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I Stumbled onto an interesting ad for a video tape called TELEVISION'S VIETNAM" narrated by Charlton Heston. The ad quotes James Reston of the New York Times as saying "It was the reporters and cameramen who forced the withdrawal of American Power from Southeast Asia. For those of you who might be interested in such a film, order from:

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The ad is not real current but I am sure the film is still available. Sounded very interesting.

Another interesting blurb: The USA gives Egypt two Billion dollars a year. With part of that they buy aircraft and submarines from Red China -- With which China buys hardware from Israel! This gives new meaning to the term "foreign policy." It's pretty damn foreign to me!

Well, here we are, finally getting to No. 6 which should've been out in February, but better late than never. We really appreciate your patience and understanding. It is our intention to get this all caught up by June, which will be the last issue of Volume 1. At that time we will find out how many think this has been worthwhile.

For those of you who are interested, I will again note the Brigade Reunion will be in San Antonio September 27/29 at the Tropicana Hotel, \$50 per night per room. Contact Bob Speights at P.O. Box 140733 Austin, TX 78714-0733.

Also note that The Chosin Few's convention will be in November in Reno. We will give more details later.

**THE CONTINUING SAGA OF  
BILL HALL'S LETTERS FROM KOREA**

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There's a movie on outside but I wouldn't sit outside to see it. We had a fine meal of steak at noon, the first hot meal in several days. We have been eating C-rations, which are not bad at all, but they do get monotonous, There is everything imaginable in them, even small tablets to heat the cans.

Our old outfit is now scattered, There is one man in this battalion from the old platoon, but I don't expect to see much of him when we leave here.

I escaped guard duty today and tonight, Four hours in the cold is not pleasant, believe me, but it's nothing compared to what the division experienced recently.

It will soon be one month since we left the States, It seems almost impossible, I'll soon have four months into this hitch, I can't see any immediate chances of getting out either, When will the world ever regain its sanity?

Pohang, Korea  
January 15, 1951

To the Fennos:

Received my first letter last night—from Grandma Hall, written January 4. The rest of the mail should begin arriving soon. Of the 15 letters that came to our tent, one man got eleven.

Yesterday morning I had charge of a seven-man ammunition detail unloading trucks, but at noon the lieutenant called me in and said that he had heard I was a college grad and asked me if I would like to be a stock records clerk. I

told him I was scheduled to be a company clerk but it made absolutely no difference to me. So it appears that I will be the stock records clerk, keeping track of ammunition supplies for the various outfits in the division. Since I know so little about the job, I spent last night reading up on the different types of ammunition and other items that we use. It looks a little complicated. I feel somewhat guilty writing this morning when everyone else is out working somewhere with shovels.

We are short of water at times and can't wash as often as we would like. It gets quite muddy around here in the daytime when it thaws out. We're situated in the middle of a plowed field and the furrows run through our tent. I have a cot to sleep on but most of the men don't. I grabbed it when someone carelessly went inside his tent and left it outside. That's the most expeditious way of acquiring such things around here and is considered quite legitimate, except by the victim, I suppose.

Our company commander gave us a little speech yesterday, assuring us we were in one of the best outfits in the best division in the world. We will not be pushed out of Korea, he said, no matter what the army does and we can take on the Chinese by ourselves if necessary. I filed all this away for future reference. We have been hearing persistent rumors about a cease fire arrangement and we hope there is some basis for them. We really miss regular news reports. We hardly ever hear anything official. Occasionally we get to read old copies of Stars and Stripes, the army propaganda sheet.

I got warmed up last night. We had a football game and a baseball game here. Several of us even stood outside talking after dark with no coats on. We

have no lights in the tent yet and I don't like to go to bed early as I always seem to wake up about 3 a.m. Last night they passed out candy, cigarettes, soap, etc.—most of the things we need. There is no reason to be paid since there's no place to spend money. If I were making good pay, I could really save some money. U. S. currency is not allowed over here. It's all military scrip (play money).

Pohang, Korea  
Friday, January 19, 1951

Everyone around here thinks I have some kind of racket and I suppose it's true, for the moment anyhow. I didn't do anything yesterday and haven't so far today, except take care of some personal things like shaving. Everyone else is out draining airplane revetments. I'm still standing by for the job of stock records clerk. A sergeant came in yesterday and showed me a few things about the job. What he showed me didn't look very difficult, and he made several mistakes in arithmetic while I was watching. The man I'll be working for told me he was trying to obtain a typewriter and it would take a few days to go through channels, so I suppose that's what I'm waiting for. I'm afraid it will be quite awhile before my typing is acceptable again.

The temperature here is about the same as it is there now. It didn't freeze last night for the first time since we've been here, which makes for muddier conditions than before. The inside of the tent is getting rather muddy in spots. Most of the men still don't have cots and the dampness comes through the canvas, I know because I didn't have a cot the first night.

We received several copies of Stars

and Stripes this morning but the latest was four days old, so I still don't know what is going on. For all I knew, the war was over. I would certainly like to hear firsthand what is happening and not have to rely on hearsay. The stupidest people must have radios because the news they pass on couldn't be more incorrect.

I suppose we're pretty lucky to be this far behind the front, but of course it won't last forever.

I couldn't tell you exactly where we are if I wanted to. I don't have a good map. If you can find a good map of Korea, please send it. I think we're on the Pohang airstrip, which was fought over several months ago and finally lost to the North Koreans when we were holding the Pusan beachhead. I don't think I've seen Pohang itself. We did enter a fishing village, which some said was Pohang, but the majority disagree. There were quite a few fishing boats there—a little larger than Fred Soderbom's—with one-cylinder engines and also sails. I saw a few fish about twice the size of herring but the principal catch seems to be squid, which they hang on ropes to dry. The dried squid are tied together in bunches of about 20 and stored for shipment out into the countryside. When I first saw the squid back in Masan, I thought they were rats that had been pressed flat and dried.

There seems to be an abundance of apples and eggs are in good supply. I've never eaten any of the apples and wouldn't unless I peeled them first. I ate some peanuts but they weren't very appetizing. When I think about the conditions under which they're grown, even though they're in shells, they seem to lose their appeal.

We would have had a light in the

tent last night, but there was a short in the wire somewhere. I hope they get it fixed today. A screen was set up last night for a movie, but the electricity wasn't available.

I'll try the free mail service with this letter. Let me know if it takes any longer than the air mail I've been using in the past.

I haven't been paid since the middle of December and then I don't think it was up-to-date. I can save money this way, better than I could back in the States, and I was hardly a spendthrift there. I think we're supposed to receive extra pay for being over here and our insurance is supposed to be free if the bill giving us an extra six or seven dollars a month was ever passed. Still, it doesn't amount to much and the high noncoms and officers are the ones making the money. Some things never change.

Pohang, Korea  
January 22, 1951

The weather took a turn for the worse lately and the wind almost blew the tent down. I heard night before last the temperature was down to 25 degrees below zero, but I doubt it. It seems like zero to me, but with the wind blowing it's hard to tell. Some times our oil stoves don't function very well, and yesterday morning we could see our breath right over the stove. The mess hall is 100 yards away and, since we usually bring our chow back to the tent, it's always cold by the time we get back.

It has warmed up a little and the wind finally abated somewhat. I picked up a chest cold lately but it seems to be getting better. By 10 p.m. I will have

taken 17 pills that I was given at sick bay today. My temperature was only four degrees above normal this morning and two degrees at noon. About 20 percent of the men have been ill lately with diarrhea, etc., and the cause is unknown. Some of the men are standing four to five-hour guard shifts in the middle of the night, but I haven't been assigned any so far.

I'm making progress in my new job, learning how to make out reports, etc., and doing a little typing. I work for a tech sergeant from Washington (state), who really knows all about ammunition. My degree in English seems to have made an impression on the office force, including the first sergeant and the lieutenant. Every time there's a dispute over a word or something similar, they come to look me up. But I just keep my mouth closed otherwise—I've found it's the best policy.

What is this about Bill getting home? I can't complain about breaks, I guess, but that's one I would have enjoyed. I had thought he was probably over here somewhere by now.

So far as the war is concerned, things seem to be improving from what I hear, but a big offensive may be in the offing. I'm surprised our division hasn't been shoved into the front line, but I suppose they will wait until they're in trouble. Now that I'm in the office, I do hear a radio occasionally and in other ways I'm better informed so I don't feel so much in the dark any more.

The other night I couldn't keep warm in my sleeping bag, but last night I left my flannel shirt and wool socks on and was quite comfortable. I usually go to bed too early and then wake up early in the morning. No one in the company went to chow this morning because we

weren't waked up, so tomorrow morning we'll have roll call at 6:40.

Pohang, Korea  
January 25, 1951

I've felt much better today. The weather has warmed up again and, even though it didn't thaw out today, it felt as though spring might be just around the corner.

About all I've done today is sit around a nice, warm stove. I've learned how to make out most of the reports, but it will be some time before I've learned the code names for all the various types of ammunition. When more ammunition arrives, it will make our work a little harder, but not much. All the higher NCO's and commissioned officers hang out here so we're aware of all the conferences and hear all the news and rumors, distorted as it all is. Just today, for example, we heard that a cease fire has gone into effect. I suppose it's just wishful thinking.

I understand some of our units are running into gooks 10 miles or so from here—just small bands of guerrillas. It sounds as if the army has been advancing on the main line with no resistance whatsoever. I wonder where the Chinese have gone. Our rumor has it that the Chinese are mad at the Russians for not providing air support for their last drive. Something is up because they certainly had the army on the run when they stopped recently. We didn't think they were much concerned about the enormous losses we were inflicting on them, but maybe they were.

Yesterday we were asked how much money we wanted on pay day, I didn't ask for any since I don't have any need for it.

The sergeant in charge of our section went pheasant hunting today. I hope he brings back several. We have a frying pan, grease, and other things in the tent just in case he does. The chow has been getting rather monotonous again and the coffee is hardly fit to drink.

We are the only ones in the company who don't have to fall out for roll call at 6:30. I usually crawl out of my sleeping bag about seven. Why not enjoy the privilege while I can? I still haven't pulled any guard duty.

(RUMORS ABOUT GUERRILLAS WERE CORRECT. NOT UNTIL I READ THE HISTORY OF MARINE CORPS OPERATIONS IN KOREA YEARS LATER WAS I TO LEARN OF THE EXISTENCE OF GROUPS OF KOREAN BANDITS AND OUTLAWS IN THE CHIOI SAN MOUNTAINS 50 MILES NORTHWEST OF MASAN. NEITHER THE JAPANESE NOR THE FLEDGLING SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN ABLE TO ERADICATE THEM. THEY REMINDED ME OF THE CHINESE WARLORDS WHO PLAYED SUCH A PROMINENT ROLE IN CHINESE HISTORY RIGHT DOWN TO THE VICTORY OF THE COMMUNISTS THERE. AT ANY RATE, MARINE PATROLS WERE CONSTANTLY ON THE ALERT FOR THEM BUT NEVER SUCCEEDED IN MAKING CONTACT.

THE GUERRILLAS REFERRED TO HERE, HOWEVER, WERE ELEMENTS OF THE TENTH NKPA (NORTH KOREAN PEOPLE'S ARMY) DIVISION, WHICH HAD INFILTRATED BEHIND X CORPS LINES NEAR WONJU IN LATE DECEMBER TO HARASS UN FORCES. BY EARLY FEBRUARY MARINE UNITS HAD VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED THE NORTH KOREAN GUERRILLAS AS AN EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE AND I

BELIEVE THE BEDRAGGLED REMNANT SOMEHOW MADE THEIR WAY BACK TO THE NORTH. NOT A LITTLE CREDIT WAS DUE THE SOUTH KOREAN CIVILIANS, WHO CONTINUED TO REPORT ON THEIR WHEREABOUTS EVEN AS THEY EXAGGERATED THEIR NUMBERS.

BY THE WAY, IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT THE CHINESE ARMY WAS FEARED MOST FOR ITS INCLINATION TO ATTACK IN HUMAN WAVES, BUT THE MARINE CORPS GENERALS FELT, FOR THE MOST PART, THAT THEY WERE MORE TO BE FEARED FOR THEIR UNCANNY ABILITY TO INFILTRATE THROUGH OUR LINES.

Pohang, Korea  
January 31, 1951

I just got a letter from Buyral saying he was afraid Glenn might be called at any time. I thought the current reserve policy was to give several months' notification before call-up. I certainly hope he doesn't get called. One of us is enough.

The furor that I caused here has about died down. After I had twice refused the captain's request—more like a demand—that I apply for officers' training back in the States, I was cornered by two warrant officers last night. One congratulated me for "turning down a commission," and the other insisted that it was my duty to try for one. I told them when I go back to the States, it will be for a discharge. I've learned my lesson. They won't get me again. If, by some manner, they should then I might even go in the army and try for a commission there. Now, now. I hope to get back to the States this year, but who knows.

The word going around now is that

all the remaining members of the Brigade, which came over here June 27 (*Brigade Arrived in Korea August 2nd, 1950. Editor*) last year, are to return to the States. That would include Tech. Sgt. Bowen and most of the high ranking NCO's of the company. Sgt. Bowen was awarded a bronze star at a battalion formation the other day. The citation said he had organized a machine gun section on a truck during the withdrawal from the Reservoir and, when they were held up by Chinese machine gun fire, he had silenced two of the guns by accurate rifle grenade fire, thereby aiding the convoy in avoiding the ambush. Bowen says modestly that a good many men deserve the medal more than he does, and he may well be correct. So far as I am concerned, the whole group of Marines who were up there deserve medals. It's amazing how many Chinese bodies were piled up in front of their lines with such small losses to themselves. The men who were there still say they could have stayed indefinitely and that their worst enemy was the weather.

(I CAN'T FORGET THE INCIDENT DESCRIBED TO ME ABOUT THIS TIME THAT INVOLVED A GROUP OF CHINESE WHO HAD SOMEHOW OBTAINED ONE OF OUR 75 M.M. RECOILLESS RIFLES. THEY SET IT UP ON A HILL ABOVE THE MARINE CONVOY AND AIMED IT CAREFULLY. THEN THEY ALL STOOD DIRECTLY BEHIND IT IN THE BELIEF THAT THAT WAS THE SAFEST PLACE. WHEN THE GUN DISCHARGED THEY WERE BLASTED INTO KINGDOM COME BECAUSE THEY HAD CHOSEN TO STAND WHERE MOST OF THE FORCE OF THE BLAST WAS DIRECTED).

Our tent is now furnished with a wooden door and is much more comfortable. The weather is noticeably

warmer, at least in the daytime. The mess hall and the movie screen have been moved closer to our tent. We could just as well be at Pendleton for all the difference there is. I have no idea how long we'll stay here, but someone has to be with the ammunition.

I finally got a typewriter today. I've been making use of a calculator lately and it saves a lot of time. Once in a while I go with a truck to one of our ammunition areas to pick up ammunition of one kind or another. It helps me to learn what the various types look like, how they're packed, and where they're stored. I must have learned something because I started with virtually no knowledge of ammunition. I know the melting point of phosphorous and similar trivia, but what I don't know would fill volumes and does. Incidentally, phosphorous is another of the horrible weapons of war. I understand that when a tiny portion of phosphorous attaches itself to a person, it tends to burn inward and is almost impossible to extinguish.

We all have friends in the mess hall and try to use our influence occasionally. I had counted on a couple of pounds of coffee today but it didn't materialize. I'm still drawing two packs of cigarettes every two days for their use as barter. I sent out some laundry and it cost 1,000 yuan (25 cents).

I wonder what effect the price controls on meat will have. I suppose it will make it harder to buy livestock as people will expect more for their cattle even though meat prices have stabilized.

Do you suppose Bill is coming over this way? I wanted him to get some pictures of Tent Camp 1, but I don't know whether he did or not. **(To be Continued)**

## Inchon-Seoul Campaign Continued from No. 5

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Instead of risking collision or grounding in a night approach, he decided to forego the advantages of surprise and attack in broad daylight. And instead of avoiding NKPA fire, he intended to goad the enemy into retaliations which would reveal the positions of NKPA guns on Wolmi-do.

The hazards of the operation were increased by the fact that a ROK PC boat had discovered an NKPA craft laying mines on the morning of the 10th. This confirmed Admiral Struble's opinion that the Inchon area offered the enemy excellent opportunities for this form of warfare. Not only would the muddy waters make detection difficult, but crippled ships would block the narrow channel.

It was not a pleasant prospect. And the outlook became darker on the morning of 13 September when four mines were spotted in Flying Fish Channel. The U. S. cruisers *Toledo* and *Rochester* and the British cruisers *Kenya* and *Jamaica* had dropped off in support as the six destroyers carried out their mission. Pausing only to detonate the mines with 40mm rounds, the cans moved up within 800 yards of Wolmi-do to fire down the enemy's throat while the four cruisers poured in 6 and 8-inch salvos and the planes of TF-77 made bombing runs.

It had been long since the Navy issued the historic order "Prepare to repel boarders!" But Admiral Higgins did not overlook the possibility of NKPA infantry swarming out over the mud flats to attack a disabled and grounded destroyer. And though he did not issue pikes and cutlasses, the crews of the

Gurke, Henderson, Swanson, Collett, DeHaven, and Mansfield were armed with grenades and Tommy guns for action at close quarters.

The enemy endured half an hour of punishment before obliging Higgins by opening up with the shore guns of Wolmi-do. The Gurke and DeHaven took hits, and five NKPA shells found the Collett. The total damage was insignificant, however, and the casualties amounted to one man killed and eight wounded. These results cost the enemy dearly when the cruisers and destroyers silenced the NKPA guns shortly after they revealed their positions.

On the return trip the destroyers found eight more mines and exploded them. This proved to be all, for the enemy had neglected an opportunity to make the waters around Inchon dangerous for the attack force. The next morning, when the destroyers paid another visit to Wolmi-do, the shore guns appeared to have been effectually silenced. The DDs fired more than 1,700 5-inch shells and drew only a few scattered shots in reply. Meanwhile, the Marine planes of VMFs -214 and 323, having returned from Sasebo, cooperated by spotting for the cruisers and launching napalm strikes before and after the bombardment.

On the evening of 14 September, after five days of continual pounding, Wolmi-do was a blasted piece of real estate as the Marines of 3/5 prepared to hit GREEN Beach in the morning.

### Marine Landings on GREEN Beach

The predawn stillness of the Yellow Sea was shattered as the Corsairs of VMFs-214 and 323 flashed up from the decks of the *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait*. To the west the planes of Task Force 77



were assembling in attack formations above the *Valley Forge*, *Philippine Sea*, and *Boxer*. Squadron after squadron droned eastward through the blackness, and the first aircraft began orbiting over the objective area at 0454.

Two hours earlier, Advance Attack Group 90, under Captain Norman W. Sears, USN, had glided into the entrance of Flying Fish channel. Led by the *Mansfield*, the column of 19 ships snaked through the treacherous passage while captains and navigators sweated over radar scopes. Lieutenant Clark's handiwork provided a welcome relief midway along the route, when the glimmering beacon on Palmi-do guided the vessels past one of the more dangerous points in the channel. Minutes after air cover began to form over Inchon, the ships eased into the narrows west of Wolmi-do and sought assigned battle stations. Training their big guns on the port city were the cruisers *Toledo*, *Rochester*, *Kenya*, and *Jamaica*, comprising one of the three Fire Support Units under Admiral Higgins. Other support vessels scattered throughout the waters of the objective area were the destroyers *Collet*, *Gurke*, *Henderson*, *Mansfield*, *DeHaven*, *Swenson*, and *Southerland*; and this array of fire power was further supplemented by the three bristling rocket ships, LSMR's 401, 403, and 404.

The control ship, *Mount McKinley*, its flag bridge crowded with starstudded commanders, steamed into the narrows just before dawn. No sooner had the gray shoreline become outlined in the morning haze than the 6 and 8-inch guns of the cruisers belched sheets of orange flame in the direction of Inchon; and at 0545, the initial explosions rocked the city and reverberated throughout the channel. There was a deafening crescendo as the destroyers

hammered Wolmi-do with their 5-inch guns. Radio Hill, its seaward side already burnt and blackened from previous bombardments, was almost hidden by smoke when Marine planes streaked down at 0600 to smother the island with tons of rockets and bombs.

Captain Sears, reporting to the *Mount McKinley*, confirmed L-hour at 0630. To this end, Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Taplett's landing force was boated by 0600, and the LCVPs and LSUs rendezvoused while Marine air continued to soften up the target.

Air attacks ceased at 0615, but Wolmi-do enjoyed only a momentary respite before the most unnerving blow of all. In strange contrast to the sleek men-o'-war and nimble aircraft, three squat LSMRs closed on the island from the north, a few hundred yards offshore. Phalanxes of rockets arose from the decks of the clumsy ships, arched steeply, and crashed down. One of the rocket ships, taking a southerly course, passed GREEN Beach and dumped salvo after salvo along the slopes and crest of Radio Hill.

When the LSMR cleared North Point of Wolmi-do, seven LCVPs darted across the line of departure and sped shoreward with 3/5's first wave. Rockets and 40mm shells were still ripping the southern half of the island when one platoon of Company G and three platoons of Company H stormed GREEN Beach at 0633. Two minutes later, the second wave of landing craft ground to a halt on the sand, bringing the remainder of both assault companies.

The Marines were confronted by a scene of devastation almost devoid of enemy resistance. Only a few scattered shots greeted the assault force as it

punched inland. The failure of UDT men to clear away all of the wrecked small craft cluttering the beach had left 3/5 a landing strip less than fifty yards wide. Consequently, each wave had to contract like an accordion, and there was considerable crowding during the first crucial minutes of the landing. But even at this stage, the potent Marine air arm offered a final measure of protection to the infantrymen splashing ashore. Pilots swung their F4Us fifty yards ahead of the assault troops and hosed the routes of advance with machine-gun bullets.

After a brief pause for reorganization at the beach, First Lieutenant Robert D. Bohn's Company G wheeled to the right and drove up the northern slopes of Radio Hill, Objective I-A. Only half-hearted resistance was met along the way, most of the scattered and numb North Koreans preferring to surrender rather than face the inevitable. At 0655, Sergeant Alvin E. Smith, guide of the 3d Platoon, secured the American flag to a shell-torn tree on the crest.

At this point General MacArthur rose from the swivel chair in which he had been viewing the operation on the flag bridge of the *Mount McKinley*. "That's it," he said. "Let's get a cup of coffee."

Meanwhile, the Wolmi-do assault continued as Captain Patrick E. Wildman, after detaching a small force from Company H to clear rubble-strewn North Point, attacked across Wolmi-do toward the Inchon causeway with the rest of his unit. How Company's mission was to seize Objective 2-B, which included the eastern nose of Radio Hill and the shoreline industrial area facing Inchon.

At 0646, the three LSUs comprising

the third wave squeezed into the narrow beach and disgorged the armored detachment of Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, under Second Lieutenant Granville G. Sweet. Ten tanks were landed in all—six M-26s, one flame-thrower, two dozers, and one retriever. The big vehicles crunched inland a short distance to await calls from the infantry.

Lieutenant Colonel Taplett ordered his free boat to the beach at 0650. Fifteen minutes later, he radioed the *Mount McKinley* and *Fort Marion* that his assault companies were advancing on schedule.

It was ironic that 3/5's reserve company should encounter the angriest hornets' nest on Wolmi-do. Landing in the fourth wave at 0659, Captain Robert A. McMullen's Company I moved through North Point in trace of the How Company detachment which supposedly had cleared the area. Suddenly a flurry of hand grenades clattered on the rubble, and the surprised Marines scattered for cover. Regaining their composure after the explosions, the infantrymen determined the source of trouble to be a by-passed string of enemy emplacements dug into a low cliff at the shoreline facing Inchon. There appeared to be about a platoon of North Koreans, who would rise from their holes intermittently, fling grenades inland, then disappear from sight.

Item Company's interpreter crawled toward the cliff during a lull, bellowing to the Reds that their predicament was hopeless and exhorting them to surrender. When the Communists responded to this advice by throwing more grenades, McMullen signaled Sweet's tanks into action. The M-26s and Marine riflemen took covering positions, while the dozer tank, directed by McMullen

himself, rumbled into the troublesome pocket and systematically sealed the die-hard Reds in their holes.

Another bit of drama unfolded before the reserve troops when they closed on the causeway terminus in the wake of How Company's advance. From one of many caves drifted noises indicating the presence of several occupants, hitherto unnoticed. While riflemen covered the entrance, a Marine tank drove forward and fired two rounds into the interior.

Muffled explosions shook the area, and billows of black smoke streaked with flame rolled out of the cave. Wide-eyed, as though watching ghosts emerge, the Marines of Company I saw thirty enemy soldiers stagger out of the blazing recess and throw up their hands.

Less than an hour after landing, 3/5 controlled half of Wolmi-do. Company H, having cleared the causeway terminus, was pivoting southward to clean out the ruins of the industrial area. Engineers, close on the heels of the infantry, advanced 25 yards out on the pavement leading to Inchon and laid an antitank mine field. George Company had advanced about 400 yards and was clearing the northern crest of Radio Hill. Action up to this point is best summed up in Taplett's message to the *Mount McKinley* at 0745: "Captured 45 prisoners. Meeting light resistance."

Nor did the situation change as Company G occupied the dominating peak of Radio Hill, some 105 meters high. The enemy lacked the will to fight, despite the fact that he had sufficient weapons and a formidable defensive complex from which to fire them. Frightened, dejected Red soldiers continued to surrender singly or in small

groups, and Taplett exulted over the amazingly light casualties sustained by his battalion.

Since Company H found the going slow in the shambles of the industrial area, the battalion commander ordered Lieutenant Bohn to seize the whole of Radio Hill. Accordingly, George Company troops rushed across the ridgeline to the eastern spur. This done, Bohn dispatched a force to clear the western reaches of the high ground. By 0800, Radio Hill became the property of the 1st Marine Division, and with the prize went control of the island and Inchon Harbor.

When the news of 3/5's success blared from the loudspeaker on the flag bridge of the *Mount McKinley*, the commander in chief, wearing his famous leather jacket and braided campaign cap, withdrew to his cabin and penned a spirited message to Vice Admiral Struble aboard the *Rochester*:

"The Navy and Marines have never shone more brightly than this morning. MACARTHUR"

Consolidation of Wolmi-do required the reduction of an enemy outpost on Sowolmi-do, the small lighthouse station connected to the southwestern tip of the island by a causeway 750 yards long and 12 yards wide. An islet of about 500 square yards, Sowolmi-do was topped by a low hill with the navigational beacon on the summit. Before bothering with this tiny, isolated target, Taplett put his larger house in order.

By previous plan, the three rifle companies of 3/5 took up defensive positions generally facing Inchon. Item Company occupied North Point, Wildman's unit the slopes above the industrial area, and Company G the crest of Radio Hill. While the battalion

dug in, mopping-up operations throughout the island continued to net more prisoners and reveal the extent of North Korean fortifications. Radio Hill was ringed by mutually supporting trenches and emplacements, all of which had brought only a negligible return on the Reds' investment in time and labor. Parked on the western nose of the ridge were two intact 76mm anti-tank guns that could have wrought havoc on landing waves approaching GREEN Beach. Fortunately, these weapons had been exposed to the 40mm fire of the LSMR covering the beach assault, and their crews had lacked the stomach to man them.

More antitank guns were scattered around the terminus of the causeway leading to Inchon, leaving some question as to whether they had been rushed to the defense of the island or were marked for displacement to the city.

North Point, once a luxurious resort, was honeycombed with caves used both for storage and for bomb shelters. The swimming pool, one of the few structures still recognizable after the bombardment, was converted by the Marines into a prisoner-of-war stockade.

More than 300 cast-iron antipersonnel mines were found attached to the barbed wire entanglement stretched along the west coast at the base of Radio Hill. The explosives were removed and disarmed by Technical Sergeant Edwin L. Knox and his detachment from Company A, 1st Engineer Battalion. Though the North Koreans had been helpful in placing these mines in so obvious a location, they had, oddly enough, failed to employ similar obstacles on the beaches, roads, and paths around the island.

Prior to the midmorning advance on Sowolmi-do, total casualties for the 3d Battalion were 14 wounded—an incredibly small price for a critical terrain feature commanding the approaches to Korea's major west coast port. Evacuation plans so carefully laid out by the 1st Medical Battalion worked smoothly. In the early phase of the operation, LCVPs returning from GREEN Beach delivered Marine casualties to the *Fort Marion*, whose normal medical complement had been augmented by a special surgical team. Men with particularly bad wounds were transferred to the *Mount McKinley* after being administered first aid. As the battle developed, navy medical corpsmen of 3/5 established a collecting point on a small pier which could be reached by ambulance boats even during low water.

Shortly before 1000, Taplett ordered Company G to seize Sowolmi-do. Bohn in turn assigned the mission to one infantry squad reinforced with machine guns and a section of tanks, all under the control of Second Lieutenant John D. Counselman, leader of George Company's 3d Platoon. Although the islet was by no means an objective of formidable proportions, the attackers eyed their route of approach over the long strip with misgivings. Their skepticism was not unfounded, for they neared the entrance to the causeway only to be stopped cold by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from the other end. A platoon of North Koreans, almost literally at the end of a rope, preferred to fight it out.

Taplett ordered the tank-infantry team to hold up while he radioed a mission to Marine air. A few minutes later, Corsairs of VMF-214 nosed down and scorched the objective with napalm.

Sweet's tanks, preceded by an engineer mine-clearance team and followed by the column of infantrymen, rumbled onto the rock bed tracing the seaward edge of the causeway. As the task force filed across the exposed route, 81mm shells from 3/5's mortar platoon rattled overhead and tore into the Communist emplacements. Enemy fire was reduced to a light patter, and the observers on Radio Hill breathed a sigh of relief when the attackers gained the far end of the causeway at 1048.

Covered by tank fire, the Marine infantry quickly fanned out and closed with the defenders. There was a sharp outburst of small-arms racket, interspersed with the clatter of machine guns; then a few scattered volleys and the main fight was over at 1115. Mopping up with grenades and a flame thrower continued for almost another hour, owing to the number of caves and the determination of a few Red soldiers.

Nineteen North Koreans surrendered and 17 were killed, including some hapless warriors who tried to swim to the mainland. Despite the size of the islet, eight Reds succeeded in hiding out from the attackers; and General Craig, after landing on Wolmi-do with the ADC group in the evening, observed the fugitives escape to the mainland.

### **The Two Harbor Islands Secured**

Three Marines were wounded on Sowolmi-do, bringing 3/5's total casualties for the day to 17 WIA. In return, Taplett's battalion could count 136 prisoners and 108 enemy dead. Since interrogation of captives established the original number of Red defenders at 400, it could be concluded that some 150 more Communist fatalities lay entombed in sealed emplacements and

caves throughout the island.

The Wolmi-do garrison was part of a 2,000-man force committed to the defense of Inchon by NKPA headquarters in Seoul. Represented were elements of the 226th Marine Regiment, to which two companies of the 2d Battalion, 91th Coast Artillery Regiment were attached with their Soviet-manufactured 76mm guns. The spiritless resistance encountered by 3/5 was the natural reaction of green troops to the awesome power of modern combined arms; for the North Korean marines and their artillerymen were largely recent conscripts with sketchy training and no experience. It remained to be seen how the other 1,600 Red troops would respond to the later assaults on RED and BLUE Beaches.

Mopping-up operations on the island were completed by noon, and with the support ships standing silent in the narrows, an oppressive quiet settled on the objective area. Gradually the phenomenal tide rolled back from its morning high of more than 30 feet. By 1300 the waters had receded, leaving 3/5 perched on an island in a sea of mud. For the next several hours Taplett and his men were on their own, speculating whether an enemy force might suddenly rush out of Inchon's dead streets in an attempt to cross the mud flats, or whether a Red tank column would abruptly streak from the city and make for the causeway.

Nothing happened. The air of unreality caused by the stillness of the Oriental seaport weighed down on the nerves of the entire attack force. As the afternoon wore on, the Marines detected movement here and there, but the distant figures were identified as civilians more often than not. Captain McMullen, studying the RED Beach area from his

OP on North Point, reported possible enemy "field pieces" on Cemetery Hill. What he actually sighted were the tubes of the mortar company of the 26th NK Marine Regiment, as will be shown later.

At Taplett's OP on Radio Hill, the Shore Fire Control Party Officer, Second Lieutenant Joseph R. Wayerski, searched Inchon intently through his binoculars. On one occasion he called down naval gunfire on small groups of people stirring in the inner tidal basin area to his right front, but when further observation revealed the figures to be civilians raiding a pile of rice, the Marine officer promptly canceled the mission. Wayerski's lone tactical target of importance was a section of trench on Observatory Hill in which he once spotted about 20 enemy soldiers on the move. He smothered the earthworks with 30 5-inch shells from the *Mansfield*, and what North Koreans remained chose other avenues from that point on.

Taplett and others of his headquarters picked out enemy gun emplacements right at the waterfront near the Inchon dry dock. After the report went out to the *Mount McKinley*, red pencils throughout the task force circled the locale on maps for special attention during the pre-H-Hour bombardment.

Thus, the 3d Battalion enjoyed an almost uneventful interlude during its isolation. An occasional mortar round or long-range machine gun burst was the feeble reminder that Inchon still remained in enemy hands.

While the infantry lolled in relative ease and safety, service and support elements, attached to 3/5 for the landing, set the stage at GREEN Beach for the logistical follow-up so vital to am-

phibious operations. First Lieutenant Melvin K. Green's team from Shore Party Group A, having unloaded its LSUs in record time, established dumps for ammunition, rations, and other field necessities. Personnel of the Ordnance Battalion, Combat Service Group, and Service Battalion engaged in backbreaking toil to alleviate the headaches of a harried beachmaster. Signalmen scurried about, setting up their equipment and creating the familiar maze of wire. The reconnaissance detachment of the 11th Marines probed around the island's desolation in search of battery positions for the howitzers scheduled to roll ashore on the evening tide.

The narrow strip of sand on North Point would have appeared crowded and hopelessly confused to the inexperienced eye, but old hands knew that order would gradually emerge, as if by magic, from the "early rush hour"—that necessary evil inherent in all assault landings.

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### **First Blood at Kosong Continued from No. 5**

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#### **Security Provided for Wonsan Area**

Responsibility for the security of the Wonsan area having been assigned to the 1st Marines, something of an administrative problem was created on the 28th by the order sending 2/1 to reinforce 1/1 at Kojo. For the 3d Battalion of the regiment had departed that same day to relieve a ROK unit at Majon-ni, 28 miles west of Wonsan. Since this left no troops to patrol roads in the Wonsan area and maintain blocking positions at Anbyon, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, and 5th KMC Battalion were attached to the 1st Marines for

those missions.

Also available to the 1st Marines for such security duties as guarding the Wonsan airfield and harbor area were the 1st Shore Party Battalion, 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion, and Company B of the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion.

By the morning of the 29th, moreover, it had already become apparent that one or both of the battalions in the Kojo area could soon be spared. When General Craig arrived by helicopter, he found the situation well in hand.

About 60 percent of the seaport had been destroyed by air strikes and the guns of the destroyers when a patrol consisting of Dog and Fox Companies combed the ruins on the morning of the 29th without finding any evidences of enemy occupation. Meanwhile an Easy Company patrol ranged to the west of the coastal plain with equally negative results.

Captain George B. Farish of VM0-6 was making a reconnaissance flight when he discerned the word HELP spelled out in rice straw near a straw-stack a mile northeast of Tongchon. A Marine crawled out from concealment, and the pilot landed his helicopter to pick up PFC William H. Meister, who had been hiding since losing touch with his unit during the enemy night attack on Hill 109. This was the first of four such rescues completed by Farish that day.

On the afternoon of the 29th, Captain Noren led a patrol along the railway track south of Kojo and retraced the route of his fighting withdrawal in the darkness. In the vicinity of Hill 109, where Lieutenant Belli's platoon had been surprised, he found 12 Marine

bodies. None had been despoiled by the enemy of arms or equipment.

Pushing farther south, Noren encountered sniper fire from the ruins of Tongchon, destroyed by Marine air, and called for more strikes. The Corsairs flushed out a group of 20 enemy troops, 16 of whom were cut down by the machine guns of the Baker Company patrol.

By the 29th, when General Almond made a trip of inspection to Kojo, it was possible to revise the original Marine casualty list as the MIA casualties were reduced. The final count was 23 KIA, 47 WIA and four MIA.

Twenty-four wounded Marines were evacuated to Wonsan that day by APD. LST 883, when it returned to Wonsan with the tanks, took the bodies of 19 Marines and 17 prisoners.

Enemy losses, in addition to 83 POW, were estimated at 250 KIA and an unknown number of WIA on the basis of more than 165 bodies found by Marine patrols. Curiously enough, the Communists had shown little interest in the equipment which fell into their hands, and two Marine 75mm recoilless rifles, rendered inoperative, were recovered with their carts and ammunition in the vicinity of Chonchon-ni. Almost all abandoned equipment was found in usable condition.

#### *Marines Relieved at Kojo*

Each of the Marine rifle companies set up outposts in front of its zone. Morning and afternoon patrolling, with air on station, went on during the last two days of October with negative results. Harassing and interdiction fires were also continued until 1/1 departed.

LST 973 arrived off Kojo at 1430, 31 October, and disembarked the 5th Battalion of the KMC Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins' battalion, accompanied by Colonel Puller, left Kojo at 0700 the next morning on the return trip of the LST. The ship docked at Wonsan at 1230 on 2 November. That afternoon 1/1 relieved elements of the 1st Tank Battalion at the road block near Katsuma, four miles southeast of Wonsan.

Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., CG FMFPac, who was acting in an informal capacity as amphibious adviser to General MacArthur, inspected 2/1 at Kojo by helicopter on 31 October. Having arrived at Wonsan that day with Colonel Victor H. Krulak, his G-3, he conferred at X Corps Headquarters with Admiral Struble and Generals Almond and Smith.

Among the other subjects of discussion was the news that Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) prisoners had been taken in the area north of Hamhung by ROK units which were soon to be relieved by the 7th Marines. Several clashes with organized Chinese forces during the last days of October had also been reported by elements of the 1st Cavalry Division of the Eighth Army in western Korea.

The 7th Marines had been given the mission of spearheading the Marine advance to the northern border of Korea as directed in Corps orders. After parkas and other cold weather clothing had been issued from the beach dumps at Wonsan, the regiment completed the movement to Hamhung by motor convoy from 29 to 31 October. By this time the Corps drive to the Yalu was shifting into second gear, with the I ROK Corps far in advance along the coastal highway. Two U. S. Army units were soon to

be involved. The 7th Infantry Division, which landed at Iwon from 29 October to 8 November, had Corps orders to push on toward the border; and it was planned that the 3d Infantry Division, due to land its first units on the 8th at Wonsan, would relieve 1st Marine units south of Hamhung.

Corps orders of 2 November called for 2/1 to return to Wonsan immediately. The southern boundary of X Corps was to be moved 70 miles farther south, effective on the departure of the battalion from Kojo. In order to cover the new zone, the KMC regiment had already been detached from the 1st Marine Division and given responsibility for the Corps zone south of the 39th Parallel. The relief of the 2d Battalion of the 5th Marines was completed by KMC elements that same day at Anbyon, eight miles southeast of Wonsan, thus freeing that unit for a motor lift northward to rejoin its regiment.

Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's 2/1 and the artillery battery departed Kojo the following day. A small train and a truck convoy sent from Wonsan were used chiefly for the transport of supplies, and most of the troops traveled by shanks' mare. The column was on the way when the report came that the rail line had been blown up at Anbyon by guerrillas. The battalion halted there and set up a perimeter for the night which included both the train and truck convoys. At 0730 in the morning the convoys moved out again for Wonsan. Delayed slightly by another rail break, Sutter completed the movement at noon.

The track-blowing incident gave evidence that the Marines must deal with a third type of enemy. In addition to the NKPA remnants, and the forces of Red China, it now appeared that ac-



count must be taken of thousands of uprooted Koreans prowling in small bands for food and loot, the flotsam of a cruel civil war. Called guerrillas by courtesy, they were actually outlaws and banditti, loyal to no cause. And by virtue of their very furtiveness, they were capable of doing a great deal of mischief to organized forces.

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Next is a story of the Hagaru operation, then next month's issue we'll go to the East Central Front and the beginning of the Trench War.

We are working on some other short stories from OLD issues of Leatherneck dating back to the '50s era that look interesting.

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## HAGARU 1950

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THE CHINESE COMMUNIST FORCES seldom departed very far in their Korean operations from that most primitive of all tactical ideas, the ambush. When attacking a motor convoy, they usually let a few vehicles pass before slicing the column into 2 or more morsels for tactical mastication.

It was actually a gigantic ambush, therefore, that the enemy had prepared on the night of 27 November 1950 for the 1st MarDiv, strung out for 35 miles in the Chosin Reservoir area. Regiments and battalions were the objects of attack instead of vehicles; and the 20th and 27th Field Army Corps, of 4 divisions each, were employed instead of a few platoons. But in either case the object was the same. The object was to fractionalize and destroy.

The Marines were hit at a time when their heaviest elements were

farthest out on the end of the strategic limb. X Corps orders had called for 2 reinforced infantry regiments, the 5th and 7th Marines, to proceed with 3 artillery battalions of the 11th Marines on a drive westward from Yudam-ni (see Map #1). They were to close the 80-mile gap between X Corps and the right flank of the US Eighth Army, which had commenced an advance toward the Yalu on the 24th, only to be rocked back by a surprise CCF counter-offensive.

The Marines at Yudam-ni were the first in the X Corps zone to be cut off. After an all-night fight in the sub-zero darkness of 27-28 November, they formed a 360° defense near the western arm of the Chosin Reservoir. A second Marine perimeter, on the 14-mile stretch of mountain road to Hagaru, was manned by Fox Co of the 7th Marines, which had been given the mission of protecting Toktong Pass. Three battalion-size perimeters of the 1st Marines were located farther south along the 70 mile MSR at Hagaru, Kotori and Chinhung-ni; but only the last had physical contact with friendly forces both to the north and south. The strategic picture was completed by 3 battalions of the 7th Infantry Division, cut off by the enemy east of the reservoir.

It is not likely that we shall ever know the enemy's side of the story, as we did after WW II. Even if Chinese Communist leaders chose to comment on operations of 1950, the intent would doubtless be to hoodwink rather than enlighten "capitalistic tyrants." At any rate, it would be interesting to learn why CCF strategists failed to perceive that Hagaru was the key to decision. There was simply no other spot where the main elements of the 1st MarDiv could assemble and regroup to fight

their way out to Hamhung. Yet the Chinese elected to attack at Yudam-ni and Toktong Pass on the first night. And when they hit Hagaru, after presenting that undermanned perimeter with 24 hours for preparation, they employed elements of only one of the 8 divisions at their disposal.

"I may lose battles," said Napoleon, "I do not lose minutes."

Those minutes lost by the enemy at Hagaru were doubly precious to Marines caught during an awkward interlude of administrative housekeeping. Not only was the Division CP and Headquarters in the midst of a move from Hungnam to Hagaru, but the infantry battalion defending Hagaru was short one of its rifle companies, left behind to guard supplies. This company, about half of the Division Headquarters personnel, 2 companies (each less a platoon) of Marine tanks, an Army infantry company, a British Royal Marine Commando unit and a large supply convoy, were en route to Hagaru on the 28th only to learn that the MSR north of Koto-ri had been cut by defended road blocks.

The 3d Bn of the 1st Marines, with the responsibility of the Hagaru defense, had not even been able to reconnoiter the immediate area until the 27th, after arriving the night before. But this unit happened to be the one battalion of the Division with any experience at defending a perimeter in Korea. The 17 day operation at Majon-ni had taught valuable lessons, even though it was a perimeter of expediency held against materially inferior foes.

But now the enemy held a great superiority in numbers, and Hagaru was to be a perimeter of necessity defended by men fighting for survival.

On the morning of the 28th, the

battalion commander called at the new forward Division CP. There he conferred with the G-3 and proposed that an overall Hagaru defense commander be designated with control over local units. He also urged that Co G, his third rifle company, be expedited to Hagaru with all available reinforcements.

The Division G-3 telephoned, about 1500, to inform the CO of 3/1 that he had been named Hagaru defense commander by the CG 1st MarDiv. The question as to what units came under his control was not made clear for the simple reason that everyone was vague as to their identity and whereabouts. Not only did Hagaru resemble a Klondike gold-rush camp, with its tents and dumps scattered over a frozen plain, but units had poured in too fast during the last 48 hours to be digested administratively by a skeleton Division Headquarters just arrived. As a first step toward order, therefore, the CO 3/1 directed his S-1 to contact all units, with the exception of medical and the like, and have their senior officers report to the 3/1 CP at 1700. The emergency conditions prevailing at Hagaru, 5 hours before the expected CCF attack, were recalled long later by the battalion commander:

"No formal pronouncement-dispatch, order or similar means was employed by Division Headquarters to announce either the formation of a perimeter defense or the designation of CO 3/1 as its commander. A primary reason was that no one knew just what units were there, this being compounded by the numerous small elements such as detachments, advance parties, etc., of which many were Corps and ROK units. Hence, the Battalion S-1 and his assistants were a combination of town criers and census takers. We did, however, get most of the major

(if such they can be called) unit commanders to the unit conference, but the process of locating and identifying smaller units was thereafter a continuous process which we never accurately completed. The smaller units appeared to be attaching themselves to near-by major units."

Among the 3913 troops at Hagaru on the 28th, as determined by later surveys, no less than 58 different Marine Corps, Army, Navy and ROK units were represented, many of them by advance parties of fewer than 10 men. But it was easy enough to take stock of the combat outfits. In addition to 3/1 (-), they included a provisional Marine tank platoon; the 2d Platoon of Co D, 1st Tank Bn; Dog and How Batteries of the 11th Marines; and the AT Co, Weapons Co and a 4.2 mortar detachment of the 7th Marines, a total of almost 1060 troops.

Prior to the unit conference, the CO of 3/1 directed his S-3 to be prepared to assign units to places in the perimeter when their strength became known. Such decisions depended to a great extent, of course, on intelligence as to when and where the CCF attack could be expected. The \$64,000,000 question was whether the enemy would launch his major effort from the heights to the south and southwest or the hill mass east of Hagaru. Nor could the possibility of a sneak attack, under cover of darkness, from the low ground to the north be entirely discounted, though the Chinese preferred to assemble in hill areas offering maximum protection from the fury of Marine supporting arms.

The answer by the CO of 3/1 represented a difficult decision. If he attempted to take in too much territory with his limited numbers, he would be weak everywhere. And if he massed his

few combat troops in one part of the perimeter, he must take his chances on the Chinese striking elsewhere.

The battalion commander staked everything on the intelligence brought to him that afternoon by his S-2 and the 12 men of the 181st Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) team attached to 3/1. At Majon-ni, where 3/1 officers learned to work with this group, the Marines had a great advantage over the enemy in intelligence. The time and place of the first CCF attack on the Majon-ni perimeter were predicted so accurately, in fact, that the actual event differed from the intelligence in only one particular, the actual event was half an hour late.

Again, at Hagaru, the CIC team supplied intelligence based upon POW and Korean civilian interrogations. The report was that the Chinese would attack from the south and southwest at 2130, and the CO of 3/1 made his dispositions accordingly by concentrating his only 2 rifle companies on the south and southwest sides of the perimeter (see Map #2). They were already in position, having relieved 7th Marines units in this area; and at the close of the unit conference the S-3 instructed the 2 rifle company commanders to utilize the few remaining hours to dig in and prepare for a major CCF attack. Not only did they have the post of danger, but it was their responsibility to protect the partially completed C-47 air-strip.

At this crisis the Marines could be thankful for the realism which was perhaps the outstanding trait of their commanding general. As early as 15 November, when optimism as to the early end of the war prevailed in high military circles, CG 1st MarDiv was almost alone in preparing for trouble.

He directed the 1st Engineer Bn to make the MSR fit for tanks; he ordered supplies and ammunition to be trucked to Hagaru; he arranged for the 1st MedBn to establish a field hospital at the new forward base; and he assigned Marine engineers the task of constructing a 5,000-foot airstrip.

In one respect, however, these preparations proved to be a mixed blessing. They made necessary a larger perimeter to enclose so many dumps and installations. Another sobering thought occurred to the CO of 3/1 on the afternoon of the 28th when out of a blue sky an enemy 76mm shell exploded near his CP, mortally wounding his S-4. The perimeter was filled with ammunition and fuel dumps which would make splendid targets, and the field hospitals of Co C and Co E of the 1st Med Bn were also vulnerable. All the enemy had to do for artillery spotting, moreover, was to post observers in the surrounding hills.

Marine air was requested to make a special search for the CCF gun, but it remained ominously silent and hidden all the rest of the day.

As an off-the-cuff solution for time and space problems in such a large perimeter, it was decided, during the few hours available for planning, to create virtually a separate defense zone of the entire area north and northwest of the frozen Changjin River. Known as the supply area, it was placed under the command of an officer from H&S Bn, 1st MarDiv, assisted by the CO of 2/7. They were given How Btry of 3/11, which also had the mission of supporting the Marines surrounded at Toktong Pass. The only other combat groups in this area were Weapons Co, 2/7 (guarding the northwest road block) and elements of the AT Co, 7th Marines, sup-

ported by several Marine tanks. With these exceptions, provisional reserve platoons of service troops held the line.

South of the supply area, the CO of 3/1 put all his tactical eggs in one basket by placing his most reliable troops in a continuous line, tied in as to units. From left to right, Weapons Co of 3/1, Dog Co of the 1st EngrBn, Dog Btry of 2/11, and How and Item Co's of 3/1 held about 40 per cent of a perimeter measuring more than 4 miles.

It was proposed during the planning conference that one of the rifle companies be assigned to the left of Weapons Co to block any attack from the land mass known as East Hill. Although the CO of 3/1 did not concur, he decided to reserve this sector for George Co when it arrived. Meanwhile, the area was to be defended by service troops hastily scraped together during the last minutes of daylight. Marines of the 1st ServBn were represented along with 3 Army units—the Sig Bn, 10th Engr and H&S Co of X Corps.

An unusually heavy responsibility fell upon Dog Btry. Their 6 howitzers were assigned 75 per cent of the perimeter to cover with observed indirect fire and the remaining one fourth with direct fire. And though How Btry had other assignments, it could cover about 30 per cent of the perimeter front and thus complement Dog Btry if the tactical situation demanded it.

Coordination of the 81mm mortars, 3.5" rocket launchers, 75mm recoilless rifles and heavy machine guns was the responsibility of the CO of Weapons Co. He also had the mission of defending the road block on the route to Koto-ri.

A final planning problem, never fully solved, was the creation of reserve

units. This was done from day to day by telephone to major units and by runner to the others. On the 28th, anyone able to pull a trigger, regardless of his MOS, was considered reserve material. Only the most necessary exceptions were recognized.

The transition from planning to action took place when the 2 rifle company commanders returned from a conference with the S-3 to brief their own officers and NCOs. Platoon leaders were instructed to devote the first few hours of early November darkness to completing preparations for the attack. With a combined frontage of 2300 linear yards to defend, How Co and Item Co were putting all their platoons in the front line and depending on supporting arms to take the place of man power. Ground, frozen to a depth of 6 to 10 inches, made it difficult to dig in, but the men did not have to be warned that their lives depended on their entrenching tools.

Radio messages brought word that task forces sent out from Yudam-ni and Koto-ri had been repulsed in attempts to open up the MSR. Hagaru had also been represented by a detachment of Weapons Co, 7th Marines, commanded by the CO of 2/7, which made an unsuccessful effort to fight its way to Toktong Pass.

The cold had moderated at dusk but the raw air hinted at snow as the troops went back in relays for hot chow. Meanwhile, the 2 rifle company fronts were mined, with extra concertinas of barbed wire being strung across approaches made deadly with booby traps and trip flares. A special wire led from each company OP to the CP, and both were connected by power phone to the platoon OPs, the 60mm mortar sections and the aid station.

When everything possible had been done to prepare a hot reception for the enemy, orders were given for a 50 per cent watch as the men went back, a few at a time, to the defiladed warming tents for hot coffee and a smoke. The first soft white flakes of snow were fluttering down to melt on the barrels of machine guns, fired at intervals to keep them from freezing. And though the howitzers and 81mm mortars were already warming up with interdictory rounds, the men of How Co marveled at the strangely unwarlike scene in their rear. There the dozers were huffing and puffing and clanking under the floodlights, as Marine engineers armed with carbines hacked away at the granite-hard, frozen earth. Work on the airstrip was so important that the engineers refused to be interrupted by a battle.

Explosions of booby traps and trip flares announced the first enemy probing attacks about 2230. In the Battalion CP, the commanding officer glanced at his wrist watch and noted that this time the enemy was an hour late.

Chinese patrols of 5 to 10 men probed for the flanks and weak spots. After they withdrew or were beaten off, white phosphorus mortar shells crashed into the Marine positions. By watching for casualty evacuations, the enemy hoped to establish the location of the front line as his assault troops crept forward within 30 yards.

Three blasts of a whistle gave the signal for the main assault. Swirling snowflakes aided the enemy by reducing visibility, so that the Chinese communists were almost on top of the Marines before their presence became known. Supported by accurate mortar fire, and advancing in perfect skirmish formation with grenades and burp

guns, the communists demonstrated that they deserved their reputation as formidable night fighters. Each successive assault wave kept on striving for a penetration as long as any men were left standing. Marine supporting arms reaped a grim harvest as mortars, rocket launchers, recoilless rifles, heavy machine guns and stationary tanks poured it in, and yet the enemy kept on coming.

About 2315 they broke through the How Co front. This was the beginning of a savage all-night fight at close quarters in which 3 Marine officers were killed and 4 wounded. Accurate CCF mortar fires helped the communists to enlarge the penetration. Pouring through the gap, they threatened the CP and infiltrated back as far as the airstrip.

Fortunately for How Co, the communists soon proved that they knew better how to make a penetration than to use one. Some of them fell to plundering the tents, others split off into little combat groups without any central purpose. It was a scene of confusion, with the Marines often hesitating to fire at shadowy figures for fear of hitting their own men. Not even shouts of recognition could be trusted, for the communists had a nasty trick of yelling a few English phrases for purposes of deception.

At 2330, the CO of 3/1 sent a detachment of 50 reserves, and some of the engineers from the airstrip got into the fight from motives of self-defense. By this time the enemy had achieved fire superiority in the How Co zone with his mortars and heavy machine guns. It was nip and tuck when the company executive officer hurried back to the 3/1 CP for more reserves. On his return with 50 engineers and truck drivers, he found that the Marines had regained

fire superiority, thanks to the efforts of the mortar section. A Marine counterattack sealed off the penetration; but groups of communists were still lurking in the How Co zone, and not until dawn were the lines fully restored.

Item Co had meanwhile been engaged since the first probing attacks, as the enemy strove without success for a breakthrough. The total of 1700 60mm mortar rounds fired, in this company zone alone during the night, gives some idea of the use made of supporting arms. Even so, small groups of communists managed to weather the hurricane of fire and come within grenade-throwing range, where they were shot down by Marine rifles and even pistols. One platoon position was twice overrun momentarily by communists who were killed to a man by Marines fighting from their own foxholes.

Illuminating shells being scarce, the CO of Item Co had earmarked 2 Korean houses in front of his line to be set afire for purposes of visibility. The CCF attacks continued until 0400 in this zone, but at no time did the enemy achieve a real penetration .

Quick thinking on the part of the CO of Dog Btry may have averted a good deal of trouble within the perimeter. When several enemy 76mm artillery shells exploded behind him, not far from the Division CP, he concluded that the communists were firing at his flashes and had overshot the mark. Immediately he ordered his howitzers to cease firing while the No. 6 gun crew pulled out, about 150 yards to the west, to act as a decoy. Its flashes drew enemy fire revealing the CCF positions to Btry D officers, who set up aiming circles and completed an estimated range and deflection. They cut loose with 5 rounds from each of their howit-

zers and the CCF artillery was silenced for the night. A later survey disclosed that 2 enemy guns had been destroyed by Marine counter battery fire and 2 others removed.

Up to midnight only How and Item Companies had been engaged. Then, about 0100, Chinese communists in column formation appeared before the Weapons Co road block, having apparently mistaken their direction. Marine machine guns scattered them after exacting a stiff price in casualties.

At 0200 the Chinese struck for the first time in the East Hill area. It does not appear that the initial effort was much more than a secondary attack on a comparatively small scale. But the sideshow became the main circus when the overrunning of a platoon position opened up a gap which green service troops were not capable of closing.

Two Marine officers, each with a SCR-300 operator, had been sent to this sector to assist the Army senior officer. Their leadership held the service troops together until one Marine officer and the senior Army officer were killed. Then the whole East Hill front crumbled as units lost contact and disintegrated.

Here it must be remembered that the quality of service troops differed widely. Some of the Marine and Army engineers, signalmen and truck drivers did almost as well as the infantry. But the X Corps units on East Hill were composed of new men, combined with a large proportion of ROKs, who spoke no English. With little training of any sort, let alone combat training, they can hardly be blamed for falling apart at the seams after their leaders were killed.

**(To Be Continued)**