

BLOODY

3

1



GEORGE



SPRING OFFENSE
KOREA 1951 - 1952

WESTERN FRONT
KOREA 1952 - 1953

VOLUME III VOLUME IV

1st Platoon of George Company crossing Som River on a "Swiss Bent" expedient bridge. Constructed with abandoned Army "comm wire" by Weapons Company 3rd Battalion 1st Marines. The bridge was started at night and finished the following day by Marines standing hip deep in the icy river.

Photo Courtesy of Marine Corps Gazette, Quantico VA



Volume III
SPRING OFFENSIVE CENTRAL AND EAST FRONT
1951-1952

Table of Contents

Foreword by "Peepsight" Pendas	Page 1
Foreword by Captain Fred Redmon	2
Foreword by Colonel Tom Reid.....	3
Dedication to the Marine Rifleman	4
Prologue by James "Jim" Byrne, Unit Historian	5
JANUARY - Guerilla Hunt	8
FEBRUARY - The Central Front.....	10
MARCH - "Operation Killer" Hill 303	12
APRIL - Chinese Spring Offensive	19
JUNE/JULY	32
SEPTEMBER - Hill 751	42
OCTOBER - Stalemate-Fixed Positions	47
NOVEMBER - The Second Winter 1951-1952.....	51

Vol. I
INCHON-SEOUL
1950

VOL. II
MAJON-NI/HAGARU-RI
1950

Vol. III
SPRING OFFENSE
CENTRAL & EAST FRONT
1951-1952

VOL. IV
WESTERN FRONT
1952-1953



G/3/1 KOREA



15 September 1993

In 1986 at West Point Military Academy G/3/1 Korea was formed along with the idea to put to paper the complete history of a Marine Rifle Company (Infantry) in combat from the beginning of the war to the end. From cutting the barb wire on the beach at Inchon to the dismantling of the barb wire at Boulder City.

As your historian Jim Byrne and I worked on this noble project for the last seven (7) years, we have both come to be amazed and rightfully proud of every member of George Company from the rifleman, BAR man, machine gunner, clerks, cooks, litter bearers, non-commissioned officers, and officers. Their story is one of courage, dedication, and true guts.

Some of the events that come to mind in recalling the creation of these four volumes were:

That we continually earned our share in some historic events with three Medals of Honor, two Navy Crosses, the Silver and Bronze Stars are far too many to count. But we must also acknowledge and pay tribute to the unsung hero so to speak. Those individual heroic acts of achievement that went unnoticed, unobserved, unreported, that were not seen by the right people or written up or were just lost or down graded in the paper shuffle. Simply, many brave deeds were done by the Marines of Bloody George for which no personal awards were given.

We also found in several cases Marines that were reported as being wounded in action (WIA) and had been observed dead by other surviving members of association. Possibly a partial answer to so many that are still listed as missing in action.

In the late in life battles of "Sea Stories" the last speaker always seems to have had it the roughest and suffered more than the previous speaker. Once again proving the age old adage that "The first liar doesn't stand a chance."

However, if you study George's combat record you will come to the opinion that Bloody George seldom had it easy, was always in the hell fire middle of it and survived, doing so with honor and great distinction. The few that think Chosin was the only campaign in the war should contemplate these facts:

In the last 3 days of the Korean War, the Chinese and NKPA rained 65,000, yeah, sixty five thousand rounds of mortar and artillery on just the Marines of the 1st Marine Division. With our own eleventh Marines firing 56,280 rounds in 835 fire missions. Comparison: In the (8) eight days of Naval gunfire prep. for the invasion of Okinawa the Navy fired 30,000 rounds. Unheard of in 1945.

None of us, except those that actually lived through this fire storm of artillery and mortar death, can imagine the constant pounding with the reduction of six foot deep trenches to level ground, nor the Marines that were buried in bunkers under this murderous fire who could only "stick and stay." The added fact that the Chinese infantry was jumping into the trench line along with their own artillery only added to the nightmare.

This then completes our, Jim and mine, effort to put your story in a proper logical readable sequence. We hope you are as proud of our efforts as we are of your record of combat. We also wish that your children, grandchildren and the remainder of your family will read and study your story.

Only then will they be able to comprehend and appreciate your noble contribution to history as a proud member of

Bloody George.

These volumes are the sole property of the G/3/1 Korea Association and no portion of it may be used without the specific written permission of its president with the approval of the membership.

Semper Fidelis

G. Peepsight Pendas, Jr.
Captain USMC Ret.
President G/3/1 Korea



Camp Pendleton 1988 Reunion. Peepsight, Jim and Jean Byrne

Foreword

by Captain Fred Redmon

During the fall of 1947 at the University of Washington NROTC unit, Major Harry Milne USMC explained, in detail, the extent of the commitment the Marine Corps would expect of me, when and if, they offered me a commission. Plt/Sgt. Kolasar USMC also informed me, during our sessions on the rifle range, that I should remember that the sergeants run the "Corps". I was fortunate indeed to have men with this experience and good character be my first contact with the Marine Corps. It was their attraction and not their promotion that convinced me to request the opportunity to become a reserve officer in the Marine Corps. There were times I questioned the wisdom of my decision but I never regretted making it.

In August 1950 the rapid transfer from civilian life to Marine Reserve officer status at Quantico Virginia, plus the accounts of the operations of the First Marine Division in Korea, left no doubt of the high expectations the Marine Corps had for its reserves. This was confirmed in December of that year when our commanding officer, then Colonel David Shoup, dashed all the hopes of many of us that we would spend our time on active duty protecting Washington DC from any impending air raid by the North Koreans. (Of course, with headquarters at the lounge of the Ambassador Hotel!)

While approximately fifty fellow Marines were flown to Korea I was fortunate to have Christmas 1950 at home with my wife and son. Then into the 5th Replacement Draft which arrived in Korea in time to push off from Wonju-Hoeng'song in February 1951. It was cold . . .!! However, the Chosen veterans let me know what cold meant . . .! I was assigned to George Company after a short time with the Heavy Machine Gun Platoon where my legs were converted from rubber to good operating condition. We had many patrols during our brief stay in the Wonju area.

I was naive. I had often thought of the "thrill" of combat; never expecting I would ever be placed in such a situation. Yet, I found myself, on that first day out of Hoeng'song, climbing up one of those Korean hills looking for Stf/Sgt. Archie MacDonald, the platoon sergeant of the 2nd platoon. There had been many shots fired that morning and Lt. Dale Quinlan had been hit. At the time I was serving as platoon leader of the light machine guns. (A platoon I never did see all together at the same time.) Our company commander, Lt. Johnson, sent word for me to catch up with the 2nd Platoon as it was now my responsibility.

From this time, and over the next five months in George Company, I served as platoon leader, executive officer, and very briefly as company commander. Upon catching the 2nd Platoon I quickly got acquainted with Staff/Sgt. MacDonald. I was assured, after meeting this fine Marine, that my education would take giant and rapid steps forward. They did . . .! I began a life long appreciation for my fellow Marines. I have since become aware that my being in this position at this time and place was the greatest achievement a Marine lieutenant could ever realize. Regular or reserve.

In a Marine rifle company we all had our places to be and responsibilities to fulfill. The integrity of our unit had to be maintained. We weren't there to create tradition. We were to uphold the traditions so many Marines before us had fought so hard to establish. Our weapons were to be clean. Our physical condition was to be the highest. We were to be nothing more than the very best we could possibly be with the training we had been given and with the equipment we were to use to accomplish our mission. No more, no less . . .!

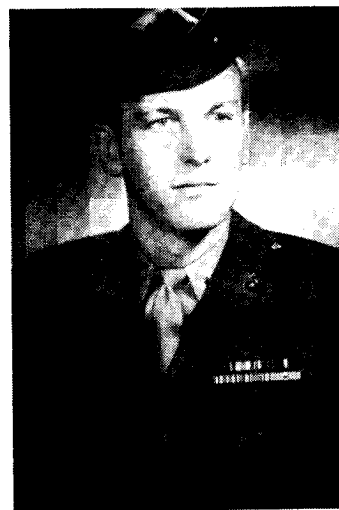
On the following pages you will read some of the history of George Company during the time we were in the central Korean area. The many engagements and patrols from Wonju, Hoeng'song, Chunchon, Hwacon, and a hill numbered 902 are recorded here in the spirit of the Marines that fought there. The rugged hills, unpredictable weather, and a tenacious enemy all played their part in the operations of our company. Considering all these factors, doing things right was the touch stone of our company's success as well as our personal survival.

There was great sense of pride in George Company. This pride was felt from our fire teams up through each segment of the organization. George Company was then and is now a very special group of men. Those that may observe a Marine Rifle Company, from the outside, just might overlook something unique in these very special organizations. Unless each Marine follows, to the best of his ability, the standards and traditions that past success has established, he almost certainly aids in signing his own death warrant. His lack of awareness or his personal disobedience to the importance of the unit's integrity, and his part in it, will lead to consequences whose penalty is far worse than any human authority could inflict. George company's Marines have displayed such obedience.

It was a privilege to have served with them, as it is today, to be associated with them, through G/3/1 Korea.

SEMPER FIDELIS,

Captain Fred G. Redmon
2nd Lt., 2nd Plt.
Feb 1951-June 1951



Foreword

by Colonel Tom Reid

It has been many years since I served with the company, yet the memories of my five month's tour reside in a very special place in my heart.

As I write this I mourn, yes, I mourn forty-one years later as I remember all the good and brave men I served with, those who died, those wounded and those who survived that I will never see again to exchange a few words of concern or encouragement as we complete this, our last tour of duty.

Sharing the day to day hardships, and the uncertainty of mortality with you Marines in combat was an experience that has had a profound effect on my life and which I shall proudly carry to "Heaven's scenes"!

To this day I still marvel that the U.S. Marine Corps continues to find such brave, loyal and dedicated men!

It was an honor and a privilege to have served with you!

God Bless you Marines of George Company.

Semper Fi,

Thomas P. Reid
Colonel USMC Retired
2nd Lt. 1st Plt (Mar 51 - July 51)



This Portion of the History of George Company 3rd Battalion First Marines is Dedicated to the Memory of The Marine Rifleman

To choose one representative of the typical Marine rifleman in Bloody George was difficult. However, one of the typical rifleman was the extra ordinary Private James "Jim" Byrne.

Joining the company shortly after Inchon on one of the first replacement drafts - Majon-Ni, North Korea; Chosin Reservoir campaign; where he was wounded on Operation Drysdale, evacuated, hospitalized, recuperated, and returned to George Company. Few of us can realize the inner courage required to go back into battle after having been wounded once - "Pushing your luck." To have your buddies killed inches from you from a round that barely missed your head. To see **again** all the death and destruction. To enter a totally new kind of warfare, one with plenty of incoming. Something that Bloody George had not experienced up till then. Plus the still more than aggressive Chinese enemy. Jim did it all without a whimper. The constant patrols, the two man listening posts, the fire team outpost, the assault, the wounded and dying.

I certainly would feel proud to have Jim represent me as a typical Marine Rifleman!

We, therefore, dedicate this final volume to Jim Byrne. Not because he was the author who took your accounts and put them to paper. Through this entire process, Jim had help - someone to inspire, assist, and encourage him.

When G/3/1 returned to Korea in 1990, we climbed Hill 902 where Speedy Wilson won his Medal of Honor. The report was of the Magnificent Seven who made it to the top yet only six in the photograph: Tom Reid, Ed Goodwin, Bobby Smith, Red McLaren, John Hayden and Peepsight. The seventh Marine to reach the top was Joan Byrne.

Again, we honor Jim and Joan, not only for their effort on allowing us to realize a goal in actually accomplishing the writing of our story. But for his staunch devotion to duty,

many times carrying out orders that put him in harms way and always close to death. He carried out each order as a Marine; unhesitating, with perseverance, and dedication. He is symbolic of all of you. Those are the reasons why we honor him and Joan with this dedication and title of

Marine Rifleman

For it is truly the Marines such as Jim Byrne who have made and given our Corps its world wide reputation as one of the worlds elite fighting force.

Semper Fidelis



Prologue

By Jim Byrne, Unit Historian

George Company, Third Battalion, First Marines

The Marines of G/3/1 reached the safety of the Hungnam perimeter on December 11, 1950. Events were moving swiftly and within twenty-four hours George Company was boarding a troop ship, the General Collins. During the next fourteen days the naval force off Hungnam harbor would evacuate "105,000 military personnel, 91,000 Korean refugees, 17,500 vehicles and 350,000 measurement tons of cargo loaded out in 193 ship loads by 109 ships." Thus, George Company's 100 plus Marines became part of this amazing exodus.

In the one day prior to boarding the General Collins, some of the men managed to clean up a bit and a few even found razors with which to shave their two week old beards. But for the most part, they boarded the ship pretty much as they looked when they came out of the mountains of North Korea: battered, unshaven and covered with the grime of war. At least one Marine, Pfc. Steve Olmstead, looked so grubby and tired that a member of the ship's crew took pity on him and gave him clean underwear, a place to wash up and even his bunk to sleep in.

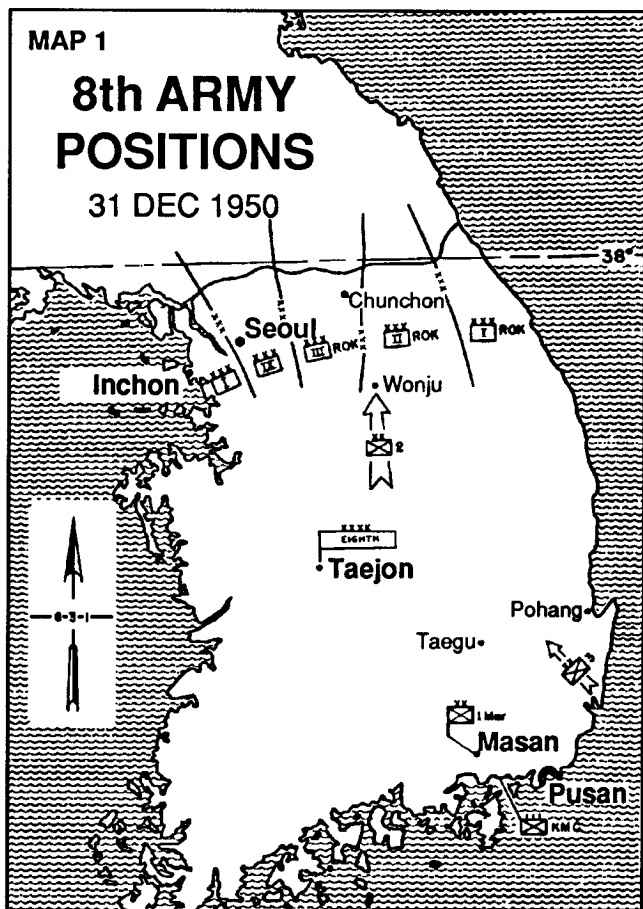
Once aboard ship everyone was given ample reminders of the magnitude of the evacuation operation. Jamming more men onto the ship than the ship was built to accommodate resulted in approximately one bunk for every four men; consequently, troops were found sleeping in every nook and corner. For example, Pfc. Otto Olson discovered on old friend from the 1st replacement draft in the laundry room, sleeping in a laundry tub. Because of the overcrowded facilities, the galleys ran twenty-four hours a day, with each man entitled to two meals a day. The menu rarely changed and basically consisted of boiled rice, canned chili and canned peaches for dessert, but it was hot and certainly a vast improvement over frozen C rations and tootsie rolls. But most important of all, everyone rediscovered what it was like to be warm again.

While the evacuation of Hungnam was in full swing, the United Nations command was assessing the damage to the 8th Army and the X Corps. On the east coast (Xth Corps) it was the 1st Marine Division and two battalions from the U.S. Army's 7th Division that received the brunt of the Chinese attack. In the 8th Army area in the west, it was a regiment of the U.S. 2nd Division that was so badly mauled by the Chinese that it could no longer function as a military unit until it was replenished by replacements and supplies.

While the casualties in the above mentioned divisions and regiments were extremely high, the psychological victory of the Chinese, over the 8th Army in particular,

seems to be greater than the actual damage to the U.N. command. Suddenly, the Chinese appeared to the highest echelons of the 8th Army to be near invincible. A feeling of pessimism pervaded strategy sessions and a sense of impending defeat apparently extended all the way to the top ranking officers of the 8th Army and appears to have possibly included General Douglas MacArthur.

The more optimistic strategy planners thought that a stand could be made at the old Pusan Perimeter at the tip of the Korean peninsula, thus denying the Chinese a total victory and allowing for some sort of a face-saving negotiated peace. However, the more pessimistic of General MacArthur's staff argued for a token show of resistance as the Chinese marched southward, but that an evacuation of Korea was inevitable. So what appears in



retrospect as a too hasty retreat, the 8th Army on the western front sped southward, for the most part unhampered by the Chinese, until the units gathered and reorganized just north of Seoul.

As the General Collins pulled out of Hungnam, it is interesting to speculate about the thoughts of George Company Marines. Many had slugged their way to victory in the Inchon/Seoul campaign. All of them had hung on tenaciously in North Korea and helped deny the Chinese People's Army a victory over the 1st Marine Division. But what new mission would they be given? Were they, indeed, heading south to man the last line of defense prior to the evacuation of Pusan and a total Chinese victory? To risk death in such a scenario could not give much comfort to the officers and men of George Company.

Upon arriving at Pusan, G/3/1 moved immediately to the nearby town of Masan. For a day or two, during which the troops moved into existing tents or tents they erected, they were given a chance to regain a little strength and vitality by simply being left alone. However, the "sleeping, eating, clean up yourself and your gear routine" did not last long. The Marine Corps has always prided itself in being "squared away" and before a few days had passed, the men answered roll call fully dressed and spent the rest of the day in a light training schedule despite the still nasty weather.

It is only on the eve of battle that a company roster accurately depicts a Marine rifle company. Usually within minutes of engaging the enemy, casualties occur, and in a short time squads and platoons are at half strength. Sometimes replacements are found within the battalion or regiment and there is always the trickle in of men who had been previously wounded and/or hospitalized, but usually the ranks are not filled until a replacement draft from the States arrives.

G/3/1 first set foot on Korean soil on September 15, 1950 with a roster that listed 255 officers and men and an unknown number of navy corpsmen. KIAs, WIAs and non battle casualties (primarily frozen hands and feet) had reduced the original 255 Marines to 67 by the January 31, 1951 roster. There were another 38 officers and enlisted men on that same roster, from the 1st and 2nd replacement drafts, who had joined George Company just prior to the Chinese intervention in North Korea. Added to these numbers were 94 men (most from the 3rd and 4th replacement drafts) who joined the Company in Masan during December and January.

In addition to the December and January replacement drafts, there was a small number of new men who joined G/3/1 from a variety of 1st Division units. Cpl. Phil Heath had been in the Amtract Battalion during the North Korean campaign, but pestered his superiors no end until he was granted his wish - an assignment with a rifle company. Others joined, not because they were exactly tired of their units, but because they didn't have much choice about the matter.

Pfc. Tom Madden, for example, was initially assigned to the tank battalion. Madden, who had served during WWII and had been a "China Marine" after the war, wasn't too impressed with a sergeant in his unit. After a series of disagreements, none of them too serious, Madden found himself in Captain Sitter's tent asking for a transfer. (Captain Sitter asked "Papa-San" Madden if he thought at the age of 26 that "he could keep up with the kids." Madden's reply was that if he couldn't keep up, the troops should go on without him. For some reason this response didn't bother Sitter, and Madden was immediately assigned to a machine gun squad.)

Pfc. Richard "Dave" Davis during the Inchon/Seoul and North Korea campaigns had what he admitted was pretty soft duty as a jeep driver at the regimental motor pool. Unfortunately for Davis, his assigned jeep developed a cracked head at Koto-ri when the radiator froze. As soon as the Division reached Masan, Davis was handed a M-1 rifle and spent the next six months as a fire team leader with the 1st platoon.

But perhaps the most interesting reassignment was that of Phil "Curt" Corbin. In North Korea Corbin served as a corporal in an anti-tank company of the 1st Marines. At this time it should be pointed out that Corbin became part of that large G/3/1 contingent of reserve Marines from Savannah, Georgia. Despite their polished southern manners, they were basically a wild crew, and, to say the least, Corbin was no exception. Although never admitting any guilt, he ended up with G/3/1 for an unusual reason. Let him explain:

On December 31, 1950, New Year's Eve, I was accused of stealing a turkey and destroying government property.

On New Year's Day I was tossed in the brig. I slept on the ground while the drunks and even one prisoner accused of murder slept on field bunks. It was clear to me that an accused turkey thief was the lowest of the prisoners.

I was kept in the brig for about a week, but there was no concrete evidence that they could use against me to make the charges stick. At this time I was released into George Company.

Phil Heath adds to the story of the accused murderer Carbons brig rat associate:

At Masan three of the Marines assigned to our tent were the man accused of murder Jack Ward, Don Deem and myself.

There was a large hill behind our tent and over this hill was a T.B. sanatorium. During the night of the murder, I was awakened by some noise in the tent and saw Jack Ward sitting on his bunk cleaning his 45. I told him to turn down the lamp and got to sleep. The next morning, just before chow, I saw him

shave off the little black mustache he had. I asked him why he was doing this and he said he was tired of trimming it. As we went to chow, we heard that a Marine had killed a South Korean and there was going to be a battalion formation so some Korean women could try to identify the guilty Marine. When we fell in, Jack went to the third rank. I fell in beside him and we waited as a number of platoons were looked at and marched away. There were only a few left when the Marine officers and Korean women came to us. I started to wonder if there was a chance that this guy could look like me. The women passed the first rank, then started down the second rank. While still in the second rank, I saw one of the women say something to a Marine officer and point in our direction. The officer came to the third rank and took my arm and pulled me out. At this point, my heart was about to stop. The Korean woman looked at the officer and shook her head "No" and pointed to the next man (Jack Ward). What a relief! Friend or no friend, I was glad to see him take my place.

Some weeks later we moved north with the rest of the division and left this man behind. When the trial started, Don Deem and I were

sent back to Mason to testify. Jack Ward was convicted and sent to prison.

The story of the murder night goes like this. Jack had found some alcohol and had been drinking. He knew about the T.B. Sanatorium, so he went over this hill to look for a woman. He found a nurse and offered her some money, but she refused. He then tried to force her and her husband came to her aid. Jack and her husband started fighting and Jack fired a couple of wild shots, but did not hit anyone. The continued into the hospital yard, where Jack picked up an Ax and hit the man in the head killing him.

I suppose this murder is the reason I managed to Join G/3/1. I was away from my unit, so I again applied for a rifle company and was accepted.

Not quite at full strength, George Company had 199 men who answered roll call on January 31, 1951. Of that number 86 were reservists and 113 regular Marines. The following month the 5th replacement draft and the return of more men who had been wounded in North Korea would once again bring the company to full strength.



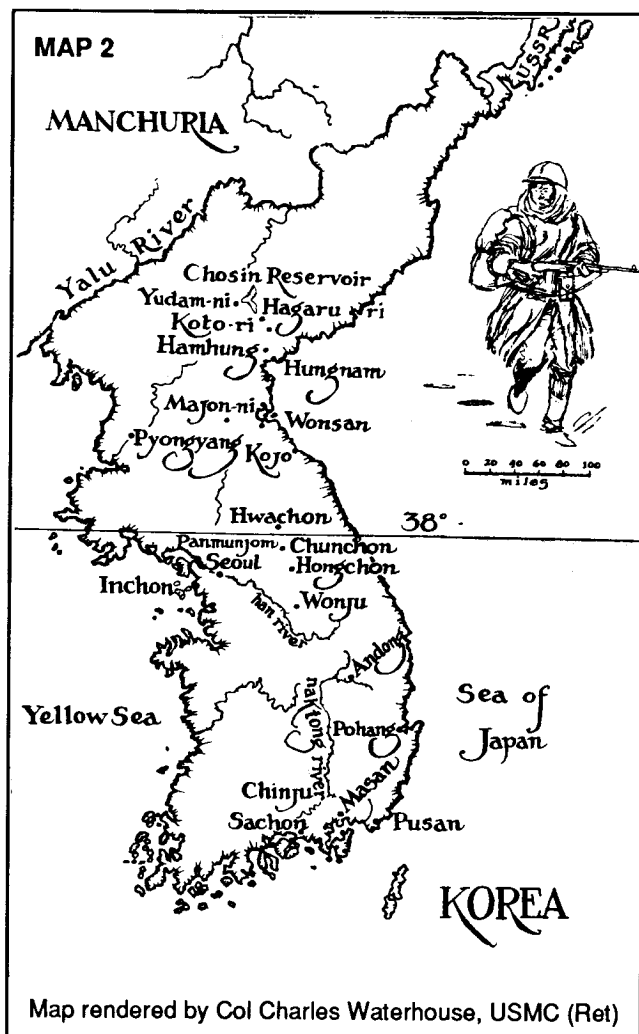
GUERRILLA HUNT

The last ditch defense of the Korean peninsula never occurred. The Chinese did launch a New Year's Eve offensive against ROK units that forced the 8th Army to retreat to a position below Seoul. It was just a few days before this Chinese offensive that the U.S. Army began a period of re-awakening. This revitalization can be greatly attributed to the arrival of General Mathew Ridgeway, who took command of the U.N. forces in Korea following the death of General Walton Walker in a jeep accident shortly after the stunning victories of the Chinese army in November/December. General Ridgeway was an inspirational leader in WW II, and he continued in that mold throughout the Korean War. In staff meetings all the way down to the battalion level, he threatened to remove any officer from command who displayed a defeatist attitude. He demanded a more aggressive army and by mid January he had units probing northward, trying to make contact with Chinese forces.

When the Chinese offensive resumed in mid February of 1951, Ridgeway had stiffened the backs of his unit commanders and the offensive was checked. It is interesting to note that it was elements of the 2nd Army division and the attached Dutch battalion that inflicted heavy casualties on the Chinese in a battle since called the "Wonju Shoot." By stopping the Chinese just north of Wonju, an area that would soon be the jumping off place for the 1st Marine Division, the U.N. command prevented the envelopment of the forces in the Seoul sector. Suddenly, things no longer looked so hopeless.

Meanwhile, the Marine Division was given a mission on January 9, 1951. The 1st Marine Regiment departed first for what would be termed the Pohang guerrilla hunt. By this time intelligence gathering indicated that the 10th NKPA division had been ordered to the rear of U.N. lines with the objective of destroying lines of communication and supply in the Yongdok - Andong - Pohang area. By January 18, 1951 all three regiments of the 1st Marine Division were in position and ready to take on Major General Lee Bau Nam's 10th Division.

What followed the positioning of the Marine Division was not what had been expected. Instead of aggressively attacking U.N. supply lines, the Korean guerrillas tended to stay in the mountains and avoid contact with Marine patrols. The only action of 3/1 occurred on the same day that the battalion arrived at Andong. A patrol that day from an unspecified company "flushed out North Korean troops just east of Andong." The NKPA troops were not eager for a fight, and the Marine patrol had to aggressively pursue them, finally bagging three prisoners.



Map rendered by Col Charles Waterhouse, USMC (Ret)

There is no evidence to suggest that George Company made any contact with the enemy during the time it was deployed at Andong. In fact, there is some substantial evidence to suggest that things were awfully quiet. Cpl. Curt Corbin decided that to relieve the boredom of a quiet sector, a birthday party for one of his comrades would be in order. Let Corbin describe the festivities:

We had been at Andong for two weeks, and we were doing nothing. It was Pfc. Lynch's birthday and that called for a celebration.

Lynch and I went into town and brought back booze for the party. Before long the whole platoon was drunk, even the men on watch.

Lt. Amason inspected the line and found everyone drunk; some who were supposed to

be standing watch had passed out. Sgt. Fedie, who usually didn't drink a drop, got drunk and somehow managed to fall into the head! It was quite a birthday party.

The guerrilla hunt lasted 22 days. As early as February 5, 1951 the Commanding General of the Division, General Smith, indicated that the enemy forces were no longer a threat. The entire anti-guerrilla operation was probably a success in that the enemy's forces were unable to disrupt movement in the area. There is some evidence that the 10th NKPA Division was roughly handled, but the only hard facts regarding casualties are the 120 counted enemy dead and 184 prisoners. Marine casualties were 26 KIA, 10 MIA and 148 WIA. Evidence suggests that the 7th Marines were more heavily engaged than the other two regiments and presumably had a disproportionate share of the casualties. Apparently, there were no casualties in George Company, and probably none in the entire 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines. Finally, at the request of General Smith, the Marines were given a new assignment on February 15, 1951.



Tommy Dunn
KIA Hill 902



Andong Guerrilla Hunt

Pfc Oliver Fuller and Cpl. Billy Phillips at light machine gun emplacement. Note winter clothing and two Korean Burial Mounds in upper left corner



THE CENTRAL FRONT

The 1st Marine Division began its move to the Central Front on February 15, 1951. The initial destination was the vital city of Wonju which had been under heavy Chinese attack from February 11th to the 14th. In this four day period there were 11,800 U.N. casualties and an estimated 20,000 Chinese killed and wounded. Of the 1,900 American casualties, a very large number were from artillery units that had been supporting ROK forces. When the ROKs collapsed, these artillery units were trapped in the narrow valley between Hoeng'song and Wonju and were badly mauled. George Company arrived in this sector even before the grisly task of removing the army dead could be completed. Pfc. Tom Madden had recently joined the company at Masan and was almost overwhelmed with what he observed:

Many of the soldiers had apparently been caught while still in their sleeping bags. I had never seen so many dead men in all my life as there were there. As we entered that small cluster of huts, we found that the gooks had stripped the soldiers naked and spread eagled them on the fences and hung them from trees. If they had been alive when stripped, they would have certainly frozen to death. I remember walking along that trail at that time, sticking my bayonet into gook bodies just to make sure that they were dead.

It was in this valley of death that the Marines relieved the 2nd Army Division and its attached units. "Operation Killer" commenced on February 21st with the 1st and 5th Marines on the line, but with 3/1 in regimental reserve. The Chinese were evidently still trying to recover from the blood bath they had experienced during the "Wonju Shoot" of February 14th and offered little resistance. By February 25th when all offensive operations were halted in order to replenish supplies, fuel and ammunition the two assault regiments had suffered 3 KIAs and 27 WIAs.

For the next two or three days the Marine line remained just south of the destroyed village of Hoeng'song. From this position the Marines could see their final objective for Operation Killer, which was the range of mountains just north of Hoeng'song. Between the 1st and 7th Marines and the next objective was the narrow valley occupied by the debris that was once Hoeng'song and two rain swollen streams that had to be crossed. George Company by this date was moving into position to pass

through the valley and assault the hills that lay directly ahead.

Before G/3/1 jumped off on March 2, 1951 there were some very fundamental changes in key leadership positions. Sometime in mid February, Captain Sitter was returned to the States in recognition of a superb job performed at the Chosin Reservoir and to become the recipient of the nation's highest military award, the Congressional Medal of Honor. Captain Sitter's replacement, Lt. Horace Johnson, had proven his mettle at Hagaru, North Korea when he was awarded the Navy Cross while serving with H/3/1.* While Captain Sitter, S/Sgt. De Loach and a number of enlisted men who had served since the Inchon//Seoul campaign were heading towards Pohang for rotation home, members of the 5th Replacement Draft were on trains heading for George Company.

From the 5th Draft, George Company was to receive two officers who would lead the 1st and 2nd platoons for the next four months, Lt. Tom Reid and Lt. Fred Redmon.



Left - Lt. Fred Redmon - Right - Lt. Tom Reid
Spring 1951

Both men represented the background of the officers who served George Company during the spring and early summer of 1951. For example, Lt. Reid had been an enlisted Marine during WW II and had participated in the island campaigns. After the war he entered college, picked up a reserve commission, married and was all set

*28-29 November 1950 Hagaru-Ri

to enter the legal profession. The Korean conflict changed his plans as it did the plans of so many others.

Lt. Reid and Lt. Redmon had to wonder what their reserve commissions had gotten them into as they boarded the Korean train just outside of Pohang. They were told that trains making the run from Pohang to the Divisional area were frequently attacked by guerrillas. The fact that all the windows were shot out gave mute testimony to what they had been told. All hands were told to "lock and load" and to keep a sharp eye for possible hit and run tactics. Fortunately, no attack was experienced, but Reid recalls that it was damn miserable and cold with the frigid February wind howling through the open windows. Although Lt. Reid survived the train ride without any major problems, his arrival at the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines was a little less than what he had hoped for:

By the time I arrived at Battalion, I had not eaten since I left Pohang. I observed men heating C-rations and decided to follow their example. I found a small empty ration can and filled it with gasoline, lit it and held my beans and franks over the fire. I was doing this while it was dark and some Marine getting off a truck stumbled and kicked the can of gas over, which engulfed my face in flames.

I reached instinctively and threw myself into a shell hole which was full of mud and water. I got the fire out and the only damage was the lost of my eyelashes and eyebrows. Although I must have been a hell of a sight, I reported into Battalion. No one even commented on my appearance, looking like I did must have been par for the course.



Lt. Jim Marsh



Cpl. Philip Heath



John Leeson



Typical Foxhole

"OPERATION KILLER" HILL 303

When George Company was trucked to Wonju on March 1, 1951, almost three months had passed since the company had last engaged the enemy and suffered casualties. To all of the veterans of WW II and previous action in Korea the sights, sounds and even the odor of Wonju told them clearly that the blood letting was about to resume. Three months of inactivity allowed most of the men to push the terror of combat to the dark recesses of their minds, but now they had to come to grips with the knowledge that very shortly they would hear the crack of a sniper's rifle, the angry burst of an automatic weapon and the scream of incoming mortars. They also realized that all of this would be accompanied with the chilling call of "corpsman." Those who gave it some thought took a degree of solace in the fact that most of them would survive any series of engagements unscathed. In addition they realized that if they did end up as a casualty they had roughly an 80% chance of surviving their wounds. This was all well and good, but beyond these comforting statistics was the gnawing fear that they might be included in that small group that never returns to country and home.

These fears and other emotions that are more individual in nature sweep over men on the eve of battle and tend to isolate them and make them uncommunicative. The recently arrived replacements who had not yet experienced combat caught the apprehension of their comrades and wondered how they would perform when "the chips were down." Fortunately, these emotions were quickly subdued as soon as the troops marched off. It is a blessing and a curse that infantrymen must carry arms and ammunition over the most god-awful terrain imaginable. A curse in that total physical exhaustion is experienced on a daily basis, but it is also a blessing in that the pain of blistered and swollen feet, the ache of leg muscles and the throbbing pain in the back and shoulders tends to focus the attention on forcing the body to move forward while reducing fear and terror to a secondary position of importance. Thus it was on March 1, 1951 when the men of George Company heard the familiar cry of "saddle up" as they moved to a ridge line just north of the flattened village of Wonju.

The men dug in and went on 50% alert, enduring a cold, but uneventful night. The bitter cold of November and December in North Korea was over, but the climate of South Korea in March was anything but pleasant. The top foot or so of earth would remain frozen until sometime in April, and in order to dig in, the entrenching tool had to be used as a pick to break through the frozen crust of

earth. The early spring sun was taunting in that its brightness promised warmth that it was unable to deliver, and the cold wind that whipped around the hilltops and through the narrow valleys turned sweat soaked clothing into miserable cold compresses.

When the troops awakened at dawn on March 2nd the hill was coated with a layer of frost. By this time most of the men had reduced their clothing to a bare minimum. Unfortunately, this bare minimum was for forward movement and not for a bone-chilling morning. There was not too much time to dwell on how miserable life was because each man had to roll his sleeping bag, assemble his pack and, if so inclined, eat a biscuit or open a C-ration can. Soon the call to form a skirmish line and to fix bayonets was heard. In only moments G/3/1 was moving down the northern slope of the hill.

About midway down the hill sporadic sniper fire was encountered, but not enough to stall the advance. Supporting fire from our mortars and artillery either permanently silenced or at least discouraged the enemy from firing. As the skirmish line advanced up the hill directly north of it, the men passed a number of enemy dead and enemy bunkers that had been recently occupied. Some of the enemy dead had been hit with napalm and were literally cooked beyond recognition, giving testimony to the effectiveness of the 1st Marine Air Wing. So far so good. The light resistance had caused no casualties, and the men had reached the ridge line of their intermediate objective.

After a short rest which provided the troops a chance to bolt down a can of C-rations, the word was once again passed to move out. A skirmish line was reformed as the company moved towards the small valley below it. The men were moving down the northerly slope of the hill so that there was much more vegetation and many more trees than had been on the reverse slope. The area had been heavily shelled that morning and a grass and brush fire had started in the valley directly in front of the troops. The fire swept up the hill, forcing the Marines to move back to their previous position and allow the fire to burn itself out.

As soon as the brush fire would permit, the assault was renewed. Cpl. Otto Olson recalls that, "we heard small arms 'fire' ahead of us, spooking everyone. This 'rifle fire' turned out to be the ammo and bandoleers of a number of dead Chinese that had been caught in an artillery barrage that morning. The grass fire had been hot enough to cause the ammo to explode."

Finally, the valley was reached and the skirmish line began to advance towards the day's final objective. Once again a handful of snipers and at least one machine gun



Sgt. Kenneth Berry from 60mm mortar. Note rugged terrain

that had been left behind began to zero in on the Marine line. This time luck ran out for a young Marine reservist from New Orleans; Pfc. Lindy Raphael received a mortal groin wound in early afternoon. It was a nasty wound and those that rushed to his side after he went down realized he had little chance to survive. His death was hard on his comrades in the 1st platoon, for he always had a smile on his face and somehow seemed to find humor in the most hellish situations. His infectious laugh would be sorely missed in the weeks to come.

Despite enemy fire the skirmish line moved up the hill. Finally a sniper, probably the one that killed Raphael, was located. He was in a hole with a cover over it. What he would apparently do was push the lid aside, take quick aim, fire off a round and then pull the cover back over the hole. He was eventually spotted and while a few Marines had his position zeroed in, Pfc. Mitch Mitchell (1st platoon) rushed his hole, kicked off the cover and hit the sniper point blank with a burst from his BAR.

At another segment of the advance, the 2nd platoon ran into heavy enemy fire. Pfc. Tom Madden recalls the wounds received by three Marines from that platoon:

Pfc. Donald Kohler was on the point when he was hit. I remember he got it through the mouth, and I believe down through his shoulder. When he came walking by with his tongue or blood clot hanging out, he surely didn't look too good. It was so cold that he wasn't bleeding

very much. Although badly wounded, he managed to keep moving. The next time I saw Kohler was in the hospital in Japan.

Later, as the 2nd platoon was going up the side of another hill, a machine gun hit my platoon leader, Lt. Edward (Dale) Quinlan. It was as if the gooks were trying to cut his legs off as they got him bad in both knees. I spoke to him and saluted him as I went by.

A moment later Pfc. Carl Fisher got hit. I thought it was all over for him, for he got it right in the stomach. Knowing him like I did, it hit home a little harder. When I knelt alongside of him and spoke, he was like the lieutenant, in shock and a little incoherent. I don't believe he knew that I even spoke to him. When I saw him next in the hospital, they had placed his stomach in a bag next to him on the bed, and he smiled and started talking. I just thought to myself how great the doctors and nurses were.

After witnessing the wounds of his comrades, Pfc. Madden came very close to joining them at the regimental aid station. If Tom was a fatalist so long ago, he must have concluded that this bullet just "didn't have his name on it.."

We were coming up another hill, probably in our five yard spacing. I was loaded with gear and ammo for the machine gun, and one of the ammo cans was hanging right in front of my stomach. All of a sudden a gook sniper hits the ammo can which I was carrying against my stomach. The slug he fired was a long one and acted like a dum-dum, going end over end. When one of these hit you, it really tore you up.

The ammo can stopped the slug, but the force of it half turned me around, but I didn't go down and then somebody tackled me. Several men rushed to me to see if I had been hit. It took a moment or two for me to realize I wasn't.

We opened the can and pulled the belt out. It was all torn up, but we found the slug, as it hadn't gone through the can. I still have it as a souvenir.

The 3rd platoon, too, had its share of action on this first day of combat on the central front. Cpl. P.C. (Curt) Corbin describes his experience in most vivid terms:

I was a corporal. I had not been in real battle, not since being up North. Then it came. That morning we jumped off at day light, and in the middle of a 500 yard rice paddy, all hell broke loose. The Gooks were like flies on the hill in front of the 3rd platoon.

My buddies were falling and my squad leader, Sgt. Leonard Fedie, was screaming, "Corbin, move the rest of the squad out!!" I was scared shitless and my Adam's apple was stuck in my throat. When my Adam's apple did break loose I suddenly took off up the hill.

At one point, I heard Edgar LaFleshe, the platoon runner, shout at Sgt. Wilson, "Look out, Gunny, you ran past one." Then Frenchie LaFleshe yelled, "It's OK, Gunny, I just shot his ass off!"

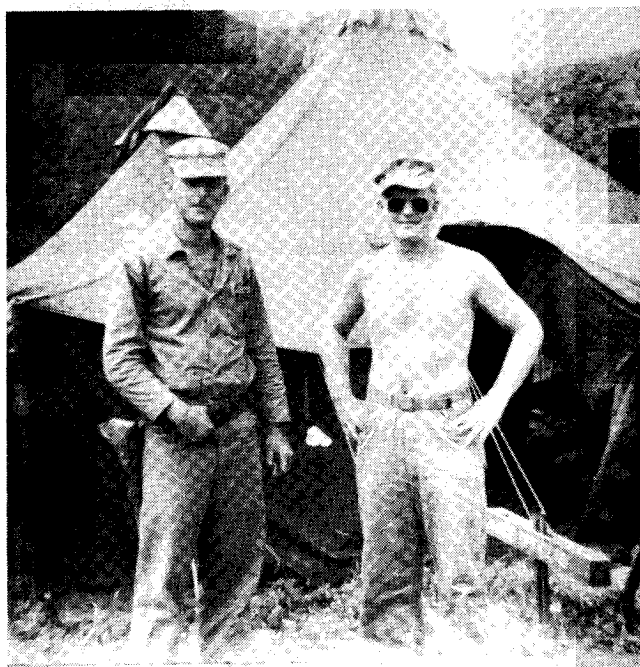
Gunny Gaaei Gets Hit

The company continued to press forward and probably sooner than anyone expected the ridge line of the final objective was secured. The hill contained a number of enemy dead and some well dug in entrenchments. One collapsed bunker apparently held enemy soldiers who were heard hollering for help. Before they could be dug out, all hell broke loose.

It was now late afternoon and even the feeble sunshine had deserted the troops. The wind beat against them and most of them hugged the earth to escape the lashing of the wind. Lt. Tom Reid was sitting opposite his platoon sergeant, T/Sgt. Christian Gaaei, and his platoon runner, Pfc. Steve Olmstead. Reid and Gunny Gaaei had not yet deployed the 1st platoon and were trying to catch their breath after the grueling climb up the hill. Both men were enjoying a sense of relief that the hill had been taken with only light casualties. Lt. Reid soon started up the hill. He had moved perhaps five yards above Olmstead and Gaaei when he heard what he thought was incoming mortars. Instinctively, Reid hit the deck. What Reid thought was enemy fire turned out to be one of those bitter ironies of war.

For some reason, perhaps because George Company had occupied the hill earlier than was thought possible, pre-registered friendly artillery swept the ridge line. T/Sgt. Gaaei took the full impact of the first round. When Reid looked up, he was confused by what he thought was a blanket that covered Olmstead. To his horror, he immediately realized that the blood and clothing of Gaaei was the "blanket" that obscured Olmstead. Pfc. Olmstead was sitting so close to Gunny Gaaei that there is no reasonable explanation as to why he also wasn't killed. But as fate would have it, one man was killed and the other was spared to eventually become a Lieutenant General in the Marine Corps.

Probably two, but possibly three, rounds landed in the 1st platoon sector. Cpl. J.V. Farry, a BAR man and Pfc. Bruce Farr, a machine gunner attached to the first platoon were wounded. Within seconds the artillery shifted to the area occupied by the 3rd platoon and the 60mm mortar section. The last "friendly" shells to land on George Company's position took the lives of two veterans of the Inchon/Seoul and Chosin Reservoir campaigns, Cpl. Donald (Lucky) Henderson and Pfc. Amar Marks. All in



Lt. Redmon (in proper uniform) and Capt. Johnson
CO G Company

all, the day's casualties numbered 4 KIAs and 21 WIAs, roughly 10% of the company's strength of that morning.

The evacuation of Pfc. Bruce Farr gives some insight into the almost impossible terrain that George Company was fighting in. Farr was being carried off Hill 303 towards a helicopter. When the stretcher he was on was about 100 yards from the chopper, the pilot suddenly took off. Farr was then carried to a Marine tank that was already covered with dead and wounded Marines. He was the last man on as the tank took off for the Battalion aid station. To get there the tank had to cross the same river on seven separate occasions.

More Hills and Snipers

Late in the afternoon of March 2nd, three members of George Company, Sgt. Richard Widden, Pfc. Clayton Sepulvada and Pvt. Jim Byrne, arrived at Battalion Headquarters after spending several months in Japan recuperating from wounds and/or injuries. Some time after darkness had fallen, the three returning Marines were trucked up to "G" Company's CP and were told to dig a hole and get some sleep and that they would join their platoons the following morning. Pvt. Byrne sets the stage and describes the action with the following account:

Between March 1st and 3rd of 1951, Pfc. Clayton Sepulvada and I were moving from Pohang, South Korea to an area just north of Wonju in Central Korea. Clayton and I were young reservists and had trained together at Camp Pendleton, became part of the 2nd replacement draft and had been assigned to G/3/1 on or about November 15, 1950. Around

Thanksgiving Clayton had been severely burned in an accident, and on November 29th I had received flesh wounds while serving in "Task Force Drysdale." So after three comfortable months in Japan, we were back in Korea, and it was still damned cold.

We joined the 1st platoon early in the morning of 3/3/51 just as it was getting ready to jump off. The previous day George Company had taken some heavy casualties; consequently, there was a certain amount of tension in the air. But because the attack was imminent, the fear and apprehension was short lived. Our objective was a hill mass (Hill 321) about four or five miles in front of us.

Three months in Japan had left me out of shape, and for some reason I had elected to wear shoe pacs. After a couple of miles of going up and down hills, I was near the point of exhaustion. Finally we reached the edge of a valley that ran east to west and was perhaps a half mile in width. We stopped to reassemble for the rush on Hill 321.

Before we could make our final plunge, a mortar round landed a little behind us. Pfc. Robert "Dumbo" Barber and I found a shallow ditch and took cover. A few more shells landed in the company area, but caused no casualties. During the time the incoming rounds were falling, I looked up and noticed Sgt. "Black" Jones was up on the skyline, scanning our objective with binoculars. He was totally exposed and completely disdainful of the mortar shells. ("Black" Jones, a WWII Marine, received his name so that there would be no confusion between him and Sgt. "White" Jones. The only thing black about Jones was his prominent mustache.)

Eventually, the word was given to move out of the protective hills, cross the narrow valley and take Hill 321. I ran as fast as I could because I didn't want to be in that open valley any longer than I had to. By this time my legs felt like lead and the shoe pacs seemed to weigh 50 pounds a piece. Somehow I managed to reach the top of our objective and dropped to the ground in complete exhaustion. As I lay on my back grasping for air, a sniper must have zeroed in on me because a rifle round came so close that I swear I felt it pass my head. I rolled to my right and fervently hoped that I was no longer in his line of vision.

A moment later "Black" Jones yelled at Sepulvada and me to move with him to the forward slope in order to locate the sniper. Apparently, the sniper was raising hell with an attempt to establish a company CP and orders

were given to the 1st platoon to silence him. Jones searched the area in front of us with his binoculars while Sepulvada and I scanned the area with our eyes. Jones was on my left and Sepulvada was on my right. There was no sequence to the following events; they occurred simultaneously. I heard the crack of a rifle, followed by a hollow thud, which reminded me of a huge paddle hitting a mattress. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Sepulvada fly backwards. I can't remember how Sepulvada was pulled to the reverse slope, but it really didn't matter because he was a KIA the second the round hit him in the chest.

The ironic thing is that the sniper apparently was trying to take out Jones because he had his hands to the binoculars and was an inviting target. Incidentally, we were looking in the wrong direction; the sniper was to our left and not in front of us. His shot missed Jones by inches. The round passed through the left sleeve of the field jacket of Jones, crossed his chest, passed by my face and slammed into Sepulvada's chest. I never quite believed the theory that "the bullet had to have your name on it, and, if it didn't, you had nothing to worry about," but the events of March 3rd made me wonder about it..

About an hour after the death of Sepulvada, a machine gun crew in the 1st platoon area decided they had to take a chance with the sniper in order to get their gun into position while there was still some light left. The sniper had not fired for some time (probably because he didn't have any targets) and there was some hope that he had moved out of the area. Pfc. Ellsworth Hems was using his entrenching tool like a pick to hack away at the frozen earth. All of a sudden, a shot rang out and Ellsworth Hems was knocked off the skyline. The sniper had spoken again!

For the second day in a row, George company was bloodied - - 1 KIA and 8 WIAs.

Enemy Tactics and Snipers

The action of **March 2nd** and **March 3rd** turned out to be the pattern for the entire month. The Chinese winter offensive had come to an inglorious end in the narrow valleys just north of Wonju in mid-February. All across the Korean peninsula the Chinese and their North Korean ally were fighting a delaying action as they retreated northward to reorganize and resupply their units. The U.N. command's strategy was to exert pressure on the enemy as he withdrew in order to inflict maximum punishment and to interfere with his reorganizational efforts. In this broad advance northward, the First Marine Division was given the central front which contained some of the most mountainous terrain in all of South Korea.

The terrain on the central front nullified much of the Division's offensive punch. Mechanized elements, particularly the tanks, were of limited value. In fact, just getting supplies to the rifle companies via trucks often became near impossible because of terrain and poor roads. But while all of this reduced the effectiveness of supporting arms for the Marine infantryman, it made the enemy's strategy all the more effective.

His plan was simple. Leave a handful of men on each hill mass with orders not to retreat until nightfall. Their job was to slow down the Marine advance by inflicting maximum casualties.

So as it was on March 2nd and March 3rd, George Company was fighting a largely invisible enemy during the month of March. The troops would jump off and before long would draw sniper fire. Mortar fire and artillery fire if available would be called in, and with some luck this would take care of the snipers. If this didn't work, then it was up to the riflemen to root them out.

It was all very frustrating to be fired at and not know where to return the fire. In an attempt to even the odds, Lt. Reid's 1st platoon "acquired" roughly twenty BARS (Browning Automatic Rifles). At full strength a rifle platoon has nine BARS, so Reid's platoon was literally armed to the teeth. From early March on, the 1st platoon answered sniper fire with as many BARS as could be given a field of fire. It is uncertain if this firepower caused many enemy casualties, but it certainly made the men feel as if they were striking back. However, there was one major problem in that the 1st platoon was using up an excessive amount of ammunition. Before long, someone at the company level guessed what was happening and had an inventory of weapons taken and the 1st platoon was back to one BAR per fire team.

Another advantage that the enemy snipers had was smokeless powder. This meant that if they were carefully camouflaged they would remain undetected because there would be no tell tale puff of smoke. On either March 2nd or March 3rd, Lt. Reid watched in amazement as a sniper popped out of a spider hole and fired a round that left no powder trace. Reid zeroed in on the sniper's position, waiting for him to come up for another shot. He soon did, but Reid's carbine misfired. Reid never got a second chance because the sniper slipped away without exposing himself again.

Fighting against snipers was compared to fighting against phantoms by one Marine. It was not uncommon during the month of March to take all kinds of small arms fire while climbing the hill, only to find it deserted once the military crest was secured. What made matters worse was that in many cases the snipers that had been shooting at the troops as they climbed the hill had merely moved to the next ridge line and continued to harass the company and inflict casualties while the troops tried to prepare defensive positions for the night. However, the day of March 11th was a different story.

Drive to 38th Continues

Second Lieutenant Fred Redmon's first assignment with the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines was with the heavy machine gun section of Weapons Company. Within two weeks of joining the battalion, Lt. Redmon was transferred to the second platoon of George Company when Lt. Edward (Dale) Quinlan was wounded and evacuated during the fire fight on March 3rd.

Events were happening rather rapidly for Lt. Redmon. When given his new assignment, the 2nd platoon was advancing to a new position, and he had to catch up with it. It was at this time that he met his platoon sergeant, Archie McDonald. Redmon describes the importance of this particular platoon sergeant in the following way. "I found Sgt. McDonald and reported in for a course in Advanced P.L.T. work. We had an immediate understanding of our mission and as a result our relationship was one of mutual respect. This man was, indeed, THE second platoon of George Company. Any successes can be attributed to one hell of a Marine platoon sergeant."

On March 10th Battalion called Lt. Redmon to the CP for a briefing. A rather large enemy force had been detected withdrawing towards Hill 549 which was a hill directly in front of Battalion and commanded any approach up the valley. The mission of the 2nd platoon was to move out the next day as a combat patrol and to engage the enemy. Apparently, Battalion wanted to determine whether the Chinese were withdrawing northward as rapidly as possible or were they planning to stand and fight. It was for the 2nd platoon to find out.

The three rifle squads were reinforced with a light machine gun section and a single tank when the platoon jumped off on the morning of March 11th. The men had to cross a valley floor, which was a maze of rice paddies, before they stopped at the base of Hill 549. Directly in front of the troops were two parallel ridges that ran up to the summit. The ridges were roughly 100 yards apart and were separated by a narrow valley. The plan was to send a squad up each of the ridges, while the remaining squad would advance up the valley. The light machine guns were to be set up on some high ground on the left ridge to give covering fire if needed.

Sgt. Rudy Hand was the platoon guide for the 2nd platoon. Hand had spent three years with the 4th Marine Division in WW II and was a member of the inactive Marine Reserves when the Korean War erupted. Hand spoke for the majority of recalled WW II vets when he said, "You see, I wasn't the happiest Marine in Korea. In fact, I was mad all the time (because) I had just gotten married, bought a new home and then received a call to come back."

Whenever the Marine Corps investigated the performance of the reserves called to duty during the Korean War, the results were always the same. Those who were asked to make the evaluation reported that as soon as the enemy was engaged there was no way to tell the regulars

from the reserves, and Sgt. Hand was no exception at this rule. Hand recalls the initial contact with the Chinese as follows:

There was a well fortified hill in front of us, and I knew taking this hill was really going to be something. We had to cross a clearing at the bottom; we got pinned down and had a real problem trying to move. (Because this operation was a patrol we had) no artillery nor mortar support. Finally, we made it across the base. I don't remember how many were hit, (but I do remember) one guy, Cpl. Dean Reinke, who was shot in the leg. I gave him a shot of morphine and then kept on going up the hill.

Besides Dean Reinke, the WIA list for this day included Edward Burke, Hollis Fuchs, Tom Harder, Tom Madden, John Martin and Dega Netles. What has stuck in Pfc. Madden's mind all these years is the way his comrades took care of him:

There just are not enough words to praise the corpsmen and stretcher bearers. When we moved up Hill 549, the gooks were pounding us. I remember someone hollered, "Papa San's been hit!" (Madden, a WW II Marine, was an ancient 26 years of age). It was either Johnny Corbin, Leonard Hattig or D. Young who dropped down beside me and yelled, "Corpsman."

Without hesitating I saw him come a running, sleeping bag and first aid kit flying in the air. I was put on a stretcher, and we started down the hill. When we reached the base of the hill, a machine gun opened up on us before we could reach the tank that was evacuating the wounded.

The stretcher bearers dumped me in a ditch and jumped in behind me. The machine gun had us zeroed in because it was kicking dirt up all around us. One guy asked me, "Do you think you can run to that tank?" I said, "I don't know, but I'll sure give it a try." Fortunately, a squad of Marines moved past us in the direction of the machine gun. The fire stopped and they got me to the tank. As I was being evacuated to regimental aid, I thought to myself that those stretcher bearers would be right back to gathering up the dead and wounded and bringing them out. They were something else.

As Hand's squad was slowly moving up the valley while under heavy Chinese fire, the platoon's 2nd squad, with Pfc. Andrew Dirga leading the way, moved up the ridge on the right. Redmon and McDonald were with the squad on the left, which also came under heavy fire and

was stalled. Lt. Redmon picks up the sequence of events at this point:

We had some badly wounded men in the valley and although we made great efforts to get them out we lost two men, Pfc. Glenn Byrd and Pfc. Tom Naney.

By this time, Sgt. McDonald had effected a reorganization and had finally gotten our air panel out. We had a SCR 300 radio with us, and we called for an air strike. I'll never forget Sgt. McDonald's warning that "those fly boys are nuts" as we parted to our respective positions. We passed the word that an air strike was on the way. Some of our troops were pulled back and the Corsairs came in with an effective strafing run. We were trying to use the special band on the SCR 300 to talk directly to our friend in the sky. This was very difficult for this infantryman to do when near panic was crowding in. On the last run by the Corsairs, a bomb dropped and landed about twenty yards from my position. I'll be forever grateful to whom ever assembled that piece of ordinance as all it did was make a menacing thud.

The advance was continued as the enemy withdrew while continuing a steady volume of fire. We eventually went through the enemy's positions, and I checked over and under what we had fought so hard to gain. In a short while a runner reached me with orders to withdraw to our position on the MLR. It was difficult to come down Hill 549. It has remained that way ever since.

What Lt. Fred Redmon failed to mention in his account of the March 11th patrol was the fact that he was awarded the Silver Star. A part of the citation reads, "During the reorganization of the platoon, he (Redmon) observed a seriously wounded man lying in an exposed area approximately fifty yards in front of the lines and, in company with another Marine, rushed forward in the face of intense fire to carry the stricken man back to the lines."

On the evening of March 11th, the first platoon was told it would move out at dawn the following day and determine if the enemy still occupied any portion of Hill 549. On the following morning the men of the 1st platoon were out of their sleeping bags before daybreak, some tried to eat, most were too nervous to try much more than some instant coffee and perhaps a cracker. The previous day's casualties, 2 killed and 6 wounded, while moving up the same hill reminded everyone that a small number of the enemy could hold off a much larger group because of the difficult terrain and strong fortifications.

Sgt. Jim Robideau's 3rd squad was given the ridge line on the right side of the valley. There was little or no talking

and no fooling around as the squad moved up the ridge. Every so often Robideau would shout out some instructions, but other than that there was an eerie silence as the squad advanced, waiting for the first shot to be fired and each man hoping like hell that some sniper didn't already have him in his sights. As the squad passed beyond the first line of trenches and bunkers, it became apparent why Redmon's platoon had caught so much hell the previous day. All of a sudden a shot rang out. Pvt. Jim Byrne was out in the open and could only think that unless he could get to some cover fast, he was a goner. Byrne continues, "I scrambled to a protected spot and tried to make some sense out of the situation. It seemed as if all those silent Marines were now shouting all at once, trying to find out what was going on. Before long someone out shouted everyone else and said that everything was OK. Apparently Pfc. Don Kolb, while jumping into a trench that led into a bunker, had fired a round that had hit the rim of his helmet, almost taking the helmet off his head."

Fortunately, that was the only "action" for that day. The climb continued and by mid day the platoon was on top of Hill 549. Now that it was early afternoon, it was time for the rest of George Company to make the climb. The members of the first platoon shivered away about 4 hours of darkness waiting for the Korean laborers to bring up their sleeping bags and packs that were left behind that morning when they went out to make contact with enemy. The Company was put on 50% alert, but the Chinese were apparently several ridge lines away and were still moving northward to reorganize and get ready for their spring offensive.

During the next ten days "G" Company made contact with the enemy but twice. Each encounter consisted of some sniper fire and/or light mortar fire, resulting in the wounding of one Marine, Pfc. Billy Phillips of the 3rd machine gun section. However, another Marine Pfc. Stanley Checki lost his life in a truck accident while returning from Divisional hospital. Checki had landed at Inchon with George Company, had fought his way to Seoul, had survived the Chinese onslaught at the Chosen

Reservoir and had his luck run out on some muddy road a few miles behind the front lines.

On March 23rd G/3/1 engaged the enemy again and for the last time during the month of March suffered 6 casualties, all were WIA's. Based on the MOS numbers of the wounded men, it looks like the headquarters section of the 3rd platoon was sighted by the enemy and received more than its share of incoming fire. It also looks like Pfc. Ed "Frenchie" Lafleshe had forgotten one of the cardinal rules of combat: If you want to stay alive, keep a lot of distance between you and the radioman. Lafleshe was with Gunny Wilson and the radioman while the 3rd platoon was moving through a rice paddy. While in the middle of the paddy, the enemy opened up with small arms fire and mortar fire. The next thing that Lafleshe remembers is waking up in an Aid Station after being knocked out by a mortar shell that landed directly behind him and sprayed the back of his legs with shrapnel.

At the time Pfc. Lafleshe was wounded he occupied a unique position in the 3rd platoon. As he remembers it, the 3rd platoon "was filled with Birmingham (Alabama) Marine reservists. They made me carry the Confederate flag! They always reminded me, a Yankee, that they had given me the honor or raising the "Stars and Bars" whenever appropriate." With this, his second wound, Frenchie Lafleshe was stateside bound, but without the Confederate flag. Another Yankee would have to be found to fill his shoes.

On March 27th George Company received some incoming fire, but suffered no casualties. In less than a week the 1st Marines would be in divisional reserve and the weary Marines of G/3/1 would be given a chance to rest a bit, allow some of the blisters to heal, wash some of the grime off skin and clothing and write a few letters home. The Company had performed well and on occasions had been hit hard. In the 30 days of hill climbing and combat the company suffered 50 casualties: 7 killed in action and 43 wounded in action. This represents a casualty figure in the neighborhood of 22%. The rest would be well deserved.



Lt. Morton (left) Sgt. Steely (right)



Catholic Mass on Mother's Day 1951

APRIL

Chinese Spring Offensive

902 MEDAL OF HONOR

By the time the 1st Marine Regiment went into reserve on April 2, 1951, UN forces had reached the 38th Parallel and the communist North and non-communist South were roughly divided at the same point that they were when the war began. As George Company was trying again to relearn what it was like to be on flat ground just outside of Hongchon, the 5th and 7th Marines were on the "Kansas Line", ready to continue the UN push northward. The assault regiments were scheduled to jump off on April 10th, but at the last minute the attack was called off and activity was limited to small unit patrols.

Everything came to a halt because it became apparent that the Chinese were on the verge of launching their Spring offensive which they proclaimed would drive UN forces into the sea. POW's taken in the early days of April indicated that the main thrust of the attack would be in the Marine sector. All other intelligence gathering supported what the POW's reported, so all units of the Division were

ordered to remain in place; thus, the reserve status of George Company was to last a full three weeks.

Life was relatively pleasant during this three week period. The Company was encamped next to a shallow river which allowed the troops to bathe and wash clothing. An added luxury was a head made out of wood and equipped with several holes. After a month of squatting over shallow holes, this was really living!

The life of leisure did not last very long and in a day's time company streets were established, makeshift pup tents were aligned and the area was policed (cleaned up) on a regular basis. What seemed like an example of cruel and unusual punishment to the infantrymen were the hikes/patrols that went out every other day or so. On those designated days a platoon at a time would be told to move out with full pack and combat gear. The hikes would last the better part of a day, and when the troops got back they were too tired to bitch about the chow or to fantasize about wine, women and song, which is precisely why the Marine Corps in its wisdom insisted on conditioning hikes.



Top Row Left to Right: Cpl. Rudd, Cpl. Wise, Pfc. Keizer, Cpl. Parkin, Pfc. Jacobson, Pfc. Johnson, Pfc. Listerman, Pfc. Faulk, Cpl. French, Pfc. Sullivan.
Second Row-Kneeling: Pfc. Danials, Pfc. DeVries (KIA 4/24/51), unknown, Pfc. Ryan, Sgt. Young. Front Center: Lt. Linseth (KIA 6/6/51).

Despite all of this every man knew that this was a lot better than being on line and the frequent helicopter flights into the Divisional hospital with wounded Marines in the external body baskets reminded everyone that things could be a lot worse elsewhere.

On April 5th, 29 Marines from the 7th Replacement Draft joined G/3/1. One of those replacements, Pfc. C.W. Johnson made some interesting observations during his first few days. He described the appearance of his new comrades as "unkempt and looking like vagabonds." He added that they were "laid back" and had a "don't give a damn attitude." These first impressions did not last long, and he "quickly learned that these hardened Marines were men who could be trusted with his life." He was bombarded with questions like the following: "What's happening in the States? Got any scissors, razor blades, can you cut hair?"

Johnson was assigned to the 5th gun of the 3rd machine gun section of light 30's. Gunner Danny Daniels and Paul Devries became his teachers and mentors. Paul made him wear the Red Rag of George Company around his neck. His training began in earnest. He was constantly reminded that machine gunners last from "6 to 35 seconds in a fire fight" and that a gunner had to respond instantly to any malfunctioning of his weapon. Johnson described what he and other members of the gun section did on an almost daily basis:

We were blindfolded, spun around and set down by either a complete gun or one that was torn down. Conditions were given and we had to take care of the problem. My best time was a minute and 15 seconds to put a gun together and load - not good enough!"

Another training session was thought up at probably the company level, but perhaps at battalion. The idea, apparently, was to find a Marine about the same size as the South Korean who was the interpreter for the company. They would both dress as Korean civilians and at nightfall enter a nearby village to see how easily they might move about and to determine if this might prove to be a way of gathering intelligence. Because Pvt. Jim Byrne at 5'7" was one of the shorter Marines in the 1st platoon, he was asked to be part of the mission:

When the assignment was explained to me, it sounded kind of interesting and I had no objections. Late that afternoon I was given some very dirty and smelly Korean clothing and a 45 pistol to carry up my sleeve. I was briefed on what to do and how to behave, and before long the interpreter and I moved off base.

As we approached the village I became aware that the interpreter was extremely nervous. It was now dark, and I found his

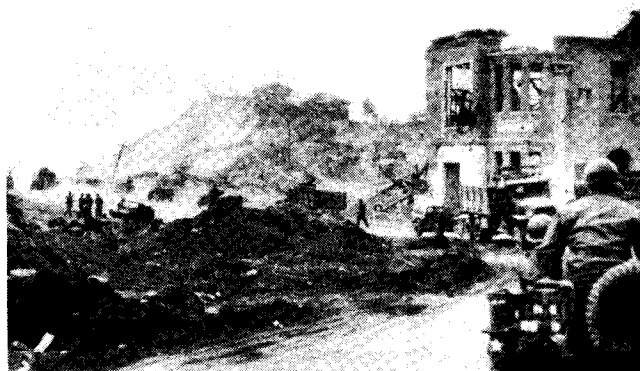
apprehension contagious - although I was uncertain as to why he appeared so agitated. He blurted out that the village probably had communist sympathizers and organizers and that what we were doing was extremely dangerous. In one split second, all the intrigue I felt as a spy vanished. I thought to myself "what the hell did I get myself into?"

As we approached an area with a number of people, they all moved away from us. It was as if we had the bubonic plague and they wanted nothing to do with us. Obviously, we weren't fooling anyone.

We continued on until we came to the end of the buildings and started to return to the base. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see small clusters of people, saying nothing and just looking in our direction. They were too far away to see that I was not Korean, but they sure as hell knew I wasn't one of them.

Either we got lucky or the interpreter was wrong in assuming the place was full of communists because we got back without any problems. I was one happy Marine when I got out of the smelly Korean clothing and put on my equally smelly dungarees.

On April 21st a Chinese attack on elements of the 5th and 7th Marines foreshadowed an end to the reserve status of the 1st Marines. The Chinese were contained by the two forward Marine regiments, but the 6th ROK division on the left flank of the Marines collapsed shortly before midnight on April 22nd. The Chinese spring offensive was in high gear. As ROK soldiers streamed down the valleys in the direction of Chunchon, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines was heading northward to protect the exposed flank of the 7th Marines. The 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines was not far behind.



Bank at Chunchon

On the morning of April 23rd, 3/1 was told to be ready to move out on 30 minutes warning. By 10:35 the battalion had boarded trucks and was heading north, and within an hour crossed the Mojin bridge. While heading

northward, George Company Marines watched the retreat of ROK soldiers from the 6th Division. Major Simmons, the CO of Weapons Company, described them as "completely listless, apathetic and bovine. There was no panic; neither was there any apparent leadership; and the troops rested at will under the trees."

The trucks dumped the 3rd Battalion not too far from the point where George Company would start the ascent of Hill 902. Pfc. Nick Incarnato's 2nd platoon was marching up the road when he became aware of some tanks from the 1st Tank Battalion, but he didn't give it much thought. All of a sudden he heard someone shout out his name. Incarnato remembers that, "I looked over there, and wouldn't you know it. There was my brother; he was a crewman on Tank D-43."



Church services prior to 902. Joe Rinn (right front).

By roughly 1400 hours George Company was clawing its way up Hill 902. There was little doubt that in the next 24 hours there was going to be one hell of a fire fight, so each man carried as much ammo as he could; in some cases rifle men were carrying mortar ammunition as well as their own bandoliers and grenades. The day was hot, each man was carrying between 45 and 90 pounds of equipment and weapons, and the Company was in a race with the Chinese to see who would get to the top of 902 first!

Officers and senior NCO's walked up and down the line yelling at the troops to keep moving. More than one rifleman heard the shout, "God Damn it, Do you want to walk up this hill or do you want to fight your way up it"? Each man knew that the only avenue of withdrawal for the 5th and 7th Marines was the Mojin bridge and that Hill 902 in the possession of the Chinese could easily block that withdrawal. Despite this understanding, the heat of the day and the weight carried took its toll with many a Marine dropping to the ground from exhaustion. However, shortly before dusk, the first elements of George Company reached the summit; stragglers continued to

arrive for over an hour. The race was over; the Marines had won.

Major Simmons described Hill 902 as follows: "902 was a natural fort, a bare pinnacle of rock jutting into the sky. From it ran three ridges: the ridge we were on, a second dropping to the southeast toward the Mojin bridge and a third climbing west to an even higher elevation: Hill 1010. The ridge line to Hill 1010 would be a devil's raceway before the night was out."

Gunny Wilson's 3rd platoon was given the task of defending the center of George Company's line which put his men on the ridge line facing Hill 1010. Sgt. Phillip Corbin placed two of his fire teams from the 1st squad, 3rd platoon out on the ridge line and directly in the path of anyone moving down from Hill 1010. (Corbin was later to remark that, "losing two fire teams out of three is enough to make you remember.") With the outpost was one of the company runners, Pfc. AL Carrano. Pfc. Bill Lantow told an interesting tale to Leatherneck magazine about his experiences on the point that night:

We were both pretty tired. Bill (Pfc. William James), my BAR-man, took the first watch. He asked if he could use my M-1. I gave it to him. Bill had his back propped against the side of the hill at the open end of the tent with my M-1 in his lap, and the BAR right beside him when I got into my sleeping bag.

I fell right off to sleep. The next thing I knew was when the burp gun opened up and some slugs went through the tent. I got out of my bag and jumped towards Bill who was still kind of sitting against the bank. I grabbed him and tried to shake him, but he wasn't asleep. I could feel the blood. (As I reached for my M-1), my hand got knocked away; there was a Chinese standing over me with a burp gun. I thought that he was going to shoot me, too.

There were a lot more gooks around me; I could see maybe 15 or 20 of 'em right around our position. They talked back and forth for a minute, then this first Chink with the burp gun hit me in the face with it and forced me down the hill into the valley.

In the rest of the interview with Leatherneck magazine, Lantow described passing by a machine gun squad rushing towards the Marine positions and observed a Chinese mortar crew swinging into action. He added, "There were gooks all over, moving around the valley and yelling at each other. They looked like they were a little fouled up."

After about 2 hours as a captive, Lantow got his chance to escape. His four or five captors moved into a tight circle and appeared to be arguing about something. All the time that he was a captive, he managed to keep a grenade in his pocket undetected. He decided to take a

chance. He lobbed the grenade into the middle of the group and dove to one side, tumbling down the ridge. Several hours later he made his way back to Marine lines.

Pfc. George Sullivan was an ammo carrier in the 3rd machine gun section and was dug in just behind the riflemen who were first hit by the Chinese. Sullivan had lugged up four boxes of MG ammo up Hill 902 and just had enough time to scrape out a shallow hole before he collapsed into his sleeping bag from exhaustion. He remembers that he was on the verge of dozing off when the Chinese pounced on the forward outpost.

As soon as I realized that the explosion of grenades and the firing of small arms was right in front of our position, I knew that the riflemen just to my front were being hit hard. Perhaps ten minutes after the initial attack, everything became strangely silent. My eyes were fixed straight ahead, trying to pierce the darkness when all of a sudden a figure appeared to my right, standing over my hole. As I tried to swing my carbine around, a Marine to my left fired point blank into the shadowy figure. He flew backwards, and all these years later I can still hear the rustling of leaves and the breaking of twigs as the weight of his body carried him down the cliff-like side of the hill.

The Chinese had not reached our position, but they were within hand grenade range, and a steady stream of grenades kept landing around our position.

Several times when there was a brief lull in the firing, I could hear several Marines groaning and calling for help. Although we tried to get to them several times, we couldn't reach them. Anyone attempting to get to those wounded men would have been cut down after taking a few steps. It was tearing me apart to know that someone was suffering like hell and that I could do nothing about it..

Our machine gun position was now by itself, far out in front of the rest of the company and facing the build-up of enemy forces on Hill 1010. The Chinese were probably no more than 15 yards in front of us and to tell you that I was scared is to completely understate the situation. Before the Chinese could organize and kind of flanking movement, we got word to pull back. We fought the rest of the night, but at least we had riflemen and other machine guns to support us. In our first position, after the squad in front of us was over run, it was just my machine gun crew and the Chinese out in "no man's land."

Sgt. Ron Wyman of the 3rd platoon was just behind and at a slightly higher elevation than the forward squad

and machine gun position that first encountered the Chinese. Let Wyman continue the story at this point:

Behind the 3rd platoon was a sharp rocky cliff about 20 to 30 feet back. The trail down the finger was the only approach into our position from the front.

Right after dark we observed a big fire fight going on to the north, about a mile away. There were lots of tracers arcing out from the hill and many mortar and artillery rounds were going off with the whole area lit up by illumination rounds and flares. Gunny Wilson told us that the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines was in position up there somewhere, and it was probably them. It was a clue as to what we could expect later.

All had been quiet for some time on our hill when we suddenly heard voices to our front, followed immediately by small arms fire and grenade explosions. The firing continued for only a few minutes, then all was quiet again. In a few minutes several men who had been out on the finger began coming back to our main position. They reported that the Chinese had swarmed over their position from the right (north), coming up the hill between them and the company position to their rear.

There had been much confusion because the Chinese were surprised to find Marines occupying the spur. The voices I heard were the Chinese point warning the main body, and the firing was both Marine and Chinese.

Shortly thereafter we began receiving fire from the front, including fire from a recoilless rifle positioned near where our machine gun had been. Much of the fire was going over our position and hitting the cliff face behind us.

After what seemed to be the longest night of my life, the sun finally did come up and began to light up the top of the ridge (Hill 1010) across from us. The sunrise was greeted by two beautiful blue Corsairs zooming over head.

Shortly after daylight one lone Marine came up the hill from the finger. Pfc. Hunter had been cut off when the position was lost and had hidden out in the darkness all night long. The experience had given him a bad case of jitters, and he was quite "shook-up." We had two Hunters in the platoon (Pfc. Donald Hunter and Pfc. John Hunter) at this time and to distinguish between them we called this one "Jumpy Hunter" from then on out..

There were plenty of heroes to go around that night, but the actions of one man stand out. Based on one

account after another, it appears that Gunny Wilson's leadership kept the perimeter intact and prevented the Chinese from driving a wedge in the Battalion lines. Major Simmons of Weapons Company beautifully describes the "gallantry and intrepidity" that Gunny Wilson displayed and which earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor:

Technical Sergeant Harold E. Wilson was at the apex of the attack. Crawling from foxhole to foxhole, he was hit almost immediately in the right arm. His arm useless, a second bullet caught him in the leg. With his line being chopped to bits in the meat grinding attack, he fed in his support squad, getting hit again in the left shoulder and forehead. A platoon from How Company was hurriedly shifted to bolster his position. While guiding them into his lines, a mortar blast knocked him down, and a fragment cut his cheek.

Doughty Sergeant Wilson was not through yet. Wounded in five places, he went forward at first light with his platoon leader to drag the bodies of the four Marines who had been killed in the outpost. Then, and only after he had helped reorganize his shot-up platoon, he allowed himself to be taken to the rear.

Although there is no question that Gunny Wilson was in the "eye of the storm" and that his performance was an inspiration to all, each man who stood and fought contributed to the Marine Corps tradition of dogged determination. The story of one ammo carrier, Pfc. C. W. Johnson, illustrates this commitment to duty:

We gained the high ground at dusk. Some enemy troops were observed in the valley, but they were too far to shoot and it was too late for an air strike. Everyone spread out according to job and assignment. A fire team went down the slope in front of the 5th gun, and the 6th gun was to over shoot the 5th gun from a rocky ledge about 15 to 20 feet higher on the forward slope.

I tried to take a quick break and eat something - forget this! Gunner Danny Daniels spotted some Chinese running and cut them into pieces at the waist. Just after Daniels and Devries shifted the gun to a better position, a mortar round hit a shelter half where the gun had been less than a minute before.

The 5th gun had to be moved up onto the rocky ledge to the left of the 6th gun. Pfc. George "Jake" Jacobson and I covered the move. Once the gun was set up, Daniels called for us to join him on the ledge. Jacobson went up first, and when I started up, I got hit in the knee.

Gunner Daniels and his assistant, Paul Devries, were raking the knoll where our fire team had been. The return fire of the Chinese was very heavy, and a Chinese manned American BAR was particularly effective against us. I was suddenly aware that the enemy was coming up under me from the left side. When I fired at them, the Chinese soldier firing the BAR would open up on me. At one point, a rifleman got too close to the edge while trying to get a better position to fire downward, and he was shot from below. He fell over the ledge - dead. Within minutes I heard the BAR that was harassing us misfire. The yell from Danny and Paul wasn't needed, for as soon as that BAR misfired, I was clawing my way to the top.

My knee locked straight out. Paul Devries and Wayne Rudd pushed me down low and bandaged my leg. Then they moved me to a depression behind the gun. From this position I watched tracers passing over my head by 20 or 30 inches.

I noticed two corpsmen huddled in a depression near the 5th gun. A mortar round hit between them. Sleeping bag and feathers went everywhere. One corpsman had one hand and arm messed up. The other was also hurt. They (one of the corpsmen was HM Norman Leeson) continued to do their job with top class. Now I realized what was meant by saying, "Don't mess with the Docs, unless you want to start a war." They were the greatest of the great. I heard they were up for Silver Stars: I voiced my approval.

By this time the machine gun served by George Sullivan had been placed in a new position. Pfc. Joe "Bo" Faulk, Cpl. Marvin Ryan and Pfc. George Sullivan were behind the gun most of the night while enemy fire and mortars raked the 3rd platoon's position. Word came down to Sullivan that Pfc. Paul Devries had been killed and had this effect on Sullivan:

No, I thought, Not Paul! Devries, Faulk and Jack Daniels and I had been very close buddies. When we broke camp that morning, I had told Paul that it was my turn. I had been lucky up to now, but I thought that this day would be my last. I had come through the Reservoir campaign unscathed, except for a slight case of frostbite, fought through Operation Killer still all in one piece, but on this morning I was really depressed.

Paul answered, 'George, no way are you going to get it. Just keep telling yourself that

you will make it.' That was the last time I had a conversation with him.

Later that night or more likely the early morning hours of the next day, George Sullivan and two other machine gunners became casualties. Sullivan remembers the sequence in this way:

During a heavy enemy grenade attack, I suddenly felt a stinging sensation in my right leg. 'I've been hit,' I yelled. Faulk asked me how bad it was. I felt my leg and came up with only a small amount of blood on my hand. 'I'm OK,' I answered.

Minutes later, Ryan screamed, 'I'm hit! Help me!' He had caught a bullet in his right shoulder. Faulk and I had to lift him out of the hole, and he was heavy, about 180 pounds.

About ten minutes later, Bo Faulk grabbed his head with both hands. He'd been hit in the head. A bullet had peeled back his scalp. The blood flowed down his face. "He's dead," I thought. A sergeant, whose name I have forgotten, and I got him out of the hole.

The sergeant then got in the hole with me and we used up almost all of our ammo. When daylight came, we pulled back.

The first thing I did when we began to pull back was to look up Bo Faulk. I found him. He was partially paralyzed, but otherwise seemed

OK. Two other Marines and I put him on a poncho and got him back down the hill where a medical team took over.

While the Navy "Docs" have always held a position of high esteem in Marine Corps tradition, they don't usually get a chance to add their own perceptions to fire fights. It is appropriate at this time to see events unfold through the eyes of HM Norman Leeson:

I left my hole and went to help a couple of wounded and to check on the gunner of the light machine gun. The call, "Hey, Doc, Devries (Pfc. Paul Devries) has been hit" made me hurry. Indeed, he had been hit; he was dead. I tried to move him to be certain, and the gun shifted on its base. Someone yelled to keep that damn gun firing.

I pulled the gun back and fired it. It seemed like years, but no doubt no more than a minute or so before they got someone to take over. I crawled back up the ridge to my hole.

The stuff got real heavy, more mortars and grenades, this time White Phosphorous. Pfc. Joseph Caruso was in the next hole and someone had left some mortar ammo just above our holes. He must have noticed it too, as he exposed himself numerous times trying to remove it.

Caruso was hit and died almost immediately. Another Marine crawled into the hole. He was followed by a grenade that sparked on the edge of the hole. I grabbed his helmet and jerked his head to one side and ducked. He received a wound in the arm and one in the stomach. I was very lucky with only a few small fragments and two dents in my helmet.

At about the time that Caruso was killed, a Chinese soldier, perhaps wounded, crawled right up towards me. Initially, I thought he was one of us, but the dog ears on his hat gave him away. I had never killed anyone face to face. I was overcome with stark, but controlled terror. 45's will jam, G.I. shovels don't. I dispatched this same Chink at least three times.

I was jerked out of my fox hole by a mortar round. I can remember the sky getting lighter and the pain in my leg that gave way under me when I came back down. It was only badly twisted and still there.

I found out later that I was reported KIA, MIA and all sorts of things. One thing is for sure. I would have never made it had it not been for previous Marine training and the quality of the officers and men that were there



Pfc. Joseph Caruso and Sgt. Young in background.

with me. I'm sure God loves the ones that didn't come back and must have blessed us that did. Only "He" and those of us who survived remember that rock called Korea.

The 3rd platoon with its attached machine gun bore the brunt of the Chinese attack. Most of the casualties were from that platoon; however, not all of them were. Lt. Fred Redmon's 2nd platoon was on the left flank of the company and the following recollections of Pfc. Nick Incarnato indicate that some of the fighting spilled over to that flank:

That night I shared a hole with Pfc. Arthur Costello. There was a guy a few holes up from us by the name of Lumbis (Cpl. Emil Lumbis). He kept yelling, "We need grenades, pass more grenades up here, we need more grenades!"

In a hole maybe 5 yards away there were two other guys. I don't remember who one of them was, but the other guy got shot in the throat. Boy that bullet . . . You could here it smack when it hit him. His name was Decker (Pfc. Charles Decker).

The company CP was on the reverse slope of 902, just behind the rocky cliff. As part of the CP personnel, Cpl. Ed Goodwin had scratched out a shallow hole. Goodwin recalls "The wounded streaming by my hole on their way to get first aid. The one man (that) I knew well was Al Carrano (who) was dragging himself, as he was in bad shape with both legs and an arm shot up."

The ridge line facing Hill 1010 might have been the "devil's raceway," but it was the reverse slope of 902, somewhere near Cpl. Goodwin's hole, that for a few minutes could be termed the "devil's boiler room." Sometime during the worst part of the fire fight on the ridge line, an army artillery unit in support of the 3rd Battalion let loose with a volley of rounds that hit in the middle of the CP area.



L
J
J
Left to Right: Unknown, Pfc. Cranfill, Cpl. French, Pfc. Johnson, Pfc. Jacobson (in bed) at hospital in Yokosuka Japan after Hill 902.

Pfc. Joseph Bell, who had served with the 1st platoon since the invasion of Inchon, had just recently been transferred to Battalion because he was scheduled to return to the States within a week or so as part of the normal rotation program. With the Battalion heavily engaged and with casualties mounting, Bell was recruited as a stretcher bearer and sent to the area where the action was heaviest, the reverse slope of 902's peak. While waiting for a call to carry out any wounded Marine, a barrage of our own artillery shells covered the supposedly safe side of the hill. Pfc. Bell as a rifle man survived Inchon, Seoul and East Hill, to name just a few of the battles, unscathed, but as a stretcher bearer he lost one of his legs above the knee. The bitter irony is that Bell had been transferred to Battalion because it was thought he would be safer there while filling in the last few days of his Korean duty.

At the crack of dawn, Gunny Wilson and Cpl. Goodwin made their way towards the outpost that was facing Hill 1010. Goodwin remembers that the two of them went out "under a cover of small arms fire to retrieve the KIA's (from the outpost) that had been overrun during the night. We had covering fire, especially from a heavy 30 cal machine gun which worked over a bunker hot spot on the point. We retrieved two of the KIA's. They were still half out of their hole as a mortar round had landed right between them on the parapet. They were big men and difficult to get back to our lines."

The 3rd platoon had received so many casualties the night of April 24th that it would not have the manpower to defend the same area another night. At this point in time the assumption was that the 5th and 7th Marines were still north of the Mojin bridge and that 902 would have to be defended for an indefinite period of time. With this in mind the 2nd platoon was instructed to move from its position on the left flank and move into the 3rd platoon's sector. Lt. Redmon reports that he went up on the battleground and met with T/Sgt. Wilson. Redmon adds, "I will always remember him looking out at me from under his cap and noticing the weary eyes and exhausted gaze. I noticed, also, the bullet hole right through the brim of his cap! It had been a long night, and one that no one on that hill will ever forget!"

Before the 3rd platoon could be relieved and before all the dead and wounded were evacuated, word was flashed to battalion headquarters that the mission was accomplished and that the 3rd battalion was to withdraw to new defensive positions. Disengaging from an aggressive enemy is always an extremely difficult task and getting off Hill 902 was as dangerous as any withdrawal could be. Because Lt. Reid's 1st platoon was not engaged with the enemy on the previous night, it was given the job of being the rear guard for the battalion. Reid picks up the story at this point:

We moved down to the 3rd platoon's positions as the KIA's and WIA's were being

evacuated. At about the same time the engineers destroyed the ammunition that could not be carried out.

I don't recall any communication other than by word of mouth, and we were told to hold the crest of the hill until we got word to withdraw. An air strike had been called in, and we were told to get to the reverse slope. That is where we were when the Corsairs came directly overhead. They made strafing runs on the Chinese on the opposite ridge line and the saddle. I recall the casings from the 50 cal. machine guns hitting all around us. I was very concerned that we would take casualties because the casings were probably going about 300 miles an hour. I remember vividly trying to get my entire body under my helmet.

The word was given to withdraw, but not all the KIA's had been evacuated. Pfc. Jim Byrne and Pfc. Willie Laughrey were trying to carry a dead Marine in a poncho. Byrne remembers that "our artillery, mortars and machine guns were firing in the direction of Hill 1010 and the Chinese were firing at us. It was extremely difficult to carry the body because we had to move down off the ridge line and it was so steep that we kept losing our footing. Several times the body fell out of the poncho, and we had to reposition him and start again. You have to realize that I was carrying an M-1 and Willie was carrying a BAR. We were both loaded down with ammo and grenades, and that dead Marine must have weighed about 170 lbs. If we had had a stretcher it might not have been so bad, but ponchos don't have handles. After about 20 minutes of this torturous movement down the hill, some Korean laborers with stretchers took the body off our hands."

The KIA carried by Byrne and Laughrey was one of almost 100 dead and seriously wounded Marines that were carried off hill 902 while under fire from a pursuing enemy. Major Simmons has stated that "the Chinamen



Robert Erwin, Joe Sagan, Speedy Wilson, and Joe Rinn on liberty from the hospital at Otsu in the Grand Kyoto Hotel, Japan.

knew what we were up to, and started down the ridge line after us. Our artillery attempted to keep a screen of fire between us and them, but the Chinese accepted their losses and continue to come."

The ridge line that was the route of withdrawal was 3 miles in length. It swooped down and then up, every 300 to 500 feet, to intermediate crests. At each of these intermediate crests a light machine gun with rifle men in support would fire up the ridge line and allow another group of machine gunners and rifle men to set up on the next crest down the hill. In this "leap frog" fashion the 1st platoon and its attached machine gunners moved down the ridge until they came under the protection of the heavy 30 cal. machine guns. Pfc. Jim Byrne remembers vividly an episode on one of the intermediate crests:

Cpl. Donald Plott set his light 30 machine gun right on the crest of the ridge line. I moved off to his right about 12 feet, which put me off the middle of the ridge. At the time I thought that probably every Chinese soldier in front of us would be firing at Plott.

As the rifle squad and machine gun crew in front of us started its retrograde movement, Plott's gun started to sweep the area in front of him. I don't suppose we were firing for more than about 20 minutes when we were given the order to withdraw. I didn't have to hear that order more than once, and I moved out like a bat out of hell.

When I reached the relative safety of the next position I dropped to the ground. Perhaps a minute or two later, Plott and his assistant gunner joined me. He turned to me and a few other riflemen and said, "Where the hell were you guys"? I suddenly realized that we got the hell out of there as soon as we could, but Plott and his assistant had to spend extra time disengaging the gun. Obviously, we should have waited until he had moved out. Plott was one hell of a Marine and immediately dropped the subject. But he was right and it has bothered me to this day.

The forced march up 902 had been excruciating, but the withdrawal down the hill was even worse. It was a hot, sunny day, and there probably wasn't a Marine coming off that hill who had a drop of water in his canteen. In many, if not most cases, Marines had used up their water in the grueling climb on the way up or shortly after they reached the top. With each burst of energy on the way down, parched lips and dry mouth became more pronounced. Tongues felt swollen and talking became almost painful. The fact that the Pukhan River was visible in the valley below only made the thirst more unbearable.

About mid way down the hill, just when you thought that with swollen tongues and pursuing Chinese things

could not get worse, they got worse. Lt. Reid with the rear guard platoon glanced skyward and saw Corsairs approaching:

I thought the first plane was making a run to separate friendly from foe. Boy, all of a sudden he let go with his rockets and his machine guns. He started to hit the ridge line where all our troops were. He didn't realize we were friendlies; he thought we were Chinese, probably because the Chinese were so close to us . . . I had never been rocketed before, and those rockets of the Corsair made a terrifying, ear piercing sound. It was really demoralizing to be hit by your own planes, but our panels were spread out, and the second pass was never made.

Cpl. Ed Goodwin was in the middle of the column and was very close to the point where one of the rockets hit. He recalls the following sequence of events:

The ground all around me seemed to explode. The man just in front of me was the Korean interpreter, Kim. He had half of his foot blown off in the strafing. I bandaged his foot best I could, field stripped his weapon and others, threw the dismantled weapon off the ridge, loaded Kim and his pack on my back and got him down the ridge where some stretcher bearers took over.

The ordeal was soon to be over and G/3/1 passed through the lines of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines. Sgt. Ron Wyman remembers "starting down off the ridge toward that cool stream. As we neared the water the pace quickened as hot, thirsty Marines smelled that water. We hit the water with canteens and mouths open and I, for one, drank plenty of that cool, refreshing, dirty old Korean river water. I wonder if the case of intestinal parasites I later developed could be traced to that lapse of good sense?"

On the night of April 25th, the 3rd Battalion was tied in with the newly arrived 2nd Battalion and was in a much stronger defensive position. The Chinese offensive was still in progress, but had failed once again to trap the 5th and 7th Marines which were able to withdraw through the 1st Marines lines. That night there was considerable activity in front of George Company's lines in an attempt to draw fire, but when that failed, the Chinese did not mount an assault.

The next morning broke bright and clear. About mid-morning, Cpl. William "Red" McLaren was looking through the scope of his "03" sniper rifle and saw some movement in the valley below near some brush and scrub pines. He continues:

It looked to me as if someone was checking communication wire. He'd walk a while, check the wire, walk some more, then look around. He repeated this pattern several times, so I relayed this information to Lt. Reid. He got his binoculars and confirmed that it was the enemy, probably checking wire.

We decided this might be a good opportunity to do a little sniping. He passed the word down the line that we would be doing a little firing and to hold any other fire.

It was a long shot; I estimated, and Lt. Reid estimated, that it was about 1,000 yards. I felt like I needed someone to spot for me because at this distance, I was sure I would be off target.

Lt. Reid was watching as I cranked off the first round. A puff of dust was a little to the right and a little high. Lt. Reid relayed this information to me. I made an adjustment and fired again. This shot was two feet to the left, but with the correct elevation.

The guy stopped, looked around and didn't seem able to figure out what was going on. I think he heard the impact, but wasn't getting the report until way after the impact, so he was a little bit confused as to what was going on.

At this point, I felt, well, I hope this next one is going to be the one that gets him. I fired again, and this time hit him in the leg. He went down, and a moment later you could see the white of the bandage he was putting on his leg. He then crawled up to the bushes, almost out of sight. I put my scope on him, fired a couple more rounds and saw no more movement.

I turned to Lt. Reid at this point and said, "That was for Norris!" Pfc. Walter Norris was a home town buddy of mine who was killed on Hill 902.

Although the Chinese offensive had little success in the 1st Division's sector, they had penetrated on the left flank of the Marines and it became necessary for the entire division to move farther southward. Lt. Fred Redmon picks up the sequence of events at this point:

Anyway when the word came to pull out we were told that we - the 2nd platoon - would be the rear guard (for the battalion). Major Trumpeter laid out the greatest plan to get us out of there. There was a Bailey bridge across the river. The Army had built it, and they were going to blow it up once the rockets had expended their ammunition in a barrage.

That was the plan - the battalion was to pull out over the bridge. We were to stay in place until after these rockets had fired their

mission and cleared the bridge. Then we were to leave our position on the ridge, cross the bridge, set up to cover the Army engineers while the bridge was blown up, and then start down the MSR in the rear of battalion.

Great plan! I'll never forget sitting on the ridge line while all the people were heading out. (As the withdrawal started, I kept) checking north of my position for any enemy activity. When all of this was going on, I looked down to the rear about the time the Army engineers blew up the bridge!!

Anyway we ended up coming down the hill, fording the river at dusk, getting to the south side and on down the road to Chunchon. A long walk, but we were all dry when we got to the outskirts of that destroyed city after marching all night.

For the rest of April, George Company prepared defensive positions and braced itself for another Chinese attack, which never materialized. The first phase of the enemy's spring offensive had made some gains and had forced the 1st Marine Division to fall back when its left flank was exposed, but the withdrawal was superbly executed and the enemy paid a high price for its advance. Late in April as the 3rd Battalion made its orderly withdrawal, Major Simmons summarized the critical 48 hours (April 24th to the 26th) in the following way:

We had taken extremely heavy casualties, but we had beaten the Chinese and sent him sulking back into the mountains. And if, by any chance, he might have had the misconception that he had won a temporary advantage, we set him straight by posting our withdrawal route with cardboard signs which read in English, Korean and Chinese:

We, the U.S. Marines, will be back!

During the month of May, the 1st Marine Division spent most of its time preparing for a massive Chinese offensive that never materialized. By April 26th the first phase of the Spring offensive had run out of steam, and the Chinese had all but broken contact with the Marine division. By this time the action had shifted to the area above Seoul. May Day (May 1st) is a communist day of celebration and it appeared that the enemy was trying to capture the South Korean capital to coincide with May Day celebrations throughout the world. In this attempt

during the last few days of April they were soundly beaten by U.N. forces.

By April 30th the 5th Marines, 7 Marines and the KMC regiment had taken up positions on No Name Line. The 1st Marines went into reserve near Hongchon. The initial thrust of the enemy's Fifth Phase Offensive had been a serious defeat with Chinese and North Korean losses estimate in the 70,000 to 100,000 range. As the Marines dug in on No Name Line they were fully aware that the Chinese still had 17 fresh divisions for the second round which could come at any time.

For the first two weeks of May the Marine division worked on preparing defensive positions for the expected attack. Eighth Army intelligence had detected a movement of enemy troops from the western area (Seoul) to the east. The assumption was that the Chinese were going to take on the Marines again, but, instead 125,000 Chinese troops on May 16th attacked on the east coast which was defended by ROK forces. The ROK forces were initially swept aside, which exposed the right flank of the 2nd Army division.

For the most part Marine positions were avoided by the Chinese during this phase. However, on May 17th an enemy force, almost by accident, hit the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines which occupied a position roughly 2 miles in front of the No Name Line. By the time the surprised Chinese unit was able to disengage they had lost 112 counted dead, 82 prisoners and a large quantity of supplies. 3/7 in this same fire fight had 7 KIA and 19 WIA.

In a series of maneuvers the Eighth Army moved units, including elements of the Marine division, to take the pressure off the 2nd Army division. On May 20th a battalion of the 5th Marines was in positions that the Chinese were unaware of and the Chinese suffered huge casualties for their lack of intelligence. Except for these two limited engagements, the Chinese offensive had by passed the 1st Division. By May 21st Chinese forces had suffered a decisive defeat in their spring offensive, and they were extremely vulnerable to a U.N. counter attack.

The Eighth Army counter attack was launched, and in the last week of May Chinese forces were under pressure everywhere. Chinese casualties during the last phase of the spring offensive numbered an additional (estimated) 105,000 which included 10,000 POW's. The Chinese successes of November and December 1950 had created an arrogance that led them to believe that American soldiers and Marines were no match for them and that they would push the entire U.N. command into the sea. The Chinese and their North Korean ally were so badly punished in April and May of 1951 that this dream was abandoned, for by this time they realized it was one thing to encircle badly extended American units and through the element of surprise gain the advantage as they had in the winter of 1950, and it was quite another thing to push aside a U.N. command that expected an attack and was positioned to make them wish the attack had not been ordered.

George Company suffered no casualties during the month of May, but that is not to say that there were no tense moments. Just waiting for the big attack while digging deeper and deeper into the earth created enough anxiety in itself. The fact that No Name Line had been occupied earlier in April by another Marine unit that had placed anti personnel mines all over the terrain made for some additional concern and caution. Let Lt. Reid describe a particularly harrowing moment as his platoon moved into an area that previously had been mined and fortified with barb wire.

I was walking along, trying to figure out where to set the troops. All of a sudden I felt something tighten on my shin. I stopped dead still, and I looked over to the right and noticed a booby trap. The grenade was taped or wired to a tree about shoulder height, and the trip wire was run back and up the tree. I froze. I stared at the grenade and slowly backed off. When I went over to check the grenade, as I remember, it was one of our frag grenades. I realized that I was fortunate in that someone had left the pin legs slightly spread apart. If this person had done his job properly, and thank God he hadn't, I would have been a statistic.

Perhaps a day after Lt. Reid's encounter with the booby trap, Lt. Swanson, company commander of Item Company, was in front of his company position with one of his platoon leaders and a lieutenant from the 1st Engineers. It was now May 15th, and the battalion was pretty well dug in. As the three officers moved about on the left flank of George company's 1st platoon, one of the men tripped a "Bouncing Betty." Lt. Swanson was killed immediately and the two officers with him were wounded. Four hours later an engineer team in the 3/1 sector exploded a mine, killing one man and wounding two others. Although not under direct ground attack, the uncharted mine fields and an unidentified aircraft that dropped six small bombs or hand grenades on 3rd Battalions positions the morning of May 15th kept George Company Marines anything but complacent during the first two weeks of May.

On May 18th the 3rd Battalion was relieved by 2/7. The Marines of G/3/1 began their march to a new location sometime in mid-morning. Pfc. George O'Connor of the 2nd squad, 2nd platoon remembers an incident that apparently moved a grizzled old gunnery sergeant who had probably spent over half his life serving the Corps:

We were being pulled out of one section of the front where we were in a blocking position and were going to be moved to another section. It was a cold, foggy and rainy day. As we passed Battalion CP, a gunnery sergeant from

the CP said to pass the word, "You can reenlist for six years without a physical exam." He sounded like he was serious. Not to worry, the various members of the column yelled what they thought of the idea, and some began to sing, "When the war is over we will all enlist again etc." finally a large group in the column began to sing the Marines Hymn. The gunnery sergeant was overcome with pride and respect!

Cpl. Heath Patrol

On May 23rd the 1st Marines and 5th Marines jumped off on the U.N. counter offensive, but with 3/1 in regimental reserve. On May 26th the entire 1st Marines went into reserve after being relieved by the KMC. In order to understand a rather interesting one-man "patrol," it is necessary to recall that the area where George Company went into reserve on May 26th had been but a few days before a staging area for the Chinese offensive. With this in mind the one-man patrol of Cpl. Phil Heath of the 60mm mortar section is of interest:

In late May we went into an area in which the enemy had been (supposedly) cleared. There were stacks of new enemy weapons which still had grease on them.

Most of us were looking for souvenirs. I went out alone, armed with a carbine and 25 rounds of ammo. I was in a wooded area, and I saw an enemy soldier coming down the road. I waited until he was close and then stepped out and took him prisoner. We started towards our camp when he started talking some English. I asked him if he had friends back in the woods, and he said there were four. I thought this would be something to make my parents proud of me. As we were walking towards his camp, I became very nervous because his mood was becoming happier. I thought this might be a trap to capture me, so we turned around and headed for our camp again. We talked some, and once again I thought maybe there were only four and I could bring them in. Once again, we started to his camp.

As we neared his area, I placed myself behind a large boulder and had him call to his people. I was more than a little frightened when I saw a number of people come out of a house with their hands up. I told him to have them strip to the waist. I had these people sit in the road to be counted, and he asked me to go to a bunker where his four friends were. I got behind the entrance, and he called them out. They came, looked at me and started bowing. When I finished getting them together there were thirty-two of them. Two had been

badly burned, so we made a stretcher and started back to our lines.

At this time, I again became frightened when I thought about Marines who might see a platoon of Chinese soldiers coming towards them. I started calling to let them know I was a Marine with thirty-two prisoners. At the camp, some officers took over, and I was dismissed. No thanks - no medal, but I was alive. Stupid, but alive, without even enough ammo to kill all of them.

The Battalion Historical Diary for the month of May, 1951 carries this interesting report on activities of May 26th, "Six squad size reconnaissance - security patrols were dispatched to comb the ground surrounding the assembly area. As a result of these patrols, 37 POW's were taken without the enemy putting up a fight. Two horses were taken and large quantities of supplies were discovered."

It doesn't take too much reading between the lines to realize that the officer in charge of preparing the Historical diary thought it was best to inform those at higher levels that the prisoners were taken by patrols. Think how it would look at regimental headquarter if the report read, "a lone corporal, armed with a carbine and looking for souvenirs, rounded up 32 of the 37 POWs on this day."

On May 30th, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines was told to prepare to relieve elements of the 7th Marines. The move in the direction of the front was on trucks, but took some ten hours because of "heavy rains, road washouts, temporary bridges, and one way control."

The 3rd Battalion remained in position on May 31st. A patrol to Hill 874 which was directly in front of 3/1 discovered 15 enemy dead and supplies and ammunition. At roughly noon on the 31st, George company observed gun flashes from a Chinese battery directly to the north. Lt. Reid recalls that it was about his time that artillery brought up "flash-bang" teams. Reid adds that "we were instructed to count from the time we saw the flash until we heard the bang. This time sequence was then relayed to the artillery FO." As a result of this "flash-bang" technique, the enemy battery was silenced and according to battalion "the destruction (of the enemy battery) was confirmed by OY report."

Despite a few close calls, George Company had a relatively easy time in May. This was not the case with the 7th Marines and 5th Marines who suffered most of the 83 KIAs and 731 WIAs during May, with most of the casualties occurring in the last week of May. It would be accurate to say the G/3/1 was not put to the test in May; however, it would be a far different story in June.



Sgt. Sparu, Cpl. English, Pfc. Powers, Pfc. Hasselbach, Pfc. Hassel, Pfc. Tex, Pfc. Ford, Pfc. Graion



Cpl. Loraine English, Squad Leader after Hill 902



Cpl. Wilbur after Hill 902



Hill 902 area with a few live rounds overhead



G/3/1 Corpsman



G/3/1 Corpsmen

JUNE AND JULY 1951

The First Marine Division jumped off from a position just north of Hongchon on May 23rd. By May 31st the assault regiments had covered about three miles and had reached the southern edge of Yang-gu on the eastern edge of the Hwachon Reservoir.

commissars holding life and death authority over them. Any NKPA soldier suspected of trying to shirk his duty or escape was certain to be shot like a dog. At least the man on the firing line had a chance to come out alive; the man who defied the system had none." (Page 132, Vol. IV—U.S. Marine Operations in Korea)

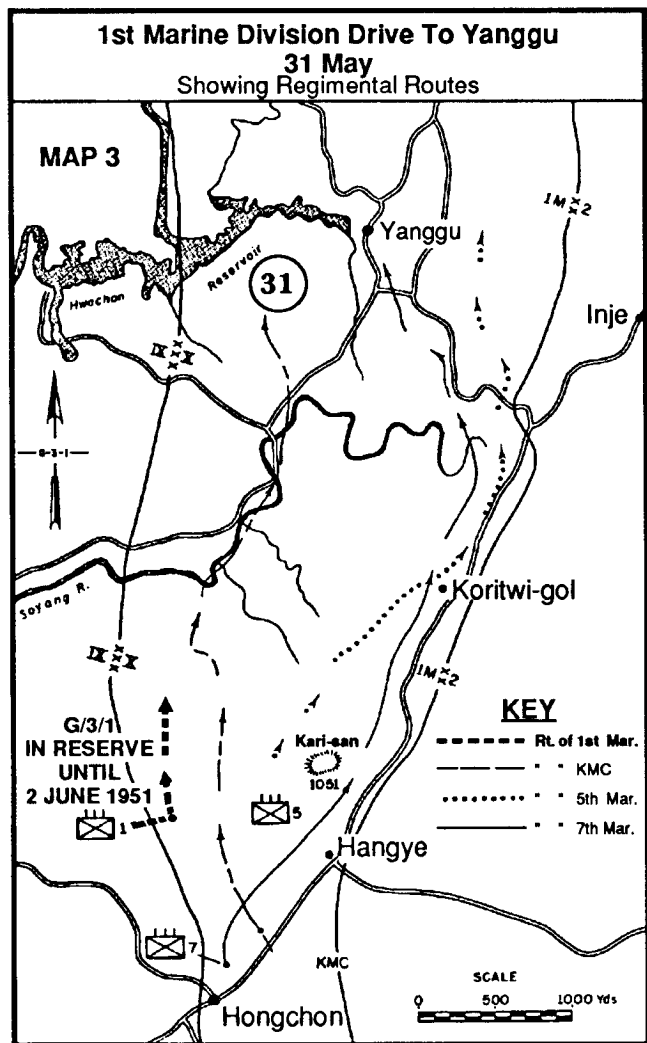
Early in the morning of June 2nd, 3rd Battalion officers and the COs of the three rifle companies and Weapons Company moved ahead of the troops in order to make a reconnaissance of the ground over which the assault was to be made. Just as the group arrived at the CP of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, a heavy mortar barrage swept the area. In one brief moment the artillery liaison officer was killed and four company commanders of 3/1 were wounded. Two of those wounded, Lt. James Williams of Weapons Company and Lt. Horace Johnson of George Company, required evacuation. The accuracy of the enemy's barrage stunned everyone. The Battalion Historical Diary for the month of June, 1951 summed up this disbelief in what had happened:

The fact that a heavy ground fog completely cut off the enemy's observation and no fire had been received in the draw leading to the CP before, makes it seem incredible that the enemy could place his barrage along a 50 yard length of a narrow draw so quickly and without adjustment.

The barrage that almost wiped out the key officers of the 3rd Battalion was probably just a lucky call of the North Korean who issued the fire order and probably was comparable to the random strike of lightning in a thunder storm. But to Lt. Fred Redmon of George Company's second platoon, it must have seemed like fate was out to have a little fun with him because he found himself as the CO of G/3/1, a job that he was definitely not interested in. He explains his reaction to his new position in the following passage:

I was one apprehensive lieutenant at the time the word was passed to me to take over George Company. It occurred to me that things must be in a bad way for such an event to happen! Some of the lessons I had learned were just not there any more and others were. I had a tendency to try and do everything and not give the proper orders and that was really on my mind.

The basic rules of unit security and communication were the first ideas that came to mind. The immediate task in front of me was to relieve another unit (2/7) in broad



As the month of May came to an end, the enemy in front of the Marine division changed dramatically. Initially it was Chinese troops that engaged the Marines, but by May 31st the 12th Division, V Corps of the NKPA was given the job of slowing down the Marine advance so that the Chinese could disengage and retreat northward to prepare defensive positions. Marine intelligence concluded that "North Koreans were being sacrificed in rear guard delaying actions in order that the Chinese Reds might save their own skins."

Interrogation of NKPA POWs provided an answer as to why North Korean soldiers fought so tenaciously. They reported that they were "under the thumb of political

daylight in full view of the NKPA after some of the key leadership people had been wounded by this same enemy; this weighed heavy on my mind and is still fresh in my memory.

The major factors that gave some positive light to the situation was the knowledge that I was with people who wanted to survive as much as I did, and, therefore, we could depend on each other.

I can still recall the relief I felt after we relieved the 7th Marines and a lineman showed up with a wire that worked. Man, I thought, I had a line to home when Major Joseph Trompeter, 3rd Battalion XO, talked to me and got me to feel the confidence I knew I would need to get through that night. Before long, an artillery FO made his way to us and did his job.

Meanwhile, Tom Reid had reported that there were no ROK troops to "tie" in with, and George Quail down in the mortar section had security problems along with the whole left flank that Reid was trying to cover. To make matters worse, T/Sgt. John Steely was wounded that night. We were all glad to see daylight on June 3rd.

I was relieved to get orders for the day and find out that we would be in reserve for the day's operation. Much to my relief, Major Trompeter told me there would be a Captain up in a day or so to take over the company. I am glad to say I had no ego problems with that, and when Captain Frisbie showed up, I was one happy platoon leader!

As Lt. Redmon wrestled with the problems of command, the rank and file marched at a rapid pace with most of them fully aware that before the day would end they would be in the thick of combat. As the troops reached the forward positions of the 7th Marines, they encountered men who were quickly able to convey that they had just survived some perilous days. Pfc. Jim Byrne sized up the situation in this way:

The first thing I noticed was that the men we were about to relieve remained, for the most part, in their holes. I also noticed the foxholes I could see were much deeper than the holes I dug during March. I tried to start up a conversation with one of the 7th Marines, but he wasn't too talkative. Before long I realized what was bothering him. We were standing on the ridge line and that was like requesting incoming mortar and artillery fire. All I had to do was to look in his eyes to realize he had been through some scary days and that we would

soon be reminded of the terror of concentrated mortar and artillery fire.

Not long after the relief of the 7th Marines was accomplished, Cpl. Jim Robideau's 3rd squad of the first platoon was sent out to see if there were any troops, friendly or otherwise, on a hill about a mile away on George Company's right flank. It turned out to be a routine patrol with no enemy nor friendly troops observed. As the squad returned to company lines, they must have been observed by the enemy for a mortar barrage raked George Company lines. Many of the rounds exploded in the air, they were either air-burst rounds or they were exploding as they hit trees. In either case, it was like being in a shower of hot steel. One of these air-bursts killed Sergeant Leslie Westberry. Westberry had been with the company since January, 1951 and was WIA on Hill 902 while serving with the 2nd squad, 3rd platoon. On June 2, 1951 his luck ran out. Later that same day, Cpl. Ed Goodwin was part of a detail that moved Westberry's body to battalion headquarters. Goodwin remembers that "we had to cross an open area of several hundred yards which was exposed to enemy observation. They hit us with mortars all the way across this open area, but we suffered no casualties. A frightful journey, though, I must say." (Editor's Note: By September I was on a burial detail. As the detail arrived at the cemetery, I recognized four or five Marines in attendance as members of George Company. I asked them who was being buried, and they told me it was Sgt. Westberry. He was killed only twenty or thirty yards from me and here I was burying him 3 months later. Unlike the Viet Nam war, during the Korean War, bodies were returned to the States by ship and a long wait between death and burial always meant a closed casket. JB)

After a day of being pounded by mortars and artillery, G/3/1 jumped off on the morning of June 3rd. The attack began at 0700 hours and for the first two hours was concealed behind a heavy ground fog. By the time the fog lifted the assault units had moved past the open, flat terrain and had secured their first two objectives by 1000 hours. Battalion reported that the remaining two objectives for June 3rd were taken only after overcoming resistance that "stiffened considerably."

Battalion casualties for June 3rd numbered 5 KIAs and 129 WIAs with 11 of the WIAs from George Company. Pfc. George O'Connor was a rifleman serving with the 2nd squad, 2nd platoon on this day and recalls how one Marine became a casualty and how another became a near miss:

As my platoon advanced on June 3rd, Pfc. Hastings Hall got hit in the leg. Almost simultaneously, Pfc. Olie Johnson's feather sleeping bag was hit by machine gun fire. It seemed like feathers were everywhere, but Olie

was not scratched. Corpsman Hoppie or Cass ran forward to bring Hall to safety. As he did this, everyone in the second squad opened up with covering fire. Hall returned to the company four months later, and Olie had to settle for a summer sleeping bag.

On the same day, but at a different location, the men of Cpl. Phil Heath's mortar section found themselves in the line of fire of an NKPA machine gun emplacement. Pfc. Andy Jacobs has this to add to the day's events:

At the time the machine gunner opened up on us, it was hard to tell exactly where he was up on the side of the mountain. I was on a path, maybe a foot or two lower than the rice paddy that Bob Kirk was walking across. I hit the deck. The gunner began walking his rounds on the side of the paddy toward me. I had already figured just about where the round would enter my head -- and I was saying my last "Hail Mary." It was then that Bob Kirk suddenly jumped up from the prone position and started running across the paddy. I believe this distracted the gunner who redirected his attention to Bob and hit Bob in the leg. In the meantime "Swede" got off a round from his recoilless rifle, which either hit or scared away the enemy machine gun crew. That meant that all of us proceeded without further attack from that particular gun.

In the month of March, the enemy usually faded into the hills once an objective was secured and with only a few exceptions offered no additional resistance. Such was not the case in June. At this time, the enemy would just pull back to the next hill and from that position would direct mortar and artillery fire at any observable target. For June 3, 1951, Battalion reported that "supply and evacuation problems were multiplied in this position due to the fact that the valley offered the only route and it was under enemy observation. Engineers were fired upon as they cleared mines from the road, and after the road was cleared, all vehicles had to run a gauntlet of mortar and long range machine gun fire."

No offensive action was taken by the 3rd Battalion on June 4th; however, the battalion sector received heavy mortar and artillery fire as well as long range small arms fire throughout the day. At 0700 that morning, Item Company beat off an attack of about 70 NKPA soldiers, leaving 10 dead in front of Item's lines.

The only other event of June 4th of some interest was a patrol of George Company's first platoon, supported by a tank. The mission of the patrol was to determine to what extent the enemy was entrenched in and around a valley that ran from east to west and was on the right flank of G/3/1's position as it faced northward.

It was a very narrow valley and was divided by either an irrigation ditch or a small stream that was dry in the summer. As soon as the patrol left the company perimeter, it came under fire. The only protection available was the ditch or the safe side of the tank.

The tank plodded along and went to work on the bunkers of the NKPA soldiers. For the most part it was move ahead until the fire got too heavy and then wait for the tank to neutralize the source of fire. On one occasion one of the first platoon's riflemen got up next to the turret and raked the hill to the north with the 50 cal. machine gun which was mounted on the tank.

Another 200 yards down the valley the sight of the tank apparently flushed out a dozen or more NKPA soldiers. Cpl. Otto Olson had a recent replacement in his fire team, Pfc. Thomas Brown who hailed from the Chicago area. He was a Gung Ho Marine and was itching to try out his rifle grenade. Cpl. Olson picks up the story at this point:

Brown spotted the Koreans running up the hill, aimed his rifle grenade in their direction and much to his surprise, it landed right on them. It exploded, apparently killing and wounding some of them. Brown's excited comment to me was, "Did you see that? I put it right in his rear pocket."

By this time the platoon had taken some casualties. Pfc. Kennard "Corky" Irgens, who had just arrived in the last replacement draft, was hit by machine gun burst as he tried to get across an open area. It was impossible for the patrol to continue with a man this badly wounded, and it was decided to place the wounded Marine on the most protected side of the tank and head for home. He was hit by at least one round in the "gut" area. Many of the platoon members assumed he would end up as a DOW (Died Of Wounds), but prompt medical attention and rapid evacuation saved his life.

By late afternoon of June 4th, the first platoon rejoined the company and remained in position on June 5th. The battalion's lines were subjected to heavy mortar, artillery and small arms fire during these two days. When George Company engaged the enemy at the Chosin Reservoir and during March and April, it seemed that the enemy rationed ammunition and only fired at choice targets. It now appeared that his supplies were plentiful and the shells just kept raining down.

The night of June 5th was ominous and miserable. Pfc. Jim Byrne recalls his thoughts that night:

It was raining hard and there was no way that I could stay dry. The water ran down by back and down by chest. Eventually water formed at the bottom of my hole, covering my shoes. I got cold, real cold. I shivered so much

that night that I could barely control my legs the next morning.

I probably would not have been able to suffer through the cold except for the fact that I was so damned scared. All night long the scream of incoming and outgoing artillery kept my mind on what I could expect the next day.

I was alone in my foxhole because the Marine I had dug in with the last three months had turned himself into sickbay as a "non-combat casualty." I don't know if I would have been in better spirits if I had someone to talk to, but I kind of think so. You know, misery loves company.

The next morning George Company was to jump off in an attack that in the words of battalion was "for the purpose of straightening out the (battalion) perimeter for forming an east-west line in conjunction with the 1st battalion moving up on the left flank." As George Company organized for the attack, Pfc. Byrne noticed another two or three Marines from the 1st platoon who decided to declare a personal truce with the enemy. They just made no effort to move out, nor did they give any indication that they had any intention of ever doing so. They simply joined the ranks of the non-battle casualties.

The 2nd and 3rd platoons moved out initially, and the 1st platoon was with company headquarters. Cpl. Ed Goodwin and the company 1st sergeant, T/Sgt. Isaac Williams were moving directly behind the assault platoons. Goodwin continues:

(We were) at the bottom of the hill in an open paddy when we started taking mortars. The barrage was moving toward us so we took cover in a ditch about 10 yards apart. We took a round about 5 yards from us. I was hit by shrapnel in the chest and arm. I looked over at the 1st Sgt. and he was slumped over and not moving. I got over to him; he had taken a piece of shrapnel in the left temple and was unconscious. I bandaged his head, got Corpsman Sobol and others to care for him. I don't know if he lived or died. I went to the rear, turned in my dispatch case to battalion headquarters and was evacuated by helicopter.

Somewhere up front, the 2nd platoon was receiving fire. Sgt. Rudy Hand was where the fighting was heaviest. He recalls:

Our platoon (the 2nd) was way below full strength. We ran into a pillbox that was holding us up. We were in grenade range and they were throwing everything they had. I remember an explosion . . . I sailed up in the air

and came down, no pack, no rifle and no helmet. Two good buddies carried me back down. The North Koreans were using mortars on us all the way down, but we made it to the helicopter. They loaded me in a basket and flew me back to the field hospital.

Every combat Marine loves to tell stories about navy corpsmen and Cpl. Otto Olson remembers the arrival of corpsmen who a day or so before were aboard the cruiser St. Paul and a battleship. Let Olson continue:

Their utility clothing and other gear was pressed and still very neat appearing, as was their packs, sleeping bags and web gear. Within minutes of their arrival, the cry for a corpsman came down the trail. The company Exec. told the first corpsman to go up and assist. As he stood up he was told to drop his pack and get up there with the first-aid bag, which he did.

The remaining corpsmen adjusted their packs and waited along the side of the trail. The wait was not too long, and soon the cry of "corpsman" was heard again. The second corpsman was immediately dispatched up the trail. Soon the stretcher bearers came back down the trail carrying the wounded Marine, and right behind him was the first corpsman that had been sent up. While working on the Marine, he was hit in the arm. The second call for a corpsman was for the first corpsman!

Before long the 1st platoon was called upon to move into action. As the platoon reached the crest of one hill, it started to receive heavy mortar fire. Lt. Reid looked the area over, decided what the next move should be and told the troops to move forward. Forward meant moving over the crest of the hill and down the northern slope that was heavily wooded. As soon as the platoon started to move down the slope, a machine gun directly to the front began to sweep the hillside. Pfc. Jim Byrne was running down the hill when the machine gun began to sweep through his immediate area:

Even at the time I realized the machine gunner probably could no longer see us because of all the trees. He knew we were somewhere on that hillside, so he just fired from side to side. I had built up quite a bit of momentum going down the fill, but realized that I had to get down before that machine gunner caught up with me. Just ahead of me was Pfc. Fred Marston. He must have come to the same conclusion as I had because he threw himself to the ground. Without giving it any thought, I hit the deck right next to him and slightly behind him. We were not lying there over a second or

two when he took a bullet in his shoulder. I have no way of knowing the direction of the round, but if that machine gun was to our left, Fred's shoulder would have stopped a bullet that would have hit my head.

It was a mad dash down the hill because that North Korean machine gunner was not about to quit working over that hillside. At one point Lt. Reid, running with the best of his troops, tripped over a branch, somersaulted end over end a few times, and when he finally came to a stop, he looked back up the hill and saw his M-1 rifle sticking upright in the ground.

Fortunately, the 1st platoon moved out of the machine gunner's field of fire. Unfortunately, the platoon moved into an area where the enemy was dropping mortar rounds. Again, let Cpl. Olson fill in some details:

We started to move up a ridge and came under small arms and mortar fire, resulting in a number of people getting hit. Jim Byrne was one of the casualties and was hit in the shoulder blade area. The last I saw of him was when he came bounding down the hill with out his utility jacket or a T shirt. As he passed me he said, "Look at that \Ole," pointing to his shoulder. "I am going home now," as this was his second purple heart. It was about this same time that Jim Robideau received his second wound and was evacuated. By noon the company had taken the ridge and started regrouping for the next push forward.

The rest of the story belongs to Lt. Tom Reid and shall be told in his words:

The night of June 5th, I got a call from battalion telling me that I should inform S/Sgt. Richard Evans, my platoon sergeant, that on the evening of June 6th he was to report to battalion and be processed for rotation home. I became a little miffed and thought to myself, "you got to be kidding--Do you think I am going to tell him he is going to be rotated home--He'll get himself killed." I was told this was an order, and I said "all right." I guess this was the first order that I willfully and knowingly disobeyed. I didn't tell Evans about it, and we jumped off the next day. He, as well as everyone else, did a splendid job.

We took the first objective even though we didn't have any fire from supporting arms, nor did we have any Corsairs waiting to be called in. So after we jumped off we received tree bursts that slightly wounded me and wounded several men from my platoon.

After we secured our first objective, we were told to continue our advance to our final objective for the day. When we reached the final objective everything was very quiet. Pfc. Don Kolb and Pfc. Charles Hunt were checking bunkers on the forward slope. Frank Otto and "Pappy" Wojton had set up the light machine guns on our flanks because we had no one up on either side of us. We were just told to make a hasty defense and wait for the rest of the company to get up there.

I was sitting up on the ridge line. Frank Otto and Sgt. Evans were with me, and I was scanning the area to our front with binoculars, and I couldn't pick up a thing.

All of a sudden, all hell broke loose. Where they were, I don't know, but they must have been tremendously well camouflaged and concealed. They just raked the whole ridge line, and they caught Kolb and Hunt. I flipped backwards, and I guess everybody else did the same. They practically took down all the trees and shrubs with their fire.

They were waiting for us, and after chasing us off the ridge, they started coming up. We were all on the reverse slope, and we couldn't get on the military crest without taking more casualties.

When we had reached this objective, the platoon was down to about 20 riflemen. We took a lot more casualties at this time and by the end of the day the platoon was down to 12 able bodied men. The machine guns, one by one, were knocked out. One round must have hit the cover plate of the machine gun on the left flank, and the second gun was inoperable shortly afterwards.

So we started throwing grenades over to the forward slope, and luckily, none came back. This went on for quite a while. When our supply of grenades was exhausted, we started making our own. A demolition man attached to the platoon had a number of pound blocks of explosives, fuses, caps and tape. The demo man cut the blocks in half, and we attached as many empty shell casings as we could. The demo man cut a number of fuses about 5 inches in length and attached them to a cap. We lit them with a cigarette and tossed them over the crest as fast as we could.

All this time I was trying to get some close air support or some fire from our mortars or artillery, but I was told that nothing was available. The 4.2 and 81 mortars were not in position and it would be some time before they could give any support.

There were—out there and practically out of even home made grenades. Later on I saw some of our troops that were not engaged and we scrounged some grenades from them. These were quickly used up.

The North Koreans were still firing like hell, and we still couldn't get to the ridge line without getting our heads chopped off. About this time, I looked at my M-1 and found a slug in my stock—Another close call that I had not been aware of.

Things were looking pretty grim. We still had plenty of rifle ammo, so we decided to do what the Royal Marines have done in similar situations, so we set up a line, fixed bayonets and waited for them to come over.

About this time we looked up and saw a couple of P-51s. They were apparently returning from a sortie and didn't have any bombs or anything else, but they peeled off, one by one, and made a couple of machine gun sweeps on the forward slope. These characters came so low that they were behind the ridge line at times, and they must have scrubbed off the forward slope. I could see that the planes were flown by South African pilots. They really saved our bacon!

Shortly after, a company from the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines appeared on our flank. Lt. Appleby, with whom I had trained earlier, and who was in my replacement draft approached me. He had a mortar platoon, and I don't know why he was up there first, but he was, and he said, "I understand that you are having some problems." I said, "yeah, Do you have any mortar rounds"? He said he did and started plunking off some 60s.

A little bit later the 3rd platoon came up and by this time things had gotten a bit quieter. All of sudden I heard a burst of a burp gun and a scream. Apparently Lt. Lindseth had gone up to the ridge line with his Thompson sub machine gun. He was cut almost in half by that burp gun.

Captain Varge Frisbie was now the CO of George Company. I remember that we were still taking a lot of fire when he came strolling up there holding a swagger stick. He had a handlebar mustache and was wearing paratrooper boots. He was standing up, and the rest of us were hugging the ground. He didn't seem to be bothered by anything. He was a very gutsy guy. His presence was really helpful.

After things settled down, we set up our positions and really dug in. At this point I told Sgt. Evans that he was being rotated home and

that he was to get his butt back to battalion. He couldn't believe it. I never told him that I had gotten the word the night before. He did a fantastic job that day, and I know that if I had told him ahead of time that he would have been so cautious that he would have ended up getting killed. He had not been overly cautious, he did a great job and he lived!

I told him to get his gear and get back right now. It was about 1600 or 1700 by this time. About 1900 I contacted battalion had told them that Evans had left over two hours ago. I was informed that he had not arrived. I said, "oh hell, he ran into an ambush or something like that."

At any rate, he finally arrived several hours later, and this is my explanation. He had a new lease on life, and he wasn't about to take any chances like walking on a ridge line. He probably was so cautious that he lost his way and only by luck ended up at battalion.

About a month later, I was stationed at Masan, which is very close to the air field used by the South African air force. At the first opportunity, I hopped a ride over to their base. I went to their squadron operations office and asked about June 6th. They checked the logs, operating reports and everything, but couldn't find a single mention of the support they gave us. I wanted to thank the pilots that saved our butts that day, but it was apparently just a day's work for them, and it wasn't important enough for them to record it.

(Editor's Note: Both Lt. Reid and Captain Frisbie were awarded Silver Stars for the leadership they displayed on June 6, 1951.)

Pfc. Andy Jacobs of George Company's 60mm platoon reached the 1st platoon just about the time that the P-51s were working over the North Koreans. Jacobs recalls that the pilots were flying incredibly low and that one of them was smoking a cigar. About this time, Jacobs was asked to carry out the difficult task of getting Lt. Lindseth's body to battalion. He continues:

Three other Marines and I set out with the litter on which Lt. Lindseth had been placed. We were looking for the aid station - but nobody knew exactly where it was. Everybody had moved up pretty quickly, and it was a matter of guessing where the support units might be. We chose a route through a rice paddy which was next to a woods. When we got to the top of the rice paddy, men of one of our sister companies were crouched in the woods. Ordinarily some of them would have been expected to come out and take the litter

from where we were and continue to the aid station. But they did not. They seemed frozen in their tracks. Then one of them shouted out that an enemy recoilless rifle was zeroed in on us. We looked back at a hill about 300 yards away and sure enough there were two soldiers—one with the recoilless weapon and the other standing behind him. I assumed the second one was a loader. One of the soldiers raised his hand and motioned for us to continue. We did. As we climbed over a wooded hill, one of us tripped over a rusty wire. The wire was attached to a land mine, which I believe was called a Bouncing Betty. The mine was defective. It did not go off. So lightning failed to strike two times in a row!

(Editor's Note: The former Pfc. Andy Jacobs is presently Congressman Andy Jacobs, serving in the United States House of Representatives and representing constituents of the State of Indiana.)

June 6th had been quite a day, especially for the 1st platoon. Cpl. Otto Olson summed it up in the following way:

After what seemed an eternity, we gained the upper hand and the foe withdrew, but we had paid a dear price for our victory. Our company had lost a number of people this day, both killed and wounded. It also changed me and my association with my comrades in arms. This actually occurred the next day.

After the counterattack had been stopped, our platoon was moved down the ridge a ways, and we dug in for a short stay. The next day Lt. Reid asked me to go back up the ridge to the area where we had been and which was now occupied by another company. This company had sent out a patrol to check the area forward of their lines. I arrived there at the same time as they brought in the bodies of two Marines. They were those of Don Kolb and Charles Hunt, who had just received a letter from his wife informing him that she was pregnant with their first child.

It was a sad journey for me back down to the company CP with Kolb and Hunt, both shoeless as the North Koreans had taken them from their bodies. From that day forward, as long as I was in Korea, I really made no friends nor formed any close associations as it hurt too much. In one day I had lost four of them: Jim Byrne, Jim Robideau, Don Kolb, and Charles Hunt, and three days before, Bob Krebs.

With the passage of each day in June, Marines of the 1st Division had to face increased enemy resistance and

had to endure mortar and artillery fire that greatly surpassed that of any prior period of the Korean War. The fighting was taking place in the most mountainous part of Korea which meant that riflemen were spread out on ridge lines and support troops were in narrow valleys; consequently, it was not difficult for the enemy to determine the location of Marines and to plaster those locations with mortar and artillery barrages. In addition, because of the terrain, assaults frequently had to be made along ridge lines, which gave enemy gunners a field day. It was a different kind of warfare for George Company Marines, but a type that they would experience for the next two years of the Korean War.

From June 7th to the 9th, the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines remained in defensive positions. The entire battalion front was subjected to mortar and artillery fire which resulted in 1 KIA and 16 WIAs. On June 9th elements of the 7th Marines moved passed 3/1 and attacked northward. On the same day the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 1st Marines were also attacking northward against heavy opposition. 2/1 continued the assault on June 10th and suffered 14 KIAs and 114 WIAs on that day alone. On that same day 1/1 suffered 9 KIAs and 97 WIAs.

On June 10th the 3rd Battalion moved forward to a new assembly area just behind 2/1. While patrolling an area somewhere between the 2nd Battalion and the assembly area, Marines of 3/1 suffered 10 WIAs.

On June 13th Cpl. Ed Goodwin returned to duty and was heading to the company CP. Just to show how heavy incoming rounds were, his replacement for the last week, Cpl. Heiden had been wounded on three separate occasions, but not evacuated. To say that Cpl. Heiden was happy to have Ed Goodwin return is putting it mildly:

When I (Cpl. Goodwin) returned from the hospital and was on my way up the hill to assume my former duties with the company, Cpl. Heiden passed me on his way down. He was in such a hurry to get back to battalion that I had to snag the dispatch case from him like a pony express rider.

Goodwin could understand his replacement's hasty departure because he, too, was beginning to wonder how much longer his luck would hold up. Like almost every Marine who spent some time in a hospital, it was not easy for Goodwin to pick up where he had left off on June 6th. Goodwin shares his introspection with us.

Captain Varge Frisbie had assumed duty as the company CO while I was gone. He was a fearless leader and gave the impression of being invincible. By this time after having been hit twice and having so many close calls, I was very cautious and didn't share his feelings of invincibility. I know that during my tour in

Korea I had so many close calls that I had more than one guardian angel. I'm sure that I had a platoon of them watching over me.

On the day that Cpl. Goodwin returned to duty, the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines went on the offensive, but with George Company in reserve. The assault companies encountered heavy resistance and at times were engaged in hand to hand combat. (3/1 casualties for the day were 4 killed and 58 wounded.) A short quotation from the Battalion's Historical Diary for June 13th describes the difficulty in fighting in mountainous terrain:

One bad feature of the situation was the fact that the terrain made it necessary to attack in column down narrow, steep ridge lines. And the enemy, protected by bunkers, some of which were cut into rock formations, was able to make the advance slow and relatively costly. There was also high velocity artillery fire and mortar fire interdicting the ridge lines over which the troops passed, which inflicted a fair share of the wounds. The supply and evacuation problems on this day were tremendous. The ridge lines were so sharp and so rugged that it required 8 hours for 8 men to carry 1 stretcher case from the front line to the evacuation point by way of 6,000 meters of ridge line trails. The valley to the east of the ridge line route could

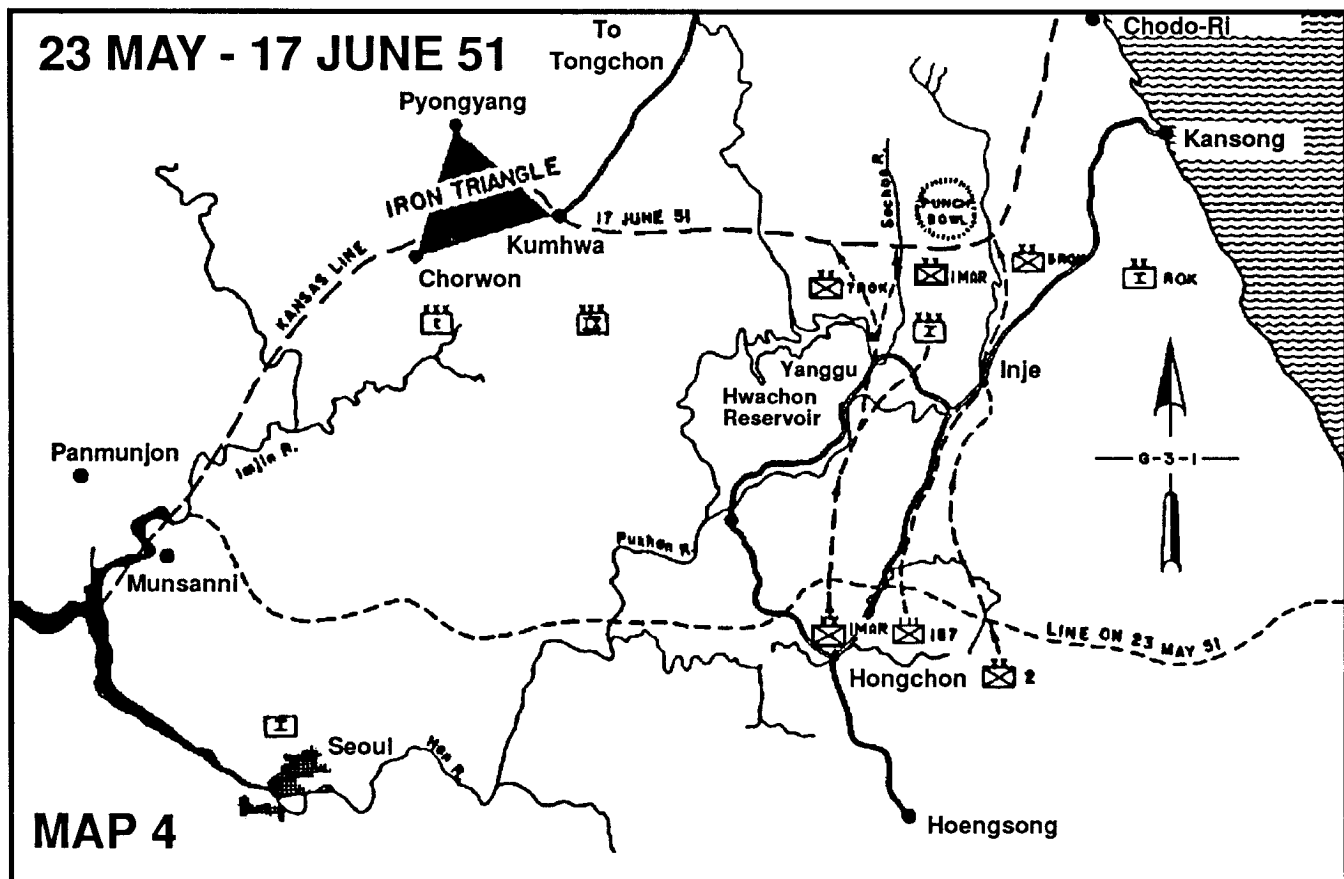
not be used at the time because it was under complete observation and all roads were mined.

From June 14th to the 18th, 3/1 remained in position and conducted some patrolling. The entire battalion front was subjected to frequent and heavy shelling. During these five days battalion casualties numbered 4 KIAs and 64 WIAs, with 6 of the WIAs from George Company.

On June 19th 3/1 was relieved by 2/1. Earlier in the war this kind of a relief was quick and uneventful. This was no longer the case. Enemy forward observers apparently could hardly wait for this type of event because it provided them with large numbers of men out in the open. In this change of battalions, George Company was relatively lucky and suffered only 1 WIA, Pfc. Edwin Joki, from the barrage that swept the area.

By mid day George Company Marines were far enough behind the lines to be provided with showers, clean clothes, hot food and even movies. A routine consisting of "training, resting and re-equipping" was followed for the next 5 days.

On June 25th the 3rd Battalion moved northward to an assembly area near 2/1's positions. The next day Item Company was sent forward of the MLR to establish a "patrol base." The "patrol base" concept was the brain-child of the highest levels of the Army command and was not welcomed by Marine commanders in the field. Orders



are orders and during the dark hours on the morning of June 26th Item Company moved out to establish a patrol base. By daylight the enemy detected their presence and unleashed a barrage that never let up for long during the entire day. The shelling was so furious that Item was called back during darkness on June 27th after suffering 2 killed and 8 wounded.

On June 29th the 3rd Battalion relieved the 1st Battalion and immediately began the task of improving defenses. The month ended with Battalion patrols that made no contact with the enemy.

The major objectives of the 1st Marine Division had been accomplished by June 20th when the modified Kansas Line was in Marine hands.

In the previous two months the Marines had crushed the vaunted Chinese offensive, relentlessly pursued the fleeing Chinese troops and pushed both the Chinese and the North Koreans north of the 38th parallel. By June 20th the future division of Korea into communist and non-Communist areas was all but complete. The fighting was far from over despite the beginning of truce talks that were proposed by Russia, which expressed the position of the communist nations. The truce talks were first proposed on June 23rd and lasted for almost two years and mocked the fighting and dying that went on continuously during this time. The fighting would be furious at times during the next two years, but the exchange of real estate would be minor, not unlike the trench warfare of World War I.

Peace Talks and False Hopes

On **June 23, 1951** peace talks were first proposed by the Foreign Minister of the USSR, and both sides agreed to meet on **July 7, 1951** at the village of Kaesong. By this date the communist forces had suffered a series of stunning military defeats, but with the beginning of the peace talks they would soon achieve a series of propaganda victories at the negotiating tables. By a number of very subtle, but extremely effective, negotiating ploys, the Chinese and the North Koreans made it appear to their people and to many of the non aligned nations that a defeated United States was begging for peace. For example, on **July 7th** the motorcade of United Nations negotiators arrived at Kaesong with the agreed upon white flags flying on each vehicle. They were met by "scowling communist guards" who were heavily armed and who herded the U.N. negotiators around as if they were POW's. Needless to say, extensive pictures and newsreels were distributed throughout China, North Korea and the rest of the world.

It has been suggested that the Chinese and North Koreans entered into negotiations to buy time and consolidate their badly mauled forces. If this was their objective, they were largely successful because U.N. forces were ordered to basically remain in position. Action was limited during the first two weeks of July to combat patrols and the seizure of limited objectives that were necessary for defensive positions.

Early in July, X Corps ordered the establishment of a patrol base on a 4,000 foot peak (Taew-san) some two miles north of main line of resistance (MLR). At this time the Korean Marine Corps (KMC) occupied the middle of the Marine line, and this regiment was told to seize the objective. By July 10th, after two days and heavy casualties, the KMC regiment had not dislodged the NKPA defenders on the highest peak, but did establish a patrol base on Hill 1100.

During this same period of time, George Company was limited to patrol action. Pfc. George O'Connor describes one of those patrols in the following narrative:

The second platoon was to send out a reinforced squad patrol on July 3rd. (On the night of July 2nd) the second squad was to stand the watches of the patrol squad so that the men in that squad could get a good night's sleep.

Before the patrol squad got very far, there were several casualties from our own mines. I heard that Sgt. Ignacio Gonzales was KIA and that our platoon leader (probably 2nd Lt. Harry Caviston) lost his legs. That meant that 2nd squad would be the patrol squad, and Lt. James Marsh was immediately assigned to the second platoon.

The patrol turned out to be uneventful, but I remember that it was a very hot day, and we did a lot of running. Running made us hotter and thirstier. Finally, we came to a stream. We filled our canteens very quickly, put in water purification tablets and drank. As we moved upstream, we saw the body of a Korean woman, which was badly decomposed. I remember hoping that the tablets would take care of any impurities, but at least my tremendous thirst was gone.

The patrols continued until mid July when the 38th Infantry and the 9th Infantry of the 2nd Army Division relieved the 1st Marine Division on July 17th. Pfc. George O'Connor was in the last George Company platoon to be relieved and describes a little interservice rivalry in this way:

King and Love companies of the 38th regiment were to take our positions. The 38th and the 9th regiment were to tie in right about where the second platoon had been dug in. Unfortunately, the two regiments could not agree where to tie in. After some delay, we were finally relieved, but it seemed to me that there was a section of the front that was not covered. As we walked by a group of soldiers eating hot chow on the reverse slope, several of

them called us a bunch of jar heads. Naturally, we returned in kind and called them doggies and made barking sounds.

The relief was accomplished without any interference from the enemy, and G/3/1 marched towards a valley where the entire battalion would spend the night. 2nd Lt. Robert Morton had joined George Company a few weeks earlier and was in command of George's 60mm mortars. As Morton was marching with his men towards the valley, he observed army pyramidal tents, with some of them emitting smoke. After situating his mortarmen, he decided to check out the army tents that were nearby. His story of Marine/Army cooperation is one that no Marine would refuse and one that probably no soldier would extend if he knew all the details. Let Lt. Morton continue:

The tent emitting smoke had a familiar smell, FOOD, HOT FOOD! I stuck my head in. "Hey, any chance of hot chow?" I asked. My 2nd Lt. bars adorned my hat. "Yes, Sir, we'll always feed officers," replied the army cook. I ate turkey, mashed spuds, peas and biscuits--WOW--This was something after 8 weeks of C rations!

A thought suddenly struck me. "Why don't I feed my troops?" After eating, I returned to my outfit, dug out 4 or 5 more 2nd. Lt. bars, gave my cap to one of my sergeants, and lo and behold--after a couple of hours my 60mm mortar crew had partaken of hot chow. Those army cooks must have thought all Marines were 2nd lieutenants.

The entire 1st Marine Division with the attached Korean Marine Corps regiment went into reserve on July 17th and remained in this status until August 27th. This was only the second time since the Marine Brigade landed in the Pusan perimeter on August 2, 1950 that no Marine unit faced the enemy. It was a well deserved rest. The troops had hot chow, were entertained with band concerts and movies and outside of a busy training schedule the troops were allowed to relax and let all the foot blisters heal.

July 1951 had not been as hard on G/3/1 as previous months, but some units, particularly the KMC regiment attached to the Marine Division, had heavy losses. Total casualties for the first two weeks (including KMC casualties) were 55 KIA, 360 WIA and 22 MIA. Just about half of these figures represent losses suffered by the Korean Marine Corps regiment.

By late August 1951, the communist forces apparently had the breathing spell that they needed, and on August 22nd they walked out of the peace conference claiming that the United States had dropped napalm bombs on Kaesong. It was apparent to the negotiators at Kaesong that this was just an excuse to end or at least suspend peace talks. By August 26th the 1st Marine Division was told to prepare to return to the offensive. On August 27th the 5th Marines, 7th Marines and the KMC regiment moved up to the combat areas south and west of the Punchbowl. The 1st Marines were to remain in Divisional reserve.



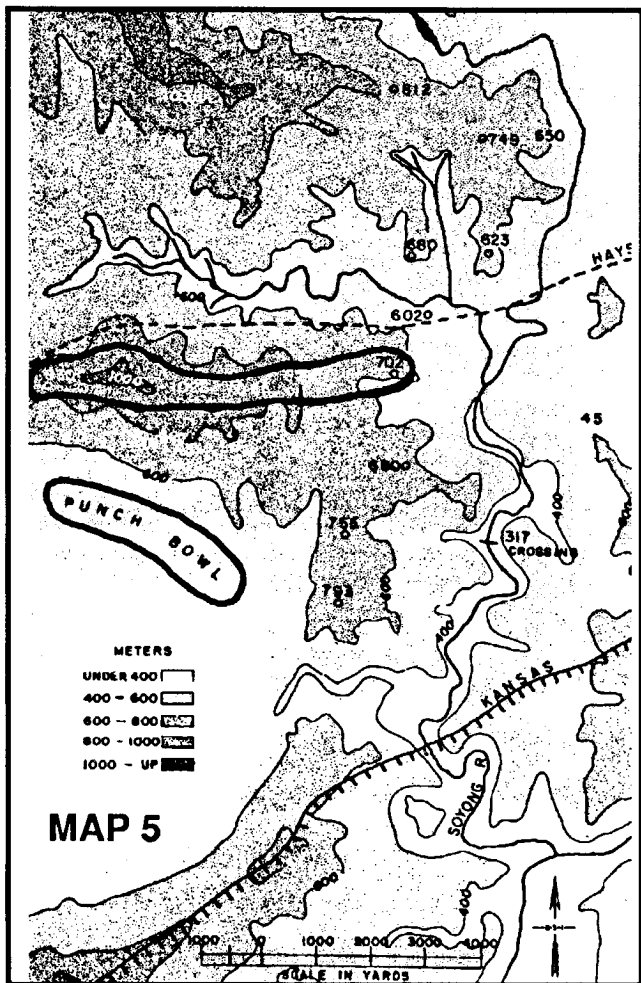
Pfc. Tom Madden receiving Purple Heart



Cpl. Kelly receiving Purple Heart

751 STARVATION HILL

For the next 14 days, from August 28th to September 12th, the 7th Marines would bear the brunt of the U.N. offensive in the Punchbowl area. On the 28th the 7th Marines left its assembly area just south and west of the Punchbowl and moved easterly to the area near Sahwari. The objective of the Marine regiment was a dominating line of mountains identified on the following map as Yoke Ridge.



The battle for this ridge line raged for four days and by the 4th of September was in Marine hands. It had been a bitter fight and Marine casualties (including the KMC regiment) were 109 KIA and 494 WIA. The high casualty rate was a direct result of the firepower that the enemy had amassed during the truce talks. According to Volume IV of the official history, this was the first battle in which enemy artillery and enemy mortars were able to match the firepower of Marine and Army forces.

During the next six days the Marine offensive stopped in order to resupply the assault troops and their supporting arms. The terrain and rain created a logistical nightmare and only by using approximately 200 Korean laborers per battalion was it possible to get supplies to the front in those six days.

On September 9th, the men of the 7th Marines left their positions on the Yoke, descended into the narrow valley and began their assault on the hill mass leading to Kanmubong Ridge. (See Map and note Hills 812, 980 and 1052.) The fighting was intense. The North Koreans were well dug-in and had almost unlimited artillery and mortar support. Each knoll and ridgeline was defended, often to the last man, and each yard of terrain taken was paid in Marine blood. By the 12th of September the 7th Marines had not yet secured the Kanmubong Ridge and were relieved by the 1st Marines. The fighting over just a two day period had cost the 7th Marines 22 KIA and 245 WIA. It was now time for the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines to enter the battle.

On the 11th of September the 3rd Battalion had reached the assembly area late in the afternoon. The next day 3/1 was told to move to a location close to Hill 749 and relieve the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines. On the march towards Hill 751, Lt. Robert Watson, the company X.O., reported that, "the troops crossed a shallow, fairly wide stream, which was immediately below our approach route, and then climbed a ridge line leading to the higher ground. After our entire company trooped across this area without incident, we were told that the stream bed had been heavily mined with anti-vehicle devices. For once it paid off being afoot!"

The difficult terrain made movement forward extremely difficult and contact with 3/7 was not made until shortly after midnight on the 13th of September. The attack which had been scheduled to start at 0900 was delayed because 2/1 had not yet moved into position. This delay allowed Lt. Marsh, Lt. Morton, Lt. Connolly, Lt. Watson and Lt. Selmyhr to make a reconnaissance into the area that George Company would soon move through. Lt. Morton picks up the narrative at this point:

I lagged behind (the other officers) and before long noticed a long string of (North Koreans) going north no more than 200 yards to my left and way above me. I thought of firing but thought better of it when I realized there were but five of us against all of them. There must have been between 50 and 70 of them and why they never spotted me I'll never know.

Suddenly there was a loud shouting up and above and here come two enemy soldiers

with their hands in the air and waving surrender leaflets. (I had the) safely off my carbine and I was ready to fire. I let them come to me and I removed their weapons. I took my prisoners and hustled to Connolly. When I got back to my platoon, they fell out and presented me a cardboard badge—made from a ration box, but which said, "HERO."

An interesting footnote to Lt. Morton's story is an entry in the 3rd Battalion Historical Diary that indicates the two men that Morton had captured were members of the 5th Company, 3rd Regiment, 1st Division of the III North Korean Corps. They claimed to have killed their company commander the previous day and were waiting to surrender at the first possible chance.

The obvious purpose of Lt. Connolly's reconnaissance was to gain enough height to clearly observe the company's objective for later that day. What the CO and his platoon leaders viewed was terrain so cut up with interconnecting ridge lines that it was difficult to be sure what was what. While absorbed in trying to figure out where they were and where their intermediate and final objectives were, the two POWs with Lt. Morton appeared. Lt. Watson wryly commented that, "We were happy at that point that they were not firing, for if they had been planning to attack us, instead of surrendering, our company would have lost most of its officers before the assault began."

While the attack of 13 September by the 3rd Battalion would be delayed until the early afternoon, that same morning George Company's 2nd platoon was moving forward, apparently to be in a better position when the battalion attack commenced. In this preliminary advance, Pfc. George O'Connor was with the fire team that had the point most the morning. As the fire team moved forward, two North Koreans surrendered without any resistance. At about noon, another fire team took the point. Minutes after O'Connor's fire team was relieved of point duty, an explosion was heard. Apparently someone in the point had hit a trip wire and set off a grenade. Pfc. David Stapleton was killed and Pfc. Lawson was wounded.

Finally, at 1300 on September 13th, Marine artillery commenced firing on 3/1's objective and moments later George Company and Item Company moved out towards Hill 751. At first enemy resistance was light, but a mine field and numerous booby traps slowed George Company's advance. As the afternoon progressed the amount of small arms and automatic weapon fire increased. By this time Lt. Connolly was with Lt. Marsh's 2nd platoon which was leading the way. Once again the treacherous terrain forced the company to deploy the length of the narrow ridge line. Before long the company was strung out over a considerable distance.

The forward element of the second platoon was taking heavy fire from the upper reaches of the ridge. During the second prolonged skirmish with enemy pock-

ets of resistance, the company C.P., consisting of Lt. Watson and Sgts. Angelo Defusco and John Steely, decided to move out of a protected position in order to see what the situation was. Lt. Watson learned that the enemy was not confined to the head of the column, but were also located close enough to lob grenades at those who were some distance from the point. Lt. Watson recalls:

Before I got to a place I could observe from I heard a shout of "fire in the hole!" I ducked behind a big pine tree. My right leg was stick-out, and I received a grenade fragment high in the thigh. Since I couldn't walk, the C.P. was left in the hands of Steely and Defusco.

Korean litter bearers carried me back down the ridge, and when we returned to where our approach route crossed the stream, a 76mm gun opened up on us. They were sporadically shelling the crossing and my litter bearers ducked me into a small crease in the slope. In their haste they placed me nearly on top of a booby trap (a cylindrical grenade with a wooden throwing handle). When I pointed this out to them, they wasted no time in moving out and depositing me on the far side of the stream. It wasn't long before I met up with many G/3/1 men on the hospital ship U.S.S. Haven.

By the end of the day George Company was told to dig in where they were because the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines had been unable to secure its objective. Not yet at the company objective, G/3/1 was living up to its nickname "Bloody George." Sgt. Walter Seivert, who had come over in the 3rd replacement draft in January of 1951, was killed in action and 9 other George Company Marines were wounded.

Another officer wounded on 13 September was Lt. Garlen (Spike) Selmyhr of the 3rd platoon. His first wound was to his left shoulder, painful, but not disabling. His second wound was from small arms fire and entered his left cheek and exited behind his left ear. With his sense of balance completely absent and the hearing in that ear gone forever, it was clear that he needed immediate medical attention. It was at this point that Sgt. Loraine English exposed himself to intense small arms fire in order to get Lt. Selmyhr to the first aid station.

Lt. Selmyhr's evacuation to battalion was anything but easy. At one point the South Korean stretcher bearers were crossing a stream. Spike Selmyhr remembers that "the stream bed was composed of smooth, rounded and rather small stones. The stretcher bearers were slipping and sliding. Suddenly one of the Korean "cargadores" slipped and fell; his actions pulled down another bearer and I was dropped in the river. Because I had a head wound, I had not been allowed anything to drink, and by this time I was dehydrated and extremely thirsty. When I found myself in the river, I greedily drank my fill — to no

ill effect! The evacuation of battalion aid took over seven hours!"

A rifle company in the heat of combat also suffers a number of "non-combat casualties". This category includes a few men who quit early in combat and others who perform admirable for months and then experience something that is just too difficult for them to deal with. Pfc. Robert Olsen remembers what happened to Pfc. Ralph Jacovek, a Marine who went through boot camp with Olsen and a personal friend. On September 13th Jacovek was carrying a wounded man down the hill. The wounded Marine was slung over Jacovek's shoulders. The fighting had been intense all day and it was not slackening as Jacovek tried to get his wounded comrade to safety. Olsen recalls that "the wounded man was hit by what appeared to be a heavy caliber machine gun and was literally thrown off Jacovek's back and into the air. That was the end of it for Jacovek; he just went off the hill and we never saw him again."

The night of September 13th and the early morning hours of the 14th, George Company beat off 7 counter attacks of at least platoon size strength, and possibly larger. Pfc. George O'Connor found himself in the middle of these attacks and describes the action as follows:

I was the BAR man in Pfc. Billy Gibson's fire team, and we were put on outpost duty from 1900 to 2100. After being relieved by another fire team, we were assigned a position on the MLR. Lt. Marsh felt that whoever had set up the MLR had overlooked a key position and that's where he set us.

It turned out that he was right. The tax payers sure got a bargain with James Marsh—Where the going was worst—there he was directing fire and shouting words of encouragement.

Anyway, at 2115 our outpost came running back. The enemy was attacking. Unfortunately, my fire team could not dig in very well in 15 minutes. Higher up the hill to my left was a light 30 machine gun. I was with my assistant BAR man, Pfc. Morrison, and Pfc. Billy Gibson and Pfc. James Harrison were to my right. The configuration of the hill limited the number of positions that could put fire on the enemy.

At first our machine gunners were slow to open up, but encouraging words from Annapolis graduate, James Marsh, cured that. Throughout the night the enemy attacked seven times. After each attack Lt. Marsh made sure we had enough ammo and grenades.

I had never seen anything as bad as that night. A new replacement, Pfc. Morrison, turned to me as dawn broke and said, "Is it always like this?"

Oh! I almost forgot George Company's 60mm mortars were given fire directions by Lt. Marsh. They fell in the right places at the right time and took much of the vinegar out of the enemy.

Bronze Stars were awarded to Pfc. Billy Gibson and Pfc. James Harrison for valor during this NKPA counter attack. Among other things that were notable that night, Gibson used an old family six-shooter that had belonged to his grandfather to stop one enemy soldier. Harrison, who didn't have good night vision to begin with, was having a very difficult time seeing because of the number of White Phosphorus and illuminating grenades that were thrown. At one point he rose up out of his shallow hole to fire his weapon and found a North Korean only inches away. In one motion he thrust his bayonet into the shadowy figure and pulled the trigger of his rifle.

At 0830 on the morning of the 14th of September G/3/1 moved out to secure Hill 751. The enemy responded with small arms and automatic weapons and an abundance of artillery and mortars. The action first became intense in the vicinity of a fire team led by Cpl. Graves Francis. Pfc. Nick Incarnato was the rifleman in this fire team and was in the midst of the initial bedlam:

We were moving forward and Francis said, "Pass the word back to find out who is on our left flank." Just as the word got back that there was nobody on our left flank, it hit the fan!

Francis opened up and we all joined him, but nobody knew exactly who or what to fire at. We had just gotten a new man, brand spanking new. He was out on the point as the scout—and did he get it—right now! We had walked to within 15 meters of a North Korean bunker, and when they opened up he went down.

Pfc. Donald Kollross, a machine gunner, came up and dug in his tripod. Pfc. Lawrence Hengy, his assistant gunner, immediately slammed the gun onto the tripod. Before they could get off a burst, Kollross was hit in the face. I was only about 5 feet away and watched Kollross jump up and start running. Hengy tried to pull him down and that's when Hengy caught a couple in the back; it killed him on the spot.

I don't know how Kollross made out. My fire team leader Graves Francis, took one through the crook of his left arm which blew his elbow out.

The rest of the platoon moved up and we delivered a large volume of fire at that bunker. A couple of NKPA soldiers ran out of it and disappeared into the bushes. We continued to fire, but I don't know if we got them or not.

By 1400 Hill 751 was secured. The 30 counted enemy dead in George Company's area gave mute testimony to the stubbornness of the North Korean defenders. Among the dead were 3 enemy company grade officers, suggesting that the counter attacks of the night before were of at least company strength, rather than consisting of single platoons only.

On the night of the 14th, roughly at midnight, approximately 175 enemy troops counterattacked Item Company, but were driven back by friendly artillery fire. A few hours later, a light probing attack of George's lines was quickly repulsed by artillery fire. As dawn broke, George Company Marines observed an estimated 50 enemy troops moving on a ridge line directly in front of their positions.

The enemy resistance of the past day and all of the visible movement of the enemy at dawn foreshadowed what lay in store for G/3/1 for the next 24 hours. All morning long, the FO from the 11th Marines, Lt. Jack Scullay, was busy calling in artillery to silence machine gun and mortar emplacements in front of George Company's position. In the early afternoon things began to heat up when the enemy in company strength launched a counter attack, preceded by a mortar barrage. As the counter attack was beaten off, the enemy increased its hail of mortar rounds that covered "G" Company's lines non stop to 1800 hours.

Once the enemy counter attack was thwarted, all that the riflemen and machine gunners could do was to dig deeper and hope that their holes would not take a direct hit. An air strike hit an enemy mortar position on the northwest side of Hill 1052 (see map), but the pounding continued and it soon became apparent that the NKPA mortars were located somewhat south of 1052. About mid afternoon tank fire destroyed 10 enemy bunkers on the high ground directly in front of George Company. Thus the battle raged on. Enemy artillery and mortars raining destruction on Marine lines, while supporting arms, tanks and air tried to silence the enemy guns.

At some time during the afternoon of the 15th, enemy fire all but subsided and Lt. Jered Krohn decided to move some of his troops to a different area on the ridge line. Pfc. Robert Olsen was two men behind Krohn when a single mortar shell came in. Olsen recalls:

We were very close to the ridge line when all of a sudden a mortar round broke the relative stillness of the battlefield. Bam! It was all over for the lieutenant. It looked to me like he took a direct hit to his helmet.

At Christmas, about 3 months later, his wife sent us a basket of fruit and candy. Included in the basket was a picture of Lt. Krohn's child who had been born after his death.

Lt. Krohn had taken command only 3 days ago after Lt. Selmyhr was wounded. With "G" Company's occupation of Hill 751 still being contested by the NKPA, Lt. Robert Morton was rushed from the 60mm platoon to take command of the 3rd platoon. His recollection of the next few hours follows:

I could actually hear enemy rounds being dropped into the tubes, and I saw where the rounds impacted. I told my runner who shared the hole with me that if they add 100 - left 50, we've had it.

In the next second, I saw all the colors of the rainbow plus!! No sound, just colors. I lost control of my bowels, then I was out.

As we were being mortared constantly and because all the corpsmen were wounded, no one came to our aid. About dawn I came to and found my runner slumped over me--most of his face was gone.

I carried his body to the company CP even though it appeared to me that it was too late to give him any help. At the company CP, G/Sgt. Angelo D. Fusco took over. I went back to the 3rd platoon area and found a blond moustache and upper lip on the edge of my foxhole. It was an unforgettable night!

Suddenly a sense of rage took over. I was mad as hell! Of all things, my anger focused on the fact that my pack was shredded from the shrapnel. I was not evacuated for a couple of days. By that time a huge scab formed over my face from the flashburn I had received. Five or six days at a MASH unit, and then a return to G/3/1.

By 0600 on September 16th, G/3/1/ was relieved by a company of South Korean Marines. Taking the hill and defending the hill was a nightmare that covered only three full days, but seemed much longer. Sgt. Phil Heath of the 60mm mortar section offers some remarks that serve as a good summary for those three days:

In mid September 1951, we were on Hill 751, which some of us called Starvation Hill. For three days and three nights the fighting was so intense that our Korean supply carriers were able to bring only ammo to us because we were using so much of it. They could not bring food nor water, so we had to make do with what we had until things let up.

I moved from platoon sergeant to acting platoon leader when Lt. Morton took over the 3rd (rifle) platoon. We set up firing concentrations on every ridge line leading up to Hill 751. In some cases we were firing within

yards of our own lines at the request of the Marines in these foxholes.

Pfc. Richard Marson, who had been with the mortar section just a short time, was one of the Marines killed on this hill. I remember seeing him and Lt. Jered Krohn lying together, waiting to be evacuated from the hill.

On the third day things let up a little, so we were given a choice of food or water, and we all said we wanted water. We were relieved by a KMC unit and left the hill. When we got to the bottom, we were given a generous amount of fruit and C rations.

With 3/1 in reserve, the 5th Marines went on the attack during the afternoon of September 16th with Hill 812 as the objective. After a fierce two day fight and after suffering heavy casualties, the 5th Marines were firmly entrenched on Hill 812, but the NKPA still commanded the heights from Hills 980 and 1052.

It was at this time that General James Van Fleet decided that the cost in casualties for offensive operations could no longer be justified. With this in mind, he ordered all units to remain in position and only small scale advances to strengthen the existing line would be allowed.

On the 26th of September, 3/1 was back on the line, and How Company was given the task of seizing a hill that

was in line with Van Fleet's directive that allowed for offensive action if it served to strengthen defensive positions. At a cost of 2 KIAs and 31 WIAs, How Company succeeded in its task.

The last recorded action of George Company in September of 1951 occurred on September 22nd. When an attempt by the enemy to infiltrate our lines was beaten back. For the rest of the month, the lines of the 3rd Battalion were peppered with mortar and artillery fire, and every Marine had to be on the lookout for mines that had been left by South Korean forces. Perhaps the last "G" Company casualty in September occurred on the 23rd of the month when a Marine was seriously wounded by a mine and was evacuated from the CP by helicopter.

When the Marines of G/3/1 came off Hill 751, they had no idea that they had fought their last battle for real estate. The assault of Hill 751 coincided with and was actually tied in with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines battle for Hill 749. During the fight for these two hills, 2/1 and 3/1 suffered the vast majority of the 1st Division's casualties for those 4 days: 90 KIA, 714 WIA and 1 MIA. Indeed, the war had entered a new phase, but there would be no end to the death and destruction in the new phase, and, of course, there would be no end to the physical discomfort and downright misery that only men assigned to rifle companies must endure. The end was still 22 bitter months away.



Back Row: B. E. Gipson, Pfc. Williamson, Pfc. Kennedy, L.B. Johnson, Pfc. De Young, Pfc. Dirga, Pfc. Aldrich, R. W. Johnson, Billy V. Gibson. Front Row: John Martin, Doyle Dreyer, "Shep" Shepperd, B. C. Goff

STALEMATE - FIXED POSITIONS

On the 1st of October, 1951 the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines was dug into defensive positions on Hill 854. The enemy was directly in front of the Marine position of Hill 802. A narrow valley separated the two ridge lines. Each side would employ mortars and heavy artillery to periodically sweep the other's main line of resistance (MLR) and in the valley and the lower slopes of the dominant ridge lines, small unit patrols of each side would try to catch their counterpart unexpectedly, quickly inflict casualties and get back to the safety of their own lines before the enemy's mortars and artillery could register in on them.

Patrols from the battalion went out daily into the "no man's land" between the two forces. By October 9th it became necessary to also send patrols to the rear after an enemy force, operating as guerrillas behind Marine lines, ambushed a small party from B/1/1, killing two Marines and probably capturing a third Marine who was listed as an MIA.

The use of mortars and artillery by the enemy had steadily increased over the last few months, but from this point on it would be directed at Marines who occupied static positions. It was not uncommon for the North Koreans to pepper 3rd Battalion lines every four or five hours with ten to thirty rounds from 82mm and 120mm mortars and 76mm artillery pieces. For example, on October 5th an estimated 106 rounds of mortar and artillery fire struck the 3rd Battalion's lines.

The Marines responded with mortars and artillery, but what gave the Marines a distinct advantage was the use of air power and the 16 inch guns of the battleship, U.S.S. New Jersey. Troops of the 3rd Battalion would stare in disbelief when the tops of mountains would virtually disappear when the New Jersey fired her salvos at enemy bunkers.

In most United Nations reports the days of October were usually described as "uneventful" and limited to counter battery fire and small unit patrols. To a rear-echelon officer sitting in a comfortable office in far off Tokyo, it might so appear, but to the men in the rifle companies, the unspoken realization that the next 120mm mortar round could hit next to one of them or that the patrol they were on could be walking into a NKPA trap made life any thing but uneventful and routine.

On the 3rd of October 4 officers and 55 enlisted men of the 3rd Battalion were pulled off the line and told they were going home. By this date the men who had fought at Inchon-Seoul were either casualties or already had been rotated home. The men leaving on this date had been shipped to Korea as part of the 1st and 2nd replacement drafts and had landed in North Korea in early November of 1950 and helped fight off the Chinese at the battle of

the Chosin Reservoir. During the next month, November, 1951, all who had survived the Chosin Reservoir would be rotated home, but for the next 30 days or so, Sgt. Otto Olson ("Mr. First Platoon") would be up in the hills, sleeping in trenches, eating "C" rations and dodging artillery rounds. Exactly what he had been doing for the previous eleven months.

The rotation home of Marines was always a happy occasion. Those left behind were happy to see comrades going home in one piece and happy because it brought them one month closer to their own rotation. Just a few days earlier an event occurred that had the opposite effect on George Company Marines. Sgt. Phil Heath was there when it happened:

Early in October the company was in one of those situations where the troops were allowed to go down from the hill for a hot shower, clean clothes and two hot meals. A sad thing happened on my trip down. We had two men and I can't recall their first names, but they were the Porter twins. (August roster lists Pfc. Keith Porter and Pfc. Kenneth Porter.) They both came down and while standing in the chow line, one of them (Pfc. Keith Porter) took a revolver from the holster of the man in front of him, spun the cylinder, put the pistol to his temple and said, "Look, Russian Roulette" as he pulled the trigger. He died with his twin brother at his side.

On the 4th of October, 10 officers and 164 enlisted men from the 13th replacement draft joined the 3rd Battalion. Pfc. Carl Winterwerp was a member of the 13th draft and recalls those early October days in this way:

The trip over took approximately 15 days, and everybody was looking forward to a three day liberty in Japan. I remember the ship docking in Kobe, Japan. There were two navy ships directly across the pier from us. We soon learned that all liberty had been cancelled, and within a few hours we were boarding those two navy ships. Both ships sailed that evening after dark.

We arrived off the east coast of Korea just after daybreak. Rumors were flying! We thought we were about to make an amphibious landing. After contact from the shore was made, we gathered our gear and began disembarking by climbing down the nets on the side of the ship and loading into landing craft. You can imagine the thoughts going

through our heads. Once loaded, the landing craft began circling, and as soon as all of the landing craft were loaded, they formed waves and headed for the shore. Upon reaching the shore, the ramps were lowered and there before our eyes was a large convoy of trucks awaiting us. We traveled until well after dark and arrived at the 3rd Battalion CP in the middle of the night.

The next morning we were divided into squads and introduced to our leader, who took us to join our new outfit. Our leader walked us single file from the Battalion CP up along the ridge line, being very careful and telling us to keep our heads and butts down. As we walked by an unmanned or undermanned position, he would assign as many of us as necessary to cover that position. It didn't matter that we had been trained as riflemen, machine gunners or mortar men. Whatever that position happened to be, that is what we became. I was trained as a rifleman and ended up as an ammo carrier in light 30 machine gun squad.

The squad patrol that left company lines on October 19th was led by Sgt. William Stacey who had just arrived with the 13th replacement draft. No contact with the enemy was made, but the patrol did find a bunker with two

or maybe three North Koreans in it. They appeared to be dead, but they could have been playing possum. There was a North Korean rifle in the bunker. Pfc. Colin Boyle, one of Stacey's fire team leaders, wanted to take home an enemy weapon as a souvenir. Everyone had been repeatedly warned about booby traps and no one was willing to go into the bunker to get the rifle. Boyle wanted that rifle in the worst way so the squad sprayed the bodies with rifle fire and threw in a couple of grenades. There were no secondary explosions and Boyle crawled in and got his rifle.

It only takes one mortar or artillery shell to make a new replacement respond like a seasoned veteran. Shortly after joining George Company. Pfc. Carl Winterwerp was repairing barbed wire in front of his MG position. He recalls that, "We received several rounds of incoming fire and to this day I think I plowed a furrow in the ground with my nose while scrambling up the slope to get back into the bunker."

Winterwerp also recalls that on an almost daily basis, and at roughly the same time each day, incoming artillery was able to make almost direct hits on company positions. The accuracy of the enemy's fire was uncanny. It was sometime later that someone stopped a "mama san" who hung around the company positions begging cigarettes, candy, soap or anything else of value and searched her. Hidden in her garments was a small radio that she would use when everyone's attention was focused on the incoming shells. The enemy literally had an FO within the company's lines. Once discovered, she was quickly led to the rear.

Whatever fate awaited the "mama san" could not be regretted because she was actively helping the enemy; however, the war's impact on other civilians could not be as easily dismissed. Let Lt. Morton describe a rather unsettling event that he experienced:

I had been selected by Captain Connelly to lead a patrol behind our lines. I returned to my platoon and selected 6 men and a corpsman. I set a slow pace and headed for a small village, close to some small streams. The going was easy as there were many footpaths which were well traveled.

"A hunya sum nika" cried a young waif of a boy--8 or maybe 10 years of age--smiling with two other boys standing shyly behind him. "Chocolate, cigarettes, rations, you got?" I guess we rounded up some of whatever we had and moved on. The boys followed us. I said, "Sergeant, tell those kids to scam. We could draw fire, and I don't want them hurt."

We soon outdistanced the boys (so I thought) and came upon a large vacated bivouac area. Something flashed in the mid-day sun--a rifle cleaning rod was stuck in the ground! The earth around it was not too long ago



Sgt. William Stacey

packed. It looked fishy. The sergeant and I both called the troops over. I said, "Don't touch-looks booby trapped."

I marked on my map the location of the rod, thinking ordnance might want to know. We had no rope and I even considered shooting at it to set it off. Anyway away we went. 5 or 10 minutes later we heard it - Boom!! (We did not see it, but the sound of a grenade going off gets familiar)

I yelled, "Sergeant, turn the patrol around. Let's have a look." Sure enough, 3 little kids were lying on the ground. I picked up the older one, and other Marines got the other two. We hustled back to a dirt road we had crossed. Luck was with us when an army truck came along.

The driver of the truck agreed to haul the kids to the nearest MASH unit. We finished the patrol after blowing up a couple of thatched huts that we felt were possible threats, seeing as we were fired on when in the vicinity.

I was able to check on the kids in a day or so. They were dead on arrival. Such was life in 1951 Korea, but I'll never forget holding the kid with the crew cut hair, tears and holes in his face and chest.

On October 20th a squad size patrol from How Company caught 10 NKPA soldiers in a bunker out in that no man's land between the two opposing forces. It was a one sided contest with 8 of the enemy perishing in the first burst of fire and 2 surrendering as soon as the firing lifted. Two days later, on October 22nd, a squad from George Company's 2nd platoon, led by Lt. James Marsh, departed company lines at 0730. Pfc. George O'Connor was a rifleman in that squad and has the events of that day indelibly etched in his memory:

We slipped through our lines and started down the hill. The day was so foggy that visibility was limited to perhaps 30 feet. We moved down in a leap frog manner, stopping for minutes at a time, trying to detect the enemy's presence by sounds of movement.

We were in single file and just starting up a 30 foot knoll when we almost stumbled in to a 10 to 12 man NKPA squad. I heard what I thought was the clanking a mess gear, which was immediately followed by rifle fire.

Instantly, my squad fanned out in order to place fire on the enemy. We were pretty close to them-about 25 yards-close enough to smell the smoke of their cartridges. Because the enemy squad had been caught by complete surprise, we were able to take out several

before they could effectively respond to our attack.

During a brief lull in the firing, I heard someone speaking in what could almost pass for Chinese or perhaps Korean. Lt. Marsh must have been waiting for just this kind of an opportunity to talk the enemy into surrendering. One did surrender at this point, but a few others continued to fight. We returned their fire and eventually two more surrendered.

It was all over in roughly ten minutes. We gave some medical treatment to the wounded POWs and "requested" that one of the uninjured POWs carry the radio because the radioman had sustained a wound. The POW was not going to cooperate until Sgt. Dickey encouraged him with the point of a bayonet.

We had luck on our side that day. We were well trained and we executed beautifully, but it could have just as easily gone the other way. We did have a few of our people wounded, including my old buddy Pfc. Cornelius Taylor, who was lying to my right when he was hit by shrapnel.

The Battalion Historical Diary for the action described above indicates that "one enemy light machine gun, three burp guns and three rifles were destroyed and two rifles were captured." The Battalion diary also indicates that the patrol was out there over 3 hours and was fired on by at least one machine gun and enemy mortars as the patrol returned to friendly lines.

Apparently because of the success of two squad size patrols that flushed out between 20 and 30 NKPA's in the previous two days, Battalion decided to send a reinforced platoon to make a sweep of the valley in order to "clear the enemy from the valley." Once again, the patrol would be led by Lt. James Marsh, who by this time had what one George Company Marine called a "mystique." He apparently was absolutely cool under fire, made all the right decisions and most importantly, always had luck on his side. Because of this reputation, Lt. Marsh had no trouble in getting volunteers for this patrol. As a matter of fact, he had to turn down volunteers like Pfc. Carl Winterwerp because of the number of combat tested Marines who would follow Marsh almost anywhere.

The raiding party led by Lt. Marsh left company lines at 0730. Sgt. William Stacey was about to get his baptism of fire and has a very clear picture of the events of that day:

We dropped from the top of our hill right into the valley. I was a new squad leader, but most of the people in the squad had already seen action of one kind or another.

During the patrol nothing happened. I'm not sure how long we were out-probably an

hour or two. As we started up the hill to return to our lines through a draw or a ravine, the North Koreans hit us. It was obvious that they had this ravine zeroed in and their fire was very effective.

We took some casualties, probably a couple of KIAs (There were two KIAs, Sgt. Richard McCune and Pfc. James Quillen. In addition, there were 21 WIAs.) I can remember crawling up the draw and seeing our line about 150 yards away. Mortar shells and machine gun fire were exploding all over the place. I remember watching the "splat" of the MG bullets as they walked up the draw; just as the impact of the bullets approached Lt. Marsh they seemed to skip over him and continued on up the draw.

I remember one of the KIAs; he was a new man who probably came over in my replacement draft. His name was Sgt. McCune. I seem to remember that he was married. McCune came down the hill with several other Marines to help with the dead and wounded. He was killed by a rifle or the fire of an automatic weapon. Some of our troops came down the hill out of their positions to carry McCune's body to our lines.

I think we would have all been killed if the North Koreans had taken us under fire while in

that wide open valley. It would have been like shooting fish in a barrel.

Battalion also wondered why the NKPA waited so long in firing on the patrol. The best guess was that the enemy thought the reinforced platoon was the point of a major attack and they were waiting for more troops to be in an exposed location. This explanation was supported a few days later following the interrogation of North Korean POWs.

The next day, October 24th, the 3rd Battalion was relieve by the 1st Battalion and spent the rest of October in reserve status. Things got a little exciting at battalion headquarters when the Commandant of the Marine Corps arrived on October 27th, but there is no evidence that he shared a can of beans and franks with any of the riflemen or machine gunners.

With or without a visit from the Commandant, life in reserve was a hell of a lot better than being on the line. During the previous 24 days there was only one 48 hour period when no shells landed on 3/1's positions. Enemy gunners had given G/3/1 Marines a taste of just about everything in their arsenal, including over "100 rounds of 14.5 mm anti-tank rifle fire" on October 17th. This kind of pounding from the sky was what positional warfare was all about, and no future George Company Marine was going to be rotated home without first sucking in the acrid air of a shell burst.

One last note: Battalion recorded that on October 25th Marines awoke to the season's first light freeze. Old man winter was about to join forces against G/3/1.

MEMORIAL CEREMONY

3RD BATTALION 1ST MARINES

1ST MARINE DIVISION

1 NOVEMBER 1951 1500

INVOCATION Chaplain H. Elihu Rickel, USNR

ADDRESS LtCol Foster C. La Hue USMCR

COMMEMORATION Chaplain R. H. Trower, USN

SINGING OF "My Country, 'Tis of Thee"

BENEDICTION Chaplain J. F. Follard, USN

HONORS

TAPS

In memory of these heroic Marines, who made the supreme sacrifice that men throughout the world may have the opportunity to enjoy the dignity of living as free human beings.

Herbert M. Anderson
 Donald M. Custard
 Edward E. Eccleston
 William M. Gaul
 Richard E. Henderson
 Lawrence J. Hengy
 Darrell B. Hirschbach
 Robert W. Johnson
 Jered Krohn
 John A. Lenchuck
 James E. Lowe
 Richard N. Marson
 Donald E. McCarty
 Richard E. McCune
 Roy H. Ploeger, Jr.
 Gordon J. Read
 Loren D. Reed
 Robert D. Reiner
 Wallace Reuter
 James J. Romero
 Walter L. Seivere
 William J. Shauf
 Donald E. Smith
 David F. Stapleton
 Felix C. Stock
 Augustus E. Todd
 Donald E. Wanoreck

(From 12 September to 24 October 1951)

THE SECOND WINTER 1951-1952

The front lines of the Korean War had changed but slightly in October, and by November 1, 1951, 195,000 United Nations troops looked across no man's land at 208,000 Chinese and North Korean soldiers. General Van Fleet's main task now was to prevent any kind of a surprise offensive by keeping the enemy off balance through aggressive patrolling, artillery fire and air strikes. There could be some limited offensive operations by UN forces, but they would be few in number and would involve very little real estate.

For the entire month, 1st Marine Division activity was limited to nightly squad size patrols and an occasional company size raid in the daytime. For most of the month the North Koreans appeared to be avoiding contact with Marine forces. Despite this lack of aggressiveness on the part of the enemy, casualties for the Division (including the KMC regiment) totalled 34 KIA and 250 WIA.

November 10th never goes by unnoticed by the Marine Corps, and this birthday of the Corps would be celebrated like all the rest. This year, in addition to the traditional dinner and cake, there would be some fireworks. Directly in front of Marine lines was Hill 1052. The enemy used it as an observation post and it was a thorn in the side of Marine forces; on November 10th the NKPA forces on that hill became unwilling participants in the celebration.

Every weapon available to the 1st Marine Division was zeroed in on Hill 1052 and at the appropriate time all commenced firing. The United States Navy joined in on the celebration when the guns of the cruiser, U.S.S. Los Angeles, participated in the festivities. Not to be outdone by the Navy, the Commanding General of the Marine Air Wing, General Christian Schilt, personally led an air strike of 83 Marine planes. To add insult to injury, the enemy was "bombarded with 50,000 leaflets inviting them to the Marine birthday dinner that evening."

November, 1951 was a relatively easy month for George Company. In the early days of November the company was in battalion reserve, and on November 11th, the entire 1st Marines went into divisional reserve. Sometime in early November, Sgt. Robert McNesky joined G/3/1. Like many replacements before him, his arrival is embedded in his memory:

After a long ride we disembarked near the area where George Company was in reserve. I was pointed in a general direction and told to ask where the company was located.

After several inquiries, I felt I was finally on the right trail. Down the hill and around

and with any luck I would end up in the middle of G/3/1. The reason I'm dwelling on this is that no one ever gives a new person a straight answer; it's a matter of finding out for yourself.

As I rounded the curve in the path, a figure sprang out of the early morning mist, clean shaven, clean dungarees and shiny brown eyes. All of a sudden, a slight smile wandered across his face. Without a word of welcome he blurted out, "When you get hit, let me have that pistol."

This figure turned out to be Sgt. William Stacey, who proved to be my best friend in Korea for the next seven months. We got to know each other quite well as all combat soldiers do. (Editor's Note! Little did Stacey think that on April 30, 1952 that this pistol would be handed over to him. More on this later.)

Back at Camp Tripoli life was pretty easy except for a never ending training schedule, but that was the price the troops had to pay for hot chow, a dry place to sleep and the chance to slowly get acclimated to the Korean winter.

December 1951

The last month of 1951 was a continuation of the previous month for the 1st Marine Division in that contact with the enemy was of a very limited nature. This inactivity was primarily a response to the encouraging news coming out of the peace talks. Armistice negotiations had been broken off on August 23rd when the communists walked out, but had been resumed on October 25th. A day after negotiations had been resumed, a partial cease fire went into effect.

Under the terms of the cease fire, the Marine Division was instructed to reduce its operations. Present positions were to be defended and a counter attack was to be allowed if the enemy seized any Marine positions. The key to the directive issued to the United Nations forces was that for all practical purposes operations would be limited to patrolling to a "line (where) contact has been repeatedly established." Each side could patrol under the cease fire agreement and each side could use artillery and supporting arms. The only change was that there would be no attempt to launch a full scale offensive.

It was under these conditions that George Company, along with the rest of the 1st Marines, returned to the MLR on December 11th. Cpl. Peter Beauchamp had arrived in Korea the previous month and had been assigned to Lt.

Miller's 1st platoon and describes his portion of the MLR as follows:

The 1st platoon was stretched across a large valley, with a small stream running north to south, dividing our lines in the valley. Every evening at dusk we would go out to our shallow fighting holes, deep enough for sitting in, to stand our 100% watch. At day break we would leave our position in the valley and head for tents and sleeping bunkers located behind a hill on the left side of the valley.

Occasionally, the stream would freeze at night, and the ice would break through the sandbags that served as stepping stones across the stream and wash them down stream. The squad on the other side would have to ford the stream in almost knee deep water. By the time they made it to the tents, their boots and pants were frozen solid.

One evening our squad was told to meet up, out in no man's land, with another G Company platoon to carry out a raid on a North Korean position. The snow was knee deep and it was hard to move. We decided to dump our cumbersome parkas and pick them up when we returned from the raid. We dropped them in a pass between a hill we called Sugarloaf in NK territory and a hill out in no man's land.

We proceeded through the pass and into a large valley where we met up with the rest of the raiding party. The lead squad was dressed in white camouflaged uniforms, which looked strange with the dark 782 gear and dark weapons. The rest of us were in our dark clothing and were silhouetted against the moon lit snow.

About this time, the patrol leader was on the radio explaining that they had hit the wrong hill and that the enemy was now alerted. He asked to have the mission aborted, which was denied.

We continued on to the objective, trudging up the moon lit hill with my squad bringing up the rear. Suddenly grenades or mortars and small arms fire greeted the patrol. The word came down to return to our lines.

When we got to the pass where we had left our parkas, a burp gun or burp guns opened up on us. Luckily, no one was hit. Pfc. Chuck Brant wanted to stay and fight, but because we couldn't see where the fire was coming from, we decided to leave our parkas where they lay and get back to our lines.

As we reached the gate in our barbed wire, the machine gunner at that position counted

heads as we came in. Somewhat behind us were a few people that didn't belong to our patrol. Before we fully realized that we were being followed by North Korean soldiers, they began to rake our lines with burp gun fire.

The next morning we knew we would have to go out and retrieve our parkas. I figured that one of three things was going to happen: The North Koreans would set up an ambush; the parkas were bobby-trapped; they would call in mortars and artillery on us. As it turned out, we got our parkas without incident. As you can imagine we were very, very alert out there and back.

In December of 1951, some fifteen months after G/3/1 landed in Korea, most Marines still carried the old dependable M-1 rifle, but a few of the men were able to come up with weapons that were light enough to carry, but could fire automatically. Sgt. Stacey remembers one patrol (perhaps in October, but probably in December) led by his good friend Sgt. Andrew Shipke that led to some serious questions regarding the reliability of Thompson sub machine guns:

Shipke led his patrol down into the valley in front of our lines. As they were going down, but prior to reaching the valley floor, the patrol jumped some North Koreans in a bunker. Shipke was carrying a Tommy gun and opened up, killing one of the enemy. Before he could get another burst from the sub machine gun, it jammed. He threw the gun down and grabbed an M-1 rifle from the hands of a nearby Marine and killed a second one.

When he got back with this story, those of us carrying Tommy gun just left them on the trail or gave them to the KMCs because it was kind of scary to think of what happened on Shipke's patrol.

The reduction in fighting allowed the troops to observe Christmas in a limited way. Pfc. George O'Connor was dug in on or near Hill 441 Christmas morning and recalls how he spent the day:

(Early in the morning) I heard the message on the sound power indicate that Catholics could attend a mass by Cardinal Spellman at division head quarters. After I passed the word to the bunkers that had no sound power, I got a second message that no one could leave the MLR unless there was a man to take his place.

Fat chance, I thought, and dismissed the idea that it was possible or even sound to let front line troops go to the rear for religious services.

In a short period of time, several Marines and corpsmen stopped at my bunker. They asked if any "mackerel snappers" were around who wanted to go to church services. It was not long before Pfc. Weber, Pfc. Taylor and I, plus several other Marines, had gathered. After some good natured bantering, such as, "I thought they were going to send men to take our place," and "You Protestants, Jews and atheists sure have a fine Catholic attitude," we were on our way.

Cardinal Spellman's mass was well attended; he complemented the group, and we were soon on our way back to G/3/1. I remember feeling that I was "playing hooky" and hoping that the enemy had not attacked those guys who volunteered to take our places as the Six-by rumbled back to the company

When we got back to our area, there was a chow truck serving a hot Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. The group I was with was the last one served, so we were told to take any left overs that we wanted. What a feast!

Even though there wasn't a single large scale operation on the entire divisional front, the 1st Division and the attached KMC regiment suffered 24 KIAs and 139 WIAs during the month. The addition of 8 MIAs to the monthly casualty report reminded everyone that in this new phase of warfare, the enemy was out to get prisoners. Not a comforting thought in view of the way North Koreans had treated United Nations prisoners in the previous year and one-half.

January, 1952

January was basically a repeat of the previous two months. While all across the division's front the enemy offered very little resistance to Marine outposts and patrols, mortar and artillery fire increased during the month.

On New Year's Day, a company sized patrol from How Company went out to engage the enemy, but had to return when a Marine suffered a severe wound from stepping on a mine. Every now and then, a NKPA patrol would approach Marine lines. On one such occasion in mid January, Pfc. Carl Winterwerp was manning a machine gun when the enemy hit. He remembers that the, "enemy patrol broke through our lines and got behind us. This time I pulled my machine gun out of its position, set it out in the open and fired both ways. It seemed like all hell had broken loose. Luckily, none of our guys were hit and the enemy was repulsed."

January has got to be the coldest month of the year, and this year was no exception. Unlike the snow pacs used at the Chosin Reservoir, the thermal boot, affectionately called the "Mickey Mouse" boot made the winter a bit

more tolerable, but not much so. Again let Pfc. Winterwerp describe conditions in January.

These weeks in these positions were some of the coldest I can remember. We had snow storms with the temperature reaching 25 degrees below zero. It was during these snow storms that we were most afraid because you could not tell if someone was sneaking up on you until he was approximately 6 inches away from you. Pass words were hollered well in advance when approaching another Marine's position. One morning we awoke with the entire mountain covered with 8 to 12 inches of snow. The only way a Marine's position could be identified was by a tiny hole in the side of the mountain, just below the ridge line. The same was true for the enemy's slope, and a lot of sniping took place with us aiming at the tiny holes just below the ridge line.

Most of the winter of 1951 and 1952 were spent in these positions of little activity. Our routine was to stand a cold, lonely 4 hour watch, burning our mittens trying to smoke a cigarette, while hiding the burning end. Occasionally, we were permitted to go back to the battalion area for a hot shower and a hot meal, and then back to the line. Back in your bunker you would return to the same monotonous routine.

Due to the cold weather, it was an effort to make head calls as your butt would freeze when it was exposed to the north wind sweeping down through the crack. The outfits we wore consisted of long johns, winter greens, including flannel dress shirt, alpaca vests, cold weather trousers, full length parkas with mittens and, of course, our "Mickey Mouse" boots.

February, 1952

February looked like it was going to be a re-run of the previous months except for the famous, or better yet, infamous, Operation Clam-Up. Someone in the high echelons of the United Nations command decided that the best way to inflict punishment on the Chinese and the North Koreans was to feign a general withdrawal all along the UN front. The theory was that the enemy would be confused and send out large patrols to find out what was going on. As these large units approached our lines that seemed to be vacated, they would be captured or eliminated.

The day before Clam-Up was to begin, the 11th Marines fired 471 harassing and interdiction missions, (over 12,000 rounds were fired) hoping that the North Korean forces opposite Marine lines would interpret this as fire to cover a large-scale withdrawal.

After this barrage Clam-Up began. Those Marines on the front lines had to lay low, while the reserve battalions marched to the rear in broad daylight, only to return to their positions after night fall. The 5th Marines in reserve at Camp Tripoli also feigned a withdrawal.

As it turned out the North Koreans were probably more confused than fooled. They did send out patrols and tried desperately to draw fire. The first night fire discipline was maintained, but the second night a Marine outpost had to fight back in self protection. The next morning, February 12th, an enemy patrol tried to reach the MLR in the 1st Marines sector and was fired upon. So far operation Clam-Up had netted 19 enemy killed and 2 prisoners in the entire Marine sector of the UN line. On February 13th, the next day, Marine positions were subjected to the heaviest artillery fire of the entire month. This was the NKPA's way of telling us that they were perfectly aware that there had been no withdrawal.

Not only was the operation a failure in that it netted very few prisoners across the UN line, but it also allowed the Chinese and the North Koreans to take advantage of the absence of artillery fire to bring up an enormous amount of supplies and ammunition.

Sgt. William Stacey has a pretty clear memory of operation Clam-Up and a few choice words to describe its promise and effectiveness:

We were on line in the same sector, but in a different position. There had been no enemy contact, and we were happy to keep it that way, but HQ wanted prisoners.

We left the MLR making a lot of noise and commotion to make it appear that we were evacuating the area. At darkness, we sneaked

back to the rear slope and then crept into look out positions with most of the troops remaining on the rear slope.

Can you imagine a regiment of Marines being quiet for 3 days? We took our turns on watch, then returned to our bunkers in a way that would minimize detection. I was in the bunker on the reverse slope with two other guys and was getting the "bulkhead stares." To relieve the monotony, I pulled out my pistol, pointed it to a top corner of the bunker and acted like I was going to shoot. The two Marines in the bunker with me said in unison, "No, No!"

I always kept the first chamber empty so that there would never be an accident. I was the most surprised guy in the world when the pistol went off! I'm thankful to this day for my USMC training that said you don't point a weapon at someone unless you intend to shoot him. The phone rang and Captain Fred Kraus, George Company's CO, asked, "Who fired that shot?" I had answered the phone and, thinking quickly, said that it came from farther up the hill. I told him I would check it out. Fortunately for me, it was never determined where that shot came from.

Operation Clam-Up came to an ignoble end on February 15th and the Marine division and its enemy returned to the old routine of daily patrols and artillery fire. Total casualties for the Marine division and the KMC regiment were 23 KIA, 102 WIA and 1 MIA for the month of February, the last full month of operations on the **Central and East Front.**

