

# THE BATTLE REPORT

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AN ORAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

## THE KOREAN WAR BATTLE REPORT



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### INTRODUCTIONS/COMMENTS

Welcome to the first issue of the first volume of **THE BATTLE REPORT**. Based on the support we've gotten with very little advertising, we are sending this first issue to a large number of people who to date have never heard of us, in the hopes that they will find it informative, entertaining, and otherwise useful. Our hope is that we can build a sufficient subscription base that we can take advantage of the lower mail costs and maybe interest a few advertisers to spend a buck or two on a few ads for books, memorabilia, caps, shirts, all those things that most of us seem to buy in large quantity everytime we go to a convention; in general, things that will be of interest to our readers.

You will find that **THE BATTLE REPORT** will be devoted primarily to the Korean War, from June of 1950 through July of 1953, concentrating on Marine and naval operations, and covering those Army operations that affected the Marines, or wherein Marines and Army were jointly involved, such as on the Pusan Perimeter in August and at the Reservoir during the winter of 1950.

The format will be divided into five main sections, each dealing with one of the five campaigns that comprised the Korean War. So you will be able to read just the area that interests you, or digest the whole thing. Many things we have come upon that are interesting have been published in books that never got much circulation, some things were never published and come from the musty files of the Historical Branch, USMC.

We have some talented folks out there, poets and spinners of great stories. We will have a section

from time to time to deal with those subjects. so if you have any good tales to tell, send them in and we'll run them. If at all possible, please type them, otherwise I have to retype your handwriting. If you do send in handwritten material, PLEASE write so I can read it. I have spent time trying to decipher some handwriting that I conclude must come from doctors. We are using state of the art scanning equipment that just reads typed material right into the computer and that enables us to save a lot of time. And since I do this evenings and weekends, I much appreciate seeing typed material. But if your story is really good, I will retype it if you just can't get to a typewriter.

Also, keep in mind that we are interested in what has been commonly referred to as "Oral History." If what you read here recalls an incident, or if you recall it differently, send it in and we'll print it.

Subject matter that we are interested in includes current Veterans Administration actions affecting service connected disabilities, MediCare and Medicaid programs, special discounts to veterans and or senior citizens -- since I think we have all reached that magic threshold -- and anything you have done to solve a problem in these areas that would benefit others like yourself. Of course, the main purpose of the magazine is the history of the war, but we want to broaden it to cover everything that is of peculiar interest to the Korean Vet.

With that said, I will apologize for a late start. We intended to have this in the mail September 1st but the scanner hasn't gotten on line yet. I hope that we will be able to keep this thing timely.

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### CLOSE AIR SUPPORT: NAVY/MARINE VERSUS ARMY/AIR FORCE

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The seed of close air support, as practiced by the Navy and Marine Corps, was planted in the 1920's during Marine Corps action in Nicaragua, Haiti and Santo Domingo. In these Caribbean countries, airplanes and infantry functioned as a team for the first time in military history.

As an outgrowth of these primitive efforts, serious consideration was first given by Marine and naval planners in the mid-thirties for using the airplane in conjunction with the then-developing art of amphibious warfare to strengthen a weak link in the amphibious assault chain. At the vital moment when the first wave of Marines was charging across a hostile beach, naval gunfire had ceased and artillery was not yet ashore. Could not the fire-power of the airplane strengthen this critical period when an amphibious assault was at its most

delicate stage? Might not the guns and bombs of the airplane take the place of the artillery during the initial landing?

This simple need -- to contribute to the success of an amphibious assault -- was the genesis of the Navy-Marine system of close air support.

The actual Navy-Marine system of close air support was perfected during World War II. In the early days of the Pacific campaign, it was recognized that properly controlled air attacks would be a major asset, even a necessity, in the successful prosecution of an amphibious advance across the Pacific. Navy and Marine officials believed that airplanes could be a valuable supporting weapon to help ground troops advance against the Japanese.

The Navy-Marine doctrine of close air support had its battle test during the Tarawa campaign in November 1943. For the first time in combat, frontline units were accompanied by liaison parties whose main duty was to assist ground commanders in selecting suitable targets and in transmitting this target information and instructions for attack to the airplanes overhead. At Tarawa, also, liaison aircraft were flown by senior experienced aviators who were conversant with the ground plan, and who were in radio contact with the close air support airplanes.

Following Tarawa, the Navy-Marine system was further improved under fire at Iwo Jima. The final innovation, however, the direction of attack aircraft by frontline ground units, was not extensively used until the Battle of Okinawa, at which time sufficient portable radio communication equipment made air-ground communication reliable.

Thus, by the end of World War II, the Navy-Marine system of close air support had been fully developed and battle-tested. The Navy-Marine system had proved itself time and time again, at Guam, in the Phillipines, at Iwo Jima, and especially in Okinawa. Naval and Marine aircraft, under the control of foot soldiers, had learned to quickly and effectively deliver their bullets and bombs upon close targets (50 to 200 yards distant) directed by trained parties at the front lines.

This system was ready and available for use at the outbreak of the Korean War.

#### OBITUARIES:

#### **Jack Dulaney**

Orange County, California. Brother requested donations to 1st Marine Division Association Scholarship fund in his name. Jack and I served together in Able/5 60 mortars in the Brigade on the Pusan Perimeter.

## THE FIRST AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT:

I know that we Marines think we made the first amphibious landing in Korea, but the Army beat us to it at a place called Pohang. The story is recorded in an excellent book called *THE SEA WAR IN KOREA*, published by the Naval Institute. Commanders Malcolm Cagle and Frank Manson are the authors. The book was published in 1957. The following is excerpted from that book.

"By good fortune, on the day the North Koreans smashed across the 38th parallel, Rear Admiral James H. Doyle, USN, was ordering his Amphibious Group One ships to get under way from Yokosuka, Japan, to conduct amphibious training exercises with the embarked troops of the 35th Regimental Combat Team (25th Infantry Division) on Chigasaki Beach, Sagami-Wan.

"Thus, a program of amphibious familiarization for the Eighth Army troops had been begun in May. While the Army units were not thereby prepared or well trained, certain rudiments of the amphibious art had been transmitted. The brief training given to the Army units [by the Marines] would be of later value in the several amphibious landings in the next six months of the Korean War: Pohang, Inchon, Wonsan, Iwon and Hungnam.

"The rapid deterioration of the ground fighting in Korea made it apparent that. . . [a] landing site, one on the east coast, had to be found for the defense of the Pusan Perimeter. Doyle suggested Pohang as the most likely objective. This was accepted on 10 July."

On 18 July the 1st Cavalry Division made an unopposed landing at Pohang and within 48 hours were at the front.

#### **O.V. Middlekauff, Jr.**

Roanoke, Virginia. Survivors include wife, Adeline, daughter and two sons, Victor Middlekauff III, and Sgt. Gordon Middlekauff, USMC, Camp Lejeune, N.C. Vic was my assistant BAR man at the Reservoir.

#### **Walter Techtman,**

Levittown, Pennsylvania, survived by his wife and six children.

#### **MSgt. James P. Carey,**

Marietta, Georgia, survived by his wife.

#### **Maj. John McGuire,**

West Jefferson, North Carolina.

## IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD!

In the early morning hours of June 25th, 1950, the North Korean Army launched its invasion of the Republic of South Korea. Just months before that the American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, had announced that Korea was beyond the sphere of American strategic interests. It is possible that no one was more surprised at the American involvement than North Korea, and it is certain that no one was more surprised at the competence of the North Korean forces than America. At the outset the scuttlebutt was it wouldn't last over a month. That was almost the case, but with a different winner walking from the ring than the overconfident American military at first considered.

On June 29th President Truman authorized Gen. MacArthur to use certain supporting ground units in Korea, authorized the U.S. Air Force to conduct missions on specific military targets in North Korea and ordered a naval blockade of the entire Korean coast.

On July 7th the United Nations security council authorized the unified command in Korea to use the U.N. flag in the course of military operations in Korea and requested the United States to name the commander of the unified forces.

The North Korean attack came at the beginning of the monsoon season, a time of unremitting rains that turned the roads into quagmires. The nearest American troops were on occupation duty in Japan and were mere skeleton outlines of combat-ready forces. The great majority of these occupation forces were very young men, and combat experienced NCOs and officers were in short supply. There had been very little serious combat training for any of these men in Japan, and war materiel was in short supply and much of it aged beyond usefulness, as many were to learn later, when flares wouldn't light and misfires occurred with ammunition and grenades.

Within three days of the Communist attack the North

Koreans had seized Seoul, completely routing the poorly trained and poorly armed ROK forces. The South Korean ROK forces lacked tanks and antitank weapons. The Communists obviously felt that a swift assault against inferior forces would lead to a quick victory. They failed to reckon with the strong world opinion that voiced shock and indignation at this wanton act of aggression.

As has been the case throughout American history, we were ill prepared to fight a war. World War II had ended just five years previously and America was war weary and what had recently been the strongest military force in history was now but a ghost of its former power. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson had cut the military establishment down to bare bones, reducing the U.S. Marine Corps to 75,000 men. There existed only 12 American combat divisions, including two U.S. Marine

Corps divisions, and all except the 1st Infantry Division were considerably under strength, for the most part consisting of barely a regiment filling out a division. The 1st Infantry Division was in Europe, where America's major foreign policy concerns lay, a fear that this Korean War was a mere feint to draw us from Europe so that Stalin could launch an invasion of Western Europe.

There were four understrength divisions of the American 8th Army on occupation duty in Japan. From this thin line of troops a one-half battalion combat team was detached from the 21st Regiment of the 24th division, named Task Force Smith, and on July 2nd was airlifted into Korea. It engaged NK forces for the first time on July 5th in an area near the city of Osan. Two rifle companies, a battery of 105-mm howitzers, two 4.2-inch mortar platoons, a platoon of 75-mm recoilless rifles and six attached teams equipped with 2.36 Bazookas had held an entire NK division for seven hours. They destroyed five tanks and slowed the NK advance, but the tankless American troops, outgunned and badly outnumbered, were finally overrun. The survivors of Task force Smith were able to finally fight their way out of the impending encirclement, but American arms were humiliated, and many gallant men died giving it their best. It was but one of many tragic lessons in the cost of unpreparedness yet to come for the American Army.

After all, America possessed the Atomic Bomb and the popular opinion was that there would be no more infantry wars, it would all be done with missiles. America was prepared for global interchange of ballistic missiles, prepared for an Armageddon, but totally unprepared for a small, limited war against a small but well armed and well trained aggressor. We could deal with a pack of Grizzly bears but were unable to deal with a pack of dogs. Lessons unlearned in Korea came back to haunt America in Viet Nam.

From the North Korean perspective, giving the Devil his due, they perceived that South Korean President Syngman Rhee was busily stirring his nation to forcibly reunite the two Koreas. Rhee was constantly threatening the North with rhetoric, and cajoling his protector, the American government, to provide him with the wherewithal to invade the North.

The major reason that the American government failed to provide the South Koreans with a competent military force was due to Rhee's strident calls for invasion of the North. It was America's policy to give the North no reason to fear an invasion from the South.

It is possible that the North decided that since a war was inevitable in Korea, it would be better to strike while they were weak, before they would be able to carry out their threats.

It is certain that the Russian government authorized the strike against the South. It is very uncertain that the Chinese were either advised or

consulted in the matter. There was little love lost between the Chinese and Russian governments at the time. A fact we failed to take into consideration when we defeated the North Koreans and moved north of the 38th parallel.

China evinced little desire to aid the Russian/North Korean efforts, yet was quite hostile to any foreign occupation of North Korea, a border state, and especially in an area of great economic concern to China, the Chosin (Changjin), Hwachon and Fusen reservoirs of North Korea, a major electrical power source for both sides of the Chinese/Korean border.

American military forces came late to learn of the Chinese position, much to their grief. Stubborn egos determined that China would not enter the war, even in the face of many reports from the field of engagements with Chinese forces.

While Task Force Smith was trying to hold the line, other elements of the 24th Division were being readied for transport to Korea, soon joined by the 1st Cavalry Division, the 25th and the 7th Infantry Divisions from Japan. But keep in mind, these units were way under strength, and lacked in experienced personnel and training. No one was prepared for the suffocating heat and humidity of the Korean summer, with temperatures ranging to 120 degrees. Physical conditioning and lack of water discipline contributed greatly to the overall sad picture.

Lt.Gen. Walton Walker, the CG of the 8th Army, took command of all ground forces in Korea on July 12, just before the battle of Taejon. Taejon held until July 20th, and to that date constituted the most determined effort of American forces. It was during this battle that Gen. Dean was taken prisoner.

The North Koreans had placed nine well trained and manned divisions on line with an undetermined but numerous number in reserve. By July 29 the American command estimated that the NK had suffered 30,000 casualties. The Communists drafted every able bodied man in the areas they controlled and threw them into the battle.

By July 29 the perimeter was reduced to a 200 mile arc around Pusan and the enemy was within 55 miles of the port city. During the first week of August elements of the 2nd Infantry Division arrived, with the rest of the division arriving by mid August. The 5th RCT arrived from Hawaii and at about the same time the Fifth Marines, reinforced, reconstituted as the First Provisional Marine Brigade, arrived under the Command of BGen. Eddie Craig. The Brigade was made up of the 5th Marines, the 11th Marines and the 1st Marine Air Wing.

A little known story concerns the 1st Provisional Platoon, an element of the 1st Marine Division, stationed aboard the USS Juneau, an anti-aircraft cruiser in Yokosuka, Japan, at the outbreak of the war, made a raid on the NK coast line on 29 June, taking out a railroad tunnel. They

were assigned from the 1st Mar. Div. at Pendleton. They subsequently made raids on the east coast and disbanded in October and fitted in with other units. Lt. Richard Johnson commanding the other 1/2 of The Division Recon company on the USS Bass was making raids on the NK west coast.

The rest of this narrative will now primarily deal with the Marine Brigade and the hard-fought defense of the Naktong bulge, the battle for Kosong, Taedabok Pass, Changchon, Obong-ni Ridge, Masan, Miryang, The Bean Patch, and explain why the Marine Brigade was referred to as "The Fire Brigade," and respectfully referred to as "Yellow Legs" by the North Koreans.

The story of the Marine Brigade's action from August 7th, when they first met the Communist forces in combat, until September 5th, their last action as The First Provisional Marine Brigade, is as stirring a tale of Marine combat as any story told, from Guadacanal to Hue. On September 7th, 1950 the entire Brigade was in Pusan, loading out to join Puller's 1st Regiment and the formation of the 1st Marine Division, for the last major amphibious assault in Marine Corps history, the Inchon invasion. Then the 7th Marines arrived September 22nd, so finally the entire division is complete; then the assault and capture of Seoul, the landing at Wonsan, and the Chosin Reservoir campaign closes out the year 1950. 1952 and 1953 fill out the history of the First Marine Division's exploits during the Korean War.

I hope you stay with us to the end of the story, for it's only just begun.

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#### TIME ENOUGH?

Life passes by in little bites,  
One hardly notices the time;  
Hurried little fleeting sights,  
As life's hurdles we climb.

One day you awaken, as winter comes  
And the blooms have withered on the vine.  
Now 'tis too late, as the clock faster runs,  
To return to your dreams sublime.

Wisdom comes with age they say,  
Though the benefit's often wasted  
As your years pass like merely a day,  
You yearn for the days you barely tasted.

You who have yet a vibrant youth take heed of  
my words today,  
For your life may become a booth, with the  
sides closing in like clay.

You too will soon enough awaken to bones that  
ache and hair that's gray,  
Your dreams and hopes will be taken  
Unless you live each minute as your last day.

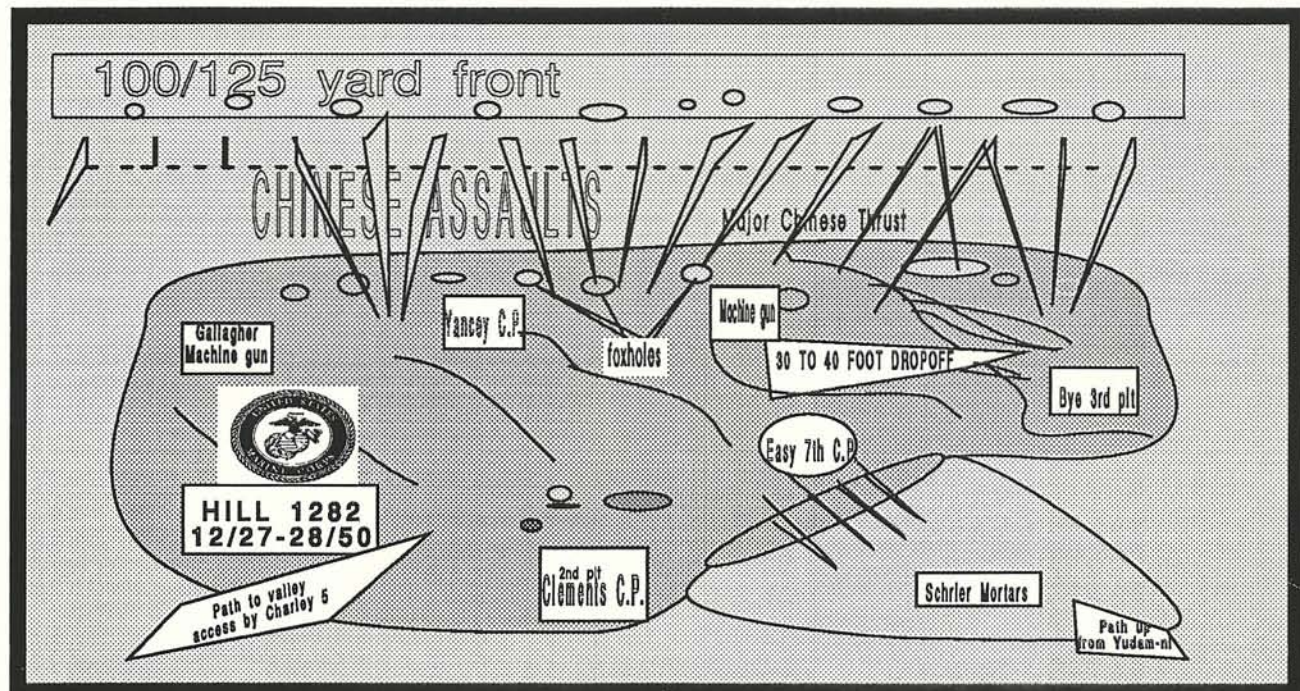
# HILL 1282 YUDAM-NI NOV. 27, 1950

John Yancey's Story

Easy Co. 7th Marines

The map below was drawn by me from the original as drawn by John Yancey. It will be helpful to refer to it from time to time as you read. And keep in mind that John was a sick man at the time of this interview and did not expect to live very long. His memory seemed

its thin edge all the way across. Looking at that jacket it is hard to understand how he managed to avoid being hit far more times than he was. He suffered three major wounds during the battle, one hitting the right cheekbone popped his right eye out of



sharp on most aspects of the battle up until the last hour he was on the hill. As we spoke he would wander off the subject at times, and he was going over this on tape as a favor to me. He showed me his battle jacket, which he still had, and I counted 57 bullet holes in it. He still had a copy of a letter from his wife dated September 15, 1950, announcing the birth of a baby. He had the letter in the upper left pocket of his jacket and a bullet had cut the letter on

its socket. You will read during his recounting of the battle where he talks about putting his eye back in the socket. He managed to retain the sight in the eye after he got to the hospital. One bullet took out a number of his teeth as it crossed from one side of his cheek to the other, then a piece of shrapnel from one of the Chinese grenades hit him in the roof of his mouth as he was yelling commands. All in all, a hell of a story.

RAY WALKER: We are recording, John, 30 minutes to a side, and I told Martin Russ I would get it as well as I could.

He told me he would like to get you and me and Charlie [Griffin] in a group.

I was hoping that Charlie could come, because Charlie was there and had so much -- just the way he expresses himself, he brings out a lot.

JOHN YANCEY: I have discussed with him, when you were here and when you weren't, about a situation on Hill 698. And of course he had a hell of a lot better view of it than I did, but I was leading the fucking charge up the sonofabithch, and, overall, he saw the damn thing better than I did. He told me stuff I didn't even know about, you know. But he and Clements came up with those 17 men, including Charlie. I thought, hell, that is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life, because it was in the -- right in the middle of a counterattack. I told them to take the right flank.

WALKER: That was 698.

YANCEY: Yeah. I never told Charlie, but I was on their ass.

When we went up on 1282 initially we were lacking the 3rd platoon because they had been held down in the perimeter around regimental headquarters. So initially, when we dug in up there we -- I took the front as a semi -- set up a perimeter on the north boundary and Clements went in on the rear. He was in support. We tied in with each other, just like in two semi circles. So when the 3rd platoon finally came up late in the afternoon --

WALKER: 3rd platoon, Sgt. Murphy and Lt. Bye?

YANCEY: Murphy was originally my platoon sergeant, but when the 3rd platoon leader got killed around Seoul and we got Bye in --

WALKER: Bye was --

YANCEY: Bye was green at the time and we didn't want to trust him with a platoon by himself, so I was more or less forced to act just on the practical side to give up Murphy, because he was the best NCO I had, and put him in with Bye so Bye could have -- would have some guidance as to what the hell was going on and to be able to handle the troops.

When Bye and Murphy finally came up on 1282, Lt. Ball and I discussed what we were going to do. So we strung them out in a single defense line close to the south, not over 12 foot apart.

In retrospect, what we should have done we should have moved my people up, and then down the hill, on to the north.

WALKER: To the enemy side?

YANCEY: Yes, we should have expanded the perimeter we had and we should have put those people behind my people, in support, and made the thing -- in other words, have the defense in-depth, rather than have it strung out.

I have fought that battle over many times in my head and I came to that same conclusion, we should have done that, had it in-depth rather than

strung out like they were on the right flank. Because when they penetrated us, they penetrated my right flank right in between the 2nd platoon and Bye, and that really --

WALKER: How far would you estimate you were at the time of the major assault from the C.P., and in what direction from Phillips and the C.P.?

YANCEY: 25 yards to my right rear.

WALKER: The C.P. was 25 yards to your right rear?

YANCEY: The C.P., yes.

WALKER: And from that C.P., where would you estimate that Murphy and Bye were?

YANCEY: They were strung out along that saddle and their left flank couldn't have been no more than 30, 40 yards from the top, from the peak of the hill.

WALKER: Where would you say they were from the C.P.?

YANCEY: Tell you what, turn that off a minute and I will get a piece of paper. Anyway, say this is the top of Hill 1282. That saddle left off to the right to 1240, which I forget the Captain's name that had it. But anyway, in general, I had this portion here. I had my people scattered out in two-man foxholes all the way across the front here. Now, I had a machinegun here, positioned so it could fire across the face of the 3rd platoon's position. In other words, it was in such a position that I could not get grazing fire. As close I could get grazing fire was to put the machinegun here, where it could fire across the face of the 3rd platoon and he could also fire back across this way.

WALKER: 3rd platoon was Murphy and Bye.

YANCEY: Yes, this was the 3rd platoon, here.

WALKER: They were out on this east -- to the east --

YANCEY: That's right, between 1282 and 1240.

WALKER: Was this a decline? This was a saddle?

YANCEY: This was -- here was the saddle and here was a kind of gully back down in here.

WALKER: So from where you were to where they were, there was a dip down into that saddle?

YANCEY: A very precipitous dip.

WALKER: They were underneath you by some number of feet.

YANCEY: Absolutely.

WALKER: How many feet do you think it was down that hill where they were? What would you say, if you were walking --

YANCEY: 30, 40 foot drop.

WALKER: All right.

YANCEY: The mortars were in a kind of declivity, kind of a low spot in here, kind of a sink, like somebody scooped it out.

WALKER: Behind you and just before you get down --

YANCEY: To the mortars, yes. Then the company C.P. was right in here, adjacent to the mortars. And my platoon was in this situation here,

with the machinegun there, on the left, Gallagher's team. He had the machinegun and he had it positioned where he could fire down that saddle, this saddle, because that was the logical place.

WALKER: Gallagher was on your far left flank.

YANCEY: That's correct.

WALKER: Do you recall who had the machinegun on the right flank?

YANCEY: I don't remember the guy's name, but I had him positioned here where he could fire down this thing here, and also --

WALKER: That "thing" there is the spur going out towards the Chinese position?

YANCEY: That's correct.

WALKER: Going north towards the Chinamen.

YANCEY: And he could also fire across here, kind of like the end of this here. But it was impossible, it was very difficult to get those guns where they could have maximum effect, that is, grazing fire, say, from four foot down to one foot, and that was a compromise was all that was.

WALKER: This dropped off pretty good in front of you there, didn't it? Right in here, from your line, was a pretty good drop?

YANCEY: Right. Right in here it dropped off I guess about 20 or 30 feet, just like it did here. Because when on the night of the 27th, I guess it was, when everything was quiet and they had everybody laying over on 50 percent watch, and when I heard this goddamn -- I was walking along behind here and I heard this terrible queer kind of a sound, and getting to thinking about it afterwards it sounded like a thousand men walking on Corn Flakes. And what it was, when -- I called back to the mortars here and I called back to the C.P. here and told Ray Ball, I said, "Ray, something funny going on. Throw me a couple flares." And they were right there talking to us, to the mortars, so they threw up a couple flares. I was here in this position at the time, and I looked down, out this way, and here was all of these fucking Chinamen in a row, and here --

WALKER: One row behind the other?

YANCEY: Yeah, about 20 yards, yes. Three goddamned lines of them.

WALKER: Well, this was down, looking down in front of you, just a 30 or 40 foot drop and out to the flats, getting ready to come up the hill?

YANCEY: But there was three lines of them stretched all the way as far as I could see, to the left and to the right. That is when this damn Chinese officer started hollering, "Thank God, nobody lives forever." So when I saw that, of course I yelled, "All stand steady and hold your fire. That damn Chinaman is mine." And when he got a little closer I cut loose on him with a couple bursts. I had an M-1 Carbine, automatic selector, you know. And about that time the shit hit the fan. The bugles started blowing and cymbals start clashing and they started following at a run.

So Clements was tied in on the rear, because in unknown circumstance like that, where it is

almost necessary, when you are isolated -- now the closest unit was way over the on the right, seven or 800 yards, Dog Company I believe it was, and in an isolated position like that, you need a perimeter all the way around to protect yourselves.

WALKER: You all were kind of sitting in like a Y there, with the tail of the Y going to the east towards 1240, that was Murphy and Bye, and you were on the top end or fork of the Y and Clements on the bottom fork of the Y.

YANCEY: Yeah, Clements' C.P. was somewhere in this vicinity here. I had a two-man foxhole dug right here. I had another one, another dug by a Chinaman, I presume -- I had a two-man foxhole dug right here. I had another one that was a bigger one, started by a Chinaman, I presume, right here, so that I would be, you know, as close as I could to all elements of the front. Initially, I was right in here.

Gallagher was here, and another guy I don't remember. But when the Chinamen made the breakthrough, Ray, they made it right in here, right in the juncture --

WALKER: Between you and 3rd platoon?

YANCEY: Right, and they knocked out my right machinegun there.

WALKER: Do you have any idea what time that was, approximately, when they knocked out the right machinegun? Was it about midnight?

YANCEY: Somewhere around that time.

WALKER: Because my memory is seeing a machinegunner shot down, a guy walking --

YANCEY: You were on the right flank so you saw the machinegunner knocked down had to be this one here. I had one more machinegun, I had it stationed in here to protect the left flank, because I didn't have enough men --

WALKER: That would be the top of what would be the south fork of the Y.

YANCEY: It wasn't on the level of the plateau at the top of the hill, it was down a little bit up here. Maybe a 10 foot difference between here and there, but it was here so he could protect the draw. The draw came up this way. I had -- I wanted to have that draw covered by men, riflemen or a machinegun, and I didn't have enough men to spare so I put the machinegun there.

WALKER: As I came up that hill, the way we came up, the platoon of Able 5th that came up, the left of the hill was to my left shoulder, as I came up.

YANCEY: There was another -- from here there was another little ridge come back down here, and this is more than like what you came up, this little ridge.

WALKER: Just below the 3rd platoon's position?

YANCEY: And there was low ground there, a declivity like this, between the ridge you came up on and the 3rd platoon. And for whatever reason, I don't know why they selected it, I had nothing to do with it, but down in kind of a little hollow place right here they set up the company tent and had a damn



field stove in the sonofabitch and had the First Sergeant and the company clerk there in the sonofabitch. We were sending the men down to it in kind of relays to get them warm because they had that damn stove in there. They had water and they were boiling this water and the kids would come up and fill their can of -- give their can of rations and they'd get a can that was already heated out.

WALKER: Charlie remembered the warming tents. I didn't have any recollection --

YANCEY: It was singular, one tent.

WALKER: I didn't have any recollection of a warming tent.

YANCEY: Well, later on, they -- the Chinamen set the tents on fire, or either that or their fire set it on fire, but the thing burnt, with all of the company records, right here.

So when they made this thing here, we organized the first counterattack. We were in a situation like this, across like this, and we lined the people up and we counterattacked in this direction, across here.

WALKER: Back towards the hilt of the Y?

YANCEY: Correct, that's it. Right across here. Shit, we didn't get 20 yards before I looked around and there wasn't a man still standing, except me. And right along in here I was all alone in the situation here, and the Chinamen came right in here, threw a hand grenade at me. I put up my hand and knocked it back, like that, and at the same time another Chinaman threw another hand grenade in here and the damn thing went off, and that is when I got the slug in the roof of my mouth. That thing must have blown me 20 foot, at least, and I came down against a damn rock on my left side.

WALKER: Blew you down and sort of off the hill?

YANCEY: Backwards, yeah, in the damn air. I had gone up to talk with Gallagher and he was low on ammunition and I got hold of some ammunition from the C.P. and carried it up there, myself, and gave it to Gallagher. I got shot the first time in here. I also told Gallagher it was his damn fault, you know.

WALKER: Where did that one hit you? This was before --

YANCEY: That went across here and went through the nose, like this. Kind of messed the nose up.

Gallagher was real proud of himself. He had -- the last Chinaman he killed fell right here. Another step he would have reached and touched the gun, but he had them sonsofabitches scattered out in kind of a fan shape from the muzzle of the gun. But the last Chinaman fell right under the muzzle of his gun. The night before he had killed I guess a dozen Chinamen right down in this area here.

You read the book where it was a Chinese officer with an alidade was -- never did understand what that was.

WALKER: It is a means of measuring off real estate. People use them to measure off distances

for a map.

YANCEY: I remember he had --

WALKER: Metes and bounds.

YANCEY: He had a clipboard, he had a compass on his watch. He had a tape measure in his pocket, vest, something. But I never did know what an alidade was.

WALKER: It gives metes and bounds on real estate. If you have a compass, he can take a reading and make a map from that, saying so many feet, so many degrees. It is used with a compass to make an accurate map.

YANCEY: So we went down there and took the stuff off of him, his papers, so that we could send it to intelligence, and we tore his insignia off of his collar, rank, and all of that shit, and took all of his papers out of his pocket, and whatever he had.

Without a doubt, Ray, what you people did, you came up this little ridge here, which is the way we approached 1282 when we first moved up, and the C.P. was here and the mortars here. The right flank machinegun was here. So -- the other machinegun was here so we could cut across here and cover this side to the north, which we knew logically was the avenue of approach. Then they would either come up this way or this way. So I had to compromise and put the gun down here, where he could fire down either side of this little hummock.

So actually what happened, they did, they came up this damn little saddle, and they also came up in this area. And I had this other machinegun to try to protect the left flank and the foreground. I've never been able to satisfactorily get in the mind as to where in the hell I should have put it to be more protective. Probably should have put the damn thing in the center here, but it was -- if I had done that, all of the fire would be plunging fire, which is the least effective of any type fire, with a machinegun. But it was a mistake anyway. There was another kind of a ridge came back down from the center.

WALKER: Off to the south, about the middle part of the south end of that Y.

YANCEY: That's right. So on the 3rd counter-attack I had come back around here and kept hollering for Clements, because his C.P. was in here. He came up and I was standing here. "Tell me where I'm needed," he said. I said, "Clem, give me a squad, quick. I have got to reinforce this left section near Gallagher's gun." And he hollered, "Sergeant, go with Yancey." And that's when the bullet hit in the vicinity of his helmet and he fell down right here.

WALKER: So you thought he was dead?

YANCEY: Well, yeah, when the bullet hit, the blood spurted and he dropped like a rock. So I took the squad that came up with him and at that time the penetration had been made, the penetration had already been made here. And I had them line up, kneeling down, firing in this direction.

WALKER: Sort of an oblique angle.

YANCEY: Oblique, that's right. Firing from

the kneeling position, and that is when we made the 2nd counterattack. Needless to say, we got clobbered.

WALKER: Well, at that point, where was Murphy and Bye, and those people?

YANCEY: They were somewhere over in this vicinity.

WALKER: You were cutoff from them by then?

YANCEY: That's right. As I understand it, the remnants of their platoon, because they hit them like a damn wave and just kind of rolled over them, and from what I could understand, talking to the guys later, they pulled back to this little ridge in here, the one you approached on. They were trying to hold the position there. I don't know that, but that is what -- from all the people I talked to, that is what happened.

So about the time you came up Bye's survivors and his platoon is somewhere in this direction.

WALKER: That may be where we went.

YANCEY: I imagine it was.

WALKER: It may be the 3rd platoon we reinforced.

YANCEY: Did you notice any high ground to your direct front? If you noticed any high ground, you would have been in this saddle here.

WALKER: We went up in the dark and never saw much of it in the light. Where I was, I was looking down the hill. Chinese were coming up the hill and I was sitting on top of them, throwing hand grenades down on them.

YANCEY: You had to be here or there.

WALKER: I was looking down, and I don't know what --

YANCEY: Either way, you would have been looking down. You would have been looking down from here into this little area, or you would have been over here, looking down into this vicinity.

WALKER: There were a whole bunch of whatever, a whole bunch of them throwing grenades, because they were going off like firecrackers all over the place.

YANCEY: First time I ever saw a barrage was 698, and they was throwing them sonofabitches in squad formation, obviously, because they would come over 12, 15 at a time.

WALKER: Thoroughly effective.

YANCEY: They really clobbered Bye's platoon when they made the first attack on 698.

WALKER: During the second counterattack, did you see Phillips at that time? Did you see him at all?

YANCEY: I didn't see him until the third counterattack. He was standing right here. He was standing in the C.P. and Bye and Ball -- Ball had a bunch dug in right along here and he was sitting in a sitting position, firing at these Chinamen as they come over the ridge. You could see them in silhouette. When they come over the top, you could see 'em in silhouette.

And he was in the third counterattack, that we were still effective in this direction when a guy

about this position here was coming towards me. Had been several Chinaman in this area we had killed and this guy had that Tommy Gun leading the assault right there, and that is where I got hit the third time, was right in here.

WALKER: What time of morning do you think that was by that time?

YANCEY: I think it would have been around four o'clock.

WALKER: About three or four hours since the first major assault?

YANCEY: I'd say something like that. Given the fact that probably the first was about midnight and, you know, time goes kind of slow.

WALKER: It does. I understand.

YANCEY: Like sitting on a mound, like you were sitting there all your life.

WALKER: And when somebody's calling you on the phone and puts you on hold.

YANCEY: But anyway, in general, that was the situation, and the disposition of my platoon, Clements' platoon and 3rd platoon, seemed logical at the time.

WALKER: At the point of the third counterattack, now Clements is down. You don't know where the hell Bye and Murphy are, because they are cut off to the right and you have not seen them.

YANCEY: That's correct.

WALKER: And Phillips has been shot down.

YANCEY: He's dead right here.

WALKER: And you got that Thompson in the face and you went down, and that is about four o'clock in the morning.

YANCEY: I'd say something like that.

WALKER: And at the point you went down with the Thompson, do you recall what happened after that?

YANCEY: Well, I was in such bad shape by then that I had that slug through the roof of my mouth and one through the nose, and that damn -- I remember coming back over here and I -- several days before I had had blankets taken off of the dead and wounded, back down after 698, and I had the blankets taken off and we tore them into strips about a foot wide, and I used those as -- had the men wrap them around their necks, use them as mufflers and tuck them in over their shoulders and try to keep warm, and also where they could pull them up to keep the wind off their face.

And I had one around my neck and I took that off and tore me off a strip about four or five inches wide, and after I poked my eye back in the socket I put that thing up under my chin like this, and tied my jaw like this. But it was hanging way down, you know. And when it was hanging down, I couldn't articulate. So when I tied it up and got my jaw back into reasonable shape, I was talking like this, you see. I couldn't really speak.

So at about -- seemed like I lost all sense of time by that time --

WALKER: Did you see Gallagher after that?

YANCEY: No.

WALKER: Talk to him at all after that?  
YANCEY: No.  
WALKER: When was it, in relation to that point, that you got this sort of sling tied around your jaw? What time -- from there to the time that Captain Jones with Charlie 5 came up on the hill?  
YANCEY: It must have been an hour or more.  
WALKER: What went on in that hour?  
YANCEY: You know, I don't really know. I know Ball was dead, Phillips was dead. My right flank had been knocked out, and mostly it was just kind of random firing and occasional hand grenades. It wasn't really a lot of hand grenades.  
WALKER: After the third counterattack you all had pretty much stopped the major --  
YANCEY: It was kind of like we both petered out at the same time.  
WALKER: So they sort of relaxed.  
YANCEY: They kind of petered out here and we kind of petered out across here. But still we had this random firing here, here.  
WALKER: See, at the time I was hit, which was just maybe an hour before sunrise --  
YANCEY: That is about when I got hit.  
WALKER: Because I lay there about an hour and it was pretty much random, nothing real concentrated, and --  
YANCEY: I'd say our time -- I remember about quarter to five.  
WALKER: Just a little bit going on, not a whole lot.  
YANCEY: If they'd had another wave they would have wiped us out, because when -- what happened to Jones -- I thought it was Baker Company. You said Charlie Company.  
WALKER: Charlie Company 5th.  
YANCEY: I thought it was Baker. But anyway, they came up this little ridge right here, came up right in here. And when I first became aware there was anybody on my left flank, they were in this position here and moving this way, and I had this two-man hole dug here.  
WALKER: So they came up on the wide point of that Y, on the left flank; they came up in trace right behind Gallagher?  
YANCEY: Right, right behind Gallagher. They were here in our perimeter before I realized they were here, and I went up and met the people and, as well as I could, I explained what the situation was. And they -- as I understand it, they waited until daylight. They spread their people out across here and waited until daylight and they made an assault.  
WALKER: Well, you were the only officer then --  
YANCEY: Clements was out.  
WALKER: -- that was functioning at all?  
YANCEY: Clements was down. The other two were dead. Schreier had not been heard from. He had the mortars.  
WALKER: Murphy and Bye are cut off on the right flank.

YANCEY: Yes.  
WALKER: They are fighting their own war down there.  
YANCEY: Right. As far as I know, from talking to the guys, Lieutenant Wells, who we had sent back --  
WALKER: He had gone down the hill.  
YANCEY: We stationed him to bring up supplies and carry off wounded.  
WALKER: But he didn't come back up, did he?  
YANCEY: No. I should have had him court martialed.  
WALKER: He did get some recognition for his lack of -- I believe he was cashiered.  
YANCEY: I never brought the thing up because I didn't want to get tied up with a damn court martial. It wouldn't have changed a goddamned thing.  
WALKER: He got in hot water.  
YANCEY: He did.  
WALKER: This is always sort of risky to speculate as to what would have happened if something had been different. You can carry that on to infinity, but if you were to assume that at the time that Phillips was killed that you also were put out of action totally at that point --  
YANCEY: It is was sometime after Phillips was killed.  
WALKER: But assuming you were put out at the same time, let's say they had you out and Phillips and Ball and Clements, the 3rd platoon totally cut off, but in as much as it turned out you were the only surviving officer in control on that hill.  
YANCEY: Correct.  
WALKER: But assume you went down at the same time that Phillips did, what would you -- would you speculate as to what the outcome of that situation would have been?  
YANCEY: I don't think it would have been any different. Wouldn't have been different because Gallagher had this under very good control. He was a very forceful, competent leader.  
I told you the story about his right flank. I can't remember that sergeant's name for shit, because after they made that first breach these people in here, somebody hollered "Gas!" and they started pulling out, pulling back. And I and the sergeant who had this squad in here, we literally hauled those kids back in, beat them with our fists, "Get your ass back in the hole and fight. It ain't gas, it's smoke."  
And right in here, I told you the story about the sergeant that helped get those people. He turned around and hollered, "I'm shot in the balls," and started to run. Didn't I tell you about that? I tripped him up here. I tripped him here and told him he wasn't shot in the balls, he was shot in the leg, "Now get back up there and make your men fight."  
But the right flank was gone. That was all there was to it, they were completely overrun.

WALKER: Charlie came up out of Clements' platoon.

YANCEY: When I came back here and hollered for Clem to give me a squad --

WALKER: You went down and picked up what was left of his squad?

YANCEY: He had just said to his sergeant, "Take your men and go with Yancy." The sergeant -- never did know his name -- the sergeant came up here and put his squad here, and it was Charlie's squad and Clements' people that were put across here for the second counter attack.

WALKER: That was slightly north of the C.P.?

YANCEY: That's correct.

WALKER: From that position, west and north of the C.P. where you all held that oblique line, what would you say that was, 25 yards?

YANCEY: From there?

WALKER: Yes, 25 yards from the C.P. to the center of that line of resistance?

YANCEY: I'd say that was probably pretty close.

WALKER: And from the C.P. down to where Murphy and Bye were cutoff, was it about 25, 30 yards?

YANCEY: 60 or 70 yards.

WALKER: 70 yards?

YANCEY: To the right flank over here.

WALKER: From their position where they were cutoff and involved in their own little war, to where the main center of your line of resistance over there, that third counter attack, would have been 120 or 130 yards, a 100 yards, anyway?

YANCEY: No, I don't think it was over 70 yards. I'd say from here -- from here, my right flank, down to --

WALKER: From the center of where you were?

YANCEY: About a 100 yards, yes.

WALKER: It is difficult, in reading about these things, it is difficult to get in mind the actual magnitude of the terrain that is being defended, from one end to the other, and, you know, you take it in terms of football fields, one sort of takes it from one goal line to the other goal line.

YANCEY: I would say from my center here, which is on the top --

WALKER: Top of that northern leg of the Y?

YANCEY: Right. To the 3rd platoon's right flank was close to a 100 yards, yes.

WALKER: And that had a declivity going down to it.

YANCEY: They wouldn't have heard -- from here up to here is almost a 45 degree slope.

WALKER: But apparently the way that terrain was set you couldn't hear what was going on down there, nor could they hear what was going on up here.

YANCEY: Talking with Charlie and other people that were here, back on this, Clements' people, they couldn't hear what was going on over here, just -- it was kind of odd terrain, but in retrospect I think what we should have done -- we

should have taken that 3rd platoon, moved my people down, say, 25 or 30 yards down this slope in here, and put them in position of depth here, where this front line was.

WALKER: This fellow who was your runner from the state of Washington --

YANCEY: McCann.

WALKER: McCann. What was -- where was he during all of this?

YANCEY: Last time I saw Marshall McCann I was here and I told Marshall, I said, "Marshall, I don't need you right now." I said, "Go up and get in the hole with Rick. . ." -- what the hell was his last name? Anyway, I said, "Get in the hole with so and so, Rick. . ." Oh, shit, what -- his first name was Rick

WALKER: About ten or 15 yards to the east?

YANCEY: That was the last time I remember seeing Marshall. He probably was --

WALKER: When was the next time you ever saw Gallagher?

YANCEY: Japan. Gallagher made it through the whole damn thing, including the march back to Hamhung, Hungnam. And a damn tank sideswiped a telephone pole, one of them old skinny poles, and the damn pole hit him on the shoulder and I think broke his collar bone, something like that. A telephone pole hit him when a tank sideswiped it. All that shit going on up here, he had them strewed out in front of his gun.

WALKER: Let me borrow your pen a moment, I'm going to sort of draw --

YANCEY: Did you ever play football?

WALKER: Yes, six man football.

YANCEY: Did you ever play the game over in your mind afterwards?

WALKER: Oh, yeah.

YANCEY: Say, "I fucked up here; what we should have done . . ."

WALKER: Yes.

YANCEY: I have done this a thousand fucking times, played that game over. Played it over and over. I should have put them guns down lower.

WALKER: I'm going to put some names on this thing so we can sort of make some sense out of this map.

YANCEY: The mortar lieutenant, Schreier, he had a little of those grenade wounds all over him. He was down in that situation, incapacitated from grenade wounds. Ball and Phillips died within ten feet of each other.

WALKER: Charlie Company came up, Captain Jones came up on this left flank here.

YANCEY: Day was just starting to break, and what the time it was I don't know. I never have had the time sequence straight in my mind.

WALKER: Well, of course, my recollection of it, you know, we came in late at night and laid out in the valley, and must have been 10:30 or 11 o'clock when I remember watching those green tracers coming over the top of the hill, and in 30, 40 minutes they roused us out and sent us up the

hill. So it was around midnight was my estimate we went up the hill.

YANCEY: When you saw them green tracers you knew damn well it wasn't ours.

WALKER: We thought it was a typical reserve unit up there, couldn't hold off a half dozen guerrillas up there. We were griping. We had not had any sleep and we were griping that the 7th Marines can't take care of a few guerrillas.

YANCEY: Those tracers green, red, yellow.

WALKER: I remember the green ones. I think that is -- John, I think that is going to be helpful. I think this map is right helpful. It is to me, because I have had a hard time understanding all of it. The thing that has been hard to understand is the distances involved.

YANCEY: Wasn't it the 27th when the shit hit the fan?

WALKER: Night of the 27th and morning of the 28th.

YANCEY: So the afternoon of the 27th, there was Gallagher down in here, and scrub brush in here and --

WALKER: It was a little hard to dig holes in that.

YANCEY: You didn't dig holes. But anyway, they -- the Chinese had a collapsible map board and they had four officers sitting there drawing out diagrams.

WALKER: According to Hamill, I guess, who made a pretty good study of all this, the Chinese unit that hit you all did so by accident. They had no intention -- they had not intended to hit that hill at all because they had known from the night before, the day before, that it was well defended and they were looking for a soft entry. They weren't planning --

YANCEY: They were headed towards 1240.

WALKER: Captain Hull's Dog Company.

YANCEY: Hull was about the same stripe as Phillips. They were both jockstraps. They had spent practically the whole time in the Marine Corps handling sports and recreation, and shit like that. They had no real field experience. And, of course, Hull was -- you know, they got knocked off 1240 back down to the foot somewhere. I think they later retook the thing. But had we folded up there, had they sent one more attack, the whole thing would have been open down to the valley.

WALKER: The 5th and 7th C.P.'s were at the bottom.

YANCEY: That's right, the 7th C.P. was right at the bottom of this little ridge that led back down to the left rear, right down at the bottom.

WALKER: John, there is another story that [Martin] Russ had commented on that he'd like to have gotten good, and that was a right humorous one, the busting the bank in Seoul.

YANCEY: That was kind of funny, you know. He asked me -- he was on the phone one day and he said, you know, he wanted the little vignettes, anecdotes.

Well, anyway, he said, you know, it might add a little color. I said, "Well, shit," I said, "would you like to hear about the time I blew the bank at Uijongbu?"

What it was, we were going into Uijongbu. We had a column of those damn tanks, you remember the old 90 millimeters?

WALKER: Right.

YANCEY: We was making a speed march into Uijongbu because that was a railhead, you see, and we had our troops on the -- right behind the tanks, kind of double timing, a speed march, double time. You walk fast, then you trot, you see, for ten minutes, off and on. Kind of trying to keep up with the tanks. But the time element was such that we was trying to get there and secure that rail junction before the North Koreans got there.

So about three quarters of a mile before we got to Uijongbu they hit us on both flanks. First of all the lead tank hit a damn mine, which was a calculated risk because we were trying to -- when the first tank hit the mine field, they cut loose on both flanks with heavy machinegun fire and antitank shells.

Of course, everybody goes off and hits the side of the road. And your first tanks up there were afraid to go further because of the mines. I went off to the left of the damn road and my supply sergeant -- funny damn thing, the day before we had captured a lot of whiskey. I did my damndest to keep everybody from getting any, but everybody in the company got some, except me. And this kid had a fifth of Canadian Club. And when we went off the side of the road on the ambush, he pulled this damn fifth of Canadian Club out of his blouse and he handed it to me -- tried to hand it to me.

He said, "You want a drink?" I said, "Hell, no." He said, "You better take it. It might be the last one you ever have."

Leaning against that embankment on the side of road, he lifted that -- he lifted that damn bottle to take a drink, and all at once he went like this. Still had the cork in his hand, the bottle, like this.

And what had happened, a corpsman told me later, a splinter of an antitank shell hit the tank right above us and a splinter from that damn thing hit him here and went straight through his brain. When the corpsman examined him he couldn't see any marks on him and finally he saw where the splinter went.

WALKER: Right up under the jaw, through the brain?

YANCEY: Taking that drink of Canadian Club.

WALKER: His prophecy was right, he just had the wrong one.

YANCEY: But my First Sergeant reached over and took the cork out of his hand. And we was trying to organize an attack up the damn hill, and the First Sergeant reached over and took the cork out of his hand and put it in the bottle and stuck it in his blouse.

WALKER: No sense wasting good whiskey.

YANCEY: We had direct liaison with the tanks, and they put in what we used to call a rolling barrage on the hill line to our left. And we went down that thing pretty damn fast, just a shootin' and a hoopin,' you know. Because when the tanks opened up, they started pulling out and we were shooting them in the back, so to speak.

So we went down the damn ridge into the outskirts of Uijongbu. And right down at the bottom of the hill we ran into a Russian jeep. Later on we got it started. But we went through Uijongbu shootin' and hoopin' like a bunch of cowboys.

And up on the north part of Uijongbu, where there was a little creek line, I noticed -- you know, a small town bank, you know, like a small town in Texas still looks like a bank. So when we got up to this creek line and I got my people all dug in, and everything come straightened out, Clements was on my right and the 3rd platoon was on the left. We hauled back. We got in touch with regiment and they said, "Hold what you got because we have to clear this mine field before we can come through with the tanks," you know.

So I knew that would take some time. So I got -- I figured I had about three quarters of an hour or so before the regiment showed up. So I called my demolition sergeant, company demolition man, and asked if he had any composition C. He had Composition C, which is a plastic, sort of like soft putty. And we went back up there, and sure enough, it was a damn bank.

And what I had remembered before this was -- did you ever read the story about Jimmy Valentine? He was a nitroglycerin man. You took a bar of soft soap and you filled up the seam around the clamp of the door with soap, and you filled that up with soap except at the bottom, right at bottom you let one little outlet for the nitroglycerin and at the top you formed kind of a funnel-like out of soap on top, and you poured that nitroglycerin in the funnel and it went down the door frame. When you saw it trickling out the bottom, you knew it was full, you had distribution. Then you took a piece of soap and closed up the bottom and you took a piece of primer, a blasting cap or primer card, as we had it, and you put it in at the top and mold it in with the soft soap.

Well, I didn't have any soft soap or nitroglycerin, but the Composition C served the same function. So we packed it in around the door and put my blasting cap in there and a piece of fuse about six or eight inches long, which is about a minute, you know. And I lit that damn timer fuse and lit out the front door and around the corner.

Well, when that damn stuff went off, I had misjudged it and it blew that goddamn door off and out the front door and clear across the street. We all run back in there and the door was gone and here was all these 1000 Won bills all over the damn place.

So I got the demolition man and myself, and whoever else, and we grabbed ahold of one bundle

of money like this, and I walked back up to the company C.P. and called all my squad leaders in. I gave them all a whole armload of money.

WALKER: North Korean or South Korean?

YANCEY: South Korean. I didn't know whether the shit was worth anything. So I took three bills out of the whole bunch, just for souvenirs, stuck them in my pocket and gave all the stuff away. There was every squad leader had all he could carry in his arms, like a cord of wood.

So the upshot of the thing was, when we get pulled back to the parallel and went back into bivouac around Seoul, they put us in a -- our company was put into an old abandoned naval factory. I had seen a -- while going back I had seen this damn brewery. So I told the First Sergeant, I said, "Sergeant, you take care of things. I'm going to take this jeep and go over and see if we can't get the boys some beer."

So I got up some five gallon cans and I got up to the brewery. There wasn't no bottle beer at all, but they had these vats of beer, you see. And I filled these five gallon Jerry cans up with beer, just old hot, flat beer, and took it back. Hot flat beer was better than no beer at all. And when I got back these piss ants had barbecued chickens. One of them had a damn pig, suckling pig. They had -- somehow they'd gotten eggs from the natives and they were frying eggs, eggs, bacon, and at the far end of the damn naval factory, and in what must have been an office, they had a whorehouse going, and they had goddamn women in there giggling, carrying on. And I said to the First Sergeant, I said, "Goddamnit," I said, "I leave for a damn hour and everything goes to hell. You know, we got orders not to fraternize with these people or looting." He said, "What do you mean, looting?" I said, "All these eggs, chickens, that little pig."

He said, "No, no. We bought it." I said, "What the shit did you use for money?" We'd had no payday.

"All that money you gave the kids, these gooks think it's good. They think we are rich Americans."

I was still kind of pissed-off, you know. He had a shoe box and he opened that damn thing up and he said, "Peek in there." And I looked in there, and he had been over to some one of these gardens and picked that thing about half full of spring onions.

Well, I should have known better, but anyway, he said, "Take some. They are good fresh green onions." I got three or four of them, because eating this old warmed up Charlie rations, and that don't taste like much at all, and I ate three or four of them.

And the Colonel -- no, Buzz Sawyer, he was a Major at the time but he had taken over the company. Maj. Sawyer was a damn fine Marine. And he said, "What the shit you got in that damn box there?" I said, "Green onions. You want one?" He said, "Hell, yes."

He took a couple of them, and about two

o'clock the next morning I'm going down this damn path to where we had this privy dug, the slit trench, and the two paths coming like this and they merged and went over to where we had the slit trench. And right at the merge I run into a guy, knocked him down. It was Buzz Sawyer, Maj. Sawyer. And the shit hit us both at the same time. I shit my britches and he shit his trying to get to the damn slit trench.

WALKER: From the onions?

YANCEY: Yes. He cussed my ass out. I said, "Hell, I didn't make you take those damn things. You asked for it." You know, anything green like that, you know --

WALKER: Yeah, they used the honey buckets for fertilizer.

YANCEY: But, you know, they grew some of the most beautiful vegetables.

WALKER: I never got anything. I ate the chickens, turnips. Never got onions, but before I got discharged I went down to the hospital at Santa Margarita and they checked me out and I had no parasites.

YANCEY: Down around Kimpo, when we were scouring the country down there for leftover stragglers and that sort of thing, they sent me on patrol north of there and I hit a little old village and they had an apple orchard there. Pretty damn apples, like the Ben Davis. You know anything about apples? Ben Davis is a little apple, real tart. One of those children came up to me and offered me two or three apples, and I had the interpreter with us so I told the interpreter to ask him if he would sell us some apples. He said sure, you know. So I bought apples, several bushels of apples, and had the guys, you know, taking them back to the the rest of the guys. And at the equivalent of three cents a bushel. I figured it out later, they cost me three cents a bushel in American money.

WALKER: They told us somewhere along in there not to eat that stuff, that the communists injected arsenic into them, and all that, but we didn't pay any attention to it. We didn't believe it.

YANCEY: Well, we ate the apples, three cents a bushel. Damn final apples.

WALKER: We used to swap cigarettes for eggs. They would bring them up in those little knitted straw things that hold a dozen eggs and they wouldn't take Old Gold cigarettes, didn't want them.

YANCEY: You didn't count them eggs in Korea. They sell eggs by the 10.

WALKER: It may have been 10.

YANCEY: In the little straw deal.

WALKER: Ten?

YANCEY: Not a dozen.

WALKER: I just tend to think in terms of a dozen.

YANCEY: I remember, when --

WALKER: They work on the decimal system, right, instead of 12? They didn't want Old Golds, though. Lucky Strike, Camels and Chesterfield, but Old Gold and some other off brands cigarettes, they got wise to that real quick.

YANCEY: Around World War II they had the damndest cigarette you ever seen in your life, Chelsea. Ever hear of that?

WALKER: Yes, Chelsea and Wings.

YANCEY: They were terrible. On Saipan we were getting those damn Chelsea cigarettes, and when they put up my company tent -- I was company commander then -- when they put up my company tent, this damn little orphan goat wandered up, about this high, and I was smoking a cigarette and put the butt out and the goat went up there and started eating that damn thing. So I fed him the rest of my Chelsea cigarettes. He ate them. Loved them. And from that time on that little bastard followed me around wherever I went. And a lot of guys had them Chelsea cigarettes they wouldn't smoke. I said, "Give them to me." And I fed them to the damn goat, and that goat became so attached to me.

WALKER: He was addicted.

YANCEY: Several days later we got some heavy old cots, and that little sonofabitch kept sleeping on my cot. And one day several days after that, my First Sergeant said to me, he said, "I think you ought to get rid of that goat."

"What do you mean?"

He said, "He smells the place up."

WALKER: Down south in August we were at a regrounding area, at a place call Miryang, and everybody was crapped out by the river there and washing clothes and what not, and somebody yelled -- a lot of noise, and a bunch of us went over to see what it was. And it was a little deer about a foot and a half off the ground to its shoulder, about 18 inches, and running, and about six or seven of us started chasing that deer. And I tackled it and the thing hit me with a tooth along the thumb and cut my thumb open, and of course we killed it and cooked it. It was a Sabertooth deer and had incisors, fangs, these long incisors. But the animal couldn't have weighed over 25 pounds.

YANCEY: I saw, when we were in Hawaii, up around Crater Lake, Camp Catlin, out in the brush, there is a lot of brush around this camp, and I have seen the same damn deer there. And I'm trying to think what the shit they called them. You know where Camp Catlin was?

WALKER: Sure.

YANCEY: Crater Lake?

WALKER: I didn't remember Crater Lake, but I remember -- sort of up by Aiea Heights?

Well the anthropologists, zoologists, whatever, called them Sabertooth deer.

YANCEY: There was another name for them. You want another beer, another drink?

WALKER: About half what you made there.

YANCEY: I have had a lot of trouble lately this last month. I have taken so much codeine I ain't hungry at all. It comes in spells. Something you learn to live with, more or less.

WALKER: I guess the mind can accommodate most anything.

YANCEY: A doctor friend of mine yesterday -- he started out as a medic in the Marine Corps and I'm quite fond of him, and he seemingly is fond of me, and he came by yesterday and visited. He said, "You look like shit, look like a cadaver." He took my pulse and all this shit, and he said, "I want you to promise me that you will go to the V.A. and let them check you over, because," he said, "you don't look good at all."

FINIS:

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

This taped interview was taken in July of 1985. I managed to get John to the Chosin Few convention in December of 1985, wherein he was given a standing ovation. John died in Little Rock, Arkansas, May 16th of 1986, survived by his wife, two daughters and a son.

John received his second Navy Cross for his actions in defense of Hill 1282, November 27 and 28, 1950. He got the first award on Guadalcanal as part of Carlson's Raiders, and also received a battlefield commission for his actions there.

John Yancey was one of those natural born troop leaders, possessing both the charisma and the steel nerve, as well as the ability to assess objectively the situation he was in. I did not meet him during the Korean War, though we went down Hill 1282 to the aid station together the morning of the 28th. It wasn't until the Chosin Few was organized that I happened to "find" Yancey in Little Rock, my wife's hometown and where I lived from 1958 to 1962. My great regret is that I did not look him up sooner.

John was born in Plummerville, Arkansas, graduated from the University of Arkansas, where he played varsity football; owned a liquor store in Little Rock called "Yancey's," which is still in business; ran for the Arkansas state senate against the then Gov. Faubus machine, and was narrowly defeated. He was friends with a former Marine aviator, Maj. Gen. Sid McMath, who was a former Governor of Arkansas, also was close to the late

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Gen. Lew Walt, USMC, who asked Yancey if he would like to be his Exec in Vietnam. Yancey jumped at the chance, but the Corps turned him down due to lack of sufficient teeth, most of which were shot out on Hill 1282. John's reply was, "Hell, I wasn't planning on biting the sonsofbitches to death."

Due to his injuries, cold weather was painful, so John spent most of the winters in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he had a lot of friends amongst the local population. They nicknamed him Tigre Jungilia - I hope I spelled that right - meaning "Jungle Tiger."

One of John's hobbies was the history of Mexico. He knew more about Hispanic history, both Mexico and the rest of the Americas, than any Anglo I have ever met. He had a great respect for the people and the culture of our southern neighbors, and had a house full of artifacts from the area. He also was well read on philosophy and religions and we spent many hours chewing the fat, going through the battles of World War II, Korea, Nam, and the historic causes behind them and the philosophies that were born from these wars. A truly fascinating man, and a good friend.

Dallas, Texas is home to the John Yancey Detachment of the Marine Corps League. I am proud to be one of the founders of that detachment, along with the late Ted Lynn, Jr., a former Raider, Don Childs, and many others.

The Chosin Few tried to get John's Navy Cross upgraded to the CMOH. I managed to collect about 30 affidavits, but the Corps said it was the same story they had on which they based the Navy Cross.

Listening to John describe the battles of Hill 698 and 1282 was sure an enlightening experience for me. I wish I had recorded the story of 698, but maybe I can get it done from memory and from a few of you who were in that one.

If any of you have similar stories to tell, send them in and we'll try to print them.

FINIS:

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