to which it had displaced on the 18th, and 3/5 in possession of the dominating height of the Naktong Bulge. The reduction of the enemy bridgehead cost the Marines 66 dead, 1 missing in action, and 278 wounded.

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Chapter 11. Second Naktong

IT WAS ALL over but the mopping-up operations. Battalion areas were carefully patrolled on 19 August to clear them of NKPA snipers or stragglers. During this process a patrol ranging along the Naktong river discovered three enemy 122-mm. howitzers hidden in a strip of woods on a hill. The pieces had not been touched by Marine air or artillery. What was more surprising, they were emplaced in a column to fire over one another—something new and wonderful that the Marines had never seen before.[1] General Craig concluded that these howitzers had fired the shells which landed on Marine positions to the bitter end.

The next day the Brigade commander took a helicopter to 24th Division Headquarters to confer with General Church. There he was informed that the Marines had been detached from 24th Division operational control to Eighth Army reserve. Church complimented the Brigade warmly on its performance, and letters of commendation were later received both from him and CG EUSAK.

At 1300 on the 21st Craig arrived by helicopter at a new Brigade bivouac area near Masan that was to be recorded in capital letters as the Bean Patch. It was just that—a bean patch large enough to accommodate a brigade. But from this historic spot the Marines were to fight their way around the peninsula during the next 5 months and complete the circuit to their identical starting point.

General Craig arrived along with the Brigade advance elements. After setting up his CP, he reported to General Kean, of the 25th Division, who was in control of the bivouac area. Kean divulged that the situation in his sector had deteriorated. The enemy had made several penetrations, and Brigade assistance might be required in the event of further breakthroughs. As it was, Kean had been authorized by Eighth Army to employ Brigade artillery along with his own; and 1/11 proceeded the next day to the familiar Chindong-ni area in support of 25th Division Infantry.

Orders were received from Eighth Army for the Brigade infantry to be prepared to counterattack in the 25th Division sector as part of its reserve mission. General Craig and Lieutenant Colonel Stewart made a helicopter reconnaissance of the areas of greatest activity, but events proved that the Marine rifle battalions were not needed.

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The Famous Bean Patch

Unit training, including the checking and firing of all weapons, was conducted at the Bean Patch; and Marine patrols were sent out to the rear of the 25th Division to watch for infiltrating forces. Patrols in rugged country were fed hot meals delivered in special containers by the versatile helicopters of VMO–6.

Truckloads of supplies rolled in daily from Pusan, including some of the equipment left behind at the docks when the Brigade landed. But no tentage was available, and the exhausting marches of combat had forced the men to discard everything except fighting tools. In the lack of shelter tents, therefore, the Marines lived in the open at the Bean Patch.

General Craig conferred on 23 August with General Kean and a distinguished visitor, General J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff, USA. Collins was keenly interested in Marine methods of knocking out NKPA tanks and requested Craig to prepare a memorandum on the subject.

That evening the entire Brigade attended an outdoor entertainment given on an improvised stage by South Korean girls, who sang and played native instruments which sounded out of tune to Western ears. Translations of the songs were forthcoming, since some of the girls were English-speaking refugees from Seoul University. Afterwards, General Craig addressed the Brigade, paying a high tribute to his Marines for their conduct in battle. NKPA prisoners, he said, had told G–2 interviewers that they earnestly wished to steer clear of "the Americans in yellow leggings."

Letters from home and beer from Pusan [2] contributed to good Marine morale, even though no liberty was granted to nearby towns. On the 29th an honor guard of 87 Marines received Purple Heart medals at a ceremony attended by President Syngman Rhee, who arrived in a helicopter provided by VMO–6. General Craig had paid an official call on him the day before at Chinhae, being most courteously received. And after the presentation of medals, President Rhee gave a talk to the Marines.

He confided to Craig afterwards that he would like to confer some sort of an award on every man in the Brigade for heroic service in Korea. This was undoubtedly the inception of the Korean Presidential Unit Citation which the Brigade later received from the ROK executive.

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Chapter 11. Second Naktong
Planning for Inchon Landing

General Craig, it may be recalled, had insisted that replacements be sent to the Brigade. Thanks to his determination, a long column of trucks arrived at the Bean Patch with more than 800 Marines just landed at Pusan.

Some of the 5th Marines outfits had been so thinned by combat that an appeal was made for volunteers from supporting units to serve temporarily in rifle companies, with the privilege of returning to their former status after the emergency. The hearty response was a tribute to Marine morale as well as Marine basic training which made every man a potential rifleman. Engineers, shore party troops and headquarters personnel came forward in such numbers that some could not be accepted after the arrival of replacements eased the situation.

No attempt was made at the Bean Patch to form the newcomers into third rifle companies. They were simply used to build up the strength of the present companies and given intensive unit training.

Rumors of an impending Marine amphibious operation had already filtered down to every PFC, and there were wild speculations as to when and where. At least, it could hardly be denied that the Brigade would soon be taking another voyage; for convoys of trucks left the Bean Patch every day laden with heavy supplies and equipment to be unloaded at Pusan.[3]

This was once that lower-echelon “scuttlebutt” came close to the mark. In fact, planning for the Inchon landing had already gone so far that General Craig sent his chief of staff, G–3 and G–4 to Tokyo to confer with staff officers of the 1st Marine Division about the projected operation.[4]

Major General Oliver P. Smith, CG of the 1st Marine Division, had relieved General Erskine early in July when the latter was sent on a secret State Department mission. As the ADC of the Division during the fight for Peleliu in 1944, Smith knew how tough an amphibious operation can become when it encounters unexpected obstacles. He was determined to keep his Division intact with its three infantry regiments, the 1st, 5th, and 7th Marines. And after his arrival in Japan with the advance party, he returned a firm negative to proposals that the 5th Marines and other Brigade troops remain with the Eighth Army.

It would be putting the case mildly to say that this was the eleventh hour. The 1st Marine Division (less the 7th Marines) had landed at Kobe from 28 August to 3 September. And though a typhoon caused a good deal of damage, little time was lost at the gigantic task of unloading mixed-type shipping and combat-loading it into assault-type shipping. The LST’s had to be ready to sail for the target area by 10 September, and the transports by the 12th.

The Marines at the Bean Patch would have been flattered to know that they were the objects of an official tug of war at Tokyo. It was maintained by the EUSAK command and staff that Army morale would be hurt by taking the Brigade away from the Pusan Perimeter at a critical moment. On the other hand, General Smith contended that he needed the Brigade all the more urgently because the 7th Marines,[5] sailing belatedly from San Diego, would not be able to reach Inchon until a week after the proposed D-day of 15 September 1950.

The Marine general was informed that the decision would depend upon the tactical situation in Korea. On 30 August he sent a dispatch to X Corps—the new Army tactical organization activated by CINCFE especially for the Inchon operation—requesting that the Brigade be released from its Army commitments on 1 September. In response, General MacArthur issued an order restoring the unit to the 1st Marine Division on the 4th.[6]

At this point the enemy rudely interrupted by launching an all-out offensive against the Pusan Perimeter on 1 September, and General MacArthur’s order was rescinded. Even though most of the Brigade’s heavy

equipment was at the Pusan docks, waiting for shipping, GHQFEC decided that General Craig's troops should again be used as "firemen" to extinguish an NKPA conflagration.

Colonel Edward H. Forney, the Marine officer recently named deputy chief of staff of X Corps, suggested to General Smith the possibility of substituting an Army unit, the 32d Infantry of the 7th Infantry Division, for the 5th Marines. Smith demurred on the grounds that these troops had not been trained for amphibious warfare.

On 3 September, with D-day less than 2 weeks away, a conference was held in Tokyo to decide the question once and for all. X Corps was represented by General Wright, the G–3, and General Edward S. Almond, the new commanding general and former chief of staff, GHQFEC. COMNAVFE (Admiral Joy), COMSEVENTHFLT (Admiral Struble) and COMPHIBGRUONE (Admiral Doyle) were the Navy officers present. General Almond opened the discussion by reiterating that the 32d Infantry would be substituted for the 5th Marines. In reply, General Smith mentioned the complications of an amphibious assault landing and urged that the operations plan be amended if the untrained Army regiment were to be employed.

Another solution, offered by Admiral Struble, was baited with reciprocal concessions. He suggested that the Brigade be employed briefly for counterattacks in the Pusan Perimeter, but that meanwhile the 32d or some other 7th Infantry Division regiment be moved from Japan to Korea. There it would become a floating reserve for EUSAK, thus releasing the Brigade units to take their former places in the 1st Marine Division for the Inchon operation. This compromise was finally accepted, and orders were issued for the Brigade to be withdrawn from Eighth Army control at midnight on 5 September.

The first intimations to reach the troops at the Bean Patch were received on the 1st, at 0810, when the Brigade was alerted for a possible move by CG EUSAK to an unknown destination. At 1109 came the warning order for a road lift to the Miryang assembly area. The confirmation followed at 1215, with all units being scheduled to move out at 1330.[7]

The Marines had another date with destiny.

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Return to the Naktong Bulge

General Craig set up his CP in the Miryang area at 1800 on 1 September. Billeting officers, having gone ahead by helicopter, were prepared to take care of Brigade units as they arrived. Among them was the 1st Battalion of the 11th Marines, which had been returned from 25th Division control to the Brigade.

The news from the front was depressing. Heavy attacks had been received all day along the 2d and 25th Infantry Division fronts. An enemy penetration of 4,000 yards was made at the expense of the 2d Division, with the old familiar Naktong Bulge being occupied again by Red Koreans who had gained a firm foothold on the east bank of the river. This meant that General Craig's men, now under operational control of the 2d Division, were likely to revisit some scarred parcels of Korean real estate they had hoped never to see again. Major General Lawrence B. Keiser, commanding the 2d Division, informed the Brigade commander that several of his companies had been cut off by enemy advances which pushed his lines back almost to Yongsan.[8] There was a good deal of NKPA infiltration, he added, in his rear.

It had been a full day, and at 2230 that night Craig received orders from the Eighth Army to move the Brigade at first light to a reserve position south of Yongsan and in the rear of the 9th Infantry of the 2d Division.

At 0630, on 2 September, the 2d Battalion of the 5th Marines arrived at its assigned covering position on the road leading to Yongsan. The remainder of the Brigade moved out to assembly positions during the day.[9]

Craig proceeded by helicopter at 0830 to the 2d Infantry Division headquarters for a conference with Keiser to plan the move of the Brigade into his lines. Afterwards, the Marine general devoted the rest of the morning to reconnaissance of the terrain by helicopter. On the way he stopped at Lieutenant Colonel Murray's CP and learned that the 5th Marines units were well established along the road leading to the front.

The planning conference for the projected counterattack began at 1430 in the 2d Infantry Division CP. General Craig was accompanied by his assistant G–3, Major Frank R. Stewart, Jr., since his regular G–3 had not yet returned from the 1st Marine Division briefing at Tokyo. General Keiser and his staff officers emphasized the gravity of the situation in the 2d Division sector. They wanted General Craig to counterattack that very afternoon on a widely extended front, but he objected on both counts.

As for the time element, he pointed out that the hour was late. Some of his units were not even in their assembly positions, and others were still detraining or in trucks. Smoke and haze had resulted in such low visibility that planes could not operate effectively. Finally, Craig's TACRON had not arrived and he was out of touch with the aircraft carriers. He did not wish to commit his force piecemeal without air support; and in the end the Army staff officers agreed with him on the advisability of the Marines attacking in the morning.[10]

Next came a discussion as to the nature of the Marine counterattack. Craig cited the risks and disadvantages of advancing on too wide a front. He suggested that the 2d Infantry Division specify the Marine objectives and allow him to attack in such formations as he deemed most effective. Keiser and his staff assented, and the Marine officers hurried back to the Brigade CP.

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All-Out NKPA Offensive

Glancing at the big picture, there could be no doubt that the enemy was making an all-out effort to smash through the Pusan Perimeter. Late in August it became evident that he was massing troops. The blow fell in the early morning hours of 1 September. The direction of the main attack remained in doubt until that afternoon, when it was revealed as a bid for a breakthrough in the Naktong Bulge which would expose the Pusan-Taegu lifeline.

Despite heavy casualties of the past 2 months, NKPA overall strength was estimated as high as 133,000 men as the result of filling the ranks with hastily trained replacements. Thirteen infantry regiments, 3 security regiments and the remnants of the original 3 armored regiments were believed to be participating in the offensive. [11]

For 2 months the Eighth Army had been purchasing time with space, and the enemy realized that time was now fighting on the side of the United Nations. The first ground force unit sent by a member nation to reinforce United States and ROK troops was the British 27th Infantry Brigade, which landed and took over a sector early in September. But the enemy knew that other UN contingents had been promised.

The reorganized ROK army, moreover, had recovered from its early disasters and was giving a good account of itself in the northern sectors of the Pusan Perimeter. There the 1st, 3d, 6th, 8th, and Capital Divisions had not only maintained their tactical integrity throughout August but even delivered several counterattacks.[12]

The NKPA numerical superiority, in short, could not last much longer. It was now or never if the invaders hoped to batter their way to Pusan, and Pyongyang staked everything on a final offensive.

The brunt fell upon the United States 2d Infantry Division. Troops from four enemy divisions were identified on this sensitive front, well supported by armor and artillery. Within a few hours pressure became so great that EUSAK decided to send the Marine mobile reserve to the aid of the Army troops.

Not only was the terrain familiar to Marines who had fought their way up Obong-ni Ridge, but they were renewing acquaintance with the same enemy outfit. For G–2 reports confirmed that the NKPA 4th Infantry Division was back again at the old stand—or at least such survivors as had emerged with a whole skin from their defeat of 17–18 August in this area.

Perhaps because of the large numbers of new recruits filling the ranks, the retreaded outfit followed in reserve just behind the NKPA 9th Infantry Division as it crossed the Naktong and drove eastward. The 9th was one of the enemy units hastily raised from constabulary forces for purposes of the invasion. Assigned to guard duty at Seoul throughout July and half of August, the troops devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the pleasant mission of forcing South Koreans to “volunteer” as soldiers or laborers against their own people. Thus the division could be considered a fresh and rested outfit, though deficient in training and combat discipline as compared to the older NKPA units.

Troops from the enemy’s 2d and 10th Divisions were also identified on the front of the United States 2d Infantry Division, but the Marines had no contacts with these units.[13]

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The Marines Jump Off

General Keiser's operational directive for the 3 September counterattack was half a page in length. As in the case of the first Naktong counter-stroke, the Marine brigade was placed opposite the center of the Bulge, with the mission of driving westward "to restore former 9th Infantry positions." This time, however, Craig's force was scheduled to jump off 4 miles east of Observation Hill; for the North Koreans were knocking at the gates of Yongsan.

The Brigade's line of departure was a long north-south ridgeline about a thousand yards west of Yongsan and directly south of Myong-ni. This high ground was occupied on 2 September by the 9th Infantry. When the Marines passed through the next morning, the Army unit was to swing northward to attack on the Brigade right. Still farther north, the 23d Infantry had orders to hold positions on the right of the 9th and maintain contact with friendly units by patrolling.[14]

On the Brigade's left, a special task force of the Army's 72d Tank Battalion and 2d Engineer Battalion was to attack southward from Il-li to the Naktong River line below the Bulge. There it would link with the 25th Division's right.

The fact that the Communists upset the plan by smashing through the 9th Infantry lines on the night of 2–3 September was both bad and good news from the standpoint of the Marines. It was bad because an overextended friendly unit had been shattered by many times its numbers and forced into a disorganized withdrawal. It was good because the enemy was plowing ahead at full steam, obviously unaware that he was shortly due for a blow that would find him off balance and send him reeling.

Low hanging clouds and smoke made for poor visibility on the morning of the 3d when General Craig set out on his customary prebattle reconnaissance by helicopter. He was accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Stewart, who had just returned from the 1st Marine Division planning conferences at Tokyo.

"We couldn't see anything but an occasional mountain peak," Craig recalled at a later date. "After flying around for some time, we had almost decided to return to the CP and complete the tour by jeep. Then Colonel Stewart noticed a hole in the clouds, and we dropped to an altitude where we had a good view of the front." [15]

What Craig and Stewart saw was a long column of Marines fighting their way toward the line of departure.

Lieutenant Colonel Murray's plan of attack for the 5th Marines called for the 1st and 2d Battalions to advance westward astride the Yongsan road, with 2/5 on the right. Taplett's 3d Battalion would initially be in reserve, blocking the southern approaches to Yongsan.[16]

At 0450, 3 September, 2/5 detrucked about 800 yards from Yongsan and marched forward in a route column. Moving into the town a short time later, the Marines received small arms fire from snipers hidden in buildings, ditches and culverts. Most of them were liquidated as the column pushed through to the road junction at the western end of Yongsan by 0630.[17]

At this fork a secondary route branches from the main road through the large village of Myong-ni, about 2,000 yards northwest of Yongsan.

Although still 1,000 yards from the designated line of departure, the 2d Battalion came under moderate fire from its right front. Moreover, dawn had brought indications of considerable activity and confusion ahead of the Marines. Ignoring the fire, Roise went forward about 500 yards to a low hill lying athwart the MSR. There he was jolted by the discovery that the 9th Infantry's lines had collapsed.[18]

On the right of the road there was no friendly situation worthy of the name. To the left of the MSR, an Army tank unit was parked behind the little hill which Roise had reached, and to the front were 4 of its tanks—2 destroyed and 2 abandoned. Included in the wreckage ahead were 2 burned-out NKPA T–34's.

Three hundred yards to the west, on the high ground south of the main road, Army troops were retreating from 1/5's line of departure. The soldiers had buckled under an onslaught by the NKPA 9th Division, which had launched an all-out attack at first light.[19]

Having observed evidence of the confusing situation from their helicopter, Craig and Stewart landed some distance behind Yongsan and proceeded forward by jeep and foot. The Brigade commander located 1/5's CP south of Yongsan and discovered that the battalion was slightly out of position. During 2/5's delay in moving through the city, Murray had ordered Newton to swing westward and align his unit for the attack as best he could. Darkness, coupled with confusion caused by the Army's withdrawal and 2/5's fight, had caused the 1st Battalion to move south of Chukchon-ni instead of Yongsan, as planned. Craig instructed 1/5's commander to make a 500-yard correction northward during the actual attack.[20]

Roise was meanwhile taking the situation in hand north of the MSR. At 0645 he called Marine tanks forward to cover the withdrawal of 9th Infantry troops from the high ridge in 1/5's zone.

Second Lieutenant Robert M. Winter led his platoon of M–26's into hull defilade next to 2/5's OP on the low hill and unleashed overhead fire in support of the Army troops. The pursuit by the North Koreans began to lag.

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Progress of Brigade Attack

Despite enemy artillery fire in the 2d Battalion zone, Companies D and E jumped off from the road junction at 0715 to clear the Yongsan-Myong-ni road and secure the 5th Marines' right flank.[21]

While this move was in progress, the last of the 9th Infantry troops vacated 1/5's line of departure to the left front. Roise immediately smothered that ridgeline with fire from Marine tanks, artillery, air, mortars, and machineguns.

Despite this blanket of steel, enemy guns from the high ground were able to fire across the MSR at Company E as it cleared a series of hills below Myong-ni. These hills had been designated 2/5's line of departure the previous day, but now were considered part of the first objective.

At 0800, when Captain Samuel Jaskilka reported that Easy Company had completed its mission, Roise ordered Company D to push through Myong-ni and take the hill just northwest of that village.

Click here to view map

By this time the entire Brigade was shifting into high gear. Winter's tanks on the little hill straddling the MSR were joined by the 1st Platoon, Able Company Engineers. The Army armored unit behind the southern portion of the hill suddenly went into hull defilade and added its firepower to that of the Marine M–26's. Craig, Snedeker and Stewart crawled to the crest of the hill on the right side of the MSR and studied the front from positions between the Marine tanks and Roise's OP.

The NKPA 9th Division had been stopped in its tracks when the Brigade's supporting arms connected. Then the Reds concentrated their fire on the little hill where Craig's OP was located. Lieutenant Winter was shot through the neck and one of his men wounded while aiding him. Before being evacuated, the painfully wounded tank officer offered General Craig a bottle of whiskey left in his M–26.

Chaplains Sporrer and Hickey were taken under machinegun fire as they walked forward on the MSR toward the hill. "It's lucky they're poor shots," said Sporrer as a second and third burst cracked over his head. The two chaplains arrived just in time to administer to the wounded being carried off the hill by the engineers.

At 0855, the 1st Battalion jumped off from below Chukchon-ni. The attack having been launched too far to the south, Companies A and B had to veer northwest as they advanced toward the enemy-held ridge 1,000 yards away. Fenton's unit was on the right, gradually closing on the MSR as it moved forward.

To the south, Stevens deployed his 1st, 2d, and 3d Platoons from right to left in that order, the latter being slightly withheld to protect the open left flank.

As the men of 1/5 waded into the knee-deep muck of the rice paddy, they came under long-range small-arms fire from their objective. Newton countered immediately by plastering the ridge with artillery and mortar fire. The advance continued and only a few casualties were taken by the time the companies reached a drainage ditch midway across the rice paddy. Here the long skirmish line paused to check its direction and place the wounded on dikes where they would be seen by corpsmen.

During the advance from the drainage ditch to the base of the ridge, 1/5's commander frequently called on air, artillery and mortars to blast enemy automatic weapons on the crest and forward slopes of the objective. Company A had the added support of an Army tank destroyer which gave overhead fire from the hill south of Chukchon-ni. On one occasion Marine 75's joined with the Army weapon to silence Communist guns in a small village at the base of the ridge.

Throughout the rice-paddy crossing, the Marines were constantly meeting Army stragglers, some of

whom had been isolated in enemy territory for as long as three days. Most of the soldiers were wounded, and all were weaponless and near exhaustion.

At 1100 Fenton and Stevens radioed Newton that they were ready for the assault, and the battalion commander immediately showered the objective with 81-mm. mortar fire to smother North Korean machineguns.

Beyond the edge of the rice paddy in Company A's zone, a sharp step led to the gentle incline at the base of the ridge. After a few yards, the gradual slope gave way to a steep rise which shot up abruptly to the crest of the high hill.

Lieutenant Muetzel's 2d Platoon held up at the step, using its protection against enemy fire while 1/5's mortar barrage was falling. During the pause Technical Sergeant McMullen brought the 1st Platoon into position on Muetzel's right and Lieutenant Fox aligned his 3d Platoon on the left.

As soon as the supporting fire lifted, Muetzel jumped to his feet and shouted the command to assault. Every man in Company A's skirmish line responded by scrambling up the hillside. The Marines made such a fearful racket that a whole company of alarmed North Koreans suddenly jumped up from concealed foxholes on the forward slope and fled toward the summit.

The panic-stricken Reds were easy targets for Company A's riflemen and BAR men. Halting on the gentle incline, the Marines carefully took aim and killed most of the enemy soldiers. When the Communist survivors disappeared over the crest, Company A again surged upward and within minutes carried the summit.

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Chapter 11. Second Naktong
Assault on Hill 117

The 1st Battalion secured its initial objective about noon on 3 September. Company B's next target was a continuation of the ridge running parallel to the MSR for 1,000 yards and topped by 4 conspicuous peaks. Able Company's second objective was a hill stretching across its front beyond a 200-yard valley. This hill was connected to Stevens' first objective by a narrow razorback ridge on the right which offered a poor route of approach.[22]

The two companies paused on their newly won positions to reorganize, evacuate wounded, and wait for a resupply of ammunition. There they came under heavy fire from the reverse slopes of their first objective and the high ground to the west. Several casualties were taken before Corsairs, requested by Newton, appeared for an air strike. As the Marine fighter planes unloaded their ordnance, large groups of enemy broke. Most of the Reds fled down the northern slopes, crossed the MSR and ascended Hill 117 in 2/5's zone.

Newton reacted to reports of the rout by throwing heavy artillery fire across the enemy's avenues of retreat. The hillsides and road were soon littered with bodies and equipment.

While 1/5's attack on its first objective was in progress, Company D had secured the 5th Marines' right flank by clearing Myong-ni of moderate resistance and seizing the hill to the northwest of the large village. The new company commander, First Lieutenant H. J. Smith, reported to Roise that he was receiving considerable machinegun and mortar fire from Hill 117. This high ground lay directly across 2/5's front, stretching northward from the MSR to a point about 500 yards west of Myong-ni.

Smith's reports, together with the news of the enemy's withdrawal to Hill 117 from 1/5's zone, led Roise to order Company D to attack the high ground from the north and cut off the North Korean retreat. Shortly after 1200, Smith's company jumped off to the southwest from its positions above Myong-ni and fought across the rice paddies circling the objective.

Company E could not advance from the chain of hills won earlier in the day because of enemy troops along the high ridge in Baker Company's zone south of the MSR. But Jaskilka's men supported the attack on 117 by fire.

A platoon of 75's from First Lieutenant Almarion S. Bailey's AntiTank Company, taking positions on Jaskilka's right, quickly knocked out an enemy gun on the objective. The Communists answered with 85-mm. fire from a concealed T–34 tank, killing 2 and wounding 7 of the recoilless rifle crews.

Company D gained a foothold on one of Hill 117's spurs against light resistance. As the unit advanced south toward the crest, however, enemy troops pouring across the MSR from 1/5's zone had boosted the ranks of the defenders to approximately two battalions. Smith's company was caught in its isolated position 500 yards from the rest of 2/5 and blasted by North Korean artillery, mortars, and automatic weapons. Casualties mounted at such a staggering rate that the Marines were hard put to retain their foothold on the northern tip of the hill.

While the 2d Battalion was maneuvering and fighting on the right of the road, the 2d Platoon of tanks pushed westward along the MSR from its early morning position 500 yards west of Yongsan. The Brigade armor became heavily engaged with enemy antitank weapons, and several casualties were taken as Marines exposed themselves from unbuttoned M–26's to spot Communist emplacements. Second Lieutenant John S. Carson, who had taken over the platoon after Winter was wounded, fell before enemy machinegun fire and died instantly.

Going into hull defilade on another low hill overlooking the MSR, the 2d Platoon surprised three T–34 tanks on the road ahead and quickly destroyed them with 90-mm. fire. The tankmen then turned their guns on a

wealth of targets spread across the front: Red antitank weapons, machinegun positions, troop concentrations, and groups either retreating or attempting to reinforce.

About noon, Second Lieutenant Sweet's 3d Platoon joined the 2d and added its firepower to the fusillade. Another T–34 was knocked out when Sweet's men blasted a thicket suspected of concealing an antitank gun. A fifth North Korean tank went out of action when it was abandoned by its crew on the left side of the road.

In the afternoon of 3 September, enemy resistance across 1/5's front weakened proportionately as it grew stronger in the 2d Battalion zone. Newton launched his attack on Objective Two at 1510, after MAG–33 and 1/11 had softened up the North Korean positions.[23]

Company B drove down the ridgeline paralleling the MSR and in little more than an hour had seized its part of the objective, a peak directly across the road from Hill 117. During the 1,000-yard advance, Fenton reported another large group of enemy fleeing to 2/5's zone. The information was quickly relayed to Roise, who had ample reason by this time to curse the fortunes of war.

In Company A's zone, Stevens and his platoon leaders worked out a classic scheme of maneuver for seizing Hill 91, their part of the battalion objective. McMullen's 1st Platoon and the company machineguns were to remain in position as the base of fire, while Muetzel's 2d Platoon feinted across the 200-yard valley to the front. Fox's 3d Platoon, earmarked for the main effort, would then circle to the south and flank the enemy's right. Click here to view map

Muetzel's unit jumped off with Company B at 1510, crossed the low ground, and ascended a draw leading to Hill 91. The Marines miscalculated, however, and climbed too far up the slope, so that they came within grenade range of the crest and were pinned down by machinegun fire. The platoon was split, with Muetzel and two squads on the left of the draw and Corporal Raymond E. Stephens and his squad on the right.

During the preparatory artillery barrage, Fox had led his platoon around to the enemy's right flank, concealed en route by a rice-paddy bank. Not knowing when the supporting fire would lift, he withheld his squads from an assault line by a wide safety margin. Thus when the artillery ceased, the North Koreans had time to come out of their holes and hit the envelopment with small arms fire. Fox was wounded, and command passed to Technical Sergeant George W. Bolkow who worked the platoon up into the enemy positions.

The 3d Platoon's assault was sparked by Corporal Virgil W. Henderson and his 3d Squad, who worked to the rear of a troublesome machinegun position and destroyed it. During the attack Henderson was painfully wounded in the jaw by a Communist bullet.

Since both forward platoons had SCR 300 radios, Muetzel heard the report that Fox was wounded. Concluding that the envelopment had failed, the 2d Platoon leader requested and received permission to make a frontal assault on Hill 91 from his position on the forward slopes. Enemy mortar fire had added to the woes of Muetzel's diversionary thrust. And though an OY–2 of VMO–6 had given information leading to the destruction of the mortar position, the beleaguered platoon leader sought the relative safety of a frontal assault.

Corporal Stephens, acting on his own initiative across the draw, had worked his squad up to the razorback ridge and around the enemy's left flank. Thus the hapless North Koreans on Hill 91 were hit by a "triple envelopment" when Stephens struck from the north, Muetzel from the east and Bolkow from the south.

Company A reported its objective seized at 1630, and Newton ordered Stevens and Fenton to dig in for the night.

Both Roise and Newton were confronted by serious space factors on the night of 3–4 September. The 2d Battalion's front was more than 2,000 yards long and formed a right angle. A gap of 500 yards stretched between Company D's precarious position on the northern tip of Hill 117 and Easy Company's lines below Myong-ni. This left Smith's depleted unit isolated and Jaskilka's right dangling.

The 1st Battalion's right flank was exposed more than 1,000 yards along the MSR; and its front was almost a mile in length, with a 200-yard valley separating the two rifle companies. The Brigade Reconnaissance

Company was deployed on high ground far out on Newton's left flank, but this was hardly ample protection for the many avenues of approach in the south.

Exhibiting his characteristic faith in high explosives, Newton called on the 1st Platoon, Able Company Engineers, to contribute their sundry lethal devices to 1/5's infantry defense. Beginning at 1800, 3 September, one group of engineers fanned out to the front and right flank of Company B's lines. Despite fire from Hill 117 and enemy positions to the west, the demolitions men strung out dozens of antipersonnel mines, hand grenades, and blocks of TNT wrapped with 60-penny spikes. Before darkness set in, Baker Company's forward slopes had the potential of an active volcano.

In Company A's zone, Technical Sergeant David N. Duncan and Sergeant Bryan K. White led the other half of the engineer platoon in laying a similar field of obstacles. Duncan crowned his handiwork with a 40-pound shaped charge hooked up in a gully with a trip wire.

Staff Sergeant Saweren J. Dennis and his 2d Squad of engineers crept forward at midnight 1,000 yards on the MSR and laid an antitank minefield across the road near the southern tip of Hill 117. On the way Dennis discovered an enemy antitank minefield embedded in the road. Although the engineers had never seen a Russian wooden-box mine before, knowledge gained from the study of intelligence manuals during the Brigade's sea voyage enabled them to detect, remove, and disarm every mine in the field during darkness. The work was delayed a few minutes when Dennis traced a clanking sound to the roadside ditch and killed a Communist soldier frantically trying to insert a loaded magazine into his submachinegun.

Before the engineers completed their work and retired to 1/5's lines, Nature added an obstacle of her own to any enemy plans for a counterattack. A rainstorm broke, and the heavy downpour, accompanied by unseasonably icy winds, wrought misery on friend and foe alike for the rest of the night.

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Chapter 12. Mission Completed

THE CASUALTIES OF 2/5 for 3 September totaled 18 dead and 77 wounded, most of them being taken by Company D. Lieutenant Colonel Murray ordered the 3d Battalion to pass through the 2d, therefore, and continue the attack on the right of the MSR at 0800 the next morning. The 1st Battalion was to resume its advance south of the MSR, while the Reconnaissance Company far out on the left would move forward to a new blocking position. [1]

Shortly after dawn on the 4th, the 1st Platoon of engineers went forward and removed the mines ahead of 1/5's positions. Preparatory fires by 1/11 at 0750 routed a group of enemy on the peak on Baker Company's front, and the Marine riflemen had a field day as the Reds threw away their weapons and pelted westward.

Companies A and B jumped off at 0800 and advanced rapidly over the high ground south of the MSR against negligible resistance. The attackers frequently observed small groups of enemy fleeing in all directions, and many of the Communists were cut down by Brigade air, artillery, and armor. Twelve prisoners were captured before 1/5 reached its half of Brigade Objective One at 1505. This was the high ground south of the MSR at Kang-ni, over 3,000 yards from the line of departure.

Shortly after 0800, 3/5 had launched a two-pronged assault against Hill 117, core of the NKPA 9th Division's resistance the previous day. Company G advanced through Easy Company's lines just above the MSR and pushed across the intervening rice paddies. The Marines charged over a small knoll in their path but found the enemy positions unoccupied except for several dead. Bohn quickly led the company to the southern slopes of Hill 117, which was strangely quiet by comparison with the tumult of the previous day. In capturing the southern half of the hill, Company G killed only 15 North Koreans.

Simultaneously with Bohn's advance, Company H swung wide to the right and passed through the thin ranks of Dog Company on the northern tip of Hill 117. The attackers drove south against negligible resistance and quickly linked with Company G, securing the objective at 0840.

A connecting road runs from Myong-ni to the MSR, tracing the eastern base of Hill 117. Since engineers on the previous night had located the enemy minefield east of the junction on the main road, Taplett moved his headquarters to the MSR via the connecting road. The lead vehicle, a personnel carrier loaded with communications men, struck a Communist mine on the secondary route east of the newly captured objective. The resulting explosion caused 10 casualties.

By noon the engineers had cleared the road of several Russian-type mines identical to those found during the night. The two anti-vehicular minefields were among the first such obstacles encountered by the UN forces in the Korean conflict.

After seizing Hill 117, Companies G and H continued the attack westward by advancing abreast on the high ground north of the MSR. Contact with 1/5 on the left was maintained, but the 9th Infantry on the right soon fell behind and disappeared from sight.

At 1045 Company G ran into machinegun fire coming from the 3/5 area of the Brigade objective, the hill north of Kang-ni. Taplett blasted the hill with Marine air and artillery, and the North Koreans were in full retreat within an hour. MAG–33 and 1/11 rained death on the retreating Reds and continued to pound the hill preparatory to an assault by Company G. Bohn led his troops forward and secured the objective at 1515.

Looking across the stream bed to the north of their new positions, the Marines of George Company spotted enemy infantry escorting a T–34 tank and withdrawing into the 9th Infantry zone. The Communist column was quickly dispersed by machinegun fire.

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Chapter 12. Mission Completed
Collapse of NKPA 9th Division

Marines following up the 3,000-yard advance along the MSR saw a picture of devastation unequalled even by the earlier defeat of the NKPA 4th Division. Hundreds of enemy dead were strewn along the road, hillsides and ridgelines. On the MSR between Hill 117 and Kang-ni lay a long column of North Koreans who had been caught by Marine air and artillery while attempting to reinforce Red lines. The dead leader was a lieutenant colonel whose briefcase contained a lengthy artillery treatise among other less scholarly documents.[2]

In addition to knocked-out and abandoned Communist tanks, vehicles, mortars, and antitank guns, the countryside was littered with enough small arms, ammunition, and gear to equip several hundred men. Even the North Korean paymaster had been caught in the sweeping tide of Brigade arms, and Marines distributed a huge quantity of worthless currency among themselves.

Not only did the Marines reap a harvest of enemy materiel; they also recaptured a great quantity of United States Army equipment lost during the Communist drive. American tanks, artillery pieces, mortars, vehicles, small arms, and ammunition and supply dumps were turned over to the 2d Division by the Brigade.

The destruction of the enemy camp left Army and Marine intelligence officers inundated by captured enemy documents. Muster rolls, ledgers, maps, orders, textbooks, and propaganda material were heaped into separate piles.

Late in the afternoon of 4 September, the 9th Infantry moved into positions on the high ground northeast of 3/5. This completed the advance to Phase Line One of the 2d Division's counterattack plan. The second phase line on G–3 maps was drawn through Hill 125 and Observation Hill, 3,000 yards west of Kang-ni.

When informed that the Brigade had completed the first part of its mission, General Keiser authorized General Craig to advance toward Phase Line Two.

Beyond Kang-ni, the Brigade's right boundary became the MSR, so that 3/5 could not advance westward from its half of Objective One. Major Charles H. Brush, Murray's S–3, radioed Newton and passed on orders for the battalion commander to take the next piece of high ground, Cloverleaf Hill, just south of the MSR at Hwayong-ni, about a thousand yards away.

The 1st Battalion struck out through the intervening rice paddy, Company A on the left and Baker Company just below the MSR. Fenton's unit had hardly begun the advance when it was stopped by heavy machinegun fire coming from the high ground north of Hwayong-ni. Newton then called for an air strike on the ridge and also requested 3/5 to keep it covered with supporting fire during Company B's attack.

Enemy resistance evaporated with accustomed rapidity, and the Marines reported Cloverleaf Hill secure at 1800. Murray then ordered both front line battalions to establish night defenses and be prepared to continue the attack at 0800, 5 September.

The extent and trace of the Brigade front line on the night of 4–5 September was almost identical to that of 24 hours before. Again Newton's battalion was in front on the left by a good 1,000 yards, and Companies A and B were stretched across a line almost a mile long, with the left flank wide open.

Separated from both 1/5 on the left and the 9th Infantry on the right, the 3d Battalion established a perimeter defense, even though it was in the center of the counterattack zone.

There was considerable tension and excitement after darkness on 4 September, although the Brigade lines were never seriously threatened. The engineers were busy in 1/5's zone until after midnight, creeping to the front and flanks to lay mines. The 3d Battalion was shelled heavily throughout the night, and 1/5's CP took direct hits

killing 1 Marine and wounding 2 others. One of the wounded was Second Lieutenant James R. Young, Newton's Assistant S–3. The artillery liaison officer, First Lieutenant Joris J. Snyder, was knocked unconscious for several hours, though he received not a scratch from the 120-mm. explosion a few yards away.

At 0230 night-fighter planes of Major Joseph H. Reinburg's VMF(N)–513 bombed the North Korean mortar position causing most of the damage, and the shelling slackened appreciably. Completing this mission, the Marine pilots dumped general purpose and fragmentation bombs on enemy vehicles and troops in the area.[3]

Companies G and H reported movement forward of their lines before dawn, and 3/5's 81-mm. mortars quickly illuminated the front, disclosing several small groups of enemy. There was a flurry of fire, but the Reds gave no indication of organizing for an assault. One of the groups, either by error or suicidal folly, stumbled into the area of Taplett's CP. A listening post of Weapons Company took the intruders under fire, killing an NKPA officer and routing the others.

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Chapter 12. Mission Completed
Attacks of 5 September

Marines of the 3d Battalion were startled at daybreak, 5 September, when a company of North Koreans attacked the 9th Infantry's left flank in full view of 3/5's positions on the adjacent high ground. George, How, and H & S Companies poured machinegun fire into the mass of Reds at ranges of 600–1,000 yards. Most of the Red attackers were cut down before they could flee into the hills west of the Army lines.[4]

Company B, on its high ground south of Hwayong-ni, heard the firing in 3/5's area at daybreak and steeled itself for a possible counterattack from the right flank. When Newton received word of the abortive attack on the 9th Infantry, he ordered his two rifle companies to prepare to move out at 0800 as planned.

The Marines of Companies A and B were organizing their attack formation on Cloverleaf Hill when two Air Force P–51's came in for an uncontrolled air strike on the high ground north of Hwayong-ni. Strafing the ridge from north to south, the planes riddled Cloverleaf Hill as they pulled out of their dives. The 2 exposed companies were showered with bullets, and it seemed miraculous that only 1 Marine was wounded.

At 0820, 1/5 jumped off to the west to seize the Brigade's portion of Phase Line Two—Hill 125 and Observation Hill. Beyond these hills lay Obong-ni Ridge, blocking the path to the Naktong River, third and final phase line of the 2d Division counterattack. Because of its tactical importance and great significance, battle-scarred Obong-ni was designated a special objective, apart from the phase lines.

Half a mile west of Hwayong-ni the MSR makes a right-angle turn to the south, proceeds in that direction for 1,000 yards, then resumes its westward course through the cut between Hill 125 and Observation Hill.

Companies A and B, with the latter on the right, moved rapidly through the rice paddy below the MSR after leaving their line of departure on Cloverleaf Hill. At the road bend mentioned above, the MSR turned across Baker Company's front. When Fenton's unit crossed over to the base of the high ground leading to Hill 125, Companies A and B were separated by the MSR as it resumed its westward course. Stevens' unit started up the long eastern slopes of Observation Hill, while Fenton's men secured the eastern extension of Hill 125.
Click here to view map

Obong-ni Ridge rumbled its first greeting to 1/5 at 0935 when mortars and artillery fired at the Marine attackers from emplacements around the hill. The Reds were answered immediately by 1/11 and Newton's 81-mm. mortar platoon; and the rifle companies continued the advance to Phase Line Two, securing their objectives at 1100.

Murray ordered 1/5 to hold up until the 9th Infantry tied in on Fenton's right. Communist automatic weapons on Obong-ni Ridge fired on the Marines sporadically during this interlude.

At 1000, while 1/5 was attacking to the west, the 3d Battalion had swung southward behind Cloverleaf Hill to take positions on the 5th Marines' left. This was in preparation for Murray's contemplated assault on Obong-ni Ridge by two battalions. It was planned that Newton's unit would take the northern half of the long hill and 3/5 the southern portion.

Company G led the 3d Battalion advance through the rice paddy south of Cloverleaf Hill. Artillery and 75-mm. recoilless guns paved the way by raking possible enemy hiding places, enabling the infantrymen to proceed rapidly. Bohn's destination was Hill 91, a shoe-like projection jutting out from the southern reaches of Obong-ni Ridge. Reaching the base of the high ground, Bohn requested that supporting fires be lifted. Attached tanks, 75's, and 1/11 immediately shifted their destruction to Obong-ni Ridge.

Company G started up the slopes of Hill 91, while an attached 75-mm. recoilless gun obliterated a wheel-

mounted machinegun and its crew going into position on the crest. The Marines had climbed only a few yards when Bohn was ordered by Taplett at 1230 to withdraw the company to Observation Hill.

Company H, then passing between Hill 91 and Observation Hill on its way to Obong-ni's eastern approaches, received the same order from the Battalion commander. The assault on the ridge had been canceled, and Murray was concentrating his regiment along the MSR.

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Chapter 12. Mission Completed
Two Marine Tanks Killed

Throughout the Brigade advance on 5 September, the Marines were hampered by heavy rain and fog which prevented MAG–33 and VMO–6 from operating effectively. Thus the enemy was offered a rare opportunity to mount a daylight attack.[5]

After Company B received orders to hold up on Hill 125, Fenton ordered his men to dig foxholes along the rain-soaked crest facing Tugok village and Finger Ridge to the west and Obong-ni Ridge to the southwest. The company commander directed the attached 1st Platoon of tanks to remain in the road cut, just to the rear of the famous bend around the forward slopes of Hill 125. Peering through the rain and fog, the Marine tankmen could see the dead, black hulls of the three T–34's knocked out by the Brigade 2 weeks earlier.

At 1420 the sporadic sniping from the front suddenly increased to the intensity of preparatory fire, and Baker Company was pinned down on its ridgeline positions. The northern tip of Obong-ni Ridge blazed with NKPA machineguns, whose chatter was soon joined by that of automatic weapons concealed in Tugok and at the northern base of Observation Hill. A Communist antitank gun on Finger Ridge added its voice intermittently to the chorus.

Fenton's radio went dead just as he reported the situation to Newton at his OP on the high ground to the east. As luck would have it, every other radio in the company area was inoperative because of the mud and rain; and Fenton was unable to warn the Marine tanks in the road cut that enemy armor and troops were advancing toward the road bend from the west.

As the Communist vehicles swung into the turn, a company of Red soldiers left the road and assaulted Company B's positions by advancing up the draw on the Marines' left front. The intense overhead fire supporting the Red Infantry enabled them to get well up the forward slopes. Meanwhile, a squad of North Koreans advanced up the draw leading from Tugok and harassed Fenton's right front.

To stop the attack, the Marines were forced to man the crest of Hill 125. Thus exposed to the enemy's supporting fire, Company B had to pay a heavy price in casualties.

During the advance of the Communist armor, it was determined that the first 2 of the 3 vehicles were T–34 tanks and the last a tracked armored personnel carrier. Fenton immediately deployed his assault squad on the slopes below his left flank to meet the threat on the MSR.

Lieutenant Pomeroy, unaware of the enemy tanks around the bend, advanced his M–26's so that the machineguns on Obong-ni Ridge could be taken under massed fire. Thus, as the first Marine tank reached the bend, its 90-mm. gun was pointing to the left front, a quarter turn away from the enemy armor.

The lead T–34 fired on the Marine vehicle as soon as it came into view. Before the turret of the M–26 could be turned to take aim, several more 85-mm. projectiles struck; and the Brigade lost its first tank to enemy action. The second M–26 in column tried to squeeze by the first to render assistance, and it too was knocked out by 85-mm. fire in the restricted passageway.

The crews of both Marine tanks managed to get out of their vehicles through the escape hatches. Some of the wounded were aided by the engineer mine-clearance team accompanying the tank column.

Since the road bend was now blocked, the remainder of Pomeroy's tanks could do nothing but park in the road cut. It was Marine infantrymen who stepped in at this point and blunted the NKPA victory on the MSR.

Company B's assault squad plastered the lead T–34 with 3.5" rocket fire and stopped it cold. Shortly afterwards, the 1st Battalion's assault platoon reached the fight scene and went into action with its 3.5's. In short

order the infantrymen had completed the destruction of the first tank, knocked out the second, and destroyed the enemy personnel carrier.

The historic road bend, as seen through the rain and mist, had become a graveyard of armor. A total of 8 steel monsters were sprawled there in death: 5 T–34's and 1 armored carrier of the NKPA, and 2 Pershing tanks of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade.

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Chapter 12. Mission Completed
The Brigade's Final Action

On Hill 125 the fight reached a climax as Marines exchanged grenades and small-arms fire with the North Koreans slithering up the slopes in the driving rain. Company B had used all of its 60-mm. mortar shells and was running low on grenades and small arms ammunition. Enemy automatic weapons on the ridges to the front were still cutting down the Marine defenders at 1500 when Fenton sent a runner to Newton requesting more ammunition.[6]

The endurance contest was still in progress half an hour later, as the 9th Infantry moved into positions on the high ground north of Hill 125. Having no communications with his own supporting arms, Fenton sent a messenger to the Army unit commander, asking that he place artillery fire on the Marine front.

When Army shells began falling in answer to the request, 1/5's 81-mm. mortars belatedly got into the fight and worked over the forward slopes of Hill 125 to within 50 yards of Company B's positions. The heavy supporting fire turned the tide, and enemy pressure slackened considerably.

During the final stage of the enemy's attack, Company A was being relieved on Observation Hill by 3/5. Stevens told his platoon leaders to leave their grenades and extra ammunition on the hill, since his orders were to withdraw to the rear. While the relief was taking place, however, Company A was ordered to reinforce Fenton's unit against the enemy's attack on Hill 125. Muetzel's 2d Platoon, after recovering its ammunition, was augmented by a machinegun section, mortar squad, and two SCR–300 radios, before the young officer led the unit across the MSR to lend a hand.

When Stevens' relief by 3/5 was completed, he added the 1st Platoon to Company B's reinforcements, and himself withdrew to Cloverleaf Hill with the 3d Platoon as ordered.

The reinforcements were fed into Fenton's line as fast as they reached the summit of Hill 125. By this time every man in Company B had been committed to the forward wall — mortarmen, clerks, signalmen, and all. Lieutenant Howard Blank combined his Able Company mortars with those of the defenders and immediately followed up the artillery and 81-mm. fire which had blunted the attack. These final concentrations of 60-mm. mortar fire on Obong-ni and Finger Ridges and the forward slopes of Hill 125 ended the enemy attack. The surviving Reds withdrew to Tugok.

At 1600, during the dying minutes of the Brigade's final action in the Pusan Perimeter, Newton was ordered back to the regimental CP for a conference. The executive officer, Major Merlin R. Olson, took over 1/5 from the battalion OP on the ridge east of Hill 125.

The 5th Marines commander had called the leaders of his battalions to brief them on General Craig's last field directive, which began with the long awaited words:

"THIS MY OPN ORDER 22–50 X COMMENCING AT 2400 5 SEPT BRIG MOVES BY RAIL AND MOTOR TO STAGING AREA PUSAN FOR FURTHER OPERATION AGAINST THE ENEMY X PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF MOVEMENT 5TH MARS WILL STAND RELIEVED BY ELMS OF 2ND INF DIV COMMENCING AT DARKNESS . . . CONCEAL FROM THE ENEMY ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH YOUR WITHDRAWAL . . ."

Taplett's 3d Battalion had sustained 24 casualties from artillery and mortar fire between its occupation of Observation Hill and the time it was relieved by a company of the 23d Infantry shortly after midnight. Plodding rearward through mud and driving rain, 3/5's long column began its three-and-a-half-mile march to an entrucking point 2,000 yards west of Yongsan.

Following 3/5 were the weary, mud-soaked troops of the 1st Battalion. Having successfully defended Hill 125 at a cost of 2 killed and 23 wounded, Baker Company had filed down to the road after being relieved by another company of the 23d Infantry. Muetzel brought up the rear with Company A's contingent, and a battalion column was formed at Olson's check point east of Hill 125.

By dawn of 6 September, the two battalions were loading aboard trucks to follow the rest of the Brigade. Numbed by fatigue and icy rain, the bent forms huddled together in the cargo vehicles had no regrets as they bade good-bye to the Pusan perimeter.

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Chapter 12. Mission Completed
Brigade Embarkation at Pusan

The movement to Pusan was completed by the morning of 7 September, and the Brigade troops found themselves back at the docks where they had landed a little more than a month before. In fact, the docks were to be their bivouac area during the next 6 days; the men slept in the open and took their meals on board the transports in which they would soon be sailing around the peninsula.

The survivors of the Naktong fights—even the latecomers who had joined the Brigade at the Bean Patch—felt old and worn when they saw the large draft of shiny new Marines just landed as third rifle companies organized with their own NCO's and platoons. The veterans had forgotten how young and untroubled a Marine could look; how neat and clean he could appear in a recently issued utility jacket.

The new companies were immediately assigned to their battalions. It was another job for officers and NCO's who had the responsibility of replacing equipment lost in action as well as servicing ordnance, motor transport and other heavy equipment which had been sent from the Bean Patch to Pusan late in August.[7]

General Craig and his staff had their headquarters in one of the Pusan University buildings. There was no opportunity for planning, let alone rehearsals, for the forthcoming amphibious assault at Inchon. Craig and his officers had all they could do to get the Brigade ready for embarkation.

Among the tasks to be accomplished in less than a week, it remained to give some weapons training to the 3,000 troops of the 1st Korean Marine Regiment. This newly raised unit, attached to the Brigade for embarkation, was to make a name for itself within the next year and become the fourth rifle regiment of the 1st Marine Division. But in September 1950 there were great gaps in the training of the KMC's. The men kept their rifles scrupulously clean, and they could strip an M–1 expertly, but few of them had ever fired a shot.

Marine NCO's had the hazardous duty of giving the eager and excited KMC's their first target practice after eight rounds of ammunition for each man had been acquired. No Marine casualties resulted, fortunately, but puffed and bruised cheeks were the rule among Koreans having their first experience with an M–1's recoil.

There was, of course, no end of "scuttlebutt" going the rounds of the Marines as to their destination. One day the troops were lined up in formation and read a long lecture on the hydrographic aspects of the west coast port of Kunsan. It is to be hoped that this red herring made some impression upon the Koreans who were listening, since Pusan was a headquarters of enemy spies. As for the Marines, most of them concluded that at least Kunsan could be eliminated from the list of possible objectives.

The secret was well kept by Brigade officers in the higher echelons. Two engineer officers, First Lieutenant Ernest P. Skelt and Commissioned Warrant Officer Willard C. Downs, were given the secret mission of constructing wooden scaling ladders for the next operation. This project gave rise to more rumors, but it is safe to say that few men in the ranks knew the answer when the Brigade was deactivated at 0001 on 13 September 1950. The components immediately resumed their old unit designations in the 1st Marine Division and sailed to take part in the amphibious assault on Inchon scheduled for the 15th.[8]

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Chapter 12. Mission Completed
Results of Brigade Operations

As the mountains behind Pusan faded from sight, General Craig and his men could reflect that the Brigade's 67 days of existence had been productive. Altogether, the Marine air-ground team had fought three difficult offensive operations in a month while traveling 380 miles with a third of its organic transportation plus Army vehicles.

Total casualties for the Brigade included 148 KIA, 15 DOW, 9 MIA (seven of whom were later reclassified as KIA after recovery of the bodies) and 730 WIA.[9] It was estimated that the Marines inflicted total casualties of 9,900 killed and wounded on opposing NKPA units. Enemy losses of arms and equipment were on such a scale as to impair the effectiveness of the forces concerned.

In its initial operation, as a component of Task Force Kean, the Brigade had the major part in the first sustained Eighth Army counterattack—the military equivalent of a hard left jab which rocks an opponent back on his heels. General MacArthur, when reporting to the United Nations, asserted that "this attack not only secured the southern approaches to the beachhead, but also showed that the North Korean forces will not hold under attack."[10]

The Communist drive in this sensitive area came closest of all NKPA thrusts to the vital UN supply port of Pusan. Up to that time the NKPA units spearheading the advance—the 6th Infantry Division and the 83d Motorcycle Regiment—had never suffered a reverse worth mentioning since the outset of the invasion. Then the counterattack by the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade hurled the enemy back 26 miles in 4 days from the Chindong-ni area to Sachon.

It was estimated that the Marine air-ground team killed and wounded 1,900 of the enemy while destroying nearly all the vehicles of an NKPA motorized battalion in addition to infantry armament and equipment. The enemy threat in this critical area was nullified for the time being, and never again became so serious. Marine efforts assisted Army units of Task Force Kean in taking new defensive positions and defending them with fewer troops, thus freeing some elements for employment on other fronts. Finally, the Marines earned more time and space for the building up of Eighth Army forces in preparation for a decisive UN counteroffensive.

The next Brigade operation, the first battle of the Naktong, ranks with the hardest fights of Marine Corps history. The enemy, after showing skill and aggressiveness in breaching the last natural barrier of the Pusan Perimeter, widened his Naktong bridgehead and took strong defensive positions in preparation for an all-out offensive while still maintaining his material superiority.

Only two Eighth Army units were available for a counterattack—the 27th Infantry and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade. The Army regiment being needed in reserve on the southern front, the "firemen of the Pusan Perimeter" were placed under the operational control of the 24th Infantry Division on the central front. There the Marines had the mission of clearing the enemy from Obong-ni Ridge and two other large hill masses of the Naktong Bulge.

The NKPA 4th Infantry Division had taken maximum advantage of strong defensive terrain in accordance with the precepts taught by Soviet and Chinese Communist military instructors. This enlarged bridgehead was credited by CINCFE with giving the enemy the capability of mounting a serious threat to the main railroad from Pusan to Taegu.

It took a bitter and costly effort on the part of the Brigade, but the result was the most smashing defeat ever given an NKPA major unit up to this time. This reverse turned into a rout and slaughter toward the end as

Marine air, artillery, armor, and mortars inflicted terrible losses. Broken NKPA forces were cut down in flight or while trying to swim the Naktong.

If the Brigade's first operation may be likened to a hard left jab, the fight in the Naktong Bulge is comparable to a solid right dealing a knockdown blow. The enemy lurched back to his feet, it is true, but the three rifle regiments of the NKPA 4th Infantry Division had to be filled up with hastily trained recruits.

Arms ranging from rifles to howitzers were abandoned as impediments by the routed Communists, so that the rebuilt NKPA 4th Infantry Division needed new armament and equipment of all sorts. General MacArthur's summary of the action, reported to the UN Security Council on 18 September 1950, stated that "attacks by the United States 24th Division and the Marines eliminated a major penetration of the Naktong defense line on 18 August. Here, the enemy 4th Division was decisively defeated, lost its bridgehead, and was thrown westward across the Naktong River, suffering very heavy losses in both personnel and equipment."

Never before had a major NKPA unit taken such a staggering defeat. As evidence of recent victories won over United States troops, the 4th Infantry Division had brought captured American machineguns and 105-mm. howitzers into the Naktong Bulge. Among the most important results achieved by the Brigade, therefore, was the hurt done to Red Korean morale.

Not only was the enemy's Naktong bridgehead liquidated; he also lost heavily in time, which was becoming more valuable to him than space if he hoped to profit from his rapidly dwindling advantage in numbers. Not until 10 days later did the Communists establish another bridgehead in the Naktong Bulge area, and then it was their misfortune to encounter the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade again.

During the early morning hours of 1 September 1950, the enemy made his final effort to smash through to Pusan. Again the 27th Infantry was needed on another front, so that the Marines, as the only other mobile reserve unit, were committed under the operational control of the 2d Infantry Division. The seriousness of the situation in the Naktong Bulge is indicated by the fact that the enemy had enlarged his new bridgehead with a penetration of about 4,000 yards in the sector of the 2d Division. Elements of four enemy divisions had been identified on the central front when the Marines jumped off on the morning of 3 September.

The Brigade's 3-day fight did not end as decisively as the first battle of the Naktong. That is because it was an unfinished fight. The Marines were pulled out on the night of 5 September, after gains of 2,500 to 3,000 yards that day, and it can only be conjectured what General Craig and his men might have accomplished during the next 48 hours.

As it was, the Brigade had a prominent part in disrupting the enemy's effort to sever the Pusan-Taegu lifeline. Heavy losses both in personnel and equipment were inflicted on NKPA forces, and the Marines helped to reduce the enemy's new bridgehead by 8,000 to 10,000 yards.

Not only had the enemy lost the battle; he had lost the war, as it proved, for EUSAK staff officers were even then planning a great UN counterstroke in the Pusan Perimeter. This drive was to be in conjunction with the amphibious assault on Inchon.

The turning point in the UN fortunes of war owed in no small measure to the three counterattacks by the Marines in the Pusan Perimeter. As for the overall effects, it would be hard to improve upon the analysis and evaluation in the Marine Corps Board Study:

"A careful examination of any of these operations in which Marines engaged discloses that a single failure would have a profound effect upon the entire UN effort. . . . On 3 separate occasions the Brigade was attached to the defending UN forces at points of dangerous enemy penetrations and 3 times Marine units spearheaded the counterattacking elements and effectively stopped the enemy's efforts, seizing the initiative from him, inflicting serious losses upon him, and forcing the abandonment of immediate attempts at decisive penetration."[11]

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Chapter 12. Mission Completed
Summaries and Conclusions

No Marine tactical organization of history ever did more than the Brigade to uphold the tradition of the Corps as a force-in-readiness. The transition from activation to embarkation took only 6 days, and it may be recalled that the Brigade became the first United States unit to get into the fight after crossing the Pacific from the American mainland.

Although the components had been hastily thrown together without opportunity for training or rehearsals, there were singularly few instances of tactical fumbling during the early actions. Some of the men had their only weapons familiarization instruction in actual battle, when they fired new arms for the first time. But thanks to the steadying influence of combat-wise company officers and NCO's, the Marines of the Brigade soon gained competence.

The Brigade command and staff faced unusual problems arising from such factors as emergency situations, hurried planning, oral orders, incomplete intelligence, and lack of adequate maps. There were decisions now and then which officers would not have made if they had been endowed with the wisdom of knowledge after the event. But on the basis of information at the time, the Brigade command and staff need no whitewashing from history. Marine victories, on the other hand, may be attributed in large degree to a high order of leadership and professional ability in the upper echelons as well as on the company and platoon level.

It might have been argued that it was a waste to commit amphibious specialists to the operations of mountain warfare. But Marines were also trained as infantry, and gravel-crunching fighting men were needed to correct an illusion held by many of their countrymen. Atomic bombs, guided missiles, jet planes, and other marvelous new weapons had convinced a large section of the public that the day of push-button warfare was at hand. These Americans sincerely believed that wars could be waged at long distance, and the Marines of the Brigade served their country well by demonstrating that even in the tactical millenium it was necessary to seek out the enemy and close with him. For if there was any outstanding figure of the conflict in Korea, it was some second lieutenant making split-second decisions which meant life or death for a platoon holding a hill position against enemy attack in the darkness.

The three squadrons of MAG–33 provided support which the Brigade reported as "the best close air support in the history of the Marine Corps . . . outstanding in its effectiveness." Army infantry officers were frankly envious on occasion; and Colonel Paul L. Freeman, USA, commanding the 23d Infantry, commented that "the Marines on our left were a sight to behold. Not only was their equipment superior or equal to ours, but they had squadrons of air in direct support. They used it like artillery. It was 'Hey, Joe—This is Smitty—Knock the left of that ridge in front of Item Company.' They had it *day and night.* It came off nearby carriers, and not from Japan with only 15 minutes of fuel to accomplish mission."[12]

The UN forces, of course, had complete supremacy in the air. On two occasions the Marines of the Brigade were briefly strafed by NKPA night hecklers making a "scalded-cat" raid. During the interlude at the Bean Patch an enemy plane winged its way under cover of darkness to cut loose with a brief burst of machinegun bullets before disappearing into the night. But United States Air Force planes had virtually destroyed the little NKPA air force during the first few weeks of the war, so that the men of the Brigade were virtually unopposed in the air.

The time interval between a request for Marine air support and the actual delivery varied according to local conditions, but the ground forces seldom had cause for complaint. All-weather Squadron VMF(N)–513,

based at Itazuke, Japan, was prevented by reason of faulty communications and liaison from responding to every request for dawn, dusk or night support during early Brigade operations, but such missions were flown effectively in the Naktong Bulge. Meanwhile, the Corsairs of VMF–214 and VMF–323, orbiting on station and always available for short notice employment, gave fresh proof that the Navy-Marine concept of carrier-based tactical aircraft was sound in practice. Following are the statistics of MAG–33 operations in Korea from 3 August to 14 September 1950:

Click here to view table

Demands on the time of the original 4 helicopters of VMO–6 made it necessary to fly 2 more machines in from Japan. The rotary-wing aircraft had so many "firsts" to their credit in the Pusan Perimeter that a major tactical innovation was obviously in the making. The flights of General Craig, Colonel Snedeker and Lieutenant Colonel Stewart alone were enough to indicate that the helicopter was capable of working a revolution in command and staff procedures.

Altogether, the participation of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was an important factor in stopping the NKPA invasion in August 1950 and punishing the invaders so severely that they were ripe for a crushing defeat the following month. The Marines, moreover, did a great deal to restore the national pride of countrymen who had been hurt and bewildered by the outcome of the first month's operations.

It was humiliating to read on the front page that only 5 years after reaching our greatest military strength of history, United States troops were being pushed around by Asiatic peasants of a Soviet-trained organization calling itself the North Korean People's Army. Perhaps these Americans did not remember that the decline in our Armed Forces was due to overwhelming popular demands for the disbanding of our victorious armies of 1945. At any rate, the United States paid the penalty of unpreparedness in 1950 when its first ground-force units were beaten by better trained and equipped NKPA troops. Worse yet, correspondents at the front intimated that these defeats were due to the softness of our youth. It was charged that United States troops had been so pampered by motor transport that they could no longer march, let alone fight.

The Marines helped to change all that. The Marines and the better Army units proved that they were more than a match for the enemy when it came to marching as well as fighting. The Marines did their best to restore the pride of Americans who read about the advance to Kosong or the fight on Obong-ni Ridge. The Marines, in short, deserved the pat on the back conveyed in a dispatch to the Brigade on 23 August 1950 from their Commandant, General Clifton B. Cates:

"I AM VERY PROUD OF THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR AIR-GROUND TEAM. KEEP ON HITTING THEM, FRONT, FLANKS, REAR, AND TOPSIDE! WELL DONE!"

The Pusan Perimeter

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Appendix A. Glossary of Military and Aeronautical Terms

AKA—Attack cargo ship

APA—Attack transport ship

ADC—Assistant Division Commander

BAR—Browning automatic rifle

BLT—Battalion landing team

CCF—Chinese Communist Forces (refers to entire Chinese force employed in Korea)

CG—Commanding general

CINCFE—Commander in Chief, Far East

CincPacFlt—Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet

CINCUNC—Commander in Chief, United Nations Command

CNO—Chief of Naval Operations

CO—Commanding officer

COMNAGFE—Commander Naval Air Group Far East

COMNAVFE—Commander Navy Far East

COMPHIBGRUONE—Commander Amphibious Group One

COMSEVENTHFLT—Commander Seventh Fleet

COS—Combined Operations Section

CP—Command Post

CSG—Combat Service Group

CTF—Commander Task Force

CVG—Carrier Air Group

DOW—Died of wounds

EUSAK—Eighth United States Army in Korea

FAC—Forward Air Controller

FEAF—Far East Air Force

FECOM—Far East Command

FL—Flight leader

FMF—Fleet Marine Force (Pac = Pacific; Lant = Atlantic)

GHQFEC—General Headquarters, Far East Command

HF—High frequency (radio)

InfDiv—Infantry Division

JCS—Joint Chiefs of Staff

JOC—Joint Operations Center

KIA—Killed in action

KMC—Korean Marine Corps

KVA—Korean Volunteer Army

LST—Landing ship, tank

MAG—Marine Aircraft Group

MCBS—Marine Corps Board Study

MGCIS—Marine Ground Control Intercept Squadron

MIA—Missing in action

MSR—Main supply route

MTACS—Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron

NCO—Noncommissioned officer

NK—North Korea (n)

NKPA—North Korean Peoples Army

OP—Observation post

OY—Light observation plane

POL—Petroleum oil lubricants

POW—Prisoner of war

ProvCasCo—Provisional Casual Company

RCT—Regimental Combat Team

ROK—Republic of Korea

SAC—Supporting Arms Center

SAR—Special Action Report

SecNav—Secretary of the Navy

TAC—Tactical Air Coordinator

TAC X Corps—Tactical Air Command, X Corps

TACC—Tactical Air Control Center

TACP—Tactical Air Control Party

TACRON—Tactical Air Control Squadron

TAD—Tactical Air Direction

TADC—Tactical Air Direction Center

TAO—Tactical Air Observer

TAR—Tactical air request

T/E—Table of equipment

T/O—Table of organization

UN—United Nations

VHF—Very high frequency (radio)

VMF—Marine fighter type aircraft (squadron)

VMF (N)—Marine night fighter type aircraft, all-weather (squadron)

VMO—Marine observation type aircraft (squadron)

VMR—Marine transport type aircraft (squadron)

WIA—Wounded in action

The Pusan Perimeter

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Appendix B. Command and Staff List of the First Provisional Marine Brigade

7 July—13 September 1950

Commanding General: BrigGen Edward A. Craig

Deputy Commander: BrigGen Thomas J. Cushman

Chief of Staff: Col Edward W. Snedeker

G–1: Maj Donald W. Sherman

G–2: LtCol Ellsworth G. Van Orman

G–3: LtCol Joseph L. Stewart

G–4: LtCol Arthur A. Chidester

Special Staff Section

Adjutant: Capt Harold G. Schrier

Supply Officer: Maj James K. Eagan

Air Officer: Maj James N. Cupp

Signal Officer: Maj Elwin M. Stimpson

Air Observer: Capt Edwin L. Rives

Signal Supply Officer: 1stLt Joseph E. Conners

Engineer Supply Officer: Capt William R. Gould

Liaison Officer: LtCol Edward R. Hagenah

Brigade Surgeon: Capt Eugene R. Hering, Jr., USN

Brigade Dental Officer: LtComdr Jack J. Kelly, USN

Headquarters and Service Battalion

(32 officers—183 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: Maj Richard E. Sullivan

Executive Officer: Capt Samuel Jaskilka (to 18 Aug 50)

CoComdr, Hq Co: 1stLt Nathaniel F. Mann, Jr.

Detachment, 1st Signal Battalion

(4 officers—99 enlisted men)

DetComdr: Capt Earl F. Stanley

Company A, 1st Motor Transport Battalion

(6 officers—112 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: Capt Arthur W Ecklund

Company C, 1st Medical Battalion

(5 officers—94 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: Comdr Robert A. Freyling, USN

Company A, 1st Shore Party Battalion

(12 officers—213 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: Maj William L. Batchelor

Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion

(9 officers—209 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: Capt George W. King

Detachment, 1st Ordnance Battalion

(5 officers—119 enlisted men)

DetComdr: 1stLt Meyer La Bellman

Company A, 1st Tank Battalion

(9 officers—173 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: Capt Gearl M. English

PlatComdr, 1st Plat: 1stLt William D. Pomeroy

PlatComdr, 2d Plat: 2dLt Robert M. Winter (to 3 Sep 50, WIA); 2dLt John S. Carson (3 Sep 50, KIA)

PlatComdr, 3d Plat: 2dLt Granville G. Sweet

1st Battalion, 11th Marines

(44 officers—474 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: LtCol Ransom M. Wood

Executive Officer: Maj Francis R. Schlesinger

Headquarters Battery:

Commanding Officer: Capt James W. Brayshay

Service Battery:

Commanding Officer: 1stLt Kenneth H. Quelch

Battery A:

Commanding Officer: Capt James D. Jordan

Battery B:

Commanding Officer: Capt Arnold C. Hofstetter

Battery C:

Commanding Officer: Capt William J. Nichols, Jr.

Detachment, 1st Service Battalion

(11 officers—161 enlisted men)

DetComdr: Capt Thomas M. Sagar

Detachment, 1st Combat Service Group

(5 officers—104 enlisted men)

DetComdr: Maj Thomas J. O'Mahoney

Detachment, Reconnaissance Company

(2 officers—37 enlisted men)

DetComdr: Capt Kenneth J. Houghton

Detachment, Military Police Company

(2 officers—36 enlisted men)

DetComdr: 1sLt Nye G. Rodes

1st Amphibian Tractor Company

(10 officers—244 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: Maj James P. Treadwell

1st Amphibian Truck Platoon

(1 officer—75 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: 1stLt James E. Condra

VMO—6

Commanding Officer: Maj Vincent J. Gottschalk

5th Marines

(132 officers—2452 enlisted men)

Commanding Officer: LtCol Raymond L. Murray

Executive Officer: LtCol Lawrence C. Hays, Jr.

S–1: 1stLt Alton C. Weed

S–2: Maj William C. Esterline

S–3: LtCol George F. Waters, Jr. (to 29 Aug 50); Maj Charles H. Brush, Jr.

S–4: Maj Harold Wallace

Special Staff, 5th Marines:

Chaplain: LtComdr Orlando Ingvolstad, Jr., USN

Medical Officer: Lt (jg) William E. Larsen, USN (to 11 Aug 50); LtComdr Byron D. Casteel

Supply Officer: Capt John V. Huff

Motor Transport Officer: Capt William F. A. Trax (to 15 Aug 50); 1stLt James O. Alison

Ordnance Officer: CWO Bill E. Parrish

Disbursing Officer: Capt Kenneth L. Shaw

Communications Officer: Maj Kenneth B. Boyd

Naval Gunfire Officer: Lt Jerry C. Ragon, USN

Air Officer: 1stLt Leo R. Jillisky

1st Battalion, 5th Marines:

Commanding Officer: LtCol George R. Newton

Executive Officer: Maj Merlin R. Olson

CO, H & S Company: Capt Walter E. Godenius

CO, Company A: Capt John R. Stevens

CO, Company B: Capt John L. Tobin (to 17 Aug 50, WIA); Capt Francis I. Fenton, Jr.

CO, Weapons Company: Maj John W. Russell

2d Battalion, 5th Marines:

Commanding Officer: LtCol Harold S. Roise

Executive Officer: LtCol John W. Stevens, II

CO, H & S Company: 1stLt David W. Walsh

CO, Company D: Capt John Finn, Jr. (to 8 Aug 50, WIA); Capt Andrew M. Zimmer (to 17 Aug 50, WIA); 1stLt Robert T. Hanifin, Jr. (to 22 Aug 50); 1stLt H. J. Smith

CO, Company E: Capt George E. Kittredge (to 7 Aug 50, WIA); 1stLt William E. Sweeney (to 18 Aug 50); Capt Samuel Jaskilka

CO, Weapons Company: Maj Walter Gall (to 10 Aug 50); Maj Theodore F. Spiker

3d Battalion, 5th Marines:

Commanding Officer: LtCol Robert D. Taplett

Executive Officer: Maj John J. Canney

CO, H & S Company: 1stLt Arthur E. House, Jr. (to 22 Aug 50); 1stLt Harold D. Fredericks

CO, Company G: 1stLt Robert D. Bohn

CO, Company H: Capt Joseph C. Fegan, Jr. (to 18 Aug 50, WIA); Capt Patrick E. Wildman

CO, Weapons Company: Capt Patrick E. Wildman (to 19 Aug 50); Maj Murray Ehrlich

Forward Echelon, 1st Marine Air Wing

Commanding General: BrigGen Thomas J. Cushman

Chief of Staff: Col Kenneth H. Weir

Marine Air Group 33:

Commanding Officer: Col Allen C. Koonce (to 20 Aug 50); Col Frank G. Dailey

Deputy Commander: LtCol Norman J. Anderson

Executive Officer: LtCol Radford C. West

CO, VMF–214: LtCol Walter E. Lischeid

CO, VMF–323: Maj Arnold A. Lund

CO, VMF(N)–513: Maj Joseph H. Reinburg

CO, Hq Squadron: Capt Norman D. Glenn

CO, Service Squadron: LtCol James C. Lindsay

CO, MTACS–2: Maj Christian C. Lee

The Pusan Perimeter

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Appendix C. Citations and Commendations

September 29, 1950

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

The President of the Republic of Korea takes profound pleasure in citing for outstanding and heroic performance of duty on the field of battle during the period 2 August 1950–6 September 1950.

THE FIRST UNITED STATES PROVISIONAL MARINE BRIGADE for the Award of THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

The First United States Provisional Marine Brigade was a vital element in the first major counterattack against the enemy.

In late July and early August 1950, the enemy had swept through the Chulla Provinces and had rapidly approached along the south Korean coast to a point only 35 miles from the vital port of Pusan. Together with the 25th Infantry Division, the First United States Provisional Marine Brigade, from 7 August to 12 August 1950, played a major role in attacking and driving back the enemy.

During the period 17 August to 20 August 1950 in conjunction with the 24th Infantry Division and units of the 2d Infantry Division, the First United States Provisional Marine Brigade attacked a great pocket of enemy forces who had successfully crossed the Naktong River and established a firm beachhead on the eastern bank. The Brigade attacked with such determination and skill as to earn the admiration of all who saw or knew of its battle conduct.

Later, on the night of 31 August–1 September, the enemy again launched an all-out offensive against the United Nations Forces. The First United States Provisional Marine Brigade was in Army reserve at that time. With the 2d Infantry Division, the Brigade again was committed in almost the same area of its earlier action against the Naktong pocket in the neighborhood of Yongsan. Again the gallant Marine forces were instrumental in preventing the enemy from capturing their objective and cutting the north-south lines of communication of the United Nations Forces.

The brilliant performance of duty in combat in Korea of each individual of the First United States Provisional Marine Brigade is in accord with the highest traditions of the military service.

This citation carries with it the right to wear the Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon by each individual of the First United States Provisional Marine Brigade which served in Korea in the stated period.

(Signed) SYNGMAN RHEE

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the FIRST PROVISIONAL MARINE BRIGADE, REINFORCED for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 7 August to 7 September 1950. Functioning as a mobile, self-contained, air-ground team, the First Provisional Marine Brigade, Reinforced, rendered invaluable service during the fierce struggle to maintain the foothold established by friendly forces in the Pusan area during the early stages of the Korean conflict. Quickly moving into action as numerically superior enemy forces neared the Naktong River on the central front and penetrated to within 35 miles of Pusan in the southern sector, threatening the integrity of the entire defensive perimeter, this hard-hitting, indomitable team counterattacked serious enemy penetrations at three different points in rapid succession. Undeterred by roadblocks, heavy hostile automatic weapons and highly effective artillery fire, extremely difficult terrain and intense heat, the Brigade met the invaders with relentless determination and, on each crucial occasion, hurled them back in disorderly retreat. By combining sheer resolution and esprit de corps with sound infantry tactics and splendid close air support, the Brigade was largely instrumental in restoring the line of defense, in inflicting thousands of casualties upon the enemy and in seizing large amounts of ammunition, equipment and other supplies. The brilliant record achieved by the unit during the critical early days of the Korean conflict attests to the individual valor and competence of the officers and men and reflects the highest credit upon the First Provisional Marine Brigade, Reinforced, and the United States Naval Service."

All of the First Provisional Marine Brigade except the First Amphibian Tractor Company participated in operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 7 August to 7 September 1950.

The following reinforcing units of the First Provisional Marine Brigade participated in operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 7 August to 7 September 1950:

Forward Echelon, First Marine Aircraft Wing (less ground personnel)

Marine Air Group Thirty-Three, Reinforced (less ground personnel)

Marine Observation Squadron Six plus Helicopter Section, Headquarters Squadron

Air Support Section of Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron Two

United States Army: Counter Intelligence Corps and Military Intelligence Special Detachment personnel attached to the Headquarters Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion, First Provisional Marine Brigade.

For the President,
(Signed) R. A. ANDERSON
Secretary of the Navy

HEADQUARTERS
EIGHTH UNITED STATES ARMY KOREA (EUSAK)
Office of the Commanding General
APO 301
22 August 1950
Subject: Commendation

Thru: Commanding General, 24th Infantry Division
To: Commanding General, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade

1. It gives me great pleasure to commend you, your officers and men, for the part your organization played in the successful attack which began 17 August 50 against a determined enemy occupying a bridgehead east of the NAKTONG RIVER in the vicinity of KUJIN-SAN and ended only when the bridgehead had been eliminated with great loss of men and equipment to the enemy.

2. Through excellence in leadership and grit and determination in all ranks, your organization helped materially in preventing the enemy from penetrating our lines at a critical time. In so doing it has upheld the fine tradition of the Marines in a glorious manner and by close cooperation has proved unification of the services a success.

3. Please accept my sincere thanks and congratulations. I ask that you convey to your splendid command, the traditional "Well Done."

WALTON H. WALKER
Lieutenant General, United States Army
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
24TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 24, 28 August 1950
To: Commanding General, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, APO 25

1. I am pleased and privileged to add my personal commendation to that of the Army Commander. And, on behalf of all officers and enlisted personnel of my command, I desire to express our sincere appreciation for the decisive and valiant offensive actions conducted by your command which predominately contributed to the total destruction of the Naktong pocket.

2. The esprit, aggressiveness and sheer determination continuously displayed by all personnel of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in the face of fierce enemy resistance and counteraction has aroused the highest admiration of every member of my command.

JOHN E. CHURCH
Maj Gen, USA
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
1ST PROVISIONAL MARINE BRIGADE, FMF (REINFORCED)
c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Calif.
9 Sep 1950
From: The Commanding General

To: All officers and men of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, FMF (Reinforced)

Subj: Letter of commendation from the Commanding General, Eighth United States Army in Korea, of 22 August 1950 with first endorsement by the Commanding General, 24th Infantry Division

Encl: (1) Copy of subj ltr and endorsement

1. It is with extreme pride in your accomplishments that I publish to all officers and men of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade the enclosed copy of a letter from the Commanding General, Eighth United States Army in Korea, and endorsement by the Commanding General, 24th Infantry Division, United States Army, commending the Brigade.

2. The realization that your professional skill, esprit de corps, outstanding bravery, and determination to succeed in all missions has been specifically commended by the Army and Division Commanders under whom the Brigade was serving at the time is indeed a source of gratification to me as it will also be to you.

(Signed) E. A. Craig

E. A. CRAIG

The Pusan Perimeter
Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

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Annex King, Co A, 1st MT Bn
Annex Love, Co C, 1st Med Bn
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The Inchon-Seoul Operation

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Foreword

THE INCHON LANDING was a major amphibious operation, planned in record time and executed with skill and precision. Even more, it was an exemplification of the fruits of a bold strategy executed by a competent force. The decision to attack at Inchon involved weakening the line against enemy strength in the Pusan Perimeter in order to strike him in the rear. It involved the conduct of an amphibious attack under most difficult conditions of weather and geography.

The stakes were high and the risk was fully justified. Had it not been for the intervention of the Chinese Communist Army, the offensive generated by the Inchon attack would have resulted in a complete victory for our arms in Korea. A study of the record of this operation will disclose, with arresting clarity, the decisive power that is to be found in highly trained amphibious forces when their strength is applied at the critical place and time.

--Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps

The Inchon-Seoul Operation

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Preface

THIS IS THE second volume of a series dealing with United States Marine Operations in Korea during the period 2 August 1950 to 27 July 1953. Volume II presents in detail the operations of the 1st Marine Division and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing as a part of X Corps, USA, during and immediately following the Inchon Landing on 15 September 1950.

In order to tell a complete story of this historic amphibious operation, the authors have described the mobilization of the Marine Corps reserves to form the components of the Division and Aircraft Wing; the movement to the staging area and the hurried planning for an amphibious landing; the withdrawal of the 1st Provisional Brigade and Marine Air Group 33 from the embattled Pusan Perimeter to amalgamate with the larger force for D-day at Inchon; the seizure of Seoul and its environs, and finally the withdrawal on 7 October to prepare for the Wonsan operation.

Again, this is primarily a Marine Corps story. Activities of other services are presented in sufficient detail only to set this operation in its proper perspective.

Grateful acknowledgment is made for the valuable information furnished by the scores of officers and men consulted by interview or letter and for the assistance provided by the Current History Branch of the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army.

Maps included herein were prepared by the Reproduction Section, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia.

--Maj. Gen. T.A. Wornham, USMC, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3

The Inchon-Seoul Operation

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Chapter 1. The Communist Challenge

NO SPOT ON earth could have seemed farther removed from war's alarms than Yellowstone Park on the tranquil Sunday afternoon of 25 June 1950. Yet it was here that Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commanding General of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (FMFPac), had his first news of Communist armed aggression in Korea and the resulting threat to world peace.

Appointed to his new command only nine days before, he was motoring from the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico to the West Coast. From Yellowstone Park he advised Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, of his readiness to proceed to Hawaii and the Far East. His offer was accepted, and a Marine plane from El Toro transported him from Salt Lake City to San Francisco. There he boarded the first available plane to Pearl Harbor, arriving in the early morning hours of 2 July.[1]

On this date, with the Korean conflict only a week old, the armed forces of the United States were already committed. From the outset the United Nations had viewed the Red Korean invasion of the Republic of Korea as a challenge issued to free nations by World Communism. The so-called North Korean People's Republic had been set up after World War II as a Communist puppet state, and the army of invasion was both trained and armed by Soviet Russia.

More than half of the troops in the original North Korean People's Army (NKPA) were veterans of the victorious Chinese Communist forces in the Chinese Civil War. Weapons and equipment, all the way from T–34 tanks to Tokarev pistols, had been made available by the Soviet Union; and Soviet instructors prepared the invading army for its surprise attack of 25 June on the Republic of Korea.[2]

There could have been little doubt as to the outcome. Although the ROK army included eight divisions and a regiment, estimated at some 98,000 men in all, it could not compare with the NKPA establishment of about equal numbers. The difference lay in the purposes for which the two forces had been organized during the joint Soviet-American occupation of Korea after World War II. While Red Army officers created the NKPA as an instrument of aggression, American instructors trained the ROK troops for frontier defense and internal security. They had neither tanks nor combat aircraft, and their heaviest artillery consisted of a few battalions of 105mm howitzers. It was scarcely more than a lightly armed constabulary which crumpled at the first shock of NKPA columns led by Soviet-made tanks and supported by Soviet-made bombing planes. The four ROK divisions deployed along the frontier were routed, and Seoul fell to the invaders on the third day.

The reaction of the United Nations was prompt and decisive. On 27 June the UN Security Council denounced the NKPA attack as a breach of world peace and called upon member nations to aid the Republic of Korea. The United States and 52 other nations approved this resolution, which was opposed only by the Soviet Union and two of its satellites.[3]

As the NKPA tanks entered Seoul, just evacuated by American nationals, President Truman ordered American air and sea forces in the Far East to support the shattered ROK army. With the U.S. Seventh Fleet protecting Formosa, Task Force 77 bombed and bombarded points on the Korean coast. Far East Air Forces (FEAF), consisting of eight and a half combat groups commanded by Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer, USAF, flew interdictory strikes meanwhile from bases in Japan against NKPA supply lines.

Within a few days the NKPA air force, consisting of about 100 Yak-type planes, was driven from the skies except for occasional night raids. It would appear that a mountainous peninsula of few good roads would be a favorable area for strategic bombing, since our naval forces were denying the sea lanes to the enemy. Yet the FEAF bombers could not prevent the aggressors from bringing up supplies at night by means of truck, animal,

and human transport. The columns of invasion were doubtless hampered, but they continued to roll on southward in spite of interdictory strikes.

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief, Far East (CinCFE), concluded on 29 June, during his first flying visit to the front, “that air and naval action alone could not be decisive, and that nothing short of the intervention of U.S. ground forces could give any assurance of stopping the Communists and of later regaining the lost ground.”[4] Unfortunately, he had only the four understrength divisions of the Eighth U.S. Army at his disposal in the Far East. During the two World Wars the United States had been able to raise and train armies while allies held the line. But no such respite was forthcoming in Korea, and the first U.S. ground forces at the front consisted of a small task force flown from Japan—an incomplete battalion reinforced by a battery of artillery.

The date was 2 July 1950. And on this same Sunday, CinCFE sent a request to Washington for the immediate dispatch of a Marine regimental combat team (RCT) with appropriate air to the Far East.

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Authorization of Marine Brigade

It is not quite a coincidence that 2 July happened also to be the date of General Shepherd's arrival at Pearl Harbor. Previous decisions in Washington had made it virtually certain that General MacArthur's request would be granted, and CG FMFPac was on his way to the Far East to prepare for the reception of the Marine reinforcements.

The first step had been taken on 28 June. General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, conferred at the Pentagon with Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations. He urged that troops of the Fleet Marine Force be employed, and CNO promptly informed Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, Commander of Naval Forces, Far East (ComNavFE), that a Marine RCT could be made available if General MacArthur desired it.[5]

CinCFE had hoped that an entire Marine division could be sent to the Far East. But after being briefed by Admiral Joy as to the limitations of Marine Corps numbers, he had to content himself with the request for an RCT.

Admiral Sherman acted at once. With the approval of JCS and the President, he ordered Admiral Radford to transport the Marine units across the Pacific. This was the inception of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (Reinf.), which was activated on 7 July with three squadrons of Marine Aircraft Group 33 as its air component.[6]

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Chapter 1. The Communist Challenge
First Conference on Inchon Landing

While General Shepherd stopped for a few days at Pearl Harbor, the possibility of an Inchon amphibious operation was mentioned officially for the first time at a conference in Tokyo attended by two Marine officers.

On 4 July a party given by the American colony was interrupted by a message for Brigadier General William S. Fellers, commanding general of Troop Training Unit, Amphibious Training Command, Pacific Fleet, and Colonel Edward S. Forney, commanding Mobile Training Team Able of that organization. As specialists in amphibious techniques, they were summoned along with Army and Air Force officers to a meeting at Headquarters, FECOM, presided over by General MacArthur's chief of staff, Major General Edward M. Almond, USA.[7]

The Marine officers were in Japan as a result of General MacArthur's belief in the efficacy of amphibious tactics. Early in 1950, several months before the outbreak of the Korean conflict, he had foreseen the necessity of recovering lost ground by means of a ship-to-shore assault if an enemy ever won a foothold in the Japanese Islands. His request for amphibious instructors to train U.S. Army troops in Japan had found the Navy and Marine Corps ready with units set up for just such a purpose.[8]

The oldest was the TTU organization of the Phib Tra Pac established originally on 15 August 1943 to prepare Army as well as Navy and Marine forces for amphibious operations. After making a distinguished record in World War II, TTU created a permanent place for itself during the following five years.[9]

A group of TTU officers and enlisted men under the command of Colonel Forney made up Mobile Training Team Able in the spring of 1950. Sailing from San Diego in April, these Marines were accompanied by a second group of amphibious specialists, the ANGLICO (Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company) instruction team commanded by Lieutenant Edward B. Williams, USN.[10]

The ANGLICOs, composed of both Navy and Marine Corps personnel, evolved in 1949 to assist Army units lacking the forward air control and naval gunfire control units which are integral in Marine divisions. Growing out of the responsibility of the Marine Corps for the development of those phases of landing force operations pertaining to tactics, techniques, and equipment employed by landing forces, the first company was formed in answer to the request of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, USA, for a unit capable of giving an Army division this sort of amphibious fire support. After taking part in the MIKI exercises with the Sixth Army in Hawaii during the autumn of 1949, this ANGLICO split up into instruction teams assigned to various Army units.[11]

Training Team Able and Lieutenant Williams' ANGLICO team reached Japan just in time to cooperate with a third organization of amphibious specialists, Rear Admiral James H. Doyle's Amphibious Group (PhibGru) One of the Pacific Fleet. The three teams were given a mission of training one regiment from each of the four Eighth Army divisions in Japan. But the instruction program had only been launched when it was interrupted by the Korean conflict.

PhibGru One and the ANGLICO team were immediately assigned to new duties in connection with the sea lift of Eighth Army troops to Korea. They had just begun this task when orders came for Admiral Doyle and his staff, in the USS *Mount McKinley* at Sasebo, to proceed by air on 4 July to the conference at Tokyo.[12] There at FECOM Headquarters, they met General Fellers, Colonel Forney, and the Army officers who had been summoned from the Independence Day celebration of the American colony.

At the conference it was made plain that the concept of an Inchon landing had originated with General

MacArthur. Even at this early date, he envisioned not only a ship-to-shore assault on some east or west coast seaport, preferably Inchon, but also a drive inland to cut enemy communications and envelop Seoul. The Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG) headed by Brigadier General Edwin K. Wright, U.S.A. (FECOM G–3) was then drawing up the outline of such an amphibious attack plan. Code-named Operation BLUE-HEARTS, it called for a landing in the Inchon area by a Marine RCT and an Army assault force in coordination with a frontal attack from the south by the 24th and 25th Divisions. Inchon had been designated the objective area for the amphibious assault, and the date would depend upon the availability of troops for the combined operation. [13]

It would be an understatement to say that the naval and Marine officers were impressed by the boldness of MacArthur's thinking. At a time when he could send only a battalion-size force to the aid of the shattered ROK army, his mind had soared over obstacles and deficiencies to the concept of an amphibious operation designed to end the war at a stroke.

It was an idea that fired the imagination. But the amphibious specialists of TTU and PhibGru One had been trained to view the risks with a realistic appraisal. Their admiration was tempered by caution, therefore, when they took into account the difficulties.[14]

The end of World War II had found the United States at a peak of military strength never before attained in the Nation's history. Then, within a year, the popular clamor for the immediate discharge of citizen-soldiers had left the Army with scarcely enough troops for the occupation of strategic areas in the Far East. It took vigorous recruiting to fill the ranks in time of peace, and on 25 June 1950 the U.S. Eighth Army in Japan included the 7th, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry (dismounted) Division. Infantry regiments were limited to two battalions.

In the lack of trained amphibious assault troops, a definite decision could not be reached at the conference of 4 July. But it was proposed by FECOM officers that Major General Hobart H. Gay's 1st Cavalry Division be employed as the Army assault force of the proposed Inchon operation. PhibGru One and Training Team Able were to give the troops all possible amphibious training, and Colonel Forney was assigned on 5 July as the G–5 (Plans) of the division.[15]

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General Shepherd in Tokyo

The activation of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade on 7 July freed General Shepherd to continue his trip to the Far East. That evening, accompanied by his G–3, Colonel Victor H. Krulak, he took off from the Pearl Harbor area on the flight to Tokyo.

Upon his arrival, CG FMFPac was acquainted by General Almond with the deteriorating military situation. As a first step toward sending U.S. ground forces to Korea, CinCFE had set up the GHQ Advanced Command Group under the command of Brigadier General John H. Church, USA. After beginning the reorganization of the ROK forces, it was absorbed on 3 July by Headquarters, U.S. Armed Forces in Korea. And with the establishment next day of the Pusan Logistical Command (Brigadier General Crump Garvin, USA), a start was made toward handling the mountains of supplies which would be required.[16]

On 4 July the initial contact of U.S. ground forces with the enemy took place near Osan. The little task force from Major General William F. Dean's 24th Infantry Division could not attempt anything more ambitious than delaying actions. But preparations were afoot to send the rest of the division to Korea as soon as possible, to be followed by Major General William B. Kean's 25th Infantry Division.

The first fire fights occurred on 5 and 6 July in the vicinity of Osan. It was evident at once that the enemy held a great superiority in arms and equipment. Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, USA, who had been one of Patton's favorite subordinates, commented after his first visit to the Korean front that the NKPA units appeared equal to the Germans who were his adversaries in World War II.[17]

Accounts of the early actions in Korea were depressing to FECOM officers.[18] Many plausible excuses may be found for men snatched from occupation duties and rushed piecemeal into action against great material odds. The nation as a whole must share the blame when willing troops are sent to the firing line without adequate preparation, as were the first U.S. units. Eighth Army officers had done their best under the circumstances, but a scarcity of maneuver areas in Japan had restricted training exercises to the battalion and company levels. Divisions with barely 70 percent of their full complement of troops were armed with worn World War II weapons, some of which proved unserviceable for lack of spare parts and maintenance personnel. Division tank units, equipped with light M–24 tanks because of poor roads and bridges in Japan, operated at a handicap against the enemy's new Soviet T–34 tanks; and American 2.36-inch rocket launchers knocked out NKPA armor only at fairly close ranges.[19]

At this stage the ground forces were particularly dependent upon air support because of shortages of artillery. But since the mission of the Air Force in Japan had been primarily of a defensive nature, neither the organization nor equipment was available for effective air-ground cooperation on the tactical level. As a consequence, FEAF units had to confine their tactical efforts largely to targets of opportunity, and 24th Infantry units had to do without such support when it was most needed.[20]

Altogether, the so-called "police action" in Korea proved to be one of the toughest assignments ever given to American soldiers.

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Chapter 1. The Communist Challenge
Request for a Marine Division

General Shepherd's few days in Tokyo were filled with conferences, and history was made on 10 July during the course of a conversation with General MacArthur at FECOM Headquarters.

The commander in chief was not optimistic about the situation at the front. Not only had the NKPA invasion developed into a formidable threat at the end of the first two weeks, but the possibility of Red Chinese or Soviet armed intervention could not be dismissed.

President Truman had named General MacArthur as supreme commander of UN forces after the Security Council passed a resolution on 7 July calling for a unified effort in Korea. General Walker was soon to be appointed to the command of the Eighth Army in Korea (EUSAK), assuming control of all ROK ground forces.

The personnel situation had grown critical. After being completely routed, the ROK troops were now in process of reorganization into five divisions. Meanwhile, the U.S. 25th Infantry Division was being sent to Korea as rapidly as possible; and it had been decided to withdraw the 1st Cavalry Division from consideration as the landing force of the proposed Inchon operation. Not only were these troops lacking in amphibious training, but they were needed as infantry reinforcements. Thus it was planned for the combat-loaded 1st Cavalry Division to make a landing at the East Coast port of Pohang-dong, under the direction of ComPhibGru One and Mobile Training Team Able, before proceeding to the front. This would leave only the 7th Infantry Division in Japan, and it was being stripped of troops to fill out units of the other three.

The outweighed UN forces were still limited to delaying actions. But General MacArthur hoped that space could be traded for time until the arrival of stateside units enabled him to take the offensive. At his urgent request, the 2d Infantry Division and 2d Engineer Special Brigade had been alerted in the United States for immediate movement to the Far East. Port dates commencing on 20 July had been assigned, and General Wright expressed his opinion that these units might be employed along with the recently activated 1st Provisional Marine Brigade to initiate the first UN counterstroke.[21]

The only hope of an early UN decision, General MacArthur told CG FMFPac at their conference of 10 July, lay in the launching of an amphibious assault to cut supply lines in the enemy's rear. This situation, he added, reminded him of the critical days of World War II in the Pacific, when troops trained in amphibious techniques were urgently needed to make ship-to-shore landings on Japanese-held islands.

In a reminiscent mood, MacArthur recalled the competence shown by the 1st Marine Division while under his control during the New Britain operation of 1943–1944. If only he had this unit in Japan, he said, he would employ it at his first opportunity as his landing force for the Inchon assault.

Shepherd, who had been assistant division commander of the 1st Marine Division during the New Britain landings, immediately suggested that the UN supreme commander make a request that the 1st Marine Division with appropriate Marine air be assigned to him. This possibility had apparently been put aside by MacArthur after being limited to an RCT in his request of 2 July. He asked eagerly if the Marine general believed that the division could be made available for an Inchon landing as early as 15 September. And Shepherd replied that since the unit was under his command, he would take the responsibility for stating that it could be sent to Korea by that date, minus the infantry regiment and other troops of the Brigade.[22]

Thus was history made without pomp or ceremony during the conference at FECOM Headquarters.

The date was 10 July, but it was already D-minus 67 for thousands of American young men. On farms and in offices, in cities and villages from coast to coast, these civilians had no inkling that just 67 days later they

would be fighting their way ashore in a major amphibious operation. For they were Marine reservists, and the 1st Marine Division could not be brought up to full strength without calling them back into uniform.

Shepherd realized, even while assuring MacArthur that the division could be made combat-ready by 15 September, that the activation of the Brigade had left the division with less than the strength of a single RCT. Nearly as many men would be required to bring it up to full strength as were contained at present in the entire Fleet Marine Force.[23] But so great was his confidence in the Marine Corps Reserve that he did not hesitate to take the responsibility.

Nor did MacArthur lose any time at making up his mind. That very day, 10 July, he sent his first request to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for a Marine division.

As the conference ended, Shepherd found the UN supreme commander “enthusiastic” about the prospect of employing again the Marine outfit that had been his reliance seven years before in the New Britain operation. He planned to stabilize the front in Korea as soon as possible, he said, as a prelude to the landing in the NKPA rear which he believed would be decisive.[24]

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Chapter 1. The Communist Challenge
America's Force-in-Readiness

Long before the New Britain landing, Cates and Shepherd had learned from first-hand experience as junior officers how decisive a force-in-readiness can be. The lieutenant from Tennessee and the lieutenant from Virginia took part in June 1918 with the Marines who stopped the Germans by counterattacking at Belleau Wood. In terms of human tonnage, two Marine regiments did not cut much of a figure in the American Expeditionary Force. What counted was the *readiness* of the Marines and a few outfits of U.S. Army regulars at a time when most of the American divisions had not yet finished training.

More than three decades later, as CMC and CG FMFPac, both Marine generals were firm advocates of the force-in-readiness concept as a basic mission of the Marine Corps. It was a mission that had evolved from practice rather than theory. During the half century since the Spanish-American War, there had been only two years when U.S. Marines were not on combat duty somewhere. It had long been a tradition that the Marines, as transitory naval forces, might land on foreign soil without the implication of hostilities usually associated with invasion. This principle was invoked, along with a liberal interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, by the State Department from 1906 to 1932 in the Caribbean and Central America. As a means of supervising unstable governments in sensitive strategic areas, Marines were sent to Cuba, Mexico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and China for long periods of occupation.[25]

U.S. Marines were not only web-footed infantry during these overseas operations; they also distinguished themselves as scouts, cannoneers, constabulary, engineers, and horse marines. As modern warfare grew more complex, however, the time came when the Leather-necks could no longer sail on a few hours' notice as a "gangplank expeditionary force" made up of men detailed from the nearest posts and stations. No longer could such light weapons as machine guns, mortars, and mountain howitzers serve as the only armament necessary for seizing a beachhead.

The Fleet Marine Force evolved in 1933, therefore, to fill the need for a corps of highly-trained amphibious specialists capable of carrying out a major ship-to-shore assault against modern defensive weapons. New landing craft as well as new landing tactics and techniques were developed during the next ten years, and the reputation of the Marine Corps as a force-in-readiness was upheld in the amphibious operations of World War II.

During these three eventful decades of Marine development, General Cates and General Shepherd had participated in all the stages while ascending the ladder of command. Thus in the summer of 1950, they were eminently qualified for leadership in the task of building the 1st Marine Division up to war strength for the amphibious operation which General MacArthur hoped to launch on 15 September.

As a prerequisite, the sanction of Congress and authorization of the President had to be obtained before the Marine Corps Reserve could be mobilized. General MacArthur's request of 10 July for a Marine division went to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who referred it to General Cates. The Commandant could only reply that it would be necessary to call out the Reserve, and no action was taken on this first request. It was enough that a beginning had been made, and CMC put his staff to work on the necessary studies and plans.

General Shepherd was meanwhile winding up his visit to Tokyo by conferring with Admirals Joy and Doyle and Generals Almond and Stratemeyer. The Air Force general tentatively confirmed (subject to discussion with his staff) the assignment of Itami Airfield in Japan to Marine air units. He also informed CG FMFPac that he accepted as valid the principle of employing Marine air in support of Marine ground forces.[26]

The air situation in Korea had struck General Shepherd as abounding in paradoxes. He noted that "B-29's

are employed against tactical targets to the dissatisfaction of all concerned—the Air Force because of misemployment of its planes, and the ground forces because of the results achieved. Carrier aircraft, despite the wealth of close support targets available, were committed against deep and semi-strategic targets. Jet fighters, with little enemy air to engage, have been assigned to close support work despite a fuel restriction which holds them to no more than 15 minutes in the combat zone. Only a very limited number of aircraft adaptable to tactical support missions are available (F–51 and B–26) and there appears to be urgent need for suitable close support aircraft along with competent air-ground liaison units."[27]

These conclusions had much to do with a Marine policy, dating back to World War II, of insisting whenever possible on Marine close air support for Marine ground forces. Without disparaging other techniques, Marines believed that their own fliers, trained in Marine infantry methods, could provide the most effective tactical air for Marine infantry.

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Chapter 1. The Communist Challenge
Planning for the Pohang Landing

While General Shepherd was flying back to Pearl Harbor, a succession of sleepless nights awaited the officers of PhibGru One, the ANGLICO group, and Training Team Able. Upon the shoulders of these amphibious specialists fell the task of drawing up the orders, planning the loading, and mounting out the troops of the 1st Cavalry Division for its landing of 18 July at Pohang-dong.

It was not even certain, when the division commenced loading at Yokohama on 14 July, that Pohang-dong could be held by the ROKs long enough for a landing to be effected. Three reinforced NKPA divisions were making the enemy's main thrust down the Seoul-Taejon axis. They were opposed only by weary 24th Infantry Division units fighting delaying actions while falling back on Taejon and the line of the river Kum. Along the east coast and the mountains of the central sector, five regrouped and reorganized ROK divisions held as best they could. Two of these units in the center were being relieved by the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, which completed its movement to Korea on the 14th.

As a preliminary step in the Pohang landing, a reconnaissance party of Army, Navy, and Marine officers flew from Tokyo on 11 July into the objective area. They returned two days later with valuable information about the beaches, depths of water, and unloading facilities.

"Because of the extraordinary speed with which the landing at Pohang-dong was conceived, planned, and executed," said the report of ComPhibGru One, "there was no opportunity for conventional and orderly planning. . . . Since all echelons of the planning force were installed in offices at GHQ in Tokyo, it was possible to employ the quickest and most informal ways of doing business. Telephone conversations and oral directives were used in place of dispatches, letters, and formal orders."[28]

Lack of amphibious shipping in the area made it a Herculean labor to provide boat servicing gear, general securing gear, debarkation nets, towing bridles, and boat and vehicle slings in less than a week. By 14 July, however, enough shipping to move the four embarkation groups of the division had been assembled at Yokohama—two MSTS transports, two AKAs, six LSUs, and 16 LSTs in addition to LCVPs and LCMs.

The transport group and screen got under way on the 15th for a rendezvous near the objective area on D-day with the tractor group. Naval aircraft of Rear Admiral John M. Hoskins' carrier group of the Seventh Fleet were on call to provide support; but at 0558 on the 18th, the armada was unopposed as it steamed into Yongil Bay. CTF 90 signaled orders for the carrying out of Plan Baker, calling for a landing against little or no enemy resistance. By midnight the *Mount McKinley*, *Union*, *Oglethorpe*, and *Titania* had been completely unloaded, and the LSTs had accounted for 60 percent of their cargoes. Altogether, 10,027 troops, 2,022 vehicles, and 2,729 tons of bulk cargo were put ashore on D-day.

The Second Echelon consisted of six LSTs, three APs, and four Japanese freighters, while six LSTs made up the Third Echelon. These ships discharged their cargo from 23 to 29 July, having been delayed by Typhoon GRACE. And on the 30th, ComPhibGru One, as CTF 90, reported that the operation had been completed and no naval units were now at the objective.[29]

Viewed superficially, the uncontested Pohang landing may have seemed a tame affair to stateside newspaper readers. Nevertheless, it was a timely demonstration of Navy and Marine Corps amphibious know-how and Army energy, and it came at a critical moment. The important communications center of Taejon had to be abandoned by 24th Infantry Division units on 20 July, and it was growing apparent that the Eighth Army would be hard-pressed to retain a foothold in Korea until reinforcements from the States could give the United

Nations a material equality. It was a time when every platoon counted, and the fresh regiments of General Gay's division were rushed to the Yongdong area two days after their landing to relieve weary and battered elements of the 24th Infantry Division.

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Chapter 2. The Minute Men of 1950

ON 18 JULY 1950, it was D-minus 59 for the Marine reservists who would hit the beaches at Inchon. These young civilians were doubtless more interested in major league baseball standings at the moment than in hydrographic conditions at the Korean seaport they would assault within two months. Yet the proposed amphibious operation moved a long step closer to reality on the 18th when Major General Oliver P. Smith left Washington under orders to assume command of the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California.

A graduate of the University of California in 1916, General Smith had been commissioned a Marine second lieutenant at the age of 24 in the first World War. After serving in Guam during that conflict, he saw duty at sea and in Haiti during the early 1920's, followed by studies at the Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, and duty as an instructor in the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico.

In Paris, while attached administratively to the office of the U.S. Naval Attache, he took the full two-year course at the École Superieure de Guerre, and afterwards he was an instructor for three more years at the Marine Corps Schools. He had an extensive experience of hard-fought amphibious operations during World War II as a regimental commander in the Talasea, New Britain, landing, as ADC of the 1st Marine Division at Peleliu, and as deputy chief of staff of the U.S. Tenth Army on Okinawa. Returning with the rank of brigadier, he became Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools; and after putting up a second star, the tall, slender, white-haired general served as Assistant Commandant at Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington.

At the outbreak of the Korean conflict, Major General Graves B. Erskine had commanded the 1st Marine Division. Following his assignment to a secret State Department mission in southeast Asia, General Smith was named as his relief.

The division had meanwhile been reduced to 3,386 officers and men as compared to a strength of 7,789 on 30 June 1950. It had been stripped of its principal operating elements to build up the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, which numbered about 5,000 officers and men when it sailed from San Diego to the Far East on 14 July under the command of Brigadier General Edward A. Craig. [1]

At El Toro, the near-by Marine Corps Air Station, it was the same story. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, with a total strength of 4,004 officers and men on 30 June, provided most of the 1,548 officers and men of Marine Aircraft Group 33, the air component of the Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman, who was also deputy Brigade commander.[2]

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Chapter 2. The Minute Men of 1950
Expansion to Full Peace Strength

General Smith had known before his arrival at Pendleton that his first task would be the building up of the 1st Marine Division to full peace strength. As early as 12 July, a dispatch from CNO had warned CinCPacFlt that this expansion would take place, including the elements of the Brigade.[3] And on 15 July General Shepherd directed Brigadier General Harry B. Liversedge, temporary CG 1st Marine Division, to extend the work day and work week while intensifying training and making preparations to expand.[4]

The 15th was also the date of General MacArthur's second request for a war-strength Marine division with its own air for employment in his proposed Inchon amphibious assault. General Shepherd advised CMC that same day as to the composition of cadres to facilitate the rapid expansion of the 1st Marine Division.[5]

Already it was becoming apparent that this build-up would allow little time for training. Fortunate it was, therefore, that the Division and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing had participated in an intensive training program during recent months. Following are the principal exercises:

Oct 1949: Air lift field exercise involving movement of a reinforced battalion and air command to San Nicholas Island, Calif. One Marine aircraft group carrier-embarked for participation in Operation MIKI with Sixth Army in Hawaii.

Nov 1949: Field exercise involving a reinforced regiment and supporting aircraft.

Dec 1949: Combined field exercise—a simulated amphibious assault extending over a period of seven days—involving all principal elements of the Division and Wing.

Jan 1950: Participation by elements of Division in Operation MICOWEX 50, stressing the use of the transport submarine and helicopter in amphibious operations.

Feb 1950: Field exercise involving a reinforced regiment with supporting air.

Mar 1950: Land plane and seaplane air-lift exercise involving seizure of San Nicholas Island by a reinforced battalion and a Marine air command.

May 1950: Participation by a majority of Division and Wing elements in DEMON III, an amphibious demonstration for students of Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth. Participation by Wing in two-week major advanced base field exercise, with intensive training in close support.

Jun 1950: Continuation of training in lesser air-ground problems, field exercises and command post exercises.[6]

Counterparts of nearly all of these exercises might have been found in the training program for the 2d Marine Division and 2d Marine Aircraft Wing on the North Carolina coast. Operation CAMID at Little Creek, Va., was similar to DEMON III. All principal FMFLant elements participated in Operation CROSSOVER at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in the spring of 1950, and a Marine aircraft group was embarked aboard a carrier in the Mediterranean. Other elements of the Wing took part in PORTREX, an Army-Navy amphibious exercise in the Caribbean, and in SWARMER, an Army-Air Force airborne exercise in North Carolina. Units of both the Division and the Wing were represented in the annual Amphibious Command Post Exercise at Lejeune; and throughout the winter and spring a succession of smaller ground, air, and air-ground exercises emphasized close support and amphibious landings.

Posts and stations were meanwhile conducting annual weapons qualification firing tests and individual

training as required by USMC General Order No. 10. This program was designed to maintain the basic military proficiency of men not serving with the Fleet Marine Force. It is significant, however, that a large proportion of them had reported to such duty directly from FMF units, in accordance with the rotation policy.

The program for the Organized Reserve included both armory and active duty summer training. Air and ground units of reservists were “adopted” during their summer training by similar units of the Fleet Marine Force, which supervised the exercises and provided instructors. By the summer of 1950, a large proportion of the reservists had progressed beyond basic training into advanced individual and unit training, so that they could be classed as “nearly combat ready” at the time of the 1st Marine Division expansion.[7]

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Chapter 2. The Minute Men of 1950
Mobilization of Marine Corps Reserve

Shortcomings in quantity rather than quality of Marine personnel made expansion a problem on 19 July 1950, when General MacArthur sent his third request to the Pentagon for a Marine division with appropriate air. Again the Joint Chiefs referred the matter to General Cates, who was prepared with two plans worked out in detail by his staff—Plan ABLE, providing third rifle companies and replacements for the Brigade; and Plan BAKER, designed to bring the 1st Marine Division up to full war strength by calling reservists to active duty.

These plans were based on the personnel statistics of 30 June 1950. The grand total of 74,279 Marines on active duty at that time (97 per cent of authorized strength) was distributed as follows:
Operating Forces—engaged directly in carrying out assigned missions and tasks = 40, 364
Supporting Establishment—comprising trained administrative and supply personnel = 24,552
Special Assignment—including all personnel serving with organizations outside the regular establishment = 3,871
Non-Available—made up of personnel hospitalized, confined, or en route = 5,492
TOTAL = 74, 279

A breakdown of the Operating Forces reveals that the Fleet Marine Force numbered 27,703 men, the security detachments included 11,087, and 1,574 Marines were afloat. Of the 11,853 in FMFPac, 7,779 were in the 1st Marine Division, and 3,733 in the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. The 15,803 Marines in FMFLant included 8,973 in the 2d Marine Division and 5,297 in the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing.[8]

These figures make it evident that the 1st Marine Division could not be brought up to war strength of about 25,000 troops without drawing upon the 33,527 (77 per cent of authorized strength) in the ground forces of the Organized Reserve, and the 6,341 (94 per cent of authorized strength) in the aviation forces. The ground personnel were distributed among these units:

Twenty-one infantry battalions; 16 rifle companies; seven 105mm howitzer battalions; five 155mm howitzer battalions; one 155mm gun battalion; two 40mm gun batteries; two tank battalions; three amphibian tractor battalions; one amphibian truck company; one signal company (supplementary); six signal companies; one engineer battalion; 15 women's reserve platoons.

Aviation units consisted of 30 Marine fighter squadrons (VMF) and 12 Marine ground control intercept squadrons (MGCI).

The Organized Reserve was exceeded as a reservoir of potential man power by the Volunteer Marine Corps Reserve, which had a total of 90,044 men and women on 30 June 1950. This total included 2,267 volunteer reservists on continuous active duty with the regular establishment, about 5,000 training in some 200 volunteer training units, and 1,316 in the Fleet Reserve.

Altogether, the strength of all Marine reserve components (less volunteer reservists on active duty) amounted to a total of 128,959, or nearly double the number of Marines in the regular establishment.[9]

Behind every Marine regular, figuratively speaking, stood two reservists who were ready to step forward and fill the gaps in the ranks. Thus it was scarcely far-fetched when some inspired public information officer coined the phrase "Minute Men of 1950" for these recent civilians who made it possible for the 1st Marine Division to hit the beaches at Inchon.

Events moved swiftly on 19 July. Only a few hours after the receipt of CinCFE's third request, the mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve was authorized by President Truman with the sanction of Congress. Headquarters Marine Corps, on the hill overlooking the Pentagon, was ablaze with lights that summer night; and

decisions were made which enabled four important steps to be taken next day:

(1) a warning to Reserve District directors that the Organized Reserve would soon be ordered to active duty;

(2) notification to commanding generals to expect some 21,000 Organized Reservists shortly at Marine Barracks, Camp Pendleton, and about 5,800 at Marine Barracks, Camp Lejeune;

(3) orders issued by CMC, with the approval of CNO, to discontinue the practice of discharging reservists at their own request;

(4) the first reservists—22 units with a total strength of 4,830 men—ordered to active duty with a delay of ten days.[10]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff were still not convinced that a Marine force could be embarked to meet General MacArthur's deadline of 10 September without stripping FMFLant units to a dangerous extent. On the advice of Admiral Sherman, they informed CinCFE on 20 July that a Marine division could not be sent before November or even December.

General Shepherd had a great deal to do with shaping the ultimate decision. On the 20th, when CNO conferred with Admiral Radford on the question of a Marine division, the Commander of the Pacific Fleet in his turn asked the opinion of the Marine general. General Shepherd replied that a Marine amphibious striking force could be raised for the proposed Inchon landing without seriously weakening the Fleet Marine Force as a whole. This striking force, he predicted, would prove to be "the key of achievement of a timely and economical decision for our arms."[11]

The Marine general's statement was one of the main factors in causing the Joint Chiefs to advise MacArthur on the 22d that they were reconsidering their stand. During the next 48 hours, as dispatches sped back and forth across the Pacific, a compromise was reached. CinCFE was promised his Marine division in time for his target date—but it was to be a division minus one RCT. In other words, the infantry regiment of the Brigade would be supplemented by another RCT and supporting troops with appropriate Marine air. But the Joint Chiefs were adamant in their decision that MacArthur must wait until autumn or even winter for his third RCT.

These preliminaries cleared the way so that General MacArthur's request was finally approved by JCS on 25 July, the day when General Smith took over command of the 1st Marine Division. The Marine Corps was directed to build the division (less one RCT) up to full war strength, and a date of departure of 10–15 August for the Far East was set.

A 50 percent reduction in Marine security forces within the continental limits of the United States was authorized by CNO on that same date. This meant that an additional 3,630 regulars would be enabled to report for service with the 1st Marine Division.

On the morning of the 26th a courier from Washington arrived at Camp Pendleton with a communication for General Smith indicating that the expanded 1st Marine Division would be composed of four types of personnel: (1) Brigade units, to be combined with the Division upon arrival in the Far East; (2) units of the 2d Marine Division, to be ordered to Camp Pendleton to augment elements of the 1st; (3) regular personnel to be called in from posts and stations; and (4) final deficiencies to be filled by men from the Marine Corps Reserve who met minimum combat experience requirements.[12]

Congress passed legislation on 27 July authorizing the President to extend for one year all enlistments in the armed forces, both regular and reserve, which were due to expire before 9 July 1951. This gave the assurance of a stable body of troops.

On the 31st, with the first reservists arriving at Camp Pendleton and the first contingents leaving Camp Lejeune for the West Coast, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed CNO to expand the 2d Marine Division to war strength while increasing the number of Marine tactical air squadrons from 16 to 18.[13] Obviously, the 1st and 2d Divisions could not be built up simultaneously without serious delays, and priority must be given to the 1st. It

was equally obvious, moreover, that this expansion must be largely accomplished during the first week of August if the troops were to be made ready for embarkation between the 10th and 15th.

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Chapter 2. The Minute Men of 1950
The Influx at Camp Pendleton

The first build-up troops to reach Camp Pendleton were three Organized Reserve units which arrived on 31 July—the 13th Infantry Company, of Los Angeles; the 12th Amphibian Tractor Company, of San Francisco; and the 3d Engineer Company, of Phoenix, Arizona. This was the beginning of an inundation which kept the camp keyed to a 24-hour day and a 7-day week. A torrent of troops poured into the vast military reservation by bus, train, and plane at all hours of the day and night. Confusion seemed to reign from the tawny California hills to the blue Pacific; and yet this seeming chaos was under the control of veteran officers and NCOs who had mounted out before. Accommodations for the newcomers were not de luxe, but men were being processed, assigned, fed, and equipped as rapidly as they arrived. The tramp of feet could be heard all night long as details of troops drew clothing and equipment or reported for medical examinations.

A total of 13,703 Marines reached Camp Pendleton during this busy week. Counting the personnel already on hand, troops of four categories were represented:
Officers and men remaining in 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton after dispatch of the Brigade = 3,459
Officers and men reporting from posts and stations up to 4 August = 3,630
Officers and men reporting from the 2d Marine Division from 3 to 6 August = 7,182
Officers and men selected as combat-ready out of the total of about 10,000 reservists reporting by 7 August = 2,891
TOTAL = 17,162

The expansion took place in two phases. First, of course, came the bringing of the 1st Marine Division (less one RCT) up to war strength, including augmentation personnel and supplies for the units of the Brigade. Next, the organization of a third reinforced infantry regiment, the 7th Marines, was directed by a letter from CMC to CG 1st Marine Division on 4 August.[14]

Headquarters Marine Corps naturally foresaw the necessity for replacement and rotation troops. The importance of the Reserve in this long-range expansion program may be seen by glancing ahead at the statistics of the next few months. Units of these recent civilians continued to report at such a rate that by 11 September 1950 the Organized Reserve (Ground) had in effect ceased to exist! In other words, all acceptable personnel had already reported for active duty, and the total of 33,528 officers and men represented a 90.02 percentage of availability.

The record of the Volunteer Reserve proved to be equally good after it was ordered to active duty on 15 August 1950. During the next seven and a half months, down to 31 March 1951, the Volunteer Reserve furnished 51,942 of the 84,821 reservists on active duty. As to the quality of these troops, about 99 per cent of the officers and 77.5 per cent of the enlisted were veterans of World War II.[15]

Many of the first reservists to report at Camp Pendleton made unusual sacrifices. Although they had the privilege of being discharged at their own request as late as 18 July 1950, the unexpectedness of the Korean conflict worked hardships in some instances. Reservists with several dependents or just establishing themselves in a business or profession had to settle their affairs hurriedly. There was little applause when the Minute Men of 1950 departed from home communities which were on a basis of business and pleasure as usual. The Korean conflict was still regarded as a “police action” which would be ended shortly. Nobody dreamed that within its first year it would become the fourth largest military effort of our nation’s history.

The Marine Corps was as lenient as could reasonably be expected when it came to granting delays and

deferments. On 1 August a board of eight officers at Marine Corps Headquarters initiated daily meetings to consider such requests emanating from the various Reserve districts. Two weeks later the Commandant gave Reserve District directors the authority to grant delays for periods up to six months after judging each case on its individual merits. But even after every concession had been made that could be reconciled with the national interest, it was a wrench for hundreds of reservists to make the sudden plunge from civil into military life.

There were instances of men seeking deferment by using political influence or pleading physical disability. But such cases were rare as compared to the great majority who reported promptly and declared themselves combat-ready.

In the selection of reservists for the division, two categories were recognized—combat-ready and noncombat-ready. The first applied to men whose records proved that they had been members of the Organized Reserve for two years and had attended one summer camp and 72 drills or two summer camps and 32 drills. Veterans of more than 90 days' service in the Marine Corps also qualified. All other reservists were classified as noncombat-ready.

When lost or incomplete records complicated the equation, a reservist's own opinion could not be accepted as proof of his fitness for combat. This ruling had to be made because so many men were found to have more spunk than training. Officers of a reservist's unit were questioned before a decision was reached, and any man feeling the need of further training could be removed without prejudice from immediate consideration for combat.

Standards were so strictly observed that only about half of the reservists qualified as being combat-ready. This group broke down into the 15 per cent accepted for the 1st Marine Division and the 35 per cent assigned to posts and stations to relieve regulars who joined the division. The remaining 50 per cent consisted of men placed in the noncombat-ready or recruit class.[16]

The emergency found the Organized Aviation Reserve with 30 VMF and 12 GCI squadrons generally up to peacetime strength. Of the 1,588 officers, about 95 per cent were combat-experienced, and only about 10 per cent of the enlisted men stood in need of basic training. It was a comparatively simple task, therefore, to comply with the order of 23 July calling for six VMF and three GCI squadrons to report to El Toro. Their mission was to build up to war strength the units of the 1st MAW which had been stripped to mount out MAG–33.

On 3 August the remaining nine GCI squadrons of the Organized Aviation Reserve were ordered to El Toro.[17] By this time the buildup was so well in hand that Major General Field Harris, commanding the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, conferred with General Smith about aviation shipping for the embarkation.

This veteran Marine pilot, a native of Kentucky, had been commissioned a second lieutenant in 1917 after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy. Three years of service with Marine ground forces in Cuba and the Philippines were followed by Headquarters duty at Washington and flight training at Pensacola. Designated a naval aviator in 1929, he held various Marine air commands before participating as colonel and brigadier general in the Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons, and Green Island air operations of World War II. On his return, he was appointed Assistant Commandant (Air) and Director of Aviation.

In the autumn of 1946, after Operation CROSSROADS had given a glimpse into the tactical future, Generals Shepherd, Harris, and Smith were named as a Special Board "to orient the effort of the Marine Corps away from the last war and toward the next." The result was recommendations leading to experiments with rotary wing aircraft as a means of tactical dispersion in amphibious operations against an enemy employing atomic weapons. Thus the Marine Corps worked out new helicopter combat techniques which were soon to create tactical history with the Brigade and Division in Korea.[18]

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Chapter 2. The Minute Men of 1950
Embarkation of 1st Marine Division

It is a curious circumstance that not until 8 August did General Smith himself have his first information as to the Inchon landing. The basic directive of 25 July had merely specified that the main body of the Division would embark from San Diego, prepared for combat. The commanding general did not learn even unofficially about the time and the place of the proposed operation until he was told by General Fellers. While reporting at Camp Pendleton on his return from Japan, the TTU commander gave General Smith an informal account of the conference which took place on 4 July at FECOM Headquarters in Tokyo.[19]

On the following day, 9 August, the Division issued Operation Order No. 1–50, which provided for the movement of the Division (less the Brigade and one RCT) to the Far East to report upon arrival to CinCFE for operational control. Embarkation was to be carried out in accordance with Embarkation Plan No. 1–50 of 6 August.

By this date, 17,162 Marines in Camp Pendleton were eligible for reassignment to the 1st Marine Division. There was no time, of course, for much training. On 2 August the Division issued Training Bulletin No. 36–50 as a general guide providing for some rudiments of individual and small-unit instruction. But about all that could be accomplished was conditioning training and test firing of weapons. As a result, many of the weapons issued directly to units were found to be defective, having been in storage since 1945.[20]

The war news from Korea at this time lent an atmosphere of grim realism to preparations at Camp Pendleton. On 2 August the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade had landed at Pusan, the day following the debarkation of two U.S. Army units, the skeletonized 2d Infantry Division and the 5th RCT. The original destination of the Marines had been Japan, but during the voyage the military situation deteriorated so rapidly that on 25 July a landing in Korea was ordered by CinCFE.

Following the capture of Taejon on 20 July, the Red Korean columns of invasion speeded up their “end run” around the Eighth Army’s open left flank. Driving eastward as well as southward, the enemy made such progress during the next ten days that on 31 July the UN forces were pushed back into a chain of defensive positions in southeast Korea. This was the Pusan Perimeter, which must be held if the vital line of communications from the supply port to Taegu was to be maintained.

The Marines jumped off east of Masan on 7 August with the Army 5th RCT and elements of the 25th Infantry Division in the first sustained counterattack mounted by UN forces. General Craig had control of Army as well as Marine units during the most critical period of the initial two days, and carrier-based MAG–33 squadrons provided tactical air support. Enemy resistance was so shattered by the 9th that the Red Korean machine of invasion went into reverse for the first time.

Click here to view map

From the 9th to the 13th, when they were relieved, parallel columns of Army and Marine assault troops drove from Chindong-ni nearly to Chinju, a distance of about 40 miles by the seacoast route. It was only a local setback for the enemy, to be sure, but it had a heartening effect for tired UN forces which had known only delaying actions so far.

It also added to the problems of staff officers at Camp Pendleton and Pearl Harbor, since replacements must be sent to the Brigade. With this in mind, the Commandant had begun the organization of the 1st Replacement Draft of approximately 800 men on the date of Brigade activation. These troops, however, were absorbed into the 1st Marine Division when it expanded to war strength, as was a second draft (also designated

the 1st Replacement Draft) of 3,000 men.[21]

On 3 August the 1st Marine Division was directed by FMFPac to send 10 officers and 290 enlisted men to the Brigade by airlift. This draft was to be ready to move from Camp Pendleton by MATS planes on 9 August, but not until five days later did it finally proceed to San Francisco by rail and fly to Japan.

On the 23d another draft of 10 officers and 300 enlisted men from Marine posts in Hawaii and Guam was sent by air to Japan, these troops being replaced by the same number of noncombat-ready Marines airlifted from Camp Pendleton. This process was twice repeated early in September, when two more drafts totaling 20 officers and 590 men flew to Japan to provide replacements and third companies for the 5th Marines of the Brigade.[22]

Logistics offered as many problems as personnel at Camp Pendleton, since both the Brigade and Division units had been on peace tables of organization and equipment. The 30–day replenishment stock, held in readiness for such an emergency, was also based on peace strength tables. Thus it was found that the specification of "requirements" was best determined in most instances by making out requisitions based on the difference between T/E for peace and war.

Narrow time limits did not permit the assembly of supplies and equipment delivered at Camp Pendleton under the relentless pressure of urgent deadlines. FMFLant air and ground units arriving from Camp Lejeune brought their own organization equipment, which was staged through the Recruit Depot at San Diego. Much of the heavy equipment from the Barstow, California, Annex, Depot of Supplies, was delivered dockside and loaded without further inspection. Not until arrival at Kobe, Japan, were such items as the LVTs finally given a mechanical checkup.[23]

Ammunition was delivered from the depots to the Naval Station, San Diego, for loading. The following units of fire were specified by Division Embarkation Plan 1–50:

(1) 3 UF in hands of 1st Marines, LVT, tank, and artillery units; 1 UF in hands of all other units;

(2) 2 UF in hands of 1st Ordnance Bn for the 1st Marines, LVT, tank, and artillery units;

(3) 4 UF in the hands of the 1st Ordnance Bn for other units.[24]

Even after all items of initial supply had been assembled, the problem was by no means solved. Since the Division and Wing would be operating under Army and Air Force control, it became necessary to establish a long-range policy for resupply. The best answer seemed to be the procedure adopted by the Brigade, providing that the Army and Air Force furnish all supplies not peculiar to the Marine Corps. The latter would be provided by Marine or Navy agencies automatically in 30–day increments, with 120 days of resupply allotted to ground units and 90 days to air units. Thereafter, supply was to be requisitioned as needed. And in the lack of a service command as such, the G–4 section of FMFPac was committed to the task of preparing and submitting resupply requisitions for items in this category.[25]

Five hundred civilians were employed to help with the reconditioning of motor transport and other heavy equipment which had been "in mothballs" at Barstow since the end of World War II. Such items had to be put through the shops in many instances and restored to operating condition before delivery. The enormous supply depot in the California desert erupted with activity as trains of flatcars and long columns of motor trucks were routed to San Diego.

The actual loading and embarkation were conducted almost according to schedule in spite of such handicaps as inadequate dock facilities, the reception of supplies and equipment from a variety of sources, a shortage of stevedores, and piecemeal assignments of shipping. Only 54 stevedore crews were available out of the 90 requested, and commercial ships were necessary to supplement naval shipping. Nevertheless, the loading began on 8 August and was completed by the 22d. The following 19 ships were employed to mount out the main body of the 1st Marine Division:

LST 845; LSM 419; two APAs, the USS *Noble* and USS *President Jackson;* five APs, the USNS *General Buckner,* USNS *General Weigel,* USS *Marine Phoenix,* USNS *General Meigs* and USS *General Butner;*

and ten AKs, the SS *Dolly Thurman,* SS *Green Bay Victory,* SS *Noonday,* SS *African Patriot,* SS *Twin Falls Victory,* SS *Southwind,* SS *American Press,* SS *American Victory,* SS *Alma Victory,* and SS *Belgian Victory.*[26]

Generals Shepherd and Cates arrived for the main embarkation on the 13th and 14th respectively, accompanied by Major General Franklin A. Hart and Brigadier General Edwin A. Pollock. While these general officers were being acquainted with the progress made so far, the AKA *Titania* blew out two boilers after being about 20 percent loaded. Since the repairs would require about ten days, a commercial freighter was provided as a last-minute replacement.

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Chapter 2. The Minute Men of 1950
Build-up of 7th Marine Regiment

One of the purposes of General Shepherd's visit was to discuss with General Cates the problems of organizing and embarking the 7th Marines (Reinf.). The activation of this unit had been directed on 10 August 1950, when an officer of the G–1 Section, Headquarters FMFPac, delivered orders to Camp Pendleton.[27]

This was the result of a change of mind on the part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After reconsideration, they decided that it would be feasible to raise a third RCT much sooner than had at first seemed possible, though not in time for MacArthur's assault landing. Arrival in Japan about 20 September seemed to be the earliest date that could be managed.

Of the 17,162 eligible Marines at Camp Pendleton at that time, the regulars in excess of those required to mount out between the 10th and 15th were placed in the rear echelon of the division as a cadre for the third infantry regiment.[28] The following troops were made available to draw upon for the formation of the 7th Marines:

Officers and men from 2d Marine Division = 1,822
Officers and men of 3d Bn, 6th Marines in the Mediterranean = 735
Officers and men of Marine Corps Reserve selected as combat-ready = 1,972
Officers and men of rear echelon of Division, and from posts and stations = 1,109
TOTAL = 5, 638[29]

Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg was designated as commanding officer on the date of activation, 17 August 1950. The Chief of Naval Operations directed the regiment to embark for the Far East not later than 3 September. These components were included in the build-up:

3d Battalion, 11th Marines; Company D, 1st Tank Battalion; Company D, 1st Engineer Battalion; Company C, 1st Shore Party Battalion (including two Shore Party communication teams from Signal Com-party, Signal Battalion); Company D, 1st Motor Transport Battalion; Company E, 1st Medical Battalion.

Forming the nucleus of the regiment, the 6th Marines, at peace strength and less two battalions, arrived from Camp Lejeune on 16 August. The 3d Battalion of this FMFLant regiment, then stationed afloat in the Mediterranean, was ordered to proceed through the Suez Canal to become part of the 7th Marines upon arrival in Japan.

While the other elements were being absorbed at Camp Pendleton, a conference attended by General Smith, Major General Alfred H. Noble, and Colonel Litzenberg was held to discuss rear echelon personnel and the formation of RCT–7. The following troops were found to be available to take care of casuals and retain custody of such division supplies and equipment as had not yet been embarked:

Marine Corps: 224 officers, 1,029 enlisted
Navy: 11 officers, 35 enlisted

Not included in these figures were 197 noneffective enlisted personnel, a rocket battery, a motor transport company, and the organizational rear echelon of eight officers and 28 men. It was decided that General Noble, as FMFPac representative, would examine MOSs, to determine how many men would be transferred to the 7th Marines or retained for FMF units to be activated later. The need was also foreseen for rear echelon working parties to relieve personnel of units mounting out.[30]

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Chapter 2. The Minute Men of 1950
Staff Groups Flown to Japan

Although the 1st Marine Division had enough problems at Camp Pendleton to keep a full war-strength staff busy, several of the key members were in Korea with the Brigade. The complete Division staff was never integrated until after the landing at Inchon. On 7 August, however, a dispatch from CinCFE requested that the "Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, and planning group capable of developing Division embarkation and landing plans be airlifted" to the Far East.[31]

General Smith decided that this flight could best be made in two echelons. The first, which took off for Japan at 1400 on 16 August 1950, included a group of 12 officers and six enlisted men selected to initiate planning:

G-2: Col B. T. Holcomb, Jr., and TSgt W. O'Grady
Asst. G-2: Maj J. G. Babashanian and Cpl J. N. Lareau
G-3: Col A. L. Bowser, Jr., and Sgt G. O. Davis, Jr.
Asst. G-3: LtCol F. R. Moore
Asst. G-4: LtCol C. T. Hodges
Asst. Emb. Off.: Capt R. E. Moody and PFC H. J. McAvinue
Shore Pty. Off.: Maj J. G. Dibble
Signal Off.: LtCol A. Creal and Cpl L. Shefchik
Asst. G-1: LtCol B. D. Godbold
Fire Sup. Coord.: LtCol D. E. Reeve and SSgt P. Richardson
Naval Gunfire Off.: LtCol L. S. Fraser
Air Off.: Capt W. F. Jacobs

General Smith stayed at Camp Pendleton for two more days until he was assured that the main body of the Division had sailed. Then he accompanied the second echelon of planners which departed by air at 1410 on 18 August:

CG: MajGen O. P. Smith
C/S: Col G. A. Williams and Cpl C. V. Irwin
Aide to CG: Capt M. J. Sexton and PFC W. D. Grove
G-1: Col H. S. Walseth and Cpl W. P. Minette
Asst. Signal Off.: Capt A. J. Gunther and MSgt F. J. Stumpges
G-4: Col F. M. McAlister
Engineer Off.: Maj E. P. Moses, Jr.
Embark Off.: Maj J. M. Rouse
Amtrac Off.: Maj A. J. Barrett
Motor Trans. Off.: Maj H. W. Seeley, Jr.
Ordnance Off.: Maj L. O. Williams[32]

The departure of the commanding general coincided with the closing of the Division CP at Camp Pendleton. There were still several thousand Marines of the rear echelon left under the control of General Noble in the sprawling installation, but the brown California hills looked down upon a scene of strange and brooding quiet as compared to the activity of the past three weeks.

It was D-minus 28 for the men of the 1st Marine Division.

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Chapter 3. Operation Plan CHROMITE

THE SCARS OF WAR heal rapidly. From the air General Smith could see jungle covering the battlefields of Guam. Iwo Jima looked as untouched as if it had never been the scene of Marine casualties exceeding the losses of the Union army at Gettysburg. Even fire-blasted Tokyo had recovered to a surprising extent from the terrible bombings of 1945.

Now, five years later, the United States had entered upon a new military effort. As the Marine general landed at Haneda Airfield on the afternoon of 22 August 1950, he was met by Admiral Doyle and driven to the *Mount McKinley*, tied up at the dock in Tokyo harbor. And though assigned to the cabin reserved for the landing force commander, CG 1st MarDiv found it an ironical circumstance that he did not yet know the prospective D-day and H-hour of the landing.[1]

He had not long to wait for such data. The advance section of the Marine planning group being already aboard the *Mount McKinley*, he was quickly informed by Colonel Bowser, the G–3 of the incomplete Division staff. D-day at Inchon had been tentatively set for 15 September, and the landing must be made during the high tide of late afternoon. It meant assaulting a port of 250,000 prewar population over the mud flats and seawalls, with little opportunity to consolidate positions before nighfall. Nor would there be time for training and rehearsals, since the troops would reach Japan barely in time to unload and reload in amphibious shipping before proceeding to the objective area.

General Smith learned further that a new command structure, to be known as X Corps, was being hastily erected by FECOM especially for the operation. No announcement had been made of a project still classified as Top Secret, but it was known to the planning group that General Almond would command a corps not yet activated. The 1st Marine Division would be under his control as the landing force.

Admiral Doyle, an old hand at amphibious warfare, was not happy about Inchon when he considered the naval aspects. Initiated at Guadalcanal and Tulagi in 1942, he had taken part in some rugged ship-to-shore assaults of World War II. Afterwards, as Commander of Amphibious Shipping for the Pacific Fleet, he had made a career of it. And Admiral Doyle considered Inchon a hard nut to crack. He refused to admit that any amphibious operation was impossible as long as the United States Navy remained afloat, but he did maintain that Inchon bristled with risks.

In twenty minutes that Tuesday afternoon General Smith heard enough to convince him that the forthcoming assault would take a great deal of doing. But there was no time for discussion. For at 1730, just two hours after stepping from his plane, he had an appointment with the commander in chief.

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Chapter 3. Operation Plan CHROMITE
Interview with General MacArthur

Arriving on the minute at the Dai Ichi building, General Smith reported to FECOM Headquarters. He was met by an aide, who escorted him to General Almond's office. On the way down echoing corridors, he responded at frequent intervals to the salutes of sentries who presented arms with fixed bayonets.[2]

The offices of CinCFE and his chief of staff were connected by an imposing conference room with paneled walls and pillars along one side. General Smith had an opportunity to survey his surroundings at leisure before General Almond appeared. The new X Corps commander explained that his chief had a habit of taking a long afternoon break and would arrive later.

Of medium height and stocky build, Almond gave the impression at the age of 58 of a buoyant temperament and restless energy. A native Virginian and graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, he had been an ETO division commander in World War II. After joining MacArthur's staff, he became one of the most loyal officers of a group noted for devotion to their famous chief.

Almond greeted the reserved, white-haired Marine general cordially. He launched at once into the topic of the Inchon operation, expressing the utmost confidence in the ability of the UN forces to prevail.

It was the initial contact of the two men. Mutual respect was not lacking, but differences in temperament made it inevitable that these generals would not always see eye to eye. History teaches that this is by no means a deplorable situation when kept within reasonable bounds. Character can be as decisive a factor as logistics, and some of the greatest victories of the ages have been won by colleagues who did not agree at times. Friction, in fact, is more likely to sharpen than to blunt military intellects; and Smith's precision had potentialities of being a good counterpoise for Almond's energy.

While they were discussing the tactical problems, the commander in chief returned to his office. He summoned his chief of staff for a brief conference, then requested that Smith be presented.

MacArthur shook hands warmly, grasping the Marine general's elbow with his left hand. Without the celebrated "scrambled eggs" cap, he looked his 70 years in moments of fatigue, but the old fire and dash were not lacking. The very simplicity of his attire—shirtsleeves and open collar—made a dramatic contrast to the military pomp and ceremony surrounding him in this former Japanese commercial building, one of the few earthquake-proof and air-conditioned structures in Tokyo.

In a cigarette-smoking age, both MacArthur and Smith preferred the calm comfort of a pipe. The commander in chief lit up and puffed reflectively a moment. Then he leaned back in his chair and gave his concept of the Inchon operation. But it was more than a concept in the usual military sense; it was a vision of a victory potent enough to end the Korean conflict at a stroke. And it was more than confidence which upheld him; it was a supreme and almost mystical faith that he could not fail.

He granted, of course, that there were difficulties and risks. Evidently Almond had mentioned Smith's reservations, for he proceeded to reassure the Marine general. His voice full of feeling, he expressed his deep conviction that the war could be won in a month at Inchon, and that the 1st Marine Division could win it. The enemy, he explained, had committed nearly all of his troops in the Pusan Perimeter. Thus the Marines would not be heavily opposed when they stormed ashore at Inchon and drove inland to cut the main NKPA line of communications at Seoul.

MacArthur said he knew that the Marines had high standards, having commanded them in the New Britain operations of the last war. He realized that the Marines strove for perfection, and the Inchon landing was

bound to be somewhat helter-skelter by the very nature of things. But there was no doubt, he affirmed, that the victory soon to be gained by the 1st Marine Division would make 15 September 1950 a glorious date in American history.

His voice was charged with fervor as it rose and fell eloquently. Once General Smith made a move as if to depart, but the commander in chief motioned him back to his chair. At last he brought the conversation to a close by standing suddenly, grasping the Marine general's hand, and bidding him a cordial good-bye.

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Chapter 3. Operation Plan CHROMITE
Conferences in Tokyo

It was sometimes an awkward situation for Navy and Marine officers in general, and Admiral Doyle and General Smith in particular. In many respects they appeared doubters and pessimists in contrast to FECOM staff officers who reflected General MacArthur's shining confidence. But as amphibious specialists, carrying a heavy load of responsibility for the landing, they had to give serious thought to the risks at Inchon.

This was brought home forcibly to the Marine general on the morning of the 23d, when he attended a meeting conducted by Major General Clark L. Ruffner, Chief of Staff of the future X Corps. Although the conference proceeded according to the usual form, General Smith felt that it departed at times from the realism which he considered an essential of sound amphibious planning. It was announced, for instance, that after taking Inchon, the 1st Marine Division was to cross the Hah and attack Seoul, although X Corps had neither equipment nor materiel for bridging the sizeable river.[3]

A review of the background disclosed that after CinCFE decided on 10 July not to use the 1st Cavalry Division as his landing force, he briefly considered two other Army outfits. The 2d Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Lawrence B. Keiser, was then under orders to embark from the West Coast. Some of the personnel had been given amphibious training by an ANGLICO instruction team and had taken part in Operation MIKI, but the division as a whole was much understrength. The same difficulty led to the elimination of Major General David G. Barr's 7th Infantry Division in Japan, which had supplied troops to units at the front until only a cadre remained.

The assurance on 25 July of a war-strength Marine division took care of the *who* question. Next came the problems of *when* and *where* an amphibious assault could be best mounted. JANIS (Joint Army and Navy Intelligence Studies) reports indicated that the east coast of Korea, though of lesser importance in military respects, offered such hydrographic advantages as unusually moderate tides and a general absence of shoals. In forbidding contrast, the shallow west coast waters could be navigated at most points only by means of narrow channels winding through the mud flats.[4]

Of all the west coast seaports, Inchon was probably the least desirable objective when considered strictly from the viewpoint of hydrographic conditions. From first to last, however, Inchon was Douglas MacArthur's choice. FECOM staff officers ventured to suggest two alternatives, Wonsan on the east coast and Kunsan on the west coast, but the commander in chief replied that neither was close enough to the enemy's main line of communications to suit his purposes. He would settle for nothing less than Inchon.

So much for the place. As to the time, the choice was even more limited. The tidal range varied from an average spring tide5 height of 23 feet to an occasional maximum of 33 feet. Landing craft required a tide of 25 feet to navigate the mud flats of the harbor, and the LSTs must have 29 feet. Only during a few days in the middle of September and October were those depths provided by spring tides of the next 12 weeks. MacArthur rejected an October date as being too late in the season, so that 15 September became D-day by virtue of elimination.

A late afternoon H-hour was also a choice of necessity. Islands, reefs, and shoals restricted the approach to the outer harbor, and currents ranging from three to six knots multiplied the chances of confusion. This meant that daylight landings were necessary for all but small groups.

Much of the inner harbor was a vast swamp at low water, penetrated by a single dredged channel 12 to 13 feet deep.[6] The duration of spring tides above the prescribed minimum depth averaged about three hours, and during this interval the maximum in troops and supplies must be put ashore. Every minute counted, since initial

landing forces could not be reinforced or supplied until the next high water period.

Time and tide seemed to have combined forces to protect Inchon from seaborne foes. As if such natural obstacles were not enough, the target area provided others. Two islands, Wolmi-do and Sowolmi-do, located in a commanding position between the inner and outer harbors, were linked to each other and to Inchon by a causeway. In advance of intelligence reports, it must be assumed that rocky, wooded Wolmi-do would be honeycombed with hidden emplacements for enough guns to create a serious menace for the landing craft.

This critical terrain feature must somehow be reduced as a preliminary to the main landing during the high tide of late afternoon. Inchon being situated on a hilly promontory, the “beaches” were mere narrow strips of urban waterfront, protected by seawalls too high for ramps to be dropped at any stage of the tide. Once past these barriers, the troops would have about two hours of daylight in which to secure an Oriental city with a population comparable to that of Omaha.

But the amphibious assault was only the first phase of the operation as conceived by CinCFE. After taking Inchon the landing force had the task of driving some 16 miles inland, without loss of momentum, to assault Korea’s largest airfield before crossing a tidal river to assault Korea’s largest city.

And even this ambitious undertaking was not the whole show. For a joint operation was to be carried out meanwhile by Eighth Army forces thrusting northward from the Pusan Perimeter to form a junction with the units of the Inchon-Seoul drive. This double-barreled assault, it was believed, would shatter North Korean resistance and put an end to the war.

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Chapter 3. Operation Plan CHROMITE
Inception of X Corps

The time, the place, the landing force, the main objectives—these essentials of the proposed Inchon-Seoul operation had been pretty well settled, at least to General MacArthur's satisfaction, by the first week of August. But even though he had his assault troops, there was as yet no headquarters organization.

Admiral Sherman urged early in August that the commander in chief call upon General Shepherd and the facilities of the FMFPac organization at Pearl Harbor. Since there was so little time left before D-day—only a fraction of the time usually allotted to the planning phase of a major ship to shore assault—he felt that amphibious know-how and experience were required. He proposed, therefore, that steps be taken to obtain the approval of Admiral Radford, who had jurisdiction over FMFPac.

The need for a headquarters organization was discussed on 7 August by the Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG) of FECOM. Brigadier General Wright, G–3 of FECOM, received a memorandum from the other members of the staff recommending that the gap be filled in one of two ways—either by putting into effect Admiral Sherman's plan, or by sponsoring the organization of a provisional corps headquarters. General Wright favored the first course of action, as did Brigadier General Doyle G. Hickey, FECOM deputy chief of staff. Ultimately, however, the FECOM chief of staff decided in favor of the latter command arrangement.[7]

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Chapter 3. Operation Plan CHROMITE
Final Conference on Inchon

The questions of *when* and *where* and *who* had been answered to some extent. But as late as 23 August, a good many variations of opinion existed as to *how* the amphibious assault was to be accomplished.

The natural obstacles of the Inchon harbor area were so disturbing that Doyle suggested an alternative to MacArthur and Almond. Since the purpose of the landing was to drive inland and cut the enemy's communications, urged ComPhibGru One, why not select a west coast objective with fewer hydrographic difficulties? He proposed the Posung-Myon area, about 30 miles south of Inchon on the west coast, where better approach channels and beaches were believed to be available in a more lightly populated locality. A landing at this point, Doyle contended, would not be attended by the risks and restrictions of Inchon, yet after securing a beachhead the troops would be in position to strike inland at the enemy's main line of rail and highway communications in the vicinity of Osan.[8]

Smith was favorably impressed. He brought up the subject on 23 August, when he and Barr had a meeting with Almond. The X Corps commander did not concur, though conceding that Posung-Myon had possibilities as an area for a subsidiary landing in connection with the Inchon assault. Nor was Doyle able to obtain MacArthur's consent to the alternate objective.

It was the Marine general's third conference of the day. From the X Corps meeting he had gone directly to the regular conference at GHQ, and thence to the talk with Almond and Barr. He came away from all three meetings with the conviction that CinCFE and his staff were not to be swerved by his objections. It was definitely to be Inchon on 15 September, and Smith instructed his planning group to proceed accordingly.

Doyle made a last attempt at 1730 that afternoon to present a comprehensive picture of the risks and difficulties inherent at Inchon. This final conference on the subject of a west coast landing was attended by some of the nation's highest ranking officers—General J. Lawton Collins, Army Chief of Staff; Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations; General Shepherd, CG FMFPac; Lieutenant General Idwal H. Edwards, U.S. Air Force; as well as other high-ranking staff officers who had flown out from Washington. It was no secret in Tokyo military circles that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were present for the purpose of studying General MacArthur's plans for the Inchon landing. It was also generally known that doubts and misgivings had been expressed at various times when the project was discussed at the Pentagon. General Collins stated candidly at a later date that the purpose of his Tokyo visit was ". . . to find out exactly what the plans were. Frankly, we were somewhat in the dark, and as it was a matter of great concern, we went out to discuss it with General MacArthur. We suggested certain alternate possibilities and places. . . ."[9]

Admirals Joy and Doyle also attended the meeting, and FECOM was represented by Generals Almond, Ruffner, and Wright. The conference room on the sixth floor of the Dai Ichi building proved too small for the audience, and members of the PhibGru One team had to wait their turn in Almond's adjoining office. One by one, at eight-minute intervals, Doyle's officers took turns at being presented to MacArthur, who listened gravely while puffing at his pipe. The following amphibious specialists were heard:

Cdr Edmund S. L. Marshall, USN: Navigation
Lt Charles R. Barron, USN: Aerology
LtCol William E. Benedict, USMC: Military Aspects
LCdr Jack L. Lowentrout, USN: Beach Study
LCdr M. Ted Jacobs, Jr., USN: Seabees Pontoon Causeway Plans

LCdr Clyde E. Allmon, USN: Ship to Shore Plans
LCdr Arlie G. Capps, USN; Gunfire Support
Cdr Theophilus H. Moore, USN: Air Support[10]

The officers spoke of the natural obstacles. They asserted that it would be the peak of optimism to hope for a strategic surprise at Inchon, for the enemy also knew that only a few days each autumn month offered a tidal range sufficient to float the landing craft and supply ships over the mud flats of the harbor.

They contended that even a tactical surprise was out of the question, since Wolmi-do must be neutralized before landings could be made on the mainland. Otherwise, the vulnerable column of landing craft would be exposed to a slaughter from the flanking fire of the island`s guns.

The Navy group pointed out further that it must also be assumed that the enemy would not neglect a good opportunity to sow both moored and magnetic mines in the channels the shipping must take. And to cap all the other natural and man-made risks, there was danger at the height of the typhoon season that Nature would intervene and scatter the amphibious armada during its approach to the objective area.

The presentation lasted for nearly an hour and a half. At the conclusion, Admiral Doyle summed up by giving his opinion. “The best I can say, ”he told the commander in chief,” is that Inchon is not impossible.“

General MacArthur heard the amphibious specialists to a finish without his imperturbability being shaken. Even the onlookers who could not partake of his perfect faith were impressed. There was something magnificent about this old warrior in shirtsleeves and open collar, calmly smoking his pipe while hearing his plan dissected. Daring and optimism are supposed to be the exclusive prerogatives of youth, yet this smiling septuagenarian was not only the oldest officer at the conference, he was also the most confident and assured! After the PhibGru One presentation ended, he took 45 minutes for his comments. Speaking with eloquence, he declared that the natural obstacles and practical difficulties of the proposed Inchon operation were more than balanced in the strategic scale by the psychological advantages of a bold stroke. About 90 percent of the NKPA forces were fighting in the Pusan Perimeter. A combined offensive by X Corps and the Eighth Army would have the effect of placing the enemy between the hammer and anvil.

Referring to the Kunsan landing favored by General Collins and Admiral Sherman, CinCFE asserted that this objective was too far south for a fatal blow to be dealt the invaders. He cited a historical precept in Wolfe’s victory at Quebec, made possible by audacity in overcoming natural obstacles that the enemy regarded as insurmountable. He recalled the amphibious victories he himself had won in the Southwest Pacific, with the Navy and sometimes the Marine Corps sharing in the glory. And he ended on a dramatic note with a single, prophetic sentence spoken in a tense voice:

“We shall land at Inchon and I shall crush them!”[11]

As the officers filed out into the noisy, teeming Tokyo street, most of them felt certain that the last word had been said. It was still possible, of course, for the Joint Chiefs to overrule CinCFE; and it was not likely that all of their doubts had been laid to rest. Nevertheless, the Navy and Marine planners proceeded on the basis that a final decision had been reached that August afternoon.

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Chapter 3. Operation Plan CHROMITE
Brigade Victory in Korea

Before his arrival at Tokyo, General Shepherd had paid a flying visit to the headquarters of the Brigade in Korea immediately after the Marines stormed and seized Obong-ni Ridge. Just as General Craig's men had taken part from 7 to 13 August in the first sustained UN counterattack, so this Army and Marine effort a week later became the first rout of a major NKPA unit. After putting up a fierce struggle to hold their bridgehead on the east bank of the river Naktong, the veteran troops of the NKPA 4th Division were shattered by repeated Marine attacks. Carrier-borne Corsairs of MAG–33 had a turkey shoot at the expense of panic stricken enemy soldiers who abandoned their arms in a wild flight. Some of the fugitives were shot down while trying to swim the river.

Despite this encouraging little victory, it was still nip and tuck on the central front of the Pusan Perimeter. With the U.S. 2d Infantry Division and 5th RCT now in line, the Eighth Army strategy of trading space for time had resulted in whittling down the enemy's material superiority. But the invaders still held the material advantage, and there were signs that they would soon launch an all-out effort to smash through to Pusan.

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Chapter 3. Operation Plan CHROMITE
The Marine Amphibious Mission

General Shepherd, after being informed as to the Tokyo conferences, accompanied General Smith on the morning of 24 August to a meeting with Admirals Sherman, Radford, Joy, and Doyle. It was generally agreed that not enough weight had been given to amphibious considerations in the final decision to attack at Inchon. Navy opinion held that one more attempt should be made to propose another landing point with fewer hydrographic objections. The area south of Inchon had been investigated by Navy UDT and Marine amphibious scouts of the Reconnaissance Company, 1st Marine Division, who had sailed to the Far East with the Brigade. As a preliminary, this group had embarked on the USS *Horace A. Bass* (APD–124) and gone ashore undetected to stage several raids during the period 12–16 August on the enemy's main line of communications along the west coast. Three tunnels and two railway bridges were destroyed without the loss of a man.[12]

Next the raiders successfully carried out a survey and reconnaissance of available landing beaches during the period 22–25 August in the Posung-Myon area. Their findings impressed General Shepherd so much that before his departure from Tokyo he called on CinCFE to make a last plea for reconsideration of the landing area. General MacArthur, however, remained firm in his preference for Inchon.[13]

The meeting of the admirals and Marine generals on the 24th broke up with a general agreement that the decision as to Inchon on 15 September must be accepted as the basis for final planning. That same afternoon General Smith instructed his planning group to begin work on a scheme of maneuver.

Modern amphibious tactics were in their infancy during World War I when an appalling object lesson seemed to have been left by the Allied disaster at Gallipoli in 1915–16. Brilliant in strategic conception, this major amphibious operation might have knocked Turkey out of the war and opened the unlocked back door of Austria and Germany. Unfortunately, the execution fell short; and the failure was too often charged to amphibious warfare itself rather than a wholesale violation of its basic principles.

In 1920 the new Marine Corps Schools at Quantico became the center of Marine amphibious study and research. Marine units participated in fleet problems at Panama and Culebra during the post-war years; and in 1927 the Joint Board of the Army and Navy (fore-runner of JCS) stated in a directive that the Marine Corps had the mission of "special preparation in the conduct of landing operations."[14]

During the early 1920s the writings of a brilliant Marine officer, Major Earl H. Ellis, had a tremendous influence on current amphibious thought. Predicting that Japan would strike first in the Pacific and win initial successes, he drew up a strategic plan for assaults on Japanese-mandated islands which was approved by Major General John A. Lejeune, Commandant of the Marine Corps. Later known as Operation Plan No. 712, this Top Secret document helped to shape the ORANGE plans adopted by the Joint Board of the Army and Navy for offensive operations against Japan if it came to war.

After making good progress in the early 1920s, with landing exercises being held annually, the Marine amphibious program bogged down from 1927 to 1932 because of the necessity of sending expeditionary forces to China and Nicaragua. The turning point came in 1933, a memorable date in the evolution of modern amphibious warfare. It was then that Major General John H. Russell, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, urged that a staff be set up at Quantico to plan for the organization of a mobile Marine striking force. This force, under the Commandant, and fully prepared for service with the fleet, was to be in readiness for tactical employment subject to the orders of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Navy. General Russell further proposed that the old name "Expeditionary Force" be discontinued and "Fleet Marine Force" adopted as a name better expressing this

mission.[15]

After the acceptance of these recommendations, the Commandant ordered classes discontinued at the Marine Corps Schools and a concerted effort applied to the preparation of a new amphibious manual. Both the Army and Navy had treated some of the procedures in existing manuals, but it remained for the Marine Corps in 1934 to put out the first complete work of the sort. Known as the *Tentative Manual on Landing Operations,* it became either directly or indirectly the guide for exercises and maneuvers of the Navy and Marine Corps down to World War II.

Most of its suggested procedures were endorsed with revisions in the Navy's *Fleet Training Publication 167,* published in 1938. This work in its turn became the model three years later for the Army's first basic field manual for landing operations.[16]

Training exercises were held every year, usually at Culebra or Vieques in the Caribbean and San Clemente Island off San Diego. At the suggestion of the Fleet Marine Force, the Navy purchased Bloodsworth Island in Chesapeake Bay as the first amphibious gunfire range used for that purpose alone.

Schools were set up to train Army and Navy as well as Marine officers as specialists in fire control parties. Air support was closely integrated with naval gunfire, shore artillery, and troop movements. Technology came to the aid of tactics when the Fleet Marine Force encouraged and supervised the designing of strange new amphibious craft and vehicles. Concepts were actually based in several instances on landing craft not yet developed and the confidence of the Marine Corps in American inventiveness proved to be justified.

Thus the Nation entered World War II with a system of offensive tactics which opened Europe, Africa, and the islands of the Pacific to American invasion without incurring a single major defeat. Not only was the United States ahead of the enemy in the development of amphibious operations but the Axis Powers never found the key to an adequate defense. In an often quoted summary, the British military critic and historian, Major General J. F. C. Fuller, has asserted that these techniques were "in all probability . . . the most far-reaching tactical innovation of the war."[17]

During the next few years the Marine Corps was twice officially given the major responsibility for American amphibious tactics. The National Security Act of 1947 made it the function of the Corps "to provide fleet marine forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign."[18]

At the so-called Key West Conference the following spring (March 11–14, 1948), the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff restated the Marine Corps' mission to include that of developing "in coordination with the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, the tactics, technique, and equipment employed by landing forces in amphibious operations. The Marine Corps shall have primary interest in the development of those landing force tactics, techniques, and equipment which are of common interest to the Army and the Marine Corps."[19]

During these post-war years, the Marine Corps was grappling with the new amphibious problems posed by atomic weapons. It was fitting, therefore, that the three men who formed the Special Board for this research—Generals Shepherd, Harris, and Smith—should have been at the forefront in 1950 when the Marine Corps faced its next amphibious test. As veterans of World War II operations, they could recall the scramble for the beaches of Bougainville, the fight for Bloody Nose on Peleliu, the off-the-cuff landing on Oroku Peninsula in Okinawa. There had been some tense moments in those battles, but never had Marine generals contemplated an objective which held more potentialities for trouble than the harbor area at Inchon.

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Chapter 4. The Planning Phase

THE CHAMPION GLOBE-TROTTERS of the 1st Marine Division were the men of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. Before returning to their homes from Korea, these military tourists would have traveled entirely around the world by various forms of land, water, and air transportation.

The unit was originally an element of the 6th Marines, FMFLant, serving afloat with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. On 12 August 1950 the CP aboard the USS *Yellowstone* at Suda Bay, Crete, received a message from CNO ordering the battalion to the Far East. Lieutenant Colonel Frederick R. Dowsett, deputy commander, noted that the dispatch had bypassed such channels as CMC and the Sixth Fleet.[1] This irregularity, he learned later, was explained by the urgency of an order which had been framed by Admiral Sherman while General Cates was present. It directed that the APA *Bexar* arrive on 14 August at Suda Bay and depart two days later with the troops.

The rub was that these Marines were dispersed on various ships all over the Mediterranean.

Given the rush job of picking up the scattered elements of the battalion was the USS *Leyte*, which was due to return to Norfolk for refitting afterwards and thence to the Far East via the Panama Canal. Not only did the carrier complete its assignment before the deadline, but the *Bexar* also arrived at Suda Bay on the evening of the 14th. Both ships had hardly dropped anchor when the LCVPs and LCMs were shuttling troops and cargo to the transport and the AKA *Montague*, which was to accompany it to the Far East.[2]

On the 16th the two vessels departed according to schedule by way of Port Said and the Suez Canal. Security regulations were rigidly enforced, with only one stop being made when the vessels anchored at Ceylon for six hours to take on fuel. Marine officers were figuratively as well as literally at sea, since they had no idea of the specific mission awaiting the battalion in the Far East. Unaware of plans for the Inchon landing, they envisioned the troops being employed as the ship-based raiding party of some American task force.

Meanwhile their future teammates of the 7th Marines were preparing to embark from San Diego. Colonel Litzenberg and his officers had made a good start at Camp Pendleton even before the activation date of 17 August 1950. In order to build up from cadres of former 6th Marines' troops, this regiment received the largest proportion of combat-ready reservists of any major unit in the 1st Marine Division—about 50 per cent, counting the augmentation personnel to bring 3/6 up to war strength when it would be taken into the outfit in Japan.[3]

CNO had set 3 September as the date of embarkation. But Headquarters, FMFPac, prepared the embarkation plans while the regimental staff solved problems of organization and equipment so effectively that the 7th Marines sailed on the 1st, thus beating the deadline by two days.[4]

Orders came to El Toro on 16 August for the overseas movement of the remaining elements of the 1st MAW. Units affected were Wing Headquarters Squadron 1 and MAG–12, comprising Headquarters Squadron 12, Service Squadron 12, VMF–312, VMF–212, VMF(N)–542, and the rear echelon of VMF(N)–513.

VMF–312 and the rear echelon of VMF(N)–513 were loaded on the USS *Sitkoh Bay* with their aircraft and sailed on 24 August. Three days later VMF–212 and VMF(N)–542 embarked on the USS *Cape Esperance*, and the USNS *General Morton* weighed anchor with the remaining components on 1 September.[5] This completed the overseas movement of the 1st MAW, since General Harris and his staff had departed from El Toro by air for Japan the day before.

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Chapter 4. The Planning Phase
Working Around the Clock

The first echelon of the 1st Marine Division planning group had its preliminary briefing on 19 August, and the tractor elements of the Attack Force were scheduled to sail for the objective area on 9 September. This left an interval of 20 days for most of the Inchon planning—probably the shortest period ever allotted to a major amphibious assault.

Less than one-fourth of the officers and men of the 1st Marine Division staff were on the *Mount McKinley* when planning commenced. At that time the distribution of the staff was as follows:[6]
Click here to view table

The Marine planners aboard the *Mount McKinley* were short on elbow room as well as personnel, time, and equipment. Although it was an advantage to have the planning groups of the Attack Force and Landing Force together, the ship did not provide enough space for both without crowding. Moreover, the already undermanned Marine contingent had to be further reduced late in August by sending several officers to Kobe to meet incoming units. Thus the G–2 section, to cite one example, consisted of only two officers, one of whom was detached on this duty for a week.

"The issuance of and adherence to a planning schedule was utterly impossible," commented the 1st Marine Division report. "Only by a virtual 'around the clock' working day, concurrent . . . planning by Attack Force (ComPhibGru One) and Landing Force (1st MarDiv), willing teamwork by both, and especially the amphibious 'know-how' of key staff members gained by long experience, was it possible to complete and issue . . . plans and orders for a most difficult . . . landing operation. The time-space factor denied any coordinated orientation, prohibited even the most elementary rehearsal, made it difficult to distribute orders, and gave subordinate units very little time for formulation and distribution of their plans."[7]

Command relationships during the embarkation and assault phases were as follows:
Click here to view table

All the top commanders were concentrated in Tokyo with the arrival of Admiral Struble on 25 August. This facilitated the planning and allowed important decisions to be worked out in conferences between the principal commanders.[8]

Planning was based mainly on studies made by ComPhibGru One as prospective Attack Force Commander. It was conducted entirely on a concurrent basis by the Attack Force and Landing Force groups aboard the *Mount McKinley*. No step was taken by either without the full knowledge and consent of the other.

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Chapter 4. The Planning Phase
X Corps Scheme of Maneuver

Army planning had been initiated by the Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group until 16 August, when the "Special Planning Staff" was set up at GHQ to issue directives for Operation Plan CHROMITE. Published on 12 August as CinCFE Operation Plan No. 100–B, it was based on these assumptions:

(a) that the North Korean ground advance would be stopped in time to permit the build-up of our forces in South Korea;

(b) that our forces in South Korea would be built up to the capability of mounting effective offensive operations against NKPA forces opposing them;

(c) that we retain air and naval supremacy in the area of operation;

(d) that the NKPA ground forces would not receive major reinforcements from the USSR or Red China;

(e) that there would be no major change in the basic disposition of the NKPA forces.[9]

It was understood from the beginning that the Special Plans Staff, headed by General Ruffner, would be the nucleus of the future X Corps staff. In order to have the benefit of specialized amphibious knowledge, ten Marine and two Navy officers of TTU Mobile Training Team Able were assigned on 19 August:

Col H. A. Forney:	Deputy Chief of Staff
LtCol J. Tabor:	Asst Coordinator, FSCC
LtCol C. E. Warren:	Asst G–4
Maj J. N. McLaughlin:	Asst G–3
Maj J. F. Warner:	Asst G–3
Maj C. P. Weiland:	Air Officer, FSCC
Maj V. H. Vogel:	Asst G–4
Capt H. S. Coppedge:	Asst G–2
Capt T. A. Manion:	Asst Signal Officer, FSCC
Capt V. J. Robinson:	Target Info Officer
Lt L. N. Lay, USN:	Asst Surgeon
Lt W. A. Sheltren, USN:	Asst NGF Officer, FSCC[10]

These officers did not begin their new assignment in time to contribute to the preliminary X Corps overall scheme of maneuver. The main provisions, as communicated to General Smith at General Ruffner's briefing conference of 23 August, were as follows:

(1) The 1st Marine Division, as the landing force, was to seize the urban area of Inchon (line A–A); to capture a beachhead (line B–B); to advance as rapidly as possible and seize Kimpo Airfield (line C–C); to clear out the south bank of the Han River (line D–D); to cross the river, seize Seoul and secure the commanding ground to the north (E–E); and, finally, to fortify and occupy this line with reduced forces until relieved (apparently by the 3d Infantry Division, still in the United States), whereupon the Division was to recross the Han and seize a line (F–F) about 25 miles southeast of Seoul.

(2) The 7th Infantry Division was to land behind the Marines and advance on their right flank to seize the commanding ground south of Seoul and the south bank of the river (line D–D); to continue the advance to phase line (E–E); and to conduct a reconnaissance in force to the south (line F–F). There, on the line from Suwon to Kyongan-ni, the 7th Infantry Division and 1st Marine Division would form the strategic anvil as Eighth Army forces advanced from the Pusan Perimeter in the role of hammer.

(3) The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was to furnish air support, air direction, and air warning for the Corps with units operating from Kimpo Airfield. It was also to be prepared to operate a control center ashore on order. [11]

The Special Plans Staff gave General Smith a study explaining the purposes of these maneuvers. “The B–B line in this study appeared to be a suitable beachhead line,” he commented, “and we decided to concentrate our efforts on plans for its seizure. Subsequent operations would be reserved for later consideration.”[12]

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Chapter 4. The Planning Phase
Intelligence Planning for Inchon

Good planning, of course, depended on accurate intelligence. All possible information about the objective area had been gathered by the staff of PhibGru One before the arrival of the 1st Marine Division planners. Air Force planes had taken hundreds of photographs at every stage of the tide. Hydrographic reports and navigation charts had been studied. Army and Navy men familiar with Inchon during the American occupation after World War II were interrogated as well as NKPA prisoners captured by the Eighth Army.

Although a great deal of useful data was compiled, some disturbing questions remained. How high were the sea walls of Inchon? Were the mud flats suitable for landing either troops or vehicles at low tide? Approximately how many NKPA guns were hidden on Wolmi-do?… These were some of the intelligence gaps which must be filled before an effective plan could be drawn up for an assault landing.

PhibGru One made its material available to the G–2 Section of the 1st Marine Division, and the two staffs worked together on the *Mount McKinley* in close cooperation. Attached were the 163d Military Intelligence Service Detachment (MISD) and the 441st Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) Team. Both of these units had been furnished by FECOM and consisted of Army commissioned and enlisted personnel as well as native Koreans serving in liaison, interpretation, and translation capacities.

Even when a question could not be answered conclusively, it was up to the G–2 sections of the Attack Force and Landing Force to arrive at a conclusion for planning purposes. For instance, it was never satisfactorily determined from available sources—JANIS publications, strategic engineering studies, Naval Attaché reports, and photographic interpretation reports—whether LVTs would be able to traverse the mud flats of the Inchon harbor area. And since there remained some doubt, planning proceeded on the assumption that the answer was negative. This proved to be the correct as well as the prudent decision, later developments revealed.

Another G–2 planning problem concerned the effect that the height of the sea walls would have upon the landing. Photographs at hourly stages of the tide made it appear that the masonry was too high for the dropping of ramps at any time. As a solution, G–2 officers hit upon a device reminiscent of the storming of castles during the Middle Ages. Scaling ladders were recommended with the suggestion that they be built of aluminum with hooks at one end to be attached to the masonry. Construction was started at Kobe, but the order could be only partially filled before D-day, and wooden ladders were built as substitutes.

It is hardly necessary to point out the importance of estimates as to the numbers and defensive capabilities of the enemy. Yet the G–2 sections on the *Mount McKinley* were up against a peculiar situation cited in the 1st Marine Division report:

"Our accumulated knowledge of the enemy's military tactics, prior to our landing at Inchon on 15 September 1950, consisted almost in its entirety of knowledge about the enemy's offense. . . . With but few exceptions, UN forces were forced to take a defensive stand and denied the opportunity to study large scale enemy defensive tactics from actual combat. Thus it was that our assault landing was made with relatively little prior knowledge regarding the enemy's probable reaction to a large-scale offensive of this nature, particularly when it involved the penetration into the very heart of his newly acquired domain"[13]

Photographic coverage showed the Inchon harbor area to be honey-combed with gun positions and other defensive installations. On the other hand, daily aerial observation indicated that most of them were not occupied.

G–2 conclusions during the planning phase often had to be based on such conflicting evidence, even though the penalties of faulty interpretation might be drastic. But after being viewed with due suspicion, signs of

negative enemy activity were finally accepted as valid in estimates of light to moderate NKPA resistance.

"Sadly lacking as was information on the objective area," commented the Division G–2 report, "more so was that on the enemy in the area." Early in September, however, the Attack Force and Landing Force concurred in the initial X Corps estimate of 1,500 to 2,500 NKPA troops in the immediate area, consisting largely of newly raised personnel.[14]

Radio reports of first-hand observations in the objective area, though coming too late for initial planning purposes, confirmed some of the G–2 estimates. This dangerous mission was undertaken by Lieutenant Eugene F. Clark, a naval officer on General MacArthur's JSPOG staff. U.S. and British Marines provided an escort on 1 September when the British destroyer *Charity* brought him from Sasebo to a point along the coast where the South Korean patrol vessel PC 703 waited to land him at Yonghung-do, an island about 15 miles southwest of Inchon.[15]

Clark went ashore with a small arsenal of firearms, grenades and ammunition, as well as 30 cases of C rations and 200 pounds of rice. He quickly made allies of the 400 friendly Korean inhabitants of the island and organized his own private little "army" of about 150 youths from 14 to 18 years old. These "troops" were posted about Yonghung-do for security, since the near-by island, Taebu-do, was occupied by 400 NKPA soldiers within wading distance at low tide.

The naval officer had no illusions as to what his fate might be in the event of capture. Day and night, he kept a grenade within reach, since he did not intend to be taken alive. When the long expected enemy attack from Taebu-do materialized, he commandeered a "one-lung" South Korean motor sampan and fought it out with the NKPA motor sampan escorting boats filled with soldiers. The enemy began the strange "naval" battle with a few badly aimed rounds from a 37mm tank gun. Clark and his crew of three friendly Koreans finished it with a long burst from a .50 caliber machine gun. After sinking the NKPA motor sampan, he destroyed another boat with 18 soldiers aboard and captured three prisoners for questioning.

One night the intrepid lieutenant rowed a dinghy to the Inchon sea wall. When the tide went out, he tested the mire by wading in it up to his waist. This experience led to the sending of a radio report, "Inchon not suitable for landing either troops or vehicles across the mud."

Korean youths, posing as fishermen, brought intelligence which Clark included in his daily radio messages. One of these spies made an effort to count the guns on Wolmi-do and describe the locations. Others took measurements of the Inchon sea wall and penetrated as far inland as Seoul to report numbers and positions of NKPA troops.

Clark declined all offers to evacuate him. As the climax of his exploit, he managed to restore the usefulness of the lighthouse on Palmi Island which the enemy had put out of commission. This structure, the former entrance beacon for Inchon by way of Flying Fish channel, served him as a refuge when he had to leave Yonghung-do hurriedly just ahead of NKPA troops who landed in force and butchered 50 civilians of both sexes. Clark, who received a Silver Star, stuck it out on Palmi until midnight of 14 September, when he turned on the beacon light to guide the amphibious task force.

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Chapter 4. The Planning Phase
The Landing Force Plan

The decisions behind the Landing Force Plan—1st Marine Division OpnO 2–50—obviously had to be made without benefit of Lieutenant Clark's reports, since the publication date was 4 September 1950.[16] It is to the credit of these conclusions, therefore, that so few of them had to be corrected in the light of first-hand evidence from the objective area.

Although CG X Corps was the assigned Expeditionary Troops Commander, planning on the Corps level was concerned almost entirely with the exploitation phase following the seizure of the beachhead. All Landing Force planning was done on the *Mount McKinley* by the Division in close coordination with PhibGru One.

The first consideration, as viewed by the Navy planners, was that the tides, currents, and tortuous channels of Inchon made necessary a four-hour daylight approach to the transport area. This meant that 1130, at low tide, was the earliest hour of arrival; and not until about 1700 would the next high tide provide enough water for an assault landing.

On 15 September a maximum high tide of 31 feet could be expected at 1919. Evening twilight came at 1909. It was estimated initially that 23 feet of water would take the LCVPs and LVTs over the mud flats, but that 29 feet were necessary for the beaching of the LSTs.

In view of these conditions, PhibGru One planners concluded that 1700 was the best time for landing the LCVPs and LVTs, and it was decided to beach the LSTs at about 1900. Simultaneous landings of troops on Wolmi-do and the mainland were contemplated.

This was the point of departure for Division planners. They maintained that Wolmi-do was the key terrain feature, and that it should be secured first in a separate landing. The logical course, according to the Marines, would be to utilize the morning high tide for the seizure of this island commanding the waterfront. The enemy would be given the whole day in which to prepare for the attack on the mainland; but the Landing Force could also utilize this period for cleaning up Wolmi-do and moving in supporting artillery.

It was typical of the harmony prevailing between the two planning groups on the *Mount McKinley* that PhibGru One immediately accepted the concept of a double-barreled attack. The rub was that a night approach would be necessary to assault Wolmi-do at 0600 on the morning high tide, and the Navy doubted the feasibility of a movement of the slow-moving and unmaneuverable APAs, AKAs, and LSTs through winding, mud-lined channels in the darkness.

At length a compromise was reached with the decision to employ DD, APD, and LSD types primarily, which were more maneuverable in addition to being equipped with radar navigational instruments.[17]

The morning landing on Wolmi-do was to be made with a single battalion of the 5th Marines, to be designated by the Brigade. On the mainland the remaining two battalions would land with the evening high tide on RED Beach, just north of the causeway connecting the island with the city, while two battalions of the 11th Marines landed in support on Wolmi-do. Meanwhile the 1st Marines was to hit BLUE Beach, southeast of the urban area. And after driving rapidly inland to consolidate their positions before nightfall, the two Marine regiments were to make a junction in the morning and seize the beachhead while the 17th ROK Regiment (later replaced by 1st KMC Regiment) mopped up the city streets.

Marine G–4 planners suggested one of the most daring of all the calculated risks. This was the decision to use LCVPs for the RED Beach landings because their comparative speed would clear the landing area for the beaching of eight LSTs—all that could be crammed into the narrow confines of this strip of urban waterfront.

Each was to be loaded with ammunition, rations, water, and fuel. Obviously these Navy workhorses, nicknamed “large slow targets”, would be easy marks for NKPA shore guns, but this was a chance that had to be taken if the assault troops were to be adequately supplied.

There was not time, of course, to unload and retract the ships during the period of evening high tide. They must be unloaded during the night and taken out on the morning tide.

Since it was not considered feasible to land LSTs on BLUE Beach, that area would not be developed beyond the needs of the immediate assault. For this purpose, 16 preloaded LVTs were to be used as floating dumps until the 1st Marines could link up with the other regiment.

These were the essentials of the Landing Force plan. H-hour was ultimately determined from a study of late photographs which brought about a slight change in estimates. Since a tide of 25 feet (two feet higher than the initial estimate) appeared to be necessary for the LCVPs and LVTs to reach the sea wall, H-hour was set at 1730 instead of 1700. The completed Landing Force plan provided for these steps:

(1) BLT–3 of RCT–5 to land on Beach GREEN at L-hour on D-day and seize Wolmi-do.

(2) RCT–5 (- BLT–3) to land on Beach RED at H-hour, seize Objective O-A, effect a juncture with RCT–1, and prepare for further operations to the east in coordination with RCT–1 to seize the FBHL.

(3) RCT–1, to land on Beach BLUE, with two battalions in assault, seize Objective O–1, and prepare for further operations to the east in coordination with RCT–5 to seize the FBHL.

(4) 11th Marines (– 3d Bn) (96th F. A. Bn, USA, attached) to land 1st and 2d Bns on Beach GREEN at H-hour, occupy positions on Wolmi-do and support seizure of the beachhead with priority of fires to RCT–1. Remainder of artillery to land on call.

(5) ROK Marines, initially in Division reserve, to land over Beach RED on call and conduct operations to occupy the city of Inchon in coordination with RCT–5.

(6) 1st Tank Bn (–) (Reinf.) to be prepared to land on order one company in LSU on Beach GREEN, remainder of battalion on order on beaches to be designated.

(7) 1st Engr Bn (–) to land on Beach RED or in harbor on order, assume control of detached companies on order, and support seizure of beachhead as directed. Priority to opening and maintaining MSR along southern edge of the city to RCT–1 zone of action.

(8) 1st Shore Party Bn (–) to land on order on Beach RED or in harbor and assume control of shore party activities on Beaches RED and GREEN.

(9) 1st Amph Trac Bn to transport and land elements of RCT–1 on Beach BLUE and continue support of RCT–1 until released.

(10) 2d Engr Spl Brig, USA (Reinf.) to furnish ships platoons and augment Division shore party as requested. After landing and when directed, to assume operational control of Division shore party and responsibility for control of all port operations. To provide logistical support of 1st MarDiv.

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Chapter 4. The Planning Phase
Availability of Brigade Troops

The old recipe for rabbit stew began, "First, catch your rabbit." And while the Landing Force plan was being formulated, General Smith had no assurance for a few days that he could count on having the whole of his landing force available.

General Almond informed the Marine general on 23 August that the release of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade for participation in the Inchon landing would depend on the military situation. He seemed doubtful and added that the withdrawal of the Marines would be bad for Eighth Army morale.

The Attack Force and Landing Force began their planning, however, on the basis of Brigade availability. It had been the intention of CinCFE to employ a full Marine division, but an embarkation date of 1 September would not permit the 7th Marines to arrive in time. This left the 1st Marines as the only RCT of the Landing Force unless the 5th Marines and other Brigade units could be released.

On 30 August, Smith brought up the issue again in a dispatch to X Corps, whereupon CinCFE issued an order making the Brigade troops available to the Division on 4 September.

This might have settled the issue if the enemy had not launched an all-out offensive on 1 September to smash through the Pusan Perimeter. Although the Brigade had already sent heavy equipment to Pusan for embarkation, the Marines were rushed up to the front on 2 September as a mobile reserve. That same day the order for their release was revoked.

There could be no doubt about the gravity of the military situation. Thirteen NKPA divisions were making a final effort, and the Marines were needed in the Naktong Bulge sector, where the Korean Reds were attempting to cut the Pusan-Taegu lifeline.

On the other hand, time was also running out for the Inchon planners. Colonel Forney, the new deputy chief of staff for X Corps, informed Smith on 2 September that Almond planned to use the 32d Infantry of the 7th Infantry Division if the 7th Marines could not arrive in time for the Inchon landing. Recently, the cadres of this Army division had been brought up to strength with 8,000 South Koreans. The remaining 12,000 U.S. troops had received no adequate amphibious training, though instructors from Training Team Able had made a start with some of the units.

This turn of affairs resulted in a meeting in General Almond's office. The Navy was represented by Admirals Joy, Struble, and Doyle; the Army by Generals Almond, Ruffner, and Wright; and the Marines by General Smith.

Wright opened the discussion by stating that Walker needed the Brigade troops urgently as a mobile reserve to hold the line in the current NKPA offensive. Almond conceded that the question of Brigade availability must be decided on a basis of Eighth Army requirements and tactical considerations. But if the 5th Marines could not be released, he reiterated his decision to substitute the 32d Infantry for the Inchon operation.

Admiral Joy declared that the success of the Inchon assault depended on the employment of Marines trained in amphibious techniques; and he called upon Smith for his opinion. The Marine general said that a hastily instructed unit could not be expected to take the place of a combat-experienced regiment in the Landing Force, and that last-minute substitutions of this sort could not be made in complicated ship-to-shore landings without courting trouble. He added that it would be necessary in such an event to land in column on one beach instead of two, with the 1st Marines in advance of the 32d Infantry. These comments had the support of Doyle, who agreed that the availability of the 5th Marines might mean the difference between success and failure at Inchon.

At this point Admiral Struble commented that the issue boiled down to the need for a mobile Eighth Army reserve. He suggested as a compromise that a regiment of the 7th Infantry Division be embarked and moved to Pusan as a floating reserve to be landed in an emergency as a substitute for the 5th Marines. This solution was accepted. Almond called up Eighth Army Headquarters immediately, and within an hour Wright telephoned to inform Smith that the Brigade would be relieved at midnight on 5 September.[18]

As it turned out, the 17th Infantry of the 7th Infantry Division was embarked and transferred to Pusan to substitute for the 5th Marines, with Marine officers of Training Team Able assisting in the outloading. After the amphibious assault, the regiment landed administratively at Inchon to rejoin its parent unit.

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Chapter 4. The Planning Phase
Naval Gunfire and Rockets

At a conference on 1 September called by Admiral Struble and attended by Admirals Richard W. Ruble, John M. Higgins, and Sir William G. Andrewes (RN)[19] in addition to Generals Ruffner and Smith, it was tentatively agreed that the cruisers would begin the bombardment on the morning of D-minus 1, and the destroyers that afternoon after a napalm air strike had been conducted against Wolmi-do on D-minus 4.

At another naval gunfire conference two days later, the napalm strike was delayed until D-minus 3. On 8 September, when Admiral Struble held his final meeting, PhibGru One and the 1st Marine Division agreed on the scope and timing of naval gunfire support. It was decided, therefore, that the bombardment would commence on D-minus 2 and be repeated if necessary on D-minus 1.[20]

During the following week, plans were worked out in detail. The beachhead was divided into 52 target areas, including two on Wolmi-do and one on Sowolmi-do. In the channel to the west and southwest of the port, imaginary lines marked off three fire support areas for the ships, numbered in order from south to north.
Click here to view map

On D-day the four cruisers would stand in from 13,000 to 15,000 yards offshore in Fire Support Area I, while the destroyers in FSAs II and III manned stations 800 to 6,000 yards from the beach. The three LSMRs would first support the Wolmi-do landing from close-in positions to the north and west of the island. Later, for H-hour, one of the rocket ships was to remain northward to soften up RED Beach, and the other two would displace to the vicinity of BLUE Beach.[21]

From L-minus 45 to L-minus 2, the cruisers and destroyers would dump a total of 2,845 shells on Inchon and its outlying island, each ship concentrating on specifically assigned target areas. From L-minus 15 to L-minus 2, each of the three LSMRs would saturate Wolmi-do with 1,000 5–inch rockets. Most of the ships were to cease fire two minutes before the landing on GREEN Beach, when Marine planes strafed possible enemy positions for final shock effect. Four of the destroyers would continue to pound Inchon targets with 55 shells during the short air attack.

Another intricate piece in the mosaic of destruction was the mission assigned to one LSMR for the period immediately preceding and following the landing of 3/5. The lone rocket ship would lumber parallel to Wolmi-do's shoreline, across the front of the advancing first wave, and pour 40mm shells into the beach area. Clearing the route of approach to GREEN Beach just in time for the landing craft to speed by, the LSMR was to continue southward along the coast and direct its heavy automatic fire at the slopes in advance of the attacking troops.

Once Wolmi-do was secured, the full fury of the support ships would rain down on targets in the Inchon area. From H-minus 180 to H-minus 5, the cruisers and destroyers were scheduled to blast their assigned targets with a total of 2,875 shells. Chiming in at H-minus 25 with 2,000 rockets apiece, the LSMRs would pulverize RED and BLUE Beaches until five minutes before the landings by the two Marine regiments. At that time, all ships must cease fire to clear the way for strafing Corsairs and Navy Skyraiders.

The meticulous planning left nothing to chance, even with the assumption that a foothold would be successfully established by darkness. During the night of D-day, the cruisers would expend an additional 250 shells on interdictory missions, and the destroyers were authorized to fire a total of 300 5–inch rounds on call from the infantry. To help thwart any possible enemy ambitions at dawn of D-plus 1, the cruisers would be prepared to unload 300 shells for interdiction and call fires, while the destroyers stood poised with the same number of high-explosive missiles plus 300 illuminating shells.

Other details of the elaborate plan dealt with the coordination of naval gunfire, air, artillery, mortars, and rockets. At certain times, for example, Marine and Navy gunners could fire only below a maximum trajectory of 1100 feet, so that planes, whose minimum altitude was set at 1500 feet, could pass safely over Inchon during strikes on adjacent areas. During those periods when close support Corsairs were scheduled to descend on beachhead targets, all other heavy weapons would fire completely clear of broad circles defining strike areas for the air missions.

More tables and instructions in the formidable appendixes of Admiral Doyle's operation order assigned shore fire control parties their ships and radio frequencies, ships their battery missions and ammunition allowances, and a host of other tasks and responsibilities.

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Chapter 4. The Planning Phase
Air Support for Inchon

Air support, of course, was closely related to naval gunfire planning. After the arrival of CG 1st MAW and his staff at Tokyo on 3 September, part of the group proceeded at once to Itami Air Force Base while General Harris and selected staff members remained at Tokyo for planning conferences.

Air support planning for Inchon was based on the decision that the sky over the objective area was to be divided between the organic air units of JTF–7 and X Corps.

JTF–7 counted on its fast carrier task force, TF–77, to gain air supremacy and furnish deep support and interdiction strikes. Close support for the landing was to be provided by the two squadrons of TG–90.5, on board the CVEs *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait,* which had been the main air components of MAG–33 in support of the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade. In addition, the Attack Force commander could also call upon the aircraft of TF–77 for close support.

Organic air support for X Corps was to be the mission of the Tactical Air Control set up under the operational control of the corps commander and the direct command of General Cushman. The inspiration for this organization came from Marine officers on the staff of X Corps. Their suggestions were accepted by General Almond, who used his authority as FECOM chief of staff to put the idea into effect.

MAG–33 was designated by General Harris from the Forward Echelon, 1st MAW, to serve as TAC X Corps, with VMFs 212 and 312 in addition to VMF(N)–542 and the rear echelon of VMF(N)–513. These units were not to be assigned, however, until X Corps assumed control of operations in the objective area, whereupon they would be based at Kimpo Airfield. Meanwhile, they remained under the administrative control of ComNavFE and MAG–12, with headquarters at the Itami AFB in Japan. The two Marine carrier-based squadrons and the forward echelon of VMF(N)–513, having come out to Korea in August as units of MAG–33, continued to be assigned temporarily to that group for administrative purposes.[22]

TAC X Corps was activated on 8 September, just six days before its components landed in Japan. 1st MAW planners designated the Air Support Section of MTACS–2, which had controlled air support for the Brigade, to continue in that capacity for the Landing Force and later for the entire X Corps. Arrangements were made with the Combat Cargo Command, FEAF, to airlift aviation fuel and ammunition from Japan to Kimpo Airfield, after its capture, until such supplies could be transported by sea.

Marine air units were also affected, of course, by the planning which the 1st Marine Division air and naval gunfire representatives of the Fire Support Coordination Center had already accomplished. Working aboard the *Mount McKinley* in conjunction with their opposite numbers of PhibGru One, the FSCC group had been busy since its arrival in Japan on 18 August. Planning was conducted with the CO 11th Marines after the artillery regiment landed in Japan, and the resulting decisions coordinated with air and naval gunfire plans.

The 1st MAW completed its planning on 9 September. General Cushman was designated Tactical Air Commander, X Corps, on that date and departed for the objective area the next day with the air elements scheduled to proceed by ship.

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Chapter 5. Embarkation and Assault

On 30 August, ComNavFE issued his Operation Plan 108–50, assigning to JTF–7, of which X Corps was a part, the mission of seizing by amphibious assault a beachhead at Inchon.

X Corps OpnO No. 1 was dated on the 28th, though not received by Division until the 30th. By that time, Division planning had made so much progress that Embarkation Order 1–50 was issued on the last day of the month, followed on 4 September by the final draft of Division OpnO 2-50. Operations orders of JTF–7 and TF–90 were issued concurrently.

This meant that the assault RCTs, contrary to amphibious doctrine, were to receive rigid landing plans drawn up completely by the Division. Lack of time caused this variation from usual procedure, but General Smith had confidence in the ability of his troops to overcome the handicap. “Under the circumstances,” he asserted, “adoption of such methods was justified by the common background and training of all elements and individuals in amphibious doctrine, procedures, tactics, and techniques.”[1]

The most that could be done was to summon Brigade staff officers from Korea for a conference. Colonel Edward D. Snedeker (Chief of Staff), Captain Eugene R. Hering, Jr., USN (Brigade Surgeon), Lieutenant Colonel Arthur A. Chidester (G–4), and Major Donald W. Sherman (G–1) arrived on board the *Mount McKinley* for a conference on 28 August and the following day. The Brigade G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L. Stewart, reported as liaison officer on the 31st. When he returned to the front, the 5th Marines was attacking, and he discussed landing schedules with Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray while the regimental commander directed the action.

“This,” remarked General Smith, “was hardly in accordance with accepted procedure for planning amphibious operations.”[2]

The recommendation of Brigade staff officers that the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, be designated for the assault on Wolmi-do was accepted by Division planners. Colonel Snedeker also proposed that the 1st Korean Marine Corps (KMC) Regiment of nearly 3,000 men be substituted for the 17th ROK Regiment, which he said was committed in the Pusan Perimeter and might not be available. The change was approved by GHQ on 3 September, with the Eighth Army being directed to provide weapons for the newcomers.

This was the beginning of a relationship that would find the KMCs serving with distinction alongside the men of the 1st Marine Division and eventually becoming a fourth infantry regiment of the Division. Activated in 1949 by the Republic of Korea, the unit took part in anti-guerrilla operations until the NKPA invasion. After the outbreak of hostilities, the KMCs fought creditably in UN delaying actions in southwest Korea. The turning point came when they were attached to the 1st Marine Division and sent to Pusan for test-firing of their new weapons before embarking for Inchon. Immediately the Koreans commenced to model themselves after U.S. Marines so assiduously as to win respect for their spirit and rugged fighting qualities.[3] They were quick to learn, despite the language handicap, and showed aptitude in mechanical respects.

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Chapter 5. Embarkation and Assault
Landing of 1st Marine Division

The main body of the 1st Marine Division troops landed at Kobe from 29 August to 3 September. Marine officers sent in advance to that seaport had found the authorities there "very cooperative" and brought back to Tokyo a billeting plan which General Smith approved. Since the facilities in and about Kobe were limited, two large APs were designated as barracks ships, thus making available a Marine labor pool at the docks.

At best, every hour was needed for the tremendous task of transferring cargo from merchant type shipping into assault shipping.[4] There was cause for anxiety, therefore, when a telephone message informed the command of the 1st Marine Division on 3 September that Typhoon JANE had struck Kobe with winds of 74 miles per hour. First reports had it that the *Marine Phoenix* was on the bottom with all of the Division's signal gear. Several ships were said to have broken their moorings and gone adrift; the docks were reported under 4 feet of water, and loose cargo on the piers had been inundated by breakers.

Later accounts proved to be less alarming. The *Marine Phoenix,* having merely developed a bad list as a result of shifting cargo, was soon righted. Nor was the other damage as serious as had at first been supposed. But 24 hours were lost from the tight reloading schedule while Typhoon JANE kicked up her heels, and time was one commodity that could not be replaced. All operations at Kobe had to be speeded up to pay for this delay.

On 4 September the *Mount McKinley* set sail for Kobe, arriving at 1445 the next day to be welcomed by an Army band at the pier. The soothing powers of music were needed by Marine officers who learned that fire had broken out in the hold of the *Noonday* as she belatedly approached Kobe. This "Jonah" had taken so long to load at San Diego that she lagged behind the others, and now large quantities of much-needed Marine clothing were apparently ruined by water when the fire was extinguished. Once again the Army came to the rescue with wholehearted cooperation by taking the water-soaked boxes to a reclamation depot where the garments were dried, repackaged and sent back to the docks in time for loading out on the originally scheduled ships.

Only the most basic troop training could be conducted at Kobe to supplement the individual and amphibious instruction the men had received on shipboard. At this time, moreover, an order from the Secretary of the Navy made it necessary to reduce the size of the landing force by withdrawing about 500 Marines who had not yet reached their 18th birthday. They were transferred to the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion, which was to be left behind at Kobe when the Division embarked for Inchon.

This unit had been organized at Camp Pendleton in accordance with a directive from the Commandant. It was found necessary, however, to transfer most of its combat-ready men to the 1st Tank Battalion in order to bring that outfit up to full strength. The tank battalion was given priority because its vehicles would be used throughout the operation while the armored amphibians might be employed only occasionally. As a consequence, the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion left San Diego with new personnel lacking in the skills to make it fully combat ready.

Lieutenant Colonel Francis H. Cooper, the commanding officer, recommended at Kobe that the unit be withheld from action until drivers, gunners, and maintenance crews could be properly trained. General Smith and his staff concurred, having learned that a trained Army unit, Company A of the 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, could be made available. Orders were given for Cooper's battalion to remain at Kobe, therefore, with the 17-year-old Marines attached.

Several other U.S. Army units were to take part along with the Marines—the 96th Field Artillery Battalion, the 2d Engineer Special Brigade, the 73d Engineer (c) Battalion, the 73d Tank Battalion, the 50th

Engineer Port Construction Company, and the 65th Ordnance and Ammunition Company. These units comprised a total of about 2,750 troops.

Plans called for the commanding officer of the 2d Engineer Special Brigade to head a logistical task organization which also included several Marine units—the 1st Shore Party Battalion, the 1st Combat Service Group, and the 7th Motor Transport Battalion. The Shore Party troops were to initiate unloading at the objective, whereupon the over-all control would pass to the 2d Engineer Special Brigade, on order, to insure continuity of development of unloading facilities.[5]

Division service units, in accordance with current directives, were to carry the 30-day replenishment of spare parts appropriate to the unit concerned. Although the Combat Service Group had neither spare parts nor supplies, it was to have custody of both after the landing. Thus the units would be freed immediately to move away from the beach in support of the Division as it drove toward Kimpo and Seoul.[6]

At Kobe the men of the 1st Marine Division were required to leave the full clothing bags they had brought from San Diego and embark for Inchon with field transport packs containing only the most essential items. This meant that some 25,000 sea bags must be stored at the Japanese port in such a way that future casualties and rotation drafts could reclaim their personal effects without delay. As a reminder of the grim task ahead, provisions must be also made to return to proper custody the effects of deceased personnel.

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Chapter 5. Embarkation and Assault
Plan to Seize Kimpo Airfield

Intelligence reports on the eve of embarkation did not depart from earlier estimates of a maximum of 2,500 NKPA troops in the objective area. From 400 to 500 were believed to be garrisoning Wolmi-do, 500 defending Kimpo, and the balance stationed in and about Inchon.[7] Despite the estimates of low to moderate enemy resistance, however, General Smith differed with the command of X Corps when a commando-type raid on Kimpo was proposed.

The question came up on 8 September at a conference held at Kobe on the *Mount McKinley* and attended by Generals Hickey and Smith, Admiral Doyle and Colonel Louis B. Ely, USA. Ely commanded the newly formed X Corps Special Operations Company composed of 124 U.S. Army troops briefly trained by TTU instructors in demolitions, individual combat and ship-to-shore movements in rubber boats.[8] General Almond's plan called for this company, reinforced by Marines, to embark at Kobe on 10 September in a British frigate and transfer to a South Korean picket boat. Upon arrival at the objective area on D-day, the raiders were to paddle three miles in rubber boats to the north of the Attack Force, land under cover of darkness, and move inland for a surprise attack on Kimpo at dawn.

General Almond felt it necessary to seize the airfield at the earliest possible moment. Surprise, he felt, would reduce the risks. General Smith pointed out, however, that Colonel Ely's men would have to row their rubber boats against a strong tide and cross a wide expanse of mud flats on foot. His radios could only reach four miles, and his presence in the 1st Marine Division's zone of action would restrict the use of naval gunfire and air support. Finally, said the Marine general, it was not certain that the raiders could hold the airfield even if they took it.[9]

This conference did not settle the issue. Colonel Williams, the Division chief of staff, was requested in a telephone call followed by a dispatch from the G–1 Section of GHQ to turn over 100 specially qualified Marines to Ely's company. Smith sent a dispatch requesting reconsideration. He cited the battle casualties of the Brigade, which had not been replaced, and the 500 under-age Marines to be left behind at Kobe. As a final objection, many of his best qualified men had already embarked on the LSTs.

General Shepherd sent a dispatch supporting the 1st Marine Division commander, and the order from GHQ was recalled.[10]

Another proposal by General Almond to speed up the drive inland from the beachhead was relayed to General Smith aboard the *Mount McKinley* on 9 September by Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes, ADC of the 7th Infantry Division. This was a plan to land a battalion of the 32d Infantry on GREEN Beach, Wolmi-do, with a mission of racing across the causeway on the late afternoon of D-day and moving rapidly down the road to seize the high ground south of Seoul, more than 20 miles inland. The 1st Marine Division was requested to furnish five tanks in support of the enterprise tentatively scheduled to take place while two battalions of Marine artillery were landing on Wolmi-do and two Marine rifle regiments were landing on the Inchon beaches.

This idea struck Smith as being extremely optimistic. Without going into the tactical objections, he decided that the scheme was logistically impracticable.[11]

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Chapter 5. Embarkation and Assault
Shipping Assigned to Marines

The embarkation at Kobe was not completed without some confusion. Much of the equipment was in its original containers and had never been checked or identified. Large quantities of Class I, III, and V supplies, distributed throughout the incoming shipping, had to be reassembled and reassigned for the outloading. In the lack of suitable storage areas near the piers, Classes III and V were off-loaded into Japanese barges and held in floating storage until they could be reloaded into assault shipping.[12]

Inter-pier transfer of cargo was avoided whenever possible by berthing incoming shipping so that units could load directly into assault shipping. Unfortunately, this could not be done in some instances, since the LST landing was outside but adjacent to the pier area.

Facilities for the embarkation of the Brigade at Pusan were satisfactory, with pier space for three APAs and one AKA at one pier and an LSD at another. All of the assigned LSTs could beach simultaneously along the sea wall.

Only Marine amphibious experience enabled the Division to complete its tremendous task at Kobe in spite of the time lost as a result of Typhoon JANE. The shipping tentatively assigned by X Corps consisted of one AGC, six APAs, eight AKAs, three LSDs, one LSM, three APDs, 12 LSUs, and 47 LSTs. This last figure included 17 Navy-manned and 30 SCAJAP (Japanese-manned) LSTs. The troop list of approximately 29,000 men was broken down by the Division into the following six embarkation groups with their assigned shipping:

ABLE: Division Troops--1 AGC; 1st CSG--2 APAs, 5 AKAs, 9 LSTs, 1 LSM, and 3 LSUs (towed to objective area by tugs

BAKER: 1st Marine (Reinf)--1 APA; 1st Amtrac Bn--12 LSTs

CHARLIE: 5th Marines (Reinf)--3 APAs; 73d Tank Bn, USA--12 LSTs, 3 APDs, and 1 LSD with 3 LSUs

DOG: 11th Marines--1 AKA and 6 LSTs

EASY: 1st Tank Bn--2 LSDs with 3 LSUs each and 4 LSTs (later increased to 6)

FOX: 2d Engr Spec Brig, USA--1 AKA; 96th FA Bn, USA--4 LSTs

Four of these groups were to embark from Kobe while CHARLIE mounted out from Pusan and FOX from Yokohama, Yokosuka, and Camp McGill in Japan.[13] The main body of the Division's third rifle regiment, the 7th Marines, was scheduled to land in Japan on 17 September. Colonel Litzenberg, the commanding officer, arrived at Itami Airfield on the 6th, having flown from Camp Pendleton ahead of his troops to make arrangements.

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Chapter 5. Embarkation and Assault
Movement to the Objective Area

Command relationships during the assault and embarkation phase were as follows:
Click here to view table

The movement of JTF–7 to the objective area was planned in the most exacting detail, owing to the dispersion of the ships to begin with, the need for secrecy, and the limited time. Another complication entered the picture at the last minute, when a second typhoon loomed on the Pacific horizon with considerably more menace than its exotic name would imply.

Navy meteorologists had been plotting the movement of Typhoon KEZIA since the first signs of turbulence near the Marianas Islands on 6 September. Generating winds of 100 miles per hour three days later, the typhoon was churning a steady course toward the East China Sea and Tsushima Strait, where it was expected to hit on 12 or 13 September. The timing could not have been worse as far as Admiral Doyle and General Smith were concerned. KEZIA threatened to strike the ships of the task force during the last stages of embarkation and the first phase of the approach to Inchon. And any serious disruption of the Navy's delicate timetable would place the 15 September deadline hopelessly beyond reach.

With the carriers, cruisers, and destroyers scheduled to be in the Yellow Sea, beyond the path of the storm, Admiral Doyle's amphibious vessels were the most imperiled elements. The Attack Force Commander planned to move his ships to the objective area in six increments, three of them loading in Japan, one in Pusan, and two at both places simultaneously. Because of the last two, certain rendezvous areas were designated so that fragments of a group could converge at sea to form the whole. Obviously, then, the mathematics of navigation was a dominant factor. Success hinged on coordination in terms of hours, not weeks or days.

Each of the six increments had its own time schedule for an independent voyage. The route to Inchon was marked off on maps by a chain of check points, the most significant of which bore the code names ARKANSAS, IOWA, and CALIFORNIA. The first two, lying in the East China Sea off the southwestern tip of Korea, formed the junction of the sea lanes from Japan and Pusan. Consequently, there was no alternative to their remaining fixed in the direct path of the oncoming typhoon. Point CALIFORNIA was important in that it marked the end of the open sea phase and the beginning of the treacherous offshore approach to Inchon via Flying Fish and East channels.[14]
Click here to view map

The departure schedule for the Attack Force was set out in Doyle's Operation Order 14–50 as follows:

Pontoon Movement Group (2 ATFs, 3 LSUs, 1 YTB, 1 YW): Yokohama, 5 Sep.

LSMR Movement Element (3 LSMRs): Yokohama, 9 Sep.

Tractor Movement Element A (LSM, 1 AMS, 1 AM, 1 ARS, 2 LSDs, 36 LSTs): Kobe, 10 Sep.

Tractor Movement Element B (1 ARL, 1 PF, 1 PCEC, 12 LSTs): Kobe, 10 Sep.

Transport Movement Group (5 APAs, 8 AKAs, 1 AP, 2 PFs): Kobe, 12 Sep.

Advanced Attack Group (Wolmi-do) (1 LSD, 3 APDs): Pusan, 13 Sep.

The chart shows the basic pattern, which would evolve only after considerable shuffling and secondary routing. For instance, two vessels of the cumbersome Pontoon Movement Group, carrying vital equipment for the expansion of Inchon's port facilities, would not leave Sasebo until 11 September. They were to join the slow Yokohama convoy near Point IOWA the same day. Tractor Elements A and B, the latter trailing at a distance of six miles, would pick up the Pusan LSTs at IOWA on 13 September. The Kobe contingent of the Transport

Movement Group was to pass through Point ARKANSAS on the 14th, joining the *Cavalier, Pickaway, Henrico,* and *Seminole* from Pusan.

All ship movements took place on schedule until the morning of 11 September, when angry ocean swells off the coast of Japan marked the approach of KEZIA. Winds at the center of the typhoon were estimated at 125 miles per hour, but Admiral Doyle based his decisions on the assumption that the storm would curve off to the north instead of colliding with the invasion armada in full force. He was taking a calculated risk, therefore, when he ordered the Transport Movement Group at Kobe to weigh anchor on the 11th, a day ahead of schedule, and proceed to the objective area. The LSTs, already on their way, were now out of danger; and Doyle believed that advancing the sailing date would enable the AKAs and APAs to escape the worst of the typhoon.

The *Mount McKinley*, with Doyle, Smith, and their staffs aboard, departed Kobe at 1030 on the 11th. As the ship rolled and pitched in heavy seas, the Attack Force Commander remarked that KEZIA was one of the worst storms he had ever encountered.[15]

This was also the opinion of Captain Cameron Briggs, USN, then fighting it out with KEZIA in an effort to reach Sasebo with the carrier *Boxer* and its 96 planes plus 14 extra aircraft taken aboard at Pearl Harbor. It was necessary to launch these spares and land them on Okinawa before he could finally make port on the 12th and prepare to mount out two days later for Inchon.[16]

On 12 September the *Mount McKinley* overtook the AKAs and APAs. They had reversed course, apparently on the assumption that they could not get around the typhoon. If Doyle had not ordered the heaving vessels to circle about and follow the flagship through the storm, their chances for meeting the 15 September deadline at Inchon would have vanished like the wind-whipped spray.[17]

There was no joy in the troop compartments as the transports plowed through mountains of water. But Doyle was winning his gamble that the typhoon would slowly veer off to the north, and starting the Transport Group a day early proved to be a sound decision. Thanks to the admiral's judgment and resolution, every ship weathered the storm and approached Point ARKANSAS on schedule.

After rounding Kyushu on 12 September, the *Mount McKinley* docked at Sasebo that evening to pick up General MacArthur with his party of GHQ and X Corps officers. The proper ship for this purpose was Admiral Struble's flagship, the USS *Rochester*. But CinCFE preferred the *Mount McKinley* despite the fact that an AGC was designed for the staffs of an Attack Force and Landing Force and had no accommodations suited to a party including seven general officers. The ship was warped in by two tugs and CinCFE came aboard. General Shepherd had previously been assigned by General MacArthur to his staff for temporary duty as amphibious adviser and personal liaison officer to the 1st Marine Division. The Marine general was accompanied by Colonel V. H. Krulak, G–3 of FMFPac, and his personal aide, Major J. B. Ord.

In less than an hour the *Mount McKinley* was back on the high seas, straining through the darkness toward Korea.[18]

All elements of the Attack Force completed the last leg of the voyage without incident on 14 September. Headquarters of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, rode the only cripple, an LST partially incapacitated by an engine breakdown. Fortunately, an ocean-going tug was on hand to tow the ailing vessel at eight knots—sufficient speed to get her to the objective area on time.

The Yellow Sea was quiet as the columns of ships closed on Point CALIFORNIA and Korea's coastline. Nothing was taken for granted, and the approach was carefully screened to the very end by Admiral Andrewes' fast Blockade and Covering Force.

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Chapter 5. Embarkation and Assault
Air and Naval Bombardments

The softening up of Wolmi-do had begun on 10 September, when the Marine fliers of TG–95.5 made napalm attacks designed to burn off the trees screening NKPA artillery. Six planes of VMF–323 and eight planes of VMF–214 took off from the CVEs at 0600 and scorched the eastern side of the island. The next flight of 14 planes found it necessary to orbit for a few minutes until the smoke cleared sufficiently for them to continue the work of destruction.

Lieutenant Clark's reports had led G–2 officers to believe that enemy defensive installations on Wolmi-do were more formidable than had at first been supposed. As if in support of this conclusion, the Marine fliers of the second strike were greeted with small-caliber anti-aircraft fire both from the island and mainland. A third attack, launched from the decks of the *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* shortly before noon, left the hump-backed island in flames from one shore to another.

After the CVEs returned to Sasebo for replenishment the next day, the carrier-based Navy planes of TF–77 worked over both Wolmi-do and Inchon on 12 and 13 September. It was now the turn of the destroyers, and Admiral Higgins had planned a bold venture. Instead of risking collision or grounding in a night approach, he decided to forego the advantages of surprise and attack in broad daylight. And instead of avoiding NKPA fire, he intended to goad the enemy into retaliations which would reveal the positions of NKPA guns on Wolmi-do.

The hazards of the operation were increased by the fact that a ROK PC boat had discovered an NKPA craft laying mines on the morning of the 10th. This confirmed Admiral Struble's opinion that the Inchon area offered the enemy excellent opportunities for this form of warfare. Not only would the muddy waters make detection difficult, but crippled ships would block the narrow channel.

It was not a pleasant prospect. And the outlook became darker on the morning of 13 September when four mines were spotted in Flying Fish Channel. The U.S. cruisers *Toledo* and *Rochester* and the British cruisers *Kenya* and *Jamaica* had dropped off in support as the six destroyers carried out their mission. Pausing only to detonate the mines with 40mm rounds, the cans moved up within 800 yards of Wolmi-do to fire down the enemy's throat while the four cruisers poured in 6- and 8-inch salvoes and the planes of TF–77 made bombing runs.[19]

It had been long since the Navy issued the historic order "Prepare to repel boarders!" But Admiral Higgins did not overlook the possibility of NKPA infantry swarming out over the mud flats to attack a disabled and grounded destroyer. And though he did not issue pikes and cutlasses, the crews of the *Gurke, Henderson, Swanson, Collett, De Haven,* and *Mansfield* were armed with grenades and Tommy guns for action at close quarters.

The enemy endured half an hour of punishment before obliging Higgins by opening up with the shore guns of Wolmi-do. The *Gurke* and *DeHaven* took hits, and five NKPA shells found the *Collett.* The total damage was insignificant, however, and the casualties amounted to one man killed and eight wounded. These results cost the enemy dearly when the cruisers and destroyers silenced the NKPA guns shortly after they revealed their positions.

On the return trip the destroyers found eight more mines and exploded them. This proved to be all, for the enemy had neglected an opportunity to make the waters around Inchon dangerous for the attack force. The next morning, when the destroyers paid another visit to Wolmi-do, the shore guns appeared to have been effectually silenced. The DDs fired more than 1,700 5-inch shells and drew only a few scattered shots in reply.

Meanwhile, the Marine planes of VMFs -214 and -323, having returned from Sasebo, cooperated by spotting for the cruisers and launching napalm strikes before and after the bombardment.

On the evening of 14 September, after five days of continual pounding, Wolmi-do was a blasted piece of real estate as the Marines of 3/5 prepared to hit GREEN Beach in the morning.

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Chapter 5. Embarkation and Assault
Marine Landings on GREEN Beach

The pre-dawn stillness of the Yellow Sea was shattered as the Corsairs of VMFs–214 and –323 flashed up from the decks of the *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait.* To the west the planes of Task Force 77 were assembling in attack formations above the *Valley Forge, Philippine Sea,* and *Boxer.* Squadron after squadron droned eastward through the blackness, and the first aircraft began orbiting over the objective area at 0454.[20]

Two hours earlier, Advance Attack Group 90.1, under Captain Norman W. Sears, USN, had glided into the entrance of Flying Fish channel. Led by the *Mansfield,* the column of 19 ships snaked through the treacherous passage while captains and navigators sweated over radar scopes. Lieutenant Clark's handiwork provided a welcome relief midway along the route, when the glimmering beacon on Palmi-do guided the vessels past one of the more dangerous points in the channel. Minutes after air cover began to form over Inchon, the ships eased into the narrows west of Wolmi-do and sought assigned battle stations. Training their big guns on the port city were the cruisers *Toledo, Rochester, Kenya,* and *Jamaica,* comprising one of the three Fire Support Units under Admiral Higgins. Other support vessels scattered throughout the waters of the objective area were the destroyers *Collet, Gurke, Henderson, Mansfield, De Haven, Swenson,* and *Southerland;* and this array of fire power was further supplemented by the three bristling rocket ships, LSMR's 401, 403, and 404.[21]

The control ship, *Mount McKinley,* its flag bridge crowded with star-studded commanders, steamed into the narrows just before dawn. No sooner had the gray shoreline become outlined in the morning haze than the 6- and 8-inch guns of the cruisers belched sheets of orange flame in the direction of Inchon; and at 0545, the initial explosions rocked the city and reverberated throughout the channel. There was a deafening crescendo as the destroyers hammered Wolmi-do with their 5-inch guns. Radio Hill, its seaward side already burnt and blackened from previous bombardments, was almost hidden by smoke when Marine planes streaked down at 0600 to smother the island with tons of rockets and bombs.[22]

Captain Sears, reporting to the *Mount McKinley,* confirmed L-hour at 0630. To this end, Lieutenant Colonal Robert D. Taplett's landing force was boated by 0600, and the LCUPs and LSUs rendezvoused while Marine air continued to soften up the target.[23]

Air attacks ceased at 0615, but Wolmi-do enjoyed only a momentary respite before the most unnerving blow of all. In strange contrast to the sleek men-o'-war and nimble aircraft, three squat LSMRs closed on the island from the north, a few hundred yards offshore. Phalanxes of rockets arose from the decks of the clumsy ships, arched steeply, and crashed down. One of the rocket ships, taking a southerly course, passed GREEN Beach and dumped salvo after salvo along the slopes and crest of Radio Hill.

When the LSMR cleared North Point of Wolmi-do, seven LCVPs darted across the line of departure and sped shoreward with 3/5's first wave.[24] Rockets and 40mm shells were still ripping the southern half of the island when one platoon of Company G and three platoons of Company H stormed GREEN Beach at 0633. Two minutes later, the second wave of landing craft ground to a halt on the sand, bringing the remainder of both assault companies.

The Marines were confronted by a scene of devastation almost devoid of enemy resistance. Only a few scattered shots greeted the assault force as it punched inland. The failure of UDT men to clear away all of the wrecked small craft cluttering the beach had left 3/5 a landing strip less than fifty yards wide. Consequently, each wave had to contract like an accordion, and there was considerable crowding during the first crucial minutes of the landing. But even at this stage, the potent Marine air arm offered a final measure of protection to the

infantrymen splashing ashore. Pilots swung their F4Us fifty yards ahead of the assault troops and hosed the routes of advance with machine-gun bullets.

Click here to view map

After a brief pause for reorganization at the beach, First Lieutenant Robert D. Bohn's Company G wheeled to the right and drove up the northern slopes of Radio Hill, Objective 1-A. Only half-hearted resistance was met along the way, most of the scattered and numb North Koreans preferring to surrender rather than face the inevitable. At 0655, Sergeant Alvin E. Smith, guide of the 3d Platoon, secured the American flag to a shell-torn tree on the crest.

At this point General MacArthur rose from the swivel chair in which he had been viewing the operation on the flag bridge of the *Mount McKinley*. "That's it," he said. "Let's get a cup of coffee."

Meanwhile, the Wolmi-do assault continued as Captain Patrick E. Wildman, after detaching a small force from Company H to clear rubble-strewn North Point, attacked across Wolmi-do toward the Inchon causeway with the rest of his unit. How Company's mission was to seize Objective 2-B, which included the eastern nose of Radio Hill and the shoreline industrial area facing Inchon.

At 0646, the three LSUs comprising the third wave squeezed into the narrow beach and disgorged the armored detachment of Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, under Second Lieutenant Granville G. Sweet. Ten tanks were landed in all—six M-26s, one flame-thrower, two dozers, and one retriever. The big vehicles crunched inland a short distance to await calls from the infantry.

Lieutenant Colonel Taplett ordered his free boat to the beach at 0650. Fifteen minutes later, he radioed the *Mount McKinley* and *Fort Marion* that his assault companies were advancing on schedule.

It was ironic that 3/5's reserve company should encounter the angriest hornets' nest on Wolmi-do. Landing in the fourth wave at 0659, Captain Robert A. McMullen's Company I moved through North Point in trace of the How Company detachment which supposedly had cleared the area. Suddenly a flurry of hand grenades clattered on the rubble, and the surprised Marines scattered for cover. Regaining their composure after the explosions, the infantrymen determined the source of trouble to be a by-passed string of enemy emplacements dug into a low cliff at the shoreline facing Inchon. There appeared to be about a platoon of North Koreans, who would rise from their holes intermittently, fling grenades inland, then disappear from sight.

Item Company's interpreter crawled toward the cliff during a lull, bellowing to the Reds that their predicament was hopeless and exhorting them to surrender. When the Communists responded to this advice by throwing more grenades, McMullen signalled Sweet's tanks into action. The M-26s and Marine riflemen took covering positions, while the dozer tank, directed by McMullen himself, rumbled into the troublesome pocket and systematically sealed the die-hard Reds in their holes.

Another bit of drama unfolded before the reserve troops when they closed on the causeway terminus in the wake of How Company's advance. From one of many caves drifted noises indicating the presence of several occupants, hitherto unnoticed. While riflemen covered the entrance, a Marine tank drove forward and fired two rounds into the interior.

Muffled explosions shook the area, and billows of black smoke streaked with flame rolled out of the cave. Wide-eyed, as though watching ghosts emerge, the Marines of Company I saw thirty enemy soldiers stagger out of the blazing recess and throw up their hands.

Less than an hour after landing, 3/5 controlled half of Wolmi-do. Company H, having cleared the causeway terminus, was pivoting southward to clean out the ruins of the industrial area. Engineers, close on the heels of the infantry, advanced 25 yards out on the pavement leading to Inchon and laid an antitank mine field. George Company had advanced about 400 yards and was clearing the northern crest of Radio Hill. Action up to this point is best summed up in Taplett's message to the *Mount McKinley* at 0745:

"Captured 45 prisoners. Meeting light resistance."

Nor did the situation change as Company G occupied the dominating peak of Radio Hill, some 105 meters high. The enemy lacked the will to fight, despite the fact that he had sufficient weapons and a formidable defensive complex from which to fire them. Frightened, dejected Red soldiers continued to surrender singly or in small groups, and Taplett exulted over the amazingly light casualties sustained by his battalion.

Since Company H found the going slow in the shambles of the industrial area, the battalion commander ordered Lieutenant Bohn to seize the whole of Radio Hill. Accordingly, George Company troops rushed across the ridgeline to the eastern spur. This done, Bohn dispatched a force to clear the western reaches of the high ground. By 0800, Radio Hill became the property of the 1st Marine Division, and with the prize went control of the island and Inchon Harbor.

When the news of 3/5's success blared from the loudspeaker on the flag bridge of the *Mount McKinley*, the commander in chief, wearing his famous leather jacket and braided campaign cap, withdrew to his cabin and penned a spirited message to Vice Admiral Struble aboard the *Rochester:*

"The Navy and Marines have never shone more brightly than this morning.

"MACARTHUR"

Consolidation of Wolmi-do required the reduction of an enemy outpost on Sowolmi-do, the small lighthouse station connected to the southwestern tip of the island by a causeway 750 yards long and 12 yards wide. An islet of about 500 square yards, Sowolmi-do was topped by a low hill with the navigational beacon on the summit. Before bothering with this tiny, isolated target, Taplett put his larger house in order.

By previous plan, the three rifle companies of 3/5 took up defensive positions generally facing Inchon. Item Company occupied North Point, Wildman's unit the slopes above the industrial area, and Company G the crest of Radio Hill. While the battalion dug in, mopping-up operations throughout the island continued to net more prisoners and reveal the extent of North Korean fortifications. Radio Hill was ringed by mutually supporting trenches and emplacements, all of which had brought only a negligible return on the Reds' investment in time and labor. Parked on the western nose of the ridge were two intact 76mm antitank guns that could have wrought havoc on landing waves approaching GREEN Beach. Fortunately, these weapons had been exposed to the 40mm fire of the LSMR covering the beach assault, and their crews had lacked the stomach to man them.

More antitank guns were scattered around the terminus of the causeway leading to Inchon, leaving some question as to whether they had been rushed to the defense of the island or were marked for displacement to the city.

North Point, once a luxurious resort, was honeycombed with caves used both for storage and for bomb shelters. The swimming pool, one of the few structures still recognizable after the bombardment, was converted by the Marines into a prisoner-of-war stockade.

More than 300 cast-iron antipersonnel mines were found attached to the barbed wire entanglement stretched along the west coast at the base of Radio Hill. The explosives were removed and disarmed by Technical Sergeant Edwin L. Knox and his detachment from Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion. Though the North Koreans had been helpful in placing these mines in so obvious a location, they had, oddly enough, failed to employ similar obstacles on the beaches, roads, and paths around the island.

Prior to the midmorning advance on Sowolmi-do, total casualties for the 3d Battalion were 14 wounded—an incredibly small price for a critical terrain feature commanding the approaches to Korea's major west coast port. Evacuation plans so carefully laid out by the 1st Medical Battalion worked smoothly. In the early phase of the operation, LCVPs returning from GREEN Beach delivered Marine casualties to the *Fort Marion*, whose normal medical complement had been augmented by a special surgical team. Men with particularly bad wounds were transferred to the *Mount McKinley* after being administered first aid. As the battle developed, navy medical corpsmen of 3/5 established a collecting point on a small pier which could be reached by ambulance boats even during low water.

Shortly before 1000, Taplett ordered Company G to seize Sowolmi-do. Bohn in turn assigned the mission to one infantry squad reinforced with machine guns and a section of tanks, all under the control of Second Lieutenant John D. Counselman, leader of George Company's 3d Platoon. Although the islet was by no means an objective of formidable proportions, the attackers eyed their route of approach over the long strip with misgivings. Their skepticism was not unfounded, for they neared the entrance to the causeway only to be stopped cold by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from the other end. A platoon of North Koreans, almost literally at the end of a rope, preferred to fight it out.

Taplett ordered the tank-infantry team to hold up while he radioed a mission to Marine air. A few minutes later, Corsairs of VMF-214 nosed down and scorched the objective with napalm.

Sweet's tanks, preceded by an engineer mine-clearance team and followed by the column of infantrymen, rumbled onto the rock bed tracing the seaward edge of the causeway. As the task force filed across the exposed route, 81mm shells from 3/5's mortar platoon rattled overhead and tore into the Communist emplacements. Enemy fire was reduced to a light patter, and the observers on Radio Hill breathed a sigh of relief when the attackers gained the far end of the causeway at 1048.

Covered by tank fire, the Marine infantry quickly fanned out and closed with the defenders. There was a sharp outburst of small-arms racket, interspersed with the clatter of machine guns; then a few scattered volleys and the main fight was over at 1115. Mopping up with grenades and a flame thrower continued for almost another hour, owing to the number of caves and the determination of a few Red soldiers.

Nineteen North Koreans surrendered and 17 were killed, including some hapless warriors who tried to swim to the mainland. Despite the size of the islet, eight Reds succeeded in hiding out from the attackers; and General Craig, after landing on Wolmi-do with the ADC group in the evening, observed the fugitives escape to the mainland.[25]

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Chapter 5. Embarkation and Assault
The Two Harbor Islands Secured

Three Marines were wounded on Sowolmi-do, bringing 3/5's total casualties for the day to 17 WIA. In return, Taplett's battalion could count 136 prisoners and 108 enemy dead. Since interrogation of captives established the original number of Red defenders at 400, it could be concluded that some 150 more Communist fatalities lay entombed in sealed emplacements and caves throughout the island.

The Wolmi-do garrison was part of a 2,000-man force committed to the defense of Inchon by NKPA headquarters in Seoul. Represented were elements of the 226th Marine Regiment, to which two companies of the 2d Battalion, 918th Coast Artillery Regiment were attached with their Soviet-manufactured 76mm guns. The spiritless resistance encountered by 3/5 was the natural reaction of green troops to the awesome power of modern combined arms; for the North Korean marines and their artillerymen were largely recent conscripts with sketchy training and no experience. It remained to be seen how the other 1,600 Red troops would respond to the later assaults on RED and BLUE Beaches.

Mopping-up operations on the island were completed by noon, and with the support ships standing silent in the narrows, an oppressive quiet settled on the objective area. Gradually the phenomenal tide rolled back from its morning high of more than 30 feet. By 1300 the waters had receded, leaving 3/5 perched on an island in a sea of mud. For the next several hours Taplett and his men were on their own, speculating whether an enemy force might suddenly rush out of Inchon's dead streets in an attempt to cross the mud flats, or whether a Red tank column would abruptly streak from the city and make for the causeway.

Nothing happened. The air of unreality caused by the stillness of the Oriental seaport weighed down on the nerves of the entire attack force. As the afternoon wore on, the Marines detected movement here and there, but the distant figures were identified as civilians more often than not. Captain McMullen, studying the RED Beach area from his OP on North Point, reported possible enemy "field pieces" on Cemetery Hill. What he actually sighted were the tubes of the mortar company of the 226th NK Marine Regiment, as will be shown later.

At Taplett's OP on Radio Hill, the Shore Fire Control Party Officer, Second Lieutenant Joseph R. Wayerski, searched Inchon intently through his binoculars. On one occasion he called down naval gunfire on small groups of people stirring in the inner tidal basin area to his right front, but when further observation revealed the figures to be civilians raiding a pile of rice, the Marine officer promptly cancelled the mission. Wayerski's lone tactical target of importance was a section of trench on Observatory Hill in which he once spotted about 20 enemy soldiers on the move. He smothered the earthworks with 30 5-inch shells from the *Mansfield*, and what North Koreans remained chose other avenues from that point on.

Taplett and others of his headquarters picked out enemy gun emplacements right at the waterfront near the Inchon dry dock. After the report went out to the *Mount McKinley*, red pencils throughout the task force circled the locale on maps for special attention during the pre-H-Hour bombardment.

Thus, the 3d Battalion enjoyed an almost uneventful interlude during its isolation. An occasional mortar round or long-range machine gun burst was the feeble reminder that Inchon still remained in enemy hands.

While the infantry lolled in relative ease and safety, service and support elements, attached to 3/5 for the landing, set the stage at GREEN Beach for the logistical follow-up so vital to amphibious operations. First Lieutenant Melvin K. Green's team from Shore Party Group A, having unloaded its LSUs in record time, established dumps for ammunition, rations, and other field necessities. Personnel of the Ordnance Battalion, Combat Service Group, and Service Battalion engaged in backbreaking toil to alleviate the headaches of a harried

beachmaster. Signalmen scurried about, setting up their equipment and creating the familiar maze of wire. The reconnaissance detachment of the 11th Marines probed around the island's desolation in search of battery positions for the howitzers scheduled to roll ashore on the evening tide.

The narrow strip of sand on North Point would have appeared crowded and hopelessly confused to the inexperienced eye, but old hands knew that order would gradually emerge, as if by magic, from the "early rush hour"—that necessary evil inherent in all assault landings.

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches

THE CONCEPT OF the amphibious envelopment of the North Korean Peoples Army, together with the actual assault on Inchon by United States Marines, constituted heresy to that school of wishful thinkers which sprang to life as World War II faded in the first brilliant flashes of the Atomic Age. Widely accepted and noisily proclaimed was the belief, perhaps sincere, perhaps convenient, that the nuclear and aeronautical sciences had relegated armies, navies, and man himself to insignificant positions in the waging of war. The massing of ships and field forces, it was argued, was a thing of the past; for the next war, if humanity dared risk another, would be decided in weeks or even days with the power unleashed by electronic and mechanical devices—many of which in 1950 were still in rudimentary stages on drawing boards.

This was the controversial "push-button" theory of war which left the peace-loving nations of the world unprepared in 1950 for violent aggression by the tough little peasant army of North Korea, supported by some 100 tanks and a few hundred artillery pieces. And to the premature acceptance of this theory by a large section of the American public may be attributed many of the major shortcomings of the Inchon assault, as it unfolded in the evening of 15 September. That the operation succeeded despite these shortcomings and the myriad natural handicaps amounts almost to a tactical miracle.

In the words of General Smith, ". . . half of the problem was in getting to Inchon at all."[1] The tremendous obstacles overcome in solving that "half of the problem" have already been treated at length; and it remains now, in the short space of a chapter, to show how the other half became history.

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
The Assault Plan

Aboard the *Henrico* and *Cavalier* in the Inchon narrows on 15 September were the 1st and 2d Battalions, 5th Marines, yanked out of the Pusan Perimeter ten days earlier. Having had no time for a rehearsal and only a few days for planning on the basis of admittedly sketchy intelligence, these two units would scale the sea wall of RED Beach and plunge into the dense waterfront area of the sprawling seaport.

The mission of the 5th Marines (less 3/5 on Wolmi-do) was to seize the O-A Line, a 3,000-yard arc encompassing Cemetery Hill on the left (north), Observatory Hill in the center, and thence extending the last 1,000 yards through a maze of buildings and streets to terminate at the inner tidal basin. Each battalion would land in a column of companies, Lieutenant Colonel George R. Newton's 1st, on the left, seizing Cemetery Hill and the northern half of Observatory Hill; while Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Roise's 2d secured the remainder of the latter, the hill of the British Consulate, and the inner tidal basin.[2]

Landing nearly three miles southeast of the 5th Marines, the 1st Regiment would seize BLUE Beach, a north-south strip fronting a suburban industrial area. BLUE Beach One, on the left, was 500 yards wide, flanked on the north by the rock revetment of a salt evaporator that jutted into the water at a sharp angle to the shoreline. A wide drainage ditch, about which little was known besides the fact that it existed, formed the south boundary. Just inland a dirt road—the sole exit from the beach—skirted the north end of a steep knoll that ran the whole width of the landing site. There being no revetment at the waterline, Marine planners hoped that amphibian tractors could crawl ashore with the assault troops.[3]

Click here to view map

BLUE Beach Two, connected to One by the drainage ditch, also extended 500 yards. Like RED Beach it was fronted by a rock sea wall. On the right half, the wall retained one side of a narrow ramp that jutted southward like a long index finger. Behind the ramp lay a cove, its shoreline at a right angle to the sea wall. During the assault, Marines would scale the waterfront of BLUE Two from LVTs, while the cove around the corner on the right, unofficially dubbed "BLUE Beach Three," was investigated as a possible supplementary landing site.[4]

Preceded by a wave of LVT(A)s of Company A (Reinf), 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, USA, the 2d and 3d Battalions, 1st Marines, would land abreast on BLUE One and Two respectively. With two companies initially in the assault, each of the infantry battalions was to drive forward and secure its portion of the O–1 Line. This four-mile arc bent inland as far as 3,000 yards to include four main objectives, assigned as follows:

2d Battalion (BLUE One)

ABLE: A critical road junction about 1,000 yards northeast of the beach.

DOG: Hill 117, 3,000 yards northeast of the beach, commanding Inchon's back door and the highway leading to Seoul, 22 miles away.

3d Battalion (BLUE Two)

CHARLIE: The seaward tip of Hill 233, a long east-west ridge beginning 1,500 yards southeast of the beach and blocking off the stubby Munhang Peninsula, which projected southward.

BAKER: A small cape, topped by Hill 94, to the right of Objective Charlie and flanking BLUE Beach.[5]

While a question may arise as to the choice of landing the 5th Marines in the very heart of Inchon, it must be remembered that immediate seizure of the port facilities was vital to the success of the operation. Hitting the beaches at only two-thirds infantry strength, the 1st Marine Division could not swell to the overwhelming

proportions of an invasion force. A modern harbor for rapid build-up and exploitation by X Corps figured inherently in MacArthur's strategy.

If RED Beach thus constituted the critical objective, then the selection of BLUE Beach for a supporting landing followed in logical sequence. Once on the O–1 Line, the 1st Marines would flank the single overland approach to the peninsular seaport, thereby presenting the NKPA garrison with the grim alternatives of early flight, capitulation, or strangulation. Without this leverage on Inchon's flank and rear, the 5th Regiment could easily be swallowed up by two square miles of dense urban area.

Four assault battalions would have two hours of daylight in which to bridge the gap between planning and reality. From overhead and behind they could expect a preponderance of heavy fire support, but ahead lay enemy and hydrographic situations still clouded by question marks.

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
Beginning the Ship-to-Shore Movement

As the early afternoon of 15 September wore on, the continued silence of Inchon beckoned temptingly to Lieutenant Colonel Taplett on Wolmi-do. Having studied the city over a prolonged period without detecting any significant evidence of Communist defensive capability, he radioed Division headquarters for permission to move a strong tank-infantry force across the causeway. The battalion commander believed that 3/5 could launch either an effective reconnaissance in force or an actual assault on RED Beach. Although his estimate of the enemy potential was shortly borne out, the degree of risk in Taplett's bold plan drew a firm "negative" from the *Mount McKinley*.[6]

Busy with last-minute details aboard the command ship, General Smith at noon had radioed General Craig instructions to land on Wolmi-do on the evening tide and set up an advance echelon of the division command post with the ADC group. Smith did not desire to land the remainder of his headquarters until D–plus 1, when there would be more room for dispersion within the expanding beachhead.[7]

The Landing Force Commander could look down from the flag bridge at 1400 and note the first signs of activity on the water. A few special landing craft were beating the forthcoming traffic rush as they sped toward the various ships to which they were assigned as command boats.

At the same time, the central control vessel, *Diachenko* (APD 123), edged forward to its key station 3,000 yards southwest of the BLUE Beach line of departure. Lieutenant Commander Allmon checked the set and drift of the current and radioed his observations to Admiral Doyle. Estimated at three and a half knots, the run of current was heavier than expected. After receiving the Senior Control Officer's report, the Attack Force Commander confirmed 1730 as H-Hour.[8]

The confirmation went out to the entire Joint Task Force at 1430, and Admiral Higgins' fire support ships immediately commenced the final bombardment of Inchon. His four cruisers and six destroyers poured shells into the seaport for the next three hours, smashing every landmark of tactical importance and starting fires that blazed across the whole waterfront.

Under the calculating eyes of tactical air observers and coordinators in F4Us droning high above the objective area, VMFs-323 and -214 and three squadrons of Navy Skyraiders alternately blasted Inchon, integrating their strikes with naval gunfire from H-minus 180 minutes onward. Simultaneously, Fast Carrier Task Force 77 kept another 12 planes in the air continuously for deep support missions designed to freeze all enemy activity within a radius of 25 miles.

As if enough obstacles did not confront the landing force already, rain squalls began drifting past Inchon during the bombardment. Gradually the storm clouds merged with the thick smoke boiling up from the city, and heavy overcasts settled over large areas, particularly in the vicinity of BLUE Beach.[9]

Assault troops of the 5th Marines scrambled down cargo nets on the *Henrico* and *Cavalier* to fill landing craft splashing into the water from booms and davits. Nearly 200 LCVPs and 70 LCMs soon were joined by 12 LSUs and 18 LVT(A)s, 164 LVTs, and 85 DUKWs disgorged from the yawning wells of the LSTs, wherein the Marines of the 1st Regiment had made ready for battle.[10]

Guided by Lieutenant Commander Ralph H. Schneeloch, USNR, the *Horace A. Bass*, RED Beach control vessel, slowly steamed toward the line of departure, a long file of assault craft trailing behind like a brood of ducklings. Lieutenant Theodore B. Clark, USN, ordered the *Wantuck* to the head of the boat lane to BLUE Beach, and PCEC 896, under Lieutenant Reuben W. Berry, USN, took station off Wolmi-do to regulate the waves

scheduled for the administrative landing on GREEN Beach.[11]

At 1645, the 18 Army LVT(A)s comprising the first wave of the 1st Marines crossed the line of departure and headed for BLUE Beach. Crawling at four knots, the armored vehicles had three quarters of an hour to cover the 5,500 yards to the target. The LCVPs, capable of twice the speed of the amphibian tractors, left the inner transport area near the *Diachenko's* station for the five-mile trip northward to the RED and GREEN boat lanes.[12]

The roar of the fire support ships increased in volume during the approach of the landing craft until, at 1705 (H-minus 25), Admiral Higgins signaled the LSMRs into action. At once the cruisers and destroyers fell silent. Again missiles soared from the squat rocket ships in high arcs that sent them plunging into the RED and BLUE landing areas. Upwards of 6,000 rockets detonated in the seaport during the next twenty minutes, further numbing the defenders but at the same time increasing the density and volume of the overcast.[13]

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
Seizure of Cemetery Hill

The critical moment of every amphibious assault was now at hand—the moment when intelligence and planning would be put to the test of actuality. On the bridge of the *Mount McKinley* high-ranking Army, Navy, and Marine Corps officers gathered again about General MacArthur, seated in a swivel chair. They listened for the second time that day as the loud speaker gave a blow-by-blow account of developments reported by aerial observers.

Everything that air attacks and naval gunfire could do to soften up the target had been done, yet no one could be sure just what sort of opposition the troops would encounter on RED and BLUE Beaches. It might be as fainthearted as that brushed aside by 3/5 on Wolmi-do; or it might be that another Tarawa awaited on those cramped strips of urban waterfront lying between the mud flats of the harbor and the dark, crooked streets of the Asiatic town and environs. The enemy had been given ample time in which to prepare for a defense of the mainland.

Even the possibility of undetected mines or surprise NKPA air attacks at the last minute had not been overlooked. Although the Attack Force continued to exercise control from the TADC on the *Mount McKinley* of all aircraft operating in its assigned area, an alternate control agency had been installed on the USS *George Clymer,* utilizing an emergency hookup and a control unit attached to TAC, X Corps. All nets were manned and communications set up to permit a rapid shift of control to General Cushman in case of disaster.

With H-hour only minutes away, the sky above the objective was murky and the wind whipped rain as well as stinging spray into the faces of the Marines in the assault waves. Only the Marine and Navy flyers upstairs could see the panorama of the waterborne attack—the cruisers and destroyers standing silent in the background, LSMR rocket flashes stabbing the false twilight ashore, the landing craft trailing pale wakes behind them like the tails of comets. The pilots observed the LCVPs to the left of Wolmi-do fan out at the line of departure and touch the sea wall of RED Beach minutes later. To the right of the little island, however, they saw the leading waves of the 1st Marines disappear in a blanket of gloom. For while the smoke and moisture-laden air had obscured parts of the 5th Marines' zone of action ashore, it had completely blotted out BLUE Beach and half the length of the 1st Regiment's boat lanes. Because of this development and other factors which posed special problems for the 1st Marines, the narrative will treat each landing separately, beginning with that of the 5th Regiment on the left.

Eight LCVPs had crossed the line of departure at H-minus 8 and sped toward RED Beach with the first wave of the 5th Marines. Starting from the left, boats numbered one through four carried parts of two assault platoons of Company A, 1st Battalion, whose mission was to seize Cemetery Hill and anchor the regimental left. In boats five through eight were troops of Company E, 2d Battalion, whose task included clearing the right flank of the beach and taking the hill of the British Consulate.[15]

From Wolmi-do 3/5's machine guns, mortars, and supporting M-26s cut loose with a hail of bullets and high explosive to cover the landing. Technical Sergeant Knox lead an engineer team forward to clear the causeway, in order that the detachment of Able Company Tanks could advance to the mainland after the initial assault waves hit the beach.

As the landing craft passed the midway point of the 2,200-yard boat lane, the heaving LSMRs ceased firing, so that Lieutenant Colonel Walter E. Lischeid and Major Arnold A. Lund could lead in VMFs–214 and –323 for final strikes on both RED and BLUE Beaches. Navy Skyraiders joined in at the request of Captain John R. Stevens, commander of Company A; and the FAC of 1/5, First Lieutenant James W. Smith, controlled their

strafing passes as the first wave came within 30 yards of the sea wall.[16]

Although the tide was racing in fast, the wall still projected about four feet above the ramps of the landing craft. The Marines readied their scaling ladders. On the right the boats of Company E touched the revetment at 1731. Up went the ladders as the assault troops hurled grenades over the wall. Following the explosions, the Marines from the four boats scrambled to the top of the barrier one by one. The ladders slipped and swayed as the LCVPs bobbed next to the wall. But they served their purpose, and in short order every man of Second Lieutenant Edwin A. Deptula's 1st Platoon was on the beach.

There were no casualties from the few stray bullets cracking through the air. Filtering through smoke and wreckage, the platoon moved inland to cover the landing of the second and third waves, carrying the remainder of Easy Company.

On the north of RED Beach, three of the four LCVPs with the leading elements of Company A bumped the sea wall at 1733. Boat number one, carrying Technical Sergeant Orval F. McMullen and half of his 1st Platoon, was delayed offshore by an engine failure. The remainder of the 1st, under the platoon guide, Sergeant Charles D. Allen, scaled the wall from boat number two in the face of heavy fire from the north flank and from submachine guns in a bunker directly ahead. Several Marines were cut down immediately, the others being unable to advance more than a few yards inland.

Boat number three, with Second Lieutenant Francis W. Muetzel and a squad of his 2d Platoon, touched a breach in the sea wall under the muzzle of an enemy machine gun protruding from a pillbox. The weapon did not fire as the Marines scrambled through the gap and onto the beach. A second squad and a 3.5-inch rocket section joined from boat number four. Gunfire crackled far off on the left, barely audible amid the road of fighter planes strafing fifty yards ahead. Muetzel and his men jumped into a long trench which paralleled the sea wall a few feet away. It was empty. Two Marines threw grenades into the silent pillbox, and the six bloody North Koreans who emerged in the wake of the hollow explosions were left under guard of a Marine rifleman.

Just beyond the beach loomed Cemetery Hill, its seaward side an almost vertical bluff. To avoid getting trapped if the enemy opened up from the high ground, Muetzel attacked toward his objective, the Asahi Brewery, without waiting for the remainder of his men in the tardy second wave. The skirmish line raced across the narrow beach, ignoring padlocked buildings and flaming wreckage. Passing to the south of Cemetery Hill, the 2d Platoon entered the built-up area of the city and marched unopposed up a street to the brewery.

On the left of Company A's zone, the beached half of the 1st Platoon made no progress against the flanking fire and the Communist bunker to the front. The 3d Platoon, under First Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez, landed in the second wave, and McMullen finally got ashore with the other half of the 1st. Both units crowded into the restricted foothold and casualties mounted rapidly. Enemy guns had felled Lopez as he climbed ashore and moved against the bunker with a grenade. Unable to throw the armed missile because of his wound, the young officer was killed when he smothered the explosion with his body to protect his men. Two Marines attacked the emplacement with flame throwers. They were shot down and their valuable assault weapons put out of action.

The situation on the left was at its worst when Captain Stevens landed in Muetzel's zone at H-plus 5. Learning of Lopez' death and unable to contact McMullen, he ordered his executive officer, First Lieutenant Fred F. Eubanks, Jr., to "take over on the left and get them organized and moving."[17] Time was of the essence, since Cemetery Hill, objective of the 1st Platoon, yet remained in enemy hands. Succeeding waves would be landing hundreds of Marines in the shadow of the cliff within the next half hour. Stevens also radioed Muetzel, whose small force had just reached the brewery without suffering a casualty, and ordered the 2d Platoon back to the beach to help out.

Muetzel immediately formed his unit in column and struck out on the return trip to the waterfront. Nearing Cemetery Hill again, he noted that the southern slope of the vital objective was an excellent route of approach to the top. In planning Company A's part of the operation, Stevens had once told him that the 2d

Platoon could expect to help seize the high ground if the job proved too rough for the 1st alone.[18] With a creditable display of judgment and initiative, Muetzel launched an assault on the key to RED Beach.

The Marines moved rapidly up the incline, flushing out about a dozen Red soldiers who surrendered meekly. Gaining the summit, they drove forward and saw the entire crest suddenly come alive with infantry-crewmen of the 226th NKPA Regiment's mortar company. Spiritless and dazed from the pounding by air and naval gunfire, the North Koreans to a man threw down their weapons, filed quietly from trenches and bunkers, and marched to the base of the hill where a small detachment kept them under guard. Hardly a shot had been fired by the 2d Platoon, still without a single casualty, and the capture of Cemetery Hill had required about ten minutes.

During the attack on the high ground, Eubanks had taken the situation in hand on the left of the beach. He first bested the bunker's occupants in a grenade duel, then ordered the emplacement fired by a flame thrower. Just as Muetzel prepared to dispatch assistance from the top of Cemetery Hill, the 1st and 3d Platoons broke out of the pocket, drove inland to the edge of the city, and made physical contact with the 2d.

At 1755, Stevens fired an amber star cluster signifying that Cemetery Hill was secured for the 5th Marines. The half-hour fight in the north corner of RED Beach had cost Company A eight killed and 28 wounded.

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
RED Beach Secured

After landing in 2/5's first wave, the 1st Platoon of Company E pushed inland 100 yards to the railroad tracks against no resistance whatsoever. Captain Samuel Jaskilka was ashore with the rest of the Company by H-plus 10, and reorganization took place quickly near the Nippon Flour Company buildings, just south of the beach. Deptula's platoon then moved unopposed down the railroad tracks and seized the British Consulate, Regimental Objective C, at 1845. Simultaneously, another platoon cleared the built-up area across the tracks on the lower slopes of Observatory Hill. These rapid accomplishments secured the 5th Marines' right flank, giving an added measure of protection to 22 more waves of landing craft and LSTs scheduled for RED Beach.

Still in enemy hands, however, was Observatory Hill, reaching well over 200 feet above the center of the regimental zone to buttress the arc of the O–A Line. Company C of the 1st Battalion, landing in the fourth and fifth waves shortly before 1800, was to take Objective A, northern half of the critical terrain feature. To Dog Company of 2/5 was charged the southern half, designated Objective B.

That the attack did not go off as planned stemmed from a series of mishaps which began as far out as the line of departure. Despite the fact that Lieutenant Commander Schneeloch was using standard control procedures from the *Bass*, including radio contact with the beach, there was a mixing of waves starting with number four.[19] This development reflected the lack of a rehearsal in the hurried preparations for the operation, and the end result was that parts of Companies C and D, both in the second assault echelon, landed over the wrong beaches.[20] After landing, Charlie Company had the added disadvantage of being without its company commander for a crucial 12 minutes. Captain Poul F. Pedersen was delayed when the fifth-wave commander, who shared his boat, decided to tow a stalled LCVP left behind by the preceding formation.[21] When he finally reached his company, the job of reorganization was much more difficult than it would have been had he arrived at the beach on schedule. With troops pouring over the sea wall from succeeding waves, what had begun as intermingling at the point of overlap in the center of the landing area had grown to temporary congestion and confusion.

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
LSTs Under Enemy Fire

Out in the channel, the first of eight LSTs[22] heralded the climax of the ship-to-shore movement at 1830 by crossing the line of departure and heading for the sea wall. Prior to the approach, ships' officers had spotted the close fighting on the north flank of RED Beach as they peered through binoculars from their respective bridges. Later, noting the growing knot of Marines in the center of the waterfront area, they concluded that the assault troops could not advance inland. This impression was strengthened by an abrupt procession of gun flashes on Observatory Hill where, owing to the delay in the attack by Companies C and D, a handful of enemy soldiers had recovered from shock sufficiently to set up machine guns. A few North Korean mortar crews in the city also came to life and manned their weapons.

LST 859, leading the pack, came under mortar and machine-gun fire as it waddled toward its berth about 1835. Gun crews on the ship reacted by opening up with 40mm and 20mm cannon, spraying Cemetery and Observatory Hills and the right flank of the beach. Next in the column of ships, LSTs 975 and 857 likewise commenced firing after taking hits from mortars and machine guns. Enemy automatic weapons touched off a fire near ammunition trucks on LST 914, trailing fourth, but sailors and Marines quickly brought the blaze under control. Guns on the latter ship remained silent as a result of dispatch orders received by the captain after leaving the line of departure.[23]

Lieutenant Muetzel and his platoon were chased by LST fire from the crest of Cemetery Hill to the slope facing Inchon—where they came under fire from a Red machine gun in a building on Observatory Hill. Fortunately, a 40mm shell from one of the LSTs crashed into the building and obliterated the enemy position. There were no casualties in Muetzel's outfit, but Lieutenant Colonel Roise's 2d Battalion did not fare as luckily from the misdirected shooting by the American ships. Weapons and H&S Companies of 2/5 had landed about 1830 and were just proceeding inland when LST fire seared their ranks, killing one Marine and wounding 23 others. "If it hadn't been for the thick walls of the Nippon Flour Company," remarked Roise later, "the casualties might have been worse."[24]

All eight of the supply vessels were intact in their berths by 1900. Guns fell silent as soon as the LSTs touched the sea wall and contact was established with the infantry.

On the beach, meanwhile, Second Lieutenant Byron L. Magness had reorganized his 2d Platoon of Company C and, on his own initiative, attacked Observatory Hill. Second Lieutenant Max A. Merritt's 60mm mortar section followed closely behind, but the rest of the company remained fragmented in the landing area. Sparked by Technical Sergeant Max Stein, who was wounded while personally accounting for a North Korean machine gun, the provisional force advanced rapidly in the gathering darkness and at 1845 seized the saddle between Objectives A and B on Observatory Hill. This was just about the time when the LSTs stopped firing.[25]

Since their single flare misfired and they were not able to raise Lieutenant Pedersen by radio, Magness and Merritt were unable to inform the beach of their success. In the meantime, Company B, 1/5's reserve, had landed in the 2d Battalion zone, the waves having swerved to that area to avoid small-arms fire peppering their assigned approach on the left. Captain Francis I. Fenton, Jr., led the unit through a mixed group on the waterfront to an assembly area near the base of Cemetery Hill. When he discussed the beach situation by radio with the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Newton ordered him to take over Charlie Company's mission and assault the northern half of Observatory Hill.[26]

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
Fighting on Observatory Hill

Darkness had fallen when Company B drove up the slopes of Objective A in a two-pronged attack. Six Marines were wounded in brief skirmishes with North Korean die-hards along the way. Gaining the summit at 2000, Fenton deployed three platoons on line, making contact with the Magness-Merritt force dug in on the saddle to the right. With Objective A seized and Able Company deployed on top and to the flanks of Cemetery Hill, Newton radioed the 5th Marines at 2240 that 1/5's segment of the O-A Line was secured.[27]

In the right of the 5th Marines' zone, the 2d Battalion had also been making gains, despite the handicaps of mixed boat waves, LST fire, poor visibility, and, finally, enemy action.[28] It will be recalled that Company E suffered no casualties in landing and clearing the waterfront as far south as Objective C, the British Consulate. Next to hit the beach was First Lieutenant H. J. Smith's Company D, part of which went ashore in 1/5's zone. Assembling later near the base of Observatory Hill, the unit prepared to carry out its mission of seizing Objective B, the southern half of the big ridge.

Although 2d Battalion overlays show that Easy Company bore no responsibility for the crest of Observatory Hill, Smith's men somehow got the impression that part of Jaskilka's force was already on the summit. Its tactics based on this misunderstanding, Company D formed a simple route column, with Second Lieutenant Ray Heck's 1st Platoon leading the way, and marched up a street to the top of the hill. The vanguard troops cleared the first peak in the company zone without opposition and continued along the road to the second, expecting to meet men of Company E. They were greeted, however, by machine-gun fire from an enemy squad entrenched to the right of the street.

The Marines tumbled into positions on the left. Grenades and small-arms fire flew back and forth across the road during a brisk exchange that lasted about 15 minutes. One of Heck's men was killed and three others wounded. The company corpsmen was hit but refused evacuation until he had first administered to the other casualties and seen them off to safety. Company D's executive officer, First Lieutenant Michael J. Dunbar, went forward with Lieutenant Colonel Roise, the battalion commander, and was wounded by a ricochet.

The enemy troops were driven off just as darkness closed in, leaving the Marines to grope for night defensive positions on unfamiliar ground. Eventually Lieutenant Smith formed a line with all three rifle platoons deployed on the forward slopes of Objective B. Out of battalion reserve came Second Lieutenant Harry J. Nolan's platoon of Company F to bridge the gap between Company D and the Magness-Merritt positions in 1/5's zone on the left.

With Cemetery and Observatory Hills secured, the only portion of the O-A Line not yet under control was the extreme right, anchored on the inner tidal basin. Since the night was pitch black, Roise felt apprehensive about sending troops any farther into the city. In answer to a query, Lieutenant Colonel Murray, whose regimental headquarters had landed at 1830 and set up near the terminus of the Wolmi-do causeway, emphasized to Roise that where the O-A Line could not actually be defended from a suitable tactical standpoint, it must at least be outposted. The battalion commander forthwith dispatched a two-squad patrol from Fox Company to the tidal basin, and the small force returned from the 1,000-yard prowl into the city at 2300, having seen no sign of the enemy. Roise reacted by committing Company F, less its platoon on Observatory Hill, to a defensive perimeter on the right flank. Shortly after midnight, Captain Uel D. Peters deployed the company next to the tidal basin as ordered; and the 5th Marines' O-A Line, though not manned in entirety, came as close to tactical reality as the tangled black depths of the seaport would allow.

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
1st Marines on BLUE Beach

As mentioned earlier, the overcast resulting from rain squalls and smoke had completely blotted out BLUE Beach by H-hour, 1730. This fact in itself would have sufficed to upset a precise landing procedure; but at this point in the narrative, it is timely to review some of the other problems which had beset the 1st Marines since the inception of the plan for the Inchon assault.[29]

In the short space of weeks, the regiment had been brought up to war strength by the rapid convergence on Camp Pendleton of Marines—in units or as individuals, both regular and reserve—from all over the United States; it had embarked at San Diego and crossed the Pacific; and it had reloaded and embarked from Japan for a combat operation designed to quench a major conflagration. There had been time for only the sketchiest training above the company level. The new 1st Marines had never operated tactically as a regiment, nor had it ever been concentrated in one place as an organizational entity up until the time it hit BLUE Beach.

During the planning phase in Kobe, battalions had to combat-load their LSTs according to an X factor, while awaiting the prescribed tactical plans that would be handed down from higher echelon at the last minute. Intelligence on the enemy and beach conditions was practically non-existent; and the speculative studies and inadequate photos available could be kept only a few hours before being passed on to the next unit in line.

Whenever Marines are given a difficult assignment, the United States Navy invariably draws its own full measure of handicaps. A typical example of the problems confronting naval planners was this case, cited by Major Edwin H. Simmons, of 3/1:

"I was aboard LST 802, which was carrying H&S Company and elements of Weapons Company. The ship had just been recovered from the island trade. Her captain had been flown out to Sasebo from the States, given a pick-up crew and two weeks to condition the ship and crew for an amphibious landing. Despite his best efforts, the 802 had three major breakdowns and had to drop out of convoy several times. At one point it appeared as though the battalion command group would have to be taken off the 802 if they were to get to Inchon in time."

In connection with BLUE Beach itself, officers of the 1st Marines had only a vague impression of offshore conditions and the accessibility of the landing site. As already noted, the current in the channel was underestimated, and so little was known about the consistency of the mud flats that each landing craft contained planking for emergency use by the assault troops.

The sole exit from BLUE One was the dirt road already mentioned. On aerial photos the drainage ditch separating BLUE One and Two appeared to be some kind of a road over which tractors could crawl ashore. No one was certain, and "BLUE Beach Three," the cove on the right, was ruled out as a possible landing area early in the planning. At the last minute, however, recent aerial photos and studies led to the conclusion that both the inlet and the ramp at the southern tip of BLUE Two might be good approaches after all. Acting on this information while en route to the target area, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Ridge, commanding officer of 3/1, decided to explore personally the right flank with his executive officer at the outset of the assault. If the ramp, BLUE Three, or both were accessible to LVTs, Ridge would divert later assault echelons on a "follow me" basis.

Thus vital questions were to remain unanswered until the officers and men of the 1st Marines got their first look at BLUE Beach. It was keenly disappointing, therefore, when they stared from the line of departure on the afternoon of 15 September and saw, instead of the distant shoreline, a murky wall rolling seaward from the blazing waterfront.

As noted previously, the line of departure was 5,500 yards—3.2 miles—from the beach, a distance

requiring 45-minute trips for the slow-moving LVT waves. The ship-to-shore movement got off to a bad start owing to the current, which scattered some of the landing formations during the rendezvous phase. Other obstacles entered the picture in rapid succession, one of them best described by Lieutenant Clark, BLUE Beach Control Officer:

"At about H-50, while press boats and the initial waves of LVT(A) and LVT were milling around the BLUE Beach control vessel[*Wantuck*], mortar fire was received in the immediate vicinity. This created some confusion until a destroyer spun around on her anchor and silenced the battery. This was the beginning of the end of the well-planned ship-to-shore movement for BLUE Beach."[30]

Other shortcomings that took on special significance because of the overcast were the lack of compasses and radios in the amphibian tractors and the inexperience of many of the crews. The first wave, consisting of the Army LVT(A)s, was escorted shoreward from the line of departure by Navy guide boats, manned by UDT crews who possessed both the compasses and seamanship necessary to pierce the smoke screen and find the distant beach on time.[31] Wave number two, only a minute behind and close enough to benefit by the expert guidance, did not fare too badly. The ragged formation of number three, however, indicated mounting difficulties at the line of departure. From a study of numerous accounts, the experience of Major Simmons appears to have been typical:

"Wave 5 cleared the 802 about 1630. We had been told that a wave guide would pick us up and lead us to the line of departure. . . . Time was passing and we were feeling desperate when we came alongside what was apparently the central control vessel. I asked the bridge for instructions. A naval officer with a bull horn pointed out the direction of BLUE Two, but nothing could be seen in that direction except mustard-colored haze and black smoke. We were on our way, and our path crossed that of another wave. I asked if they were headed for BLUE Two. Their wave commander answered, 'Hell no, we're the 2d Battalion headed for BLUE One.' We then veered off to the right. I broke out my map, but the LVT driver had no compass. . . . With no confidence in its accuracy within a steel hull, I got out my lensatic compass and made a best guess as to the azimuth of our approach line."[32]

The nine LVT(A)s leading off for Lieutenant Colonel Alan Sutter's 2d Battalion thrashed through the gloom and crawled ashore on BLUE One at 1730, on schedule. Meeting no opposition at the beach, they rumbled northward to the road skirting the knoll in order to penetrate the interior. The exit was blocked by an earth slide resulting from the naval bombardment of the high ground, and the column of amphibious vehicles ground to a halt.

At H-plus 1, most of the eleven LVTs of the second wave crunched ashore with elements of two assault companies. The remainder, with troops of Fox Company embarked, had grounded in mud about 300 yards offshore. The Marines had to wade to the beach, and they lost several pieces of communications gear in potholes en route. Company D, on the left, was to have remained aboard the tractors for the drive inland, while the troops of Company F debarked at the beach, cleared the knoll, and continued overland on foot. The latter scheme of maneuver unfolded as planned, and the Marines encountered no resistance when they swept to the top of the high ground. Dog Company, meanwhile, had also dismounted because of the blocked road.

The third wave groped ashore through the smoke at H-plus 4, bringing the remainder of both assault companies and raising the total strength on BLUE One to 30 tractors and over 600 men. Noting that the beach was getting crowded, Lieutenant Colonel Sutter ordered his free tractor to pull alongside the revetment of the evaporator on the left. When his battalion headquarters had debarked on the wall, he turned his attention seaward that he might signal the succeeding three waves, carrying the rest of 2/1, to do likewise. He looked and waited in vain, however, for the LVT formations did not materialize out of the offshore haze.

Meanwhile, Companies D and F reorganized quickly to continue the attack. Looking inland from the knoll, officers and NCOs could catch glimpses of the unfamiliar terrain only between billows of smoke. Several landmarks loomed ahead that were not marked on the inaccurate tactical maps. Many others that had been

recorded were ablaze, and the numerous fires would make direct compass marches difficult. Moreover, since the enemy situation inland was open to conjecture, dispersed tactical formations would add to the problem of controlling the Marine advance.

Despite these disadvantages, Sutter pressed the attack. Easy Company in battalion reserve, together with part of Weapons and H&S, had not landed, nor had all of the vital signal equipment for supporting arms. But further waiting and delay was out of the question, since only about an hour of daylight remained.

Company D struck out for Regimental Objective ABLE, the junction on the left flank 1,000 yards away, and Company F drove northeast in the direction of Objective DOG, Hill 117. It was almost dark when the last of the 600 troops plunged forward into the unknown, leaving LVT crews behind to open the road with picks and shovels.

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
Ending the Ship-to-Shore Movement

The nine LVT(A)s comprising 3/1's first wave had closed on the sea wall of BLUE Beach Two shortly after H-hour.[33] Nosing their vehicles toward the drainage ditch on the left, the drivers apparently eyed the muck and conformation of the restricted passageway with some skepticism, for they backed off and exchanged fire with scattered enemy soldiers shooting from just beyond the waterfront.

Wave number two passed through the Army tractors and bumped the sea wall ten minutes late with the leading elements of Companies G and I, the former on the left. Since the landing echelons had intermingled in the cloudy boat lane, some LVTs of the third wave arrived with those of the second. This accounted for Lieutenant Colonel Ridge's tractor reaching the beach one increment ahead of schedule. The battalion commander and his executive officer, Major Reginald R. Myers, immediately swung their separate vehicles around to the right flank, Ridge heading toward the ramp while the other officer continued around the corner in the direction of BLUE Three.

On the left of BLUE Two, meanwhile, the amphibians carrying Captain George C. Westover's Company G formed a column and crawled into the drainage ditch.[34] Troops of First Lieutenant Joseph R. Fisher's Item Company simultaneously scrambled up their aluminum ladders and deployed just beyond the sea wall in the face of moderate small arms fire. As had been anticipated, some of the metal scaling devices bent and buckled under the strain, delaying troop debarkation from the landing craft crowding the revetment. Assault elements of Captain Lester G. Harmon's Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion, reached the beach and anchored cargo nets over the wall to speed up the landing.[35]

The lead tractor in George Company's column bellied down in the mud of the drainage ditch, blocking five other LVTs behind. Westover ordered his troops to dismount and move forward along a road near the beach. After a brief period of reorganization, Company G fanned out for the drive inland, its mission being to block a lowland corridor and secondary access road leading to BLUE Beach out of the east.[36]

Just about the time Westover's LVTs bogged down in the ditch on the left, the tractors transporting Ridge and Myers crawled ashore over the ramp and BLUE Beach Three respectively, setting a precept for the mounting number of landing craft lying off BLUE Two. A heavy volume of traffic was thus diverted to the cove, and the appreciable gain in time far outweighed the intermingling which developed by landing troops at a right angle to those scaling the sea wall.

Click here to view map

In recalling the situation ashore as of 1800 (H-plus30), Colonel Lewis B. Puller, the regimental commander, later observed:

"I personally landed on BLUE Beach with the 3d wave. My reason for doing so was, exactly, that there was a strong possibility of confusion and disorganization under the circumstances: namely, the unavoidable necessity of landing the regiment without a rehearsal, without even a CPX . . . The reorganization of the assault battalions was accomplished with remarkable speed and effectiveness. I recall being, at the time, extremely gratified that my prior concern in this connection was not warranted."[37]

Despite the initial delays at the ditch and sea wall, Companies G and I cleared the beach rapidly. Of the few casualties taken during the first 30 minutes ashore, most were caused by an enemy machine gun in a tower about 500 yards inland. LVT fire silenced the weapon, and the Marine infantry plunged forward through a labyrinth of blazing buildings and smoke-filled streets. On the left, George Company groped almost straight ahead

toward the lowland corridor as Item veered sharply southward to attack Objective CHARLIE, the seaward tip of Hill 233.

While the assault units fought inland, the gathering darkness created one more formidable handicap for the last wave serials leaving the line of departure far out in the channel. The four Navy guide boats, mentioned earlier as having escorted the first wave, were exactly 28 short of the number prescribed by amphibious doctrine for a landing of the Inchon assault's magnitude.[38] For this reason the guide boats took station on either side of the boat lanes after the initial run, since it was manifestly impossible for them to help out in any other way. The limited visibility, however, just about negated their worth as stationary markers, owing to the fact that some landing craft formations were losing their direction even before they entered the boat lanes.

In describing the situation as it developed at the line of departure Lieutenant Clark later commented:

"The BLUE Beach Control Officer was unable to contact LVT wave commanders or wave guide officers by radio at any time during the initial assault. The control officer was aware that waves or groups of LVTs and boats were landing at the wrong places but was helpless to prevent it without communications. As a last resort, Casualty and Salvage landing craft were dispatched to assist the initial wave guides (members of UDT 1) in rounding up vehicles and leading or directing them to BLUE Beach."[39]

Since current and smoke fought relentlessly against tractors seaward of the line of departure, not all of the vehicles could find the control ship. If they did, it was next to impossible to come in close enough to get instructions shouted from the bridge. Thus many wave commanders, amtrac officers, and infantry leaders gave orders to head shoreward on their own initiative. They went in with waves and fragments of waves, displaying the kind of leadership that made the operation an overwhelming success in spite of the obstacles. This was the case with the three waves of 2/1 that failed to arrive at BLUE One. They found their way ashore, some of the LVTs landing on BLUE Two, others diverted to BLUE Three; but the important thing was that they got there.[40]

The most serious error of the day, again offset by initiative and decision, involved Lieutenant Colonel Jack Hawkins' 1st Battalion, landing in regimental reserve.[41] About H-hour, Puller radioed Hawkins and ordered him to cross the line of departure with LCVP waves 21 through 25, carrying the whole of 1/1. Had the approach to the beach gone smoothly, the battalion would have begun landing at approximately H-plus 45 (1815).

Because of conditions in the channel and boat lanes, as already described, a searchlight on the control ship now beamed the supposed course to the beach. Actually, the whole area had become so clouded that the light was mistakenly pointed toward the outer tidal basin, some 45 degrees off course to the northeast.

Moving in the designated direction, the first two of the reserve waves reached the sea wall of the basin; and the Marines, believing they were at the revetment of BLUE Two, began debarking. Hawkins, following in the third wave (wave number 23), caught the error as his boat passed within sight of two outlying islands between the basin and the salt evaporator jutting out from the left of BLUE One. About the same time, Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Rickert, executive officer of the 1st Marines, noticed some of the errant landing craft from his free boat between the line of departure and BLUE One. He intercepted a group of the LCVPs and reoriented them.

In the meantime, Hawkins cruised the length of the basin wall and shouted instructions to the troops of the first two waves. Most of Company B had already debarked and a few of the empty boats had left for the channel. Able Company, having just begun to land, promptly reembarked in its LCVPs. In short order, the battalion reformed at sea and headed toward BLUE Two. Owing to the lack of boats, one platoon of Baker Company remained on the tidal basin all night. Hiking to rejoin the company on the mainland next morning, this platoon rounded up an impressive bag of prisoners.

Upon reaching BLUE Two in darkness, Hawkins found Company C, which had avoided the detour owing to the sixth sense of a boat coxswain, organizing and setting up local security. The battalion commander led most of 1/1 forward to a night assembly area along the railroad tracks, half a mile inland. Major David W. Bridges, battalion S–3, was left behind to organize late-comers as they arrived from the tidal basin.

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Chapter 6. Hitting the Beaches
Seizure of the O–1 Line

The tactical situation ashore had meanwhile begun to crystallize for the 1st Marines. In the 2d Battalion zone, Dog Company occupied Objective A, the road intersection, at 2000. Two hours later, Fox Company reported that it occupied enough of Objective D, Hill 117, so that it could cover the Inchon-Seoul highway with fire.

The attack from the beach had cost Sutter's unit one KIA and 19 WIA as compared to enemy losses of 15 prisoners and an estimated 50 dead.

On the right of the regimental zone, Ridge's 3d Battalion was also making good progress against light resistance. Item Company reported at 1900 that it was on Objective C, the western nose of Hill 233. Half an hour later, George company began deploying in blocking positions across the corridor and road at the center of the O–1 Line. This movement was completed about 2030.[42]

The 1st Platoon of How Company passed seaward of Item at 2030 and pressed a night attack against a company of North Koreans on objective B, the small cape topped by Hill 94. After a token resistance, the Reds abandoned their well-prepared entrenchments, leaving 30 dead and wounded to be counted by the Marines.

How Company (less 1st and 2d Platoons) covered the low ground between George and Item, finally occupying a blocking position about 400 yards behind the O–1 Line.

With the seizure of Hill 94, the critical portions of the O–1 Line were secured. There was, however, a good deal of activity within the perimeter for several more hours. Major Bridges of 1/1 collected about 100 late-comers at BLUE Three and led them forward in search of the battalion assembly area. Composed of men from H&S, Able and Baker Companies, the little force not only missed its destination but made one of the deepest penetrations of the day, finally halting on a hill to the left of George Company's front lines.

Shortly after Bridges set up a defensive position for the night, his position was invaded by an Easy Company contingent in search of the 2d Battalion. Reoriented to some degree, the visitors reached Dog Company's intersection much later. The 2d Battalion CP had meanwhile intercepted a group from Major Whitman S. Bartley's Weapons Company at the trail junction selected in the darkness for the initial battalion CP. At one or the other of these points, the misdirected portions of Sutter's battalion were directed to their parent units. All personnel were present or accounted for before dawn.[43]

Two other troop movements completed the tactical mosaic of the 1st Marines. The 2d Platoon of How Company was to pass through Item's lines on Objective C at 2330 and outpost the summit of Hill 233, some 2,000 yards farther along the ridge and beyond the regimental front. After setting out on schedule, the small unit covered about half of its rugged journey upon reaching Hill 180, an intermediate height. With most of the night gone and his troops wearied by the climb, the platoon leader radioed for permission to halt and his request was granted.

Another venture into the unknown was made by an even smaller unit. Second Lieutenant Bruce F. Cunliffe's 60mm section of Fox Company had somehow mingled with 3d Battalion troops during the drive inland. When he led his men through the darkness in search of 2/1, the section ranged forward of friendly lines and into unexplored territory near Hill 117.

The surprise was mutual when these Marines stumbled into a small NKPA patrol. But a brief fire fight in the darkness was enough for the Red soldiers, who took to their heels and left three dead. Cunliffe's force, which had no casualties, spent the rest of the night in uneventful isolation.

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Chapter 7. Securing the Beachhead

OF ALL THE calculated risks taken at Inchon, perhaps the most daring was the decision to ground eight LSTs abreast on RED Beach immediately after the assault troops landed. The Navy workhorses were vulnerable enough at best, and on this narrow strip of waterfront they were lined up so close to one another that shots fired by a blindfolded enemy could scarcely have missed.

Not all the NKPA shells and bullets did miss, for that matter. But fortune as usual blessed the bold, and such enemy rounds as found their targets did not touch off tons of napalm, gasoline, and ammunition.

Only with reluctance had the planners accepted the risk of landing thin-skinned supply vessels before the immediate battle area was secured. But Inchon was not a typical amphibious operation. The tremendous tidal range created an unprecedented situation; and if vital supplies were not landed on the evening high tide, the assault troops must pass a precarious first night without adequate quantities of ammunition, water, and gasoline.

Dusk had fallen, with visibility further reduced by smoke and rain squalls, when the vessels wallowed into RED Beach. The reconnaissance element of Shore Party Group Able had gone ahead with the assault troops to erect landing guides during the last moments of daylight. While the men were working under fire, one of the beach markers was riddled by enemy machine guns as it was being erected.

The H&S Company of Lieutenant Colonel Henry P. Crowe's 1st Shore Party Battalion came in with the first of the LSTs, and other elements of Groups Able and Baker followed in short order. Each of the eight vessels brought a cargo consisting of 50 tons of ammunition, 30 tons of rations, 15 tons of water, and five tons of fuel. These special loads were in addition to the normal cargo of engineer and shore party equipment and combat vehicles. Every LST was limited to 500 short tons, however, in order to insure that it could be beached without trouble.[1]

The last of the LCMs had not yet unloaded and retracted on RED Beach when the first of the LSTs appeared slightly ahead of schedule. Naval officers managed to hold the LSTs back until the beach had cleared, and the eight vessels made a successful landing in spite of treacherous currents combined with low visibility. Two of them grounded momentarily on the mud flats but butted their way through to the beach. And though the sea wall temporarily prevented several vessels from lowering bow ramps effectively, the LSTs at each end of the line were able to discharge cargo over their ramps.[2]

Bulldozers were first on the beach. They moved along the sea wall under enemy fire, pushing down sections of masonry which interfered with unloading operations.

LST 973 had no more than grated ashore when a Red Korean mortar shell exploded among the drums of motor fuel. Gasoline flooded the main deck and leaked down to the crew quarters through holes made by shell fragments. Orders were given to cut off electric motors and enforce all possible precautions, and the vessel miraculously escaped a conflagration even though it took further hits from enemy machine-gun fire.[3]

LST 857 ran into a ROK PC boat while heading in toward the beach, but no harm was done to either vessel. Hits from NKPA mortar and machine-gun fire punctured eight drums of gasoline without any of them bursting into flame. This was one of the LSTs which fired back at enemy gun flashes. During the exchange a sailor was killed and another knocked unconscious when an enemy projectile damaged one of the LST's gun mounts.

LST 859, which had a sailor wounded by enemy mortar fragments, hit RED Beach with all guns blazing away. When the vessel beached, it was immediately boarded by Marines who helped themselves to ammunition while shouting to sailors in the well deck to stop firing. The same message was slammed home more

authoritatively when First Lieutenant William J. Peter, Jr., appeared on deck, as directed by Lieutenant Colonel Newton, and demanded that the LST's guns cease at once.[4]

This put an end to the bombardment of shore positions. "No LSTs fired after my ship beached," commented Lieutenant Trumond E. Houston, USN, commander of LST 799 at the extreme left of the line. "Earlier LSTs beaching had opened fire on targets unknown to me, but my command had received very firm orders not to open fire due to the danger of firing into our own forces."[5]

As dusk shaded into darkness, the Marines on and around Cemetery Hill extended their lines into the city. Even at the climax of the military drama there was an unexpected note of comedy—assault troops were to discover shortly that among the ammunition brought by the LSTs, some useless .22 caliber cartridges testified to the haste of departure from Camp Pendleton.[6] There was enough M-1 ammunition, however, so that the enemy had no cause to complain of being neglected by the Marines.

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Chapter 7. Securing the Beachhead
Supplies on RED and BLUE Beaches

It was absolutely essential that the LSTs unload in time to retract on the morning high tide and allow other cargo vessels to take their places. This meant an all-night job for the 1st Shore Party Battalion, which was to initiate unloading on both beaches for the organization composed also of the 1st Combat Service Group, the 7th Motor Transport Battalion, and the U.S. Army 2d Engineer Special Brigade, with the latter in control.

The vehicles came off the LSTs first—about 450 of them, all told—and darkness had fallen when the unloading of cargo got into full swing. Congestion on the 650-foot strip of beach did not permit normal location and employment of dumps. It was catch-as-catch-can for the shore party troops and engineers, with the cargo being off-loaded and stockpiled wherever space could be found. Later, as the tactical situation improved, designated dumps were established.

The men went about their work under the floodlights, heedless of scattered enemy small-arms fire which continued throughout the night. At a glance the unloading presented a scene of noisy chaos, yet everything was so well under control by midnight that the accomplishment of the mission within prescribed time limits was assured.

In the morning the eight LSTs were retracted according to schedule as a like number approached the beach to discharge cargo. Two of them grounded in the mud flats too far out for unloading, but the supply problem was already so well solved that this setback was not serious.

On BLUE Beach it was not the intention to develop the area beyond the needs of the initial assault, so that a comparatively small shore party element was required. Only such equipment as could be carried by hand was taken ashore in the LCVPs and LVTs.

The reconnaissance element of Shore Party Group B (—) had landed with the assault troops, followed by the rest of the group at 1930. Provisions for the use of pre-loaded LVTs having been made in the assault phase supply plan, the shore party troops set out flanking lights to mark the entire BLUE area as a single beach. This was in preparation for the arrival of the 24 LVTs bringing pre-loaded supplies to sustain the attack in the morning. Ten of these vehicles were so delayed by adverse currents that a receding tide left them high and dry. Officers of the 1st Marines decided that the supplies were not critical enough to warrant unloading by hand over the mud flats, and the job was postponed until the LVTs could be floated in on the morning high tide. While they were discharging on BLUE–3, the LCVPs came in with other gear which was unloaded and stored in the regimental dump.

Prison stockades were set up on both beaches the first night. The LSTs continued to unload most of the Division supplies on RED Beach in spite of treacherous currents, the tidal range and the mistakes made by Japanese crews. BLUE Beach was closed on D-plus 1, having served its purpose, and the shore party personnel transferred to GREEN Beach, where facilities for unloading LSTs had been improved. Supplies landed there could be trucked across the causeway, and on D-plus 2 the shore party troops on RED Beach were also relieved and sent to Wolmi-do.

The 2d Engineer Special Brigade retained control of all logistical operations in the Inchon port area on 17 September as vessels began to discharge at Pier No. 2, designated as YELLOW Beach. There were assurances by this time that the engineers would soon have the tidal basin partially operative, thus adding materially to the capacity of the harbor.[7]

The 1st Combat Service Group remained in control of consolidated dumps. This organization was the storage agency for all X Corps supplies with the exception of ammunition and engineering materials, both of

which were handled by Army personnel. Owing to the shortage of trucks, the 7th Motor Transport Battalion was held in the port area under control of the engineer brigade.

The lack of enough motor trucks for port operations was alleviated by the restoration of rail transportation much sooner than had been expected. Although the planners did not count on this factor before D-plus 30, the 2d Engineer Special Brigade rounded up Korean crews and speeded up the tremendous task of putting the Inchon-Seoul line back in working order. As early as D-plus 1 a switch engine and six cars were operating in the Inchon yards. Three days later the first train, carrying 1,200 Marines, was dispatched over the 5-mile run from Inchon to Ascom City. As the ground forces advanced, the engineers followed close behind the front with rail transportation which handled a total of 350,000 rations, 315,000 gallons of fuel, 1,260 tons of ammunition, and 10,000 troops before the Division was relieved.

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Chapter 7. Securing the Beachhead
Surgical Teams on the Beaches

Casualties of the Landing Force on D-day amounted to 20 KIA, 1 DOW, 1 MIA, and 174 WIA in addition to 14 of non-battle classification. Medical officers regarded the operation as a landmark because of the four Navy surgical teams, each composed of three doctors and ten corpsmen, which went in behind the assault troops on the LSTs. Similar teams had been employed in the later operations of World War II, but Inchon had the distinction of being the first amphibious assault in which carefully planned medical techniques were integrated with military operations.

The surgical teams had been drilled and rehearsed in Japan for their tasks. Patients requiring immediate surgery on the night of D-day were evacuated to LST(H) 898, where an improvised operating room had been installed. During the assault phase, 42 military and 32 civilian casualties were treated instead of the 300 which had been expected. Such an unqualified success was achieved that the teams were recalled to Japan afterwards to act as instructors. Within a year the numbers of Navy surgical teams had grown to a total of 22 on standby duty in the Far East.[8]

Captain Eugene R. Hering, (MC) USN, had served in the Pusan Perimeter as the Brigade Surgeon. From a study of maps and intelligence reports, he tentatively selected a site for the Division hospital on the eastern outskirts of Inchon.

The 1st Medical Battalion, commanded by Commander Howard B. Johnson, (MC) USN, consisted of an H&S Company and five letter companies. Able and Baker were hospital companies, while Charlie, Dog, and Easy functioned as collecting and clearing companies. The last was organized for attachment to the 7th Marines when that regiment landed at Inchon.

Medical planning necessarily had to be hurried. In view of the unusual landing conditions at Inchon, it was decided to revert the clearing platoons, normally attached to infantry regiments, to Division control when they reached the transport area.

Three casualty teams, each consisting of a medical officer and six hospital corpsmen—one team from Able Company, and two from Baker—landed from separate LSTs on D-day with a mission of caring for initial casualties. Supporting collection sections of Charlie and Dog Companies landed with the assault troops of the two rifle regiments.

The reconnaissance group and the two hospital companies arrived on D-plus 1, followed by the H&S Company with equipment for the hospital set up in a schoolhouse. It was opened at 1500 on D-plus 2, with 47 casualties being received the first day.

These were the forerunners of a total of 5,516 patients to be treated by the 1st Medical Battalion for all causes during the entire Inchon-Seoul operation. Most of them were WIA cases, but such ailments as acute appendicitis, hernia, piles, and sprains are also recorded.

Of the 2,484 surgical patients, only nine died after reaching the first aid station, and among them were six deaths following major surgery. The proportion of patients surviving after evacuation, therefore, reached the figure of 99.43 per cent. This meant that the chances were about 199 to 1 that a wounded Marine would live.

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Chapter 7. Securing the Beachhead
Artillery and Tank Operations

The planners, anticipating the need of artillery support for the assault on the mainland, had hoped that DUKWs could land two battalions of Colonel James H. Brower's 11th Marines on GREEN Beach for this mission. There was some reason to believe that these vehicles could cross the mud flats at low tide, thus enabling the 105s to get in position on Wolmi-do and registered before the Inchon landing. In the end, however, it was decided that this plan was not feasible, and the 1st and 2d Battalions of the artillery regiment landed on the evening tide while the rifle regiments were hitting the beaches at Inchon. A delay of an hour and a half occurred as a result of the confused maneuvering of ships in the inner harbor. It was not until 2150, therefore, that the 1st and 2d Battalions were prepared to deliver massed fires in support of the 5th and 1st Marines respectively.[9] Fortunately, the lack of this support at H-hour had not been a grave handicap in view of the light resistance encountered on the beaches.

Low visibility and lack of targets limited the fires to a few rounds the first night. Next day the artillery landing was completed when 4/11 went ashore on RED Beach, followed on D-plus 2 by the 96th Field Artillery Battalion, USA. Plans for the drive inland called for 1/11 and 2/11 to fire in direct support of RCT–5 and RCT–1 respectively. Support was to be provided by 4/11 for RCT–5 and by the Army battalion for RCT–1.[10]

The problems of tank support for the Inchon operation had given the planners many a headache. BLUE Beach was dismissed from consideration because of the mud flats, and the possibilities at RED Beach were not encouraging. GREEN Beach offered the best prospects for landing tanks, though it was recognized that they would be stranded if the enemy destroyed the causeway connecting Wolmi-do with the mainland.

The consequences of the hasty embarkation from Camp Pendleton had borne down heavily upon the 1st Tank Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Harry T. Milne. Crews trained with the M–4A3 (Sherman) and 105mm howitzer were suddenly equipped with the M–26 (Pershing) and its 90mm gun. With the exception of Company A, which saw action with the Brigade, few of the men had had any experience either at driving or firing the new tanks. The flame tank platoon of Headquarters Company had received some training at Barstow, but most of the personnel of Baker, Charlie, and Dog Companies were limited to shipboard instruction.

The men of the Company A platoon which landed on GREEN Beach in support of 3/5 were veterans of several fights with NKPA tanks and infantry in the Pusan Perimeter. In the evening of D-day they supported the landing on RED Beach and moved across the causeway to the mainland at dusk. There they joined the other two platoons of Able Company and the flame tank platoon, which landed with the LSTs in support of the 5th Marines.

At 1700 on D-day a reconnaissance team went ashore on Wolmi-do to prepare for the landing of B Company, which took place late the following afternoon. YELLOW Beach, in the inner harbor, was operative for the landing of Company C on 18 September, and Company D was to arrive later with the 7th Marines.[11]

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Chapter 7. Securing the Beachhead
The Attack on D-plus 1

The night of 15–16 September passed quietly for both of the infantry regiments. At 2000 on D-day the 3d Battalion crossed over the causeway from Wolmi-do to rejoin RCT–5. The most dramatic action on either regimental front was an episode in the Cemetery Hill area. Two Marines mistakenly wandered out in front of the high ground and were cut down by enemy fire from a cave at the base of the hill, just below the lines of Company A, 5th Marines. Repeated attempts to reach the fallen men were thwarted by submachine gun fire from the recess, until a ROK interpreter, threatening the use of tanks, persuaded the occupants to surrender. As a squad of North Koreans filed out in submission, troops from Able Company rushed forward to get their two comrades. One of the Marines was already dead; the other lay mortally wounded.[12]

In the middle of the night, the 1st and 5th Marines received General Smith's OpnO 3–50, directing them to attack after dawn. Murray's regiment, by previous plan, would march through the southern part of Inchon, leaving the heart of the seaport to be cleared by the KMC. About three miles inland, the 5th Marines would reach the O–2 Line coming abreast of Puller's front of the night before. (Thus, the O–1 and O–2 Lines were one and the same in the 1st Marines zone). Tied in along the Inchon-Seoul Highway at Hill 117, the two regiments would drive eastward to the O–3 Line, approximately five miles inland. This last arc was the goal specified in Smith's attack order.[13]

Murray's tactical plan was dictated by the simple necessity of getting out of Inchon as quickly as possible. The 5th Marines would therefore attack in a column of battalions, with Roise's 2d in the lead, followed by the 1st and 3d in that order. Two hills, located north of the highway on the outskirts of the city, were designated Regimental Objectives D and E. In taking this high ground, 2/5 would automatically control the 5th Marines' segment of the O–2 Line and seal off the Inchon Peninsula in conjunction with the 1st Marines. This would leave a secure pocket for the great ship-to-shore build-up commencing on the morning tide.

Following a brief orientation at dawn, Captain Jaskilka led Company E forward from the British Consulate. Unopposed, the column passed the inner tidal basin, where Fox Company fell in behind. In the meantime, Company D left its positions atop Observatory Hill and brought up the rear of the battalion formation. Inchon's streets were strangely quiet during 2/5's advance. Frightened civilians peeped from windows and alleyways, but the enemy was nowhere to be found. The sprawling seaport seemed dead.

Inconsistencies of the Oriental enemy were exposed in a striking contrast of scenes at 0700. Nearing the edge of the city, Easy Company was preparing to veer off the road and attack Objective D. The troops were encountering no resistance whatsoever, and it was obvious that the North Koreans had abandoned Inchon in haste during the night. Only five miles away, however, six T–34 tanks were rumbling along the highway in broad daylight, headed toward the seaport without infantry escort.

An eight-plane strike of VMF–214 intercepted the enemy armor at the village of Kansong-ni. As the Corsairs swept down on the first pass, one of the tanks was enveloped in flaming napalm. Another was disabled when a rocket hit blew off its tracks. A third was left seemingly helpless on the road, squatting in a pool of motor fuel which poured out of its wounds.[14]

Marines of 2/1 watched the show with enthusiasm from the top of Hill 117, less than two miles away. The joy of victory went flat, however, when one of the planes failed to pull out of its dive. Captain William F. Simpson, the pilot, was killed as the F4U crashed beside the highway.[15]

A second flight of VMF–214 descended on Kansong-ni with a vengeance. Rocket fire destroyed one T–

34, and a direct bomb hit knocked another off the road. It will be shown shortly that these two tanks must have been the same pair that were severely damaged by napalm and rockets during the first strike. When panicky NKPA crewmen fled to nearby thatched huts for concealment, the dwellings were promptly razed by napalm. Marine pilots, assuming incorrectly that all six tanks lay dead beneath the pall of smoke and flame, turned their attention to other targets in the area. They bombed an enemy jeep and weapons carrier standing in the open, then strafed two other motor vehicles which had been cleverly camouflaged.[16]

It would soon become more apparent why Red leaders in Seoul had sacrificed precious armor in a clearly hopeless thrust against the swelling beachhead. Communications were destroyed, so that NKPA defense forces fought or fled as isolated units. Adequate reserves were not at hand initially, with the result that stop-gap detachments were fed piecemeal into battle, only to be flattened by the Marine steamroller. In short, the North Koreans lost control. And when they attempted to regain it, time had run out.

While Marine air hammered the enemy's armored column, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, deployed outside Inchon. Having made sight contact with Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's troops on Hill 117 at 0730, Captain Jaskilka led Easy Company off the road and toward Objective D the left. Fox Company continued along the pavement several hundred more yards, then also veered northward in the direction of Objective E. Neither company met opposition, and both were atop their respective hills at 0930.[17]

Meanwhile, Company D had advanced eastward on the highway with a platoon of Able Company tanks. There was the occasional whine of a sniper's bullet overhead as the column moved rapidly to its junction with the 1st Marines. At 0900, while Easy and Fox Companies were climbing their objectives, Dog made contact with 2/1 at Hill 117.[18]

It was its opposite of the 1st Marines that Dog Company of 2/5 met at Hill 117. Fox Company of 2/1 had been clearing the eastern reaches of the big ridge since 0615, and Easy was to spend all morning and afternoon securing high ground and a village about a mile off on the right flank. When the attack along the highway resumed shortly after 0900, Company D of the 5th Marines and a platoon of A/Tanks took the lead. Fox and Dog Companies of 2/1 followed in trace and on the right as the formation advanced rapidly against nothing heavier than sniper fire. By 1100, elements of both battalions were deployed at Sogam-ni, just a few hundred yards short of smoking Kansong-ni. Since the former hamlet bordered the O–3 Line, the Marines held up to await further orders.[19]

To the south of the highway, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, reorganized in the center of Puller's zone and moved forward as regimental reserve. Simultaneously, the 3d Battalion began its sweep of the Munhang Peninsula, Companies G and I attacking generally southward from Hill 233. Since the broad front was studded with high ground and villages, Lieutenant Colonel Ridge relied on LVT transport whenever possible to regain momentum lost to hill-climbing and searching. Resistance on the peninsula proved negligible, although once again the capture of prisoners and materiel revealed enemy potential unused. Among the weapons abandoned by the North Koreans were quantities of rifles and machine guns, a battery of Russian-made 120mm mortars, and four coastal guns, the latter pointing menacingly toward the ships of the Attack Force anchored in the channel.[20]

Although 1/1 and 3/1 did not reach their portion of the objective until later in the day, Division Headquarters realized by mid-morning that enemy resistance as far out as the O–3 Line could be discounted. Now that the tremendous obstacles of the actual landing had been overcome, the tactical advantage of the moment swung from the Red commander at Seoul to General Smith. Owing to the conformation of the Inchon and Munhang Peninsulas, which were linked together inland like Siamese twins, the O–3 Line formed a front three miles long with both flanks bounded by water. A glance at the map will show the beachhead thus set off as an ideal foothold. To North Koreans thinking in terms of counterattack, the vacuum rapidly being filled by the Landing Force was a defensible bottleneck. To the Marines, on the other hand, it was the gateway to freedom of

maneuver for an overland offensive.

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Chapter 7. Securing the Beachhead
Advance to the Force Beachhead Line

Opening the gate was the subject of General Smith's OpnO 4–50, issued by dispatch at 1045, D-plus 1. He directed Puller and Murray to continue the attack from the O–3 Line, seized the Force Beachhead Line (FBHL), and thereby conclude the assault phase of the amphibious operation. The order also marked off a new Tactical Bomb Line,[21] behind which Marine Air was forbidden to strike without ground coordination.

Roughly the shape of a right angle, the FBHL corresponded to X Corps Phase Line BB. Like the O–3 arc, it was anchored on the sea at both ends. The east-west leg of the angle, five miles long, lay above and almost parallel to the Inchon-Seoul Highway. The north-south leg, about seven miles inland, added a third projection, the Namdong Peninsula, to the beachhead. Encompassing the built-up centers of Ascom City and Mahang-ri on the main road, the apex of the FBHL pointed northeast toward Kimpo Airfield like an arrowhead.
Click here to view map

The Inchon-Seoul Highway remained the boundary between the 1st and 5th Marines. Lieutenant Colonel Murray's order went out to the latter before noon, directing a two-pronged assault. The 2d Battalion would jump off from the O–3 Line and trace the course of the highway, clearing the hills and villages on the left. Simultaneously, the 3d was to swing sharply northward from behind 2/5 and attack high ground overlooking the east-west leg of the FBHL. The 1st Battalion would remain in regimental reserve.[22]

There were a number of reasons why Colonel Puller's scheme of maneuver was more complex. Not only was the 1st Marines' front much wider and the terrain more difficult, but the rapid advance had left troops units scattered throughout a zone of action some 15 square miles in area. There was considerable shuffling to be done before the regiment could deploy along the highway for the drive to the east.

The 2d Battalion would continue along the MSR, clearing the high ground on the right and coordinating with 2/5 on the left. To the south, the 1st Battalion would move up on the right of the 2d as quickly as the rugged terrain allowed. The 3d, after clearing the Munhang Peninsula, was to pass into regimental reserve subsequent to being relieved on the right flank by the Reconnaissance Company. Swinging around a sharp cove of salt pans and mud flats, the latter unit would patrol the Namdong Peninsula to secure the Division right.[23]

At 1335, the 5th Marines attacked against minor resistance on the north of the highway. Moving into Kansong-ni, the vanguard of 2/5 and its tank escort approached a sharp bend where the road veered northward for about a mile to avoid two large hills. Around the curve were the enemy tanks believed to have been knocked out by VMF-214 earlier in the day.

A section of Marine armor turned left off the pavement just short of the bend. The two M–26s crawled to the top of a knoll from which they could cover the infantry, as the latter advanced around the corner. Looking down from their vantage point, the tank crews saw three intact T–34s parked in column on the highway, about 300 yards beyond the turn. Hatches on the Communist vehicles were buttoned, with the 85mm guns leveled at the road bend.[24]

The M–26s opened up immediately. Twenty rounds of 90mm armor-piercing (AP) ammunition crashed into the enemy armor. There was no return fire, probably because the Red crews had not time to elevate and traverse their manually-operated guns. In the space of a few minutes, each of the T–34s exploded and burst into flame. The crews did not escape.[25]

The Marine attack rolled past the blazing hulks. Nearby were two other wrecked T–34s, obviously the victims of the air attack. If the pilots of VMF–214 had attacked a total of six enemy tanks, one of the vehicles

must have escaped before the ground troops reached the scene.[26]

Tracing the north-south stretch of highway that led to Ascom City, Dog Company of RCT–5 marched a thousand yards beyond the bend and ascended a high hill on the west side of the road. Company F swung out to the left, crossed the railroad tracks running parallel to the highway, and seized the high ground adjacent to that held by Company D. Both assault units encountered only sniping, but it was early evening before the two hills and surrounding low ground had been searched thoroughly.[27]

Lieutenant Colonel Roise ordered 2/5 to dig in for the night. He was about 3,000 yards short of the highway's intersection with the FBHL, but his battalion held the commanding ground. Companies D and F defended the approach to Ascom City, which sprawled out on the low ground just forward of their positions. Company E, in reserve, set up a perimeter in the battalion rear.[28]

Lieutenant Sweet's five M–26s, which had supported the day-long advance from RED Beach, were relieved at dusk by the 1st Platoon of Able Company tanks. In addition to their score of three T-34s, Sweet's veterans of the Pusan Perimeter had captured an impressive tally of enemy materiel: three NKPA trucks, two 76mm AT guns, two 122mm mortars, and a pair of Russian-manufactured jeeps.[29]

During 2/5's attack along the MSR, the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines was occupied with the hills overlooking that portion of the FBHL to the northwest. Lieutenant Colonel Taplett had launched his drive at 1330 with Companies G and I in the assault and H in reserve. On the left, George Company seized its high-ground objective at 1440, while Item took an extra hour to clear adjacent Hill 137. There were no Marine casualties during a rapid advance that netted 12 enemy prisoners.[30]

Patrols from 3/5 ranged westward to the sea, and eastward to the edge of Ascom City, where Item Company troops discovered an enemy ammunition dump and vehicle park. Location of these undefended prizes was promptly reported to the 5th Marines CP.[31]

South of the Inchon-Seoul Highway, the 1st Marines attacked from the O–3 Line at 1600. Sutter's 2d Battalion drove forward on the right of the MSR and passed below Kansong-ni without incident. Continuing a thousand yards farther, Company D scaled the rugged slopes of Hill 186, cleared the summit, and dug in. Fox Company climbed the same high ground shortly afterwards and went into position on the left of Dog and overlooking the highway. Thus 2/1's front for the night was across the road and slightly to the rear of the high ground positions occupied by Company D of 2/5. Easy Company returned from its independent mission on the right flank and set up a reserve position in the vicinity of Kansong-ni, just rearward of Sutter's CP at the base of Hill 186.[32]

The enemy attitude in the 2d Battalion's zone gradually had developed from occasional sniping early in the day to a pattern of definite light resistance as the Marines surged over Hill 186. Though most of the North Koreans fled after firing a few rounds, their token efforts cost the battalion four killed and 10 wounded. These figures are noteworthy in view of the fact that total losses for the whole Division on D-plus 1 were four KIA and 21 WIA.[33]

Sutter's troops exacted a comparatively stiff price from the Reds in return, for it was estimated that 120 of the enemy were killed or wounded. Moreover, the Marines captured more than 30 prisoners, 70 rifles, 10 machine guns, and an ordnance dump loaded with small-arms ammunition.[34]

Elsewhere on the 1st Marines front there was considerably more hiking than combat. The 3d Battalion completed its sweep of the Munhang Peninsula about 1600 and assembled at the southern tip of the O–3 Line to await relief by the Reconnaissance Company.[35] In the course of rounding up NKPA prisoners and abandoned weapons, 3/1 had encountered a group of Korean villagers, headed by their schoolmaster, who called themselves the Young People's Anti-Communist Resistance League. They had armed themselves with Russian rifles and light machine guns left behind by enemy troops fleeing inland.[36]

In the center of Puller's zone, the 1st Battalion had moved rapidly to fill the gap between the 2d and 3d.

Attacking into the vacuum left by the retreating enemy, Hawkins' unit drove two mountainous miles beyond the O–3 Line, finally stopping for the night on high ground about 2,500 yards south of 2/1's positions on Hill 186. The break in the regimental front was protected when 3/1 shifted northward and formed a reserve perimeter to the rear of the lines, after being relieved on the right at 1700 by Captain Kenneth J. Houghton's Reconnaissance Company. Assuming responsibility for the Division's southern flank, the Recon troops set up a night defense at the base of the Namdong Peninsula with their front linked to that of 1/1 on the left.[37]

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Chapter 7. Securing the Beachhead
Displacement Ashore of Division CP

The establishment of a Division CP on shore was delayed by the necessity of utilizing every minute of the limited periods of high tide for the movement of troops, supplies, and equipment. General Smith decided on D-day that it would not be advisable to displace his CP ashore until General Craig and the ADC group (former headquarters of 1st ProvMarBrig) were able to set up adequate communications. With this object in mind, the ADC group landed on the evening high tide of D-day to locate an advance echelon on Wolmi-do.

Not much could be done that evening. And in the morning Craig informed CG 1st MarDiv that the island was too crowded. He reported that he and Lieutenant Colonel Stewart had discovered a likely spot on the southeast outskirts of Inchon and recommended that the CP be moved without delay.[38] General Smith approved and the move started at once.

Meanwhile, a good deal of military housekeeping had been accomplished in the Inchon port area. Lieutenant Colonel John H. Partridge's 1st Engineer Battalion was given the task of making a survey of beach exit roads with a view to opening up an MSR between RED and BLUE Beaches.

After elements of Company A hit GREEN Beach, the remaining troops of the battalion had landed on the two beaches and assisted short party units at unloading water, ammunition, and rations. This work was so well along by the morning of D-plus 1 that the engineers opened up the MSR betweeen the two beaches and assigned personnel for improvement and maintenance. A water point was established at the north end of RED Beach with 31 distillation units, and 125,000 gallons were issued during the next six days.[39]

The new Division CP on the outskirts of Inchon was ready by the afternoon of D-plus 1, and General Smith said goodbye to General MacArthur on the bridge of the *Mount McKinley*. The commander in chief wished him well and enjoined him to take Kimpo Airfield at the first opportunity.[40]

The Marine general landed at YELLOW Beach at 1730. Upon arrival at the CP, he sent a dispatch to Admiral Doyle, informing him that he was assuming responsibility for the conduct of operations ashore at 1800 on 16 September. Thus ended the amphibious assault phase, almost exactly 24 hours after the first wave of Marines set foot on RED Beach.

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Chapter 8. On to Kimpo

ON SUNDAY MORNING, D-plus 2, General Smith was directed as Landing Force Commander to re-establish civil government in Inchon. Although parts of the Korean seaport had been burned or battered into rubble, thousands of refugees were returning to the ruins of their homes after having fled during the bombardments. The KMC Regiment, operating under the control of RCT–5, had been given the task of screening the remaining inhabitants for their loyalty. No fault could have been found with the thoroughness of these Korean allies who were perhaps inclined to be too zealous when they suspected subversion.

General Smith concluded that the best procedure was to find loyal Korean officials and uphold their authority. He consulted Rear Admiral Sohn Won Yil, the ROK Chief of Naval Operations, and learned that the former mayor of Inchon had fled during the original NKPA invasion and never returned. Admiral Sohn vouched for the loyalty of one of the political prisoners, Pyo Yang Moon, who had been the losing candidate for the mayoralty in the last election. The Marine general decided to install him as Inchon's chief executive and issued a proclamation to that effect in Korean as well as English.

Induction ceremonies were held on the morning of 18 September on the portico of the city hall, a once imposing edifice which bore the scars of war. About 700 prominent citizens attended as the Marine interpreter led in singing the Korean national anthem. After the proclamation had been read in both languages, General Smith made a few remarks and the new mayor responded. A ROK Marine guard of honor officiated, and Admiral Sohn brought the occasion to a close with a brief address.

Steps were taken immediately to bury the civilian dead, to care for the orphans, to distribute food and clothing to the distressed, and to establish a civilian hospital and police force.[1]

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Chapter 8. On to Kimpo
Operations on Other Korean Fronts

Dispatches received from the Pusan Perimeter revealed that the Eighth Army had jumped off according to schedule on the 16th in its joint offensive. Although gains were negligible the first day, this effort was pinning down NKPA troops who might otherwise have reinforced the defenders of Kimpo and Seoul.

Several other operations had been mounted on both coasts as diversions to keep the enemy guessing as to where the lightning would strike. Kunsan, it may be recalled, had been briefly considered by X Corps planners as an alternate amphibious objective. Early in September this west coast seaport was selected as the chief target of feints during the preparations for the Inchon landing. General Stratemeyer's Fifth Air Force bombers initiated strikes on rail and highway communications within a 30-mile radius. That same day a hit-and-run amphibious raid on Kunsan was planned at Admiral Joy's headquarters in Tokyo. As a result, Colonel Ely sailed with his company on the British frigate *Whitesand Bay* and raided the Kunsan waterfront on the night of 12 September. Three casualties were incurred from enemy machine-gun fire.

The Seventh Fleet added to the deception by singling out Kunsan for carrier air strikes and naval gunfire bombardments to give the impression of softening up an objective for amphibious assault. Chinnampo, the seaport of Pyongyang, also appeared to be threatened when it was bombarded by a British task force.

On the east coast the USS *Missouri*, just arrived from the United States, poured 16-inch shells into Samchok on 14 September while a Navy helicopter did the spotting. The cruiser *Helena* and three U.S. destroyers added their metal to the bombardment.[2]

D-day at Inchon was the date of a landing of ROK guerrillas behind the NKPA lines at Changsa-dong, a coastal town about midway between Yongdok and Pohang-dong. After the ROK merchant marine LST struck submerged rocks and grounded, it was used as an improvised fortress by the guerrillas, who retreated from the NKPA forces when their ammunition ran short. The only two Americans, an Army lieutenant and sergeant, radioed for help; and the cruiser *Helena* provided naval gunfire for the Navy relief expedition which took off the survivors.

How much these diversions on both Korean coasts may have contributed to a surprise at Inchon is a moot question. It might even be argued that the enemy was not surprised, since an intercepted NKPA radio message warned Pyongyang on 13 September that United Nations vessels were approaching Inchon and planes bombing Wolmi-do. The senders deduced that an amphibious landing was forthcoming and assured NKPA Headquarters that defensive units were being stationed where they would repulse the UN forces.[3]

This would make it appear doubtful that a surprise had been achieved. But it is the opinion of Admiral Struble that "the actual results in the Inchon-Seoul area clearly indicate surprise . . . . While the message was apparently sent, and was a good report, there is no evidence that the enemy headquarters accepted the report. It is possible that a later report that the enemy bombarding ships were retreating from Inchon may have confused the issue. In any event, only a short time was available to take advantage of strong defensive positions and certainly not enough time to mine the harbor." [4]

An excellent analysis of the outcome is to be found in Admiral Doyle's official report. After paying tribute to the pre-D-day bombardments by the cruisers and destroyers, plus the air strikes by planes of TF–77 and TG–90.5, he concluded that "the assault itself was successful only through the perfect teamwork that existed between the participating Naval and Marine elements. The successful accomplishment of the assault on Inchon demanded that an incredible number of individual and coordinated tasks be performed precisely as planned. Only

the United States Marines, through their many years of specialized training in amphibious warfare, in conjunction with the Navy, had the requisite know-how to formulate the plans within the limited time available and execute those plans flawlessly without additional training or rehearsal."[5]

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Chapter 8. On to Kimpo
Landing of RCT-7 in Japan

Dispatches were received on D-plus 2 at the new Division CP to the effect that the 7th Marines was preparing to embark that day from Kobe and land at Inchon on 21 September.

The 3d Battalion of this regiment, it may be recalled, had originally been a unit of the 6th Marines on FMFLant duty with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. Upon being ordered to the Far East, the unit sailed from Crete to Japan by way of the Suez Canal and Indian Ocean. Lieutenant Colonel Dowsett, the battalion commander, did not know throughout the voyage what specific mission awaited his men.

They later met at Kobe their new regimental commander, Colonel Litzenberg, who had flown to Japan ahead of the other two battalions sailing from San Diego. He informed Dowsett that his battalion was now a part of the 7th Marines and named him executive officer of the regiment. Major Maurice E. Roach succeeded to the command of the newly designated 3/7.

A formidable task awaited the 7th Marines in Japan. The officers of the staff, not having served with the Division before, were unfamiliar with references and terms in directives dealing with the Inchon landing. Problems of integrating the regiment into the operations of the division were solved only by intensive application.

A reshuffling of the regiment had to be accomplished meanwhile before embarking for Inchon. The purpose was to spread the hundreds of reservists throughout the three battalions instead of having them concentrated in several companies.[6]

It took some remarkable adjustments to get the regiment ready for embarkation from Kobe only 17 days after sailing from San Diego. But it meant that the 7th Marines would get into the fight at least a week sooner than Division planners had anticipated.

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Chapter 8. On to Kimpo
Destruction of NKPA Tank Column

The amphibious assault phase was left behind on D-plus 2 when the 1st and 5th Marines jumped off from the western outskirts of Ascom City to initiate their drive inland. With the exploitation phase coming next, command relationships would be as follows:
Click here to view table

The night of 16-17 September had been quiet all along the Division front. It was so quiet, in fact, that the troops of 2/5 paid no particular heed to a truck which drove through their lines on the Inchon-Seoul Highway about midnight. Not until the vehicle penetrated a few hundred yards into Marine territory was it stopped by curious tank crews of Able/Tanks' 1st Platoon, whose M–26s were deployed across the road in deep anti-mechanized defense. The startled occupants of the stray truck turned out to be an NKPA officer and four enlisted men, but they were no more surprised than the Marines who stepped out of the darkness and took them prisoner. [7]

Apparently, neither the tank crews nor anybody else in the area attached any special importance to the strange truck incident. In a few hours, however, an epic of smoke, flame, and twisted steel would attest to the significance of this scrap of evidence. The fact of the matter was that the Red leaders in Seoul did not know the exact location of the 1st Marine Division.

It will be recalled that Dog Company of 2/5 occupied a hill on the west side of the highway as the attack on D-plus 1 ground to a halt. About 200 yards beyond the company front was a large knoll that nosed into the center of Ascom City. Observing that the highway turned sharply to the east and passed through a cut at the base of the knoll, Lieutenant H. J. Smith decided to outpost the natural roadblock in strength. At dusk, therefore, he dispatched the 2d Platoon, under Second Lieutenant Lee R. Howard, to man the advance position along with machine-gun and rocket-launcher attachments.[8]

As the first rays of dawn creased the sky on 17 September, Howard and his troops were entrenched in a compact perimeter atop the knoll. Several hundred yards to the rear, the 1st Platoon of A/Tanks was augmented in its blocking position by 3.5-inch rocket launchers of 2/5 and the 75mm recoilless rifles of the 5th Marines. Just across the road from this formidable array were more 75s and 3.5s of the 1st Marines, emplaced with Fox Company of 2/1 on Hill 186.[9]

Records of the 5th Marines describe this bristling gauntlet as ". . . a temporary defensive position in depth . . ." It was more like a giant torpedo.

Sometime before daybreak, a North Korean column formed on the Inchon-Seoul Highway a few miles east of Ascom City.[10] In the van were six sleek T–34s of the 42d NKPA Mechanized Regiment. Perched atop the tanks and strung out for about a hundred yards were 200 Red infantrymen, comprising a mixed representation of the 18th NKPA Division in Seoul. The enemy force was on its way to block the advance of the 1st Marine Division along the highway.

It was obvious that the Communist soldiers had little or no knowledge of the situation ahead. For as they neared Ascom City at the crack of dawn, some were still sitting comfortably on the tanks and eating breakfast. Others laughed and jabbered as they trailed along the road.

Lieutenant Howard saw them approaching his Dog Company outpost on the knoll. He reported to Smith, who passed the word to Roise at 2/5's CP, first one tank, then three, and finally six. Roise took the information with the proverbial grain of salt, supposing it to be a delusion of youth and inexperience. Just as quickly as that

impression formed in his mind, it was shattered by the first reverberations of the battle.

Click here to view map

The attitude of the enemy soldiers as they neared his outpost convinced Howard that they were unaware of the proximity of Marine lines. He let the head of the column slip by on the road below, therefore, until the tanks began to round the bend leading to Dog Company's MLR. Then the platoon leader shouted the order, and his men opened up with machine guns, rifles, and BARs.[11]

The Red infantry went down under the hail of lead like wheat under the sickle. Soldiers on the tanks were knocked to the road, where many were ground under as the big vehicles lurched and roared crazily in reaction to the surprise.

Corporal Okey J. Douglas moved part way down the knoll and closed on the lead T–34 with his 2.36-inch rocket launcher. A few well-placed rounds, fired calmly at a range of 75 yards, killed the armored vehicle on the spot. Continuing the single-handed assault, Douglas damaged tank number 2 just as the main Marine position exploded into action.

Under attack by the outpost, the cripple and the four unharmed T–34s had continued around the road bend, some of them spilling off the curve in an attempt to deploy in the adjacent rice paddy. All five were taken under fire by First Lieutenant William D. Pomeroy's M–26s, about 600 yards away. Within five minutes, the Marine 90mm guns threw 45 rounds of AP at the enemy armor.

Recoilless rifles of Second Lieutenant Charles M. Jones' platoon (5th Marines AT Co) added their hot metal at a range of 500 yards, and the 75s with the 1st Marines across the road also erupted. Simultaneously, Second Lieutenant James E. Harrell ordered the 3.5-inch rocket launchers of 2/5's assault platoon into action.

The T–34's didn't have a chance. All of them exploded under the heavy fusilade; and when the smoke cleared, they were heaps of burning wreckage. Scattered around the dead tanks and along the road were the bodies of 200 Red infantrymen. So rapid and complete was the enemy's destruction that only one Marine casualty—slightly wounded—resulted from the fight.

It was only natural that conflicting claims would arise among the participants in the short, violent clash. To Pomeroy's tank crews, it appeared that the M–26s accounted for the five T–34s with little or no assistance from infantry arms. This was a reasonable conclusion on their part, owing to the limited visibility from the buttoned vehicles and the fact that their 90mm guns unquestionably wrought the greatest destruction on the NKPA machines. Since so many weapons were firing simultaneously from various other positions, however, and since the T–34s were wrecked so completely, kills and partial kills were also claimed by the recoilless rifles of both regiments. Moreover, the 3.5-inch rocket gunners of 2/5 and 2/1 believed that some of their rounds found the mark in the midst of the furor. It is known, for instance, that Private First Class Walter C. Monegan, Jr., rocket man in the assault squad of Fox Company, 1st Marines, closed on the enemy vehicles after they had rounded the bend and fired his weapon at point-blank ranges.

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Chapter 8. On to Kimpo
General MacArthur Visits the Front

The acrid odor of high explosives still lingered in the fresh morning air as a column of jeeps came slowly around the bend from the rear. General MacArthur was making his first visit to the front. With him and Admiral Struble were Generals Almond, Shepherd, Smith, Ruffner, Hodes, Wright, and a group of X Corps staff officers. Several jeeps filled with newspaper correspondents and photographers followed close behind the military cortege. [12]

Grimy Marines of RCT–5, their eyes dazzled by the glitter of starry insignia, gazed in wonder at this sudden revelation of the pomp and circumstance of war. The generals and admirals in their turn were equally impressed by the destruction these Marines had wrought—the warm corpses beside the road, the blazing heaps of twisted metal that had been T–34 tanks only a few minutes before.

The Marine driver parked the leading jeep on a culvert and General MacArthur leaped down to survey the spectacle. Instantly he was surrounded by cameramen snapping pictures which would soon appear on stateside front pages. All America was rejoicing at the turning tide in Korea after the humiliating weeks of delaying operations.

Early that morning CinCFE had been met by General Smith at YELLOW Beach and welcomed to the 1st Marine Division CP, a Quonset hut with a dirt floor. There the commander in chief was briefed by the Division G–2 and G–3 on the military situation.

The second stop was at the 1st Marines CP. CinCFE informed Colonel Puller and Admiral Sohn that he was awarding each of them a Silver Star. Reaching into the pocket of his leather jacket, he discovered that he had no medals with him.

“Make a note of that,” he enjoined an aide as the correspondents busily scribbled on their pads.

Next, the route of the procession led to the zone of RCT–5 and the scene of the Marine tank ambush. It was not exactly a happy occasion for General Smith, who felt a heavy responsibility for the lives and welfare of the 1st Marine Division’s distinguished guests. Not only was the commander in chief indifferent to danger, but the Marine general had similar cause to worry about others making the tour of inspection. For instance, there was Frank Lowe, a 66-year-old retired National Guard major general visiting Korea as President Truman’s personal observer. Astonishingly hardy for his age, this admirer of the Marines took personal risks which gave concern to Smith. Another source of anxiety was the attractive correspondent of a New York newspaper, Marguerite Higgins, who had hit RED Beach on the heels of the Landing Force.

Both she and Lowe were on hand when the column of jeeps stopped to survey the results of the tank ambush. Smith scanned the landscape with apprehension, devoutly hoping that some hidden foeman would not choose this moment to obliterate several visiting generals with a well-aimed mortar round. It was with relief that he departed with MacArthur for a visit to the CP of the 5th Marines. And it was just as well that he did not learn until later what happened shortly after his departure. First Lieutenant George C. McNaughton’s platoon, hearing a suspicious noise, had flushed seven armed NKPA soldiers out of a culvert—the culvert on which General MacArthur’s jeep had been parked! A few rifle shots persuaded them to surrender as the only survivors of the enemy expedition.[13]

The caravan of distinguished visitors proceeded meanwhile to the CP of the 5th Marines, raising a cloud of dust that could be seen for miles. Lieutenant Colonel Murray and General Craig were next to be awarded Silver Stars by General MacArthur. His tour of inspection ended with a look at the Marine stockade in Inchon, where

671 NKPA prisoners were held, and a survey of the defenses of Wolmi-do.

When the Marine general returned to his CP, he found Major General James M. Gavin, USA, waiting to make a detailed study of Marine close air support and the weapons employed. The day ended with Ruffner and Hodes conferring with Smith on plans for the employment of the 32d Infantry, due to land the next day as the first unit of the 7th Infantry Division to go ashore. Plans were made for the Army unit to assume responsibility at 1200 on 19 September for the zone of action on RCT–1's right flank.[14]

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Chapter 8. On to Kimpo
The Drive to Kimpo Airfield

On the evening of D-plus 1, General Smith had issued OpnO 5–50, directing the 1st and 5th Marines to attack toward Corps Phase Line CC the next morning.[15] The actual jump-off on 17 September was delayed about an hour by the intrusion of the ill-fated Red tank column.

Both in scope and in shape, Phase Line CC was an enlargement of the FBHL. Beginning on the coast above Inchon and running parallel to the Inchon-Seoul Highway, the line extended inland about eight miles to bend around Kimpo Airfield. It then ran southward, intersecting the highway two miles east of Sosa and finally terminating at an inlet not far from the Namdong Peninsula.

The 5th Marines' tactical plan was of necessity an ambitious one, since approximately two-thirds of the Division's projected 19-mile frontage lay in Murray's zone. On the left, an attached KMC battalion would attack northward to the phase line, taking high ground Objectives One, Two, and Three en route. Roise's 2d Battalion was to advance in the center on a northeasterly course, which included Objectives ABLE, BAKER, and CHARLIE, the latter being Kimpo itself. Newton's 1st Battalion would follow the 2d initially, then take over the regimental right and seize Objectives EASY and FOX, two sprawling hills just beyond the phase line.[16]

The 3d KMC Battalion passed through 2/5's lines at 0700 for the purpose of clearing the western outskirts of Ascom City before driving toward its numbered objectives to the north. That the initial mission was accomplished only with considerable difficulty and assistance will be shown later. Afterwards the Korean Marines made rapid progress, as they advanced over flatlands almost devoid of enemy resistance.
Click here to view map

Lieutenant Colonel Roise launched 2/5's attack at 0900. Company E led the long route column eastward on the Inchon-Seoul Highway through the carnage left by the defeat of the Red tank thrust. Having marched about a mile, the vanguard of the battalion turned left on a secondary road that traced the eastern edge of Ascom City.[17]

This expansive urban area would prove to be a thorn in the side of the 5th Marines for the next 24 hours. Originally a large Korean village called Taejong-ni, Ascom City became the site of a huge service command of the United States Army during the occupation of South Korea after World War II. The few acres of small buildings and thatched huts had grown into almost two square miles of residential, industrial, and storage area. Caves, large warehouses, hundreds of other buildings, and a complex network of streets made it an ideal hiding place for fragments of a broken enemy, as the Marines were shortly to learn.

Marching northward through the outskirts, Easy Company of 2/5 was repeatedly held up by small pockets of resistance among the dwellings on both sides of the road. Captain Jaskilka's veteran infantry reduced the enemy positions methodically, but the whole morning was used up in the process. Simultaneously with the main advance, the 2d Platoon of Fox Company marched through the heart of Ascom City and screened 2/5's left flank. Second Lieutenant Tilton A. Anderson, the platoon leader, reported everything quiet in his zone, although his men did not have time to check all of the side streets and blocks of buildings.[18]

Having cleared the eastern fringe of the city by noon, Roise looked in vain for the branch road shown on his map as leading to Objective Able and Baker, some four miles distant. The chart was inaccurate, and only a time-consuming reconnaissance could locate the correct route. It was already 1400 by the time Company E led off on the hike.

While 2/5 was having its troubles in the eastern outskirts, Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's 3d Battalion

stepped in to help the Korean Marines on the other side of Ascom City. In regimental reserve, 3/5 was scheduled to occupy a series of assembly areas throughout the day, moving forward by bounds behind the assault elements. The morning displacement, into the western edge of Ascom City, took place before the KMC attack had cleared the suburb as planned. Using his initiative, Taplett committed his battalion against moderate resistance that was holding up the South Koreans.[19]

Company G went into action and knocked out a Communist machine-gun emplacement in the city. Next, a George Company patrol attacked a strong enemy force deployed among the buildings. The North Koreans fled after a hot fight, leaving behind 18 dead at a cost of three wounded to the Marines. Item and How Companies also spread out through the maze of streets, and there were several more skirmishes before the “assembly area” was secured. The Korean Marines then passed through and attacked to the north, as mentioned earlier.[20]

The 1st Platoon of A/Tanks, having silenced other enemy positions in the city, made contact with 3/5 at 1500. Leaving the built-up area, Lieutenant Pomeroy led his M–26s in search of 2/5, in order to support that unit’s drive on Kimpo. His armor was escorted by Lieutenant Anderson’s rifle platoon, which had just completed its independent mission in Ascom City without incident. Finding a road to the northeast proved as much of a headache to Pomeroy as it had to Roise, particularly since his big vehicles could not use the same route over which 2/5’s infantry column had advanced an hour earlier.[21]

Extending his quest northward, the tank platoon leader found a road that not only paralleled the infantry’s path but also led to within a few hundred yards of Kimpo, now about five miles distant. The M–26s proceeded approximately a mile on the new route and were stopped by a damaged bridge. First Lieutenant Wayne E. Richards rounded up a party of Korean natives to help his 2d Platoon of A/Engineers repair the span. During the layover, Pomeroy’s force was beefed up by another platoon of M–26s, brought forward by Captain Gearl M. English, the company commander, and by a long column of rolling stock from 2/5’s headquarters.[22]

Meanwhile, the leading elements of Roise’s infantry reached the foot of Objectives Able and Baker, two large hills about 4,000 yards due south of Kimpo. There being no evidence of the enemy in the area, the battalion commander did not waste time by committing whole rifle companies to the high ground. At 1600, Lieutenant Deptula’s 1st Platoon of Easy Company ascended Objective Baker, while the rest of the battalion waited on the road below. The hill was laced with vacant entrenchments, and once on the summit, Deptula further observed that objective Able was unoccupied. Moreover, he reported by radio that it appeared to be clear sailing over the low ground leading to the airfield.[23]

Acting on this information, Roise promptly launched his attack on Kimpo, one of the major tactical objectives of the Inchon-Seoul operation. A left face by the roadbound column put the troops of 2/5 on line for the assault. Easy and Dog Companies, the latter on the left, advanced rapidly against only desultory sniper fire.

Captain English’s tanks arrived propitiously, entering far out to the left front of the attacking infantry. At a point 1,000 yards south of the airfield, the M–26s came under moderate small-arms fire. Lieutenant Anderson’s rifle platoon dismounted and engaged the small force of North Koreans, knocking out one automatic weapon with grenades. The Marine armor put down the remaining resistance with seven rounds of 90mm High Explosive (HE) followed by a thorough hosing with bow machine-gun fire.[24]

Just as this action subsided, Company D of 2/5 swept through the area, picked up a platoon of tanks, and continued toward the airfield. The other platoon of armor swung to the right to support Easy Company’s attack. By 1800, the Marines were on the southern tip of Kimpo’s main runway. Aside from sporadic long range fire from the east, there was no opposition worthy of note.[25]

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Chapter 8. On to Kimpo
Action at 5th Marines CP

Over a mile long and three-quarters of a mile wide, Korea's principal airdrome was no mean target to secure. Scattered around the field were more than half a dozen villages, and the runways themselves were lined by scores of plane revetments and emplacements. It was already dusk when Roise ordered his two assault companies to take the objective "with all speed," but by nightfall the infantry and tanks had cleared only the southern portion of the runway.[26]

Rather than stretch a single defensive line to the point of diminishing returns, the battalion commander deployed his three rifle companies in separate perimeters, each one a tightly knit strong point. Easy Company dug in on the east of the main runway and Dog on the west. Company F deployed to the south of the airfield, paying particular attention to the main road and a pair of intersections that tied in secondary routes. In a central perimeter was 2/5's CP, and Able Company Tanks took up positions in Company D's area. Just before dark, Lieutenant Deptula's platoon had raced northward to outpost the village of Soryu-li, several hundred yards beyond Company E's lines.[27]

While 2/5 was investing the southern reaches of Kimpo, Lieutenant Colonel Newton's 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, pressed the attack on the regimental right. Encountering no resistance, Company A occupied the southern portion of Objective Easy at 1900. Company B ascended the northern half of the high ground without incident later in the evening. With Charlie Company on another hill to the west, 1/5 settled down for the night some 1,500 yards southeast of the 2d Battalion's lines. Two miles to the rear, 3/5 deployed in regimental reserve around a critical road junction midway between Kimpo and Ascom City.[28]

During the afternoon of 17 September, as the assault elements of the 5th Marines rolled forward over a relatively quiet front, regimental headquarters suddenly found itself in the center of an angry hornets' nest. Lieutenant Colonel Murray's CP had just displaced to the north of the railroad station in Ascom City, when Commissioned Warrant Officer Bill E. Parrish walked across the tracks to reconnoiter a site for his ordnance dump. Gaining the summit of a small knoll, the officer and his NCO assistants were met by a heavy fusilade from the orchard and rice paddy beyond. Parrish was killed instantly and two of his men seriously wounded.[29]

Cries of help brought First Lieutenant Nicholas A. Canzona's 1st Platoon of A/Engineers, which had just arrived at Murray's CP. In a brief clash around the orchard, the engineers killed ten enemy diehards. South Korean police swept through the adjoining rice paddy and came up with seven prisoners.

About the same time, Major James D. Jordan's party arrived in the area to select a position for Battery A of 1/11. Again small-arms fire crackled. Two of Jordan's NCOs, Technical Sergeants Kenneth C. Boston and Donald Comiskey, plowed through the hail of lead and killed four more North Koreans.[30]

North of the railroad, still another Marine was killed and one more wounded not far from Murray's headquarters. For obvious reasons a tight perimeter of engineers and H&S Company troops was drawn around the CP during the night. Nevertheless, a Red officer stumbled through the line in the darkness and seriously wounded Second Lieutenant Lawrence Hetrick of A/Engineers.

At dawn on 18 September the regimental commander and his staff were awakened by the chatter of an enemy submachine gun a few yards from the CP. Holed up in a grain field with one Communist rifleman, the officer who had shot Hetrick fought fanatically against a whole platoon of engineers. Another Marine was wounded before the suicidal stand was crushed by grenades and rifle fire.

There were no regrets when Murray's headquarters took leave of Ascom City and displaced to Kimpo.

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Chapter 8. On to Kimpo
Enemy Counterattack at Kimpo

The air at Kimpo was charged with tension during the night of 17-18 September. Troops of 2/5, manning perimeters which had been laid out on unfamiliar ground during darkness, had every reason to believe that the North Koreans would not give up the airfield without a fight.

But there were troubles enough in the North Korean camp, where confusion and panic seemed to be the order of the day. Intelligence on the enemy garrison in the Kimpo area presents a scrambled picture so characteristic of the Communist organization throughout the Inchon-Seoul operation.[31] It appears that elements of the NKPA 1st Air Force Division were charged with the operation of the airfield. Under the command of 40-year-old Chinese-trained Brigadier General Wan Yong, the division was comprised of the following units or, more often than not, mere fragments thereof:

Division Headquarters
- 1st Co, Engineer Bn, Fighters Regt
- 3d Co, Engineer Bn, Fighters Regt
- 3d Plat, Gunners Co
- 2d Co, 1st Bn, 1st Regt
- 2d Bn, 1st Regt
- Finance Co, 3d Technical Bn
- Supply Co

The Kimpo force was augmented by a motley mixture of poorly trained troops from the 226th and 107th NKPA Regiments and the separate 877th Air Force Unit. In the face of the Marine advance, Colonel Han Choi Han, commander of the 107th had fled across the Han River, leaving the remnants of his regiment to an obvious fate. Major Kung Chan So, leader of the 877th AF Unit, was killed in action on 17 September. Of the 400 men originally assigned to this organization, only five remained in combat by 18 September.

Crowded into undesirable terrain between the airfield and the Han River, the Red troops were demoralized and bewildered by the rapid advance of the 5th Marines. Only the fanaticism of a few officers and NCOs prevented the complete collapse that would have resulted from the lack of tangible assistance from the North Korean leaders in Seoul. And it was no boost to sagging morale that white clothing had been issued by the Supply Company, so that the Red soldiers could quickly change to the traditional Korean garb when defeat was imminent, and dissolve in the local populace.

In the counterattack against the airfield, which was designed to uproot a full-strength Marine battalion backed by tanks and other heavy fire support, the celebrated night tactics of the Communists fizzled completely. With only a few hundred men at most, the rest having slipped away to safer parts, the North Koreans further reduced their strength by trying to develop three widely separated attacks. That they launched these assaults with only rifles and submachine guns serves to make the story more incredible.

The first move was in company strength against Lieutenant Deptula's isolated platoon outpost in Soryu-li, far to the north of Easy Company lines.[32] Deployed on both sides of a road junction in the village, the Marines heard the enemy column approaching about 0300. Deptula held fire until the Red vanguard marched into the center of his position. Sergeant Richard L. Martson then jumped to his feet, bellowed "United States Marines!" and opened up with his carbine on full automatic. A sheet of rifle and BAR fire poured into the column from the roadsides, and a dozen North Koreans went down in a heap. The remainder fled.

The Communist commander rallied his soldiers for three more thrusts against the Marine platoon. In between the attacks, his gravel-voiced exhortations ground the air. The will to fight was lacking, however, and each time, the attackers barely brushed the Marine position before darting back into the night.

A T-34 tank was finally brought up to buttress another North Korean assault. Without AT weapons to stop the armored vehicle rumbling down the road toward his platoon, Deptula retracted southward in the direction of 2/5's main positions. The outpost had suffered only one KIA and one WIA in blunting the four attacks. It was not pursued during the withdrawal.

Deptula's platoon gained Company E's lines at 0500, just before the perimeter received enemy small-arms fire from the west. Captain Jaskilka, supposing it to be coming inadvertently from Dog Company, forbade his men to reply. He stood up and yelled, "Hey! Cease fire, you guys, this is Easy Company!" Fortunately, the enemy's aim must have been disturbed by the spectacle of a Marine officer giving orders, for Jaskilka escaped without a scratch after discovering his mistake. This enemy force proved to number about two squads, and just at that moment the main NKPA force hit from the east. Easy Company was thus engaged on two fronts, with Jones' recoilless gun platoon taking on the attack from the west while the 2d Platoon bore the brunt of the assault from the east.[33]

Click here to view map

The 2d Battalion's southernmost position, manned by Company F, had been active throughout the night. Lieutenant Harrell's assault platoon together with Richards' engineer outfit was entrenched around an overpass within the southeastern arc of the company perimeter. In the first hours of 18 September, a North Korean lieutenant and his five-man demolition team tried to reach the bridge in an apparent attempt to destroy it. Sergeant Ray D. Kearl opposed the intruders single-handedly, killing the Red officer and three of his men, and driving the remaining pair back into the night. Before daybreak, another enemy patrol approached on the road and was annihilated.

It proved that these and other scattered incidents were the prelude to the third and final attack against the airfield, which was launched from the south at dawn. This last maneuver by the Reds, however, was checked even before it began, for the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, spotted the attackers moving across its front toward Kimpo. Baker Company took the North Koreans under fire immediately, and the battalion commander called down heavy mortar and artillery concentrations.

Most of the Communist column was disorganized and dispersed before it could reach 2/5's southern defenses. The lone platoon that did connect with Company F's perimeter engaged the Marines at the overpass. Harrell's troops and the engineers poured small-arms fire and white phosphorus rockets into the attackers. Staff Sergeant Robert J. Kikta, defying enemy bullets as he moved among his men shouting encouragement, fell mortally wounded. Sergeant David R. DeArmond, normally a bulldozer operator for A/Engineers, was killed behind his machine gun.

After the short, bitter clash, the surviving North Koreans retreated through the rice paddies and hills leading to the Han River. Companies E and F, supported by A/Tanks, fanned out from their perimeters and mopped up. In 1/5's zone, Lieutenant Colonel Newton committed Charlie Company against the withdrawing enemy and inflicted more casualties.

Kimpo and the surrounding villages were secured by 1000, 18 September. Half an hour later, Lieutenant Colonel Roise ordered Company D, supported by tanks, recoilless rifles, and heavy machine guns, to seize Regimental Objective Dog—Hill 131, which dominated the banks of the Han River north of the airfield. Advancing under cover of naval gunfire, the Marines occupied the high ground unopposed at 1145.[34]

In the 24 hours since leaving Ascom City, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, had suffered four KIA and 19 WIA in driving over nine miles of hills and rice paddies.[35] The rapid advance cost the North Koreans 100 dead in 2/5's zone, ten prisoners, and one of the finest airdromes in the Far East.

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Chapter 9. Marine Air Support

AT 1000 ON the morning of 18 September an HO3S–1 helicopter became the first American aircraft to land on Kimpo Airfield since June. Mopping up operations had scarcely been completed, following the enemy counterattack, when Captain Victor A. Armstrong of VMO–6 made a vertical approach with General Shepherd and Colonel Krulak as passengers. They were greeted by General Craig, the ADC, who had just arrived in a jeep.

The field was in surprisingly good shape, considering the fighting it had seen within the last few hours. As evidence that the enemy had been surprised, one Russian-built fighter of the Yak III type and two Stormovik type aircraft were found “relatively undamaged” and turned over to Air Force Intelligence.[1] Several other Yaks and Stormoviks had been destroyed by the enemy.

On the return trip, Armstrong was requested by his passengers to fly them across the Han for a preview of the outskirts of Seoul. Except for scattered small-arms fire, the helicopter was allowed to proceed without being molested by the enemy. There were few signs of extensive NKPA preparations to be seen at this time.[2]

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Chapter 9. Marine Air Support
Helicopters and OYs in Support

VMO–6, the composite observation squadron commanded by Major Vincent J. Gottschalk, had already made a name for itself in the Pusan Perimeter actions. Consisting of eight HO3S–1 helicopters and an equal number of OY planes, this former Brigade unit came under the operational control of the 1st Marine Division and the administrative and logistical control of MAG–33. During the Inchon assault, VMO–6 was based on SCAJAP LST QO79 in the harbor except for an Oy attached to each of the two CVEs.

The first of a long sequence of helicopter rescue missions during the Inchon-Seoul operation took place on D-plus 1 when First Lieutenant Max N. Nebergall picked up a Navy pilot who had ditched in Inchon harbor. Flights carried out by other aircraft were reported as three reconnaissance, two artillery spot, three beach reconnaissance, and one utility.[3]

VMO–6 displaced ashore the next day to an airstrip improvised near the Division CP by the Marine engineers. This was the beginning of liaison, utility, reconnaissance, evacuation, and rescue flights on a dawn-to-dark basis.

Division air and naval gunfire representatives of the Fire Support Coordination Center followed VMO–6 ashore on the 16th. During the planning phase they had worked with their opposite numbers of PhibGru One and with the 11th Marines after the Division landed at Kobe. Although some of the officers and men embarked for Inchon in the *Mount McKinley*, the materiel and 90 percent of the personnel arrived in the *President Jackson.* At 1400 on D-plus 2 the FSCC became operational after all elements and their equipment reported to the Division CP. Responsibility for the coordination of supporting arms ashore was assumed at 0630 on 16 September for air, at 1500 on the 17th for artillery, and at 1800 on the 18th for naval gunfire.[4]

The rapid advance of Marine ground forces during the first three days meant that Major Robert L. Schreier's 1st Signal Battalion had a job on its hands. The main body reached the objective area on board the *President Jackson*, and the first units ashore were the battalion and regimental ANGLICO teams, most of which had embarked in LSTs. When the ADC group displaced from Wolmi-do to Inchon, radio facilities were maintained without a hitch.

Radio and message center facilities met all requirements during the night of 16–17 September. Teletype (through radio carrier) was initiated between the Division CP and Corps, afloat on the *Mount McKinley*. And by the morning of D-plus 2, such progress had been made that wire communication was established not only with both advancing infantry regiments but also with most of the battalions.[5]

Enemy resistance was so ineffectual from 16 to 18 September that the Marine infantry regiments were able to advance without much flank protection. The three battalions of the 11th Marines did more displacing than firing in their efforts to keep pace, and men and vehicles of the Signal Battalion were kept busy at laying wire.

Security was provided for the left, or northern, Division flank by the attack of the KMC Regiment (less the 2d Battalion, left behind for police duties in Inchon) under the control of the 5th Marines. Attached to the regiment for possible use in calling down naval gunfire were two Shore Fire Control Parties. Objectives on Corps Phase Line CC were reached without much difficulty after the initial KMC setbacks described in the previous chapter.[6]

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Chapter 9. Marine Air Support
Marine Air Units at Kimpo

There had been little or no urgent need for close air support until 18 September, when RCT–1 met stubborn opposition in the Sosa area. Thus the capture of Kimpo in comparatively good condition was a timely boon, since it meant that land-based Marine tactical air support could be initiated as soon as Captain George W. King's Able Company Engineers made the field operative with temporary repairs.

This was the conclusion of Generals Harris and Cushman, commanding the 1st MAW and TAC X Corps, when they visited Kimpo by helicopter on the afternoon of the 18th. They advised CG X Corps accordingly, and that evening he ordered the deployment of MAG–33 to the captured airfield with its headquarters and service squadrons.

The tactical squadrons figured in an administrative switch that has sometimes puzzled chroniclers of Marine air operations. By order of General Harris, the following reassignments were directed to take effect on 21 September 1950:

From MAG–33 to MAG-12—VMF–214, VMF–323, and VMF (N)–513;

From MAG–12 to MAG-33—VMF–212, VMF–312, and VMF (N)–542.[7]

Both MGCIS–1 and MTACS–2 were already ashore at Inchon under the operational control of the 1st Marine Division. Aircraft and flight echelons of the tactical squadrons were to be flown to Kimpo on the 19th from Itazuke and Itami airfields in Japan, with the remaining elements following by surface shipping. Thus MAG–33 would consist of these units:

HqSq-33: 74 officers, 177 enlisted, 251 total
SMS-33: 29 officers, 538 enlisted, 567 total
VMF-212: 32 officers, 154 enlisted, 186 total
VMF-312: 53 officers, 221 enlisted, 274 total
VMF(N)-542: 54 officers, 291 enlisted, 345 total
MTACS-2: 34 officers, 190 enlisted, 224 total
MGCIS-1: 19 officers, 185 enlisted, 204 total
TOTAL: 295 officers, 1,756 enlisted, 2,051 total[8]

VMFs–214 and 323 would continue to operate from the carriers *Sicily* and Badoeng Strait, with the night-fighters, VMF(N)–513 being based as usual at Itazuke AFB in Japan. The only difference was that a scratch of the pen had transferred these units from MAG–33 to MAG–12. It was their responsibility to support the advancing ground forces during the critical period while the other three tactical squadrons were making the move from Japan to Kimpo.

Control of tactical air support had passed from the TADC on the *Mount McKinley* to the Air Support Section of MTACS–2 on D-plus 2, after the Landing Force Commander signified his readiness to assume it. Calls for close air support were increasing as the enemy recovered from the first shock of invasion. On the 18th and 19th, the three fighter squadrons of MAG–12 flew a total of nearly 50 close support sorties controlled by the Air Support Section of MTACS–2. Napalm, 20mm ammunition, rockets, and 500-pound bombs were used to blast NKPA troop concentrations in the zone of the 1st Marines.[9]

Logistical as well as tactical and administrative problems had to be solved. During the planning phase, it may be recalled, Colonel Kenneth H. Weir (C/S TAC X corps) had learned that X corps would not have enough trucks to support air operations at Kimpo by transporting aviation gasoline and aircraft munitions from Inchon. As

a solution, arrangements were made to accept the offer of FEAF Combat Cargo Command to provide logistical support; and these totals in tonnage were flown in from Japan during the first week:
18 Sep.: 16 tons ammo, 8 tons avgas, 0 tons oil
19 Sep.: 73 tons ammo, 28 tons avgas, 5 tons oil
20 Sep.: 151 tons ammo, 86 tons avgas, 0 tons oil
21 Sep.: 219 tons ammo, 88 tons avgas, 11 tons oil
22 Sep.: 268 tons ammo, 153 tons avgas, 5 tons oil
23 Sep.: 139 tons ammo, 80 tons avgas, 0 tons oil
24 Sep.: 118 tons ammo, 81 tons avgas, 16 tons oil[10]

This proved to be the largest total for a single week during the Inchon-Seoul operation. In addition, about 1,025 tons of POL and 425 tons of ammunition were trucked from Inchon to Kimpo during the entire period, and the forward echelon of VMR–152 flew in spare parts and items of urgently needed equipment.

Headquarters of the 1st MAW remained at Itami AFB in Japan, though General Harris made frequent trips to Kimpo. The chief task of the Wing during the Kimpo air operations was furnishing administrative and logistical support to TAC X Corps and MAG–33.

TAC X Corps set up its headquarters at Kimpo Airfield on 19 September, followed by MTACS–2, MGCIS–1, and VMO–6. The first fighter squadron of MAG–33 to arrive at the new base was VMF(N)–542. Lieutenant Colonel Max J. Volcansek, Jr., the commanding officer, and five pilots landed their F7F-3Ns at 1830 on the 19th after a flight from Itami AFB. This was the baptism of fire for a majority of the squadron's pilots. Numbering 54 officers and 274 enlisted men when it left El Toro, VMF(N)–542 had only 20 trained night fighter pilots. The remainder were volunteer reservists qualified by "a good experience level and a desire to become night fighters."[11]

The squadron claimed the distinction of flying the first Marine combat mission from Kimpo at 0735 on the 20th when four of the F7F–3N aircraft destroyed two enemy locomotives after expending some 3,000 rounds of 20mm ammunition. The Corsairs of Lieutenant Colonel Richard W. Wyczawski's VMF–212 and two aircraft of Lieutenant Colonel J. Frank Cole's VMF–312 also landed at Kimpo on the 19th and got into action the following day. Conditions were primitive at the outset. In the lack of refueling facilities, the first strikes had to be flown on fuel remaining in the aircraft, and bombs were loaded by hand.[12]

It had been an achievement to have two tactical squadrons of MAG–33 in action less than 48 hours after the reconnaissance landing by Generals Harris and Cushman. This accomplishment owed a great deal to the care shown by the 5th Marines to keep damage at a minimum. Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer, CG FEAF, expressed his appreciation of this factor in a letter to General Smith:

"I want to take this opportunity of expressing my admiration and gratification for the manner in which elements of your Division recently captured Kimpo Airfield and so secured it as to make it available for use by Far East Air Forces and Marine Corps aircraft in the shortest possible time."[13]

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Chapter 9. Marine Air Support
Progress of Eighth Army Offensive

General MacArthur had intended the Eighth Army to be the hammer and X Corps the anvil of a great joint operation. During the first few days, however, it sometimes appeared as if these roles were reversed. On 18 September, after a penetration of 16 miles on the X Corps front, the attacking forces in the Pusan Perimeter had just begun to inch ahead against desperate NKPA resistance. In some sectors, indeed, the enemy not only put up a stubborn defense but counterattacked vigorously.

The Eighth Army now consisted of the U.S. I Corps (IX Corps did not become operational until 23 September) and the ROK I and II Corps. General Walker's command was already on the way to becoming the most cosmopolitan army in which Americans have ever served. Contingents of British ground forces had reached the front; and before the end of the year, 40 countries of the United Nations would have offered assistance, either military or economic, to the fight against Communism.

Most of this aid had not yet materialized on 16 September, but the Eighth Army had overcome its disadvantage in numbers of trained troops, thanks to NKPA losses, when it jumped off all along the line in southeast Korea. In the north the 1st Cavalry Division, 24th Infantry Division, ROK 1st Division, and British 27th Brigade launched a determined attack along the Taegu-Waegwon axis to win a bridgehead across the Naktong. It was nip-and-tuck for the first three days, and not until the 19th did the UN forces fight their way across the river against the last-ditch opposition of the 1st, 3d, 10th, and 13th NKPA Divisions.[14]

Still farther north, the enemy relinquished little ground until the 18th. On that date the ROK 3d Division recaptured the east coast port of Pohang-dong, which the invaders had taken in their drive during the first week of September.

In the south, the U.S. 2d and 25th Infantry Divisions and attached ROK units were held up for three days by the NKPA 6th and 7th Divisions. The deadlock lasted until 19 September, when the enemy fell back in the Masan area along the southern coast.[15]

Major Joseph H. Reinburg's VMF(N)–513, operating out of its Itazuke base, played a conspicuous role in the first days of Walker's offensive. Although specialists in night-fighting, the Marine pilots flew 15 daylight close support missions for Army units from 17 to 19 September. Enemy troops, tanks, vehicles, and artillery were scored during every strike, as the planes ranged the entire extent of the Pusan Perimeter.[16]

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Chapter 9. Marine Air Support
Division CP Displaces to Oeoso-ri

So much progress had been made by this date on the X Corps front that General Smith displaced the 1st Marine Division CP from the eastern outskirts of Inchon to Oeoso-ri, about a mile and a half southeast of Kimpo Airfield. This forward location was selected by General Craig with a view to preliminary Division planning for the crossing of the Han, which would entail a reshuffling of units.

Oeoso-ri having been an American housing area during the post-World War II occupation, duplex houses and Quonset huts were available. General Smith arrived by helicopter on the afternoon of the 19th, and the new CP opened at 1645. During the next few days the area was treated to intermittent artillery fire, apparently from a single well-hidden gun somewhere in the Seoul area. It was an embarrassment to Marine artillery officers, who were never able to locate the offending weapon, but no great harm was done.

By this time General Smith could look forward to the arrival of more units at the front. On D-day the strength of X Corps on paper had been 69,450 ground force troops. In addition to the 1st Marine Division and 7th Infantry Division, there were such major units as the 93d and 96th Field Artillery Battalions, the 73d Tank Battalion, 56th Amphibian Tank and Tractor Battalion, the 2d Engineer Combat Group. In GHQ UNC Reserve were the 3d Infantry Division and the 187th Airborne RCT.[17]

The 3d Division had not sailed for the Far East in time to take part in the Inchon-Seoul operation. The 187th Airborne RCT, due to land at Inchon on 23 September, had been the answer to General MacArthur's requests in July for paratroops to land behind the enemy's lines in conjunction with the amphibious assault planned as Operation BLUEHEARTS. Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided against flying an airborne RCT to Japan at the time, the 11th Airborne Division was later directed to organize and train such a unit for service in the Far East. On account of the large proportion of new troops filling out a skeleton unit, General Collins stipulated that the 187th was not to be committed for an airdrop before 29 September. It was decided, therefore, that the RCT would be given an initial mission of protecting the left flank of the 1st Marine Division.

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Chapter 9. Marine Air Support
Advance of RCT-1 to Sosa

Preliminary planning for the crossing of the river Han began as soon as the Division staff settled down in the new CP. The reshuffling of various units had to wait, however, until both Marine regiments took their assigned objectives of 18 and 19 September. Throughout the 17th, while Murray's regiment drove northeastward toward Kimpo, the 1st Marines had continued the attack from Ascom City along the Inchon-Seoul Highway. As mentioned previously, Monegan's rocket launcher and the 75mm recoilless rifles, emplaced in 2/1's positions on Hill 186, helped smash the North Korean tank-infantry column at dawn. It appeared that a second enemy force was supposed to have closed on Marine lines by taking a parallel course through the hills south of the highway. The Red infantry, in about company strength, was spotted moving along the high ground toward Company D's front on Hill 186. Fox Company dispersed the column with mortar fire and then notified Dog to be on the alert. [18]

Though the North Koreans were stopped cold, they did not flee with the usual rapidity. Their base of operations seemed to be Hill 208, a land mass that began near Mahang-ri on the highway and spread southward across most of the 2d Battalion front. Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's attack plan committed Easy Company on the left of the road, Fox on the right, and Dog in the high ground to the south. No sooner had the companies jumped off than they became involved in scattered, stubborn fighting with Red soldiers on and around Hill 208.[19]

Howitzers of the 11th Marines raked the high ground ahead of the attackers, and Sutter's troops measured off slow but steady progress. In the low ground bordering the highway, enemy troops had taken cover in the fields on both sides of a road block about 500 yards from Mahang-ri. Second Lieutenant Robert C. Hanlon's 2d Platoon of Easy Company was pinned down by fire from three sides. Second Lieutenants Johnny L. Carter and George E. McAlee started forward with reinforcements, but McAlee was wounded by several bullets. After summoning a corpsman, Carter got through to Hanlon, and they called for 3.5-inch rockets and 75mm recoilless fire on huts sheltering enemy soldiers. The two officers then led an advance which took the platoon to a small hill on the right of the road block, where the other two platoons moved up abreast. About 20 NKPA troops were estimated to have been killed.[20]

Click here to view map

At noon, Companies F and D had secured Hill 208 overlooking the FBHL, but it remained for E to break into Mahang-ri on the highway. By this time 3/1 had entered the fight with an armored column. Company G, led by First Lieutenant Robert L. Gover's 1st Platoon of Baker Company Tanks, punched down the road in an attempt to pierce the screen of Red resistance with the rest of 3/1 in column close behind. The M–26 crews spotted an 85mm gun protruding from a thatched hut and destroyed the camouflaged T–34 before it could fire a shot. An infantry platoon riding the Marine tanks was forced to dismount at Mahang-ri and deploy, while the armor fired from the road at numerous targets of opportunity. The village was finally secured shortly before 1600, and small bands of enemy were seen darting eastward to take up new positions along the highway.[21]

The advance to Mahang-ri and the FBHL had carried the 1st Marines 3,000 yards from its starting point at Ascom City. As the attack continued late in the afternoon, the next objective was Corps Phase Line CC, whose boundaries were defined in the previous chapter. Midway between Mahang-ri and the phase line was the town of Sosa, and it was from this locale that North Korean soldiers were pouring westward to delay the Marine advance on the highway.

Since the 5th Marines had veered to the northeast to attack Kimpo, its boundary with the 1st had moved

well to the left of the highway. Henceforth, Puller's regiment would have to go it alone on the main road. This was the case as the 2d and 3d Battalions butted against enemy delaying forces between Ascom City and Mahang-ri, and the isolation became more pronounced as they attacked toward Sosa late on the 17th.

Sutter's unit advanced on the left of the highway with Companies E and F in assault. George Company of 3/1, transported in LVTs and followed by the rest of the battalion, moved along the road behind the 2d Platoon, Baker Company Tanks. There is a defile halfway between Mahang-ri and Sosa, and at this spot the North Koreans chose to make a determined stand. Second Lieutenant Bryan J. Cummings nosed his lead M–26 into the pass, while infantry moved to the shoulders on either side against light opposition. Suddenly the troops and lone tank were hit from the front by a heavy volume of small-arms, anti-tank, and mortar fire.[22]

The Marine infantry was thrown back by the intensity of the outburst, the most severe they had yet encountered. As luck would have it, the engine of Cummings' tank went dead at this inopportune moment, and the big vehicle stalled. Remembering that infantry had been riding on top of his M–26, the platoon leader opened the hatch to make a quick check. He yanked a lone rifleman inside and buttoned up just as Red soldiers scrambled down the embankment.

Fumes from the 90mm gun choked the Marines in the vehicle as they listened to the clamor of North Koreans on the hull. The infantryman who had been pulled to safety by Cummings suddenly went berserk and had to be knocked out. Then the officer was forced to choose between two evils: either his crew must succumb to the acrid fumes or take its chances on opening the pistol port for ventilation. He opened the port. A grenade bounced inside, and the ear-shattering explosion within the steel enclosure wounded Cummings, the rifleman, and one of the tank gunners. At this moment the semi-conscious Marines resigned themselves to the worst.[23]

Help was on the way, however, and it was timed to the split second. Just as the grenade exploded, Sergeant Marion C. Altaire's M–26 moved to the mouth of the defile and "scratched the back" of the beleaguered vehicle with bow machine-gun fire. Riddled Red soldiers were swept from the top of Cummings' tank and piled up alongside. Within a few minutes, a VMF–214 flight appeared over the pass, and the planes peeled off to bomb, rocket, and strafe the high ground.[24]

As the tide of battle swept past, Cummings and his men opened the hatch, coughing and choking, and drank in long breaths of fresh air. It took them a moment to realize that they were back again in the land of the living after one of the closest calls that Marines have ever experienced.

Company G of 3/1 fought back on the right of the MSR and gained the high ground above the pass. Simultaneously, Staff Sergeant Arthur J. MacDonald led the second section of Cummings' tank platoon into the defile, and the M–26s laid down heavy 90mm and machine-gun fire on the crescent of North Korean emplacements ahead. A total of six enemy AT guns was destroyed, but not before the weapons had knocked a track off Cummings' vehicle and damaged two others to a lesser extent.[25]

The 2d Battalion drove to the top of the high ground on the left of the road, and the Marines enjoyed a small-scale "turkey shoot" as the North Koreans pulled out and pelted toward Sosa. While the assault units consolidated their holdings, the remainder of the 2d and 3d Battalions moved into the area around the defile and dug in for the night.

The 1st Marines' attack along the highway had netted 4,800 yards. Despite repeated clashes in the course of the day, 2/1 lost only one killed and 28 wounded, and Company G of the 3d Battalion suffered six WIA. Enemy losses included 250 killed and wounded, 70 prisoners, one T–34 tank, several AT guns, and large quantities of small arms and ammunition.[26]

Action on the Division's southern flank involved little more than hill climbing and foot races for the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, and the Division Reconnaissance Company. After jumping off in the morning of D-plus 2, Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins' infantry fanned out through a maze of twisting valleys and ridges. The battalion encountered only light resistance, which invariably evaporated under pressure, and by dark the assault elements

had gained 4,000 yards. Hawkins then deployed his troops for night defense on the high ground south of 3/1's positions overlooking the highway defile.[27]

On the right of the 1st Battalion, Captain Houghton's Reconnaissance Company reached the tip of the Namdong Peninsula. The Recon troops spent two days, the 17th and 18th, patrolling this spacious tactical vacuum. A number of dispirited prisoners were collected and caches of arms and munitions uncovered. One of the more significant discoveries was a small arsenal in which Russian-type wooden box mines were being manufactured and stored in quantity. First encountered by Able Company engineers in the Pusan Perimeter, these crude but effective explosives would become serious obstacles to the Marine advance in the days ahead.[28]

The night of 17–18 September passed quietly for the 1st Marines. During the hours of darkness, Ridge requested intermittent naval gunfire to interdict Sosa and Hill 123, where he believed enemy defenses to be located. Jump-off fires were also planned for the morning in addition to air strikes. Captain P. W. Brock's HMS *Kenya* poured in more than 300 6-inch rounds with good results. "Our Royal Navy ally not only supported the battalion to the maximum of its naval gunfire desires," said Ridge, "but volunteered to render more than was requested."[29]

Shortly after first light on D-plus 3, the 2d Battalion attacked along the highway with Easy Company on the left of the road and Dog on the right. Premature air bursts from an artillery preparation resulted in two KIA and three WIA among the troops of Company E.[30]

Ridge's 3d Battalion boarded a column of LVTs, DUKWs, and jeeps, then rumbled down the highway through 2/1's assault companies. In striking contrast to the previous day's advance, there was a conspicuous absence of NKPA infantry along the way. The Marines brushed aside light opposition, including an antitank roadblock at Sosa's outskirts, and captured the town at noon. Covered by Baker Company Tanks, 2/1 moved into defensive positions on the right side of the railroad about a mile beyond the built-up area, and the 3d Battalion deployed on Hill 123 just across the tracks.[31]

On the Division's right, 1/1 gained another 4,000 yards in the course of 18 September. In its third consecutive day of attack, the battalion had yet to encounter anything more formidable than steep hills and vapid enemy bands. Hawkins built his night defenses along a mountainous two-mile front south of 2/1's position overlooking the highway.

Click here to view map

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Chapter 9. Marine Air Support
Reports of Enemy Build-up

There was little activity in the 5th Marines' zone of action during the 1st Regiment's drive on Sosa. After helping 2/5 smash the dawn counterattack at Kimpo, Company C, 1st Battalion, attacked Objective Fox under cover of an artillery preparation. Lieutenant Pedersen's unit seized the high ground against light opposition at 0930, while the remainder of 1/5 remained entrenched at Objective Easy, captured the previous day.[32]

Murray's CP displaced to Kimpo at 1245 on the 18th, and the regiment spent the rest of the day patrolling from its positions which ringed the airfield. On the 5th Marines' left, the 3d Battalion of the KMC was joined by 1/KMC in searching out the base of the Kumpo Peninsula. A new security force was added to the Division sector when the 17th ROK Regiment landed at Inchon and fanned out to comb the troublesome area between Ascom City and the sea.[33]

The General Situation Map gives the disposition of friendly and suspected enemy elements as of late afternoon on 18 September. This date is particularly important in that the Marine division, regimental, and battalion headquarters were swamped by a torrent of intelligence which indicated for the first time the future patterns of organized NKPA resistance.

Beginning on the left of the broad arc of the 1st Marine Division's front, repeated reports told of enemy concentrations north and south of the Han River in the area of the Kumpo Peninsula.[34] Upwards of 1,000 troops were sighted by natives and air observers, and it was believed that the North Koreans were organizing for an attempt against Kimpo. A strike by four Navy Skyraiders caught part of the Red force exposed on both banks of the Han northeast of the airfield. After killing an estimated 50 of the enemy and dispersing the remainder, the Navy pilots reported the area "still active."

Marine Air in turn warned of a build-up of Communist troops and equipment in the vicinity of Haengju and Hill 125, directly across the Han from 2/5's position north of Kimpo. East of the airfield, the enemy was withdrawing from the 5th Marines' zone toward Yong dungpo, using the Hill 118 area as an intermediate rallying point. Moreover, interrogation of two NKPA officers captured near Kimpo disclosed that a Communist regiment was already committed to the defense of Yongdungpo. Since this large industrial suburb of Seoul rambled across the 1st Marines' path to the Han, Colonel Puller knew well in advance that trouble lay ahead of his regiment.

Further evidence that storm clouds were gathering over the highway came from a number of sources in Sosa. Informants were almost unanimous in their predictions that the approaches to Yongdungpo would be sown liberally with land mines.

VMF–214, which provided effective close air support for the 1st Marines' attack through Sosa, reported destroying huge enemy stock-piles hidden in and around buildings on the sand spit between Yongdungpo and Seoul. The squadron also sighted six enemy tanks far beyond Marine lines and killed two of them with direct napalm hits. Its sister unit, VMF–323, likewise scoured the Division front and radioed similar findings to Tactical Air Control.

Other reports from scattered sources placed approximately 3,000 North Koreans in Seoul—with more on the way. Air spotters noted heavy traffic south from the 38th Parallel and north from the Suwon area. Tanks, troops, and vehicles from the latter not only were heading for the capital but also were veering off toward Yongdungpo and the Division right flank.

Thus, the Marines faced the possibility of major interference from: (1) the Kumpo Peninsula; (2) the Haengju locale on the north bank of the Han; (3) the area around Hill 118 between Kimpo Airfield and

Yongdungpo; (4) Yongdungpo itself; (5) Seoul; and (6) the direction of the Division's right (southeastern) flank. Strangely enough for an enemy who was at his best with the artful dodge, only the two flank threats failed to measure up to expectations.

The North Koreans gave a preview of the changing picture on the afternoon of 18 September when, at 1415, the first shells of a sustained mortar barrage crashed into 3/1's positions on Hill 123. During the next hour, 120mm eruptions traced accurate paths back and forth along the ridge, and 30 Marines were cut down by the whirring fragments. Moving through the explosions with near-miraculous immunity, the 3d Battalion's senior medical officer, Lieutenant Robert J. Fleischaker, (MC) USN, remained fully exposed to the barrage while administering to the wounded. "He never thought of his own safety when men needed his services," commented Lieutenant Colonel Ridge.[35]

Click here to view map

South of the highway, enemy gunners ranged in on 2/1's lines at 1800, adding 14 more Marines to the casualty rolls. Lieutenant Colonel Sutter and his S–3, Captain Gildo S. Codispoti, narrowly escaped injury when two mortar rounds hit the battalion CP. The explosions wounded Captain Albert L. Williams, commander of Company E, and Warrant Officer Bartley D. Kent, the battalion supply officer.[36]

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Chapter 9. Marine Air Support
Orders for Crossing the Han

Late in the afternoon of the 18th, both Corps and Division issued orders within a period of two hours for crossing the Han. In OpnO 6-50, the Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division directed RCT–5 to seize crossing sites along the south bank the next day and be prepared to cross on order while RCT–1 continued its attack along the highway toward Yongdungpo.

Much more territory was taken in by X Corps Operational Instructions No. 1, which ordered the 1st Marine Division to reconnoiter the river on the 19th and cross the next day. Then, after enveloping enemy positions on the north bank in the vicinity of Seoul, the Marines were to seize and secure both the city and the high ground to the north.

Since the Corps did not concern itself much with ways and means, General Smith asked for a conference at 0930 the next morning with General Almond. He informed the X Corps commander that he and his staff had already given considerable thought to the question of a crossing site. A preliminary Marine study had disclosed that three abandoned ferry crossings met military requirements: one downstream from Kimpo Airfield; one at Yongdungpo in the zone of the 1st Marines; and one opposite Kimpo near the village of Haengju. The first was too far from Seoul, and the second too near; but the Haengju site seemed to satisfy all conditions, subject to General Craig's verification by helicopter reconnaissance.[37]

Next to be discussed was the problem of bridging material. The X Corps engineer officer, Lieutenant Colonel Edward L. Rowny, reported that Corps had no material other than that brought by the 1st Engineer Battalion of the Marines. Fortunately, that unit's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Partridge, was prepared to meet the emergency. Although he did not have enough floating bridge material to span such a wide stream, he reported to General Smith that he could have one 50-ton raft in operation to support the assault of troops crossing in LVTs, and another shortly afterwards. These rafts would take the tanks and vehicles across, and Partridge added that later his engineers might be able to put together an actual bridge by combining floating and Bailey components.[38]

The two Marine regiments had been in effect the infantry of X Corps up to this time. But Almond promised the Marine general that the 32d Infantry of the 7th Infantry Division would be moved up on the right flank of RCT-1. This Army unit, it may be recalled, had made an administrative landing at Inchon on the 18th and gone into an assembly area under 1st Marine Division control. The other two regiments of the 7th Division were the 31st Infantry, due to arrive on the 20th, and the 17th Infantry, still attached to the Eighth Army.

The X Corps commander lost no time at ordering the 32d to move up on the right, after reverting to the control of the 7th Division, to relieve the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. This was the first of a series of maneuvers carried out on the 19th in preparation for the river crossing. On the left, the 2d Battalion of the KMCs advanced against negligible opposition to occupy the high ground south of the Han and provide flank protection for the crossing.

A more intricate maneuver was carried out when 1st Battalion of the 5th Marines was relieved west of Yongdungpo by its opposite of RCT–1, which had sideslipped to the left after the 32d Infantry moved up in protection of the regiment's right flank. This shift was not accomplished without some fighting, the account of which belongs in a forthcoming chapter dealing with the battle for Yongdungpo.

Another preliminary step was taken on the 19th when the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion was relieved of its mission of supporting the 1st Marines. All LVTs were withdrawn as the unit displaced by motor march to

the vicinity of Kimpo Airfield, a distance of about 18 miles.[39]

The 1st Shore Party Battalion was also concerned in planning for the river crossing. On the 19th this unit reverted to Division control and displaced to the vicinity of Oeoso-ri. Meanwhile, a reconnaissance detail reported to the CP of the 5th Marines with a mission of selecting DUKW, LVT, and ferry sites. The shore party battalion was also to have the responsibility of establishing evacuation stations and supply dumps on both banks after the crossing while exerting LVT and DUKW traffic control.[40]

Except for the 1st Battalion, the 5th Marines had no trouble on the 19th while advancing to its assigned positions on the south bank of the Han. All objectives were occupied against little or no opposition, placing the regiment in position for the crossing.

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Chapter 10. Crossing the Han

THE CP OF the 5th Marines had a holiday atmosphere during the afternoon of 19 September. An already large group of newspaper and magazine correspondents had been reinforced by new arrivals flown in from Tokyo to report the crossing of the Han. The gathering might have been mistaken for a journalistic convention, and Lieutenant Colonel Murray and his regimental planners could scarcely make themselves heard. Finally it became necessary to request the gentlemen of the press to leave, so that the battalion and company commanders could be summoned for briefing and orders.

The CP was located in a basement room of the Kimpo Airfield administration building. Coleman lanterns lighted the scene as Murray gave a brief talk to his officers, seated about him on boxes and bedrolls. There had been little time for planning, said the regimental commander, but he was confident of success. General Craig, who made a helicopter reconnaissance of the river and roads leading to Seoul, had recommended the old ferry crossing to Haengju. The river was about 400 yards wide at this site, which was about a mile from the Kaesong-Seoul railroad and main highway to Seoul. Hill 125, as the principal terrain feature, was an isolated knob rising nearly 500 feet and located on the right of the landing point. To the left was the village of Haengju, bordered by dikes and rice paddies.

Regimental planning, said Murray, had been conducted in compliance with 1st MarDiv OpnO 7-50, issued at 1430 that afternoon. The 5th Marines was directed to cross the Han in the vicinity of Haengju, seize Hill 125 and advance southeast along the railroad to the high ground dominating the Seoul highway. The units attached for the operation were the 2d Battalion, KMC Regiment, the Division Reconnaissance Company, Company A of the 1st Tank Battalion, and Company A of the 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, USA. In addition, the 11th Marines had been directed to give priority in artillery fires to the 5th Marines, while the 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Shore Party Battalion and 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion were in direct support.

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Chapter 10. Crossing the Han
Swimming Team Leads the Way

Major William C. Esterline, the S–2 of the 5th Marines admitted that intelligence as to conditions on the north bank left much to be desired. He mentioned the reports of an enemy build-up on the other side of the river, and he added that a POW had told of enemy mining activities along the road to Haengju. But in spite of these warning notes, his listeners got the impression that 5th Marines' planning was based on assumptions of light resistance.

Major Charles H. Brush, Jr., the S–3, announced the hastily formulated regimental plan. Houghton's Recon Company was to lead the advance by sending a swimming team across shortly after nightfall. If the swimmers found the other bank clear of the enemy, they were to signal for the rest of the men to follow in LVTs. Recon Company then had the mission of seizing a bridgehead consisting roughly of the triangle formed by Hills 95, 125, and 51. After securing these objectives, about 1,500 yards apart, Recon was to defend until Taplett's 3d Battalion crossed at 0400, with Bohn's and McMullen's companies in assault and Wildman's in reserve. While they passed through Recon and attacked toward Seoul, Roise's 2d Battalion would follow in column two hours later, with Newton's 1st Battalion remaining in reserve and crossing on order as the KMC battalion protected the regiment's left flank. Tanks and vehicles would be ferried across on 50-ton floating bridge sections.[1]
Click here to view map

No alternate plan was provided. After the briefing ended at 1700, Houghton and Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence C. Hays, Jr., executive officer of RCT–5, climbed a hill on the south bank and inspected the old ferry crossing and the opposite shore. They saw no enemy activity. Houghton was so optimistic that he asked permission to swim across at dusk but Murray denied the request.[2]

The swimming team consisted of Houghton, Second Lieutenant Dana M. Cashion, and ten enlisted men, accompanied by two Navy reserve officers, Lieutenant Horace Underwood and Ensign John Seigle. The first went along as interpreter, and the other as public information officer with a tape recorder. General Lowe had asked permission to cross in the LVTs; and when the Division commander refused, the 66-year old observer showed a card signed by President Truman, requesting that he be allowed to go anywhere. Even this passport did not swerve General Smith, who decided that Lowe must wait to accompany the reserve battalion.[3]

It was a dark and moonless night when the swimmers trudged through the muddy grain fields to the river bank, carrying two small rubber boats in which to tow the arms and equipment. After checking the current and making allowances for drift, they stripped to their skivvies and slipped into the tepid water shortly after 2000. Only two or three sets of rubber fins were available, but speed was not expected of men using a slow breast stroke to avoid making noise or ripples. These precautions became all the more necessary after a Marine shell or aerial bomb set fire to a native house on the far bank and the flames cast a lurid glow over the water. Apparently the swimmers had not been observed when they scrambled ashore, dripping, about 2040. They encountered two Koreans at the water's edge and overpowered them without much difficulty. Lieutenant Underwood questioned the captives in their native tongue and reported that they were escaping from Seoul.[4]

Houghton ordered Lieutenant Cashion and four enlisted men out on patrol duty with a mission of reconnoitering Hill 125 and the Haengju area. The Recon commander remained at the beach, where Gunnery Sergeant Ernest L. DeFazio and the other members of the swimming team guarded the prisoners and prowled the immediate area without encountering enemy. There were so few signs of NKPA activity that Houghton decided even before the return of Cashion's patrol to give the signal for the rest of the company to cross. And it was when

the LVTs revved up on the south bank, shattering the night's stillness, that hell broke loose.[5]

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Chapter 10. Crossing the Han
Marine LVTs Grounded in Mud

The men in the amtracs had the problem of advancing five miles by road from Kimpo to an embarkation site they had never seen, crossing a river in the darkness, and seizing three objectives on a basis of map reconnaissance. First Lieutenant Ralph B. Crossman, executive officer of Recon Company, had received oral orders without an overlay or an opportunity to take notes during the briefing at the Fifth Marines CP. His first message by SCR–300 from Houghton came about 2000, warning that the swimming team was taking to the water. This was the signal for the amtracs to start their road trip. They were on the way when Houghton prematurely radioed the familiar words:

"The Marines have landed and the situation is well in hand."[6]

An hour later the Recon commander came in again with a message that no enemy had been encountered. He directed his executive officer to cross in LVTs with the three platoons of Recon Company and the attached platoon of Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion, which had a mission of mining road blocks after the objectives were secured.

Crossman acknowledged this message but replied that he could not reach the river bank for nearly an hour. He had assigned the three objectives to his platoon commanders, directing that they take their orders from Houghton upon reaching the other bank. SCR–300 communications were frequently blurred, however, or blasted off the air altogether by the more powerful radios of the tractors. Thus the possibilities for confusion were multiplied as the nine amtracs proceeded in column to the embarkation point, clanking and revving up thunderously in preparation for the crossing.[7]

The din was deafening enough to arouse even an enemy who had not shown much fight so far in the zone of RCT–5. Hill 125 suddenly came to life as NKPA bullets whipped the water and mortar shells exploded among the LVTs or along the beach occupied by Houghton's swimmers. Although Cashion's patrol reported no enemy encountered on Hill 125, his men came under fire from that quarter on their return to the beach. One of them, Private First Class Alphonse O. Ledet, Jr., was reported as missing in action, and it was assumed that Communists bullets had cut him down.[8]

The embarkation area was so cramped that Crossman had found it necessary to send the LVTs across the river in column, with First Lieutenant Francis R. Kraince's 1st Platoon in the lead, followed by Second Lieutenant Philip D. Shutler's 2d Platoon and the 3d commanded by Second Lieutenant Charles Puckett. Kraince was to seize Hill 125 while Shutler attacked Hill 51 and Puckett went up against Hill 95.

The three platoons were accompanied by a 4.2-inch mortar forward observer team, two 105mm FO teams from the 11th Marines, and a squad of engineers. Communications on the SCR–300 net were so badly jammed, however, that Houghton and Crossman were figuratively as well as literally in the dark on opposite sides of the river. Crossman's final messages from Kraince and Shutler reported that four of their amtracs had drifted from the course and grounded in the mud. He ordered both officers to extricate themselves while Puckett, who had not yet left the south bank, covered them with fire. Just then DeFazio radioed that Houghton and his team were planning to swim to the LVTs. This was the last word from the north bank received by Crossman, who lost all radio contact afterwards with anyone except the 5th Marines.[9]

At the height of the pandemonium on the north bank, the two Korean prisoners attempted to escape. Both were killed by Marines of the swimming team.[10]

Houghton's first thought had been to swim out and guide the LVTs to the north bank. But the enemy had

shown such unexpected resistance as to justify the withdrawal of the swimming team. The rubber boats and excess equipment were hidden along the shore and some of the weapons thrown in the river to prevent capture. [11] Then the swimmers started their return trip through water churned by mortar shells, chiefly Marine 4.2-inch bursts falling short. One of these projectiles exploded so near to Houghton as to knock him out momentarily, and he was assisted to a grounded LVT by Corporal James Morgan. The Recon commander suffered a sprained back and double vision from the concussion, and two men of the team were slightly wounded. DeFazio led the remaining swimmers to the south bank.

There he learned that all the amtracs had returned except the four reported grounded. Most of the Recon troops on these stranded vehicles had chosen to swim or wade back to the south bank. These stragglers were collected on the northern tip of Hill 131 by Captain John F. Paul and Corporal James P. Harney of the amtracs and shuttled to Kimpo as fast as they returned.[12]

DeFazio took care of his casualties, then set out with eight men in search of Houghton. It was low tide by this time, but wading through the mud proved to be more tiring than swimming. After finding Houghton in a dazed condition on one of the grounded LVTs, the sergeant agreed with Kraince and Shutler that the approach of dawn made it necessary to abandon the two amtracs which were still stuck. They returned on the two that the officers had succeeded in extricating. Thus at daybreak the swimming expedition ended in the CP of the 5th Marines, with DeFazio reporting to Murray and Brush after seeing his commanding officer on the way to a field hospital.[13]

The crews and troops on the LVTs retained a confused impression of the night's events. Master Sergeant Edwin L. Knox, who crossed with the engineers in the second amtrac, could not understand why the column withdrew. The vehicles were dispersed in every direction after some became stuck, and it was on his LVT that Captain Houghton received first aid.[14]

It was not officially established who gave the order for the return of the LVTs when they neared the north bank, if indeed such an order was ever given. But all participants agreed that it was for the best. Events had proved that too much dependence was placed in assumptions of little or no resistance, despite G–2 warnings of an enemy build-up in the Haengju area. And even if Recon Company had landed, the task of taking three hills in a night attack without previous reconnaissance would probably have been too much for a unit of 126 men against an enemy estimated by Houghton at a battalion.

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Chapter 10. Crossing the Han
Daylight Assault Crossing by 3/5

At dawn on the 20th the command and staff of the 5th Marines rebounded from this preliminary reverse with vigor and firmness. General Craig, the ADC, summed up the viewpoint of Murray and his officers when he commented:

"The eyes of the world were upon us. It would have looked bad for the Marines, of all people, to reach a river and not be able to cross." [15]

It was decided at 0430 that the 3d Battalion would make a daylight assault crossing just two hours later. The revised plan called for LVTs to cross at the Haengju site in waves of two to six vehicles. Troop units would be organized into boat teams, and the plan provided for a 15-minute artillery preparation by the 1st and 4th Battalions of the 11th Marines.[16]

Many of the Marine shells fell short, so that little benefit was derived from the barrage by the assault troops. On the other hand, enemy fire from Hill 125 was only too well placed. About 200 hits were taken by the first wave of amtracs from 14.5mm antitank projectiles and small caliber high explosive shells as well as machine-gun bullets. The armor plate prevented any infantry losses, and only four casualties were suffered by the crews.

Battalion objectives, according to the revised plan, were designated ABLE, BAKER, and CHARLIE—Hills 125, 51, and 95. Captain McMullen's Item Company landed at 0650 in the first wave, followed by How and George. While discharging troops, the LVTs were exposed to more machine-gun and antitank fire, resulting in several infantry casualties.[17]

Item Company, it may be recalled, consisted of newcomers who had arrived at Pusan to make up third infantry companies just before the Brigade embarked for Inchon. Barring a few World War II men, these troops had known no combat experience before they hit GREEN Beach at Wolmi-do. They acquitted themselves like veterans in the Han crossing, however, as platoon leaders organized them under fire after they piled out of the amtracs.

The only covering fires at first were provided by the 50-caliber machine guns of First Lieutenant Stanley H. Carpenter's platoon of amtracs, which had taken the first wave across. Then four Corsairs of VMF–214 struck the enemy on Hill 125 while Captain Joseph N. Irick of the amtracs led four of his vehicles eastward to a position where they could direct 50 caliber fire on the NKPA positions.

Item Company's plan of attack called for a two-pronged assault on Hill 125 (Objective ABLE) from the northwest by First Lieutenant William F. Sparks' 3d Platoon on the right, attacking up the main spur paralleling the river, while First Lieutenant Elmer G. Peterson's 2d Platoon attacked on the left after riding a few hundred yards inland on LVTs. Second Lieutenant Roy E. Krieger's 1st Platoon was to remain on call in reserve.

Item Company had it hot and heavy from the beginning. The two assault platoons overcame such difficulties as bogged-down amtracs, intermingled units, and bullet-swept open areas before getting in position to return the Communist fire. The first phase ended on a plateau about halfway up the hill when enemy machine guns cut down most of the mortar section before the Marines could gain a foothold.

At this point it became necessary for the 3d Platoon to fall back and redeploy. Contact had been lost momentarily with Peterson's men; but after he appeared on the left, McMullen called up his reserve unit to pass through the 3d Platoon. Sparks having been wounded, First Lieutenant Wallace Williamson took command of his men, now reinforced by an engineer squad and troops from company headquarters. The revamped 3d Platoon was

sent out to envelop the enemy left while Krieger hit the center and Peterson worked his way around the NKPA right.

This time the plateau was carried in a single rush. But casualties had reduced the company to the point where another reorganization was necessary before attacking the military crest. Although Captain McMullen had been wounded, he remained in action to lead the final assault.

The 1st and 3d Platoons were clawing their way upward when Peterson radioed from the left that he could see enemy soldiers in flight from the peak to the low ground north of the hill mass. One of the VMF–214 Corsairs also reported Communists streaming down the eastern slopes with Marine planes in hot pursuit. Thanks to their efforts, not many Korean Reds were left on the crest when the panting Marines arrived to finish the job. More lucrative targets were presented by the foes racing down the eastern slopes. Marine rifles and BARs cut down many of these fugitives when they attempted to change into civilian clothes to avoid capture.

It was estimated that the enemy had 200 killed on Objective ABLE. The other two battalion objectives offered little or no resistance to troops who rode in column from the beaches on LVTs—How Company to seize Hill 95, and George Company attacking Hill 51. Thus at a total cost of 43 casualties—most of them in Item Company—the 3d Battalion had secured its three objectives by 0940.

Among the other results of the successful assault crossing was the salvaging of the two grounded LVTs, both of which had been in the enemy's field of fire. The equipment left on the north bank by the swimming team was also recovered, and PFC Ledet showed up unharmed. After being assigned to an observation post, he had inadvertently been left behind as missing in action when the Reds opened fire. But he kept his head throughout his lonely night's vigil and was able to give a good report of enemy numbers and activities.

At 1000 on the 20th the first wave of amtracs crossed the river with troops of 2/5. This battalion had orders to remain in the LVTs while passing through 3/5 and continuing the attack. The scheme of maneuver called for a sharp turn to the right at Hill 51, and the next objectives, DOG and EASY, consisted of the high ground on either side of the Kaesong-Seoul Railroad about three miles east of Haengju.

Company A of the 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, USA, was to follow with the 2d Battalion of the KMC regiment in DUKWs. These troops had a mission of providing security for the rear of the 5th Marines.

The 1st Battalion of that regiment was alerted to be ready to cross the Han at 1330 and move into an assembly area near Hill 95, prepared to continue the attack toward Seoul.

Once the plan has been told, it would be repetitive to describe a performance which put it into effect without incident. At 1400 the regimental CP displaced across the river to the vicinity of Sojong, about two miles northeast of the Haengju crossing site. Fifteen minutes later the 2d Battalion reported that it had secured Objectives DOG and EASY. Troops of that unit had ridden the LVTs as far as Sojong, where they encountered a swamp and a bridge too small for anything larger than a jeep. The infantry proceeded on foot while a few LVTs and a platoon of tanks crossed over a railroad bridge. About 30 prisoners, believed to be the remnants of enemy forces on Hill 125, were taken on Objective EASY. They were hiding in a cave and surrendered after a couple of warning rounds fired by a platoon of the Army amtrac troops supporting the battalion. Company D dug in on Objective EASY and Company E on Objective DOG while Company F covered the gap between.[18]

The 3d Battalion went into an assembly area a mile north of Hill 95. And after 1/5 moved a company to Hill 125 to secure the landing area for the night, the 1st Marine Division had a firm bridgehead on the north bank of the Han.

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Chapter 10. Crossing the Han
Departure of General MacArthur

General Shepherd and Admiral Struble witnessed the crossing from a vantage point on the south bank, where they had a good view of the fight for Hill 125.[19] Both accompanied General MacArthur that afternoon, when he made a final tour of the front before his departure for Tokyo.

The caravan of jeep-borne officers and reporters stopped first at the crossing area, then proceeded to the zone of the 1st Marines, where the battle for Yongdungpo was going on full blast. General MacArthur got out of his jeep and continued on foot along rice paddies where Marines were still flushing out snipers. This meant a period of anxiety for General Smith which lasted until the responsibility for the safety of the commander-in-chief passed to General Barr in the zone of the 7th Infantry Division.

On the afternoon of the 21st the Marine general saw MacArthur off at Kimpo on his plane for Tokyo. Never had the old warrior worn his famous “scrambled egg” cap with more verve. Barely a week had gone by since the Marines scrambled ashore on RED and BLUE Beaches, yet most of the major objectives had already been taken—Inchon, Kimpo, Yongdungpo, the north bank of the Han, and the approaches to Seoul. In the Pusan Perimeter meanwhile, the Eighth Army had been hitting the enemy hard in its joint offensive.

This was the score on D-plus 7. But perhaps the famous septuagenarian recalled with pardonable complacency that as late as D-minus 7, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had reiterated doubts of the Inchon landing which they had expressed on several previous occasions. MacArthur was warned that if the operation failed, the entire United Nations cause in Korea might be plunged into serious difficulties. The commander in chief replied with superb assurance, “I and all of my commanders and staff officers, without exception, are enthusiastic and confident of the success of the enveloping operation.” [20]

Such confidence could not be withstood. But it was not until 8 September 1950 that the Joint Chiefs of Staff finally acquiesced in an operation they had never entirely approved—an operation scheduled to take place in just one week.

It may be that Douglas MacArthur was recalling this exchange of views as he stood in the sunlight of Kimpo Airfield, his eyes flashing and his chin outthrust. There is no tonic like victory, and he looked 20 years younger than his actual years as he decorated General Smith with a Silver Star just before the plane took off.

“To the gallant commander of a gallant division!” said the commander in chief by way of citation.

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Chapter 10. Crossing the Han
Supporting Arms of Bridgehead

Even success did not alter the conviction of Navy and Marine amphibious specialists that risks had been assumed in the Inchon landing which might have resulted in disaster. It was taking no credit away from General MacArthur for his unshakeable faith in victory to conclude that fortune had smiled in some instances when a frown would have been costly.

The teamwork of Marine supporting arms was never shown to better effect than in the establishment of a bridgehead over the Han. Lieutenant Colonel Partridge's engineers, of course, were on the job from the beginning. It was up to them to get the tanks across the river as soon as possible, in case the infantry needed the support of armor. Approaches and ferry landings had to be constructed for this purpose; and just six hours after the initial infantry crossing, the engineers had their first six-float M4A2 raft in operation. It had taken them four hours to build.[21]

The 2d Platoon of Able Company, 1st Tank Battalion, crossed the river at 1410 on 20 September and moved up in support of 3/5. The 1st Platoon followed at 1600 and the 3d Platoon late that afternoon, after the engineers completed a second raft.

When the KMCs attempted to cross in DUKWs, the clumsy vehicles bogged down several yards from the river on the south bank. Partridge suggested to the KMC commander that his troops build a makeshift corduroy approach off the main route which Marine engineers were constructing to the embarkation point. The Korean officer agreed with Partridge that this was a sensible solution and soon had his men gathering logs.

Neither of them dreamed that they had stirred up an international incident which called for a decision on the division level. American policy makers had felt it necessary to lean backwards to avoid giving Communist propagandists any excuse to charge us with recruiting Koreans for "slave labor." It was an extremely sensitive subject, and Partridge was astonished at the repercussions. At last General Craig visited the ferry site and ruled that it was a closed incident after finding all explanations satisfactory. It was further decided—for mechanical rather than political reasons—to take the KMCs across in amtracs rather than waste any more time on DUKWs. [22]

On the night of the 20th, Partridge and Colonel McAlister, the Division G–4, interviewed a captured NKPA engineer major at Kimpo Airfield. The prisoner informed them that the bombed highway bridge between Yongdungpo and Seoul had been damaged beyond repair with the means at hand. This agreed with the conclusions of the Marine officers on the basis of aerial observation. Prospects for a span over the Han seemed dim as Partridge was leaving McAlister's quarters. That very evening, however, Lieutenant Colonel Rowny, chief of the X Corps engineers, telephoned to announce that materials for a floating bridge unit had been accumulated by the Army in Japan and would be flown to Korea shortly. Up to this time, with rafts the only solution, the Marine engineers had supplied all the materials. But Rowny announced that Corps would assume the responsibility after the arrival of enough materials for a floating bridge unit.[23]

Military operations could not wait a week or ten days for the new span, and the Marine ferry plus amtracs and DUKWs [24] had to nourish the assault on Seoul. With this end in view, the 1st Shore Party Battalion reverted to Division control on the 19th and displaced from Inchon to Oeoso-ri. By nightfall the entire battalion was bivouacked in this area.

On the 20th, after establishing a forward CP at Kimpo Airfield, the shore party troops of Baker Company moved up to the Han in support of the 5th Marines, followed by two teams from Able Company. Evacuation

stations and supply dumps were set up on both banks. Other shore party missions were maintaining LVT and DUKW traffic control, providing guides for the amtracs, posting security at the crossing sites on both banks, and effecting unit distribution of supplies upon request by the DUKWs and LVTs.

Control of the ferry site, known as BAKER Ferry, became the responsibility of Baker Company of the 1st Shore Party Battalion. Teams 1 and 2 were employed on the south bank, and Team 3 plus headquarters troops on the other shore. Traffic control was of the utmost importance, since ferry operation had to be limited to periods of low tide, and during idle intervals a long line of vehicles accumulated. Most of them were trucks containing cargo to be reloaded in LVTs and taken across the river. The shore party men had the duty of keeping the traffic flowing as smoothly as possible, both on land and water, and special regulations were enforced to prevent the LVTs from colliding with the ferries. With the establishment of a third ferry, the problem of supplying the troops across the river was pretty well solved.[25]

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Chapter 10. Crossing the Han
Command Ashore Assumed by X Corps

A military ceremony was held on 21 September when the commanding general of X Corps established his CP in Inchon and assumed command at 1700 of all forces ashore. It was stated in some reports that command had been transferred from the commander of JTF–7 to the commander of X Corps. But officers familiar with amphibious doctrine pointed out that at no time prior to landing did CG X Corps relinquish command; and only through him did the commander of JTF–7 exercise command.[26]

The date was also significant for the 1st Marine Division in that its third rifle regiment, the 7th Marines, landed at Inchon with Major Francis F. Parry's 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines attached. Before the ships reached the inner harbor, Colonel Litzenberg went ashore and reported at the Division CP. Informing General Smith that troop units in the convoy had been vertically loaded for maximum flexibility, he asked what troops the Division commander desired to have unloaded first.

"An infantry battalion," said General Smith.

"And what next?"

"Another infantry battalion," said the commanding general.

Colonel Litzenberg began unloading at once, and by 2200 his CP had opened at Wonjong-ni, two miles south of Kimpo Airfield, while H&S Company and the 3d Battalion (Major Maurice E. Roach) occupied near-by assembly areas. The 2d Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Thornton M. Hinkle) had reached an assembly area at Hill 131, a mile north of Kimpo, by 0100 on 22 September with a mission of providing security for the airfield and a river crossing site. The 1st Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Davis) was given the duty of unloading the ships of the convoy.[27]

It appeared for a few hours on 21 September that the enemy might be planning to retake Kimpo Airfield. At 0730 a report came to the 3d Battalion, KMC Regiment, warning of an attempted NKPA crossing of the Han in the area about seven miles northwest of the field. Air strikes were called immediately with the result of dispersing the enemy. At 1310, however, an estimated two NKPA battalions were reported in front of KMC positions by the air liaison officer attached to the battalion. All units in the Kimpo area were alerted to the possibility of attack. The CO of the 1st Shore Party Battalion was designated as coordinator of defensive forces consisting of his unit, and elements of the 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Ordnance Battalion, and 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion. Army troops of the 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion were also ordered to Kimpo.

With an NKPA attack threatening, some concern was felt about an enemy Yak type aircraft—fueled, armed, and ready for flight—which had been discovered in a revetment on the edge of the airfield by First Lieutenant Edward E. Collins of the Ordnance Battalion and later of the 5th Marines. The plane was hastily disarmed and painted with U.S. markings, so that it could be flown to Japan in case the enemy overran Kimpo.[28]

Although the NKPA threat did not materialize, there could be no doubt of an enemy build-up within striking distance. And it was on this sensitive left flank that the support of naval gunfire was most effective.

As early as 19 September the 1st and 5th Marines had advanced beyond the range of the light cruisers and destroyers. The battleship *Missouri* was made available the next day, but targets in Seoul proved to be too distant for her maximum range, and no further efforts were made to call upon the battleship's 16-inch rifles. In the Kimpo area, however, naval gunfire was at its best, and a total of 535 8-inch shells were fired from 21 to 24

September by the *Toledo* and *Rochester*. These fires were requested by Lieutenant Wayerski in support of patrol actions by the 3d KMC Battalion. One of the KMC attacks wiped out a company-size pocket of Red Korean resistance in the vicinity of Chongdong—about three miles northwest of the airfield on the south bank of the Han—with a loss to the enemy of 40 counted dead and some 150 prisoners.[29]

After the Han crossing, the 1st Marine Division found itself in the position of advancing astride an unbridged tidal river with the northern flank wide open. Generals Smith and Craig depended on VMO–6 helicopters for their visits to the 5th Marines front. Those rotary-winged aircraft were in increasing demand for evacuating serious casualties; and the commanding general directed that such missions be given priority over command and liaison flights. This meant that Smith and Craig were occasionally "bumped." In such instances they crossed the river by LVT or waited until their helicopter could return.

At the time of the Han crossing, the general plan of the 1st Marine Division had been for RCT–5 to clear the north bank and open up crossing sites for RCT–1 in the Yongdungpo area. That regiment would then cross to seize South Mountain, just north of the crossing site, thus forming an enclave in Seoul proper. Further objectives were to be seized by RCT–1 to the north and east while the KMC Regiment passed through RCT–5 to attack the center of the city. Here a political motive entered the picture, since it was desired to have Koreans take a prominent part in the liberation of the former ROK capital. To the north, on the left flank of the Division, it was planned for RCT–7 to seize objectives to protect the flank and cut off the escape of the enemy. Meanwhile, RCT–5 would revert to Division reserve as soon as the tactical situation made it possible.

So much for the plan. Before it could be put into execution, stiffening NKPA resistance made it necessary to consider revisions.[30] Not only was the hilly terrain northwest of Seoul well suited to defensive operations, but it had been a training area as far back as the Japanese overlordship, with fields of fire accurately charted. Moreover, it had become evident by the 21st that the enemy was about to exchange a strategy of delaying operations for one of defending to the last ditch. The 1st Marines had already experienced the new NKPA spirit at Yongdungpo, and on the 21st the 5th Marines contented itself with limited advances for the purpose of seizing high ground from which to launch the assault on Seoul.

The attack on the 21st was launched astride the railroad by the 3d Battalion to the north and the 1st Battalion between the railroad and the river. After passing through the 2d Battalion, Taplett's men seized three hills and by dusk were digging in on Hill 216, about six miles east of Hill 125 and the ferry landing site.

The 1st Battalion had meanwhile advanced to Hill 96, about 3,000 yards southeast of yesterday's Objective DOG, now occupied by the 2d Battalion in reserve. Further gains of some 2,500 yards to the southeast took the battalion to Hill 68, between the railroad and river, which was seized and held for the night.

Enemy resistance ranged from light to moderate in both battalion zones. Between them, the 1st Battalion of the KMCs moved up to Hill 104, just north of the railroad and south of Sachon Creek.[31]

This was the situation across the river at nightfall on the 21st. The 5th Marines was in position to grapple with the enemy for possession of Seoul. Hill 104, in the center of the 5th Marines front, was only 5,000 yards west of the Government Palace in the northwest section of the city. Less than three miles, yet officers and men alike realized that they would have to fight for every inch of the way. If anyone had any doubts, he had only to watch the flashes of gunfire stabbing the night sky to the southeast, and he had only to listen to the unremitting roar of gunfire. For at Yongdungpo the 1st Marines had been slugging it out with the enemy for the last three days in a battle for the rambling industrial suburb.

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo

IF YONGDUNGPO is lost, Seoul also will fall." This was the warning note sounded during the conferences of the Red Korean military leaders in Seoul. So important did they consider the industrial suburb that a regiment of the 18th NKPA Division was assigned to the defense of the built-up area on the south bank of the Han.[1]

Slogans of this sort were a favorite form of Communist inspirational literature, and they may have served to buck up the defenders. From the tactical standpoint, however, the quoted catch phrase was illogical. Yongdungpo was untenable. Squatting on the low ground at the confluence of the Kalchon and Han Rivers, the town was an isolated landmark of only symbolic significance. It was separated from Seoul by two miles of sand and water, and the only connecting links, the old railroad and highway bridges, had long since been destroyed. Thus, what had once been a vital communications hub south of the Han was now a veritable dead end.

While the Reds in Seoul were able to ferry troops and materiel across the exposed river and sand spit by night, they could not hope by this primitive method to meet the logistical requirements of a regimental garrison confronted by a modern juggernaut of combined arms. Nevertheless, the North Koreans chose to make a fight of it, and in addition to the hundreds of troops in Yongdungpo, they sent over considerable artillery and armor that could have been put to better use in the defensible terrain around Seoul.

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo
Three Hills Taken by 1/5

Hill 118 was the principal terrain feature between Kimpo Airfield and Yongdungpo, the dominating peak being about three miles from the former and two from the latter. Giant spurs from the main ridge extended northward toward the Han and eastward to the bed of the Kalchon, beyond which lay Yongdungpo. At the end of one easterly projection were the twin caps, Hills 80 and 85. Paralleling the Han River, a modern highway led from Kimpo, passed north of Hill 118, skirted 80 and 85, then bridged the Kalchon to enter Yongdungpo from the northwest.

It will be recalled that the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, occupied high ground generally east of Kimpo Airfield at the close of 18 September. During the night, Lieutenant Colonel Murray ordered the unit to seize Hills 80 and 85 the next day. To gain these gates to Yongdungpo, it would be necessary to take Hill 118; and the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Newton, formulated his plan accordingly.[2] Company B would leave its positions on old Objective EASY at dawn and envelop Hill 118 from the south. Company C would attack frontally from Objective FOX, assist the enveloping force by taking one of 118's spurs, then continue eastward to seize 80 and 85. Company A was to remain behind an Objective EASY for the purpose of guarding the approaches to the airfield.

At dawn of 19 September, Company C atop Objective FOX was greeted by a hail of mortar and small-arms fire. Under this shield part of a 500-man enemy force attacked the Marine position from the east, while the remainder attempted to move along the Yongdungpo-Kimpo Highway, obviously bent on reaching the airfield. Other large NKPA concentrations were spotted at the base of Hill 118.

Charlie Company's organic weapons roared into action along with the battalion 81s. While the Marine fire cut swaths through the exposed enemy ranks, Baker Company lunged forward to envelop Hill 118 according to plan. Air and artillery paved the way so effectively that Captain Fenton's unit gained the commanding peak about 1100 without suffering a casualty. This left the North Korean attackers, who had been contained by Charlie Company, trapped between Objective Fox and Hill 118. After losses of 300 dead and 100 prisoners, the Red Force broke into a few small bands that fled across the highway to the fields and villages bordering the Han. Company C's casualties in stopping the attack and moving forward to its spur on Hill 118 were two killed and six wounded.[3]

Click here to view map

As the two assault companies reorganized on the newly won ridge, Fenton spotted a large number of Red troops on Hill 80, now about 1,000 yards away. He directed an air strike from his advance position, and the Corsairs not only cut down many of the North Koreans but completely routed the survivors. While the planes worked over the enemy positions on the high ground, the Marines of Company B observed a growing throng of NKPA soldiers in the vicinity of the Kalchon Bridge leading to Yongdungpo. Some of the Reds were milling around, but others were filing across the undamaged span and disappearing into a knot of warehouses and huts at the far end. Fenton radioed for artillery fire just as Communist machine guns and an AT weapon opened up on Baker Company from positions across the bridge. Four times firing for effect with "battery four rounds," the Marine howitzers sent a total of 96 shells crashing into the enemy positions within the space of a few minutes. The explosions neutralized the bridge area, but the span itself was badly damaged in the process.[4]

First Lieutenant Pedersen led Company C along the highway toward Hills 80 and 85 at 1430. Owing to the press of time, the area between the road and the Han River was not cleared, with the result that small bands of

enemy were left free to roam the fields and make their presence felt later. The 3d Platoon, under Second Lieutenant Harold L. Dawe, Jr., peeled off the column and attacked Hill 80 shortly after 1500. Following at an interval of 500 yards, Second Lieutenant Robert H. Corbet's 1st Platoon continued along the pavement toward Hill 85. A platoon of A/Tanks supported the two-pronged assault along with Charlie Company's mortars and machine guns, and by 1650 the two heights were secured. In the wake of the air strike called down by Fenton, the attacking infantry had encountered practically no opposition.

Yongdungpo, bristling with Communist armament, rumbled its challenge from the low ground 500 yards east of Hill 85. Taken under heavy fire by artillery, mortars, and small arms, Company C was forced to dig in on the reverse slopes of its high ground, there to await the expected counterattack after nightfall.

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo
Enemy Minefields Encountered

As noted previously, the 2d and 3d Battalions, 1st Marines, spent the night of 18–19 September astride the Inchon-Seoul Highway a mile east of Sosa. The 1st Battalion, deployed over a broad front in the hills south of the road, was to be relieved in the morning by the 32d Infantry, so that Colonel Puller could shift his regiment to the left. Since the relief did not take place as early as expected, Puller ordered his 2d and 3d Battalions to attack at 1030, leaving 1/1 in position to await replacement by the Army unit.[5]

On the left of the highway, 3/1 jumped off from Hill 123 with Companies H and I in the assault. The battalion's mission was to clear a rambling ridge complex that extended more than three miles before stopping short of Hill 118. Assigned as a final objective was the terminal height, Lookout Hill, facing western Yongdungpo across the wide bottomland of the Kalchon.[6]

Considering the formidable cross-compartment approach, the assault companies led by the battalion S–3, Major Joseph D. Trompeter, made good progress against enemy resistance described as "light but stubborn." At a cost of two killed and 15 wounded, the Marines combed the vertical wilderness and seized Lookout Hill late in the evening. The attack was almost too successful, for the battalion was now out on a limb. The closest friendly forces were on Hill 118, several hundred yards to the north, and along the Inchon-Seoul Highway, about a mile to the south, as will be shown.[7]

The 2d Battalion could boast comparable success along the highway in the course of 19 September, but gains were made under far different circumstances. Spearheaded by Charlie Company Tanks commanded by Captain Richard M. Taylor, the battalion had advanced only 500 yards in the morning when the lead M–26 was enveloped in a violent explosion. With one track and two road wheels destroyed, the steel monster settled into the crater left by the detonation of a wooden box mine.[8]

Simultaneously, the infantrymen of Company F came under heavy small-arms fire from Hill 72 to the right front. In an attempt to sight in on the enemy positions, other tanks tried to bypass the mine field in the highway, only to discover that explosives were concealed in both road shoulders as well. Howitzers of the 11th Marines registered on Hill 72, and during the ensuing bombardment a VMF–214 flight appeared overhead to lend further assistance.[9]

Despite his generous use of supporting arms, Lieutenant Colonel Sutter was forced to commit all three rifle companies to the fight. Tank gunners tried to detonate mines embedded in the road with machine-gun fire, but without success.[10] It remained for First Lieutenant George A. Babe's 2d Platoon, Charlie Company Engineers, to remove the obstacles under fire. Darting forward on the bullet-swept highway, the engineers placed "snowball" charges of C–3 on the wooden boxes, then took cover while the mines exploded.[11]

After 2/1 had driven the enemy from the area with the assistance of Marine air and artillery, the job of clearing the 250-yard mine field proceeded under less hair-raising conditions. To get the armor back into the fight as soon as possible, Babe ignored the explosives embedded in the highway shoulders. Word was passed back to this effect, but several jeeps and trucks were lost later when drivers failed to heed the warning.[12]

While the tanks remained on the sideline, Companies D and F punched about a mile down the highway against continuing resistance, which gradually solidified at Hill 146. Like 72, this ridge was on the right side of the road, in the 32d Infantry's zone of action. Since the Army unit had yet to enter the picture, the Marine flank was becoming more and more exposed with each forward bound by 2/1.[13]

Sutter had no choice but to commit troops beyond his zone. Not only were the Reds entrenched on Hill

146 with machine guns and field pieces, but they had blocked the highway with trees and other encumbrances. Thus, while Fox Company seized a knoll on the left, Dog Company invaded Army territory and battled its way to the top of Hill 146's western spur. VMF–214 plastered the peak itself, and the 11th Marines shelled enemy positions across the whole battalion front.[14]

It was 1300 when the mine field to the rear was finally cleared, enabling Charlie Company Tanks to move forward in an attempt to overtake Sutter's infantry. Within sight of the fighting around Hill 146, the armor ground to a halt before the roadblock of trees, rice bags, and other debris.[15] A dozer tank rumbled ahead, smashed through the first obstruction, then went up in a cloud of smoke. Under the litter on the road lay a second mine field, 75 yards long.[16]

Again the tank men watched from behind as engineers cleared the highway and 2/1 drove forward out of sight. By 1730, the Marine infantry had completely smashed the main enemy concentration on the highway. When the surviving Reds fled, they exhibited the same determination that had characterized their stand throughout the day. Weapons and equipment were strewn along the road, and the Marines captured a truck loaded with mines as further evidence of the hasty retreat.[17]

Sutter ordered 2/1 to hold up at 1900 and dig in astride the highway. The 4,800-yard advance had cost the Marine unit four killed and 18 wounded, against 350 casualties and five prisoners for the North Koreans. Since all written and personal accounts agree that 19 September amounted to almost one continuous fire fight for the 2d Battalion, the amazing contrast in friendly-enemy loss figures must be attributed to the sound employment of Marine supporting arms.[18]

As mentioned earlier, 2/1's positions for the night were a mile southeast of the 3d Battalion on Lookout Hill. Company E entrenched on high ground to the left of the highway—4,000 yards from Yongdungpo—while D and F manned a long, low hill on the right. Because the latter height ran parallel to the road, the line formed by Dog and Fox was at a right angle to that held by Easy. Sutter's choice of this L-shaped defense would shortly prove to be an extremely wise one.

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo
NKPA Counterattacks of 20 September

The right flank of the 1st Marines was bare. Not until 1200, 19 September, did the 32d Infantry begin relieving 1/1 in its old positions southeast of Sosa. Liaison between the Marine and Army units at this time was weak. Apparently many of the Marines were unaware that General Barr's OpnO No. 2,[19] for the 7th Infantry Division did not call for a jump-off by the 32d until 0630 on the 20th. At that time the Army regiment would attack a series of objectives which included Hill 146 and other high ground above the road.[20] Thus, the schedules north and south of the highway were running one day apart, and it would take the enemy himself to straighten the line when he slammed the gates of Yongdungpo.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, entrucked below Sosa for its circuitous journey from the right flank of the regiment to the left, where it was to relieve the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, on Hills 118, 80, and 85. The 11-mile trip via Sosa and Wonjong-ni was uneventful, except that the troops had to dismount at the latter village and proceed on foot over the primitive road. With the first increment to arrive at Wonjong-ni, Captain Robert H. Barrow, commanding Company A of 1/1, set a rugged pace to get his troops on top of Hill 118 before dark. Relieving Company B of 1/5, he expected Charlie Company to pass through and replace its opposite of the 5th Marines on Hills 80 and 85.

It was dusk, and Companies B and C were still on the move when Hawkins of 1/1 met Newton of 1/5. They briefly discussed the lay of the land, the latter's tactical disposition, and the requirement that 1/5 assemble at Kimpo within a matter of hours to prepare for the river-crossing next day. Time, space, and terrain factors were too great, Hawkins concluded, for his battalion to assume all positions then occupied by the other. To facilitate the rest of the relief, which now would take place in darkness, he ordered Charlie Company to occupy Hill 118 with Able and directed Baker to dig in on a southern extension of the big ridge.[21]

Having relieved Fenton on Hill 118 before nightfall, Barrow enjoyed the opportunity to reconnoiter 1/5's area and to realize the tactical significance of Hills 80 and 85. When it became apparent that Company C would not arrive before dark, he radioed the battalion S–3 for permission to move his company to the twin peaks immediately, explaining that Charlie Company of 1/5 could remain in position no later than 2100. Since Hawkins had already decided against taking over too much unfamiliar ground after daylight, Major Bridges turned down the request. Thus, at 2100, with no relief in sight, the 5th Marines' unit withdrew from the two heights as ordered. Company C of 1/1 reached Hill 118 at 2200 and went into position with Barrow's outfit for the night. Unknown to the enemy, Hills 80 and 85 had become a no-man's-land.[22]

While the battalions of the 1st Marines settled down for the night in a three-mile arc facing western Yongdungpo, the North Korean commander within the town organized part of his garrison for two separate thrusts against the closing vise. In one case he would win by default; in the other he would see more of his limited resources go down the drain.

Just before dawn of 20 September, the Marines on Hill 118 were alerted by a furious clatter of small arms and automatic weapons far out to the east. Daylight disclosed that the enemy was "assaulting" Hills 80 and 85. When the North Koreans finally discovered that their objectives were unoccupied, they abruptly ceased firing, surged over both crests, and entrenched in about company strength. An attempt was made to extend the counterattack to Hill 118, but Companies A and C, backed by a flight of VMF–323, threw the Reds back with ease.[23]

During the early morning blackness which found the enemy filling the vacuum on Hills 80 and 85, a

stronger North Korean force—estimated at a battalion—marched out of Yongdungpo toward 2/1's positions astride the Inchon-Seoul Highway.[24] In the van of the Red column were five T–34 tanks preceded, oddly enough, by a truck loaded with ammunition. Other vehicles, laden with less sensitive supplies, were safely interspersed among the infantry in the long file.

It will be remembered that Companies D and F, the latter in the fore, occupied high ground positions parallel to and south of the highway. Farther back, Easy Company's line tied in at a right angle and extended to the north of the road. The troops of Fox Company, tense with anticipation in their advance deployment, heard the first distant sounds of clanking armor and racing engines sometime before 0400. The noise grew steadily louder until, at 0430, the shadows of the ammunition truck and T–34s passed beneath the Marine defenses and continued along the road toward Easy Company's lines. At the latter, Private Oliver O'Neil, Jr., rose from behind his machine gun and shouted a challenge to the truck, which by this time was well out in front of the enemy tanks. O'Neil was cut down by automatic fire in answer, and pandemonium broke out on the highway.

Obviously the North Koreans had stumbled into it again, just as they had done at Ascom City. Two T–34s stopped short of Easy Company's front and opened up wildly. Companies D and F in turn exploded with machine guns, small arms, grenades, and mortars against the flank of the enemy column, while E fought to deny further passage along the road. Under the hail of fire from above, the Red soldiers milled about in panic and were slaughtered. Some flung themselves into roadside ditches, where the crowding only increased the odds of destruction. Others sought escape by scrambling up the slopes—into the very muzzles of Dog and Fox Company weapons.

The T–34s began to lurch back and forth like trapped animals. Owing either to mines laid by Marine engineers or a grenade thrown from above, the ammunition truck exploded in a brillant spectacle of pyrotechnics. In the midst of the furor, Private First Class Monegan moved across the hillside from Company F's front with his rocket launcher. Observing his progress against the backdrop of flames from the truck, his comrades either held or shifted their fire to protect him.

Monegan closed on the lead tank and wrecked it with one 3.5-inch projectile. Approaching the second T–34 under intense fire, he paused and took aim with imperturbability. Again his rocket connected with a roar, and the black hulk on the road turned into a blazing furnace. Silhouetted against the hillside, the Marine leveled his weapon at a third armored vehicle just as it was pivoting around to retreat. But at this moment an enemy machine gun found the mark, and Monegan—killer of tanks—fell dead.

Although the North Korean attack was thus smashed at the outset, fighting along the highway continued until daylight. In addition to the two T–34s destroyed, another was captured intact with its crew. The 11th Marines closed the "back door" of the highway with a curtain of high explosive, thereby sealing the fate of the Red battalion.

Dawn of 20 September revealed a scene of utter ruin across the Marine front. The highway was littered with burnt NKPA trucks, tanks, and equipment. Heaped on the road, in ditches, and along hillsides were 300 enemy dead.[25]

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo
Recapture of Hills 80 and 85

For the most part, fighting around Yongdungpo on 20 September was a contest of the giants. Supporting arms of both sides exchanged heavy blows, and the 1st Marines reported with business-like frankness that it was ". . . leveling the southern part of Yongdungpo, which is infested with enemy." North Korean mortars, tanks, and field pieces pumped hundreds of rounds out of positions in the center of town and the eastern outskirts. Marine planes and howitzers replied by smothering Red concentrations and emplacements with literally thousands of missiles of all types.

The 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, commanded by Major William McReynolds, fired 28 concentrations in the course of the day; and Lieutenant Colonel Merritt Adelman's 2d Battalion expended 1,656 rounds in 21 missions. It was the precision firing of these two units which had supported 2/1 so effectively during the pre-dawn counterattack.[26]

Battery C, 1st 4.5-inch Rocket Battalion, FMF, moved to advance positions in the morning to increase the pressure on the Yongdungpo garrison. Land counterpart of the LSMRs which rocked the Inchon waterfront on D-day, this unit had seen little action to date, owing to the lack of M48 fuses for its missiles. Banking on substitute detonating devices (M51 for 105mm and 155mm Howitzer shells), First Lieutenant Eugene A. Bushe ordered his gunners to fire a test salvo of 24 rockets. No visible effect being noticeable from his OP, the battery commander then called for a full ripple of 144—enough high explosive to flatten a good portion of the town. Again the big missiles plowed into the target area with a dull thud, and Bushe withdrew his battery to the rear. The M48 fuses did not arrive until 28 September, with the result that the potent Marine rocket artillery was sidelined until the closing days of the operation.[27]

Colonel Puller's tactics during the bombardment on 20 September were designed to align the 1st Marines for the actual assault of Yongdungpo, planned for the next day. It was necessary to occupy in strength all the final approaches to the town, so that the full weight of the regiment could be brought to bear against the defending garrison. From left to right, therefore, the schedule of operations on the 20th was as follows: (1) 1st Battalion to seize Hills 80 and 85; (2) 3d Battalion to remain in position on Lookout Hill; and (3) 2d Battalion to advance to the first of two highway bridges which spanned branches of the Kalchon just outside of Yongdungpo.

These limited attacks would also provide time for the 32d Infantry to catch up on the right. The day's mission for the Army unit was to attack over a six-mile front and secure, among other objectives, towering Tongdok Mountain south of the MSR and two miles from Yongdungpo.[28]

Shortly after first light, Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins reached the crest of Hill 118 and established his OP. He was in time to see Able and Charlie Companies repulse disconnected Red elements moving on the Marine lines from Hills 80 and 85. While the battalion commander issued his order for the attack, Major William L. Bates, Jr., commander of 1/1's Weapons Company, set up his "supporting arms center" to cover the impending assault.[29]

Hawkins gave Company C the mission of taking Hills 80 and 85.[30] Deciding on a southerly approach, the company commander Captain Robert P. Wray ordered his 2d Platoon to lead off by clearing a village sprawled across the route to the lower peak. Second Lieutenant John N. Guild moved out at the head of the skirmishers and led them over 500 yards of intervening low ground. Nearing a knoll which topped the clump of thatched huts, the platoon came under heavy small-arms fire and was stalled.

Wray immediately committed the rest of his company in a two-pronged attack which wrapped around the

flanks of Guild's line and smashed through the North Korean resistance. After a hot fire fight, the surviving Reds fled to Hill 80, and Company C occupied the village and knoll by early afternoon. The executive officer, First Lieutenant James M. McGee, led a six-man patrol eastward to clean out a small nest of holdouts, while Wray reorganized the company for the assault on the twin caps.

Charlie Company's tactics in advancing on the enemy's southern flank were ideal from the standpoint of Weapons and Able Companies, which supported the attack from Hill 118. The two units could actually witness the progress of the assault troops across the 1st Battalion's front, so that mortars and machine guns at the base of fire had only to shift gradually leftward to support the Marine advance.

Late in the afternoon, Wray launched a double envelopment of Hill 80. Second Lieutenant Henry A. Commiskey led his 3d Platoon around to the right, and Second Lieutenant William A. Craven's 1st swung through the low ground on the left. A few huts concealing snipers were demolished by 3.5-inch rockets, but otherwise the Marines met little resistance as they moved over the crest of the objective early in the evening. With the first signs of darkness already in the sky, Wray lost no time in preparing for his third double envelopment of the day.

The remnants of the North Korean company were entrenched on the crest and forward slopes (facing the Marine attack) of Hill 85, obviously intent on making a determined stand. Anticipating Charlie Company's tactics, the Red leader had bent back both flanks to prevent encroachments on the sides or rear. Thus, though both Marine assault platoons swung out to stab at the enemy flanks, the Communist disposition actually relegated each maneuver to a separate frontal attack.

Craven's platoon and Charlie Company machine guns, under First Lieutenant Francis B. Carlon, covered the attackers from a base of fire on the northern slopes of Hill 80. Moving aggressively through a hail of bullets, the 2d Platoon on the left crossed the low ground and drove up the western incline of the objective. Almost to the top, Guild was grievously wounded by a machine-gun burst.

Click here to view map

On the right, Lieutenant Commiskey paved the way in the face of heavy resistance. Nearing the crest of Hill 85, the officer abruptly bounded ahead of his platoon and went over the top. He jumped into a machine-gun emplacement and was dispatching the last of five occupants when his lead skirmishers caught up with him. He ran forward again to clean out another North Korean position in a single-handed attack. By this time, the Reds on the eastern side of the hill had had enough. Those who still had hides to save pelted down the northern slopes in the direction of the mouth of the Kalchon River, where the stream was spanned by the now damaged bridge.

Guild's platoon, inspired by its leader who remained in action despite a mortal wound, gained the summit shortly after Commiskey's unit. Captain Wray, following closely behind, later described his meeting with Guild on the slope as follows:

"He stayed on his feet and turned toward where I was climbing 20 yards behind him. He dropped at my feet and made every effort to remain conscious long enough to tell me how his squads were attacking and pleading with me to keep them attacking. I called for a corpsman; he tried to refuse, saying that he had a wounded man who needed one more than he did."

Lieutenant Guild died shortly afterwards.

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo
1st Marines in Position

During the morning phase of Charlie Company's attack, Hawkins and the others on Hill 118 were racked by frustration of a type seldom experienced by Marines in the history of the Corps. It will be recalled that the ground between the Kimpo-Yongdungpo Highway and the Han River was not cleared in the course of 1/5's attack on Hills 80 and 85 on 19 September. Since the 5th Marines' unit had withdrawn to cross the Han at Haengju, and since Charlie Company of 1/1 had chosen a southern route in recapturing the twin heights, enemy bands in hiding along the river bank were unmolested. The potential danger in the area was not realized, however, until too late.

From Kimpo came a "weasel" of the 1st Signal Battalion, the crew calmly stringing wire into the 1st Marines' zone as the vehicle rattled along the highway. Just short of the Kalchon bridge, the little tractor struck a mine and was ambushed by a party of North Koreans. The power-packed Marine infantry on Hill 118, less than a thousand yards away, watched helplessly as the communications men were either killed or captured. No sooner had the Reds disappeared into the brush with two prisoners than a Marine truck, belonging to A/Engineers, cruised down the highway with four unsuspecting passengers. Captain Barrow ordered his troops to fire over the vehicle, hoping that the driver would hear the bullets in the air and turn back. But the truck continued on into the ambuscade, where it was stopped by an enemy fusilade.[31]

The engineers piled out and plunged into a rice paddy in an attempt to escape. Three of them made it. The fourth, Private First Class Clayton O. Edwards, was tracked down and captured. Although the Marine was out of ammunition and already wounded, one heroic warrior of the NKPA stepped forward and bayoneted him in the shoulder after he had surrendered. Edwards later escaped from a POW train fleeing before the UN drive into North Korea.

Not long after these incidents, Captain Richard F. Bland led Baker Company of 1/1 through the area and secured Hill 55 and the nearby villages on the bank of the Han. The North Koreans pulled out and crossed the Kalchon to join the Yongdungpo garrison.

With fighting going on to the right and left, 3/1 sat quietly on Lookout Hill during 20 September without suffering a casualty. An occasional break in the orange and black pall over Yongdungpo allowed the Marines a glimpse of the wrecked railroad and highway spans which once had bridged the Han to Seoul.

The ROK capital was still a long way off for the 1st Marines; and the 2d Battalion, now on the regimental right and in its sixth straight day of the assault, was more concerned with the immediate foreground. After smashing the Red attack in the morning of the 20th, Sutter's unit jumped off at 0645 against scattered resistance along the Inchon-Seoul Highway. The assault elements reached the bridge spanning the western branch of the Kalchon at 1230, and the battalion commander immediately ordered engineers to inspect the long concrete structure. It was reported to be in good enough condition to support M–26 tanks for the attack on Yongdungpo the next day.[32]

While the battalion dug in on the west side of the stream, the Marines eyed the 2,000-yard stretch of highway leading ahead to a second span, bridging the Kalchon's eastern branch at the very edge of the blazing town. A high ridge on the right of the road—technically in the 32d Infantry's zone of action—was a beehive of North Korean activity. Anticipating the effect of this commanding position on his attack the following day, Sutter contacted Lieutenant Colonel Charles M. Mount, USA, commanding the 2d Battalion of the 32d, for permission to shell the height. The Army officer approved the request at 1300, but more than *seven hours* elapsed before the necessary clearance filtered through 7th Division, X Corps, and 1st Marine Division to reach the 11th Marines.

When the howitzers finally opened up, darkness prevented effective observed fire from being delivered on the enemy strong point.[33]

Out of sight and earshot of 2/1 during 20 September, Colonel Charles E. Beauchamp's 32d Regiment, in its first day of actual combat, paid with seven killed and 36 wounded in taking Tongdok Mountain and part of "Copper Mine Hill." Using the Inchon-Anyang road as an MSR, the Army unit lost three tanks in a field of over 150 wooden box mines. Beauchamp himself narrowly escaped death or serious injury when his jeep struck one of the explosives, killing the driver and wounding a radio operator. By nightfall, the 32d was deployed far out on the right of the Marines on the Inchon-Seoul Highway; and the 31st Infantry, having landed at Inchon earlier in the day, went into position even farther southward.[34]

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo
Assault of Yongdungpo

There was no infantry action during the night of 20–21 September. Both sides were steeling themselves for the ordeal each knew would commence at dawn. The Red commander in Yongdungpo threw up formidable earthworks to block the approach over the Kalchon from Hills 80 and 85 in the northwest; and he concentrated a strong force between the two tributaries in the southwest. That edge of town facing due west, though most defensible, he left unguarded, with the result that a single Marine rifle company would hasten his demise.

Marine artillery thundered all night long, and the glare from flaming Yongdungpo rolled back the darkness in an ever broadening arc. Shortly after dawn, the Marines of Company B, 1st Battalion, threaded across the wreckage of the Kalchon bridge under cover of machine-gun, mortar, and tank fire from Hill 85. Reaching the eastern bank, the attackers swept over a knoll over-looking the Han on the left, which the North Koreans had left undefended. The assault inched forward toward the town, first through sporadic small arms resistance, then into a deadly cross-fire from several automatic weapons.[35]

Baker Company was now confronted by two dikes which the Reds had converted into a main line of resistance. One of the barriers paralleled the Han River north of Yongdungpo; the other ran the entire length of the western edge of town. Where they met to form a point facing the Kalchon bridge and the Marine advance, a reinforced company of North Koreans was deployed across each levee in strong, mutually supporting positions.

Captain Bland chose wisely in directing his attack against the northern dike alone. By this decision he not only kept his left flank and rear protected by the Han, but also maintained local superiority in numbers over the Reds immediately confronting him. Grinding slowly forward with heavy casualties, Company B rolled up the length of enemy entrenchments on the levee and pushed eastward 2,000 yards by afternoon. The Marines then formed a line with their backs to the Han and shot it out with the Communists on the second dike at a range of 500 yards. At this point the attack stalled, and the fight settled down to one of attrition. Casualties on both sides mounted rapidly under the ceaseless exchange of machine-gun, mortar, and tank fire.[36]

Part of Bland's difficulty owed to the random deployment of all opposing forces at this time, as indicated on the charts of the 11th Marines. Noting that Company B's positions were along the Han north of Yongdungpo, the artillerymen expressed reluctance to fire on the enemy-held dike to the "rear" in answer to Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins' repeated requests from his OP on Hill 85. It was a matter of the howitzers pointing generally north toward Seoul, while Bland's outfit, at the moment, was trying to head south. The misunderstanding was finally cleared up late in the afternoon, and Marine air joined the artillery in pounding the southern barrier. The Reds held stubbornly under the battering, and at darkness Hawkins sent Charlie and Weapons Companies across the bridge to form a perimeter with Baker for the night.[37]

The narrative will now switch to the action in the 2d Battalion zone, leaving the separate attack of Company A to be taken up in detail later.

Sutter's unit jumped off at 0630 on the 21st with Companies D and E in the assault. The infantry crossed the first bridge without incident, then fanned out to move on the second. It was no surprise when the North Koreans on the intermediate ridge to the right of the highway suddenly threw heavy fire across the Marine front, but it was disconcerting to Sutter that his calls for artillery fire met with the same delay as on the previous day. He therefore shelled the high ground with attached 4.2-inch mortars on his own initiative, before ordering Companies E and F to attack the enemy bastion.[38]

Meanwhile, Captain Welby Cronk led Company D forward on the left of the highway against a strongly

defended dike fronting the Kalchon's western branch. Progress was slow and casualties severe, but the Marines closed to within 100 yards of the barrier by noon. There they dug in and slugged it out, while the 2d and 3d Platoons of Charlie Company tanks alternated in ripping the Communist trenches with 90mm, delayed-action shells.

Heavy fighting continued on the right side of the road until evening. Companies E and F fought part way up the slopes of the ridge and suffered heavily during the close exchange with the Reds on the crest. Since the enemy was still in control of most of the high ground at dusk, Sutter ordered the assault units to withdraw into 2/1's zone and dig in with Dog Company. VMF–214 covered the hot disengagement—one of the most difficult of all tactics—under a masterful job of forward air controlling by First Lieutenant Norman Vining, Sutter's FAC. After bombing and rocketing from 75 to 100 yards beyond the Marine front, the Corsairs closed to within 30 yards for strafing runs to shield the retracting line of infantry.[39]

Click here to view map

The seventh straight day in the assault had cost the 2d Battalion 11 killed and 74 wounded, bringing its total casualties since D-Day to 28 KIA and 226 WIA. Partially because of these crippling statistics, Colonel Puller, at 1530 on the 21st, had committed 3/1 to the relief of the battle-weary outfit. The reserve battalion swung northeast from Lookout Hill to flank the enemy dike positions facing Company D from the eastern tributary. Crossing the Kalchon against light resistance, the attackers ran into trouble at the fortified levees fronting southwestern Yongdongpo.

After heavy machine guns of 3/1 bested a battery of Communist automatic weapons, Companies G and I, the latter on the right, attacked astride the stream branch. Progress was slow, but at a cost of 11 killed and 18 wounded, the Marines rolled up the heavily defended dike and reached the bridge entering the city. Darkness fell with the 3d Battalion entrenching to the north of the 2d, both units along the left side of the Inchon-Seoul Highway.[40]

To the south of the 1st Marines, the 32d Infantry met with considerable success during its attack over a mountainous nine-mile front. The 1st Battalion on the right mopped up Copper Mine Hill, then seized the high ground around Anyang against "light sniper fire." In the left of the Army zone and adjacent to the Marines, 2/32 took its objective south of Yongdungpo against light-to-moderate resistance. Thus, at a cost of two KIA, 28 WIA, and one MIA, the regiment succeeded in cutting the railroad and highway leading from Suwon to Seoul via Anyang and Yongdungpo. Difficulties in Marine-Army liaison and coordination throughout 21 September stemmed from the fact that neither realized the size of the gap between them. The map will show that the 32d's route of advance was planned to miss Yongdungpo by two miles, not even coming close to the NKPA strong point which gave the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, so much trouble.[41]

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo
Able Company on a Limb

With the coming of night on 21 September, there was grave apprehension in the 1st Marines over the fate of one rifle company. In the course of the day, the Reds had staved off major penetrations by two Marine battalions in the southwest and the better part of another in the northwest. Incredibly enough, one Marine unit of some 200 men had swept through the space in between and cleared the very heart of Yongdungpo; so that when darkness fell, the isolated force was anchored in the rear of the enemy, a good mile and a half beyond the closest friendly units.

Company A of the 1st Battalion had jumped off from below Hill 80 on the morning of the 21st, after Baker Company was slowed by the dike positions east of the Kalchon bridge. In committing the unit to an attack through a mile of open rice paddies, Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins was gambling with high stakes for surprise.[42]

Captain Barrow employed the classic approach-march formation. Forward on the left was Second Lieutenant John J. Swords' 3d Platoon; on the right front was the 2d, under Second Lieutenant Donald R. Jones. To the left rear was First Lieutenant William A. McClelland's 1st Platoon, with the dual mission of company reserve and flank guard. In the right rear were the 60mm mortars, a section of heavy machine guns of Weapons Company, and the assault squad. Light machine gun sections were attached to each rifle platoon, so that they could be employed to the front or flanks on a moment's notice. Barrow's six-foot, four-inch frame loomed between the two assault platoons.

To say that these Marines were tense and expectant as they plodded across the broad, flat expanse would be an understatement. Far off on the left and right, small arms crackled continuously at the bridge entrances to Yongdungpo. Marine planes were swooping down in the distance, the hollow eruptions of their ordnance adding to the incessant rumbling of artillery and mortars.

Almost hidden from view by the high grain stalks, Company A swept through the rice paddies against no opposition whatever. Its advance was rapid until the 3d Platoon was slowed by muck which marked the beginning of the Kalchon's bed. Heads craned eagerly to the front and flanks as progress dropped to a snail's pace for several minutes.

The crucial moment seemed certainly at hand when the assault line stepped forward from the concealment of the rice and waded into the stream, completely exposed to the wide bank and parallel dike beyond. Still, not an enemy shot was fired. Dripping mud and water, the green-clad figures in the van surged ashore and over the dike. The rest of the men followed, unbelieving, close behind.

Retaining the same tactical formation, ready to engage in any or all directions, Company A marched into Yongdungpo. The first buildings were 100 yards ahead of the levee. Barrow channeled his advance astride the main east-west street. Although buildings and dwellings were many, the layout was not dense; and the Marines were able to keep their ranks open and enjoy good all-around observation.

The place seemed empty and dead. By noon Able Company was several hundred yards within the town, its careful search of buildings and side streets having failed to uncover a flicker of enemy resistance. Barrow could tell from the din far out on either flank that he was well ahead (eastward) of Baker Company and the 2d Battalion. He radioed for instructions, and Hawkins told him to keep going.

Halfway through town, Barrow noted on his map that the Inchon-Seoul Highway was now converging on his right, so that it would meet the company's attack route just east of Yongdungpo. Because of the furious clatter along the stretch of highway out of sight on the southwest (2/1's fight), he ordered the reserve platoon to shift

from the left side to the right. No sooner had McClelland completed the move than his men spotted an enemy column advancing down the highway in the direction of 2/1's front. The Reds were chanting a spirited military air when the 3d Platoon opened up and cut the formation to ribbons.

Simultaneously, the two lead platoons began firing on individuals and small groups in the streets of eastern Yongdungpo. Astonished at the sight of a large Marine force in the very heart of their bastion, most of the North Koreans took to their heels. But there were other Reds "in the rear with the gear" who obviously did not recognize the attackers. After glancing curiously from distant streets, they went calmly about their business.

Swords' 3d Platoon barreled through town on the left of the street and broke into the open. A dike topped by a road lay across the Marine front, and the platoon leader led his men into a hasty defense on top. From this position they could cover the vast sand spit with its airfield and approaches to Seoul. Looking north, they observed a large body of enemy soldiers withdrawing from Baker Company's zone onto the spit. Light machine guns took the North Koreans under fire immediately, and the section of heavies sent forward by Barrow joined in shortly afterwards. Caught by surprise in the open, the Red outfit suffered heavy casualties before the survivors could fan out and disappear.

The rest of Company A moved up on the right of the 3d Platoon, occupying more of the dike and the junction with the Inchon-Seoul Highway. It was at this point that Company A—if it could hold the ground—had an opportunity to deal the Yongdungpo garrison a mortal blow. For the road junction turned out to be the enemy's supply center.

Across the intersection lay what appeared at first glance to be a huge coal pile. Actually it was a camouflaged mountain of ammunition. During a fire fight with a small group of North Koreans taking cover behind the explosives, one Marine set off the dump with a grenade. The whole countryside shook with the detonation, and the great cloud of smoke that shot into the air marked Able Company's isolated position for the rest of the 1st Marines on the outskirts of town.

While part of the unit dug in on the dike, the remainder inspected and cleared the area around the intersection. A five-story building on the near corner was jammed with captured U.S. Army medical supplies, field equipment, ammunition, and enemy ordnance. The Marines could not use the heavy caliber ammo but they did help themselves to blood plasma for their wounded.

Throughout the afternoon, the Reds made repeated attempts to regain the vital area by throwing small assault parties against Able Company from the south. Each attack was smashed, and darkness found the Marines firmly entrenched on the dike, hoping only that their limited supply of ammunition would last throughout the night. A weak SCR300 battery prevented further communications with the battalion CP.

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Chapter 11. The Fight for Yongdungpo
Yongdungpo Secured

If the Marine Corps Schools ever enlarges its varied curriculum to include "The Defense of a Dike," Captain Barrow's tactical disposition on the night of 21–22 September 1950 can be taken as a unique precedent. Able Company's commander chose to defend a 100-yard stretch of the levee just north of the intersection. Here the macadam road ran about 25 feet above ground level, and the incline on either side sloped gently. The Marines staggered their foxholes alongside, some high on the slope, others low. Machine guns and BARs were emplaced along the shoulders at the top, so that automatic fire could be directed in volume in any direction. Since all of their ammunition had been fired during the afternoon counterattacks, the 60mm mortar crews laid aside their tubes and went into the line as infantry.[43]

Company A's perimeter for the night thus had the shape of a long sausage, with the 3d Platoon in an arc at the northern end, the 1st defending the west side, and the 2d in position on the east. From their foxholes on the top and sides of the levee, the Marines commanded the sand spit, the road on the dike, Yongdungpo's eastern exits, and the vital intersection with the Inchon-Seoul Highway.

Fortunately, they had dug their holes deep. At dusk came the telltale rattling, revving, and clanking from the direction of 2/1's front; and five unescorted T–34s loomed on the Inchon-Seoul Highway, headed toward the intersection. They turned left just short of the crossroads and proceeded in column along a street that paralleled Company A's dike.

The Marines on the levee crouched low in their holes. Cruising majestically like a file of battleships, the tank column cut loose with a hail of machine-gun fire and salvoes of 85mm shells at a range of 30 yards. Able Company's rocket gunners, whose total experience with the 3.5-inch launcher was limited to the firing of a few practice rounds, popped up from their holes and let fly. One of the tanks exploded in a convulsion of flame and smoke, its turret twisted askew as though some giant hand had torn the steel cap from the body.

The other four tanks continued to the end of the perimeter, then reversed course past the Marine line a second time, pumping a steady stream of steel into the western slope of the dike. Reaching their starting point at the Inchon-Seoul Highway, they turned back and made another round trip, with Marine rocket fire damaging two more vehicles and sending them limping off the field. The remaining pair, upon completing the second circuit, again reversed course and made a final pass—the fifth—on the Marine lines. Clearing the perimeter, they rumbled into town and disappeared.

Click here to view map

Fantastic as it may seem, Company A sustained a single casualty, a concussion case, during the half hour of sustained heavy caliber pounding at pistol ranges. Tremendous muzzle velocity had embedded the 85mm, armor-piercing shells deep in the slope of the dike in the split second before each explosion; and Marine foxholes proved to be sufficient protection against the raking machine-gun fire.

Between 1900 and 2100 it was relatively quiet. McClelland's platoon, facing town, killed a few Reds attempting to remove stores from the five-story building. Then the long expected report reached Barrow by sound-power telephone: Swords' platoon, manning the northern arc of the perimeter, could hear a large enemy force approaching its front.

The counterattack hit shortly after 2100. Transmitting a running account of the sharp fire fight by phone, Swords assured his company commander that he was "having no trouble." After 15 minutes of failure, the Reds withdrew for a breather. They struck in the same place half an hour later and were thrown back again, despite any

inspiration derived from a display of multi-colored flares and wild cries of “banzai.”

By midnight, the 3d Platoon had withstood five such onslaughts, each appearing to be in about company strength. Before the last attack, a captive Red officer escaped from Company A’s POW “compound” east of the dike and ran northward into the blackness, shouting repeatedly, according to Barrow’s ROK interpreter, “Don’t attack any more! They’re too strong for you!”

Apparently his advice was heeded, much to the relief of the Marines, whose ammunition supply was becoming dangerously low. At midnight, following the enemy’s fifth unsuccessful attempt against Swords’ position, the fight for Yongdungpo came to an end for the 1st Marines. There was scattered firing throughout the night, but the North Koreans, denied access to their vital supplies, quickly withered on the vine.

At dawn, Company A counted 275 dead and 50 automatic weapons around its perimeter, principally in front of the 3d Platoon. The four T–34 tanks which had withdrawn into town were found abandoned.

The 1st and 3d Battalions attacked at 0800 against negligible resistance and converged on the isolated unit, making the historic link-up in short order. The enemy was gone, except for the hundreds of dead that littered the borders of the city. He had left behind practically all of his heavy armament, equipment, and supplies.

Continuing the advance on the 22d, the 1st Marines surged eastward beyond Yongdungpo, then spent the remainder of the day reorganizing and patrolling. On the 23d, the regiment moved almost unopposed to the bank of the Han, 3/1 seizing Hill 108 which dominated the battered bridges. Late that night Puller received orders to effect the river-crossing early next morning.

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Chapter 12. Main Line of Resistance

DURING THE NIGHT of 21–22 September an NKPA shell crashed through the roof of the native house serving as CP of the 5th Marines northwest of Seoul. The explosion wounded Lieutenant Colonel Hays so severely that the regimental executive officer required immediate evacuation. Lieutenant Colonel Murray, who escaped with a slight cut, directed that the CP be moved to a cave on the reverse slope of a hill.

Thus did the enemy serve notice that henceforward the battle for the northwest approaches to Seoul would be furiously contested. Yongdungpo had been taken by the 1st Marines only after a grim, three-day struggle in which the Korean Reds made their first real stand as distinguished from delaying operations. And now it was the turn of the 5th Marines to meet opposition such as that regiment had not encountered since D-day.

Two new NKPA units had much to do with the sudden stiffening of resistance. One was the 78th Independent Regiment, commanded by Colonel Pak Han Lin. This unit, numbering about 2,000 recruits in July, was organized into three battalions of infantry supported by medical, motorcycle, weapons, reconnaissance, mortar and 76mm gun companies, and an engineer platoon.

Another recent arrival which won the respect of the Marines for rugged fighting qualities was the 25th Brigade of 4,000 to 5,000 troops. Commanded by Major General Wol Ki Chan, who had reportedly studied in Russia in 1947, the unit was made up of four heavy weapons battalions and an infantry battalion in addition to engineer, 120mm mortar, heavy artillery, and brigade artillery battalions.[1]

It was literally a fight to the death for these two NKPA outfits, which were all but wiped out of existence by the Marines of RCT-5 during the battle for Seoul. But while they lasted, the 78th Regiment and 25th Brigade put up a determined and at times desperate resistance in hill country well adapted to defense.

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Chapter 12. Main Line of Resistance
Three Hills Designated 105

The grapple for the northwest approaches to Seoul began in deadly earnest at 0700 on the morning of 22 September. From north to south, the three assault battalions of the reinforced 5th Marines were the 3d on the left, the 1st KMC in the center, and the 1st on the right. They were jumping off from the high ground about three miles southeast of Haengju along a line bounded by Hill 216 on the north, 104 in the center, and 68 on the south.

Misunderstandings in regard to routes and unit boundaries were made inevitable by maps disagreeing as to place names and heights of ridges. Added to the confusion was the fact that each battalion zone had a Hill 105 as one of its final objectives. (Staff officers played safe by designating them 105–N, 105–C, and 105–S to indicate north, central and south.)

Ahead of the Marines lay a hill complex which constituted a great natural bastion of interlocking heights and fields of fire. Spurs and defiles leading from one ridge to another enabled NKPA troops to move up in concealment and launch counterattacks in the most unexpected quarters.

Casualties of the next three days were the heaviest for a comparable period that RCT–5 had suffered in Korea. Added to previous totals, it meant that 17 of the original 18 platoon leaders were killed or wounded in a 50-day period, and five of the six company commanders who landed with the Brigade.[2]

Grim as the outlook was, the Marines of the 2d Battalion enjoyed a sideshow on the eve of battle when Sergeant James I. Higgins and a companion made a prize of an enemy locomotive. Knowing nothing about operating it, they found a simple but effective solution by firing up and opening throttles or depressing levers until the gauges were at the halfway mark. This policy of moderation led to success. The locomotive took off with ponderous docility, and Higgins managed to bring it to a safe stop near the regimental CP. His exploit was not applauded, however, by supply officers taking alarm from the dense clouds pouring out of the smokestack. They did not relish the idea of providing enemy artillery with a target marker, visible for miles, in an area full of exposed Marine ammunition. As a result of their anxiety, Higgins was promptly invited to keep rolling until he reached the rear.[3]

The 2d Battalion remained in reserve while the 1st KMC Battalion jumped off in the center from Hill 104. Heavy resistance was met immediately. In fact, NKPA detachments infiltrated all the way to Hill 104 itself, though it had been secured by 3/5 the previous afternoon. They poured small-arms fire into KMCs already taking a pounding from mortar and artillery fire, and the battalion was held up until the high ground to the front could be cleared by artillery and air strikes.[4]

On the left, 3/5 also ran into trouble after deceptively easy progress at first. At 0700 all three companies jumped off from Hill 216, secured by Item Company the day before. The new objective, as directed by 5th Marines' Operations Order 24-50, was Hill 296.

This height was reported by How Company as taken at 0945. It was not realized at the time that Hill 296 was actually the bastion of the Red Korean defense complex northwest of Seoul if its three southern spurs were considered. Attached to the main land mass like the roots of an ulcerated molar were Hills 56, 88, and 105–N, with 105–C, 72, and 105–S describing an arc to the southward. Nearly all of these positions would have to be reduced before the road could be opened to Seoul.

Only long-range small-arms fire from Hill 338 was encountered by How Company at the outset, but enemy pressure steadily increased from the southern spurs of 296. An NKPA counterattack in estimated company strength was repulsed with heavy enemy losses, including some 40 prisoners, by Marine riflemen supported by

tanks. Communist pressure was soon renewed, however, with How Company receiving heavy small-arms, automatic, AT, and mortar fire.

Patrols from the other two companies, ranging to the northeast of Hill 216 in the early afternoon, met determined opposition. A reinforced rifle platoon of Item Company encountered an NKPA force, in estimated company strength, defending the village of Nokpon-ni. During the ensuing fight the Marines lost two men killed and 11 wounded. Action was broken off at dusk, when the 3d Battalion received oral orders to defend against an enemy infiltrating from the south, southeast, and northeast in attempts to regain lost ground.

The fight for Hill 296 had only begun.[5]

South of the railroad, 1/5 had about 2,000 yards to cover to its objective, Hill 105–S. The battalion plan of maneuver called for Baker Company to deliver fire support while Able passed through Charlie and advanced to the base of the hill. Meanwhile, Charlie was to envelop the objective from the right. When the three Able platoons moved into position, they were pinned down by enemy automatic fire from the forward slope of 105–S. First Lieutenant Joseph A. Schimmenti of 3/A and his men had a grim reminder of American reverses earlier in the war when they found a 50–caliber machine gun and ammunition of U.S. manufacture which the enemy had abandoned.[6]

Schimmenti was severely wounded and First Lieutenant Nathaniel F. Mann, Jr., killed before Able Company won a foothold on the lower slopes of 105–S. It took until 1500 for Charlie Company, supported by a machine gun section, to complete its wide swing and close in on the right of the enemy's positions. Baker Company passed through Able meanwhile and attacked the forward slopes. At 1720, after an intense mortar, air, and artillery preparation, the 1st Battalion needed only 15 minutes in which to secure the objective. The three companies had taken losses of 12 killed and 31 wounded during the day.[7]

Close air support was provided for RCT–5 by the MAG–33 squadrons which had begun tactical operations at Kimpo on the 20th. Although they were still in process of moving to the airfield from Japanese bases, VMF–212 and VMF(N)–542 flew strikes in support of all three assault battalions. Of the two carrier-based squadrons, VMF–323 almost doubled its usual number of daily missions on 22 September.[8]

Click here to view map

Just before nightfall, Lieutenant Colonel Murray directed 1/5 to pull back to Hill 68 with one company while holding Hill 105–S with the other two. This shift was made necessary by the fact that the KMCs had been compelled to withdraw to Hill 104, their starting point. As a consequence, the center of the line was more than 1,000 yards in the rear of the battalions on the right and left. The company on Hill 68 was to provide covering fires in the morning, therefore, when the KMC battalion would renew its attack in an effort to regain lost ground.

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Chapter 12. Main Line of Resistance
RCT-7 North of the Han

On D-plus 8 the 1st Marine Division had its third rifle regiment in line for the first time. OpnO 9–50, issued at 1200 on 23 September, directed the 7th Marines (less 2d Battalion) to cross the Han into a zone of action in the rear of the 5th Marines.

In response to verbal instructions and a fragmentary warning order the day before, the regimental headquarters and 3d Battalion crossed late on the morning of the 23d. Colonel Litzenberg set up his CP on the north bank at 1710, and his men had their first contact with the enemy the following morning. A 3d Battalion patrol ranging to the north of the battalion zone of action encountered an estimated 200 NKPA troops, and Marine air and artillery supported a successful attack.[9]

Division orders called for the relief of 2/7 on the 24th in the area northwest of Kimpo by the 2d Battalion of the 187th Airborne RCT, USA. The Marine unit was directed to cross the Han that afternoon, followed by the 1st Battalion, which had completed unloading at Inchon.

It had been decided by the Division command and staff to give the 7th Marines time for shaking down instead of committing the newcomers immediately to the attack on Seoul. The regiment was assigned a series of five objectives along a ridgeline extending from the ferry crossing at Haengju on a gentle arc to a point north of the city. Protecting the north flank and rear of the 5th Marines was a primary mission, and Colonel Litzenberg was also directed to prevent the escape of the enemy to the northward.[10]

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Chapter 12. Main Line of Resistance
Attack Continued by RCT-5

On the morning of the 23d the 1st KMC Battalion was directed to attack from Hill 104 at 0700 to straighten out the line. The 1st and 3d Battalions of the 5th Marines were to remain in position and assist the advance by fire.

Heavy and immediate resistance was encountered from NKPA troops dug in on Hill 56. Although the KMCs made a valiant effort, they were soon stopped cold. Only slight gains resulted at an excessive cost in casualties from artillery, mortar, and automatic weapons fire.[11]

Lieutenant Colonel Roise moved his CP forward at 1300 to the western base of Hill 104. While his 2d Battalion assembled under cover of that height, he conferred with Lieutenant Colonel Murray after receiving orders to pass through the KMCs and continue the attack on Hill 56. Both officers realized the advantages of swinging around to hit the enemy from the left after approaching along the low ground. But it was already midafternoon and this movement could not be completed before darkness. The only alternative was a line-buck in the center if Hill 56 was to be taken that day. And since the line had to be stabilized and the KMCs pulled back in reserve to give the regimental defense some depth, Murray and Roise agreed that the situation called for a frontal assault without delay.[12]

At this stage the Marine officers did not realize that Hill 56 was part of the enemy's main line of resistance. It seemed logical to them that he would make his final stand on the next ridgeline, crowned with Hills 105–C and 105–N. As for the repulses suffered by the KMCs, it was a logical assumption that their inexperience had been a contributing factor. In view of these circumstances, a brief artillery preparation and the support of a platoon of tanks seemed sufficient when Companies D and F attacked and E contributed fires from the eastern slopes of Hill 104.[13]

Captain Peters' Fox Company was to lead off on the right, south of the railroad, and seize the portion of the objective below the railroad tunnel. From this high ground, his men could then support First Lieutenant H. J. Smith's Dog Company, moving forward under cover of a sunken road, to assault Hill 56 north of the tunnel. About 1,000 yards of rice paddies had to be crossed at the outset, and the expected support of the tanks in this low ground failed to materialize. The leading M–26 bogged down in a wide ditch which prevented the advance of the other four. One of them remained in the paddies to give supporting fires while three took a new route along the railroad tracks. Fox Company received increasingly heavy casualties meanwhile on the way across the low ground.

Peters ordered Second Lieutenant S. E. Sansing's mortar section forward, but the officer reported afterwards that his radio did not pick up the message. This left the three assault platoons without 60mm support as they climbed the lower slopes of Hill 56 and became heavily engaged with NKPA troops just below the railway tunnel.[14]

Apparently the Reds so overrated the weight of Company F's assault that they lost the topographical peak of Hill 56 by default. Whether their timely withdrawal from Dog Company's initial objective was meant to be permanent is not known, for they might have been caught flatfooted while shifting troops against Fox. Nevertheless, Company D emerged from the sunken road in a column of platoons and moved onto the high ground in its zone against negligible opposition.

Lieutenant Heck's 1st Platoon, according to plan, then pivoted leftward to spearhead the attack on the final objective, Smith's Ridge—named by the men after their company commander. Halfway into the connecting

saddle, the Marines were caught in the open by a heavy burst of fire from a large knoll on the southern tip of the wooded ridge. Heck fell mortally wounded, and his senior NCO, Staff Sergeant T. Albert Crowson, went down with a shattered leg. In the space of a few minutes, more than half of the exposed platoon became casualties.[15]

Startled by the intensity of enemy reaction from this unexpected quarter, Smith personally retrieved the battered 1st Platoon, while the 2d and 3d were clearing the northeastern slopes of Hill 56. Then, owing to the lateness of the hour, he deployed Company D defensively on that high ground for the night. There was no contact with Fox Company or any other friendly unit. This fact, coupled with the evidence of strong enemy positions on Smith's Ridge, led the company commander to reconsider carefully his plans for the postponed attack.[16]

Fox Company had meanwhile been heavily engaged along the eastern slopes of Hill 56 in the vicinity of the railway tunnel. Peters ordered Lieutenant Anderson to lead his 2d Platoon against the strong NKPA positions just beyond the tunnel. Only 27 men were left to fight it out at close quarters with an entrenched enemy estimated by the platoon leader at company strength. The Communist force was wiped out in exchanges of small-arms fire and grenades at murderous ranges, but the effort took a frightful toll of the 1st Platoon in KIA and WIA casualties. Only seven able-bodied men were left when Peters ordered a withdrawal to the company position south of the tunnel.[17]

All of Anderson's wounded and most of his dead were brought back, and he combined his remnants with the survivors of Lieutenant Nolan's 2d Platoon. A gap of about 50 yards separated their position from First Lieutenant Albert F. Belbusti's isolated 3d Platoon as Fox Company dug in for the night.[18]

No fault could be found with the over-all plan of attack, providing as it did for each assault company to seize ground from which it could support the advance of the other. But as darkness approached, it became evident that the 2d Battalion had bargained for more North Korean real estate than it could handle. The two isolated companies had no choice but to cling desperately to their scorched holdings while organizing to meet an expected NKPA counterattack.

Although the other two battalions of the 5th Marines had defensive missions on 23 September, enemy threats and encroachments kept them occupied. On Hill 296, in the zone of 3/5, Weapons Company took a good deal of satisfaction in firing a captured NKPA howitzer to break up hostile troop concentrations in the vicinity of Nokpon-ni. How Company remained in contact with the enemy all day, supported by 50-caliber and 90mm fires from Marine tanks.[19]

Click here to view map

It was in the How Company zone that Taplett's men first made the acquaintance of "Fireproof Phil." This was the name applied to a gigantic NKPA officer, towering head and shoulders over his troops, who exposed himself with contempt for Marine bullets. Not only his burly build but his light complexion gave some of the Marines the conviction that he was Russian. At any rate, Fireproof Phil was both fearless and lucky. Machine gun bullets and mortar rounds seemed to bounce off his frame. Finally, the tanks paid the honor of making him the special target of 90mm ammunition, and still Fireproof Phil always had the benefit of a minor miracle at the last moment.[20]

Combat leadership by enemy officers and NCOs was outstanding in the operations north of Seoul. On Hill 105–S the 1st Battalion came under pressure all day on 23 September. Movement was impossible for the men of Baker and Charlie Companies, and supplies of water, food, and ammunition had to wait for darkness. Enemy smoke pots created a haze restricting air activities, but it did not prevent a timely strike flown by Lieutenant Colonel Lischeid and five planes of VMF–214 to break up a threatened enemy counterattack on Hill 105–S. This was one of six close support missions completed on the 23d by that squadron in the zone of RCT–5.[21]

Why the enemy did not launch a counterattack that night against the hard-hit assault companies of the 2d Battalion is one of the mysteries of the war. But the weary Marines on the slope of Hill 56 attributed their respite to effective and unremitting artillery support. All night long the howitzers of the 11th Marines lit up the night sky

like heat lightning in the rear and crashed like thunder in front as they scourged the NKPA positions.

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Chapter 12. Main Line of Resistance
Modified Plan of Corps Attack

Up to this time the Corps plan of attack had called for the 1st Marines to clear the south bank of the Han and cross in the vicinity of Yongdungpo to join the 5th Marines in an assault on Seoul from the west and southwest. In view of the location of the boundary between the 1st Marines and the 7th Infantry Division, this meant that the Army troops would not participate in the attack on the city.

General Almond had already made it plain in conversations with General Smith that it was highly desirable to take Seoul by 25 September as GHQ wished to announce the liberation just three months to the day after the NKPA invasion.

The subject came up again during a conference at Corps Headquarters on 23 September. Almond proposed that Smith send RCT–1 around to attack Seoul from the southeast while RCT–5 continued its assault from the northwest. This plan struck the Corps commander as promising to maneuver the enemy out of the city sooner than the attack as formerly conceived.

Smith replied that the NKPA forces defending Seoul had proved to be much stronger than had been expected. He said he was convinced that the enemy would put up a fight from street to street regardless of any flanking maneuvers. The Marine general added that the fierce opposition met by RCT–5 had demonstrated that the western approaches to Seoul were too much for one regiment to handle, and he urged that no change be made in the original plan of crossing RCT–1 northwest of Yongdungpo to aid the attack. This plan, Smith asserted, would offer the advantage of keeping the 1st Marine Division together; for when the 1st and 5th Marines had penetrated well into the city, the 7th Marines could be brought around from the northwest to deliver the *coup de grace*.[22]

Differences between commanders are not remarkable, and it is noteworthy that Corps and Division usually managed in the Inchon-Seoul operation to reach an acceptable solution. Such was the case when General Almond reconsidered on the 23d and agreed to allow the 1st Marines to cross northwest of Yongdungpo, as originally planned, and take part in a two-regiment attack on Seoul from the west and southwest. In place of the 1st Marines, the 32d Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division was to cross the Han and enter Seoul from the southeast. Amphibian tractors for the operation would be furnished by the 1st Marine Division.

Revised 1st Marine Division plans called for RCT–1 to take position on the right flank of RCT–5 after the crossing, then pivot to the northeast and continue the attack through the heart of the city. RCT–7 (less one battalion in Division reserve) would have the mission of advancing across the northern approaches to protect the left flank and prevent the enemy from escaping while RCT–5 sliced through the western edge of the built-up area. Thus the burden of capturing Seoul fell chiefly upon Colonel Puller's regiment.

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Chapter 12. Main Line of Resistance
Climax of the Marine Assault

As the eastern sky turned gray on the Saturday morning of 24 September, the men on the firing line northwest of Seoul knew that the time had come. They knew with the instinct of battle-wise troops that supporting arms had done all they could. Now it was up to the infantry to come to grips with the enemy. Supporting arms could only sue for victory and it was up to the infantry to collect.

The two companies of 2/5 were still clinging by their eyelashes to the scarred slopes of Hill 56. All three of the Company F platoon leaders, Nolan, Anderson, and Belbusti were carrying on in spite of wounds. Corporal Welden D. Harris, who had killed three Red Koreans in hand-to-hand combat the day before, refused to be evacuated after a second wound.[23]

The survivors of Captain Peters' outfit could not say too much in praise of the support given continuously throughout the night by Captain Arnold C. Hofstetter's Baker Battery of the 11th Marines. There were indications that several incipient NKPA counterattacks had been broken up during the night by the bombardment.

In the Dog Company zone the night had been relatively uneventful except for sniping, though the enemy could be heard digging new positions and bringing up ammunition.

The regimental scheme of maneuver, as outlined in OpnO 26–50, called for the 2d Battalion to continue the attack, with Hill 105–N as a final objective. This meant going up against practically the entire Hill 296 defense system, since Smith's Ridge and all of Hill 88 also remained to be seized. An estimated 2,500 enemy troops, well supported by automatic weapons, mortars, and artillery were defending every foot of defensible ground in front of the two thinned companies of 2/5.

It was intended that 3/5 should assist by attacking down the principal eastern spur of 296 to outflank the enemy and contribute supporting fires. Taplett's men were to be relieved in gradual stages on Hills 216 and 296 by elements of the 1st Battalion. As a preliminary, Newton was to send out a patrol to secure a portion of the river bank on the right flank of Hill 105–S in preparation for the crossing of the Han by the 1st Marines that morning. The reserve company of 1/5 would then commence the relief of the 3d Battalion while the 1st Battalion of the KMC Regiment remained in an assembly area in the rear of the 5th Marines and elements of the 7th Marines protected the left flank. Units of 1/5 were to continue to defend 105–S—seized and held at a total cost of 27 KIA and 72 WIA—until the crossing of the 1st Marines and the relief of 3/5 had been completed.[24]

Two small enemy counterattacks were repulsed without much trouble by elements of 3/5 on Hill 296 before dawn. Company H remained in contact with the enemy on the eastern slopes until 1550, when Company G moved around the right flank and a coordinated attack was launched against moderate NKPA artillery, mortar, and AT fires. Relief of Item Company and other 3/5 troops remaining on Hill 216 was completed by the 1st Battalion at 2000. Casualties of the 3d Battalion for the day were five killed and 33 wounded.[25]

The movements of these two battalions were subsidiary to the main attack launched by 2/5 on 24 September. H-hour at 0630 was preceded by a 20-minute artillery preparation and an air strike by VMF–323 planes. Lieutenant Colonel Roise planned to bring up Easy Company from reserve on Hill 104 and push it forward between Dog and Fox while those companies completed the seizure of Hill 56 and cleared the heavily wooded spur to the north known as Smith's Ridge, linking up with the main land mass of Hill 296. Easy Company would then take the lead in a battalion attack aimed at Hills 88 and 105–N as the final objectives.

Fox Company jumped off on the eastern slope of Hill 56. Nolan having been evacuated, Anderson led

what was left of the 2d and 3d Platoons—a total of some 20 riflemen. Belbusti commanded about the same number in the combined assault on the heavily defended finger of high ground east of the tunnel. Counting machine gunners, mortar-men, and troops bringing up ammunition, Fox Company had been reduced to fewer than 90 effectives, including wounded men refusing evacuation.

Corsairs of VMF–323 swooped down to drop 500-pound bombs less than a hundred yards in front of the attackers. Thanks to such close air support, Fox Company soon seized high ground which enabled the men to gain fire superiority.[26] At this point they took cover to make use of their advantage in an exchange of small-arms and automatic fire.

Dog Company, with two platoons still almost at full strength, had at least a dozen walking wounded who elected to keep on fighting. Ground mist and smoke from burning huts made for low visibility when the men jumped off in a column of platoons. The enemy opened up from Smith's Ridge as the Marines came within close range, pinning them down for two hours by concentrated and accurate artillery, mortar, AT, and automatic fire. One of the Marine tanks moving up the road in support was disabled by a mine and another became inoperative after a direct hit by an NKPA mortar shell on the motor hatch.[27]

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Chapter 12. Main Line of Resistance
The Epic of Dog Company

The large knob across the sunken road from Hill 56 remained to be taken before Dog Company completed its mission by advancing northward to clear the enemy from the wooded spine of Smith's Ridge. After the attack stalled with heavy casualties Lieutenant H. J. Smith ordered every available man into line, including personnel of company headquarters. Two Marine machine guns were kept in action at a cost of repeated casualties as First Lieutenant Karle Seydel made five consecutive trips under fire to bring up ammunition.

At some points the opposing forces were within long grenade-throwing distance. In these exchanges the Marines had a pronounced advantage because of stronger arms and the control developed by baseball.

Both sides attempted without success to break the deadlock by sending out detachments for flanking movements. Sergeant Robert Smith of McNaughton's platoon led a squad in a wide end sweep to the north, only to meet such fierce NKPA opposition that Smith and eight of his men were killed, including a corpsman. Only three wounded Marines ever got back.[28]

At 1000 the company commander sent the first of three messages to inform the battalion CP of his situation and request reinforcements. Roise could only reply that Easy Company, his reserve unit, was irrevocably committed to the attack on the final objectives. During the course of the battle the battalion commander himself was wounded by a mortar fragment but returned to the CP after having his arm dressed.[29]

When Second Lieutenant George Grimes' 60mm mortar section ran out of ammunition, the survivors fought as riflemen. Two platoon leaders, McNaughton and Lieutenant Howard, were wounded but continued in action.

About 1030, as the smoke and mist cleared, the howitzers of the 11th Marines and the 81mm mortars of 2/5 poured it into the enemy positions along the wooded ridge. The men on the firing line had another welcome assist when four Corsairs of VMF–323 roared in to make passes with bombs, rockets, and napalm.

Lieutenant Smith had 44 effectives left as he alerted his men for the assault. McNaughton, Seydel, Grimes, and First Lieutenant Karl Wirth were the other officers still on their feet. Platoons, sections, and squads had ceased to exist as units when the 44 men of Dog Company moved out of their foxholes and swarmed over the high ground that had held them up for more than two hours.

First impressions under more normal circumstances would have been shocking, for the position held more enemy dead and dying than the Marines had ever seen before in Korea. The entire area was honey-combed with foxholes, trenches, and bunkers, which had become the graves of Red Koreans cut down by Marine air and artillery. There they had died at their posts, crowded together so closely that every shell, bomb, or rocket had caused frightful carnage. The dead outnumbered the living, in fact, for the men of Dog Company met unexpectedly weak resistance from the few NKPA effectives who trusted to their weapons instead of their feet.[30]

Lieutenant Smith paused to regroup in a skirmish line for the final attack to clear the remainder of the ridge. Again the Marines seemed to prevail by sheer moral ascendancy as the assault went forward by leaps and bounds. But the victory was bought at the cost of the company commander's life, for Smith was killed at the head of his men.

Only five additional casualties were taken in this phase, but Marines dropped from exhaustion until McNaughton, as acting commander, had just 26 able-bodied men left at the finish. They were greeted by the strange spectacle of three enemy officers exhorting about 150 Red Koreans to retreat. No second invitation was

needed, and the Marines had a “turkey shoot” at the expense of foemen scurrying down the eastern and northern slopes in the direction of Seoul.[31]

Seydel was the only officer left unwounded when Dog Company notified the Battalion CP at 1300 that objectives had been secured. Fox Company reported about two hours later that it also had seized all assigned ground and was digging in after a mopping-up period.[32]

Casualties had not been heavy on the east side of the ridge as compared to the day before. The Company F attack consisted of two prolonged fire fights in which the Marines seized better positions and made good use of their advantage. After reaching the objective, they took cover and proceeded systematically to cut the enemy down to size with the support of VMF–214 planes. Captain Peters then sent both platoons forward to eliminate an NKPA force firing on them from a distance. Anderson’s men passed through a small built-up area and took cover behind a stone wall on the enemy’s flank. Opening fire on Communists about 300 yards away in an open field, they made short work of the opposition.[33]

Second Lieutenant Wiley J. Grigsby, the machine gun platoon leader, was killed in the day’s final Fox Company attack. Anderson’s composite platoon had three men killed and three wounded. Among the casualties was Corporal Harris, who received a mortal wound after twice refusing evacuation. He was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.[34]

The attack of Easy Company on Hill 105–N was delayed until after the other two companies took their objectives. At 1500, after moving up from battalion reserve, Jaskilka’s men ran into heavy enemy mortar and automatic fire soon after passing Hill 56. Two tanks of the 1st Platoon, Company B, 1st Tank Battalion were knocked out, one by an AT mine and the other by a direct hit of a mortar shell. The remaining three tanks could not have continued in action except for the efforts of Staff Sergeant Stanley B. McPherson of Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion, who went ahead and cleared a path through the enemy mine field. By some miracle he survived the hail of NKPA fire unhurt, and the tanks went on to destroy two enemy AT guns and several machine gun emplacements.

The main enemy stronghold appeared to be Hill 72, a conical height located between Hills 105–N and 105–C and enfilading both of them. Not enough daylight remained on 24 September to mount an assault on this position, and the effort was put off until the following morning.[35]

Marine air had a busy day. Lieutenant Colonel Lischeid’s VMF–214, repeating the pattern of the day before, launched strikes of five aircraft every two hours in support of 2/5 attacks northwest of Seoul—a total of six missions. Not only was the city a flak-trap, but Marine pilots were flying Corsairs from which the armor around the air-cooler system had been removed by order of BuAer as a peacetime economy measure and never restored. As a consequence, NKPA small-arms fire was likely to hit the oil lines and send a machine down in flames.[36]

A 1st MAW record for combat sorties flown in a day by a single squadron was set on the 24th by VMF–212 with 12 flights and 46 sorties. Close support missions were about equally represented along with search and attack.[37]

Nightfall of this eventful day found 2/5 in possession of ground containing the most enemy dead in a small area ever seen in the Inchon-Seoul operation. Lieutenant Colonel Roise estimated that 1,500 NKPA bodies were left on Hill 56 and Smith’s Ridge, and the command of the 1st Marine Division put the figure at 1,750 enemy killed in the Hill 296 defenses.[38]

Survivors of Dog Company agreed that in spite of such frightful losses, the Red Koreans had enough able-bodied men left at the finish to make mincemeat of the 26 attackers who took Smith’s Ridge. But this Marine effort seemed to break the heart of enemy resistance in the Hill 296 defense complex, thus giving fresh proof of Napoleon’s famous dictum, “The moral is to the material in war as three to one.”

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Chapter 12. Main Line of Resistance
River Crossing of RCT–1

The battle for Seoul entered its final stage on the 24th with the river crossing of the 1st Marines. At first light a site about 2,000 yards southwest of Hill 105–S was cleared by Charlie Company of the 1st Engineer Battalion. Extensive mine-clearing operations at the crossing site area caused delays, and it was 0800 when reconnaissance and assault elements of 2/1 embarked in the LVTs of Company A, 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion. Sutter's troops completed their crossing at 0945 against scattered and ineffectual fire, and made contact that afternoon on the north bank with elements of Company C, 5th Marines.[39]

For lack of a ferry, the 1st Marines had no tank support at the crossing site. Plans had been made to send Baker Company, 1st Tank Battalion, around by the Haengju ferry to join the infantry north of the river. As it worked out, however, the armor was delayed by a fight on the north bank which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Hill 79, about 4,000 yards from the crossing site, had been assigned to the 1st Marines by Division OpnO 10–50 as an objective. The 2d Battalion began a rapid advance toward this point after moving into position on the north bank abreast of the 5th Marines on a 1,500-yard front.

The 1st Battalion and Regimental Headquarters were next to cross. Puller ordered Hawkins and his men to drive eastward along the river and pass through the 2d Battalion. Since that unit was rapidly advancing at the time, one of the 1/1 staff officers looked dubious.

"You'll just have to advance a little faster," explained the veteran regimental commander.[40]

This proved to be a practical even if not exactly a school solution. On the march the 1st Battalion had the same experience as the 2d when small-arms and automatic fire came from Hill 105–S, supposedly secured by 1/5. Again the enemy was demonstrating his ability to hide out behind the Marine lines and make the most of his nuisance value. The 2d Battalion had two men killed and nine wounded by harassing fires, and the 1st suffered four casualties while passing through at 1300 to continue the attack.

Effective Marine artillery and 4.2-inch mortar fire supported the advance. After drawing out of range of Hill 105–S, Hawkins and his men encountered long-range small-arms fire, and roads into the city were mined. Hill 79 was located in the southwest section of Seoul itself, commanding a good view of the railroad marshaling yards and industrial area. After seizing the objective at 1500, the men celebrated by raising an American flag, thus precipitating a friendly race with the 5th Marines in exuberant ceremonies of this sort.

At 1515 the 3d Battalion was relieved by the Division of its mission of defending Hill 108, south of the wrecked Han bridges, and reverted to regimental control for a river crossing completed at 2000. On the north bank Ridge's outfit was thought to have pulled the last fangs of enemy resistance on Hill 105–S after his men in their turn came under fire from hidden opponents. Since this height dominated the new regimental CP, Company I was given the mission of outposting the height. A small but lively fire fight took place at dusk, and the Marines bagged ten prisoners at a cost of one man killed and two wounded.[41]

The 3d Battalion went into an assembly area near the crossing site for the night. Hawkins set up a perimeter defense on the objective, and the 2d Battalion occupied positions about 2,000 yards in the rear. A few probing attacks were received from enemy patrols on Hill 79, but Marine artillery and 4.2-inch mortars made short work of these attempts.

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield

ON THE MORNING of 25 September 1950, with RCT–1 across the river, the 1st Marine Division was in a position for the first time since D-day to launch an attack of all three regiments abreast.

This was but one of the portents indicating that the days of the North Korean People's Army were numbered. Exactly three months had passed since the invasion of the Republic of Korea, and now the forces of the Communist puppet state were reeling under blows from two directions. While X Corps pounded inland to seize the NKPA main communications hub, the Eighth Army had smashed through the Pusan Perimeter and was driving northward to place the enemy between two fires.

The big break in South Korea came on 23 September. Up to that time, the NKPA 5th, 8th, 12th, and 15th Divisions had put up a stubborn resistance on the northern front of the Pusan Perimeter against six ROK divisions. Then the enemy crumpled and the ROKs began an advance (see map in end papers) that would take them 70 miles during the ensuing week.[1]

It was much the same story along the Kumchon-Taejon axis of the central front. There the U.S. I Corps, comprising the U.S. 24th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions, the 1st ROK Division, and the British 27th Brigade, drove a deep salient into the line of the 1st, 3d, 13th, 10th, and 2d NKPA Divisions. UN gains of 35 miles were made from the 22d to the 25th.

In the south the U.S. 2d and 25th Divisions had hurled the NKPA 6th, 4th, 9th, and 7th Divisions back from the vicinity of Masan to the Chinju area. This gain of about 15 miles from 21 to 23 September was only a prelude as the two U.S. divisions pressed their advantage against a retreating enemy.[2]

The ultimate purpose of the joint Eighth Army and X Corps offensive must already have been made alarmingly apparent to NKPA generals. Not only was the Eighth Army salient along the Kumchon-Taejon axis being extended northwest, but a X Corps regiment was driving southeast toward a junction. This was the 31st Infantry of the 7th Infantry Division, which had been given the mission of following in the trace of the 32d, then wheeling southward toward the Suwon area to meet the elements of the 1st Cavalry Division spearheading the Eighth Army advance. Thus was the drawstring being rapidly pulled on the remnants of the invading NKPA army, soon to have its main routes of escape cut off by UN forces.

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield
Two More River Crossings

After nearly a week of commanding a division in combat on both sides of an unbridged tidal river, Generals Smith and Craig now had a consolidated front north of the Han, with RCT–1 on the right, RCT–5 in the center, and RCT–7 on the left. The 11th Marines was in position on the south bank. The 1st, 3d, and 4th Battalions lined up northwest of Yongdungpo, while the 2d Battalion and the U.S. Army 96th Field Artillery emplaced to the east of that shattered suburb.[3]

Two more river crossings took place on 25 September. First, the 32d Infantry of the 7th Infantry Division moved to the north bank in accordance with the revised Corps plan. The Marine 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion (less Company B) and the Army's Company A, 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion had to make a 25-mile round trip that night to bring the troops to an embarkation point about 5,000 yards east of the railroad bridge at Yongdungpo. Scattered enemy small-arms and artillery fire was received during the crossing, resulting in a few casualties among crews and soldiers. The LVTs took the troops about 200 yards inland, where they advanced on foot to their objectives on South Mountain without encountering any opposition other than long-range harassing fires.[4]

Later that same day the 17th ROK Regiment, under the control of the 7th Infantry Division, crossed in the LVTs. It was hoped by United Nations leaders that this unit, known as the Seoul Regiment, could take part in the liberation of the ROK capital. Apparently the second river crossing of the day alarmed the enemy, for it drew mortar and artillery fire in greater volume and accuracy than had been encountered before.

The support given to the two crossings by the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion was commended by General Barr in a letter to General Smith. "Despite long hours, loss of sleep, maintenance difficulties, and exposure to fire," said the commanding general of the 7th Infantry Division, "the personnel of your battalion performed so magnificently that I have nothing but praise to offer. If at any time in the future elements of this Division are called upon to cross a river, it is my sincere wish that they may be supported by the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion."[5]

From South Mountain the troops of the 32d Infantry looked down upon the city. They could not enter as yet because of the danger of interfering with the fires of the 1st and 5th Marines. But the 32d and the ROK unit were assigned a zone of action by Corps for an advance on the right of the Marines when the time came for a concerted effort.

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield
Division Attack of 25 September

At 0700 on the 25th the 1st Marine Division launched the final phase of its attack on Seoul. The following objectives were assigned by Division OpnO 11–50:

RCT–1, with the 2d KMC Battalion attached, was to seize the part of Seoul within its zone of action and Objective ABLE, consisting of the high ground beyond the northeastern outskirts and about six miles from the jump-off positions. The zone of action, ranging from a mile to a mile and a half wide, carried the attack through the heart of the city, with South Mountain on the right and Ducksoo Palace on the left. Mopping-up operations were assigned to the KMCs, who would revert to their own regimental control afterwards.

RCT–5, with the Division Reconnaissance Company and 1st KMC Battalion attached, was to seize that part of Seoul within its zone of action and Objective BAKER, comprising the high ground overlooking the Seoul-Uijongbu road six miles from the line of departure. About a mile and a half wide, this zone included the northwest section of the city and the Government Palace, though the regiment would be operating in open country after an advance of about two miles. The KMCs were to be used for mopping up after RCT–5.

RCT–7 had the mission of protecting the left flank of the Division and seizing Objective CHARLIE—the high ground astride the Seoul-Kaesong road about six miles northwest of the center of Seoul in the vicinity of Chonsong-ni.

The KMC Regiment (less the 1st and 2d Battalions) was designated the division reserve. It was to be prepared to resume control of detached battalions and occupy Seoul.

The 3d Battalion, 187th Airborne RCT, with Special Operations Company attached, was to continue under operational control of the 1st Marine Division and protect the Corps left flank west and south of the river Hah.[6]

Following the artillery and air preparation, 3/5 and 2/5 jumped off abreast from left to right in an attack on the remaining defenses of the Hill 296 complex. Roise's objective was Hill 105–N. He was to be supported by fires from Taplett's men, attacking down the slopes of Hill 296 in an advance that would eventually pinch out the 2d Battalion, which would go into reserve. The 1st Battalion had completed its relief of 3d Battalion elements on Hills 216 and 296, thus placing it in position to move up on the left of the 3d.[7]

During the air strikes, VMF–214 had its second pilot fatality in two days when Lieutenant Colonel Lischeid was shot down in flames over the western edge of the city. His death brought to light a curious train of circumstances. It was recalled that the squadron had lost its first pilot on D-plus 2 when enemy fire killed Captain Simpson in plane No. 17. Two days later, while inspecting the new No. 17 on the flight deck of the *Sicily*, Technical Sergeant George C. Underwood received a mortal wound from an accidental discharge of the guns. Major Robert Floeck was flying this Corsair when he met his death on 23 September, but the machine was saved. And it was in plane No. 17 that the squadron commander crashed on the 25th. This was enough for Captain John H. Thach of the *Sicily*, and he issued an order banning the number forever on the carrier.[8]

Within two hours of Lischeid's death, two other squadron commanders were shot down, Lieutenant Colonel Wyczawski of VMF–212 and Lieutenant Colonel Volcansek of VMF(N)–542. Both escaped with moderate injuries, but in the space of a few minutes Volcansek had pressed his luck within a hair's breadth of the point of no return. Wounded, his plane badly damaged by enemy fire from Seoul, the squadron commander stubbornly led his flight in two more passes on Red positions. Approaching Kimpo, he was forced to keep the battered F7F–3N at almost 200 knots—twice the landing speed—to prevent its stalling.

There was no alternative but to bail out. When he jettisoned the canopy, his altimeter needle wavered around the 1,000-foot mark. Slipstreams from the twin engines pinned him to the cockpit as the plane continued losing altitude. In desperation he kicked violently at the stick with both feet. The aircraft lurched downward and Volcansek was thrown clear, the big tail of the machine missing him by inches as both plummeted earthward. A few seconds after the officer's chute opened and broke the fall, his feet touched earth a few miles northwest of Kimpo. Within 45 minutes he was aboard a helicopter rattling back to the airfield.[9]

It was the last day for the *Sicily* and VMF–214 in the Inchon-Seoul operation. That evening the CVE left the area for maintenance work, and the *Badoeng Strait* took over with VMF–323.

Easy Company led the attack of 2/5 on the 25th, with Dog on the left and Fox in reserve. The advance was supported by a platoon of tanks as well as fires from 3/5 on Hill 296. An effective artillery preparation aided the advance, but Captain Jaskilka's men were enfiladed by enemy mortar and automatic fire from Hill 72. Lieutenant Deptula's platoon led the assault and seized this position by 1335 after suffering heavily along the way. Lieutenant Seydel commanded the remnants of Dog Company which jumped off from Smith's Ridge and took Hill 88 at 1320.[10]

While Fox Company moved up to occupy Hill 72, an airstrike was called on Hill 105–N at 1310, and the artillery bombardment began 15 minutes later in preparation for the final assault by Easy Company. Second Lieutenants James W. Epley and Samuel L. Eddy, Jr., led the advance with their platoons, and Hill 105–N was reported as secured at 1545.

The 2d Battalion, with the exception of Deptula's platoon had met moderate opposition as compared with the last two days. It was in the zone of the 3d that the enemy put up his most stubborn resistance on 25 September. George and How Companies, the latter on the exposed left flank, led the attack on the remaining NKPA positions along the two southeastern spurs of Hill 296. Initial progress was slow, the attackers being harassed by long range fires from Hill 338 on the left and 105–N on the right. Lieutenant Colonel Murray directed the battalion to hold up until the situation around 105–N clarified. Resuming the attack against mounting resistance on the left, at 1435, the two companies reached their objectives two hours later and made contact with 2/5 on the right.[11]

Since 105–N capped the terminus of the lower of 3/5's two spurs, the whole length of the 1,000-yard projection was tagged with that number. This fact accounts for both Roise and Taplett reporting that they were in possession of the height. Actually, 2/5 was on 105–N, and George Company of 3/5 held an unnumbered peak to the north on the same ridge.[12]

Company H, in moving down the huge spur on the open left flank, had taken heavy casualties before reaching its objective, an intermediate peak. Just as Item Company was passing through to continue the attack at about 1700, the Marines were hit hard by a force of 200 Reds, who advanced under cover of accurate supporting fire. The close-in fire fight raged until after nightfall, and both depleted companies were hard-pressed to hold their own. Weakened by the loss of 100 dead, the enemy finally withdrew, thereby allowing Item Company to take over the front line while How reverted to battalion reserve.[13]

Thus, the 3d Battalion was now in position to pinch out the 2d on the morrow and to trace Item Company's spur into the very heart of Seoul. In preparation for the assault of Hill 338, Newton's 1st Battalion had shifted to the regimental left, where, with the Division Recon Company and the 1st KMC Battalion, it blocked the precipitous approaches to 216 and 296.

In the zone of the 7th Marines, the 2d Battalion had jumped off at 0630 and occupied Objective CHARLIE at 1215 without meeting resistance. Patrols of the 1st Battalion devoted the day to reconnoitering the area between RCT–7 and RCT–5, maintaining contact with both. The 3d Battalion was employed defensively along roads and trails in an arc around the ferry crossing site at Haengju.[14]

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield
Tank Victory on Hill 105-S

In preparation for the attack of the 1st Marines, the 3d Battalion moved forward before daybreak in a column of companies. Passing eastward through the 2d Battalion, Ridge's men began a sharp wheel to the north. The 1st Battalion, on Hill 79, withdrew slightly, pivoting on its left flank in order to reorient its direction of attack and tie in with the 3d Battalion on the left.

Thus did RCT–1 carry out the Corps plan of maneuver on the morning of the 25th by making a 90-degree change of direction, after advancing eastward to Hill 79, and driving straight northward toward the heart of Seoul. It was necessary to jump off without tank support, however, since the assigned armor had been delayed by a fight on the way.

The 2d and 3d Platoons of Captain Bruce F. Williams' Baker Company, 1st Tank Battalion, had crossed the river at the Haengju ferry on the 24th. Reports of enemy mines along the railroad leading into Seoul caused Lieutenant Babe's 2d Platoon of Company C Engineers to be attached to the tanks. And since the column was to pass through the zone of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, a depleted infantry platoon of Company F was attached under the command of Staff Sergeant Arthur Farrington.

Owing to the shift of 1/5, a gap existed at this time between the zones of the 1st and 5th Marines; and the little task force entered this area with the infantry at the point and the engineers sandwiched between the tanks—a total of some 50 men supporting the armor. About half of the gap between the regiments had been safely traversed when the head of the column received a few scattered shots from the slope of Hill 105–S.

After being supposedly secured by 1/5, with a final mopping up by 3/1, this troublesome position now erupted into enemy small-arms fire that could only have come from at least a company-size pocket of resistance. Lieutenant Babe was severely wounded before he could carry out his plan of sending Farrington's platoon around to envelop the left flank of the NKPA troops entrenched on the slope. After Technical Sergeant Pasquale Paolino took command of the engineers, his men and the infantry platoon were so badly outnumbered that Captain Williams considered pulling them inside the tanks and withdrawing. Then it occurred to him to send a flame-thrower tank, escorted by Staff Sergeant Altaire's M–26, around the enemy's left flank by way of a primitive trail leading southward from the railway tracks.[15]

This maneuver had a spectacular success. The flame tank moved into a position enabling it to sear the length of the NKPA trenches with bursts of napalm. When the terrified Red Koreans fled down the slope, they became targets for the machine guns of Lieutenant Cummings' platoon of tanks.

Sergeants Paolino and Farrington had meanwhile been organizing an infantry and engineer base of small-arms fire from men taking cover along the railroad embankment and the lower slopes of the hill. The engineer NCO noticed that enemy grenades were being lobbed from three thatched huts below the NKPA trenches on the left flank. Closer inspection revealed the mouth of a cave, concealed by the third house and extending back into Hill 105–S.

Paolino, after getting Williams' permission to direct tank fire, banged on the hull of Cummings' M–26 and indicated the huts and mouth of the cave as targets. A few 90mm rounds destroyed the huts; but before Cummings could fire into the cave, eight or ten NKPA soldiers came out with upraised hands. When they were allowed to surrender unharmed, the example had an amazing effect as a seemingly endless file of enemy troops poured out of the cave. Altogether, 131 prisoners were taken, in addition to an estimated 150 killed, on a hill first reported secured two days before. Apparently the undiscovered cave had provided a refuge for nearly 300 Red

Koreans.

Among the captives, as the Marines discovered later were two women in uniform who had evidently been armed. Because of the NKPA reputation for treachery, it was considered necessary to search them; but they were treated with respect and provided with garments more appropriate to their sex. In spite of the consideration shown them, the incident resulted in sensational articles in stateside publications after the women reached the rear and claimed mistreatment on the grounds that they were nurses.

Two wounded engineers and an infantry casualty were the price of the Marine success after a surprise encounter had been turned to the disadvantage of the enemy. Since the NKPA prisoners were more than double the numbers of the engineers and infantry, they were placed between two M–26s when the column resumed the march.

It was 1200 when Cummings reported to Colonel Puller at the intersection of the railroad and a boulevard with street car tracks leading into the heart of the city. The tanks took the lead, joining 3/1 in its fighting advance up both sides of the north-south boulevard. Enemy mines knocked out two of the M-26s, one of them being Cummings' tank, but both were retrieved in spite of heavy NKPA fire.

Successive road blocks consisting of earth-filled rice bags were stubbornly defended by enemy infantry supported by NKPA automatic, AT, and mortar fire from the roof tops. The Marines pressed forward methodically and by evening the 3d Battalion had penetrated about 2,000 yards into the city to occupy positions astride the streetcar line and on the western slopes of Hill 97. The 1st Battalion, on the high ground to the right, had advanced about 2,000 yards when both assault units tied in for the night with defensive positions on Hill 82. The 2d Battalion, as regimental reserve, deployed in the rear of the 1st to protect the right flank and rear.[16]

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield
Night Attack Ordered by Corps

The battle for Seoul took a sudden and unexpected new turn at 2009 on the night of 25 September 1950 when the following X Corps flash (plain) message was received at the CP of the 1st Marine Division:

"Info addressee (X Corps TacAir Commander) reports enemy fleeing city of Seoul on road north of Uijongbu. . . He TacAir] is conducting heavy air attack and will continue same. You will push attack now to the limit of your objectives in order to insure maximum destruction of enemy forces. Signed Almond."[17]

The Division G–3 immediately called the Corps G–3 for corroboration. Colonel Bowser questioned the ability of night air observation to determine whether the movement out of the city consisted of urban refugees or enemy troops. He was informed, however, that the intention of Corps was for the attack to begin at once.

General Smith then called the X Corps chief of staff for confirmation, pointing out the inadvisability of attacking at night in an unfamiliar Oriental city of the size and complexity of Seoul, particularly as there was no indication of the enemy fleeing from the Division front. But General Ruffner replied that General Almond himself had dictated the message and it was to be executed without delay.[18]

General Smith gave the attack order to the commanding officers of the 1st and 5th Marines, directing them to coordinate their efforts and confine them to avenues of advance which could be identified at night. His order was receipted by the 1st Marines at 2205 and the 5th Marines at 2215 just a few hours after the NKPA counterattack hit the 3d Battalion of Murray's regiment.

While the two rifle regiments made preparations to jump off, the order was relayed to the 7th and 11th Marines. Colonel Puller coordinated hastily with the 5th Marines and supporting arms for an attack scheduled to begin at 0145 on 26 September, following a 15-minute artillery preparation.[19]

At 0138, deciding that the preparation was inadequate, he notified the assault battalions to "stand fast, preparatory fires to be repeated." A new jump-off time of 0200 was set, but at 0153 a dramatic interruption came in the form of a flash message from the 3d Battalion of the 1st Marines. Lieutenant Colonel Ridge reported that a heavy enemy attack, supported by tanks and self-propelled guns, was moving down the main avenue leading from the center of the city to the southwest in the zone of the 1st Marines.[20]

It was the enemy's misfortune that 3/1 had sent out a patrol of eight Marines and three natives under Corporal Charles E. Collins to make contact with a similar patrol from the 5th Marines. But at 0130 the clamor of a fire fight about 400 yards in front of 3/1 was followed by the return of members of the patrol who gave the alarm. Corporal Collins was still missing when Major Simmons heard the sound of tracked vehicles and was warned that two enemy tanks were approaching the George Company roadblock defended by heavy machine guns, 3.5-inch rocket launchers and 75mm recoilless guns.[21]

These weapons accounted for the destruction of one enemy tank and the hasty retreat of the other. The Division attack scheduled for 0200 was indefinitely postponed, of course, until 3/1, astride the principal avenue of approach, could deal with a large-scale enemy counter-attack launched by an estimated battalion of infantry and about 12 tanks supported by self-propelled guns and mortars. A terrific concentration of Marine artillery was called down upon an NKPA effort that reached its peak about 0230. High-angle Marine howitzer and 81mm mortar fire almost literally blasted the attacking column out of existence, and enemy infantry action was negligible afterwards.[22]

At 0315 the artillery liaison officer informed Puller that the three battalions of the 11th Marines must cease barrage fire at the penalty of burning out the tubes of their howitzers. During the comparative lull the T–34s

continued to attack at intervals until daybreak, and the last two tanks were killed at 0630.[23] About that time Corporal Collins returned safely after having been given up as dead. Exposed to friendly as well as enemy fire all night, he had made his way back through enemy-held areas in a disguise of Korean civilian garments.

POW interrogation and examination of the ground revealed that seven enemy tanks and two self-propelled guns were destroyed or disabled by Marine mines, rockets, mortars, or artillery. An estimated 475 to 500 infantry of the NKPA 25th Brigade had been killed and many more wounded, and the Marines took 83 prisoners at a relatively light cost in casualties.[24]

At 0500, as 3/1's fight in the city was tapering off, another Red force of battalion strength hit the 2d Battalion, 32d Infantry, on South Mountain. A section of the Army unit's front was overrun, but a counter-attack restored the line by 0700. Finally driven from the ridge, the North Koreans left behind 394 dead and 174 prisoners, according to the regimental report.[25]

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield
Entrapment of Dog Company, RCT–7

On the morning of 26 September it may have occurred to some of the Marines that yesterday's announcement by X Corps of the capture of Seoul was a bit premature. The lines of the Division remained where they were the night before, with only the difference that hundreds of enemy dead gave testimony of a busy night.

Division OpnO 12–50, isued at 1230 on the 26th, directed a continuation of the attack on Seoul, the principal change from the last order being the commitment of the 7th Marines. This regiment, augmented by the Division Recon Company and 5th KMC battalion, was given the mission of pinching out the 5th Marines about 1200 yards beyond the Government Palace and attacking abreast of the 1st Marines toward the northeast. In the 7th's zone of advance north of the city lay Objectives DOG (northern half of Hill 338), EASY (Hill 342), FOX (Hill 133), GEORGE (Hill 343), and BAKER (Hill 171)—as rugged an order of terrain as any outfit could be served. Puller's regiment, with the 2d KMC Battalion attached, would drive northward from Hills 97 and 82 in lower Seoul, clear the center of the city, then wheel to the right to take Objective ABLE, Hill 133 in the northeastern outskirts.

The 5th Marines, with the 1st KMC Battalion attached, was to support Litzenberg's attack until being pinched out, whereupon it had orders to assemble in Division reserve and relieve elements of the 7th Marines. The KMC Regiment was still under orders to resume control of its detached battalions for the occupation of Seoul. The 3d Battalion, however, was detached from the 1st Marine Division and ordered to report to the 3d Battalion, 187th Airborne RCT, for operational control in Kumpo Peninsula operations. Responsibility for the security of Kimpo Airfield now rested upon X Corps.[26]

Click here to view map

Thus, the Marine front prior to the assault formed a semicircle extending from the Kaesong Highway in the northwest to Hill 82 in the south, and the concave side faced Seoul like a giant scythe poised to mow down the last remnants of NKPA resistance.

Click here to view map

Colonel Litzenberg dispatched Dog Company of the 7th Marines southwest along the Kaesong Highway at 0630 on 26 September. The mission of the unit was to approach Seoul and make contact with the 5th Marines on the right. In the van of the column was the company machine gun officer, First Lieutenant William F. Goggin. For a while it seemed as though this untried unit was reaping the laurels earned by its battle-weary relatives of the 1st and 5th Marines, since hundreds of Koreans lined the highway to welcome the "victors" with resounding cheers.[27]

Progress was marked off rapidly in the absence of enemy resistance. The Marines passed through Hoengjeoe-ri, and by 0900 the great slopes of Hill 296 loomed up on the right and those of 338 on the left. Tracing the road through the narrow valley between, the company approached the Sodaemun Prison at the northwest corner of Seoul. Suddenly the column came under machine-gun fire from a high tower about 400 yards down the road. The initial burst caused several casualties, including Lieutenant Goggin, and the Marines quickly deployed on both sides of the road. Several more enemy machine-guns and rifles opened up from hillside positions only a hundred yards away. Since the throngs of well-wishers along the highway had prevented the use of flank guards, Company D was caught flatfooted in the low ground by the hail of lead.

After a few minutes, other Red weapons began firing from the lower slopes of Hills 296 and 338, directly to the flanks, and encirclement seemed imminent. Dog Company's commander, Captain Richard R. Breen,

reacted by ordering the 2d Platoon to attack the high ground around the prison. Simultaneously, First Lieutenant Paul P. Sartwell set up two 60mm mortars on the road and silenced one of the North Korean emplacements. Directing his crews from an exposed position, the young officer was wounded three times before finally being put out of action.

First Lieutenant Edward H. Seeburger closed on the prison with his 2d Platoon, while First Lieutenant Paul V. Mullaney's 1st ascended the slopes of Hill 338 on the left. The 3d, under First Lieutenant James D. Hammond, Jr., remained in position along the road. When the assault platoons were stopped on the high ground by stiffening resistance, Company D settled down in an elongated perimeter for a battle of survival. There was no artillery support, but Marine air assisted by pounding the crescent of Red positions.

The S–3 of the 7th Marines, Major Raymond V. Fridrich, radioed Captain Breen and asked about the situation. Though now wounded himself, Breen stated that he could hold his ground. A small tank-infantry column was dispatched from regiment to reach the beleaguered force with ammunition and supplies. By this time, however, the Reds had set up in the rear of Dog Company, and the relief force was turned back.

Faced with the bleak fact that it was now surrounded, Company D withdrew 1000 yards to a defensible road cut between Hills 296 and 338. The Marines completed the move with their wounded and dead at 1600. After being resupplied by air drop in their tight perimeter, they prepared grimly for an all-night stand.

Elsewhere in the 7th Marines' zone, 26 September would be remembered as much for exhausting marches and climbs as for enemy contacts. In the morning the 1st Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Davis, had taken over flank responsibility far to the northeast along the Kaesong highway, thereby relieving the 2d (less Company D) and 3d for the advance on Seoul. The 2d Battalion then moved out in trace of Dog Company, but according to plan veered leftward into the hills at Hoengjeoe-ri, one mile short of the ambuscade. While 2/7 reconnoitered the high ground above the village, Major Roach's 3d Battalion completed an eight-and-a-half-mile forced march to gain an assembly area in preparation for the assault of northern Hill 338.

At 1400 Fox and Easy Companies of 2/7 attacked eastward from the height above Hoengjeoe-ri to seize Hill 343. After an advance of 1000 yards, they were stopped cold by heavy fire from the direction of Hill 338 to the south. Lieutenant Colonel Hinkle ordered 2/7 to dig in short of the objective, since any further progress would only make his right more vulnerable to the enemy guns on the flank.

Click here to view map

Captain Thomas E. Cooney led Company G of 3/7 through Hoengjeoe-ri about 1700, circled the northern half of Hill 338, then launched a two-platoon assault on the crest. His Marines gained the north summit against no opposition, but Company H, led by Captain Nicholas L. Shields, was taken under fire in a draw to the right and held up on the slopes for the night.[28]

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield
Last Fight on Hill 296

While the 7th Marines were fighting uphill on 26 September, the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, punched downward in a bitter contest to clear the last NKPA resistance from the Hill 296 complex. The attack was launched early in the morning after preparatory fires by artillery and 81mm mortars. Item Company on the left was to sweep the remainder of the giant spur which descended into the very heart of Seoul. George, upon jumping off from the ridge above Hill 105–N, would clear the low ground on Item's right.

Dissatisfied with the accuracy of the preparatory barrages, and underestimating the enemy's strength and determination, Captain McMullen called off supporting arms and based the success of his two-platoon assault on organic company weapons alone. No sooner had the Marines lunged downhill than great gaps were torn in the skirmish line by fire from swarms of North Koreans on the lower slopes. Both assault platoon leaders were wounded before an intermediate knoll was taken, and McMullen was forced to commit his reserve to bolster the hard-hit 3d Platoon on the right.

Continuing the attack under the personal leadership of its commander, the entire company waded into a maze of entrenchments manned by 200 enemy soldiers. In the close-in fighting that followed, the Reds were driven from their emplacements to seek cover farther down the spur. The depleted ranks of Item Company ground to a halt.

There followed a brief calm—abruptly shattered when the North Koreans rallied and counterattacked uphill against the company center. A wild melee enveloped the ridgeline, and the tactical situation gradually became a blur. Just as it seemed the Marines' hold on the lower spur would be pried loose, Lieutenant Williamson plowed into the tumult at the head of a small supply party. Ammunition distributed in the heat of the fighting tipped the scales in favor of the Marines, but not before McMullen was carried from the field as a result of his seventh battle wound in two wars.

The heavy fighting finally eased toward the close of the day. Although the last organized defenses of the enemy were smashed, Company I was too badly battered to seize the tip of the spur before nightfall. Abreast on the right, First Lieutenant Charles D. Mize led Company G into defensive positions after a day of inching forward against stubborn opposition in the low ground.[29]

Other units of the 5th Marines experienced little action during 3/5's day-long engagement. While the 2d Battalion mopped up in its zone south of the 3d, the 1st KMC Battalion moved into position between the latter and the Reconnaissance Company, now manning the topographical peak of Hill 296 in the northwest. To the rear of 3/5, the 1st Battalion enjoyed a quiet interlude in regimental reserve.

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield
1st Marines in the Heart of Seoul

Early in the morning of 26 September, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, moved out of reserve to pass through the 3d on the streetcar line and continue the attack northward into the center of Seoul. On the right of Puller's zone, 1/1 prepared to descend Hill 82 and clear the main railroad station and adjoining slopes of South Mountain, where increasing enemy activity had been noted below the positions of the 32d Infantry.[30]

Sutter's unit completed the passage of lines at 0900 and attacked along the boulevard with Fox and Easy Companies in the assault. Leading the advance up the street were the tanks of Baker Company, Cummings' M–26 in the van. The young officer's machine had proceeded only a few yards when it struck an American M6 mine, overlooked by Marine engineers while they were removing their hasty field of the previous night. Not only did the explosion wreck the tank, but it also caused several casualties among the infantry on either side.

The attack edged forward in the second day of the "Battle of the Barricades." Every 200–300 yards, fanatical Red detachments manned rice-bag barriers about eight feet high and five feet thick, stretching the whole width of the street. It fell to the M–26s to smash the emplacements and silence the NKPA antitank guns behind each one. Marine tank action in turn hinged on mine clearance by supporting engineers, who looked to flanking infantry for covering fire. Thus was a system of three-party teamwork developed and perfected during the roar of battle.

Aiding the Communists behind the barricades were other North Koreans who fired their rifles and submachine guns from roof tops, windows, and side streets. The Marine infantry, therefore, had to defend in every direction as it attacked to the front. Intense heat from burning buildings along the street added to the handicaps, and the constant discovery of South Korean civilians, including women and children, huddled in the rubble further strained the taut nerves of men who looked for trouble from every quarter.

It was a dirty, frustrating fight every yard of the way, perhaps best described by Puller himself, who reported that "progress was agonizingly slow." A principal deterrent to speed was the fact that all supporting tanks simultaneously expended their ammunition and fuel, so that all had to return to the rear for replenishment at the same time. During their absences from the fight, the infantry understandably chose to await their return rather than pay heavily in casualties by assaulting barricades with small arms alone.

At one point in the street battle, an enemy soldier darted from behind a building and charged a flame tank advancing behind two lead M–26s. Ignoring the Marine infantrymen, who gaped in disbelief, the North Korean hurled a huge satchel charge over the engine compartment of the armored vehicle, then escaped unharmed as the explosion rocked the area. The flame tank was wrecked, but the crew escaped serious injury with the assistance of supporting infantry. Apparently a suicide squad of NKPA demolitions men had been assigned the mission of destroying Marine armor in this fashion, for several other Red soldiers tried single-handed assaults shortly afterwards. The riflemen of 2/1 were alert for the later attempts, however, and the enemy fanatics were cut down before inflicting further damage.

The crucial period in the 2d Battalion's day-long fire fight came as Captain Goodwin C. Groff's Fox Company approached a street junction below Hill 97. It had been planned that this unit would advance through the intersection and continue along the streetcar line, while Company E, moving behind in column, veered off on the right branch. Enemy resistance against Fox's advance proved so fierce that Captain Norman R. Stanford by-passed the fork and threw Easy Company's weight in support of the other unit. The North Korean strong point crumbled under the two-company onslaught, but not before Stanford and several others were added to the casualty

rolls.[31]

By dark, 2/1 had measured off a hard-won gain of 1200 yards. Lieutenant Colonel Sutter ordered the battalion into defensive positions astride the boulevard a scant 100 yards from the tip of the ridge spur which was costing Item Company, 5th Marines, so dearly.

In the right half of Puller's zone on 26 September, the 1st Battalion stamped out a hornets' nest around the main railroad station, nestled at the foot of South Mountain.[32] Charlie Company had led off the early morning attack in the wake of a preparation by air, artillery, and mortars. After descending Hill 82 in a column of platoons, the company formed on line along a stream paralleling the rail yard. Then, at a signal from Captain Wray, the platoons crossed over, wheeled to the north, and advanced up the tracks by leaps and bounds.

Though the over-all intensity of enemy resistance in this quarter could be termed only moderate, the random deployment of the Reds among buildings and train cars made the going slow and costly for the Marines. After clearing out the yard, the attackers converged on the station house itself and drove the last North Koreans from the building during a sharp exchange. The interior of the bullet-pocked structure produced only a handful of enemy dead, but in one corner were heaped the bodies of several South Korean women and children. It was obvious that the latter had been gunned by Communist executioners, since their sheltered location within the building was ample protection against the small arms of the advancing Marines.

By darkness, Company C was in undisputed control of the railroad terminal, a patrol led by Lieutenant Carlon having mopped up the fringe area. To the right, Company A had secured the park promontory on the northwestern tip of South Mountain in conjunction with Baker Company's drive which included the nose jutting out below.

East of the 1st Marines, the 32d Infantry's zone was the scene of considerable activity throughout 26 September. After the 2d Battalion repulsed the enemy's pre-dawn counterattack, the 3d jumped off at 0800 from positions a mile and a half east of South Mountain. Its objective, Hill 106, lay more than 3000 yards away, just south of the highway leading eastward out of Seoul. Approaching the base of the ridge, Company L surprised and destroyed a strong NKPA position, while Company I swept up the objective itself against light opposition.

Reaching the summit, the company commander called an air strike on an enemy column marching out of Seoul on the highway. As the planes broke up the Red formation, Company L, reinforced with tanks and additional infantry, drove down the road to mop up and block the escape route.[33]

In the day-long attack, 3/32 and its supporting armament accounted for 500 enemy dead, five tanks, 45 vehicles, three artillery pieces, and two ammunition dumps, according to regimental reports. The remainder of the 32d, now augmented by the 2d Battalion, 17th Infantry, in addition to the 17th ROK, saw spots of heavy fighting during the mop-up and consolidation on and around South Mountain. Casualties for the 32d, as reported on 26 September, were six KIA, 92 WIA, and three MIA. Most of those reported the following day—32 KIA, 33 WIA, and nine MIA—could also be traced to action on the 26th.[34]

Thus the Army regiment, having been impressively blooded in its eight days of action, could lay claim to clearing both South Mountain and that 15 per cent of Seoul's built-up area east of the great height.[35]

In the course of the day, the 1st Marines had made patrol contact with the 5th Marines in the left rear and with Army elements atop South Mountain on the right flank. Prospects for the morrow appeared much brighter at Division and Corps levels, where there must have existed some apprehension over the complicated maneuvering which had denied the attackers a solid front until they were in the heart of the sprawling capital.

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Chapter 13. Seoul as a Battlefield
Objective Secured

The twenty-seventh of September dawned as the day of reckoning. Applicable to the tactical situation in Seoul was the old law of physics, that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. With X Corps troops pouring into the city and environs to share them with the Communist garrison, it was axiomatical that one side or the other would shortly have to go.

Oddly enough, despite the electrified atmosphere, the night of 26–27 September had passed quietly, even for Dog Company, 7th Marines, isolated in the road cut between Hills 296 and 338.[36] At dawn a tank-infantry team supported by engineers of Company D, 1st Engineer Battalion, advanced down the Kaesong Highway against negligible resistance and escorted the beleaguered rifle company back to the 7th Marines CP at Hoengjeoe-ri.

While the anticlimatical "rescue" was taking place, the 3d Battalion jumped off in the attack, supported by fire from the 2d on the left, to clear the northern reaches of Hill 338. How Company pressed forward up the draw on George's right but was stalled by heavy fire which suddenly erupted on the slopes above. The 3d Platoon, under Second Lieutenant Paul E. Denny, broke through in its zone, only to be recalled by Shields when the rest of the company failed to regain the lost momentum. Captain Richard H. Sengewald's Item Company, en route to take positions on the left of George, paused to assist Shields' outfit for a short time. After further attempts by Company H to gain the summit were unsuccessful, Sengewald led his unit to the north and attacked the right flank of the NKPA elements scattered indiscriminately over the remote humps of Hill 338. The situation on the northern half of the towering objective did not change appreciably in the course of the day.

Colonel Litzenberg developed further pressure against the enemy's right by ordering 2/7 to continue the attack against Hill 343 in mid-morning. On the right of the battalion zone, Captain Walter D. Phillips, Jr., led Company E forward in the face of stubborn enemy resistance from the crest. Owing to steady North Korean fire and the rugged terrain, gains were measured off by the yard, both for Phillips' unit and for Captain Elmer J. Zorn's Fox Company on the left. By nightfall, nevertheless, the Marines had mastered the situation to the extent that Company E sat firmly entrenched atop Hill 343—2500 yards from its starting point.

More force was applied to Litzenberg's flanking lever north of Seoul when Company G was withdrawn from its ridgeline on Hill 338 and ordered to attack eastward to seize Hill 342, which loomed above the capital building in the northern tip of Seoul. Circling through the low ground north of Hill 338, the company passed safely through an extensive minefield that had been conveniently marked off by friendly South Koreans. As the Marines approached the base of their objective and came under heavy sniper fire, Captain Cooney ordered the 1st Platoon, under Second Lieutenant Arthur R. Mooney, to set up a base of fire on intermediate high ground in order to support an assault by the 2d and 3d.

The plan backfired, for the 1st Platoon became engaged in a hot fire fight as it moved toward the designated position. The two assault units fared no better when, without the expected covering fire, they were hit by a hail of lead on the lower slopes of Hill 342. Several officers and NCOs were killed or wounded within a matter of minutes, and the scattered fighting that continued until nightfall brought about no significant change in the local situation.

Thus, the day ended on Litzenberg's "Seoul Front" with the 7th Marines in control of Hill 343 but sharing parts of 338 and 342 with the NKPA. The story would not be complete, however, without a brief visit to the regiment's "Haengju Front," several miles to the west, which had crackled with activity during the early

afternoon. About 1200, a company of North Koreans emerged from the northern hills and attacked toward the old ferry crossing at Hill 125. On the way the Reds had the misfortune to stumble into Captain David W. Banks' Able Company of 1/7, manning a blocking position at Ryokoku. (See map of Han River crossing). To avoid the danger of infiltration in the bustling bridgehead, Lieutenant Colonel Davis promptly committed Company C, under Captain Richard F. Delamar, III.

Despite their disadvantages in numbers and fire power, the dogged Reds extended the fight sufficiently to involve even a platoon of Captain Myron E. Wilcox's Baker Company. After a prolonged clatter, the engagement ended almost as abruptly as it had begun; and the immediate result was that all Communist troops above the ferry site withdrew to Kaesong.

The 7th Marines claimed 375 enemy killed and 34 taken prisoner in the fighting which ranged its vast front from 23 to 27 September. The spoils of war included the strangely unbalanced assortment of four machine guns, six rifles and 600 bayonets.

While the 2d and 3d Battalions of Litzenberg's regiment struggled among the massive ridges north of Seoul on the 27th, the 1st and 5th Marines struck at the vital nerve center of the ROK capital. The regimental attacks through the center of the city began as separate thrusts in the morning, but as the day wore on they took on aspects of a coordinated foot race. It could even be said, finally, that the battle became a flag-raising contest between the two Marine units, as the last NKPA resistance died in heaps of rubble and torn rice bags.

At 0645, the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, jumped off to clear the tip of Hill 296's troublesome eastern spur. For the first time in longer than they cared to remember, the infantrymen were greeted not by a sheet of small-arms and machine-gun fire, but by occasional, erratic pops from the rifles of dispirited snipers. Groping through the smoke and haze boiling up from the shattered city, Companies G and I swept the high ground by 0730 and—at long last—slowly filtered through the first streets of western Seoul. In short order they were encountering the expected barricades and minefields. There was a hint of stiffening opposition, but it quickly dissolved as the riflemen, backed by supporting tanks and engineers, ground forward relentlessly.[37]

By 0930, George Company made contact with the 1st Marines on the right.[38] Less than an hour later, after wheeling northward 3/5 controlled Middle School and adjacent high ground—the springboard for the assault on the capital building 1000 yards away. At 1200, Lieutenant Colonel Taplett ordered Companies G and I to continue the attack, guiding on the two Red flags which whipped the wind defiantly on both sides of the great dome ahead. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion moved up behind and prepared to advance on the left of the 3d. Its mission in the final assault was to seize the craggy peak of Hill 338, which reared upward on the left of the capital building like a grim fortress.[39]

On the right of the 5th Regiment, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines had smashed through another series of rice-bag barriers on the boulevard and at 1057, the United States colors unfurled above the French Consulate. A furious fight exploded around the city's main intersection, where the principal streetcar lines crossed to form an X not far from Middle School. Company D, spearheading 2/1's drive, waded into the fray with determination. Lieutenant Cummings, who by this time appeared to have a remarkable affinity for heavy trouble, again lost his tank to enemy mines, but not before he had knocked out two Russian 76mm self-propelled guns emplaced in the middle of the intersection. Staff Sergeant MacDonald's M–26 obliterated an NKPA truck with two 90mm rounds when the vehicle tried to escape with a howitzer and its crew.[40]

The afternoon of 27 September was a time of climax as the 1st Marine Division front surged forward of Middle School and the central intersection. Though beaten and faltering, the North Koreans still managed to fight stubbornly here and there; but their over-all deployment no longer bore any semblance of tactical integrity.

By early afternoon the Reds facing the 5th Marines broke and fled. Troops of 3/5 poured into the government compound, their final objective, and secured it at 1508. The North Korean flags were struck, and in their place rose the United States colors. Somewhat awed by the historic import of their accomplishment, young

Marine riflemen wonderingly probed the spacious halls and chambers of the huge building that shortly would be reoccupied by the government of the Korean Republic.[41]

On the left of the 3d Battalion, Company A of 1/5 had launched its attack on Hill 338 at 1300 in the wake of devastating preparations by air, artillery, and mortars. Second Lieutenant Nicholas M. Trapnell led off with the 1st Platoon, which seized an intermediate piece of high ground against moderate resistance. The 2d Platoon, under Second Lieutenant Edward E. Collins, then drove forward on the left of the ancient wall leading to the crest of the objective; but the attack was stopped by heavy mortar and small-arms fire. Marine air thundered down to rake the target with machine guns and rockets. The ground troops followed up with heavy concentrations of 60mm and 81mm mortars. Moving closely behind the supporting fire, the 1st Platoon overran a knob situated below the dominating peak. The 2d Platoon then resumed its advance on the left of the wall, and the 3d, under Technical Sergeant George W. Bolkow, took the lead on the right. It was the latter unit that smashed through the last resistance and secured the cliffs at the summit of Hill 338 at 1850.[42]

While the 5th Marines completed its final mission in Seoul, 2/1 on the right continued along the streetcar line which curved below the government buildings to run eastward to the far edge of the city. Since the 7th Marines had been slowed in the hills north of the capital, the expected tie-in on the left flank did not occur, and Puller's troops had to go it alone through the dense maze of streets in eastern Seoul. At 1530 infantrymen of 2/1 raised the American flag over the Russian Consulate, just to the right of the curve in the boulevard. Seven minutes later the flag also waved above the United States Consulate, about 350 yards farther off on the flank.[43]

To the right of 2/1, the 1st Battalion was making good progress after a slow start against stiff opposition. Charlie Company had been held up at the outset in the neighborhood of the railroad station, but supporting tanks, including flame throwers, had paved the way by blasting and burning a formidable nest of NKPA automatic weapons and AT guns. One armored vehicle was disabled by a mine and another by antitank fire before the Marines finally broke through. As the battalion pivoted eastward in accordance with the general plan, both Charlie Company and Able on the right hammered through the usual barricades and suicide detachments.[44]

The 32d Infantry and elements of the 17th enjoyed a relatively quiet day on and around South Mountain, for these units had only to hold firm in their positions until the 1st Marines could complete its wheeling movement and come abreast, facing east.[45]

Shortly before 1630, 2/1 was pounding eastward through a stretch of the streetcar line south of the government compound. Fire poured into the ranks of Dog Company from three sides, and Marines sweltered in the heat of burning buildings that offered dubious protection. Corsairs screamed down to plaster enemy positions only a block ahead of the foremost infantry. Immediately after each pass by the gull-winged planes, Second Lieutenant Carl B. Thompson, Jr., led his 1st Platoon in the assault with covering fire provided by supporting tanks.[46]

There was a final surge up the street by the green-clad riflemen and BAR-men, and then it was all over. At 1630 enemy resistance across the 1st Regiment's front abruptly collapsed, with the result that the Battle of Seoul came to an end. Snipers and bypassed pockets remained to be mopped up by the Marines, KMC units, and South Korean Police; but the NKPA had clearly quit the fight and abandoned the city. The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 1st Marines marched rapidly through desultory sniper fire to the eastern part of town, where they dug in for the night.[47]

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Chapter 14. The Drive to Uijongbu

AS RAPIDLY as the advance of the troops permitted, preparations were made for the restoration of civil government to Seoul. A group of former city officials had arrived by plane from Pusan; and on 26 September, Mayor Lee opened a temporary office in Yongdungpo. The police chief, construction engineer, and the health and welfare officials also resumed their old duties.

Collecting points were set up for handling the civilian wounded. The following statistics, comprising the patients treated for all causes by the 1st Medical Battalion of the 1st Marine Division, show that Korean civilians were second in numbers only to the Marines themselves:

U.S. Marine:	2,811
Korean civilian:	1,908
U.S. Army:	358
KMC and ROK:	322
U.S. Navy:	78
POW: [1]	39

The problem of food for a city with a pre-war population of a million and a half was met during the advance when stores of rice and other supplies were turned over to Seoul officials by the Marines. Medical supplies found in the city were redistributed for use in Seoul and Inchon hospitals as well as the hospital established at Yongdungpo by Captain Hering, the Division Surgeon, expressly for the treatment of civilian wounded.

A shipment of some 50 tons of rice through X Corps, plus large amounts located in Seoul by the Marines, enabled the officials to take over without critical food shortages. On the 28th, Mayor Lee moved into the city hall at Seoul and acted immediately to re-establish police authority, clear destroyed areas and provide for the restoration of such public utilities as water and electricity.[2] These prompt measures did much to ease the hardships of thousands of returning refugees.

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Chapter 14. The Drive to Uijongbu
Operations of 28 September

The 5th Marines passed an uneventful day on 28 September, having taken its assigned objectives and been pinched out by the 1st Marines on the right and the 7th Marines on the left, as planned. An assembly area was established in the vicinity of the Women's University, and though the regiment sent out patrols, no enemy were encountered.[3]

The 7th Marines put in a busy day at seizing objectives which consisted of the high ground north of Seoul on both sides of the main highway from the capital to Uijongbu. Opposition was light to moderate, with the stiffest resistance occurring in areas which indicated that the enemy intended to put up a fight to protect his escape route to Uijongbu. Seventy-five tons of American-made dynamite and explosives, captured by the 7th Marines, were believed to have been originally supplied to the ROK forces before the war and abandoned during the NKPA invasion.[4] Total advances for the day ranged from 1,500 yards in the zone of the 3d Battalion to 2,600 yards in the zone of the 2d Battalion.

When the 1st Marines jumped off at 0645 on the 28th, the 1st and 2d Battalions were in assault. The 3d Battalion remained in an assembly area in the rear and continued mopping up along with the 2d KMC Battalion. Although organized resistance in the city had been broken, the 1st Battalion met stubborn resistance from enemy groups and encountered many mines. The 2d Battalion, on the left, made headway against light opposition.

These attacks cleared the remainder of Seoul and took the assault battalions to Hill 133 (Objective ABLE) commanding the city on the northeast.[5]

General Smith visited the CPs of all three regiments on the 28th by helicopter. He found Colonel Puller at the Ducksoo Palace, near the intersection of the streetcar lines. Colonel Litzenberg's CP was located a short distance to the west, and Lieutenant Colonel Murray had established his headquarters in the Women's University on the northwest outskirts of the city.

Later that day Generals Smith and Craig displaced the Division CP from Oeoso-ri to a barracks area in Seoul, southwest of South Mountain. The two Marine generals took over a former infirmary, but they decided that the mortuary slab was too depressing and had that fixture removed.[6]

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Liberation Ceremonies at Seoul

Planning for impressive liberation ceremonies at Seoul had begun while the street fighting was at its height. The 1st Marine Division was requested by Corps to furnish two honor guards and a band. Musical instruments having been left behind in Japan, air shipment was prescribed.[7]

General MacArthur had hoped to hold the liberation ceremony at Seoul on 25 September, just three months to the day after the launching of the NKPA invasion. The enemy, however, was not co-operative with respect to this date; and even on the morning of the 29th, three NKPA counterattacks were repulsed on the outskirts of the city. As it proved, General MacArthur vetoed plans for a ceremony with band music. “I will personally conduct the proceedings without being introduced,” said his message to X Corps, and he specified that there be no honor guard.[8]

Two pre-dawn counterattacks on the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, were not auspicious beginnings for the day of the liberation exercises. The first occurred at 0445 on 29 September, when the OP, located on a spur projecting forward of the MLR and defended by a rifle platoon, was infiltrated by an estimated 70 to 100 NKPA troops. A second enemy attack hit the left flank of the battalion shortly afterwards. Both attempts were repulsed with total losses of 48 to the Communists, and the Marines had casualties of 4 KIA and 28 WIA, most of them resulting from hand grenades.[9]

Another assault, launched by the enemy at 0600 in the zone of action of the 7th Marines, was repulsed without trouble. Most of the fighting on 29 September was done by this regiment, which pushed forward to gain all the rest of its objectives before nightfall.

At dawn, in preparation for the liberation ceremony, Marine guards were unobtrusively stationed along the route of approach from the new floating bridge to the Government Palace. This duty fell chiefly on 3/1, with elements of the 5th Marines being responsible for security in the western part of the city.

General MacArthur and President Syngman Rhee drove directly to the Palace after separate arrivals at Kimpo Airfield. The guests included Korean dignitaries and United Nations officials in addition to high-ranking representatives of military organizations.

The commander in chief opened the ceremony with a moving five-minute address ending with the Lord’s Prayer. The rumble of artillery could be heard at times, and some of the guests glanced up apprehensively at the shattered skylight overhead.

“Occasional falls of glass from the dome and drifting smoke and ashes were part of the scene,” commented a Marine officer. “Unheeded noise of rifle shots punctuated the talks. Grim Marines from Puller’s regiment surrounded the seated audience. . . . The youth of the guards was offset by the tall, gray-haired figures of Generals Smith and Barr at the front of the audience. They were patently the men who had borne precisely and capably the load of decision.”[10]

With the 1st Marine Division still responsible for security, it was a relief to General Smith when the distinguished visitors departed unharmed. Not all the mines had been removed from the streets as yet, and it was suspected that snipers might still be lurking in the ruins.[11]

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Crumbling of NKPA Resistance

Although more hard fighting lay ahead in the Inchon-Seoul operation, X Corps alerted its major units on 29 September to the possibility of a new amphibious landing on the east coast of Korea. This was one of the earliest announcements of the planning which led to the Wonsan landing and the advance to the Chosin Reservoir, but the history of those events belongs in the next volume of this series.

The new operation was suggested by the rapid disintegration of the main body of the NKPA invasion forces. In a single day, 26 September, elements of the 1st Cavalry Division had advanced more than 100 miles; and a total of about 23,600 prisoners were taken by the Eighth Army before the end of the month. Enemy resistance was still encountered, to be sure, and sometimes it was of a desperate nature as Red Korean troops fought to escape encirclement. But all hope and heart had gone out of the Communist cause. One Eighth Army column sliced across the peninsula to Kunsan while other spearheads drove northward and ROK units pushed up the east coast nearly to Samchok. NKPA opposition was crumbling everywhere as demoralized invasion troops threw away their weapons and changed to civilian clothes in the hope of making their way to North Korea through the ever tightening Eighth Army cordon.[12]

The X Corps troops in the Seoul area had enough on their hands to finish the old operation before starting a new one. 1st Marine Division OpnO 13–50, issued at 2000 on 29 September, provided for the securing of the captured city by these means:

(1) a continuation of the attack to the east;

(2) the conduct of reconnaissances in force to the north and northwest;

(3) the relief of elements of the 7th Infantry Division north of the river Han;

(4) the seizure of prescribed blocking positions.[13]

The Division plan of maneuver called for the three Marine rifle regiments to take blocking positions forming a rough semi-circle defending Seoul from three sides—the 5th Marines to the northwest, the 7th Marines to the north, and the 1st Marines to the northeast. Responsibility for the area north of the Han river and west of the Pukhan River had passed to the 1st Marine Division, and at 1500 on 30 September the following missions were assigned by OpnO 14–50:

"RCT–1—To protect the right flank of the Division and be prepared to assemble in Division reserve by battalions for a motor lift. Blocking positions, as assigned by OpnO 13–50, consisted of high ground from two to five miles northeast of Seoul.

"RCT–5—To continue reconnaissance in force with minimum of a reinforced battalion to Suyuhyon and establish a blocking position; to protect the left flank of the Division; and to be prepared to provide a reinforced rifle company for Task Force Kumpo, on order. These attachments to be made: 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, and one battery of 50th AAA Battalion, USA; Company A, 1st Tank Battalion; Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion; and a company from the 1st Motor Transport Battalion.

"RCT–7—To advance rapidly and seize blocking positions in the vicinity of Uijongbu. These attachments to be made: 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, and one battery of 50th AAA Battalion, USA; Company D, 1st Tank Battalion; and one company of the KMC Regiment.

"The KMC Regiment (less the 1st and 3d Battalions and one company of the 5th Battalion, with a detachment of ANGLICO attached) was meanwhile to advance to the east and seize blocking positions at the junctiton of the Han and Pukhan rivers where the road leading northeast from Seoul reaches that point. The 1st

KMC Battalion had been attached to the 7th Infantry Division, and the 3d Battalion was operating on the Kumpo Peninsula.

"Task Force Kumpo, when activated on Division order, was to consist of the 3d KMC Battalion and Battery C, 50th AAA Battalion, USA, plus a 5th Marines rifle company and a tank detachment, if required. As it proved, however, X Corps held responsibility for the defense of this area until 2 October, when the 187th Airborne RCT was relieved by Task Force Kumpo."[14]

Two more small fire fights awaited the 5th Marines in carrying out the missions assigned by Division OpnO

14–50. At 1030 on 1 October, while patrolling the extensive area of regimental responsibility, a detachment of 2/5 made contact with an NKPA force estimated at 150 to 200 men. Air strikes and mortar fire soon took the fight out of the enemy, who left 30 dead behind.

At 0600 on 1 October the 3d Battalion, reinforced with a battery of artillery and a platoon of tanks and engineers, moved out toward Suyuhyon. Charlie Company of 1/5 followed in trace to protect the battalion rear and provide security for returning motor transport.

Two road blocks were cleared before the battalion tied in for the night on high ground just short of the objective. Then, at 0230 the next morning, the enemy struck in estimated company strength. The attempt was repulsed by machine-gun fire, and 67 Red Korean bodies were found at daybreak in the attack area. At 0700 the column resumed the march to Suyuhyon, which was occupied without further incident.[15]

The 1st Marines found little difficulty in carrying out all missions assigned by Division OpnO 14–50. In fact, the regiment had only a few minor patrol actions after taking blocking positions northeast of Seoul.

Colonel Litzenberg's men were now making the main effort of the 1st Marine Division. Preparations for the drive to Uijongbu began with every indication that the enemy was bent upon flight. A patrol from the 3d Battalion found 30 Korean bodies beside a wall, including several women and a child, whose hands had been bound behind them before they were shot. The victims, according to a POW, were members of the families of ROK soldiers.[16]

Positions had been consolidated by the late afternoon of 30 September in readiness for the jump-off in the morning. The 7th Marines might well have been called Task Force Litzenberg at this stage for it was reinforced by Major Parry's 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines, Captain Lester T. Chase's Company D of the 1st Tank Battalion, Captain Byron C. Turner's Company D of the 1st Engineer Battalion, and Captain Kim's Company C of the 5th KMC Battalion.

The drive to the new objective began at 0630 on 1 October in a column of battalions. Air reconnaissance had made it appear likely that any NKPA resistance would probably take advantage of a tactical bottleneck, about halfway to Uijongbu, where steep and rocky ridges overlooked a narrow defile through which the road passed. Colonel Litzenberg and his staff decided to maneuver by sending the 1st Battalion to make a broad feint to cover the entry of the 3d Battalion into the defile with tank support while the 2d Battalion followed in reserve.

Lieutenant Colonel Davis secured his preliminary objectives, then swiftly spread out on both sides of the defile for his feint. Unfortunately, Major Roach was delayed by an enemy mine field, which brought the 3d Battalion and the tanks to a halt while the engineers cleared the way. Davis' simulated attack had meanwhile disclosed that the enemy was entrenched in depth along the high ground on each side of the defile. Both Marine battalions took heavy NKPA artillery and mortar fire before halting for the night.[17]

Click here to view map

At least the day's attacks had unmasked the enemy's positions and exposed them to savage attacks by the Corsairs of VMF–312. RCT–7 continued the attack at 0630 on the 2d, with Roach on the left of the road and Davis on the right. About halfway through the defile the 3d Battalion was pinned down by a concentration of NKPA artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire. Again the tanks were held up while the engineers cleared away

mines, working in a hail of bullets. The tanks of the 1st Platoon repaid the favor by closing in on two huts sheltering NKPA troops and killing an estimated 35. Here an attached dozer tank, without blade, had a freakish accident when two men in the turret were wounded by enemy fire down a 105mm gun tube while the breech was open.

The 1st Battalion managed to cross the stream east of the defile and seize the high ground just beyond. But the day ended with gains of only 300 yards in the defile.

Roach's men returned to the attack in the morning, supported by the tanks of the 2d Platoon. Again VMF–312 flew one close air support sortie after another. Major Charles E. McLean was hit by enemy AA fire but crash-landed his plane in friendly territory. First Lieutenant Robert O. Crocker was killed in action shortly after being brought down by NKPA small-arms fire.

VMF–312 fliers intercepted an enemy convoy and First Lieutenant Franklin Stratton reported the destruction of seven out of eight trucks. The tanks also gave the infantry helpful support, firing 167 90mm rounds during the day and an estimated 20,000 machine gun rounds at enemy troops along the ridge.

While 1/7 cleared the high ground on the east side of the road and 3/7 on the west side, Colonel Litzenberg directed Major Webb D. Sawyer [18] to pass between them with 2/7 and drive directly along the highway. Progress was satisfactory from the start. When Sawyer's men began to overrun abandoned NKPA artillery pieces and supply dumps, they pounded ahead with the realization that enemy resistance was broken.

At five that afternoon the 2d Battalion entered the ruins of Uijongbu, evacuated by the enemy. The last large-scale fight of the Inchon-Seoul operation had ended in a smashing victory for the Division's youngest regiment.

Identifications showed that the Marines had been opposed by three battalions of the 31st Regiment of the 31st NKPA Division. Elements of the 17th and Seoul Divisions and of an artillery battalion were also encountered. These troops had been supported by 13 tanks, of which four were killed by Marine air attacks and two captured in a damaged condition by 2/7 after the others escaped.

The three-mile advance of RCT–7 on 3 October had resulted in the cutting of lateral communications to the east and west of Uijongbu and the securing of an important blocking position on the X Corps final phase line. Losses of 13 killed and 111 wounded were suffered by the regiment in the three-day fight.

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Last Days of Inchon-Seoul Operation

The climax of the battle was witnessed by General Cates, who visited the front on 3 October, accompanied by Major Generals Edwin A. Pollock and Clayton C. Jerome. After being briefed at the Division CP by the G–1, G–2, G–3, and G–4, the Commandant inspected the positions of RCT–1 and RCT–5 by helicopter before taking a jeep tour along the road to Uijongbu to watch Colonel Litzenberg's men slug their way forward into the battered town.[19]

That evening the fighting virtually came to an end, for the 1st Marine Division had a total of only seven casualties during the last four days of the Inchon-Seoul operation. The rifle regiments had only to maintain their blocking positions while patrolling to front and flank.

Operations on the Kumpo Peninsula, which had been sputtering intermittently ever since the occupation of the airfield, also drew to a close.[20] Responsibility for the area having passed from Corps back to Division on 2 October, elements of the 187th Airborne RCT were relieved by Task Force Kumpo, consisting of the 3d KMC Battalion, a detachment from the 1st Signal Battalion, and Battery C of the 50th AAA Battalion, USA.

Naval gunfire had found its greatest mission of the exploitation phase in support of the widely assorted units which protected the left flank of X Corps at various times. The 187th, being short on artillery, had relied on the naval gunfire and spot teams commanded by Lieutenant (jg) Leo D. McMillan, USN, and First Lieutenant J. E. Dolan, of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. These officers and their men remained with Task Force Kumpo after it relieved the 187th, but patrols reported no enemy contacts after 2 October. The chief activity on the peninsula was listening to the baseball games of the World Series, which came in clearly over the radios of the naval gunfire teams.[21]

As directed on 5 October by OpnO 15–50, the last to be issued by the Division in the Inchon-Seoul Operation, the major Marine units were scheduled to close into staging areas in Inchon as follows:

5th Marines:	1800 on 5 October
11th Marines:	1700 on 6 October
1st Marines:	Prior to darkness, 6 October
7th Marines:	Midafternoon, 7 October
KMC Regiment:	Prior to darkness, 7 October

An impressive ceremony was held on the 6th, when the cemetery established by the Marines on the outskirts of Inchon was taken over by the United Nations. After an invocation by Chaplain R. M. Schwyhart of the 1st Marine Division, General Almond made a few remarks and laid a wreath on the grave of an unknown soldier. Then General Smith, General Barr, and Colonel Lee performed the same ceremony over Marine, Army, and ROK graves. Volleys were fired, taps were sounded, and the dedication ended with the national anthems of the United States and Korea.[22]

There could be no doubt, as the Marines prepared to mount out for a new amphibious operation, that the NKPA invaders had been knocked out of the war by the combined X Corps and Eighth Army offensives. The Red Korean retreat had become a rout, and Marine staff officers considered it doubtful whether the enemy could hold the east coast port of Wonsan long enough to defend it against the proposed new Marine assault landing.[23]

It was apparent, in fact, that only the active intervention of Red China or the Soviet Union could save the North Korean People's Republic from imminent collapse. At this time, however, it did not seem likely that any such attempt would be made.

And so it was that one of the most remarkable amphibious operations in Marine Corps annals came uneventfully to an end on 7 October 1950. Early in the morning the Division CP displaced from Seoul to a housing area just north of Ascom City. At 0935, in accordance with X Corps OpnO 5, General Smith reported to Admiral Doyle, ComPhib-Gru One, for duty as commander of the landing force for the proposed Wonsan assault. And at 1200 the Inchon-Seoul operation passed into history when the last troops of the 7th Marines were relieved in the Uijongbu area by elements of the Eighth Army.

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Summaries and Conclusions

At this stage the men of the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing were still too close to the operation to see it clearly in detail. If there was any one overwhelming impression they all had in common, it was a sense of the speed with which events had raced toward a climax.

This was by no means an illusion. Hundreds of Marine reservists had watched baseball games or enjoyed picnics with their families on the Fourth of July, never dreaming that shortly after Labor Day they would be scrambling out of landing boats to assault a flaming Asiatic seaport on the other side of the earth!

Speed was an essential if the assault landing were to be completed on the prescribed D-day. But there was no place for the proverbial haste that leads to waste. It had to be the speed of precision—an acceleration of men and events made possible by the amphibious know-how of a Navy-Marine Corps team that had worked together throughout the Pacific operations of World War II.

Sometimes this acceleration was so unobtrusive as to pass almost unnoticed. Shipping does not grow on trees, particularly the enormous amounts of shipping required for a major amphibious operation. Yet the U.S. Navy made it appear a simple and routine matter to assemble from all the seven seas an invasion fleet made up of craft ranging from cruisers to rowboats.

The Marines, as the Landing Force, worked hand-in-hand with the Attack Force commanded by Rear Admiral James H. Doyle, who had no superior in the world of 1950 as an amphibious specialist. From preliminary planning to final execution, Doyle and his staff officers of PhibGru One supplied a precision which had much to do with the success of an operation holding so many potentialties of disaster.

Looking back, some of the Marine participants could hardly recall a full night's sleep from 25 July 1950, the date of the order directing that the 1st Marine Division be brought up to full war strength, until 7 October 1950, when the operation came to a victorious end. From the mobilization at Camp Pendleton to the street fighting in Seoul, it was often necessary to utilize the hours of darkness ordinarily devoted to rest. At Kobe, for instance, there were so few copies of the plans for the Inchon landing that they were circulated on a 24-hour schedule for study by Marine officers who took turns.

The acceleration of the 1st Marine Division in 64 days from a peace-time basis to the capture of Seoul has been summarized as follows:

"(a) Expansion from a reduced peace strength (less the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade) to a reinforced war strength, less one RCT, was completed in a period of approximately 15 days.

"(b) Administrative sea lift and movement of over 15,000 personnel, organic equipment, and partial resupply from San Diego to the Far East Command commenced in less than three weeks after expansion was ordered.

"(c) Debarkation and unloading from administrative shipping, and re-embarkation and reloading at Kobe, Japan for the assault landing at Inchon were done in a period averaging about seven days per unit, two days of which were lost due to a heavy typhoon in the Kobe area.

"(d) Completed planning and the issuance of the complete operation order for the amphibious landing at Inchon were accomplished 17 days after the receipt of the initial directive.

"(e) The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was disengaged from active combat with the enemy on the South Korean front at midnight on 5 September, moved to Pusan, and outloaded in combat shipping in less than 7 days.

"(f) A successful assault landing was executed at Inchon, Korea, on 15 September under some of the most adverse landing conditions in the history of amphibious operations.

"(g) The Force Beachhead Line approximately six miles from landing beaches was seized within 24 hours after the main landing on Beaches RED and BLUE.

"(h) Kimpo Airfield, a primary objective of the operation in the 1st Marine Division's zone of action, was captured 50 hours and 35 minutes after H-Hour, D-Day.

"(i) The first assault crossing of the Han River (400 yards wide at the crossing site) was executed by RCT–5, employing LVTs, DUKWs, and pontoon ferries, less than five days after landing at Inchon.

"(j) The remainder of the Division crossed the Han River without bridging, and after intense fighting completed the seizure of Seoul 12 days after landing at Inchon.

"(k) The effectiveness of the Marine air-ground team and close air support doctrine were reaffirmed with outstanding success.

"(l) The ability of Marine units to participate in extended land operations, provided additional transportation requirements are met during the emergency, was demonstrated in the Inchon-Seoul operation."[24]

In any such summary, it is understood that credit for the accomplishments of the 1st Marine Division was shared by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. Two more days of fighting remained for the squadrons at Kimpo after the relief of the ground forces, since Marine air operations cover the period from 7 September to 9 October 1950. Altogether, 2,774 combat sorties were flown by the five Marine squadrons during this 33-day period, most of them in close support of infantry units. Following are the totals:

VMF–214: 16 days in action, 484 combat sorties
VMF–323: 22 days in action, 784 combat sorties
VMF–212: 19 days in action, 607 combat sorties
VMF–312: 10 days in action, 288 combat sorties
VMF(N)–542: 19 days in action, 573 combat sorties
TOTAL: 2,774 combat sorties[25]

"No enemy air operations of any significance were encountered," stated the TAC X Corps report. "Some enemy antiaircraft fire from light to moderate was encountered. Most of this AA fire was of small caliber."

Eleven Marine planes (not counting VMO–6 aircraft) were shot down by NKPA ground forces. Six pilots and a crewman were killed in action and two pilots wounded.

As an example of the types of missions, the 326 combat sorties flown by VMF–322 fell into these categories: close air support, 163; reconnaissance, 99; rescue cover, 18; deep support, 17; helicopter escort, 8; photo escort, 6; combat air patrol, 6; tactical air control, 4; leaflet, 2; R4D escort, 2; message drop, 2. In addition, the squadron was credited with 151 noncombat sorties.

There could be no question that Marine close air support had won the esteem of Army infantry units. Generals Harris and Cushman were the recipients of many spontaneous comments of appreciation from individuals as well as formal endorsements. (See Appendix L for the record.)

On the other hand, the Marines had cause to be grateful for the deep support and interdiction strikes provided by the Naval fast carrier planes of JTF–7 in combination with the Fifth Air Force, which was committed primarily to the support of the Eighth Army in South Korea. During the first two weeks of September, JTF–7 had responsibility for the gradual isolation of the Inchon target area by means of air operations conducted as far as 150 miles north of the objective and 100 miles to the south.

The air defense of our forces at sea and in the Inchon area, and the air interdiction operations of the first five or six days of the landing—these were carried out largely by Naval air effort under Commander JTF–7. Mutual assistance between JTF–7 and the Fifth Air Force was provided for, with coordination being achieved by the delineation of areas for each.[26]

VMO–6, under the control of the 1st Marine Division and administration control of MAG–33, completed a total of 643 helicopter and OY flights in 515 hours. Of the 139 seriously wounded men evacuated by helicopter from the firing line, a large proportion owed their lives to the speed and ease with which they were transported to the hospital. The helicopters also were credited with twelve rescue missions of friendly pilots shot down behind the enemy lines.[27]

In the long run, of course, it took the co-ordinated efforts of ground, air, and sea forces to win the final victory in one of the most unusual and difficult amphibious operations of all time. And though this book is limited to an account of Marine activities primarily, the Marines who took part would be first to acknowledge how much the final victory owed to the efforts of other ground forces—the U.S. Army units, the KMC Regiment, and the ROK contingents.

Many of these units, like the Marines, had been handicapped by a hasty build-up which allowed little or no time for special training and rehearsals. No greater feat of organization was recorded in 1950 than the creation of a new 7th Infantry Division from the bare bones of the old in only a few weeks. The Marines saw more of the 32d Infantry than General Barr's other units, for it was this regiment which protected the right flank during critical periods of the advance on Seoul while elements of the 187th Airborne RCT were responsible for the security of the left flank.

The Army artillery units, amphibian tractor troops, and AAA companies also deserve their full share of credit for the victory. And though the Marines were not often in contact with the ROKs, they realized how much these allies had contributed, often under the most adverse circumstances.

Naturally, the Marines felt a special interest in the KMC Regiment, which they had trained and equipped. The KMCs repaid this feeling by the valor with which they fought in every phase of the operation from the mopping up of Inchon to the battle for Seoul.

The Inchon landing and its exploitation have been made the subject of a study by officers of the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, who summed up the over-all effects as follows:

"(a) The amphibious envelopment at Inchon produced a decisive threat to the North Korean forces which led directly to the rapid disintegration of their front on the Pusan Perimeter. The 1st Marine Division was the landing force in this amphibious envelopment.

"(b) It completed the dislocation of the enemy's entire logistical system by the capture of Seoul, which, together with the combat action of other UN forces, shattered the enemy in all of South Korea, causing the complete rout of the North Korean forces. The 1st Marine Division played a principal role in the capture of Seoul.

"(c) The successful completion of the campaign made available to UN forces the port facilities of Inchon and the extensive Seoul communications complex for carrying offensive action into North Korea.

"(d) By the direct action of the 1st Marine Division, the enemy's potential was reduced by the capture of 4,692 POWs, by inflicting 13,666 casualties on the enemy, by destroying 44 tanks, and by destroying or capturing much other material."[28]

In view of such far-reaching results, total casualties for the 1st Marine Division of 366 KIA, 49 DOW, 6 MIA, and 2,029 WIA cannot be considered excessive for an operation fraught with so many calculated risks. No man's life was given in vain, for the Communist challenge to the free nations was met in Korea and the aggressors beaten so decisively that the world would soon have had peace except for the intervention of Red China.

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Chapter 14. The Drive to Uijongbu
MacArthur's Report to United Nations

Again it is worthy of emphasis that the victory was not won by any one nation or any one branch of the military service. As far as this country is concerned, the Inchon-Seoul operation was conducted jointly by the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. General Douglas MacArthur was spokesman for all of them late in September 1950, in these extracts from the Sixth Report of the Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, to the Security Council of the United Nations:

"Events of the past two weeks have been decisive. The strategic concepts designed to win the war are rapidly proving their soundness through aggressive application by our ground, sea, and air forces.

"The seizure of the heart of the enemy's distributing system in the Seoul area has completely dislocated his logistical supply to his forces in South Korea and has quickly resulted in their disintegration. Caught between our northern and southern forces, both of which are completely self-sustaining because of our absolute air and naval supremacy, the enemy is thoroughly shattered through disruption of his logistical support and our combined combat activities.

"The prompt junction of our two forces is dramatically symbolic of this collapse.

"The obstacles to this wide envelopment were not only the enemy opposition, but also the natural obstacles of poor beaches fronted by miles of mud flats, a narrow channel and an extraordinary tidal range of over 29 feet. The success demonstrated a complete mastery of the technique of amphibious warfare, clockwork coordination, and cooperation between the units and services participating. There was nothing noteworthy about the North Korean opposition, but there could have been. The potential was there. The North Koreans were proceeding with the construction of coastal fortifications, dug-in tanks and guns of all calibers, beach defenses and mining operations. Had this development been delayed for as much as a month, the enemy would have been ready and the assault, if possible, would have been more costly to United Nations forces."

At no time, not even when the United Nations forces were fighting with their backs to the wall at Pusan, did the commander in chief ever have any doubts as to the outcome. It was fitting, therefore, that he should have summed up the results of the combined Eighth Army and X Corps offensives in this conclusion written after the securing of Seoul:

"A successful frontal attack and envelopment has completely changed the tide of battle in South Korea. The backbone of the North Korean army has been broken and their scattered forces are being liquidated or driven north with material losses in equipment and men captured."

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Appendix A. Glossary of Technical Terms and Abbreviations

AAA(AW)Bn—Antiaircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion (USA)

AD—Destroyer Tender

AE—Ammunition Ship

AerialDelPlat—Aerial Delivery Platoon

AF—Air Force; Store Ship

AGC—Amphibious Force Flagship

AH—Hospital Ship

AK—Cargo Ship

AKA—Assault Cargo Ship

AKL—Cargo Ship—Light

AKS—Stores Issue Ship

AM—Minesweeper

AmphTracBn—Amphibious Tractor Battalion

AmphTrkBn—Amphibious Truck Battalion

AMS—Auxiliary Motor Minesweeper

ANGLICO—Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company

AO—Oiler

AOG—Gasoline Tanker

AP—Transport

APA—Assault Transport

APD—High Speed Transport

ARG—Repair Ship—Internal Combustion Engines

ARH—Repair Ship—Heavy Hull Damage

ARL—Repair Ship—Landing Craft

ArmdAmphBn—Armored Amphibian Battalion

ARS—Salvage Vessel

AT—Antitank

ATF—Ocean Tug—Fleet

AV—Seaplane Tender

AVP—Seaplane Tender, Small

Bchmstr Unit—Beachmaster Unit

BLT—Battalion Landing Team

Bn—Battalion

CA—Heavy Cruiser

CG—Commanding General

CICDet—Counter-Intelligence Corps Detachment (USA)

CinCFE—Commander in Chief, Far East

CinCPacFlt—Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet

CL—Light Cruiser

CMC—Commandant of the Marine Corps

CNO—Chief of Naval Operations

CO—Commanding Officer

Co—Company

ComAirSupGrp—Commander Air Support Group

ComCarDiv—Commander Carrier Division

ComNavFE—Commander Navy Far East

ComPhibGruOne—Commander Amphibious Group One

CP—Command Post

C/S—Chief of Staff

CSG—Combat Service Group

CTF—Commander Task Force

CV—Aircraft Carrier

CVE—Aircraft Carrier—Escort

CVL—Aircraft Carrier—Light

DD—Destroyer

DDE—Escort Destroyer

DDR—Radar Picket Destroyer

DOW—Died of wounds

DUKW—Amphibious Truck.

Emb Off—Embarkation Officer

EngrBn—Engineer Battalion

EngrPortConstCo—Engineer Port Construction Company (USA)

EngrSpecBrig—Engineer Special Brigade (USA)

ETO—European Theater of Operations

EUSAK—Eighth United States Army in Korea

FABn—Field Artillery Battalion (USA)

FAC—Forward Air Controller

FBHL—Force Beachhead Line

FEAF—Far East Air Force

FECOM—Far East Command

F4U—Vought “Corsair” Fighter

FMF—Fleet Marine Force (Pac-Pacific; Lant-Atlantic)

FO—Forward Observer

FSA—Fire Support Area

FSCC—Fire Support Coordination Center

F7F-3—Grumman “Tigercat” Night Fighter

Fum & Bath Plat—Fumigation and Bath Platoon

GCI—Ground Control Intercept

GHQ—General Headquarters

H & S Co—Headquarters and Service Company

HO3S-1—Sikorsky Helicopter

HqBn—Headquarters Battalion

HqCo—Headquarters Company

HqSq—Headquarters Squadron

InfDiv—Infantry Division (USA)

interv—Interview

JANIS—Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Studies

JCS—Joint Chiefs of Staff

JSPOG—Joint Strategic Planning and Operations Group

JTF—Joint Task Force

KIA—Killed in Action

KMC—Korean Marine Corps

LCM—Landing Craft, Mechanized

LCVP—Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel

LSD—Landing Ship, Dock

LSM—Landing Ship, Medium

LSMR—Landing Ship, Medium-Rocket

LST—Landing Ship, Tank

LSU—Landing Ship, Utility

LVT—Landing Vehicle, Tracked

LVT(A)—Landing Vehicle, Tracked (Armored)

MAG—Marine Air Group

MAW—Marine Air Wing

MedBn—Medical Battalion

MGCIS—Marine Ground Control Intercept Squadron

MIA—Missing in action

MOS—Military Occupational Specialty

MPCo—Military Police Company

MTACS—Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron

MTBn—Motor Transport Battalion

NCO—Noncommissioned Officer

NGF—Naval Gunfire

NK—North Korea(n)

NKPA—North Korean Peoples Army

OCMH—Office of the Chief of Military History (USA)

Off—Officer

OP—Observation Post

OpnO—Operation Order

OrdAmmCo—Ordnance Ammunition Company (USA)

OrdBn—Ordnance Battalion

OY—Consolidated-Vultee light observation plane

PC—Submarine Chaser

PCEC—Escort Amphibious Control Vessel

PF—Frigate

PhibGru—Amphibious Group

PhibTraPac—Training Command, Amphibious Forces, Pacific Fleet

PIR—Periodic Intelligence Report

Plat—Platoon

POL—Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants

POW—Prisoner of War

RAF—Royal Air Force

RcnCo—Reconnaissance Company

RCT—Regimental Combat Team

RktBn—Rocket Battalion

ROK—Republic of Korea

SAC—Supporting Arms Center

SAR—Special Action Report

SCAJAP—Supreme Commander Allied Powers, Japan

ServBn—Service Battalion

SigBn—Signal Battalion

SigRepCo—Signal Repair Company (USA)

SPBn—Shore Party Battalion

SpOpnsCo—Special Operations Company (USA)

TAC—Tactical Air Coordinator

TAC X Corps—Tactical Air Command, X Corps

TacAir—Tactical Air

TADC—Tactical Air Direction Center

T-AP—Transport Operated by MSTS

T/E—Table of Equipment

TF—Task Force

TG—Task Group

T/O—Table of Organization

UDT—Underwater Demolitions Team

UF—Unit of fire

UN—United Nations

UNC—United Nations Command

USA—United States Army

USAF—United States Air Force

USMC—United States Marine Corps

USN—United States Navy

VMF—Marine fighter type aircraft (squadron)

VMF (N)—Marine night fighter type aircraft, all-weather (squadron)

VMO—Marine observation type aircraft (squadron)

VMR—Marine transport type aircraft (squadron)

WIA—Wounded in action

WP—White phosphorous

YMS—Motor Minesweeper

YTB—Harbor Tug, Big

YW—District Barge, Water (self-propelled)

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Appendix C. Task Organization of Marine Division for Inchon Landing

In order to present a concise picture of the Task Organization of the 1st Marine Division (Reinf), FMF, for the period of 1 August-7 October 1950, task organizations are presented for the following five conditions:

(1) Completion of mobilization of the Division (less 1st Provisional Marine Brigade and RCT-7) at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California, 12 August.

(2) Organization for landing at INCHON, KOREA, 15 September.

(3) RCT-7 task organization on arrival INCHON, KOREA, 21 September.

(4) Intermediate temporary attachments and detachments during the period 15 September-7 October.

(5) Completion of INCHON-KIMPO-SEOUL operation on 7 October.

The detailed Task Organizations are as follows:

(1) Completion of Mobilization on WAR "K" series T/O, 12 August.

1st Marine Division, (Reinf) FMF	MajGen O. P. SMITH
HqBn, 1stMarDiv, less Brig Det	LtCol M. T. STARR
1st SigBn, less Brig Det, 2 SP Comm Sects & Det Anglico	
Carrier Plat, FMF	Maj R. L. SCHREIER
1st ServBn, less Brig Det	LtCol C. L. BANKS
1st OrdBn, less Brig Det	Maj L. O. WILLIAMS
1st MT Bn, less Cos A and D; 1st Amph Trk Co, FMF, less 1 Plat	LtCol O. L. BEALL
1st Med Bn, less Cos A and E	Comdr H. B. JOHNSON, USN
1st EngrBn, less Cos A and D	LtCol J. H. PARTRIDGE
1st SP Bn, less Cos A and C	LtCol H. P. CROWE
1st Tk Bn, less Cos A and D; Tk Plat AT Co, 1st Mar	
Tk Plat AT Co, 5th Mar	LtCol H. T. MILNE
1st Amph Trac Bn, FMF, less Cos A and D	LtCol E. F. WANN
1st Armd Amph Bn, FMF, less 1st Plat Co A and Cos C and D	LtCol F. H. COOPER
1st CSG, SC, FMF, less BrigDet; 1st Fum & Bath Plat, SC, FMF	
1st Aerial Del Plat, SC, FMF	Col J. S. COOK
7th MT Bn, SC, FMF	Maj J. F. STEPKA

1st Mar, less Tk Plat, AT Co; Cos
C, F, and I, Reinf, 5th Mar Col L. B. PULLER
11th Mar, less 1st and 3rd Bns;
Btry C, 1st 4.5" Rkt Bn, FMF Col J. H. BROWER

(2) Organization for landing at INCHON, KOREA (1st Prov Mar Brig disbanded 13 September, units and detachments reverted control parent organizations of division). Task Organization from Annex "A", 1st Mar Div Op Order 2-50 as derived from X Corps Op Order No. 1.

1st Marine Division (Reinf) FMF MajGen O. P. SMITH
HqBn, Reinf, 1stMarDiv, less dets
163rd Mil Int Service Det
441st CIC Det
1st Sig Bn, Reinf, less dets;
Det, 205th Sig Rep Co USA
Carrier Plat, FMF
Det, 4th Sig Bn, USA
1st Serv Bn, less Dets
1st MT Bn
1st Ord Bn, less dets
Det, MTACS-2
Blt-3, RCT-5 LtCol R. D. TAPLETT
3dBn, 5th Mar
Det, ANGLICO, 1st Sig Bn
Det, Co A, 1st Tk Bn
Recon Det, 11th Mar
Team 1, SP Gp A
1stPlat, Co A, 1st SP Bn
SP Comm Sqd, 1st Sig Bn
Amm Sqd, 1st Ord Bn
Det, Rat Sec, 1st Ser Bn
Det, 1st CSG, (SP Aug)
Det, Bchmstr Unit, USN
RCT-5 LtCol R. L. MURRAY
5th Mar, less 3dBn & Tk Plat, AT
Co
Co A, 1st Engr Bn
Co C, 1st Med Bn
Det Anglico, 1st Sig Bn
ROK Marine Bn

SP GP A, less Team 1;
Co A, 1st SP Bn, less 1 Plat
Evac Sec, 1st SP Bn
Det, Ord Sup Plat, CSG
Det, Auto Sup Plat, CSG
Det, Engr Sup Plat, CSG
Det, CS Plat, CSG
Det, Sig Sup Plat, CSG
SP Comm Sec, 1st Sig Bn
Det, 1st CSG (SP Aug)
Det, Bchmstr Unit, USN
1st Traffic Plat, MP Co
Police Sqd, MP Co
FO & Ln Sec, 1st Bn, 11th Mar
Co A, 1st Tk Bn, less det
Det, Sig Co, 1st Sig Bn

RCT-1 Col L. B. PULLER

1st Mar, less Tk Plat, AT Co
Co A, Reinf, 56th Amph Trac Bn, USA
Btry C, 1st 4.5” Rkt Bn, FMF
Co C, Reinf, 1st Engr Bn, less det; Water Sup Sec
Co D, 1st Med Bn, less det
Det ANGLICO, 1st Sig Bn
SP Gp B, less Team 3;
Co B, 1st SP Bn, less 1 Plat & Equip Sec
Evac Sec, 1st SP Bn
Amm Plat, less 1 Sqd, 1st Ord Bn
Rat Sec, 1st Ser Bn
Fuel Sec, 1st Ser Bn
SP Comm Sec, 1st Sig Bn
Det, Bchmstr Unit, USN
Det, 1st CSG (SP Aug)
2d Traffic Plat, MP Co
Police Sqd, MP Co

FO & Ln Secs, 2d Bn, 11th Mar	
11th Mar, less 3d Bn, reinf	Col J. H. BROWER
96th FA Bn, USA	
Det, Co B, 1st Engr Bn	
1st Amph Trk Co, FMF	
1st Tk Bn, less dets, reinf	LtCol H. T. MILNE
Tk Plat, AT Co, 1st Mar	
Tk Plat, AT Co, 5th Mar	
1st Engr Bn, less dets	LtCol J. H. PARTRIDGE
1st SP Bn, less dets	LtCol H. P. CROWE
H&S Co, 1st SP Bn, less dets	
SP Comm Sec, 1st Sig Bn	
Team 3, SP Gp B	
3d Plat, Co B, 1st SP Bn	
Equip Sec, Co B, 1st SP Bn	
SP Comm Sec, 1st Sig Bn	
Det, Ord Sup Plat, CSG	
Det, Auto Sup Plat, CSG	
Det, Engr Sup Plat, CSG	
Det, Sig Sup Plat, CSG	
Det, GS Plat, CSG	
Det, Depot Plat, CSG	
Rcn Co, 1st MAR Div	Capt K. J. HOUGHTON
1st Amph Trac Bn, FMF	LtCol E. F. WANN
VMO-6	Maj V. J. GOTTSCHALK
ROK Marine Regt (-)	Col SHIN, KMC
2d Engr Spec Brig reinf	Col J. TWITTY, USA
1st CSG, SC, FMF, less dets	
1st Fum & Bath Plat	
1st Aerial Del Plat	
Naval Beach Gp 1, less dets	
7th MT Bn, SC, FMF	
73d Engr (C) Bn, USA	
50th Engr Port Const Co, USA	
65th Ord Amm Co, USA	

(3) RCT-7 Task Organization on landing at INCHON, KOREA, 21 September. Attachments reverted to parent control on arrival assembly areas.

RCT-7	Col H. L. LITZENBERG

7th Mar
3d Bn, 11th Mar
Co D, 1st MT Bn
Co D, 1st Tk Bn
Co D, 1st Engr Bn
Co E, 1st Med Bn
Co C, 1st SP Bn
Det, 1st Sig Bn (ANGLICO
2 & 2 SP Comm Sec)

(4) Intermediate temporary attachments and detachments during the period 15 September-7 October.

18 Sept-32nd RCT USA attached 1st Mar Div
19 Sep-SpOpnsCo USA attchd 1st Mar Div
32nd RCT detached 1st MarDiv reverted to 7th Inf Div
23 Sep-17th ROK Regt attchd 1st Mar Div
17th ROK Regt detached 1st Mar Div
24 Sep-3d Bn, 187th Airborne RCT USA Attchd 1st Mar Div 3d Bn, KMC Regt detached 1st Mar Div attached 3d Bn, 187th AB RCT 1st Amph Trac Bn, FMF, less 3 Cos, detached 1st Mar Div attchd 7th Inf Div Co A, 1st Amph Tk and Trac Bn, USA, detached 1st Mar Div attchd 7th Inf Div
25 Sept-3d Bn, 187th AB RCT detached 1st Mar Div, attchd X Corps 3d Bn, KMC Regt det 3d Bn, 187th AB RCT attchd 1st MarDiv 161st KMC Bn (redesignated 5th KMC Bn) attchd 1st Mar Div Sp Opns Co, USA detached 1st Mar Div, attchd 3d Bn, 187th ABRCT
26 Sep-3d Bn KMC Regt detached 1st Mar Div, attchd 187th AB RCT
(TF ABLE)
29 Sep-1st Amph Trac Bn, less 3d Cos, detached 7th Inf Div attchd 1st Mar Div
96th FA Bn, USA detached 1st Mar Div
30 Sep-50th AAA(AW) Bn attached 1st Mar Div
3 Oct-50th AAA(AW) Bn detached 1st Mar Div

(5) Completion of INCHON-SEOUL operation, 7 October, and prior to mounting out at INCHON.

1st Marine Division Reinf, FMF	MajGen O. P. SMITH
HqBn, 1st MarDiv	
163d MISD	
441st CIC	
Civ Asst Team	LtCol M. T. STARR
1st Sig Bn	
Carrier Plat, FMF	Maj R. L. SCHREIER
1st Serv Bn	LtCol C. L. BANKS
1st Ord Bn	Maj L. O. WILLIAMS
1st MT Bn	

1st Amph Trk Co, FMF	LtCol O. L. BEALL
1st Tk Bn	LtCol H. T. MILNE
1st Med Bn	Comdr H. B. JOHNSON, USN
1st SP Bn	LtCol H. P. CROWE
1st Engr Bn	LtCol J. H. PARTRIDGE
1st Mar	Col L. B. PULLER
5th Mar	LtCol R. L. MURRAY
7th Mar	Col H. L. LITZENBERG
11th Mar	
Btry C, 1st 4.5" Rkt Bn, FMF	Col J. H. BROWER
1st Amph Trac Bn, FMF	
less Co D	LtCol E. F. WANN
1st Armd Amph Bn, FMF	
less Cos C & D	LtCol F. H. COOPER
7th MT Bn, SC, FMF	Maj J. F. STEPKA
1st CSG, SC, FMF less dets;	
1st Fum & Bath Plat	
1st Aerial Del Plat	Col J. S. COOK

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Appendix D. Supplies and Equipment for Inchon

1st Marine Division Embarkation Order 1-50 of 31 August 1950 provided that the following supplies and equipment would be embarked in assigned shipping:

a. Class I

(1) Rations: 30 days as follows:

For attached Army units and 5th Marines (Reinf)

Individual Assault Type C: 5 days

(Combat Unit Loaded: 5 days)

Operational Type B: 25 days

(Unit Loaded: 25 days)

PX Accessories Pack: 30 days

(Combat Unit Loaded: 5 days)

(Unit Loaded: 10 days)

(Convoy Loaded: 15 days)

For 1st Marine Division (Reinf) (Less Army elements and 5th Marines [Reinf]): 5 days

Operational Type B (Convoy Loaded)

Food Packet, Individual Assault 1A1: 2 days

(In hands of individuals: 1 day)

Individual Combat, Type C: 10 days

(Combat Unit Loaded: 5 days)

(Unit Loaded: 5 days)

PX Accessories Pack: 30 days

(Combat Unit Loaded: 5 days)

(Unit Loaded: 10 days)

(Convoy Loaded: 15 days)

Small Detachment 5 in 1 Type: 5 days

(Unit Loaded: 5 days)

Individual Combat Type C

(Convoy Loaded-Corps Reserve: 150,000 Rations)

(In hands of 1st Serv Bn)

(2) Water

(a) All water containers filled, not less than 5 gallons per man combat loaded; 5 gallons per man to be unit loaded.

(b) Assault Elements: 2 filled canteens per individual.

(c) Others: 1 filled canteen.

b. Class II

(1) Essential Class II items as determined by unit commanders. Vehicles to be loaded on priority basis within available space.

(2) Initial (less chemical warfare) in hands of units.

(3) Chemical warfare in hands of 1st Serv Bn.

(4) 30 day replenishment in hands of appropriate service units.

(5) All distillation units to have high priority for unloading.

(6) No special services gear to be lifted in assault shipping.

(7) Tentage: not to exceed 10% of T/E allowance.

(8) Other Class II in accordance AdOrder 2-50.

c. Class III

(1) Vehicle tanks 3/4 full. Jeeps-1 filled expeditionary can (5 gal); all other vehicles: 2 filled cans (5 gal each).

(2) Replenishment: 30 days

Assault units:

(Combat Unit Load: 15 days)

(Unit Load: 15 days)

Other Units:

(Combat Unit Load: 5 days)

(Unit Load: 25 days)

d. Class IV

(1) In accordance with AdOrder 2-50.

e. Class V—5 units of fire

(1) Assault Units

(Combat Unit Load: 2 U/F)

(Unit Load: 3 U/F)

(2) Other than Assault Units

(Combat Unit Load: 1 U/F)

(Unit Load: 4 U/F)

(3) Flame thrower fuel: 15 U/F

(Combat Unit Load: 5 U/F)

(Unit Load: 10 U/F)

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Appendix E. Task Organization of Joint Task Force Seven

JOINT TASK FORCE SEVEN: VAdm Arthur D. Struble

Task Force 90--Attack Force: RAdm James H. Doyle

92.1 Landing Force: MajGen Oliver P. Smith

1st Marine Division (Reinforced)

92.11 Regimental Combat Team 1: Col Lewis B. Puller

92.11.1 Battalion Landing: LtCol Jack Hawkins

Team 1, 1st Marines

92.11.2 Battalion Landing: LtCol Alan Sutter

Team 2, 1st Marines

92.11.3 Battalion Landing: LtCol Thomas L. Ridge

Team 3, 1st Marines

92.12 Regimental Combat Team 5: LtCol Raymond L. Murray

92.12.1 Battalion Landing: LtCol George R. Newton

Team 1, 5th Marines

92.12.2 Battalion Landing: LtCol Harold R. Roise

Team 2, 5th Marines

90.00 Flagship Element

Mount McKinley (AGC): Capt Carter A. Printup

Eldorado (AGC; RAdm Lyman K. Thackrey embarked): Capt Joseph B. Stefanac

90.01 Tactical Air Control Element: Cdr Theophilus H. Moore

Tactical Air Squadron 1

90.02 Naval Beach Group Element: Capt Watson T. Singer

90.02.1 Headquarters Unit

90.02.2 Beachmaster Unit: LCdr Martin C. Sibitzky

90.02.3 Boat Unit 1: LCdr Herman E. Hock

90.02.4 Amphibious Construction Battalion: LCdr M. Ted Jacobs, Jr.

90.02.5 Underwater Demolition Team Unit: LCdr David F. Welch

90.03 Control Element: LCdr Clyde Allmon

Diachenko (APD): LCdr James R. Wilson

90.03.1 Control Unit Red: LCdr Ralph H. Schneeloch, Jr.

Horace A. Bass (APD): LCdr Alan Ray

90.03.2 Control Unit Green: Lt Reuben W. Berry

PCEC 896: Lt Reuben W. Berry

90.03.3 Control Unit Blue: Lt Theodore B. Clark

Wantuck (APD): LCdr John B. Thro

90.04 Administrative Element: Capt Virginius R. Roane

90.04.1 Service Unit

Consolation (AH): Capt Charles M. Ryan

12 LSU (plus additional LSUs on arrival; 12-20 LSU)

90.04.2 Repair and Salvage Unit: Cdr Emmanuel T. Goyette

Lipan: LCdr Howard K. Smith

Cree: Lt George E. Poore

Arikara (3 ATF): LCdr Kenneth A. Mundy

Conserver (ARS): Lt James L. Thompson

Askari (ARL): LCdr Robert J. Siegelman

YTB 406

Gunston Hall: Cdr Charles W. Musgrave

Fort Marion: Cdr Noah Adair, Jr.

Comstock (3 LSD): Cdr Emmanuel T. Goyette

90.1 Advance Attack Group: Capt Norman W. Sears

92.12.3 Advance Landing Force Unit

Battalion Landing Team 3: LtCol Robert D. Taplett

5th Marines

90.11 Transport Element: Capt Norman W. Sears

Fort Marion: Cdr Noah Adair, Jr.

3 LSU embarked

90.11.1 Transport Unit: Cdr Selden C. Small

Horace A. Bess: LCdr Alan Ray

Diachenko: LCdr James R. Wilson

Wantuck: LCdr John B. Thro

90.2 Transport Group: Capt Virginius R. Roane

George Clymer: Capt Raymond S. Lamb

Cavalier: Capt Daniel J. Sweeney

Pickaway: Capt Samuel H. Crittenden, Jr.

Henrico: Capt John E. Fradd

Noble (5 APA): Capt Michael F. D. Flaherty

Union: Capt Gerald D. Zurmuchlen

Alshain: Capt Robert N. S. Clark

Achernar: Capt Crutchfield Adair

Oglethorpe: Capt Paul F. Heerbrandt

Seminole: Capt Henry Farrow

Thuban: Cdr Erle V. Dennett

Whiteside: Capt Eugene L. Lugibihl

Washburn (8 AKA): Capt James A. Prichard

President Jackson (AP): Capt Charles A. Ferriter

Gunston Hall (3 LSU embarked): Cdr Charles W. Musgrave

Comstock (3 LSU embarked): Cdr Emmanuel T. Goyette

90.3 Tractor Group: Capt Robert C. Peden

LST 611: Lt Delmar E. Blevins

LST 715: Lt Willie J. Gros

LST 742: Lt Robert B. Leonnig

LST 802: Lt Vladimir Fedorowicz

LST 845: Lt John F. Butler

LST 1048: Lt Rayburn M. Quinn

LST 1123: Lt Charles L. Wall

LST 1134: Lt William B. Faris

LST 1138: Lt Mike Stapleton

LST 857: Lt Dick Weidemeyer

LST 859: Lt Leland Tinsley

LST 898: Lt Robert M. Beckley

LST 914: Lt Ralph L. Holzhaus

LST 973: Lt Robert I. Trapp

LST 799: Lt Trumond E. Houston

LST 883: Lt Charles M. Miller

LST 975 (17 LST): Lt Arnold W. Harer

SCAJAP LSTs (30 LST)

LSM 419: Lt John R. Bradley

90.4 Transport Division 14: Capt Samuel G. Kelly

(7th RCT U. S. Marines and MAG 33 embarked; did not arrive Inchon until 21 Sept.)

Bayfield: Capt William E. Ferrall

Okanogan: Capt Timothy F. Donohue

Bexar: Capt Clarence E. Coffin, Jr.

Thomas Jefferson (4 APA): Capt Tyrrell D. Jacobs

Algol: Capt John A. Edwards

Winston: Capt Jack Maginnis

Montague (3 AKA): Capt Henry P. Wright, Jr.

Catamount: Cdr Kenneth Loveland

Colonial (2 LSD): Cdr Thomas J. Greene

90.5 Air Support Group: RAdm Richard W. Ruble

90.51 CVE Element: RAdm Richard W. Ruble

Badoeng Strait: Capt Arnold W. McKechnie

Sicily (2 CVE): Capt John S. Thach

90.52 CVE Screen: Cdr Byron L. Gurnette

Hanson (DDR): Cdr Cecil R. Welte

Taussig: Cdr William C. Meyer

George K. MacKenzie: Cdr William R. Laird, Jr.

Ernest G. Small (3 DD): Cdr Franklin C. Snow

90.6 Gunfire Support Group: RAdm John M. Higgins

90.61 Cruiser Element: RAdm John M. Higgins

90.6.2 Fire Support Unit 1: RAdm John M. Higgins

Toledo: Capt Richard F. Stout

Rochester: Capt Edward L. Woodyard

HMS *Kenya*: Capt P. W. Brock, RN

HMS *Jamaica*: Capt J. S. C. Salter, D.S.O., O.B.E., RN

90.62 Destroyer Element: Capt Halle C. Allan, Jr.

90.6.2 Fire Support Unit 2: Capt Halle C. Allan, Jr.

Mansfield: Cdr Edwin H. Headland

De Haven: Cdr Oscar B. Lungren

Lyman K. Swenson (3 DD): Cdr Robert A. Schelling

90.6.3 Fire Support Unit 3: Cdr Robert H. Close

Collett: Cdr Robert H. Close

Gurke: Cdr Frederick M. Radel

Henderson: Cdr William S. Stewart

90.63 LSMR Element: Cdr Clarence T. Doss, Jr.

90.6.4 Fire Support Unit 4: Cdr Clarence T. Doss, Jr.

LSMR 401: LCdr Melvin E. Bustard, Jr.

LSMR 403: Lt Frank G. Schettino

LSMR 404 (3 LSMR): Lt George M. Wrocklage

90.7 Screening and Protective Group: Capt Richard T. Spofford

Rowan (DD): Cdr Alan R. Josephson

Southerland (DDR): Cdr Homer E. Conrad

Bayonne: LCdr Harry A. Clark

Newport: LCdr Percy A. Lilly, Jr.

Evansville: LCdr Elliot V. Converse, Jr.

HMS *Mounts Bay*: Capt J. H. Unwin, D.S.C., RN

HMS *Whitesand Bay*: LCdr J. V. Brothers, RN

HMNZS *Tutira*: LCdr P. J. H. Hoare, RNZN

HMNZS *Pukaki* (7 PF): LCdr L. E. Herrick, D.S.C., RNZN

RFS *La Grandiere* (8 PF): Cdr Urbain E. Cabanie

Pledge (AM): Lt Richard Young

Partridge: Lt(jg) Robert C. Fuller, Jr.

Mockingbird: Lt(jg) Stanley P. Gary

Kite: Lt(jg) Nicholas Grkovic

Osprey: Lt(jg) Philip Levin

Redhead: Lt(jg) T. R. Howard

Chatterer (6 AMS): Lt(jg) James P. McMahon

90.8 Second Echelon Movement Group: Capt Louis D. Sharp, Jr.

92.2 7th Infantry Division (Reinforced)

General G. M. Randall: Capt Alexander C. Thorington

General J. C. Breckinridge: Capt Fremont B. Eggers

General H. W. Butner (3 AP): Capt Dale E. Collins

Fred C. Ainsworth

General Leroy Eltinge

Aiken Victory

Private Sadao S. Munemori (4 T-AP)

SS *African Rainbow*

SS *African Pilot*

SS *Robin Kirk*

SS *Helen Lykes*

SS *Meredith Victory*

SS *Empire Marshall*

SS *Mormacport*

SS *Lawrence Victory*

SS *Southwind*

SS *Beaver Victory*

SS *Robin Goodfellow*

SS *California Bear*

90.9 Third Echelon Movement Group: Capt Albert E. Jarrell

X Corps troops

General William A. Mann (AP): Capt Charles H. Walker

General William Weigel

Marine Phoenix (2 T-AP)

SS *Robin Trent*

SS *Dolly Turman*

SS *Charles Lykes*

SS *Twin Falls Victory*
SS *American Veteran*
SS *American Attorney*
SS *Empire Wallace*
SS *Green Bay Victory*
SS *P. & T. Navigator*
SS *Luxembourg Victory*
SS *Belgium Victory*
SS *Bessemer Victory*
SS *Cotton State*
91 Blockade and Covering Force: RAdm Sir William G. Andrewes, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., RN
HMS *Triumph* (CVL): Capt A. D. Torlesse, D.S.O., RN
HMS *Ceylon* (CL): Capt C. F. J. L. Davies, D.S.C., RN
HMS *Cockade*: LtCdr H. J. Lee, D.S.C., RN
HMS *Charity*: LtCdr P. R. G. Worth, D.S.C., RN
HMCS *Cayuga*: Capt Jeffry V. Brock, D.S.C., RCN
HMCS *Sioux*: Cdr P. D. Taylor, RCN
HMCS *Athabaskan*: Cdr R. T. Welland, D.S.C., RCN
HMAS *Bataan*: Cdr W. B. M. Marks, RAN
HMAS *Warramunga*: Cdr O. H. Becher, D.S.C., RAN
HNethMS *Evertsen* (8 DD): LtCdr D. J. Van Doorninck
ROK NAVAL FORCES: Cdr Michael J. Luosey, USN
Paik Doo San (PC 701): Cdr Chai Yong Nam, ROKN
Kum Kang San (PC 702): Cdr Lee Hi Jong, ROKN
Chi Ri San (PC 704; 4 PC): LCdr Hyun Sibak, ROKN
YMS 302
YMS 303
YMS 306
YMS 307
YMS 501
YMS 502
YMS 503
YMS 510
YMS 512
YMS 515
YMS 518 (11 YMS)
TASK FORCE 77--FAST CARRIER GROUP: RAdm Edward C. Ewen (in Philippine Sea)
Carrier Division 1: RAdm Edward C. Ewen

Philippine Sea (CV): Capt Willard K. Goodney

Carrier Division 3: RAdm John M. Hoskins

Valley Forge (CV): Capt Lester K. Rice

Carrier Division 5

Boxer (CV): Capt Cameron Briggs

77.1 Support Group: Capt Harry H. Henderson

Worcester: Capt Harry H. Henderson

77.2 Screen Group: Capt Charles W. Parker

DesDiv 31: Capt Charles W. Parker

Shelton: Cdr Charles B. Jackson, Jr.

James E. Kyes: Cdr Fran M. Christiansen

Eversole (3 DD): Cdr Charles E. Phillips

Higbee (DDR): Cdr Elmer Moore

DesDiv 111: Capt Jeane R. Clark

Wiltsie: Cdr Carrol W. Brigham

Theodore E. Chandler: Cdr William J. Collum, Jr.

Hamner (3 DD): Cdr Jack J. Hughes

Chevalier (DDR): Cdr Blake B. Booth

DesDiv 112: Capt Bernard F. Roeder

Ozbourn: Cdr Charles O. Akers

McKean: Cdr Harry L. Reiter, Jr.

Hollister (3 DD): Cdr Hugh W. Howard

Frank Knox (DDR): Cdr Sam J. Caldwell, Jr.

CortRon 1

Fletcher: Cdr W. M. Lowry

Radford (2 DDE): Cdr Elvin C. Ogle

TASK FORCE 79--COMMANDER SERVICE SQUADRON 3: Capt Bernard L. Austin

79.1 Mobile Logistic Service Group: Capt John G. McClaughry

Cacapon (Initially): Capt John G. McClaughry

Passumpsic (Initially; 2 AO): Capt Frank I. Winant, Jr.

Mount Katmai (AE): Capt Albert S. Carter

Graffias (AF): Capt William W. Fitts

79.2 Objective Area Logistic Group: Capt Philip H. Ross

Navasota (Initially; AO): Capt Robert O. Strange

Virgo (AKA): Capt Philip H. Ross

Grainger (AK): Cdr Horace C. Laird, Jr.

Hewell: Lt Stanley Jaworski

Ryer: Lt Gurley P. Chatelain

Estero (3 AKL): Lt Tom Watson

79.3 Logistic Support Group: Capt Bernard L. Austin

Piedmont: Capt James R. Topper

Dixie (2 AD): Capt Jose M. Cabanillas

Kermit Roosevelt (ARG): Cdr Lester C. Conwell

Jason (ARH): Capt William B. Epps

Cimarron (AO): Capt Stanley G. Nichols

Warrick: Capt George Fritschmann

Uvalde (2 AKA): Capt Louis F. Teuscher

Nemasket (AOG): Lt Harry F. Dixon

Karin (AF): LCdr Berley L. Maddox

79.4 Salvage and Maintenance Group

Mataco (ATF): Lt Frank P. Wilson

Bolster (ARS): Lt Billis L. Whitworth

TASK FORCE 99--PATROL AND RECONNAISSANCE FORCE: RAdm George R. *Henderson*

Curtiss (AV): Capt Anson C. Perkins

Gardiners Bay (AVP): Capt Frank G. Raysbrook

Salisbury Sound (AV): Capt Francis R. Jones

99.1 Search and Reconnaissance Group: Capt Joseph M. Carson

99.11 Patrol Squadron 6: Cdr Arthur F. Farwell, Jr.

99.12 88th Squadron RAF: Squadron Leader P. Helme

99.13 209th Squadron RAF: Squadron Leader P. Le Cheminant

99.2 Patrol and Escort Group: Capt Joseph M. Carson

99.21 Patrol Squadron 42: Cdr Gordon F. Smale

99.22 Patrol Squadron 47: Cdr Joe H. Arnold

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Appendix F. Final Troop List of Division for the Inchon Landing

Below, as nearly as can be determined, is the troop list of the 1st Marine Division (Reinf) for the Inchon Landing. The list is correct as to units included, but it has been difficult to reconcile the totals given for units.

Headquarters Bn: 916 actual strength
1st Serv Bn: 873
lst Sig Bn: 652 (Includes Carrier Platoon, FMF.)
Ist MT Bn: 686
1st Med Bn: 566
1st Am Trk Co: 244
1st Ord Bn: 533
1st Shore Party Bn: 648 (Includes Detachments of Naval Beach Group 1.)
1st Engr Bn: 1,038
1st Tank Bn: 811 (Includes Anti-tank Platoons of the Anti-tank Companies of the 1st and 5th Marines.)
11th Marine: 2,360 (Includes Battery C, 1st 4.5” Rocket Bn, FMF.)
1st Marines: 3, 850
5th Marines: 3,611
7th Marines: 0
1st Am Trac Bn: 868
1st CSG: 1,291 (Includes 1st Fumigation and Bath Plat., FMF; 1st Aerial Delivery Plat., FMF; and Naval Beach Group 1 [less dets. with the 1st Shore Party Bn].)
7th MT Bn: 430
Det MTACS-2: 55
VMO-6: 62
Total Marine Corps and Navy: 19,494

Korean MC Regt: 2,786

Co A, 56th Am Trac Bn, USA: 151
Hq Det, USA: 38
Sig Det, USA: 37
96th FA Bn, USA: 388
2d Engr Spec Brig, USA: 952
73d Engr (c) Bn, USA: 724
50th Engr Port Const Co., USA: 214

65th Ord Amm Co., USA: 256

Total U.S. Army: 2,760

GRAND TOTAL: 25,040

The following units of the Division did not participate in the Inchon Landing:

RCT-7, en route to the Far East

Administrative Center Pusan, Korea

Division Administrative Center, 1st Armd Amph TracBn, 17-year-olds and casuals at Kobe, Japan

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Appendix G. Summary of Operation Orders Issued by 1st Marine Division for the Inchon-Seoul Campaign

1-50, 9 Aug 50: Movement of the Division to the Far East

2-50, 4 Sep 50: Inchon Landing

3-50, 15 Sep 50 (2328): Seizure of Objective O-3 short of the FBHL

4-50, 16 Sep 50 (1045): Seizure of FBHL

5-50, 16 Sep 50 (1600): Capture of Kimpo Airfield. Prepare to seize Corps Phase Line C-C

6-50, 18 Sep 50 (1814): Seizure and preparation of crossing of Han River by 5th Marines. 1st Marines to continue attack relieved on the right (south) flank by the 32nd Infantry now attached to 1st MarDiv

7-50, 19 Sep 50 (1430): Crossing of the Han River by the 5th Marines and uncovering crossing sites by 1st Marines

8-50, 20 Sep 50: Continuation of attack by 5th Marines toward Seoul to uncover the northern approaches of the main Seoul bridge sites. Continuation of attack by 1st Marines to seize the southern and western approaches and the Seoul ridge sites, prepared to cross the Han River in that vicinity

9-50, 23 Sep 50 (1200): Continuation of attack by 1st Marines to seize high ground south of the road and rail bridges leading to Seoul prepared to cross the Han River. Continuation of attack by 5th Marines to uncover the bridge sites. Crossing of the Han River at Haengju by the 7th Marines to seize objectives covering the north flank of the Division

10-50, 23 Sep 50 (2200): Crossing of the Han River by the 1s Marines. Continuation of the attack by the 5th Marines. 7th Marines to continue or Mission assigned by 1st MarDiv OpnO 9-50

11-50, 24 Sep 50 (2400): Continuation of the attack with all three regiments to capture Seoul and the high ground north thereof

12-50, 26 Sep 50 (1230): Continuation of the attack to capture Seoul. Boundary between 5th and 7th Marines changed to pinch out 5th Marines beyond the Government Palace. The 7th Marines to make an enveloping attack from the northwest

13-50, 29 Sep 50 (2000): Continuation of the attack to the east to secure Seoul and conduct a reconnaissance in force to the northwest prepared to relieve elements of the 7th Infantry Division north of the Han River. Seizure of prescribed Corps blocking positions

14-50, 30 Sep 50 (1500): Continuation of the attack and prescription of blocking positions to be occupied by the Division

15-50, 5 Oct 50: Movement of the Division to staging area in the vicinity of Inchon in anticipation of the move in assault shipping to Wonsan

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Appendix I. Congratulatory Messages

The following messages, of a commendatory nature, were transmitted to the 1st Marine Division by the X Corps upon completion of the Inchon-Seoul Campaign.

From CG, X Corps to CG, 1st Marine Division under date of 28 September 1950

"On this date the X Corps attained one of its distinct objectives—the securing of the city of Seoul. In recognition of the heroic efforts of the officers and men of the 1st Marine Division I extend my deepest thanks and my continuing admiration for a task well done." Signed Edward M. Almond, Major General, United States Army, Commanding.

From the President to General MacArthur

"I know that I speak for the entire American people when I send you my warmest congratulations on the victory which has been achieved under your leadership in Korea. Few operations in military history can match either the delaying action where you traded space for time in which to build up your forces, or the brilliant maneuver which has now resulted in the liberation of Seoul. I am particularly impressed by the splendid cooperation of our Army, Navy, and Air Force. I wish you would extend my thanks and congratulations to the commanders of those services—Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, Vice Admiral Charles T. Joy and Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer. The unification of our arms established by you and by them has set a shining example. My thanks and the thanks of the people of all the free nations go out to your gallant forces—soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen—from the United States and the other countries fighting for freedom under the United Nations Banner. I salute you all, and say to all of you from all of us at home, 'well and nobly done.' " Signed Harry S. Truman.

From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to General MacArthur

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff are proud of the great successes you have achieved. We realize that they would have been impossible without brilliant and audacious leadership and without the full coordination and the fighting spirit of all forces and all arms. From the sudden initiation of hostilities you have exploited to the utmost all capabilities and opportunities. Your transition from defensive to offensive operations was magnificently planned, timed, and executed. You have given new inspiration to the freedom-loving peoples of the world. We remain completely confident that the great task entrusted to you by the United Nations will be carried to a successful conclusion."

From CG, X Corps to all units of the X Corps under date of 2 October 1950

"It is desired that this message be disseminated to all members of your command. The achievements of

the U. N. forces comprising the X Corps should be a pride and inspiration to all who participated in the recent operations so successfully concluded and which resulted in the liberation of Seoul, the capital city of Korea. Your efforts have greatly contributed in freeing the Republic of Korea of the forces of Communism that threatened to enslave her people. Koreans may now take their rightful place among the freedom-loving people of the world. History will long remember the feat of arms that you, through your untiring efforts and superb valor have accomplished. I am proud of the units comprising the X Corps. Each of you should be proud of the unit in which you serve, the nation it represents, and your part in this military operation. I am confident that the tasks that are before us will be accomplished with the same splendid cooperation, leadership, and determination that you have so recently displayed." Signed Major General Edward M. Almond, Commanding General, X Corps.

Division Commander's Message to the 1st Marine Division upon Completion of the Inchon-Seoul Campaign

On 8 October 1950, the Division Commander issued Division Memorandum No. 192-50, quoted below, in recognition of the accomplishments of the 1st Marine Division during the Inchon-Seoul Campaign:

"1. Upon completion of the campaign in the Inchon-Seoul area of Korea I desire to express my appreciation and admiration of the superb manner in which all hands have cooperated in bringing to a successful conclusion a very difficult operation.

"2. From the time the decision was made to bring the Division to war strength and to commit it in Korea until the city of Seoul was captured, urgency has been the order of the day. Urgency has been necessary because tidal conditions dictated that a landing at Inchon be made on September 15th. For the Division this meant that its elements in the United States had to be brought to war strength immediately, had to be re-equipped and, in the absence of amphibious shipping, had to be loaded on such other ships as could hurriedly be made available. Upon arrival in Kobe, Japan, there was the pressing necessity of reloading in minimum time in amphibious shipping, with the disruption caused by a destructve typhoon. Elements of the Division comprising the First Provisional Marine Brigade were not released from combat in South Korea until midnight of September 5th and between that date and September 12th were required to move to Pusan, re-equip and mount out.

"3. It is now history that the First Marine Division did meet its commitments, did land at Inchon on September 15th under conditions which required the maximum of coordination, aggressive action, and devotion to duty; went on to capture the Kimpo airfield three days after landing, to effect a difficult amphibious crossing of the Han River, and to liberate the city of Seoul by driving the North Korean invaders far beyond its limits.

"4. I fully appreciate, and I am sure the American people now fully appreciate and realize, that only well-trained and determined troops, completely devoted to duty, could have accomplished what the First Marine Division did in Korea. You have established your place in history. The memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice in the accomplishment of this mission will forever remain an inspiration to all Marines."

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Appendix K. Comments on Close Air Support Provided by 1st Marine Aircraft Wing

HEADQUARTERS
7TH INFANTRY DIVISION ARTILLERY
Office of the Commanding General
APO 7
10 January 1951
Subject: Marine Air Support
To: Commandant, United States Marine Corps, Washington 25, D. C.
Thru: Commanding General, 7th Infantry Division, APO 7.

1. In my capacity as Division Artillery Commander and Fire Support Coordinator of the Seventh Infantry Division I have been able to observe closely the most effective system of close air support currently used by the Marines. During the period 19 September to 20 December 1950, close air support of this division was furnished almost exclusively by the First Marine Air Wing.

2. In an effort to parallel as nearly as possible the Marine system of controlling close support air this division had attached to it the Far East Detachment, ANGLICO, FMF, Atlantic. This detachment was augmented by nine (9) Tactical Air Control Parties, Fifth U. S. Air Force, trained in the Marine system of control by the ANGLICO detachment. This enabled the placement of Tactical Air Control Parties with each infantry battalion. Such placement proved to be ideal and gave the battalion commander a means of controlling and coordinating the close air support he received.

3. It is worthy to note that in 57 days of combat 1024 sorties were flown by Marine Aircraft in close support of the division without a single casualty among our own troops due to friendly air action. This record I attribute to the fact that adequate control was available with front line units. In many instances Marine planes were bombing and strafing within 200 yards of our front lines.

4. I wish to express my appreciation for the superior cooperation of Captain Charles E. Crew, 023897, USMC, Far East Detachment, ANGLICO, FMF, Atlantic and his enlisted assistants during the period 19 September 1950 to 20 December 1950. In his capacity as Marine Air Liaison Officer to the Seventh Infantry Division Captain Crew functioned as a member of the division team with a common objective. The excellent air support received by this division was due in no small part to the enthusiastic manner in which Captain Crew performed. Unfortunately, I was not able to observe the work of the other two Marine Forward Air Controllers attached to the division. Reports indicate that they performed equally as well.

5. Again, allow me to reemphasize my appreciation for the outstanding air support received by this division. The Marine system of control, in my estimation, approaches the ideal and I firmly believe that a similar system should be adopted as standard for Army Divisions.

(s) HOMER W. KIEFER

Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

[1st Endorsement]
Subject: Marine Air Support
Headquarters, 7th Infantry Division, APO 7 12 January 1951
To: Commanding General, X Corps, APO 909

I wish to express my own appreciation to all members of the 1st Marine Air Wing who assisted in the fine air support given to the 7th Infantry Division and also to commend Forward Air Controllers, Captain Edward P. Stamford and 1st Lieutenant Jack R. Grey as well as Captain Crew for outstanding performances of duty in connection with the support.

(s) DAVID G. BARR
Maj Gen., USA
Commanding

[2nd Endorsement]
Headquarters, X Corps, APO 909, 16 January 1951
To: Commanding General, Eighth United States Army, APO 301

1. The effective close air support rendered by the 1st Marine Air Wing through the Forward Air Controllers with the 7th Infantry Division greatly aided in the successful accomplishment of X Corps operations. The actions of the personnel concerned are worthy of commendation, and I wish to add my appreciation for their assistance.

2. Further, I wish to emphasize the statements of General Kiefer in paragraph 5, basic letter, in which he endorses the Marine system of Tactical Air Control. It has proved itself on every occasion.

(s) EDWARD M. ALMOND
Major General, United States Army
Commanding
Comments on Close Air Support

[3rd Endorsement]
CHO FEC-SCAP
AG RECORDS
FIEDAG 330.13
4795
AG 373 KAR (10 Jan 51)
Subject: Marine Air Support
Hq Eighth U.S. Army Korea (EU AK), APO 301 30 JAN 1951
TO: Commander-in-Chief, Far East, APO 500

I note with gratification the splendid spirit of cooperation that existed between the 1st Marine Air Wing and the 7th Infantry Division in recent combat operations. I congratulate not only Captain Crew, Captain Stamford, and Lieutenant Grey but all officers and men of the 1st Marine Air Wing for their magnificent performance.

(s) M.B. RIDGWAY
Lieutenant General, United States Army
Commanding

[4th Endorsement]
AG 330.13 (10 Jan 51) GA
General Headquarters, Far East Command, APO 500, 4 February 1951
To: Commander, United States Naval Forces, Far East, Navy No. 1165

Commander-in-Chief, Far East, takes pleasure in forwarding this correspondence which again illustrated the outstanding support that Marine Air is providing ground forces in the Korean operations.

By Command of General MacArthur
(s) K.B. BUSH
Brigadier General, USA
Adjutant General

CNFE/P15 05/RVW/the
Serial: 1213 12 Feb 1951
Fifth Endorsement on CG, 7th INFDIVART ltr of 10 Jan 1951
From: Commander Naval Forces, Far East
To: Commandant, United States Marine Corps
Via: (1) Commanding General, First Marine Air Wing
(2) Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet
Subj: Marine Air Support

1. Readdressed and forwarded.

2. Commander, Naval Forces, Far East, takes great pleasure in forwarding correspondence and desires to recognize also the outstanding performance of duty of Marine Corps personnel concerned.

(s) C. T. JOY

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Appendix L. Presidential Unit Citation

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

FIRST MARINE DIVISION, REINFORCED

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 15 September to 11 October 1950. In the face of a determined enemy and against almost insurmountable obstacles, including disadvantageous tidal and beach conditions on the western coast of Korea, the First Marine Division, Reinforced, rapidly and successfully effected the amphibious seizure of Inch'on in an operation without parallel in the history of amphibious warfare. Fully aware that the precarious situation of friendly ground forces fighting desperately against the continued heavy pressure of a numerically superior hostile force necessitated the planning and execution of this extremely hazardous operation within a period of less than thirty days, and cognizant of the military importance of its assigned target, the Division moved quickly into action and, on 15 September, by executing three well-coordinated attacks over highly treacherous beach approaches defended by resolute enemy troops, captured the island of Wolmi-do, the city of Inch'on and Kimp'o Airfield, and rendered invaluable assistance in the capture of Seoul. As a result of its aggressive attack, the Division drove the hostile forces in hasty retreat over thirty miles in the ensuing ten days, completely severed vital hostile communication and supply lines and greatly relieved enemy pressure on other friendy ground units, thereby permitting these units to break out from their Pusan beachhead and contributing materially to the total destruction of hostile ground forces in southern Korea. The havoc and destruction wrought on an enemy flushed with previous victories and the vast accomplishments in turning the tide of battle from a weakening defensive to a vigorous offensive action reflect the highest credit upon the officers and men of the First Marine Division, Reinforced, and the United States Naval Service."

The following reinforcing units of the First Marine Division participated in operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 15 September to 11 October 1950:

Fleet Marine Force Units and Detachments: Radio Relay Platoon, 1st Signal Operations Company; Battery C, 1st 4.5 Inch Rocket Battalion; 1st Amphibian Truck Company; 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion (less Company "D"); 1st Combat Service Group, Service Command; 1st Fumigation and Bath Platoon; 1st Aerial Delivery Platoon; 7th Motor Transport Battalion, Service Command; 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion; Detachment Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron Two; Team #1, First Provisional Historical Platoon; Marine Observation Squadron Six; Marine Aircraft Group Thirty-Three, Reinforced, including Headquarters Squadron Thirty-Three, Marine Service Squadron Thirty-Three, Marine Ground Control Intercept Squadron One, Marine

Fighter Squadron Two Hundred Twelve, Marine Fighter Squadron Two Hundred Fourteen, Marine Fighter Squadron Three Hundred Twelve, Marine Fighter Squadron Three Hundred Twenty-Three, Marine Night Fighter Squadron Five Hundred Thirteen, and Marine Night Fighter Squadron Five Hundred Forty-Two.

United States Navy Units: Naval Beach Group One.

United States Army Units: Detachment 205th Signal Repair Company; Detachment 4th Signal Battalion; 163rd Military Intelligence Service Detachment; Company "A" Reinforced, 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion; 96th Field Artillery Battalion; 441st Counter-Intelligence Corps Detachment; 2nd Engineer Special Brigade; 73rd Engineer (C) Battalion; 50th Engineer Port Construction Company; 65th Ordnance Ammunition Company; 32nd Regimental Combat Team; Special Operations Company; 3rd Battalion, 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team; and the 50th Antiaircraft Artillery Air Warning Battalion.

For the President,

(s) DAN A. KIMBALL

Secretary of the Navy

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The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Foreword

THE BREAKOUT of the 1st Marine Division from the Chosin Reservoir area will long be remembered as one of the inspiring epics of our history. It is also worthy of consideration as a campaign in the best tradition of American military annals.

The ability of the Marines to fight their way through twelve Chinese divisions over a 78-mile mountain road in sub-zero weather cannot be explained by courage and endurance alone. It also owed to the high degree of professional forethought and skill as well as the "uncommon valor" expected of all Marines.

A great deal of initiative was required of unit commanders, and tactics had to be improvised at times on the spur of the moment to meet unusual circumstances. But in the main, the victory was gained by firm discipline and adherence to time-tested military principles. Allowing for differences in arms, indeed, the Marines of 1950 used much the same fundamental tactics as those employed on mountain roads by Xenophon and his immortal Ten Thousand when they cut their way through Asiatic hordes to the Black Sea in the year 401 B.C.

When the danger was greatest, the 1st Marine Division might have accepted an opportunity for air evacuation of troops after the destruction of weapons and supplies to keep them from falling into the enemy's hands. But there was never a moment's hesitation. The decision of the commander and the determination of all hands to come out fighting with all essential equipment were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Marine Corps.

--Gen. R. McC. Pate, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Preface

THIS IS THE THIRD in a series of five volumes dealing with the operations of the United States Marine Corps in Korea during the period 2 August 1950 to 27 July 1953. Volume III presents in detail the operations of the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing as a part of X Corps, USA, in the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

The time covered in this book extends from the administrative landing at Wonsan on 26 October 1950 to the Hungnam evacuation which ended on Christmas Eve. The record would not be complete, however, without reference to preceding high-level strategic decisions in Washington and Tokyo which placed the Marines in northeast Korea and governed their employment.

Credit is due the U.S. Army and Navy for support on land and sea, and the U.S. Navy and Air Force for support in the air. But since this is primarily a Marine Corps history, the activities of other services are described here only in sufficient detail to show Marine operations in their proper perspective.

The ideal of the authors has been to relate the epic of the Chosin Reservoir breakout from the viewpoint of the man in the foxhole as well as the senior officer at the command post. Grateful acknowledgment is made to the 142 Marine officers and men who gave so generously of their time by contributing 338 narratives, letters, and interviews. In many instances this material was so detailed that some could not be used, because of space limitations. But all will go into the permanent Marine archives for the benefit of future historians.

Thanks are also extended to the Army, Navy, and Air Force, as well as Marine officers, who offered valuable comments and criticisms after reading the preliminary drafts of chapters. Without this assistance no accurate and detailed account could have been written.

The maps contained in this volume, as in the previous ones, have been prepared by the Reproduction Section, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia. The advice of officers of the Current History Branch of the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, has also been of aid in the preparation of these pages.

--Maj. Gen. E. W. Snedeker, USMC, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3

The Chosin Reservoir Campaign

Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona

Chapter 1. Problems of Victory

IT IS A LESSON of history that questions of how to use a victory can be as difficult as problems of how to win one. This truism was brought home forcibly to the attention of the United Nations (UN) heads, both political and military, during the last week of September 1950. Already, with the fighting still in progress, it had become evident that the UN armies were crushing the forces of Communism in Korea, as represented by the remnants of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA).

Only a month before, such a result would have seemed a faint and unrealistic hope. Late in August the hard-pressed Eighth U.S. Army in Korea (EUSAK) was defending that southeast corner of the peninsula known as the Pusan Perimeter.

"Nothing fails like success," runs a cynical French proverb, and the truth of this adage was demonstrated militarily when the dangerously over-extended NKPA forces paid the penalty of their tenuous supply line on 15 September 1950. That was the date of the X Corps amphibious assault at Inchon, with the 1st Marine Division as landing force spearheading the advance on Seoul.

X Corps was the strategic anvil of a combined operation as the Eighth Army jumped off next day to hammer its way out of the Pusan Perimeter and pound northward toward Seoul. When elements of the two UN forces met just south of the Republic of Korea (ROK) capital on 26 September, the routed NKPA remnants were left only the hope of escaping northward across the 38th parallel.[1]

The bold strategic plan leading up to this victory—one of the most decisive ever won by U.S. land, sea and air forces—was largely the concept of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, USA, who was Commander in Chief of the United Nations Command (CinCUNC) as well as U.S. Commander in Chief in the Far East (CinCFE). It was singularly appropriate, therefore, that he should have returned the political control of the battle-scarred ROK capital to President Syngman Rhee on 29 September. Marine officers who witnessed the ceremony have never forgotten the moving spectacle of the American general and the fiery Korean patriot, both past their 70th birthdays, as they stood together under the shell-shattered skylight of the Government Palace.[2]

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Chapter 1. Problems of Victory

Decision to Cross the 38th Parallel

"Where do we go from here?" would hardly have been an oversimplified summary of the questions confronting UN leaders when it became apparent that the NKPA forces were defeated. In order to appraise the situation, it is necessary to take a glance at preceding events.

As early as 19 July, the dynamic ROK leader had made it plain that he did not propose to accept the pre-invasion *status quo*. He served notice that his forces would unify Korea by driving to the Manchurian border. Since the Communists had violated the 38th Parallel, the aged Rhee declared, this imaginary demarcation between North and South no longer existed. He pointed out that the sole purpose of the line in the first place had been to divide Soviet and American occupation zones after World War II, in order to facilitate the Japanese surrender and pave the way for a democratic Korean government.

In May 1948, such a government had come about in South Korea by popular elections, sponsored and supervised by the UN. These elections had been scheduled for all Korea but were prohibited by the Russians in their zone. The Communists not only ignored the National Assembly in Seoul, but also arranged their own version of a governing body in Pyongyang two months later. The so-called North Korean People's Republic thus became another of the Communist puppet states set up by the USSR.

That the United Nations did not recognize the North Korean state in no way altered its very real status as a politico-military fact. For obvious reasons, then, all UN decisions relating to the Communist state had to take into account the possibility of reactions by Soviet Russia and Red China, which shared Korea's northern boundary.

At the outbreak of the conflict on 25 June 1950, the UN Security Council had, by a vote of 9–0, called for an immediate end to the fighting and the withdrawal of all NKPA forces to the 38th Parallel.[3] This appeal having gone unheeded, the Council on 27 June recommended "... that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area.'[4] It was the latter authorization, supplemented by another resolution on 7 July, that led to military commitments by the United States and to the appointment of General MacArthur as over-all UN Commander.

These early UN actions constituted adequate guidance in Korea until the Inchon landing and EUSAK's counteroffensive turned the tide. With the NKPA in full retreat, however, and UN Forces rapidly approaching the 38th Parallel, the situation demanded re-evaluation, including supplemental instructions to the military commander. The question arose as to whether the North Koreans should be allowed sanctuary beyond the parallel, possibly enabling them to reorganize for new aggression. It will be recalled that Syngman Rhee had already expressed his thoughts forcibly in this connection on 19 July; and the ROK Army translated thoughts into action on 1 October by crossing the border.

Click here to view map

The UN, in its 7 July resolution, having authorized the United States to form a unified military force and appoint a supreme commander in Korea, it fell upon the Administration of President Harry S. Truman to translate this dictum into workaday reality. Aiding the Chief Executive and his Cabinet in this delicate task with its far-reaching implications were the Joint U.S. Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The Army member, General J. Lawton Collins, also functioned as Executive Agent of JCS for the United Nations Command in Korea, thus keeping intact the usual chain of command from the Army Chief of Staff to General MacArthur, who now served both the U.S. and

UN.[5]

Late in August, two of the Joint Chiefs, General Collins and Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, USN, had flown to Japan to discuss the forthcoming Inchon landing with General MacArthur. In the course of the talks, it was agreed that CinCUNC's objective should be the *destruction* of the North Korean forces, and that ground operations should be extended beyond the 38th Parallel to achieve this goal. The agreement took the form of a recommendation, placed before Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson on 7 September.[6]

A week later, JCS informed MacArthur that President Truman had approved certain "conclusions" relating to the Korean conflict, but that these were not yet to be construed as final decisions. Among other things, the Chief Executive accepted the reasoning that UN Forces had a legal basis for engaging the NKPA north of the Parallel. MacArthur would plan operations accordingly, JCS directed, but would carry them out only after being granted explicit permission.[7]

The historic authorization, based on recommendations of the National Security Council to President Truman, reached General Headquarters (GHQ), Tokyo, in a message dispatched by JCS on 27 September:

"Your military objective is the destruction of the North Korean Armed Forces. In attaining this objective you are authorized to conduct military operations, including amphibious and airborne landings or ground operations north of the 38th Parallel in Korea, provided that at the time of such operations there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces, no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea. . . ."

The lengthy message abounded in paragraphs of caution, reflecting the desire of both the UN and the United States to avoid a general war. Not discounting the possibility of intervention by Russia or Red China, JCS carefully outlined MacArthur's courses of action for several theoretical situations. Moreover, he was informed that certain broad restrictions applied regardless of developments:

". . . under no circumstances, however, will your forces cross the Manchurian or USSR borders of Korea and, as a matter of policy, no non-Korean Ground Forces will be used in the northeast provinces bordering the Soviet Union or in the area along the Manchurian border. Furthermore, support of your operations north or south of the 38th parallel will not include Air or Naval action against Manchuria or against USSR territory. . . ."[8]

Thus MacArthur had the green light, although the signal was shaded by various qualifications. On 29 September, the new Secretary of Defense, George C. Marshall, told him in a message, ". . . We want you to feel unhampered tactically and strategically to proceed north of 38th parallel. . . . "[9]

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Chapter 1. Problems of Victory
Surrender Message to NKPA Forces

Meanwhile, a step was taken by the U.S. Government on 27 September in the hope that hostilities might end without much further loss or risk for either side. By dispatch, JCS authorized MacArthur to announce, at his discretion, a suggested surrender message to the NKPA.[10] Framed by the U.S. State Department, the message was broadcast on 1 October and went as follows:

"To: The Commander-in-chief, North Korean Forces. The early and total defeat and complete destruction of your Armed Forces and war making potential is now inevitable. In order that the decision of the United Nations may be carried out with a minimum of further loss of life and destruction of property, I, as the United Nations Commander-in-Chief, call up on you and the forces under your command, in whatever part of Korea situated, forthwith to lay down your arms and cease hostilities under such military supervision as I may direct and I call upon you at once to liberate all United Nations prisoners of war and civilian internees under your control and to make adequate provision for their protection, care, maintenance, and immediate transportation to such places as I indicate.

"North Korean forces, including prisoners of war in the hands of the United Nations Command, will continue to be given the care indicated by civilized custom and practice and permitted to return to their homes as soon as practicable.

"I shall anticipate your early decision upon this opportunity to avoid the further useless shedding of blood and destruction of property."[11]

The surrender broadcast evoked no direct reply from Kim Il Sung, Premier of North Korea and Commander in Chief of the NKPA. Instead, the reaction of the Communist bloc came ominously from another quarter. Two days after MacArthur's proclamation, Red China's Foreign Minister Chou En-Lai informed K. M. Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador in Peiping, that China would intervene in the event UN forces crossed the 38th Parallel. He added, however, that such action would not be forthcoming if only ROK troops entered North Korea.[12]

It will be recalled that the JCS authorization of 27 September permitted operations north of the Parallel" . . . provided that at the time of such operations there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces, *no announcement of intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea*. . . . "[13] In view of the last two provisos, MacArthur's plans for crossing the border could conceivably have been cancelled after Chou's announcement. But optimism over the course of the war ran high among the United Nations at this time, and CinCUNC shortly received supplemental authority from both the UN and JCS—the one establishing legal grounds for an incursion into North Korea, the other reaffirming military concurrence at the summit. In a resolution adopted on 7 October, the United Nations directed that

"All appropriate steps be taken to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea and all constituent acts be taken . . . for the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic Government in the Sovereign State of Korea. . . ."[14]

Since the enemy had ignored his surrender ultimatum, MacArthur could attend to the UN objectives only by occupying North Korea militarily and imposing his will. JCS, therefore, on 9 October amplified its early instructions to the Commander in Chief as follows:

"Hereafter, in the event of open or covert employment anywhere in Korea of major Chinese Communist units, without prior announcement, you should continue the action as long as, in your judgment, action by forces

now under your control offers a reasonable chance of success. In any case you will obtain authorization from Washington prior to taking any military actions against objectives in Chinese territory."[15]

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Chapter 1. Problems of Victory
MacArthur's Strategy of Celerity

Anticipating his authority for crossing the 38th Parallel, CinCUNC on 26 September had directed his Joint Special Plans and Operations Group (JSPOG) to develop a plan for operations north of the border. He stipulated that Eighth Army should make the main effort in either the west or the east, and that however this was resolved, there should be an amphibious envelopment on the opposite coast—at Chinnampo, Wonsan, or elsewhere.[16] Despite recommendations of key staff members, MacArthur did not place X Corps under EUSAK command for the forthcoming campaign but retained General Almond's unit as a separate tactical entity under GHQ.[17]

JSPOG, headed by Brigadier General Edwin K. Wright, MacArthur's G-3, rapidly fitted an earlier staff study into the framework of Cin CUNC'S directive. And the following day, 27 September, a proposed Operation Plan (OpnPlan) 9–50 was laid before the commander in chief.[18] This detailed scheme of action evolved from two basic assumptions: (1) that the bulk of the NKPA had already been destroyed; and (2) that neither the USSR nor Red China would intervene, covertly or openly.

Eighth Army, according to plan, would attack across the 38th Parallel, directing its main effort in the west, along the axis Kaesong-Sariwon-Pyongyang (see Map 1). JSPOG designated the latter city—capital of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea—as final objective of the first phase. Further, it recommended that EUSAK'S drive begin in mid-October, to be followed within a week by a X Corps amphibious landing at Wonsan on the east coast. After establishing a beachhead, Almond's force would attack 125 road miles westward through the Pyongyang-Wonsan corridor and link up with General Walker's army, thereby trapping North Korean elements falling back from the south.[19]

JSPOG suggested that both commands should then advance north to the line Chongju–Kunuri–Yongwon–Hamhung–Hungnam, ranging roughly from 50 to 100 miles below the Manchurian border. Only ROK elements would proceed beyond the restraining line, in keeping with the spirit and letter of the 27 September dispatch from JCS.[20]

Major General Doyle O. Hickey, acting as CinCUNC'S chief of staff during General Almond's tour in the field, approved the JSPOG draft of 28 September. It thereby became OpnPlan 9–50 officially. MacArthur forwarded a summary to JCS the same day, closing his message with this reassurance:

"There is no indication at present of entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese Communist Forces."[21]

Within three days, he received word from the Joint Chiefs that they approved his plan.[22] On 2 October it became the official operation order for the attack.[23]

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Chapter 1. Problems of Victory

Logistical Problems of Advance

On 29 September, the day before he received the JCS endorsement of his plan, General MacArthur arrived in Seoul to officiate at the ceremony restoring control of South Korea to the legal ROK government. During the visit, he met with the principals named in the Task Organization of OpnPlan 9–50:

Eighth U.S. Army: LtGen Walton H. Walker, USA
Naval Forces Far East: VAdm C. Turner Joy, USN
Far East Air Forces (FEAF): LtGen George E. Stratemeyer, USAF
X Corps: MajGen Edward M. Almond, USA

Missing from the top-level conference, Major General Walter L. Weible, USA, of the Japan Logistical Command, probably was already aware of things to come.[24]

MacArthur outlined his concept of operations in North Korea to those present. He set 20 October as D-Day for the Wonsan amphibious assault by the 1st Marine Division, which, with all X Corps Troops, would embark for the operation from Inchon. The 7th Infantry Division, also a part of X Corps, would motor 200 miles to Pusan and there load out for an administrative landing behind the Marines.[25]

Initial overland routing of the 7th Division was made necessary by problems arising out of Inchon's limited port facilities. General MacArthur gave EUSAK the logistic responsibility for all UN Forces in Korea, including X Corps. To carry out this charge, General Walker could rely on only two harbors, Pusan and Inchon. There were no other ports in South Korea capable of supporting large-scale military operations. Meeting the tight Wonsan schedule would require that X Corps have immediate priority over the whole of Inchon's capacity, even with the 7th Division being shunted off on Pusan. And it still remained for Walker to mount and sustain Eighth Army's general offensive *before* the Wonsan landing!

In the light of logistical considerations, then, Wonsan had more than mere tactical significance as the objective of X Corps. Its seizure would open up the principal east-coast port of Korea, together with vital new road and rail junctions. But while MacArthur had decided on an amphibious assault by a separate tactical unit as the proper stroke, there existed a school of dissenters among his closest advisers. Generals Hickey and Wright had recommended that X Corps be incorporated into EUSAK at the close of the Inchon-Seoul Operation. Major General George L. Eberle, MacArthur's G–4, held that supplying X Corps in North Korea would be simpler if that unit were a part of Eight Army. And General Almond himself, while hardly a dissenter, had expected his corps to be placed under General Walker's command after the Seoul fighting.[26]

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Chapter 1. Problems of Victory
Naval Missions Prescribed

Logistical problems were magnified by the tight embarkation schedule laid out for the amphibious force. In submitting its proposed plan for North Korean operations to General MacArthur on 27 September, JSPOG had listed the following "bare minimum time requirements:"
For assembling assault shipping: 6 days
For planning: 4 days
For loading: 6 days
For sailing to Wonsan: 4 days

Thus it was estimated that the 1st Marine Division could assault Wonsan 10 days after receiving the order to load out of Inchon, provided that shipping had already been assembled and planning accomplished concurrently.[27]

Following CinCUNC'S meeting in the capitol building on the 29th, General Almond called a conference of division commanders and staff members at his X Corps Headquarters in Ascom City, near Inchon. MacArthur's strategy was outlined to the assembled officers, so that planning could commence on the division level. Almond set 15 October as D-Day for the Wonsan landing. He based this target date on the assumption that Eighth Army would pass through and relieve X Corps on 3 October, the date on which the necessary shipping was to begin arriving at Inchon.[28]
Click here to view map

On 29 September, the 1st Marine Division was still committed tactically above Seoul, two regiments blocking and one attacking. If the first vessels began arriving at Inchon on 3 October, the assault shipping would not be completely assembled until the 8th, according to the JSPOG estimate. Four days would be required to get to the objective, leaving two days, instead of the planned six, for outloading the landing force. Neither Major General Oliver P. Smith, Commanding General (CG) 1stMarDiv, nor his staff regarded this as a realistic schedule.[29]

The Marine officers came away from the conference without knowledge of the types and numbers of ships that would be made available to the division. And since they had no maps of the objective area and no intelligence data whatever, it was manifestly impossible to lay firm plans along either administrative or tactical lines.[30]

Vice Admiral Joy, Commander Naval Forces Far East (ComNavFE), issued his instructions on 1 October in connection with the forthcoming operations. To Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble's Joint Task Force 7 (JTF-7), which had carried out the Inchon attack, he gave these missions:

"1. To maintain a naval blockade of Korea's East coast south of Chongjin.
"2. To furnish naval gunfire and air support to Eighth Army as directed.
"3. To conduct pre-D-Day naval operations for the Wonsan landing as required.
"4. To load and transport X Corps to Wonsan, providing cover and support en route.
"5. To seize by amphibious assault, occupy, and defend a beachhead in the Wonsan area on D-Day.
"6. To provide naval gunfire, air, and initial logistical support to X Corps at Wonsan until relieved."[31]

Admiral Joy's directive also warned: "The strong probability exists that the ports and possible landing beaches under control of the North Koreans have been recently mined. The sighting of new mines floating in the area indicates that mines are being seeded along the coast."[32]

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Chapter 1. Problems of Victory
X Corps Relieved at Seoul

The related events, decisions, and plans of September 1950 had unfolded with startling rapidity. Before the scattered UN forces could shift from one phase of operations to another, a transitional gap developed during the early days of October. Orders might flow forth in abundance, but not until MacArthur's land, sea and air forces wound up one campaign could they begin another. Thus, from the standpoint of Marine operations, the first week of October is more a story of the Inchon-Seoul action than of preparations for the Wonsan landing.

On 2 October, when Eighth Army commenced the relief of X Corps, General Almond ordered the 7th Infantry Division to begin displacing to Pusan by motor and rail.[33] There was as yet no such respite for the 1st Marine Division, which on the same day lost 16 killed in action (KIA) and 81 wounded (WIA). Practically all of the casualties were taken by the 7th Regiment, then approaching Uijongbu on the heels of the enemy.[34]

Despite the limited planning data in the hands of the 1st Marine Division, General Smith's staff put a cautious foot forward on 3 October.[35] Word of the pending Wonsan operation went out by message to all subordinate units, with a tentative task organization indicating the formation of three Regimental Combat Teams (RCTs).

The 1st and 7th Marines were earmarked to launch the amphibious attack. Each would plan on the basis of employing two battalions in the assault. These battalions were to embark on LSTs and hit the beach in LVTs. All tactical units were to combat-load out of Inchon. And although still uninformed as to available shipping, the Marine planners named likely embarkation groups and listed tentative arrangements for loading tanks and amphibious vehicles.[36]

The following day saw the publication of X Corps OpnO 4, specifying subordinate unit missions. The 7th Infantry Division, together with the 92d and 96th Field Artillery (FA) Battalions, was instructed to mount out of Pusan and to land at Wonsan on order (see Map 2). These tasks were assigned to the 1st Marine Division:

"1. Report immediately to the Attack Force Commander (Commander, Amphibious Group One) of the Seventh Fleet as the landing force for the Wonsan attack.

"2. Seize and secure X Corps base of operations at Wonsan, protect the Wonsan Airfield, and continue such operations ashore as assigned.

"3. Furnish logistic support for all forces ashore until relieved by Corps Shore Party."[37]

As Almond's order went out for distribution on 4 October, EUSAK's 1st Cavalry Division, bound for Kaesong, passed through the 5th Marines northwest of Seoul. Simultaneously, the II ROK Corps began assembling along the road to Uijongbu, captured by the 7th Marines the previous day.[38]

After 20 days in the line, the weary battalions of the 5th Marines retired on 5 October across the Han River to an assembly area at Inchon. They were followed on the 6th by the 1st Regiment, and on the next day by the 7th Marines. The withdrawal of the latter unit completed the relief of X Corps, and General Almond's command officially re-reverted to GHQ Reserve.[39]

October 7th also marked the displacement of the 1st Marine Division command post (CP) to Inchon, where planning and reality had finally merged to the extent that preparations for Wonsan could begin in earnest. Two days earlier, Vice Admiral Struble had re-created JTF–7 out of his Seventh Fleet; and by publication of his OpnO 16–50 on the same date, 5 October, he set in motion the operational elements involved in the projected amphibious envelopment. His new task organization, almost identical to that which had carried out the Inchon Operation with historic dispatch, was as follows:

TF95 (Advance Force): RAdm Allen E. Smith
TG 95.2 (Covering & Support): RAdm Charles C. Hartman
TG 95.6 (Minesweeping): Capt Richard T. Spofford
TF 90 (Attack Force): RAdm James H. Doyle
TF 79 (Logistical Support Force): Capt Bernard L. Austin
TF 77 (Fast Carrier Force): RAdm Edward C. Ewen
TG 96.8 (Escort Carrier Group): RAdm Richard W. Ruble
TG 96.2 (Patrol & Reconnaissance): RAdm George R. Henderson
TG 70.1 (Flagship Group): Capt Irving T. Duke

Struble, who had directed the Inchon assault from the bridge of the USS *Rochester*, would now fly his flag in the recently arrived USS *Missouri*, the sole American battleship in commission at this early stage of the Korean war.[40]

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Chapter 1. Problems of Victory
Joint Planning for Wonsan Landing

The Seventh Fleet directive of 5 October dispatched both the Fast Carrier and the Patrol and Reconnaissance Forces of JTF-7 on the usual search and attack missions preliminary to an amphibious assault. Task force 77, consisting of the carriers *Boxer, Leyte, Philippine Sea* and *Valley Forge*, escorted by a light cruiser and 24 destroyers, was under orders to direct 50 per cent of the preparatory air effort against the local defenses of Wonsan. Simultaneously, the Advance Force, with its cruisers destroyers and mine sweeping units, would close in to shell the target and wrest control of the offshore waters from the enemy.[41]
Click here to view map

Topographic and hydrographic studies made available to the Attack and Landing Forces showed Wonsan to be a far more accessible target than Inchon (see Map 3). Nestling in the southwestern corner of Yonghung Bay, 80 miles above the 38th Parallel, the seaport offers one of the best natural harbors in Korea. A vast anchorage lies sheltered in the lee of Kalma Peninsula which, finger-like, juts northward from a bend in the coastline. Tides range from seven to 14 inches, fog is rare, and currents are weak. Docks can accommodate vessels drawing from 12 to 25 feet, and depths in the bay run from 10 fathoms in the outer anchorage to 15 feet just offshore.[42]

Beaches around Wonsan are of moderate gradient, and the floor at water's edge consists of hard-packed sand. Though slightly wet landings might be expected, amphibious craft could easily negotiate any of the several desirable approaches. The coastal plain, ranging from 100 yards to two miles in depth, provides an acceptable lodgment area, but the seaward wall of the Taebaek mountain range renders inland egress difficult from the military standpoint.

In 1940, the population of Wonsan included 69,115 Koreans and 10,205 Japanese, the latter subsequently being repatriated to their homeland after World War II. Under the Japanese program of industrialization, the city had become Korea's petroleum refining center. The construction of port facilities, railways, and roads kept pace with the appearance of cracking plants, supporting industries, and huge storage areas.

Two airfields served the locale in 1950. One of these, situated on the coast about five miles north of the seaport, was of minor importance. The other, known as Wonsan Airfield, on Kalma Peninsula across the harbor, ranked high as a military prize. Spacious and accessible, it was an excellent base from which to project air coverage over all of Korea and the Sea of Japan. The Japanese first developed the field as an air adjunct to the naval base at Wonsan; but after World War II, a North Korean aviation unit moved in and used it until July 1950. Thereafter, with the skies dominated by the UN air arm, Wonsan Airfield temporarily lost all military significance. Its vacant runways, barracks, and dispersal areas were given only passing attention in the UN strategic bombing pattern, although the nearby industrial complex was demolished.

In addition to being situated on an excellent harbor, Wonsan is the eastern terminus of the Seoul-Wonsan corridor, the best of the few natural routes across the mountainous nation. This 115-mile road and rail passageway, once considered as a possible overland approach for X Corps, separates the northern and southern divisions of the Taebaek range, which rises precipitously from Korea's east coast to heights of 5000 feet. Railroads and highways, primitive by western standards, also trace the seaward base of the Taebaek Mountains to connect Wonsan with Hamhung in the north and Pusan far to the south. Still another road and railway leads to Pyongyang, 100 miles across the narrow neck of the peninsula in the western piedmont.

The climate along Korea's northeast coast is comparable to that of the lower Great Lakes region in the United States. Mean summer temperatures range between 80 and 88 degrees, although highs of 103 degrees have

been recorded. Winter readings drop as low as –7 degrees, but the season is usually temperate with winds of low velocity. Despite light snowfalls and moderate icing, the period from October through March is best suited to military operations, for the heavy rains of spring and summer create difficulties on the gravel-topped roads.

Although members of Admiral Doyle's Amphibious Group One (PhibGruOne) staff met with planners of the 1st Marine Division at Inchon early in October, it soon became apparent that the projected D-Day of 15 October could not be realized. Maps and intelligence data necessary for planning did not reach the Attack Force-Landing Force team until 6 October. The relief of X Corps by EUSAK was completed, not on 3 October as General Almond had anticipated, but on the 7th.

Moreover, the first transport vessels to reach Inchon ran behind schedule, and they had not been pre-loaded with a ten-day level of Class I, II, and V supplies, as was promised. Planning and outloading consequently started late and from scratch, with the result that D-Day — was moved progressively back to a tentative date of 20 October."[43]

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Chapter 2. The Wonsan Landing

ON 6 OCTOBER 1950, after the arrival of the initial assault shipping at Inchon, General Smith ordered the 1st Marine Division to commence embarkation on the 8th. Similar instructions were issued by X Corps the following day.[1] Thus, the first troops and equipment were to be loaded even before the G–2 Section of the Landing Force could begin evaluating the enemy situation at the objective, since it was not until 8 October that the intelligence planners received X Corps' OpnO 4, published four days earlier. Summing up the outlook at the time, G–2 later reported:

"Inasmuch as subordinate units of the Division were scheduled to embark aboard ship some time prior to 15 October 1950, it was immediately obvious that preliminary intelligence planning, with its attendant problems of collection, processing, and distribution of information, and the procurement and distribution of graphic aids, would be both limited and sketchy . . . Fortunately . . . the section [G–2] had been previously alerted on the projected operation, and while elements of the Division were yet engaged with the enemy at Uijongbu, had requested reproductions of some 100 copies of pertinent extracts of the JANIS (75) of Korea. Thus it was . . . that subordinate units would not be wholly unprepared for the coming operation."[2]

General Smith's OpnO 16–50, published on 10 October, climaxed the accelerated planning at Inchon. Worked out jointly by the staffs of PhibGruOne and the 1st Marine Division, this directive covered the Wonsan attack in detail and pinpointed subordinate unit responsibilities.

Kalma Peninsula was chosen as the point of assault, with two beaches, YELLOW and BLUE, marked off on the eastern shore. Ten high-ground objectives described the semicircular arc of the beachhead, which focused on Wonsan and fanned out as far as five miles inland. The 1st and 7th Marines were to hit YELLOW and BLUE Beaches, respectively and drive inland to their assigned objectives. The 5th, upon being ordered ashore, would assemble west of Wonsan, prepared for further operations. Two battalions of the 11th Marines were to land on call in direct support of the assault units, and the remainder of the artillery would initially function in general support.

Other subordinate units drew the usual assignments. The Reconnaissance Company, after landing on order, was to screen the Division's left flank by occupying specified objectives. Attached to the 1st and 7th Regiments respectively, the 5th and 3d Korean Marine Corps (KMC) Battalions would also go ashore on call.[3]

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Chapter 2. The Wonsan Landing
ROK Army Captures Wonsan

At 0815, 10 October, coincidentally with the publication of 1stMarDiv OpnO 16–50, troops of I ROK Corps, advancing rapidly up the east coast of Korea, entered Wonsan. By evening of the next day, the ROK 3d and Capital Divisions were mopping up minor resistance in the city and guarding the airfield on Kalma Peninsula. [4]

Overland seizure of the 1st Marine Division's amphibious objective did not come as a surprise either at GHQ in Tokyo or at General Smith's CP aboard the *Mount McKinley* in Inchon Harbor. General MacArthur had, in fact, prepared for this eventuality by considering an alternate assault landing at Hungnam, another major seaport, about 50 air miles north of Wonsan. On 8 October, therefore, the JSPOG completed a modified version of CinCFE OpnPlan 9–50. Eighth Army's mission—the capture of Pyongyang—remained unchanged in this draft, but X Corps would now land ". . . in the vicinity of Hungnam in order to cut the lines of communications north of Wonsan and envelop the North Korean forces in that area."

Although the choice of a new objective seemed logical on the basis of the ROK Army's accomplishment, certain logistical obstacles at once loomed in the path of the alternate plan. Not unaware of the most imposing of these, JSPOG commented:

"The harbor at Wonsan cannot accommodate at docks the large vessels lifting the 7th Division. Since most of the amphibious type boats are carried on ships lifting the 1st Marine Division, the plans for off-loading the 7th Division will have to be revised."[5]

But the plans for off-loading the 7th Division could not be revised. If the Army unit was to land within a reasonable length of time, it would have to go in on the heels of the 1st Marine Division, using the same landing craft. If the ship-to-shore movement took place at Hungnam, the 7th Division would be ill-disposed for beginning its overland drive to Pyongyang as planned; for it would have to backtrack by land almost all the way to Wonsan. On the other hand, if the Army division landed at Wonsan while the Marines assaulted Hungnam, the Navy would be handicapped not only by the lack of landing craft but also by the problem of sweeping mines from both harbors simultaneously.

From the standpoint of Admiral Joy in Japan and Admiral Doyle in Korea, there was insufficient time for planning a new tactical deployment of X Corps at this late date. And the time-space handicap would be compounded by serious shortages of mine sweepers and intelligence information. Joy was unsuccessful on 8 October in his first attempt to dissuade MacArthur from the new idea. On the 9th, unofficial word of the pending change reached General Smith at Inchon, just as his staff wound up work on the draft for the Wonsan assault. ComNavFE persisted in his arguments with the commander in chief, however, with the final result that on 10 October the original plan for landing the whole X Corps at Wonsan was ordered into effect.[6] Coming events were to uphold the Navy viewpoint; for while the Wonsan landing itself was delayed several days by enemy mines, it was 15 November before the first ships safely entered the harbor at Hungnam.[7]

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Chapter 2. The Wonsan Landing
Marine Loading and Embarkation

On 11 October, the day after he opened his CP on the *Mount McKinley*, General Smith learned that the Hungnam plan had been dropped. The 1st Marine Division continued loading out in accordance with X Corps OpnO 4, even though its objective had already been captured.[8]

During the period 4–10 October, Admiral Doyle had assembled at Inchon an assortment of Navy amphibious vessels, ships of the Military Sea Transport Service (MSTS), and Japanese-manned LSTs (SCAJAP).[9] With the arrival of Transport Squadron One on 8 October, the total shipping assigned to the landing force consisted of one AGC, eight APAs, two APs, 10 AKAs, five LSDs, 36 LSTs, three LSUs, one LSM, and six commercial cargo vessels ("Victory" and C-2 types).[10]

Loading a reinforced division, several thousand Corps troops and thousands of tons of supplies and equipment proved to be an aggravating job under the circumstances. Pressure on the attack and landing forces for an early D-Day only magnified the shortcomings of Inchon as a port. Limited facilities and unusual tide conditions held dock activity to a series of feverish bursts. Moreover, many ships not part of the amphibious force had to be accommodated since they were delivering vital materiel. The assigned shipping itself was inadequate, according to the Division G–4 and "considerable quantities" of vehicles had to be left behind. Much of the trucking that could be taken was temporarily diverted to help transport the 7th Infantry Division to Pusan; and although unavailable for port operations when needed, it returned at the last minute to disrupt out-loading of the Shore Party's heavy beach equipment.[11] Out of conditions and developments such as these grew the necessity for postponing D-Day from 15 October, the date initially set by General Almond, to the 20th.

For purposes of expediting embarkation and economizing on shipping space, X Corps directed the 1st Marine Division to out-load with less than the usual amount of supplies carried by a landing force.[12] Resupply shipping would be so scheduled as to deliver adequate stocks of Class I, II, III, and IV consumables ". . . prior to the time they would be needed," even though when "they would be needed" was anybody's guess at this stage of the war.[13]

In anticipation of a rapid advance to the west (which did not materialize), Division G–4 not only assigned 16 pre-loaded trucks and trailers to each RCT, but also earmarked three truck companies and more trailers as a mobile logistical reserve. These supply trains would stay on the heels of the attacking regiments in order to maintain ammunition dumps as far forward as possible in a fast-moving situation.[14]

On 8 October, ComNavFE directed Admiral Doyle and General Smith to effect his OpnPlan 113–50.[15] Coincidentally, the first contingents of the 5th Marines boarded the *Bayfield* (1/5), *George Clymer* (2/5), and *Bexar* (3/5). Three days later, on the 11th, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray, commander of the reserve regiment, opened his CP in the *Bayfield*, and his unit completed embarkation.[16]

Although reserve and administrative elements of the 1st and 7th Marines loaded earlier, the four assault battalions of these regiments could not begin embarkation until 13 October, owing to the fact that the LSTs had been used for shuttle service around Inchon Harbor. General Smith opened his CP in the *Mount McKinley* at 1200 on the 11th.[17] The last of the landing ships were loaded by high tide on the morning of the 15th, and later that day all of them sailed for the objective. By evening of the 16th, most of the transports were on the way, but the *Mount McKinley* and *Bayfield* did not depart until the next day.[18]

Broken down into seven embarkation groups, the landing force and X Corps troops leaving Inchon comprised a grand total of 1902 officers and 28,287 men. Of this number, 1461 officers and 23,938 men were on

the rolls of the 1st Marine Division, the breakdown being as follows:
Marine officers: 1119
Marine enlisted: 20,597
Navy officers: 153
Navy enlisted: 1002
U.S. Army & KMC officers attached: 189
U.S. Army & KMC enlisted attached: 2339[19]

Even in the last stages of loading and during the actual departure, new orders had continued to flow out of higher headquarters. It will be recalled that General Smith issued his OpnO 16-50 for the Wonsan assault on 10 October. An alternate plan, to be executed on signal, went out to subordinate units the same day, providing for an administrative landing by the Division on RED Beach, north of Wonsan, instead of Kalma Peninsula.[20]

As a result of discussions during a X Corps staff conference on 13 October, a party headed by General Almond flew to Wonsan the next day.[21] The purpose of his visit was to reconnoiter the objective and to explain his latest operational directive to the I ROK Corps commander, who would come under his control.[22] This new order, published on the 14th, called for an administrative landing by X Corps and a rapid advance westward along the Wonsan—Pyongyang axis to a juncture with EUSAK. Assigned to the 1st Marine Division was an objective northeast of Pyongyang, the Red capital.[23]

It was this tactical scheme, then, that prevailed as the Marines departed Inchon from 15 to 17 October and the 7th Infantry Division prepared to embark from Pusan. General Smith, of course, placed into effect his alternate order for a landing RED Beach.[24] While there may be a note of humor in the fact that on 15 October ComPhibGruOne issued his OpnO 16–50 for the “assault landing” at Wonsan, it must be remembered that the ship-to-shore movement would remain essentially the same from the Navy’s standpoint, regardless of the swift march of events ashore.

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Chapter 2. The Wonsan Landing
Two Weeks of Mine Sweeping

Mine sweeping for the Wonsan landing commenced on 8 October, when Task Group 95.6, commanded by Captain Spofford, began assembling for the mission of clearing a path ahead of the 250-ship armada bringing the 1st Marine Division and other units of X Corps. It had been known for a month that the waters of the east coast were dangerous for navigation. The first mine was discovered off Chinnampo on the west coast on 7 September, and four days later Admiral Joy ordered the United Nations Blocking and Escort Force to stay on the safe side of the 100-fathom line along the east coast. But it was not until 26 and 28 September that more definite information was acquired the hard way when the U.S. destroyer *Brush* and the ROK mine sweeper *YMS 905* were damaged by east coast mines.[25]

On the 28th ComNavFE issued his OpnO 17–50 covering operations of mine sweepers in Korean waters. The herculean task awaiting the 12 available American vessels of this type may be judged by the fact that more than a hundred had been employed off Okinawa in World War II.

Although the exact date remained unknown, it was a safe assumption that North Korean mining activities, beginning in late July or early August, were speeded by the Inchon landing, which aroused the enemy to the peril of further amphibious operations. Russian instructors had trained Korean Reds at Wonsan and Chinnampo in the employment of Soviet-manufactured mines. Sampans, junks, and wooden coastal barges were used to sow a field of about 2000 in the harbor and approaches to Wonsan.[26]

Captain Spofford's TG 95.6 commenced its sweep off Wonsan on 10 October after a sortie from Sasebo. Unfortunately, the three large fleet sweepers, *Pledge, Pirate,* and *Incredible,* were not well adapted to the shallow sweeping necessary at Wonsan. More dependence could be placed in the seven small wooden-hulled U.S. motor mine sweepers *Redhead, Mocking Bird, Osprey, Chatterer, Merganser, Kite,* and *Partridge,* which were rugged even though low-powered. Spofford's two big high-speed sweepers, *Doyle* and *Endicott,* had their limitations for this type of operation; and the nine Japanese and three ROK sweepers lacked some of the essential gear.[27]

The U.S. destroyers *Collett, Swenson, Maddox,* and *Thomas* were in the Wonsan area as well as the cruiser *Rochester.* On the 9th the *Rochester's* helicopter sighted 61 mines in a reconnaissance, and the next day the observer found them too numerous to count. In spite of these grim indications, rapid progress the first day led to predictions of a brief operation. By late afternoon a 3000-yard channel had been cleared from the 100-fathom curve to the 30-fathom line. But hopes were dashed at this point by the discovery of five additional lines of mines.[28]

On 12 and 13 October the naval guns of TG 95.2 bombarded Tanchon and Songjin on the northeast coast. While the USS *Missouri* treated the marshaling yards of Tanchon to 163 16 inches rounds, the cruisers *Helena, Worcester,* and *Ceylon* fired at bridges, shore batteries, and tunnels in the Chongjin area.[29]

Spofford tried to save time on the morning of the 12th by countermining as 39 planes from the carriers *Leyte Gulf* and *Philippine Sea* dropped 50 tons of bombs. It was found, however, that even the explosion of a 1000-pound bomb would not set off nearby mines by concussion.[30] According to Admiral Struble, "The results of this operation simply bore out our experience in World War II, but were tried out on the long chance that they might be effective in the current situation."[31]

The 12th was a black day for the sweeping squadron. For the steel sweepers *Pledge* and *Pirate* both were blown up by mines that afternoon and sank with a total of 13 killed and 87 wounded. Rescue of the survivors was handicapped by fire from enemy shore batteries.[32]

While the blast of a half-ton bomb had not been powerful enough, Spofford reasoned that depth charges might start a chain reaction in which mines would detonate mines. But a precision drop by naval planes met with no success, and there was nothing left but a return to the slow, weary, and dangerous work of methodical sweeping.[33]

The flying boats, Mariners and Sunderlands, were called upon to assist by conducting systematic aerial searches for moored and drifting mines, which they destroyed by .50 caliber machine-gun fire. Soon an effective new technique was developed as the seaplanes carried overlays of Hydrographic Office charts to be marked with the locations of all mines sighted. These charts were dropped to the sweepers and were of considerable assistance in pinpointing literally hundreds of mines.[34]

On the 18th one of the Japanese sweepers, the *JMS–14*, hit a mine and went down. In spite of this loss, the end seemed in sight. No attempt was being made to clear all the mines; but with a lane swept into the harbor, it remained only to check the immediate area of the landing beaches. So hopeful did the outlook appear that it was more disillusioning when the ROK *YMS 516* disintegrated on 19 October after a terrific explosion in the supposedly cleared lane. Thus was TG 95.6 rudely introduced to the fact that the sweepers had to deal with magnetic mines in addition to the other types. The mechanism could be set to allow as many as 12 ships to pass over the mine before it exploded. This meant, of course, that the sweepers must make at least 13 passes over any given area before it could be considered safe.[35]

The *Mount McKinley* having arrived off Wonsan that same day, Admiral Doyle and General Almond, with six members of the X Corps staff, went by boat to the battleship *Missouri* for a conference with Admiral Struble. CJTF–7 asserted that he would not authorize the administrative landing until the magnetic mines were cleared from the shipping lane—a task which he estimated would take three more days. This announcement led to General Almond's decision to fly ashore in the *Missouri's* helicopter on the 20th and establish his CP in Wonsan.[36] So rapidly had the situation changed, it was hard to remember that this date had once been set as D-Day when the Marine landing force would fight for a beachhead.

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Chapter 2. The Wonsan Landing
Operation Yo-Yo

Shortly after 1700 on the afternoon of 19 October, a rumor swept through the 250 ships of the Tractor and Transport Groups. “War’s over!” shouted the excited Marines. “They’re taking us back to Pusan for embarkation to the States.”

Rumor seemed to have the support of fact on this occasion, for compass readings left no doubt that the armada had indeed executed a maritime “about face” to head southward. What the men on the transports did not know was that the reversal of direction had been ordered for purely military reasons as a result of the conference that day on the *Missouri.*

It was puzzling enough to the troops the following morning when the ships resumed their original course. But this was nothing as compared to their bewilderment late that afternoon as the Tractor and Transport Groups turned southward again.

Every twelve hours, in accordance with the directive of CJTF–7, the fleet was to reverse course, steaming back and forth off the eastern coast of Korea until the last of the magnetic mines could be cleared from the lane in preparation for an administrative landing at Wonsan.[37]

Marines have always been ready with a derisive phrase, and “Operation Yo-Yo” was coined to express their disgust with this interlude of concentrated monotony. Never did time die a harder death, and never did the grumblers have so much to grouse about. Letters to wives and sweethearts took on more bulk daily, and paper-backed murder mysteries were worn to tatters by bored readers.

On the 22d, at CJTF–7’s regular daily meeting, Admirals Struble and Doyle conferred in the destroyer *Rowan* with Admiral Smith and Captain Spofford. It was agreed that the sweeping could not be completed until the 24th or 25th, which meant that Operation Yo-Yo might last a week.[38]

The situation had its serious aspects on LSTs and transports which were not prepared for a voyage around Korea taking nearly as long as a crossing of the Pacific. Food supplies ran low as gastro-enteritis and dysentery swept through the crowded transports in spite of strict medical precautions. The MSTS transport *Marine Phoenix* alone had a sick list of 750 during the epidemic. A case of smallpox was discovered on the *Bayfield*, and all crewmen as well as passengers were vaccinated that same day.[39]

On the 23d, as the *Mount McKinley* proceeded into the inner harbor at Wonsan, there could be no doubt that the final mine sweeping would be completed by the 25th. Operation Yo-Yo came to an end, therefore, when Admiral Doyle directed the amphibious fleet to arrive on the 25th, prepared for an administrative landing. The order of entry called for the Transport Group to take the lead, followed by the vessels of the Tractor Group.[40]

On the morning of the 25th, Admirals Struble and Doyle held a final conference with General Almond and Captain Spofford. By this time they had decided to land the Marines over YELLOW and BLUE Beaches on Kalma Peninsula, as originally conceived in 1stMarDiv OpnO 16–50. The inner harbor of Wonsan would remain closed until completely clear of mines, and then it would be developed as a supply base.[41]

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Chapter 2. The Wonsan Landing
Marine Air First at Objective

The sense of frustration which oppressed the Marine ground forces during Operation Yo-Yo would have been increased if they had realized that the air maintenance crews had beaten them to Wonsan by a margin of twelve days. Even more humiliating to the landing force troops, Bob Hope and Marilyn Maxwell were flown to the objective area. On the evening of the 24th they put on a USO show spiced with quips at the expense of the disgruntled Leathernecks in the transports.

Planning for Marine air operations in northeast Korea had been modified from day to day to keep pace with the rapidly changing strategic situation. On 11 October, when ROK forces secured Wonsan, preparations for air support of an assault landing were abandoned. Two days later Major General Field Harris, CG 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Tactical Air Command X Corps (TAC X Corps), flew to Wonsan. After inspecting the airfield he decided to begin operations without delay.[42]

These developments, of course, were accompanied by amendments to the original plan which had assigned Marine Fighter Squadrons (VMFs)–214 and –323 the air support role in the naval task force, with Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)–12 to be landed as soon as the field at Wonsan was secured.

In response to changing conditions, VMF-312 aircraft flew from Kimpo to Wonsan on the 14th, and R5Ds lifted 210 personnel of the advance echelons of Headquarters Squadron (Hedron)–12, Service Squadron (SMS)–12, and Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron (VMF(N))–513. Two LSTs sailed from Kobe with equipment of MAG-12, and Combat Cargo Command aircraft of Far East Air Force began flying in aviation gasoline. Bombs and rockets were flown to Wonsan by the planes of VMF(N)–513.[43]

On the 16th, VMFs–214 and –323 departed Sasebo for station off Wonsan in the CVE's *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait.* From the following day until the 27th these two fighter squadrons were to provide air cover for the mine sweeping operations off Wonsan and the ensuing 1st Marine Division administrative landing.[44]

TAC X Corps OpnO 2-50, issued on 15 October, had contemplated the opening of the port at Wonsan and arrival of the surface echelon within three days. Until then the two squadrons at Wonsan airfield were to be dependent on airlift for all supplies.

The unforeseen ten-day delay in clearing a lane through the mine field made it difficult to maintain flight operations. Fuel was pumped by hand from 55-gallon drums which had been rolled along the ground about a mile from the dump to the flight line. Muscle also had to substitute for machinery in ordnance sections which had only one jeep and eight bomb trailers for moving ammunition.[45]

Despite such difficulties, air operations from the new field were speeded up when General Almond landed to establish the X Corps CP at Wonsan on the 20th, after taking control of I ROK Corps. Armed reconnaissance sorties were flown regularly and attacks made on retreating bodies of NKPA troops. On the 24th a VMF–312 flight surprised a column of about 800 Korean Reds near Kojo, 39 miles southeast of Wonsan, and scattered it with heavy losses.

There were administrative as well as operational problems to be solved. If an assault landing had been carried out at Wonsan, the provision for air support would have been planned in a manner similar to that of Inchon. But the change to an administrative landing caused the 1st MAW to be placed under the control of the Far East Air Forces. This was in accordance with a CinCFE directive to the effect that when both FEAF and Naval air were assigned missions in Korea, coordination control would be exercised by CG FEAF. He had in turn delegated that control north of the 38th parallel, including close-support operations of carrier-borne planes, to CG Fifth Air

Force.

An effort was made at first by MAG–12 officers to comply with Fifth AF procedures, which required the schedule for any given day's strikes to be submitted to that headquarters by 1800 the previous day. Obviously, the distance separating X Corps in Wonsan from Fifth Air Force Headquarters in Seoul made it virtually impossible to get clearance in time. This issue was speedily settled by a conference in which Major General Earle E. Partridge, USAF, CG Fifth Air Force, gave General Harris oral permission to plan and execute supporting missions for X Corps in northeast Korea while awaiting clearance from the Fifth AF.

His decision was made on the basis of a liberal interpretation of the authority of CG 1st MAW to take action "in emergencies." In practice, the arrangement worked out smoothly during this preliminary period, and on 12 November CG Fifth Air Force confirmed his oral agreement with a written directive.

Direction of air operations in support of X Corps was exercised by MAG–12 for the 1st MAW from 15 October to 9 November. Night operations did not begin until late in October for lack of runway lights at Wonsan, so that VMF(N)–513 flew daytime missions along with VMF–312. The two carrier-based squadrons conducted flights in a similar manner. Aircraft reported at designated times to specified Tactical Air Control Parties (TACPS) for operations directed by a daily Fifth AF order, some of them in response to previously submitted requests of ground units for air support.

Major Vincent J. Gottschalk's Marine Observation Squadron (VMO)–6 was under the operational control of the 1st Marine Division, though it was under the administrative direction of MAG–12. Two helicopter pilots, Captain Wallace D. Blatt and First Lieutenant Chester C. Ward, flew from Kimpo to Wonsan on 23 October. The rest of the squadron had proceeded by LST. A flight echelon of helicopters, commanded by Captain Victor A. Armstrong, VMO–6 executive officer, remained temporarily at Kimpo at the request of the Fifth Air Force to evacuate casualties of the 187th Airborne RCT in the Sukchon area.[46]

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Chapter 2. The Wonsan Landing
MacArthur Orders Advance to Border

From all that has gone before, it might be expected that UN strategy and tactics, after frequent modification, had finally been decided upon by mid-October 1950. This was not the case, and a brief recapitulation of events in western and central Korea is now necessary in order to set the scene for the sweeping changes that followed.

General Walker's Eighth Army, as mentioned earlier, had deployed along the 38th Parallel after relieving X Corps above Seoul on 7 October. Two days later, armored elements of the 1st Cavalry Division crossed the boundary to spearhead the U.S. I Corps drive on Sariwon and Pyongyang. The former city was secured on 17 October with the help of the 27th Commonwealth Brigade, while the 24th Infantry Division moved up the west coast on the left of the Kaesong-Sariwon-Pyongyang axis.[47] The 1st Cavalry Division continued the attack toward Pyongyang on the 18th, entering the Red capital with the 1st ROK Division the next day. Pyongyang was secured on 21 October, and elements of the 1st Cavalry Division also occupied the undefended port city of Chinnampo, 35 miles to the southwest.[48]

A vertical envelopment on 20 October had come as a dramatic supplement to the attack on Pyongyang. The 187th Airborne RCT parachuted successfully into the Sukchon-Sunchon area, about 30 miles north of the city, thereby cutting the two principal NKPA escape routes to Manchuria. After watching the drop from his plane, General MacArthur stopped off at Pyongyang and declared that the surprise stroke had closed the trap on the enemy. At his Tokyo headquarters the next day, he predicted that the war would end shortly.[49]

In mountainous central Korea on the right flank of I US Corps, the 6th ROK Division had been leading the rapid advance of South Korean forces under EUSAK. With Hwachon captured on 8 October, the division went on to take the vital hubs of Chorwon on the 10th and Kumhwa on the 11th. It made contact with ROK Capitol Division elements from Wonsan the following day. During the next 24 hours, the 6th Division advanced 20 miles, and the 7th and 8th ROK Divisions fanned out to exploit the deepening penetration. On 14 October the 6th closed on Yangdok, about midway between Wonsan and Pyongyang.[50]

Thereafter the ROK forces in the center of the peninsula began veering northwest, so that by 22 October, the day after Pyongyang fell to I Corps, the vanguard 6th Division was bearing down on Kunu-ri,[51] about 45 air miles to the north of the capital.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that a trans-peninsular drive by X Corps was no longer necessary after mid-October. In fact, both in Washington and in Tokyo the attitude prevailed that the Korean war was nearing an end. President Truman had deemed a meeting of minds appropriate at this time, and he flew to Wake Island for a conference with General MacArthur on 15 October.[52]

Various aspects of American policy in the Far East were discussed at the meeting, but the Korean situation ranked high on the agenda. When asked by President Truman about the chances of Russian or Chinese interference in the war, General MacArthur replied, "Very little." His conclusion agreed with that held by many in high government circles, although officials in both Washington and Tokyo realized that the possibility of Communist intervention could not be dismissed entirely.

MacArthur stated that about 300,000 Chinese troops were stationed in Manchuria, of whom from 100,000 to 125,000 had been deployed along the Yalu River boundary with Korea. He estimated that only 50,000 to 60,000 of these troops could get across the river. If they attempted to move on Pyongyang, he said, they would be "slaughtered," owing to the proximity of UN air bases.

The commander in chief added that Russia had no troops immediately available for a thrust into the peninsula. It would take six weeks for a Soviet division to assemble at the border, and by that time winter would have set in. And while Russia had a fairly good air force in Siberia and Manchuria, tactical support of Chinese ground troops would be difficult to control. “I believe Russian air would bomb the Chinese as often as they would bomb us,” MacArthur remarked.[53]

Part of the conference dealt with the rehabilitation of Korea and the eventual departure of UN troops after the fighting had ceased. MacArthur expressed his belief that organized resistance would end by Thanksgiving (23 November). He hoped to withdraw EUSAK to Japan by Christmas, leaving X Corps, reconstituted with the 2d and 3d U.S. Infantry Divisions and other UN detachments, as a security force until peace and order were fully restored. All present seemed to agree that elections should be held early to achieve stability in the re-united country, and that the ROK Army must be made tough enough to deter the Chinese Communists from any aggressive moves.

The conference ended on a note of general optimism. President Truman pinned a Distinguished Service Medal on the commander in chief (his fifth), and the latter boarded his plane and departed shortly after the meeting.

Once back in Tokyo, MacArthur issued on 17 October a new order that would become effective if Pyongyang fell before X Corps landed at Wonsan (as was the case four days later). This draft established parallel zones of action for EUSAK and X Corps in North Korea, with the Taebaek Range as the dividing line. The restraining line for UN Forces was advanced as much as 60 miles to a lateral drawn through Chongsanjangsi-Koingdong-Pyongwon-Toksil-li-Pungsan-Songjin (see Map 1). ROK Forces, of course, would still drive all the way to the borders of Manchuria and the USSR.[54]

On 24 October, just as the 1st Marine Division was preparing to land at Wonsan, General MacArthur did away with the restraining line altogether. The original restriction on the advance of UN elements, he told his subordinate commanders, was based on the possibility of enemy capitulation. Since there appeared to be no prospect of a formal surrender, he now authorized Generals Walker and Almond to use whatever of their ground forces were necessary to secure all of North Korea. And he enjoined them “. . . to drive forward with all speed and with full utilization of all their force.”[55]

The commander in chief received a message from JCS the next day, telling him that they considered his new order “not in consonance” with their 27 September authorization, which had stipulated a policy of using only ROK ground forces in the provinces bordering Russia and Manchuria. The matter had caused some concern in Washington, the Joint Chiefs said, and they wanted to know MacArthur’s reasons for making the decision.[56]

In reply they were informed that the commander in chief’s decision was a “matter of military necessity,” since the ROK Army lacked both the strength and the seasoned commanders required for securing North Korea. MacArthur added that the 27 September authorization had “. . . merely enunciated the [restraining line] provision as a matter of policy,” and had admitted the possibility of JCS instructions being modified in accordance with developments. He stated further that he possessed the authority to so modify from Secretary of Defense Marshall himself, who had told him “. . . to feel unhampered tactically and strategically . . .” Assuring the Joint Chiefs that he understood the reasons for their apprehension, he warned that “. . . tactical hazards might even result from other action than that which I have directed.”[57]

And there the matter rested.

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Chapter 2. The Wonsan Landing
Landing of 1st Marine Division

It was at a X Corps staff meeting on 18 October that General Almond disclosed MacArthur's plan for parallel zones of action and the new Chongsanjansi-Songjin restraining line in North Korea. Upon establishing his CP at Wonsan two days later, he accordingly assumed command of all UN and ROK forces north of the 39° 10' parallel and east of the Taebaek Range.[58]

By this time the ROK Capitol Division was occupying Hamhung, Hungnam, and nearby Yonpo Airfield, all of which had been captured on 17 October during the swift drive northward.[59] The ROK 3d Division had one regiment at Wonsan, another at Kojo, and the third en route to Hamhung.[60]

On the 21st, General Almond requested CJTF-7 to land one battalion of Marines at Kojo immediately, for the purpose of relieving the ROK regiment defending that locale. He contended that Navy LSTs could beach there safely, since SCAJAP ships had already done so. Learning of the proposed landing, Admiral Doyle argued against it and Admiral Struble forbade it on the ground that the military requirement did not justify the risk incident to negotiating unswept waters. Thus the landing was called off, although the Marines had not heard the last of Kojo.[61]

On 22 October, General Smith issued a new plan based on the proposed X Corps deployment as far north as the Chongsanjangsi-Songjin line. The 1st Marine Division would now occupy the southern part of the extended corps zone, with each regiment responsible for the security of its assigned sector.[62] But again planning went for naught when, two days later, General Almond received MacArthur's order to disregard the restraining line and use whatever forces necessary to drive rapidly to the Manchurian and Soviet borders. On 25 October, therefore, X Corps directed the 1st Marine Division to concentrate one RCT in the Hamhung area and to relieve elements of the I ROK Corps at the Chosin and Fusen Reservoirs. South Korean troops had already begun their advance on these vital power centers, some 50 to 60 air miles north of Hamhung.[63]

It was also on the 25th that the 1st Marine Division finally began its administrative landing at Wonsan—as anticlimactic a landing as Marines have ever made. Five LSTs loaded with Engineer, Shore Party, and Combat Service Group elements beached on Kalma Peninsula in the evening. Since the approaches had not been declared clear until late afternoon, the main ship-to-shore movement was delayed until the next day. Thus, 26 October actually became D-Day—or "Doyle Day," as it was referred to by an impatient General Almond.[64]

At first light on the 26th, landing craft clustered around the transport vessels in the swept channel as troops spilled down debarkation nets. The first of 39 scheduled waves were shortly on the way, with amphibious craft of every description churning the water.[65] LSUs began disgorging armor of the 1st Tank Battalion at 0730, and the big machines, fitted with deep-water fording adapters, thrashed through the surf and onto the loose sand.[66] Simultaneously, swarms of vehicles of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion crawled ashore shuttling troops and cargo.[67]

At 0900, LSTs landed the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines on YELLOW Beach, while Colonel Lewis B. Puller's regimental headquarters splashed ashore out of landing craft dispatched from the *Noble.* The reserve battalion, 2/1, remained on board ship until the 28th. By 1700, the 3d Battalion was in position for the night and the 1st was well on the way to Kojo for a special mission. In the midst of the landing, Colonel Puller received a message from General Smith congratulating him on his being selected for promotion to brigadier general.[68]

Troops of the 7th Marines marched ashore on BLUE Beach without incident and the assembled

battalions moved to assigned areas north of Wonsan. At 1300, Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg opened his regimental CP at St. Benedict's Abbey, which had been gutted by the retreating Communists.[69]

Advance parties of the 5th Marines began landing over both beaches at 0800. Priority was given to unloading the reserve unit's cargo, and the majority of troops remained on board transports for the night. Most of the regiment debarked the next day and assembled about three miles northwest of Wonsan, where Lieutenant Colonel Murray established his CP at 1800.[70]

Only the 2d Battalion and several reconnaissance parties of the 11th Marines landed on the 26th. The remainder of the artillery regiment went ashore the next day and bivouacked at the coastal town of Munpyong-ni, five miles above Wonsan. Colonel James H. Brower, the regimental commander, detached 2/11 to the 1st Marines at 1715 on 27 October, but the other battalions ". . . remained in a mobile state awaiting further orders."[71]

The Wonsan landing, though tactically insignificant at the moment, was a major logistical undertaking to such units as the 1st Engineer Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel John H. Partridge), the 1st Shore Party Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Henry P. Crowe), and the 1st Combat Service Group (Colonel John H. Cook, Jr.).

Representatives from these and other support and service units had flown to the objective area several days before the Division's arrival. After completing an inspection of Wonsan, the Shore Party detachment employed 500 North Korean POWs and 210 civilians to improve landing sites and beach exits. This work continued 24 hours a day for nine days, until the vanguard LSTs grated ashore on Kalma Peninsula in the evening of 25 October.[72] At this point, Shore Party Group C (Major George A. Smith) assumed responsibility for YELLOW Beach in the north, and Group B (Major Henry Brzezinski) took over BLUE Beach.

With the arrival of the first waves of LSTs, LSUs, LVTs, and landing craft in the morning, there began a routine of unremitting toil that would abate only after all of X Corps had landed weeks later. Because of the shallow offshore gradient, many amphibious craft could not reach the beach with their heavy cargoes, and the Shore Party troops had to construct ramps which projected 30 feet into the water. These improvised piers were made of rice bags filled with sand, with the result that their maintenance required considerable effort in men and heavy equipment. A pontoon causeway constructed on 27 October lessened the difficulties connected with getting troops ashore, but other problems persisted.

One of these had to do with a sandbar that stretched across the boat lanes about 50 yards from the coast. Heavier craft frequently grounded here, and while some could be towed ashore by tractor dozers (TD–18s) and LVTs, others had to be unloaded in the water by cranes operating off the ramps and from barges.

Once men and supplies finally reached dry land, there was the difficulty of transporting them inland over the loose sand and around the sprawling dunes of the peninsular beaches. Trucks and trailers often bogged down to such depths that they had to be uprooted and towed by LVTs or dozers. This tied up the overworked tracked vehicles when they were badly needed elsewhere.

The Combat Service Group established its Class I, III, and V dumps according to plan on 26 October, but Class II and IV supplies arrived on the beach ". . . in a completely mixed condition," owing to the haste of the out-loading at Inchon. From D-Day onward, from 1500 to 2000 Korean civilians were hired daily to help segregate and issue supplies.

Upon the completion of mine sweeping in the inner harbor, the intact port facilities of Wonsan became operative on 2 November. During the next nine days, the Combat Service Group dispatched by rail to Hamhung 3900 tons of ammunition alone. On 9 November, the group was attached to X Corps for operational control, thereafter assuming specific responsibility for such varied tasks as: operation of all port facilities; unloading all X Corps elements; transporting all equipment and supplies to inland dumps and supply points; casualty evacuation; maintenance of an airhead at Wonsan Airfield; providing local security; traffic control in the port and its environs; and providing field maintenance for all units in the Wonsan area.

The magnitude of the logistical operation can be imagined from a survey of statistics mentioned in Shore

Party reports. By 31 October, when the 1st Marine Division's landing was completed, a total of 24 cargo vessels, 36 LSTs, and one LSM had been unloaded. Bulk cargo in the order of 18,402 tons had moved across the beaches along with 30,189 personnel and 4731 vehicles. During the same period, 2534 troops were out-loaded with 70 vehicles and 4323 POWs. And in November, as the MAG–12 elements and the rest of X Corps poured ashore, the total of ships handled soared to 76 cargo and 52 LSTs, adding 30,928 personnel, 51,270 tons of supplies, and 7113 vehicles to the short-lived buildup in Northeast Korea.

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IT WAS PERHAPS inevitable after the NKPA collapse that an end-of-the-war atmosphere should prevail. This attitude was found in the CP as well as the foxhole. General MacArthur, while witnessing the Eighth Army paratroop landings north of the captured enemy capital, was quoted by the newspapers as saying:

"The war is very definitely coming to an end shortly. With the closing of that trap there should be an end to organized resistance."[1]

As another straw in the wind, General Smith had received a dispatch from ComNavFE on 21 October which stated that on the conclusion of hostilities it was his intention to recommend to CinCFE that the 1st Marine Division be returned to the United States, less an RCT to be stationed in Japan.[2]

On the 24th the Marine commander learned that X Corps had received a document, for planning purposes only, providing that the Corps commander would become commander of the occupation forces. These were to consist of a single American division, probably the 3d Infantry Division, while the remainder of the Eighth Army returned to Japan.[3]

Such indications seemed less reassuring after an incident which occurred at Wonsan on the evening of D-day. Two Marines, gathering firewood on the beach, had been blown to pieces by a booby trap. They were the only casualties from enemy action in the Wonsan landing.[4]

As early as 24 October the Marine division CP aboard the *Mount McKinley* had been advised of an ancillary mission. Immediately following the landing one battalion was to be sent 39 miles south of Wonsan to the small seaport of Kojo. There it was to protect a supply dump of the ROK I Corps.[5]

X Corps issued OI 13 on the 25th but General Smith did not receive his copy until two days later. Corps orders now assigned the Marine division a zone of action more than 300 road miles from north to south and 50 road miles in width. The missions prescribed for the Marines were those of an occupation rather than a fighting force:

"(1) To land on beaches in the vicinity of Wonsan.

"(2) To relieve all elements of I ROK Corps in Kojo and zone.

"(3) To protect the Wonsan-Kojo-Majon-ni area, employing not less than one RCT, and patrolling all roads to the west in zone.

"(4) To advance rapidly in zone to the Korean northern border.

"(5) To be prepared to land one Battalion Landing Team (BLT) in the Chongjin area rapidly on order.

"(6) To assist the 101st Engineer Group (C) (ROK) in the repair of the Yonghung-Hamhung railroad, employing not less than one engineer company."[6]

The 1st Marine Division in turn assigned these tasks to the following units in OpnO 18–50, issued at 0800 on the 28th but communicated orally to most of the designated commanding officers during the preceding 48 hours:

"(1) RCT–1 to relieve elements of I ROK Corps in Wonsan-Kojo-Majon-ni zone, establish necessary road blocks to prevent movement into the area, patrol roads, and destroy enemy in zone. RCT–1 to maintain one reinforced battalion at Kojo until further orders.

"(2) RCT–7 to relieve elements of I ROK Corps along the Hamhung-Chosin Reservoir road, advance rapidly to the northern tip of the reservoir and Changjin, prepared for further advance to the northern border of Korea, and to destroy enemy in zone.

"(3) RCT–5 to move to an assigned zone behind RCT–7, relieve elements of I ROK Corps in the vicinity

of Fusen Reservoir, establish necessary road blocks to prevent movement into the area, patrol the roads and destroy the enemy.

"(4) BLT1/5 to be activated on order. Upon activation to report to the designated commander for operational control and landing in the vicinity of Chongjin.

"(5) The 11th Marines, reinforced and less detachments, from an assembly area in the vicinity of Hamhung, to be prepared for operating in the zone of any RCT."[7]

Two of the objectives mentioned in these orders, Chongjin and the northern border of Korea, were more than 300 road miles north of Wonsan. With the exception of the main coastal route, most of the roads in the 1st Marine Division zone were mere mountain trails, unfit for tanks or heavy vehicles.

OpnO 18–50 was modified the next day to provide for attaching the 1st Battalion, KMC Regiment, to the 5th Marines, and the 5th KMC Battalion to the 1st Marines. The security of the Munchon and Yong-hung areas (13 and 32 miles north of Wonsan respectively) was assigned for the time being to the 5th Marines, reinforced by Company A of the 1st Tank Battalion.

On the 27th General Smith moved from the *Mount McKinley* at 1000 to the new Division CP, a mile north of Wonsan. An old Russian barracks, it was too small and badly in need of repairs. The building occupied by the 1st Marine Air Wing was in even worse shape, but carpenters were soon busy at boarding up windows and doors blown out by bombs.[8]

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1/1 Sent to Kojo

A holiday spirit prevailed among the men of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, as they entrained on the morning of 26 October 1950 at a railhead near the Wonsan airfield. Physical activity was a treat after the monotony and confinement of Operation Yo-Yo, and 1/1 had been selected for the Kojo mission. Immediately after the landing on YELLOW Beach at 0900 that morning, preparations were made for departure by rail of the rifle companies at noon. Supplies and reinforcing units were scheduled to follow on the 27th on a second train and a convoy consisting of 1/1 and Motor Transport Battalion vehicles; Battery F, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines; 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion; and a detachment of Company D, 1st Medical Battalion.[9]

At 1330 a wheezing Korean engine manned by a Korean crew pulled out of Wonsan with the rifle companies riding in gondola cars. It was a bright blue day, with a hint of frost in the air; and not a sign of enemy resistance appeared along the 39-mile route, though several tunnels might have been utilized for a guerrilla attack.

Upon their arrival late that afternoon, Kojo proved to be the most attractive town the men had seen in Korea—an almost undamaged small seaport flanked by the white beaches and sparkling blue waters of the bay.

There remained for the Marines the task of relieving ROK units and protecting an area consisting of a coastal plain about 5000 yards in diameter which stretched from the bay to a semicircle of hills ranging from 150 to 600 feet in height (see Map 4). The ROK officers assured the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Jack Hawkins, that his men would find their duty at Kojo a tame assignment. They admitted that small bands of escaping NKPA soldiers had sometimes raided the villages for rice, but added that ROK patrols had scoured the hills without meeting any organized resistance.

The night passed uneventfully for the battalion in a perimeter northwest of Kojo while the ROKs occupied outposts along the southern fringe of the coast plain. In the morning the Marines found the rice paddies glazed with the first ice of the autumn. After completing the relief of the 2d Battalion of the 22d ROK Regiment at 1200, they watched with amusement that afternoon as the Koreans crowded into the gondola cars with their women, children, dogs, and chickens for the ride back to Wonsan. When it seemed that the train could not hold another human being, a ROK officer barked out an order and everyone squeezed farther back with audible sighs and grunts. At last, as a grand climax, the officer shouted a final command and the entire trainload of Koreans sat down simultaneously, like collapsing dominoes.

It was an ironical circumstance that the ROKs on the overcrowded train took with them the remnants of the supply dump that 1/1 was assigned to guard. However important this dump may have been in its heyday, it had apparently been consumed by the ROKs to the point where only a few drums of fuel oil remained along with other odds and ends.

That afternoon the train and truck convoys arrived without incident, bringing supplies and all reinforcing units except the artillery. And though the Marines at Kojo did not neglect security precautions, they had seen nothing during their first 24 hours to hint that an organized enemy was about to launch a surprise attack.

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Marine Positions in Kojo Area

Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins faced a problem in selecting positions for his battalion.

"Mindful of my mission—to protect the supply dump until removed—I had to dispose the battalion in a way designated to accomplish this end [he commented]. The supply dump was located at the railroad station in the flat ground south of Kojo—a point difficult to defend, since it was on low ground and could be approached by the enemy from any direction. I considered the most likely direction of enemy approach to be from the south along the coastal road or through the valley leading toward Kojo from the southwest. Therefore, I decided to place Company B in outpost positions to cover these approaches. . . . The remainder of the battalion would be deployed on the hill massif west of Kojo, prepared to defend the area or counterattack if necessary to prevent loss of the supplies at the railroad station. I did not consider this disposition ideal by any means from the standpoint of defensive strength, but it appeared to be the best possible disposition in the complex terrain to protect the supply dump. . . . Also, I did not have reason to expect an organized attack by large enemy forces. In the event such a contingency should occur, it was planned that Company B, the outpost, would withdraw to the main battle position."[10]

Click here to view map

Captain Wesley B. Noren's Baker Company positions were about two miles south and southwest of Kojo across an expanse of rice paddies. From east to west the company held three isolated points of high ground:

1st Platoon (First Lieutenant George S. Belli), reinforced by one section of light machine guns and one 3.2" rocket launcher squad, on the east slope of Hill 109;

3d Platoon (Master Sergeant Matthew D. Monk) and Company Headquarters, reinforced by one section of heavy machine guns, one section of light machine guns, a 75mm recoilless rifle, one squad of 3.5" rocket launchers and a flame thrower, on high ground to the west and south of the 1st Platoon;

2d Platoon (First Lieutenant George G. Chambers), reinforced by one section of 81mm mortars, one section of light machine guns, a 75mm recoilless rifle and one squad of 3.2" rocket launchers, on Hill 185.

The remainder of 1/1 occupied positions west of Kojo. Captain Robert P. Wray's Charlie Company held a continuous line of foxholes in the hills that rose from the rice paddies a mile and a half north of Baker Company's positions. From west to east were First Lieutenant Francis B. Conlon's 2d Platoon, First Lieutenant William A. Craven's 1st and Second Lieutenant Henry A. Commiskey's 3d. About 250 yards to the east were two platoons of Captain Robert H. Barrow's Able Company. On the slopes north of Barrow stood Colonel Hawkins' CP and the tubes of First Lieutenant Edward E. Kaufer's 4.2" Mortar Platoon. Captain Barrow's third platoon occupied the topographical crest of Hill 117.[11]

While the Marines organized their positions during the afternoon of 27 October, a column of refugees "almost as long as the eye could see" appeared in the valley southwest of Kojo headed for the seaport. Colonel Hawkins estimated that there were 2000 to 3000 people in the column. Since he did not have the time to examine all the refugees before darkness, Hawkins had them herded into the peninsula northeast of Kojo for the night.[12]

After a quiet afternoon on the 27th, the first hint of enemy opposition came at 1600 when a wire team was fired upon in the vicinity of Hill 185. Two hours later a truck and a jeep borrowed from the S—3, Major David W. Bridges, received fire from the high ground west of Hill 109. Both were abandoned after the truck broke down, and a Baker Company patrol had a brief fire fight at 1900 when it recovered the vehicles.[13]

These first indications of Red Korean activity in the Kojo area were attributed to the forays of guerrilla

bands. Not until after the battle did the Marines learn from POW interrogations that the enemy consisted of an estimated 1000 to 1200 men of the 10th Regiment, 5th NKPA Division. This regiment, commanded by Colonel Cho Il Kwon, former director of the Communist Party at Wonsan, was believed to have its CP in the large village of Tongchon, about two miles south of the Baker Company outposts. Other units of the NKPA division, which was credited with a total strength of 7000 to 8000 men, occupied areas farther to the south.[14]

After the Red Korean collapse, the 2d, 5th, and 10th NKPA Divisions had maintained their organization, though much depleted in strength by casualties. Withdrawing to the Wonsan area, they kept to the secondary roads and raided the villages for food. It is a tribute to Communist discipline that the outfits had not lost their cohesion at a time when their cause seemed to be collapsing. But the 5th NKPA Division was one of the units made up almost entirely of Koreans who had served in the Chinese Civil War, and its officers were fanatically dedicated to Communist principles.[15]

Only well trained and led troops could have launched the attacks which hit both ends of the Baker Company's chain of outposts simultaneously about 2200, after the first few hours of darkness had passed in comparative quiet punctuated by occasional shots. Normal security measures were taken on a cold night with a 50 per cent watch—one rifleman remaining on the alert in the two-man foxholes while the other burrowed for warmth into a partially closed sleeping bag. The 81mm and 60mm mortars were registered on the hills just beyond the 2d and 3d platoons.[16]

These two units came under attack shortly before First Lieutenant Carlon's position at the extreme west of Charlie Company's line was assailed. In each instance the enemy infiltrated within grenade throwing distance before his presence was detected. Past contacts with American soldiers had given the Red Koreans some knowledge of the language, and for purposes of deception the NKPA assault troops shouted phrases in broken English:

"Come this way! . . . Don't shoot! We're friends."[17]

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The All-Night Fight of Baker Company

The surprise was devastating, particularly in the Baker Company zone. On the eastern slope of Hill 109 the 1st Platoon had no inkling until men yelled warnings from the foxholes just as the enemy grenades exploded and Red Koreans in estimated strength of two platoons overran the position. Seven Marines were killed before they could get out of their sleeping bags, and others lost contact in the darkness.

The 3d Platoon and Company CP were attacked from three points to the south and southeast. Marine 60mm mortars fired within 50 yards of the front line while the 81s laid down a barrage directly forward of the position. After a brief and bitter struggle, Communists believed to number three platoons were repulsed.

In the Charlie' Company zone, Lieutenant Carlon's position was hardest hit. The North Koreans closed within ten feet before they were noticed. During the confused fighting which followed, the enemy won a brief foothold. An estimated 20 Marines were cut off but got back safely the next morning.

After recovering from the initial surprise the Charlie Company outposts repulsed all further attacks. Wray's men lost 6 killed and 16 wounded during the night's encounters but could count 92 Korean bodies the next morning.

At 2215 the 3d Platoon of Baker Company had a second attack at the same points as the first one. The Red Koreans appeared to Captain Noren to be exceptionally well disciplined and controlled in spite of heavy casualties inflicted on them by combination of mortar, machine-gun and small-arms fire, and grenades.[18]

The plight of Belli's platoon was first made known when 2/B on Hill 185 received a message to the effect that 1/B had withdrawn from Hill 109 with 30 men missing. The retirement was made possible by the brave stand of Sergeant Clayton Roberts, who covered the movement with a light machine gun until he was surrounded and killed.

The 3d Platoon beat off another attack meanwhile as the enemy closed in from the left rear as well as the front. With machine-gun fire coming from both directions, Noren informed the battalion CP at 2350 that his position was untenable and asked permission to with draw. His request being granted, he directed Lieutenant Chambers to pull back from Hill 185, covering the withdrawal of 3/B with 81mm fire.

The intersection of the dike and railway track was designated as the meeting place for the three Baker Company platoons. Noren covered the rear of the 3/B withdrawal while his executive officer, First Lieutenant Chester B. Farmer, took charge of the point. Opposite Hill 109 they encountered Staff Sergeant Robert Fisher and five men whom Belli had directed to remain at the dike and pick up stragglers while the rest of 1/B continued to pull back.

Fisher reported that the attack on Hill 109 had been conducted with skill and discipline. Whistles and red and green flares were used for signaling by Communists who cut off a listening post and overran a squad on the right flank. The assault force numbered 160, according to POW testimony.

The methodical, position-by-position withdrawal of the three Baker Company platoons was conducted so skilfully that remarkably few casualties resulted. Noren lost all contact for a short time when enemy fire severed the antenna on his last operative SCR–300. At about 0215 Chambers' platoon was last to reach the meeting place, having beaten off several attacks during its withdrawal from Hill 185. With another large-scale enemy assault threatening, Noren organized a 360° defense on both sides of the railway track just south of the village of Chonchon-ni. One Marine was killed and six wounded by enemy fire received from the west as well as east.

Fox Battery of the 11th Marines had arrived in the Kojo area about midnight and set up its guns on the

beach northeast of the town at about 0200.[19] Baker Company had no radio in operation, however, until parts of two damaged SCR—300's were combined into one to restore communication. Contact was made with the 4.2" mortars, which registered about 0300, directed by Captain Noren, and broke up the NKPA attack. The 81mm mortars made it hot for the enemy in Chonchon-ni, and at 0330 the Communists apparently disengaged to withdraw east of the railway track and northward toward Kojo. Marine artillery had registered by 0400, but all was quiet in the area the rest of the night.

Although a few NKPA mortar shells were received, enemy equipment appeared to be limited for the most part to automatic weapons, small arms, and grenades. There were indications that Korean civilians had been used in several instances as human shields for an attacking force.[20]

The NKPA withdrawal to Kojo led to the Marine speculation that the Communists meant to make enforced recruits of some of the hapless residents allotted a refuge in the peninsula north of the town. As it proved, they were not harmed by the NKPA troops. The last enemy effort, just before dawn, was an attack in platoon strength on Second Lieutenant John J. Swords' Able Company platoon by Reds who had infiltrated through Kojo. A brief fight ensued on Hill 117 as the Marines beat off the assault at the cost of one man killed and two wounded.

Baker Company elements had meanwhile resumed their withdrawal along the railway track north of Chonchon. All was quiet at first light when Noren began the task of evacuating his wounded in ponchos through rice paddies which were knee-deep in mud and water under a thin skin of ice. Marines came out from the Able Company positions to lend a hand.

The evacuation had nearly been completed when about 200 enemy troops suddenly moved out from Kojo in a westerly direction across the rice paddies. Whether they meant to interfere with the evacuation or merely to escape was never made clear. For the Marines of Able and Baker Companies as well as the gunners of Fox Battery opened up in broad daylight and found lucrative targets. An estimated 75 Communists were killed and wounded before the rest scurried out of range into the hills west of the coastal plain.

Some contact was maintained with the enemy until 1000 by elements of Charlie Company, then the action was gradually broken off as the planes of VMF(N)–513 came in low with close support.[21] Although the strikes by air were largely uncontrolled because of poor radio communications between the Forward Air Controller (FAC) and the planes, they were very helpful to the Marines on the ground.[22]

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2/1 Ordered to Kojo

The radio message bringing the first news of the Kojo fight was sent by 1/1 at 0418 on the 28th. Owing to transmission difficulty, it was picked up by the 7th Marines, relayed to the 1st Marines at 0700, and telephoned to the 1st Marine Division.[23] It stated briefly that the battalion had been under attack since 1700 by an estimated 1000 enemy and had suffered a large number of casualties. Helicopters were requested for air evacuation and an LSTH for water evacuation of the wounded. Air support was required, the message continued, adding that the destroyer in direct support of the battalion had not yet arrived on station.

At 0830 an officer from 1/1 reported in to 1st Marines CP with a further account. He reported a platoon of B Company cut off and estimated 150 casualties.[24]

A third report from 1/1 reached the CP of the 1st Marine Division as an intercepted radio message at 1238 on the 28th while General Almond was conferring with General Smith. Sent from Kojo at 1000, the message said:

"Received determined attack from South North and West from sunset to sunrise by large enemy force. Estimated from 1000 to 1200. One company still heavily engaged. Civilian reports indicate possibility 3000 enemy this immediate area. Have suffered 9 KIA, 39 WIA, 34 MIA [Missing in Action] probably dead. Two positions overrun during night. If this position is to be held a regiment is required. Enemy now to South North and West of us but believe road to North is still open. Harbor is in our hands and ROK LST has been here. Shall we hold here or withdraw to North? ROK supply dump . . . removed. Request immediate instructions. Send all available helicopters for wounded. Suggest send instructions by both radio and helicopters."[25]

The Corps and Division commanders agreed immediately that Kojo should be held, since a large-scale NKPA attack appeared to be in the making. Another factor in this decision was the ROK supply dump. Nobody at the Division CP seemed to know as yet that it had been removed, but General Smith directed his G–3 to issue the necessary orders to send Colonel Puller, CO of the 1st Marines, and a battalion of reinforcements to Kojo. Within five minutes Colonel Alpha L. Bowser, 1stMarDiv G–3, telephoned Corps to request that a train be assembled on the Wonsan siding immediately for a battalion lift.[26]

Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, ADC of the 1st Marine Division, was on his way to a conference at the 1st Marines CP when he met General Almond and Colonel Puller, and the three compared notes from their jeeps. Craig informed them that action toward the providing of transportation had already been initiated by Division. A request had later been made for a second destroyer to provide gunfire support (the first having already arrived) and an LSTH for casualty evacuation. Another LST had been requested for the purpose of sending tanks to Kojo, since the road and bridges would not bear the weight of armor.

The possibility of a major engagement taking place at Kojo seemed to be confirmed by two later reports 1/1 sent at 1415 and 1840. The first relayed prisoner of war statements to the effect that an estimated 7000 men of the NKPA 5th Division were located at Tongchon.[27] The second, a radio message, read:

"Reinforcement train has not arrived as of 1800. NK prisoners revealed large enemy force plans attack over position tonight. Recommend LVTs with LSTs stand by at daylight in case of emergency evacuation necessary. In view of large numbers of troops facing us as previously reported and fact enemy on all sides except seaward, consider situation critical. Request higher authority visit."[28]

By that time Colonel Puller and the troops were on the way. Making up a train and loading it with a reinforced battalion and extra supplies in three and a half hours had been something of an administrative feat,

particularly when the battalion was just coming off landing craft. Yet Lieutenant Colonel Allan Sutter's 2/1 and the Regimental Command Group pulled out for Kojo at 1630 and a second train followed two hours later.[29]

Upon arrival at 2230, CO 1stMar learned that there had been no major enemy contact since 1000. Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins had contracted his unit that afternoon to his main position along the high ground forming a semicircle around Hill 117. The 2d Battalion and supporting arms having tied in with the 1st for the night, Colonel Puller concluded that no further cause for alarm existed. And since the battery positions at Kojo were limited, he radioed General Smith that more artillery would not be needed.[30]

Seventeen Marines previously listed as MIA by 1/1 had returned unhurt to their units on the 28th after being cut off during the confusion of the night's fighting. Marine air had all but obliterated Tongchon that afternoon while the U.S. destroyers *Hank* and *English* were bombarding Kojo.

The request for water as well as air evacuation of serious casualties had resulted in immediate action. Within an hour after receiving the message, CTF–90 had the transport *Wantuck* on the way with a surgical team, and VMO–6 sent five helicopters which flew 17 wounded men to a hospital ship at Wonsan on the 29th.[31]

Ten tanks of Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, were loaded in LST 883 at Wonsan on the 28th, but the ship was delayed by running aground. Upon arrival at Kojo the next day, it again became necessary for the LST to be pulled off the bar by a tug. By this time the military situation was so well in hand that the tanks were taken back to Wonsan without being unloaded.[32]

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Security Provided for Wonsan Area

Responsibility for the security of the Wonsan area having been assigned to the 1st Marines, something of an administrative problem was created on the 28th by the order sending 2/1 to reinforce 1/1 at Kojo. For the 3d Battalion of the regiment had departed that same day to relieve a ROK unit at Majon-ni, 28 miles west of Wonsan. Since this left no troops to patrol roads in the Wonsan area and maintain blocking positions at Anbyon, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, and 5th KMC Battalion were attached to the 1st Marines for those missions.

Also available to the 1st Marines for such security duties as guarding the Wonsan airfield and harbor area were the 1st Shore Party Battalion, 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion, and Company B of the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion.[33]

By the morning of the 29th, moreover, it had already become apparent that one or both of the battalions in the Kojo area could soon be spared. When General Craig arrived by helicopter, he found the situation well in hand.[34]

About 60 percent of the seaport had been destroyed by air strikes and the guns of the destroyers when a patrol consisting of Dog and Fox Companies combed the ruins on the morning of the 29th without finding any evidences of enemy occupation. Meanwhile an Easy Company patrol ranged to the west of the coastal plain with equally negative results.[35]

Captain George B. Farish of VMO–6 was making a reconnaissance flight when he discerned the word HELP spelled out in rice straw near a straw-stack a mile northeast of Tongchon. A Marine crawled out from concealment, and the pilot landed his helicopter to pick up PFC William H. Meister, who had been hiding since losing touch with his unit during the enemy night attack on Hill 109. This was the first of four such rescues completed by Farish that day.[36]

On the afternoon of the 29th, Captain Noren led a patrol along the railway track south of Kojo and retraced the route of his fighting withdrawal in the darkness. In the vicinity of Hill 109, where Lieutenant Belli's platoon had been surprised, he found 12 Marine bodies. None had been despoiled by the enemy of arms or equipment.

Pushing farther south, Noren encountered sniper fire from the ruins of Tongchon, destroyed by Marine air, and called for more strikes. The Corsairs flushed out a group of 20 enemy troops, 16 of whom were cut down by the machine guns of the Baker Company patrol.[37]

By the 29th, when General Almond made a trip of inspection to Kojo, it was possible to revise the original Marine casualty list as the MIA casualties were reduced. The final count was 23 KIA, 47 WIA and four MIA.[38]

Twenty-four wounded Marines were evacuated to Wonsan that day by APD. LST 883, when it returned to Wonsan with the tanks, took the bodies of 19 Marines and 17 prisoners.

Enemy losses, in addition to 83 POW, were estimated at 250 KIA and an unknown number of WIA on the basis of more than 165 bodies found by Marine patrols. Curiously enough, the Communists had shown little interest in the equipment which fell into their hands, and two Marine 75mm recoilless rifles, rendered inoperative, were recovered with their carts and ammunition in the vicinity of Chonchon-ni. Almost all abandoned equipment was found in usable condition.[39]

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Chapter 3. First Blood at Kojo
Marines Relieved at Kojo

Each of the Marine rifle companies set up outposts in front of its zone. Morning and afternoon patrolling, with air on station, went on during the last two days of October with negative results. Harassing and interdiction fires were also continued until 1/1 departed.

LST 973 arrived off Kojo at 1430, 31 October, and disembarked the 5th Battalion of the KMC Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins' battalion, accompanied by Colonel Puller, left Kojo at 0700 the next morning on the return trip of the LST. The ship docked at Wonsan at 1230 on 2 November. That afternoon 1/1 relieved elements of the 1st Tank Battalion at the road block near Katsuma, four miles southeast of Wonsan.

Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., CG FMFPac, who was acting in an informal capacity as amphibious adviser to General MacArthur, inspected 2/1 at Kojo by helicopter on 31 October. Having arrived at Wonsan that day with Colonel Victor H. Krulak, his G–3, he conferred at X Corps Headquarters with Admiral Struble and Generals Almond and Smith.[40]

Among the other subjects of discussion was the news that Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) prisoners had been taken in the area north of Hamhung by ROK units which were soon to be relieved by the 7th Marines. Several clashes with organized Chinese forces during the last days of October had also been reported by elements of the 1st Cavalry Division of the Eighth Army in western Korea.

The 7th Marines had been given the mission of spearheading the Marine advance to the northern border of Korea as directed in Corps orders. After parkas and other cold weather clothing had been issued from the beach dumps at Wonsan, the regiment completed the movement to Hamhung by motor convoy from 29 to 31 October. By this time the Corps drive to the Yalu was shifting into second gear, with the I ROK Corps far in advance along the coastal highway. Two U.S. Army units were soon to be involved. The 7th Infantry Division, which landed at Iwon from 29 October to 8 November, had Corps orders to push on toward the border; and it was planned that the 3d Infantry Division, due to land its first units on the 8th at Wonsan, would relieve 1st Marines units south of Hamhung.[41]

Corps orders of 2 November called for 2/1 to return to Wonsan immediately. The southern boundary of X Corps was to be moved 70 miles farther south, effective on the departure of the battalion from Kojo. In order to cover the new zone, the KMC regiment had already been detached from the 1st Marine Division and given responsibility for the Corps zone south of the 39th Parallel. The relief of the 2d Battalion of the 5th Marines was completed by KMC elements that same day at Anbyon, eight miles southeast of Wonsan, thus freeing that unit for a motor lift northward to rejoin its regiment.[42]

Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's 2/1 and the artillery battery departed Kojo the following day. A small train and a truck convoy sent from Wonsan were used chiefly for the transport of supplies, and most of the troops traveled by shanks' mare. The column was on the way when the report came that the rail line had been blown up at Anbyon by guerrillas. The battalion halted there and set up a perimeter for the night which included both the train and truck convoys. At 0730 in the morning the convoys moved out again for Wonsan. Delayed slightly by another rail break, Sutter completed the movement at noon.[43]

The track-blowing incident gave evidence that the Marines must deal with a third type of enemy. In addition to the NKPA remnants, and the forces of Red China, it now appeared that account must be taken of thousands of uprooted Koreans prowling in small bands for food and loot—the flotsam of a cruel civil war. Called guerrillas by courtesy, they were actually outlaws and banditti, loyal to no cause. And by virtue of their very

furtiveness, they were capable of doing a great deal of mischief to organized forces.

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Chapter 4. Majon-ni and Ambush Alley

FROM A DISTANCE the Y-shaped mountain valley, encircled by peaks and crossed by two swift, clear streams, might have been taken for a scene in the Alps. This impression was borne out by the village of Majon-ni, which nestled close to the earth, as seen from afar, with the tranquil and untroubled air of a Swiss hamlet.

On closer inspection, however, such first impressions could only prove to be illusory. The most prominent building in the Korean village was a new schoolhouse with the onion-shaped dome of Russian architecture. An incongruous and pretentious structure for such a small peasant community, it had been erected not so much for the instruction of children as the indoctrination of adults in Communist principles.

Majon-ni, in short, had been for five years a hotbed of forced culture in the doctrines of the Communist puppet state set up in northern Korea after World War II by the occupation forces of Soviet Russia. And it was here that the 3d Battalion of the 1st Marines arrived on 28 October 1950. Relief of elements of the 26th ROK Regiment at 1600 enabled those troops to return to Wonsan in the vehicles which had brought 3/1.[1]

The Marines had been assigned the mission of "setting up a defensive position at Majon-ni, destroying enemy forces, and denying them the use of this road net." In addition, the unit was "to patrol roads to the north, south, and west, and keep the road open between Majon-ni and Wonsan."[2]

This last directive was soon modified by oral instructions relieving the battalion from the responsibility of keeping open the Wonsan-Majon-ni road. The reason for the change was apparent when the troops of 3/1 covered the 28-mile route by motor lift in two echelons on the afternoon of the 28th. After leaving the seaport and alluvial plain, the shelf-like road twists precariously through a 3000-foot pass. This stretch abounds in hairpin turns and deep gorges which are ideal for setting a tactical trap, and the route was soon to be known to the troops as Ambush Alley. Although traversable by tanks, it offered too much danger from road-blocks and landslides to permit the dispatch of the iron elephants.[3]

Click here to view map

The strategic importance of the Majon-ni area derived from its position at the headwaters of the river Imjin and the junction of roads leading east to Wonsan, south to Seoul, and west to Pyongyang. They were being traveled extensively at this time by NKPA troops escaping northward in civilian clothes after the collapse of the Red Korean military effort.

It was natural that the 1st Marine Division, with a zone of more than 15,000 square miles to control, should be ordered to occupy such an important road junction and potential assembly area as Majon-ni.[4] Thus the Marines of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Ridge's reinforced battalion were sent as a blocking and screening force.

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Chapter 4. Majon-ni and Ambush Alley
Marine Units Tied In for Defense

In addition to H&S, Weapons, and the three rifle companies, the task organization consisted on 28 October of Battery D of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, the 3d Platoon of Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion, and detachments from ANGLICO, 1st Signal Battalion; Company D, 1st Medical Battalion; and H&S Company, 1st Marines.[5]

The battalion commander and his S-3, Major Joseph D. Trompeter, decided after a survey of the terrain that the commanding ground was too far from the village and too rugged for company outposts. The logical solution seemed to be a battalion perimeter combined with daytime company OPs and vigorous patrolling of the three main roads. In order to tie in all units of a perimeter 3770 yards in circumference, it was necessary to create provisional platoons of such H&S, artillery and engineer troops as could be spared from their regular duties. Even so, the defense was spread thin in places.

The schoolhouse was the obvious place for the battalion CP. Communication within the perimeter was by telephone, with wires laid from the CP to artillery and mortar positions as well as company and platoon CPs. Radio communication was established with the regiment and the division but due to the terrain remained irregular at best.

First Lieutenant Leroy M. Duffy and his engineers were assigned the task of constructing on OY strip on the east side of the perimeter which was completed on 2 November. A parallel cliff made it necessary to land planes at a dangerous angle, but no better site could be had in this steep-sided valley.
Click here to view map

Topography also limited Captain Andrew J. Strohmenger's cannoneers, who were almost literally "firing out of a barrel." Close-in support was out of the question in the bowl-like valley ringed with peaks, but the six howitzers were emplaced so that they could be swung to fire on any avenue of approach, especially toward the three roads leading into Majon-ni.[6]

No difficulty was found in deciding on a water point, for tests established the purity of the water from both branches of the Imjin flowing through the perimeter. Lieutenant Duffy explained that he added chlorine only because the Marines were accustomed to the flavor.

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Chapter 4. Majon-ni and Ambush Alley
Political Aspects of Mission

The Marine mission had its political as well as military side. Major Edwin H. Simmons, CO of Weapons Company, was given the responsibility for defending the three road blocks of the perimeter with Weapons Company personnel. At each of them he stationed a heavy machine gun section and a 3.5" rocket launcher section. These barriers were also ports of entry where all Korean transients were searched for weapons. When a group of 20 to 30 accumulated, they were escorted under guard to the prison stockade, just across the road from the battalion CP.[7]

There they were “processed” by the Civil Affairs Section, consisting of 12 Marine enlisted men under the command of First Lieutenant Donald M. Holmes and Master Sergeant Marian M. Stocks, known facetiously as the mayor and sheriff respectively of Majon-ni. Their decisions were based largely on the findings of the 181st Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) team and the battalion S–2, Second Lieutenant Frederick W. Hopkins. The CIC specialists proved to be indispensable by contributing daily intelligence based on civilian as well as POW interrogations.

As might be supposed, the question of whether a transient was an escaping NKPA soldier or a harmless peasant might have perplexed Solomon himself. But the Marines came up with a simple off-the-cuff solution. Time did not permit a lengthy screening, and each Korean was given a brief examination with the aid of interpreters. If his head was still close-cropped in the NKPA manner, if his neck showed a tanned V-line recently left by a uniform, if his feet bore the tell-tale callouses left by military footgear—if he could not pass these three tests, the transient was sent to the prison stockade as a fugitive Red Korean soldier. Now that Chinese Communist troops had been encountered both on the X Corps and Eighth Army fronts, it was all the more important that battlewise NKPA elements should be prevented from joining their new allies if Red China intervened.

Some of the prisoners were admittedly NKPA veterans, weary of the war and ready to give up voluntarily. Manifestations of this spirit caused Lieutenant Colonel Ridge to send a radio request for an air drop of surrender leaflets.

The first full day’s operations, on 29 October, resulted in 24 prisoners being taken. But this was a trickle as compared to the torrent which would follow until an average daily rate of 82 was maintained during the 17 days of the operations.

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Chapter 4. Majon-ni and Ambush Alley
Roads Patrolled by Rifle Companies

Each of the rifle companies was given the mission of sending out daily motorized or foot patrols while manning, as required, company OPs. The three roads were assigned as follows:
George Company (Captain Carl L. Sitter), the road to Wonsan;
How Company (Captain Clarence E. Corley, Jr.) the road to Seoul;
Item Company (First Lieutenant Joseph R. Fisher), the road to Pyongyang.[8]

All patrols reported negative results throughout the first four days. Nevertheless, a system of artillery and 81mm mortar harassing and interdiction fires on suspected Red Korean assembly areas was put into effect. Major Simmons was designated the Supporting Arms Coordinator (SAC), and OYs were used for artillery spotting and to call air strikes when planes were on station.[9]

The battalion commander emphasized to his officers the necessity for maintaining as good relations with the inhabitants as security would permit. Strict troop discipline was to be maintained at all times, and the villagers were allowed their own mayor and council along with such laws or customs as did not conflict with the Marine mission.[10] A policy of justice and fairness had its reward when the inhabitants warned the CIC team of an impending attack by organized NKPA troops.

POW interrogations and reports by civilians identified the enemy unit as the 15th NKPA Division, including the 45th, 48th, and 50th regiments, commanded by Major General Pak Sun Chol. Following the NKPA collapse, the division had been able to maintain its organization while infiltrating northward from the Pusan Perimeter and raiding the villages for food. The mission was reported to be the occupation and control of the upper Imjin valley as a base for guerrilla operations, with the Majon-ni road junction being designated one of the main objectives.[11]

Enemy numbers were said to reach a total of 11,000. But that figure, like most Oriental estimates of numbers, had to be taken with the traditional grain of salt.

At any rate, the Marines had no further doubt on the morning of 2 November that they were opposed by a resolute enemy skilled at guerrilla tactics. Second Lieutenant Harvey A. Goss' platoon of How Company, reinforced with 81mm mortars, light machine guns, an artillery forward observer (FO) team and a FAC, was ambushed in a deep gorge five miles south of Majon-ni while conducting a motorized patrol. The Marines, raked by rifle and automatic small-arms fire from an unseen enemy hidden along the heights on both sides, got off only the message, "We've been hit, send help, send help" before the radio was hit.[12]

Effective deployment in the narrow road was prevented by stalled vehicles. Casualties were mounting when Second Lieutenant Kenneth A. Bott and PFC Donald O. Hoffstetter ran the gauntlet of fire in a jeep. They reached Majon-ni unhurt although one tire of the jeep had been shot.

The 3/1 CP was delayed in summoning air because of the difficulties in radio transmission.[13] This break in communications alarmed Major Simmons, acting as SAC. He persuaded the pilot of an OY to fly him over the scene of the ambush. From his point of vantage Simmons had a good view of the deployment of Captain Corley's remaining two rifle platoons, riding artillery trucks and reinforced with heavy machine guns and 81mm mortars, which had been sent out from Majon-ni to extricate the patrol. The 81mm mortars were set up just off the road and began pounding the North Korean cliffside positions. PFC Jack Golden, a one-man task force, climbed with a 94-pound heavy machine gun to a height where he could fire down on the Communists. Marine Corsairs came on station, somewhat tardily because of the poor radio communication, and the remnants of the enemy

disappeared into the hills.

Lieutenant Robert J. Fleischaker, (MC) USN, the battalion medical officer, and his assistants cared for the less critical Marine casualties. One man died during the night but most of the others were evacuated during the next day in three helicopter flights—much to the astonishment of the natives. Fleischaker and his assistants also treated Korean civilians on occasion, and the saving of a village boy's life by an emergency appendectomy did much to gain the good will of the community.[14]

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Chapter 4. Majon-ni and Ambush Alley
Air Drop of Supplies Requested

Radio communication between Majon-ni and Wonsan was so uncertain, because of the intervening hill mass, that it was possible to get through for only a few hours at night. The surest means of communication was a written message carried by helicopter or OY pilots, who had to insure delivery to regiment after landing at the Wonsan airfield.[15]

The supply problem had already begun to pinch before the first week ended. A convoy came through from Wonsan without molestation on 29 October, but it was the last for a week. On 1 November, just to play safe, Lieutenant Colonel Ridge requested a practice air drop which went off satisfactorily. His judgment was upheld on the morning of the How Company ambush when a 3/1 supply convoy was attacked seven miles west of Wonsan (see Map 5) and forced to turn back.

First Lieutenant James D. Beeler commanded the George Company rifle platoon escorting the column of supply vehicles which was under the charge of Second Lieutenant James L. Crutchfield of H&S Company. The third truck in line, loaded with diesel fuel and C–3 composition,[16] burst into flames after running into a hail of enemy rifle and automatic weapons bullets. Meanwhile the first two trucks continued until they came to a roadblock created by blowing a crater. Turning around under intense fire, they got back to the point of original ambush just as the other vehicles were trying to reverse direction; and in the confusion two trucks went off the narrow road, making a total of three lost.

A flight of three VMF–312 Corsairs led by Lieutenant Colonel J. Frank Cole dispersed an enemy force estimated at 200 to 300 men. The convoy was extricated and brought back to Wonsan after the 1st Marines sent out a task force consisting of four tanks, a tank dozer and six trucks filled with infantry. Personnel losses in the ambush were nine men killed and 15 wounded.[17]

Ridge now had to call for an air drop in earnest. Gasoline, rations, grenades and artillery, mortar and machine gun ammunition to a total of more than 21 tons were packaged at the Wonsan airfield on 2 November by Captain Hersel D. C. Blasingame's 1st Air Delivery Platoon. Four hours after the receipt of the message, the Air Force C–47s released 152 parachutes over the Majon-ni perimeter. This was one of the 141 replenishment missions of the Air Delivery Platoon in November, amounting to 864 man-hours of flying time and 377 tons of supplies dropped.[18]

Less than the usual amount of breakage resulted, but Colonel Puller considered it so necessary to push a truck convoy through to Majon-ni that he assigned a rifle company as guards. This mission fell to Captain Barrow's Able Company, reinforced by one platoon of Captain Lester G. Harmon's Company C engineers, Technical Sergeant Shelly Wiggins' section of 81mm mortars, and Second Lieutenant Harold L. Coffman's section of 75mm recoilless rifles. Thirty-four supply vehicles were in the column which left Wonsan at 1430 on 4 November.[19]

The late hour of departure was a handicap; and though an OY flew reconnaissance, the convoy had no FAC. A TACP jeep well back in the column could communicate with the OY, which relayed the message to the two VMF–312 Corsairs on station.

Barrow reasoned that because so many of the enemy road-blocks required engineer equipment, it would be advisable for Harmon's vehicles to lead, followed by First Lieutenant William A. McClelland's infantry platoon. This scheme promised well when four undefended crater roadblocks were encountered and speedily filled in by the engineers. The fifth, however, was the scene of an ambush by Red Koreans occupying the steep

heights on both sides of the narrow, winding road.

The engineers soon had a hot fire fight on their hands. Taking cover behind the vehicles, they gave a good account of themselves. But the stalled trucks delayed the infantry platoon coming to their aid; and lack of a FAC resulted in less effective close air support than the Corsairs usually rendered. Thus, with the early November dusk approaching, Captain Barrow decided on a return to Wonsan.

By a near-miracle the trucks turned about safely on the narrow shelf that passed for a road. As the enemy long-range fire increased, Barrow ordered lights out when the column commenced its eight-mile return trip. In the darkness a truck loaded with 20 Marines missed a hairpin turn and plunged over the edge. Fortunately, the accident happened at one of the few spots where the vehicle could land on a wooded shoulder instead of hurtling through space to the rocky valley floor several hundred feet below. It was found that nothing worse than broken bones and concussion had resulted after a human chain brought the injured men back up to the road.

Lights were turned on and the convoy got back without further trouble. Barrow reported to his regimental commander at Togwon that his losses amounted to eight men wounded and 16 injured in addition to five vehicles destroyed.

Colonel Puller assured him that his failure had been due to an unavoidably late start and lack of a FAC rather than faulty judgment.

The following morning, after departing Wonsan at 0830, the air controller was not needed. Barrow had put into effect a new tactical plan based on the premise that the guerrillas of Ambush Alley would be waiting as usual for the sound of approaching trucks. He prepared a surprise, therefore, by directing his infantry platoons to take turns at leading the column on foot, keeping a thousand yards or more in advance of the vehicles.

The scheme worked to perfection as Second Lieutenant Donald R. Jones' platoon rounded a bend near the scene of yesterday's ambush and surprised about 70 guerrillas as they were eating. The ambushers had in effect been ambushed. The Marines opened up with everything they had, and only a few of the Reds escaped with their lives. There was no further trouble after the convoy got under way again, arriving at Majon-ni early in the afternoon of 5 November without a single casualty. Losses of 51 killed and three prisoners were inflicted on the enemy.

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Chapter 4. Majon-ni and Ambush Alley
First Attack on Perimeter

The supplies were no less welcome than the Marines who brought them, for the CIC team had warned of an attack on Majon-ni at 0100 the following night. Colonel Puller placed Able Company under the operational control of 3/1 for the defense, and the commanding officer assigned the three rifle platoons and their reinforcing elements a sector between How and George Companies on the perimeter.

This addition to his strength made it possible for Lieutenant Colonel Ridge to send out his executive officer, Major Reginald R. Myers, in command of a motorized patrol large enough to cope with a reported enemy build-up of 2000 to 3000 men about six miles northwest of Majon-ni on the Pyongyang road. Intelligence received by Corps indicated that this force was assembling in an old mining area, and a 3/1 reconnaissance in force was ordered.

The Marine task force, consisting of George and Item Companies, plus elements of Weapons Company, was supported by artillery from Majon-ni. Nothing more formidable was encountered than a few guerrillas firing at long-range, but Myers brought back 81 willing prisoners.[20]

That night at 0130, trip flares and exploding booby traps were the prelude to the first NKPA probing attacks on the perimeter. The enemy was half an hour late, but otherwise the assault developed pretty much as the CIC team had predicted, even to the identification of elements of the 45th Regiment of the 15th NKPA Division. The assailants showed no disposition to close, and the assault turned into a desultory fire fight. At 0500, with a fog reducing visibility almost to zero, the enemy could be heard but not seen in his assault on the battalion OP. This position was located on the How Company front and manned by wiremen and artillery and mortar FO teams. When their ammunition ran out, these Marines were forced to withdraw; but Captain Thomas E. McCarthy, Second Lieutenants Charles Mattox and Charles R. Stiles with an assortment of H&S Company personnel recaptured the position the moment that the fog lifted. The enemy withdrew into the hills after the Corsairs came on station, and the action ended at 0730 with two wounded Marines representing the casualty list of 3/1 in the engagement.[21]

Able Company returned to Wonsan that morning with 619 of the prisoners who had been accumulating at Majon-ni until the stockade was almost overflowing with Korean humanity. Captain Barrow packed the captives into open trucks covered with tarpaulins. This precaution was taken in order not to advertise the nature of the cargo while passing through Ambush Alley, since it might be embarrassing if the guerrillas attempted to liberate prisoners who outnumbered their keepers three to one.

Simultaneously with the return of Able Company, Colonel Puller ordered his 2d Battalion (—) to proceed via the Majon-ni road to Munchon-ni. Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's mission was similar to that of Lieutenant Colonel Ridge at Majon-ni: to block enemy movement along the trails leading north and to screen civilians. The hamlet of Munchon-ni squatted near the top of the highest pass along Ambush Alley. Trucks could be supplied for only one reinforced rifle company —Easy—which departed Wonsan at 0830.

Four miles short of the objective, the motorized column entered a horseshoe bend large enough to contain all the vehicles. On the left of the road was a sheer drop, and on the right rose cliffs 200 feet in height. The last truck had just entered the bend when the first was stopped by a landslide roadblock. As the column ground to a halt the enemy opened up with rifles and automatic weapons from well camouflaged positions in the high ground at the far end of the horseshoe.[22]

The Marines scrambled out of the trucks and returned the fire. But it was necessary to attack in order to

dislodge the enemy, and during the advance Easy Company took a total of 46 casualties—8 KIA and 38 WIA—in addition to six wounded truck drivers. Five of the seven officers were wounded, including the company commander, Captain Charles D. Frederick.

It was estimated that the roadblock had been defended by about 200 Red Koreans, who left 61 counted dead behind them and probably removed at least as many wounded. Fifty cases of 120mm mortar ammunition were destroyed by the Marines and 300 cases of small arms cartridges.

At 1615 Sutter and the remainder of the 2/1 force arrived on the scene from Wonsan just as Able Company and its prisoners appeared from the opposite direction. Helicopters having already evacuated the Easy Company's critical casualties, Able Company brought the lightly wounded and prisoners to Wonsan without further enemy interference. Sutters' force proceeded to Munchon-ni as originally planned.

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Chapter 4. Majon-ni and Ambush Alley
KMC Battalion Sent to Majon-ni

At Majon-ni an OP manned by two squads of Lieutenant Ronald A. Mason's 2d Platoon of How Company was threatened with encirclement on the 8th when a Red Korean force gradually built up to an estimated 250 men worked around to the rear. The other two platoons of the company, reinforced with heavy machine guns and an Item Company platoon, were sent out from the perimeter. Artillery and mortars helped to scatter the enemy in confusion with estimated 40 per cent losses. Marine casualties were one man killed and ten wounded.[23]

On 10 November, reflecting the concern of CO 1st Marines over enemy activity in the Majon-ni area, the 3d KMC Battalion arrived as reinforcements together with a convoy of supplies. CO 3/1 assigned the unit to the sector in the perimeter recently vacated by Able Company of 1/1.[24]

The celebration of the 175th birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps was not neglected at Majon-ni. Somehow the cooks managed to bake a prodigious cake, with thinly spread jam serving as frosting, and all hands were rotated a few at a time to their company CPs to receive a slice.[25]

That afternoon an OY of VMO-6 spotted an estimated 300 enemy troops about four miles west of Majon-ni. Under direction of the aerial observers, Captain Strohmenger's howitzers broke up this concentration.[26]

The CIC team warned that another attack on the perimeter by the 45th NKPA Regiment would take place on the night of 11–12 November. As a prelude, General Pak made an effort to terrorize inhabitants who had kept the team informed of his plans and movements. Some of the villagers took his threats seriously enough to prepare for a hurried leavetaking, but the Civil Affairs section reassured them and put a curfew into effect.[27]

After such a menacing build-up, the second attack on the perimeter fizzled out like a damp firecracker. A few probing jabs, beginning at 0130, were followed by a weak main assault on the KMC front which was easily repulsed. The enemy tried again to overrun the OP but gave up the attempt after stumbling into a field of "Bouncing Betty" mines. At 0600 the last action of the Majon-ni operation came to an end as the Communists withdrew. Friendly losses were two men killed and six wounded.[28]

This was the final appearance of the 15th NKPA Division, which apparently abandoned Majon-ni as an objective and transferred its guerrilla operations southward along the Imjin valley. The relief of the Marines and KMCs on position began the next afternoon as elements of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, U.S. 3d Infantry Division, arrived to take over the perimeter.

The Army column, including 34 Marine supply vehicles, had moved out from Wonsan at 1030 the day before. Although 2/1 (less Dog Company) had maintained its blocking positions at Munchon-ni, the convoy was stopped a few miles beyond the Marine outposts by a wrecked bridge and three large craters. Guerrillas poured in small-arms fire from the high ground which resulted in two soldiers being killed and four wounded. Two Marine trucks and a jeep were destroyed.

Extensive repairs to the road being needed, Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Blanchard, the commanding officer of 1/15, formed a defensive perimeter for the night. The column reached Majon-ni without further incident at 1530 on the 13th.[29]

Following relief by the Army unit, the Marine battalion departed at 1015 on the 14th by truck for the Wonsan area. A total of 1395 prisoners had been taken during the 17 days of Majon-ni—a large proportion of them voluntary—and more than 4000 Korean transients screened. Enemy battle casualties were estimated at 525 killed and an unknown number wounded.[30]

Losses of the Marine battalion numbered 65—16 KIA, 4 DOW and 45 WIA. Nonbattle casualties were remarkably low, owing to strict enforcement of sanitary and health regulations.[31]

The vulnerability of a tenuous MSR must also be taken into account, and casualties of nine killed and 81 wounded or injured were incurred by Marines escorting supply convoys through Ambush Alley.

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Chapter 4. Majon-ni and Ambush Alley
Movement of 1st Marines to Chigyong

From the 1st Marines in the Wonsan area to the 7th Marines leading the northward advance, a distance of more than 130 road miles separated the elements of the 1st Marine Division. But the arrival of more U.S. Army units made possible a first step toward concentration.

On 29 October the 17th RCT of the 7th Infantry Division had begun landing at Iwon (see Map 2), about 60 air miles northeast of Hungnam. Other units and reinforcing elements followed until all had completed unloading by 8 November—a total of 28,995 troops, 5924 vehicles, and 30,016 short tons of cargo.[32]

Transports had been sent by CTF–90 on 31 October to Moji, Japan, for the first units of the 3d Infantry Division. The 65th RCT landed at Wonsan on 5 November, but it was not until the 18th that the last elements arrived.[33] All four of the major units of X Corps—the two Army divisions as well as the 1st Marine Division and I ROK Corps—were then in the zone of operations, even though dispersed over a wide area.

The commanding generals of both Army units were "old China hands." Major General Robert H. Soule, CG 3d Infantry Division, had been U.S. military attaché in Nationalist China during the last months of the civil war. During this same period Major General David G. Barr, CG 7th Infantry Division, was senior officer of the United States Military Advisory Group in China.[34]

On 31 October, by order of ComNavFE, JTF–7 had been dissolved and the TG 95.2 Support and Covering Group passed to the operational control of CTF–90, Admiral Doyle. As the center of gravity of X Corps gradually shifted to the north, General Almond moved his advanced CP from Wonsan to Hamhung on 2 November and the remainder of his headquarters on the 10th. He was joined four days later by Admiral Doyle and his staff as the *Mount McKinley* anchored off Hungnam.[35]

The 1st Marine Division CP had displaced from Wonsan to Hung-nam on 4 November as the 5th and 7th Marines carried out assignments in the north. This movement included 2/5, which had been under the operational control of the 1st Marines for patrolling missions in the Wonsan area. Not until a week later was General Smith able to plan the northward advance of Colonel Puller's regiment. On the 12th, X Corps OpnO 6 directed the 3d Infantry Division to relieve elements of the 1st Marines. The mission of the Army division was to protect the left flank of X Corps and prepare for an advance to the west.[36]

For a time it had appeared that 1/1, which had the responsibility for security in the Wonsan area after its return from Kojo, might be sent to Chongjin, 220 air miles northeast of Wonsan, in accordance with X Corps OI–13 of 25 October. This battalion was designated for the mission in 1stMarDiv OpnO 10–50, issued on 5 November, but four days later X Corps cancelled this requirement.[37]

Before departing the Wonsan area, Puller's headquarters had another false alarm. Small craft sighted by air on 8 November, and two mysterious explosions, led to the report that 500 to 1000 enemy boats were attempting an amphibious landing ten miles north of Wonsan. An armored patrol of Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, was sent to investigate but reported no contact.[38]

X Corps directed that upon the relief of the Marines by the 3d Infantry Division, the 3d and 5th KMC Battalions, which had been under the operational control of RCT–1, would then be attached to the Army unit.[39]

After lack of transport imposed a delay of two days, 1/1 initiated the northward movement of RCT–1 by rail and closed Chigyong, eight miles southwest of Hamhung, by 1820, 14 November. A motor convoy followed.[40]

Relief of 2/1(–), which had been holding screening and blocking positions on Ambush Alley, was

completed on the 15th by the 3d Battalion of the 15th Infantry. Other Army elements relieved Dog Company in the rear area near Wonsan. On the 16th 2/1 moved by rail to Chigyong, followed by 3/1 and the last elements of RCT–1 the next day.[41]

Thus the 1st Marine Division achieved a relative and temporary degree of concentration. The farthest distance between components had been reduced from 130 to less than 60 miles by the middle of November, but a new dispersion of units was already in progress.

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue

UP TO THIS TIME the 1st Marine Division had virtually been waging two separate wars. In the southern zone, as was related in the last two chapters, blocking and screening operations were conducted by RCT-1 against NKPA remnants. RCT-7, with RCT-5 in reserve, had meanwhile been confronted in the north by some of the first Chinese Communist troops to enter the Korean conflict.

In order to trace the movements of these two Marine regiments, it will be necessary to go back over chronological ground previously covered. Division OpnO 18-50, issued on 28 October to implement X Corps OI-13 and supplementary telephone orders received from Corps, assigned RCT-7 the mission of proceeding from Wonsan to Hamhung, prepared for an advance to the Manchurian border 135 miles to the north. RCT-5 was assigned a zone behind RCT-7 (see end-paper maps).

Plans for the northward advance brought up the vital problem of providing security for the 78-mile main supply route (MSR) and the parallel railway stretching along the coast from Wonsan to Hamhung. Division orders of the 28th assigned RCT-5 (less 2/5), temporarily under the operational control of RCT-1, the responsibility for the security of the Munchon and Yonghung areas, 16 and 57 miles north of Wonsan respectively. Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, attached to RCT-5, had orders to establish blocking positions on three main roads joining the MSR from the west.[1]

RCT-7, after being partially issued cold weather clothing at Wonsan, moved by road and rail to the Hamhung area during the last three days of October. The 1st Motor Transport Battalion and Division Reconnaissance Company were attached along with other reinforcing units, since this regiment had been designated to lead the advance of the 1st Marine Division to the Manchurian border.[2]

RCT-5 completed a motor march meanwhile from its assembly area near Wonsan to assigned positions along the Wonsan-Hamhung MSR. General Almond's OI-15 (30 October) had directed the dispatch of two Marine RCTs to the Hamhung area, which meant that Lieutenant Colonel Murray's regiment was to follow RCT-7. On the 31st General Smith ordered him to advance a battalion to Chigyong, eight miles southwest of Hamhung. Murray selected his 1st Battalion and directed that one of its companies be detached to relieve an RCT-7 company guarding the Advance Supply Point at Yonpo Airfield, five miles southwest of Hungnam.[3]

Two additional Marine units were assigned to assembly areas along the MSR. The 1st Tank Battalion (less Company C, attached to the 1st Marines) moved up to Munchon and regained its Company A. Since the landing of the 11th Marines (less the battalions attached to RCTs) the artillery regiment (-) had occupied positions at Munpyong-ni, five miles northwest of Wonsan.[4]

When four days passed without enemy contacts along the MSR, General Almond decided to expedite the movement of RCT-5 to the Hamhung area. In a conference with General Smith on 2 November, he outlined a plan for using patrols instead of blocking positions. Under this system RCT-1, with elements of the 1st Tank Battalion, would be made responsible for MSR security as far north as Munchon. The 54-mile stretch between Munchon and Chigyong would be assigned to the Special Operations Company, USA, and Korean agents, both under Corps control. As soon as these arrangements could be put into effect, RCT-5 would be free to advance to Hamhung. That same day, 2 November, the 2d Battalion was released from operational control of RCT-1 and moved to Hamhung.[5]

Ironically, the 2d was also the date of the first guerrilla raid on the MSR. A patrol from the 1st Tank Battalion was sent by Division to the aid of the Special Operations Company, which had reported an attack west of Munchon resulting in a wound casualty and loss of equipment. The Marines drove the guerrillas back into the

hills.[6]

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue
Chinese in X Corps Zone

Red Korean guerrilla activities were overshadowed by confirmation of reports that organized CCF units had appeared in the X Corps zone as well as on the Eighth Army front. After crossing the Yalu, they had secretly infiltrated through the mountains, marching by night and hiding by day from air observation. Their numbers and intentions remained a mystery at this date, but late in October the 8th U.S. Cavalry Regiment and the 6th ROK Division were surprised by Chinese in northwest Korea and badly mauled.[7]

First-hand evidence of CCF penetrations in northeast Korea was obtained by three Marine officers of RCT-7. Shortly after arrival in the Hamhung area, the regimental commander sent out reconnoitering parties in preparation for the northward advance of 1 November. The 1/7 patrol on 31 October consisted of a fire team in three jeeps led by Captain Myron E. Wilcox and First Lieutenants William G. Graeber and John B. Wilson. As a result of their visit to the CP of the 26th ROK Regiment of the 3d ROK Division, which RCT-7 was scheduled to relieve near Sudong (see Map 7) on 2 November, the Marine officers reported to their regimental headquarters that they had seen one Chinese prisoner.[8]

As a matter of fact, the ROK regiment took 16 Chinese prisoners in all. They were identified as belonging to two regiments of the 124th CCF Division, one of the three divisions of the 42d CCF Army. This force had crossed the Yalu about 16 October, according to POW testimony, and moved southward without being observed into the Chosin Reservoir area during the following ten days.[9]

Not only was Colonel Litzenberg aware that he would be facing Chinese adversaries in this area; he also suspected that they had infiltrated toward his left rear. He sent a patrol consisting of 20 men and five jeeps of Recon Company as far as Chigyong on the 31st without making any enemy contacts. The following morning CO RCT-7 ordered Recon Company in 21 jeeps to conduct a reconnaissance to the Huksu-ri area, approximately 45 miles northwest of Hamhung. After bypassing a blown bridge, First Lieutenant Ralph B. Crossman's force dug in for the night 4500 yards short of its objective. Shots were exchanged several times that night and early the following morning with North Korean guerrillas in company strength, but the patrol returned with a negative report as far as Chinese forces were concerned.[10]

News was received on 1 November of the heavy losses taken by the 1st Cavalry Division at the hands of the Chinese in northwest Korea. There was no change, however, in Corps orders calling for the advance of Litzenberg's regiment to the border. Koto-ri, 23 road miles north of Majon-dong, was the first objective. The right flank of the Eighth Army was about 60 air miles southwest of Majon-dong, so that RCT-7 must advance without protection for its left flank except for Division Recon Company, which was to be relieved as soon as possible by RCT-1.

"Under these circumstances," commented General Smith at a later date, "there was no alternative except to continue forward in the hope that the Eighth Army situation would right itself and that we would succeed in our efforts to close up the entire 1st Marine Division behind RCT-7."[11]

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue
Introducing the New Enemy

Here it is hardly a digression to pause for a brief survey of the organization, tactics and aims of the new enemy who was about to prolong the Korean conflict by intervening on behalf of the beaten NKPA. The powerful, ever-ready military instrument which the Chinese Reds knew as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had been forged and tempered in the fires of civil strife. It came into being in the late summer of 1927 during the abortive Nanchang rebellion. Following their defeat, the Communists found a refuge in Kiangsi Province of south China and gained strength as disaffected Kuomintang units came over to their side.[12]

The infant PLA managed with difficulty to survive the first four "bandit suppression campaigns" waged by Chiang Kai-shek. When he launched his fifth in 1933, the Chinese Reds planned the celebrated "Long March" which has become one of their most cherished traditions. Breaking out of Chiang's encirclement in October, 1934, they took a circuitous, 6000-mile route to avoid Nationalist armies. Of the 90,000 who started, only 20,000 were left a year later when the PLA reached Yenan in Shensi Province.[13]

This destination in northwest China gave the Communists a refuge with Mongolia and Soviet Russia at their backs. There Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues alternately fought and negotiated with the Government. Finally, in 1941, the Communists and Nationalists agreed to cease fighting one another in order to make common cause against the Japanese invaders.

The Communists took advantage of their membership in the People's Political Council—a Nationalist-sponsored organization which theoretically united all factions in China against the Japanese—to continue their "boring-from-within" tactics. Chiang's estimate of his troublesome allies was summed up in a quotation attributed to him in 1941:

"You think it is important that I have kept the Japanese from expanding. . . .I tell you it is more important that I have kept the Communists from spreading. The Japanese are a disease of the skin; the Communists are a disease of the heart."[14]

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue
Communist Victory in Civil War

In late 1945, with the Japanese no longer a menace, the grapple for mastery began anew. Chiang Kai-shek held the material and moral advantage as a result of the arms and other assistance supplied by the United States.

The Nationalists controlled all the important centers of population and industry and the major lines of communication. The Communists, with their backs to the wall, eagerly accepted the United States proposal for a cease fire in January 1946. General George C. Marshall, as personal representative of President Truman, flew out to Nanking in December, 1945, and tried for 12 months to arrange a workable compromise between two irreconcilable ideologies. Meanwhile, the Reds retrained and reequipped their forces with the vast supply of weapons which had fallen into their hands as a result of the collapse of the Japanese Army in Manchuria in August, 1945. By the spring of 1947, they were ready again for war. They denounced the truce and recommenced military operations. From that time the balance of power swung steadily in their favor.[15]

Although the PLA had seized the initiative, the Government still had an army of about 2,700,000 men facing 1,150,000 Reds, according to estimates of American military advisers in China. But Chiang was committed to a positional warfare; his forces were dangerously over-extended, and for reasons of prestige and political considerations he hesitated to withdraw from areas of dubious military value. Mao's hard and realistic strategy took full advantage of these lapses. As a result the Communists won the upper hand in Manchuria and Shantung and by the end of the year had massed large forces in central China.

Early in 1948, the year of decision, the PLA recaptured Yenan along with thousands of Government troops. But the most crushing Communist victory of all came with the surrender of Tsinan, the capital of Shantung, and its garrison of 85,000 to 100,000 Nationalists.

In his summary of Nationalist reverses, Major General David G. Barr, senior officer of the United States Military Advisory Group in China, reported to the Department of the Army on 16 November 1948:

"No battle has been lost since my arrival due to lack of ammunition and equipment. Their [the Chinese Nationalists'] military debacles in my opinion can all be attributed to the world's worst leadership and many other morale destroying factors that lead to a complete loss of will to fight."[16]

By the early spring of 1949 the military collapse of the Nationalists had gone so far that the enemy controlled the major centers of population and the railroads from Manchuria south to the Yangtze Valley. Nanking, Hangkow, and Shanghai were soon to fall into the hands of Communists whose military strength increased every day as they captured Nationalist arms and were joined by Nationalist deserters. Perhaps the best summary of the Chinese Civil War was put in a few words by Dean Acheson, the U.S. Secretary of State:

"The Nationalist armies did not have to be defeated; they disintegrated."[17]

In addition to the aid extended during World War II, Washington had authorized grants and credits to Nationalist China amounting to two billion dollars since V-J Day. Nor was American assistance confined to arms and monetary grants. From 1945-1947 the occupation of certain key cities in North China, e. g., Tientsin, Peiping, Tsingtao, [18] etc., by sizeable U.S. Marine forces held those bases secure for the Nationalist government and permitted the release of appreciable numbers of Chiang's soldiers for offensive operations, who would otherwise have been tied up in garrison type duty.[19]

The Marines, upon their withdrawal, were directed to turn over vast stores of weapons and munitions to the Chinese Nationalists. In addition, the Nationalists were "sold" large quantities of military and civilian war

surplus property, with a total procurement cost of more than a billion dollars, for a bargain price of 232 million. [20]

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue
Organization of the CCF

Although the victorious army continued to be called the People's Liberation Army by the Chinese Reds themselves, it was known as the Chinese Communist Forces by commentators of Western nations. At the head of the new police state were the 72 regular and alternate members of the Central Committee, or Politburo. Formed at the Seventh Party Congress in 1945, this body consisted for the most part of Mao's close associates—leaders identified with the revolutionary movement from the beginning.

From top to bottom of the Chinese state, the usual Communist dualism of high political and military rank prevailed. The highest governing body, the People's Revolutionary Military Council, consisted of leaders holding both positions. After they determined policies, the execution was left to the General Headquarters of the army. [21]

This organization comprised a general staff section, a rear Services section and a general political bureau. The largest CCF administrative unit was the field army, which reported directly to Headquarters. Composed of two or more army groups, the field army had a small headquarters of its own.

The army group, as the largest unit encountered by UN forces, was comparable to an army in the American military system. CCF army groups in Korea consisted of two to four armies with an average total strength of 60,000-120,000 troops. Equivalent to an American corps was the CCF army, an organization including three infantry divisions and an artillery regiment. Thus the average strength of a CCF army was about 30,000 men.

The CCF infantry division, with a paper strength of 10,000 men, averaged from 7,000 to 8,500 men in Korea, according to various estimates. Triangular in organization, it included three infantry regiments and an artillery battalion.

Divisional units consisted of reconnaissance and engineer companies of about 100 men, a 150-man transport company, a 100-man guard company, and a 60-man communications company. Transport companies had only draft animals and carts, since little motor transport was organic to a CCF division at that time.

The CCF infantry regiment, averaging about 2,200 men in the field, broke down into the following units: three infantry battalions; an artillery battery of four to six guns; a mortar and bazooka company; a guard company; a transportation company; a medical unit with attached stretcher personnel (often composed of impressed civilians) and a combined reconnaissance and signal company.

The CCF infantry battalion, with an authorized strength of 852 men and an actual strength of perhaps 700, consisted of a mortar and machine gun or heavy weapons company, a signal squad, a medical squad and a small battalion headquarters in addition to the three rifle companies of about 170 men each. Each of the latter was composed of a headquarters platoon, a 60mm mortar platoon and three rifle platoons.

The CCF artillery battalion, organic to every division, must be considered theoretical rather than actual as far as Korean operations of 1950 are concerned. As a rule, only a few

horse-drawn or pack howitzers were brought into action by an infantry division depending chiefly on mortars.

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue
The Chinese Peasant as a Soldier

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the CCF, from the viewpoint of a Western observer, was the lack of any official provision for the honorable discharge of a soldier. Once he became a cog in the CCF military machine, a man remained in the ranks until he was killed, captured, became a deserter, or was incapacitated for active service by reason of wounds, disease or old age.

Theoretically depending on a "volunteer" system, the recruiting officers of the CCF knew how to apply political or economic pressure so that a man found it prudent to become a soldier. After putting on a uniform, he was vigorously indoctrinated in political as well as military subjects.

Both self-criticism and criticism of comrades were encouraged at platoon meetings held for that purpose. Every recruit was subjected to a course of psychological mass coercion known to the Chinese as *hsi-nao* and to the non-Communist world as "brain-washing." Spying on comrades and reporting political or military deviations was a soldier's duty.[22]

Inured to hardships from birth, the peasant in the ranks did not find that the military service demanded many unwonted privations. He was used to cold and hunger, and he could make long daily marches on a diet which the American soldier would have regarded as both insufficient and monotonous. It would appear, however, that some of the Western legends about Oriental stoicism and contempt for death were a little far-fetched. At any rate, the CCF had to deal with the problem of straggling from the battlefield; and U.S. Marines in Korea could attest that on occasion the Chinese soldier showed evidences of fear and low morale. Nor was he as much of a fanatic as might have been expected, considering the extent of his political indoctrination.

Although the CCF departed in most respects from the Chinese military past, the policy of organizing units along ethnic lines was retained. Men from the same village were formed into a company; companies from the same area into battalions; and battalions from the same province into regiments or divisions. Replacements were drawn from the localities where the unit was originally recruited.[23]

On the other hand, the Chinese Reds broke with both Nationalist and Communist tradition in their policy of avoiding a permanent rank system. Officers (in Korea denoted by red piping on their sleeves) were divided into company, field, and general groups. The company commander and political officer held about equal authority in an infantry unit, and the only NCOs mentioned in CCF field reports are sergeants and squad leaders.[24]

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue
CCF Arms and Equipment

The CCF depended on a wide assortment of weapons, so that it was not uncommon to find several different kinds of rifles of varying calibers in the same regiment. Japanese arms acquired after the surrender of 1945; Russian arms furnished by the Soviets; and American, German, Czech, British, and Canadian arms taken from the Chinese Nationalists—these were some of the diverse sources. And it is a tribute to the adaptability of the Chinese Reds that they managed to utilize such military hand-me-downs without disastrous confusion.

Paper work was at a minimum in a force which kept few records and numbered a great many illiterates. As for logistics, each soldier was given a four-day food supply in the winter of 1950-1951 when he crossed the Yalu—usually rice, millet or soy beans carried in his pack. Afterwards, food was to be procured locally by extortion or confiscation, though the Communists were fond of using such euphemisms as “purchase” or “donation” to denote those processes.[25]

The CCF soldiers who fought in Korea during the winter of 1950-1951 wore a two-piece, reversible mustard-yellow and white uniform of quilted cotton and a heavy cotton cap with fur-lined ear flaps. Issued to the troops just before crossing the Yalu, the quilted cotton blouse and trousers were worn over the standard summer uniform and any other layers of clothing the soldier may have acquired.

The first CCF units in action had canvas shoes with crepe rubber soles. Later arrivals were issued a half-leather shoe or even a full leather boot. Chinese footwear was of poor quality and few of the troops wore gloves in cold weather. The consequence was a high rate of frostbitten hands and feet.[26]

The CCF soldier usually carried a shawl-like blanket in addition to the small pack containing his food as well as personal belongings. These were few and simple, for it could never be said that the Chinese Reds pampered their soldiers.

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue
China's "Hate America" Campaign

It was essentially an Asiatic guerrilla army which came to the rescue of beaten Red Korea in the autumn of 1950. CCF strategic aims had been summed up years before by Mao Tse-tung himself:

"We are against guerilla-ism of the Red Army, yet we must admit its guerrilla character. We are opposed to protracted campaigns and a strategy of quick decision while we believe in a strategy of protracted war and campaigns of quick decision. As we are opposed to fixed operational fronts and positional. warfare, we believe in unfixed operational fronts and a war of maneuvers. We are against simply routing the enemy, and believe in a war of annihilation. We are against two-fistism in strategic directions and believe in one-fistism. We are against the institution of a big rear and believe in a small rear. We are against absolute centralized command and believe in a relatively centralized command."[27]

Mao was held in such reverence as a veteran Chinese Communist leader that long passages of his writings were committed to memory. His strategic ideas, therefore, deserve more than passing consideration. In the first place, his concept of war itself differed from that of Western nations.

"There are only two kinds of war in history, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary," he wrote. "We support the former and oppose the latter. Only a revolutionary war is holy."[28]

From the Western viewpoint, Mao's followers had fought four different wars in close succession—against the Chinese Nationalists from 1927 to 1936; against the Japanese from 1937 to 1945; against the Nationalists in a second war from 1946 to 1949; and against the United Nations, beginning in 1950. But Mao and his colleagues saw this period as one prolonged war in which revolutionists were pitted against counter-revolutionary adversaries. The fact that the conflict had lasted for a generation did not disturb Communist leaders who envisioned a continual state of war "to save mankind and China from destruction."

"The greatest and most ruthless counter-revolutionary war is pressing on us," continued Mao. "If we do not hoist the banner of revolutionary war, a greater part of the human race will face extinction."[29]

Early in December, 1949, following Red China's victory over the Nationalists, Mao arrived in Moscow for a series of talks with Stalin which lasted until 4 March 1950. The decisions reached in these conferences are not known, but it was probably no coincidence that the Communist puppet state in North Korea violated the world's peace a few months later. It is perhaps also significant that the head of the Soviet Military Mission in Tokyo, Lieutenant General Kuzma Derevyanko, was absent from Tokyo during the same period and reported in Moscow.[30]

It was the Year of the Tiger in the Chinese calendar, and a "Resist America, Aid Korea" movement was launched in Red China when the United States came to the aid of the Republic of Korea. Every dictatorship must have some object of mass hatred, and Mao found the United States ideal for the purpose. A "Hate America" campaign was inaugurated after the CCF intervention, with the following serving as an example of anti-American propaganda:

"This [the United States] is the paradise of gangsters, swindlers, rascals, special agents, fascist germs, speculators, debauchers, and all the dregs of mankind. This is the world's manufactory and source of such crimes as reaction, darkness, cruelty, decadence, corruption, debauchery, oppression of man by man, and cannibalism. This is the exhibition ground of all the crimes which can possibly be committed by mankind. This is a living hell, ten times, one hundred times, one thousand times worse than can possibly be depicted by the most sanguinary of writers. Here the criminal phenomena that issue forth defy the imagination of human brains. Conscientious

persons can only wonder how the spiritual civilization of mankind can be depraved to such an extent.”[31]

Communist doctrine held that the people must be incited by such propaganda to a constant high pitch of emotional intensity for the sacrifices demanded by total war. The prevalence of illiteracy made it necessary to depend largely on street-corner loud speakers blaring forth radio harangues. Realistic broadcasts of the torture and execution of political deviates were also heard at times, and such spectacles were exhibited for the edification of the public.[32]

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Chapter 5. Red China to the Rescue
CCF Strategy and Tactics

CCF strategy was so rudimentary at first that its basic tenets could be summed up in a 16-word principle adopted by the Central Committee:

> "Enemy advancing, we retreat; enemy entrenched, we harass; enemy exhausted, we attack; enemy retreating, we pursue."[33]

But as time went on, other principles were added. Mao favored a planned defensive-offensive as the only valid strategy against superior enemy numbers. He made it plain, however, that any withdrawal was to be merely temporary as the preliminary to advancing and striking at the first advantageous opportunity. And he reiterated that annihilation of the enemy must always be the final goal of strategy.[34]

It was in the field of tactics that the essentially guerrilla character of the CCF was most fully revealed. Since Communist dialectics insisted that there was a correct (Marxist) and an incorrect ("petty bourgeois" or "opportunist" or "reactionary") way of doing everything, CCF tactics were reduced to principles whenever possible.

A generation of warfare against material odds had established a pattern of attack which proved effective against armies possessing an advantage in arms and equipment. One Marine officer has aptly defined a Chinese attack as "assembly on the objective."[35] The coolie in the CCF ranks had no superior in the world at making long approach marches by night and hiding by day, with as many as fifty men sharing a hut or cave and subsisting on a few handfuls of rice apiece. Night attacks were so much the rule that any exception came as a surprise. The advancing columns took such natural routes as draws or stream beds, deploying as soon as they met resistance. Combat groups then peeled off from the tactical columns, one at a time, and closed with rifles, submachine guns, and grenades.

Once engaged and under fire, the attackers hit the ground. Rising at any lull, they came on until engaged again; but when fully committed, they did not relinquish the attack even when riddled with casualties. Other Chinese came forward to take their places, and the build-up continued until a penetration was made, usually on the front of one or two platoons. After consolidating the ground, the combat troops then crept or wriggled forward against the open flank of the next platoon position. Each step of the assault was executed with practiced stealth and boldness, and the results of several such penetrations on a battalion front could be devastating.[36]

The pattern of attack was varied somewhat to suit different occasions. As an example of an action in which the CCF used mortars, the following is quoted from a Marine field report:

> "Five to nine men [CCF] patrols were sent out forward of the main body in an attempt to locate or establish [our] front lines and flanks. After these patrols had withdrawn or been beaten off, white phosphorus mortar shells were dropped about the area in an attempt to inflict casualties. By closely watching the area for movement in removing these casualties, they attempted to establish the location of our front lines. After establishing what they believed were the front lines, white phosphorous shells were dropped in the lines and used as markers. While this was taking place, the assault troops crawled forward to distances as close as possible to the front lines . . . [and] attacked at a given signal. The signal in this particular instance was three blasts of a police whistle. The attacking troops then rose and in a perfect skirmish formation rushed the front line."[37]

It might be added that this attack resulted in a CCF penetration on a platoon front. Friendly lines were restored only by dawn counter-attacks.

The ambush was a favorite resort of Chinese commanders. Whatever the form of attack, the object was

usually fractionalization of an opposing force, so that the segments could be beaten in detail by a local superiority in numbers.

CCF attacking forces ranged as a rule from a platoon to a company in size, being continually built up as casualties thinned the ranks. Reports by newspaper correspondents of “hordes” and “human sea” assaults were so unrealistic as to inspire a derisive Marine comment:

“How many hordes are there in a Chinese platoon?”

After giving CCF tactics due credit for their merits, some serious weaknesses were also apparent. The primitive logistical system put such restrictions on ammunition supplies, particularly artillery and mortar shells, that a Chinese battalion sometimes had to be pulled back to wait for replenishments if the first night’s attack failed. At best the infantry received little help from supporting arms.[38]

POW interrogations revealed that in many instances each soldier was issued 80 rounds of small arms ammunition upon crossing the Yalu. This was his total supply. The artillery and mortars were so limited that they must reserve their fire for the front line while passing up lucrative targets in the rear areas. Some attempts were made to bring reserve stocks up to forward supply dumps about 30 miles behind the front, but not much could be accomplished with animal and human transport.

A primitive communications system also accounted for CCF shortcomings. The radio net extended only down to the regimental level, and telephones only to battalions or occasionally companies. Below the battalion, communication depended on runners or such signaling devices as bugles, whistles, flares, and flashlights.[39]

The consequence was a tactical rigidity which at times was fatal. Apparently CCF commanding officers had little or no option below the battalion level. A battalion once committed to the attack often kept on as long as its ammunition lasted, even if events indicated that it was beating out its brains against the strongest part of the opposing line. The result in many such instances was tactical suicide.

After these defects are taken into full account, however, the Chinese soldier and the Korean terrain made a formidable combination. Ironically, Americans fighting the first war of the new Atomic Age were encountering conditions reminiscent of the border warfare waged by their pioneer forefathers against the Indians. These aborigines, too, were outweighed in terms of weapons and equipment. But from time immemorial the night has always been the ally of the primitive fighter, and surprise his best weapon. Thus the Americans in Korea, like their ancestors on the Western plains, could never be sure when the darkness would erupt into flame as stealthy foes seemed to spring from the very earth.

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Chapter 6. The Battle of Sudong

THE COASTAL PLAIN of the Songchon estuary is one of the most spacious flatlands in all North Korea. Its 100 square miles divide into two irrigation districts, which regulate cultivation in a virtual sea of rice paddies. The Songchon River, swollen by tributaries in its descent from the northern hinterland, nourishes this agricultural complex before flowing into the Sea of Japan.

Flanking the mouth of the waterway are the port city of Hungnam to the north and the town of Yonpo, with its modern airfield, to the south. Eight miles upstream lies Hamhung, an important transportation center with a population of approximately 85,000 Koreans and Japanese in 1940.

Hamhung straddles the main railroad connecting Wonsan and Sonjin as it follows the coastal route to the border of Soviet Russia. A narrow-gauge line (2' 6") stems from Hungnam and passes through Hamhung before penetrating into the mountainous heart of North Korea. Parallel to this railroad is the only highway that could be utilized by the transport of the 1st Marine Division for its advance to the north.

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Chapter 6. The Battle of Sudong
The MSR from Hungnam to Yudam-ni

Soon the eyes of the world would be fixed on maps of the narrow, winding 78-mile stretch of dirt and gravel road leading from the supply port of Hungnam to the forlorn village of Yudam-ni at the western tip of the Chosin Reservoir. Distances in road miles between points along the route are as follows:
Hungnam to Hamhung: 8 miles
Hamhung to Oro-ri: 8 miles
Oro-ri to Majon-dong: 14 miles
Majon-dong to Sudong: 7 miles
Sudong to Chinhung-ni: 6 miles
Chinhung-ni to Koto-ri: 10 miles
Koto-ri to Hagaru: 11 miles
Hagaru to Yudam-ni: 14 miles
TOTAL: 78 miles

The first half of the distance—the 43 miles from Hungnam to Chinhung-ni—is traversed by a two-lane road passing through comparatively level terrain. Rolling country is encountered north of Majon-dong, but it is at Chinhung-ni that the road makes its abrupt climb into a tumbled region of mile-high peaks. There are few straight or level stretches all the rest of the 35 miles to Yudam-ni, but the route from Chinhung-ni to Koto-ri is the most difficult.

Funchilin Pass, comprising eight of these ten miles, represents an ascent of 2500 feet for a straining jeep or truck. The road is merely a twisting, one-way shelf, with a cliff on one side and a chasm on the other.

About two miles south of Koto-ri the trail reaches a rugged plateau region. There it rejoins the railway along the Changjin River, though the narrow-gauge line was operative only from Hamhung to Chinhung-ni.

Hagaru, at the southern tip of the Chosin Reservoir, with highways branching off on both sides of that body of water, was an important communications center before the war. And even though many buildings had been flattened by bombing, the town was still impressive as compared to such wretched mountain hamlets as Koto-ri and Chinhung-ri.

The road from Hagaru to Yudam-ni climbs from the tableland at the foot of the Chosin Reservoir and winds its way up to 4000-foot Toktong Pass. Descending through gloomy gorges, it finally reaches a broad valley leading to Yudam-ni, where roads branch off to the north, west, and south from a western arm of the Reservoir.
Click here to view map

This was the 78-mile main supply route that would soon be claiming its page in history. In only a few weeks it would be known to thousands of Marines as *the* MSR, as if there never had been another.

Officers and NCOs of the 7th Marines, which was fated to be the first United States unit to defeat the Chinese Communists in battle, were given a verbal preview of the MSR and the part it might play in their future. This was as the result of a flight of inspection made by Major Henry J. Woessner on 30 October, following a briefing at the X Corps CP in Wonsan. The S-3 of the 7th Marines was fortunate enough to arrive just in time to hear the briefing given General Barr by General Almond. Pointing to the map, the X Corps commander indicated that the 7th Infantry Division would push northward to Hyesan-jin on the Yalu. Meanwhile the Marines were to head for the border by way of Chinhung-ni, Koto-ri and Hagaru while the 3d Infantry Division took over responsibility for the rear area.

"When we have cleared all this out," concluded General Almond, pointing again to the map, "the ROKs will take over, and we will pull our divisions out of Korea."[1]

At the X Corps CP, Woessner met a U.S. Army liaison officer just returned from the 26th ROK Regiment with a report of that unit's encounter with Chinese Communists. The ROKs had been north of Sudong when they collided with the new enemy and were pushed back, after taking 16 prisoners.

Colonel Edward H. Forney, ranking Marine officer on the X Corps staff, arranged for Major Woessner to make a reconnaissance flight over the Hamhung-Hagaru route in an Air Force T-6. The S-3 saw no sign of enemy troop movements all the way to the northern end of the Chosin Reservoir, but he did not fail to note the formidable character of the terrain through which the new MSR passed.

When he returned that evening with his report, Colonel Litzenberg called a meeting of officers and NCOs at the regimental CP. In an informal talk, he told them that they might soon be taking part in the opening engagement of World War III.

"We can expect to meet Chinese Communist troops," he concluded, "and it is important that we win the first battle. The results of that action will reverberate around the world, and we want to make sure that the outcome has an adverse effect in Moscow as well as Peiping."[2]

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ROKs Relieved by 7th Marines

On 1 November the 7th Marines trucked out of Hamhung to an assembly area midway between Oro-ri and Majon-dong. Moving into position behind the 26th ROK Regiment without incident, Colonel Litzenberg ordered a reconnaissance which took Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Davis' 1st Battalion about four miles northward to the South Korean positions above Majon-dong. Late that afternoon the regiment secured for the night in a tight perimeter.[3]

Attached to the regiment were the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines (Major Francis F. Parry); Division Reconnaissance Company (First Lieutenant Ralph B. Crossman); Company D, 1st Engineer Battalion (Captain Byron C. Turner); 1st Motor Transport Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Olin L. Beall; Company E, 1st Medical Battalion (Lieutenant Commander Charles K. Holloway); and detachments from the 1st Signal Battalion, 1st Service Battalion, and Division Military Police Company.[4]

Intelligence based on the questioning of the 16 prisoners taken by the ROKs had revealed that they had been attacked by elements of the 370th Regiment of the 124th CCF Division. Along with the 125th and 126th, the other two divisions of the 42d CCF Army, the 124th had crossed the Yalu during the period 14–20 October. After marching southeast via Kanggye and Changjin, the unit deployed for the defense of the Chosin Reservoir power complex while the 126th pushed eastward to the Fusen Reservoir and the 125th protected the right, flank of the 42d CCF Army.[5]

X Corps G-2 officers concluded that these CCF forces were "probably flank security" for the enemy's 4th Army Group across the peninsula in the EUSAK zone.[6] The G-2 section of the 1st Marine Division arrived at this interpretation:

"The capture by the 26th ROK Regt. of 16 POWs identified as being members of the 124th CCF Division . . . would seem to indicate that the CCF has decided to intervene in the Korean War. It would indicate, also, that this reinforcement is being effected by unit rather than by piecemeal replacement from volunteer cadres. However, until more definite information is obtained it must be presumed that the CCF has not yet decided on full scale intervention."[7]

Division intelligence officers concluded their analysis with the comment, "The advantage to be gained by all-out intervention, at a time when the NK forces are on the verge of complete collapse, is not readily apparent."[8]

There was little activity in the valley on 31 October and 1 November. The ROKs, upon learning that they would be relieved shortly by the 7th Marines, withdrew from advance positions near Sudong to a valley junction about four miles south of that town. Here, at 0600 on 2 November, they were hit by an enemy "counterattack" which, since it was of about two-platoon strength and of only 30 minutes duration, amounted really to a CCF combat patrol action.[9]

Shortly after this clash, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Davis' 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, moved out of the regimental assembly area and marched toward the ROK lines at Majon-dong in route column. Major Webb D. Sawyer's 2d Battalion followed at an interval of 500 yards, while overhead the Corsairs of VMF-312 orbited on station for reconnaissance and close air support missions.[10]

The passage of lines proceeded smoothly and quietly, save for the drone of aircraft as they probed the reaches of the valley. It was over by 1030. Thereafter, progress to the front was slow and watchful. Led by Company A, under Captain David W. Banks, the 1st Battalion took ineffectual long-range CCF fire with only a

few casualties. Batteries G and H of 3/11 displaced forward during the morning, and at noon Battery I opened up with the first of 26 missions fired by the artillery battalion that day.

Though second in the tactical column, 2/7 was responsible for high ground on both sides of the MSR, dominated on the left by Hill 698. Company D ascended the eastern slopes early in the afternoon to relieve a ROK unit that apparently had been unable to hold the crest. When the South Koreans saw the Marines approaching, they promptly abandoned their position about midway up the slope and headed for the rear.

Click here to view map

Dog Company continued up the exposed hillside. Scattered enemy shots from the top of the ridge gradually merged into a pattern of light resistance as the Marines climbed higher. Captain Milton A. Hull ordered his troops to halt, deployed his machine guns for return fire, and radioed for an air strike. Within a few minutes a flight of Corsairs swept down and worked over the ridgeline.

Hull's only assault route traversed a barren area about 50 yards from the crest. His two assault platoons, fully exposed to the enemy's observation, inched upward by fire and movement, taking casualties, and finally reached the top. Their foothold on the ridgeline did not discourage the Red Chinese, who continued to pour fire from skillfully camouflaged positions. To prevent continued attrition among his now exhausted troops (by this time they had climbed some 1600 vertical feet from ground level over an average gradient of 25 per cent), Hull recalled the two platoons to the eastern slopes and radioed for supporting fire.

This fire was not forthcoming. Company D held a line near the summit until about 2200 when Easy Company passed through to occupy a small plateau about 150 yards below the crest for the night.

Meanwhile, down in the valley, Litzenberg's "walking perimeter" completed a 1300-yard advance by 1630. Owing to the nature of the terrain, with the attendant 360-degree vulnerability, the regimental commander stipulated that the 7th Marines' column extend not less than 4000 (the minimum distance which would allow for close-in artillery support) nor more than 6000 yards in length. This allowed sufficient depth for over-all protection, with no loss of mutual support among the three infantry battalions.

Enemy resistance had flared up now and then in the course of the day, but Marine supporting arms so ruled the valley that no serious challenge by the Chinese developed. VMF-312 flew 12 close support missions in the Sudong area, and VMF(N)-513 assisted with several more. The whole precipitous skyline on either side of the regiment was blasted with 500-pound bombs, 20mm shells, and high-velocity rockets.

By way of reply to the heavy shelling and bombing, Chinese mortars and at least one small artillery piece began to fire sporadically as the day wore on. A 120mm mortar round struck 1/7's CP at 1700 and wounded three men.

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CCF Counterattack at Sudong

Although the unit commanders of the 7th Marines anticipated more fighting with the new enemy, they probably did not suspect what the night held in store when the regiment dug in at dusk on 2 November. They did not know that the 371st Regiment, 124th CCF Division, was massed to the north and west, nor that the 370th Regiment occupied high ground east of the MSR in strength—both units within easy striking distance of Litzenberg's perimeter. The 372d Regiment, in reserve, stood poised in its hidden encampment several miles to the rear.[11]

Leading elements of the 7th Marines deployed defensively less than a mile south of Sudong (see Map 8). To the right of the MSR, Able Company's 3d, 2d, and 1st Platoons, in that order, formed a line which extended across Hill 532 and part way up a spur of massive Hill 727, then bent rearward sharply to refuse the east flank. Emplaced along the road in anti-mechanized defense was the company's 3.5-inch rocket squad. The 60mm mortar section and company CP set up in the low ground behind the spur, but Captain Banks himself decided to spend the night in an OP with his rifle platoons.

Lieutenant Colonel Davis of 1/7 deployed Charlie Company (-) across the MSR from Able, on the northeast slopes of Hill 698.[12] To the rear, headquarters and one platoon of Company B dug in on an arm of the same hill, while the other two platoons went into position on the lower reaches of Hill 727 behind Company A. One platoon of Charlie Company, Davis' CP and the battalion 81mm mortars were located in low ground behind Able Company and the elements of Baker on the right of the road.

South of 1/7 lay Major Sawyer's 2d Battalion with Company D at the foot of Hill 698, E on its crest and slopes, and F spread along the steep incline of 727. Sawyer's CP and elements of the 7th Marines' Anti-tank and 4.2-inch Mortar Companies were situated in a shallow meadow along the road beneath the Fox Company positions. Several hundred yards to the rear, south of a sharp bend in the road, Major Maurice E. Roach's 3d Battalion deployed in what was in effect a second perimeter protecting the regimental train, 3/11, and Litzenberg's CP on the valley floor. Tieing in at the MSR, Companies H and I occupied ridges on the left and right of the road respectively, while G(-) arched through the low ground as the southernmost element of the regiment. Colonel Litzenberg was concerned about the valley which joined the Sudong Valley below Oro-ri lest it contain Chinese. He had Major Roach make a helicopter reconnaissance during the afternoon. Roach sighted nothing.[13]

Except for the occasional thump of an incoming mortar round, night settled on the valley and the Marine perimeter with deceptive quiet. Deceptive, since at Sudong two CCF battalions were poised to smash at the 7th Marines with a well-coordinated double envelopment.

At 2300, Davis' 1st Battalion reported itself under attack from the right flank, the enemy apparently descending the higher slopes of Hill 727. This announcement was somewhat premature, as the Marines of Company A were merely experiencing the infiltration and probing that precede almost every Communist assault. At 2400, 2/7 reported two enemy battalions on the left flank.[14] During the first hour of 3 November, sobering messages were received from Litzenberg's northernmost units. What had begun at 2300 as a staccato of small-arms fire swelled in volume by imperceptible degrees until Hills 698 and 727 were engulfed in a ceaseless din. And by 0100 the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 7th Marines bent under the weight of a full-scale attack on both flanks.

Avoiding the obvious approach through the corridor leading south from Sudong, the commander of the

371st CCF Regiment had dispatched a battalion along each of the ridgelines bordering the valley. Bursting flares and bugle calls signaled when the two assault units came abreast of the Marine positions on the lower reaches of Hills 727 and 698. Then, treading swiftly and silently in their rubber sneakers, the Chinese infantrymen swept down obliquely and struck Able and Fox Companies on the east and Baker on the west. Charlie on the slopes of Hill 698 was undisturbed. Where the Chinese met resistance, they slugged it out at close range with grenades and submachine guns. Where they found gaps, they poured through and raced to the low ground. To the Marines, the specific CCF objectives were not readily apparent in those hectic hours before dawn, for the enemy seemed to be everywhere.[15]

Shortly after the battle was joined high on the hillsides, Marines at Able Company's CP heard the clanking sounds of a tracked vehicle on the MSR to the north. When the machine passed the rocket section at the roadblock without incident, they dropped their guards momentarily, believing it to be a friendly bulldozer. The big vehicle rumbled into the CP and stopped, one headlight glaring at exposed mortar crews and headquarters personnel.

"Tank!" shouted Staff Sergeant Donald T. Jones, section chief of Able Company's 60mm mortars.

It was a Russian T-34, one of the five remaining to the 344th North Korean Tank Regiment, supporting the 124th CCF Division. The troops at the roadblock had been caught napping.

A burst of machine-gun fire from the tank sent the lightly armed Marines scurrying for cover. The armored vehicle quickly withdrew to the road and drove farther south, into 1/7s' CP. After a short, inquisitive pause, it rumbled toward the 1st Battalion's 81mm mortar positions. The Russian 85mm rifle flashed four times in the darkness, but the shells screamed harmlessly over the mortars and detonated in the high ground beyond.

Rocket launchers of Charlie Company and the recoilless rifles of 7th Marines Antitank Company opened up from positions around 1/7's headquarters. At least one 75mm round struck home, and the belt of sandbags around the T-34's turret began to burn. The tank swung back onto the MSR and headed north. Approaching Able Company's roadblock, through which it had entered the Marine position, it took a hit from the 3.5-inch rocket section. In reply, one 85mm shell at pistol range all but wiped out the Marine antitank crew. The enemy vehicle, trailing flame and sparks, clanked around a bend in the road and disappeared.

Not long after this astounding foray, the fighting on Hills 698 and 727 spread down to the MSR. The 1st and 2d Platoons of Company A, pressed now from three directions and suffering heavy casualties, retracted to the 3d Platoon positions at the tip of the spur. Some of the men were cut off and forced back on the Baker Company elements east of the MSR. Ultimately, one of the two Company B platoons in this area was driven down to the low ground, and the other forced to fall back. Later they counterattacked and recovered their foxholes.

West of the MSR, the remainder of Company B fought off assaults on its left flank and rear by Chinese who had skirted around Charlie Company's advance positions.[16] Lieutenant Colonel Davis sent the battalion reserve, Lieutenant Graeber's 2d Platoon of Baker, to reinforce the hard pressed left platoon. Attempting to lead his men across the MSR, Graeber found the route effectively blocked by the enemy in the river bed.

Descending now from both sides of the road, enemy infantrymen swarmed over the valley floor. They overran most of the 7th Marines 4.2-inch Mortar Company and captured one of its tubes. They seriously threatened the 1st and 2d Battalion CPs and the AT Company in the same general idea. High on the slopes in 2/7's zone, Companies E and F were beset by small bands of infiltrators. And though these two companies held their ground, the Reds found their flanks, slipped behind them, and entrenched at the key road bend separating 2/7 from 3/7 to the south. The principal Marine unit at the sharp curve in the MSR was Battery I, whose position in the low ground became increasingly precarious as the night wore on.

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Two Marine Battalions Cut Off

Dawn of 3 November revealed a confused and alarming situation in the valley south of Sudong. Enemy troops shared the low ground with Marine elements between the 1st and 2d Battalion CPs, and they had blown out a section of the MSR in this locale.[17] The 2d Battalion's commander later remarked, "When daylight came, we found that we were in a dickens of a mess. The rifle companies were well up in the hills, and the Chinese were occupying the terrain between the CP and the companies."[18]

Between 2/7 and 3/7, a company of Reds had dug in on a finger of high ground overlooking the road bend and Battery I from the east. Scattered Chinese forces roamed Hills 698 and 727 almost at will. On the latter height, elements of the 371st CCF Regiment had been reinforced by a battalion of the 370th, so that pressure against the right flank of 1/7 and 2/7 continued long after daybreak.[19]

With his lead battalions thrown back on the defensive, Colonel Litzenberg relied on overwhelming superiority in supporting arms to tip the scales on 3 November and regain the initiative. While the regimental 4.2-inch mortars fired, howitzers of Batteries G and H thundered almost ceaselessly the whole night long from positions within 3/7's perimeter. Battery I, after being extricated from the enemy dominated road bend at 1100 with the help of a platoon of G Company, added its metal to the bombardment. In the course of the day, the 18 field pieces of the battalion fired a total of 1431 rounds in 49 missions.[20]

VMF—312 provided constant air cover after first light. Its planes not only scourged enemy assault troops left exposed on the ridges, but also searched out and attacked CCF artillery positions and vehicles. This squadron alone flew 18 close support missions on 3 November, the alternating flights being led by Major Daniel H. Davis, Captain Harry G. C. Henneberger, Captain George E. McClane, and First Lieutenant Shelby M. Forrest.[21] VMF (N)—513 dispatched a flight of night fighters to Sudong at 0910 under Major Robert L. Cochran. After raking enemy troops with 1500 rounds from their 20mm cannon, Cochran and his three pilots unloaded three general purpose and fragmentation bombs along with 15 high-velocity rockets.[22]

As much supporting fire fell within the 7th Regiment's perimeter as outside. Since the crack of dawn it had been the principal mission of the advance Marine elements to eject scores of Chinese troops, individuals and small bands, who were scattered along the hillsides and valley floor within the zones of the 1st and 2d Battalions. While accomplishing this task, the Marines established a tactical principle for coming weeks: that to nullify Chinese night tactics, regardless of large-scale penetrations and infiltration, defending units had only to maintain position until daybreak. With observation restored, Marine firepower invariably would melt down the Chinese mass to impotency.

This was the case on 3 November, although the melting down process was a savage, all-day affair. With the help of air, artillery, and mortars, the 1st Battalion cleared the low ground by midmorning and restored its right flank later in the day. The Chinese in the valley were crushed, the main group being annihilated by the heavy machine guns of Weapons Company as they attempted to march northward along the railroad in column at daylight. Counted enemy dead in 1/7's zone alone amounted to 662.[23]

The main effort in the 2d Battalion's zone was aimed at the CCF concentration on the spur of Hill 727 overlooking the bend in the MSR. Owing to this barrier, Litzenberg had to call for an airdrop of supplies to sustain his leading elements on 3 November.[24] Major Sawyer ordered Company D, on the base of Hill 698 to the south of the roadblock, to move up the valley, cross the river, and clean out the spur at Hill 727. Finding the low ground blocked by heavy fire, Captain Hull circled to the left along the incline of Hill 698, intending to come

abreast of the Chinese strong point before striking at it across the MSR.[25]

Meanwhile, Captain Walter D. Phillips' Easy Company, perched on the side of Hill 698, struggled to secure the peak of that hill mass. A rush by First Lieutenant John Yancey's 2d Platoon at about 0800 secured a small plateau about 50 yards below the crest against the opposition of one Chinese soldier. First Lieutenant Robert T. Bey's 3d Platoon then passed through and frontally assaulted the peak only to be thrown back by what Bey calls "the most concentrated grenade barrage this writer has had the dubious distinction to witness." Following an air strike at about 1400 Easy Company secured the crest with its 40 Chinese dead.[26]

With all of the rifle companies involved in fire fights or security missions, Litzenberg resorted to supporting arms and headquarters troops to knock out the roadblock. From his regimental CP he dispatched First Lieutenant Earl R. Delong, Executive Officer of the AT Company, with a reserve 75mm recoilless rifle and a makeshift crew. Delong moved into position opposite the strong point at a range of 500 yards, while air and artillery hammered the enemy positions.[27]

Simultaneously, the Division Reconnaissance Company ascended the high ground east of the MSR in the vicinity of Litzenberg's headquarters, then advanced northward along the ridge to envelop the roadblock. This unit, just returned from an active, overnight patrol to Huksu-ri, moved into a hillside position and took the rear of the Chinese under fire across an intervening gulley.[28]

Delong's 75 had begun firing high explosive and white phosphorus into the enemy's front; and Company D, after cleaning up the scattered resistance on the slopes of Hill 698, closed on the roadblock under cover of two air strikes and prepared to assault. The Chinese, obviously shaken by the pounding of supporting arms, had commenced a withdrawal into the hills east of the roadbend when Hull's men began their assault. From Recon Company's positions, Lieutenant Crossman called for air and artillery to catch the retreating Reds in the open. But the request was turned down because Dog Company troops were already filtering through the objective area. By 1810 the roadblock was eliminated, although Dog Company had to withstand two counterattacks before its hold on the spur was secure. The Chinese had left behind 28 dead, strewn among the boulders and recesses of a natural redoubt.[29]

The main enemy encroachments having been smashed, the 7th Marines' MSR was again clear for traffic, save for long-range harassment by an occasional CCF rifleman hidden in the hills. At dusk, trucks streamed northward from the regimental CP to deliver supplies to the 1st and 2d Battalions and to evacuate about 100 battle casualties from those units. The wounded were rushed to the Division Hospital and the 121st Army Evacuation Hospital in Hungnam.[30]

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End of NKPA Tank Regiment

The coming of darkness on 3 November marked the finish of the first phase. Litzenberg's perimeter remained essentially the same as on the previous day, the only changes being Company D's occupation of the high ground east of the road bend, Recon Company's assumption of local security at the regimental CP, and 3/11's tighter concentration within the zone of 3/7. What few light contacts occurred during the night were decided quickly by Marine artillery and mortars.[31]

Later intelligence evaluations proved that these contacts could have involved only CCF patrols or stragglers, for it was in this same period that the 370th and 371st CCF Regiments withdrew some three miles from Sudong to a defense line established by elements of the 372d Regiment north of Chinhung-ni. The two assault units had paid a high price for failure during the 2–4 November fighting. The 371st Regiment lost the equivalent of five companies out of its 1st and 3d Battalions, with the total dead estimated at 793. And the 3d Battalion, 370th Regiment, was reduced by the destruction of two companies.[32]

It was a wobbly 124th CCF Division, then, that dug in with heavy machine guns and mortars on two massive hills, 987 and 891, flanking the MSR about two miles north of Chinhung-ni. The depleted 344th NKPA Tank Regiment could not avail itself of such defensible terrain, for until Marine engineers widened the tortuous cliff road through Funchilin Pass it would not accommodate armor.[33]

Apparently the Chinese Communists had left their North Korean comrades of the 344th to fend for themselves. The NKPA unit had already dwindled considerably from its original organization of three armored and three infantry companies. On 2 November it comprised only five T-34s and their crews. One of these machines, after being damaged during the single-handed raid on the 7th Marines' perimeter that night, was abandoned the next day. The NKPA crews put the remaining four vehicles into camouflaged positions next to the MSR at Chinhung-ni, where they waited resignedly at a tactical dead-end.[34]

Colonel Litzenberg was aware of the probability of further resistance along the road, since on 3 November Marine air had reported approximately 300 enemy trucks—in groups of 15 or 20—on the move south of the Chosin Reservoir.[35] At dawn of 4 November, after a night of relative calm around the old perimeter, he ordered his subordinates to conduct vigorous patrolling preparatory to continuing the advance.[36]
Click here to view map

Troops of 1/7 moved forward in the early light and scouted the valley as far north as the edge of Sudong. They met no opposition and returned to the perimeter. Litzenberg then formed the 7th Marines in column, with the Reconnaissance Company in the lead, followed by 1/7 and 3/7 in that order. He left the 2d Battalion in position on Hills 698 and 727 to protect the regimental flanks.[37]

Recon Company moved out in jeeps at 0800, First Lieutenant Ernest C. Hargett's 1st Platoon in the point. Entering Sudong a short time later, the vanguard rounded a bend in the middle of town and surprised a group of CCF soldiers. In a 30-minute fight, Hargett's men killed three and captured about 20. The 2d and 3d Platoons of the Reconnaissance Company meanwhile inspected the high ground above Sudong without opposition.

Lieutenant Crossman reorganized his company in column on the road and set out for Chinhung-ni with Second Lieutenant Donald W. Sharon's 2d Platoon in the lead. About the same time, 1000, the 1st Battalion moved out of the 7th Marines' perimeter south of Sudong and traced Crossman's route through the low ground.

At Chinhung-ni the highway runs along the east side of the river while the railroad traces the west side.

The narrow-gauge track enters the village over a bridge spanning a branch stream. Just beyond is Samgo station, which served as a railhead for the cable-car system of Funchilin Pass. As the Reconnaissance Company approached Chinhung-ni on 4 November, a small group of Chinese soldiers milled around the train cars and buildings of Samgo Station. They probably had some tactical connection with the four T-34 tanks camouflaged opposite them across the river and road; but the two forces seemed oblivious not only of each other but also of the Marines bearing down on them.

Lieutenant Sharon's platoon advanced rapidly from Sudong at 1400, followed closely by the rest of the Reconnaissance Company and a section of 75mm recoilless rifles. About 2000 yards south of Chinhung-ni they halted on sighting fresh tank tracks but quickly moved out again on orders of Lieutenant Colonel Davis. At the highway entrance to Chinhung-ni, Sharon's troops unknowingly passed the first T-34, hidden on the right of the road. Coming abreast of the second Communist tank, which also remained undetected for the moment, the Marines spotted the Chinese soldiers across the river at Samgo Station and opened fire.

The CCF infantrymen scattered under the hail of small-arms fire and many of them were cut down. This was fortunate for Company C of 1/7, which was marching along the railroad tracks and just then nearing the bridge south of the station, where it could have been taken under enfilade fire by the enemy soldiers and tanks.

It was during the exchange with the Chinese that Sharon and his men spotted the second North Korean tank under a pile of brush on the right of the road. The platoon leader, accompanied by Staff Sergeant Richard B. Twohey and Corporal Joseph E. McDermott, climbed upon the dormant vehicle. Suddenly the periscope began to revolve. McDermott smashed the glass and Twohey dropped in a grenade. With Sharon they jumped to the ground just as the grenade exploded inside the machine.

The tank engine roared and the vehicle lurched toward the three Marines. Twohey jumped on it again and dropped another grenade down the periscope. After the dull thump of the second explosion, the T-34 stopped dead and began smoking.

By this time Staff Sergeant William L. Vick's 75mm recoilless gun section and 3.5-inch rocket crews of Company C had moved up. Together they gave the *coup de grace* to the damaged T-34. Simultaneously, Sharon's men saw a thatched hut farther down the road disintegrate as tank number three emerged, its 85mm rifle swinging menacingly toward the valley crowded with Marines and vehicles. First Lieutenant Raymond J. Elledge fired his 75s from their carts, and Company C's rocket launchers opened up. The T-34 took hits but rumbled on. Seconds earlier, First Lieutenant Dan C. Holland, Forward Air Controller for 1/7, had radioed overhead Corsairs for assistance. One of the gull-winged planes plummetted out of formation and unleashed a pair of five-inch rockets. They were direct hits. The T-34 blew up and died on the road.[38]

Sharon and his men moved forward cautiously. While passing the blazing hulk, they spotted enemy tank Number Four, camouflaged against a hillside just ahead. At almost the same moment, Marines passing Chinhung-ni stumbled upon docile tank Number One in the midst of their formation. Recoilless rifles and rocket launchers blasted the machine, and its crew climbed out and surrendered. Sharon then led the antitank crews through the river bed toward the fourth T-34. The Communist tankmen, entrenched on the slope behind their empty vehicle, gave up without a fight. The tank itself was knocked out by 3.5-inch rockets and 75mm shells; and the 344th NKPA Tank Regiment ceased to exist.

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Chapter 6. The Battle of Sudong
The Fight for How Hill

After the destruction of enemy armor, Colonel Litzenberg began deploying the 7th Marines in perimeter around the valley junction at Chinhung-ni. The advance had netted about 6000 yards by midafternoon, and the remaining daylight was needed to bring all elements forward and consolidate the newly won ground.[39]

Aware that the Chinese were at the top of Funchilin Pass but not that he was directly under their guns, the regimental commander at 1600 ordered Reconnaissance Company to patrol some 2000 yards into Funchilin Pass and outpost the southern tip of Hill 891. The high ground selected for the outpost coincided with the eastern half of the Chinese forward line, and it would later be remembered as "How Hill" in honor of Company H of 3/7.[40]

As 1/7 dug in on the heights flanking Chinhung-ni, Recon Company, with Second Lieutenant Charles R. Puckett's 3d Platoon leading, advanced in motorized column about a mile into the pass. At this point, Hill 987 looms up on the west and the highway veers sharply to the east for approximately 1000 yards. After a hairpin turn, the road climbs on a parallel line almost to its starting point, then resumes its northerly course, clinging to the rocky wall of Hill 891 which rises abruptly from the chasm that separates it from Hill 987.

Puckett's platoon had approached the road bend warily, for a sizeable enemy group had been spotted earlier near the base of Hill 987 across the gorge. At 1630 the first two jeeps of the column eased around the curve and immediately came under fire from Hill 987 to the left, 891 to the front, and from a CCF patrol to the right, on the road itself.[41]

Click here to view map

For 45 minutes Puckett and his men were pinned to the road and hillside, and only darkness and a strike by Marine air finally enabled the whole column to withdraw to the 7th Marines' lines. The clash cost Recon two killed and five wounded, and heavy machine-gun fire had destroyed the two lead jeeps.[42]

During the relatively quiet night of 4–5 November, Colonel Litzenberg issued his order for the next day's advance. The 1st Battalion was to hold the flanks at Chinhung-ni while 3/7, followed at a distance of 500–1000 yards by 2/7, passed through and attacked into Funchilin Pass. Major Parry's 3/11 and the 4.2 Mortar Company were to support the infantry by high-angle fire from positions south of Sudong.[43] Resistance could be expected, for even as the 7th Marines peacefully sat out the hours of darkness, the night fighters of VMF(N)-513 were bombing and strafing enemy convoys around the southern tip of the Chosin Reservoir.[44]

At 0700 Lieutenant Hargett's 1st Platoon of Recon Company departed Chinhung-ni along the MSR to patrol on the right flank. Reaching the hairpin curve, the platoon was pinned down by enemy fire at exactly the same place where Puckett's unit had come to grief. VMF-312 and 3/11 promptly went into action, and Hargett ultimately withdrew his patrol under the shield of their supporting fire. Marine casualties were four wounded.[45]

Major Roach's 3d Battalion moved out for the attack at 0800, passing through the high-ground positions of 1/7 on either side of Chinhung-ni. Company I advanced toward Hill 987 and G toward 891 (see Map 10). Both units were hit hard by small-arms and machine-gun fire as they came abreast of the road bend; and for the remainder of the day, the "advance was negligible."[46]

From 1000 onward, the second phase of the battle roared to a climax as a duel between supporting arms. In 26 missions during 5 November, the batteries of 3/11 threw 943 shells into the enemy positions. The Chinese answered with counterbattery fire from their 122mm mortars, but toward the end of the day these weapons were silenced by Marine howitzer barrages. A forward observer with Company G reported an enemy ammunition dump destroyed. This information was later verified by a POW who mentioned the following additional losses in

CCF mortars: 10 crewmen killed and 17 wounded, one mortar destroyed, two mortars put out of action, and the dispersal of “most of the remaining personnel.”

VMF-312 flew 37 sorties in 90 hours of close support combat on the 5th. Between Chinhung-ni and the Chosin Reservoir, 21 enemy trucks were destroyed. Pilots reported that “the surrounding ridges were filled with enemy troops” and that their strikes against these Chinese were “extremely effective.” Led by Major Cochran and Captain Otis W. S. Corman, flights from VMF (N)-513 blasted troops, buildings, supply vehicles, and gun emplacements scattered from Koto-ri at the top of Funchilin Pass to Hagaru at the reservoir. General Smith, during a helicopter visit to Litzenberg’s CP, remarked that a “considerable number of planes . . . really worked the place over.”[47]

On the ground, the fight ended at dusk with the Chinese retaining their firm grip on these well camouflaged positions studding Hills 891 and 987 despite heavy losses.[48] Marine casualties were light, for it was the tortuous terrain in conjunction with enemy bullets, not enemy fire alone, that obstructed the attackers. Since General Smith earlier in the day had named Koto-ri as the 7th Marines’ immediate objective, Colonel Litzenberg ordered the 3d Battalion to resume the advance at 0800 the next morning.

The night of 5–6 November witnessed only minor contacts around the regimental perimeter. Some 200 Korean laborers accounted for most of the activity during darkness as they carried supplies to forward Marine positions and evacuated casualties to the rear.

Major Roach’s plan for 6 November called for How Company, supported by the fire of George, to envelop the southeast slope of Hill 891 while Item continued its attack on Hill 987. At about 0800 First Lieutenant Howard H. Harris led How Company out of its reserve position. It took him until nearly 1500 to traverse the rugged landscape and get into position. Meanwhile, Item Company under First Lieutenant William E. Johnson had beaten off one counterattack and edged about 300 yards closer to Hill 987, with its most effective opposition coming from bunkers on a spur overlooking the MSR.

Captain Thomas E. Cooney had been wounded twice the previous day while leading Company G against the trenches and foxholes on the southern tip of Hill 891. Except for a feint by one platoon along the MSR into the hairpin turn, his company spent the day in a long-range fight with the Chinese defenders.

Lieutenant Harris led his men over the high ground behind G into positions to the east. Cooney’s experience showed that the only possible approach to Hill 891 was to flank it from the southeast. Although the fresh company arrived sometime after 1400, its attack was held up until about 1600 to await air. Following a strike by two Corsairs, the howitzers of 3/11 and the regimental 4.2 mortars began pounding the Chinese positions.

How Company jumped off at about 1615. Two assault platoons, led by Second Lieutenants Robert D. Reem and Minard P. Newton, descended into the intervening gulley at the tip of the hairpin curve. During a quick reorganization in the low ground, machine guns were posted to cover the ascent. Then the platoons started up towards the enemy-held summit through companion draws, Harris accompanying Newton’s outfit on the left.

The powdery soil of the steep slope made climbing difficult and exhausting. About a hundred yards up, Newton’s platoon began receiving light fire, followed a few yards farther by a hail of grenades and machine gun slugs. The Marines inched forward and were stopped by the Chinese fire. On the right, meanwhile, Reed climbed against no opposition, so it appeared that the envelopment was working. Unexpectedly, the two draws converged near the top of the hill, with the result that the platoons met.

Lieutenant Harris revised his plans by directing Newton, with his left squad supporting by BAR fire, to lead Reem to the top of the hill. Once there, Newton was to swing right and Reem left to envelop the Chinese positions. Newton worked a squad up onto a nose extending out from the summit. The Chinese replied with a renewed barrage of grenades and counterattacked Newton’s left. Sergeant Charlie Foster, seeing apparent victory turning into defeat, lunged forward to break up the attack. He reached the top and died but the men behind him

repulsed the Reds.

During the close fighting on the left, Lieutenant Reem had gathered his squad leaders for instructions preparatory to the final assault on the right. An enemy grenade fell into the midst of the group, and Reem was killed as he smothered the explosion with his body. Staff Sergeant Anthony J. Ricardi took over the platoon.

At about 1800 Harris radioed Roach that his troops were exhausted. Although it was already dusk, he was bringing up his reserve platoon, he said, for the Chinese still held the crest in strength. Company H had taken only eight casualties, but ammunition was low and the approaching darkness prevented the dispatching of more fresh troops. The battalion commander relayed the report to Colonel Litzenberg, who immediately ordered the company to disengage and withdraw. The fighting descent under cover of a 4.2 mortar and artillery bombardment brought Company H back within the lines of 3/7 by 2000 with its six wounded and the body of Lieutenant Reem.

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Chapter 6. The Battle of Sudong
Disappearance of CCF Remnants

Darkness on the night of 6 November descended like a cloak over the 124th CCF Division. In the morning the Chinese had vanished. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, encountered no opposition whatever as it occupied the southern tips of Hills 891 and 987. [49]

The mysterious disappearance of this unit, following the equally strange withdrawal of the Chinese Reds who made the first CCF contacts in the EUSAK zone, aroused no end of speculation. Officers of the 7th Marines believed that enemy losses had been heavy enough for a disabling effect. This opinion was confirmed the following year when a Marine Corps Board visited Korea for a special analytical study of Marine operations of 1950, based on all Army and Marine records available at that time as well as interviews and interrogations. The Board concluded that "the 124th CCF Division was estimated to have been rendered militarily noneffective." [50]

Following the enemy's disappearance on the night of 6–7 November, the 7th Marines occupied the southern reaches of Hills 891 and 987 while reconnoitering to the top of 891. The rest of the day and all the next was devoted to consolidating positions along the MSR and sending out patrols in a vain search for the vanished 124th CCF Division.[51]

On 8 November, General Almond visited the 7th Marines. Upon hearing of the valor of Captain Cooney at "How Hill," he awarded that officer the Silver Star medal on the spot. There being neither pendant nor citation available, the Corps Commander pinned a slip of paper to Cooney's jacket in the brief ceremony. Scrawled on the fragment was the inscription, "Silver Star Medal for Gallantry in Action—Almond." [52]

While the 7th Marines advanced astride the MSR, a volunteer patrol of fifteen men, led by First Lieutenant William F. Goggin of 2/7, traced a lonely, circuitous route in the mountains to the west. Having left Chinhung-ni at 1200 on 8 November, the scouting party covered some 25 miles through perpendicular wilds during the following 26 hours. This journey brought it to the Chosin Reservoir plateau at a point just southwest of Koto-ri.

Lieutenant Goggin, his slight wound the only scar of the patrol's single clash with Chinese, radioed Colonel Litzenberg that Koto-ri was clear of enemy. He then led his party southward, and in the evening of the 9th, returned through the lines of 3/7.[53]

The Marines had been told that big game animals were hunted before the war in the mountains of northeast Korea. But not until the otherwise calm night of 9–10 November did a four-legged enemy invade the positions of RCT-7. Near the cable-car trestle, midway through Funchilin Pass, an unfriendly bear, no doubt a Russian bear, paid a nocturnal visit to the 1st Platoon of George Company. An unnamed Marine PFC, awakened in his sleeping bag, swore afterwards that the animal was wearing a hammer and sickle emblem. However this may be, the intruder was routed by his startled yell and disappeared into the night. [54]

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Chapter 6. The Battle of Sudong
Koto-ri Occupied by 7th Marines

At 0830 on 10 November—the Marine Corps Birthday—the 1st Battalion passed through the 3d and emerged from Funchilin Pass onto the open plateau. Koto-ri (designated as Objective One) was occupied without opposition an hour and a half later. Litzenberg halted his column and drew up a perimeter around the mountain village.

Upon reaching the Koto-ri plateau the 7th Marines was first to meet a new enemy who would take a heavier toll in casualties than the Chinese. This was General Winter, who has won many a historic campaign. When the first cold blasts struck, "our men were not conditioned for it," commented Litzenberg. "The doctors reported numerous cases where the men came down to the sickbay suffering from what appeared to be shock. Some of them would come in crying; some of them were extremely nervous; and the doctors said it was simply the sudden shock of the terrific cold when they were not ready for it." [55]

The Marines recovered quickly after "thawing out," and platoon warming tents, heated by camp stoves burning fuel oil, were set up at Koto-ri. Buckets of steaming water were provided for the warming of "C" rations.

Hot weather, however uncomfortable it may be, is fighting weather as compared to sub-zero cold which seems to numb the spirit as well as flesh. Cold weather clothing is a handicap to movement and the use of firearms; and some weapons, particularly the carbine, are not dependable at low temperatures. It was probably as well for morale that the Marines at Koto-ri could not foresee that this was only the beginning of a prolonged operation in sub-zero weather without a parallel in the nation's history. [56]

Until 13 November, when the 7th Marines advanced toward Hagaru, patrols from Koto-ri repeatedly sighted bands of Chinese in the distance. Except for a fight on 11 November in which C Company claimed to have inflicted 40 casualties on the enemy and lost four killed and four wounded, there was little action. With a little pressure on the ground or from the air, the enemy vanished, and thus the uneasy calm continued.[57]

While the 7th Regiment had been fighting, marching, and climbing toward the Chosin Reservoir in early November, the 5th Marines peacefully combed the approaches to the Fusen Reservoir to the east. After detaching 1/5 to Division control on 4 November and stationing 3/5 near Oro-ri, Lieutenant Colonel Murray sent the 2d Battalion into the Sinhung Valley to relieve the 18th ROK Regiment. The relief took place at 1145 on the 4th, and Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Roise deployed 2/5 around a valley junction five miles north and 15 miles east of the then embattled 7th Marines. [58]

Roise's mission was twofold: to block the Sinhung corridor while determining the strength and disposition of the enemy, if any; and to check certain northerly routes shown on maps as possibly leading to either the Fusen or Chosin Reservoirs, or both. Reconnaissance patrols in squad strength and combat patrols of reinforced platoons and company size fanned out in a broad arc during 5–9 November. They determined that no usable route led to either reservoir from the south, but that the highway continuing northeast from the town of Sinhung, leading to the 7th Infantry Division's zone and the Manchurian border, would carry military traffic. From 7 November, Roise's troops made daily contact with Army patrols coming down the highway, but no units tried to penetrate the apparent screen of enemy defenses close to the Fusen Reservoir. [59]

Major Merlin R. Olson, 1/5's Executive Officer, led Companies A and B on 7 November in a reconnaissance in force to Huksu-ri, that annoying road junction west of Oro-ri. On the 8th Olson's force had a running fight with North Koreans before being recalled while still short of his objective. Olson's recall resulted from reports of 2000 North Koreans moving towards the MSR. [60]

On 8 November, Company D (Reinf) made an overnight trek deep into a branch valley northwest of Sinhung, reaching a point about 10 miles due east of Koto-ri. One CCF soldier was captured while asleep in a house. He said he belonged to the 126th Division and that Red China would commit a total of 24 divisions against the UN forces in Korea. [61]

On 9 November, Colonel Murray received orders to concentrate his regiment along the MSR leading to the Chosin Reservoir. During the next two days he deployed the 1st and 3d Battalions at Majon-dong and Chinhung-ni respectively. The ambush of a Charlie Company patrol on the 10th delayed the departure of 1/5 from the Chigyong area. The patrol had to be rescued by a battalion attack the next day before the force could move to Majon-dong. [62] On the 13th while operating out of Majon-dong a 1/5 patrol ran into 50–150 enemy who inflicted 7 KIA and 3 WIA before withdrawing. [63]

The 2d Battalion moved out of the Sinhung Valley on 13 and 14 November to relieve the 7th Marines of the responsibility for defending Koto-ri and thus free Colonel Litzenberg's regiment for the advance to Hagaru and the north. Lieutenant Colonel Roise's battalion had completed its mission without firing more than a few shots and with a total prisoner bag of 12 North Koreans and one Chinese. [64]

Although the new enemy had seemingly evaporated from the path of the 1st Marine Division, there was good reason to believe that he was not forsaking his aggressive designs in North Korea. For in addition to the ominous but questionable predictions of Chinese POWs, eye-witness accounts of pilots of VMF (N)-542 provided G-2 officers with information of the gravest portent in early November. The Marine airmen made nightly strikes from the 1st to the 9th against Sinuiju at the mouth of the Yalu, and they repeatedly reported a steady stream of trucks moving into northwest Korea from Antung, Manchuria. Time after time they blasted Sinuiju with bombs, rockets, and 20mm shells, and though parts of the city were continuously aflame, it still seethed with activity. They described southward bound traffic as "heavy, "very heavy," and even "tremendous," and at least one convoy was reported to be "gigantic." [65]

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Chosin Reservoir

ON 4 NOVEMBER, WHILE RCT–7 was at the height of its fight with the Chinese, the Division CP displaced from Wonsan to Hungnam. General Craig, the ADC, who inspected the area on the 2d, recommended the abandoned Engineering College on the western outskirts as the best location. During his visit he was shown a knoll outside the city where the bodies of some 200 Korean civilians were laid out in a perfect row. All had been victims of the retreating NKPA forces.[1]

A location in Hamhung would have been preferred, but available sites were already taken by X Corps. General Smith flew to Hungnam by helicopter and opened the new CP at 1100 on the morning of the 4th. That evening a train carrying 160 officers and men of Headquarters Battalion and the Division staff arrived at 2130 from Wonsan. En route it had been fired on by guerrillas but no casualties resulted.[2]

A perimeter defense, consisting of two outposts and eight machine-gun positions, was set up to command all likely approaches to the new CP. Defensive wiring and trip flares were installed, with the gun positions and outposts being connected by telephone.

During these proceedings everyone was blissfully unaware of the existence of 250 tons of NKPA high explosive, stored only 600 yards from the CP in three connecting caves. Undiscovered for a week, this enemy cache was believed capable of demolishing the command post. A 16-man security detachment was placed on guard until the explosive could be removed and detonated.[3]

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Chosin Reservoir
Attacks on Wonsan-Hungnam MSR

Protection of the Wonsan-Hungnam MSR took on added importance as the 1st Marine Division speeded up its move to the north. This responsibility, it may be recalled, was shared by Division and Corps on 3 November in accordance with a decision by General Almond. The 1st Marines and elements of the 1st Tank Battalion maintained security from Wonsan 15 miles northward to Munchon, while the 1st Battalion of the 5th Marines was responsible from Hamhung southward to Chigyong. This left the 54-mile stretch between Chigyong and Munchon without any protection except the patrols of the Korean CIC agents and the Special Operations Company, USA, both under Corps control.

On 4 November this company reported that large numbers of North Koreans were moving into the area to the west. That same afternoon Corps notified Division that a group of mounted guerrillas had fired on railway police in the yards at Kowon, 15 miles north of Munchon.[4]

On 6 November, immediately after landing at Wonsan, the 65th RCT of the 3d Infantry Division (less one battalion, placed temporarily under 1st Marine Division control for the Majon-ni operation) was ordered by Corps to relieve elements of the 96th Field Artillery Battalion, USA, which had been recently sent to Yonghung. The Army RCT was assigned a mission of protecting the Yonghung-Kowon area and patrolling to the west (see map on Page 122).[5]

The Wonsan-Hamhung rail line took on special importance after the announcement that water transportation would be delayed until enemy mines were cleared from the harbor at Hungnam. This made it necessary for the 1st Marine Division to send daily supply trains from Wonsan.[6] The first two completed the run without incident, but after departing Wonsan at dusk on the 6th the third train was halted at Kowon by the destruction of rails ahead. North Korean guerrillas attacked the train, guarded by a lieutenant and 38 men from Company C of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion.[7]

The detachment was taken by surprise in the darkness by foes firing from both sides of the track. When the Marines attempted to reverse the train, the enemy wounded the engineer and put a hole in the boiler with grenades. In the darkness the guard became separated into two groups, the smaller of which was surrounded in a car. The guerrillas fired through the wooden sides, forcing the Marines to the floor, and threw grenades through the windows until all ten men were killed or wounded, only two of them surviving.

The remaining 29 men of the guard made a stand on an embankment about 200 yards from the track. Six Marines were wounded in the ensuing fire fight. The train guard broke off the action and withdrew to the area of the Army artillery battalion.

An empty train from Hamhung, guarded by a platoon from Company A of the Amtracs, was halted at 1700 on the afternoon of 6 November by railway officials at Yonghung. Reports of guerrilla activity in the area had proved to be only too well founded when elements of the 96th Field Artillery Battalion were attacked early that morning. Their perimeter south of the town was breached with losses to the Army unit of equipment and ammunition.

The 2d Battalion of the 65th RCT, which arrived at Yonghung late that afternoon, had its baptism of fire within a few hours. Guerrillas in estimated strength of 500 to 800 attacked at 0300 on the 7th, inflicting casualties of six killed and 14 wounded. Troops of the 96th Field Artillery Battalion also came under attack, as did elements of the 4th Signal Battalion, USA. Company D of the 1st Tank Battalion sent a Marine tank and “Weasel” (M–29) to evacuate the wounded with the assistance of the Amtrac platoon guarding the empty train at Yonghung.[8]

At 1400 that afternoon the empty train resumed its run to Wonsan. Only two miles had been covered when the locomotive and six cars were derailed by a split rail and wrecked just south of Yonghung. Personnel losses amounted to one man killed and 14 injured.[9]

At almost exactly this same hour the fourth supply train was stopped south of Kowon by a blown section of track. The guard proceeded on foot to investigate and encountered the depressing spectacle of the third supply train, abandoned by the enemy after being plundered. One ammunition car was still burning and in another riddled car the bodies of the trapped Marines were found. So extensive was the damage to tracks and switches that rail service could not be resumed until 9 November.[10]

The Corps commander summoned General Smith to Wonsan that morning for a conference on measures for the security of the rail line. It was decided that only daytime runs would be made thereafter, with the train guard increased from 38 to 50 men. The 65th RCT, the 26th ROK Regiment and a battery of the 96th Field Artillery Battalion were placed under the temporary control of the 1st Marine Division with a mission of guarding bridges and other key points.[11]

General Smith worked out a plan for the ROK regiment to drive the guerrillas southward from the Chigyong area toward the 65th RCT at Yonghung. As it proved, elements of both units were given Corps commitments which prevented this maneuver from being put into effect. They remained only a few days under nominal Division control, being used for a variety of security missions along the Wonsan-Hamhung MSR.[12]

By 9 November, when the Division supply trains resumed their runs, 95 loaded cars had accumulated at Wonsan. The 1st Combat Service Group continued to route supplies northward from the railhead at the Wonsan airfield. Corps orders required troops to ride in open gondola cars.[13]

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Chosin Reservoir
Appraisals of the New Enemy

It is understandable that an atmosphere of uncertainty should have enveloped military decisions of this period. With the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the UN command groping their way through a fog of war, division commanders in Korea could not be expected to see very far ahead.

Disconcerting as it had been to have the Chinese appear in the first place, it was even more disturbing to have them break off contact and vanish so inexplicably. Nevertheless, General MacArthur and his staff had a fairly accurate idea of CCF numbers at this time. On 2 November the UN command estimated that 16,500 Chinese Communist soldiers had crossed the Yalu and 450,000 CCF regulars were in Manchuria. Three days later, Major General Charles A. Willoughby's intelligence summary warned that the Chinese had the potential to start a largescale counteroffensive.[14]

General MacArthur, reporting to the United Nations for the first half of November, stated that 12 CCF divisions had been identified in Korea, indicating a total of perhaps 100,000 troops. Nine of these units had appeared on the Eighth Army front and three in the X Corps zone north of Hamhung.

"At the same time," the report continued, "United Nations aerial reconnaissance disclosed heavy troop movements near the border, in Manchuria, and into Korea."[15]

Quite as important as the new enemy's numbers was the question of his intentions. Did the CCF divisions consist merely of so-called volunteers making a demonstration to encourage the beaten NKPA remnants? Or were the Chinese contemplating an all-out military intervention?

President Truman asked JCS on 4 November to obtain from General MacArthur an estimate of the situation.[16] The general's reply stated that it was "impossible to authoritatively appraise the actualities of Chinese Communist intervention in North Korea." He recommended " . . . that a final appraisement should await a more complete accumulation of military facts."[17]

During the next three days the issue of bombing bridges across the Yalu posed a question that has remained a controversial subject ever since. General MacArthur was granted permission, after being at first refused, but cautioned "that extreme care be taken to avoid violation [of] Manchurian territory and airspace."[18]
Click here to view map

In two messages of 7 November, the UN commander confirmed his original appraisal to the effect that the Chinese were not making a full-scale intervention. But he conceded that reinforcements might enable the new enemy to stop the UN advance or even throw it into reverse. He planned a resumption of the initiative, he said, in order to take "accurate measure . . . of enemy strength." And he repeated that the restriction of his bombing operations provided "a complete sanctuary for hostile air immediately upon their crossing of the Manchuria-North Korean border." This factor, he warned, could "assume decisive proportions. . . ."[19]

On this same date, with the wary phase of UN strategy at its height, General Almond flew to Hungnam to confer with General Smith. The X Corps commander still wore another hat as General MacArthur's chief of staff; and though he could not function actively in this position, he kept in close touch with strategic aims at Tokyo. Thus the cautious spirit of the UN commander's messages of 7 November was reflected in Almond's changed viewpoint. Where he had previously urged haste in the X Corps drive to the border, he was now disposed to put on the brakes and carry out that mission with less scattering of forces.

The prospect of a winter campaign was discussed, and the Marine general recommended that only enough territory be held for the security of Hamhung, Hungnam and Wonsan. Almond believed that Hagaru

should also be included, but he agreed that a greater degree of concentration was advisable.[20]

As day after day passed without further CCF contacts of importance, however, operations again took on the character of an occupation rather than a drive which might end in a collision with a powerful new enemy.

X Corps OpnO 6, issued at 2400 on 11 November, called for an advance to the border by I ROK Corps on the right, the 7th Infantry Division in the center and the 1st Marine Division on the left. The 3d Infantry Division, with the 26th ROK Regiment attached, was to have the responsibility for the Wonsan-Yonghung area after relieving elements of the 1st Marine Division; the Marines were directed to take blocking positions at Huksu-ri and Yudam-ni. In the Corps rear, the 1st KMC Regiment (–) had a zone to the south and west of Kojo.

The Marine zone on the Yalu, about 40 miles in width, was approached and bounded by two roads branching off from the Changjin area. One of them ended at Huchanggangu and the other at Singalpajin. From that point the zone of the 7th Infantry Division extended east to Hyesanjin (where the border turns north at a right angle) and thence again eastward to the Hapsu area. I ROK Corps was to operate from the line Hapsu-Chuchonhujang and drive northward along the coast with Chongjin as an objective.[21]

Such a dispersion of forces, depending for supplies on poor secondary roads through wild mountain regions, could hardly have been contemplated if large-scale CCF opposition were expected. As a further indication of renewed confidence, General MacArthur asked informally and indirectly that X Corps do everything possible to assist the Eighth Army in its drive to the Yalu. This request was conveyed in a personal letter of 11 November from General Wright, G–3 of FECOM, to the Corps commander.[22]

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Chosin Reservoir
The Turning Point of 15 November

The date of General Almond's reply, the 15th, is worthy of recognition as a turning point. For it was also the occasion of messages from the UN commander-in-chief and the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division which had an effect on strategy. Indeed, the entire course of the Chosin Reservoir campaign was channeled into new directions as a result of the concepts advanced in these three communications of 15 November 1950.

Obviously the gap of 80 miles separating the Eighth Army from X Corps would have to be reduced before much help could be given by the latter. General Almond replied to General Wright in a letter proposing that X Corps attack to the west of the Chosin Reservoir while also continuing to advance northward in zone to complete its original mission.

That same day, while the letter was en route to Tokyo, General MacArthur came to a far-reaching decision. In a radio message he directed the X Corps commander to develop, as an alternative to OpnO 6, a plan for reorienting his attack to the west on reaching Changjin in order to cut the Chinese MSR, as represented by the Manpojin-Kanggye-Huichon road and rail line.

This was the first indicated change in mission, according to the X Corps command report, since CINCFE's directive late in October calling for a drive to the border. The amendment "was made necessary," the report continued, "by the enemy build-up in front of the Eighth Army and the fact that the enemy action had halted the first attempt . . . to advance Eighth Army to the border. An estimate of the Eighth Army situation . . . fixed the relative combat power as 100,000 UN to 100,000 enemy with UN forces having air superiority and superior artillery support. . . .The enemy was given an offensive capacity which he could implement with an estimated reserve of 140,000 CCF troops north of the Yalu River. In view of the enemy's offensive capacity, Eighth Army adopted a conservative plan to make a general advance with the main effort in the center generally parallel to the enemy MSR (Huichon-Kanggye). This course of action was designed to meet any course of action which might be adopted by the enemy. To assist the Eighth Army advance, X Corps was to initiate a main attack to the West from the Chosin Reservoir area, cutting the enemy MSR at Mupyong-ni, and advance in a northwesterly direction to the Yalu River line at Manpojin."[23]

By a coincidence it was also on Wednesday, 15 November, that General Smith wrote a letter which foreshadowed future military events. Addressed to General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, this communication made it plain that the 1st Marine Division commander and his staff did not share in the renewed optimism as to the course of the UN war effort. Not only did the Marines accept the possibility of imminent and formidable CCF intervention, but they were making preparations to meet it.

"So far our MSR north of Hamhung has not been molested, but there is evidence that this situation will not continue. . . .

"Someone in high authority will have to make up his mind as to what is our goal. My mission is still to advance to the border. The Eighth Army, 80 miles to the southwest, will not attack until the 20th. Manifestly, we should not push on without regard to the Eighth Army. We would simply get further out on a limb. If the Eighth Army push does not go, then the decision will have to be made as to what to do next. I believe a winter campaign in the mountains of North Korea is too much to ask of the American soldier or marine, and I doubt the feasibility of supplying troops in this area during the winter or providing for the evacuation of sick and wounded."

The letter mentioned such preparations as the work done by Marine engineers to strengthen the

Hamhung-Hagaru road for tanks and heavy vehicles. Plans had been approved, added General Smith, for an airstrip at Hagaru capable of landing cargo planes for resupply and casualty evacuation.

He emphasized that he did not mean to be pessimistic. “Our people are doing a creditable job,” he said; “their spirit is fine, and they will continue to do a fine job.” But in conclusion he reiterated his doubts about his “wide open left flank” and his concern over “the prospect of stringing out a Marine division along a single mountain road for 120 air miles from Hamhung to the border.”[24]

General Smith had no more than finished dictating his letter when two Navy officers called at the CP—Rear Admiral Albert K. Morehouse, chief of staff to Admiral Joy, and Captain Norman W. Sears, chief of staff to Admiral Doyle. Both were old acquaintances of the Marine general, who had led the assault landing force on Peleliu in 1944 while Sears commanded an LST group. Smith felt that he could speak frankly, therefore, and expressed his concern over the aspects of the strategic situation he had discussed in the letter.[25]

CinCFE had requested in his message of the 1st that the plan for re-orienting the X Corps attack be submitted to him as an alternative to OpnO 6. General Almond put his staff to work on the 16th, and that same day Draft No. 1, of OpnO Plan 8 was completed. This was a concept of an attack on Kanggye by means of a drive westward from Changjin.[26]

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Changes in X Corps Mission

Almond disapproved the first draft on the grounds that the MSR of the Corps element making the effort would be too far extended. He requested the preparation of a new plan based on the concept of an advance farther south on the Hagaru-Mupyong-ni axis and west of the zone of the 1st Marine Division. The X Corps commander also directed:

(1) That the Hamhung-Hagaru road be developed as a Corps MSR with intensive effort on the part of Corps troops, including Corps engineers;

(2) That an RCT of the 7th Division be assigned the mission of seizing Changjin in order to protect the right flank of the 1st Marine Division.

The Corps commander considered that Changjin and Mupyong-ni were too widely separated as objectives to be assigned to a single division, not to mention the difficult terrain. His staff worked for four days on Draft No. 2 of OpnO Plan 8 before submitting it to him. He accepted it with several modifications and directed that the third draft be taken to Tokyo by Lieutenant Colonel John H. Chiles, the Corps G–3, for presentation to GHQ.

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Marine Preparations for Trouble

General Smith, for his part, lost no time in putting into effect his preparations for trouble in the shape of a formidable CCF attack. The completion of mine clearance at Hungnam had opened that port on 15 November, thus easing the transportation situation. That same day the 7th Marines occupied Hagaru, being greeted by a temperature of four degrees below zero which threatened an early and bleak winter.

Only four days previously, X Corps OpnO No. 6 had directed the 1st Marine Division to take up blocking positions to the west, at Huksu-ri and Yudam-ni, while continuing the northward advance to the Yalu. This meant a further dispersion at a time when Smith hoped to reduce the 163 road miles separating his infantry battalions.

In order to carry out the Corps directives, Division OpnO 21–50 of 13 November assigned the following tasks:

"RCT–1—to seize Huksu-ri;

"RCT–7—to seize Hagaru, and, on order, to seize Yudam-ni;

"RCT–5—to protect the MSR from positions at Majon-dong, Chinhung-ni and Koto-ri, while preparing to pass through RCT–7 in the Hagaru area and advance to Changjin (approximately 40 miles northward);

"Division Reconnaissance Company—to screen the Division right flank by operating in the Soyang-ni–Sinhung valley to the east Division boundary."[27]

In connection with the mission of RCT–7, the words "on order" deserve special notice. For the commanding officer was directed by Smith's oral instructions to take up blocking positions at Toktong Pass, about halfway between Hagaru and Yudam-ni, until additional units of the Division could be moved up to the Hagaru area. In other words, the Division commander believed that the possibilities of large-scale CCF intervention were such as to justify caution in the drive to Yudam-ni.[28]

Not only would the concentration of the Marine units ease General Smith's concern over the tactical situation; it would also greatly simplify the administrative load. Colonel Bowser has commented, "Division was faced with the problem of handling a division scattered from Wonsan and Majon-ni in the south to the heavy engagement of the 7th Mar in the north. Add to this the problem of guerrilla bandits between Wonsan and Hungnam/Hamhung as well as a completely unknown situation to the West, and you have a task of considerable magnitude for any division staff."[29]

RCT–1 was delayed several days by lack of railway facilities in its move 70 miles northward to Chigyong after being relieved in the Wonsan area by the 3d Infantry Division.[30] But most of the other Marine units had been pulled up—a battalion or even a company at a time—as far as the Hungnam area. Along the new MSR north of Hamhung, the column of advance on 15 November consisted of these units:

Hagaru—RCT–7;

Koto-ri—2d Battalion, RCT–5;

Chinhung-ni—3d Battalion, RCT–5; Battery K, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines; Detachment 1st Ordnance Battalion; Detachment 1st Service Battalion; 1st and 2nd Platoons, Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion; Company B (less 3d Platoon), 1st Engineer Battalion;

Majon-dong—1st Battalion RCT–5; Company D, 1st Tank Battalion.

The Division command and staff took a dim view of the possibility of completing "the race to the Yalu" before winter. It was already too late, if sub-zero temperatures were any indication; and preparations must now be

made for tactical and logistical support of a midwinter campaign in the mountains. Among the most essential provisions were the selection of a forward base, the construction of airstrips along the MSR, and the strengthening of the road to make it fit for tanks and heavy vehicles.

Hagaru, at the foot of the Chosin Reservoir, had been recommended by General Craig as the best location for a forward base when he visited here on the 15th. The commanding generals of the Division and Wing arrived for a tour of inspection the next day. General Harris made the trip at the express request of General Almond, who believed that a strip long enough to land R4Ds was necessary to insure resupply and casualty evacuation in a midwinter emergency. One of the few comparatively flat pieces of real estate in northeast Korea was found just south of the town. The black loam promised to make a hard surface in freezing weather, so that the prevailing arctic temperatures offered at least one consolation.[31]

An OY strip had been completed on 13 November at Koto-ri, but heavier engineer equipment was needed at Hagaru. Before it could be brought forward, the road from Chinhung-ni to Koto-ri required strengthening and widening. This task had already been assigned to Lieutenant Colonel Partridge, commanding the 1st Engineer Battalion. After a survey by jeep, he decided to begin operations at the highest point of the one-way dirt road.

“By working down,” he explained, “we could first of all provide for what we considered to be a dangerous accumulation of snow, and the problem of land slides. . . . The work on the road involved a good bit of drainage in order to insure that the melting snows from day to day during the sunlight hours would not filter across and destroy the road bed. It involved demolitions and drilling and a good deal of dozer and grader work.”[32]

Enough progress had been made by 18 November so that armor could be sent forward to support RCT–7. Only the day before, the 1st Tank Battalion had begun functioning with its Headquarters and Service Companies at Soyang-ni, eight miles northwest of Hamhung. The road between Chinhung-ni and Koto-ri was still impassable for M–26 (Pershing) tanks until the engineers could widen some of the turns. But Lieutenant Colonel Harry T. Milne, the battalion commander, organized a provisional tank platoon consisting of two M4A3 (Sherman) tanks from Headquarters Company and four dozer tanks from Company D at Majon-dong. They proceeded without incident on the 18th to Hagaru, operating as a gun platoon.[33]

Opening the mountain road to heavy traffic made it possible on the 18th to begin work on the Hagaru airstrip. Five large dozers with pans of eight cubic yards capacity arrived at the site the next day, and Company D of the 1st Engineer Battalion tackled the job of hacking out a runway from ground frozen as hard as granite. Plans called for a cut of 90,000 cubic yards and a fill of 60,000 for a 3200-foot runway. The rub was that engineering field manuals prescribed a runway of 3600 feet for R4Ds or C–47s at sea level, plus an additional 1000 feet for each 1000 feet of altitude. And since Hagaru was about 4000 feet above sea level, it could only be hoped that pilots were right in estimating that a strip of 3000 to 4500 feet might do in a pinch.[34]

The 19th also dated the establishment of the Supply Regulating Station at Hagaru for the purpose of building up stockpiles. Prior to this time, the 1st Service and 1st Ordnance Battalions had been in charge of division dumps at Hamhung. Supplies arrived by rail after being unloaded from the ships at Wonsan by the 1st Shore Party Battalion and the 1st Combat Service Group.

The completion of mine clearance made it possible to order the latter organization to Hungnam by sea to operate in-transit depots for X Corps. Practically all Division supplies were soon being received by sea at this port, where the 1st Combat Service Group separated the incoming cargo into proper classifications and forwarded it to the dumps at Hamhung. Port operation was the responsibility of the 2d Engineer Special Brigade, USA. After the project got into full swing, from 2000 to 2500 Korean laborers were employed at Hungnam and as many as 6000 tons of cargo unloaded in 24 hours.[35]

A limited amount of rolling stock was available for the narrow-gauge railway from Hungnam to

Chinhung-ni. But it was up to the Marines to put the line back into operation, for the X Corps Railway Transportation Section already had its hands full with the Wonsan-Hamhung route. The 1st Service Battalion was authorized to make the attempt, and enough Korean crews were rounded up to operate the trains. Chinhung-ni thus became the railhead for supplies trucked the rest of the way to Hagaru.[36]

Preparations were also made for large-scale casualty evacuation to the Division hospital at Hungnam. H&S, A and B Companies of the 1st Medical Battalion remained there to set up the Division hospital while D, C and E Companies were attached to RCTs 1, 5 and 7 respectively. As the Division center of gravity shifted northward, medical officers foresaw the need of a hospital-type facility at Hagaru in addition to the clearing stations contemplated at Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni. Plans were approved, therefore, for Companies C and E to pool their resources at Hagaru and establish a medical supply dump. Additional surgical teams were to be flown to Hagaru in an emergency by Companies A and B from the hospital at Hungnam.

Meanwhile the hospital ship *Consolation*, commanded by Captain John W. McElroy, USNR, prepared to move from Wonsan to Hungnam. There the Division hospital had been enlarged to 400 beds, and an additional 100 to 150 were planned for the new annex at Hamhung. In order to speed up casualty evacuation, several heated railway cars were equipped for that purpose on the 35-mile narrow-gauge line from Chinhung-ni.[37]

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Supplies Trucked to Hagaru

Provisions for the advance of RCT–5 east of the Chosin Reservoir were included in Division OpnO 22–50, issued at 0800 on 17 November. As a preliminary, RCT–7 was given a two-fold mission: (1) to protect the Division left flank between Hagaru and Yudam-ni with a minimum of a battalion; and (2) to relieve elements of RCT–5 and protect the MSR in zone from positions in the vicinity of Hagaru, Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni.

RCT–5 was assigned these missions: (1) to pass a minimum of a battalion through RCT–7 at Hagaru; (2) to move up the east side of the Chosin Reservoir and seize Sinhung-ni, about 7 miles northeast of Hagaru; and (3), on order, to seize the road junction at Kyolmul-ni, some 20 miles north of Hagaru.

Division Reconnaissance Company was to screen the left flank of the MSR in the vicinity of Majon-dong, and the 11th Marines to maintain its 4th Battalion in that area prepared for employment in the north on order.

OpnO 22–50 directed the Supply Regulating Detachment (1) to establish a truckhead at Hagaru after taking over and consolidating the dumps of RCT–7; (2) to control traffic between Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni; and (3) to support RCTs 5 and 7, with priority to RCT–5. The following supply levels were fixed:

Classes I and III, five days;

Class V, 1 Unit of fire;

Classes II and IV, as required for all troops operating to the north and west of Koto-ri.[38]

Although the advance westward to Huksu-ri remained the mission of RCT–1, the shortage of rail and motor transport slowed the movement from Wonsan to Chigyong. The last elements had not arrived on the 18th when Corps asked and received the consent of Division to the employment of the 26th ROK Regiment for the attack on Huksu-ri, with the understanding that the objective would be turned over to RCT–1 at a later date. On the morning of the 19th the ROK unit left Chigyong to execute its mission.[39]

Two days later RCT–1 was relieved of this responsibility when Corps verbally notified Division that Huksu-ri had been placed within the modified boundary of the 3d Infantry Division. This was confirmed the next day by X Corps OI 17, which also directed the Division to establish blocking positions at Yudam-ni.[40]

Up to this time General Smith had not been able to make much progress toward Yudam-ni without dispersing his units to an extent which he regarded as imprudent. But with the availability of RCT–1 to occupy positions on the MSR behind the other two infantry regiments, he could now push ahead.

As an added factor, the 1st Marine Division had just acquired a new unit. Early in November Admiral Joy had inquired if General Smith could use the 41st Independent Commando, Royal Marines. This British unit of 14 officers and 221 enlisted men, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas B. Drysdale, and attached to ComNavFE in Japan, had requested service with the U.S. Marines. Smith replied that he would be glad to have these fine troops. Highly trained in reconnaissance, they could operate with the Division Reconnaissance Company in protecting the flank of the Marine advance. The British Marines arrived at Hungnam on the 20th and reported to the 1st Marine Division.[41]

Division OpnO 23–50, issued at 0800 on the 23d, directed the Commandos to locate and destroy enemy forces on the left flank, ranging as far as 13 miles west of Koto-ri. It was hoped that the British unit and the Division Reconnaissance Company might flush out CCF troops beyond the reach of routine infantry patrols. Other tasks assigned to elements of the Division were as follows:

"RCT–7—to seize Yudam-ni and maintain one battalion in that position;

"RCT–5—to seize Kyolmul-li (20 miles north of Hagaru) and be prepared to seize Toksil-li (10 miles northwest of Kyolmul-li) and Tuan-di (15 miles northeast of Kyolmul-li) on order;

"RCT–1—to relieve elements of RCT–7 in the vicinity of Hagaru and Koto-ri and protect the Division MSR from positions in the vicinity of Hagaru, Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni;

"1st Tank Battalion (less detachments)—to protect the MSR from positions in the vicinity of Majon-dong and Soyang-ni;

"1st Engineer Battalion—to support Division operations with priority to the maintenance of the MSR and construction of the airfield at Hagaru."

OpnO 23–50 also provided that the Supply Regulating Station Detachment continue operation of the truckhead at Hagaru and stock supplies at the following levels: Classes I and III, 8 days; Classes II and IV, as required; and Class V, one and one-third U/F for all troops operating to the north and west of Chinhung-ni.[42]

The trucking facilities of the Division had been strained to the limit ever since the Wonsan landing. Shortly afterwards the bulk of the 7th Motor transport Battalion was taken under the operational control of X Corps, and it became necessary to attach the 1st Motor Transport Battalion to RCT–7. On 19 November, however, the 1st MT (less detachments) had passed to the control of the 1st Supply Regulating Detachment at Hagaru. There the truckers not only built up the stockpile of supplies but rendered the best support that units of the division had known so far along the MSR.[43]

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Confidence of UN Command

General MacArthur did not appear to be shaken by EUSAK G–2 reports during the third week of November which called attention to a formidable CCF build-up on both sides of the Yalu. On the contrary, a UN order of the 20th, giving directions for the conduct of troops at the border, indicated that an occupation rather than a fight was expected:

"Elements of minimum size only will be advanced to the immediate vicinity of the geographical boundary of Korea. No troops or vehicles will go beyond the boundary between Korea and Manchuria, or between Korea and the USSR, nor will fire be exchanged with, or air strikes be requested on forces north of the northern boundary of Korea. Rigid control of troop movements in vicinity of northern boundary will be exercised. *Damage, destruction or disruption of service of power plants will be avoided.* No personnel, military or civilian, will be permitted to enter or leave Korea via the Manchurian or USSR border. Commanders will insure that the sanctity of the international border is meticulously preserved."[44]

The italicized sentence emphasizes an assumption which had made converts in high State Department as well as Defense circles in Washington. The Chinese, according to this conjecture, were concerned chiefly with defending their Manchurian frontier and guarding the power complexes along the Yalu. As evidence, it was pointed out that early in November the Sinuiju radio described the CCF troops crossing the river as a "volunteer corps" for the protection of the hydro-electric plants along the Yalu serving Mukden, Dairen and Port Arthur. Proceeding from this premise, it was a logical conclusion that if no provocation were given these forces, a large-scale fight might be avoided.[45]

General MacArthur, after receiving a qualified permission to bomb the Yalu bridges, had enjoined UN airmen not to violate territory or air space on the other side of the river. This meant that the bomber crews must take much greater risks, since their restricted axes of approach and flight paths were known to enemy antiaircraft gunners in advance. Moreover, CCF jet fighters could attack and retire to the sanctuary of Manchuria when hard-pressed.[46]

Despite these handicaps, Air Force and Navy bombers knocked out four of the twelve international bridges and damaged most of the others. These efforts doubtless imposed delays, but troops and supplies continued to cross throughout November.[47] After arrival in North Korea, they seemed to vanish into that void of mystery which had swallowed up Chinese Communist troops ever since they broke off contact.

Students of history may have recalled at this time that one of the most significant engagements of modern history was known as the Battle of the Yalu. From a tactical viewpoint, to be sure, the clash of 30 April 1904 was not a great affair. The Japanese army, after disembarking at Chemulpo (Inchon) and marching up the Korean peninsula, numbered five times the Russian force which opposed the crossing of the Yalu at Uiji, just east of Sinuiju. A Japanese victory was doubtless to be expected, yet a new page of history had opened. For the first time in modern chronicles, an Asiatic army had successfully challenged a European army with the weapons and tactics of the Machine Age.

Now, nearly half a century later, history was repeating itself as another Asiatic army crossed the Yalu with unknown capabilities and intentions. If the Chinese Communists were merely sending a force to guard the hydro-electric complexes and frontier, hopes of peace by Christmas might be realized. But if the invaders were secretly massing for an all-out counter-offensive, a great new war might soon be flaming up from the ashes of the old.

Little fault can be found with current G–2 estimates of CCF numbers, which hold up surprisingly well even when viewed with the wisdom of hindsight. Quite as much depended on interpretations of CCF intentions by the UN command, and there can be no doubt that an end-of-the-war atmosphere prevailed on the eve of the Eighth Army offensive of 24 November.

Thanksgiving Day, which fell on the 23d, was celebrated both in Korea and the United States in a spirit of rejoicing over a victorious peace which seemed almost within grasp. It was a tribute to American bounty as well as organizational genius that the troops in Korea were served a dinner which would have done credit to a first-rate Stateside restaurant. The menu, as proposed by X Corps to component units, included shrimp cocktail, stuffed olives, roast young tom turkey with cranberry sauce, candied sweet potatoes, fruit salad, fruit cake, mince pie and coffee.[48]

As an item of good news for this Thanksgiving, it was learned the day before that the 17th Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division had reached the Yalu at Hyesanjin. Not a single Chinese soldier had been encountered by troops who had troubles enough with sub-zero temperatures and mountain roads.[49]

Since the first week of November, in fact, there had been no clashes of any importance with the invaders from Red China. On the 24th, as usual, the front was quiet everywhere except for minor patrol contacts. Yet this was the D-day of the great Eighth Army offensive, and the stirring communique of the commander-in-chief was read to all troops in Korea. It was a message in the bold spirit of Inchon, and no one could doubt the confidence of the UN command after hearing these words:

"The United Nations massive compression envelopment in North Korea against the new Red Armies operating there is now approaching its decisive effort. The isolating component of the pincer, our air forces of all types, have for the past three weeks, in a sustained attack of model coordination and effectiveness, successfully interdicted enemy lines of support from the north so that further reinforcement therefrom has been sharply curtailed and essential supplies markedly limited. The eastern sector of the pincer, with noteworthy and effective naval support, has now reached commanding enveloping position, cutting in two the northern reaches of the enemy's geographical potential. This morning the western sector of the pincer moves forward in general assault in an effort to complete the compression and close the vise. If successful, this should for all practical purposes end the war, restore peace and unity to Korea, enable the prompt withdrawal of United Nations military forces, and permit the complete assumption by the Korean people and nation of full sovereignty and international equality. It is that for which we fight."

/s/ DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, General of the Army, United States Army, Commander-in-Chief"[50]

Eighth Army troops found it something of an anticlimax, after this message, to jump off without meeting any large-scale opposition. General MacArthur, who flew to the front for the occasion, watched from his plane as the UN columns moved out unmolested, as if conducting a motor march.

"The Army offensive began, as scheduled, at 1000 hours on 24 November," said the EUSAK report. "Since for some time there had been little contact with enemy forces the advance of EUSAK elements was in the nature of a meeting engagement, with little or no resistance in the initial stage. Across the Eighth Army front as a whole, advances were made from 4000 to 16,000 yards."[51]

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Marine Concentration on MSR

On this same day Lieutenant Colonel Chiles presented X Corps OpnPlan 8, Draft 3, at Tokyo. It was approved at UNC Headquarters with only one modification—the shifting of the proposed boundary between X Corps and Eighth Army farther to the south in the zone of the 1st Marine Division.

This plan was the basis of X Corps OpnO 7. Issued on the 25th, it provided for a reorientation of the X Corps attack to provide more assistance for Eighth Army. H-hour was to be 0800 on the 27th, and the principal units of X Corps were assigned these tasks:

"1st Marine Division—to seize Mupyong-ni and advance to the Yalu;

"7th Infantry Division—(1) to attack from east side of Chosin Reservoir and advance to Yalu in zone; (2) to secure Pungsan area, coordinating with 1 ROK Corps;

"1 ROK Corps—to advance from Hapsu and Chongjin areas, destroying enemy in zone to north boundary of Korea;

"3rd Infantry Division—(1) to gain and maintain contact with the right flank of Eighth Army in zone; (2) to protect the left flank of X Corps; (3) to support the 1st Marine Division on X Corps order; (4) to protect harbor and airfield at Wonsan; (5) to destroy enemy guerrillas in zone."[52]

A Corps warning order, issued on the evening of the 24th, was supplemented by a briefing session at Corps Headquarters at 1000 the next morning. General Smith learned that his division was to be the northern arm of the pincers in the "massive compression envelopment" while the 7th Infantry Division took over the previous Marine mission of advancing east of the Chosin Reservoir to the Yalu.[53]

The new Marine boundary cut across Korea to the north of Eighth Army. From Yudam-ni the Marine route of advance led to Mupyong-ni 55 miles to the west. This objective was about halfway between Huichon in the south and Kanggye in the north (see map, Page 130). From the latter, which was believed to be the assembly area of the NKPA remnants, a good road led about 40 miles north to Manpojin on the Yalu.

In accordance with Corps OpnO 7, the rear boundary of the 1st Marine Division had been moved north to a line just south of Hagaru. The 3d Infantry Division had the responsibility for the area south of Hagaru, but this unit had so many other commitments that it could assign few troops to the task. General Smith was granted permission, therefore, to retain garrisons at Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni. This left the 3d Infantry Division responsible for the protection of the MSR from Sudong southward to Hamhung.[54]

Corps OpnO 7, in short, provided for a wide envelopment to be spearheaded by the 1st Marine Division on 27 November. The other arm of the pincers, of course, was to be the Eighth Army; but on the evening of the 25th came the disturbing news that its right wing, the II ROK Corps, had been hurled back by a surprise CCF counterstroke. This reverse took place in the vicinity of Tokchon, about 70 air miles southwest of Yudam-ni.[55]

EUSAK intelligence reports, as it proved, were not far off the mark in estimating enemy strength on the Eighth Army front at 149,741 troops at this time.[56] During the past few days, however, estimates of probable enemy courses of action had been so reassuring as to justify the confidence of CinCFE's communique on D-day. Even the setback of the 25th was not regarded as alarming.

"With the possible exception of the relatively vague situation on the east flank," said the next day's G–2 report, "the enemy reaction to the EUSAK attack has been one of active defense with local counterattacks in strength." The enemy's probable course of action was believed to be "an active defense in depth along present lines employing strong local counterattacks in conjunction with continued guerrilla activities with bypassed units;

limited air activity; and further reinforcement by CCF or USSR forces."[57]

On the X Corps front the reorientation of the attack to the west gave General Smith a long-sought opportunity to collect his dispersed units and achieve a relative degree of concentration. The release of RCT–1 from its Huksu-ri mission made it possible to bring that infantry regiment up behind the other two. This move in turn enabled RCT–5 to advance east of the Chosin Reservoir and RCT–7 to push on to Yudam-ni.

Progress might have been more rapid for all units if adequate transportation had been available for RCT–1 in the Chigyong area. Only by using vehicles of the 11th Marines was it possible to move 1/1 to Chinhung-ni, where it relieved the 3d Battalion of the 5th Marines on 23 November. During the next two days the 2d Battalion and RCT–1 Headquarters relieved 2/5 at Koto-ri. After the return of the vehicles, 3/1 (less Company G, left behind for lack of trucks) was lifted to Hagaru on the 26th to relieve the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines.[58]

All three battalions of RCT–5 were operating east of the Chosin Reservoir by 24 November. Until supply levels were built up at Hagaru, however, General Smith kept a careful check on the advance in this quarter. The farthest penetration took place on the 25th when a platoon-size patrol of 3/5, reinforced by two tanks, drove nearly to the northern end of the Reservoir. Scattered enemy groups were flushed out and an abandoned 75mm gun destroyed after a pursuit resulting in five Chinese killed and one captured. This was one of the few encounters in an area combed by patrols from all three battalions, and no signs of large-scale enemy activity were reported by Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Taplett, CO of 3/5, after a helicopter reconnaissance.[59]

Meanwhile RCT–7 began its move to Yudam-ni. This objective had first been mentioned as early as 11 November in X Corps OpnO 6. But until RCT–1 could be brought up to the MSR, the Division Commander limited the advance to the vicinity of Toktong Pass. There an estimated 150 to 200 enemy resisted with machine-gun fire but were scattered with the aid of air strikes and artillery support.

On the 23d, in accordance with Division OpnO 23-50, the 1st Battalion led the advance of RCT-7. During the next two days Lieutenant Colonel Davis's reinforced battalion methodically cleared booby-trapped but undefended road blocks and scattered small groups of enemy along the route. The men of 1/7 belatedly celebrated Thanksgiving on the 24th with a full, hot turkey dinner—their last full meal for 17 days—and seized battered Yudam-ni the next day against negligible resistance.[60] The 3d Battalion, regimental headquarters, and 3/11 (–) followed.

Marine operations east of the Chosin Reservoir came to an end at 1200 on the 25th with the relief of RCT–5 by the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, 7th Infantry Division. Corps orders called for this unit to remain under operational control of the 1st Marine Division until the assumption of command in the area by the CO, 31st Infantry. All elements of RCT–5 were to be relieved by the following noon for the mission of advancing to Yudam-ni and then passing through RCT–7 to lead the attack toward Mupyong-ni.[61]

This was in accordance with Division OpnO 24–50, issued at 0800 on the 26th to implement the provisions of Corps OpnO 7. The jump-off was to be at 0800 on 27 November, with the first objective the road junction at Yongnim-dong (27 road miles west of Yudam-ni), in preparation for further advance on order to the high ground about one mile south of Kogae-gol and 35 miles west of Yudam-ni. Other provisions of OpnO 24–50 were as follows:

"RCT–7—to seize and secure Yudam-ni without delay, and when passed through by RCT–5, to protect the Division MSR from Sinhung-ni (7 miles west of Hagaru) to Yudam-ni;

"RCT–5—to pass through RCT–7 west of Yudam-ni by 0800, 27 November, advance to the west and seize first objective, prepared for further advance;

"RCT–1—in Division reserve, to occupy positions in the vicinity of Chinhung-ni, Koto-ri and Hagaru for the protection of the MSR;

"11th Marines—less detachments, to provide general support from positions in the vicinity of Yudam-ni;

"41st Commando—reinforced, to move to Yudam-ni prepared for operations to the southwest to protect

Division left flank;

"Reconnaissance Company—to move to Yudam-ni and reconnoiter to the north in co-ordination with operations of RCT–7."[62]

General Smith, flying by helicopter from Hungnam to Yudam-ni on the morning of the 26th, could survey the MSR below him and reflect with satisfaction that it was now easier to count the Marine outfits south of Chinhung-ni than those to the north. These included the 1st Tank Battalion with the exception of the provisional platoon at Hagaru and the 2d Platoon of Company D at Chinhung-ni. Transportation had not yet been provided for the 41st Commando, but the new unit was scheduled to move up in convoy on the 28th with Headquarters Battalion when the Division CP displaced from Hungham to Hagaru. By that time only service units and a few platoons of tanks and engineers would be left in the rear area.

At Hagaru the C–47 airstrip was taking shape as the dozers hacked away at the frozen earth night and day, working under flood lights in the darkness. Companies C and E of the 1st Medical Battalion had set up clearing stations and built up dumps of medical supplies. Troop units at Hagaru and Yudam-ni had two days' supplies of rations and fuel, but only a unit of fire was stockpiled at Hagaru in addition to the half unit carried by the troops.

Marine motor columns were winding along the narrow, twisting mountain road from Hagaru to Yudam-ni in preparation for the attack in the morning. Upon arrival at Lieutenant Colonel Davis's 1/7 CP, General Smith learned to his discomfort that the hovering ability of a rotary-wing aircraft is curtailed at high altitudes. The helicopter dropped like a stone the last ten feet, but fortunately no injury resulted to passenger, pilot or machine.[63]

On the 26th intelligence arrived at Hamhung from the 7th Marines, reporting capture of three soldiers from the 60th CCF Division. They asserted that the 58th, 59th, and 60th Divisions of the 20th CCF Army had reached the Yudam-ni area on the 20th. According to these enlisted men, Chinese strategy envisioned a move south and southeast from Yudam-ni to cut the MSR after two Marine regiments passed.[64]

X Corps had received similar reports of Chinese movement southeast from Yudam-ni as well as air reports of enemy activity north and northeast of the Chosin Reservoir. Six Chinese divisions had now been identified in northeast Korea but both Corps and Division intelligence estimates of probable enemy action continued to be optimistic. Although Chinese attacks on the division's MSR or along the Huichon-Huksu-ri-Hamhung axis were not ruled out, G–2 officers seemed to consider a continued westward withdrawal more likely.[65]

Division planning went ahead on the assumption of commander and staff that the enemy would be met in strength in the mountainous country west of Yudam-ni. This was the basis for the decision to pass the relatively fresh 5th Marines through the 7th for the attack westward.[66]

It was a cold, clear Sunday afternoon when General Smith returned to Hungnam. From his helicopter he could see for several miles on either side, and no signs of enemy activity were discerned in the snow-clad hills. After his arrival at the Division CP, however, the Marine general was informed that the situation had gone from bad to worse in west Korea. The II ROK Corps on the right flank had disintegrated on the 26th under a second day's heavy blows, thus exposing the 2d Infantry Divisions and Turkish Brigade to flank attack. In short, the Eighth Army offensive had been brought to a standstill before the Marines could jump off in the morning as the other arm of the United Nations envelopment.

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Chapter 8. Crisis at Yudam-ni

THE 2D BATTALION, vanguard of the 5th Marines, completed its move from the east coast of the Chosin Reservoir to Yudam-ni during the afternoon and evening of 26 November. After deploying his command south of the village, Lieutenant Colonel Roise and his S-3, Major Theodore F. Spiker, made a reconnaissance in preparation for the next day's attack.[1]

Yudam-ni lies in the center of a broad valley surrounded by five great ridges, named in relation to their direction from the village: North, Northwest, Southwest, South, and Southeast. Beginning at the rim of the valley, each of these ridges extends several thousand yards and includes many peaks, spurs, and draws, certain of which took on special significance as the crisis at Yudam-ni unfolded.

Click here to view map

A finger of the Chosin Reservoir reaches toward Yudam-ni in the valley between North and Southeast Ridges. The other four corridors radiating from the valley are highway routes. Lieutenant Colonel Roise surveyed the westerly road, which leaves Yudam-ni between Northwest and Southwest Ridges. His assigned objective encompassed distant spurs of these heights, bordering the road about a mile and a half west of the village.[2]

The 7th Marines (-) was disposed in perimeter around Yudam-ni on terminal hills of four of the five ridges: D and E Companies (attached to 1/7) on North Ridge, 3/7 on Southwest, and 1/7 on South and Southeast.[3] Since the high ground occupied by 3/7 overlooked the route of attack and Roise's objective, Colonel Litzenberg[4] later in the day specified a new destination for 2/5, a pass ten miles west of Yudam-ni. It was a big order, but Litzenberg's troops would support the 5th Marines' outfit by making limited advances along the skylines of Northwest and Southwest Ridges. With this protection on his flanks initially, Roise could concentrate more strength for the drive through the low ground.[5]

Nightfall of 26 November was accompanied by an abrupt temperature drop to zero degrees Fahrenheit. The north wind screamed across the frozen reservoir and lashed the Marines on the valley floor and hillsides around Yudam-ni. At 2200, a group of half-frozen company commanders gathered within the flapping walls of Roise's blackout tent to receive their orders. The attack was to start at 0800 the next morning, with 2/5 passing through the 7th Marines in a column of companies. Recoilless rifles and 4.2-inch mortars of the 5th Marines would support the advance, along with First Lieutenant Wayne E. Richards' 2d Platoon of Able Company Engineers. Two Corsairs of VMF-312 and a spotter plane from VMO-6 were to provide aerial reconnaissance and close air support.[6]

In other wind-blown tents, 7th Regiment officers learned of their missions as assigned by Colonel Litzenberg. The 3d Battalion would move farther along the crest of Southwest Ridge on 27 November and also seize the terminal peak, Hill 1403, of Northwest Ridge across the MSR, in order to support 2/5's attack more effectively. Dog and Easy Companies were to patrol North Ridge and the west coast of the Reservoir, while 1/7 scouted both South and Southeast Ridges and their adjoining corridors. Particular attention would be paid to the valley running southward between these hill masses, for therein lay the vital road to Hagaru.[7]

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Chapter 8. Crisis at Yudam-ni
Marine Attack on 27 November

The Yudam-ni perimeter was quiet throughout the long, frigid night of 26-27 November. At dawn the basin and hillsides came alive with parka-clad figures stamping and clapping life back into leaden limbs. Gradually they began to cluster around small fires to thaw out the morning rations and their weapons.

Companies G and H of 3/7 jumped off in the attack at 0815, the former to extend the foothold on Southwest Ridge, the latter to seize Hill 1403, terminal height of Northwest Ridge. Led by Captain Leroy M. Cooke, How Company advanced unopposed and secured its objective by midmorning.[8] Captain Cooney's Company G moved rapidly 1200 yards along the crest of Southwest Ridge and occupied a commanding peak, Hill 1426, at 0845 without meeting opposition. But when Cooney resumed the advance, his troops almost immediately came under fire from enemy positions on another peak 500 yards away.[9]

During 3/7's operations on the high ground the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, had marched out of Yudam-ni and launched the main attack along the road. Company F, under Captain Uel D. Peters, led 2/5 as it passed beneath the steep walls of Southwest and Northwest Ridges. The first objective was a long spur of the latter height, 500 yards across a draw from the 7th Marines on Hill 1403. Approaching the mouth of the draw on the right of the road, Fox Company was hit by long-range small-arms fire from enemy emplacements on the objective. About the same time, 0935, a message from the VMO-6 spotter plane told of CCF positions all across the front. Captain Peters held up momentarily to appraise the situation, and engineers moving behind his outfit began to clear the first of nine unmanned enemy roadblocks that obstructed the MSR.
Click here to view map

According to plan, Company F ascended part way up the slopes of Hill 1403 and then advanced across the front of the 7th Marines to the head of the long draw that set off the Communist-held spur. Simultaneously, 4.2-inch and 81mm mortar crews positioned their weapons along the road to support this envelopment. The flatlands south of Yudam-ni trembled as the 105mm howitzers of Lieutenant Colonel Harvey A. Feehan's 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, opened up at 1015 with a 15-minute preparation.[10]

While Company F moved overland to strike at the left (north) flank of the CCF position, Captain Samuel S. Smith's Dog Company edged forward along the MSR to the mouth of the draw. Like the earlier unit, it was met by a hail of bullets. The regimental 4.2-inch mortars opened fire on the crest of the spur, and recoilless rifles slammed 75mm shells into bunkers just now sighted on the forward slopes. At 1115, after ground supporting arms had partially neutralized the CCF positions, Corsairs of VMF-312 blasted the objective with rockets and bombs.

In the wake of the air strike, First Lieutenant Gerald J. McLaughlin led Fox Company's 1st Platoon against the enemy's north flank, the rest of the company supporting the assault by fire from Hill 1403. Most of the Chinese defenders fled to the west, and McLaughlin's troops cleared the northern half of the spur by 1300, capturing three Red soldiers. The 2d Platoon, commanded by Second Lieutenant Donald J. Krabbe, then passed through to secure the southern half, overlooking the road. Although the attackers encountered only negligible local resistance, they were slowed by heavy machine-gun fire sweeping in from a peak 1000 yards farther west.

During Company F's action on the high ground, Dog Company filed around the road bend at the south end of the spur and moved toward a valley junction a few hundred yards away. This fork is dominated by Sakkat Mountain to the west; and the Chinese, in order to block the Marine advance, had dug tiers of entrenchments on the eastern slopes of the massive height. Frontal fire from these positions converged on Company D's column. Faced by such formidable resistance and terrain Lieutenant Colonel Roise discontinued the attack. At 1430 he

ordered Fox Company to set up on Northwest Ridge for the night, and Dog to deploy defensively across the MSR on a spur of Southwest Ridge.

On the crest of the latter, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, had found progress increasingly costly during the afternoon of 27 November. The peak beyond Hill 1426 was occupied by Company G at 1500,[11] bringing that unit on line with Dog Company of 2/5 in the low ground to the north. Like the 5th Marines' outfit, Company G was now confronted with the broad crescent of CCF fortifications buttressed by the defensive complex on Sakkat Mountain. Machine-gun barrages drove the 7th Marines' unit off the hilltop, and Company I of 3/7 rushed forward from the high ground overlooking Yudam-ni to add its firepower in support. Baker Company of 1/7, on patrol in the valley between Southwest and South Ridges, ascended into the bullet-swept zone at 1230 to help out. When it became heavily engaged, elements of Company C were ordered forward from the Yudam-ni vicinity as reinforcement. Thus parts of three battalions, 2/5, 3/7, and 1/7, felt the storm of steel and lead on Southwest Ridge throughout the afternoon.

While fighting raged in an arc from south to west on the 27th, another danger area was discovered to the north and northeast, completing a vast semicircle of known CCF concentrations in proximity to Yudam-ni. A patrol from Company D of 2/7, moving over North Ridge along the west coast of the reservoir, ran into heavy machine-gun and mortar fire about 4000 yards from the village. Marine air struck at the entrenchments of an estimated enemy company, and at 1645 the patrol withdrew with several casualties to Company D's lines on the southern tip of North Ridge.

At dusk on the 27th a general calm settled over Yudam-ni, broken only occasionally by scattered exchanges of small-arms fire. The main Marine attack had netted about 1500 yards, placing 2/5 on the objective originally assigned by the regimental commander, Lieutenant Colonel Murray. That the Chinese did not allow this battalion to advance three more miles, to its new objective and into hopeless entrapment, seems inconsistent in view of the CCF plans for the night of 27-28 November. The auxiliary attack by 3/7 won 1200 more yards of the crest of Southwest Ridge, and the occupation of Hill 1403 by How Company of that battalion represented a gain of about 2000.

In a few hours, the Marines would give thanks that their successes on 27 November had been modest ones.

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Chapter 8. Crisis at Yudam-ni
Marine Dispositions Before CCF Attack

The units of Yudam-ni will be listed counter-clockwise, beginning with those on North Ridge, according to the positions they occupied around the perimeter on the night of 27-28 November. North Ridge, bounded on the east by the reservoir and on the west by the valley separating Northwest Ridge, lay closest to the village and was therefore of immediate tactical importance. Facing this hill mass from Yudam-ni, one sees four distinct terminal heights: Hill 1167 on the right, Hills 1240 and 1282 in the center, and the giant spur of Hill 1384 on the left. Companies D and E of the 7th Marines, occupied Hills 1240 and 1282 respectively. Since the combined front of these two units was a mile wide, they concentrated on their assigned hilltops and relied on periodic patrols to span the gaping, 500-yard saddle between. Although both flanks of each company dangled "in the air," they were backed by two-thirds of the 5th Marine Regiment in the valley of Yudam-ni.[12]

The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, had arrived from the east coast of the Chosin Reservoir at noon on the 27th, while the attacks to the west were in full progress. Lieutenant Colonel Taplett placed his unit in an assembly area at the base of North Ridge, beneath the large, unoccupied spur leading to Hill 1384. The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, did not complete its move to Yudam-ni from the east side of the reservoir until after dark. Lieutenant Colonel John W. Stevens, II, secured for the night in the valley below Hills 1282 and 1240; and with Taplett's nearby command, 1/5 thus comprised a formidable reserve behind the thin high-ground defenses of Companies D and E of 2/7.

To the left of North Ridge, going round the clock, Company H of 3/7 dug in on the crest of Hill 1403, terminal height of Northwest Ridge. Farther to the left, in the broad draw through which Company F had earlier enveloped the CCF-held spur, Company E of 2/5 took up strong blocking positions. The latter unit was not tied in with the 7th Marines' troops on Hill 1403, there being a steep and rugged gap of about 200 yards on the intervening hillside. Easy Company's line extended up the left side of the draw and connected with Fox's on the northern tip of the newly won spur. Company F manned the remainder of that finger of high ground, its left flank overlooking the road separating Southwest Ridge.

As mentioned before, Company D, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, occupied a finger of Southwest Ridge jutting out toward the road and directly opposite Fox Company's spur. To the left, but beyond physical contact, Companies G and I of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, defended the topographical crest of Southwest Ridge. As an example of altitudes and distances involved around the perimeter, the latter company, perched atop Hill 1426 (meters), sat 1200 feet above the valley floor at Yudam-ni[13] and at a lineal distance of a mile and a half from the village. To its left rear, 2000 yards away on the same hill mass, Company A of 1/7 defended a terminal peak, Hill 1294, overlooking the broad valley separating South Ridge. A platoon of Company C, 1/7, was deployed on the valley floor to block that avenue into Marine artillery positions.

South Ridge, capped by a conical peak jutting 1600 feet skyward, points at Yudam-ni and the reservoir like a great arrowhead. Company B of 1/7, after returning from the active patrol mentioned earlier, entrenched on the tip, Hill 1276, to cover the deep gorge between South and Southeast Ridges. In this narrow ribbon of low ground, the MSR from Yudam-ni travels southward four miles before turning abruptly east into Toktong Pass. Company C of 1/7, less one platoon, occupied a spur of Southeast Ridge near the sharp turn—three miles from the Valley of Yudam-ni and five from the village itself.

Even farther out on a tactical limb was Fox Company of 2/7, which had departed Hagaru at noon on 27 November[14] to take up hilltop positions in the center of Toktong Pass. Its mission, like that of Company C, was

to guard the vulnerable MSR between Hagaru and Yudam-ni. But it was seven miles from the friendly perimeter at Hagaru on the one side and over two mountainous miles from Company C on the other. Fox Company, numerically and geographically, appeared to be fair game for some CCF regiment on the prowl—although appearances are sometimes deceiving.

This, then, was the disposition of the 5th and 7th Marines in the evening of 27 November: a total of ten understrength rifle companies of both regiments on the high ground around Yudam-ni; two battalions of the 5th in the valley near the village; and two rifle companies, Charlie and Fox, of the 7th in isolated positions along the 14-mile route to Hagaru.

The regimental command posts of Colonel Litzenberg and Lieutenant Colonel Murray were located at Yudam-ni along with the usual headquarters elements, except for the Antitank Company of the 7th Marines, at Hagaru. Also at Hagaru were Lieutenant Colonel Randolph S. D. Lockwood's headquarters of 2/7,[15] and Weapons Company (—) of that battalion. For this reason, Companies D and E, on Hills 1240 and 1282 at Yudam-ni, came under temporary control of 1/7.

Despite the lack of tanks, [16] the Yudam-ni perimeter encompassed an impressive array of Marine supporting arms. The 1st and 4th Battalions, together with Batteries G and I of the 3d, represented almost three-fourths of the fire power of the 11th Regiment. The 48 howitzers—thirty 105mm and eighteen 155mm—were emplaced in the expansive flats generally south of the village, in the direction of South and Southeast Ridges. In position to the north were the 75mm recoilless rifles of the 5th Marines and the 4.2-inch mortar companies of both infantry regiments.

The Yudam-ni lines bristled with enough firepower to give any commander confidence, but the supply situation was not reassuring. Although Captain Robert A. Morehead and a detachment from the 1st Service Battalion arrived during the 27th to begin establishment of a division dump, the supply level was low. The dumps of the 5th and 7th Marines contained about 3 days' rations, 3 days' POL, and 2 U/F of small arms ammunition in addition to amounts in the hands of the troops. Very little artillery ammunition was available beyond that held by the firing batteries. During the 27th Colonel Litzenberg sent his S-4, Major Maurice E. Roach, to Hagaru to arrange for the dispatching of about five truckloads each of rations, POL, and ammunition. They arrived late on the evening of the same day—the last supplies to get through from Hagaru. That same evening Lieutenant Colonel Beall, commanding officer of the 1st Motor Transport Battalion, led all the organic vehicles (except 40-50) of the 5th and 7th Marines back to Hagaru with the intent of returning them the following day loaded. The Chinese, who had already invested the road, for some reason permitted the trucks to pass. Beall reached Hagaru without incident. The trucks were never able to return.[17]

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Chapter 8. Crisis at Yudam-ni
The Battle of Northwest Ridge

At 1830, two hours after the looming mass of Sakkat Mountain had blotted out the sun on 27 November, Yudam-ni was pitch black. The temperature dropped to 20 degrees below zero.[18]

On Northwest Ridge the infantrymen of 3/7 and 2/5 slowly grew numb from the penetrating cold. Trigger fingers, though heavily gloved, ached against the brittle steel of weapons, and parka hoods became encrusted with frozen moisture. In the cumbersome shoe-pacs, perspiration-soaked feet gradually became transformed into lumps of biting pain.

When men are immobilized for hours in such temperatures, no amount of clothing will keep them warm. Yet, even more disturbing to the Marines on the Yudam-ni perimeter was the effect of the weather on carbines and BARs. These weapons froze to such a degree that they became unreliable or, in some cases, completely unserviceable. The M-1 rifle and Browning machine guns showed stubborn streaks but retained their effectiveness, provided they had been cared for properly.

While the Marines sat in their holes and cursed the frigid night, the quiet hills around them came alive with thousands of Red Chinese on the march. Unseen and unheard, the endless columns of quilted green wound through valleys and over mountain trails leading toward the southern tips of North and Northwest Ridges. These were the assault battalions of the 79th and 89th CCF Divisions. With seven other divisions they comprised Red China's 9th Army Group led by Sung Shin-lun, one of the best field commanders in the CCF. Lin Pao, commanding the 3d Field Army, had dispatched Sung's army group to northeast Korea specifically to destroy the 1st Marine Division. The knockout blow, aimed at the northwest arc of the Yudam-ni perimeter, amounted to a massive frontal assault. Another CCF division, the 59th, had completed a wide envelopment to the south, driving in toward South Ridge and Toktong Pass to cut the MSR between Hagaru and Yudam-ni.[19]
Click here to view map

This was the main effort of the CCF in northeast Korea: three divisions against two regiments of Marines. And in addition to the advantage of mass, the Reds held the trump cards of mobility and surprise. They enjoyed superior mobility because they were unencumbered by heavy weapons and hence could use primitive routes of approach in the darkness. They had the advantage of surprise because their practice of marching by night and hiding by day had concealed their approach to a large degree from UN air observation. To offset these odds, the outnumbered Marines would have to rely on superior firepower, command of the air, and another weapon called *esprit.*

By 2100, Northwest Ridge was crawling with Chinese only a few hundred yards from the positions of Campanies E and F, 5th Marines, and Company H, 7th Marines. The enemy troops, padding silently in their rubber sneakers, had as yet given no hint of their presence. To divert attention, the Red commander sent a patrol against 2/5's roadblock on the MSR between Northwest and Southwest Ridges. Troops of Company D, 5th Marines, exchanged grenades with the Chinese and killed two of them. The remainder they quickly dispersed with mortar fire.

Simultaneously with the thrust at the roadblock, small enemy teams probed Fox Company's line on the spur of Northwest Ridge, vanishing into the night after each light contact. These disturbances in the center of 2/5's zone enabled CCF infiltrators and grenadiers on the northern tip of the spur to crawl undetected within a few yards of the limiting point between Company F and Company E on the right. Bugle calls cut through the darkness, and the grenadiers began heaving their missiles while the submachine gunners opened up. The din of this first

attempt to unnerve the defenders lasted several minutes. Then came a sustained mortar bombardment of Marine front lines. While the shells rained down, the Chinese opened fire with crew-served automatic weapons emplaced all across Northwest Ridge.

At 2125 the mortar eruptions began to walk toward the Marine rear. Whistles screeched, enemy machine guns fell silent, and the first Chinese assault waves hurled themselves against the juncture of Companies E and F. The enemy attacked on an extremely narrow front in order to maintain control. His troops advanced in column within grenade range, then deployed abruptly into skirmish lines that flailed the Marine positions ceaselessly and without regard to losses.

The machine guns and rifles of Companies E and F piled the attackers in grotesque heaps up and down the front, but the pressure of human tonnage was unremitting. Ultimately, the Reds broke through on the northern tip of the spur, where the two units were joined. They poured troops into the gap, and as they attempted to roll back the newly exposed flanks, they overran part of Fox Company's right wing platoon. Captain Samuel Jaskilka, commanding Easy Company in the draw, dispatched a light machine-gun section and a squad from his 3d Platoon (deployed in the rear) to reinforce his 1st Platoon at the edge of the breakthrough. The latter unit, under Second Lieutenant Jack L. Nolan, held firm and bent back its left to prevent encroachment on the rear. Staff Sergeant Russell J. Borgomainero, of the 1st Platoon, deployed the reinforcements to contain the penetration, while 2/5's 81mm mortars laid barrages on the salient.

At 2215, as the attack against Companies E and F was reaching its height, Lieutenant Colonel Roise ordered H&S Company of 2/5 to deploy for the immediate defense of his command post. The Chinese, blocked in their attempts to get behind Easy Company, continued to stab at the rear of Fox. If their envelopment succeeded, they could swarm over the headquarters and supporting arms positions of the 2d Battalion.

Roise's precaution proved unnecessary. As fast as the Red commander sent troops into the salient, they were cut down by mortar, machine-gun, and rifle fire. The few who did worm their way into Marine supporting positions died in individual combat. At 2230, on the right of Company E's front, the 2d Platoon turned its machine guns on a native hut 200 yards up the draw and set it ablaze. The brilliant illumination exposed all CCF troops in the narrow corridor and on the adjoining slopes; and the Marines commenced a turkey shoot that ended at 2400 with the virtual annihilation of the main enemy force.

The Chinese maintained their grip on the northern tip of the spur, however, and fought off patrols from Easy Company trying to re-establish contact with Fox. Since the gap remained, leaving the enemy in position to fire on the Marine rear, Roise shifted the reserve platoon of Company D to Fox Company's side of the salient. This redeployment, in conjunction with Company E's earlier action on the other side, converted the penetration area into a gantlet for the Chinese. Already weakened by casualties numbering in the hundreds, the Red commander apparently wrote off the salient as a net loss, for he never used it again.

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Chapter 8. Crisis at Yudam-ni
Chinese Seize Hill 1403

At 2135, just as the first assault waves were pounding 2/5's front, the vanguard of another enemy force began to feel out the lines of Company H, 3/7, on Hill 1403 to the north. Captain Cooke's three platoons were deployed in an arc from the road to the peak of the hill to protect the line of communication to the valley of Yudam-ni. Out of physical contact with all friendly elements, How Company was assailable from every direction, as the Chinese quickly discovered.[20]

Following a half hour of lightning probes, the enemy launched a strong attack against First Lieutenants Elmer A. Krieg's platoon on the right front. Communications with Cooke's CP went out almost immediately, and in the space of a few minutes the Marine right flank collapsed under the weight of CCF numbers. Krieg shifted his remaining men to the left and joined Second Lieutenant Paul E. Denny's platoon.

At the company CP on the reverse slope, Captain Cooke and his forward observers radioed for all available supporting arms. The prompt barrages by artillery and mortars in the valley stopped the Communists on the right half of the summit and enabled Cooke to reorganize his forward platoons. As the supporting fires lifted, he personally led an assault to restore the right flank. But the CCF machine guns and grenades smashed the counterattack, and Cooke was cut down at the head of his men.

Second Lieutenant James M. Mitchell, executive officer, temporarily took command of Company H. When word of Cooke's death reached 3/7's CP, Lieutenant Colonel William F. Harris[21] dispatched Lieutenant Harris (no relation), recently returned to duty after illness, to take over the beleaguered unit.

The younger Harris, who had been out of action since shortly after the "How Hill" battle in early November, safely ascended the enemy-infested slopes of Hill 1403 in the darkness. About midnight he reached How Company's positions and found all of Cooke's officers wounded but one, Lieutenant Newton. The platoons of Krieg and Denny were badly depleted, but Harris moved Newton's platoon from the left flank to the right. Newton's men regained enough ground in a counterattack to cement the company's position.

After these first attacks against 2/5 and H/7 over the two-mile breadth of Northwest Ridge, the Chinese remained generally inactive for a period of about two hours. They had paid heavily for minor gains—so heavily that fresh battalions were called from reserve to stamp out the Marine resistance on the tip of the ridge. And at 0300, several hundred CCF riflemen, grenadiers, and submachine gunners commenced the second general assault, striking at 2/5 and Company H simultaneously.

In the low ground at the center of the two-mile front, Jaskilka's Easy Company threw a curtain of machine-gun fire across the draw in the path of 300 Chinese advancing frontally. The first enemy ranks marched into the fire lanes and were mowed down like rows of grain. The CCF soldiers in subsequent formations apparently viewed the grisly, corpse-strewn corridor with misgivings, for they stopped several hundred yards up the narrow valley and took cover. Thereafter, the main fighting in Company E's zone involved long-range exchanges of machine-gun and mortar fire, although clashes at close quarters occasionally flared up on the flanks.

Approximately 200 Communist troops had concentrated meanwhile against Fox Company on the spur to the left, where the ground afforded more cover and space for maneuver. Stumbling over a carpet of their own dead, the Reds thrust repeatedly at the center of the Marine line. They inflicted many casualties on the defenders and ultimately overran two machine-gun positions. But this was the sum total of their success; and fighting on the north half of the spur, at the edge of the gap between Companies E and F, continued sporadically for the rest of the night with neither side gaining any appreciable advantage.

On the right of the 2d Battalion, the second CCF onslaught had struck the front and both flanks of Company H on Hill 1403. Human cannon fodder of Red China was hurled against the Marine positions for a full hour, but Lieutenant Harris' command held. H Company's roadblock, commanded by Sergeant Vick, decisively beat off a Chinese attack in the valley; and at 0400 Lieutenant Colonel Harris ordered the hard pressed company to pull back toward the rear of Easy Company, 2/5. Two hours later How Company completed its fighting withdrawal.

The loss of Hill 1403 posed a grave threat to the whole defensive network around the village. Not only were the Chinese now ideally situated to strike at the rear of 2/5 and sever it from the two regiments, but in sufficient strength they could attack the rear and flanks of the Marine units on North and Southwest Ridges. Moreover, at dawn, they would be looking down the throats of some 2000 Marines on the valley floor.

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Chapter 8. Crisis at Yudam-ni
Fighting at 3/5's CP

The partially successful assault on Northwest Ridge involved two regiments, the 266th and 267th, of the 89th CCF Division. Operating abreast of this force, the 79th Division had meanwhile advanced over the rugged spine of North Ridge toward the two isolated companies of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, occupying terminal Hills 1282 and 1240 of that huge land mass. Elements of the 79th Division's three regiments were in the fore, and each regiment was apparently disposed in a column of battalions. Facing south toward the Marine positions on North Ridge, the CCF order of battle, with probable objectives assigned, was as follows:
237th Regt: Hill 1384 (Unoccupied)
235th Regt: Hill 1240 (D/7)
236th Regt: Hill 1167 (Unoccupied)

For reasons unknown, the commander of the 235th Regiment did not include Hill 1282 in his plan for seizing the high ground above Yudam-ni. He ordered his 1st Battalion to take only Hill 1240, and the commanding officer of that unit in turn assigned the mission to his 1st and Special Duty Companies. After these two outfits had seized the objective, the 2d and 3d Companies would pass through and, in conjunction with other CCF forces in the locale, ". . . annihilate the enemy at Yudam-ni."[22]

Approaching the terminal high ground in darkness, the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment, veered off its course and mistakenly ascended a spur toward Hill 1282. The 3d Battalion, 236th Regiment, keeping contact as it advanced on the left, participated in the error and wound up at the foot of Hill 1240. Thus confronted with this precipitous mass instead of low, gently sloping Hill 1167, the 3d Battalion floundered for several hours and did not take part in the first attack against the Marine perimeter. It did, however, send out the usual screen of infiltrators.

At 2200, submachine gunners and grenadiers of the 1st and Special Duty Companies, 1/235, commenced the preliminaries against Company E, 7th Marines on Hill 1282, believing they were engaging a Marine platoon on Hill 1240. The harassing force was driven off after failing to disrupt the Marine defenses. Almost two hours later, at 2345, Company D of 2/7 reported enemy infiltration on Hill 1240 a thousand yards to the east. Both Marine companies cancelled the patrols scheduled for the long saddle connecting their positions and went on a 100% alert.

Captain Phillips, commanding Easy Company, had arranged two platoons in perimeter around the summit of Hill 1282, and the third he had deployed to the right rear, on a spur that dipped toward Yudam-ni. At midnight, after a period of silence across the company front, the initial CCF assault wave slammed into the northeastern arc of the perimeter, manned by First Lieutenant Yancey's platoon. Marine firepower blunted this frontal attack, and the Reds tried to slip around the east side of the hilltop. They ran head-on into First Lieutenant Bey's platoon entrenched on the spur and were thrown back.

Resorting to grinding tactics, the Chinese repeatedly assaulted Company E's position from midnight to 0200. Whistles and bugles blared over the reaches of North Ridge, and the charging squads of infantry met death stoically, to the tune of weird Oriental chants. When one formation was cut to pieces by machine-gun fire and grenades, another rose out of the night to take its place. By 0200, as the first attack began to taper off, the northeastern slopes of Hill 1282 lay buried under a mat of human wreckage. An hour later, the 1st and Special Duty Companies of the 1st Battalion, 235th CCF Regiment, had ceased to exist, having lost nearly every man of their combined total of over 200. Company E's casualties had been heavy, but the Marines still held Hill 1282.

Click here to view map

On Hill 1240, a thousand yards to the east, infiltrators of the 3d Battalion, 236th CCF Regiment, probed Dog Company's perimeter while Easy was under attack. By 0030, some of the harassing parties had side-slipped through the saddle separating Hill 1282 and opened fire on the 5th and 7th Regimental headquarters in Yudam-ni.

The sniping from the slopes of North Ridge did not surprise the Marines in the valley, for they had long been preparing for a possible threat from that direction. Early in the evening, Lieutenant Colonel Taplett had re-deployed 3/5 from an assembly area just north of the village to a broad tactical perimeter in the same locale. Companies H and I, the latter on the right, he positioned facing Northwest Ridge—specifically Hill 1403. Two platoons of Company G held blocking positions near the base of Southwest Ridge, and the third manned an outpost on the slopes of that high ground. At the bottom of North Ridge, in the draw between Hill 1282 and the spur of 1384, Taplett established his CP with H&S and Weapons Companies providing local security.

When 3/5's commander learned that the spur of Hill 1384 was unoccupied, he dispatched a platoon of Company I to an outpost position 500 yards up the slope. About 300 yards behind the Item Company unit, on a portion of the spur directly above the battalion CP, a platoon of South Korean police deployed with two heavy machine

guns.

At 2045, fifteen minutes before any other unit on the Yudam-ni reported a contact, the outpost platoon of Item Company began receiving fire from above. This harassment, probably involving advance elements of the 237th CCF Regiment, continued sporadically for several hours, throughout the period of the first Communist attacks against other fronts.

In the valley at 2120, a few men of How Company, 7th Marines, entered 3/5's positions barefooted and partially clothed. Taplett, personally noting the time of their arrival, questioned them in the battalion aid station, and they told how their 60mm mortar position on Hill 1403 had been seized by the Chinese.[23]

The battalion commander returned to his CP, and after listening to the far-off din of the initial Communist attacks, placed his perimeter on a 100% alert at 0115. Half an hour later, the Item Company platoon on the spur of Hill 1384 reported an increase in enemy fire coming from above. A message from H/7 next warned that CCF troops were moving around Hill 1403 to cut the MSR. Company I observed activity in that quarter shortly afterwards, and at 0218 opened fire on an enemy platoon, which promptly retracted.

A few minutes later, a company—possibly two companies—of Chinese swept down the spur of Hill 1384, overran the Item Company platoon outpost, and continued on towards the police platoon. The South Koreans, after inflicting heavy casualties on the Reds with their two machine guns, vacated the high ground. Enemy troops then spread out along the crest and poured plunging fire into H&S and Weapons Companies defending the draw.

Weapons Company, on the far side of the depression, held its ground, but H&S, directly under the gun, shortly fell back across the MSR. Taplett's CP was left in a no man's land, with enemy bullets raining down out of the night and Marine fire whistling back from across the draw and road. Upon learning of the withdrawal, the battalion commander elected to remain in the tent in order to keep telephone contact with his rifle companies, which were as yet uninvolved. He did not consider the situation too serious, and it seemed as though the police platoon's machine guns had taken the sting out of the enemy assault.

Except for a few individuals, the Chinese did not descend from the spur. Nor did they direct much fire at Taplett's blackout tent, which they probably took to be unoccupied. Inside, the battalion commander studied his maps, received reports and issued instructions over the field phone while his S-3, Major Thomas A. Durham, sat nearby with pistol drawn. Major John J. Canney, the executive officer, left the CP to retrieve H&S Company and was killed as he approached the MSR. Private First Class Louis W. Swinson, radio operator, whose instrument had proved unreliable in the severe cold, took position outside the tent and covered the approaches with his rifle.

This unique situation—a battalion commander under fire in an exposed position while his rifle companies lay peacefully entrenched several hundred yards away—lasted for over an hour.

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Chapter 8. Crisis at Yudam-ni
The Battle of North Ridge

At approximately 0300, when Taplett, Durham, and Swinson began their lonely vigil, the 79th CCF Division launched another assault on North Ridge (see Map 16).[24] As a result of the enemy's first attack, and in anticipation of the second, Colonel Murray earlier had moved elements of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, into position behind 3/5.

Second Lieutenant Nicholas M. Trapnell's 1st Platoon of Company A left the battalion assembly area in the valley at 0100 and started up the steep incline of Hill 1282. Climbing the icy slopes by day was difficult enough, but darkness and a minus-20-degree temperature made it a gruelling and perilous ordeal. Trapnell's outfit did not reach the crest until after 0300, when the CCF assault was at the height of its fury and Company E was facing imminent annihilation. The Able Company unit moved into position with Lieutenant Bey's platoon on the spur jutting back from the peak. As yet, the full force of the Chinese drive had not spread to this area.

The Red commander of the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment, used his 3d Company for the second attack against the cap of Hill 1282. With the few survivors of the 1st and Special Duty Companies attached, the fresh unit probably numbered about 125 troops. In squads of eight to ten, the Chinese struck again and again at the perimeter on the summit, and the two depleted platoons of Easy Company dwindled to a mere handful of tired, desperate Marines. First Lieutenant Robert E. Snyder's 3d Platoon of A/5, having been sent up from the valley shortly after Trapnell's outfit, arrived as reinforcements. Snyder did not have contact with Bey and Trapnell, whose platoons were still intact, so he integrated his men with the remnants of the two platoons on the peak.

Both sides suffered crippling losses during the close fighting on Hill 1282. The Reds finally drove a wedge between the Marine defenders on the summit and the platoons of Bey and Trapnell on the spur. According to Bey:

"It soon became obvious that a penetration had been made to our left. The positions atop the hill and the Command Post area were brightly illuminated by flares and other explosions. By this time [approximately 0400] nothing but Chinese could be heard on the telephone in the command post and my Platoon Sergeant, Staff Sergeant Daniel M. Murphy, requested permission to take what men we could spare in an attempt to close the gap between the left flank of the platoon and the rest of the company. I told him to go ahead and do what he could."[25]

Click here to view map

Meanwhile, the center and rear of Easy Company's perimeter was reduced to the chaos of a last stand. Yancey, already wounded, was hit again as he tried to reorganize the few Marine survivors on the peak. First Lieutenant Leonard M. Clements, the other platoon leader, fell wounded as did First Lieutenant William J. Schreier of the mortar section and Lieutenant Snyder. Captain Phillips, hurling grenades in the midst of the melee, was killed. His executive officer, First Lieutenant Raymond O. Ball, took command of Company E, shouting out encouragement as he lay immobilized by two wounds. He was hit several more times before he lapsed into unconsciousness and died after reaching the aid station. Lieutenant Snyder took command.

By 0500, CCF infantrymen of the 3d Company, 1/235, occupied the summit of Hill 1282, still believing it to be Hill 1240. The remnants of the platoons of Yancey, Clements, and Snyder had been driven to the reverse slope in the west, while the units of Trapnell and Bey clung to the crest of the southeastern spur, overlooking Yudam-ni. Up to this point, Chinese casualties on Hill 1282 probably numbered about 250, with Marine losses approximating 150. Easy Company had been reduced to the effective strength of a rifle platoon (split in two), and

the pair of A/5 platoons paid with upwards of 40 killed and wounded during the brief time on the battle line; only six effectives remained of Snyder's platoon.

The danger from enemy-held Hill 1282 was compounded by the success of the 3d Battalion, 236th Regiment on Hill 1240 to the east. At about 0105 the Chinese who had previously been content only to make probing attacks on Captain Hull's Dog Company shifted to a full-scale assault. Sergeant Othmar J. Reller's platoon, holding the northwest portion of the company perimeter, beat off three attacks before being overrun at about 0230. First Lieutenant Richard C. Webber, the machine gun platoon leader, attempted to plug the gap with the available reinforcements but was prevented by a fire fight outside the Company CP. First Lieutenant Edward M. Seeburger's platoon holding the perimeter on the right (east) was under too heavy an attack to extend to the left and tie in with Webber. The Chinese overran Hull's CP at about 0300, and he ordered Seeburger and First Lieutenant Anthony J. Sota, commanding the rear platoon, to reorganize at the foot of Hill 1240.

Captain Hull, wounded, his command cut to the size of a few squads, rallied his troops on the hillside and led a counterattack against the crest. The surprised Chinese recoiled and the Marines won a small foothold. Then the enemy smashed back from the front, right flank, and right rear. Hull was wounded again but continued in action as his hasty perimeter diminished to the proportions of a squad position. With the approach of dawn, he had only 16 men left who could fight. The enemy was on the higher ground to his front, on both flanks, and on the slopes in his rear.

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill

OF THE MARINE artillery units at Yudam-ni, those most directly imperiled by CCF gains on North Ridge were Major Parry's 3d Battalion and Battery K of the 4th. The latter, under First Lieutenant Robert C. Messman, lay beneath the southeastern spur of Hill 1282, having gone into position at 2100 on 27 November. Rearward of King Battery, 3/11 was positioned below the steep slopes of Hill 1240 where its 105s had fired in direct support of the 7th Marines on 26 and 27 November (see Map 12).[1]

The 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, which had arrived at Yudam-ni early on the 27th to support the 5th Regiment, was emplaced in the valley between the tips of South and Southwest Ridges. Major William McReynolds, commanding the 4th Battalion, reached the perimeter with his outfit later. He had two batteries in action by 1900 and all three by 2300 on the low ground separating South and Southeast Ridges. Battery K, firing under the direction of 1/11 pending the arrival of the parent unit, then reverted to McReynolds' control, although it did not displace rearward to 4/11's positions until the next day.

The TD-14 bulldozers of the 11th Marines had proved to be no match for the eight-inch frostline around the Reservoir, with the result that all batteries and security positions sat fully exposed on the concrete-like flatlands. Incoming mortar fire harassed the artillerymen throughout the day of 27 November, and after dark CCF flat trajectory weapons stepped up the tempo of bombardment. Marine casualties in the valley were light, however, for the enemy gunners seemed unable to group their erratic pot shots into effective barrages.[2]

It was the imminent threat of Communist infantry attack from North Ridge that weighed down on the artillerymen of the 11th Regiment during the predawn hours of 28 November. Since the beginning of the CCF onslaught, they had been firing their howitzers almost ceaselessly in a 180-degree arc, and ammunition stocks were fast dwindling to a critical level. Their gun flashes providing brilliant targets for enemy infiltrators, they could reasonably expect a full-scale assault in the event of the dislodgment of Easy and Dog Companies from Hills 1282 and 1240. The effect of countermoves by Colonels Litzenberg and Murray would not be known until after dawn, and meanwhile the Marine gunners kept on firing their howitzers while the black outline of North Ridge loomed ever more menacing.

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill
Encirclement of Company C of RCT-7

While the 79th and 89th CCF Divisions pounded the northwest arc of the Yudam-ni perimeter during the night of 27–28 November, the 59th completed its wide end-sweep to the southeast and moved against the 14-mile stretch of road to Hagaru. At the moment the Communist effort in that quarter could be considered a secondary attack, but if ever a target fulfilled all the qualifications of a prime objective, it was this critical link in the MSR—the very lifeline to most of the 1st Marine Division's infantry and artillery strength.

During the 27th Captain Wilcox's Baker Company of the 7th Marines patrolled along South Ridge. As darkness fell, it was heavily engaged and incumbered with a number of litter casualties. With the permission of the regimental commander, Lieutenant Colonel Davis led Captain John F. Morris's Charlie Company (–) down the MSR to positions across the road from Hill 1419. Aided by Charlie Company, Baker was then able to withdraw and return to Yudam-ni with Davis while Morris and his reduced company took up positions on Hill 1419.[3]

He deployed his two rifle platoons and 60mm mortar section in a crescent on the lower slopes of the eastern spur, facing the distant crest. At 0230, five hours after Yudam-ni came under attack, a CCF force descended from the high ground and struck the right flank.[4]

After overrunning part of First Lieutenant Jack A. Chabek's platoon and inflicting heavy casualties, the Reds lashed out at the left flank of the crescent-shaped defense. Here Staff Sergeant Earle J. Payne's platoon, less one squad in an outpost on higher ground, bent under the weight of the attack and was soon in danger of being driven out of position. Captain Morris reinforced the platoons on each flank with men from his headquarters and the mortar section. The reshuffling was accomplished in the nick of time and just barely tipped the scales in favor of the defenders. A seesaw battle raged until after dawn on the 28th when, with the help of artillery fire from Yudam-ni, the Marines drove the Chinese back into the hills.

Although the critical pressure eased at daybreak, Company C remained pinned down by enemy fire coming from every direction, including the crest of Hill 1419 directly above. The Chinese were in absolute control of the MSR to the south, toward Toktong Pass, and to the north, in the direction of Yudam-ni. Morris had taken about 40 casualties—a dangerously high proportion, since he had only two of his three rifle platoons. His radio had been knocked out by enemy bullets, and the 60mm mortar section was left with but a few rounds of ammunition. For want of communication, he could get no help from the Marine Corsairs on station overhead.

The outpost squad from Payne's platoon could not be contacted in its position on the higher slopes of Hill 1419. Corporal Curtis J. Kiesling, who volunteered to search for the lost unit, was killed by CCF machine-gun fire as he attempted to scale the rugged incline. Other men of Company C repeatedly exposed themselves in order to drag wounded comrades to the relative safety of a draw leading down to the MSR.

Surrounded and outnumbered, Morris had no alternative but to await help from Yudam-ni. He contracted his perimeter on the hillside east of the road, and from this tiny tactical island, for the rest of the morning, his men watched Communist troops jockey for position around a 360-degree circle.

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill
Fox Company at Toktong Pass

Where Morris had taken a reduced infantry company into its lonely assignment on the MSR, Captain William E. Barber went into position at Toktong Pass on the 27th with a heavily reinforced outfit.[5] His Fox Company of 2/7, augmented by heavy machine gun and 81mm mortar sections of Weapons Company, numbered 240 officers and men. At the midway point of the pass, Barber chose an isolated hill just north of the MSR for his company perimeter. He placed the 3d Platoon (First Lieutenant Robert C. McCarthy) on the summit, facing generally north, with the 1st (First Lieutenant John M. Dunne) on the right and the 2d (First Lieutenant Elmer G. Peterson) on the left. The 3d Platoon formed a hilltop perimeter with two squads forward and the third in reserve to the rear. Tied in on each flank, the 1st and 2d Platoons stretched down the respective hillsides and bent back toward the MSR. These two were connected on the reverse slope by company headquarters and the rocket squad. Just below, at the base of the hill next to the road, were Barber's CP together with the 81mm and 60mm mortar sections. All machine guns, including the heavies from Weapons Company, were emplaced with the rifle platoons.

During the first half of the night of 27–28 November, Toktong Pass rumbled with the reverberations of truck convoys—the final serials of 1/5 and 4/11 outbound for Yudam-ni and Lieutenant Colonel Beall's empty trucks inbound for Hagaru. It was after 2000 before the last trucks climbed to the summit, then nosed downhill, whining and roaring through the night as they made the twisting descent. Chinese Communists had already launched their first attacks against Southwest Ridge at Yudam-ni, but Fox Company's perimeter remained quiet, even during the first hour of 28 November.

It was actually too quiet at 0115 when Lieutenant McCarthy inspected the 3d Platoon positions atop Fox Hill, now glittering in the light of a full moon. Finding his men numbed by the severe cold, he called together his squad leaders and admonished them to be more alert. A short time later, during his next inspection, McCarthy heard the proper challenges ring out at every point.

There was no lack of watchfulness at 0230. For it was then that Chinese in estimated company strength lunged out of the night and assaulted the north, west, and south arcs of Company F's perimeter. On the summit, the two forward squads of McCarthy's platoon were overwhelmed almost immediately, losing 15 killed and nine wounded out of a total of 35 men. Three others would later be listed as missing. The eight uninjured fell back to the reserve squad's position on the military crest to the rear, and the enemy took over the topographical peak.

Fighting with small arms and grenades also raged on the hillside to the left, where the Chinese attempted to drive a wedge between the 2d and 3d Platoons. Repeated assaults were hurled back with grievous losses to the Reds, and they apparently threw in fresh units in their bid for a critical penetration. That they failed was due largely to the valor of three Marines who made a determined stand at the vital junction: PFC Robert F. Benson and Private Hector A. Cafferatta of the 2d Platoon, and PFC Gerald J. Smith, a fire team leader of the 3d. These men, assisted by the members of Smith's team, are credited with annihilating two enemy platoons.

While the enemy had undoubtedly planned the attack on the two rifle platoons with typical precision, it seems that he literally stumbled into the rear of Fox Company's position. Corporal Donald R. Thornton, member of a rocket launcher crew, reported that a group of Chinese walking along the MSR suddenly found themselves at the edge of Barber's CP and the mortar positions. The Communist soldiers recovered from the surprise and closed in aggressively, forcing the company commander and the mortar crews to ascend the hill to a protective line of trees. An embankment where the MSR cut through the base of the hill prevented pursuit by the Chinese. When

they tried to climb over it they were cut down by small-arms fire; when they hid behind it they were riddled by grenades that the Marines rolled downhill; when they finally gave up and tried to flee, they were shot as they ran into the open.

On the right (east) side of the perimeter, the 1st Platoon was engaged only on the flanks, near the summit where it tied in with the 3d and down the slope where it joined the headquarters troops and mortar crews defending the rear.

Fighting around the 270° arc of the perimeter continued until after daybreak. Despite losses of 20 dead and 54 wounded, Fox Company was in complete control of the situation. Lieutenant McCarthy described the breaking-off action as follows:

"By 0630, 28 November, the Chinese had received so many casualties that the attack could no longer be considered organized. Few Chinese remained alive near the company perimeter. Individual Chinese continued to crawl up and throw grenades. A Marine would make a one-man assault on these individuals, shooting or bayoneting them. The attack could be considered over, although three Marines . . . were hit by rifle fire at 0730. We received small arms fire intermittently during the day, but no attack."

McCarthy estimated that enemy dead in front of the 2d and 3d Platoons numbered 350, while yet another 100 littered the 1st Platoon's zone and the area at the base of the hill along the MSR.[6]

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill
Marine Counterattacks on North Ridge

As Companies C and F of the 7th Marines were fighting on the MSR in the hours just before dawn of 28 November, the first of a series of Marine counterattacks commenced at Yudam-ni. It was essential to the very survival of the 5th and 7th Regiments that the Chinese be driven back, or at least checked, on the high ground surrounding the village.

Lieutenant Colonel Taplett, operating his CP in the no man's land at the base of North Ridge, ordered Company G of 3/5 to counterattack the spur of Hill 1384 at about 0300.[7] The platoon of George Company outposting Southwest Ridge was left in position, but the other two platoons, under Second Lieutenants John J. Cahill and Dana B. Cashion, moved out abreast shortly after 0300. Driving northward aggressively, they crossed the MSR, "liberated" Taplett's CP, and cleared the draw in which Weapons Company of 3/5 was still entrenched. Troops of H&S Company followed the attackers and reoccupied their old positions in the gulley.

Cahill and Cashion, displaying remarkable cohesion on unfamiliar ground in the darkness, led the way up Hill 1384. Their men advanced swiftly behind a shield of marching fire and routed the few[8] Chinese on the spur. The position earlier vacated by the police platoon was recaptured, and the Marines saw numerous enemy dead in front of the South Korean machine gun emplacements. About 500 yards beyond the battalion CP the two platoons halted until daylight. The seven men who had formed the Item Company outpost on Hill 1384 arrived shortly afterwards and were integrated into Cashion's platoon.

He continued the attack soon after daybreak, with Cahill's platoon giving fire support. Cashion and his men plunged into enemy territory along the ridge line leading northward to the topographical crest of Hill 1384, about 1000 yards distant. They had reached the final slopes when Taplett received the radio message, almost incredible to him, that the two platoons were nearing the peak of Hill 1384. He directed them to discontinue the attack and withdraw to the top of the spur. There they were to establish a defense line overlooking Yudam-ni until receiving further orders. The spirited drive led by the two young officers had taken considerable pressure off the Marine units in the valley west of the village. One immediate effect was that approximately 80 officers and men of How Company, 7th Marines, were able to retire into 3/5's perimeter from the slopes of Hill 1403 on Northwest Ridge.

To the east of 3/5, a second successful counterattack by the 5th Marines brought stability to yet another critical point. Company C of 1/5 had deployed shortly after midnight to back up 3/5, in the event of a break-through in the valley. Owing to the adverse developments on Hills 1282 and 1240, however, it was later placed under operational control of the 7th Marines. One platoon left for Hill 1240 in the middle of the night to reinforce D/7, and the remainder of the company, led by Captain Jack R. Jones, ascended 1282 to assist E/7 and the two platoons of A/5 earlier committed.[9]

Charlie Company moved up a draw with Jones and his executive officer, First Lieutenant Loren R. Smith, in the van of the column, followed by the 1st and 2d Platoons and the 60mm mortar section. Light machine-gun sections were attached to the rifle platoons. The climb took almost two hours in the predawn darkness, the company frequently halting while Jones questioned wounded men descending from the top. Numb from cold, shock, and loss of blood, they could give no intelligible picture of a situation described as grim and confused.

At approximately 0430, the head of the column came under heavy fire from above as it reached a point just below the military crest, about 100 yards from the summit of 1282. Here, Jones found Staff Sergeant Murphy

from E/7's 3d Platoon which, along with Trapnell's, was out of sight on the spur to the right. Also out of sight but far to the left were Snyder's platoon of A/5 and a handful of men of Easy Company. While CCF grenades and small-arms fire rained down, Murphy explained that E/7's main position had been overrun and that he was attempting to form a holding line in the center with some 20 survivors of the summit battle.

Jones quickly deployed his two platoons for the attack, the 2d under Second Lieutenant Byron L. Magness on the right, the 1st under Second Lieutenant Max A. Merrit on the left. Murphy's small contingent joined the formation. Second Lieutenant Robert H. Corbet set up his 60mm mortar section to support the advance, then took a place in the assault line. Down in the valley the 81mm mortars of 1/5 opened up with a preparatory barrage. Artillery could not fire because of the short distance between friendly and enemy lines, and the first flight of Corsairs was not yet on station.

The frontal attack against the 3d Company, 1st Battalion, 235th CCF Regiment began shortly after daybreak. Jones personally led the Marine skirmishers against more than 50 enemy soldiers armed with machine guns and grenades. His troops moved upward through a hail of fire and overran the Communists after a savage clash that included hand-to-hand fighting. The Marines then deployed with the just-arrived 2d Platoon of Able Company bridging the gap between Jones and Trapnell in time to thwart the advance of enemy reinforcements.

According to enemy reports, only six or seven men survived the 3d Company's defeat. One of them happened to be the company political officer, who conveniently had retired from the battle line during the crucial stage of the struggle. At 1/235's CP, a few hundred yards to the rear, he was given a platoon of the 2d Company "in order to evacuate the wounded and to safeguard the occupied position on Hill 1282. . . ." The fresh unit ascended the northern slopes of the height while Jones' company was battling its way up from the south. By the time the Red soldiers of the 2d Company neared the summit, they were confronted from above by the muzzles of Marine rifles and machine guns. The whole story unfolds in CCF records as follows:

"As soon as the 1st Platoon [2d Company] advanced to the 3d Company's position its assistant company commander came up with the platoon. At that time, the enemy [C/5] counterattacked very violently. Accordingly, the assistant company commander ordered the 1st Platoon to strike the enemy immediately and determinedly. Before the 1st Platoon's troops had been deployed, Lee Feng Hsi, the Platoon Leader, shouted: 'Charge!' So both the 1st and 2d Squads pressed forward in swarms side by side. When they were within a little more than ten meters of the top of the hill they suffered casualties from enemy hand grenades and short-range fire. Consequently, they were absolutely unable to advance any farther. At that time, the assistant company commander and the majority of the platoon and squad leaders were either killed or wounded.

"While the 1st and 2d Squads were encountering the enemy's counterattack, the 3d Squad also deployed and joined them in an effort to drive the enemy to the back of the hill. As a result, more than half of the 3d Squad were either killed or wounded. When the second assistant platoon leader attempted to reorganize, his troops suffered again from enemy flanking fire and hand grenades. Thus, after having fought for no more than ten minutes, the entire platoon lost its attacking strength and was forced to retreat somewhat to be able to defend firmly the place it held."

Meanwhile, according to Chinese accounts, Tsung Hui Tzu, commandeer of the 2d Company, had arrived at the CP of 1/235 with his 2d Platoon at 0620. Noting that his 1st Platoon was in trouble, he said to the leader of the 2d, "There are some enemy soldiers on the hill [1282] in front of us; attack forward determinedly."

The 2d Platoon jumped off immediately with two squads abreast and one trailing. Within 30 meters of the crest, the Reds attempted to rush Charlie Company's position behind a barrage of hand grenades. The assault failed. On the right the assistant platoon leader fell at the head of the 4th squad, which was reduced to three survivors. Tsung, the company commander, rushed forward and led the 6th squad on the left. He was wounded and the squad cut to pieces. Incredibly, the platoon leader ordered the three remaining men of the 4th squad to assault the summit again. They tried and only one of them came back. The 5th squad, advancing out of reserve,

had no sooner begun to deploy than it lost all of its NCOs. “As it mixed with the 4th and 6th squads to attack, they suffered casualties again from enemy flanking fire and hand grenades from the top of the hill. Therefore, the entire platoon lost its combat strength, with only seven men being left alive.”

Not only was the commanding officer of 1/235 down to his last company, but that company was down to its last platoon. Forever hovering in the rear, the 2d Company’s political officer, Liu Sheng Hsi, ordered the platoon to “continue the attack.” The assault began with two squads forward, led by the platoon leader and his assistant. They charged uphill into the teeth of Charlie Company’s position. Like all the others, they were ground into the mat of corpses on the blood-soaked snow. To complete the suicide of the 1st Battalion, 235th Regiment, the reserve squad of this last platoon was committed. A few minutes later, “. . . there were only six men left.”

The 2d Company paid for its failure with 94 of the original 116 officers and men. This loss, added to those of the 1st, 3d, and Special Duty Companies, would place 1/235’s casualties on Hill 1282 at approximately 400, including practically all the company commanders, platoon leaders, and NCOs. It can be assumed that nearly all of the wounded succumbed, since evacuation was well nigh impossible with Marines in control of the summit for the next 24 hours.

Marine losses were not light. Able and Charlie Companies of 1/5 together suffered 15 KIA and 67 WIA. Easy Company of 2/7, according to best estimates, made its stand at a cost of about 120 killed and wounded.

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill
Deadlock on Hill 1240

At daybreak of 20 November, several of Easy Company's casualties still lay in their foxholes on the forward slopes of Hill 1282. To recover them was an undertaking of great risk, even after the defeat of 1/235; for CCF survivors continued to fire at the summit from positions on the lower slopes. Captain Jones directed the evacuation and repeatedly ran forward of his lines to rescue half-frozen Marines who were immobilized by wounds.[10]

Headquarters personnel of 1/5 spent the whole morning removing casualties from 1282 and carrying them to the battalion and regimental aid stations, which soon were filled to overflowing. In the meantime, Able Company joined Charlie on the crest and assimilated the depleted platoons of Trapnell and Snyder. A new defensive line was drawn across the vital peak with C/5 in the center, A/5 on the right, and E/7, now under the command of Lieutenant Bey, on the left. By mid-morning, despite the continued exchange of fire with CCF troops on the slopes, there was no doubt that the Marines would hold the hill.[11]

This was not the case 1000 yards to the right, where daybreak had found the shattered remnants of D/7 clinging to a toehold on Hill 1240 and beset from every direction by troops of the 3d Battalion, 236th CCF Regiment.[12] The 3d Platoon of C/5, which had been dispatched from the valley at 0400 to help, was delayed by darkness and terrain. Second Lieutenant Harold L. Dawe's small relief force became hotly engaged on the lower slopes, far short of Dog Company's position, but made a fighting ascent after dawn.

Initially Dawe missed contact with the beleaguered outfit, but afterwards the two forces cleared the Chinese from 1240. From his position on the northeastern spur of the hill he could see the enemy massing on the reverse slopes of 1240 and 1282. Communications were out and he could not call for fire. At about 1100 the Reds counterattacked with an estimated two or more battalions and forced Dawe to withdraw about 150 yards. There his depleted platoon and the 16 remaining men of Dog Company held under heavy mortar fire until relieved by B/5 at 1700. The price of a stalemate on Hill 1240 was to Dawe about half of his platoon, and to Hull practically his whole company.

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill
The Fight for Northwest Ridge

To the left of North Ridge, dawn of 28 November revealed a tactical paradox on the looming massif of Northwest Ridge. Both Marines and Red Chinese occupied the terminal high ground, and it was difficult to determine which had emerged victorious from the all-night battle. How Company, 7th Marines, had withdrawn from Hill 1403, and from this commanding peak soldiers of the 89th CCF Division could observe and enfilade the whole of Yudam-ni valley. In addition to the 80 officers and men of How Company who had pulled back to the lines of 3/5 during the early morning, another group found its way to the rear of Easy Company, 2/5, as mentioned earlier.[13]

The appearance of the latter contingent at 0430 was a cause of consternation to Lieutenant Colonel Roise. His rifle companies had thrown back repeated CCF attacks along the draw and spur on the left of the 7th Marines' outfit, but the loss of 1403 now offset his victory and gravely imperiled his line of communications to the rest of the 5th Marines at Yudam-ni, a mile to the rear. Nevertheless, 2/5 continued to hold. At 0600 Company E counterattacked and drove the Chinese from the northern tip of the spur which they had occupied during the night. Fox Company, its right flank now restored and in contact with Easy, lashed out at 0800 and recaptured the two machine guns overrun by the enemy four hours earlier. Fifteen CCF soldiers who had found their way into the rear of Company F some time in the night were destroyed. Easy Company, after its successful counterattack on the spur, drove off a large Communist force attempting to move against its right flank.[14]

Incredibly, 2/5's losses for the night-long fight were 7 KIA, 25 WIA, and 60 weather casualties. Chinese dead piled across the front of Easy and Fox Companies numbered 500, according to a rough count.[15] There was no estimate made by How Company, 7th Marines, of enemy losses on Hill 1403.

At 0145 on the 28th, Roise had received Murray's order to continue the attack to the west after daybreak, so that 3/5 could move forward, deploy, and add its weight to the X Corps offensive. Events during the night altered Murray's plans, of course, and at 0545 the regimental commander alerted Roise to the probability of withdrawing 2/5 to Southwest Ridge later in the morning. The battalion commander, not realizing the extent of the crisis at Yudam-ni, thought a mistake had been made when he checked the map coordinates mentioned in the message. Despite the fact that his whole front was engaged at the time, he was prepared to continue the westward drive, and he questioned regimental headquarters about the "error" which would take his battalion rearward. Needless to say, the correctness of the map coordinates was quickly confirmed.[16]

Lieutenant Colonel Murray visited Colonel Litzenberg at dawn on the 28th, while elements of the 5th Marines were counterattacking the Chinese forces on North and Northwest Ridges. They agreed that the enemy had appeared in sufficient strength to warrant a switch to the defensive by both regiments, and Murray cancelled the scheduled westward attack by his 2d and 3d Battalions. At 1100 he ordered 2/5 to pull back to Southwest Ridge, tying in on the left with 3/7 on the same hill mass, and on the right with 3/5, whose line extended from the valley northwest of Yudam-ni to the crest of North Ridge.[17]

Orders officially halting the northwestward advance and directing the 5th Marines to coordinate positions with the 7th Marines were sent by General Smith at 1650.[18] Twenty-three minutes earlier he had ordered the 7th Marines to attack to the south and reopen the MSR to Hagaru.[19]

To coordinate better the defense of the new perimeter, Murray moved his CP from the northwestern edge of Yudam-ni to the center of the village, where the 7th Marines' headquarters was located. He spent most of his time thereafter with Litzenberg, while Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L. Stewart, his executive officer, ran the 5th

Regiment command post.[20] Through constant contact and a policy of close cooperation in all matters, the two regimental commanders and their staffs came up with joint plans for the defense of Yudam-ni and the ultimate breakout to Hagaru.

The first of these plans had to do with the realignment of forces at Yudam-ni and the rescue of Charlie and Fox Companies, 7th Marines. Early in the afternoon of 28 November, 2/5 began withdrawing from Northwest Ridge a company at a time, with Company E providing covering fire as rear guard. The battalion's displacement to Southwest Ridge was completed by 2000 against CCF resistance consisting only of harassing fires.[21]

Directly across the valley of Yudam-ni, Company I of 3/5 relieved the elements of 1/5 on Hill 1282 of North Ridge in late afternoon. George and How Companies of 3/5 deployed in the low ground to protect the corridor approaches to Yudam-ni from the northwest. Lieutenant Colonel Stevens, keeping the bulk of 1/5 in reserve, dispatched Company B at 1400 to relieve the battered handful of Marines on Hill 1240.

While this reshuffling took place on the 28th, Colonel Litzenberg listened anxiously to the grim reports from his 1st Battalion, which had set out in the morning to retrieve both Charlie and Fox Companies from their encircled positions on the MSR leading to Hagaru.[22] Able Company led off for the relief force at 1015, entering the gorge between South and Southeast Ridges. Five hours of fighting, marching, and climbing took it to a point about three miles from the Yudam-ni perimeter and one mile short of Company C's position. Here, while moving through the high ground east of the MSR, the vanguard met heavy resistance and was stopped cold.

Lieutenant Colonel Davis, who was following with the remainder of the 1st Battalion, committed Company B to a flanking movement west of the road. Air and 81mm mortars supported the auxiliary attack and routed the Chinese. Both companies advanced to high-ground positions abreast of Charlie Company's perimeter, then bent toward the MSR to provide a protective crescent between the beleaguered outfit and the enemy-infested ground to the south.

By now it was dark. Fox Company, according to plan, was supposed to have fought its way from Toktong Pass. Owing to the burden of casualties and the ring of Chinese around its distant hilltop, it was not able to do so. Litzenberg, concerned lest 1/7 be similarly trapped in the gorge, recalled Davis to Yudam-ni. The relief force returned at 2110 with Charlie Company and its 46 wounded.

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill
Second Night's Attacks on Fox Hill

Fox Company, with 54 wounded on its hands, spent an active day at the top of Toktong Pass.[23] After the Chinese attacks subsided in the morning, Barber's men collected ammunition and weapons from Marine casualties and Communist dead. Included among enemy arms were several of the familiar U.S. Thompson submachine guns and Model 1903 Springfield rifles.

At 1030 a flight of Australian F-51s (Mustangs) blasted CCF positions around Toktong Pass, particularly a rocky promontory several hundred yards to the north on Hill 1653, which the enemy already had transformed into a redoubt. Within the Marine perimeter, the wounded were placed in two tents on a sheltered hillside where Navy corpsmen attended them constantly. According to Lieutenant McCarthy's account, the medics, "by candlelight . . . changed the bandages, slipped men in and out of sleeping bags, warmed C-rations for the men, and melted the morphine syrettes in their mouths before the injections. Because the plasma was frozen the corpsmen had to watch men die for the lack of it."

During late morning and the afternoon, Barber sent out patrols to screen the areas immediately beyond his lines. The scouting parties met only sniper fire, but other evidence of enemy activity indicated that Fox Hill was completely surrounded. An appeal for resupply by air was answered later in the day when Marine R5Ds dropped medical kits and ammunition at the base of the hill. At a cost of two wounded, the precious supplies were recovered before sundown.

Fox Company's perimeter for the night of 28–29 November was the same as before, except that the ranks were noticeably thinner. Nevertheless, a feeling of confidence pervaded the men on the hilltop; they believed implicitly that they could hold. They believed it despite the fact that strong relief columns from both Yudam-ni and Hagaru had been unable to break through to them.

All was quiet on Fox Hill until 0215, when CCF mortar rounds killed one Marine and wounded two others in the 3d Platoon, now reduced to some 20 able-bodied men. About 40 Chinese made a penetration in this area after a series of probing attacks all along the line. One Marine crew turned its light machine gun about and brought it to bear on the bunched-up attackers with deadly effect. A gap in the lines on both flanks caused the platoon to pull back about 20 yards. At sunrise, however, Staff Sergeant John D. Audas led a counterattack which regained the lost ground at a cost of only two wounded.

The second night's fighting cost Fox Company a total of five killed and 29 wounded. Both Captain Barber and Lieutenant McCarthy suffered leg wounds, but continued in action after receiving first aid. The company commander directed that the open ground on Fox Hill be marked with colored parachutes from the previous day's air drops. This provision resulted in accurate drops and easy recoveries when Marine transport planes arrived at 1030 on the 29th with ammunition and supplies. Shortly afterwards First Lieutenant Floyd J. Englehardt of VMO–6 landed with batteries for the SCR-300 and 619 radios. Although his helicopter was damaged by hits from long-distance Chinese fire, he managed to take off safely.

Air drops that afternoon by C–119s of the Combat Cargo Command missed the marked zone at times, and much of the mortar ammunition landed about 500 yards to the west of the perimeter. Lieutenant Peterson, already twice wounded, led Marines who recovered some of the rounds but were pinned down by CCF fire and got back, one at a time, with difficulty. At dusk, under cover of fire from How Battery, another detail recovered the ammunition without enemy interference.

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill
Not Enough Tents for Casualties

The night of 28–29 November passed with only minor activity in the Yudam-ni area for the infantry of RCT-5; but the regimental surgeon, Lieutenant Commander Chester M. Lessenden (MC) USN, had his hands full. During the fighting of the previous night the joint aid station had been west of Yudam-ni. Tents sheltering the wounded were riddled by enemy small-arms fire from the North Ridge battle, and on the morning of the 28th the aid station displaced to a safer location southwest of Yudam-ni. The seriously wounded filled the few tents initially available, and the others were protected from freezing by being placed outdoors, side by side, and covered by tarpaulins while lying on straw. Primitive as this hospitalization was, DOW cases were no more than might have been expected under better conditions.[24]

The crowding in the aid stations was much relieved on 30 November by the erection of sufficient tentage by 4/11 to provide shelter for approximately 500 casualties.

"Everything was frozen," said Lessenden later in an interview with Keyes Beech, a press correspondent. "Plasma froze and the bottles broke. We couldn't use plasma because it wouldn't go into solution and the tubes would clog up with particles. We couldn't change dressings because we had to work with gloves on to keep our hands from freezing.

"We couldn't cut a man's clothes off to get at a wound because he would freeze to death. Actually a man was often better off if we left him alone. Did you ever try to stuff a wounded man into a sleeping bag?"[25]

The joint defense plan for the night of 28–29 November provided for RCT-5 to take the responsibility for the west and north sectors, while RCT-7 was to defend to the east, south and southwest. Enemy mortar fire was received during the night in both regimental zones, but there were few infantry contacts. This lack of activity could only be interpreted as a temporary lull while the enemy regrouped for further efforts.

As for the next attempt to relieve Fox Company and open the MSR to Hagaru, the joint planners at Yudam-ni decided on the night of the 28th that all troops of the two regiments now in line were needed for defense. There were actually no men to spare for a relief column, and yet Division had ordered the effort to be made. The solution seemed to be a composite battalion consisting of perimeter reserve units. In order to replace these troops, personnel were to be assigned from headquarters units and artillery batteries. This was the genesis of the Composite Battalion, consisting of elements from Able Company of 1/5, Baker Company of 1/7 and George Company of 3/7, reinforced by a 75mm recoilless section and two 81mm mortar sections from RCT-7 battalions. These troops were directed to assemble at the 1/7 CP on the morning of the 29th, with Major Warren Morris, executive officer of 3/7, in command.[26]

At 0800 the striking force moved out southward with the dual mission of relieving Captain Barber and opening up the MSR all the way to Hagaru. After an advance of 300 yards, heavy machine-gun fire hit the column from both sides of the road. Groups of Chinese could be plainly seen on the ridges, affording remunerative targets for the 81mm mortars and 75 recoilless guns. Forward air controllers soon had the Corsairs overhead to lead the way. At a point about 4500 yards south of Yudam-ni, however, Marine planes dropped two messages warning that the enemy was entrenched in formidable force along the high ground on both sides of the MSR.

Similar messages were delivered by the aircraft to the regimental CP at Yudam-ni. They caused Colonel Litzenberg to modify the orders of the Composite Battalion and direct that it relieve Fox Company and return to Yudam-ni before dark.

By this time Morris' troops had become engaged with large numbers of Chinese who were being

constantly reinforced by groups moving into the area along draws masked from friendly ground observation. Litzenberg was informed on a basis of air observation that Morris was in danger of being surrounded, and at 1315 he sent an urgent message directing the force to return to Yudam-ni. Contact was broken off immediately with the aid of air and artillery cover and the Composite Battalion withdrew without further incident.

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Chapter 9. Fox Hill
The Turning Point of 30 November

The Yudam-ni area had a relatively quiet night on 29–30 November. But even though there was little fighting, the continued sub-zero cold imposed a strain on the men when at least a fifty per cent alert must be maintained at all times. This was the third virtually sleepless night for troops who had not had a warm meal since the Thanksgiving feast.

"Seldom has the human frame been so savagely punished and continued to function," wrote Keyes Beech. "Many men discovered reserves of strength they never knew they possessed. Some survived and fought on will power alone."[27]

Certainly there was no lack of will power on Fox Hill as Captain Barber called his platoon leaders together at about 1700 on 29 November and told them not to expect any immediate relief. Chinese attacks, he warned, might be heavier than ever this third night, but they would be beaten off as usual.

The area was quiet until about 0200 on the 30th, when an Oriental voice called out of the darkness in English, "Fox Company, you are surrounded. I am a lieutenant from the 11th Marines. The Chinese will give you warm clothes and good treatment. Surrender now!"[28] The Marines replied with 81mm illumination shells which revealed targets for the machine guns as the Chinese advanced across the valley from the south.

Thanks to the afternoon's air drops, Fox Hill had enough mortar ammunition and hand grenades for the first time, and good use was made of both. An estimated three CCF companies were cut to pieces at a cost of a single Marine wounded.

At sunrise, as the Corsairs roared over, all tension vanished on Fox Hill. For it was generally agreed that if the Chinese couldn't take the position in three nights, they would never make the grade.

The troops in the Yudam-ni area also felt that the enemy had shot his bolt without achieving anything more than a few local gains at a terrible cost in killed and wounded. It was recognized that some hard fighting lay ahead, but the morning of the 30th was a moral turning point both in the foxhole and the CP.

It was evident even on the platoon level at Yudam-ni that big events were in the wind. Marine enlisted men are traditionally shrewd at sizing up a tactical situation, and they sensed that a change was at hand. For three days and nights they had been on the defensive, fighting for their lives, and now the word was passed from one man to another that the Marines were about to snatch the initiative.

The regimental commanders and staff officers had a worry lifted from their minds when a helicopter brought the news that Hagaru had passed a quiet night after repulsing large enemy forces in a dusk-to-dawn battle the night before. It would have added enormously to the task of the Yudam-ni troops, of course, if the Chinese had seized that forward base with its air strip and stockpiles of supplies. Thus it was heartening to learn that a single reinforced Marine infantry battalion and an assortment of service troops had beaten off the attacks of large elements of a Chinese division at Hagaru. The following two chapters will be devoted to an account of that critical battle and its aftermath before returning to Yudam-ni.

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Chapter 10. Hagaru's Night of Fire

THE IMPORTANCE of Hagaru in the Marine scheme of things was starkly obvious after the Chinese cut the MSR. Hagaru, with its supply dumps, hospital facilities and partly finished C–47 airstrip, was the one base offering the 1st Marine Division a reasonable hope of uniting its separated elements. Hagaru had to be held at all costs, yet only a reinforced infantry battalion (less one rifle company and a third of its Weapons Company) and two batteries of artillery were available for the main burden of the defense.

Owing to transportation shortages, the 3d Battalion of the 1st Marines did not arrive at Hagaru until after dusk on 26 November. Even so, it had been necessary to leave George Company and a platoon of Weapons Company behind at Chigyong for lack of vehicles.[1]

The parka-clad Marines, climbing down stiffly from the trucks, had their first sight of a panorama which reminded one officer of old photographs of a gold-rush mining camp in the Klondike. Tents, huts, and supply dumps were scattered in a seemingly haphazard fashion about a frozen plain crossed by a frozen river and bordered on three sides by low hills rising to steep heights on the eastern outskirts. Although many of the buildings had survived the bombings, the battered town at the foot of the ice-locked Chosin Reservoir was not a spectacle calculated to raise the spirits of newcomers.

It was too late to relieve 2/7 (–) that evening. Lieutenant Colonels Ridge and Lockwood agreed that Fox Company, 7th Marines, and Weapons Company (–) of 2/7 would occupy positions jointly with 3/1. The hours of darkness passed quietly and relief was completed the next day. Fox Company then moved to its new positions near Toktong Pass.

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Chapter 10. Hagaru's Night of Fire
Four-Mile Perimeter Required

On the morning of 27 November, of course, an all-out enemy attack was still in the realm of speculation. But it was evident to Lieutenant Colonel Ridge, CO of 3/1, that one to two infantry regiments and supporting arms would be required for an adequate defense of Hagaru. With only a battalion (–) at his disposal, he realized that he must make the best possible use of the ground. For the purposes of a survey, he sent his S–3, Major Trompeter, on a walking reconnaissance with Major Simmons, CO of Weapons Company and 3/1 Supporting Arms Coordinator.

After a circuit of the natural amphitheater, the two officers agreed that even to hold the reverse slopes would require a perimeter of more than four miles in circumference (see Map 17). The personnel resources of 3/1 would thus be stretched to an average of one man for nearly seven yards of front. This meant that the commanding officer must take his choice between being weak everywhere or strong in a few sectors to the neglect of others. In either event, some areas along the perimeter would probably have to be defended by supporting fires alone.[2]

"Under the circumstances," commented General Smith, "and considering the mission assigned to the 1st Marine Division, an infantry component of one battalion was all that could be spared for the defense of Hagaru. This battalion was very adequately supported by air, and had sufficient artillery and tanks for its purposes."[3]
Click here to view map

The terrain gave the enemy two major covered avenues of approach for troop movements. One was the hill mass east of Hagaru, the other a draw leading into the southwest side of the town, where the new airstrip was being constructed. Nor could the possibility of a surprise attack from some other quarter be dismissed entirely, since CCF observers would be able to watch Marine preparations from the surrounding hills in daylight hours.

Lieutenant Colonel Ridge decided that final troop dispositions must depend not only on terrain but equally on intelligence as to enemy capabilities. Until he had more information, the units of 3/1 were to remain in the areas formerly occupied by 2/7.

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Chapter 10. Hagaru's Night of Fire
Attempts to Clear MSR

The Battalion CP had been set up in a pyramidal tent at the angle of the road to Yudam-ni. Most of the day on the 27th was given over to improving positions. At the southwest end of the perimeter, First Lieutenant Fisher's Item Company took over from Captain Barber's Fox Company, the only rifle company of 2/7 remaining at Hagaru.

On the strength of preliminary S–2 reports, Ridge instructed the commanders of his two rifle companies to improve their sectors, which included the entire south and southwest curve of the perimeter. All the Division Headquarters troops except one motor convoy had reached Hagaru by the 27th, and it was due to leave Hungnam the next morning. The new Division CP was located in the northeast quarter of town, near the long concrete bridge over the frozen Changjin River. Rows of heated tents surrounded a Japanese type frame house repaired for the occupancy of General Smith, who was expected by helicopter in the morning. Already functioning at the CP were elements of the General Staff Sections and Headquarters Company.[4]

The busiest Marines at Hagaru on the 27th were the men of the 1st Engineer Battalion. While a Company B platoon built tent decks for the Division CP, detachments of Company A were at work on the maintenance of the MSR in the area, and Company D had the job of hacking out the new airstrip. Apparently the latter project had its "sidewalk contractors" even in sub-zero weather, for this comment found its way into the company report:

"Dozer work [was] pleasing to the eye of those who wanted activity but contributed little to the overall earth-moving problem of 90,000 cubic yards of cut and 60,000 cubic yards of fill."[5]

Motor graders and scrapers with a 5.8 cubic yard capacity had been moved up from Hamhung. So difficult did it prove to get a bite of the frozen earth that steel teeth were welded to the blades. When the pan was filled, however, the earth froze to the cutting edges until it could be removed only by means of a jack hammer.

The strip was about one-fourth completed on the 27th, according to minimum estimates of the length required. Work went on that night as usual under the flood lights.[6] Not until the small hours of the morning did the first reports reach Hagaru of the CCF attacks on Yudam-ni and Fox Hill.

Some remnants of 2/7 were still at Hagaru, for lack of transportation, when Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood, commanding officer of the battalion, received a dispatch from Colonel Litzenberg directing him to proceed to Toktong Pass and assist Fox Company. At 0530 he requested the "loan" of a rifle company of 3/1 to reinforce elements of Weapons Company (–), 2/7. Lieutenant Colonel Ridge could spare only a platoon from How Company, and at 0830 the attempt was cancelled. An hour later Weapons Company and three tanks from the 2d Platoon of Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, made another effort. They pushed half-way to the objective, only to be turned back by heavy Chinese small-arms and mortar fire from the high ground on both sides of the road. Supporting fires from 3/1 helped the column to break off contact and return to Hagaru at 1500.[7]

No better success attended a reinforced platoon of How Company, 3/1, accompanied by three Company D tanks, when it set out on the road to Koto-ri. On the outskirts of Hagaru, within sight of Captain Corley's CP, the men were forced to climb down from their vehicles and engage in a hot fire fight. They estimated the enemy force at about 50, but an OY pilot dropped a message warning that some 300 Chinese were moving up on the flanks of the patrol. The Marines managed to disengage at 1530, with the aid of mortar and artillery fires from Hagaru, and returned to the perimeter with losses of one killed and five wounded.[8]

A similar patrol from Item Company, 3/1, struck off to the southwest of the perimeter in the direction of Hungmun-ni. Late in the morning of the 28th, this reinforced platoon encountered an estimated 150 enemy and

called for artillery and mortar fires. After dispersing this CCF group, the patrol routed a second enemy detachment an hour later after a brief fire fight.[9]

Any lingering doubts as to the extent of the Chinese attack on the MSR were dispelled by reports from the OY and HO3S–1 pilots of VMO–6. They disclosed that defended enemy road blocks had cut off Yudam-ni, Fox Hill, Hagaru, and Koto-ri from any physical contact with one another. The advance units of the 1st Marine Division had been sliced into four isolated segments as CCF columns penetrated as far south as the Chinhung-ni area.[10]

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Chapter 10. Hagaru's Night of Fire
Intelligence as to CCF Capabilities

There was no question at all in the minds of Lieutenant Colonel Ridge and his officers as to whether the Chinese would attack at Hagaru. As early as the morning of the 27th, the problem had simply been one of when, where, and in what strength. It was up to the S–2 Section to provide the answers, and upon their correctness would depend the fate of Hagaru, perhaps even of the 1st Marine Division.

Second Lieutenant Richard E. Carey, the S–2, was a newcomer to the battalion staff, recently transferred from a George Company infantry platoon. His group consisted of an assistant intelligence chief, Staff Sergeant Saverio P. Gallo, an interpreter, and four scout observers.[11] There were also two CIC agents assigned to 3/1 by Division G–2.

At Hagaru, as at Majon-ni, the Marines had won respect at the outset by allowing the Korean residents all privileges of self-government which could be reconciled with military security. The police department and town officials had been permitted to continue functioning. They in turn briefed the population as to restricted areas and security regulations, particularly curfew. Korean civilians entering Hagaru through Marine road blocks were searched before being taken to the police station where they were questioned by an interrogation team from the S–2 Section.

Hagaru's resemblance to a gold-rush mining camp was heightened on the 27th by a tremendous influx both of troops and Koreans from outlying districts. A large truck convoy from Headquarters Battalion arrived to set up the new Division CP, and detachments from various Marine or Army service units entered in a seemingly endless stream. The Korean refugees had much the same story to tell; most of them came from areas to the north and west of Hagaru, and they had been evicted from their homes by large numbers of CCF troops.

Carey instructed his CIC agents to converse with incoming Koreans and learn everything possible about the enemy situation. Again, as at Majon-ni, people who had been thoroughly indoctrinated with Communism were found "highly co-operative." As untrained observers, however, their estimates of CCF numbers and equipment could not be taken too literally. Since their statements agreed that the enemy was in close proximity, Carey decided to take the risk of sending his two CIC agents on the dangerous mission of establishing direct contact. They were enjoined to make a circuit of the perimeter, mingling whenever possible with the Chinese and determining the areas of heaviest concentration.

The results went beyond Carey's fondest expectations. Not only did his agents return safely from their long hike over the hills, but they brought back vital information. Well led and equipped Chinese Communist units had been encountered to the south and west of Hagaru. And since Marine air also reported unusual activity in this area, it was a reasonable assumption that the enemy was concentrated there approximately in division strength.

This answered the questions as to "how many" and "where." There remained the problem as to "when" the attack might be expected, and again on the 28th Carey sent out his CIC agents to make direct contact. "I expected little or no information," he recollected, "but apparently these men had a way with them. Upon reporting back, they told me that they had talked freely with enemy troops, including several officers who boasted that they would occupy Hagaru on the night of 28 November."

Major enemy units were reported to be five miles from the perimeter. Dusk was at approximately 1800, with complete darkness setting in shortly afterwards. Adding the estimate of three and a half hours for Chinese movements to the line of departure, the S-2 Section calculated that the enemy could attack as early as 2130 on the night of the 28th from the south and west in division strength.[12]

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Chapter 10. Hagaru's Night of Fire
Positions of Marine Units

These intelligence estimates were accepted by Lieutenant Colonel Ridge as the basis for his planning and troop dispositions. As the main bastion of defense, the tied-in sectors of How and Item Companies were extended to include the south and southwest sides of the perimeter—nearly one-third of the entire circumference—in a continuous line 2300 yards in length, or more than a mile and a quarter. Each platoon front thus averaged about 380 yards, which meant that supporting arms must make up for lack of numbers.[13]

East Hill, considered the second most likely point of enemy attack, was to be assigned to George Company on arrival. Captain Sitter's outfit had orders to depart the Chigyong area on the morning of the 28th, so that it could be expected at Hagaru before dark.

The southeast quarter of the perimeter, between East Hill and the left flank of How Company, was to be held by the following units: (1) Weapons Company (less detachments reinforcing the rifle companies and its 81mm mortars emplaced near the battalion CP) manning a road block on the route to Koto-ri and defending the south nose of East Hill; (2) Dog Company, 1st Engineer Battalion (less men at work on the airstrip), occupying the ground south of the concrete bridge; and (3) Dog Battery, 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, which had the mission of covering 75 per cent of the perimeter with observed indirect fire and 25 per cent with direct fire.

These dispositions left a gap between Weapons Company and the engineer and artillery units on the west bank of the Changjin River. But this stretch of frozen marshland was so well covered by fire that an enemy attack here would have been welcomed.

The first reports of the CCF onslaughts at Yudam-ni and Fox Hill, as interpreted by Lieutenant Colonel Ridge, "clearly indicated that no time was to be lost at buttoning up the Hagaru perimeter." He called on Colonel Bowser, the Division G–3, on the morning of the 28th and recommended that an overall defense commander be designated with operational control over all local units. Ridge also requested that George Company and the 41st Commando be expedited in their movement to Hagaru.

Before a decision could be reached, General Smith arrived by helicopter and opened the Division CP at 1100. A Marine rear echelon had remained at Hungnam to cope with supply requirements. Colonel Francis A. McAlister, the G–4, left in command, accomplished during the forthcoming campaign what General Smith termed "a magnificent job" in rendering logistical support.[14]

The CP at Hagaru had been open only half an hour when General Almond arrived in a VMO–6 helicopter to confer with the Division commander. Departing at 1255, he visited the 31st Infantry troops who had been hard hit the night before by CCF attacks east of the Chosin Reservoir. On his return to Hamhung, the Corps commander was informed that CinCFE had directed him to fly immediately to Tokyo for a conference. There he learned that the Eighth Army was in full retreat, with some units taking heavy losses both in personnel and equipment. Generals Almond, Walker, Hickey, Willoughby, Whitney, and Wright took turns at briefing the commander in chief during a meeting which lasted from midnight to 0130.[15]

At Hagaru it was becoming more apparent hourly to Ridge that his prospects of employing Captain Sitter's company on East Hill were growing dim. As he learned later, the unit had left Chigyong that morning in the trucks of Company B, 7th Motor Transport Battalion, commanded by Captain Clovis M. Jones. Sitter was met at Koto-ri by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Rickert, executive officer of RCT–1, and directed to report to the regimental S–3, Major Robert E. Lorigan. Efforts to open up the road to Hagaru had failed, he was told, and it would be necessary for George Company to remain overnight at Koto-ri.[16]

The probability of such an outcome had already been accepted by Ridge on the basis of the resistance met on the road to Koto-ri by his How Company patrol. With this development added to his worries, he received a telephone call at 1500 from Colonel Bowser, informing him that he had been named defense commander at Hagaru by General Smith.[17]

Just ten minutes later a single CCF shell, assumed to be of 76mm caliber, exploded in the Battalion CP area and fatally wounded Captain Paul E. Storaasli, the S–4. The perimeter was so cluttered with tents and dumps that artillery fire at random could hardly have been wasted; but the enemy gun remained silent the rest of the day, doubtless to avert Marine counter-battery reprisals.

Only three hours of daylight remained when the newly designated defense commander summoned unit commanders to an initial conference. It was not made clear just what troops had been placed under his operational control. “A primary reason,” commented Ridge, “was that no one knew what units were there, this being compounded by the numerous small elements such as detachments, advance parties, etc., of which many were Corps and ROK units. Hence, the Battalion S-1 and his assistants were a combination of town criers and census takers. We did, however, get most of the commanders of major units (if such they could be called) to the initial conference, but the process of locating and identifying smaller units was thereafter a continuous process which we really never accurately completed.”[18]

The larger outfits could be summoned to the conference by telephone but it was necessary to send out runners in other instances. With George Company not available, the question of defending East Hill loomed large. Ridge decided against all proposals that one of the two rifle companies be used for that purpose. On the strength of the S–2 report, he preferred to concentrate as much strength as possible against an attack from the southwest. This meant taking his chances on East Hill with such service troops as he could scrape up, and it was plain that a strong CCF effort in this quarter would have to be met in large part by fire power from supporting arms.

The two main detachments selected for East Hill (excluding the south nose) were from Dog Company of the 10th Engineer (C) Battalion, USA, and elements of X corps Headquarters. Since the mission called for control of mortar and artillery fires as well as tactical leadership, two officers of Weapons Company, 3/1, were assigned—Captain John C. Shelnutt to the Army engineer company, and First Lieutenant John L. Burke, Jr., to the Headquarters troops. Each was to be accompanied by a Marine radio (SCR 300) operator.

Smaller detachments were later sent to East Hill from two other service units—the 1st Service Battalion, 1st Marine Division, and the 4th Signal Battalion of X Corps.

The Antitank Company of the 7th Marines defended the area to the north of East Hill. Next came How Battery, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, which had the primary mission of supporting Fox Company, 2/7, on the hill near Toktong Pass. But by moving gun trails the cannoneers could with some difficulty fire on the 270º arc of the perimeter stretching from the right flank of Item Company around to the north nose of East Hill.

Between the sectors held by How Battery, 3/11, and Item Company, 3/1, were troops of five Marine units: Regulating Detachment, 1st Service Battalion; 1st Motor Transport Battalion; Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 2 (MTACS–2); Division Headquarters Battalion; and H&S Company 3/1. The only other unit in this quarter was Weapons Company (–), 2/7, which held the road block on the route to Yudam-ni.

At the conference it was decided that since Lieutenant Colonel Charles L. Banks’ Regulating Detachment had taken the lead in organizing the Supply Area on the north side of Hagaru, the arc of the perimeter east of the river and west of East Hill was to be made into a secondary defense zone. Banks thus became in effect a sub-sector commander. The only infantry troops in the Supply Area being detachments of 2/7 units, it was also agreed that tactical decisions concerning the zone should be discussed with the two ranking battalion officers — Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood, the commander, and Major Sawyer, the executive.[19]

These matters having been settled, the conference broke up shortly after 1700 and the various commanders hastened back to their outfits to make last-minute preparations for the night’s attack. A strange hush

had fallen over the perimeter, broken only by the occasional crackle of small-arms fire, and the damp air felt like snow.

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CCF Attack from the Southwest

How and Item Companies were ready. All platoon positions were well dug in, though the earth was frozen to a depth of six to ten inches.

The men of Item Company used their heads as well as hands after Lieutenant Fisher managed to obtain a thousand sandbags and several bags of C3. This explosive was utilized in ration cans to make improvised shape charges which blasted a hole through the frozen crust of snow and earth. Then it became a simple matter to enlarge the hole and place the loose dirt in sandbags to form a parapet.[20] This ingenious system resulted in de luxe foxholes and mortar emplacements attaining to the dignity of field fortifications.

Both company fronts bristled with concertinas, trip flares, booby traps, and five-gallon cans of gasoline rigged with thermite bombs for illumination. Three probable routes of enemy attack channeled the low hills to the southwest—a main draw leading to the junction between the two company sectors, and a lesser draw providing an approach to each. The ground in front of the junction had been mined, and two tanks from the Provisional Platoon were stationed in this quarter. Detachments from Weapons Company also reinforced both rifle companies. Thus the six platoons faced the enemy in the following order:

Click here to view table

Beginning at 1700, hot food was served to all hands in rotation. A fifty per cent alert went into effect after dark as the men were sent back on regular schedule for coffee and a smoke in warming tents located as close to the front as possible. The first snowflakes fluttered down about 1950, muffling the clank of the dozers at work as usual under the floodlights on the airstrip behind the How Company's sector. Just before 2130, the expected time of CCF attack, both company commanders ordered a hundred per cent alert, but the enemy did not show up on schedule. It was just over an hour later when three red flares and three blasts on a police whistle signaled the beginning of the attack. Soon trip flares and exploding booby traps revealed the approach of probing patrols composed of five to ten men.

A few minutes later, white phosphorus mortar shells scorched the Marine front line with accurate aim. The main CCF attack followed shortly afterwards, with both company sectors being hit by assault waves closing in to grenade-throwing distance.

The enemy in turn was staggered by the full power of Marine supporting arms. Snowflakes reduced an already low visibility, but fields of fire had been carefully charted and artillery and mortar concentrations skillfully registered in. Still, the Communists kept on coming in spite of frightful losses. Second Lieutenant Wayne L. Hall, commanding the 3d Platoon in the center of Item Company, was jumped by three Chinese whom he killed with a .45 caliber automatic pistol after his carbine jammed. The third foe pitched forward into Hall's foxhole.

On the left flank, tied in with How Company, First Lieutenant Robert C. Needham's 2d Platoon sustained most of the attack on Item Company. The fire of Second Lieutenant James J. Boley's 60mm mortars and Second Lieutenant John H. Miller's light machine guns was concentrated in this area. It seemed impossible that enemy burp guns could miss such a target as Lieutenant Fisher, six feet two inches in height and weighing 235 pounds. But he continued to pass up and down the line, pausing at each foxhole for a few words of encouragement. By midnight the enemy pressure on Needham's and Hall's lines had slackened, and on the right flank Second Lieutenant Mayhlon L. Degernes' 1st Platoon received only light attacks.

This was also the case on the left flank of How Company, where Second Lieutenant Ronald A. Mason's

2d Platoon saw little action as compared to the other two. A front of some 800 yards in the center of the 2300-yard Marine line, including two platoon positions and parts of two others, bore the brunt of the CCF assault on How and Item Companies.

Captain Corley had just visited his center platoon when the first attacks hit How Company. Second Lieutenant Wendell C. Endsley was killed while the company commander was on his way to Second Lieutenant Roscoe L. Barrett's 1st Platoon, on the right, which soon had its left flank heavily engaged.

Never was CCF skill at night attacks displayed more effectively. Barrett concluded that the Chinese actually rolled down the slope into the How Company lines, so that they seemed to emerge from the very earth. The 3d Platoon, already thinned by accurate CCF white phosphorus mortar fire, was now further reduced in strength by grenades and burp gun bursts. About this time the company wire net went out and Corley could keep in touch with his platoons only by runners. The battalion telephone line also being cut, he reported his situation by radio to the Battalion CP.

Two wiremen were killed while trying to repair the line. The Chinese continued to come on in waves, each preceded by concentrations of light and heavy mortar fire on the right and center of the How Company position. About 0030 the enemy broke through in the 3d Platoon area and penetrated as far back as the Company CP. A scene of pandemonium ensued, the sound of Chinese trumpets and whistles adding to the confusion as it became difficult to tell friend from foe. "Tracers were so thick," recalled Sergeant Keith E. Davis, "that they lighted up the darkness like a Christmas tree."[21]

Corley and five enlisted men operated as a supporting fire team while First Lieutenant Harrison F. Betts rounded up as many men as he could find and tried to plug the gap in the 3d Platoon line. This outnumbered group was swept aside as the next wave of CCF attack carried to the rear of How Company and threatened the engineers at work under the floodlights.

A few Chinese actually broke through and fired at the Marines operating the dozers. Second Lieutenant Robert L. McFarland, the equipment officer, led a group of Dog Company engineers who counter-attacked and cleared the airstrip at the cost of a few casualties. Then the men resumed work under the floodlights.[22]

The Battalion reserve, if such it could be called, consisted of any service troops who could be hastily gathered to meet the emergency. Shortly before midnight Ridge sent a platoon-strength group of X Corps signalmen and engineers under First Lieutenant Grady P. Mitchell to the aid of How Company. Mitchell was killed upon arrival and First Lieutenant Horace L. Johnson, Jr., deployed the reinforcements in a shallow ditch as a company reserve.

About midnight the fight had reached such a pitch of intensity that no spot in the perimeter was safe. The Company C medical clearing station, only a few hundred yards to the rear of Item Company, was repeatedly hit by machine gun bullets whipping through the wooden walls as surgeons operated on the wounded. The Division CP also took hits, and a bullet which penetrated General Smith's quarters produced unusual sound effects when it ricocheted off pots and pans in the galley.[23]

The Chinese seemed to be everywhere in the How Company zone. Shortly after midnight they surrounded the CP, portable galley and provision tent. "It is my personal opinion," commented Captain Corley, "that if the enemy had decided to effect a major breakthrough at this time, he would have experienced practically no difficulty. However, he seemed content to wander in and around the 3d Platoon, galley and hut areas."[24]

The Chinese, in short, demonstrated that they knew better how to create a penetration than to exploit one. Once inside the How Company lines, they disintegrated into looting groups or purposeless tactical fragments. Clothing appealed most to the plunderers, and a wounded Marine in the 3d Platoon area saved his life by pretending to be dead while Communists stripped him of his parka.

About 0030 the Battalion CP advised Corley by radio that more reinforcements were on the way. Lieutenant Johnson met the contingent, comprising about 50 service troops, and guided them into the company

area, where they were deployed as an added reserve to defend the airstrip.

Item Company was still having it hot and heavy but continued to beat off all CCF assaults. Elements of Weapons Company, manning the south road block, came under attack at 0115. Apparently a small enemy column had lost direction and blundered into a field of fire covered by heavy machine guns. The hurricane of Marine fire caught the Communists before they deployed and the result was virtual annihilation.

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East Hill Lost to Enemy

Half an hour later, with the situation improving in the How Company zone, the Battalion CP had its first alarming reports of reverses on East Hill. The terrain itself had offered difficulties to men scrambling up the steep, icy slopes with heavy burdens of ammunition. These detachments of service troops, moreover, included a large proportion of newly recruited ROKs who had little training and understood no English.
Click here to view map

The largest of the East Hill units, Company D of the 10th Engineer Combat Battalion, commanded by Captain Philip A. Kulbes, USA, was composed of 77 American enlisted men and 90 ROKS. Combat equipment (in addition to individual weapons) consisted of four .50 caliber machine guns, five light .30 caliber machine guns, and six 3.5 rocket launchers.[25]

The Army engineers had arrived at Hagaru at 1200 on the 28th, shortly before the enemy cut the MSR. After being assigned to the East Hill sector during the afternoon, the company used the few remaining hours of daylight to move vehicles and gear back to an equipment park in the perimeter. It was 2030 before the four platoons got into position on East Hill after an exhausting climb in the darkness with heavy loads of ammunition. Some use was made of existing holes, but most of the men were not dug in when the Chinese attacked.

On the left the collapse of a ROK platoon attached to X Corps Headquarters led rapidly to confusion everywhere on East Hill. Captain Shelnutt, the Marine officer assigned to the Army engineers, found that he could not close the gap by extending the line to the left. Nor did the men, particularly the ROKs, have the training to side-slip to the left under fire and beat off flank attacks. The consequence was a general withdrawal on East Hill, attended in some instances by demoralization. Shelnutt was killed as the four engineer platoons fell back some 250 yards in "a tight knot," according to Lieutenant Norman R. Rosen, USA, commander of the 3d Platoon.

This was the situation as reported by the Marine radio operator, PFC Bruno Podolak, who voluntarily remained as an observer at his post, now behind enemy lines. At 0230 a telephone call to Colonel Bowser from the 3/1 CP was recorded in the message blank as follows:

"How Company still catching hell and are about ready to launch counterattack to restore line. About an hour ago, enemy appeared on East Hill. A group of enemy sneaked up to a bunch of Banks' men and hand-grenaded hell out of them and took position. Sending executive officer over to see if we can get some fire on that area. Should be able to restore the line but liable to be costly. Reserve practically nil. Do have a backstop behind the break in How lines on this side of airstrip, composed of engineers and other odds and ends."[26]

At 0400 there was little to prevent the enemy from making a complete breakthrough on East Hill and attacking the Division CP and the supply dumps. A friendly foothold had been retained on reverse slopes of the southern nose, but the northern part was held only by artillery fires. Along the road at the bottom of East Hill a thin line of service troops with several tanks and machine guns formed a weak barrier.

All indications point to the fact that the Chinese themselves were not in sufficient strength to follow up their success. Their attack on East Hill was apparently a secondary and diversionary effort in support of the main assault on the sectors held by How and Item Companies. At any rate, the enemy contented himself with holding the high ground he had won.

Some of the defenders of East Hill had fought with bravery which is the more admirable because of their lack of combat training. Battle is a business for specialists, and Lieutenant Rosen relates that the Army engineers "had a great deal of difficulty with our weapons because they were cold and fired sluggishly. We had gone into

action so unexpectedly that it had not occurred to us to clean the oil off our weapons." As an example of the difficulties imposed by the language barrier, the officers were given to understand by the ROKs that they had no more ammunition. "Weeks later," commented Rosen, "we found that most of them had not fired their ammunition this night, but continued to carry it."[27]

In view of such circumstances, the service troops put up a creditable if losing fight in the darkness on East Hill. The 77 Americans of the Army engineer company suffered losses of 10 KIA, 25 WIA, and nine MIA; and of the 90 ROKs, about 50 were killed, wounded, or missing, chiefly the latter.[28]

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The Volcano of Supporting Fires

As usual, the men in the thick of the fight saw only what happened in their immediate area. The scene as a whole was witnessed by a young Marine officer of Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion, on duty at a sawmill two miles north of Hagaru. From the high ground he could look south down into the perimeter, and the awesome spectacle of a night battle made him think of a volcano in eruption. Gun flashes stabbing the darkness were fused into a great ring of living flame, and the thousands of explosions blended into one steady, low-pitched roar.[29]

Seldom in Marine history have supporting arms played as vital a part as during this night at Hagaru. It is possible that a disaster was averted on East Hill when the Marines of Captain Benjamin S. Read's How Battery shifted trails and plugged the hole in the line with howitzer fires alone. Lieutenant Colonel Banks and Major Walter T. Warren, commanding the antitank company of the 7th Marines, acted as observers. Reporting by telephone to the gun pits, they directed the sweating gunners so accurately that an enemy attack would have come up against a curtain of fire.[30]

Captain Strohmenger's Dog Battery had been attached to 3/1 so long that a high degree of co-ordination existed. His 105s fired about 1200 rounds that night, and POW interrogations disclosed that enemy concentrations in rear areas were repeatedly broken up.

When CCF guns replied, shortly before midnight, there was danger of a fuel or ammunition dump being hit and starting a chain reaction of detonations in the crowded perimeter. Strohmenger ordered five of his howitzers to cease fire while he moved the sixth out about 150 yards to act as a decoy. Its flashes drew fire from the enemy, as he had hoped, revealing the positions of the Chinese artillery. Dog Battery officers set up two aiming circles and calculated the range and deflection. Then the command was given for all six Marine howitzers to open up. The enemy guns were silenced for the night. A later survey established that two CCF 76mm guns had been destroyed and two others removed.[31]

The 60mm mortars of the two rifle companies fired a total of more than 3200 rounds; and on both fronts the heavy machine guns of Weapons Company added tremendously to the fire power. Illuminating shells being scarce, two Korean houses on the Item Company's front were set ablaze by orders of Lieutenant Fisher. The flames seemed to attract CCF soldiers like moths, and the machine guns of the two tanks stationed here reaped a deadly harvest. Curiously enough, the Chinese apparently did not realize what excellent targets they made when silhouetted against the burning buildings.

By 0400 it was evident that the enemy's main effort had failed. No further attacks of any consequence were sustained by the two rifle companies. It remained only to dispose of the unwelcome CCF visitors sealed off in the How Company zone, and at 0420 Captain Corley rounded up men for a counterattack.

"It will be just as dark for them as for us," he told his NCOs.

Second Lieutenant Edward W. Snelling was directed to fire all his remaining 60mm mortar ammunition in support. Corley and Betts led the service troops sent as reinforcements while Johnson advanced on the left. A bitter fight of extermination ensued, and by 0630 the MLR had been restored. How Company, which sustained the heaviest losses of any Marine unit that night, had a total of 16 men killed and 39 wounded, not including attached units.[32]

After it was all over, the stillness had a strange impact on ears attuned the whole night long to the thump of mortars and clatter of machine guns. The harsh gray light of dawn revealed the unforgettable spectacle of hundreds of Chinese dead heaped up in front of the two Marine rifle companies.[33] Shrouds of new white snow

covered many of them, and crimson trails showed where the wounded had made their way to the rear.

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Chapter 10. Hagaru's Night of Fire
Marine Attacks on East Hill

But even though the enemy's main attack had failed, his secondary effort on East Hill represented a grave threat to perimeter security. At 0530 Ridge decided to counterattack, and Major Reginald R. Myers volunteered to lead an assault column composed of all reserves who could be scraped together for the attempt.

It was broad daylight before the Battalion executive officer moved out with an assortment of Marine, Army, and ROK service troops, some of them stragglers from the night's withdrawals from East Hill (see Map 18). Their total strength compared to that of an infantry company. About 55 separate units were represented at Hagaru, many by splinter groups, so that most of Myer's men were strangers to one another as well as to their officers and NCOs.

The largest Marine group was the platoon led by First Lieutenant Robert E. Jochums, assistant operations officer of the 1st Engineer Battalion. Clerks, typists, and truck drivers were included along with Company D engineers. Armed with carbines or M-1s and two grenades apiece, the men carried all the small arms ammunition they could manage. Few had had recent combat experience and the platoon commander knew only one of them personally—a company clerk whom he made his runner.

It was typical of the informality attending this operation that a Marine NCO with a small group attached themselves to Jochums, giving him a total of about 45. They had an exhausting, 45-minute climb up the hill to the line of departure, where Myers directed them to attack on the left of his main force.

The early morning fog enshrouded East Hill and Myers' attack had to wait until it cleared. The jump-off line lay along a steep slope with little or no cover. From the outset the advancing troops were exposed to scattered small-arms fire as well as grenades which needed only to be rolled downhill. New snow covering the old icy crust made for treacherous footing, so that the heavily laden men took painful falls.

Myers' little task force can scarcely be considered a tactical organization. His close air support was excellent; but both artillery and mortar support were lacking. Jochums did not notice any weapons save small arms and grenades.

"Our plane assaults were very effective, especially the napalm attacks," he commented on the basis of a personal log kept at the time. "During these strikes, either live or dry runs, the enemy troops in the line of fire would often rise and run from their positions to those in the rear."[34]

Marine air came on station at 0930 as VMF–312 planes peeled off to hit the enemy with napalm and bombs. The squadron flew 31 sorties that day at Hagaru, nearly all in the East Hill area. Enemy small-arms fire crippled one aircraft; but the pilot, First Lieutenant Harry W. Colmery, escaped serious injuries by making a successful crash landing within the perimeter.[35]

All accounts agree that the ground forces met more serious opposition from the terrain at times than from the enemy. So cut up into ridges and ravines was this great hill mass that the troops seldom knew whether they were advancing in defilade or exposing themselves to the fire of hidden adversaries. Thus the attack became a lethal game of hide-and-seek in which a step to the right or left might make the difference between life and death. On the other hand, when the Corsairs provided shooting gallery targets by flushing out opponents, only a few men could get into effective firing position along the narrow, restricted ridges before the Communists scuttled safely to new cover.

It took most of the energies of the attackers to keep on toiling upward, gasping for breath, clutching at bushes for support, and sweating at every pore in spite of the cold. At noon, after snail-like progress, the force

was still far short of the main ridge recognized as the dividing line between friendly forces and the enemy. By this time more than half of Myers' composite company had melted away as a result of casualties and exhaustion. Jochums saw no more than 15 wounded men in the attacking force during the day. He noted about the same number of dead Chinese. As for enemy strength, he estimated that the total may have amounted to a company or slightly more.

It was his conviction that "three well organized platoons could have pressed the assault without serious consequences and seized the immediate highest objective. What was behind that I am unable to say, but I feel that taking this high ground would have solved the problem."[36]

Most of the friendly casualties were caused by the grenades and grazing machine-gun fire of concealed opponents who had the law of gravity fighting on their side. Jochums was painfully wounded in the foot but continued with his platoon. "The age-old problem of leadership in such an operation," he concluded, "may be compared to moving a piece of string—pulling it forward will get you farther than pushing."

Enemy small-arms fire increased in volume when Myers' remnants, estimated at 75 men, reached the military crest of the decisive ridge. There the groups in the center and on the right were halted by the Chinese holding the topographical crest and reverse slope. On the left Jochums' men managed to push on to an outlying spur before being topped by CCF fire from a ridge to the northeast. Jochums' position was still short of the commanding high ground, yet it was destined to be the point of farthest penetration on East Hill.

Myers ordered his men to take what cover they could find and draw up a defensive line "short of the topographical crest" while awaiting a supporting attack.[37] This was to be carried out by elements of Captain George W. King's Able Company of the 1st Engineer Battalion, which had been stationed at a sawmill two miles north of Hagaru to repair a blown bridge. These troops reached the perimeter without incident at noon and proceeded immediately to the assault.

First Lieutenant Nicholas A. Canzona's 1st Platoon led the column. Orders were to ascend the southwestern slope of East Hill, pass through Myers' force and clear the ridge line. But after completing an exhausting climb to the military crest, the engineer officer was directed to retrace his steps to the foot. There Captain King informed him that a new attack had been ordered on the opposite flank, from a starting point about 1000 yards to the northeast.

Moving to the indicated route of approach, Canzona began his second ascent with two squads in line, pushing up a spur and a draw which became almost perpendicular as it neared the topographical crest. Only his skeleton platoon of about 20 men was involved. There were neither radios nor supporting arms, and a light machine gun was the sole weapon in addition to small arms and grenades.

Upon reaching the military crest, the engineers were pinned down by CCF machine-gun fire along a trail a few feet wide, with nearly vertical sides. Only Canzona, Staff Sergeant Stanley B. McPhersen and PFC Eugene B. Schlegel had room for "deployment," and they found the platoon's one machine gun inoperative after it was laboriously passed up from the rear. Schlegel was wounded and rolled downhill like a log, unconscious from loss of blood.

Another machine gun, sent up from the foot, enabled the platoon to hold its own even though it could not advance. Canzona put in a request by runner for mortar support, but only two 81mm rounds were delivered after a long delay. It was late afternoon when he walked downhill to consult King, who had just been ordered to withdraw Company A to a reverse slope position. Canzona returned to his men and pulled them back about half-way down the slope while McPherson covered the retirement with machine-gun fire. The winter sun was sinking when the weary engineers set up a night defense, and at that moment the howitzers of How Battery cut loose with point-detonation and proximity bursts which hit the Chinese positions with deadly accuracy.

Canzona estimated the enemy strength in his zone at no more than a platoon, which might have been dislodged with the aid of artillery or even mortar fire.[38]

About 500 yards south of the engineers, Major Myers held a defensive position with his remaining force of about two platoons. The Battalion CP had reason to believe that the outposts on East Hill would be relieved shortly by George Company, with the 41st Commando in perimeter reserve. Both had departed Koto-ri that morning in a strong convoy which also included an Army infantry company, four platoons of Marine tanks, and the last serial of Division Headquarters Battalion.

It was still touch and go at Hagaru at dusk on the 29th, but the defenders could take satisfaction in having weathered the enemy's first onslaught. General Smith, courteous and imperturbable as always, visited the Battalion CP to commend Ridge and his officers for the night's work. Two rifle companies had inflicted a bloody repulse on several times their own numbers, and the counterattacking forces on East Hill had at least hung on by their eyelashes.

In the final issue, a bob-tailed rifle battalion, two artillery batteries and an assortment of service troops had stood off a CCF division identified as the 58th and composed of the 172d, 173d, and 174th Infantry Regiments reinforced with organic mortars and some horse-drawn artillery. Chinese prisoners reported that the 172d, taking the principal part in the attacks on How and Item Companies, had suffered 90 per cent casualties. Elements of the 173d were believed to have figured to a lesser extent, with the 174th being kept in reserve.[39]

This was the situation in the early darkness of 29 November, when the disturbing news reached Hagaru that George Company and the Commandos were being heavily attacked on the road from Koto-ri and had requested permission to turn back.

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale

BEFORE THE CHINESE struck at Yudam-ni, they had penetrated 35 miles farther south along the MSR. At Chinhung-ni, on the night of 26 November, the Marines of the 1st Battalion, RCT–1, exchanged shots in the darkness with several elusive enemy groups making "light probing attacks."

Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. Schmuck, the new battalion commander, had set up a defensive perimeter upon arrival with his three rifle companies reinforced by 4.2-inch mortar and 75mm recoilless rifle platoons.[1] The identity of the enemy on the night of the 26th was not suspected, and patrols the next day made no contacts. At 1900 on the 27th, however, another light attack on the perimeter was repulsed. During the next two days, patrol actions definitely established that Chinese in estimated battalion strength were in a mountain valley to the west, hiding in houses by day and probing by night apparently in preparation for a determined attack.

Schmuck decided to strike first. On the 29th, a Baker Company reconnaissance patrol searched out the enemy positions, and the next day the battalion commander led an attacking force composed of Captain Barrow's Able Company and part of Captain Noren's Baker Company, reinforced by 81mm and 4.2-inch mortars under the direction of Major William L. Bates, Jr., commanding the Weapons Company.

While First Lieutenant Howard A. Blancheri's Fox Battery of 2/11 laid down supporting fires, the infantry "ran the Chinese right out of the country," according to Major Bates' account. "We burned all the houses they had been living in and brought the civilians back with us. We had no more difficulty with the Chinese from that valley."

The Communists were found to be warmly clothed in new padded cotton uniforms and armed with American weapons presumably captured from the Nationalists. An estimated 56 were killed by the ground forces before the Corsairs of VMF–312 took up a relentless pursuit which lasted until the enemy remnants scattered into hiding. Some of the Chinese were mounted on shaggy Mongolian ponies.[2]

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale
CCF Attacks on 2/1 at Koto-ri

During this same period, Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's 2d Battalion of RCT–1 had several hard-fought encounters with the new enemy. After arriving at Koto-ri on the 24th, he set up a perimeter defense facing west, north, and east which included a 4.2-inch Mortar Platoon as well as Easy Battery of 2/11, commanded by Captain John C. McClelland, Jr. Some commanding ground was left unoccupied, but Sutter believed that a tight perimeter offered advantages over widely separated blocking positions. In addition to 2/1, the regimental CP and H&S Company, the AT Company (–), the 4.2 Mortar Company (–), Company D of the 1st Medical Battalion and the 2d Battalion of the 11th Marines (less Batteries D and F) were at Koto-ri.

The perimeter, second in importance only to Hagaru as a base, was to be jammed during the next few days with hundreds of Marine and Army troops held up by CCF roadblocks to the north. On 27 November, the enemy made his presence known. A motorized patrol of platoon strength from Captain Jack A. Smith's Easy Company, supported by a section of tanks, engaged in a fire fight with about 25 Chinese in the hills west of Koto-ri. Two wounded CCF soldiers were left behind by the dispersed enemy. At this point the patrol proceeded on foot until it was stopped by the fire of an estimated 200 Communists dug in along ridge lines. At 1600 the Marines returned to the perimeter with two men wounded.

Click here to view map

Enemy losses were reported as eight killed and 15 wounded in addition to the two prisoners. Upon being questioned, these Chinese asserted that they belonged to a Chinese division assembling to the west of Koto-ri with a headquarters in a mine shaft.[3]

There could be no doubt the next day that the enemy had swarmed into the area in fairly large numbers. A Marine outpost on a hill northeast of the perimeter received heavy small-arms fire at 0845 and was reinforced by a platoon from Easy Company. Finally these troops had to be withdrawn and an air strike called on the hill to evict the enemy.

At 1058 General Smith ordered Colonel Puller to push a force up the MSR to make contact with the tank patrol being sent south from Hagaru and to clear the MSR.[4] Groups of Chinese, sighted during the day to the north, west and east, were taken under artillery fire by Captain McClelland's battery. Reconnaissance planes landing at the Koto-ri OY strip reported CCF roadblocks on the way to Hagaru; and at 1330 Captain Gildo S. Codispoti, the S–3, dispatched Captain Welby W. Cronk's Dog Company in vehicles with orders to open up the route. Following in Dog Company's wake came the last serial of Division Headquarters troops, on its way to Hagaru.[5]

Less than a mile north of the perimeter, the convoy ran into a storm of rifle and automatic weapons fire from Chinese entrenched along the high ground on both sides of the road. The Marines of Dog Company piled out of their vehicles and deployed for a hot fire fight, supported from Koto-ri by 81mm mortars of Captain William A. Kerr's Weapons Company. Two platoons swung around to clear the enemy from the ridge. The other platoon and the Headquarters troops advanced along the road.

At 1615 a platoon from Captain Goodwin C. Groff's Fox Company was ordered out to assist in evacuating casualties. But as the afternoon wore on, it grew apparent that the Chinese were in greater strength than had been anticipated, and all troops were directed to return to Koto-ri at 1735. They did so under cover of strikes by the Corsairs of VMF–312.

Marine losses numbered four KIA or DOW and 34 WIA. Enemy casualties were estimated at 154 killed

and 83 wounded in addition to three prisoners taken from a unit identified as the 179th Regiment of the 60th CCF Division. Captured Chinese weapons included 130 rifles, 25 machine guns, and two cases of grenades.

That evening George Company of 3/1, 41st Commando, Royal Marines, and Baker Company of the 31st Infantry, 7th Infantry Division, arrived at Koto-ri on their way to Hagaru (see Map 20). Colonel Puller and his S–3, Major Lorigan, organized the newcomers into a task force under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Drysdale, CO of the British unit, with orders to fight its way to Hagaru the following day.

Luckily the enemy did not elect to attack the overcrowded perimeter on the night of the 28th. Every warming tent was packed to capacity, and a CCF mortar round could hardly have landed anywhere without doing a good deal of damage.

After a quiet night the Chinese began the new day by digging emplacements in the hills to the west under harassing fire from F Company. The howitzers of Easy Battery and the mortars of 2/1 provided supporting fires for Task Force Drysdale when it moved out at 0945 followed by a convoy of Division Headquarters troops. A platoon of Easy Company, 2/1, went along with corpsmen and ambulances to assist in evacuating any early wounded back to Koto-ri. Stubborn CCF resistance resulted in casualties from the outset, and it was 1600 before the Easy Company escort platoon got back to the perimeter.

The Chinese, keeping the perimeter under observation all day, evidently concluded that the northern rim, defended by Easy Company, offered the best opportunity for a penetration. Marine air strikes were called on the Chinese swarming over the near-by high ground during the last minutes of daylight, but enemy mortar rounds hit Easy Company at 1745. They were followed by bugle calls and whistle signals as the CCF infantry attacked from the high ground to the northeast.

The assault force was estimated at company strength, with the remainder of a battalion in reserve. Unfortunately for the Chinese, they had made their intentions clear all day with unusual activity in the surrounding hills, and Easy Company was not surprised. Major Clarence J. Mabry, the 2/1 executive officer, could be heard above the machine guns as he shouted encouragement to Marines who poured it into the advancing Communists. They came on with such persistence that 17 managed to penetrate within the lines, apparently to attack the warming tents.[6] All were killed. In addition, about 150 CCF bodies lay in front of the sector when the enemy withdrew at 1855, after suffering a complete repulse.

It was conjectured that the Chinese had interpreted the return of the Easy Company platoon late that afternoon as an indication that a gap in the line needed to be hastily plugged. But the supposed weak spot did not materialize, and at 1935 the enemy signed off for the night after pumping four final mortar rounds in the vicinity of the Battalion CP without doing any harm. Losses of 2/1 for the day were six KIA and 18 WIA, total CCF casualties being estimated at 175 killed and 200 wounded. Ten heavy machine guns, seven LMGs, 12 Thompson submachine guns, 76 rifles, four pistols, and 500 grenades were captured.

That was all at Koto-ri, where Recon Company arrived during the day to add its weight to the defense. But during intervals of silence the sound of heavy and continuous firing to the north gave proof that Task Force Drysdale was in trouble.

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale
Convoy Reinforced by Marine Tanks

Lieutenant Colonel Drysdale's plan of attack had called for his British Marines to lead out at 0930 and seize the first hill mass to the east of the road. Captain Sitter's George Company of 3/1 was to follow and pass through to attack Hill 1236, with Baker Company of the 31st Infantry in reserve. LtCol Sutter, assisted by his staff, had the responsibility for planning and coordinating preparatory artillery and mortar fires from Koto-ri and attaching an air liaison officer to the task force.[7]

The first hill was taken without meeting serious resistance, but Sitter came up against well entrenched CCF troops when he attacked Hill 1236, about a mile and a half north of Koto-ri. It was nip and tuck until Master Sergeant Rocco A. Zullo fired his 3.5 rocket launcher at a range of 200 yards. Several rounds brought the Chinese out of their holes and the Marines took possession of the hill.

Click here to view map

The Commandos and George Company moved up about a mile astride of the road toward the third objective, Hill 1182. There the enemy resisted strenuously with well-placed mortar as well as machine-gun fire from strong positions on the high ground. The impetus of the attack had been stopped when Sitter received orders from the task force commander to break off action, withdraw to the road, and await new instructions.

Drysdale had received a message from RCT–1 at 1130 advising him that the armor of Company D (less 2d platoon), 1st Tank Battalion, would be available to him at 1300. He decided to wait, therefore, and re-form the column before continuing the advance.

The two platoons of Company D tanks, reinforced by the tank platoon of the AT Company, RCT–5, reached Koto-ri at noon after moving out that morning from Majon-dong. Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, departed Tongjong-ni, just south of Majon-dong, but did not arrive at Koto-ri until 1500. The 2d Platoon being attached to Sutter's battalion, the remainder of the company was directed to bring up the rear of the Task Force Drysdale, which by that time had renewed its attack. Thus the convoy was made up of the following components, including the elements which joined in the late afternoon of 29 November:

41 Ind. Commando, RM: estimated strength = 235

Co. G, 3/1: estimated strength = 205

Co. B, 31st Infantry, USA: estimated strength = 190, estimated vehicles = 22

Det. Div. Hq. Bn.: estimated strength = 62, estimated vehicles = 17

Det. 1st Sig. Bn.: estimated strength = 8, estimated vehicles = 4

Det. 7th MT Bn.: estimated strength = 12, estimated vehicles = 22 (Trailers are included among the vehicles. George Company, 3/1 lacked organic transport and was mounted in the vehicles of 7thMTBn. For similar reasons ServCo, 1stTkBn, supplied the transportation for the 41st Commando and 377th Transportation Truck Company, USA, for B/31stInf.)

Det. Serv. Co., 1st Tank Bn.: estimated strength = 18, estimated vehicles = 31

Co. B(-), 1st Tank Bn.: estimated strength = 86, estimated vehicles = 23, estimated tanks = 12

Co. D(-), 1st Tank Bn.: estimated strength = 77, estimated vehicles = 22, estimated tanks = 12

Tank Plat., AT Co., RCT-5 estimated strength = 29, estimated tanks = 5

TOTALS: estimated strength = 922, estimated vehicles = 141, estimated tanks = 29

At 1350 the head of the column had resumed the advance, with the order of march as shown below:

Click here to view table

Shortly after moving out, Sitter's men were hit by heavy small-arms fire from houses on the right of the road. The company commander went forward and requested the tanks to open up with their 90mm guns, and the Chinese flushed out of the houses were destroyed by machine-gun fire.

Progress was slow because of the necessity of further halts while the tanks blasted out pockets of CCF resistance. Enemy mortar as well as small-arms fire was encountered, and a round scored a direct hit on one of the trucks carrying personnel of 3d Platoon of George Company, wounding every man in the vehicle.

Further delays resulted while the tanks made their way over roadblocks or around craters. For the three infantry companies, the advance consisted of brief periods of movement alternated with interludes in which the troops scrambled out of the trucks to engage in fire fights. Finally, about 1615, the column ground to a complete halt about four miles north of Koto-ri. At that time the tanks of Company B were just leaving the 2/1 perimeter to join the convoy.

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale
The Fight in Hell Fire Valley

Drysdale and Sitter were informed by the tank officers that they thought the armor could get through, but that further movement for the trucks was inadvisable in view of road conditions and increasing enemy resistance. The task force commander requested a decision from Division Headquarters as to whether he should resume an advance which threatened to prove costly. It was a difficult choice for General Smith to make, but in view of the urgent necessity for reinforcements at Hagaru he directed Drysdale to continue.[8]

The tanks had to refuel, so that more time was lost. CCF fire was only moderate during this delay, thanks to the air strikes of VMF-321 planes directed by Captain Norman Vining. When the column stopped, the vehicles had pulled off into a dry stream bed. Upon resuming the advance, unit integrity was lost and infantry elements mingled with headquarters troops.

Click here to view map

Not far south of the halfway point to Hagaru, increased enemy fire caused an abrupt halt in a long valley. The high ground rose sharply on the right of the road, while on the left a frozen creek wound through a plain several hundred yards wide, bordered by the Changjin River and wooded hills. This was Hell Fire Valley—a name applied by Drysdale—and it was to be the scene of an all-night fight by half the men of the convoy (see Map 21).

Such a possibility was far from their thoughts when they piled out of the trucks once more, as they had done repeatedly all day, to return the enemy's fire. It did not even seem significant when an enemy mortar shell set one of the trucks in flames at the far end of the valley, thus creating a roadblock and splitting the column. The enemy took advantage of the opportunity to pour in small-arms and mortar fire which pinned down the troops taking cover behind vehicles or in the roadside ditches and prevented removal of the damaged truck. During this interlude the head of the column, consisting of Dog/Tanks, George Company, nearly three-fourths of the 41st Commando and a few Army infantrymen, continued the advance, with Drysdale in command, in obedience to orders to proceed to Hagaru at all costs. Left behind in Hell Fire Valley were 61 Commandos, most of Company B, 31st Infantry, and practically all the Division Headquarters and Service troops.

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur A. Chidester, assistant Division G–4 and senior officer caught south of the roadblock, ordered the barred vehicles to turn around and attempt a return to Koto-ri. Before his orders could be carried out, a Chinese attack severed the convoy about 200 yards to the north of him. Other enemy attacks cut the road south of the stalled convoy, both Chidester and Major James K. Eagan being wounded and captured.

Shallow ditches on either side of the road and the unused narrow-gauge railway were utilized by the isolated troops as protection from the fire of the Chinese occuping the high ground rising abruptly at the right. The valley was about a mile long, covered with a frozen crust of snow; and far from affording much cover, it offered the enemy a convenient approach to the rear by way of the wide plain and frozen river.

The Chinese fire was not heavy at first. But when darkness put an end to Marine air strikes, the enemy became increasingly bolder. Even so, there was no attempt for several hours to close within grenade-throwing distance. During this interlude the defenders had time to recover from their confusion and take defensive positions.

As nearly as the scene can be reconstructed from confused and contradictory accounts, one large and three small perimeters were strung out over a distance of perhaps 1200 yards from north to south. Toward the north, near the outskirts of the village of Pusong-ni, was the largest perimeter. It contained the troops caught north

of the second fracture of the column and was led by Major John N. McLaughlin.[9] His hodgepodge of 130 to 140 men included Captain Charles Peckham and part of his B Company, 31st Infantry; Warrant Officer Lloyd V. Dirst and a group of Marine MPs; some Commandos, Associated Press photographer Frank Noel, and assorted Marine service and headquarters troops.

The three smaller perimeters appear to have resulted from the splintering of a larger group originally containing nearly all the men caught south of the second cut in the convoy. Major Henry J. Seeley, Division motor transport officer, attempted to form a perimeter with these men but was frustrated by Chinese attacks which forced the men to fall back in small groups. About 300 yards south of McLaughlin's perimeter the remnants of two Army platoons crouched in a drainage ditch. Apparently several Marines, including CWO Dee R. Yancey, were with them. Some 30 yards farther down the ditch were Captain Michael J. Capraro, the Division PIO, First Lieutenant John A. Buck, General Craig's aide, and about 15 headquarters troops. A few other Marines clustered around Major Seeley, perhaps a hundred yards south of Capraro's group.[10]

There was some hope at first that the tanks of Baker Company, 1st Tank Battalion, would come to the rescue. But the Marine armor ran into heavy opposition near Hills 1236 and 1182 along the road cleared only a few hours before by Task Force Drysdale.

When attacking a convoy, the Chinese usually strove to split the motorized column into segments suitable for tactical mastication. That is what happened to Baker Company. The tanks and trucks nearest to Koto-ri got back without much trouble at 2110 after the enemy cut the column into three groups. The middle group, comprising most of the service trucks, was hit hardest. Lieutenant Colonel Harvey S. Walseth, the Division G–1, was wounded as this group finally fought back to Koto-ri at 0230 after heavy losses in trucks. This left the tank platoon which had proceeded farthest; and it formed a tight perimeter for the night about half a mile south of Seeley's position, boxed in by friendly artillery fires from Koto-ri. At dawn the tanks returned to Koto-ri without further enemy interference.

No knowledge of these events reached the beleaguered troops in Hell Fire Valley. They continued to hope that the tanks might arrive to the aid of men who had no weapons larger than a single 75mm recoilless in addition to rifles, carbines, and grenades. There were also a few 60mm mortars but no ammunition for them.

Fortunately, no determined Chinese attacks were received up to midnight. Looting the trucks proved more alluring than fighting to the Asiatics, and their officers contented themselves with keeping the perimeters pinned down and enveloped on three sides.

Not until the early hours of 30 November did the Communists resort to probing attacks by small groups armed with grenades. The headquarters and service troops gave a good account of themselves in the fire fight. Signalmen, clerks, cooks, truck drivers, military policemen—the Marines of Hell Fire Valley included a good many veterans of World War II, and they proved as steady as the tough combat-trained Commandos. Once again the value of the Marine Corps insistence on good basic training showed itself.

Major McLaughlin sent reconnaissance parties south in an unsuccessful attempt to link up with the other perimeters. He decided, therefore, to remain in his positions and fight off the Chinese until air could come on station at dawn. The wounded were placed in the deepest of the three ditches and Army medics gave first aid.

As the night wore on, McLaughlin's situation became increasingly grave. By 0200 his men were out of grenades. An Army crew performed valiantly with the 75mm recoilless, firing at enemy mortar flashes until all the soldiers were killed or wounded and the gun put out of action. Twice McLaughlin's men drove the Chinese from their mortars only to have them return.

Some of the Commandos managed to slip out of the perimeter in an effort to reach Koto-ri and summon assistance. But an attempt by Noel and two men to run the gantlet in a jeep between 0200 and 0300 ended in their capture before they proceeded a hundred yards.

At about 0430 the Chinese sent their prisoners to the perimeter with a surrender demand. McLaughlin,

accompanied by a Commando, went out to parley through an interpreter in the hope of stalling until help arrived, or at least until some of the men escaped.

"Initially I demanded a CCF surrender!" he recalls. "But it made little impression."

The Marine officer stalled until the Chinese threatened to overrun the perimeter with an all-out attack. They gave him ten minutes to discuss the capitulation with his officers. McLaughlin went from one to another of the approximately 40 able bodied men he had left. Some had no rifle ammunition at all and none had more than eight rounds. For the sake of his wounded, he consented to surrender on condition that the serious cases be evacuated. The Chinese agreed and the fight in Hell Fire Valley ended.

McLaughlin succeeded in killing enough time so that more men were given the opportunity to slip away while the enemy relaxed his vigilance during the prolonged negotiations. Largest of these groups was composed of the survivors of the three small perimeters. Capraro and Buck, both of whom were slightly wounded, managed to unite with the Army infantrymen just north of them and nine Commandos, who joined them at about 0200. An hour and a half later they linked up with the Marines under Seeley, who led the combined group in a withdrawal to the high ground across the river. Outdistancing their CCF pursuers, after shooting down several, they made it safely to Koto-ri.

Other groups, including three more Commandos and 71 Army infantrymen, also contrived to straggle back to the 2/1 perimeter.

Although the Chinese did not keep their word as to evacuation of the wounded, they did not interfere with the removal of the more critical cases to a Korean house. When the enemy retired to the hills for the day, an opportunity was found to evacuate these casualties to Koto-ri.[11]

An accurate breakdown of the Task Force Drysdale casualties will probably never be made, but the following estimate is not far from the mark:

41st Commando: 18 KIA/MIA, 43 WIA
Co. G, 3/1: 8 KIA/MIA, 40 WIA
Co. B, 1/31: 100 KIA/MIA, 19 WIA, 22 vehicles lost
Div. Hq. Bn.: 25 KIA/MIA, 25 WIA, 18 vehicles lost
1st Sig. Bn.: 4 KIA/MIA, 2 WIA
7th MT Bn.: 2 KIA/MIA, 3 WIA, 4 vehicles lost
Serv. Co., 1st Tank Bn.: 5 KIA/MIA, 6 WIA, 30 vehicles lost
Co. B(-), 1st Tank Bn.: 12 WIA
Co. D(-), 1st Tank Bn.: 8 WIA, 1 vehicle lost
Plat, AT Co., RCT-5: 1 WIA
TOTALS: 162 KIA/MIA, 159 WIA, 75 vehicles lost

"The casualties of Task Force Drysdale were heavy," commented General Smith, "but by its partial success the Task Force made a significant contribution to the holding of Hagaru which was vital to the Division. To the slender infantry garrison of Hagaru were added a tank company of about 100 men and some 300 seasoned infantrymen. The approximately 300 troops which returned to Koto-ri participated thereafter in the defense of that perimeter."[12]

The head of the Task Force Drysdale column, with the Company D tanks leading George Company and the Commandos, was not aware at dusk on the 29th that the convoy had been cut behind them. There had been previous gaps during the stops and starts caused by enemy fire, and it was supposed at first that the thin-skinned vehicles would catch up with the vanguard.

Progress was fairly good, despite intermittent fire from the high ground on the right of the road, until the tanks reached a point about 2200 yards from Hagaru. There the column was stopped by concentrated CCF mortar and small-arms fire. One of the tanks was so damaged by a satchel charge that it had to be abandoned, and several

vehicles were set afire. After Drysdale was wounded the command passed to Sitter, who formed his force into a perimeter until the repulse of the Chinese permitted the march to be resumed.[13]

Several pyramidal tents just outside the Hagaru perimeter were assumed to be occupied by friendly troops until enemy in the vicinity destroyed two George Company trucks and caused several casualties. Later it was learned that the tents had been originally occupied by troops of the 10th Engineer Battalion and abandoned when the Chinese attacked on the 28th.

At 1915, Captain Sitter reported to Lieutenant Colonel Ridge, who directed that George Company and the 41st Commando spend the night in perimeter reserve. After their all-day fight, the men of the column could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the Marine engineers at work on the airstrip under the floodlights.

Contrary to expectations, the hours of darkness on 29–30 November passed in comparative quiet at Hagaru except for CCF harassing fires. It was not a coincidence that the enemy kept his distance. Attacks on the East Hill and Item and How Company positions of 3/1 actually had been planned and partly executed by troops of the 58th CCF Division, according to POW testimony. They were broken up by Marine air attacks and supporting fires which hit the assembly areas.

The effectiveness of these fires owed a good deal to the intelligence brought back to Lieutenant Carey, the Battalion S–2, by CIC agents who circulated among Chinese troops on 27 and 28 November. The Battalion S–2 had a work table at the CP beside Major Simmons, the SAC, who directed six sorties of the night hecklers of VMF(N) –542. He guided the planes through the darkness to their targets with a fiery arrow as converging machine-gun tracer bullets crossed over suspected CCF assembly areas.

The 81mm mortars of Weapons Company, 3/1, fired about 1100 rounds during the night, and the corresponding unit of 2/7 made a noteworthy contribution. The following day, according to Carey, Chinese prisoners reported that “most of the units employed around Hagaru were very badly hit.”[14]

A few white phosphorus mortar rounds fell in the lines of How and Item Companies, and a CCF green flare caused an alert for an attack which never materialized. In the early morning hours of the 30th an enemy concentration appeared to be taking place on the Item Company front, but intensive 60mm mortar fire put an end to the threat.

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale
Attack of George Company on East Hill

At 0800, the battalion commander ordered George Company to retake East Hill while the Commandos remained in reserve. Sitter's plan called for his 1st and 2d platoons, commanded by Second Lieutenants Frederick W. Hopkins and John W. Jaeger respectively, to pass through Myers' group, then make a sharp left turn and attack on either side of the ridge. First Lieutenant Carl E. Dennis' 3d Platoon and two platoons of Able Company engineers were to follow in reserve.

Click here to view map

Slow progress caused the George Company commander to modify the plan by giving his 3d platoon and the two engineer platoons the mission of enveloping the CCF right flank (see Map 22). Lieutenant Dennis led the attack, with First Lieutenant Ernest P. Skelt's and Lieutenant Canzona's engineer platoons following.

Neither of the George Company attacks was successful. The trampling of hundreds of feet over the snow had made the footing more treacherous than ever; and once again the combination of difficult terrain and long-range Chinese fire accounted for failure to retake East Hill. Sitter's request to set up defense positions on the ground previously occupied by Myers was granted. Meanwhile Dennis' platoon and the engineers were directed to withdraw to the foot of the hill, so that the Corsairs could work the CCF positions over with rockets and bombs.

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale
High Level Command Conference

Although the Marines at Hagaru had little to do with the higher levels of strategy, it was evident that the continued retreat of the Eighth Army in west Korea must ultimately affect the destinies of X Corps. Of more immediate concern was the deteriorating situation of the three battalions (two infantry and one artillery) of the 7th Infantry Division east of the Chosin Reservoir. Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes, assistant division commander, informed General Smith at noon on the 29th that the Army troops had suffered approximately 400 casualties while falling back toward Hagaru and were unable to fight their way out to safety. At 2027 that night, all troops in the Chosin Reservoir area, including the three Army battalions, were placed under the operational control of the Marine commander by X Corps. The 1st Marine Division was directed to "redeploy one RCT without delay from Yudam-ni area to Hagaru area, gain contact with elements of the 7th Inf Div E of Chosin Reservoir; co-ordinate all forces in and N of Hagaru in a perimeter defense based on Hagaru; open and secure Hagaru-Koto-ri MSR."[15]

On the afternoon of the 30th a command conference was held at Hagaru in the Division CP. Generals Almond, Smith, Barr, and Hodes were informed at the briefing session that a disaster threatened the three Army battalions.[16]

Almond was also much concerned about the attacks on the Marine MSR. He had been given a firsthand account that morning by the senior Marine officer on the X Corps staff, Colonel Edward H. Forney, who had just returned from Koto-ri.[17]

At the Hagaru conference the X Corps commander announced that he had abandoned any idea of consolidating positions in the Chosin Reservoir area. Stressing the necessity for speed in falling back toward Hamhung, he promised Smith resupply by air after authorizing him to burn or destroy all equipment which would delay his withdrawal to the seacoast.

The Marine general replied that his movements must be governed by his ability to evacuate his wounded. He would have to fight his way out, he added, and could not afford to discard equipment; it was his intention, therefore, to bring out the bulk of it.[18]

Almond directed Smith and Barr to draw up a plan and time schedule for extricating the Army battalions east of the Reservoir. Those two generals agreed, however, that not much could be done until the Yudam-ni Marines arrived at Hagaru, and the conference ended on an inconclusive note. That same afternoon X Corps OpnO 8–50 was received. It defined the Corps mission as "maintaining contact with the enemy to the maximum capability consistent with cohesive action, oriented to the Hamhung-Hungnam base of operation."[19]

The decision to concentrate X Corps forces in that area meant the evacuation of Wonsan. General Harris lost no time in directing MAG–12 to move from Wonsan Airfield to Yonpo. Hedron–12 and the three combat squadrons began shifting personnel and equipment at once. Transfer of the aircraft was completed on 1 December. In many instances the planes took off on combat missions from Wonsan and landed at Yonpo, so that the ground forces were not deprived of air support.[20]

High level naval commanders were already preparing for an evacuation of northeast Korea if matters came to the worst. Admiral Joy foresaw as early as the 28th that if the retreat of the battered Eighth Army continued, X Corps would have to choose between falling back and being outflanked. In view of the time needed to collect the enormous quantities of shipping required, he warned Admiral Doyle on that date that a large-scale redeployment operation might be necessary. Doyle in turn directed his staff to commence planning for

redeployment either by an administrative outloading or by a fighting withdrawal.[21]

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale
CCF Attacks of 1 December at Hagaru

During the early hours of darkness on 30 November, it appeared that Hagaru might have a second quiet night. Three bugle calls were heard by Item Company at 2015, and the enemy sent up a green flare an hour later. But no unusual CCF activity was reported until 2330, when small patrols began probing for weak spots in the Item Company lines.

The enemy could scarcely have chosen a less rewarding area for such research. As usual, Lieutenant Fisher had built up an elaborate system of concertinas, trip flares, and booby traps; and his sandbagged foxholes and weapon emplacements afforded his men maximum protection. At midnight, when the enemy came on in strength, each successive assault wave shattered against the terrific fire power which a Marine rifle company, aided by artillery, tanks, 81mm mortars, and heavy machine guns, could concentrate.

Several times the enemy's momentum carried him to the Item Company foxholes but no Communists lived to exploit their advantage. On one of these occasions Sergeant Charles V. Davidson, having expended his ammunition, proved that cold steel still has its uses by bayoneting the last of his attackers.[22]

Again, as on the night of the 28th, the enemy had chosen to launch his major attack against Marine strength, though his daytime observation must have disclosed the preparations for a hot reception in the Item Company sector. An estimated 500 to 750 Chinese were killed on this front at a cost to Fisher's men of two KIA and 10 WIA.[23]

The Chinese also repeated themselves by carrying out another attack on East Hill which ended in a second costly stalemate. The western slope up to the military crest was held by the following units from right to left: First Lieutenant Ermine L. Meeker's 1st Platoon of Baker Company engineers; the 2d, 1st, and 3d Platoons of George Company; and Lieutenant Skelt's 3d Platoon of Able Company Engineers. To the left of Skelt, near the foot of the hill, were Lieutenant Canzona's 1st Platoon of Able engineers; two tanks of the AT Company, 2/7; and elements of Lieutenant Colonel Banks' 1st Service Battalion.[24]

The action began shortly before midnight with one of those comedy situations which develop on the grimmest occasions. The sign or password was "Abraham" and the countersign "Lincoln," but two Company A engineers on a listening post did not pause for the customary exchange. Having been jumped by what their startled eyes took to be a Chinese regiment, they sprinted downhill yelling, "Abraham Lincoln! Abraham Lincoln!" as they slid into Skelt's lines with the enemy close behind.

His engineers had no leisure for a laugh. Within a few seconds they were mixing it in a wild melee with Communists who seemed literally to drop on them from above. Meanwhile, George Company was hard hit by well aimed mortar fire which threatened to wipe out Lieutenant Hopkins' 1st Platoon. The ensuing double-headed CCF attack bent back the left flank of George Company, with both the 1st and 3d Platoons giving ground.

On the left Skelt's platoon was pushed down to the foot of the hill by superior enemy numbers after exactly half of his 28 men were killed or wounded. Here the fight continued with Banks' service troops lending a hand until the Chinese were exterminated.

This penetration was a hollow triumph for the enemy. No friendly forces being left in the center, the How Battery howitzers walked shells up and down the western slope. Mortars and machine guns chimed in, and Lieutenant Canzona's platoon was in position to direct the fire of the two tanks of AT Company 2/7.

The scene became bright as day after an enemy artillery shell set 50 drums of gasoline ablaze in a Supply Area dump. Like an enormous torch, the flames illuminated the battle so vividly that General Smith looked on

from the doorway of his CP, some 1200 yards away. Several bullets pierced the roof and walls during the night.

Again, as in the fight of 28–29 November, Marine fire power blocked the gap on the central and northwest slopes of East Hill. Marine and Army service troops took a part in the fighting which is the more creditable considering that they were ordered out in the middle of the night, placed in a provisional unit with strange troops, and marched off into the darkness to attack or defend at some critical point.

Lieutenant Meeker's engineer platoon, on the right of George Company, had a long-drawn fire fight but got off with losses of one man killed and three wounded. At 0100 the CCF pressure on Sitter's troops was so heavy that Lieutenant Carey, former commander of the 1st Platoon, was taken from his S–2 duties to lead a group of reinforcements which he described as "all available hands from the CP or any other units in Hagaru who could spare personnel." Carrying as much ammunition as possible, he arrived at the George Company CP to find Sitter still commanding in spite of his wound. Scarcely a full squad was left of Carey's old outfit when he helped to restore the lines.

It was necessary for Ridge to send a further reinforcement consisting of British Marines of the 41st Commando before George Company's left flank was secured. A counterattack at daybreak regained lost ground, and the situation was well under control when air came on station at 0900.

Thus ended another night of confusion and frustration for both sides on East Hill. While the Chinese attack had been better organized and in larger force than the effort of the 29th, it was too little and too late for decisive results in spite of heavy losses. On the other hand, George Company and its reinforcing elements had suffered an estimated 60 men killed and wounded.

Although the Marines of Hagaru could not have suspected it on the morning of 1 December, the enemy had, for the time being, shot his bolt. His first two large-scale attacks, as POW interrogations were to confirm, had used up not only the personnel of a division but most of the limited supplies of ammunition available. Thus it is probable that the following estimates of CCF casualties, as published in the 3/1 report, for the period of 28 November to 5 December, were nearer to accuracy than most such summaries:

"(1) 58th CCF Division: Estimated casualties of 3300 for the 172d Regiment; 1750 each for the 173d and 174th Regiments.

"(2) 59th CCF Division: Estimated 1750 casualties for the 176th Regiment. No other units identified."

The known Chinese dead in the two night battles amounted to at least 1500; and if it may be assumed that three or four times that number were wounded, the total casualties would have crippled an enemy infantry division of 7500 to 10,000 men, plus an additional regiment. Considering the primitive state of CCF supply and medical service, moreover, it is likely that hundreds died of wounds and privations behind their own lines.

The losses of 3/1 at Hagaru were given as 33 KIA, 10 DOW, 2 MIA, and 270 WIA—a total of 315 battle casualties, nearly all of which were incurred from 28 November to 1 December.[25] There are no over-all casualty figures for Marine or Army service troops, but it is probable that their total losses exceeded those of 3/1.

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale
Rescue of U.S. Army Wounded

Casualties estimated as high as 75 per cent were suffered by the three U.S. Army battalions east of the Reservoir. At 2200 on the night of 1 December, the first survivors, most of them walking wounded, reached the Marine lines north of Hagaru with tales of frightful losses suffered in the five days of continual fighting since the first CCF attack on the night of 27–28 November.

Following this action Colonel Allan D. MacLean, commanding the 31st Infantry, had set up a perimeter near Sinhung-ni with the 3d Battalion of his regiment and the 1st Battalion of the 57th Field Artillery. Along the shore farther to the north, Lieutenant Colonel Don C. Faith, USA, held a separate perimeter with the 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry (see Map 20).[26]

Both positions were hard hit by the Chinese on the night of 27–28 November and isolated from each other. During the next 24 hours they beat off CCF attacks with the support of Marine and FEAF planes, and Faith fought his way through to a junction with the Sinhung-ni force.

When the senior officer was killed, Faith took command of all three battalions. Immobilized by nearly 500 casualties, he remained in the Sinhung-ni perimeter, where he was supplied by air. On the 29th General Hodes sent a relief force in company strength from 31st Infantry units in the area just north of Hagaru. These troops, supported by several Army tanks, were hurled back by superior CCF numbers with the loss of two tanks and heavy personnel casualties.

On 1 December, fearing that he would be overwhelmed in his Sin-hung-ni perimeter, Faith attempted to break through to Hagaru. After destroying the howitzers and all but the most essential equipment, the convoy with its hundreds of wounded moved out under the constant cover of Marine close air support, controlled by Captain Edward P. Stamford, USMC.[27]

Progress was slow and exhausting, with frequent stops for fire fights. There were many instances of individual bravery in the face of adversity, but losses of officers and NCOs gradually deprived the units of leadership. As an added handicap, a large proportion of the troops were ROKs who understood no English.

The task force came near to a breakout. At dusk it was only four and a half miles from Hagaru when Faith fell mortally wounded and the units shattered into leaderless groups.[28] Soon the column had ceased to exist as a military force. A tragic disintegration set in as wounded and frostbitten men made their way over the ice of the Reservoir in wretched little bands drawn together by a common misery rather than discipline.

By a miracle the first stragglers to reach Hagaru got through the mine fields and trip flares without harm. Before dawn a total of about 670 survivors of Task Force Faith had been taken into the warming tents of Hagaru.

Lieutenant Colonel Beall, commanding officer of the 1st Motor Transport Battalion, made a personal search in the morning for other survivors. Finding more than his jeep could carry, he organized a task force of trucks, jeeps, and sleds. The only CCF opposition to the Marines came in the form of long-distance sniping which grew so troublesome late in the afternoon that the truckers set up a machine gun section on the ice for protection. Far from hindering the escape of the Army wounded, the Chinese actually assisted in some instances, thus adding to the difficulty of understanding the Oriental mentality.[29]

Of the 319 soldiers rescued by Beall on 2 December, nearly all were wounded or frostbitten. Some were found wandering about in aimless circles on the ice, in a state of shock.

A company-size task force of Army troops from Hagaru, supported by tanks, moved out that day to bring in any organized units of the three shattered battalions which might have been left behind. Known as Task Force

Anderson after Lieutenant Colonel Berry K. Anderson, senior Army officer at Hagaru, the column met heavy CCF opposition and was recalled when it became evident that only stragglers remained.[30]

Beall and his men kept up their rescue work until the last of an estimated 1050 survivors of the original 2500 troops had been saved. A Marine reconnaissance patrol counted more than 300 dead in the abandoned trucks of the Task Force Faith convoy, and there were apparently hundreds of MIA. The 385 able-bodied soldiers who reached Hagaru were organized into a provisional battalion and provided with Marine equipment.[31]

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Chapter 11. Task Force Drysdale
First Landings on Hagaru Airstrip

Casualty evacuation had become such a problem by 1 December that Captain Eugene R. Hering, (MC) USN, the Division surgeon, called at General Smith's CP that morning. He reported that some 600 casualties at Hagaru were putting a severe strain on the limited facilities of C and E Companies of the 1st Medical Battalion. It was further estimated that 500 casualties would be brought in by the Yudam-ni units and 400 from the three Army battalions east of the Reservoir.[32]

Although both figures were to prove far too low, they seemed alarmingly high at a time when only the most critical casualties could be evacuated by helicopter or OY. Flying in extreme cold and landing at high altitudes where the aircraft has less than normal lift, the pilots of Major Gottschalk's VMO-6 saved scores of lives. From 27 November to 1 December, when the transports took over, 152 casualties were evacuated by the OYs and helicopters—109 from Yudam-ni, 36 from Hagaru, and seven from Koto-ri.[33]

Altogether, 220 evacuation flights and 11 rescue missions were completed during the entire Reservoir campaign by a squadron which on 1 November included 25 officers, 95 enlisted men, eight OY–2 and two L5G observation planes and nine HO3S–1 Sikorsky helicopters. First Lieutenant Robert A. Longstaff was killed by enemy small-arms fire near Toktong Pass while on an evacuation flight, and both Captain Farish and Lieutenant Englehardt had their helicopters so badly riddled by CCF bullets that the machines were laid up for repairs.[34]

Two surgical teams from Hungnam had been flown to Hagaru by helicopter, but the evacuation problem remained so urgent on 1 December that the command of the 1st Marine Division authorized a trial landing on the new airstrip. Only 40 per cent completed at this time, the runway was 2900 feet long and 50 feet wide, with a 2 per cent grade to the north.

It was a tense moment, at 1430 that afternoon, when the knots of parka-clad Marine spectators watched the wheels of the first FEAF C–47 hit the frozen, snow-covered strip. The big two-motored aircraft bounced and lurched its way over the rough surface, but the landing was a success. An even more nerve-racking test ensued half an hour later when the pilot took off with 24 casualties. It seemed for a breath-snatching instant that the run wouldn't be long enough for the machine to become airborne, but at last the tail lifted and the wings got enough "bite" to clear the hills to the south.

Three more planes landed that afternoon, taking off with about 60 more casualties. The last arrival, heavily loaded with ammunition, collapsed its landing gear on the bumpy strip and had to be destroyed and abandoned.[35]

At the other end of the evacuation chain, clearing stations had been established by X Corps at Yonpo Airfield to receive and distribute casualties. A 30-day evacuation policy was maintained, and the casualties to remain in the area went to the 1st Marine Division Hospital in Hungnam, the Army 121st Evacuation Hospital in Hamhung, and the USS *Consolation* in Hungnam harbor. Casualties requiring more than 30 days of hospitalization were flown from Yonpo to Japan, though a few critical cases were evacuated directly from Hagaru to Japan.[36]

It was planned for incoming transports at Hagaru to fly both supplies and troop replacements. Meanwhile, on 1 December, the 1st Marine Division had its first C–119 air drop from Japan. Known as "Baldwins," these drops consisted of a prearranged quantity of small arms ammunition, weapons, water, rations, and medical supplies, though the amounts could be modified as desired.[37]

Air drops, however, did not have the capability of supplying an RCT in combat, let alone a division. At

this time the Combat Cargo Command, FEAF, estimated its delivery capabilities at only 70 tons per day; and even though in practice this total was stepped up to 100, it fell five short of the requirements of an RCT. Fortunately, the foresight of the Division commander and staff had enabled the Supply Regulating Detachment to build up a level of six days' rations and two units of fire at Hagaru.[38] This backlog, plus such quantities as could be delivered by Baldwin drops, promised to see the Division through the emergency.

Infantrymen are seldom given to self-effacement, but at nightfall on 1 December only an ungrateful gravel-cruncher could have failed to pay a silent tribute to the other services as well as to the supporting arms of the Marine Corps. Navy medics, FEAF airmen, Army service units—they had all helped to make it possible for the Marines to plan a breakout. Yet it is likely that the 1st Engineer Battalion came first in the affections of wounded men being loaded in the C–47s for evacuation.

In just twelve days and nights the engineers of Company D had hacked this airstrip out of the frozen earth. Marine infantrymen could never forget the two critical nights of battle when they looked back over their shoulders from combat areas at the heartening spectacle of the dozers puffing and huffing under the floodlights. In a pinch Lieutenant Colonel Partridge's specialists had doubled as riflemen, too, and several platoons were riddled with casualties. Thanks in large part to the engineers, the Hagaru base was no longer isolated on 1 December. And though the enemy did not yet realize it, he had lost the initiative on this eventful Friday. The Marines at Yudam-ni were coming out, and they were coming out fighting with their casualties and equipment.

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni

THE FIRST STEPS toward regaining the initiative were taken by the Marine command as early as 29 November. Upon being informed that the composite battalion had failed to open up the MSR south of Yudam–ni, General Smith concluded that it was a task for a regiment. At 1545 that afternoon he issued the following orders to RCTs 5 and 7:

"RCT–5 assume responsibility protection Yudam-ni area adjusting present dispositions accordingly. RCT–7 conduct operations clear MSR to Hagaru without delay employing entire regiment."[1]

That same evening the Division CP received X Corps OI 19, providing that an RCT be redeployed from the Yudam-ni area to Hagaru.[2] No further directives from Division were necessary to implement this instruction, since it had been anticipated in General Smith's orders.

Upon receipt, the two Yudam-ni regimental commanders began joint planning for measures to be taken. The unusual command situation at Yudam-ni, in the absence of the assistant division commander, was explained by Colonel Litzenberg:

"The 5th and 7th Marines were each acting under separate orders from the Division. The Division would issue orders to one regiment with information to the other, so that Division retained the control; and, of course, the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, in general support of both regiments, was not actually under the control of either of us. Lieutenant Colonel Murray. . . operated in very close coordination with me, sometimes at his own command post and sometimes at mine. We called in [Major] McReynolds, the commander of 4/11, discussed the situation with him, and thereafter Lieutenant Colonel Murray and I issued orders jointly as necessary. . . . This command arrangement functioned very well. There was never any particular disagreement."[3]

For purposes of planning the supporting fires for the breakout, an artillery groupment was formed and Lieutenant Colonel Feehan given the responsibility of coordination. It was further agreed that no air drops of 155mm ammunition would be requested because of the greater number of 105mm rounds which could be received with fewer difficulties.[4]

The problems of the two RCTs, commented General Smith, could not be separated. "The only feasible thing for them to do was pool their resources. . . . The assignment of command to the senior regimental commander was considered but rejected in favor of cooperation."[5]

At 0600 on the 30th, the two RCTs issued their Joint OpnO 1–50, which called for the regroupment of the Yudam-ni forces in a new position south of the village and astride the MSR as a first step toward a breakout.[6] Thus in effect the two RCTs and supporting troops would be exchanging an east-and-west perimeter for one pointing from north to south along the road to Hagaru. Not only was the terrain south of the village more defensible, but a smaller perimeter would serve the purpose.

Lieutenant Colonel Winecoff, Assistant G–3 of the Division, flew to Yudam-ni on the 30th to observe and report on the situation. He was given a copy of Joint OpnO 1–50 for delivery to General Smith on his return to Hagaru.[7]

That same afternoon, during a conference with General Almond at Hagaru, the Marine commander received X Corps OpnO 8, directing him to operate against the enemy in zone, withdrawing elements north and northwest of Hagaru to that area while securing the Sudong-Hagaru MSR. And at 1920 that evening, Division issued the following dispatch orders to RCTs 5 and 7:

"Expedite execution of Joint OpnO 1–50 and combined movement RCT–5 and RCT–7 to Hagaru prepared for further withdrawal south. Destroy any supplies and equipment which must be abandoned during this

withdrawal."[8]

As a prerequisite, a good deal of reorganization had to be effected at Yudam-ni. In order to provide a force to hold the shoulders of the high ground through which RCT–7 would advance, it was decided to put together another composite battalion.

The new unit consisted of George Company, 3/7, Able Company, 1/5, and the remnants of Dog and Easy Companies, 2/7, combined into a provisional company under Captain Robert J. Polson; a section of 81s each from 2/7 and 3/7's Weapons Companies; and a communications detachment from 3/7. Major Maurice E. Roach, regimental S–4 placed in command, realized that such a jury-rigged outfit might be subject to morale problems. Noting that one of the men had made a neckerchief out of a torn green parachute, he seized upon the idea as a means of appealing to unit pride. Soon all the men were sporting green neckerchiefs, and Roach gave the new unit added distinction by christening it the Damnation Battalion after adopting "Damnation" as the code word.[9]

Beginning in the early morning hours of the 30th, regroupment was the chief activity at Yudam-ni. Enemy opposition during the night took the form of scattered small-arms fire varied with minor probing attacks. This comparative lull lasted until 0710, when Item Company of 3/5 beat off an enemy assault on Hill 1282 (North Ridge) with the support of Marine air strikes and 81mm mortar fire. In the same area George Company had a brisk fire fight from 1315 to dusk.

Click here to view map

The plan of the regroupment envisioned a gradual withdrawal from the north and west of Yudam-ni by RCT–5 for the purpose of relieving units of RCT–7 and enabling them to extend the perimeter southward from the village (see Map 23). It fell to 2/5 to execute the most difficult maneuver of the day. Roise's battalion held a line stretching from Hill 1426 on Southwest Ridge along the high ground to 3/5's positions on Hill 1282. After disengaging with the help of Marine air and artillery, 2/5 gave up Hill 1426 and pulled back nearly a mile, relieving elements of 3/7 on the left. Roise's new line included Hill 1294 on Southwest Ridge, overlooking the MSR, and extended northeast to Hill 1282 as before. Meanwhile 1/5 continued to hold a defensive line from Hill 1240 eastward to Hill 1167.

These movements freed 3/7 to re-deploy to new positions astride the MSR about 4000 yards south of Yudam-ni. In this same general area, 1/7 continued to block the valley to the southwest while holding Hill 1276, of South Ridge, about 2500 yards south of the village.

"The question of whether we should make these movements during daylight or at night was a difficult one," said Colonel Litzenberg. "We finally decided to make the movements in daylight when we could have advantage of observation for air cover and artillery. The movement, piecemeal by battalion, was successfully executed."[10]

The enemy took surprisingly little advantage of the readjustment. Movements were completed in an orderly and methodical manner as the units drew rations and ammunition for the breakout. Preparations were made for the destruction of all equipment which could not be carried out, and air drops of ammunition and other supplies were received.

As a solution for the problem of casualty evacuation, General Smith had suggested the construction of an OY strip. A start was made at 0900 on the 30th by the TD–18 dozers of Major McReynolds' artillery battalion, but the area came under enemy fire the next day and the nearly completed strip could be used only twice.[11]

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni
Joint Planning for Breakout

The plan, as finally agreed upon, called for a combination of the two solutions. Since it was essential to relieve hard-pressed Fox Company and secure vital Toktong Pass prior to the arrival of the main column, one force would advance across country. And since it would have been physically impossible to carry the wounded over the mountains, the main body would fight its way along the road to Toktong Pass.[12]

The over-all plan for the Yudam-ni breakout, after being flown to Hagaru by helicopter for General Smith's approval, was incorporated into Joint OpnO 2–50. This directive, later modified by fragmentary orders, was issued in the morning of 1 December 1950.

It meant dispensing with the vehicles and heavy equipment of the cross-country force. Only the barest military necessities could be taken by men loaded down with ammunition while struggling through snowdrifts.

The unit selected for the attempt was the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Davis. The plan of maneuver called for him to strike off across the mountain tops under cover of darkness on the night of 1 December. As the other units moved out astride the MSR from Yudam-ni to Hagaru, 3/5 was to be the advance guard.

Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's battalion had the mission of passing through 3/7 to seize the commanding ground on both sides of the road and lead the way for the rest of the Yudam-ni troops. Thus the attacks of 1/7 and 3/5 would converge in the general area of Fox Hill and Toktong Pass.

The point of the advance was to be the only Marine tank to reach Yudam-ni while the MSR was still open. It was left stranded after the recall of the crew to Hagaru; but Staff Sergeant Russell A. Munsell and another crewman were flown up from Hagaru by helicopter at Colonel Litzenberg's request. They were to man Tank D–23 when it moved out with the point. Plans also called for a battery of 3/11 to advance near the head of the column, so that it could go into position near Sinhung-ni and provide covering fires for the rearguard while other artillery units displaced.

The 4th Battalion of the 11th Marines had orders to fire most of its 155mm ammunition before departure. All the men who could be spared from this unit were formed into nine provisional infantry platoons. Two were assigned to reinforce the 7th Marines and three to the 5th Marines; four were retained under Major McReynold's command to protect the flanks of the vehicle train. It was further prescribed that the guns of 4/11 were to bring up the rear of the convoy, so that the road would not be blocked in the event of any of its vehicles becoming immobilized.

Only drivers and seriously wounded men were permitted to ride the trucks in the middle of the column along with critical equipment and supplies. Since all additional space in the vehicles would doubtless be needed for casualties incurred in the breakout as well as Fox Company casualties, it was decided not to bring out the dead from Yudam-ni. A field burial was conducted by chaplains for 85 officers and men.[13]

All available Marine aircraft were to be on station. Moreover, carrier planes of TF 77 had been released from other missions by the Fifth AF to reinforce the aircraft of the 1st MAW in direct support of the Yudam-ni troops.

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni
The Fight for Hills 1419 and 1542

The transition from planning to execution began on the morning of 1 December. Only the 1st and 3d Battalions of RCT–5 were left to the north of Yudam-ni, and pulling them out was to prove equivalent to letting loose of the tiger's tail.

The 3d Battalion began its withdrawal at 0800, followed 90 minutes later by the 1st. The initial phases of the maneuver were carried out without great difficulty. The first major problem came when 3/5's last unit, George Company, pulled down from Hill 1282 (see Map 24). There the Marines had been in such close contact with the enemy that grenades were the main weapon of both sides. The problem of preventing the Chinese from swarming over the top of the ridge at the critical moment and pursuing the Marines down the slope was solved by First Lieutenant Daniel Greene, the FAC, with a dummy run by close supporting aircraft. While the first pass of the Corsairs kept the Communists down, Captain Chester R. Hermanson commenced his withdrawal. As soon as his men moved out at a safe distance he signalled to the FAC, who called for live runs of Marine air in coordination with the fires directed by the artillery liaison officer, First Lieutenant Henry G. Ammer. First Lieutenant Arthur E. House's 81mm mortar platoon also rendered skillful support during the withdrawal.[14]
Click here to view map

The ancient ruse was so successful that George Company disengaged without a single casualty. Ammunition left behind by the rifle platoons was detonated just as the rockets, bombs, and napalm of the Corsairs hit the Chinese, followed by artillery and mortar shells. Hill 1282 seemed to erupt in one tremendous explosion. While Captain Hermanson's men crossed the bridge south of the burning town, an engineer demolitions crew waited to destroy the span.

The rear guard unit for the withdrawal of the two battalions was First Lieutenant John R. Hancock's Baker Company of 1/5. He felt that his best chance would be to "sneak off" Hill 1240. Accordingly he requested that no supporting fires be furnished Baker Company, except at his request. Making very effective use of his light machine guns to cover his withdrawal with a spray of fire, Hancock disengaged without a casualty.

The next stage of the regroupment was carried out in preparation for the attacks of 3/5 and 1/7. In order to clear the way on both sides of the MSR, 3/7 (minus How Company) moved out at 0900 on 1 December to attack Hill 1542 while How Company went up against Hill 1419.

Joint OpnO 1–50 was modified meanwhile by verbal instructions directing 2/5, instead of 3/5, to relieve 1/7 on Hill 1276, thus freeing Colonel Davis' battalion for its assigned mission. The 1st Battalion of RCT–5 took positions stretching from Hill 1100 on the west side of the MSR to the low ground southeast of the arm of the Reservoir. This meant that after 3/7 (–) seized Hill 1542, three Marine infantry battalions would occupy a defensive line about three and a half miles in length, stretching diagonally northeast from that position to the arm of the Reservoir, with Hill 1276 as its central bastion.[15]

Shortly before dusk Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's 3/5 arrived in position to pass through Lieutenant Colonel Harris' 3/7. The two battalion commanders agreed that 3/5 would execute the movement even though 3/7 had not yet secured its objectives, and 3/5 attacked astride the MSR at 1500.[16]

Harris' battalion had been having it hot and heavy all day on Hills 1419 and 1542 after jumping off at 0900. These objectives were too far apart for a mutually supported attack and the Chinese defended the difficult terrain with tenacity.

Item Company, reinforced by artillerymen and headquarters troops, made slow progress west of the road

against the Chinese dug in on Hill 1542. At 1700 George Company moved into position on the left. Both companies attempted an assault but the 3/7 report states, “Each attack by ‘I’ Co and ‘G’ Co never reached full momentum before it was broken up.” One platoon of Item Company reached the military crest before being repulsed. When night fell, the Marines were still on the eastern slopes of 1542.[17]

On Hill 1419, about 1000 yards east of the road, How Company of 3/7 met stiff opposition from Chinese dug in along four finger ridges as well as the main spur leading to the topographical crest. It became evident that How Company alone could not seize the hill and about noon Able Company of Davis’ battalion joined the attack, on How’s left.

The heavy undergrowth gave concealment to the enemy, though it also offered footholds to the Marines scrambling up the steep and icy slopes. Air strikes were laid down just ahead of them, blasting the Chinese with bombs, rockets, and 20mm fire. Artillery support, however, was limited by the relative blindness of the forward observer in the brush, but mortars succeeded in knocking out several enemy positions. How Company’s attack had come to a standstill because of casualties which included Lieutenant Harris. First Lieutenant Eugenous M. Hovatter’s Able Company regained the momentum, thanks to the efforts of First Lieutenant Leslie C. Williams’ 1st Platoon. Aided by How and by Baker, which was committed late in the afternoon, Able Company secured Hill 1419 about 1930. Thus the jump-off point for the 1/7 advance across the mountain tops had been seized.

After setting up hasty defenses, Davis directed that all dead and wounded be evacuated to 3/5’s aid station on the road. How Company was attached to his battalion by order of Colonel Litzenberg, since all units had been thinned by casualties. Then the battalion tail was pulled up the mountain and the last physical tie broken with other Marine units in the Yudam-ni area.[18]

The Marines had seized the initiative, never again to relinquish it during the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni
March of 1/7 Over the Mountains

Planning at the battalion level was done by Davis, his executive officer, Major Raymond V. Fridrich, and his S-3, Major Thomas B. Tighe. It was decided to take only two of the 81mm mortars and six heavy machine guns. They were to be manned with double crews, so that enough ammunition could be carried to keep them in action.

Pack-set radios (AN/GRC–9) were to provide positive communications in case the portable sets (SCR–300) would not reach to the Yudam-ni perimeter. The artillery liaison officer was to carry a pack set (SCR–610) to insure artillery communication.[19]

All personnel not sick or wounded were to participate, leaving behind enough walking wounded or frostbite cases to drive the vehicles and move the gear left behind with the regimental train. Extra litters were to be taken, each serving initially to carry additional mortar and machine gun ammunition; and all men were to carry sleeping bags not only for the protection of the wounded but also to save their own lives if the column should be cut off in the mountains for several days. Every man was to start the march with an extra bandolier of small arms ammunition, and personnel of the reserve company and headquarters group were to carry an extra round of 81mm mortar ammunition up the first mountain for replenishment of supplies depleted at that point.

After driving the enemy from the topographical crest of Hill 1419, the four companies were not permitted a breathing spell. Davis feared the effects of the extreme (16 degrees below zero) cold on troops drenched with sweat from clawing their way up the mountain. He pressed the reorganization with all possible speed, therefore, after no enemy contacts were reported by patrols ranging to the southeast. And at 2100 on the night of 1 December the column set out in this order:

Baker Company, First Lieutenant Kurcaba
1/7 Command Group, Lieutenant Colonel Davis
Able Company, First Lieutenant Hovatter
Charlie Company, Captain Morris
Headquarters Group, Major Fridrich
How Company, Second Lieutenant Newton

The night was dark but a few stars showed over the horizon in the general direction to be taken. They served as a guide, with a prominent rock mass being designated the first objective.

The snow-covered peaks all looked alike in the darkness, and the guide stars were lost to sight when the column descended into valleys. Repeated compass orientations of the map examined by flashlight under a poncho never checked out. The artillery was called upon to place white phosphorus on designated hills, but the splash of these rounds could seldom be located.

The point was slowed by the necessity of breaking trail in snow that had drifted knee-deep in places. After a path had been beaten, the icy footing became treacherous for the heavily burdened Marines. Some painful falls were taken on the downhill slopes by men who had to climb the finger ridges on hands and knees.

Apparently the enemy had been caught by complete surprise, for the Marines had the desolate area to themselves. A more immediate danger was loss of direction, and the head of the column veered off to the southwest while crossing the second valley. A drift in this direction would eventually take the battalion toward the enemy-held road to Hagaru (see Map 25), which had been scheduled by the Marine artillery for harassing and interdiction fires.

Radio failures kept Kurcaba, at the point, from receiving messages sent in warning. An attempt was made to communicate by word of mouth, but the shouts from behind often did not penetrate to ears protected from the cold by parka hoods. At last the loss of direction became so alarming that Davis himself hurried forward with his radio operator and runner. In the darkness he lost touch with them and floundered on alone, panting and stumbling.

It took such effort to overtake the point that he did not make it until the men were scrambling up the next steep ridge. There the westward drift was corrected just in time, for the battalion was running into its first CCF opposition.

The column had been heading up Hill 1520, the eastern and western slopes of which were held by the enemy. An increasing volume of small-arms fire was received as Davis gave his company commanders orders to reorganize units in preparation for attack. Exhausted though the men were, they summoned a burst of energy and advanced in two assault columns supported by 81 mm mortars and heavy machine guns. Now the exertion of carrying extra ammunition paid dividends as Baker and Charlie Companies closed in on a CCF position held in estimated platoon strength. Some of the Chinese were surprised while asleep or numbed with the cold, and the Marines destroyed the enemy force at a cost of only a few men wounded.

The attack cleared the enemy from the eastern slope of Hill 1520, but distant small-arms fire was received from ridges across the valley to the east. Davis called a halt for reorganization, since the troops had obviously reached the limit of their endurance. Suddenly they began collapsing in the snow—“like dominoes,” as the commanding officer later described the alarming spectacle. And there the men lay, oblivious to the cold, heedless of the Chinese bullets ricocheting off the rocks.

A strange scene ensued in the dim starlight as company officers and NCOs shook and cuffed the prostrate Marines into wakefulness. The officers could sympathize even while demanding renewed efforts, for the sub-zero cold seemed to numb the mind as well as body.

Davis had even requested his company commanders to check every order he gave, just to make sure his own weary brain was functioning accurately. At 0300 he decided to allow the men a rest—the first in 20 hours of continuous fighting or marching under a double burden. As a preliminary, the battalion commander insisted that the perimeter be buttoned up and small patrols organized within companies to insure a 25 per cent alert. Then the pack radio was set up to establish the night’s first contact with the regimental CP, and the men took turns at sleeping as an eerie silence fell over the wasteland of ice and stone.

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni
Attack of 3/5 on 1-2 December

Returning to the Yudam-ni area, it may be recalled that Lieutenant Colonel Taplett's 3/5 had passed through 3/7 at 1500 on 1 December with a mission of attacking astride the MSR to lead the way for the main column. Tank D-23, a How Company platoon and a platoon of Able Company engineers set the pace, followed by the rest of How Company and the other two rifle companies. After an advance of 1400 yards the battalion column was stopped by heavy CCF fire from both sides. How and Item Companies fanned out west and east of the road and a longdrawn fire fight ensued before the Marines cleared the enemy from their flanks at 1930.[20]

Artillery support for the breakout was provided by 1/11 and 3/11 (minus Battery H). The plan called for 1/11 to take the main responsibility for furnishing supporting fires at the outset while 3/11 displaced as soon as possible to the vicinity of Sinhung-ni, whence the last lap of the march to Hagaru could be effectively covered. The 1st Battalion would then join the vehicle column and move with it to Hagaru.[21]

Taplett gave 3/5 a brief rest after securing his first objectives—the high ground on both sides of the road just opposite the northern spurs of Hill 1520. Then he ordered a renewal of the attack shortly before midnight. How Company on the right met only moderate opposition, but was held up by the inability of Item Company to make headway against Chinese dug in along the western slope of Hill 1520. Neither 1/7 nor 3/5 had any idea at the moment that they were simultaneously engaged on opposite sides of the same great land mass, though separated by enemy groups as well as terrain of fantastic difficulties. So rugged was this mile-high mountain that the two Marine outfits might as well have been in different worlds as far as mutual support was concerned.

Item Company stirred up such a hornet's nest on the western slope that Captain Harold O. Schrier was granted permission by the battalion commander to return to his jump-off position, so that he could better defend the MSR. There he was attacked by Chinese who alternated infantry attacks with mortar bombardments. Radio communication failed and runners sent from the battalion CP to Item Company lost their way. Thus the company was isolated during an all-night defensive fight. Second Lieutenant Willard S. Peterson took over the command after Schrier received a second wound.

Taplett had ordered his reserve company, George, and his attached engineers into defensive positions to the rear of Item Company. The engineers on the right flank were also hit by the Chinese and had several wounded, including the platoon comander, First Lieutenant Wayne E. Richards, before repulsing the attack.

Counted CCF dead in the Item Company area totaled 342 at daybreak on the 2d, but the Marines had paid a heavy price in casualties. Less than 20 able-bodied men were left when George Company passed through to renew the attack on Hill 1520. For that matter, both George and How Companies were reduced to two-platoon strength. Taplett requested reinforcement by an additional company, and was assigned the so-called Dog-Easy composite company made up of the remnants of 2/7. This outfit moved directly down the road between George and How Companies.[22]

It took George Company until 1200 to secure the western slope of Hill 1520. The composite company ran into difficulties meanwhile at a point on the MSR where the Chinese had blown a bridge over a deep stream bed and set up a roadblock defended by machine guns. While George Company attacked down a long spur above the enemy, Dog-Easy Company maneuvered in defilade to outflank him. Lieutenant Greene, the FAC, directed the F4Us on target and the ground forces were treated to a daring exhibition of close support by Corsairs which barely cleared the ridge after pulling out of their runs. The roadblock was speedily wiped out, but the vehicle column had to wait until the engineers could construct a bypass. Then the advance of 3/5 was resumed, with

George and How Companies attacking on opposite sides of the MSR, and the composite company astride the road, following the tank and engineer platoons.

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni
The Ridgerunners of Toktong Pass

All the rest of their lives the survivors of the two spearhead Marine battalions would take pride in nicknames earned during the breakout from Yudam-ni. For Taplett's outfit it was "Darkhorse," after the radio call sign of the battalion, while Davis' men felt that they had a right to be known as the "Ridgerunners of Toktong Pass."

At daybreak on 2 December, 1/7 corrected its westward drift of the previous night and attacked toward Hill 1653, a mountain only about a mile and a half north of Fox Hill. Davis' men got the better of several fire fights at long range with CF groups on ridges to the east, but the terrain gave them more effective opposition than the enemy.[23]

The radios of 1/7 could not contact Marine planes when they came on station, and relays through tactical channels proved ineffective. Moreover, all efforts to reach Fox Company by radio had failed. This situation worried the Battalion commander, who realized that he was approaching within range of friendly 81 mm mortar fire from Fox Hill.

The ancient moral weapon of surprise stood Davis and his men in good stead, however, as the column encountered little opposition on the western slope of Hill 1653. How Company, bringing up the rear with the wounded men, came under an attack which threatened for a moment to endanger the casualties. But after the litters were carried forward, Newton managed to keep the Chinese at a respectful distance without aid from the other companies. Charlie Company was given the mission of seizing a spur covering the advance of Able and Baker companies east from Hill 1520 to Hill 1653. The command group had just passed Morris on this position when the radio operator shouted to Davis:

"Fox Six on the radio, sir."

Captain Barber's offer to send out a patrol to guide 1/7 to his position was declined, but Fox Company did control the strike by planes of VMF-312 which covered the attack of Kurcaba's company on the final objective—a ridge about 400 yards north of Fox Hill. Aided by the air attack and supporting 81 mm mortar fires, Baker Company seized the position and Able Company the northern portion of Hill 1653. It was 1125 on the morning of 2 December 1950 when the first men of Baker Company reached Fox Company's lines.

Able Company held its position on Hill 1653 until the rest of the battalion was on Fox Hill. After grounding their packs, men from the forward companies went back to help carry the 22 wounded men into the perimeter. While supervising this task, the regimental surgeon, Lieutenant Peter A. Arioli, (MC) USN, was instantly killed by a Chinese sniper's bullet. There were no other death casualties, though two men had to be placed in improvised strait jackets after cracking mentally and physically under the strain. Both died before evacuation was possible.

The first objective had been reached, but there was to be no rest until Toktong Pass was secured. Baker Company paused on Fox Hill only long enough for Kurcaba's men to eat a hasty meal of air-dropped rations. Then they moved out to seize the high ground commanding the vital terrain feature at a point where the road describes a loop from north to south. Able Company followed shortly afterwards and the two outfits set up a single perimeter for the night while the rest of the battalion manned perimeters on the high ground east of Fox Hill. Barber's men remained in their positions.

Five days and nights of battle had left Fox Company with 118 casualties—26 KIA, 3 MIA, and 89 WIA. Six of the seven officers were wounded, and practically all the unwounded men suffered from frostbite and

digestive ills.

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni
CCF Attacks on Hills 1276 and 1542

While the two spearhead battalions advanced, the Marine elements in the rear could not complain of being neglected by the enemy. All three infantry battalions were kept busy with CCF attacks which persisted from midnight until long after daybreak (see Map 24).

Lieutenant Colonel Roise's 2/5, which had been designated as rearguard, was hit on Hill 1276 in the early morning hours of 2 December. Under cover of rifle and machine-gun fire, the Chinese advanced on the Fox Company positions with their "inverted wedge" assault formation. Testimony as to its effectiveness is found in the 2/5 report:

"The [Chinese] . . . used fire and movement to excellent advantage. They would direct a frontal attack against our positions while other elements of their attacking force moved in closer to 'F' Company flanks in an attempt at a double envelopment. Then in turn the forces on both flanks would attack while the forces directly to our front would move closer to our position. In this, the enemy, by diverting our attention in the above manner, were able to maneuver their forces to within hand grenade range of our positions."

One Fox platoon, assailed from three sides, was forced to withdraw at 0110 and consolidate with the rest of the company. At 0200 the FAC requested an air strike from two night fighters on station. The aircraft were directed on the target by 60mm mortar white phosphorus bursts and conducted effective strafing and rocket runs within 200 yards of the Marine front line. In all, five aircraft of VMF(N)-542 were employed with excellent results during the night.

At 0230 Roise directed Fox Company to retake the left-flank hill from which the platoon had been driven. Two attempts were made before daybreak with the support of 4.2-inch mortar fire, but enemy machine guns stopped the assault. At 0730 an air strike was requested. After strafing and rocket runs, Fox Company fought its way to the crest, only to find the position untenable because of machine-gun fire from the reverse slope. At 1000 the Corsairs blasted the enemy for 25 minutes with napalm and 500-pound bombs, and CCF troops were observed vacating the objective area. It was nearly time for the battalion to displace as the rearguard, however, and the enemy was left in possession of a scarred and scorched piece of real estate.

Both Dog and Easy Companies received probing attacks which the Chinese did not attempt to push home. At daybreak some of them broke and ran along the Dog Company front, throwing away their weapons as they scattered in disorder. Marine fire pursued the retreating Communists and cut down many of them. Captain Arthur D. Challacombe's provisional company of artillerymen on Dog Company's right counted over 50 dead in front of its positions.[24]

On the eastern flank 1/5 came under attack about 2100 by 75-100 Chinese who crossed the arm of the reservoir on ice. Mortar and artillery fire drove them back at 0100 with heavy losses, but attempts at infiltration continued throughout the night. In the morning 51 CCF dead were counted in front of one Charlie Company machine gun, and total enemy KIA were estimated at 200.[25]

At the other end of the Marine line, a CCF attack hit 3/7(–) on Hill 1542. The assault force, according to the enemy report, consisted of Sung-Wei-shan's 9th Company, 3d Battalion, 235th Regiment, the 5th Company of 2/235, and apparently two other companies of 3/235. All were units of the 79th CCF Division, and their mission was "to annihilate the defending enemy before daylight."[25]

George and Item Companies of 3/7, following their repulse from the upper reaches of Hill 1542, had formed a defensive perimeter on the eastern slope. As reinforcements the depleted units were assigned a

composite outfit known as Jig Company and consisting of about 100 cannoneers, headquarters troops, and any other elements which could be hastily put together. First Lieutenant Alfred I. Thomas, of Item Company, was placed in command of men who were for the most part strangers to him as well as to one another.

Sung led the 9th Company's attacking column. Although the Chinese account states that his men were advancing from the northwest toward the topographical crest of Hill 1542, they actually held the summit. Their attack was downhill, though some climbing of spurs and finger ridges may have been necessary. After reconnoitering to a point within 25 yards of the Marines, the Chinese jumped off at 0430 with the support of fires from battalion weapons. Relying on the "inverted wedge," the attackers bored in alternately right and left while seeking an opportunity for a knockout blow. The 2d Platoon on the Chinese left took a severe mauling, losing its commander and almost half of its men. The other two platoons had heavy casualties but succeeded in routing the jury-rigged Jig Company. Since it was a composite outfit not yet 24 hours old, there is no record of either its operations or losses. Apparently, however, a majority of the men straggled back to their original units. Lieutenant Thomas, who had commanded ably under difficult circumstances, rejoined First Lieutenant William E. Johnson's Item Company with such men as he had left. The Marines gave ground slowly under Chinese pressure until daybreak, when they held positions abreast of George Company, which had not been heavily engaged.

The two companies were reduced to a total of fewer than 200 men. After being reinforced by H&S Company personnel, they formed a defensive line in an arc stretching from the MSR about 1100 yards and taking in the eastern slopes of Hill 1542.[27]

Apparently the Communists, like military forces everywhere, did not err on the light side when estimating the casualties of opponents. The Marine losses for the night were listed in the CCF report as "killed, altogether 100 enemy troops." This figure, indicating total casualties of several hundred, is manifestly too high. Owing to the loss of 7th Marines records, the statistics for Item Company are not available, but it does not appear that more than 30 to 40 men were killed or wounded.

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni
Advance of Darkhorse on 2-3 December

Several CCF daylight attacks in platoon strength were received between Hills 1542 and 1276 during the morning hours of 2 December. All Marine units in this area were in process of disengaging, so that the emphasis was placed on breaking off action rather than attempting to defend ground soon to be evacuated.

The vehicle train in the rear made slow progress during the afternoon of 2 December. Infantry strength was not sufficient to occupy all the commanding terrain during the passage of the motor column, and CCF groups infiltrated back into areas vacated by Marine riflemen. Effective air support reduced most of these efforts to harassing attacks, but Marine vehicle drivers were singled out for special attention, making it necessary to find replacements among near-by troops.

To 1/5 fell the mission of furnishing close-in flank protection on the left. Marine air and artillery supported infantry attacks clearing the flanks and the column jolted on with frequent halts. The night passed without incident except for a CCF attack on 3/11. George Battery gunners had to employ direct fire to repulse the Communists, and a 105mm howitzer was lost as well as several vehicles.

Darkhorse, leading the way, was meanwhile fighting for nearly every foot of the road during the advance of 2 December. George Company on the left went up against Hill 1520 while Dog-Easy moved astride the MSR. By noon George had secured its objective. Dog-Easy advanced against moderate resistance to a point about 300 yards beyond Hill 1520 where a demolished bridge had spanned a rock ravine as the road turns from south to east. Here Chinese automatic weapons fire halted the column until a strike by 12 Corsairs cleared the enemy from the ravine. On the right Captain Harold B. Williamson's How Company was to have joined in the attack, moving through the high ground south of the bend in the road. A Chinese strongpoint delayed its advance and How was pinned down by heavy enemy fire while attempting to cross a stream bed halfway to its objective. The last air strike of the day freed Captain Williamson's unit, which secured its objective after dark. During the last minutes of daylight, the engineer platoon, now commanded by Technical Sergeant Edwin L. Knox, constructed a bypass around the blasted bridge. About 1900 the first vehicles followed the tank across.

Click here to view map

Taplett's battalion continued its slow progress with George and How Companies clearing the high ground on opposite sides of the road while Dog-Easy moved astride the MSR. At about 0200 on the 3d the advance came to a halt 1000 yards short of Fox Hill. Dog-Easy, which had suffered heavy casualties, particularly among its key NCOs, had reached the limit of exhaustion, and 3/5 secured for the rest of the night. Not until daylight did How Company discover that it had halted 300 yards short of its final objective, the hill mass southwest of Fox Hill.

At dawn on 3 December the ground was covered with six inches of new snow, hiding the scars of war and giving a deceptively peaceful appearance to the Korean hills as the Marine column got under way again with Sergeant Knox's engineers at the point, just behind Sergeant Munsell's lone tank. Alternately serving as engineers and riflemen, this platoon came through with 17 able-bodied men left out of the 48 who started.

Dog-Easy Company having been rendered ineffective by its casualties, Taplett moved George Company down from the left flank to advance astride the road. First Lieutenant Charles D. Mize took over the reorganized outfit, assisted by Second Lieutenant August L. Camaratta. The two riddled Dog-Easy platoons were combined with George Company under the command of Second Lieutenant John J. Cahill and Technical Sergeant Don Faber.

Cahill had the distinction of leading the platoon which fought the first action of Marine ground forces in the Korean conflict. But it hardly seemed possible on this sub-zero December morning that the encounter had taken place barely four months before, or that the temperature that August day had been 1020 in the non-existent shade. Korea was a land of extremes.

Darkhorse was not far from a junction with the Ridgerunners. The night of 2-3 December had passed quietly in Toktong Pass, where the five companies occupied separate perimeters. The Marines on Fox Hill lighted warming fires in the hope of tempting the enemy to reveal his positions. The Chinese obliged by firing from two near-by ridges. One CCF group was dug in along a southern spur of the hill held by Able and Baker Companies, and the other occupied a ridge extending eastward beyond Toktong Pass in the direction of Hagaru.

Simultaneous attacks in opposite directions were launched by 1/7. Davis led Morris' and Newton's companies against the CCF force barring the way to Hagaru. Tighe moved out with Kurcaba's and Hovatter's companies meanwhile against a larger CCF force on high ground south of the big bend in the road. This stroke took the Chinese by surprise. As they fell back in disorder, the Communists did not realize that they were blundering into the path of the oncoming Marines of Williamson's How/5, attacking south of the MSR. Colonel Litzenberg, who had been informed by radio, turned to Lieutenant Colonel Murray and said, "Ray, notify your Third Battalion commander that the Chinese are running southwest into his arms!"[28]

Taplett was unaware that Tighe's attack was forcing about a battalion of Chinese into his lap. He had spotted the Chinese in strength on the high ground south of the road when day broke. Attempts to lay artillery on the Chinese having failed because of the range from Hagaru, the 3/5 commander called for an air strike. The overcast lifted just as the Corsairs came on station. They hit the demoralized Communists with napalm and rockets while the 81mm mortars and heavy machine guns of the two converging Marine forces opened up with everything they had. Probably the greatest slaughter of the Yudam-ni breakout ended at 1030 with the CCF battalion "completely eliminated," as the 3/5 report phrased it, and How Company in possession of the CCF positions.

At 1300 on 3 December, after Davis had cleared the enemy from the ridge northeast of Toktong Pass, the basic maneuver of the breakout was completed by the junction of 3/5 and 1/7. Several more fights awaited Taplett's men on the way to Hagaru, but at Toktong Pass they had fulfilled their mission. That the victory had not been gained without paying a price in casualties is indicated by the following daily returns of effective strength in the three rifle companies:

Click here to view table

This is a total of 243 battle and nonbattle casualties as compared to the 144 suffered by the same units during the CCF attacks of 27 to 30 November.

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Chapter 12. Breakout From Yudam-ni
Entry into Hagaru Perimeter

When the truck column with its wounded men reached Toktong Pass, it halted to receive the casualties of 1/7, 3/5, and Fox Company of 2/7. Lieutenant Commander John H. Craven, chaplain of the 7th Marines, helped to assist the litter cases into vehicles. Since there was not room for all, the walking wounded had to make room for helpless men. They complied with a courage which will never be forgotten by those who saw them struggling painfully toward Hagaru alongside the truck column.[29]

When the tank leading the 3/5 column reached Toktong Pass it halted only long enough for Colonels Taplett and Davis to confer. D–23 then moved out and the four companies of 1/7 came down from their hillside positions and fell in behind.

Stevens' 1/5, having leap-frogged 3/5, followed next on the way to blocking positions farther east on the MSR. Taplett remained in Toktong Pass until after midnight, acting as radio relay between Colonels Litzenberg and Murray, by now in Hagaru, and 2/5 in the rear. At about midnight the 3/5 commander sent G and H Companies into the vehicle column to furnish security for the artillery, and an hour later the remainder of the battalion joined the column. Roise's 2/5, which had passed through 3/7 came next, followed by Harris' rear guard.

Interspersed among the infantry were elements of artillery and service troops with their vehicles, and the column became more scrambled after each halt.[30] Two observation planes of VMO–6 circled overhead to give warning of enemy concentrations. Marine planes were on station continuously during daylight hours, strafing and rocketing to the front and along both flanks. A total of 145 sorties, most of them in close air support of troops advancing along the Hagaru–Yudam-ni MSR, were flown on 3 December by the following units:[31]
VMF-214: 36 sorties
VMF-323: 28 sorties
VMF-212: 27 sorties
VMF-312: 34 sorties
VMF(N)-513: 7 sorties
VMF(N)-542: 13 sorties
TOTAL: 145 sorties

At the other end of the route the Royal Marine Commandos, reinforced by a platoon of tanks, were sent out from Hagaru at 1630 on 3 December, to drive the Chinese from the road leading into that perimeter.

Thanks to excellent air support, 1/7 met no opposition save harassing attacks. One of Davis's flanking patrols reported the flushing out of a few Chinese so exhausted by cold and hardships that they had abandoned their weapons and holed up together for warmth. If these Marines had been in a mood for such reflections, they might have recalled that the American press of late had been bemoaning the supposed decline of the nation's young manhood. UN reverses in the summer of 1950 had led editorial writers to conclude that our troops had neither the legs for long marches nor the backs for the bearing of military burdens. Mechanization had gone so far, they lamented, that we had become the servants rather than the masters of our own wheeled and tracked vehicles.

The Marines of Davis' battalion might have taken a grim satisfaction, therefore, in encountering Chinese peasants, inured all their lives to privations, whose will to fight had been broken by the hardships of the past week. These Marines had not known a full night's sleep during that week. They had subsisted on a diet of crackers varied with canned rations thawed by body heat. They had been under continuous nervous pressure as

well as physical strain, and yet they were able to summon one last burst of pride when the point neared the Hagaru perimeter at 1900 on 3 December 1950. Several hundred yards from the entrance a halt was called while the men closed up into a compact column.[32] Then they came in marching, their shoulders thrown back and their shoepacs beating a firm tread on the frozen road.

The Marines at the head of the column were followed by the walking wounded and the vehicles loaded with more serious cases, some of whom had been strapped to the hoods. All casualties were given medical care and the remaining troops taken into warming tents for hot coffee. Many of them appeared dazed and uncomprehending at first. Others wandered about aimlessly with blank faces. But there were few who had suffered any psychological disturbances that could not be cleared up with a good night's sleep and some hot food.

Troops of 4/11 and 3/5 were due to arrive next at Hagaru while 1/5 and 2/5 echeloned companies forward along the MSR to provide flank protection. Not all the Chinese had lost aggressiveness, but the column had little difficulty until 0200 on 4 December. Then it came to a abrupt halt when prime movers of eight 155mm howitzers ran out of diesel fuel. As far back as Sinhung-ni 150 gallons had been requested but none had been delivered.[33] While the troops ahead, including G and H of 3/5, continued on towards Hagaru, unaware of the break, a bad situation developed around the stalled guns.

Following the halting of the convoy Major Angus J. Cronin, in charge of 4/11's vehicle column, and his handful of truck drivers and cannoneers drove off a platoon of Chinese. These Marines were soon joined by Lieutenant Colonel Feehan's 1/11 and Able Company of 1/5. By the time Lieutenant Colonel Taplett arrived, the 155s had been moved off the road by Captain O. R. Lodge of 4/11, who continued in spite of a wound until more severely wounded in the head.

Roise and Stevens arrived shortly afterwards and the three battalion commanders drew up a hasty plan. While 3/5 built up a base of fire a platoon of Easy Company, 2/5, would move through the ridge north of the road to knock out the Chinese strong point. Up to this time there had been few and minor instances of panic during the breakout from Yudam-ni. But some confusion resulted when the enemy took advantage of the delay to blow a small bridge ahead and increase his rate of fire. Thus a new roadblock awaited after the howitzers were removed, and two truck drivers were killed while the engineers repaired the break. Other drivers bypassed the bridge and made a dash for safety by crossing the little stream on the ice.

A comparatively few men, giving way to panic, were endangering the entire column. Behind one of the fleeing trucks an angry warrant officer pounded in pursuit, shouting some of the most sulphurous profanity that Lieutenant Colonel Taplett had ever heard.[34] This was CWO Allen Carlson of Baker Battery, 1/11. He disappeared around a bend in the road, only to return a moment later with a chastened driver towing a 105mm howitzer. Carlson hastily recruited a crew and set up the piece beside the road for point-blank fire at the enemy position while Taplett directed the fire of a 75mm recoilless rifle.

A Charlie Battery howitzer and a 1/5 heavy machine gun added their contribution as a platoon of Easy Company, 2/5, attacked under cover of air strikes. The Chinese position was overrun at 0830 at an estimated cost to the enemy of 150 dead. Two other attacks were launched by infantry units of Roise's battalion on the high ground to

the left before the MSR was cleared.

When the 155mm howitzers were pushed off the road, it had been assumed that they would be retrieved. Only 1000 yards farther down the MSR was a cache of air-dropped diesel fuel, but efforts to bring back replenishments were frustrated by enemy fire. Attempts at recovery by the British Marines failed later that day, and orders were given for the destruction by air of the eight stalled howitzers plus a ninth which had previously been abandoned after skidding off the road. This was the largest loss of weapons in the Yudam-ni breakout.

At 1400 on 4 December the last elements of the rearguard, 3/7, entered the perimeter and the four-day operation passed into history. Some 1500 casualties were brought to Hagaru, a third of them being in the non-

battle category, chiefly frostbite cases. It had taken the head of the column about 59 hours to cover the 14 miles, and the rear units 79 hours.

"Under the circumstances of its execution," commented General Smith, "the breakout was remarkably well conducted. Since centralized control of the widespread elements was a difficult task, particularly with a joint command, unit commanders were required to exercise a high degree of initiative .... The spirit and discipline of the men under the most adverse conditions of weather and terrain was another highly important factor contributing to the success of the operation and also reflecting the quality of the leadership being exercised."[35]

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru

THE MARINES AT Hagaru would have been astonished to learn how much anxiety over their "encirclement" was being currently felt in the United States. It had been a rude shock for Americans who believed that the troops in Korea would be "home by Christmas" to realize that the unexpected Chinese intervention had created virtually a new war. This war, moreover, was apparently going against the UN forces. On Thanksgiving Day the victory over Communist aggression had seemed almost complete, yet only a week later the headlines announced major reverses. The Eighth Army was in full retreat, and an entire Marine division was said to be "trapped."

So disturbing were the reports from Korea, newspaper readers and radio listeners could scarcely have imagined the mood of confidence prevailing at Hagaru after the arrival of the troops from Yudam-ni. Even prior to that event, few Marines had any doubts as to the ability of the Division to fight its way out to the seacoast.

The Hagaru perimeter presented a scene of bustling activity during the first days of December. Trucks and jeeps bounced along the bumpy roads in such numbers as to create a traffic problem. Twin-engined planes roared in and out of the snow-covered airstrip at frequent intervals throughout the daylight hours. Overhead the "Flying Boxcars" spilled a rainbow profusion of red, blue, yellow, green and orange parachutes to drift earthward with heavy loads of rations, gasoline and ammunition.

The busy panorama even had its humorous aspects. Parka-clad Marines displaying a five-day growth of beard went about with their cheeks bulging from an accumulation of Tootsie Rolls—a caramel confection much esteemed by Stateside youngsters for its long-lasting qualities. The Post Exchange Section had originally brought merchandise into Hagaru on the assumption that it would be established as a base. No space in vehicles was available for its removal and the commanding general directed that the entire remaining stock, $13,547.80 worth, chiefly candies and cookies, should be issued gratuitously to the troops.[1] Tootsie Rolls proved to be a prime favorite with men who would have scorned them in civilian life. Not only were they more tasty than half-frozen "C" rations, but they resulted in no intestinal disorders. Moreover, they were useful as temporary repairs for leaking radiators.

There was nothing during the daytime to indicate the presence of CCF troops near Hagaru. Even in hours of darkness the enemy was quiet throughout the first five nights of December. Apparently the Chinese were powerless to renew the attack until reinforcements and replenishments of supplies and ammunition reached the area.

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru
4312 Casualties Evacuated by Air

Evacuation of the wounded was the chief problem on 2 December, when it became evident that previous estimates of losses at Yudam-ni and among the Army troops east of the Reservoir were far too low. A total of 914 casualties were flown out by the C-47s and R4Ds that day and more than 700 on the 3d. Captain Hering and his assistants had assumed that the Air Force evacuation officer was screening the casualties until he informed them that this was not his responsibility. The Division surgeon then set a Spartan standard. He passed personally on all controversial cases and approved for evacuation only those in as bad shape as Lieutenant Commander Lessenden, the 5th Marines surgeon who had refused to be flown out and continued on duty after both feet were painfully frozen. Apparently it was not too severe a test for men who could stand the pain, since Lessenden suffered no permanent injuries.[2]

Captain Hering had to use his medical authority in several instances to overcome the objections of Yudam-ni casualties who declined evacuation, though in obvious need of hospitalization.[3]

The liaison airstrip at Koto-ri had been of little use, since it was outside the perimeter and exposed to enemy fire. But the completion of a new strip on the 2d made it possible to evacuate about 47 casualties that day from the 2/1 perimeter.[4]

More than 1400 casualties remained at Hagaru on the morning of 5 December. They were all flown out before nightfall, making a total of 4312 men (3150 Marines, 1137 Army personnel and 25 Royal Marines) evacuated from Hagaru by air in the first five days of December, according to Marine figures.[5] X Corps estimated a total of 4207 for the same period.[6]

R4Ds of the 1st MAW, flying under Wing operational control, were represented in the flights to and from Hagaru as well as the C-47s of the Combat Cargo Command, FEAF.[7] The large-scale casualty evacuation was completed without losing a man, even though the aircraft landing on the rough strip careened precariously as they bounced along the frozen runway. Only two planes could be accomodated simultaneously at first, but Marine engineers widened the 2900-foot strip until six planes could be parked at a time.

A four-engine Navy R5D made a successful landing with stretchers flown in from Japan. After taking off with a load of wounded, the pilot barely cleared the surrounding hills, and it was decided to risk no further evacuations with such large aircraft. Two crash landings marred operations on the field. An incoming Marine R4D, heavily loaded with artillery ammunition, wiped out its landing gear on the rough surface and was abandoned after its load had been put to good use by the gunners. A second accident involved an Air Force C-47 which lost power on the take off and came down just outside the Marine lines without injury to its load of casualties. Troops from the perimeter were rushed out immediately to rescue its occupants but the plane had to be destroyed.[8]

Not until long later were final official casualty reports rendered for the period of the Yudam-ni regroupment and breakout. Regimental figures are not available, and the totals included the losses suffered by the troops at Hagaru during the night of 30 November-1 December. Following are the figures for the 1st Marine Division as a whole throughout this five-day period:

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru
537 Replacements Flown to Hagaru

At 1359, on 3 December, X Corps issued OI 22, directing the 1st Marine Division to withdraw all elements to Hamhung area via the Hagaru-Hamhung axis as rapidly as evacuation of wounded and other preparations would permit.[9] General Almond flew to Hagaru that same day for a conference with General Smith. Nothing further was said about destruction of equipment. At that very time, in fact, various critical items were being salvaged and flown out from Hagaru when space on planes was available.

Surplus weapons had accumulated as a result of casualties and the Marine general wished to avoid the destruction of any material that could be removed by air without interfering with casualty evacuation. It was particularly necessary to salvage and fly out the parachutes and packages used for air drops, since a critical shortage of these had been reported from Japan. Before leaving Hagaru, the Division also planned to evacuate large quantities of stoves, tents, typewriters, rifles, machine guns and damaged 4.2" mortars.[10]

Space in empty planes landing at Hagaru was utilized not only for bringing in equipment and medical supplies, but also replacements. Since the Wonsan landing some hundreds of Marines, most of them wounded in the Inchon-Seoul operation, had returned from hospitals in Japan. These men, upon reporting at Hungnam, were temporarily assigned to the Headquarters Battalion, since the Division had no provision in its T/O for a replacement organization. Ordinarily they would have been returned to their units, but enemy action made this procedure impossible until the completion of the airstrip.

During the first five days of December, therefore, 537 replacements were flown to Hagaru, fit for duty and equipped with cold-weather clothing. Those destined for the 1st Marines were assigned to the 3d Battalion for perimeter defense, and personnel for the 5th and 7th Marines joined those units after their arrival at Hagaru.

Major General William H. Tunner, USAF, the chief of the Combat Cargo Command, expressed astonishment during his visit of 5 December on learning about these replacements. He had come to offer his C-47s for troop evacuation after the casualties were flown out, but General Smith explained that all able-bodied men would be needed for the breakout.

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru
Air Drops of Ammunition

Visitors and press correspondents arrived daily at Hagaru in the empty C-47s and R4Ds. Among them was Miss Marguerite Higgins, reporter for the New York *Herald-Tribune.* General Smith ruled that for her own protection, considering the possibility of enemy attack, she must leave the perimeter before nightfall.

French and British publications were represented as well as most of the larger American dailies and wire services. At one of the press conferences the question arose as to the proper name of the Marine operation. A British correspondent had intended to refer to it as a "retreat" or "retirement," but General Smith held that there could be no retreat when there was no rear. Since the Division was surrounded, he maintained, the word "retreat" was not a correct term for the coming breakout to the coast.[11]

General Smith and Lieutenant Colonel Murray were interviewed for television by Charles de Soria, who also "shot" Marines on infantry duty and casualties awaiting evacuation. These pictures and recordings were later shown in the United States under the title *Gethsemane.*

The correspondents were astonished to find the Hagaru perimeter so lacking in enemy activity. This quiet was shattered at 2010 on 5 December when two B-26s bombed and strafed the area. Marine night fighters were absent on a search mission, but one was recalled to offer protection against further efforts of the sort. A possible explanation was advanced by First Lieutenant Harry S. Wilson, of VMF(N)–542, who reported that he had received orders by radio to attack Hagaru. It was his conviction that Chinese use of captured radio equipment accounted for the B–26 attack.[12]

The interlude of CCF inactivity gave the 1st Marine Division an opportunity to build up a stock of air-dropped ammunition and supplies. Poor communications had prevented the obtaining of advance information as to the requirements of the Yudam-ni troops, and their needs had to be estimated by the assistant G–4.

It was planned that units moving out from Hagaru would take only enough supplies for the advance to Koto-ri. Materiel would be air-dropped there to support the next stage of the breakout.

The C–119s of the Combat Cargo Command were called upon to fly in the largest part of the total of the 372.7 tons requested for air delivery at Hagaru. C-47s and R4Ds were available for some items, particularly of a fragile nature; and specially packaged small drops to meet specific needs could be made by planes of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Officers and men of the Headquarters Battalion at Hagaru were ordered to assist the 1st Regulating Detachment in the operation of the Hagaru airhead. Army service troops were also assigned to the task, and dumps were set up adjacent to the drop zone for the direct issuing of supplies. The major items requested were artillery, mortar and small arms ammunition, hand grenades, gasoline and diesel oil, rations, and communication wire.[13]

There is no record of the amounts actually received. Pilots sometimes missed the drop zone so far that the containers were "captured" by the enemy or landed in areas where recovery was not feasible because of enemy fire. In other instances, the supplies fell near the positions of front-line units which issued them on the spot without any formalities of bookkeeping.

Breakage rates were high, due to the frozen ground. About 70 per cent of the POL products and 70 to 80 per cent of the rations were recovered in usable condition. Of the artillery ammunition delivered to the drop zone, 40 per cent was badly damaged and only 25 per cent ever reached the gun positions. About 45 per cent of the small arms ammunition was recovered and usable. A hundred per cent of the requested mortar ammunition and 90

per cent of the 81mm rounds were put into the air over the drop zone, though the damage rate was nearly as high as that of the artillery shells.[14]

In spite of the seemingly low percentages of receipts as compared to requests, it was considered that the Hagaru air drops had been successful on the whole. “Without the extra ammunition,” commented General Smith, “many more of the friendly troops would have been killed. . . . There can be no doubt that the supplies received by this method proved to be the margin necessary to sustain adequately the operations of the division during this period.”[15]

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru
Planning for Breakout to Koto-ri

The need of the Yudam-ni troops for recuperation was so urgent that 6 December was set as the D-day of the attack from Hagaru to Koto-ri. On the recommendation of his staff, General Smith decided that the need of the troops for rest and regroupment outweighed the advantages of a speedy advance, even though the enemy would be allowed more time to get his forces into position along the MSR.

Another factor influencing this decision was the thinning of the command group and staff sections of the Division. It will be recalled that General Craig, the Assistant Division Commander, had recently been returned on emergency leave to the United States. Colonel Walseth (G-1) was wounded on 30 November, while Lieutenant Colonel Chidester, had been MIA since that date. Colonel McAlister (G–4) had been directed to remain at Hungnam to co-ordinate logistic functions.

A serious handicap to planning was the shortage of staff personnel. This was due in part to the casualties suffered by the last convoy of Headquarters troops to move up from Hungnam. Moreover, the office force had been depleted by calls for reinforcements to defend the perimeter.

By dint of working round the clock, however, planning for the breakout to Koto-ri was completed on Schedule. OpnO 25–50, issued at 0800 on 5 December, provided for an advance of the 1st Marine Division at first light the following morning on the Koto-ri-Chinhung-ni-Majondong axis to close the Hamhung area. The principal subordinate units were assigned these tasks:

"(a) RCT–5 (3/1 attached) to relieve all elements on perimeter defense in the Hagaru area by 1200, 5 December; to cover the movement of RCT–7 out of Hagaru to the south; to follow RCT–7 to the south on the Hagaru-ri–Koto-ri–Chinhungni axis; to protect the Division rear from Hagaru to Koto-ri; and to follow RCT–7 from Koto-ri to the Hamhung area as Division reserve.

"(b) RCT–7 to advance south at first light on 6 December on the Hagaru–Koto-ri–Chinhung-ni axis to close the Hamhung area.

"(c) RCT–1 (–) to continue to hold Koto-ri and Chanhung-ni, protecting the approach and passage of the remainder of the Division through Koto-ri; and to protect the Division rear from Koto-ri to the Hamhung area."[16]

All personnel except drivers, relief drivers, radio operators, casualties and men specially designated by RCT commanders, were to march on foot alongside motor serials to provide close-in security. It was directed that vehicles breaking down should be pushed to the side of the road and destroyed if not operative by the time the column passed. During halts a perimeter defense of motor serials was to be established.

Nine control points were designated by map references to be used for reporting progress of the advance or directing air drops. Demolitions to clear obstacles from the front and to create them to the rear were planned by the Division Engineer Officer.

Division AdminO 20–50, which accompanied OpnO 25–50, prescribed that the troops were to take enough "C" rations for two days, equally distributed between individual and organic transportation. Selected items of "B" rations were to be loaded on organic vehicles, and the following provision was made for ammunition:

"On individual, up to 1 U/F per individual weapon; on vehicle, minimum 1 U/F, then proportionate share per RCT until dumps depleted or transportation capacity exceeded."

Helicopter evacuation was indicated for emergency cases. Other casualties were to be placed in sleeping

bags and evacuated in vehicles of the column.

Two Division trains were set up by AdminO 20–50. Lieutenant Colonel Banks commanded Train No. 1, under RCT–7; and No. 2, under RCT–5, was in charge of Lieutenant Colonel Milne. Each motor serial in the trains was to have a commander who maintained radio communication with the train commander.

Truck transportation not being available for all supplies and equipment at Hagaru, a Division destruction plan was issued on 4 December, making unit commanders responsible for disposing of all excess supplies and equipment within their own areas. “Commanding officer 1st Regulating Detachment is responsible for destruction all classes supplies and equipment remaining in dumps,” the order continued. “Unit commanders and CO 1st Regulating Detachment report types and amounts of supplies and equipment to this headquarters (G–4) prior to destruction. Permission to use fuel and ammunition for destruction purposes must be obtained from this headquarters (G–4).”

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru
3/1 Relieved by RCT–5 at Hagaru

General Smith held conferences on 4 and 5 December of senior unit commanders. During the afternoon of the 4th General Almond arrived by plane and was briefed on the plan for the breakout. In a brief ceremony at the Division CP he presented the Distinguished Service Cross to General Smith, Colonel Litzenberg and Lieutenant Colonels Murray and Beall.

The night of 5–6 December was the fifth in a row to pass without enemy activity at Hagaru. But if Division G–2 summaries were to be credited, it was the calm before the storm. For the Chinese were believed to be assembling troops and supplies both at Hagaru and along the MSR to Koto-ri. Up to this time seven CCF divisions, the 58th, 59th, 60th, 76th, 79th, 80th and 89th, had been identified through POW interrogations. But there were evidences that the 77th and 78th were also within striking distance.[17]

At 1200 on 5 December the 5th Marines relieved 3/1 of the responsibility for the defense of the Hagaru area. Division elements other than infantry were withdrawn from the front line, leaving Lieutenant Colonel Murray's three battalions, with 3/1 attached, disposed around the perimeter as follows:

1/5—From the Yudam-ni road around the north of Hagaru and astride the Changjin Valley to a point at the base of the ridge about 1,000 yards east of the bridge over the Changjin River.

2/5—In position on western slopes of East Hill.

3/5—From the south nose of East Hill west across the river to link up with 3/1 south of the airstrip.

3/1—South and southwest of airstrip in sector formerly held by How and Item Companies of 3/1.[18]

Not only were the CCF positions on East Hill a threat to Hagaru; they also dominated the road leading south to Koto-ri. Thus the plan for the breakout called for simultaneous attacks to be launched at first light on the 6th—RCT–5 to regain the enemy-held portion of East Hill, and RCT–7 to lead the advance of the Division motor column toward Koto-ri.

A plan for air support, prepared by the command and staff of the 1st MAW, was brought to Hagaru by Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman, Assistant Wing Commander, on 5 December. Aircraft were to be on station at 0700 to furnish close support for the attack on East Hill. Along the MSR to Koto-ri an umbrella of 24 close support aircraft was to cover the head, rear and flanks of the breakout column while search and attack planes scoured the ridges flanking the road and approaches leading into it. Support was also to be furnished after dark by the night hecklers. All strikes within three miles of either side of the MSR were to be controlled by the ground forces while the planes were free to hit any targets beyond.

The concentration of aircraft covering the advance south from Hagaru was one of the greatest of the whole war. Marine planes at Yonpo would, of course, continue approximately 100 daily sorties to which VMF–323 would add 30 more from the *Badoeng Strait*. The Navy's fast carriers, *Leyte, Valley Forge, Philippine Sea*, and *Princeton* were to abandon temporarily their deep support or interdiction operations and contribute about 100 or more attack sorties daily. The Fifth Air Force was to add more power with additional U.S. and Australian fighter-bombers as well as medium and heavy bomber interdiction beyond the bomb line. To augment the carrier support for the X Corps consolidation and possible redeployment by sea, VMF-212 had departed Yonpo on 4 December and was re-equipping in Itami for return to battle aboard the newly arrived USS *Bataan*. The *Sicily* was also heading for the area to take back aboard the Corsairs of VMF-214 on 7 December.[19]

Continuous artillery support, both for RCT-5 and RCT-7, was planned by the 11th Marines. Two batteries of the 3d Battalion and one of the 4th were to move out at the head of the RCT-7 train, the two from 3/11

to occupy initial positions halfway to Koto-ri to support the attack southward to that objective, and the 4/11 battery to take position in Koto-ri and provide general support northward in combination with the battery of 2/11 attached to that perimeter. The remaining batteries of the 3d and 4th Battalions would provide initial support from Hagaru southward until ordered to move out.

The three batteries of 1/11, with D/11 attached, were to support the operations of RCT-5 in a similar manner. Two batteries would move out at the head of the regimental train to positions halfway to Koto-ri, the remaining two would fire to the south in support of withdrawing units and then displace when the first two were in position.[20]

Throughout the night of 5–6 December, the darkness was stabbed by flashes as the artillery at Hagaru fired concentrations to saturate the area along the Hagaru-Koto-ri axis. In order to prevent cratering of the road the 155's fired VT rounds. A secondary purpose of this bombardment was to expend profitably the surplus of ammunition which could not be brought out.[21]

At daybreak on the 6th the Division Headquarters broke camp. General Smith had decided to fly the command group to Koto-ri in advance of the troops, so that planning could begin immediately for the breakout from Koto-ri southward. General Barr visited during the morning and was informed that the 7th Infantry Division casualties who had reached Hagaru had been flown out. The remaining 490 able-bodied men (including 385 survivors of Task Force Faith) had been provided with Marine equipment and organized into a provisional battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Anderson, USA. This battalion was attached to the 7th Marines and sometimes referred to as 31/7.

Throughout the morning General Smith kept in close touch with the progress of RCT-7 toward Koto-ri. At 1400 a reassuring message was received from Colonel Litzenberg, and the commanding general took off from Hagaru by helicopter. Ten minutes later he and his aide, Captain Martin J. Sexton, landed at Koto-ri. The other members of the command group, following by OY and helicopter, set up in a large tent at Koto-ri and started planning for the next stage.[22]

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru
East Hill Retaken from Chinese

Meanwhile, at Hagaru, Lieutenant Colonel Murray had designated his 2d Battalion for the assault on East Hill. At 0700 on 6 December, as the 4.2" mortars began their planned preparation, the 7th Marines had already initiated the breakout to Koto-ri. When Marine planes arrived on station at 0725, a shortage of napalm tanks limited the air attack to bombing, rocket and strafing runs. These had little apparent effect on the objective. Further air strikes were directed by the FAC, First Lieutenant Manning T. Jeter, Jr., who was severely wounded while standing on the crest to direct the Corsairs to the target. Captain David G. Johnson, the air liaison officer, took his place. A total of 76 planes participated in the day's air attacks.

At 0900 Captain Smith's Dog Company moved out to the assault (see Map 26) with First Lieutenant George A. Sorenson's 3d Platoon in the lead, followed by the 2d and 1st Platoons in that order.[23] Attacking to the northward, Sorensen was pinned down by fire from Objective A before he had covered 50 yards. This was the enemy's main forward position on East Hill, which he had held against Marine attacks ever since seizing it in the early morning hours of 29 November. First Lieutenant John R. Hinds replaced Sorensen, after that officer was wounded. While he engaged the enemy frontally, First Lieutenant George C. McNaughton's 2d Platoon poured in flanking fires and First Lieutenant Richard M. Johnson's 1st Platoon executed a flanking movement.
Click here to view map

Chinese resistance suddenly collapsed about 1100. Thus it seemed almost an anticlimax that East Hill, after holding out against the Marines more than a week, should have been retaken at a cost of one man killed and three wounded. About 30 CCF dead were found.

As events were to prove, however, this was but the first round in a hard-fought 22-hour battle for the hill mass. The next phase began at 1130, when Roise ordered Captain Peters' Fox Company to relieve Smith so that Dog Company could resume the attack against Objective B, a ridge about 500 yards to the southeast. The lower slopes of this position were now being cleared by 2/7.

After a 10-minute artillery preparation, the three platoons of Dog Company jumped off at 1250. The Chinese put up a stubborn resistance and it took until 1430 to seize the new objective. Marine casualties were moderate, however, and Captain Smith set up three platoon positions along the ridge running to the south whence he could control the road leading out of Hagaru.

Late in the day the enemy appeared to be massing for a counterattack in the saddle between the two objectives. Johnson called an air strike and all Dog and Fox Company troops within range opened up with everything they had as McNaughton led a patrol against the Chinese in the saddle. Caught between the infantry fires and the rocket and strafing runs of the Corsairs, the CCF survivors surrendered en masse to McNaughton and his platoon. About 220 prisoners were taken to set a record for the 1st Marine Division in the Reservoir campaign. [24]

At the request of Captain Smith, the saddle between the two Marine companies was occupied by reinforcements consisting of an officer and 11 men from the regimental AT Company and an officer and 32 men from the 4th Signal Battalion, USA. Shortly after dark the enemy launched a vigorous counterattack. Tanks and 81mm mortars fired in support of Marines who made good use of 2.36" white phosphorus rockets at close range.

Although the Chinese endured frightful casualties, they returned again and again to the attack until midnight. It was evident that they considered this a fight to a finish for East Hill, and at 0205 they renewed the assault against all three companies of the 2d Battalion as well as Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion.

The struggle during the next three hours was considered the most spectacular if not the most fiercely contested battle of the entire Reservoir campaign even by veterans of the Yudam-ni actions. Never before had they seen the Chinese come on in such numbers or return to the attack with such persistence. The darkness was crisscrossed with a fiery pattern of tracer bullets at one moment, and next the uncanny radiance of an illumination shell would reveal Chinese columns shuffling in at a trot, only to go down in heaps as they deployed. Marine tanks, artillery, mortars, rockets and machine guns reaped a deadly harvest, and still the enemy kept on coming with a dogged fatalism which commanded the respect of the Marines. Looking like round little gnomes in their padded cotton uniforms, groups of Chinese contrived at times to approach within grenade-throwing distance before being cut down.

The fight was not entirely one-sided. The Marines took a pounding from CCF mortars and machine guns, and by 0300 Dog Company was hard-pressed in its three extended positions pointed like a pistol at the heart of the enemy's assembly areas. Both McNaughton and the executive officer, First Lieutenant James H. Honeycutt, were wounded but remained in action.

This was the second time in three months that Dog Company had spearheaded a Marine attack on a desperately defended hill complex. Northwest of Seoul in September, only 26 able-bodied men had survived to break the back of North Korean resistance. The company commander, First Lieutenant H. J. Smith, had died a hero's death at the moment of victory, and First Lieutenant Karle F. Seydel was the unit's only unwounded officer.

Now another Smith commanded Dog Company, and Seydel was killed as enemy pressure from front and flank threatened to overwhelm the three riddled platoons. Casualties of 13 KIA and 50 WIA were taken in the battle for East Hill as Dog Company and the provisional platoons fell back fighting to the former Objective A and tied in with Fox Company.

Click here to view map

Along the low ground at the northern end of East Hill the Chinese were beaten off with ruinous losses by Jaskilka's Easy Company of 2/5, Jones' Charlie Company of 1/5 and three Army tanks (see Map 27). Enemy troops had to cross a comparatively level expanse which provided a lucrative field of fire for Marine supporting arms. Heaps of CCF dead, many of them charred by white phosphorus bursts, were piled up in front of the Marine positions.

Next, the Chinese hit Captain James B. Heater's Able Company of 1/5, still farther to the left, and overran several squad positions. One platoon was forced to withdraw to the rise on which the Division CP had previously been located. The lines were restored at 0546 with the help of Lieutenant Hancock and his Baker Company, which had been in reserve. Altogether the 1st Battalion had suffered casualties of ten killed and 43 wounded, while the counted CCF slain numbered 260 in front of Charlie Company and 200 in the area of Able Company. George Company of 3/1 also beat off a Chinese attack on the south of the perimeter. With the coming of daylight these Marines found that they had one of the Chinese withdrawal routes under their guns. Mortar and rifle fire annihilated one group of about 60 enemy and another group of 15 Reds surrendered.[25]

The new day revealed a scene of slaughter which surpassed anything the Marines had seen since the fight for the approaches of Seoul in September. Estimates of CCF dead in front of the 2d Battalion positions on and around East Hill ran as high as 800, and certain it is that the enemy had suffered a major defeat.

When Marine air came on station, the Chinese as usual scattered for cover. About 0200 Murray ordered 3/5, which had not been in contact with the enemy during the night, to displace to the south at the head of Division Train No. 2, followed by 1/5 and Ridge's battalion of the 1st Marines. This meant that Roise's men with a platoon of tanks and the engineers in charge of demolitions would be the last troops out of Hagaru.

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru
Attack of RCT-7 to the South

During the 22-hour battle on East Hill the 7th Marines had been attacking toward Koto-ri (see Map 28). On the eve of the breakout the gaps in the infantry ranks were partially filled with 300 artillerymen from the 11th Marines, bringing Litzenberg's strength up to about 2200 men. 7th Mar OpnO 14–50 called for the advance to be initiated at first light on 6 December as follows:

"1st Battalion—to move out at 0430 to clear the ground to the right of the river;

"2d Battalion—supported by tanks, to attack as advanced guard along the MSR;

"Provisional Battalion (31/7)—to clear the ground to the left of the MSR;[26]

"3d Battalion—to bring up the rear of the regimental train, with George Company disposed along both flanks as security for the vehicles."[27]

Daybreak revealed a peculiar silvery fog covering the Hagaru area.[28] The 1st Battalion, with Charlie Company in assault, had as its first objective the high ground southeast of Tonae-ri. No resistance was encountered, though 24 Chinese were surprised asleep in their positions near the objective and 17 of them killed.

The 2d Platoon of Dog Company, 1st Tank Battalion, was attached to 2/7 when the advance guard jumped off at 0630 from the road block south of Hagaru. Almost immediately the column ran into trouble. Upon clearing the road block the lead dozer-tank took three hits from a 3.5 bazooka. Within twenty minutes the column came under heavy fire from CCF positions on the high ground on the left. Fox Company, in the lead, was allowed to pass before the enemy opened up on the Battalion Command Group, Dog-Easy Company and Weapons Company. The fog prevented air support initially. When it lifted, First Lieutenant John G. Theros, FAC of 2/7, brought in Marine aircraft and 81mm fire on the CCF position.[29] It took a coordinated attack by the two infantry companies and the tanks, however, before the resistance could be put down and the advance resumed at 1200. Two and a half hours later the upper reaches of this hill were cleared by D/5.

Click here to view map

After 2/7 and air smothered the initial Chinese resistance, Fox Company and the platoon of Dog/Tanks advanced down the road. About 4000 yards south of Hagaru they met the next resistance. Although the Chinese positions were in plain sight of 1/7, neither 2/7 nor air could spot them. Colonel Litzenberg and Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood atempted to coordinate mortar fires from 2/7 with observation from 1/7, but were unsuccessful because of poor radio communications. Following an erratic artillery barrage and some good shooting by the tanks, Fox Company cleared the enemy position about 1500, aided by a Dog-Easy flanking attack and the Provisional Battalion. In order to assist 2/7, Baker Company of 1/7 came down from the ridge west of the river to act as right flank guard.

Meanwhile 1/7 continued to push ahead methodically to the right of the MSR as the three rifle companies leapfrogged one another. Enemy contact was continual but no serious opposition developed during the daytime hours. On the left flank the Provisional Battalion had several fire fights, while the advance was uneventful for the 3d Battalion following in the rear of the regimental train.

About 5000 yards had been covered by dusk. Enemy resistance stiffened after dark, as had been anticipated. The planners had realized that the movement could have been made in daylight hours with fewer losses in personnel and equipment. But intelligence of the expected arrival of CCF reinforcements influenced the decision to continue the march throughout the night even at the cost of increased opposition. By noon long lines of Chinese could be seen along the sky line to the east of the road moving towards the MSR. Air attacked these

reinforcements but could not stop their movement, as later events proved.

About 8000 yards south of Hagaru, in Hell Fire Valley, a Chinese machine gun on the left stopped the 2d Battalion at 2200. The column was held up until midnight before Army tank fire knocked out the enemy gun. After covering 1200 more yards a blown bridge caused another halt while Dog Company engineers made repairs. Movement was resumed at 0200 when a second blown bridge resulted in a delay of an hour and a half before it could be bypassed.

Dawn brought a significant innovation in air support. Circling above the 11-mile column inching toward Koto-ri was an airborne Tactical Air Direction Center (TADC) installed in an R5D of VMR-152 and operated by Major Harlen E. Hood and his communicators from MTACS-2. Major Christian C. Lee, Commanding Officer of MTACS-2, had made arrangements when he realized that with his radios packed in trucks and jeeps he could not control close air support effectively. Only the addition of one radio to those standard in the aircraft was necessary to provide basic communications, but when being readied for the predawn takeoff the mission faced failure because an engine wouldn't start. Minus a refueler truck, the crew chief, Technical Sergeant H. C. Stuart, had worked all night to pour 2400 gallons of gas into the craft by hand. Now, in the bitter cold of dawn, he set about to overhaul the starting motor. Two hours later Major John N. Swartley was piloting the plane over the MSR.[30]

No trouble was encountered by 2/7 along the last few miles of the route and the battalion was first to arrive at Koto-ri. Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion had been assigned the additional mission of replacing the Provisional Battalion as protection for the left flank as well as rear of the 7th Marines train. A brief fire fight developed at about 2100 as the Chinese closed to hand-grenade range. Lieutenant Colonel Harris deployed George and Item Companies around the vehicles and drove the enemy back to a respectful distance. Between 0200 and 0430, Item Company of 3/7 and a platoon of tanks were sent back up the road to clear out a troublesome Chinese position near Hell Fire Valley.

About 0200, during a halt for bridge repairs, the 7th Marines train was hit by enemy fire. The regimental command group suffered most. Captain Donald R. France and First Lieutenant Clarence E. McGuinness were killed and Lieutenant Colonel Frederick W. Dowsett was wounded. While Lieutenant (jg) Robert G. Medemeyer, (MC), USN, gave first aid, Chaplain (Lieutenant (jg)) Cornelius J. Griffin entered an ambulance to console a dying Marine. CCF machine gun bullets shattered his jaw and killed Sergeant Matthew Caruso at his side. Lieutenant Colonel Harris and Major Roach supervised the deployment of How Company troops to beat off the attack.

About 0530 Lieutenant Colonel Harris disappeared. A search was made for him to no avail and he was listed as a MIA. It was later determined that he had been killed.

The 1st Battalion of RCT-7, after a relatively uneventful march over the high ground west of the river, moved down the slope to join the regimental column. Major Warren Morris assumed command of the 3d Battalion, which reached Koto-ri about 0700. At about 1100, after a brief rest, the men were ordered together with Lockwood's troops to move back up along the MSR to the north and set up blocking between Koto-ri and Hill 1182 to keep the road open for other units of the Division.[31] While carrying out this mission, the 2d Battalion helped to bring in 22 British Marines who had been stranded ever since the Task Force Drysdale fight on the night of 29–30 November. Their plight was not known until 4 December, when an OY pilot saw the letters H-E-L-P stamped out in the snow and air-dropped food and medical supplies.

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Chapter 13. Regroupment at Hagaru
Advance of the Division Trains

By 1700 on 7 December all elements of RCT-7 were in the perimeter at Koto-ri. Division Train No. 1 was due next, and the planners had hoped that the rifle battalions would clear the way for the vehicles. As it proved, however, the Chinese closed in behind RCT-7 and attacked the flanks of the convoy, with the result that the service troops actually saw more action than the infantrymen.

One of the causes may be traced to the fact that Division Train No. 1 had to wait at Hagaru until 1600 on the 6th before RCT-7 made enough progress toward Koto-ri to warrant putting the convoy on the road. About 2000 yards south of Hagaru elements of the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, were hit in the early darkness by CCF mortar and small-arms fire. The gunners of George and How Batteries deployed as infantrymen and repulsed the enemy at the cost of a few casualties.

Upon resuming the march, a second fire fight took place after 1500 more yards had been covered. Several vehicles, set afire by Chinese mortar shells, blocked the road and brought the convoy to a halt. At daybreak the enemy swarmed to the attack in formidable numbers. It was nip and tuck as all pieces of How Battery and three howitzers of George Battery were emplaced between the trucks of the 1st MT Battalion.

There was no opportunity to dig in the trails of guns employing time fire with fuses cut for ranges of 40 to 500 yards. But the Chinese were stopped cold by two hours of continuous fire after approaching within 40 yards. All but about 50 of an estimated 500 to 800 enemy were killed or wounded before the remainder fled, according to the estimate of the gunners.[32]

The convoy of the Division Headquarters Company also had to fight its way. Small arms ammunition had been distributed throughout the column, and light machine guns were mounted on top of truck loads. All able-bodied men with the exception of drivers and radio operators walked in single file on either side of the vehicles carrying the wounded.

Progress was slow, with many halts caused by CCF fire. At 0130 several trucks were set aflame by enemy mortar shells and 2.36 rockets. Headquarters troops deployed in roadside ditches while two machine guns manned by bandsmen kept the Chinese at a distance. At 0200 the clouds cleared enough to permit strikes by night hecklers of VMF (N)-513. They stopped the Chinese until just before daylight, when a company-size group penetrated within 30 yards of the convoy. During this fight First Lieutenant Charles H. Sullivan, who measured six feet four and weighed 240 pounds, emptied his carbine at advancing Chinese. Then he hurled it like a javelin to drive the bayonet into the chest of an opponent at 15 feet.

Under the coaching of the MTACS commander, Major Lee, two more night fighters—Major Albert L. Clark and First Lieutenant Truman Clark—pinned the Chinese down with strafing runs as close as 30 yards from the Marine ground troops. At dawn Major Percy F. Avant, Jr., and his four-plane division from VMF-312 dumped about four tons of explosives and napalm on Chinese who broke and ran for cover. The fire fight had cost Headquarters Battalion 6 KIA and 14 WIA.[33]

The MP Company, just forward of Headquarters Company, had the problem of guarding about 160 Chinese prisoners. Captives unable to walk had been left behind at Hagaru, where Lieutenant Colonel Murray directed that the wounded be given shelter and provided with food and fuel by the departing Marines. The prisoners escorted by the MPs were lying in the middle of the road during the attack when the enemy seemed to concentrate his fire on them while shouting in Chinese. A scene of pandemonium ensued as some of the able-bodied prisoners attempted to make a break. Now the Marines as well as the enemy fired into them and 137 were

killed in the wild melee.

When the convoy got under way again, two Communists were captured and 15 killed after being flushed out of houses in the village of Pusong-ni. At daybreak a halt was called in Hell Fire Valley for the purpose of identifying bodies of MPs and Headquarters troops, killed in the Task Force Drysdale battle, which were to be picked up later. Attempts to start the looted and abandoned vehicles met with no success and the convoy continued the movement to Koto-ri without incident, arriving about 1000 on the 7th.

At this hour the last Marine troops had not yet left Hagaru, so that the column as a whole extended the entire 11 miles of the route. Division Train No. 2 had formed up during the afternoon of the 6th, but was unable to start until after dark. At midnight the train had moved only a short distance out of Hagaru. Lieutenant Colonel Milne requested infantry support and 3/5 was given the mission of advancing at the head of the column, along with the 5th Marines regimental train, to eliminate enemy resistance.[34] Taplett had only two companies, one of which proceeded astride the road while the other echeloned to the left rear. The late start proved to be a blessing, since Division Train No. 2 completed most of its movement by daylight under an umbrella of Marine air and met only light and scattered resistance. The head of the column reached Koto-ri at 1700, and at 2300 all of the major Division units were in the perimeter except 2/5, the rear guard [35]

Both 1/5 and 3/1 had formed up in Hagaru on the morning of the 7th and moved out as rapidly as traffic would permit, which was slow indeed. They were accompanied by the 41st Commando, which had earned the esteem of all U.S. Marines by valor in combat. British imperturbability was at its best when Lieutenant Colonel Drysdale held an inspection shortly before departing Hagaru. Disdainful of the scattered shots which were still being heard, the officers moved up and down the rigid lines, and men whose gear was not in the best possible shape were reprimanded.

By 1000 nobody was left in the battered town except Roise's battalion, First Lieutenant Vaughan R. Stuart's tank platoon and elements of Able Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, commanded by Captain William R. Gould. This unit and CWO Willie S. Harrison's Explosive Ordnance Section of Headquarters Company engineers were attached to the 5th Marines for the mission of the demolitions at Hagaru.[36]

Gould had formed five demolitions teams, each composed of an officer and four to six men. On the evening of 6 December they began preparations for burning stockpiles of surplus clothing and equipment along with the buildings of the Hagaru train yard. There was also the duty of placing charges in the dumps of mortar and artillery ammunition which could not be transported to Hagaru.

One of the main problems was the disposal of a small mountain of frozen surplus rations. A team of engineers spent hours on the 6th at the task of smashing cans and crates of food with a bulldozer and saturating the dump with fuel oil.

The Able Company engineers came under the operational control of the 2d Battalion after the other units of the 5th Marines departed. Demolitions were to await the order of Lieutenant Colonel Roise on the morning of the 7th. Hagaru was full of combustibles, however, and fires of mysterious origin sent up dense clouds of smoke before the engineers touched off the oil-soaked food supplies and the buildings of the train yard.

As the Marines of 2/5 pulled back toward the southern tip of East Hill, smoke blotted out the surrounding area so that enemy movements could not be detected. Worse yet, premature explosions sent up fountains of debris just as the engineers were setting up their fuses for a 20-minute delay. Detonations shook the earth on all sides. Rockets sliced through the air, shells shattered into vicious fragments, and large chunks of real estate rained down everywhere. Roise was understandably furious, since his troops were endangered during their withdrawal. By a miracle they came off East Hill without any casualties, and the engineers were the last Marines left in Hagaru. Soon the entire base seemed to be erupting like a volcano. Visibility was reduced to zero when the engineers pulled out, after setting a last tremendous charge to blow the bridge.

So compelling was the lure of loot that small groups of Chinese came down from the high ground toward

the man-made hell of flame and explosions. Between clouds of smoke they could be seen picking over the debris, and the Marine tanks cranked off a few rounds at targets of opportunity.

It is not likely that any of Roise's weary troops paused for a last sentimental look over their shoulders at the dying Korean town. Hagaru was not exactly a pleasure resort, and yet hundreds of Marines and soldiers owed their lives to the fact that this forward base had enabled the Division to evacuate all casualties and fly in replacements while regrouping for the breakout to the seacoast.

If it had not been for the forethought of the Division and Wing commanders, with the concurrence of General Almond, there would have been no R4D airstrip, no stockpiles of ammunition, rations and medical supplies. And though the Marines might conceivably have fought their way out of the CCF encirclement without a Hagaru, it would have been at the cost of abandoning much equipment and suffering much higher casualties.

Only a few weeks before, this Korean town had been merely an unknown dot on the map. But on 7 December 1950 the name was familiar to newspaper readers and radio listeners all over the United States as they anxiously awaited tidings of the breakout. Already it had become a name to be remembered in U.S. Marine annals along with such historical landmarks as Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal, Peleliu and Iwo Jima.

Prospects of a warm meal and a night's sleep meant more than history to Roise's troops when the column moved out at last shortly after noon, with the engineers bringing up the rear to blow bridges along the route. A pitiful horde of Korean refugees followed the troops—thousands of men, women and children with such personal belongings as they could carry. Efforts on the part of the engineers to warn the refugees of impending demolitions were futile. Although these North Koreans had enjoyed for five years the "blessings" of Communist government, the prospect of being left behind to the tender mercies of the Chinese Communists was so terrifying that they took appalling risks. Knowing that a bridge was about to blow up at any instant, they swarmed across in a blind panic of flight. Never did war seem more harsh or its victims more pathetic.[37]

The rear guard had less air and artillery support than any of the preceding troops, yet CCF opposition was confined to scattered small-arms fire all the way to Hell Fire Valley. There the enemy lobbed over a few mortar shells during a long halt at dusk, but the rest of the advance was uneventful. Gould's engineers took chances repeatedly of being cut off when they fell behind to burn abandoned vehicles or blow bridges. On several occasions a small group found itself entirely isolated as the infantry and even the refugees pushed on ahead. Luckily the engineers made it without any casualties, and by midnight the last troops of the 1st Marine Division had entered the perimeter at Koto-ri.

Thus the first stage of the Division breakout came to a close. In proportion to total numbers, the service troops of Division Train No. 1 had taken the heaviest losses—six killed and 12 wounded for the Division Headquarters Company; one killed and 16 wounded for the Military Police Company; four killed and 28 wounded for the 1st Motor Transport Battalion; one killed and 27 wounded for the 1st Ordnance Battalion; and three killed and 34 wounded for the 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines. Battle casualties for the entire 1st Marine Division, including those of the East Hill battle, were as follows:

Click here to view table

About 38 hours were required for the movement of some 10,000 troops and more than 1,000 vehicles. The new arrivals filled the perimeter at Koto-ri to the bursting point, but there was to be no pause at this point. Division OpnO 26–50, issued at 1815 on the 7th, before the last troops had arrived, provided for the advance to be resumed from Koto-ri at first light the following morning.

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THE PROGRESS of the 1st Marine Division breakout depended in no small degree on the reliable communications provided by the division radio relay linking up Hagaru, Koto-ri, Chinhung-ni, and Hungnam. At 1440 on 6 December the vehicles of the Hagaru relay terminal joined Division Train No. 1, whereupon the station at Koto-ri became in turn the terminal.[1]

This station was located on the highest point of ground just south of the Koto-ri perimeter. And though it was outside the defense area, the Chinese did not bother it until the Marines were breaking camp. Then the opposition consisted only of harassing small-arms fires instead of the attack which might have been expected.[2]

In fact, the enemy did not launch another large-scale assault on Koto-ri after his costly repulse on the night of 28-29 November. Although the perimeter was surrounded throughout the first six days of December, incipient CCF attacks were broken up in the enemy's assembly areas. Excellent observation as well as casualty evacuation was provided by the OYs taking off from the Koto-ri airstrip. They were the eyes of an impressive array of Marine fire power—tanks, 4.2-inch, and 81mm mortars as well as aircraft and Captain McClelland's Easy Battery of 2/11.

"The artillery 105's and the mortars did a grand job," commented Major Bartley. "They were always available, shifted their fires quickly and accurately, and serviced their pieces amazingly well in the cold weather."[3]

As a further asset, the Koto-ri perimeter was defended by adequate numbers in comparison to Hagaru during the first critical week of CCF attacks. On 30 November, when Baker Company of the 1st Tank Battalion returned to Koto-ri after the Task Force Drysdale battle, three platoons of tanks were added to the Dog Company platoon already attached to 2/1. The next day Colonel Puller's RCT-1 (-) was further strengthened by the arrival of the 2d Battalion of the 31st Infantry, 7th Infantry Division, the last unit to reach Koto-ri from the south. These Army troops had been ordered to Hagaru, but owing to the changing situation they were directed by X Corps on 1 December to remain at Koto-ri. Under the operational control of Colonel Puller, 2/31 took over a sector at the southern end of the perimeter.

Sporadic CCF small-arms fire was received on each of the first six days of December, and enemy troop movements were observed at all points of the compass. On several occasions a few mortar shells were lobbed into the perimeter. Not a single Marine casualty was suffered during the period,[4] though CCF losses were estimated at 646 killed and 322 wounded.

Daily air drops were required to keep the perimeter supplied with ammunition, rations, and other essentials. Captain Norman Vining, the Battalion FAC, who had once been a carrier landing signal officer, guided planes to satisfactory drop zones with makeshift paddles. One day a case of .30 caliber cartridges broke free from its chute and hurtled through the top of Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's tent during a conference. Narrowly missing several officers, it hit the straw at their feet and bounced high into the air before landing on a crate used as a table.

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Assembly of Division at Koto-ri

Koto-ri being second only to Hagaru as an advance base, Colonel Puller at times had responsibilities which are usually shouldered by an ADC. On 29 November he had been the organizer of Task Force Drysdale, and on 6 December it became his task to make ready for the reception of the 10,000 troops from Hagaru.

Although the Koto-ri perimeter was already overcrowded, Puller directed that hot food and warming tents be provided for all Hagaru troops upon arrival. More than 14,000 men would then be organized for the next stage of the breakout. Strength estimates were as follows:[5]

Marine garrison at Koto-ri: 2,640
U.SArmy units at Koto-ri: 1,535
Royal Marine Commandos at Koto-ri: 25
Marines arriving from Hagaru: 9,046
U.SArmy troops arriving from Hagaru: 818
Royal Marine Commandos arriving from Hagaru: 125
ROK police attached to RCT-5: 40
TOTAL: 14,229

Puller dealt with the problem of casualty evacuation at Koto-ri by ordering that the OY strip be lengthened so that larger aircraft could land. The engineers of Charlie Company started the job on 6 December, and progress speeded up as the Dog Company engineers arrived next day from Hagaru with their heavy equipment.

The strip had been widened by 40 feet and extended by 300 on 7 December when the first TBM landed. These planes had been borrowed from the Navy and 1stMAW administrative flight lines and assigned to VMO-6. They could fly out several litter patients and as many as nine ambulatory cases. Captain Alfred F. McCaleb, Jr., of VMO-6 and First Lieutenant Truman Clark of VMF(N)-513 evacuated a total of 103 casualties. The carrier landing training of the Marines stood them in good stead as Captain Malcolm G. Moncrief, Jr., a qualified landing signal officer of VMF-312, directed the TBMs to their landings at Koto-ri with paddles.[6]

The clearing station established at Koto-ri by Company D of the 1st Medical Battalion (Lieutenant Commander Gustave T. Anderson (MC), USN, had a normal bed capacity of only 60 but somehow continued to handle a total of 832 cases, including non-battle casualties. The Company D medics were assisted during their last few days at Koto-ri by Captain Hering, the Division surgeon, and Commander Howard A. Johnson (MC), USN, the CO of the 1st Medical Battalion. Captain Richard S. Silvis (MC), USN, surgeon of the 2d Marine Division, on temporary duty in Korea as an observer, also took an active part.[7]

Surgical assistance was welcomed by the Company D medics, since operations at Koto-ri were performed under the most difficult conditions. Only tents being available for patients, the hundreds of casualties brought from Hagaru added to the necessity for speedy evacuation. About 200 cases were flown out on the 7th by TBMs and liaison aircraft. By the following morning the engineers had lengthened the OY strip to 1750 feet, but a heavy snowfall put an end to nearly all air activity. In spite of the risks involved, one Air Force C-47 did get through to Koto-ri, where it could be heard but not seen while circling blindly about the perimeter. By a miracle the plane landed safely and took off with 19 casualties. The following day saw air evacuation of casualties in full swing, with about 225 being flown out to clear the hospital tents of all serious cases.[8]

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Activation of Task Force Dog

A large tent in the middle of the perimeter served both as office and sleeping quarters for General Smith and his staff. Planning was immediately resumed after they arrived at Koto-ri on the afternoon of 6 December. Before leaving Hagaru it had been recognized that the enemy might be saving his main effort for the mountainous ten-mile stretch from Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni. In such terrain a mere CCF platoon could do a great deal of mischief, and the planners agreed that it would be necessary for 1/1 to attack northward from Chinhung-ni and clear the road. This meant that the battalion must be relieved by an Army unit, and a request was made verbally to General Almond.[9]

X Corps had received orders on 1 December for the 3d Infantry Division to assemble in the Wonsan area prepared for further operations, possibly to join the Eighth Army in west Korea. Although General Almond initiated execution of the order immediately, he sent the highest ranking Marine officer on his staff, Colonel Forney, and the Corps G–2, Lieutenant Colonel William W. Quinn, to Tokyo to explain the implications of the withdrawal of this Army division from northeast Korea. Following a conference with General Hickey, GHQ Chief of Staff, the Division was released back to X Corps on the 3d, and General Almond ordered it to return to the Hamhung area to protect this vital port area and to assist the breakout of the 1st Marine Division by relieving 1/1 at Chinhung-ni.[10]

At 2115 on 6 December the 1st Marine Division requested by dispatch that the relief be completed the next day in order to free 1/1 for the attack to the north. The relief column, designated Task Force Dog and commanded by Brigadier General Armistead D. Mead, ADC of the 3d Infantry Division, consisted of the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, plus detachments of engineers, signalmen, and antiaircraft troops. Brushing aside some Chinese roadblocks, it arrived at Chinhung-ni on the afternoon of the 7th and relieved 1/1 immediately.[11]

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Air Drop of Bridge Sections

Another problem which the 1st Marine Division planners had faced at Hagaru called for an engineering solution. As early as 4 December the commanding general was notified that a critical bridge three and a half miles south of Koto-ri (see Map 29) had been blown by the enemy for the third time. At this point water from the Chosin Reservoir was discharged from a tunnel into four penstocks, or large steel pipes, which descended sharply down the mountainside to the turbines of the power plant in the valley below. Where the pipes crossed the road, they were covered on the uphill side by a concrete gatehouse, without a floor. On the downhill side was the one-way bridge over the penstocks which the enemy had thrice destroyed. Between the cliff and the sheer drop down the mountainside there was no possibility of a bypass. Thus the gap of 16 feet (24 feet, counting the abutments) must be spanned if the Division was to bring out its vehicles, tanks and guns.[12]

Following the destruction of the original concrete bridge, the enemy had blown a temporary wooden structure and an M-2 steel treadway span installed by Army engineers. No prefabricated bridging was available at Hagaru, and time did not permit the construction of a timber trestle bridge. The possibility of Bailey bridge sections was considered but rejected for technical reasons. Finally, after a detailed study of the break from the air on 6 December, Lieutenant Colonel Partridge estimated that four sections of an M-2 steel treadway bridge would be required. Prospects did not appear bright when a bridge section was badly damaged on the 6th after being test-dropped at Yonpo by an Air Force C-119. Nevertheless, it was decided to go ahead the next day with the drop at Koto-ri.[13]

Click here to view map

There were four U.S. Army treadway bridge (Brockway) trucks at Koto-ri, two of which were operative. After conferring with First Lieutenant George A. Babe of the 1st Engineer Battalion and Colonel Hugh D. McGaw of the 185th Engineer (C) Battalion, USA, Partridge decided to request a drop of eight sections in order to have a 100% margin of safety in case of damage.

After analyzing the causes of the unsuccessful test drop, Captain Blasingame of the Air Delivery Platoon had larger parachutes flown to Yonpo from Japan, accompanied by Captain Cecil W. Hospelhorn, USA, and a special crew of Army parachute riggers. Blasingame and a hundred-man work detail from the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion worked all night at Yonpo to make ready for the drop next day by eight C-119s of the Air Force.

At 0930 on 7 December three of the 2500-pound bridge sections were dropped inside the Koto-ri perimeter and recovered by the Brockway trucks. The remaining five sections were delivered by noon, one of them falling into the hands of the Chinese and one being damaged.

Plywood center sections were also dropped so that the bridge could accommodate any type of Marine wheel or tracked vehicle. Thus the tanks could cross on the metal spans only, while the trucks could manage with one wheel on the metal span and the other on the plywood center.[14]

All the necessary equipment having been assembled at Koto-ri by the late afternoon of the 7th, the next problem was to transport it three and a half miles to the bridge site. Colonel Bowser, the Division G-3, directed the engineers to coordinate their movements with the progress made by RCT-7 the following morning. Lieutenant Colonel Partridge attended a briefing conducted by Colonel Litzenberg on the eve of the assault, and it was agreed that the trucks with the bridge section would accompany the regimental train. First Lieutenant Ewald D. Vom Orde's First Platoon of Company D engineers was designated as the escort. First Lieutenant Charles C. Ward's engineers led the 7th Marines' trains. Both platoons were assigned the task of installing the bridge sections.

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Chapter 14. Onward from Koto-ri
Division Planning for Attack

On the assumption that the gap over the penstocks would be successfully spanned, the 1st Marine Division issued OpnO 26–50 at 1850 on 7 December. Although the last operation order had specified the Hamhung area as the objective, it was found necessary at Koto-ri to give more explicit instructions for the advance to the southward.

The plan was simple. Recognizing the sharp cleft of Funchilin Pass as the most difficult defile of the entire breakout, General Smith ordered the seizure of the heights overlooking the pass from the north end of Hill 1081, dominating the road through the pass. In its details the plan shaped up as follows:

"(1) RCT-7 (reinforced with the Provisional Army battalion) to attack south from Koto-ri at 0800 on 8 December and seize Objectives A and B—the first being the southern extension of Hill 1328, about 2500 yards southwest of Koto-ri, and the other the second nose due south of Koto-ri.

"(2) RCT-5 to attack and seize Objective D (Hill 1457, two and a half miles south of Koto-ri) while RCT-7 continued its attack and seized Objective C (a nose dominating the MSR two and three-fourths miles south of Koto-ri).

"(3) At 0800, as RCT-7 jumped off at Koto-ri, the 1st Battalion of RCT-1 was to attack from Chinhung-ni and seize Objective E (Hill 1081, three miles to the north).

"(4) RCT-1 (less the 1st Battalion but reinforced by 2/31) was to protect Koto-ri until the Division and regimental trains cleared, whereupon it was to relieve RCTs 5 and 7 on Objectives A, B, C and D.

"(5) Upon relief by RCT-1, RCTs 5 and 7 were to proceed south along the MSR to the Hamhung area.

"(6) RCT-1 was to follow RCT-5 and protect the Division rear."[15]

Artillery plans provided for one battery of 2/11 and one of 3/11 to answer the calls of RCT-7 for supporting fires. The other batteries of 3/11 were to move south with the motor column while two batteries of 1/11 supported RCT-5. The remaining battery of 3/11 was attached to 2/11 with a mission of moving south to Chinhung-ni and taking a position from which to support the withdrawal of RCT-1 as rear-guard. Easy Battery of 2/11, left behind at Koto-ri, was laid to fire to the north and west, while Fox Battery of 2/11 and the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion at Chinhung-ni supported the attack of 1/1 on Hill 1081.

The plan of the 1stMAW for air support was essentially the same as the one which proved so effective during the advance from Hagaru to Koto-ri.

An object lesson of that movement had been the personnel and equipment losses suffered by the Division trains as a consequence of a late start. The planners were determined not to repeat this mistake. As a further precautionary measure, General Smith directed that the tanks form the last elements of the motor column.[16] Thus in the event of a breakdown on the twisting, single-lane road, it would not be necessary to abandon all the vehicles behind a crippled tank.

As for the enemy situation, G-2 summaries indicated that early in December the CCF 26th Corps, consisting of the 76th, 77th and 78th Divisions, reinforced by the 94th Division of the 32d Corps, had moved down from the north and taken positions on the east side of the MSR between Hagaru and Koto-ri. There they relieved the 60th Division, which moved into the area south of Koto-ri. The 76th and 77th Divisions occupied positions along the MSR in the Koto-ri area, while the 78th and 94th Divisions were apparently held in reserve. Elements of the 89th Division, operating from the mountainous area southwest of Koto-ri, conducted harassing operations against the MSR in the vicinity of Chinhung-ni as well as Koto-ri.

The 60th CCF Division held prepared positions on the high ground south of Koto-ri commanding Funchilin Pass and the MSR leading to Chinhung-ni. That these positions included Hill 1081, the dominating terrain feature, was revealed by prisoners taken in the vicinity by patrols of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, prior to 8 December.

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Battle of 1/1 in the Snowstorm

Division plans had not called for the swirling snowstorm which reduced visibility to 50 feet and precluded air support at first light on 8 December. In spite of weather conditions, the assault battalions of RCT-7 moved out from Koto-ri on schedule after 1/1 attacked northward from Chinhung-ni.

The planners had realized that the success of the movement to Chinhung-ni would depend to a large extent on the seizure of Objective E—Hill 1081. On 2 December Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck had led a reconnaissance patrol into Funchilin Pass as far north as this position. Sighting large numbers of Chinese on both sides of the road, he called for artillery fires with good effect. This reconnaissance did much to establish Hill 1081 as the key terrain feature.

Although 1/1 had patrolled aggressively, the battalion had engaged in no large-scale actions so far in the Reservoir campaign. The men were fresh, well-rested and spoiling for a fight when they moved out at 0200 on 8 December from an assembly area south of Chinhung-ni after being relieved by Task Force Dog.

Schmuck's battle plan provided for the three companies to advance in column along the MSR in the pre-dawn darkness. Since orders were to attack at 0800, a start at 0200 was considered necessary in order to make the six-mile approach march.

Captain Wray's Charlie Company, in the lead, was to take Objective 1, the southwestern nose of Hill 1081, and hold it while the other two companies passed through to carry out their missions. Captain Barrow's Able Company was to attack east of the MSR and fight its way to the summit of Hill 1081; and Captain Noren's Baker Company to advance to the left flank, along the slopes between Barrow and the MSR.[17]

The combination of snow and darkness reduced visibility almost to zero as 1/1 set out along the slippery MSR five hours before daybreak. All heavy equipment had been sent to the rear from Chinhung-ni, and the only vehicles were two ambulances and a radio jeep.

In the snow-muffled silence of the night the men took on protective coloring as feathery flakes clung to their parkas. Objective 1 was seized shortly after dawn, following a difficult approach march against negligible resistance. The battalion commander prepared for the next phase by bringing up 81mm mortars and an attached platoon of 4.2s and emplacing those weapons in Wray's position. He also directed that the five attached Army self-propelled quad-.50 caliber and twin 40mm guns of B Company 50th AAA (AW) Bn be moved to a little rise off to the left of the road in the vicinity of the village of Pehujang. From this position they covered the MSR as far as the bridge over the penstocks.

At 1000 the main attack was set in motion. Baker Company advanced along the wooded western slope of Hill 1081 as Barrow attacked up the hogback ridge leading to the summit. The snowstorm fought on the side of the Marines by hiding their movements from the Chinese occupying the high ground east of the MSR around the great horseshoe bend where the road passed under the cable car line.

Noren's men saw hundreds of enemy footprints but met only scattered opposition until they came to the first CCF roadblock on their left flank. There they were stopped by two machine guns, but a Marine patrol worked around on the uphill side and routed the Communists with a machine gun and 60mm mortar attack.

In the absence of air and artillery support, the 4.2s and 81mm mortars emplaced in the Charlie Company position were called upon whenever visibility permitted. Surprise was Noren's best resource, however, when Baker Company came up against the CCF bunker complex on the western slope of Hill 1081. The enemy had so little warning that the Marines found a kettle of rice cooking in the largest bunker, an elaborate log and sandbag

structure which had evidently been a CCF command post. The entire complex was taken after a brief but savage fight in which all defenders were killed or routed. Schmuck set up his CP in a captured bunker, where he and his officers soon discovered that several regiments of Chinese lice had not yet surrendered.

Only enough daylight was left for the sending out of patrols, whereupon Noren secured for the night. His losses amounted to three killed and six wounded.

Barrow's men had no physical contact with Baker Company while clawing their way upward along an icy ridge line too narrow for deployment. A sudden break in the snow afforded the Able Company commander a glimpse of a CCF stronghold on a knob between him and his objective, the topographical crest of Hill 1081. The drifting flakes cut off the view before he could direct mortar fire, but Barrow decided to attack without this support and rely upon surprise. Advancing in column along the steep and narrow approach, he sent Lieutenant Jones with two squads of the 2d Platoon to execute a wide enveloping movement on the left. Lieutenant McClelland's 1st Platoon had a similar mission on the right. Barrow himself led Staff Sergeant William Roach's 3d Platoon in a front attack.

It took more than an hour for the two flanking forces to get into position. Not until they had worked well around the Chinese bunker complex did Barrow give the signal for attack. Perhaps because silence had been enforced during the stealthy advance, the assault troops yelled like Indians as they closed in on the foe. Out of the snowstorm Barrow's men "erupted with maximum violence," and the enemy was too stunned to put up much of a fight. The only effective resistance came from a single CCF machine gun which caused most of the Marine casualties before Corporal Joseph Leeds and his fire team knocked it out, killing nine Communists in the process.

More than 60 enemy bodies were counted after the Marines cleaned out the bunkers and shot down fleeing Chinese. Barrow's losses were 10 men killed and 11 wounded.

By this time it was apparent that the Chinese had held an integrated system of bunkers and strong points extending to the summit of Hill 1081. The battalion had been strictly on its own all day, all contact with the infantry of Task Force Dog having ended with the relief. When communications permitted, however, 1/1 could count on the excellent direct support of the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, USA, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Leon F. Lavoie. The Army cannoneers had set up near Fox Battery of 2/11, using the fire control data of this Marine artillery unit.

The night was clear, promising air and artillery support in the morning, as Able Company consolidated in the captured CCF positions. Although the battalion aid station was only 700 yards away, the terrain was so difficult that litter bearers took several hours to struggle down with the Marine wounded. About midnight the Chinese interrupted with an attack in estimated platoon strength, but Barrow's men drove them off with CCF losses of 18 killed.

The rest of the night passed quietly, and Baker Company had no disturbance on the high ground overlooking the MSR.

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Chapter 14. Onward from Koto-ri
Advance of RCT-7 and RCT-5

While these events were taking place, the attack to the south from Koto-ri also fell short of the day's objectives. Colonel Litzenberg's plan called for two of his four battalions (the fourth being the Provisional Battalion of Army troops) to clear the high ground on either side of the road so that a third battalion could advance astride the MSR, followed by the reserve battalion and regimental train.

Major Morris, commanding 3/7, had been assigned the task of attacking on the right at 0800 and seizing Objective A, the southernmost of the cluster of hills known collectively as Hill 1328. He made such slow progress against CCF and small-arms fire that at 1100 Colonel Litzenberg suggested the commitments of 3/7's reserve company. "All three companies," replied Morris, "are up there—fifty men from George, fifty men from How, thirty men from Item. That's it![18]

Early in the afternoon of 8 December, Litzenberg committed his reserve, 2/7, to assist 3/7. Lockwood's battalion was on the road south of 3/7 and attacked west in an attempt to get in the rear of the enemy holding up 3/7. Easy and Fox Companies attacked abreast and by 1800 the two battalions had joined on the northeastern slopes of the objective. In view of the approaching darkness, however, the attack was postponed until morning, and the troops consolidated for the night short of the objective, which was seized the following morning.

Litzenberg's plan for the seizure of the heights overlooking the northern entrance to Funchilin Pass provided for the Army Provisional Battalion to take Objective B. The soldiers jumped off at 0800, on the left of the MSR, supported by two tanks of the 5th Marines AT Company. By 0900 the battalion had secured its objective without meeting any resistance. Litzenberg then ordered a further advance of 800 yards to the northwestern tip of Hill 1457. At 1330 the Army troops secured their second objective, still without resistance and tied in with 1/5 for the night.[19]

Lieutenant Colonel Davis having become regimental executive officer after Dowsett was wounded, Major Sawyer took over command of 1/7. His plan called for the battalion to advance about 2000 yards down the road and wait for 3/7 to come up on his right flank. Then the two battalions would move along together.

The 1st Battalion jumped off at 0800 and reached its phase line without opposition. First Lieutenant Bobbie B. Bradley's platoon advanced down the road to gain contact with the Chinese while the remainder of the battalion halted. When 2/7 began its attack in support of 3/7, Sawyer's battalion moved out. Bradley's patrol having run into opposition from the northern reaches of Hill 1304, Companies A and C moved west of the MSR in a double envelopment of the enemy position. Company B continued the advance towards Objective C, meeting a heavy cross fire from Chinese to their front and on Hill 1304. Lieutenant Kurcaba was killed and Lieutenants Chew Een Lee and Joseph R. Owen wounded. First Lieutenant William W. Taylor took command and managed to clear the enemy from his front just before dusk.

Able and Charlie Companies faced less resistance in overrunning the foxholes and two bunkers on Hill 1304. With dusk falling, Sawyer did not attempt a further advance. Able and Charlie Companies dug in on Hill 1304 while Baker set up a perimeter slightly short of Objective C. The first serials of the truck convoy had moved closely on the heels of 1/7 and had to be backed up to a level area near Objective A. There they formed a perimeter reinforced with H&S and Weapons Companies of 1/7.[20]

Division OpnO 26-50 had directed Lieutenant Colonel Murray's RCT-5 to await orders before attacking Objective D. It was nearly noon on the 8th before the 1st Battalion, in assault, was directed to move out from Koto-ri.

Lieutenant Colonel Stevens followed the MSR for a mile, then sent two companies out to the left to occupy the objective, Hill 1457. Baker Company seized the intervening high ground and set up to cover the attack of Charlie Company up the slopes of the ridge leading to the objective. Charlie Company fell in with a patrol from the Army Provisional Battalion attached to the RCT-7, and the two combined forces to drive the enemy off the high ground about 1550. A weak Chinese counterattack was easily repulsed, and at 1700 as darkness fell Baker and Charlie Companies tied in with the Army troops while Able Company formed its own perimeter overlooking the MSR. In reserve, the 41st Commando moved into the high ground behind 1/5 to guard against infiltration.[21]

The day's story would not be complete without reference to the Treadway bridge train, which moved out about 1400 on the 8th in the trace of 1/7. Instructions were to install the sections at the first opportunity, but the site had not been secured as darkness approached. A few Chinese mortar rounds falling in the vicinity of the vulnerable Brockway trucks influenced a decision to return them closer to Koto-ri.[22]

Summing up the attacks of 8 December, weather and terrain had done more than the enemy to prevent all assault units of the 1st Marine Division from securing their assigned objectives. Casualties had not been heavy, however, and for the most part the troops were in a position for a renewal of their efforts in the morning.

As for the Koto-ri perimeter, the 8th had passed with only scattered small-arms fire being received by the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines, in Division reserve. All day the Dog Company roadblock, on the route to Hagaru, was like a dam holding back the human torrent of Korean refugees. From this throng rose a low-pitched wail of misery as homeless men, women, and children huddled without shelter in the snowstorm of the 8th. It was a distressing spectacle to the Marines in the perimeter, yet the refugees could not be admitted because of the probability that Chinese soldiers had infiltrated among them, watching for an opportunity to use hidden weapons. There was little the Marines could offer by way of succor except medical care in some instances. Two women gave birth during the bitterly cold night of the 8th with the assistance of Navy medics. In the morning the crowd of refugees, swollen by new arrivals, waited with the patience of the humble to follow the Marine rear guard to the seacoast.[23]

White is the color of mourning in Korea, and snowflakes drifted down gently over the common grave in which 117 Marines, soldiers, and Royal Marine Commandos were buried on the 8th at Koto-ri. Lack of time had prevented the digging of individual graves in the frozen soil.[24] Although the necessity of conducting a mass burial was regretted, all available space in planes and vehicles was needed for the evacuation of casualties.

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Chapter 14. Onward from Koto-ri
Marine Operations of 9 and 10 December

New snow sparkled in the sunlight as the day of 9 December dawned bright, clear, and cold. A brief reconnaissance convinced Captain Noren that in the early darkness of the previous evening he had stopped one ridge short of his objective—the northwest slopes of Hill 1081, covering the approach to the cable underpass. Baker Company of 1/1 moved forward without CCF interference to the position.

Captain Barrow had his men test-fire their weapons before mounting the final assault on the dominating knob of the hill. This proved to be a wise precaution, since many of the mechanisms had frozen. After thawing them out, Able Company attacked in column with the 1st Platoon in the lead. Although the assault troops had the benefit of excellent air, artillery, and mortar support, they came under intense small-arms fire from Communists occupying camouflaged log and sandbag bunkers. McClelland's men were hard hit but his left flank squad worked its way forward in brief rushes to positions within 200 yards of Objective E, the topographical crest of Hill 1081. At this point Staff Sergeant Ernest J. Umbaugh organized a squad grenade attack which wiped out the first CCF bunker.

A stretch of about 175 yards, swept bare in places by the icy wind, now lay between the Marines and the final knob. Barrow perceived that this deadly CCF field of fire could be skirted by troops working their way around a shelf jutting from the military crest. Under cover of fire from his 60mm mortars and a strike by four Corsairs, he brought up his 2d and 3d platoons. While McClelland profited by the cover of scrub trees to come up behind the objective, Jones built up a base of fire to cover the direct assault of Roach's platoon as it stormed up the crest. McClelland had to contend with the enemy's last-ditch stand in two log bunkers which the 1st platoon knocked out by tossing grenades through the embrasures. The Communists resisted to the last gasp, but at 1500 the Marines were in undisputed possesion of Hill 1081.

Sergeant Umbaugh paid with his life at the moment of victory, and Barrow had only 111 able-bodied men left of the 223 he had led out from Chinghung-ni. But the Marines had won the decisive battle of the advance from Koto-ri; they held the key height dominating Funchilin Pass, though 530 counted enemy dead testified to the desperation of the CCF defense.

Able Company had the most spectacular part, but the victory owed to the united efforts of all three rifle companies and supporting arms. While Barrow held the crest of the hill, Noren pushed farther along the cable car track, meeting stubborn resistance from scattered enemy groups.[25]

The collapse of CCF resistance on Hill 1081 had a beneficial effect on the Marine advance from Koto-ri. RCT-7 continued its attack on the morning of the 9th with effective air and artillery support. Lieutenant Hovatter's Able Company of 1/7 seized the remainder of Hill 1304 while Lieutenant Taylor's Baker Company moved south to Objective C. The Army Provisional Battalion occupied the high ground between Objectives C and D.

These movements were carried out against ineffectual enemy resistance or none at all. Whenever a few Communists dared to raise their heads along the MSR, the airborne TADC in the R5D had the communications equipment to control aircraft on station and to direct their employment in response to ground force units.

The 1st Battalion of RCT-5 maintained its positions on Objective D (Hill 1457) all day. At Koto-ri the other two battalions and regimental headquarters made preparations to move out the following day.

As a preliminary to the withdrawal of RCT-1 (-) from Koto-ri, the 3d Battalion was relieved in its positions along the perimeter by the 41st Commando. Lieutenant Colonel Ridge's men then moved out to relieve

3/7 on Objective A and occupy Objective B. The 2d Battalion of RCT-7 (less a company with the regimental train) outposted the MSR between Objectives A and C at about 1630.[26]

Captain Morris' Charlie Company and a platoon of Baker Company, 1/7, moved down the MSR and secured the bridge site after a short fight. While Charlie Company outposted the area, the Baker platoon crossed behind the broken bridge and suddenly found about 50 Chinese in foxholes. "They were so badly frozen," reported Sawyer, "that the men simply lifted them from the holes and sat them on the road where Marines from Charlie Company took them over."[27] Late in the afternoon a patrol from 1/7 attempted to make contact with 1/1 by moving down the MSR. Chinese fire forced the men off the road and they scrambled across the defile below the overpass and into 1/1's lines.[28]

Lieutenant Colonel Partridge arrived with Weapons Company, 1/7, and the bridge sections followed in the Brockway truck. Even the enemy lent a hand when Communist prisoners were put to work as laborers. After the abutments were constructed, a Brockway truck laid the treadways and plywood panels in position so that both trucks and tanks could cross.

At about 1530, three hours after the start, the bridge was in place. Partridge drove his jeep to the top of the pass to inform Lieutenant Colonel Banks, Commanding Division Train No. 1, that he could begin the descent.

Sawyer's troops had not been idle that afternoon and a total of about 60 CCF prisoners were taken during attacks to drive the enemy back from the bridge site. At about 1700 Partridge returned, and an hour later the first elements of the Division trains began to cross. Only a few vehicles had reached the other side when a disastrous accident threatened to undo everything that had been accomplished. A tractor towing an earth-moving pan broke through the plywood center panel, rendering it useless. And with the treadways spaced as they were, the way was closed to wheeled vehicles.

A first ray of hope glimmered when an expert tractor driver, Technical Sergeant Wilfred H. Prosser, managed to back the machine off the wrecked bridge. Then Patridge did some mental calculations and came up with the answer that a total width of 136 inches would result if the treadways were placed as far apart as possible. This would allow a very slight margin at both extremes—two inches to spare for the M-26s on the treadways; and barely half an inch for the jeeps using the 45-inch interval between the metal lips on the inboard edges of the treadways.

Thanks to skillful handling of the bulldozers the treadways were soon respaced. And in the early darkness Partridge's solution paid off when the first jeep crossed, its tires scraping both edges. Thus the convoy got under way again as an engineer detachment guided vehicles across with flashlights while Sawyer's troops kept the enemy at a distance.[29]

Advance reports of the bridge drop had brought press representatives flocking to Koto-ri in casualty evacuation planes. David Duncan, of *Life*, a former Marine, took realistic photographs of the troops which attracted nation-wide attention. Keyes Beech sent out daily reports while making notes for a book about his adventures in Korea. Miss Marguerite Higgins, who refused to be outdone by male colleagues, was twice requested to leave Koto-ri before nightfall by Marine officers who respected her pluck as a reporter but felt that the perimeter was no place for a woman in the event of an enemy attack.

Hundreds of words were written about the bridge drop. Some of these accounts were so dramatized as to give Stateside newspaper readers the impression that the span had been parachuted to earth in one piece, settling down neatly over the abutments. Headlines reported the progress of the 1st Marine Division every day, and front-page maps made every American household familiar with the names of such obscure Korean mountain hamlets at Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni.

General Shepherd and Colonel Frederick P. Henderson flew up to the perimeter on the 9th for a conference with General Smith. Before their departure they were informed that all remaining casualties at Koto-ri would be evacuated that day.[30]

All night long on 9-10 December an endless stream of troops and vehicles poured across the span that was doubtless the world's most famous bridge for the moment. "The sensation throughout that night," recalled Lieutenant Colonel Partridge in retrospect, "was extremely eerie. There seemed to be a glow over everything. There was no illumination and yet you seemed to see quite well; there was artillery fire, and the sound of many artillery pieces being discharged; there was the crunching of the many feet and many vehicles on the crisp snow. There were many North Korean refugees on one side of the column and Marines walking on the other side. Every once in a while, there would be a baby wailing. There were cattle on the road. Everything added to the general sensation of relief, or expected relief, and was about as eerie as anything I've ever experienced in my life."[31]

Advancing jerkily by stops and starts, the column met no serious opposition from Chinese who appeared to be numbed by cold and defeat. Prisoners taken that night brought the total up to more than a hundred during the movement from Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni. Some of them were suffering from gangrene, the result of neglected frozen limbs, and others showed the effects of prolonged malnutrition. These captives testified that CCF losses from both battle and non-battle casualties had been crippling.

At 0245 on the morning of the 10th the leading elements of the 1st Battalion, RCT-7, began to arrive at Chinhung-ni. A traffic regulating post had been set up at that point the day before by Colonel Edward W. Snedeker, Division Deputy Chief of Staff, for the purpose of controlling the movement of Marine units to the south.[32]

The remaining elements of RCT-7 were strung out from Objective C to the cableway crossing of the MSR. Traffic moved without a hitch until 0400, when two trucks bogged down in a U-shaped bypass across a partially frozen stream about 2000 yards beyond the treadway bridge. Major Frederick Simpson, commanding the 1st Divisional Train, had the vehicles pushed off to one side while the engineers built up the road. After a delay of three hours the column got under way again, with the first vehicles reaching Chinhung-ni at 0830. Ultimately both Division trains got through without a fight, thanks to avoiding the delays which had caused so much trouble during the advance from Hagaru to Koto-ri.[33]

Following the trains, the 7th Marines moved through the Pass. Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood's 2/7 (less Company E, guarding the regimental train) led the way for the regimental command group, the Provisional Army Battalion, 3/7 and the 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines.[34]

During the early morning hours of the 10th George Company of 3/1 beat off an attack on Objective A by an enemy force estimated at 350 men. This was the only noteworthy instance of CCF activity otherwise limited to scattered shots, and it was believed that the Communists were side-slipping southward, parallel with the MSR. Confirmation of that assumption came at 1200, when Able Company of 1/1 sighted Chinese marching in platoon and company columns through the valley only about 1000 yards east of Hill 1081. Almost simultaneously other dense CCF columns crossed the field of fire of the attached Army self-propelled AAA guns while pouring around an adjacent slope. Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck called immediately for air strikes and artillery fires. Able Company hit the enemy with 4.2" and 81mm mortar rounds, and the Army teams cut loose with .50 cal. and 40mm bursts. The slaughter continued for an hour as the Chinese kept on moving southward with that fatalism which never failed to astonish the Marines.

Baker Company of 1/1 launched an assault with close air support at 1300 on a CCF strong point adjacent to the railroad and north of the battalion's positions overlooking the MSR. Noren's men found 3.5 "rocket launchers their most effective weapon when clearing the Communists from heavily timbered and sandbagged bunkers. Excellent close air support was received, though two Marine KIA casualties resulted from an error by Navy planes.[35]

All day the seemingly endless column of vehicles and troops wound southward along the twisting mountain road. At 1030 General Smith and key members of his staff displaced from Koto-ri and proceeded by C-47 and helicopter to the rear CP of the Division at Hungnam. By 1800 both Division trains, all elements of RCT-7

and the 1st, 3d, and 4th Battalions of the 11th Marines had closed Chinhung-ni. There the infantrymen entrucked for Hungnam.[36]

The 5th Marines column followed the 7th, with 3/5 leading the way and 2/5 close behind. Just south of Objective A a brief fire fight was necessary to silence a CCF machine gun, whereupon the movement continued without further incident until the two battalions reached Chinhung-ni at dusk. The 1st Battalion was not relieved by 2/1 until 1800 and did not close Chinhung-ni until the early morning hours of the 11th.[37]

The withdrawal of RCT-1 (–) and attached units from Koto-ri commenced on the afternoon of the 10th. The 3d Battalion, it will be recalled, had relieved RCT-7 units the day before on Objectives A, B and C, and the 1st Battalion occupied Objective E. The regimental plan called for 1/1 to hold the Hill 1081 area and protect the MSR until the other units of the regiment passed through, whereupon Schmuck's battalion was to pull out with the tanks at the end of the column as the rear guard.

The movement from the Koto-ri perimeter commenced at 1500 when H&S Company of RCT-1 departed. The 2d Battalion (–) of the 11th Marines fell in behind, followed in order by a detachment of the 185th (C) Engineers, USA, the 2d Battalion of the 31st Infantry, USA, the 2d Battalion of RCT-1, the Division Reconnaissance Company and Lieutenant Colonel Milne's tank column, consisting of Companies B and D of the 1st Tank Battalion, the Tank Company of the 31st Infantry, USA, and the Tank Platoon of the 5th Marines AT Company.[38]

As the last elements left Koto-ri the 92d FA Battalion at Chinhung-ni began laying heavy concentrations on the evacuated base. Only scattered shots were received by the tail of the column from Chinese troops mingling with the Korean refugees. Several small enemy groups on the flanks of the column were taken under fire and dispersed. [39] But with 3/1 guarding Objectives A, B and C, no serious opposition developed during the first stage of the withdrawal.

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Chapter 14. Onward from Koto-ri
Completion of Division Breakout

At dusk on 10 December all indications made it appear that the movement of the 1st Marine Division southward would be completed according to plan with only minor losses of personnel and equipment. Following the seizure of Hill 1081, casualties had been comparatively light and enemy resistance ineffectual. Then, between midnight and 0100 on 11 December, two reverses occurred in areas the Marines supposed to be safe.

The MSR south of Chinhung-ni was under the protection of troops of the 3d Infantry Division—Task Force Dog at Chinhung-ni, and two battalions of the 65th Infantry in the vicinity of Sudong and Majon-dong. It was manifestly impossible, of course, for the Army troops to guard every yard of the road, for the rugged terrain offered many potential ambush sites. [40] Guerrilla activity had been reported near Sudong, but the division trains and the 5th and 7th Marines had passed through without incident.

On the afternoon of the 10th, Korean civilians warned of an impending attack by Chinese soldiers who had infiltrated into this village. As previously indicated, Colonel Snedeker had arrived at Chinhung-ni the previous afternoon. At his suggestion Task Force Dog sent out an infantry patrol which returned with a report of no enemy activity.

At dusk an attack on the traffic turnaround outside Sudong caused Snedeker to halt all traffic at Chinhung-ni until the MSR was cleared. After a fire fight in the darkness, elements of the 65th Infantry reported at dusk that the enemy roadblock had been cleared, and the Marine column resumed its movement southward. [41]

During the next few hours Colonel Snedeker's worst problem was lack of transport. The Division had requested that the maximum number of trucks, ambulances and narrow-gauge freight cars be collected at Majon-dong, the new railhead. Only about 150 trucks were actually made available, however, 110 of them being from Division service units in the Hungnam area.

In spite of this shortage, the flow of traffic was being maintained when an explosion of CCF activity brought every thing to a stop at Sudong shortly after midnight. Mountain defiles had usually been the scene of enemy ambushes, but this time the Chinese swarmed out from behind houses in the village with grenades and burp guns. Several truck drivers of the RCT-1 regimental train were killed by the first shots and their vehicles set on fire. In the flickering light a confused fight ensued as trucks to the rear stopped. The Marines of the RCT-1 train resisted as best they could, but leadership was lacking until Lieutenant Colonel John U. D. Page, USA, and Marine PFC Marvin L. Wasson teamed up as a two-man task force which routed a group of about 20 Chinese at the head of the vehicle column. The valiant Army artillery officer paid with his life, and Wasson received two wounds from a grenade explosion. Pausing only for first aid, he got back into the fight as another Army officer, Lieutenant Colonel Waldon C. Winston, commanding the 52d Transportation Truck Battalion, USA, directed a counterattack by Marine and Army service troops. Harry Smith, a United Press correspondent, also had a part in the action.

Wasson called for a machine gun to cover him while he fired three white phosphorus rounds from a 75mm recoilless at a house serving the enemy as a stronghold. It burst into flames and the survivors who ran out were cut down by machine-gun fire. The Marine PFC, a jeep driver who was dubbed "The Spirit of '76" by Winston, then volunteered to help push trucks of exploding ammunition off the road.

Winston gradually brought order out of chaos, but it was daybreak before the MSR was cleared so that the column could start moving again. The RCT-1 regimental train had suffered casualties of eight killed and 21

wounded, while equipment losses consisted of nine trucks and an armored personnel carrier.

Lack of infantry protection was a factor in another reverse which occurred at the tail of the Division column. General Smith's final orders for withdrawal provided that the tanks were to come out behind the 1st Marines' train with the infantry of that regiment bringing up the rear. [42] Thus a breakdown in the armored column would not block the road for wheeled vehicles, yet the tanks would have protection against close-in attack.

The 1st Marines prepared detailed plans for the leapfrogging of battalions during the final withdrawal phase. In effect these called for 2/1 to relieve 1/5 on Objective D and remain there until relieved in turn by 2/31. The Army battalion would hold until 3/1 passed through, then follow Ridge's battalion down the MSR. After 2/1, 3/1 and 2/31 had passed through Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck's positions around Hill 1081, 1/1 would follow as rear guard. [43]

The first departure from plan occurred when Lieutenant Colonel Sutter discovered, after starting up Hill 1457, that Objective D was so far from the road and so steep that most of the night would be required merely for the battalion to make the climb. No enemy having been sighted, he asked permission to return to the road and continue along the MSR. This request was granted by Colonel Puller and 2/1 resumed the march, followed by 2/11(-), 2/31 and H&S Company of RCT-1 in that order. Lieutenant Colonel Ridge's 3/1, which remained on Objectives A, B and C until 2100, fell in at the end of the regimental column. [44]

About midnight, after waiting for 3/1 to move down the pass, the the tank column began its descent with only Recon Company as protection. Lieutenant Hargett's platoon of 28 men guarded the last ten tanks and the other two platoons screened the middle and head of the column. [45] Behind the last machine, approaching as close as they dared, were the thousands of refugees. CCF soldiers had mingled with them, watching for an opportunity to strike, and Hargett had the task of keeping the Koreans at a respectful distance.

Progress was slow as the 40 tanks inched around the icy curves with lights on and dismounted crewmen acting as guides. Shortly before 0100 the ninth machine from the rear had a brake freeze which brought the tail of the column to a halt for 45 minutes. The rest of the tanks clanked on ahead, leaving the last nine stranded along the MSR southwest of Hill 1457 and about 2000 yards from the treadway bridge. The enemy took advantage of the delay when five CCF soldiers emerged in file from among the refugees as a voice in English called that they wished to surrender. [46]

Hargett went to meet them cautiously, covered by Corporal George A. J. Amyotte's BAR. Suddenly the leading Chinese stepped aside to reveal the other four producing hidden burp guns and grenades. Hargett pulled the trigger of his carbine but it failed him in the sub-zero cold. The former all-Marine football star then hurled himself at the enemy group, swinging his carbine. He crushed a Chinese skull like an eggshell, but a grenade explosion wounded him as the ambush developed into an attack from the high ground on the flank as well as the rear.

Before the remaining four Chinese could do Hargett any further harm, Amyotte shot them down, one by one. The fight turned into a wild melee in which friend could hardly be distinguished from foe.

Hargett's platoon slowly fell back until the last tank was lost to the enemy along with its crew. The men in the next to last tank had buttoned up and could not be aroused to their danger by banging on the hull with rifle butts. While making the effort Hargett was stunned by an enemy explosive charge which blew PFC Robert D. DeMott over the sheer drop at the side of the road, leaving him unconscious on a ledge. The other men of his platoon believed that he had been killed and continued their withdrawal, only to find the next seven tanks abandoned with their hatches open.

Amyotte, wearing body armor, was covering the retirement, firing from prone, when a CCF grenade exploded after landing squarely on his back. The Chinese must have suspected black magic when he went on cooly picking off opponents as if nothing had happened. [47]

It was a precarious situation for Hargett and his remaining 24 men. But they fought their way out without further casualties, and meanwhile tank crewmen had succeeded in freeing the brake of the lead tank and driving two tanks down the road. One of them was brought out by Corporal C. P. Lett, who had never driven before. “I’m going to get this tank out of here even if I get killed doing it!” he told Hargett. By sheer determination, coupled with luck, he maneuvered around the obstacles ahead and down the icy road to safety.

Captain Gould and his demolitions crew of engineers had been waiting for hours to blow the treadway bridge after the last elements of the Division crossed. With the passage of the two tanks and Hargett’s platoon, it was believed that all Marines who could be extricated were safely over the span. On this assumption, which later proved to be erroneous, CWO Willie Harrison set off the demolition charges.

The losses of the Recon platoon were three men MIA (two of them later changed to KIA) and 12 wounded. Crews of the two rear tanks were missing and presumed dead. [48] Hargett’s losses would have been more severe except for the fact that some of his men were wearing Marine body armor made of light-weight plastics.

To another man of Hargett’s platoon went the distinction of being the last Marine out at the finish of the Chosin Reservoir breakout. When durable PFC DeMott recovered consciousness, after being blown over the brink by the CCF pack charge explosion, he found himself precariously perched on a ledge overhanging the chasm. Slightly wounded, he managed to climb back on the road, where he encountered only Korean refugees. Upon hearing a tremendous detonation he realized that the bridge had been blown. He remembered, however, that pedestrians could cross through the gatehouse above the penstocks, and he came down the mountain with the refugees to Chinhung-ni. There he was given a welcome befitting one who has cheated death of a sure thing.

The remaining tanks made it safely to Chinhung-ni without benefit of infantry protection other than what was afforded by Recon Company.[49] Lieutenant Colonel Schmuck did not receive a copy of 1stMar *OpnO* 16-50, he explained, his only information being a Frag O designating 1/1 as rear guard and “a hasty, 30-second conference” with Colonel Puller when the 1st Marine command group passed through. “I was informed,” he added, “that the tanks were in the rear of the 1st Marines, that 2d Bn, 31st Infantry was bringing up the rear, and that as soon as that unit passed, I would employ my battalion as rear guard. . . . No mention at all was made of the Reconnaissance Company. In order to check off the units that passed endlessly through my lines, I established a check point at the incline railway overpass and kept a close record of movement.”

A great deal of intermingling of units was observed by the 1/1 commander. At 0300, after sighting the lights of the tanks, he gave orders for Able Company to commence the withdrawal, in order “to consolidate my battalion for the rear guard action prior to daybreak. . . . When the first tanks reached my position, I was first startled to find no 2/31 accompanying them and then flabbergasted to discover that the Recon Company was somewhere out there ‘screening’ the movement. This canceled my carefully laid covering plan.” [50]

No further trouble resulted for the tanks and Recon Company. Ahead of them the infantry units continued the movement southward from Chinhung-ni chiefly by marching because of the shortage of trucks. Lieutenant Colonel Sutter’s men proved that footslogging is not a lost art by covering the 22 miles from Koto-ri to Majon-dong in a 20-hour hike with packs, heavy parkas, individual weapons and sleeping bags. [51]

Battle casualties of the division for the final stage, the attack from Koto-ri southward, were as follows: Click here to view table

At 1300 on 11 December the last elements of the Division cleared Chinhung-ni. Majon-dong had been left behind at 1730 without audible regrets; and by 2100 all units, with the exception of the tanks, had reached assigned assembly areas in the Hamhung-Hungnam area. The armored column arrived at the LST staging area of Hungnam half an hour before midnight, thus bringing to an end the breakout of the 1st Marine Division. [52]

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Chapter 15. The Hungnam Redeployment

"WAVE AND LOOK HAPPY!" These were the first words to greet some of the weary, unshaven Marines upon arrival in the Hamhung-Hungnam area. They grinned obligingly in response to the press photographers snapping pictures of the motor column from the roadside. They were happy indeed to be back in a world of hot meals and hot baths. They were happy to be alive.

Marines and attached Army troops found it astonishing as well as flattering to learn that such expressions as "epic" and "saga" and "miracle of deliverance" were being applied to the breakout in American newspapers. The press correspondents in turn were astonished to learn that never for a moment had the men doubted that they would slug their way out to the seacoast.

"The running fight of the Marines and two battalions of the Army's 7th Infantry Division from Hagaru to Hamhung—40 miles by air but 60 miles over the icy, twisting mountainous road—was a battle unparalleled in U.S. military history," commented *Time*. "It had some aspects of Bataan, some of Anzio, some of Dunkirk, some of Valley Forge, some of the 'Retreat of the 10,000' (401–400 B.C.) as described in Xenophon's *Anabasis*."

Not until the Marines had fought their way as far as Chinhung-ni, the weekly newsmagazine continued, did there appear to be much hope that they would come out as an organized force. Then "for the first time it looked as if most of the 20,000 [Marines] would get through."[1]

By reading contemporary press accounts it is possible to recapture the mood of the American public upon realization of the disaster which had overtaken the Eighth Army. "It was defeat—the worst defeat the United States ever suffered," reported *Time* in the issue of 11 December 1950. "The Nation received the fearful news from Korea with a strange-seeming calmness—the kind of confused, fearful, half-believing matter-of-factness with which many a man has reacted upon learning that he has cancer or tuberculosis. The news of Pearl Harbor, nine years ago to the month, had pealed out like a fire bell. But the numbing facts of the defeat in Korea seeped into the national consciousness slowly out of a jumble of headlines, bulletins, and communiques; days passed before its enormity finally became plain."[2]

Newsweek called it "America's worst military licking since Pearl Harbor. Perhaps it might become the worst military disaster in American history. Barring a military or diplomatic miracle, the approximately two-thirds of the U.S. Army that had been thrown into Korea might have to be evacuated in a new Dunkerque to save them from being lost in a new Bataan."[3]

The situation in west Korea was depressing enough. But at least the Eighth Army had a line of retreat left open. It was with apprehension that the American public stared at front-page maps showing the "entrapment" of the 1st Marine Division and attached U.S. Army units and British Marines by Chinese forces. Press releases from Korea did not encourage much expectation that the encircled troops could save themselves from destruction by any means other than surrender. In either event the result would be a military catastrophe without a parallel in the Nation's history.

The first gleam of hope was inspired by the news that the Marines had seized the initiative at Yudam-ni and cut a path through Chinese blocking the route to Hagaru. Then came the thrilling reports of the air drops of supplies at Hagaru and the mass evacuation of casualties by air. Much of the humiliation felt by newspaper readers was wiped clean by pride as General Smith's troops fought through to Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni in sub-zero cold. The air drop of the bridge sections was a dramatic climax to the realization that what had been a hope was now a fact—the Chosin Reservoir troops had saved themselves and inflicted a major defeat on the Chinese Communists in the doing. Testimony of POWs had left no doubt that the mission of the three CCF corps was the

annihilation of the surrounded United States forces, but the result had been enemy losses which did not fall far short of annihilation of the CCF units themselves.

It was in a spirit of prayerful thanksgiving, therefore, that Americans read about the column of grimy, parka-clad men which came out of the mountains of northeast Korea on 11 December 1950. They had come out fighting and they had brought their wounded and most of their equipment out with them.

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Marines Billeted in Hungnam Area

As late as 9 December it had been General Smith's understanding that the 1st Marine Division would occupy a defensive sector south and southwest of Hungnam. Then Colonel McAllister at Hungnam was notified by X Corps that plans for the defense of the Hungnam area had been changed, so that the Marines were to embark immediately for redeployment by water to South Korea. General Smith was informed on the 10th, and so promptly was the new plan put into effect that the first Marine units were already loading out before the last elements of the Division arrived at Hungnam.[4]

No changes were necessary in the plans for the reception of Marine units in the Hungnam area worked out by Colonel Snedeker and Colonel McAllister on orders of General Smith. On 8 December, Snedeker had issued detailed instructions which designated defensive sectors for RCT-1 at Chigyong and for RCT-5 and RCT-7 in the vicinity of Yonpo Airfield. The 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion was charged with making such preparations to receive the returning troops as putting up tents, installing stoves, erecting heads and equipping galleys.[5]

The Navy, as usual, was ready. On 15 November, it may be recalled, General Smith had candidly expressed his misgivings about the strategic outlook to Admiral Morehouse and Captain Sears. Morehouse was chief of staff to Admiral Joy, ComNavFE, and Sears served in a like capacity under Admiral Doyle, CTF-90. This frank discussion had not fallen upon deaf ears; and on the 28th, only a few hours after the first CCF attacks at Yudam-ni, ComNavFE alerted CTF-90 as to the possible need for a redeployment operation by sea. The following day Joy advised that events in the Chosin Reservoir area made it desirable for ships of TF-90 to be on six hours' notice either in Korean waters or at Sasebo, Japan.[6]

CTF-90 commenced planning immediately for either an administrative or emergency outloading. His OpnO 19–50, issued on the 28th for planning purposes, provided for half of the amphibious force to conduct redeployment operations on the east coast under Doyle as ComPhibGruOne, while the other half had a similar mission on the west coast under Admiral Thackrey, ComPhibGruThree.

At this time ComPhibGruThree and most of the amphibious units were in Japanese ports for upkeep and replenishment. All were directed by Admiral Joy on the 29th to proceed to Sasebo.

ComPhibGruOne had just completed the opening of Hungnam as a major resupply port and was preparing to withdraw to Japan with the remaining amphibious force. On 30 November, however, the deteriorating situation of ground forces in Korea made it necessary for all units of TF-90 to be in Korean waters. The emergency appeared to be more critical on the west coast, and two-thirds of the smaller amphibious ships were allotted to the Inchon area while the transports were divided equally between Inchon and Hungnam.

The first week of December was devoted to planning and preparing for a redeployment of X Corps by sea which appeared more likely every day. Mine sweeping operations were resumed at Hungnam to enlarge the swept anchorage area and provide swept channels for gunfire support ships.

X Corps OpnO 9–50, issued on 5 December, provided for the defense of the Hungnam area by setting up a perimeter with a final defense line about seven miles in radius. Pie-shaped sectors of fairly equal area, converging on the harbor, were assigned to the following major units from east to west—1st ROK Corps (less one division at Songjin), 7th Infantry Division, 3d Infantry Division (with the 1st KMC Regiment(-)), and the 1st Marine Division. The Marine sector included Yonpo Airfield.

On 8 December a conference held on board the *Mount McKinley* by ComNavFE and CTF-90 was

attended by Vice Admiral Struble, Com7thFlt, Rear Admiral John M. Higgins, ComCruDivFive, and Lieutenant General Shepherd, CG FMFPac.

General Shepherd was present as "Representative of Commander Naval Forces, Far East, on matters relating to the Marine Corps and for consultation and advice in connection with the contemplated amphibious operation now being planned."[7]

General Almond was directed on the 9th to redeploy to South Korea and to report to the commanding general of the Eighth Army after assembling in the Ulsan-Pusan-Masan area. He was to release the 1st ROK Corps as soon as possible to the ROK Army in the Samchok area. An assembly area in the vicinity of Masan, widely separated from the other units of X Corps, was specified for the 1st Marine Division.

CTF-90 was assigned the following missions:

"(1) Provide water lift for and conduct redeployment operations of UN forces in Korea as directed;

"(2) Control all air and naval gunfire support in designated embarkation areas;

"(3) Protect shipping en route to debarkation ports;

"(4) Be responsible for naval blockade and gunfire support of friendly units East Coast of Korea, including Pusan;

"(5) Be prepared to conduct small-scale redeployment operations, including ROK forces and UN prisoners of war;

"(6) Coordinate withdrawal operations with CG X Corps and other commands as appropriate;

"(7) Support and cover redeployment operations in the Hungman or other designated Korean embarkation area."

No such large-scale sea lift of combined Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine elements, not to mention the ROK units, had been attempted since Okinawa. The time was so short, moreover, that action could not wait on detailed planning and organization. In any event the job had to be done.

An enormous fleet of shipping must be assembled from every available source in the Far East. More than 100,000 troops must be embarked, and it was estimated at first that 25,000 Korean refugees must be evacuated, though this figure had to be nearly quadrupled. Mountains of supplies and thousands of vehicles must be outloaded from a comparatively small port. While these activities were in progress, the perimeter must be protected with naval gunfire and aircraft against an enemy credited by X Corps G-2 estimates with the capabilities of launching an attack of six to eight depleted divisions against the Hamhung-Hungnam area.

It was aptly dubbed "an amphibious landing in reverse," since the plan called for the methodical shrinking of the perimeter, under cover of air strikes and naval gunfire, until the last platoon of the ground forces had embarked. Then would come the grand finale of the demolitions.

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Embarkation of 1st Marine Division

The Wonsan evacuation was instructive as a rehearsal for the Hungnam redeployment. From 2 to 10 December, Lieutenant Colonel Crowe's 1st Shore Party Battalion had charge of the outloading while sharing the defense of the harbor with a battalion from the 3d Infantry Division and two KMC battalions. Another Marine outfit, Company A of the 1st Amphibian Truck Battalion, speeded up the operation by making hundreds of round trips between docks and ships with DUKWs.[8]

Air cover and naval gunfire from supporting ships of TE-90.21 was so effective that Wonsan had no enemy interference worth mentioning. Covering missions continued to be fired until the last friendly troops withdrew, and operations were completed without the necessity of destroying UN supplies and equipment. Altogether, 3834 troops, 7009 Korean civilians, 1146 vehicles, and 10,013 bulk tons of cargo had been outloaded when the operation was completed on 10 December. One detachment of Shore Party troops sailed for Pusan with the DUKWs in preparation for unloading the 1st Marine Division upon its arrival at that port.

The Hungnam evacuation plan, as outlined in X Corps OpnO 10–50, issued on 11 December, provided for the immediate embarkation of the 1st Marine Division and the 3d ROK Division. A smaller perimeter than the original concept was to be defended meanwhile by the 7th and 3d Infantry Divisions, with the latter having the final responsibility. Major units were to withdraw gradually by side-slipping until only reinforced platoons remained as covering forces holding strong points. Plans called for naval gunfire and air support to be stepped up as the perimeter contracted.

CTF-90 assumed control of all naval functions on 10 December after approving loading plans made at a conference of Navy officers and representatives of X Corps. Colonel Forney, Deputy Chief of Staff, X Corps, was appointed Corps evacuation control officer with responsibility for the operation of the Hungnam port and was assigned a small staff. Major Richard W. Shutts, of General Shepherd's party, was placed in charge of the Operations Section. Two more former TTUPac Marines on the X Corps staff were assigned sections—Major Charles P. Weiland, the Loading Section; and Major Jack R. Munday, the Navy Liaison Section. Lieutenant Colonel Harry E. Moisell, USA, headed the Movement Section, and Captain William C. Cool, USA, the Rations Section.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Warren served as Colonel Forney's executive officer until he was incapacitated by pneumonia and relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Crowe.

The 2d Engineer Special Brigade, USA, was responsible for operation of the dock facilities, traffic control in the dock areas, and for furnishing Japanese stevedores, winch operators, cargo handling equipment, and dunnage. A reinforced company from the 1st Shore Party Battalion worked the LST and small craft beaches while controlling the lighterage for ships loading in the stream.

It was decided on 11 December that 1st Marine Division staging to assembly areas should commence immediately. Loading had to be expedited so that ships could be used for a second and even third turn-around. Embarkation Order 3-50, issued by the Division on the 11th, assigned vehicle and cargo assembly areas to units, and an embarkation control office was set up in the dock area.

As compensation for the cramped confines of the Hungnam harbor, the tidal range was less than a foot as compared to the maximum of 31 feet at Inchon. And though the docks had space for only seven ships, Major Weiland planned to double-berth four additional ships and load them from the outboard side. In addition, 11 LSTs could be handled simultaneously—seven at GREEN Beach One, and the others at GREEN Beach Two.

Marine units awaiting shipping remained on a standby basis, ready to begin loading at once upon assignment of space by the embarkation officer. The Division rear CP at Hungnam had become the only CP with General Smith's arrival; and on the 11th General Craig, the ADC, returned from emergency leave.

General MacArthur flew to Yonpo Airfield on the 11th for a brief conference with General Almond and approved the X Corps plan. A date of 27 December was set for Corps units to pass under the control of the Eighth Army in South Korea.

The outloading of the 1st Marine Division was making good progress on the 12th when General Smith visited the docks on a tour of inspection. That evening he and General Shepherd attended a dinner at the Corps CP in honor of General Almond's 58th birthday. The Army was represented by Major Generals Barr, Soule, and Clark L. Ruffner, X Corps Chief of Staff.

By the following day the 5th and 7th Marines were ready to sail. Embarkation officers loaded their ships by sight, planning as they went along. Not knowing in advance what type of ship might be assigned, they found that carefully calculated stowage diagrams were out of the question. Under these circumstances, amphibious training and experience were invaluable.

Space in the tent city established by X Corps to the rear of the LST beaches had been made available to Marine units awaiting embarkation. Most of them, however, moved directly from their bivouac areas to the beach.

While the Marines were outloading, the two Army divisions defending the perimeter had only minor patrol actions. Their artillery supplied most of the interdiction fires at the outset, with naval gunfire giving the deep support. Vigorous air support by Navy, Air Force, and Marine planes also did much to discourage any hostile intentions the enemy may have had.

MGCIS-1, the ground control intercept squadron at Yonpo, stopped directing the high altitude fighters on 11 December and passed over to the USS *Mount McKinley* the task of keeping the perimeter clear of any enemy planes. Over-all control of air still remained ashore with MTACS-2.

At 1500 on the 13th General Smith went aboard the USS *Bayfield* and opened the Division CP. As his last duty on shore, he attended memorial services held by the Division at the Hungnam Cemetery. While the commanding general paid his tribute to the honored dead, Chinese POWs were making preparations for the interment of the last bodies brought down from Chinhung-ni.

The Marine loading was completed on the 14th. At a conference that day with CTF-90 on board the *Mount McKinley*, General Smith inquired as to the possibility of having the ships carrying the Marines unload at Masan instead of Pusan, thus saving a 40-mile movement by truck. Admiral Doyle pointed out that this procedure was not feasible because of the lack of lighterage facilities at Masan. The additional turn-around time, moreover, would have delayed the evacuation of remaining Corps units.

The 14th was also the day when Marine air strikes from Yonpo ended with the departure of the last of the Wing's land-based fighters for Japan. Shortly after midnight the Air Defense Section of MTACS-2 passed control of all air in the Hungnam area to the Navy's Tactical Air Control Squadron One of TF-90 aboard the USS *Mount McKinley*. The Marine squadron then set up a standby TACC aboard an LST until the final withdrawal on 24 December.

At 1030 on 15 December, as the *Bayfield* sailed, the curtain went down on one of the most memorable campaigns in the 175-year history of the Marine Corps. A total of 22,215 Marines had embarked in shipping consisting of an APA, an AKA, 3 APs, 13 LSTs, 3 LSDs, and 7 commercial cargo ships.

The Yonpo airlift continued, however, until 17 December when the field was closed and a temporary airstrip nearer the harbor was made available to twin-engine R4D's for the final phase of the air evacuation. The only Marine units left in Hungnam were a reinforced Shore Party company, an ANGLICO group and one and a half companies (88 LVTs) of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion. They passed under the operational control of X Corps to assist in the outloading of Army units. Also, Colonel Boeker C. Batterton, commanding MAG-12, had

moved to Hungnam for the final evacuation of his air group from Yonpo and to arrange for loading its heavy equipment and remaining personnel aboard SS *Towanda Victory*. Then on 18 December he flew his command post to Itami.[9]

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The Last Ten Days at Hungnam

With ten days remaining for the embarkation of the two Army divisions, the problem of Korean refugees threatened to disrupt the schedule. But CTF-90 contrived somehow to find the shipping, and the homeless Koreans were willing to put up with any hardships to escape from Communist domination. It became standard practice to embark at least 5000 on an LST, not counting children in arms, and no less than 12,000 human sardines found standing room on one commercial cargo ship.[10]

The most fragile link in the complex chain of operations was represented by the two 390-ton diesel electric tugs. No others were available, nor were spare parts to be had, yet both tugs had clocked more than 5000 running hours since the last overhaul. Thus it seemed almost a miracle that neither broke down for more than three hours in all, and repairs were made with materials at hand.

On the 18th, when the last ROKs sailed for Samchok, the 7th Infantry Division was in the midst of its outloading. By 20 December all troops of this unit had embarked, according to schedule. Responsibility for the defense of Hungnam then passed to Admiral Doyle as General Almond and his staff joined CTF-90 on board the flagship *Mount McKinley*. General Soule's 3d Division now manned the shore defenses alone.[11]

When the perimeter contracted to the immediate vicinity of Hungnam, following the evacuation of Hamhung and Yonpo Airfield, two cruisers, seven destroyers, and three rocket-firing craft covered the entire front from their assigned positions in mine-swept lanes. A total of nearly 34,000 shells and 12,800 rockets was fired by these support ships, with the battleship *Missouri* contributing 162 16-inch rounds at the finish of the bombardment. About 800 more 8-inch shells and 12,800 more 5-inch shells were expended at Hungnam than during the naval gunfire preparation for the Inchon landing.

Seven embarkation sites were employed (see Map 30). From left to right they were designated as PINK Beach, BLUE Beach, GREEN One and Two Beaches, and YELLOW One, Two, and Three Beaches. The 7th RCT, holding the left sector, was to embark from PINK Beach. BLUE and GREEN One Beaches were assigned to the 65th RCT in the center, while the 15th RCT had GREEN Two and the three YELLOW Beaches.

H-hour had been set at 1100 on the 24th, and seven LSTs were beached at 0800 to receive 3d Infantry Division troops. Soon the three regiments were reduced to as many battalions which acted as covering forces while the other troops fell back to assigned beaches. All withdrawals were conducted methodically along specified routes by units using marking panels. Then the battalions themselves pulled out, leaving only seven reinforced platoons manning strong points. The Hungnam redeployment came to an end when these platoons boarded an LST after a search for stragglers. Air and naval gunfire support had made it an uneventful finish except for the accidental explosion of an ammunition dump on PINK Beach, resulting in two men killed and 21 wounded.

All beaches were clear by 1436 on Sunday afternoon, the 24th, with Able and Baker Companies of the Amtrac Battalion sticking it out to the end. Marines of these units provided fires to cover the flanks of the last withdrawals and manned 37 LVTs evacuating Army troops from PINK Beach. With the exception of three LVTs lost in the ammunition dump explosion on that beach, all LVTs and LVT(A)s were safely reembarked on LSDs at the finish of the operation.[12]

Remarkably few supplies had to be left behind for lack of shipping space. Among them were 400 tons of frozen dynamite and 500 thousand-pound bombs. They added to the tumult of an awe-inspiring demolitions scene. The entire Hungnam waterfront seemed to be blown sky-high in one volcanic eruption of flame, smoke,

and rubble which left a huge black mushroom cloud hovering over the ruins.

Click here to view map

The chill, misty dawn of Christmas Day found the *Mount McKinley* about to sail for Ulsan with CTF-90 and Generals Almond and Shepherd after an eminently successful operation. It had been pretty much the Navy's show, in the absence of enemy interference, and the final statistics were staggering—105,000 military personnel, 91,000 Korean refugees, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 measurement tons of cargo loaded out in 193 shiploads by 109 ships.

"With naval, air and surface units effectively isolating the beachhead, we were able to take our time and get everything out," commented Admiral Joy on 26 December. "Admiral Doyle has turned in another brilliant performance. We never, never contemplated a Dunkirk—not even faintly."[13]

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Marines Arrive at New Assembly Area

While the remaining X Corps units completed outloading at Hungnam, the Marines were landing at Pusan and proceeding by motor march to their new assembly area in the vicinity of Masan. General Craig, the ADC, had gone ahead with the advance party from Hungnam and made arrangements for the reception of the Division.[14]

News from the front in West Korea was not encouraging as the Eighth Army planned further withdrawals, for G-2 reports indicated that the advancing Chinese were about to launch a great new offensive shortly. Despite the persistent rumors that all Korea might be evacuated by UN forces, General MacArthur insisted in his special communique of 26 December that operations "were skilfully conducted without loss of cohesion and with all units remaining intact. . . .

"In its broad implications I consider that these operations, initiated on 24 November and carried through to this [Hungnam] redeployment, have served a very significant purpose—possibly in general result the most significant and fortunate of any conducted during the course of the Korean campaign.

"The might of a major military nation was suddenly and without warning thrown against this relatively small United Nations Command but without attaining a decision.

"Due to intervening circumstances beyond our power to control or even detect, we did not achieve the United Nations objective.

"But at a casualty cost less than that experienced in a comparable period of defensive fighting on the Pusan perimeter, we exposed before too late secret political and military decisions of enormous scope and threw off balance enemy preparations aimed at surreptitiously massing the power capable of destroying our forces with one mighty extended blow."[15]

Questions as to the proper evaluation of the Eighth Army withdrawal turned into a controversy during coming months with political as well as military implications. Press representatives, military critics and soldiers of other nations, while crediting MacArthur with a great victory at Inchon, were for the most part of the opinion that the Eighth Army withdrawal of November and December was a costly reverse.[16]

Marine officers in Korea had no first-hand knowledge of EUSAK operations. It was obvious, however, that an Eighth Army retirement south of the 38th Parallel had made it desirable if not actually necessary for X Corps to withdraw from northeast Korea, even though General Almond held that a Hamhung-Hungnam perimeter could be defended throughout the winter.

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Contributions of Marine Aviation

The close coordination of aviation with the ground forces in the Chosin campaign was due in large measure to the assignment of additional pilots to the 1st Marine Division as forward air controllers. They had been plucked from 1st Marine Aircraft Wing squadrons barely in time to join their battalions before embarking at Inchon. Increasing the number of FACs to two per battalion did much to bring air support down to the company level when needed.[17]

Air units frequently had to rely upon charts with place names, grid coordinates, and scales different from those in the hands of the ground troops. Here the Marine system of the man on the ground talking the pilot onto the target by reference to visual land marks paid off.

Cloudy, stormy weather was common. Three night fighter pilots were lost because of icing, disorientation, and insufficient radio aids to navigation. Two VMF-212 land-based pilots saved themselves from destruction only by landing on the *Badoeng Strait* with their last drops of gas.

With the approach of winter and cold weather, aircraft on the landing strips had to be run up every two hours at night to keep the oil warm enough for early morning takeoffs. Ordnance efficiency dropped. Planes skidded on icy runways. Once, after a six inch snow, 80 men and ten trucks worked all night to clear and sand a 150-foot strip down the runway at Yonpo.[18]

As early as mid-November it once took hours of scraping and chipping on the *Badoeng Strait* to clear three inches of glazed ice and snow off the decks, catapults, arresting wires, and barriers. Planes which stood the night on the flight deck had to be taken below to the hangar deck to thaw out. On another occasion VMF-214 had to cancel all flight operations because 68-knot winds, heavy seas, and freezing temperatures covered the *Sicily's* flight deck and aircraft with a persistent coat of ice.

One pilot of VMF-323 had to return shortly after takeoff because water vapor froze in his oil breather tube in flight. With the back pressure throwing oil all over his windshield and billowing black vapor and smoke out of his cowl, he landed only to have the front of his Corsair burst into flames when the escaped oil dripped on the hot exhaust stacks. Quick work by the deck crews extinguished the fire.

A hazard as great as being shot down was a crash landing or bail-out at sea, where the water was cold enough to kill a man in 20 minutes. Survival clothing and equipment was so bulky that pilots could barely get into their cockpits.

Maintenance and servicing problems ashore, complicated by dirt, dust, and the scarcity of parts, kept mechanics working to the point of exhaustion. Insufficient trucks forced the ground crews to refuel and arm planes by hand, often from rusting fuel drums. Two destructive crashes, one fatal, were attributed to accumulated water in gasoline.

Aboard ship until mid-November, VMF-214 was able to keep 91 per cent of its planes operative. When suddenly deployed ashore to Wonsan, its aircraft availability dropped to 82 per cent and at Yonpo to 67 per cent. Once back at sea again in December, it jumped up to 90 per cent.

Basic difference in close air support doctrine between the Navy and Marines and Air Force were resolved by close and friendly liaison between the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the Fifth Air Force commands; by a Marine aviator attached to the Joint Eighth Army-Fifth Air Force Operations Center at Seoul; and by indoctrination of non-Marine units of the X Corps in the Marine-Navy style of close air support. Difficulties in inter-service communications slowed Fifth Air Force operations orders to carrier squadrons, both Navy and

Marine. Messages were routed via FEAF and ComNavFe in Tokyo and arrived hours late. Ashore, even MAG-12 during the first two weeks at Wonsan received its Fifth Air Force mission orders six to 36 hours late. A direct radio teletype between 1st MAW and 5thAF headquarters alleviated the situation. And when the CG 1st MAW received full control of the air over the X Corps area on 1 December, these problems were eased.

Actual control of air support for the scattered ground units demonstrated close cooperation between the Navy and Marine Corps. This was evident from the time the Navy's Tactical Air Control Squadron One on the USS *Mount McKinley* passed control to the Air Defense Section of MTACS-2 at Hamhung to the time that control returned to the ship in the Hungnam evacuation.

When the Marines had control, the ship stood by as an emergency TACC and acted as a radar reporting station for MTACS-2. When control was passed back afloat, the Air Defense Section of MTACS-2 stood by as a standby TACC aboard an LST until the last man was pulled off the beach. Furthermore, three officers from MGCIS-1 went aboard *Mount McKinley* to help out as Air Defense controllers. They were experienced. All through the Wonsan-Chosin campaign, the MGCIS had directed the defensive fighter patrols, circling Wonsan and Yonpo, to check all unidentified aircraft before the latter got close enough to do any damage. MGCIS-1 also steered lost planes to base in bad weather, occasionally vectored them into the GCA radar-controlled landing pattern, and even assisted MTACS-2 in directing air support planes to FACs.[19]

Tactical air support in the X Corps zone was directed to the ground units by the Air Support Section of MTACS-2. From 26 October to 11 December, 3703 sorties in 1053 missions were controlled by the TACPS of Marine, Army, and ROK units. Close air support missions accounted for 599 of the total (468 for 1st Marine Division, 8 for 3d Infantry Division, 56 for 7th Infantry Division, and 67 for ROKs). The remaining 454 missions were search and attack.[20]

When FAC communications failed from valley to valley, aircraft became radio relays and controllers. This was highlighted by the airborne TADC, orbiting over the road from Hagaru.

Approximately half of the Marine air missions were in support of non-Marine ground units. The ROK and the U.S. Army units were not as well supplied with experienced FAC's as the 1st Marine Division. In these areas four Air Force "Mosquitos" (AT-6 "Texan" training planes) were assigned to X Corps to assist in the control of air support.[21]

When shore-based Marine air support was about to cease with the closing of Yonpo air field, VMF-214 and VMF-212 quickly moved their operations aboard carrier; and during the final phases of the Hungnam evacuation, almost half of the Marine tactical air strength was operating from carrier bases. VMF-214 flew back aboard *Sicily* on 7 December without missing a mission and VMF-212, which had moved to Itami on 4 December to draw and test a new complement of carrier Corsairs, was aboard the USS *Bataan* eight days later. When the month ended, still another squadron, VMF-312, was polishing up its carrier landing technique for seaborne duty.[22]

The outcome of the Hagaru withdrawal owed much to air-dropped supplies and to casualty evacuations by General Tunner's Combat Cargo Command (CCC). Assisting Combat Cargo in Marine support were the Wing's R4D twin engine transports and TBM World War II type torpedo bombers, both of which were flown largely by the field-desk pilots on the Wing and Group staffs. Most of the Marines' share of the heavy airlifting, however, was done by the four engine R5D transports of Colonel Dean C. Roberts' VMR-152. Early in October this squadron had been temporarily shifted from the trans-Pacific airlift of the Navy's Fleet Logistics Air Wing to support the Marines in the Wonsan campaign. In Korea its operations were controlled by the Combat Cargo Command, which committed an average of five Marine R5D's a day into the CCC airlift. In such missions these transports supported all UN units from Pyongyang to Yonpo and points north. Marine transports not committed by the CCC for general UN support in Korea were available for Wing use. From 1 November until Christmas, VMR-152 safely carried five million pounds of supplies to the front and evacuated more than 4000 casualties.[23]

The Chosin Reservoir campaign opened two new chapters in Marine aviation history. The first was the use of the airborne TADC to control the air support of the division column between Hagaru and Chinhung-ni. The second was the appearance of VMF-311, the first Marine jet squadron to fly in combat. Beginning on 10 December the newly arrived squadron flew interdiction missions for four days from Yonpo. Then it moved to Pusan to operate for the remainder of the month with 5th Air Force jets streaking up the long peninsula to cover the withdrawal of the Eighth Army.[24]

Appreciation for the assistance given by Marine aviation to Marine ground forces was expressed in a letter of 20 December from General Smith to General Harris, the Commanding General of the 1st Marine Air Wing. The Division Commander said:

"Without your support our task would have been infinitely more difficult and more costly. During the long reaches of the night and in the snow storms many a Marine prayed for the coming of day or clearing weather when he knew he would again hear the welcome roar of your planes as they dealt out destruction to the enemy. Even the presence of a night heckler was reassuring.

"Never in its history has Marine Aviation given more convincing proof of its indispensable value to the ground Marines. A bond of understanding has been established that will never be broken."[25]

The story of air support in the Chosin Reservoir campaign would not be complete without a summary of the results of VMO-6. Marines took a proprietary interest in Major Gottschalk's squadron, which had put into effect the helicopter techniques worked out at Quantico by the experimental squadron, HMX-1. Some of these techniques were having their first test in combat, for the development of rotary-wing aircraft in 1950 was at a pioneer stage comparable to that of fixed-wing aircraft in the first year of World War I. On 28 October, VMO-6 had a strength of 25 officers, 95 enlisted men, ten light fixed-wing aircraft (eight OY-2s, two L5Gs) and nine HO3S-1 helicopters. From that date until 15 December the squadron made 1544 flights for a total of 1624.8 hours. The principal missions were as follows:

"Reconnaissance—OYs, 393; helicopters, 64; Transportation—OYs, 130; helicopters, 421; Evacuation—OYs, 29; helicopters, 191; Liaison—OYs, 35; helicopters, 90; Artillery spot—OYs, 39; helicopters, 0; Utility—OYs, 26; helicopters, 60; Rescue—OYs, 0; helicopters, 11."[26]

But statistics can give no idea of the most significant achievement of VMO-6 in the Reservoir campaign. For during the most critical period the only physical contact between units separated by enemy action was provided by the OYs and helicopters. The importance of this contribution can hardly be overestimated.

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Chapter 15. The Hungnam Redeployment
Losses Sustained by the Enemy

Marine losses in northeast Korea, as reported to the Secretary of the Navy, included a total of 4418 battle casualties from 26 October to 15 December 1950—604 KIA, 114 DOW, 192 MIA, and 3508 WIA. The 7313 non-battle casualties consisted largely of minor frostbite and indigestion cases who were soon restored to active duty.[27] Eight Marine pilots were KIA or died of wounds, four were MIA, and three were wounded. General Smith estimated that a third of the non-battle casualties were returned to duty during the operation.[28]

Enemy losses for the same period were estimated at a total of 37,500–15,000 killed and 7500 wounded by Marine ground forces, plus 10,000 killed and 5000 wounded by Marine air. Not much reliance can be placed in such figures as a rule, but fortunately we have enemy testimony as to heavy losses sustained by the Chinese Communists.

This evidence goes far toward explaining why they did not interfere with the Hungham redeployment.

Contrary to expectations, Chinese military critiques have been candid in admitting failures and unsparing in self-criticism. Among captured documents are summaries of the operations of the three CCF armies encountered by the Marines in the Chosin Reservoir area. These major units, representing at least 11 and probably 12 divisions, were as follows:

20th CCF Army—58th, 59th, and 60th Divisions, with the 89th Division of the 30th Army attached;

26th CCF Army—76th, 77th, and 78th Division, with probably the 94th Division of 32d Army attached;

27th CCF Army—79th, 80th, and 81st Divisions, with the 70th Division of 24th Army attached.[29]

All three armies were major units of the 9th Army Group of the 3d CCF Field Army. In mid-October the leading elements of the 4th CCF Field Army had crossed the Yalu to oppose the U.S. Eighth Army. The operations of X Corps in northeast Korea being considered a threat to the left flank, the 42d Army was detached with a mission of providing flank protection, pending relief by units of the 3d CCF Field Army. Three divisions, the 124th, 125th, and 126th were represented. While the last hovered on the left flank of the 4th Field Army, the 124th was hard hit near Sudong during the first week of November by RCT-7 of the 1st Marine Division.

In order to cover the withdrawal of the remnants, the 125th Division moved south of Hagaru from the Fusen Reservoir area. Both CCF divisions then fell back to Yudam-ni, where they were relieved by units of the 20th Army, 3d Field Army. This ended the operations of the 4th Field Army in northeast Korea.

Shortly after the appearance of the 20th Army in the Yudam-ni area, the 27th Army moved into positions north of the Chosin Reservoir. Thus the enemy had available eight divisions for the attacks of 27–28 November on the Marines in the Yudam-ni area and the three 7th Infantry Division battalions east of the Chosin Reservoir. If it may be assumed that these CCF divisions averaged 7500 men each, or three-fourths of full strength, the enemy had a total of 60,000 men in assault or reserve.

The Chinese, as we know, failed to accomplish their basic mission, which prisoners agreed was the destruction of the 1st Marine Division. In every instance the efforts of the first night were the most formidable, with enemy effectiveness declining sharply after a second or third attack. The explanation seems to be that the 12 divisions were sent into northeast Korea with supplies which would have been sufficient only if the first attempts had succeeded. The following comment by the 26th Army supports this conclusion:

"A shortage of transportation and escort personnel makes it impossible to accomplish the mission of supplying the troops. As a result, our soldiers frequently starve. From now on, the organization of our rear service units should be improved.[30]

"The troops were hungry. They ate cold food, and some had only a few potatoes in two days. They were unable to maintain the physical strength for combat; the wounded personnel could not be evacuated. . . . The fire power of our entire army was basically inadequate. When we used our guns there were no shells and sometimes the shells were duds."

The enemy's tactical rigidity and tendency to repeat costly errors are charged by the 20th Army to inferior communications:

"Our signal communication was not up to standard. For example, it took more than two days to receive instructions from higher level units. Rapid changes of the enemy's situation and the slow motion of our signal communication caused us to lose our opportunities in combat and made the instructions of the high level units ineffective. . . .

"We succeeded in the separation and encirclement of the enemy, but we failed to annihilate the enemy one by one. The units failed to carry out the orders of the higher echelon. For example, the failure to annihilate the enemy at Yut'an-ni [Yudam-ni] made it impossible to annihilate the enemy at Hakalwu-ri [Hagaru]. The higher level units' refusal of the lower level units' suggestion of rapidly starting the combat and exterminating the enemy one by one gave the enemy a chance to break out from the encirclement."

One of the most striking instances of the tactical inflexibility which stultified Chinese efforts was found at Hagaru. With only a depleted Marine Infantry battalion and service troops available to defend a perimeter four miles in circumference, the enemy needed mere daylight observation to ascertain and avoid the most strongly defended positions. Yet these were just the positions chosen for the attack, not only on the first night but also the second occasion 48 hours later.

"The [CCF] tactics were mechanical," commented the 27th Army. "We underestimated the enemy so we distributed the strength, and consequently the higher echelons were overdispersed while the lower echelon units were overconcentrated. During one movement, the distance between the three leading divisions was very long, while the formations of the battalions, companies, and units of lower levels were too close, and the troops were unable to deploy. Furthermore, reconnaissance was not conducted strictly; we walked into the enemy fire net and suffered heavy casualties."

Summing up the reasons why the Marines at Yudam-ni were not "exterminated promptly," the 27th Army concludes that it was "because our troops encountered unfavorable conditions during the missions and the troops suffered too many casualties." This would seem to be another way of saying that the Chinese failed to destroy the 1st Marine Division because they themselves were nearly destroyed in the attempt. At any rate, evidence from the enemy documents points overwhelmingly to crippling losses both from Marine fire power and non-battle casualties chargeable to lack of equipment and supplies.

The 20th Army had a hundred deaths from tetanus caused by improper care of wounds. Hundreds of other soldiers were incapacitated by typhus or ailments of malnutrition and indigestion.

More than 90 per cent of the 26th Army suffered from frostbite. The 27th Army complained of 10,000 non-combat casualties alone out of a strength of four divisions:

"The troops did not have enough food, they did not have enough houses to live in, they could not stand the bitter cold, which was the reason for the excessive non-combat reduction in personnel (more than 10 thousand persons), the weapons were not used effectively. When the fighters bivouacked in snow-covered ground during combat, their feet, socks, and hands were frozen together in one ice ball; they could not unscrew the caps on the hand grenades; the fuses would not ignite; the hands were not supple; the mortar tubes shrank on account of the cold; 70 per cent of the shells failed to detonate; skin from the hands was struck on the shells and the mortar tubes."

Testimony as to the effects of Marine fire power is also given by the 26th Army:

"The coordination between the enemy infantry, tanks, artillery, and airplanes is surprisingly close.

Besides using heavy weapons for the depth, the enemy carries with him automatic light firearms which, coordinated with rockets, launchers, and recoilless guns are disposed at the front line. The characteristic of their employment is to stay quietly under cover and open fire suddenly when we come to between 70 and 100 meters from them, making it difficult for our troops to deploy and thus inflicting casualties upon us."

The 20th and 27th Armies appear to have been bled white by the losses of the first week. Early in December, units of the 26th Army appeared on the east side of the MSR between Hagaru and Koto-ri, and this unit furnished most of the opposition from 6 to 11 December.

Seven divisions in all were identified by the 1st Marine Division; and since the taking of prisoners was not a matter of top priority with men fighting for existence, it is likely that other CCF units were encountered. The CCF 9th Army Group, according to a prisoner questioned on 7 December, included a total of 12 divisions. This POW gave the following statement:

"Missions of the four (4) armies in 9th Group are to annihilate the 1st Division which is considered to be the best division in the U.S. After annihilating the 1st Marine Division they are to move south and take Hamhung."[31]

As to the reason why the Chinese took no advantage of the Hungnam redeployment, there seems little doubt that the 9th Army Group was too riddled by battle and non-battle casualties to make the effort. This is not a matter of opinion. Following the Hungnam redeployment, as the U.S. Eighth Army braced itself to meet a new CCF offensive, UN and FECOM G-2 officers were naturally concerned as to whether the remaining 9th Army Group troops in northeast Korea would be available to strengthen the CCF 4th Field Army. It was estimated that only two weeks would be required to move these troops to West Korea, where they had the capability of reinforcing the CCF attack against the Eighth Army.

Efforts to locate the 9th Army Group were unavailing for nearly three months. Then a prisoner from the 77th Division of the 26th Army was captured by U.S. Eighth Army troops on 18 March 1951. During the following week POW interrogations established that three divisions of the 26th Army were in contact with Eighth Army units northeast of Seoul.

"The only conclusion to be drawn," comments the *Marine Corps Board Study*, "based on information collected by 1stMarDiv and X Corps, and that by UN and FEC, is that all corps of 9th Army Group had been rendered militarily ineffective in the Chosin Reservoir operation and required a considerable period of time for replacement, re-equipment, and reorganization."[32]

Thus it appears that the Marines not only saved themselves in the Chosin Reservoir fights; they also saved U.S. Eighth Army from being assailed by reinforcements from northeast Korea in the CCF offensive which exploded on the last night of 1950.

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Chapter 15. The Hungnam Redeployment
Results of the Reservoir Campaign

There could be no doubt, after taking into account the CCF mission, that the 9th Army Group, 3d Field Army, had sustained a reverse in northeast Korea which amounted to a disaster. On the other hand, it might have been asked whether a retrograde movement such as the Marine breakout, even though aggressively and successfully executed, could be termed a victory.

This question involves issues too complex for a clearcut positive answer, but it would be hard to improve upon the analysis of results in the *Marine Corps Board Study:*

"Although the operations of this phase constitute a withdrawal, despite the fact that CG 1stMarDiv characterized them as 'an attack in a new direction,' the withdrawal was executed in the face of overwhelming odds and conducted in such a manner that, contrary to the usual withdrawal, some very important tactical results were achieved. These may be summarized as follows:

"1. Extricated 1stMarDiv from a trap sprung by overwhelming enemy ground forces by skilful employment of integrated ground and air action which enabled the Division to come through with all operable equipment, with wounded properly evacuated and with tactical integrity.

"2. Outfought and outlasted at least seven CCF divisions under conditions of terrain and weather chosen by the enemy and reputedly to his liking. Although frostbite took a heavy toll of the Division it hit CCF units far harder, perhaps decisively.

"3. In the process of accomplishing '2' above, rendered militarily noneffective a large part of 9th CCF Army Group. Those units not contacted by 1stMarDiv were fixed in the Chosin Reservoir area for possible employment against the Division and consequently suffered from the ravages of sub-zero cold and heavy air attacks.

"4. As a direct result of '3' above, enabled X Corps to evacuate Hungnam without enemy interference and, consequently, as a combat effective unit with all personnel and serviceable equipment. Pressure on X Corps by 9th CCF Army Group during the seaward evacuation of the Corps, a most difficult operation, would undoubtedly have altered the result."[33]

Improvisations in tactics were now and then made necessary by unusual conditions of terrain, weather or enemy action. But on the whole the Marines saved themselves in the Reservoir campaign by the application of sound military tactics. In the doing they demonstrated repeatedly that the rear makes as good a front as any other for the militarily skilled and stout-hearted, and that a unit is not beaten merely because it is surrounded by a more numerous enemy.

Inevitably the Marine campaign has been compared to that classic of all military breakouts—the march of the immortal Ten Thousand which is the subject of Xenophon's *Anabasis.* Stranded in the hostile Persian Empire in the year 401 B.C., these Greek mercenaries cut their way to safety through Asiatic hordes. The following description of the tactics used by Xenophon and his lieutenant Cherisophus to overcome road blocks in mountain country will have a familiar ring to Marine veterans of the Reservoir:

"The enemy, by keeping up a continuous battle and occupying in advance every narrow place, obstructed passage after passage. Accordingly, whenever the van was obstructed, Xenophon, from behind, made a dash up the hills and broke the barricade, and freed the vanguard by endeavoring to get above the obstructing enemy. Whenever the rear was the point attacked, Cherisophus, in the same way, made a detour, and by endeavoring to mount higher than the barricaders, freed the passage for the rear rank; and in this way, turn and turn about, they

rescued each other, and paid unflinching attention to their mutual needs."[34]

Spears and arrows have been superseded by bazookas and machine guns, but the basic infantry tactics of the Reservoir breakout were essentially those which served Xenophon and the Ten Thousand more than 33 centuries ago. Organization, combat, training, spirit, and discipline enabled the Marines, like the Hellenes before them, to overcome numerical odds and fight their way over Asiatic mountain roads to the sea.

The over-all strategic effects of the Reservoir campaign, as summarized by the Marine Corps Board Study, were as follows:

"1. Played a prominent part . . . in enabling X Corps, a considerable segment of the total UN forces in Korea, to be withdrawn from Hungnam as a combat effective force available for employment with the Eighth Army in South Korea at a time when that Army was retreating and was in critical need of a reinforcement.

"2. Were largely responsible for preventing reinforcement of CCF forces on Eighth Army front by 12 divisions during a period when such reinforcement might have meant to Eighth Army the difference between maintaining a foothold in Korea or forced evacuation therefrom, by being instrumental in rendering 9th CCF Army Group, a force of three corps of four divisions each, militarily noneffective for a minimum period of three months."

That the breakout of the 1st Marine Division had affected American political and military policy at the highest levels was the assertion of an editorial in *Time.* Referring to what it termed the "Great Debate," in December 1950, as to whether American forces should be withdrawn from Korea, the news-magazine commented:

"When the Marines fought their way down to Hungnam through the 'unconquerable Chinese hordes,' and embarked for Pusan with their equipment, their wounded, and their prisoners, the war in Asia took on a different look. The news stories, pictures and newsreels of the Hungham action contributed more to forming U.S. policy than all the words in the 'Great Debate.' The nation—and the revitalized Eighth Army—now knows that U.S. fighting men will stay in Korea until a better place and a better opportunity is found to punish Communist aggression."[35]

General Douglas MacArthur as CINCUNC, in his 11th report of operations of UN forces in Korea, submitted the following to the United Nations Organization regarding the Chosin Reservoir operation:

"In this epic action, the Marine Division and attached elements of the 7th Infantry Division marched and fought over 60 miles in bitter cold along a narrow, tortuous, ice-covered road against opposition of from six to eight Chinese Communist Force divisions which suffered staggering losses. Success was due in no small part to the unprecedented extent and effectiveness of air support. The basic element, however, was the high quality of soldierly courage displayed by the personnel of the ground units who maintained their integrity in the face of continuous attacks by numerically superior forces, consistently held their positions until their wounded had been evacuated, and doggedly refused to abandon supplies and equipment to the enemy.

"United Nations Air Forces threw the bulk of their effort into close support of ground forces cutting their way through overwhelming numbers of Chinese Communists. The toll of the enemy taken by the United Nations aircraft contributed in large measure to the successful move of our forces from the Chosin Reservoir to the Hamhung area despite the tremendous odds against them. Air support provided by the United States Marine Air Force and Naval Aircraft in this beleaguered area, described as magnificent by the ground force commanders, represented one of the greatest concentrations of tactical air operations in history."[36]

Rear Admiral James H. Doyle attributed the successful evacuation at Hungnam in large measure to the Marine breakout. Writing to General Smith several months later, he asserted that he had "filled in what has been a neglected page in the story of the Hungnam redeployment. It is simply this: that the destruction of enemy forces wrought by the First Marine Division on the march down the hill was a major factor in the successful withdrawal; and that the destruction was so complete the enemy was unable to exert serious pressure at any time on the

shrinking perimeter. To my mind, as I told you at Hungnam, the performance of the First Marine Division on that march constitutes one of the most glorious chapters in Marine Corps history."[37]

Letters of commendation were received by the 1st Marine Division from General Cates, CMC, General Shepherd, Admiral Joy, General Collins, Chief of Staff, USA, General Almond, and many other high-ranking military leaders. But for depth of feeling, for sincerity and emotion, there was no message which appealed more to the officers and men of the Division than the concluding paragraph of this tribute from the commanding general who had guided their destinies with unswerving courage and who had come out with them, Major General Oliver P. Smith:

"The performance of officers and men in this operation was magnificent. Rarely have all hands in a division participated so intimately in the combat phases of an operation. Every Marine can be justly proud of his participation. In Korea, Tokyo and Washington there is full appreciation of the remarkable feat of the division. With the knowledge of the determination, professional competence, heroism, devotion to duty, and self-sacrifice displayed by officers and men of this division, my feeling is one of humble pride. No division commander has ever been privileged to command a finer body of men."[38]

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Appendix A. Glossary of Technical Terms and Abbreviations

ADC—Assistant Division Comander.

AdmO—Administrative Order.

AF—Air Force.

AGC—Amphibious Force Flagship.

AH—Hospital Ship.

AirDelPlat—Air Delivery Platoon.

AirO—Air Officer.

AirSptSec—Air Support Section.

AKA—Assault Cargo Ship.

AKL—Cargo, Ship, Light.

AM—Minesweeper.

AmphTracBn—Amphibian Tractor Battalion.

AmphTrkBn—Amphibian Truc Battalion.

AMS—Auxiliary Motor Minesweeper.

ANGLICO—Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company.

AP—Transport.

APA—Assault Transport.

APD—High Speed Transport.

ARG—Internal Combustion Engine Repair Ship.

ARL—Landing Craft Repair Ship. ArmdAmphBn—Armore Amphibian Battalion.

ARS—Salvage Vessel.

AT—Antitank.

ATF—Ocean Tug, Fleet.

AutoMaint Co—Automotive Maintenance Company.

AutoSupCo—Automotive Supply Company.

BB—Battleship.

BLT—Battalion Landing Team.

Bn—Battalion.

Btry—Battery.

BuMed—Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

C-47—Douglas Transport (same as R4D).

CA—Heavy Cruiser.

CCF—Chinese Communist Forces.

CG—Commanding General.

CIC—Counter Intelligence Corps, USA.

CinCFE—Commander in Chief, Far East.

CinCPacFlt—Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet.

CinCUNC—Commander in Chief, United Nations Command.

CL—Light Cruiser.

CO—Commanding Officer.

Co—Company.

ComFltAirWing—Commander Fleet Air Wing.

ComNavFE—Commander Naval Forces Far East.

ComPacFlt—Commander Pacific Fleet.

ComPhibGruOne—Commander Amphibious Group One.

ComSeventhFlt—Commander Seventh Fleet.

ComUNBlockandCortFor—Commander United Nations Blockade and Escort Force.

CP—Command Post.

CR—Command Report.

C/S—Chief of Staff.

CSG—Combat Service Group.

CSUSA—Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

CTF—Commander Task Force.

CTG—Commander Task Group.

CVE—Escort Aircraft Carrier.

CVL—Light Aircraft Carrier.

DD—Destroyer.

DDR—Radar Picket Destroyer.

DE—Destroyer Escort.

Det—Detachment.

DMS—High Speed Minesweeper.

DOW—Died of Wounds.

EmbO—Embarkation Order.

EmbO—Embarkation Officer.

EngrBn—Engineer Battalion.

EUSAK—Eighth U.S. Army in Korea.

FABn—Field Artillery Battalion (USA).

FAC—Forward Air Controller.

FEAF—Far East Air Force.

FECOM—Far East Command.

F4U—Chance-Vought “Corsair” Fighter-Bomber.

FMFPac—Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

FO—Forward Observer.

FragOrder—Fragmentary Order.

Fum&BathPlat—Fumigation and Bath Platoon.

GHQ—General Headquarters.

Gru—Group.

H&SCo—Headquarters and Service Company.

HD—Historical Diary.

Hedron—Headquarters Squadron.

HMS—Her Majesty's Ship.

HMAS—Her Majesty's Australian Ship.

HMCS—Her Majesty's Canadian Ship.

HMNZS—Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship.

HO3S—Sikorsky Helicopter.

HqBn—Headquarters Battalion.

HQMC—Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps.

InfDiv—Infantry Division (USA).

Interv—Interview.

ISUM—Intelligence Summary.

JANIS—Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Studies.

JCS—Joint Chiefs of Staff.

JMS—Japanese Minesweeper.

JSPOG—Joint Strategic Planning and Operations Group.

JTF—Joint Task Force.

KIA—Killed in Action.

KMC—Korean Marine Corps.

Ln—Liaison.

LSD—Landing Ship, Dock.

LSM—Landing Ship, Medium.

LSMR—Landing Ship, Medium-Rocket.

LST—Landing Ship, Tank.

LSTH—Landing Ship, Tank-Casualty Evacuation.

LSU—Landing Ship, Utility.

Ltr—Letter.

LVT—Landing Vehicle, Tracked.

MAG—Marine Aircraft Group.

MAW—Marine Aircraft Wing.

MS—Manuscript. MedBn—Medical Battalion.

MedAmbCo—Medical Ambulance Company, USA.

MIA—Missing in Action.

MISD—Military Intelligence Service Detachment (USA).

MP—Military Police.

MRO—Movement Report Office.

msg—Message.

MSR—Main Supply Route.

MSTS—Military Sea Transport Service.

MTACS—Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron.

MTBn—Motor Transport Battalion.

NavBchGru—Naval Beach Group.

NavFE—Naval Forces Far East.

NCO—Noncommissioned Officer.

NK—North Korea (n).

NKPA—North Korean Peoples Army.

N.d.—Date not given.

N.t.—Time not given.

O—Officer; Order.

OCMH—Office of the Chief of Military History (USA).

OI—Operation Instruction.

OpnO—Operation Order.

OpnPlan—Operation Plan.

OrdBn—Ordnance Battalion.

OY—Consolidated-Vultee Light Observation Plane.

PCEC—Escort Amphibious Control Vessel.

PF—Frigate.

PhibGru—Amphibious Group.

PIR—Periodic Intelligence Report.

PLA—People’s Liberation Army.

Plat—Platoon.

POL—Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants.

POR—Periodic Operation Report.

POW—Prisoner of War.

QMPetDistCo—Quartermaster Petroleum Distribution Company (USA).

QMSubsistSupCo—Quartermaster Subsistence Supply Company (USA).

R4D—Douglas Transport (Navy and Marine designation of C-47).

RCT—Regimental Combat Team.

Recon—Reconnaissance.

Reinf—Reinforced.

RktBn—Rocket Battalion.

RM—Royal Marines.

ROK—Republic of Korea.

R & O File—Records and Orders File.

ROKA—Republic of Korea Army.

ROKN—Republic of Korea Navy.

SAC—Supporting Arms Coordinator.

SAR—Special Action Report.

SCAJAP—Shipping Control Authority, Japan.

Sec—Section.

SecDef—Secretary of Defense.

ServBn—Service Battalion.

SigBn—Signal Battalion.

SigRepCo—Signal Repair Company.

SitRpt—Situation Report.

SP—Shore Party.

SMS—Marine Supply Squadron.

TAC—Tactical Air Coordinator; Tactical Air Commander.

TACP—Tactical Air Control Party.

Tacron—Tactical Air Control Squadron.

TADC—Tactical Air Direction Center.

T-AP—Transport Operated by MSTS.

TBM—General Motors “Avenger” Torpedo Bomber.

TE—Task Element.

T/E—Table of Equipment.

Tel—Telephone Message.

TF—Task Force.

TG—Task Group.

TkBn—Tank Battalion.

Trk—Truck.

T/O—Table of Organization.

TU—Task Unit.

UDT—Underwater Demolitions Team.

U/F—Unit of Fire.

UN—United Nations.

UNC—United Nations Command.

URpt—Unit Report.

USA—United States Army.

USAF—United States Air Force.

USMC—United States Marine Corps.

USN—United States Navy.

VMF—Marine Fighter Squadron.

VMF (N)—All-Weather, Fighter Squadron.

VMO—Marine Observation Squadron.

VMR—Marine Transport Squadron.

WD—War Diary.

WD Sum—War Diary Summary.

WIA—Wounded in Action.

YMS—Motor Minesweeper.

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Appendix B. Task Organization of 1st Marine Division

In order to present a true picture of the Task Organization of the 1st Marine Division during its operations in northeast Korea the organization will be presented for the following periods:

1. Wonsan Landing (OpnO 16–50)
2. Advance to the Reservoir (OpnO 19–50)
3. Movement south from Hagaru (OpnO 25–50)
4. Hungnam Evacuation (OpnO 27–50)

1. Task Organization of 1st Marine Division for Wonsan Landing

1st Marine Division (Reinf), FMF	MajGen O. P. SMITH
HqBn, 1stMarDiv, less dets	LtCol M. T. STARR
163rd MISD, USA	
441st CIC Det, USA	
1st SigBn, less dets	Maj R. L. SCHREIER
Carrier Plat, FMF	
Det, 4th SigBn, USA	
2d SigRepUnit, USA	
Det, 205th SigRepCo, USA	
1st ServBn, less dets	LtCol C. L. BANKS
1st MTBn	LtCol O. L. BEALL
1st OrdBn	Maj L. O. WILLIAMS
1st SPBn, less dets	LtCol H. P. CROWE
SPCommSec, 1stSigBn	
Der, 1st CSG	
Det, NavBchGru 1	
1st MedBn, less dets	Cdr H. B. JOHNSON, USN
2d Plat, 560thMedAmbCo, USA	
7th MTBn	Maj J. F. STEPKA
1st CSG, less dets	Col. J. S. COOK
1st Fum&BathPlat, FMF	
1st AirDelPlat, FMF	
Plat, 20th QMSubsistSupCo, USA	
Plat, 506th QMPetDisCo, USA	
NavBchGru 1, less dets	

Regimental Combat Team 1	Col L. B. PULLER
1st Marines	
Det, 5th KMC Bn	
Co C, 1st EngrBn	
Co C, 1st MTBn	
Co D, 1st MedBn	
Plat, 1stArmdAmphBn	
Det, 1stSigBn	
FO & LnO Secs, 2/11	
LnDet, 1stTkBn	
SP Gru B	
Det, MP Co	
Det, 1st CSG	
Det, NavBchGru 1	
Regimental Combat Team 5	LtCol R. L. MURRAY
5th Marines	
Co A, 1st EngrBn	
Co D, 1st MTBn	
Co C, 1st MedBn	
Det, 1st SigBn	
FO & LnO Secs, 1/11	
SP Gru A	
Det, MP Co	
Der, 1st CSG	
Det, NavBchGru 1	
Regimental Combat Team 7	Col H. L. LITZENBERG
7th Marines	
Det, 3d KMC Bn	
Co D, 1st EngrBn	
Co B, 1st MTBn	
Co D, 1st MedBn	
Plat, 1stArmdAmphBn	
Det, 1st SigBn	
FO & LnO Secs, 3/11	
LnDet, 1st TkBn	
SP Gru C	
Det, MP Co	
Det, 1st CSG	

Det, NavBchGru 1	
11th Marines, Reinf	Col J. H. BROWER
Btry C, 1st 4.5” RktBn	
1st AmphTrkCo, FMF	
1st Tank Battalion, less dets	LtCol H. T. MILNE
1st Engineer Battalion, less dets	LtCol J. H. PARTRIDGE
3d KMC Battalion, less dets	Maj KIM YUN GUN
5th KMC Battalion, less dets	Col KIM TAI SHIK
1st AmphTracBn, FMF	LtCol E. F. WANN
Reconnaissance Company, 1stMar Div	1stLt R. B. CROSSMAN
VMO–6	Maj V. J. GOTTSCHALK

2. Task Organization for Advance to the Reservoir

1st Marine Division, Reinf, FMF	MajGen O. P. SMITH
HqBn, less dets	
163d MISD	
441st CIC Det	
1stSigBn, Reinf, less dets	
1stServBn, Reinf, less dets	
Co A, 7th MTBn (less 1 plat)	
Det, 1st MTBn	
1st OrdBn	
1stMedBn, less dets	
1st AmphTracBn	
Co B, 1st ArmdAmphBn (less 1st Plat)	
7th MT Bn, less dets	
1st CSG, Reinf	
1st AmphTrkCo	
1st AirDelPlat	
1st Fum&Bath Plat	
Regimental Combat Team 1	Col L. B. PULLER
1st Marines	
2/11	
Co D, 1st MedBn	
Co C, 1st TkBn	
Co C, Reinf, 1st EngrBn	
Det, 1stSigBn	
Det, 1stServBn	

Det, MP Co

Regimental Combat Team 7 Col H. L. LITZENBERG

7th Marines

3/11

Recon Co, 1stMarDiv

1st MTBn, less dets

Co D, Reinf, 1st EngrBn

Co E, 1st MedBn

Det, 1stSigBn

Det, MP Co

Det, 1stServBn

Regimental Combat Team 5 LtCol R. L. MURRAY

5th Marines

1/11

Co A, Reinf, 1stEngrBn

Co C, 1stMedBn

Co, 1stMTBn

Det, 1stSigBn

Det, MP Co

Det, 1stServBn

11th Marines, Reinf, less dets Col J. H. BROWER

Btry C, 1st 4.5" RktBn

1st Tank Battalion, Reinf, less dets LtCol H. T. MILNE

Tk Plat, 5thMar

Tk Plat, 7thMar

1st Engineer Battalion, less dets LtCol J. H. PARTRIDGE

VMO–6 Maj V. J. GOTTSCHALK

3. Task Organization for Movement South from Hagaru

(Except where noted the organization remained the same for the movement south from Koto-ri.)

1st Marine Division, Reinf, FMF MajGen O. P. SMITH

HqBn, Reinf, less dets

163d MISD

181st CIC

1stSigBn, Reinf, less dets

1st ServBn, Reinf, less dets

Co A, 7thMTBn, less dets

AutoSup Co, 1stMTBn

AutoMaint Co, 1stMTBn
1stOrdBn, less dets
1stMedBn, Reinf, less dets
1st Fum&Bath Plat
2d Plat, 506thMedAmbCo, USA
(under opn control X Corps)
1stAmphTracBn, Reinf, less dets
1st CSG, Reinf
7thMTBn, less dets
Co A, 1stAmphTracBn
1st AirDel Plat
1stSPBn (under opn control 3dInfDiv)
1stTkBn, less dets
VMO–6
Regimental Combat Team 5 LtCol R. L. MURRAY
5th Marines, less Tk Plat
1/11
Btry D, 2/11 (released to RCT 1 on passage through Koto-ri)
11th Marines, Reinf, less dets
4/11, less Btry L
Det, 96th FABn, USA
3/1 (released to RCT 1 on passage through Koto-ri)
Det, 1stSigBn
Tk Co, 31st Inf, USA
Prov Plat, 1stTkBn
Co A, 1stEngrBn (released to RCT 1 on passage through Koto-ri)
Det, 1stEngrBn
41 Commando, RM
Division Train 2 LtCol H. T. MILNE
Traffic Plat, MP Co
Det, 513th TrkCo, USA
Det, 1stMTBn
Co D, 10thEngr(C)Bn, USA
Det, 1stMedBn
Det, 1stServBn
Det, 1stSigBn
Det, 515th Trk Co, USA
Regimental Combat Team 7 Col H. L. LITZENBERG

7th Marines, less Tk Plat	
3/11	
Btry L, 4/11	(released to RCT 1 on arrival Koto-ri)
ProvBn, 31st Inf, USA	
Det, 1stSigBn	
Co D, 1stTkBn	
Co D, Reinf, 1stEngrBn	
Division Train 1	LtCol C. L. BANKS
Det, HqBn, 1stMarDiv	
Det, Hq X Corps	
Det, 1stServBn	
Det, 1stOrdBn	
Det, 7thMTBn	
Det, X Corps Ord Co, USA	
MP Co, 1stMarDiv, less dets	
1stMTBn, less dets	
Det, 1stSigBn	
AirSptSec, MTACS–2	
Det, 1stMedBn	
Regimental Combat Team 1	Col L. B. PULLER
1st Marines, less 3/1 and Tk Plat	
2/31, Reinf, USA	
2/11, less Btry D	(Btry D attached on passage Koto-ri)
Btry L, 4/11	(Btry L attached on arrival Koto-ri)
Cos A & B, 7thMTBn	
Co C, Reinf, 1stMTBn	
Det, 1stSigBn	
Det, 1stServBn	
Det, HqBn, 1stMarDiv	
Det, 1stOrdBn	
Cos B & D, 1stMedBn	
Recon Co, 1stMarDiv	
Det, 1stEngr Bn	
Det, 7thMar	
Det, 41 Commando, RM	(released to 41 Commando on passage Koto-ri by RCT 5)
Co B, Reinf, 1stTkBn	
Misc elms, USA	

4. Task Organization for Hungnam Evacuation

Forward Echelon	BrigGen E. A. CRAIG
Main Body, 1st Marine Division,	MajGen O. P. SMITH
Reinf, FMF, less dets	
Regimental Combat Team 7	Col H. L. LITZENBERG
7th Marines, less Tk Plat	
3/11	
Co D, 1stEngrBn	
1st CSG, less dets	
Det, HqBn	
1stServBn	
Co A, 7th MTBn	
Det, 1stSigBn	
1stMedBn, Reinf	
1st Fum&Bath Plat	
Regimental Combat Team 5	LtCol R. L. MURRAY
5th Marines	
1/11	
41 Commando, RM	
Co A, 1stEngrBn	
1stOrdBn	
1stMTBn	
Det, 1stSigBn	
Regimental Combat Team 1	Col L. B. PULLER
1st Marines	
2/11	
Co C, 1stEngrBn	
1stTkBn	
Tk Plat, 5th Mar	
Tk Plat, 7th Mar	
Det, 1stSigBn	
HqBn, Reinf, less dets	LtCol M. T. STARR
1stSigBn, less dets	
163d MISD, USA	
181st CIC Det, USA	
11th Marines, Reinf, less dets	LtCol C. A. YOUNGDALE
Btry C, 1st 4.5” RktBn	
1st EngrBn, less dets	

7thMTBn, less dets	
ANGLICO, 1stSigBn	
1stSPBn, less dets	LtCol H. P. CROWE
1stAmphTracBn, Reinf, FMF	LtCol E. F. WANN
Co A, Reinf, 1stAmphTrkBn, FMF	
Co B, 1stArmdAmphBn, FMF	

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Appendix C. Naval Task Organization

1. Wonsan Landing

JTF 7: VAdm A.D. Struble

TF 90 Attack Force: RAdm J. H. Doyle

TG 91.2 Landing Force (1st MarDiv): MajGen O. P. Smith

TE 90.00 Flagship Element

Mount McKinley (1 AGC)

TE 90.01 Tactical Air Control Element: Cdr T. H. Moore

TU 90.01.1 TacRon 1

TU 90.01.2 TacRon 3

TE 90.02 Naval Beach Group Element: Capt W. T. Singer

TU 90.02.1 Headquarters Unit

TU 90.02.2 Beachmaster Unit: LCdr M. C. Sibisky

TU 90.02.3 Boat Unit One: LCdr H. E. Hock

TU 90.02.4 Amphibious Construction Bn.: LCdr M. T. Jacobs, Jr.

TU 90.02.5 Underwater Demolitions Team Unit: LCdr W. R. McKinney

TG 90.1 Administrative Group: RAdm L. A. Thackery

TE 90.10 Flagship Element: Capt J. B. Stefonek

Eldorado (1 AGC)

TU 90.1.1 Medical Unit

Consolation (1 AH)

LST 898 (reported to CTG 95.2 upon arrival at objective area)

LST 975 (2 LST; reported to CTG 95.2 upon arrival at objective area)

TU 90.1.2 Repair and Salvage Unit: Capt P. W. Mothersill

Lipan

Cree

Arikara (3 ATF)

Conserver (1 ARS)

Askari (1 ARL)

Gunston Hall

Fort Marion

Comstock

Catamount

Colonial (5 LSD)

Plus other units as assigned

TU 90.1.3 Service Unit: LCdr J. D. Johnston

15 LSU

TG 90.2 Transport Group: Capt V. R. Roane

TE 90.21 Transport Division ABLE: Capt S. G. Kelly

Bayfield

Noble

Cavalier

Okanogan (4 APA)

Washburn

Seminole

Titania

Oglethorpe

Archenar (5 AKA)

Marine Phoenix (1 T-AP)

TE 90.22 Transport Division BAKER: Capt A. E. Jarrell

Henrico

George Clymer

Pickaway

Bexar (4 APA)

Union

Algol

Alshain

Winston

Montague (5 AKA)

Aiken Victory (1 T-AP)

Robin Goodfellow

1 Commercial freighter

TG 90.3 Tractor Group: Capt R. C. Peden

Gunston Hall (carrying 3 LSU)

Fort Marion (carrying 3 LSU)

Comstock (carrying 3 LSU)

Catamount (carrying 3 LSU)

Colonial (5 LSD; carrying 3 LSU)

LST 1123

LST 715

LST 742

LST 799

LST 802

LST 845

LST 883

LST 898

LST 914

LST 973

LST 975

LST 1048 (12 LST)

23 SCAJAP LSTs (23 LST)

TG 90.4 Control Group: LCdr C. Allmon

PCEC 896 (1 PCEC)

TU 90.4.1 Control Unit BLUE: Lt S. C. Pinksen

Wantuck (1 APD)

TU 90.4.2 Control Unit YELLOW: Lt A. C. Ansorge

Horace A. Bass (1 APD)

TG 95.6 Minesweeping and Protection Group: Capt R. T. Spofford

Collett (1 DD)

Diachenko (1 APD)

Doyle

Endicott (2 DMS)

Pledge

Incredible (2 AM)

Kite

Merganser

Mockingbird

Osprey

Redhead

Chatterer (7 AMS)

HMS *Mounts Bay*

HMNZS *Pukaki*

HMNZS *Putira*

LaGrandiere (French; 4 PF)

8 Japanese mine sweepers

4 Japanese mine destruction and buoying vessels

1 ROKN

1 AKL

Plus other units assigned

TG 90.6 Reconnaissance Group: Cdr S. C. Small

Horace A. Bass
Wantuck (2 APD)
UDT 1
UDT 3 (2 UDT)
TG 96.8 Escort Carrier Group: RAdm R. W. Ruble
Badoeng Strait
Sicily (2 CVE)
Taussig
Hanson
George K. Mackenzie
Ernest G. Small
Southerland
Rowan (6 DD)
TG 95.2 Gunfire Support Group: RAdm G. R. Hartman
Helena
Rochester
Toledo (3 CA)
HMS *Ceylon* (1 CL)
HMS *Cockade*
HMCS *Athabaskan*
HMAS *Warramunga*
3 DD of DesRon 9 (6 DD)
LSMR 401 (reported to CTF 90 when released by CTG 95.2)
LSMR 403 (reported to CTF 90 when released by CTG 95.2)
LSMR 404 (reported to CTF 90 when released by CTG 95.2)

2. Hungnam Evacuation

TF 90 Amphibious Force, Naval Forces Far East: RAdm J. H. Doyle
TE 90.00 Flagship Element
Mount McKinley
TE 90.01 Tactical Air Control Element: Cdr R. W. Arndt
TacRon ONE
TE 90.02 Repair and Salvage Unit: Cdr L. C. Conwell
Kermit Roosevelt (ARG)
Askari (ARL)
Bolster
Conserver (2 ARS)
Tawakoni (ATF)

TE 90.03 Control Element: LCdr C. Allmon

Diachenko

Begor (2 APD)

PCEC 882

TG 90.2 Transport Group: Capt S. G. Kelly

TE 90.21 Transport Element: Capt A. E. Jarrell

Bayfield

Henrico

Noble (3 APA)

Winston

Seminole

Montague (3 AKA)

Begor

Diachenko (2 APD)

PCEC 882

Fort Marion (3 LSU embarked)

Colonial (3 LSU embarked)

Catamount (3 LSD; 3 LSU embarked)

LST 742

LST 715

LST 845

LST 802

LST 883

LST 799

LST 898

LST 914

LST 975

LST 973

LST 1048 (11 LST)

TG 90.8 Gunfire Support Group: RAdm R. H. Hillenkoetter

St. Paul

Rochester (2 CA)

Zellars

Charles S. Sperry

Massey

Forrest Royal (4 DD)

LSMR 401

LSMR 403

LSMR 404 (3 LSMR)

Plus DD as assigned from TG 95.2

TG 95.2 Blockade, Escort and Minesweeping Group: RAdm J. M. Higgins

Rochester (CA)

English

Hank

Wallace L. Lind

Borie (4 DD)

Sausalito

Hoquiam

Gallup

Gloucester

Bisbee

Glendale (6 PF)

TG 95.6 Minesweeping Group: Capt R. T. Spofford

Endicott

Doyle (2 DMS)

Incredible (AM)

Curlew

Heron (2 AMS)

TG 96.8 Escort Carrier Group: RAdm R. W. Ruble

Badoeng Strait

Sicily (2 CVE)

Bataan (CVL)

Lofberg

John A. Bole

Mackenzie

Taussig

Ernest G. Small

Brinkley Bass

Arnold J. Isbell (7 DD)

Hanson (DDR)

Vessels attached TF 90 for operational control:

Missouri (BB)

Duncan (DDR; from 10 Dec)

Foss (DE; from 9 Dec)

Consolation (AH; from 2 Dec)

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Appendix F. Command and Staff List, 8 October-15 December 1950

1st Marine Division
Commanding General: MajGen Oliver P. Smith
Assistant Division Commander: BrigGen Edward A. Craig
Chief of Staff: Col Gregon A. Williams
Deputy Chief of Staff: Col Edward W. Snedeker
G–1: Col Harvey S. Walseth (to 28 Nov); LtCol Bryghte D. Godbold
G–2: Col Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr.
G–3: Col Alpha L. Bowser, Jr.
G–4: Col Francis A. McAlister

Special Staff
Adjutant: Maj Philip J. Costello
Air Officer: Maj James N. Cupp
Artillery Officer: Col James H. Brower (to 30 Nov); LtCol Carl A. Youngdale
Amphibian Tractor Officer: LtCol Erwin F. Wann, Jr.
Armored Amphibian Officer: LtCol Francis H. Cooper
Chaplain: Cdr Robert H. Schwyhart (ChC), USN
Chemical Warfare and Radiological Defense Officer: Maj John H. Blue
Dental Officer: Capt Mack Meradith (DC), USN
Embarkation Officer: Maj Jules M. Rouse
Engineer Officer: LtCol John H. Partridge
Exchange Officer: Capt Wilbur C. Conley
Food Director: Maj Norman R. Nickerson
Inspector: Col John A. White
Historical Officer: 2dLt John M. Patrick
Legal Officer: LtCol Albert H. Schierman
Motor Transport Officer: Maj Henry W. Seeley
Naval Gunfire Officer: LtCol Loren S. Fraser
Ordnance Officer: Capt Donald L. Shenaut
Provost Marshal: Capt John H. Griffin
Public Information Officer: Capt Michael C. Capraro (to 6 Nov); Maj Carl E. Stahley
Shore Party Officer: LtCol Henry P. Crowe
Signal Officer: LtCol Albert Creal

Special Services Officer: Capt Raymond H. Spuhler (to 29 Nov); LtCol John M. Bathum
Supply Officer: Col Gordon S. Hendricks
Surgeon: Capt Eugene R. Hering (MC), USN
Tank Officer: LtCol Harry T. Milne

Attached Units
Commanding Officer, 163d Military Intelligence Specialist Detachment, USA: Capt Fujio F. Asano, USA
Commanding Officer, 181st Counter-Intelligence Corps Detachment, USA: Maj Millard E. Dougherty, USA
Commanding Officer, 41st Independent Commando, Royal Marines: LtCol Douglas B. Drysdale, RM

Headquarters Battalion
Commanding Officer: LtCol Marvin T. Starr
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Maj Frederick Simpson
Commanding Officer, Military Police Company: Capt John H. Griffin
Commanding Officer, Reconnaissance Company: 1stLt Ralph B. Crossman (to 23 Nov); Maj Walter Gall

1st Marines
Commanding Officer: Col Lewis B. Puller
Executive Officer: LtCol Robert W. Rickert
S-1: Capt William G. Reeves
S-2: Capt Stone W. Quillian
S-3: Maj Robert E. Lorigan
S-4: Maj Thomas T. Grady
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Capt Frank P. Tatum
Commanding Officer, 4.2-inch Mortar Company: Capt Frank J. Faureck
Commanding Officer, Antitank Company: Capt George E. Petro

1st Battalion, 1st Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol Jack Hawkins (to 7 Nov); LtCol Donald M. Schmuck
Executive Officer: Maj Maurice H. Clarke
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt William B. Hopkins
Commanding Officer, A Company: Capt Robert H. Barrow
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt Wesley Noren
Commanding Officer, C Company: Capt Robert P. Wray
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Maj William T. Bates, Jr.

2d Battalion, 1st Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol Allan Suttter

Executive Officer: Maj Clarence J. Mabry
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Raymond Dewees, Jr.
Commanding Officer, D Company: Capt Welby W. Cronk
Commanding Officer, E Company: Capt Charles D. Frederick (to 6 Nov); 1stLt Harold B. Wilson (6-17 Nov); Capt Jack A. Smith
Commanding Officer, F Company: Capt Goodwin C. Groff
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Maj Whitman S. Bartley (to 16 Nov); Capt William A. Kerr

3d Battalion, 1st Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol Thomas L. Ridge
Executive Officer: Maj Reginald R. Myers
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Thomas E. McCarthy
Commanding Officer, G Company: Capt George C. Westover (to 30 Oct); Capt Carl L. Sitter
Commanding Officer, H Company: Capt Clarence E. Corley
Commanding Officer, I Company: 1stLt Joseph R. Fisher
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Maj Edwin H. Simmons

5th Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol Raymond L. Murray
Executive Officer: LtCol Joseph L. Stewart
S-1: 1stLt Alton C. Weed
S-2: Maj William C. Easterline
S-3: Maj Theodore J. Spiker
S-4: Maj Harold Wallace
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Harold G. Schrier (to 9 Oct); Capt Jack E. Hawthorn
Commanding Officer, 4.2-inch Mortar Company: 1stLt Robert M. Lucy
Commanding Officer, Antitank Company: 1stLt Almarion S. Bailey

1st Battalion, 5th Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol George R. Newton (to 17 Nov); LtCol John W. Stevens, II
Executive Officer: Maj Merlin R. Olson
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Walter E. G. Godenius
Commanding Officer, A Company: Capt John R. Stevens (to 17 Nov); Capt James B. Heater
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt Francis I. Fenton (to 13 Oct); 1stLt John R. Hancock
Commanding Officer, C Company: 1stLt Poul F. Pedersen (to 6 Nov); Capt Jack R. Jones
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Maj John W. Russell

2d Battalion, 5th Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol Harold S. Roise
Executive Officer: LtCol John W. Stevens, II (to 12Nov); Maj Glen E. Martin (13-21Nov); Maj John L. Hopkins
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: 1stLt David W. Walsh (to 8 Oct); Capt Franklin B. Mayer
Commanding Officer, D Company: Capt Samuel S. Smith
Commanding Officer, E Company: Capt Samuel Jaskilka (to 12 Dec); Capt Lawrence W. Henke, Jr.
Commanding Officer, F Company: Capt Uel D. Peters (to 6 Dec); 1stLt Charles "H" Dalton
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Maj James W. Bateman (to 10 Oct); Maj Glen E, Martin (11 Oct-12 Nov); Maj James W. Bateman (13-21 Nov); Maj Glen E. Martin

3d Battalion, 5th Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol Robert D. Taplett
Executive Officer: Maj John J. Canney (to 28 Nov); Maj Harold W. Swain
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Roland A. Marbaugh (to 4 Dec); Capt Raymond H. Spuhler
Commanding Officer, G Company: 1stLt Charles D. Mize (to 17 Nov); Capt Chester R. Hermanson (18 Nov-2 Dec); 1stLt Charles D. Mize
Commanding Officer, H Company: 1stLt Donald E. Watterson (to 8 Nov); Capt Harold B. Williamson
Commanding Officer, I Company: Capt Harold G. Schrier
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Maj Murray Ehrlich (to 18 Nov); Maj Harold W. Swain (19-28 Nov); 1stLt Hubert J. Shovlin

7th Marines
Commanding Officer: Col Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr.
Executive Officer: LtCol Frederick R. Dowsett (to 7 Dec); LtCol Raymond G. Davis
S-1: Capt John R. Grove
S-2: Capt Donald R. France (to 6 Dec)
S-3: Maj Henry J. Woessner, II
S-4: Maj David L. Mell (to 22 Nov); Maj Maurice E. Roach
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Nicholas L. Shields (to 3 Dec); Maj Walter T. Warren (4-7 Dec; additional duty); Maj Rodney V. Reigard (additional duty)
Commanding Officer, 4.2-inch Mortar Company: Maj Stanley D. Low (to 2 Nov); 1stLt Gordon Vincent (3-18 Nov); Maj Rodney V. Reigard
Commanding Officer, Antitank Company: 1stLt Earl R. DeLong (to 20 Oct); Maj Walter T. Warren (21 Oct-8 Dec); 1stLt Earl R. DeLong

1st Battalion, 7th Marines

Commanding Officer: LtCol Raymond G. Davis (to 7 Dec); Maj Webb D. Sawyer
Executive Officer: Maj Raymond V. Fridrich
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Elmer L. Starr (to 22 Nov); 1stLt Wilbert R. Gaul
Commanding Officer, A Company: Capt David W. Banks (to 20 Nov); 1stLt Eugenous M. Hovatter
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt Myron E. Wilcox, Jr. (to 27 Nov); 1stLt Joseph R. Kurcaba (27 Nov-8-Dec); 1stLt William W. Taylor
Commanding Officer, C Company: Capt William E. Shea (to 16 Nov); Capt John F. Morris
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Maj William E. Vorhies

2d Battalion, 7th Marines
Commanding Officer: Maj Webb D. Sawyer (to 9 Nov); LtCol Randolph S. D. Lockwood
Executive Officer: Maj Roland E. Carey (to 9 Nov); Maj Webb D. Sawyer (10 Nov-8 Dec); Maj James F. Lawrence, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Walter R. Anderson
Commanding Officer, D Company: Capt Milton A. Hull (to 28 Nov); 1stLt James D. Hammond, Jr.
Commanding Officer, E Company: Capt Walter D. Phillips, Jr. (to 28 Nov); 1stLt Raymond O. Ball (28 Nov); 1stLt Robert T. Bey
Commanding Officer, F Company: Capt Elmer J. Zorn (to 6 Nov); Capt William E. Barber (7 Nov-3 Dec); 1stLt John M. Dunne (3-6 Dec); 1stLt Welton R. Abell
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Capt Harry L. Givens, Jr. (to 12 Nov); Maj Joseph L. Abel (13-19 Nov); Capt Harry L. Givens, Jr.

3d Battalion, 7th Marines
Commanding Officer: Maj Maurice E. Roach (to 10 Nov); LtCol William F. Harris (11 Nov-6 Dec); Maj Warren Morris
Executive Officer: Maj Warren Morris (to 6 Dec); Maj Jefferson D. Smith, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt Eric R. Haars (to 29 Nov)
Commanding Officer, G Company: Capt Thomas E. Cooney (to 27 Nov); Capt Eric R. Haars (29 Nov-3 Dec); 1stLt George R. Earnest
Commanding Officer, H Company: 1stLt Howard H. Harris (to 11 Nov); Capt Leroy M. Cooke (12-27 Nov); 1stLt Howard H. Harris (27 Nov-1 Dec); 1stLt Harold J. Fitzgeorge (1-5 Dec); 2dLt Minard P. Newton
Commanding Officer, 1 Company: Capt Richard H. Sengewald (to 14 Oct); 1stLt William E. Johnson (15 Oct- 3 Dec); 1stLt Alfred I. Thomas
Commanding Officer, Weapons Company: Maj Jefferson D. Smith (to 5 Dec); 1stLt Austin S. Parker (6-10 Dec); 1stLt Robert E. Hill

11th Marines

Commanding Officer: Col James H. Brower (to 30 Nov); LtCol Carl A. Youngdale
Executive Officer: LtCol Carl A. Youngdale (to 30 Nov)
S-1: Maj Floyd M. McCorkle
S-2: Capt William T. Phillips
S-3: LtCol James O. Appleyard
S-4: Maj Donald V. Anderson
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery: Capt Albert H. Wunderly (to 7 Nov); Capt Clarence E. Hixson (15-25 Nov); 1stLt William C. Patton
Commanding Officer, Service Battery: Maj Donald V. Anderson (to 16 Nov); 1stLt Joseph M. Brent
Commanding Officer, Battery C, 1st 4.5-inch Rocket Battalion: 1stLt Eugene A. Bushe

1st Battalion, 11th Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol Ransom M. Wood (to 15 Nov); LtCol Harvey A. Feehan
Executive Officer: Maj Francis R. Schlesinger
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery: Capt James W. Brayshay (to 25 Nov)
Commanding Officer, Service Battery: 1stLt Kenneth H. Quelch
Commanding Officer, A Battery: Capt James D. Jordan
Commanding Officer, B Battery: Capt Arnold C. Hoffstetter (to 8 Oct); Capt Gilbert N. Powell
Commanding Officer, C Battery: Capt William J. Nichols, Jr.

2d Battalion, 11th Marines
Commanding Officer: LtCol Merritt Adelman
Executive Officer: Maj Donald E. Noll (to 25 Oct); Maj Neal G. Newell
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery: Capt George J. Batson
Commanding Officer, Service Battery: Capt Herbert R. Merrick, Jr.
Commanding Officer, D Battery: Capt Andrew J. Strohmenger (to 8 Dec); Capt Richard E. Roach
Commanding Officer, E Battery: Capt John C. McClelland, Jr.
Commanding Officer, F Battery: Capt George J. Kovich, Jr. (to 19 Nov); 1stLt Howard A. Blancheri

3d Battalion, 11th Marines
Commanding Officer: Maj Francis F. Parry
Executive Officer: Maj Norman A. Miller, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery: 1stLt Michael B. Weir (to 11 Nov); 1stLt Eugene H. Brown (12-18 Nov); 1stLt John J. Brackett
Commanding Officer, Service Battery: Capt Robert A. Thompson (to 17 Oct); Capt Ernest W. Payne (18 Oct-30 Nov); Capt Samuel A. Hannah
Commanding Officer, G Battery: Capt Samuel A. Hannah (to 30 Nov); Capt Ernest W. Payne
Commanding Officer, H Battery: Capt Benjamin S. Read (to 8 Dec); 1stLt Wilber N. Herndon

Commanding Officer, I Battery: Capt John M. McLaurin, Jr. (to 30 Nov); Capt Robert T. Patterson

4th Battalion, 11th Marines
Commanding Officer: Maj William McReynolds
Executive Officer: Maj Thomas M. Coggins (to 8 Nov); Maj Maurice J. Coffey
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery: Capt Charles S. Cummings (to 25 Oct); Capt Paul L. Hirt
Commanding Officer, Service Battery: Capt Armand G. Daddazio
Commanding Officer, K Battery: 1stLt Robert C. Messman (to 27 Nov); 1stLt Robert C. Parrott (28 Nov-11 Dec); Capt Arthur D. Challacombe
Commanding Officer, L Battery: Capt Lawrence R. Cloern
Commanding Officer, M Battery: Capt Vernon W. Shapiro

1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion
Commanding Officer: LtCol Erwin F. Wann, Jr.
Executive Officer: Maj Arthur J. Barrett
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Capt Frank E. Granucci
Commanding Officer, A Company: Maj James P. Treadwell
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt Russell Hamlet
Commanding Officer, C Company: Maj Arthur J. Noonan

1st Armored Amphibian Battalion
Commanding Officer: LtCol Francis H. Cooper
Executive Officer: Maj Richard G. Warga
Commanding Officer, Headquarter Company: Capt Roger B. Thompson
Commanding Officer, Service Company: Capt Rex Z. Michael, Jr.
Commanding Officer, A Company: Capt Bernard G. Thobe
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt Lewis E. Bolts

1st Combat Service Group
Commanding Officer: Col John H. Cook, Jr.
Executive Officer: LtCol Edward A. Clark
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Capt Francis L. Miller
Commanding Officer, Maintenance Company: Maj Edward H. Voorhees
Commanding Officer, Supply Company: Maj Robert W. Hengesback
Commanding Officer, Support Company: Maj Donald B. Cooley, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Truck Company: Capt John A. Pearson (to 11 Nov); 2dLt Alan G. Copp (11-30 Nov); Capt Jack W. Temple
Commanding Officer, 1st Fumigation and Bath Company: 1stLt James L. Dumas

Commanding Officer, 1st Air Delivery Platoon: Capt Hersel D. C. Blasingame

1st Engineer Battalion
Commanding Officer: LtCol John H. Partridge
Executive Officer: Maj Richard M. Elliott
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Capt James H. McRoberts (to 20 Nov); Maj Hewitt A. Snow; Capt Edward B. Newton
Commanding Officer, Service Company: Maj James W. McIllwain (to 22 Nov); Capt Philip A. Terrell, Jr.
Commanding Officer, A Company: Capt George W. King (to 2 Dec); Capt William R. Gould
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt Orville L. Bibb
Commanding Officer, C Company: Capt Lester G. Harmon (to 12 Nov); 1stLt Ronald L. Glendinning
Commanding Officer, D Company: Capt Byron C. Turner

1st Medical Battalion
Commanding Officer: Cdr Howard A. Johnson, USN
Executive Officer: Cdr William S. Francis, USN
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Cdr William S. Francis, USN
Commanding Officer, A Company: Cdr Byron E. Bassham, USN
Commanding Officer, B Company: LCdr James A. Kaufman, USN
Commanding Officer, C Company: Cdr Harold A. Streit, USN
Commanding Officer, D Company: LCdr Gustave J. Anderson, USN
Commanding Officer, E Company: LCdr John H. Cheffey, USN (to 15 Oct); Lt (jg) Ernest N. Grover, USN (15-30 Oct); LCdr Charles K. Holloway, USN

1st Motor Transport Battalion
Commanding Officer: LtCol Olin L. Beall
Executive Officer: Maj John R. Barreiro, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt George B. Loveday
Commanding Officer, A Company: Capt Arthur W. Ecklund
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt James C. Camp, Jr.
Commanding Officer, C Company: Capt Garfield M. Randall (to 30 Nov); 1stLt Norman E. Stow
Commanding Officer, D Company: Capt Bernard J. Whitelock (9 Dec); 1stLt Philip R. Hade
Commanding Officer, Automotive Maintenance Company: Maj Edward L. Roberts
Commanding Officer, Automotive Supply Company: 1stLt Mildridge E. Mangum
Commanding Officer, Amphibian Truck Company, FMF (redesignated Company A, 1st Amphibian Truck Battalion, 15 Nov): Capt John Bookhout

1st Ordnance Battalion

Commanding Officer: Maj Lloyd O. Williams
Executive Officer: Maj Samuel A. Johnstone, Jr.
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Capt Theodore Tunis (to 13 Nov); Capt Gordon H. Moore
Commanding Officer, Ordnance Supply Company: Capt Russel S. LaPointe (to 5 Dec); 1stLt Victor F. Brown
Commanding Officer, Ammunition Company: Capt Harvey W. Gagner (to 30 Nov); 1stLt Charles H. Miller
Commanding Officer, Ordnance Maintenance Company: Capt George L. Williams

1st Service Battalion
Commanding Officer: LtCol Charles L. Banks
Executive Officer: Maj John R. Stone
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Capt Morse “L” Holladay
Commanding Officer, Service Company: Capt Robert A. Morehead
Commanding Officer, Support Company: Capt Richard W. Sinclair (to 27 Oct); Capt Thomas M. Sagar

1st Shore Party Battalion
Commanding Officer: LtCol Henry P. Crowe
Executive Officer: LtCol Horace H. Figuers
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company: Capt William T. Miller
Commanding Officer, A Company: Maj William L. Batchelor (to 22 Nov); Capt Nathaniel H. Carver
Commanding Officer, B Company: Maj Henry Brzezinski
Commanding Officer, C Company: Maj George A. Smith (to 24 Nov); Maj Murray F. Rose

1st Signal Battalion
Commanding Officer: Maj Robert L. Schreier
Executive Officer: Maj Elwyn M. Stimson
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Capt Howard K. Alberts (to 14 Nov); Capt Earl F. Stanley
Commanding Officer, Signal Company: Maj Richard A. Glaeser
Commanding Officer, ANGLICO: Maj Fulton L. Oglesby (to 16 Nov); Maj Frederick M. Steinhauser

1st Tank Battalion
Commanding Officer: LtCol Harry T. Milne
Executive Officer: Maj Douglas E. Haberlie (to 1 Dec); Maj Philip C. Morrell
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: Capt Bruce W. Clarke (to 18 Nov); 1stLt Frederick L. Adams
Commanding Officer, Service Company: Capt Philip C. Morell (to 1 Dec); Maj Douglas E. Haberlie
Commanding Officer, A Company: Capt Gearl M. English (to 1 Dec); 1stLt Robert J. Craig
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt Bruce F. Williams
Commanding Officer, C Company: Capt Richard M. Taylor
Commanding Officer, D Company: Capt Lester T. Chase (to 18 Nov); Capt Bruce W. Clarke (19 Nov-10 Dec);

1stLt Paul E. Sanders

7th Motor Transport Battalion
Commanding Officer: Maj Joseph F. Stepka (to 7 Nov); LtCol Carl J. Cagle
Executive Officer: Maj Vernon A. Tuson
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company: 1stLt Reed T. King
Commanding Officer, A Company: Capt Ira N. Hayes
Commanding Officer, B Company: Capt Clovis M. Jones
Commanding Officer, C Company: Capt Fred B. Rogers
Commanding Officer, D Company: Capt Joseph L. Bunker

Marine Observation Squadron 6 (under operational control of 1stMarDiv and administrative control of 1stMAW)
Commanding Officer: Maj Vincent J. Gottschalk
Executive Officer: Capt Victor A. Armstrong (to 13 Nov); Capt Andrew L. McVickers

1st Marine Aircraft Wing
Commanding General: MajGen Field Harris
Assistant Commanding General: BrigGen Thomas J. Cushman
Chief of Staff: Col Kenneth H. Weir (8 Oct-1 Nov); Col Caleb T. Bailey (2 Nov-15 Dec)
Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (also Deputy C/S, Air Support, X Corps): Col Edward C. Dyer
G-1: Col Raymond E. Hopper
G-2: LtCol Winsor V. Crockett, Jr.
G-3: LtCol Howard A. York (to 9 Nov); LtCol Paul J. Fontana (10 Nov-28 Nov; additional duty); LtCol Howard A. York (29 Nov-15 Dec)
G-4: Col Thomas J. Noon
Commanding Officer, Rear Echelon, Itami: Col Roger T. Carleson
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Squadron, One: Capt Earl “B” Sumerlin, Jr.

Marine Aircraft Group 12
Commanding Officer: Col Boeker C. Batterton
Deputy Group Commander: LtCol Paul J. Fontana
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Squadron 12: Maj John E. Hays
Commanding Officer, Service Squadron 12: Maj Claude H. Welch (to 4 Nov); Maj Charles E. J. McLean

Marine Aircraft Group 33
Commanding Officer: Col Frank C. Dailey
Deputy Group Commander: LtCol Radford C. West
Commanding Officer, Headquarters Squadron 33: Capt Walter “L” Hilton

Commanding Officer, Marine Service Squadron 33: LtCol James C. Lindsay

Squadrons

Commanding Officer, Marine Fighter Squadron 212: LtCol Richard W. Wyczawski

Commanding Officer, Marine Fighter Squadron 214: Maj Robert P. Keller (to 20 Nov); Maj William M. Lundin

Commanding Officer, Marine Fighter Squadron 312: LtCol “J” Frank Cole

Commanding Officer, Marine Fighter Squadron 311: LtCol Neil R. McIntyre (from 8 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Marine Fighter Squadron 323: Maj Arnold A. Lund

Commanding Officer, Marine All-Weather Squadron 513: Maj J. Hunter Reinburg (to 4 Nov); LtCol David C. Wolfe

Commanding Officer, Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron 542: LtCol Max J. Volcansek, Jr.

Commanding Officer, Marine Transport Squadron 152: Col Deane C. Roberts

Commanding Officer, Marine Ground Control Intercept Squadron 1: Maj Harold E. Allen

Commanding Officer, Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 2: Maj Christian C. Lee

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Appendix G. Enemy Order of Battle

1. North Korean

During operations around Wonsan the 1st Marine Division encountered fragments and stragglers from many NKPA divisions. The organized elements were chiefly from the 2d, 5th, and 15th Divisions.

2. Chinese

42d Army, 124th Division

370th Regiment

371st Regiment

372nd Regiment

In action against 7th Marines south of Sudong 2 Nov. Badly cut up in actions of 3-6 Nov.

42d Army, 125th Division

373rd Regiment

374th Regiment

375th Regiment

Not in contact. Probably to west of 124th Division.

42d Army, 126th Division

376th Regiment

377th Regiment

378th Regiment

Screened Chinese retreat to Hagaru. Never heavily engaged.

20th Army, 58th Division

172nd Regiment

173rd Regiment

174th Regiment

First in action at Hagaru 28 Nov. Badly cut up in attacks on Hagaru.

20th Army, 59th Division

175th Regiment

176th Regiment

177th Regiment

In contact with 7th Marines southwest of Yudam-ni 23 Nov. Later defended Toktong Pass.

20th Army, 60th Division

178th Regiment

179th Regiment

180th Regiment

In contact with 7th Marines southeast of Yudam-ni 25 Nov. Later moved to Funchilin Pass area.

20th Army, 89th Division

266th Regiment

267th Regiment

268th Regiment

First contacted by 7th Marines west of Hagaru 22 Nov. About 2 Dec moved south to Majon-dong area.

27th Army, 79th Division

235th Regiment

236th Regiment

237th Regiment

Attacked Yudam-ni 27 Nov.

27th Army, 80th Division

238th Regiment

239th Regiment

240th Regiment

Attacked 7th Infantry Division units east of Reservoir 27 Nov.

27th Army, 81st Division

241st Regiment

242nd Regiment

243rd Regiment

No report of contact until 13 Dec. May have been in Yudam-ni area.

27th Army, 90th Division

268th Regiment

269th Regiment

270th Regiment

No contact reported. May have been in reserve near Hagaru.

26th Army, 76th Division

226th Regiment

227th Regiment

228th Regiment

First contacts east of Hagaru 5 Dec. Suffered heavy losses around Koto-ri.

26th Army, 77th Division

229th Regiment

230th Regiment

231st Regiment

First contacts at Hagaru 5 Dec.

26th Army, 78th Division

232nd Regiment

233rd Regiment

234th Regiment

Not reported in contact. May not have reached area in time for combat.

26th Army, 88th Division

263rd Regiment

264th Regiment

265th Regiment

Not reported in contact. May not have reached area in time for combat.

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Appendix I. Unit Citations

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

FIRST MARINE DIVISION, REINFORCED

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action against enemy aggressor forces in the Chosin Reservoir and Koto-ri area of Korea from 27 November to 11 December 1950. When the full fury of the enemy counterattack struck both the Eighth Army and the Tenth Corps on 27 and 28 November 1950, the First Marine Division, Reinforced, operating as the left flank division of the Tenth Corps, launched a daring assault westward from Yudam-ni in an effort to cut the road and rail communications of hostile forces attacking the Eighth Army and, at the same time, continued its mission of protecting a vital main supply route consisting of a tortuous mountain road running southward to Chinhung-ni, approximately 35 miles distant. Ordered to withdraw to Hamhung in company with attached army and other friendly units in the face of tremendous pressure in the Chosin Reservoir area, the Division began an epic battle against the bulk of the enemy Third Route Army and, while small intermediate garrisons at Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri held firmly against repeated and determined attacks by hostile forces, gallantly fought its way successively to Hagaru-ri, Koto-ri, Chinhung-ni and Hamburg over twisting, mountainous and icy roads in sub-zero temperatures. Battling desperately night and day in the face of almost insurmountable odds throughout a period of two weeks of intense and sustained combat, the First Marine Division, Reinforced, emerged from its ordeal as a fighting unit with its wounded, with its guns and equipment and with its prisoners, decisively defeating seven enemy divisions, together with elements of three others, and inflicting major losses which seriously impaired the military effectiveness of the hostile forces for a considerable period of time. The valiant fighting spirit, relentless perseverance and heroic fortitude of the officers and men of the First Marine Division, Reinforced, in battle against a vastly outnumbering enemy, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

The following reinforcing units of the First Marine Division participated in operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 27 November to 11 December 1950:

ORGANIC UNITS OF THE FIRST MARINE DIVISION: First Marine Division (less Detachment Headquarters Battalion; Detachment First Signal Battalion; Detachment First Service Battalion; Detachment Headquarters and Companies A and C, First Tank Battalion; Automotive Supply Company, First Motor Transport Battalion; Automotive Maintenance Company, First Motor Transport Battalion; Detachment First Ordnance Battalion; Detachment Headquarters and Company A, First Medical Battalion; First Shore Party Battalion; 4.5" Rocket Battery and Service Battery, Fourth Battalion, Eleventh Marines).

ATTACHED MARINE CORPS UNITS: Companies A and B, Seventh Motor Transport Battalion; Detachment Radio Relay Platoon.
ATTACHED ARMY UNITS: Provisional Battalion (Detachments, 31st and 32nd Regimental Combat Teams); Company D, 10th Engineer Combat Battalion; Tank Company, 31st Infantry Regiment; Headquarters Company, 31st Infantry Regiment; Company B, 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment; 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment (less Company E); 185th Engineer Combat Battalion (less Company A).

For the President,
R. B. ANDERSON
Secretary of the Navy

GENERAL ORDERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
No. 72
Washington 25, D.C., 9 August 1951
DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION
1. The 1st Marine Air Wing, Fleet Marine Force, is cited for outstanding performance of duty and extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy in the areas of Chosin Reservoir, Hagaru-ri, and Koto-ri, Korea, during the period 22 November to 14 December 1950. The historic role of close-support air missions flown by personnel on land and carrier based aircraft during the operations of the X Corps, United States Army, contributed immeasurably to the successful withdrawal of the X Corps when hordes of Chinese Communist and North Korean troops had encircled their positions endangering the entire operation. In their magnificent employment of close-support doctrine and in their exceedingly effective interdiction missions and night combat air patrols, the 1st Marine Air Wing flew 2,572 day and night sorties during this period, inflicting 10,313 enemy casualties and destroying 723 buildings, 144 vehicles, 17 tanks, 9 bridges, 4 locomotives, 3 command posts, 30 boxcars, 47 gun positions, and 19 supply, ammunition, and fuel dumps. These missions were flown over hazardous mountain terrain under extremely adverse weather conditions and in the face of intense enemy antiaircraft and small-arms fire. The normally ground-based Tactical Air Direction Center was ingeniously improvised into an airborne center in a C-54 aircraft without appreciable loss of efficiency in operations and the responsibility for controlling aircraft was assumed and accomplished in a remarkable manner through day and night operations by controlling personnel. Airborne tactical air coordinators also were established to supplement the airborne center to direct specific strikes in areas not under surveillance of ground control parties to the end that every available sortie was utilized to maximum effectiveness. In the evacuation of friendly casualties by cargo airplanes, the use of helicopters for rescue of air personnel shot down by the enemy and the evacuation of wounded, and the high state of aircraft availability maintained by ground personnel working under hazardous and extremely adverse conditions because of intense cold, personnel of the entire 1st Marine Air Wing displayed fortitude, courage, and marked esprit de corps. Although suffering a considerable loss of personnel and equipment during this trying period, the morale and effectiveness of the 1st Marine Air Wing were sustained at a constantly high level. The

repeated acts of valor and gallantry by the officers and men of the 1st Marine Air Wing, Fleet Marine Force, and their enviable combat record reflect great credit on the members thereof and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service.

By order of the Secretary of the Army:
J. LAWTON COLLINS
Chief of Staff, United States Army

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The East-Central Front

Lynn Montross, Hubard D. Kuokka and Norman W. Hicks

Foreword

Americans everywhere will remember the inspiring conduct of Marines during Korean operations in 1950. As the fire brigade of the Pusan Perimeter, the assault troops at Inchon, and the heroic fighters of the Chosin Reservoir campaign, they established a record in keeping with the highest traditions of their Corps. No less praiseworthy were the Marine actions during the protracted land battles of 1951, the second year of the Korean "police action."

The 1st Marine Division, supported wherever possible by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, helped stem the flood of the Chinese offensive in April. Then lashing back in vigorous and successful counterattack, the Marines fought around the Hwachon Reservoir to the mighty fastness of the Punchbowl. The Punchbowl became familiar terrain to Marines during the summer of 1951, and the Division suffered its heaviest casualties of the year fighting in the vicinity of that aptly named circular depression.

The fighting waxed hot, then cold, as the truce teams negotiated. They reached no satisfactory agreement, and the fighting again intensified. Finally, after a year of active campaigning on Korea's east-central front, the Marines moved west to occupy positions defending the approaches to the Korean capital, Seoul.

The year of desperate fighting, uneasy truce, and renewed combat covered by this volume saw the operational employment of a Marine-developed technique—assault by helicopter-borne troops. Tactics were continually being refined to meet the ever changing battle situation. However, throughout the period, the one constant factor on which United Nations commanders could rely was the spirit and professional attitude of Marines, both regular and reserve. This is their hallmark as fighting men.

--Gen. David M. Shoup, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps

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Preface

THIS IS THE FOURTH in a series of five volumes dealing with the operations of United States Marines in Korea during the period 2 August 1950 to 27 July 1953. Volume IV presents in detail the operations of the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, the former while operating under Eighth Army control and also as part of IX Corps and X Corps, USA, and the latter while controlled by the Fifth Air Force.

The period covered in this volume begins in the latter part of December 1950, when the Division rested in the Masan "bean patch," and continues through the guerrilla hunt, the Punchbowl fighting, and all other operations during 1951. The account ends when the Marines move to positions in the west during March 1952.

Marines did not fight this war alone; they were a part of the huge Eighth United States Army in Korea. But since this is primarily a Marine history, the actions of the U. S. Army, Navy, and Air Force are presented only sufficiently to place Marine operations in their proper perspective.

Many participants in the fighting during this period have generously contributed to the book by granting interviews, answering inquiries, and commenting on first draft manuscripts. Their assistance was invaluable. Although it was not possible to use all the plethora of detailed comments and information received, the material will go into Marine Corps archives for possible use and benefit of future historians.

The manuscript of this volume was prepared during the tenure of Colonel Charles W. Harrison, Major Gerald Fink, and Colonel William M. Miller as successive Heads of the Historical Branch. Production was accomplished under the direction of Colonel Thomas G. Roe. Major William T. Hickman wrote some of the preliminary drafts and did much valuable research and map sketching. Dr. K. Jack Bauer and Mrs. Elizabeth Tierney assisted the authors in research, and Mr. Truman R. Strobridge assisted in proofreading and preparing the index.

To the Army, Navy, and Air Force officers, as well as Marine officers and NCOs, who submitted valuable comments and criticisms of preliminary drafts, thanks are also extended. These suggestions added to the accuracy and details of the text. Additional assistance was rendered by personnel of the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army; the Division of Naval History, Department of the Navy; and the Historical Division, Department of the Air Force.

The exacting administrative duties involved in processing the volume from first draft manuscripts through the final printed form were ably managed by Miss Kay P. Sue. All manuscript typing was done expertly by Mrs. Miriam R. Smallwood.

The maps contained in this volume were prepared by the Reproduction Section, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, and the Historical Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps. Official Department of Defense photographs were used.

The Marine Corps mourns the passing of the prime author of this series and other admirable works of Marine Corps and military history. Lynn Montross, after a lengthy illness, died on 28 January 1961.

--Brig. Gen. H. W. Buse, Jr., USMC, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan

A NEW CHAPTER in Korean operations began for the 1st Marine Division at 1800 on 16 December 1950 with the opening of the CP at Masan. By the following afternoon all units of the Division had arrived from Hungnam with the exception of VMO–6 and small groups of such specialists as the amphibian tractor troops left behind to assist with the redeployment of remaining X Corps elements to south Korea.

The 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing were separated for the first time since the Inchon landing. VMF–311, the new Panther jet squadron, was flying from K–9, an Air Force field near Pusan. Operating together as an all-Marine carrier group taking part in the Hungham redeployment were the three Corsair squadrons: VMF–212 on the CVL (light carrier) *Bataan*; VMF–214 on the CVE *Sicily*; and VMF–323 on the CVE *Badoeng Strait.* The two Japan-based night fighter squadrons, VMF(N)–542 and VMF(N)–513, flying from Itazuke, patrolled the skies between Japan and Korea.

VMO–6, the observation squadron, consisting of helicopters and OY fixed-wing planes, was attached to various ships of the Seventh Fleet for rescue missions when pilots were forced into the sea. A detachment of Marine Ground Control Intercept Squadron–1 (MGCIS–1) and the entire Air Defense Section of Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron–2 (MTACS–2) were also attached to the warships. They assisted in the control of hundreds of planes that flew over the Hungnam beachhead daily in support of the final stages of the X Corps evacuation.

The three Marine Corsair squadrons on the *Sicily*, *Badoeng Strait*, and *Bataan* represented the entire air strength of Escort Carrier Task Group (TG) 96.8, commanded by Rear Admiral Richard N. Ruble. Each squadron came directly under the operational command of the ship on which it had embarked. Supply, engineering, ordnance, billeting, and messing were of course provided through naval channels. The only relationship of the squadrons to their parent organization, MAG–33, derived from the administration of personnel and the storage of equipment at Itami.

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan
Return to the Bean Patch

Masan, the new Division assembly area, was located about 27 air miles and 40 road miles west of Pusan on the Bay of Masan, which indents the southern coast of the peninsula (Map 1). In order to prepare for the arrival of the Division, Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, the assistant division commander (ADC), had flown from Hungnam with the advance party on 12 December to make necessary arrangements.

The small seaport, which skirts the bay for about two and a half miles, was untouched by the war as compared to the ravaged towns of northeast Korea. It had a protected anchorage, dock facilities, and good rail and road communications. There was an air strip at Chinhae, a few miles to the southeast.

Some sort of cycle seemed to have been completed by veterans of the 5th Marines when they found themselves back again in the familiar surroundings of the Bean Patch on the northern outskirts of Masan. This large, cultivated field is entitled to capital letters because of its historical distinction as bivouac area of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade after the battle of the Naktong in August 1950. Barely four months had passed since that hard fight, but a great deal more history had been made during the combats of the Inchon-Seoul and Chosin Reservoir operations.

There was room enough in the Bean Patch for all three infantry regiments. Headquarters, the 11th Marines, the 1st Signal, 1st Tank, 1st Amtrac, 1st Ordnance, and 1st Motor Transport Battalions were located on the southern outskirts of town along with the 41 Independent Commando, Royal Marines. The 1st Combat Service Group, the MP Company, and the 1st Service, 1st Shore Party, and 1st Engineer Battalions occupied the dock area of Masan proper. A large building in the center of town housed the Division hospital, and the 7th Motor Transport Battalion was assigned to the Changwon area, four miles to the northeast.[1]

Peaceful as the surroundings may have seemed to troops who had just completed the 13-day running fight of the Chosin Reservoir Breakout, the Chidi San mountain mass some 50 miles northwest of Masan had been for many years the hideout of Korean bandits and outlaws. The Japanese had never been able to clear them out, and the Republic of Korea had met with no better success. After the outbreak of civil war, they made some pretense of aiding the Communist cause but were actually preying upon the ROK army and police for arms, food, clothing, and other loot. Operating in prowling bands as large as 50 or 60 men, the guerrillas were well armed with rifles, machine guns, and at times even mortars.

Click here to view map

In order to assure the safety both of its own bivouac areas and the vital port of Masan, Division promptly initiated measures to maintain surveillance over a broad belt of countryside which described an arc from Chinju, some 40 miles west of Masan, around to Changwon (Map 1). The infantry and artillery regiments and the Division Reconnaissance Company were all assigned subsectors of this security belt. Daily motor patrols of not less than platoon strength were to be conducted in each subsector for the purpose of gaining information about the roads and the guerrillas as well as discouraging their activities.[2] As it proved, however, no hostile contacts were made by the Marines during the entire Masan interlude. The guerrillas preferred to restrict their attention to the local police and civilian population.

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan
1st Marine Division in EUSAK Reserve

At 2240 on the 18th a dispatch from Major General Edward M. Almond, USA, commanding general of X Corps, informed the 1st Marine Division that it had passed to the operational control of the Eighth Army.[3]

Major General Oliver P. Smith reported in one of his first dispatches to EUSAK that the Marines had received fresh rations on only three days since landing in Korea. The Division commander invited attention to the importance of building up the physical condition of men who had lost weight during the Chosin Reservoir operation. An information copy went to Commander Naval Forces, Far East, (ComNavFE), who reacted promptly by ordering a refrigeration ship to Masan with 50,000 rations of turkey. The G–4 of Eusak also responded with fresh rations from time to time until the Marines, in the words of General Smith, “had turkey coming out of their ears.”[4]

Games of softball and touch football became popular in the crisp, invigorating weather as the men rapidly recuperated from fatigue and nervous tension. A series of shows was put on by troupes of U.S. Army and Korean entertainers, and the U.S. Navy sent Christmas trees and decorations.

The first Christmas in Korea was observed with a memorable display of holiday spirit by men who had cause to be thankful. A choir from the 5th Marines serenaded Division Headquarters with carols on Christmas Eve, and all the next day the commanding general and ADC held open house for staff officers and unit commanders.[5]

The United States as a whole rejoiced over the news that the last of 105,000 X Corps troops had embarked from Hungnam on 24 December without a single life being lost as a result of enemy action. President Truman spoke for the Nation when he sent this message to General MacArthur:

“Wish to express my personal thanks to you, Admiral Joy, General Almond, and all your brave men for the effective operations at Hungnam. This saving of our men in this isolated beachhead is the best Christmas present I have ever had.”

Photographers and press correspondents flocked to Masan during the holiday season for pictures and interviews about various aspects of the Chosin Reservoir campaign. Among them was Captain John Ford, USNR, a successful motion picture director who had been recalled to active duty to make a documentary film depicting the role of the Navy and Marine Corps in Korea. He used scenes in the Masan area for background material.

General Smith was informed that a motion picture company intended to produce a feature film entitled “Retreat, Hell,” based on a remark attributed to him, “Retreat, Hell, we are just attacking in a different direction!” When asked if these actually were his words, the Division commander had a diplomatic answer. He said that he had pointed out to correspondents at Hagaru that the drive to Hamhung was not a typical withdrawal or retreat, and thus “the statement attributed to me described my thinking, that of my staff and unit commanders, and my situation.”

During the Masan interlude Colonel S. L. A. Marshall, USAR, arrived as a representative of the Operations Research Office of Johns Hopkins University, which had been employed on military research projects by the Far East Command. Marshall, a well-known military analyst who had written several books about World War II operations, based his studies on personal interviews with scores of participants.

The researcher was given a free hand at Masan. Aided by a stenographer, he interviewed officers and men from privates to commanding general. The resulting thousands of words went into a classified report entitled, “CCF in the Attack (Part II), A Study Based on the Operations of the 1stMarDiv in the Koto-ri, Hagaru-ri,

Yudam-ni area, 20 November–10 December 1950.”

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan
General Ridgway New Eusak Commander

Shortly after arrival at Masan, General Smith called a conference of unit commanders and emphasized that their task was to re-equip, resupply, repair and rehabilitate. Officers and men of replacement drafts were to be integrated and given unit training as soon as possible. Both veterans and newcomers were soon training in regimental areas assigned by Colonel Alpha L. Bowser, the Division G–3, who arranged for a 200-yard rifle range and a mortar range.

On 23 December came the news that Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, the Eighth Army commander, had been killed in a jeep accident. His successor, Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway, USA, had commanded the U.S. XVIII Airborne Corps in Europe during the final operations of World War II. Commencing his flight from Washington on the 24th, he landed at Tokyo just before midnight on Christmas day. [6]

The new commander's task was made more difficult by the fact that the Korean conflict, at the end of its first six months, had become probably the most unpopular military venture of American history, both at the front and in the United States. From a mere "police action" at first, the struggle soon developed into a major effort in which the national pride suffered humiliations as a consequence of military unpreparedness. Far from building up the morale of the troops, letters and newspapers from home too often contributed to the doubts of men who asked themselves these questions:

"Why are we here? And what are we fighting for?"

Some of the answers were scarcely reassuring. It was insinuated, for instance, that Americans were fighting "to make South Korean real estate safe for South Koreans."

"I must say in all frankness," commented General Ridgway in his memoirs, "that the spirit of the Eighth Army as I found it on my arrival gave me deep concern. There was a definite air of nervousness, of gloomy foreboding, of uncertainty, a spirit of apprehension as to what the future held. There was much 'looking over the shoulder' as the soldiers say."[7]

These criticisms were not applicable to the 1st Marine Division. "Our men were in high spirits and busily engaged in getting ready to fight again," commented Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, ADC. "In my travels around the various units of the Division, and in talking to the men, I never even once noticed any air of nervousness or apprehension. . . . When General Ridgway visited the Division at Masan he made a tour of the entire camp area and observed training and general arrangements. He stated that he was quite satisfied with the 1st Marine Division and its quick comeback after the Chosin fighting."[8]

General Ridgway learned soon after his arrival that the Eighth Army staff had prepared a plan for a phased withdrawal to Pusan in case of necessity. He called immediately for a plan of attack. Prospects of putting it into effect were not bright at the moment, but at least it served to announce his intentions.

Rumors were rife at this time that a general withdrawal from Korea, in virtual acknowledgment of defeat, was contemplated. In a letter of 1957, General Douglas MacArthur wrote an emphatic denial: "I have no means of knowing whether such action may have been seriously considered in Washington; but, for my own part, I never contemplated such a withdrawal and made no plans to that effect."[9]

Click here to view map

The front hugged the 38th Parallel during the last week of December as the Eighth Army held a defensive line along the Munsan-Chunchon-Yangyang axis (Map 2). Three U.S. divisions were in a combat zone

occupied largely by ROK units. The 24th and 25th Divisions both reduced a third in strength by casualties, remained in contact with the enemy in west Korea while the 1st Cavalry Division, also depleted in numbers, occupied blocking positions to the rear. Personnel and equipment losses suffered by the 2d Division during the CCF counteroffensive of late November had rendered it noneffective as a tactical unit until it could be reinforced and re–equipped, and the 3d and 7th Infantry Divisions had just landed in the Pusan-Ulsan area after the Hungnam redeployment.[10]

On 27 December 1950 the commanding general began a three-day tour of Eighth Army units at the front. He talked to hundreds of soldiers ranging from privates to unit commanders. There was nothing the matter with the Eighth Army, he assured them, that confidence wouldn't cure. "I told them their soldier forbears would turn over in their graves if they heard some of the stories I had heard about the behavior of some of our troop leaders in combat. The job of a commander was to be up where the crisis of action was taking place. In time of battle, I wanted division commanders to be up with their forward battalions, and I wanted corps commanders up with the regiment that was in the hottest action. If they had paper work to do, they could do it at night. By day their place was up there where the shooting was going on."

It could never have been said that this professional soldier, the son of a Regular Army colonel, had failed to set an example in his own career. As the commander of an airborne division, he had jumped along with his men in Normandy.

Seldom seen in Korea without a grenade attached to his harness, Ridgway insisted that it was not a gesture of showmanship. In mobile warfare a man might be surprised by the enemy when he least expected it, he said, and a grenade was useful for blasting one's way out of a tight spot.

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan
Ridgway's Declaration of Faith

After completing his tour of the combat area, the commanding general concluded that one thing was still lacking. Soldiers of the Eighth Army hadn't as yet been given an adequate answer to the questions, "Why are we here?" and "What are we fighting for?" In the belief that the men were entitled to an answer from their commanding general, he sat down in his room and wrote this declaration of faith:

"To me the issues are clear. It is not a question of this or that Korean town or village. Real estate is here, incidental. . . .

"The real issues are whether the power of Western civilization, as God has permitted it to flower in our own beloved lands, shall defy and defeat Communism; whether the rule of men who shoot their prisoners, enslave their citizens and deride the dignity of man, shall displace the rule of those to whom the individual and individual rights are sacred; whether we are to survive with God's hand to guide and lead us, or to perish in the dead existence of a Godless world.

"If these be true, and to me they are, beyond any possibility of challenge, then this has long since ceased to be a fight for freedom for our Korean allies alone and for their national survival. It has become, and it continues to be, a fight for our own freedom, for our own survival, in an honorable, independent national existence. . . ."[11]

The deep conviction of this declaration could not be doubted. But Ridgway did not confine himself to moral leadership; he also insisted on a return to sound tactical principles. Upon learning that some of the infantry commanders in combat sectors had no knowledge of the enemy's strength or whereabouts, he ordered that aggressive patrolling be resumed at once. He directed further that every unit make a resolute effort to provide a hot reception for the Red Chinese patrols which had met too little opposition while prodding every night for soft spots along the thinly held 135-mile United Nations line.[12]

In his talks with officers and men, the new commander told them that too many weapons and vehicles had fallen into the hands of the enemy during the withdrawals in west Korea. He made it plain that in the future any man abandoning equipment without good cause would be court-martialed.

Not only did Ridgway stress the increased use of firepower; he requested in one of his first messages to the Pentagon that 10 additional battalions of artillery be sent to Korea. These guns were to provide the tactical punch when he found an opportunity to take the offensive.

Meanwhile, he had the problem of putting up a defense against a Chinese Communist offensive expected within a week. On his first day as Eighth Army commander he sent a request to President Syngman Rhee, of the Republic of Korea, for 30,000 native laborers to dig field fortifications. The energetic, 71-year-old Korean patriot provided the first 10,000 at dawn the following morning and the others during the next two days. Armed with picks and shovels, this army of toilers created two broad belts of defense, one to the north and one south of the river Han. The purpose of the first was to stop the enemy if American firepower could compensate for lack of numbers, and the second was a final line to be held resolutely.

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan

Marine Personnel and Equipment Shortages

Although the Marine ground forces found themselves in the unusual situation of being 200 miles behind the front, they could be sure that this respite wouldn't last. Every effort was being pushed to restore the Division to combat efficiency by a command and staff acutely aware of shortages of men and equipment. The effective strength on 29 December 1950 was 1,304 officers and 20,696 men, including 182 attached U.S. Army troops and 143 Royal Marine Commandos. This total also included 28 officers and 1,615 men who had arrived in a replacement draft of 17 December, and 4 officers and 365 men in a draft of three days later.[13]

Authorized Division strength was 1,438 officers and 24,504 men, indicating a shortage of 134 officers and 3,808 men. Most of the deficiencies were in the infantry and artillery units—29 officers and 2,951 men in the three infantry regiments, and 38 officers and 538 men in the artillery.

Division G–1 had been informed by the FMFPac representative in Japan that about 5,000 casualties were hospitalized there, and an unknown number had been evacuated to the United States because of overcrowding of hospitals in Japan. Such factors made it difficult to predict how many would return to the Division, but G–1 estimated from 500 to 1,000 in January.

The situation in regard to Division equipment might be summed up by saying that on 23 December there was a serious shortage of practically all essential items with the single exception of M–1 rifles. Upon arrival at Masan, units had been required to submit stock status reports. These lists were forwarded on 23 December to the Commanding General, Eighth Army, with a notification that requisitions had been submitted to the 2d Logistical Command, USA, in Pusan. It was requested that deliveries of supplies and equipment be speeded up, so that the Division could soon be restored to its former combat efficiency. A comparison of the totals of selected items on 23 and 31 December as listed on the following page shows that considerable progress was made during those eight days.

The 2d Logistical Command in Pusan, commanded by Brigadier General Crump Garvin, USA, deserved much of the credit for the week's restoration of Marine equipment. Progress passed all expectations, considering that General Garvin was supplying other Eighth Army units which had lost equipment during their withdrawal.[14]

Click here to view table

There still existed on 29 December a requirement for clothing and individual equipment, and the spare parts problem remained acute. Ironically, the fact that the 1st Marine Division had brought most of its motor transport out from the Chosin Reservoir was a handicap at Masan. Eighth Army units which had lost their vehicles were given priority for receiving new ones. This meant that the Marines must make the best of war-worn trucks.

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan
Marine Air Squadrons in Action

While the ground forces trained in the Masan area, the Corsair squadrons and the jet squadron flew combat missions. Support of the Hungnam redeployment had top priority until 24 December, when the last of the 105,000 troops were evacuated by Rear Admiral James H. Doyle's Task Force 90. Such totals as 91,000 Korean refugees, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 measurement tons of cargo were also recorded by the U.S. Navy's largest operation of the Korean conflict.[15]

No serious trouble was experienced from enemy action during the two weeks of the redeployment, although G–2 reports warned that several Chinese divisions were believed to be in the general area. Air strikes and naval gunfire shared the credit for this result. Nearly 34,000 shells and 12,800 rockets were fired by the support ships, and UN planes were on station or carrying out missions every moment that weather permitted. Marine fighters of VMF–212, VMF–214, and VMF–323, flying from carriers after the closing of Yonpo Airfield, made a noteworthy contribution to the success of the Hungnam redeployment.[16]

VMF–212, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Richard W. Wyczawski, was assigned the task of gathering the helicopters of VMO–6 from various ships of the Seventh Fleet and returning them to the operational control of the 1st Marine Division at Masan. There the OYs of the observation squadron were waiting after an overland flight, and Major Vincent J. Gottschalk's unit was complete.

With the Hungnam redeployment ended, the Navy offered to make its primary carrier-borne air effort in support of the Eighth Army. There was no single over-all commander of Navy and Air Force aviation in Korea (other than General MacArthur himself) and the two services were working under a system of mutual agreement and coordination.[17]

The Far East Air Forces (FEAF), under Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer, was the senior Air Force command in the Far East, on the same level as ComNavFE, Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy. The largest FEAF subordinate command was the Fifth Air Force, commanded by Major General Earle E. Partridge, with headquarters at Taegu, alongside that of the Eighth Army.

Strictly speaking, land-based Marine air had been under Fifth Air Force operational control throughout the Chosin Reservoir operation. Actually a verbal agreement between General Partridge and Major General Field Harris, commanding the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), had given the Marines a good deal of latitude in making decisions relative to close air support. This was often the salvation of Marine units during the breakout, when every minute counted. Later, during the Hungnam redeployment, control of Marine aircraft became the responsibility of Admiral Doyle. His control agency was Tactical Air Control Squadron–1 (TacRon–1) in his flagship, the *Mount McKinley.* TacRon–1 kept in close touch not only with the 3d Infantry Division, USA, defending the shrinking perimeter, but also with the Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force.[18]

During the last days of 1950 the four Marine air squadrons were kept busy. VMF–212 on the *Bataan* was attached to TF–77. The coastline of east Korea was its hunting grounds for such missions as knocking out warehouses, bridges, and railway tunnels between the 38th and 39th parallels.

Along the west coast, VMF–214 on the *Sicily* and VMF–323 on the *Badoeng Strait* were commanded respectively by Major William M. Lundin and Major Arnold A. Lund. These squadrons were part of Task Group-95.1 under Vice Admiral Sir William G. Andrews, RN. The Marine aviators found themselves in an organization made up of Royal Commonwealth naval forces and of French, Thai, and ROK units. TG–95.1 had the responsibility for patrolling the western coastline to prohibit enemy movement by water in military junks and by

vehicle along the littoral.[19]

VMF-311, the jet squadron commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Neil R. MacIntyre, remained the only land-based Marine air unit in Korea. The Fifth Air Force had made space for it on crowded K–9, seven air miles northeast of Pusan, when General Harris expressed a desire to keep his jets in Korea for possible defense against Red air attacks (Map 3).

Click here to view map

MacIntyre exercised his prerogative as squadron commander to fly the unit's first combat mission on 17 December. He was not, however, the first Marine aviator to pilot a jet in combat. That distinction went to Captain Leslie E. Brown on 9 September 1950. Assigned to the Fifth Air Force's 8th Fighter-Bomber Squadron as an exchange pilot, he made the first of several routine flights with an F-80 Shooting Star.

On 20 December, 17 officers and 51 enlisted men arrived at K–9 to boost VMF-311's total to 27 officer pilots and 95 enlisted men. Under Fifth Air Force control, they were employed to attack suspected CCF troop shelters, entrenchments, and gun positions on the eve of the expected enemy offensive. Missions of the jet planes averaged 12 a day at the end of the month.

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan
The Air Force System of Control

It was seldom realized in the middle of the twentieth century that for the first time since the Middle Ages, a single human being represented in his person a decisive tactical unit. Just as the mailed knight on his barded charger had ruled the battlefields of the medieval world, so did the pilot of a modern aircraft have the power to put an enemy battalion to flight with napalm, or to knock out an enemy stronghold with a 500-pound bomb.

A great deal depended, of course, on how the lightning of this human thunderbolt was controlled. The Marine Corps and the Air Force had different ideas on the subject. At the foundation of the Marine system was the concept that the needs of the ground forces came first, and control of air support should be exercised by the troops being supported. In each Marine infantry battalion a tactical air control party (TACP) included two aviators—one to be employed as a forward air controller (FAC) at the front, and the other as an air liaison officer in the battalion supporting arms center (SAC).[20]

In an emergency both could quickly be assigned to companies or even platoons to “talk” air strikes down on the enemy. The normal chain of command was bypassed in favor of direct radio from the TACP to the cognizant air control agency that had the authority to cross-check the request for possible conflict with other operations and to channel fighter-bombers to the attack.

Intermediate commands kept themselves informed of the over-all air picture and controlled the employment of aviation by their own subordinates as they listened in on these requests. They indicated approval by remaining silent, and disapproval by transmitting a countermand.

The hub of the Air Force system was the Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) of the Fifth Air Force-EUSAK Joint Operations Center (JOC), known by the code name MELLOW. An aviator coming on duty called up MELLOW and received his instructions from JOC.

FACs were assigned to U.S. Army and British units down to corps, division, and regimental levels, and to ROK corps and divisions. Further assignment to smaller front line units was possible but entailed a good deal of time and advance planning. And even the most urgent requests had to be channeled through division and regimental levels to JOC for approval.

If a Marine FAC wasn’t able to control an air strike visually because of terrain conditions, he called for a “tactical air coordinator, airborne” (TACA) to locate the target from the air and direct planes to the attack. The Fifth Air Force also used special airborne coordinators. Known as “Mosquitoes,” they flew low-winged, two-seater North American training planes, designated T–6s by the Air Force and SNJs by the Navy.

This plan was capable under favorable circumstances of providing the Fifth Air Force-EUSAK tactical air control system with a mobile and flexible means of directing air power at the front. Its chief weakness, according to Marine doctrine, lay in the separation of air power from ground force control. The Air Force claimed the advantage of projecting tactical air power deep into enemy territory; but as the Marines saw it, this was deep or interdictory support, and not to be compared to genuine close air support.

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Chapter 1. Interlude at Masan
X Corps Conference at Kyongju

The command and staff of the 1st Marine Division could only speculate during this interim period as to what the near future might hold for them. Rumors had been circulated, during the first week at Masan, that the Division would be employed as rearguard to cover an Eighth Army withdrawal from Korea, with Pusan serving as the port of debarkation. And while plans cannot be made on a basis of rumor, General Smith and Colonel Bowser went so far as to discuss the possibility seriously. At last, on 24 December, a more definite prospect loomed when the EUSAK staff requested the Division to furnish logistical data for a move by rail and truck to Wonju, some 130 miles north of Masan.

It was not known whether an actual move was contemplated or the intention was merely to have available a plan for future use if the occasion warranted. General Smith sent the data but added a strong recommendation to the effect that any commitment of the Division be postponed until it was re-equipped and strengthened by replacements.[21]

At this time the Marine general received a copy of a map prepared by the Eighth Army staff which showed the phase lines of a 200-mile withdrawal from the combat zone to the Pusan port of debarkation. No enlightenment as to the employment of the Division was forthcoming until 27 December 1950, however, when a EUSAK dispatch directed that the Marines be detached from Eighth Army reserve and reassigned to the operational control of X Corps.[22]

A message of the 28th requested General Smith to attend a conference at the X Corps CP at Kyongju (about 60 air miles northeast of Masan) on the 30th. He was directed to bring several members of his staff with him and to assign a liaison officer to X Corps.[23]

Two VMO–6 helicopters flew him to Kyongju along with his G–3, Colonel Bowser, and his aide, Captain Martin J. Sexton. Tossed by high winds, they landed just in time to meet General Ridgway, who gave a talk emphasizing the necessity for reconnaissance and maintaining contact with the enemy.

The new plan for X Corps employment, as modified after discussion with the Eighth Army commander, called for the recently reorganized 2d Infantry Division to be placed under operational control of General Almond. It was to move out at once to the Wonju front, followed by the 3d and 7th Infantry Divisions. The 1st Marine Division was to stage to Pohangdong (Map 3) on the east coast, some 65 miles north of Pusan, with a view to being eventually employed on this same front.[24]

“Certainly no one could accuse General Almond, the X Corps commander, of defeatism,” was a tribute paid by General Smith. On the contrary, the Marine general had sometimes differed with him on the grounds that he was aggressive to the point of giving too little weight to logistical considerations and time and space factors.

It was realized at the conference that administrative decisions must depend to a large extent on the outcome of the impending enemy offensive. G–2 officers of the Eighth Army, forewarned by prisoner interrogations, were not surprised when the blow fell shortly before midnight on the last night of the year.

In spite of Air Force bombings of roads and suspected supply dumps, the Chinese Reds had been able to mount a great new offensive only three weeks after the old one ended. Attacking in the bitter cold of New Year’s Eve, they made penetrations during the first few hours in ROK-held sectors of the central and eastern fronts. By daybreak it became evident that Seoul was a major objective, with the UN situation deteriorating rapidly.

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive

ON THE LAST DAY of 1950 the 1st Marine Division was alerted for two missions within an hour. At 1425 it was detached from X Corps, after only four days, and once more assigned to the operational control of the Eighth Army. The Marines were directed to resume their former mission of training, reorganizing, and replacing equipment so that they could be employed either to block enemy penetrations along the Ulchin-Yongju-Yechon axis (Map 4), or to take over a sector along the main line of resistance (MLR).

Forty minutes later another EUSAK dispatch alerted the Division to move to the Pohang-Andong area, where it would be in position to block any CCF penetration. This warning order came as no surprise, since X Corps had already contemplated such employment for General Smith's troops. In fact, General Craig and Deputy Chief of Staff Colonel Edward W. Snedeker had left Masan that very morning to select assembly areas and command posts.[1]

At a conference of G–3 and G–4 officers held at Masan on New Year's Day, it was recommended that the administrative headquarters remain in its present location when the rest of the Division moved up to Pohang. Although this headquarters had accompanied the Division CP in the past, it was believed that gains in mobility would result if the large number of clerical personnel and their increasing bulk of documents were left behind.[2] In view of the changing situation at the front, there was less danger of losing valuable records if the headquarters continued to function at Masan, maintaining contact with the forward CP by means of daily courier planes. The plan was approved by the Division commander and worked out to general satisfaction.

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive
UN Forces Give Ground

Decisions were made during the first few days of 1951 in an atmosphere of suspense and strain as adverse reports came from the firing line. General Ridgway had assumed correctly, on the basis of prisoner interrogations, that the main Chinese effort would be channeled down the historical invasion corridor north of Seoul. He made his dispositions accordingly, and the Eighth Army order of battle on 31 December 1950 (Map 2) was as follows:

U.S. I Corps—Turkish Brigade, U.S. 25th Division, ROK 1st Division, from left to right northwest of Seoul. In Corps reserve, British 29th Brigade.

U.S. IX Corps—ROK 6th Division, U.S. 24th Division, from left to right north of Seoul. In Corps reserve, British Commonwealth 27th Brigade, U.S. 1st Cavalry Division.

ROK III Corps—ROK 2d, 5th, and 8th Divisions, from left to right on central front. In Corps reserve, ROK 7th Division.

ROK II Corps—ROK 3d Division, on east-central front.

ROK I Corps—ROK 9th and Capital Divisions, from left to right on eastern front.

The U.S. X Corps, comprising the newly reorganized U.S. 2d Infantry Division at Wonju and the 7th Infantry Division in the Chungju area, had been given a mission of bolstering the ROK-held line in central and east Korea and blocking enemy penetrations to the rear.

In Eighth Army reserve was the 187th Airborne RCT, with Thailand Battalion attached, in the Suwon area. Also under EUSAK operational control in rear areas were the 1st Marine Division (Masan), the 3d Infantry Division (Kyongju), the Canadian Battalion (Miryang) and the New Zealand Field Artillery Battalion (Pusan).

Altogether, the United Nations forces in Korea numbered 444,336 men as of January 1951. The cosmopolitan character of the fight against Communism is indicated by the aid given to the U.S. and ROK forces by contingents of combat troops from 13 other nations—Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.[3]

Enemy numbers at this time were estimated at a total of 740,000 men in Korea and near-by Manchuria. Seven CCF armies, the 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 42d, 50th, and 66th were identified among the troops attacking on New Year's Eve. The NKPA I and V Corps also participated. Estimated strength of the assaulting forces was 174,000 Chinese and 60,000 North Koreans.

Previously identified but not reported in contact with U.S. forces on 31 December were the 24th, 48th, 49th, and 65th CCF armies and the NKPA 1st, 3d, and 15th Divisions.

As another possibility which could not be overlooked, the five CCF armies which had opposed X Corps in northeast Korea might also take part in the new offensive. Elements of the 20th, 26th, 27th, 30th, and 32d Armies identified in that area early in December, had more than two weeks in which to reorganize and make their way to the Eighth Army front. If they got into the fight, it would mean a formidable addition to the enemy's forces.

With only five days at his disposal, after arrival in Korea, General Ridgway's preparations were limited. His dispositions could not be blamed, but it was the old story of the chain and its weakest link as the enemy scored a major breakthrough at the expense of the 1st ROK Division on the west-central front. Unfortunately, this unit represented the tactical joint between I Corps and IX Corps. The enemy widened the gap before dawn and drove on toward Seoul.

Early in the morning the EUSAK commanding general was on the road, waving his arms in an attempt to stop ROK soldiers streaming rearward in their vehicles after abandoning crew-served weapons. The short training period for these troops, their tactical inexperience, and the language barrier were the dissonant notes tolling the ominous chords of defeat. The whole front was endangered as the enemy poured through an ever widening gap, and Ridgway ordered that roadblocks be set up where MPs could halt the fugitives, rearm them, and send them back to the front. At his request, President Syngman Rhee appealed to ROK soldiers over the radio and exhorted them to make a stand. By that time it was too late to save Seoul, and the commanding general gave orders for its evacuation.

"The withdrawal was initiated in mid-afternoon on the 3d," he commented in retrospect. "I stayed on the bridge site on the north bank until dark to watch the passage of the most critical loads. These were the 8-inch howitzers and the British Centurion tanks, both of which exceeded the safety limits of the bridge under the conditions existing at the time."[4]

It was a scene of terror and despair that Ridgway never forgot. Thousands of Korean civilian refugees were making their way over the thin ice of the river Han, many of them carrying children or old people on their backs. What impressed the observer most was the uncanny silence of this mass flight in the freezing winter dusk, broken only by the sound of a multitude of feet shuffling over the ice—a sound strangely like a vast whispering. It was as if these derelicts of war were trying incoherently to confide their misery to someone.

From a strategic viewpoint, the only course left to the Eighth Army was a continued retirement south of Seoul. "We came back fast," Ridgway admitted, "but as a fighting army, not as a running mob. We brought our dead and wounded with us, and our guns, and our will to fight."[5]

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive
Further Eighth Army Withdrawals

EUSAK Fragmentary Operations Plan 20, issued as an order on 4 January, called for a further withdrawal to Line D (Map 4). In preparation, X Corps had moved up to the front on the 2d, after assuming operational control of the U.S. 2d and 7th Infantry Divisions and the ROK 2d, 5th, and 8th Divisions and occupied a sector between U.S. IX Corps and ROK III Corps.[6]

Click here to view map

The U.S. 3d Division was attached to I Corps and the 187th Airborne RCT passed temporarily under operational control of IX Corps.

By 7 January the UN forces had pulled back to a modified Line D extending from Pyongtaek on the west coast to Samchok on the east and taking in Yoju and Chechon. General Ridgway sent telegrams to all corps commanders expressing dissatisfaction with the personnel and material losses inflicted on the enemy during the withdrawal. “I shall expect,” each message concluded, “utmost exploitation of every opportunity in accordance with my basic directive.”

That evening, foreshadowing the offensive operations he was contemplating, the commanding general ordered a reconnaissance-in-force by a reinforced infantry regiment north to Osan to search out the enemy and inflict maximum punishment. No contacts were made, nor did strong patrols sent out by U.S. IX Corps flush out any sizeable groups of Chinese. But the Eighth Army had served notice that it intended to regain the initiative at the first opportunity.

One more blow remained to be absorbed. On the 8th the Communists struck in the Wonju area with an attack of four divisions. Elements of the newly reorganized 2d Infantry Division were forced to give up that important highway and rail center after counterattacks failed. The enemy now directed his main effort along the Chunchon-Wonju-Chechon corridor, and North Korean guerrilla forces infiltrated through the gap between the U.S. X Corps and ROK III Corps.

The salient created by this CCF attack caused Line D to be modified again so that in the center it dipped sharply downward to Chungju before curving northeast to Samchok (Map 4).

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive
Marine Aircraft in the Battle

The pilots and aircrewmen of the three carrier squadrons and the land-based jet squadron were the only Marines in a position to take an active part in the battle. With but one TACP per division, close air support was out of the question for the ROKs on New Year's Day.

Control facilities were severely strained when scores of UN fliers made use of the frequencies which the Mosquitoes employed for tactical air direction. The voices were all in the English language, but with more than one person doing the sending, shrill side noises sliced in to garble the whole into a cacophony of jungle sounds. A Mosquito trying to coach a fighter-bomber attack at the crossings of the Imjin might be drowned out by a distant pilot calling up a controller in the Hwachon Reservoir Area.[7]

As a consequence, there was no coordinated air-ground attack in direct support of the man in the foxhole. Most of the JOC effort was directed to the enemy's rear in an effort to block supporting arms, reinforcements, and supplies.

The two Marine squadrons attached to Admiral Ruble's carriers were at sea, some 80 miles south of Inchon when news of the Chinese offensive filtered through the tedious communication channels from JOC and EUSAK. Major Lund, CO of VMF–323, led an eight-plane attack which destroyed enemy trucks and some 40 huts believed to be occupied by CCF troops in a village south of the Imjin.

Another Marine air mission of New Year's Day was the flight commanded by Major Kenneth L. Reusser for the purpose of wiping out a reported CCF concentration on the central front. Unfortunately, he could not get verification that the target consisted of enemy troops. Before a decision could be made, Reusser heard a Mosquito of the 2d ROK Division calling urgently for any flier in the area to hit another CCF concentration (this time verified) in a village to the enemy's rear of the Chorwon-Hwachon area. Under the Mosquito's direction the Corsairs bombed and napalmed the village, then strafed survivors trying to escape.

VMF–212, flying with Navy (Task Force) TF–77 on the eastern side of the peninsula, had a busy New Year's Day. Two eight-plane interdiction strikes were flown in the morning against rear area targets along the coastal highways. The afternoon brought an emergency call from JOC, and the squadron "scrambled" 14 planes which hit the east flank of an extensive enemy push south of the Hwachon Reservoir.[8]

More than 300 UN fighter-bombers were sent out under JOC, or MELLOW, control on the embattled first day of 1951. On the west coast TacRon–3 received more calls for air support than TG–96.8 could fill. Rear Admiral Lyman A. Thackrey sent a request to Admiral Struble in the *Missouri* for additional carrier planes, and within a few hours the Marines of VMF-212 were detached and on their way to the west coast to join the other two Corsair squadrons of TG–96.8.

All four Marine fighter-bomber squadrons took part daily in air operations as the Chinese Reds continued their advance south of Seoul. VMF–311 was badly handicapped, however, by mechanical difficulties. Engine or radio trouble accounted for five "aborts" of the 15 sorties launched on 4 January. The remaining pilots could not make radio contacts with their assigned Mosquito controller, and had little choice other than to attack targets of opportunity.

The jets continued in action, but it was realized that they were not giving the maximum of their capabilities. By mid-January the squadron had become almost ineffective through no fault of its own. Technical representatives from the companies that had manufactured both the engine and plane were flown to K–9 (Map 3), and on the 16th all jets were grounded. These inspectors did not work on the planes; they were empowered only to

report the nature of the trouble to the airplane companies concerned. The companies in turn reported to BuAir in Washington, which sent instructions and if necessary mechanics to Itami, where major aircraft maintenance was done.

Meanwhile, the fall of Seoul meant that the Air Force was evicted by enemy action from such major fields as Kimpo and K–16 on an island in the river Han. The Sabre jets and Mosquitoes had to be pulled back, and soon the F–51s were no longer secure at Suwon from an advancing enemy.

Admiral Thackrey's Western Deployment Group completed the evacuation from Inchon of 70,000 tons of supplies, 2,000 vehicles, and about 5,000 troops.[9] As the Navy closed out activities on the west coast, TG–96.8 sent out its last combat air missions on 7 January. VMF–214 made its final reconnaissance patrols; VMF–212 flew 25 sorties in support of UN troops in central Korea; and VMF–323 took part in a series of Air Force raids on enemy troop assembly areas in the Hoengsong area.[9]

Until the last, the carrier Marines alternated their Eighth Army support missions with routine CAPs, coastal searches, and airfield bombings. Admiral Thackrey's Redeployment Group, including TacRon–3, completed its task in the Inchon area and departed on the 7th. On that same day HMS *Theseus,* flying the flag of Admiral Andrewes, was back in west coast waters as the British pilots resumed their coastal patrols and naval air support on that side of the peninsula. Within a week VMF–212 and the *Bataan* returned to fly alternate tours of duty with the pilots of the *Theseus.* The other two carrier squadrons found themselves unemployed for the time being. Not only were they out of a job, they were also homeless, since the United Nations had been forced to give up airfields at Yonpo, Wonsan, Seoul, Kimpo, and Suwon. Only K–1, K–2, K–4, K–9, K–10, and two small fields near Taegu remained (Map 2), and they would scarcely serve the needs of FEAF. Thus it was that VMF–214 and VMF–323 found a temporary haven at Itami, along with VMF–311 and most of the administrative and service units of the 1st MAW. There was nothing to do but wait until a new home could be found for the fighter-bomber squadrons.

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive

1st Marine Division Assigned Mission

The Marine aviators might have found some consolation in the fact that their comrades of the ground forces were also groping in a fog of uncertainty. At the most critical period of the CCF thrust in the Wonju area, General Smith was summoned to Taegu on 8 January for a conference with General Ridgway. The Eighth Army commander proposed to attach one of the Marine RCTs to X Corps in the Andong area, about 95 air miles north of Masan. The remainder of the Division would then move to the Pohang-Kyongju-Yongchon area, some 60 air miles northeast of Masan (Map 4).

Ridgway asked the Marine general to discuss the prospect with his staff. He realized, he said, that no commander liked to have his division split up, and he assured Smith that as soon as the X Corps zone became stabilized, the RCT would be sent back to him.

They parted with this understanding, but a few hours after his return by air to Masan the following message was received from Ridgway:

"Subsequent your departure, alternate plan occurred to me on which I would like your views soonest. It follows: 1st Mar Div, under Army control, move without delay to general area outlined to you personally today, to take over responsibility at date and hour to be announced later for protection of MSR between Andong and Kyongju, both inclusive, and prevent hostile penetration in force south of Andong-Yongdok road."[10]

At 1115 on the 9th the plan was made official. An Eighth Army dispatch ordered the 1st Marine Division to move without delay to the Pohang area (Map 4), remaining under EUSAK control, with the following missions:

(a) Prevent enemy penetrations in force south of the Andong-Yongdok road;

(b) Protect the MSR connecting Pohang, Kyongju, Yongchon, Uihung, and Uisong.[11]

Based on these directives, Division OpnO 1–51 was issued at 1600 on the 9th. RCT–1 was directed to move by motor to Yongchon and to protect the MSR, Yongchon-Uisong inclusive, from positions in the vicinity of Yongchon and Uihung. The 1st and 7th Motor Transport Battalions, plus other Division elements, were ordered to provide the required trucks.[12]

General Ridgway arrived at Masan by plane on the morning of 9 January. He was met by General Smith and driven to Headquarters, where the Division staff officers and regimental commanders were presented to him. In a brief talk he reiterated the necessity for reconnaissance and for regaining and maintaining contact with the enemy. The Marine officers were told that limited offensive actions by Eighth Army units would be put into effect soon.[13]

Division OpnO 2–51, issued at 1300 on the 10th, provided for the completion of the Division movement by road and water from Masan to the objective area.[14]

Shortages both of personnel and equipment were much reduced during the first two weeks of January. Returns to duty of battle and nonbattle casualties added 945 to the Division strength. Corresponding improvements had been made in the material readiness of the Division. Early in January a large resupply shipment arrived from Kobe, and a Navy cargo ship brought supplies and equipment which had been left behind at Inchon in October. Thus the situation was generally satisfactory except for nearly 1,900 gaps in the ranks that remained to be filled.[15]

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive
Replacements by Air and Sea

Facilities for air transport across the Pacific were limited, since the Army was also moving replacements to the Far East. A piecemeal process of shuttling Marines in plane-load increments could not be completed before 30 January. Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., commanding FMFPac, took a dim view of this delay. It would be better for the Division, he maintained, to receive even a part of its replacements before it went back into action. As a compromise, he proposed a combined air-sea lift which met the approval of Rear Admiral Arthur H. Radford, commanding Pacific Fleet.

Three replacement drafts were already on the way, with the 3d in Japan and the 4th and 5th at Camp Pendleton. General Shepherd scraped the bottom of the manpower barrel so closely that he dug up an additional 700 men from Marine security detachments in Japan, the Philippines, and other Pacific Ocean bases.

Seven trainloads of Marines from Camp Lejeune arrived at San Francisco on 10 January to join those from Camp Pendleton. On the same day 230 of these replacements were flown to Hawaii by the Military Air Transportation Service (MATS), by the R5D's of Marine VMR–352 and of Navy VR–5, and by the "Mars" flying boats of Navy VR–9. The next day 799 Marines sailed on the fast transport USNS *General W. O. Darby.* The remainder were transported at the rate of one plane load a day by MATS and at the rate of three or four plane loads a day by the Navy and Marine transport planes of Fleet Logistics Air Wing, Pacific (FLogAirWingPac).[16]

Five days later, on the 16th, the airlift had cleared the last Marine out of Treasure Island. On 21 January, 1,000 men of the special draft were already with the 1st Division at Pohang and the 799 on board *General Darby* were due to dock at Pusan.

It had been a fast job of coordination by the Navy, Army, Air Force, and virtually all major units of the Marine Corps. Much of the special airlift was flown by the R5Ds of VMR–352 and of VMR–152. The former, commanded by Colonel William B. Steiner, had been flying the El Toro–Tokyo flights since October, but most of its effort had been in shuttling between the mainland and Hawaii. VMR–152 had concentrated on the Hawaii–Japan leg of the long trip. During the Chosin campaign, the squadron commander, Colonel Deane C. Roberts, had maintained his headquarters and 10 planes at Itami to support the shuttle to Korea. He had barely returned to Hawaii from that job when his squadron was alerted not only for the special lift of Marine replacements but also for a return to the Far East.[17]

Hawaii had been the bottleneck in this special troop lift. Land and seaplanes were discharging their human cargo at Barbers Point, Hickam Air Force Base, and Keehi Lagoon. From there FLogAirWingPac had to space the planes over the long stretches of sea at approximately four-hour intervals. The guiding factor was other air traffic over the same route and the servicing, messing, and rescue capabilities of Guam and other points along the way, such as tiny Johnston Island. The latter was barely big enough for its single 6,100-foot runway.

VMR–152 and the Navy's VR–21 were assigned the mission of flying the long Hawaii-Japan portion of the big lift. Itami became another collection center for the airborne replacements and five of the VMR–152 planes were retained there to shuttle the troops the last 300 miles to K–3, near Pohang (Map 2). On 21 January the troop lift reached virtual completion, but Admiral Radford authorized the 1st MAW to retain a couple of R5D's at Itami a little longer. Thus the Marines were able to avoid highway and rail traffic jams in Korea by flying men and materials from troop and supply centers in Japan to K–1, K–3, or K–9.

Looking back at the troop lift from a historical distance, the observer is most impressed by its demonstration of teamwork on a gigantic scale. The Marine Corps had functioned as a single great unit, even

though a continent and an ocean separated the vanguard in Korea from the rear echelons in North Carolina.

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive
The Move to Japanese Airfields

The seven remaining UN airfields in Korea were of course not enough to accommodate the 25 FEAF and Marine tactical squadrons. Logistics and lack of space proved to be knotty problems. Thirty tank cars of gasoline a day were needed for normal flight operations of K–2 alone. Yet it took these cars eight days to make the 120-mile Pusan-Taegu round trip, such was the strain put on the railway system by the CCF offensive.

FEAF had standby plans to evacuate Korea entirely in an emergency. Some of the secondary airfields of the Itazuke complex in Japan had been reevaluated for this purpose. Originally built by the Japanese for World War II, they were obsolescent by 1951 and because of weather, neglect, and misuse badly deteriorated.[18]

The most promising of these secondary airfields were Tsuika, Ozuki, and Bofu (Map 3), ranging from 30 to 65 miles east of Itazuke and facing one another around Japan's Inland Sea. Nearest to Itazuke and on the same island of Kyushu was Tsuika. Across the narrow Shimonoseki Strait, on the shore line of Honshu, were Ozuki and Bofu.

General Stratemeyer, the FEAF commander, informed General MacArthur that it was necessary to start air operations from Ozuki and Bofu as soon as possible. A good deal of work had already been done on Tsuika, even to moving a major Japanese highway in order to lengthen the runway to 7,000 feet. The Air Force general wanted to repair Ozuki for his F–51 squadrons, and Bofu was to be reserved for the 1st MAW.

This decision meant a revision of plans for the Marines. MAG–12 had recently been lifting a hundred men a day to K–1 (Pusan west) with a view to making it into a major base. These preparations came to an abrupt halt, pending the final decision on Bofu.

A Marine survey of that World War II airfield showed it to be in serious disrepair. The Air Force had already rejected it as a base for night-harassing B-26s. Although the runway was only 7 feet above sea level, a 720-foot hill complicated the traffic pattern. Nevertheless, Bofu was considered suitable for the time being, and the Air Force assured the 1st MAW that its use would be but temporary.

FEAF proposed that the Marines start flying out of Bofu immediately, operating under field conditions. There were, however, essential repairs to be made. The 5,300-foot runway remained in fair condition, but much of the taxiway was not surfaced and couldn't stand heavy use by the Corsairs. Three of the four hangars needed extensive repairs, as did the barracks and mess hall. Fuel would have to be stored in drums.

The Wing had the capability for minor construction but lacked the equipment, men, and fiscal authority to handle major work on the runways and taxiways. The Air Force offered to furnish the labor and materials, provided that the Navy pay for them. The Navy in its turn was too limited in funds to restore an Air Force field for only temporary use by Marines.

Finally, a compromise solved the problem. The Navy agreed to have the engineering work done by a detachment of its Mobile Construction Battalion 2 (Seabees) and furnish the concrete for patching the runways and rebuilding the warm-up aprons. The Air Force was to provide the pierced steel planking for the runways.

On 15 January MAG–33 sent an advance detachment of 125 officers and men to Bofu to do some of the preliminary work, and on the following day the Seabees initiated the heavy construction. The restoration of K–1 was meanwhile resumed by MAG–12.

Until these two fields were made ready, VMF–212 on the *Bataan* would be the only Marine squadron in combat.

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive
Red China's "Hate America" Campaign

The middle of January was also a transition period for the 1st Marine Division. In accordance with Division Orders 1–51 and 2–51, the movement from Masan commenced at 0545 on 10 January when the first serial of RCT–1 departed by motor for the Pohang-Andong area. LSTs 898 and 914 sailed the next day with elements of the Tank, Ordnance, Engineer, and Service Battalions. The new Division CP opened at Sinhung, about five miles southeast of Pohang, at 1600 on 16 January; and by the 17th all designated motor and water lifts were completed. Thus the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing were poised to begin new operations which will be described in the following chapter.[19]

By 15 January relative quiet prevailed along the entire front; the Chinese Reds had shot their bolt. In terms of territorial gains (Map 4) the Communists could claim a victory, for they had inflicted heavy losses both in troop casualties and equipment on the UN forces. Yet the CCF January offensive could not compare with the November–December attacks either in moral or material damage done to the Eighth Army. This time the UN divisions had withdrawn for the most part in good order after the rout of ROK units at the outset. Nor were Ridgway's troops always driven from their positions by enemy action. Whenever he had an option between sacrificing men or Korean real estate, it was the latter he chose. And by his insistence on good combat discipline, he made the enemy pay an exorbitant price.

Nevertheless, the blunt fact remains that the United Nations forces had been beaten in spite of an overwhelming superiority in aircraft, artillery, armor, and transport as well as command of the sea. Stateside Americans can scarcely be blamed for asking themselves why their well-equipped divisions had been defeated twice within six weeks by an Asiatic peasant army using semiguerrilla tactics and depending largely on small arms, mortars, and light artillery.

The answer cannot be given in simplified terms. Although the Chinese Reds were represented by a peasant army, it was also a first-rate army when judged by its own tactical and strategic standards. Military poverty might be blamed for some of its deficiencies in arms and equipment, but its semiguerrilla tactics were based on a mobility which could not be burdened with heavy weapons and transport. The Chinese coolie in the padded cotton uniform could do one thing better than any other soldier on earth; he could infiltrate around an enemy position in the darkness with unbelievable stealth. Only Americans who have had such an experience can realize what a shock it is to be surprised at midnight with the grenades and submachine gun slugs of gnomelike attackers who seemed to rise out of the very earth.

Press correspondents were fond of referring to "the human sea tactics of the Asiatic hordes." Nothing could be further from the truth. In reality the Chinese seldom attacked in units larger than a regiment. Even these efforts were usually reduced to a seemingly endless succession of platoon infiltrations. It was not mass but deception and surprise which made the Chinese Red formidable.

They also had an advantage over Western soldiers in their ability to withstand hunger and cold while making long night marches. After all, the rigors of a winter campaign in Korea were not much worse than the hardships the Chinese peasant had endured all his life. Usually he was a veteran of at least five years' combat experience, for China had known little but war since the Japanese invasion of 1935. Many of Mao Tse-tung's troops, in fact, were former Nationalists who had fought for Chiang Kai-shek.

The Chinese Reds held another advantage in Korean terrain well suited to their tactical system. This factor has been ably summarized by U.S. Military Academy historians:

"The mountains are high, and the deep gorges between them are a bar to traffic even when the streams

are dry or frozen. Roads are few, and those that do exist are not suited for heavy traffic. Transportation then becomes a problem for the pack mule and the human back rather than the self-propelled vehicle. Telephone wires are difficult to lay and, with guerrillas on every hand, are doubly hard to maintain. Even radio is limited by such terrain, with a considerable reduction in range. In all, most observers have agreed that American forces have seldom fought in terrain to which modern means of war are less adaptable."[20]

The fanaticism and political indoctrination of the CCF soldier must also be taken into account. His introduction to Communism began when he was persuaded that China's small farms would be taken away from the hated landlords and divided among the people. This is the first stage of every Communist upheaval. Next comes a reign of terror calculated to liquidate the entire class of landlords and small shopkeepers. Communist China, almost literally wading in blood, had reached this second phase in 1951, the "year of violence." Mass trials were held in which the People's Tribunals, keyed up to a frenzy of fury, sentenced group after group of "Capitalist oppressors" to death without bothering about the evidence. The executions were public spectacles. An estimated million and a half of them took place in 1951 alone as loudspeakers on street corners blared out first-hand descriptions.

Drives were organized for everything in Red China. So rapidly did they multiply that humorless Communist leaders saw no absurdity in announcing a new drive to reduce the number of drives. And when the Youth League tried too zealously to please, a drive was launched "to Correct the Undesirable Habit of Filing False Reports."[21] Under these circumstances it is understandable that great emphasis was placed on Red China's "Hate America" drive early in 1951. The illiterate masses were made to believe that Americans praticed all manner of bestialities, including even cannibalism. This was the indoctrination of the CCF soldier in Korea, and political commissars with a captain's authority were attached to each company to see that no backsliding occurred. In case of doubt, it was a simple matter to compel the suspected political deviate to kneel at the roadside and await a bullet from behind.

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Chapter 2. The CCF January Offensive
A Tactical Formula for Victory

It might well be inquired where Red China raised the funds, for even wars waged with human cannon fodder do not come cheaply. Much of the money was donated by new farm owners as "voluntary" contributions exceeding by far the rent and taxes of pre-Communist years. The slave labor of millions of Chinese sent to concentration camps also helped to foot the bill. In the long run, however, the Communist lords found perhaps their most effective means in the extortion of ransom from Chinese living outside the country on pain of torturing or killing relatives dwelling within its borders. Enormous sums were collected in spite of the efforts of foreign governments to put an end to this form of secret terrorism.[22]

Altogether, the army of Red China may be appraised as a formidable instrument on terrain suited to its tactics. Several of America's foremost military thinkers were convinced, nevertheless, that Eighth Army reverses of the first few months in Korea were the penalty paid for a national preoccupation with airborne atomic weapons at the expense of preparations for limited wars.

It was only natural that the American public and its political and military leaders in Washington should have been much concerned about a weapon with the capability of wiping out a medium-size city in a minute.[23] Their anxiety was heightened by President Truman's announcement on 23 September 1949 that Soviet Russia had exploded an atomic bomb. A great many Americans, probably a majority, sincerely believed that it was hardly worthwhile to prepare for an old-fashioned limited war when the Armageddon of the future would be fought to an awesome finish with thermonuclear weapons. National policy was shaped by this line of reasoning; and though we had every opportunity to study Chinese tactics prior to 1950, few if any preparations were made to cope with them. The outbreak of Korean hostilities found the four U.S. skeleton divisions in Japan woefully unready, both morally and materially.

At a later date three high-placed U.S. Army generals, Matthew B. Ridgway, James M. Gavin, and Maxwell D. Taylor, would retire because they could not reconcile their views with a national policy which they interpreted as placing all our strategic eggs in the basket of intercontinental bombers and guided missiles. Afterwards, as advocates of preparedness for limited as well as atomic warfare, they published books presenting their side of the case.[24]

On 15 January 1951 these developments were still in the future, of course. But even at the time it had already been made evident that the armed forces of Red China were not an exception to the age-old rule that there is no such thing as an invincible army. When they came up against well trained and led U.S. Army outfits in both of their offensives, they always had a fight on their hands and frequently a repulse.

The Marines had proved beyond doubt in their Chosin Reservoir campaign that the Chinese Reds could be beaten by ground and air firepower engendered by sound training, discipline, and combat leadership. Five Chinese armies, of three or four divisions each, were identified in northeast Korea during the November–December operations. Three of them were directly or indirectly opposed to the 1st Marine Division, with a U.S. Army battalion and smaller Army units attached. Yet the beleaguered American forces seized the initiative and fought their way for 13 days and 35 miles through enveloping CCF units which had cut the mountain MSR in five places.

Throughout the CCF January offensive, EUSAK G–2 officers anxiously sought every scrap of evidence as to the whereabouts of the five CCF armies identified in northeast Korea as late as 10 December. Even if reduced by casualties, they would have been a formidable and perhaps even decisive reinforcement to the seven

CCF armies engaged. But they did not appear. Nor were they encountered again until the middle of March 1951, when similarly numbered units filled with replacements reached the front.

The full story may never be known, since the Chinese Reds are not fond of acknowledging their disasters. But it is a likely conjecture that the fatal combination of Marine firepower and General Winter created terrible havoc among Communists who had been so certain of an immediate victory that they were neither armed, clothed, nor supplied for a 13-day campaign in subzero weather.

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ON 15 JANUARY 1951 a reinforced regiment of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division drove northward from Line D (Map 4) to a point about half a mile from Suwon in the I Corps sector. VMF-212, flying from the CVE *Bataan*, supported the movement along with land-based Air Force planes. No CCF troops were encountered during a two-day thrust dignified with the name Operation WOLFHOUND. Its only importance lay in its distinction as the first Eighth Army counter-stroke in reply to the enemy's January offensive. Other EUSAK advances were soon to follow, each more ambitious than the last and bearing a more bristling code name.

General Ridgway proposed by this means to exert continual and increasing pressure on an enemy paying for victory with extended supply lines. Meanwhile, he hoped to build up the morale of his own troops without asking too much of them at first.

In less than seven weeks, from 1 December 1950 to 15 January 1951, the Eighth Army had been pushed back an average distance of 200 miles. Never before in the Nation's history had an American army given up so much ground and equipment in so short a time, and damage to morale was inevitable. Yet the commanding general was confident that a cure would be effected by better combat leadership and discipline. He planned to emphasize the need for these remedies until he restored the Eighth Army to tactical health.

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The New Marine Zone of Operations

Ridgway agreed with Marine generals that the 1st Marine Division had come out of its 13-day battle in the Chosin Reservoir area with its fighting spirit undulled. Minor respiratory ills seemed to be the only consequences felt by the survivors. “A hacking cough,” recalled a Marine staff officer long afterwards, “was the symbol of the Bean Patch.”[1]

Such ills soon responded to rest and medical care, and it was a physically fit division that made the move to the new zone of operations. About one man out of three in the infantry and artillery battalions was a newcomer to Korea. These replacements were shaping up nicely, and the new operation promised to be ideal combat training.

The move took nearly a week. While the other troops proceeded by motor, LSTs 898 and 914 sailed with elements of the Tank, Ordnance, Engineer, and Service Battalions. The Division CP opened at Sinhung (Map 5), about 5 miles southeast of Pohang, on 16 January. By the following day all designated motor and water lifts were completed.

Click here to view map

On the 18th the Marines were assigned a three-fold mission by Division OpnO 3-51: (1) the protection of the Pohang-Kyongju-Andong MSR (main supply route); (2) the securing of Andong and the two airstrips in the vicinity; and (3) the prevention of hostile penetrations in force to the south of the Andong-Yongdok road. The following zones of patrol responsibility were assigned to Marine units:

Zone A—RCT-1: an area about 10 miles east and west of the Uisong-Andong road, including both Uisong and Andong.

Zone B—RCT-5: an area some 15 to 20 miles wide astride the Kyongju-Yongchon-Uisong road, including Kyongju but excluding Uisong.

Zone C—RCT-7: an area 20 to 25 miles wide from east to west and extending north from the latitude of Pohang to the Andong-Yongdok road.

Zone D—11th Marines: a strip seven miles wide along the coast astride the road from Pohang to a point about 10 miles north of Yongdok.

Zone E—1st Tank Battalion: the area bounded by the road from Pohang to Kyongju and thence to the east coast at a point about 19 miles southeast of Pohang.

Keeping open the 75-mile stretch of MSR from Pohang to Andong was considered the principal mission of the Division. Strong points were set up at Pohang, Yongchon, Uisong, and Andong.

Captured documents indicated that enemy forces in unknown numbers had already infiltrated through gaps in the eastern sectors of the Eighth Army’s Line D. Guerrilla activity was reported as far west as Tanyang, on the MSR of IX Corps, and as far south as Taejon, threatening the supply line of I Corps. Train ambushes occurred on 13 January in the Namchang area and to the south of Wonju. Other attacks took place on the rail line about 60 miles north of Taegu. In expectation of further attempts, trains were provided with a sand-bagged car, pushed ahead of the engine, to absorb the shock of land-mine explosions. Another car was occupied by guards who had the duty of dealing with direct guerrilla attacks.[2]

The tactical problem of the Marines was quite simple—on paper. About 1,600 square miles, most of them standing on end in mountainous terrain, were included in the new zone of operations. The experience of World War II had demonstrated how effective guerrilla warfare could be as an adjunct to large-scale military

operations. Officers of the 1st Marine Division had no illusions about their mission, therefore, when they received unconfirmed reports of NKPA guerrilla infiltrations behind the EUSAK lines toward Andong.

All uncertainty vanished on 18 January, shortly after the issuing of OpnO 3-51, when a patrol of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, flushed out an undetermined number of North Korean troops east of Andong. They took to their heels so earnestly that the Marines barely managed to catch three of them after a long chase.

The prisoners identified their unit as the 27th Infantry of the NKPA 10th Infantry Division. The other two regiments, the 25th and 29th, were also in the general area. All three were supported more in theory than fact by artillery, mortar, medical, and engineer units organic to the division. In reality, however, the estimated total of 6,000 troops consisted largely of infantry. A few mortars, according to the prisoners, were the largest weapons.

Following the Inchon-Seoul operation, the remnants of the badly mauled NKPA 10th Infantry Division had straggled back across the 38th Parallel to the Hwachon area. There they were reorganized by the Chinese for guerrilla operations and placed under the command of NKPA Major General Lee Ban Nam.[3]

Late in December the rebuilt division, still short of arms and equipment, departed Hwachon with a mission of infiltrating through the UN lines to cut communications and harass rear installations of the Andong-Taegu area. Shots were exchanged with United Nations troops near Wonju, but General Lee Ban Nam and his troops contrived to slip to the east through the mountains. Stealthily moving southward, marching by night and hiding by day, they were soon in a position to heckle the rear of the X Corps sector. This advantage did not last long. Before they could strike a blow, the element of surprise was lost along with the three prisoners taken by the Marines.

As the Marine units moved into their assigned zones, General Ridgway flew to Pohang to confer with General Smith. Not only did he express confidence that the Marines would soon have the situation well under control; he also suggested the possibility of small amphibious landings along the east coast. The purpose was to block a possible southward advance of the three CCF armies that had operated in Northeast Korea during the Chosin Reservoir campaign.[4]

The east coast littoral was considered the most likely route of approach. Smith was of the opinion, however, that an amphibious landing should be made in strength, if at all. And there the matter rested.[5]

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1st MAW Moves to Bofu

During the operations of the first few days the Marine ground forces had to depend for air support on FEAF planes sent by JOC. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing had its hands full at this time with housekeeping activities. Work began at Bofu (Map 3) on 20 January as a Seabee detachment arrived with its graders and bulldozers. They were assisted by details of Marines from MAG–33.[6]

The job went ahead with typical Seabee efficiency. While specialists installed plumbing for the galleys and barracks, other crews graded taxiways, laid pierced steel planking, and poured concrete to patch up runways, parking ramps, and warmup aprons.

MAG-12 kept busy at the task of moving men and equipment from Itami and other Japanese fields to Korea. Aircraft of VMR-152, commanded by Colonel Deane C. Roberts, provided transportation. Since safety measures precluded the use of the K-1 runway during construction activity, K-9 substituted temporarily. As fast as the planes unloaded, passengers and gear were trucked 15 miles through Pusan to K-1.

It was a transition period in more ways than one for the 1st MAW. Following are the changes of commanders that took place during the last 2 weeks of January:

--Colonel Radford C. West, relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Paul J. Fontana as commanding officer of MAG-33;

--Lieutenant Colonel Frank J. Cole, joined MAG-33 staff as personnel officer after being relieved of VMF-312 command by Major Donald P. Frame;

--Major Arnold A. Lund of VMF-323, relieved by Major Stanley S. Nicolay and assigned to General Harris' staff as assistant operations officer;

--Major William M. Lundin, relieved of VMF-214 command by Major James A. Feeney, Jr., and transferred to the command of Service and Maintenance Squadron-33 (SMS-33).

This left only Lieutenant Colonel Richard W. Wyczawski of VMF-212 and Lieutenant Colonel Max J. Volcansek, Jr., of VMF (N)-542 still in command of the tactical squadrons they brought to Korea; and the latter was to be relieved by Lieutenant Colonel James R. Anderson in February.

The only combat operations of the 1st MAW during the week of housekeeping from 16 to 23 January were carried out by VMF-212 from the deck of the *Bataan*.[7] This CVL carrier alternated with the British light fleet carrier HMS *Theseus* on the Korean west coast blockade. Their activities were coordinated by Vice Admiral Andrewes, RN, commanding the group blockading the Korean west coast.

VMF-212 sent out a morning and afternoon reconnaissance flight each day up the coastline as far as the 39th parallel. On the trip north the pilots scanned the coastal waters for small enemy shipping which might indicate reinforcement from Chinese ports on the Yellow Sea. The return trip along the highways and railroads of the littoral was made to detect signs of any new enemy activity on land. Four aircraft flew each of the two coastal sweeps; eight maintained a defensive patrol over the carrier itself; and any remaining flights were under control of JOC, with FEAF Mosquitoes providing liaison between fighter-bombers and ground forces.

To insure sea room beyond the islands and mudbanks of the west coast, the *Bataan* had to stay outside the 100-fathom curve. This meant that the pilots must fly across 65 to 80 miles of open sea in order to reach the coast. The winter weather varied from unbelievable to unbearable, and bulky, uncomfortable survival suits were a necessity. They could be a death trap, however, if a leak developed or if they were not adjusted tightly at the throat and wrists. Captain Alfred H. Agan, for instance, was shot down southeast of Inchon and had to choose

between landing in enemy territory and ditching in the sea. He tried for a small island offshore but crash-landed into the surf. Before a helicopter from the *Bataan* could fly 65 miles to the rescue, he died from the shock of icy water which partially filled his survival suit.

The pilots of VMF-212 reported an increase in enemy antiaircraft fire, particularly in CCF rear areas. They were amazed to find troops dug in along the coast as far back as 50 or 60 miles from the battle lines. These precautions were the enemy's tribute to Marine capabilities for amphibious warfare. The fear of another Inchon caused the Chinese to immobilize thousands of men on both coasts to guard against another such decisive landing far behind the front.

On the squadron's third day of sea operations, three planes were hit by rifle and machine gun fire on reconnaissance missions. One of them, flown by Captain Russell G. Patterson, Jr., was shot down behind the enemy lines but a FEAF helicopter rescued the pilot. First Lieutenant Alfred J. Ward was not so fortunate. His plane was riddled the following day by enemy fire and he crashed to his death in the midst of CCF soldiers.

Not until 22 January did the reconditioning of Bofu reach such an advanced stage that Lieutenant Colonel Fontana could set up his MAG-33 command post. VMF-312 moved in the next day and the first combat missions were launched to the vicinity of Seoul, 300 miles away. On the 24th General Harris established his headquarters. A few hours later VMF-214 and VMF-323 arrived from Itami, where they had put in an idle week, with no place to go, after their carrier duty. On the 26th, when they flew their first missions as land-based squadrons, MAG-33 was back in business and Bofu was a going concern.

No such claim could have been made for MAG-12 and K-1. Although Colonel Boeker C. Batterton set up his command post on 27 January 1951, two more weeks were to pass before the K-1 runway was fit for the flights to tactical aircraft. Meanwhile, the MAG-12 squadrons had to make out as best they could at K-9.

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Marine Rice Paddy Patrols

Operations of the first few days demonstrated to 1st Marine Division ground forces that locating the enemy was more of a problem than defeating him. Obviously, the NKPA 10th Division had few if any of the advantages which make for effective guerrilla warfare. Far from receiving any voluntary support from the inhabitants, the Korean Reds had their own movements promptly reported to the Marines. Retaliations on civilians, such as burning mountain villages, were not calculated to improve relations. Nor did the enemy possess any of the other requisites for successful operations in an opponent's rear—a base, a source of supply, good communications, and a reliable intelligence system.

If it came to a fight, there could be little doubt about the outcome. But Marine staff officers must have been reminded of the old recipe for rabbit pie which begins, "First, catch your rabbit."

Such a situation called for systematic patrolling in all Marine zones of action. Secondary roads and mountain trails were covered by "rice paddy patrols." Numbering from four men to a squad, these groups ranged far and wide on foot in an area that was more often vertical than horizontal. On a single day the 5th Marines alone had 29 of these rice paddy patrols in action.[8] No better training for replacements could have been devised. Sometimes the men were on their own for several days, depending for supplies on helicopter drops. And while casualties were light, there was just enough danger from sniping and potential ambushes to keep the replacements on the alert.

Roads fit for vehicles—especially the 75-mile stretch of MSR from Pohang to Andong—were under the constant surveillance of motorized patrols, each supported by at least one tank or 105mm howitzer. The farthest distance was 15 miles between the main Marine strong points at Pohang, Yongchon, Uisong, and Andong.[9]

Close air support was seldom needed against such an elusive enemy as the Marines faced. General Craig put in a request, however, for an air squadron to be based at Pohang or Pusan (Map 2). The two Marine all-weather squadrons, VMF(N)-513 and VMF(N)–542, were General Harris' first and second choices. They had been flying under Air Force (314th Air Division) control in the defense of Japan, a mission of dull routine and waiting for something to break the monotony of patrolling.

The twin-engined F7F–3N Tigercats of VMF(N)–542 were well equipped with electronics equipment for night interceptor work. VMF(N)–513 flew F4U–5Ns, the night-fighter modification of the latest Corsair.[10]

General Harris' plan for VMF(N)–542 to take over the duties of VMF(N)–513 at Itazuke had the approval of General Partridge. This made it possible to send the latter squadron to K-9 at Pusan to replace the VMF-311 jets, which in turn left for Itami to await corrections of engineering defects.

VMF(N)–513 flew its first combat missions from K–9 on 22 January. These consisted of routine armed reconnaissance flights and an occasional deep support mission for the Eighth Army. Not until the 25th did the squadron respond to a request from Marine ground forces. And out of 49 combat missions (110 sorties) during the remaining 6 days of the month, only three (10 sorties) were in support of the 1st Marine Division.

For routine operations the Marine ground forces found the support of VMO–6 sufficient. The nimble little OY observation planes were ideal for seeking out an enemy who had to be caught before he could be fought. And the helicopters did their part by dropping supplies, evacuating casualties, and laying wire.

Meanwhile, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing strengthened its administrative ties with the 1st Marine Division. Although the two organizations had no common operational commander other than General MacArthur, they maintained a close liaison. Harris attached two TBM Avengers to VMO–6 for use as radio relays when

ground-to-ground communications failed in the mountainous Pohang-Andong area. He also set up daily courier flights, at General Smith's request, to provide fast administrative liaison between widely dispersed Marine air and ground units in Korea and Japan.

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Operations THUNDERBOLT and ROUNDUP

On 25 January two corps of the Eighth Army jumped off in Operation THUNDERBOLT. Advancing side by side, I Corps and IX Corps had orders to launch limited objective attacks and regain solid contact with the enemy, who was obviously preparing for a new offensive.

The EUSAK commander moved his CP from Taegu to Chonan (Map 1), the I Corps headquarters, in order to maintain personal control of the operation. He requested the Navy to step up offshore patrolling on the west coast as left-flank protection. Emphasis was also placed on aerial reconnaissance, both visual and photographic, as well as deep support directed by the Mosquitoes.

Even VMF(N)–542 at Itazuke had orders to conduct long flights to Seoul and maintain continuous patrols to report any attempt of the enemy to retire across the frozen Han River. The F7F-3N pilots shot up camp areas, convoys, and other lucrative targets but found no indications of large-scale crossings over the ice.[11] So varied were the missions of the squadron that it came as no surprise to be assigned to naval gunfire spotting for the USS *St. Paul* and the other British and American cruisers shelling Inchon.

All Marine tactical squadrons were in action on 28 January for the first time since December. Nearly two-thirds of the flights from Bofu and K-9 were diverted from armed reconnaissance to troop support. A typical operation was carried out by four VMF-312 planes on their second day of duty at Bofu. After reporting to MELLOW they were directed to Mosquito Cobalt, which had received a message that enemy troops were hiding in a village just north of Suwon, occupied that day by the U.S. 35th Infantry. Under the Mosquito's direction they bombed, strafed, and napalmed some 40 buildings containing CCF soldiers.[12]

The fall of Suwon opened the way to Inchon and Seoul as Chinese resistance stiffened. Eighth Army progress was anything but reckless, but Ridgway had served notice on the enemy that he held the initiative and intended to keep it. Operation ROUNDUP followed on the heels of THUNDERBOLT. Merely a change in name was involved, for the advance continued at the same prudent pace without any important amendments to the original mission.

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Action in the Pohang-Andong Zone

The Marines in the Pohang-Andong zone had their first brush with the elusive enemy on 22 January. A patrol of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, flushed out a guerrilla force near Mukkye-dong, several miles southeast of Andong (Map 5). Captain Robert P. Wray's Charlie Company deployed for action at sunset and shots were exchanged. The Marines had no casualties and the enemy could not have suffered many losses before he disappeared into the winter dusk.

Even at this early date the Korean Reds seemed to have lost confidence in their guerrilla operations. In a message dated 23 January taken from a prisoner, the commanding general of the II NKPA Corps directed General Lee Ban Nam to withdraw if possible. It read as follows:

"Get all of your troops out of the enemy encirclement and withdraw to north of Pyongchang without delay. Liaison team sent with radio. If you will inform us of your escape route we will assist by clearing your advance. If you cannot escape, stay in the rear of enemy as guerrillas."[13]

By the 24th an enemy drift southeast from the zones of the 1st and 5th Marines to 7th Marines territory was apparent. The 1/7 command post and Company A received scattered mortar fire late that afternoon. Action picked up the next morning when dawn brought an attack by an estimated 100 guerrillas on the regimental command post. After a brisk 90-minute fire fight the Korean Reds withdrew to the east, leaving seven dead behind and taking with them an unknown number of wounded.

Later that morning the 7th Marines teamed up with the National Police against the Chiso-dong area. Nine bodies were counted as the 3d battalion seized its objective, but 1/7 was slowed by an entrenched enemy who offered an unyielding defense. The Marine battalion ground to a halt just one mile short of Chiso-dong and dug in for the night as artillery continued to pound the enemy. The air strikes on the 25th were flown by VMF(N)-513 and VMF-323, both based at K-9, but the pilots could not contact the FAC and had to make dummy runs over the enemy.

Marine planes and artillery cleared the way on 26 January as 1/7 advanced against scattered opposition. Nearly 400 guerrillas put up a ragged and futile resistance, but by 1530 Marine firepower prevailed and Chiso-dong was taken. The 2d Battalion had meanwhile occupied Hapton-ni, eight miles southeast of Topyong-dong (Map 5). A light enemy counterattack was repulsed with ease.[14] Altogether, enemy casualties for the day amounted to 161 KIA or POW.

The VMF-323 flight led by Captain Don H. Fisher and Captain Floyd K. Fulton's VMF(N)-513 flight merit recognition as the first successful instance of Marine air-ground cooperation since the Chosin Reservoir campaign.

While the 7th Marines served eviction notices on the enemy in its area, action elsewhere was light. Task Force Puller[15] hastened on the 26th to Chongja-dong, seven miles northeast of Uisong, to investigate a police report that 300 enemy had seized the town. A Marine attack, following an artillery preparation, was planned for 1500. Captain Thomas J. Bohannon led Able Company in but discovered that the shells had fallen on empty huts. [16]

During the next few days the rice paddy patrols continued to range over the countryside, searching out the enemy. Combat units were sent to areas where the G-2 red arrows indicated an NKPA build-up. On the morning of the 29th, the 5th Marines tried to organize an attack on a large enemy force reported near Chachon-dong, 12 miles west of Topyong-dong. Captain Jack R. Jones' Charlie Company, moving out at night in small

foot patrols to maintain secrecy, scoured the area in an attempt to pin down the enemy.

Marine intelligence reports had warned of a dawn raid on the town for the purpose of plundering food from the inhabitants and arms from the Korean police station. First Lieutenant Richard J. Schening, executive officer, led a scouting force ahead of the main body to reconnoiter the area. He urged that a trap be set for the enemy, and the company commander has left a description of one of the most elaborate ambushes ever attempted by the Marines during the war:

"Well before daylight, a cordon was stealthily braided around Chachon-dong and we settled down to await the raiders. A later daylight inspection of the deployment showed that the men had done a splendid job of locating themselves so as to avoid detection. They were concealed under porches, beneath the brambles, and in the heaviest foliage and trees. But no guerrilla attack materialized, probably due to a 'grapevine' warning of our movement and intent. . . . During the remaining days in the village we conducted extensive patrolling in an attempt to catch at least one guerrilla for our effort. Patrols were kept small to maintain secrecy. We even dressed Marines in clothing worn by the 'locals' and sent them out in the hills with wood-gathering details. Larger patrols up to a platoon in size were sent on combat missions at night. One thing was certain: it was easier to talk about capturing guerrillas than it was to lay a hand on them."[17]

The elusiveness of the enemy could not always be credited to effective guerrilla tactics. Often it was due to distaste for combat. As evidence of low NKPA morale, Major Yu Dung Nam, a battalion commander, was condemned to death and shot late in January because he planned to surrender, according to POW testimony. Rations were at a bare subsistence level and typhus had claimed many victims.[18]

Unrelenting Marine pressure throughout the first week of February wore the guerrillas down until groups larger than 50 men were seldom encountered. On the 3d an NKPA second lieutenant surrendered voluntarily to a RCT-7 patrol and brought three of his men with him. NKPA morale had sunk so low, he divulged, that all ranks were striving only for survival. The division commander, Major General Lee Ban Nam, had apparently become a victim of acute melancholia. He spent nearly all his time, according to the prisoner, in the solitude of foxholes dug into the slopes of hills for added protection. There he brooded constantly over his predicament, but without arriving at any better solution than alternate hiding and flight.[19]

Certainly the military situation didn't offer much to gladden this Hamlet of the rice paddies, and the Marines continued to give him fresh causes for pessimism. His footsore remnants eluded RCT-5 only to stumble into the zone of RCT-1, northeast of Uisong. Neither rest nor sanctuary awaited them, for the 1st and 2d battalions penetrated into the mountains near Sangyong to surprise and rout a force estimated at 400 men.[20]

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KMC Regiment Joins 1st Marine Division

Late in January the 1st KMC Regiment got into the fight after being attached once more to the 1st Marine Division by a EUSAK dispatch of the 21st. Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Harrison headed a new group of Division liaison and advisory officers as the four KMC battalions moved out from Chinhae by LST and truck convoy to the Pohang area. Division OpnO 4-51 (26 January) assigned the regiment Sector F, astride the Yongdok-Andong road, which had been carved out of Sectors C and D, held by the 7th and 11th Marines respectively. The KMCs were ordered to conduct daily patrolling from positions near Yongdok, Chaegok-tong, and Chinandong and prevent enemy concentrations in their sector.[21]

Although the ROK Army and Eighth Army had the responsibility for supplying the KMCs, it proved necessary for the 1st Marine Division to cope with some of the gaps in equipment and rations. Contrary to a prevalent Western belief, Koreans did not subsist on a diet of rice alone. They were accustomed to having “side dishes” with their rice, such as eggs, meat, fish, or vegetables. Colonel Kim Sung Eun, the regimental commander, had an allotment of money for these purchases, but the sum was insufficient to meet inflation prices even if there had been enough food left in a district eaten bare. As a consequence, the KMCs had to get along on a monotonous and vitamin-poor diet until the ROK Army belatedly came to the rescue with issues of food for side dishes.

On 29 January the KMC Regiment opened its CP at Yongdok. Regimental OpnO 1 of that date divided Sector F into three parts, assigning the western, central, and eastern subsectors to the 3d, 1st, and 2d Battalions respectively. The 5th Battalion was attached to the 1st Marines and assigned to patrolling operations in the Andong area.[22]

The first few days of February saw a brief flurry of activity before NKPA guerrilla resistance breathed its last gasps. Reports that the remnants of the NKPA 25th and 27th Regiments were in flight toward the zone of the 5th Marines led to a concentration for a knockout blow, but the enemy stole away to the north in the vicinity of Topyong-dong. There he discovered that he had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines closed in from one side while the 1st and 3d Battalions of the KMC Regiment blocked roads in the vicinity of Samgo-ri and Paekcha-dong. Only a wild flight in small groups saved the guerrillas from annihilation.

The nearest approach to effective NKPA resistance was encountered on 5 February after the 1st and 2d KMC Battalions had established blocking positions in zone at the request of the 7th Marines, which was driving the enemy northward. A platoon-size patrol of the 2d KMC Battalion came up against Korean Reds dug in with 81mm mortars and heavy and light machine guns a few miles southwest of Yongdok. The KMCs were scattered with losses of 1 KIA, 8 WIA, and 24 MIA in addition to all arms and equipment, though the missing men returned later.

It was the single NKPA success of the entire campaign.

An assault was launched the following morning on this enemy stronghold by a composite KMC battalion, supported by four VMF(N)-513 aircraft which attacked with rockets and bombs. The largest combat of the guerrilla hunt appeared to be in the making, but again the enemy vanished after putting up an ineffectual resistance with small arms and mortars.[23]

An unusual air tactic was tested on 4 February in the 7th Marines zone when an interpreter in an R4D plane hailed the guerrillas by loud speaker in their own language with a demand that they surrender or suffer the consequences. Marine fighter-bombers were on station to back the threat, and about 150 supposed NKPA soldiers

came in with uplifted hands while VMF-323 planes delivered the consequences to the holdouts in the form of bombs, rockets, and napalm. Unfortunately, it developed that practically all of the prisoners were terrified civilians seeking an escape from the slave labor imposed upon them by the guerrillas.[24]

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10th NKPA Division Scattered

Reports of enemy activity were received daily from Korean civilians and police, and seldom was a smaller number than "about two thousand" mentioned. In reality, Marine patrols had difficulty in tracking down as many as ten of the skulking, half-starved fugitives split up into small bands hiding in the hills. On 5 February the situation was summed up by General Smith in reply to a EUSAK request for an estimate of the time required to complete the Marine mission:

"The original 10th NKPA Div forces in the 1st Marine Division area have been dispersed into many groups, reduced to an effective strength of 40 per cent, and are no longer capable of a major effort while dispersed. . . . It is considered that the situation in the Division area is sufficiently in hand to permit the withdrawal of the Division and the assignment of another mission at any time a new force to be assigned the responsibility for the area assumes such responsibility and the 1st Marine Division can be reassembled."[25]

Patrolling continued as usual in all Marine regimental zones during the second week in February. Some units, such as the 11th Marines and the Division Reconnaissance Company, had made few enemy contacts throughout the operation. But at least the cannoneers had found good pheasant hunting and enjoyed a change in the bill of fare.

It was just as well that the tactical situation seldom made it necessary to call for air support at this stage, since the 1st MAW was once again in the throes of moves which will be described in the following chapter. Bofu had been only a temporary base for MAG-33 squadrons which were making another transfer to K-9 while MAG-12 completed its shift to K-1.

VMO-6 took care of the reduced air requirements of the Division adequately. Another helicopter "first" was scored when First Lieutenant John L. Scott received credit for the first night casualty evacuation by a HTL (Bell), which then had no instruments for night flying. For a harrowing moment, however, it would be hard to beat the experience of Captain Clarence W. Parkins and Corpsman R. E. Krisky. While they were flying a casualty to the hospital ship *Consolation*, the patient became wildly delirious. It took the combined efforts of pilot and corpsman to subdue him and make a safe landing.[26]

Any excitement would have been welcomed by the troops in general. For the area was as tranquil as if the guerrillas had never troubled its snowbound heights. Recently arrived Marines might have been pardoned for concluding that the NKPA 10th Division and its gloomy commander were but creatures of the imagination—phantoms to be compared to the crew of the *Flying Dutchman*, that legendary ship condemned to sail on endlessly until the Day of Judgment. The NKPA 10th Division also seemed doomed to perpetual flight as its ghostly survivors made their way from crag to crag of the remote ridgelines.

Thanks to the rice paddy patrols, the replacements were ready for combat and the Division was organizing a rotation draft for return to the States. Five officers and 600 men had already been selected on a basis of combat time, wounds received, and length of service. Major General Edward A. Craig, who commanded the first Marines to land in Korea, was given a farewell dinner and congratulated on his second star. Two new brigadier generals were named, with Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller relieving Craig as ADC and Gregon A. Williams accompanying him on the voyage back to the States. Captain Eugene R. "Bud" Hering, (MC) USN, was also returning with the gratitude of all Marines for his care of casualties in the "frozen Chosin" campaign.[27]

All Marine missions in the guerrilla hunt had been successfully accomplished, so that the Division could be relieved at any time by the 2d ROK Division. There were 120 counted enemy dead and 184 prisoners. Only

estimates are available for the wounded, but there is no doubt that the total NKPA casualties were crippling. At any rate, the NKPA 10th Division was destroyed as a fighting force without accomplishing any of its objectives. Marine casualties from 18 January to 15 February were 19 KIA, 7 DOW, 10 MIA, 148 WIA, and 1,751 of a nonbattle classification, largely frostbite cases soon restored to duty.[28]

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New Mission for the Marines

On 11 February, General Smith flew to Taegu to discuss the next Marine mission with General Ridgway. The EUSAK commander spoke favorably of employing the 1st Marine Division to relieve the 24th Infantry Division in the critical Han River corridor, where recent UN advances had been made. He also recognized the advantages of committing the Marines to the east coast, so that they could be held in readiness for an amphibious operation. A third possibility was the Yoju corridor of the IX Corps zone (Map 1). As "the most powerful division in Korea," said Ridgway, "the Marines would be astride what he considered the logical route for an expected enemy counterthrust."[29]

No decision was reached that day. At midnight the CCF attack materialized; and the central front was the area of decision, as Ridgway had predicted.

Naturally, the next mission for the Marines had to be reconsidered in the light of this development. On 12 February EUSAK warning orders alerted the 1st Marine Division to be prepared to move to Chungju, in the rear area of the IX Corps front where the heaviest CCF attacks were taking place. The Division was further directed to make an immediate reconnaissance of the Chungju area while the 1st KMC Regiment prepared for a move to Samchok on the east coast and attachment to the ROK Capitol Division. The following day brought orders from the Eighth Army to initiate these movements on 15 February 1951.[30] Thus the Pohang-Andong guerrilla hunt came to an end with the Marines on their way to new employment in the battle line of the Eighth Army.

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Chapter 4. Operation Killer

THE CCF COUNTERATTACK which began northeast of Wonju on 11 February 1951 came in reaction to the unremitting pressure exerted during the previous month by the Eighth Army. Twice beaten during a recent six-week period and pushed back some 200 miles, EUSAK had shown amazing powers of recuperation.

"It is hard for me to put into words the magnificent competence, the fierce, combative, aggressive spirit of that force once it picked itself off the ground and waded back into the fight," commented General Ridgway in retrospect.[1]

During Operations THUNDERBOLT and ROUNDUP he had kept a tight rein on the Eighth Army by insisting on vigorous artillery preparations and close lateral contacts between units. On 10 February, however, caution was relaxed as CCF resistance suddenly collapsed west and south of Seoul. That day the U.S. 24th Infantry Division forged ahead 11,000 yards to occupy the port of Inchon and Kimpo Airfield, both so wrecked that weeks of repair would be necessary to make them operational. Seoul was within sight of the U.S. forces on the left bank of the Han when an aroused enemy struck back on the subzero night of the 11th.

Click here to view map

Apparently the CCF drive on the central front had as its objective the relieving of UN pressure on the Seoul area to the west. The CCF 40th and 66th Armies and NKPA V Corps struck in the IX Corps sector north of Hoengsong (Map 6). Two ROK divisions being dislodged by the initial blows, their retreat made necessary the withdrawal of other IX Corps units. As a consequence, Hoengsong had to be abandoned on 12 February to the Communists hammering out a salient northeast of Wonju.[2]

The UN forces were not bound by any unrealistic concept of holding ground to the last ditch. General Ridgway deemed it more important to inflict maximum punishment on the enemy at a minimum cost in casualties. While fighting on the defensive, he had already made up his mind to launch an offensive of his own to catch the Chinese off balance the moment their counterattack ground to a halt. His new limited objective operation emphasized the destruction of the enemy's fighting strength as the major objective rather than the acquisition of territory. A high attrition rate would preclude the Communists' capacity to hold and enable EUSAK commander to recover the critical hill mass north of Wonju. It was for this purpose, he informed Major General Bryant E. Moore, IX Corps commanding general, that the 1st Marine Division would be employed.

"The force which holds Wonju," he said, "has the situation in hand."[3]

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The Move to the Chungju Area

The 1st Marine Division had instructions to report its order of march to the Eighth Army, and to keep the Taegu headquarters informed of progress. Meanwhile, the Marines were to remain under EUSAK operational control but would pass to IX Corps control at a date and hour to be announced.

General Puller flew to Chungju with a reconnaissance party on 13 February to look over the road and select CP sites. On the following morning Major Walter Gall's Division Reconnaissance Company arrived at Chungju for patrol duty, and movement by rail and road commenced on the 15th in accordance with Division OpnO 5-51, issued the day before.

The 1st Marines, with the 7th Motor Transport Battalion attached, led the motor march, and the 5th and 7th Marines followed in that order. Tracked vehicles were outloaded by rail from Andong and Pohang in a total of 67 flat cars. Owing to a shortage of cars, Company B and H&S Company of the 1st Tank Battalion made the move of 120 miles by road. These tankers claimed the all-time Marine Corps distance record for armor.[4]

While the Marine move was in progress, the CCF counterattack went on full blast along the central front. Driving southeast from the IX Corps area to the X Corps front, the Chinese cut off and surrounded the 23d Infantry of the 2d Infantry Division, USA. Colonel Paul Freemen and his men put up a fight that is one of the classics of the war. Supported by Marine and Air Force planes, they gave more fire than they received and held out until rescued by a tank column.[5]

February was also a transition period for Marine fighter squadrons which had been more or less on the move since the middle of January. Even before the transfer to Bofu, it had been decided that K–3, four miles south of Pohang, was to be the ultimate home of MAG–33. While awaiting completion of this field, VMFs–214, –312, and –323 would find temporary lodging at K–1, near Pusan, recently assigned to MAG–12.[6]

On 6 February, Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman, assistant commanding general of the 1st MAW, radioed General Harris that K–1 would be ready to receive a squadron a day, starting on the 8th. Harris ordered Squadrons 323, 214, and 312 to make their moves on 8, 9, and 10 February respectively. Transport aircraft were to lift ground crews, extra pilots, and light equipment directly to K–1. Pilots had orders to fly combat missions en route.

By the 13th most of the vehicles, heavy equipment, and general supplies had been loaded on a train for Kobe, there to be transshipped on LSTs to Pohang. That same day Lieutenant Colonel Fontana set up his MAG–33 command post at K–3 and directed the three fighter squadrons to report from K–1.

The new field occupied a bench overlooking a wide, sandy beach. Built originally by the Japanese, the strip had 5,200 feet of concrete runway. The Air Force had extended it to 5,700 feet with pierced steel planking. This addition brought the end of the runway to the brink of a 60-foot drop-off—a hazard in the event of a "hot" landing to the northwest or too low an approach from the southeast.

Next to arrive at K–3 were the F9F–2Bs of VMF–311. Four weeks of adjustments at Itami had restored the jets to operative condition. An advance echelon went ahead to establish squadron living and operating areas, and the pilots ferried the 19 aircraft. Ground crews and equipment followed on transport planes.

Plans were made for VMF(N)–513 to move from Itami to K–3 before the end of the month. The other all-weather squadron, VMF(N)–542, now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James R. Anderson, completed the transfer from Itami and Itazuke to K–1.

This field was also the destination of the photo pilots of Headquarters Squadron, 1st MAW, who flew their F7F–3P and F4U–5P fighters from Itami. Major Donald S. Bush commanded a unit, formerly a squadron,

which had been one of the first aviation organizations to see action in Korea. Among its accomplishments were the preliminary beach studies for the Inchon and Wonsan landings.

With the completion of the moves of February 1951, the 1st MAW was again based on Korean soil. Fifteen types of Marine aircraft were being flown. For the heavy hauling, the R4D and R5D transports shifted troops and supplies. Included among the fighters were F9F Panthers, F4U Corsairs, and two models of F7F Tigercats–a stripped-down photo plane, and a radar-armed night fighter. Stinson OY Grasshoppers, TBM Avengers, and Beechcraft SNBs rounded out the list of conventional planes. Three types of rotary-wing aircraft were represented: the Sikorsky HO3S-1, and two models of the Bell HTL.[7]

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Marine Planes in Action

By 15 February the brief CCF counterstroke had spent its force. Hoengsong had fallen to Communists who hammered out a salient on a 20-mile front extending as far southward as the outskirts of Wonju (Map 6). But the enemy's main purpose had failed of accomplishment, for the grip of the Eighth Army on Inchon and Kimpo Airfield was not shaken. Nor did the Chinese gain a breathing spell in their preparations for a third great offensive as a follow–up to the December and January drives.

More by coincidence than design, the Fifth Air Force launched a new system of air tactics a few days after the beginning of the CCF counterstroke. Called "Reconnaissance Plan Fighter," it was based on a division of enemy-held Korea into 22 sections. Squadrons were given the mission of making hourly surveys of the same areas, day after day, until pilots became so familiar with them that any change hinting at CCF activity would be noticed at once.[8]

If these surveys revealed any sign of any enemy concentration, either of men or supplies, JOC scrambled special bombing strikes against them.

Although Marine fliers could readily see the advantages of covering the same ground daily, it made for monotony on reconnaissance missions. Only a highly unusual spectacle would startle a pilot, but First Lieutenant Weldon R. Mitchell blinked when he saw a camel in his gunsights.[9] Shaggy little Mongolian horses were no novelty as ammunition bearers, and after recovering from his first astonishment the VMF–311 pilot cut loose with .50 caliber machine gun slugs. As he suspected, the camel's pack contained ammunition and the animal was all but vaporized in the explosion.

Major Bush's photographic unit had an important part in keeping the enemy under constant surveillance. The Fifth Air Force directed on 16 February that all photo requests were to be screened by the Fifth Air Force's 543d Tactical Support Group at Taegu. Under the tactical coordination of this Group, the Marine unit was to fill all Navy and Marine requests. When not on such missions, it would be fitted into the Fifth Air Force photographic reconnaissance program.[10]

Pinpoint photos of suspected troop areas and such terrain features as defiles, junctions, detours, and bridges were in demand. The fact had to be faced that the enemy was almost unbelievably clever at camouflage and concealment. In one instance it was found that the Chinese had constructed bridge sections which they hid by day and put to use at night.[11] On another occasion they sank a bridge by means of weights so that it remained far enough beneath the surface of the water in the daytime to avoid detection by reconnaissance aircraft.

When the photo planes carried out missions as far north as MIG Alley[12] they flew in pairs. A fighter circled overhead to protect the photo pilot from an enemy air attack while he paid full attention to the task of "shooting" the terrain with his camera.

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Chapter 4. Operation Killer
Planning for the New Operation

Adaptability to changing circumstances had already become perhaps the outstanding quality of the revitalized Eighth Army. No better example could be found than the evolution of Operation KILLER, which completed the cycle from concept to plan and execution in just three days.

On 18 February 1951, General Ridgway learned that the enemy was apparently withdrawing. IX Corps and X Corps units had probed forward that morning without meeting any opposition. Before nightfall the commanding general decided to launch a limited objectives offensive by the entire Eighth Army. He called a planning conference for the 19th and set the 21st as D-Day for the new operation.

The 1st Marine Division found itself detached from X Corps on the 19th and placed under the operational control of General Moore of IX Corps. This was not the first time in Marine Corps history, of course, when "soldiers of the sea" have fought alongside U.S. Army units in conventional land warfare. One of the best-known occasions was in World War I, when two Marine regiments distinguished themselves in France as a brigade of the U.S. 2d Infantry Division.

The Marines had been a part of X Corps in 1950, but always under tactical circumstances which permitted more or less independent operations with the support of organic aircraft. Now the Division was to be closely integrated with the other major IX Corps units, the 24th Infantry Division, the 1st Cavalry Division, the 6th ROK Division, and the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade. Marine calls for air strikes would continue to be made through JOC, as they had been since the Hungnam redeployment.

General Ridgway was on hand for the planning conference held on 19 February in General Moore's CP at Yoju and attended by officers from IX and X Corps. General Smith, Colonel McAlister, and Colonel Bowser represented the 1st Marine Division.

The scheme of maneuver called for the Marines to relieve elements of X Corps and attack in a northeasterly direction from a line of departure north of Wonju (Map 6) through the Wonju basin. The object was to cut off enemy forces which had penetrated south and east of Hoengsong, and to recover control of the roads running eastward by seizing the high ground just south of the town.[13]

In the X Corps zone to the east, on the right flank of the Marines**,** the 7th Infantry Division was to attack to the north along the Yongwol-Pyongchang road. On the other Marine flank would be elements of the 6th ROK Division.

Simultaneous advances were planned for I Corps to the west, where patrols had found evidence that Seoul was lightly held.

Two U.S. Army units were designated at the 19 February conference to support the 1st Marine Division—the 74th Truck Company and the 92d Armored Field Artillery, then en route to the Chungju area.[14] These cannoneers and their commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Leon F. Lavoie, USA, were well and favorably known to the Marines, having given effective support during the Chosin Reservoir operations.

First Marine Division OpnO 6–51, issued on 20 February, directed the two assault regiments, the 1st and 5th Marines, to jump off at 0800 on the 21st and seize the first objective, the ridgeline about three and a half miles south of the high ground dominating Hoengsong (Map 6). RCT–1, with Division Recon Company and C/Engineers attached, was to pass through elements of the 2d Infantry Division in zone while RCT–5, with A/Engineers attached, passed through elements of the 187th Airborne Infantry, USA. RCT–7 had been designated the reserve regiment; but since it could not arrive from the Pohang-Andong area in time, a battalion of the 5th Marines was assigned this mission.[15]

The objective area was believed to be defended by the 196th Infantry Division of the 66th CCF Army and unknown elements of the 39th and 40th CCF Armies. Ahead of the Marines and other IX Corps units lay some uninviting terrain. Rocky heights and narrow valleys were laced by swift streams, the largest being the river Som, running from northeast to southwest through a defile cutting across the western part of the Division sector. Bordering this twisting stream was the Wonju-Hoengsong "highway"—a poor dirt road even by Korean standards. Through the right half of the Division zone an even more primitive road, scarcely fit for vehicular traffic, wound northeast from Wonju.[16]

All Eighth Army forces were to be tightly buttoned up and to keep in close physical contact while maintaining integrity of units. Patrol observation and reconnaissance were stressed by the EUSAK commanding general, and even lack of opposition would not justify a unit in advancing ahead of schedule. Again, as in previous operations, real estate was to be secondary to the inflicting of maximum personnel and materiel damage.

On the eve of Operation KILLER, a message from IX Corps emphasized to all units the necessity for making sure "that no hostile force of sufficient strength to jeopardize the safety of your forces has been bypassed. Maintenance of lateral contact between all units is of prime importance."[17]

Marine ground force and aviation officers alike realized that the forthcoming offensive would be the first real test of the operational control of the 1st MAW by the Fifth Air Force and the Eighth Army. General Smith was uneasy about the outlook. On 13 February 1951, the day he was alerted for the move to Chungju, he had requested in a message to EUSAK that the 1st MAW be assigned to the support of his division. Both Marine ground and air officers, he said, believed that this change would fit into the JOC overall air control system without any disruption.[18] But no approval of General Smith's proposal had been received before D-Day.

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Chapter 4. Operation Killer
The Jumpoff on 21 February

From the outset the transport and supply situation was a G–4 officer's nightmare. Heavy traffic broke the back of the MSR before the jumpoff, so that mud delayed the 5th Marines in reaching the line of departure (LD).

General Puller, the ADC, telephoned the Division commander for a decision in the event that all elements of the regiment were unable to arrive in time. This question was already under discussion between General Moore and General Smith in the new 1st Marine Division CP, just opened at Wonju. After later reports of troop arrivals reached him, Smith decided with few minutes to spare that he would attack with only the troops able to reach the LD in time—three battalions of the 1st Marines, a battalion of the 5th Marines, two battalions of the 11th Marines, and a company of tanks. Moore then confirmed 1000 as H-hour and notified Puller of the decision.

The last-minute arrival of the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, reminded Smith of the occasion in France, 32 years before, when the 5th Marines of World War I had to double-time across the wheat fields in order to attack on schedule at Soissons on 18 July 1918. For at Wonju the lone battalion scrambled out of trucks on the double and advanced without taking time for reorganization.[19]

Snarled traffic conditions were complicated by the arrival of high-ranking officers for the jumpoff. General MacArthur visited the zone of the 187th Airborne RCT, recently attached to X Corps. General Ridgway and General Moore were on hand when the Marines attacked. The EUSAK commander, surveying the scene from a snow-covered embankment, was disturbed to see a Marine corporal stumbling over an untied shoe lace while carrying a heavy radio.

"I hesitated just a moment," commented Ridgway, "knowing that what I wanted to do might be misconstrued as showmanship. Then I slid down the bank on my tail, landed right at his feet, knelt down and tied his shoe. Later, when this incident was reported in the States, there were some who did report it as a theatrical gesture. This was not true. It was purely an impulse to help a fighting soldier, a man in trouble."[20]

The Eighth Army commander was not the only one to see the advantages of tobogganing in terrain consisting of mud on the sunny slope of hills and snow on the shady side. When Captain Jack R. Jones' Charlie Company of 1/5 reached its first steep decline, the Marine leading the 2d Platoon slipped and fell in the snow, sliding about a hundred feet down the embankment. The man behind him profited from his example to make a purposeful slide, as did the rest of First Lieutenant William E. Kerrigan's men.[21]

This was but one of the unwarlike incidents which enlivened the jumpoff of Operation KILLER. Seldom if ever have Marines taken part in an offensive which began so inoffensively, for 21 February was distinguished for lack of enemy resistance in the Marine zone. Only a few rounds of scattered rifle fire were encountered until late afternoon. Then the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, leading the column of attack, had two long-distance fire fights before digging in for the night. Three Marines were slightly wounded and the enemy withdrew with such casualties as he may have suffered.[22]

The word "light" could never have been applied to the resistance put up by the weather and terrain. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L. Stewart, commanding 3/5, described it as "a mixture of thawing snow, rain, mud, and slush." His men spent the night in foxholes half filled with water. Every one of them was "wet to the bones, including his clothes, parka, weapons, and ammo."[23]

The 1st Marines led the attacking column of battalions on 22 February, with 1/1 in the lead. More long-distance small-arms fire was encountered than on the first day, but again there were no close contacts with a retreating enemy.[24]

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Chapter 4. Operation Killer
Stiffening of Chinese Resistance

Not until the 23d did either Marine regiment run into determined opposition. Then the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 1st Marines, advancing abreast, had a fight while going up against two hills of a ridge just south of the first phase objectives.

So far the Marines had found JOC air support satisfactory in quantity. The statistics show that the Fifth Air Force supported the Eighth Army during the first phase of Operation KILLER (21–24 February, inclusive) with an average of 600 sorties a day.[25] There was no room for complaint until the morning of the 23d, when an air strike the 5th Marines requested the preceding evening for 0800 failed to materialize on time. On this occasion the combination of an intense Marine artillery preparation and light enemy resistance compensated for lack of air support and the hill was taken with ease.

That afternoon it took a brisk fight to evict an enemy in estimated battalion strength from log-covered bunkers on the second hill. This time JOC responded to Marine requests with two effective air strikes. Sixty Chinese dead were counted, and the Marines reported 1 KIA and 21 WIA.[26]

On the whole, however, the 5th Marines encountered only slight resistance. “About all we did was walk—walk—walk!” recalled Captain Franklin B. Mayer, commanding Easy Company of 2/5. “I don’t think I’ve ever been so tired or footsore in my life—exception the retreat from Chosin, but not by much.”[27]

On the 24th the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 5th Marines had little trouble in taking two hills designated as the main Phase 1 objectives. The 1st Marines on the left sent a tank and infantry patrol into Hoengsong after artillery preparation and an air strike. Captain Robert P. Wray, commanding Charlie Company of 1/1 and a platoon of tanks, entered the ruins of the town only to encounter machine gun and mortar fire from the hills to the west.[28]

When the antennae were shot off two tanks, Wray directed their 90mm fire by runner and knocked out the enemy positions. After proceeding further into the town, he was recalled by his battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. Schmuck, because an aerial observer had reported that Chinese were waiting to ambush the patrol.

An air strike was directed on them while Wray rescued several survivors of “Massacre Valley,” northwest of Hoengsong, where a U.S. Army truck convoy had been ambushed during the recent CCF counterattack. The patrol returned before the ground had completely thawed. Only a few hours later a jeep passing over the same road was blown up by a land mine which killed the driver. This was one of the first object lessons illustrating the danger from enemy mines which were harmless until the midday sun thawed out the ground.

Chinese artillery fire from the hills north of Hoengsong accounted for one Marine KIA and four WIA late that afternoon before counter-battery fire by 2/11 silenced the enemy. This exchange ended the first phase of Operation KILLER at dusk on 24 February with all preliminary objectives seized.[29]

Air support had been rendered, for the most part, by Fifth Air Force planes. This gave rise to grumbling by Marine ground forces, who felt that they had been unnecessarily deprived of their own close air support. The fact was, however, that U.S. Army and British Commonwealth troops also preferred Marine air and were outspoken about it. As a disgruntled Marine ground force officer put it, Marine air was “too good for our own good.”

During the first phase of Operation KILLER most of the sorties by 1st MAW planes were in support of U.S. Army units. On 23 February the Marines flew 101 of the Fifth Air Force total of some 800 sorties for the day.[30] The experience of VMF–312 was fairly typical of the other Marine fighter-bomber squadrons. In the

morning VMF–312 took part in a 16-plane strike behind the CCF lines. That afternoon two special flights of four planes each were scrambled in support of 2d and 7th Infantry Division units of X Corps. The following morning Major Daniel H. Davis, executive officer of the squadron, scrambled with four planes and reported to a FAC attached to the Canadian and Australian battalions of the British Commonwealth Division. These troops were engaged near Chipyong-ni in the hottest fight of the first phase of Operation KILLER. After the FAC marked the CCF strongholds with white phosphorus, the Corsairs came snarling in with napalm, rocket, and strafing runs just ahead of the infantry. The enemy was driven out of positions defended by 20mm antipersonnel fire, but Major Davis paid with his life on his eighth run when he lost a wing and crashed to his death.

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Chapter 4. Operation Killer
General Smith in Command of IX Corps

On 24 February 1951 came the news that General Moore had suddenly died as the indirect result of a helicopter accident. The aircraft had plunged into the Han River, after hitting a telephone wire, and the IX Corps commander was rescued unhurt only to die of a heart attack half an hour afterwards.

Commander of the 8th Infantry Division in European operations of World War II, General Moore later became Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. As his successor, pending a permanent appointment, General Ridgway named General Smith to the command of IX Corps. When announcing this decision, the Eighth Army commander said, "General Smith is to be taken into their hearts in IX Corps, and, by definite action, made to feel that he belongs there."[31]

Marines with an interest in Corps history could recall only two similar occasions when Marines commanded major U.S. Army units. Major General John A. Lejeune had headed the 2d Infantry Division in World War I, and Major General Roy S. Geiger led the U.S. Tenth Army to victory during the closing days of the Okinawa operation after a Japanese shell killed Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr., USA.

On 24 February, with General Puller taking command of the 1st Marine Division, General Smith flew to Yoju by helicopter to begin his new duties. His military competence and complete lack of ostentation made him cordially accepted at the IX Corps CP. The following day General Ridgway arrived for a conference. Wishing to change the boundary between IX and X Corps, so as to orient the former more to the north, he directed the Marine general to reach an agreement with X Corps. He also asked for a recommendation as to future operations of the Marines, and General Smith replied that he knew of no better employment for his division than to continue attacking along the Hoengsong-Hongchon axis.[32]

The change in boundaries, as decided at a conference of corps commanders, meant that in the zone of the 1st Marine Division the 5th Marines on the right would be pinched out by the 3d ROK Division of X Corps. On the left, the zone was to be extended by bringing the 7th Marines into line to the left of the 1st Marines while the 5th Marines dropped back into reserve.[33]

Logistics became the better part of valor on 25 February as Ridgway called a halt in the fighting until enough ammunition, fuel, and other supplies could be brought up for a resumption of the attack toward the final objective, Phase Line ARIZONA (Map 6). Napoleon's famous remark that mud should be recognized as a separate element was apt as violent rains turned all roads into swamps. Operations might have come to a standstill except for air drops. On the 25th the Combat Air Command flew 480.7 tons of freight and 1,004 passengers, followed by 604.9 tons and 1,193 passengers the following day.[34] Corps and Division engineers strove meanwhile with indigenous labor to repair the roads.

By a prodigious effort, enough progress in logistics was made so that the EUSAK commanding general could issue orders on 25 February for the second phase of Operation KILLER to commence on 1 March. He made it known that he was not satisfied with results so far. The assigned physical objectives had been taken, but the enemy's withdrawals had saved him from the full extent of the personnel and material losses Ridgway had hoped to inflict. He called on his staff officers, therefore, for plans aiming at a new operation "having the primary intent of destroying as many enemy and as much equipment as possible and, by continued pressure, allowing the enemy no time to mount a counteroffensive."[35] A secondary mission was that of outflanking Seoul and the area between Seoul and the Imjin River, "so that this territory may be taken either by attack from the east or by enemy default."

The name of the new drive was to be Operation RIPPER, and it was to jump off as soon as possible after

the finish of KILLER.

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Chapter 4. Operation Killer
The Advance to Phase Line ARIZONA

From newly won positions in the high ground south of Hoengsong, the Marines could look across the soggy plain to their Phase II objectives, the hills to the north of the battered town. Hoengsong occupied a valley at the confluence of two rain-swollen streams. Thus a triangular area of low, flat ground lay between the ruins and the hills which must be taken in the final phase of Operation KILLER. The 1st and 7th Marines were the combat units, with the 5th Marines in reserve. (The KMC Regiment, it may be recalled, had been temporarily detached for service with the ROK army.)

Before the 1st and 7th Marines could launch their combined attack, the latter had to fight its way up to the point of junction after relieving elements of the 6th ROK Division.[36] The scheme of maneuver then called for Lieutenant Colonel Virgil W. Banning's 3/1 to sideslip into the zone of Major Maurice E. Roach's 3/7, in order to be in position for the advance across the Hoengsong plain. This meant a crossing of the river Som for 3/1 and a combined assault with 3/7 on the high ground along the west bank.

The problem of crossing the river, 200 feet wide and chest-deep at the most likely site, was turned over to Banning with the explanation that the engineer company supporting the regiment could not be diverted from road repairs. To meet this emergency Major Edwin H. Simmons, commanding Weapons Company of 3/1, produced a field manual with instructions for building a "Swiss bent bridge."[37] His Antitank Assault Platoon was given the task under the command of energetic Technical Sergeant Carmelo J. Randazzo, a veteran on his third enlistment.

There was no lack of trees for timbers, and rolls of telephone wire were sworn to be beyond salvaging by the battalion communications officer. The A-shaped bents, or trusses, were lashed together with wire and enthusiasm, then carried out into the ice-cold water to be attached to spars and stringers.

It was a great triumph for "war by the book." Before dark on 28 February two spans, one 120 feet long and another half that length, were linked by a sandbar in midstream. The improvised bridge stood up well next morning when the battalion crossed to the west bank. There 3/1 echeloned itself behind 3/7, which gained the first 1,000 yards under cover of a vigorous artillery preparation and belated air strikes.

On the left, Major James I. Glendinning's 2d Battalion of the 7th Marines ran into increasingly stubborn opposition from CCF mortar and small-arms fire. Before noon the attacks of both battalions of the 7th Marines were brought almost to a halt in difficult terrain which the Communists had booby-trapped. Neither artillery nor air strikes had a decisive effect against an enemy sheltered by log-covered bunkers. So many delays were encountered that it was decided in mid-afternoon to postpone the advance until the following morning, 2 March.

Artillery and air strikes supported 2/7, 3/7, and 3/1 as they attacked at 0800 west of the river. Meanwhile, 1/7 patrolled on the division left flank while maintaining contact with the 6th ROK Division.

Apparently the enemy put up a hard fight only when he could not withdraw in time to avoid one. Resistance was light on the west bank, and east of the river Lieutenant Colonel Allen Sutter's 2/1, supported by tanks, had little trouble. His battalion linked up with 3/1 in the afternoon and dug in after taking its assigned objective, Hill 208, with casualties of three men wounded.

The only determined opposition of 2 March took place during the afternoon in the zone of 2/7. There the attackers could only inch forward over rocky terrain which the enemy defended, ridge by ridge, in spite of air strikes and 1,600 artillery rounds fired by the 11th Marines.

At daybreak on the 3d the men of the 1st and 7th Marines could look to the north and see their final objectives. Five hills lay along Phase Line ARIZONA from west to east—Hills 536 and 333 in the zone of the 7th

Marines, and Hills 321, 335, and 201 in the zone of the 1st Marines.

The last two positions were in the path of 2/1, which seized them after several brisk fire fights. Casualties of three KIA and 28 WIA were incurred while inflicting losses of 70 counted CCF dead. The terrain gave 3/1 more trouble than the enemy in taking Hill 321, where the CCF troops had already begun their withdrawal.

It was in the zone of the 7th Marines that Communist resistance was hottest. The 1st battalion was summoned to cover the regimental left flank and aid in the attack of 2/7 on Hill 536 while 3/7 continued its struggle for Hill 333. Both battalions had their hardest fight of the entire operation that afternoon. They lost most of the 14 KIA and 104 WIA which the Division reported for 3 March, and the enemy still held the topographical crests.

The 1st Marines had reached the mopping-up stage on 4 March, while the 7th Marines prepared to go up against an expected last-ditch stand of the enemy on Hills 536 and 333. The parkas of the assault troops were powdered with snow as the men moved out to the attack at 0800, following an intensive artillery preparation. There was something ominous about the silence in the objective area, but no trap had been set for the attackers. The Communists actually had pulled out under cover of darkness, leaving behind only enough outpost troops for delaying operations.

Operation killer ended at nightfall on the 4th for the Marines, though mopping up continued throughout the following day. Total Marine casualties for the 8 days of fighting were 395—48 KIA, 2 MIA, and 345 WIA. Enemy losses amounted to 274 counted dead and 48 prisoners. It is certain, however, that the actual KIA and WIA figures were much higher, since the withdrawing Communists buried their dead and took their wounded with them.

Click here to view map

Any evaluation of this limited objective operation must credit it with achieving its main purpose—keeping the Communists off balance while they were striving desperately to make ready for another great offensive (Map 7). This explains why the enemy as a whole put up a half-hearted resistance. He preferred to withdraw whenever possible and fight another day.

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Chapter 4. Operation Killer
JOC Air Control System Criticized

Operation KILLER was the first real test of the JOC system as far as the Marines were concerned, and both the flying and ground-force Marines felt that it had shown grave shortcomings. Air support on 1 March proved so disappointing that General Puller, as temporary commander of the 1st Marine Division, reported the situation to General Shepherd, commanding FMFPac. His letter is quoted in part as follows:

"We are having very little success in obtaining Marine air for CAS [close air support] missions and practically no success in having Marine air on station for CAS missions. . . . Most of our CAS missions in the current operation have been Air Force or Navy Carrier planes. They do a good job and we are glad to have them, but our Marine air, with whom we have trained and operated, can do a better job. We have attempted to insure that Marine air would support us, and to cut down the delays in receiving such support, as evidenced by the attached dispatches. We have received no decision relative to our requests. Apparently, the answer is no by default."[38]

General Puller's report was obviously written for the record, since General Shepherd was present at the 1st Marine Division CP at the time. He witnessed personally the Marine attacks of 2 and 3 March and the air support they received. On the 3d, the day of heaviest fighting in the entire operation, there could be no complaint that few Marine aircraft supported Marine ground forces. The Corsairs flew 26 CAS sorties that day and cleared the way more than once for the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 7th Marines. The trouble was that air support as administered by JOC was so often late in arriving, even when requested the evening before. More than once the infantry had to go ahead with only artillery support. Such delays threw the whole plan of attack out of gear, for air and artillery had to be closely coordinated to be at their best.

General Shepherd had a series of talks with General Harris. Both then conferred with General Partridge, commander of the Fifth Air Force. They requested that he authorize the 1st MAW to keep two planes on station over the 1st Marine Division whenever it was engaged. General Partridge did not concur. He maintained that Marine aircraft should be available to him if needed elsewhere in an emergency. He did consent, however, to permit 1st MAW armed reconnaissance sorties to check in with Devastate Baker for any CAS requests.[39]

This conference did much to clear up the situation. On 5 March no less than 48 Marine sorties reported to Devastate Baker, though there was little need for them in mopping-up operations. And during the next two weeks an average of 40 sorties a day was maintained.

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper

THE NEW IX CORPS COMMANDER, Major General William H. Hoge, USA, arrived at Yoju on 4 March 1951. He relieved General Smith the next day and a color guard turned out to render honors to the Marine commander when he returned by helicopter to his own Division CP. Upon Smith's arrival, General Puller resumed his former duties as ADC.

The jumpoff of the new operation was scheduled for 0800 on 7 March, so little time remained for last-minute preparations. The basic plan called for the drive of IX and X Corps toward the 38th Parallel on the central front. Protection was to be given on the left flank by I Corps in the area south and east of Seoul. On the right the ROK divisions had the mission of maintaining lateral security with a limited northward advance.

It was no secret that General Ridgway had been disappointed in the numbers of enemy soldiers put out of action during Operation KILLER. The primary purpose of RIPPER was to inflict as many Communist casualties as possible, and by means of constant pressure to keep the enemy off balance in his buildup for a new offensive. A secondary purpose was to outflank Seoul and the area between that city and the river Imjin, thus compelling the enemy to choose between default and a defense on unfavorable terms.[1]

CCF strategy in the early spring of 1951 was obviously conditioned by preparations for a third great offensive. The enemy's emphasis on caution is shown in a translation of a CCF training directive of this period:

"There must absolutely be no hasty or impatient attitude toward warfare. Consequently, even though we have a thorough knowledge of the enemy situation and the terrain, if one day is disadvantageous for us to engage in combat, it should be done the next day; if day fighting is disadvantageous, fighting should be conducted at night, and if engagements in a certain terrain are not to our advantage, another location should be selected for combat engagement. When the enemy is concentrated and a weak point is difficult to find, one must be created (by agitating or confusing them in some way), or wait until the enemy is deploying. Engagements must be conducted only when the situation is entirely to our advantage."[2]

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper
Light Resistance the First Day

United Nations forces held a line extending across the peninsula from Inchon (Map 8) in the west by way of Hoengsong to the east coast in the vicinity of Chumunjin. The IX Corps order called for the 1st Marine Division to maintain lateral contact with the lst Cavalry Division on the left and the 2d Infantry Division on the right. Hongchon and Chunchon, two of the main objectives of Operation RIPPER, lay directly in the path of the IX Corps advance. Both were important communications centers which could be utilized to advantage by the enemy for his forthcoming offensive.

Click here to view map

The first phase line in the IX Corps zone was ALBANY. The Marines did not need a map to locate an objective just beyond Oum Mountain, a stark 2,900-foot peak about five and a half miles from the line of departure. Distance in this area was conditioned by terrain, and it was a natural fortress of wooded hills and swift streams that confronted the 1st Marine Division. Highways were conspicuous by their absence, and extensive maintenance would be required to utilize the Hoengsong-Hongchon road as a MSR. So few and poor were the secondary roads that it would sometimes prove necessary for vehicles to detour along the rocky stream beds.[3]

The last offensive had not developed major or prolonged resistance at any point. Yet that possibility had to be anticipated by Marine planners. At least the enemy was an old acquaintance—the 66th CCF Army,[4] commanded by General Show Shiu Kwai. The 196th Division was on the left and the 197th on the right, with the 198th in reserve. These units were believed to comprise about 24,000 men.

Wednesday, 7 March, dawned cold and clear, with snow falling in the afternoon. The Hoengsong-Hongchon road, winding through Kunsamma Pass, paralleled the boundary between the two Marine assault regiments, the 7th Marines on the left and the 1st Marines on the right. They jumped off to attack in line abreast, employing all three battalions when the broken terrain permitted, while the 5th Marines continued its patrolling activities in the Hoengsong area as Division reserve.

The 11th Marines had to ration its artillery ammunition, owing to supply shortages. JOC came to the rescue nobly by ordering MAG-33 to place 11 flights of four planes each at the disposal of DEVASTATE BAKER on D-minus-one. These aircraft reported at hourly intervals to work over targets in the area of the next day's Marine operations. For the ground forces, it was an embarrassment of riches. They had more air support than they could use at times, and DEVASTATE BAKER sent the surplus to hit reserve concentrations and other targets of opportunity in the enemy's rear.[5]

The two Marine assault regiments met with light resistance on D-Day. Both took their objectives with little trouble except for scattered bursts of machine gun fire. Total casualties for the day were seven men wounded.

It was like old times to have Marine planes supporting Marine ground forces. MAG-12 aircraft were on the job the next day, when CCF resistance stiffened without ever becoming serious. Heavy CCF mortar and small-arms fire was received by 3/1, supported by Company A of the 1st Tank Battalion. Well placed rounds by the 11th Marines silenced the enemy in this quarter, and both battalions of the 1st Marines reached their assigned positions by nightfall.

The second day's advances gave added proof that the enemy was up to his old trick of putting up a limited defense while pulling back before the Marines could come to grips. Log bunkers were ideal for these CCF delaying tactics; each was a little fortress that might enable a squad to stand off a company while larger CCF units

withdrew.

The Marine assault troops found that a preliminary treatment of napalm from MAG-12 aircraft, followed by well-aimed 90mm fire from the tanks, did much to soften up the bunkers for an infantry attack with hand grenades.

Company A of the 7th Marines had the hardest fight of all Marine units on 8 March. Second Lieutenant Clayton O. Bush and the 2d Platoon led the attack on the company objective, a hill mass to the left of Oum San. With 300 yards still to be covered, the Marines were pinned down by well aimed CCF small-arms and mortar fire, including white phosphorus. A high explosive shell scored a direct hit on the platoon, killing two men and wounding three. Bush was evacuated, with his right arm mangled. First Lieutenant Eugenous Hovatter, the company commander, ordered the 1st Platoon to pass through the 2d and continue the attack with air and tank support. The flat-trajectory fire of the 90mm rifles did much to help the company clear the enemy from the hill and the 7th Marines reached all assigned regimental objectives for the day.[6]

The Marine advance came to a halt on 9 March to wait for Army units to catch up on the right. While the 2d Battalion of the 1st Marines took blocking positions, the 1st and 7th Marines sent out patrols on both flanks in an effort to regain lateral contact. For the next two days, 1st Marine Division operations were limited to patrolling. A good deal of activity took place in the rear, however, as Marine service units moved up to Hoengsong.

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper
Seoul Abandoned by Enemy

The advance was resumed on 11 March after the relief of 2/1 by Major Walter Gall's Division Reconnaissance Company, reinforced by a platoon of tanks. Although the enemy withdrew from most of his positions without putting up much resistance, a patrol of George Company, 3/1, had a hot fire fight on Hill 549. Opening fire at 50 yards from camouflaged, log-faced bunkers, the Chinese killed one man and wounded nine. Marine infantrymen, supported by flat-trajectory 90mm fire, approached within grenade-throwing range to destroy five bunkers and kill 16 of the defenders. As the patrol withdrew, it called on the 11th Marines to finish the job. The cannoneers were credited with several direct hits.[7]

Chinese resistance continued to be light as the two Marine regiments occupied rather than seized ground on 12 and 13 March. By the 14th all units were dug in along Phase Line ALBANY.

CCF withdrawals were also reported by other Eighth Army units. On 15 March a patrol from the 1st ROK Division of I Corps found Seoul abandoned by the enemy. The Chinese Reds had made their choice and UN forces took over a devastated city with some 200,000 civilians dragging out a miserable existence in the ruins. Dead power lines dangled over buildings pounded into rubble, and even such a famous landmark as the enormous red, brass-studded gates of the American Embassy Compound had been destroyed.

It was the fourth time that Seoul had changed hands in 9 months of war. Air reconnaissance having established that the enemy had withdrawn about 15 miles to entrenched positions in the Uijongbu area, General Ridgway enlarged the mission of I Corps by directing it to advance on the left of IX Corps.[8]

During the first phase of Operation RIPPER, from 7 to 13 March, counted casualties inflicted on the enemy by X Corps amounted to 6,543 KIA and 216 POW. IX Corps casualties during the same period were reported as 158 KIA, 965 WIA, and 35 MIA—a total of 1,158.[9]

The total strength of the Eighth Army (less the Marines) was 185,229 officers and men in March 1951. Adding the 25,642 of the 1st Marine Division, the 4,645 of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, plus 11,353 of the American Air Force and 355 attached from the U.S. Navy, 227,119 Americans were serving in Korea. This does not count 13,475 South Koreans serving in various U.S. Army divisions.[10]

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, with an authorized total of 728 officers and 4,216 enlisted men, had an actual strength of 626 and 4,019 respectively on 31 March 1951. Of an authorized 29 officers and 93 enlisted men from the Navy, 22 and 83 in these categories were on duty.[11]

Troops to the number of 21,184 from the ground forces of other United Nations were represented as follows:

United Kingdom and Australia: 10,136
Turkey: 4,383
Philippines: 1,277
Thailand: 1,050
Canada: 858
New Zealand: 816
Greece: 777
France: 749
Belgium-Luxembourg: 638
Netherlands: 500[12]

The 249,815 officers and men of the ROK Army make a total UN combat strength of 493,503. There were an additional 671 in three noncombat units: the Danish hospital ship *Jutlandia,* 186; the 60th Indian Ambulance Group, 329; and the Swedish Evacuation Hospital Unit, 156.[13]

Chinese forces in Korea, including confirmed and probable, totaled 16 armies, each comparable to a U.S. corps. Eight others were reported. Assuming that these CCF units averaged a field strength of 24,000 officers and men, the total would have been 384,000 for the 16 armies. The reorganized forces of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) were credited with five armies. Adding these 120,000 men to the 16 Chinese armies, the enemy had 504,000 troops in Korea plus whatever might have been the strength of the eight reported armies and the rear area service elements. In addition, large reserves stood just over the border in Manchuria.[14]

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper
Second Phase of the Operation

With scarcely a pause on Phase Line ALBANY, the second phase of Operation ripper began on 14 March with a drive toward Phase Line buffalo (Map 8). Despite the difficulty of maneuver over muddy roads in mountainous terrain, an Eighth Army directive of that date called for a pincers movement to be initiated by means of a rapid advance of the 1st Marine Division on the right and the 1st Cavalry Division on the left. It was hoped that the Chinese forces south of Hongchon might be trapped and destroyed after the 187th Airborne Regiment cut off escape by landing north of the town. General Ridgway having urged his corps commanders to stress maneuver, IX Corps sent this message to division commanders:

"It is desired that more use be made of maneuver within and between division zones with a view toward trapping and annihilating the enemy through such maneuver. Movements should be less stereotyped; it is not desirable that units always advance toward the enemy abreast. Well planned and successfully executed maneuver using companies and battalions has previously been conducted; this should be extended to include regiments. This Headquarters is studying and will continue to study and order into execution the maneuver of divisions with the same intent and purpose."[15]

Both the 1st Marine Division and 1st Cavalry Division made rapid progress toward Phase Line Baker (Map 9), established by IX Corps as an intermediate control. Unfortunately for the purposes of the envelopment maneuver, the Chinese withdrew from the Hongchon area before the pincers could close or the 187th Airborne make an air drop. CCF resistance was confined to machine gun fire covering hasty retirements. The 7th Marines on the left occupied its objective without once calling for air or artillery support, and the 1st Marines was virtually unopposed. Division casualties for the 14th were six men wounded.

Click here to view map

Flash floods and roads churned into hub-deep mud were the greatest enemies of progress. Serious as the resulting supply problems were, they might have been worse but for the efforts of the recently organized Civil Transport Corps formed from members of the ROK National Guard who lacked the necessary training for military duties. There was no shortage of willing indigenous labor, for these auxiliaries received pay as well as rations and clothing. Formed into companies, they worked with the wooden "A-frames"—so-called because of their shape—used from time immemorial in Korea as a rack for carrying heavy burdens.

The Civil Transport Corps proved to be a boon for the Eighth Army. Veteran porters could manage a load of 100 to 125 pounds over ground too rugged for motor vehicles. Several hundred were attached to each regiment during Operation RIPPER.

Any lingering hope of rounding up Chinese prisoners in the Hongchon area was blasted on the 15th when evidence of Chinese withdrawal came in the form of an enemy radio message intercepted at 1230. "We cannot fight any longer," the translation read. "We must move back today. We will move back at 1400. Enemy troops will enter our positions at 1300 or 1400. Enemy troops approaching fast."[16]

Hongchon fell without a fight to the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines on the afternoon of 15 March. Major Webb D. Sawyer, the commanding officer, sent a motor patrol through the ruins without flushing out any Chinese, but on the return trip a truck was damaged by a "butterfly bomb." This led to the discovery that the Hongchon area was covered with similar explosives that had been dropped by U.S. planes to slow up the CCF counterattacks in the middle of February.

Butterfly bombs, so-called because of the whirling vanes that controlled the drop and armed the 4-pound

projectiles, could be set for air or ground bursts. Usually, however, they were dropped in clusters to remain on the ground until disturbed. Apparently the enemy had not troubled to clear them from the Hongchon area, and that three-day task was begun by Company D of the 1st Engineer Battalion while 1/7 seized the high ground northwest of the town.[17]

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper
Changes in 1st MAW Units

Air support for the ground forces continued to be more than adequate in quantity. Since the agreement between Generals Partridge and Harris, 40 1st MAW sorties a day had been allotted to the 1st Marine Division. The timing was not all that could have been asked on occasion, but on the whole the Marine infantry had no complaint.

The 1st MAW had undergone an extensive reshuffling of units on the eve of Operation RIPPER. VMF (N)-542 was sent back to El Toro, California, for conversion to F3D jet all weather fighters. The squadron's F7F–3N's and two F–82's were left with VMF(N)–513. The former commanding officer of 542, Lieutenant Colonel James R. Anderson, assumed command of 513. He relieved Lieutenant Colonel David C. Wolfe, who returned to the States.

The California-bound cadre of 542 included 45 officers and 145 enlisted men under Major Albert L. Clark. VMF(N)-513 was now a composite squadron, attacking from K-1 during the day with its F4U-5N's and at night with its F7F-3N's.

Another change took place when VMF-312 replaced VMF-212 on the CVE *Bataan*. The former squadron had been preparing for weeks to perform carrier duty, so that the change was made without a hitch. VMF-212, after nearly 3 months on the *Bataan*, established itself at K-3 under a new commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Claude H. Welch, who relieved Lieutenant Colonel Wyczawski.

The transportation jam in Korea made necessary the permanent assignment of a VMR-152 detachment to 1st MAW Headquarters. Transports had heretofore been sent to the Wing on a temporary basis and returned to Hawaii when missions were completed.

Mud and inadequate rail facilities doubled the demands on FEAF's aerial supply of combat forces. The Wing's courier service to Marine air and ground forces scattered over Korea reached the limit of its capabilities. As a solution General Harris requested a five-plane VMR-152 detachment on a long-term assignment, and Colonel Deane C. Roberts took command of this forward echelon at Itami.

It was now possible to handle cargo and troop transport at the cargo and passenger terminals of all Marine air bases. In one 4-day period, early in April, approximately 2,000 replacement troops were lifted from Masan to Hoengsong by the five R5Ds. About a thousand rotated veterans were flown back on the return trips. [18]

A further change involved the coordination of the Wing's air control organizations. As the enemy's air power increased, obviously the problems of UN air defense multiplied. At K-1 the Marine Ground Intercept Squadron-1 (MGCIS-1) and the Air Defense Section of Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron-2 (MTACS-2) were hard pressed to identify and control the hundreds of aircraft flying daily over Korea.

There was no adequate system of alerting these air defense stations to the effect that planes were departing or incoming. Many of them failed to send out their standard identification friend or foe (IFF) signals; and those that did so were still suspect, since U.S. electronics equipment on UN planes had fallen into enemy hands. As a consequence MGCIS-1 was kept busy vectoring air defense fighters to verify that certain bogeys were friendly transports, B-29s, or enemy bombers.[19]

In an effort to cope with the situation, General Harris requested that another Marine ground control intercept squadron, MGCIS-3 be sent to Korea. He desired that Marine Air Control Group-2 (MACG-2) also be made available to coordinate the Wing's air control functions. These units sailed on 5 March from San Francisco.

Until March 1951 the Air Force's 606th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron had participated in the air surveillance of the Pusan area from the top of 3,000-foot Chon-San—the encroaching mountain that made K-9's traffic pattern so hazardous. This Air Force unit displaced to Taejon early in March, and the MGCIS-1 commanding officer, Major H. E. Allen, moved his radio and radar vans to the mountain top to take over the job. [20]

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper
General MacArthur Visits Marine Battalion

Following the occupation of Hongchon on the 15th, the Marine ground forces ran into stiffening enemy opposition during the next two days. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 7th Marines were pinned down by intense CCF mortar and artillery fire when attacking Hill 356 (Map 9). Three out of six friendly 81mm mortars were knocked out on 15 March in the 3d Battalion area, and at dusk 2/7 and 3/7 had barely won a foothold on the hill. [21]

The 1st Marines also met opposition which indicated that the enemy planned to make a stand on the high ground east and north of Hongchon. An intricate maneuver was executed when Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. McClelland's 2/1 swung from the right flank, where no enemy was encountered, to the extreme left. As a preliminary, the battalion had to circle to the rear, then move by truck up the MSR and through the zone of the 7th Marines as far as the village of Yangjimal (Map 9). Dismounting, the men made a difficult march across broken country toward Hill 246. At 1230 on the 15th the column deployed to attack Hill 428 in conjunction with Lieutenant Colonel Virgil W. Banning's 3d Battalion.

Easy Company (Captain Jack A. Smith) and Item Company (First Lieutenant Joseph R. Fisher) engaged in a hot fire fight with the enemy. Both sides relied chiefly on mortars, but the Chinese had the advantage of firing from camouflaged bunkers. Smith called for an air strike and four planes from VMF-214 responded immediately. Fox Company (Captain Goodwin C. Groff) and Dog Company (Captain Welby D. Cronk) were committed in the attempt to carry Hill 428, but the enemy continued to resist stubbornly until dusk. McClelland then ordered a withdrawal to night defensive positions around Hill 246. The two assault battalions had suffered 7 KIA and 86 WIA casualties. Counted enemy dead were reported as 93.[22]

Lieutenant Colonel Donald R. Kennedy's 3/5 was attached to the 1st Marines to protect the right flank as the Marines prepared to resume the attack on the morning of the 16th. But the enemy had pulled out from Hill 428 during the night and patrols advanced more than 300 yards without making contact.

Another hard action awaited the 7th Marines on the 16th, when Major Sawyer's 1st Battalion moved up to Line BAKER (Map 9). The Chinese resisted so hard on Hill 399 that the Marines had to attack bunker after bunker with grenades.

The following morning was the occasion of a visit to the front by General MacArthur. Accompanied by Generals Ridgway and O. P. Smith, he drove in a jeep from Wonju over the mountain pass to Hongchon, where Marine engineers were still clearing mines. The jeep stalled after crossing the Hongchon-gang at a ford and a tow was necessary. This did not deter the commander in chief, who had asked to visit a Marine battalion in a combat area. He was taken to the CP of Major Sawyer, whose 1/7 was mopping up on Hill 399 after the hard fight of the day before.

Five hours of riding over miserable roads had not daunted the 71-year-old veteran of two World Wars. He seemed fresh and rested as he shook hands with 1/7 officers. "Although we had not passed the word regarding General MacArthur's visit," commented General Smith, "there were dozens of cameras in evidence."[23]

IX Corps orders were received on the 17th for the 1st Marine Division to attack from Line BAKER to Line BUFFALO (Map 9). The Division plan of maneuver called for the 5th Marines to pass through and relieve the 7th Marines while the 1st Marines continued to advance on the right.

Again the enemy chose withdrawal to resistance, and five of the six Marine battalions reached Line BUFFALO on 20 March after encountering only sniper fire and a few scattered mortar rounds. Enemy opposition

was reserved for 2/1 on the 19th, when Fox Company was pinned down by enemy small-arms and mortar fire from a long, narrow ridge running north and south to the west of Hill 330.

Fortunately for the attackers, a parallel valley enabled a platoon of tanks from Baker Company, 1st Tank Battalion, to knock out unusually strong CCF bunkers with direct 90mm fire while Fox Company riflemen followed along the ridgeline with a grenade attack before the enemy had time to recover. Thanks to intelligent planning, not a single Marine was killed or wounded as the battalion dug in for the night on Hill 330.

Adopting the same tactics on the 20th, after artillery preparation and an air strike by VMF-214 and VMF-323 planes, Easy Company of 2/1 advanced along the ridgeline connecting Hills 330 and 381 while tanks moved forward on either side providing direct flat-trajectory 90mm fire. By 1315 the Marines had overrun the enemy's main line of resistance without a casualty.[24]

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper
1st KMC Regiment Returns to Division

As the Eighth Army jumped off on 20 March from Line BUFFALO toward Line CAIRO (Map 9), the 1st KMC Regiment was attached again to the 1st Marine Division. This was the third time that Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Harrison had been directed to reorganize and reassemble a KMC liaison advisory group. The 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William McReynolds, was placed in direct artillery support. When the advance was resumed, the KMCs attacked between the 1st Marines on the right and the 5th Marines on the left.[25]

The high *esprit de corps* of the KMCs shines forth from a comment written in his own English by First Lieutenant Kim Sik Tong: "The KMC ideal is to complete the mission, regardless of receiving strong enemy resistance, with endurance and strong united power, and always bearing in one's mind the distinction between honor and dishonor."[26]

The zone of the KMC Regiment was a roadless wilderness, making it necessary to air-drop ammunition and supplies for the attack on Hill 975. This was the hardest fight of the Division advance to Line CAIRO. Excellent artillery support was provided for the 2d and 3d Battalions as they inched their way forward in three days of bitter combat. Not until the morning of 24 March was the issue decided by maneuver when the 1st Battalion moved around the left KMC flank into a position threatening the enemy's right. Resistance slackened immediately on Hill 975 and the KMCs took their objective without further trouble.

The 1st and 5th Marines were already on Line CAIRO, having met comparatively light opposition from NKPA troops who had relieved the 66th and 39th CCF Armies. Apparently the enemy was using North Koreans as expendable delaying elements while massing in the rear for an offensive that could be expected at any time. A smoke screen, produced by burning green wood, shrouded the front in an almost constant haze.

Although the objectives of Operation RIPPER had been reached, General Ridgway planned to continue the UN offensive for the purpose of keeping the enemy off balance during his offensive preparations. The Eighth Army had been attacking with few and brief pauses for regrouping even since 21 February, and the commanding general wished to maintain its momentum.

An advance of the 1st Marine Division to a new Line CAIRO was ordered by IX Corps on 26 March. This was simply a northeast extension of the old line to the boundary between IX and X Corps (Map 9). There was no need for the 5th Marines to advance, and the 1st Marines and KMC Regiment moved up to the new line on schedule without opposition.

Eighth Army units had made average gains of about 35 miles during the last three weeks while driving nearly to the 38th Parallel. On 29 March, General Ridgway published a plan for Operation RUGGED. It was to be a continuation of the offensive, with Line KANSAS (Map 8) as the new objective. While other 1st Marine units were being relieved by X Corps elements, the 7th Marines was to be moved up from reserve near Hongchon and attached to the 1st Cavalry Division for the attack beyond Chunchon, evacuated by the retreating enemy.[27]

On 1 April the Marines were informed of sweeping changes in IX Corps plans. Instead of being relieved, the 1st Marine Division was to continue forward with two infantry regiments plus the KMCs. Its new mission called for a relief of the 1st Cavalry Division (with the 7th Marines attached) north of Chunchon. This modification gave General Smith the responsibility for nearly 20 miles of front.[28]

"I visited this front frequently," commented Major General A. L. Bowser, the G-3 of that period, "and it was difficult at times to even locate an infantry battalion. . . . Visitors from the States or FMFPac were shocked at

the wide frontages."[29]

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper
38th Parallel Recrossed by Marines

Further IX Corps instructions on 2 April directed that the 1st Marines go into Division reserve near Hongchon while the 5th Marines and 1st KMC Regiment attacked. The deep, swift Soyang-gang, fordable in only a few places, lay squarely in the path of the 5th Marines. Speculations as to the method of crossing became rife just as air mattresses were issued. And though the officers denied any such intent, the troops were convinced that inflated mattresses would be used.

As it happened, the regimental executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Stewart, worked out a plan that did not include any such novelty. A narrow ford was discovered that would get the 1st and 2d Battalions across while the 3d rode in DUKWs. Light enemy opposition of a rear guard nature was encountered but the regiment completed the operation without casualties. Stewart reported to the regimental CP and learned that a jeep waited to take him on the initial lap of his homeward journey. He was the last man to leave Korea of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, which had landed at Pusan on 2 August 1950.[30]

After reaching their prescribed objectives, the 5th Marines and KMC Regiment were relieved on 5 April by elements of the 7th Infantry Division of X Corps. Meanwhile, the 7th Marines, attached to the 1st Cavalry Division, advanced northward with the 7th and 8th Cavalry Regiments. Little opposition developed and on 4 April the Marines were among the first Eighth Army troops to recross the 38th Parallel.

General Ridgway published another operation plan on 6 April 1951 and designated new Eighth Army objectives to the northward. The purpose was to threaten the buildup for the forthcoming CCF offensive that was taking place behind the enemy lines in the so-called “Iron Triangle.”

This strategic area, one of the few pieces of comparatively level real estate in central Korea, was bounded by Kumhwa, Chorwon, and Pyongyang (Map 14). A broad valley containing a network of good roads, it had been utilized by the Chinese for the massing of supplies and troops.

Experience had proved that interdictory bombing could not prevent the enemy from nourishing an offensive, even though the FEAF had complete control of the air over roads and rail lines of a mountainous peninsula. The Chinese, though hampered in their efforts, had been able to bring up large quantities of supplies under cover of darkness. General Ridgway determined, therefore, to launch his ground forces at objectives threatening the Iron Triangle, thus forcing the enemy to fight.

On 8 April, in preparation for the new effort, the 1st Marine Division was directed by IX Corps to relieve the 1st Cavalry Division on Line KANSAS and prepare to attack toward Line QUANTICO (Map 8).

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Chapter 5. Operation Ripper
Renewal of Division's CAS Problems

By this time, after three months of various sorts of operational difficulties, VMF-311 was riding a wave of efficiency. The distance from the operating base to the combat area emphasized the superior speed of the F9Fs. The Panther jets could get into action in half the time required by the Corsairs. The jets were more stable in rocket, bombing, and strafing runs. They were faster on armed reconnaissance and often were pouring it into the enemy before he could disperse. These advantages offset the high fuel consumption of the F9Fs and made them ideal planes for close air support.

On the morning of 8 April an opportunity arose for the Marine jets to help the 7th Marines. It started when 3/7 patrols encountered 120mm mortars, small arms, automatic weapons, and grenades employed by an enemy force dug in on a ridge looming over the road near the west end of the Hwachon reservoir. The battalion forward air controller radioed DEVASTATE BAKER at Hongchon for air support.[31]

At the time Major Roy R. Hewitt, an air officer on General Shepherd's FMFPac staff, was visiting the Air Support Section of Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron-2 (MTACS-2). His blow-by-blow report of events is as follows:

"a. At 0900 a request for an air support strike on an enemy mortar position was received from the 7th Marines. It took the Air Support Section until 0945 to get through to JOC and then it had to be shunted through K-1 in order to get the request in.

"b. The G-3 1st Marine Air Wing had arranged with JOC to have four (4) F9F 'scramble alert' for use by the 1st Marine Division. The F9Fs were requested, and JOC authorized their use, but when Marine Aircraft Group-33 was contacted they informed the Air Support Section that JOC had already scrambled the aircraft and sent them to another target.

"c. Air Support Section again contacted JOC, and JOC said aircraft would be on station in one (1) hour. At the end of one (1) hour JOC was again contacted concerning aircraft. This time JOC said they would have two (2) flights on station within one (1) hour. At the end of the second one (1) hour period no aircraft were received.

"d. Again the Air Support Section contacted JOC and was informed that any air support for the 7th Marines would have to be requested through the 1st Cavalry Division to which the 7th Marines were attached."[32] In fact, JOC notified DEVASTATE BAKER that any such requests from the 1st Marine Division would not be honored until the Division went back into action.

During all this time ten Marine planes—six from VMF-311 and four from VMF-214—had reported in and out of the area. They had been sent by MELLOW to work under the control of Mosquito STRATEGY, the tactical air controller (airborne) (taca) of the 1st Cavalry Division. The flights also supported the 6th ROK Division patrols on the Marines' left, hit troops in a small settlement 3 miles to the Marines' front, and aided the 7th and 8th Cavalry regiments which were encountering resistance on the commanding ground to the right. None of the flights supported the Marines.

Meanwhile, the 3/7 Marines employed artillery and tanks on the enemy positions, and late in the day a Mosquito brought in a flight of four Air Force F-80s. Major Hewitt's report continued:

"e. At the end of six (6) hours air support was finally received by the 7th Marines. It was brought in by a Mosquito who would not relinquish control of the aircraft to the Forward Air Controller who could see the target much better than the Mosquito.

"f. After having the fighters make a couple of passes the Mosquito took the fighters and went to another

target without having completely destroyed the position."

This was the beginning of a deterioration in air support for Marine ground forces that can be charged in large measure to the JOC system of control. Major Hewitt's report was read with great interest by high-ranking Navy and Marine Corps officers. By now they were devoting a lot of thought to the breakup of the Marine air-ground team.

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Chapter 6. The CCF Spring Offensive

ON 10 APRIL 1951 the 1st Marine Division was poised on Line KANSAS for a drive to Line QUANTICO. Then a new IX Corps directive put on the brakes, and for 10 days Marine activities were limited to patrolling and preparation of defensive works. Boundary adjustments between the Division and the 6th ROK Division on the left extended the Marine zone about 2,000 yards to the west; and General O. P. Smith's CP was advanced to Sapyong-ni, just south of the 38th Parallel (Map 8).

Out of a blue sky came the announcement on the 11th that General MacArthur had been recalled by President Truman for failure to give wholehearted support to the policies of the United States Government and of the United Nations in matters pertaining to his official duties. General Ridgway was appointed to the UN command, and he in turn was relieved on 14 April by Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet, USA.

The new Eighth Army commander, youthful in appearance for his 59 years, was no novice at fighting Communists. In 1949 and 1950 he had been Director of the Joint Military Aid Group that saved Greece from falling into the clutches of Communism after Moscow fomented a civil war. Van Fleet also brought to his new command a World War II reputation as a vigorous leader with a preference for offensive doctrines.

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Prisoners Reveal Date of Offensive

Chinese prisoners taken during the first three weeks of April 1951 told all they knew with no apparent reluctance, just as Japanese captives had given information in World War II. Inconsistent as it may seem that fanatical Asian soldiers should prove so cooperative, such was the penalty the enemy paid for insisting on resistance to the last ditch. Since the possibility of surrender was not considered, CCF prisoners were taught no code of behavior and answered questions freely and frankly.

POW interrogations were supplemented by captured documents revealing that the Chinese prided themselves on a new tactical doctrine known as "the roving defensive," put into effect in the spring of 1951. It meant "not to hold your position to the death, but to defend against the enemy through movement," explained a secret CCF directive dated 17 March 1951. "Therefore, the wisdom of the roving defensive is based on exhausting the enemy without regard for the loss or gain of some fighting area or the immediate fulfillment of our aims."[1]

It was admitted that the CCF soldier must work harder, "because the troops will have to construct entrenchments and field works in every place they move." But the advantages were that "roving warfare can conserve our power, deplete the enemy's strength, and secure for us more favorable conditions for future victory. Meanwhile, the enemy will make the mistake once again, and collapse on the Korean battlefield."

The last sentence evidently refers to the UN advance of late November 1950 that was rolled back by a surprise CCF counteroffensive. Chinese strategists seem to have concluded that their "roving defensive" had made possible another such offensive victory in the spring of 1951. At any rate, prisoners questioned by the 1st Marine Division and other IX Corps units agreed that the CCF 5th Phase Offensive was scheduled to begin on 22 April 1951. The IX Corps zone was said to be the target area for an attempted breakthrough.[2]

Marine G-2 officers recalled that prisoners gave information on the eve of the CCF offensive in November 1950 that proved to be astonishingly accurate in the light of later events. For it was a paradox that the Chinese Reds, so secretive in other respects, let the man in the ranks know about high-level strategic plans. In the spring of 1951 it mattered little, since air reconnaissance had kept the Eighth Army well informed as to the enemy buildup.

Prisoners were taken in the IX Corps zone from the following major CCF units during the first three weeks of April:

20th Army (58th, 59th, and 60th Divisions), estimated strength, 24,261;

26th Army (76th, 77th, and 78th Divisions), estimated total strength, 22,222;

39th Army (115th, 116th, and 117th Divisions), estimated total strength, 19,538;

40th Army (118th, 119th, and 120th Divisions), estimated total strength, 25,319.

The 20th and 26th, it may be recalled, were two of the CCF armies opposing the 1st Marine Division during the Chosin Reservoir breakout. It was a satisfaction to the Marines that their opponents of December 1950 had evidently needed from three to four months to reorganize and get back into action.

In CCF reserve on 21 April 1951 were the 42d and 66th Armies, both located in the Iron Triangle to the enemy's rear. The former included the 124th, 125th, and 126th Divisions—the 124th being the unit cut to pieces from 3 to 7 November 1950 by the 7th Marines in the war's first American offensive action against Chinese Red adversaries.

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Chapter 6. The CCF Spring Offensive
Hwachon Occupied by KMC Regiment

At 0700 on the 21st the 1st Marine Division resumed the attack toward Line QUANTICO with the 7th Marines on the left, the 5th Marines in the center, the KMC Regiment on the right, and the 1st Marines in reserve. Negligible resistance awaited the Marines and other IX Corps troops during advances of 5,000 to 9,000 yards. An ominous quiet hung over the front as green wood smoke limited visability to a few hundred yards.

On the Marine left the 6th ROK Division lost touch, opening a gap of 2,500 yards, according to a message from Corps to the 1st Marine Division. The ROK commander was ordered by Corps to restore lateral contact. This incident would be recalled significantly by the Marines when the CCF blow fell.[3]

The KMC Regiment had the mission of finishing the fight for control of the Hwachon Reservoir area. Early in April the 1st Cavalry Division and the 4th Ranger Company, USA, had been repulsed in attempts to fight their way across the artificial lake in rubber boats. The enemy retaliated by opening the penstocks and spillway gates. Considering that the dam was 275 feet high and the spillway 826 feet long, it is not surprising that a wall of water 10 feet high roared down the Pukhan Valley into areas recently occupied by IX Corps units.[4]

Both Army and Marine engineers were on the alert, having been warned by aerial observers. They cut three floating bridges loose from one bank or another, so that they could ride out the crest of the flood. Thanks to this precaution, only temporary damage and interruption of traffic resulted.[5]

The 1st Engineer Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John H. Partridge, was given the mission by Corps of jamming the gates of the dam at the open position. Compliance would have to wait, of course, until the KMCs took the dam. Partridge conferred meanwhile with Colonel Bowser, and it was decided to take no action after the anticipated capture until a demolitions reconnaissance could be made.[6]

As early as 18 April a KMC patrol had crossed the Pukhan into the town of Hwachon, which was found abandoned except for 11 Chinese soldiers, who were taken prisoner. Marine engineers installed a floating bridge on the 21st for the advance of one KMC battalion the next morning. The other two battalions were to cross the river several miles downstream by DUKWs.[7]

Corps plans for the attack were made in full realization of air reconnaissance reports for 20 and 21 April indicating that the enemy offensive buildup was in its final stages. This intelligence was gleaned in spite of all enemy efforts to frustrate the airmen. CCF spotters were placed on mountain tops to give the alarm, and relays of men fired shots to pass on warnings of approaching planes. Antiaircraft defenses were increased at such vital spots as bridges and supply areas. The Communists even went so far as to put out decoys—fake trucks, tanks, and tank cars—to lure UN fighter-bombers within range of antiaircraft guns.

These efforts resulted in 16 Marine planes being shot down from 1 to 21 April 1951. Nine of the pilots were killed, one was captured, three were rescued from enemy territory, one walked back to friendly outposts, and two managed to bail out or crash-land behind the UN lines.[8]

This total was equivalent to two-thirds of the average tactical squadron. Because of the disruption to the 1st MAW pilot replacement program, the Commandant arranged for 20 pilots to be flown to Korea to augment the normal rotation quotas.[9]

Direct opposition from enemy aircraft was also on the increase. CCF flights even reached the EUSAK battle line as unidentified light planes flew over positions or dropped small bombs. Evidently the enemy was using well camouflaged airfields in North Korea.

An air battle took place on 20 April when two VMF-312 pilots from the *Bataan*, Captain Philip C.

DeLong and First Lieutenant Harold D. Daigh, encountered four YAK fighters in the heavily defended Pyongyang-Chinnanpo area. They gave chase and shot down three of the enemy planes.[10]

Marine aircraft were on station when Marine ground forces resumed their forward movement at 0830 on the morning of 22 April. A CCF prisoner taken that very afternoon confirmed previous POW statements that the 22d was the opening day of the Fifth Phase Offensive. The front was quiet, however, as the three Marine infantry regiments advanced almost at will.

A motorized patrol of Division Reconnaissance Company, led by the commanding officer, Major Robert L. Autrey, had the initial contact with the enemy while advancing on the Division left flank. The two platoons, supported by Marine tanks, found their first indications when searching a Korean roadside hut. Although the natives denied having seen any Chinese soldiers, Corporal Paul G. Martin discovered about 50 hidden rice bowls waiting to be washed. Upon being confronted with this evidence, the terrified Koreans admitted that Chinese soldiers had reconnoitred the area just before dawn.

Farther up the road, an ammunition dump of hidden mortar shells was discovered. The enemy had also put up several crude propaganda signs with such sentiments as YOUR FOLKS LIKE SEE YOU HOME and HALT! FORWARD MEANS DEATH.

The patrol dismounted and proceeded with caution, guided by an OY overhead. Although the “choppers” were the favored aircraft of VMO-6, the OYs also earned the gratitude of the troops on many an occasion such as this. The pilot gave the alarm just before hidden Communists opened fire. Thus the Marines of the patrol were enabled to take cover, and the tanks routed the enemy force with well placed 90mm shells.[11]

The KMCs met no resistance worth mentioning when they secured the town of Hwachon and the north bank of the Pukhan just west of the reservoir. Only light and scattered opposition awaited the 5th Marines (Colonel Richard M. Hayward) and the 7th Marines (Colonel Herman Nickerson, Jr.) on their way to the occupation of assigned objectives on Line QUANTICO.

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CCF Breakthrough Exposes Marine Flank

For weeks the Communist forces in Korea might have been compared to an antagonist backtracking to get set for taking aim with a shotgun. There could be no doubt, on the strength of daily G-2 reports, about both barrels being loaded. And on the night of 22 April the enemy pulled the trigger.

The KMCs, after taking their objectives, reported a concentration of enemy small-arms fire. At 1800 the command of the 1st Marine Division directed a renewal of the advance at 0700, on the morning of the 23d. This order was cancelled at 2224 by a message calling for all Marine units to consolidate and patrol in zone, pending further instructions.[12]

One of the reasons for the sudden change was the receipt of a message by the 1st Marine Division at 2120, informing that the 6th ROK Division was under heavy attack to the west of the Marines. Meanwhile, an on-the-spot questioning of a CCF prisoner just taken by the KMCs convinced the command and staff of the 1st Marine Division that the CCF 5th Phase Offensive was only hours away and gathering momentum. Thanks to this timely interpretation, all forward Marine units were alerted two hours before the main blow fell.

It was on the left of the 1st Marine Division that the situation first became critical. The 6th ROK Division had never quite succeeded in closing up the gap on its right and restoring contact with the Marines. But this failure was trivial as compared to the collapse of the entire ROK division an hour before midnight, leaving a gap wide enough for a major breakthrough.

The 1st Marine Division took prompt measures to cope with the emergency. As early as 2130, the 1st Marines, in reserve just north of Chunchon, were alerted to move one battalion to contain a possible enemy threat to the Division left flank. A second message an hour later called for immediate execution. And at midnight the Division Provost Marshal was directed to stop ROK stragglers and place them under guard. The Division Reconnaissance Company received orders to aid the military police.[13]

Colonel Francis M. McAlister, commanding the 1st Marines, selected Lieutenant Colonel Robley E. West's 1st Battalion to carry out Division orders. "By midnight we were all on trucks and rolling on the roads north," wrote Second Lieutenant Joseph M. Reisler in a letter home. "Mile after mile, all the roads were covered with remnants of the ROKs who had fled. Thousands of them [were] straggling along the roads in confusion."[14]

Despite these preparations for trouble on the left flank, the KMCs on the right and the 5th Marines in the center were first in the Division to come under attack. During the last minutes of 22 April the 2d KMC Battalion had it hot and heavy on Hill 509. To the left the 1st KMC Battalion, partially encircled, notified the 5th Marines of a penetration.

The effects were felt immediately by 1/5, with its CP in Hwachon. Hill 313 was the key to the town, being located at the Hwachon end of a long ridge forming a natural avenue of approach from the northeast. Captain James T. Cronin's Baker Company of 1/5 had the responsibility for protecting the CP and shifting troops to the right flank if necessary. He sent Second Lieutenant Harvey W. Nolan's platoon to run a race with the enemy for the occupation of Hill 313. Attached in excess of T/O for familiarization was Second Lieutenant Patrick T. McGahn.[15]

About 220 yards from the summit the slope was so steep that the Marines clawed their way upward on hands and knees. The company commander posted the attached light machine gun section while Nolan, McGahn, and Sergeant William Piner organized the assault. The three squads of riflemen advanced a few yards, only to be pinned down by well directed CCF machine gun fire. Another rush brought the Marines closer to the enemy but a

stalemate ensued in the darkness. Seven of the platoon were killed and 17 wounded.

The situation in the 1/5 area was so serious that Fox Company of 2/5 (Lieutenant Colonel Glen E. Martin) sent reinforcements. At dawn, however, Hill 313 proved to be abandoned by the enemy. A vigorous KMC counterstroke had swept the Communists from Hill 509, so that the front was relatively quiet in this area. The courage and determination of the KMC Regiment were praised by General Smith, who sent this message on the morning of the 23d to Colonel Kim, the commanding officer:

"Congratulate you and your fine officers and men on dash and spirit in maintaining your positions against strong enemy attacks. We are proud of the Korean Marines."[16]

It is taking no credit away from the KMCs and 5th Marines to point out that they appear to have been hit by enemy holding attacks. The main CCF effort was directed at the left of the Division line, held by the 7th Marines.

The heaviest fighting took place in the sector of 1/7 on the extreme left, commanded by Major Webb D. Sawyer. It was obvious that the enemy planned to widen the penetration made at the expense of the 6th ROK Division. The 358th Regiment of the 120th Division, CCF 40th Army, hurled nearly 2,000 men at the Marine battalion. Charlie Company, commanded by Captain Eugene H. Haffey, took the brunt of the assault.[17]

The thin battalion line bent under sheer weight of numbers. But it did not break. It held through three hours of furious fighting, with the support of Marine and Army artillery, until the 1st Battalion of the 1st Marines came up as reinforcements under the operational control of the 7th Marines. The newcomers took a position to the left of 1/7, so that the division flank was no longer completely "in the air."

This was one of the first examples of the Corps and Division maneuvering that played such a large part throughout in the blunting of the CCF offensive. Troops were not left to continue a desperate fight when a shift of units would ease the pressure.

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Chapter 6. The CCF Spring Offensive
Marine Air in Support Everywhere

At first light on the 23d the FEAF Mosquitoes and fighter-bombers went into action. The Marines had four two-plane flights of Corsairs airborne before sun-up. VMF-323 responded to a call from Baker Company, 1/5, only to find that the enemy had abandoned Hill 313. A low-flying OY of VMO-6, commanded by Major D. W. McFarland, guided the Corsairs to the withdrawing Chinese, who were worked over thoroughly. VMF-214 planes meanwhile supported 1/7 in that battalion's desperate fight at the left of the line.[18]

A pilot's-eye view showed fighting in progress from one coast to another, although the enemy was making his main effort in the IX Corps sector. The U.S. 24th Infantry Division, to the left of the 6th ROK Division, was having to bend its right flank southward to defend against the CCF penetration. Toward the rear the 27th Brigade of the British Commonwealth Division, in IX Corps reserve, was being alerted to meet the Communists head on and bring the breakthrough to a halt.

Elements of the U.S. 24th and 25th Divisions on the edge of the Iron Triangle were giving ground slowly. Seoul was obviously an objective of CCF units that had crossed the Imjin in the moonlight. But General Ridgway had decided that the city was not to be abandoned. "Considerable importance was attached to the retention of Seoul," he explained at a later date, "as it then had more value psychologically than its acquisition had conferred when we were still south of the Han."[19]

Near the junction of X Corps and I ROK Corps the 7th ROK Division had been hard hit, although the enemy attack in this area was a secondary effort. Air support helped this unit to hold its own until it could be reinforced.

Of the 205 Marine aircraft sorties on 23 April, 153 went to support the fighting front. The 1st Marine Division received 42 of these CAS strikes; 24 went to the ROK 7th Division; 59 to I Corps to check the advance on Seoul; and 28 to pound the Communists crossings the Imjin.[20]

Only about 66 percent of the landing strip at K-3 (Pohang) could be used; the remainder was being repaired by the Seabees. In order to give the Panther jets more room, VMF-212 shifted its squadrons for two days to K-16 near Seoul. A detachment of VMF-323 planes from K-1 (Pusan) also made the move. Since K-16 was only 30 miles from the combat area along the Imjin, the Corsairs were able to launch their attacks and return for rearming and refueling in an hour or less.[21]

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Chapter 6. The CCF Spring Offensive
Plugging the Gap on the Marine Left

At first light on 23 April the entire left flank of the 1st Marine Division lay exposed to the Chinese who had poured into the gap left by the disintegration of the 6th ROK Division. IX Corps orders called for the ROKs to reassemble on the KANSAS line, but most of them straggled from 10 to 14 miles behind the positions they held prior to the CCF attack. The 1st Marine Division ordered Reconnaissance Company to stop ROK stragglers at the river crossing, and several groups were turned back.

The reasons for the ROK collapse are variously given. Weak command and low morale have been blamed for the debacle, yet the shattered division did not lack for defenders. No less an authority than General Van Fleet declared himself ". . . reluctant to criticize the 6th ROK Division too severely. I do not believe they deliberately threw away their equipment—I am inclined to believe such equipment was abandoned due to the terrain, lack of roads and weight. Our check at the time indicated that the Korean soldiers held on to their hand weapons. It is interesting to know that General Chang who commanded 6th ROK Division at the time . . . is today [March 1958] Vice Chief of Staff of the Korean Army."[22]

As a first step toward setting up a defense in two directions, the 1st-Marine Division received orders from IX Corps to fall back to Line PENDLETON (Map 10). This was one of the Eighth Army lines assigned to such profusion that they resembled cracks in a pane of glass. PENDLETON ran generally southwest to northeast through the 7th Marines sector, then turned eastward just north of the town of Hwachon.
Click here to view map

By occupying this line, the 7th Marines could bend its left to the south in order to refuse that flank. Still farther to the south, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines were to take positions facing west. Thus the line of the 1st Marine Division would face west as much as north. On the center and right the KMCs and 5th Marines would find it necessary to withdraw only about 1,000 yards to take up their new positions.[23]

It was up to 1/1 to make the first move toward plugging the gap. At 0130 on the 23d Captain John Coffey's Baker Company led the way. Moving north in the darkness along the Pukhan and then west along a tributary, the long column of vehicles made its first stop about 1,000 yards from the assigned position. Here the 92d Armored Field Battalion, USA, was stationed in support of the 6th ROK Division and elements of the 1st Marine Division. The commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Leon F. Lavoie, was an old acquaintance of 1/1, having supported that battalion during the final days of the Chosin Reservoir breakout. Lavoie was held in high esteem by the Marines, who found it characteristic of him that in this fluid situation his cannoneers were formed into a tight defensive perimeter, ready to fight as infantry if need be.

Another Army artillery unit, the 987th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, had been roughly used by the Chinese who routed the ROK division. Losses in guns and equipment had resulted, and Coffey moved with his company about 1,500 yards to the west to assist in extricating from the mud all the 105s that could be saved. Resistance was encountered in the form of machine gun fire from Chinese who had set up a road block.[24]

Upon returning to 1/1, Coffey found it occupying what was in effect an outpost to the southwest of the 7th Marines. Baker Company was assigned to the left of Captain Robert P. Wray's Charlie Company, holding the curve of a horseshoe-shaped ridge, with Captain Thomas J. Bohannon's Able Company on the right. In support, along the comparatively level ground to the immediate rear, was Weapons Company (Major William L. Bates).

With 1/1 facing in three directions to block a CCF attack, 1/7 managed to disengage and withdraw through 3/7, which occupied a position on Line PENDLETON. VMO-6 helicopters and troops of 2/7 helped to

evacuate the 1/7 casualties incurred during the night's hard fighting.

Click here to view map

During the early morning hours of the 23d the Marines of 3/1 had boarded trucks to the village of Todunni (Map 11) on the west bank of the Pukhan. Their assigned position was Hill 902, a 3,000-foot height dominating the surrounding terrain. The Chinese also were interested in this piece of real estate, since it overlooked the river crossing of the 1st Marine Division. Pressure to beat the Communists to the crest mounted as NCOs urged the men to their utmost efforts over steep uphill trails.

The Marines won the race. Once in position, however, it was evident to Lieutenant Colonel Banning that three ridge lines leading up to the hill mass would have to be defended. This necessity imposed a triangular formation, and he placed Captain Horace L. Johnson's George Company at the apex, with First Lieutenant William J. Allert's How Company on the left, and First Lieutenant William Swanson's Item Company on the right. The heavy machine gems of Major Edwin A. Simmons' Weapons Company were distributed among the rifle companies and the 81mm mortars placed only 10 to 20 yards behind the front lines.[25]

The KMCs and 5th Marines completed their withdrawal without interference. Thus the line of the 1st Marine Division on the afternoon of 23 April might have been compared to a fishhook with the shank in the north and the barb curling around to the west and south. The three Marine battalions plugging the gap were not tied in physically. Major Maurice E. Roach's 3/7 was separated by an interval of 1,000 yards from 1/1, and the other two Marine battalions were 5,500 yards apart (Map 11). But at least the 1st Marine Division had formed a new front under fire and awaited the night's attacks with confidence.

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Chapter 6. The CCF Spring Offensive
Repulse of Communist Attacks

Bugle calls and green flares at about 2000 announced the presence of the Chinese to the west of 1/1 on Horseshoe Ridge.

"They came on in wave after wave, hundreds of them," wrote Lieutenant Reisler, whose platoon held an outpost in advance of Charlie Company. "They were singing, humming and chanting, 'Awake, Marine. . . .' In the first rush they knocked out both our machine guns and wounded about 10 men, putting a big hole in our lines. We held for about 15 minutes, under mortar fire, machine gun fire, and those grenades—hundreds of grenades. There was nothing to do but withdraw to a better position, which I did. We pulled back about 50 yds. and set up a new line. All this was in the pitch-black night with Chinese cymbals crashing, horns blowing, and their god-awful yells."[26]

For four hours the attacks on Horseshoe Ridge were continuous, particularly along the curve held by Wray's company. He was reinforced during the night by squads sent from Coffey's and Bohannon's companies. Wray realized that the integrity of the battalion position depended on holding the curve of the ridge, but his main problem was bringing up enough ammunition. Men evacuating casualties to the rear returned with supplies, but the amount was all too limited until Corporal Leo Marquez appointed himself a one-man committee. His energy equalled his courage as he carried grenades and small-arms ammunition all night to the men on the firing line. Marquez emerged unhurt in spite of bullet holes through his cartridge belt, helmet, and a heel of his shoe.

About midnight it was the turn of 3/1. These Marines had dug in as best they could, but the position was too rocky to permit much excavation. Ammunition for the mortars had to be hand-carried from a point halfway up the hill.

Several hours of harrassing mortar fire preceded the CCF effort. George Company, at the apex of the ridge, was almost overwhelmed by the first Communist waves of assault. The courage of individual Marines shone forth in the ensuing struggle. Technical Sergeant Harold E. Wilson, second in command of the center platoon, suffered four painful wounds but remained in the fight, encouraging his men and guiding reinforcements from How Company as they arrived.[27]

Steady artillery support was provided by Colonel McAlister, who rounded up a jury-rigged liaison party and three forward observer teams composed mainly of officers from the 987th AFA Battalion. They registered 11th Marines and 987th Battalion defensive fires which had a large part in stopping the CCF attack as it lapped around George Company and hit How and Item on the other two ridges.

Colonel McAlister and Colonel Nickerson paid a visit to the CP of 1/1, which remained under the operational control of the 7th Marines until morning. The two regimental commanders arranged for artillery and tank support to cover the gap between 1/1 and 3/7.[28] The enemy, however, seemed to be wary about infiltrating between the three battalion outposts. This reluctance owed in large part to the deadly flat-trajectory fire of the 90mm rifles of Companies A and B of the 1st Tank Battalion, whose commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Holly F. Evans had relieved Lieutenant Colonel Harry T. Milne that day.

Attacks on 3/1 and 3/7 also continued throughout the night. At daybreak the close air support of Marine aircraft prevented further Communist efforts, though dug-in enemy groups remained within machine gun range. Identification of Chinese bodies at daybreak indicated that the 359th and 360th Regiments, 120th Division, 40th CCF Army, had been employed.

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Chapter 6. The CCF Spring Offensive
Withdrawal to the KANSAS Line

Now came the problem for the three Marine battalions of letting loose of the tiger's tail. Corps orders were received on the morning of 24 April for all units of the Division to pull back to Line KANSAS. This was in accordance with General Ridgway's policy, continued by General Van Fleet, of attaching more importance to destruction of enemy personnel than the holding of military real estate.

Some of the most seriously wounded men of 1/1 required immediate evacuation, in spite of the obvious risks. A VMO-6 helicopter piloted by First Lieutenant Robert E. Matthewson attempted a landing at the base of Horseshoe Ridge. As he hovered over the panel markings, CCF small-arms fire mangled the tail rotor. The machine plunged to earth so badly damaged that it had to be destroyed. Matthewson emerged unhurt and waved off a helicopter flown by Captain H. G. McRay. Then the stranded pilot asked for a rifle and gave a good account of himself as an infantryman.[29]

While First Lieutenant Norman W. Hicks' second platoon fought as the rear guard, First Lieutenant Niel B. Mills' first platoon of Charlie Company led the attack down the hill, carrying the wounded behind. In an attempt to rout the Chinese from a flanking hill, Mills was wounded in the neck by a bullet that severed an artery. Corpsman E. N. Smith gripped the end of the artery between his fingers until a hemostat could be applied, thus saving the lieutenant's life. Just before losing consciousness, Mills looked at his watch. It was 1000 and 1/1 had weathered the storm.[30]

The 3d Battalion of the 7th Marines, which had beaten off probing attacks all night, coordinated its movements with those of the two Marine battalions as they slowly withdrew toward the Pukhan. Despite Marine air attacks, the Communists not only followed but infiltrated in sufficient numbers to threaten the perimeter of Lavoie's cannoneers. The training this Army officer had given his men in infantry tactics now paid off as the perimeter held firm while mowing down the attackers with point blank 105mm shells at a range of 1,000 yards. The Marines of Captain Bohannon's company soon got into the fight, and the 92d repaid the courtesy by supporting 1/1 and 3/7 during their withdrawal. Counted CCF dead numbered 179 at a cost to the 92d of 4 KIA and 11 WIA casualties.[31]

As the morning haze lifted, the OYs of VMO-6 spotted for both Army and Marine artillery. DEVASTATE BAKER fed close support to the forward air controllers as fast as it could get planes from K-16 at Seoul, only a 15-minute flight away. Not only 49 Corsairs but also 40 of the Navy ADs and Air Force F-51s and jets aided the Marine ground forces in their withdrawal to Line KANSAS. To speed the fighter-bombers to their targets, some of the Marine pilots were designated tactical air coordinators, airborne (TACA). Their familiarity with the terrain was an asset as they led incoming pilots to ground force units most in need of support.[32]

It was a confusing day in the air. The mutual radio frequencies to which planes and ground controllers were pretuned proved to be inadequate. The consequence was all too often the blocking out of key information at a frustrating moment. Haze and smoke made for limited vision. The planes needed a two-mile circle for their attacks, yet the battalions were at times less than 1,000 yards apart. DEVASTATE BAKER had to deal with this congested and dangerous situation as best it could.

In addition to its strong support of Marine ground forces, the 1st MAW sent 10 sorties to the ROKs in east Korea and 57 to I Corps in its battle along the Imjin. By this time the Gloucestershire Battalion of the 29th British Brigade was isolated seven miles behind enemy lines and receiving all supplies by air-drop. The outlook grew so desperate that officers ordered their men to break up and make their way back to the UN lines if they

could. Only 40 ever succeeded.

In the former 6th ROK Division sector units of the 27th Brigade of the British Commonwealth Division had done a magnificent job of stopping the breakthrough. The 2d Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the 3d Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment distinguished themselves in this fight, which won a Distinguished Unit Citation for the division.[33]

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Chapter 6. The CCF Spring Offensive
Enemy Stopped in IX Corps Sector

Spring had come at last to war-ravaged Korea and the hills were a misty green in the sunshine. Looking down from an aircraft on the warm afternoon of 24 April 1951 the Marine sector resembled a human anthill. Columns of weary men toiled and strained in every direction. Chaotic as the scene may have seemed, however, everything had a purpose. The 1st Marine Division was in full control of all troop movements, despite enemy pressure of the last two nights.

The 5th Marines and KMCs had no opposition as they continued their withdrawal. Marine air reduced to a minimum the harassing efforts of the Chinese following the 1st Marines. As front-line units disengaged and fell back, the length of the main line of resistance was contracted enough for the 7th Marines to be assigned a reserve role. The 1st and 2d Battalions were given the responsibility for the defense of Chunchon as well as the crossing sites over the Pukhan and Soyang Rivers. Major Roach had reached the outskirts of Chunchon when 3/7 was ordered back across the Chunchon, to be attached to the 1st Marines on the left flank.[34]

Throughout the night of 24-25 April the enemy probed the Marine lines, seeking in vain a weak spot where a penetration could be made. It was already evident that the breakthrough in this area had given the Communists only a short-lived advantage. By the third night they were definitely stopped. Only minor patrol actions resulted except for two attacks in company strength on 2/1 at 0050 and 0150. Both were repulsed with total CCF losses of 25 counted dead.

Contrary to the usual rule, the Marines saw more action during the daylight hours. A company-size patrol from 1/1 became heavily engaged at 1350 and three Company A tanks moved up in support. The fight lasted until 1645, when the enemy broke off action and the tanks evacuated 18 wounded Marines.

Early in the afternoon a 3/1 patrol had advanced only 200 yards along a ridgeline when it was compelled to withdraw after running into concentrated mortar and machine gun fire. Sporadic mortar rounds continued until a direct hit was scored on the battalion CP, wounding Colonel McAlister, Lieutenant Colonel Banning, Major Reginald R. Myers, the executive officer, and Major Joseph D. Trompeter, the S-3. Banning and Myers were evacuated and Trompeter assumed command of 3/1.

Losses of 18 KIA and 82 WIA for 24-25 April brought the casualties of the 1st Marines to nearly 300 during the past 48 hours.[35]

A simple ceremony was held at the 1st Marine Division CP on the afternoon of the 24th for the relief of General Smith by Major General Gerald C. Thomas. The new commanding general, a native of Missouri, was educated at Illinois Wesleyan University and enlisted in the Marine Corps in May 1917 at the age of 23. Awarded the Silver Star for bravery at Belleau Wood and Soissons, he was commissioned just before the Meuse-Argonne offensive, in which he was wounded.

During the next two decades, Thomas chased bandits in Haiti, guarded the U.S. mails, protected American interests in China, and served as naval observer in Egypt when Rommel knocked at the gates of Alexandria in 1941. As operations officer and later chief of staff of the 1st Marine Division, he participated in the Guadalcanal campaign in 1942. The next year he became chief of staff of I Marine Amphibious Corps in the Bougainville operation. Returning to Marine Headquarters in 1944 as Director of Plans and Policies, he was named commanding general of the Marines in China three years later.

General Smith had won an enduring place in the hearts of all Marines for his magnificent leadership as well as resourceful generalship during the Inchon-Seoul and Chosin Reservoir campaigns. Speaking of the

Marines of April 1951, he paid them this tribute in retrospect:

"The unit commanders and staff of the Division deserve great credit for the manner in which they planned and conducted the operations which resulted in blunting the Chinese counteroffensive in our area. In my opinion, it was the most professional job performed by the Division while it was under my command."[36]

The night of 25-26 April passed in comparative quiet for the Marines. A few CCF probing attacks and occasional mortar rounds were the extent of the enemy's activity. All Marine units had now reached the modified Line KANSAS, but General Van Fleet desired further withdrawals because the enemy had cut a lateral road.

IX Corps also directed that the 1st Marine Division be prepared on the 26th to move back to Chunchon, where it would defend along the south bank of the Soyang until service units could move out their large supply dumps. The Division was to tie in on the right with the lower extension of the Hwachon Reservoir, and contact was made in that quarter with the French battalion of the 2d Infantry Division, X Corps. On the Marine left flank the 5th Cavalry of the 1st Cavalry Division had relieved elements of the British Commonwealth Division.

Marine regimental officers met with Colonel Bowser, G-3, to plan the continued withdrawal. It was decided that four infantry battalions —1/1, 2/1, 3/5, and 3/7—were to take positions on the west bank of the Pukhan to protect the Mojin bridge and ferry sites while the other units crossed. The execution of the plan went smoothly, without enemy interference. After all other Marine troops were on the east side, 3/7 disengaged last of all and forded the chest-deep stream as a prelude to hiking to Chunchon.[37]

The enemy was kept at a discreet distance throughout the night by continuous artillery fires supplemented by ripples from Captain Eugene A. Bushe's Battery C, 1st 4.5" Rocket Battalion. An acute shortage of trucks made it necessary for most of the troops to hike. Then came the task of organizing the new Division defenses on a line running northeast and southwest through the northern outskirts of Chunchon (Map 10). Planning continued meanwhile for further withdrawals to positions astride the Hongchon-Chunchon MSR.[38]

It was apparent by this time that the enemy had been badly mauled on the IX Corps front. The Communists were now making a supreme effort to smash through in the I Corps area and capture Seoul. It was believed that they had set themselves the goal of taking the city by May Day, the world-wide Communist holiday.

In this aspiration they were destined to be disappointed. They tried to work around the Eighth Army's left flank by crossing the river Han to the Kimpo Peninsula, but air strikes and the threat of naval gunfire frustrated them. Another flanking attempt 35 miles to the southeast met repulse, and before the end of the month it was evident that the Chinese Reds would not celebrate May Day in Seoul.

Generally speaking, the Eighth Army had kept its major units intact and inflicted frightful losses on the enemy while trading shell-pocked ground for Chinese lives. The night of 27-28 April saw little activity on the IX Corps front, adding to the evidence that the enemy had shot his bolt. The next day the 1st Marine Division, along with other Eighth Army forces, continued the withdrawal to the general defensive line designated NO NAME Line (Map 10). Further withdrawals were not contemplated, asserted the IX Corps commander, who sent this message to General Thomas:

"It is the intention of CG Eighth Army to hold firmly on general defense line as outlined in my Operation Plan 17 and my message 9639, and from this line to inflict maximum personnel casualties by an active defense utilizing artillery and sharp armored counterattacks. Withdrawal south of this line will be initiated only on personal direction of Corps commander."[39]

FEAF placed the emphasis on armed reconnaissance or interdiction flights for Marine aircraft during the last few days of April. 1st MAW pilots reported the killing or wounding of 312 enemy troops on the 29th and 30th, and the destruction of 212 trucks, 6 locomotives, and 80 box cars. On the other side of the ledger, the Wing lost a plane a day during the first eight days of the CCF offensive. Of the fliers shot down, five were killed, one was wounded seriously but rescued by helicopter, and two returned safely from enemy-held territory.[40]

The shortage of vehicles slowed the withdrawal of Marine ground forces, but by the 30th the 5th

Marines, KMC Regiment, and 7th Marines were deployed from left to right on NO NAME Line. The 1st Marines went into reserve near Hongchon. On the Division left was the reorganized 6th ROK Division, and on the right the 2d Infantry Division of X Corps.[41]

Nobody was in a better position to evaluate Marine maneuvers of the past week than Colonel Bowser, the G-3, and he had the highest praise. “Whereas the Chosin withdrawal was more spectacular than the April ‘retrograde,’” he commented seven years later, “the latter was executed so smoothly and efficiently that a complex and difficult operation was made to look easy. The entire Division executed everything asked of it with the calm assurance of veterans.”[42]

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Chapter 6. The CCF Spring Offensive
1st Marine Division Returns to X Corps

UN estimates of enemy casualties ranged from 70,000 to 100,000. The Fifth Phase Offensive was an unmitigated defeat for the Communists so far, but EUSAK G-2 officers warned that this was only the first round. Seventeen fresh CCF divisions were available for the second.

General Van Fleet called a conference or corps commanders on 30 April to discuss defensive plans. In the reshuffling of units the 1st Marine Division was placed for the third time in eight months under the operational control of X Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Edward M. Almond. The Marines were to occupy the western sector of X Corps after its boundary with IX Corps had been shifted about 12 miles to the west.[43]

Van Fleet put into effect a reshuffling of units all the way across the peninsula in preparation for the expected renewal of the CCF offensive. Thus on 1 May the UN line was as follows from left to right:

US I Corps—1 ROK Division, 1st Cavalry Division and 25th Infantry Division in line; the 3d Infantry Division and British 29th Brigade in reserve;

US IX Corps—British 27th Brigade, 24th Infantry Division, 5th and 6th ROK Divisions and 7th Infantry Division in line; the 187th Airborne RCT in reserve;

US X Corps—1st Marine Division, 2d Infantry Division, 5th and 7th ROK Divisions;

ROK III Corps—9th and 3d Divisions;

ROK I Corps—Capitol Division and ROK 11th Division.

"I don't want to lose a company—certainly not a battalion," Van Fleet told the corps commanders. "Keep units intact. Small units must be kept within supporting distance. . . . Give every consideration to the use of armor and infantry teams for a limited objective counterthrust. For greater distances, have ready and use when appropriate, regiments of infantry protected by artillery and tanks."[44]

From the foxhole to the command post a confident new offensive spirit animated an Eight Army which only four months previously had been recuperating from two major reverses within two months. The Eighth Army, in short, had been welded by fire into one of the finest military instruments of American military history; and the foreign units attached to it proved on the battlefield that they were picked troops.

With the Hwachon dam now in enemy hands, the Communists had the capability of closing the gates, thus lowering the water level in the Pukhan and Han rivers to fording depth. As a countermeasure, EUSAK asked the Navy to blast the dam. It was a difficult assignment, but Douglas AD Skyraiders from the *Princeton* successfully torpedoed the flood gates on 1 May.[45]

An atmosphere of watchful waiting prevailed during the next two weeks as the Marines on NO NAME Line improved their defensive positions and patrolled to maintain contact with the enemy. Eighth Army evolved at this time the "patrol base" concept to deal with an enemy retiring beyond artillery range. These bases were part of a screen, called the outpost line of resistance (OPLR), established in front of the MLR. Their mission was to maintain contact with the enemy by means of patrols, give warning of an impending attack, and delay its progress as much as possible.

When it came to artillery ammunition, the 11th Marines found that it had progressed from a famine to a feast. Where shells had recently been rationed because of transport difficulties, the Eighth Army now directed the cannoneers along NO NAME Line to expend a unit of fire a day. The 11th Marines protested, since the infantry was seldom in contact with the enemy. One artillery battalion submitted a tongue-in-cheek report to the effect that the required amount of ammunition had been fired "in target areas cleared of friendly patrols."[46] The requirement

was kept in force, however, until the demands of the renewed CCF offensive resulted in another ammunition shortage for the 11th Marines.

Marine tanks were directed by Division to use their 90mm rifles to supplement 11th Marine howitzers in carrying out Corps fire plans. The tankers protested that their tubes had nearly reached the end of a normal life expectancy, with no replacements in sight. This plaint did not fall upon deaf ears at Corps Headquarters and two Army units, the 96th AFA Battalion and 17th FA Battalion, were assigned to fire the deep missions.[47]

Eighth Army staff officers concluded that the enemy would launch his next effort in the center. Intelligence, according to General Van Fleet, "had noted for some 2 weeks prior to the May attack that the Chinese Communists were shifting their units to the east." Nevertheless, the blow fell "much farther east than [was] expected." [48]

Although the east offered the best prospects of surprise, a rugged terrain of few roads imposed grave logistical handicaps on the enemy. Moreover, UN warships dominated the entire eastern littoral. Despite these disadvantages, an estimated 125,000 Chinese attacked on the morning of 16 May 1951 in the area of the III and I ROK Corps between the U.S. 2d Infantry Division and the coast. Six CCF divisions spearheaded an advance on a 20-mile front that broke through the lines of the 5th and 7th ROK Divisions. Pouring into this gap, the Communists made a maximum penetration of 30 miles that endangered the right flank of the U.S. 2d Infantry Division.

General Van Fleet took immediate steps to stabilize the front. In one of the war's most remarkable maneuvers he sent units of the 3d Infantry Division, then in reserve southeast of Seoul, on a 70-mile all-night ride in trucks to the threatened area.[49]

The 1st Marine Division was not directly in the path of the enemy advance. During the early morning hours of 17 May, however, an enemy column made a thrust that apparently was intended as an end-run attack on the left flank of the 2d Infantry Division. Avoiding initially the Chunchon-Hongchon highway, Chinese in estimated regimental strength slipped behind the patrol base set up by a KMC company just west of the MSR (Map 12).

Click here to view map

For several days Colonel Nickerson and his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Davis, had been apprehensive over the security of this road on which the 7th Marines depended for logistical support. On the afternoon of the 17th they pulled back Lieutenant Colonel Bernard T. Kelly's 3/7 (less Company G) to establish a blocking position, generally rectangular in shape, at the vital Morae-Kogae pass on the Chunchon road. This move was not completed until sunset and George Company did not rejoin the battalion until midnight, so that the enemy probably had no intelligence of the new position. The main road ran along a shelf on one shoulder of the pass, but the Chinese avoided it and came by a trail from the northwest (Map 12).

The surprise was mutual. A platoon of D/Tanks, a Weapons Company platoon, and an Item Company platoon, defending the northern end of the perimeter, opened up with everything they had. A desperate fire fight ensued as the enemy replied with a variety of weapons—mortars, recoilless rifles, satchel charges, grenades, and machine guns.

Two CCF soldiers were killed after disabling a Marine tank by a grenade explosion in the engine compartment. A satchel charge knocked out another tank, and the enemy made an unsuccessful attempt to kill a third by rolling up a drum of gasoline and igniting it.

Captain Victor Stoyanow's Item Company, at the critical point of the thinly stretched 3/7 perimeter, was hard-pressed. The enemy made a slight penetration into one platoon position but was repulsed by a counterattack that Stoyanow led. Marine infantry and tanks were well supported by artillery that sealed off the Chinese column from the rear. The action ended at daybreak with the routed enemy seeking only escape as Marine artillery and mortars continued to find lucrative targets. Air did not come on station until about 1030, when it added to the

slaughter. Scattered enemy groups finally found a refuge in the hills, leaving behind 82 prisoners and 112 counted dead. Captures of enemy equipment included mortars, recoilless rifles, and Russian 76mm guns and machine guns. Friendly losses were 7 KIA and 19 WIA.[50]

1st MAW squadrons were kept busy furnishing close air support to the 2d Infantry Division and the two ROK divisions hit by the enemy's May offensive. Because of the patrolling Marine sector, the OYs of VMO-6 took over much of the task of controlling air strikes. They flew cover for the infantry-tank patrols, and in the distant areas controlled almost as many air strikes as they did artillery missions. From the 1st to the 23d of May, VMO-6 observers controlled 54 air strikes involving 189 UN planes—159 Navy and Marine F4Us, F9Fs, and ADs, and 30 Air Force F-80s, F-84s, and F-51s. About 40 percent of the aircraft controlled by the OYs were non-Marine planes.[51]

On the 18th the 1st Marine Division, carrying out X Corps orders, began a maneuver designed to aid the U.S. 2d Infantry Division on the east by narrowing its front. The 7th Marines pulled back to NO NAME Line to relieve the 1st Marines, which side-slipped to the east to take over an area held by the 9th Infantry. The 5th Marines then swung around from the Division left flank to the extreme right and relieved another Army regiment, the 38th Infantry. This permitted the 2d Infantry Division to face east and repulse attacks from that direction.

By noon on 19 May the enemy's renewed Fifth Phase Offensive had lost most of its momentum as CCF supplies dwindled to a trickle along a tenuous line of communications. That same day, when Colonel Wilburt S. Brown took over the command of the 1st Marines from Colonel McAlister, all four Marine regiments were in line—from left to right, the KMCs, the 7th Marines, the 1st Marines, and the 5th Marines. A new NO NAME Line ran more in a east-west direction than the old one with its northeast to southwest slant. Thus in the east of the Marine sector the line was moved back some 4,000 yards while remaining virtually unchanged in the west.

Enough enemy pressure was still being felt by the 2d Infantry Division so that General Van Fleet ordered a limited offensive by IX Corps to divert some of the CCF strength. While the rest of the 1st Marine Division stood fast, the KMC Regiment advanced with IX Corps elements.

At the other end of the line the Marines had the second of their two fights during the CCF offensive. Major Morse L. Holliday's 3/5 became engaged at 0445 on the 20th with elements of the 44th CCF Division. Chinese in regimental strength were apparently on the way to occupy the positions of the Marine battalion, unaware of its presence.

This mistake cost them dearly when 3/5 opened up with every weapon at its disposal while requesting the support of Marine air, rockets, and artillery. The slaughter lasted until 0930, when the last of the routed Chinese escaped into the hills. Fifteen were taken prisoner and 152 dead were counted in front of the Marine positions.[52]

From 20 May onward, it grew more apparent every hour that the second installment of the CCF Fifth Phase Offensive had failed even more conclusively than the first. The enemy had only a narrow penetration on a secondary front to show for ruinous casualties. Worse yet, from the Chinese viewpoint, the UN forces were in a position to retaliate before the attackers recovered their tactical balance. The Eighth Army had come through with relatively light losses, and it was now about to seize the initiative.

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Punchbowl

ONLY FROM THE AIR could the effects of the UN counterstroke of May and June 1951 be fully appreciated. It was more than a CCF withdrawal; it was a flight of beaten troops under very little control in some instances. They were scourged with bullets, rockets, and napalm as planes swooped down upon them like hawks scattering chickens. And where it had been rare for a single Chinese soldier to surrender voluntarily, remnants of platoons, companies, and even battalions were now giving up after throwing down their arms.

There had been nothing like it before, and its like would never be seen in Korea again. The enemy was on the run! General Van Fleet, after his retirement, summed up the double-barreled Chinese spring offensive and the UN counterstroke in these words:

"We met the attack and routed the enemy. We had him beaten and could have destroyed his armies. Those days are the ones most vivid in my memory—great days when all the Eighth Army, and we thought America too, were inspired to win. In those days in Korea we reached the heights."[1]

Communist casualties from 15 to 31 May were estimated by the Eighth Army at 105,000. This figure included 17,000 counted dead and the unprecedented total of some 10,000 prisoners, most of them Chinese Reds taken during the last week of the month in frantic efforts to escape. Such results were a vast departure from past occasions when Mao Tse-tung's troops had preferred death to surrender.

In all probability, only the mountainous terrain saved them from a complete debacle. If the Eighth Army had been able to use its armor for a mechanized pursuit, it might have struck blows from which the enemy could not recover. As it was, the Communists escaped disaster by virtue of the fact that a platoon could often stand off a company or even a battalion by digging in and defending high ground commanding the only approach. Every hill was a potential Thermopylae in this craggy land of few roads.

It was the misfortune of the 1st Marine Division to have perhaps the least lucrative zone of action in all Korea for the peninsula-wide turkey shoot. A chaos of jagged peaks and dark, narrow valleys, the terrain alone was enough to limit an advance. Even so, the Marines inflicted 1,870 counted KIA casualties on the Communists in May and captured 593, most of them during the last eight days of the month.

General Almond congratulated the Division for its accomplishment of "a most arduous battle task. You have denied [the enemy] the opportunity of regrouping his forces and forced him into a hasty retreat; the destruction of enemy forces and materiel has been tremendous and many times greater than our own losses."[2]

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack
Light Resistance at First

Priority of air support on 31 August was assigned to the two KMC battalions. They jumped off in column against light to moderate resistance, with Hill 924 as their first objective. Mine fields gave the KMCs more trouble at first than scattered NKPA mortar and machine gun fire. Forward movement and maneuver were restricted as 1/KMC passed through 3/KMC at 1445 to continue the attack against stiffening resistance.

On the right 3/7 also encountered light resistance in the morning which increased as the assault troops neared the objective. The slopes of Hill 702 proved to be heavily mined, and forward elements of 3/7 were hit by a concentration of mortar and artillery fire.

East of the river, on the regimental right flank, where Objective 1 had been occupied without a fight, 1/7 supported the attack of 3/7 with mortar fire. Both 3/7 and the KMCs were within 1,000 yards of their objectives late in the afternoon when a halt was called for the day. Casualties had been light, thanks in large measure to excellent air and artillery support.

When the attack was resumed on 1 September, 3/KMC moved through positions of 3/7 to reach, a ridgeline on the flank of the regimental objective. While 3/KMC advanced from the northeast, 1/KMC closed in from the southeast. Both battalions took heavy losses from enemy mines and mortars as well as machine guns and automatic weapons fired from hidden bunkers. The converging attack made slow but steady progress, however, until one company of 3/KMC drove within 200 meters of the top of Hill 924 at 1700. Even so, it took four more hours of hard fighting to secure the objective. That evening 2/KMC was relieved of its defensive responsibility along the KANSAS Line by 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, enabling the KMC battalion to join in the attack.

Throughout the day 3/7 slugged it out in the vicinity of 702 with an NKPA battalion. Four counterattacks were launched from Hill 602, the northeastern fork of YOKE Ridge. More than 500 men were employed in this effort, some of them penetrating briefly into 3/7 positions. Two air strikes, called by patrols of 1/7 from across the river, helped to break up the main NKPA attack, and the 11th Marines (Colonel Custis Burton, Jr.), poured in a deadly concentration of artillery fire. Lieutenant Colonel B. T. Kelly's battalion continued to be engaged until dusk.

The tenacity of the NKPA defense was demonstrated at the expense of the KMCs when they were driven from the top of Hill 924 by a surprise enemy counterattack at midnight. The Korean Marines came back strongly at daybreak and a terrific fight ensued before the North Koreans were in turn evicted shortly before noon. As a measure of the artillery assistance rendered, Major Gordon R. Worthington's 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, fired 1,682 rounds of 105 ammunition in support of the KMC's during the 24 hours ending at 1800 on 2 September. During the same period Lieutenant Colonel William McReynold's 3/11 fired 1,400 rounds in support of 3/7. The other battalions of the Marine artillery regiment, reinforced by the 196th, 937th, and 780th Field Artillery Battalions, USA, brought the number of rounds to a grand total of 8,400 for this 24-hour period.

After the securing of Hill 924, the 2d Battalion of the KMC Regiment passed through the 1st and 3d Battalions to spearpoint the attack west toward Hill 1026. In the zone of 3/7, an NKPA counterattack was repulsed at 0700 on 2 September. Two hours later George Company, supported by How Company with mortar and machine gun fire, moved out to resume the attack on Hill 602. Lieutenant Colonel B. T. Kelly ordered his battalion heavy machine guns set up in battery to deliver overhead supporting fires.

In slightly less than two hours the Marines of 3/7 swept the crest of Hill 602, securing Division Objective 2. Three company-size enemy counterattacks were repulsed before the North Koreans withdrew to the north at

1500.

The 2d KMC Battalion fought its way to a point within 800 yards of Hill 1026 before dusk. So aggressive and persistent was the NKPA defense that several light enemy probing attacks were launched during the night of 2-3 September, not only against forward Marine elements but also against the 5th Marines units on the KANSAS Line, 5 miles to the rear. The front was where you found it.

While 3/7 constructed emplacements and obstacles on Hill 602, the KMCs continued their attack on the morning of 3 September toward Hill 1026. With the extending of the 7th Marines zone to the left to decrease the width of the KMC front, 2/7 was brought up from regimental reserve to help cover a new sector that included Hill 924.

The attack led by 2/KMC collided with a large-scale enemy counterattack. It was nip and tuck for 3 1/2 hours before the North Koreans broke, but, by midmorning, the KMCs were in possession of Division Objective 3 and consolidating for defense. They were not a moment too soon in these preparations, for the enemy counterattacked at 1230 and put up a hot fight for two hours before retiring.

This action completed the battle for Corps Objective YOKE. At 1800 on 3 September, the 1st Marine Division was in full possession of the HAYS Line, dominating the entire northern rim of the Punch-bowl (Map 18). Reports from the U.S. 2d Infantry Division and 5th ROK Division, attacking in sectors to the west, indicated that the pressure exerted by the Marines was assisting these units. Large gains had been made on the west side of the Punchbowl against comparatively light resistance.

On 4 September, with all objectives consolidated, 1st Marine Division units patrolled northward from defensive positions. Plans were being formed for the second phase of the Division attack—the advance to seize the next series of commanding ridgelines, 4,000 to 7,000 yards forward of the present MLR.

The victory in the four-day battle had not been bought cheaply. A total of 109 Marine KIA and 494 WIA (including KMCs) was reported. NKPA casualties for the period were 656 counted KIA and 40 prisoners.

As evidence that the enemy had profited by the breathing spell during the Kaesong truce talks, it was estimated that NKPA artillery fire in the Punchbowl sector almost equalled the firepower provided by the organic Marine artillery and the guns of attached U.S. Army units. NKPA strength in mortars and machine guns also compared favorably with that of Marines.

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Punchbowl

Plan to Cut Off Communists

The 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, released from IX Corps reserve, arrived in the Hongchon area on 21 May and took a position between the 1st Marine Division on the left and the 2d Infantry Division on the right. Two days later X Corps gave the Marines the mission of securing the important road center of Yanggu at the eastern end of the Hwachon Reservoir (Map 13). Elements of the 2d Infantry Division, with the 187th Airborne RCT attached, were meanwhile to drive northeast to Inje after establishing a bridgehead across the river Soyang. From Inje the 187th (reinforced) would continue to advance northeast toward its final objective, Kansong on the coast. After linking up with I ROK Corps, the Army regiment might be able to pull the drawstring on a tremendous bag of prisoners—all the CCF forces south of the Inje-Kansong road. There was, however, a big "if" in the equation. The Communists were falling back with all haste, and it was a question whether the bag could be closed in time.

Click here to view map

The 1st Marine Division jumped off at 0800 on 23 May with the 1st and 5th Marines abreast, the 1st on the left. Both regiments advanced more than 5,000 yards against negligible opposition. During the course of this attack the 1st Marines experimented by calling an air strike in the hope of detonating an entire mine field. The results were disappointing. Live mines were blown to new locations, thus changing the pattern, but few exploded. [3]

The 7th Marines was relieved on the 23d by elements of the 7th Infantry Division (IX Corps) and moved to the east for employment on the Marine right flank. The KMC Regiment, relieved by other IX Corps units, went into Division reserve.[4]

The 1st Marines, advancing on the left, reached its objectives, about two-thirds of the way to the Soyang, by noon on the 26th. The regiment reverted to Division reserve upon relief by the KMCs. In the right half of the Division zone, resistance gradually stiffened. On the 24th, the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 5th Marines ran into trouble as they started their advance toward their initial objective, three hills about 7,000 yards north of Hangye (Map 12). Both battalions were slowed by heavy enemy mortar and machine gun fire. They requested immediate artillery and air support.

Captain John A. Pearson, commanding Item Company, could observe the enemy on Hill 1051, holding up the attack with flanking fire. He directed air and artillery on the crest and on the Communists dug in along the southeastern slopes. Soon the enemy troops were seen retiring northward. This eased the pressure on the center, and Captain Samuel S. Smith's Dog Company managed to work forward and gain the summit of Hill 883 by 1300. Tanks moved up in support and at midnight Colonel Hayward reported his portion of the Division objective secured.[5]

The 7th Marines, moving forward in the right rear of the 5th, veered to the left and drove into the center of the Division zone, reaching the southern bank of the Soyang by nightfall on the 26th. That same day 2/7 overran an enemy ammunition dump and took 27 CCF prisoners, some of them wounded men who had been left behind. The captured material included 100,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition, 12,000 rounds of mortar ammunition, 1,000 rounds of artillery ammunition, 6,000 pounds of explosive charges, and 9,000 hand grenades.

Five U.S. trucks and jeeps were "released to higher headquarters." Two CCF trucks, two mules, and a horse were "integrated into the battalion transportation system and profitably employed thereafter."[6]

The 187th Airborne RCT reported on the 24th that its advance was being held up by increasing enemy

resistance.[7] It was already evident that the CCF flight had frustrated the plan of cutting off decisively large numbers in the X Corps zone. Air observation established, however, that hundreds of Chinese Reds had merely escaped from the frying pan into the fire. By fleeing westward along the south shore of the Hwachon Reservoir, they stumbled into the IX Corps zone. There the remnants of whole units surrendered, in some instances without striking a blow. Along the route they were pitilessly attacked by UN aircraft. 1st MAW units had never before known such good hunting as during the last week in May 1951.[8]

Despite the “murky instrument weather” of 27 May the all-weather fighters of VMF(N)-513 reported the killing of an estimated 425 CCF soldiers. Two F7F pilots killed or wounded some 200 Chinese Reds in the I Corps zone. On the following day the 1st MAW claimed a total of 454 KIA casualties inflicted on the enemy.[9]

Estimates of enemy dead by pilots are likely to be over-optimistic, but there can be no doubt that UN aircraft slaughtered the fleeing Communists in large numbers. Only poor flying weather saved the enemy from far worse casualties. So intent were the Chinese on escape that they violated their usual rule of making troop movements only by night. When the fog and mist cleared briefly, Marine pilots had glimpses of CCF units crowding the roads without any attempt at concealment. Napalm, bombs, and machine guns left heaps of dead and wounded as the survivors continued their flight, hoping for a return of fog and mist to protect them.

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Initial Marine Objectives Secured

As the Marine ground forces advanced, they found fewer and fewer Chinese Reds opposing them. The explanation was given by a prisoner from the 12th Division, V Corps, of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA). His unit had the mission, he said, of relieving troops in the Yanggu-Inje area and conducting delaying actions. The purpose was to allow CCF units to escape a complete disaster and dig in farther north. The North Koreans, in short, were being sacrificed in rear guard delaying actions in order that the Chinese Reds might save their own skins.

U.S. interrogators asked NKPA prisoners why they put up with such treatment. The answer was that they couldn't help themselves. The Chinese had impressed them into service, armed them, and trained them after the NKPA collapse in the fall of 1950. They were under the thumb of political commissars holding life and death authority over them. Any NKPA soldier suspected of trying to shirk his duty or escape was certain to be shot like a dog. At least the man on the firing line had a chance to come out alive; the man who defied the system had none.

This attitude accounts to a large extent for the many occasions when NKPA troops literally resisted to the last man in delaying actions. Marines in general, judging by their comments, considered the Chinese Red the better all-around soldier; but they credited the Korean Red with more tenacity on the defensive.

Because of the stubborn NKPA opposition in East Korea, the Eighth Army staff and command gave some thought to the possibility of an amphibious operation in the enemy's rear by the 1st Marine Division. Plans were discussed on 28 May for a landing at Tongchon (Map 8). The Marines were to drive southward along the Tongchon-Kumhwa road to link up with the IX Corps units attacking toward the northeast along the same route. After meeting, the two forces would systematically destroy the pocketed enemy units. It was decided that 6 June would be D-day. And then, to the great disappointment of Generals Thomas and Almond, the plan was suddenly cancelled by EUSAK on 29 May after a single day's consideration.[10]

Another scheme for cutting off large enemy forces was abandoned on 28 May when the 187th Airborne got as far as Inje. Most of the CCF units having escaped, this regiment was given a new mission of securing the high ground to the north of Inje.

During the last five days of May the 5th and 7th Marines continued to advance steadily. On the morning of the 31st the 7th faced the task of breaking through a stubbornly contested pass leading into Yanggu. With a battalion on each ridge leading into the pass, Colonel Nickerson found it a slow yet precarious prelude to get the men down. Adding to their trials were some 500 enemy 76mm and mortar shells received by the regiment.

General Van Fleet, an onlooker while visiting the 7th Marines OP, shook his head wonderingly. "How did you ever get the men up those cliffs?" he asked Colonel Nickerson.

The answer was short and simple. "General," said the regimental commander, "they climbed."

As the day wore on, Nickerson called for what his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Davis, described as "a through-the-middle play. A company of tanks [Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, commanded by Captain Richard M. Taylor] was launched up the road with infantry on foot hugging the protective cover of the steep road embankments. As the tanks drew fire, the infantry could spot the source and . . . quickly cleaned the enemy out. This rapid thrust caused the enemy defenders to flee as fire was poured into them from our center force as well as the flank attackers."[11]

By nightfall on the 31st the 7th Marines had control of Yanggu, its airfield, and the hills surrounding that

burnt-out town. The 5th Marines had reached a point 6,000 yards northeast of Yanggu, astride the north-south ridgeline between that road center and Inje.

Losses for the 1st Marine Division in May added up to 75 KIA, 8 DOW, and 731 WIA. The ratio of wounded to killed, it may be noted, is more than nine-to-one. This proportion, so much more favorable than the usual ratio, rose to an even more astonishing 15-to-1 in June. Various explanations have been offered, one of them being the spirit of cool professionalism of Marines who had learned how to take cover and not expose themselves to needless risks. But this doesn't account for the unusual ratio, and it may perhaps be concluded that the Marines were simply lucky in this operation.

The comparatively low death rate has also been credited in part to the alertness with which Marine officers adapted to changing situations. War is a grim business on the whole, but Colonel Wilburt S. Brown took an amusing advantage of enemy propaganda accusing Americans of all manner of crimes against humanity. At the outset he had requested colored smoke shells for signaling. But upon learning from POW interrogations that NKPA soldiers were terrified by what they believed to be frightful new gases, the commanding officer of the 1st Marines had an added reason for using green, red, and yellow smoke. Unfortunately, Lieutenant Colonel Merritt Adelman, commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, soon had to inform him that the inadequate supply was exhausted.[12] It was never renewed during Brown's command.

Major David W. McFarland, commanding officer of VMO-6, also exploited enemy ignorance. His original purpose in initiating night aerial observation by OY planes was to improve artillery accuracy. Soon he noticed that the mere presence of an OY overhead would silence enemy artillery.

"The aerial observer," McFarland explained, "was often unable to determine the location of enemy artillery even though he could see it firing, because he would be unable to locate map coordinates in the dark—that is, relating them to the ground. Fortunately, this fact was unknown to the enemy. From their observation of the OYs in the daytime, they had found that the safest thing to do whenever an OY was overhead was to take cover. This they continued to do at night."[13]

VMO-6 also put into effect an improvement of 1st Marine Division aerial photographic service at a time when the 1st MAW photo section had missions all over the Korean front. Lieutenant Colonel Donald S. Bush, commanding officer of the section, is credited with the innovation of mounting a K-17 camera on an OY. Only a 6-inch focal length lens could be installed on one of these small planes. This meant that in order to get the same picture as a jet the OY must fly at half the altitude. The pilot would be in more danger but haze problems were reduced.

The experiment was an immediate success. The Division set up a photo laboratory near the VMO–6 CP for rapid processing and printing. A helicopter stood by for rapid delivery to the units concerned.[14]

Not all the variations in tactics were innovations. Lieutenant Colonel Bernard T. Kelly, commanding officer of 3/7, revived an old device on 31 May by using indirect automatic weapons fire with good effect. Four water-cooled heavy machine guns provided long range (2,600 yards) plunging fires on the reverse slopes of hills in support of his leading elements during the final attack on Yanggu.[15]

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MAG–12 Moves to K–46 at Hoengsong

Delay and uncertainty were still the two great stumbling blocks to adequate air support for the ground forces under the JOC control system. Marine officers contended that infantry units sometimes took unnecessary casualties as a consequence. Worse yet, there were occasions when the expected planes did not arrive at all.

Statistics kept by the 1st MAW and Navy during the spring of 1951 upheld these conclusions. During the Inchon-Seoul operation, the average delay in receiving air support had been 15 minutes as compared to 80 minutes in May and June of 1951. Approximately 35 minutes of this time was required to process the request through JOC. And only 65 to 70 percent of the sorties requested were ever received by Marine ground forces.[16]

Generals Shepherd and Harris had discussed the problem during the early spring of 1951 with General Partridge of the Fifth Air Force. Several compromises were reached, and for brief periods the 1st Marine Division received more air support than it could use. Unfortunately, these periods were at times of the least need. When the chips were down, the old delays and uncertainties reappeared. General Partridge commented:

"The 1st Marine Air Wing was assigned for operational control by the Fifth Air Force and it was used just as any of the other units of the Fifth were employed, that is, in support anywhere along the battle front where it appeared to be most urgently needed.

"In every action such as took place in Korea when the resources and especially the air resources are far too few, ground commanders inevitably feel that they are being shortchanged. They are trying to accomplish their objectives under the most difficult circumstances and with the minimum number of casualties and they want all the assistance from the air that they can get. I am sure I would feel the same in similar circumstances. However, there was never enough air support to satisfy everyone and I was most unhappy that this was the case.

"From time to time I was called upon to denude one section of the front of its close air support in order to bolster some other area where the situation was critical. Sometimes this worked to the advantage of the Marines as in the case of operations near the Chosin Reservoir in December 1950, and at other times it worked to their disadvantage. In retrospect, however, I would estimate that, day in and day out, the Marine ground units had more air support than any other division which was engaged."[17]

With all due respect to General Partridge, Marine officers felt that the discussion should not be limited merely to the amount of air support. It was not so much the amount as the delay and unreliability under JOC control that constituted the problem as the Marines saw it. On 24 May, while on one of his periodic tours of the Far East, General Shepherd brought up the matter of CAS with General Ridgway. He agreed with the UN commander in chief that it would be improper for a Marine division to expect the exclusive support of a Marine air wing in Korea. The main difficulty, he reiterated, lay in the slowness and uncertainty of getting air support when needed.[18]

At this time an extensive reshuffling of Air Force commanders was in progress. On 21 May General Partridge relieved Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer, CG FEAF, who had suffered a heart attack. Partridge in turn was relieved by Major General Edward J. Timberlake, who assumed temporary command of Fifth Air Force until Major General Frank E. Everest arrived to take over a few days later.

The 1st MAW was also undergoing changes in command. General Harris was relieved on 29 May by his deputy commander, Major General Thomas J. Cushman. Brigadier General William O. Brice, just arrived from the States, became the Wing's new deputy commander.

After several "get acquainted" discussions, the new Air Force and 1st MAW generals agreed on a plan to

cut down delays in air support. It was a simple solution: the aircraft were merely to be brought nearer to the Marine ground forces. This was to be managed by moving the MAG-12 forward echelon from K-16 at Seoul to K-46 at Hoengsong (Map 16). The new field, if such it could be called, was nothing more than a stony dirt strip. But it was only 40 miles, or a 10- to 15-minute flight, from the firing line. The first missions from the new field were flown on 27 May. VMFs-214 and -323 kept an average of 12 Corsairs at K-46 thereafter, rotating them from K-1.[19]

On the surface this seemed to be a practical solution, especially after a four-plane alert was established at K-46 for use by the 1st Marine Division when needed. DEVASTATE BAKER was permitted to put in an alerting call directly to the field. The rub was that JOC must be called in order to make the original request. Before the planes could take off, the MAG-12 operations officer at the field was likewise required to call JOC and confirm the fact that the mission had been approved.

Communications were poor at first for the 40 miles between the field and the front. DEVASTATE BAKER got better results by calling 1st MAW Headquarters at K-l, 140 miles south, and having the Wing call K-46 and JOC. This meant delays such as General Thomas described in a letter to General Almond. On 29 May, he said, the 5th and 7th Marines were up against severe enemy fire in their attack. The TACPS had enemy targets under observation and were ready to control any aircraft they could get. The Marines requested 92 sorties and received 55. Of these, 20 were flown by Corsairs or Panther Jets, and 35 by Air Force jets and Mustangs. And though 55 sorties were considerably less than optimum air support, practically all arrived from two to four hours late. On the firing line the enemy's resistance, concluded General Thomas, was broken not by air power but by Marine riflemen.[20]

On other days the new plan made a more encouraging showing. There was, for instance, the occasion when the OYs discovered an enemy regiment near the 1st Marine Division right flank. DEVASTATE BAKER called the 1st MAW direct on 31 May for 16 fighters as soon as possible. Wing called JOC for approval to launch the flight and put in a call to K-46 to alert the planes. In just 48 minutes after the initial call from DEVASTATE BAKER, 16 pilots had jumped into their flight gear at K-46, had been briefed, and were airborne on what proved to be a timely strike with excellent results.[21]

A new tactic of night air support was introduced late in May when Marine R4D transports were outfitted to operate as flare planes. Not only did these unarmed aircraft light up targets along the front lines for the VMF (N)-513 night fighters; they were also on call for use by the 1st Marine Division. Later, on 12 June, the Navy provided the 1st MAW with PB4Y-2 Privateers for the nightly illumination missions.[22]

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Punchbowl
Fight of the 5th Marines for Hill 610

During the heyday of the battleship, every midshipman dreamed of some glorious future day when he would be on the bridge, directing the naval maneuver known as crossing the T. In other words, his ships would be in line of battle, firing converging broadsides on an enemy approaching in column. Obviously, the enemy would be at a disadvantage until he executed a 90°turn under fire to bring his battered ships into line to deliver broadsides of their own.

It was a mountain warfare variation of crossing the T that the Korean Reds were using against the Marines. Whenever possible, the enemy made a stand on a hill flanked by transverse ridgelines. He emplaced hidden machine guns or mortars on these ridgelines to pour a converging fire into attackers limited by the terrain to a single approach. It meant that the Marines had to advance through this crossfire before they could get in position for the final assault on the enemy's main position.

Click here to view map

There were two tactical antidotes. One was well directed close air support. The other was the support of tanks advancing parallel to enemy-held ridgelines and scorching them with the direct fire of 90mm rifles and 50 caliber machine guns.

On 1 June the two regiments in assault, the 5th and 7th Marines, found the resistance growing stiffer as they slugged their way forward toward Line KANSAS (Map 15). Within an hour after jumping off, 2/5 was heavily engaged with an estimated 200 enemy defending Hill 651 tenaciously. At noon, after ground assaults had failed, a request was put in for air support. Four VMF-214 planes led by Captain William T. Kopas bombed and strafed the target. This attack broke the back of NKPA opposition, and 2/5 moved in to seize the objective.[23]

Click here to view map

Early on the morning of the 2d, Lieutenant Colonel Hopkins' 1/5 moved out to secure the southwest end of the long ridge line that stretched northeast from Yanggu (Map 15) and afforded a natural avenue of approach to Taeam-san and the KANSAS line on the southern rim of the Punchbowl. The Marine advance got under way at 0915. After two four-plane strikes by VMF-214 and a "preparation" by 1/11 and the 1st Rocket Battery, the battalion attacked across a valley with Baker Company (First Lieutenant William E. Kerrigan) on the right and Charlie Company (First Lieutenant Robert E. Warner) on the left to seize the terminal point on the ridge leading to Hill 610 (Map 15). Able Company (Captain John L. Kelly) followed Charlie as Company C (Captain Richard M. Taylor) of the 1st Tank Battalion moved into supporting position.

Converging fire from transverse ridges had the Marine riflemen pinned down until the tankers moved along the valley road running parallel. Direct 90mm fire into NKPA log bunkers enabled C/1/5 to advance to the forward slope of Hill 610. The enemy fought back with machine guns and grenades while directing long-range rifle fire against 2/5, attacking along a parallel ridge across the valley.

By 1945 the last bunker on Hill 610 had been overrun. Meanwhile, 2/5 had pushed ahead some 5,000 yards to the northeast.

The capture of Hill 610 will never have its glorious page in history. It was all in the day's work for Marines who could expect a succession of such nameless battles as they clawed their way forward. That night the weary men of 1/5 were not astonished to receive a counterattack in the darkness. It was all part of the job, too. After driving off the unseen enemy, the new tenants of Hill 610 snatched a few hours of sleep. They were on their feet again at dawn, ready to go up against the next key terrain feature in a rocky area that seemed to be composed

entirely of Hill 610s.

The next knob along the ridge happened to be Hill 680, about 1,000 yards to the northeast. VMF-214 planes from K-46 napalmed and strafed the enemy, and Able Company led the 1/5 attack. During the air strike the Koreans had taken to cover in their holes on the reverse.

They were back in previously selected forward slope firing positions by the time the Marines came in sight. Close-in artillery support enabled the attackers to get within grenade range and seize the last NKPA bunker by 1400. Able Company pushed on.

Midway from Hill 680 to the next knob, Hill 692, the advance was stopped by enemy small-arms and mortar fire. An air strike was requested on the bunkers holding up the assault, but fog closed in and the planes were delayed more than two hours.

At 1600, after Able Company had renewed the assault without air support, four VMF-214 Corsairs started a target run controlled by a liaison plane from VMO-6. The foremost Marines, almost at the summit by this time, had to beat a hasty retreat to escape the napalm and 500-pound bombs being dumped on Hill 692. Fortunately, there were no friendly casualties. Some were caused indirectly, however, when hostile mortar fire caught Marines withdrawing along a connecting saddle to the comparatively safe reverse slope of Hill 680. When the danger passed, Able Company returned to the attack on 692 and routed the remaining defenders.[24]

The 1st Marine Division made it a policy thereafter that only the forward air controllers on the ground were to direct close air support along the front. Control of air strikes farther behind the enemy lines was reserved for the OYs.

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1st MAW in Operation STRANGLE

Sightings of enemy vehicles during the month of May totaled 54,561—seven times those of January. This increase prompted General Van Fleet to ask the Fifth Air Force and Seventh Fleet to initiate a program of cutting off all possible enemy road traffic between the latitudes 38° 15' N and 39° 15' N.

Earlier in 1951 the interdiction program had been aimed chiefly at the enemy's rail lines and bridges. The Communists had countered by using more trucks. The new program, known as Operation STRANGLE, was to be concentrated against vital road networks. Flight leaders were briefed to search out critical spots where truck and ox cart traffic could be stopped. Roads skirting hills were to be blocked by landslides caused by well placed bombs. Where cliffside roads followed the coast, as they so often did in East Korea, naval gunfire started avalanches of dirt and rocks which sometimes reached a depth of 20 feet. Roads running through a narrow ravine or rice paddy could often be cut by a deep bomb crater.[25]

The 1st MAW was given the assignment of stopping traffic on three roads in East Korea—from Wonsan to Pyonggang, from Kojo to Kumhwa, and along a lateral route linking the two (Map 16). Since Kumhwa and Pyonggang were two of the three Iron Triangle towns, these roads were of more than ordinary importance.
Click here to view map

The Communists reacted to the new UN pressure by increasing their flak traps. UN pilots were lured with such bait as mysterious lights, tempting displays of supposed fuel drums, or damaged UN aircraft that called for investigation. The cost of the UN in planes and pilots showed an increase during the first two months of Operation STRANGLE. From 20 May to the middle of July, 20 Marine planes were shot down. Six of the pilots returned safely; two were killed and 12 listed as missing.[26]

The demands of Operation STRANGLE added to the emphasis on interdiction and armed reconnaissance by the Fifth Air Force. Statistics compiled by the 1st Marine Division for 1-17 June 1951 show that 984 close air support sorties had been requested and 642 received— about 65 percent. The ratio of Marine planes to other UN aircraft reporting to the Division was about four to one.[27]

The statistics of the 1st MAW indicate that out of a total of 1,875 combat sorties flown from 1 to 15 June 1951, about a third were close air support—651 day CAS and 19 night CAS. Of this number, 377 sorties went to the 1st Marine Division, which received more than half. Next in line were the 7th Infantry Division (41 sorties), the 3d Infantry Division (31 sorties), and the 25th Infantry Division (28 sorties).[28]

The effect of Operation STRANGLE on the enemy must be left largely to conjecture. There can be no doubt that it added enormously to the Communists' logistical problem. It is equally certain that they solved these problems to such an extent that their combat units were never at a decisive handicap for lack of ammunition and other supplies. Operation STRANGLE, in short, merely added to the evidence that interdictory air alone was not enough to knock a determined adversary out of the war, as enthusiasts had predicted at the outbreak of hostilities in Korea.

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Punchbowl
KMC Regiment Launches Night Attack

On the night of 1-2 June, Colonel Nickerson was notified that the 7th Marines would be relieved next day by the 1st Marines, which would pass through and continue the attack. The 1st Marines moved into assembly areas at 0630. Lieutenant Colonel Homer E. Hire, commanding officer of 3/1, went forward at 0800 with his command group to make a reconnaissance of the area. As his staff paused for a conference in a supposedly enfiladed location, a Communist mortar barrage hit the group by complete surprise. The artillery liaison officer was killed instantly. His assistant, two forward observers, four company commanders, the S-3 and 32 enlisted men were wounded. So hard hit was the battalion that its attack had to be postponed until the following day.[29]

The first Division objective was designated X-RAY. 2/1 had the mission of taking the high point, Hill 516 (Map 15). Across the valley 3/1 advanced up a parallel ridge. Planes from VMF-214 and VMF-323 cleared the way for the securing of this battalion's objective at 1900. Aircraft from these same squadrons also aided 2/1 in over-running the last opposition on Hill 516, where 80 NKPA dead were counted.[30]

The KMC regiment, in reserve only two days, was ordered to relieve the 5th Marines on 4 June. This would permit Colonel Hayward to shift over to the right flank, thus extending the 1st Marine Division zone 5,000 yards to the east with a north-south boundary of the Soyang river valley (Map 15). The purpose of this maneuver was to free 2d Infantry Division troops for a mission of mopping up in the X Corps rear area.

Three Marine regiments were now in line, the 1st on the left, the KMCs in the center, the 5th on the right, and the 7th in reserve. A reshuffling of units also took place in the 1st MAW when VMF-312 ended its tour of duty on the CVL *Bataan.* The replacement involved a change of carriers when VMF-323 was alerted for west coast duty on the CVE *Sicily* a week later.[31]

Ahead of the KMCs stretched the most difficult of the regimental zones of action—the main mountain range extending northeast from Yanggu to Hill 1316, known to the Koreans as Taeam-san. Along these ridges the Chinese had placed North Korean troops with orders to "hold until death."[32]

From the air, the ground in front of the KMCs resembled a monstrous prehistoric lizard, rearing up on its hind legs. The 1st Battalion was to ascend the tail and the 2d the hind legs. The two would meet at the rump, Hill 1122 (Map 15). From this position the backbone ran northeast to the shoulders, Hill 1218. Still farther northeast, along the neck, was the key terrain feature—Taeam-san, the head of the imagined reptile.

The 1st and 2d Battalions ran immediately into the opposition of an estimated NKPA regiment. In an effort to outflank the enemy, the 3d Battalion swung over to the east and attacked up the ridge forming the forelegs. Seizure of the shoulders (Hill 1218) would render enemy positions along the back, rump, hind legs, and tail untenable. Major General Choe Am Lin, commanding the 12th NKPA Division, was quick to recognize the tactical worth of this height and exact a stiff price for it.

That the KMCs could expect little mercy from their fellow countrymen was demonstrated when the bodies of ten men reported missing were found. All had been shot in the back of the head.

For five days the fight raged with unabated fury. The terrain limited the advance to a narrow front, so that the attack resembled the thrust of a spear rather than a blow from a battering ram. When the KMCs did gain a brief foothold, the enemy launched a counterattack.

At 2000 on 10 June, after six days of relatively unsuccessful fighting, the KMCs decided to gamble on a night attack. This had heretofore been the enemy's prerogative, and the Korean Reds were caught unaware in a devastating surprise. Most of the NKPA troops were attending to housekeeping duties at 0200 when all three

KMC battalions fell upon them like an avalanche. Hill 1122, the rump of the lizard, was seized; and under pressure the enemy withdrew from the shoulders. This made the fall of Taeam-san inevitable, and only mopping-up operations remained for KMCs who had suffered more than 500 casualties. General Thomas sent the regiment this message on 12 June:

"Congratulations to the KMC on a difficult job well done. Your seizure of objectives on the KANSAS Line from a determined enemy was a magnificent dash of courage and endurance. Your courageous and aggressive actions justify our pride in the Korean Marines."

Logistical support of the three regiments in the attack presented a problem to the Division supply echelons. The KMCs in the center and the 1st Marines on the left could be supplied over a narrow, winding mountain road that scaled a high pass before dropping down into an east-west valley giving relatively easy access to the center and left. The 5th Marines had to receive its supplies over another mountain road leading north of Inje, then west into the regimental zone.[33]

Both of the Division supply routes needed a good deal of engineering work before trucks could move over them freely. Landslides were frequent and many trucks skidded off the slippery trail while rounding the hairpin turns.

The 1st Marines moved northward on north-south ridges, and the KMCs in the center had spurs leading to their objectives. It was the misfortune of the 5th Marines to have a topographical washboard effect ahead. The axis of advance was south to north, but the ground on the way to the final objectives on the KANSAS Line consisted of five sharply defined ridgelines running northwest to southeast. Instead of attacking along the ridgelines Colonel Hayward's men had to climb some 1,200 feet, then descend 1,200 feet, five separate times while covering an advance of 8,000 yards (Map 15).

Artillery fired for more than two hours on the morning of 6 June to soften defenses on the next regimental objective, Hill 729. An air strike was attempted but fog with low-hanging clouds forced the flight leader to abort the mission. At 1300 the assault battalions moved across the LD against small-arms and machine gun fire. The fog lifted sufficiently at 1400 to allow four F9Fs from VMF-311 to deliver an effective attack. And by 2100 both 2/5 and 3/5 were consolidating their positions on the first of the five ridges.

This assault is typical of the fighting as the 5th Marines took the remaining four ridges, one by one, in a slugging assault on an enemy defending every commanding height. The advance resolved itself into a pattern as the Korean Reds probed the Marine lines at night and continued their tough resistance by day. For 10 days the regiment plugged ahead, step by step, with the support of artillery, air, mortars, and 75mm recoilless rifles.[34]

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Punchbowl
1st Marines Moves Up to BROWN Line

On the left flank, the 1st Marines devoted several days to consolidating its position and sending out reconnaissance patrols in preparation for an attack on the ridge just north of the Hwachon Reservoir. From this height the Communists could look down the throats of Colonel Brown's troops.

From 6 to 8 June, Lieutenant Colonel Hire's 3d Battalion led the attack against moderate but gathering resistance. A gain of 1,500 yards was made on the right flank by 2/1, commanded by Major Clarence J. Mabry after the evacuation of Lieutenant Colonel McClellan, wounded on the 5th. On the left, Lieutenant Colonel Robley E. West's 1/1 held fast as the 5th ROK Regiment, 7th ROK Division, X Corps, passed through on its way to a new zone of action to the west.

Early on the 9th, as 2/1 was preparing to launch its attack, an intense artillery and mortar barrage fell upon the lines, followed by the assault of an estimated NKPA company. The Korean Reds were beaten off with heavy losses. And though the enemy fire continued, 2/1 jumped off on schedule, fighting for every inch of ground. Colonel Brown committed 1/1 on the left. It was an all-day fight for both battalions. After taking one ridge in the morning, it was used as the springboard for an assault on the second objective. The weapons of the regimental Anti-Tank Company built up a base of fire that enabled this ridge to be secured by 1600.

The 5th ROK Regiment took its objectives by the morning of the 10th. The 1st Marines provided additional fire support by diverting all its antitank guns and tank rifles to the aid of the ROKs.

The pressure, which had been building up for several days, reached a new high on 10 June. Late that morning Colonel Brown met General Almond and the Division G-3, Colonel Richard G. Weede, at a conference. By 1100 the entire 2d Battalion of the 1st Marines was committed. On the left, Lieutenant Colonel West had to hold up the 1st Battalion until 1330, when the ROKs completed the occupation of the high ground dominating the route of advance.

For several hours it appeared that the Marines had met their match this time. A tenacious enemy defended log bunkers expertly, refusing to give ground until evicted by grenade and bayonet attacks. At every opportunity the Communists counterattacked. So effective was their resistance that at dusk the two Marine battalions were still short of their objectives in spite of casualties draining the strength of both units.

Colonel Joseph L. Winecoff, commanding officer of the 11th Marines, remained on the telephone for hours with Colonel Brown. He gave all possible artillery support, not only of his own regiment but also nearby Corps units. By nightfall, with the attacking battalions still held up, the atmosphere was tense in the regimental forward CP. Lieutenant Colonel Adelman, commanding the supporting artillery battalion, 2/11, helped to coordinate air strikes and artillery with Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. Schmuck, executive officer of the 1st Marines, and the air liaison officers.

"Everything I had ever hoped to see in years of teaching such co-ordination of fires seemed to come true that night," commented Colonel Brown at a later date. "I stayed in my regular CP until I was sure all I could do through Winecoff was done, and then went forward to see the finale. It was a glorious spectacle, that last bayonet assault. In the last analysis 2/1 had to take its objective with the bayonet and hand grenades, crawling up the side of a mountain to get at the enemy. It was bloody work, the hardest fighting I have ever seen."[35]

This was no small tribute, coming from a veteran officer whose combat service included three major wars, not to mention Nicaragua and China. It was nearly midnight before Mabry's battalion took its final objective. Casualties for the day's attack were 14 KIA and 114 WIA exclusive of slightly wounded, who were

neither counted nor evacuated. West's battalion, which seized Hill 802, overlooking the Soyang River, had won its all-day fight at a cost of 9 KIA and 97 WIA.

Unfailing support had been given throughout the daylight hours by aircraft of VMF-214. VMF(N)-513 took over on the night shift, and planes came screeching in as late as 2200 to attack moonlit targets a hundred yards ahead of the leading infantry elements.

The 1st Marines had outfought and outgamed a tough enemy. Never again, after the 10th, was the NKPA resistance quite as determined. The 3d Battalion led the other two during the next few days. There was plenty of fighting for all three, but the result was never again in doubt.

By the late afternoon of 14 June the regiment was in position on the BROWN Line. This was the unofficial name for an extension of the KANSAS Line some 3,000 yards north. It had been requested by Colonel Brown when he realized that positions along the KANSAS Line were completely dominated by the next ridge to the north.

The change made necessary a continued advance by the KMCs on the right to tie in with the 1st Marines. The so-called BROWN Line was then officially designated the modified KANSAS Line.

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Chapter 7. Advance to the Punchbowl
7th Marines Committed to the Attack

For several days General Thomas had been concerned over the heavy casualties suffered by his command. In order to give greater impetus to the Division effort, he decided to commit the reserve infantry regiment, the 7th Marines (minus one battalion held back as Division reserve) to complete the occupation of the modified KANSAS Line.

On 8 June, Colonel Nickerson's regiment (minus 3/7) moved into an assembly area between the 1st Marines and the KMCs, ready to attack in the morning. Ahead stretched a narrow but difficult zone of advance up the valley of the So-chon River (Map 15). Tank-infantry patrols went forward to select favorable positions for the jumpoff, and engineers worked throughout the daylight hours to clear the valley roads of mines. Despite their best efforts, 10 Marine tanks were lost to mines during the first week.[36]

As the two battalions advanced on the morning of the 9th they came under heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire. Nevertheless, they secured Hill 420 and dug in before nightfall.

On the 10th Rooney's 1/7 advanced along the ridgeline to support the attack of Meyerhoff's 2/7 up the valley floor. The maneuver was carried out successfully in spite of NKPA automatic weapons and mortar opposition. Contact was established with KMC forward units at dusk. Sixteen POWs were taken by the 7th Marines and 85 North Korean dead were counted on the objectives.

The two battalions continued the attack throughout the next week. The 3d Battalion of the 7th Marines remained General Thomas' sole Division reserve until he committed it on the afternoon of 18 June.

The newcomers got into the fight just in time for the enemy's all-out effort to defend the steep east-west ridge marking the BROWN Line. The nature of the terrain made maneuver impossible—a frontal assault was the only answer. Defending the ridge was the 1st Battalion, 41st Regiment, 12th NKPA Division. Waiting on the reverse slope, the enemy launched a counterattack when the Marines neared the crest. George Company, commanded by First Lieutenant William C. Airheart, met five successive repulses at the hands of superior numbers. Item Company (First Lieutenant Frank A. Winfrey) also took part in the fifth assault, and both companies held their ground near the summit when the fighting ended at dusk. They expected to resume the attack at dawn, but the enemy had silently withdrawn during the night. All three 7th Marines battalions occupied their designated positions on the BROWN Line without further interference.

By early afternoon on the 20th, the Division was in complete control of the modified KANSAS Line and construction of defenses began in earnest. The next day the 1st Marines and KMCs extended their right and left flanks respectively and pinched out the 7th Marines, which dropped back into reserve.

Thus ended two months of continual hard fighting for the 1st Marine Division, beginning on 22 April with the great CCF offensive. Few and far between were the interludes of rest for troops which saw both defensive and offensive action. After stopping the enemy's two drives, they launched a month-long counterstroke that had the enemy hardpressed at times for survival. Only the ruthless sacrifice of NKPA troops in defensive operations enabled the Chinese Reds to recover from the blows dealt them in late May and early June.

The cost in Marine casualties had been high. Throughout the entire month the 1st Marines alone suffered 67 KIA and 1,044 WIA, most of them being reported during the first 2 weeks. This was a higher total than the regiment incurred during the Chosin Reservoir operation. Reflecting on the caliber of these men, their regimental commander had this to say:

"They were war-wise when I got command; I contributed nothing to their training because they were in

battle when I joined them and I left them when they came out of the lines for a rest. They used cover, maneuvered beautifully, used their own and supporting arms intelligently, were patient and not foolhardy; but when it came to the point where they had to rely on themselves with bayonet, hand grenade and sheer guts, they could and did do that too. I have long ago given up telling people what I saw them do on many occasions. Nobody believes me, nor would I believe anyone else telling the same story of other troops."[37]

Colonel Brown, of course, paid this tribute to the troops of his regiment. But it is safe to say that any commanding officer of the 1st Marine Division would have felt that these sentiments applied equally to his own men. All the combat Marines of the 60-day battle had shown themselves to be worthy heirs of the traditions of Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, and the Chosin Reservoir.

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Chapter 8. The Truce Talks at Kaesong

It is not likely that the date 25 June 1951 meant much to the Marines on the KANSAS Line. In all probability few of them recalled that it was the first anniversary of the Communist aggression which started the war in Korea.

Since that surprise attack on a June Sunday morning in 1950, some 1,250,000 men had been killed, wounded or captured in battle—a million of them from the Communist forces of Red China and the North Korean People's Republic. This was the estimate of J. Donald Kingsley, Korean reconstruction agent general for the United States. He reckoned the civilian victims of privation, violence, and disease at two million dead. Another three million had been made homeless refugees.[1]

On 25 June 1951 the Communists held less territory by 2,100 square miles than they occupied when they began their onslaught with an overwhelming local superiority in arms and trained troops. Losses of Communist equipment during the first year included 391 aircraft, 1,000 pieces of artillery, and many thousands of machine guns, automatic rifles, and mortars. North Korea, formerly the industrial region of the peninsula, lay in ruins. Cities, factories, and power plants had been pounded into rubble.

In short, the thrifty conquest planned by the Koreans and their Soviet masters had backfired. Not only had the Communist offensives of April and May been stopped; the United Nations forces had rebounded to win their greatest victory of the war's first year. While X Corps was advancing to the Punchbowl, other major Eighth Army units had also gained ground. Perhaps the most crushing blow was dealt by I Corps in its attack on the Iron Triangle. Units of two U.S. infantry divisions fought their way through extensive mine fields into Chorwon and Kumhwa on 8 June. By the end of the month, I Corps held defensive positions about midway between the base and apex of the strategic triangle that had been the enemy's main assembly area for the troops and supplies of his spring offensives.[2]

On the east-central front, units of IX Corps pushed within 10 miles of Kumsong while I ROK Corps advanced along the east coast to Chodo-ri. Thus the UN forces occupied the most favorable line they had held since the great CCF offensive early in January. From the mouth of the Imjin this line ran northeast to the middle of the Iron Triangle, eastward across the mountains to the southern rim of the Punchbowl, then northeast to the coast of Chodo–ri (Map 14).

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Chapter 8. The Truce Talks at Kaesong
Communists Ask for Truce Talks

The first anniversary of the Korean conflict was overshadowed two days earlier by the news that the Communists had taken the initiative in proposing truce talks. The suggestion was made in a New York radio address of 23 June by a Soviet delegate to the United Nations—Jacob Malik, Foreign Minister of the USSR. On the 25th the idea was unofficially endorsed in a radio broadcast by the Chinese Communist government. UN officials immediately indicated their willingness to discuss preliminary terms. The outcome was an agreement that representatives of both sides would meet on 7 July at Kaesong, then located between the opposing lines in west Korea.

Why had the Communists been first to ask for a truce conference? Both Generals Van Fleet and Almond believed that the answer might have been traced to military necessity rather than any genuine desire for peace. “I felt at that time that the Chinese Communists and the North Korean armies were on the most wobbly legs that they had been on to that date,” said General Almond when interviewed shortly after his retirement in 1953. “They were punch drunk and ineffective, and I, personally, thought at that time that it was the time to finish off the effort.”[3]

Raymond Cartier, representing a Paris newspaper, probably spoke for most of the correspondents at the front when he suspected that the proposal for truce talks “was possibly just a crafty trick devised by the Communists to gain time and build up again the badly mauled Chinese armies.”[4]

It might have been recalled at this time that the Communists had used truce negotiations for military purposes during the Chinese Civil War. In 1945 and 1946, when prospects for a Nationalist victory were bright, the enemy took advantage of American peace efforts by agreeing on several occasions to meet for truce conferences. And while prolonging the talks by all manner of subterfuges, the Communists profited from the breathing spells by regrouping their forces and planning new offensives. Their final triumph, in fact, owed in no small measure to interludes when the conference table served a military purpose.[5]

History repeated itself in June and July 1951 when events of the next two years were shaped by the political decisions of a few summer weeks. Indeed, Admiral C. Turner Joy believed that the war was actually prolonged rather than shortened as a result of the negotiations.

“Military victory was not impossible nor even unusually difficult of achievement,” wrote the Senior Delegate and Chief of the UN Command delegation at the truce talks. “Elimination of the artificial restraints imposed on United States forces, coupled with an effective blockade on Red China, probably would have resulted in military victory in less time than was expended on truce talks.”[6]

Mao Tse-tung’s forces had lost face by the failure of their long heralded 5th Phase Offensive. They had been badly beaten during the UN counteroffensive. Pretensions of high CCF morale could no longer be maintained when troops were laying down their arms without a fight. Nor could charges of low UN morale be supported when the fighting spirit of the Eighth Army was being shown every day at the front.

In view of these circumstances, it would appear that the Communists had poor cards to play against United Nations trumps at a truce conference. But they played them so craftily, with such a sly sense of propaganda values, that the victors of the May and June battles were soon made to appear losers begging for a breathing spell.

To begin with, the Chinese knew that the mere public announcement of the possibility of truce talks would have a tremendous appeal in the United States, where the war was unpopular. Pressure would be brought

upon Washington to meet the enemy immediately for negotiations. And while a cease fire remained even a remote prospect, American public opinion would demand a slackening of offensive military operations with their attendant casualties.

From the outset it was apparent that the United Nations Command was no match for the Communists in low cunning. The UN suggested, for instance, that the truce teams meet on the Danish hospital ship *Jutlandia.* Here, surely, was neutral ground, since the Danes had no combat forces in Korea. Moreover, the ship was to be anchored in Wonsan harbor within range of CCF shore batteries.

The Reds won the first of many such concessions with their refusal. They insisted that the talks be held at Kaesong, and the UN Command let them have it their way. The reason for the Communist decision was soon made evident. Kaesong was in the path of the advancing Eighth Army, which meant that an important road center would be immune from attack. And though the ancient Korean town was originally in no man's land, the Communists soon managed to include it within their lines.

All delegates were requested to display white flags on their vehicles for identification. Communist photographers were on hand to snap countless pictures of UN delegates which convinced Asia's illiterate millions at a glance that the beaten United Nations had sent representatives to plead for terms. If any doubt remained, other photographs showed the unarmed UN delegates being herded about Kaesong by scowling Communist guards with burp guns.

No detail of the stage setting was too trivial to be overlooked. Oriental custom prescribes that at the peace table the victors face south and the losers face north. Needless to add, the UN delegates were seated at Kaesong with a view to enhancing Communist prestige.

Some of the propaganda schemes bordered on the ridiculous. "At the first meeting of the delegates," Admiral Joy related, "I seated myself at the conference table and almost sank out of sight. The Communists had provided a chair for me which was considerably shorter than a standard chair. Across the table, the senior Communist delegate, General Nam Il, protruded a good foot above my cagily diminished stature. This had been accomplished by providing stumpy Nam Il with a chair about four inches higher than usual. Chain-smoking Nam Il puffed his cigarette in obvious satisfaction as he glowered down on me, an obviously torpedoed admiral. This condition of affairs was promptly rectified when I changed my foreshortened chair for a normal one, but not before Communist photographers had exposed reels of film."[8]

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Chapter 8. The Truce Talks at Kaesong
Patrol Bases on BADGER Line

The war went on, of course, during the negotiations. But the tempo was much reduced as the UN forces consolidated their gains, and the enemy appeared to be breaking off contact at every opportunity. Generally speaking, the Eighth Army had shifted from the offensive to the defensive. In keeping with this trend, the 1st Marine Division occupied the same positions for nearly three weeks after fighting its way to the BROWN Line.

On 22 June all three infantry regiments were directed to establish battalion-size patrol bases on the BADGER Line—1 ½ to 2 ½ miles forward of their present positions. In the 1st Marines sector 3/7 was attached to Colonel Brown and ordered to relieve 3/1 on the left flank of the regiment. The purpose was to free 3/1 to move forward and establish a patrol base on Hill 761, about 1,000 yards forward of the MLR.

While these arrangements were being carried out, General Almond called at the 1st Marines CP. He expressed surprise that the establishment of patrol bases was being contemplated by EUSAK when some of the front-line units were still in contact with the enemy.[9]

Execution of these orders was accordingly suspended. The following day, however, Division again alerted the infantry regiments to be prepared to occupy patrol bases on order. This was by direction of Corps, which in turn had been directed by EUSAK.

The Marine regimental and battalion commanders were not happy about this turn of affairs. The patrol base concept had been tried out early in May, during the lull between the enemy's two offensives, and found wanting. In theory it was a good means of keeping contact with an enemy who had pulled back out of mortar and light artillery range. In practice the enemy had shown that he could bypass patrol bases at night for probing attacks on the MLR. The bases themselves ran the constant risk of being surrounded and overwhelmed. As a final objection, a regiment was often deprived of its reserve battalion, which was the logical choice for such duty.

In compliance with orders, 3/1 moved out on 26 June and established a patrol base on Hill 761. This position received such a bombardment of large caliber mortar fire that Colonel Brown pulled the battalion back to the MLR the following day.[10]

General Thomas gave his opinion of the patrol base concept after his retirement when he summed it up as "an invitation to disaster."[11] He could only carry out orders, however, when Corps directed early in July that a patrol base be established on Taeu-san.

This 4,000-foot peak, located some 2 miles north of the MLR, afforded excellent observation eastward into the Punchbowl and westward into the So-chon River Valley. The enemy, of course, was aware of these advantages and had made Taeu-san a strongpoint of his MLR. This was clearly indicated by the stiff resistance encountered by KMC reconnaissance patrols.[12]

Nevertheless, Division G–3 was suddenly alerted on the morning of 7 July by the Marine Liaison Officer with X Corps to expect an order directing the setting up of a patrol base on Taeu-san the following day. The KMC Regiment, warned by telephone, had little time for planning and organizing an attack. Since the KMCs could not be relieved for responsibility for their sector, it was necessary to form a composite battalion of the three companies that could most conveniently be relieved. Unfortunately, they contained a large proportion of recruits, and the battalion commander was a new arrival.

There were two avenues of approach. One was along an open, fairly level, ridgeline that extended from the KMC positions. The other called for a descent into the stream-bed generally paralleling the MLR and a steep climb up a ridge leading directly north to Taeu-san.

Both routes of approach were used. One company advanced on the right by way of the stream bed and two companies took to the ridge-line on the left. The assault was to have been preceded by air strikes and an artillery bombardment, but bad weather kept the aircraft grounded.

The attack jumped off at 1030 on 8 July. All three companies were greeted by enemy mortar and machine gun fire that pinned down the company on the right. The two companies on the left won a foothold on Hill 1100, about a mile in front of Taeu-san. Here the advance ground to a halt.

These KMCs dug in for the night and repulsed a series of counter-attacks. On the morning of the 9th the KMC regimental commander, Colonel Kim Tai Shik, committed the entire 1st Battalion to the attack on the right. It had no better success than the company of the day before. Meanwhile, the two companies were driven off Hill 1100.

Colonel Gould P. Groves, senior liaison officer with the KMCs, recommended that the remnants of the two companies be withdrawn. The 1st Battalion had managed to capture Hill 1001, but it was plain that the KMC regiment could not come close to Taeu-san. On 12 July the 1st Marine Division informed X Corps that the position held by the KMCs just forward of Hill 1001 fulfilled the requirements of an advance patrol base. As far as the Marines were concerned, the sad affair was permitted to rest there.

As evidence of the valiant effort made by the KMCs, they suffered 222 casualties. A sequel to this story was written late in July after the 2d Infantry Division relieved the Marines. X Corps again ordered the capture of Taeu-san as a patrol base, and it required the commitment of the major part of the division to accomplish the task. [13]

Although the fighting had not been severe for other units of the 1st Marine Division during the first two weeks of July, the casualties (including KMC losses) were 55 KIA, 360 WIA, and 22 MIA—a total of 437. Relief of the Marines was completed by the 2d Infantry Division on 15 July, and by the 17th all units were on their way back to assembly areas in X Corps rear.

It was the second time since the landing of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade on 2 August 1950 that the Marines had been away from the firing line for more than a few days.

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Chapter 8. The Truce Talks at Kaesong

Red Herrings at Kaesong

It is not changing the subject to switch to the truce talks. Kaesong was actually a second UN front.

After the preliminaries had been settled—most of them to Communist satisfaction—the UN delegation, headed by Admiral Joy, held a first meeting on l0 July 1951 with his opposite number, NKPA Major General Nam Il, and the Communist truce team. This was the first of the talks that were to drag on for two dreary years.

Nam Il, a Korean native of Manchuria, born in 1911, had been educated in Russia and had served with the Soviet army in World War II. His career in Korea began when he arrived as a captain with Soviet occupation troops in 1945. Rising to power rapidly, he took a prominent part in the creation of a Soviet puppet state in North Korea.

An atmosphere of sullen hatred surrounded the UN delegates at Kaesong. The CCF sentinel posted at the entrance to the conference room wore a gaudy medal which he boasted had been awarded to him "for killing forty Americans." When Admiral Joy tried to send a report to General Ridgway, the messenger was turned back by armed Communist guards. These are samples of the indignities heaped upon the UN truce team. After several UN delegates were threatened by guards with burp guns, Joy protested to Nam Il, "demanding prompt elimination of such crudities."

In order to give their battered armies more time for recuperation, the Communist delegates met every issue with delaying tactics. They proved themselves to be masters of the ancient art of dragging a red herring across the trail. Going back on their word did not embarrass them in the least if they found it to their advantage to renege.[14]

The truce negotiations were bound to have an immediate effect on military operations. In the United States it seemed a pity to newspaper readers that American young men should have to die in battle at a time when headlines were hinting at the possibility of peace. Mothers wrote to their congressmen, requesting a halt in Korean operations.

General Van Fleet minced no words after his retirement when he commented on the effect of the truce talks on strategy:

"Instead of getting directives for offensive action, we found our activities more and more proscribed as time went on. Even in the matter of straightening out our lines for greater protection, or capturing hills when the Reds were looking down our throats, we were limited by orders from the Far East Command in Japan, presumably acting on directives from Washington."[15]

It was the opinion of Admiral Joy that more UN casualties were suffered as a consequence of the truce talks than would have resulted from an offensive taking full advantage of Red China's military weaknesses in June 1951.

"As soon as armistice discussions began," he wrote, "United Nations Command ground forces slackened their offensive preparations. Instead, offensive pressure by all arms should have been increased to the maximum during the armistice talks. . . . I feel certain that the casualties the United Nations Command endured during the two long years of negotiations far exceed any that might have been expected from an offensive in the summer of 1951."[16]

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1st Marine Division in Reserve

Most of the 1st Marine Division units were in X Corps reserve during the last two weeks of July 1951. The 5th Marines, however, remained in "ready reserve" near Inje under the operational control of X Corps. Toward the end of the month, the 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines passed to the operational control of the 2d Infantry Division. Meanwhile, the 7th Marines and Division Reconnaissance Company displaced to the Yanggu area to aid in the construction of defensive positions and undergo special training.

1st Marine Division Training Order 2-51, covering the period from 23 July to 20 August 1951, provided for a stiff daily schedule of general and specialist military subjects. The objectives were "to maintain each individual and unit of the command at a very high state of proficiency, while emphasizing rest and rehabilitation of personnel and repair and maintenance of equipment . . . . A minimum of 33 % of all technical training was to be conducted at night, stressing individual and unit night discipline. Formal unit schools and on-the-job training were utilized extensively."[17]

Most thoroughly covered among general military subjects were mechanical training, capabilities, tactical employment, and firing of individual and infantry crew-served weapons. Lectures and demonstrations were combined to good effect with instruction in basic infantry tactics.

"The prescribed periods of physical conditioning," the Division report continued, "were supplemented by extensive organized athletic programs outside of training hours, resulting in the maintenance of a high degree of battle conditioning of all hands. Special military subjects encompassed the whole range of activities necessary to the accomplishment of any mission assigned the Division. Building from the duties of the individual Marine, infantry, artillery, engineer, and tank personnel progressed through small unit employment and tactics as it applied to their respective specialities. Meanwhile such diverse training as tank repair and watch repair was conducted in various units."[18]

Fortification came in for study after a tour of the KANSAS Line by Major General Clovis E. Byers, who had relieved General Almond as X Corps commander. He listed the weaknesses he found and directed that "special attention [be] given to the thickness, strength and support of bunker overheads, and to the proper revetting and draining of excavations."[19]

The KMC Regiment received the most thorough training it had ever known, considering that it had been in combat continually since its organization. Each of the Division's three other regiments sent four training teams consisting of a lieutenant, an NCO, and an interpreter to the KMCs on 22 July. The 12 teams had orders to remain until 20 August. Attached to various KMC companies, they acted as advisers for the entire training period.

Another organization of Koreans that had won its way to favorable recognition was the newly formed Civil Transport Corps (CTC). The use of indigenous labor for logistical purposes dated back to March 1951, when the Eighth Army's advance was slowed up by supply problems caused by muddy roads. Plans were made to equip and train a special corps to assist in the logistical support of combat troops in areas inaccessible to normal motor transportation.[20]

The project began on 29 March with 720 South Koreans—all from the Korean National Guard—being assigned to I Corps. Plans were developed for a Civil Transport Corps of 82 companies, each containing 240 men. The CTC was to be supervised by a staff of eight U.S. Army officers and four enlisted men under the operational control of the Transportation Section, EUSAK.

The ROK Army had the added responsibility for logistical support, of hospitalization and medical

services other than emergency treatment in forward areas. Support for the CTC from UN units was to be provided in a manner similar to that in effect for the ROK forces.[21] No difficulty was found in filling the CTC ranks, for the pay meant food and clothing to a Korean and his family.

The Marines were always astonished at the heavy loads the Korean cargadores could carry uphill on their "A-frames," which looked like sturdy easels with a pair of arm-and-shoulder carrying straps. Humble and patient, these burden bearers were the only means of supply in remote combat areas.

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Chapter 8. The Truce Talks at Kaesong
Marine Helicopters Take the Lead

The truce talks continued to be front-page news in August. Some of the more impulsive newspaper and radio commentators hinted at the possibility of a cease fire before the end of summer. As for the Marine command and staff, they were not so optimistic, judging from this sentence in a report:

"All Division units were notified on 14 August that requisitions had been sent to EUSAK for cold weather clothing and equipment."

The training period afforded an opportunity to glance back over the first year of fighting in Korea and evaluate the results. There could be no doubt that the war's foremost tactical innovation so far was the combat helicopter. The Marine Corps had taken the lead in its development when VMO–6, made up of OYs and Sikorsky HO3S–1 helicopters in roughly equal numbers, got into action with the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in the Pusan Perimeter. Brigadier General Edward A. Craig had the historical distinction, insofar as is known, of being the first commanding general to see the advantages of a "chopper" as a command vehicle.

Evacuation of casualties was the principal job of the rotary-wing aircraft, and 1,926 wounded Marines were flown out during the first year. No less than 701 of these mercy flights took place during the three months from 1 April to 30 June 1951, covering the period of the two CCF 5th Phase offensives and the UN counterstroke. By that time the Bell HTL-4, with its built-in litters on both sides sheltered by plexiglas hoods, had taken over most of the evacuation missions from the HO3S–1.

The zeal of the pilots contributed substantially to the successful results. Captain Dwain L. Redalen gave a demonstration of the VMO–6 spirit at the height of the first CCF offensive in the spring of 1951. During the 13 ½ hours from 0600 to 1930 on 23 April, he was in the air constantly except for intervals of loading or unloading casualties. Logging a total of 9.6 flight hours, he evacuated 18 wounded men under enemy fire that left bullet holes in the plexiglas of his HTL–4.[22]

Practically all the helicopter techniques put into effect by VMO–6 had originally been developed by the Marine experimental squadron, HMX–1, organized late in 1947 at Quantico. Despite the enthusiasm for rotary-wing aircraft then prevailing, HMX–1 decided that an observation squadron should combine OYs with helicopters. The wisdom of this conclusion was proved in Korea, where the test of combat showed that both types were needed. The OYs were the superiors at reconnaissance and artillery spot missions, while the helicopters excelled at transportation and liaison and evacuation flights.

VMO–6 as a whole was the only Marine organization linking the ground and air commands. An administrative unit of the 1st MAW, the squadron was under the operational control of the 1st Marine Division. [23]

Thanks to the ability of the helicopter to land "on a dime," staff liaison missions and command visits were greatly facilitated. The helicopter had become the modern general's steed, and the gap between staff and line was narrowed by rotary wings.

The importance of wound evacuation missions can hardly be overestimated. Surgeons stressed the value of time in treating the shock resulting from severe wounds. The sooner a patient could be made ready for surgery, the better were his chances of survival. Definitive care had waited in the past until a casualty was borne on a jolting stretcher from the firing line to the nearest road to begin a long ambulance ride. Such a journey might take most of a day, but there were instances of a helicopter evacuee reaching the operation table only an hour after being wounded at the front, 15 or 20 miles away.

Captain J. W. McElroy, USNR, commanding the famous hospital ship *Consolation*, asserted that his experience had "proved conclusively the superiority of the helicopter method of embarking and evacuating casualties to and from the ship."[24] A helicopter loading platform was installed on the *Consolation* in July 1951, during an overhaul at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard in California. Marine helicopter pilots advised as to landing requirements, and eventually all the hospital ships had similar platforms.

At a conservative estimate, the 1,926 wounded men flown out by VMO–6 helicopters during the squadron's first year in Korea included several hundred who might not have survived former methods of evacuation.

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Chapter 8. The Truce Talks at Kaesong
Marine Body Armor Tested in Korea

Another far-reaching tactical innovation was being launched at this time as Lieutenant Commander Frederick J. Lewis (MSC) USN, supervised a joint Army-Navy three-month field test of Marine armored vests made of lightweight plastics.

A glance at the past reveals that body armor had never quite vanished from modern warfare. European cavalry lancers wore steel cuirasses throughout the 19th century. During the American Civil War two commercial firms in Connecticut manufactured steel breastplates purchased by thousands of Union soldiers. So irksome were the weight and rigidity of this protection, however, that infantrymen soon discarded it.

World War I dated the first widespread adoption of armor in the 20th century. The idea was suggested when a French general noted that one of his men had survived a lethal shell fragment by virtue of wearing an iron mess bowl under his beret. France led the way, and before the end of 1915 steel helmets were being issued to all armies on the Western Front.

When the United States entered the war, General John J. Pershing put in a request for body armor. Some 30 prototypes using steel or aluminum plates were submitted but rejected. In every instance the weight and rigidity were such that too high a price in mobility would be paid for protection.[25]

During the 1930's new possibilities were opened up by developments in lightweight plastics. The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor interrupted experiments that were not resumed until 1943. Then a new start was made with the formation of a joint Army-Navy committee headed by Rear Admiral Alexander H. Van Kueren and Colonel George F. Doriot.

Wound statistics indicated that the great majority of fatal wounds were received in a comparatively small area of the body. The following table shows the regional frequency:
Click here to view table

Shell, mortar, or grenade fragments caused 60 percent of the fatal wounds, the statistics revealed, with the remainder being charged to rifle or machine gun fire. It was futile to hope for lightweight protection against high-velocity bullets. But researchers hoped that plastic body armor could stop enough shell or mortar fragments to reduce serious wounds to light wounds while preventing light wounds altogether.

Doron and nylon were the materials approved by the joint Army-Navy committee. The first, named in honor of Colonel Doriot, consisted of laminated layers of glass cloth filaments, bonded under heavy pressure to form a thin, rigid slab. That a 1/8-inch thickness could stop and partially flatten a submachine gun bullet with a muzzle velocity of 1,150 feet per second was demonstrated by ballistic tests at a range of eight yards.

The committee recommended 12-ply, laminated, basket-weave nylon for use where flexibility was required. Both the doron and nylon protected the wearer by offering enough resistance to absorb the energy of the missile, which spent itself at the impact. Thus the shock was spread out over too large a surface for a penetration, although the wearer could receive a bad bruise. If a penetration did result from a missile of higher velocity, its effects would be much reduced in severity.

Aircraft pilots and crewmen, who could tolerate more weight than foot-sloggers, were first to benefit. Flak suits and curtains were being manufactured in quantity for airmen by 1944, and the Eighth Air Force claimed a 50 percent reduction in casualties as a result.

The infantry stood most in need of protection. Statistics from 57 U.S. divisions in the European theater of operations during World War II indicated that foot soldiers, comprising 68.5 percent of the total strength, suffered

94.5 percent of the casualties. It was further established that shell or mortar fragments caused from 61.3 to 80.4 percent of the wounds.

Unfortunately, progress lagged for the ground forces, owing to conflicting requirements. Several prototype armored vests were submitted and rejected. The Marine Corps planned to conduct combat tests in the spring of 1945 by providing the ordinary utility jacket with sheaths to hold slabs of doron. A battalion of the 2d Marine Division had been selected to wear the garment on Okinawa, but the experiment was interrupted by the end of the campaign.

The Navy and Marine Corps renewed their research in 1947 at Camp Lejeune. There a new ballistics center, established for the development and evaluation of body armor, was set up by the Naval Medical Field Research Laboratory (NMFRL). Lieutenant Commander Lewis was placed in charge of experiments.

Scientific precision seemed more important than haste in time of peace, and the NMFRL was not ready with an armored vest when Communism challenged the free world to a showdown in Korea. Five hundred of the armored utility jackets of the proposed Okinawa test were available, however, and were air-shipped to the 1st Marine Division during the Inchon-Seoul operation.

Many of them went astray during the sea lift to Wonsan and subsequent Chosin Reservoir operation. Only the 50 garments issued to the Division Reconnaissance Company were worn in combat. And though this unit kept no records, the doron slabs were credited by Major Walter Gall, the commanding officer, with saving several lives.

By the summer of 1951, Lieutenant Commander Lewis and his researchers had designed a new Marine armored vest, weighing about 8 1/2 pounds, combining curved, overlapping doron plates with flexible pads of basket-weave nylon. This garment, according to the official description, was capable of “stopping a .45 caliber USA pistol or Thompson submachine gun bullet; all the fragments of the U.S. hand grenade at three feet; 75 percent of the U.S. 81mm mortar at 10 feet; and full thrust of the American bayonet.”

Only 40 vests were available for field tests in the summer of 1951. Lewis rotated them among as many wearers as possible in the three regiments selected for the test, the 5th Marines and the 23d and 38th regiments of the U.S. 2d Infantry Division. There was, as he saw it, a psychological question to be answered—would body armor win the acceptance of troops in combat? The hackneyed phrase “bullet-proof vest,” for instance, put the wearer in a class with the buyer of a gold brick. Nylon was associated in the minds of the men with alluring feminine attire rather than protection from shell fragments. Finally, there could be no denying that undesired weight had been added, that doron plates hampered movement to some extent, and that nylon pads were uncomfortably warm for summer wear.

Despite these drawbacks, Lewis found that troop acceptance was all that could be asked. The locale of the tests was the Inje area and the approaches to the KANSAS Line in June and early July. “By keeping these few vests almost constantly in use,” the Medical Service Corps officer commented, “the maximum amount of troop wear was obtained. Included in the wide sampling were company aid men, riflemen, BAR men, mortar (60mm) men, radio (backpack type) men—each carrying his basic weapon, ammunition load and a one-meal ration.”

When Lewis returned to Camp Lejeune, he reported “that body armor, protection of some type for the vital anatomic areas, is almost unanimously *desired by all combat troops*, particularly the combat veteran of several actual fire fights with the enemy.”[26]

Infantry body armor had at last made the transition from a dream to a reality. The M–1951 was put into production by a Philadelphia sportswear firm. And it was estimated that by the spring of 1952 nearly all Marines would be protected by the vest in combat.

Saving of American lives, of course, was a primary consideration. But there was a tactical as well as humanitarian advantage to be gained. For if body armor could reduce fatal and serious wounds by as much as 50 percent, as NMFRL researchers hoped, it would mean that a large percentage of the enemy’s best antipersonnel

weapons had in effect been silenced.

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Chapter 8. The Truce Talks at Kaesong
MAG-12 Moves to K-18

There was no respite for 1st MAW while the 1st Marine Division remained in reserve. Operation Strangle was at its height, and interdiction flights called for nearly all the resources of Marine aviation during the summer of 1951.

Close air support missions were made secondary. This principle was upheld by Air Force Major General Otto P. Weyland:

"I might suggest that all of us should keep in mind the limitations of air forces as well as their capabilities. Continuous CAS along a static front requires dispersed and sustained fire power against pinpoint targets. With conventional weapons there is no opportunity to exploit the characteristic mobility and fire power of air forces against worthwhile concentrations. In a static situation close support is an expensive substitute for artillery fire. It pays its greatest dividends when the enemy's sustaining capability has been crippled and his logistics cut to a minimum while his forces are immobilized by interdiction and armed reconnaissance. Then decisive results can be obtained as the close-support effort is massed in coordination with determined ground action."[27]

Marine aviation officers, of course, would have challenged some of these opinions. But General Weyland insisted that in the summer and fall of 1951 "it would have been sheer folly not to have concentrated the bulk of our air effort against interdiction targets in the enemy rear areas. Otherwise, the available firepower would have been expended inefficiently against relatively invulnerable targets along the front, while the enemy was left to build up his resources to launch and sustain a general offensive."[28]

The UN interdiction program was costly to the Communists. Yet it remained a stubborn fact that the enemy had not only maintained but actually increased his flow of supplies in spite of bombings that might have knocked a Western army out of the war. That was because CCF and NKPA troops could operate with a minimum of 50 short tons per day per division—an average of about 10 pounds per man. It was about one-fifth of the supply requirements for an equal number of U.S. troops.

Try as they might, the UN air forces could not prevent the arrival of the 2,900 tons of rations, fuel, ammunition, and other supplies needed every day by the 58 Communist divisions at the front.

The enemy during this period was increasing his own air potential. On 17 June the Fifth Air Force warned that the Communists had stepped up their number of planes from an estimated 900 in mid-May to 1,050 in mid-June. Their Korean airfields were being kept under repair in spite of persistent UN air attacks.

In June enemy light planes made night raids along the UN front lines and even into the Seoul area. VMF (N)–513 pilots, flying the nightly combat patrol over Seoul, had several fleeting contacts with these black-painted raiders. The Marines were unable to close in for the kill, since the opposing planes were nonmetal and difficult to track by radar. Soon, however, the VMF(N)–513 pilots had better hunting. On 30 June Captain Edwin B. Long and his radar operator, CWO Robert C. Buckingham, shot down a black, two-place PO-2 biplane. And on 13 July Captain Donald L. Fenton destroyed another.[29]

Despite the Air Force emphasis on interdiction, better close air support remained a major objective of the 1st MAW. One of the requirements was a shorter flying distance from air base to combat area. K-46, the MAG-12 field near Hoengsong, had qualified with respect to reduced flying time. Maintenance problems caused by the dusty, rocky runway of this primitive strip led to its abandonment. On 14 July the squadrons pulled back temporarily to K–1, and on the 26th MAG–12 withdrew its maintenance crews.

The Group's new field was K–18, a 4,400-foot strip on the east coast near Kangnung and just south of the 38th Parallel. Situated only 40 miles behind the 1st Marine Division and on the seacoast, the new field seemed to be ideally located. The runway, reinforced with pierced steel planking, extended inland from a beach where water-borne supplies could be delivered, as at K–3.[30]

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Chapter 8. The Truce Talks at Kaesong
The Division Back in Action Again

Political causes had a good deal to do with the renewal of activity for the 1st Marine Division late in August 1951. Apparently the Communist armed forces had been given enough time to recuperate from their hard knocks in May and June. At any rate, the Red delegates walked out on the truce talks after falsely charging on 22 August that UN planes had violated the neutrality of the Kaesong area by dropping napalm bombs. Although the Reds were unable to show any credible evidence, the negotiations came to an abrupt end for the time being.[31]

On the 26th all Marine units received a Division warning that offensive operations were to be initiated in the immediate future. The effective strength, of the Division (including the KMCs) had been reported as 1,386 officers and 24,044 enlisted men on 1 August 1951. Attached to the Division at that time were 165 interpreters and 4,184 Korean CTC cargadores.

On the 26th the regiments were disposed as follows: the 1st Marines near Chogutan; the 5th Marines near Inje; the 7th Marines near Yanggu; and the 1st KMC Regiment at Hangye. Service units and the Division CP were located along the Hongchon-Hangye road in the vicinity of Tundong-ni.

The 11th Marines (–), with the 196th FA Battalion, USA, attached, constituted the 11th Marine Regiment Group, an element of X Corps artillery. Throughout the training period 2/11 remained under the control of the 1st Marine Division and 3/11 was attached to the 2d Infantry Division.

The 5th Marines, 7th Marines, and KMCs were alerted to be prepared to move up to the combat areas south and west of the Punchbowl on 27 August. The 1st Marines was to remain in Division reserve, and the 11th Marines reverted to parent control.[32]

It was only about a five hour motor march from Tundong-ni to the forward assembly area under normal road and weather conditions. But recent rains had turned roads into bogs and fordable streams into torrents. Bridges were weakened by the raging current in the Soyang, and landslides blocked the road in many places.

The 1st Marine Division was back in action again. But it would have to fight its first battles against the rain and the mud.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack

IT WAS to a large extent a new 1st Marine Division on 27 August 1951. Very few veterans of the Reservoir campaign were left, and even the Marines of the hard fighting in April and May had been thinned by casualties and rotation. Whatever the new arrivals lacked in experience, however, they had made up as far as possible by intensive and realistic training while the Division was in reserve.

The new Marine zone of action, in the Punchbowl area, was as bleak and forbidding as any expanse of terrain in Korea. Dominating the Punchbowl from the north and blocking any movement out of it was YOKE Ridge, looking somewhat like an alligator on the map (See Map 17). Hill 930 represented the snout. Hill 1000 was the head, and the body extended eastward through Hills 1026 and 924.

Click here to view map

Two smaller hills, 702 and 602, spread off southeast and northeast respectively to the Soyang River and its unnamed tributary from the west. On either side of YOKE Ridge were numerous sharp and narrow ridges. Some of the hills were wooded with enough scrub pine to afford concealment for outposts and bunkers. Altogether, it was an area eminently suited to defense.

The defenders were identified by Division G-2 as troops of the 6th Regiment, 2d Division, II NKPA Corps. Apparently they did not lack supporting weapons, for 3/7 positions on Hill 680 were hit by an estimated 200 mortar and artillery rounds during daylight hours of the 30th.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack
Crossing the Soyang in Flood

The 7th Marines and KMC Regiment, ordered to relieve U.S. and ROK Army units on the KANSAS Line, started their march in a downpour on 27 August. The 5th Marines (less 1st Battalion) at Inje had orders to follow the 7th up the narrow Soyang valley.

Typical of the wet weather difficulties were those experienced by 3/7. Scheduled to depart early for the forward positions, the companies struck tents. Trucks failed to arrive and they remained to eat the noon meal, a gustatorial bonus of all food the galley crew could not carry with them. Unfortunately, the trucks were delayed further and the men shivered in the rain as they ate an evening meal of "C" rations.

When the vehicles finally arrived at 2100 the rain had reached torrential proportions. Progress was so slow over muddy roads that it took until 0330 on the 28th to reach the CP of the 7th Marines at Sohwari (Map 18), just southeast of the junction of the Soyang and a tributary from the east.
Click here to view map

The bivouac area assigned to 3/7 for the night proved to be a foot deep in water, and Lieutenant Colonel Kelly directed his men to catch what sleep they could in the trucks while he and his staff attempted to straighten out the snarled traffic situation.[1]

It took the rest of the night for the 3/7 officers to walk the length of the convoy, cutting out trucks with less essential cargo. With only a small space available for a turn-around, the 3/7 vehicles were ordered to back into it, unload their troops and equipment, and return along a narrow road, which had been churned into a quagmire.

The battalion assembly area was on the other side of the rain-swollen Soyang. How Company and the command group managed to cross over a waist-deep ford, but the crossing was so perilous that DUKWs were requested for the other two rifle companies. Lieutenant Colonel Louis C. Griffin's 2/7 also found the river crossing an operation requiring DUKWs. By the afternoon of the 29th all elements of the two 7th Marine battalions were on the west bank, occupying their assigned assembly areas.

The relief proceeded slowly. Two KMC battalions on the left of the 7th Marines took over the zone formerly held by elements of the 2d Infantry Division and the 8th ROK Division. The cosmopolitan character of the Eighth Army was revealed when 2/KMC relieved the French Battalion of the 2d Infantry Division. Linguistic chaos was averted only by the best efforts of the exhausted interpreters.

By the 30th, the 1st and 3d KMC Battalions were behind the line of departure on Hill 755, ready to attack in the morning. The 2d Battalion assumed responsibility for the regimental zone on the KANSAS Line.

The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 7th Marines had meanwhile completed the relief of elements of the 8th ROK Division. On the other side of the river Lieutenant Colonel James G. Kelly's 1/7 had relieved units of the ROK division on the hill mass a mile and a half north of Tonpyong (Map 17). These Marines were first to come under fire as the enemy sent over a few mortar rounds after dark on the 29th.

Division OpnO 22-51 directed the two assault regiments, the 7th Marines and KMCs, to attack at 0600 the following morning and seize their assigned positions on Corps Objective YOKE, the ridgeline running from Hill 930 on the west through Hills 1026 and 924 on the east (Map 17). Objective 1, the hill mass 1 1/2 miles northeast of Tonpyong, was already occupied by 1/7.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, was ordered to seize Objective 2, generally that part of YOKE Ridge east of Hill 924. The KMC Regiment was assigned Objective 3, consisting of Hills 924 and 1026.

Other 1st Marine Division units had the following missions on 31 August:

5th Marines—to patrol the Division zone along the KANSAS Line and protect defensive installations;

1st Marines—to remain in the rear in the Hongchon area in X Corps reserve;

1st Tank Battalion—to move up in readiness to support the assault regiments;

Division Reconnaissance Company—to continue to patrol the Punchbowl and mop up bypassed enemy.

Land mines were a constant menace to troop movements as the assault regiments adjusted positions in preparation for the attack. As usual, neglected "friendly" mines were encountered as well as those planted by the enemy.[2]

POW information and air reports indicated a southward movement of two to three enemy regiments with artillery and supplies. Prisoners stated that an attack was due on 1 September, leading to the G-2 conjecture that the enemy's Sixth Phase Offensive might be about to start.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack

Supply Problems Cause Delay

Logistical shortages made it necessary for the 1st Marine Division to call a six-day halt and build up a new reserve of artillery and mortar ammunition.

During the first phase of the Division attack, the main burden of transport and supply had fallen upon three Marine units—the 1st Ordnance Battalion (Major Harold C. Borth), the 1st Motor Transport Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Howard E. Wertman), and the 7th Motor Transport Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Carl J. Cagle). The extraordinary expenditure of artillery shells for these four days posed a resupply problem that was aggravated by an almost impassable supply route. The three Marine battalions had to strain every resource to meet minimal requirements.

Ammunition Supply Point (ASP) 60-B, a U.S. Army installation manned by elements of the Marine 1st Ordnance Battalion, was located about five miles behind the gun positions. From this dump it was 48 miles to Hongchon, the source of supplies for ASP 60-B. A well maintained, two-lane dirt road led from that base to Inje, but northward it deteriorated into a narrow, twisting trail following the Soyang valley. Recent rains, resulting in earth slides and mudholes, had reduced the road to such a condition that the round trip between ASP 60-B and Hongchon took 25 hours.[3]

As an added complication, it was necessary to build up a 10-day reserve of ammunition at ASP 60–B so that Division transport would be available for lifting 2,000 rotated troops to Chunchon some time between 3 and 15 September. This meant that 50 to 60 Marine trucks must be employed daily to haul ammunition, with the result of a drastic shortage of motor transport for other purposes.

Only human transport was available for supplying Marines on the firing line. X Corps started the month of September with 20,070 Korean Service Corps, the successor to CTC, and civilian contract laborers—the equivalent in numbers of a U.S. Army infantry division. Even so, 14 air drops were necessary during the month, only one of which went to a Marine unit. This took place on 1 September, when 20 Air Force cargo planes from Japan dropped ammunition and rations to the KMCs. A 90 percent recovery was reported.[4]

It generally took a full day in the 1st Marine Division zone during the first week of September for a cargador to complete the trip from a battalion supply point to the front lines and return. This made it necessary to assign from 150 to 250 Korean laborers to each infantry battalion. And as the Marines advanced farther into the rugged Korean highlands, the logistic problem was increased.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack
Resumption of Division Attack

Enemy groups moving southward into the zone of the 1st Marine Division during the six-day lull were sighted by air observation. POW interrogations and other G–2 sources established that the 2d NKPA Division, II Corps, had been relieved by the 1st NKPA Division, III Corps. Accurate 76mm fire from well-hidden guns was received by the Marines throughout the interlude, and patrols ran into brisk mortar fire when they approached too near to enemy bunkers on Hill 673.

For the second time, during the night of 4–5 September, 5th Marines units were assailed on the KANSAS Line, 5 miles to the rear of the 7th Marines troops similarly deployed along the HAYS Line. Yet a large 7th Marines patrol ranged forward some 2,000 yards the next day without enemy contacts. A like result was reported by a patrol representing almost the entire strength of the Division Reconnaissance Company (Major Robert L. Autry) after it scoured the area north of the Punchbowl.[5]

1st Marine Division OpnO 23–51, issued on the morning of 9 September, called for the 7th Marines to jump off at 0300 on the 11th and attack Objectives ABLE and BAKER—Hills 673 and 749 respectively—while maintaining contact with the 8th ROK Division on the right. Other Division units were given these missions:

1st Marines—to be released from X Corps reserve near Hongchon to Division control; to be prepared to pass through the 7th Marines, when that regiment secured its objectives, and continue the attack to seize Objective CHARLIE, the ridgeline leading northwest from Hill 1052.

5th Marines—to maintain one company on KANSAS Line while occupying positions in Division reserve along HAYS Line in rear of 7th Marines.

KMC Regiment—to patrol aggressively on Division left to exert pressure on enemy defenses south and southeast of Objective CHARLIE.

11th Marines—to displace forward to support attack of the 7th Marines.

Division Reconnaissance Company—to patrol northward in the Soyang valley as far as Hwanggi to deny the enemy this area.

The area ahead of the 7th Marines was ideal for defense. From YOKE Ridge the assault troops had to descend into a narrow valley formed by a small tributary of the Soyang-gang, cross the stream, and climb Kanmubong Ridge on the other side. This formidable piece of terrain was dominated by three enemy positions, Hills 812, 980, and 1052 (Map 17). Thus the attack of the 7th Marines had as its primary purpose the securing of initial objectives on Kanmubong Ridge that would give access to the main NKPA defense line, some 4,000 yards to the north.

The 7th Marines was to seize the eastern tip (Objective ABLE) of this commanding terrain feature and “run the ridge” to Hill 749, Objective BAKER. While Lieutenant Colonel Louis G. Griffin’s 2/7 maintained its patrolling activities on the left, tied in with the KMCs, Lieutenant Colonel B. T. Kelly’s 3/7 in the center and Lieutenant Colonel J. G. Kelly’s 1/7 on the right were to attack.

As an intermediate regimental objective on the way to Kanmubong Ridge, the 680-meter hill directly north of B. T. Kelly’s position on Hill 602 was assigned to his battalion. He ordered How Company to move forward under cover of darkness and be prepared to attack at dawn. Rain and poor visibility delayed the attempt until surprise was lost, and after a fierce fire fight How Company was stopped halfway up the southeast spur.

In order to relieve the pressure, the battalion commander directed Item Company to attack on the left up the southwest spur. This maneuver enabled How Company to inch forward under heavy mortar and machine gun

fire to a point with 50 yards of the topographical crest. Item Company became confused in the “fog of war” and finally wound up on How’s spur at 1245.

Twice the two companies made a combined assault after artillery and mortar preparation and air strikes with napalm, rocket, and strafing fire. Both times the North Koreans swarmed out of their bunkers to drive the Marines halfway back to the original jump off line. It was anybody’s fight when the two battered companies dug in at dusk.

Across the valley to the east, J. G. Kelly’s 1/7 had no better fortune in its attack on Hill 673. Heavy enemy mortar and machine gun fire kept the assault troops pinned down until they consolidated for the night.

With both attacking battalions in trouble, Colonel Nickerson ordered 2/7 to advance up the narrow valley separating them. His plan called for the reserve battalion to move under cover of darkness around the left flank of 1/7 and into a position behind the enemy before wheeling to the northeast to trap the North Koreans defending Hill 673.

The maneuver succeeded brilliantly. Griffin’s troops were undetected as they filed northward during the night, making every effort to maintain silence. By daybreak on 12 September 2/7 had two platoons in position behind the enemy to lead the attack.[6]

The assault exploded with complete surprise as 2/7 swept to the crest of Hill 673 against confused and ineffectual opposition. Griffin’s battalion and 1/7 had the enemy between them, but the jaws of the trap could not close in time because of NKPA mine fields. Thus 1/7 continued to be held up on the forward approaches to Hill 673 by NKPA mortar and small-arms fire. Grenades were the most effective weapons as J. G. Kelly’s men slugged their way to the summit at 1415 while 2/7 was attacking Objective BAKER, Hill 749.

On the other side of the valley, 3/7 had seized its initial objective. While How and Item Companies attacked up the southeast spur, where they had been stopped the day before, George Company launched a surprise assault up the southwest spur. This was the blow that broke the enemy’s will to resist. George Company knocked out seven active enemy bunkers, one by one, thus taking the pressure off the troops on the other spur. At 1028 all three companies met on the summit.

The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, radioed that Objective BAKER had been secured at 1710 after a hard fight, but this report proved to be premature. Enough NKPA troops to give the Marines a good deal of trouble were still holding the wooded slopes of Hill 749, and it would take the attack of a fresh battalion to dislodge them. Along the ridgeline from Hill 673 to Hill 749, an undetermined number of enemy soldiers had been caught between 2/7 and 1/7, and events were to prove that they would resist as long as a man remained alive.

Casualties of the 1st Marine Division on 11 and 12 September were 22 KIA and 245 WIA, nearly all of them being suffered by the assault regiment. Enemy losses included 30 counted KIA and 22 prisoners.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack

The Mounting Problem of CAS

With the Division in reserve from 15 July until the latter part of August, close air support (CAS) was not a vital problem; however, upon return to the Punchbowl area the situation became serious. The difficulties arose from the time lag between the request for air support to the time the planes arrived over target. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing operating under the control of the Fifth Air Force was busily employed on interdiction missions. On 30 August, a tactical air observer, spotting what appeared to be a division of NKPA troops moving toward the Marines, hurriedly flashed back a request for a multi-plane strike. The enemy troops were beyond artillery range, but they were bunched up—a good target for a concentrated air strike. It was more than three hours later that four fighter bombers arrived on the scene; by that time, the enemy formation had dispersed and the desired number of casualties could not be inflicted.[7]

The reason for this lack of timely air support was apparent. Most of the UN air power was being funneled into Operation STRANGLE, the interdiction operation designed to cut off the enemy's vehicular and rail traffic in the narrow waist of North Korea. With the emphasis on air interdiction, close air support sorties were limited to only 96 per day for the entire Eighth Army.[8] The 1st Marine Division received only a proportionate share.

Marine close air support was needed because of the enemy's determined resistance to the Division's attack. The Reds hurled frequent night counterattacks and pounded the Marine positions with artillery and mortars hidden in the precipitous Punchbowl area. At one time it was estimated that the enemy was using 92 pieces of artillery. The Marines had only 72 field pieces, but in one 24-hour period they expended more than 11,000 rounds of artillery ammunition on a 6,000-yard frontage. The enemy emplacements, hewn out of solid rock, were hard to knock out.

To support the hard-working infantrymen, Marine Aircraft Group 12 (MAG–12) had moved VMF–214 and VMF–312 from the Pusan area to K–18, an airfield on the east coast at Kangnung. By moving closer to the Division area, planes were able to extend their time over the target area and render more effective support to the infantry. Also, Marine Air Support Radar Team One (MASRT-1) was sent to Korea and established positions to support the Division. Using its support radar the team began to evaluate its capability of guiding unseen fighter-bombers at night or under conditions of poor visibility.[9]

Even though the Corsairs at K-18 were less than 50 miles from the 1st Marine Division, very few were available to the Marines. Operation STRANGLE, in full swing, was not achieving the desired results. Since sightings of enemy vehicles were increasing, more and more Marine and Navy air sorties were channeled into interdiction. During 18 days of rugged fighting from 3 to 21 September, forward air controllers made 182 tactical air requests. Fighter-bombers were provided on 127 of these requests; however, in only 24 instances did the planes arrive when needed. The average delay time in getting CAS in response to requests during September was slightly less than two hours, but in 49 cases the planes were more than two hours late.[10] As a consequence, General Thomas reported, many of the 1,621 casualties suffered by the 1st Marine Division during the hard fighting in September were due to inadequate close air support. Furthermore, he said, the tactical capabilities of his battalions were strongly restricted.

During the planning of attacks, infantry commanders almost always desired and requested close air support. It was also desirable to have planes on station overhead should an immediate CAS need arise, for the lack of an air strike when needed could jeopardize success. However, with restricted availability of CAS planes due to participation in STRANGLE, many times desired air cover was not to be had. Attacks under those circumstances

were often costly.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack
First Helicopter Supply Operation of History

The relief of the three battalions of the 7th Marines by their corresponding numbers of Colonel Thomas A. Wornham's 1st Marines took place during the night of 12-13 September. By daybreak 3/1 and 1/1 had assumed responsibility for the zones of 3/7 and 1/7, which were on their way to Division reserve at Wontong-ni at the junction of the Inje and Kansong roads. In the center, however, 2/1 could not complete the relief of 2/7. Not only was that battalion engaged most of the day with the enemy, but the units were separated—one company south of Hill 749 being unable to join the other two companies on separate spurs northwest of that height. All three were under persistent NKPA mortar and 76mm fire.[11]

The attack of the 1st Marines, originally scheduled for 0500 on 13 September, had been changed to 0900 by Division orders. One reason for the postponement was the serious shortage of ammunition and other supplies after the urgent demands of the last two days. Another reason was the inability of VMO–6 helicopters, lifting two wounded men at most, to cope with the mounting casualty lists. Enemy interdiction of roads added in several instances to the complications of a major logistical problem, particularly in the zone of Lieutenant Colonel Franklin B. Nihart's 2d Battalion, 1st Marines.

The hour had struck for HMR-161, and the world's first large-scale helicopter supply operation in a combat zone would soon be under way. It was not the development of a day. On the contrary, its roots went all the way back to 1945, when the atomic bomb of Hiroshima rendered obsolescent in 10 seconds a system of amphibious assault tactics that had been 10 years in the making. Obviously, the concentrations of transports, warships, and aircraft carriers that had made possible the Saipan and Iwo Jima landings would be sitting ducks for an enemy armed with atomic weapons.

The problem was left on the doorstep of the Marine Corps Schools, which had reared the Fleet Marine Force from infancy to maturity during the 1930's. A Special Board and Secretariat were appointed for studies. They assigned two general missions to Marine Helicopter Experimental Squadron 1 (HMX–1), organized late in 1947 before the first rotary-wing aircraft had been delivered. These missions were:

(1) Develop techniques and tactics in connection with the movement of assault troops by helicopter in amphibious operations;

(2) Evaluate a small helicopter as a replacement for the present OY type aircraft to be used for gunfire spotting, observation, and liaison missions in connection with amphibious operation.[12]

The second mission resulted in the small Sikorsky and Bell helicopters of VMO–6 which landed in Korea with the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in August 1950. Although it was originally believed that rotary wing aircraft might replace the OYs, combat experience soon demonstrated that the best results were obtained by retaining both types in fairly equal numbers.

Landing exercises under simulated combat conditions were conducted by HMX–1 in fulfillment of the first mission. At first the squadron had only three-place helicopters. Later, when the usefulness of the helicopter was fully realized, even the new 10-place "choppers" were never available in sufficient numbers. The capacity designations of these machines, however, were more ideal than real, for the helicopters could lift only four to six men in addition to the pilot, copilot, and crewman. Despite such drawbacks, HMX–1 developed tactical and logistical techniques for helicopter landings to be made from widely dispersed carriers against an enemy using atomic weapons.

Belated deliveries of aircraft delayed the commissioning of the world's first transport helicopter

squadron, HMR–161, until 15 January 1951 at El Toro. Lieutenant Colonel George W. Herring was designated the commanding officer and Lieutenant Colonel William P. Mitchell the executive officer.

Nearly three months passed before the first three transport helicopters arrived. The squadron was gradually built up to a strength of 43 officers and 244 enlisted men with a full complement of 15 HRS–1 helicopters. These Sikorsky aircraft, designed to Marine specifications, were simply an enlarged three-place HO3S in configuration, with a similar main rotor and vertical tail rotor. About 62 feet long with maximum extention of rotor blades, the HRS–1 was 11 1/2 feet wide with the blades folded. Following are some of the other statistics:

Gross weight at sea level, 7,000 pounds; cruising speed, 60 knots; payload at sea level, 1,420 pounds; troop-lifting capacity, four to six men with full combat equipment or three to five casualties in litters.[13] Capabilities varied, of course, according to such factors as altitude, temperature, and pilot experience.

Marine Transport Helicopter Squadron 161 arrived in Korea on the last day of August, and by the 10th of September it had moved up to the front, sharing Airfield X–83 (see Map 18) with VMO–6.[14] The 11th was devoted to reconnaissance flights in search of landing sites, and on the 12th the transport squadron was ready for its first combat mission. A new means of logistical and tactical support that was to revolutionize operations and create front page headlines had arrived in Korea.

Prior to the squadron's arrival, the Division chief of staff, Colonel Victor H. Krulak, had held numerous planning conferences with Division staff officers, and preparations for the employment of HMR-161 had made noteworthy progress. Then General Thomas ordered executed the first operation of the squadron under combat conditions, and the major logistical problem of moving supplies and evacuating casualties was well on the way to being solved. At 1600 on 13 September 1951—a date that would have historical significance—Operation WINDMILL I was set in motion.

Lieutenant Colonel Herring had attended the final planning conference at Division headquarters at 0830 on the 13th, and he was told that the operation would involve a lift of one day's supplies to 2/1 over a distance of seven miles. The commanding officer of 2/1 was to select suitable landing points and the commanding officer of 1st Shore Party Battalion had the responsibility of providing support teams to operate at the embarkation and landing points.[15]

Only two days had been available for training and rehearsals, but not a minute was wasted. All morning on the 13th the embarkation point section separated the supplies into balanced loads of about 800 pounds per helicopter. Loading commenced at 1520. Half an hour later, seven aircraft were ready to depart while four others went ahead to carry the landing point section to the previously reconnoitered site.

The route followed the valleys as much as possible, so that the helicopters were in defilade most of the way. Smoke was laid down by the 11th Marines for concealment.

The landing point section managed in 20 minutes to clear an area of 20 x 40 feet (later enlarged to 100 x 100 feet) and mark it with fluorescent panels. At 1610 the first HRS-1 hovered with cargo nets suspended from a hook released by manual control. A few minutes later it took off with five walking wounded and two litter cases.

Each helicopter carried out as many casualties as possible, depending on the amount of gasoline in the fuel tanks. Only 30 minutes passed from the time one Marine was wounded and the time of his arrival at a hospital clearing station 17 miles behind the firing line.

Radio provided communications between helicopters in flight, HMR–161 headquarters, 2/1 CP, and the Shore Party team at the landing site.

Fifteen aircraft were employed for one hour, three for two hours, and one for two hours and 45 minutes—a total of 28 flights in over-all time of 2 ½ hours. The helicopters landed at intervals of two minutes and took off as soon as the landing point section could put the casualties aboard. And though an altitude of 2,100 feet restricted loads, 18,848 pounds of cargo had been lifted into the area and 74 casualties evacuated when the last

“chopper” returned to X–83 at 1840.

To even the most pessimistic observer Operation WINDMILL I was a complete success, so successful that a similar operation, WINDMILL II was conducted on the 19th. Two days later the first helicopter lift of combat troops was completed. A new era of military transport had dawned.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack
The Fight for Hill 749

Although 2/1 alone had 240 Korean cargadores attached, the 7 1/2 tons of helicopter-borne supplies, largely ammunition, were vitally needed by the two assault battalions of the 1st Marines. After relieving Fox Company of 2/7 south of Hill 749 at 1100 on the 13th, Lieutenant Colonel Nihart's 2/1 jumped off to the attack an hour later. Stiff opposition was encountered from the beginning. The relief of the remaining two companies of 2/7 was complicated by the fact that they were some 400 yards from the position reported, on the reverse slope of Hill 749. Throughout the day these Marines were heavily engaged with the enemy.[16]

On the left of 2/1, the 3d Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Foster C. La Hue) could not make much progress toward its regimental objective, Hill 751, while the enemy was active on Hill 749. A second attack of 2/1 at 1500 drove to the summit of that height after fierce fighting with small arms, automatic weapons, and hand grenades. There was still much fighting to be done before the entire objective would be secured since many enemy bunkers hidden among the trees remained to be neutralized.

At 1600 a gap of about 300 yards separated 2/1 from the two 2/7 companies. So fierce was enemy resistance in this area that it took until 2025 for Nihart's men to complete the relief after fighting for every foot of ground.

Air and artillery support had been excellent on the 13th despite the fact that neither could be called by 2/1 in some instances because of the danger of hitting elements of 2/7. Even so, 2/11 (Lieutenant Colonel Dale H. Heely) and other artillery units fired 2,133 rounds and Company C of the 1st Tank Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Holly H. Evans) contributed 720 rounds of 90mm fire which knocked out six enemy bunkers. The 4.2" mortars had a busy day firing 261 HE and 28 WP rounds, and Company C of the 1st Engineer Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel John V. Kelsey) supported the attack by clearing mine fields.

Mortar fire was received by the 1st Marines throughout the night, and 3/1 repulsed a series of counterattacks by an estimated 300 enemy. Colonel Wornham's regiment continued the attack at 0800 on 14 September. Both the 2d and 3d Battalions inched their way forward against a heavy volume of well-aimed enemy mortar, artillery, and automatic weapons fire.

NKPA resistance persisted on the wooded northern slope of Hill 749, where hidden bunkers had to be knocked out, one by one. It took constant slugging for 2/1 to advance 300 meters before dusk, enabling 3/1 to fight its way to the summit of Hill 751. Again the flat trajectory fire of Company C tanks had been helpful as 400 rounds were directed against NKPA bunkers, while the 11th Marines fired 3,029 rounds.

The 15th was a relatively quiet day as compared to the previous 48 hours. In preparation for an expected passage of lines, the action took a slower tempo as units consolidated their positions. The principal fight of the day was a continuation of the attack by 2/1 north of Hill 749. Although the battalion commander had arranged for a heavy artillery preparation, the attack, which jumped off at 1710, was stopped at 1800 by a terrific pounding from NKPA mortars and artillery coupled with a crossfire of machine guns from concealed bunkers. The assault troops withdrew under effective covering fire by the 11th Marines to positions occupied the previous night. Objective Baker yet remained to be secured.

The Marines could not help paying reluctant tribute to the skill as well as obstinacy of the NKPA defense. Enemy bunkers were so stoutly constructed that the North Koreans did not hesitate to direct well aimed mortar fire on their own positions when the Marines closed in for the final attack.

NKPA fields of fire were laid out for the utmost effect. Marines with recent memories of college football

referred to the enemy's effective use of terrain as the "North Korean T Formation." On Hill 749, for example, the main ridgeline leading to the summit was crossed by another wooded ridgeline at right angles. Attackers fighting their way up the leg of the "T" came under deadly crossfire from the head of the imaginary letter—a transverse ridgeline bristling with mortars and machine guns positioned in bunkers.

In accordance with Division OpnO 25–51, the 5th Marines (Colonel Richard C. Weede) moved up to assembly areas on 15 September in preparation for passing through 3/1 on the 16th to continue the attack. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines in turn would relieve 1/1 (Major Edgar F. Carney, Jr.), so that it could pass through 2/1 and carry on the assault to complete the securing of Hill 749.

The KMCs and Division Recon Company were to relieve the 5th Marines of responsibility for the Hays Line, while the 7th Marines remained in reserve at Wontong-ni.

The comparative quiet of the 15th was shattered a minute after midnight when the enemy launched a savage four-hour attack to drive 2/1 off Hill 749. The NKPA hurricane barrage that preceded the attempt, according to the Division report, "reached an intensity that was estimated to surpass that of any barrage yet encountered by the 1st Marine Division in Korea."[17]

The thinned companies of 2/1 took a frightful pounding from 76mm, 105mm, and 122mm artillery supplemented by 82mm and 120mm mortars. Bugles and whistles were the signal for the onslaught. It was stopped by weary Marines who demonstrated at NKPA expense that they, too, could put up a resolute defensive fight.

Wave after wave of attackers dashed itself at the thinned Marine platoons, only to shatter against a resistance that could be bent but not broken. The fight was noteworthy for examples of individual valor. When one of the forward Marine platoons was compelled to give ground slowly, Corporal Joseph Vittori of Fox Company rushed through the withdrawing troops to lead a successful local counterattack. As the all-night fight continued, "he leaped from one foxhole to another, covering each foxhole in turn as casualties continued to mount, manning a machine gun when the gunner was struck down and making repeated trips through the heaviest shell fire to replenish ammunition."[18]

Vittori was mortally wounded during the last few minutes of the fight, thus becoming the second Marine of 2/1 within a 48-hour period to win the Medal of Honor. His predecessor was Pfc Edward Gomez of Easy Company. When an enemy grenade landed in the midst of his squad on 14 September, he "unhesitatingly chose to sacrifice himself and, diving into the ditch with the deadly missile, absorbed the shattering violence of the explosion in his own body."[19]

Not until 0400 on the 16th did the enemy waves of attack subside on Hill 749. NKPA strength was estimated at a regiment. A combined assault by an estimated 150 enemy on 3/1 positions to the west in the vicinity of Hill 751 was repulsed shortly after midnight, as were three lesser efforts during the early morning hours of the 16th.

When the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines moved out at 0830 to pass through 2/1 and continue the fight, it was the first day of command for Lieutenant Colonel John E. Gorman.[20] The passage of lines was slowed by enemy mortar fire, and NKPA resistance stiffened as 1/1 attacked along the ridgeline leading toward Hill 749. At 1800, after a hard day's fighting, Objective Baker was occupied and defensive positions were organized for the night.

Thus was the attack of the 1st Marines terminated. Around Hill 751, 3/1 remained in control. The regiment's other two battalions, 1/1 and 2/1, held a defensive line about 1,500 yards long on both sides of Hill 749.

Hill 749 had finally been secured. A number of mutually supporting hidden enemy bunkers had been knocked out in a ruthless battle of extermination, and veterans of the World War II Pacific conflict were reminded of occasions when Japanese resistance flared up in similar fashion after ground was thought to be secure.

Casualties of the 1st Marine Division during the four-day fight for Hill 749, most of them suffered by the

attacking regiment, were 90 KIA, 714 WIA, and 1 MIA. Enemy losses for the same period were 771 counted KIA (although more than twice that number were estimated KIA) and 81 prisoners.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack
5th Marines Attack Hill 812

Division OpnO 25–51 assigned the 5th Marines the mission of passing through 3/1 in the vicinity of Hill 751 and attacking to secure Objective Dog, the bare, brown hill mass which loomed approximately 1,000 yards ahead. The last few hundred yards were certain to be long ones, for the main east-west ridgeline leading to Hill 812 was crossed by a north-south ridgeline—the leg and head of another "T" formation. Again, as on Hill 749, the attackers had to fight their way through a vicious crossfire.

Lieutenant Colonel Houston Stiff's 2/5 on the right had the main effort. The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel Donald R. Kennedy) was to advance on Stiff's left with the mission of supporting his attack on Objective dog, prepared to seize Hill 980 on order. Lieutenant Colonel William P. Alston's 1/5 remained in regimental reserve.[21]

Fox Company spearheaded the 2/5 attack by moving initially up the low ground between Hill 673 on the right hand and 680 on the left. Owing to delays in completing the relief of 1st Marines elements, it was early afternoon on 16 September before the assault got underway. Progress was slow against heavy mortar and machine gun fire, and a halt came at 1700 for regrouping and evacuation of casualties.

Dog Company, in support on the ridge to the left, sighted troops approaching the objective and requested that the positions of the assault company be identified. In order to pinpoint the locations, a white phosphorous grenade was used as a mark. It attracted the attention of aircraft summoned by 3/5 against Hill 980 (Map 17), from which fire had been received. The planes, assuming that another target had been designated, attacked the forward platoons of Fox Company with napalm and machine guns. By a miracle, recognition panels were put out before a single casualty resulted, but the men found it a harrowing experience.

Darkness fell before the attack could be resumed, and Fox Company pulled back along the ridgeline to set up a perimeter defense and evacuate the wounded. The night passed without enemy action. Bright moonlight made for unusual visibility which discouraged enemy attacks and permitted the Marine assault platoons more sleep than might otherwise have been expected.

Regimental orders called for 2/5 to resume the attack at 0400 on the 17th, supported by the fires of 3/5, while 1/5 continued in reserve. Fox Company of 2/5 had some difficulty in orienting itself after the confusion of the night before and was delayed until 0700 in jumping off. This proved to be a stroke of luck, for dawn gave the Marines a good view of unsuspecting enemy troops eating breakfast and making ready for the day's fighting. Fox Company called artillery on them with good effect.

Surprise gave the attack an opening advantage and rapid progress was made at first along the main ridgeline leading west to Hill 812. Then Fox Company was stopped by the cross-fire from the head of the "T." Easy Company passed through at 0830 to continue the assault, reinforced by a platoon of Fox Company that had become separated from its parent unit, although it kept in touch by radio.

An air strike was called but did not materialize. After waiting for it in vain, Easy Company drove toward the summit with the support of artillery and mortars.

Two hours after passing through Fox Company, the attackers had advanced only about a hundred yards against the NKPA cross-fire. At 1100, Lieutenant Colonel Stiff ordered an all-out drive for the objective, following a preliminary barrage of everything that could be thrown at the enemy—artillery, 75mm recoilless, rockets, and 81mm and 4.2" mortars. As soon as the bombardment lifted, Easy Company was to drive straight ahead along the ridgeline while the 2d Platoon of Fox Company made a flank attack.

This maneuver turned the trick. The blow on the flank took the enemy by surprise, and in just 36 minutes the assault troops were on the summit after a hard fight at close quarters with automatic weapons and grenades. Since regimental orders had specified “before nightfall,” Objective DOG had been seized ahead of schedule.

With scarcely a pause, Easy Company continued along the ridgeline leading west from Hill 812 toward Hill 980. Remarkably fast progress was made against an enemy who appeared to be thrown off balance. Permission was asked to seize Hill 980. The regimental commander refused because of instructions from Division to the effect that this position could not be defended while the enemy remained in possession of Hill 1052, the key terrain feature. Easy Company was directed to withdraw 600 yards toward Hill 812.

Late in the evening of 17 September, Colonel Weede directed his two assault battalions to consolidate on the best ground in their present locations and prepare to hold a defensive line.

When the brakes were put on the attack, 3/5 was strung out over a wide area to the north of Hill 751. This battalion was not tied in with 2/5, which occupied positions coordinated for the defense of Hill 812—Easy Company to the west, on the ridgeline leading to 980; Dog and Weapons Company to the south, protecting the left flank; and Fox Company to the east.

Both Easy and Fox Companies were under fire from Hills 980 and 1052, and daytime movement on 812 was restricted to the northern slope. Even so, sniping shots from well aimed North Korean 76mm mountain guns inflicted a number of casualties.

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Chapter 9. Renewal of the Attack
The Struggle for the “Rock”

An abrupt change in the enemy’s strategy became evident throughout these September operations. Where he had previously contented himself with an elastic defense, every position was now bitterly fought for and held to the last man. When it was lost, counterattacks were launched in efforts to regain it.

One of these attempts hit the western outpost of 2/5’s Easy Company at 0430 on 18 September, compelling the Marines to give ground. A second counterattack at 0840 was repulsed. Enemy fire from Hills 980 and 1042 continued all day long, and Colonel Stiff’s battalion suffered most of the 16 KIA and 98 WIA casualties reported by the Division for 18 September.

The night of 18–19 September passed in comparative quiet, but at daylight the enemy on Hills 980 and 1052 was still looking down the throats of the 2/5 Marines. None of the participants will ever forget a landmark known simply as “the Rock”— a huge granite knob athwart the ridgeline approximately 700 yards west of Hill 812. Only 12 feet high, its location made it visible from afar. The Marines outposted the top and eastern side, while the enemy held tenaciously to the western side. Along the northern slope of the ridge leading west to the Rock were the only positions affording protection to the dug-in forward elements of the battalion.

The need for fortification materials such as sand bags, barbed wire, and mines aggravated the already serious supply problems of 2/5. A request for helicopter support was sent at 1100 on the 19th and approved immediately by General Thomas. Loading commenced early the same afternoon, and Operation WINDMILL II was launched. A total of 12,180 pounds were lifted by 10 HRS–1 aircraft in 16 flights during the overall time of one hour.[22]

Again, on 19 September, 2/5 incurred most of the casualties reported by the Division. During the day 1/5, after relieving the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 1st Marines, moved up on the right of 2/5 to occupy a defensive line stretching two miles east along the ridge almost to the Soyang-gang.

NKPA action was confined to incessant long-range fire during the daylight hours of the 19th, but at 0315 the following morning the enemy made a desperate effort to retake Hill 812. After a brief but intense mortar and artillery barrage, North Koreans in at least company strength came pouring around the northern side of the Rock to attack with grenades and burp guns at close range. The left platoon of Easy Company counterattacked but was pushed back by superior numbers to positions on the left flank of the hill.

The enemy immediately took possession of evacuated ground which enabled him to fire into the front lines of Easy Company. At 0500 another Marine counterattack began, with Easy Company making a frontal assault and the 2d Platoon of Fox Company striking the enemy flank. It was the same platoon that had delivered the flank attack resulting in the capture of Hill 812. Again 2/Fox struck the decisive blow with grenades and automatic weapons. The surprise was too much for enemy troops who hastened back to their own side of the Rock, leaving 60 counted dead behind.[23]

This was the last action of a battle that had occupied all three Marine regiments from 11 to 20 September inclusive while the KMC Regiment patrolled aggressively on the Division left flank. Three of the four Division objectives had been secured after savage fights, but Objective CHARLIE (the ridgeline northwest of Hill 1052 in the KMC zone) had yet to be attacked when Division OpnO 26–51 put an abrupt stop to offensive movement.

Not only was the fight west of Hill 812 the last action of the 1st Marine Division’s nine-day battle; it was the last action of mobility for Marines in Korea. As time went on, it would become more and more apparent that 20 September 1951 dated a turning point in the Korean conflict. On that day the warfare of movement came to an

end, and the warfare of position began.

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position

TWO AND A HALF weeks of hard fighting had taken place along the X Corps front when General James A. Van Fleet paid a visit on 16 September 1951. The commanding general of EUSAK wished to inspect the operations and determine the morale of the 1st Marine Division and 2d Infantry Division, both of which had suffered heavy casualties. He found the morale of these X Corps units good and had no adverse criticisms of their operations. While on this tour of inspection, however, he issued the following three directives to X Corps:

"(1) That replacements would be integrated into units only when the battalion or larger-sized unit to which they were assigned was in reserve;

"(2) that certain 'choke points' [General Van Fleet pointed out the locations on the map] be interdicted to prevent enemy reinforcements or withdrawals through these points;

"(3) *that the Corps Commander firm up his line by 20 September and to plan no further offensives after that date*, as it was unprofitable to continue the bitter operation."[1]

Italics have been added to emphasize the importance of 20 September 1951 as the turning point when a warfare of position replaced a warfare of movement throughout the remaining 22 months of the conflict in Korea. There are few dates as important in the entire history of the war.

General Van Fleet reiterated his instructions on the 18th in a confirming directive to the effect that X Corps continue making limited attacks "until 20 September, after which . . . units were to firm up the existing line and to patrol vigorously forward of it."[2]

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position
Sectors of Major EUSAK Units

Click here to view map

At this turning point the Eighth Army had 14 divisions from four corps committed along a 125-mile front across the peninsula. These units were distributed (Map 19) as follows:

U.S. I CORPS

ROK 1st Division holding the left anchor in the Munsan-ni area and controlling the 5th KMC Battalion on the Kimpo Peninsula;

British 1st Commonwealth Division across the river Imjin to the northeast;

U.S. 1st Cavalry Division (Greek and Thai Battalions attached) still farther to the northeast in the Yonchon area;

U.S. 3rd Infantry Division (Belgian Battalion and Philippine 20th BCT attached) having the responsibility for the vital Chorwon area;

U.S. IX CORPS

U.S. 25th Infantry Division (Turkish Brigade attached) defending the area west of Kumhwa;

ROK 2d Division holding a sector east of Kumhwa;

U.S. 7th Infantry Division (Ethiopian Battalion attached) on the right;

ROK 6th Division with a narrow sector as far east as the Pukhan River, the Corps boundary;

U.S. 24th Infantry Division (Colombian Battalion attached) in Corps reserve south of Hwachon;

U.S. X CORPS

ROK 8th Division on the left flank;

U.S. 2d Infantry Division (French and Netherlands Battalions attached) in left-central portion of Corps front;

ROK 5th Division occupying a narrow sector to the east;

U.S. 1st Marine Division holding eastern portion of the Corps sector;

ROK I CORPS

ROK 11th Division responsible for left of the Corps front;

ROK Capitol Division holding the line eastward to the Sea of Japan;

ROK 3d Division in reserve at Yangyang for a period of training.[3]

Some rather complicated juggling of units took place on the X Corps front, giving the effect of a game of musical chairs in the tactical sphere. From 18 to 21 September the 1st Marine Division extended its line eastward to relieve the 8th ROK Division on the extreme right of the Corps area. That Division in turn relieved the 5th ROK Division on the extreme left, whereupon the latter leapfrogged the 2d Infantry Division to occupy a new sector on the left of the Marines.

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position
Statement by General Van Fleet

"Theirs not to reason why" could never have been written about American fighting men. From 1775 to the present day, they have always taken a keen interest in the high-level strategic and tactical decisions governing their operations. This applies with particular force to the Marines, who have seldom had a voice in the shaping of operations above the division level.

As if in direct reply to unspoken questions, the commanding general of the Eighth Army made a statement on 30 September explaining the purpose of his strategy. "My basic mission during the past four months," he said, "has been to destroy the enemy, so that the men of Eighth Army will not be destroyed. . . . Each loaded enemy weapon was a definite threat to the Eighth Army. It was imperative that we knock out as many of those weapons as we could find. . . ."

"In prodding the enemy in the deep belly of the peninsula," continued General Van Fleet, "we have taken many casualties. . . . It was mandatory that we control the high ground features, so that we could look down the throat of the enemy and thereby better perform our task of destruction. . . . In seizing these hills we lost men, but in losing a comparative few we saved other thousands."

Estimated casualties, inflicted on the enemy by UN ground forces alone from 25 May to 25 September, were announced as 188,237 by the EUSAK commander. "As we open our autumn campaign," he added, "the enemy potential along the front line has been sharply reduced by our hill-hopping tactics. The Communist forces in Korea are not liquidated but they are badly crippled."[4]

Even so, EUSAK G–2 summaries credited the enemy on 1 October 1951 with more than 600,000 troops at the front, or in reserve and available as immediate reinforcements. Six CCF armies and one NKPA corps were capable of reinforcing the units on the MLR or participating in an offensive. The enemy also had an estimated 7,000 men in guerrilla forces behind the UN lines.[5]

The maximum strength of UN forces in Korea during October was 607,300. This total included 236,871 U.S. Army troops, 21,020 Fifth Air Force personnel, 30,913 U.S. Marines (including 5,386 officers and men of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing), 286,000 men in ROK units, and 32,172 Allied troops.[6]

Although it might appear that the opposing forces were about equal, it must be remembered that well over one-fourth of the UN troops were engaged in administrative or maintenance duties behind the front. Thus the Communists had a numerical advantage of at least four to three on the firing line. This was not at all unusual, since they had enjoyed a preponderance in manpower from the beginning.

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position
Hill 854 Secured by 3/1

In accordance with EUSAK instructions, X Corps OI–235 directed the 1st Marine Division to organize and construct defensive positions after relieving the 8th ROK Division on the right and taking over its sector. On the Corps boundary, elements of the 11th ROK Division, I ROK Corps, were to be relieved on Hill 884 (Map 20). This meant the addition of some 9,000 yards to the Marine front, making a total of about 22,800 yards or more than 13 miles.

Click here to view map

First Marine Division OpnO 27–51, issued on 18 September, relayed the X Corps directions. It also called for such offensive action as might be necessary to complete the securing of Hill 854, in the sector of the 8th ROK Division, if not in friendly hands at the time of the relief.[7]

That the enemy had put up a desperate fight to hold this position is indicated by the EUSAK report for 15–16 September: "The ROK 8th Division, employing all three regiments, attacked against heavy and stubborn resistance to wrest Hill 854 from the three battalions of North Koreans who held the position. The ROK 21st Regiment forced one of these battalions to withdraw and occupied a part of the hill, but at the close of the day were engaged in heavy hand-to-hand fighting to retain the position."[8]

On 20 September, after three weeks of continual combat, the major units of the 1st Marine Division were disposed from left to right (Map 20) as follows:

1st KMC Regiment (Colonel Kim Dae Shik, commanding; Colonel Walter N. Flournoy, senior adviser) occupying the HAYS line on the left flank and patrolling vigorously to the north;

5th Marines (Colonel Richard G. Weede) holding a wide sector in the center, with Hill 812 as the principal terrain feature;

1st Marines (Colonel Thomas A. Wornham) in process of extending eastward to the Corps boundary just beyond Hill 884;

7th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel John J. Wermuth) in Division reserve at Wontong-ni.[9]

Division OpnO 27–51 designated the 1st Marines to relieve the ROKs on Hill 854 and complete the seizure of that terrain feature, if necessary. As a preliminary, the 1st Battalion of the 5th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel William P. Alston) took over the front of the 1st Marines on the HAYS line. This enabled 1/l and 3/1 to enlarge the Division sector by side-slipping to the east while Lieutenant Colonel Franklin B. Nihart's 2/1 went into immediate reserve just behind the main line of resistance.[10]

The 1st Battalion of the 1st Marines (Lieutenant Colonel John E. Gorman) relieved two battalions of the 10th ROK Regiment in the Hill 854 area. No opposition from the enemy was encountered, but the Marines suffered 11 casualties from mines as a consequence of incorrect charts supplied by the ROKs.

By this time it had become an open question whether "friendly" mines did more harm to friend or foe. Certain it was, at any rate, that the prevailing system—or lack of system—resulted in Marine casualties during nearly every offensive operation in zones where the action shifted back and forth.

Lieutenant Colonel Foster C. La Hue's 3/1 relieved two battalions of the 21st ROK Regiment. Although the ROKs had fought their way to the summit of Hill 854, the ridgeline to the southwest remained in the enemy's hands. An attack by 3/1 was planned for 1530 on 20 September, supported by artillery and an air strike. Delays in the arrival of the planes caused a postponement until 1720. How Company jumped off and had advanced 50 yards when a man was killed and another wounded by mines. The attack was called off at dusk so that the ROKs could remove the explosives they had planted.

Air support was requested for 0700 on the morning of the 21st, but it was 1040 before four Air Force F–51s arrived for a strike directed by an observation plane of VMO–6 and a forward air controller. At 1220, following a 10-minute artillery preparation, How Company spearpointed a battalion attack which met stiff resistance. Another air strike was requested but did not materialize. The assault continued with mortar and artillery support until 1745, when How Company reported the ridge line secured.

Casualties of 3/1 for the two days were nine KIA and 55 WIA. Enemy losses totaled 159 counted and 150 estimated KIA, 225 estimated WIA, and 29 prisoners.[11]

"A large number of mines and booby traps were discovered within the battalion sector," the 3/1 report for the 23d concluded, "most of these being U.S. types which were placed by ROK troops, with only a few enemy mines scattered in the central portion of the sector."[12]

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position
Helicopter Troop Lift to Hill 884

Division OpnO 27–51, it may be recalled, had directed the Marines to extend the X Corps boundary eastward by taking over the sector of the 11th Regiment, I ROK Corps. Even under ordinary circumstances this would have meant an exhausting 15-hour march for the relieving troops merely to climb Hill 884 (Map 20). The position was accessible only on foot, and supplies had to be brought on the backs of cargadores.

Because of the isolation of this wildly mountainous area, a reconnaissance was deemed essential. Major General Gerald C. Thomas, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, assigned that mission to the Division Reconnaissance Company after deciding on a troop lift by helicopter.

He was aware, of course, that no such operation had ever been undertaken during the brief history of rotary-wing aircraft. Large-scale helicopter troop lifts were still at the theoretical stage.

Lieutenant Colonel George W. Herring, commanding officer of HMR–161, had but 48 hours for preparation. He and his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel William P. Mitchell, worked out a tactical and loading plan with the commanding officer of Recon Company, Major Ephraim Kirby-Smith, and the acting Division Embarkation Officer, First Lieutenant Richard C. Higgs.[13]

An air reconnaissance of Hill 884 disclosed only two acceptable locations for landing sites, both approximately 50 feet square with a sheer drop on two sides. About 100 yards apart and some 300 feet below the topographical crest, each could be cleared sufficiently for the landing of a single aircraft.

Major Kirby-Smith decided on the order in which troops of his company and attached units would be landed. The assignment and loading tables were completed on 20 September in time for a rehearsal. All participants were instructed as to their team numbers and embarkation points.

H-Hour of Operation SUMMIT (Map 21) was set for 1000 on 21 September. The plan called for a preliminary landing of a Recon Company rifle squad to provide security. Next, a landing point team from the 1st Shore Party Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Harry W. Edwards) had the mission of clearing the two sites. These two groups were to disembark from hovering helicopters by means of knotted 30-foot ropes. Strong winds at the 2,900-foot altitude made landing quite hazardous.

Click here to view map

The execution was delayed half an hour by the ground fog so prevalent at this time of year. As soon as the two landing sites were cleared (about 40 minutes), word was transmitted by radio for the loading to begin at Field X–83 (Map 21), about 14 miles southwest of Hill 884 by the defiladed route of flight.

Control over the landings and takeoffs on the two Hill 884 sites was exercised by a hovering helicopter. Aircraft landed at 30-second intervals, each carrying five fully equipped men who disembarked in average time of 20 seconds. Two radio nets maintained communications between the landing sites and orbiting aircraft. Voice contact could not be established between the landing point team and X–83, however, and it became necessary for a helicopter to return within sight of the field to restore communications for incoming aircraft.

A total of 224 men, including a heavy machine gun platoon from 2/7, was lifted in flight time of 31.2 hours and over-all time of four hours. In addition, 17,772 pounds of cargo were landed.

Operation SUMMIT ended with the laying of two telephone lines between Recon Company on Hill 884 and the CP of the 1st Marines, about eight miles to the rear. Fifteen minutes were required for dropping each line. The ROKs, following their relief, proceeded on foot to their own Corps area.

From a tactical viewpoint, the importance of Hill 884 lay in its domination of enemy-held terrain. The difficulty of reaching the remote position had been overcome by the helicopter, and Operation SUMMIT was

recorded in front page headlines by Stateside newspapers.

Congratulations poured in from all sides. Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., commanding general of FMFPac, complimented HMR–161 on “a bright new chapter in the employment of helicopters by Marines.” Major General Clovis E. Byers, commanding X Corps, praised the “organic and attached units of the 1st Marine Division that participated in the first relief of units on the battle position. Your imaginative experiment with this kind of transport is certain to be of lasting value to all the services.”[14]

Nobody was more enthusiastic than General Thomas. “Operation SUMMIT, the first helicopter-borne landing of a combat unit in history, was an outstanding success,” said his message. “To all who took part, well done!”

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position
Helicopter Operation BLACKBIRD

It is not surprising, considering their training, that the Marines found it a difficult transition from offensive to defensive operations after 20 September. As evidence that patrols were conducted with customary aggressiveness, Marine casualties (including the 1st KMC Regiment) for the last 10 days of the month were 59 KIA, 1 MIA, and 331 WIA. Enemy losses for the same period were 505 counted KIA, and 237 prisoners.

1st Marine Division casualties of 2,416 (including 594 reported by the KMCs) for September as a whole were the most severe suffered during any month of the war so far with the exception of December 1950 and June 1951. NKPA losses of the month were 2,799 counted KIA and 557 prisoners.[15]

On the 23d the 1st Marines extended to the eastern boundary of X Corps and relieved the Division Reconnaissance Company on Hill 884. That same day the enemy was treated to a novelty when 100 well aimed 16-inch projectiles, fired from a range of 40,000 yards, roared in like meteors on his positions in the area of Hill 951 (Map 20). Naval gunfire from the USS *New Jersey* was being conducted by Marine spotters in forward OPs, who reported good coverage for the 2,000-pound rounds. Ammunition dumps and artillery pieces were destroyed while NKPA troops in the open suffered heavy personnel casualties, according to observers.

Several more bombardments were contributed by the *New Jersey* at the request of 1/1 and 3/1 during the balance of the month. Marine and attached Army artillery also gave excellent support with fire so accurate as to break up enemy counterattacks before they could be launched. Ammunition restrictions hampered the efforts of the 11th Marines (Colonel Custis Burton, Jr.) but the cannoneers never failed to respond to an emergency. The 90mm rifles of the 1st Tank Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Holly H. Evans) continued to show good results with direct observed fire on enemy bunkers. Air support in September, concluded the Division report, was “generally inadequate and unsatisfactory.”[16]

By the last week of September the Division right (east) flank was well protected, considering the rugged terrain. Not as much could be said for the other flank, northwest of the Punchbowl, where the sector of the Marines joined that of the 5th ROK Division. Since the Division sector was divided by high, roadless mountains, there was no rapid way of moving reserves other than by helicopter. In short, the 1st Marine Division was hard pressed to man a 22,800-yard MLR while keeping in reserve enough troops to help defend this sensitive area in an emergency.

Plans were completed by General Thomas and the Division staff for the rapid displacement of a company from 2/1, the reserve battalion of the 1st Marines, to meet any such threat. Since a surprise attack was most likely to occur at night, it was decided that a helicopter lift of an element of the Division reserve should be made in the darkness of 27 September after a detailed daytime rehearsal.[17]

In contrast to former Marine helicopters, which had no night-flying aids, the HRS–1 was equipped with few attitude of flight instruments. They were primitive compared to the sophisticated instrumentation of fixed-wing planes, and Lieutenant Colonel Herring sent his pilots on preliminary night indoctrination flights to memorize terrain features.

The route, five air miles in length, amounted to a round trip of 13 miles because of the detours necessary for purposes of concealment. The aircraft were to take off from a dry river bed southeast of Hill 702 (Map 21) and land near the northwestern rim of the Punchbowl, where the troops would march a mile to their final assembly area.

The infantry unit selected for Operation BLACKBIRD was Easy Company of 2/1, commanded by

Second Lieutenant William K. Rockey. Lieutenant Colonel Nihart and Major Carl E. Walker, the battalion commander and his executive officer, supervised the daylight rehearsal on the morning of the 27th. Six helicopters lifted 200 men in the overall time of two hours and 10 minutes to a landing site of 50 by 100 feet cleared by a team of the 1st Shore Party Battalion. The troops were proceeding on foot to their assembly area when an antipersonnel mine wounded a man. Nihart called a halt immediately and investigation revealed that the area was filled with mines. Plans were changed to abandon the march, although the landing site remained the same.

Operation BLACKBIRD got under way at 1930 on 27 September. The night was dark when the first HRS–1 took off with five combat-equipped men. Three-minute intervals were required between aircraft operating on a shuttle system, so as to avoid the danger of collisions. Different altitudes were assigned to outgoing and incoming helicopters which used running lights only two minutes before entering or leaving the debarkation zone.

A total of 223 troops were landed in over-all time of two hours and 20 minutes instead of the nine hours a movement by foot would have required. Nevertheless, some of the results were not reassuring. Rotor wash blew out many of the flare pots lighting the embarkation area, and the battery-powered beach lanterns on the landing site proved inadequate. Pilots were temporarily blinded by the glare on windshields; and artillery flashes bothered them while making their way through three mountain passes. Fortunately, good radio communications aided pilots who had trouble in locating the landing site in spite of night rehearsals.

Operation BLACKBIRD remained the only night helicopter troop lift during the war in Korea. “Present equipment,” said the Marine report, “indicates that under present conditions in Korea these night lifts should be limited to movements within friendly territory.”[18]

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position
"To Organize, Construct and Defend"

"The Division continued to organize, construct and defend positions along a 13½-mile front; patrol forward of the MLR and screen rear areas; and maintain one U.S. Marine regiment which could not be committed without authority from X Corps in a reserve area 17 miles behind the lines."

The above quotation, from the opening paragraph of the report of the 1st Marine Division for October 1951, sums up in a nutshell the new trend of operations since 20 September. It is significant that for the first time in 1951 the Division Historical Diary departs from a daily account of events and divides the month into two equal parts for a chronicle of operations. Not enough had happened to justify a day-by-day summary.

This does not mean that the Marines neglected any opportunity to do the enemy hurt. It means only that the opportunities of defensive warfare were limited as compared to the preceding six months of offensive operations. That the Marines made the best of such opportunities is shown by the fact that the ratio of enemy to friendly casualties increased from the 4-to-1 of September to the 20-to-1 of October, even though the totals of the former month were larger.[19]

As a result of his new defensive policies, the enemy often avoided a fight. Day after day passed during the first two weeks of October without far-ranging Marine patrols being able to make contact.

Line MINNESOTA, the new MLR (Map 20), ran roughly parallel to the HAYS line but included advanced positions taken in the September offensive. During the first 10 days of October the 2d Battalion of the 1st Marines continued to be the Division forward reserve in readiness for a quick shift to any threatened point in the MLR, and the Division Reconnaissance Company had the mission of maintaining daily contact with the 11th ROK Division on the Marines' right flank.

It might seem that the 7th Marines, 17 miles to the rear at Wontong-ni, would be entirely becalmed. Yet this regiment saw as much action on some days as any of the three regiments ranging forward of the MLR. The explanation was that the rear area was infested with elusive North Korean guerrillas who kept the 7th Marines patrols busy.

Early in October the question arose as to how quickly a reserve battalion could be shifted from one point to another. By this time a company-size helicopter lift had become commonplace, having been successfully completed twice by HMR–161 since Operation SUMMIT. It remained to be seen whether a battalion could be transported with comparable celerity, and, on 9 October, Division issued an order warning of 3/7's move.

The 7th Marines was due to exchange places with the 5th Marines on the 11th after relieving that regiment in the center of the Division front. While 1/7 and 2/7 completed a conventional relief of their opposite numbers, 3/7 was selected for a helicopter lift. Lieutenant Colonel Edwards, the new commanding officer, had recently commanded the Shore Party Battalion and helped to train its landing site and loading point teams. He took part in the planning along with Colonel Krulak, Lieutenant Colonels Herring and Mitchell, and the new commanding officer of the Shore Party Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel George G. Pafford.

Planning went on as if for an amphibious operation. Assignment and loading tables were worked out, and each Marine of the six-man embarkation teams had his designated place in the helicopter. On 10 October all officers and men of 3/7 attended a familiarization class at which trial teams were loaded.

Operation BUMBLEBEE began at 1000 on the 11th. Field X–77 (Map 21) had been selected as the loading zone because of its proximity to the assembly area of the 7th Marines. The landing site was just behind the 5th Marines MLR, northeast of Hill 702. A flight path of 15 miles took advantage of the concealment afforded by valleys and defiladed areas.

The two dispatchers in the loading zone were provided with a checkoff flight list containing the names of every team of 3/7. In order to avoid delays, replacements could be summoned from a casual pool to fill understrength teams to plane capacity. Average time for loading was 20 seconds.

Ten to 12 minutes were required for the flight. As the helicopters landed at intervals of a minute, a team could exit and allow the craft to be airborne in an average time of 17 seconds. “Time was saved,” according to one Marine report, “when the Shore Party personnel, after opening the door, vigorously assisted the passengers by grasping their arms and starting them away from the craft. The last man out checked to see if any gear had been forgotten. Guides furnished by the battalion directed the passengers toward their respective company assembly areas, thus keeping the landing areas clear at all times.”[20]

Twelve helicopters were employed in 156 flights. The flight time was 65.9 hours and over-all time five hours and 50 minutes. A total weight of 229,920 pounds included 958 combat-equipped troops averaging 240 pounds.

These statistics of Operation BUMBLEBEE made it certain that Stateside headlines would proclaim another Marine “first.” Only four days later HMR-161 demonstrated its ability to carry out on short notice an emergency resupply and evacuation operation in a combat zone. Help was requested in the IX Corps sector to the west for a completely surrounded ROK unit in need of ammunition and of casualty evacuation. Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell led six HRS-1 aircraft which flew in 19,000 pounds of ammunition. Lieutenant Donald L. Hilian (MC), USN, surgeon of HMR–161, landed to supervise the evacuation of 24 wounded ROKs, several of whom would otherwise have died. Captains James T. Cotton and Albert A. Black made four flights each into the beleaguered area, and all Marine pilots of Operation WEDGE were congratulated in person by Major General Claude F. Ferenbaugh, commanding general of IX Corps.[21]

Seven infantry battalions, with 2/1 in immediate reserve, manned the MLR from 1 to 13 October—three KMC battalions on the left of the Division sector; two 5th Marines battalions (relieved by the 7th Marines on the 11th) in the center; and two 1st Marines battalions on the right. Scout and sniper teams were employed throughout the period, with contacts few and far between. More destruction was inflicted on the enemy by observed artillery, tank, and mortar fire.[22]

A new emphasis was placed on psychological warfare during these defensive operations. Eighty-seven NKPA soldiers surrendered from 1 to 13 October, but whether they responded to leaflets fired by the 11th Marines could not be determined.

Early in October the 1st Marine Division was granted permission by EUSAK to use Sokcho-ri (Map 19) as a port of embarkation and debarkation instead of Pusan. The change proved satisfactory even though troops had to be lightered from ship to shore. A 68-mile truck movement through the I ROK Corps zone replaced the airlift of 200 miles from Pusan to Chunchon, followed by a motor march of 70 miles. It was estimated that the new routing would add from 8,000 to 10,000 man-days a month to the combat potential of the Division.

An improvement in logistics resulted when the Division asked and received permission from EUSAK to use field K–50 near Sokcho-ri for an airhead instead of K–51 at Inje. Although the Marines were limited to five or six sorties a day while sharing K–50 with I ROK Corps, they were able to transfer many airhead activities to the new field.

The mission of the Division remained essentially unchanged from 14 to 31 October. Foot patrols ranged farther into enemy territory, and tank-infantry raids in company strength, supported by air and artillery, were launched at every opportunity.

Typical of these operations was the raid staged on 16 October by elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, (Lieutenant Colonel James G. Kelly) supported by tanks, air, artillery, and engineers. Captain John R. McMahon’s Charlie Company was the principal unit involved. The Marine column had as its objective an NKPA strong point overlooking the village of Changhang (Map 2) on the east and the flats on both sides of the Soyang-

gang to the south and southwest. Captain McMahon's mission was "to reduce all fortifications and installations . . ." [and] ". . . to seize, occupy and hold ground until the area was thoroughly mined, booby-trapped and infested with trip flares."[23]

A small-scale battle flared up for a few minutes as the enemy put up a stiff resistance with artillery, mortar, and automatic weapons fire. Superior Marine firepower soon prevailed, and at 1540 the attackers reached their objective. During the next hour and 20 minutes enemy installations were destroyed and the strong point rendered untenable by mines and booby traps. The Marines withdrew at 1700 after sustaining casualties of 3 KIA and 18 WIA. Enemy losses were 35 counted KIA.

The next day a reinforced KMC company, supported by tanks, air, artillery, and engineers made a similar raid on enemy positions about 875 yards northwest of Hill 751 and 1,500 yards south of Hill 1052 (Map 20). Twenty-five NKPA bunkers were destroyed with losses to the enemy of 15 counted KIA, 3 prisoners, and 5 captured machine guns.[24]

On 21 October the front of the 1st Marine Division was reduced a mile when elements of the 3d ROK Division relieved the 2d KMC Battalion on the Marine left flank in accordance with instructions of X Corps. Six infantry battalions now manned an MLR of 12¼ miles.

A strong enemy position, menacing the forward elements, had developed to the north of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines' sector. Three days of reconnaissance and detailed preparation preceded the destructive raid carried out on 30 October. Captain George E. Lawrence's Charlie Company, reinforced with heavy machine guns, was held up by NKPA resistance in estimated company strength. The Marines fought their way up a ridgeline, throwing white phosphorus grenades into enemy bunkers. Pinned down momentarily by NKPA mortar and small-arms fire, they reached a defiladed position and withdrew under cover of Marine artillery, air, mortars, and heavy machine guns. At a cost of only one WIA, the raiders inflicted 65 counted KIA casualties on the enemy and destroyed an estimated 40 NKPA bunkers.[25]

All three Marine regiments on Line MINNESOTA were directed by General Thomas to fight the enemy whenever possible with his own weapons in the form of ruses and night ambushes. On 31 October the 3d Battalion of the 1st Marines feigned preparations for an attack even to the extent of a brief artillery barrage. When the firing let up, the Marines sounded an NKPA bugle call as a signal for enemy troops to rush out of bunkers and man open trenches. Thus exposed, they became the victims of intense Marine mortar and artillery fire which inflicted an estimated 47 KIA and 48 WIA casualties.

During the last 2 weeks of October, 11 missions were fired by the battleship USS *New Jersey* and 41 missions by the heavy cruiser USS *Toledo*. Appreciation was expressed in a message to the *Toledo* by General Thomas: "Your accurate and effective fire during period 24–29 October made an important contribution to operations of this division. Many thanks and come again."[26]

Antiguerrilla raids behind the MLR were carried out by Marine ground forces relying upon HMR–161 helicopters for transportation. In Operation BUSHBEATER teams from 1/1 were landed on the Division's east flank to sweep westward toward the Soyang-gang on 22 October while teams from Recon Company patrolled from the opposite direction.

Operations HOUSEBURNER I and II were planned to deprive guerrillas of shelter during the coming winter. As the name implies, helicopter-borne teams set Korean huts afire with flame throwers and incendiary grenades.[27]

Enemy forces facing the Marines at various times in October were believed to comprise the 2d Division, II NKPA Corps, the 1st and 15th Divisions of III Corps, and the 19th Division of VI Corps. NKPA casualties during the month were announced by the 1st Marine Division as 709 counted and 2,377 estimated KIA, 4,927 estimated WIA, and 571 prisoners. The Marines (including the 1st KMC Regiment) suffered losses of 50 KIA, 2 MIA, and 323 WIA.[28]

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position
Marine Operations of November 1951

On 1 November 1951 the front line strength of the opposing forces was nearly equal—195,000 for the UN, and 208,000 for the enemy. In reserves the Communists held their usual numerical advantage with nine CCF armies totaling 235,000 men plus 138,600 in four NKPA corps. All were readily available either as reinforcements or as assault troops for a great offensive.[29]

Even though the Eighth Army was committed to a warfare of position, General Van Fleet meant to keep the initiative. "If we had stagnated on any one of our many positions since the tide turned in April," he said in a recorded statement of 3 November, "the hydra-headed Communists—who seem to grow two soldiers for each one cut down—would soon have been at our throats. With the enemy's prolific capacity posing an ever-present threat, we had no choice but to destroy the menace before it matured."[30]

Throughout November the 1st Marine Division continued to occupy the eastern portion of the X Corps defense sector in east-central Korea. From left to right the 1st KMC Regiment, 7th Marines, and 1st Marines held the 12 1/4-mile MLR with two battalions each. The 5th Marines remained in reserve until the 11th, when it relieved the 1st Marines. That regiment went into the new reserve area at Mago-ri (Map 19).[31]

Elements of the 1st, 15th, and 19th Divisions, III NKPA Corps, manned the opposing lines. The Marines continued to organize artillery- and air-supported tank-infantry-engineer task forces in company strength for raids. Squad-size patrols were sent out nightly to ambush the enemy, employing ruses whenever possible.

The howitzers of the 11th Marines and the 90mm rifles of the 1st Tank Battalion were kept busy throughout the month. On 7–8 November, for instance, Marine artillery fired 257 observed missions in 24 hours—including 34 on enemy artillery positions, 32 on mortar positions, 25 on bunkers, 22 on machine gun positions, 4 in support of friendly patrols, 3 on supply dumps, 2 on trucks, and 1 each on a bridge, a CP, and a 57mm recoilless rifle position.

In spite of such daily pounding, aerial photographs proved that NKPA defenses in depth had become more intricate and formidable in November 1951 than during any previous month.

On the 7th the 14th Replacement Draft added 2,756 officers and men to the 1st Marine Division. Within a few hours 2,066 officers and men of the 10th Rotation Draft were detached. And on the 27th the 11th Rotation Draft represented a further loss of 2,468 Marines whose departure was hastened so that they could be home by Christmas.

A note of grim humor crept into proceedings on 9 November. Division OpnO 50–51 directed that all supporting arms and weapons commemorate the Marine Corps Birthday the next day by firing a TOT on Hill 1052, the key enemy observation point overlooking the friendly sector.[32] While the cruiser USS *Los Angeles* contributed naval gunfire, the Commanding General of 1st MAW, Major General Christian F. Schilt, led an air strike of 83 Marine planes to blast this enemy strong point.

The performance was embellished on the 10th when Marine tanks, mortars, and machine guns added their fire to the grand crescendo of exploding shells and bombs. The Communists were also bombarded with 50,000 leaflets inviting them to the Marine birthday dinner that evening. Twenty Korean Reds actually did surrender, though some doubt remained whether they had responded to the invitation or the TOT. General Van Fleet sent a message to all Marines in his command, congratulating them on "a job well done" in Korea.[33]

On 11 November the 5th Marines carried out its relief of the 1st Marines on Line MINNESOTA. This was the occasion for the largest helicopter troop lift so far, involving the transportation of nearly 2,000 combat-equipped men.

Operation SWITCH began at 0635 on D-Day when three helicopters took off from Field X-83 with Shore Party specialists to signal aircraft into landing sites and supervise the unloading and reloading of troops. Twelve helicopters were employed, each carrying five men and supplies from the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel Kirt W. Norton), and returning to Field X–83 with a like load from Lieutenant Colonel Clifford E. Quilici's 2d Battalion, 1st Marines.[34]

Naval gunfire from the USS *New Jersey* helped to keep the enemy quiet during the relief. All told, 950 men were flown to Hill 884—soon to be known unofficially as "Mount Helicopter"—and 952 lifted to Field X–83 in return flights. Total flight time was 95.6 hours and over-all time 10 hours. Once again the Marine Corps had made tactical history.

Ground forces operations throughout November seldom varied from the familiar pattern of squad-size patrols nightly and an occasional daytime raid by a company-size task force with the support of artillery and air. Supporting arms kept enemy strongholds under almost constant fire, and North Korean activity in the construction or improvement of bunkers provided frequent targets of opportunity.

Contacts seemed to be avoided by enemy troops. On the night of 29 November, for instance, 11 Marine ambush patrols ranged from 1,500 to 2,500 yards ahead of the MLR with only a single contact before returning at daybreak. One enemy KIA was inflicted and one prisoner taken at a cost of four Marine WIA casualties.

Total Marine casualties (including the KMCs) during November were 34 KIA and 250 WIA. Enemy losses amounted to 408 counted and 1,728 estimated KIA, 2,235 estimated WIA, and 104 prisoners.

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Chapter 10. The New Warfare of Position
The Second Marine Christmas in Korea

Marine operations in December were shaped in advance by the resumption of armistice negotiations. This time Panmunjom was agreed upon as a conference site instead of Kaesong. Literally a wide place in the road, the tiny hamlet was located just north of the 38th Parallel between Munsan and Kaesong (Map 19). In the lack of houses, tents provided shelter for the UN and Communist delegates who renewed their meetings on 25 October 1951 for the first time since the Reds walked out at Kaesong on 23 August.

Discussions during November were largely devoted to the question of a cease fire based upon a line of demarcation. On the 23d it was agreed to accept a line linking up the farthest points of repeated contacts up to 2,000 yards forward of the United Nations MLR. Three days later, representatives of both sides initialed maps to indicate acceptance.[35]

The effect of the so-called cease fire on EUSAK operations was immediate. General Van Fleet sent his corps commanders a letter of instructions warning that active defensive operations were to continue until a full armistice had been concluded. If such an event took place within 30 days after 27 November 1951, the demarcation line would not be altered. But if an agreement had not been reached by that time, the line would be revised in accordance with actual changes.[36]

EUSAK instructions to corps commanders were relayed in a X Corps message of 27 November to the 1st Marine Division:

"*Part I.* The conference at Panmunjom has fixed a military demarcation line as a preliminary step to ending hostilities within a 30-day period.

"*Part II.* Every US, UN, and ROK soldier will be informed that hostilities will continue until armistice agreement is signed.

"*Part III.* While negotiations continue, X Corps will: (1) Demonstrate its willingness to reach an agreement by reducing operations to those which are essential to insure maintenance of present positions. Counterattacks to regain key terrain lost to enemy assault are authorized, but other clearly offensive actions will be taken only by direction of this Headquarters; patrolling only to that line beyond which contact has been repeatedly established; limiting supporting fires, including air strikes, to destruction of those targets which appear to constitute a major threat, or to improve the enemy's offensive capability. (2) Prepare for offensive action by: Conserving ammunition; maintaining combat effectiveness through intensified training; preparation for and rehearsal of limited-objective attacks, to be launched near the end of the 30-day period in order to improve the MLR.

"*Part IV.* Every effort will be made to prevent unnecessary casualties."[37]

In view of these instructions, it is understandable that a lull set in along the X Corps front in December 1951. Most of the cold weather clothing had been issued during the preceding month, and work was largely completed for the "winterizing" of bunkers. It remained only to improve defensive installations as front line elements continued to send out patrols to maintain pressure against the enemy. And since the Communists were putting similar military policies into effect, both sides kept in contact with relatively small units.[38]

The enemy also busied himself with extending already formidable defenses in depth. And though he did not seek a fight, he showed no hesitation about accepting one.

From 5 to 20 Marine patrols went out nightly during December, some of them manning night outposts called "duck blinds;"[39] occasional raids continued with relatively few contacts. In the rear of the Division area, helicopter patrols continued against guerrillas.

The 13 aircraft of HMR–161 had a busy month with 390 missions and 621 flights. Six thousand pounds of rations, 9,000 pounds of fuel oil in drums, 15,000 pounds of fortification material, and 15,000 pounds of cold weather clothing were among the supplies flown to the front. Personnel to the number of 2,022 were lifted, and cargo to the amount of 149,477 pounds.

The first breakthrough in truce negotiations, at Kaesong, occurred on 18 December, when lists of prisoners held by both sides were exchanged. Prior to this exchange of lists the UN Command could only speculate on the number carried as missing in action who were in reality held as prisoners of war. The Communists had previously reported only a few dozen names, and then only if it suited their propaganda purposes. Radio Peking, in releasing names piecemeal, had broadcast recordings made by UN prisoners under duress. Far Eastern monitors reported these broadcasts were slanted to give the Communist viewpoint.

The 18 December list of 3,198 American POWs revealed only 61 Marines including 2 Navy hospital corpsmen. (Information received from 18 Marines who gained their freedom in May 1951 was sketchy concerning others held at the time and was never accredited as official or authoritative.)[40] Interestingly enough when the Communist negotiators saw the list given them by the UN representative they became irate and tried to withdraw their list. The names of the Chinese and Korean prisoners had been Anglicized and caused considerable difficulty in retranslating the names into oriental characters.

Negotiations hit a snag at this point, and no other list was offered by the Red officials until the first prisoner exchange (Operation LITTLE SWITCH in April 1953). Notwithstanding the protracted and exasperating tactics of the Reds at the truce table, the exchange of prisoner of war lists presaged infinitely better treatment to the UN prisoners than had been accorded them prior to that time. The so-called lenient treatment policy by the Chinese, promulgated in July 1951, was initiated after the exchange of lists."[41]

The lists given by the Communists did not include several Marines captured during the months of October, November, or December of 1951. The families of these men were to sit in anguish waiting for these names until April of 1953. These and other instances of perfidy and treachery at the truce table by the Communist negotiators were to become legion.[42]

On 19 December the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines (Major William E. Baugh) was relieved just behind the MLR by Lieutenant Colonel Norton's 1/5 in helicopter Operation FAREWELL. It was the last flight in Korea for Lieutenant Colonel Herring, who returned to Quantico as commanding officer of Marine Helicopter Experimental Squadron (HMX)–1. His relief as commander of HMR-1 was Colonel Keith B. McCutcheon, and Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell remained as executive officer.[43]

The Marine helicopters of VMO–6 had also been setting records during the last half of 1951 under four commanding officers, Major David W. McFarland (5 April–5 October), Major Allan H. Ringblom (6 October–31 October), Major Edward R. Polgrean (1 November–25 November), and Major Kenneth C. Smedley (26 November–31 January 1952). A total of 1,096 Marine wounded had been flown out during this period, many of whom would otherwise have lost their lives.[44]

The supposed vulnerability of the helicopter was whittled down to a myth by VMO–6 experience. Returning from a front line mission with bullet holes was too commonplace for mention, yet the year 1951 passed without a single helicopter pilot being lost to enemy action, even though several aircraft were shot down. The experience of these 12 months also proved anew the wisdom of combining rotary-wing and fixed-wing aircraft in an observation squadron in fairly equal numbers. When it came to reconnaissance and artillery spotting, the nimble little OYs and OEs (both types are light observation planes) were much better suited than the "choppers."

As for close air support, increased Air Force emphasis on an interdiction campaign beyond artillery ranges added to the limitations imposed on Marine requests. Of the 22 strikes requested in December 1951, only five were approved.

From the 1st to the 10th, units of the Division along the MLR consisted from left to right of the 1st KMC

Regiment, 7th Marines, and 5th Marines. The only major change took place on the 11th, when the 1st Marines relieved the 7th and the latter went into Division reserve. Enemy units were believed to be the 1st, 15th, and 19th (soon relieved by the 47th) NKPA Divisions with an estimated strength of 25,750.

Permission was rarely granted by X Corps for Marine raids to cross the EUSAK military limiting line known as Line DUCK, which generally coincided with the line of demarcation. Christmas passed like any other day except for the holiday feast. Nineteen patrols went out on Christmas Eve, two of which had brief fire fights with enemy patrols before returning at dawn. During the day 40 rounds of naval gunfire from the heavy cruiser USS *St. Paul* were credited with destroying seven enemy bunkers.

More than a third of the Marines partaking of Christmas turkey were comparative newcomers who had reached Korea since the warfare of movement ended on 20 September. The 15th Replacement Draft brought 38 officers and 2,278 men early in December, and 127 officers and 1,805 men departed with the 12th Rotation Draft. No Marines who had arrived prior to 1 January 1951 were left among the 1,495 officers and 23,040 men in Korea at the close of the year.

Heavy snow on 26 December impeded foot-patrol activity and increased the danger of mines. Next day, when the 30-day cease-fire agreement ended, it was announced at Panmunjom that the terms had been renewed and that operational restrictions would be extended indefinitely.

Thus December came to an end on a note of troubled uncertainty. Not a single large-scale combat had been reported, yet 24 Marines were killed (including KMCs) and 139 wounded in patrol actions. That the enemy had sometimes succeeded in the grim quest of both sides for prisoners is shown by the unwonted entry of eight Marines missing in action. NKPA losses for the month consisted of 246 counted KIA, and 56 prisoners.

The year 1951 passed into history at 2400 on 31 December as the 11th Marines saluted 1952 by firing a “toast” at enemy strongholds. The thud of the snow-muffled howitzers was also a fitting farewell to the past year of a war that was not officially a war. Indications were that it would doubtless be concluded by a peace that was not a peace, judging from the attitude of the Communist delegates at Panmunjom. And meanwhile the Marines and other Eighth Army troops would keep on fighting in accordance with the terms of a cease fire that was not a cease fire.

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AS THE NEW YEAR began, the 1st Marine Division occupied practically the same front it had held along Line MINNESOTA for the last three months (Map 20) and would continue to hold for the next two and a half. The major units were disposed from left to right on 1 January 1952 as follows:

1st KMC Regiment (Colonel Kim Dong Ha commanding, LtCol Alfred H. Marks, senior advisor);

1st Marines (Colonel Sidney S. Wade);

5th Marines (Colonel Frank P. Hager, Jr.);

11th Marines (Colonel Bruce T. Hemphill) in artillery support.

The 7th Marines (Colonel John J. Wermuth) was in reserve until 10 January, when it relieved the 5th Marines on line. That regiment then went into reserve and could not be committed to action without the approval of X Corps.[1]

Tactical units not organic to the 1st Marine Division but attached at this time were, in addition to the 1st KMC Regiment, the 1st Korean Artillery Battalion, the 1st Platoon, 92d U.S. Army Searchlight Company, and Battery C, 1st 4.5” Rocket Battalion.

The new Korean artillery battalion consisted of two medium (155mm) and two light (105mm) howitzer batteries. Major General Gerald C. Thomas, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, approved a plan for placing this unit in the Punchbowl on 9 January to reinforce Lieutenant Colonel Sherman W. Parry’s 1st Battalion, 11th Marines.

Enemy units opposing the 1st Marine Division up to 23 January 1952 were the 1st, 15th, and 47th NKPA Divisions with an estimated combined strength of 25,750 men. On the 23d the 15th Division was relieved by the 45th.

The enemy, according to the Division report, showed “greater caution than he had in previous months, and friendly outposts and ambuscades noted fewer contacts. His harassing mortar and artillery fires increased in volume through the month. Meanwhile, extensive efforts to improve his defenses continued with particular attention being given to reverse slope installations.”[2]

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Ambush Patrol on New Year's Eve

The new year was but a few minutes old when the first Marine action took place. Captain Charles W. McDonald's Baker Company had been directed by Lieutenant Colonel Kirt W. Norton, commanding the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, to send out an ambush patrol on New Year's Eve.

A rifle squad, a light machine gun squad, an interpreter, and a corpsman composed the little column wearing white camouflage clothing which made the men all but invisible against a background of snow. After getting into position, the patrol settled down for the usual long wait. Darkness was the enemy's element, and Marine ambushers ran the risk of being ambushed themselves. This time, however, a six-man North Korean patrol came within five yards before the Marines let the enemy have it with machine gun and rifle fire which inflicted one KIA and four estimated WIA casualties. Efforts to take a prisoner were frustrated as the NKPA survivors melted away into the darkness. The Baker Company patrol returned without casualties at 0400.[3]

Marine operations were still limited by the EUSAK "cease fire" directive which went into effect for a month on 27 November 1951 in accordance with a decision reached during the armistice negotiations at Panmunjom. UN and Communist delegates agreed on a line of demarcation, known to the Eighth Army as Line DUCK. It linked up points of repeated EUSAK patrol contacts, not to exceed 2,000 yards beyond the MLR. Operations past this line, running generally parallel with Line MINNESOTA, could not be launched without permission from corps commanders.

When the agreement expired on 27 December, it was renewed indefinitely. Actually, it brought about few changes in the warfare of position which had replaced a warfare of movement on 20 September 1951. Each Marine infantry regiment on the MLR continued to send out several squad-size patrols nightly for such purposes as ambush, reconnaissance, and taking prisoners. Raids were employed for special missions where formidable enemy resistance might be expected. These forces usually ranged from a platoon to a company in strength, reinforced by supporting weapons. Operations of this sort were planned with meticulous thoroughness and carried out with minimal risks.

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Marine Raid in Company Strength

The first company-size raid of the new year was conducted by units of the 3d Battalion of the 1st Marines (Lieutenant Colonel Spencer H. Pratt) in the darkness of 1–2 January 1952. Captain James B. Ord, Jr.'s How Company was alerted on 30 December to prepare for a night raid with a mission of reconnaissance and capturing or destroying any enemy that might be encountered. On the afternoon of the 30th, Ord made a preliminary reconnaissance with Second Lieutenants Milo J. See and John E. Watson, commanding the 2d and 3d Platoons respectively. That evening the company commander held a briefing at his OP (observation post) which was attended by the sergeants and squad leaders of the two platoons selected for the raid.[4]

This command group carried out a second reconnaissance forward of the MLR on 31 December, proceeding until they ran into enemy sniper fire. Captain Ord requested aerial reconnaissance and three missions were flown by observation planes of Major Kenneth C. Smedley's VMO–6.

Line DUCK and the assigned battalion sector limited the objective area. On a basis of these restrictions as well as reconnaissance reports, Ord recommended an operational area containing three objectives, each of which represented a point where the enemy was not likely to be encountered. These objectives were approved by Lieutenant Colonel Pratt and formed the basis of the battalion order.

The task organization for the raid included two attached How Company units, the machine gun platoon (–), and 60mm mortar section, commanded by Second Lieutenants John D. Koutsandreas and James J. Hughes respectively. Another infantry unit, the 1st Platoon of Item Company, 3/1 (Second Lieutenant William E. Harper), was also attached.

First Lieutenant Francis E. White, How Company executive officer, remained at the OP with the tactical air-control party, which had an observation plane on strip alert in case the raiders ran into artillery or mortar fire. A forward air controller with radioman accompanied the raiding party as well as artillery, 4.2", and 81mm mortar forward observers. An interpreter, the assistant battalion surgeon, and a corpsman were included, and wiremen had the assignment of laying a line.

Hill 812 (Map 20) was the jumping-off place for the column of files in ghostly white snow suits with hoods. Boots were dark in contrast but the snow was deep enough to hide them. The drifts slowed up the wiremen and an infantry fire team protected them at their work.

The first objective consisted of bunkers and suspected mortar positions which had been reported by tactical air observers as recently occupied by the enemy. They were empty when the raiding party reached them, and the Marine column proceeded toward Objective 2, an ambush site overlooking and commanding a crossing of the Soyang-gang.

The selected area for the support group was located nearby, and there the machine gun section and riflemen took positions on a nose with the wiremen, radiomen, and corpsman in the center. While these elements peeled off, the raiding party continued toward the ambush site, where it was planned to lie in wait two hours for the enemy. A suspected mine field had to be crossed and Captain Ord directed his men to advance in single file, stepping carefully in the footprints ahead. Twelve Marines had passed safely when the 13th became the victim of a mine explosion. The corpsman found broken bones but none of the usual torn flesh and hemorrhaging, thanks to the new thermal boots issued during the winter of 1951–1952.[5]

The temperature was zero with a sharp wind blowing. Some of the Marines had to shed clothing to keep the casualty warm during the forced immobility, and the raiding party commander broke radio silence by requesting permission of Captain Ord, in the support group area, to pull back to that position and set up the

ambush.

Permission was granted by Ord after radio consultation with the battalion commander on the How Company OP. The raiding party remained in ambush formation on Objective 2 for two hours without seeing or hearing an enemy. By that time the condition of the mine casualty had deteriorated to such an extent that Lieutenant Colonel Pratt gave permission for a return to the MLR without proceeding to Objective 3.

He directed that the raiders split and take two routes in the hope of capturing a prisoner, since a light enemy probing attack on the MLR had just been reported by Item Company of 3/1. This proved to be a fortunate decision, for two NKPA soldiers were seized. The main object of the raid had thus been fulfilled, even though little action was seen during the five-hour operation.

Raids of this sort may seem anticlimactic when compared to the fights in the same area during the first three weeks of September. But the Marines were showing adaptability in conforming to a warfare of position that was contrary to all their offensive training. Careful reconnaissance, detailed planning, and minimal risks—these were the elements of defensive tactics in which large forces had to content themselves with small gains.

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Major General John T. Selden Assumes Command

On 11 January 1952 the 1st Marine Division had its second change of command in Korea when Major General John T. Selden relieved General Thomas. The new commanding general was born at Richmond, Virginia, and educated there at McGuire's University School. Before the United States entered World War I, he tried to join the Canadian Army but was warned that he would lose his American citizenship. In January 1915, at the age of 21, he enlisted as a private in the Marine Corps and saw two years of active duty on jungle patrols in Haiti. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1918, he served in ocean convoys during World War I.

Sea duty, China duty, and more Haiti duty occupied him during the postwar years. The outbreak of World War II found him a Scouting Force Marine Officer aboard the *Indianapolis.* After that he had three main assignments: personnel and intelligence officer of I Marine Amphibious Corps; commanding officer of the 5th Marines in the New Britain operation; and chief of staff of the 1st Marine Division at Peleliu.

Brigadier General William J. Whaling remained on duty as Assistant Division Commander. The new staff officers were Colonel Richard G. Weede, Chief of Staff; Colonel Walter N. Flournoy, G–1; Lieutenant Colonel James H. Tinsley, G–2; Lieutenant Colonel Gordon D. Gayle, G–3; and Colonel Custis Burton, Jr., G–4.

A change of FMFPac command had taken place on 1 January. Lieutenant General Franklin H. Hart relieved General Shepherd, who became Commandant of the Marine Corps as General Cates finished his four-year term. General Hart paid his first visit to the 1st Marine Division late in January.

The new FMFPac commander found the Marines occupying essentially the same positions they had defended since late September. About two-thirds of the 12¼-mile MLR on Line MINNESOTA (Map 20) was good defensive ground. It had been strengthened by an elaborate system of trenches and bunkers behind miles of barbed wire.[6]

In the left-central portion of the Marine sector, the enemy held the dominating terrain. This was particularly true of the rugged area just west of Hill 812, where the opposing trenches were only 50 to 150 yards apart. There a fire-raked landmark, known to the Marines as Luke the Gook's Castle, had been made into a strong point by the enemy. Its base was a maze of trenches and bunkers, and the 20-foot granite knob could have been taken only at an excessive cost in casualties. Although this bastion was hit repeatedly by almost every type of supporting ordnance, it was never completely destroyed nor denied to the enemy.

Operations of trench warfare had inevitably shaken down into a daily routine of sniping by day and patrols or raids by night. Marine artillery, mortars, and stationary tank fire, occasionally reinforced by naval guns, played an increasingly important part in the coordinated destruction of NKPA defenses. As a result the enemy was limited for the most part to well camouflaged reverse slope positions.

Because of the 1st Marine Division's defensive mission and the constant rotation of the more experienced personnel back to the United States, it was considered that men assigned to infantry elements, in particular, needed additional training in small unit leadership and offensive tactics. Consequently the regiments were rotated at monthly intervals to the reserve area near Wontong-ni, where Camp Tripoli had been established for training. An average of 84 NCOs a week completed a 168-hour special course of instruction over a four-week period. The program for the rank and file was so intensive, according to one report, that "it was considered a relief by some Marines to cease training and return to the relatively quiet life on the front lines."[7]

The truce talks at Panmunjom continued to influence operations at the front. A demilitarized zone having been proposed in anticipation of an armistice, preparations were begun by the 1st Marine Division to develop the defenses along Line ICELAND, generally conforming to the Line KANSAS of Marine fights early in September.

It was to be used as a new line of defense if the UN and Communist delegates reached an agreement.

Perhaps because other offensive tactics were so curtailed, psychological warfare had its heyday in the winter months of 1952. Propaganda leaflets were dropped from planes or fired by 105mm howitzers. At vantage points along the front, loud speakers bombarded the Communists with surrender appeals in their own language. The effects could not be evaluated with any degree of certainty, but it was hoped that the enemy did not respond with the amused indifference shown by the Marines toward Red propaganda.

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Chapter 11. Winter Operations in East Korea
Boot, Combat, Rubber, Insulated

The average low temperature for January 1952, was 11 degrees Fahrenheit. This was mild weather as compared to the subzero readings of the previous winter. Only 10 slight frostbite cases were reported for the month in contrast to the 3,083 nonbattle casualties, nearly all frostbite cases, incurred during the two weeks (27 November to 10 December 1950) of the Chosin Reservoir breakout.

The improvement in January 1952 could not be credited entirely to more clement weather. It was due in greater measure to one of the most noteworthy innovations of the Korean war—the insulated rubber combat boot, which proved much superior to the shoe pac of the past winter.

U.S. Army experiments dated back to 1944. They were dropped three years later after efforts to perfect a boot with sealed insulation failed to meet the test of long marches. The Navy had more promising results with the boot during the winter of 1948–1949 when Arctic clothing tests were conducted at Point Barrow, Alaska. Army and Navy tests at Mt. Washington, New Hampshire, the following winter were inconclusive. Marine Corps tests were held during the first four months of 1951 at the following places: MCEB, Quantico; Fort Churchill, Manitoba; Big Delta, Alaska; Pickel Meadows, California; and the Naval Medical Field Research Laboratory (NMFRL), Camp Lejeune.

"In addition to engineering tests," states the Marine report, "the insulated rubber boots have been worn by test subjects selected from a variety of backgrounds; under conditions of activity varying from strenuous marching for 20 miles to complete immobility; in ambient temperatures from 58° to–42° F.; over terrain ranging from soft snow [to] hard snow, ice, sand, rocky ground, mud, gravel, water, and iced river banks; for periods of time corresponding to a normal working day and more than 72 hours. As now constructed, the insulated rubber boot, employing the vapor barrier principle, meets the requirements outlined previously and is satisfactory for use by Marine Corps ground troops in cold climate areas, supplanting the shoe-pac combination. . . ."[8]

The distinguishing feature of the "thermal boot," as it came to be popularly known, is an air space between the inner and outer layers of wool pile insulation, both of which are completely sealed off by latex from any contact with moisture. This air space, under pressure, produces a vapor barrier such that heat cannot readily escape when it is emitted from the foot. Thus the wearer of the boot supplies his own warmth, which is retained as long as he is active, regardless of prevailing temperatures. If, however, the walls of the air space are punctured and the insulation becomes wet, the moisture collected within the boot freezes at low temperatures if the wearer remains inactive. In such cases, severe frostbite may result.

Some of the tests were spectacular. One subject poured water containing pieces of ice into his boots and donned frozen socks before putting on the footgear. After 10 minutes of walking, the ice in the boots had turned to warm water, and there was no harmful effect on the man.

Another subject waded across a knee-deep creek at a temperature of zero. Before he had marched a mile in the snow, his feet had warmed the water in the boots, although his pants were frozen so stiff that he could scarcely walk.

Seldom has a military innovation been tested so thoroughly and scientifically in such a short time. Colonels Ion M. Bethel and John F. Stamm of Marine Corps Headquarters took a leading part in the development and procurement phases along with Lieutenant Colonel Gordon A. Hardwick. Major Vernon D. Boyd and Captain David R. McGrew, Jr. were active in the troop acceptance tests.

A good many "bugs" had to be eliminated before the boot met with complete Marine approval. The

manufacturer's modifications were effected with minimal delay.

It is perhaps needless to add that the thermal boot was not fool-proof. Protection continued in subzero weather for at least an hour after the termination of activity, but it was inviting frostbite to remain motionless much longer. Socks had to be changed every 12 hours, and foot cleanliness and hygiene could not be neglected.

If a few such simple rules were observed, a man had virtually perfect frostbite protection in the coldest weather. In fact, it was seriously proposed that a Marine casualty of this sort should be charged with misconduct if he acquired his frostbite while provided with thermal boots and a change of socks.

In view of the tests and negotiations with the manufacturers, it was a marvel of promptness when the first shipment of boots reached the 1st Marine Division in August 1951, long before the advent of cold weather.

Distribution to the Division was completed by 15 November. Throughout the winter the experience of all units concerned was reported to Division headquarters. And in a memorandum of 26 August 1952 to the Commandant, General Selden expressed his approval: "The boot, rubber, insulated, is considered an excellent item of cold weather equipment. It is far superior to the shoe pac."

The acceptance by the rank and file went so far that the "Mickey Mouse boot," as it was sometimes dubbed, acquired a reputation for protecting the wearer against antipersonnel mines. Some wounds apparently were reduced in severity by this protection, but it could not be claimed that the boot qualified as armor.

Production by the manufacturer kept pace with Division and Air Wing requirements in Korea. By 14 December 1951 about 90,000 pairs of boots and 2,000 patching kits had been received at San Francisco—more than enough to take care of the 6,500 pairs needed monthly for resupply under combat conditions.

The thermal boot was here to stay.

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Chapter 11. Winter Operations in East Korea
500 Armored Vests Flown to Korea

Marine body armor was just then about to meet its first large-scale test in the field. It had cleared its preliminary hurdle during the tests from 14 June to 13 October 1951 (see Chapter VIII) when a joint Army-Navy Medical Commission endorsed 40 vests worn in action by troops of the 5th Marines and two Army infantry regiments.

On 9 November, at Marine Corps Headquarters, Marine officers were briefed on the successful results in Korea by the two Navy officers who helped supervise the tests, Commander John S. Cowan (MC) USN, and Lieutenant Commander Frederick J. Lewis (MSC) USN.

That same day the commanding general of FMFPac stated an operational requirement for 500 armored vests to be sent to the 1st Marine Division. And on 16 November the Commandant approved the standardization and procurement of vests to be designed by the Naval Medical Field Research Laboratory at Camp Lejeune and air-shipped to Korea not later than 31 January 1952.[9]

So many problems remained to be solved that it was nip and tuck whether Lieutenant Commander Lewis and his NMFRL colleagues would make the deadline. On 11 December 1951 another body armor meeting was held at Marine Corps Headquarters, attended by Marine representatives. Lieutenant Commander Lewis and Mr. John F. Quinlan, reporting for the NMFRL, explained that as a consequence of changes in design to speed up manufacture, samples submitted to them weighed as much as 10 pounds.

Under no circumstances, said Lewis, would he approve a vest weighing more than eight pounds, since its success depended so much on troop acceptance. Despite the fact that only a few weeks remained before the deadline, Lewis exhibited a vest that he and Quinlan had redesigned by working around the clock until the armor came within the weight limit without any sacrifice in protection. This vest was immediately put into production as the M–1951.

A plastic fibre manufacturer agreed to supply 70,000 Doron plates, and a Philadelphia sportswear company contracted to manufacture the first 500 vests, plus an additional 2,500 to be delivered by 30 March 1952. The M–1951 was described in Marine reports as “a zippered, vest-type, sleeveless jacket constructed of water-resistant nylon incorporating two types of armor. One, a flexible pad of basket-weave nylon, covers the upper chest and shoulder girdle; the other, overlapping curved Doron plates, covers the lower chest, back and abdomen. These Doron plates consist of several layers of fibre glass cloth, bonded or laminated together with a resin. . . . Although the ballistic properties of the flexible pads of basket-weave nylon and the Doron plates are virtually the same, by using the rigid plates where flexibility is not mandatory the problem of protrusion and the resultant wounds under the armor is reduced.”[10]

Marine wearers of the M–1951 were warned that it would not stop rifle or machine gun bullets unless they had lost much of their velocity at long ranges. The vest was protection against most grenade, mortar, and artillery fragments, as well as .45 caliber pistol and burp gun slugs of less than 1,000 feet per second initial muzzle velocity. Wearers did not escape entirely unscathed, for the impact of the fragment or slug left painful bruises.

It was a close squeak but the first 500 vests reached Korea with only a few days to spare. Captain David R. McGrew, Jr. accompanied the shipment as project officer with a mission of supervising and observing the use made of the M–1951 in action. His first letter to Headquarters Marine Corps, dated 4 February 1952, commented that “up to tonight we have had nine men hit while wearing the vest. One was killed outright as a 120mm mortar

round landed right in his lap. However, the other eight showed excellent results. All of the eight were wounded in other places not covered by the vest—but they are all WIA instead of KIA."[11]

Captain McGrew cited the instance of a Pfc of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, wounded by the explosion of an 82mm mortar shell only 15 feet in front of him. He received several fragments in the face and his leg was fractured. But there were some 45 holes in his vest, without any penetrations. Fifteen of the fragments had been large enough to inflict mortal chest or abdomen wounds.

The 500 vests were issued only to troops in particularly hazardous situations, such as patrols to the enemy lines. Upon returning from a patrol or raid, the wearers turned in their armor to be worn by other Marines under fire.

"The reaction of the user to the vest," reported McGrew, "is closely related to the amount of enemy activity. In sectors of the OPLR and MLR [outpost and main lines of resistance] where heavy incoming mortar and artillery fire was received, there were no complaints regarding the weight or restrictive features of the vest. In other sectors where there was little or no enemy activity, approximately 15 percent of the personnel complained that the vest was heavy and restricted movement to some degree. Approximately 2 percent of the wearers in these sectors thought the vest was not worth the trouble and would wear it only when ordered to do so."[12]

The project officer believed that a "significant reduction" in KIA casualties could be credited to the M–1951, but that WIA figures were only slightly lessened. That was because so many wearers were wounded who would have been killed save for the armor. Captain McGrew listed the following case histories, confirmed by medical officers:

Men who would have been killed instead of wounded if they had lacked armor protection—23:

Men who had potentially severe wounds reduced to superficial wounds—29;

Men who had superficial wounds prevented altogether—31.

The project officer had no opportunity to compare the casualties of vest wearers with those of an equal number of unprotected Marines taking part in the same action. It was his conclusion, based on observation, that "use of the vest by all personnel who are habitually forward of battalion command posts may result in as much as a 30 percent reduction in battle casualties. Because many WIA cases are the result of wounds of the extremities and/or multiple wounds, there probably will not be a large reduction of casualties in this category. It is believed that the largest reduction will occur in the KIA category and that this reduction will be substantial."[13]

The introduction of body armor was not heralded in the press by page one headlines such as had announced the first transport helicopter operations in Korea. Occasionally a photograph on page eight showed a Marine grinning triumphantly while pointing to a hole in his armored vest and holding aloft the jagged mortar fragment that might otherwise have killed him. But it is safe to say that a majority of Stateside newspaper readers and radio listeners in 1951 were unaware of the Marine revival of armor adapted to 20th-century warfare.

Press correspondents in Korea did not appear to grasp the tactical significance of an innovation which they regarded entirely as a humanitarian achievement. From a strictly military viewpoint, however, it was apparent that if the M–1951 could reduce casualties by 30 percent, as Captain McGrew estimated (and his estimate was later regarded as conservative), it would mean that a like reduction had been effected in the destructive potential of the enemy's best anti-personnel weapons. It was as if the Marines were able to slip behind the enemy's lines and silence 3 out of 10 of his howitzers, mortars, burp guns, and grenades.

This was of particular importance in overcoming the numerical superiority of the Communists. Not only did each American wound casualty reduce the effectiveness of a unit, but four or more comrades were often neutralized as stretcher bearers in Korean mountain terrain. If body armor could prevent 3 casualties out of 10, therefore, it would be a significant addition to a unit's numerical strength as well as combat morale.

Any doubts about Marine troop acceptance of the M–1951 were laid to rest by the approval of the 500 vests issued early in February 1952. An additional 2,500 arrived early in March and on the 13th of that month the

Division ordered 25,000 more. The armored vest, like the thermal boot, had needed only a thorough trial to become standard equipment.

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Chapter 11. Winter Operations in East Korea
Helicopter Operations MULETRAIN and CHANGIE-CHANGIE

The combat helicopter, oldest of the three Marine tactical innovations in Korea, had already managed to make routine performances out of operations that once claimed headlines. Battalion troop lifts were no longer a novelty, and supplying a front-line company by air was taken for granted. But nothing quite as ambitious as Operation MULETRAIN had ever been attempted—the mission of completely supplying a battalion on the MLR for a week with a daily average of four helicopters.

Hill 884 was again the objective. Colonel Keith B. McCutcheon's HMR-161 was given the task of flying tentage, stoves, rations, and ammunition from supply dumps to the 1st Battalion of the 1st Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John E. Gorman.

It was the first opportunity for HMR–161 to try out improvements in helicopter "flying crane" techniques credited to Major Charles E. Cornwell. He had adapted the underslung nets, controlled manually from the cabin, which did a better job than the pallet, or portable platform, for many types of cargo.

An average altitude of 2,300 feet for the five landing places made it necessary to reduce the payload to 850 pounds. Yet HMR–161 handled the assignment during the first week of 1952 with about one-third of its aircraft while the remainder went about routine chores. So well did four helicopters keep ahead of schedule that sometimes they flew in more cargo than could be immediately unloaded at the objectives. Following are the statistics of the seven days:

Pounds lifted, 150,730; Hours of flight time, 91.7; Loads lifted, 219; Average of miles flown, 9.6

Three days later, Operation CHANGIE-CHANGIE began on 10 January 1952. Like Operation BUMBLEBEE three months earlier, this was a battalion relief lift. Yet it differed from its predecessors in that troops were to be flown from Field X–83 to sites on the company instead of battalion level, the former being only 200 yards behind the front line.[14]

In December the loading zone and landing site duties formerly assigned to a platoon of the 1st Shore Party Battalion, were taken over by the 1st Air Delivery Platoon, Service Command, FMFPac. First Lieutenant William A. Reavis and 35 enlisted men had a mission "to prepare and deliver supplies by air, whether by parachute, air freight, or helicopter." These specialists were in charge during Operation CHANGIE-CHANGIE when the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel Edward G. Kurdziel) relieved Lieutenant Colonel Norton's 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. The operation was conducted smoothly by helicopters flying in defilade throughout the approach, landing, and return phases.

Operation MOUSETRAP, from 14 to 17 January, was planned primarily as a test of the ability of HMR–161 to launch an antiguerrilla attack on short notice. Colonel McCutcheon and Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell were alerted at 0100 in regard to a two-company lift scheduled for 1000 that same morning. With "only minor difficulties" they transported 500 Marines to a landing site cleared by the Air Delivery Platoon. Three similar troop movements were completed by HMR–161 during the next three days.

If ever a bronze plaque is awarded in commemoration of the first history-making helicopter troop and supply lifts, it would be fitting to install it on Hill 884. That bleak and roadless height had its fifth large-scale operation on 24 February when Lieutenant Colonel Harold C. Howard's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, relieved the 2d Battalion, of that same regiment on "Mount Helicopter." Operation ROTATE was completed without incident as further evidence that battalion reliefs by helicopter were now routine.

In spite of the demands made upon HMR–161 helicopters in cold weather and mountainous terrain, it is

noteworthy that no serious mechanical defects had developed. This six-month record came to an end on 24 February 1952 when Captain John R. Irwin was returning from Seoul to X–83. Warned by alarming vibrations, he landed to discover that the broken remnants of the tail assembly had dropped behind him in the snow.

Four days later, while flying a load of logs for bunkers, Captain Calvin G. Alston's aircraft was so shaken by vibrations that he suspected damage from enemy artillery fragments. He made a forced landing in the snow only to discover another instance of a tail assembly breakdown.

Colonel McCutcheon grounded all HMR-161 aircraft until the trouble could be corrected. Not until 14 March, after 16 modified tail assemblies had been flown to Korea did the Marine transport helicopter squadron take to the air again.

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Chapter 11. Winter Operations in East Korea
The Five Days of Operation CLAM-UP

Ground operations continued with little change during February and the first two weeks of March. The only departure from the well-worn tactical norm came on 10 February, when EUSAK put Operation CLAM-UP into effect across the entire UN front.

The purpose was to feign a withdrawal and lure the enemy into sending out patrols which would yield prisoners to Eighth Army units. A EUSAK letter of instruction, dated 4 February 1952, asserted that "a policy of aggressive patrolling has led the enemy to rely upon our patrols for the maintenance of contact. This situation enables him to maintain contact without subjecting his troops to the hazard of capture or casualty."[15]

All corps were directed to ". . . attempt to decoy the enemy into dispatching patrols against our lines and ambush and capture such patrols."

First Marine Division orders called for an elaborate series of deceptions. Immediately prior to CLAM-UP, on 9–10 February, the 11th Marines fired 471 harrassing and interdiction missions, as if to cover a large-scale withdrawal. Over 12,000 artillery rounds were expended.[16] Then CLAM-UP commenced, and the three regiments on the MLR—from left to right, the KMCs, 1st Marines, and 7th Marines—did their part to hoodwink the enemy. Reserve battalions executed daylight marches on foot to the rear and returned after dark by means of motor lifts. The 5th Marines, in Division reserve at Camp Tripoli, executed similar feigned withdrawals.

After the Marine cannoneers completed their supposed covering fires, the front was plunged into an eerie silence. It did not take long, of course, for the enemy's curiosity to be aroused. NKPA patrols reconnoitred the Marine lines on the night of 10-11 February without being fired upon. The following night a patrol attempted to draw Marine fire in the Hill 812 area by advertising its presence with loud talk. The enemy's fire was not returned until the patrol attacked a Marine position with white phosphorous grenades. In sheer self-defense the Marines retaliated, and the North Koreans made a hurried exit, leaving behind 10 dead and 2 wounded men who became prisoners.

At first light on the 12th another enemy patrol tried to penetrate the wire in front of a 1st Marines position and paid the penalty with nine men killed and three wounded in a 15-minute fire fight.

On 13 February the Marines were pounded with the month's heaviest concentration of NKPA fire—344 artillery and 1,469 mortar rounds. Thus did the enemy serve notice of his realization that Marine positions on the MLR were being held in strength. NKPA patrol actions on the nights of the 13th and 14th were launched at Marine trenches on Hills 812 and 854 at the estimated cost of heavy casualties.

When Operation CLAM-UP came to an end on 15 February, it had admittedly fallen short of EUSAK expectations. Although NKPA patrol losses had been considerable, they were offset by fewer casualties in rear areas enjoying a five-day immunity from UN artillery fire. Worse yet, the enemy was enabled during this period of grace to bring up ammunition and other supplies without interference. As a final disillusionment, it was reckoned that across the whole Eighth Army front the Communists had lost fewer prisoners than during the preceding five-day period.

In the Marine combat zone a gain was recorded in enemy casualties. General Selden congratulated the Division on "the fire discipline practiced by MLR troops and by platoon and company commanders. As a consequence of the fire discipline, the line companies were able to kill 56 enemy and wound 54." These totals, it was pointed out, were larger than the losses normally inflicted on the enemy in a five-day period.[17]

On the other hand, five deserters from the mortar company of the 1st Battalion, 91st Regiment, 45th

NKPA Division revealed that advantage had been taken of Operation CLAM-UP by detailing mortar personnel and men from the rifle companies to carry ammunition. During the five-day lull, according to the prisoners, 2,600 rounds were brought up for the company's nine mortars.[18]

After the brief flurry of Operation CLAM-UP the front quickly settled down to its old routine of patrols. An average of eight Marine night ambush patrols and five daylight reconnaissance patrols forward of the MLR was maintained. The results left much to be desired. Of the last 110 ambuscades and 75 reconnaissance patrols reported in February, only 1 of the former and 6 of the latter claimed contacts. All but one of the contacts had negligible results.

The Marine fire attack did the enemy more damage. Artillery fired 679 observed missions during the month—211 on troops, 175 on bunkers, 121 on mortars, 96 on artillery, and 75 on such miscellaneous targets as OPs, vehicles, machine guns, and supply points. This total was recorded in spite of an ammunition shortage which would ultimately become the subject of debate in Congress.

Even with supplies of ammunition limited by X Corps orders, Marine artillery drove the enemy from untenable forward-slope positions to underground fortifications on the reverse slope.

Naval gunfire was limited by the extreme range to the Division zone of action.[19] Only large targets forward and to the right of center could be taken under fire. Even so, the *Wisconsin* and the *St. Paul* scored some devastating hits in February on enemy reverse slope positions.

On one occasion, the *Wisconsin* erroneously calculated its deflection. Two 16-inch rounds landed between the front line and the 3/7 mortar positions before the fire could be stopped. Fortunately, no one was injured. The *Wisconsin* Marine officer happened to be visiting the Division CP that day, and on hearing the news he came up to 3/7 and collected a large shell fragment. He stated that he intended to mount the jagged piece of steel in the ship's CIC room as a reminder to future gunners to make no errors in plot.

Observed direct fire by the 90mm rifles of the 1st Tank Battalion (Major Walter E. Reynolds, Jr.) continued to be effective against NKPA bunkers and gun emplacements. Utilizing the high ground along the MLR, particularly on Hills 812 and 854, tanks sniped at the enemy both by day and night.

This was made possible by the powerful lights of a platoon from the 92d U.S. Army Searchlight Company, attached to the 11th Marines. The mountainous terrain in East Korea was not particularly suited to "artificial moonlight"—the indirect illumination of a large area which results from "bouncing" the rays of searchlights off low-lying clouds. But direct illumination permitted aimed 90mm fire in the darkness and had the further advantage of blinding the enemy to the tanks themselves as well as to troop movements behind them. Not a single light was shot out during the winter in spite of persistent NKPA attempts.

The lessons taught by battlefield illumination in Korea were to be incorporated into two instructive bulletins after the war. "The enemy does *not* have any better night vision than we do," asserted USMC Landing Force Bulletin No. 6. "No racial or national group of people has any inherent physical advantage over another as to capability for seeing in darkness. . . .[20] The apparent advantage which the enemy sometimes displays in night operations is due only to a difference in training. In the case of the Oriental soldier, or the Eskimo, for example, training usually begins early in life, where he does not have the convenience of artificial light to the degree we have, and has been forced to make maximum use of his natural night vision in many of his normal activities.

"U.S. Forces have conducted many successful night operations after adequate training. Some units have reported that after intensive night training, personnel have become so proficient that they sometimes prefer night operations to daylight operations."

In support of this conclusion, records for the winter of 1951–1952 reveal that the Marines held their own very well in the night combats of no man's land, where the outcome depended upon immediate decisions based upon seeing in the dark.

Marine casualties for February, the last full month in East Korea, were 23 KIA, 102 WIA, and 1 MIA,

including the KMC Regiment. Enemy losses were reported as 174 counted and 381 estimated KIA, 606 estimated WIA, and 63 prisoners.[21]

After a winter of positional warfare, the Marines could recall with better understanding the tales their fathers had told them about France in World War I. For history was staging one of its repetitions; and, allowing for improvements in weapons, the trenches of Korea in 1951-1952 differed but slightly from the trenches of the Western Front in 1917-1918.

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Chapter 12. The Move to West Korea

NO CHRONICLE of activities in Korea would be complete without a discussion of the truce talks which began in the summer of 1951. When the Communists proposed these meetings early in June, their motives were transparent; they were hurt, staggering, and badly in need of a breathing spell. Pretending a sudden interest in peace, the hard-pressed enemy requested talks at Kaesong for the purposes of recuperation.

The enemy would never admit the real damage he suffered. A typical excuse for the smashing CCF defeat was given in a book by Wilford G. Burchett, an Australian Communist who was a press correspondent behind the Chinese lines.

"Immediately prior to the beginning of the talks," he explained, "the Korean-Chinese troops had withdrawn extensively along the East Coast, hoping to entice the Americans as deep as possible into a trap which would be sprung and would cut them off by an encircling move. The Americans were seriously nibbling at the bait when the proposal for cease-fire talks was made. The line was immediately frozen and Korean-Chinese troops started to dig in."[1]

This beginning of static warfare was unquestionably the great turning point of a war whose course from that time on was to be decided at the conference table of Kaesong and later Panmunjom. Any doubts as to the actual motives of the Communists might have been dispelled upon reading in Burchett's book this naive boast of the advantage taken of the truce talks by the Reds:

"Digging in is an understatement of the way the Korean-Chinese troops literally burrowed into the mountains, constructed two and three story dwellings underground, linked mountains and hills by underground tunnels and carved deep communication trenches linking flank with flank and front with rear. They raked the insides out of mountains as you would rake ashes out of a furnace. Each hill, mountain or ridge was connected with its neighbors by deep, zig-zagged inter-communication trenches, at least two yards below ground level and with yard-high antiblast walls. In emergency, troops could be switched from hill-top to hill-top with the enemy never knowing. Similar trenches extended well to the rear, so that supplies could be brought up and withdrawals if necessary made in comparative safety. . . . Everything was deep underground with many yards of rock and earth between them and shells and bombs, atomic or otherwise. Back of the front line positions, similar scooped-out mountain ridges stretched all the way back to Pyongyang and further. It was against these positions that Van Fleet began hurling his troops in August, 1951."[2]

The breathing spell provided by preliminary truce talk discussions gave the Communists an opportunity they had not previously enjoyed. Not only did they have time to prepare sturdy and effective entrenchments, but they were able to bring up additional mortars and artillery to equal those of the Allied forces. As a further advantage, while "free from the compulsion of impending military disaster,"[3] they made use of the interlude to reorganize and train NKPA divisions to a new and increased level of effectiveness.

Communists are never embarrassed in the least to deny an agreement already reached, and once having accomplished their intermediate goal, the Red delegates broke off the Kaesong talks for a while. Once the pressure on them was reduced, the enemy was in a position to try to obtain the most favorable terms for armistice talks, even if it meant prolonging the fighting.

The change in tactics soon became apparent. "Since the opening of the Kaesong conference," commented a FECom G–2 report, "the enemy has deviated from his usual tactics of 'flexible defense' which he so skilfully employed during the buildup period prior to all his past offensives—to that of a more orthodox 'fixed defense.' Where the enemy in the past has defended key terrain features with relatively small groups to delay friendly

forces, he has now changed over to tactics of a fixed line of defense to be defended at all costs."[4]

"The most extended delay imposed upon the Korean Armistice Conference by the Communists was in connection with the exchange of prisoners of war,"[5] which subject will be discussed in Volume V of this series. The United Nations contended that all prisoners should be "screened" to determine whether they wished to return to their side of origin. No prisoner was to be returned against his wishes. The Communists claimed this treatment consisted of a reign of terror in which CCF prisoners were held at gunpoint.

Some prisoners held in UN camps rioted and injuries and deaths resulted. This provided the Communists with excellent propaganda on which to denounce our principles of no forced repatriation.[6] In the end, after a delay of more than 14 months of war, the Communists finally did accept this principle, and an armistice was achieved.

The Communist delaying tactics were not entirely without benefits to the Allied forces, for the major part of the 1st Marine Division had the opportunity to go into reserve and engage in several weeks' intensive training. While the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing was busily participating in the interdiction activities of Operation STRANGLE, General Van Fleet and his ground commanders felt frustrated over their orders to "sit tight" rather than attack and prevent further enemy buildup.

An agreement to resume cease-fire talks, this time at Panmunjom, led to a EUSAK order which committed the 1st Marine Division and other major units to a defensive stand behind a fixed line of demarcation on 20 September 1951 (Map 19). Further negotiations resulted in a month's lull which was brought about by the fact that the delegates could not agree on where the lines would remain if the fighting stopped. The United States delegates pressed for a settlement within a 30-day period. The Communists continued to stall. The United States then consented to accept the present (then current) demarcation line if the Communists agreed within the 30-day period.[7]

The significance of these dates was to become more and more plain as the conflict dragged on into 1952 with both sides on the defensive, limiting themselves to the raids and patrols of positional warfare while the appointed representatives haggled for a truce. Although the Marines did not realize it, the war had already turned into a contest of watchful waiting and fierce local fights.

This line of demarcation left the Eighth Army holding a MLR across one of the narrowest parts of the peninsula (Map 22). Just behind the Communist MLR the peninsula bulged to the west. This meant that the enemy had to devote much of his effort to mining the waters and defense of many beaches against a surprise amphibious attack, and it necessitated keeping in operation long and vulnerable supply lines.

It is probable that a UN breakthrough or successful amphibious operation could have been mounted at this time,[8] for several high ranking officers expressed such opinions. All the necessary ingredients were available, yet the high level decision for such an operation was not made.

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Chapter 12. The Move to West Korea
Tactical Innovations

Until World War II, it had been a deserved reproach throughout the brief history of our country that Americans were never prepared at the outset of a war. A welcome departure from this tenet came in 1942 when the Marine Corps and Navy introduced the new amphibious tactics they had developed during the 1930s. Victory in the Pacific War was due in large measure to the techniques, landing craft, and vehicles of the Navy-Marine Corps ship-to-shore attack.

As a result, North Africa, Europe, and the Japanese-occupied islands of the Pacific were opened to invasion without a single major reverse. In contrast, Hitler's *Wehrmacht* lacked both the techniques and equipment to launch a cross-channel attack on England in 1940, and Operation SEA LION was of necessity abandoned by an army that dominated the rest of Europe as a result of victories in land warfare.

Again, in Korea, the Marines demonstrated their foresightedness by taking a prominent part in the development of such important innovations as combat helicopters, body armor, and thermal footwear.[9] By the first month in 1952 the combat helicopter had proved to be of immeasurable assistance in modern warfare. In the beginning of the Korean War the "chopper" was initially used for command and liaison flights and reconnaissance missions. Evacuation of casualties and rescue missions also became routine duties, and within a short time the helicopter became the favorite "workhorse" for a variety of tasks. In September of 1951 tactical troop movements began. These operations made newspaper headlines everywhere.

Of greater tactical importance, at least in the opinion of the frontline rifleman, was the physical protection provided him. The armored vest and the new thermal boots were first tested by Marines late in 1951 and soon came to be highly desired items of equipment.

The fighting men in Korea would not disagree with Benjamin Franklin's statement that "there never was a good war," but modern inventions certainly improved conditions by providing for the safety and comfort of the fighting men. Marine transport helicopters and body armor were of particular importance because they added to the human resources of UN forces opposed by an enemy with a contempt for life, based on seemingly endless reserves of manpower. UN commanders in their fight against the Communist forces could not recklessly expend lives as did the enemy; therefore, the Allies had need of tactical innovations and life-saving devices in order to compensate for a lack of numbers.

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Chapter 12. The Move to West Korea
The Marines in Operation MIXMASTER

In the spring of 1952, when the UN and Communist forces were facing each other from static positions and fighting local engagements, Operation MIXMASTER took place. MIXMASTER was a complicated rearrangement of UN divisions across the entire Korean front during March, and involved the shuffling of about 200,000 men and their equipment over distances from 25 to 180 miles. It was a severe test of Eighth Army mobility.[10]

General Van Fleet visited the 1st Marine Division CP on 12 March 1952, and announced an important command decision. After six months of defensive warfare in the same sector along Line MINNESOTA (20 September 1951 to 16 March 1952) the Division was to move across the peninsula to West Korea.
Click here to view map

The Marines had orders to relieve the 1st ROK Division and take over a sector at the extreme left of the Eighth Army line under the operational control of I Corps (Map 22). There they would have the responsibility for blocking Korea's historic invasion route to Seoul. The reasons behind this EUSAK decision were summarized in the 1st Marine Division report as follows:

"(1) The abandonment of plans to carry out an amphibious envelopment somewhere on the east coast;

"(2) Concern over weaknesses in the Kimpo area defenses;

"(3) The overall situation would not permit loss of ground on the EUSAK left (South Korea) as this would endanger the capital at Seoul; that if retraction of lines was necessary, territory could better be sacrificed on the right (North Korea) where the country was mountainous and had little economic or strategic value."[11]

Up to this time the four corps of the Eighth Army had defended a 125-mile front across the peninsula (Map 22) with the following units in line from left to right on 15 March 1952.

I CORPS—ROK 1st Division; British Commonwealth Division; U.S. 3d Infantry Division (–); U.S. 45th Infantry Division (Oklahoma National Guard); ROK 9th Division. In reserve were the ROK 8th Division and RCT–65 of the U.S. 3d Infantry Division.

IX CORPS—U.S. 2d Infantry Division; ROK 2d Division; U.S. 40th Infantry Division (California National Guard); ROK 3d Division. In reserve were the U.S. 7th Infantry Division (–), RCT–17 of that Division, and the ROK Capitol Division.

X CORPS—ROK 7th Division; U.S. 25th Infantry Division; U.S. 1st Marine Division (including 1st KMC Regiment). In reserve was the ROK 6th Division (–).

I ROK CORPS—ROK 5th Division (–). In reserve was the ROK 11th Division (–).[12]

Allowing for a few changes, these were the positions held by major EUSAK units through the winter of 1951–1952.

The Marine move was launched by Division Operation Plan 2–52 and provided that the 1st Marine Division would be relieved by the 8th ROK Division as a preliminary to movement overland and by sea to the relief of the 1st ROK Division and defense of Line JAMESTOWN in the I Corps sector in the west. According to verbal orders later confirmed by EUSAK OI 272, transportation by truck and ship was specified, and the move was to be completed prior to 1 April.[13]

Obviously such a transplacement—moving entire divisions great distances from one sector of the MLR to another—necessitated careful timing and close coordination, but the planners involved were equal to the task. In referring to detailed plans by the Division G–3 Section (Lieutenant Colonel Gordon D. Gayle) and the G–4

Section (Colonel Robert A. McGill), several unit commanders expressed the opinion that "the move from east to west was a masterpiece of logistical efficiency with no unnecessary paper work and no undue harrassment."[14]

In addition to transporting the Division, the arrival of replacements and departure of personnel to be rotated to the United States were smoothly coordinated into the over-all plan. The transport *General W. H. Gordon* anchored at Sokcho-ri on 16 March with 174 officers and 1,135 enlisted men of the 18th Replacement Draft. The newly arrived Marines scarcely had time to drop their seabags before they joined the motor march to West Korea. The *Gordon* departed with 103 officers and 1,135 Marines homeward bound, and the 2d Logistical Command (Army) received a 1st Marine Division request to route the 19th Replacement Draft, due in April, to Inchon instead of Sokcho-ri.

At K-50, near Sokcho-ri on the east coast, air freight and passenger service was discontinued and diverted to the new Division airhead, K-16, at Seoul. The Division railhead was changed to Munsan-ni (Map 22).

The first Marine unit to depart for West Korea was the KMC Regiment with its organic battalion of artillery. Since the artillery had to be moved and repositioned all across the front with as little interruption as possible in overall support available at any one time, the 11th Marines CO planned to move his battalions directly into their new firing positions. This was preceded by an initial detailed reconnaissance.

Elements of the U.S. 25th Infantry sideslipped to the right and assumed responsibility for the Marine sector on the 17th (Map 22), and the KMCs and the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines moved into their new positions on 18 March. The other artillery battalions followed at two-day intervals, all battalions firing from their new positions by 24 March.

The movement of the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion (less Company A), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John T. O'Neill, was an unforgettable experience. Embarking on LSTs manned by a skeleton Japanese crew, the vessels headed for the Kimpo Peninsula. The weather was squally and foggy throughout, and the ships were completely blacked out at night with no facilities for emergency transmission of messages. There were many navigational hazards, but in spite of this, and the lack of adequate navigational equipment, the LSTs arrived at their destination without incident.

Two days later, on 20 September, the 1st Tank Battalion and the antitank companies of the three infantry regiments also took the sea route to the new Division area in the west.

Division Operation Order 8–52, dated 18 March, directed the 1st Marines to proceed by motor march from the Division reserve area at Camp TRIPOLI to the new Division area east of Munsan-ni, and there to move into front line positions. The 7th Marines, after being relieved on the 20th by elements of the 8th ROK Division, assembled at Camp TRIPOLI and moved by truck to West Korea. Colonel Austin R. Brunelli, who had replaced Colonel Custis Burton, Jr., as chief of staff, moved the forward CP personnel and prepared the new Division command post.

After being relieved by the ROKs on the 23d, the 5th Marines departed their east coast area. Two days later the regiment arrived in the Munsan-ni area behind the 7th Marines and the remaining elements of the artillery regiment.

The 5th Marines had originally been scheduled to occupy reserve positions on the Kimpo Peninsula, but plans were changed en route. The commanding general and his G–3 were appalled at the Division sector's width, and after General Selden had a chance to inspect the areas to be defended and talk over the situation with the commanders of the 1st and 7th Marines (Col Sidney S. Wade and Col Russell E. Honsowetz), he decided that the 5th Marines should go into the line.[15]

A few hours after the 5th Marines convoy left the east coast on their 140-mile trans-Korea move, helicopters picked up the regimental and battalion commanders from their respective vehicles in the convoy and took them to the new Division CP. There they were assigned new defensive sectors and immediately reconnoitered the ground while awaiting the arrival of their units. By the time the regiment arrived, all

preparations were made for them to move into positions and relieve a portion of the thinly stretched line of the 1st Marines.

It had been a busy week for the 1st and 7th Motor Transport Battalions, commanded respectively by Lieutenant Colonel Howard E. Wertman and Major Herbert E. Pierce. Two hundred Division trucks and a like number of U.S. Army vehicles made up the long columns that shuttled back and forth across the peninsula. The plan provided for moving an infantry regiment every third day. For the drivers this meant a 140-mile trip, a return trip the following day, and a one-day layover for maintenance before commencing the new cycle. The artillery battalions, by order of X Corps, were retained until the latest possible date.

The statistics of Operation MIXMASTER are impressive. It took 5,716 truck loads and 80 DUKW loads to move most of the Division personnel, gear, and supplies. Sixty-three lowboys (flat-bed trailers) and 83 railroad cars were also utilized in addition to hundreds of jeeps and jeep trailers. Three LSDs and 11 LSTs sailed from Sokcho-ri to Inchon with the heaviest equipment.

During the previous winter a sizable number of prefabricated shelters had been set up for supporting and headquarters units. Since timber, logs, and salvage materials were in short supply, the 1st Marine Division moved large quantites of these materials to the west coast in order to live as comfortably as possible under static warfare conditions.

The operations of the 1st Marine Division in defense of the western sector of Line JAMESTOWN do not come within the scope of Volume IV. The account of Marine activities in the new sector, under the operational control of I Corps, will be discussed in the fifth and final volume of this series.

The East-Central Front

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Chapter 12. The Move to West Korea
Operations of Fifteen Months in Retrospect

During 1951 the Korean War became a most unpopular military venture among Americans. As a consequence, letters and newspapers from home caused a certain amount of anxiety among citizen-soldiers in Korea. To counter any spirit of doubt which may have arisen, military leaders issued frank and honest replies to inquiring politicians.

The *esprit de corps* of Marines was high, and they were well aware of their purpose in Korea. One noted author, on spending a couple of days among front-line Marines during January of 1952, told a group of officers at the Division CP that he "was impressed with the morale of the Marines on the MLR." He stated that he "had been prepared to find that they didn't know what they were fighting for or why they were there." However, he was encouraged to find that they knew exactly their purpose in the Korean fighting.[16]

The period of nearly 15 months covered by Volume IV was at that time the longest stretch of land warfare ever experienced by a major Marine unit. Even during the numerous island-hopping campaigns of World War II, the periods of combat were relatively brief for each.

Glancing back over the year 1951 with the benefit of hindsight, it is evident that Marine "uncommon valor" during this period was supplemented by such outstanding innovations as helicopter-borne assaults and lightweight body armor, concepts brought to fruition by the pressure of combat.

It is also apparent that Marine training, both for officers and enlisted men, paid off handsomely under the demands of practically every type of land warfare. The Division chalked up a commendable record of service fighting on the east-central front. Since the UN commander desired to have EUSAK'S only amphibious trained and equipped division near a coast offering a suitable selection of landing beaches, the Division was originally positioned in the east. Not since the Inchon landing, however, had the Marines been employed in their specialty, amphibious assault.

Subsequent to the unprecedented Chosin Reservoir campaign of late 1950 the Division reorganized and refitted in South Korea near Masan. Then in January and February of 1951 came the prolonged guerrilla-hunting campaign (Map 5) some 60 air miles north of Masan. Division operations in this area covered more than 1,000 square miles.[17]

The mountainous terrain offered cover and concealment for the clandestine operations of far too many enemy groups. A solution to this problem was found in "rice paddy patrols"—groups ranging from a fire team to a squad in size which penetrated the mountain areas on foot to flush out small enemy bands. In retrospect, had one squadron of helicopters been available at that time, and its quick lift capabilities utilized, the increased mobility and surveillance would have made quite a difference in the conduct of the action.

Although land-based Marine air power had been under operational control of the Fifth Air Force during the Chosin Reservoir fighting, a verbal agreement allowed the 1st MAW commander to provide directly necessary support to the 1st Marine Division. At the same time, carrier-based Marine planes were flying on the west coast along with other Allied planes harrassing enemy traffic.

During the guerrilla hunt VMO–6 planes provided air support to the 1st Marine Division while Marine attack aircraft were busy elsewhere along the Eighth Army front. Marine pilots, operating under JOC control, felt frustrated because they were unable to provide the timely close air support desired by the infantry. The Marine viewpoint held that too many links in the Air Force system of control caused an excessive delay in bringing air power over the target. This system continued for the remainder of the year.

As an operation, the guerrilla hunt was merely a series of minor engagements, but it accomplished its purpose of clearing out most of the North Korean irregulars who had been a constant threat in the Eighth Army's rear. In addition, the numerous small patrols provided excellent training for the newly arrived replacements.

The Eighth Army seemed to gain new vitality under General Ridgway. On the 18th of February, when the general learned that the enemy was withdrawing, he ordered a limited offensive. Operation KILLER began three days later, and was followed by Operation RIPPER on 7 March. The purpose of these operations was twofold: (1) General Ridgway wanted to restore his army's fighting spirit after its two defeats during the 1950–1951 winter; and (2) he wished to keep the Chinese Reds off balance while they prepared for another Communist offensive.

For the Marines these two operations were an experience with a strictly limited offensive. The advance was "buttoned up" as major units paid close attention to lateral contact. As the advance continued in March and April, mud proved to be an adversary second only to a formidable enemy using delaying tactics, and the Division as a whole had a thorough workout in the logistics of the offensive under adverse conditions.

In early April the Division, as part of the Eighth Army, crossed the 38th parallel and continued the attack to the north, the purpose being to threaten the suspected enemy buildup for an offensive. EUSAK forces rolled onward while the enemy, using his roving defensive tactics, fought vigorously and withdrew.

The long-expected enemy counterblow fell on the night of 22 April and resulted in the 1st Marine Division bearing the brunt of a 48-hour attack (Map 10). This opening CCF assault in the IX Corps area of east-central Korea was intended to throw the Eighth Army off balance as a preliminary to aiming the main blow at I Corps in west Korea.

The CCF attack opened a hole in the MLR large enough for a major breakthrough, and the Communists apparently expected to exploit this success to the fullest. However, the Allied line pulled back, consolidated, and held, as the Division's reserve regiment was thrown in to stem the tide. As the Marine flank was refused, the units on the left found themselves facing to the west while stopping the enemy thrust. Slowly, trading space for time, the Marines contained the enemy attack while the entire Eighth Army line organized new positions.

The enemy effort ground to a halt in the east-central sector, and the Chinese Reds were contravened in their attempt to take Seoul by May Day. Surprise and impetus were lost on the western front when they struck several days later, only to be stopped with frightful losses after a few gains on regimental fronts. The Allied line now held firm.

The Division's war of maneuver had worked well in halting this round of the CCF offensive, but the Communists were far from finished. As 17 enemy divisions were still available to attack, the Marine division was shifted to the east on 1 May in preparation for an expected battle.

On the 16th of May the Chinese offensive again opened, with the enemy hitting more to the east than had been expected, and making a deep but narrow penetration near the coast. The Marines moved eastward, established blocking positions, and engaged fringe units of the drive. This allowed the right flank Army division to move farther east and brake the enemy's rush.

The enemy was dangerously overextended when the UN counter-stroke hit him late in May. For a month the Eighth Army attacked and advanced, the Marines slugging ahead day after day in the X Corps zone of action. CCF casualties mounted high, and Marine veterans of only a few months of Korean service saw scores of enemy corpses left behind on the battlefield as the enemy withdrew northward.

This great UN counteroffensive netted prisoners all along the EUSAK front as remnants of CCF platoons and even companies threw down their arms. Marines captured their share. Upwards of 10,000 Chinese surrendered to the Allies in a 10-day period—more prisoners than had been taken up to this time.

As the Chinese withdrew northward they left determined NKPA troops behind. The 1st Marine Division moved slowly forward, fighting for every inch of ground. So fierce was the enemy's resistance that at times

during June the division commander was forced to commit all four regiments (the KMCs included) in the attack at the same time in order to seize designated objectives. This was a modification of accepted tactical doctrine, necessitated by the situation.

Throughout March, April, and part of May, Marine pilots continued to provide close air support not only for the 1st Marine Division, but also for other Allied units as directed by JOC. From the beginning of Operation STRANGLE on 20 May this interdiction effort had first priority, and close air support to all infantry units was secondary. Difficulties in air-ground communication continued as radio frequencies were heavily burdened with traffic. Although the 1st Marine Division received a proportionate share of the few air support missions flown, the frustrating time lag between requests for air support and the arrival of planes on target continued into the next year.

Some planes were always available for front line support, although rarely ever enough according to infantrymen's opinion. When they had the chance, 1st MAW pilots viciously attacked the fleeing enemy to ease the way for advancing ground troops. During June the unrelenting pressure of combined air-ground attacks sometimes caused large groups of enemy to surrender. Marines also captured thousands of rounds of enemy ammunition and other equipment.

By the last week in June the Marines had entrenched themselves along the Division's assigned portion of the MLR and "caught their breath" after two months of hard fighting. In driving from the Hwachon Reservoir area to the Punchbowl, they had employed practically every weapon and tactic that could be used in an all-out offensive. The Division then settled down to stable positions for a while, and some units had the opportunity to go into reserve and train.

It was a recharged 1st Marine Division (the 5th and 11th Marines did not go into reserve during this period) which moved back into the lines at the end of August. The offensive which opened northeast of the Punchbowl on the 30th and lasted with few and brief interludes until 20 September was the equal of the June fighting in sustained ferocity. All four infantry regiments (including the KMCs) went up against seemingly impregnable opposition.

The enemy's "stubborn defense of strong positions and many well-placed log and earth bunkers was similar to the tenacious tactics of the Japanese in World War II," according to a Navy report. "His artillery and mortar fires were effective, his minefields continued to be hazardous for many weeks, and his ability to dig in and fortify his positions [was] always impressive."[18]

After the 20th of September the EUSAK commander ordered that no further offensives be launched and that the MLR be stabilized. This was a period of aggressive patrolling, local attacks for more advantageous pieces of terrain, and watchful waiting to determine the outcome of truce negotiations. In spite of Operation STRANGLE, enemy vehicular movements increased at the end of the year, but 1st MAW pilots continually attempted to provide more support for all the infantry divisions.

The mission of the 1st Marine Division at this time was to organize, construct, and defend its sector of the MLR, a front of more than 13 miles. Although there were heavy local skirmishes, during the latter months of 1951 and the first 3 months of 1952, no great offensive drives were launched. Essentially, the Marines were engaged in an aggressive defense of their positions until they moved to West Korea.

While all Marines were hoping that the conflict would soon end, there was no slackening of the customary vigilance. All hands remembered General Ridgway's words of the previous year, that it was ". . . a fight for our own freedom, our own survival . . . ,"[19] and this was their creed.

These lines would have made a fitting epitaph for Marines who gave their lives in Korea. They had as worthy a cause as any fighting men of our history, for it had become increasingly plain since World War II that a stand must eventually be made against Communist encroachments. By going halfway around the world to fight the enemy on his own doorstep, Americans may well have spared themselves a more bloody and costly future

struggle nearer to their own homeland if not actually on their own soil. The designs of Red China and Soviet Russia were unmasked in Korea, and the people of the United States awakened to their peril after neglecting the Nation's defenses since 1945. To that extent, therefore, the operations in Korea were a defeat for Communism.

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Appendix A. Glossary of Technical Terms and Abbreviations

ADC—Assistant Division Commander

AdmO—Administrative Order

AD—Douglas “Skyraider” single engine attack plane

AF—Air Force

AH—Hospital Ship

AirDelPlat—Air Delivery Platoon

AirO—Air Officer

AirSptSec—Air Support Section

AmphTracBn—Amphibian Tractor Battalion

AmphTrkBn—Amphibian Truck Battalion

ANGLICO—Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company

ArmdAmphBn—Armored Amphibian Battalion

AT—Antitank

AutoMaintCo—Automotive Maintenance Company

AutoSupCo—Automotive Supply Company

BB—Battleship

BLT—Battalion Landing Team

Bn—Battalion

Btry—Battery

BuMed—Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

C-47—Douglas Transport used by Air Force (same as R4D)

CA—Heavy Cruiser

CCF—Chinese Communist Forces

CG—Commanding General

CIC—Counter Intelligence Corps, USA

CinCFE—Commander in Chief, Far East

CinCPacFlt—Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet

CinCUNC—Commander in Chief, United Nations Command

CL—Light Cruiser

CO—Commanding Officer

Co—Company

ComFltAirWing—Commander Fleet Air Wing

ComNavFe—Commander Naval Forces Far East

ComPacFlt—Commander Pacific Fleet

ComPhibGruOne—Commander Amphibious Group One

ComSeventhFlt—Commander Seventh Fleet

ComUNBlockandCortFor—Commander United Nations Blockade and Escort Force

CP—Command Post

CR—Command Report

C/S—Chief of Staff

CSG—Combat Service Group

CSUSA—Chief of Staff, U. S. Army

CTF—Commander Task Force

CTG—Commander Task Group

CVE—Escort Aircraft Carrier

CVL—Light Aircraft Carrier

DD—Destroyer

DE—Destroyer Escort

Det—Detachment

DOW—Died of Wounds

EmbO—Embarkation Order/Officer

EngrBn—Engineer Battalion

EUSAK—Eighth U.S. Army in Korea

FABn—Field Artillery Battalion (USA)

FAC—Forward Air Controller

FAF—Fifth Air Force

FEAF—Far East Air Force

FECOM—Far East Command

F4U—Chance-Vought “Corsair” Single-Engine Fighter-Bomber

F4U-5N—Chance-Vought “Corsair” Single-Engine Night Fighter

F7F-3N—Grumman “Tigercat” Twin-Engine Night Fighter

FMFPac—Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

FO—Forward Observer

FragOrder—Fragmentary Order

Fum&BathPlat—Fumigation and Bath Platoon

GHQ—General Headquarters

Gru—Group

H&SCo—Headquarters and Service Company

HD—Historical Diary

Hedron—Headquarters Squadron

HO3S—Sikorsky Helicopter

HqBn—Headquarters Battalion

HQMC—Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps

InfDiv—Infantry Division (USA)

Interv—Interview

ISUM—Intelligence Summary

JANIS—Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Studies

JCS—Joint Chiefs of Staff

JMS—Japanese Minesweeper

JSPOG—Joint Strategic Planning and Operations Group

JTF—Joint Task Force

KIA—Killed in Action

KMC—Korean Marine Corps

Ln—Liaison

LSD—Landing Ship, Dock

LSM—Landing Ship, Medium

LSMR—Landing Ship, Medium-Rocket

LST—Landing Ship, Tank

LSTH—Landing Ship, Tank-Casualty Evacuation

LSU—Landing Ship, Utility

Ltr—Letter

LVT—Landing Vehicle, Tracked

MAG—Marine Aircraft Group

MAW—Marine Aircraft Wing

MS—Manuscript

MedBn—Medical Battalion

MedAmbCo—Medical Ambulance Company (USA)

MIA—Missing in Action

MISD—Military Intelligence Service Detachment (USA)

MLR—Main Line of Resistance, the main front line

Mosquito—North American AT-6 “Texan” Trainer; Single Engine Plane used as Airborne FAC and Target Spotting

MP—Military Police

MRO—Movement Report Office

Msg—Message

MSR—Main Supply Route

MSTS—Military Sea Transport Service

MTACS—Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron

MTBn—Motor Transport Battalion

NavBchGru—Naval Beach Group

NavFE—Naval Forces Far East

NCO—Noncommissioned Officer

NK—North Korea(n)

NKPA—North Korean People's Army

N.d.—Date not given

N.t.—Time not given

O—Officer; Order

OCMH—Office of the Chief of Military History (USA)

OI—Operation Instruction

OpnO—Operation Order

OpnPlan—Operation Plan

OrdBn—Ordnance Battalion

OY—Consolidated-Vultee Single-Engine Light Observation Plane

PhibGru—Amphibious Group

PIR—Periodic Intelligence Report

PLA—People's Liberation Army

Plat—Platoon

POL—Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants

POR—Periodic Operation Report

POW—Prisoner of War

QMSubsistSupCo—Quartermaster Subsistence Supply Company (USA)

R4D—Douglas Twin-Engine Transport (Navy and Marine designation of C-47)

R5D—Douglas Four-Engine Transport

RCT—Regimental Combat Team

Recon—Reconnaissance

Reinf—Reinforced

RktBn—Rocket Battalion

RM—Royal Marines

ROK—Republic of Korea

R&O File—Records and Orders File

ROKA—Republic of Korea Army

ROKN—Republic of Korea Navy

Rpt—Report

SAC—Supporting Arms Coordinator

SAR—Special Action Report

Sec—Section

SecDef—Secretary of Defense

ServBn—Service Battalion

SigBn—Signal Battalion

SigRepCo—Signal Repair Company

SitRpt—Situation Report

SP—Shore Party

SMC—Marine Supply Squadron

TAC—Tactical Air Coordinator; Tactical Air Commander

TACP—Tactical Air Control Party

Tacron—Tactical Air Control Squadron

TADC—Tactical Air Direction Center

T-AP—Transport operated by MSTS

TBM—General Motors “Avenger” Single-Engine Torpedo Bomber. Also used for Utility Purposes.

TE—Task Element

T/E—Table of Equipment

Tel—Telephone Message

TF—Task Force

TG—Task Group

TkBn—Tank Battalion

Trk—Truck

T/O—Table of Organization

TU—Task Unit

UDT—Underwater Demolition Team

U/F—Unit of Fire

UN—United Nations

UNC—United Nations Command

URpt—Unit Report

USA—United States Army

USAR—United States Army Reserve

USAF—United States Air Force

USMC—United States Marine Corps

USMCR—United States Marine Corps Reserve

USN—United States Navy

USNR—United States Navy Reserve

VMF—Marine Fighter Squadron

VMF (N)—Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron

VMO—Marine Observation Squadron

VMR—Marine Transport Squadron

WD—War Diary

WD Sum—War Diary Summary

WIA—Wounded in Action

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Appendix C. Command and Staff List, December 1950-March 1952

1st Marine Division

Commanding General

- MajGen Oliver P. Smith (to 23 Feb 1951)
- BrigGen Lewis B. Puller (from 24 Feb)
- MajGen Oliver P. Smith (from 5 Mar)
- MajGen Gerald C. Thomas (from 25 Apr)
- MajGen John T. Selden (from 11 Jan 1952)

Asst Division Commander

- BrigGen Edward A. Craig (to 20 Jan 1951)
- MajGen Edward A. Craig (from 21 Jan)
- BrigGen Lewis B. Puller (from 2 Feb)
- BrigGen William J. Whaling (from 20 May)

Chief of Staff

- Col Gregon A. Williams (to 22 Jan 1951)
- BrigGen Gregon A. Williams (from 23 Jan)
- Col Edward W. Snedeker (from 27 Jan)
- Col Francis M. McAlister (from 23 May)
- Col Richard G. Weede (from 10 Jun)
- Col Victor H. Krulak (from 29 Jun)
- Col Richard G. Weede (from 26 Nov)
- Col Custis Burton, Jr. (from 15 Feb 1952)
- Col Austin R. Brunelli (from 23 Mar)

G-1

- LtCol Bryghte D. Godbold (to 13 Feb 1951)
- Col Bryghte D. Godbold (from 14 Feb)
- Col Wesley M. Platt (from 31 May)
- Col Gould P. Groves (from 27 Sep)
- Col Walter N. Flournoy (from 20 Nov)

G-2

- Col Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr. (to 5 Feb 1951)
- LtCol Ellsworth G. Van Orman (from 6 Feb)
- LtCol Joseph P. Sayers (from 8 Mar)
- LtCol James H. Tinsley (from 13 Aug)

G-3

Col Alpha L. Bowser, Jr. (to 7 May 1951)
Col Richard G. Weede (from 8 May)
Col Bruce T. Hemphill (from 30 Jul)
LtCol Gordon D. Gayle (from 14 Nov)

G-4

Col Francis M. McAlister (to 25 Jan 1951)
LtCol Charles L. Banks (from 26 Jan)
Col Charles L. Banks (from 14 Feb)
Col Frank P. Hager (from 24 May)
Col Custis Burton, Jr. (from 19 Nov)
Col Robert A. McGill (from 9 Feb 1952)

Special Staff

Adjutant

Maj Philip J. Costello (to 18 Feb 1951)
LtCol Foster C. LaHue (from 19 Feb)
LtCol Homer E. Hire (from 19 Jun)
Maj James K. Young (from 15 Oct)

Air Officer

Maj James N. Cupp (to 20 Apr 1951)
LtCol Edward V. Finn (from 21 Apr)

Amphibian Tractor Officer

LtCol Erwin F. Wann, Jr. (to 26 Sep 1951)
LtCol Michiel Dobervich (from 27 Sep)

Anti-Tank Officer

Maj John H. Blue (to 27 Apr 1951)
Maj William L. Bates (from 28 Apr)
Maj Robert E. Baldwin (from 3 Sep)
Maj Franklin J. Harte (from 9 Nov)
Maj John P. Lanigan (from 31 Dec)
Maj Harold C. Howard (from 2 Mar 1952)

Armored Amphibian Officer

LtCol Francis H. Cooper (to 15 Jun 1951)
Maj George M. Warnke (from 16 Jun)
LtCol John T. O'Neill (from 2 Oct)

Artillery Officer

LtCol Carl A. Youngdale (to 5 Mar 1951)

Col Joseph L. Winecoff (from 6 Mar)
LtCol Custis Burton, Jr. (from 5 Aug)
LtCol George B. Thomas (from 8 Nov)
LtCol Dale H. Heely (from 1 Jan 1952)
Col Bruce T. Hemphill (from 11 Jan)
Col Frederick P. Henderson (from 27 Mar)

Chaplain

Cmdr Robert M. Schwyhart, USN (to 17 Feb 1951)
Cmdr Francis W. Kelly, USN (from 18 Feb)
Cmdr Walter S. Peck, Jr., USN (from 8 Oct)

Chemical Warfare and Radiological Defense Officer

Maj John H. Blue (to 15 Jul 1951)
Maj Robert E. Baldwin (from 3 Sep)
Maj Luther H. Hake (from 21 Nov)
Maj John P. Lanigan (from 31 Dec)
Maj Harold C. Howard (from 29 Feb 1952)

Dental Officer

Capt Mack Meradith, USN (to 20 May 1951)
Cmdr James L. Bradley, USN (from 21 May)
Capt Francis C. Snyder, USN (from 15 Jul)

Embarkation Officer

Maj Jules M. Rouse (to 9 Mar 1951)
LtCol Louis C. Griffin (from 10 Mar)
LtCol Clifford E. Quilici (from 11 Aug)
LtCol Corbin L. West (from 26 Oct)
LtCol John H. Papurca (from 6 Dec)

Engineer Officer

LtCol John H. Partridge (to 10 Jun 1951)
LtCol John V. Kelsey (from 11 Jun)
LtCol August L. Vogt (from 19 Sep)

Exchange Officer

Capt Wilbur C. Conley (to 16 May 1951)
1stLt Frank C. Trumble (from 17 May)
1stLt George W. Krahn (from 29 Aug)
Capt Robert W. Schmidt (from 26 Oct)
Capt Robert J. McKay (from 6 Mar 1952)
Capt Benjamin Reed (from 26 Mar)

Food Director

LtCol Norman R. Nickerson (to 6 May 1951)
LtCol George G. Pafford (from 7 May)
1stLt Herbert E. McNabb (from 16 Aug)

Historical Officer
1stLt John M. Patrick (to 26 Jun 1951)
1stLt Theodore L. Richardson (from 27 Jun)
2dLt Francis X. Goss (from 8 Jan 1952)

Inspector
Col John A. White (to 26 Apr 1951)
Col Gould P. Groves (from 27 Apr)
LtCol Charles W. Harrison (from 21 Jun)
Col Russell N. Jordahl (from 30 Jun)
LtCol Alfred H. Marks (from 1 Oct)
Col William K. Davenport, Jr. (from 19 Nov)

Legal Officer
LtCol Albert H. Schierman (to 8 May 1951)
LtCol Randolph S. D. Lockwood (from 9 May)
Cmdr Geoffrey E. Carlisle, USN (from 28 Oct)
LtCdr Arnold W. Eggen, USN (from 6 Mar 1952)

Motor Transport Officer
LtCol Henry W. Seeley, Jr. (to 26 Jun 1951)
LtCol Howard E. Wertman (from 27 Jun)
Maj Herbert E. Pierce (from 17 Aug)
Maj Walter R. O'Quinn (from 3 Jan 1952)

Naval Gunfire Officer
LtCol Loren S. Fraser (to 12 Aug 1951)
Maj Charles A. Lipot (from 13 Aug)
Maj John V. Downes (from 23 Mar 1952)

Ordnance Officer
Capt Donald L. Shenaut (to 9 Jul 1951)
Maj Frank W. Keith (from 10 Jul)
Maj James M. Rogers (from 1 Nov)
Maj Harold G. Borth (from 11 Jan 1952)

Postal Officer
Maj Frederick Bove (to 13 May 1951)
1stLt Robert P. Sanders (from 14 May)
1stLt Robert W. Blum (from 26 Jul)
1stLt Edward D. Gelzer, Jr. (from 10 Aug)

CWO George C. Hunter (from 9 Feb 1952)

Provost Marshall

Capt John H. Griffin (to 20 Apr 1951)

Capt Donald D. Pomerleau (from 21 Apr)

Maj Raymond L. Luckel (from 6 Aug)

LtCol William F. Pulver (from 18 Oct)

Public Information Officer

Capt Michael C. Capraro (to 14 Apr 1951)

1stLt Jeremiah A. O'Leary, Jr. (from 15 Apr)

1stLt Robert S. Gray (from 27 Dec)

Shore Party Officer

LtCol Henry P. Crowe (to 10 May 1951)

LtCol Horace S. Figuers (from 11 May)

LtCol Harry W. Edwards (from 7 Jul)

LtCol George G. Pafford (from 29 Sep)

LtCol Franklin B. Nihart (from 20 Dec)

LtCol Warren S. Sivertsen (from 9 Mar 1952)

Signal Officer

LtCol Robert L. Schreier (to 7 Jun 1951)

LtCol Jino J. D'Alessandro (from 8 Jun)

Special Services Officer

LtCol John M. Bathum (to 10 Sep 1951)

Maj Paul H. Bratten, Jr. (from 11 Sep)

LtCol Franklin B. Nihart (from 28 Oct)

1stLt Joseph H. McDannold (from 20 Dec)

Capt John W. Algeo (from 16 Feb 1952)

LtCol John E. Gorman (from 9 Mar)

Supply Officer

Col Gordon E. Hendricks (to 29 Jun 1951)

Col Chester R. Allen (from 30 Jun)

Surgeon

Capt Eugene R. Hering, USN (to 24 Jan 1951)

Cmdr Howard A. Johnson, USN (from 25 Jan 1951)

Capt Louis R. Kirkpatrick, USN (from 10 Jul 1951)

Tank Officer

LtCol Harry T. Milne (to 22 Apr 1951)

LtCol Holly H. Evans (from 23 Apr)

Maj Walter E. Reynolds (from 9 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Division Rear Echelon Headquarters

Col Harvey S. Walseth (to 23 Jul 1951)

Col Wilburt S. Brown (from 24 Jul to 19 Nov)

Headquarters Battalion

Commanding Officer

LtCol Marvin T. Starr (to 23 Apr 1951)

LtCol William P. Alston (from 24 Apr)

Col Gould P. Groves (from 11 May)

LtCol Charles W. Harrison (from 29 Jun)

LtCol Alfred H. Marks (from 29 Aug)

Col William K. Davenport, Jr. (from 19 Nov)

Maj Corbin L. West (from 15 Jan 1952)

Col Robert T. Stivers (from 18 Feb)

Executive Officer

Maj Frederick Simpson (to 15 Aug 1951)

Maj William O. Cain, Jr. (from 16 Aug)

Maj Corbin L. West (from 10 Dec)

Capt “J” E. Hancey (from 22 Jan 1952)

Maj Corbin L. West (from 18 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company

Maj Frederick Simpson (to 15 Aug 1951)

Maj William O. Cain, Jr. (from 16 Aug)

Maj Corbin L. West (from 10 Dec)

Capt “J” E. Hancey (from 21 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Military Police Company

Capt John H. Griffin (to 20 Apr 1951)

Capt Donald D. Pomerleau (from 21 Apr)

Maj Raymond L. Luckel (from 19 Sep)

LtCol William F. Pulver (from 18 October)

Commanding Officer, Reconnaissance Company

Maj Walter Gall (to 26 Mar 1951)

Capt Robert L. Autry (from 27 Mar)

Maj Ephraim Kirby-Smith (from 10 Sep)

1st Marines

Commanding Officer

Col Lewis B. Puller (to 24 Jan 1951)

Col Francis M. McAlister (from 25 Jan)

Col Wilburt S. Brown (from 19 May)

Col Thomas A. Wornham (from 18 Jul)

Col Sidney S. Wade (from 13 Oct)

Executive Officer

LtCol Robert W. Rickert (to 7 Jan 1951)

LtCol Alan Sutter (from 8 Jan)

LtCol Robert W. Rickert (from 16 Jan)

LtCol Alan Sutter (from 12 Feb)

LtCol Donald M. Schmuck (from 31 May)

LtCol John A. McAlister (from 3 Sep)

LtCol Clifford F. Quilici (from 7 Jan 1952)

S-1

Capt William G. Reeves (to 8 Jan 1951)

Capt David M. Cox (from 9 Jan)

Capt John S. Court (from 5 Sep)

Maj Elizia M. Cable (from 21 Oct)

Capt Thomas C. Palmer (from 12 Feb 1952)

Capt Leroy V. Corbett (from 28 Feb)

S-2

Capt Stone W. Quillian (to 10 May 1951)

Capt Glenn F. Miller (from 11 May)

Capt Robert G. Cadwallader (from 2 Oct)

Capt Fred K. Cottrell (from 15 Dec)

Capt Edwin H. Heim (from 4 Mar 1952)

S-3

Maj Robert E. Lorigan (to 20 Jul 1951)

Maj Ralph “C” Rosacker (from 21 Jul)

Maj John P. Lanigan (from 4 Mar 1952)

S-4

Maj Thomas T. Grady (to 27 Apr 1951)

Capt Augustine B. Reynolds, Jr. (from 28 Apr)

Maj Thomas A. Burns (from 5 Jul)

Maj John L. Kelly (from 5 Oct)

Maj Fletcher R. Wycoff (from 27 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

Maj Robert K. McClelland (to 11 Mar 1951)

Maj Carl E. Walker (from 12 Mar)

Capt George E. Petro (from 11 May)
1stLt Roscoe L. Barrett, Jr. (from 15 Aug)
1stLt James L. Burnett (from 3 Oct)
Capt James P. Egan (from 23 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Anti-Tank Company
Capt George E. Petro (to 10 May 1951)
1stLt John A. Dudrey (from 11 May)
1stLt Magness W. Marshall (from 2 Oct)
Capt Frederick A. Hale (from 27 Nov)

Commanding Officer, 4.2 Inch Mortar Company
Capt Frank J. Faureck (to 8 Feb 1951)
1stLt Edward E. Kauffer (from 9 Feb)
Capt Otis R. Waldrop (from 5 Mar)
Capt Edward E. Kauffer (from 4 Jun)
1stLt Robert W. Jorn (from 9 Aug)
1stLt Thomas J. Holt (from 2 Oct)
Capt Robert G. Cadwallader (from 23 Dec)
Capt George E. Lawrence (from 18 Mar 1952)

1st Battalion, 1st Marines

Commanding Officer
LtCol Donald M. Schmuck (to 27 Feb 1951)
LtCol Robley E. West (from 28 Feb)
Maj Thomas T. Grady (from 15 Jun)
LtCol Horace E. Knapp, Jr. (from 7 Jul)
Maj Edgar F. Carney, Jr. (from 14 Sep)
LtCol John E. Gorman (from 16 Sep)
LtCol John H. Papurca (from 7 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer
Maj Robley E. West (to 27 Feb 1951)
Maj David W. Bridges (from 28 Feb)
Maj Thomas T. Grady (from 10 Jun)
Maj Wesley C. Noren (from 15 Jun)
Maj Edgar F. Carney, Jr. (from 20 Jul)
Maj Leo V. Gross (from 18 Dec)
Maj Ralph “C” Rosacker (from 4 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company
Capt William B. Hopkins (to 30 Jan 1951)

1stLt Bruce E. Geisert (from 31 Jan)
1stLt Norman W. Hicks (from 1 Jul)
1stLt John B. Franklin (from 18 Aug)
1stLt Stuart P. Barr, Jr. (from 22 Oct)
1stLt Nicholas J. Sheppard (from 28 Nov)
1stLt Harry A. Spaight (from 26 Dec)
Capt Edwin H. Heim (from 20 Feb 1952)
2ndLt Vinton L. Spencer (from 4 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company A
Capt Robert H. Barrow (to 30 Jan 1951)
Capt Thomas J. Bohannon (from 31 Jan)
1stLt Calvin R. Baker (from 1 Jul)
Capt Edwin H. Heim (from 20 Oct)
1stLt Clifton M. Grubbs (from 20 Feb 1952)
Capt Anthony Novak (from 17 Mar)
1stLt Morace M. Dritley (from 26 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company B
Capt Wesley C. Noren (to 12 Mar 1951)
Capt John F. Coffey (from 13 Mar)
1stLt James H. Cowan, Jr. (from 8 Jun)
1stLt Robert G. Work (from 1 Aug)
1stLt Richard S. Kitchen (from 18 Aug)
Capt Roy J. Wride (from 16 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company C
Capt Robert P. Wray (to 9 May 1951)
1stLt William A. Craven (from 10 May)
1stLt William F. Koehnlein (from 12 Jun)
Capt Michael D. Harvath (from 21 Jul)
Capt George E. Lawrence (from 10 Oct)
Capt Kenneth F. Swiger (from 7 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company
Maj William L. Bates (to 28 Feb 1951)
1stLt William F. Koehnlein (from 1 Mar)
Capt Wesley C. Noren (from 13 Mar)
Maj John F. Coffey (from 8 Jun)
Capt Benjamin W. Muntz (from 5 Jul)
Maj William O. Cain, Jr. (from 14 Jul)
Maj John F. Morris (from 14 Aug)

Maj Fletcher B. Wycoff (from 9 Sep)
Capt James P. Egan (from 27 Dec)
Capt George E. Lawrence (from 21 Feb 1952)
1stLt Joseph E. Lee (from 18 Mar)
Maj Stanley N. McLeod (from 27 Mar)

2d Battalion, 1st Marines

Commanding Officer

LtCol Allan Sutter (to 7 Jan 1951)
Maj Clarence J. Mabry (from 8 Jan)
LtCol Allan Sutter (from 15 Jan)
Maj Clarence J. Mabry (from 13 Feb)
LtCol Robert K. McClelland (from 15 Mar)
Maj Clarence J. Mabry (from 5 Jun)
LtCol Robert K. McClelland (from 20 Jun)
LtCol Franklin B. Nihart (from 14 Aug)
LtCol Clifford F. Quilici (from 28 Oct)
LtCol Theil H. Fisher (from 3 Jan 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj Clarence J. Mabry (to 7 Jan 1951)
Maj Whitman S. Bartley (from 8 Jan)
Maj Clarence J. Mabry (from 15 Jan)
Maj Whitman S. Bartley (from 13 Feb)
Maj Clarence J. Mabry (from 15 Mar)
Maj Jules M. Rouse (from 10 Jun)
Maj John P. Lanigan (from 6 Aug)
Maj Franklin J. Harte (from 26 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

Capt Raymond DeWees, Jr. (to 9 Sep 1951)
2dLt Robert A. Arning (from 10 Sep)
1stLt George H. Benskin, Jr. (from 30 Oct)
1stLt Frank E. Guthrie (from 3 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company D

Capt Welby W. Cronk (to 4 Mar 1951)
1stLt Theodore Culpepper (from 5 Mar)
1stLt Alexander L. Michaux, Jr. (from 19 Apr)
1stLt Jay “J” Thomas (from 11 Jun)
1stLt George H. Benskin, Jr. (from 9 Aug)

1stLt Robert E. Lundberg (from 15 Sep)
2dLt Arthur H. Woodruff (from 25 Sep)
1stLt Richard A. Bonifas (from 5 Oct)
1stLt George H. Benskin, Jr. (from 16 Oct)
Capt Richard A. Bonifas (from 30 Oct)
1stLt Robert J. Lahr (from 3 Nov)
Capt Robert N. Kreider (from 13 Nov)
Capt John H. Lauck (from 26 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company E

Capt Jack A. Smith (to 9 Mar 1951)
1stLt Johnny L. Carter (from 10 Mar)
1stLt Donald L. Evans, Jr. (from 9 Aug)
Capt Ralph V. Harper (from 14 Aug)
1stLt Robert J. Lahr (from 14 Sep)
2dLt William K. Rockey (from 25 Sep)
1stLt Kenneth E. Will (from 5 Oct)
Capt James H. Reeder (from 16 Oct)
Capt Charles J. Irwin, Jr. (from 21 Feb 1952)
Capt Jack H. Hagler (from 17 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company F

Capt Goodwin C. Groff (to 9 Jun 1951)
1stLt Patrick McGrotty (from 10 Jun)
Capt Frederick A. Hale, Jr. (from 4 Sep)
Capt Neville G. Hall, Jr. (from 21 Nov)
1stLt John A. Barry (from 29 Dec)
1stLt Robert J. Lahr (from 11 Mar 1952)
Capt Victor A. Kleber, Jr. (from 18 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company

Capt William A. Kerr (to 28 Feb 1951)
1stLt Russell A. Davidson (from 1 Mar)
Maj Carl E. Walker (from 12 May)
Capt Russell A. Davidson (from 2 Jul)
Maj John I. Kelly (from 22 Jul)
Maj William S. Witt (from 5 Oct)
Capt John W. Algeo (from 20 Nov)
Maj William S. Witt (from 20 Jan 1952)
Capt John W. Algeo (from 3 Feb)
1stLt Clarence G. Moody, Jr. (from 17 Feb)

Capt Charles J. Irwin, Jr. (from 18 Mar)

3d Battalion, 1st Marines

Commanding Officer

LtCol Thomas L. Ridge (to 15 Feb 1951)

LtCot Virgil W. Banning (from 16 Feb)

Maj Joseph D. Trompeter (from 25 Apr)

Maj Edwin H. Simmons (from 8 May)

LtCol Homer E. Hire (from 15 May)

LtCol Foster C. LaHue (from 19 Jul)

LtCol Spencer H. Pratt (from 13 Nov)

Executive Officer

Maj Reginald R. Myers (to 25 Apr)

Maj Edwin H. Simmons (from 26 Apr)

Maj Joseph D. Trompeter (from 15 May)

Maj Ralph “C” Rosacker (from 7 Jun)

Maj Rodney V. Reighard (from 22 July)

Maj Thell H. Fisher (from 3 Oct)

Maj Robert V. Perkins (from 4 Jan 52)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

Capt Roy N. Courington (to 16 Feb 1951)

1stLt Edgar A. Crum (from 17 Feb)

1stLt Daniel R. Evans (from 3 Mar)

Capt Clarence E. Corley, Jr. (from 20 Mar)

1stLt Thomas J. Holt (from 9 Aug)

Capt Earle E. Carr (from 1 Sep)

2dLt Joseph D. Reed (from 3 Oct)

2dLt Robert C. Morton (from 4 Jan 1952)

Capt Harold R. Connolly (from 22 Feb)

Capt Donald C. Mack (from 15 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company G

Capt Carl L. Sitter (to 13 Feb 1951)

1stLt Horace L. Johnson (from 14 Feb)

1stLt Thomas J. Holt (from 26 May)

1stLt Fred G. Redmon (from 1 Jun)

Capt Varge G. Frisbie (from 5 Jun)

1stLt Harold R. Connolly (from 20 Jul)

Capt Fred A. Kraus (from 8 Nov)

1stLt Richard A. Krajnyak (from 19 Feb 1952)
Capt Wilford L. Stone (from 17 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company H
Capt Clarence E. Corley, Jr. (to 19 Mar 1951)
1stLt William J. Allert (from 20 Mar)
1stLt Daniel R. Evans (from 8 May)
1stLt James L. Burnett (from 8 Jun)
1stLt Herbert M. Anderson (from 15 Jun)
1stLt James L. Burnett (from 21 Sep)
Capt Earle E. Carr (from 3 Oct)
Capt James B. Ord, Jr. (from 17 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company I
1stLt Joseph R. Fisher (to 7 Apr 1951)
1stLt William Swanson (from 8 Apr)
Capt Stone W. Quillian (from 15 May)
1stLt Norbert D. Carlson (from 5 Aug)
Capt Leroy V. Corbett (from 7 Sep)
Capt Donald C. Mack (from 19 Jan 1952)
Capt Richard B. Smith (from 22 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company
Maj Edwin H. Simmons (to 25 Apr 1951)
1stLt James F. Williams (from 26 Apr)
Capt Otis R. Waldrop (from 6 Jun)
Maj Henry Brzezinski (from 19 Jun)
Capt Varge G. Frisbie (from 6 Aug)
Maj Thell H. Fisher (from 31 Aug)
1stLt Thomas C. Holleman (from 2 Oct)
Maj Robert V. Perkins (from 15 Nov)
Capt Earle E. Carr (from 4 Jan 1952)
1stLt Hugh P. Murphy (from 25 Jan)

5th Marines

Commanding Officer
LtCol Raymond L. Murray (to 23 Jan 1951)
Col Raymond L. Murray (from 24 Jan)
Col Richard W. Hayward (from 14 Mar)
Col Richard G. Weede (from 7 Aug)
Col Frank P. Hager, Jr. (from 19 Nov)

Col Thomas A. Culhane, Jr. (from 23 Feb 1952)

Executive Officer

LtCol Joseph L. Stewart (to 13 Feb 1951)

LtCol John W. Stevens, II (from 14 Feb)

LtCol Joseph L. Stewart (from 14 Mar)

LtCol Donald R. Kennedy (from 4 Apr)

LtCol Francis H. Cooper (from 17 Jun)

LtCol Virgil W. Banning (from 22 Sep)

LtCol John T. Rooney (from 13 Dec)

LtCol John A. Saxten (from 19 Mar 1952)

S-1

Capt Alton C. Weed (to 1 Mar 1951)

Capt Jack E. Hawthorn (from 2 Mar)

Capt George A. Rheman, Jr. (from 17 Mar)

Capt Harley L. Grant (from 25 Aug)

S-2

1stLt Richard M. Woodard (to 3 Feb 1951)

Capt Eugene F. Langan (from 4 Feb)

Maj Nicholas G. W. Thorne (from 9 Aug)

Maj Paul H. Bratten, Jr. (from 17 Nov)

Maj John C. Lundrigan (from 31 Jan 1952)

S-3

Maj Lawrence W. Smith, Jr. (to 8 Mar 1951)

Maj Robert E. Baldwin (from 9 Mar)

LtCol Glen E. Martin (from 24 Jun)

Maj Merwin H. Silverthorn, Jr. (from 11 Jul)

Maj Gerald P. Averill (from 10 Oct)

Maj David A. Brewster, Sr. (from 15 Dec)

S-4

Maj Harold Wallace (to 9 Mar 1951)

Maj William E. Baugh (from 10 Mar)

Maj Robert S. Hudson (from 11 Aug)

Maj Warren F. Lloyd (from 22 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

Capt Jack E. Hanthorn (to 1 Mar 1951)

1stLt Richard M. Woodard (from 2 Mar)

1stLt Lee J. Cary (from 22 Jun)

Capt Howard H. Dismeier (from 12 Sep)

1stLt George “T” Capatanos (from 1 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Antitank Company

1stLt Almarion S. Bailey (to 8 Apr 1951)

1stLt Jo M. Van Meter (from 9 Apr)

1stLt William E. Kerrigan (from 23 Jul)

Capt Edgar F. Moore, Jr. (from 15 Aug)

Commanding Officer, 4.2 Inch Mortar Company

1stLt Robert M. Lucy (to 25 Feb 1951)

1stLt Robert H. Uskurait (from 26 Feb)

1stLt John A. Buchanan (from 11 Sep)

Capt Yale B. Davis (from 29 Dec)

1st Battalion, 5th Marines

Commanding Officer

LtCol John W. Stevens, II (to 20 Feb 1951)

LtCol John W. Hopkins (from 21 Feb)

LtCol William P. Alston (from 21 Jun)

Maj Kirt W. Norton (from 9 Nov)

Maj Lowell T. Keagy (from 25 Nov)

LtCol Kirt W. Norton (from 2 Dec)

LtCol Louis N. King (from 13 Jan 1952)

LtCol Franklin B. Nihart (from 12 Feb)

Executive Officer

Maj Merlin R. Olson (to 8 Apr 1951)

Maj Donald J. Kendall, Jr. (from 9 Apr)

Maj Kirt W. Norton (from 9 Aug)

Maj Robert L. Autry (from 9 Nov)

Maj Lowell T. Keagy (from 2 Dec)

Maj Hildeburn R. Martin (from 3l Dec)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

Capt George A. Rheman, Jr. (to 11 Mar 1951)

2dLt Robert H. Corbet (from 12 Mar)

1stLt Andrew V. Marusak (from 29 Mar)

1stLt Frank J. Meers (from 12 Jul)

2dLt Vincent B. Murphy, Jr. (from 3 Oct)

1stLt Parks H. Simpson (from 25 Oct)

1stLt Thomas J. Hermes (from 13 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company

Capt Almond H. Sollom (to 5 Mar 1951)
1stLt Poul F. Pedersen (from 6 Mar)
Capt Donald D. Pomerleau (from 6 Apr)
Maj Albert Hartman (from 13 Apr)
Capt Raymond H. Spuhler (from 8 May)
1stLt Frank J. Meers (from 4 Jun)
Capt Lucian F. May (from 12 Jul)
Maj David A. Brewster, Sr. (from 1 Sep)
Capt Harry A. Mathew (from 9 Nov)
Capt Nicholas G. W. Thorne (from 17 Nov)
Maj Lowell T. Keagy (from 31 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company A

1stLt Loren R. Smith (to 16 Feb 1951)
Capt Walter E. G. Godenius (from 17 Feb)
Capt John L. Kelly (from 9 Apr)
Capt Richard M. Woodard (from 1 Jul)
Capt Eugene F. Langan (from 12 Aug)
Capt Frederick B. Clunie (from 5 Nov)
1stLt Merrill Waide, Jr. (from 24 Jan 1952)
1stLt Ernest S. Lee (from 18 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Company B

1stLt John R. Hancock (to 7 Feb 1951)
1stLt Michael V. Palatas (from 8 Feb)
1stLt James T. Cronin (from 17 Feb)
1stLt William E. Kerrigan (from 8 Jun)
1stLt Stuart H. Wright (from 30 Jun)
1stLt John A. Hayes (from 12 Jul)
Capt Louis R. Daze (from 21 Jul)
Capt Charles M. MacDonald, Jr. (from 21 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Company C

Capt Jack R. Jones (to 8 May 1951)
1stLt Richard J. Schening (from 9 May)
1stLt Robert E. Warner (from 29 May)
Capt Lucian F. May (from 4 Sep)
Capt Harry A. Mathew (from 22 Jan 1952)

2d Battalion, 5th Marines

Commanding Officer

LtCol Harold S. Roise (to 19 Feb 1951)
LtCol Glen E. Martin (from 20 Feb)
Maj Merwin H. Silverthorn, Jr. (from 24 Jun)
LtCol Houston Stiff (from 8 Jul)
Maj William E. Baugh (from 3 Dec)
LtCol George G. Pafford (from 27 Dec)
LtCol William P. Cushing (from 14 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj John L. Hopkins (to 20 Feb 1951)
Maj Theodore F. Spiker (from 21 Feb)
Maj Merwin H. Silverthorn, Jr. (from 9 Apr)
Maj Robert E. Baldwin (from 25 Jun)
Maj Gerald P. Averill (from 3 Sep)
Maj Robert W. Rynerson (from 9 Sep)
Maj Warren F. Lloyd (from 26 Sep)
Maj William L. Sims (from 9 Dec)
Maj Robert S. Hudson (from 27 Dec)
Maj William P. Cushing (from 21 Feb 1952)
Maj Robert S. Hudson (from 14 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

Capt Franklin B. Mayer (to 9 Jan 1951)
1stLt Charles “H” Dalton (from 10 Jan)
Capt William O. Cain, Jr. (from 21 Feb)
1stLt John R. Hinds (from 2 Jul)
1stLt Richard T. Hauar (from 12 Jul)
1stLt Harold L. Michael (from 8 Aug)
1stLt Dexter H. Kimball (from 25 Sep)
1stLt Otis “Z” McConnell, Jr. (from 23 Dec)
1stLt Emmett T. Hill, Jr. (from 15 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company D

Capt Samuel S. Smith (to 11 Jun 1951)
1stLt John P. Cooney (from 12 Jun)
Capt Ray N. Joens (from 28 Jun)
Capt Victor Sawina (from 26 Sep)
1stLt Tom G. Fagles (from 7 Oct)
Capt Philip A. Davis (from 23 Dec)
1stLt Emmitt T. Hill (from 13 Feb 1952)
Capt William A. Harper (from 25 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Company E

1stLt James F. Roberts (to 9 Jan 1951)
Capt Franklin B. Mayer (from 10 Jan)
Capt William E. Melby (from 9 Apr)
1stLt Bernard W. Christofferson (from 20 Apr)
1stLt Warren H. Allen (from 12 Jun)
Capt William E. Melby (from 18 Jun)
1stLt Warren H. Allen (from 9 Jul)
Capt William L. Wallace (from 3 Aug)
Capt Warren H. Allen (from 3 Oct)
1stLt Jo M. Van Meter (from 18 Oct)
Capt Charles C. Matthews (from 4 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company F

1stLt Charles "H" Dalton (to 8 Jan 1951)
1stLt George Janiszewski (from 9 Jan)
Capt William O. Cain, Jr. (from 20 Jan)
1stLt George Janiszewski (from 20 Feb)
1stLt James H. Honeycutt, Jr. (from 9 Apr)
1stLt Harold L. Michael (from 23 Jul)
Capt William E. Melby (from 11 Aug)
Capt Arvil B. Hendrickson (from 4 Nov)
Capt Harold C. Fuson (from 14 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company

Maj Glen E. Martin (to 19 Feb 1951)
Capt John Stepanovich (from 20 Feb)
Capt Elliot B. Lima (from 6 Apr)
1stLt Arvil B. Hendrickson (from 17 Aug)
Maj Warren F. Lloyd (from 15 Sep)
Capt Arvil B. Hendrickson (from 25 Sep)
Maj William L. Sims (from 4 Nov)
Capt William A. Harper (from 23 Dec)
Capt Harold C. Fuson (from 25 Feb 1952)
Capt Russell L. Silverthorn (from 16 Mar)

3d Battalion, 5th Marines

Commanding Officer

LtCol Robert D. Taplett (to 13 Feb 1951)
LtCol Joseph L. Stewart (from 14 Feb)

LtCol Donald R. Kennedy (from 14 Mar)
Maj Morse “L” Holladay (from 4 Apr)
LtCol Donald R. Kennedy (from 16 Jun)
Maj William E. Baugh (from 23 Sep)
LCol Bernard W. McLean (from 13 Oct)
LtCol William S. McLaughlin (from 25 Feb 1952)

Executive Officer
Maj Harold E. Swain (to 7 May 1951)
Maj Albert Hartman (from 8 May)
Maj William E. Baugh (from 11 Aug)
Maj Donald D. Pomerleau (from 27 Sep)
Maj William E. Baugh (from 13 Oct)
Maj Donald D. Pomerleau (from 30 Nov)
Maj Paul H. Bratten (from 4 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company
1stLt Harold D. Fredericks (to 13 Feb 1951)
1stLt Duncan McRae (from 14 Feb)
1stLt Carlisle G. Kohl, Jr. (from 25 Mar)
1stLt Herbert Preston (from 27 Jun)
Capt Robert J. McKay (from 25 Aug)
Capt Charles W. Marker, Jr. (from 23 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company G
1stLt Charles D. Mize (to 5 Mar 1951)
1stLt August L. Camarata (from 6 Mar)
1stLt William G. Robinson (from 18 Jul)
Capt John M. Fallon (from 10 Sep)
Capt James Irving, Jr. (from 5 Nov)
1stLt Wilson L. Cook (from 28 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company H
Capt Harold I. Williamson (to 1 Apr 1951)
1stLt Herbert Preston, Jr. (from 2 Apr)
Capt Clarence H. Pritchett (from 1 May)
1stLt Bruce F. Meyers (from 5 Aug)
Capt Raymond J. McGlynn (from 4 Nov)
Capt Matthew A. Clary, Jr. (from 21 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company I
1stLt Donald E. Watterson (to 5 Mar 1951)
Capt Raymond H. Spuhler (from 6 Mar)

Capt John A. Pearson (from 1 Apr)
1stLt Raymond J. McGlynn (from 10 Aug)
1stLt Lawrence W. Payne (from 29 Aug)
Capt Neil Dimond (from 5 Oct)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company

Capt Raymond H. Spuhler (to 31 Jan 1951)
Maj Thomas A. Durham (from 1 Feb)
Maj Ilo J. Scatena (from 26 Jul)
Maj Donald D. Pomerleau (from 20 Sep)
Maj Ilo J. Scatena (from 27 Sep)
Maj James H. Pope (from 13 Oct)
Capt Charles W. Marker, Jr. (from 3 Dec)
Capt Robert J. McKay (from 23 Dec)
1stLt Anthony R. Kurowski (from 6 Mar 1952)
Capt Robert W. Lowe (from 17 Mar)

7th Marines

Commanding Officer

Col Homer L. Litzenberg (to 15 Apr 1951)
Col Herman Nickerson, Jr. (from 16 Apr)
LtCol John J. Wermuth (from 20 Sep)
Col John J. Wermuth (from 13 Dec)
Col Russell E. Honsowetz (from 11 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer

LtCol Raymond G. Davis (to 3 Jun 1951)
LtCol Woodrow M. Kessler (from 4 Jun)
LtCol John J. Wermuth (from 30 Jun)
LtCol Gordon D. Gayle (from 20 Sep)
LtCol James G. Kelly (from 3 Nov)
LtCol Noel C. Gregory (from 2 Dec)
LtCol John D. Wiggins (from 23 Feb 1952)

S-1

Capt John R. Grove (to 15 Apr 1951)
Capt Hugh E. McNeely (from 16 Apr)
Maj Robert R. Sedgwick (from 5 Sep)
Capt William K. Dormady (from 5 Jan 1952)

S-2

Capt John D. Bradbeer (to 4 Jul 1951)

Capt Walter E. Lange (from 5 Jul)

Capt Clifford E. McCollam (from 29 Jul)

Maj Henry V. Joslin (from 25 Aug)

1stLt George W. Barnes (from 8 Nov)

Capt Donald E. Euchert (from 19 Dec)

Capt Harry E. Leland, Jr. (from 17 Mar 1952)

S-3

Maj Henry J. Woessner, II (to 8 Jan 1951)

Maj Joseph L. Abel (from 9 Jun)

Maj George Codrea (from 22 Sep)

S-4

Maj Maurice E. Roach (to 8 Jan 1951)

Maj William E. Voorhies (from 9 Jan)

Maj John D. Bradbeer (from 5 Jul)

Maj Franklin C. Bacon (from 5 Oct)

Maj Robert B. Prescott (from 3 Jan 1952)

Maj James K. Linnan (from 19 Jan)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

2dLt Arthur R. Mooney (to 17 Feb 1951)

1stLt Harrol Kiser (from 18 Feb)

1stLt John C. Beauparlant (from 6 Mar)

1stLt Welton R. Abell (from 14 Mar)

Capt James J. Bott (from 19 Mar)

Capt Thomas A. Robesky (from 9 May)

Capt Walter R. Anderson (from 18 Jun)

Capt Hugh E. McNeely (from 5 Sep)

Capt Donald S. McClellan (from 20 Sep)

Capt David A. McKay (from 28 Nov)

Capt Robert C. Hendrickson (from 17 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Antitank Company

1stLt Earl R. DeLong (to 5 May 1951)

1stLt Raymond J. Eldridge (from 6 Mar)

Capt Thomas Santamaria (from 19 Apr)

1stLt Francis W. Tief (from 13 May)

1stLt William F. Dyroff (from 10 Aug)

Commanding Officer, 4.2 Inch Mortar Company

Maj Rodney V. Reighard (to 1 July 1951)

1stLt Samuel E. Piercy (from 2 Jul)

Capt Alvin F. Mackin (from 24 Sep)
Capt Dean F. Johnson (from 28 Nov)
Capt John F. McMahon, Jr. (from 28 Dec)

1st Battalion, 7th Marines
Commanding Officer
Maj Webb D. Sawyer (to 25 Apr 1951)
LtCol John T. Rooney (from 26 Apr)
LtCol James G. Kelly (from 23 Aug)
Maj Harold C. Howard (from 8 Nov)
LtCol George W. E. Daughtry (from 28 Feb 1952)
Executive Officer
Maj Raymond V. Fridrich (to 20 Feb 1951)
Maj Thomas B. Tighe (from 21 Feb)
Maj Raymond V. Fridrich (from 24 Mar)
Maj Thomas B. Tighe (from 26 May)
Maj Robert J. Polson (from 5 Jul)
Maj George Codrea (from 4 Aug)
Maj Harold C. Howard (from 15 Sep)
Maj Henry V. Joslin (from 8 Nov)
Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company
1stLt Wilbert R. Gaul (to 19 Jan 1951)
Capt John C. Johnson (from 20 Jan)
Capt Nathan R. Smith (from 18 Mar)
1stLt Eugenous M. Hovatter (from 28 Mar)
Capt Donald F. J. Field (from 11 May)
Capt Wilburt R. Gaul (from 7 Jun)
1stLt Robert C. Taylor (from 9 Aug)
Capt Orville E. Brauss (from 24 Nov)
1stLt Guy R. Cassell (from 14 Dec)
1stLt Edward L. Nadeau (from 1 Jan 1952)
Capt Seneker Woll (from 18 Jan)
2dLt Henry D. Bruns (from 10 Feb)
2d Lt Lawrence P. Flynn (from 9 Mar)
Commanding Officer, Company A
1stLt Eugenous M. Hovatter (to 27 Mar 1951)
Capt Nathan R. Smith (from 28 Mar)
1stLt Van D. Bell (from 3 Jun)

Capt Everett Hampton (from 2 Sep)
2dLt Carl F. Ullrich (from 2 Jan 1952)
Capt Earl W. Thompson (from 27 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company B

Capt James J. Bott (to 5 Mar 1951)
Capt John C. Johnston (from 6 Mar)
1stLt Orville W. Brauss (from 22 Jul)
1stLt Dean F. Johnson (from 23 Aug)
1stLt James W. Sweeney (from 14 Sep)
Capt Henry A. Glockner (from 29 Sep)
1stLt Donald L. Smith (from 14 Dec)
1stLt "J" Alan Myers (from 1 Jan 1952)
1stLt Donald M. Russ (from 14 Feb)
Capt Lyle S. Whitmore, Jr. (from 28 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Company C

Capt John F. Morris (to 17 Jan 195l)
Capt Eugene H. Haffey (from 18 Jan)
Capt Daniel F. J. Field (from 8 Jun)
1stLt Donald E. Euckert (from 23 Jul)
Capt John F. McMahon (from 10 Aug)
Capt Robert W. Hughes, Jr. (from 21 Nov)
Capt Seneker Woll (from 7 Jan 1952)
Capt Robert W. Hughes, Jr. (from 18 Jan)
Capt Roger L. Johnson (from 3 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company

Maj William E. Voorhies (to 5 Jan 1951)
Capt Robert J. Polson (from 6 Jan)
Maj Joseph L. Abel (from 12 Jan)
Maj Robert J. Polson (from 15 May)
Capt Alonzo C. Thorson (from 5 Jul)
Capt John C. Johnston (from 5 Aug)
Capt Dean F. Johnson (from 5 Nov)
Capt John R. McMahon (from 22 Nov)
1stLt Guy R. Cassell (from 31 Dec)
Capt Robert W. Hughes, Jr. (from 4 Jan 1952)
1stLt Frank P. Shannon (from 18 Jan)
1stLt Carlton R. Appleby (from 16 Feb)

2d Battalion, 7th Marines

Commanding Officer

LtCol Robert L. Bayer (to 15 Feb 1951)

Maj James I. Glendinning (from 16 Feb)

LtCol Wilbur F. Meyerhoff (from 21 Mar)

LtCol Louis C. Griffin (from 21 Jul)

LtCol Noel C. Gregory (from 11 Nov)

Maj Edward G. Kurdziel (from 1 Dec)

LtCol Noel C. Gregory (from 27 Feb 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj James F. Lawrence, Jr. (to 2 Jan 1951)

Maj James I. Glendinning, Jr. (from 3 Jan)

Maj James F. Lawrence, Jr. (from 20 May)

Maj Edward G. Kurdziel (from 4 Jul)

Maj Edwin Madsen (from 2 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

1stLt Kent D. Thorup (to 19 Jan 1951)

Capt Jerome D. Gordon (from 20 Jan)

1stLt Kent D. Thorup (from 6 Feb)

Capt Thomas “A” Robesky (from 15 Mar)

1stLt Joseph R. Walsh (from 8 May)

1stLt George G. Flood (from 8 Jun)

1st Lt John J. Robinson, Jr (from 1 Sep)

Capt Charles P. Logan, Jr. (from 5 Nov)

1stLt Donald D. MacLachlan (from 16 Dec)

1stLt Edward R. Hannon (from 27 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company D

1stLt James D. Hammond, Jr. (to 1 Jan 1951)

Capt Patsy Algieri (from 2 Jan)

Capt Jerome D. Gordon (from 8 Feb)

Capt Alvin F. Mackin (from 7 Apr)

1stLt Thomas W. Burke (from 21 Jul)

Capt John H. Chafee (from 15 Sep)

Capt Charles P. Logan, Jr. (from 15 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company E

1stLt David H. Vanderwart (to 21 Jan 1951)

1stLt Robert T. Bey (from 22 Jan)

Capt Walter R. Anderson, Jr. (from 8 Feb)

Capt Merlin T. Matthews (from 17 Feb)
1stLt Robert W. Schmidt (from 14 Jun)
1stLt Charles P. Logan, Jr. (from 18 Sep)
Capt Embree W. Maxson (from 5 Oct)
Capt Donald McGuire (from 21 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company F
1stLt Ronald J. Rice (to 1 Mar 1951)
1stLt Ross R. Minor (from 2 Mar)
Capt Raymond N. Bowman (from 6 Mar)
1stLt Ross R. Minor (from 1 May)
Capt Donald S. McClellan (from 23 Jun)
1stLt Don G. Phelan (from 24 Aug)
Capt Harry E. Leland, Jr. (from 14 Oct)
1stLt Rex C. Wells (from 17 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company
Maj Joseph L. Abel (to 7 Jan 1951)
Maj James P. Metzler (from 8 Jan)
Capt John R. Grove (from 19 Apr)
Capt Harry L. Givens (from 20 May)
Capt Alvin F. Mackin (from 8 Aug)
Capt David A. McKay (from 24 Sep)
Capt Walter Oberg (from 26 Nov)
1stLt Elmer R. Phillips (from 17 Feb 1952)
Maj Dennis D. Nicholson (from 16 Mar)
Capt Owen G. Jackson, Jr. (from 30 Mar)

3d Battalion, 7th Marines

Commanding Officer
Maj Maurice E. Roach, Jr. (to 13 Jan 1951)
LtCol Wilbur F. Meyerhoff (from 14 Jan)
Maj Maurice E. Roach, Jr. (from 16 Feb)
LtCol Bernard T. Kelly (from 8 May)
LtCol Harry W. Edwards (from 4 Oct)
LtCol Houston Stiff (from 12 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer
Maj Warren Morris (to 8 Jan 1951)
Maj Maurice E. Roach, Jr. (from 9 Jan)
Maj Warren Morris (from 16 Feb)

Maj James J. Bott (from 4 Jul)
Capt Howard L. Mabie (from 4 Aug)
Maj Robert B. Prescott (from 6 Aug)
Maj Franklin G. Bacon (from 3 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company
1stLt Samuel B. Abston (to 7 Jan 1951)
Capt John DeCloud (from 8 Jan)
1stLt Samuel D. Miller (from 5 Mar)
1stLt Frank N. Winfrey (from 15 May)
1stLt Robert H. Starek (from 25 May)
1stLt William R. Bennett (from 21 Jul)
1stLt Dennis E. Youngblood (from 6 Oct)
1stLt Raymond B. McGill (from 28 Nov)
Capt Clayton A. Lodoen (from 2 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company G
1stLt George R. Earnest (to 31 Dec 1950)
Capt Walter E. Lange (from 1 Jan 1951)
1stLt George R. Earnest (from 11 Mar)
1stLt Frank N. Winfrey (from 22 Mar)
Capt William C. Airheart (from 28 Mar)
1stLt Edward J. Sullivan (from 22 Jul)
Capt Robert C. Hendrickson (from 12 Aug)
Capt Thomas D. Smith, Jr. (from 14 Dec)
1stLt Harry H. Saltzman (from 11 Feb 1952)
Capt Thomas P. O'Callaghan (from 23 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Company H
1stLt William C. Airheart (to 19 Jan 1951)
Capt James A. Hoey, Jr. (from 20 Jan)
Capt Reed T. King (from 5 Jun)
1stLt Dwight A. Young (from 4 Aug)
Capt Clayton A. Lodoen (from 9 Nov)
1stLt William B. Stengle (from 22 Feb 1952)
Capt William B. Cosgrove (from 17 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company I
Capt Howard L. Mabie (to 15 Feb 1951)
1stLt Alfred I. Thomas (from 16 Feb)
1stLt Victor Stoyanow (from 29 Mar)
1stLt Frank N. Winfrey (from 5 Jun)

1stLt Thomas N. Preston (from 20 Jun)
1stLt Richard L. Shell (from 23 Jul)
Maj Hildeburn R. Martin (from 5 Sep)
Capt Clifford G. Moore (from 14 Sep)
1stLt Charles H. Hammett (from 27 Dec)
1stLt Hubert McEntyre (from 2 Mar 1952)
Capt Gifford S. Horton (from 9 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Weapons Company

Maj Jefferson D. Smith, Jr. (to 16 Feb 1951)
Capt Howard L. Mabie (from 17 Feb)
1stLt Frederick Van Brunt (from 8 Apr)
Capt Howard L. Mabie (from 19 Apr)
Maj James J. Bott (from 4 Jun)
1stLt Alfred I. Thomas (from 4 Jul)
Capt Claudie "M" Hollingsworth (from 8 Jul)
Capt William C. Airheart (from 12 Aug)
Capt Theodore E. Metzger (from 4 Nov)
Capt Thomas P. O'Callaghan (from 27 Dec)
1stLt Louis A. Mann (from 22 Feb 1952)

11th Marines

Commanding Officer

LtCol Carl A. Youngdale (to 5 Mar 1951)
Col Joseph L. Winecoff (from 6 Mar)
Col Custis Burton, Jr. (from 5 Aug)
Col Bruce T. Hemphill (from 17 Nov)
Col Frederick P. Henderson (from 27 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer

LtCol Douglas A. Reeve (to 5 Mar 1951)
LtCol Carl A. Youngdale (from 6 Mar)
LtCol Douglas A. Reeve (from 7 May)
LtCol Merritt Adelman (from 13 Jun)
LtCol Albert H. Potter (from 15 Aug)
LtCol Lewis A. Jones (from 23 Nov)

S-1

Maj Floyd M. McCorkle (to 10 Jun 1951.)
Capt Arthur L. Jackson (from 11 Jun)
1stLt Jessie R. Collins (from 2 Oct)

S-2

Capt William T. Phillips (to 26 Aug 1951)

Capt Vernon K. Ausherman (from 27 Aug)

Capt Phillip A. Schloss, Jr. (from 17 Dec)

Capt Marshall R. Hunter, Jr. (from 20 Feb 1952)

S-3

LtCol James O. Appleyard (to 19 Jul 1951)

LtCol William H. Gilliam (from 20 Jul)

LtCol William F. Pala (from 18 Nov)

S-4

Maj Donald V. Anderson (to 5 Feb 1951)

Maj Thomas M. Coggins (from 6 Feb)

Maj Benjamin W. Muntz (from 23 Jul)

Capt Robert B. Carney (from 14 Sep)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery

Capt Clarence E. Hixon (to 7 Apr 1951)

1stLt Thomas C. Thompson (from 8 Apr)

Capt Richard L. McDaniel (from 22 Aug)

Maj Claudie “M” Hollingsworth (from 24 Sep)

2dLt Chester E. Reese (from 17 Nov)

1stLt Samuel S. Rockwood (from 9 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Service Battery

Maj Thomas M. Coggins (to 5 Feb 195l)

1stLt Fred Rea (from 6 Feb)

1stLt John F. Gresham (from 21 May)

2dLt Chester E. Reese (from 7 Nov)

Capt Warren G. Hopkins (from 17 Nov)

Capt William B. Tom (from 16 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Battery C, 1st 4.5 Inch Rocket Battalion

1stLt Eugene A. Busche (to 11 Jul 1951)

1stLt Edward A. Bailey (from 12 Jul)

1stLt Stephen R. Mihalic (from 2 Nov)

1stLt Edward J. Pierson (from 30 Mar 1952)

1st Battalion, 11th Marines

Commanding Officer

LtCol Harvey A. Feehan (to 30 Mar 1951)

Maj Thomas F. Cave, Jr. (from 31 Mar)

Maj Gordon R. Worthington (from 8 Aug)
LtCol Sherman W. Parry (from 13 Sep)
LtCol James R. Haynes (from 30 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer
Maj Thomas F. Cave (to 30 Mar 1951)
Maj Gordon R. Worthington (from 31 Mar)
Maj George J. Kovich, Jr. (from 8 Aug)
Maj Harold E. Nelson (from 17 Sep)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery
Capt Haskell C. Baker (to 2 Jan 1951)
Capt Arnold C. Hofstetter (from 3 Jan)
Capt Alonzo C. Thorson (from 3 May)
Capt John McCaffrey (from 2 Jul)
Capt Rodman E. Street (from 17 Oct)
1stLt Charles D. Branson (from 26 Dec)
1stLt Harley “B” Riley (from 1 Feb 1952)
1stLt Joseph P. McDermott, Jr. (from 26 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Service Battery
Capt Arnold C. Hofstetter (to 1 Jan 1951)
1stLt Kenneth H. Quelch (from 2 Jan)
Capt Philip D. Higby (from 1 Mar)
Capt Mont G. Kenney (from 9 Jul)
Capt Mansfield L. Clinnick (from 9 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Battery A
Capt James D. Jordan (to 1 Apr 1951)
Capt Mont G. Kenney (from 2 Apr)
Capt Philip D. Higby (from 10 Jul)
Capt Joseph A. Goeke (from 22 Jul)
1stLt Richard J. Randolph, Jr. (from 11 Sep)
1stLt Robert O. Martin, Jr. (from 3 Oct)
Capt Duane W. Skow (from 9 Nov)
Capt Rodman E. Street (from 24 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Battery B
Capt Gilbert N. Powell (to 12 Jun 1951)
Capt Charles D. Corpening (from 13 Jun)
Capt Leslie C. Procter, Jr. (from 27 Aug)
1stLt Donald T. Clark (from 13 Dec)
1stLt Jefferson S. Smith (from 1 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Battery C

Capt William J. Nichols, Jr. (to 14 Feb 1951)

Capt Haskell C. Baker (from 15 Feb)

Capt Glenn L. Tole (from 14 Jul)

Capt Mansfield L. Clinnick (from 12 Sep)

1stLt Harold H. Ramsour (from 5 Jan 1952)

Capt James C. Gasser (from 26 Mar 1952)

2d Battalion, 11th Marines

Commanding Officer

Maj Francis R. Schlesinger (to 4 Mar 1951)

Maj Jack C. Newell (from 5 Mar)

LtCol Merritt Adelman (from 14 Mar)

LtCol Dale H. Heely (from 13 Jun)

LtCol George B. Thomas (from 1 Jan 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj Neal C. Newell (to 15 Mar 1951)

Maj Bruce E. Keith (from 16 Mar)

Maj Horace W. Card, Jr. (from 12 May)

Maj Peter J. Mulroney (from 4 Aug)

Maj Claudie “M” Hollingsworth (from 14 Aug)

Maj Frank W. Keith (from 11 Sep)

Maj James R. Haynes (from 1 Nov)

Maj Peter J. Mulroney (from 29 Nov)

Maj James R. Haynes (from 15 Dec)

Maj Morris R. Snead (from 29 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery

Capt George J. Batson, Jr. (to 27 Jun 1951)

1stLt Howard A. Blancheri (from 28 Jun)

Capt Raymond D. Spicer (from 3 Oct)

1stLt John J. Scollay (from 29 Oct)

2dLt Arthur H. Westing (from 15 Jan 1952)

2dLt John E. Buynak (from 16 Feb)

1stLt Ivan B. Clevinger (from 13 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Service Battery

Capt Herbert R. Merrick, Jr. (to 24 Feb 1951)

Capt William D. Gibson (from 25 Feb)

1stLt Walter L. Blocker (from 30 Jun)

Capt Robert N. Kreider (from 20 Jul)
1stLt Robert E. Santee (from 6 Oct)
1stLt Donald F. Schaller (from 3 Feb 1952)
1stLt James W. Bell (from 16 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Battery D
Capt Richard E. Roach (to 18 Mar 1951)
Capt William D. Stubbs, Jr. (from 19 Mar)
Capt Walter L. Blocker, Jr. (from 4 Aug)
1stLt John M. Hoben (from 4 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Battery E
Capt Richard N. Aufmann (to 25 Feb 1951)
Capt Herbert R. Merrick, Jr. (from 26 Feb)
Capt Robt. E. Dawson (from 2 Apr)
Capt Herbert R. Merrick, Jr. (from 27 Apr)
Capt George J. Batson, Jr. (from 28 Jun)
1stLt Albert "G" Harris, III (from 7 Aug)
Capt Raymond D. Spicer (from 11 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Battery F
1st Lt Howard A. Blancheri (to 20 Jan 1951)
Capt George J. Kovich, Jr. (from 21 Jan)
Capt Robert E. Dawson (from 3 May)
Capt William D. Gibson (from 30 Jun)
1stLt James F. Shea (from 13 Aug)
1stLt James W. Bell (from 8 Nov)
Capt Robert E. Dawson (from 24 Nov)
Capt John S. Adamson (from 24 Dec)
1stLt Frederick A. Koch, Jr. (from 31 Dec)

3d Battalion, 11th Marines

Commanding Officer
LtCol Francis F. Parry (to 6 Feb 1951)
LtCol William McReynolds (from 7 Feb)
Maj James R. Haynes (from 6 Sep)
LtCol James F. Coady (from 23 Oct)
LtCol Henry E. Barnes (from 2 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer
Maj Norman A. Miller, Jr. (to 14 Jul 1951)
Maj Stephen K. Pawloski (from 15 Jul)

Maj James R. Haynes (from 16 Aug)
Maj Carl A. Neilson (from 6 Sep)
Maj Richard H. Jeschke, Jr. (from 1 Dec)
Maj Charles A. Lipot (from 4 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery

1stLt John J. Brackett (to 20 Jan 1951)
1stLt Eugene H. Brown (from 21 Jan)
1stLt Robert C. Cameron (from 6 Apr)
Capt Donald H. Campbell (from 21 May)
1stLt Robert H. Maurer (from 2 Aug)
1stLt Thomas E. Driscoll (from 18 Aug)
1stLt Hugh W. Manning (from 6 Sep)
2dLt John B. Buynak (from 7 Oct)
Capt Thomas L. Sullivan (from 20 Nov)
2dLt Thomas P. McGeeney, Jr. (from 3 Jan 1952)
2dLt Albert E. Shaw, Jr. (from 19 Feb)
1stLt William A. Barton, Jr. (from 14 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Service Battery

Capt Samuel A. Hannah (to 25 Feb 1951)
1stLt Lawrence T. Kane (from 26 Feb)
1stLt David D. Metcalf (from 4 Apr)
Capt Arthur S. Tarkington (from 10 Sep)
Capt Charles J. Small (from 27 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Battery G

Capt Ernest W. Payne (to 14 Jul 1951)
Capt Arthur S. Tarkington (from 15 Jul)
1stLt Arthur H. Fugalsoe (from 6 Sep)
1stLt Mervyn E. Kerstner (from 11 Sep)
1stLt Arthur H. Fugalsoe (from 15 Sep)
1stLt Edward S. McCabe (from 1 Nov)
1stLt Joseph M. Vosmik (from 13 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Battery H

Capt Mason D. McQuiston (to 24 Aug 1951)
Capt David D. Metcalf (from 25 Aug)
1stLt William A. Barton, Jr. (from 1 Nov)
1stLt George E. Chambers, Jr. (from 21 Jan 1952)
1stLt Russell E. Blagg (from 17 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Battery I

Capt Robert T. Patterson, Jr. (to 13 Jun 1951)
Capt Floyd R. Jaggears (from 14 Jun)
Capt Donald H. Campbell (from 2 Aug)
1stLt Homer C. Wright (from 12 Aug)
Capt Donald H. Campbell (from 25 Aug)
1stLt Homer C. Wright (from 9 Sep)
1stLt Charles R. Davidson, Jr. (from 19 Feb 1952)

4th Battalion, 11th Marines

Commanding Officer

Maj William McReynolds (to 6 Feb 1951)
Maj Maurice J. Coffey (from 7 Feb)
Maj Norman A. Miller, Jr. (from 16 Jul)
LtCol Louis A. Jones (from 6 Sep)
LtCol William M. Gilliam (from 24 Nov)

Executive Officer

Maj Maurice J. Coffey (to 6 Feb 1951)
Maj Donald V. Anderson (from 7 Feb)
Maj Bernard W. Giebler (from 17 Aug)
LtCol Bruce F. Hillan (from 24 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Battery

1stLt Michael B. Wier (to 10 Jun 1951)
1stLt Frank P. Zarzeka (from 11 Jun)
1stLt Arthur Coburn (from 21 Aug)
1stLt Paul R. Joyce (from 28 Aug)
1stLt Thomas C. Thompson, Jr. (from 25 Nov)
1stLt Earl C. Senter (from 10 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Service Battery

Capt Aldor B. Elmquist (to 9 Jun 1951)
1stLt Matthew J. Dennin (from 10 Jun)
1stLt William A. Mazzarella (from 1 Jul)
Capt Matthew J. Dennin (from 2 Sep)
Capt Eugene A. Frank (from 8 Sep)
Capt Matthew J. Dennin (from 16 Oct)
1stLt Leland B. Elton (from 19 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Battery K

Capt Arthur D. Challacombe, Jr. (to 4 Aug 1951)
1stLt Albert E. Coffeen (from 5 Aug)

1stLt Paul M. Rice (from 23 Dec)
1stLt William L. Jesse (from 17 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Battery L
Capt Armond G. Daddazio (to 15 Apr 1951)
Capt Eugene A. Frank (from 16 Apr)
Capt William M. Sigler, Jr. (from 7 Sep)
1stLt Dennis Manko (from 28 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Battery M
Capt Vernon W. Shapiro (to 3 Feb 1951)
Capt Charles E. Walker (from 14 Feb)
Capt Walter E. Magon (from 18 Jun)
1stLt George C. Briggs, Jr. (from 28 Nov)
1stLt Louis M. Dunklin (from 10 Feb 1952)
1stLt Billy J. White (from 18 Mar)

1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion

Commanding Officer
LtCol Erwin F. Wann, Jr. (to 26 Sep 1951)
LtCol Michiel Dobervich (from 27 Sep)

Executive Officer
Maj Arthur J. Barrett (to 14 Sep 1951)
Maj William L. Eubank (from 15 Sep)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company
Capt Frank E. Granucci (to 12 Jun 1951)
Capt Lawrence H. Woods (from 13 Jun)
Capt Thomas J. Melcher (from 15 Sep)
1stLt Richard R. Myers (from 9 Jan 1952)
1stLt William H. Gatlin (from 10 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company A
Maj James P. Treadwell (to 6 Apr 1951)
Maj Thomas H. Boler (from 7 Apr)
Capt Harry A. Steinmeyer (from 1 May)
Capt Dudley F. McGeehan (from 17 May)
Capt Robert L. Stuford (from 10 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company B
Capt Russell Hamlet (to 11 Apr 1951)
Capt Dudley F. McGeehan (from 12 Apr)
Capt John C. Crawley (from 17 May)

Capt Carl L. Hill (from 10 Jun)
Capt Harold W. Stroschein (from 1 Jan 1952)
Capt Samuel L. Eddy (from 10 Jan)

Commanding Officer, Company C
Maj Arthur J. Noonan (to 8 Aug 1951)
Maj William L. Eubank (from 9 Aug)
Maj Edward C. Nelson (from 10 Sep)
Capt Samuel L. Eddy (from 19 Dec)
Capt Robert T. Johnson (from 9 Jan 1952)

1st Armored Amphibian Battalion

Commanding Officer
LtCol Francis H. Cooper (to 15 Jun 1951)
Maj George M. Warnke (from 16 Jun)
LtCol John T. O'Neill (from 2 Oct)

Executive Officer
Maj Richard G. Warga (to 7 Apr 1951)
Maj George M. Warnke (from 8 Apr)
Maj Bernard G. Thobe (from 16 Jun)
Maj Robert J. Murphy (from 1 Oct)
Maj David Young (from 6 Jan 1952)
LtCol James L. Jones (from 29 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company
Capt Roger B. Thompson (to 10 May 1951)
1stLt Jean T. Fox (from 11 May)
Capt Richard P. Greene (from 18 Jun)
1stLt Edward J. Sullivan (from 12 Oct)
2dLt Newton C. Tullis (from 2 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company A
Capt Bernard G. Thobe (to 25 Apr 1951)
1stLt Clyde P. Guy (from 26 Apr)
Maj Rex Z. Michael, Jr. (from 5 Sep)
Maj David Foos (from 3 Oct)

Commanding Officer, Company B
Capt Lewis E. Bolts (to 26 Jun 1951)
Maj Ralph H. Platt (from 27 Jun)
Maj John M. Scarborough (from 3 Oct)
Capt John B. Harney (from 10 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Service Company

Capt Rex Z. Michael, Jr. (to 4 Sep 1951)

1stLt Presley K. Saine (from 5 Sep)

2dLt John A. Boone (from 5 Nov)

Capt William H. Chandler (from 16 Mar 1952)

1st Combat Service Group

Commanding Officer

Col John N. Cook, Jr. (to 10 Jun 1951)

LtCol John M. Brickley (from 10 Jun)

Col Joseph P. Sayers (from 9 Aug)

Col Russell N. Jordahl (from 30 Sep)

Executive Officer

LtCol Edward A. Clark (to 17 Jan 1951)

LtCol Randolph S. D. Lockwood (from 18 Jan)

LtCol John H. Brickley (from 9 May)

Maj Murray F. Rose (from 11 Jun)

LtCol Robert K. McClelland (from 17 Aug)

Maj John R. Blackett (from 1 Sep)

LtCol Robert T. Stivers (from 22 Oct)

LtCol James G. Kelly (from 6 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company

Capt Francis L. Miller (to 11 Apr 1951)

Capt Raymond E. Wase (from 12 Apr)

Capt Billie G. Hagan (from 19 Apr)

Capt George M. Zellick (from 22 Jul)

1stLt William P. Lacy (from 21 Sep)

Capt James H. Shaw (from 15 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Maintenance Company

Maj Edward H. Voorhees (to 19 May 1951)

1stLt Donald M. Dackins (from 20 May)

Maj Berny L. Thurman (from 3 Sep)

Capt Warren H. Allen (from 25 Nov)

Maj John R. Blackett (from 31 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Supply Company

Maj Robert W. Hengesbach (to 17 Apr 1951)

Capt Bernard L. Keiter (from 18 Apr)

1stLt John Spiropoulas (from 24 Nov)

Maj William D. Porter (from 29 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Support Company

Maj Donald B. Cooley, Jr. (to 22 Jan 1951)

Maj James T. Breen (from 23 Jan)

Maj Mason H. Morse (from 10 Oct)

Maj Howard T. Pittman (from 4 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Truck Company

Capt Jack W. Temple (to 10 Jun 1951)

1stLt Cecil C. Spencer (from 11 Jun)

1stLt Frank W. Dickel (from 7 Jul)

1stLt James H. Shaw (from 8 Sep)

Capt Jacob Stocker (from 24 Sep)

Commanding Officer, 1st Fumigation and Bath Platoon

1stLt James L. Dumas (to 14 Aug 1951)

1stLt Raymond S. Eason (from 15 Aug)

1stLt Roger B. Meade (from 6 Sep)

Commanding Officer, 1st Air Delivery Platoon

Capt Hersel D. C. Blasingame (to 10 Jun 1951)

2dLt Robert C. Morton (from 11 Jun)

CWO John T. Eakes (from 26 Jun)

1stLt William A. Reavis (from 30 Dec)

2dLt William S. Daniels (from 7 Feb 1952)

1st Engineer Battalion

Commanding Officer

LtCol John H. Partridge (to 10 Jun 1951)

LtCol John V. Kelsey (from 11 Jun)

Executive Officer

Maj Richard M. Elliott (to 1 Feb 1951)

Maj Emile P. Moses, Jr. (from 2 Feb)

Maj Grover C. Williams (from 4 Aug)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company

Capt Edward D. Newton (to 24 Mar 1951)

1stLt Gerald W. Wade (from 25 Mar)

1stLt Lee A. Kirstein (from 16 Jun)

Capt Leonard L. Schultz (from 22 Aug)

Capt Donald F. Draeger (from 24 Nov)

Capt Robert W. Hurley (from 20 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Service Company

Capt Phillip A. Terrell, Jr. (to 25 Mar 1951)

Maj Richard M. Elliott (from 26 Mar)

Maj Louis L. Ball (from 6 Sep)

Capt Thirl D. Johnson (from 10 Jan 1952)

1stLt Arthur L. Rourke (from 9 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company A

Capt William B. Gould (to 20 Apr 1951)

Capt Harold R. Gingher (from 21 Apr)

1stLt George L. Bowman (from 15 Jun)

1stLt Floyd L. Vuillemot (from 1 Oct)

Capt Walter L. Hill (from 5 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Company B

Capt Orville L. Bibb (to 25 Mar 1951)

Capt Phillip A. Terrill, Jr. (from 26 Mar 1951)

1stLt Gerald W. Wade (from 17 Oct)

1stLt Clyde R. Kolahan (from 1 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company C

Capt Lester G. Harmon (to 15 Aug 1951)

1stLt Robert L. Brown (from 16 Aug)

1stLt Robert J. Hickson (from 4 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Company D

Capt Byron C. Turner (to 30 May 1951)

Capt Edward D. Newton (from 31 May)

Capt Thirl D. Johnson (from 29 Jun)

1stLt Lee A. Kirstein (from 23 Sep)

1stLt John J. Killelea (from 23 Dec)

1st Medical Battalion

Commanding Officer

Cdr Howard A. Johnson, USN (to 22 Jan 1951)

Cdr Clifford A. Stevenson, USN (from 23 Jan)

Cdr Richard Lawrence, Jr., USN (from 23 Sep)

Executive Officer

Cdr William S. Francis, USN (to 8 Jan 1951)

LtCdr Gustave T. Anderson, USN (from 9 Jan)

Cdr George A. Schlesinger, USN (from 4 Jul)

Cdr Lewis E. Rector, USN (from 9 Aug)

LtCdr Merrill W. Rusher, USN (from 28 Oct)

Cdr James C. Luce, USN (from 28 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

Cdr William S. Francis, USN (to 8 Jan 1951)

LtCdr Gustav T. Anderson, USN (from 9 Jan)

Cdr Lewis E. Rector, USN (from 7 Jun)

Cdr George C. Schlesinger, USN (from 4 Jul)

Cdr Lewis E. Rector, USN (from 9 Aug)

LtCdr Merrill W. Rusher, USN (from 28 Oct)

Lt Edgar F. Bechtel, USN (from 16 Dec)

Lt(jg) Charles P. Richardson, USN (from 21 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company A

Cdr Byron E. Bassham, USN (to 3 Mar 1951)

Cdr Philip L. Nova, USN (from 4 Mar)

Cdr James A. Addison, USN (from 18 Apr)

LtCdr Arvin T. Henderson, USN (from 22 Sep)

Commanding Officer, Company B

LtCdr James A. Kaufman, USN (to 12 Jun 1951)

LtCdr Francis M. Morgan, USN (from 13 Jun)

Lt James F. Mumma, USN (from 11 Aug)

Lt Robert Fahrner, USN (from 17 Sep)

Lt John T. St. Mary, USN (from 20 Sep)

Lt(jg) Leroy F. Von Lackum, USN (from 15 Oct)

LtCdr Merrill W. Rusher, USN (from 8 Nov)

CWO William R. Lipscomb, USN (from 27 Nov)

WO Clarence B. Mohler, USN (from 7 Dec)

WO William R. Stanberry, USN (from 22 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company C

Cdr Harold A. Streit, USN (to 8 Jan 1951)

Cdr Lewis E. Rector, USN (from 9 Jan)

LtCdr Merrill W. Rusher, USN (from 6 Jun)

Lt John P. McDonald, USN (from 28 Oct)

LtCdr Merrill W. Rusher, USN (from 27 Nov)

Lt(jg) Thaddeus H. Doggett, USN (from 26 Dec)

LtCdr James A. McLaughlin, USN (from 11 Jan 1952)

Lt(jg) Thaddeus H. Doggett, USN (from 7 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Company D

LtCdr Gustave J. Anderson, USN (to 7 Jan 1951)

LtCdr Daniel M. Pino, USN (from 8 Jan)
Lt(jg) Hermes C. Grillo, USN (from 10 Aug)
Lt (jg) Powell H. Perkins, USN (from 8 Dec)
LtCdr James A. McLaughlin, USN (from 6 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company E
LtCdr Charles K. Holloway, USN (to 8 Jan 1951)
LtCdr John H. Cheffey, USN (from 9 Jan)
LtCdr Robert G. Allen, USN (from 13 Jun)
Lt Robert J. Fahrner, USN (from 9 Sep)
LtCdr Clifford R. Hall, USN (from 17 Oct)

1st Motor Transport Battalion

Commanding Officer
LtCol Olin L. Beall (to 15 Mar 1951)
LtCol John R. Barreiro, Jr. (from 16 Mar)
LtCol Howard E. Wertman (from 18 Aug)

Executive Officer
Maj John R. Barreiro, Jr. (to 15 Mar 1951)
Maj Edward L. Roberts (from 16 Mar)
Maj Eero Nori (from 6 Aug)
Capt Howard Dismeier (from 3 Feb 1952)
Maj Raymond L. Luckel (from 7 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company
Capt George B. Loveday (to 4 May 1951)
1stLt John C. O'Connell (from 5 May)
2dLt Walter R. Gustafson (from 21 Jul)
1stLt John C. O'Connell (from 17 Aug)
Capt Seneker Woll (from 1 Sep)
1stLt Eldon F. Kennedy (from 9 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company A
Capt Arthur W. Ecklund (to 3 May 1951)
1stLt Mildridge E. Mangum (from 4 May)
Capt Arnold T. Reed (from 4 Sep)
1stLt Walter A. Knopp (from 30 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company B
Capt James C. Camp, Jr. (to 9 Aug 1951)
1stLt Marshall "A" Webb, Jr. (from 10 Aug)
1stLt Gerald W. Gruber (from 13 Sep)

Commanding Officer, Company C

1stLt Norman E. Stow (to 15 Aug 1951)

Capt Joe P. England (from 16 Aug)

Commanding Officer, Company D

1stLt William D. Pothoff (to 8 Oct 1951)

1stLt Eldon F. Kennedy (from 9 Oct)

Capt Leroy P. Oetter (from 17 Oct)

Commanding Officer, Automotive Support Company

1stLt Mildridge E. Mangum (to 16 Feb 1951)

Capt Walter J. Desel, Jr. (from 17 Feb)

1stLt Marshall "A" Webb, Jr. (from 14 May)

Capt Leon Serkin (from 1 Aug)

Capt Charles R. Godwin (from 4 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Automotive Maintenance Company

Maj Edward L. Roberts (to 15 Mar 1951)

Capt Victor E. Sellers (from 16 Mar)

Capt Ira N. Hayes (from 10 Apr)

Capt Harold L. Mayfield (from 3 Aug)

Maj Marion D. Grush (from 5 Nov)

7th Motor Transport Battalion

Commanding Officer

LtCol Carl J. Cagle (to 1 Oct 1951)

Maj Walter R. O'Quinn (from 2 Oct)

Maj Herbert E. Pierce (from 3 Jan 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj Vernon A. Tuson (to 26 Jul 1951)

Capt Joseph L. Bunker (from 27 Jul)

Maj Walter R. O'Quinn (from 19 Sep)

Maj Ben Sutts (from 2 Oct)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

2dLt Henry F. Finney (to 13 Jan 1951)

2dLt Palmer B. Fordham (from 14 Jan)

1stLt Richard J. Keeling (from 10 Feb)

1stLt Earl H. Johnson (from 10 Apr)

1stLt Louis C. Tauber (from 13 Aug)

1stLt Kenneth F. Smith (from 1 Sep)

Capt John J. Wilkinson (from 1 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company A

Capt Ira N. Hayes (to 8 Apr 1951)

1stLt Landon E. Christian (from 9 Apr)

Capt Robert B. Stone (from 8 Aug)

Capt John J. Wilkinson (from 1 Sep)

Capt Kenneth F. Smith (from 1 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company B

Capt Clovis M. Jones (to 11 Mar 1951)

1stLt Lawrence C. Norton (from 12 Mar)

1stLt John B. Wilson (from 1 Sep)

1stLt Clyde H. Loveday, Jr. (from 15 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company C

Capt Fred B. Rogers (to 16 Apr 1951)

1stLt Oscar A. Bosma (from 17 Apr)

1stLt Richard C. O'Dowd (from 6 Jun)

Capt Roscoe C. Hibbard (from 23 Nov)

Capt Clifton G. Moore (from 28 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company D

Capt Joseph L. Bunker (to 26 Jul 1951)

1stLt Hubert J. Thomas (from 27 Jul)

1stLt Clyde H, Stratton (from 1 Sep)

Capt Clyde H. Stratton (from 1 Jan 1952)

1st Ordnance Battalion

Commanding Officer

Maj Lloyd O. Williams (to 31 Aug 1951)

Maj Harold C. Borth (from 1 Sep)

Executive Officer

Maj Samuel A. Johnstone, Jr. (to 5 Jul 1951)

Capt Theodore Tunis (from 6 Jul)

Capt Gordon H. Moore (from 1 Aug)

Maj Harold C. Borth (from 13 Aug)

Maj Eugene Anderson (from 1 Sep)

Capt Thomas J. Belt, Jr. (from 1 Jan 1952)

Capt Frederick V. Osborn (from 6 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company

Capt Gordon H. Moore (to 9 Sep 1951)

2dLt Willie B. Hayter, Jr. (from 10 Sep)

1stLt Henry “H” Best, Jr. (from 7 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Ordnance Supply Company

1stLt Victor F. Brown (to 10 Aug 1951)

Capt Simon W. Vevurka (from 11 Aug)

Capt Thomas J. Belt (from 1 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Ammunition Company

Capt Richard W. Sinclair (to 6 Apr 1951)

Capt Robert C. Holder (from 7 Apr)

Capt David A. Malinsky (from 12 Sep)

Capt Chester D. Brown, Jr. (from 4 Jan 1952)

Capt Cecil B. Smith (from 21 Feb)

Commanding Officer, Ordnance Maintenance Company

Capt George L. Williams (to 15 Aug 1951)

Maj James H. Pierce (from 16 Aug)

1stLt Charles B. Haslam (from 10 Dec)

Capt William E. L. Donner (from 20 Jan 1952)

Capt Dwight H. Sawin, Jr. (from 17 Mar)

1st Service Battalion

Commanding Officer

LtCol Charles L. Banks (to 11 Jan 1951)

Col Gould P. Groves (from 12 Jan)

LtCol Horace E. Knapp (from 27 Mar)

LtCol Woodrow M. Kessler (from 6 Jul)

LtCol Bernard W. McLean (from 3 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj John R. Stone (to 18 Jun 1951)

Capt Victor E. Johnson, Jr. (from 19 Jun)

Maj Louis G. Monville (from 3 Jul)

Maj George E. Allison (from 18 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company

Capt Morse “L” Holladay (to 20 Jan 1951)

1stLt Robert E. Follendorf (from 21 Jan)

1stLt James B. Lichtenberger (from 3 Sep)

1stLt Peter N. Pappas (from 10 Oct)

Capt John E. Welch (from 31 Dec)

1stLt Joseph D. Walker (from 10 Jan 1952)

1stLt Harry H. Saltzman (from 10 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Supply Company

Capt Robert A. Morehead (to 13 Apr 1951)

Capt George K. Reid (from 14 Apr)

Capt Hayward M. Friedrich (from 27 May)

Capt Milton W. Magee (from 6 Jun)

Maj James R. Fury (from 13 Aug)

Capt Warren G. Hopkins (from 26 Dec)

Capt John H. Tomlinson (from 11 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Support Company

Capt Thomas M. Sagar (to 22 Jan 1951)

Capt Morse "L" Holladay (from 23 Jan)

1stLt Victor E. Johnson (from 30 Mar)

Capt Hayward M. Friedrich (from 7 Jun)

1stLt Glenn P. Gasaway (from 2 Jul)

1stLt Robert W. Blum (from 3 Sep)

Capt Robert E. Moyer (from 1 Oct)

1stLt Jack A. Mackenzie (from 13 Nov)

1stLt Carlton R. Appleby (from 21 Dec)

1stLt Barry D. Diamond (from 8 Jan 1952)

Capt Seneker Woll (from 10 Mar)

1st Shore Party Battalion

Commanding Officer

LtCol Henry P. Crowe (to 10 May 1951)

LtCol Horace H. Figuers (from 11 May)

LtCol Harry W. Edwards (from 17 Jul)

LtCol George G. Pafford (from 29 Sep)

LtCol Franklin B. Nihart (from 20 Dec)

LtCol Warren S. Sivertsen (from 9 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer

LtCol Horace H. Figuers (to 10 May 1951)

Maj John G. Dibble (from 11 May)

Maj Frederick F. Draper (from 7 Aug)

Maj Joseph T. Smith, Jr. (from 6 Sep)

Maj Frederick F. Draper (from 7 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company

Maj James I. Glendinning, Jr. (to 2 Jan 1951)

Maj George A. Smith (from 3 Jan)

Maj Burt A. Lewis (from 19 May)
Maj William T. Miller (from 20 Jun)
1stLt Robert H. During (from 20 Aug)
Maj Edson W. Card (from 29 Aug)
Maj Paul R. Nugent (from 12 Sep)
Capt Quentin H. Kravig (from 19 Jan 1952)

Commanding Officer, Company A
Maj Charles E. Ingram (to 1 Jul 1951)
Maj Orville L. Bibb (from 2 Jul)
Capt Calvin Wall (from 10 Aug)

Commanding Officer, Company B
Maj Henry Brezinski (to 17 Jun 1951)
Capt William A. Reno (from 18 Jun)
Maj Charles E. Ingram (from 3 Jul)
Maj George W. Ellis, Jr. (from 29 Jul)
Capt Francis V. Clifford (from 8 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company C
Maj Murray F. Rose (to 9 Jun 1951)
Capt Henry J. Jadrich (from 10 Jun)
Maj Burt A. Lewis, Jr. (from 21 Jun)
Maj Edson W. Card (from 4 Aug)
Capt William A. Reno (from 29 Aug)
Maj Edson W. Card (from 8 Sep)
Capt Robert T. Weis (from 12 Dec)

1st Signal Battalion

Commanding Officer
LtCol Robert L. Schreier (to 6 Apr 1951)
Maj Richard A. Glaeser (from 7 Apr)
Maj Alton L. Hicks (from 31 Aug)
LtCol John E. Morris (from 20 Oct)

Executive Officer
Maj Elwyn M. Stimson (to 9 Mar 1951)
Maj Richard A. Glaeser (from 10 Mar)
Capt Marion J. Griffin (from 7 Apr)
Maj Robert W. Nelson (from 20 Apr)
Maj Alton L. Hicks (from 20 Oct)
Maj Ernest C. Bennett (from 12 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company

2dLt Merle W. Allen (to 1 Mar 1951)

1stLt Raymond B. Spicer (from 2 Mar)

2dLt Richard D. Alexander (from 18 Jun)

1stLt Frank J. Cerny (from 16 Aug)

Commanding Officer, Signal Company

Maj Richard A. Glaeser (to 8 Mar 1951)

Capt John H. McGuire (from 9 Mar)

Maj Harold S. Hill (from 17 Aug)

Maj Bolish J. Kozak (from 1 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, ANGLICO

Maj Frederick N. Steinhauser (to 24 Oct 1951)

Maj Walter R. Miller (from 25 Oct)

LtCol Alton L. Hicks (from 13 Feb 1952)

1st Tank Battalion

Commanding Officer

LtCol Harry T. Milne (to 21 Apr 1951)

LtCol Holly H. Evans (from 22 Apr)

Maj Walter E. Reynolds, Jr. (from 9 Feb 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj Philip C. Morell (to 2 Sep 1951)

Maj Walter E. Reynolds, Jr. (from 3 Sep)

Maj Edward C. Nelson, Jr. (from 9 Feb 1952)

Commanding Officer, Headquarters Company

1stLt John B. Lund (to 21 Sep 1951)

Capt Robert S. Grether (from 22 Sep)

1stLt Jack D. Sheldon (from 10 Mar 1952)

Commanding Officer, Service Company

Maj Douglas E. Haberlie (to 3 Jul 1951)

Maj George W. Bubb (from 4 Jul)

Maj Edward C. Nelson (from 27 Dec)

Capt Robt. H. Vogel (from 9 Feb 1952)

Commanding, Officer, Company A

1stLt Robert J. Craig (to 20 Jan 1951)

Maj Arthur M. Hale (from 21 Jan)

Capt Robert M. Krippner (from 31 Mar)

Capt John E. Scanlon (from 17 Apr)

Capt Joseph W. Luker (from 14 Jun)
Capt Robert S. Grether (from 3 Sep)
Capt Albert W. Snell (from 21 Sep)
1stLt William E. Young (from 19 Feb 1952)
Capt Milton L. Raphael (from 10 Mar)

Commanding Officer, Company B
Capt Bruce F. Williams (to 1 Jul 1951)
Capt Paul F. Curtis (from 2 Jul)
Capt John E. Lund (from 2 Oct)
1stLt Paul A. Wood (from 5 Nov)
Capt Jack J. Jackson (from 29 Dec)

Commanding Officer, Company C
Capt Richard M. Taylor (to 5 Aug 1951)
Maj Walter Moore (from 6 Aug)
Capt Thomas W. Clark (From 21 Nov)

Commanding Officer, Company D
Capt Joseph W. Malcolm, Jr. (to 2 Sep 1951)
Capt James L. Carey (from 3 Sep)
Capt Charles A. Sooter (from 28 Nov)

Marine Observation Squadron 6

Commanding Officer
Maj Vincent J. Gottschalk (to 31 Mar 1951)
Capt Clarence W. Parkins (from 1 Apr)
Maj David W. McFarland (from 5 Apr)
Maj Allan H. Ringblom (from 6 Oct)
Maj Edward R. Polgrean (from 1 Nov)
Maj Kenneth G. Smedley (from 1 Feb 1952)
Maj William G. MacLean, Jr. (from 11 Feb)
LtCol William T. Herring (from 27 Feb)

Executive Officer
Capt Andrew L. McVicars (to 13 Jan 1951)
Capt Clarence W. Parkins (from 14 Jan)
Capt Kenneth C. Smedley (from 21 Jul)
Maj William G. MacLean, Jr. (from 21 Nov)

Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 161

Commanding Officer

LtCol George W. Herring (to 17 Dec 1951)

Col Keith B. McCutcheon (from 18 Dec)

Executive Officer

Maj William P. Mitchell (to 19 Mar 1952)

Maj James R. Dyer (from 20 Mar)

First Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW), 1 January 1951-31 March 1952

Commanding General

MajGen Field Harris (to 28 May 1951)

BrigGen Thomas J. Cushman (from 29 May)

MajGen Christian F. Schilt (from 27 Jul)

Asst Commanding General

BrigGen Thomas J. Cushman (to 28 May 1951)

BrigGen William O. Brice (from 29 May)

BrigGen Frank H. Lamson-Scribner (from 29 Sep)

Chief of Staff

Col Caleb T. Bailey (to 18 Aug 1951)

Col Arthur F. Binney (from 19 Aug)

Col Carson A. Roberts (from 2 Jan 1952)

Col Arthur F. Binney (from 26 Mar)

Asst Chief of Staff, G-1

Col Raymond E. Hopper (to 10 Feb 1951)

Col Alexander G. Bunker (from 11 Feb)

LtCol Owen M. Hines (from 1 Nov)

Col Robert O. Bisson (from 27 Feb 1952)

Asst Chief of Staff, G-2

Col Roger T. Carleson (to 18 Feb 1951)

LtCol Winson V. Crockett (from 19 Feb)

Capt John E. Buckle (from 21 Jun)

Capt William G. Redel (from 1 Aug)

LtCol Chester A. Henry, Jr. (from 1 Sep)

LtCol John W. Stage (from 12 Jan 1952)

Asst Chief of Staff, G-3

Col Edward C. Dyer (to 28 Feb 1951)

LtCol Howard A. York (from 1 Mar)

LtCol Neil R. MacIntyre (from 12 Mar)

Col Rivers J. Morrell, Jr. (from 26 Jun)

Col Stanley W. Trachta (from 19 Aug)

Col Rivers J. Morrell, Jr. (from 7 Sep)
Col Guy M. Morrows (from 14 Sep)
Col Stanley W. Trachta (from 21 Jan 1952)

Asst Chief of Staff, G-4
Col Thomas J. Noon (to 14 May 1951)
Col Wallace T. Breakey (from 15 May)
LtCol Carl M. Longley (from 21 Jul)
Col Luther S. Moore (from 5 Sep)
Col Elmer T. Dorsey (from 7 Jan 1952)
Col Robert E. Galer (from 12 Mar)

Marine Aircraft Group 33 (MAG-33)

Commanding Officer
Col Frank G. Dailey (to 29 Dec 1950)
LtCol Radford C. West (from 30 Dec)
LtCol Paul J. Fontana (from 15 Jan 1951)
LtCol Richard A. Beard, Jr. (acting) (from 2 Apr)
Col Guy M. Morrow (from 9 Apr)
Col Carson A. Roberts (from 31 Jul)
Col Arthur F. Binney (from 2 Jan 1952)
Col Martin A. Severson (from 27 Mar)

Executive Officer
LtCol Richard A. Beard, Jr. (to 18 May 1951)
LtCol James B. Moore (from 19 May)
LtCol Nathan T. Post, Jr. (from 14 Jul)
LtCol John W. Stage (from 2 Sep)
LtCol Nathan T. Post, Jr. (from 12 Jan 1952)
LtCol Vernon O. Ullman (from 6 Feb)

Marine Air Base Squadron 33 (MABS-33)

Commanding Officer
LtCol Nathan T. Post (to 10 Jan 1952)
LtCol Finley T. Clarke, Jr. (from 11 Jan)
Maj Frank P. Barker, Jr. (from 27 Mar)

Executive Officer
Maj George K. Harshbarger (to 24 Apr 1952)

Marine Aircraft Maintenance Squadron 33 (MAMS-33)

Commanding Officer

LtCol Joseph W. Kean, Jr. (2 Dec 1951 to 21 Jan 1952)

Maj Zadik Collier (from 22 Jan)

Executive Officer

Maj Alton C. Bennett (to 4 Dec 1951)

Maj Zadik Collier (from 5 Dec)

Maj Alton C. Bennett (from 22 Jan 1952)

Headquarters Squadron 33 (HQSQ, MAG-33)

Commanding Officer

Capt Grover C. McClure, Jr. (to 14 Apr 1951)

Maj William D. Armstrong (from 15 Apr)

Maj Raymond F. Scherer (from 28 Jul)

Maj Morgan C. Webb, III (from 27 Aug)

Capt Allen R. Schutter (from 27 Mar 1952)

Marine Service Squadron 33 (SMS-33)

(SMS disestablished 1 Dec 1951--concurrently, MABS-33 and MAMS-33 formed.)

Commanding Officer

LtCol James C. Lindsay (to 23 Jan 1951)

Maj Edward J. Montagne (from 24 Jan)

Maj William M. Lundin (from 26 Jan)

Maj Elmer P. Thompson, Jr. (from 1 Apr)

LtCol Allen T. Barnum (from 2 Jul)

LtCol Joseph W. Kean, Jr. (from 12 Nov)

Executive Officer

Maj Edward J. Montagne, Jr. (To 13 Mar 1951. No Exec listed after Montagne was detached sometime in March 1951 until July 1951. Thompson came aboard 13 Mar 1951, which may well be date that Montagne was detached as Exec--however, nothing is recorded to this effect.)

Maj Elmer P. Thompson, Jr. (From 2 Jul. It is quite possible and logical that Thompson was Exec from 13 Mar to 2 Apr 1951--when he became CO.)

Maj George K. Harshbarger (from 7 Aug)

Marine Aircraft Group 12 (MAG-12)

Commanding Officer

Col Boeker C. Batterton (to 28 May 1951)

Col Stanley W. Trachta (from 29 May)

Col Richard C. Mangrum (from 1 Aug)

Col Luther S. Moore (from 2 Jan 1952)

Col Elmer T. Dorsey (from 1 Apr)

Executive Officer

LtCol Donald K. Yost (to 24 Feb 1951)

LtCol Rivers J. Morrell, Jr. (from 25 Feb)

LtCol Richard W. Wyczawski (from 26 Jun)

LtCol William G. Thrash (from 18 Jul)

LtCol Hugh M. Elwood (from 8 Aug)

LtCol Jens C. Aggerbeck, Jr. (from 17 Nov)

LtCol Robert J. Hoey (from 27 Feb 1952)

Headquarters Squadron, (HQSQ, MAG–12)

Commanding Officer

Maj John E. Hays (to 31 Dec 1950)

Capt William E. Lesage (from 1 Jan 1951)

Maj Bradley K. Schwarz (from 4 Apr)

Maj David P. John (from 2 Sep)

Capt Joseph E. Givens (from 9 Oct)

Capt George Byers, Jr. (from 1 Feb 1952)

Marine Service Squadron 12 (SMS-12)

(SMS disestablished 1 Dec 1951--concurrently, MABS-12 and MAMS-12 formed and commissioned.)

Commanding Officer

LtCol Charles E. McLean, Jr. (to 28 Jul 1951)

Maj Perry L. Shuman (from 29 Jul)

Executive Officer

Maj Joseph W. Mackin (to 2 Apr 1951)

Maj Howard W. Bollmann (from 3 Apr)

Maj Raphael Ahern (from 8 Aug)

Maj Robert E. Wall (from 3 Oct)

Marine Air Base Squadron 12 (MABS–12)

(Commissioned 1 Dec 1951.)

Commanding Officer

Maj Perry L. Shuman (To 5 Jan 1952. Narrative of Jan 1952 CD MABS-12 states Shuman det 4 Jan 1952 and Bryson on same date took over as CO. Assumption of command order states that 6 Jan 1952 was date Bryson became CO.)

Maj Robert L. Bryson (from 6 Jan)

LtCol Carl M. Longley (from 1 Mar)

Executive Officer

Maj Floyd C. Kirkpatrick (to 18 Dec 1951)

Maj Robert L. Bryson (from 19 Dec)

Maj Floyd C. Kirkpatrick (from 6 Jan 1952)

Maj Robert A. Collett (from 1 Mar)

Marine Aircraft Maintenance Squadron 12 (MAMS–12)

(Commissioned 1 Dec 1951.)

Commanding Officer

Maj Robert E. Wall (to 10 Feb 1952)

LtCol Carl M. Longley (from 11 Feb)

LtCol Joseph A. Gray (from 1 Mar)

Executive Officer

Capt Kenneth A. Anderson (to 26 Dec 1951)

Maj "S" "D" G. Peterson (from 27 Dec)

Maj Robert E. Wall (From Feb/Mar 1952. The dates for Peterson and Wall are from the Station Lists. The diary records nothing--except in the case of Beatty [20 Feb 1952]--that would either prove or disprove these dates as being correct.)

Marine Wing Service Squadron 1 (MWSS–1; decommissioned 1 Jul 1953) and

Marine Wing Service Group 17 (MWSG-17; commissioned 1 Jul 1953)

Commanding Officer

CWO Aubrey D. Taylor (to 23 Jan 1951)

LtCol James C. Lindsay (from 24 Jan)

Col Roger T. Carleson (from 19 Feb)

Col Elmer T. Dorsey (from 9 Sep)

Col John Wehle (from 7 Jan 1952)

Executive Officer

None shown prior to 19 Feb 1951.

LtCol James C. Lindsay (to 16 Jul 1951)

LtCol Alton D. Gould (from 17 Jul)

Maj Edward J. McGee (from 13 Nov)

LtCol Robert M. Haynes (from 2 Dec)

LtCol Birney B. Truitt (from 15 Mar 1952)

Marine Ground Control Intercept Squadron 1 (MGCIS-1)

Commanding Officer

Maj Harold E. Allen (to 10 Jun 1951)
LtCol Manual Brilliant (from 11 Jun)
Maj Edward R. Polgrean (from 18 Aug)
LtCol William T. Herring (from 18 Sep)
Maj Milton M. Cook (from 1 Feb 1952)
LtCol Herbert D. Raymond, Jr. (from 16 Feb)
Maj Fred A, Steele (from 28 Mar)

Executive Officer
Maj Richard Hey, Jr. (to 3 Apr 1951)
Maj Casper F. Hegner (from 4 Apr)
Maj Edward R. Polgrean (from 31 Jul)
Maj William T. Porter (from 21 Nov)
Maj Milton M. Cook, Jr. (from 11 Dec)
Maj Marvin R. Bridges, Jr. (from 2 Feb 1952)
Maj Fred A. Steele (from 16 Feb)
Maj Marvin R. Bridges, Jr. (from 28 Mar)

Marine Transport Squadron 152 (VMR-152)
Commanding Officer
Col Deane C. Roberts (to 15 Jul 1951)
LtCol John S. Carter (from 16 Jul)
Col William B. Steiner (from 27 Jul)

Marine Fighter Squadron 212 (VMF-212)
(Redesignated Marine Attack Squadron 212 [VMA-212] on 10 Jun 1952.)
Commanding Officer
LtCol Richard W. Wyczawski (to 9 Mar 1951)
LtCol Claude H. Welch (from 10 Mar)
LtCol Manual Brilliant (from 21 Aug)
LtCol Joseph A. Gray (from 11 Dec)
LtCol Robert L. Bryson (from 1 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer
Maj Elmer P. Thompson, Jr. (to 18 Mar 1951)
Maj Edward J. Montagne, Jr. (from 19 Mar)
Maj Joseph W. Mackin (from 13 Apr)
Maj Floyd C. Kirkpatrick (from 16 Jul)
Maj William H. Rankin (from 20 Sep)
Maj Robert A. Collett (from 11 Dec)

Maj Richard B. Elliott (from 23 Feb 1952)

1st 90mm AAA Gun Battalion
(Arrived Pusan, Korea, on 29 Aug 1951.)
Battalion Commander
LtCol Charles W. May (KIA) (to 21 Dec 1951)
LtCol Kenneth P. Dunkle (from 22 Dec)
Col John F. Dunlap (from 30 Jan 1952)
Col Max C. Chapman (from 23 Mar)
Executive Officer
Maj Kenneth P. Dunkle (to 21 Dec 1951)
None shown 22-25 Dec 1951.
Maj David H. Simmons (from 26 Dec)
LtCol Kenneth P. Dunkle (from 30 Jan 1952)

Marine Fighter Squadron 311 (VMF-311)
Commanding Officer
LtCol Neil R. MacIntyre (to 10 Mar 1951)
LtCol John F. Kinney (from 11 Mar)
Maj Frank S. Hoffecker (from 28 Jul)
LtCol James B. Moore (from 1 Aug)
LtCol John S. Payne (from 1 Dec)
LtCol Darrell D. Irwin (from 27 Feb 1952)
Executive Officer
Maj John R. Stack (to 20 Feb 1951)
Maj Samuel Richards, Jr. (from 21 Feb)
Maj Samuel B. Folsom, Jr. (From Apr. The absence of a specific date indicates that no specific date of assignment is shown in unit records.)
Maj Frank S. Hoffecker, Jr. (from 1 Jun) (KIA)
Maj Frank C. Drury (from 25 Aug)
Maj Carroll E. McCullah (from 1 Jan 1952)
Maj Jay E. McDonald (from 16 Feb)

Marine Night-Fighter Squadron 513 (VMF(N)-513)
Commanding Officer
LtCol David C. Wolfe (to 22 Feb 1951)
LtCol James R. Anderson (from 23 Feb)
LtCol Robert R. Davis (from 1 Jul)

LtCol Allen T. Barnum (from 22 Nov)

Maj Frank H. Simonds (from 1 Feb 1952)

LtCol John R. Burnett (from 1 Mar)

Executive Officer

Maj Albert L. Clark (to 18 Dec 1950)

Maj George B. Herlihy (from 19 Dec)

Maj William G. Johnson (From Feb 1951. The absence of specific dates indicates that no specific assignment dates can be found in existing records.)

Maj Evans C. Carlson (from 23 Apr)

Maj John E. Reynolds (from 7 May)

Maj Leo F. Tatro, Jr. (from 25 Aug)

Maj Judson C. Richardson, Jr. (MIA) (from 4 Oct)

Maj Frank H. Simonds (from 14 Dec)

Maj Leroy T. Frey (from 1 Feb 1952)

Maj Frank H. Simonds (from 1 Mar)

Marine Night-Fighter Squadron 542 (VMF(N)-542)

Commanding Officer

LtCol Max J. Volcansek, Jr. (to 5 Feb 1951)

LtCol James R. Anderson (from 6 Feb)

Maj Albert L. Clark (From 23 Feb. VMF(N)-542: At sea bound for United States 12-21 Mar 1951--arrived El Toro on 24 Mar 1951.)

LtCol Peter D. Lambrecht (from 24 Mar)

Executive Officer

Maj Robert T. Whitten (to 23 Jan 1951)

LtCol James R. Anderson (from 24 Jan)

Marine Fighter Squadron 323 (VMF-323)

(Redesignated Marine Attack Squadron 323 [VMA-323] on 30 Jun 1952.)

Commanding Officer

Maj Arnold A. Lund (to 24 Jan 1951)

Maj Stanley S. Nicolay (from 25 Jan)

Maj Donald L. Clark (from 1 Mar)

Maj Charles M. Kunz (from 3 May)

LtCol George F. Vaughan (from 25 Sep)

Maj John L. Dexter (from 26 Oct)

LtCol Richard L. Blume (from 16 Jan 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj Robert E. Johnson (to 31 Jan 1951)
Maj Donald L. Clark (from 1 Feb)
Maj Wilbur F. Evans, Jr. (from 1 Mar)
Maj John L. Dexter (from 7 Jul)
Maj Floyd C. Kirkpatrick (from 25 Oct)
Maj Andrew J. Voyles (from 22 Nov)
Maj Howard E. Cook (from 18 Dec)
Maj Herbert D. Raymond, Jr. (from 13 Jan 1952)
Maj Howard E. Cook (from 14 Feb)
Maj William A. Weir (from 16 Mar)

Marine Air Control Group 2 (MACG-2)
(Arrived in Korea 11 Apr 1951.)
Commanding Officer
LtCol Manual Brilliant (from 10 Apr 1951)
Col Edwin P. Pennebaker, Jr. (from 30 Apr)
Col Martin A. Severson (from 1 Jan 1952)
Col Frederick R. Payne, Jr. (from 1 Mar)
Executive Officer
None shown during period LtCol Brilliant was CO.
LtCol Manual Brilliant (from 30 Apr 1951)
LtCol Joseph W. Kean (from 10 Jun)
LtCol Robert R. Davis (from 4 Dec)
LtCol Russell D. Rupp (from 6 Feb 1952)

Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron 2 (MTACS-2)
Commanding Officer
Maj Christian C. Lee (to 30 Apr 1951)
Maj James A. Etheridge (from 1 May)
Maj Milton M. Cook, Jr. (from 6 May)
Maj Wade W. Larkin (from 28 May)
LtCol Henry W. Bransom (from 25 Jun)
LtCol Hensley Williams (from 1 Dec 1951)
Executive Officer
Maj Harlen E. Hood (to Mar/Apr 1951)
Maj James A. Etheridge (From 26 Apr. His date of attachment is vague.)
Maj Wade W. Larkin (from 1 May)
Maj Milton M. Cook, Jr. (from 28 May)

Maj Clinton E. Jones (from 23 Sep)

Marine Ground Control Intercept Squadron 3 (MGCIS-3)
Commanding Officer
Maj Raymond H. George (to 15 Feb 1951)
Maj Jack R. Moore (from 16 Feb)
LtCol Hoyle R. Barr (from 1 Nov)
LtCol Owen W. Hines (from 2 Mar 1952)
Executive Officer
Maj David M. Hudson (to 15 Aug 1951)
Maj Daniel L. Cummings (from 16 Aug)
Maj James H. Foster (from 17 Feb 1952)

Marine Attack Squadron 121 (VMA-121)
(Departed El Toro-2 Oct 1951 for Korea; 21 Oct 1951 reported to CG, 1stMAW, for duty; 22 Oct 1951 CO arrived Pohang [K-3], Korea.)
Commanding Officer
LtCol Alfred N. Gordon (KIA) (to 17 Nov 1951)
Maj Frank P. Barker, Jr. (from 18 Nov)
LtCol Phillip B. May (from 1 Dec)
LtCol William A. Houston, Jr. (from 15 Mar 1952)
Executive Officer
Maj Frank P. Barker, Jr. (to 17 Nov 1951)
Maj Edward B. Harrison (from 18 Nov)
Maj Frank P. Barker, Jr. (from 1 Dec)
Maj Edward B. Harrison (from 1 Jan 1952)
Maj Richard J. Flynn, Jr. (from 15 Feb)
Maj Henry W. Horst (from 26 Mar)

Marine Fighter Squadron 214 (VMF-214)
Commanding Officer
Maj William M. Lundin (to 25 Jan 1951)
Maj James A. Feeley, Jr. (from 26 Jan)
Maj Edward Ochoa (from 5 May)
LtCol James W. Poindexter (from 16 May)
Maj Charles M. Kunz (From 4 Nov. VMF-214 departed Korea for Itami on 4 Nov 1951--en route to United States (El Toro) aboard the *Lenawee*, 8-27 Nov 1951.)
Executive Officer

Maj Edward Ochoa (to 31 Jan 1951)
Maj Hugh B. Calahan (from 1 Feb)
Maj Herbert C. Langenfeld (From 1 Jun. Records do not indicate specific date.)

Marine Fighter Squadron 115 (VMF-115)
(Arrived Pohang [K-3], Korea, on 25 Feb 1952.)
Commanding Officer
LtCol Thomas M. Coles (25 Feb-20 May 1952)
Executive Officer
Maj Conrad G. Winter (25 Feb-26 Apr 1952)

Marine Fighter Squadron (VMF-312)
(Redesignated Marine Attack Squadron [VMA-312] on 1 Mar 1952.)
Commanding Officer
LtCol "J" Frank Cole (to 28 Jan 1951)
Maj Donald P. Frame (KIA) (from 29 Jan)
Maj Frank H. Presley (from 4 Apr)
Maj Edward J. McGee (from 20 Jun)
LtCol Harry W. Reed (KIA) (from 22 Jul)
Maj Edward J. McGee (from 31 Jul)
LtCol Russell D. Rupp (from 15 Aug)
LtCol Joe H. McGlothlin, Jr. (from 8 Jan 1952)
Executive Officer
Maj Frank H. Presley (to 3 Apr 1951)
Capt Phillip C. DeLong (from 4 Apr)
Maj Robert J. Shelley, Jr. (from 22 Jun)
Maj Edward J. McGee (from 22 Jul)
Maj Robert J. Shelley, Jr. (from 31 Jul)
Maj Edward J. McGee (from 4 Aug)
Maj James H. Crutchfield (KIA) (from 25 Oct)
Maj Jay W. Hubbard (from 4 Nov)
Maj Richard J. Webster (From 19 Dec. Records do not indicate specific date.)
Maj Fred A. Steele (From Jan 1952. Records do not indicate specific date.)
Maj Alexander S. Walker, Jr. (from 28 Jan)
Maj Edmond P. Hartsock (from 30 Mar)

Photographic Unit
(Commissioned Marine Photographic Squadron 1 [VMJ-1] on 25 Feb 1952.)

Commanding Officer

Maj Donald S. Bush (to 14 Jun 1951)

Maj Edgar L. Smith (from 15 Jun)

Maj James W. Dougherty (from 27 Jul)

Capt Edward A. Fitzgerald (from 29 Oct)

LtCol Alton D. Gould (from 12 Nov)

Maj Robert R. Read (from 26 Mar 1952)

Executive Officer

Maj Robert R. Read (to 25 Mar 1952)

Maj Albert E. James (from 26 Mar)

HQSQ, 1st MAW

Commanding Officer

Capt Earl B. Sumerlin, Jr. (to 12 Jan 1951)

Maj John A. Reeder (from 13 Jan)

Capt Edwin H. McCaleb, III (from 17 Jun)

Maj Herbert C. Langenfeld (from 11 Oct)

Maj Earl C. Miles (from 2 Dec)

The East-Central Front
Lynn Montross, Hubard D. Kuokka and Norman W. Hicks

Appendix D. Unit Citations

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

FIRST MARINE DIVISION, REINFORCED

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in Korea during the periods 21 to 26 April, 16 May to 30 June, and 11 to 25 September 1951. Spearheading the first counteroffensive in the spring of 1951, the First Marine Division, Reinforced, engaged the enemy in the mountainous center of Korea in a brilliant series of actions unparalleled in the history of the Marine Corps, destroying and routing hostile forces with an unrelenting drive of seventy miles north from Wonju. During the period 21 to 26 April, the full force of the enemy counteroffensive was met by the Division, north of the Hwachon Reservoir. Although major units flanking the Marine Division were destroyed or driven back by the force of this attack, the Division held firm against the attackers, repelling the onslaught from three directions and preventing the encirclement of the key center of the lines. Following a rapid regrouping of friendly forces in close contact with the enemy, the First Marine Division, Reinforced, was committed into the flanks of the massive enemy penetiation and, from 16 May to 30 June, was locked in violent and crucial battle which resulted in the enemy being driven back to the north with disastrous losses to his forces in the number of killed, wounded and captured. Carrying out a series of devastating assaults, the Division succeeded in reducing the enemy's main fortified complex dominating the 38th Parallel. In the final significant offensive of the action in Korea, from 11 to 25 September 1951, the First Marine Division, Reinforced, completed the destruction of the enemy forces in Eastern Korea by advancing the front against a final desperate enemy defense in the 'Punch Bowl' area in heavy action which completed the liberation of South Korea in this locality. With the enemy's major defenses reduced, his forces on the central front decimated, and the advantage of terrain and the tactical initiative passing to friendly forces, he never again recovered sufficiently to resume the offensive in Korea. The outstanding courage, resourcefulness and aggressive fighting spirit of the officers and men of the First Marine Division, Reinforced, reflect the highest credit upon themselves and the United States Naval Service."

The following reinforcing units of the First Marine Division participated in operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea during the cited periods:

FLEET MARINE FORCE UNITS AND DETACHMENTS: "C" Battery, 1st 4.5 Rocket Battalion; 1st Combat Service Group; 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion; 7th Motor Transport Battalion; 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion; "A" Company, 1st Amphibian Truck Battalion (Redesignated 1st Amphibian Truck Company 18 July 1951); Team #1, 1st Provisional Historical Platoon; 1st Fumigation and Bath Platoon; 1st Air Delivery Platoon; Radio Relay Team, 1st Signal Operations Company; Detachment, 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company; 2nd Platoon, Auto Field Maintenance Company; 1st Provisional Truck Company; Detachment, 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company.

UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS: (For such periods not included in Army Unit Awards) 1st Bn, 32d Regt, 7th Inf Div; 7th Inf Div; 74th Truck Co; 513th Truck Co; 1st Ord Medium Maint Co, USA; 3d Plt, 86th Engr Searchlight Co (passed to operational control of 11th Marines); 558th Trans Truck Co (Amphibious, was attached to 7th MT Bn, FMF); 196th Field Arty Bn; 92d Army Engr Searchlight Plt; 181st CIC Det USA; 163d MIS Det

USA; TLO Det USA; UNMACK Civil Affairs Team USA; 61st Engr Co; 159th Field Arty Bn (155 Howitzer); 623d Field Arty Bn; 17th Field Arty Bn "C" Btry; 204th Field Arty Bn "B" Btry; 84th Engr Construction Bn; 1st Bn, 15th US Inf Regt; 1st Bn, 65th US Inf Regt; 1st Bn, 9th Regt, 2d US Div (attached to KPR); Recon Co, 7th US Inf Div; 461st Inf Bn; Heavy Mortars, 7th Inf Div; 204th Field Arty Bn "A" Btry; 69th Field Arty Bn; 64th Field Arty Bn; 8th Field Arty Bn; 90th Field Arty Bn; 21st AAA-AW Bn; 89th Tank Bn; 441st CIC Det, USA; Prov Bn, USA (Dets 31st and 32d RCTS); Co D, 10th Engr (C) Bn, USA; Tank Co, 31st Inf, USA; Hqr Co, 31st Inf, USA; Co B, 1st Bn, 31st Inf, USA; 2d Bn, 31st Inf, USA (less Co E).

For the President,
CHARLES S. THOMAS
Secretary of the Navy

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

FIRST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, REINFORCED

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism in action against enemy aggressor forces in Korea from 8 March to 30 April, 18 May to 30 June, and 3 August to 29 September 1951. Carrying out 'round-the-clock' combat flights during these periods, often under hazardous conditions of weather and terrain, the First Marine Aircraft Wing, Reinforced, provided unparalleled close air support for friendly ground forces, effectively reducing the enemy's power to resist and contributing materially to the sweeping victories achieved by our ground forces. Operating continuously in the most advanced areas under fire, the Wing consistently maintained a high degree of combat readiness and struck savage blows to inflict tremendous damage and heavy casualties upon the enemy. Individually capable and determined, the gallant officers and men of this indomitable team achieved a distinctive combat record during a period of vital operations against a stubborn foe. This record is a lasting tribute to the courage and fighting spirit of all members of the First Marine Aircraft Wing, Reinforced, and reflects the highest credit upon the United States Naval Service."

All organic units (excepting Marine Fighting Squadrons 214 and 323 for the periods 8 March to 30 April 1951 and 18 May to 30 June 1951, and Marine Observation Squadron 6 for the entire three periods) and the following reinforcing units of the First Marine Aircraft Wing participated in operations against enemy aggressor forces in Korea during one or more of the above cited periods: 1st 90mm Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion and Ground Control Approach Unit 41M.

For the President,
CHARLES S. THOMAS

Secretary of the Navy

The East-Central Front
Lynn Montross, Hubard D. Kuokka and Norman W. Hicks

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