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CORP. 654460

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PFC 1038900

Walter K. Hood
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Capt. USMC

James P. Sumner
1st Lt. USMC

Ashtenell Roberts
PFC 1022200

John T. Collier
1st Lt. 296029

PFC Jack Sumner 1078444

Hard Times
more soon
I need

Cor. James
PFC Russ Church

Al Milam
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Charlie Bunker
651117 P.S.C.

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Capt. USMC 1070751

Lonnie White
PFC 1042279
U.S.M.C.P.

Bill Buzard



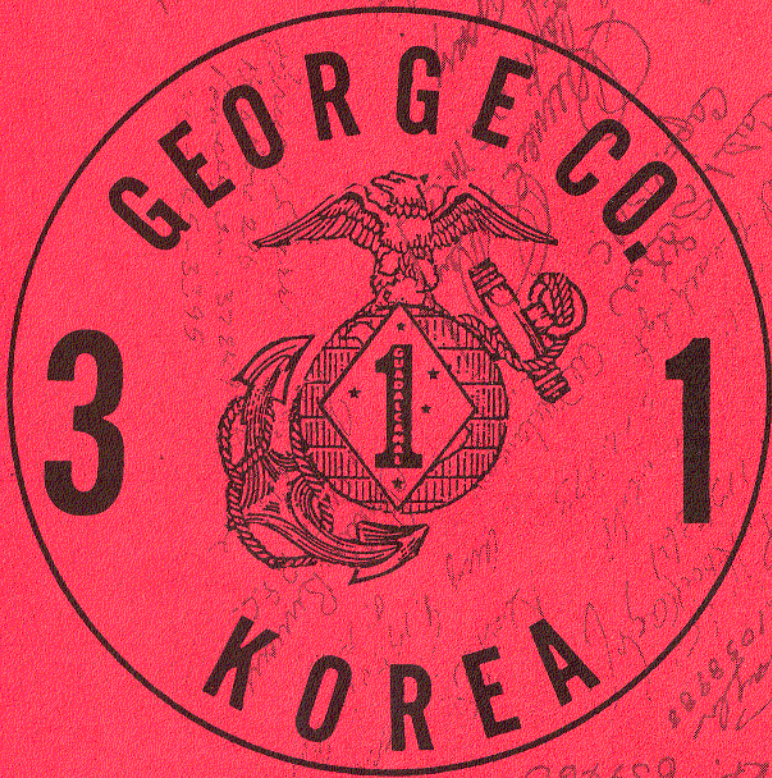
**MAJON-NI
HAGARU-RI
Chosin Reservoir Campaign
North Korea
1950**

婦人は特務長の
視線を嫌う。



The men with canvas
on their legs and rags
on their hats.

The United States Marines



Reported Korea
COR. 65460

- ① 내외한이름
- ② 라이라
- ③ 눈을 뜨는 것
- ④ 키슬
- ⑤ 양안
- ⑥ 한남구 (노라이)
- ⑦ 사리다다.
- ⑧ 時에
- ⑨ 천을 늘리는 것
- ⑩ 불을 쬐는 것
- ⑪ 구 (수구)
- ⑫ 모액

⑬ 웃는 것

- ⑭ 라이라
- ⑮ 키슬
- ⑯ 양안
- ⑰ 키

- ⑱ 時에
- ⑲ 불을 쬐는 것
- ⑳ 구 (수구)
- ㉑ 모액

기발 (80)

Volume II
MAJON-NI / HAGARU-RI
1950

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WESTERN FRONT
1952-1953



G-3-1 Korea



6 August 1989

(A-1-6 redesignated G-3-1 same date 1950)

We assumed that every Marine who had experienced combat has an overwhelming desire to put to writing his experiences as well as those of his unit. Such was the choice of this organization at our first reunion at West Point, New York in 1986. As the stories were submitted it became apparent that the majority of survivors were of the Chosin campaign — thus Volume II was created prior to Volume I; preceding volumes will be added later.

What the reader has before him is the product of two privates and a corporal — “If you want it down right, have the troops do it.”

Private James Byrne a Marine Reservist from northern California, who after being wounded twice, went home, married his sweetheart Joan, and did what every veteran was supposed to do — get a job and become productive. Jim returned to college, obtained a teaching degree and taught high school history in San Jose, California until retirement.

As our Association Historian, Jim took it upon himself to work for over two years taking the dubs, drabs, tapes and manuscripts we sent him and placing them in a logical sequence that made sense and began typing them. He pushed, prodded, called and returned calls, working tirelessly at this labor of love. At our Los Angeles reunion he said, “It’s your book, all I did was put it together.” And put it together he has. Those of us who lived this volume can only feel a sense of pride at such an outstanding work of art. We burnt Jim out and for his magnificent effort we are forever in his debt. “Thanks Jim” just doesn’t seem to be enough.

Private First Class A. Harrell Roberts also a reservist from Savannah, Georgia, returned to civilian life after his wounds healed, marrying his sweetheart Betty. He learned to use his weaker hand far better than most of us use a healthy one. He perfected his skills, starting as a simple draftsman with the Army Corps of Engineers and working his way up through the promotional ladder until his retirement. All the art work and detailed maps are from his skilled hands.

Corporal Peepsight Pendas a regular on his second cruise, reenlisted and retired as a Captain after an infantry tour in Vietnam. His contribution was the editing, composition, design, typesetting and printing of Volume II.

Therefore comments and short rounds should be taken up with the responsible individual.

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Peepsight

G.G. Pendas, Jr.
Captain USMC Retired
President G-3-1 Korea



Corporal G. "Peepsight" Pendas
USMC
President



P.F.C. A. Harrell Roberts
USMCR
Adjutant



Pvt. James "Jim" Byrne
USMCR
Historian



As a rifleman in the First Platoon of "Bloody" George Company, the impressions I developed have remained with me throughout my service to our corps.

The Marines of G-3-1 were the role models for what I thought a Marine should be. Their abundance of the professional soldier traits: loyalty, bravery and love of corps, country and fellow warrior created the example that I've held my Marines to for over forty years.

I'm indebted to the Reservoir Marines of George Company for providing me the inspiration for my professional career.

Semper Fi,

Stephen G. Olmstead

Stephen G. Olmstead
Lieutenant General, USMC
(PFC G-3-1 1950-51)





CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR SOCIETY
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CHARTERED BY THE CONGRESS

FORWARD

From the Book of Jeremiah 4:17-18, we read "Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took their load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon. As for the builders each wore his sword girded at his side as he built. While the trumpeter stood near." As we can see from ancient times, the citizen soldier has always stood ready and willing to protect his home and country.

It is the lot of some men to be called upon to protect their country once in their life time, while others may be called upon to make the sacrifice more than once; this was as it was with G Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division, during the hot summer, fall and freezing winter of 1950. The Marine Reservists were called back to active duty again, after serving in World War II. To the Regular Marines this was just another dirty job which must be done; that was what they were trained to do.

Though the fighting of these men of "George" Company took place many years ago, to each of us it remains a living part of our lives. From the heat and dust and stench of the rice paddies, to the sharp crack of enemy bullets as the men of "George" Company slugged their way through Seoul, to the freezing cold and blinding snow at Koto-ri, to the 25 degrees below zero weather on East Hill at the Chosin Reservoir, the men of "George" Company conducted themselves in a manner that epitomized the name MARINE.

The stories in this book are about real people who have seen war and its carnage from a mud level viewpoint. In their stories they tell of the interaction of personalities stretched to the physical and psychological breaking point. They came from all over this great land of ours, but in the time of crises they put aside sectional and personality differences to band together into one magnificent group of warriors.

The Company got rid of its sea legs after the landing at Wonson by partolling over the hills at Majon-ni. At Majon-ni, again they were in combat, foretelling for the replacements what was in store for the future. They were also to feel the grief of seeing some of their comrades in arms get wounded and die.

On to the Chosin Reservoir where every person in "George" Company was put to the test both physically and mentally; each met the test heroically, never faltering under the most tremendous odds. The gallantry and valor displayed by these men can not be measured by ordinary terms because their actions had to be extraordinary to accomplish the feats of arms they were able to achieve.

As Commanding Officer of G Company, it was my privilege and honor to serve with them at Majon-ni, the Chosin Reservoir and beyond. No matter what tough or difficult task I called on "George" Company to do, my men did it in a spirit of getting the job done at all costs.

I salute the brave living of "George" Company, but I salute also the braver dead, "For They Gave Their Todays For Our Tomorrows."

God Bless the Men of "George" Company.

Captain Carl L. Sitter
Commanding Officer G-3-1
October 1950 - March 1951



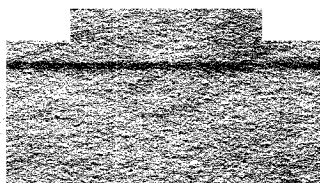
Captain Carl Sitter C.O. (2nd from right) with some of the troops.

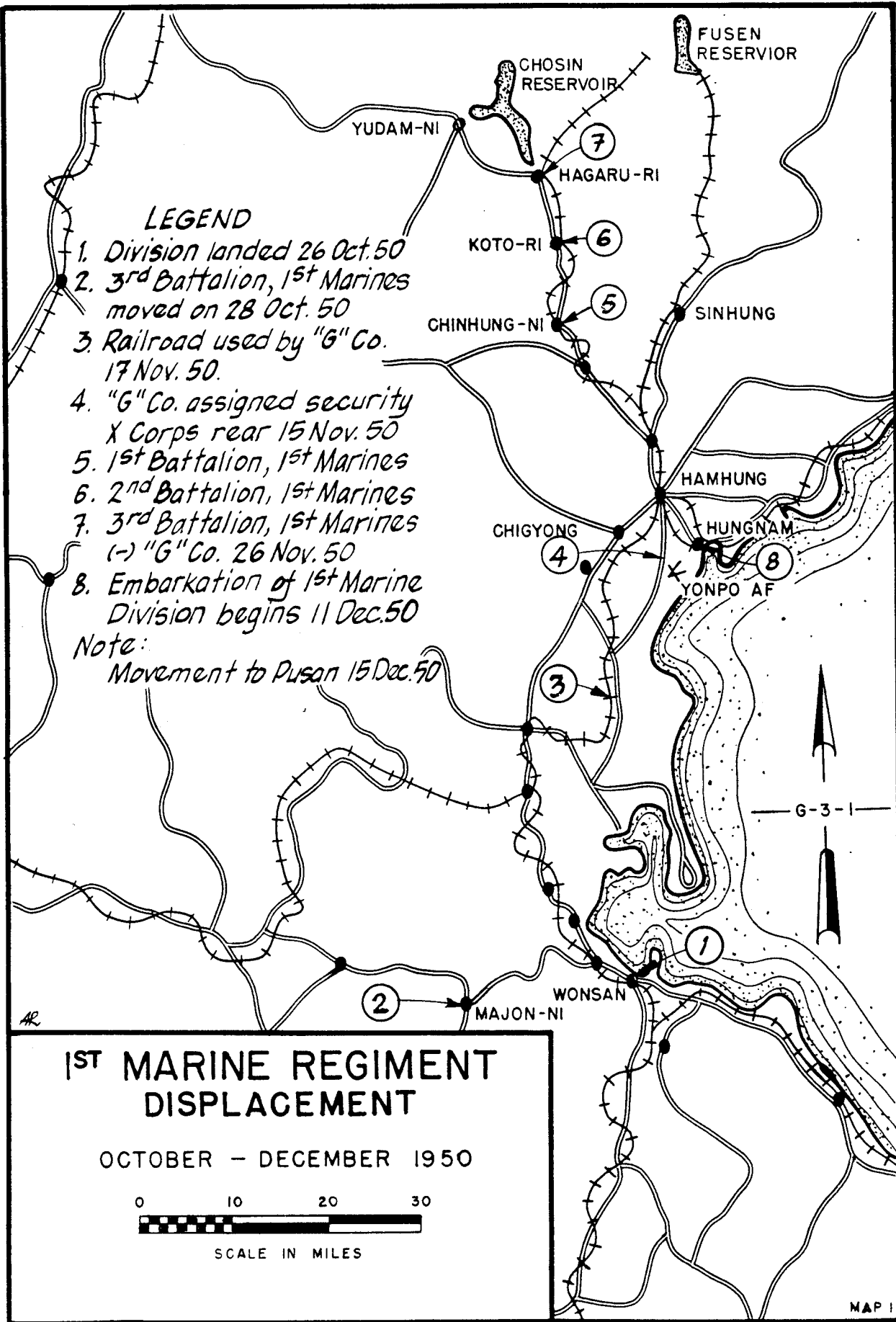


G Company 3rd Battalion 1st Marines
or
Let George Company Do It

THIS IS A STORY OF ONE MARINE RIFLE COMPANY among many that fought in Korea during 1950. It is a short episode in the time of the Korean conflict but to the men who were serving and fighting there, it was a long time in their lives. This is a story of Marines who were thrown into combat in a cold and inhospitable country, and how they reacted to the difficult and dangerous situations that they encountered. They were from the regular and the reserve establishment of the Marine Corps. To some of the reserves it meant leaving home and hearth again after a few short years of peace. These veterans of World War II again left home for war time duty not because they believed in making Korea safe for democracy, but they left because their country called then to do so. There were no shouts of "Hell No, We Won't Go" ringing in their ears, no great parades or patriotic speeches by the politicians; they left silently to protect their country and those who returned were met with silence also. No great victory parades, no thank you from a grateful country, just silence as if the country wanted to forget. And the country did forget these heroes who gave their all to protect their homeland and the free world.

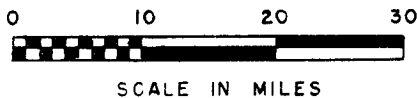
This story is written so that the children and grandchildren of the members of "George Company" will know what their fathers and grandfathers accomplished in a war largely forgotten by the American people.





**1ST MARINE REGIMENT
DISPLACEMENT**

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1950



★ Chapter 1 ★
Inchon to Wonsan

"G" Company (*George - phonetic alphabet*), 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines had its origins as "A" Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. Upon returning from deployment in the Mediterranean in May of 1950 the company was at Camp Lejune, North Carolina. In the mobilization of forces for the Korean conflict, the company moved by troop train to Camp Pendleton, California. At Camp Pendleton "A" Company was officially designated "G" Company. The company staged in Japan, then landed at Inchon with the 1st Marine Division. The company fought through Inchon, crossed the Han River and fought through the streets of Seoul assisting in the capture of that city. After capture of Seoul, the company was withdrawn to Inchon and there placed on a "Q" (Queen) Ship, which is a Japanese-manned LST (*Landing Ship Tank*) for amphibious landing on the East coast of Korea.

As the Queen ship was lying in the mud of Inchon Harbor, 40 feet below high tide, a short dumpy Captain wearing a stocking cap arrived aboard ship as the new Company Commander. Captain George Westover, who had commanded the company since the days of its Mediterranean deployment, had been ordered back to the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, Virginia. The company which had known its Skipper for a long period of time and had been bloodied under his direction was presented an unknown. Scuttlebutt had it that he was one of those Regimental Staff Officers, being sent down to get some combat experience now that the worst of the fighting was over. He hadn't been through the fighting that the company had experienced so they were waiting to see what would happen. The troops didn't know that this Captain, who had made two major first wave landings in WWII, been wounded three times and received the Silver Star for gallantry in action, was no novice to combat. He had heard the sharp crack of the enemies bullets hit around him. Captain Carl L. Sitter had arrived to take command of George Company.

After a short meeting with the Battalion Commander and his staff, Sitter was given a large roll of charts. The charts were numbered and were to be given to the Japanese Captain of the ship at 1600 (4 P.M.) hours each day. These American LST's with Japanese crews were designated "Q" boats. The Captain did not speak English and Captain Sitter did not speak Japanese. Most of the communication was accomplished by sign language and pointing to the chart.

The trip around the horn of Korea from the west coast at Inchon to the east coast of Wosan, even on an LST, should take no more than a week. Sufficient rations for a week were loaded aboard, no one anticipating an additional two weeks at sea until the mines were swept from the harbor to allow a landing.

During this extended back and forth cruising, Private First Class Frank Bove's scrounging abilities in rations at Inchon became life saving. Bove had assembled his Brooklyn Navy Yard "hit" squad, consisting of Corporal DeVito, Private "How's By You" Jerry Weisbaum, Corporal "Peepsight" Pendas, Private First Class "Gus" Arena and Private First Class "Bobby" Kirk. He marched them off to the Army ration dump on the beach at Inchon, reporting to the Major in charge as additional security for the ration dump. The Army Officer declined the offer whereupon the recently assumed "Sergeant" Bove informed him that the

Regimental Commander would not be responsible for any rations misappropriated by Marines. He re-thought his position and changed his mind. The "Hit" Squad was posted at the four corners. A drainage ditch ran parallel to the dump and emptied into the sea. In the ditch was most of George Company, including some Officers, as cases of corn flakes, powdered milk, pickles, powdered potatoes and various canned foods were passed from the dump into the ditch, then passed chain style right into the tank deck of the "Q" Boat. After the combat loading, PFC Bove secured the detail in a military fashion.

The Army Major, was none the wiser and grateful for the additional security. At sea, as the regulation rations were consumed — corn flakes and powdered milk were eaten for all three daily meals; then it was down to two meals a day and finally all the canned goods were made into a soup, with one serving a day. Some of George Company could be found in the Japanese crew's mess eating "gohan" (rice) and "fish heads", but no one in George Company starved. PFC Bove also managed to find the radio room and convinced the Japanese operator to tune into Stars and Stripes Radio. Being in a complete news black out, Bove's typed and carbon copies were read, passed and re-read by all hands. Bove's news "The Hot Cock" contained all stateside ball scores and major events taking place at home as well as in Korea and was typed daily. A real morale booster.

This Japanese ship did not distill fresh water, so the use of fresh water for bathing was held to a minimum. On the night before the scheduled landing the next day, the troops were allowed to bathe. The only problem was that we did not land the next day. We cruised back and forth for 10 days waiting for the mines to be cleared from the harbor. With the food running low and fresh water being rationed everyone was glad to get aboard the LVT's and hit the beach; only to find that Bob Hope's Show had hit the beach a week before us.

On 26 October 1950, we went ashore at Wonsan. We disembarked from the LVT's (*landing vehicle tractors*) and marched in Battalion Column to the assembly area. Whether by design or fate, "G" Company was "tail end Charley" in the column of march, our pace was almost double time to keep up. The time spent in the Wonsan area was a time of feeling out the Company Commander and he likewise, getting to know the troops. This was to prove valuable in the days to come — for it was but two days and George was off again.

Moral to this story: Never conduct an amphibious operation against a hostile enemy from a ship manned by a former hostile enemy, who you defeated just five short years before.

Chapter 2

Majon-ni

On October 28, the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines moved by truck convoy to the village of Majon-ni. Less the 1st Platoon of George Company, (see *Platoon Roster*) which had been given the task of escorting in a large Caterpillar bulldozer — the “cat” would prove critical in carving out an airstrip to evacuate wounded, bring in copies of the *Stars and Stripes* and an occasional fresh loaf of bread by OY Aircraft (grasshopper).

1ST PLAT. GEORGE COMPANY 3RD BN., 1ST MARINES

Carey, R.E., Lt.	Plt. Ldr.	049834 0302
Tillman, G.D., S/Sgt.	Plt. Sgt.	575119 0316
Pendas, G.G., Cpl.	Plt. Guide, Sniper	654460 0311
Jablonski, F.A., Pfc.	Mess./Run	1099918 0311
Wasylczak, P.P., Pfc.	Mess./Run	1073865 0311
Anderson, D.E., HM3	Corpsman	
Martin, S.E., HN	Corpsman	3029107 91

1st Squad

Arnold, C.W., Cpl.	Sqd. Ldr.	654990 0311
Crowell, R.O., Cpl.	F.T.L.	1101986 0311
Mainor, J.C., Pfc.	BAR	656761 0311
Farry, J.V., Cpl.	ABAR	1054764 0300 2R
Stewart, C.M., Pfc.	FTL	1102186 0311
Smith, K.T., Pfc.	BAR	1113013 0311
Aul, K.O., Pvt.	ABAR	666814 0300

2nd Squad

Fry, J.R., Sgt.	Sqd. Ldr.	634494 0311
Emerson, S.R., Cpl.	F.T.L.	631393 0300
Manning, W.R., Pfc.	BAR	653552 0311
Woolcocks, T., Pfc.	ABAR	670670 0311
Boggan, J.W., Cpl.	F.T.L.	659242 0311
Lesser, L., Pfc.	Rifleman	625851 0311
Wilmoth, M.E., Cpl.	F.T.L.	1046668 0311 R
Touzeau, M., Pfc.	BAR	1096287 0311
Rametta, R.N., Pfc.	ABAR	1054628 0300 R

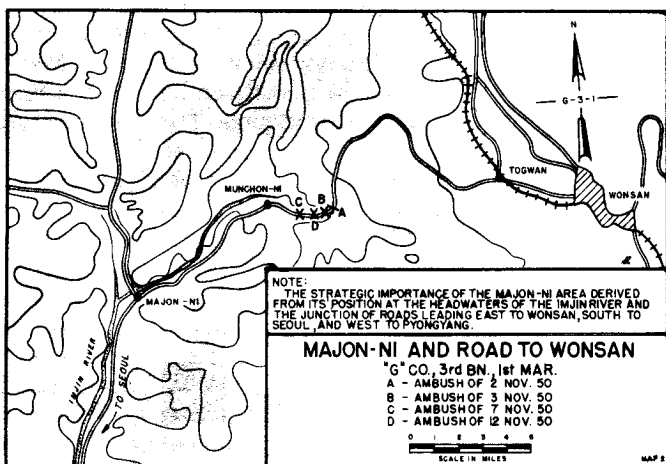
3rd Squad

Kent, V.R., Sgt.	Sqd. Ldr.	1017417 0311
Martinez, D., Cpl.	F.T.L.	1054592 0311 R
Edwards, O.L., Cpl.	BAR	1070751 0311
Bell, J.E., Pfc.	ABAR	653551 0311
Jones, R.R., Cpl.	F.T.L.	1078764 0311
Semski, L.W., Pfc.	BAR	1114462 0300
McNeive, F.T., Pfc.	ABAR	581417 0311
Weeks, O.W., Cpl.	F.T.L.	1079687 0311
Crumpler, O.B., Cpl.	BAR	668025 0300
Kharer, L.J., Pfc.	ABAR	580323 0761

1 - Officer; 30 - Marines; 2 - Corpsmen

constant. It was returned immediately and little pockets of resistance were over run, but the “big cat” never stopped, constantly clanging and plodding along. The “cat” was the enemy’s target. Small arms ricocheted off all parts of the cat. Rounds flew by the driver’s head, but on he went, even when fire was extremely heavy, and we took cover, the “cat” continued the march. The Sergeant was an inspiration to all of us and we followed his lead on in. When we finally got into Majon-ni, it was late at night. The trip had taken all day and the Sergeant finally shut down the “cat.” Many of us went over to him and told him he was “fearless”, “bravest thing we had ever seen”, “cool”, “taksun guts” — his return reply was “What did you say?” — he was deaf.

The village of Majon-ni, a tiny spot on the map, but with great geographical significance, was situated high in the mountains. It had roads that connected it with Wonson, Seoul and the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

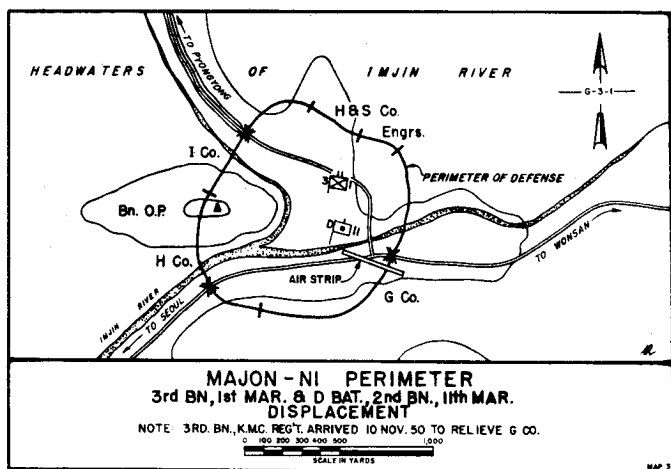


The enemy, as they retreated northward, would have to use these roads; and the mission of the 3rd Battalion was to take as many prisoners as possible and to disallow the use of the roads that converged at Majon-ni for any organized withdrawal by North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) forces. A temporary prisoner of war (POW) stockade was established to hold prisoners until shipped via trucks to the coast.

By the time that the 3rd Battalion was posted to Majon-ni, the NKPA as an integrated force was totally fragmented and defeated. However, the regime of Kim Il Sung was not about to unconditionally surrender, and units like the 15th NKPA Division were instructed to begin guerrilla operations in key areas, such as Majon-ni. Somehow, the 15th Division had remained relatively intact as it retreated from the Pusan Perimeter and was able to begin operations about the same time that the 3rd Battalion reached its destination.

During its stay at Majon-ni, the 3rd Battalion’s perimeter was attacked on a few occasions, but each time the enemy was easily repulsed. The patrols, usually consisting of reinforced platoons, were a different matter. A platoon from How Company, in particular, found itself in a very difficult position on November 2, 1950 while on a motorized patrol and extricated itself only after a relief column and Marine air power were able to put pressure on the enemy.

On the same day that How Company was heavily engaged on the road west of Majon-ni (the road to Pyongyang), a convoy on the road from Wonson to Majon-ni was also under attack. From November 2nd on, so many attacks occurred on a short stretch of this road that it became known as "Ambush Alley".



The enemy chose this area for its attacks because of the hair-pin turns and the field of fire they had from the high ground. For those Marines driving the trucks and the riflemen who accompanied them, there was consequently, the numbing fear that at any curve in the road the enemy could pour in devastating fire from concealed position. PFC Jack Dunne, who had received a Silver Star for valor in the battle of Seoul, was on one of those ill-fated convoys on November 3, 1950:

North Koreans were surrendering in droves, and 2nd platoon was assigned to take prisoners back to regiment at Wonson. We also brought a radio, which we had captured and which had a tag showing manufacture in Russia after the start of the Korean war, to X Corps headquarters. They wanted evidence to show the U.N. that Russia was still supplying the North Koreans.

The platoon, which consisted of 42 men at Inchon, was down to 12 after Seoul. Some wounded, including Lieutenant Beeler, had returned to duty and at Majon-ni we had between 15 and 20 people. We left some people to cover our position, so there were probably 10 of us to guard the prisoners. That part of the trip was uneventful, and we drove by hundreds of North Koreans walking in to surrender.

While at Regimental Headquarters, I was sent out with 4 others on a recon patrol of a wide area, and at one point we were fired at (1 shot). When we were being debriefed, Colonel Puller commented that we had come close to their lines and that there were "about 5,000 of them" out there.

We were well into the return trip (to Majon-ni) when we passed through a little village, and the people tried to warn us of the danger ahead, but we didn't understand them and drove right through. The North Korean people had welcomed us and were obviously happy to get rid of their communist government.

As the convoy came to a curve in the road, the road was blown out and we were fired at from above

and from below the road. I think I was on the 2nd truck, and the first guy hit was a Marine bringing mail from regiment to battalion.

The truck had a tarp cover, but for a while I had a good field of fire down the mountain and on the low side of the road. At first it was like shooting fish in a barrel. I hit a Gook on a horse at about 500 yards, and I was really proud of that shot. Then their fire from the high side got really intense, and we got off the trucks and against the steep bank.

I have no measure of time, but it could not have been very long. The drivers managed to get their trucks turned around, or at least some of them did. We were not being hit, but neither could we fire back. I got to Lieutenant Beeler and he said, "Let's get out of here." I got into a turned around truck. I never saw Lieutenant Beeler get hit (KIA 11/3/50), and I don't really know what happened to him. I remember a guy on the truck with me firing a light 30 from the hip, and I was also able to fire again from the truck. The North Koreans were standing in the open on the mountainside, shooting at us, but also making easy targets for us.

The last thing I remember was an ox cart coming up the road towards us and an explosion, probably a grenade. The truck went off the road and down the hill. Someone got me out of there, I never knew who. I know from talking to guys at Yokosuka Naval Hospital that an attempt was made to get through the next day with tank support but that it was turned back. They did recover bodies of our guys that were worked over with burp guns. One guy who had a Purple Heart (from Seoul) in his pack had it stuck on a stick and shoved down his throat. I've also been told of one guy who hid out and made it back with the relief column.

The ambush of the November 3, 1950 convoy resulted in the death of nine Marines and the wounding of fifteen others. Casualties included truck drivers and other attached Marines as well as those from George Company.

It was during the 3rd Battalion's stay at Majon-ni that the First Replacement Draft arrived in Korea. This draft and the Second Replacement Draft that followed about a week later consisted basically of Reservists who had been called up during August of 1950. Most of the Reservists in both drafts had received one or two summer training programs during the period of time between World War II and the Korean Conflict. However, few had ever been on extended active duty, and the vast majority had not been to boot camp. They had been given a four-week combat training course at Camp Pendleton and then rushed to Korea to bring the Division back to full strength. One of those reservists from Seattle, Washington, PFC Otto Olson describes his trip to Majon-ni and his duty there.

The afternoon of November 10, 1950 found us aboard supply trucks with a number of Republic of Korea troops on our way to Majon-ni. We must have been a bunch of wide-eyed and slightly scared troopers as none of us had seen actual combat yet. Adding to this fact that when we boarded the trucks, we were told to lock and load our weapons and be prepared for an ambush as there had been a number of them along this route.

Upon reaching George Company, I was assigned to the first platoon and taken by company runner to join them on a hill to the west of the town. Staff Sergeant Tillman assigned me to Peepsight Penda's squad as a Browning Automatic Rifleman in the second fire team.

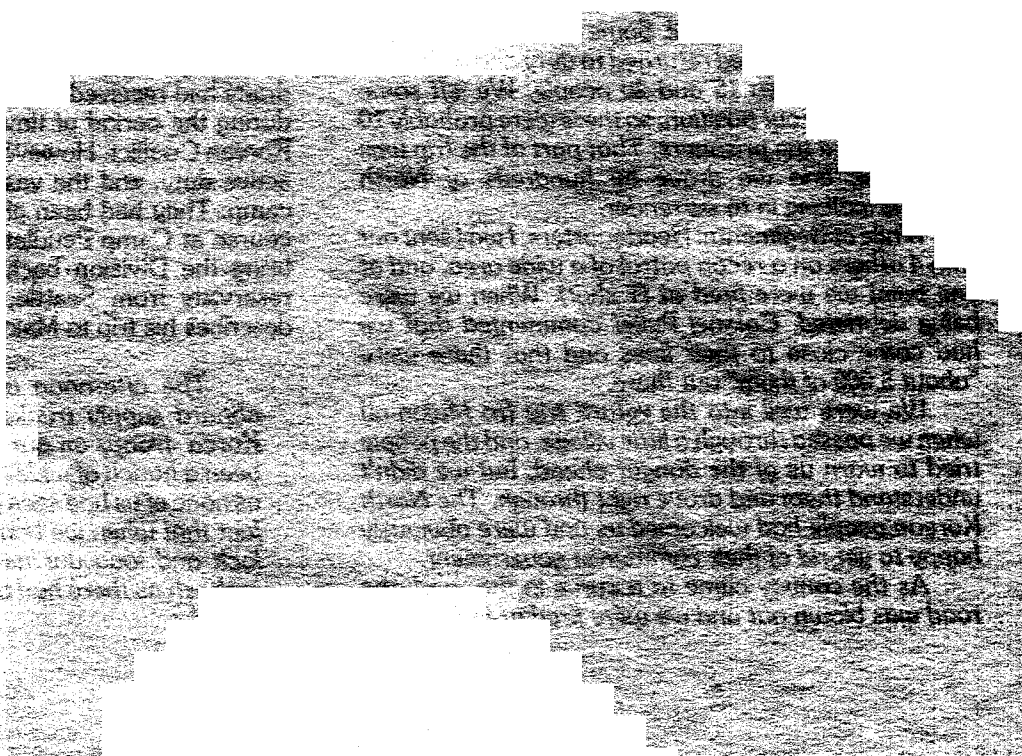
The stay at Majon-ni was basically day time patrols and nights of 50% alerts. Although there was some activity at night, none occurred in our sector. The day patrols were mainly on the ridge tops or along trails and roads leading out of Majon-ni to check on possible troop movements or pick up North Korean stragglers. On ridge tops you scanned the low lands for any troop movements.

My squad went out on a ridge patrol one day to the north of town, and we passed a water point. Here the engineers had set up their equipment to purify water for our use. They were pumping it out of a small stream which ran along the trail we were taking up the ridge we were to patrol that day. After filling our canteens from the lister bags, we proceeded up stream about 200 or 300 yards. At this point, we came upon two dead North Korean soldiers. One of them lay near the stream's edge; the other, who had been disembowled, lay directly in the stream, half way submerged. I don't know about the others, but I did not drink any water from my canteen that day. One sees and remembers many strange things during combat.

(Editor's Note: Otto Olson served continuously in the 1st platoon of George Company for over a year and was finally rotated home in November of 1951. In the words of his first squad leader, he was given the honorary title of "Mr. First Platoon" at George Company's first reunion at West Point in 1986.)

While situated in Majon-ni for 17 days, the 3rd Battalion processed 1,395 prisoners and "enemy battle casualties were estimated at 525 killed and an unknown number wounded. Losses to the Marine battalion numbered 65 — 16 KIA (killed in action), 4 DOW (died of wounds) and 45 WIA (wounded in action)." On November 14, 1950 elements of the U.S. Army's 3rd Division relieved the 3rd Battalion at Majon-ni. The new mission for the Marines was to guard X Corps headquarters in what most believed would be the final days of the Korean War.

Just as the war appeared to be "winding down" and as the 3rd Battalion was given relatively easy duty (15 Nov. 50) George Company was brought up to its original strength by the arrival of the 2nd Replacement Draft. As these "green" Marines were integrated into the ranks and as they listened to the stories of Inchon-Seoul and Majon-ni, they wondered how well they would have performed in combat. Most of them believed they would never find out because they, too, thought the war was virtually over. Little did they know what the future held for them.



★ Chapter 3 ★

Stand Down

From the time that the 3rd Army Division relieved the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines on November 14, 1950 at Majon-ni until George Company departed for Koto-ri on November 28, 1950, the official history of Marine Corps operations in North Korea had little to say about the deployment of the entire 1st Marine Regiment. This period of the Korean War was marked by rapid movement of Army, Republic of Korea (ROK) and Marine units in what frequently appeared to be a mad scramble towards the Yalu River. The Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division, General O.P. Smith, was very apprehensive about MacArthur's "on to the Yalu" strategy and was, in effect, holding the 1st Marines in Division reserve.

So as the 5th and 7th Marines pushed cautiously northward, the 1st Marines were to remain in the Wonson-Hungham-Chigyong area. This same area was the staging and supply area of the entire Xth Corps, which consisted of the 3rd and 7th U.S. Army divisions, the ROK 1st Corps and the First Marine Division. To say that confusion reigned is to understate the situation. Sector responsibility in this area was ill-defined and frequently was working at cross purposes. Consequently, it was not unusual for a Company or Battalion of the 1st Marines to be given a mission, only to have it scrapped because an Army or ROK unit suddenly appeared in the area.

Another problem in effectively deploying the 1st Marines, was a serious lack of trucks and trains. Rightfully so, the units advancing towards the Yalu had first call on any motor or rail transport. This lack of transportation often led to "guard duty" assignments in and around the Xth Corps headquarters for George Company. The total number of times "George" was "marking time" is unknown, but the official history does specify that after being relieved at Majon-ni, the 3rd Battalion had to wait a few days for its new assignment until transportation was available. The second time cited in the official history occurred when George Company was left behind on November 26, 1950. On that day, How, Item, Weapons (less a section of heavy machine guns and 81 mortars) and H & S companies moved to Hagaru. "George" was not with the convoy because trucks were not available. History is always a matter of "If's", and this is a classic example: What "if" George Company had moved to Hagaru on November 26, 1950 with the rest of the battalion? Would Tillman, Bowers, McGregor, Storey and others be alive today? Would the casualties on East Hill be fewer "if" George Company had been able to occupy the most defensible ridgeline prior to the Chinese assault?

While all the confusion and chaos of middle November may have distressed General O.P. Smith, Colonel Chesty Puller and officers at battalion level, the rank and file of George Company were not about to complain of the "easy duty" of that period. From Majon-ni to Koto-ri the company did not experience a single incoming round. In fact, days and nights were so calm that the days slipped by almost unnoticed and today it is difficult to determine if something happened prior to or just after Thanksgiving.

However, there are a few things that can be placed in the exact time slot. To quite a few, all members of the 2nd Replacement Draft, an event that stands out is the day the replacements were assigned to platoons and squads. It was

about midday on November 15, 1950 and George Company had spent the previous night at a Catholic church which had been heavily damaged. PFC Harrell Roberts (2nd draft) even remembers an inoperative 1937 Nash auto and a 3-wheel motorcycle in the church yard. Another replacement, still relatively clean from his last shower in Japan, watched in amazement as a half dozen or so of the 1st platoon washed out of a single helmet containing some warm water. In a matter of minutes, the water became a rich dark brown and reminded him of the mud and baths of his native California.

According to the official history, rail transportation was found on November 17, 1950 that would allow G-3-1 to move northward. The train was carrying aviation fuel and the entire company was to ride "shot gun." Riflemen and machine gunners were distributed throughout the train cars so as to give maximum fire power if attacked from any direction by NKPA guerrillas. The appearance of the train was not unlike some of the western movies which depicted frontier trains bristling with rifles and guns while waiting for the Indians to attack.

Two events occurred on that train ride that made it a memorable journey. One was the familiar Marine technique of requisitioning U.S. Army supplies as described by PFC Harrell Roberts.

We stopped somewhere along the way in a railroad marshalling yard. There was a lot of repair work being done to the tracks by what appeared to be an Army engineer outfit working about 50 yards away. Our gondola halted opposite a couple of box cars. A platoon of the engineers' work crew had stacked their arms against these box cars. Lt. Cary and Sgt. Tillman walked up to the gondolas and said in a low voice, "Do any of you people need to survey your weapons? If so, get those leather slings off your pieces and when we give the word get off the cars, pick out one of those new army rifles, take the web slings off, put them on your rifle, then lean the rifles back against the box car and get back on the train." When the word was given, the regulars hopped off the train, accomplished the survey and the Army engineers were none the wiser. I don't know what was in the other box cars, but a short time later Captain Sitter, Lt. Cary, 1st Sergeant Zullo and the Gunny strutted by, not wearing their parkas, but wearing brand new trench coats with heavy wool liners. They looked like movie stars with the coat collars turned up. I have often wondered if the Army ever figured out what happened.

The second noteworthy event of that train ride started out looking as if "George" was in a serious situation. Somewhere on one of the flatcars a machine gunner decided to test fire his weapon. Somehow the word did not reach all the cars and Marines began jumping off the slowly moving train in order to place themselves in a more defensible position. Combat experienced gun crews, like the one PFC Bruce Farr was assigned to, responded to the "attack" in an appropriate manner. Farr reports that after jumping from the moving train, "We tumbled, rolled, scooted and immediately set up our machine gun in firing

position." Some random firing took place for a minute or two after the initial M.G. burst (one green replacement never left his position next to the aviation fuel and admitted that he didn't have enough sense to seek adequate cover mainly because he was too busy emptying a clip in the hill that the M.G. had zeroed in on), but before long the order to cease firing filtered down the length of the train and the "attack" was over. **(Editor's Note: Captain Sitter will not easily forget this episode because he suffered a knee injury that to this day still bothers him. It is the editor's opinion that the injury was serious enough to warrant evacuation. Instead, Captain Sitter remained in command despite the painful injury.)**

G-3-1 arrived in the Chigyong area in the late afternoon of November 17, 1950. The next date that is remembered by all was Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 1950. Marine cooks on that day supplied a feast that could not be surpassed by any stateside duty post in terms of the amount and variety of the food. There was something else besides the food that made Thanksgiving day of 1950 unforgettable. While the rank and file of George Company gathered near the mess area, 1st Sgt. Rocco Zullo was taking a short cut across a rice paddy dike. Suddenly, in front of the entire company, Zullo lost his footing and sank hip high into the "aromatic ooze" of the rice paddy. Zullo looked up at the assembled company and in the words of PFC Tom Powers, "not a man in the company smiled nor snickered; we were more afraid of the 1st Sgt. than we were of the enemy."

1st Marine Division Thanksgiving Dinner 23 November, 1950. Korea

Menu

Shrimp Cocktail

Stuffed Olives

Sweet Pickles

Roast Young Tom Turkey

with

Cranberry Sauce
Green Peas

Sage Dressing
Buttered Corn

Giblet Gravy
Mashed Potatoes

Candied Sweet Potatoes

Bread

Butter

Fruit Salad with Salad Dressing

Fruit Cake

Pumpkin Pie

Mincemeat Pie

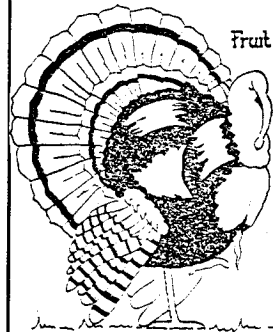
Coffee

Hard Candies

Salted Nuts

Apples

Oranges



Thanksgiving Day Menu, November 23, 1950

On November 28, 1950 the company left the Chigyong area for Koto-ri. This leaves five days before Thanksgiving

and four days after that are difficult to account for. During one of those "blurred" days, "George" marched from one obscure place to another, while North Korean civilians lined the streets waving flags and shouting what appeared to be words of welcome. This reception by the civilians was reminiscent of the newsreels of WW II, showing liberated civilians cheering U.S. troops. On another day PFC Roberts recalls how delighted he was when the 1st platoon was quartered in a school house, while the rest of the company was placed on a steep hill. His joy was of little duration because he found himself crawling up that hill three times the first day, carrying water and supplies to the rest of the company. While quartered in the school house, PFC Clayton Sepulvada (2nd Replacement Draft) was involved in one of the non-combat injuries that accompany all wars. Four members of the 1st platoon were playing a game of Hearts. To provide light, a C ration can was half filled with sand and the sand was filled with gasoline. As the supply of gasoline in the can was exhausted, PFC Roberts decided to call it a day; his place in the card game was taken by Sepulvada. Someone went out to get more gasoline. Roberts cautioned him not to bring the five gallon can into the building; he agreed, took the five gallon outside and returned with a small can of gas. He reached over Sepulvada's shoulder to pour the gas into the sand filled can. Somehow a streak of flame hit the can of gas and in a moment Sepulvada was a human torch. It was quite dark by now, and the men who had fallen asleep were awakened by the commotion. It was a scene out of Dante's "Inferno." Sepulvada, engulfed in flames, was thrashing about as some of the cooler heads tried to tackle him in order to smother the fire. In a minute or two the flames were extinguished and Sepulvada was evacuated to a hospital in Japan. To this day Harrell Roberts has not played another game of Hearts.

(Editor's Note: On March 3, 1951 Clayton Sepulvada and Jim Byrne rejoined G-3-1. On the same day, late in the afternoon, Byrne, Sepulvada and Sgt. "Black" Jones were told to locate a sniper who was shooting up How Company's C.P. The sniper sent a round through the field jacket sleeve of "Black" Jones, past Byrne's face and into Sepulvada's chest. He died instantly.)

A more pleasant memory centers on the bartering skills and the audacity of PFC Frank Bove. Somewhere before or after Thanksgiving, Bove "midnight requisitioned without permission" the company commander's jeep. He took two Soviet Burp guns, enemy weapons, to an air field where well-provisioned rear echelon troops were stationed. In their eagerness to get trophies of war, these soldiers gave Bove all kinds of provisions, including what amounted to two cases of brown whiskey. Upon returning to the company, Bove lined the troops up in front of the company C.P. and issued a ration of grog to all hands. It is probably correct to assume that Captain Sitter was furious about the disappearance of his jeep, but to remain angry with the irrepressible Frank Bove for very long was an impossible task, even for the C.O. of a Marine rifle company. In addition, the morale boost that Bove gave to the company more than compensated for his misdeed. The skipper, allowed this incident to pass for Bove's act was a labor of love — Frank did not himself drink the whiskey.

Again, sometime during the pre or post Thanksgiving holiday, the regimental commander, "Chesty" Puller,

arrived at the 3rd Battalion headquarters to award decorations earned at Inchon-Seoul and Majon-ni. Prior to Puller's arrival, someone in the 3rd Battalion had discharged a round into his ankle while getting out of his foxhole. Peepsight Pendas, while awaiting Puller's appearance, recalls a young Lieutenant, acting as Adjutant, giving orders to write up the injured Marine for a court martial. In a loud, aggressive voice, the lieutenant was instructing a clerk on how the report on self-inflicted wounds should be prepared. As the S-1 officer was preparing to throw the book at the injured man, he stormed Colonel Puller. Pendas can still recall Puller backing the adjutant to the tent pole, waving his finger in the Lieutenant's face, and telling him in no uncertain terms, "No man in the fighting 1st Marine Regiment would ever dare shoot himself." Pendas adds, "That was the end of that!"

So it was during that nine day rest period before and after Thanksgiving. Men wrote letters home, had hot showers and washed utilities. Veterans of Inchon-Seoul were grateful that the war appeared over. Reservists of the 1st and 2nd Replacement Drafts were still adjusting to life in the field and many secretly wished that they had been in at least one fire fight so that they could think of themselves as really part of George Company. The weather all this time was getting nastier by the day, and being uncomfortably cold, except when in the sleeping bag, was a fact of life. Yet this two week period of time was, by comparison to what preceded it and what followed it, a time in which most creature comforts were satisfied and no life threatening situations seemed imminent. The cold experienced at Chigyong was uncomfortable; the cold to be experienced at Hagaru would be virtually unbearable.





"Easy Targets"
Telegraph Hill, Koto-ri
A sketch by Colonel Charles Waterhouse



Chapter 4

Telegraph Hill

On November 28, 1950 dawn broke, revealing to the men of G-3-1 the same gray, sullen skies that they had grudgingly learned to accept. For those who were not standing a watch at reveille, there was the extreme reluctance of crawling out of a warm sleeping bag and facing the cold Korean morning. This morning was a bit different, for George Company would soon be boarding the trucks of Baker Company, 2nd Motor Battalion. One of the more appealing explanations for this departure was the widespread belief that the Company was bound for Hungnam and that it would be in a victory parade in San Francisco before Christmas.

The rumor of boarding a ship for home was founded on some very substantial premises. After all, General MacArthur had told the American people that "the boys will be home by Christmas." In addition, the North Korean Army had been shattered, and the United Nations forces had reached the Yalu River at various points.

There was one cloud on the horizon and that was the intentions of the Chinese Communists. Early in November Chinese forces attacked elements of the 7th Marines and surrounded an Army battalion. The units of the 7th Marines held their positions and beat back the Chinese attack. Unfortunately, the Army battalion was destroyed, with only a few stragglers making it back to friendly lines. As suddenly as the Chinese had appeared, they just as quickly vanished. General MacArthur by mid November described this action as the activity of a small number of "Chinese volunteers."



"George Co." climbing Telegraph Hill, Koto-ri

Although it looked like the war was over, as fate would have it, the trucks started heading in a generally northern direction and away from the east coast ports. Everyone slowly accepted the idea that November 28, 1950 would not be a departure date and that Division had other plans for G-3-1. Although few knew it at the time, the Company was moving over the Funchilin Pass that separated the coastal plains of Hamhung, Hungnam and Wonson from the

interior plateau that contained the vital Chosin Reservoir and hydroelectric facilities. As the convoy slowly moved towards the summit, the temperature seemed to get a degree lower with the passing of each minute. In addition, an annoying red-clay type dust covered everyone. Although there was some snow on the ground, it did not impede the forward movement of the vehicles. The journey to Koto-ri was miserably uncomfortable, but it was uneventful.

Late in the afternoon the convoy pulled into Koto-ri, and it soon became apparent that the war was far from over. The Second Battalion, First Marines was defending the village, and an air strike on the ridgeline at the northern edge of the perimeter clearly indicated that an entrenched enemy was only a few hundred yards away. Later that night Captain Sitter was told that the road to Hagaru was blocked by Chinese troops and that his mission was to become part of a task force that was to open the road between Koto-ri and Hagaru. This information slowly filtered down to the squad level sometime during the night of November 28/29. It was in this way that the men of George Company found out that they were to fight a new enemy, the Chinese.

What the Marines of George Company didn't know that night was that United Nations forces across the width of the Korean peninsula were falling back in disarray after encountering Chinese field armies that vastly outnumbered them. Key elements of the American army and the South Korean army were in full retreat and were no longer operating as combat effective units. Nor did the men of George Company know that the 5th and 7th Marines were surrounded at Yudam-ni.

The truth of the matter was that the situation facing the 1st Marine Division was so desperate by the last week in November of 1950, that General Almond, Xth Corp Commanding General, told General O.P. Smith to get his Marine Division out of the Chinese trap as best he could. General Almond apparently assumed that the Marine Division, like the 2nd Army Division, would lose its combat effectiveness and much of its equipment.

Fortunately, General Smith had anticipated the possibility of Chinese intervention and had deployed his 1st Regiment at strategic points along the Main Supply Route (MSR). The **1st Battalion, 1st Marines** was encamped at **Chinhung-ni**, which was located at the edge of the coastal plain, about thirty-five miles from Hungnam. About ten miles from Chinhung-ni and over a treacherous mountain pass, the **2nd Battalion, 1st Marines** was given the mission of defending **Koto-ri**, a village at the southern edge of the interior plateau. The **3rd Battalion, 1st Marines** was assigned the defense of **Hagaru**, another small village (see Map #1) which was located at the southern tip of the Chosin Reservoir and approximately eleven miles from Koto-ri.

If these three positions could be held, then the 1st Marine Division might be spared the humiliating experience of the Army's 2nd Division that abandoned its dead, its wounded and much of its equipment in an "every man for himself" attempt to escape a similar Chinese encirclement.

Colonel Puller recognized that the situation at Hagaru was especially critical because the 3rd Battalion was not at full strength. George Company had been left behind for lack of transportation when the battalion moved to Hagaru. As the Chinese attack north of Koto-ri became bolder, Colonel

Puller could not be sure that the garrison at Hagaru could hold out with one of its rifle companies still detached. With the safety of the 5th and 7th Marines uppermost in his mind, Puller decided that he had no choice but to send George Company and attached units through what would soon be known as "Hell Fire Valley" in order to strengthen Hagaru.

The break through to Hagaru was given the code name of Operation Drysdale. As senior officer, Colonel D.B. Drysdale of the British Marines was to lead an assault force consisting of his 41 Independent Royal Marine Commando Group, George Company 3/1 and Company B, 31st Infantry Regt., 7th Division. (The Commandos, seasoned troops that had conducted raids from submarines and assault destroyers along the communist-held coastline up to and including the Inchon landing, consisted of 3 troop size units for a total of approximately 250 Royal Marines.) Giving crucial support to those rifle companies were a number of tanks from D Company. In addition to the assault units, Marines attached to Division HQ were also part of the operation. **(Editor's Note: This part of the convoy and part of B Company-31st Regiment were separated from George Company and the Royal Marines and suffered extensive casualties. They held off the Chinese most of the night and surrendered only when ammunition was virtually exhausted.)**

During the night of November 28, 1950, George Company had been placed on the 2nd Battalion's perimeter, and the men on the line slept only fitfully and over short intervals. It snowed lightly that night, and the temperature felt like it had dropped another ten degrees. In the morning hot coffee was provided, but it had to be gulped quickly because it went from a scalding hot drink to frozen coffee in a matter of minutes.

rockets and machine gun fire. The Commandos were quite a sight. Each man looked as if he had recently shaved. Each man was wearing a light type field jacket, and each head was covered with nothing more than a Green Beret. They looked like they might be ready to stand inspection somewhere in England, rather than assaulting a hill in some inhospitable, frozen wasteland. They began their assault, and the professionalism of their appearance was matched by their combat effectiveness. Although suffering some casualties, the Royal Marines quickly secured the first hill. Now it was George Company's turn.



Telegraph Hill, Koto-ri

As the Royal Marines were fighting their way up the first hill, George Company had formed a skirmish line and had started to move towards the second objective, Telegraph Hill. As soon as the advance started, a Chinese sniper from the right began firing into the ranks. This was the Company's first combat experience under winter conditions, and it was an eerie sensation to see the snow erupt and to hear a "puffing" sound as the rounds hit the snow. Finally the cry went out for Peepsight Pendas, scout sniper of the first platoon, who was slightly forward of the location where the sniper was firing. Calmly, Peepsight (armed with a star gauge 1903 Springfield bolt action rifle equipped with an 8 power Unertel telescope) located the sniper and let go a round or two. That was the last that was heard from that sniper.

Nothing else happened until the company passed through the Royal Marines and tried to take Telegraph Hill. At the crest of the hill, automatic weapons raked the ridge line and pinned the company down. At one point a squad leader tried to organize a frontal rush on the next ridge line. A few Marines stood up, took a few steps forward and were met with withering machine gun fire. It was soon apparent that the ridge line was an untenable position and the first platoon moved to the reverse slope of the hill.

Most had withdrawn to a safer position, but not all. Staff Sergeant Gerald Tillman, displaying the same kind of bravery that earned him a Silver Star in the Inchon-Seoul operation, was exposing himself to fire while trying to locate enemy positions. PFC Harrell Roberts observed Tillman pointing out targets while on his knees. Roberts suddenly



"George" assaulting Telegraph Hill, Koto-ri
Commandos in foreground

On the morning that the forces of Operation Drysdale were being assembled, George Company was close to full strength. By the time that the Company returned to front line duty in the Spring of 1951, only a few survivors of the northern Campaign were in its ranks. The odyssey was about to begin.

As the Royal Marines grouped for the attack, three Corsairs (F4U) began pounding their objective with napalm,

noticed Tillman's helmet rolling down the hill and realized that he had been seriously wounded. The word of his injury rapidly spread to all members of the first platoon and had a particularly devastating effect on Cpl. Pendas.

Someone yelled to me, "Peepsight, GD's been hit bad." I immediately got to the Platoon Sergeant and found him high on the ridge and pulled him down. He was still alive. Sgt. Tillman wore a large gold dress Marine Corps Emblem on his Army cold weather cap. The slugs had gone right through the emblem. He had two holes right in the middle of his forehead. I applied a battle dressing; however, the back of his skull was all mush. He was still moaning. As Otto Olsen and I struggled to get him down to the bottom of the hill, we could see a litter bearer with a Jeep and yelled to them to hurry up with the litter. They were slipping and sliding in the snow. I ran down and got the litter. A Chaplain appeared and attempted to give the last rites. I was furious and had sharp words with the "Padre." When he inquired his faith and name, I replied religion, "Marine" and name, "Jimmy Bones." What he took from me was undeserved. Anyone could see our Platoon Sergeant was mortally wounded. He was still alive when they loaded him on the back of the Jeep, along with several other wounded, and left for the Battalion Aid Station in Koto-ri.

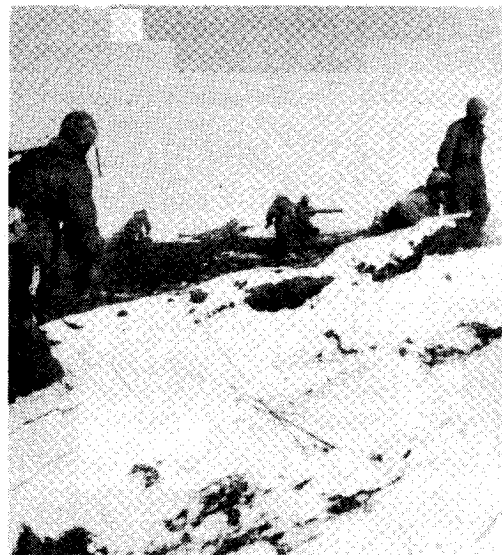
Shortly after Sgt. Tillman received his fatal wound, First Sergeant Rocco Zullo and Captain Sitter approached the ridge line. Zullo, like Tillman, was unwilling to be fired at without doing something about it.

I quickly grasped a 3.5 rocket launcher, had it loaded, crawled up to the top of the ridge, picked out the largest bunker on the next ridge line and fired. Members of the 1st Platoon observing exclaimed that it was a direct hit. I crawled off the ridge, moved to the right about twenty-five (25) yards, had the launcher

reloaded, crawled up to the top of the ridge and fired a second time. It was a direct hit, and Chinese soldiers were observed running from their bunkers.

Peepsight, by this time, had calmed down a bit and returned to the ridge line.

I returned to the top of the hill and just wanted to kill. First Sergeant Zullo was about to fire a 3.5 inch rocket launcher and was telling everyone to get down and off the sky line. I went off to the far right. I never saw what he fired at as the range appeared about 600 yards, but they came out of their bunker and I could see them shaking their heads as if in shock from the concussion of the rocket. Everything was total white snow out there except the enemy stumbling around in their brown suits with hands to their ears. **Again, easy targets.**

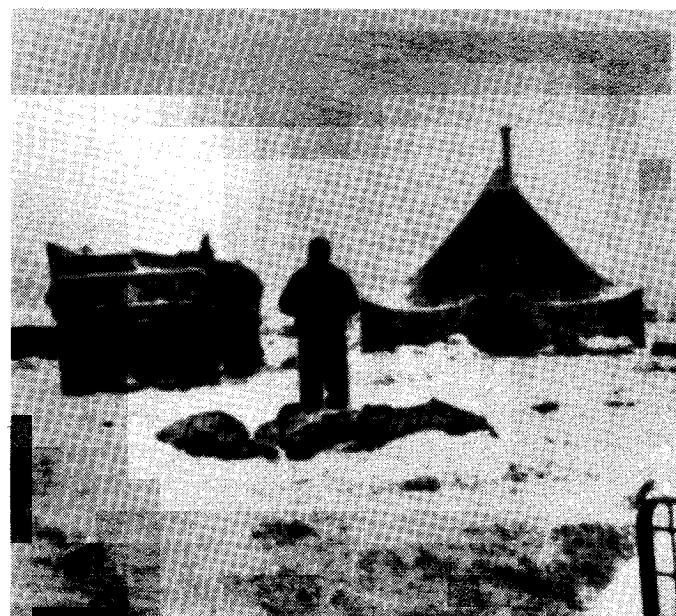


First Sgt. Zullo firing 3.5 rocket launcher

While Sgt. Zullo and Peepsight were punishing the Chinese on the next ridge line, the fire team of Cpl. Crowell, PFC Roberts, PFC Smith and Pvt. Byrne was sent over to the right flank to prevent any Chinese from getting behind or to the side of George Company. PFC Roberts recalls:

My rifle had frozen and was jammed, and I was attempting to clear it when my fire team was directed to a clump of rocks over to the right. We quickly moved to that point where I set some kind of record in field stripping an M1 rifle. In that clump of rocks, we found a cache of about a dozen hand grenades and four boxes of 30 cal. machine gun ammo. I looked back to the left from where we had just come and there stood a Chinaman in a fur hat looking at the company with binoculars — needless to say, he was dispatched.

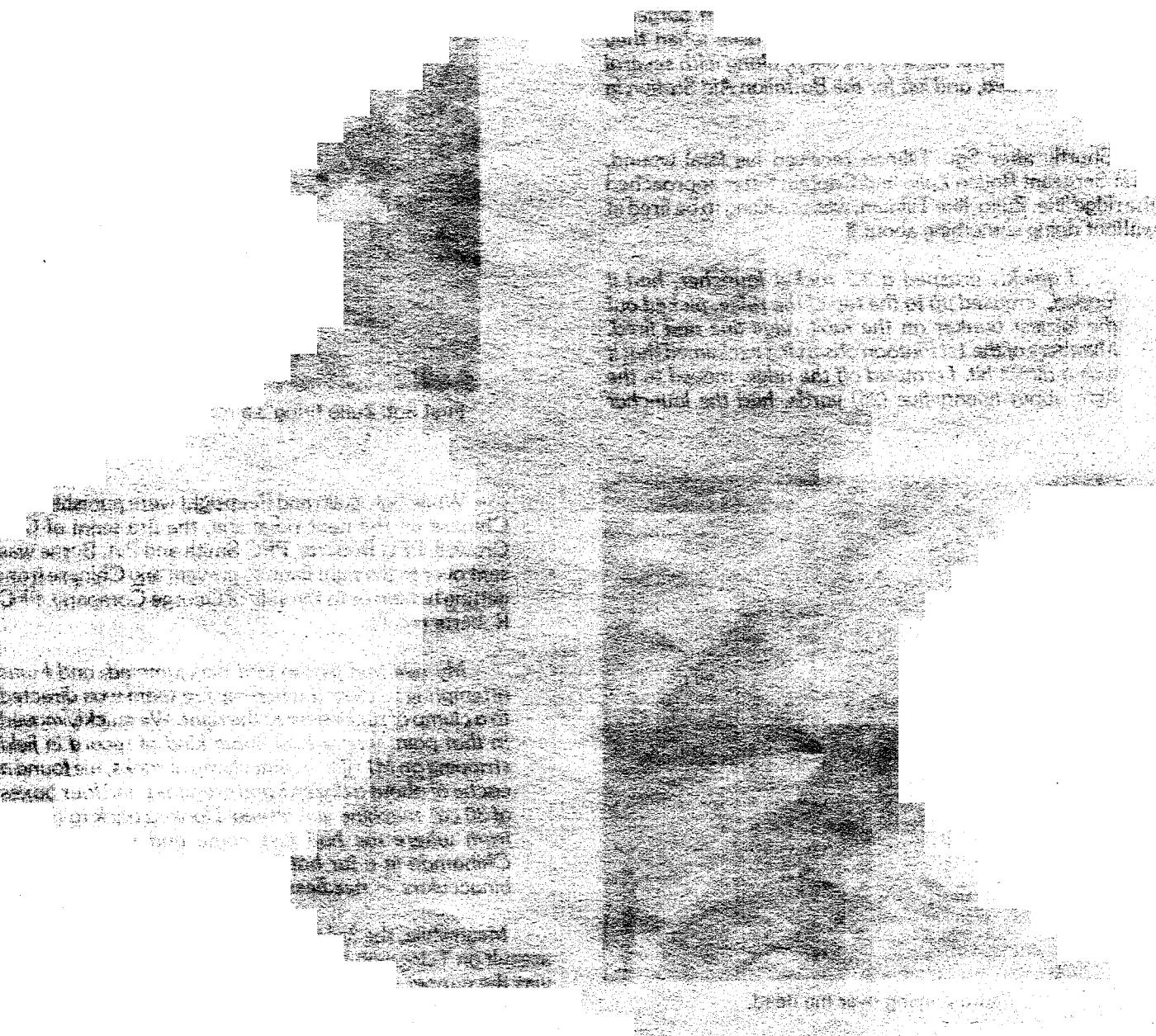
Meanwhile, the 3rd platoon was on the left flank of the assault on Telegraph Hill. At this time PFC Charles Beman was the gunner with the 5th squad of the 3rd machine gun section and describes the action on that flank as follows:



Padre praying over the dead.

First thing out of the box, mortar fire landed between the 5th and 6th squads of our machine gun section. I saw the explosion before I heard it. We had WIA's and it spooked me! Staff Sgt. Fritts, who was now our section leader, saved my day by forceful leadership and by making us move forward. (We were finally in position) and set up a base of fire with the guns. From the time we received those first mortar rounds until we came off that hill, we met heavy, and I mean heavy, incoming fire. Staff Sgt. Fritts kept us going. The fire was so heavy on our guns after we put them into action that I had to stop to clean my glasses as the incoming small arms fire tossed snow and dirt up to where I couldn't see. Staff Sgt. Fritts moved me and assistant gunner G.B. Webster to an exposed position

to better put fire on the hill in front of us. We did it and in that cold weather the gun barrel became red hot. I don't remember how many belts of ammo we had with us, but we got rid of it all before we pulled back. The enemy got upset with us because the ground around us just jumped with incoming small arms fire. After we got pulled back Staff Sgt. Fritts looked at me and said, "I didn't think we were going to make it out of that one." He wasn't alone in his thinking! Fritts was just one hell of a Staff Sergeant, as was Staff Sgt. Pickering and 1st Sgt. Zullo. To me, a PFC, these guys were the "balls" of George Company. **(Editor's Note: For his performance of duty on Telegraph Hill, PFC Charles Berman was awarded the Bronze Star medal with a "V".**



Hell Fire Valley Operation Drysdale

The fire fight on Telegraph Hill resulted in fourteen casualties before word was received from Colonel Drysdale to withdraw from the hill and form on the main supply road with a new mission. The mission was to move towards Hagaru by motorized column. The order of march of the assault units was "B" Company, 31st Infantry, followed by George Company and then the Royal Marines.

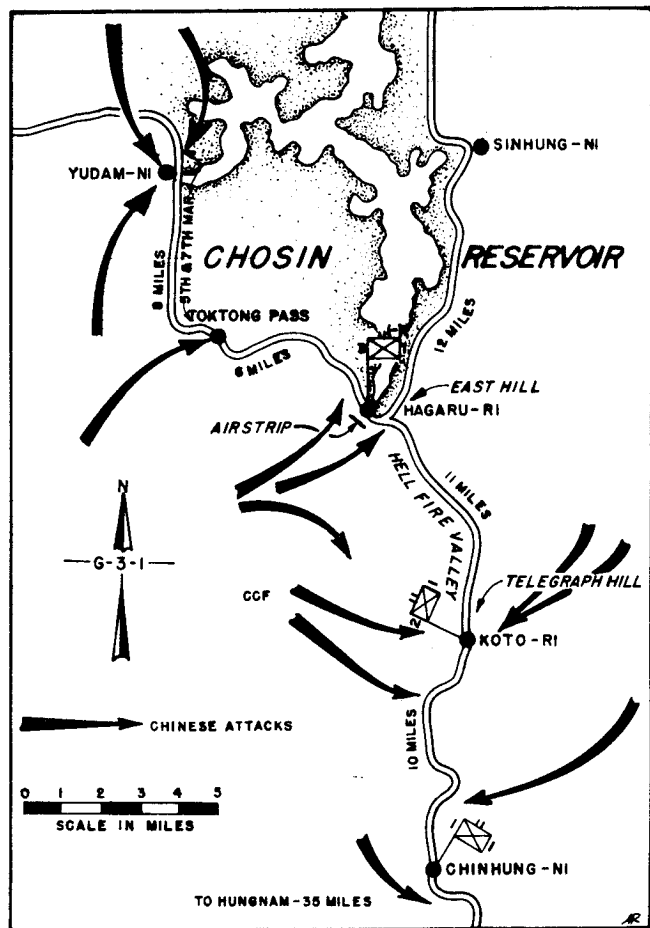
As ordered, the Company pulled off the hill and boarded trucks of the 7th Motor Transport Battalion. The column of vehicles advanced but a few hundred yards when it came under heavy small arms fire. Well positioned Chinese automatic weapons swept down the line of trucks, forcing most of George Company to take cover behind the trucks they were assigned to. While Marines were crouching behind the wheels of trucks, a few mortar rounds began to fall. One of the rounds fell between PFC Paul Price and Pvt. Jim Byrne, wounding both men. Byrne's response was:

I knew I was injured, but I couldn't immediately tell how serious it was. My first concern was a gut wound. I tore at my clothing (all five layers) so that I could get my hands to my stomach. After the initial panic subsided, I was aware that there was no extreme pain, except in my shoulder and foot, and I calmed down. Somehow I was passed back to a medic from the Army unit, who promptly put me on an army jeep. Within minutes I arrived at the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines sick bay, and I was told I would be evacuated shortly.

About six or eight of the wounded from Telegraph Hill were assigned to a "meat wagon" for the trip over the Funchilin pass. It took very little understanding of the situation to realize that there were Chinese between us and Hungnam, which was defended by the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. I asked someone if the road was still open; he said the last ambulance made it. This was only partially reassuring.

Near the top of the pass, the staccato sound of an automatic weapon firing at the ambulance shattered the silence of mid-day. The "meat wagon" came to a screeching halt, and the driver and the Marine riding shotgun took cover. I waited for the next burst to rip through the thin walls of the ambulance. Five seconds - ten seconds of almost unbearable silence passed. Another few minutes dragged by as we waited for their second blow. Suddenly, the driver jumped in the cab, started the engine and took off down the road to safety. To this day I believe I am alive because some Chinese soldier had second thoughts about firing on an ambulance.

Pvt. Byrne's injury and evacuation to safety took place over a few hours. Such was not the case for others who were wounded just outside of Koto-ri. For example, the experiences of PFC John Mainor illustrate not only the confusion of the areas in or near the battlefield, but also the chaos that existed in the rear areas of Korea and even in Japan during those hectic first two weeks of the Chinese winter offensive. PFC Mainor begins his story shortly after he was wounded:



My squad leader and the platoon corpsman carried me down the hill. At the bottom I was given blood, patched up and placed in an ambulance. I was taken to the aid tent in Koto-ri for additional treatment. At one point I fell asleep and was awakened when someone took my boots off, saying I would not need them any more. No one from this point on asked me who I was, nor did they tell me where I was going.

After several days of being moved from tent to tent, someone came in and said he needed the walking wounded. Another Marine and I got up and were placed in a spotter plane and flown to Hungnam. After a short time in an old North Korean hospital, an announcement was made that anyone going to Japan should report to the evacuation ward. Japan sounded pretty good to me, so I got my clothing, got on a truck and was taken to a cluster of large tents near an airstrip. During the first night some of us stayed up all night taking care of the more seriously wounded and keeping the fires going.

The next morning I found a tent with an empty bunk where I slept for a while. When I awoke, the tent was almost empty. I asked where everyone had gone and was told they were getting on a truck to take them to planes bound for Japan. I was in no mood to be left behind and made sure I was on the next truck out.

Once in Japan, I was taken to an Army hospital in the North. I was still wearing the filthy clothing I had

while in Korea and my wounds had not been looked at nor had the bandages been changed since the corpsman treated me at the bottom of Telegraph Hill. Before anyone had a chance to look at me, a Marine officer discovered that I was a Marine and ordered me to stay put until he found the rest of the Marines. We were then put on a train and transferred to a naval hospital in Southern Japan.

When I was assigned to a ward, the nurse on duty told me to find a bunk and that she was too busy to help me. I was there for several days before a doctor discovered I had no chart, that no one had changed the battle-dressing and that the nurse had no idea as to who I was. All this had taken about ten days. During this time the Defense Department sent my parents a telegram indicating that I was missing in action (MIA).

Although it is impossible to say how many men were wounded and evacuated out of Koto-ri, a good guess is that the number was somewhere around twenty-five to thirty. As the column inched northward of Koto-ri, the more difficult the evacuation became. For example, PFC Kent Jensen received a body wound a little north of Telegraph Hill. While waiting to be evacuated and while taking cover in a ditch near the road, a mortar round landed near him, causing a near fatal wound to the head.

PFC Richard O'Brien was also wounded just a little north of Koto-ri and really made it back the hard way. During an attempted evacuation to the 2nd Battalion perimeter, he and a few others were captured by the Chinese. O'Brien soon found himself in a Korean farm house, guarded by a few soldiers under the command of a Chinese officer or non-com who was completely outfitted in the Class "A" uniform of a 1st U.S. Cavalry Division First Sergeant. Despite the fact that this man was his enemy, O'Brien could not help but be impressed with the "spit and polish" appearance of his captor. For the next two days this Chinese soldier in the American uniform would appear in the "hootch" to distribute cold canned tomatoes while waving his Thompson submachine gun in the air in a threatening manner.

On the third day of captivity, one of the POWs noticed that a single Chinese soldier was guarding them and that he was busily engaged in operating some communication equipment. Among the captives were three or four unwounded or slightly wounded Marine M.P.s (Military Policemen) who had managed to keep hand guns hidden on strings around their necks. One of these M.P.s decided he didn't want to spend the duration of the war in a prison camp and killed the lone guard.

O'Brien and three other Marines joined the M.P. who had made the escape possible. These five men, armed only with two or three hand guns, started heading for friendly lines. Luck was on their side and they were able to evade Chinese soldiers, and despite a confused Corsair pilot who strafed them, they eventually made their way to Koto-ri.

As the wounded continued to trickle back to Koto-ri, the rest of George Company pressed forward. The fire from automatic weapons that had initially halted the convoy came from a few houses on the right of the road. Captain Sitter went forward and ordered the tanks to fire on the houses. The enemy in this early encounter was quickly neutralized and the column resumed its movement towards Hagaru. If all of the enemy points of resistance could be this

easy to remove, Task Force Drysdale would arrive at Hagaru almost on schedule, but this would not be the case. In fact, nothing again would be this easy; the nightmare was about to begin!

Marines have always been trained and organized around the idea that they are assault troops. The Marine mission is to hit the "beach", overpower the enemy and quickly secure the objective, but the combat for the rest of November 29th was unlike anything the battle tested troops of the Inchon-Seoul and Majon-ni campaigns had been trained for or had experienced. In those earlier encounters with the enemy G-3-1 Marines performed as members of fire teams, squads and platoons pretty much as Marine Corps training had anticipated. The enemy earlier in the war would put up stiff resistance at times, but it was an enemy that was withdrawing as he fought. Incoming fire was frequently heavy and casualties mounted up, but the enemy was usually not visible, and when he was observed, it was usually only for a brief second before he disappeared from sight. Such was not the case as George Company made its way through Hell Fire Valley.

First of all the terrain gave the Chinese a major advantage. The road itself was really a dike, higher than the immediate ground on either side of it. The single land road (dike) snaked its way northward with mountain ranges paralleling it on both sides. Sometimes the hills were within fifty yards of the road, while at other times there might be close to a mile of flat agricultural land on one or both sides of the road.

Fighting from the back of trucks would be new to the Marines, but ambushing convoys had been a specialty of Mao Tse-tung's Peoples Army in the 1946-1949 Chinese Civil War. To the Chinese field commander, the destruction of the Drysdale Task Force must have looked easy. The Chinese strategy was simple. Stop the convoy by erecting road blocks. Once the convoy could be permanently halted, the next step would be to break the column into smaller segments and then methodically over run each of the small enclaves of soldiers and Marines.

The first few road blocks consisted of anything the Chinese could get their hands on, such as empty ammunition barrels filled with rocks, logs and anything else that might stop a truck. They did not stop the convoy, but forced the trucks to go around them and into the frozen fields, thus slowing the movement of the convoy. **(Editor's Note: The Chinese did succeed in separating Divisional HQ from the column. George Company continued to attack forward unaware the convoy had been cut in two.)**

Because the crude road blocks had not proven totally effective in halting the head of the column, the Chinese became bolder in their attacks. Now, instead of an enemy that was invisible, the Marines of George Company were literally toe to toe and face to face with an enemy that had the initiative and was attacking them.

Long before the convoy reached Hagaru, unit integrity had ceased to exist. As trucks came under fire and stopped, men had to seek protective cover, and when the convoy started up again, usually under Chinese fire, it was necessary to board the first available truck. When a truck was disabled by enemy fire, those riding that truck would split up in search of a truck with available space. Thus the advantages of thorough training and the leadership of senior NCO's and officers were lost in the confusion that existed. Platoons, squads and even fire teams no longer functioned as units,

and each Marine functioned on individual initiative and fought for survival.

As the day progressed it became common for Chinese in squad strength and sometimes armed with rocket launchers to rush a truck. In situations like this it finally boiled down to the individual Marine instinctively responding to the Chinese soldier racing towards his truck. In an attack on a single truck, PFC William Baugh, attached to George Company from Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, found himself in one of those critical situations which forced him to react quickly, but perhaps not instinctively. A Chinese soldier got close enough to Baugh's truck to toss a grenade onto the floor. Baugh had three choices. He could try to throw the grenade back at the Chinese. He could also try to get off the truck before it exploded. We can only assume that he rejected both of these alternatives for fear that the grenade would explode prematurely and cause serious injuries to his comrades. The third choice, the one he made, was to sacrifice himself in order to shield the other Marines in the truck from harm. For smothering that grenade with his body, PFC Baugh was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

By late afternoon it became questionable whether or not the convoy could push its way to Hagaru by dark. Chinese troops were already aggressively attacking the trucks, often dressed in Marine or Army uniforms. What would it be like at night when it would become impossible for the Marines to distinguish between friend and foe. By 1500 each Marine knew there could be no turning back to Koto-ri because there were as many Chinese behind him as there were in front of him. Throughout the day it was not uncommon to see Chinese soldiers swarm out of the hills and start erecting new road blocks as soon as the trucks got a few hundred yards up the road. There was no turning back. The choice became easy. It was either Hagaru after nightfall or be overwhelmed in a General Custer type massacre in the middle of the night on some lonely North Korean road.

In the following pages some of those who survived Task Force Drysdale describe the confusion, chaos and, at times, the terror that they experienced that day. These experiences from this point on of individual Marines do not fit into a sequential pattern. At any given moment the head of the column might not have any incoming rounds, while the rear of the convoy might be receiving a pounding. The one incident remembered by almost everyone was a direct mortar hit on a truck carrying members of the 3rd platoon. PFC George Sullivan, of the 3rd platoon, but on a different truck, remembers the carnage this way:

Once, while we crouched down in the trucks, the enemy was sending mortars on us. The truck behind mine received a direct hit, and eight to ten Marines were badly wounded or killed. They were screaming in pain on the ground, and their blood mixed with the white snow. I'll never forget that moment. I threw down my M-1 and headed back to help them, but Sgt. Garcia ordered me back, explaining that the corpsmen would tend to them.

Although a single mortar shell could wound and kill an entire truck load of Marines, it was the light automatic weapons that caused most of the havoc. Cpl. Pendas reports that:

There were constant road blocks which we went around, often into the ditch, and then out again. Men were constantly being wounded and then placed on the bed of 6 x 6's. There were many individual acts of heroism, some superhuman. I was sitting on the tailgate now, returning fire at flashes that were firing at us. Sgt. McGregor, the Company clerk, was hit and fell off the truck. We were traveling at a good rate of speed and he was gone.

One of the individual acts of heroism that Cpl. Pendas refers to was that of Pvt. Joe Galkin. To Galkin, however, the help he rendered was what any Marine would do for a fellow Marine. It all started when Pvt. Galkin's truck was forced to stop and those in the back of the truck took cover on the side of the road. Galkin remembers being in a ditch and firing in the direction of the Chinese. The next thing he can remember is the order to get back onto the truck and "move out."

I ran from the ditch and jumped on the truck. It was then that I heard a voice calling from the ditch, "Please don't leave me. I'm hit in the legs; I can't walk." I jumped from the truck and ran back to the ditch. It was dark, and I could not see his face. Someone else also heard this wounded man calling; we lifted him up and got him on the truck. By this time the truck was moving and I was still on the ground, holding the wounded man by his legs. I don't know where the strength came from, dressed as I was with all of my heavy clothing and carrying my weapon, except someone from above was watching over me. I ran, jumped and caught the top of the wooden rib of the truck. Unfortunately, I was over the truck's wheel; it was turning so fast that I could not climb up. I just held on to that wooden rib until I was pulled up and into the truck by the strong hands of some Marine friends (thank you, whoever you are). Once in the truck, I was lying on a Marine's leg. I said to him, "If you move your leg, you will be more comfortable." He didn't move, he was dead.

The above episode takes on additional drama because the crippled Marine in the ditch, who was not recognized by Galkin in the dark, was more than likely PFC Robert Henderson, a member of Galkin's reserve unit — Co. "D", 10th Infantry Battalion, U.S.M.C.R. from Savannah, Georgia.

The Chinese were inflicting high casualties on George Company, but that does not mean that they did so with impunity. At a crucial point in time, when Colonel Drysdale had decided to turn the convoy around and return to Koto-ri, Captain Sitter observed Rocco Zullo on a 2½ ton truck, firing a 50 caliber machine gun at enemy positions. A slightly different perspective of that same event was reported by PFC Frank Bove (3rd squad - 3rd platoon):

When Sgt. Zullo was on that six-by working that 50 caliber machine gun, he ran out of ammo and needed help. He looked down from the truck and in his "pleasant" voice said, "Get me some ammo and get your guinea ass up here." — I did. I helped load the gun as he fired at will.

Air support for the entire division was a major factor during those November-December days. PFC Harrell Roberts remembers an air strike that almost backfired.

I looked back at one of the hills we had made it past, and a Marine Corsair (F4U) was working it over. He wheeled around and came back behind and across the hill and toward us on the road. He attempted to drop his napalm; he pulled up but the rear tank bracket had not turned loose. Before he reached the road where we were, it finally dropped and went tumbling end over end at about 50 to 100 feet high over our heads and hit the ground about 300 yards past us with a mighty roar; that must have been forty times that day that I had the life scared out of me, and the day was still young! Each time I got out of a truck, I moved forward a couple of trucks. One time I pulled a British Commando radio operator into the truck as we started forward. He said he had fought all through Europe in WWII, in Malaysia and now Korea, and he was still on his original enlistment — 12 years — I hope he made it.

While air support was the crucial factor for the entire division, and Corsairs from **VMF 214** and **VMF 321** were on station periodically throughout daylight hours bombing and strafing enemy positions, it was the tanks of Companies **Baker** and **Dog, 1st Tank Battalion** and the **Antitank Platoon of the 5th Marines** that made the difference for the Drysdale Task Force. It was at Pusong-ri that Colonel Drysdale received word from Chesty Puller that the column was to continue on to Hagaru. He (Drysdale) immediately ordered that tanks be interspersed throughout the column to give protective fire for the trucks. This positioning of the tanks led to some interesting examples of infantry — armor interaction. Don Taylor, a Marine Reservist from Washington, describes his experiences with a tank crew.

After one particularly bad ambush we prepared to push forward into Hagaru. The last 2 trucks in our section of the convoy were loaded with dead and wounded, so another Marine and I decided to ride a tank. The telephone on the tank did not work, so we had to chase it down the road banging on it so we could get aboard. The tankerman attempted to give us a geography quiz to make certain we were Americans. We convinced him of our nationality after calling him some names that he could readily identify with USMC vocabulary. This was all happening in extreme darkness and extreme cold. I am amazed that the drivers could even see the road. Sitting on the tanks ventilating system we were able to get warm for the first time in several days. We were hit with something which showered me with shrapnel but did not stop the tank.

Just before entering Hagaru burning straw was thrown up on the tank which my partner and I kicked off. I will never understand why they didn't shoot us instead of throwing straw at us. A few years ago in a bar, telling sea stories with a group of high school principals, we came to the conclusion that one of our group, Bob Mack from Ephrat, Washington, was the driver of that tank!

Frank Bove owes a special debt to a tank crew because he found himself alone on a Korean road when the trucks inadvertently left him stranded:

I was sent up one side of the road to pass the word to load the trucks. Boy, did they move out quickly! When I came back, the trucks were fully loaded and pulling out without me. So, there I was. All alone in the wide open spaces of North Korea. I was so frightened! Fortunately, for me, one of our tanks came my way; I yelled to the guys in the rear of the tank. They asked questions to determine the validity of the fact that I was American. When they were convinced that I was an American, they told me to get on top of the tank. I was saying more prayers because we started to draw enemy fire and the Gooks were using tracers. The tank crew's sleeping bags started to burn, and I then kicked them off the tank.

Another straggler was picked up by the tank and together we huddled, praying for our lives all the way to Hagaru-ri.

At one time we were between two mountain peaks, and the enemy was dropping concussion — grenades on the tank. The tank crew turned the gun turret to protect us and shield us from the blast. Lucky we were not hit, but we could smell the black powder from the explosions. Thank God, we made it!

Although the tanks played a crucial role in getting the column to Hagaru, the real drama occurred with the men riding in open vehicles. For example, about 1,000 meters north of Koto-ri, Captain Sitter's jeep was so badly shot up that it had to be abandoned, and the skipper boarded a truck with First Sgt. Zullo. PFC George Sullivan also describes what it was like to be a sitting-duck in an unprotected vehicle:

Later in the day, just before dark, our truck was knocked out. The Squad Leader told us to split up and half got to the front truck and the other half boarded the truck behind ours. We headed toward the front truck, but the driver didn't know that our truck had been knocked out, and he pulled off. We ran about 100 yards, the bullets whistling all around us. He finally stopped and we boarded. The fire continued, and every few minutes or so, you could hear a bullet hit someone. I laid down on top of one Marine, I told the Marine that I was lying on, that I knew he must be uncomfortable, but that there was no room anywhere else, and that I was sorry if it bothered him. He didn't answer, and I repeated what I had said; PFC Schafer said, " 'Sully', there's no need talking to him, he's been dead for awhile." There was an empty feeling in the pit of my stomach. If I remember correctly, the dead Marine was Cpl. Bowers. I knew him from King Training Co. at Pendleton. He had been hit in the head.

On the lighter side, Peepsight Pendas recalls an encounter with PFC (now Lieutenant General) Steve Olmstead.

I was between the truck cab and truck bed, somewhat protected when PFC Steve Olmstead ran by and stopped, and we shot the breeze about the winters not being as bad as our hometown of Albany, N.Y. We

made small talk for a minute, probably to assure each other that we were not afraid. About then, a 45 caliber submachine gun found us and we parted and jumped into a ditch with several Royal Marine Commandos. When a Royal Marine jumped in right on top of us, he rolled off me and said, "I say, mate, bit of a show, eh, what?" They all soon left as a Royal Marine officer **walked** up to us and inquired if they were "Charlie Troop", and away they went.

Because events were so hectic and because company records were lost with the death of the company clerk, Sgt. McGregor, and the wounding of First Sergeant Zullo, there will never be an exact accounting of George Company men killed and wounded on November 29, 1950. It is safe to say that many men died and many more were wounded. For those who survived November 29th, the day's events left a permanent mark on their souls.

For one man, First Sergeant Rozzo Zullo, that day's struggle led him to a career choice that he might not have otherwise made. Throughout the day First Sgt. Zullo had disregarded his own personal safety and had consistently exposed himself to danger; suddenly his luck ran out:

At the last road block, before entering Hagaru-ri, I was wounded for the second time. Thinking that we had finally reached friendly line, I was looking over the area, trying to decide what to do, when suddenly I was knocked off my feet by rifle and machine gun fire. I felt a searing pain in my stomach, and I knew that I had been badly wounded.

I shouted to my clerk, Sergeant Dale A. McGregor, for help, not knowing that he had been killed-in-action at this same or prior engagement. Marines picked me up and placed me on a truck with other dead and wounded personnel. I believe Private First Class Andrew Dirga and another Marine got on the truck to provide me necessary protection.

Things became very hazy for me at this time, and I remember seeing 1st Lieutenant Evans at the Medical Company, and I remember someone asking me about company rosters. I really do not remember too much

until I got th Army Hospital 118 in Japan. (I think that was its name.) But, you can rest assured, I was a very happy Marine when they transferred me to the Navy Hospital in Yokosuka, Japan, around the middle of January 1951.

In September 1954, I went to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, to visit Private First Class Philip H. Loughlin, a paraplegic. During our conversation, he mentioned he got wounded at the last road block on the road to Hagaru-ri, looking for first aid bandages to dress my wounds. Obviously, I felt that I was partly responsible for his becoming a paraplegic. Therefore, upon my retirement, I did try to make a contribution to society by becoming a teacher on the secondary level. PFC Loughlin is now deceased, but I think of him often.

Peepsight recalls:

As the convoy got within sight of Hagaru, suddenly all the lights came on at Hagaru. Our first thought was that they were giving us a beacon to home in. Little did we realize, it was the Engineers of Dog Company working to build an airstrip which would prove so valuable in evacuating our wounded, as well as 2,000 other WIAs. We assumed we were within the perimeter, and down to our left and just off the road were two visible "squad tents" with stoves. Marines came out of these tents, you could see them with their camouflaged helmet covers, shoe packs and parkas. Suddenly, they all started shooting at us and fired a rocket at the third truck — it was a direct hit, at only 50 yards, and the truck exploded in a ball of flame. They were Chinese, and plenty of them. I had large clips on my carbine and was in perfect position to pour it into them and I did, as well as into the tents, as more Chinese were piling out. The tents must have been packed with chinks — and then we were through the road block and home safe for one night.

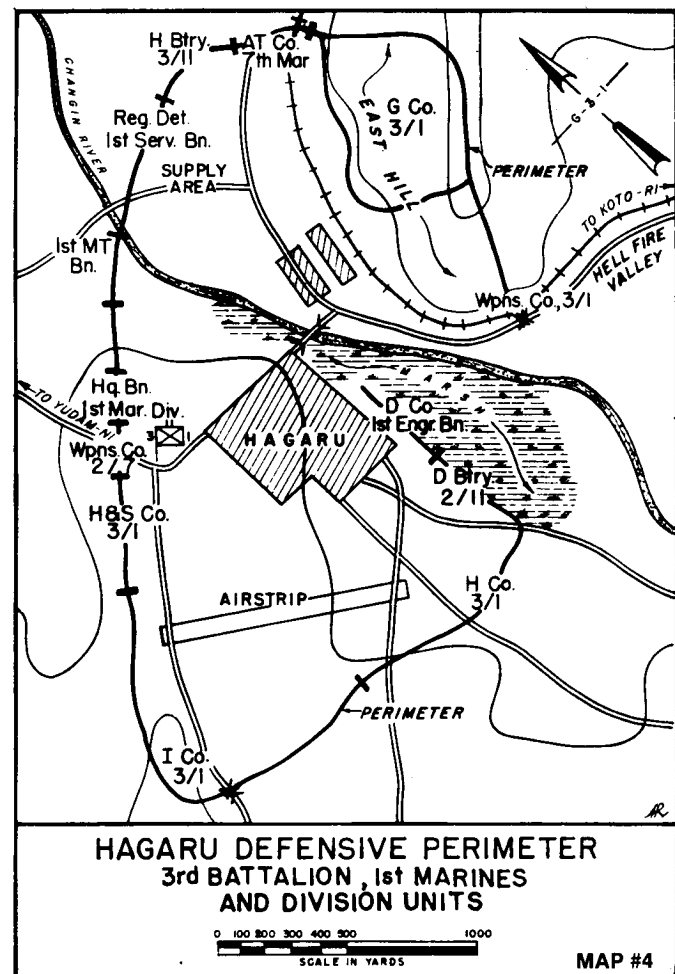


Chapter 6

The Big Picture

Task Force Drysdale consisted of approximately 922 American Marines, Army Infantrymen and British Commandos. After the middle of the convoy was shattered, roughly 400 of these men fought through three enemy regiments and reached Hagaru-ri; during the night of 30 November; approximately 300 turned around and made it back to Koto-ri. The total estimated battle casualties were 321, with 162 of this number killed or missing in action; including an additional 25, unconfirmed, taken prisoner. (Interesting to note: G Company lost only 4 trucks it was riding, however 41 Commando lost all 30 of its Service Battalion trucks as well as the Army lost all 22 of its trucks.) **(Editor's Note: Independent Commando, Royal Marines consisted of 3 troops "B", "C" and "D". It continued coastal raid type operations until its withdrawal on December 23, 1951 and was disbanded on February 22, 1952. It received the Presidential Unit Citation for its actions at the Chosin Reservoir campaign.)** This is a high price to pay, but the situation at Hagaru was so grim at that time that the CG of the First Marine Division felt he had no choice but to order the convoy northward. **Marines do not question an order given in combat, but many a man in that convoy had to wonder why Hagaru was so important.**

To General Smith and his staff, Hagaru was the crucial position of the entire Chosin withdrawal. An examination of Map #6 (pg. 19) shows the location of the entire division on the eve of the Chinese assault.



By November 27, the 5th and 7th Marines were hard pressed at Yudam-ni and would soon begin their "attack" southward. Hagaru had to hold, for if the enemy possessed Hagaru, the division would have been entrapped and the Chinese would have used their superiority of numbers to isolate and destroy units.

According to the official USMC history of the Korean War, one unidentified officer of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, upon arriving at Hagaru, was reminded of "old photographs of a gold mining camp in the Klondike." This same history goes on to indicate that, "tents, huts and supply dumps were scattered in a seemingly haphazard fashion about a frozen plain crossed by a frozen river bordered on three sides by low hills rising to steep heights on the eastern outskirts." In addition to vast quantities of supplies, by November the 26th Hagaru could boast of hospital facilities and a partially completed C-47 air strip. Because Hagaru was to become the divisional CP, there was a vast number of support troops there prior to the Chinese offensive. In addition to Marines, there were many American Army units moving in and out of Hagaru every day. All of this meant, of course, that Hagaru was an important and tantalizing objective of the 58th Division of the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF).

Lt. Carey, the battalion S-2 intelligence officer (and former platoon leader of George Company's first platoon), sent Control Intelligence Combat (CIC) agents out on November 28 to determine enemy strength, the location of enemy troops and the time of an attack. Amazingly, the agents returned with all the answers. The enemy was at divisional strength, located to the south and west of Hagaru and would attack on the night of November 28th.

The defense for the night of November 28 was in the hands of Lieutenant Colonel Ridge of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. It was his opinion that an adequate defense of Hagaru would require at least one infantry regiment and possible two, but this was out of the question. What he had on hand at midday on November 28 was one understrength Infantry battalion, two Batteries of Artillery and a hodgepodge of Marine service troops. In addition, Dog Company of the 10th U.S. Army Engineer Battalion and elements of X Corps headquarters were part of his command.

Based on the intelligence gathered by Lt. Carey, Lt. Col. Ridge decided to position his two rifle companies (How and Item, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines) south and southwest of Hagaru to face the brunt of the expected attack. The importance of East Hill was not overlooked, but Ridge was forced to gamble that the enemy would concentrate its attack in the sector defended by his two rifle companies. In addition there was the hope that George Company would arrive late on the 28th and would be rushed to East Hill.

By early afternoon, Ridge slowly came to the conclusion that the defense of Hagaru on the 28th would be without George Company. In view of this, he hastily organized a number of small units to defend the high ground east of the village. The two largest groups were U.S. Army units: Dog Company, 10th Engineers and personnel from X Corps headquarters. Map #4 shows the positions of units as the sun set on November 28, 1950.

The Chinese attack came as expected. Item and How Companies were hard hit by the assault troops. At one

point in time, the enemy penetrated How Company's 3rd platoon and threatened the company CP and the engineers working on the air strip. The fire fight in front of and behind How Company raged through most of the night. On two occasions Lt. Col Ridge sent reinforcements to How Company's lines and the penetration was contained by daybreak.

If the Chinese had realized how poorly East Hill was defended, they might have altered their plans. In what now appears as a diversionary attack, the Chinese hit East Hill with relatively few soldiers. To the left of the Army engineers, a ROK platoon from Xth Corps Headquarters collapsed as it was hit. This exposed the left flank of the engineers which caused heavy casualties (10 KIA, 9 MIA and 25 WIA out of 77 men) and resulted in what was described as a basically "demoralized" withdrawal of the company. The survivors of the initial attack regrouped on the reverse slope of a hill about 500 yards from the commanding heights, which were now in the hands of the enemy. There is little question that had the Chinese centered their attack on East Hill, they would have easily brushed aside what was left of the Army personnel and "a thin line of Marine service troops with several tanks . . . (that) formed a weak barrier (at the foot of East Hill)." As it was, the Chinese did not exploit, or perhaps because of an inadequate number of troops could not exploit the situation and "contented themselves with holding the high ground."

If Lt. Col. Ridge had responded to the deteriorating situation on East Hill by sending reinforcements from How and Item Companies, the Chinese might have succeeded on overrunning Hagaru. Ridge did not take the bait; he gambled and won. (**Editor's Note:** Statistics and quoted material on this page are from "USMC Operations in Korea" Vol. 3.)

Again, from intelligence gathered by Lt. Carey, it appears that the Chinese were absolutely confident that they could break through the defensive perimeter on the relatively flat plains of the western and southwestern portion of the Marine line and that the occupation of East Hill was not important. For centuries a Chinese Axiom was to never underestimate an enemy. The commanding officer of the 58th division made a fatal mistake by not following this age-old precept. He was confident his 172nd and 173rd regiments would crush the Marine perimeter on the relatively flat ground. He, indeed, underestimated Marine determination, and instead of occupying a warm command post in captured Hagaru on the night of November 28, 1950, he was forced to retire to the frozen hills to re-group and plan a new attack.

During the daylight hours of November 29, while George Company was slugging its way through Hell Fire Valley, Major Myers of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines volunteered to lead a counter attack on East Hill, which would consist of "all reserves who could be scraped up."

While the attack carried itself close to the Chinese commanding the highest ridge line, it did not have the strength to push the Chinese out of their positions. As nightfall approached, most segments of Myers' force were forced to withdraw to positions that were easier to defend. In only slightly improved positions from the previous night, American defenders of the high ground would have to face any Chinese attack as best they could, for George Company had not yet reached Hagaru.

It was several hours after darkness enclosed the defensive perimeter of Hagaru that George Company, in a somewhat disorganized state, finally arrived. At 1915 Captain Sitter reported to the Commanding General. After the debriefing, the skipper returned to his troops and made sure that the wounded were taken to sickbay. One of these injured men, PFC Robert T. Henderson, a Reservist from Savannah, Georgia, who had been severely wounded in both legs as he sat on the tailgate of a truck lumbering through Hell Fire Valley, recalls the hours of uncertainty as he awaited evacuation.

In the meantime (while waiting for the landing strip to be completed) I was lying in blood, a pool of blood; I was half frozen, grimy from the frozen snow and wishing I could get hold of a can of fruit cocktail or even some frozen baked beans would taste delicious. Six hours, twelve hours, a day went by and then two, then three. Time (became) relative, and my wounds were flaring up from infection. I remember a needle in my arm, morphine for the unbearable pain in my legs. Finally, some small Stinsons landed, but unlike the helicopters that could take two men out, the Stinson would only get a one-man stretcher inside the plane. Two corpsmen came in . . . but I am rambling . . . (Henderson was placed on the Stinson, and for him the war was over).

The treatment and evacuation of PFC Henderson went as smoothly as circumstances would allow, especially when compared to the near tragic mistake made with First Sgt. Zullo. In an interview given to "Leatherneck" (November 1986), Col. Sitter told how Zullo narrowly escaped the category of KIA on November 29, 1950.

Everybody assumed that Rocco Zullo was dead, so he was laid out in the morgue and an hour or so later, the corpsman is out there and he hears this cough, and he checks Zullo and yes, he's living. So he moves him in and gives him all this stuff to get him going. Being in the morgue, Zullo got frostbite on his hands and feet. So he's sent to Japan. We didn't think he was going to make it, but he did.

Chapter 7

East Hill



East Hill — Chosin Reservoir, 4 December 1950

Realizing that running the gauntlet from Koto-ri to Hagaru was as much of an effort as a unit could make in a given day, the Battalion placed George Company in reserve the night of November 29, 1950 and allowed the men to get, if possible, an uninterrupted night's sleep. In a very real sense, George Company had a bit of good luck in that the Chinese were unable to mount any large scale attack that night. By this time the 58th CCF Division had received horrendous casualties (estimated at 90% for the 172nd regiment). Prisoners also reported that extremely accurate artillery and mortar fire from Hagaru and the constant attacks by Marine air power prevented the Chinese from successfully reorganizing at assembly areas. Therefore, the night passed without any major incidents around the perimeter. At daybreak on November 30, 1950, Captain Sitter's mission was to reorganize his weary and half frozen men and drive the enemy off the ridgeline of East Hill. In that same interview with "Leatherneck" magazine, Sitter described the immensity of the task that lay before him that morning.

The major thing was the cold and just getting people operating. When you are cold and you can't move, you just don't operate as efficiently as you would otherwise. And getting these people out, after sleeping in snow all night, and then you had to hack them damned five-in-one rations apart to get something to eat and throw your canteen in the fire to get it to pour.

... As miserable as we had been sleeping in the cold and open, we didn't want to leave those known comforts for humping those snowy hills. We were

drained; exhausted. But the men were proud; they were Marines, and so, with a little prodding, we began going up the hill.

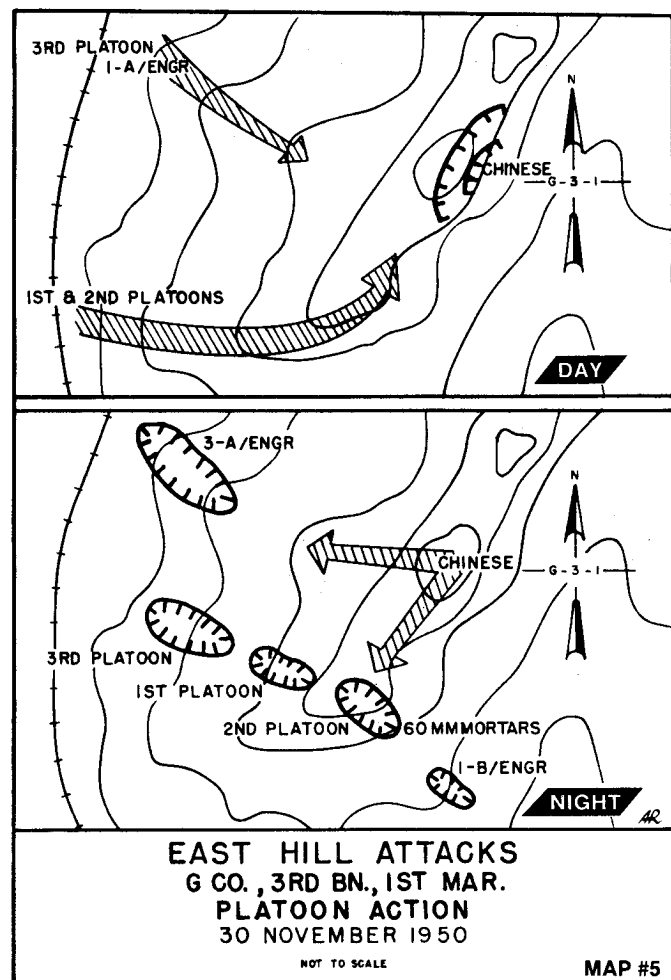
George Company's attempt to drive the Chinese off the high ground ran into difficulty before a shot was fired. By the morning of November 30, 1950 hundreds of men, carrying ammunition up and the wounded and dead down, had turned the slopes into a mass of slime that literally resulted in "two steps forward — slide one and one-half steps back." Burdened with heavy clothing and ammunition and suffering the tortures of the damned from the numbing cold, the men of George Company struggled forward until many of them dropped from fatigue. Slowly they plodded on, passing stretcher bearers, bandsmen and graves registration personnel. They had the somber task of dragging down the frozen bodies of Marines killed while serving as part of Major Myers' assault force on the previous day. As the men scanned the military crest of the ridgeline in front of them, they could see a 50 cal. machine gun in a huge tripod pointing downward and in their general direction. Those who did reach the first ridgeline soon came under heavy fire from the Chinese who held the higher ground that George was supposed to seize.

The first and second platoons had been called upon to lead the attack. When most of the members of the first platoon assembled at the first ridgeline, the order was given to move over the crest of the hill and begin the assault. Unfortunately, the enemy held all the trump cards. They held the high ground, and they had had several days to consolidate their positions.

Most of those who had started to advance were driven back to the safety of the reverse slope by the heavy and accurate machine gun fire from above. One (perhaps two) Marine didn't make it back. PFC Woolcocks had been a member of the Honor Guard at Arlington National Cemetery prior to Korea. With his square jaw and rugged, but handsome features, he looked every inch like the Marine found on recruiting posters. He went down in a hail of small arm's fire. PFC Manning, trying to get Woolcocks to the reverse slope, lost his life too. When the Chinese firing eventually subsided, PFC Harrell Roberts and PFC Neil Cowart were sent to retrieve Woolcocks' body. In Robert's words:

They (members of the first platoon) laid down cover fire, and we went to Woolcocks, got him on a poncho and took him back up to our position. Woolcocks was frozen in an awkward position which made him very difficult to carry under the circumstances. We took him to the CP. I always remember Woolcocks had light blond hair. His best buddy who had a Hispanic name (Cpl. Martinez) went wild when we brought Woolcocks back to the line and had to be restrained to keep him from charging the Chinese.

With the first and second platoons stopped in their tracks, Captain Sitter called for the third platoon of Lt. Dennis and two engineer platoons assigned to his command to envelop the Chinese right flank. This attack was also aborted in the face of overwhelming Chinese fire.



Captain Sitter was granted permission by Battalion to set up a defensive line on the ground held by Major Myers on the night of November 29, 1950. The disposition of Sitter's command is indicated in Map # 5 below.

The weary Marines soon found that the frozen earth was going to give them little protection. Some tried to dig in, but their entrenching tools either broke or had little effect on the unyielding earth which was frozen solid like concrete. Now that the Company was in a stationary line and the men physically inactive, the agony that results from temperatures reaching 24 degrees below zero swept the ranks. While waiting for the attack that everyone knew was imminent, Captain Sitter spent his time going up and down the line, giving his Marines what encouragement he could. To "Leatherneck" magazine, Sitter explained his actions as follows:

At that time, my job was easy. I'd get a private in a hole, and he's the only one he's thinking about. I had all the other people to think about, so I didn't have to think or worry about myself. (I was just) trying to get those kids settled down.

He would tell his troops:

What are you gonna do? You're gonna fight, damnit. You gotta fight or we aren't getting out of here. It gets that simple.

During late afternoon and early evening on November 30, reinforcements of U.S. Army soldiers and ROKS reached George Company's lines. While many of these replacements fought shoulder to shoulder with the Marines, many more just simply disappeared as the night wore on. PFC Don Taylor describes his experience with the soldiers and ROKS in the following way:

The next afternoon (November 30) I rejoined George Company on East Hill (Taylor spent the earlier part of the day having shrapnel removed from his hand and arm). As I recall, my squad consisted of 4 Marines, 3 soldiers and 2 ROKS. The next morning only the Marines remained. I don't know what happened to the others.

On the other hand, Cpl. Pendas came up with a somewhat satisfactory solution to the problem of the vanishing replacements.

I put the ROK soldiers to work digging fighting holes. I was amazed that they dug 3 large holes in frozen concrete-like ground. At each round of incoming they attempted to take off, so I put a Marine in each hole with them. PFC Leonard Semski was almost like a prison chaser with his foot in their backs holding them in position, while he fired at oncoming chinks.

Shortly before midnight (November 30) the Chinese began their main assault. PFC Roberts recalls that, "Whistles started blowing and you could hear feet being stomped on the ground and then the bugles blew and here came the Chinese, whooping and hollering. There was a tank down the draw to the left that fired illumination flares and you could see the troops swarming across the draw and coming up the hill at us." (In closed formation, shoulder to shoulder 3 across, 4 deep, in bunches of about 15-16 men.)

The crucial high ground was the right flank of George Company and was defended by Lt. John Jaeger's 2nd platoon. A night or two earlier this high ground had been occupied by soldiers of the U.S. Army. When they were driven off, they left behind their dead and a huge supply of weapons and ammunition. S/Sgt. Jack DeLoach estimated that the bodies of 30 to 40 soldiers were scattered about the hill, indicating mass confusion during their retreat. Because of all the supplies left behind by the army, the 2nd platoon was able to place six light machine guns in position and to supply each man with extra grenades and ammunition. The defense of the 2nd platoon's area actually began a few hours prior to the Chinese attack. S/Sgt. DeLoach took advantage of the relatively quiet time before midnight as follows:

At about 8:00 PM all was quiet in front of the 2nd platoon. I told my men that I was going to move out about 40 yards in front of the line. My men were exhausted and desperately needed sleep; I decided I would move out in order to force the enemy to walk over me before they could get to my weary troops. Lt. Jaeger refused to let me do this unless he went with me. So we went out and found a couple of dead Chinese in a hole and placed them in front of us for protection. I stacked about 14 grenades in front of me. About 2400 I could hear my men moving about. It had been snowing hard since we moved to the forward position and our tracks were no longer visible. I raised up slowly and there were two Chinese soldiers whispering to each other. I could almost reach out and touch them. I pulled the pin from a grenade and put it between them and blew them to kingdom come. I threw the rest of the grenades; then I told Lt. Jaeger to head back to our lines. As soon as we got back, shit hit the fan — we fought furiously until daylight.

The peak of the hill commanded the whole valley that was Hagaru; it had to be held and Lt. Jaeger's platoon hung on tenaciously. However, the ground between the 1st and 2nd platoon was breached shortly after midnight on November 30. Cpl. Pendas (1st platoon), to this day, maintains that the tie in with the 2nd platoon was never made and the Chinese slipped through a point of 100 yards in the line that was either not defended at all or was so inadequately defended that the Chinese met little or no opposition. In any event, with the Chinese inside and behind the positions of the 1st platoon, riflemen swung either to the right, towards the crest of the hill defended by the 2nd platoon, and the Company CP or to the left, towards the 3rd platoon. PFC Steve Olmstead, one of those who moved to the right, recalls feeding grenades to Sgt. DeLoach as the Sgt. shouted in bad Chinese, "WANBATUA!" Later, when Olmstead asked what this meant, DeLoach said it was an insult and meant, "You are a turtle!"

Despite the collapse of its left flank, the 2nd platoon held the high ground. The fighting was intense and the casualties were heavy. PFC Louis Reina (2nd replacement draft) remembers the death of a young Marine from the 2nd platoon:

Late in the evening (11/30 — but before the main Chinese attack) my foxhole buddy, PFC William Pickett, started talking about his home town, which was Omaha, Nebraska and how he had quit school when he was

fifteen years old and had joined the Marine Corps. He said he would not be seventeen until sometime in April 1951. Later in the evening I told Bill that I was going to turn him in to the company CO in the morning. Well, I never got the chance as we were attacked that night and Bill was killed. His death happened after three potato masher type grenades were thrown into our hole. He yelled, "I'm going to get those S.O.B.'s." (As he stood up), I pulled him down. The second time (that he stood up) Bill planted a size sixteen boot on my chest and knocked me down into the hole. At the moment Bill jumped out of our hole, a star flare lit up the sky, and could hear what sounded like a hundred machine guns firing at the same time. I saw my buddy, Bill Pickett, go down on the forward slope of our hill and out of sight. The next morning our Lt. came by and asked me to get Bill. I told him that he was my fox hole buddy and please have someone else get him as I could not stand to see him all shot full of holes and frozen stiff.

The Chinese break through meant that the enemy was now everywhere on the hill. Tanks at the bottom of East Hill were able to prevent any further penetration of Hagaru's perimeter, and their murderous fire up the draw did much to keep the Chinese disorganized. However, small clusters of Chinese infantry were encountered at almost any location on East Hill. Cpl. James Robideau (1st platoon) relates the following:

I helped Cpl. Oscar Weeks (3rd squad, 1st platoon) off the hill. He had a bad wound in one of his legs. I had to drag him down the hill. I was constantly straightening his leg as it was busted up so bad that it kept turning almost completely around. Then when I got back up the hill to the Company CP, there were more gooks than Marines. It was at this time that I saw Captain Sitter fighting hand to hand with the Chinese. God! what a night. I honestly did not think I would get out alive.

PFC Merton GoodEagle was an ammo carrier with the 1st machine gun section and had to make frequent trips down the hill for ammo. About the time Robideau observed the Skipper heavily engaged with Chinese soldiers, GoodEagle was making one of his ammo runs and describes it in this way:

On one trip back up East Hill, I was confronted by two Chinese soldiers with their rifles. They came charging at me with fixed bayonets. The first Chinese I threw down and hit him with a can of machine gun ammo. The second soldier, I emptied a full carbine magazine at, killing him. Later I found out that I only hit him a couple of times. By this time the first Chinese soldier was starting to move so I turned and jumped on him, killing him with my carbine bayonet. I was so scared and shook-up that I ran the rest of the way up to our machine gun position without the ammo. A very short time later I realized I had wet my trousers, and I had forgotten to reload my carbine. I remember shaking for quite some time.

While it is true that the Chinese broke the line in what was probably the 1st platoon's sector, riflemen of that platoon continued to fight on, many from positions they

were in from the beginning, while others fought from new positions. When engaged with ROK units and U.S. Army units, the Chinese discovered that a single breakthrough of any portion of the line usually resulted in a disorganized withdrawal of infantrymen on either side of the penetration. This appears to be the major reason why the Chinese were able to rout Army and ROK battalions and inflict such heavy casualties on support troops and to capture huge supplies and equipment. The Chinese must have been dismayed to see the Marines roll with the attack and, at worst, simply take new positions. Three 1st platoon riflemen describe what it was like to be in the eye of the storm:

PFC Otto Olsen

A flare erupted directly in front of me, lighting up the ridge in front of me. On the ridge, seemingly marching 4 or 6 abreast, was a company of Chinese headed for Hagaru . . . I and everyone else along the line opened fire and continued until the flare went out. Within seconds after the flare went out, Lt. Hopkins came up to my position and asked what was going on. I explained to him what was out there. Another flare erupted about this time and lit up the area. The number of Chinese had increased and they were still marching down the hill. Soon after this the firing and exploding of grenades became very heavy off to my right, up the hill, and then the machine gun became silent. I could see some activity up there, but was watching my field of fire. A Cpl. from another fire team came up and checked in with me asking what was above me. I told him I was not sure, so he crawled up and checked the machine gun post. He was back in a few seconds and said that there was no one above us but Chinese that had overrun the machine gun position. The Cpl. and two others below me all dropped down the ridge about 50 yards and tied in with some men from the 3rd platoon. We formed a defensive line across the ridge and facing up the hill towards the positions we had just vacated.

Cpl. Peepsight Pendas

At one time a Chinaman came blazing up the hill with an automatic weapon. I ducked down as the muzzle blast lit up the area in front of me. He was standing above me, still walking, shooting straight up in the air. He never realized he was at the top and was probably doped or blinded by his own fire. I had hung up my bolt gun on a nearby tree and was using a carbine, which I quickly emptied into his mid-section. The entire platoon kept up a heavy volume of fire and grenades. The three fighting holes of Army and ROK soldiers with a Marine in charge were holding. As the intensity of the attack increased, the Chinese came through the lines where there was no one and swung down the hill, at which time they were behind us. Most of the platoon had been wounded at least once, but they made no move to leave their positions. Small Chinese grenades with bamboo handles landed among us. They blew little holes in our parkas, but never broke the skin — totally ineffective. Most of us were up on the line in a prone position, firing down at the enemy. When I emptied a magazine, I rolled over on my back, sat up, took off my gloves and loaded rounds into several carbine magazines. Rolling back over to the prone, I resumed firing.

The battle was intense about midnight. At approximately 0100 on December 1, the Chinese came through the gap between the 1st and 2nd platoons as all hell was breaking loose. Some Chinese were behind us and there was now a great deal of activity to our rear. I was reloading magazines in a sitting position when I was shot from the rear. The round entered through the sole of my shoe pack and exited on top of my foot near the ankle bone. It felt like I had been hit with a sharp stick. I tried to move to the right flank where the platoon seemed to be hit the hardest. I couldn't walk. I crawled back up to the line and fired a few more magazines. It seemed as if everyone was wounded. The ROKS and Soldiers had taken off. I was crawling on the ground, yelling to O.W. Weeks and a few other Marines. When someone above me said, "Who's that?" I looked up and said, "Peepsight." The Marine standing above me barely had a sleeve on his parka, his left arm had been badly shot up. "Hang on," he said. He grabbed the hood of my parka and dragged me like a sled down the frozen hill. The following morning PFC Frank Bove walked into the old barn being used as a battalion aid station with a Thompson Submachine gun on each shoulder. I asked him, "Frank, how is the company?" He replied, "I am the company."

PFC Harrell Roberts

The Chinese 50 cal. machine gun with the green tracers was hard at work over on the left. I was firing down the ridge at the Chinese coming up the hill when a round from the 50 caught me through the left wrist. It seemed as though I had stuck my finger in a 110-volt light socket. Violent reaction threw the shell cover and glove off my left hand. I called for a corpsman; they were all wounded or dead. Neil Cowart tied a leather thong tourniquet on my arm, and I eased off the ridge and started down. I suddenly realized I had committed the cardinal sin! I had dropped and left "ole 2447720" laying in the snow on the ridge. I turned back and started back up to get that M1. As I topped the slope at the ridge, something tugged at my trouser leg, and I looked down and found two neat holes through my right pants leg. I thought, "to hell with 'ole 2447720'." My fire team leader, Cpl. Crowell had always said he would get to pick up that fine piece when I "got it." I have always wondered if he did. As I again started down the hill, I saw Sgt. James Fry. He had been shot through the mouth and was spitting teeth and blood and cursing. (For a while) I followed him down. It was so steep that I (eventually) reached down to the tail of my parka, pulled it up between my legs, sat down and started sliding. When I hit the bottom, I landed in a frozen stream and could not get my footing. I heard some one exclaiming that he was blind; it was a guy we called Piccalo. He always wore an army fur hat. He had a head wound and blood had frozen over his eyes. He came to my voice, and I pulled up on him, and we started across the railroad track to the road. A jeep pulled up, and we climbed aboard and rode to the aid station.

The importance of the light thirty caliber A4 machine gun can never be overstated. Whether delivering cover fire for an attack or in a defensive position, it was the weapon that provided the necessary fire power. As long as a

machine gun was chattering away, the individual rifleman knew he could hold his ground, and when a machine gun was silenced, the same rifleman knew he was in trouble. Therefore, keeping the guns firing on East Hill was crucial, and, beyond the gunners and assistant gunners, it was up to the ammo carriers to make sure that the MGs were able to keep up a curtain of fire in the direction of the advancing enemy. PFC Bruce Farr was one of those ammo carriers and describes the following action:

Just after midnight, PFC Greene and I had gone around the side of the hill to the company CP where we each picked up two boxes of ammo. On our way back to the platoon area, all hell broke loose, and most of the 1st platoon was knocked off the hill. My squad leader ordered us to the bottom of the hill. We quickly reorganized and returned to the vicinity of the company CP and began to deliver fire on our previous position. At this point PFC Hallowell was hit while delivering ammo to Cpl. Haller and PFC Elsworth Hems. (I dropped off my ammo) and dragged Hallowell about 10 feet. I got him to a corpsman who was treating about 5 other wounded Marines. Later, the corpsman told me that Hallowell was dead.

(Later) Captain Sitter told me to stay on the hill with my gun. He said to only carry the wounded off the hill and that the dead would be removed at daybreak. Thank God Captain Sitter remained cool.

(On one ammo run, while at the bottom of the hill) PFC William Greene told me that he had a premonition that he would not live long enough to get to the top of the hill. I told him that I had that same fear, but that we had to go back up (because without MG ammo) everyone up there would be killed before daylight. Greene was found the next morning about 25 yards from the top of the hill and about 10 yards to the right of the path with a fatal head wound. He didn't make it to the top, but he did his best to get there.

It is worth noting that when George Company was relieved by the 5th Marines on East Hill that Farr's MG section, which consisted of 17 men on November 28, 1950, was down to three men: E.C. Hems, Don Kohlker and Farr. *(Editor's note: On March 2, 1951 Kohler and Farr were WIA, and on March 3, 1951 E.C. Hems was shot through the leg while positioning his MG on a ridge line.)*

As usual the 60 mortars provided the kind of steady support that George Company riflemen had always been able to count on. On the night of November 30/December 1, S/Sgt. John Collier saw one of his mortarmen give supporting fire of a different kind. While in the gun pit, Sgt. Don Perry, a reservist called to active duty in August of 1950, noticed that a machine gun was without a gunner. Instead of looking the other way and hoping someone else would take the challenge, Perry raced to the gun and fired it continuously throughout the night. The irony of it all was that orders to return Perry to the States, because of his dependent children, had already reached Battalion Headquarters. The next morning he was sent down the hill and presumably returned to the U.S. to be discharged.

The sub-zero temperatures had a great impact on rifles and MGs, but did not seem to be a major problem with the 60 mortars. Although all of the ammunition was of World War II vintage, only the flares had a high failure rate —

judged to be about 50% effective. The high explosive and white phosphorus rounds seemed to be highly reliable.

The nature of the terrain on East Hill led to positioning the mortars very close to the defensive line. When giving close support, the tubes of the weapons appeared to be pointing straight up in the air. In fact the mortars were so close that riflemen and the men in the mortar pits could be heard by one another. This proximity led to a somewhat amusing exchange when a rifleman shouted back to PFC Donald "Lucky" Henderson, "Henderson, you are placing your rounds too close to us." Henderson yelled back, "Hell, I haven't fired anything for five minutes." **(Editor's Note: Lucky Henderson was killed on March 2, 1951 when short rounds from an artillery unit fell on George Company just after a hill was secured.)**

Interspersed with moments of terror were those almost bizarre, almost humorous (if black humor is truly humorous) events. For example, after Sgt. James Fry was temporarily blinded by a hand grenade, he began his trek towards the aid station. He described it in this way:

It wasn't funny at the time, but seems a wee bit so now. After I was hit, I started down to find an aid station and ran into five or six people on the way, and since I couldn't see, I found out they were Chinese who had breached our lines when I felt their padded coats. They made no attempt to stop me, and I reached the bottom of the hill where our company Gunny was rallying men to go up to reinforce our troops on the hill. He led me to a cracker-box ambulance without a driver. Although blinded, I seemed to think I could drive it, so I made my way to the cab, got in, and, thinking I was turning on the combat ignition, turned on the full headlights instead! Of course, I couldn't see them, but the whole 1st Marines and half the Chinese army did, and I heard much screaming, "Turn off those God damn lights!" amid hundreds of bullets which seemed to hit the vehicle almost at once. Having resolved that problem, I was taken to an aid station nearby, treated, and flown out the next morning on a C 47 to Hamhung.

While Sgt. Fry was making his way to the aid station, the rest of George Company was hanging tenaciously to East Hill. PFC Otto Olson remembers lying in the snow for two or three hours after the initial Chinese assault had been somewhat contained. The following incident, which Olson describes, probably occurred at roughly 0300 on December 1, 1950.

About two or three hours after we had taken up our new position on the ridge and the din of battle had lessened some, a man dressed in a Marine parka and carrying a carbine under his arm came strolling down the ridge in front of us. A sergeant next to me stood up and challenged him, but he kept walking towards us and was challenged by the sergeant again. The man now mumbled something in an alien tongue. The sergeant yelled, "He's a Gook!" and raised his rifle to fire at him. All that was heard was the clink of the hammer hitting the firing pin. I tried to fire my BAR, as I had been covering him, and it jammed with the round only half way into the chamber. (At this point) the Chinaman turned and ran up the hill a lot faster than he had strolled down.

Because the Chinese soldier Olson encountered was wearing a Marine parka, he was able to almost wander into Marine lines. Another case of mistaken identity took place in the 2nd platoon sector and was just as bizarre as Olson's account. The incident that PFC Louis Reina experienced occurred on or about December 3, 1950:

A few nights later (after the 11/30/50 Chinese assault) the Chinese mounted another attack on our lines and overran our right flank where ROK were in position. The next thing I remember was some guy standing on my right side saying something to me in what I thought was South Korean. I thought he was trying to get some ammo or supplies. I kept telling this guy to get down by using hand signals. All of a sudden I heard Sgt. Ronald Wyman yelling at the top of his lungs, "Reina, are you still there? Answer me, that's a Gook on your right." The first time I tried to answer Wyman, nothing came out. I cleared my throat, which was dry from the extreme cold and also, I might say, from being scared. As I turned around and took a good look at this guy standing over my hole, I noticed he was pointing a rifle at my head. He couldn't have been more than three feet from me. To this day I don't know if this Chinese soldier was trying to give up or was trying to take me as a prisoner. The next thing I remember was Sgt. Wyman, who was about 50 feet away, shooting at this guy with his 45 cal. pistol. I do not recall ever seeing Sgt. Wyman again after this incident, and to this day I owe him by life.

No treatment of "black" humor in combat could be complete without some mention of at least one man answering "a call of nature." PFC Al "Windy" Melancon vividly remembers one such incident that occurred sometime between December 1 and December 5.

I got out of my hole to urinate. I stood there for a moment watching the stream of urine hit the snow. All of a sudden, rifle shots started kicking up snow all around me. It didn't take too long for me to realize that some sniper was shooting at me. I continued to urinate, but went to my knees, finished what I had started and returned to my hole.

The Chinese did keep the pressure on from December 1 to December 5, but it was not as intense as it had been on the night of November 30/December 1. On December 5, 1950, elements of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines relieved George Company on East Hill. By this time the Company was down to 96 men. (Many of this number were so severely frostbitten that they would be evacuated once they reached Hungnam or Mason.) Those survivors would be called upon to fight again, but their major contribution to the defense of Hagaru was over. They, the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, had denied the enemy the advantage of the high ground overlooking Hagaru. Without friendly troops on East Hill, the history of the orderly withdrawal of the First Marine Division from North Korea would have unquestionably be written differently than it was. For without an air field to evacuate the thousands wounded and bringing in replacements and ammo, the rest of the division could still be there.

The reader who was not on East Hill might ask, "Were there any heroes?" He might add, "All of the individual accounts sound so matter-of-fact." The answer, of course,

is that all those who stayed on the hill were heroes. It would have been extremely easy for anyone to slip down the hill and get lost in the sea of support troops in the village of Hagaru. It took an extreme devotion to duty to be on top of the frozen earth, knowing there was over a 50-50 chance that fingers and toes would turn blue with frostbite. It took guts to face a charging enemy because the chances were great that your weapon would malfunction due to the temperature. Every man who saw the dead and the wounded around him, but refused to give the enemy an inch of ground as long as he could function, was a hero. This simple commitment to duty was illustrated by the determination of Marines like PFC Semski. Cpl. Pendas reported that:

PFC Semski had a difficult time getting his BAR to fire. As he pulled the trigger, the bolt barely slid forward and did not have sufficient energy to strip a round from the magazine. He removed the magazine hand held a loose round with his two index fingers. Somehow he got his BAR to fire a-round, then two rounds; then he put the magazine back in and got the BAR to function near normally. To remove your gloves in subzero temperatures to get your weapon to function was almost super heroic. It was so cold that every bone in your body hurt.

PFC Semski was just one of the 96 men who coped with the elements and held off the enemy. They were heroes all!

(Editor's Note: *As these words are read, nearly 40 years after the fact, it is amazing to hear each Marine talk of his own fear — a very compelling emotion, for this fear was not evident at the Chosin. The men of George Company fought as if fearless.*)

After being relieved on East Hill, George Company's new assignment was to protect the west end of the air strip. This part of Hagaru consisted of very level ground that slowly climbed up to a ridge line that was in Chinese hands. Between the ridge line in the distance and the forward position of the Company was a ditch, roughly 100 yards in front of the defensive line. Sometime during the early morning hours of December 6, 1950, Chinese soldiers had inched their way to the ditch, and in the first dim rays of sunlight appeared to be ready to rush George Company's position in what might have been an attempt to spread havoc just as the 7th Marines were about to spearhead the withdrawal southward to Koto-ri. For some reason the Chinese had delayed their attack too long, and now the element of surprise was lost. It must have occurred to them that a frontal assault in broad daylight would have been disastrous. By the same token, it would have been very costly for the riflemen of George Company to storm the ditch. The solution was to call in the 60 mm mortars of S/Sgt. John Collier; however, this was not quite so simple as it sounded. Sgt. Collier explains the action in this way:

I called to Cpl. Bobbi Holloway to get his mortar into position to see if those Chinese could be driven out of the ditch. Cpl. Holloway and his assistant gunner ran into the first of many problems when the baseplate wouldn't stand steady. Holloway calmly said, "I'm going to have to hold it in my hands." I stood with him and told

him to put two turns on the elevation. It (the round) went straight up; I thought it was going to come down on top of us. I thought, "Oh hell! He is going to kill all of us." We hit the ground, and although it landed only a little in front of us, no one was hurt. I told him (Holloway) to put two more turns on it. The next shell landed in the ditch — we just kept working that ditch up and down.

Except for the fact that Cpl. Holloway had to hold the mortar tube in his hands, this still sounds pretty much like routine work for an experienced crew. But it must be remembered that Collier, Holloway and the assistant gunner had no concealment; they were operating the mortar from a completely exposed position and could at any moment (in the words of Melancon) "get rifle fire right down their necks." (**Editor's note:** Cpl. Holloway was awarded a Silver Star for the action just described.)

It was near the air field that a PFC rifleman received his first promotion on his way to becoming a three star general in the United States Marine Corps. In reorganizing the 1st platoon, Lt. Hopkins informed PFC Steve Olmstead that his new assignment was that of platoon runner. At the time Olmstead thought that this sounded like a "pretty good deal." That same night, December 6th, the 1st platoon was positioned on the extreme right flank in preparation for the withdrawal to Koto-ri. Olmstead soon learned that being a runner had some inherent disadvantages. He explains:

There was considerable anxiety about when we were going to move out. (For all anyone knew, it might be in the early morning hours under the cover of darkness.) About 2000 hours I started getting directions to go down to the Company C.P. to find out when we were to pull out — I think the Company C.O. got tired of seeing my face about every hour. (On my return trip) to avoid being shot at by the Chinese or by George Company Marines I learned how to run, slide and jump into foxholes along the way. My first day on the job, and I got to meet most of the Company that night.

George Company started its withdrawal on the morning of December 7th. S/Sgt. Collier remembers a strange mood that swept the troops as they left their positions at the edge of the run way. He describes it as if the "company was on its way to a picnic." On the other hand, PFC Olmstead recalls that after the men left the air strip "they looked up at East Hill because the five day struggle for that ridge line had made a hell of an impact on us." It wasn't too long before the sound of moving men was punctuated by the snap of rifle fire from Chinese snipers. There is general agreement that by this time the troops were almost indifferent to the kind of danger that snipers posed and possessed what amounted to a fatalistic attitude about the prospects of their own survival.

In the march southward to Koto-ri, the Company was subject to random sniper fire, but met no organized Chinese opposition. How unlike eight days earlier when the Drysdale Task Force crept its way up the same eleven, bloody miles! The road still contained grisly reminders of the cost in lives and material of running a series of Chinese roadblocks. A dead Marine Major was still on the side of the road where he fell to a Chinese bullet. Bodies of dead Marines, stripped of shoes and clothing, were frozen in grotesque positions. Intermingled with fallen Americans were the dead Chinese soldiers who littered the area and gave silent testimony to the savageness of the running battles along this stretch of road. In addition, postal trucks carrying mail to the 5th and 7th Marines had been looted and Christmas mail and packages were strewn about. Vehicles that had run off the road and could not regain the road had been left abandoned. Other vehicles, too shot up to continue to Hagaru, also stood as reminders of the ferocity of the Chinese on that fateful day. In the late afternoon of December 7, 1950, G-3-1 was back in Koto-ri, back to where it had all begun.



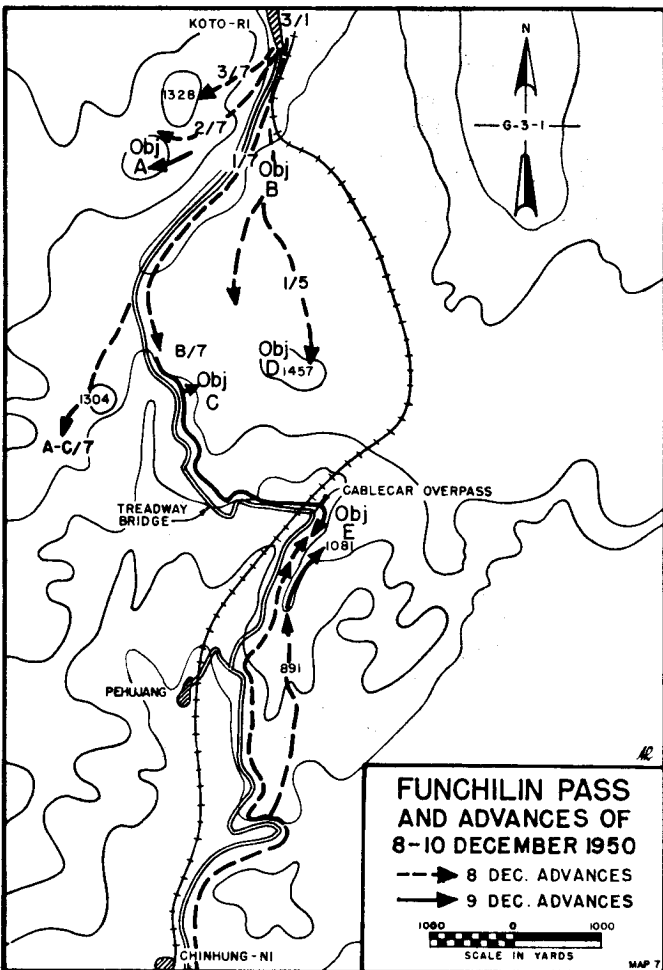
Koto-ri to Hungnam

By the night of December 7th, all the Marines who had fought at Yudam-ni and Hagaru had joined forces with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines at Koto-ri. The garrison at Koto-ri now consisted of approximately 14,229 men. This number included roughly 2,353 soldiers of the U.S. Army and 150 Royal Marine Commandos.

On December 8th the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines was given the task of defending Koto-ri until "the Division and regimental trains cleared, whereupon it was to relieve 5th Marines and 7th Marines on Objectives A, B, C and D."

During the day and night of December 8/9, the men of George Company did not face any organized attack by the enemy. The 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines did provide some thawed food and the men did the best they could to cope with the crippling effects of the cold on their bodies and spirits.

While George Company was basically inactive on the 8th of December, the 7th Marines spearheaded the attack southward. The first objective was a hill mass about a mile and one-half south of Koto-ri. The map that follows indicates this position as Objective A.



This hill mass (Objective A) protected the route of march to the south, and it was imperative that it be secured and held to protect the Marines as they withdrew to Hungnam. Late in the afternoon of December 9th, just as

darkness enclosed the still entrapped Division, George Company was sent to relieve the 7th Marines at Objective A.

Based on intelligence gathered later, it now appears that a force of about 350 Chinese was moving southward in the morning hours of December 10th and suddenly found themselves inside George Company's lines. The fire fight that ensued centered around a single machine gun emplacement manned by Fred Hems and W.E. "Red" Nash. It was in this fire fight that George Company suffered its final KIA of the northern campaign. Fred Hems describes the action that night in this way:

(When we arrived) the ground was frozen and snow-covered. Sgt. Garcia told me to set up my machine gun in an existing foxhole the best we could. The hole was not very big, and Nash was over six feet tall.

Later that night I was concerned that my gun would not fire when needed. Ever so often, I ejected a round of ammo, hopefully to prevent it from freezing up.

It was snowing, I believe. We were cold, tired and exhausted. Unable to sleep for so long a period, Nash said, "Fred, I just can't stay awake." I said, "Nash, I know. I will try to keep my eyes open." I also said, "Nash, remember we are in the forwardmost position. If they come and we are asleep, they will kill us first." (Despite the dangerous situation), we both fell asleep.

About 4:00 a.m. or so (12/10/50) I was alerted by someone shouting that the enemy was walking through our lines. I immediately became wide-awake and saw Chinese soldiers walking around our foxhole. I shook Nash and told him to wake up that our position was being overrun. Nash was a hard person to wake up. Being cold and utterly exhausted made it even harder to make him realize what was happening. I immediately started firing my machine gun. I could see enough in front of me to see that many of the enemy were dropping to the ground. Some were so close I would reach out and touch them. (The next day) there was an estimated 50 or so dead in the first 5 to 15 yards in front of us.

Nash was firing his carbine at them. We were being fired on in our front and his left flank. Nash asked me if I had any hand grenades. I replied that I had two. He threw them. He asked me for my carbine after exhausting his supply of ammunition for his. Mine had 2 loaded banana clips. That was the last time he talked to me.

Shortly after I gave him my carbine, an illuminating flare lit up the whole area around us. Even though it was snowing, I could clearly see the enemy I had killed. I could also see 20 or more running for cover. I saw all this as I was ducking in the foxhole until the flare went out.

After the flare went out, I stood up and started firing my machine gun again. To the right of me, 10 feet or so, I saw that someone was moving. I thought it might have been one of our men. Because Nash had been given our sector of fire earlier that night, I turned around to ask him how far I would fire to the right. Nash was bent over. I thought he had fallen asleep again. I don't know why I thought that, but I did. Not receiving an answer from Nash, I, in a split second, fired on that moving person,

whoever he was. I found out later that he was one of the enemy. I turned around again to give Nash "hell" for falling asleep. As soon as I touched him, I knew he was dead. I could not believe he died without uttering a sound. I had tried earlier to convince him to get out of his sleeping bag, but he never did. He died in his bag with my carbine in his hand. Three rounds were left in this carbine when we checked it at daybreak.

I remember looking at my watch when the flare went up. My watch read 4:20 a.m. Nash died, I would say, about 15 minutes after we were attacked. Attacked? I attacked them. I believe they did not know we were there, and we did not know they were there until someone shouted that the enemy was passing through our lines.

I called to Sgt. Garcia to send me another assistant. I continued to fire my machine gun as I was still being fired upon. It was about a half an hour before my new assistant came over. Alone, I fired low to ground level and up to where I thought the enemies' midsection would be.

When the replacement for Nash came over (PFC Harry Hobbs), he had no gloves on and his hands were frozen. I said, "Where the hell are your gloves?" He said, "I took them off and can't find them." I quickly took the gloves from Nash's body. Even though it was hard to get them off, I somehow managed to do so. I helped him to put them on and gave him the outer pair and sent him back to tell Sgt. Garcia to send someone else over.

The next assistant gunner sent by Sgt. Garcia was PFC Tom Powers. Tom also was well over six feet and the body of Red Nash had to be moved out of the hole in order to give some protection to Hems and Powers. Powers offers substantial support for Hem's previous account of events.

(Garcia) told me to join Fred Hems and be his assistant gunner. (After I arrived), the firing continued until it got light. It was estimated that our gun had killed about 250 Chinese. I don't remember any mortar fire that night and I don't believe mortar fire could be a factor because the dead Chinese were only inches from our gun. You could "reach out and touch someone." One Chinese soldier was kneeling just in front of the gun and had been hit just as he was pulling the string on a potato masher that hadn't gone off. All around the parapet there were many more.

Once the last elements of the Division passed Objective A, George Company returned to the road to serve as part of the rear guard. Because the 1st Division always seized the high ground in the Chosin withdrawal, George did not have to worry about massive opposition from either flank. However, directly north of the Company (i.e., the road leading out of Koto-ri) the action was often fast and furious. PFC Tom Powers describes the sometimes desperate rear guard struggle in this way:

We were put on the last tank in line; behind us were refugees. The Chinese were firing at the refugees, trying to drive them among us. Our job was to protect the tank, and the tank was to destroy any trucks or equipment left behind; this was being done by the tank's 90mm gun. Before we knew what happened, there were Korean

civilians and Chinese soldiers all around us. (They were swarming over us), and we were fighting them off hand to hand. One Chinese soldier came around the tank where I was standing, and I shot him in the face with my 45. Another jumped on my back, and I wrestled him to the ground. I had him by the throat when word came down to get aboard the tank. I jumped up and put my hands around the 90 to pull myself up on the engine compartment. The 90 had been facing the rear to knock out the equipment left behind. "BOOM!" Just as I was getting on the tank, a crewman fired the 90. The blast knocked me out and from what I was told later, if the guys on the tank from the 3rd platoon had not grabbed me, I'd be still up in the Reservoir. When I finally came to, I could not see and probably because I'd been hit in the back by a grenade, everything was white. I could not see a thing. They put me inside the tank until my eyesight came back.

I've seen that Chinese soldier I shot in the face the rest of my days. When I pulled the trigger, the gun was right in his nose. It was wild; people were shooting all over; refugees and Chinese soldiers were everywhere. How we got out of there still amazes me!

When George Company reached the Funchilin Pass and was directly below Hill 1081 that Able Company of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines had secured but two days before at a cost of 112 killed and wounded, its Divisional rear guard responsibility was passed to the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. There was still a grueling march to be made before transportation could carry the weary Marines to Hungnam, but the worse was over. It must have been quite a sight for the soldiers of the U.S. Army's Third Division to see bloody and battered George Company Marines, many of them walking on painfully swollen and frost bitten feet, pass through their lines. Otto Olson can still recall the troops on that "downhill" march:

(To the relatively fresh and untested soldiers of the 3rd Division), we might have looked more like a "rag-tag" mob than a Marine unit, as none of us had had any real rest for over a week. (During the last 12 or 13 days) we had not been able to wash, let alone shave. Our faces and hands were darkened by smoke from what fires we had been able to start. All of us had frost bitten fingers and toes of one degree or another. One sergeant did not have shoe pacs on and to keep his feet warm he had wrapped a large number of layers of burlap gunny sacking over his boon dockers. Our sleeping bags were also carried in various fashions, some rolled lengthwise and tied over our shoulders like a Civil War blanket roll, while others were bundled under packs. Some Marines had blankets thrown over them like old ladies covered by shawls. No matter how we looked, we were still a fighting unit and "attacking in a different direction."

Unquestionably, George Company Marines looked battered, but certainly not beaten. They had taken all that the Chinese could deliver, and for every blow they had received, they returned several more to the enemy. Even though they were numb from the freezing temperatures and physically exhausted by their ordeal, somewhere deep in their guts they knew they had proven themselves in a battle that would go down as one of the shining moments in the

history of the United States Marine Corps. The thoughts of many men went back to November 29th. While the 8th Army was in a chaotic retreat to the south, they were attacking the enemy, driving northward in order to help save the 5th and 7th Marines. Thoughts also lingered on the five days and nights on East Hill when the thin line of George Company Marines prevented the enemy from swarming down East Hill and causing havoc with support troops in the village of Hagaru. During those long nights on East Hill the combat effective and many of the wounded simply stayed in their positions, refused to panic and stalemated a numerically superior enemy. Thoughts also flashed back to the lonely positions near the Hagaru runway and the mountain mass just south of Koto-ri and to the fact that they were part of the last infantry unit to reach the safety of the Hamhung-Hungnam perimeter.

And so at daybreak on December 11, 1950, the men of George Company passed their regimental commander, the legendary "Chesty" Puller, who stood at the side of the road watching with pride as his line units passed by. PFC Tom Powers recalled how the sight of Colonel Puller "made me feel great (and that) backs got straightened and steps became smarter. Only in the movies? No sir! We were MARINES!"



Colonel Lewis "Chesty" Puller, USMC
Regimental Commander 1st Marines





George Company, Third Battalion, First Marine Regiment

Summary of Casualty List for 29 Nov. 1950 to 10 Dec. 1950

On eve of battle, George Company consisted of:

227 Officers and Enlisted Men

4 Navy corpsmen

21 Enlisted Men were Killed in Action (KIA)

53 Officers and Enlisted Men were Wounded in Action and evacuated (WIA)

33 Officers and Enlisted Men were wounded in action, but returned to duty within a few days

54 Officers and Enlisted Men were evacuated as non combat casualties — primarily frostbite

87 Officers and Enlisted Men were still on roster on December 31, 1950

(NOTE: Above numbers do not add up to the original of 227 men. Even though the statistics are based on official USMC documents, all numbers beyond the KIA's are, at best, approximations. Events in North Korea were too fluid to expect 100% accuracy. For example, I found men who were finally dropped from the Company roster on February 28, 1951 who had actually left the Company at Hagaru in December.)

Post Script

In the month of March 1951

3 veterans of the Chosin Reservoir campaign were killed in action

1 veteran of the Chosin Reservoir campaign was killed in a truck accident

17 veterans of the Chosin Reservoir campaign were wounded in action

I am absolutely certain that an examination of unit diaries for April, May, June, July, August, September, and October will show additional casualties for the men who served in North Korea. By November of 1951 the Marine Corps rotated home all men who had served in North Korea in the winter of 1950.

Jim Byrne
Pvt. USMCR



Company Roster - November 30, 1950

Rank and Name	Casualty List 11/29 to 12/10	After Battle Report
2nd Lt. James Crutchfield	WIA	Wounds required evacuation to Japan on 12/6/50.
1st Lt. Carl Dennis	WIA	Evacuated to Division hospital on 12/3/50 and to Japan on 12/31/50.
1st Lt. Frederick Goff	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. WIA again on 3/16/51 and evacuated.
2nd Lt. Frederick Hopkins		Transferred to H & S Company on 2/24/51. Returned to States shortly thereafter.
1st Lt. John Jaeger	WIA	To Division hospital on 1/10/51. To Japan on 12/5/50. Awarded Silver Star for service in North Korea.
1st Lt. Charles Merrill	WIA	Wounds required evacuation to Japan on 12/5/50.
Capt. Carl Sitter	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. Returned to States on 2/24/51. Recipient of Medal of Honor for 29-30 November.
Pfc. Cleopha Albert	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50. Returned to duty on 2/16/51. To Battalion on 4/7/51. Rotated to States.
Cpl. James Allen	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. Conatantio Arena	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50.
Cp. Charles Arnold	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Pfc. Kenneth Aul	WIA	Rotated home on 3/3/51.
Cpl. Joseph Babka	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Cpl. Leo Bayard	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pf. Joseph Bell		Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50. Returned to duty on 2/16/51. WIA on 4/23/51 on hill 902. Evacuated to Japan and States.
Pfc. Charles Beman	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50. Recipient of Bronze Star for action on Telegraph Hill, Koto-ri, North Korea.
Cpl. Kenneth Berry		
Cpl. Jaspar Boggan		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. Frank Bove	WIA	Wounds did not require evacuation. Returned to duty on 12/7/50. To Division hospital on 1/10/51. Evacuated to Japan on 1/21/51.
Cpl. Raymond Bowers	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 as part of Task Force Drysdale.
Pvt. Warren Bowling	KIA	KIA on 11/30/50 on East Hill.
Pfc. Raymond Brenkamp	WIA	Evacuated to Division hospital on 12/1/50 and to Japan on 12/15/50.
Sgt. James Brown	WIA	Wounds did not require evacuation. On 1/30/51 evacuated to Japan.
Pfc. Robert Brown		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. Edward Burke	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50. Returned to duty on 2/1/51. WIA on 3/11/51.
Pvt. James Byrne	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50. Returned to duty on 3/3/51. WIA on 6/6/51. Rotated to States under USMC policy of ending tour of duty after second hospitalized wound.
Sgt. Colonel Campbell		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50. Returned to duty on 2/16/51.
Pfc. Edwin Cannon		To Division hospital on 12/1/50. Evacuated to Japan on 12/9/50.
Pfc. Alfonso Carrano	WIA	Wounds did not require evacuation. WIA on 4/24/51. Evacuated to Japan.
Pfc. Stanley Checki	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. DOW as a result of truck accident in Central Korea in Spring of 1951.

Rank and Name	Casualty List 11/29 to 12/10	After Battle Report
S/Sgt. John Collier		Awarded Bronze Star medal w/V for service in N.K.
Sgt. Charles Collins	WIA	Wounds did not require evacuation. Returned to States on 2/16/51. Awarded Bronze Star w/V for service in Seoul.
Cpl. John Cortez		To Division hospital on 1/10/51. Evacuated to Japan on 1/19/51.
Pfc. Eugene Covert		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.
Pvt. Ollie Cowart	WIA	Wounds did not require evacuation. WIA again on 3/2/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Pvt. Harry Cowart		Evacuated to Japan on 12/12/50.
Pfc. Richard Crandall	WIA	Evacuated to Division hospital on 11/30/50. Returned to duty on 12/3/50.
Pfc. George Crawford		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.
Cpl. Ray Crowell		Transferred to H & S Co. 5/15/51.
Cpl. Odie Crumpler	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. Daniel Dalier	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 as part of Task Force Drysdale.
Pfc. Jack Daniels		WIA on 4/24/51. Evacuated. Returned to duty 5/11/51.
Cpl. Thomas Davis		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Cpl. Kenneth Deaton		To Division hospital on 1/13/51. Evacuated to Japan on 3/14/51.
S/Sgt. Jack DeLoach		Awarded Gold Star in lieu of second Bronze Star medal. Rotated to States on 2/16/51.
Cpl. Lawrence Delplato	WIA	Wounds did not require evacuation.
Cpl. Dominick Devito	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50. Returned to duty on 2/16/51. WIA again on 3/2/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Pvt. Arnold Diaz		
Pfc. Woodrow Dicken		
Pfc. Andrew Dirga	WIA	Wounds did not require evacuation.
Pfc. Joseph Dobrenich		
Pfc. Cornelius Donovan	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Sgt. Jeff Doolittle		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Cpl. Duren Dornian	WIA	Returned to duty on 12/19/50. WIA again on 3/2/51. Evacuated to Japan on 3/20/51.
Pfc. William Driskill	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 as part of Task Force Drysdale.
Pfc. Benedict Duke	WIA	Returned to duty on 12/7/50.
Sgt. Peter Dusanowsky		
Cpl. Orace Edwards		Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Sgt. Ralf Edwards		Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50.
Cpl. Stanley Emerson		To Division hospital on 11/30/50. Returned to duty on 1/3/51.
Cpl. Thomas Enos		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. William Epperson		Evacuated to Japan on 12/12/50.
Pfc. Robert Falcon		
Pfc. Bruce Farr		WIA on Central Front on 3/2/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Cp. John Farry		WIA on Central Front on 3/2/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Pvt. Joe Faulk	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. WIA on 4/24/51. Evacuated.
Cpl. Leonard Fedie		Awarded Bronze Star w/V for N.K. service.
Pfc. James Feemster		Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Cpl. Bruno Franchetti		Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50.

**Casualty List
11/29 to 12/10 After Battle Report**

Rank and Name

S/Sgt. John Fritts		Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Sgt. James Fry	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. Arthur Fulgenzi	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. Fred Fullerton	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. John Fury		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.
Pvt. Joseph Galkin		Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50.
Pfc. Francis Gall		
Sgt. Fred Garcia		Emergency leave to States on 2/27/51.
Cpl. Milton Geno		Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. Clair Gochnaur		WIA on Central Front on 3/2/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Pfc. Merton Goodeagle		Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50.
Cpl. James Grant	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50. Returned to duty of 1/24/51.
Pfc. William Green	KIA	KIA on East Hill, Hagaru, North Korea.
Cpl. Richard Haller		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.
Sgt. James Hancock		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. Robert Harbula		Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50. Returned to duty on 1/27/51.
Pfc. Ellsworth Hems		WIA on Central Front on 3/3/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Pfc. Fred Hems		Awarded Letter of Commendation just South of Koto-ri for action of 12/10/50. Rotated to States on 3/25/51.
Cpl. Donald Henderson		Awarded Letter of Commendation w/v for action in North Korea. KIA on Central Front on 3/2/51.
Pvt. Robert Henderson	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50.
Cpl. William Herold	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Cpl. Allan Hoagland	KIA	KIA on East Hill, Hagaru, North Korea.
Pfc. Harry Hobbs	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50.
Pfc. Robert Hallawell	KIA	KIA on East Hill, Hagaru, North Korea.
Pfc. Richard Hock	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/6/50.
Cpl. Bobby Holloway	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. Awarded Bronze Star for action adjacent to air strip at Hagaru. Rotated to States on 3/3/51.
Pfc. Milton Howe	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. WIA again on 3/2/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Pfc. Francis Jablonski		
T/Sgt. Lawson Jenkins	WIA	Evacuated to Division hospital on 11/29/50.
Pfc. Kent Jensen	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. James Johnson		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Cpl. Donald Jones	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12.12.50.
Cpl. Raymond Jones		
Sgt. Robert Jones		
Sgt. Thomas Jones		To Division hospital on 12/1/50. Returned to duty on 1/15/51. To Division hospital on 2/19/51. Returned to States 3/22/51.
Pfc. Anthony Jursa		Awarded Letter of Commendation w/v for service in North Korea. Rotated to States on 2/16/51.
Pfc. Louis Kahrer	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50.
Pfc. William Kane	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/9/50.
Pfc. Robert Keef		To sick bay on 11/29/50. Returned to duty on 12/6/50. Evacuated to Japan on 12/14/50.
Sgt. Robert Keiter	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.

Rank and Name	Casualty List 11/29 to 12/10	After Battle Report
Pfc. Laurence Kelley		WIA on 3/2/51.
Sgt. Vernon Kent		
Pfc. Walter Kiefer	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. Awarded Bronze Star for service in N.K. Emergency leave to States on 12/31/50. Transferred to Stateside duty while on leave on 2/14/51
Pfc. Robert Kirk		Evacuated to Japan on 12/10/50. Returned to duty on 1/27/51.
Pfc. Duane Knapp	WIA	Wounds did not require evacuation.
Pfc. Donald Kohler		WIA on 3/2/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Pfc. Fabian Kotara	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 as part of Task Force Drysdale.
Pfc. Edgar Lafleshe	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. WIA again on 3/23/51. Returned to duty on 3/24/51.
Sgt. Nathan Langford		WIA on 3/11/51. No evacuation required.
Pfc. Thomas Lesser		Reported UA 12/30/50.
Cpl. Nelson Longley		Evacuated to Japan on 12/14/50.
Pfc. Phillip Loughlin	WIA	Wounded while searching for aid for Company 1st Sgt. Rocco Zullo. Wounds left him a paraplegic. He is now deceased.
Pfc. Bobby Lybarger		Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Pfc. William Lynch		
Pfc. Joe Macchiarole		Transferred to 1st Provisional Casual Co. 12/5/50.
Pfc. Tony Macchiarole		Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. John Mainor	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 11/30/50.
Pfc. James Malone		Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Pfc. William Manning	KIA	KIA on East Hill, Hagaru, North Korea.
Pfc. Amar Marks		KIA in Central Korea on 3/2/51.
Cpl. David Martinez		Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Pfc. Joe Mazuca	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50.
Pfc. Archie McClendon		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.
Sgt. Jerry McDonald	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. William McDonald		Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Sgt. Dale McGregor	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 as part of Task Force Drysdale.
Pfc. Dale McKenna	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. Returned to States on 2/16/51.
Pfc. Francis McNeive	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. Returned to States, June 1951.
Pfc. Alfred Melancon		
Pfc. Robert Miller	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. WIA again on 3/23/51.
Cpl. James Mills	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50/ Returned to duty on 2/16/51. Transferred to H & S on 3/25/51 for rotation to States.
Pfc. Raymond Mitchell	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50.
Cpl. Frank Moore	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation.
Pfc. Calvin Morrill	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50.
Pfc. James Mueller		
Cpl. Melvin Munnings		
Pfc. W.E. Red Nash	KIA	KIA on 12/10/50 just south of Koto-ri. Awarded Bronze Star posthumously. His death was the last KIA for George Company in North Korea.

<u>Rank and Name</u>	<u>Casualty List 11/29 to 12/10</u>	<u>After Battle Report</u>
Pfc. Gordon Nelson	WIA	Wounded a second time while in hospital tent waiting for air evacuation. To Japan on 12/2/50.
Pfc. Richard O'Brien	WIA	Captured by Chinese a mile or two north of Koto-ri. Escaped a day or two later and made his way to friendly lines. To Japan on 12/7/50.
Pfc. Stephen Olmstead		Returned to States on 3/30/51 to enroll in USMC Officers Training Program. Present rank is Lieutenant General, USMC.
Pfc. Otto Olson		"Mr. First Platoon" served continually with G-3-1 longer than any man who served the company during the Korean War. His tour extended beyond one year.
Cpl. Jack Orebaugh		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.
Cpl. Mark Parkin		
Cpl. G. "Peepsight" Pendas	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50. Awarded Bronze Star w/V for Seoul.
Pfc. David Penrose		Evacuated to Japan on 12/14/50.
Sgt. Don Perry		Transferred to States on 12/13/50.
Sgt. Steve Pickereil		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. James Pickett	KIA	KIA on 12/1/50 while serving with 2nd platoon on East Hill, Hagaru, North Korea.
Pfc. Donald Pierce		Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50.
Pvt. John Pirola	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50. Returned to duty on 2/23/50.
Pfc. Thomas Powers	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. To Division hospital on 3/16/51. Returned to duty on 3/23/51.
Pfc. Paul Price	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Cpl. Jack Prince	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.
Pfc. Wallace Proksel		Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50.
Pfc. Robert Rametta	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. Lindy Raphiel		KIA on Central Front on 3/2/51.
Pfc. Allen Rasmussen	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 as part of Task Force Drysdale.
Pfc. Louis Reina		Evacuated to Japan on 12/13/50.
Cpl. Max Reynolds		
Pfc. Joseph Rice	KIA	KIA on East Hill, Hagaru, North Korea.
Pfc. Thomas Richards	WIA	WIA on 11/30/50. Returned to duty on 12/10/50. Evacuated to Japan on 1/2/51.
Cpl. Charles Richmond		Evacuated to Japan on 12/8/50.
Pfc. John Roach	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. Arthur H. Roberts	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. James Robideau		WIA on 3/2/51. Returned to duty on 3/5/51. WIA again on 6/6/51. Rotated to States under USMC policy of ending tour of duty after second hospitalized wound.
Pfc. Paul Roose		Transferred to H & S Co. on 5/15/51.
Pfc. Baldy Ryals		Evacuated to Japan on 12/15/51.
Pfc. Donald Ryder		Evacuated to Japan on 12/10/50.
Cpl. Joseph Sagan	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation.
Pfc. Samuel Sage	KIA	Pfc. Sage joined G-3-1 from 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines on 11/26/50, KIA on 12/7/50.
Pfc. Joseph Salerno		Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50. Returned to duty on 1/15/51.
Cpl. Martin Salg	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. To Division hospital on 3/5/51.

<u>Rank and Name</u>	<u>Casualty List 11/29 to 12/10</u>	<u>After Battle Report</u>
Pfc. Albert Scheaffer		
Pfc. Leonard Semski		Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. Haskell Shalley		Joined G-3-1 on 12/1/50. Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50.
Pfc. Fred Smith	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation.
Pfc. Kenneth Smith		Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. Leon Snope		Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Sgt. Edward Speck		To Division hospital on 12/1/50. Returned to duty on 12/22/50.
Pfc. William Spicer	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. Carl Stewart	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/7/50
Pfc. Harvey Stoker		WIA on 3/2/51 and evacuated to Japan.
Pfc. Leroy Storey	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 as part of Task Force Drysdale.
Cpl. Edward Strater	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/4/50.
Pfc. George Sullivan		WIA on 6/6/51. Evacuated.
T/Sgt. James Sweeney		Awarded Letter of Commendation w/v for service in North Korea. Transferred to States on 2/7/51.
Pfc. Donald Taylor	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50.
S/Sgt. Gerald Tillman	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 on Telegraph Hill, Koto-ri, North Korea. Awarded Silver Star for Seoul.
Cpl. Edward Timer		Joined G-3-1 on 12/1/50. WIA on 3/13/51 on Central Front. Wounds did not require evacuation.
Cpl. Joseph Tomcala		
Cpl. John Torci		Transferred to H & S Co. on 3/25/51. (This was SOP for those about to be rotated to States.)
Pfc. Luke Trosclair	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation.
Sgt. Fred Turner	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. Awarded Bronze Star medal for service in North Korea.
Pfc. Robert Turner		
Pfc. Douglas Underwood	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. Transferred to H & S Co. on 3/25/51 in preparation for rotation to States.
Pfc. Thomas Vallee		
Pfc. Louis Venuto		
Cpl. Donald Ward		Evacuated to Japan on 12/14/50.
Pfc. Peter Wasylczak		Evacuated to Japan on 12/12/50.
Pfc. Given Webster		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50. Returned to duty on 2/3/51. Rotated to States on 3/3/51.
Cpl. Oscar Weeks	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50.
Pfc. Gerald Weisbaum	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation. To Division hospital on 2/9/51. Returned to duty on 3/2/51. Transferred to H & S on 3/25/51 in preparation for rotation to States.
Sgt. Richard Whidden	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50. Returned to duty on 3/3/51.
Pfc. J.W. Whitehurst	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50. Returned to duty on 1/15/51. Transferred to H & S Co. on 3/25/51 in preparation for rotation to States.
Pfc. Ralph Whitney	KIA	KIA on 11/29/50 as part of Task Force Drysdale.
Pfc. Donald Wiebort		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.
Pfc. Donald Williams	KIA	KIA on 11/30/50 on East Hill, Hagaru, North Korea.
Pfc. Lloyd Williams	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/8/50.
Sgt. Tommie Williams	KIA	KIA on 11/30/50 on East Hill, Hagaru, North Korea.
Cpl. Maurice Wilmoth		Evacuated to Japan on 12/2/50.

Rank and Name	Casualty List 11/29 to 12/10	After Battle Report
T/Sgt. Harold Wilson	WIA	Returned to duty on 12/9/50. Recipient of Medal of Honor for service on Central Front (Hill 902) on April 23, 1951.
Pfc. Richard Woernle		Evacuated to Japan on 12/9/50. Returned to duty on 2/3/51. Rotated to States on 3/3/51.
Pfc. Thomas Woolcock	KIA	KIA on 11/30/50 on East Hill, Hagaru-ri, North Korea.
Cpl. John Wren		
Sgt. Ronald Wyman		WIA on 6/6/51. Returned to States June 1951.
Pfc. Donald Young		Transferred to H & S Co. 5/15/51.
Sgt. William Young	WIA	Wounds in N.K. did not require evacuation.
Cpl. Wilfred Ziganti		Evacuated to Japan on 12/5/50.
M/Sgt. Rocco Zullo	WIA	Evacuated to Japan on 12/3/50. Awarded Navy Cross.
HM 3 David Anderson		Awarded Bronze Star medal for Inchon, Seoul.
HM 3 Herman Castle	WIA	Returned to States on 2/10/51.
HM 3 Daniel Clark		Evacuated to Japan on 12.3.50.
HM 3 Ernest Hefley		

Editor's Note: These figures do not reflect non-battle casualties. As much as 58% of all casualties were frostbite with 75% of those to the feet from the obsolete crap known as "shoe pacs". Many today are still suffering from the after effects. During the second winter after the issuing of the "Mickey Mouse thermo boots", frostbite was a court-martial offense.

★ *Photo Album of Memories* ★



PHOTO COURTESY: DAVID DUNCAN DOUGLAS

MACHINE GUNNERS MARCH TO THE SEA

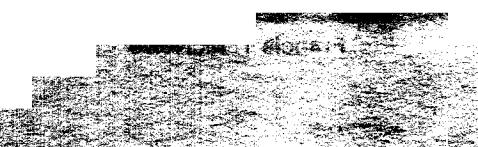
Left to Right: Tex, Mac, Pfc. Fred Hems, Pfc. Tom Powers. Sgt. F. Garcia (with carbine slung) — Only dead ride.



HEAVY MACHINE GUNNERS ATTACHED TO G-3-1
Pfc. C. T. Johnson, standing on rear right



EVER PRESENT "SCROUNGERS"





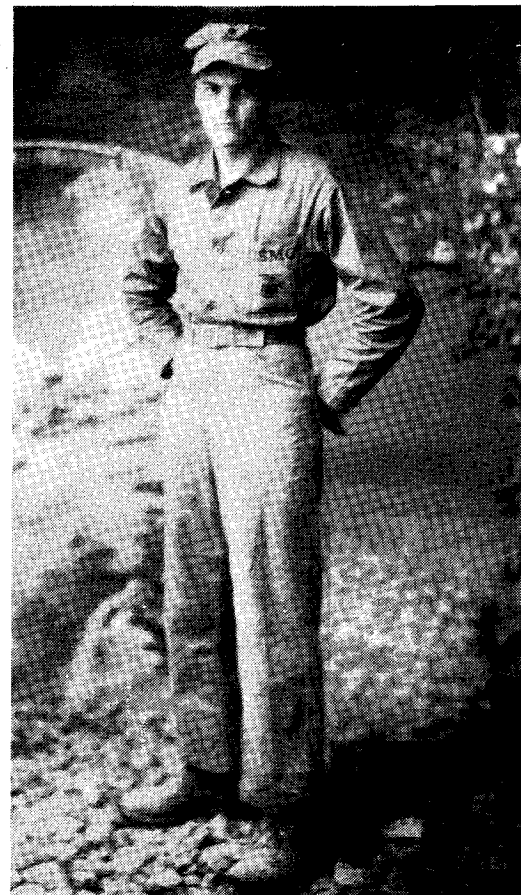
W.I.A. U.S. NAVAL HOSPITAL PETTY OFFICERS CLUB, YOKOSUKA, JAPAN — NEW YEAR'S EVE 1950
Left to Right: Pfc. Woerner, Pfc. "Pete" Wasylczak, Sgt. Rhoades, Cpl. Peepsight Pendas, Cpl. Dominic Devito



Capt. Sitter — Haircut



1st. Lt. John Jaeger



Pfc. Francis T. McNeive



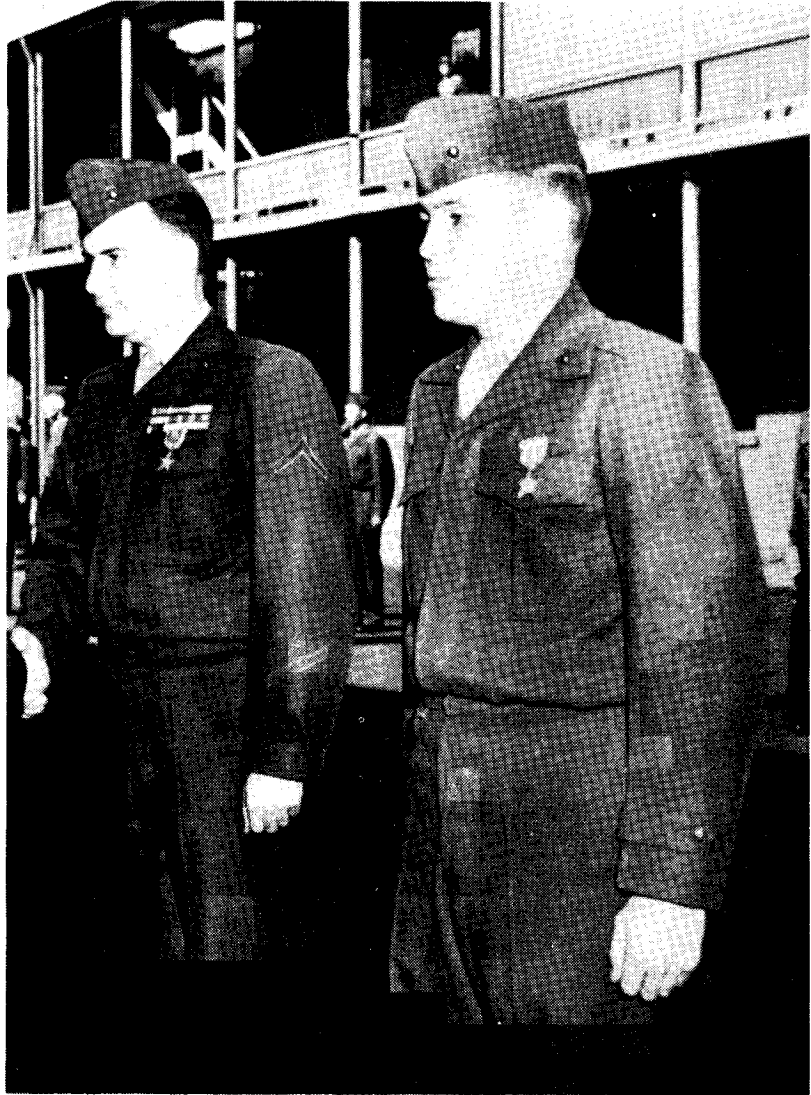
Technical Sgt. Harold Speedy Wilson (center, smoking),
(kneeling) Hospital Corpsman John "Doc" Leeson, Pfc. Edgar "Frenchy" LaFleshe



Pfc. Donald Taylor (kneeling)



Pfc. Frank Bove (L)
Pfc. G. "Hows By You" Weisbaum (R)



Pfc. John "Jack" Dunne with Silver Star on his right "Piper" Timmy Killeen (Brooklyn Navy Yard)



Pvt. R.T. Henderson



Pfc. A. Harrell Roberts



Left to Right: Pvt. G. "Jerry" Weisbaum, Pfc. Milton Howe with Heavy Machine Gunners, Sgt. Polliot, Pfc. Rizzo and Pfc. Lonirga



Pvt. Jim Byrne in Chinese Fox Hole (right)
Pvt. Dale Alstrom, Weapons Co. Attached



Sgt. Polliot (Heavy Machine Guns),
Pfc. Milton "Bud" Howe



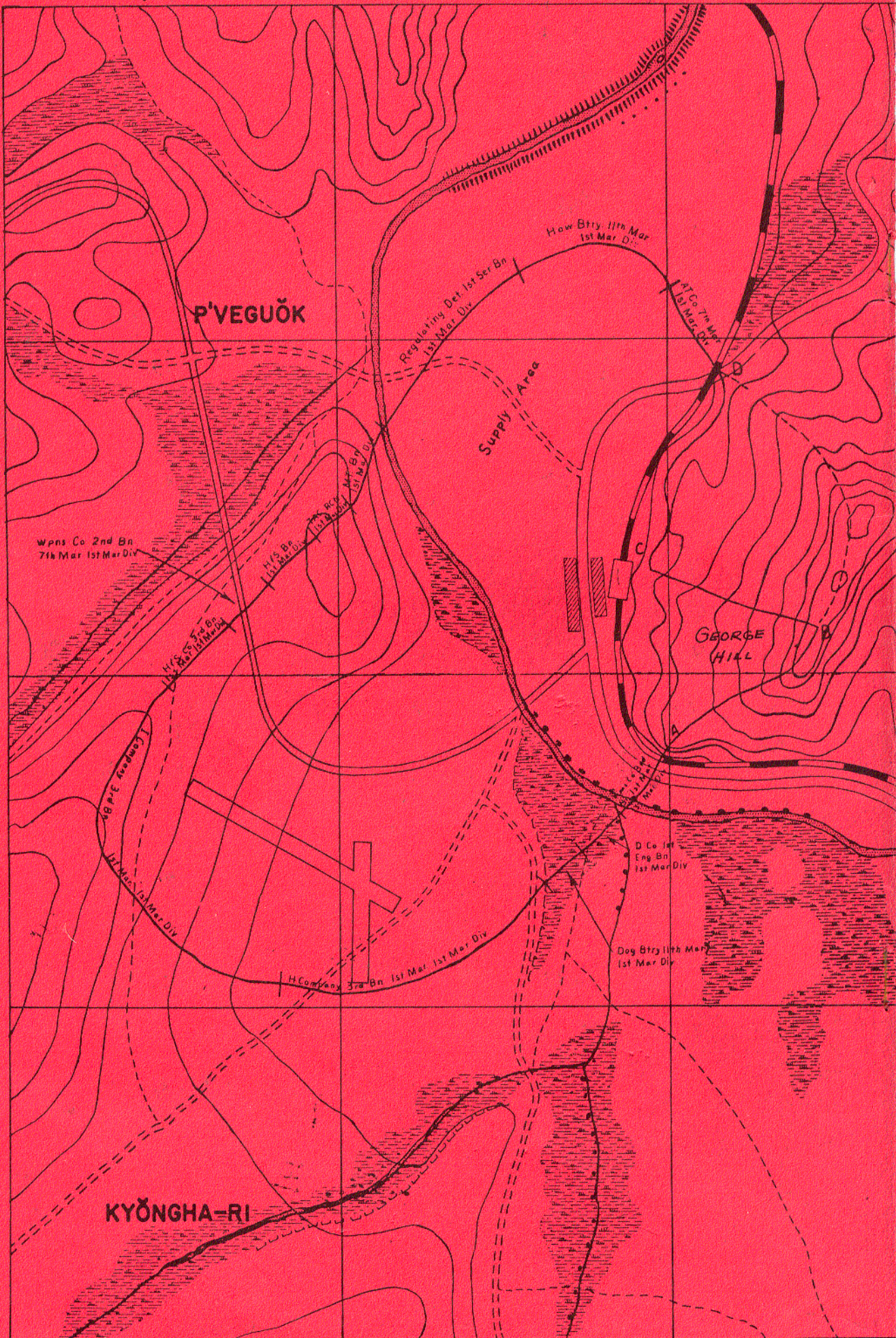
HAMHUNG

HAGARU-RI

SCALE 1/10,000

*Francis T. The Train
PFC 581417*

*Stens Olsonson
PFC G-13/1*



KYÖNGHA-RI