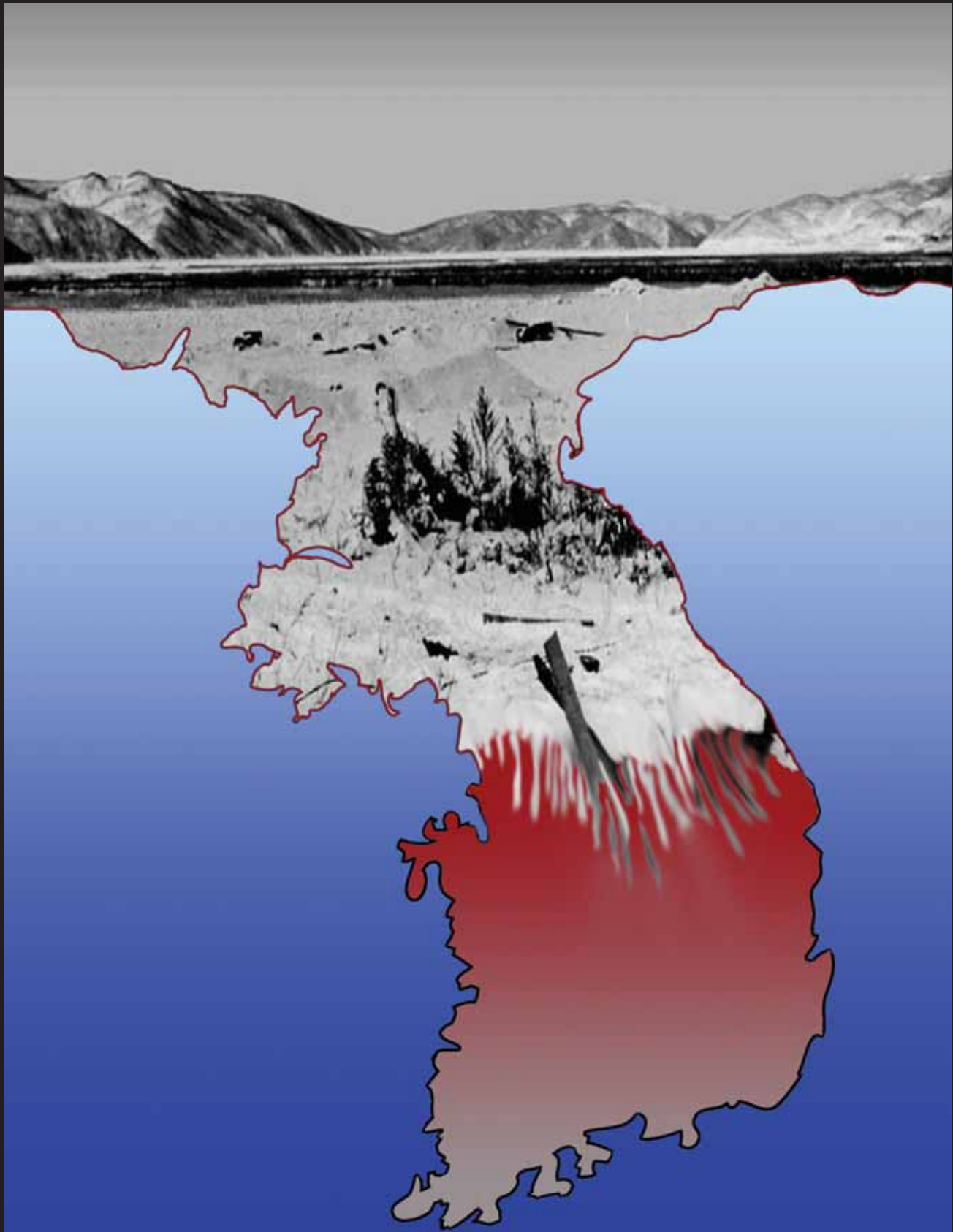


THE CHOSIN CHRONOLOGY

BATTLE OF THE CHANGJIN RESERVOIR, 1950



George A. Rasula
with maps by Melville J. Coolbaugh

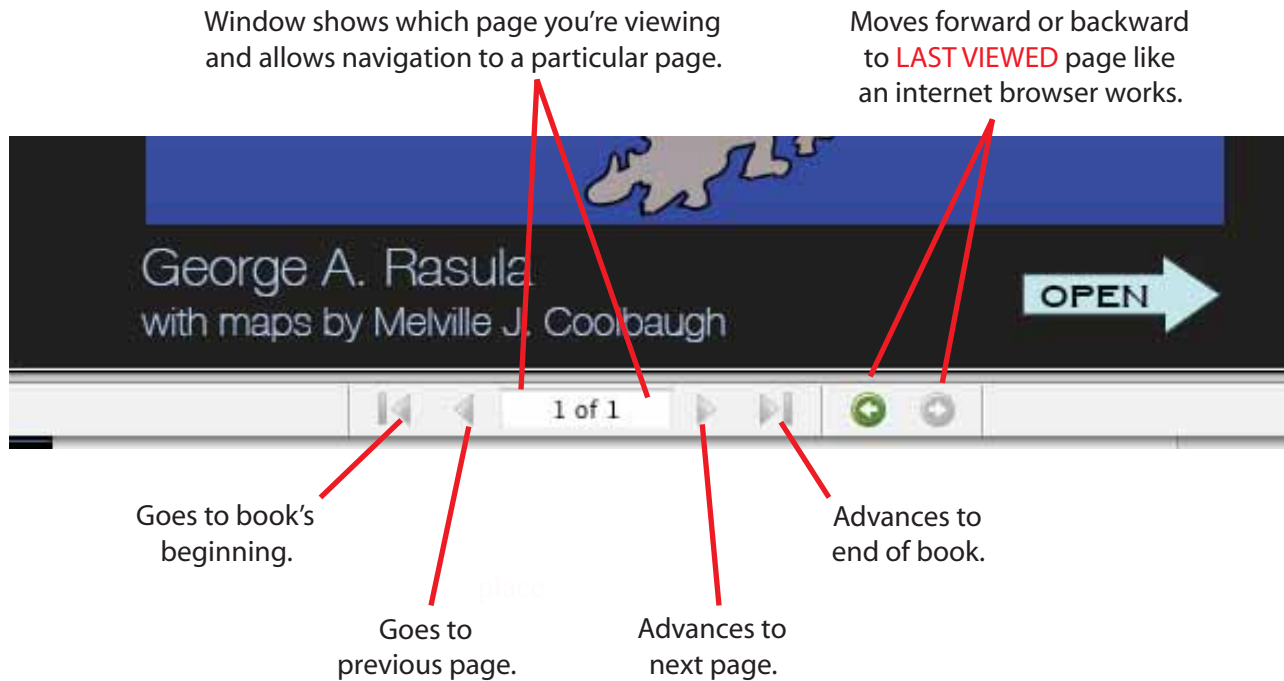
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THE CHOSIN CHRONOLOGY

Battle of the Changjin Reservoir, 1950

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of more than one-thousand soldiers of the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT-31), 7th Infantry Division, who were lost during the battle east of the Chosin Reservoir, 27 November - 2 December 1950, many whose remains to this day rest in the soil adjacent to the Changjin Reservoir. Those soldiers fought for four days and five nights, preventing two Chinese Communist Divisions from driving south and taking the key junction at Hagaru-ri, thereby saving the 1st Marine Division and enabling them to break out to the sea.

PRO PATRIA

AUTHORS OF CHOSIN CHRONOLOGY

George A. Rasula

During his 32 years of service in the United States Army, first as a private soldier in the regular army to a colonel of infantry, George Rasula fought in three wars: As a rifle platoon leader in the Palau operation (attached to the 1st Marine Division on Peleliu), the Korean War as a regimental staff officer (and infantry rifle company commander attached to the 1st Marine Division during the Chosin Reservoir campaign) and in the Vietnam War for two tours, first as a regimental advisor in Tay Ninh/Iron Triangle during the early phases of Viet Cong activity, and years later as Inspector Gen. of XXIV Corps on his last tour. Col. Rasula served as a deputy brigade commander in Alaska after which he served as Army Attache to Finland, both tours enhancing his expertise in cold weather operations.

Lt. Rasula first went to South Korea in 1948 where he served both in the Inchon and Seoul areas, as well as flying the 38th parallel as an observer during the growing border tensions of 1949. When the war began he was with the 31st Infantry Regiment in Hokkaido where he had served as a platoon leader and rifle company commander in K3/31, then a regimental staff officer in the operations section into Korea, promoted to captain during move to North Korea in October 1950 where he participated in the Chosin campaign.

As an early board member of The Chosin Few, George Rasula unknowingly began a decades-long journey into the history of the Chosin campaign. As historian of The Chosin Few he saw a need for a comprehensive chronology of the campaign to help its members see what really happened. It was first briefed at the association's international convention in 1992. It has been presented to reservists of the Naval War College and Finland's National Defense College among many others. It remains a living, changing investigation as new perspectives are always arising.

Melville J. Coolbaugh

A native of Colorado, Melville J. Coolbaugh entered the U.S. Army in 1950 and had just completed his training when the Korean War began, shortly finding himself a member of Company L, 31st Infantry, in Japan as they were preparing as part of the Tenth Corps for the landing at Inchon.

When the Corps went to North Korea he participated in the 3rd Battalion operations near the Fusen Reservoir during the earliest actions against the Chinese, followed by the battle with two Chinese divisions east of the Chosin Reservoir. Although wounded three times and suffering frostbite injury, he was able to fight with the provisional Army unit attached to the 7th Marines during the breakout to the coast. After hospitalization he returned to and fought with the 31st Infantry until summer of 1951, returning to the States and being discharged as a Sergeant First Class.

After leaving the service Coolbaugh used the GI Bill and graduated from the Colorado School of Mines as an Engineer of Mines, resulting in engineering experience at many underground mines and tunnels in North America. In 1984 he founded Coolbaugh Minerals, Inc., a company which evaluates ore deposits and mining properties, an important role in the mining industry. In this work he employed computer programs to draw maps showing the three-dimensional size, shape and content of mineral deposits and to draw maps of the terrain above the deposits. It was this map making capability which became known and the need recognized when he joined the survivors of the Chosin campaign, the Army Chapter of The Chosin Few.

Mel Coolbaugh and George Rasula merged their talents by developing the visual side to The Chosin Chronology during the early 1990s. The highly accurate maps of North Korea with story telling overlays opened the door to new understanding of battles through a technique seldom employed to portray day-by-day battle actions of organizations from divisions to platoons. It has been Mel Coolbaugh's understanding of the Chosin terrain enhanced by years of professional knowledge and technical expertise which played a major role in making this book possible.

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PREFACE

The Chosin Chronology has had as its driving force a combat experience in a foreign land, a type of experience remembered by a few, most of whom saw that action from the rear sight of a rifle, thereby limiting their knowledge and understanding of the big picture. Because of the variety of experiences, there emerged various versions of what actually happened when and where. The Chosin campaign was actually a series of separate battles that took place between 27 November - 12 December 1950. Although the battle took place at the Changjin Reservoir in North Korea, many prefer the Japanese name Chosin because of the maps then available. That word then became the foundation for the frozen Chosin and also The Chosin Few, a Chosin veterans association.

When survivors of that campaign boarded ships and sailed out of the Hungnam harbor, those with enough energy took the time to stand at the rail to watch the mountains of North Korea recede into the distance, knowing that within those mountains lay the remains of more than a thousand soldiers. That was their farewell in December 1950. During those moments I had mixed feelings. On the one hand, I wanted to know more about the so-called Chosin Reservoir campaign, yet, and equally compelling, I felt the need to shake it loose and get on with life.

Years later former soldiers and marines were alerted by calls from other survivors, drawing them into a brotherhood, an association named The Chosin Few which had its first biannual reunion in 1985. It was during those early years when I once again sensed the need to know more about Chosin: what happened and why. They said it was a time for healing those deep inner-wounds that always remain after such a traumatic experience. As years went by the sound of *semper fi* rang loudly in reunion hallways while experiences voiced from lecterns continued to emphasize Yudam-ni, Hagaru-ri and the breakout from there, with little attention given to the east side of the reservoir which today, these many decades later, continues to be the resting place of more than a thousand soldiers. The story had to be told. That's when stories gave birth to more questions, with the answers to be divulged in the enclosed History of the Chosin Story. Yes, even the Chosin story has its own history.

During twenty years of research we concentrated on what happened. Eventually it led to the sequence of significant combat actions which we call The Chosin Chronology. This e-book consists of a compilation of documents that separate the wheat from the chaff, the basis of which is a sequential sketch in the form of words, maps and photographs. By following the chronology, one will emerge with a clear general understanding of what happened, and why.

Connected to the chronology are volumes of detailed information that are revealed as links to The Changin Journal, documents published on the web page of the New York Military Affairs Symposium (www.nymas.org). Also included are archives of maps and photographs. The 47 maps that make up the chronology are of topographic quality created by Mel Coolbaugh who designed them for maximum understanding (and minimum clutter as found on military topo maps). These maps are supported by a Map Archive which contains sections of actual 1:50,000 or 1:250,000 topographic maps; helpful are elevations (contours) and 1,000 meter grid lines for quick reference to distances.

As you continue through the story of the Chosin, keep in mind that the words Chosin (printed on 1950 maps) and Changjin, the Korean name of the reservoir, are interchangeable herein.

George Arthur Rasula

HISTORY OF THE CHOSIN STORY

INTRODUCTION

Once the Chosin operation ended and X Corps departed North Korea, the only documents in existence were the command and after-action reports of the units that had the capability of producing them, that is, had enough survivors. In due time the units began to reconstruct what they could of the battle, as was the case in units of RCT-31. There were a few news articles written by reporters who had been present at Hagaru-ri, Koto-ri and further south to the coast.

THE NEW BREED

It didn't take long for the first author to take hold of the Chosin story. Andrew Geer's book *The New Breed* was published in 1952. This is a book by a marine about the Marines. A quick read will reveal essentially nothing about the battle of RCT-31 on the east side of the reservoir, although it does contain information about Lt. Col. Beall's group providing aid to wounded and frozen troops on the ice, details obviously taken from the Beall statement. It is very interesting to study Geer's handling of the story at a time when little was known about some actions.

COMBAT ACTIONS IN KOREA

When units returned to South Korea the Army's historians were also arriving. Their mission at the time to interview survivors of Eighth Army and X Corps units, to begin the process of writing the history of the war. These early interviews led to the first Army publication containing some details of the Chosin action and published in the form of Chapter 6, "Chosin Reservoir," in the Army Historical Series, *Combat Actions in Korea*. This chapter contained and was limited to interviews by Army historian Martin Blumeson of members of the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry. This publication obviously formed the basis for problems faced later in covering the Army history of Chosin, some authors writing as if the 1/32 action was all there was east of the reservoir. This could also be said to have been the basis for the use of the term "task force" when referring to Army units east of the reservoir.

USMC CHOSIN RESERVOIR CAMPAIGN

The Marine Corps, with the 1st Marine Division (reinforced) participating in the war, published Volume III, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, of the USMC Korean War Series in 1957. Volume II covered the Inchon-Seoul operation, while Volume I covered the Marine Brigade (based on the 5th Marines in the Pusan Perimeter action.) Two more volumes would follow providing coverage to the end of the war. When an alert reader looks inside the cover of this book at a map of enemy divisions, he will note a blank space east of the reservoir. Roy Appleman later commented on the coverage of the war to a point just before the CCF attacks in November 1950, with the last few pages providing a good insight into the CCF buildup before attacking units in the Chosin area. This is an excellent and well-documented book. The Army coverage of the Chosin action would wait many more years.

Then came the dry spell when Chosin survivors were going on with careers and raising children, some already experiencing the landscape of Southeast Asia, learning a new acronym - "V.C." It was in the late seventies and early eighties when survivors were contacted by Roy Appleman and Eric Hammel - both of them researching Chosin. During this research period we learned authors did not share their valuable information with others; not until their own book was published.

CHOSIN

Eric Hammel's book *Chosin* came out in 1981. His book was the trigger which motivated Frank Kerr and Jack Hessman to activate The Chosin Few. Although Hammel covered the Army unit actions well with the information he had available, we later learned that the detailed and time-consuming research by Appleman

would pay off in the end. Hammel's objective was writing books about the Marines for Marines; writing is his profession.

THE CHOSIN FEW NEWS DIGEST

Although The Chosin Few publications are not official documents of the services, they have had an impact on members of The Chosin Few. One of the first documents was the "Fact Sheet" published shortly after the association was formed. This document, written by a public relations expert, contained far too much hype and errors in fact that continue to be heard to this day in the meeting rooms and hallways of The Chosin Few reunions. To complicate the problem, the official publication of the association has continued to reprint old articles from newspapers and magazines that also carry misleading statements and errors in fact. A few members have written articles that borrowed hype and errors from the past: an example is that Chosin units "were attacked by 12 CCF divisions consisting of 120,000 men" and we suffered "5,000 killed and 15,000 wounded." Our purpose in including the foregoing is to advise researchers and writers to use common sense and do serious homework, rather than borrow from past authors. If what they have written can be justified, then use it, and inform your readers of the source.

THE FORGOTTEN WAR

As time marched on we saw the work of Clay Blair (1987) and John Toland (1991), among others. Blair's book *The Forgotten War* is a masterpiece of supported detail, all 1,136 numbered pages. If you want a good reference book on the Korean War, this is it.

IN MORTAL COMBAT

John Toland wrote *In Mortal Combat* without footnotes identifying his sources. A short list was included in Notes in the end pages. Although we had long believed more than one CCF division fought east of the reservoir, these many contacts with John Toland - one of the few historians who conducted research in China - convinced us that a much larger Chinese force was involved in that action.

Although the books mentioned contain important information (the meat of the Chosin story) many special category books were also published, such as Navy, Air Force, and others. These books also borrowed from past authors, continuing to spread errors, rather than clean historical research.

ONE BUGLE NO DRUMS

In 1986 William Hopkins's book *One Bugle No Drums* told about the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines that had been at the bottom of the Funchilin Pass at Chinhung-ni and, after being relieved by Task Force Dog of the 3rd Infantry Division, was committed on 8-9 December to take Hill 1081. Hopkins commanded H&S Company of the battalion. The dust cover reads "With two hitherto-unpublished secret reports by S.L.A. Marshall." It is a document worth reading.

EAST OF CHOSIN

The background behind Roy Appleman's research continued to draw interest. We knew he had left the Army's Center of Military History (CMH) and was continuing research on his own, with four books on the Korean War eventually published by the Texas A&M University Press. We understand internal problems in CMH led to Appleman's departure. After a long period of research, Appleman came out in 1987 with his first book, *East of Chosin*, that finally opened the door to the story about Army units east of the reservoir. Today we see *East of Chosin* as a prelude to more comprehensive coverage of the Chosin campaign, the next book on our list.

ESCAPING THE TRAP

Appleman's *Escaping the Trap* was published in 1990. This is a must read for all interested in the Chosin

operation because, at that time of his research, it examined the entire Chosin campaign. As we studied the evolution of the Chosin story during these many years, we learned there was a need beyond examination, that of explanation. The question most often asked by survivors has been “why?”

KOREAN WAR ALMANAC

In 1990 Col. Harry Summers published his *Korean War Almanac*, a reference book on the war. Since the author had been an historian at the Army War College, we expected new keys to open rusty locks securing the Chosin story. Although it's helpful for reference purposes, we were surprised at such errors as “Only 385 of the task force's 3,200-man force survived,” and that the “31st Infantry Regiment won two Navy PUCs for bravery at the Chosin and Hwachon reservoirs.” In addition to the 385, about 900 casualties were evacuated from Hagaru-ri. The units of the regiment that fought the battle east of Chosin did not receive the original award of 1953; they received it in 1999 in time for the 50th anniversary.

Twenty-nine years after the first volume and forty years after the battle, the Department of the Army's Center of Military History finally came out in 1990 with its next volume on the Korean War, *Ebb and Flow* by Billy Mossman. This is where we catch a glimpse of the problem involving CMH and Roy Appleman; his two books, *East of Chosin* and *Escaping the Trap* are not mentioned, not referred to, not used. The primary references cited regarding Chosin are Gugeler's 1954 chapter based on interviews in 1951 of 1/32 Infantry personnel, and the official Marine Corps history of 1957. A knowledgeable source wrote: “I do know that Roy Appleman had planned to write *Ebb and Flow*. He was criticized for his straightforward comments in *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* about the 24th Regiment and apparently taken off the project. This made him very bitter and he proceeded to write his four volumes about that period. They are vastly superior to *Ebb and Flow*, which is disappointing. It covers probably the most important part of the war.” Of interest is today's CMH web page on the Chosin campaign. We are now able to look at Gugeler's entire Chapter 6, “The Chosin Reservoir,” and many other documents and excellent maps.

Other books that may be of interest to students of history are *America's Tenth Legion* by Shelby Stanton (1989); *Miracle in Korea: Evacuation of X Corps from Hungnam Beachhead* by Glen Cowart (1992); and a long-forgotten history of the 3rd Infantry Division originally published in Japan after the war, and now hard to find.

THE CHOSIN FEW NEWS DIGEST

As indicated, this has been a brief sketch of books available into the early 1990s. Other publications that have influenced the perception of readers within The Chosin Few are *The Chosin Few News Digest* and newsletters published by chapters, many with various formats and purposes. In the digest we noted a tendency to include old newspaper articles as well as letters expressing fault with the Army units at Chosin, many of which were out of date because of new knowledge gained through interviews with survivors.

REUNIONS AS SOURCES

In 1984 The Chosin Few held its first mini-reunion at Crystal City, across the river from our nation's capital. This was a gala affair for the Marine Corps. In 1985 the first official Chosin Few Biannual Reunion was held at San Diego during which David Koegel of the 7th Marines and George Rasula of the Army 31st Infantry, were designated co-historians. This was when, as a result of frequent contacts, the two saw future possibilities for creating an understanding of the Army role at Chosin. Through contacts with educators and the educated, they learned that most members knew very little about the performance of units other than their own. They appeared eager to learn. It was a matter of disseminating accurate information.

The hype at San Diego was similar to that at Crystal City, so much so that a colonel of Marines wrote the following in his evaluation of that reunion: “The central theme of the literature of The Chosin Few from its inception has been aggrandizement, self-praise, and hero-cultism. This theme was carried on ad nauseam at the reunion. It was acutely embarrassing to suffer through . . . gross overuse of ‘hero’ at the opening ceremonies (once would have been too many)

“Multi-service aspects. There exists much resentment and dissatisfaction among non-Marine members, and with good reason. There was no discernible effort made at the reunion to recognize the contributions of the various services. If and when such recognition is given it must be honest and sincere, not condescending. Among things that come to mind are Lt. Col. Faith’s impossible mission, and what benefit accrued to the Marines as a result of this sacrifice. There was Army bridging material rigged for drop by Army parachute riggers, Army artillery support at Chinhung-ni of great benefit to the 1st Marines, Army participation with the Marines during the withdrawal, and not the least, Army units that held the ground between Chinhung-ni and the sea. The Air Force evacuated thousands of wounded and dead Marines and brought in vitally needed supplies and ammunition. The Navy furnished close air support and there were many doctors, dentists, chaplains, and corpsmen with the Marines, not to mention the ships at Hungnam that participated in the evacuation. And what of Drysdale and his magnificent Royal Marine Commandos? Or the many Koreans who served in various capacities, including the combat arms, with Marine and Army units?”

REWRITE OR RE-RIGHT

In the past decade a more accurate picture of the Chosin campaign began to take shape. During this time we heard from “both sides of the aisle,” especially when historians began to address the Presidential Unit Citation awarded in 1953 to the 1st Marine Division reinforced, specifically the Army units that fought the battle east of Chosin that were not permitted to share in the award. In the background this took on the form of a political issue. One faction held the position that the Army units were not deserving of the PUC as stated by Maj. Gen. O.P. Smith in his 11th Endorsement to the Navy (see Changjin Journals 04.05.00 and 05.06.00). The other faction introduced evidence that Gen. Smith’s decision of 1953 could no longer be supported. Although The Chosin Few’s chapters provided a basis for disseminating information, they also formed the political factions that almost destroyed the association. It was within this atmosphere that historians continued to search for new knowledge on which to base a new look at the Chosin story. Emerging was a need to re-right the story as it was being rewritten.

BIRTH OF THE ARMY STORY

In 1986 at a reunion of the 31st Infantry Regiment, 16 survivors of Chosin decided to activate the “U.S. Army Chapter of The Chosin Few.” This was the beginning of an organized voice within The Few, not only to seek more background on what had happened during the Chosin campaign, but more importantly to formalize the search for and recording of knowledge through seminars. The “Soldiers of Changjin” was organized and Changjin became its newsletter with a primary mission of disseminating information about the Chosin campaign.

During these early years of The Chosin Few, a letter was dispatched by the Executive Director to the Secretary of the Navy, recommending additions to the list of units awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) for the Chosin campaign. Although the action was not successful at the time, it did open the door at higher levels by revealing the problem, one which could result in serious embarrassment. More research was necessary.

THE CHOSIN FEW REUNIONS

The Army Chapter initiated a seminar program at each annual reunion. When survivors of Chosin were

invited to tell their stories and discuss differing points of view, participants quickly learned that no one had a complete picture. Many recalled only that which they had seen through the sights of their rifles. These stories were formalized into articles and published in Changjin, with very few picked up in other chapter publications or The Chosin Few News Digest.

During the 1990 reunion at Las Vegas The Chosin Few entered a change of pace initiated by the newly elected president, Col. Edward L. "Ted" Magill, JAGC, USAR (Ret). During this reunion Col. George Rasula participated in an "east-west" presentation of the Chosin story with Lt. Gen. Al Bowser, USMC (Ret), G-3 of 1MarDiv at Chosin. During this presentation the audience began to realize that Army units did play an important role. The technique used for the presentation gave birth to the concept play an important role. The technique used for the presentation gave birth to the concept of presenting the story in a chronological format - a field test of "The Chosin Chronology." The seminar resulted in Magill's appointment of Rasula as founder and first chair of The Chosin Few Historical Committee.

During the next two years The Chosin Chronology was prepared. Published sources were primarily the official Marine Corps history and Roy Appleman's Escaping the Trap. Additional information was gathered at reunion seminars along with personal contacts with members of other military services and outside sources. Equally important was the talent of Melville Coolbaugh (L3/31/7), a mining engineer with map-making resources. The concept in designing the Chronology was to present a day/night description of the action on maps so as to create an understanding of the relationship between combat actions at various locations. Most publications in the past had told the story in separate sections which resulted in a misunderstanding of how one action influenced another. An important example was how the battle on the east side of the Reservoir affected the security of Hagaru-ri, and the resulting security of the 5th and 7th Marines at Yudam-ni.

The Chosin Chronology was presented at the New Orleans Chosin Few Reunion in 1992. The introduction and summary was presented by Medal of Honor recipient Gen. Raymond Davis, USMC (Ret). Attendees recall the Gen.'s concluding words: "I learned more today about Chosin than I had ever known." Yet however informative the presentation may have been, there was negative reaction within a small faction of The Chosin Few membership, with some saying "You're trying to rewrite history." The problem was allowing a myth to grow, with the realization that myths had to be challenged before becoming presumptive fact.

Although the Historical Committee was prepared to present the next upgrade of The Chosin Chronology at the 1994 Chosin Few Reunion in Miami, the offer was not accepted. At New Orleans the chair of the Historical Committee rotated to Maj. Patrick Roe, USMC (Ret), who had been a battalion S-2 in the 7th Marines. This was an excellent choice because his specialty and interest had been the enemy; he was well on his way in research to write a book. From that point on Roe and Rasula worked closely, exchanging ideas and further developing the content and accuracy of the Chosin story. During the next few years they learned that their research coincided with that of Merrill A. Needham, Ph.D., who was researching the Faith clan, including the battle east of Chosin leading to the death of Lt. Col. Don C. Faith. Both Needham and Roe had been exposed to translations of Chinese documents that revealed RCT-31 units east of the Reservoir were attacked by two CCF divisions and a regiment of a third CCF division, reinforcing the theory that the primary objective of the CCF was the most direct route to Hagaru-ri where they would cut off the Marine units at Yudam-ni. (See CJ 02.04.00)

An effort to correct the PUC problem was also taking place at the Miami reunion. With continued support from the Board of Directors, the Awards Committee set the groundwork for an effort to get the PUC for units of RCT-31 that fought the battle east of Chosin.

Next came the 1996 Chosin Few Reunion in Portland, Oregon. At this reunion the history seminar was led by Lt. Gen. Al Bowser, USMC, and included presentations by Patrick C. Roe who spoke about the enemy and Edward L. Magill who covered his experience as a member of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion east of the Reservoir. His presentation was so well received that one board member came up after the seminar with tears in his eyes, saying "We didn't know." It was after the 1996 reunion when politics erupted once again within The Chosin Few, an undesirable situation that ended up in Federal Court. Under this difficult atmosphere the Awards Committee continued its work. The goal was the 50th anniversary - the year 2000.

Throughout these years the Army Chapter continued with its annual reunions, the 16 founding members growing to more than 400. Each reunion included a history seminar at which members participated by telling firsthand experiences. Many stories were published in Changjin. During these reunions The Chosin Chronology was presented at the three combat arms service schools of the Army: the Infantry School at Fort Benning; the Armor School at Fort Knox; and the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill. Later it was presented for Naval Reserve units in New York State and at the U.S. Naval Academy. In 1998 George Rasula presented The Chosin Chronology at the National Defense College of the Finnish Defense Forces in Helsinki, a country of his ancestors noted for excellence in winter warfare.

With the approach of the 50th anniversary, the Korean War soon became a focal point for editors of magazines and newspapers, along with television program reruns. Ceremonies were being planned for Washington as well as in Seoul, Korea, to commemorate the beginning of the war. Soon the Chosin story would follow with its various versions; on television it would depend on the military affiliation of the talking heads.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

As we approached the 50th anniversary of the Chosin campaign, interest was sharpened by new books, magazine and newspaper articles, and television reruns. We also noted The Chosin Few's 50th celebration at San Diego, the Army Chapter's PUC ceremony in Pennsylvania, and the Navy's ceremony and related activities Washington, D.C. As a conclusion to our four-part history of the Chosin story, let us look at the past few years and highlight the publications contributing to the story.

BOOKS

- 1996 Joseph R. Owen, *Colder Than Hell*
- 1999 Martin Russ, *Breakout* (See CJ 03.08.00)
- 2000 James Brady, *The Marines of Autumn*
- 2000 Patrick C. Roe, *The Dragon Strikes* (See CJ 10.15.00)
- 2000 Edwin H. Simmons, *Dog Company Six*
- 2001 Clifton La Bree, *The Gentle Warrior* (See CJ 11.01.01)
- 2001 University of Kansas Press, *Mao's Gen.s Remember Korea* (See CJ 11.27.03)
- 2002 Edwin H. Simmons, *Frozen Chosin: U.S. Marines at the Changjin Reservoir* (See CJ10.10.04)

Joe Owen's book is from the viewpoint of a platoon leader, highly recommended for junior Officers. It's a good read on leadership. Martin Russ's *Breakout* is a service-bashing classic as noted in our review. We regret that Jim Brady's novel often took a similar approach even though neither author was a Chosin veteran. Pat Roe's book is a must-read for those interested in Chinese entry into the war. The novel written by historian Ed Simmons could be described as the opposite of Brady's; Simmons didn't need to bash others to tell a fine story.

MAGAZINES

Anthony R. Garrett, "Task Force Faith: A Failure in Command, Control and Communications,"

INFANTRY magazine, September-December 1999, (review in CJ 01.22.01) Gina DiNicolo, "Chosin Reservoir," *The Retired Officer* magazine, November 2000 (review in CJ 01.22.01) Allan R. Millett, "Harry's Police Force," *Military History Quarterly*, Autumn 2000 J. Robert Moskin, "Chosin," *American Heritage*, November 2000. Rod Paschall, "Reluctant Dragons and Red Conspiracies," *Military History Quarterly*, Summer 2000. Joe Sugarman, "Breakout from Chosin," *Airlift/Tanker Quarterly*, Fall 2000, published originally in *Air & Space/Smithsonian* magazine, June/July 2000 (see CJ 03.30.01) Blumenson, "Glory and Heartbreak East of the Reservoir," *ARMY* magazine, March 2001. Kevin M. Hymel, "Task Force Faith," *ARMY* magazine, March 2001. Marc D. Bernstein, "Incident at Funchilin Pass," (with sidebar "The Fate of Task Force MacLean/Faith" by Kevin M. Hymel), *Military Heritage*, April 2001 (review in CJ 03.30.01)

The magazine articles run the gamut from minor errors to misinformation, all having a tendency to borrow from the past. We noted a connection between *ARMY* magazine and *Military Heritage*, two related articles by the same author addressing that favorite term of copy-cat historians, "Task Force MacLean/Faith" and "Task Force Faith."

We were especially interested in the *American Heritage* article because the editor made related comments in his "Letter from the Editor - The Forgotten War." He explained he had cut the article because David Douglas Duncan's photographs crowded out the escapade by Lt. Col. John U.D. Page and marine Pfc. Marvin L. Wassen. This was written in such a way one may think Wassen should have received the Medal of Honor, not Page. The editor then uses his page by mentioning two books by Martin Russ and two books by James Brady. When we asked for the editor's military affiliation, the response was "why?" We didn't believe an answer was necessary since his cards were already on the table.

The reader may wonder why we listed "Harry's Police Force" by Millett. This article, based on Truman's comment in August 1950 about the Marine Corps, may be the birthplace of service bashing, the problem of interservice relationships extending far beyond Truman's statement, heard today in the hallways of reunions involving soldiers and marines. The article by Rod Paschall, (former historian at the Army War College) "Reluctant Dragons and Red Conspiracies," provides the reader with a nutshell similar to Pat Roe's book *The Dragon Strikes*.

The article in *Airlift/Tanker Quarterly* is related to the one in *Military Heritage*, both covering the bridge in the Funchilin Pass. Noted in A/TO is recognition of the 2348th QM Airborne Air Supply & Packaging Company. Commanded by Capt. Cecil Hospelhorn, these were the riggers who made the airdrop of the Treadway possible. Recognition is also given to Lt. Charles Ward of the 58th Treadway Bridge Company at Koto-ri who supervised the transport and installation of the bridge using his equipment and expertise. In the *Military Heritage* article there is no mention of the 58th, just that "at Koto was a U.S. Army engineer unit that possessed two ... Brockway transporter trucks," that the "Air force unit at Yonpo used regular G-1 chutes, and the test failed," with no mention of the Army's 2348th riggers who planned and accomplished the rigging. When the story enters the scene of the pass all the credit for movement and installation of the Treadway goes to Marine Lt. Peppin, with no mention of Lt. Ward, as if he didn't exist. Stories such as these demonstrate the power of the press, how by omission a story can be slanted. When one reads stories about Chosin, remember the last story about the same subject, then think different.

NEWSPAPERS

Paul Richter, "Korea War: Once-Maligned Army Troops Honored For Their Actions in Brutal Attack," *Los Angeles Times*, 27 June 2000.
Steve Vogel, "50 Years Later, an Army Force Gets Its Due," *The Washington Post*, 11 December 2000.

The author of the *Los Angeles Times* article was able to reach survivors of RCT-31 while they were attending the Lancaster reunion where the PUC was being awarded. These long distance phone calls resulted in important documents being sent to him as background material. One reader remarked after reading the Times article “The author did a pretty good job of tackling the subject of regaining reputation, although he never did take on the question why the PUC was not awarded to RCT-31 in the first place.” We find it interesting how reporters are able to paint a word picture of a major battle within the confines of a newspaper article, for it takes more than a book to understand the whole.

The Washington Post author was also provided background material for his article and also made use of interviews with familiar names who live in the greater Washington area, this article built around retired Army Col. Jerome McCabe of Heavy Mortar Company, 31st Infantry, and among others retired Marine Col. Robert Parrott leading the effort “to push the Pentagon to award the citation.” A key quote came from Merrill A. Needham, Ph.D., relating to Gen. O.P. Smith’s decision that the RCT-31 units be removed, saying “Smith denied honors to the unit that fought itself to death protecting the flank of the Marines.” The map accompanying the article is the best yet, a graphic describing how the two Chinese divisions cut off the 31st RCT east of the reservoir and how that action related to the two Marine regiments at Yudam-ni to the west. Although the map shows eleven Chinese divisions, Gen. Smith’s memoirs report the 1st Marine Division made contact with elements of six CCF divisions, although his report probably did not count the two CCF divisions east of the reservoir opposing the 31st RCT.

These two articles are the first in the country to address the late award of the Navy Presidential Unit Citation, yet no known publication has addressed the reasons behind the fact that they were denied consideration by Gen. O.P. Smith.

CEREMONIES

LANCASTER, PA

11 June 2000, Reunion of The Army Chapter of The Chosin Few: Award of the Navy Presidential Unit Citation to units of RCT-31. Colors of 31st and 32nd Infantry Regiments carried by battalions stationed at Fort Drum as units of the 10th Mountain Division participated in this event.

SAN DIEGO, CA

December 2000, The Chosin Few 50th Anniversary Reunion, San Diego and Camp Pendleton. Speakers included, among others, Gen. J. L. Jones, Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps, and Col. Edward L. Magill, JAGC, USAR (Ret), past president of The Chosin Few.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The U.S. Navy Memorial, National Commemoration of the Hungnam Redeployment and Evacuation of the Chosin Reservoir Campaign, 12 December 2000. Speakers included, among others, Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig, Brig. Gen. Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret), and Col. George A. Rasula, USA (Ret). In his closing remarks at the ceremony Col. Rasula said: “I would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation from the Soldiers of Changjin for recognition afforded them 49 years after the battle of Chosin. The units of RCT-31 that fought the two Chinese divisions east of the reservoir were never recognized when the original Presidential Unit Citation was awarded in 1953 to the 1st Marine Division reinforced. During the past few years a special effort was launched by concerned members of The Chosin Few to set the record straight. In September of this past year, Secretary of the Navy Danzig signed the final document approving the Navy presidential Unit Citation for those units of RCT-31 which fought that important battle east of the Reservoir. Be it known, Mr. Secretary, that the Soldiers of Changjin - remembering more than one-thousand MIAs who are still in North Korea - appreciate this recognition. The long battle of Chosin is now over. Thank you.” Following the ceremony a symposium “Attacking in a different direction, the Chosin-Hungnam operations” was sponsored by the U.S. Navy Memorial.

INTERPRETATION OF THE CHOSIN STORY

The Chosin story has always rested in the minds of the tellers and the listeners, all modifying what they say or hear to suit their own beliefs, be it from a knowledge base or their own political or service affiliation. The books and magazine articles mentioned have done just that, they present the author's point of view at the time of his research, as well as suggesting motivation related to affiliation or sale of the article. In The Changin Journal we continue to be motivated by interest - nothing more - and because of that we are inclined to look at all points of view and express our findings as accurately as possible.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHOSIN CHRONOLOGY

The Chosin Chronology is a sketch of the battle with minimum use of text and maximum use of visual aids (maps and photographs). It is important that readers use imagination as they mentally plow through the snow and cold of northeast Korea at a time when winter arrived earlier than normal - minus 14 degrees Fahrenheit by mid-November 1950.

When the author began his formal inquiry into the battle of Chosin he saw the need for untold stories from soldiers who fought the battle east of Chosin as well as the final breakout. To do that he organized seminars at veteran's reunions at which soldiers were be able to tell their stories as remembered. Gradually these pieces began to meld with what had already been published, creating the need to tell a more accurate story.

When reading and viewing The Chosin Chronology, readers are encouraged to study the map and the overlay that is presented to portray the specific combat action. Look at the terrain, understanding that the contour lines are in meters, those massive mini-mountains that the infantrymen had to control to survive. Read and understand the distances before wondering why they didn't they do this or that.

After the final withdrawal from Northeast Korea we provide the reader with an essay titled "Sacrifice at the Chosin Reservoir." After experiencing The Chosin Chronology, we encourage readers to study, in their own minds, the relationship between the word "sacrifice" and the loss of more than one-thousand soldiers who continue their rest in the battleground east of the Chosin - all waiting for the end to the forgotten war.

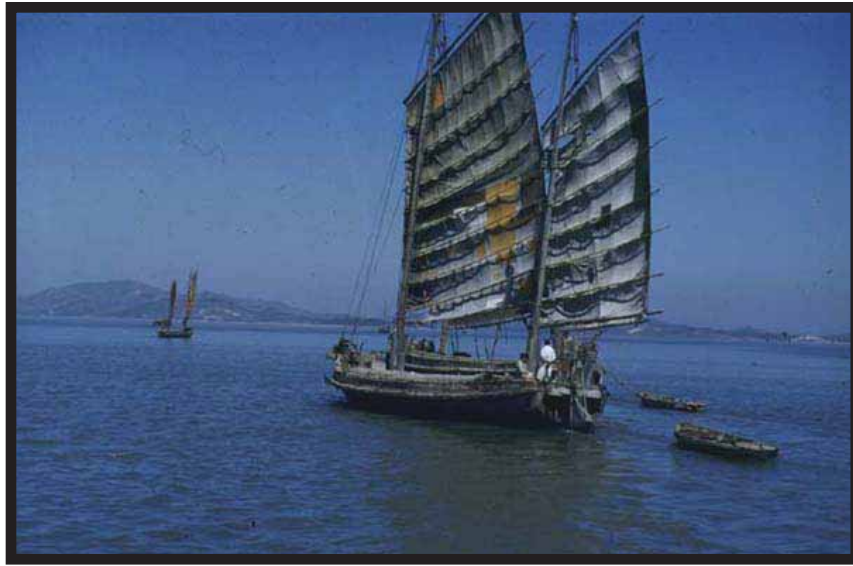
After The Chosin Chronology the reader will find The Changjin Journal with personal experiences and other important documents, followed by The Photo Gallery.

BEFORE THE KOREAN WAR

In 1950 the divisions in Japan were ill prepared for combat. They had but two infantry battalions in each regiment, two artillery batteries in each battalion, and other manpower reductions due to the defense budget of the day. Units had equipment shortages and that which they had was of World War II vintage, as were the supplies located in the depots of the Far East Command.

Located in southern Japan were the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division ... and further north the 7th Infantry Division with its 31st Infantry Regiment on the northern island of Hokkaido, an appropriate location for the Polar Bear regiment.

It has been written that there had been no training, that troops got their training in the Tokyo geisha houses. That was hardly the case outside the Tokyo area, especially on the northern island of Hokkaido where training included winter survival and over-snow mobility. However, they did lack live-fire exercises at a time when the number-crunchers were allocating bullets and bombs. Although the divisions were far better off than the Army was at the time of Pearl Harbor; national priorities were in support of the growing Cold War threat in Europe.



Inchon Junk.
Photo by George Rasula

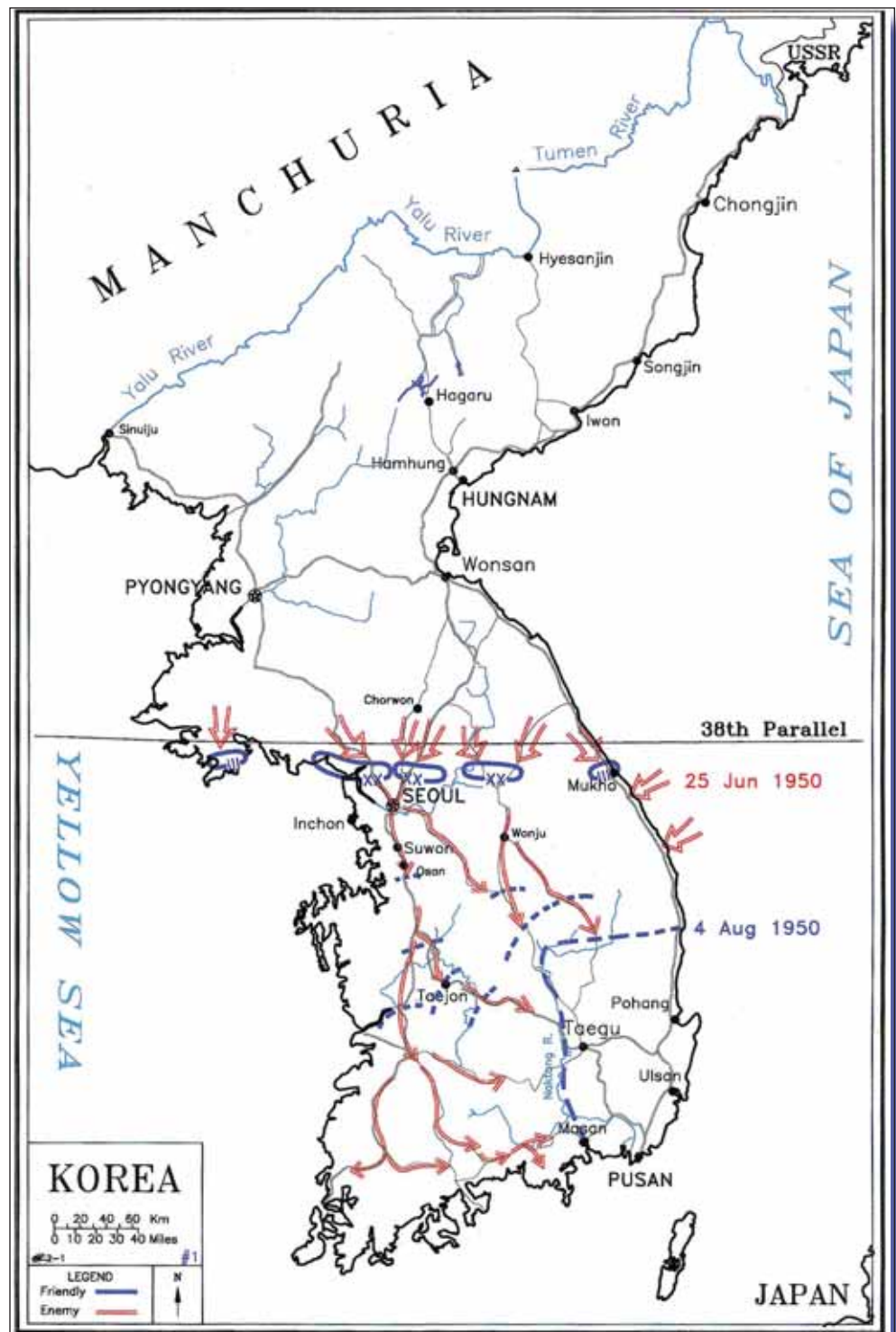
PART I – THE WAR BEGINS

25 JUNE 1950 - NORTH KOREA ATTACKS

First committed is 24th Infantry Division led by Task Force Smith in a delaying action followed by the 25th Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry Division and the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade, forming the Pusan Perimeter.

X Corps was being made up of the 7th Infantry Division in northern Japan, already reduced in strength to build up the Eighth Army units. The 31st Infantry Regiment under Col. Ovenshine was digging foxholes in Hokkaido as they intensified training. The Corps would be rounded out from units in the States, the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California, and the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia.

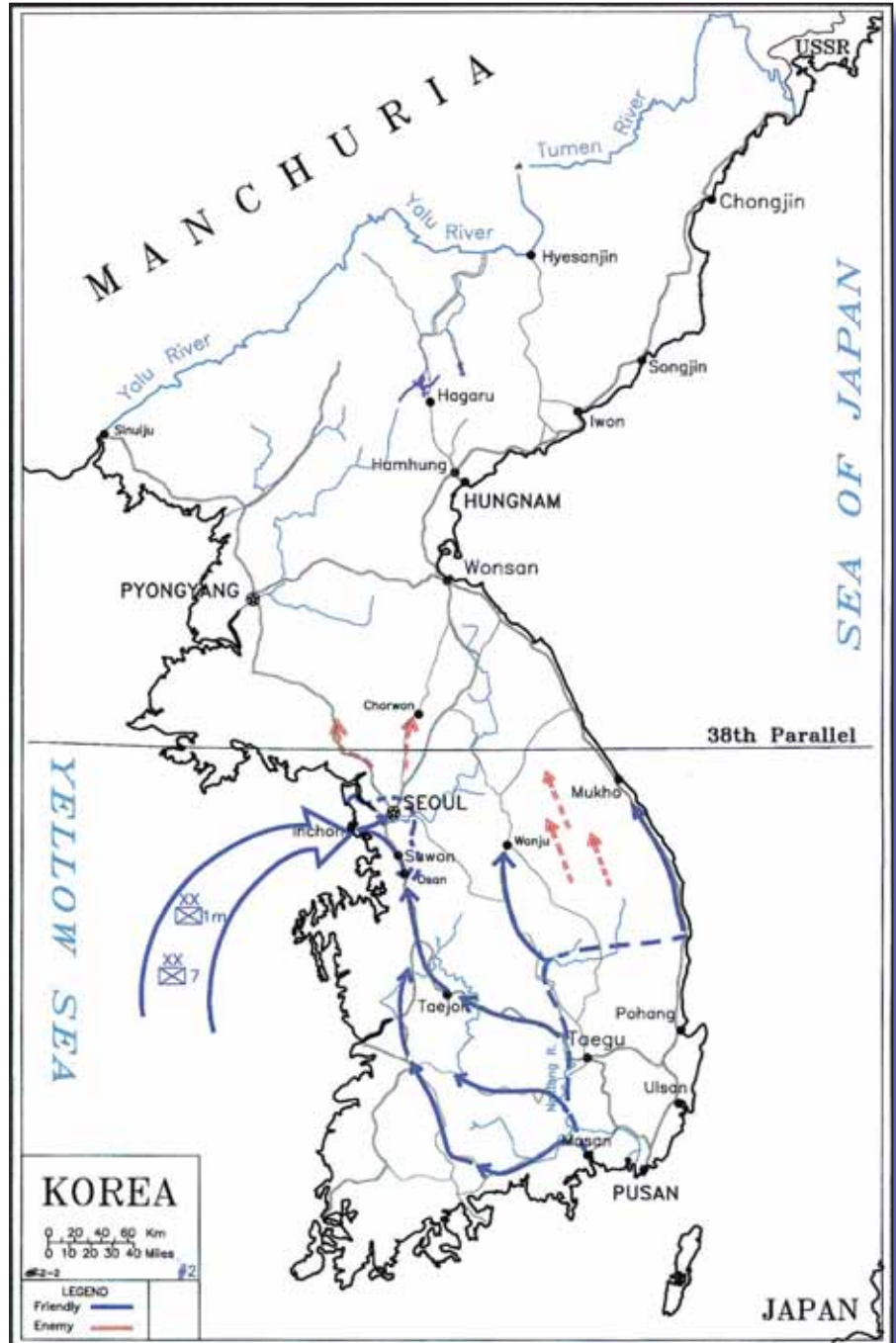
All this time during the battle of the Pusan Perimeter Gen. MacArthur was developing his plan for an invasion strike at Inchon - a risky operation not looked on favorably by the Navy nor the Marine Corps because of 30-foot tides. Divisions on the Pusan perimeter continued to hold as the 1st Marine Division and 7th Division loaded ships, during which time the 3rd Infantry Division was still busy turning itself into a combat effective force.



INCHON LANDING

On 15 September, six years to the day after the bloody landing on Peleliu, the 1st Marine Division landed at Inchon where, with the support of RCT-32, the 32nd Infantry, captured Seoul in record time. Following came RCT-31 which headed south for the Suwon airfield where, just a few miles south of the airfield on 27 September, they engaged withdrawing North Koreans, soon meeting lead units of the 1st Cavalry Division.

This action caused casualties of two key officers, Lt. Col. Robert Summers who commanded 2/31, and Maj. Lester Olson, an outstanding operations officer (S-3) of the regiment. Since Ovenshine's performance was not a shining example expected of a regimental commander, he was soon relieved and replaced by Col. Allan D. MacLean who commanded until his disappearance east of the Chosin Reservoir.



On 26 September MacArthur decided to split the ground command. Eighth Army took over the western sector as the X Corps began assembling its units for a withdrawal to the Pusan area. Keep in mind that this was the first time these major units of battalion and regimental size were actually operating in the field as part of a larger force. For everyone, from riflemen to corps staff, this was on-the-job training in a combat environment.



Inchon from LST landing at sea wall, 18 September 1950.
Photo by George Rasula

“Despite strict orders from MacArthur to the contrary, the publicity-hungry Marines had smuggled several brave war correspondents into their landing craft. These included Marguerite Higgins and Life photographer “Hank” Walker—Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War*, p.271.



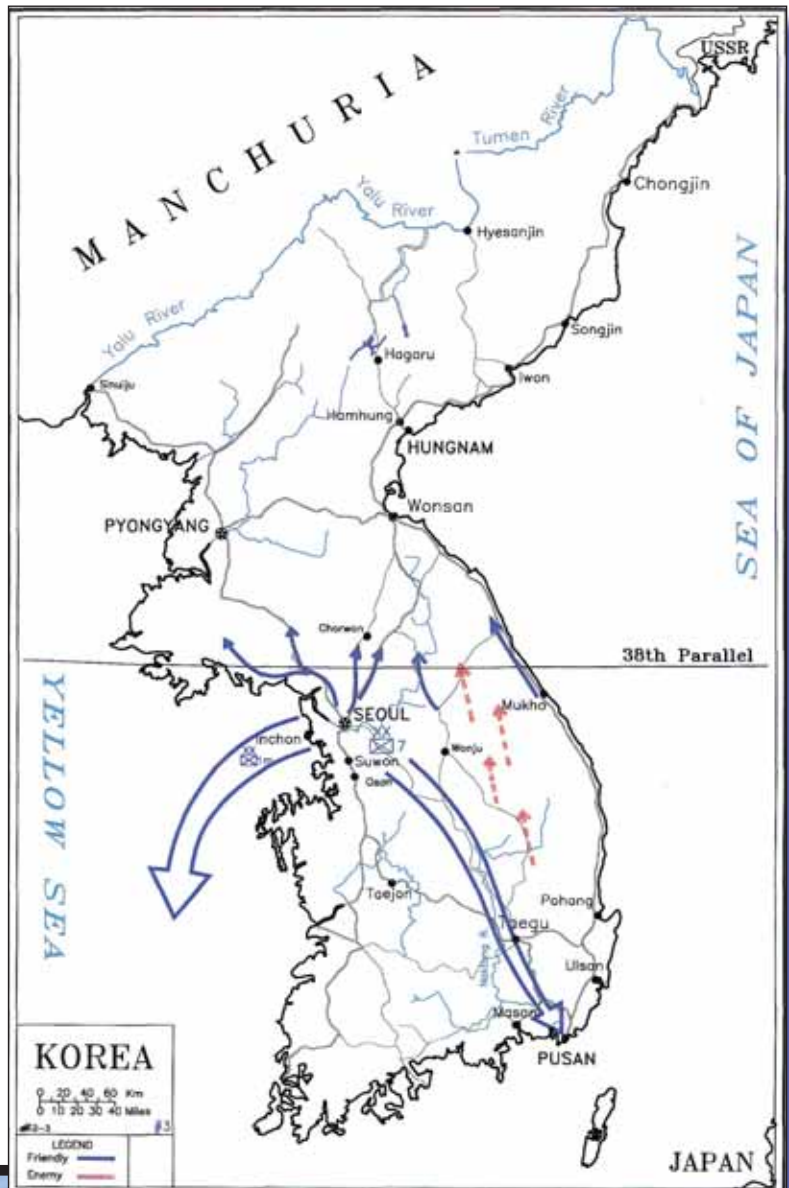
Adm. Struble, Gen. MacArthur and Maj. Gen. Smith at Inchon, 17 Sep 1950.
Photo National Archives

X CORPS WITHDRAWS

The 1st Marine Division and the heavy equipment of Army units moved out by sea through the port of Inchon, while the lighter units of the 7th Infantry Division moved overland by road where they faced occasional ambushes by North Koreans who were withdrawing to the north.

MISSION: Prepare for further operations in Northeast Korea.

As the X Corps was withdrawing, the lead ROK Divisions were already crossing the 38th Parallel, to be followed shortly by American divisions of the Eighth Army.

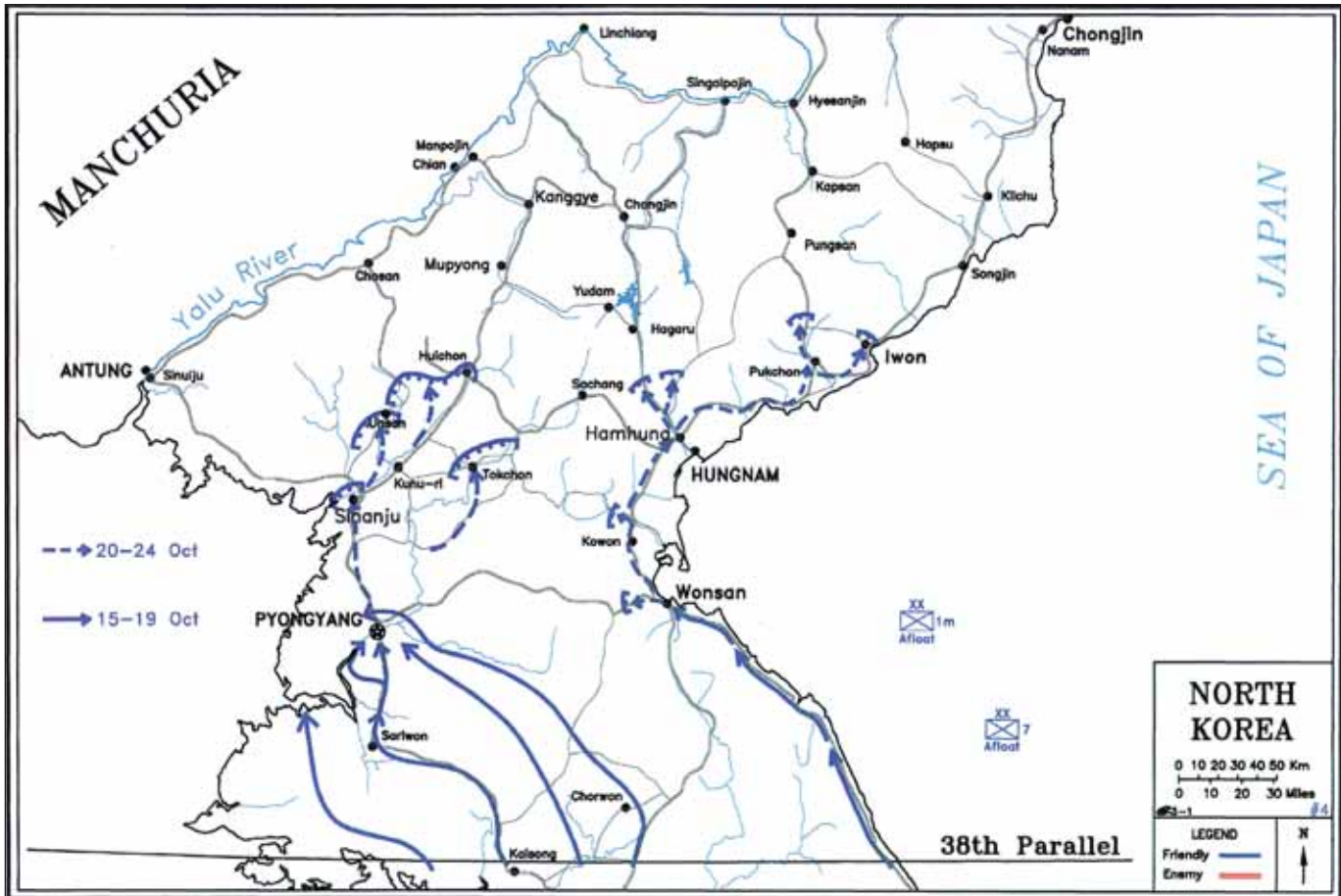


North Gate of Suwon about 25 September 1950. It was in this area of Suwon where Col. Hampton, G-3 of 7ID, was killed by a T-34 tank.

Photo by George Rasula

EIGHTH ARMY ATTACKS NORTH - X CORPS MOVES BY SEA

As the divisions of X Corps were loading ships for the next mission, the U.S. I Corps and ROK divisions of the Eighth Army continued to move north. By 19 October they had captured the capital city of Pyongyang. The ROK I Corps was also on the move north along the east coast, with units already as far north as Hungnam and Iwon.



Band on pier in Pusan playing farewell music to troops of the 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry (2/31)
Photo by Lt. Joseph C. Rodgers

CHINESE ENTER WAR

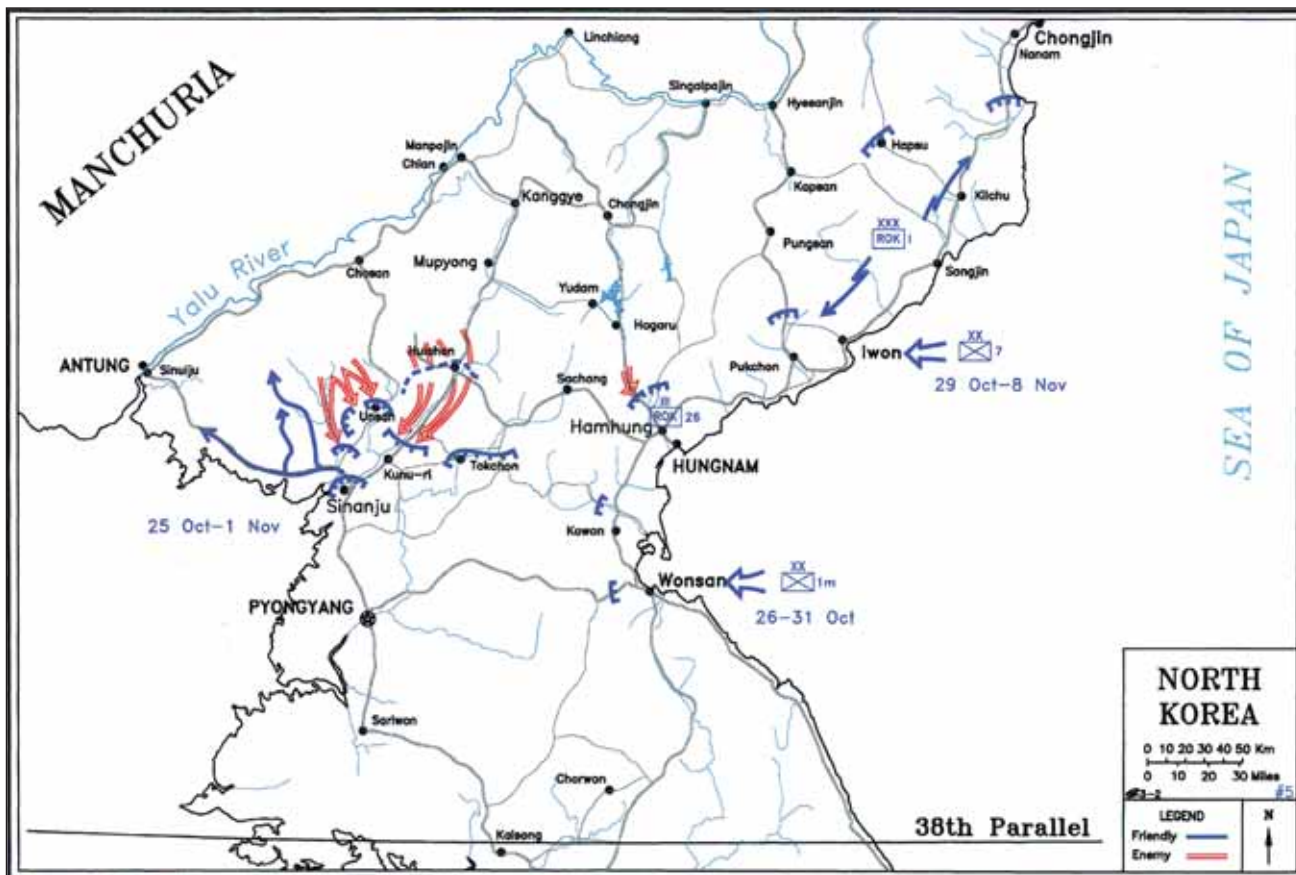
While the Far East Command in Tokyo was wondering if Mao's China would enter the war, on 25 October Chinese "volunteers" attacked the ROK 1st and 6th Divisions on the Eighth Army right flank, as well as units of the 1st Cavalry Division.

To the east, the Chinese launched an attack against the ROK 26th Regiment at Sudong, located north of Hamhung on the road to the Chosin Reservoir. This was the first warning by the Chinese that they would not condone U.N. Forces near the Manchurian border.

At this time the 1st Marine Division was off Wonsan waiting for the mine sweepers to clear the channel, while the 7th Infantry Division sailed north toward Iwon. The 3rd Infantry Division was busy staging in Japan, they too receiving Korean (KATUSA) fillers, called ROKs, to bring them up to strength. These were untrained conscripts from the streets of South Korea.

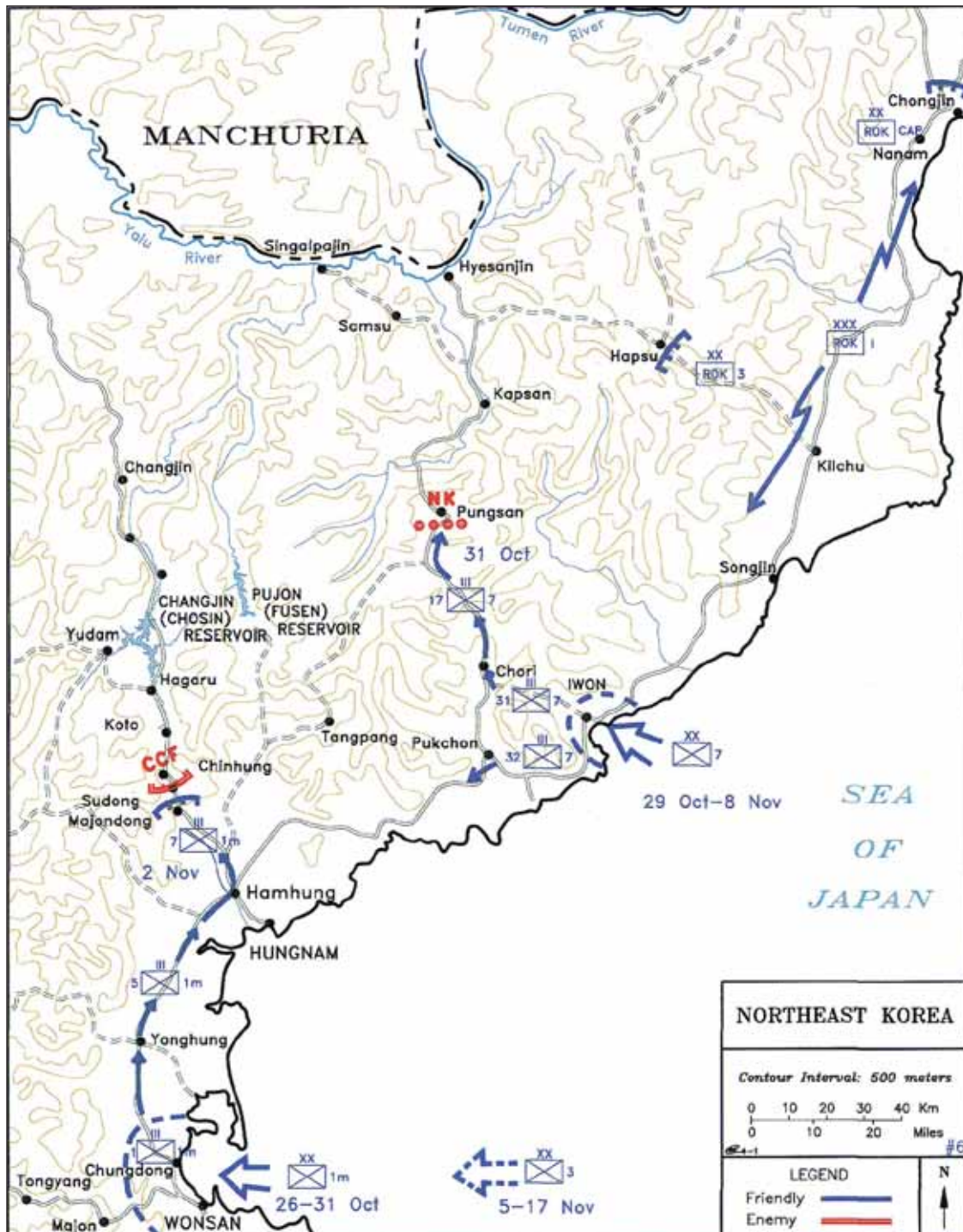


X Corps convoy moves north.
Photo by Joseph Rodgers



PART II – X CORPS ATTACKS NORTHEAST KOREA

Waiting for the minesweepers to clear the channel at Wonsan was dubbed “Operation Yo-Yo”. On 26 October the 1st Marine Division began landing with RCT-7 leading, followed by RCT-5 and RCT-1. The Regimental Combat Team (RCT) organization was used by the three divisions of X Corps due to the wide dispersion of forces in Northeast Korea, with artillery, engineer and other supporting units attached to regiments.



The 7th Infantry Division began landing at Iwon on 29 October in order RCT-17, RCT-31 and RCT-32. By 2 November the 7th Marines had relieved the ROK 26th Regiment at Sudong while the RCT-17 continued north toward the Yalu River.

TERRAIN

Other than the coastal road, there are only two main roads inland in this area, often single-lane roads, the 7th Infantry Division MSR to Hyesanjin on the Yalu, and the 1st Marine Division MSR to the Chosin Reservoir and beyond, a road which climbs the rugged gorges of the Funchilin Pass. The elevation of the Chosin Reservoir is 1,060 meters, 3870 feet, with nearby mountains over 2,000 meters. This rugged terrain of the Kaema Plateau is adjacent to Manchuria across the Yalu River and Siberia to the north, an environment that experiences early frost. Mid-winter (January-February) temperature extremes can plunge to where the Fahrenheit and Celsius scales meet — 40 below zero. This was an early winter with ice beginning to form on lakes and streams in early November as the temperature continued to fall.

DISTANCES

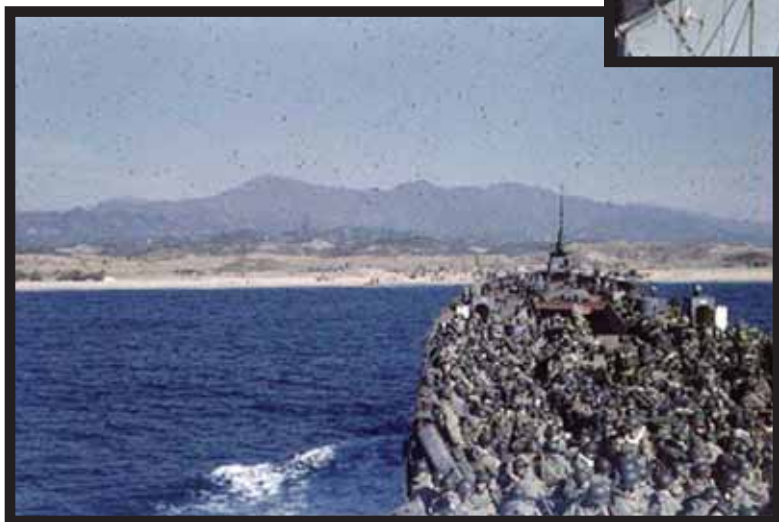
60 miles from Hungnam to Hagaru-ri at south end of the Chosin Reservoir.

14 more miles over Toktong Pass to Yudam-ni.

8 miles up east side of Reservoir to the Inlet of the Pungnyuri-gang.



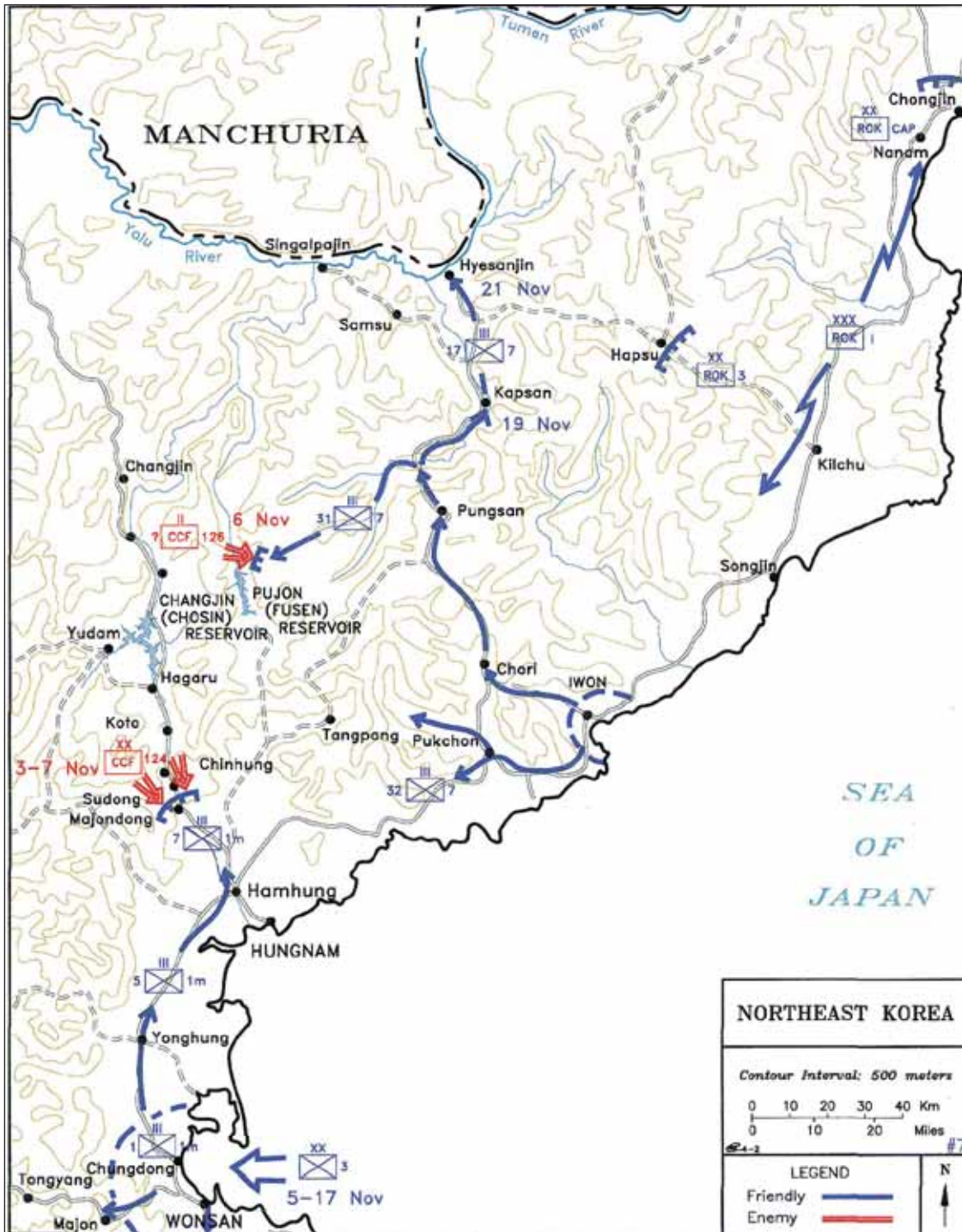
Troops of 2/31 Infantry transfer to LST at Iwon.
Photo by George Rasula



Units of 2/31 Infantry landing at Iwon.
Photo by George Rasula

X CORPS MOVES NORTH

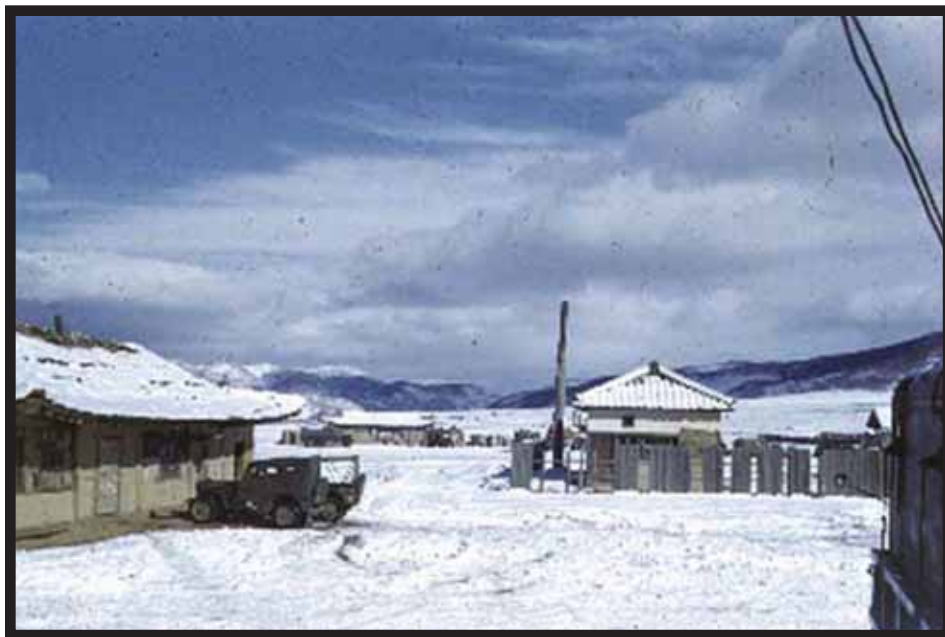
After relieving the 26th ROK Regiment the 7th Marines, RCT-7, faced its first battle with the Chinese. The CCF 124th Division attacked them in the Sudong area on 3 November, and after a pitched battle which reportedly destroyed the enemy division, the Chinese reportedly “disappeared.” A enemy disappears only when they are not pursued. On 6 November near the north end of the Fusen Reservoir the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry, also encountered Chinese, these from the CCF 126th Division. They also “disappeared.”



During this same time-frame, 5 November, the Chinese attacked the U.S. 2nd and 24th Divisions in the Eighth Army sector where, on the 6th, they seemed to have vanished. Was this the Mao's final warning? Students of military history are reminded of Sun Tzu's words written a few thousand years ago, "All warfare is based on deception," or a more appropriate message for the Far East Command in Tokyo, "Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance."



RCT-31 CP in schoolhouse at Untaek, east of the Fusen Reservoir. This is where Dr. Galloway, regimental surgeon, ordered Col. MacLean to bed to get rid of a serious cold saying "Stay in bed or I'll have you evacuated." On 14 November at this location, Chaplain Martin Hoehn's thermometer registered -14 F.
Photo by George Rasula



Rear of schoolhouse CP showing scattered buildings and distant mountains.
Photo by George Rasula

7TH MARINES ARRIVE HAGARU-RI

The 3rd Division landed at Wonsan during 5 - 17 November, where they began the relief of Marines units in that area so the Marines could move to the Chosin. By 10 November the 7th Marines arrived at Koto-ri and by the 14th they were at Hagaru-ri where work on an airstrip began on the 19th.



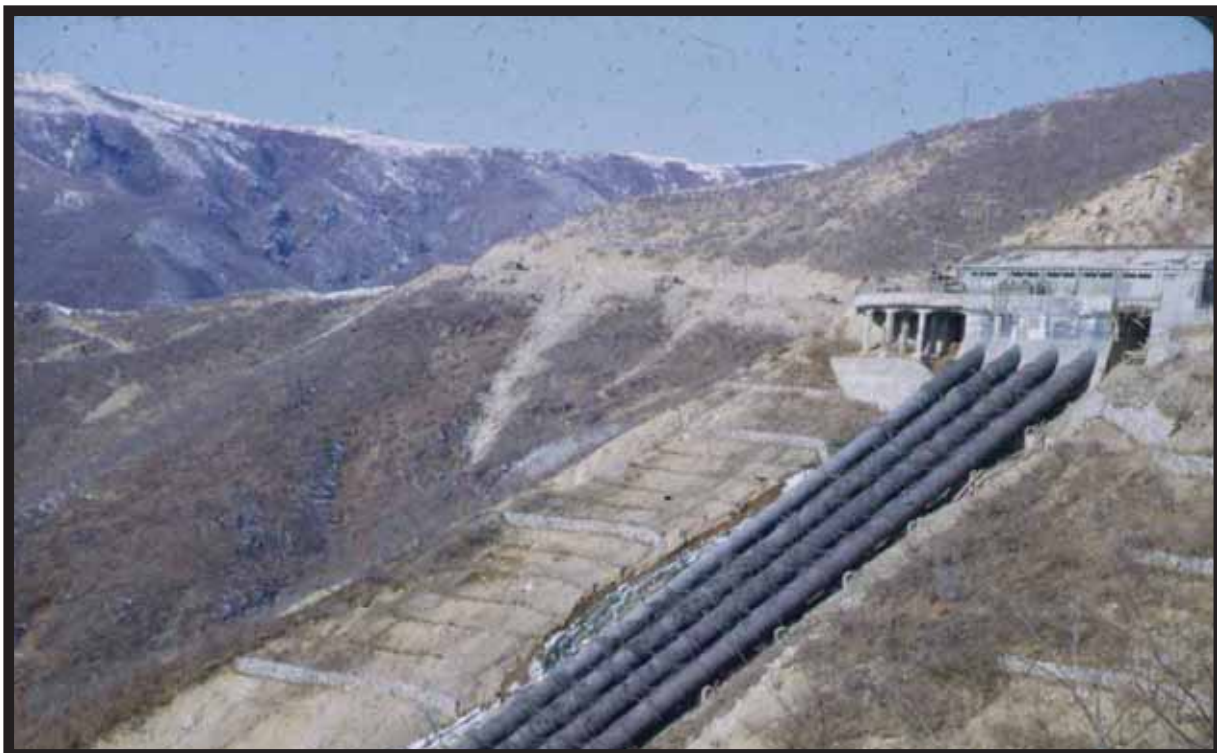
The lead battalion of RCT-17 arrived at Kapsan on the 19th, and by the 21st the lead company was at Hyesanjin on the Yalu River, there providing a “photo opportunity” for the brass. The symbol of K Company 3/32 Infantry moving west through Samsu is Task Force Kingston commanded by a second lieutenant, reaching the Yalu in that sector with only one casualty, a soldier killed by a Siberian tiger. These actions assured Gen. Barr that the Chinese were not crossing the Yalu River in his sector.

The Funchilin Pass with its bridge at the Gatehouse was the most critical terrain feature on the MSR, yet the immediate area was never protected by a combat unit. This played an important role in the success or failure of the eventual breakout. One may ask why the CCF 124th Division used the Sudong terrain rather than this rugged pass area which would have been far more effective in fighting a delaying action. The answer may link to the location of the power plant in the valley.

As the Marines moved north in this sector, there were occasional contacts with enemy patrols. Here again, the enemy was watching and waiting as his field armies continued to cross the Yalu River and prepare to implement their plans against the U.N. forces that were “invading their neighbor - North Korea.”

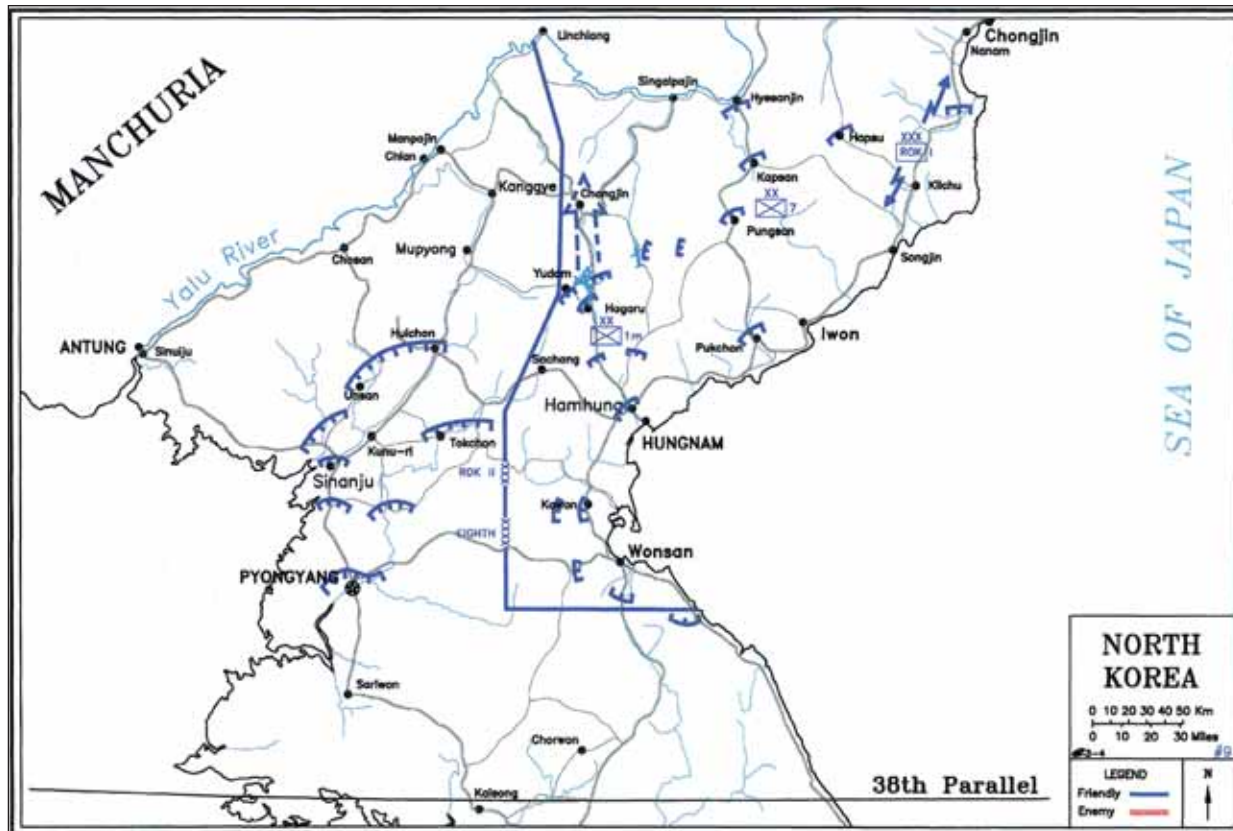
The Gatehouse controls the flow of Chosin Reservoir water which comes through a tunnel under the Funchilin Pass, then through the pipes to the Power Plant far below in the valley. A one lane bridge passes around the outside of the building. Note the dark gap to the right of the pipes; this photo was taken after the Chinese blew a small gap which was temporarily repaired by the engineers. It was blown again later which stopped all traffic, eventually bridged on 9 December during the breakout.

Photos by Joseph Rodgers, 2/31 Infantry.



THE OLD CORPS BOUNDARY

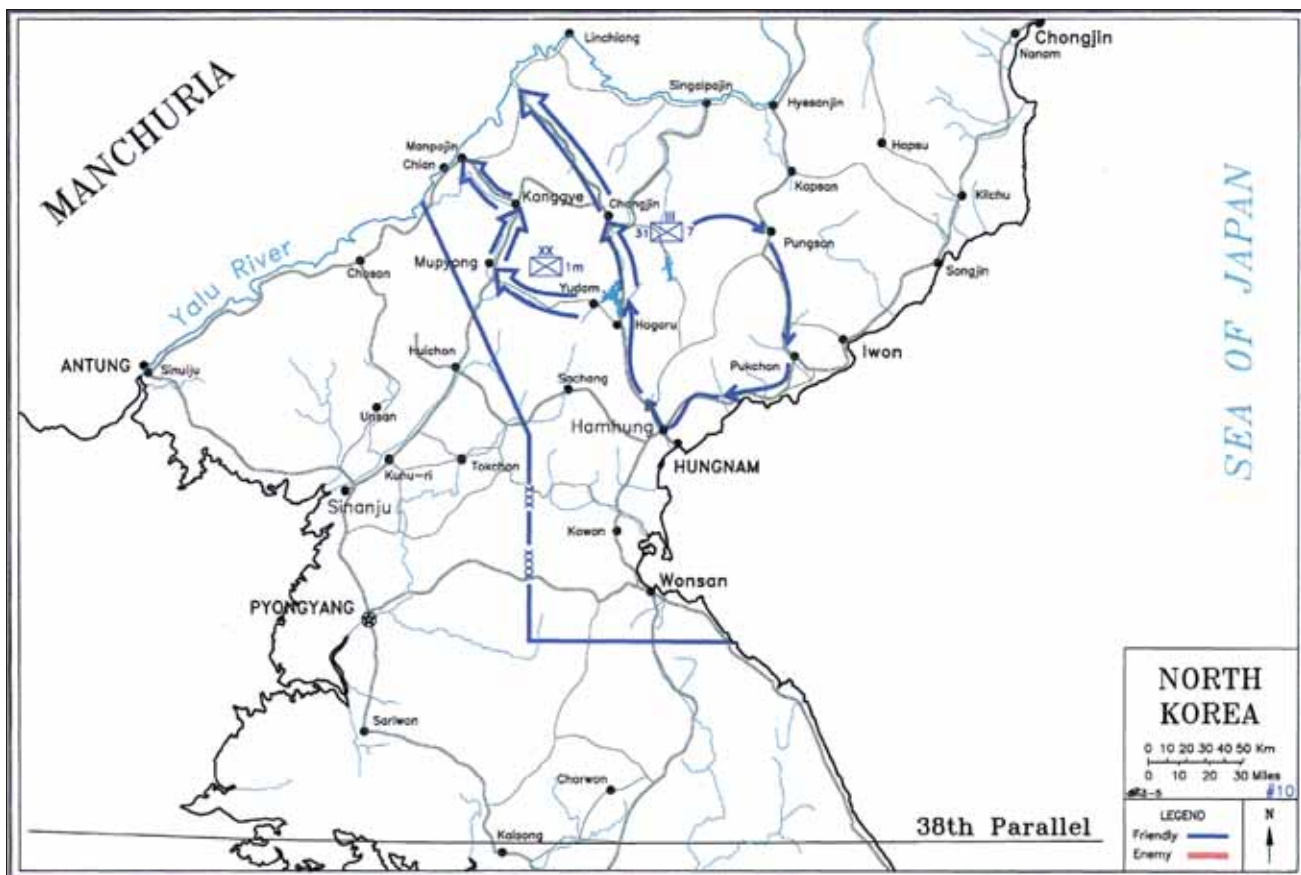
This map shows the boundary between X Corps and Eighth Army before change of the Corps' mission. Note that the 1st Marine Division was to drive north from Hagaru-ri along the east side of the Chosin Reservoir. The terrain west of Yudam-ni was but a massive mountain range with one narrow road westward for a distance of about fifty miles to the Mupyong-Kanggye axis. The much talked about gap between X Corps and Eighth Army was eighty miles, an area which contained some of the most rugged mountains in Korea.



NEW BOUNDARY - NEW OFFENSIVE

Then came new strategy from Tokyo through X Corps with orders for a new offensive. On 23 November the X Corps issued its operations instruction which was to kick off on November 27th. This called for the 1st Marine Division to attack west from Yudam-ni as shown on the map, then north to the Yalu River, while the 7th Infantry Division was to provide RCT-31 to relieve the Marine RCT-5 east of the Reservoir, then attack north to the Yalu river along the Changjin River axis. This order would place two regiments in the Yudam-ni area prepared to attack west with RCT-5 passing through RCT-7.

Hindsight continues to ask if anyone on Gen. MacArthur's staff, or MacArthur himself, had studied a 1:50,000 topographic map of the terrain to the west of Yudam-ni. On the other hand, hindsight also wonders why the Chinese didn't draw a few battalions up that narrow mountain road before using the Finnish tactic of slicing them into segments ("motti"). Both sides were about to learn important lessons.

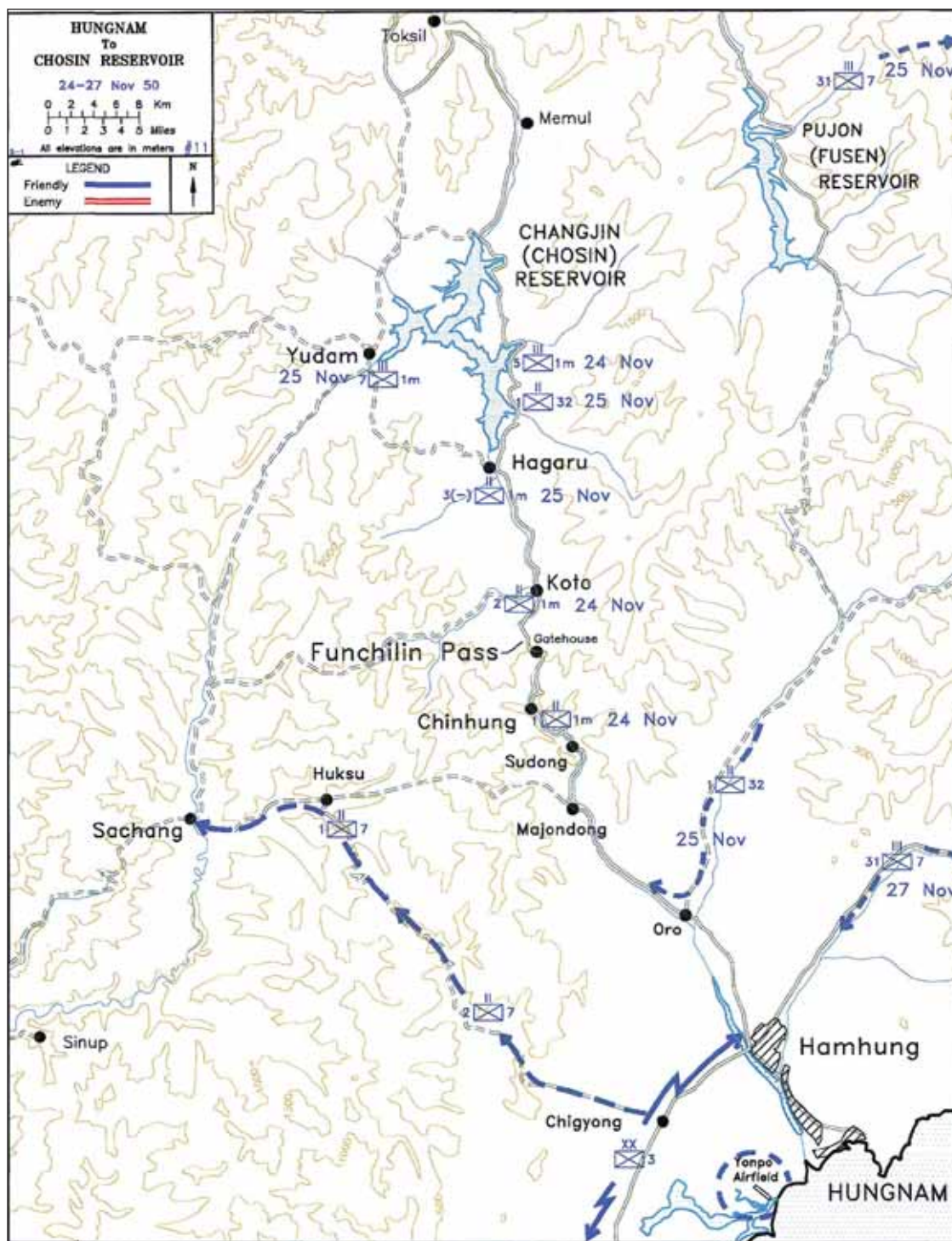


Once again the ancient words of Sun Tzu echo across the battlefields of the Orient. Have the Chinese finally been successful in "encouraging his arrogance?"

MARINES ARRIVE WEST AND EAST OF CHOSIN

Thanksgiving Day was Thursday, 23 November, the day the lead units of RCT-7 departed Hagaru-ri for Yudam-ni, while on the 24 November RCT-5 closed into their zone of operations east of the reservoir.

Further south, 2/1 Marines of RCT-1 arrived at Koto-ri on the 24th, while 1/1 Marines took up positions at the bottom of the pass at Chinhung-ni. In the 3rd Infantry Division sector 1/7 Infantry, followed by 2/7 Infantry, was well on its way through Huksu-ri to Sachang-ni. Minor contacts continued to be made with small Chinese patrols.



This same day, 24 November, RCT-31 which was assembling its units east of the Fusen Reservoir, was ordered to the Chosin Reservoir. Because of the location of its battalions, the 1/32 Infantry, a battalion nearest the Chosin MSR, was attached to RCT-31, while the 1/31 Infantry was detached and remained in the Pukchong area on another mission. Movement began, with some units being loaded on railroad open flatcars for movement south to the coastal roads.



Troops of 2/31 Infantry load at Pukchong for a cold trip to Hamhung.
Photo by Joseph Rodgers

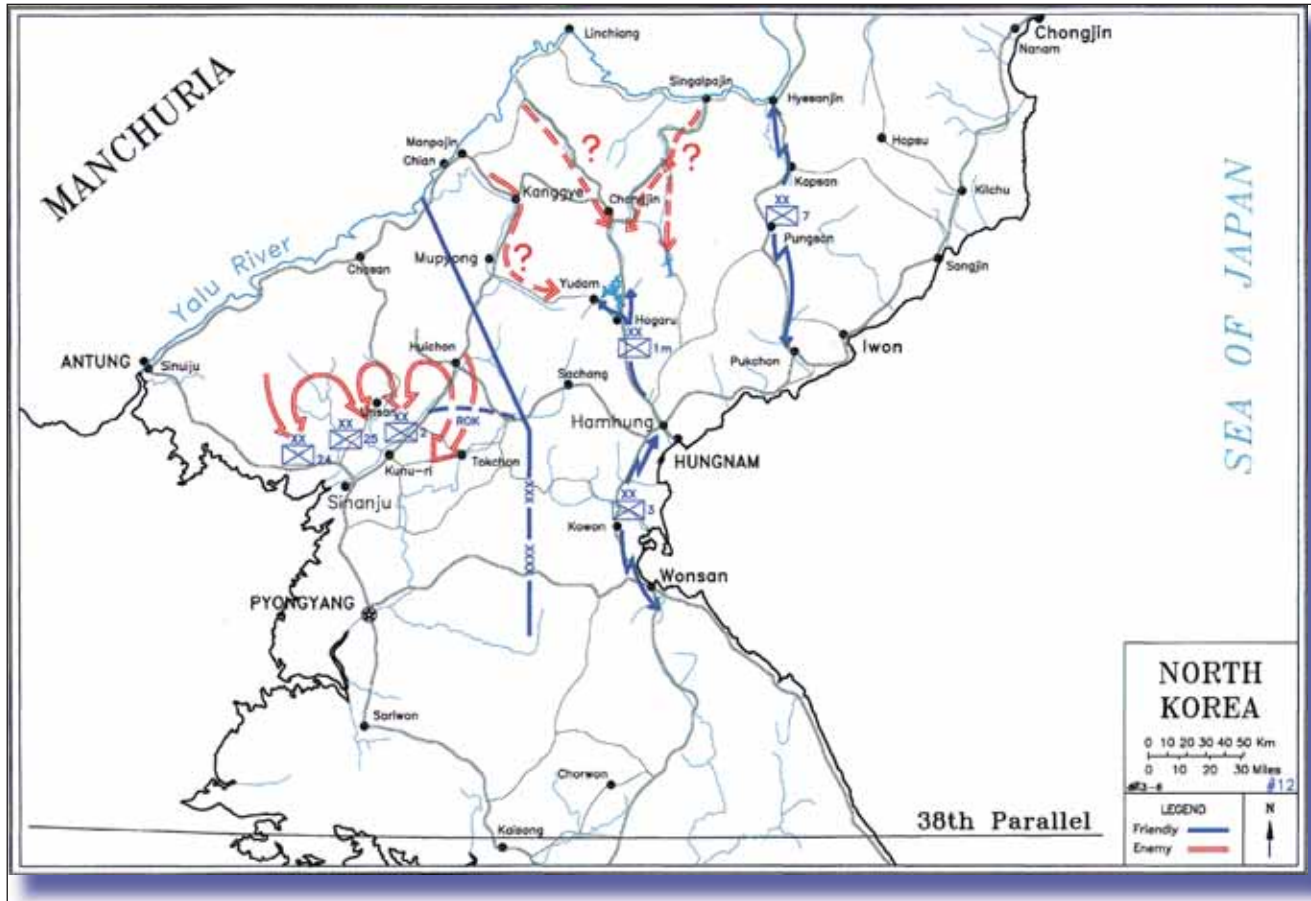


This photo, taken on 24 November by a member of the 5th Marines, looks northwest from north side of Hill 1221 toward the reservoir. Note the open water with ice beginning to form along the edge of the reservoir. In less than seven days the ice would be thick enough to hold a jeep.

Photo by Unknown

EIGHTH ARMY BEGINS OFFENSIVE - CHINESE ATTACK

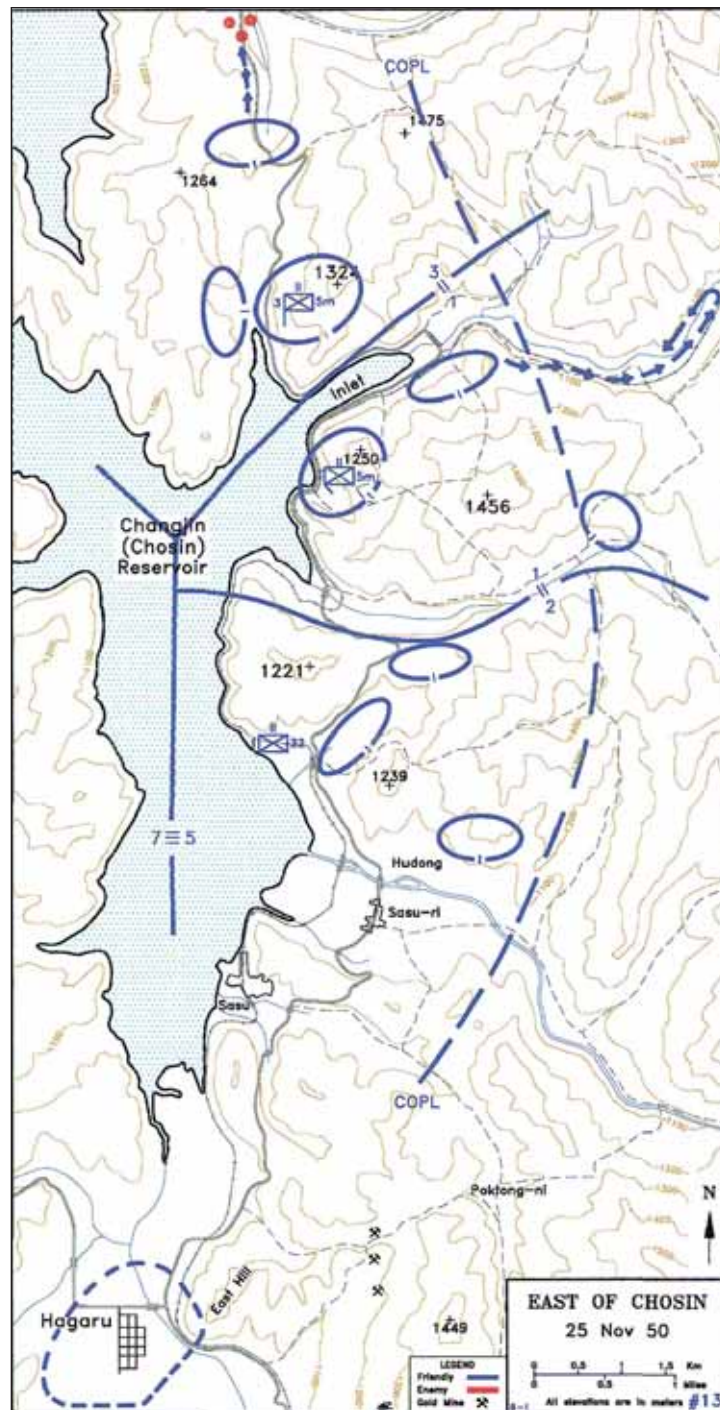
Unknown to the troops of X Corps, the Eighth Army offensive began on 24 November, while the enemy remained very quiet for the next 36 hours. Then suddenly, the night of 25 November, the Chinese struck, driving through the ROK II Corps on the right flank, then attacking the 2nd Infantry Division and the 24th Infantry Division the next night.



At the same time, old China-hand Gen. Barr, CG of 7th Infantry Division at Pukchong, received intelligence from Korean civilians that thousands of Chinese were crossing the Yalu River to his west, “west” being the area north of the Fusen and Chosin Reservoirs. Barr took immediate action to build up the block on the route which was being vacated by RCT-31. The red arrows with question marks indicate the routes available to the Chinese to enter the X Corps zone of operations.

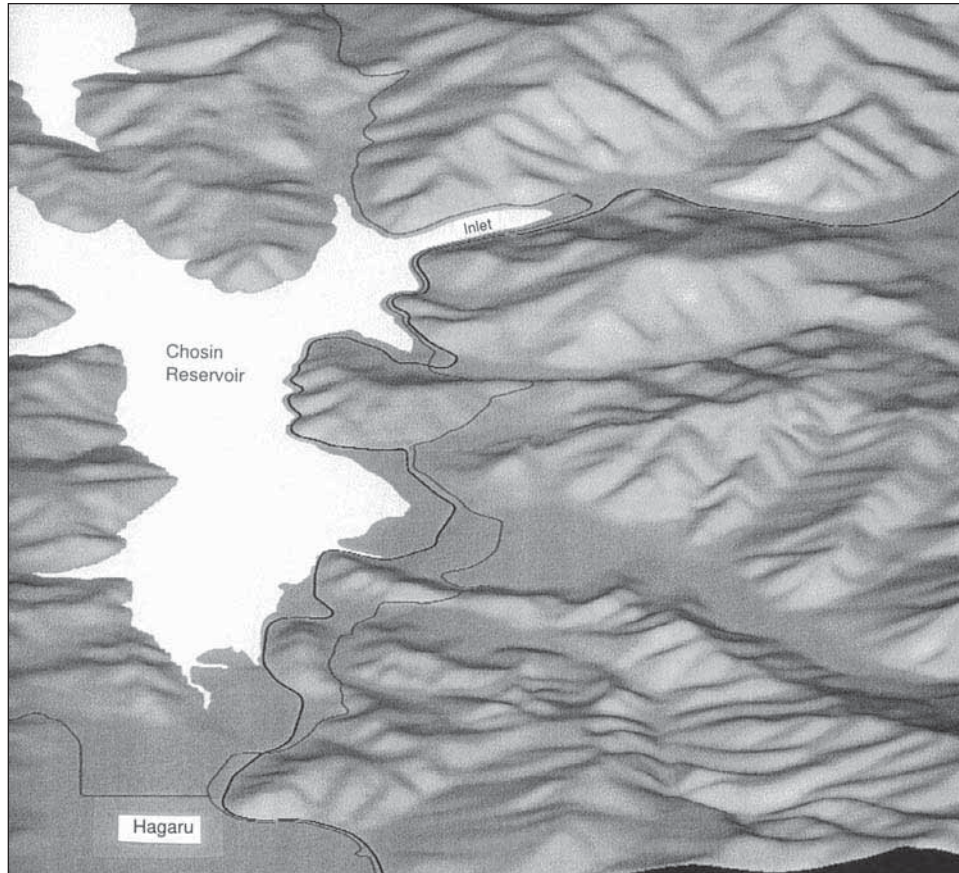
RCT-5 EAST OF CHOSIN

On 25 November a patrol of the 5th Marines made first contact with a Chinese patrol. Otherwise, the area was quiet. History reports patrols were of company size which makes them combat patrols. It takes a small recon patrol to find an enemy who does not want to be found. It was also on the 25th when the first Army battalion arrived east of Chosin. Lt. Col. Don Faith's 1/32 Infantry occupied an assembly area south of Hill 1221 in the zone of 2/5 Marines.



The battalions of RCT-5 were disposed north to south: 3/5, 1/5, 2/5. Note the location of the Lt. .Col. Murray's RCT-5 command post in the 1/5 zone, protected by a rifle company.

Company and platoon size patrols probed north and east, east being the roadless route to the Fusen Reservoir, an air distance of only 20 miles. Here again the enemy was watching and waiting, quickly disappearing at the sound of large patrols. Since the Marine units withdrew into tight perimeters at the approach of darkness, the Chinese owned the night.

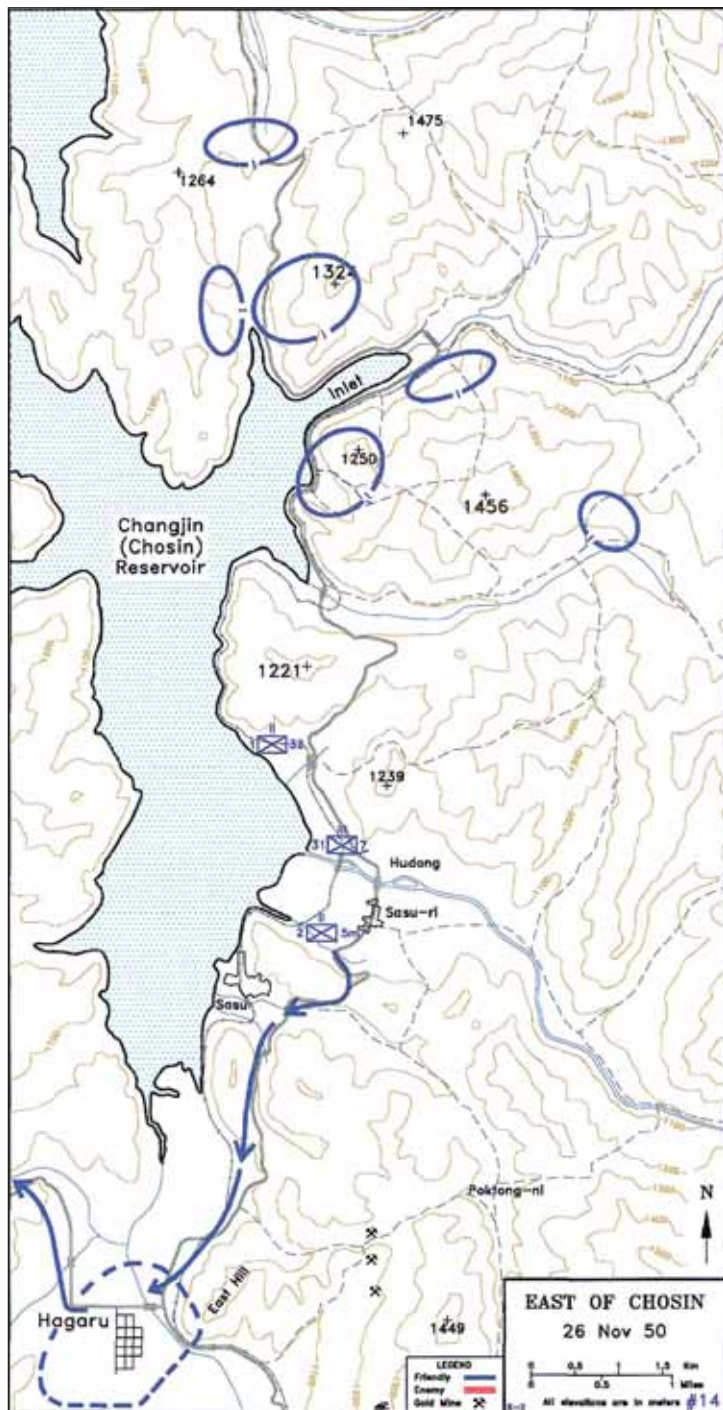


Mel Coolbaugh's relief map emphasizes the rugged terrain east of the Chosin Reservoir. The distance from Hagaru to the Inlet is eight road miles.

As one can see by this relief map, hills in the area were mountains, with hill numbers and contour lines on the topographic map expressed in meters. At this time, Saturday 25 November, the lead units of RCT-7 arrived at Yudam-ni west of the reservoir. Further south, Marine 3/1 was still on the move and didn't complete their move to Hagaru-ri until the 27th. The MSR from Hamhung to the Chosin Reservoir area was a challenge for Military Police who had to control traffic in many one-way sectors.

2/5 MARINES FIRST TO MOVE

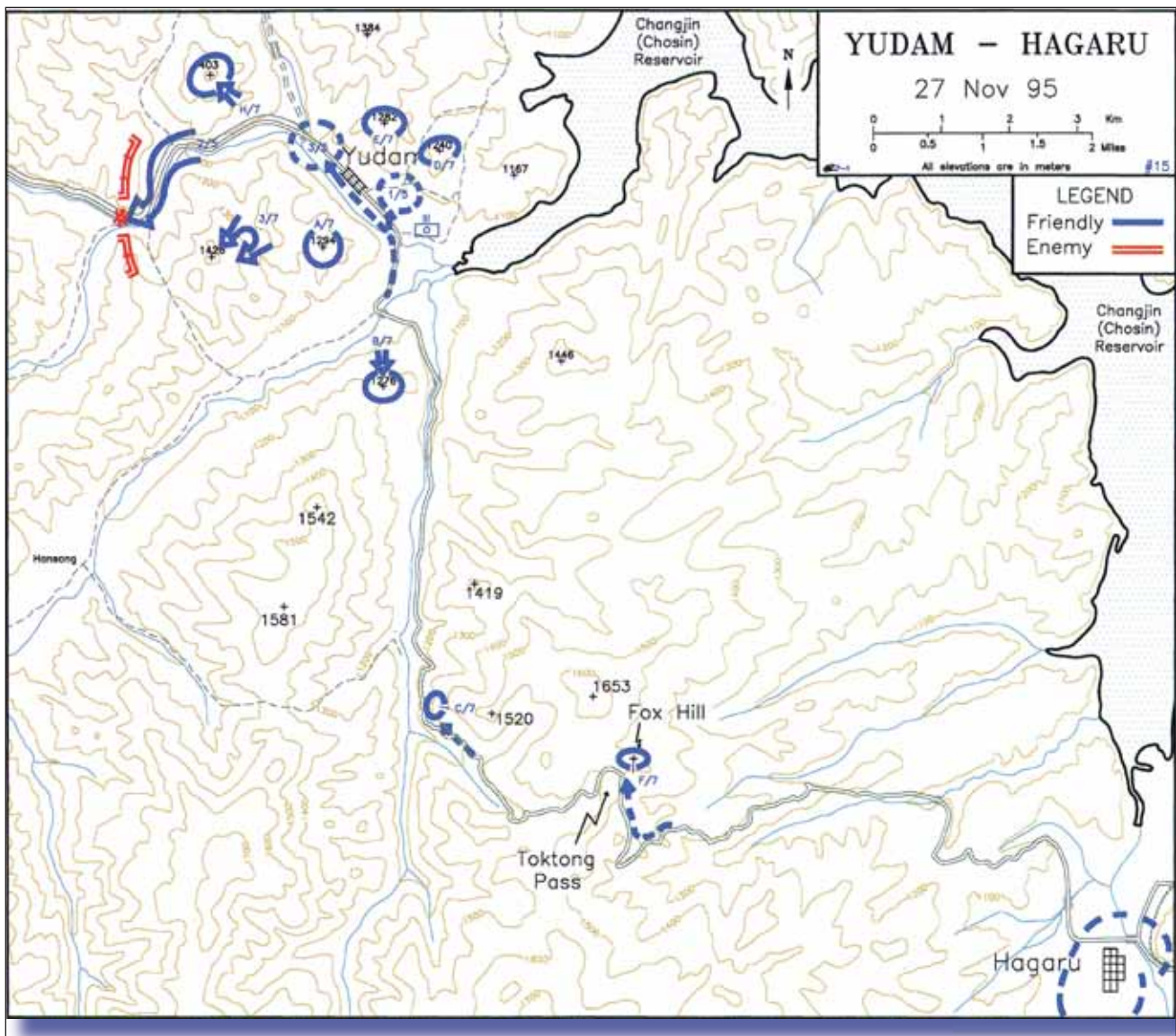
On Sunday, 26 November, the first of the changes began to take place. Col. MacLean, commander of RCT-31 arrived with his advance command group, setting up his CP in a schoolhouse at Hudong-ni. This same day Marine 2/5 moved to Yudam-ni during the afternoon hours, an urgent move because the battalion would lead the RCT-5 attack to the west the following morning. The X Corps Operations Instruction called for the attack to begin on 27 November, a tight schedule for an RCT which was deployed east of the Chosin Reservoir.



The 1/32 Infantry covered the 2/5 sector from positions at Hill 1221. At Hagaru-ri were two 105 howitzer batteries of the 11th Marines, very limited firepower to be covering this critical road junction. It was on 26 November when X Corps headquarters learned of the major attacks far to the west against units of the Eighth Army where once again, the Chinese made their presence known and once again, assumed a position of silence. Beyond the low mountains surrounding the Chosin Reservoir - beyond the range of artillery - were the silent and well concealed enemy forces that did not want to be found until they were ready to announce their presence. The enemy continued to observe and report, then moved units into ready positions at night.

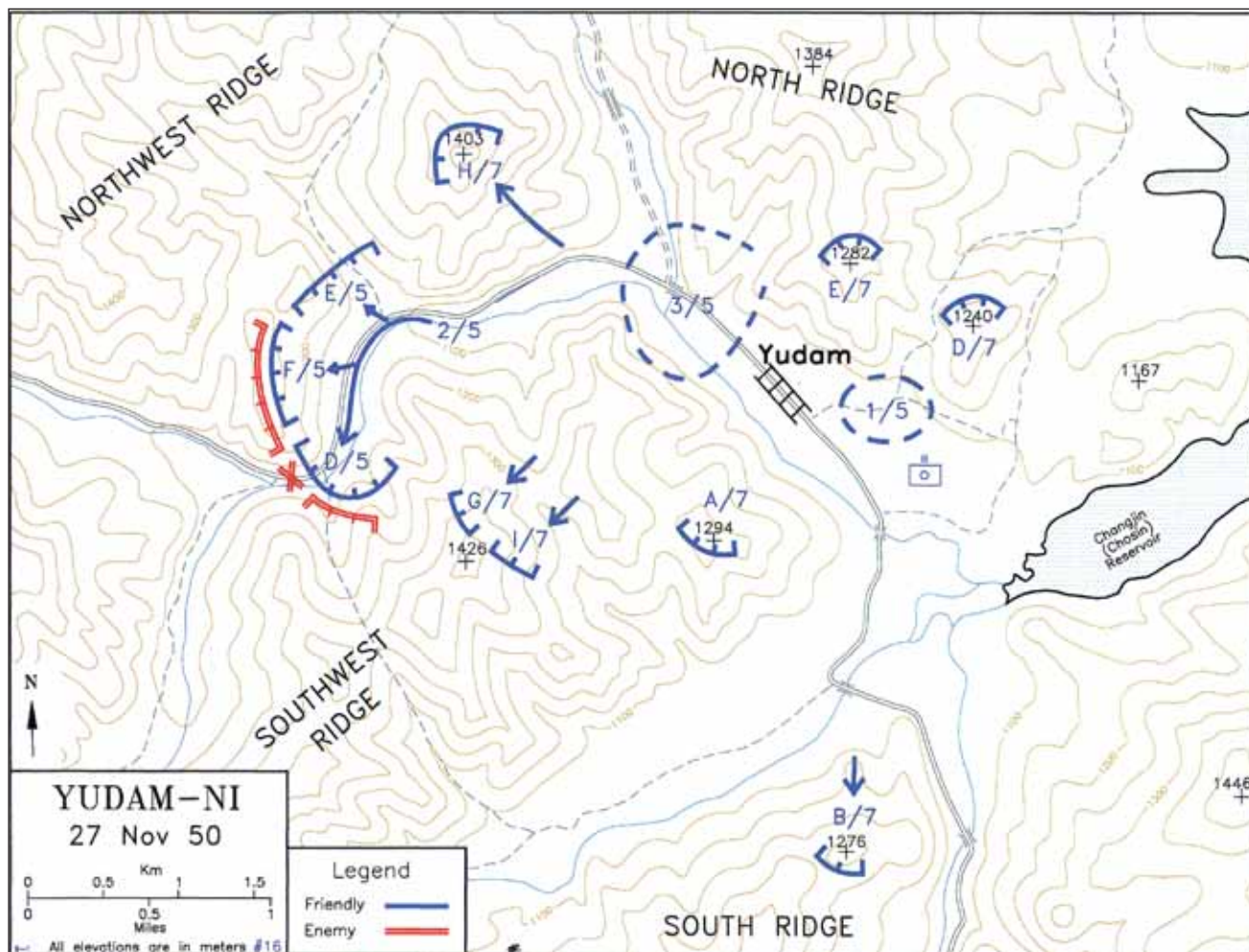
Monday the 27th of November arouses powerful memories among survivors of Chosin, with morning action being considerably different from the coming night. During morning the balance of RCT-5 began moving from positions east of Chosin, moving into positions at Yudam-ni to back up the attack west by Marine 2/5 which began at 0800 that morning.

The last of the RCT-7 move was also taking place, dropping Fox 2/7 at the top of the Toktong Pass and Charlie 1/7 at the west end of the pass on a spur of Hill 1520. These two rifle companies were the only security for the 14-mile road through the low mountain range which had originally been planned as a blocking position. Now the other units of RCT-7 would find themselves disposed on the ridges covering the valley of Yudam-ni.



As shown on the map, the RCT-7 units were spread far beyond the commander's desires when the 2/5 Marines began the attack to the west. While these moves were taking place, the MSR's in both the 7th Infantry Division and 1st Marine Division sectors were busy moving units as well as tons supplies. The logistics tail would soon be wagging the dog.

We zoom in on 0815 hours when 2/5 began its attack and ran into heavy opposition within one kilometer. The Chinese were there in strength and permitted no further advance. Marine movement against the Northwest and Southwest ridges were also opposed by the enemy. Elsewhere it was quiet as long as the Marines didn't move west or north.



During the day Gen. Almond traveled by jeep to Yudam-ni to witness the attack, departing at 1630. Although he knew of the attacks against Eighth Army, he did not reveal what he thought of the Chinese defensive actions against the lead battalion of RCT-5. History reveals this to have been a command visit to command posts of RCT-7.

Forty-eight howitzers of the 11th Marine Artillery occupied positions between the village and the reservoir. By the end of the day there were ten rifle companies on the high ground, two battalions of 5th Marines on the low ground and two rifle companies, C 1/7 and F 2/7 isolated in the Toktong Pass. As darkness arrived the marines at Yudam-ni had one important advantage, that of knowing the enemy was nearby in strength. It was going to be a cold night with the temperature dropping to 25 below zero on the Fahrenheit scale. The readiness of the individual soldier, Chinese or American, would play an important role in the days to come.

RCT-31 ARRIVES EAST OF CHOSIN

On Monday 27 November units of RCT-31 began arriving as the remainder of RCT-5 moved to Yudam-ni.

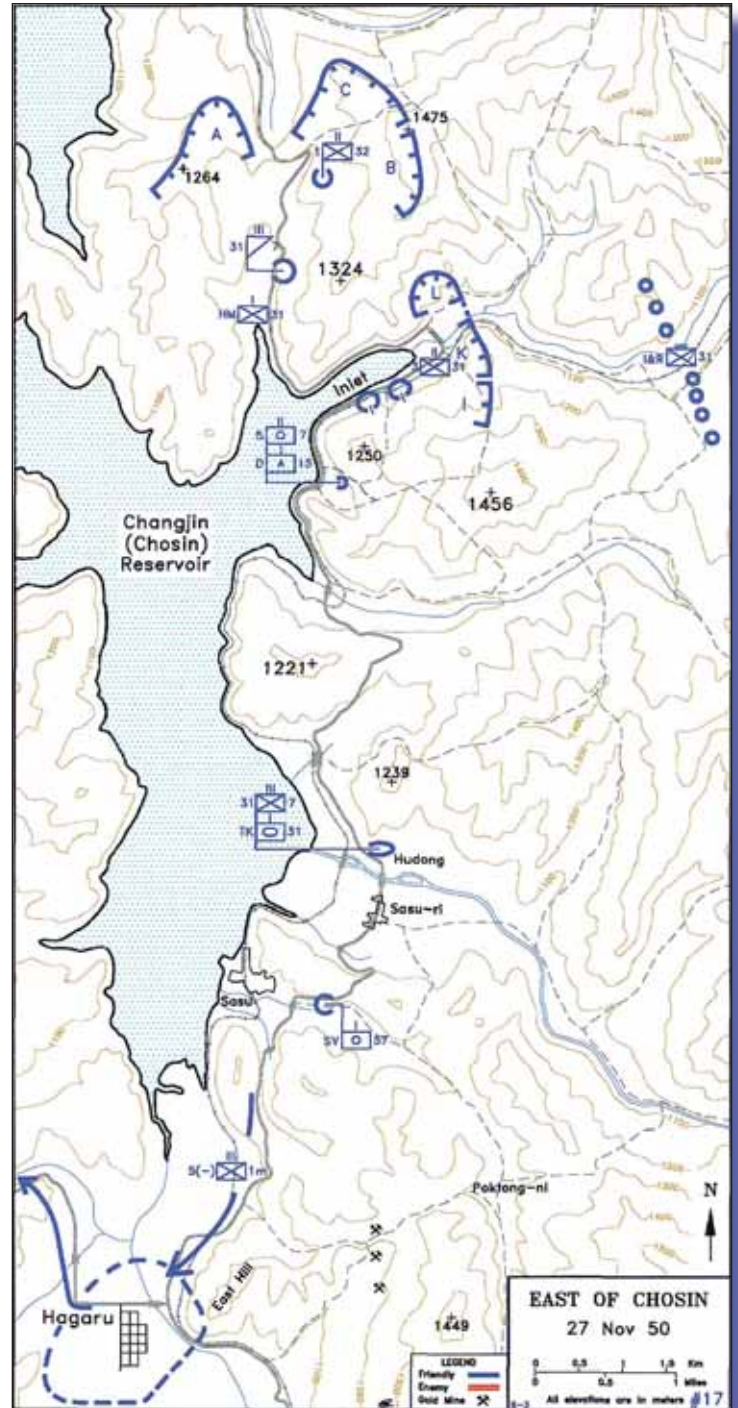
After last Marines had departed, Lt. Col. Faith's 1/32 moved forward and occupied the northern position vacated by 3/5 Marines. This map shows the positions occupied by RCT-31 units during the afternoon and evening.

- 1/32 Infantry – Lt. Col. Don Faith
- RCT-31 Forward CP – Col. Allan D. MacLean
- Hv Mortar positions
- 3/31 Infantry – Lt. Col. William Reilly
- I&R Platoon – Lt. Richard Coke, occupying screening positions to the northeast in the direction of the Fusen Reservoir, an area of concern to Col. MacLean since the encounter with Chinese by 3/31 near the Fusen Reservoir.
- A & B Batteries, 57th FA Battalion
- 57th FA Battalion CP – Lt. Col. Ray Embree; with attached D Battery (-), 15th AAA Battalion
- RCT-31 Main CP - Schoolhouse at Hudong-ni, with the 31st Tank Company, a platoon of C Company, 13th Engineer Bn, as well as supply & service elements.
- Service Battery, 57th FA Bn – further south

RCT-31 was disposed for an attack north, although Col. MacLean did not plan to attack until arrival of his third infantry battalion, Lt. Col. Reidy's 2/31 Infantry which was near Hamhung struggling with X Corps transportation problems.

Brig. Gen. Henry Hodes, Assistant Division Commander of the 7th Division, arrived at the Hudong-ni CP planning to remain the night, while Col. MacLean went to his Forward CP south of Faith's 1/32.

All was quiet east of Chosin as units occupied assigned positions and began digging into the ground that was freezing rapidly. The ice of the Inlet was already frozen. Operation Order 25 was being carried to the units by Lt. Rolin Skilton, liaison officer of the S-3 Section. The order specifically stated that the attack north would be “on order” — not the next day as some writers have suggested. With some units arriving after darkness set in, soldiers were improvising shelter as leaders wondered when unit trains would arrive with sleeping bags and tents. The temperature continued to fall.



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Review of the situation in the greater Chosin battle area.

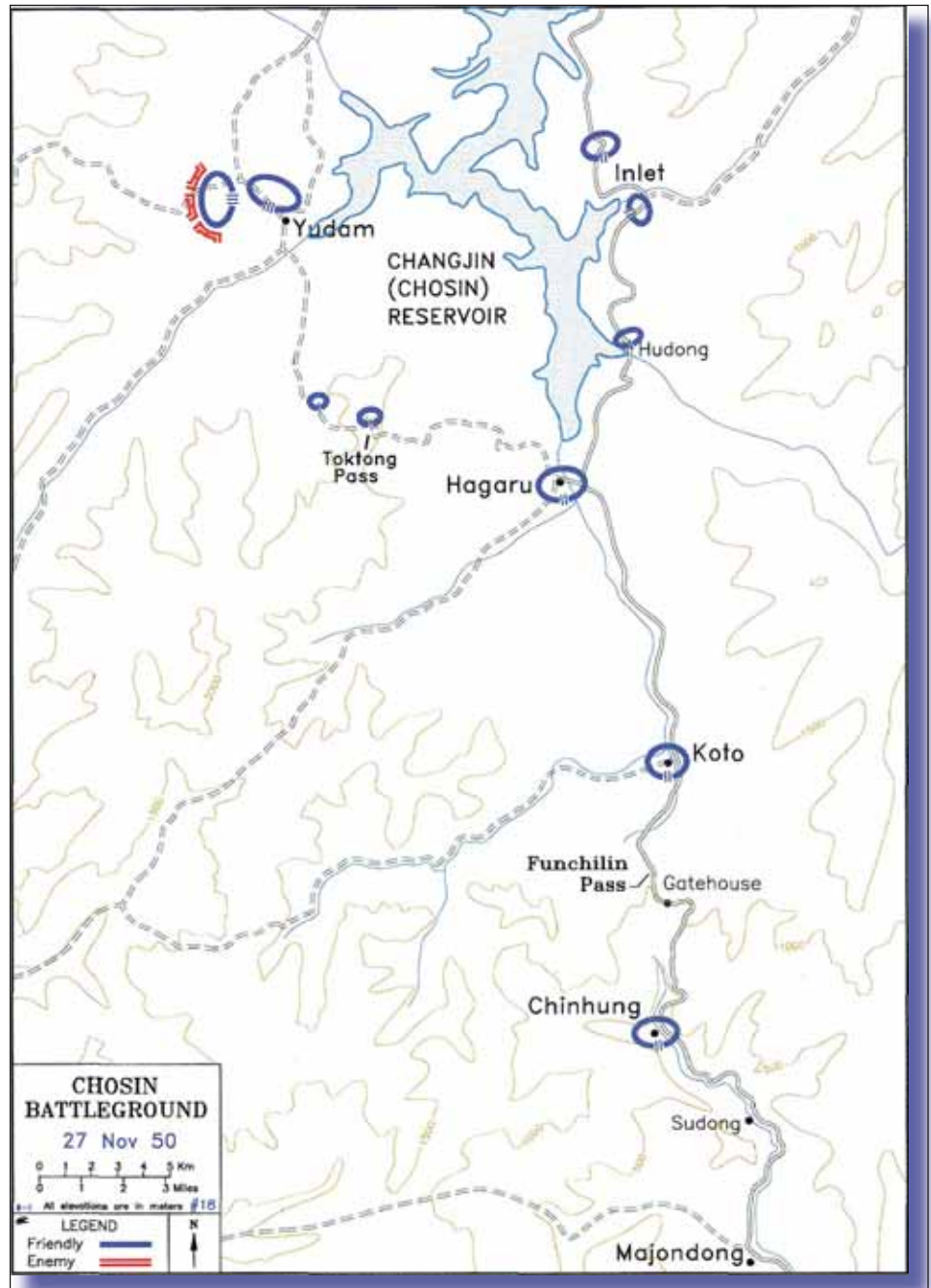
At Yudam-ni were the two Marine regiments, RCT-5 and RCT-7, with supporting artillery of the 11th Marines, while C1/7 and F2/7 occupied isolated positions long the MSR into the Toktong Pass.

At Hagaru-ri were the Marine 3/1 (less G Company), two 105 batteries of the 11th Artillery, and Marine engineers busy working on the airstrip. D Company/10th Engineer Bn of the 3rd Division and a Corps Signal Platoon had arrived, and rather than begin work on the Corps Advance CP, they were moved to occupy defense positions with the Marines on the south slope of East Hill. Combat units were extremely limited for such a large perimeter. Further north on the east side of the reservoir RCT-31 was waiting for other units to arrive.

Further south at Koto-ri were Marine 2/1 and Col. Puller's RCT-1 CP, with Marine 1/1 at the bottom of the pass at Chinhung-ni. Supply convoys continued to travel the MSR. As darkness came the empty trucks of the last re-supply convoy returned from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri before the Chinese played their hand.

As we enter the main battle phase of the Chosin campaign, keep in mind the rugged terrain you see on the maps as well as

the distances involved, both being extremely important to the outcome, as was the falling temperature. From that critical junction of Hagaru-ri, it was 14 miles over the Toktong Pass to Yudam-ni, eight miles up the east side of the reservoir to the Inlet, and eleven miles south to Koto-ri. From Koto-ri down the Funchilin Pass it was eight miles to Chinhung-ni which some have defined as the south edge of the Chosin battle zone. The long trek from a logistics point of view was sixty miles from Hagaru-ri to Hungnam. The Funchilin Pass was still open, although the critical Gatehouse bridge had not been secured by a combat unit.



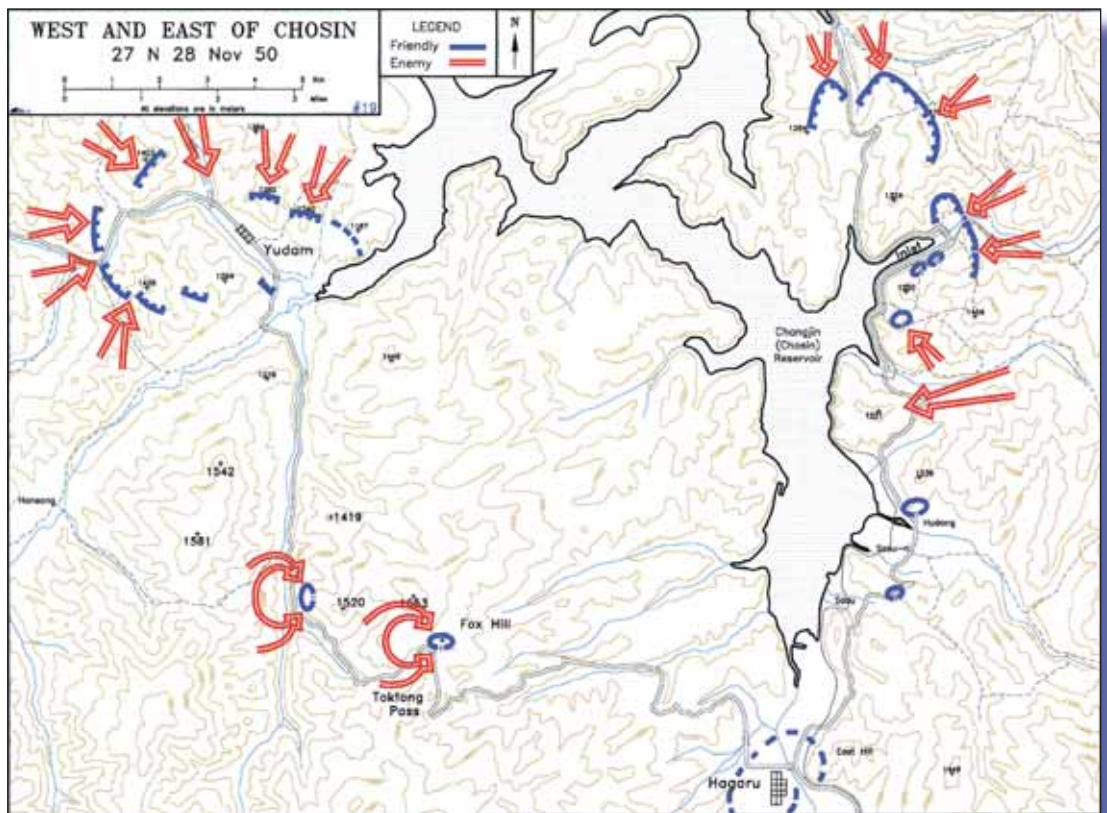
PART III – CHINESE ATTACK

NIGHT OF 27 – 28 NOVEMBER

This map shows the big picture of the simultaneous attacks on both sides of the reservoir late Monday night 27 November. Some believe the Chinese Army Group commander's plan was to attack two regiments of Marines at Yudam-ni and an Army regiment east of the reservoir. That was not what happened.

The attack was actually scheduled for 25 or 26 November, but they were not ready. The plan was to attack the disposition of Marine units that existed before 27 November, one regiment on each side of the reservoir, then cut the MSR to the south - especially the Funchilin Pass - and annihilate those caught within the encirclement. This, to author George Rasula, would have been the grand "motti" if they accomplished it in the manner the Finns did to the Russians during their Winter War. But they couldn't, therefore they didn't.

The Chinese did not have the capability of making rapid changes. Any organization that has only one radio down to regimental level and relies on whistles and bugles to control attacking units will require several days to change plans and issue orders. This leads to another fact. When one reads that the Chinese attacked Yudam-ni or the Inlet with two divisions, they actually

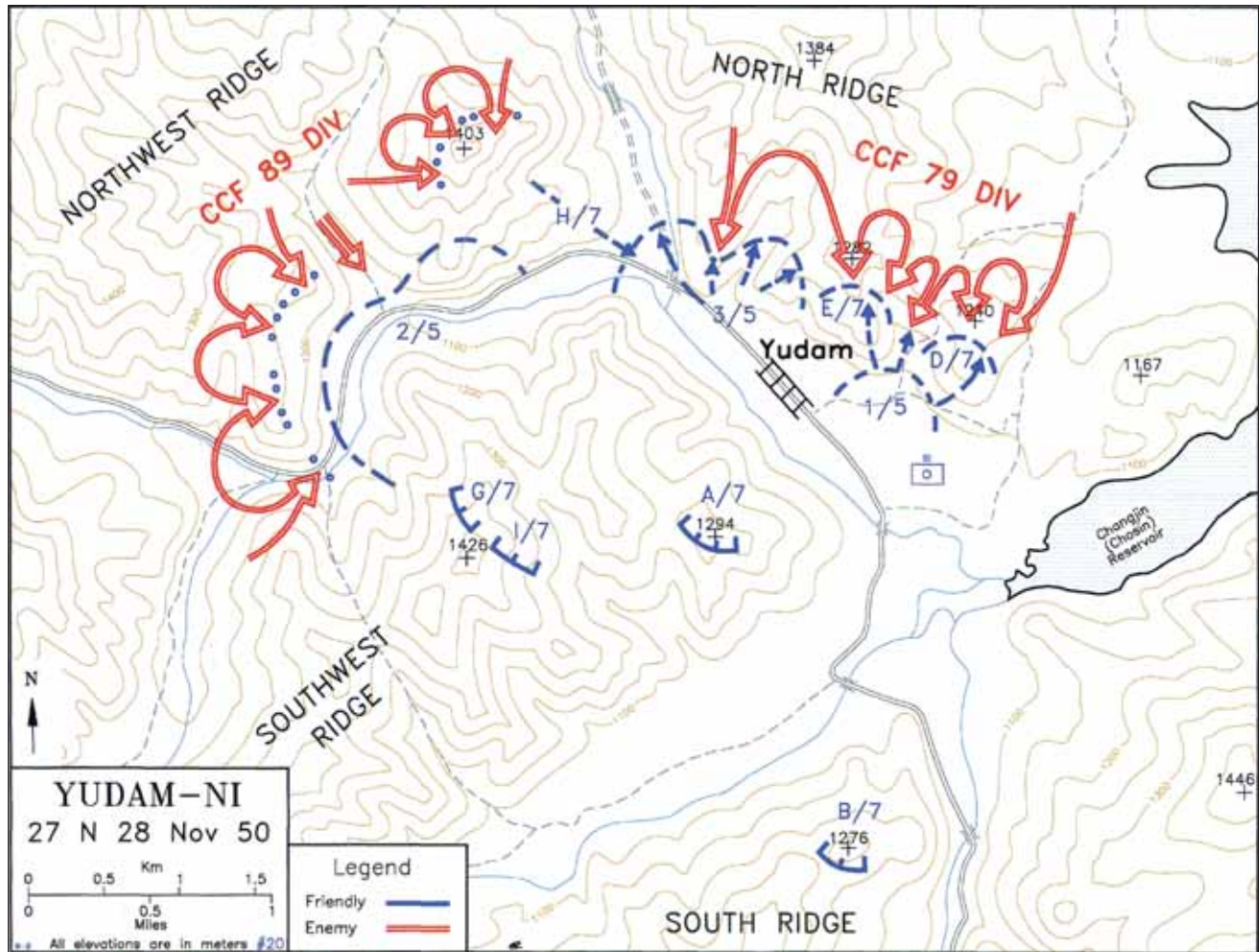


attacked with elements of two divisions. For the same reason, they did not have the command and control capability of launching a division or even a regimental size attack. Nor did they have the capability of making quick changes based on a new and changing situation.

From a logistics point of view, these Chinese divisions made long foot marches at night from their entry points on the Yalu River as the temperature continued to fall. Every round of rifle, machine gun, and mortar ammunition they expended on the first attack had to be replaced by a back-packing line of coolies who were freezing to death. And finally, as you look at this battle, please don't allow yourself to become mesmerized by hype from past literature, or the television documentaries which are based on the best graphics available.

CHINESE ATTACK YUDAM-NI

Here on the Yudam-ni map we see how the enemy went head-on into the firepower of the Marine units on the high ground, lead wedges seeking soft spots and searching for flanks. North and Northwest Ridges took the brunt of the attacks, while the 89th CCF Division maneuvered around the west into the 5th Marines on Southwest Ridge. Throughout the night it was attack and counterattack, with heavy casualties on both sides. Some enemy advances came down to the valley floor, dangerously close to command posts.



Charlie/7 at the base of the Toktong Pass had a rough night; heavy artillery from Yudam-ni saved the company. At the top of the Pass, Fox/7 was fighting for its life with no possibility of rescue. The company had radio communication which permitted artillery support from H/11 at Hagaru-ri, firing very close to maximum range. Only daylight could add more firepower to the battle.

Many readers of the Korean war have heard about the Americans being attacked by "hordes" of Chinese, a word closely defined as "a large moving crowd, or swarm." We often question the source of the expression, since large numbers of attackers have existed in battles for centuries, even as recently as the invasion of Normandy or the Russian hordes attacking the Germans across the steppes of Russia. At Chosin, the horde was an enemy platoon or company, depending on how many the defender could see through the sights of his rifle. The problem the Chinese had was their ability to control that horde, for the sound of the human voice in battle has extreme limitations.

CHINESE ATTACK RCT-31

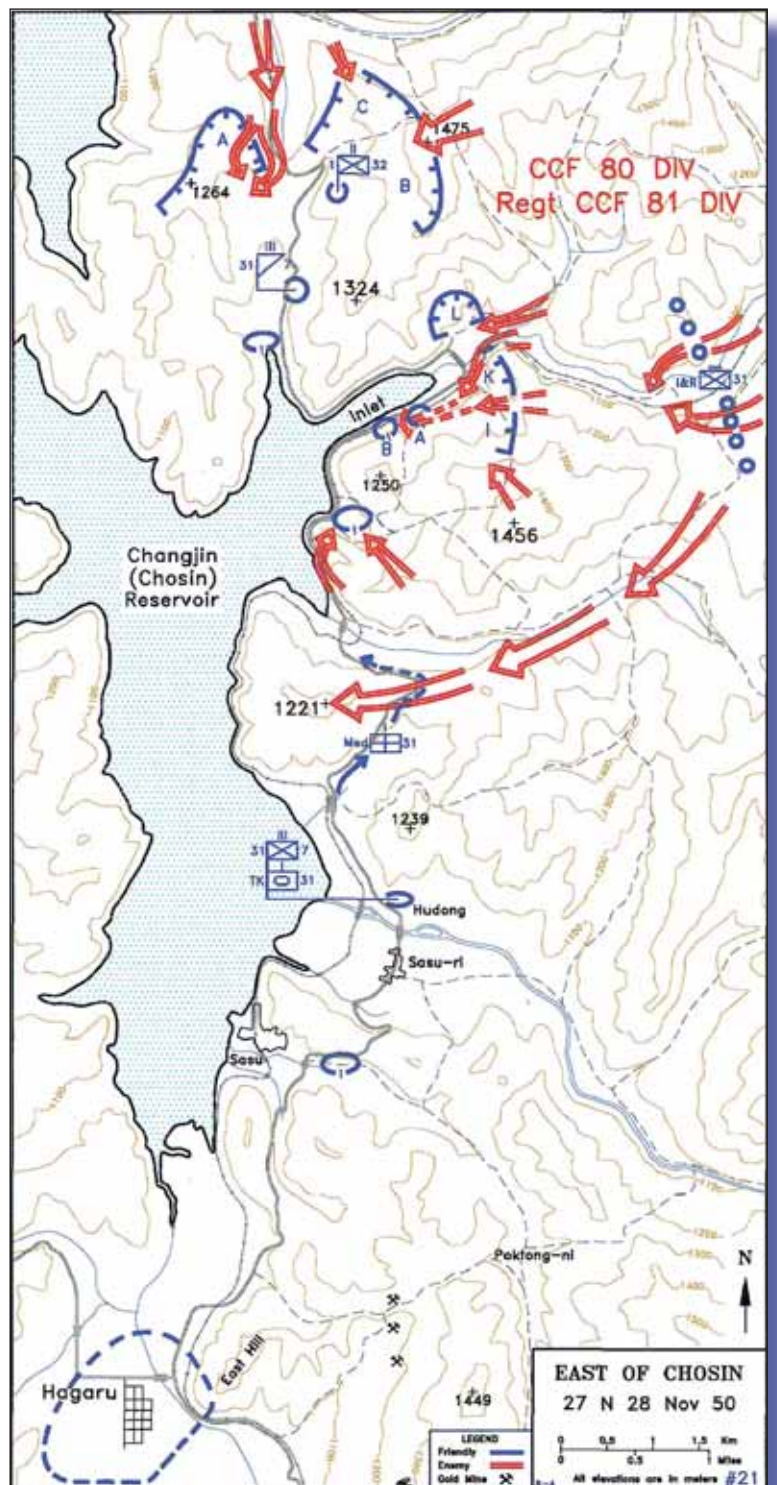
NIGHT 27 - 28 NOVEMBER

East of Chosin the CCF 80th Division, reinforced by one regiment of the CCF 81st Division, attacked from both the north and east, the heaviest coming down the Inlet route where they drove into the gun positions of A Battery. Regrouping and counterattack after daylight revealed no damage to the guns. Exactly what happened to the I&R Platoon would remain a mystery for the next 35 years when a few survivors appeared at reunions to tell their story. Lt. Dick Coke was captured and marched to prison camp where he died.

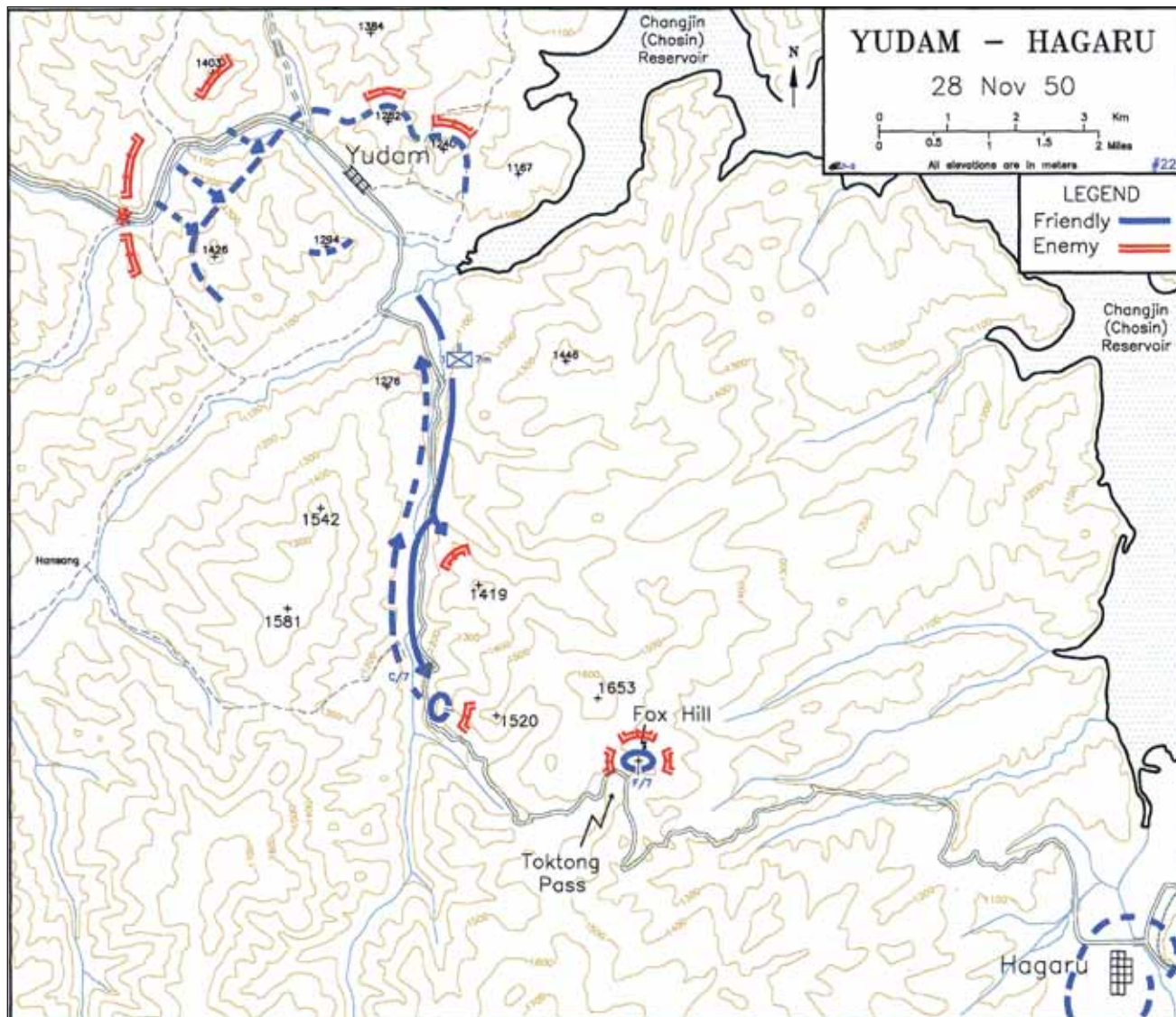
Losses were heavy, including battalion commanders Lt. Col. Bill Reilly of 3/31 Infantry and Lt. Col. Ray Embree of 57th FA Battalion, both seriously wounded. Embree was wounded at his CP which was located where the 5th Marines CP was the previous night protected by a rifle company.

Late that night a convoy of Medical Company had passed the Hudong-ni schoolhouse heading north. At the hairpin turn of Hill 1221 they were ambushed, resulting in a serious reduction of medical support for units at the Inlet. Enemy occupation of Hill 1221 would play a critical role in days to come. Although only two kilometers distant, the Chinese did not molest Tank Company or the CP at Hudong-ni, nor the artillery service battery further south. Nor did they molest a unit of the 1st Marine Engineer Battalion that was at the sawmill town of Sasu-ri getting lumber.

The Chinese were carrying out the first phase of their attack plan, that of attacking the positions of the 5th Marines. While doing so they captured a key objective east of the reservoir, Hill 1221, and in doing so blocked the MSR between Tank Company and the Inlet.



On the morning of 28 November it was obvious to Col. Litzenberg and Lt. Col. Murray, the two regimental commanders at Yudam-ni, that there would be no further attack to the west. Adjustments were made in the western sector, while the 3/5 was deployed across the valley to protect Yudam-ni from the northwest.

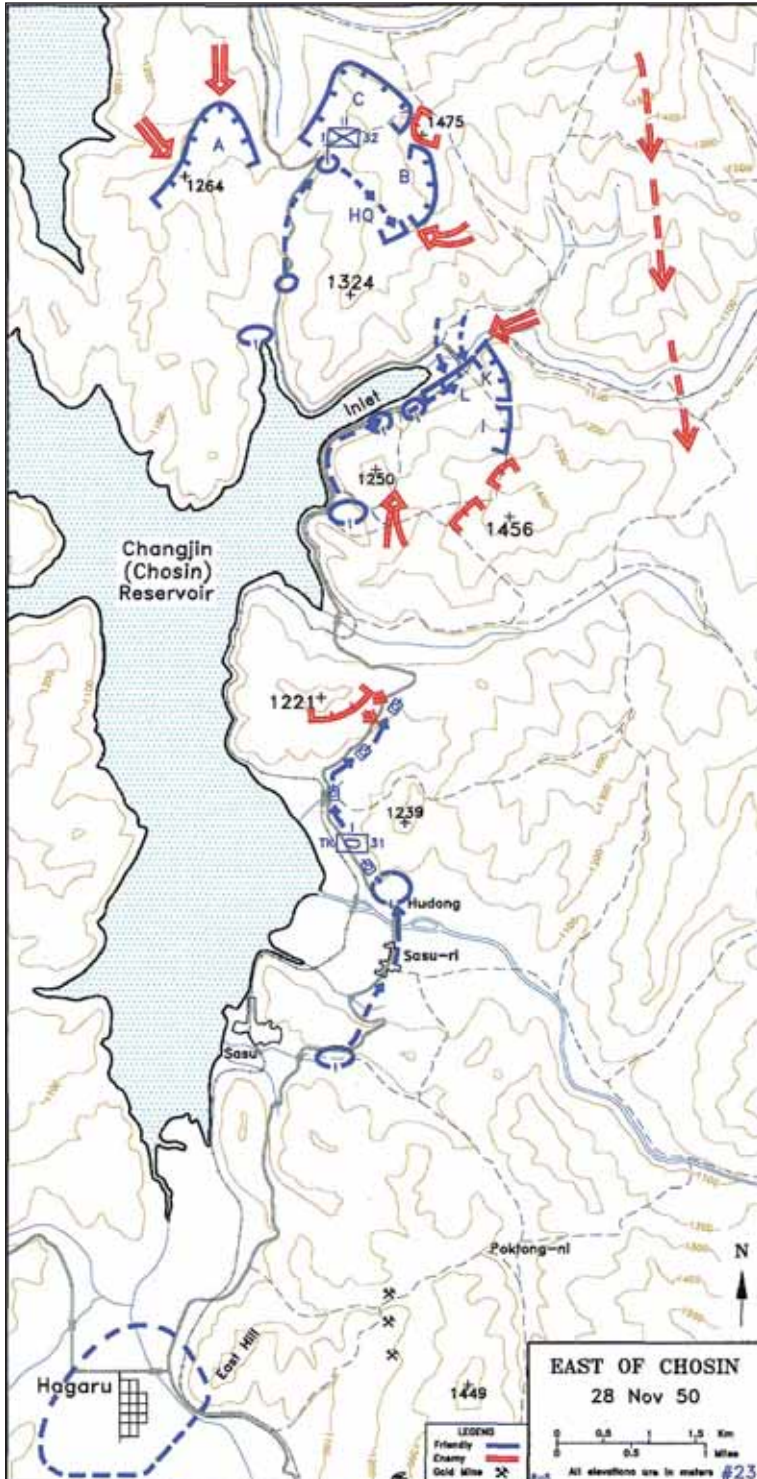


That afternoon Gen. Smith ordered the RCT-7 to attack south to open the MSR. Col. Litzenberg sent the 1/7 on the mission to rescue C1/7 and F2/7. After three miles in five hours of fighting, heavy air attacks enabled the battalion to hold a route open for C1/7 to withdraw. In the Toktong Pass, Fox Company was left to fight its own battle. They already had 54 wounded. At 1030 they received tactical air support from Australian Mustangs, and fortunately, an air drop of ammunition and medical kits. During the night artillery support from Hagaru-ri continued to be the key to its defense.

The Yudam-ni casualty reports for the night of 27 - 28 November vary depending on the time period being addressed, ranging from 450 to more than 600 total battle casualties. This was the beginning of non-battle casualties caused by frostbite and exposure, with dropping night temperatures raising havoc among those who were not prepared, especially the Chinese soldier. From this moment on, the battle with the environment was as important as the battle with the enemy. Father Winter was neutral, both sides suffered and he who was least prepared suffered the most.

EAST OF CHOSIN - TANK COMPANY ATTACKS HILL 1221

On 28 November units west and east of the reservoir, as well as Hagaru-ri, received airdrops of supplies, some falling into enemy hands. Daylight brought air support for 1/32 Infantry because they had an Air Controller. This was not the case at the Inlet because the Air Force Controller with 3/31 Infantry had been killed the previous night, and his radios damaged. In the east sector of 1/32 the Chinese took the top of Hill 1475, commanding terrain where counterattacks could not dislodge them.



This was the day Gen. Almond flew into Hagaru-ri for a meeting, then by helicopter to Lt. Col. Don Faith's CP where he performed his famous Silver Star routine, well publicized by past writers.

At the Inlet area the Chinese had withdrawn to the high ground east and south while the artillery and AAA units consolidated into a tighter perimeter. Rumors were being passed that the I&R Platoon had been "wiped out." By this time the twin-40s and quad-50s of the AAA were becoming the most effective weapons against enemy attacks, in turn becoming prime targets of the Chinese each night.

Further south at Hudong-ni Tank Company moved out in an attempt to break through the Chinese at Hill 1221 and move north to reinforce the forward battalions; that was their mission. When they approached the area of the destroyed Medical Company vehicles, they lost two tanks to enemy fire which blocked the narrow road. Then two more tanks were lost, one with a thrown track and another breaking through frozen ground and getting mired down. This was not "tank country." Gen. Hodes had accompanied Capt. Drake during this attack which was eventually called off, after which the general was taken to Hagaru-ri in one of Drake's tanks which, eventually, became the only radio communications link between Hagaru-ri and the CP at Hudong-ni.

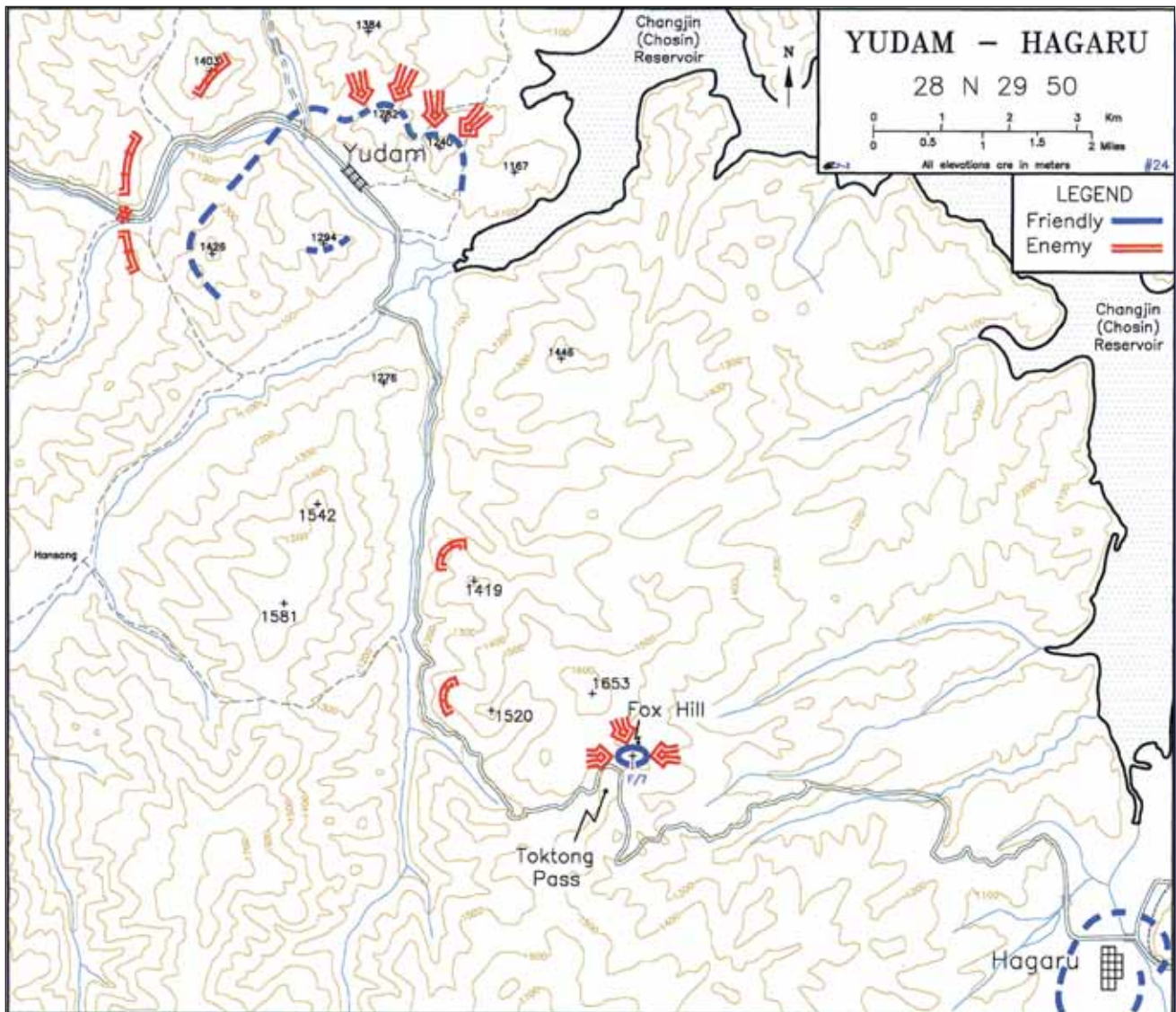
A QUIET NIGHT AT YUDAM-NI

NIGHT 28 - 29 NOVEMBER

It was relatively quiet at Yudam-ni the night of 28 - 29 November, but very cold. The enemy was probably regrouping from heavy casualties caused by combat and cold weather, as well as struggling with logistics problems, one to decide which unit had enough ammo to launch the next attack.

North Ridge continued to receive attacks. During the night the aid stations were moved south of Yudam-ni to a location safer from enemy attacks. The two regimental commanders, Col. Litzenberg and Lt. Col. Murray, began developing their joint plan for the breakout. Although "Litz" was senior, Gen. Smith did not place him in command at Yudam-ni; it became known as a joint command. Col. Al Bowser, division G-3 operations officer, had volunteered to go to Yudam-ni to assume command, but Gen. Smith declined his offer, telling him he was far more essential at Hagaru-ri as the G-3.

At Toktong Pass the attacks and counterattacks continued. Fox 7 suffered five more killed and 29 more wounded. The 14 miles from Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri remained no man's land, except at night when the Chinese used it as their own MSR.



CHINESE ATTACK HAGARU-RI

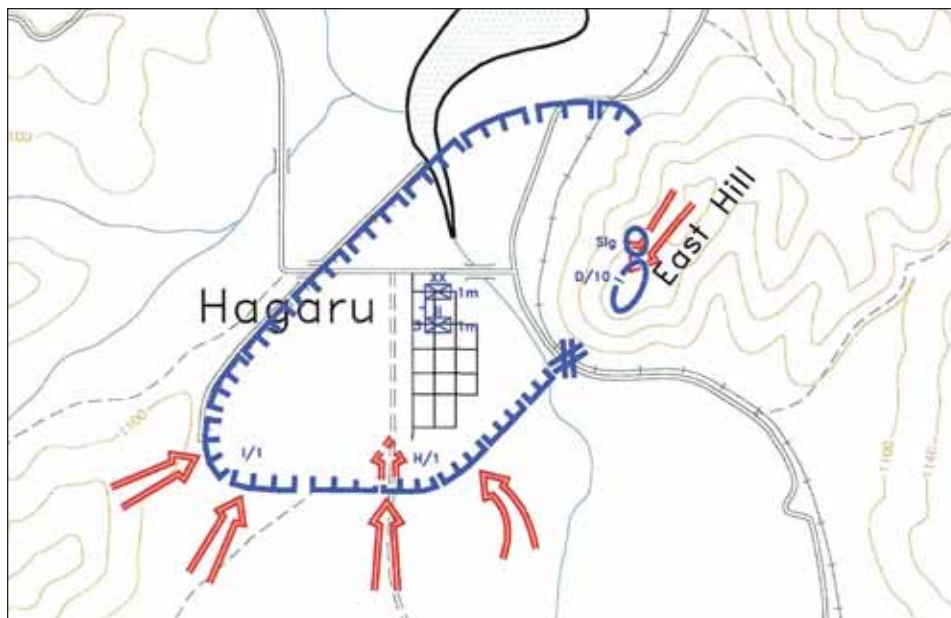
NIGHT 28 - 29 NOVEMBER

At Hagaru-ri it was a different story, but first, a review of the previous days is appropriate.

On 19 November five large bulldozers arrived and began building the airstrip. The first tanks also arrived. On 26 November, after dark, the 3/1 Marines (minus G Company) arrived, as did Dog and How Batteries (105 mm) of the 11th Marines. This was a small force to be securing such a large area.

About 0200 hours on 28 November, Dog/10 Engineers had arrived just before the road to Koto-ri had been cut. This company, with only 81 Americans and 90 Koreans, was ordered to East Hill where they tied in with an Army Signal Platoon. A Marine officer with radio operator was provided as liaison and communications. Gen. Smith arrived to occupy his division command post, while the commander of the 3/1 Marines organized the area defense against a threat from the southwest, based on intelligence from civilians.

There were two attacks about 2230 that night, one from the southwest as predicted and one from East Hill. By 0400 the attack slacked off and by daylight the Chinese withdrew leaving behind about 750 bodies. Marine H3/1 received the brunt of the attack suffering 16 killed and 39 wounded.



On East Hill the Chinese attacked through the Signal Platoon, turning then into the left flank of Dog Company engineers, then both withdrew to a lower position. By 0300 the company was in a tight perimeter on the south end of the ridge spur. They had suffered heavy casualties; the liaison officer had been killed. Near dawn a composite group of Marines moved up and reinforced Dog Company, and by daylight air strikes relieved the situation. Later in the day limited counterattacks were made, only to withdraw to a lower positions. From this point on no side, American or Chinese, controlled all of East Hill—that little mountain east of Hagaru-ri.

Some may wonder where the Chinese took shelter when they were not attacking the Hagaru-ri perimeter, a question taken seriously by co-author Mel Coolbaugh during the map-making process. Look east and southwest of Hagaru-ri to find symbols of mines which, at the time, were gold mines. These served as ideal places to shelter troops out of sight from American observation during daylight hours.

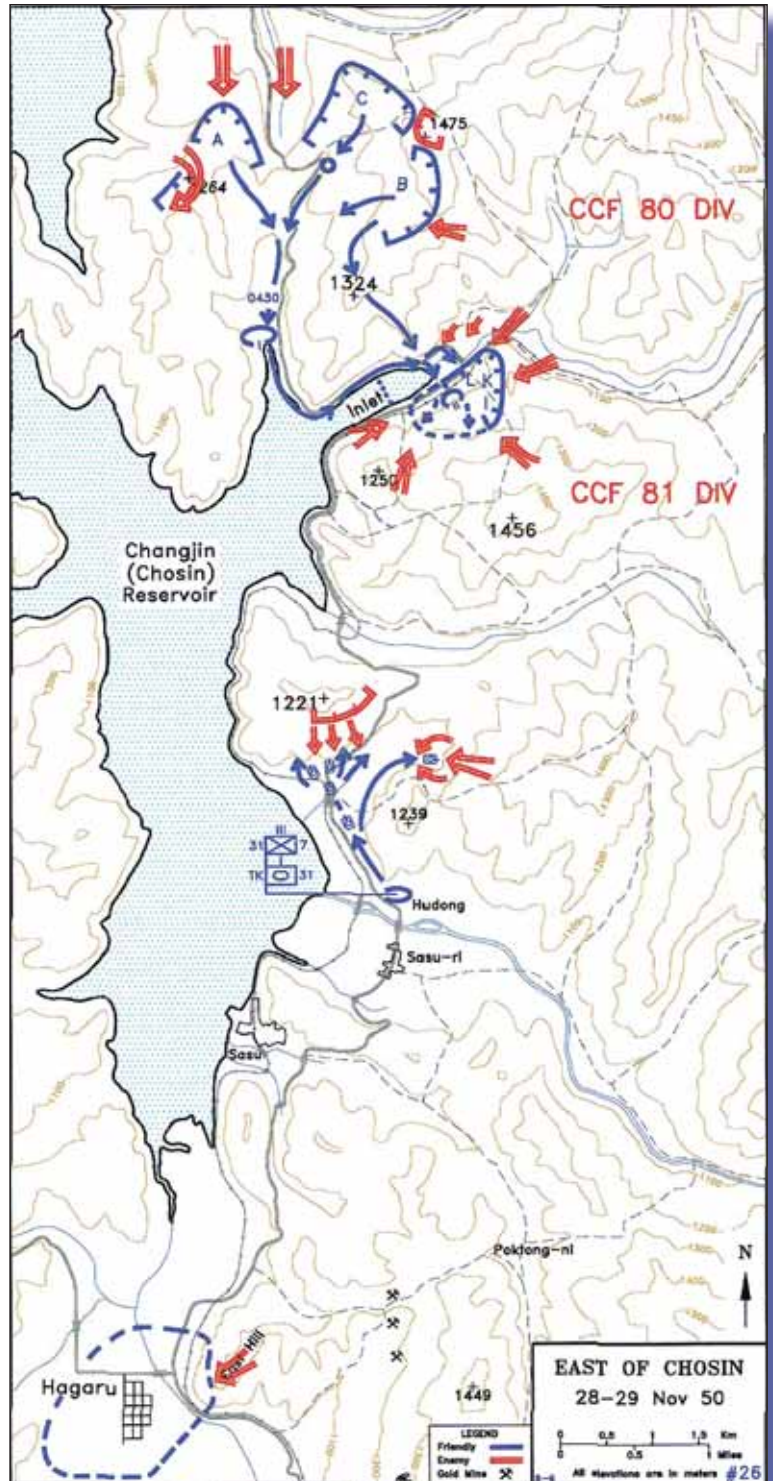
In the area of 1/32 Infantry on the night of 28-29 November, we find a situation developing which leads into daylight. The Chinese resumed their attack before dark in the east sector of the Inlet, some getting dangerously close to the AAA vehicles. New attacks from the west came a few hours before dawn, as well as from the south where they were also targeting the AAA vehicles.

In the 1/32 Infantry area the night began quietly. The Heavy Mortars were having problems with broken base-plates, further reducing their capabilities. About midnight the Chinese began their usual probes and by 0100 launched a full attack in all sectors as shown on this overlay. At 0200 Col. MacLean ordered Faith to prepare to withdraw, a difficult maneuver when in contact with the enemy.

The plan called for the withdrawal to begin at 0430, although word was late getting out. After loading the wounded on trucks the withdrawal began. Although it was hasty, there was no pursuit by the enemy. This again highlights the inflexibility of the Chinese unit commander to exploit a favorable situation. By 0500 the 1/32 withdrawal was well under way, soon learning why the Chinese troops did not pursue. They stopped to plunder what was left behind, most likely food and clothing.

The dots you see crossing the ice represent the route Col. MacLean took to stop, he apparently thought, a column of friendly troops—Reidy's 2/31 Infantry - coming from the south. He was hit a few times after which the Chinese came out of the brush and dragged him away, never to be seen again.

After his troops crossed the ice and vehicles crossed the causeway under fire, Lt. Col. Faith learned that the other two battalion commanders, Reilly and Embree, had been seriously wounded.



Faith's first mission as the new commander of RCT-31 east of Chosin was to reorganize the perimeter at a time when he had no radio communications with the next higher headquarters, not knowing that he would shortly be under command of Gen. O. P. Smith of the 1st Marine Division,

On this map we also see Capt. Drake's second attempt launched on the morning of 29 November, about the time Faith's battalion was crossing the Inlet.

This time Tank Company was reinforced with a provisional infantry group, about 50 to 75 men. They attacked the south slope of Hill 1221 where the tanks could not get traction to climb the hill. Although they had air support they didn't have an air controller, resulting in casualties from friendly fire. Infantry casualties were heavy. After four hours the attack was called off. At noon back at the schoolhouse Lt. Hensen was told to take two tanks and try to find a bypass. They were soon hit by enemy fire which killed Hensen. The Chinese obviously controlled all the high ground north of Hudong-ni. The Chinese later propped Hensen's body against a tree on the hill behind the CP as bait.

This ended attempts to get through from the Hudong-ni area. The Chinese were in command of the key terrain, just waiting for the inevitable breakout by the units at the Inlet.



Dead Chinese soldiers shot by Retherford and Donovan inside the perimeter near the 3/31 command post.

Photo by Willard Donovan, L 3/31

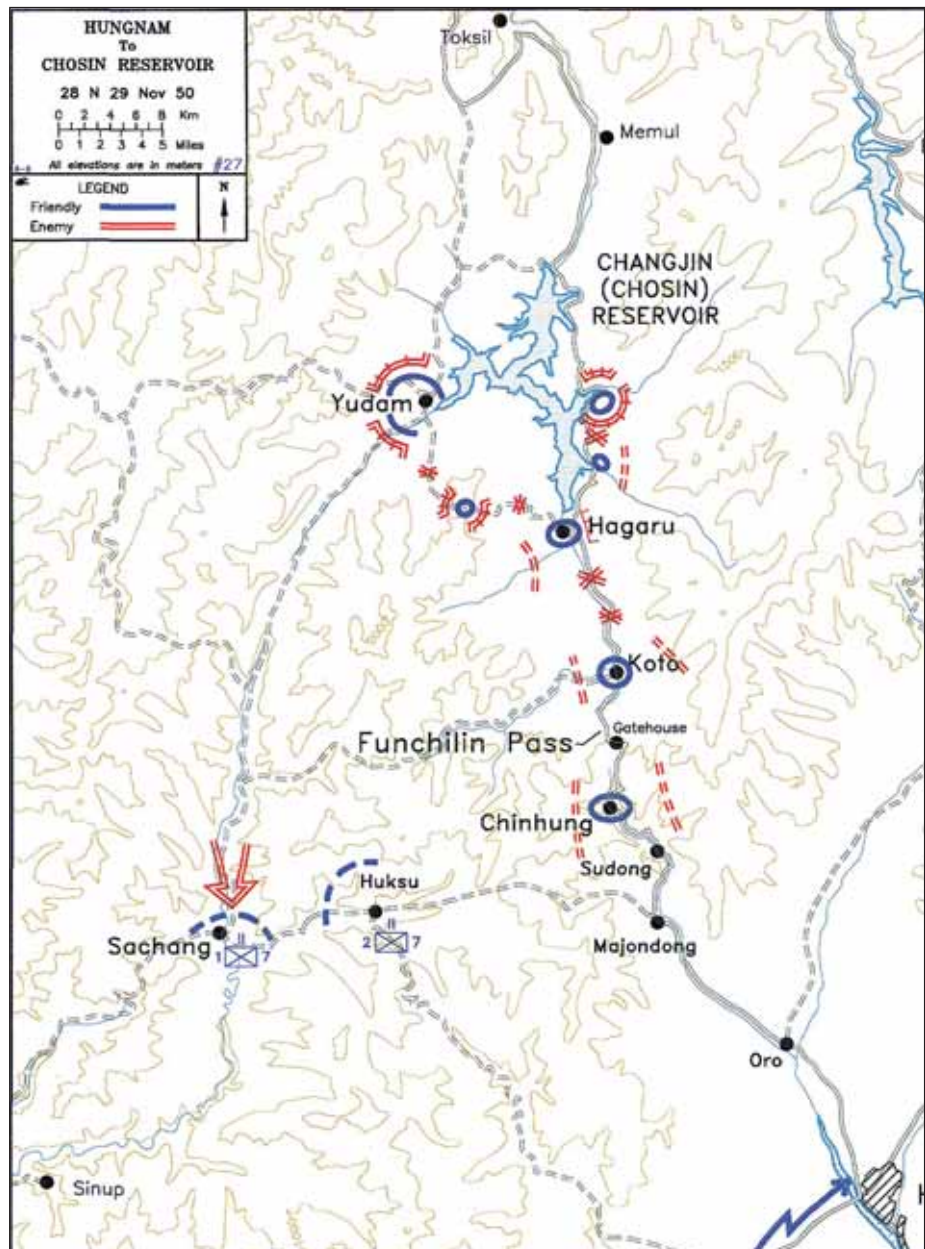
Man squatting is ROK from Donovan's platoon who could speak Chinese. Prisoner talked freely about enemy troop strength. Since he was unable to walk, we left him.

Photo by Willard Donovan, L 3/31

On the night of 28-29 November, about 30 miles south-southwest of Yudam-ni at Sachang-ni, a regiment from the 89th CCF Div attacked the 1/7 Infantry of the 3rd Infantry Division. The battle continued for the night and at 0500, the Chinese withdrew leaving 150 bodies. The reason why such a large force was operating this far south is interesting, obviously part of their initial plan, a deep envelopment.

Columns of Chinese troops continued to be seen in the hills surrounding Koto-ri and as far south as Chinhung-ni at the bottom of the Funchilin Pass. The fact that they never launched major attacks at these two perimeters must have been the result of the Chinese commander's understanding of his capabilities. He was about to enter the third night of his plan and had not yet accomplished phase one, the destruction of the Americans east and west of the Chosin Reservoir. Once again, Father Winter was increasing his influence on the unprepared.

It was this evening when Gen. Almond ordered Gen. Smith to "redeploy" one regiment immediately from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri and to gain contact with elements of the 7th Infantry Division east of the reservoir. This same order attached all Army units in the reservoir area to Gen. Smith. The term attached at this point is very important in understanding Chosin, meaning that Lt. Col. Don Faith's RCT-31 units trapped east of the reservoir now assumed the same role as the Marine regiments, all being the responsibility of Maj. Gen. O.P. Smith.



TASK FORCE DRYSDALE

Picture the situation in Col. "Chesty" Puller's headquarters tent at Koto-ri where they continued to hear reports of the savage attacks further north, especially through Marine channels from Yudam-ni, and receiving no attacks at Koto-ri, even though they could see Chinese in the hills every day. Did the continuing arrival of units and tanks have something to do with their reluctance to attack this perimeter, as it apparently did further north at Hudong-ni? Or was he concentrating his CCF force to create a final block in the Funchilin Pass? The answer may be none of the above, for we know not what Father Winter was doing at that time to the Chinese who planned on living off the land, not knowing this land was barren.

On 28 November Col. Puller had been ordered to send a force north to meet a tank patrol coming south. A patrol of D2/1 Marines went north about a mile, and that's as far as the Chinese allowed them to go. By the night of 28 - 29 November Koto-ri was filling with more units: G/1 Marines (205), a company of the 3rd Bn at Hagaru-ri; B/31 Infantry (190) that had been sent to replace E/31 of Reidy's 2/31 which had not yet arrived; and 41 Commando, Royal Marines (240).

That night Puller organized Task Force Drysdale, placing these combat units under the British Royal Marine Lt. Col. Drysdale with instructions to break through and reinforce the defense at Hagaru-ri, attaching armor as well as many miscellaneous headquarters, supply, and service elements.

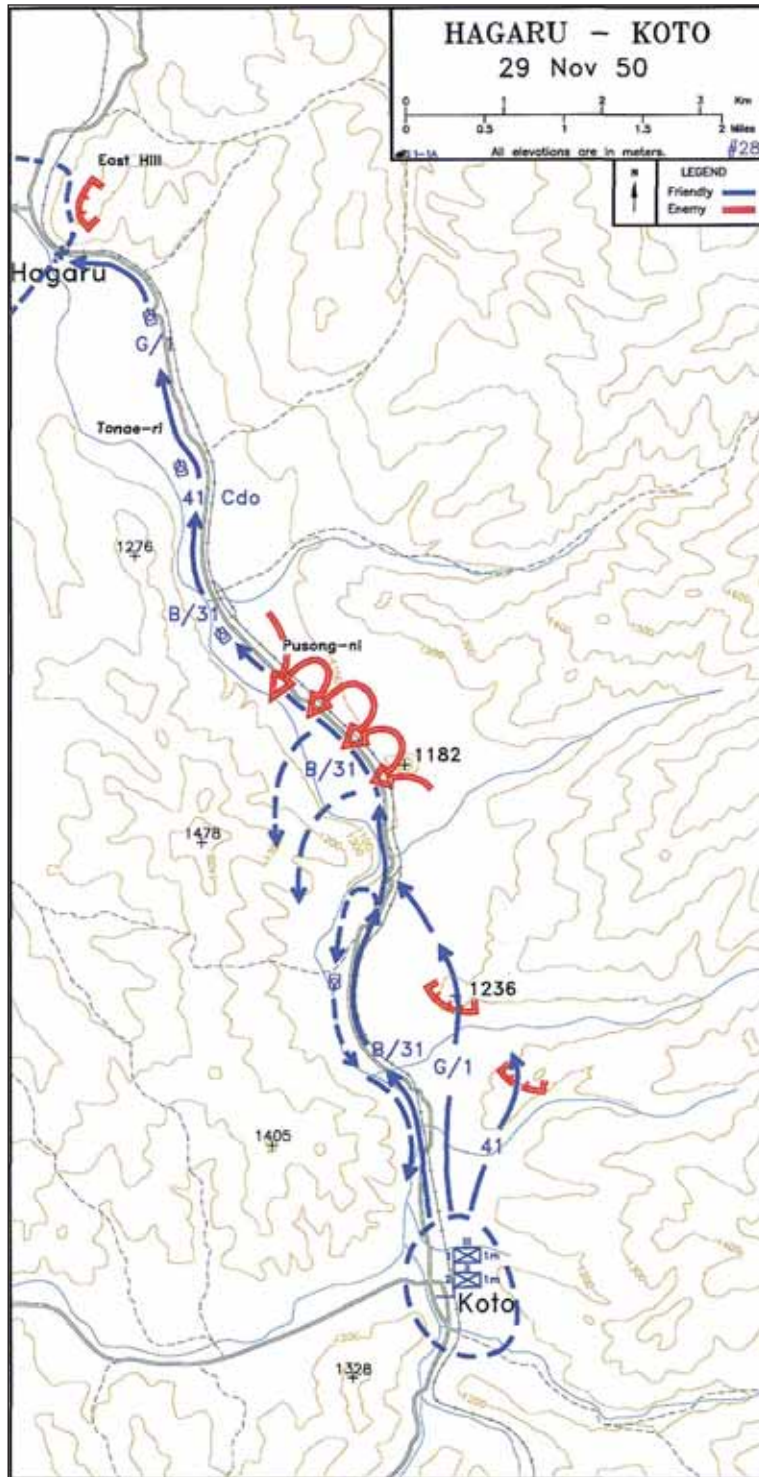
When the attack got underway the morning of 29 November, Drysdale had a force of 922 troops, 750 of which were combat, 29 tanks, and 141 vehicles. The attack jumped off at 0930 with 41 Commando taking the first objective, followed by G/1 taking Hill 1236, with B/31 in reserve. Then 41 Commando moved forward and took Hill 1182, and that's where the attack began to stall, two and a half miles north of Koto-ri.

Then came the problems. They waited 90 minutes for a second platoon of tanks to arrive. Drysdale wanted to disperse the tanks in the column, but Capt. Clarke wanted to keep the tanks together in the lead. Drysdale acceded.



Machine gun position at Koto-ri.
Photo by Gus Guth

The action then consisted of troops getting off and on trucks, and soon the Chinese began to cut the column into sections, a classic Chinese “motti.” Hell Fire Valley was the chopping block which resulted in: Lead tanks with G/1, three-fourths of 41 Commando and a few men from B/31 made it to Hagaru-ri; about 400 men and 16 tanks. About 300 men with two platoons of tanks and 15 vehicles made it back to Koto-ri. Drysdale had followed Smith’s orders to get to Hagaru-ri at all costs. The cost: at least 320 troops of which many ended up in prison camp, plus one tank and half the vehicles.

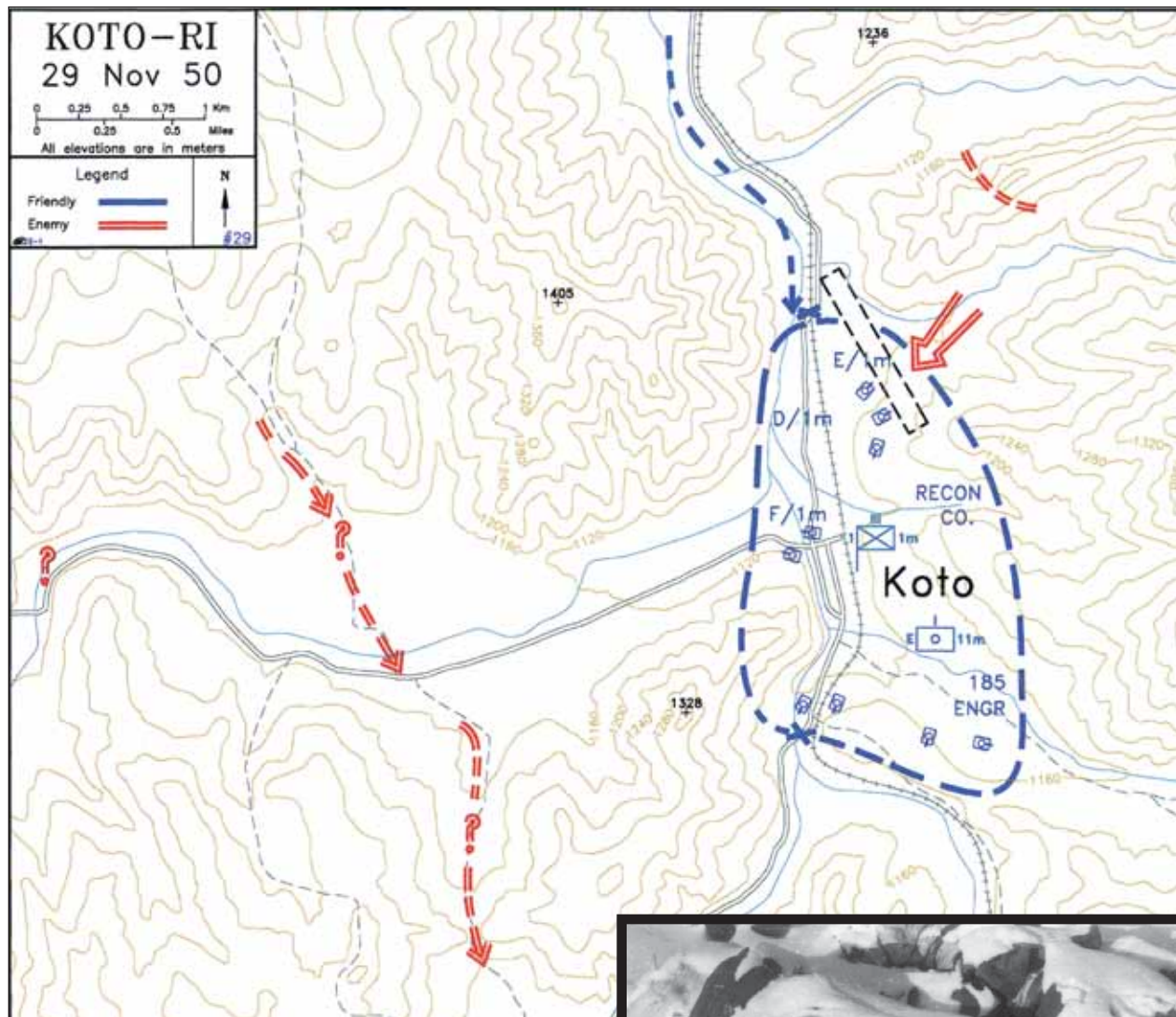


The enemy was estimated to have been one regiment of the 60th CCF Division, using minimum force while making maximum use of the terrain, especially the dark of night.

Gen. Smith’s summation reads: “The casualties of Task Force Drysdale were heavy, but by its partial success the task force made a significant contribution to holding of Hagaru-ri which was vital to the Division. To the slender garrison of Hagaru-ri were added a tank company of about 100 men and some 300 seasoned infantrymen. The approximately 300 troops which returned to Koto-ri participated thereafter in the defense of that perimeter.”

This was a brief description of a complex operation. A movie producer would have a difficult job telling the story as it actually happened. One may ask the question “Why was Drysdale assigned command when there were many highly qualified commanders and staff officers at Koto-ri to coordinate the three services and hundreds of strap-hangers who were going along for the ride? There has been no answer. Once again, a highly trained recon unit was employed in a combat role when, in fact, they should have been used far to the front and flank in a deep recon role.

Back at Koto-ri in the late afternoon of 29 November, an estimated CCF company attacked the E2/1 Marines sector of the perimeter near the airstrip. About 17 penetrated and were promptly killed. By 1900 the enemy withdrew leaving behind 150 dead and many weapons. This was the only attack on the Koto-ri perimeter during the entire Chosin campaign.



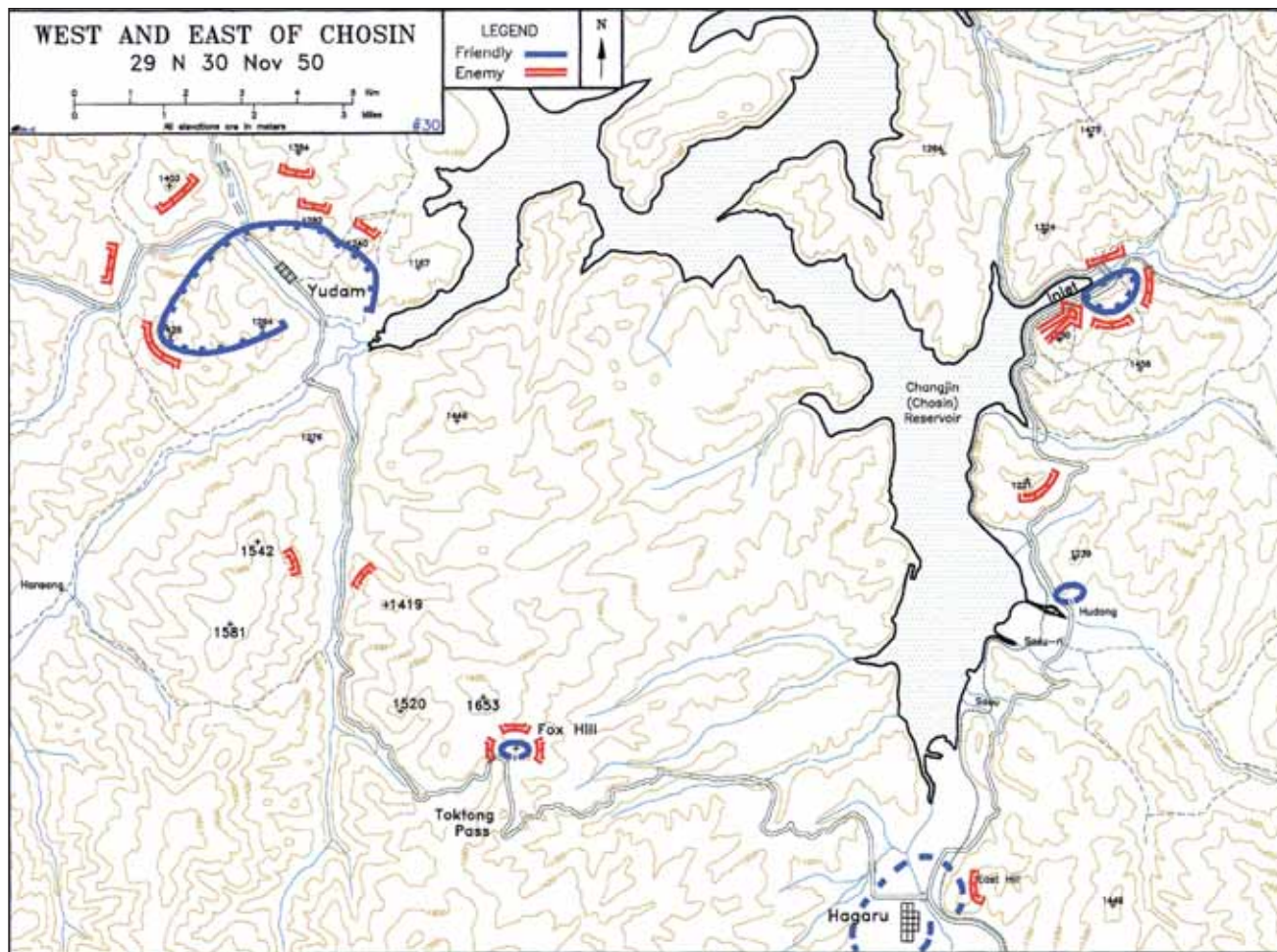
Although the MSR south was still open, Lt. Col. Reidy's 2/31 had not yet arrived. The battalion was far to the south near Hamhung waiting for the X Corps to solve transportation problems. They would eventually arrive south of the perimeter the next night and enter the perimeter and occupy assigned defense positions on 1 December, far too late to help Col. MacLean's units at the Inlet. The battalion captured and occupied a key hill in the southwest sector of the Koto-ri perimeter, holding it until the final withdrawal.



Dead Chinese in snow at Koto-ri. Photographed by the driver for Medal of Honor recipient, Lt. Col. John U.D. Page, USA.
Photo by Cpl. Klepsig

The night of 29 - 30 November was relatively quiet in all sectors. At Yudam-ni they were planning to disengage. It was on this evening when Gen. Smith received orders from X Corps to do what he was planning to do, to have the RCT-7 mount a full regimental attack south to Hagaru-ri.

To implement these instructions Col. Litzenberg and Lt. Col. Murray, in coordination with the 11th Artillery commander, issued their joint operations order calling for the two regiments to redeploy after daylight and concentrate on the south of Yudam-ni as the first step in preparation for the breakout. Fox 7 continued its struggle in the Pass.



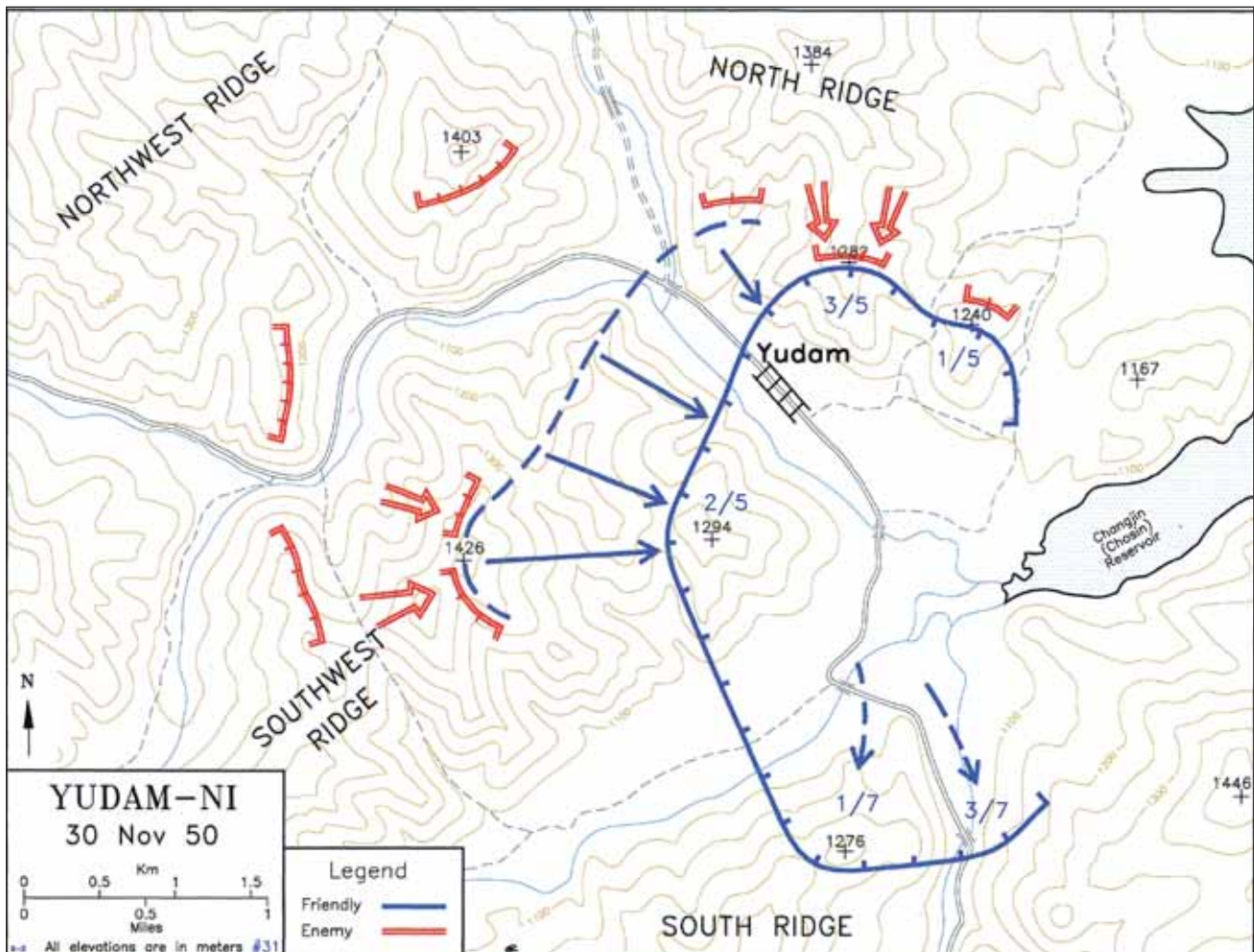
East of the reservoir it was quiet from darkness until near midnight, a bright moon at first, then clouds and snowfall. Then came probes in all sectors. There was no major coordinated attack, although two or three sharp attacks were directed against the southwest at the roadblock, and continued attempts against the Quad-50s. That night stragglers from the platoon of 1/32 Infantry that had been cut off from Faith's forward position came over the ice of the Inlet into the perimeter. Ammunition was running low.

YUDAM-NI MAKES ADJUSTMENTS

30 NOVEMBER

At 0600 on 30 November, Marines began implementing the joint operation order to regroup south of Yudam-ni village in preparation for the attack to Hagaru-ri. Adjustments shown on this overlay were carried out in daylight, made possible with tactical air and observed artillery support.

Other preparations continued, distribution of ammo and rations, and preparations to destroy ammunition, supplies and equipment that could not be carried. The Aid Station now held about 500 casualties and by day's end all was ready for the 1 December breakout. About 150 sorties were flown throughout the reservoir area which helped keep the enemy relatively quiet.



At Toktong Pass Fox 2/7 fought off Chinese attacks after daylight, a bad move for the enemy because it exposed them to Corsairs and the well supplied firepower of Fox Company. The dedication to and support of this one isolated rifle company continues to be an example for military historians involved in lessons learned. The decisive factors were communications and resupply.

HUDONG-NI UNITS WITHDRAWN TO HAGARU-RI

30 NOVEMBER

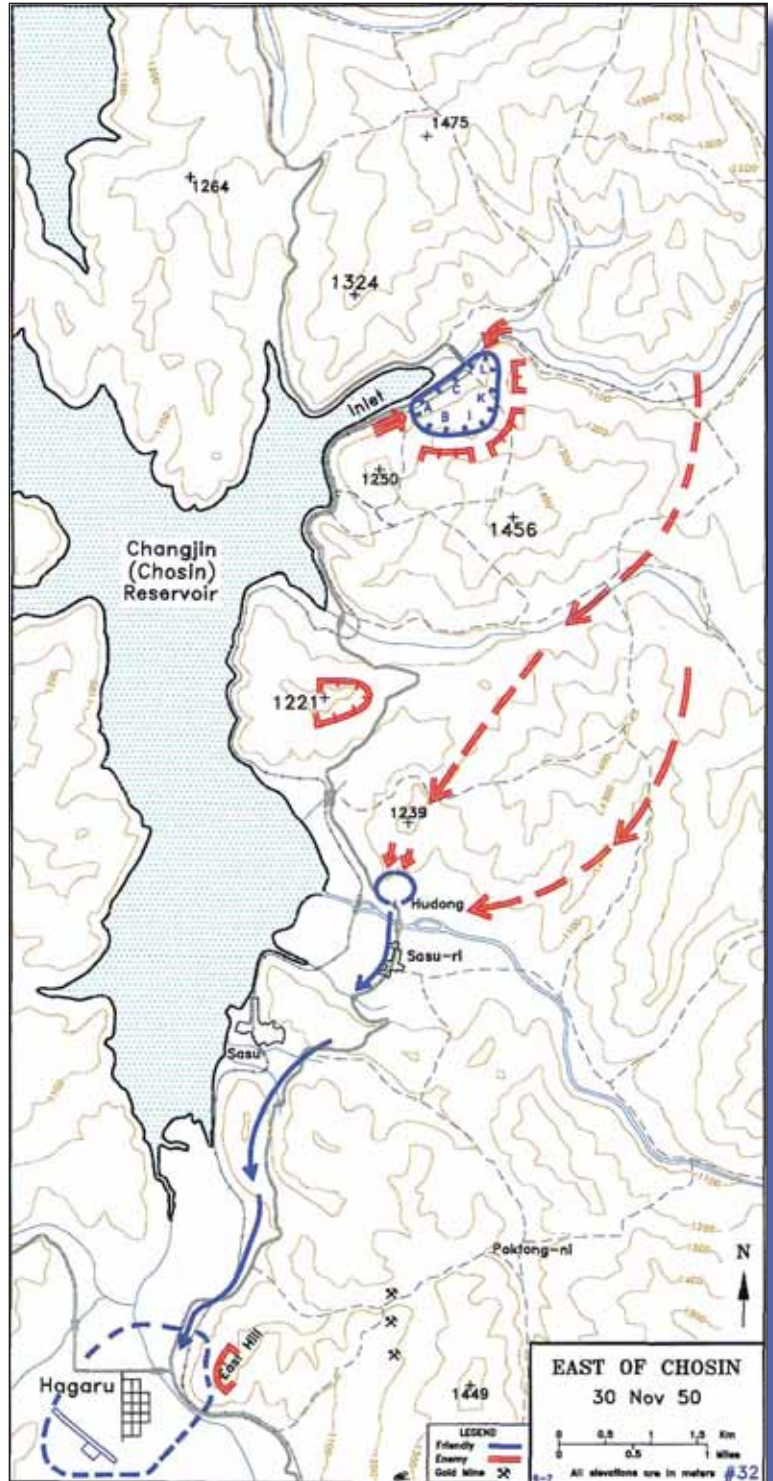
East of the reservoir on 30 November the ground fog cleared by 1000 hours, and shortly air drops delivered 50-caliber and some 4.2 ammunition, but no 40-mm for the Twin-40s. Later it was learned that 76-mm tank ammo was dropped at the Inlet where there were no tanks, while 40-mm was dropped at Hudong-ni where there were no AAA weapons.

Before noon Gen. Barr arrived by helicopter and went directly to the CP tent where he spoke privately with Lt. Col. Don Faith. There were no instructions from the Gen. because the RCT-31 was no longer under Barr's command; it now belonged to Gen. Smith. Some may define this visit as a father-son talk, however, the general must have informed Faith of the situation back at Smith's headquarters in Hagaru-ri, essentially that Faith was on his own. Tactical air directed by one controller was busy in the Inlet area as the Chinese continued their probes in the northeast and southwest sectors of the perimeter.

About mid-afternoon the Hudong-ni CP received orders to withdraw immediately to Hagaru-ri, an order which was most likely sent by the tank radio that Gen. Hodes used on 28 November. Although Hudong-ni had not experienced a major attack, sniper fire was now being directed at the schoolhouse. It was obvious that the Chinese had no intention of attacking a perimeter defended by so many tanks.

The withdrawal began about 1600 during which two disabled tanks had to be abandoned, now leaving 15 plus the one at Hagaru-ri. Once again, anyone looking at the hills to the east could see columns of Chinese moving south. There was no enemy action during the withdrawal except for long range small arms fire. Decades later it was learned that three soldiers from the I&R Platoon arrived at Hudong-ni just as the last trucks were pulling out.

After arrival at Hagaru-ri, 325 soldiers with 16 tanks were added to its defense, occupying the northeast section of the perimeter at the base of East Hill.



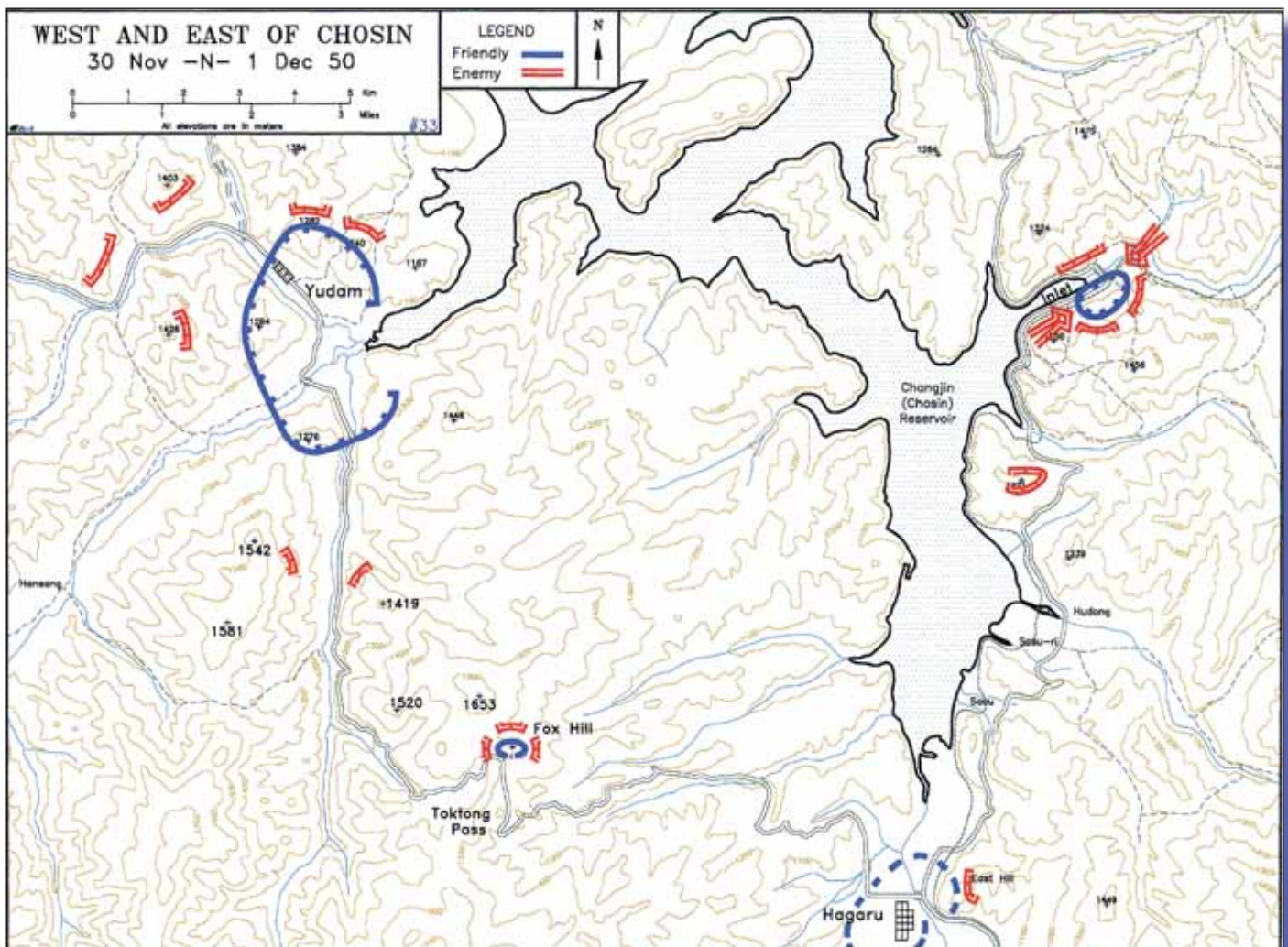
LAST LONG NIGHT

30 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER

On the night before the breakout the Yudam-ni plan called for further adjustments, that of organizing all men into fighting units as infantrymen. For this, 26 provisional platoons were organized from Artillery and Service units. Platoons were attached to rifle companies with some held in reserve. Litzenberg and Murray formed a provisional battalion under command of the S-4, 7th Marines. While the enemy remained reasonably quiet, it was obvious to his observation posts that something was about to happen.

After dark east of the reservoir they had heavy snowfall. Then, at 2000 hours, mortar fire and attacks were received along the southwest road. There was but one exit route and the Chinese were well aware of that. By 2400 the attacks intensified in all sectors, with heavy casualties being inflicted on the Chinese by AAA fire. One penetration was made in the northeast sector near the bridge where the Chinese took the critical high knob. During this period a mortar round hit the 1/32 aid station wounding the battalion surgeon. By dawn, medical supplies were exhausted.

After daylight the Chinese did not pull back as usual, but stayed within small arms range and continued to inflict more casualties. The weather was getting worse with no air support or evacuation in sight. All troops were low on ammunition. It was eight miles to Hagaru-ri and Reidy's 2/31 Infantry had not yet arrived. Hudong-ni was empty, no tanks, no troops, no nothing. While to the south at Hagaru-ri another action was brewing.

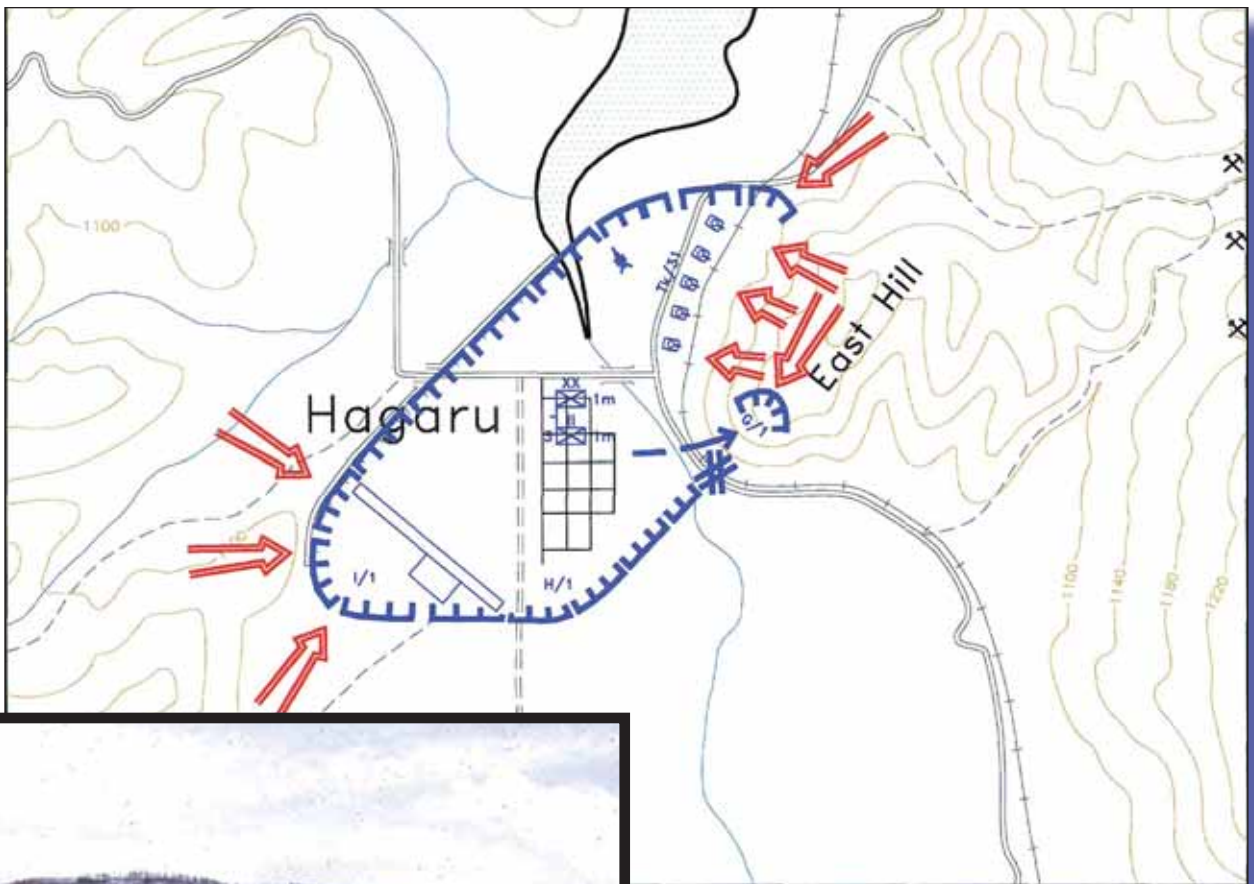


SECOND ATTACK ON HAGARU-RI

30 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER

During the day G3/1 Marines attacked the southwest slope of East Hill; the resistance was heavy. At 2000 hours 30 November the Chinese once again began probing attacks in the southwest sector against I Company.

By 2300 hours serious attacks began. Chinese casualties were estimated at 500 from two regiments of the 58th CCF Division, while friendly casualties were relatively light, two killed and 10 wounded. At the same time attacks from East Hill came directly into the machine guns and cannons of the 31st Tank Company, a battle continuing most of the night aided by illumination from an ignited fuel dump; known as the "turkey shoot." By 0100 hours 1 December, reinforcements were sent to G3/1 on East Hill where a counterattack up the ridge resulted in 60 friendly casualties. By daylight the Chinese withdrew over the crest. 300 Chinese lay dead in front of two of the tanks at the base of the hill. The worst was over, after attacks on two nights the enemy had known losses of 1,500 killed. Hagaru-ri was safe once again, although the Chinese still held the crest of East Hill.



East Hill on 3 December 1950.
Photo by George Rasula

PART IV – BREAKOUT FROM THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR

THE BREAKOUT EAST OF CHOSIN - THE BEGINNING OF THE END

We now enter the final phase of the action east of Chosin, the attempted breakout. Since the Yudam-ni and the Inlet attacks both began on 1 December, RCT-31 will be covered first because it lasted less than 24 hours.

Dawn broke with low clouds and snow flurries. Later, about 0900 hours, aircraft came overhead and told the air controller they would bring in a flight at noon. Keep in mind that the only communication in or out of the Inlet had been through the TACP radio relayed by pilots. Between the time RCT-31 units were attached to the 1st Marine Division, the evening of 29 November, and this moment of the breakout, Gen. Smith had made no contact with Lt. Col. Don Faith who was then the commander of RCT-31 units east of the reservoir. At 1000 hours Lt. Col. Faith held a meeting with his commanders, the plan being: 1/32 Infantry would lead and clear the road. The Artillery and Mortars would expend ammunition in support, then destroy the weapons. 3/31 Infantry would follow the vehicle column and protect the rear.

Instructions were to destroy unnecessary vehicles and equipment and make ready the trucks carrying wounded. AAA trucks would lead and be dispersed in the column. By this time only one Dual-40 was operable. During preparation they began receiving mortar fire causing more casualties. The Chinese were watching from the high ground and knew exactly what was about to happen. The last of the ammunition was distributed; many men had only one clip for their M1 rifle. By 1100 hours they were ready as enemy mortar fire continued.

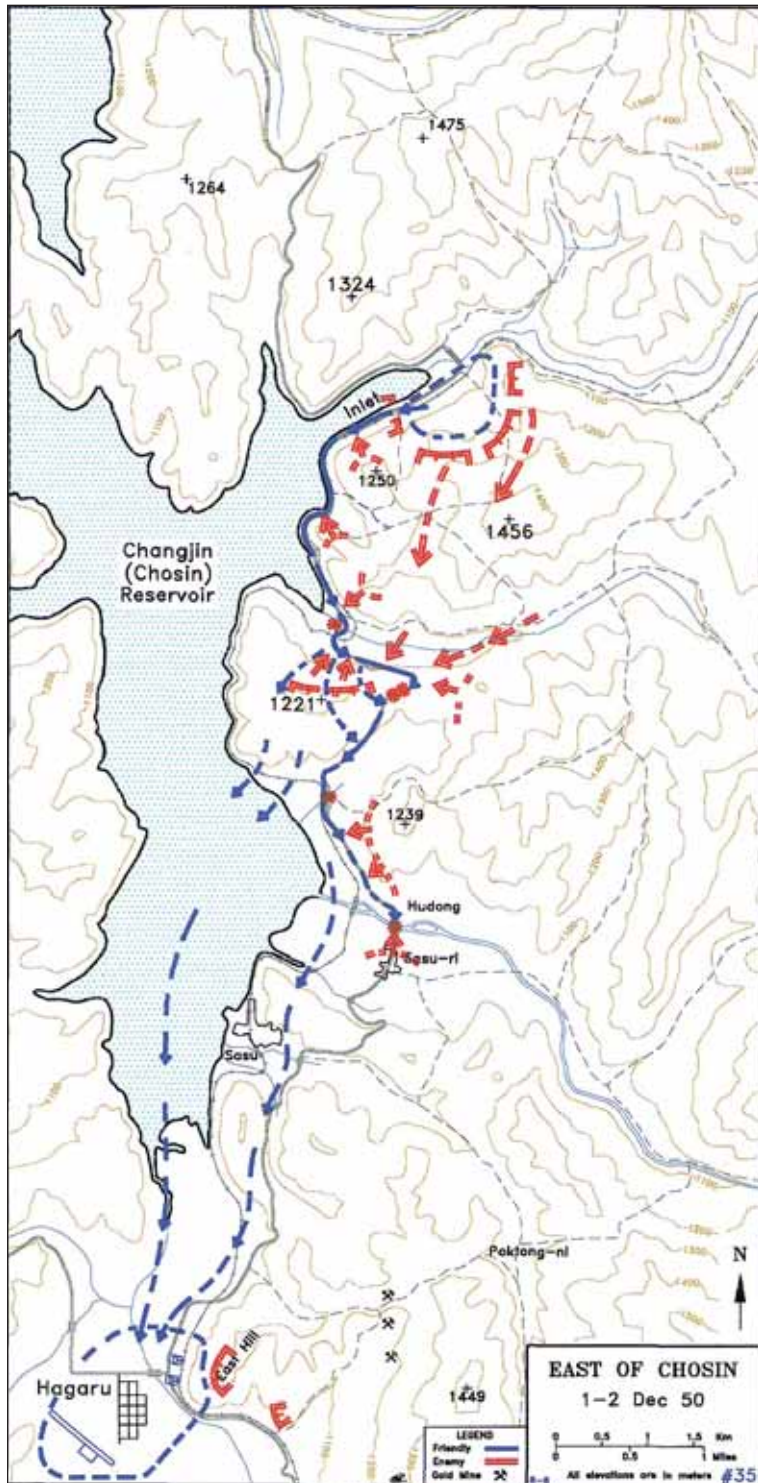
The breakout began about 1300 hours. As the lead unit was heading for the first enemy block, a hung or misdirected napalm bomb hit the lead unit, severely impacting morale. By 1500 they came to the first blown bridge north of Hill 1221 where the lead tracked vehicle had to be used to tow trucks of wounded across the bumpy steam bed. By this time wounded soldiers were already dying from additional wounds or from traumatic stress.



Aerial Photo of Inlet Perimeter
This photo is believed to have been taken by a reconnaissance aircraft the morning before the breakout from the Inlet. This is the southwest sector of the perimeter and shows trucks being lined up to board wounded soldiers. One can also see the trace of the perimeter fox-holes in this southwest sector of the Inlet perimeter. This copy was provided by Marine Master Sergeant Ed Smith who had been with the Air Section of the Tenth Corps Fire Support Coordination Center. Through Smith it was learned that recon flights were being made in an attempt to determine the thickness of the reservoir ice.

Once the lead trucks reached the hairpin curve they met the first roadblock, a block well covered by fire, after which heavy machine gun fire raked the column from well dug-in enemy positions on Hill 1221. Keep in mind that Hill 1221 was not the usual hill, but a small mountain. This resulted in many small unit actions, “small unit” meaning available leaders gathering available soldiers and attacking the enemy they could see. Unit integrity no longer existed as men were running out of ammunition.

During one of the small-unit actions Lt. Col. Don Faith was seriously wounded by a grenade and placed in the cab of a truck where he died, one of many hundreds on that convoy of trucks that was attempting to break through to Hagaru-ri. The column again suffered friendly fire as air strikes missed at a time when targets were almost impossible to identify in the fading daylight.



Marine pilot Tom Mulvihill who flew his Corsair in support the column said “... we dropped small arms ammunition to them the last night they were in business, and we hung around until after dark strafing and trying our best to keep the Chinese from them. But it was all over, there was no doubt about it.”

Many heroic actions took place during this unsuccessful breakout. Awards of valor rest in the frozen memories of more than a thousand soldiers whose remains lie somewhere east of Chosin to this day. After darkness had set in the lead vehicles of the convoy got beyond the next blown bridge, after which the enemy machine guns commanding the high ground of Hudong-ni turned the scene into a column of incinerated trucks. Those who were able hobbled or crawled seeking refuge wherever it could be found.

Some escaped to the reservoir ice or cross country to the Hagaru-ri perimeter. And a few who had been captured were able to escape and make it out a few days later. Hundreds were formed into long columns of prisoners and marched at night for the next 17 days to their first prison camp at Kanggye. Only the fittest survived as others were shot when they could no longer walk. Among them had to have been Col. MacLean, that is, if he was still alive on 1 December.

Musters conducted later at Hamhung revealed that most companies suffered

about 85% casualties. In 1990, forty years after Chosin, the Army published Ebb and Flow by Billy Mossman that covers the Army's role in the Chosin campaign, a follow-on to the Army's South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, an outstanding historical work by Roy Appleman. Survivors of Chosin find it frustrating that their own Army still had not publicly accounted for the casualties of RCT-31.



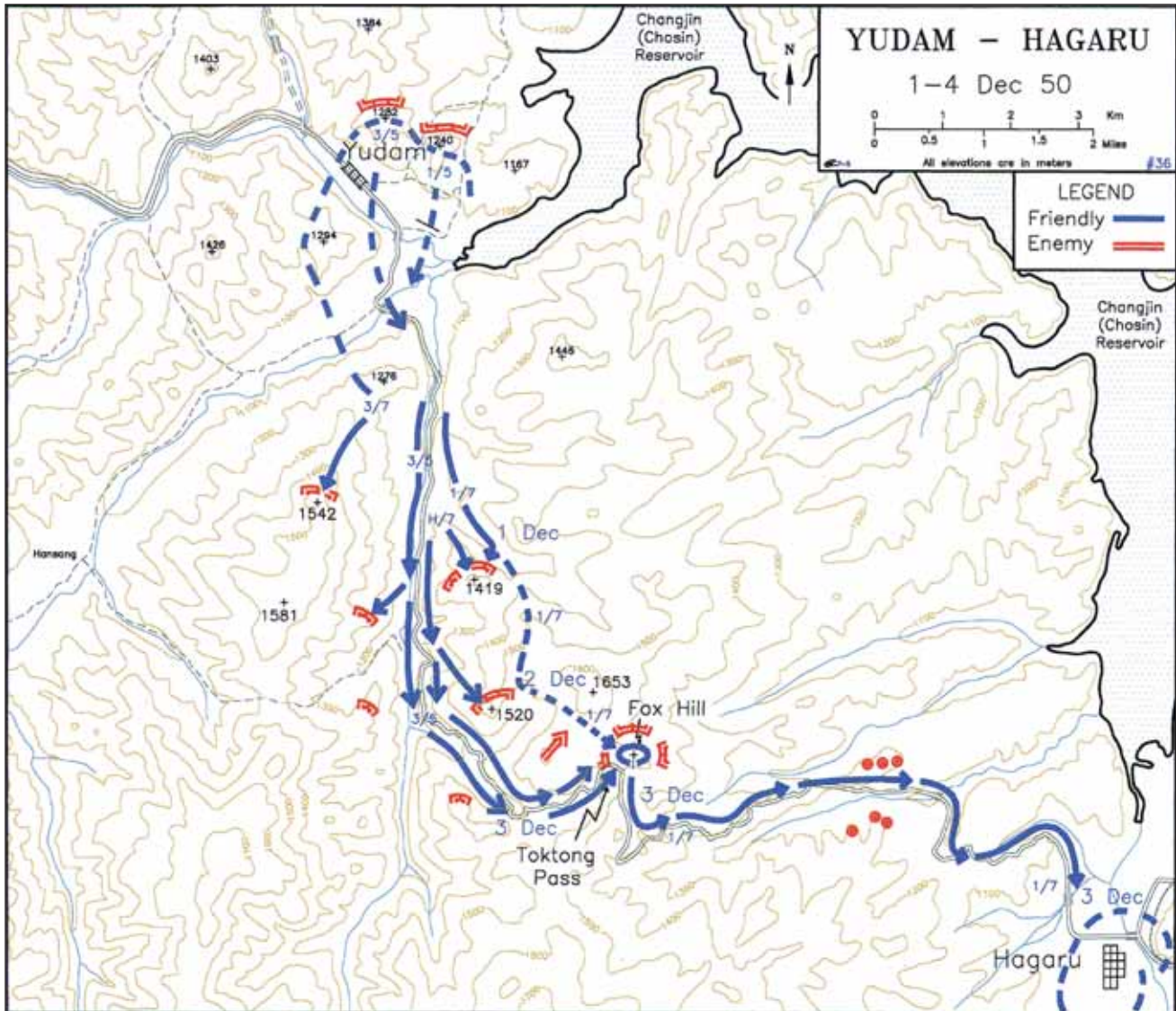
Men not standing are dead; killed earlier by enemy on high ground to the right.
Photo by Willard Donovan



Truck column of wounded is just below the railroad track.
Photo by Willard Donovan

BREAKOUT FROM YUDAM

At Yudam-ni the joint plan for the attack called for troops to move along the road with the vehicles while infantry swept the ridges on either side. Marine 3/5 was to lead the attack, while 1/7 would move cross-country to relieve Fox Company in Toktong Pass. The heavy 155-mm guns and tractors of the 11th Marines would be at the end of the column to avoid blocking the road. Only one tank, Dog-23, was at Yudam-ni; it would lead. Someone had a lot of faith that such a large tank would not break down and block the road, a lesson to be learned a week later.



Maximum air cover was available — 280 aircraft. Keep in mind that RCT-31 east of the reservoir was also breaking out this same day. The Marines had a forward air controller with each battalion, and a few more at regiment, whereas RCT-31 had only one. The joint plan had been submitted to and approved by Smith, whereas there was no contact by Smith with Faith, the RCT-31 commander east of Chosin.

On 1 December 1/5 and 3/5 were able to break off contact with the Chinese with support of mortars, artillery and air strikes. By 0900 hours 3/7 attacked hills along the road, this opening the door for the cross-country move by 1/7.

By 1500 hours 3/5 was well on the way clearing the flanks, finally stopping at 1930 to rest. After 2300 hours 3/5 continued its move west of the road as "I" Company of 3/5 met resistance at Hill 1520. By daylight G Company 3/5 took over and captured the crest of Hill 1520 by noon.

On 2 December the progress was slow with snipers targeting drivers who had to be replaced. Walking wounded moved alongside the trucks, some serving as replacement drivers when called upon.

CROSS-COUNTRY TO FOX HILL

During this period 1/7, beginning at 2100 on the first, took a route about two miles east of the MSR in their trek toward Fox Hill. Patrols moved ahead finding no enemy. Soon they met Chinese on the east side of Hill 1520 where B and C Companies attacked. By 0200 hours on 2 December, after a 20-hour grind through knee-deep snow, they finally formed a perimeter and stopped to rest.

At daybreak 1/7 started for Hill 1653 during which they encountered minor long-range fire, finally making contact with Fox 7. By 1125 hours the lead unit of 1/7 entered the perimeter of Fox Company, ending a cross-country trek that cost them one killed and 22 wounded; the one KIA was the battalion surgeon who was hit by a sniper as he entered F/7 perimeter. Fox 2/7 casualties were then 26 killed, 89 wounded, and 3 missing. Six of the seven officers had been wounded, including the company commander.

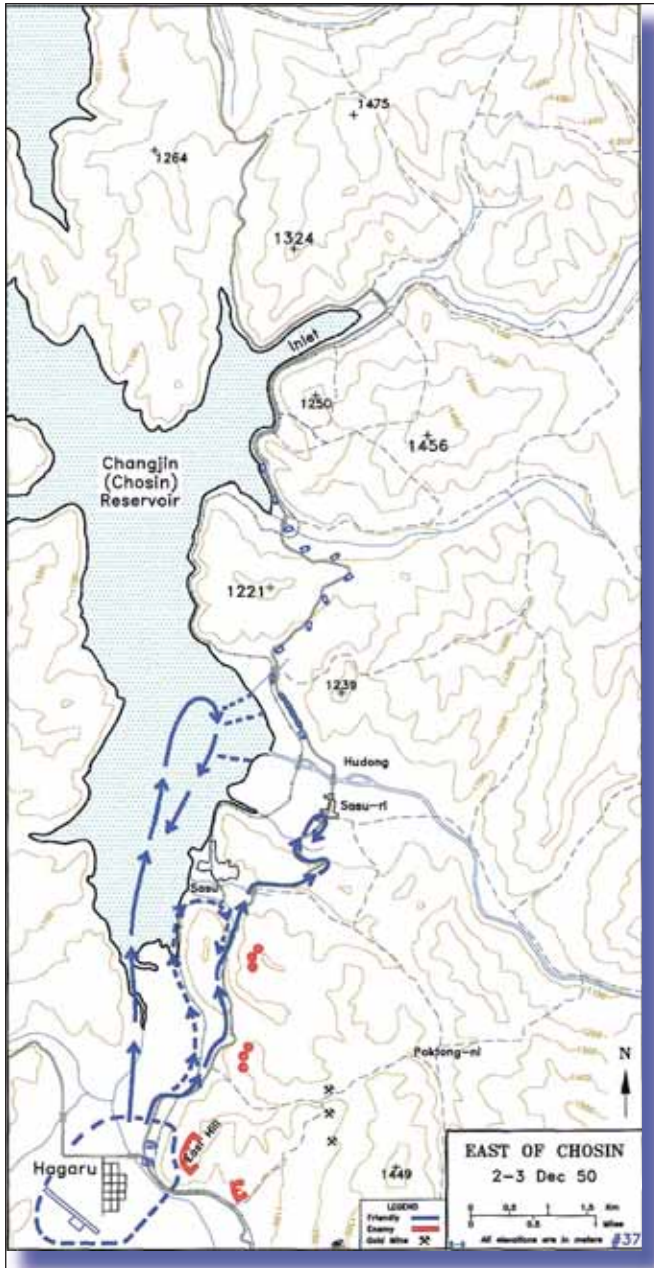
BACK ON THE ROAD

At 1300 hours on 3 December, tank D-23 and 3/5 arrived at the Pass, at which time 1/7 took over the lead to Hagaru-ri. By 1600 on 3 December, the lead unit of 1/7 arrived at the Hagaru-ri perimeter.

Far behind at about 0200 hours 4 December, the prime movers with 155 mm guns ran out of diesel fuel and had to be left, reportedly destroyed later by air strikes. At 1400 hours on 4 December, 3/7 was the last unit to enter the Hagaru-ri perimeter. This had been a four-day fight across 14 miles which averaged five and 1/2 hours per mile. They brought out 1,500 casualties of which one-third were non-battle.

The heaviest casualties were experienced by the Marines at Yudam-ni on 28 and 29 November. On 28 November: 98 KIA, 539 WIA and 17 MIA; On 29 November: 74 KIA, 396 WIA and 43 MIA. The daily casualty rate continued to be less from then to the final breakout on 12 December. This was the result of the reduced capability of the Chinese due to cold casualties and logistics problems. From this point on, the Chinese were incapable of stopping the breakout from Hagaru-ri to the coast, although the marines and attached army units would continue to suffer combat as well as cold casualties. Now was the time for planners to take a hard look at Hell Fire Valley and the critical terrain in the Funchilin Pass.

While RCT 5 and 7 were breaking out from Yudam-ni, rescue efforts were helping wounded and cold casualties east of Chosin.



The lead man on the ice rescue effort was Lt. Col. Olin Beall who commanded the Marine Transportation Battalion. His team which operated on the reservoir ice reportedly rescued 325 soldiers. Also written is a claim that under cover of Corsairs he had walked the column of trucks on 2 December and counted 300 bodies. This feat was suspect ever since it was published, resulting in the questioning of survivors of that disaster.

Conclusion: Since the trucks with casualties were spread out from the bridge at Hudong-ni, a distance of four road-miles north to the bridge north of Hill 1221 as shown on this map, such a feat was not possible. American prisoners who were in the area at the time with their captors agree with this conclusion. We can only assume that he made an educated guess based on the vehicles he could see.

Unknown to past historians were efforts by Lt. Hodges “Sam” Escue of Headquarters, RCT-31, who, with jeep and driver, went up the east road and returned with 16 wounded soldiers. Then, realizing more were in the area, he borrowed two trucks and went back again, rescuing many more. Not satisfied, he later took a jeep and followed the narrow gauge railroad where he found a dead Korean youngster laying by the track, nothing more. During these trips he saw many Chinese soldiers on the ridges above the road, just watching.

And finally, historians have written that an infantry

company with armor went up the east road in a rescue effort. This did not happen. It was a plan that was never executed. This fact was confirmed once again by the tank company commander, Col. Robert E. Drake and Lt. Col. Hodges S. Escue. The author of this e-book, then captain assistant RCT S-3 under Lt. Col. Berry K. Anderson, senior Army officer at Hagaru-ri, concurs.



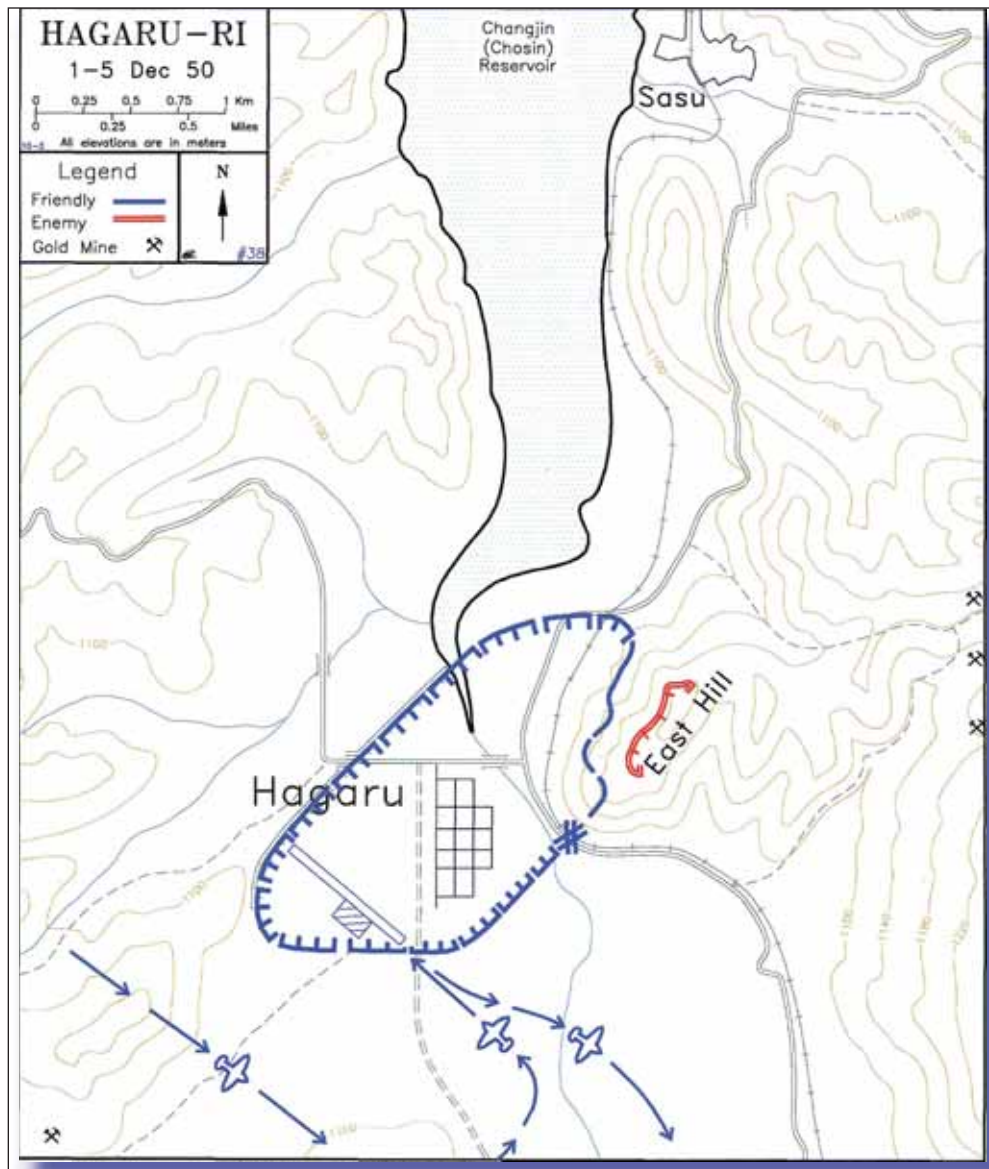
Capt. Rasula and Lt. Escue at H/11 Marines CP/FDC Hagaru-ri. Photo by Unknown

HAGARU-RI EVACUATES WOUNDED

When the Marines from Yudam-ni arrived at Hagaru-ri the perimeter was bulging as air drops continued, some free-falls causing casualties as well as damaging cargo. At this time the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron, including one Greek aircraft, played its amazing role in evacuating wounded and frozen casualties.

On 1 December there were 600 casualties at Hagaru-ri and Doctor Hering expected 400 from east of the reservoir and 500 more from Yudam-ni. At 1430 hours on 1 December the first C-47 landed, then three more that afternoon. On 2 December 914 cases were evacuated, and during the next three days a thousand each day. During 1 - 5 December 4,312 personnel were evacuated: 3,150 Marines; 1,137 Army; and 25 Royal Marine Commandos. Incoming flights brought in critical supplies and 537 Marine replacements.

Chinese soldiers occupying that massive observation post known as East Hill were probably amazed, especially seeing thousands of targets below and not having the capability to do anything about it. Enemy units in those long columns seen bypassing RCT-31 east of Chosin were most likely damaged by air strikes that needed no air controller. The scorched earth policy was still in effect. And those who froze did not have the luxury of air evacuation, for they were a long way from the Yalu River.



X CORPS FORMS HUNGNAM PERIMETER

Sixty miles south of Hagaru-ri units of the 3rd Infantry Division and 7th Infantry Division, and other Corps units, were preparing the Hungnam Perimeter. It was during this period when Tokyo was having a serious problem with the massive Chinese intervention in Korea.

In X Corps the 3rd Infantry Division received three separate sets of orders, one being to out-load from Wonsan for movement to the Eighth Army, before FEC made the final decision to leave them with Gen. Almond. The 3rd Infantry Division had its own "Operation Yo-Yo." Finally, after reason prevailed, Task Force Dog was organized from units of the 3rd Infantry Division, readied for movement north to Chinhung-ni where they would relieve the 1/1 Marines at the base of the Funchilin Pass.

It was as early as 28 November when Admiral Joy issued orders to begin gathering ships for the possible evacuation from Northeast Korea, a very wise move. As the ground forces built up the perimeter the Naval forces continued to position their troop-carrying and cargo ships to await their call into port. The same applied to weapons-bearing ships — battleship, cruisers, destroyers, rocket-bearing gunships and finally the aircraft carriers that were to be used for working deep to search out and destroy enemy columns before they neared the perimeter. This was a massive buildup for an amphibious operation in reverse.



BREAKOUT HAGARU-RI TO KOTO-RI

6 - 7 DECEMBER

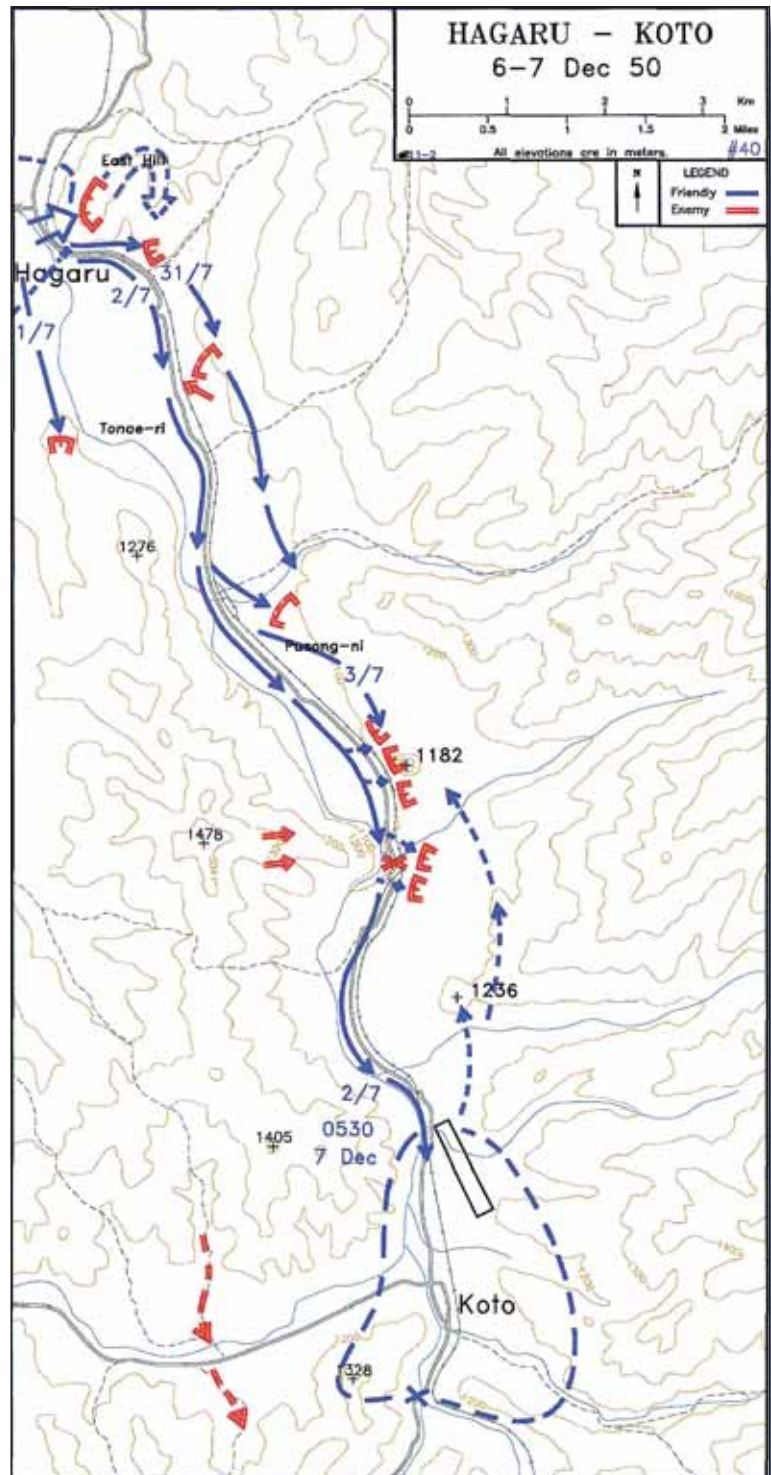
Planning for the 6 December breakout from Hagaru-ri was completed on the 5th, with orders issued that evening and many preparations taking place that night. This called for the 7th Marines to lead while the 5th Marines attacked East Hill, the only serious threat at the moment.

An Army Provisional Battalion known as “31/7” commanded by Lt. Col. Anderson — the senior army officer present at Hagaru-ri — had been organized from RCT-31 personnel and attached to the 7th Marines. 31/7 was then organized into two mini-battalions: 3/31 under Maj. Carl Witte and 1/32 under Maj. Robert Jones, each battalion having three small rifle companies. Tank Company/31 was attached to the 5th Marines as part of the rear guard.

At 0430 hours on 6 December 1/7 led on the right flank toward Tonae-ri where they found 24 Chinese soldiers asleep. At 0630, from the perimeter roadblock position, F 2/7 moved out with a platoon of tanks. The Chinese allowed the company to move about a mile, then hit the lead tank with a bazooka, followed by heavy fire from the left. It was foggy at the time and there was no air support.

This halt came at 0730 hours and didn't resume until 1100, the time used to issue orders for the Army provisional Battalion to “extend the left flank” as called for in the plan. Anderson committed Maj. Witte's 3/31 with Capt. Rasula's “I” Company leading the attack on the left; this involved taking the Chinese position that cut the lead unit of 2/7. The plan was to maneuver around the left, climbing the south slope of East Hill to an assault position above the Chinese, while at the same time receiving air strikes followed by 4.2 mortar fire on the objective. This was to be a classic maneuver of pre-planned fire support followed by an assault, an Infantry School solution.

“I” Company, with three small platoons organized the previous night (two led by artillery officers), had one light machine gun and one SCR 300 radio linked to Anderson and Witte. The machine gun never did work and the radio lasted long enough to receive one critical message, the mortar fire had been lifted. The assault was launched as the Chinese were beginning to come to their senses, causing some friendly casualties. They apparently had second thoughts when they



saw the American “horde” coming at them—many surrendered.

Taking head count and turning 115 prisoners over to the Marine MPs took some time. In the meantime Witte committed “L” Company to take over on the left. The company shortly encountered the next Chinese fireblock during which the company commander, Lt. Robert Boyer and one of his platoon leaders, Lt. Rolin Skilton, were killed. By this time it was obvious that the Chinese took advantage of the terrain and dug in their defensive positions on the left of the road, the sector that had been assigned to 31/7. In a related encounter the battalion commander, Maj. Carl Witte, was wounded. His men lifted him on the nearest tank for the remainder of his trip to Koto-ri where he would be evacuated by air.

Lt. Col. Anderson then committed Maj. Jones’s 1/32 mini-battalion on the left where they continued to encounter Chinese blocks, suffering more casualties. By then it was obvious, especially to someone who had studied the terrain and results of the Drysdale operation, the Chinese main effort was on the left East side of the road. By the time darkness arrived a Marine battalion had taken over on the left, a time when command and control became almost impossible as the units encountered Drysdale’s nemesis, Hell Fire Valley. This series of Chinese fireblocks had obviously been reinforced since Drysdale’s experience. Those who experienced Hellfire that night will agree that it was a violent replay of the first experience, only this time the Chinese knew they were blocking the final breakout. And it was very cold.

Twenty-two hours after the breakout began, the lead company of 2/7 Marines made contact with the Koto-ri perimeter. Those that followed continued to have problems. East Hill had been a major operation for the 5th Marines. During one of the final actions the enemy was seen massing for a daylight attack, resulting in an effective air strike during which 220 Chinese soldiers surrendered. The fact that Chinese soldiers continued to surrender again signaled their diminishing capability.

In the darkness between Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri an artillery unit was attacked, resulting in the use of 105 howitzers in direct fire, quickly scattering the enemy. The 31st Tank company had its moments covering the rear of the 5th Marines. Although meeting scattered small-arms fire in Hell Fire Valley, the company was one of the last units to arrive at the Koto-ri perimeter just before dark on 7 December. It took 38 hours to move ten thousand men and one-thousand vehicles a distance of eleven miles.

Battle casualties for the Marines during this phase were: 103 killed, 506 wounded and seven missing. Army casualties are unknown, soon found to be more serious than expected. As the Provisional Battalion began reorganizing they encountered the problem of locating soldiers who, during the previous night’s action, ended up in other units.

The Koto-ri perimeter was now bulging at the seams while the Chinese made no attempt to attack the perimeter, once again reminding planners that the enemy’s capabilities continued to decline. Since no one had been conducting ground recon in the area of the Funchilin Pass, only assumptions could be made as to locations of the main Chinese defense. The high ground on the east and west side of the road commanded the Pass.



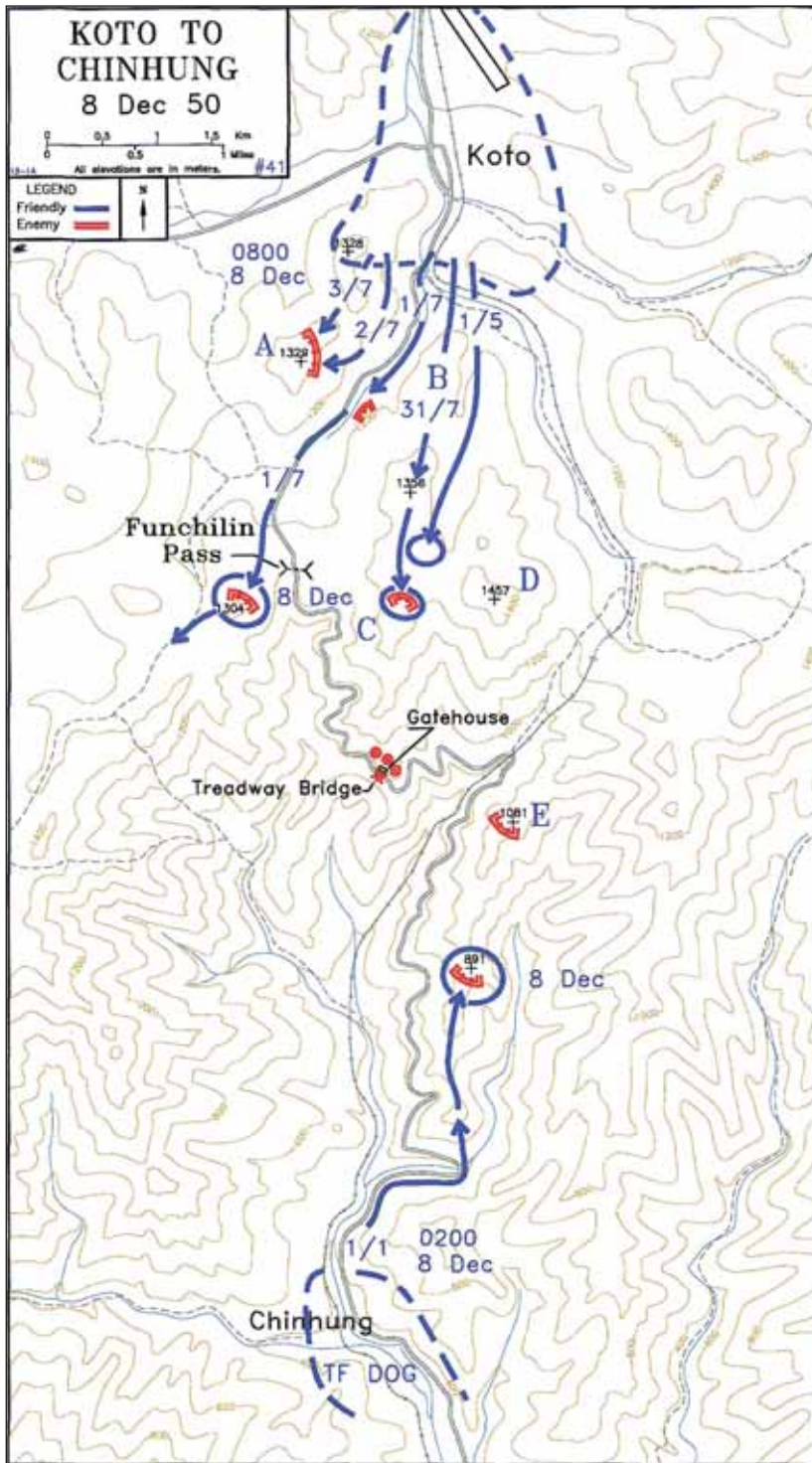
Marines watching air strikes against objective which Item Company 31/7 would shortly assault from the high ground on the left.

Photo by Frank Kerr, DOD photo A5464

BREAKOUT TO FUNCHILIN PASS

8 DECEMBER

The most important air-drop of the Chosin campaign came to Koto-ri in the form of eight Treadway bridge sections, one damaged and another dropped in enemy territory. Six were enough to do the job of bridging the gap at the Gatehouse in the Funchilin Pass, a feat that had to be accomplished before any vehicle could be taken south.



Lt. Col. Reidy's 2/31 Infantry had arrived in the Koto-ri perimeter the morning of 1 December, the same day RCT-31 was destroyed east of Chosin. After becoming frustrated by sniper fire on his command post, Reidy had Fox Company take Hill 1328 which extended the Southwest perimeter and occupied more defensible terrain, an important factor when planning the breakout from Koto-ri. After being relieved by George Company, this provided an excellent Observation Post down the valley to the west, bringing fire on the columns of Chinese troops that were seen each day, all moving south toward the Pass. These enemy troops, somewhat reduced in strength by artillery and air strikes, were obviously manning the ridges extending south from Hill 1328, later to be objectives on the west side of the road.

THE BREAKOUT PLAN

The plan for the breakout was to take the high ground on both sides of the road and protect the Trains. Note the assigned objectives on the map, a control element that was not provided in the breakout plan between Hagaruri and Koto-ri. (Lt. Gen. Al Bowser informed the audience at the 1990 Las Vegas reunion that this was a regrettable error in the Division plan for that phase of the breakout.) Once again, lesson learned.

The 1/1 Marines would attack north from Chinhung-ni and take Hill 891, the first phase to their final objective, Hill 1081. The 7th Marines, to which the Army provisional units would remain attached, would lead once again, followed by the 5th Marines, with the 1st Marines and Army 2/31 bringing up the tail. Once the pass was secure and the

Treadway bridge installed, the units would move down the pass. Tanks would be last to make sure the treacherous road in the pass would not be blocked. Then 1/1 Marines would come off Hill 1081 and clear the Pass, after which Task Force Dog at Chinhung-ni and other 3rd Division units securing the withdrawal route would fold into the Hungnam Perimeter.



Unloading dead at Koto-ri. Registration teams were kept busy as a bulldozer was preparing a mass grave nearby.
Photo by Cpl. Klepsig

THE ATTACK BEGINS

On 8 December the 1/1 Marines, supported by the Army 92nd AFA Battalion (155mm SP), a AAA Battery and some 73rd Engineers, moved out and took Hill 891 in a snowstorm. For the Koto-ri units the snowstorm helped or hindered, depending on one's point of view. Although it offered concealment, observed fire support was out of question.

On the right West side of the road heavy fire was received from Chinese positions on Objective A, and progress by 2/7 and 3/7 was slow. Marine 1/7 moving along the road had its problem with Chinese occupying a knoll on the immediate left, far below the advancing lead company of the Provisional Battalion. The reorganization at Koto-ri the previous night was able to provide one mini-battalion under Maj. Jones, with but two rifle companies, Capt. Rasula's Item Company followed by Capt. Kitz's King company.

On the left East sector the lead company, once again provisional Item Company which was no more than a platoon when they crossed the LD, followed the ridge line to Objective B without opposition. After having enough time for more men from Koto-ri to be brought forward by Lt. Escue, they received orders and continued up the ridge in a snowstorm to Objective C where they suddenly encountered the Chinese. This was apparently a surprise for both sides as Item Company immediately launched an assault which killed defenders and drove others off the mountain, probably to the Gatehouse directly below which offered the only shelter for miles around.

Once the objectives on both sides of the MSR were secured, the units remained on the highest ground of the Funchilin Pass for the coldest night of the Chosin campaign, a night during which Item Company lost more men to cold that they did for all causes since they left Hagaru-ri. Capt. Kitz positioned his King Company on a knob just below Item, scratching improvised shelter in the snow as they waited for relief after daylight. After this encounter there was no question that the Chinese in this sector had finally lost any ability to do serious battle. The next objective was the Gatehouse and Hill 1081.

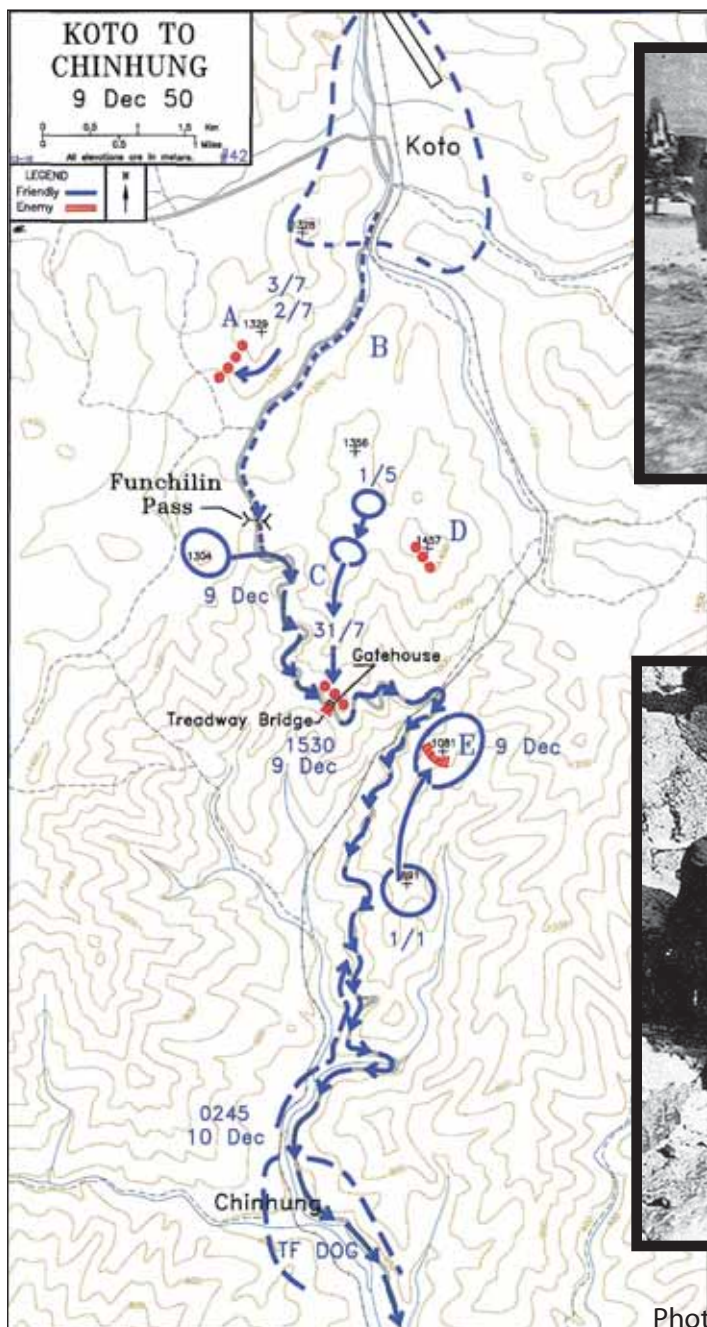
BREAKOUT DOWN THE PASS

9 DECEMBER

The morning of 9 December broke clear and cold; one could see forever from the top of the Pass.

The 1/1 Marines continued their attack from the South and took Objective E, Hill 1081. Throughout the area objectives were quickly secured with air strikes and artillery readily available. In the area of the Gatehouse many Chinese soldiers were found frozen to death, some so cold their bare hands were frozen to rifles.

Bridge work began and the crossing was complete by 1500 hours after which the 7th Marines and attached Army provisional companies began moving south, lead units arriving at Chinhung-ni at 0245 hours, 10 December. By 1800 hours the Trains began their move out of the Koto-ri area, movement which continued all night long. As the Koto-ri perimeter continued to shrink hundreds of Korean refugees could be seen in the near distance, crowds of civilians among whom were Chinese soldiers.



Memorial service for mass grave at Koto-ri.
Photo by Cpl. Klepsig

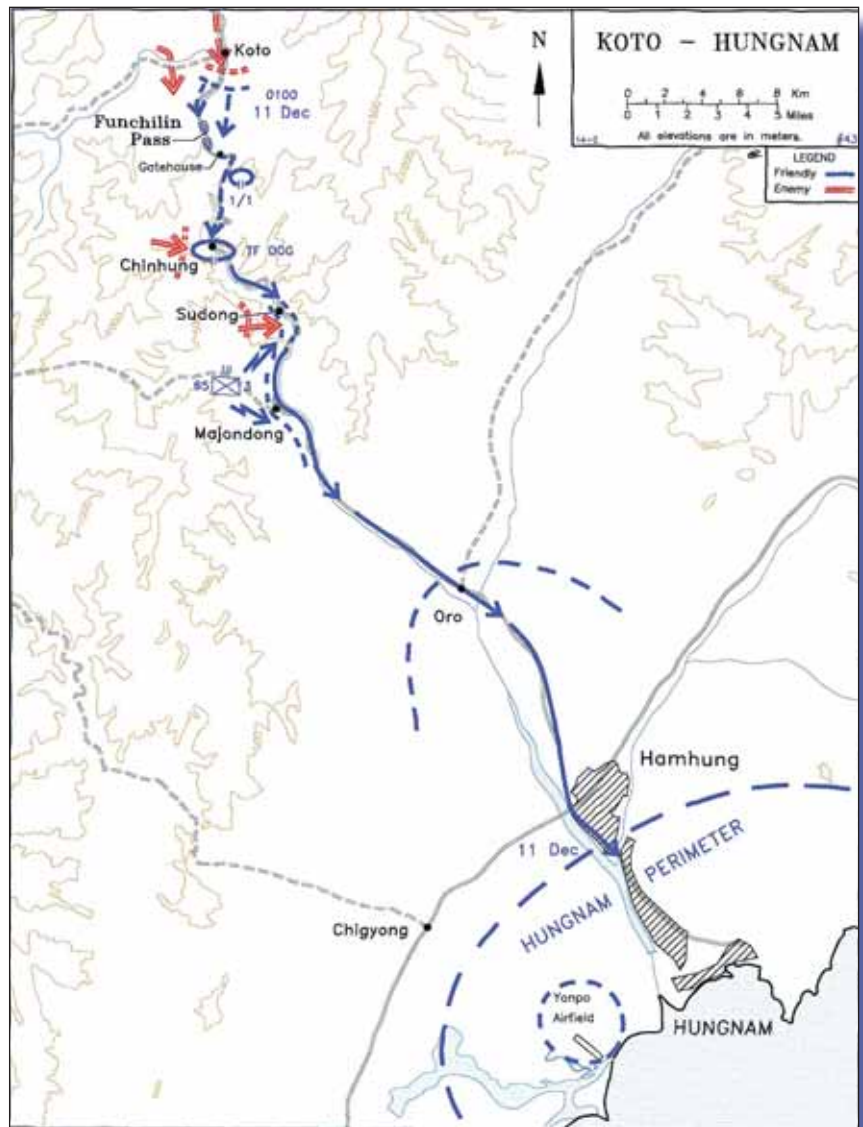


Chinese prisoners in the Funchilin Pass.
Photo by Frank C. Kerr, National Archives (USMC) 127-N-A5377

PART V – THE FINAL WITHDRAWAL

By 1500 hours, 10 December, the 1st Marine Regiment began leaving Koto-ri with the attached 185th Engineer Battalion, 2/31 Infantry and many smaller units, followed by the Division Recon Company and finally, the Army and Marine tanks which were covered by a Recon Platoon.

After the dumps were blown and the last units cleared, the 92nd AFA Battalion from position at Chinhung-ni began interdicting the Koto-ri area; interdiction being the random firing into that general area. In hindsight, we now know why the refugees were staying so close to the end of the column.



THE TANK PROBLEM

About midnight, the ninth tank from the end stalled and the brakes locked. This resulted in a difficult time for the Recon Platoon because of Chinese soldiers mingling in the crowd of refugees. Eventually the platoon withdrew and the bridge was blown, leaving eight stalled tanks behind. After the tanks passed, the 1/1 Marines on Hill 1081 came down to the road and headed south.

By 2100 hours on 11 December all units had arrived in the Hamhung area, and by midnight the tanks arrived, less those lost in the Funchilin Pass. At Chinhung-ni Task Force Dog, after destroying or setting fire to the sizable supply dumps at that location, cleared town at 1400 hours on 11 December. South of Sudong they came under enemy fire and with the help of Corsairs and Quad-50s were able to continue. At 2200 hours they arrived at the 65th Infantry perimeter at Majon-dong, then disbanded as a task force and returned to parent units. The 65th was the final covering force in the withdrawal to the Hungnam Perimeter.

THE HUNGNAM PERIMETER

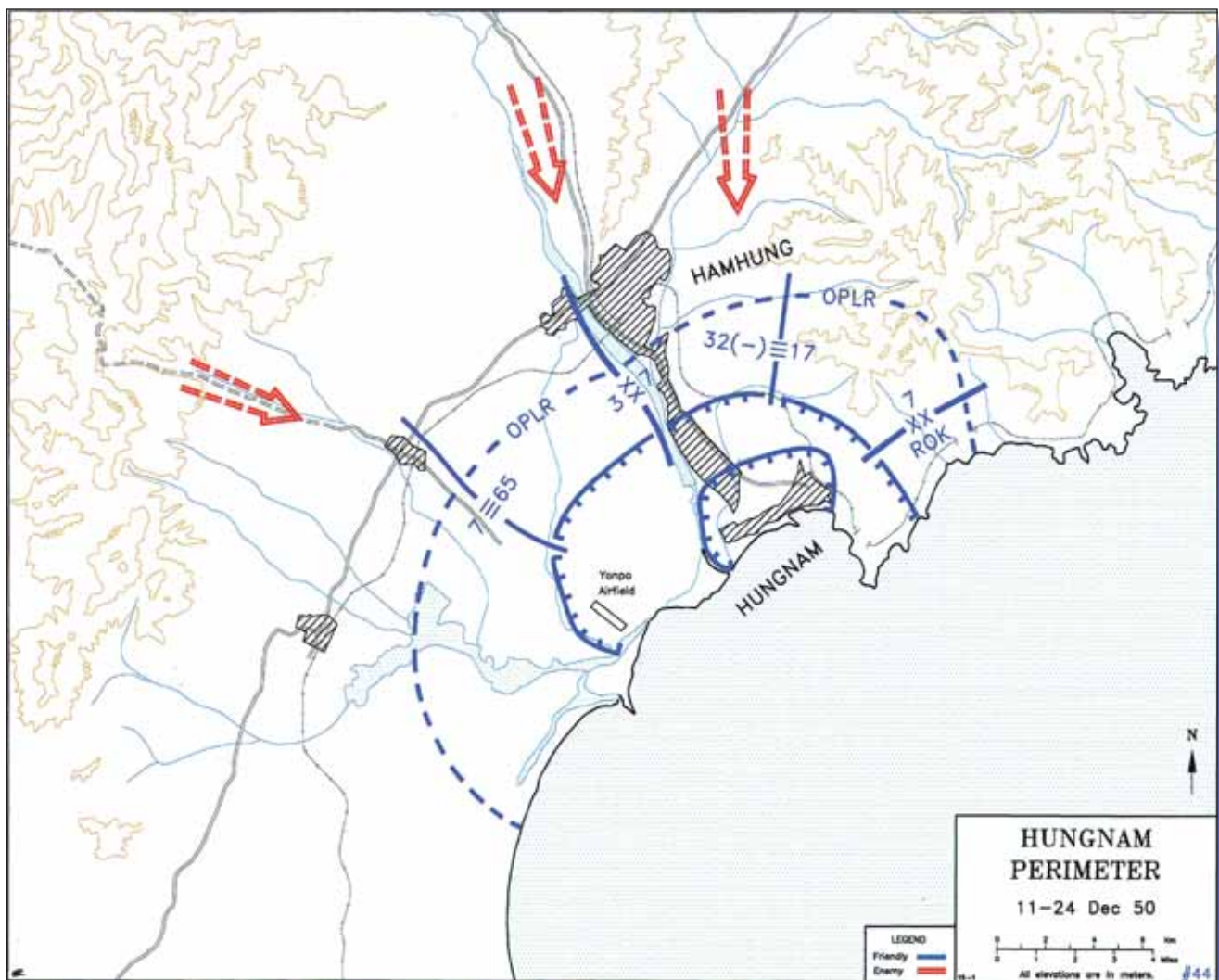
AMPHIBIOUS LANDING IN REVERSE

The larger perimeter arc included the Yonpo Airfield which continued to be used to airlift casualties, priority cargo, key civilians and other personnel. At noon on 11 December Gen. MacArthur flew into Yonpo to visit Gen. Almond.

The evacuation plan had three phase lines for withdrawal as the units embarked in the order: 1st Marine Division and survivors of RCT-31; Units of ROK I Corps; 7th Infantry Division (less RCT-31); and finally, the 3rd Infantry Division.

There were five major attacks by Chinese units against the perimeter, one of the largest being on 15 December against the 7th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division. Even as late as the 19 December, intelligence reported sightings of enemy columns moving south, estimated 23,000. They were too late with too little; it was a long way back to China.

Naval gunfire played an important role in fending off attacks, firing a total of 2,000 rounds per day. In the last six days the field artillery of the 3rd Infantry Division fired more than 46,000 rounds, and the last artillery battalion to fire a round was out-loaded at 1100 hours on December 24. On this last day demolitions were set off at 1410 hours, and by 1436 hours all personnel were off the beaches. That ended the amphibious operation in reverse.





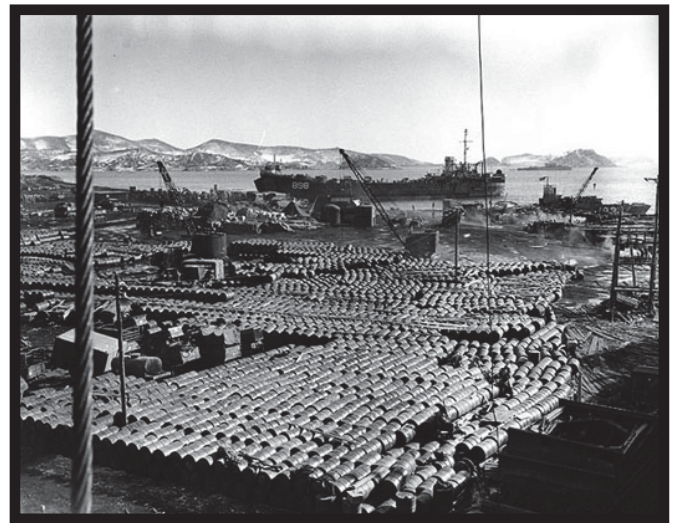
Refugees boarding an LST at Hungnam.
Photo from National Archives



Korean refugees on SS Meredith Victory.
Photo from National Archives



Hungnam is blown up beyond USS Bangor.
Photo from National Archives



Fuel drums on the docks at Hungnam during the
evacuation.
Photo from National Archives

FINAL WITHDRAWAL FROM NORTHEAST KOREA

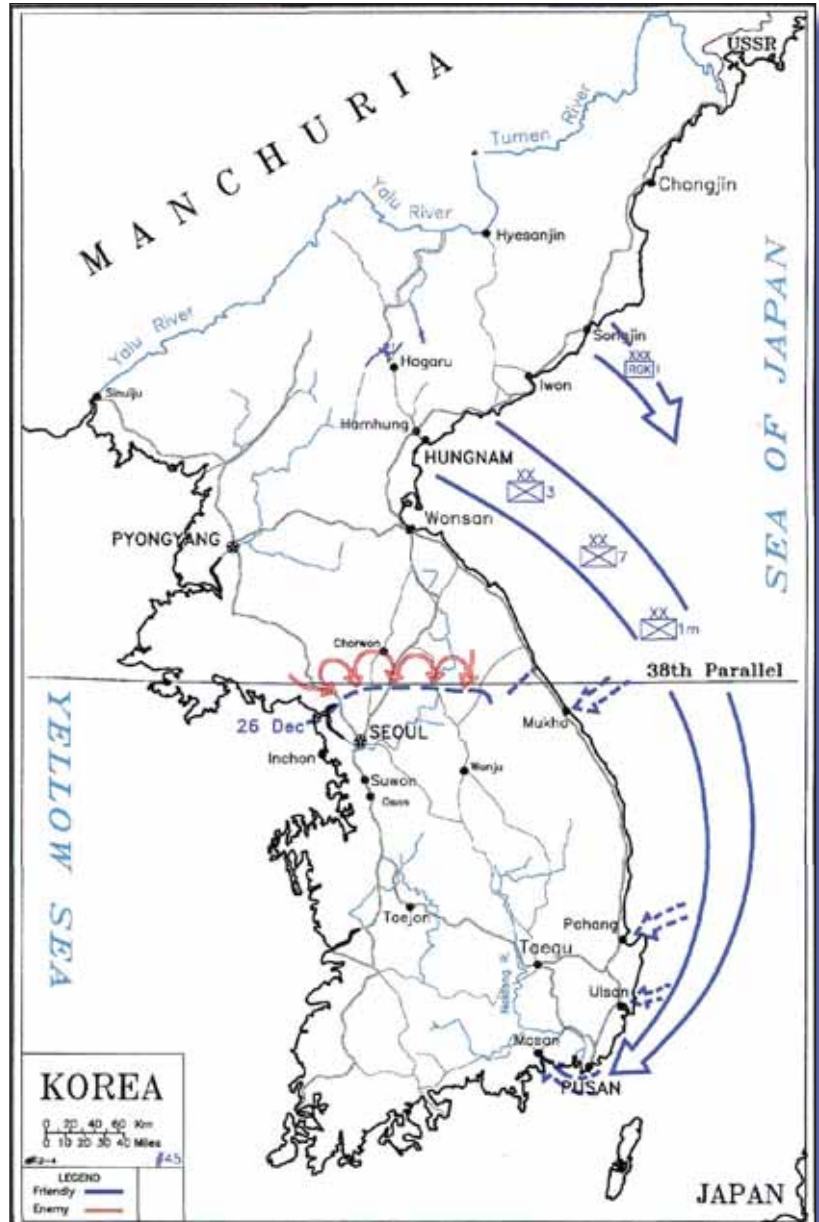
The final withdrawal from Hungnam brings to mind one element of the Chosin Campaign that had received little attention in the past, yet played an important role in making it impossible for the enemy to accomplish his mission. It was the scorched earth policy. This was a policy that permitted the air and naval arm to destroy anything that might have been of use of the enemy occupying the area beyond the bomb line of friendly forces.

In Northeast Korea, that which would have been of dire use to the Chinese soldier was shelter and food. Within China the soldier was accustomed to living off the land, commandeering shelter and food as they moved across the land. The battleground of the Chosin campaign did not lend itself to support such a policy; this was the home range of the Siberian tiger and occupied by very few people.

We have read that refugees by the thousands were voting with their feet, following the withdrawing units during the breakout because they preferred our political system. Rest assured that the North Korean of that day knew less about our political system than the “NKs” of today know about democracy. The scorched earth policy caused the destruction of their homes, farms and food storage facilities, making it impossible for them to remain. We can hardly agree that those crowds of civilians with children and pregnant mothers were trudging through the snow at sub-zero temperatures because of politics. The political victory they experienced came in South Korea after the the war ended.

On the other hand, scorched earth permitted combat aircraft to play an important role by destroying the enemy columns and supply lines when they could find them, drastically reducing their combat effectiveness. Although hype has it that the 1st Marine Division was attacked by 12 CCF divisions, they actually had contact with elements of six divisions, emphasis on elements of and not full divisions. The reduced capability of the enemy can be seen by studying the day-by-day reduction in friendly casualties, climaxed by a few thousand Chinese soldiers in the Funchilin Pass who were incapable of preventing the breakout in terrain ideally suited for a victorious encirclement.

To have been successful in achieving a Chinese “Motti,” the classic envelopment in Finland’s Winter War, they had to have cut the corps units into segments, preventing each segment from reinforcing



the other, then defeating each segment individually. The first error was not having the ability of attacking according to their original plan, that of attacking one Marine regiment on each side of the reservoir. Had they done so they could have been successful as long as they placed enough combat power in the Funchilin Pass to prevent the Americans from using the Pass in either direction. As it was, they ran into the firepower of two Marine regiments at Yudam-ni and a light Army Regiment east of Chosin which happened to be equipped with a new defensive weapon, armored anti-aircraft weapons used in a ground role. In both cases, the Chinese commanders continued to push their ill-equipped infantrymen into superior firepower that cut them to pieces. This was happening while Father Winter began imposing his will over their ill-equipped units which lacked the logistics capability of providing ammunition, food and shelter for the soldiers.

Let us give credit not only to the pilots and air crews of the United States Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force who flew the air strikes and airlift during the Chosin campaign, but also to those who had the vision and made the shipping available for the civilians to be evacuated to South Korea where they continue to enjoy the benefits that exist south of the DMZ, as compared to what we know does not exist in North Korea.



Although this photo was made far to the west in the Eighth Army sector, it is included here to emphasize the plight of the refugees throughout the Korean War.

SACRIFICE AT THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR

Sacrifice is defined as “forgoing something valued for the sake of something having a more pressing claim.” How does this definition relate to the sacrifice of a regimental combat team east of Chosin that in five nights and four days fought elements of two Chinese divisions which had as its objective Hagaru-ri at the base of the reservoir. To have sacrifice, one must have intent to do so. Intent in this case would inquire into who ordered the sacrifice? And finally, who permitted the sacrifice to reach its conclusion on 1 December 1950 without doing anything about it? Has finger-pointing been avoided because the situation at the time was so confusing that higher commanders did not have the ability to cope; that could very well have been the case.

Often heard at reunions are soldiers saying “We were sacrificed,” suggestions that Maj. Gen. O.P. Smith had little interest in the Army units east of Chosin other than “protecting his flank.”

Those are strong statements when, in fact, much of what they say is probably true. We must remember that Smith did not see things as we see them today, a half century later. He was absorbed with his two regimental combat teams that were cut off at Yudam-ni, the fact that Hagaru-ri with his own division CP was being threatened, that the MSR to Koto-ri had been blocked, and two isolated rifle companies were isolated in the Toktong Pass. Why wasn't he concerned about his right flank when, just a few days earlier, he gave Faith's newly arrived 1/32 the mission of protecting that flank? All of these questions contribute to one's state of wonderment. What happened?

Let us start our analysis from the time the action ended far to the south at Sudong, the division's first action against a organized Chinese force. That brief action ended about 7 November after which it took three days to see the top of the Funchilin Pass and Koto-ri, during which time they saw a few enemy patrols. Leaping ahead in time he was 17 days from the day the Chinese would attack him at Yudam-ni, a distance of only 24 miles. What did they do all that time when the mission was to drive north to find and destroy the enemy.

What did he do? He wrote a letter to the Commandant of the Marine Corps in which he complained about Almond being too aggressive. Then it took him four days to go from Koto-ri to Hagaru-ri, a distance of 11 miles (a four-hour foot march) during which time he had no contact with the enemy other than sighting patrols that disappeared quickly when attacked by fire. All this time the enemy was crossing the Yalu River and marching each night toward their assembly areas on both sides of the Chosin Reservoir. There they would lay a trap for one regiment of Marines on each side of the reservoir. A classic Chinese motti was being created while no one was listening to the quiet shuffle of feet marching south along the MSR that Smith said was to be his MSR north to the Yalu.

Then came MacArthur's plan and urgent order to launch the attack west in an effort to assist the Eighth Army. All this time Smith seemed to be discounting those small Chinese patrols and local observers, rather than reaching out and capturing them for essential elements of information (EEI) about his enemy. Every step of the way they learned more about him than he was learning about his enemy. We read little about interrogation of Chinese prisoners or Korean civilians. At this same time his Division Recon Company and the attached British 41 Commando were far to the rear looking at an empty flank about which Smith was overly concerned.

The fact that elements of five CCF divisions would be in assembly areas making ready for the last night-march to attack positions, without Smith's knowledge, is one of the most grievous errors of the Chosin campaign. He misread the cards. He would have learned that the enemy was far closer if he had pushed his recon beyond the next mountain and up every valley. He didn't. As a result he would face the consequences.

What did Roy Appleman say about sacrifice?

We find in East of Chosin, p.323: “Withdrawing these forces from Hudong-ni had the effect of signing the death warrant for Task Force Faith and its wounded. What commander in his right mind would order such a move in the circumstances without deliberately running the risk of sacrificing the task force, and how could he be willing to take that risk?”

In his examination Appleman does not isolate the blame as to who ordered the withdrawal, why it was ordered, nor how was the order transmitted. For this author of Changjin who was at Hudong-ni in the headquarters S-3 staff, it sounds today like the result of an ad hoc committee making a decision based on

ignorance. However, Appleman's final conclusion cannot be faulted, that "Smith cannot escape his degree of responsibility." One has but to read Smith's Aide-Memoire to witness sleight of hand in explaining the actions that took place east of Chosin, for most of what he writes he had no knowledge of at the time, but later made use of reports which favored his conclusions as to what happened.

Smith knew that the Army units were attached to his command, yet he did nothing to accept them as attached units. In fact, he seems to have ignored them. In his last chapter of *East of Chosin* — "Could Task Force Faith Have Been Saved?" — Appleman's discussion of the Hudong-ni withdrawal takes four pages (pp.322-325) to come to the conclusion that "The withdrawal of the forces at Hudong-ni on the afternoon of November 30 was a disastrous command decision. In the end it doomed Task Force Faith."

The day before the attempted breakout was doomsday for the units at the Inlet. They were left alone to solve their own problems which, by then, were insurmountable. To tell Faith that he was essentially on his own, which is what Gen. Barr obviously told him during his visit, was signing not only his death warrant, but that of the entire force which no longer had the capability of executing a successful breakout. Smith's words "improve your position" and "do nothing to jeopardize the safety of the wounded" came from a commander who had no knowledge of the situation that existed at the Inlet, nor did he take action to find out and contribute something other than a death sentence.

Going back to the key word "sacrifice," we must open the door to reasons why this was the case. We can begin by drawing differences between one command and the other, the two Marine RCTs west of Chosin and one Army RCT east of Chosin. Smith always had radio communications with RCT 5 and 7; he never had and never did establish communications with RCT-31 from the time they were attached to him on 29 November, until the end. When communication is out with a subordinate command it is the responsibility of the higher commander to establish or re-establish commo. Some may believe the radio link from Stamford through the pilots to the air support center at Hagaru-ri would have been Smith's commo link with the RCT-31 commander, Lt. Col. Don Faith. That was hardly possible, and if it had been, it was never used by Smith.

Other examples relating to communications can be found in the support of Fox Company 2/7 in the Toktong Pass, a Marine rifle company that had continuous commo with its regimental HQ and, more important, commo with the division CP and H/11 Artillery at Hagaru-ri. Because of this, higher command always knew the status of the company and its needs for radio batteries (provided by helicopter) and other supplies, especially ammunition (provided by airdrop). Fox Company survived because of the attention provided by Smith's resources at Hagaru-ri, especially artillery.

East of Chosin the airdrops—part of which landed in enemy territory— apparently contained supplies that an unknown higher command believed were needed, for the logistics commo link had been cut long before. The headquarters element at Hudong-ni had sporadic communication with radios at the Inlet which allowed the staff to get a feel for the supply situation and send messages back to 7ID through Brig. Gen. Hodes and Maj. Lynch at Hagaru-ri. However, this system was unreliable, one example being a drop of 40mm ammo at Hudong-ni which was needed by the AAA at the Inlet, and a drop of tank ammo at the Inlet that was intended for Tank Company at Hudong-ni. We do know that three helicopters (one carrying Gen. Barr to visit Faith) were sent to the Inlet on 30 November to evacuate wounded. Although the exact number evacuated is not known, three key officers were evacuated (two battalion commanders and the regimental surgeon).

We also know that on 30 November Smith attempted to convey his instructions to Faith through a message that he asked Hodes to draw up in his name, embodying Smith's ideas, that Faith "should

make every effort to secure necessary exits and move south ... at the earliest ... and that he should do nothing which would jeopardize the safety of the wounded.” Not only will historians have a problem understanding the meaning of these instructions, they will continue their struggle to find out when and how the message was sent, who received the message, and whether or not the intended recipient, Don Faith, ever received it. The words “secure necessary exits” will continue to be a problem, as will “do nothing to jeopardize the safety of the wounded.” After these many years we can only conclude that those at Hagaru-ri — however honorable their intentions — had little or no knowledge of the status of RCT-31 units east of Chosin.

We then look at the preparations for the breakout. At Yudam-ni the Joint Command was required to prepare a plan and send it to Smith at Hagaru-ri for his approval. No such requirement was imposed on RCT-31, nor was commo established to determine Faith’s needs for his breakout. Close air support was planned for both areas. At Yudam-ni there were two forward air controllers with each battalion, making more than 12 controllers for RCT-5 and 7. East of Chosin there was but one air controller from 28 November to the end. Although Smith said he would give air priority to Faith, the fact remains that one controller cannot be compared with the eyes of 12. Stamford, who maintained a position with Faith near the front of the column, was not in a position to see and call in strikes for a column of trucks scattered over four miles. In the end, commo was no longer available as pilots in the semi-darkness strafed the flanks which, by then, contained many wounded who were attempting to escape to the ice of the reservoir. As one pilot acknowledged as he flew above Hill 1221 in the fading daylight, it was over.

What about “sacrifice”?

This author, one who served at the Chosin and fought the march from Hagaru-ri as a provisional rifle company commander to the flats below Chinhung-ni, and one who has since lived with history’s literature regarding Chosin, concludes with thoughts about command responsibility.

Public relations of the day cast a veil over the possibility of sacrifice by spreading effective hype over what was being done, while at the same time leaving the east of Chosin debacle up to the imagination of readers. Talk of the day was Smith attacking in another direction followed by the eventual success of the breakout, never mentioning the fact that success was made possible because of the rapid decline in the enemy’s capability to do anything about it. The veil thickened with statements such as “we were attacked by twelve CCF Divisions when, in fact, the contact was with elements of six enemy divisions, two of which attacked and destroyed RCT-31. The veil never does address the limitations of radio communication within the CCF forces that made it impossible to launch coordinated attacks by large units, nor the inadequate logistics system to sustain their operations at the Chosin.

This in no way degrades the marines and soldiers who valiantly fought their way to the safety of the Hungnam perimeter; as individuals serving in platoons and companies, their accomplishments have been properly recognized by history. What has been examined here is one element of the *story* of Chosin, facts relating to how it had been told and the interpretation of command and unit accomplishments. Our conclusion is that the units of RCT-31 which fought east of Chosin accomplished their mission by preventing more than two CCF divisions from driving south and taking Hagaru-ri and, in doing so without help from the outside, were themselves destroyed as a fighting force. If the Chinese had been more successful against the soldiers east of Chosin by achieving their objective of Hagaru-ri, the story about the Chosin campaign would have been entirely different. We close with a question seldom asked: Should a commander reinforce failure?

PRO PATRIA

THE CHANGJIN JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHANGJIN JOURNAL

The Changjin Journal was written by the author as a follow-on to his articles in the Army Chapter Chosin Few newsletter with a publication name Changjin/Chosin. The 1999 climax of his series of newsletters was the announcement that the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) had been awarded by the Secretary of the Navy to all Army units of RCT-31 in the battle east of Chosin that had not received the award in 1953. This, in effect, was a victory after a long period during which The Chosin Chronology played an important role in updating the history of the Chosin campaign.

Within the first year of publication, the year 2000, The Changin Journal was accepted by and published on the web page of the New York Military Affairs Symposium (nymas.org). As of the publication of this e-book more than sixty issues have been published and are available to readers at this address. <<http://nymas.org/changjinjournalTOC.html>>

The Changjin Journal contains information that had not been available in past publications, or in some cases because of errors in content, have been modified based on new facts as well as expressing other points of view. The author had extensive experience in Korea, first in 1948-49 while being stationed in Inchon and Seoul, including duties in the Intelligence Section of the 32nd Infantry Regiment, later becoming the 5th Regimental Combat Team (RCT-5) before the final pullout of U.S. forces after which he joined the 31st Infantry Regiment in Japan.

In this e-book we have included a limited number of journals to aid in understanding the Chosin story. Attention is invited to the experiences of surviving officers who had been able to write about their personal experiences after leaving Korea. These include officers from the two infantry battalions and one artillery battalion (major units of Col. MacLean's RCT-31: Edward L. Magill, 57th Field Artillery Battalion (57FA); Hugh W. Robbins, Headquarters, RCT-31; Crosby Miller, Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry (1/32); Wesley Curtis, also of Headquarters, 1/32; and Herbert Bryant, Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry (3/31).

Issues are numbered according to the publication date using month.day.year and are not in any sequence relating to content. Subject headings and the "In this Issue" paragraph indicate contents. End Notes include editor's comments and administrative information. This Changjin Journal section of this e-book contains selected issues relating to The Chosin Chronology.

PRO PATRIA

DIVISIONS OF THE TENTH CORPS

IN THIS ISSUE We will provide background material about the divisions which made up the Tenth Corps as well as their readiness status at the beginning of the war.

BACK TO BASIC

Questions asked by recipients of the Journal have not been limited to former military personnel who served in Korea. They come from a variety of persons interested in the subject. During my travels this summer I have been asked many questions, many quite basic, such as “what is a battalion, how big is it?” Questions point out that many do not know there is a difference between an Army division and a Marine division, thinking they are the same because they are called a “division.” For that reason we include this brief refresher course.

DIVISIONS

The divisions in the Korean War were essentially the same as World War II, using the same Table of Organization & Equipment (TO&E).

The ARMY INFANTRY DIVISION, with a TO&E of about 18,000 personnel, has three infantry regiments with each regiment having three infantry battalions, and a battalion with three rifle companies and one heavy weapons company, and a rifle company having three rifle platoons and one weapons platoon, and a rifle platoon having three rifle squads and one weapons squad. In other words, a triangular organization, these being called “combat units.” The infantry regiment also has its own tank company, heavy mortar company, as well as administrative and service units. The division has “combat support” units which include the division artillery, “DivArty” having three 105mm howtzer battalion and one 155mm howtzer battalion, these battalions supporting the infantry units in various combinations. Other combat support units are the tank battalion and the combat engineer battalion, anti-aircraft battalion, all providing direct or general support to infantry units. The last category is service support, units such as medics, quartermaster, ordnance, engineer construction, transportation and units which perform various administrative functions.

The Marine Division is very similar to the above with two exceptions: it has units which provide its amphibious capability for assault landings, and also its own aviation element for combat air support. Because of this, the division’s authorized strength is about 25,000. When we study Chosin actions one note that the lettering system in the infantry battalion different between the services. The rifle companies in a Marine regiment are A, B & C for the 1st Bn, D, E, F for the 2nd Bn, and G, H & I for the 3rd Bn; while the heavy weapons companies are Wpns/1, Wpns/2 and Wpns/3 for the battalions. In the Army infantry regiment the rifle companies are A, B & C, with D being the heavy weapons company for the 1st Bn; 2nd Bn being E, F, G & H for Wpns; 3rd Bn being I, K & L, with M for Wpns. Note there is no “J” company.

READINESS OF THE TENTH CORPS

From the Far East point of view, the soon-to-be major units of the X Corps consisted of the 7th Infantry Division which was stationed in Northern Honshu and Hokkaido, Japan; the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California; and the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia. However, they were all paper tigers at the time, a few troops carrying the colors but in no way having the personnel and equipment as called for in the TO&E. Descriptions of status can be found in the book America’s Tenth Legion by Shelby L. Stanton.

1st MARINE DIVISION

“On July 25, Gen. Cates directed that the 1st Marine Division be brought to full wartime strength within three weeks,” All Marine facilities were ruthlessly combed to expand [Gen. Smith’s division] from a skeletal shadow (having just a brigade for Korean duty) to a solid phalanx at Camp Pendleton in California. They were bolstered by more than nine thousand Marines from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina (most of the 2nd Marine Division) to form the rejuvenated 1st Marines, the division’s first regiment. “The 7th Marines became the division’s second regiment and was formed by augmenting two weakened battalions of the 6th Marines with more regulars and reservists. The division relied on units overseas for completion: the last battalion of the 7th Marines was derived from the Sixth Fleet landing force steaming to Japan from the Mediterranean Sea, and the division’s third regiment, the 5th Marines, was already in Korea as the basis of the Marine brigade fighting on the Eighth Army front.”

7th INFANTRY DIVISION

While the Marine division was being readied, the 7th Infantry Division “was so depleted and scattered by the incessant demands to fill earlier units, it has hardly more than a flag on MacArthur’s wall chart. In the early stages the division was a cadre outfit instructing recruits arriving in Japan with some elemental training before being sent to Korea as replacements. . . .” The formation had absorbed ten thousand soldiers in the past few weeks, but more were needed. To complete its ranks, another expedient measure was introduced during the last week of August. The division received 8,637 raw Korean recruits, dumped into the assembly area just three weeks shy of D-Day Inchon.

The KATUSA (Korean Augmentation To the U.S. Army), in addition to having had no military training whatever, did not speak the English language. Most became ammo bearers in rifle companies. In time they learned basic English reinforced by sign language, and in due time—a long time from a combat point of view—many became excellent soldiers. The last limited field training took place on the slopes of Mount Fuji where, for a few days, troops had to take refuge from one of the two typhoons which skirted southern Japan shortly before the Inchon landing.

3rd INFANTRY DIVISION

“At the outbreak of the Korean war, the 3rd Infantry Division was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, but manned at one-third cadre strength (5,179 men when authorized 18,894). When the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to send the division as emergency reinforcement to Japan, additional personnel were taken from almost every post in the U.S. Its two regiments, the 7th and 15th Infantry, filled slowly because all installations had been previously combed for Korean-bound replacements. “Even the drastic measures failed to boost regiments to wartime complements, and both regiments received the usual KATUSA boost [of 8,500] while in Japan undergoing final training for Korea. . . . “The Puerto Rican 65th Infantry was added hastily on October 6 as the division’s third regiment. . . . The need for infantry was so great in Korea that the 65th Regimental Combat Team was unloaded directly at Pusan and spent two months battling on the Eighth Army front before being released to join X Corps on the last day of October.”

REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM (RCT)

The terms “regiment” and “regimental combat team” bear explanation. The infantry regiment (Army or Marine) is that organization defined by the TO&E mentioned above, in other words, the organic units. A Regimental Combat Team (RCT) is an organization based on the regiment to which are attached other combat organizations, such as artillery, armor, anti-aircraft, combat engineer, as well as service support units such as truck companies. When attached, all of these units are responsible to the infantry regimental commander, not to their mother organization from which they came until officially detached. The reason for RCT formations in North Korea was due to the dispersal of regiments which could not be supported

within the command and control systems of a normal division. In the tight formations common during WW II, the division's artillery was within supporting distance of more than one infantry unit, and the division commander could shift priorities depending on the situation. In Korea that was not possible when one regiment was 25 or 50 miles from another, which was the norm in X Corps at that time. The RCT formations were used in all X Corps divisions in North Korea.

BATTALION COMBAT TEAM (BCT)

The Battalion Combat Team (BCT) was organized in like manner. During the Chosin campaign the RCTs were RCT 5 and RCT 7 at Yudam and RCT-31 east of the reservoir. The two BCTs were BCT 1/1 at Chinhung-ni; BCT 3/1 at Hagaru-ri; and BCT 2/1 which was at Koto-ri. Even though the 1st Marine Regimental Headquarters was at Koto-ri, the combat perimeter was organized around the 2nd Bn, 1st Marines, which was the largest BCT of the operation ending up with many attached units (2/31 Infantry, 185th Engineer Bn, 1MarDiv Recon Company, and many smaller units). As the operation changed direction and units gathered into tighter formations, BCTs were normally dissolved by the mother organization.

TASK FORCES

The term "task force" is often seen in history books and in some cases it has been misused. The primary example is the use of the term "Task Force Faith" when referring to RCT-31 east of Chosin. The term did not exist at the time, but was invented by a historian after the fact, and in turn used by later historians and story writers.

A task force is organized for a specific mission, after which it is dissolved. The best example during Chosin is "Task Force Drysdale," a gathering of units under the command of Lt. Col. Drysdale of 41 Commando, Royal Marines, who was given the specific mission of getting those units from Koto-ri to Hagaru-ri on 29 November; it had no other purpose and didn't exist after 30 November.

East of Chosin RCT-31 was under the command of Col. MacLean until he disappeared. When Lt. Col. Faith arrived at the Inlet to join the other units of the RCT he found both Lt. Col. Reilly of 3/31 and Lt. Col. Embree of 57FA both seriously wounded. As a result he assumed command of RCT-31 based on seniority. The command structure did not change, nor did it receive instructions from higher headquarters (then Gen. Smith at Hagaru-ri) to change its designation.

The recent action which awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) to units of RCT-31 did not award it to "Task Force Faith." Although the recent papers recommending the award used the term "RCT-31" frequently, the award was not made to the RCT, but rather the units which made up the RCT at that time and place.

In summary, the ultimate burden caused by the readiness status of the the divisions which made up the Tenth Corps fell on the leaders at the lowest levels, for it was the squad and the platoon which suffered the most casualties.

READINESS IN 1950

IN THIS ISSUE we continue the subject of readiness by presenting comments from readers as well as other sources. It's difficult to compare the lack of readiness experienced in 1950 with contemporary comments on the same subject, for the problem today appears to be quantity rather than quality. In 1950 it was both. Let us remember that the units first deployed — those “first to fight” such as the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions — drew down on the readiness of those that followed, thereby compounding their readiness status, topics covered in CJ 08.06.00.

THE FIRST MARINE DIVISION

“You may get some comments from Marines on your report on the mobilization of the 1st Marine Division. The brigade was made up of the 5th Marines, which was the only regiment in the 1st Marine Division at the time, and had only two rifle companies per battalion. It went as is. The 1st Marines were formed from two battalions of the 2nd Marines, and the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, 2nd Mar Div, at Camp Lejeune, plus fillers from posts and stations. It arrived in Japan in time to take part in the assault at Inchon. Initially there was to be only two regiments in the division. But about a week later it was decided to fill the division out to full strength. The 7th Marines were then formed from the remaining battalion of the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune, the other battalion in the Mediterranean and a battalion to be formed from scratch. It arrived at Inchon on D + 3. Most of this is in the reference, Policy and Direction, pages 160-165.” — Patrick C. Roe

AIRBORNE UNIT READINESS

“From 1946 to 1948 in the 505 PIR 82nd Airborne Div. there were only two battalions. The other two consisted of Hq Co. which had a machine gun platoon, 81mm mortar platoon and a Commo platoon. There wasn't any 1st Bn. . . . In reality there were just enough men for one full battalion. We went to the rifle range once in 18 months. We had to buy our own jump boots, no jump pants or jackets and most important no Airborne Tab on the Division Patch.

“The Division got the Tab back Christmas 1949. The newspapers used to say “Crack 82nd Airborne Division” which was true in 1942-1945. But the truth was it was only a shell of its former self. Since 1950 I have always felt for those men who went into almost instant combat and then were criticized for their efforts.”—Ed “Tyrone” Boyle

INDIANA TRACES READINESS

The following is from TRACES of the Indiana Historical Society, Summer 2000 issue, which contains articles based on Marine Corps reserve units in Indiana that provided replacements for the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton when they were preparing for Korea. This quotation relates to preparedness.

“But if the weekly volunteer meetings at sites such as Evansville failed to prepare reservists for handling weapons and for unexpected combat, Marine Corps officials believed the two-week volunteer summer camps might fill the void. The national director of the reserves even boldly declared in 1948 that the military efficiency of his command as a potential fighting force, able to take its place alongside the regular service, ‘increased 100 percent over 1947’ because of summer camp training. Contrary to this assessment, summer camp participation, which was voluntary, fell off from 54 percent in 1948 to 47 percent in 1949.

“In reality both weekly sessions and summer camps failed to prepare reservists for the rigors of actual combat. ‘Once-a-week nighttime drills inhibited training,’ as one Marine Corps historian noted, ‘and

summer camps were not well attended. More significantly, new recruits did not attend boot camp or receive advanced training.' The reservists were 'largely untrained and many [had] joined for social and athletic reasons.' The result of these circumstances was a 'reserve unprepared for war.' Some reservists' experiences in the training process led them to believe the drills and camps were a monumental waste as well. Said one disgruntled veteran, 'I witnessed nothing but confusion, disorder, overspending...and everything but sound constructive training.'

Since shipboard training cannot compare with squad battle-drill on a live-fire range, we can conclude that those reservists experienced on-the-job training at Inchon, Seoul and Chosin. The concluding paragraph verifies the result of battlefield experience.

“Several of these Hoosier reservists died fighting in Korea, while many others forever bore great physical and emotional scars. Gen. O.P. Smith, commander of the First Division at the time of the Evansville reservists' tour, commended this and other reserve units when he noted, 'When I was detached from the Division in April of 1951, 51 percent of the Division was composed of reserves, and in my opinion it was a better Division than the one I brought to Korea.' ”

RESERVE READINESS

“The Marine who had never fired a rifle before was not an exception. We had number of reservists who may have been NCOs, in the reserve, but had never been to enough summer camps to have fired the range. Nevertheless, they learned quickly. Lt. Gen. “Brute” Krulak (father of Charles Krulak, former commandant) wrote a book *First to Fight* which can be found in paperback in some used bookstores, in which he talks about the mobilization of the 1st Mar Div under the theory 'be prepared to go with what you've got.' We did.

“On the plus side, we had a great backbone of experienced NCOs. We also had some pretty good 2nd Lt. platoon commanders. My class, for example, had a full year of training, nine month of instruction at Basic School plus three months of helping train PLCs and midshipmen for the summer, then another year in the FMF working with our platoons intensively under some very experienced and capable leadership. In my battalion, 3/7, the CO,XO, S3 and all the company commanders had prior combat experience. In addition, speaking of my class again, seventy-five percent of them, including myself, were former NCOs with anywhere from three to seven years prior experience. Keep Warm, and Keep Up the Good Work.”
— Patrick C. Roe

THE ENEMY POINT OF VIEW

Our interest in this issue is the theory that the Chinese, not having the capability of making rapid changes in plans due to inadequate signal commo, were, on the night 27-28 November, attacking the 5th Marines east of the Reservoir when, in fact, the lead battalions of RCT-31 had just arrived hours before and had relieved the 5th Marines. Let's look further at Chinese documents and see what else may be different. We can use knowledge gained from Chinese documents (often written years later based on the political climate of the moment) to learn why the CCF were not successful in annihilating the U.N. forces at Chosin. But first, let's look deeper at what they had written. [Comments for clarification will be in brackets.]

“Heavy snow fell throughout the eastern front on the 27th. The temperature dropped to 30 below zero Celsius. It was severely cold, making it very difficult to fight and bring up rations and ammunition.

“That night our 9th Army Group launched a counterattack according to plan and quickly cut up and encircled the Changjin Reservoir enemy

“The 58th Division entered the Sangpyong-ni area and encircled the Yudam-ni area enemy on three sides, east south and west. This Army's 59th Division seized positions at Sayong [Toktong] Pass and Sohung-ni, northwest of Hagaru-ri, cutting the enemy's contact between Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri. This Army's 89th Division pressed closer to Sachang-ni. [Location of 1st Bn, 7th Inf, 3rd Division]

“The 79th Division attacked toward the Yudam-ni enemy and destroyed part of the enemy that night and made a stand in front of the enemy.

“The 80th Division with one regiment of the 81st Division attached, encircled the enemy at Sinhung-ni and Neidongjik [the Inlet area east of Chosin] and destroyed part of them.

“During the daytime of the 28th, the enemy, to break being cut up and encircled and to link up with one another, began successive and continuous attacks on us. The enemy at Hagaru-ri and Yudam-ni attacked our 59th Division's Sayong [Toktong] Pass and Sohung-ni positions from the east and west. The enemy at Sasu-ri and Hubuk-ni [Hudong-ni with Tank Co/31 Inf] attacked our 80th Division's Sintae-ni [Hill 1221] positions from the south and the enemy at Koto-ri attacked our 60th Division's positions on Chomintae-ni and Pusong-ni [between Koto-ri and Hagaru]. Our 9th Army Group organized resistance against the enemy's continuous attacks and adjusted plans, preparing to continue the destruction of the encircled enemy.

“On the night of the 28th, our 27th Army's 80th Division continued attacking the enemy at Sinhung-ni and Neidongjik. Heavy fighting lasted until dawn on the 29th and the Neidongjik enemy [1/32 Inf] fled to Sinhung-ni, leaving behind over 300 bodies and four howitzers. [There were no howitzers in the 1/32 area, although there were 4.2 mortars.] We penetrated Sinhung-ni for a time and killed or wounded a part of the enemy. Afterward, because our troops weren't enough and there were a pretty high number of frostbite casualties, we took it on our own to retire from the fight and prepare to continue the attack when we were ready.

“Our 20th Army's 58th Division on the night of the 28th continued to attack the Hagaru-ri enemy and destroyed over 800 enemy in heavy fighting. The mountains east of Hagaru-ri [East Hill] were completely under our control. The 89th Division's attack on Sachang-ni was blocked. [by 1/7 Inf, 3rd Div]

“We took a close look at the enemy after two consecutive days of combat. The Yudam-ni enemy were the U.S. 1st Marine Division's 7th Regiment and 5th Regiment (less one battalion) and two battalions of the

11th Artillery Regiment.

“The Sinhung-ni enemy were the U.S. 7th Division’s 32nd Regiment and the 31st Regiment’s 3rd Battalion, along with a battalion of division artillery. [Chinese had the unit designations switched as they were RCT-31 made up of 31st Regiment (minus) and the 32nd Regiment’s 1st Battalion attached]

“The Hagaru-ri enemy were the 1st Marine Division Headquarters, one battalion of the 5th Regiment and also one tank battalion. [Actually 1st Bn, 1st Marines, reinforced, and not many tanks at this time.]

“The Sachang-ni enemy was the U.S. 3rd Division’s 7th Regiment.

“Prior to our preparations to mass our troops to attack the enemy at Sinhung-ni, the enemy in the Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri areas opened line of communication and on the 29th, separately made heavy attacks on our 58th and 60th Divisions’ positions. The Hagaru-ri enemy at dawn that day attacked our Hill 1071.1 [East Hill], near their southeast corner.

“That morning [29 Nov] the Koto-ri enemy launched four consecutive attacks on Pusong-ni and Ch’omint’ae-ni line positions held by our 60th Division. They were repulsed by us. In the afternoon, the enemy mustered [Task Force Drysdale] one battalion of the 1st Marine Division’s 1st Regiment, one tank battalion and the British Marines 41st Commando, over 1,000 men and more than 100 tanks and motor vehicles in the Nampohuchang and Chinhung-ni areas south of Koto-ri and under the cover of over 50 aircraft, again attacked our Pusong-ni and Chomintae-ni line positions. Our 60th Division stubbornly resisted and after repulsing many enemy attacks, made a determined counterattack against the enemy at dusk. Heavy fighting lasted until 0600 hours on the 30th. Most of the enemy was annihilated, except for some who fled. While the Koto-ri enemy was attacking us, at 1400 hours on the 29th, the Yudam-ni enemy attacked our forces’ positions north of him. Over 100 paratroops jumped to join in. All were but to fight.” [The “paratroops” could well have been reference to an air drop at Yudam]

Why weren’t they successful? The Chinese had an ideal situation in which they could cut, divide and destroy the American elements all the way back to the Funchilin Pass, but they made mistakes from the beginning. Their timing was off, they admit that, while they failed to allow the 5th Marines to continue their attack westward from Yudam, drawing them deep into those mountain switchbacks, and then cut them into smaller pieces; just as the Finns had cut the Russians in Nov-Dec 1939 where they annihilated two Soviet divisions using their motti tactics. Their next mistake was not taking Toktong Pass early in the game (as they did Hill 1221 east of Chosin), and then use that terrain to block the withdrawal of the 5th and 7th Marines, rather than dissipating their strength (and ammo) in head-on attacks against the defending firepower around Yudam-ni. These are but a few examples.

Who won? American and British units were fortunate to have the heavy firepower of artillery and tactical air support, and airlift to keep themselves armed and fit to fight, while the Chinese suffered conditions which are well described by Roy Appleman in his book *Escaping the Trap*.

The Chinese soldiers were not nearly as well prepared to withstand the subzero temperatures as were the Americans. The latter had relatively good winter clothing and protection for hand, feet, and body that the Chinese soldier did not have. And whereas the X Corp troops had ample food most of the time, the Chinese did not—they starved, they were weak from loss of strength, and they developed crippling stomach ailments. The Chinese soldiers did not receive a single known resupply of food or ammunition in the Chosin campaign after they crossed the border and headed south toward the Chosin Reservoir. Their medical facilities were either primitive or nonexistent in the Chosin fighting. Relatively few received immediate battlefield treatment for critical wounds, there was only slow evacuation (when there was any) to hospitals in China. And most of the frostbite cases received no treatment at all.

IMPACT OF RUGGED TERRAIN

IN THIS ISSUE

One of the overpowering images of the Chosin campaign was the rugged terrain and the impact of the early winter of November-December 1950. Troops who walked up the Funchilin Pass climbing 2,500 feet in eight miles probably thought any mountain after that would be a cake walk. But it wasn't, for they had just arrived on what was called the Kaema upland on which there were more valleys and mountains. There was no time during the campaign to conduct geography lessons, nor to click on the weather channel to find what it'd be like for tomorrow's attack. The troops learned by walking over the land and feeling the windchill coming all the way from Siberia by way of Manchuria. Now that fifty years has passed, let us rekindle memories with a brief lesson in geography and climatology.

TERRAIN APPRECIATION

In the Army's history covering Chosin, Ebb and Flow by Billy Mossman, discussing the "Change in X Corps Plans" we find a footnote attributed to Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway: "I find it amazing that highly trained professionals with extensive combat experience could have approved and tried to execute the tactical plan of operation for the X Corps in northeast Korea in November 1950. It appears like a pure Map Exercise put on by amateurs, appealing in theory, but utterly ignoring the reality of a huge mountainous terrain, largely devoid of terrestrial communications, and ordered for execution in the face of a fast approaching sub-arctic winter."

Those who were on the frozen ground at Chosin can identify those words as coming from the pen of a true professional, one who understood that the battlefield was made up of far more than the paper and ink on a large-scale map or sweeping gestures of war-room briefers. An interesting point in Mossman's text is that MacArthur directed Almond to "open an attack to the west after his inland flank forces reached the town of Changjin, twenty-five miles north of the reservoir." Even though the one-lane road and narrow-gauge railroad would have taken a column of rifle companies through the switchbacks of that mountainous terrain, we continue to wonder what one infantry battalion on the Yalu at Manpojin or Huichon could have accomplished, especially when it would take the remainder of the division to safeguard the MSR and manage a 150-mile supply line.

When considering an operation west of Yudam-ni and north of Hagaru-ri, one must not lose sight of the two major terrain obstacles already encountered on the main supply route (MSR): the Funchilin Pass between Chinhung-ni and Koto-ri, and the Toktong Pass between Hagaru-ri and Yudam-ni. Both of these sectors could be interdicted by the enemy or even closed for extended periods by the destruction of bridges. West of Yudam-ni, already 74 miles from the port of Hungnam, lay some of the most treacherous mountains in all of North Korea—the northeast/southwesterly Nangnimsanmaek mountain range, terrain ideally suited for delaying an enemy with roadblocks (barriers) and fireblocks.

What is it about the terrain that made it different? For background on terrain let us look to the writings of Hermann Lautensach based on his travels in Korea during the 1930s. For those who experienced Northeast Korea in 1950, the Kaema upland begins when they arrived at the top of the Funchilin Pass in the 1MarDiv sector, or when in the 7th Div sector they reached the the high country around Pungsan, the road to Kapsan and the Yalu River at Hyesanjin.

Only two wild, winding canyons connect the Kaema river system with the outside world, the Yalu River between Singalpajin and Muchangdong, and further to the northeast the Tumen River between Musan

and Songhak-dong. In the gorge of the Yalu one can look up almost one-thousand meters to the steep peaks towering south of the valley. The two main rivers in our area of interest which drain this sector of the upland to the north at the Yalu are the Changjin-gang and the Pujon-gang. The Kaema upland is the highest region in Korea where only the northern valleys near the Yalu are lower than one-thousand meters.

The contrast between the Kaema side and that of the Japan sea side is that on the latter the slopes are very steep with an average of 50 degrees or more, very sharp crests with many valleys close together (such as the gorges south of the Funchilin Pass). To the north in our sector of interest between the rivers Pujon-gang and the Changjin-gang, the ridge running north (the original boundary between the 7th Div and the 1MarDiv) culminates in the Yonhwasan (mountain) at a height of 2,335 meters. Keep this in mind when we discuss combat operations in future Journals.

Within the terrain just described we have numbered hills (indicating elevation) on which many of the Chosin battles were fought, those north and west of Yudam-ni, Hill 1221 east of the Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir, and "East Hill" adjacent to Hagaru-ri. Receiving lesser attention have been: the high ground east of the road between Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri named "Hell Fire Valley", and the numbered hills leading to and within the Funchilin Pass. Although the word "hill" had been used in defining the terrain on which many battles were fought, most were mini-mountains; a mountain defined as a land rise of a thousand feet (more than 300 meters).

THE WEATHER

Kaema has special climate characteristics that are not noted in other parts of the country, the upland being cut off from the influence of the sea. Being cut off from the sea and being open to the north has a strong effect. Winter temperatures are extremely low, especially in the basins of the Yalu valley in which stagnating cold air pockets form. In general the winters in the upland become milder with increasing altitude. This is called temperature inversion, similar to that experienced by troops who trained in the maneuver areas surrounding Fairbanks, Alaska, where Fairbanks sits in the basin formed by the Tanana and Chena Rivers, while the maneuver area is the high ground above the nearby Air Force base. This is noted in Pungsan where the January mean temperature was 4.6 degrees Celsius higher than in the 837 meter lower Chunggangjin. Changjin does not show this intense temperature inversion as clearly because, in contrast to Pungsan, it lies in a high mountain basin.

The winter precipitation in the Kaema upland is abnormally low. the average cloudiness has its minimum in January and the number of hours with sunshine is maximum in February (63%). In Chunggangjin all of the winter precipitation falls as snow. The station there registers an annual average of 72 days with snowfall. Despite the southerly latitude of less than 42 degrees, snow lies with brief interruptions for half a year. In Pungsan, on the average only 3.5 months are without frost, in the worst case only 2.5. Other nearby areas are only slightly better off.

The pronounced continentality of the climate shows that the Kaema upland is closely related to the adjoining southeastern part of Manchuria which, in turn, is related to the winter blasts of Siberia. Soldiers of Changjin remember the "Siberian Express."

THE TAEBAEK SPLIT

Veterans of the Chosin campaign will find meaning in the words of William Blake, the mystic eighteenth-century poet who once wrote that "Great things are done when men and mountains meet." In reference to "the examples of Hannibal's and Napoleon's crossings of the Alps and Simon Bolivar's crossing of the Andes" he writes, "Presumably mountain campaigns are more the exception than the rule: areas on which steep slopes predominate do not, ceteris paribus, generally favor offensive operations. This tendency holds

double true for the modern, mechanized army, whose overland capabilities—however impressive—are not without certain limitations. Indeed, one distinguished historian warns that ‘an army that depends for superiority on its mobility, firepower, and technology, should never voluntarily give battle where these assets are at a discount.’ Physiography, and other natural phenomena, it appears, can play a vital and pivotal role in determining the outcome of military ventures”.

After an interesting discussion of land and battles in Europe, Gordon* writes “In Korea, a somewhat analogous event occurred in 1950, when a similar misreading of the landscape and strategic options occurred. ... The Eighth Army advanced toward the Chinese border along the west coast, and the X Corps was assigned to the northeast. Between the two lay a sizeable, undefended upland segment of Taebaek Mountains (the ‘Taebaek Split’). The UN attackers thus were left with their flanks ‘up in the air.’ ”

PHYSIOGRAPHY AND MILITARY PERCEPTIONS

“An eminent geomorphologist once posed the question, ‘Do the mountains defend the army, or does the army defend the mountains?’ The answer must be couched in holistic terms; it would be erroneous to assume that only landforms are important, when a whole host of other factors also come into play, to a greater or lesser degree.

At the Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir the horizons of the mind did not appear to be reaching out to the other side of the mountain, for the Chinese attack in force came as a surprise and rang bells all the way back to Tokyo and Washington.—GAR



CHINESE ATTACK 5TH MARINES EAST OF CHOSIN

THIS ISSUE

Studying the Chosin battles for the past dozen years has been most interesting, learning through these studies that most historians have been following the same track, one borrowing from the other. The story seems to be: the 7th Marines went to Yudam and the 5th was briefly east of the reservoir where they were suddenly relieved by an Army outfit first called Task Force MacLean which later became Task Force Faith.

The enemy then attacked the 5th and 7th at Yudam with two divisions, while one division attacked and destroyed Task Force Faith, after which the Yudam force arrived at Hagaru and then everyone marched to the sea at Hungnam.

This may sound simplistic, but if one brushes aside non-essentials of any major battle, be it Leningrad or the Bulge or Chosin, they will end up with basics. We are presenting here a new theory which is based on studying the battle from the viewpoint of the enemy commander, not on how we think it happened or wish that it had. In doing this one studies not only the forces he has available, but also his mission, objectives to accomplished that mission, as well as the terrain. Think different.

The theory that the enemy attacked the 5th Marines east of Chosin began during the 1990 Las Vegas reunion when Lt. Gen. Al Bowser and I did our west-and-east of Chosin presentation. I have long believed, as did Maj. Carl Witte, the RCT S-2 at Hudong-ni, that the force opposing RCT-31 was far more than one CCF division; we just didn't have the specific unit designations at the time. It wasn't until Pat Roe and Merrill Needham received translations of Chinese publications when we began putting the numbers 80, 81 and 94 on the map. But that's not the point, yet.

It's very easy for us in this high tech age to lose sight of the rather crude commo system we had fifty years ago. For the Chinese, it was even more basic, messengers were used at lower levels of command. Chinese history reports this important fact. The enemy did not have the capability to make rapid changes in their tactical plans due to the poor communications system; it would take up to three days to make a major change necessary because of new information about their enemy.

The lead battalion (3/5) of the 5th Marines arrived east of Chosin on November 24 and assumed the forward (north) position, other battalions closed behind them. Significant are the dates, for they arrived more than three full days before the first CCF assault the night of November 27-28. When the 5th Marines arrived and occupied their positions we can rest assured that the Chinese scouts, their recon elements, were on those mountain tops observing every move and reporting the size and location of enemy units. But how did they report? A runner to company to battalion and to regiment where the one radio may have the capability of communicating with a few radios at division; that is, if they were operable in the cold weather. These recon reports therefore provided the basis for the enemy attack plan. The Chinese at the time, based on translation of their documents, did not have the capability of making rapid changes in their plans when they saw the forward battalions of the 5th Marines withdrawing the morning of November 27 and the lead elements of RCT-31 arriving in the afternoon and evening. The scouts probably ran back and reported mass confusion.

The Chinese plan committed two divisions in the Yudam area and two divisions against the 5th Marines east of the Reservoir. Other CCF divisions were to maneuver deeper to cut the MSR and further positioning themselves for the next phase of the plan. The Chinese attack units were but eight miles from their objectives when they began movement shortly after dark, and before midnight on November 27

launched their attack on the 5th Marines east of the Reservoir - but the Marines weren't there. Many of their key objectives which were supposed to be occupied by Marine companies were not, especially an important objective known as Hill 1221 located halfway between the Inlet and Hagaru.

We have also learned from Chinese documents that the attack was originally scheduled for the night of November 26, the day before, but was postponed because they were not ready. Those who were with the 5th Marines can visualize, based on attacks against RCT-31, where the main attacks would have tracked had the attack taken place November 26. (On the evening of November 26 the 2/5 Marines had just arrived at Yudam preparing for their attack west the next morning, while 1/23 Infantry was south of Hill 1221 waiting arrival of the main body of RCT-31. Keep in mind also that the attack against Yudam was not a complete surprise. The 2/5 Marines launched their attack westward the morning of November 27 and had been stopped abruptly by a strong Chinese force.)

For the attack east of Chosin on the night of November 27, the Chinese initially committed the 80th CCF Division and one regiment of the 81st CCF Division; after which they reinforced with the remainder of the 81st CCF Division and held one regiment of the 94th CCF Division in reserve for that sector. This leaves no question as to his main effort; his objective was Hagaru which would put the 7th Marines in a box west of the Toktong Pass where he would annihilate them.

During the history seminar at the Jacksonville reunion we had planned a summary during which the maps would be turned around so we could look at the battle of Chosin from an enemy point of view, looking from north to south. Since we ran out of time, and since I'm running out of space in this journal issue, may I suggest that you turn your map around and assume the thought process of the CCF commander. Ask yourself how you would accomplish your mission of destroying the enemy: What are the UN force dispositions on November 25? What are the key objectives to accomplish my mission? And finally, what axis of advance should I use for my main effort?

From this point our analysis should proceed to the question "Why didn't the Chinese succeed?" A short answer must be related to timing and lack of up-to-date intelligence on his enemy. They committed their secondary effort against what became the firepower of two Marine regiments at Yudam, while their main effort found themselves being worn down by weapons not expected against their mass assaults, the awesome firepower of anti-aircraft Dual-40s and Quad-50s of RCT-31 east of the reservoir. These weapons were only effective until ammunition began to run out and mechanical failure took its toll, as well as the human casualties.

FOUR DAYS AND FIVE NIGHTS

IN THIS ISSUE We provide a first person account from a member of the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry (3/31). As our readers may recall, the units of RCT-31 moved into positions vacated by the 5th Marines just a few hours before the CCF attacks on both sides of the reservoir (see CJ 02.04.00).

By Herbert L. Bryant, Commander of Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, written in 1992. "Having relived the days of late November 1950 for 42 years, I decided to put it in writing and maybe it will help me to forget."

NEAR THE FUSEN RESERVOIR

I was assigned as commander of Headquarters Company 3/31 about 15 November, having replaced Capt. Snodgrass who was evacuated because of kidney stones. It was the day after 3/31 had fought the Chinese and had killed quite a large number of them. I recall seeing them scattered across the hillside as I traveled to the battalion CP. I was transferring from D1/31. We moved without vehicles cross-country to the vicinity of the Fusen Reservoir where we stayed for a few days. Brig. Gen. Henry Hodes came and spent the night with us. Maj. Clifton Z. Couch, Jr., the executive officer (XO), who was a great hunter from Arkansas, and I went on a hunt for about three hours; this shows how relaxed this operation was and the assurance that we were in control. We had no knowledge of the danger we faced from the Chinese.

We left the Fusen area and returned to the regimental headquarters area at Untaek. A few days later we boarded a train and went to Hamhung, while our vehicles went by road. There we joined with our vehicles and the trucks that were to carry our troops the following morning.

MOVE TO THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR - November 27

We traveled many miles up a dangerous mountain road. It was very cold riding in a jeep, but a wonderful view of the mountains and valleys, and a relief to reach the top. I remember the sawmill town [Sasu-ri] and thought, "That's something that looks familiar."

When we arrived at the inlet area our adjutant, Capt. Bob McClay, showed me to my company CP, a two-room house with a hallway between the rooms, doors at both ends of the hall. The house was about six feet from the railroad track and about 200 yards from the bridge and causeway across the inlet. My CP was about 100 yards from the battalion CP and almost directly in line with the bridge. We were on the same side [uphill ?] of the railroad track as the battalion CP. The kitchen, supply, P&A Platoon and ammo trucks were all located about 100 yards in the rear of the company CP and between the road and the reservoir there was no sign of a living thing in the area other than ourselves. Darkness came early as I attended a meeting at the battalion CP that evening. We were told there would be no movement the next morning, that we'd wait for further orders. My runner and I returned to our CP and were challenged as we approached. We went inside and talked with the First Sergeant and then went to sleep.

THE FIRST NIGHT

It was about midnight when I was awakened to the sound of small arms fire. I pulled on my boots and got my rifle and went out the hall door facing the battalion CP. There was the First Sergeant and several men from the P&A Platoon. Small arms fire was coming from the direction of the bridge and the area to the right. A man came around the end of the house toward the bridge and several people shot him. I told the men to go to the battalion CP where we arrived without challenge from the security. The first sergeant and

I set up security on three sides of the CP. The CP building was next to a steep bank facing north and there was no place to position anyone on the north side. The security on the east was facing the M Company CP. On the south, they were facing the artillery; on the west they were facing my CP and the inlet bridge. We did not encounter anyone at the battalion CP nor did we look for anyone. There was no time for that.

In the corner of the yard, toward the reservoir, my runner took a position facing the artillery. My first sergeant and I took positions in the same corner facing our CP. We had about a dozen men. I had no idea the CP had been evacuated. There were numerous attacks by squads of eight to 12 Chinese from the direction of my CP. Some were stopped within a few feet of our position. It was light enough to see our CP and my jeep which was parked between the two CPs.

During WW II, I was a platoon leader in L Company, 314th Infantry, 79th Division in Europe. I found that the only rifle that would stop a man was the M1 and that's what I used then. Shortly after the Inchon landing I procured myself an M1. Other company commanders made fun of me but I was glad that night that I had it. The only problem was reloading with cold numb hands.

There was a wooden pole about 15 feet long behind the position where we were lying and every 10 minutes we would pound our boots against it to restore circulation. It was great and we used it for four nights. Just before dawn we began to see groups of Chinese coming back from the direction of the artillery. Several groups wanted to fight but most were willing to bypass us toward the reservoir.

THE FIRST DAY

After daylight on November 28, we saw American troops coming from the hills between M Company and the artillery position. We got up from our positions and as they approached, we realized that it was our battalion CP group. I remember the surprised look on Maj. Couch, as if to say "What are you all doing here?" At that time the first sergeant and I took our men toward our own CP. Both areas were littered with dead Chinese. They paid a heavy price and didn't accomplish very much. We found a squad leader from our P&A Platoon dead by the corner of the house. Two men from his squad lost control of themselves because they were sure they had killed him. It took the first sergeant some time before he could assure them that many of us had fired at him when he came around the corner of the house. We went in the hallway of the CP and looked at the place where we had been sleeping; it was a total wreck. The company field desk was destroyed as was everything else in the room. Some grenades littered the floor. The room across the hall was in shambles, the only occupant being a dead ROK soldier. I told the first sergeant not to let anyone in the house as it was too dangerous and nothing worth salvaging. I regret not saving my musette bag.

We then went to the area of the kitchen and ammo trucks. I found the mess sergeant and cooks; they had all survived the night. Two of the cooks had spent the night under the truck while the Chinese went through the truck over their heads. The enemy soldiers took a frozen turkey, one the mess sergeant had held back from Thanksgiving to make soup, although they dropped it about ten yards away. The first sergeant then started getting a head count and making a roster. I found Lt. Barnard, the P&A Platoon leader. He and some of his men had stayed with the trucks during the night. He was trying to find the remainder of his platoon.

I went back to the battalion CP about mid-morning where I was told Lt. Col. Reilly was wounded and had been in the CP all night. Capt. McClay told me that Maj. Couch and Capt. Adams (S-4) had been wounded. I told him about the condition of my company so he told me to consolidate my CP with the battalion CP so we would have only one to secure. McClay said Couch and Adams both had chest wounds from a sniper, so I went to see Couch who was unconscious in the battalion CP. I don't believe he ever

regained consciousness. I then went to see Adams at the aid station. He was in good spirits. The next day I went to see him again and he wanted me to get a jeep and take him out; he was sure we could make it. He had his pistol under his pillow and said they would never take him. He was aware of our situation, but died on day three. Maj. Couch died on day two.



Beyond the artillery is the 3/31 sector where Capt. Bryant had his command post near the railroad, 200 yards to the left of the causeway bridge in the right distance.—Photo by Ivan Long

SECOND NIGHT

The attacks started early on the second night. The headquarters personnel, including Lt. Jule C. Rybolt, the commo officer, took up positions with the security group of Headquarters Company. The intensity of the attack was equal to the night before and came from the same general direction, from the bridge through L Company and through my CP. They appeared to stop at K Company's kitchen and have a party, then go to my old CP to regroup. From there, they would make a move toward the battalion CP. We were successful in stopping the attacks while some would turn off toward the artillery, just as they did the first night. There were many who we stopped within 30 feet of our positions. Some had no weapons, just grenades. A number of times during the night the battle became intense in the artillery area where they were apparently firing direct fire from the big guns, then all at once it would stop like you had flipped a switch. Then we would concentrate on our rear, expecting to be hit from that direction. After a while, it would start again and we realized the artillery had survived once again. This type of action went on all night.

SECOND DAY

Shortly before daylight [November 29] we received word not to shoot across the Inlet, that Col. MacLean was coming across. This message was passed along as loudly as we could yell, and off and on for about an hour until well after daylight. Part of the P&A Platoon and the company cooks were defending in that direction. Some time later that morning we heard that Col. MacLean had been captured in the rear of our position and killed. This was reported by the artillery. After daylight, the 1/32 began racing across the bridge and joined our position. Lt. Col. Faith visited our battalion headquarters; that was the first time I had seen him. The remainder of the day was spent trying to tighten our defense and salvaging weapons and ammunition. We were accumulating quite a number of U.S. weapons outside the battalion CP. We were also exchanging weapons, as everyone was trying to trade a carbine for an M1.

We had two Chinese prisoners secured in a stall by the commo building. The first sergeant, my runner and I spent quite a few hours trying to dig a foxhole, difficult to do in the frozen ground. We got down about a

foot that day and a little deeper on the third day.

THIRD NIGHT

Night fell with everyone expecting a repeat of the night before, but things were quiet for a while. A group of headquarters personnel was standing in the yard close to the entrance of the CP when one of the quad 50s from the AAA half-track fired through the battalion CP killing the battalion sergeant major and wounding the commo officer, Lt. Rybolt. This was about 15 feet from my position. Later we began receiving fire from my old CP area. This had been an assembly and attack point since the first night. Someone from the artillery came to the yard and asked if we had anyone in that building. I told him no and asked him to burn it. He said he would destroy it and they did a beautiful job. First they blew it apart, then set it on fire. When we visited the house the next day we found many charred Chinese bodies. For the remainder of the night we had many squad attacks coming from the bridge area. They would try to get to the battalion CP, but when the fire was too intense they would slide off the ridge and toward the artillery. A number of squads came by in squad columns about 30 yards from our location and headed for the artillery. It was obvious that the AAA tracks and 105 howitzers were their targets. They could sit on the ridge all day, see the artillery and plan their attacks. During the night it was difficult for me to know what was going on behind our position. All I knew was where M Company's CP was located and the battle raged in that direction every night. They were catching them coming off the hill from the east. I went to their area twice and saw the slaughter that had taken place.

THIRD DAY

The third day [November 30] began with a few enemy soldiers straggling back at daylight. The remainder of the day was devoted to looking after the wounded, food and ammo resupply, and preparing for another night. The big event of the day was the arrival of Gen. David Barr, the division commander. We thought he would bring some good news, but we never heard a word. Later in the day a helicopter came and evacuated Reilly and Embree. We took Lt. Rybolt down to the lake as he was going to be the next one out. The chopper did not return and, after dark, we brought him back to the aid station. He came close to getting out.

Sometime during the afternoon Capt. McClay asked me if I would attend a service for Maj. Couch and the sergeant major. Their bodies and others had been placed outside the CP toward the bridge. We had a short service attended by a dozen people. [See Photo Archives page 180 for photograph of the bodies mentioned by Capt. Bryant.] During the afternoon many air attacks were directed at the enemy behind the hills. We also received air drops of supplies.

FOURTH NIGHT

The attacks on the fourth night started soon after dark and continued all night, much like it was after midnight the first night. We survived because of what we had learned the first night; hold our ground and keep shooting. I think everyone knew after that first night there was no place to go. It was quite hectic throughout the night. The enemy continued to come in squads from the bridge area to my side of the perimeter, but I knew that they were also coming from the hills to the north and east. There were many pitched battles fought throughout the area that night.

FOURTH DAY

The fourth day [December 1] arrived with more miserable weather and some snow. We all had a bad night, then went about our morning business of looking after the wounded and trying to get more food and ammo. There were wounded enemy soldiers their grenades that had to be dealt with. Sometime around mid-morning Maj. Harvey Storms, then the 3/31 commander, called a meeting of company commanders

and staff. He said we were going to withdraw to Hagaru as soon as the weather permitted. We were told to unload all two and one-half ton trucks and load them with wounded. All other vehicles were to be destroyed. After the meeting, I asked Maj. Storms what we should do with the two Chinese prisoners. He said unlock the lock and leave it in the hasp.

We had a huge pile of rifles outside the CP. I talked with Lt. William J. Barnard about putting demolition charges under them. He said he would take care of it. I saw him later on the road and he was not sure if the charge had blown. With all the noise we could not tell. He had not seen his two men who were assigned to set the charges. There were so many men running through the area they could easily have tripped and broken the wires.

It appeared as if the Chinese knew what we were about to do because the mortar fire increased considerably. They had the high ground and we could not conceal our actions. The tasks were numerous, to say the least - getting vehicles started, getting them unloaded, refueling from one to another, destroying jeeps and trailers, destroying kitchens and P&A equipment, and loading the wounded. My first sergeant was going to the different sections of the company and telling men where to assemble when we got word to withdraw. My orders from Maj. Storms were to follow the convoy and assist the rear guard. About noon, my first sergeant and I split a can of frozen franks and beans, not doing much with them; it was like eating buckshot. That was normally one of the best meals to eat cold.

THE BREAKOUT BEGINS - EARLY AFTERNOON

After mid-day the convoy began to move. The first sergeant, my runner and I left the battalion CP area and moved to the road about 100 yards south of the CP. I thought the men assembled quite well under the circumstances. We had men from battalion headquarters, cooks, P&A and commo men, and even a few ROKs. We had about 30 men when we started out behind the convoy and had good control for about a mile, after which we were forced off the road down to the edge of the reservoir. I use the word "forced" but it was more of a drift to the right. We were getting heavy fire from the hills to our left.

There were many troops who were supposed to be the rear guard that were between the road and the reservoir and were passing our group, and as a result our troops moved in the same direction. After we were on the edge of the reservoir I made numerous attempts to get men to stop and take up positions on the bank. They would not reply and some would almost walk into me with blank stares on their faces. [See Photo Archives page 190. The obvious trigger being casualties from friendly fire caused by the napalm dropped on the lead unit.] I came to a cove where everyone was crawling across a 40 yard stretch of ice. I laid down and began crawling, and didn't get very far before it was evident that I was in more danger than I would be walking or running across. I got up and walked to the other side of the cove. I called back and they started to get up and run across. There was scattered fire but it was not intense. There was a little baby girl lying on the ice who had been killed. That was the first time I saw civilians in the group. I had not seen a civilian the entire time we were in the position by the bridge. I finally arrived at the bridge north of Hill 1221 when the last truck was being pulled across. Maj. Storms and Capt. O'Neal were about 20 yards from the crossing, observing the battle. They were alone, no radio operations, no messengers, just the two of them.

The trucks with the wounded were lined up on the road climbing up the left side of Hill 1221. It was quite a scene. There were trucks with steam spewing from broken radiators, wounded and dead drivers being pulled out of truck cabs and other men taking their place, trucks pushing others to help them up the hill. It was a horrible sight.

The fighter planes were strafing down the side of the road left of the trucks moving up the hill. Boyhood

One Four was about 15 yards to the left of Maj. Storms directing the aircraft. It was the best close air support you could ask for. Boyhood One Four, Capt. Stamford, was the tactical air controller for Faith's battalion. I walked with Maj. Storms and Capt. O'Neal for several minutes as we watched the air attacks coming almost directly at us. The Chinese were coming down the hill to the left toward the convoy. I crossed the swamp with several men and started up the road on the right side of the trucks. The fire was quite heavy and we took to the ditch and began crawling. It didn't take long before I realized there were too many dead men in the ditch. We got up and started toward the top of Hill 1221.

BEGINNING OF THE END - FIFTH NIGHT

It was getting dark fast and the air cover departed about that time. When we reached the top of the hill we went toward the head of the convoy. We could see swarms of Chinese across the valley to the east. We went a few hundred yards along the top of the hill where there were many foxholes and some machine gun emplacements. We dropped off the hill to the right and there was an American tank disabled in the road. We stopped and leaned against the steep bank above the road and took a smoke. It was still night as visibility was very poor which made it difficult to see enemy from friendly. There were wounded sitting beside the road.

We headed south and picked up more men, including a sergeant who took the lead. We encountered many roadblocks. We would leave the road and go to the railroad, and on to the lake, and back to the road. Sometimes we stayed in one place for thirty minutes, but it seemed like hours. When the shooting stopped, we would move out. I talked several times with the sergeant who was the point man. I knew who he was, but his name will not come back after all these years. He was a real quality NCO, one who would still listen and also make suggestions. We did not engage any of the roadblocks. We waited them out and went around them when the firing died down. When we came to the sawmill town it was light enough so I knew where we were. We could see the flashes from the artillery at Hagaru. We arrived at the Hagaru perimeter about 0200 hours, December 1, with about 15 men.

EVACUATION

I was debriefed on December 2 by Lt. Escue of Headquarters/31 who gave me at least a gallon of water, being dehydrated from consuming nothing more than snow. He also found me a place to sleep where I sacked out until the morning of December 3. When I awakened I discovered I could barely walk; my left knee was swollen from a fall down a railroad embankment, one of many falls that previous night. Capt. McClay and I checked into the aid station and were put on an evacuation flight to the Hamhung area [Yonpo airfield]. It was quite a takeoff for that fully loaded aircraft. Later that day we were evacuated to the Osaka Gen. Hospital in Japan. Capt. Sterling Morgan who was our 3/31 battalion surgeon was on our plane; he did a remarkable job at the reservoir. It had been a trying time for all.

HUDONG-NI

IN THIS ISSUE we take a new look at the Chosin story in an area that has received very little attention in the past, that of Hudong-ni where Col. MacLean established the first command post of RCT-31 in a Korean schoolhouse south of Hill 1221 at Hudong-ni. The 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry (1/32), was the lead battalion of RCT-31 that arrived east of Chosin on 25 November 1950 to begin the relief of the 5th Marines. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines (2/5) Marines left the area on 26 November and moved to Yudam-ni where it began the attack to the west on the morning of 27 November, while the remainder of the 5th Marines departed for Yudam-ni on the morning of 27 November, the day additional battalions of RCT-31 arrived east of Chosin.

MOON SHADOWS It was the night of the 27th when the November moon was making shadows on the newly fallen snow. The Medical Company convoy of the 31st Infantry had passed by the Hudong-ni schoolhouse, command post of the 31st RCT, heading north to set up near the forward battalions. Soon, radio sets at the command post began receiving rapid transmissions, with sounds of weapons firing trying to drown out the voices of excited radio operators.

A soldier came into the schoolhouse saying he could hear firing not far to the north, steady firing not random shots. I went out to listen, looked at the moon making its shadows, and quickly realized that there was a small war going on. Far off to the northwest I heard the sounds of cannon fire, my mind immediately visualizing artillery of the Marines in that direction at Yudam-ni.

Then one of the medics came rushing to the CP saying his company had been ambushed and had taken serious casualties. They needed help. About that time Brig. Gen. Hodes was awakened from his cot behind the screen in the operations center, where Col. MacLean preferred to sleep. On this night MacLean had gone forward to his newly established forward CP, the one we called the Jump CP behind the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry (1/32). Or maybe it was because he preferred to be forward with his troops rather than back in the rear with a brigadier from division breathing down his neck.

At that moment it was nearly impossible to brief the general on the situation because it was changing every second, and the messages were so garbled we didn't know exactly what was going on. Every time we made contact and asked questions, the answers would be cut off in mid-sentence. FM radios were near impossible for some reason. To get accurate answers to the general's questions was to go north and ask, but that was not possible once we learned what happened to Medical Company on that hairpin around Hill 1221. The enemy picked a perfect spot for an ambush and we wouldn't know until the next day how serious it was. The general said we would send Tank Company north after daylight to help the forward battalions, while others were concerned at the moment about Hill 1221 that wasn't very far from the schoolhouse.

That's the way it was the night of the full moon, the night we didn't know what was going on. It was a guessing game until daylight when we could gather the casualties from the Medical Company ambush and learn what had happened and get air support to find out what the battalions were doing.

Lt. Col. Anderson appointed Maj. Witte as coordinator of security at Hudong-ni. We had arrived with an assortment of units, not sure how many were present because units were still on the way. The headquarters commandant, Maj. Frank Fife, was still on the road with his administrative and supply group. Service Battery of the 57th FA Battalion had set up its supply point about halfway to Hagaru-ri, while another

attached artillery unit, A Battery of the 31st Artillery Battalion (A/31FA), a 155 outfit, was still on the road - somewhere. Col. Reidy's 2nd Battalion (2/31) was also on the road far to the rear, which revealed the vulnerability of the entire RCT at the moment the enemy attacked. From our limited knowledge, the Marine situation seemed to be better since they had two regiments at Yudam-ni.

Before daylight I went outside again to watch the moon cast its shadows, anxious to see if any of them were moving. A winter war was upon us; white on white was hard to see. I was reminded of the previous winter training in Hokkaido, and also three winters back on Exercise Yukon in Alaska, and the experience of skiing in moonlight, at other times in a total whiteout. I couldn't resist thinking of a famous battle in the history of my family heritage, when the Finns annihilated two Russian divisions during a similar early winter of 1939, and doing it with only one division. Was this the year for the "Kiinalainen Motti" - the Chinese encirclement?

When our staff prepared RCT-31 Operation Order 25 for continuing the attack north, I recall studying the map covering both sides of the reservoir. The contour lines of a mountain pass showed many more switchbacks than we experienced coming up the Funchilin Pass, ideal terrain for a grand "motti" against a marine column. But the Chinese apparently didn't think that way. Instead, they blocked the route west of Yudam-ni on the morning of 7 November and revealed to the Marines they were there in strength. Although we may call it the enemy's first mistake, it was unavoidable because the U.N. forces were moving north and they were moving south. This became an engagement with initial success awarded to the outfit that knew the most about his enemy.

As I warmed myself over an open fire I realized not everyone was warm. Many were feeling the heat of adrenalin racing through their blood from the excitement of sudden combat. Fifty years later, the mind recalls that excitement, but any thrill is quickly subdued by thoughts of a nearby buddy who wouldn't see the light of the next day, 28 November.

Many years after the Chosin campaign we read various versions of battles, always wondering what really happened, where and when. Authors have offered us interpretations based on their sources with very little detail being published about Hudong-ni and the role it played in the campaign. Almost two decades have past since the early books on Chosin were published, books by Hammel, Appleman, Blair and others. Since that time many survivors of the campaign have surfaced to provide new insights which enable us to update history.

THE REGIMENTAL SURGEON

IN THIS ISSUE we continue our look at Hudong-ni units and personal experiences of the regimental surgeon who was caught in the ambush of his medical company at Hill 1221 on the first night of the Chinese offensive east of Chosin.

SEPARATE UNIT ORGANIZATION The separate companies of the 31st Infantry Regiment, the base unit of RCT-31, consisted of Headquarters & Headquarters Company, Heavy Tank Company, Heavy Mortar Company, Medical Company and Service Company. In the past historians have placed emphasis on combat units with little left to history about the actions of service support units.

Headquarters & Headquarters Company consisted of the headquarters element (Col. MacLean and his staff) with the company element made up of the Intelligence & Reconnaissance Platoon (I&R), Pioneer & Ammunition Platoon (P&A), Antitank & Mine Platoon (ATM), and mess and supply sections. Due to the variety of functions the entire company never moved as a unit.

The lead element to Chosin was the Quartering Party under the Adjutant (S-1) followed by the commander and his operations staff (S-2 and S-3 sections). The mission of the quartering party was to post road guides to the areas units were to occupy. This was more of an administrative movement due to the urgency to get to and relieve the 5th Marines east of Chosin. The lead elements included I&R Platoon which the commander kept in the forefront as his eyes and ears.

When RCT-31 was operating in the Fusen Reservoir area, its organic battalions were about 140 road miles from the Chosin Reservoir. Most roads were no more than mountain trails suitable for oxcarts and jeeps. Because of its location close to the Marine MSR to Chosin, 1st Bn, 32nd Infantry (1/32) was attached to the RCT and was already east of Chosin in an assembly area south of Hill 1221, the zone of 2/5 Marines. When Col. MacLean arrived he established his RCT's main CP in a schoolhouse at Hudong-ni.

UNITS ARRIVE AT HUDONG-NI During late afternoon of 27 November Tank Company was one of the last combat elements to arrive east of Chosin, settling into a perimeter at Hudong-ni to service the tanks in preparation for the move north the next morning. Other elements of headquarters, medical and service units were still on the move. About 2300 hours a Medical Company convoy was moving around Hill 1221 where it met a Chinese ambush.

The northernmost RCT command element was Col. MacLean's forward CP - also called a "Jump CP" - established behind 1/32. Why the colonel elected to be at that location rather than at Hudong-ni remains unclear. This was his first mistake. We know MacLean was not going to launch an attack to the north until the arrival of his third infantry battalion, knowing also that 2/31 was not about to arrive in time to attack the next day. At this forward location the adjutant and commo officer, as well as the sergeant major, were supervising about 30 men erecting tents and digging in the CP. At the same time I&R Platoon was moving into the area northeast of the Inlet to cover the threat from the Fusen Reservoir area where on 6 December the 3/31 had its first encounter with the Chinese.

An assortment of units ended up at Hudong-ni. The intelligence officer (S-2) and operations officer (S-3) were set up in the schoolhouse where on this disastrous night Brig. Gen. Henry Hodes, assistant division commander, was sleeping in the operations room, just as Maj. Gen. Barr had done when he visited the CP near the Fusen Reservoir. Hodes was the senior officer of the 7th Infantry Division present in the Chosin

area at the time. He was accompanied by an officer from the G-3 section and one NCO. In this area was Tank Company, a platoon of Company A, 13th Engineer Bn, mess and supply personnel, and eventually a small aid station established by personnel who escaped the Medical Company ambush at Hill 1221. About a mile to the rear was Service Battery, 57th FA Bn, positioned between ammo dump at Hagaru-ri and the artillery batteries at the Inlet.

Further to the rear was the headquarters company commander on the way behind Lt. Col. Reidy's 2/31. With him were administrative and supply personnel. Farther back on the move was the Rear CP of RCT-31 under the regimental executive officer, Lt. Col. Deshon, with administrative and logistics elements. Another attached unit that never made it to Chosin was a 155mm howitzer battery of the 31st FA Battalion (A/31FA), designated to replace C/57FA that remained with 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry (1/31) near Pukchong. These rapid changes taking place on a very tight time schedule caused many problems years later for historians when they tried to follow a paper trail to determine unit locations. In most cases, such a trail could never be found.

The S-3 (operations) section was near full strength in the schoolhouse CP at Hudong-ni. Newly promoted Lt. Col. Berry Anderson, the RCT S-3, was the senior officer. Maj. Carl Witte (S-2) was present with his assistant, Capt. William Dowell, although his intelligence sergeant was at the forward "jump" CP with Col. MacLean, as were most men of the S-1 section. Sgt. Joe Wells, S-3 operations sergeant, and his clerk Cpl. Lucian Choate were also present as witnessed by Wells' initials on the RCT Operations Order 25 that was delivered to the forward battalions late afternoon 27 Nov. by liaison officer Lt. Rolin Skilton. Later the status of the other two liaison officers was learned: Lt. Hodges Escue was caught in the Drysdale ambush and made it to Hagaru, while Lt. William Racek was at the rear CP with Lt. Col. Deshon. Supervising the nuts and bolts of the S-3 staff at Hudong-ni was Capt. George Rasula, who administered the S-3 section and coordinated the missions of the liaison officers. Capt. Ronald Alley, artillery liaison officer from the 57th FA Bn who was normally present in the operations center, had moved to the reservoir with his battalion (later captured). A small supply dump existed at Hudong-ni.

A regimental headquarters of the day did not have enough fat to be spread out in so many locations at such a critical time. The enemy chose a good time to attack because a larger American force, the 5th Marines, had moved to Yudam-ni and in doing so left the axis of the enemy's main effort east of Chosin defended by a much smaller force. From a friendly point of view the move was an advantage to the Marines by creating a more powerful force - the principle of mass - at Yudam-ni by consolidating two Marine regiments. On the other hand, had the enemy followed their original plan of attacking the night of 26 November, they would have been engaging one regiment on each side of the reservoir at a time when the convoys of RCT-31 were yet a half-day from the Chosin. These scenarios make interesting war games for our military schools.

Most units formed perimeters for the night with the RCT disposed for an attack to the north. Command and control was sacrificed when MacLean chose to go to his forward CP for the night, once again dividing the RCT's command function. Personnel of the Forward CP eventually became riflemen, joining 1/32 and 3/31 for the disastrous breakout attempt. Approaching units of the RCT were cut off when the Chinese severed the MSR between Koto-ri and Hagaru-ri, leaving a small detachment at Koto-ri, while farther south Lt. Col. Deshon would soon be in the process of organizing a new regimental headquarters which eventually came under command of Col. John Gavin. Those few survivors who made it to Hamhung would meet strangers, replacements who had arrived to fill the ranks of the company.

MEDICS FACE TRAUMA The first officer of Medical Company to arrive at the schoolhouse CP was Capt. Clifford Hancock, a medical service officer (MSC) who, acting as the motor officer, was at the tail

of the column as it headed north.

CAPTAIN CLIFFORD HANCOCK, MSC “In the lead vehicles were Capt. Galloway, regimental surgeon and commander of Medical Company; Capt. Wamble, senior MSC officer and company executive officer; Capt. Brown Sebastian, MSC; First Sgt. Lee, and one dental officer (I believe a major). I was the motor officer at the rear of the convoy.

“At about sunset that day the mess truck broke down so I stopped to assist. It took some time to make the repairs. Meanwhile, the main body of the convoy had continued north. It was close to midnight when I arrived at the schoolhouse CP where I was informed that the convoy passed some time ago, and that I could continue with lights on as the road was said to be clear.

“About two miles north of the schoolhouse we came upon part of the convoy that had been stopped by enemy action. We learned later the personnel in the area were Chinese. Although we turned off our lights, we drew heavy small arms fire from the left. There were five of us in the last two vehicles and we were able to find six more at the rear of the stopped convoy, including the first sergeant. I was quickly briefed by the sergeant and told that the enemy had been systematically walking down the convoy shooting anyone they found alive. One of the men reported he had acted dead to avoid being shot. Apparently the lights of the vehicles directed at the Chinese had enabled him to make it to the rear. After assuring ourselves that there were no others, we made the decision to return to the schoolhouse. We drew fire for the first hundred yards. About a dozen of us made it back.

“I briefed the S-3 on the situation and just as I had finished Brig. Gen. Hodes, the ADC, woke up and asked what was going on. After being briefed he gave the order to send a message to a forward battalion of the 31st Infantry to send a platoon back to get the medics out of trouble, and to retrieve the vehicles.

“My group of medics spent the remainder of the night huddled around a fire in front of the building. None of us had sleeping bags as all of our gear was still in the vehicles. I had a carbine and a pistol, and my camera strapped around my neck.”

CAPTAIN HARVEY GALLOWAY, MD Dr. Galloway joined the 31st Infantry at Mount Fuji while the regiment was staging for the Inchon landing. During the Inchon-Suwon operations he served as surgeon of 2/31, and became regimental surgeon in early November when the CP was at Untaek near the Fusen Reservoir. A few weeks before the move to Chosin, Dr. Galloway visited Col. MacLean who was suffering fever and a bad cold. Those present on the other side of the screen heard the doctor tell MacLean he had pneumonia and gave him specific orders to take his medications and get to bed, and stay there or he would have him evacuated.

“The Chinese hit our column. In my case, they had merely waited for distance to develop between my jeep and the truck ahead of me, then put a log in the road. That was enough to slow us so they could fire from hidden positions on the side of the road. My driver Jeeter was hit in the arm and I was hit in the right leg, twice in the right arm, and in the brain. Fortunately, I did not lose consciousness and knew just what nerves had been hit and what area of my brain had been hit. Jeeter quickly recovered from his wound enough to put the jeep in low and drive over the log, and on to reach the 3/31 area at the Inlet. I told Dr. Morgan, the 3/31 surgeon, where the Chinese ambush was and urged them to send men back to help those who were following us.” Fortunately, Dr. Galloway was one of the few to be evacuated from the Inlet.

“I was taken to the hospital ship (Repose) where I had my first brain operation, two more at the Tokyo Gen. Hospital, then to Walter Reed in Washington where I later took a residency in internal medicine.”

CAPTAIN STERLING MORGAN, MD The impact of this ambush and other enemy actions can be sensed in a letter from the 3/31 surgeon, Dr. Morgan, to Dr. Galloway written shortly after Morgan survived the breakout to Hagaru-ri. "You were one of the [few] wounded who were removed by helicopter. During the entrapment of the 2,400 men that finally got together [1/32, 3/31, 57 FA] where you joined us, only about 300 ever survived. [The number 300 refers to those well enough to make up the provisional battalion, not the hundreds of casualties that had been flown out of Hagaru-ri.] The whole 3/31 was officially wiped out, together with 1/32 and the artillery battalion [57 FA] If your belongings were not burned with the rest of the burnibles (aid station, etc.), the Chinese have it all. Nothing was left. I kept only my toothbrush, soap and razor of all my possessions in Korea. I even burned some of my clothes because they were too bulky to wear. Jeeter [driver] was first wounded in the arm and SGT Lee through the spine. Both were later wounded fatally when a mortar landed in the box ambulance parked near the aid station. Capt. Henry Wamble was wounded first in the chest, then, since he was unable to walk, was in the truck column of 300 to 600 litter cases that was completely destroyed by the Chinese. Capt. Brown Sebastian [MSC] was killed instantly by a bullet through the head as the medics were attempting to clear the third roadblock on the way back to the marines who were never reached. Dr. Baido, Dr. Lavides and Capt. Hancock [MSC] are all well as far as I know.

"Of the 3/31 medics, only five, including myself, got back to Hagaru-ri, and only about 50 of the whole battalion actually got out OK."

BACK AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE The situation that night was filled with frustration when those in the operations center realized the communications system of the day was failing rapidly. Although commo with forward units was sporadic, it was quickly learned they were under serious attack. Never was Brig. Gen. Hodes or anyone else at the schoolhouse able to speak directly with Col. MacLean or the battalion commanders. Radio signals would drift and fade while the commo officer with most of his signal men were at the forward CP struggling with the same problem. By morning Hudong-ni knew the situation was serious. It was time to do something to relieve the situation - call for tactical air support, attack north with Tank Company, tell 7th Division to hasten the move of 2/31 to Chosin.

At the same time officers in charge of security received reports that Chinese soldiers were seen on the high ground just north of the perimeter. Maj. Witte took immediate action to improve the perimeter by including Capt. Drake's tanks. This tank threat could well have been the reason the Chinese never launched an attack on Hudong-ni, but limited their effort to harassing fire by snipers.

RCT-31 MAIN CP AT HUDONG-NI

IN THIS ISSUE we continue our discussion of Hudong-ni, the location of the RCT-31 main command post when the Chinese attacked east of the reservoir. The attack in this sector may be seen as a masterful stroke by the commander of the Chinese Army Group where, on that night, he committed his 80th Division and one regiment of his 81st Division, then committing the remainder of the 81st CCF Division on 29 November. At the time he developed his plan he was attacking the 5th Marine Regiment, but as it turned out RCT-5 had left that day and the Army RCT-31 was arriving and occupied some of the same positions. However, the third infantry battalion of RCT-31 had not yet arrived, so the area around Hill 1221 and the approaches to it from the northeast were not occupied. Its capture turned into a minor operation for the Chinese regimental commander, who didn't know he'd have to contend with a convoy of Americans which, to his surprise, provided him with unexpected medical supplies.

THE SCHOOLHOUSE Letter

Rasula to Witte: "As I remember, the first word about the attacks north of Hudong-ni came via the command radio net, a lot of excitement, much of it garbled and reception got worse as time went on. I don't think it lasted longer than morning of the next day, 28 November. I remember a speaker in the operations room of the schoolhouse; that was where we heard the transmissions. Gen. Hodes was awakened. I do remember being outside listening, at one time hearing firing far off and thinking it was coming from the Marines on the other side of the reservoir.... Anderson was in the operations room, so whatever was heard we heard together. Word about the activity to the north was almost simultaneous with the arrival of Capt. Hancock from the Medical Company ambush at Hill 1221."

BRIGADIER GENERAL HODES

When Brig. Gen. Hodes learned of the Medical Company ambush on Hill 1221, he decided that the 31st Tank Company would attack north after daylight and break through to the forward battalions. Not yet understanding what was going on further north, he directed that a message be sent to Reilly's 3/31 to send a small force south to help relieve the situation.

We find the coverage of Tank Company's activities on 28 and 29 November most interesting, especially as reported in Roy Appleman's "Escaping the Trap," pp.103-6, 118-19 (recommended reading). His sources were limited to Drake's report of 1950, followed by letters 35 years later. Tank Company attempted on two days to break through and learned on both occasions that Hill 1221 was strongly defended by the Chinese. It would take a sizeable tank-infantry force to break through. In those two days they lost five tanks. Why? They lacked prior knowledge of terrain and enemy.

Col. MacLean had left the schoolhouse after dark and was at his advance CP behind the 1/32 positions, accompanied by his adjutant Maj. Robbins, communications officer Lt. McNally, and about 40 enlisted men from various headquarters elements.

The officers at the schoolhouse CP who took part or observed this activity were: Brig. Gen. Hodes, assistant division commander (ADC), and Maj. Lynch from the Division G3 section. The main element at the schoolhouse was the Operations Center with Lt. Col. Berry Anderson, regimental S-3, with his assistant Capt. Rasula and liaison officer Lt. Skilton. In the S-2 section was Maj. Carl Witte with his assistant Capt. Dowell. Capt. Hancock, MSC of Medical Company, arrived at the Hudong-ni CP after the Medical Company ambush. Regimental Chaplain (Capt.) Martin Hoehn. Troops at Hudong-ni came from 31st Regimental Headquarters Company (anti-tank and mine platoon, administrative personnel), a platoon

of Company C, 13th Engineer (C) Battalion. On the morning of 28 November, Service Battery, 57th FA Battalion, arrived from its overnight position between Hudong-ni and Hagaru-ri.

A combat action has at its forefront a mission followed by a plan to implement that mission. At the schoolhouse CP the planners didn't have a basis for forming a plan to accomplish the mission assigned by Gen. Hodes, that of clearing the road with tank company and reinforcing units at the Inlet. The problem was lack of intelligence about the enemy; the essential elements of information (EEI) to develop the plan were missing. How many Chinese were involved in the ambush? What size force was attacking the forward battalions?

As for the immediate situation, exactly where did the ambush take place? Planners asked the medics who had returned, but since it was the dark of night the men actually didn't know where they were at the time. It appeared to be a road clearing operation - go up the road and shoot anything that moves. Simple as that.

LOOKING BACK AT HISTORY

For Capt. Rasula thoughts were a bit different because of past experience. Was this the making of a "motti" - a classic envelopment? During the previous day when the staff was preparing the RCT attack plan, Rasula looked at the map west of Yudam-ni to see where the Corps order was sending the Marines. He recalled mentioning to Anderson that the terrain west of Yudam-ni was ideal for a "motti" operation, cutting a column into sections in that mountainous terrain. Was the same thing happening east of Chosin? Unknown at Hudong-ni the Chinese had already driven between the two battalions and overrun one of the two artillery batteries, and now with the occupation of Hill 1221 the Chinese were between the Inlet and Hudong-ni's Tank Company, an ideal situation in that they occupied positions vacated by the 5th Marines.

TANK COMPANY - 28 November.

Tank Company moved out in the attack. Years later the company commander recalled: "While the reports indicate that infantry elements accompanied our initial attack, the story is somewhat distorted and also dimmed by time. When we left Hudong-ni with Hodes [and others], there were no infantry troops of any sort. I thought it would be a road clearing operation for tanks. Once on the scene and after the lead tanks were hit, I realized we had more of a fight than I expected. At that time, I called for whatever infantry type support troops might be available at Hudong-ni to come forward along the west slope of the high ground to clear out the enemy on the north slopes near the hairpin turn on Hill 1221. This is how the infantry types came into the engagement. It was not well coordinated if, indeed, coordinated at all. The support arrived far too late in the day."

In response to questions about casualties he wrote: "The casualties might indeed have been higher than reported. The enemy strength in retrospect might have been more formidable - particularly because the CCF were using the Marine foxholes already prepared. Hill 1221 was surely the key position in our RCT area and it should have been occupied by an infantry battalion (an ideal location for Lt. Col. Reidy's 2/31 if it had arrived on time). Had it been co-located with my company, the outcome would have been different. The fact is that the RCT was strung out too thinly; its piecemeal positioning was predicated on a pursuit action, hardly one of defensive posture. I consider the major cause of the disaster came at the very outset: the operation of moving the RCT to Chosin was too hastily conceived and too hastily executed.

"In retrospect, I hate to think what could have happened had I recognized that narrow gauge railroad bed. It was an easy access to the north - never saw it - never saw the aerial photos in Appleman's book until it was published. Of course, the major issue raised - and appropriately - was what would have happened if my company and 31st rear [Hudong-ni CP] would have remained at Hudong-ni at least one more night rather than move to Hagaru-ri on 30 Nov."

CAPTAIN HANCOCK During this action of the 28th Capt. Hancock and Chaplain Hoehn accompanied by a few medics were involved aiding casualties. It was while maneuvering to return fire that the lead tank hit a mine. Hancock thought the location was about 200 feet behind the last vehicle of the convoy. "This was very rough terrain, the tanks were unable to leave the road...and it was difficult to turn a tank around. The terrain to the left [Hill 1221] was much higher; that's where the enemy was dug in, as well as lower to the right. "I got the feeling that ammunition was running low. Several attempts were made to send infantrymen to the left against the enemy's right flank because the Chinese had a commanding view of the entire area." Hancock and SGT Lee were kept busy giving aid and it was during this time when Lee was killed. They had run out of first aid material and were conserving morphine by using one syrette on two patients.

During the day the ambulance made several trips to the schoolhouse where an aid station was set up. By the time they were to return on the last run the ambulance gave up with a hole in the radiator. A tank carried the last of the patients. Some dead had been returned throughout the day, but Hancock had the feeling that many wounded had been left behind because they could not be reached. During these two days Hancock made at least one trip with a small convoy to Hagaru-ri to turn over wounded to the Navy Clearing Company, returning with ammo and supplies. He remembered one area above a curve between Hudong-ni and Hagaru where the Chinese were digging in.

CHAPLAIN HOEHN

Chaplain Hoehn remembered "In the morning after the medical company ambush, an improvised force of infantry and tanks began to go forward. I had not started with them, but the S-3, Anderson, told me to try to bring back wounded from the ambush...I was with Capt. Drake and Gen. Hodes at the time. There was no snow, thus no tracks to follow to find wounded. I remember GEN Hodes remarking that the enemy used smokeless powder. It disgusted me to see the enemy, some in civilian clothes, squirm around in open patches on the hills. No one could shoot as we were riding away as rapidly as possible."

GENERAL HODES

Hodes arrived back at the schoolhouse CP at noon the 28th. There he instructed Lt. Hensen, the Tank Company officer who had remained with his 4th Platoon, to recon to the northeast and find a route to bypass Hill 1221 and get to the forward battalions. This instruction had to have been based on his total lack of information at Hudong-ni as to what was going on further north. In fact, the operations center had no knowledge of the road being cut between Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri, nor of the action taking place by the Marines in the Toktong Pass or at Yudam-ni. Many assumptions were being made without the benefit of communications with higher (division and corps), lower (forward battalions) or adjacent (Marines at Hagaru-ri) units.

Hodes told Anderson, Witte and Lynch that he was going to Hagaru-ri to get help. Before he left, realizing the Chinese were already on the ridges to the east and heading south toward Hagaru-ri, and concerned also about the security at Hudong-ni, he told Witte to lay out a perimeter defense...then walked the ground with Witte. This perimeter would be manned by engineers and service troops, in addition to the Tank Company. Hodes left Hudong-ni in a tank for two reasons - his security, as had been encouraged by the staff, and to provide communications at Hagaru-ri with the tank's radio.

Lt. HENSEN

In the afternoon Lt. Hensen took two tanks in his effort to find a bypass as instructed by Gen. Hodes. Enemy fire hit and stopped the lead tank, killing the lieutenant. An attempt to retrieve his body failed. The Chinese had taken him and propped his body against a tree on the ridge above the schoolhouse, rifle

across his lap. Another version of this brief action comes from Chaplain Hoehn: “The enemy was now on the ridges above us. Lt. Hensen of Tank Company had led a small unit against the enemy up the hill from the schoolhouse. We were sure he had been killed, as the enemy propped his body against a tree to induce us to come for a wounded comrade. In any case, we considered it a decoy and no one took the bait.”

We conclude that on 28 November the enemy held Hill 1221 and the adjacent high ground in strength. The CCF commander, having known the 5th Marines had a battalion on that hill before the big switch, took it unopposed with one regiment.

57TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

The 57th Field Artillery Battalion was attached to the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT-31) east of the Changjin Reservoir. Charlie Battery had been detached prior to the move to Chosin, although A Battery of the 31st FA Battalion (155mm) had been attached; although the battery did not arrive before the Chinese cut the MSR on the night of 27 November 1950.

The basis for this essay is a letter from Col. Edward L. Magill, JAGC, USAR (Ret) to Roy E. Appleman, written shortly after reading Appleman's book *Escaping the Trap*. This was also the basis for "Ted" Magill's presentation of the artillery story at a Chosin Few reunion that resulted in a favorable change in the attitude of many Marines about the performance of Army units at Chosin.

After occupying a non-tactical position in the late afternoon, Baker Battery settled down for the night. Lt. Morrison fired registration rounds but there was no other firing. During the early evening, a few Korean refugees passed through our position and indicated that they had seen a large number of soldiers to the north. Nobody took them seriously. The evening of 27/28 was not too bad from our standpoint. We did not know that Item, Love and King Companies and Able Battery were under attack until well after midnight. The first thing that alerted us was the sound of bugles. Oddly enough, we did not hear much small arms or mortar fire from their positions farther north in the inlet until early in the morning. We received some small arms fire in our position but not a great deal. Initially, the Chinese attacked Item, Love, King Companies, and Able Battery north of us and Headquarters Battery to our south, but bypassed Baker Battery for awhile. At dawn, men from Love, King, Item Companies and Able Battery filtered back into our position. When daylight arrived, we could see that the Chinese had pulled out of the Able Battery position and had not removed or damaged its guns. We then moved farther north and went into position in the inlet next to Able Battery. After the move, all of the 3rd Battalion and its supporting units were within the inlet perimeter. Generally speaking, the Able Battery guns were emplaced on the east side of the perimeter, aimed in a northerly direction, and the Baker Battery guns were located on the west side of the perimeter, aimed in a southerly direction. Each battery was responsible for covering half of the perimeter. Baker Battery's western most gun was very close to the railroad track. It was probably not more than 50 feet from Sgt. Branford R. Brown's M-19. (See map 9, page 117.) The guns were not well dug in because of the frozen condition of the ground.

During the nights of 27/28 and 28/29, I was primarily concerned with the local defense of the battery. The same situation was true for Lts. Eichorn, Tackus and Smithey. Unfortunately, on the night of 28/29, Baker Battery suffered extremely heavy casualties. Lts. Morrison and Stysinger were both killed. Lt. Anderson was seriously wounded. All the rest sustained minor wounds and were beginning to have frostbite problems. But they all could function. We lost four chiefs of section and numerous cannoners. Sgt. Nitze, a chief of section, was decapitated when a mortar round landed on his helmet. Gun crews were firing almost all night long. Of necessity, firing battery personnel were standing on top of the ground, servicing their guns. Consequently, they sustained heavy casualties from mortar fire. Mortar shells exploded almost at the instant of impact because of the frozen ground. The explosions caused maximum fragmentation and concussion effect.

During the battle at the inlet, Baker Battery did not operate under battalion control. Almost all of our artillery fire was direct. We were covering the ridge lines and the avenues of ingress into the southern half of the perimeter. At times, our gun tubes were depressed as far as possible and fired so that the shells would ricochet off the frozen ground and obtain maximum fragmentation effect against the advancing

Chinese infantry. Fuses were set at minimum arming range. During the early morning of November 29, I became the “de facto” battery commander. By that time, we were already very short of food, water, artillery shells, small arms ammunition and manpower. There was very little medical assistance available for the wounded, many of whom simply froze to death. We had received some air resupply, but it was spotty at best and a substantial part of the air drop supplies fell into areas controlled by the Chinese.

I was quite surprised when the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, arrived at the inlet on the morning of November 29. Nobody had mentioned to me that there was another infantry battalion in the area. The arrival of this unit was very heartening as we certainly needed the additional troop strength. On page 114, you mentioned that nobody from the 57th Field Artillery saw Col. Alan D. MacLean as he traveled across the ice next to the bridge approaching the perimeter. Actually, Sgts. Copelan, Brown and I all saw him coming across the ice. We were standing next to Sgt. Brown’s M-19 when we saw him come out onto the ice and move toward the perimeter. He was a large man and we had a clear line of sight. At the time, we did not know who he was and did not learn his identity until later. He was hit several times and staggered, fell and finally was led off the ice by what appeared to be Chinese soldiers. Some friendly troops on the south side of the bridge were trying to assist Col. MacLean but were unable to reach him in time. While this was going on, vehicles from the 1st Battalion were erratically crossing the inlet bridge at high speed.

At the time Col. MacLean was crossing the ice toward the perimeter, Baker Battery and the M-16s and M-19s of D Battery, 15th AAA, were heavily engaged trying to contain a Chinese attack from the south. Consequently, these units were not able to direct their attention toward the inlet bridge approach to the perimeter.

In my opinion, there are two men who have never received proper credit for their contribution to the inlet defense. They are Sgts. Brown, D Battery, 15th AAA Battalion, and Edgar Copelan. Sgt. Brown commanded an M-19 and was especially skilled in directing the fire of its twin (dual) 40s. He was a very courageous and capable NCO who performed exceptionally well during the entire battle. The most impressive thing about him was his calmness and good humor under the most trying of circumstances. Sgt. Copelan was Baker Battery’s chief of firing battery. He had combat experience in Europe during World War II. He was also an outstanding NCO who was thoroughly proficient in the use of the 105s. He played a key role in keeping Baker Battery’s guns manned and firing. Like Sgt. Brown, Sgt. Copelan was very calm and good-humored throughout the ordeal. These two men performed magnificently and provided great inspiration for their soldiers. And, they certainly were of immense help to me in operating the firing battery.

The night of 29/30 was not as bad as the previous night. By then, the perimeter defense had been reorganized to incorporate the units of the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry, which strengthened the perimeter defense. However, the ever-increasing number of casualties was becoming a critical problem. The men were very concerned about being hit because they knew there was a good chance that they would freeze to death if they were immobilized. The remaining medical personnel were close to exhaustion and there were few medical supplies. There was no satisfactory cover for the wounded who were unable to ambulate. Truck tarpaulins and supply parachutes were used to cover the wounded wherever possible. I kept telling Lt. Anderson that he would probably be evacuated by helicopter although I knew that was unlikely. He was well aware of the situation even though he was critically wounded. Supplies of food, water and ammunition were being rapidly depleted. Remarkably, the troops remained in pretty good spirits, everything considered. What they lacked in unit training and experience, they more than made up for in courage and determination. By November 30 Baker Battery was down to five, later four, guns.

When Maj. Gen. David G. Barr flew into the position on Nov. 30, his helicopter landed a short distance east of Sgt. Brown's M-19. He was met by a couple of officers who took him to find Lt. Col. Don Faith. After his meeting with Col. Faith, he returned to his helicopter and immediately left the inlet. He did not spend any time trying to encourage the troops. In retrospect, Gen. Barr must have decided that the battle was about over for the perimeter defenders and that there was little chance of any of them surviving the engagement. That's the only logical conclusion one can reach as to why the 31st Infantry Rear and 31st Tank Company were ordered to withdraw from Hudong-ni to Hagaru-ri on the afternoon of Nov. 30. Gen. Barr had to realize that withdrawing those units eliminated any chance the troops at the inlet had of completing the trek to Hagaru-ri as an effective fighting force. Had the tank company and supporting troops remained, the inlet force would have had a much better chance of remaining substantially intact, including the truck column, and successfully making its way to Hagaru-ri. [Note: At the time Gen. Barr visited the Inlet units he was not in command of those units, for on the previous night all Army units in the Chosin area had been attached to the 1st Marine Division. - Editor]



The helicopter medical evacuation flights that removed a small number of wounded from the inlet on November 29, provided some temporary encouragement to the wounded men. They began telling themselves that other helicopters would come in later and evacuate the most seriously wounded. That, of course, was not to be.

Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan, L3/31.

GI field jacket and I thought he was an American. He jumped on me, wrapped his legs around my waist and started hitting me on the helmet with a "potato masher" hand grenade. Fortunately the grenade didn't go off and I killed him with a carbine bayonet that was tucked in my boot. The cannoneers thought it was pretty funny. When daylight came, Baker Battery was in very tough shape. We had almost no ammunition left and only four guns that would shoot. I had three hand grenades, and 22 rounds of carbine ammunition, a carbine bayonet and a carbine that wouldn't fire. Fortunately, the Chinese withdrew shortly after daylight rather than follow up with one more determined infantry attack which probably would have succeeded in overrunning the position.

The sky was overcast and there was no air cover. We tried to police up the position, distribute what little ammunition was left and prepare for the next attack. A section chief, Sgt. Hodge, gave me part of a half of a frozen peach. That was all the food he had left. While we were discussing our predicament, an opening

The fighting was fierce all through the night of 30/1. Baker Battery had a direct field telephone line to the infantry units on the south side of the perimeter that was being manned by Lt. Keith E. Sickafoose, 57th Field Artillery, who was directing the fire. I can still hear him saying, "Oh s---! They've broken through again." (Lt. Sickafoose was a USMA graduate, Class of '49.) We were firing direct at minimum arming range. We used up most of our remaining HE shells with point detonating fuses. By daylight the Chinese had fought their way into the Baker Battery gun position. A group of Chinese infantrymen infiltrated the position by moving along the railroad track from the south and were lobbing hand grenades over the embankment. They were killed near the 105s. One Chinese soldier came running toward me as I stood next to a 105. Some of the cannoneers were yelling at me to shoot him but he was wearing a

appeared in the overcast and a couple of Corsairs came through providing us with some much-needed air cover.

During mid-morning, word filtered down that we were going to try to break out of the perimeter and proceed to Hagaru-ri. Subsequently, we unloaded all of the trucks that would run. The only items left on the trucks were tarpaulins. Whatever gasoline was available was put into the trucks. When the unloading job was completed, there were 23 trucks ready to be loaded with wounded. Throughout the morning we received sporadic mortar fire and automatic weapons fire causing numerous additional casualties. I was hit in the legs by mortar fragments. The same round killed two of my NCOs.



The morning haze was due to the weather as well as the smoke caused by artillery fire. Daylight encouraged the Chinese to withdraw due to the presence of friendly air support, that is, if the weather was favorable. The AAA weapons were also respected by the enemy; they only attacked at night.

Photo by MSgt. Ivan Long, Hq/31.

a Chinese roadblock constructed of logs placed across the road, covered by automatic weapons and small arms fire. At the time four Corsairs were covering the inlet. Capt. Stamford instructed the Corsairs to come down and knock out the roadblock which we marked for them. The first Corsair came down the column, north to south, at tree-top level. The pilot dropped a napalm bomb which landed right on top of Sgt. Brown's M-19. Several members of the M-19 crew, who were aflame, came off the mount screaming. Some of the napalm sprayed off of the M-19 to the left of the road and hit some other soldiers. One of the M-19 crew members came directly toward me, aflame. My first reaction was to shoot him (which I couldn't have done as my carbine wouldn't fire). We threw him to the ground and tried to smother the flames. We were able to put the flames out but he was mortally wounded. We then put him on one of the trucks. In the meantime, the remaining Corsairs had neutralized the roadblock. The M-19 was still running and Sgt. Brown somehow got it moving. The napalm incident startled everyone. The troops in the immediate area became disorganized. After some delay, the column started moving again.

Shortly before the truck column moved out, I met Col. Faith for the first time. He was wearing ODs, a sheepskin vest, and was holding a .45 automatic in his right hand. He ordered me to organize any available unassigned troops for flank protection on the forward, left-hand side of the column, which I did.

We decided to put Sgt. Brown's M-19 at the head of the column. He had no 40mm ammunition left but we thought that the tracked vehicle would be more effective in breaking through obstacles than wheeled vehicles. All remaining artillery ammunition was expended and the guns were then destroyed. Most of the available trucks belonged to the 57th Field Artillery and were being driven by its men. Only the wounded who were unable to walk were loaded on the trucks. We did not move out of the perimeter, however, until we received a specific order from Maj. Gen. Oliver P. Smith over Capt. Ed Stamford's TAC radio. I was standing next to the radio when the message came through. That order was received about 1 p.m.*

After receiving Gen. Smith's order the column moved out and quickly ran into

The column moved south until it came to the first bridge that had been destroyed (map 11, p. 149). During that part of the trip, the column received small arms and automatic weapons fire from the high ground on the left, the marshes on the right and the road in front. We had some air cover. All of the aircraft were Corsairs (F4Us). The only F7F that appeared over the area was at Hill 1221 much later in the day. It should be emphasized that by this time there was no effective means of communication left. The troops from various units had become so commingled that there was no unit integrity. Consequently, there was no functioning chain of command and the column was moving of its own volition.

When the lead vehicles reached the first knocked-out bridge, and one of the trucks broke through the ice trying to bypass the bridge, the column came to a halt. The troops on the left-hand side of the column fanned out toward several buildings in the valley. They got mixed in with other soldiers. At that point, we were receiving heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire both from the north side (Hill 1456) and the south side (Hill 1221) of the streambed. We were taking heavy casualties. At this point, Lt. Tackus was critically wounded. He was shot in the back of the neck by a small-caliber bullet. While trying to help him, I could see the bullet lodged near his cervical spine below the base of his skull. He couldn't move.

I knew that something had to be done to neutralize the machine gun fire that was sweeping the road and bridge from the crest of Hill 1221. About this time, a fairly large body of troops, about a company-sized unit, moved across the valley floor, in a southerly direction, and disappeared from sight to the east of Hill 1221. Somebody said that it was A Company of the 32nd Infantry. I moved up to the road on the side of Hill 1221. There were quite a few soldiers huddled in a ditch between the road and the base of the hill. I tried to cajole them, encourage them or do anything possible to get them going so we could attack the Chinese on top of the hill. But most of them apparently had gone as far as they could go. An infantry officer laying on the bottom of the hill was also trying to rally the soldiers. He was badly wounded, but he urged the troops to move out even though he was unable to get to his feet. At any rate, I did get a few volunteers, perhaps a squad, and organized them for an assault on the hill. One of the men in the group was from Capt. Stamford's TACP. He had lost his trigger finger mittens so I gave him my scarf to wrap around his hands so they wouldn't freeze. He was killed later in the day.

Frankly, I wasn't sure that I'd ever make it to the top of the hill. I had not slept and had had almost nothing to eat or drink since Nov. 29. Halfway up the hill, I discarded my field overcoat because it was too heavy and restricting. After that, I was wearing a pile liner as an outer garment. Every step forward was a struggle. A Chinese machine gunner on top of the hill fired at me the entire time I was making my way up the hill. He nicked me several times but I finally got close enough to finish him off with two hand grenades. I had lost most of my makeshift squad on the way up the hill. My carbine was still wouldn't fire. It was very late in the afternoon when we reached the top of Hill 1221. Lt. Eichorn led another small group of soldiers up to the top from the northwest side of the hill. As soon as we entered the Chinese trenches, an air strike came in and plastered us. We were worked over with rockets, machine gun fire and napalm. There was one Grumman F7F in the group of four attacking aircraft. That was the only F7F I saw that day. The air strike finished off most of the remaining soldiers.

Following the air strike there were no live Chinese left in the immediate area of the crest of Hill 1221, which temporarily eliminated a problem for the truck column. There was still enough daylight to see. I scanned the area through my field glasses from this vantage point. Looking back toward the knocked-out bridge, I saw a company of what appeared to be North Korean soldiers traveling west, parallel to the stream bed, along the base of Hill 1456. I thought that they were North Koreans as they were dressed in grayish-white uniforms. The top part of their uniforms included fur-lined hoods. Their uniforms were not the same as the olive drab quilted uniforms the Chinese were wearing. They also looked larger than

Chinese. This group came up behind the truck column, moved along both sides of the trucks, poured gasoline on the wounded men and set fire to them. It was not a very pleasant sight to see. By then, a few of the trucks had bypassed the knocked-out bridge and were stopped along the road on the north side of Hill 1221. The truck column was no longer being effectively defended as far as I could determine. It was obvious that the trucks were not going to make it much farther. I could not observe any military activity taking place to the east, west or south of Hill 1221. My view in those directions was blocked to some extent by wooded areas and intermediate masks. Darkness fell.

After reviewing the situation for a while, I took a couple of men and moved off into a southeasterly direction and Lt. Eichorn took a few men and moved in a more southerly direction. The next time we met was in a hospital in Japan. Before leaving the top of the hill, I took an M1 rifle that would fire and about ten rounds of ammunition from a dead soldier. Shortly thereafter, I captured a Chinese soldier. Although I don't speak Chinese, I told him we wanted to go to Hagaru-ri. I put my carbine bayonet in his ribs and he seemed to understand my message. We meandered slowly down the hill and exchanged fire with several different small groups of Chinese along the way. While descending the hill, I couldn't see or hear anything on the east side of the hill. We finally got to the bottom of the hill just west of the second blown bridge. We proceeded south to the area of Hudong-ni and again exchanged fire with several Chinese units. Around Hudong-ni, we proceeded west and crossed the ice, then moved south and entered the Marine position through a marshy area. While crossing the ice we received rifle and automatic weapons fire from the Chinese on the shore. Luckily, most of their fire was well over our heads.

As we made our way south through the marshy area, I was suddenly challenged by a Marine sentry. I had a short discussion with him while he satisfied himself as to our identity. There were still four of us, including the prisoner. It was just before daybreak on 12/2. The Marine came out and led us safely through the minefield. The Marines then took charge of the prisoner and the rest of us were taken to an aid station. Late in the afternoon of 12/2, I was air-evacuated from Hagaru-ri aboard a Royal Hellenic Air Force C-47. As the plane lifted off of the airstrip, Chinese machine gunners at the end of the strip were firing at it. The starboard wing was hit several times. That aircraft was later identified as belonging to Flight 13 of the Greek Air Force which was attached to a squadron of the USAF. (I have never seen anything written about the operation that mentioned any Greek military personnel in the area.) The plane landed near Hungnam. I was first taken to the hospital ship, USS Consolation, then evacuated to the 172nd Army Hospital in Japan and later transferred to the 155th Station Hospital in Japan.

END NOTES

* Personal reports of battles have had varying recall of when the message from Gen. Smith was received by Lt. Col. Faith. Roy Appleman reported in *Escaping the Trap* (p.139), "About 3 pm ... Maj. Curtis said that the artillery observer's jeep-mounted radio picked up the following message in the clear: 'To Col. Faith: Secure your own exit to Hagaru-ri. Unable to assist you. Signed Smith, CG 1st Marine Division.'" "

In his manuscript of January 1953 Maj. Curtis did not mention receipt of a message at the beginning of the breakout, although he did report "Col. Faith, upon consultation with his staff, decided to try to break out of the perimeter and reach Hagaru-ri in a single dash rather than risk another night in the perimeter."

We searched an additional source, the forward air controller, Edward P. Stamford. He said: "At daylight [1 December] Col. Faith made preparations to fight south to Hagaru-ri and had me send a message requesting aircraft and to notify CG, 7th Inf. Div. of his contemplated action." Note that Stamford did not mention Gen. Smith, indicating he did not know they were attached to the 1st Marine Division.

Stamford last mentioned contact with air when units attacked Hill 1221. "At this time I was on the road

about at the foot of [the hill] and had been running strikes on [Hill 1221] and all the high ground north and northeast thereof. I had extreme difficulty at this time in running missions because the troops were now assaulting Hill 1221 on the south and the pilots of the aircraft were cluttering up the air with their own transmissions. Some strafing missions were run immediately to my front and on the steep side of the hill below the road where enemy troops were trying to attack the rear of troops assaulting the hill.” Many survivors of that action have reported friendly fire casualties from strafing and napalm.

It has been obvious to historians and students of Chosin that the battle for Hill 1221 sounded the final bugle call for Faith’s attempt to do the impossible. The climax came as darkness began to reduce visibility and prevent further air support. Here we close this report with two pilots remembering the last moments. They are Marine pilots Ed Montagne and Tom Mulvihill who were flying their Corsairs on an urgent mission to drop ammunition to the units fighting Hill 1221.

Montagne: “We circled the reservoir for a while trying to reach Boyhood One-Four [Ed Stamford] to get permission to make the drop, to no avail. Much yelling into [the] microphone. I do believe Tom [Mulvihill] tried to get Boyhood One-Four to calm down. . . So we finally went out over the reservoir, dropped down to almost water [ice] level, slowed up to about 100 knots and went in right over the truck convoy to make the drop. Just as we were about to reach the trucks, someone (I presume Stamford) yelled into the mike “You’re strafing us,” or words to that effect. We could see the troops huddled around the vehicles and up the side of the hill, their black forms against the snow. . . As I remember, Tom and I were shaken by their situation and there was some discussion about sending more planes to help them...In fact I felt bad that we were not able to do more to help them. To this day I don’t know if they ever recovered the ammo. Did it do them any good? Were we any help in our rocket and strafing runs?”

Tom Mulvihill “... we dropped small arms ammunition to them the last night they were in business, and we hung around until after dark strafing and trying our best to keep the Chinese from them. But it was all over, there was no doubt about it.”

MAJ. HUGH ROBBINS MEMOIR

IN THIS ISSUE we provide yet another point of view of the battle east of the Chosin reservoir, one which is especially valuable because it was written so soon after the experience. This memoir was written by Maj. Hugh Robbins while he was hospitalized in the Army Hospital at Osaka, Japan, following his medical evacuation from Hagaru-ri. At the time he entered the area east of the Chosin Reservoir he was adjutant (S-1) of the 31st Infantry Regiment. Additions to the original text are contained in brackets []. Photographs by Master Sergeant William Donovan and Master Sergeant Ivan Long who were present in the battle east of Chosin. Maps by Melville Coolbaugh are extracts from *The Chosin Chronology* © George A. Rasula, 1992, 2004.

BREAKOUT BY HUGH ROBBINS

On 24 Nov 1950 the 31st Regimental Combat Team was in a defensive position east of the Fusen [Pujon] Reservoir and out of contact with enemy forces. [RCT CP was at the village of Untaek, North Korea.] The 7th Infantry Division's RCT 17 had the honor of being the first unit to reach the Yalu River on the Manchurian border, and without much difficulty. The weather had been an obstacle, however, with temperatures ranging to 10 below zero.

Orders came from 7th Division Headquarters to shift to the left in all zones of the X Corps. The 1st Marine Division on our left was to move its forces west of the Chosin Reservoir and be replaced by our division on the east shore. Col. Allan D. MacLean [RCT commander], following a hurried conference with Maj. Gen. [David] Barr, 7th Division commander, gave orders over the phone to move a quartering party of the regiment, less the 1st and 2nd Battalions, to the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir immediately. On 25 November I had assembled the party and moved over the snow-covered trails (a road was a scarce luxury) to the south.

We halted for the night in Pukchong, site of the division rear command post. Col. MacLean met us and outlined the plan for the shift to the left. A gap was to be filled between the Eighth Army and the 1st Marine Division. The regiment was to relieve marine units of the Chosin Reservoir, then advance north to the Manchurian border. Initially we would have only our 3rd Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. William Reilly, the 1st Battalion of the 32nd Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Don Faith, and the 57th Field Artillery Battalion, less one battery, commanded by Lt. Col. [Ray] Embree. Division and Corps had other plans for the balance of the 31st RCT for the present.

The 1/32 had preceded us and was assembled in the vicinity of Hagaru-ri, a small village controlling the roads at the south end of the reservoir. Col. MacLean, with his S-2 [Maj. Carl Witte] and his S-3 [Lt. Col. Berry K. Anderson], preceded us to Hagaru to await the arrival of our quartering party and the 3rd Battalion. Late in the afternoon of 26 November our quartering party passed through Hamhung, dropping off guides for the 3rd Battalion following, and turned north toward Hagaru-ri. About 2130 hours we were halted on the road by a detachment of marines who controlled traffic through the steep and curving mountain pass ahead. We were able to talk by radio-telephone relay with our regimental commander already at Hagaru 30 miles away. Clearance was arranged for our little convoy and we moved north through the one-way section of the road, and to a point some six miles north of Hagaru where the CO had picked out a schoolhouse for our command post [Hudong-ni]. It was after midnight when we got into our sleeping bags on the cold floor.

At 0800 hours on 27 November, the regimental commander, myself, Lt. [William] McNally, our commo

officer, Maj. Witte [S-2] and Lt. Col. Anderson [S-3] drove north to the command post of the 1/32, a few miles away. There we had breakfast with Lt. Col. Faith and his staff. Col. MacLean was eager to get going as we heard that the marines [5th Marine Regiment] were pulling out that morning and would not wait for our troops to actually relieve them on the ground. No contact with the enemy had been reported in the area and all had been quiet. Our commanding officer was not anxious, but merely eager to get into our zone so a rapid move to the north could begin.

Along with Lt. Col. Faith we made a reconnaissance to the forward limit of the outposts vacated by the marines that morning, and saw nothing arouse suspicion of the vicious attacks that lay in wait. We did view bodies of Chinese soldiers who had been killed in front of a marine outpost a couple of nights before, but we felt they probably had been lost and wandered into the fire of the marines by mistake. The regimental commander directed that the 1/32 go into position that morning on the northeastern tip of the reservoir; that I should establish a forward command post for the regiment about four miles south of the 1st Battalion; and that the 3/31 was to go into position about two miles south of the CP. We would then await the arrival of 2/31 before proceeding northward.

After sending Lt. McNally to bring forward our command group of about 35 men, I began laying out the command post in an area just off the road along the lake [reservoir]. There were about 15 refugees in the vicinity and I put them to work digging a site for an operations tent and also got them busy collecting equipment left behind by the departing marines. Many of the marines we had talked with the night before actually thought they were being relieved to go to Hamhung and thence back to the States! About 1400 hours, Lt. McNally came back leading our command post group. We set up our CP and got ready for business. The work was slow digging into the frozen ground and it was after dark before we were prepared to operate within the tents. The CO and the balance of the staff elected to remain at the schoolhouse [Hudong-ni] for the night; they would come up the following morning. Having checked the defenses of the area to my satisfaction with the security platoon leader, I crawled into my sack and settled down for a night's sleep.

28 NOVEMBER

At about 0100 hours 28 November I was awakened by Lt. McNally shaking me and telling me to get dressed quickly and rouse the others. He also said the colonel had come up to our area. Grumbling that such a move was not at all to my liking and that it was probably not very important, I slowly pulled on my stiff and frozen clothes. Lt. McNally then told me the 1st and 3rd battalions had received probing attacks earlier in the evening by Chinese troops, and the attacks were being stepped up as each hour wore on.

The colonel had come forward from the schoolhouse [at Hudong-ni] and had gone to the 1st Battalion. I roused the others still sleeping and put everyone on guard in foxholes for the remainder of the early morning. Reports of enemy attacks began to come in with increasing tempo from both battalions and also from the [57th] Field Artillery Battalion. These attacks were becoming more aggressive and in considerable force. Our own CP, however, in its exposed and poorly protected area, went without detection by the Chinese. The enemy, "who wasn't there" in earlier reports, was very much there and giving our units the fight of their lives.

Col. MacLean came back from the 1st Battalion CP about dawn and reported things were pretty much under control and all units of the battalion were holding. The 57th Field Artillery reported about then that Able Battery was being over-run and that having fired all ammunition they were abandoning their guns. Their CP was also under considerable fire and partially surrounded. From our position we could hear the battles as they ranged from the north and south of us. The firing to the north had died down but Lt. Col. Reilly [3/31 Inf.] and Lt. Col. Embree [57FA Bn.] were still engaged in a continuing battle, sounds that

gave no indication of a letup. The 3rd Battalion reported its command post was under heavy and close-range attack. In quick succession reports came in that Reilly and Embree had both become casualties, though not killed.

TAKING STOCK

It was not until a few hours after daylight when the Chinese withdrew to the hills surrounding the 3rd Battalion area that a view of the situation was possible. A check revealed that King Company had been routed and had lost heavily, including two fine officers. The other companies had taken heavy casualties but had not been cut off. After recapturing its howitzers, the 57th FA Battalion hastily regrouped and moved to the perimeter of the 3rd Battalion. The fact that the enemy did not destroy those guns was a stroke of luck. The situation was grim indeed as the two battalions had suffered heavy casualties, including their commanders. The road south was blocked by the Chinese. From their position they determined the roadblock had been established between our position to the north and them; they were neatly blocked in. The 1st Battalion fared slightly better, not having suffered as many casualties, but was cut off on all sides in the same manner.

Our CP was immediately ordered to break camp and proceed with all haste to the north and join the protective perimeter of Lt. Col. Faith's battalion. We closed into the new area about 1500 hours 28 Nov. I reported to Lt. Col. Faith that we had 10 vehicles and about 35 men and would put them at his disposal. We could not very well operate as a regimental CP in a normal manner as every man was needed to man a weapon. Our command group would then consist of the regimental commander, myself as adjutant, Lt. McNally as the communications officer, and our radio crew. My sergeant major and his clerks along with the handful of security platoon men were sent out to one of the companies of the 1st Battalion. The battalion command post was located in a mud farmhouse situated in a small valley surrounded by high hills occupied by the troops of the companies. The occasional crack of small arms fire and the answering sputter of our own machine guns and the deep chug of our mortars could be heard. We stood by and made plans for the coming night. Marine aircraft were strafing and bombing the Chinese just over the hill to our front. The air attacks kept up until dark, after which it was up to us. Daylight would again bring us the much-needed air support.



Wounded Chinese soldier. "First morning of the attack. The Chinese soldier had reached the edge of our position and wounded SFC Adams (Photo D-03). Our medics bandaged him. The man squatting is a ROK from my platoon who could speak Chinese. The prisoner talked freely. Unable to walk, we left him."

Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan

A WELCOME HOT MEAL

During the past 24 hours we had eaten on the run, just cold C rations. That evening the Heavy Weapons Company [D1/32] kitchen was in full swing and despite the nearness of enemy fire produced a hot meal we enjoyed to the utmost. Then we settled down to await developments of the night. As usual, the Chinese began probing patrol actions about midnight and we knew that night would be no exception. We also reasoned that the Chinese, having failed to dislodge the outfit the previous night, would double their efforts to destroy us. The 1st Battalion S-4, Capt. Bodray, came in to report a critical shortage of ammunition of all types was beginning to show up and resupply would have to be effected the next day by airdrop.

We hugged the small gasoline stove in the battalion CP and waited. Col. MacLean and Lt. Col. Faith retired to a small side room and tried to snatch a few winks of sleep, while the officers and a few of the men around the CP nodded and exchanged small talk. About 2000 hours Lt. Col. Faith came back into the room and began calling his company commanders, and was assured that no activity was stirring along our front. A few minutes later we learned the remaining communication with our supporting artillery had gone out, leaving us without their much-needed support. That blow was greeted by silence from the colonel as he realized he would now be without help from a good defensive weapon.

Probing attacks began shortly before midnight. Col. MacLean joined us in the small room to listen to the reports from the companies by phone and radio. The battalion commander must have been on edge as he ordered several of us to leave the room and aid in the close-in defense of the CP. We went out and took up positions in the shadows of the building and contemplated what would happen next. Firing increased in the company areas around us along with the crack of incoming small arms fire over our heads. One of our own heavy mortars dropped a short round about 50 yards to our left and shook the building thoroughly. We later found out the same round knocked out one of our machine guns. Such things happen and nothing was said.

29 NOVEMBER

About 0100 hours 29 November enemy attacks had increased: the full force was now being felt by the entire battalion. All companies were getting savage assaults from the Chinese who were attacking regardless of losses. All weapons of the battalion were apparently firing as fast as they could be operated from the din going on about us. Mortars were throwing out their rounds as fast as they could; machine guns kept up their incessant bursts.

AN EERIE SCENE

Shadowy figures kept coming and going around the entrance of the CP as wounded were helped or carried into the relative safety of the area. Company runners made their way in and out of the building. A ghostly light pervaded the whole scene as a light snow began to fall. A faint moon tried vainly to shine. Flashes of fire from the bursting shells and flares lighted the area and added to the weird effect. There wasn't much I could do except stand in place and strain my eyes against the eerie scene before me, half expecting, I guess, some Chinese soldier to loom into view any minute. In a little while the firing seemed to die down to more sporadic bursts at different places about the perimeter. Lt. McNally had been called back into the CP but soon returned to my position. He told me in a hurried voice that the colonel [MacLean] had ordered the battalion to withdraw to the perimeter of the 3rd Battalion with which we had no communication. I recall glancing at my watch; the time was 0200 hours.

Our orders were to unload the trucks of cargo and load the wounded in preparation for the move. With some reluctance I realized that our CP truck of the regiment would be no exception and that all of our field desks and contents would have to be abandoned. There were to be no fires. The move was to be under cover of complete blackout. That eliminated the possibility of destroying abandoned equipment by fire. Headquarters personnel and medics were busy moving wounded to the trucks. The snow was now coming down in earnest and the footing had become extremely slippery. Drivers of the vehicles began the task of starting frozen engines, then driving the trucks out on the road. Since our own jeep driver was busy defending a part of the perimeter, I tackled the job of getting our jeep going. With the assistance of another soldier I managed to crank the engine to life. Lt. McNally came out of the CP and joined me as I wheeled into the column ready to move out.

Columns of troops formed on each side of the vehicles and moved to the front. All preparations had been

completed by about 0430 hours and the column began to crawl forward. Many vehicles that could not be started had to be left behind, but none of the wounded were without transport. That was the important task at the moment. It was strangely quiet behind as we moved down the road towards the 3rd Battalion. Our rear guard reported later the Chinese seemed content to allow us to withdraw without any extreme effort on their part to follow closely. Actually this must have been true. I believe the enemy spent time looting the area we had evacuated before organizing for an effective pursuit. Their need for supplies was as acute as ours. About daylight we had progressed to the vicinity of the former regimental CP site before the column was halted.

I walked forward along the vehicles and soon came abreast of Col. MacLean's jeep with only his driver. A few yards beyond was a bend in the road which shut out the view. I was informed the colonel was on the road making a reconnaissance of a reported roadblock that had caused the halt. A small straggling group came from the direction of the bend and told us a company of our troops was encircling the roadblock. No one seemed to know exactly where the colonel was, but I suspected at the time he was with the company going after the roadblock. That suspicion was proved wrong as I shall relate later; he was ahead of the company! As we waited for the go-ahead signal someone came down the line of vehicles yelling that vehicles were to get off the road and disperse in an open area on our left. We promptly drove into the area and dismounted. When some 60 vehicles were so placed, personnel were instructed to take up a defensive position in case the Chinese caught up with us again or tried to come in on our left flank before we could resume our road march. We waited for what seemed hours and were getting more concerned by the minute, as we knew the Chinese behind us would not fool around all day going through the abandoned area we had occupied, and would soon be hot-footing down the road toward us.

CAUGHT BY SURPRISE

Soon a small squad of Chinese did just that and were as surprised as we were. They had come trotting around a bend in the road not 20 feet from the nearest vehicle. In a moment of firing was going on all directions. The enemy must have thought they had run into an ambush and took to their heels. Lt. McNally and I had taken cover beside a mud house and for a few minutes I thought that a sizable force had begun an attack on our position. Then someone began and others repeated the call to cease fire, and all became quiet. Order was restored.

I made my way up the road again toward the location of the roadblock and once more came upon the colonel's jeep. This time his bodyguard and radio operator, who rarely ever left the colonel's side, were looking concerned and talking excitedly. I was told the colonel had not gone with the enveloping company toward the flank of the roadblock, but had gone boldly down the road directly toward the obstacle and had not returned. It might be explained at this time that about a mile separated our halted motor column and foot elements of the 1st Battalion from the site of the roadblock; and just in front of the roadblock was a hundred-foot-long concrete bridge over the frozen inlet of the reservoir. A scant 200 yards beyond the bridge was the encircled 3rd Battalion, our goal. I moved cautiously to the bend where I had view of the bridge. With field glasses I could make out troops along the bridge supports firing at some target on the opposite side of the bridge.

About this time Lt. Col. Faith came striding up with the news that his company had cleared the roadblock. The men I observed were our own troops holding the bridge and would cover our dash over and to the safety of the 3rd Battalion area. That was the plan. Start up the vehicles again, get them on the road and send them one at a time over the bridge which was still under fire from the surrounding hills, though it was held by our troops. With the Chinese at our backs there was no hesitation in anyone's mind. Drivers floor-boarded their accelerators as we ran the gauntlet. Although some of the vehicles got hit, no casualties were reported. We regrouped on the far side of the bridge. I felt quite lucky as we pulled to the halt, and

after inspecting our jeep found not a single hole.

Leaving the jeep parked in the new area I set out for the 3rd Battalion CP where I found Lt. Col. Reilly propped on a stretcher with a bullet hole through his leg and grenade splinters lightly sprinkled in his arms and shoulder. He was in good spirits and chatted with me about the situation in general. Lt. Col. Faith came in at this time and went into immediate conference with Reilly as they laid plans to consolidate the two infantry battalions and the field artillery battalion.

I cornered Capt. [Robert] McClay, 3rd Battalion adjutant, and got from him the story of the hammering and slashing they had taken from the enemy the night before. One had only to look about as he told the story to confirm everything he said. Dead and wounded GIs lay in and around the Korean mud house that served as a CP, and just a few yards beyond I counted 20 dead Chinese in their now familiar quilted jackets and tennis shoes. In fact, they were strewn throughout the area giving evidence of their penetration into the foxholes of the beleaguered battalion and its command post. How the Chinese were finally pushed back as dawn came, and how those soldiers of the 3rd Battalion kept firing until the Chinese retired to the



Dead Chinese soldiers. "Dead Chinese soldiers shot by Retherford and Donovan inside the perimeter near the 3/31 command post." – MSgt. Willard Donovan

protection of the hills, will be a tribute to that unit forever. Capt. McClay said simply there was nothing else to do and no place to go, so they just stayed in their holes and shot Chinese until the fanatical enemy had enough and withdrew.

TWO OFFICERS WERE DYING

Casualties in the battalion ran high, especially among the officers. Dropping by another mud hut that served as a hospital, I found Capt. [Melville E.] Adams, S-4 of the 3rd Battalion, dying of wounds as was Lt. [Paul N.] Dill [M3/31], a fine officer. Capt. Wamble of the 31st Medical Company was also in a bad way with bullet wounds through his lungs; he could hardly speak above a whisper as I chatted with him briefly. We had been good friends back in Japan and I was shocked to see Henry in such a state. He was pessimistic about our chances of getting out and showed me his .45 pistol which he dragged out from under the blanket. He told me that he would shoot himself rather than let the Chinese capture him. That was the last time I saw Henry, and though he was placed on a truck when we finally left the area, he was never reported to have made it to Hagaru-ri. How he fared we will probably never know.

When I returned to the area where Lt. Col. Faith had established his CP, I learned that Col. MacLean had been captured a short while before. It was reported he had mistaken a group of Chinese for GIs, and upon running towards the group he was fired on and wounded. He struggled to his feet, the report went on, and again started toward the group and was shot down once more. This time men in the group who were identified as Chinese dragged the colonel off with them as they withdrew. This action had taken place in the vicinity of the roadblock. The colonel was never seen again and is listed as missing.

As the afternoon [29 November] wore on we set about digging foxholes and establishing the 1st Battalion into the defenses of the other units already there [3/31 and 57FA]. I took over Col. MacLean's jeep and crew. Together we dug into the side of a small embankment, with an overhead cover of logs. This would give us partial protection from any direct hits by mortar shells or artillery bursts overhead. Leaving the men to lay out sleeping bags inside our new home, I went to search for Lt. Col. Faith and his executive officer. He had taken over after viewing the condition of the other two battalion commanders. I was appointed the "task force S-4." I set about organizing the collection of supplies in the area so that equal distribution could be made. About 1530 hours my supplies were built up by an airdrop. Two C-119 Flying Boxcars were overhead and after two trial passes spouted their cargo of colored parachutes with much-needed ammunition and rations. One of the chutes failed to open and the heavy cargo came down like a stone. Before we could get off a warning it hit among a group of ROK soldiers about 20 feet from me, killing one of them immediately. After that, when an airdrop was pending, loud yells of warning kept everyone alert for falling cargo.

'COPTERS TAKE OUT WOUNDED

About an hour after the airdrop two helicopters in the vicinity were contacted and directed to land within our perimeter. They evacuated a few of the more seriously wounded to Hagaru-ri that afternoon, but darkness prevented them from making but two trips out and back. The next day when our forward air controller (FAC) contacted them, we learned that other units in similar trouble had priority over us.

With a strengthened defense we stood our watches that night and set ourselves for attacks we knew would come about midnight. About 2300 hours our artillery began to fire and the cough of our mortars started up. Next the machine guns on the perimeter took up the chatter and were joined by the firing of our M-1 rifles. The crack of rifle and machine gun bullets coming in overhead told us the Chinese were coming from the hills to the south and into the defense of the newly arrived 1st Battalion. The Chinese wanted to try them out. The reception was too hot and in about an hour the Chinese gave up trying. With a lot of bugle blowing they returned to the hills. All became quiet again. And so it went for the rest of the night and early morning with only occasional firing of our mortars on suspected enemy positions and infrequent fire from our outposts. This was surprising as we had expected the enemy to double his efforts that night.

Daylight came slowly on 30 November with ground fog persisting until after 0800 hours. About 1000 hours the skies cleared and another air-drop came in, bringing more precious supplies. We were still short of ammunition and appealed over the radio to the aircraft for more. Maj. Gen. [David] Barr, our division commander, paid us a surprise visit that morning and promised to do all he could to get us better supplied by air. He was quite worried, as I had never seen him before, and for good cause. His information was that a tank-led task force had been trying for two days to reach our surrounded garrison and had been severely mauled and turned back. We then realized the full gravity of our situation. Lt. Col. Faith decided that he would prepare to fight our way out of the trap, but wanted to get better supplied with ammunition before making the effort.

That night we went into our holes and waited for the Chinese. They didn't disappoint us. About 2000

hours they began to lob 120mm mortars and light artillery into our perimeter. We could hear the dull boom of guns followed by the swishing of projectiles singing through the air all about our emplacements. Our 105mm artillery began retaliation but their fire went unobserved and probably did the enemy batteries little damage. The Chinese fire was in preparation for an assault by foot troops and kept up for about 45 minutes. Luckily none landed close to our hole to cause more than an occasional shower of dirt. We could hear the smack of steel when fragments hit an exposed vehicle, and that was often. Some of the men weren't as lucky, as I could hear calls for a medic from several directions.

MORTAR FIRE WOUNDS MEDICS

The aid station the 3rd Battalion had set up that afternoon was directly behind our hole and had the misfortune of receiving two near hits by incoming mortars which wounded some of the medics and those already wounded. The heavy stuff lifted and the enemy gunners began to step up their pace. The Chinese who had been creeping nearer and nearer all this time began to pour in with their burp guns and rifle fire. The snow outside our hole spurted every now and then as a slug plowed into the dirt. The air over my head was alive with the buzz and crack of incoming bullets. We could hear the yells of our own troops mingled with those of the Chinese as the outer defenses clashed.



"Bodies of soldiers from 3/31 killed inside the perimeter. Most are from Company L and Battalion Headquarters Company. Burial was not possible because of frozen ground."
Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan

trouble also, as a patrol was formed and came by our hole with the mission of locating and eliminating the sniper. He could not have been more than 20 yards behind us but was so well hidden in the murky darkness that they could not find him. He kept up his firing off and on until well after daylight, then his fire suddenly ceased. Someone got him or he took off. Anyway, it became safer to come out of our holes. Although the Chinese withdrew from the edge of the perimeter, they still kept up a harassing fire and casualties among our men continued. The morning of 1 December at about 0900 hours I crawled out to our jeep and dug up a can of frozen beans. Others found the same fare and we went back to our hole and built a small fire but it wasn't enough. We ate the rations anyway. Nothing so delicious as ice crystals in your beans! That was all we had so there wasn't much bitching about the chow. No one volunteered to scout for more wood to build another fire so the topic of food came to a rapid close.

Our troops withheld fire until the enemy was well within range, then cut loose with everything they had. Attacks were being made on all sides. There was business for everybody.

All night waves of Chinese soldiers attacked our lines and were held off. Our machine guns were taking a terrible toll and our artillery, having lowered their guns to fire point-blank at the screaming hordes, hacked huge holes in their ranks. Very few Chinese infiltrated past the outer perimeter and those who did were killed before they could do much damage.

1 DECEMBER

There was one sniper who proved troublesome all during the early morning hours by firing past our foxhole into the dirt beyond. Evidently he was causing others

CLOUDS LIFT, CORSAIRS ATTACK

The low-hanging clouds still persisted and we began to sweat for fear that our daily fighter cover and expected airdrop would not come. Our position on the ground was obscured by the clouds. About 1100 hours, however, the sun broke through and our fighters came in to begin one of the prettiest shows I have ever seen. They dived and dived again, covering the surrounding hills with deadly rocket and machine gun fire. They dropped oblong containers of napalm that sent up terrible pillars of flame. The Chinese dreaded napalm and cleared out when it hit nearby. Lt. Col. Faith came over to our hole and in a few quick sentences told me the time had come to get out of there. He told me we must get the trucks warmed up and the wounded loaded. At last we were going to try to break out of the ring of Chinese. Waiting for airdrops was futile. We set about rounding up drivers and getting the troops organized for the fight. It was within 10 minutes of my talk with Lt. Col. Faith when I was taken out of the play.



"Inside the perimeter. A small Chinese attack was moving in from the hill to the right and rear of the bridge. The M-16 Quad-50 machine guns are firing into the attacking Chinese."
Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan

I was making my way to the 57th FA Battalion CP when an explosion knocked me sideways and down to the ground. Stunned for a moment, I did not realize that a mortar round had landed no more than three feet from me and shrapnel had hit me in the arm and leg.

Lt. McNally also became a casualty from the same burst. I looked at my carbine which had been blown from my hand and discovered it was useless. The force of the explosion or some fragments had exploded several rounds in the clip and the slide mechanism would not work. Sgt. [John]

Lynch, my sergeant major, reached me in a couple of minutes and helped me to a slit trench nearby. He rolled up my pants, bandaged the gash in my leg and bound my arm. It wasn't bad as I could hobble around. Lynch led me to a truck and put me aboard, telling me to stay put. Other wounded were placed on the truck as preparations to leave were stepped up. I lay face down in the left front of the truck bed and watched what was going on through the slatted sides of the vehicle. Artillery gunners were dropping phosphorous grenades down the muzzles of their guns. Jeep drivers were jabbing bayonets into the tires of their abandoned vehicles and setting fire to them. Remaining records and documents that could not be risked to capture were set afire and supplies were soaked in gasoline and burned. The Chinese were well alerted to our plans and had begun to throw in more mortar fire and became bolder with their rifle fire. At last our trucks were loaded and our troops deployed beside the truck column. At a signal we moved out. Marine and Navy aircraft dove into the wall of enemy ahead and blasted with all they had. Ahead of our truck was a tracked vehicle mounting a 40mm gun, but short on ammunition. Also ahead of our truck was a jeep with a .30 caliber machine gun mounted on the front. This was our spearhead. Our troops on either side of the road moved forward but were dropping from the withering fire laid down by the Chinese as we moved forward.

NAPALM SPLASHES OUR RANKS

Then came one of the most horrible sights I ever hope to witness. A Marine Corsair diving toward the enemy line just ahead of our troops dropped a tank of napalm that slammed into our front line of advancing GIs. A wall of flame and heat rushed out in all directions, enveloping about 15 of our soldiers in its deadly blanket. The heat and flash caused me to duck momentarily. Looking back up I could see

the terrible sight of men ablaze from head to foot, staggering back or rolling on the ground screaming for someone to help them. This, coupled with the steady whack of enemy bullets into our ranks, stopped the advance. I am quite sure I recognized the helpless and blazing figure of Sgt. Dave Smith, my assistant sergeant major and one of the finest men I have ever known. He wasn't more than 10 yards off the side of the road and I was powerless to do anything for him. I had to turn my head. Officers and NCOs, through superhuman effort, rallied their men and soon our line of GIs began to move forward again, filling the blackened gap that had been blasted open minutes earlier. Our truck began to move forward once more and I breathed a prayer of thanks, the first of many prayers that day. At least we were through the first ring of Chinese who had surrounded our group two days before. They were still in the hills on our left and hidden in the brush along the road, laying down a hail of lead into our troops and trucks.

My leg began to throb and I had to keep shifting to keep a more severely wounded man from rolling on me. He was unaware of the whole ruckus and kept trying to raise up, especially when a bullet smacked into the truck. I quieted him the best I could by telling him we were going to get out, although I had my doubts. The other wounded on the truck just lay quietly and stared into nothing. Most of them had been wounded before that day and were on litters. None of them able to walk at all. As we moved forward in jerks and halts, a few frightened ROK soldiers tried to climb into the truck but were pulled off by GIs beside our vehicle. From my peephole I could see dead Chinese and American soldiers lying in little sprawling heaps on the side of the road, their blood forming pools from which steam rose into the freezing air. I remember looking at this and realizing the fight those GIs were making. Soldiers passing our truck called out encouragement and grinned as they went forward to fight more Chinese or fall themselves. The

enemy was giving way now and our men sensed it, following them more closely and with greater courage.



"Last photo inside the perimeter. Donovan had gone back to make sure all equipment in his mortar position had been destroyed, setting this jeep on fire."

Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan

About three miles down the road we came to a bridge which had been destroyed. Our motor column turned off the road into a wide riverbed to bypass the obstacle. Great mounds of frozen earth covered with a tough grass carpeted the riverbed. For about 100 yards we bounced and crashed up and down over those hummocks with the wounded screaming in anguish as they were jostled and slammed into one another. Luckily I still had on my steel helmet and thus was able to protect my head, although I had a bruised head for days afterward. We came to a final jolting crash and stopped. Our front wheels were down through a crust of ice in a small creek and no amount of effort on the part

of our driver could move the truck forward or backward. To top it off the engine went dead and the driver departed as enemy fire began to crackle around our stalled truck. Other vehicles began to come abreast of us and with more caution were able to ford the creek. Again I began to sweat. Was this going to be the end of the road?

After what seemed to be hours (actually a short time) a tracked vehicle backed up to our truck, hooked on a tow rope and pulled us through the creek to firm ground. Our driver returned and once more we moved

slowly forward. We reached the road and after a halt to allow other vehicles to cross the difficult bypass, we got under way. The hills were now on the right side of the road and on our left the ground fell sharply away to form a valley paralleling our course to the south. Heavy small arms fire was coming down at the column from the high ground on our right and the continual smack of slugs against the truck was unnerving to me, as I expected any minute to be hit by the next one. A heavy-set Korean soldier was lying next to me and once when I turned to look his way I saw his jacket sleeve jerk as a slug passed through. He just grunted and rolled his eyes. It had not hit his arm and had missed me by inches. Again our truck stopped. This time the word came back that another roadblock was holding up the column.

SOME WOUNDED GOT HIT AGAIN

To our left I could see ragged lines of Chinese troops forming in the valley below, even though our covering aircraft dived on them time and again. The Chinese were too far away for any effective rifle fire, but seeing them reforming for new attacks was no comfort. On our right the enemy were in the commanding spots on the ridges and were having a field day firing into our truck column and its escorting guard. Wounded men in the trucks were getting additional wounds and set up a mournful racket for someone to help them. Nothing could be done for them. Officers began forming groups to flank the roadblock ahead and also to clear the Chinese-held hillside overlooking our column. The men were reluctant to get going when they saw men on all sides of them being shot down by Chinese fire. At first a few began to inch their way up the steep hill that began abruptly at the roadside, then others joined. This action had a snowballing effect and a platoon soon took the top of the ridge and then went over the other side. This at least cleared part of the ridge, but fire was still coming from the roadblock and the ridges to the right front.

Dozens of soldiers huddled and crouched around the trucks seeking protection and not heeding the call of their officers to charge over the hill to support the initial group of GIs. The dull boom of enemy mortars began a new tale. Out to our left the bursts began creeping closer to our column. Included in this fire were deadly and much-feared white phosphorous shells which can burn the flesh right off one's bones in seconds. About this time a wild-eyed ROK soldier jumped into the truck and flung himself on top of the wounded causing them to yell with new pain. He wasn't wounded, just out of his head, I guess. But he wasn't so far out of his head that he failed to recognize what I wanted of him when I picked up my carbine and shoved the barrel in his face, yelling at him to get the hell out of the truck. I was so mad at the s.o.b. for jumping in like that I would have gladly blown his head off. He got out pronto and lost himself in the crowd of others milling in the area.



"On the way out on 1 December. The soldiers are from M3/31, part of the rear guard. The two men lying in the foreground are dead. The road is just over the bank (below) to the left. The trucks at this time are about 100 yards behind me. A Chinese foot column is less than 100 yards to the rear of the men pulling out. Heavy fire is coming from the hill in the background. Time was about 1530 hours."

Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan

As mortar fire continued to come closer I made up my mind, despite my aching leg, to get out somehow.

We had been stalled too long and it was growing darker by the minute. No progress had been made in reducing the roadblock and the Chinese were still pouring deadly fire from positions forward and above us. I pulled myself out between the other wounded and dropped to the ground behind the truck. I had the carbine with a full clip of ammunition ready to shoot.

Lt. [Charles] Curtis [I3/31] hailed me and came up to join me in the ditch for a quick conference. We decided there was only one thing to do - go over the hill as had the others, even though it meant taking a chance of getting hit. To stay would lead to capture or eventually getting shot in the truck. A decision was quickly reached to get going over the hill. Rallying about 20 other men to go with us, we jumped up and scrambled up the hill firing as we went. We couldn't see the Chinese but we knew where they were and could feel their fire coming in and around us. My carbine fired two times, then failed to function. I threw it down, picked up another from a dead GI, and kept going until we reached the top and safety on the other side. We headed back toward the road on the far side [beyond] the enemy held roadblock.

REMAINS OF A RELIEF FORCE

As we arrived at the road it had grown dark. We could see the burned-out hulks of American tanks. This had been the limit of advance of the task force [31st Tank Company] that tried in vain to relieve our surrounded force the day before [two days before, 29 November]. We came upon Capt. [Earl H.] Jordan, M Company [3/31] commander, who was organizing a group to knock out the roadblock from the rear. Once getting his band together, he set off and was soon banging away in a firefight. It was quite dark by then but we could see the flashes of gunfire. The group of 20 swelled to about 50 on the road and they sat around or milled about trying to decide the next move. There was no organization left. Men of all units were mixed up at this stage. Again Lt. Curtis and I came to our decision as to what to do. We were going on to Hagaru-ri where the marines were holding, or where we thought they were holding. What lay between, we could only guess. Maj. [Robert E.] Jones of the 32nd Infantry [1/32] and Capt. [Ted] Goss from the 57th FA Battalion [B/57FA] came up about this time and joined us with a few men they had led out. We formed two long lines of soldiers on each side of the road and moved out quietly to the south. As we moved along the group swelled in size until there must have been a hundred or more.

Crossing another bridge that had been severely damaged, we ran into an enemy outpost which immediately opened fire. Our troops dove off the road but kept going forward. I was near the tail of the column, having dropped back as my leg began to stiffen and slow me down. I had become separated from Lt. Curtis by that time, but Capt. Goss stayed with me, which I appreciated. Being left behind was no rosy prospect. When the group hit the sides of the road after being fired on they broke into two units, one going down a narrow-gauge railroad paralleling the dirt road, the other cutting sharply to the right and hugging the frozen lakeshore [reservoir] path. I was with the latter group. We were about 30 in number and actually had a better chance to move undetected through the Chinese positions. We passed through a small logging village [Sasu-ri] expecting any minute to be ambushed, but got to the other side without incident. Another few miles and we began to feel safer. This was short-lived for we got another sharp challenge in Chinese as we approached a bend in the path. We silently ducked to the right once more and kept going. A few yards further we arrived at the ice of the reservoir and moved across an inlet. After we moved about 800 yards a string of .50 caliber tracers licked out after us. The Chinese were poor shots in the darkness and no one was hit, though a few rounds came uncomfortably close.

About 2230 hours we could see flashes of machine gun and artillery fire in the distance. This was, in our estimation, the site of the marines at Hagaru. Our big concern was that the Chinese would have the town cut off from the north, the direction from which we were approaching. We had no information on the marines' situation prior to our breakout and it was anybody's guess as to the real picture up ahead.

HALT, AND SAFE AT LAST

We held a council of war and decided that we would risk it and move forward and take our chances. Staying overnight in the hills would invite freezing and perhaps capture, so moving ahead seemed the best bet. With caution and with greater intervals between men, we approached the flashes of fire, noise we could hear loud and clear. About a hundred yards along the route we were startled by a loud but unmistakable American "Halt!" Boy, that was the best word I had ever heard in my life. The marines challenged us, then led us into their lines. We were safe at last and could let down a little. They had been prepared for us as the aircraft overhead had alerted them we would be coming out during the night. Hot food and medical attention followed, then a place to sleep for the rest of the night. As I drifted off to sleep that night I could say my prayers with full assurance that I had a lot of assistance from the good Lord that day.

END NOTES

Although Hugh Robbins has been cited as a source by historians Roy Appleman and others, we believe it important that readers interested in Chosin see his complete manuscript. It reflects the mind's eye of one person who experienced Chosin and survived to tell his story, It's also important to understand the relationship between Robbins' experience and previous journals which provided limited insight into the Chinese side.

FAITH'S SECOND IN COMMAND: MAJOR CROSBY P. MILLER

THIS ISSUE of The Changin Journal we provide important background material regarding the activities of the 1st Battalion 32nd infantry, in the form of a after-action report dated October 1953 by the battalion's executive officer, Maj. Crosby P. Miller; written from notes made during his extensive hospitalization resulting from wounds and cold injury at Chosin. Students of Chosin will note that historians have had a considerable amount of detailed information available from reports by majors Miller, Curtis and Jones, about the activities of 1/32, yet none from field grade officers about Lt. Col. Reilly's battalion, 3/31; the two majors in 3/31, Couch (XO) and Storms (S-3), were both killed. Maps have been inserted to assist the reader in understanding the battleground. Discussion of content will be included in End Notes.

SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER

On or about 25 November 1950 the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, on a special mission to protect a section of the MSR of the 1st Marine Division between Hamhung and Hagaru-ri, was relieved of its mission by elements of the 3rd Infantry Division and ordered to rejoin the 32nd Regiment then fighting north to the Yalu River in the vicinity of Samsu-ri.

The Battalion moved out to Hamhung under my command as Lt. Col. Don Faith, battalion commander, went ahead to contact Col. Beauchamp, regimental CO, for our new mission. While the battalion was moving through Hamhung, I was contacted by a liaison officer, ordered to halt the battalion and to report to the G-3, X Corps, located at Hamhung. I turned the battalion over to Maj. Wesley Curtis, S-3, to assemble it in the northern outskirts of the city. On reporting to X Corps Hq, I received orders from Gen. Almond and Gen. Barr, 7th Division CG, to move the battalion north to the area of the 1st Marine Division and push up the east side of the Changjin (Chosin) Reservoir, moving as far as possible that day; and further, that the battalion was attached to the 1st Marine Division.

The battalion moved north immediately and reached the foot of the Funchilin Pass that night where it was stopped by a Marine traffic control officer. Permission was obtained to move up through the pass at first light the next morning. The battalion pulled off the road and bedded down. During the night, Col. Faith rejoined the battalion.

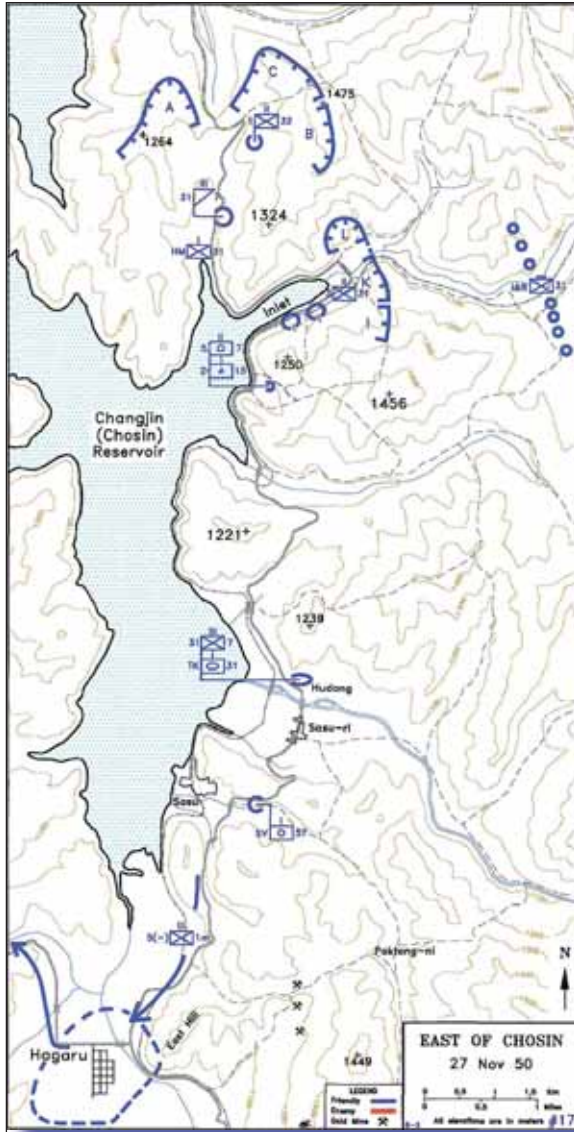
SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER

At dawn 26 November the battalion move up through the [Funchilin] pass, Koto-ri, Hagaru-ri, and into an assembly area on the east side of the Changjin Reservoir (vicinity 5377). The 5th Marine Regiment was relieved [?] by elements of the battalion and moved back to Hagaru-ri to join in operations by the 1st Marine Division west of the reservoir. Maj. Powell, battalion S-3 [S-2 ?], obtained information from the Marines that only rearguard action had been encountered by the Marines after they had gained the reservoir plateau, and further that patrols of Chinese had been engaged in long range rifle fire exchanges. A Chinese patrol had closed on a Marine outpost two nights previously, attempted to seize a prisoner, but fled with one M1 rifle after being fired on. The Battalion S-2 also had information from higher headquarters of large numbers of Chinese troops to our north, all south of the Yalu River in our zone of operations. Although indications pointed to small scale delaying action by the enemy to the Yalu, Col. Faith issued orders to keep the battalion alert and prepared for any eventuality.

That night Col. Allan D. MacLean, CO, 31st Infantry Regiment, arrived at our CP and I learned that the 31st Infantry was to move in behind us and relieve us after two battalions had closed in the area. The first

of these, the 3rd Battalion, was expected to close in the area with the 57th Field artillery Battalion by the following day. We were attached to the 31st Infantry. Col. Faith, who had reconnoitered the area forward, recommended to Col. MacLean that the 1st Battalion (32nd Infantry) move forward the following day to an excellent position alongside the reservoir about 13 miles north of Hagaru-ri. Col. MacLean approved this and the battalion moved forward the next morning, 27 November 1950, using all available transportation to shuttle the troops forward. I sent the battalion headquarters group forward about noon and went forward myself after being sure that all personnel, equipment and supplies had been cleared from the old area.

MONDAY, 27 NOVEMBER



While moving to the new position, I took notice of the terrain. The single road running north along the east side of the reservoir was dirt and barely wide enough for two trucks to pass. The ground sloped up steeply from the reservoir and was deeply cut by many stream lines leading to the lake level. The road twisted up and down over these cross-compartments, usually running around the widest inlets but crossing the narrow streams by narrow wooden bridges. The one modern concrete bridge at Sasu-ri (5475) on the entire stretch of road from Hagaru-ri to the battalion position had been blown. However, this stream was fordable by vehicles just below the bridge site. A narrow gauge railroad ran along the edge of the reservoir, at times running parallel to the road and then leaving the road in favor of more level terrain on the shoreline. The railroad crossed streams on its wooden trestles and no deck for walking. The reservoir was frozen over to a sufficient thickness of ice to support foot troops. I have been told since that the temperature was about 27 degrees below zero. This was further aggravated by a piercing wind which never ceased.

When I reached the new CP (5384), I found the battalion position to be on high ground which stretched about a huge horseshoe, the open end of which ties in on the reservoir. In order to cover this ground the battalion was extended beyond its capabilities, but the one road leading north was adequately covered. Able Company on the north and left end of the horseshoe was well disposed to block the road. Charley Company extended east from the right

flank of Able Company, along the northern side of the horseshoe to its bend. Baker Company closed off the bend and back along the southern leg to the road. Dog Company, Headquarters Company, and the Battalion CP were in a deep ravine immediately behind Able and Charlie companies. An ammunition dump was also located in the ravine. This ravine area was crowded. The battalion was thinly spread, but the position had excellent control of the ground and the key road to the north. The ground physically occupied was essential for a defense of the area. However, the battalion mission was to attack at dawn, 28 November, to seize the key road intersection at Kalchon-ni (5191) at the north end of the reservoir.

MONDAY NIGHT

Plans were laid on and orders issued for the next morning's attack, and the battalion settled in for the night after setting out outposts and putting in trip flares. By evening we were informed by Col. MacLean that his 3rd Battalion (31st Infantry) was in bivouac about three miles to our rear on the road. We had spent the rest of the day improving our position, digging in, registering fires of the 57th FA Battalion (located about 1500 yards from the 3rd Battalion, and the mortar fires of the 31st Heavy Mortar Company (Capt. George Cody's 4.2 mortars), with one platoon of the 32nd Heavy Mortar Company attached (Lt. Robert Reynolds). By nightfall the battalion was ready as it ever would be for any attack.

About 2200, trip flares were set off in front of Charley and Able Company. Firing started up all along the hill mass above the CP. Reports began to come in by phone of several attacks along each company position. Quite a few grenade explosions could be heard. The firing increased in intensity. A check of the situation revealed that Chinese patrols had hit all along our position apparently probing for our dispositions. Col. MacLean called off the dawn attack, deciding to bring forward his regiment to reinforce a very vague but disquieting situation.

TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER

At about 0030, 28 November, the attack came with a vengeance. Calls for artillery and mortar fire started coming in from Able and Charley companies. A phone call from Able Company reported that Capt. Edward Scullion, the CO, had been killed. Shortly thereafter, communications with Able Company by both phone and radio went out. Charley Company reported strong attacks but that it could hold. Baker Company was getting probing attacks but was making out alright. Col. Faith ordered Capt. Haynes, the assistant S-3, to get up to Able Company when the firing quieted down and take command of the company. Capt. Biggers, CO of Company D, left the CP with Haynes with the intent of checking on his heavy machine guns and 75-mm recoilless rifle crews and of improving the 81mm mortar fire support which his company was putting out. In about 30 minutes Biggers rushed into the CP stating that he and Haynes had run into a group of Chinese just off the road short of Able Company. The Chinese had shot down Haynes and forced Biggers to clear out. Biggers went back to his company, got some men and went up to get Haynes. They encountered the Chinese and drove them off, losing another man, the mess sergeant of Able Company. Haynes was brought back to the air station which by this time was overflowing into the CP which was the only structure in the area in which heat and light could be provided. Haynes had received bullet and bayonet wounds which, coupled with exposure, took his life shortly thereafter.

During this time, I later discovered, Able Company counterattacked with one platoon and drove the Chinese out of their position. The firing soon died down to occasional rifle shots. As dawn broke, 28 November, I went up to Able Company to check on the situation and communications. The company was still cleaning out isolated Chinese in holes and collecting their dead and wounded. They had spent a wild night but acquitted themselves well. Marine Capt. Stamford and his tactical air control party had come through the night with relatively light wounds. He already had Corsairs on the scene and was working over the Chinese to our front with Napalm and rockets. 1st Lt. Smith had assumed command of the company.

Back at the CP I was told that Charley Company had several casualties but still was in good shape as was Baker Company. However, the Chinese were still busy. An attack late in the morning drove in the right flank of Charley Company. A counterattack to regain the lost knoll resulted in failure in that the Chinese had brought up several heavy machine guns with which they could rake the crest of the knoll. The battalion Sergeant Maj., Master Sergeant Russavage, was hit in this attack and, when the troops were pushed back, he had to be left behind. Corsairs were called in to rake the area but Charley Company still

was unable to take the knoll. By this time Baker Company was fighting off Chinese on their front, the battalion rear!

At the same time columns of Chinese troops were observed to the east beyond range, marching openly on the ridges toward our rear. This obviously meant that the Chinese plan was to contain our battalion and bypass our position with the main body. Col. MacLean, who had joined us earlier with a truck mounted

SCR 399 radio, stated that the same thing was happening to his infantry and the artillery battalion behind us. We watched Chinese troops bypass us to the east the entire rest of the day, 28 November. Two truckloads of Chinese and one tank, a Russian T-34, moved down the road toward our position but were knocked out by the combined efforts of three Marine Corsairs and three Army F-51s. These planes were called in by Marine Capt. Stamford, head of our attached TACP (ANGLICO).

Night fell and again the Chinese hit the battalion positions. By midnight Charley Company was hard pressed and the left flank of Baker Company was also in trouble. A report from a Baker Company lieutenant, Lt. Mazzulla, stated that the Chinese had broken through the company's left flank positions and were in a draw leading directly to the battalion CP. All remaining Hq & Hq Company personnel were moved out to stop the expected attack. It never materialized and Baker Company closed off the gap.

WEDNESDAY 29 NOVEMBER

However, Charley Company was so weakened by continuous attacks that Col. Faith ordered a platoon of Baker Company out of its position to reinforce Charley Company. This added strength allowed Charley Company to beat off the Chinese once again. Our 4.2-inch mortar fire was dropping off in its intensity because the heavy mortar platoon supporting us was also under heavy attack. I climbed the hill at about 0300, 29 November, to the CP of Charley Company and talked the situation over with the company commander, Capt. Dale Sievers. In a short time almost all activity ceased in this area but firing began to build up on the left flank on Able Company's front. At about 0030, 29 November, I received a phone call at Charley Company CP from Col. Faith who stated that the battalion would withdraw to join forces with the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry, to our rear. He directed me to organize the conduct of a rear guard action with Able Company. The withdrawal was to commence at about 0430.

I moved over to Able Company and found it under attack with one platoon cut off on the left flank. Lt. Smith, the commander of Able Company, had launched one unsuccessful counterattack to reach the platoon and was about to launch a second. I discussed the withdrawal with Lt. Smith and directed him on my order to pull out down the draw to his rear. Upon reaching the road he was to move the platoon along the ridge line with the company minus, moving back parallel to the road about one hundred yards above it until we rejoined the battalion.

The second counterattack failed but by this time the battalion had cleared. I ordered Lt. Smith to move out, knowing that the protection of the battalion rear was more important than relieving the cut off platoon. Prior to the start of Able Company's withdrawal, the Chinese launched an attack for which they paid dearly as most of them were clearly silhouetted against the snow. The withdrawal of the battalion was conducted with little difficulty even though the Chinese followed closely, blowing weird calls continuously on their bugles. Occasional burst from a light machine gun [which] passed over us landed on the battalion when we started to rejoin, and they opened up on us before we could identify ourselves, but the firing was stopped before any casualties were sustained.

The battalion was halted at (5282) just north of an ice covered inlet on the south side of which I could see positions and vehicles of the 3rd Battalion (5481). Upon finding Col. Faith, I was told that when the

battalion moved along the road on the north side of the inlet, it had been fired on from across the inlet. Col. MacLean, thinking this to be friendly fire, had crossed the ice to inform the 3rd Battalion to cease fire. he had reached the other bank after being hit three or four times. Col. Faith had realized that the fire was coming from Chinese who were surrounding the 3rd Battalion. He was able to get some of our troops across the ice and kill most of the enemy along the ice directly below the other battalion positions. These same troops managed to remove the logs blocking the bridge which was subject to small arms fire from the east further up the inlet.

All trucks crossed safely and the 1st Battalion troops linked up with the 3rd Battalion. Here I found Col. Faith who stated that Col. MacLean had never reached the friendly lines of the 3rd Battalion. Col. Faith [then] assumed command of what might be called a provisional regiment or a task force. I was placed in command of the 1st Battalion; Maj. Storms commanded the 3rd Battalion; and Lt. Col. Tolley (information provided by Maj. Jones) commanded the 57th FA Battalion which had sought refuge within the perimeter early that morning.

The task force perimeter was organized with 1/32 in position on the north along the south bank of the inlet and bending back to the south across the road and railroad to link up with 3/31. On the battalion line from right to left I had Able, Charley, Baker, with D Company behind them along the road. Col. Faith directed that a platoon size force of Dog be kept free as a task force reserve. While we were digging in, two airdrops of ammunition and rations were made, controlled by Capt. Stamford, who was able to establish radio contact. The area was small and many parachutes fell to the Chinese. The night of 29-30 November was comparatively quiet although far from restful. The Chinese made constant small scale probing attacks which kept all troops on edge.

THURSDAY 30 NOVEMBER

The 30th of November brought mostly harassing mortar fire of about 50 or 60 millimeter in size, and one brief period of shelling by a weapons of about 75mm size. This latter weapons fired about 15 shells which whistled over the battalion CP and burst on a knoll just inside the far edge of the perimeter. All rounds burst in about the same spot with no attempt made to traverse or search. To the best of my knowledge

no one was hurt by this weapon. I believe that enemy activity was kept down to a considerable extent by the presence of Corsairs which Capt. Stamford had working over the enemy.



Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan, L, 3/31

During the day, Gen. Barr, CG of the 7th Division, flew in by helicopter and talked briefly with Col. Faith. Two other Marine helicopters evacuated four of the most seriously wounded of the task force. I understood from Col. Faith that Gen.

Hodes, assistant division commander, was

trying to get a relief force through to us, using the 31st Infantry Tank company. I was especially concerned with frostbite and passed the word to the companies to be sure that each man changed socks before nightfall. Up to this point, there were few cases of frozen feet in that Col. Faith did not believe in the shoepac, but in ordinary combat boots and overshoes coupled with daily changes of socks with the extra pair of socks kept under the shirt to dry out from body heat.

We had brought all our wounded out from the first position to the north and a check of the aid station

disclosed better than 60 men in the battalion aid station. We were seriously low in medical supplies. The aid station was set up under a canvas tarp stretched across the railroad culvert or cut, with another canvas hung on the sides to cut the wind and a makeshift stove set up inside to dispel some of the chill. A standard GI cook stove was in use to heat soup for the wounded. The battalion CP was of the same makeshift construction and was set up about 20 yards from the aid station. Two sets of telephone wires were run from the CP to each company and to the task force CP.

THURSDAY NIGHT

About midnight, 30 November - 1 December, the Chinese again hit the perimeter, particularly along the road from the southwest into C and B companies. Two dual 40-mm guns and two Quad-50 self-propelled AAA carriages of the 15th AAA located within the perimeter inflicted terrific casualties on the enemy, especially a Quad-50 which had been laid on the road in front of C Company. The Chinese made repeated attempts to knock out these SP vehicles. No penetrations occurred in the area of 1/32, but the reserve was used by Col. Faith several times during the night to restore positions elsewhere on the perimeter.

FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER

A gray cold morning (1 December) came with a low ceiling and snow flurries with the task force perimeter still intact. The number of casualties was tripled with an unknown number of lightly wounded men staying on the line to fight. During the night the battalion aid station had received a direct mortar round hit which had wounded all the aid station medical personnel. Medical supplies were completely exhausted by dawn. Also, the battalion CP received a direct mortar hit which perforated the canvas shelter, wounded Capt.s Bigger and Thompson. Maj. Jones and Warrant Officer Wester who were inside the CP on the telephones were unhurt.

Col. Faith called a meeting at his CP. As I walked to the meeting I noticed scores of dead Chinese throughout the area. I was amazed to note that many of them wore low quarter canvas shoes similar to a tennis shoe. They also must have been suffering from frostbite. Col. Faith's stated he was taking it on himself to order a withdrawal and that all communications with higher headquarters were out. Further, no assistance by the Marines was possible. The artillery battalion commander stated that only a few rounds of 105mm ammunition were left in his battalion. The heavy mortar company CO stated he was in the same shape. The AAA ammunition was almost expended.

Col. Faith issued this order: 1/32 would lead off, penetrate the enemy positions along the road and clear the road for movement of the truck column to Hagaru-ri to link up with the 1st Marine Division. The 57FA Battalion and Heavy Mortar Company would expend the remaining ammunition in support of the assault, destroy pieces and tubes, and fight as riflemen in the center of the task force column. 3/31 was to follow and protect the rear of the task force. All 1/4-ton trucks and trailers would be destroyed and all wounded to be loaded on the remaining operable vehicles. He further instructed Capt. Stamford to request support of at least ten aircraft overhead at all times to cover our withdrawal. The attack was to begin on his order after the arrival of aircraft. I asked for one SP gun to lead the truck column, knowing this vehicle would be of help in clearing physical roadblocks. This request was granted.

Back at the CPI I found Capt. Stamford's radio repairman working on a dead radio, then called the company commanders together. I issued orders for all 1/4-ton trucks and trailers to be destroyed and the remaining vehicles to be unloaded and contents destroyed. Wounded were to be prepared for loading on the trucks. Everything to be left behind was to be destroyed. The companies were to move out along the road in column of companies after an air strike in the order: C, B, D and A. The truck column was to follow the lead company. The lead company was to engage any resistance encountered, destroy or contain it to permit the passage of the battalion and the fall in behind as a reserve. The next company in column

was to take the lead and repeat the process. If resistance were too strong to be overcome by the leading company, the second company was to be committed. The move was to commence on my order. All ammunition was to be picked up from the dead and wounded and distributed to able-bodied men.

The air-ground radio was finally repaired (a remarkable feat at 27° below zero) and a request was sent out for air support. There was strong doubt that the Corsair pilots could find the task force as a light snow was falling. However, as our situation was desperate and this was our last chance, the air support request was sent on a "May Day" basis. Corsair pilots took off from the USS Leyte which was supporting us and found the task force in spite of the limited visibility (information from Navy Capt., then Commander, B.E. Day, Navy Air Operations Officer on the board).

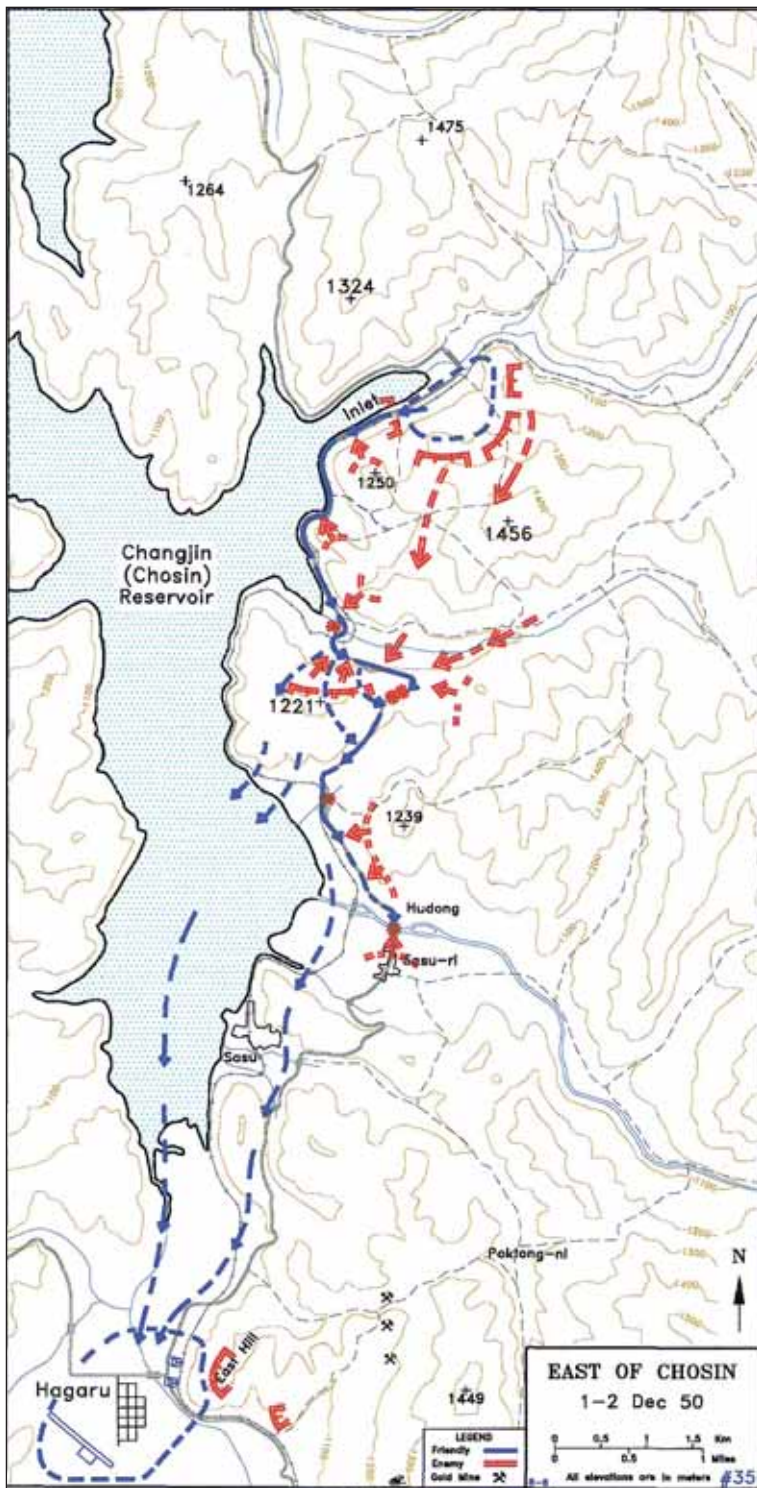
FRIDAY AFTERNOON BREAKOUT

At about 1300 Col. Faith ordered the air controller to bring a strike in over the perimeter to hit the Chinese across the road in front of 1/32. By this time the battalion was ready to go. The lead Corsair dropped a napalm bomb a second early and it struck along side the 40-mm gun carrier. Eight or ten men of Charley Company were set on fire by the flaming gobs of jellied gasoline. Most of these men were seriously burned before they could be rolled in the snow and their burning clothes extinguished. A napalm bomb from the second Corsair landed squarely on the Chinese troops astride the road. Many of them broke and ran even though not actually hit. Charley Company, in spite of its own fire casualties, charged into the Chinese and a pitched battle started. I ran forward on the road, climbed up and looked into the railroad cut. Not ten yards away were three Chinese manning a heavy machine gun and firing into Baker Company on the left flank which was moving forward on my order to help clear the enemy positions. I fired one round from my carbine and it jammed. However, a BAR man sprayed them and put the gun out of action. The fight was over in a matter of seconds and C and B Companies moved out down the road and on the right of the road. At the first slight turn of the road was a log barricade of three or four eight-inch logs. I signaled the SP carrier which moved into the logs diagonally and nudged them far enough to one side to allow the trucks to clear.

The trucks moved out behind the infantrymen. My radio operators (2) were both missing by this time, so I sent runners forward to Baker and Charley Companies with instructions to keep troops on the left of the road; the troops were giving way to the right of the road and the shelter of its embankment. I do not believe the runners were able to accomplish their mission as no change in troop dispositions became evident either then nor later. I started trotting forward to catch the leading company. When I reached the first major stream crossing the road (5379), I could see that the bridge was blown and could see our troops moving up the valley below and to the left of the road which ran diagonally up the hill on the far (south) side of the valley where the road disappeared over the hill through a small saddle (5478). Enemy fire was coming from this hill.

As soldiers were working up the lower slopes of the hill, I was hopeful that, by the time the truck column could get across the stream, the hill would be cleared. The dual 40-mm SP easily crossed the stream, but the trucks, rocking and bumping over hard hummocks of swamp grass and dirt, were unable to cross. It was deep and very narrow, and effectively trapped the front wheels. I immediately turned the SP back to throw a cable on each truck and tow them through. All this time scattered fire was striking from the hill to our front (south). I moved forward to a small house on the far side of the valley where I found Maj. Wesley Curtis, battalion S-3, now executive officer, with a small group of men preparing to move directly up the hill. We moved quickly to the road without casualties and the men started working up the hill. I moved up the road to find out what was going on there. By this time several trucks had crossed the stream and joined me on the road sheltered from fire from the hill crest by the steep bank to the right (south) of the road. I noticed, at this point, that friendly troops (3/31) on the high ground across the valley (north

side) were leaving the hill (5479) and moving down to the road. I assumed that Col. Faith, whom I had last seen at the blown bridge in the valley, had ordered them forward to assist in clearing the hill from the right flank. These troops, however, were promptly replaced by Chinese who opened up with long range fire across the valley into the exposed left flank of the truck column. Capt. Stamford was able to get an air strike on the Chinese across the valley which helped but immediately thereafter his radio battery went dead. Radio communications to both ground and air were completely out.



DETERMINED TO SURVIVE

I moved up the road to discover if the high ground covering the road had been cleared, spotted a heavy machine gun trained on me from just above the road, dove for cover, but was too slow. Just before I reached cover I was hit in the upper left leg (three bullets later removed from leg), and, at the same time, the last three fingers of the left hand were neatly removed by a bullet which I believe came from across the valley. As my first aid packet had been expended long ago, I removed the glove from my right hand and pulled it over the wounded hand to stop the bleeding. The soaked glove soon froze and effectively cut off the flow. Nothing could be done about the leg, so I lay in the ditch taking stock of a very sorry situation.

I sent a lieutenant lying in the ditch near me back to Col. Faith to tell him I was hit and that the only way to clear up a desperate situation was to get troops up to clear the high ground above the road. Apparently previous attempts had failed. ... The ditch and road around me were dotted with dead and wounded with casualties increasing every minute. I tried to get men around the trucks to move directly up the Hill [1221] and clear it, but each man who tried it became a casualty. After what seemed to be eternity, friendly troops were observed on top of the hill and the truck column moved out. Fortunately for me, Capt. Stamford came by walking beside his jeep, spotted me and had me loaded across the hood. The time then was about 1700 hours and darkness was falling.

The column was started through the efforts of persons unknown to me by unloading the wounded on operating trucks and getting them moving. The column inched forward up the hill, through the saddle,

past two or three M4E8 tanks. ... The column continued to move slowly down the winding road, past the first bivouac area of the battalion [1/32] north of Hagaru-ri and over a section of narrow-gauge railway trestle to the road again. Jolting over the exposed ties, coupled with wounds and cold, left me, by this time, in pretty bad shape. The column stopped on the road (5377) and I heard someone say there was another road block ahead. During the interminable wait, I checked the five or six soldiers near me and found that those who had weapons (two) had only one or two rounds of ammunition left. No other ammunition was available.

FRIDAY NIGHT

At about 2400 absolute silence was broken by two mortar round bursts to the right of the road opposite the truck column about 100 yards away. Very shortly two more rounds hit the right of the road by closer in. It became apparent that soon we would be bracketed. I could visualize the wounded hit again and possibly a truck set on fire making us an even better sitting target. The leading truck driver (the dual 40-mm had run out of gas far back) came to me and asked permission to make a run for it. He said he had been forward 100 yards and had not seen nor heard any movement. It was a choice of the unknown against the known danger. I told him to move out.

The column moved out and proceeded about 200 yards down the road to a bend. As the lead truck started around the bend, a terrific blast of rifle and machine gun fire hit the column from a hill mass to the left of the road (5376). The lead truck driver apparently was hit as the truck piled into the ditch and blocked the road. The column was stopped cold and being punished mercifully by a hail of lead. I rolled off the hood of the jeep onto the road and into the ditch away from the hill. A wounded soldier was already there. He started crawling across an open space to gain the shelter of the railroad embankment. However, he was silhouetted against the snow, was hit again and killed. Soon the firing died down, and I realized that the Chinese would rush the trucks and, for the immediate time, the best bet was to get clear of the trucks. I knew my hands would freeze while crawling if I didn't get gloves, so I crawled out to the dead soldier. I made sure he was dead, but, before I could get his gloves, a burst of machine gun bullets hit all around my head. Fortunately, none hit me, so I got back to cover.

A few minutes later I crawled down the ditch to the lead truck where I found Lt. Mazzulla (?) sitting in the back. He asked me to help get him loose as his clothes were frozen to the seat. I couldn't climb into the truck with the wounded hand and leg, but I was able to hand him my pocket knife. he was unable to cut himself free so he handed back the knife and thanked me. Knowing I could do no more with no help available, I crawled away from the truck toward a pile of ties. A few rounds hit around me but I reached the shelter of the ties safely. Here I found tow GIs both unhurt but unarmed. One started over the RR embankment, but promptly dropped back, saying that some Chinese were moving toward us on the other side of the embankment. We started crawling down the ditch beside the road moving south away from the Chinese. The soldiers soon outdistanced me, but one came back to help. I told him to go ahead while they had a chance, and they both soon disappeared.

A few minutes later someone shot at me from the direction I had come. I lay doggo and no more shots came my way. About ten minutes later I crawled on around the bend, found a stick, got to my feet, found I could hobble on the crutch and struck out across the field toward the town of Sasu-ri, just beyond the Paegamni-gang [river]. Having studied the terrain on the way up I knew exactly where I was. But even though I knew the bridge was blown, I bypassed the schoolhouse near the bridge where the 31st Infantry Hq had once been located, climbed up on the road and walked out on the bridge to the break.

Then I realized that I was in pretty bad shape, wandering around without reason. Also, I realized my right hand was frozen stiff around the stick and the fingers were white and hard as a rock. From crawling in the

snow, the remaining fingers of the left hand were also frozen. I retraced by steps to the end of the bridge, got down the bank to the water and started across the stream on ice and rocks. Almost across my foot slipped, and the left foot went in the water far enough to fill the boot with water. I kept on into the town which appeared to be deserted. I found a house with some comforters on the floor, sat down and, after what seemed hours, got out my penknife, opened it with my teeth, cut the left boot laces and got it off. The extra socks under my shirt were dry and I got one on the bare left foot. By this time I felt no pain, just an overall numbness, so I pulled a comforter over me and went to sleep. I woke up in daylight when a Korean woman and her son came in. She was quite frightened, but she dressed my finger stumps with some kind of powder, gave me some milk (GI, powdered, I think) and left hurriedly.

SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER

About 0900, 2 December, I heard shots in the village and realized that Chinese were searching the houses. But I had no place to hide so I lay there. Two Chinese soldiers came in, one armed with a rifle and the other with a typical Russian tommy gun. They each took a cigarette from me, laughed when I pointed out my wounds, and then left. Soon two more Chinese came in. These took my cigarettes and lighter, ransacked the house and left. A third pair came in, took a can of meat and beans from my pocket, searched the house and left.

Nothing more occurred until about 1200 when a young American soldier crept in the back door. No more Chinese were in sight in the village, but we could see approximately a company size unit digging in astride the road on the high ground just to the south (5374). I decided to try to walk around their left flank, advised the soldier to get a stick and hobble as though he were wounded. I realize now that an attempt to get around the enemy left flank was a bad choice, but it was a short-lived attempt at any rate—we got no more than two houses down the street when two Chinese appeared, shoved me into a shed and marched the soldier with me off up the road to the troops on the hill. I heard no shot so I assume he was held prisoner. I can only assume that I was not taken prisoner throughout the whole time because of my appearance. Unshaven, dirty, covered with blood and with frozen fingers now beginning to blister and turn black, I believe I was being left to die. By this time I was again exhausted so I crawled into a shed behind a pile of wood and again went to sleep.

SATURDAY NIGHT

I was awakened by being dragged out of the shed by two more Chinese who took my wallet, tore my ID card in half, but gave me back my folder of family pictures. One enemy soldier threw a round into the chamber of his rifle, pointed it at me, and, after what seemed to be eternity, turned and walked away. At a temperature of at least 20° below zero, I still wiped sweat from my face. I picked up the largest piece of my ID card, found another house back off the street and, entering it, found two soldiers hiding there. One was wounded in the back and the other in the foot. Again I slept.

SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER

The next morning, 3 December, I crawled out and took a look at the hill (5374) to the south where the Chinese had dug in. There was no sign of an enemy soldier. I estimated they had pulled out straight south along the road to Hagaru-ri or had move out around the east side of that town and the marines there. I knew that the odds were in favor of the Marines having to pull out and that I'd better get moving or get left behind.

Considering the condition of my leg and hands, I decided to use the road and move south until I ran across the Marines or more Chinese. I told the two soldiers what I intended to do, but they would not come with me. I hobbled down the road past a knocked out T-34 tank, up the hill past two M4E8 tanks to the top—no Chinese were in sight. I went down the hill to the sawmill town of Sasu (5274). Here a North Korean man

came out and led me into a house where another man and two women gave me some coffee (GI soluble) and gave me a penciled note which said in both Korean and English, "Go to the edge of the reservoir and come down it to the Marines." One of the Korean men in broken English told me he would guide me down the road-that the road was open. We started out but when we reached the south edge of the town, we spotted Chinese on the hill to the south. My guide left me and disappeared.

I decided to go over to the railroad on the edge of the reservoir and try to get by the Chinese that way. As I reached the west side of the town, two Corsairs made three passes at the town. I dropped into a ditch when 50-caliber slugs tore up the house behind me. One napalm went over my head, hit about 30 yards behind me and took some of the chill out of the air.

When the air attack was over, I moved on to the railroad and down the side of the reservoir, sweating out the high ground to my left-Hill 1203 (5273). I tripped and fell and almost quit because the snow seemed soft and warm. I felt as though sleep was all I needed. But I remembered a description of the symptoms of freezing told me by a friend of my father's who was an Alaskan expert. I realized I was freezing so I got up and after what seemed hours of effort and stumbled on. I had lost my stick cane in the fall. Finally, I reached a point from which I could see Hagaru-ri with tanks spotted around it. This gave me enough strength to keep going until a jeep came out and picked me up.

The rest is routine-treatment in the Marine aid station where I saw Capt. Stamford and was told that Maj. [Robert E.] Jones and Maj. [Wesley] Curtis had gotten out, flown out by C-47 (one the last) to Hamhung, then to Japan and then to Camp Pickett, Virginia, by 19 December 1950. Thereafter, it was just a long siege, nine months, in a hospital and then back to duty.

END NOTES

It is interesting to note that Maj. Miller does not mention the visit by Gen. Almond on 28 November to Faith's CP. One can only assume that he did not witness the event.

This report verifies that Faith learned about Tank/31 attempts to break through to the Inlet from Gen. Barr's visit. Note also that "two other helicopters" came in and evacuated four wounded. Three of the four evacuated are known to have been Lt. Col. Reilly, Lt. Col. Embree and Dr. (Capt.) Galloway, the regimental surgeon.

During Faith's meeting at his CP prior to the breakout he "stated that he was taking it on himself to order a withdrawal and that all communications with higher headquarters were out." Faith apparently did not inform Miller nor Curtis about his conversation with Gen. Barr the previous day, shortly after the Almond's conference at Hagaru-ri with Smith, Barr and Hodes. Barr must have mentioned the conference he had attended which included Smith's position regarding his inability to provide assistance to units east of Chosin. These factors would have influenced Faith's announced decision, yet it's difficult to understand why Faith did not provide more background about the situation to Miller.

He then "instructed Stamford ... to request support ... to cover the withdrawal" If Stamford had the ability to request air support we cannot agree that all communications was out; radio relay was available. Maj. Miller's statement was first published in the June 1991 newsletter of the Army Chapter Chosin Few.

1ST BATTALION 32ND INFANTRY

IN THIS ISSUE of The Changin Journal we continue with background material regarding the activities of the 1st Battalion 32nd infantry. This is a report dated October 1953 by the battalion's operations officer (S-3), Maj. Wesley J. Curtis, written at the USMA West Point between September 1951 and January 1953 based on notes Curtis made while hospitalized in Japan. Students of Chosin will note that historians have had a considerable amount of detailed information available from reports by Maj.s Curtis, Miller (CJ 06.25.05) and Jones about the activities of 1/32. Maps are inserted to assist the reader in understanding the battleground. Editorial comments are inserted in [brackets] or in End Notes. We pick up the report at the time the battalion began its move to the Chosin Reservoir.

MAJ. WESLEY J. CURTIS, FAITH'S OPERATIONS OFFICER (S-3)

SATURDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1950

Lt. Col. Faith rejoined his battalion at approximately 0030 hours; he had driven all the way to Pukchong to learn of the change in plans and had then driven back. The troops slept restlessly because of the bitter cold and they moved about all night. Chinhung-ni was on the main supply route [MSR] of the 1st Marine Division, so there was considerable traffic on the road. A railhead was also in operation at the foot of the pass. Traffic on the pass up to the plateau was one-way and the plan to move the battalion at 0630 had to be coordinated with the traffic regulating point at the foot of the pass. The battalion commander, the operations officer, the operations sergeant and the sergeant major left the assembly area at 0600 in two vehicles and started up the pass. The executive officer, Maj. Crosby Miller, was to follow with the battalion at 0630.

Up on the plateau the road was covered with ice and some snow. Road signs soon indicated various units of the 1st Marine Division. Upon reaching Hagaru-ri at the southern tip of the reservoir the party turned right up the east side of the reservoir into the area of the 5th Marine Regiment. The command post of the 5th Marines, the officers learned, was located in the area of its advance battalion some 12 miles north of Hagaru-ri. The other two battalions were located along the road at about four-mile intervals.

While driving north, Col. Faith and his party met the commanding officer of the 5th Marines at about 0930 who was driving south on an inspection of his area. He introduced himself as Col. Murray and stated that he had been expecting Faith. He assigned an area to Col. Faith for his battalion on a piece of high ground near [533775] and arranged for communications with his headquarters and the issue of rations, ammunition and gasoline. He stated that he had no definite plans at that time for the movement of his regiment and that although Faith's battalion was not attached to him, he would expect to assume control of it in the event of a general attack on the 5th Marines. He requested that Col. Faith report to his command post for a general orientation after his battalion closed in the assigned area.

Col. Faith's battalion closed into its assigned assembly area by 1500 hours. The area was in the form of a partially closed perimeter. Local security was posted but artillery support was not available. Immediately thereafter Col. Faith his S-3, S-2 and his Heavy Weapons Company commander, Capt. Erwin Bigger, departed for the CP of the 5th Marines. There Col. Faith and his party were oriented by the CO, XO and S-3 of the 5th Marines. Little was known of the enemy situation or plans for future operations. Col. Murray stated that he was going to a meeting at 1st Marine Division HQ the following morning and would undoubtedly get additional information for Col. Faith. Faith and his party then went to the battalion

HQ of the lead battalion of the 5th Marines. From there they made a partial reconnaissance of the area prior to dark and then returned to their CP shortly after dark.

The last Regimental Combat Team [RCT] of the 7th Infantry Division, the 32nd, landed on the beach at Iwon on or about 3 November and went into an assembly area near the beach. The 17th RCT was already some 75 miles to the north and the 31st RCT was securing the long supply line behind the 17th. Seventh Division Headquarters had been established at Pukchong. The 1st Marine Division was working north from Hamhung; and the 3rd Infantry Division was in the Wonsan area. Indeed it appeared that the 32nd Infantry might finish up the war in reserve and not get in a fight again.

The first night on the beach at Iwon a group of officers and men stood around a campfire in the 32nd RCT area speculating upon when the war would end and which division would be detailed for occupation duty. Maj. Spencer P. Edwards, the talented and well-trained regimental S-2, was inside the S-2/3 tent pouring over the latest Corps Intelligence Summary and plotting enemy dispositions on his map. Presently he joined the group around the campfire, and after gazing speculatively into the fire for a few minutes announced, "I predict that the U.S. Army is headed for the worst disaster in its history."

The group around the fire smiled – these G-2s and S-2s and their crystal ball gazing! Then Maj. Edwards quoted some doctrine he had taught as an instructor at the Ground Gen. School at Fort Riley: "A commander must base his estimate on the enemy's capabilities – not what he believes the enemy's intentions to be." The group smiled again – those teachers and their manuals – they just don't apply in this crazy war in Korea.

Exactly one month later TIME magazine reported to a startled nation: "The United States Army has suffered the worst disaster in its history." That was essentially a correct report; schoolteacher Edwards had been right – but too many people had smiled.

This account covers the operations of the 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry during the ensuing month. The 32nd was a battle-tested and efficient combat team when it landed at Iwon; within one month it was a defeated and decimated unit. What happened to it on a small scale, and the mistakes it made on a small scale, are typical of the actions of all the UN forces in Korea during that period of the war.

My purpose in writing this account is to point out the lessons learned and to re-emphasize the old lessons that were not learned too well. No one wants to place blame or to criticize: every man involved did his duty as he saw it to the best of his ability, far beyond the point of normal physical endurance, and with remarkable moral courage. The mistakes made were natural and unavoidable errors in judgment.

From the beach at Iwon the 32nd Infantry moved by motor and rail first to Pukchong, then southwest along the coast to secure the long route of communications to the Corps Headquarters at Hamhung. By 15 November the RCT (less the 3rd Battalion) was assembled in a blocking position some 35 miles northeast of Hamhung in the vicinity of Kujung-ni (387459). The 31st RCT was farther still to the northeast, and the 17th RCT was way out to the northeast, approaching the Manchurian border against little or no opposition. The 3rd Battalion 32nd Infantry was assembled in the vicinity of the division command post north of Pukchong.

From the assigned blocking position the 32nd RCT did extensive patrolling by small foot patrols to the north, northeast and northwest. Motorized patrols were of little value because of the poor and limited road nets. Despite continued reports from Korean civilians of the presence of Chinese troops in the area, no contacts were made. Among our forces, elements of the 31st Infantry were contacted to the northeast, but

no contact was established with friendly elements to the west or northwest.

During this period communication with Division HQ was through X Corps HQ in Hamhung. Supplies were drawn directly from corps dumps in Hamhung. Neither communications nor supply was satisfactory due to the unusual distances involved. The Combat Team Artillery, the 48th FA Battalion, constructed an airstrip for liaison planes.

The weather was rapidly becoming colder and there was snow on the high mountains to the north. The regiment was not prepared for winter in either clothing or equipment. Each company had only a kitchen fly for tentage. Vehicles lacked chains and tarpaulin covers. The troops had been issued shoepacs, long underwear, pile liners, and a parka shell. They were short of gloves and of correct sizes in many items.

Morale, however, was good; everyone expected the war to end in a few days. The strength of the battalion was at about 90% plus an average of about 50 ROK soldiers in each company. The organization of the battalion was essentially as it had been when the battalion left Japan in September. There were no shortages of major items of equipment.



Photo by Joseph Rodgers, 2/31 Infantry.

HAPPY VALLEY

The soldiers called the blocking position “Happy Valley” – and considerable time was devoted to training and recreation. On November 21 the 1st Battalion was left by itself in Happy Valley when the remainder of the RCT moved to join its 3rd Battalion north of Pukchong.

On the following day, Wednesday the 22d, the 1st Battalion celebrated Thanksgiving Day with a football game and a special dinner – expecting that they might be moving the next day. That day – the 23d – the 7th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division, moved into Happy Valley

to replace the 1st Battalion, who received orders to move to the vicinity of Pukchong on the 24th.

The morning of the 23d, the 1st Battalion dispatched a quartering party composed of the adjutant, company guides, the commo officer, and a wire team to the new assembly area. That evening a Quartermaster Truck Company arrived from division HQ to assist in moving the battalion.

The next morning – the 24th – the battalion moved before dawn on the 160-mile road march to Pukchong. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Faith, went ahead by himself to get his instructions at regiment HQ since he had been out of communication with the regimental commander for three days. Col. Faith left his executive officer, Maj. Crosby P. Miller, to move the battalion.

The battalion column reached the outskirts of Hamhung at about 0900 hours where it was met by a division liaison officer from corps HQ. He instructed Maj. Miller to halt the battalion, have it turned around, and report to corps HQ for further instructions. The LnO had missed Col. Faith, who was on his way to Pukchong and therefore out of communication with his battalion.

CHANGING DIRECTION

The Battalion S-3 started to assemble the column in a schoolyard and prepare it to march in a different direction. The executive officer proceeded to corps HQ to receive the new orders for the battalion commander. There he was told that the 1st Battalion would move to the area of the 5th Marine Regiment on the east side of the Chosin Reservoir and await the arrival of other 7th Division units. He was told that the battalion was not attached to the Marine Division, but that a change in boundaries had been effected which included the 5th Marine Regimental sector in the 7th Division area.

The battalion column was assembled in the schoolyard by 1100, where it proceeded to eat C rations. Over the jeep radio of the Marine Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) attached to the battalion, came a broadcast from Tokyo in which Gen. HQ announced that Eighth Army had launched an offensive designed to quickly terminate the war. The word was that American divisions in Korea would be back in Japan by Christmas; this word spread quickly and drew cheers from the troops.

At 1130 hours the S-3 departed with guides to locate an assembly area for the night. The battalion was to follow after a half hour. The S-3 picked an area in the vicinity of Chinhung-ni (356460) at the foot of the long winding defile leading up to the plateau which contained the Chosin Reservoir. The battalion was enveloped in this early darkness – about 1645 – and its men attempted to protect themselves from the bitter cold of the night. Orders soon told them that the move would continue at 0630 the following morning.

SUNDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1950

The morning of 26 November was cold but clear. No firing had been heard during the night and no communications had been received. The morning was spent in the care and cleaning of equipment; preparation of shelters; and replenishing rations, motor fuel, and some items of winter clothing from the 5th Marine Regiment supply point. At approximately 1130 hours the ADC of the 7th Division, Brig. Gen. Hodes, arrived at the battalion CP. He had flown to Hagaru-ri by light aircraft and driven north to the battalion area by jeep. He informed Col. Faith that the 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry, Heavy Mortar Company of the 31st Infantry, and the 57th Field Artillery Battalion, less C Battery, were proceeding north to the 5th Marine Regimental area. He also stated that the regimental commander [MacLean] and his staff, plus his I&R Platoon, a detachment of medical personnel, and a detachment of communications personnel, would arrive shortly. Further, he said that Col. MacLean would assume command of the composite task force. [This was not a “composite task force” when, in fact, it was MacLean’s RCT-31 that was ordered to Chosin with the 1/32 attached and the 1/31 detached. –GAR] He added that the Tank Company of the 31st Infantry was on the way. Because of road conditions, weather, and distance, the company had an extremely uncertain time of arrival. Gen. Hodes, while eating with the battalion CO, stated that the overall situation in the X Corps area was vague and the mission of the 7th Division was uncertain pending news from the west. Col. Faith told Gen. Hodes that he was able, provided a tank platoon and artillery support from the Marine Division, to attack to the north before the arrival of other elements of the 7th Division. Gen. Hodes disapproved this plan and departed the Battalion area at approximately 1300 hours.

Shortly after 1300 Col. Faith, his S-2 and S-3, his company commanders and platoon leaders, went on a detailed reconnaissance of the area of the forward Marine battalion. They found that, by Army standards, this Marine battalion occupied a very small goose egg, and that most of its perimeter was on low ground. The perimeter was, however, outposted by small security forces on high ground outside the perimeter. Col. Faith found that extensive foot patrols to the north and east during the morning had made no enemy contact.

Col. Faith and his party returned to his CP at dark. At approximately 1800 hours Col. Faith received by jeep messenger a copy of a 5th Marine Regiment operations order of that day, 26 November 1950, which directed the movement of the 5th Marine Regiment from the east side to the west side of the Chosin Reservoir beginning early on the morning of 27 November. This in effect meant that Col. Faith's battalion would be the only unit on the east side of the reservoir until the arrival of additional 7th Division units; and that during the changeover he had no assigned mission or orders. He therefore contacted Col. Murray, the Marine regimental commander, by telephone and asked for additional instructions. Col. Murray had no information or instructions for him but suggested that he proceed no farther north without orders from the 7th Division. [The Marine RCT-5 order moved only one battalion to Yudam-ni on 26 November; the remainder moved on the 27th, at which time 1/32 moved to the forward position followed by the remaining units of RCT-31 (except 2/31) as they arrived later in the day. – GAR]

Shortly after 1900 hours Col. Allan D. MacLean, commander, 31st Infantry, RCT-31, his executive [S-2, Maj. Carl Witte], his S-3 [Lt. Col. Berry K. Anderson], his S-1 [Maj. Hugh Robbins] and his communications officer [Lt. William McNally] arrived at Col. Faith's CP. Col. MacLean immediately stated an intention to attack to the north as soon as his task force [RCT-31] was closed in the area. Col. Faith promptly asked permission to move his battalion early in the morning of November 27 then occupied by the leading battalion of the 5th Marines. This, as we know, is the area that had previously been reconnoitered by Col. Faith and his staff and commanders; it will be referred to hereafter as Area "A". Col. MacLean approved this plan and steps were taken immediately to coordinate with the 5th Marines and to plan the move.

At approximately 2030 hours the CO of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion [Lt. Col. Embree] arrived at Col. Faith's CP and stated that the remainder of the task force [RCT-31] was on the march and would arrive in the area before dark on the following day. Col. MacLean then decided to establish his command post in a schoolhouse approximately one mile to the south of Faith's CP. Col. MacLean established telephone communications with the 1st Marine Division at Hagaru-ri and, through them, to X Corps HQ at Hamhung. He was unable, however, to establish communications with 7th Division HQ at Pukchong.

MARINES MOVE OUT – ARMY MOVES IN

Monday, 27 November, was another clear and cold day. Shortly after dawn, the 5th Marine Regiment began moving south by motor shuttle. Despite some snow the roads were dry and by mid-morning truck traffic on the road was raising dust. As the map shows, the road follows the shoreline of the reservoir and for the most part is on low ground. Since none of the high ground in the area was in friendly hands, we must assume from subsequent events that the entire movement was under enemy observation.

Col. Faith's battalion, 1/32nd Infantry, moved by shuttling in organic vehicles, starting at approximately 1300 hours. The move, except for the rear supply dump, was completed by 1530 and the battalion had then closed into defensive perimeter A. During the afternoon the Heavy Mortar Company of the 31st Infantry also occupied its assigned position as indicated on the sketch. During the late afternoon the 57th Field Artillery Battalion and the 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry moved into area B. Registration of artillery and mortar defensive fires was not completed prior to dark and continued up until about 2030 hours. During the afternoon, the I&R Platoon of the 31st Infantry was dispatched on a foot patrol? up the valley leading to the northeast from Area B. Significantly, no member of that patrol ever returned or sent back any communication. The task force HQ [RCT-31 Forward CP], with a Medical Detachment and a Communications Detachment, was established as shown on Sketch A approximately halfway between the two defensive perimeters.

Shortly after dark the battalion adjutant [Maj. Robert E. Jones] and his quartering party which had left the battalion on the morning of 23 November rejoined the battalion, having driven some 200 miles that day from division HQ at Pukchong. They were heartily welcomed since they had with them a two-week supply of mail including some early Christmas packages. At approximately 2030 hours the liaison officer [Lt. Rolin Skilton] from task force HQ [RCT-31] arrived with an operation order that directed the 1st Battalion to attack to the north at dawn. Paragraph 1a of the operation order gave no information of the enemy [as it normally does]. The company commanders were then called to the battalion CP with instructions to bring the mail orderlies with them, and Col. Faith, at about 2130 hours, issued his attack order to his company commanders. Then, after passing a few pleasantries and opening mail, the commanders returned to their companies with the attack order and the mail orderlies loaded down with mail.

CHINESE ATTACK

Within 45 minutes, scattered rifle fire was heard in the Company A area on the northwest side of the perimeter. The commander of Company A, Capt. Scullion, stepped out of his CP to investigate the firing and was shot dead by a group of Chinese soldiers who had infiltrated his company area. Within a period of ten minutes the entire north portion of the battalion perimeter was under determined attack. The assistant S-3, Capt. Haynes, was sent to assume command of A Company but was mortally wounded on his way to join the company. Subsequently both the A Company mess sergeant and first sergeant were killed attempting to recover the body of Capt. Haynes. The crew of a 75mm recoilless fire in the C Company area fired one round, disclosed their position, and were immediately overrun. The rifle was dragged away by the enemy. Shortly after the attack started wire communication with task force HQ and the 57th FA Battalion went out. After some difficulty, radio communication came in and reported that both those positions were also under heavy attack. The 57th Field Artillery was unable to fire sustained fire support to the 1st Battalion because of the more immediate necessity of defending its own position and firing in support of the 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry. The Heavy Mortar Company experienced difficulty in delivering sustained fire support because they had placed their base plates in marshy ground and the plates were shifting. By midnight no serious penetration of our perimeter had been made.

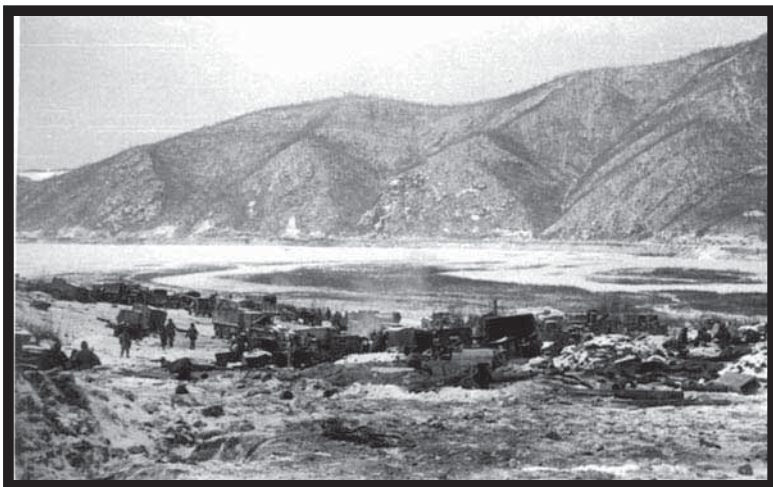
TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 1950

The general attack on the battalion perimeter increased in intensity shortly after midnight and by 0300 hours the high ground on the right flank of C Company and the left flank of B Company had been occupied in strength by the enemy. The weather had turned colder during the night; further, it had started to snow again. Soldiers of all companies reported many malfunctions of weapons and a low supply of ammunition. At dawn the enemy attack reached its peak but no further penetrations of the perimeter were made and the attack soon subsided. During the first hour of daylight the wounded were evacuated from their positions and efforts were made to redistribute the limited supply of ammunition. Shortly thereafter, B and C companies attempted to regain the high ground that had been lost on the east side of the perimeter. These limited attacks were made without artillery or mortar support and did not succeed. The 81mm mortars of D Company were shifted and within an hour mortar fire was available from the east side of the perimeter. Efforts to obtain fire from the 57th were ineffective because of communication difficulties and enemy pressure on the gun positions.

At approximately 0900 hours the battalion supply officer arrived in the area with the battalion supply section and a resupply of ammunition. He had spent the night in the vicinity of the task force HQ [MacLean's RCT-31 forward CP]. At approximately 0200 hours interrogation of a captured Chinese soldier disclosed to the battalion S-2 that the Chinese attack was to envelop both sides of the Chosin Reservoir. At approximately 1100 hours telephone communication was re-established with task force HQ which reported it was moving into the perimeter of the 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry. B and C companies

resumed their attacks with mortar support and continued to attack throughout the afternoon, but were unable to seize the high ground they had lost.

At approximately 1400 hours the CG of X Corps, Maj. Gen. Ned Almond, and Col. MacLean arrived in the battalion perimeter. Gen. Almond had landed in the vicinity of task force HQ in a helicopter and he



“Crowded center of the Inlet perimeter
Photo by MSgt. Ivan Long, Hq/31/7

and Col. MacLean proceeded to Col. Faith’s position in a jeep. Gen. Almond decorated Col. Faith and several other member of the battalion with the Silver Star. The general then announced that the enemy that confronted us, he was convinced, were remnants of retreating Chinese divisions, and he reiterated that our mission was to attack north to the Yalu River. Gen. Almond then departed and Col. MacLean remained in the battalion perimeter.

By approximately 1500 hours weather conditions had cleared considerably and tactical aircraft arrived overhead. The Marine tactical air control party with the battalion established radio communication

with the aircraft and successfully conducted an air strike on the high ground east of the perimeter. By the time the air strike was completed, however, dusk was settling and Col. Faith decided to consolidate his positions for the night and to discontinue the attacks of B and C companies. All available personnel, including clerks, cooks, drivers, etc., strengthened the perimeter.

Col. MacLean attempted to return to his CP but found the road south of the perimeter had been cut by the enemy. He then prepared to spend the night at Col. Faith’s CP. As a result of the day’s operations, ammunition supply was again running low and several wounded who were in the aid station could not be evacuated. The attack on the position resumed shortly after dark. Col. MacLean decided to relieve the 57th FA Battalion of the mission of supporting Col. Faith’s battalion. Col. Faith then had only his organic mortars and the heavy mortars of the 31st Infantry to support his perimeter. Several heavy mortars went out of action when their standards cracked or broke as a result of firing high rates at maximum charges in the extreme cold. By midnight the entire battalion was in a tough spot as enemy mortar and small arms fire increased and the supply of ammunition in the battalion decreased.

WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 1950

Shortly after midnight the task force [RCT-31] commander, Col. MacLean, directed Col. Faith to make his own decision as to whether or not he would continue to defend his present position or fall back and join the remainder of the task force in Area B. [This differs with the Robbins report. Col. MacLean was not the type of commander who would leave such a decision to a battalion commander. – GAR]

A penetration of the left platoon of A Company that threatened the mortar positions influenced Col. Faith at about 0130 to decide to fall back. The battalion staff immediately started plans and instructions for the move. All kitchen trucks were to be emptied and loaded with the wounded. A Company was to secure the left flank by moving over the high ground to the east of the road. Artillery support as an aid in breaking contact was not possible because the perimeter in Area B was also under heavy attack. In Area B, one penetration had overrun the 3rd Battalion CP and the battalion CO [Lt. Col. William Reilly] had been

severely wounded. The move was planned to start at 0400 hours.

Preparations for the move did not proceed in an orderly fashion because of lack of control due to missing key personnel who had been wounded in squads and platoons. By 0400, however, the move was in progress as planned and the enemy did not react to it. Contact was broken and the battalion moved slowly down the road, harassed only by intermittent small arms fire.

No enemy roadblock was encountered until advance elements reached the bridge over the neck of the reservoir just outside of Area B perimeter. However, Company C maneuvered to attack it from the ground above the road and members of Company B attacked directly across the ice to knock it out. The entire battalion was inside the perimeter in Area B by 0900 hours. Col. MacLean had been killed or seriously wounded while crossing the ice. Later efforts to recover him were unsuccessful.

Within the new perimeter conditions were extremely desperate. Company L of the 31st Infantry had been overrun during the night. The 3rd Battalion CP had been overrun. Cannoneers of the 57th FA Battalion had been killed by small arms fire while serving their howitzers. The perimeter was very small and was entirely on low ground while the enemy occupied high ground beyond the perimeter. Ammunition, rations and medical equipment were in short supply.

Col. Faith immediately assumed command of the entire area and the task force hereafter will be called Task Force Faith [in this report]. The task force perimeter was reorganized as shown in Sketch B. Col. Faith decided to defend a relatively small perimeter on low ground rather than attempt to seize high ground and defend an over-extended perimeter. Tactical aircraft appeared in the area about 1100 hours and bombed and strafed the high ground outside the perimeter. This allowed badly needed time to readjust the perimeter and to prepare positions. The tactical aircraft also carried back with them an urgent request for aerial resupply.



Airdrop at the Inlet.
Photo by MSgt. Ivan Long, Hq/31/7

Shortly before noon, the CG of the 7th Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. David Barr, arrived in the perimeter by helicopter and talked in private with Col. Faith for about 20 minutes. Col. Faith never disclosed the contents of this conversation to any other officer in the perimeter. He did state, however, that the assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Hodes, was forming a task force in Hagaru-ri composed of a platoon of tanks and a composite platoon of riflemen to attempt to relieve the task force.

Shortly before dark a flight of six cargo planes (C-82) arrived over the perimeter and proceeded to drop supplies by parachute. A good portion of the supplies fell outside of the perimeter and could not be recovered. It is estimated that approximately 75% recovery was affected. Ammunition was redistributed and medical supplies were turned over to the aid stations. Efforts to systematically distribute rations by supply personnel were ineffective because of the limited supply of rations that was dropped. From dark until midnight the area was ominously quiet. Artillery firing could be heard to the west on the other side of

the reservoir and occasional bugle calls could be heard to the north.

THURSDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 1950

Shortly after midnight the enemy resumed probing attacks around the entire perimeter, concentrating on the two points where the road entered the perimeter. In the Company A area the roadblock built around a heavy machine gun and 75mm recoilless rifle, was overrun and some members of the crew were dragged away as prisoners. Throughout the balance of the night the enemy used flares, whistles, bugles and apparently undirected automatic weapons fire to harass the perimeter. By dawn, however, the enemy had not made a determined attack against the perimeter at any one point.

Shortly after dawn the men inside the perimeter built fires to warm themselves and those fires drew no reaction from the enemy. The morning was cold and clear, and it was generally felt from the comparatively easy night that the worst part of the enemy attack had been withstood and that surely a relief column would reach the area that day. During the morning a litter-bearing helicopter made two trips into the area and carried out four badly wounded men. One of them was the commander [Lt. Col. Reilly] of the 3rd Battalion 31st Infantry.

An effective air strike hit the high ground outside the perimeter about noon and shortly after noon came another aerial resupply drop. Again some of the supplies were dropped outside the perimeter and could not be recovered. As the afternoon wore on it became apparent a relief column was not going to reach the perimeter that day and that at least one more night would be spent in the area.

During the late afternoon, Col. Faith and his S-3 worked out a detailed plan to counterattack a penetration of any part of the perimeter. These counter-attacking forces were composed of men from the field artillery HQ, the infantry battalion HQ, and Heavy Weapons Company. Wire communications within the perimeter were improved and ammunition was redistributed. One feature of the aerial resupply was that an ample supply of 4.2-inch mortar ammunition had been dropped. As darkness settled the word was passed: "Hold out one more night and we've got it made."

Shortly after dark enemy activity was heard to the north. It followed the usual pattern of bugle calls, whistles and flares. The most logical avenue of approach to the perimeter from the north was across the ice of the narrow neck of the reservoir adjacent to the north side of the perimeter. Efforts were made to break the ice with 4.2 mortar fire but failed as the ice was too solidly frozen.

The enemy attack on the perimeter started early that night and with more determination than during the past two nights. To complicate the situation further, heavy snow started falling. The attack built up in intensity to midnight with no penetration of the area but with mounting American casualties. The enemy was using mortar fire more effectively than he had on the previous two nights. But the enemy may have been somewhat confused in his plans and in his system of communications. Capt. Bigger of the Heavy Weapons Company hit upon the idea of firing a different colored flare every time the enemy fired a flare and also blowing a whistle whenever the enemy blew a whistle. In any event, the enemy attack, though determined, did not appear to be too well coordinated or concentrated.

FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER 1950

From midnight until dawn on Friday, as the enemy attack reached its height, the enemy appeared determined to overrun the perimeter at all cost. In the roadblock area of A Company a body of enemy troops charged down the open road in such a manner that our men at first identified them as other friendly troops. This attack, however, was repulsed with heavy casualties to the enemy. Fighting became very close, in some instances hand-to-hand in other parts of the perimeter. Occasionally a Chinese soldier

would infiltrate the perimeter and run about like a madman spraying with his burp gun until he was killed.

At about 0300 hours the portion of the [north] perimeter near the bridge where the two battalions were joined was overrun. A preplanned counterattack led by the executive officer [Lt. Wilson] of D Company managed to plug the gap but was unable to restore the original perimeter. Lt. Wilson was killed while leading this counterattack. Enemy mortar fire became increasingly accurate and forced our own mortars to move. Between 0400 and 0600 every man in the perimeter was in a defensive position operating a weapon. The question as whether the perimeter could hold out until dawn. After dawn the enemy attack subsided.

An attempt to describe accurately the scene inside the perimeter of Task Force Faith on the morning of 1 December runs the risk of appearing macabre. It is safe to say, however, that even Hollywood will not be able to accurately duplicate it in stark tragedy and horror. A few facts will set the props of the scene – and from there on only the reader who has experienced similar events can imagine the actual picture.

The original task force [RCT-31] was composed of approximately 2,500 men. By dawn on 1 December members of the task force had been under attack for 80 hours in subzero weather. None had slept much. None had washed or shaved, none had eaten more than a bare minimum. Due to the season of the year, darkness covered about 16 hours of each 24-hour period – and during the hours of darkness the enemy exploited his psychological weapons such as bugles, whistles, flares, burp guns and infiltration tactics. The ground was frozen so solidly that rifle and weapons crews occupied very shallow trenches.

The dead, concentrated at central collecting points, had to be used as a source of supply for clothing, weapons and ammunition. Everyone seemed to be wounded in one fashion or another and to varying degrees of severity. Frozen feet and hands were common. The wounded who were unable to move about froze to death. Trucks and jeeps and trailers were ransacked for ammunitions and any kind of fabric that would serve for bandages or a means to keep a man warm.

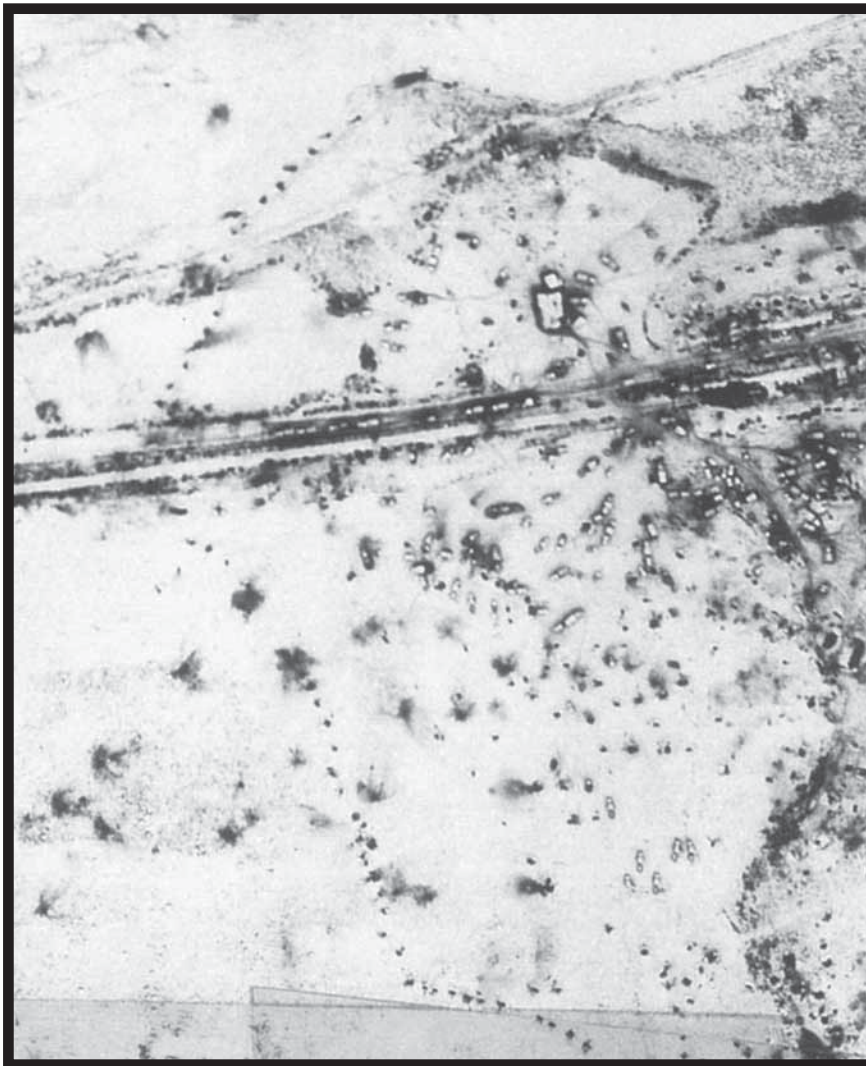
But the factors that discouraged and disheartened most were these: Everyone could see that the weather was growing worse, which meant the loss of air support and aerial resupply; it was obvious that the relief column from Hagaru-ri in any force less than regimental size could never reach us; that another night of determined attacks would surely overrun the position.

Defeat and desperation were written in the glazed expressions of the men as vividly as the blood on the snow. As in all ages, hardened men knelt unashamed in the snow with their prayer books, rosaries, or Bibles clasped to their hearts and prayed – another case history that cannot be discounted by skeptics.

As men became indifferent to the instinct of self-preservation they started exposing themselves unnecessarily. The enemy apparently sensed the state of demoralization within the perimeter, because their fire – particularly mortar fire – became more intense and more accurate. The battalion aid station and nearby 81mm mortar position suffered direct hits. The enemy located the battalion CP and it suffered two direct hits. The assistant S-2 and D Company commander [Capt. Bigger] were wounded by mortar fire in the battalion CP.

C Company commander, Capt. Dale Seever, and I sat on the edge of a hole discussing the situation. An enemy mortar shell landed some ten feet from us without injuring either of us. Seevers looked at me, shrugged his shoulders, and said “Maj., I feel like I’m a thousand years old.” His feeling summed up the feeling of most of us. Only two weeks before he had learned that his wife had given birth to his first son – by three o’clock that afternoon he was dead.

The battalion chaplain had pneumonia. The battalion surgeon sat with his hands folded in his aid station. He was physically exhausted and had no medical supplies whatsoever. No one spoke of rations because there were no rations to issue. Ammunition was again in very short supply. Efforts to reach any friendly radio stations were unsuccessful. At about 1000 hours a single low-flying Marine fighter-bomber, despite unbelievable weather, flew over and was contacted by the TACP. The pilot stated that he would guide in more aircraft to the area shortly after noon if the weather improved as was forecast. The pilot stated that there were no friendly forces on the road between the perimeter and Hagaru-ri.



This aerial photo is believed to have been taken by a reconnaissance aircraft the morning of 1 December, showing the southwest section of the Inlet perimeter at a time when the trucks were being lined up along the road to load wounded soldiers. This multiple generation photo courtesy MSgt. Edward Smith, USMC (Ret) who at the time was assigned to the Air Section of the X Corps Fire Support Coordination Center, when recon was being made to determine the thickness of the reservoir ice.

wounded were loaded on trucks and given all blankets and bed rolls for comfort and warmth.

BREAKOUT

Col. Faith, [after] consultation with his staff, decided to try to break out of the perimeter and reach Hagaru-ri in a single dash rather than risk another night in the perimeter. He emphasized that no wounded men would be abandoned and that the tactical formation would be designed to protect the column of trucks that would be loaded with wounded. [This decision by Faith was obviously influenced by his meeting with Gen. Barr the afternoon of 29 November, soon after Barr had attended a conference with generals Almond and Smith. These many years later one can assume that Faith was told "You're on your own." The official message from Smith arrives later this afternoon.

Planning commenced immediately. The artillery batteries and the Heavy Mortar Company were instructed to expend all their ammunition by 1300 hours and then destroy their weapons. All vehicles were unloaded and any serviceable equipment was destroyed or burned. All available ammunition was redistributed with the understanding that each ROK soldier would be allowed only one clip for his own self-protection. Machine guns were mounted on pedestal mounts on vehicles and the

The breakout was planned to be coordinated with the air strike. The formation decided upon was a column on the road protected on the flank away from the reservoir in the order: 1st Battalion; Heavy Mortar Company; 57th FA Battalion; and 3rd Battalion. Within the 1st Battalion, C Company was selected to make the initial breakout of the perimeter and A Company was to secure the left flank. It is estimated that some twenty-five 2-1/2 ton trucks were loaded with wounded men who could not walk. The truck column was interspersed with many jeeps mounting radios and machine guns.

A flight of some half-dozen tactical aircraft appeared over the area shortly after noon. The weather, as predicted, had cleared somewhat. Capt. Stamford [Forward Air Controller] controlled the air strikes for the remainder of the afternoon with a VHF portable radio strapped to his back. C Company's initial attack out of the perimeter down the road was strongly resisted by the enemy. A Company immediately joined in the attack as the two companies became intermingled. Aircraft were then called upon to bomb and strafe down the road in front of the attacking friendly troops. One aircraft dropped a napalm bomb short in the middle of A Company with horrible and demoralizing results. However, the enemy gave way and the breakout started down the road.

The truck column started to move very slowly. At the initial success of the breakout a sort of hysterical enthusiasm seized the troops. They flooded down the road like a great mob and tactical control broke down almost immediately. Officers and NCOs tried frantically to re-establish control and to order men up on the high ground where they could protect the truck column. But every man seemed to want to reach the head of the column and thereby increase his chances of reaching safety. Enemy small arms fire was encountered all the way, but men attacked and overran enemy positions frontally with seeming disregard for basic tactical principles and their own safety.

The aircraft were having a heyday strafing and bombing in front of the troops and it appeared that the attack would carry successfully all the way to Hagaru-ri. However, after the attack had progressed about one mile the column reached a blown-out bridge and it was necessary at this point to very tortuously move the vehicles off the roadbed, down a steep embankment, across a rice paddy, and up another steep embankment onto the roadbed. Many trucks could not negotiate this route and had to be assisted by other trucks. This delay lasted about two hours and gave the enemy time to react to the breakout.

During this period, at approximately 1500 hours, a jeep-mounted radio picked up the following message in the clear: "To Col. Faith: Secure your own exit to Hagaru-ri. Unable to assist you. Signed Smith, CG 1st Marine Div." This was the first instruction that Col. Faith had received from higher HQ in 48 hours and in effect directed him to do what he had decided to do three hours previously. [Magill reports in CJ 12.15.02 that he personally heard the message come through the TACP radio at about 1300 hours.]

It was not possible to get the column going again until about 1530 and then a determined roadblock was encountered at the sharp bend in the road on the high ground [Hill 1221] as point D on Sketch Number 1. In addition, the road winding up to this point was very steep and covered with ice and none of the trucks had chains. As a result some trucks slipped over the side of the road and down the mountainside. One such truck was loaded with wounded men. By this time enemy small arms fire had grown very intense and very accurate. The enemy could be observed in large numbers on all the high ground along the road. Small arms ammunition was running extremely low among our troops. Additional people were being wounded so fast that it was rapidly becoming impossible to put any more wounded men in the trucks. By 1700 hours darkness was settling rapidly on the column and the use of tactical air cover was no longer possible. The dash to Hagaru-ri had failed and the task force was being cut to ribbons on the road.

At this point Col. Faith assumed personal command of the troops at the head of the column who were

attempting to break the roadblock at Point D. The roadblock was successfully reduced. However, Col. Faith was mortally wounded and died shortly thereafter. For this action he was awarded the Medal of Honor. As the column passed through the roadblock at Point D it could see that this was the farthest point north reached by Gen. Hodes' relief force since two friendly tanks were knocked out in the road.

The column moved down the road from Point D to Point E where it discovered another bridge out. After some reconnaissance it was found necessary to take the trucks off the road, across a rice paddy, up an embankment to the railroad track, then across a narrow railroad trestle, down the embankment again, across another rice paddy, and back on to the road. This operation took what seemed to be an endless time.

Enemy mortar fire was brought to bear on the column. Wounded men inside the trucks screamed as the trucks bounced over the rough rice paddies and trestle. Walking wounded clung to the sides of the trucks as their only hope of ever reaching safety. By 2200 hours the column was again slowly moving down the road. At Point F the column was again stopped by a strong roadblock and taken under heavy attack by the enemy. The enemy closed in on the column throwing grenades into trucks, setting fire to trucks and killing the wounded indiscriminately. There were not enough men left who could walk and fire a rifle to effectively deal with the enemy. Control and the will to fight was no longer present in the column. Men resisted individually and in small groups. Gradually, those who were able crawled out on the ice of the reservoir and headed south to Hagaru-ri. Only remnants of the task force reached the safety of friendly lines. No one escaped who had not been wounded at least once.

AUTHOR'S CONCLUSIONS

The 1st Battalion 32nd Infantry had been completely defeated and disintegrated. Let it be said, however, that the battalion was not defeated while under the direct control of the regiment commander of the 32nd Infantry – or of the CG of the 7th Division for that matter. During the rapid shifting of units in North Korea in mid-November 1950, the battalion had become separated temporarily by distance from its parent units and at a crucial time had become in effect a separate rifle battalion – a pawn on a large chess board – which was at the disposal of the Corps commander to plug a gap. This is a sad fate for any rifle battalion, a mission for which the rifle battalion was not designed nor intended. [Edited by Appleman to read: "... but the only unit in the Corps disposed to plug a vital gap. This was a mission that a rifle battalion could execute only by fighting to annihilation!"]

In retrospect it is obvious that TF Faith had been sacrificed to protect the right flank of the 1st Marine Division and to save time for the Marine division to pull back into Hagaru-ri and to start the withdrawal south to the beach at Hamhung [Hungnam]. The bridges that were blown out behind TF Faith were blown out by friendly force. This is an acceptable tactical principle and completely in accordance with our doctrine. The point raised here is that it would have been more practical and realistic to have told the members of TF Faith that they were being sacrificed – to have ordered them to hold at all cost – rather than hold out false hope of relief. It is believed that if American troops are told the exact situation – no matter how grim and realistic – they will fight more intelligently and effectively.

In any event, it may be claimed rightfully for TF Faith that they held the right flank of American forces in the Chosin Reservoir area for a period of five days against overwhelming odds under the most adverse of weather conditions – and thereby traded time for space and allowed the escape of other friendly forces from North Korea.

Of the small number of the task force who made their way individually and in small groups back to Hagaru-ri, those who were unable to walk further were evacuated by air to Japan. The remainder made the long march back to Hamhung with the Marine division.

CHANGJIN JOURNAL END NOTES

The conclusion that “the battalion was not defeated while under the direct control of the CO, 32IR-or of the CG of the 7th Division” invites discussion. Where does this lay command responsibility from the author’s point of view, on Col. MacLean or Maj. Gen. Smith or Maj. Gen. Almond? The battalion did not “become in effect a separate rifle battalion,” it was attached to RCT-31 to replace 1/31 Infantry which was detached on another mission in the Pungsan area behind RCT-17, positioned to close the gap caused by the departure of the main force of RCT-31. The organization and equipment of the infantry battalion was the same for all infantry battalions, only the faces were different. And in this case, Lt. Col. Faith had already served under Col. MacLean’s command in Japan prior to the Korean war; they knew each other. The mission of 1/32 was no different than that of 3/31, a rifle battalion attached to RCT-31 commanded by Col. Allan D. MacLean who had the mission of taking over the new zone of operation assigned to the 7ID, and attack to the north as ordered, not to “fill a gap.” The sudden attack by the Chinese within hours after assuming their assigned positions created misunderstandings as to roles and missions.

Although protecting the right flank of 1MarDiv was not the mission of RCT-31, it did end up that way. Both the corps and division zones of operation had been shifted to the left/west with RCT-31 taking over the zone of RCT-5 after which the attack that would continue north toward the Yalu River, while the 1st Marine Division was to attack to the west. The sudden attack by the Chinese the evening of arrival of the RCT-31 units created a situation wherein fate was the controlling factor, eventually resulting in the fate of Faith.

The author is correct in claiming “they [RCT-31] held the right flank of the American forces ... for a period of five days ... thereby traded time for space and allowed the escape of other friendly forces from North Korea.” However, although time was one factor, the defensive actions of RCT-31 destroyed the combat effectiveness of the CCF 80th and 81st Divisions and one regiment of the CCF 94th Division, an impossible accomplishment.

And finally, one may suggest the unwritten principle that one does not reinforce failure. This is one of many subjects often discussed at veteran’s reunions - subjects often suggested but not investigated, such as inter-service rivalry.

PRO PATRIA

PHOTO GALLERY

INTRODUCTION TO THE PHOTO GALLERY

The Photo Gallery is a collection of photographs made by a few soldiers during the Chosin campaign. During the late 1940s many who were stationed in Japan took advantage of the cameras being marketed by the Japanese. For example, the author came upon an M-Series Leica in Korea before the war which regrettably was stolen from him at the ski lodge the following winter in Sopporo, Hokkaido; he quickly replaced it with a 35mm Kodak Retina that he carried into Korea.

Two sets of photographs taken at the Inlet east of Chosin are from MSgt. Willard Donovan of L Company, 3/31, and MSgt. Ivan Long of Headquarters, 31st Infantry; both using 35mm monochrome film. Another soldier using monochrome film was Lt. C.W. "Gus" Guth, 185th Engineer Bn, using 6x6cm film at Koto-ri. Two soldiers with an artistic bent used color slide film, Lt. Joseph Rodgers, Medical Company/31 (with 2/31 at Koto-ri), and Capt. George Rasula, Headquarters, 31st Infantry, initially at Hudong-ni, who took four photos at Hagaru-ri after being withdrawn from Hudong-ni.

Of interest has been the source of the Ivan Long collection of 18 photographs (one roll of black & white film), some of which had shown up in Appleman's books credited to various sources. We have concluded that more than one set of prints had been made and circulated when wounded survivors of Chosin who were evacuated to hospitals in Japan. The late Ivan Long (retired Lt. Col. USAR) was in contact with and loaned Rasula his complete set to be copied and further reproduced for his use in Chosin history. Long's photographs herein were copied from original 2.5 x 3.5 inch prints made in Japan 1951.

Another interesting camera story came from the late Robert McClay who had been with Reilly's 3/31 at the Inlet. During the breakout when McClay and others were crossing a neck of frozen reservoir he threw his camera into a hole in the ice, believing if captured the Chinese would accuse him of being a spy. Although seriously wounded, McClay made it to Hagaru-ri.

PRO PATRIA



Convoy off Inchon, Korea, evening of 17 September 1950.

—Photo by George Rasula

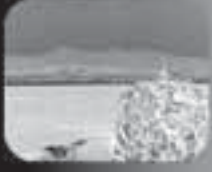


Officers of 1/31 Infantry during move to Inchon, Korea, September 1950. (left of two photos).
—Photo by George Rasula



Officers of 1/31 Infantry during move to Inchon, Korea, September 1950. (right of two photos).
—Photo by George Rasula





Beached LSTs in Inchon harbor, September 1950.
—Source unknown



The Castle at Inchon, September 1950. The building in the skyline was called "the Castle" because it served as a mess and officer's quarters for members of the 3rd Medium Port during 1948-49 when the American divisions were being withdrawn from Korea.
—Photo by George Rasula



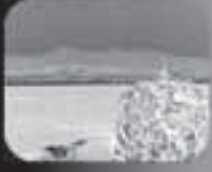
North Gate of Suwon, Korea, September 1950. Results of an engagement between North Korean and Task Force Hannon of the 73rd Tank Bn, 7ID, when NKs were attempting to withdraw to the north. During the confusion of night battle Col. Henry Hampton, Division G-3, who had come to lend a hand, was killed.
—Photo by George Rasula



31 Infantry S-3 tent outside Pusan, Korea, October 1950. Officers receiving a briefing in preparation for move to Northeast Korea. In center is Capt. Henry Wamble of Medical Co/31 (MIA during breakout east of Chosin); next left is Lt. Jerome McCabe, Heavy Mortar Co/31; left (hand on cheek) is Lt. Richard Coke, Recon Platoon/31 (captured at Chosin, died in prison camp); to right of Wamble is Maj. Couch, Executive Officer, 3/31 Inf, KIA.; on right with helmet is the Executive Officer, 2/31 Inf.

—Photo by George Rasula





Lt. Joseph C. Rodgers, Medical Service Corps (MSC), 31 Inf, with 2/31 Inf. during move to North Korea.
—Photo by unknown



Army band playing for troops departing for Iwon, North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Soldiers from Medical Company, 31st Inf. at Pusan.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



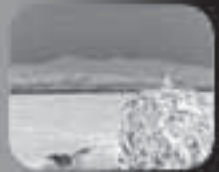
Convoy moves north toward Iwon, North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers

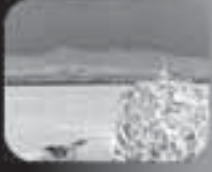


Convoy nears Iwon, North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Convoy off Iwon preparing to land troops.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers





Iwon harbor, North Korea. 7ID units landed at Iwon during 29 October to 8 November, in the order RCT-17, RCT-31, RCT-32. Here we see troops of 2/31 Inf. climbing down landing net from APA Marine Lynx to an LST for transport to the beach.
—Photo by George Rasula



Troops from 2/31 Inf. loading on LST from Marine Lynx, Iwon harbor, North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Iwon, North Korea. Units of 2/31 Inf. on LST waiting move to Iwon beach.
—Photo by George Rasula



Troops from 2/31 Inf. loading on LST from Marine Lynx, Iwon harbor, North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers





LST with troops of 2/31 Inf. heading for Iwon beach, North Korea. Mountains in background show terrain the battalion will face when they move inland.

—Photo by George Rasula



Troops of 2/31 Inf. debark LST at Iwon, North Korea.

—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers





Units of 2/31 cross beach at Iwon, North Korea, in an unopposed landing.

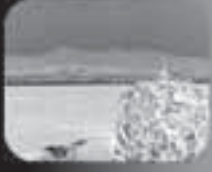
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Troops of 2/31 departing LST at Iwon, North Korea.

—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers





North Korean family watches as troops march by near Iwon, North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



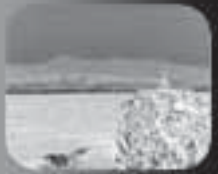
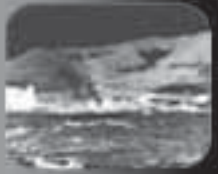
2/31 Inf Hq and Aid Station in North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers

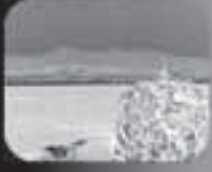


North Korean mother and daughter.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Lt. Rodgers with North Korean family.
—Photo by unknown





Lt. Rodgers with farmer at time when 2/31 units were using oxen to haul supplies in mountainous areas of North Korea.
—Photo by unknown.



Units of 2/31 ford stream as they move inland, North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



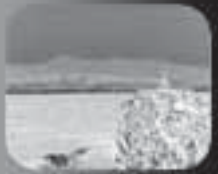
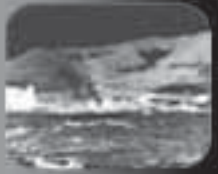
North Korean prisoners captured by units of 2/31.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers

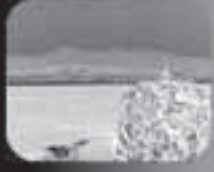


North Korean father and son.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Heating C Rations in North Korea.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers





RCT-31 command post (CP) at Untaek, North Korea, east of the Fusen Reservoir. Temperature on 14 November at this location, recorded by Chaplain Martin Hoehn, was 14 degrees below zero, Fahrenheit (minus 25 Celsius).
—Photo by George Rasula



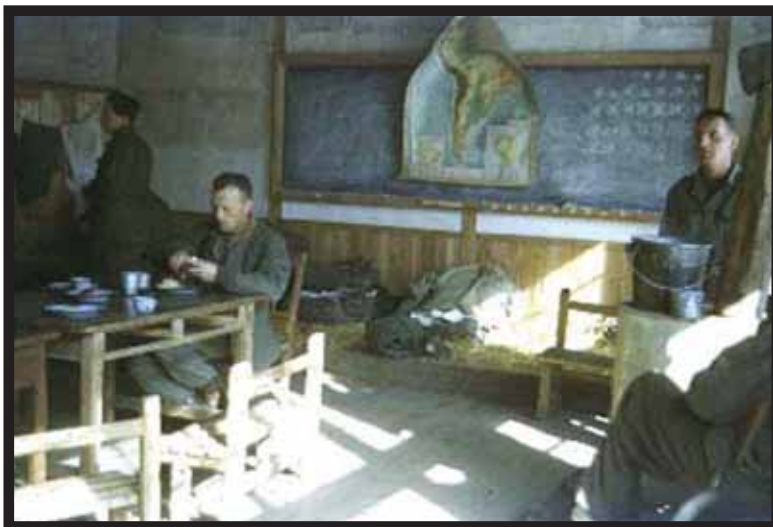
Typical North Korean house at Untaek. Note the stones on the roof to hold down shingles during high wind. Mountains in background were being patrolled by units of the 2/31 Inf., while 3/31 Inf. was further west near the Fusen Reservoir.
—Photo by George Rasula



Untaek houses after snowfall, 15 November 1950.

This area is known for severe temperatures in mid-winter, lows in January falling to 40 below zero F. (40 below Celsius).

—Photo by George Rasula



Hq, RCT-31 Officer's Mess in Untaek schoolhouse CP. At table is Maj. Frank Fife, Headquarters Commandant. At far left is Maj. Hugh Robbins, Adjutant (later wounded east of Chosin, evacuated). Map of South America indicates students were studying geography prior to arrival of the Americans.

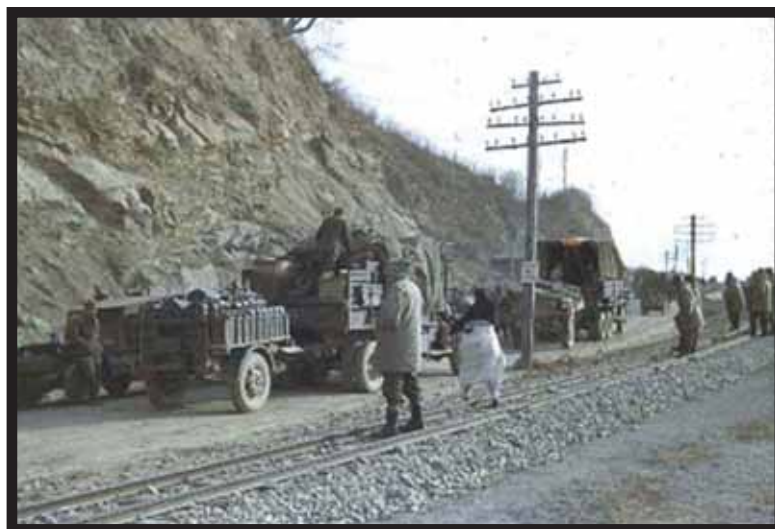
—Photo by George Rasula





Untaek, North Korea. An example of GI ingenuity. Soldiers converted a root cellar into a heated shelter.

—Photo by George Rasula



Convoy in Hamhung area enroute to Chosin. Many parts of this road were one-way and had to be controlled by Military Police units, especially further north at road neared the Funchilin Pass.

—Photo by George Rasula



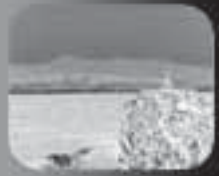
Troops of 2/31 Inf. boarding open flat cars on narrow gauge railroad near Pukchong for transportation south to Hamhung, a very cold means of transportation.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers

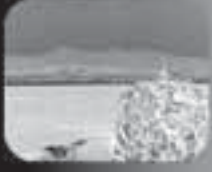


Crashed Marine helicopter in Funchilin Pass, south of Koto-ri.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Gatehouse in the Funchilin Pass. Water is controlled from the Changjin Reservoir via a tunnel under the Pass. Normal drainage runs north to the Yalu River.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers





Water pipes carry water from Gatehouse to Power Plant No. 1 far below in the valley at Pojang Station.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Photo from 5 Marines convoy moving down north side of Hill 1221 on 25 November. Note reservoir in distance is not yet completely frozen.
—Source unknown



Soldiers and ROKs heating C rations after arrival east of Chosin.
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



First morning [28 Nov] of the attack, wounded Chinese soldier had reached the edge of the bank and wounded SFC Adams. Medics bandaged him. Man squatting is ROK who could speak Chinese. Prisoner talked freely about the enemy troop strength. Unable to walk, he was left.

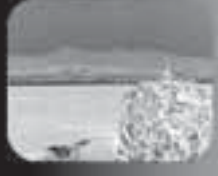
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



This is the second gunner, 4th Platoon, L 3/31. He died a few minutes after being hit. This photo was taken outside the perimeter of the first position.

—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan





Dead Chinese soldiers shot by Retherford and Donovan inside the perimeter near the 3/31 command post.
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



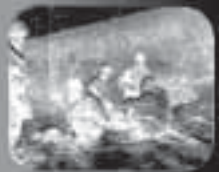
Inside the perimeter, men of Headquarters Company, 3/31, improving their positions. Smoke in background is from burning farm house shelled by artillery the night before. Area was a starting point for Chinese night attacks.
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



This is inside the Inlet perimeter. The men are members of L Company 3/31. The bodies are dead Chinese. Men down in the valley are collecting straw, stones, logs, etc., for their foxholes.
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



This photo is inside the Inlet perimeter. Notice the background, right in the center of the picture, you can see three helicopters that have just landed to pick up wounded. They landed about 400 yards left (SW) of the bridge. The men just below the bank are going out to assist in the loading. To the left is a 40mm M19 track of D Battery, 15th AAA. In the center foreground is the #2 mortar position, 4th Platoon, L 3/31. The man in the photo by the hold is Sgt. Luther Crump, squad leader.
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan





Inside the Inlet perimeter. A small Chinese attack is moving in from the hill to the right and rear of the bridge. The Quad 50 machine guns (M16) are firing into the attacking Chinese.
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



Airdrop made on second or third day. Supplies landed in a small gully at the base of the hill. The men in the foreground are from K Company, 3/31, preparing to retrieve supplies.
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



Outside the perimeter. At the base of the mountain is a road that leads to the bridge on the right. The men are part of the 40mm gun crew firing at groups of Chinese on the mountain. Very heavy sniper fire after this photo was taken.

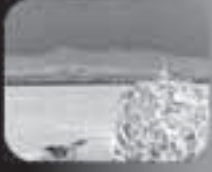
—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



Bodies of soldiers killed from 3rd Bn/31. There are not many men at this location from 1/32 Inf. All these men were killed inside the perimeter, most being from companies L and Battalion Hq. Burial was not possible as the ground was frozen too hard.

—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan





The white phosphorous shell landing on moutain top was the first round of artillery barrage by our 57 FA Bn. A large group of Chinese had moved across the crest of the mountain and were spotted by an artillery FO. Fire was accurate and deadly.

—Photo by MSgt. Willard "Bill" Donovan



Downhill toward the inlet. Many vehicles, some trucks with hoods up. Many clusters of men, some around a fire.

—Photo by Ivan Long



Dead in foreground. Three men talking, no gloves or mittens on. One 105mm artillery piece. Trucks and many men (about 35) in background. Perimeter positions appear to right rear.

—Photo by Ivan Long



Closeup of man in foreground, M1 rifle, bandoleer across chest, field jacket, hood up under helmet, wearing mittens. One 105mm with crew at right rear. Smoke in air, guns may have just fired.

—Photo by Ivan Long





Downhill toward inlet. Double CP tent in foreground. Trucks and many men in background. Column of men coming off ice into this area (need magnifying glass to see them). This is 1/32 coming south on morning 29 Nov, apparently last of them as no more can be seen. Causeway and bridge just off right of photo.

—Photo by Ivan Long



Closeup of 105mm pointed uphill, trucks in rear, Korean house seems intact.

—Photo by Ivan Long



105mm howitzer in foreground, second 105mm in rear to left. Crew by second gun appears active. Inlet below in the distance.

—Photo by Ivan Long



Northwest across inlet. Cable or wire line in foreground (could be downed power line). Road in cut seen across inlet. Many vehicles and improvised shelters. One fire going.

—Photo by Ivan Long





Five men in dug-in positions. Trucks behind downhill. Wider part of inlet in rear toward southwest.
—Photo by Ivan Long



Dead in foreground. Two 105mm with crews, pointed left and right. Smoke in air, guns may have fired.
—Photo by Ivan Long



Two 105mm, six men standing, inactive.
—Photo by Ivan Long



Downhill showing inlet, causeway and bridge. Dead in foreground. Two 105mm. Two clusters of men. Double CP tent at right rear. Many vehicles. [This double CP tent is very near the causeway which was the 3/31 part of the perimeter; tents could be battalion aid station.
—Photo by Ivan Long





105mm howitzer in foreground left pointing right, another further on right pointing left. Korean house. Many vehicles.
—Photo by Ivan Long



Tarps covering something in foreground. Hill slopes up to left, perimeter positions to rear, few men.
—Photo by Ivan Long



Air drop from C-119 aircraft, about 32 chutes both dark and white.
—Photo by Ivan Long



Commander of L Company, 3/31, Capt. Etchemendy, speaking with his radio operator (radio on back). On right nearest camera is Lt. Schermerhorn who was later killed in action during the breakout.
—Source unknown





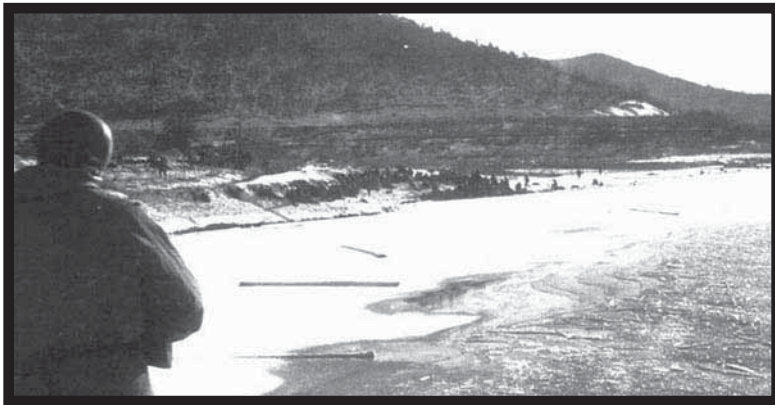
This is the photo of men on ice of reservoir, many footprints, low sun to right creating long shadows indicating late in day. Same photo appears on dust cover of Appleman's "East of Chosin." Seven men in foreground, large groups (could be 100 or more) further south. Of three nearest men, two have rifles, only one has helmet. Far group could be nearing Hagaru perimeter.

—Photo by Ivan Long



Last photo [1 December] inside the perimeter. Donovan had gone back to make sure all equipment in his mortar position had been destroyed, then set jeep on fire.

—Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan



On our way out about one or two miles from the Inlet perimeter.

Man with his back to the camera is SFC Ladieu, Hq Co, 3/31.

Notice the large group of men from 1/32 Inf. Caught in heavy Chinese cross-fire, seeking protection of a small bank. Men can be seen crawling and running across the ice. To the left of the main group are men running to the next higher bank to form a skirmish line to return fire. Enemy fire was very heavy at this time.

Chinese held all visible high ground.

—Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan



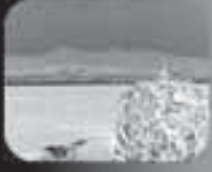
On the way out. Men are from M Company, 3/31, part of the rear guard. The two men lying in the foreground are dead. The road

is just below the bank on the left. The trucks at this time are about 100 yards behind me. A Chinese goat column is less than 100 yards to the rear of the men pulling out. Heavy enemy fire is coming from hill in the background, Photo was taken about

1539 hours [1 December].

—Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan





On the way out, about 100 yards from photo 17. Trucks had stopped to load more wounded. Men are from 3/31 Infantry. More wounded were loaded on trucks. Chinese were very close.
—Photo by MSgt. Willard Donovan



East Hill at Hagaru-ri was, as some believe, the linchpin to the success of the Chosin operation, northbound or southbound, as well as to the Chinese or the U.N. forces. Neither side ever owned this little mountain, even though it was well blooded.
—Photo by George Rasula

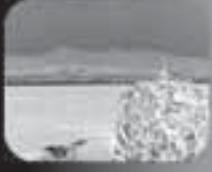


Capt. Rasula and Lt. Escue outside H/11 Marine artillery Command Post which was used as a gathering point for survivors from the east side of the reservoir (background).
—Photo by unknown



Lt. Escue and Capt. Rasula with officers of H/11 Marine artillery at north sector of Hagaru perimeter.
—Photo by unknown





Chosin (Changjin) Reservoir looking north from the Hagaru perimeter. Most of the survivors from RCT-31 east of Chosin came through this sector during the night of 1-2 December 1950. This photo was made about 4 December, a time when the last Marine units were arriving from Yudam-ni and the aerial evacuation of casualties was taking place from the airstrip in the southwest sector of the perimeter.

—Photo by George Rasula



Officers and men watching an air strike from the Koto-ri perimeter.

—Courtesy Col. C.W. Guth

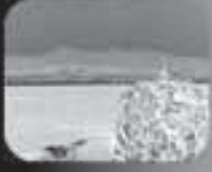


ROK soldiers sawing logs to be used for building weapons positions and bunkers; Koto-ri perimeter.
—Courtesy Col. C.W. Guth



Light machine gun emplacement on Koto-ri perimeter. One soldier, possibly ROK soldier with ear flaps down and scarf covering face. 185 Engineer (C) Bn.
—Courtesy Col. C.W. Guth





4.2 mortar at Koto-ri. Heavy Mortar Company, 3 Inf. Dug-in emplacement, not too deep as ground was frozen, C-ration boxes full of stones used to build up position. Mortar cart in rear, next to one-ton trailer. Mortar sight on weapon.
—Courtesy Col. C.W. Guth



Engineer company area, main tent in foreground, motor pool in background.
—Courtesy Col. C.W. Guth



Unloading US and UN dead at Koto-ri aid station.
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig



Graves registration team working on US and UN dead at Koto-ri aid station.
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig



Mass grave memorial service at Koto-ri 8 Dec 1950.
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig





Dead Chinese infiltrators, Koto-ri, 29-30 Nov 50.
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig



Dead Chinese inside Koto-ri perimeter, 29 Nov, photo taken 30 Nov 50. "The next morning Col. Page and I went over the area and found between 40 to 60 killed." This was the result of a company-size attack by CCF on NE perimeter into E/1 Marines positions on evening of 29 Nov, day of Drysdale operation.
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig



Koto-ri airstrip, plane makes a belly landing, Dec 50
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig

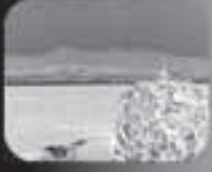


Navy attack bomber, Koto-ri airstrip, Dec 1950
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig

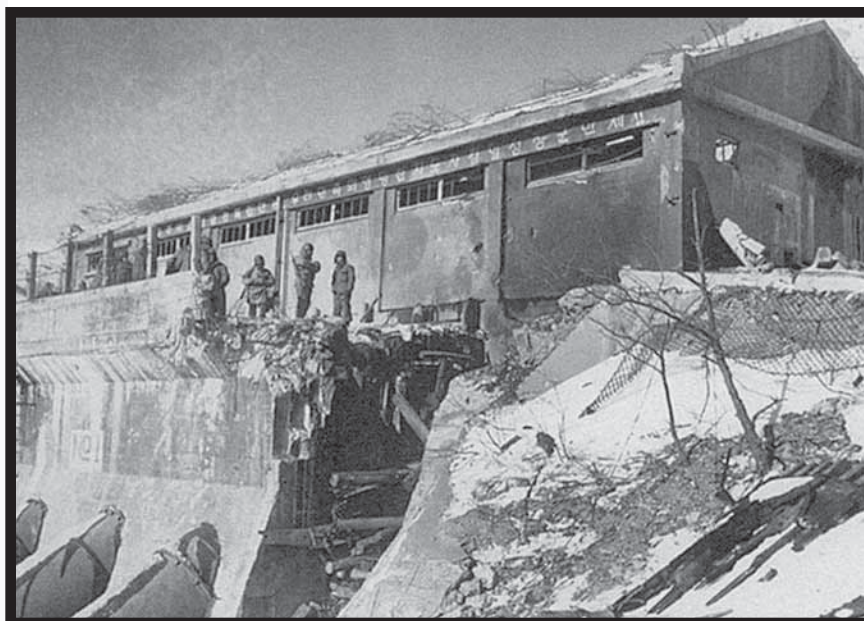


Lt. Col. John U.D. Page, US Army, at Koto-ri. Cpl. Klepzig was his jeep driver while at Koto-ri. Page was later killed south of the Pass, a heroic action for which he received a posthumous Medal of Honor.
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig





Troops from Hagaru arriving at the Koto-ri perimeter, 7 Dec 50.
—Photo by Cpl. Klepzig



Gap in Gateway bridge from below.
—DoD photo (USMC) A5376



Gateway bridge gap from road level, camera on downhill side. Footpath exists behind building, but no vehicles could use this bridge until repaired by Army and Marine Engineers, spanning gap with sections of a Treadway bridge using equipment of the Army 58th Treadway Bridge Company which was at Koto-ri.
—DoD Photo (USMC) A5375

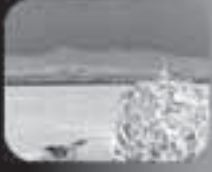


Chinese prisoners in Funchilin Pass. Most of these enemy soldiers suffered severe cold injury (frostbite) to hands and feet, and all had not eaten in many days.
—Photo by Frank Kerr

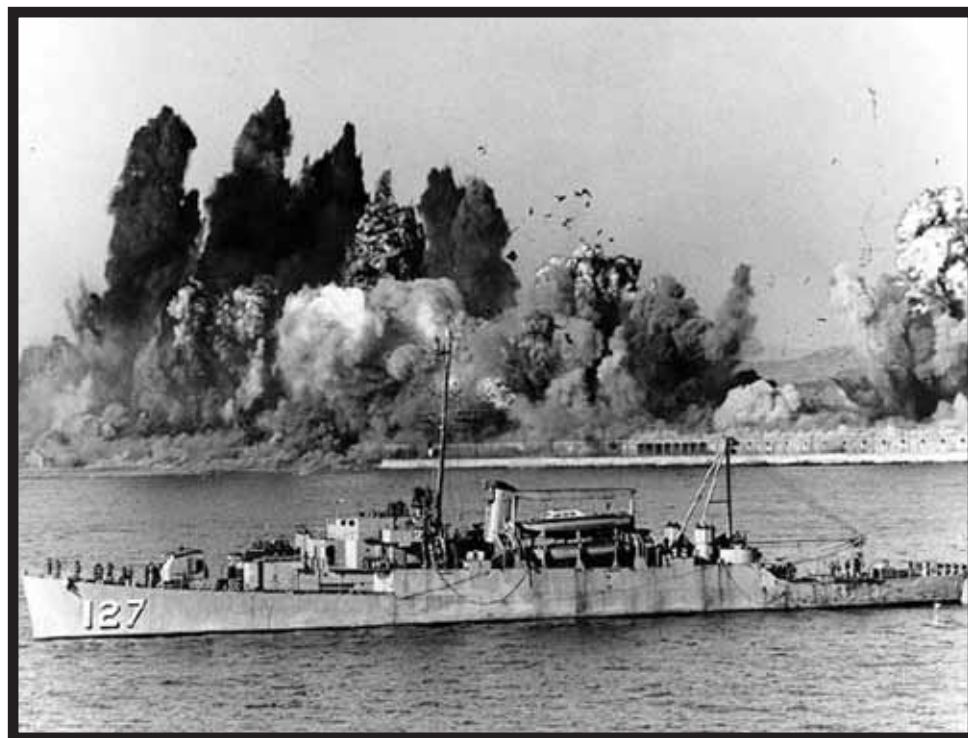


41 Commando, British Royal Marines, moving through the Funchilin Pass.
—Courtesy 41 Commando, Royal Marines





Hamhung, North Korea. An industrial city where units of the 31 Infantry Regiment and survivors of Chosin were billeted before loading ships at nearby Hungnam.
—Photo by Joseph C. Rodgers



Demolition of port of Hungnam, North Korea, 24 December 1950.
—Photo by unknown.



Demolition of Hungnam port, 24 December 1950.
—Photo by unknown



The silence shown in this photograph serves as a reminder that more than one-thousand soldiers continue their eternal rest in the soil east of the Changjin Reservoir, as they have been for the past 56 years.
—Photo by George Rasula, Hq/31



CHOSIN END PAPERS

INTERVIEW WITH LT. GENERAL EDWARD M. ALMOND

[Note: The interviewer, Capt. Fergusson, is Gen. Almond's grandson. While reading the interview one should keep in mind this took place years after the events at Chosin. Gen. Almond is 83 years old and his grasp of details and memories of certain events is not as clear as it might have been earlier. This particular paper has been scanned from a photo copy of the bound interview in the MacArthur Library in Norfolk, Virginia. Scanning a photo copy inevitably necessitates some editing. Aside from possible errors of punctuation and spelling, this is an accurate copy of the original. Any such errors are those of the transcriber.]

This is side #1 of tape #5 of the interviews with Lt. Gen. Almond, Interviewer Capt. Thomas Fergusson, CGSC student. The date is March 29, 1975. The interview is taking place at the home of Gen. Almond in Anniston, Alabama.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Gen. Almond, would you continue your description of your visit to the Yalu River in the 17th Infantry on the 21st of November, 1950?

GENERAL ALMOND: Yes, it was a very pleasant experience for me to be able to fly to the Command Post which was following close to the leading elements of the regiment and in the proximity of the Yalu River and I arrived there the night before the leading battalion of the regiment marched down the hill two miles from the crest, two miles south of the Yalu River and moved freely through the town of Hyesanjin located on the south bank of the Yalu River. The Yalu River was frozen over, the ground was covered over with snow and at this point, the river was very little of an obstacle to the possibility of an enemy advance across the river from the north side in raiding operations. We had to watch for this but otherwise there was no serious concern. I accompanied Gen. Barr, the division commander, Gen. Hodes, the assistant division commander and Gen. Kieffer, the artilleryman, with the Regimental Commander, Col. Powell. We all walked behind the lead company down the road to the river bank. This was the first element of the American forces to reach the Korean-Manchurian border, although earlier elements of the 6th ROK Division with the I American Corps on the west flank, Eighth Army front, attempted to get to the river but did not succeed in remaining there.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: What about the 1st Marine Division, general Almond? What sort of progress did they make after their deployment northward from Wonsan. Would you also describe their initial encounter with the Chinese Communists Division, the 124th, in early November?

GENERAL ALMOND: Well, the 1st Marine Division having landed at Wonsan moved north with one regiment, the 7th leaning towards the Hamhung area where the 1st ROK Corps had advanced some days earlier. On 2 November, the 7th Marine Regiment relieved the ROK 26th Regiment in an area north of Hamhung and in the direction of the Chosin Reservoir. At the time that the 7th Marines relieved the 26th ROK Regiment, the latter was engaged with a number of detachments of what turned out to be later the 124th CCF Division which was secretly cross the Yalu River at point a good deal to the west of this Chosin Reservoir area. And the Marines from then on in their advance towards the Chosin Reservoir were engaged sporadically with Chinese elements. Following the 7th Marine Regiment to the Chosin Reservoir area was the 5th Marine Regiment. While these two regiments the balance of the division with its artillery and other detachment advanced toward the Chosin Reservoir, the 1st Marine Regiment was occupied in an area about 30 miles south of Wonsan in clearing up guerilla activities. This task was later taken over by the 3rd Division when it arrived for service with the X Corps in the combat area. From this time on,

the Marine Division, in moving to and beyond the Reservoir area was engaged in numerous and sporadic fights with Chinese organized element. While some of the attacks by the Chinese were quite fierce, they appeared to be separate and not coordinated attacks and eventually, the Marines were able to advance to the position that they occupied when the Eighth Army attacked later on the 27th of November.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: But, sir, in the official U. S. Army history of the Korean War in the volume entitled Policy and Direction: The First Year by James F. Schnabel on page 236 after discussing the clash of the 1st Marine Division element with the Chinese Communist the 124th Division in early November, Schnabel says quote: "It was now quite clear that the eventuality so long discussed by American planners, Communist China's entry on the side of North Korea, was no longer hypothetical. Yet there was great reluctance at Eighth Army and X Corps headquarters, at GHQ in Tokyo and in Washington to accept this intervention at face value." Would you disagree with Schnabel's statement? What, at this point, what did you think Chinese intentions to be? Did you become more cautious at this point in deploying your forces farther north?

GENERAL ALMOND: at this point, the estimate of how many Chinese and if they were organized Chinese forces rather than volunteer forces was difficult to determine and nobody had a definite answer to the question. That made everyone more conscious and more desirous of determining just what force we were confronted with and for that reason our operations zone was of an offensive nature because to determine the exact power of the enemy confronted required offensive action rather than surmises. For that reason, the Marines as well as the 7th Division were directed to continue efforts toward the front. We realized that guerilla and North Korean opposition on the right of the X Corps was minor compared to the Chinese regular units that were being run in through the front, left front or the Marine front of the X Corps and the entire front of the Eighth Army

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Were you concerned at this point sir about being able to support particularly the Marine Division logistically as they go further and further north, away from their base at Wonsan.

GENERAL ALMOND: Well, I realized the danger of a large number of troops flowing around the Marine front as it was established from point to point and effecting [sic] our lines of communication from the Chosin Reservoir and Hagaru-ri southeast to Hungnam and Hamhung. For that reason, the 31st Regiment of the 7th Division was ordered to be transplanted from the 7th Division zone into the Chosin Reservoir area to protect the line south of Hagaru-ri, the logistics line I mean.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Back at GHQ in Tokyo on the 10th of November, the G-2, Gen. Willoughby, made an intelligence report to the Department of the Army which stated that the Chinese Communists offensive potential had been greatly strengthened in the past week and he particularly cited a Chinese build-up posed a serious threat to your forces not only in the immediate area but also in the coastal area along the northeast shoreline of Korea. Were you aware of Gen. Willoughby's opinion at this point and if so, did you disagree with him?

GENERAL ALMOND: No, I didn't disagree with him because in general, what he said had to be true. We were making contacts along the X Corps left front or western portion of this line that the Marines occupied. The Eighth Army was making contact with the organized units of the CCF and we had to be alert to the possibility of a build-up. But we had to continue operations in the area because if you think the enemy's in an area, you don't withdraw. My orders were to move to protect the right flank of the Eighth Army and to protect my own front and to use my judgment as the build-up was confirmed that Willoughby had been fearful of. To surmise a military situation and to accept it completely are two different things.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: After the clash in early November between the CCF 124th Division and the Marines, the actual contacts greatly diminished and apparently, this had something, this had some effect on Gen. MacArthur and on yourself as well in the decision to renew the advance northward. On 11 November, you having received new orders from Gen. MacArthur, again directed the Marines to advance to the north. At about this same time you had some fairly serious disagreements with the Marine Division Commander, Gen. Smith, about the orders to move this elements farther to the north. He apparently had greater fear than you of the danger of the Chinese Communist forces cutting his lines of communication and attacking him on his own left flank. In fact, during a visit with Rear Admiral Albert K. Morehouse on the 15th of November, Smith, feeling that he was talking "within the family," expressed frank concern over what he considered you unrealistic planning and tendency to ignore enemy capabilities when you wanted a rapid advance, and then he further back this up with a person letter to the Marine Corps Commandant, Gen. Cates, on the same day. He felt that your orders were wrong and that he, as Marine Commander in Korea, was not going to press his own troops forward to their possible destruction. What are your comments on Gen. Smith's opinions at this point and your own feelings.

GENERAL ALMOND: My general comment is that Gen. Smith, ever since the beginning of the Inchon landing and the preparation phase, was overly cautious of executing any order that he ever received. While he never refused to obey an order in the final analysis, he many times was over cautious and in that way, delayed the execution of some order. The case that your mentioned, the Chosin Reservoir, is one of them. My orders from GHQ were to press forward and determine what, if any, and how much Chinese forces there was in my front that might threaten the Eighth Army's right flank. This I was doing and my instructions to the 7th Division and Marine Division were based on my opinion that offensive action was the best way to determine the threat that existed in that situation.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: But did not events prove Gen. Smith was right in that a part of his division was cut off and practically annihilated at the Chosin Reservoir?

GENERAL ALMOND: Now that is not exactly right. We had determined the strength of the enemy in front of us by moving into the area that the enemy was supposed to be in. When we learned this, that fact alone determined Gen. MacArthur's action in withdrawing the Marine Division. Our position would be to protect our line of communication and to engage the enemy in contact with us in every possible manner. Gen. Smith had objected to the advance against the enemy in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir area when the effort of the X Corps was to comply with order from Gen. MacArthur to determine the enemy on our front which would threaten either the front of the X Corps or the front and right flank of the Eighth Army.

Gen. Smith met the enemy and it was determined that it was too strong to withstand. Gen. MacArthur had the good judgment to order a change in the orders of the operations of the X Corps and the Eighth Army accordingly. As a matter of fact, the full determination of the threat to the Marines was not forthcoming until the day of the Eighth Army's intended advance, the 27th of November. On that day, I was in the midst of the Marine's operation and was at the command post of the 7th Marine Regiment before Gen. Smith was. I was personally present and when I learned the extend of the threat that eventually plagued the Marines in their withdrawal, I could report to Gen. MacArthur that the possibility of further advance and the possibility of retaining the position of the Chosin Reservoir area was rather grim. As a matter of fact, on the other side of the Chosin Reservoir area, two battalions of the 7th Division were engaged with the enemy which was trying to move around to the northeast of our line of communication from Hamhung to the Chosin area. There, the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry had a serious engagement with the enemy which is well recorded history and about which I have written. (In my opinion, it is most unwise to accept

Gen. Smith's statement on these matters without regard to the opinions of other combat commanders who were intimately involved in the Chosin situation.)

Returning to the particular objections of Gen. Smith to push his division north of Hamhung and towards the Chosin Reservoir where the enemy was, it is abundantly clear to me and it was to my staff in Korea, that what Gen. Smith was really complaining about was the fact that his division happened to be the division used to push into the forward area and meet an unknown force that would determine the strength of that force. On the very day that Gen. Smith was doubting the X Corps Commander's judgment and leadership by exposing his division to the enemy unduly and pushing forward to the flank to protect the right flank of the Eighth Army, the 3rd U.S. Infantry Division was beginning to arrive in Wonsan for the purpose of supporting the X Corps and protecting the left flank where the gap was, and where Gen. Smith feared the worst, that he would be out on a limb.

The 3rd Division was the force that was to be in echelon on the left of the west side of the Corps Zone, an echelon to the rear of the open flank side of the Marine Division where Gen. Smith claimed that he had no protection. And, as a matter of fact, he had the protection of three regiments, echeloned in depth on his left rear. He had to protect his own left flank. Unfortunately the enemy was in such great numbers that in his withdrawal they flowed in all directions as they flowed around the Eighth Army at Kunu-ri.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Gen. MacArthur later wrote that at the time ... that about the time the full potential of the Chinese Communist forces crossing the Yalu was recognized at his headquarters he saw three possible courses of action for the United Nations forces. They could go forward, remain immobile, or withdraw. In discussing the course of action of going forward his thinking was that if he went forward and found the Chinese in force, his strategy would be to immediately break contact and withdraw rapidly so as to lengthen and expose the enemy supply line. "This would result in a pyramiding of logistical difficulties of the Reds and an almost astronomical increase in the destructiveness of our air power. Every step forward his strength would decrease as compared with mine until the degree of parity would be reached between opposing forces. I would then rely upon maneuver with my objective — his supply line." Gen. Almond did you in the days before the Chinese struck in force in the very last part of November, understand this to be the overall strategy? Did you realize that Gen. MacArthur expected to fight this type of an action to withdraw in the face of Chinese forces, overwhelming Chinese forces and attempt to take advantage of our air power to destroy them?

GENERAL ALMOND: No, I didn't because I didn't attempt to interpret the various aspects of planning at GHQ when I had my own problems in controlling the activities at the X Corps. I would carry out the orders as they stood at the time and continued to do so and I've always done as a leader on any occasion. My ideas were that there were several courses of action open but I didn't attempt to influence Gen. MacArthur's planning except to the degree where my opinion was asked. These plans that you have just cited or possible plans had not been presented to me in the form that you have stated. As I say, I was concerned with the immediate operations and operated under the orders that were at hand.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Gen. Almond, would you describe a visit you made, the last visit you made to the forward Marine elements just prior to the last November Communist-Chinese offensive?

GENERAL ALMOND: Yes, I left my Command Post at Hamhung on the morning of the 27th of November at 10 o'clock by jeep, accompanied by an aide and G-3 representative of my own headquarters. I drove to the 7th Marine Regimental CP fifteen miles northwest of Hagaru-ri. Hagaru-ri, it will be recalled, was a southern portion of the Chosin Reservoir. The road that I traveled was jammed with convoys of the 1st Marine Division moving troops and supplies to the Hagaru-ri rear area and delayed

my arrival to the 7th Marine headquarters somewhat. At the CP of the 7th Regiment of Marines, I found the executive officer; the commander was out inspecting some of his units in action. He explained the disposition of the regiment and the enemy situation.

The 7th Infantry Regiment had made strong contact with the enemy to the north, to the west and to the south. I, as Corps commander, presented some dispatches and several medals to officers and several enlisted men and departed 7th Marine CP at 1650, returning the Hamhung. The trip required some four hours and forty minutes due to the traffic congested along the road. The situation along the MSR was aggravated by inadequate control stations and conveys disregarding to some extent normal convoy discipline. The weather was bitterly cold throughout the day but particularly in the mountains and on the plateau surrounding Chosin lake. This reconnaissance of the front lines convinced me that the strength of the enemy (by my personal inspection and the front line reports was considerable and a re-examination was needed of the disposition of the Marines. This I reported probably to GHQ and I'm sure it had some influence in the changing of the situation which was in fact worse on the Eighth Army front. The Eighth Army's attack that had been expected to be launched on the 27th of November and the offensive plans for X Corps had to be changed drastically and rapidly, which resulted in a withdrawal of the X Corps units in the Chosin Reservoir area, both marine elements and the 7th Division elements that I referred to before.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: You mean you made the decision to begin the withdrawal at that point, sir? Or was that from higher headquarters (GHQ)?

GENERAL ALMOND: No.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Or was that a few days later?

GENERAL ALMOND: I made a report on the situation to the GHQ and Gen. MacArthur made the decision to withdraw.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: You've described your own visit to the Marine on the 27th of November. What then happened on the 28th of November, Gen. Almond?

GENERAL ALMOND: On the 28th of November early in the day, I departed by helicopter to go towards the front again and visit the units that I thought most needed and inspection. I had a conference on the east bank of the Hagaru-ri area in the Chosin Reservoir position with Col. MacLean, the CO of the 31st Regiment, who later that day was killed by an enemy patrol.

I proceeded to visit the BCOF Commander who had gotten to our headquarters and was leaving. This BCOF Commander was Gen. Robertson who was a part of the occupation force visiting Korea and I wanted to see in a general way because of his interest in our operations there. I departed for Yong-Po to see Gen. Robertson and after that was accomplished I returned to my own CP in Hamhung. When I arrived there at 1700 I found that Gen. MacArthur had requested my return to Tokyo for a conference at GHQ and that Gen. Walker would be present. I knew that this was a very important conference for the commanders of both forces, the X Corps and the Eighth Army, to have been called back to discuss the situation with Gen. MacArthur. He felt that it was urgent and we responded accordingly. I, therefore at 1700 departed the airfield in a C-54 plane for Tokyo, accompanied by Col. McCaffrey, Col. Glass, both of the G-2 and G-3 sections and Maj. Ladd, my aide. Arriving in Haneda at 2130, I was informed that I should proceed directly to Gen. MacArthur's home, the American Embassy in Tokyo. Arriving there at 2150, we conferred with the command-in-Chief for the next two hours on the situation that was confronting the Eighth Army and X Corps in Korea. Present at this conference was Gen. Walker,

Command of the eighth Army; Gen. Hickey, acting Chief of Staff of GHQ; Gen. Willoughby, G-2 of GHQ; Gen. Whitney, government section of the occupation; and Gen. Wright, the G-3 of GHQ and myself. This was a very important conference and would be a historical story in itself. This conference confirmed Gen. MacArthur's decision to readjust his front by withdrawing from the contact with the enemy until it was cleared to all concerned the extent of the invasion. This developed in the next successive days and was the beginning of the withdrawal of the X Corps from its then existing front lines to the evacuation that occurred later on.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Following the conference in Tokyo on the 28th and the decision of Gen. MacArthur to begin withdrawal of American or United Nations forces, what were your actions as the Corps Commander? What sort of plan for withdrawal did you develop at that time and how soon did units begin to withdraw?

GENERAL ALMOND: I immediately returned to my post in Korea following this conference, leaving Tokyo the next morning at daylight and arriving in the next two hours at my command station. There I directed the G-3 and the other staff officers to begin planning for the discontinuance of the X Corps attack to the northwest and the withdrawal of the Corps forces as a whole to allow for our redeployment in action against the enemy to be decided later by Gen. MacArthur. At 8 o'clock the next morning, with the order practically ready for issue, I assembled the entire staff and explained the new concept of operations based on the Corps being supplied from Hamhung and Hungnam with operations against the enemy whenever possible, consistent with the concentration of the Corps. That afternoon at 1400 I had a conference with the commanders of the main units, namely general Smith, Gen. Barr, Gen. Hodes, both of the 7th Division, Gen. Smith of the Marines of course, Col. Williams who had to do with the port operations, and Col. Forney, who was a Marine staff officer on my staff for advice in the use of the Marines or the Navy in any operation that concerned them. I stressed the urgency of withdrawing the 5th and 7th Marines from their present position at Hagaru-ri, and ordered Gen. Barr and Gen. Smith, the two division commanders concerned, to submit a plan for the withdrawal of the elements of the 31st and 32nd Regiment from the position east of the lake into Hagaru-ri and the evacuation of the wounded, both from the Marine and Army units, which we could do from the temporary emergency air strip that we had already established days before at Hagaru-ri. I, by telephone, ordered the Chief of Staff of the X Corps to send an immediate message to Col. Reedy, commanding a battalion of 7th Division enroute to Koto-ri, to join Col. Fuller [sic] in anticipation of supporting the advance of the Marines on the attack of the 27th (which had been called off). Col. Carleton, one of my staff assistants, was ordered to proceed to Hagaru-ri for the purpose of providing airlift supplies and plans for it as desired by the Marine division and arrangement for proper packing and delivering. This included the operations for the day and the commanders that I have mentioned began to function for the purpose of withdrawal of both the 7th Division and the Marine Division as rapidly as possible. In this withdrawal, the 3rd Division, which was on the left flank, in echelon towards the gap with the Eighth Army, provided magnificent support, to the extent even of a task force cutting across enemy trickling towards the direction of our withdrawal along the road system from the Chosin Reservoir to Hamhung.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: What were your other actions; were you still in control of the ROK Corps at that point and what were your orders to them?

GENERAL ALMOND: Oh, yes. The ROK Corps was ordered to withdraw from the coastal sector so that they could take the right flank where there was no threat from the North Korean forces, or from guerillas. They would occupy the right flank of our line until future operations were fixed upon.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: In the conduct of the Corps withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir and other

areas to the north, did you establish a Corps covering force and also, did you establish successive lines to which the Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division would withdraw to or did you merely order them to withdraw all the way back to the Hungnam area?

GENERAL ALMOND: Well, first they were ordered to withdraw from their present position to the Hungnam area bringing with them all equipment with which they were supplied rather than destroying it or leaving it for the enemy's use. In connection with this withdrawal, the front line forces had to protect themselves. There was no protection needed on the right flank of the Corps, along the coast in other words, because the Korean divisions were not pressed by any opponent and they could take care of themselves. However, on the left flank of the Corps, the Marine flank were under great pressure by constantly increasing forces. Realizing the need for a covering force of some size, I had a conference at once, on the 5th of December with Gen. Soule, the Commanding Gen. of the 3rd Division. Gen. Soule was very cooperative in all the demands that I made on his forces, namely to form this covering force under a general officer and to have it include not only infantry but engineers and artillery to use against the enemy if needed or to prepare the route of withdrawal if obstructed by explosive or what not, especially the bridge site. This task force was formed in short order, I would say within 24 hours it was moving to its position. The position to which it was moved was just short of where the rear element of the Marine Division were located at Koto-ri, which was some 10 miles south of Hagaru-ri. This covering force was moved and took position where it could actually cover the withdrawal of the Marines. Also the 31st Regiment withdrawing with them would come under its protection at a point halfway between Hamhung and Hagaru-ri. The commander of this covering force was Brig. Gen. "Red" Mead who was a fine Infantry officer and a graduate of Fort Benning and the Infantry School and a resident of Columbus, Georgia. We had known him long before and his did a fine job in this mission.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Did the Marines withdraw then through that covering force?

GENERAL ALMOND: The Marines then moved as rapidly as possible bringing their equipment with them to the Hamhung area and, as I say, when they got halfway to Hamhung from Hagaru-ri they no longer had to furnish their own patrolling but this was taken over by the task force under Gen. Mead. And the Marines completed their movement into the Hungnam area by the 12th of December.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Wasn't there a conversation between you and Gen. Smith at the time you initially ordered the Marines to withdraw from the Chosin Reservoir area in which you offered him the option to leave behind all of his equipment and he said he would bring it out instead. Did you order him to destroy his equipment at one point and then change your mind?

GENERAL ALMOND: No, not at all. I ordered him to withdraw his division and bring out such equipment as he could but not to sacrifice manpower for the sake of equipment. I ordered him to withdraw such equipment as the enemy would permit but if necessary to destroy it rather than trying to protect it at the risk of further casualties.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Did you get adequate close air support during this withdrawal operation?

GENERAL ALMOND: I think so. We got all that was available and that we asked for, but this was no answer to the seething, struggling Chinese rifleman who could slip under a bush and avoid much of the air support that our withdrawal was demanding.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: So to sum up the withdrawal operation, there was no attempt to withdraw to successive lines on the part of the Marines and the 7th Division but instead it was one continuous

movement for them to withdraw all the way back to the Hungnam area?

GENERAL ALMOND: That's correct. And while that was happening, my staff was fixing upon a plan of total defense of the Hungnam area, the port area which was 8 miles distant on the waterfront, (8 miles from Hamhung). We had in our minds in this respect that the Corps CP would be moved down to the Hungnam area, the port area, and that a line of defenses would be established by our 3rd Division, Marine Division and 7th Division to protect the dock area and the withdrawal area by ship if and when it was so ordered.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: How would you characterize the enemy forces pursuit or movement? Did they maintain pressure constantly throughout the entire withdrawal down to Hungnam?

GENERAL ALMOND: They maintained constant pressure but not in a large enough sense to threaten the penetration of our covering force and the coagulation and intense effort of both the 7th Division and the Marine Division to get in hand sufficient number to form a defense line. Our defense line excluded Yong-po airport which was regrettable but was the safest and wisest military procedure to take. We felt no particular threat on our right flank but we did on our left flank and in that area, the 3rd Division and the Marine Division took their place. The 3rd Division engaged in a number of fire fights of company and battalion size which relieved the other units, the 7th Division and the Marines from battle participation. The Marines were a reserve of the X Corps in order to let them rehabilitate themselves from the strenuous efforts of the Chosin Reservoir.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: Did you judge the Marine Division at that point to be greatly reduced as an effective fighting force?

GENERAL ALMOND: Well, more mentally were they reduced than they were physically. While there were a number of casualties and disorder during the Chosin Reservoir operation, when the marines got back in hand in the Hungnam area, and re-adjusted themselves to conditions, they were considered combat effective.

CAPTAIN FERGUSSON: What about the withdrawal of the 7th Infantry Division?

GENERAL ALMOND: Very well, because they had no pressure particularly. The pressure was on the Marines of the Chosin Reservoir area where two battalions of the 7th Division were also engaged and suffered greatly from Chinese attacks before we could get them out. The rest of the Division was in hand and in good conditions for our combat operations.

END Fergusson-Almond Interview

PRO PATRIA

ALMOND COMMENTS ON SMITH

GEN. ALMOND COMMENTS ON GEN. O.P. SMITH AND THE ARMY'S HISTORY.

The following is taken from a letter from Gen. Edward M. Almond, USA (Ret) to Gen. H. C. Pattison, Chief of Military History, U. S. Army dated March 7, 1969. Gen. Almond is commenting on a draft of Volume III of the Army History of the Korean War Policy and Direction.

[It has been edited to leave out extraneous references, except where necessary, and to provide some continuity. Gen. Almond's spelling, punctuation and capitalization has been followed as closely as possible. The original can be found in the National Archives.—Patrick C. Roe]

THE INVASION OF NORTH KOREA

Reference to the delay in beginning the landing operation of the X Corps troops after the planned date of 20 October, as stated on Page 31, this should be expanded to show that Gen. Almond, appreciating the rapid advance of the ROK troops to the Wonsan area had moved a small command and communication group from X Corps by air from Kimpo Airfield to Wonsan Airfield on 15 October and this actually became the X Corps Advance CP at Wonsan on 20 October when the troop landings were delayed. On 19 October Gen. Almond went by boat from the Mt. McKinley, the Command Ship, to the battleship Missouri and from the Missouri to Wonsan by helicopter. He took command of all ROK troops in Northeast Korea-, the leading elements of which were then moving on Hamhung, and thus acted in consonance with GHQ orders issued on 16 October;

The arrangements between Admiral Struble and Admiral Doyle and Gen. Almond, whereby this new landing site at Iwon, for the 7th U. S. Division were agreed upon and executed should be expanded with a description of the operation in more detail as illustrating a great lesson in the basic principles of war: Cooperation. This agreement was a new and justified change in the original plan based on the changed tactical situation on the east coast of Korea. Gen. Smith of the Marines had nothing to do with the change and the single reference to his "chronicles" is beside the point and of no value. X Corps records, and my own personal Diary which is an official publication from my Headquarters and now microfilmed in the U. S. Marine Corps Headquarters, are the correct references for this discussion.

The last sentence on Page 33 is misleading because as CG X Corps I sent a Radio on 30 October "Personal to MacArthur" stating that: "On this date I have interviewed prisoners captured by ROK troops near the Chosin Reservoir in the number of 16 Chinese soldiers (of a Mortar and Artillery Unit) which crossed the Yalu River near Manpojin on 18 October 14 days ago.

THE THRESHOLD OF VICTORY

Gen. Smith's estimate ...of what X CORPS thought, namely that the Chinese were volunteers, is directly opposite to what the X Corps estimate actually did evaluate. On 11 November the X Corps knew that it was confronted by the 124th and by elements of the 125th and 126th Chinese Divisions. Gen. Smith's approval of Orders is beside the point; the X Corps was complying with Orders from Gen. MacArthur to resume the advance and that is what the Commander intended to do.

[The] record should make this point abundantly clear and not leave to "opinions" of Gen. Smith as the only record of the case and thus to go unchallenged: Example: On 2 November the X Corps knew that the 7th U.S. Marines, one of Gen. Smith's Regiments, was opposed by Chinese troops of the 370th and 372nd Regiments; that both of these Regiments were from the 124th Chinese Division and that this had occurred at the Changjin Power Plant Northwest of Hamhung. Gen. Smith's charges, on 10 November that the X Corps Commander and his Staff thought that his (Smith's) troops were opposed by Chinese "Volunteers"

are totally unfounded and should not even be in this factual history.

Gen. Smith's views...on the X Corps attitude "Optimism or pessimism without middle ground," and his other views that are "also admirably illustrated," in his letter to Gen. Cates namely, among which can be cited that, "Almond's Orders were wrong, etc.," leave much to be desired in objective historical reporting. Gen. Almond's orders were issued in execution of GHQ Order Part 2, CX 67291. Gen. Smith, not only on this occasion, showed his objections, but he so often at other times thought that the orders he received were wrong. The periods in which he had feelings, to my certain knowledge, in the order here mentioned

1. In the planning for the Inchon Landing Gen. Smith thought it was impossible, and certainly impossible of execution in September, and maintained this position until Gen. Almond offered to substitute for the 7th Marine Regiment the 32nd Infantry Regiment, two battalions of which had had amphibious training. This brought Gen. Smith to his senses and he finally decided that the landing might be made after all.

2. There was his objection to the manner of execution of the landing at Inchon.

3. Then came his objection to plans for the capture of Seoul.

4. He objected to the outloading of Marines on 7 October, among other reasons, stating that his own supplies had to be abandoned and when I questioned what supplies, he referred to he began to describe whereupon I demanded to see what he meant and found a warehouse full of steel clothes lockers which had been brought from Japan for the service of the Marines after the landing, when Gen. Smith, and everyone involved, knew that ship space was at a great premium. In spite of this Gen. Smith brought material useless for the landing operations in the form of steel clothes-lockers.

5. When the Japanese Stevedores struck at Wonsan about 25 October, Gen. Smith objected to using any part of his combat troops to unload his own supplies, in spite of the fact that this was the only possible way to accomplish the operation; he wanted a "written order" before he would comply and he got it!

6. He objected to the advance against the enemy in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir area in the effort of the X Corps to comply with Orders from Gen. MacArthur;

7. He had many other objections on numerous other occasions, which an interview with the undersigned could establish.

In my opinion, it is most unwise to quote Gen. Smith on such matters as he has been quoted without affording rebuttal opportunities to those in opposition to his estimate, namely, the combat commanders concerned.

Returning to the particular objection of Gen. Smith to push his Division North of Hamhung and toward the Chosin Reservoir where the enemy was. it is abundantly clear to me, and it was to my Staff, that what Gen. Smith was really complaining about was the fact that his division happened to be the division used to, "Push into the forward area and meet an unknown force inland."

On the very day that Gen. Smith was doubting the Corps Commander's judgment and leadership, by exposing his Division to the enemy unduly, and pushing beyond the flank of the Eighth Army, the Third U.S. Infantry Army Division was beginning to arrive at Wonsan for the purpose of supporting X Corps and protecting its left flank where the gap was, and where Smith feared the worst, "That he would be out on a limb." The Third Division was the force that was to be in echelon and on the left (West) side. to the

rear, the open flank side, of the Marine Division, for the purpose of protecting the gap of the exposed left of X Corps, which Gen. Smith so loudly condemns.

Gen.. Smith also fails to indicate that when the Marines withdrew From, the Reservoir area, early in December, that this same 3rd Division (U.S.Army) was in place and backed up this withdrawal and provided the wedge that moved to Sudong and opened the avenue through which Gen. Smith withdrew and at the same time that he issued his supposedly famous statement “Retreat hell—we’re just attacking in another direction.” It appears that the Marine Gen.’s statements very decidedly appealed to the chronicler of this Chapter and also to the exclusion of all other aspects and other persons views of the operations under consideration.

It should be noted that in several places in the Chapter the impression is created that liaison ordered between the Eighth Army and the X Corps had not been made, prior to 14 November. This is entirely inadequate and is thoroughly covered by Appleman in his, “South to the Naktong: North to the Yalu,” record of events.

[With reference to the plan to attack west] it appears entirely unfair to infer that JSPOG [Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group of the Far Eastern Command headquarters] was influenced in its strategic judgment partly due to the fact that Gen. Almond was still the Chief of Staff. This is not only unfair to Gen. Almond, but to the officers who composed the JSPOG organization. This whole page of analysis deserves a. complete re-analysis and the clarification that X Corps was executing the Orders of GHQ as the military situation was being developed, and everyone knows the situation was rapidly changing; furthermore, that Gen. Almond and his Staff were making revised estimates as well as Gen. Smith and JSPOG.

There is some attempt to accommodate the foregoing by quoting from Gen. Almond’s letter to Gen. Wright on the situation ..., but the damage by inference to which objection is raised here has already been done in expressing the “charm of Gen. Smith’s views.” Twenty-twenty hindsight always intrigues the historiographer, and this occasion provides no exception. Example: How would the Chinese force be determined except by moving into it and developing its strength which was unknown, as is admitted in all references that I have so far had the privilege of reading. Gen. Almond’s letter to Wright gives the reasons for this developing action and the road net on X Corps West Flank with the gap, as has been so abundantly described. The very presence of the Marines and the X Corps on the East Flank of the Eighth Army, and in spite of the gap, was to prevent the envelopment of the Eighth Army East Flank, and as a matter of history, no one can dispute the fact that the utilization of this so-called gap privilege by the Chinese never occurred.

THE CHINESE

The remarks in this Chapter are snide, when they refer to, “the somewhat less than prophetic note” in Gen. Almond’s message to Barr, “...I am confident that you will hold it.” This seems to show an unfair attitude towards the X Corps. Gen. Barr did hold it until he was ordered to withdraw from it as the situation changed on the Eighth Army Front and the X Corps West Left Flank due to the Chinese force being developed there, and eventually amounting to seven or eight Chinese divisions which even the cautious Marine Commander, Gen. Smith, had not visualized!

It would seem that there would be some virtue in X Corps having, by opposing these Chinese Divisions, furnished some opposition to their having moved against Eighth Army’s East Flank, which they never did. This aspect appears to have escaped the “objective” analysis being made here.

As to the number of lives saved by Gen. Smith's cautious delays, such inferences are subtle criticisms of an aggressive commander who was attempting to operate in accordance with his Orders and certainly to the best interest, under the circumstances, of the troops that he commanded.

It is difficult to rationalize the account of X Corps leadership as set forth in Army official records, "South to the Nakong – North to the Yalu" with this "Marine interpreted" version in this manuscript. I refer to Pages 741-747 of "South to the Naktong – North to the Yalu," to show the difference between the two versions of the operations. The first describes what actually happened, and the latter, this manuscript, is casting aspersions on GHQ and X Corps leadership in a hazy fluctuating situation that no one really understood, and the only development of which was that which occurred under pressure from both the Eighth Army and X Corps.

In commenting on the disposition of the Eighth Army and X Corps on 10 December it should be made clear that:

- a. The enemy had apparently withdrawn
- b. The lack of roads between the two forces and the rugged terrain in the gap area, was within itself a degree of protection to rapid enemy movements in that area.
- c. That the Marine Division was in itself the forward flanking protection of the X Corps, and that the 3rd U. S. (Army) Division was the left flank. X Corps protected, echeloned to the left rear of the 1st Marine Division.
- d. That in the arrangement of Left (West) Flank protection, one (26th ROK) Regiment of the 3rd Division was opposite Hamhung, and another Regiment, the 65th of the 3rd Division, was located opposite Yonghung on the West Flank; that another Regiment, the 15th of the 3rd Division, was at Wonsan and the 7th Regiment was in 3rd Division Reserve.
- e. Finally, this gap between Eighth Army and X Corps was never entered by the Chinese, principally because of the difficulty of terrain and lack of a road system. Reference here is found on Page 746, in "South to the Naktong – North to the Yalu." This reference gives a very thorough description of the importance of the gap and whether or not it was taken advantage of.

The evident urge, which constantly appears in these Chapters concerning X Corps operations in Northeast Korea, seems to be to find fault with leadership of the commanders in Korea from Gen. MacArthur on down. The real objective should be to set forth aspects of terrain and the troop operations as they took place.

PRO PATRIA

EVALUATION OF OPERATIONS IN X CORPS

SOURCE "Hq X Corps Special Study on Chosin Reservoir", Edward M. Almond Papers. Box: Korean War Sp. Study on Chosin Story, Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.
p.101 - 104

EVALUATION OF OPERATIONS

During September CCF counter-offensive began. The requirement of establishing civil governments rapidly and of protecting them against frequent guerrilla depredations put additional burdens on the already extended troop units.

The decision to concentrate the troops of X Corps in the Hamhung-Hungnam Defense Perimeter required extremely rapid execution. In order to complete this concentration it was necessary for the troops of the ROK Corps to move some 300 miles and troops of the 7th Infantry Division to move nearly 200 miles. Retrograde movements of such magnitude over such extreme distances and terrain [and weather conditions] have seldom been required in modern war. These units were required to move over long distances with the possibility of enemy interference. The 3rd Infantry Division was spread over nearly 100 miles of front and had to concentrate partially, then move approximately 70 miles to the defense perimeter with a strong possibility of enemy attack enroute. In the center of the defense arc was the 1st Marine Division (reinforced) which was the only major unit of the Corps reasonably well concentrated. The concentration of Corps units was appreciably slowed when the 3rd Infantry Division was initially ordered to concentrate on Wonsan. This was by direction of CINCFE. At that time it was planned to attempt employing the 3rd Infantry Division to help plug the gap which developed in the center of the Korean Peninsula. Due to the fast moving CCF offensive the 3rd Infantry Division was unable to concentrate for effective counteraction. As a result, the 3rd Infantry Division was ordered, a few days later, to concentrate in the Hamhung-Hungnam defense perimeter, since such a weakening of X Corps could not be counteracted by any major advantage in the other area.

There were three primary lines of action open to the CCF in northeast Korea.

1. An attack could be made in strength from Sachang-ni through Huksu-ri against the widely dispersed 3rd Infantry Division with the objective of seizing the Hamhung-Hungnam supply base and communications center. This action would have separated the 3rd Infantry Division from the remainder of the Corps, cut off the 1st Marine Division from the sea, and denied I ROK Corps and the 7th Infantry Division the services of their main supply base.
2. An attack could be made in strength from the areas north of the Chosin and Fusen Reservoirs toward Pungsan and on to the sea. This action would have split the 7th Infantry Division and cut off I ROK Corps from the remainder of X Corps.
3. An attack could be launched in great strength against the 1st Marine Division in the vicinity of Chosin Reservoir. Such an attack would have the capability of destroying the entire 1st Marine Division and opening a short route direct to the Hamhung-Hungnam supply base and communications center.

Of these three alternatives the CCF chose the latter. Paradoxically, the mode of execution selected by the CCF resulted in his failure to accomplish any major tactical objective other than causing an extensive battle. In view of the CCF capabilities of mass, surprise, and offensive movement, the failure to create more than a meeting engagement is noteworthy. By striking with its "Human Wave" tactics at the 1st Marine Division, in the center of the X Corps periphery, the CCF commander committed two errors:

1. He massed his strength against the only concentrated force in X Corps instead of against weakness. At best a battle with this unit, even if successful, would have been time-consuming and would have allowed the X Corps valuable time to complete the concentration.

2. He made a serious miscalculation of the strength of the unit[s] he was attacking, because he underestimated the strength of American air support and fire power available in the battle area.

In addition to these errors the CCF also failed to follow the principle of mass, which was employed at higher level, to its logical conclusion. The number of divisions available to the CCF in the area should have made it possible for them to launch large well coordinated attacks instead of dissipating their efforts in piecemeal attacks and innumerable road blocks.

When it became apparent to the enemy that the two Corps initially committed in the Chosin area were not sufficient to accomplish the mission, one additional CCF Corps, the 26th, and possibly a second were employed in an all-out effort to attempt to block the withdrawal of friendly forces in the first week of December. By that time it was too late.

The month of November 1950 had seen the near accomplishment of the X Corps mission in Northeast Korea, the launching of the final UN general offensive to end hostilities, and the precipitation of a “new war” by Communist China. As the period ended X Corps was involved in a critical engagement at Chosin Reservoir which gained the time necessary for the concentration of X Corps.

After the 5th and 7th Marine Regiments had been surrounded at Yudam-ni the Marine units gave a convincing demonstration of what can be done by a cohesive unit to extricate itself from a serious situation when Tactical Air Support is available in large quantities. This in no way detracts from the activities of the ground forces themselves who were coordinating this fire support with their organic weapons to cut their way out of an intended pocket and to reunite with other friendly units.

The fact that units become surrounded and cut off is characteristic of warfare where operations are conducted on wide frontages against a numerically superior enemy. During World War II it was common for American units in the Pacific Theater and Airborne Units in Europe to meet this condition. In Korea, Chosin Reservoir is a good example. Where commanders have remained calm, concentrated their forces on terrain favorable enough to prevent being overrun, and made the maximum use of resupply and evacuation by air, they have prevented defeat. Constant all around security must become habitual. An attack to the rear must be executed with the same efficiency as one in any other direction. The breakout of the encircled units at Chosin Reservoir is a classic example of what can be done under these circumstances.

PRO PATRIA

PRINCIPLES OF WAR

As a summary to this e-book, we recall the concluding chapter in Appleman's Escaping the Trap, "Results of the Chosin Campaign." He covers a variety of subjects to summarize the book under the headings: Casualties, Tank Losses, UN Equipment and Arms Losses, CCF Losses, Clothing of the CCF, CCF Strength Committed to the Campaign, Who Won the Chosin Reservoir Campaign?, X Corps Analysis of Chinese Attack Options, Why Did Complete Victory at Chosin Educate the CCF?, The Myth of Chinese Human Sea Tactics, Chinese Army Group's Initial Success, The CCF Fatal Mistake at Hagaru-ri, Marine Tactics Nullify Initial Chinese Success, The CCF Achievement, and finally, Could X Corps Have Evacuated Overland?

Although all of the subjects include factors contributing to the success or failure of either side, the fact remains that the X Corps was forced to withdraw from Northeast Korea. However successful the breakout may have been, he who owns the land after the battle is the victor.

It's easy to find faults with the enemy, from the shoes he wore to the fact that he couldn't supply enough bullets for his weapons and food for his soldier's stomachs. As simple as that. Rather than enter into a discussion of details, as Appleman has, let us look at the principles of war and see how they may apply to the Chosin campaign.

There has always been a tendency to justify one's own victory. The Chinese claim victory because they drove the X Corps out of Northeast Korea. True. The 1st Marine Division claimed victory because the enemy failed to destroy them. This may be true, but only when reading one side of the story. In both cases we conclude that no one won. In the final analysis, it is not success or failure in a debacle of this sort, but rather the lessons learned by both sides. Many of the lessons learned can be found in The Chosin Journal publications contained in this e-book.

OBJECTIVE

After crossing the 38th Parallel, the objective was to drive north to the Yalu and defeat the North Korean army. However, the situation changed when the Chinese "volunteers" exposed themselves in the Eighth Army sector as well as in the X Corps sector at Sudong and nearby at the Fusen Reservoir. The question arose, how many Chinese were participating in this changing war and what was their intention? The two early attack-and-disappear strikes by the Chinese were not accepted by MacArthur as serious warnings by Chairman Mao, so the Eighth Army and X Corps were ordered to continue the march to the Yalu River. In the X Corps sector, Maj. Gen. Smith's mission was to drive north and destroy the enemy, which he did slowly and methodically, contrary to the expressed instructions of his corps commander. As a result, rather than finding the enemy, he allowed the enemy to position his forces to accomplish its initial objective by launching a surprise attack against the Americans on the west and east side of the Chosin Reservoir.

OFFENSIVE

The offensive lacked the drive needed to find and destroy the enemy while the Chinese were, at the same time, marching south from the Yalu to prepare their grand ambush. Be it known that the attacks at Yudam-ni and east of Chosin cannot be defined as an ambush. It was a meeting engagement between two opposing forces, with those attacking northward having a problem defining objective and not using enough recon to ensure security of command. As the reader can see, the principles are all interrelated, each working with or against the others.

MASS

With such the large zone of responsibility in Northeast Korea, the X Corps did not have the ability to mass its forces. In most cases an RCT was the largest mass while the combat battalions were often dispersed beyond supporting distances. Circumstances allowed a semblance of mass to be created at Yudam-ni when the situation resulted in the bulk of two RCTs being present the moment the Chinese attacked, a condition that led to the sacrifice of an understrength RCT east of the reservoir.

Mass favored the CCF forces because of their readiness to strike--offensive--at a place of their choosing with the divisions available; yet unable to make use of forces available by concentrating them where success could be assured. Although the Chinese commander had 12 CCF divisions available in Northeast Korea, he was only able to use elements of six of those divisions in the Chosin campaign; emphasis on elements of due to limited ability to exercise command and control over large groups of attacking units. This, in addition to his inability to logistically support his forces, made the application of mass far less effective. The size of his forces diminished rapidly as the cold nights and days passed. Lessons learned would be applied later in the bunker war.

ECONOMY OF FORCE

This principle was a given because all U.N. forces were stretched to the maximum when the Chinese entered the war. In the X Corps sector the terrain dictated the use of forces.

MANEUVER

The application of maneuver is also governed by the terrain. With the attached ROK corps committed to the northeast where they were far from being a threat to China, the remaining options for maneuver were the 7ID MSR to Hyesanjin on the Yalu River and the 1MarDiv MSR passing east of the Chosin Reservoir northward to the Yalu River. When MacArthur ordered X Corps to attack west to assist the Eighth Army, his staff committed one of the most gross errors of the war, ordering the impossible. See Ridgeway's writings.

UNITY OF COMMAND

This principle came into question when MacArthur split the ground forces in Korea after the Inchon-Seoul operation, leaving Eighth Army and X Corps as separate ground commands responding to his headquarters in Tokyo. There was no field army command, such as Eighth Army should have been, between MacArthur and Almond; while at the same time Almond enjoyed his position, or previous position as some believe, as MacArthur's Chief of Staff.

Unity of command also emerges in the relationship between Maj. Gen. O.P. Smith, U.S. Marine Corps, and Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond, U.S. Army, the X Corps commander. Although Smith's command was subordinate to X Corps, Smith did not respond to instructions by Almond as expected of a subordinate commander. If an Army division commander had written a letter to the Army Chief of Staff, as Smith did to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Army division commander would have been promptly relieved. Smith was not relieved, and his slow and methodical move northward gave his enemy the time to set the so-called "trap" at a time and place of their choosing.

After the attacks at Yudam-ni it was noted that Gen. Smith did not appoint one officer--usually the senior officer--in command of the two RCTs for the breakout to Hagaru-ri, but permitted them operate as a joint command. Smith obviously had a reason for this.

SECURITY

This principle is related to the words “a time and place of their choosing.” A major fault in the movement northward by the lead divisions of Eighth Army and X Corps was the inadequate use of ground recon, the eyes and ears of any combat command. It has been written that aerial observation did not see the movement of Chinese forces, revealing the lack of experience by those who think the enemy marches only during daylight hours. The problem was the lack of deep ground recon by division’s organic recon companies as well as the British 41 Commando which was attached to the 1MarDiv. During the movement north on the Chosin MSR the units exercised excellent security at night by digging into tight perimeters, just as they did in the islands during World War II. By not conducting intensive recon patrols at night the enemy was free to move his units, while the use of platoon and company-size recon patrols during daylight hours did nothing more than announce to the enemy where they were located. If you don’t find the enemy in a timely manner, he will find you when you are least prepared.

SURPRISE

Surprise is related to security, one feeds on the other. The Chinese used this principle to move large forces at night and hiding them during daylight. In the Chosin area the Chinese moved their initial attack divisions into attack positions (within range of Marine artillery) on both sides of the reservoir without being detected, then launched their attack as a complete surprise.

SIMPLICITY

The ultimate in simplicity must be awarded to the Chinese, for they actually didn’t have the capability of being complicated in most operations. They moved by foot and attacked, using sound and visual signals for control. Then simplicity caught up with them because they could not care for their soldiers, especially their casualties. They did learn their lessons as it was soon revealed when the war shifted south of the neck of Korea and the slow, methodical bunker war began.

The eventual withdrawal did use simplicity in plans and orders. While the Hungnam Perimeter and eventual amphibious landing in reverse may have sounded complex, it was not. Planners visualized empty ships that had to be filled, waiting for the long line of troops and equipment come down the pass into assembly areas and eventually into their assigned space. They loaded just as they had unloaded previously at Wonsan, Iwon and Hungnam, veterans of amphibious operations just as they were veterans of turning around and attacking in another direction.

We close this e-book by suggesting that readers make use of the information available that is directly related to the campaign. Since the chronology is essentially a sketch book, we leave it to the reader to fill in the spaces with the resources available. See it as a war game, then decide who, what, when and where; then think of the reasons why you have arrived at your conclusions. Try to think different, rather than draw on the rumors and hype-filled stories of the past. In time, you will learn that those who enjoy the standard of living in South Korea are those who eventually won, and those who didn’t win continue to suffer north of the DMZ.

SEMPER FI

PRO PATRIA

Walk Of The Long Shadows




















PHOTO BY IVAN LONG, 1 DECEMBER 1950

IN MEMORY OF THOSE LEFT BEHIND



MILITARY MAP SYMBOLS

Rectangles symbolize a military unit, triangles an observation post and circles a supply point.



Military Unit Identification

Antiaircraft Artillery	
Armored Command	
Army Air Forces	
Artillery, except Antiaircraft and Coast Artillery	
Cavalry, Horse	
Cavalry, Mechanized	
Chemical Warfare Service	
Coast Artillery	
Engineers	
Infantry	
Medical Corps	
Ordnance Department	
Quartermaster Corps	
Signal Corps	
Tank Destroyer	
Transportation Corps	
Veterinary Corps	

Airborne units are symbolized by a gull wing with the arm or service symbol.

Airborne Artillery	
Airborne Infantry	

Weapons Identification

Machine gun	
Gun	
Gun battery	
Howitzer or Mortar	
Tank	
Self-propelled gun	

Size Symbols

The following symbols placed in boundry lines or above the rectangle, triangle or circle indicate the size of the organization.

Squad	•
Section	••
Platoon	•••
Company, troop, battery, Air Force flight	
Battalion, cavalry squadron, or Air Force squadron	
Regiment or group; combat team (with abbr. CT following identifying numeral)	
Brigade, Combat Command of Armored Division or Air Force Wing	X
Division or Command of an Air Force	XX
Corps or Air Force	XXX
Army	XXXX
Group of Armies	XXXXX

Examples

The letter or number to the left of the symbol indicates the unit designation and to the right, the designation of the parent unit to which it belongs. Letters or numbers above or below boundry lines designate the units searated by those lines:

Company A, 137th Infantry	A ⊠ 137
8th Field Artillery Battalion	⊠ • 8
Combat Command A, 1st Armored Division	A ⊠ X 1
Observation Post, 23rd Infantry	⊠ 23
Command Post, 5th Infantry Division	⊠ X 5
Boundry between 137th & 138th Infantry	— 137 — 138

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HODGES SAMUEL ESCUE

Lt. Col. Hodges S. “Sam” Escue, USA-Ret, known as “Hodges” back in 1950, was a liaison officer in the S-3 section of Headquarters, RCT-31, survived the trek with Task Force Drysdale to Hagaru-ri, saved dozens of soldiers east of Chosin and never received recognition for his heroic feat. Hodges Escue played an important role as a platoon leader in Item Company during our attack to the top of the Funchilin Pass. For him I am truly thankful for friendship and advice throughout the years.

EDWARD L. MAGILL

I met Col. Edward L. “Ted” Magill, JAGC, USAR-Ret, at the first Chosin Few reunion in San Diego where we had lunch together and immediately entered into deep discussions about Chosin, conversation relating his career as a lawyer and survivor of Chosin to mine as a thirty-two year career soldier. We both saw the need for dedicated research to set the record straight which, in time, led to Ted being elected president of The Chosin Few and to his help with my early versions of The Chosin Chronology, as well as later efforts to have the Presidential Unit Citation awarded to the Army units of RCT-31 that had not received the original award.

PATRICK C. ROE

I made contact with Maj. Patrick C. Roe, USMC-Ret, during the years I was working on The Chosin Chronology, Pat’s interests being the enemy, a link to his assignment as a battalion S-2 in the 7th Marines. After forming and chairing The Chosin Few Historical Committee for a few years, I turned the helm over to Pat Roe as we continued our contacts while he worked on his book, *The Dragon Strikes*. Our frequent exchange through e-mail helped create an understanding on both sides of the Chosin coin, Army and Marine which, to me, was a follow-on to my experience on Peleliu 1944.

EDWIN H. SIMMONS

I first met Brig. Gen. Edwin H. Simmons, USMC-Ret, through e-mail during my search for more knowledge about Marine units, especially since he had been a unit commander at Hagaru-ri. Our personal meeting of interest took place at the 1990 where we both took part in the 50-year anniversary at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C. It was during the follow-on seminar where I got to know him while enjoying a bit of Chosin history fencing from the podium, then a few years later afforded the honor of commenting on the drafts for his Marine Corps’ Commemorative Series publication *Frozen Chosin: U.S. Marines at the Changjin Reservoir*, and also his book *Dog Company Six*.

JOHN TOLAND

Soon after completing a master’s program at the University of New Hampshire, John Toland came to our home for an interview, a session during which I was as interested in interrogating John as he was in my experience at Chosin. I soon realized that talking with John over maps was an excellent way of preparing myself for my own research. John Toland was a renowned master of asking questions that continued to build on more questions, all developing reasonable conclusions to aid in rounding out the story. With John, every minute was a learning process. I was honored to participate in his research and receive a copy of his book *In Mortal Combat*, 1991. John titled the heading of his Prologue “Tools of History,” causing me to believe that the best tools for making sense of combat action were the soldiers who participated in the battle. Shortly after this meeting with John Toland I became an active member of The Chosin Few as an historian and editor which ultimately led to The Changin Journal and this e-book.

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Changjin Journal by Col. George A. Rasula, USA (Ret), Chosin Historian, with Byron Sims, Contributing Editor. A total of sixty-two issues of the Journal have been published to date on the web pages of the New York Military Affairs Symposium (www.nymas.org), of which 14 are included in this e-book.

Other periodicals are addressed above in the “History of the Chosin Story.”

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