Task Force Smith and the 24th Infantry Division in Korea, July 1950

A Monograph

by

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When the 24th Infantry Division deployed to Korea in July 1950 it experienced a series of defeats from 5-20 July in an attempt to delay the invading North Korean People's Army (NKPA). The division suffered devastating losses of men and equipment and was withdrawn from combat because it was no longer capable of effective combat operations. Historians blamed the appalling losses and demoralizing defeats of 5-20 July on poor training, poor equipment, and lazy, ill-disciplined soldiers of an occupation army.

The operational approach and the operational art of the commanders and staffs of the Eight Army and the 24th Infantry Division was the real cause of this reckless waste of American lives. They failed to employ their forces in accordance with their training, experience, and readiness and that of the enemy. Additionally, the gains the 24th Infantry Division achieved in delaying the NKPA were not decisive. The subsequent successful defense of the Pusan Perimeter occurred despite, not because of the 24th ID's delaying operation.

This monograph explores the reasons for the 24th Infantry Division's defeats between 5 and 20 July. Although Eighth Army was not at an optimal state of readiness, it was sufficiently equipped and ready to conduct fundamental operational and tactical tasks. In modern warfare, technology and numerical preponderance are not the primary determinant of results; force employment is the primary cause of victory or defeat. Lastly, this monograph examines the operational art of the 24th Infantry Division and shows the small delays achieved were not decisive. The primary and immediate cause of failure was poor force employment and operational art. The 24th Infantry Division should have been able to delay two reinforced NKPA Infantry Divisions without suffering the devastating losses that it did.

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ABSTRACT

TASK FORCE SMITH AND THE 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN KOREA, JULY 1950 BY MAJ Raymond M. Longabaugh, Army, 57 pages.

When the 24th Infantry Division deployed to Korea in July 1950 it experienced a series of defeats from 5-20 July in an attempt to delay the invading North Korean People's Army (NKPA). The division suffered devastating losses of men and equipment and was withdrawn from combat because it was no longer capable of effective combat operations. Despite the losses, many commanders and historians consider the operation a strategic success. Never the less, historians blamed the appalling losses and demoralizing defeats of 5-20 July on poor training, poor equipment, and lazy, ill-disciplined soldiers of an occupation army. This is a simplistic and remarkably linear understanding of the causes of what happened to the 24th Infantry Division.

The Far East Command developed a sound operational approach to confront the invading North Korean People's Army. General MacArthur intended to take full advantage of his strengths in air, naval and amphibious superiority while capitalizing on North Korean weaknesses and vulnerability to a deep envelopment. However, the shaping operation to delay the NKPA with the 24th Infantry Division was poorly conceived. They based the operation on the illusion that they had no choice but to commit forces piece meal and that the NKPA would run at first sight of American soldiers. The operational approach and the operational art of the commanders and staffs of the Eight Army and the 24th Infantry Division was the real cause of this reckless waste of American lives. They failed to employ their forces in accordance with their training, experience, and readiness and that of the enemy. Additionally, the gains the 24th Infantry Division achieved in delaying the NKPA were not decisive. The subsequent successful defense of the Pusan Perimeter occurred despite, not because of the 24th ID's delaying operation.

This monograph explores the reasons for the 24th Infantry Division's defeats between 5 and 20 July. The most common reasons for the catastrophe, the Eighth Army soldiers, training, and equipment, are evaluated based on the available evidence, much of which has been ignored or vastly under-valued. Although Eighth Army was not at an optimal state of readiness, it was sufficiently equipped and ready to conduct fundamental operational and tactical tasks. In modern warfare, technology and numerical preponderance are not the primary determinant of results; force employment is the primary cause of victory or defeat. Lastly, this monograph examines the operational art of the 24th Infantry Division and shows the small delays achieved were not decisive. The primary and immediate cause of failure was poor force employment and operational art. The 24th Infantry Division should have been able to delay two reinforced NKPA Infantry Divisions without suffering the devastating losses that it did.

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ACRONYMS

FA	Field Artillery
FEC	Far East Command
GLOC	Ground Lines of Communication
ID	Infantry Division
LOC	Lines of Communication
NKPA	North Korean People's Army
UN	United Nations
ROK	Republic of Korea
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
WWII	World War II
1/19th	1st Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division
2/19th	2nt Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division
1/21st	1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division
2/21st	2nd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division
1/34th	1st Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division
2/34th	2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division

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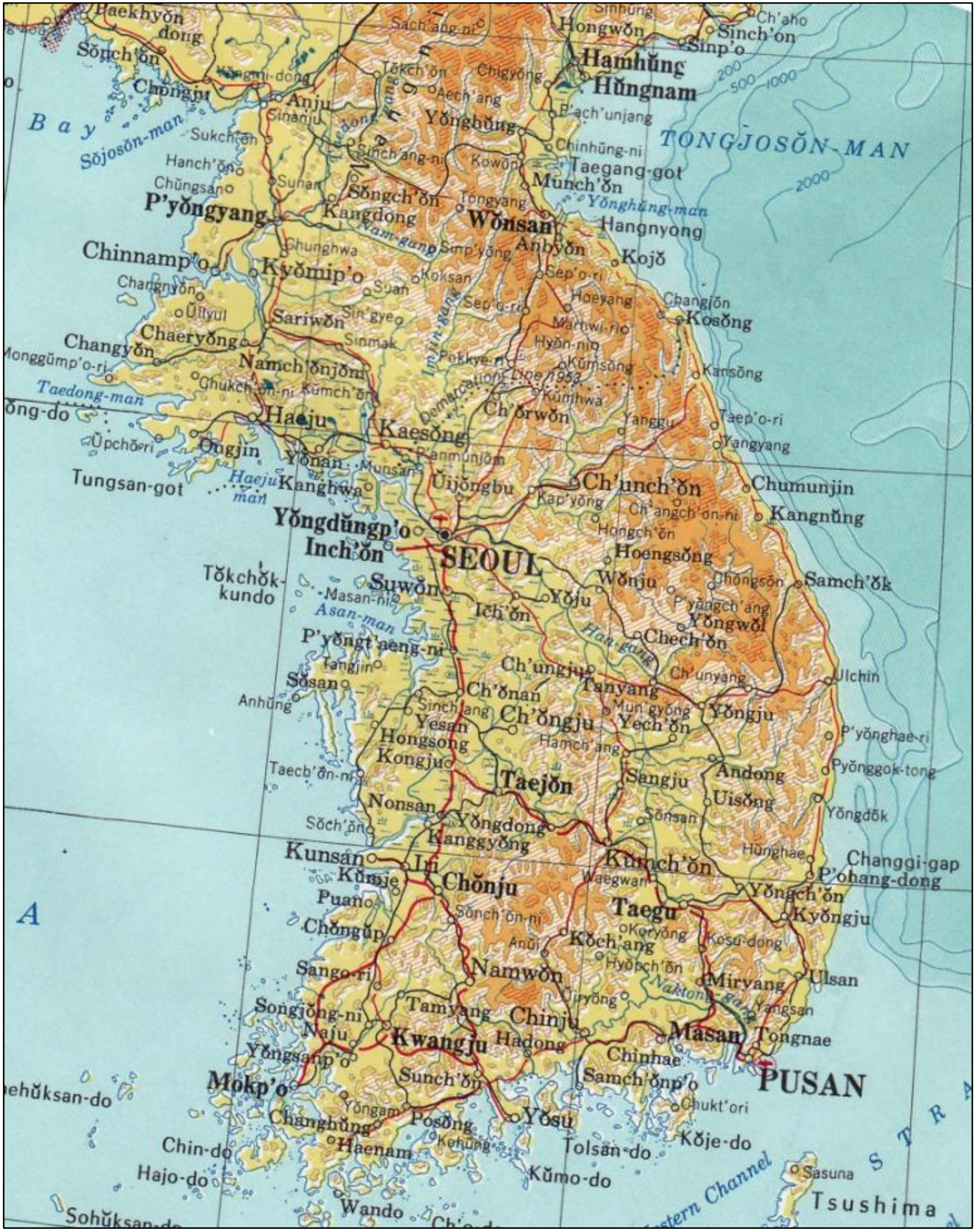

Paekhyŏn dong
Sach'ang-ni
Sinhung
Hongwŏn
Ch'aho
Sinch'on
Sinp'o
Sŏnch'ŏn
Hamhŭng
Hŭngnam
Chŏngju
Anju
Sinanju
Tŏkch'ŏn
Aech'ang
Chigyong
Yŏngbŭng
P'ach'unjang
B a y
Sŏjosŏn-man
Sukch'ŏn
Hanch'ŏn
Ch'ŏngsan
Sunan
Sinch'ang-ni
Kowŏn
Chinhŭng-ni
Taegang-got
Munch'ŏn
TONGJOSŎN-MAN
200
500
1000
2000
P'yŏngyang
Sŏngch'ŏn
Kangdong
Tongyang
Wŏnsan
Yŏnghŭng-man
Hangnyong
Nam-gang
Sinp'yŏng
Anbyŏn
Kojŏ
Chinnamp'o
Kyŏmip'o
Chunghwa
Suan
Koksan
Sep'o-ri
Changnyŏn
Ŭllyul
Sariwŏn
Sin'gye
Sep'o-ri
Hoeyang
Changjŏn
Kosŏng
Imjin-gang
Chaeryŏng
Changyŏn
Sinmak
Marhwi-ri
Hyŏn-ni
Monggŭmp'o-ri
Namch'ŏnjŏm
P'okkye-ri
Kŭmsŏng
Kansŏng
Taedong-man
Chukch'ŏn-ni
Kumch'ŏn
Demarcation Line 1953
Kŭmhwa
Ŏng-do
Haeju
Ch'ŏrwŏn
Yanggu
Taep'o-ri
Ŭpchŏ-ri
Ongjin
Kaesŏng
Yangyang
Yŏnan
P'anmunjŏm
Tungsan-got
Haeju man
Kanghwa
Munsan
Ŭijŏngbu
Ch'unch'ŏn
Chumunjin
Kap'yŏng
Ch'angch'ŏn-ni
Kangnŭng
Yŏngdŭngp'o
Inch'ŏn
SEOUL
Hongch'ŏn
Hoengsŏng
Tŏkchŏk-kundo
Suwŏn
Wŏnju
Chongsŏn
Samch'ŏk
Masan-ni
Ich'ŏn
Yŏju
P'yŏngch'ang
Asan-man
Yŏngwŏl
P'yŏngt'aeng-ni
Han-gang
Chech'ŏn
Tangjin
Ch'ungju
Ch'unyang
Ulchin
Sŏsan
Ch'ŏnan
Tanyang
Anhŭng
Sinch'ang
Mun'gyŏng
Yŏngju
Yesan
Ch'ŏngju
Yech'ŏn
Hongsŏng
Hamch'ang
P'yŏnghae-ri
Kongju
Taech'ŏn-ni
Sangju
Andong
P'yŏnggok-tong
Taejŏn
Uisŏng
Nonsan
Sŏnsan
Yŏngdŏk
Sŏch'ŏn
Yŏngdong
Kanggyŏng
Hŭnghae
Changgi-gap
Kunsan
Iri
Kŭmch'ŏn
P'ohang-dong
Kŭmje
Chŏnju
Waegwan
Yŏngch'ŏn
A
Puan
Taegu
Kyŏngju
Chŏngŭp
Sŏnch'ŏn-ni
Koryŏng
Anŭi
Kŏch'ang
Kosu-dong
Hyŏpch'ŏn
Sango-ri
Namwŏn
Miryang
Ulsan
Naktong-gang
Songjŏng-ni
Tamyang
Ŭiryŏng
Yangsan
Naju
Chinju
Masan
Tongnae
Kwangju
Hadong
Yŏngsanp'o
Chinhae
Sunch'ŏn
Samch'ŏnp'o
PUSAN
Mokp'o
Hŭksan-do
Yŏngam
Chukt'ori
Posŏng
Yŏsu
Changhŭng
Kŏje-do
Kohŭng
Chin-do
Haenam
Tolsan-do
Sasuna
S T R A
Hajo-do
Kŭmo-do
Eastern Channel
Tsushima
Sohŭksan-do
Wando
Ch'o-do

Source: James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1972), Map I, supplemental insert.

> On the actual day of battle naked truths may be picked up for the asking; by the following morning they have already begun to get into their uniforms.
>
> —Ian Hamilton, *A Staff Officer's Scrap-book During the Russo-Japanese War*

Introduction

The Korean War began on 25 June 1950 with a North Korean invasion intent on complete conquest of its southern neighbor, the Republic of Korea. For the US Army the war in Korea began with the 24th Infantry Divisions (24th ID) attempt to delay the advance of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) advancing along the Seoul-Pusan Highway. The first engagement was on 5 July 1950 at Osan and ended two and half weeks later with the fall of Taejon and the near destruction of the 24th ID (24th ID). In sixteen days of fighting, the 24th ID retreated nearly 150 kilometers and suffered devastating losses of men and equipment. The division suffered over 3,600 casualties, lost its commanding general, three regimental commanders, five battalion commanders and nearly all of its heavy weapons and equipment. It was a shocking outcome and a loss rate of 30%, averaging 225 soldiers per day. It was a loss rate greater than Iwo Jima, 174 per day, Okinawa, 152 per day, or Kasserine Pass, 142 per day. The sacrifice of the 24th ID was the equivalent to some of the bloodiest US battles of WWII, including Tarawa, 3,811 casualties, Pearl Harbor, 3,682 casualties, or Omaha Beach, 3,000 casualties.[1]

General Douglas MacArthur, the Far East Commander, believed he had no choice but to deploy Eighth Army forces piecemeal into Korea in order to delay the advancing NKPA.[2] MacArthur and General Walton Walker, the Eighth Army commander, knew its four Army divisions (7th, 24th, and 25th IDs and 1st Cavalry Division) were not combat ready. If they knew this to be true, an important question remains unanswered. Why did MacArthur and Walker employ these units, particularly the 24th ID, as though they were fully combat ready when in fact they knew they were not? General MacArthur called the delaying action of the 24th ID a great strategic victory. Indeed his United Nations forces stopped the North Korean invasion and went on to liberate South Korea. However, even though the 24th ID had conducted a delaying action of sorts, its operations in early July 1950 were not the decisive factor in Eighth Army's eventual operational success. In fact, the effective loss of one third of Eighth Army's combat power probably did more harm than good toward achieving its strategic objectives. The Eighth Army and the Far East Command (FEC) achieved operational and strategic success in spite of the 24th ID's sacrifice, not because of it. Several factors were at least or more important including: the friction and destruction imposed on the NKPA by Fifth Air Force interdiction; the delaying actions of Republic of Korea (ROK) Army divisions in central Korea; the ROK Navy's interception of a North Korean commando raid aimed at the docks of Pusan; the FEC's abundant logistical capabilities and the weakness of the NKPA's logistics apparatus.[3]

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[1] Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu: June-November 1950* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1961), 179-80; Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 141; Richard E. Ecker, *Korean War Chronology: Unit-by-Unit United States Casualty Figures and Medal of Honor Citations* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2005), 10; Kevin Schiele, "American Battles and Casualty Statistics," SCHIELE.US, http://www.schiele.us/battleInfo.asp (accessed 25 March 2014).

[2] Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 335.

Generally, historians attribute the disaster of the 24th ID to a variety of factors. These reasons primarily fall into the categories of poor training, obsolete equipment, skeletal force structure, poor leadership, and Army budget cuts. The Eighth Army that went to Korea in July 1950 has been called totally unprepared, not equipped, trained or mentally prepared for combat. The results of battle and the events that led to it invariably shape the post battle inquiry particularly in the case of disaster. Our knowledge of the outcome distorts the analysis of battle and it is difficult to achieve the necessary detachment that provides veracity. The historian John Shy has noted that we have a "natural tendency to read history backward, to look for the present in the past, neglecting all that for the moment does not seem relevant."[4] That tendency, he explains, destroys the integrity of the past. Blaming the disaster of the 24th ID on the soldiers, their training, and equipment is an oversimplification filled with hyperbole and hasty generalizations.[5]

---

[3] William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas Macarthur, 1880-1964* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company,1978), 555-56; Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came from the North* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 35-37, 83, 91-92, 95-96; Sheila M. Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2013), 79; James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775-1953* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1966), 615-617; Charles R. Shrader, *Communist Logistics in the Korean War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 224; Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War, Volume 1* (Seoul: Korea Institute of Military History, 1997), 191-207; David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hyperion, 2007), 142-43; James A. Field, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1962) 51; Blair, 88; Appleman, 103-04.

The focus on training, equipment, and soldiers, obscures the truth of what caused the disasters of 5-20 July. The reality is far more complex. This monograph will demonstrate that deficiencies in Eighth Army's preparations for combat are general factors that contributed to the destruction of the 24th ID, but are not the immediate cause. This inquiry will examine the traditional reasons such as manpower, equipment and training and also the manner in which General William Dean, the 24th ID commander, employed his forces. Without doubt, the Eighth Army suffered from significant shortcomings. However, the traditional explanations are insufficient to explain the early failures of the 24th ID. General Dean and the 24th ID should have been able to accomplish a same or greater delay with far fewer losses in men and equipment.

The most important and immediate cause of the 24th ID defeats in July 1950 was the failure of Dean and Walker to employ its forces with competent operational art. Dean and Walker did not employ their formations in accordance with their strengths and weaknesses and their sub-optimal readiness and capabilities. Dean developed a flawed operational approach largely based on the faulty assumption that the NKPA would run at the sight of American troops. It was a monumental and fatal error for many soldiers of the 24th ID. Instead of taking prudent risks, as commanders should do they gambled with the lives of their soldiers.[6]

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[4] John Shy, "First Battles in Retrospect," in, *America's First Battles, 1776-1965*, ed. Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 328.

[5] Roy K. Flint, "Task Force Smith and the 24th Division: Delay and Withdrawal, 5-19 July 1950," in, *America's First Battles, 1776-1965*, ed. Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 271-75; T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 2000), 101-02; Halberstam, 138; Appleman 180-81; Shy, 138.

[6] Blair, 93, 97, 115; Halberstam, 145-46.

Eighth Army in Japan - Manning

Between 1946 and 1950, the Army budget was insufficient for the Army's authorized size and its global commitments in the Cold War.[7] After World War II, the Army rapidly demobilized from eighty-nine divisions and 8 million soldiers to less than 1.9 million in 1946 and to ten divisions and 684,000 by 1947. The government and public envisioned the next war almost exclusively as one based on atomic weapons. Accordingly, the United States based its post-war strategy of deterrence on its atomic monopoly. In a strategy that relied heavily on air delivered atomic weapons the Army seemed largely irrelevant. President Harry S. Truman's deep fear of another economic depression and the atomic war mind-set meant that the Army remained underfunded for its mission. The Army's total strength by June 1950 was 591,487, nearly forty-thousand short of its authorized number of 630,201 soldiers.[8]

Despite the chronic budget shortages, the Army made several important organization changes to the infantry division tables of organization based on its wartime experiences. The intent of the changes was to increase the capacity of infantry divisions to conduct independent operations. The Army increased Infantry divisions by over 4,700 personnel compared to their 1945 counter parts. Approximately 90% of the additional personnel and equipment were in the combat arms of infantry, armor, and artillery. Each divisional artillery regiment was increased from forty-eight to seventy-two guns by adding eighteen 105mm and six 155mm howitzers. The Army added a tank battalion and an antiaircraft battalion to each infantry division. At the regimental level, the Army added a tank company as well as a 4.2-inch mortar company and 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles. These additions gave Army infantry divisions a significant increase in firepower, mobility, tactical flexibility, overall combat power and capacity for independent operations (See Figure 1). Unfortunately, Army divisions in June 1950 did not even approach their authorized numbers of personnel and equipment.[9]

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[7] Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life: An Autobiography by the General of the Army* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 473-74, 489; Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 486-87; 501-03

[8] Weigley, *History of the United States Army,* 501-03; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 382-83; Bevin Alexander, *Korea: The First War We Lost* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1986), 47-48; James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1972), 43-45; Thomas E. Hanson, *Combat Ready: The Eighth U.S. Army on the Eve of the Korean War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010), 13, 23-24.

In order to overcome limitations in its budget while maintaining the larger division structure the Army decided to maintain ten divisions with partially reduced skeleton formations. The Army intended, theoretically, to expand the skeleton formation rapidly in time of war. All Army divisions in June 1950, except the 1st ID in Germany, were intentionally undermanned at a level of 12,500 soldiers. In Japan, the four Eighth Army divisions, the 7th, 24th, 25th, and 1st Cavalry (Cavalry in name only, actually a triangular infantry division) were short several thousand soldiers. The three infantry regiments in each division had only two battalions instead of the normal three and the artillery battalions had only two instead of three firing batteries. With two exceptions, the segregated 24th Regiment, 25th Division, had three battalions and the segregated 159th Field Artillery Battalion which had its normal complement of three firing batteries. The medium tank battalion in each division had only one company of light tanks, the regiments did not have their authorized tank company and the antiaircraft battalions had only one battery each. Overall, the forward deployed divisions in Japan were at only 70 percent of their authorized wartime strength of 18,804. A great deal of the missing personnel and equipment were from the combat arms force structure added after World War II.[10]

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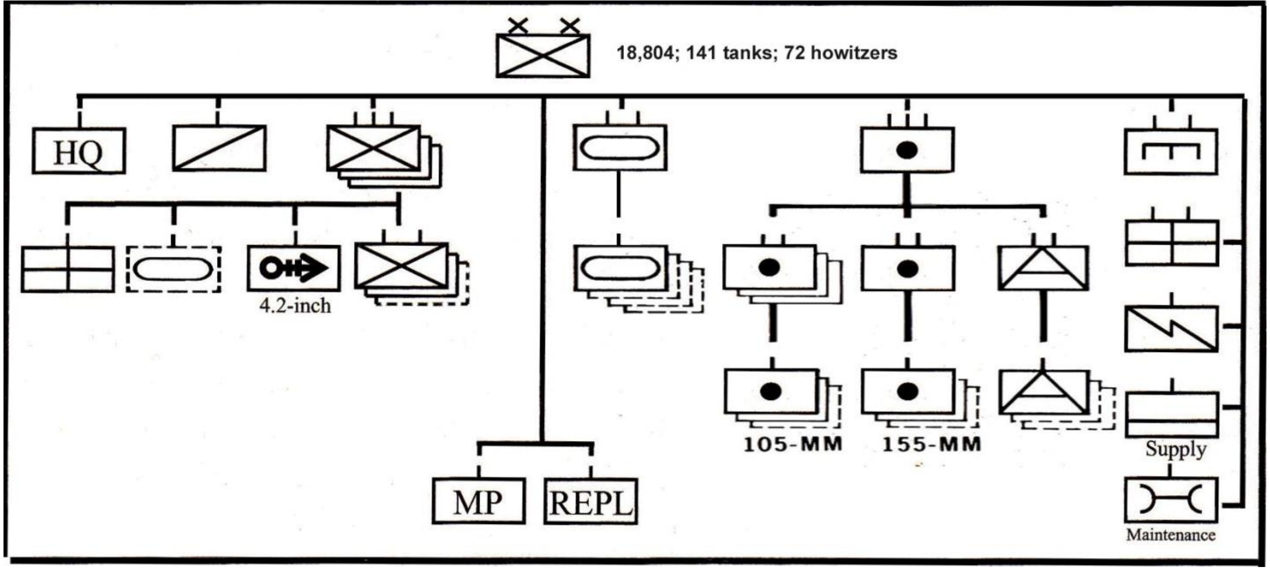
[9] Donald W. Boose, *US Army Forces in the Korean War 1950-53* (New York: Osprey, 2005), 19-22; William G. Robertson, *Counterattack on the Naktong, 1950* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 3-4; Jonathan M. House, "Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20th Century Tactics, Doctrine and Organization," (Research Survey, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 148-49; George Forty, *U.S. Army Handbook 1939-1945* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2003), 69-71; U. S. Department of the Army, *Table of Organization and Equipment, No. 7, Infantry Division* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1945); U. S. Department of the Army, *Table of Organization and Equipment, No. 7N, Infantry Division* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1948); Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 502-03; Hansen, 14.

[10] Appleman, 49-50; Robertson, 4; Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 503; Hansen, 13; Schnabel, 53; Boose, 20; Forty, 69; U.S. Army, *TO&E No. 7*, 1945; U.S. Army, *TO&E No. 7N*, 1948.

Figure 1, US Army Infantry Division, T/O&E 7N, 1948



Source: Adapted from William G. Robertson, *Counterattack on the Naktong, 1950* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 7; Jonathan M. House, "Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20th Century Tactics, Doctrine and Organization," (Research Survey, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1985), 148; U. S. Department of the Army, *Table of Organization and Equipment, No. 7N, Infantry Division* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1948).

Personnel shortages existed in other branches and Eighth Army organizations as well. Far East Command eliminated the I Corps and IX Corps headquarters from its force structure as well as many Corps special troops, such as artillery, engineer, and signal units. Service and technical troops were so short that the Army employed 150,000 Japanese civilians to perform duties normally performed by Army service troops. In June 1950, the total authorized strength of Army troops in the Far East Command was 120,000, but the total strength on hand was only 108,500.[11]

In 1949-50, the Eighth Army also suffered significant turbulence among personnel that hurt unit stability and cohesion. A shortage of personnel, numerous internal reassignments and poor personnel management policies caused an excessive personnel turnover of 43 percent annually. Some rifle squads experienced turnover as high as 50 percent every 60 days. Additionally, Army classification and assignment procedures without reference to branch adversely affected small unit leadership and experience. Starting in 1947, the Army appointed officers and many NCOs without reference to branch. Under the Army's Career Guidance Program, many units received officers and NCOs into directed occupational specialties and could not be placed in command or key billets where needed. The program intended to facilitate career progression by providing greater opportunities to gain wider experience in a variety of command, staff, and technical jobs instead of branch based consecutive assignments. The result was that many officers and NCOs lacked experience and proficiency in their assigned positions of leadership, particularly at the regimental level and below.[12]

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[11] D.M. Giangreco, "Artillery in Korea: Massing Fires and Reinventing the Wheel," (Korean War Anthology, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, No. 03-01, n.d.), 6; Schnabel, 52-54.

The Eighth Army believed the Army sent them a very high percentage of soldiers who scored low on the Army General Classification Test (AGCT), which caused training and discipline problems. The number of soldiers in the Eighth Army that scored in the two lowest categories, Class IV and V, of the AGCT was as high as 43 percent in 1949. This was a cause for concern in Eighth Army in terms of not only training but also discipline and incidents of bad behavior. However, this did not necessarily mean that units could not conduct effective training programs, although some technical specialties probably suffered. In reality, the Eighth Army did not receive more than its share of these soldiers, replacements in Europe had about the same percentage of soldiers in Class IV and V. Low scores on the AGCT was an Army wide problem.[13]

However, the personnel situation was not all bad news. The fact that only 1 percent of all Eighth Army soldiers were draftees partially offset the low aptitude problem. This meant commanders had soldiers with the spirit of volunteers but without the corrosive effects cynical draftees often had on unit morale and cohesion. The Eighth Army also had a high percentage of combat veterans in its ranks. As many as one-third of officers and one-half of non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were WWII veterans.

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[12] Williams T. Bowers, William M. Hammond, and George L. MacGarrigle, *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24th Infantry in Korea* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1996), 61; Millett, 79-81; Schnabel, 54-56; Hansen, 25-26, 34-6, 114-15.

[13] Schnabel, 56; Hansen, 27.

The spirit of the enlistees and the experience of the veterans provided commanders with considerable substance to conduct training and build readiness.[14]

In 1949, the Far East Command attempted to mitigate the problems of personnel turbulence with the Constant Flow Program. The program leveled gains and losses across the Eighth Army and reduced the possibility that a single unit would lose a high proportion of trained and experienced soldiers in any given month. The Army also used the Career Guidance Program (CGP) to prescribe a clear assignment path for Non-commissioned Officers (NCO) and warrant officers in order to build technical proficiency within a defined career field. Soldiers took proficiency exams to measure readiness for promotion and whether the Army retained a soldier at his current rank. This merit-based approach brought a measure of rationalization to enlisted promotions and a clear understanding of the requirements for promotion. Regardless, the Eighth Army was still limited to 12,500 personnel per division. The Constant Flow and CGP programs provided greater stability, predictability and emphasized progressive assignments that built knowledge and experience.[15]

The prevailing view that pre-war Eighth Army soldiers were not a "pampered, undisciplined" constabulary force that had no stomach for combat is fraught with exaggeration and biases.[16] The personnel issues presented a serious but not insurmountable problem for the Far East Command and Eighth Army. The most serious shortcoming was the missing formations and personnel that left the commanders with only two thirds of their maneuver elements and combat power. Army doctrine provided a way to mitigate this problem through ad hoc task organization, although Eighth Army chose not to pursue it. Regardless, the soldiers of the Eighth Army proved as good as their WWII counterparts and fought hard when properly led and employed. Although the average Eighth Army soldier was of low aptitude, young and not well educated, they were motivated and leavened with many combat seasoned officers and NCOs. These same soldiers fought well enough to salvage a precarious operational and strategic situation and eventually liberated South Korea only two months after the defeats of July 1950.[17]

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[14] Flint, in *America's First Battles*, 271; Hansen, 25-26; Schnabel, 61.

[15] Hansen, 25-26, 35-36.

[16] T. R Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History* (Washington: Brassey's, 2000), 84.

Eighth Army in Japan - Equipment

After World War II, the Army's development of new conventional weapons slowed considerably and procurement of new durable items was even slower. Development of most of the Army's post-war weapons and equipment occurred before 1945. This included venerable weapons such as the M1 Garand rifle, the M1918 Browning automatic rifle, the M1919 .30 and M2 .50 caliber machine guns, the M1 81mm and M2 4.2 inch mortars, the M2 105mm howitzer, and the M4A3 tank. Many of the weapons that were in the hands of Eighth Army soldiers saw combat during WWII and were well worn. However, these systems were battle tested, proven, and still effective on the battlefields of 1950 and in many cases superior to those of the NKPA.[18]

The Army had not gone completely to a standstill in acquiring new weapons or improving existing equipment. In fiscal year 1949, the Army spent over $1 billion (approximately $9.7 billion in 2013 dollars) on procurement of supplies, equipment, and the facilities to produce them. For example, the Army acquired several different models of helicopters by 1950, including the Bell H-13, the Hiller H-23, and the Sikorsky H-19. The M26 Pershing tank, introduced at the end of WWII, underwent upgrades with an improved engine and 90mm main gun and renamed the M46 Patton. An upgrade of the M46 Patton to the M47 Patton was in development when the Korean War started and went into production in July 1950. The Army also developed and acquired the 3.5-inch Bazooka to replace the 2.36-inch WWII model. The Army also developed and acquired 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles and added them to the infantry battalion table of organization and equipment. All of these weapons were significant improvements; unfortunately, few new models had reached units in Japan by June 1950 due to slowness or problems in procurement. Equally as unfortunate, the Far East Command intentionally refused the M26 and M46/47 tanks, because they were too heavy for most bridges in Japan.[19]

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[17] Richard Wiersema, "No More Bad Force Myths: A Tactical Study of Regimental Combat in Korea," (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1998), 44-45; Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea, the Untold Story of the War* (New York: Times Books, 1982), 137; Millet, 79-80; Hansen, 2-4.

[18] Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 502-03; Millett, 162-63; Schnabel, 58.

The Eighth Army had ample supply of most basic types of equipment in June 1950, such as rifles, machine guns, artillery, mortars and individual soldier equipment. However, significant shortages existed in heavy construction equipment, the latest radios, recoilless rifles, radar, medium and heavy tanks, and anti-aircraft guns. Overall, the Eighth Army was authorized 540 medium/heavy tanks (M26 Pershing or M4A3 Sherman), in four 69-tank armor battalions (one per division) and twelve 22-tank armor companies (one per infantry regiment). However, only 103 M24 Chaffee light tanks and 25 M4A3 tanks were on hand in June 1950. Each division had only one company of these light tanks assigned, all but one of the M4A3 tanks were unserviceable. Eighth Army was authorized 226 recoilless rifles but had only 21 on hand in June 1950. There were no 3.5-inch bazookas on hand. The lack of medium/heavy tanks and the 3.5-inch bazooka had a significant adverse impact on US operations early in the war, particularly when faced by the T-34/85 tanks of the NKPA.[20]

Despite the shortages noted above, the US Army was as lavishly equipped in 1950 as it was in 1945. Quantitatively speaking, a fully equipped US Army Infantry division dwarfed its North Korean counterpart in nearly every category. A 1950 US Army infantry division was authorized 18,804 soldiers versus 10,935 soldiers of an NKPA infantry division. On paper, US divisions had twice as many small arms, machine guns, anti-aircraft guns, and four and half times as many anti-tank weapons. Additionally, US divisions had twice as many mortars, guns, recoilless rifles, and howitzers, nearly twelve times as many trucks and trailers and 149 more tanks of all types. Even when considering the reduced skeletal formations of US divisions, they still compared favorably with an NKPA infantry division (See Figure 2). The most notable absence was the anti-tank capability provided by the tanks and the 3.5" bazookas, which was a important capability gap in the first several days of the war. Otherwise, a reduced US division had a preponderance of small arms, machine guns, mortars, howitzers and jeeps, trucks and trailers. The US divisions also had significantly more amounts of all types of individual and specialty equipment, including tents, field kitchens, binoculars, compasses, tools, mine detectors and a light aviation company of eighteen aircraft. Another significant advantage was in signal equipment, each US infantry battalion was authorized as many as sixty-five wireless radios, and up to four miles of telephone wire. This was a critical capability almost completely absent from the NKPA infantry battalions. The under strength Eighth Army divisions almost certainly had a quantitative edge in equipment over the NKPA divisions that had already seen ten days of intense combat by 5 July 1950.[21]

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[19] James A. Huston, *Guns and Butter, Powder and Rice: U.S. Army Logistics in the Korean War* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1989), 30; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 625-28.

[20] Blair, 101, 113, 128; Schnabel, 52-54, 84; Huston, *Guns and Butter*, 34-35; Millett, 138-40.

It was not inherently a disadvantage that the Eighth Army used arms and equipment developed prior to 1945. Many weapon systems have lifecycles that last for years or decades. Take for instance the M2 .50 caliber machine gun that is still in service today, virtually unchanged since 1933 and still enormously effective. It was certainly not a comparative disadvantage with the NKPA, which was equipped almost entirely with surplus WWII Soviet equipment and captured Japanese equipment. The US Army's weapons and equipment proved their worthiness on the battlefields of WWII. American infantry soldiers fighting in Korea expressed, almost universally, the positive effectiveness of their small arms, machine guns, mortars, and recoilless rifles. The US Army's artillery had greater average range, projectile weight, and relative firepower than the guns and howitzers found in NKPA divisions. The American M4A3 (76mm gun) tank was at least equal to the NKPA T34/85 (85mm gun) and the M26 and M46 tanks (90mm gun) were clearly superior in terms of firepower, armor, mobility, and reliability. The 3.5-inch bazooka, once it appeared on the battlefield in mid July 1950, proved effective at penetrating the armor of NKPA tanks. Overall, the quality of American weapons and equipment was at least equal or even superior to that of the NKPA.[22]

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[21] Kelly Jordan, "Three Armies in Korea: The Combat Effectiveness of the United States Eighth Army in Korea, July 1950-June 1952" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1999), 102-03; James M. Minnich, *The North Korean People's Army: Origins and Current Tactics* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 41-42; John K. Mahon and Romana Danysch, *Infantry, Part I: Regular Army* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1972), 83; U. S. Department of the Army, *Table of Organization and Equipment, No. 7N, Infantry Division* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1948); Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 479; Shrader, 92-93.

The vast reserves of surplus war materiel made combat operations in Korea possible since there had been so little new procurement of durable items after 1945. Rebuild plants in Japan refurbished large quantities of this surplus materiel, which filled serious shortages of many types of equipment. The US Army sustainment force structure not only re-equipped and sustained battered Eighth Army formations, notably the 24th ID, but also beat-up ROK Army formations. In the first four months of the war the Army's rebuild program refurbished 489,000 small arms, 1,418 artillery guns, 33,416 pieces of fire control equipment, 743 combat vehicles and 15,000 other vehicles.[23] Beyond the materiel aspects were also the practices and procedures used by the Army's logistical services that provided the supply, distribution, maintenance, and refurbishment. These procedures were largely developed and proven on a global scale during WWII. In fact, it is hard to imagine the eventual success of the Eighth Army in Korea without the vast amounts of WWII surplus equipment available in the Far East Command in 1950.[24]

The most serious lack of equipment resulted not from failure of Army procurement, but from the Army's decision to maintain a skeleton peacetime of organization for its divisions. Each division was short over 6,000 personnel, three infantry battalions, six medium tank companies, three 105mm field artillery batteries, one 155mm field artillery battery, and two anti-aircraft battalions. The equipment absent with these formations included over 4,000 rifles, nearly 300 machine guns, nearly 40 mortars, 24 howitzers, and 126 tanks.[25] In real terms, this meant each division could only muster about two thirds of its infantry and artillery firepower and a mere 14 percent of its tank mobility and firepower. The Eighth Army might have mitigated this capability gap by task organizing the available infantry battalions and artillery batteries from regiments not deploying immediately to Korea into the deploying regiments. However, they chose not to do so primarily because many senior leaders thought the war would be over quickly and easily.[26]

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[22] S. L. A. Marshall, *Infantry Operations & Weapons Usage in Korea* (London: Greenhill Books in association with Institute for Research on Small Arms in International Security, 1988), 3, 64-65, 72-73, 87, 93; Paul M. Edwards, *The Korean War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 71-74; Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 507; Minnich, 40-42; Jordan 117-18, 128-31; Appleman, 8-12; Huston, *Guns and Butter*, 174, 191, 391.

[23] Huston, *Sinews of War*, 641.

[24] William J. Flanagan, and Harry L. Mayfield, "Korean War Logistics: The First One Hundred Days, 25 June 1950 to 2 October 1950," (Study Project, U.S. Army War College, 1985), 60; U.S. Army Forces Far East and Eighth Army, G-4, *Logistics Study of the Korean Campaign, 1950-53* (Department of the Army, 1954), 102; U.S. Department of the Army, Office of the Quartermaster General, *Quartermaster Activities Relating to the Korean Conflict, June 1950 - September 1951* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1951), 2-3; Huston, *Sinews of War*, 641, 649; Huston, *Guns and Butter*, 370-71; Schnabel, 58-59.

Much of the anecdotal evidence suggests that Eighth Army equipment was not at an optimal state of readiness in June 1950. Clearly, most of the equipment in Eighth Army hands experienced combat during WWII and it was well worn and sometimes difficult to maintain. A shortage of funds, service personnel, and spare parts made routine and unscheduled maintenance even more difficult to sustain. However, the true extent of the problem is difficult to ascertain with accuracy. The lack of complete data and the lack of reliability in the data that exists provide an incomplete picture of Eighth Army's equipment readiness. Many unit reports both corroborated and contradicted the maintenance situation in other units. In March 1950, the 1st Battalion, 34th Regiment, 24th ID, reported extraordinarily low rates of serviceable individual weapons, less than 35 percent. The 3rd Battalion of the same regiment reported very high serviceable rates, approximately 98 percent, and the 1st Battalion, 19th Regiment, 24th ID, reported 48 percent of its individual weapons serviceable. In June 1950, the Eighth Army Headquarters reported that all the ordnance items it had on hand were at a high state of serviceability, which normally equates to 85-90 percent or better. Therefore, units had the capability to repair weapons rapidly, or their reported data was incorrect and corrected after scrutiny from higher headquarters. It is also possible their reported data simply did not make its way to Eighth Army Headquarters. After the war, an Eighth Army logistics study reported that the lack of qualified technical Quartermaster personnel led directly to inaccurate stock and inventory reporting. Units also suffered equally from a lack of qualified Ordnance personnel. This leads one to believe the logistical reporting in pre-war Japan and the early days of the war was not at a high level of reliability.[27]

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[25] Schnabel, 54.

[26] Schnabel, 54; Robertson, 4; Blair, 93. The segregated 24th Regiment had the normal three infantry battalions and supporting artillery batteries.

Figure 2. Strength & Equipment Comparison of NKPA and US Infantry Divisions

	1950 NKPA Infantry Division	US Army Infantry Division 1948 TO&E	US Army Infantry Division, Japan June 1950
Soldiers	10,935	18,804	12,500
Pistols	1,298	2,794	1,956
Rifles and Carbines	6,089	14,387	10,071
Submachine guns	3,198	638	447
Light Machine Guns	385	572	400
Heavy Machine Guns	162	394	275
AA Machine Guns	24	32	22
Anti-Aircraft Guns		32	22
14.5mm Anti-tank Guns	66		0
45mm Anti-tank Guns	54		0
2.36 inch Rocker Launchers		81	325
3.5 inch Rocket Launchers		465	0
57mm Recoilless Rifles		81	0
75mm Recoilless Rifles		39	0
60mm Mortars		84	58
81/82mm Mortars	81	40	28
120mm Mortars	18		
4.2 inch Mortars		36	25
76mm Guns	24		0
76mm Self Propelled Guns	16		0
76mm Howitzers	12		0
122mm Howitzers	12		0
105mm Howitzers		54	36
155mm Howitzers		18	12
Light, Med, Heavy Tanks		149	22
Trucks/Jeeps, all types	194	2,286	1,600

Source: Created by author with data from, Charles R. Shrader, *Communist Logistics in the Korean War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 36, 93; U. S. Department of the Army, *Table of Organization and Equipment, No. 7N, Infantry Division* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1948).

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[27] U.S. Army Forces Far East and Eighth Army 4th Historical Detachment. "Withdrawal from Taejon: 20 July 1950," After action interviews by Martin Blumenson (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1950), 2LT Augustus Orr; Huston, *Guns and Butter*, 35; Schnabel, 58; Hansen, 40-41; Blair, 92; Hansen, 87-88; Marshall, xviii; U.S. Army Quartermaster General, *Quartermaster Activities*, 122; U.S. Army Force Far East, *Logistics Study*, 11, 76-77.

In late 1950, the Army's Operational Research Office conducted a systematic examination of infantry operations in Korea. One area examined in detail was weapons failures. Their report concluded that not all causes of faults were ascertainable. Primarily because the firers did not check the fault before passing on the weapon or, having cleared the weapon, simply did not know what caused the failure. The report concluded that firers caused 25 percent of all failures because of errors made in the operation of their weapons. The report found that weapons failure is normal aspect of combat and that even well cleaned, oiled, and test fired weapons could fail. Finally, the report also concluded that company commanders did not systematically check and record equipment failures and higher commands did not take a great deal of interest in the subject. As a result, "practically all information sent forward on this subject is incomplete, colored by opinion, and unreliable."[28]

High intensity usage in combat conditions, the austere environment, and improper operator maintenance contributed to the failure rate as much as the design or age of the available equipment. Many units exhibited poor command supply discipline, a lack of emphasis on maintenance and lack of soldier proficiency in the care and maintenance of equipment. Commanders and staffs often failed to employ the available reinforcing ordnance units properly, further reducing the effectiveness of maintenance operations. It is fair to say that in July 1950, units had many things that seemed far more urgent than inspecting and servicing equipment that still fired or operated. The dirt and grime that is inherent to conditions in any combat zone foul weapons and equipment. Soldiers in combat rarely have sufficient time for maintenance and it is unrealistic to expect soldiers will always engage the enemy with clean weapons and perfectly serviced equipment. However, once commanders utilized sustainment forces properly, sufficient technical personnel became available, operator maintenance received sufficient training, and emphasis, pass-back maintenance to the second and third echelons fell dramatically.[29]

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[28] Marshall, xviii, 17-19

[29] Leroy Zimmerman, "Korean War Logistics: Eighth United States Army," (Study Project, U.S. Army War College, 1986), 47; John G. Westover, *Combat Support in Korea: The United States Army in the Korean Conflict* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1955), 129-31; Huston, *Guns and Butter*, 283.

The most common narratives about the Eighth Army's equipment is that it was obsolete, broken and ineffective is simply not true or subject to hyperbole. There is no doubt that when compared division to division, Eighth Army divisions almost certainly had a quantitative advantage in equipment of almost every type, with the only exception being armor and anti-armor capabilities. Although the 24th ID suffered from the absence of the anti-armor capability gap in the engagements of 5-16 July, this gap only lasted for the first several days of the war. By 18 July, the 3.5-inch bazookas began arriving in significant quantities and proved very effective against NKPA tanks. The missing anti-armor capability was the only capability that Eighth Army could not overcome with sound force tailoring and task organization. The Eighth Army equipment, although developed prior to 1945, demonstrated its effectiveness five years earlier on the battlefields of WWII. The Army improved and upgraded many equipment types during the post war years and nearly all of it was equal to or superior to the WWII era equipment of the NKPA. The evidence that Eighth Army equipment was in poor state of readiness is incomplete and unreliable. Anecdotal evidence suggests that much of Eighth Army's equipment was in poor condition and failed at high rates; however, insufficient hard evidence exists to show that failure rates were excessive for combat conditions. The anecdotes of working equipment remain uncounted because they do not make for a dramatic story. The unready equipment theme also does not fit with the ultimate tactical and operational success of the Eight Army in the summer and fall of 1950. The NKPA had far greater problems than the Eighth Army maintaining its hodgepodge of surplus and captured equipment. It is doubtful that the readiness of US equipment, although not optimal by US Army standards, was a comparative disadvantage versus the NKPA.[30]

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[30] Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 479, 502-03; Millett, 162-63; Schnabel, 58, Alexander, 51; Fehrenbach, 101; Appleman, 180; Shrader, 92-93; Jordan, 102-03; Minnich, 41-42, Mahon and Danysch, 83, Huston, *Guns and Butter*, 78-79.

Eighth Army in Japan - Training

Between 1945 and 1949, the primary duty of the Eighth Army was to conduct stability operations throughout Japan and its territories. The Eighth Army lacked a wartime focus in its training program. Units lacked the time or incentive to train for combat operations. Eighth Army soldiers trained on basic individual functions as time and facilities permitted, with emphasis placed on building discipline and unit cohesion.[31] Collective training for combat operations at the battalion level and higher was limited or non-existent during this period. As stability operations progressed in Japan, General MacArthur relaxed the strict nature of the occupation. In March 1949, MacArthur relieved the Eighth Army of many of its purely occupational duties. MacArthur wanted a training program that would rebuild the Far East Command forces into a cohesive and joint air, naval and ground team. Eighth Army's focus changed from occupation duties to training in preparation for combat, specifically for the defense of Japan (there were no contingency plans for the defense of South Korea).[32]

In accordance with MacArthur's intent, General Walton Walker, the Eighth Army commander, and the Eighth Army staff developed a training program to create a combat ready ground force component. In April 1949, Walker promulgated his training guidance in Eighth Army's Training Directive Number Four. Training Directive Number Four brought about an immediate change of emphasis in Eighth Army. The directive emphasized that every soldier's primary duty was to fight or support the fight. Training Directive Number Four was a relatively orthodox program that followed the Army's existing training doctrine. The training program progressed from individual training to collective training up to division level and eventually to joint training with the Air Force and Navy. Units were required to complete individual training and tactical collective training at the squad, platoon, and company level by December 1949. Battalion level collective training and evaluation was required to be complete by May 1950 and Regiments complete by July 1950. Selected infantry battalions were to complete joint amphibious training with Navy and airlift training with the Air Force by October 1950. All units were to receive close air support training with Air Force Tactical Control Parties (TACP). Walker's intent was to have all four Eighth Army divisions combat ready by the end of 1950.[33]

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[31] Schnabel, 54.

[32] Thomas E. Hanson, "The Eighth Army's Combat Readiness Before Korea: A New Appraisal," Armed Forces & Society, 29, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 178; Hansen, *Combat Ready?*, 20; Schnabel, 54-55; Millet, 78; Army Force Far East, *Logistics Study*, 17.

The Eighth Army also required subordinate units, beginning in June 1949, to submit quarterly combat effectiveness reports. Units were required to provide details of training conducted, personnel strength, equipment readiness, unit morale, and obstacles to effective training. These reports provided a framework for commanders to assess their unit's readiness and progress toward their goal and were an important and innovative feedback mechanism for its time. The Army adopted a very similar type of operational readiness report for use throughout the force in late 1950's.[34]

Nearly all Eighth Army recruits arriving in Japan required additional individual training upon their arrival. The Army's basic training course in early 1949 was only eight weeks long, compared to seventeen weeks of basic training during WWII. In response to complaints from the field, the Army increased basic training to fourteen weeks beginning in July 1949, but this block of training did not include any branch specific training. Units were responsible for training soldiers to perform the duties of their military occupation specialty (MOS). Although superior to the eight-week basic training course, it still left soldiers with major shortcomings in their training. Walker's solution for the Eighth Army was to require Regiments to operate basic training courses for all new recruits.[35]

By June 1949, most divisions had completed the individual training, and started collective training. The only exception was the 24th ID, which continued some individual training into September. During the summer of 1949, all the divisions of the Eighth Army began training in earnest with squad and platoons. The training programs varied from unit to unit, but they all included weapons qualification, crew served weapons fire and crew drills, physical training, road marching, and battle drills. Squads and platoons trained on reacting to indirect fire, patrolling, scouting, and assaulting enemy positions. In September and October, divisions validated their rifle squads and regiments began more platoon and company level collective training.[36]

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[33] Robert Frank Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953* (Washington, DC: United States Air Force, 1983), 60-61; Hansen, *Combat Ready?*, 18-19; Schnabel, 55; Blair, 50.

[34] Hanson, *Combat Ready?*, 33.

[35] Schnabel, 45; Hanson, 30; Hanson, "New Appraisal," 170.

Regiments progressed in their collective training through the fall of 1949 and conducted individual refresher training. Some regiments established technical schools to give specialists advanced training. Regiments began evaluating platoon and company level training in October and November. The platoon and company level training included tasks such as occupation of a defensive position, maneuvering at night, combined arms hasty attacks with tanks and indirect fire. All Eighth Army divisions completed the required training and evaluation of company collective training by the end of December.[37]

After validating company level tasks, some regiments began battalion level exercises. The 27th Regiment, 25th ID conducted battalion level defensive and offensive live-fire exercises before the end of December. The battalions of the 24th Regiment, 25th ID each completed a four-day battalion level exercise in December. The 1st battalion of the19th Regiment, 24th ID completed a seven day tactical maneuver and live-fire exercise. The battalions of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division conducted combined arms battalion level offensive and defensive exercises with artillery live fire support.[38]

The level and intensity of training continued and even accelerated during the first half of 1950. In January 1950 and continuing through the spring, the regiments in Eighth Army conducted additional battalion level collective training. The Eighth Army was building toward regiment and division level exercises scheduled for the second half of 1950. In March, the entire 31st Regiment, 7th ID deployed to the Shimamatsu Maneuver Area for a combined arms regimental exercise.[39] The 31st returned in April for more individual and collective training including battalion and regimental command post exercises. The 27th Infantry Regiment conducted more battalion level exercises in February and March, including attack and defend tasks, night attacks and retrograde operations. The 19th Infantry Regiment conducted battalion exercises in January and March including deliberate defense, attack, and counterattack tasks. In May the 1st Battalion, 19th Regiment began six weeks of training and rehearsals for amphibious operations. Between January and June 1950, the battalions of the Eighth Army divisions averaged an impressive seven weeks of collective training in the field. The 24th Regiment sent both its Infantry battalions to the field in April and in May, the entire regiment deployed for a combined arms regimental level exercise, possibly the first since WWII. Unfortunately, a number of battalions failed their external evaluations during this period. Eighth Army commanders faced many hurdles that impeded progress and many units progressed with difficulty, taking two steps forward and one back.[40]

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[36] Bowers, 61-62; Hanson, *Combat Ready?,* 81-83; Hanson "New Appraisal," 170-71.

[37] Schnabel, 55-57, Hanson, *Combat Ready?,* 81-82, passim.

[38] Hanson, *Combat Ready?,* 84, 102-03; Hanson, "New Appraisal," 172; Bowers, 63.

Personnel turnover was probably the most intractable issue that impeded unit readiness in 1949 and early 1950. The continuous turnover impeded the cohesion, experience, and readiness of most units. The Department of Army did not help the matter by cutting basic training to eight weeks in 1949. Units largely had to train their own soldiers with additional training upon arrival. Personnel shortages also caused a lack of leadership depth among officers and NCOs and personnel policies tended to put inexperienced leaders in critical positions. Many officers in key billets lacked important experience. For example, only one of four division commanders (General William Dean) had combat experience commanding troops. Only one of three regimental commanders (COL Jay Loveless) in the 24th ID had experience commanding troops in combat.

The lack of large training areas in Japan was also a difficult problem that slowed progress. The primary training areas in Japan were only large enough for reinforced battalion sized training and local training areas were only big enough for company-sized maneuver. In 1949, the Eighth Army expanded the training area at Mount Fuji to accommodate full regimental combat team exercises. Beginning in January 1950, the Eighth Army established centralized control of all training areas in Japan capable of battalion sized or larger maneuver. The Eighth Army G-3 then established a comprehensive training schedule of all major exercises and live fire events for the first six months of 1950. Although a serious issue, Eighth Army was partially able to mitigate the land problem and it did not prevent units from conducting significant and challenging field exercises.[41]

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[39] Hanson, 71.

[40] Millett, 81; Hanson, "New Appraisal,"177; Hanson, *Combat Ready?*, 70-71, 84-85; Bowers, 63-64.

Units also experienced periodic equipment shortages and at times low readiness rates, often due to the intense level of training conducted. Training on some types of equipment, such as recoilless rifles and 3.5 inch bazookas did not take place due to shortages. They were also unable to conduct combined arms maneuvers with tanks, since so few were available in pre-war Japan. However, the intensity of training that occurred in the spring of 1950 bears witness to the fact that no major training events or exercises failed to take place due to a lack of equipment.[42]

A great deal of disagreement exists regarding the state of Eighth Army's combat readiness in July 1950. Significant issues existed with personnel, equipment and training and the quality of preparation varied significantly from unit to unit. One of most glaring training omissions was the large scale regimental and division level field exercises in which commanders and staff could hone their operational art. Another was the lack of training with Air Force TACPs in order to achieve close coordination of close air support. It is fair to say many units were on the borderline of minimally ready.

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[41] Appleman, 113; Hanson, 50, 115.

[42] Hanson, 39, 68-69, 72-73, 88-90, 106-08; Bowers, 63-64.

The anecdotal evidence of the training program is a mixed bag; some soldiers said they were not well prepared, while others believed the training was tough and realistic.[43] In the fall of 1949, General Lawton Collins, the Chief of Staff of the Army, visited the FEC. He reported to the Secretary of the Army that Eighth Army was "making excellent progress with realistic field training", and expected divisions to be in excellent shape within six months.[44] Additionally, the Eighth Army assessed each division based on external evaluations of unit exercises. Their ratings may not be entirely reliable measures; however, they show that Eighth Army divisions had made substantial progress toward completing the goals of Training Directive Four (See Figure 3). Plans from Eighth Army to conduct larger and more complex exercises up to division level also indicate increasing confidence in the training and readiness of its regiments. This training had only just begun at the end of June 1950 when the war started. General Walker and the Eighth Army simply ran out of time to execute the entirety of their scheduled training program.[45]

Figure 3, Eighth Army Assessments of Combat Readiness

	June 1949	September 1949	April 1950
1st Cavalry Division	51.5%	59.9%	84.0%
7th Infantry Division	45.3%	54.6%	74.0%
24th Infantry Division	43.6%	53.0%	65.0%
25th Infantry Division	47.6%	56.4%	72.0%

Source: Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came from the North* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 84.

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[43] For comments on insufficient training see, Sarah A. Larsen, and Jennifer M. Miller, *Wisconsin Korean War Stories: Veterans Tell Their Stories from the Forgotten War* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2008), 13; David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hyperion, 2007), 143; Fehrenbach, 77; For comments that state training was tough and realistic see, Uzal W. Ent, *Fighting on the Brink: Defense of the Pusan Perimeter* (Paducah: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 32; Westover; 127; U.S. Army Forces Far East, "Withdrawal from Taejon", interview of 2LT George Wilcox.

[44] Schnabel, 56-67.

[45] Stanlis D. Milkowski, "After Inch'on: MacArthur's 1959 Campaign in Korea," in *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art,* ed. Michael D. Krause, and R. Cody Phillips (Washington: Department of the Army, 2007), 421-22; Millet, 78-83, 129-30; Goulden, 141; Hanson, *Combat Ready?,* 2-4, 12, Hansen, New Appraisal, 176; Flint in *America's First Battles*, 273-74, 278.

The state of training and readiness of the Eighth Army in July 1950 was far from the optimal U.S Army standard. However, it is not true that the Eighth Army was "untrained" and "totally unprepared" for war.[46] In fact, it might have been the most prepared pre-war Army in US History up to that time. Most Eighth Army units, commanders, staffs, and soldiers, had trained to a level sufficient to conduct fundamental tactical tasks based on the Army's operational doctrine at that time. The level of training was not sufficient to conduct a successful high-risk and piecemeal commitment to delay a numerically superior and highly committed opponent. Commanders and staff did not have sufficient training or experience to conduct complex and poorly supported independent battalion sized operations with exposed flanks, excessive unit frontages, or highly synchronized close air support. The individual soldiers had trained well enough to fight hard in July 1950 and did so more often than not, even when faced with overwhelming odds. Although the Eighth Army's combat readiness was a contributing factor, it is not by itself sufficient to explain the defeats of the 24th ID in the first three weeks of the war.[47]

Operational Art - Modern Warfare Since 1900

Military capability in land combat operations is the capacity to destroy as many possible enemy forces over the largest possible territory at the lowest friendly cost in the least amount of time.[48] Land combat operations utilize close combat or warfare carried out on land in a direct-fire fight, supported by direct and indirect fires and other assets. After 1900, the dominant technological aspect of the battlefield was firepower and vastly increased lethality. In order to reduce an army's vulnerability and increase its resiliency from this increased lethality a modern system of warfare developed. This system is a complex and interdependent combination of cover, concealment, dispersion, suppression, combined arms, small unit maneuver, depth, reserves, and differential concentration at the operational level. Armies that do not master it suffer severe consequences when fully exposed to the firepower of those that have mastered it. An important aspect of the modern system is that numerical preponderance and material factors are secondary to force employment in assessing capability and determining outcomes of campaigns and operations. The modern system of warfare is extremely complex and difficult to master. By 1950, the US Army had a far richer history and demonstrated knowledge, experience, and mastery of modern warfare than did the NKPA.[49]

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[46] Feherenbach, 84, 101; Halberstrom, 138.

[47] John Garrett, "Task Force Smith, the Lesson Never Learned," (Monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2000); 1-2; Hanson, 4, 117; Millet, 78; Blair, 88; Wiersma, 43.

[48] Stephen D. Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 6.

The available evidence sufficiently demonstrates that Eighth Army's preparations for combat were adequate to execute the fundamental tasks of modern warfare. The Eighth Army was not at a material disadvantage to the NKPA and their training was adequate to conduct fundamental tactical tasks. The 24th ID was at a numerical disadvantage throughout its delaying operation but that is not of primary importance in modern warfare, particularly in defensive operations. Furthermore, the NKPA had its own substantial difficulties with operational art and executing the distributed operations of modern warfare. Although the Eighth Army forces were not at the optimal US Army standard of combat, they did not have to be prepared impeccably in order to perform successfully. They only had to outperform the less than perfect NKPA. The Eight Army's training and equipment was sufficient to do so without suffering the near complete loss of an entire infantry division. Therefore it remains that the immediate cause of the 24th ID's defeat was the manner in which they were employed as opposed to manpower or equipment deficiencies. This reasoning follows the logic and framework of the modern system of warfare.[50]

The manner and creativity that commanders use to employ forces is governed by operational art. Operational art "is the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose."[51] It is a cognitive approach or intellectual framework that uses the "skill, knowledge, experience, and judgment" of commanders and staffs to integrate ends, ways, and means while accounting for risk.[52] Operational art is about the interplay of action and reaction and finding effective combinations of air, sea, and land power. More simply, it is the planning of campaigns and major operations. Operational art spans all levels of war and serves as the cognitive link between strategy and tactics and is directly associated with conceptual planning. It is important because it prevents tactical actions from devolving into a series of disconnected battles or engagements that do not achieve strategic objectives or the desired end state.[53]

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[49] Stephen D. Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 2-3; James J. Schneider, "Vulcan's Anvil: The American Civil War and the Foundations of Operational Art," (Theoretical Paper, Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1992), 17-22; Matheny, xiii-xviii; U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 1-8.

[50] Colin Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Orion Books, 2005), 44; Shy, 339; Millet, 35-37, 138; Blair, 163-64; Shrader, 224.

Furthermore, commanders and staffs use operational art to translate their conceptual plan, or operational approach, into meaningful action and a concept of operations. An operational approach is a conceptual plan of broad actions that provides a framework to guide detailed planning for the necessary tactical tasks and concept of operations. A good operational approach is not one that transpires exactly as planned but rather facilitates effective action in the face of war's inevitable uncertainties and surprises. One of the most critical aspects of operational art is that is it must consider the strategic context of the situation and friendly tactical capabilities. A deep understanding of one's own forces and the enemy are essential to good operational art. Campaigns and operations that do not consider both the strategic context and the specific conditions of the situation constitute poor operational art.[54]

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[51] U. S. Department of the Army, *Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 3-0, Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 4-1.

[52] U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 4-1.

[53] U. S. Department of the Army, *Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 5-0, The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 2-4; U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 4-1.

[54] Aleksandr A. Svechin, *Strategy*, ed. Kent D. Lee (Minneapolis: East View Publications, 1992), 68-69; Georgii S. Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*. trans. Bruce W. Menning (Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2013), 47-48; Michael R. Matheny, *Carrying the War to the Enemy: American Operational Art to 1945* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), xviii-xix; Thomas Bruscino, "The Theory of Operational Art and Unified Land Operations," (Theoretical Paper, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2012), 4-5; U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 4-1, U.S. Army, *ADRP 5-0*, 2-6.

Operational Art - Operational Approaches of the FEC, Eighth Army and the NKPA

Once President Truman gave MacArthur permission to employ ground forces in defense of South Korea two basic options were available. One, deploy ground troops into the Korean peninsula as rapidly as possible and defeat the North Korean offensive with the FEC's combined joint forces. Alternatively, temporarily abandon the peninsula, build overwhelming air, sea and ground strength, and return to Korea by amphibious invasion. MacArthur quickly developed in his mind the only operational approach that could work. Given MacArthur's humiliating experience abandoning the Philippines during WWII, he only seriously considered the first option.[55]

Within the first week of July, MacArthur visualized the operational approach he favored. He wanted a deep envelopment operation that consisted of three phases. Phase one was a shaping operation to insert ground troops into South Korea, halt the North Korean offensive and hold the key terrain and decisive point of Pusan with its large port. During phase one, the Far East Air Force and Seventh Fleet were to conduct deep operations blockading Korea ports and interdicting ground and sea LOCs as far north as Yalu River. Phase two was an amphibious invasion on the west coast of South Korea with a simultaneous offensive by Eighth Army forces coming north to link up with the invasion force. Phase two was the decisive operation of the concept and was meant to recapture Seoul and destroy the North Korean Army's. Phase three was to restore the South Korean border, and if possible, proceed north of the 38th parallel, eliminate the North Korean communist regime and reunite Korea.[56]

MacArthur's concept of a deep envelopment from the sea was a solid and workable operational approach given the existing situation in July 1950. MacArthur's initial mandate from the Truman administration gave him a clear end state; expel the North Korean Army from South Korea and restore the pre-war border. His operational approach had at least three lines of operation, ground assault, amphibious assault, and air and naval interdiction of enemy LOCs. The concept took full advantage of United Nations (UN) strengths, complete naval, air and amphibious superiority, and struck at North Korea weaknesses, undefended coastal flanks, extended and vulnerable LOCs and lack of ground force mobility. MacArthur believed the North Korean Army would culminate short of its objectives and would be unable to respond to a deep amphibious envelopment at Inchon. A landing at Inchon would quickly retake Seoul, a decisive point and key terrain of great importance, and simultaneously cut nearly all NKPA ground LOCs running south of the Han River. The Eighth Army assault north would complete the destruction of the North Korean Army and restore the pre-war border. Not surprisingly, MacArthur's concept closely resembled the winning strategy of the US Southwest Pacific campaigns. His approach was a variation of the island hopping campaigns that enveloped strongly garrisoned Japanese positions with amphibious operations far to their rear (See Map 2).[57]

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[55] Stanley Weintraub, *MacArthur's War: Korea and the Undoing of an American Hero* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 62-63.

[56] Clayton D. James, *The Years of MacArthur* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 434; MacArthur, 336-37; Appleman, 488-89; Blair, 87-88.

The FEC operational framework included deep, close and security operations. Deep operations included the naval blockade of the Korean peninsula and aerial interdiction of NKPA LOCs and key North Korean infrastructure. The deep operations intended to disrupt NKPA sustainment operations, slow their advance, and erode the strength of reinforcing formations. In close area operations, the 24th and 25th IDs deployed to reinforce the ROK Army and stop the advance of the NKPA through fire and maneuver. The 24th ID was to advance up the Seoul-Pusan Highway as far north as possible, make contact with the NKPA and delay their advance. The 25th ID was to follow close behind and buy time to allow the ROK Army to reconstitute and set the conditions for the deep amphibious envelopment at Inchon. Security operations were limited primarily to ensuring uninterrupted support and sustainment from Japan and the United States. The Far East Air Force (FEAF) intended to gain air superiority over the Korean peninsula to enable unfettered aerial interdiction, aerial reconnaissance, airlift operations, and prevent NKPA operations. The US Seventh Fleet intended to gain naval superiority over the Sea

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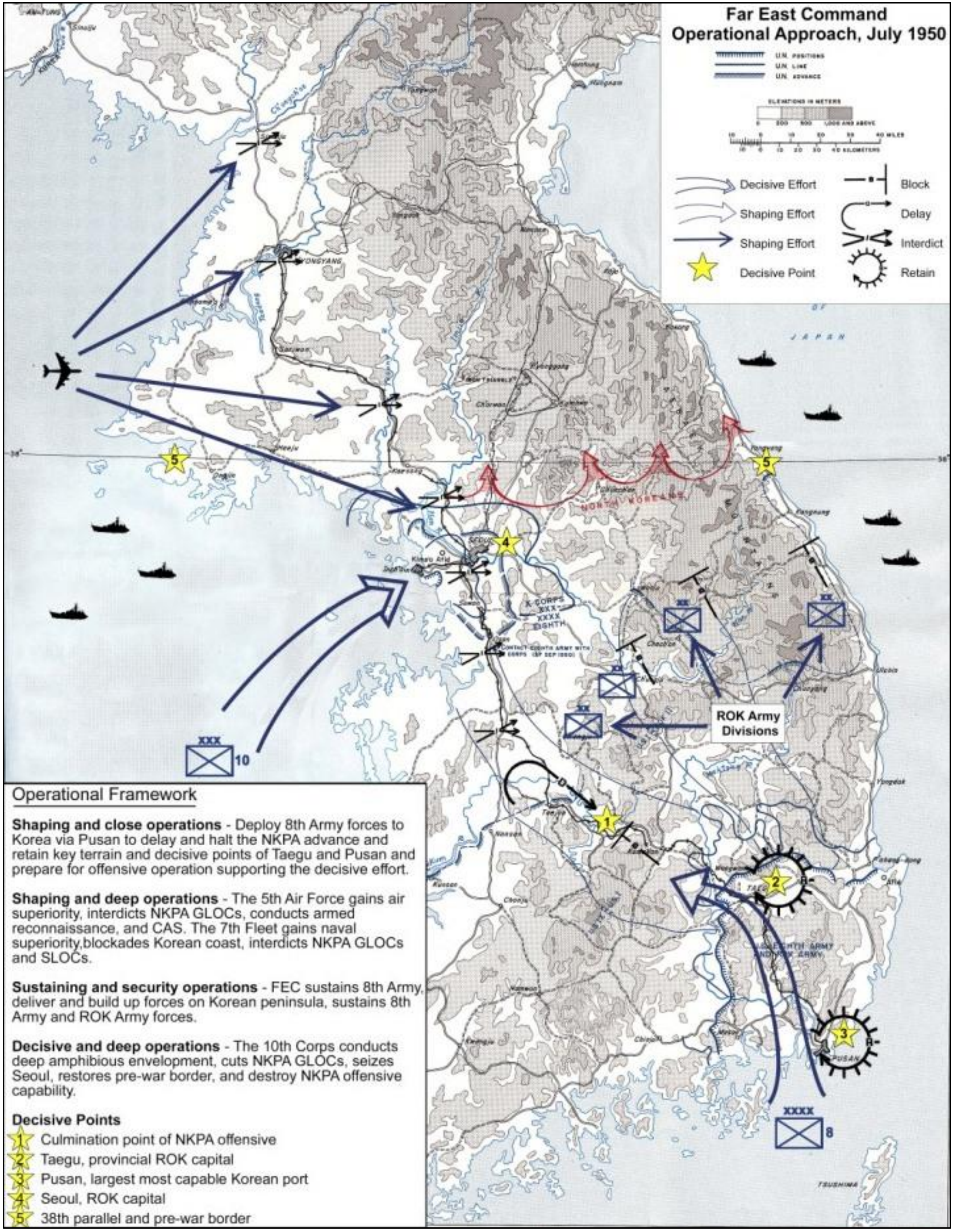
[57] Alexander, 149-53; Blair, 87-88; U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 4-1 to 4-2; Flint, in *America's First Battles*, 275; Halberstram, 139.

Map 2. The Far East Command Operational Approach.


Far East Command Operational Approach, July 1950
U.N. POSITIONS
U.N. LINE
U.N. ADVANCE
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0
200
500
1,000 AND ABOVE
MILES
KILOMETERS
Decisive Effort
Shaping Effort
Shaping Effort
Decisive Point
Block
Delay
Interdict
Retain
PYONGYANG
SEOUL
TAEGU
PUSAN
NORTH KOREANS
X CORPS
EIGHTH
ROK Army Divisions
XXX
10
XXXX
8
XX
1
2
3
4
5
5
TSUSHIMA
JAPAN

Operational Framework

Shaping and close operations - Deploy 8th Army forces to Korea via Pusan to delay and halt the NKPA advance and retain key terrain and decisive points of Taegu and Pusan and prepare for offensive operation supporting the decisive effort.

Shaping and deep operations - The 5th Air Force gains air superiority, interdicts NKPA GLOCs, conducts armed reconnaissance, and CAS. The 7th Fleet gains naval superiority,blockades Korean coast, interdicts NKPA GLOCs and SLOCs.

Sustaining and security operations - FEC sustains 8th Army, deliver and build up forces on Korean peninsula, sustains 8th Army and ROK Army forces.

Decisive and deep operations - The 10th Corps conducts deep amphibious envelopment, cuts NKPA GLOCs, seizes Seoul, restores pre-war border, and destroy NKPA offensive capability.

Decisive Points

1. Culmination point of NKPA offensive
2. Taegu, provincial ROK capital
3. Pusan, largest most capable Korean port
4. Seoul, ROK capital
5. 38th parallel and pre-war border

Source: James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1972), Map IV, foldout supplement. This map was adapted from Schnabel, additional graphics were added.

of Japan and the Yellow Sea to enable naval air operations over the peninsula and ensure uninterrupted operation of FEC SLOCs. The ability of the FEC and Eighth Army to integrate and execute elements their operational framework had significant impact on 24th ID operations in first three weeks of the war.[58]

On 30 June 1950, MacArthur ordered Eighth Army to send the 24th ID to Korea immediately. The FEC selected the 24th ID, not because it was the best-prepared division, but because it was physically the closest to Korea. On 1 July 1950, Eighth Army issued orders for the 24th ID to deploy by air an initial task force of two rifle companies and a 4.2-inch mortar platoon led by a battalion commander. This was the force, later joined by one battery from the 52nd Field Artillery Battalion, now known as Task Force Smith. The rest of the division was to follow primarily by sealift to Pusan and was to establish a base for early offensive operations. The mission of the advance elements was to "Advance at once upon landing with delaying force, in accordance with the situation, to the north by all possibly means, contact enemy now advancing south from Seoul towards Suwon and delay his advance."[59]

The mission of the 24th ID was to delay the enemy advance and build up for offensive operations. At that time, MacArthur intended that the amphibious envelopment at Inchon would take place around 20 July 1950, carried out by the 1st Cavalry Division (CD). The Eighth Army order left General Dean and the 24th ID with a vague and ill-defined end state. However, their orders provided them flexibility to conduct their mission "in accordance with the situation." The operational approach and operational art that Dean and his staff used to execute their mission had grave consequences for the 24th ID and potentially for the entire Eighth Army.[60]

Dean's operational approach was to block the Seoul-Pusan highway as for north as possible and establish a main line of resistance between Pyongtaek and Ansong with the Yellow Sea guarding his left flank. A Yellow Sea estuary formed a neck in the coastline at Pyongteak, a natural barrier below which

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[58] Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea, 1950-1953* (Washington: United States Air Force, 1983), 85-91; Appleman, 51-52, 59; Millet, 135-37; Field, 58-60; Blair 84-85.

[59] Appleman, 59, 63; Blair, 89; Millet, 84.

[60] Appleman, 59; Blair, 88.

Dean knew his left flank would be exposed. Task Force Smith was to establish a blocking position north at Osan about five miles north of Pyongtaek. The 34th Infantry Regiment followed immediately behind Task Force Smith and was to defend the Pyongtaek line with one infantry battalion at Pyongtaek and one eleven miles east at Ansong. If Task Force Smith was unable to hold at Osan, it was to fall back to Pyongtaek and reinforce the 34th Regiment. The rest of the division was to follow on as quickly as possible to reinforce and hold the Pyongtaek line of resistance.[61]

The NKPA operational approach was a swift Soviet style offensive of an initial break through, a deep exploitation, and a rapid consolidation and conclusion. Their approach divided the operation into three phases. Phase one was the decisive operation intended to penetrate the initial ROK defensive line, destroy the core of the ROK Army and occupy Seoul and a line across the peninsula approximately fifty miles south of the 38th parallel. Phase two was a shaping operation intended to rapidly exploit phase one penetrations, destroy ROK Army reserves and penetrate another one hundred miles south along a line spanning from Kunsan-Taegu-Pohang. Phase three was a shaping operation to advance to southern coast of the peninsula and complete the occupation of South Korea and seize the coastal cities of Pusan, Mokp'o and Yosu. (See Map 3)

The NKPA organized its ten divisions in two corps. The 1st Corps was the main effort and comprised of the 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 6th Infantry Divisions supported by the 105th Armor Brigade. The 2nd Corps was the supporting effort and was comprised of the 2nd, 5th and 12th Infantry Divisions. The 1st Corps was to cross the 38th parallel near Kumch'on and Yonch'on and converge on Seoul. The 2nd Corps was to cross the 38th parallel near Hwach'on and support 1st Corp's operations with two divisions by enveloping Seoul from the east. The 2nd Corps also conducted a supporting operation along the east coast of the peninsula with one division.[62]

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[61] William Frishe Dean and William L. Worden, *General Dean's Story* (New York: Viking Press, 1954), 19-21; Blair, 96-97; Appleman, 78-79.

[62] Korea Institute of Military History, 118.

The NKPA approach relied on a widespread popular revolt erupting across South Korea after the capture of Seoul and causing the complete collapse of the ROK government and most resistance. They intended an average advance of 15-20 kilometers per day and complete the conquest within 30 days before the United States could intervene. The decisive points of their approach were the destruction of the ROK Army, a popular uprising in South Korea, capture Seoul, capture Taegu, and capture the port of Pusan. It was a sound operational approach developed with the assistance of Soviet planners; however the plan did not synchronize the second and third phases as well as the first. Additionally, the popular revolt did not occur and the NKPA was unable to advance consistently the planned distances of 15-20 kilometers per day. In the end, only the first phase unfolded close to the plan. Unexpectedly strong resistance from the ROK Army, the non-existent uprising, and the rapid deployment of US forces thwarted the remainder of the NKPA plan (See Map 3).[63]

Operational Art - Task Organization

Operational art begins not upon arriving at the battlefield but upon receipt of the mission.[64] One of the most important elements of combat power is the organization of combat power or task organizing. Task organizing is creating the specific size and composition of forces and capabilities necessary to meet a task or mission. It should consider the status of training, experience, equipment, sustainment, environment, and the enemy threat. Ad hoc task organization was a familiar concept to the knowledge and experience of Eighth Army commanders and staffs and existing US Army doctrine. Endless examples of ad hoc task organizations exist throughout US Army history and the first few weeks and months of the Korean War.[65]

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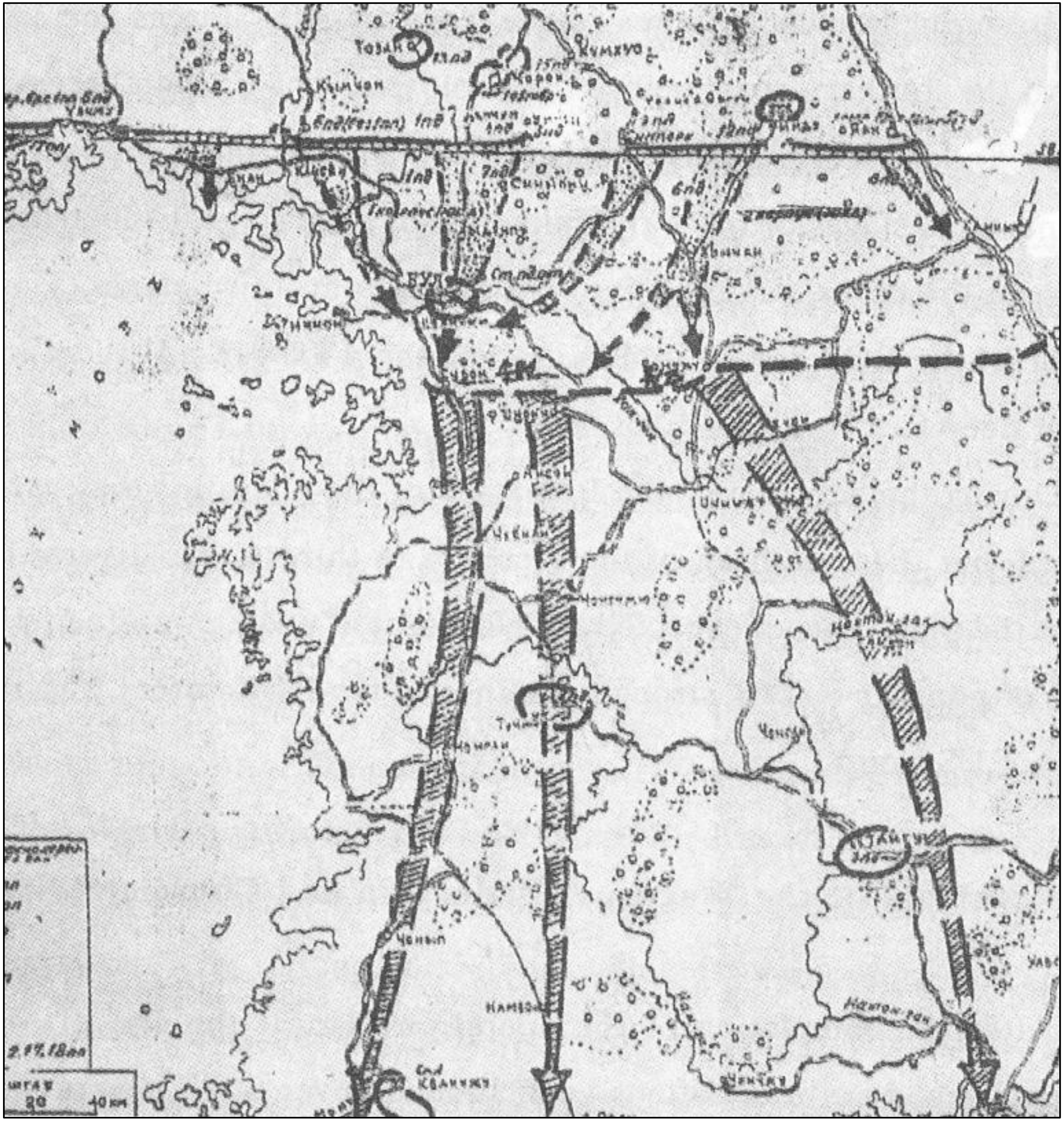
[63] Korea Institute of Military History, 115-120; Appleman, 21-28 and Map III; Millet, 85-88.

[64] U.S. Army, *ADRP 5-0,* 1-4.

[65] Appleman, 59, 196; U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 3-6; Donald W. Boose, *US Army Forces in the Korean War 1950-53* (New York: Osprey, 2005), 83; Donald W. Boose, *Over the Beach: U.S. Army Amphibious Operations in the Korean War* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2008), 129. For example, Eighth Army attached two infantry battalions from the 29th Infantry Regiment to the 19th

Map 3. The North Korean People's Army Operational Approach.



Source: Korea Institute of Military History, *The Korean War, Volume 1* (Seoul: Korea Institute of Military History, 1997), 119. This map is a copy of the original NKPA invasion plan obtained in 1992 by the Yon-hap News Agency from a senior researcher at the Russia Institute of Military History.

Infantry Regiment, 24 ID in July 1950. In August, Eighth Army attached the same two battalions to the 27th and 35th regiments in the 25th Infantry Division. In early August, Eighth Army created Task Force Kean, comprised of two 25th Infantry Division regiments (24th and 35th regiments), the 5th Regimental Combat Team (RCT), 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, a Republic of Korea (ROK) Marine Corps battalion, and a ROK Army battalion.

The missing infantry battalions and artillery batteries in the Eighth Army regiments were a serious deficiency in maneuver capability and firepower. Regimental commanders could maneuver one battalion forward with one in reserve or maneuver two forward with none in reserve. This created an enormous risk and capability gap for commanders ordered to hold extraordinarily wide frontages in a complex delaying operation. The blame for creating the skeletal regimental formations lies with the Department of the Army. However, an obvious solution existed that was in accordance with Army doctrine and experience. The 1949 version of Army FM 100-5, states that "...to increase readiness for combat, part or all of the subordinate units of a command may be formed into one or more temporary tactical groupings (task forces), each under a designated commander."[66] Unfortunately, Eighth Army commanders and staffs chose not to task organize their existing battalions into doctrinal triangular regiments before deploying to Korea.[67]

The Eighth Army, at a minimum, might have attached three additional battalions from the 1st Cavalry and/or 7th ID to the 24th ID. This course of action would have solved all the task organization problems, such the missing armor formations, but it was preferable to the alternative chosen by the Far East Command and Eighth Army. Eighth Army chose to cannibalize individual soldiers from the 1st Cavalry and 7th ID in order to plus up the existing two-battalion regiments in the 24th and 25th IDs. While this increased the 24th ID's strength to 15,965, it was still nearly 3,000 soldiers short of its authorized strength and lacked three infantry battalions, a tank battalion and three artillery batteries. This type of "body snatching" only served to break up unity, integrity and readiness of the donor formations, and did not make up for the missing maneuver battalions in the receiving regiments.[68] The 24th ID would have gained much greater capability, depth, and combat power by the attachment of entire battalions and batteries. Why Eighth Army did not task organize its available infantry battalions into some combination of three-battalion regiments before committing them to combat in July 1950 is inexplicable. The Eighth Army commanders and staff had a poor situational understanding of the NKPA and did not adequately consider the risks associated with the missing formations. Most believed they would win against North Korea regardless of how they organized their combat power and be back in Japan within days.[69]

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[66] U. S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations-Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1949), 4 para 20a.

[67] Appleman, 196; Hansen, 114; Fehrenbach, 88.

[68] Hansen, 114.

Operational Art - Intelligence and Understanding

Intelligence is a warfighting function and capability that includes tasks and systems that facilitate understanding of the enemy, terrain, and the operational environment. A thorough understanding of the enemy, the specific conditions of the theater and the strategic context are essential to good operational art and successful employment of forces. Commanders must have an understanding of the enemy's strengths, weaknesses, intentions, and dispositions in order to avoid surprise and place his own forces in a position of continuing advantage.[70]

Considerable information about the capabilities of the NKPA existed in 1950; however, staffs had poorly analyzed and shared it. Commanders at every level failed to understand the intelligence they needed to accomplish their mission and information that staffs collected did not support decisions on the battlefield. MacArthur, Walker, and Dean all underestimated the fighting capability and commitment of the NKPA. Dean did not understand the enemy, his tendencies, his tactics, his critical vulnerabilities or his own situation and level of readiness. In fact, American failure to come to grips with the nature of the enemy reached the levels of blatant racism. The attitude filtered down to the lowest levels, nearly everyone believed the NKPA was nothing more than a rabble armed with spears and pitchforks and would run at first sight of the Americans. That was true to an extent, as one participant put it, "they ran alright, right over us."[71]

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[69] Appleman, 59; Schnabel, 85-86; Blair, 93.

[70] U. S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 2-0, Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2010), 1-3 to 1-4; John Keegan, *Intelligence in War: The Value-and Limitations-of What the Military Can Learn About the Enemy* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 4-6; U.S. Army, *Field Manual 100-5,*1949 edition, 34-35; U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 3-4; Bruscino, 3.

The failure of intelligence to support Eighth Army operations process led to the poor understanding and visualization of the operational environment. This led directly to the subsequent poor operational art and employment of the 24th ID, particularly in the first five days. Dean did not begin to understand the magnitude of his situation until well into the 24th ID's mission. On 8 July, Dean wrote in a letter to MacArthur "that the North Korean Army soldier and his status of training and the quality of his equipment have been underestimated."[72] By implication, American commanders also overestimated the capabilities of their own forces. Unfortunately, Dean did not adapt his own operational art to take advantage of the knowledge he gained during the first days of the campaign.[73]

Operational Art - The 24th ID Delaying Operation, Osan to Chochiwon, 5-12 July

The almost complete disregard of the NKPA meant Walker and Dean accepted a course of action committing 24th ID's combat power in a piece meal manner. Throughout the 24th ID delaying operation the division's combat power was fragmented and Dean and his staff never achieved a position of advantage nor massed the considerable combat effects of his division. In fact, the 24th ID never maneuvered or fought as a division in the engagements that occurred between 5 and 20 July. When TF Smith first encountered the enemy on 5 July, the division's units stretched out over 350 kilometers from Osan to Pusan. Over the next several days, the 24th ID fought a series of engagements that committed poorly supported under strength battalion sized elements against NKPA forces in regimental and division plus strength.[74]

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[71] Richard E. Matthews, "Task Force Smith: An Intelligence Failure," (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies 1996), 14-15, 33-34, 41; Blair, 93; Halberstram, 145-46; Fehrenbach, 73; Larsen and Miller, 12.

[72] Schnabel, 84.

[73] Millet, 41-44, 169; Blair, 78; Matthews, 40-42.

[74] Lawton J. Collins, *War in Peacetime; the History and Lessons of Korea* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 55; Wiersema, 20; Garrett, 31-32; Blair, 97.

The 24th ID fought five separate single battalion engagements to begin the campaign, TF Smith at Osan, 5 July, 3/34th at Chonan, 7 July, 1/21st at Chonui, 10 July, 3/21st south of Chonui, 11 July, and the remnants of 1/21st at Chochiwon on 12 July. Each time the American commanders fought outside the mutually supporting distance of other division elements against at least one entire NKPA infantry division supported by an armor brigade. The first, TF Smith occurred at Osan approximately 30 kilometers south of Seoul. Task Force Smith consisted of two infantry companies from 1st Battalion, 21st Regiment (1/21st) and a 105mm artillery battery from the 52nd Field Artillery Battalion (52nd FA), a total of 540 soldiers. They suffered 186 casualties and were routed by two regiments of the 4th NKPA Infantry Division and 33 tanks from the 105th Armor Brigade, a force at least 5 to 6 times larger than TF Smith.[75]

On 7 July at Chonan, approximately 45 kilometers south of Osan, the 3rd Battalion, 34th Regiment (3/34th) encountered the same two regiments and tanks that defeated TF Smith two days earlier. In the ensuing battle, the 4th NKPA Division overwhelmed the 3/34th which suffered heavy casualties including the death of COL Robert Martin the 34th Regimental commanders. Only 175 soldiers escaped from Chonan and the 3/34th was no longer an effective fighting force. On 10 July at Chonui, approximately 17 kilometers south of Chonan, the 1/21st was defeated again by the 4th NKPA Infantry Division supported by the 105th Armor Brigade. The next day, 11 July, approximately 2 kilometers south of Chonui, the 3rd Battalion, 21st Regiment (3/21st) was almost completely destroyed by the 3rd NKPA Infantry Division supported by the 105th Armor Brigade. On 12 July, 1/21st was defeated at Chochiwon, approximately 8 kilometers south of Chonui by the 3rd NKPA Infantry Division supported by the 105th Armor Brigade. In three days of fighting, the 21st Regiment suffered over 665 casualties and lost most of its heavy weapons and equipment. Two more battalions of combat power were lost and the 21st Regiment was no longer capable of combat operations (See Map 4).[76]

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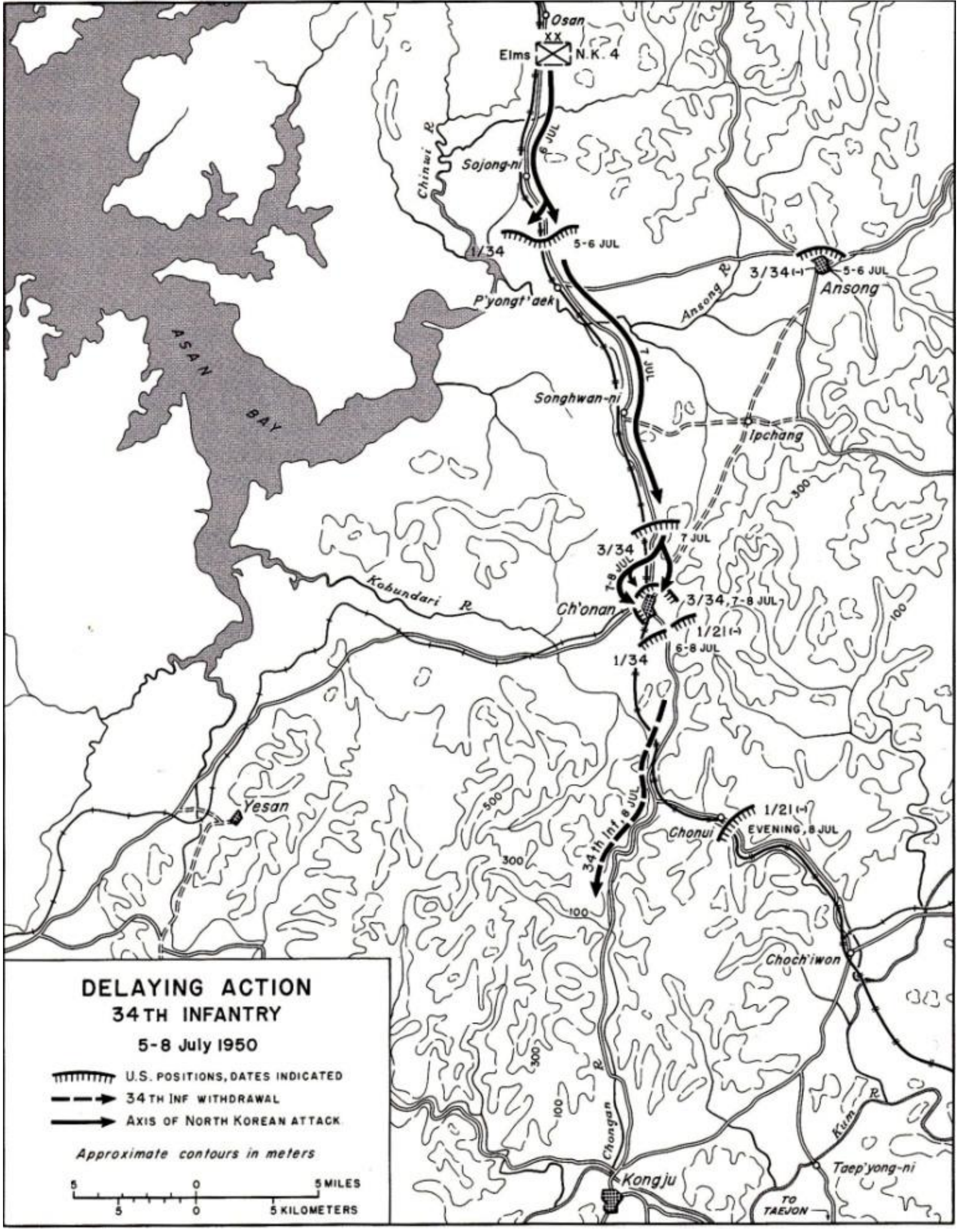
[75] Appleman, 69-76; Weirsma, 17.

[76] Appleman, 80-100; Alexander, 63-67, 71-75; Ecker, 6.

Map 4. 34th Infantry Regiment Engagements at Chonan.


Osan
XX
Elms
N.K. 4
Chinwi R
Sojong-ni
6 JUL
1/34
5-6 JUL
P'yongt'aek
3/34(-)
5-6 JUL
Ansong
Ansong R
ASAN BAY
7 JUL
Songhwan-ni
Ipchang
300
3/34
7 JUL
7-8 JUL
3/34, 7-8 JUL
Kobundari R
Ch'onan
1/21(-)
6-8 JUL
1/34
100
Yesan
500
300
34th Inf, 8 JUL
Chonui
1/21(-)
EVENING, 8 JUL
100
Choch'iwon
300
100
Chongan R
Kum R
Kongju
Taep'yong-ni
TO TAEJON
DELAYING ACTION
34TH INFANTRY
5-8 July 1950
U.S. POSITIONS, DATES INDICATED
34TH INF WITHDRAWAL
AXIS OF NORTH KOREAN ATTACK
Approximate contours in meters
5 0 5 MILES
5 0 5 KILOMETERS

Source: Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu: June-November 1950* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1961), 78.

The tactics used by the NKPA were remarkable consistent and effective each time. They fixed the front of US positions with limited tank and infantry attacks supported with heavy artillery. The NKPA infantry then enveloped one or both flanks attempting to get into the rear of US positions. The object of the enveloping attacks was to destroy command posts, artillery, mortar units, and establish roadblocks to block withdrawals and counterattacks. If the fixing attacks penetrated the forward positions, which they often did, so much the better. Once the roadblocks were established, success came quickly, as 24th ID soldiers were not experienced or trained well enough to execute a difficult, complex breakout and withdrawal operation. This kind of operation is trebly difficult when the trapped battalion is outside the mutually supporting distance of the remainder of the division.[77]

When Dean moved TF Smith as far north as Osan and the 34th Regiment to Pyongtaek, he exceeded the operational reach of his division. Operational reach is the distance and duration across which a joint force can successfully employ its capabilities. It is largely a function of protection, relative combat power, and sustainment and endurance. The abundant sustainment capability of the Far East Command made it relatively easy to deploy forces as far north as Osan. However, the lead elements of the 24th ID had no endurance and little relative combat power at that point. Dean placed TF Smith in a position in which its commander, LTC Brad Smith, was unable to protect his force from enemy action.[78]

Despite what some historians have stated, TF Smith did not achieve even a minor delay of the NKPA. In fact between 5 July, when the 4th NKPA Division over ran TF Smith, and 7 July when 3/34th was destroyed at Chonan, the NKPA advanced approximately forty-five kilometers. They averaged more than the highly optimistic twenty kilometers per day of their planned operational approach. The deployment of an under-strength battalion as far north as Osan was a reckless attempt to stop the NKPA and a foolish waste of American lives. The near destruction of the unsupported 21st Regiment over the subsequent five days at Chonui and Chochiwon are also testament of how badly the 24th ID exceeded its operational reach. Dean and his staff maneuvered the 21st and 34th Regiment into positions in which they could not delay the NKPA while at the same time protecting their force and extending their endurance.[79]

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[77] Flint, in *America's First Battles*, 299; Millet, 190.

[78] U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 4-5 to 4-6.

Not only did the 24th ID exceed its operational reach, it was also fighting unnecessary engagements for terrain that was not decisive or essential to strategic objectives. Osan, Pyongteak, Chonan, Chonui, Chochiwon, Kum River, and Taejon were not decisive points and did not give a significant advantage to either the NKPA or the combined U.N. Forces. Nor did they weaken the North Korean center of gravity or expose their critical vulnerabilities. Dean and his staff missed the opportunity to pick the locations that would give them the greatest advantage. The most important decisive point for the 24th ID was to delay the NKPA and possibly force them to culminate short of Taegu, the provincial ROK capital. The 24th ID was wasting what precious little combat power the 8th Army had for unimportant geography and for questionable gains in time. Dean might have improved his position by assembling the 24th ID further south and east, on 11 or 12 July, before committing it against the NKPA.[80]

The almost complete disregard of the NKPA meant Walker and Dean accepted a course of action committing 24th ID's combat power in a piece meal manner. Throughout the 24th ID delaying operation the division's combat power was fragmented and Dean and his staff never achieved a position of advantage nor massed the considerable combat effects of his division. In fact, the 24th ID never maneuvered or fought as a division in of the engagements that occurred between 5 and 20 July. When TF Smith first encountered the enemy on 5 July, the division's units stretched out over 350 kilometers from Osan to Pusan. Over the next several days, the 24th ID fought a series of engagements that committed poorly supported under strength battalion sized elements against NKPA forces in regimental and division plus strength.[81]

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[79] Collins, 54; Blair, 103, Halberstam, 148.

[80] Blair, 97, 100-01; U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 4-3 to 4-4.

[81] Collins, 55-57; Wiersma, 10, 17, 20; Halberstram, 144.

Operational Art - The 24th ID Delaying Operation, Kum River and Taejon, 13-20 July

After this series of defeats Dean decided to fall back and attempt to make a stand behind the Kum River with two regiments, the 19th and 34th. The 21st Regiment had even less remaining strength than the 34th Regiment and deployed to positions twenty-five kilometers to the east to guard against NKPA force enveloping Taejon from the north. By this time, the 34th Regiment was not much more than a battalion strength task force and could muster only two companies to defend its forward positions on the Kum River. The 1/34th was in reserve several miles south and the 63rd FA battalion was in support. The distance between the 19th and 34th regiments was over three kilometers and the right flank of the 34th Regiment was virtually undefended. On 14 July, the 4th NKPA Division found the open flank on the right of 3/34th and attacked using their favored approach. The 4th Division fixed the two forward companies and enveloped their right flank with an infantry regiment and quickly over ran the 63rd FA and set up road blocks. The 63rd lost ten 105mm howitzers, as many as eight vehicles, and suffered 136 casualties. The forward 34th positions caved in and the NKPA breached the Kum River line in less than a day (See Map 5).[82]

The 19th Regiment defended a frontage on the Kum River thirty miles wide between the 34th Regiment on their left and the 2nd ROK Division on their right. The 19th Regiment defended the most likely crossings with 1st Battalion (1/19th) and most 2/19th forward and one 2/19th company in reserve with the 11th, 52nd, and 13th FA Battalions in support. The 3rd NKPA Infantry Division concentrated to their front and after two days of probing attacks, they commenced its attack against the19th Regiment on 16 July. The 3rd NKPA used their trademark operational approach, a fixing attack on the center positions of 1/19th and a double envelopment on the open flanks. The center positions held initially, but the flanking attacks infiltrated into the rear area and began attacking the 52nd FA and setup a strong roadblock behind 1/19th. While attempting to breakout, the 1/19th lost most of its heavy equipment, suffered 658 casualties, and melted into the hills, virtually destroyed. The NKPA completely breached all the 24th ID Kum River positions and the 19th Regiment was in full retreat toward Taejon (See Map 6).[83]

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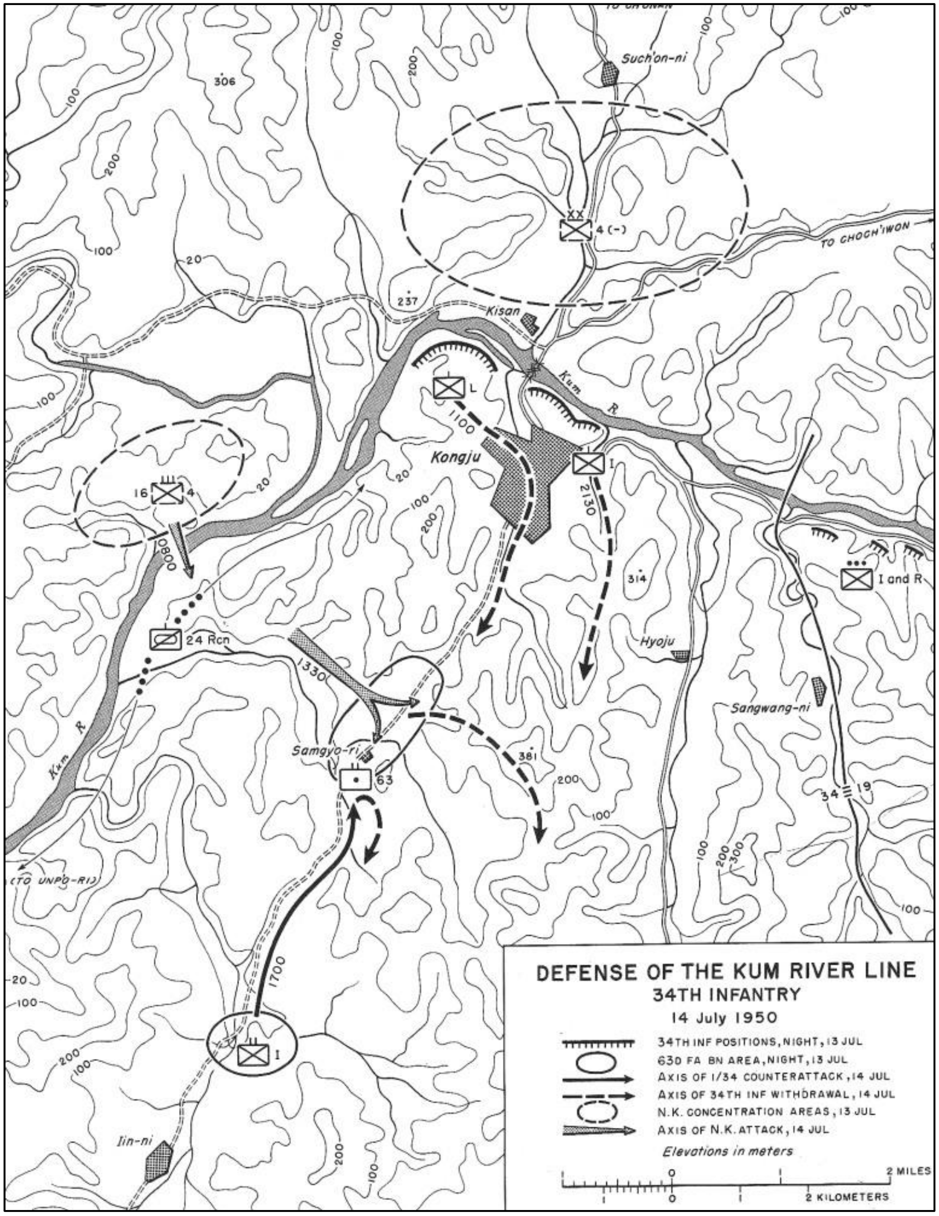
[82] Appleman, 121-30; Millet, 190-91; Alexander, 76-81.

Map 5. 34th Infantry Regiment's Defense at the Kum River.


TO CH'ONAN
Such'on-ni
306
4 (-)
TO CHOCH'IWON
237
Kisan
Kum R
L
1100
Kongju
I
2130
16
4
0800
24 Rcn
314
I and R
Hyoju
1330
Sangwang-ni
Samgyo-ri
63
381
34
19
(TO UNPO-RI)
1700
I
Iin-ni
100
200
300
20
DEFENSE OF THE KUM RIVER LINE
34TH INFANTRY
14 July 1950
34TH INF POSITIONS, NIGHT, 13 JUL
63D FA BN AREA, NIGHT, 13 JUL
AXIS OF 1/34 COUNTERATTACK, 14 JUL
AXIS OF 34TH INF WITHDRAWAL, 14 JUL
N.K. CONCENTRATION AREAS, 13 JUL
AXIS OF N.K. ATTACK, 14 JUL
Elevations in meters
0
2 MILES
0
2 KILOMETERS

Source: Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu: June-November 1950* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1961), 124,

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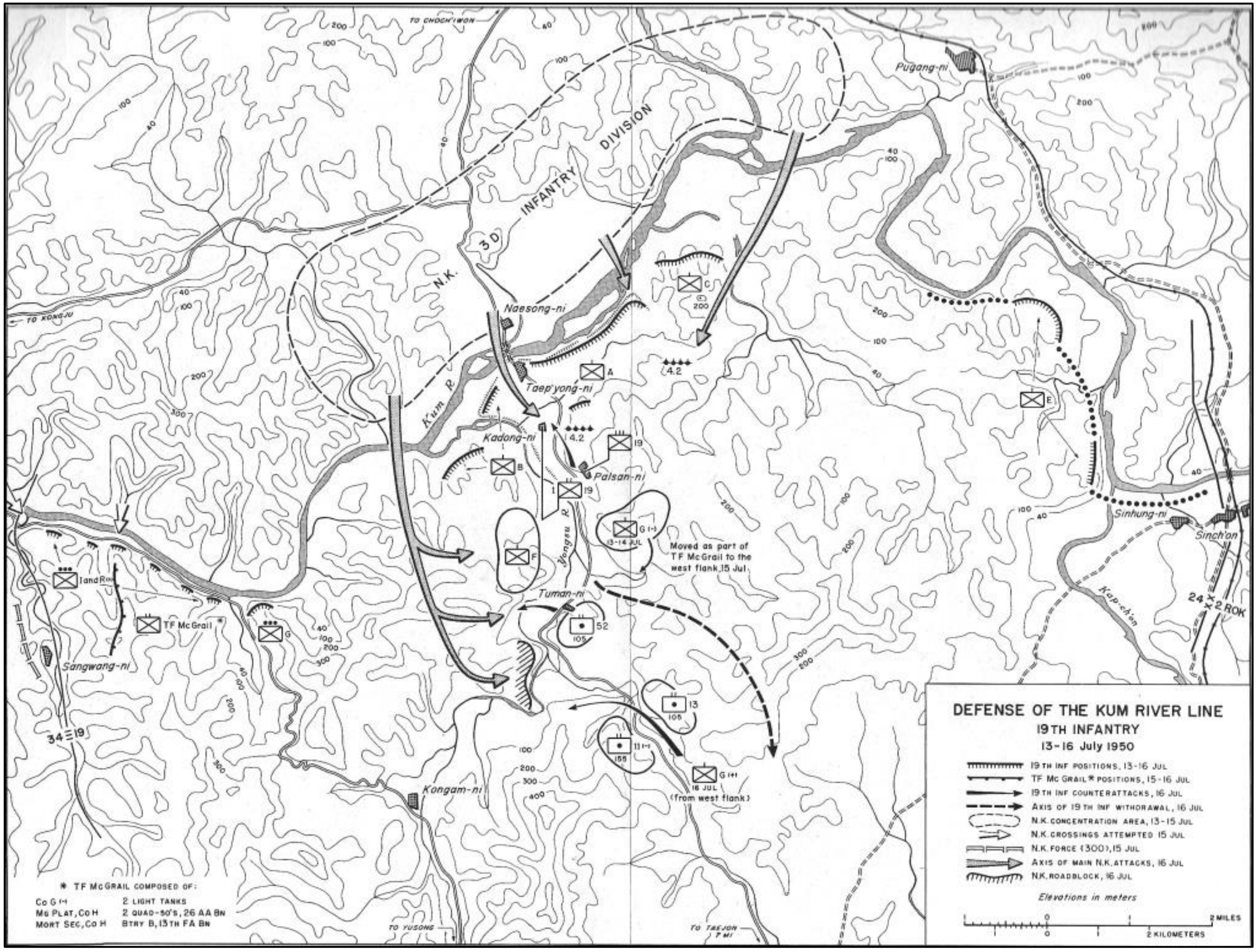
[83] Appleman, 130-45; Millet, 191-92; Alexander, 82-91.

Map 6, The 19th Infantry Regiment's Defense at the Kum River


DEFENSE OF THE KUM RIVER LINE
19TH INFANTRY
13-16 July 1950
19TH INF POSITIONS, 13-16 JUL
TF McGRAIL* POSITIONS, 15-16 JUL
19TH INF COUNTERATTACKS, 16 JUL
AXIS OF 19TH INF WITHDRAWAL, 16 JUL
N.K. CONCENTRATION AREA, 13-15 JUL
N.K. CROSSINGS ATTEMPTED 15 JUL
N.K. FORCE (300), 15 JUL
AXIS OF MAIN N.K. ATTACKS, 16 JUL
N.K. ROADBLOCK, 16 JUL
Elevations in meters
0
2 MILES
0
2 KILOMETERS
* TF McGRAIL COMPOSED OF:
Co G (-)
MG PLAT, Co H
MORT SEC, Co H
2 LIGHT TANKS
2 QUAD-50'S, 26 AA Bn
BTRY B, 13TH FA Bn
N.K. 3D INFANTRY DIVISION
Kum R.
Naesong-ni
Taep'yong-ni
Kadong-ni
Palsan-ni
Tuman-ni
Pugang-ni
Sinhung-ni
Sinch'on
Sangwang-ni
Kongam-ni
Yongsu R.
Kap-ch'on
TO CHOCH'IWON
TO KONGJU
TO YUSONG
TO TAEJON 7 MI
24
2 ROK
34
19
TF McGrail
Moved as part of TF McGrail to the west flank, 15 Jul
16 JUL (from west flank)
13-14 JUL
4.2
105
155

Source: Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu: June-November 1950* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1961), map foldout, 130-131.

Dean knew that he could not hold Taejon with his remaining combat power and planned to evacuate the city and he sent his Division HQ to Yongdong, 45 kilometers to the east. The 24th ID was little more than three wrecked regiments each little more than battalion strength. The field artillery had taken so many losses its remaining 105mm guns Dean consolidated it into one composite artillery battalion. However, on 18 July, Walker essentially told Dean that if he could, he wanted him to hold Taejon for two more days in order to give the 1st CD time to deploy and reinforce the 24th ID. Dean deployed two battalions, 1/34th and 2/19th, approximately 4 kilometers west of Taejon along the Kap-chon River, with the remnants of 3/34th held in reserve near the Taejon Airfield, 2 kilometers east of

1/34th positions. The 21st Regiment remained in its positions approximately 5 kilometers east of Taejon.[84]

The NKPA attacked with the 3rd and 4th Infantry Divisions supported by the 105th Armor Brigade. On 20 July, the NKPA attack easily outflanked and encircled the 24th ID positions around Taejon. This time the NKPA made a wider flanking movement to the south and blocked the Seoul-Pusan highway east of the city and cutoff the both regiments still fighting west of Taejon. The 4th NKPA division made fixing attacks and over ran its forward positions along the Kap-chon River and captured Taejon. The 3/34th attempting to withdrawal east through Taejon and was caught in the NKPA roadblock and almost completely annihilated. General Dean was missing in action and later captured, and the division suffered over 1,100 casualties and lost nearly all of its remaining heavy weapons and equipment. On 21 July, the 21st Regiment and remaining elements of that division that escaped Taejon retreated east to Yongdong and Walker pulled them out of the line to be reconstituted (See Map 7).[85]

Commanders use movement and maneuver to place forces in a position of relative advantage over the enemy and mass combat effects. At Kum River and Taejon, Dean maneuvered his forces into hopeless positions of disadvantage and allowed the NKPA to gain overwhelming differential concentration at the point of their attack. At the Kum River between 14 and 16 July defended with two regiments abreast in positions that were not mutually supporting. The regimental frontages were two to three times in excess of their designed capability with three battalions. With only two battalions per regiment, commanders could not generate much reserve capability and Dean never generated a division reserve to reinforce their positions or influence the outcome. Both the 34th and 19th Regiment defended with only one battalion forward. The 1/19th defended at Taepyongni with most of the division artillery, the 11th, 13th, and 52nd FA battalions. The 3/34th, which was little more than two under strength companies at this point, defended at Kongju with one supporting artillery battalion, the 63rd FA. The

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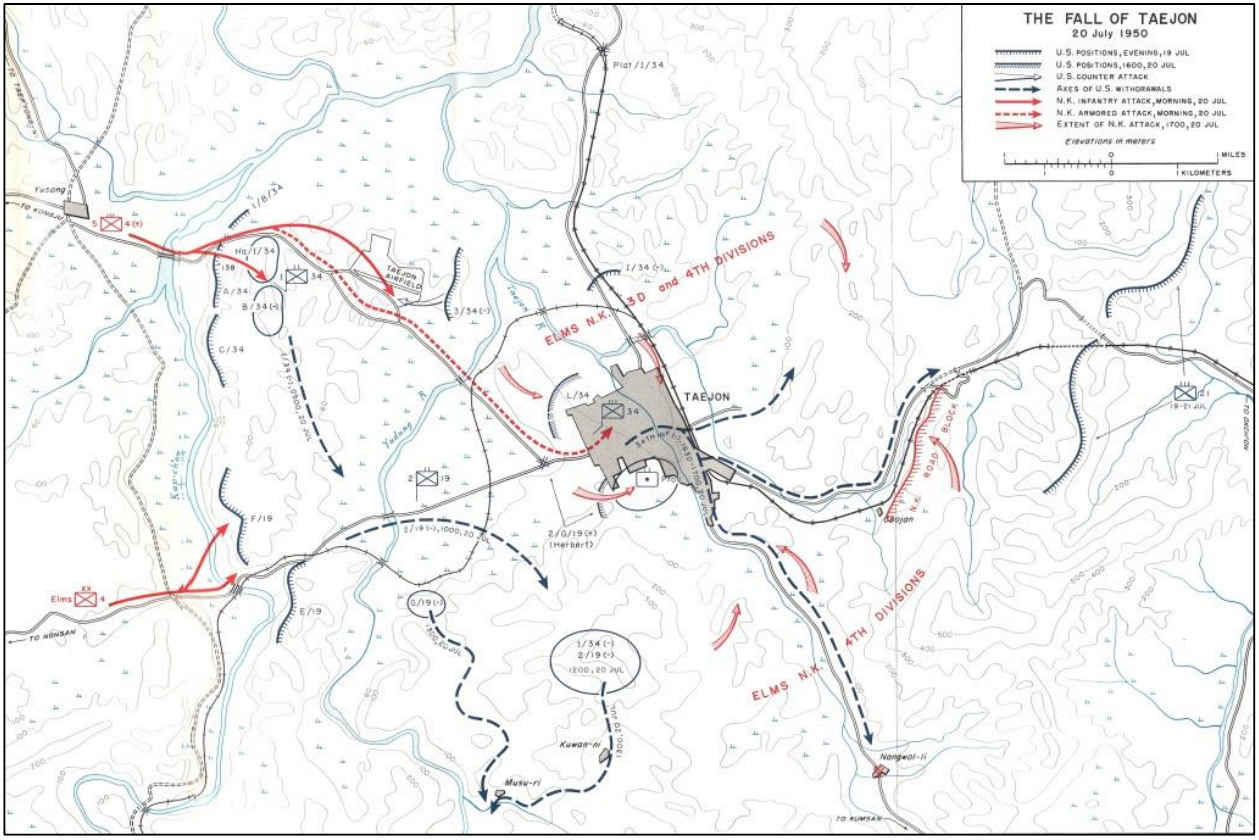
[84] Appleman, 148-51; Millet, 192-93; Alexander, 94-96; Collins, 57-58.

[85] Appleman, 156-78; Millet, 192-93; Alexander, 96-107; Collins, 60-64.

Map 7. 34th Infantry Regiment's Defense at the Kum River.


THE FALL OF TAEJON
20 July 1950
U.S. POSITIONS, EVENING, 19 JUL
U.S. POSITIONS, 1600, 20 JUL
U.S. COUNTER ATTACK
AXES OF U.S. WITHDRAWALS
N.K. INFANTRY ATTACK, MORNING, 20 JUL
N.K. ARMORED ATTACK, MORNING, 20 JUL
EXTENT OF N.K. ATTACK, 1700, 20 JUL
Elevations in meters
MILES
KILOMETERS
Yusong
TO KONGJU
1/B/34
Hq/1/34
A/34
B/34(-)
C/34
TAEJON AIRFIELD
3/34(-)
Plat/1/34
I/34(-)
ELMS N.K. 3D and 4TH DIVISIONS
L/34
34
TAEJON
2/19
F/19
E/19
G/19(-)
2/G/19(+) (Herbert)
Elms 4
TO NONSAN
1/34(-) 2/19(-) 1200, 20 JUL
Kuwan-ni
Musu-ri
ELMS N.K. 4TH DIVISIONS
N.K. ROAD BLOCK
Sojan
Nangwol-li
TO KUMSAN
21 19-21 JUL
TO OKCHON

Source: Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu: June-November 1950* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1961), Insert, Map II.

21st Regiment was east of Taejon, near Ockcheon, over 25 kilometers away. The result was the 24th ID fought two separate battalion task force engagements against each against a reinforced NKPA division. One on the 14th when the 4th NKPA division encircled and over ran the 3/34th and 63rd FA BN. The second on the 16th when the 3rd NKPA division using the same fixing and flanking tactics and destroyed most of the 1/19th and a battery of the 52nd FA.[86]

The same pattern was repeated again at Taejon on 20 July when the 3rd and 4th NKPA divisions each outflanked and over ran the forward defending battalions, the 2/19th and the 1/34th. The 21st Regiment was still at Ockcheon east of Taejon, in a position meant to guard the route from Taejon to Yongdong from an NKPA penetration from the north, which never came. The 21st not only was out of position to support the other regiments of the division it also failed to keep the route out of Taejon open. At no time was there indication in any of these engagements that a 24th ID element or asset was maneuvered by the Division in support of one its subordinate commanders. The division HQ was so far back, nearly forty-five kilometers away in Yongdong, it was unable to influence the battle in any way. The 24th ID did not successfully maneuver and fight as a division massing its combat power meant it had failed to protect and preserve its force, and thus maintain its combat power.[87]

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[86] U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 3-3; Fehrenbach, 91; Collins, 57; Wiersema, 4, 10-11; Garrett ,17; Flint in *America's First Battles*, 293.

Dean also failed to drive his own operations process and intelligence gathering function and failed to utilize his HQ in any meaningful way. He spent most of the campaign separated from his command and control capabilities. As the 24th ID Commander, his primary responsibility was to integrate the activities of the division, balancing the art of command with the science of control while integrating all the warfighting functions. The critical capability that enables Dean to direct integrating activities is the Division staff but Dean stayed separated from most of the staff and HQ throughout the campaign. A number of observers described the situation inside the division headquarters as chaos. Although, it is important for commanders to circulate around the battlefield to gain first hand situational understanding, the commander cannot drive the operations process without time guiding the staff's work.[88]

Dividing a division headquarters into forward and rear echelons was a well-known concept in 1950 and the 1949 edition of FM 100-5 clearly articulates such a framework. However, throughout the operations of 5-20 July, Dean had with him only one captain from G3, his personal aide, an interpretor, and his driver. Such a small element of captains did not make an effective tactical headquarters for commanding a division. The staff itself took almost no part in the battles after 16 July when Dean sent the HQ to Yongdong, almost 45 kilometers away from the forward line of division troops west of Taejon.

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[87] Halberstam, 144; Collins, 59; Alexander, 102, 105.

[88] Hastings, 80; Collins, 59-61; Blair, 135; Dean, 28-29; U.S. Army, ADRP 3-0, 1-8, 2-11, 3-2.

Without utilizing his HQ effectively, Dean lost the science of control over the 24th ID and was never able to fight the division as an integrated and synchronized whole.[89]

Although Dean was a stalwart and courageous officer, he never had complete control of his division nor fought the division as a unified force. At the battle of Taejon, Dean lost complete control of the division and took to the streets to fight tanks with a bazooka, giving up his ability to influence the outcome of the battle. There was no one in the division who could replace the missing leadership or influence of a major general. Dean clearly showed what Clausewitz calls the first requirement of a soldier, courage, and one of the indispensible qualities of a commander, determination, but not the power of intellect or coup d'oeil. As 24th ID operations progressed, Dean and his staff acted without insight or reflection and could only slavishly react to one defeat after another with uncoordinated single battalion actions, never adapting to the rapidly disintegrating situation.[90]

Operational Art - Feasible Alternative Operational Approach

A more effective operational approach was easily within sight. Dean might have concentrated his entire Division in or around Taejon by 11 or 12 July, and arrayed in sufficient depth with massed combat effects, and reserves to affect essentially the same delay without needless sacrifice of blood and loss of combat power. The friction caused by the Fifth Air Force interdiction was having significant effects on NKPA daylight movements by the first days of July. By which time the NKPA, advancing at fifteen kilometers per day would only have reached the Kum River with significant combat power and operational endurance. The 24th ID could then fight as a unified division in the more favorable mountainous terrain between Teajon and Kumchon.[91]

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[89] U.S. Army, *Field Manual 100-5,*1949 edition, 28-29; Appleman, 147; Dean, 20, 28-29, 30, 34, 37; Blair, 136-37.

[90] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 100-02; Dean, 30-35, Blair, 132, 135.

[91] Blair, 97, 115; Millet, 151; Futrell; 84-45, 90-91, 97; Halberstam, 144; Wiersema, 10; Garrett, 34-35.

The terrain east of Taejon was more mountainous and favorable to the defender than the coastal plains west of Taejon. The NKPA ability to encircle and flank the 24th ID positions would be severely constrained by the much hillier terrain. The 24th could have displaced to subsequent positions without becoming decisively engaged, finally ending near Gumi on the Naktong, each time affecting a delay of 1-2 days. This approach places the 24th ID at or near Yongdong on or around 19 July when the 1st Cavalry Division's 5th Cavalry Regiment arrived east of Yongdong.[92]

This type of delaying operation was by no means something foreign to the knowledge and experience of the US Army in 1950. Dean and his staff only had to read and understand FM 100-5 to gain a sufficient conceptual framework of how to employ forces for a successful delay. Army Field Manual 100-5 of 1949 states that the "principle of a delaying action is to gain time without fighting a decisive engagement." Delaying operations "gain time for the united employment of the entire command." Furthermore, FM 100-5 describes delaying action in successive actions in a series of coordinated withdrawals by portions of the delaying force, based on limited resistance on each position, and should be broken off without becoming closely engaged. Even more damning for the commander and staff of the 24th ID, the manual articulates a situation eerily similar to that faced in July 1950.[93]

> In situations where the enemy has freedom of maneuver and mobile troops and the flanks of the delaying force are open to hostile attack, the protection of the flanks and rear is of vital importance. Since the enemy may succeed in pushing by the flanks or in executing a wider maneuver with mobile forces to strike in the rear of an occupied delaying position, the commander must make provision to block or destroy such forces.[94]

This approach could have protected most of the 24th ID's combat power and left the 8th Army with the three US Divisions abreast to hold the western edge of Pusan perimeter, the minimum Walker thought necessary. The training and experience of the division in July 1950 was well within the necessary skills necessary to execute this simpler and less risky approach and more like the type of operation at which the US Army was the best in the world. With flanks unexposed and daring maneuver not required the NKPA would have to fight a contest of firepower and logistics. As historian Robert Citino has noted, a US Force fighting a linear battlefield with sufficient artillery, control of the air and a large port at its back "can hold any spot on earth almost indefinitely."[95]

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[92] Appleman, 196.

[93] U.S. Army, *Field Manual 100-5,* 1949 edition, 155-60; Wiersema, 17-18.

[94] U.S. Army, *Field Manual 100-5,* 1949 edition, 156.

Conclusion

A US infantry division, even at two thirds of its designed capability, should have been able to fight and delay two NKPA infantry divisions and armor brigade without suffering catastrophic losses. The 24th ID, although not optimally prepared, fought with the advantages of complete air and naval superiority. The 3rd and 4th NKPA divisions, who did most of the damage to the 24th ID, were themselves down to 70% strength after a week of fighting the ROK Army. Dean employed and maneuvered his forces with such uncoordinated and poor operational art that no amount of training, discipline, or equipment could have succeeded in stopping or substantially delaying the NKPA advance. The 24th ID's failure to successfully maneuver and fight as a division that massed its combat power also meant it had failed to protect and preserve its force, and thus was unable to maintain its combat power. The poor operational art employed by Dean and the 24th ID robbed Walker and the Eighth Army of 33% of its available combat power to hold the Korean peninsula. Even when judged by US Army doctrine of 1950, it is hard to understand how Dean was fighting his division in an effective manner. The US Army should re-write its familiar tagline of "no more Task Force Smiths" to something more like "no more sacrificed divisions."[96]

The training, equipment, and manpower deficiencies were general causes of the 24th ID failure, necessary but not sufficient to explain the outcome of the 24th ID delaying operation. They are what Porter Abbott calls supplementary events of a narrative, the "catalyzers" or "satellites", and they do not lead anywhere.[97] These factors were surmountable without causing the near destruction of the 24th ID had commanders more effectively employed the available forces. The Eighth Army's equipment was a mix of proven and updated weapons systems from WWII that was at least equal to that of the NKPA in quality and quantity. While anecdotal evidence exists, that it was in a poor state of readiness there is little or no qualitative data to show the degree of readiness was excessively poor or less than that of the NKPA. The Eighth Army in July 1950 was not trained to the high-level of readiness necessary for units expected to fight in a moment's notice, however they were far from totally unprepared. The units of the Eighth Army had been preparing for combat operations for twelve months when the war in Korea began. Although hampered by serious constraints on manpower, training facilities and money, most units made substantial progress in readiness and could adequately execute basic tactical tasks by June 1950.[98]

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[95] Robert M Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm: The Evolution of Operational Warfare* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 129-30; Ent, 58; Millet, 153; Alexander, 122.

[96] Wiersema, 20; Citino; 149; Millet,151, 194; Alexander, 70.

The FEC and Eighth Army commanders and staffs did not adequately consider the risks and uncertainty they would face against the NKPA and recklessly placed their forces in peril. The senior commanders, from division to theater level, failed to appreciate or understand the NKPA's capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses. This poor understanding of the enemy led directly to the foolhardy piecemeal commitment of the 24th ID. Implied in any defensive operation is the need to maximize the impact on enemy while minimizing your own. The 24th ID did not achieve this simple principle. An implied task of the 24th ID's mission was to preserve its combat power for a transition to early offensive operations. By not preserving the division's combat power, Dean probably endangered the entire Eighth Army mission and never stopped the NKPA at any point nor destroyed their offensive capability. It was not a prudent risk, but a reckless gamble that did not adequately consider the effects of sacrificing an entire division of combat power. Effective operational art is about accepting prudent risk and fleeting opportunities, not gambling all with a high-risk course of action.[99]

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[97] H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 22-23.

[98] Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 479, 502-03; Millett, 78-80, 162-63; Alexander, 51; Appleman, 180; Schrader, 92-93; Jordan, 102-03; Minnich, 41-42, Mahon and Danysch, 83; Wiersema, 43-45; Goulden, 137; Hansen 109-16; Blair, 88; Garrett, 1-2.

The employment of the 24th ID followed a pattern of disconnected battalion engagements that largely failed to accomplish its strategic objectives without excess losses. At each engagement, roughly a battalion strength element maneuvered into positions of great weakness that covered frontages two or three times larger than normal and easily outflanked by vastly larger enemy forces. Tactically the 24th ID soldiers fought, often quite well, and inflicted significant casualties on the NKPA formations. However, they were not prepared well enough to conduct such a high-risk course of action and particularly without sufficient joint capabilities to make up their capability gaps. At each engagement the NKPA fixed the forward American positions and then outflanked them and placed roadblocks in their rear. The encircled American positions quickly crumbled and they suffered tremendous casualties as they attempted to withdraw, usually abandoning most of their heavy weapons and equipment. Each time another battalion of the 24th ID was lost as an effective fighting force.[100]

The usual reasons attributed to the 24th ID's failures simply do not fit the evidence nor do they fit with the overall narrative of the Korean War in 1950-51. Walker was able to win the battle for the Pusan Perimeter in July and August 1950 using operational art that was better suited to the capabilities of the Eighth Army. His defense of the perimeter capitalized on good defensive terrain, covered flanks, air superiority, and defensive mobility. In September 1950, Walker completed the destruction of the NKPA, broke out of the Pusan Perimeter, and joined with the Army and Marine Corps troops that landed a Inchon and liberated Seoul. He did this using the same Eighth Army soldiers, equipment, and training that were present in the 24th ID. If the Eighth Army was as badly trained, led, manned and equipped as many historians claim, the Eighth Army and the ROK Army could not have possibly held the peninsula and eventually liberated South Korea. The 24th ID's poor operational art caused what John Gaddis calls the tipping point or the point of no return, when the existing equilibrium ceased to exist. The immediate and exceptional cause, or the "kernel" of the 24th ID's story, was the failure of operational art.[101]

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[99] Matthews, 14-15, 33-34; Blair, 93; Halberstram, 145-46; Fehrenbach, 73; Larsen and Miller, 12; Ent, 58-61; Citino, 124-27, 149; Millet, 194; Biddle, 6; U.S. Army, *ADRP 3-0*, 2-1, 2-8, 2-10, 2-14, 4-9.

[100] Weirsema, 10-11; Garrett, 33-35; Blair, 115, 141-42; Collins, 55; Hablerstam, 148-50; Alexander, 93; Citino, 149; Millet, 140.

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[101] John L. Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 95-99; Abbott, 22-23; Alexander, 134-36, 219-27; Ent, 58-60.

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