

Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr.

His troops called him "Litz the Blitz" for no particular reason except the alliteration of sound. He had come up from the ranks and was extraordinarily proud of it. Immediately before the Korean War began he was in command of the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune, very much interested in his regimental baseball teams, and about to turn over the command to another colonel. When war came he was restored to command of the regiment and sadly watched his skeleton battalions depart for Camp Pendleton to form the cadre for the re-activated 1st Marines. This was scarcely done when he received orders to re-activate the 7th Marines on the West Coast.

Litzenberg was a "Pennsylvania Dutchman," born in Steelton, Pennsylvania, in 1903. His family moved to Philadelphia and, after graduating from high school and two years in the National Guard, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1922. Subsequent to recruit training at Parris Island, he was sent to Haiti. In 1925 he became a second lieutenant. East Coast duty was followed by expeditionary service in Nicaragua in 1928 and 1929, and then by sea service in a string of battleships—*Idaho*, *Arkansas*, *Arizona*, *New Mexico*—and the cruiser *Augusta*. After graduating from the Infantry School at Fort Benning in 1933, he had two years with a Marine Reserve battalion in Philadelphia. Next came two years on Guam as aide to the governor and inspector-instructor of the local militia. He came home in 1938 to serve at several levels as a war planner.

When World War II came, he was sent, as a major, to England to serve with a combined planning staff. This took him to North Africa for the amphibious assault of Casablanca in November 1942. He came home to form and command the 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, in the new 4th Marine Division, moving up to regimental executive officer for the assault of Roi-Namur in the Marshalls. He then went to the planning staff of the V Amphibious Corps for Saipan and Tinian.

After the war he went to China for duty with the Seventh Fleet and stayed on with Naval Forces Western Pacific. He came home in 1948 and was given command of the 6th Marines in 1949.



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After Inchon, he continued in command of the 7th Marines through the battles of Seoul, Chosin Reservoir, and the Spring Offensive, coming home in April 1951. Soon promoted to brigadier general and subsequently to major general, he had many responsible assignments including assistant command of the 3d Marine Division in Japan, Inspector General of the Marine Corps, command of Camp Pendleton, and command of Parris Island. He returned to Korea in 1957 to serve as senior member of the United Nations component negotiating at Panmunjom. At the end of the year he came back for what would be his last assignment, another tour of duty as Inspector General.

He retired in 1959, with an elevation to lieutenant general because of his combat awards that included a Navy Cross, a Distinguished Service Cross, and three Silver Stars. He died in the Bethesda Naval Hospital on 27 June 1963 at age 68 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

and 25 September.

Much of the heavy equipment to be loaded arrived at dockside from the Barstow supply depot with no time for inspection. General Shepherd arrived on 13 August to observe and encourage, joined next day by General Cates. Puller's 1st Marines sailed from San Diego

on 14 August, 10 days after activation. The Navy had very little amphibious shipping on the West Coast, and much of the division and its gear had to be lifted by commercial shipping.

Among the pressing matters discussed by Smith with his superiors Cates and Shepherd was the reacti-

vation of the 7th Marines. Nucleus of the 7th Marines would be the skeleton 6th Marines, which had already lost two battalions to the 1st Marines. The 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, a half-strength peacetime battalion with pieces scattered around the Mediterranean, became the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, with

orders to proceed to Japan by way of the Suez Canal. Fillers for the battalion and a completely new third rifle company would have to come from Camp Pendleton.

What was left of the 6th Marines arrived at Pendleton on 16 August. The 7th Marines activated the next day. Colonel Homer L. "Litz the Blitz" Litzenberg, Jr., a mercurial man who had commanded the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune, continued as commanding officer of the 7th Marines with orders to embark his regiment not later than 3 September.

Joint Chiefs Have a Problem

Although the National Defense Act of 1947 was in effect, the relationship of the Joint Chiefs to the theater commanders was not too clear. As a theater commander MacArthur had broad leeway in his actions. The JCS faced the Hobson's choice of asking MacArthur no questions and making no challenges, or exerting their capacity as the principal advisors to President Truman in his role.

The Joint Chiefs held an inten-

sive series of briefings in the White House on 10 August, culminating in an afternoon meeting with the National Security Council. President Truman was told that a war-strength Marine division was being assembled for service in Korea. Admiral Sherman assured the President, however, that the JCS would have to pass on MacArthur's plans for an amphibious operation.

On 12 August, MacArthur issued CinCFE Operations Plan 100-B, specifically naming Inchon-Seoul as the objective area. No copy of this plan was sent to the JCS.

O. P. Smith Departs Pendleton

General Smith sent off the first echelon of his division headquarters by air on 16 August. Two days later he closed his command post at Camp Pendleton and left by air for Japan. Delayed by shipping shortages, outloading of a third of Smith's division—essentially the reinforced 1st Marines—was completed on 22 August. In all, 19 ships were employed.

Following close behind, Litzenberg beat by two days the

embarkation date given him by Smith. The 7th Marines, filled up with regulars pulled away from posts and stations and reservists, sailed from San Diego on 1 September.

Marine Versus Air Force Close Support

General Stratemeyer, MacArthur's Air Force component commander, apparently first heard of the possibility of an Inchon landing on 20 July. His first action was to instruct his staff to prepare a small command group with which he could accompany MacArthur on the operation. Almost a month later, on 14 August, MacArthur discussed the proposed landing with Stratemeyer, pointing out that Kimpo Airfield, just west of the Han River from Seoul, was the best in Korea. MacArthur emphasized that the airfield must be quickly rehabilitated from any battle damage and put to use.

By then news stories were appearing that compared Fifth Air Force support of the Eighth Army unfavorably with the close air support being provided the Marine

USS Mount McKinley (AGC7) was the command center afloat for the Inchon landing. It also served as a floating hotel for the large number of VIPs who were in Gen Douglas MacArthur's official party or were simply passing through.

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-424523



brigade by its organic squadrons. On 23 August, Stratemeyer sent a memorandum to MacArthur stating that the news stories were another step “in a planned program to discredit the Air Force and the Army and at the same time to unwarrantedly enhance the prestige of the Marines.” He pointed out that the Marine squadrons, operating from two aircraft carriers, were supporting a brigade of about 3,000 Marines on a front that could be measured in yards as compared to the Fifth Air Force which had to supply close air support for a front of 160 miles.

General Walker, collocated at Taegu with General Partridge, pulled the rug out from under General Stratemeyer’s doctrinal concerns and contentions of unfairness, by commenting officially: “Without the slightest intent of disparaging the support of the Air Force, I must say that I, in common with the vast majority of officers of the Army, feel strongly that the Marine system of close air support has much to commend it I feel strongly that the Army would be well advised to emulate the Marine Corps and have its own tactical aviation.”

Top Brass Gathers in Tokyo

General Collins and Admiral Sherman—the latter had not been to Korea before—made a quick visit on 22 August to Walker’s Eighth Army headquarters at Taegu. Collins found Walker “too involved in plugging holes in his leaky front to give much thought to a later breakout.” On the morning of 23 August, Collins accompanied Walker on a visit to all U. S. division commanders and the Marine brigade commander, Brigadier General Edward A. Craig. Collins found these field commanders confident but weary. Collins



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Gen Douglas MacArthur, center, greets Gen J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, and Adm Forrest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations, upon their arrival in Tokyo on 21 August 1950. A critical conference would be held two days later at which MacArthur would have to convince these two members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that a landing at Inchon was feasible.

then returned to Tokyo for the crucial conference at which MacArthur must overcome JCS reservations concerning the Inchon landing.

Major General Smith arrived at Haneda airport in Japan on 22 August and was met by his old friend, Admiral Doyle, the prospective Attack Force Commander. Smith later remembered that Doyle “was not very happy about the whole affair.” They proceeded to Doyle’s command ship, USS *Mount McKinley* (AGC 7). Smith’s orders were to report his division directly to Commander in Chief, Far East, for operational control. His appointment with General MacArthur was set for 1730 that evening at the Dai Ichi building. Colonel Alpha L. Bowser, Jr., the division G-3, who had come out with the first echelon of Smith’s staff, gave him a hurried briefing on the tentative plans for the division. “For the first time

I learned that the division was to land at Inchon on 15 September,” Smith wrote later.

On arriving at GHQ comfortably before the appointed time of 1730, Smith found that he was to meet first with Almond, who kept him waiting until 1900. Almond called most soldiers and officers “son,” but when 58-year-old Almond addressed 57-year-old Smith as “son,” it infuriated Smith. Almond further aggravated Smith by dismissing the difficulties of an amphibious operation as being “purely mechanical.”

Having had his say, Almond ushered Smith into MacArthur’s office. MacArthur, in a cordial and expansive mood, confidently told Smith that the 1st Marine Division would win the war by its landing at Inchon. The North Koreans had committed all their troops against the Pusan Perimeter, and he did not expect heavy opposition at Inchon. The operation would be

somewhat “helter-skelter,” but it would be successful. It was MacArthur’s feeling that all hands would be home for Christmas, if not to the United States, at least to Japan.

Smith reported to Doyle his conviction that MacArthur was firm in his decision to land at Inchon on 15 September. Doyle replied that he thought there was still a chance to substitute Posung-Myun, a few miles to the south of Inchon, as a more likely landing site. Doyle was having his underwater demolition teams reconnoiter those beaches.

Next day, 23 August, Smith met again with Almond, this time accompanied by General Barr, commander of the 7th Infantry Division. When Smith raised the possibility of Posung-Myun as a landing site, Almond brushed him off, saying that any landing at Posung-Myun would be no more than a subsidiary landing.

Critical 23 August Conference Convenes

Smith was not invited to the 23 August conference. Nor was Shepherd. The all-important summit conference began with brief opening remarks by MacArthur. General Wright then outlined the basic plan which called for an assault landing by the 1st Marine Division directly into the port of Inchon. After the capture of Inchon, the division was to advance and seize, as rapidly as possible, Kimpo Airfield, the town of Yongdung-po, and the south bank of the Han River. The division was then to cross the river, capture Seoul, and seize the dominant ground to the north. Meanwhile, the 7th Infantry Division was to land behind the Marines, advance on the right flank, secure the south bank of the Han southeast of Seoul and the

high ground north of Suwon. Thereafter, X Corps—1st Marine and 7th Infantry Divisions—would form the anvil against which the Eighth Army, breaking out of the Pusan Perimeter, would deliver the hammer blows that would destroy the North Korean Army.

After Wright’s briefing, Doyle, as the prospective Attack Force commander, gave a thorough analysis of the naval aspects of the landing. Of greatest concern to Doyle were the tides. A point of contention was the length of the naval gunfire preparation. Doyle argued for three to four days of pre-landing bombardment by air and naval gunfire, particularly to take out the shore batteries. MacArthur’s staff disputed this on the basis of the loss of tactical surprise. Admiral Sherman was asked his opinion and replied, “I wouldn’t hesitate to take a ship up there.”

“Spoken like a Farragut,” said MacArthur.

With his concerns brushed aside, Doyle concluded his brief-

ing with “the best that I can say is that Inchon is not impossible.”

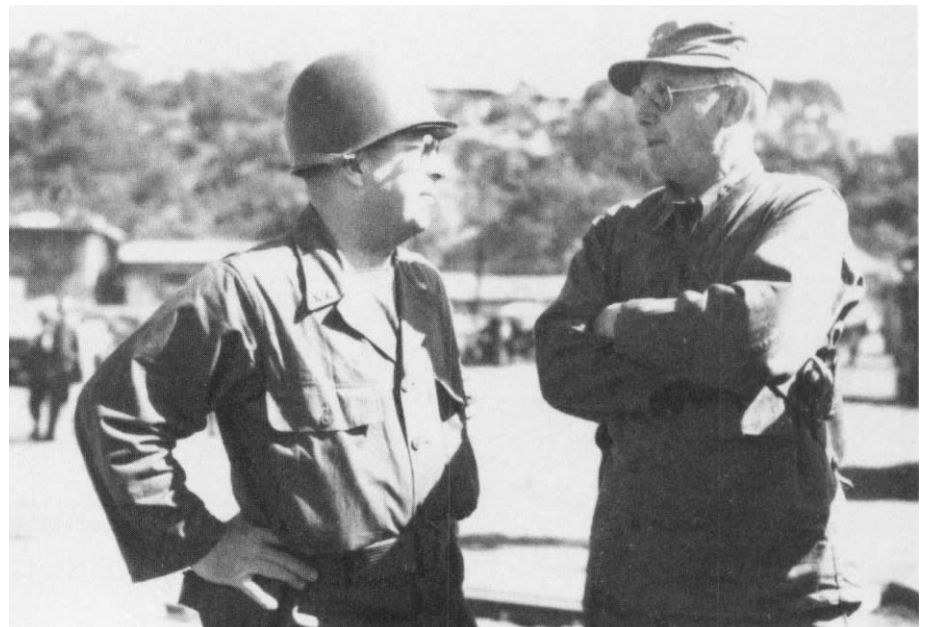
Collins questioned the ability of the Eighth Army to link up quickly with X Corps. He suggested Kunsan, to the south, as an alternate landing site. Sherman, in general terms, supported Collins’ reservations. General MacArthur sat silently, puffing his pipe, for several moments. He then spoke and all agree that his exposition was brilliant. He dazzled and possibly confused his audience with an analogy from the French and Indian War, Wolfe’s victory at Quebec: “Like Montcalm, the North Koreans will regard the Inchon landing as impossible. Like Wolfe I [can] take them by surprise.”

As he himself remembered his summation years later in his memoirs:

The Navy’s objections as to tides, hydrography, terrain, and physical handicaps are indeed substantial and pertinent. But they are not insuperable. My confidence in the

MajGen David G. Barr, left, Commanding General of the U. S. Army’s 7th Infantry Division meets with MajGen Edward M. Almond, Commanding General, X Corps, to discuss the Inchon landing. The 7th Division would land behind the Marines, advance on their right flank, and seize the commanding ground south of Seoul.

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC349013



Navy is complete, and in fact I seem to have more confidence in the Navy than the Navy has in itself As to the proposal for a landing at Kunsan, it would indeed eliminate many of the hazards of Inchon, but it would be largely ineffective and indecisive. It would be an attempted envelopment which would not envelop. It would not sever or destroy the enemy's supply lines or distribution center, and would therefore serve little purpose. It would be a "short envelopment," and nothing in war is more futile. But seizure of Inchon and Seoul will cut the enemy's supply line and seal off the entire southern peninsula This in turn will paralyze the fighting power of the troops that now face Walker If my estimate is

inaccurate and should I run into a defense with which I cannot cope, I will be there personally and will immediately withdraw our forces before they are committed to a bloody setback. The only loss then will be my professional reputation. But Inchon will not fail. Inchon will succeed. And it will save 100,000 lives.

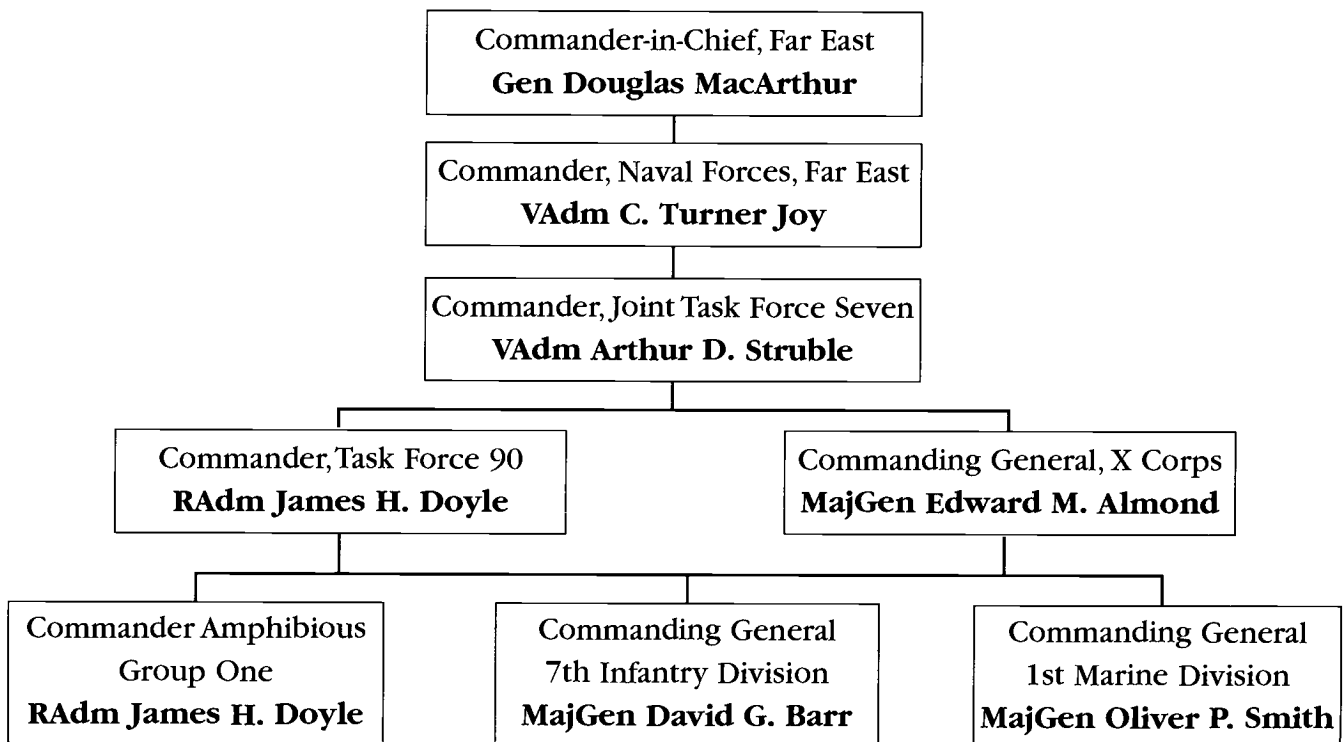
Others at the conference recalled MacArthur's closing words at the conference as being: "We shall land at Inchon, and I shall crush them." This said, MacArthur knocked the ashes of his pipe out into a glass ashtray, making it ring, and stalked majestically out of the room.

General Collins still harbored reservations. He thought a main point had been missed: what was the strength of the enemy at

Inchon and what was his capability to concentrate there?

Admiral Sherman was momentarily carried away by MacArthur's oratory, but once removed from MacArthur's personal magnetism he too had second thoughts. Next morning, 24 August, he gathered together in Admiral Joy's office the principal Navy and Marine Corps commanders. Present, in addition to Sherman and Joy, were Admirals Radford and Doyle and Generals Shepherd and Smith. Despite general indignation over MacArthur's failure to give due weight to naval considerations, it was now abundantly clear that the landing would have to be made at or near Inchon. But perhaps there was still room for argument for another landing site with fewer hydrographic problems. Shepherd announced that he was going to see MacArthur once again before returning to Pearl Harbor and that he would make a

Command Structure for Inchon



final plea for a landing south of Inchon in the vicinity of Posung-Myun.

Disappointment for General Shepherd

Shepherd, accompanied by Krulak, arrived at GHQ for his scheduled visit with MacArthur but was short-stopped by Almond who dismissed the Posung-Myun site, saying that Inchon had been decided upon and that was where the landing would be. The discussion became heated. Fortunately, MacArthur entered the room and waved Shepherd and Krulak into his office.

Shepherd had some expectation of being named the landing force commander. Admiral Sherman had recommended, without any great amount of enthusiasm, that Shepherd command X Corps for the operation because of his great amphibious experience and the expertise of his Fleet Marine Force, Pacific staff. General Wright on MacArthur's staff also recommended it, but a rumor was prevalent that Almond would get X Corps. MacArthur confirmed this intention, saying he would like to have had Shepherd as commander, but that he had promised it to Almond. He asked if Shepherd would go along as his amphibious advisor. Shepherd hedged slightly. He said he would gladly go along as an observer.

Shepherd showed no rancor, then or later, at not getting command. He and Almond were both Virginians and both had gone to Virginia Military Institute—Almond, class of 1915 and Shepherd, class of 1917. Their personal relations were good but not close. Shepherd later characterized Almond as “an excellent corps commander. He was energetic, forceful, brave, and

in many ways did a good job under difficult conditions.” O. P. Smith would not come to share Shepherd's good opinion of Almond.

Plans Progress

The day following the 23 August conference, General Stratemeyer directed his staff to develop a FEAF plan to support the landing. The plan was to be separate from the CinCFE plan and was to provide mission direction for all combat aircraft not essential to the close support of the Eighth Army.

MacArthur, on 26 August, formally announced Almond's assignment as commanding general of X Corps. MacArthur had told him that he would continue, at the same time, to be the chief of staff of Far East Command. MacArthur's prediction was that Almond would soon be able to return to Tokyo. The landing at Inchon and subsequent capture of Seoul would end the war.

General Bradley's assessment of Almond was less than enthusiastic:

Ned Almond had never commanded a corps—or troops in an amphibious assault. However, he and his staff, mostly recruited from MacArthur's headquarters, were ably backstopped by the expertise of the Navy and Marines, notably that of Oliver P. Smith, who commanded the 1st Marine Division, which would spearhead the assault.

MacArthur had not asked Collins and Sherman to approve his plan nor would they have had the authority to do so. The best they had to take back with them to Washington was a fairly clear concept of MacArthur's intended operations.

Collins and Sherman reported to Bradley and the other chiefs what they had learned about the Inchon plan, repeating their own misgivings. On 26 August, Bradley briefed President Truman and Secretary Johnson. The President was more optimistic than the chiefs.

'Conditional' Approval

On 28 August, the Joint Chiefs sent MacArthur a “conditional” approval, concurring in an amphibious turning movement, either at Inchon or across a favorable beach to the south. Chief “conditions” were that MacArthur was to provide amplifying details and keep them abreast of any modification of his plans. The Joint Chiefs specifically suggested preparation of an alternate plan for a landing at Kunsan.

X Corps dated its Operation Order No. 1, written largely by the facile pen of Colonel Forney, as 28 August; distribution was a day or so later. The 1st Marine Division “was charged with the responsibility as the Landing Force to assault INCHON, conduct beachhead operations, seize and protect KIMPO airfield, then advance to the HAN River line west of SEOUL. This achieved, the Division was further directed to seize SEOUL, and the commanding ground north of SEOUL, on order.”

O. P. Smith's division staff, then on the *Mount McKinley*, was at half strength. Part of the remainder was enroute from the United States; part was with Craig's 1st Marine Brigade in the south of Korea. The brigade, although an organic part of the division, was still under the operational control of General Walker. Smith's staff, directed by Colonel Gregon A. Williams as chief of staff, worked well with Doyle's PhibGruOne staff. Above this harmonious relationship, the

exact status of the more senior commands was indistinct and vaguely defined. From amidst a welter of paper, misunderstanding, ragged tempers, and sleep deprivation, Division Order 2-50, expanding on the corps order, emerged on 4 September.

Smith wrote later in the *Marine Corps Gazette*:

By dedicated work on the part of the Division staff, with the wholehearted support of Adm Doyle's PhibGruOne staff, within three days a

detailed plan for the Inchon Landing was drawn up, and two days later an advance planning draft of 1stMarDiv OpO 2-50 (Inchon Landing) was issued.

Time available for planning was so short that the assault regiments, contrary to amphibious doctrine, would get rigid landing plans drawn up completely by division.

The always dapper General Stratemeyer, seeking to solidify his contention that he was General MacArthur's tactical air comman-

der, conferred with Joy, Struble, and Almond at CinCFE headquarters on 30 August. All that he could get was a general agreement on the adequacy of a CinCFE 8 July directive, "Coordination of Air Effort of Far East Air Forces and United States Naval Forces, Far East." Building on that, Stratemeyer sent a message to MacArthur, the gist of it being: "It is recognized that ComNavFE must have control of air operations within the objective area during the amphibious phase. Air operations outside of the objective area are part of the

Junior officers and enlisted Marines did not get a briefing on their unit's role in the landing until embarked in amphibious shipping enroute to the objective area. However,

by then, because of leakage to the press, it was an open secret that the Marines were going to land at Inchon.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A2681



overall air campaign, and during the amphibious phase contribute to the success of the amphibious operation.”

MacArthur’s headquarters issued Operation Order No. 1 on 30 August, but neither a copy of this order nor any other amplifying detail had reached Washington by 5 September. On that date the chiefs sent a further request for details to MacArthur. Choosing to consider the 28 August JCS message to be sufficient approval, MacArthur dismissed the request with a brief message, stating “the general outline of the plan remains as described to you.”

Later he would write that his plan “was opposed by powerful military in Washington.” He knew that Omar Bradley, the JCS chairman, had recently testified to Congress that large-scale amphibious operations were obsolete. He disliked Bradley personally and derisively referred to him as a “farmer.”

Both Bradley and Truman came from Missouri working-class families and were proud of it. A routine had been established under which the Joint Chiefs kept Truman informed, usually by a personal briefing by Bradley, of the current situation in Korea.

On 7 September, MacArthur received a JCS message which he said chilled him to the marrow of his bones. The message asked for an “estimate as to the feasibility and chance of success of projected operation if initiated on planned schedule.”

The offending message reminded MacArthur that all reserves in the Far East had been committed to the Eighth Army and all available general reserves in the United States—except for the 82d Airborne Division—had been committed to the Far East Command. No further reinforcement was in

prospect for at least four months. In light of this situation, a fresh evaluation of Inchon was requested.

MacArthur Protests

An indignant MacArthur fired back an answer, the concluding paragraph of which said: “The embarkation of the troops and the preliminary air and naval preparations are proceeding according to schedule. I repeat that I and all my commanders and staff officers are enthusiastic for and confident of the success of the enveloping movement.”

The last sentence was manifestly not true. Lack of enthusiasm was readily apparent at all levels of command.

Next day, 8 September, the JCS sent MacArthur a short, contrite message: “We approve your plan and the President has been informed.” The phrase “the President has been informed” annoyed MacArthur. To him it implied something less than presidential approval and he interpreted it as a threat on President Truman’s part to overrule the Joint Chiefs. General Collins, for one, had no recollection of Truman ever expressing any doubt about the success of the Inchon landing or any inclination to override the actions of the JCS with respect to the operation.

Beach Reconnaissance

According to the intelligence available to General Smith, the enemy had about 2,500 troops in the Inchon-Kimpo region, including at least two battalions of the *226th Independent Marine Regiment* and two companies of the *918th Artillery Regiment*. The North Koreans had apparently prepared strong defensive positions.

Reconnaissance reports indicated 106 hard targets, such as gun emplacements, along the Inchon beaches.

Some of the best beach intelligence was obtained by Navy offshore reconnaissance. Best known are the exploits of Lieutenant Eugene F. Clark, ex-enlisted man and an experienced amphibious sailor. He and two South Koreans left Sasebo on 31 August on board the British destroyer HMS *Charity*, transferred the next morning to a South Korean frigate, and landed that evening on Yong-hong-do, 14 miles off Inchon and one of the hundreds of islands that dotted Korea’s west coast. The islanders were friendly. Clark organized the island’s teenagers into coastwatching parties and commandeered the island’s only motorized sampan. For two weeks he fought a nocturnal war, capturing more sampans, sending agents into Inchon, and testing the mud flats for himself. His greatest accomplishment was discovering that one of the main navigation lights for Flying Fish Channel was still operable. GHQ at Tokyo instructed him to turn on the light at midnight on 14 September. This he would do.

Anticipated hydrographic conditions were much more frightening than the quality of expected enemy resistance. Doyle’s Attack Force would have to thread its way from the Yellow Sea through the tortuous Flying Fish Channel. As had already been determined, the 15th of September was the best day of the month because of the height and spacing of the tides. The morning high tide—an incredible 31.5 feet—would be at 0659 and the evening high tide at 1919. In between these times, as the tide fell, the currents would rip out of the channel at seven or eight knots, exposing mud flats across which even amphibian tractors



Terrain Handbook No. 65: Seoul and Vicinity (GHQ, Far East Command, 16 August 1950)

This pre-landing aerial photograph shows clearly the convoluted nature of the Inchon "beachhead." MajGen Oliver P. Smith, commanding the landing force, considered Wolmi-

do, the island at the lower left of the photo, the key to the whole situation. Seizure of Wolmi-do would precede the main landings on Inchon itself.

could not be expected to crawl.

Wolmi-do: Key to Operation

Wolmi-do ("Moon Tip Island"), the long narrow island that formed the northern arm of Inchon's inner harbor, was thought to have about 500 defenders. Wolmi-do harbor was connected to the Inchon dock area by a 600-yard-long causeway. "Wolmi-do," wrote Smith, was "the key to the whole operation."

Brigade staff officers, headed by their chief of staff, Colonel Edward W. Snedeker, were called to Japan from Pusan. They recommended that the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, be used for the assault of Wolmi-do.

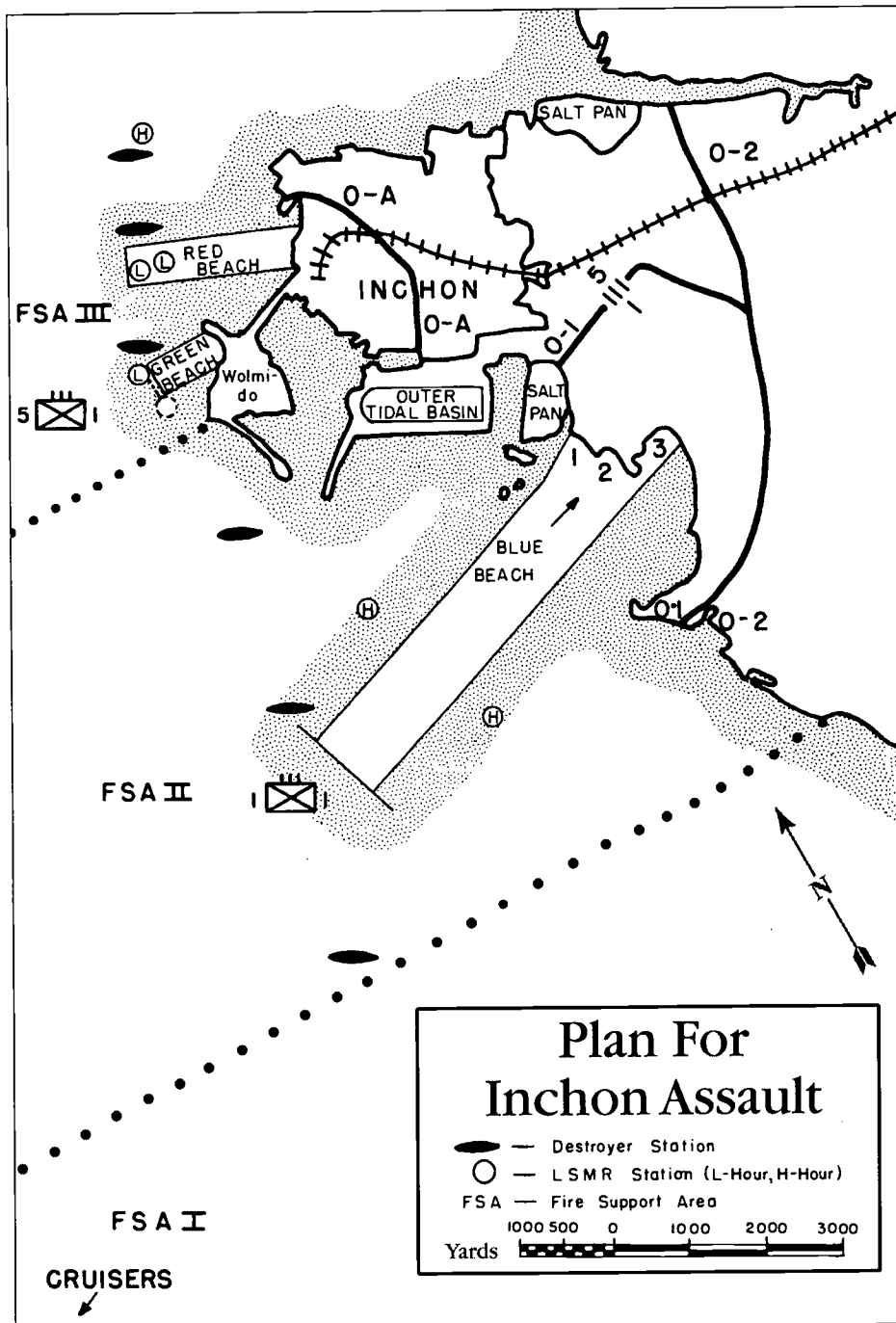
Smith's plan, as it emerged, was to take Wolmi-do on the morning tide by landing the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, across Green Beach. Then would come a long wait of 12 hours until the evening tide came in and the remainder of the division could continue the landing. The rest of the 5th Marines would cross Red Beach to the north of Wolmi-do, while Puller's 1st Marines landed over Blue Beach in the inner harbor to the south. Designation of the landing sites as "beaches" was misleading; the harbor was edged with cut-granite sea walls that would have to be scaled or penetrated.

Colonel Snedeker recommend-

ed that the new 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment be added to the troop list. The assignment of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Marines to the division was approved by GHQ on 3 September. The Eighth Army was instructed to provide them weapons.

Almond asked Smith to take part in a war-gaming of the operation. Smith saw it as nothing more than a "CPX" or command post exercise and a waste of precious time. He sent a major in his place.

Almond inspected units of Barr's 7th Division at their camps—Fuji, McNair, McGill, Drake, and Whittington—between 31 August through 3 September. His aide,



74 miles an hour, struck Kobe on 3 September. Two feet of water covered the docks. One ship, with all the division's signal gear, settled to the bottom at her pier. All unloading and loading stopped for 24 hours. Property sergeants, called in from the outlying battalions, worked frantically to sort out their units' gear.

Adding to General Smith's worries, the availability of the 5th Marines was now challenged. General Walker, deeply involved in the bitter defense of the Naktong Bulge, strongly opposed the release of this now-seasoned regiment from his Eighth Army. To meet Walker's objections, and influenced by his own favorable impression of the 7th Division, Almond sent Colonel Forney, now the Marine Deputy Chief of Staff, X Corps, to ask O. P. Smith whether the 7th Marines would arrive in time to be substituted for the 5th Marines, or alternatively, if not, would the 32d Infantry be acceptable?

A conference on the proposed substitution was held on the evening of 3 September. Present, among others, were Generals Almond and Smith and Admirals Joy, Struble, and Doyle. Strangely, General Barr, the 7th Division's commander, was not there. The discussion became heated. Smith argued that the proposal went beyond a considered risk. If the substitution were made, he declared, he would change his scheme of maneuver. He would call off the landing of the 1st Marines over Blue Beach and give them the 5th Marines' mission of landing on Red Beach with the 32d Infantry following behind.

Admiral Struble (Shepherd thought him "slippery") resolved the contretemps by suggesting that a regiment of Barr's 7th Division be immediately embarked to stand off Pusan as a floating reserve,

First Lieutenant Haig, accompanied him and took extensive notes. With few exceptions, Almond gained a "good" to "excellent" impression of the units he visited.

On the morning of 2 September Almond met with the officers of his Corps staff who were involved in his war game. He pointed out the necessity for frequent visits to subordinate units by commanding officers and the need for strong, well-organized, defenses for Corps

headquarters. "The front line is the perimeter of the place where you happen to be," said Almond.

Meanwhile, the main body of the 1st Marine Division arrived at Kobe, Japan—except for the 5th Marines, which was still at Pusan, and the 7th Marines, which was still at sea.

Typhoon Jane Disrupts Embarkation

Typhoon Jane, with winds up to

allowing the release of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade. In General Smith's mind, Almond's proposal exemplified the wide gulf separating Army and Marine Corps thinking. As Colonel Bowser, General Smith's operations officer, remembered it, Doyle and Smith "came back about 11 o'clock having won their point, that the [Marine] brigade must come out of the Pusan perimeter and be part of our landing force."

The *Mount McKinley*, flagship of the Attack Force—with Smith on board so as to be in a better position to supervise the out-loading—

President Harry S. Truman and Marine Commandant Gen Clifton B. Cates exchange warm greetings at a Marine Corps field demonstration at Quantico in June 1950, 10 days before the outbreak of the Korean War. This friendly relationship dissolved when Truman, in an ill-advised note, called the Marine Corps "the Navy's police force."

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A407260



set sail from Tokyo for Kobe on 4 September, arriving there early the next afternoon. That evening Smith called a conference of all available Marine Corps commanders to stress the urgency of the operation.

Almond Inspects Marines

A day later, 6 September, General Almond came to Kobe to inspect 1st Marine Division units. He lunched with the staff noncommissioned officers at Camp Otsu accompanied by General Smith and Lieutenant Colonel Allan Sutter, then visited the 2d and 3d

Battalions of the 1st Marines. Afterwards he went to Camp Sakai near Osaka to see the 11th Marines, the division's artillery regiment commanded by Colonel James H. Brower, and was favorably impressed." He commented in his diary: "A large percentage of the troops were drawn from active Marine reserve units The Army should have done likewise but did not."

In the evening Smith and his staff briefed him on the division's operation plan. Again Almond was favorably impressed, but he thought Smith's planned subsequent moves ashore too slow and deliberate. He stressed to Smith the need for speed in capturing Kimpo Airfield and Seoul itself. Smith was less impressed with Almond, saying: "The inspection consisted [of Almond] primarily questioning men, I suppose for the purpose of finding out what made Marines tick."

In the 1st Marine Division, operational planning trickled down to the battalion level. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, under Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Ridge, had steamed comfortably to Japan in the *General Simon B. Buckner* (AP 123) and was ensconced in what had been the barracks for a battalion of the 24th Infantry Division at Otsu on the south shore of Lake Biwa. There was no room for field training and the best the battalion could do was road-bound conditioning marches. The commanding officer and the three majors in the battalion were summoned to a meeting on board the regimental command ship berthed in Kobe. There had been a plethora of rumors, but now for the first time they learned officially that they were to land at Inchon. The regimental S-2, Captain Stone W. Quillian, went over the beach defenses, tapping a large map

studded with suspected weapons emplacements. The S-3, Major Robert E. Lorigan, then briefed the scheme of maneuver. The 3d Battalion would be the right flank unit of the main landing. These were the D-Day objectives. *Tap, tap*. This piece of high ground was the battalion's objective. *Tap, tap*. This hook of land on the extreme right flank had to be taken. *Tap, tap*. The landing would be at 1730; it would be dark at 1900. There were no enthusiastic cheers from the listeners.

Then the regimental commander, Chesty Puller, got to his feet. "You people are lucky," he growled. "We used to have to wait every 10 or 15 years for a war. You get one every five years. You people have been living by the sword. By God, you better be prepared to die by the sword."

The troop list for the landing force totalled 29,731 persons, to be loaded out in six embarkation groups. Four groups would load out of Kobe, one group out of Pusan, and one group—made up of the Army's 2d Engineer Special Brigade—out of Yokohama. Not all units could be combat loaded; some compromises had to be accepted.

One Marine Corps unit that was not ready to go was the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion, activated but not yet combat ready. The Army's Company A, 56th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, was substituted.

President Writes Letter

As the Marines combat loaded their amphibious ships at Kobe, the Pacific edition of *Stars and Stripes* reached them with a story that President Truman had called them "the Navy's police force." This compounded a previously perceived insult when the

President labeled the United Nations intervention in Korea a "police action." The enraged Marines chalked on the tarpaulins covering their trucks and tanks, "Horrible Harry's Police Force" and similar epithets.

What had happened was that on 21 August, Congressman Gordon L. McDonough of California had written President Truman a well-intentioned letter urging that the Marines be given a voice on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President fired back a feisty note: "For your information the Marine Corps is the Navy's police force and as long as I am President that is what it will remain. They have a propaganda machine that is almost equal to Stalin's The Chief of Naval Operations is the Chief of Staff of the Navy of which the Marines are a part."

He had dictated the letter to his secretary, Rose Conway, and sent it without any member of his staff seeing it.

McDonough inserted the letter into the Congressional Record where it appeared on 1 September. The story reached the newspapers four days later and a great public outcry went up. By five o'clock the next afternoon Truman's advisors had prevailed upon him to send an apology to General Cates: "I sincerely regret the unfortunate choice of language which I used." Truman, in further fence-mending, in company with Cates, made a surprise visit two mornings later at a Marine Corps League convention coincidentally being held in Washington's Statler Hotel and charmed his audience.

Pulling Together the Landing Force

General Craig's 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was relieved of its combat commitment at midnight, 5

September. The brigade had done most of its fighting with a peacetime structure, that is, at about two-thirds its authorized wartime strength: two rifle companies to a battalion instead of three, four guns to an artillery battery instead of six. The 5th Marines did not get a third company for its three infantry battalions until just before mounting out for Inchon.

The Korean 1st Marine Regiment, some 3,000 men, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kim Sung Eun, arrived in Pusan on 5 September to join the 1st Marine Division. They were in khaki uniforms including cloth caps, and equipped with Japanese rifles and machine guns. The South Korean Marines were issued American uniforms—including helmets—and each was given one day on the rifle range to fire his new American weapons.

Built around a cadre drawn from the ROK Navy, the Korean Marine Corps ("KMCs" to the U.S. Marines) had been activated 15 April 1949. Company-size units had first deployed to southern Korea, and then to Cheju Island, to rout out Communist-bent guerrillas. After the North Korean invasion, the KMCs, growing to regimental size, had made small-scale hit-and-run raids along the west coast against the flank of the invaders.

Craig assigned Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Harrison, until recently the executive officer of the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune, as liaison officer to the KMCs. His party, given a radio jeep, was made up of three corporal radiomen, and a corporal driver. Harrison was well-chosen. His parents had been missionaries in Korea. He himself had graduated from the foreign high school in Pyongyang in 1928 and he had a working knowledge of Korean.

While the 5th Marines were

loading out, a paper, marked "Confidential" and giving specifics on a landing beach at Kaesong, was widely distributed and one or more copies were purposely "lost." Perhaps the word got back to the North Koreans.

The amphibious assault transport *Henrico* (APA 45) known to the fleet as "Happy Hank," had brought the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, to Pusan. Now the ship received the same battalion, its numbers, thinned by the fighting in the Pusan Perimeter, now brought up to war strength. The Navy crew did their best to provide a little extra for their Marine passengers. The wardroom was made available to the officers 24 hours a day.

Marguerite "Maggie" Higgins, a movie-star-pretty blonde reporting on the war for the New York *Herald-Tribune* occupied one of the few staterooms. She had been a war correspondent in Europe during the last years of World War II and had been in Korea since the beginning of the new war. Ribald rumors as to her imagined nocturnal associations inevitably circulated throughout the ship.

Major General Field Harris, Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing—O. P. Smith's aviator counterpart—arrived in Tokyo on 3 September. His forward echelon of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, was informed of the Inchon-Seoul operation three days later. Planning for the employment of Marine air was completed on 9 September. Marine Aircraft Group 33, relieved of its close support role in the Pusan Perimeter, would be the operating element. Harris and his forward echelon embarked at Kobe on 10 September as Tactical Air Command, X Corps.

Meanwhile, Almond continued his restless visits and inspections. On 9 September, General Barr

briefed him on the 7th Infantry Division's plan of operations. Almond thought the plan adequate, but was concerned over possible problems of liaison and coordination with the 1st Marine Division. Events would prove him right

Almond's Good Ideas

A restive General Almond formed, for commando work, a Special Operations Company, X Corps, sometimes called a "Raider Group," under command of Colonel Louis B. Ely, Jr., USA. With Almond's encouragement, Ely proposed a raid to seize Kimpo Airfield. Almond asked Smith for 100 Marine volunteers to join the Special Operations Company; Smith, skeptical of the mission and unimpressed by Ely, stalled in providing Marines and the request was cancelled. As it turned out, Ely and his company would make an approach to the beach, but the distance from ship to shore proved too great for rubber boats.

Brigadier General Henry I. Hodes, USA, the assistant division commander of the 7th Infantry Division, visited Smith on the *Mount McKinley* on 9 September. Almond, still concerned by Smith's deliberate manner, had come up with yet another idea for the swift seizure of Kimpo. Almond's new plan called for landing a battalion of the 32d Infantry on Wolmi-do the evening of D-Day. It would "barrel" down the road to Seoul in trucks and tanks provided by the Marines. Smith, horrified by a plan he considered tactically impossible, told Hodes that he had no tanks to lend him.

The Secretary of the Navy, alerted by parents' complaints that underage sons were being sent to Korea, on 8 September sent a last-minute order to remove Marines

under 18 before sailing, reducing the landing force by about 500 men. Those who were close to being 18 were held in Japan on other duties and eventually found their way to the division as replacements.

Second Typhoon

Weathermen said that a second typhoon, "Kezia," was following close behind "Jane." Rear Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, USN, had arrived in Tokyo from Washington to be Admiral Joy's deputy chief of staff. Burke attempted to make an office call on MacArthur to express his concerns regarding the coming typhoon and was blocked by Almond. Burke refused to discuss the matter with Almond and went back to his office. By the time he got there, a message was waiting that MacArthur would see him. Burke hurried back to GHQ and explained to MacArthur that if the typhoon came up and blew west there could be no landing on the 15th or 16th.

"What do we do, Admiral?" asked MacArthur.

"We sail early," said Burke. MacArthur agreed.

Navy meteorologists had first picked up signs of Kezia off the Mariana Islands on 6 September. Whipping up winds of 100 miles per hour, the typhoon moved steadily toward Japan and the East China Sea. Most endangered were the amphibious ships of Admiral Doyle's Attack Force. The route for all six transport groups to Inchon placed them squarely in the path of the on-coming oriental hurricane.

Both Doyle and O.P. Smith, the two who would bear the burden of directing the actual landing, were painfully aware that all the normal steps of preparing for an amphibious operation were either



Photo courtesy of LtCol Leo J. Ihli, USMC (Ret)

Marines prime an F4U-4B of VMF 323 for take-off from the deck of the light aircraft carrier Badoeng Strait (CVE 116) standing off Korea. VMF-214, embarked in sister carrier

Sicily (CVE 118), played a companion role in close support of the assault. The bent-wing Corsairs would prove once again to be ideal close support aircraft.

being compressed or ignored completely in order to squeeze the operation into an impossibly short time frame. During World War II, at least three months would have been spent in planning and training for an operation of this magnitude. Beginning with Guadalcanal, a rehearsal—or rehearsals—was considered essential. For Inchon there would be no rehearsal. Doyle wryly concluded that a good deal would depend upon how skillfully the individual coxswains could perform in finding their way to the beaches.

Captain Martin J. “Stormy” Sexton, a World War II Raider and now aide-de-camp to General Smith, said later: “There was not

even time for landing exercises by the LVTs. Some of the LVT crews had not even had the opportunity to try their engines out in the water and paddle around.”

Execution

Marine aircraft squadrons VMF-214 and VMF-323 began the softening-up of Wolmi-do on 10 September with the delivery of napalm. Operating from the decks of the light carriers *Sicily* (CVE 118) and *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116) (“Bing-Ding” to the Marines and sailors), the Marine fliers burned out most of the buildings on the island. Strikes by Navy aircraft from the big carriers *Valley Forge*

(CV 45), *Philippine Sea* (CV 47), and *Boxer* (CV 21) continued for the next two days.

Joint Task Force 7 (JTF 7) was officially activated under Admiral Struble the following day, 11 September. Almond and X Corps would be subordinate to Struble and JTF 7 until Almond assumed command ashore and JTF 7 was dissolved.

Preliminary and diversionary air and naval gunfire strikes were roughly divided into 30 percent delivered north of Inchon, 30 percent south, and 40 percent against Inchon itself. Except for a few gunnery ships held back to protect the flanks of the Pusan Perimeter, JTF 7—in its other guise, the Seventh

Joint Task Force Seven

VAdm Arthur D. Struble

Task Force 90	Attack Force	RAdm James H. Doyle
Task Force 91	Blockade and Covering Force	RAdm Sir William G. Andrewes
Task Force 92	X Corps	MajGen Edward M. Almond
Task Force 99	Control and Reconnaissance Force	RAdm George R. Henderson
Task Force 77	Fast Carrier Group	RAdm Edward C. Ewen
Task Force 79	Service Squadron	Capt Bernard L. Austin
ROK Naval Forces		Cdr Michael L. Luosey ¹

¹ Liaison and Advisor

Fleet—including all the combatant ships in the Far East. Among them were three fast carriers, two escort carriers, and a British light carrier. In the final count, the force numbered some 230 ships, including 34 Japanese vessels, mostly ex-U.S. Navy LSTs (landing ships, tank) with Japanese crews. The French contributed one tropical frigate, *La Grandiere*, which arrived at Sasebo with a five-month supply of wine and a pin-up picture of Esther Williams, but no coding machine.

Mount McKinley, with Doyle, Smith, and their staffs on board, got underway from Kobe the morning of 11 September—a day ahead of schedule because of the approach of Typhoon Kezia—and steamed for Sasebo. Winds of the typhoon whipped up to 125 miles per hour. Doyle was gambling that Kezia would veer off to the north.

Almond held a last meeting at GHQ on 12 September to deal with the urgency for an early sailing because of the threat of Kezia. General Shepherd, General Wright, and Admiral Burke attended. That afternoon General MacArthur and his party left Haneda airport to fly

to Itazuke air base. From there they would go by automobile to Sasebo.

MacArthur Goes to Sea

Because of the storm the *Mount McKinley* was late in reaching port. MacArthur's party waited in the Bachelor Officers Quarters, passing the time having sandwiches. It was close to midnight before the *Mount McKinley* rounded the southern tip of Kyushu and docked at Sasebo. MacArthur and his party boarded the ship and she was underway again within an hour. With General Shepherd came his G-3, Colonel Victor H. Krulak, and his aide and future son-in-law, Major James B. Ord, Jr.

MacArthur had five generals in his party—Shepherd, Almond, and Wright, and two others: Major General Courtney Whitney—his deputy chief of staff for civil affairs, but more importantly his press officer—and Major General Alonzo P. Fox. Fox was chief of staff to MacArthur in his capacity as “SCAP” (Supreme Commander Allied Powers) and Lieutenant Haig's father-in-law. Absent from

the group was Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer, USAF, who had had some expectation of accompanying MacArthur as his air boss. In assignment of spaces, MacArthur grandly ignored traditional ship protocol and took over Doyle's cabin. Doyle moved to his sea cabin off the flag bridge. Almond appropriated the ship's captain's cabin. O. P. Smith managed to keep his stateroom.

After breakfast on the morning of the 13th, Admiral Doyle led the embarked flag officers in a tour of the *Mount McKinley*, hoping to impress the Army generals that amphibious operations required specialization. MacArthur did not go along.

The absence of General Stratemeyer from MacArthur's party was a clear signal that the Navy had been successful in keeping the Air Force from operating within the amphibious objective area—a circle with a 100-mile radius drawn around Inchon. There would be no FEAF operations within this radius unless specifically requested by Struble. MacArthur remained above these doctrinal squabbles.

Operation 'Common Knowledge'

Neither General MacArthur nor Admiral Struble favored extensive air and naval gunfire preparation of the objective area, primarily because it would cause a loss of tactical surprise. Their concern was largely academic. All sorts of leakage circulated in Japan—and even reached the media in the United States—that an amphibious operation was being mounted out with a probable target of Inchon. At the Tokyo Press Club the impending landing was derisively called "Operation Common Knowledge." The North Korean command almost certainly heard these rumors and almost equally certain had tide tables for Inchon. Mao Tse Tung is supposed to have pointed at Inchon on a map of Korea and have said, "The Americans will land here."

American intelligence knew that the Russians had supplied mines, but how many had been sown in Flying Fish Channel? The lack of time and sufficient minesweepers made orderly mine-sweeping operations impossible.

'Sitting Ducks'

The pre-landing naval gunfire bombardment began at 0700 on 13 September with a column of cruisers and destroyers coming up the channel. The weather was good, the sea calm. Four cruisers—*Toledo* (CA 133), *Rochester* (CA 124), HMS *Kenya*, and HMS *Jamaica*—found their bombardment stations several miles south of Inchon and dropped anchor. Six destroyers—*Mansfield* (DD 728), *DeHaven* (DD 727), *Lyman K. Swenson* (DD 729), *Collett* (DD 730), *Gurke* (DD 783), and *Henderson* (DD 785)—continued on past the cruisers and were about to earn for themselves the rueful title of "Sitting Ducks."

What appeared to be a string of mines was sighted in the vicinity of Palmi-do. The destroyers opened fire with their 40mm guns and the mines began to explode. Leaving the *Henderson* behind to continue shooting at the mines, the five other destroyers steamed closer to their objectives. *Gurke* anchored 800 yards off Wolmi-do, which was being pounded by carrier air.

The remaining four destroyers took station behind *Gurke*. Just before 1300 they opened fire. Within minutes return fire came blazing back from hidden shore batteries. *Collett* took five hits, knocking out her fire direction system; her guns switched to individual control. *Gurke* took two light hits. *DeHaven* was slightly damaged. *Lyman K. Swenson* felt a near miss that caused two casualties. After an hour's bombardment the destroyers withdrew. One man had been killed—ironically Lieutenant (Junior Grade) David Swenson, nephew of the admiral for whom the destroyer was named—and eight were wounded.

From their more distant anchorage, the cruisers picked up the bombardment with 6-inch and 8-inch salvos. After that the carrier aircraft resumed their attack.

Next day, 14 September, five of the destroyers came back (the damaged *Collett* was left behind) and banged away again. At first the destroyers drew feeble return fire. By the time they withdrew 75 minutes later, having delivered 1,700 5-inch shells, there was no return fire at all. The Navy, with considerable satisfaction, reported Wolmi-do now ready for capture.

Attack Force Gathers

Admiral Doyle had won his gamble against the typhoon. The Yellow Sea was quiet and all elements of the Attack Force were in

place off Inchon. General Craig's embarked 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, having arrived from Pusan, was formally dissolved on 13 September and its parts returned to the control of the parent division. Craig became the assistant division commander.

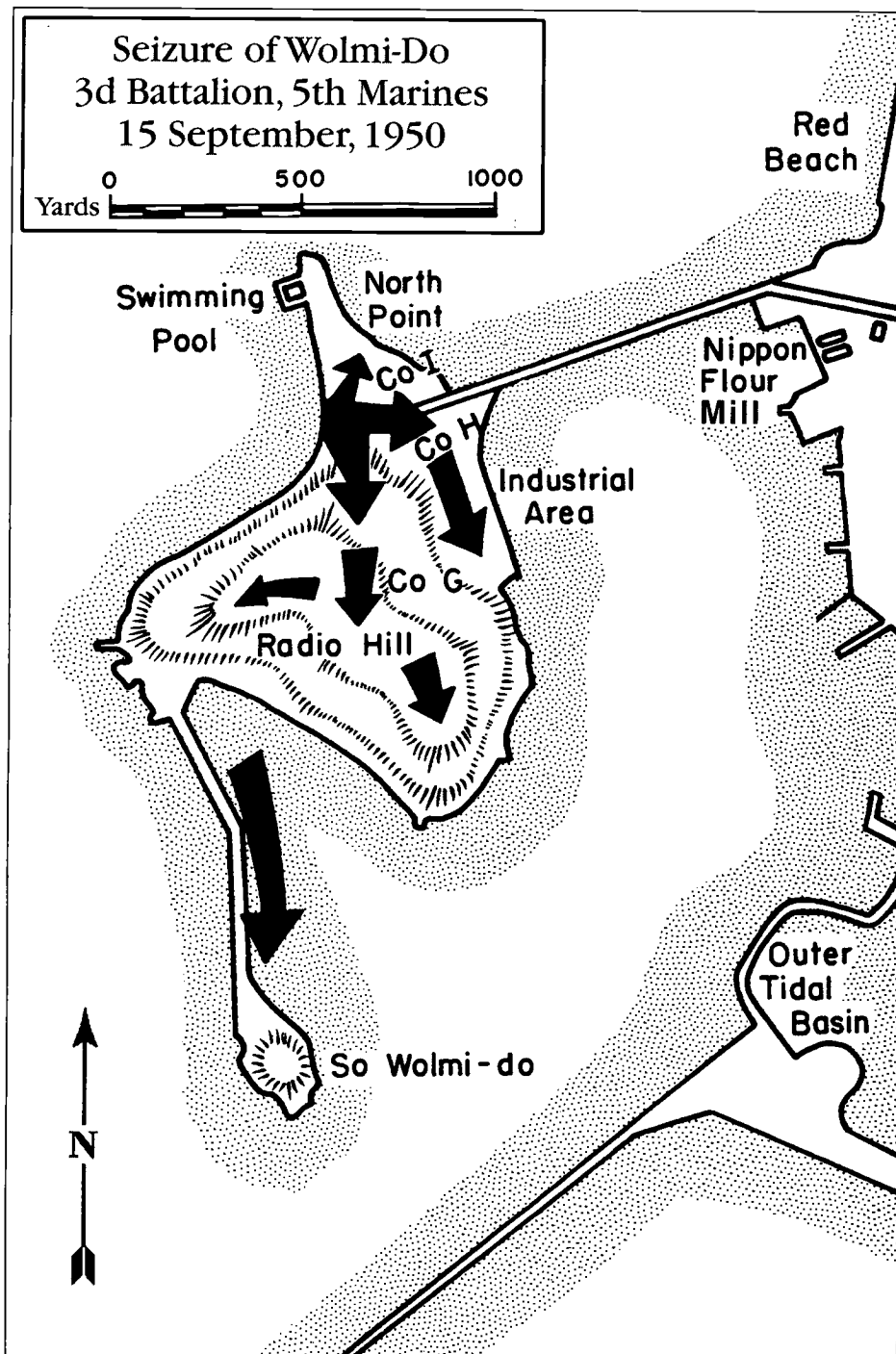
The Attack Force eased its way up Flying Fish Channel so as to be in the transport area before daylight on 15 September. General MacArthur spent a restless night. Standing at the rail of the *Mount McKinley* in the darkness, he entertained certain morbid thoughts, at least as he remembered them later in his *Reminiscences*: "Within five hours 40,000 men would act boldly, in the hope that 100,000 others manning the thin defense lines in South Korea would not die. I alone was responsible for tomorrow, and if I failed, the dreadful results would rest on judgment day against my soul."

George Gilman, an ensign in the *Mount McKinley*, had less lofty thoughts: "None of us boat group officers had ever had any experience operating under such tidal conditions before, let alone ever having been involved in an amphibious landing As the morning of September 15 approached, we realized we had all the ingredients for a disaster on our hands."

Destination Wolmi-do

L-hour was to be 0630. At 0545, the pre-landing shore bombardment began. Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. "Tap" Taplett's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, was boated by 0600. The carrier-based Marine Corsairs completed their last sweep of the beach 15 minutes later.

"G Company was to land to the right of Green Beach in the assault, wheel right, and seize the domi-



nant hill mass on the island, Radio Hill," remembered Robert D. "Dewey" Bohn (then a first lieutenant; he would retire a major general). His company was embarked in the fast destroyer transport *Diachenko* (APD 123). She stopped her engines at about 0300, the troop compartment lights came on, and reveille sounded over the public address system.

Most of the Marines were

already awake. They hoped for the traditional "steak and eggs" pre-landing breakfast of World War II; instead they got scrambled powdered eggs, dry toast, and canned apricots. At about first light, Company G went over the side and down the cargo nets into the bobbing LCVPs, which then cleared the ship and began to circle.

Three LSMRs—medium landing

ships converted to rocket ships—sent their loads of thousands of 5-inch rockets screeching shoreward toward Wolmi-do. The island seemed to explode under the impact. Then the landing craft began the run to Green Beach. MacArthur, Shepherd, Almond, Smith, Whitney, and Doyle all watched from the flag bridge of the *Mount McKinley*.

Seven LCVPs brought in the first wave, one platoon of Company G on the right and three platoons of Company H on the left. The landing craft converged on the narrow beach—scarcely 50 yards wide—and grounded at 0633, three minutes behind schedule. The remainder of the two assault companies came in as the second wave two minutes later. Resistance was limited to a few scattered shots.

Captain Patrick E. Wildman, commanding Company H, left a small detachment to clear North Point and then plunged across the island toward his objectives—the northern nose of Radio Hill and the shoreline of the burning industrial area facing Inchon. After a short pause to reorganize, Bohn took Company G towards the southern half of Radio Hill, 105 meters high. Resistance was half-hearted. At 0655, Sergeant Alvin E. Smith, guide of the 3d Platoon, secured an American flag to the trunk of a shattered tree. MacArthur, watching the action ashore from his swivel chair on the bridge of the *Mount McKinley*, saw the flag go up and said, "That's it. Let's get a cup of coffee."

Ten tanks—six M-26 Pershings and four modified M-4A3 Shermans, all under Second Lieutenant Granville G. Sweet—landed in the third wave at 0646 from three utility landing ships (LSUs). They crunched their way inland, poised to help the infantry.

Lieutenant Colonel Taplett land-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A2686

Reveille in the amphibious ships went at 0300 on the morning of 15 September. Marines hoped for the traditional "steak-and-eggs" D-day breakfast of World War II, but most transports fed simpler fare, such as powdered eggs and canned apricots. Breakfast on board the landing ships was even more spartan.

ed from his free boat a few minutes later. At almost the same time, Captain Robert A. McMullen brought in the fourth wave bearing Company I, the battalion reserve. His company, following behind Company H, encountered an angry

nest of about a platoon of bypassed North Koreans. A flurry of hand grenades was exchanged. McMullen signaled Sweet's tanks to come forward. A Sherman with a dozer blade sealed the die-hard North Koreans in their holes.

By 0655, the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, had landed on Wolmi-do and had an American flag flying at the top of a

shell-blasted tree. An hour later the battalion commander reported resistance as light and 45 dazed prisoners taken.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-GK-2341-A2694



Moving on to the near end of the causeway that stretched to Inchon itself, McMullen found more North Korean defenders hiding in a cave. One of Sweet's tanks fired a 90mm round into the mouth of the cave. There was a muffled explosion and 30 dazed and deafened North Koreans came staggering out with their hands above their heads. "Captured forty-five prisoners . . . meeting light resistance," radioed Taplett at 0745 to the *Mount McKinley*.

Wildman's Marines were finding it slow going in the ruins of the industrial area. Taplett ordered Bohn to take the rest of Radio Hill and by 0800 the high ground was Marine Corps property.

'Wolmi-do Secured'

Once again Taplett radioed the *Mount McKinley*, this time: "Wolmi-do secured."

With the success of the Marine landing blaring over the loudspeakers, MacArthur left the bridge



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A2798

Some North Korean defenders of Wolmi-do stubbornly remained in their cave-like positions and had to be burned out by flamethrowers. U.S. Marines were readily distinguishable at this stage of the war by their wear of camouflage helmet covers and leggings.

to pen a message to Admiral Struble in his flagship *Rochester*: "The Navy and Marines have never shone more brightly than this morning."

Ashore, Taplett consolidated his gains. His three rifle companies, by prearranged plan, took up defensive positions facing Inchon. The empty swimming pool at the tip of North Point became a stockade for prisoners.

At about 10 o'clock Taplett ordered Bohn to take Sowolmi-do, an islet dangling to the south of Wolmi-do with a lighthouse at the end of the causeway. Bohn sent Second Lieutenant John D. Counselman, leader of his 3d Platoon, with a rifle squad and a section of tanks. As a prelude to the assault, a flight of Corsairs drenched Sowolmi-do with napalm. Covered by the two tanks and a curtain of 81mm mortar fire, Counselman's riflemen crossed the narrow causeway, taking fire from a hill honey-combed with em-

placements. Flamethrowers and 3.5-inch rocket launchers burned and blasted the dug-in enemy. Seventeen were killed, 19 surrendered, and eight or more managed to hide out. The lighthouse was

M-26 Pershing tanks, new to the Marines, began to land in the third wave at Wolmi-do and were soon put to use against North Korean fortified positions. A tank-infantry patrol assaulted and took Sowolmi-do, an islet dangling at the end of a causeway from the main island.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC)



taken and the job completed in less than two hours. Three Marines were wounded, bringing Taplett's casualties for the day to none killed, 17 wounded.

Word was passed that some of the North Koreans who had escaped were trying to swim for Inchon. A number of Bohn's Marines lined up rifle-range fashion and shot at what they saw as heads bobbing in the water. Others dismissed the targets as imaginary. Mopping up of the island was completed by noon.

Taplett, growing restless and seeing no sign of enemy activity, proposed to division that he make an assault on the city from his present position or at least a reconnaissance in force. Smith responded to his proposal with a firm negative.

Waiting for Evening Tide

The remainder of the division was steaming toward the inner transport area. There would now be a long wait until the evening tide swept in and the assault regi-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A2723

Marines from the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, escorted a steady stream of prisoners back to Green Beach on the seaward side of Wolmi-do. Landing ships and craft could beach as long as the tide was high, but once the tide receded they would be left high and dry on the mud flats.

ments could be landed. Marines, standing at the rail of their transports, strained their eyes looking for their intended beaches but could see nothing but smoke. The bombardment, alternating between naval gunfire and air strikes, continued.

During the course of the afternoon, Admiral Struble had his admiral's barge lowered into the water from the *Rochester* ("Roach-Catcher"). He swung by the *Mount McKinley* to pick up General MacArthur for a personal reconnaissance from close offshore of Wolmi-do and the harbor. Almond and Shepherd went with them.

They swung close to the seawall fronting the harbor. "General," said Shepherd, "You're getting in mighty close to the beach. They're shooting at us." MacArthur ignored the caution.

Naval gunfire and carrier air sought to hit everything that could

be found in the way of targets within a 25-mile radius of Inchon. (The D-Day action for the aircraft on board the carrier *Boxer* was labeled "Event 15" and consisted of a strike with 12 F4U Corsairs and five AD Skyraiders.) The smoke of the bombardment and from burning buildings mixed with the rain so that a gray-green pall hung over the city.

H-Hour for the main landing was 1730. Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray's 5th Marines, minus the 3d Battalion already ashore on Wolmi-do, was to land over Red Beach, to the left and north of Wolmi-do. Murray's regiment was to seize the O-A line, a blue arc on the overlay to the division's attack order. On the ground O-A line swung 3,000 yards from Cemetery Hill on the north or left flank, through Observatory Hill in the center, and then through a maze of buildings, including the British Consulate,

A corpsman bandages the forearm of a wounded North Korean prisoner on Wolmi-do. He and other prisoners were moved to one of the several prison stockades that were set up on the landing beaches.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A2802





Department of Defense Photo (USA) SC348839

Gen MacArthur indulged his passion for visiting the "front." During the interval between the morning and evening landings he personally "reconnoitered" the Inchon beaches in

VAdm Arthur D. Struble's barge. Struble sits to MacArthur's right. On his left is Army MajGen Courtney Whitney, often-called MacArthur's "press secretary."

until it reached the inner tidal basin.

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 5th Marines, under Lieutenant Colonels George R. Newton and Harold S. Roise respectively, would land abreast across Red Beach. The new 1st ROK Marine Regiment would follow them ashore.

Newton and Roise had the Pusan Perimeter behind them, but not much other infantry experience. Newton, commissioned in 1938 from the Naval Academy, was with the Embassy Guard at Peking when World War II came on 7

December 1941 and spent the war as a prisoner of the Japanese. Roise, commissioned from the University of Idaho in 1939, had served at sea during the war.

In the assault, Newton's 1st Battalion and Roise's 2d Battalion would come away from the attack transports *Henrico* and *Cavalier* (APA 37) in landing craft. Both battalions would land in column of companies across the seawall onto narrow Red Beach. Newton, on the left, was to take Cemetery Hill and the northern half of Observatory Hill. Roise, on the right, was to take his half of Observatory Hill,

the British Consulate, and the inner tidal basin.

"Two things scared me to death," said Roise of the landing plan. "One, we were not landing on a beach; we were landing against a seawall. Each LCVP had two ladders, which would be used to climb up and over the wall. This was risky Two, the landing was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. This would give us only about two hours of daylight to clear the city and set up for the night."

Captain Francis I. "Ike" Fenton, Jr., commander of Company B in Newton's battalion, sharply

Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray

Seldom does a Marine Corps regiment go into combat with a lesser grade than full colonel in command. But when Brigadier General Edward Craig arrived at Camp Pendleton in July 1950 to form the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade for service in Korea he found no reason to supplant the commanding officer of the 5th Marines, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Murray. The tall, rangy Texan was an exception to the general rule. He had already made his reputation as a fighter and of being a step ahead of his grade in his assignments. As a major at Guadalcanal he had commanded the 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, and for his conspicuous gallantry had earned his first Silver Star.

After Guadalcanal, came Tarawa for the battalion and a second Silver Star for Murray, now a lieutenant colonel. Finally, at Saipan, although he was painfully wounded, Murray's control of his battalion was such that it brought him a Navy Cross.

Novelist Leon Uris served in Murray's battalion. Later, when he wrote his book *Battle Cry*, he used Murray as his model for "High Pockets" Huxley, his hard-charging fictional battalion commander.

Born in Alhambra, California, in 1913, Murray grew up in Harlingen, Texas. When he accepted his commission in July 1935, after graduating from Texas A&M College, then the incubator of many Army and Marine officers, he had behind him four years of the Army's Reserve Officers Training Corps and two years of the Texas National Guard. He had also starred at football and basketball. After attending Basic School, then in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, he was detailed to the 2d Marine Brigade in San Diego. The brigade went to troubled China a year later. Murray served for a short time in Shanghai, then moved to a prized slot in the Embassy Guard in Peking. He came back to San Diego in 1940 and returned to the 2d Marine Brigade which within months expanded into the 2d Marine Division. A 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was pulled out of the 2d Division in the summer of 1941 for service in Iceland. Murray, now a captain and soon to be a major, went with it. He was back in San Diego in April 1942 and in October sailed with the 6th Marines for the war in the Pacific.

He came home in August 1944 and served at Quantico, Camp Lejeune, Hawaii, and Camp Pendleton. Promotions were slow after 1945 and Murray was still a lieutenant colonel when the Korean War began in 1950. As commander of the infantry element of the later-day 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in the "fire brigade" defense of the Pusan Perimeter, he received his third and fourth

Silver Stars for his staunch leadership.

At Inchon, Major General O. P. Smith gave Murray and his now-seasoned regiment the more complicated northern half of the landing. After Inchon and Seoul, Murray would continue in command through the Chosin Reservoir campaign. That battle in sub-zero weather brought him the Army's Distinguished Service Cross as well as his second Navy Cross. Finally, in January 1951 he was promoted to colonel.

Coming home from Korea in April 1951, he attended the National War College and then was hand-picked to command The Basic School, since World War II at Quantico. Next he served at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune. A promotion to brigadier general came in June 1959. Assignments in Okinawa, then Pendleton again, and Parris Island followed. Serving at Headquarters Marine Corps in 1967 as a major general, he was ordered to Vietnam as Deputy Commander, III Marine Amphibious Force. His strong physique finally failed him. He was invalided home in February 1968 to Bethesda Naval Hospital where he remained until his retirement on 1 August 1968. He now lives in Oceanside, California, close to Camp Pendleton.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A42922





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A2865

Navy transports stand off Inchon and Wolmi-do before the landing. Amphibious lift for Inchon, some of it literally borrowed back from the Japanese, was a rusty travesty of the great amphibious armadas of World War II.

remembered the characteristics of Red Beach:

Once on the beach there was an open area of about 200 yards. The left flank was marked by Cemetery Hill. From the sea it looked like a sheer cliff. To the right of Cemetery Hill was a brewery, some work shops, and a cotton mill. Further to the right and about 600 yards in from the beach was Observatory Hill, overlooking the entire landing area and considered critical; it was the regimental objective. Further to the right was a five-story office building built of concrete and reinforced steel.

Captain John R. Stevens' Company A was to land on the right flank. In the assault would be the 2d Platoon under Second Lieutenant Francis W. Muetzel and the 1st Platoon under Gunnery Sergeant Orval F. McMullen. In reserve was the 3d Platoon under First Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez, who had joined the company as it loaded out from Pusan.

Three miles to the south of the 5th Marines, Chesty Puller's 1st Marines was to land across Blue

Beach. Puller's mission was to secure the O-1 line, a 4,000-yard arc that went inland as deep as 3,000 yards, and then hooked around to the left to cut off Inchon from Seoul.

Blue Beach One, 500 yards wide, had its left flank marked by a salt evaporator. What looked to be a road formed the boundary to the south with Blue Beach Two.

The 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, was under affable, white-haired Lieutenant Colonel Allan Sutter. After landing over Blue Beach One, he was to take a critical road junction about 1,000 yards northeast of the beach, and Hill 117, nearly two miles inland, which commanded Inchon's "back door" and the highway to Seoul, 22 miles away.

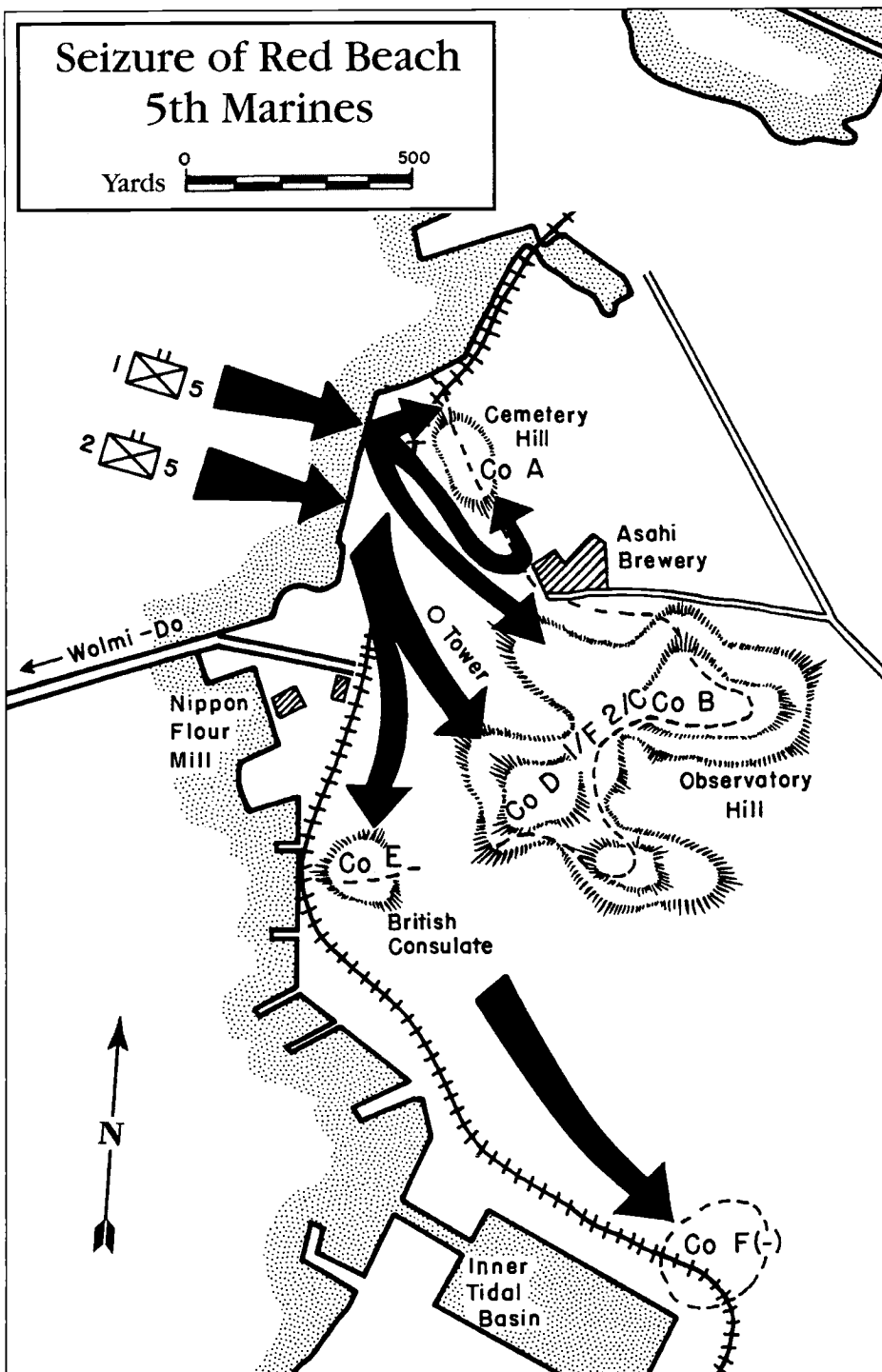
Sutter, a graduate of Valley Forge Military Academy and Dartmouth College, had gained his Marine Corps commission in 1937 through the Platoon Leaders Course, a program under which college students spent two summers at Quantico to qualify as second lieutenants. He then spent a year at the Basic School in Philadelphia before being assigned troop duties. During World War II, Sutter was a signal officer at Guadalcanal, Guam, and Okinawa.

Blue Beach Two, also 500 yards wide, had its left flank marked by the supposed road and its right flank by a narrow ramp jutting seaward. A cove, further to the right, named at the last minute "Blue Beach Three," offered an alternate or supplementary landing site. Ridge, with the 3d Battalion, was to cross the seawall girdling Blue Beach Two and take Hill 233, a mile southeast of the beach, and, on the extreme right, a small cape, flanking Blue Beach and topped by Hill 94.

At best, the four assault battalions coming across Red and Blue Beaches would have but two hours of high tide and daylight to turn the plan into reality. Smith, after fully committing his two regiments, would have nothing left as a division reserve except two half-trained Korean Marine battalions.

Assaulting Red Beach

It would be a long ride to Red Beach for the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 5th Marines. Troops began debarking from the transports at about 1530. "As you climb down that net into the LCVP you're scared," remembered Private First Class Doug Koch of Company D, 5th Marines. "What keeps you



four boats on the left carried the two assault platoons of Company A. Captain Steven's mission was to take Cemetery Hill and to secure the left flank of the beachhead. The four boats on the right carried the assault elements of Captain Samuel Jaskilka's Company E, which was to clear the right flank of the beach and then capture the hill that held the British Consulate.

As the first wave passed the mid-way point, two squadrons of Marine Corps Corsairs—VMF-214 under Lieutenant Colonel Walter E. Lischied and VMF-323 under Major Arnold A. Lund—came in to strafe both Red and Blue Beaches. They exhausted their loads and flew away. Not satisfied, Captain Stevens called for further air strikes against Red Beach. Four Navy A-4D Skyraiders made strafing passes until the wave had only 30 yards to go.

On the right, First Lieutenant Edwin A. Deptula's 1st Platoon, Company E, hit the seawall at 1731, one minute behind schedule. Designated Marines threw grenades up over the seawall, and after they exploded, Deptula took his platoon up the scaling ladders. A few stray rounds whined overhead.

Deptula pushed inland about 100 yards to the railroad tracks against no resistance. The rest of Company E landed about 10 minutes later. Captain Jaskilka (who would retire as a four-star general) quickly re-organized his company near the Nippon Flour Company building just south of the beachhead. Deptula's platoon continued down the railroad tracks to the British Consulate. Jaskilka sent another platoon to cross the railroad tracks and then move up the slope of 200-foot-high Observatory Hill.

On the left flank it was not quite that easy. One of the four landing

going is knowing this is what you have to do."

The *Horace A. Bass* (APD 124), the Red Beach control vessel, slowly steamed ahead with a long file of landing craft "trailing behind like a brood of ducklings."

The supporting rocket ships let go with a final fusillade of some 6,500 5-inch rockets. The resulting cloud of dust and smoke com-

pletely masked the beach area. The *Horace A. Bass*, an escort destroyer converted into a high-speed transport and anxious to get into the fight, banged away with her 5-inch guns. She then dipped her signal flag and the first wave headed for Red Beach.

The eight LCVPs in the first wave crossed the line of departure at H-8 with 2,200 yards to go. The



Gen Oliver P. Smith Collection, Marine Corps Research Center

Aerial photo of Red Beach shows the pounding it took in the pre-landing naval gunfire and air attacks. The 1st and 2d

Battalions, 5th Marines, landed across this beach immediately north of the causeway leading to Wolmi-do.

craft, with half the 1st Platoon, Company A, on board, lagged behind with engine trouble. The remaining three boats reached the seawall at 1733. Sergeant Charles D. Allen took his half of the 1st Platoon over the wall and received fire from his north flank and from a bunker directly to his front. Several Marines went down.

To Allen's right, Second Lieutenant Frank Muetzel found a breach in the seawall and brought his 2d Platoon ashore. Facing them was a pillbox. Two Marines threw grenades and six bloody North Korean soldiers came out.

Cemetery Hill loomed ahead, but Muetzel's immediate objective was Asahi Brewery. He slipped south of Cemetery Hill and marched unopposed down a street to the brewery. There was a brief indulgence in green beer.

Sergeant Allen, with his half-platoon, was making no progress against the bunker to his front. The second wave landed, bringing in the 3d Platoon under Baldomero Lopez and the missing half of the 1st Platoon. Too many Marines were now crowded into too small a space.

Lopez charged forward alone.

He took out the bunker with a grenade and moved forward against a second bunker, pulling the pin from another grenade. Before he could throw it, he was hit. The grenade dropped by his side. He smothered the explosion with his body. This gained him a posthumous Medal of Honor. Two Marines went against the bunker with flamethrowers. They were shot down but the bunker was taken.

Captain Stevens's boat landed him in Company E's zone of action. Unable to get to his own company, he radioed his executive

officer, First Lieutenant Fred F. Eubanks, Jr., to take charge. Stevens then radioed Muetzel to leave the brewery and get back to the beach where he could help out.

On the way back, Muetzel found a route up the southern slope of Cemetery Hill and launched an assault. The summit was alive with North Koreans, but there was no fight left in them. Dazed and spiritless from the pounding they had taken from the air and sea, they threw up their hands and surrendered. Muetzel sent them down to the base of the hill under guard.

Eubanks' Company E Marines meanwhile had bested the obstructing bunker with grenades and a flamethrower. His 1st and 2d Platoons pushed through and joined Muetzel's 2d Platoon. At 1755, 25 minutes after H-Hour, Captain Stevens fired an amber

flare, signaling that Cemetery Hill was secure. It had cost his company eight Marines killed and 28 wounded.

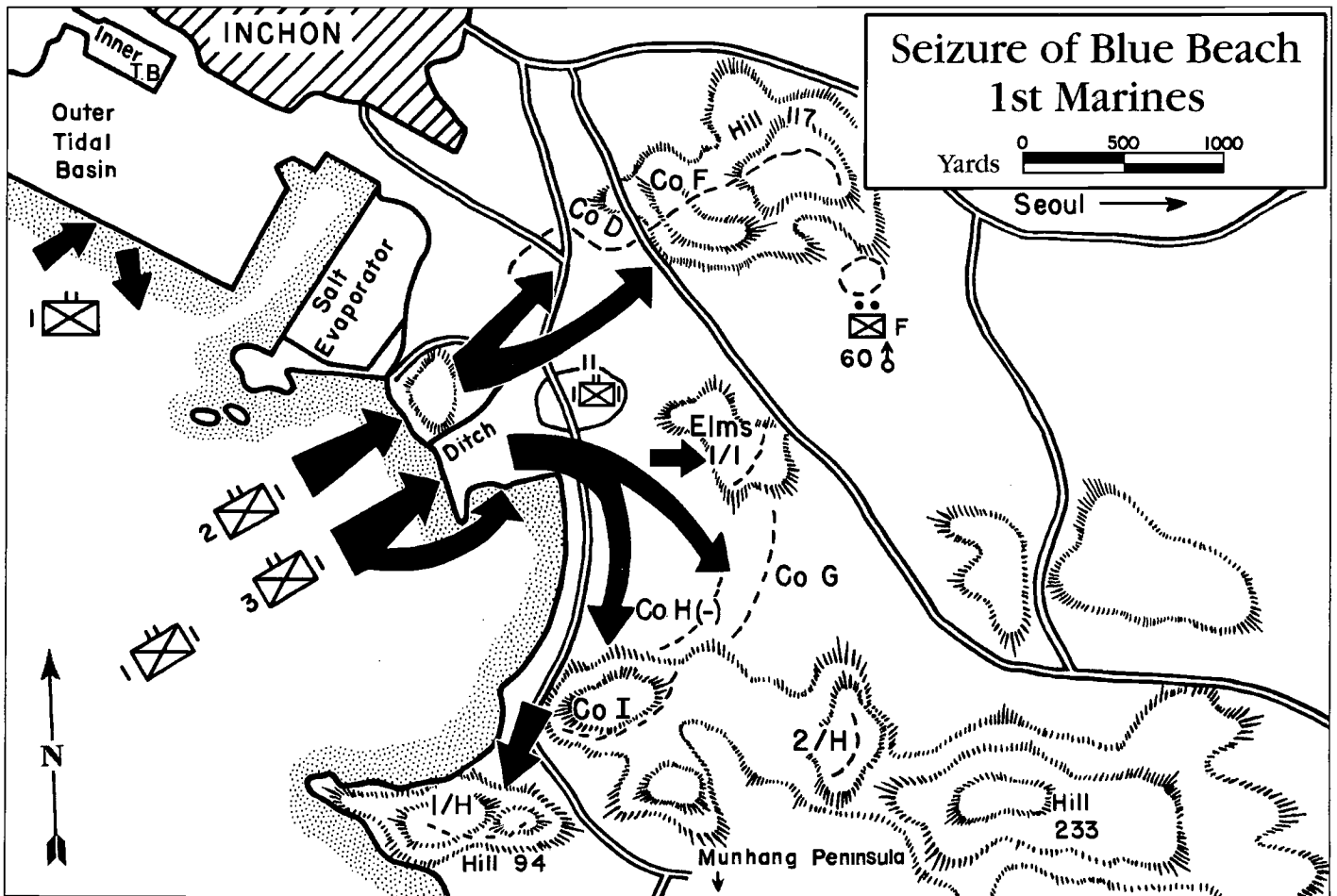
Coming in on the third and fourth waves, Company C, 1st Battalion, was to take the northern half of Observatory Hill, and Company D, 2d Battalion, was to take the southern half. It did not work out quite that way. Parts of Companies C and D were landed on the wrong beaches. Company C, once ashore, had to wait 12 minutes for its commander, Captain Poul F. Pedersen. In Pedersen's boat was the fifth wave commander who had decided to tow a stalled LCVP. Once ashore, Pedersen had trouble sorting out his company from amongst the jumble of Marines that had gathered in the center of the beach.

Maggie Higgins, the *Herald-Tribune* correspondent, came off

the *Henrico* in Wave 5 along with John Davies of the Newark *Daily News*, Lionel Crane of the London *Daily Press*, and a photographer. As their landing craft hit the seawall, the wave commander, First Lieutenant Richard J. "Spike" Schening, urged on his Marines with, "Come on you big, brave Marines. Let's get the hell out of here."

The photographer decided he had had enough and that he would go back to the *Henrico*. Maggie considered doing the same, but then, juggling her typewriter, she, along with Davies and Crane, followed Schening over the seawall.

Eight LSTs crossed the line of departure, as scheduled, at 1830 and were headed for the seawall. Seeing the congestion on Red Beach, the skippers of the LSTs concluded that the Marines were held up and could not advance.





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A3701

Marines enroute to Red Beach go over the side of their assault transport, down the cargo net hand-over-hand, and into the waiting LCVP, a version of the famous "Higgins boat" of World War II.

The lead LST received some mortar and machine-gun fire and fired back with its own 20mm and 40mm guns. Two other LSTs joined in. Unfortunately, they were spraying ground already occupied by the Marines.

The LST fire showered Muetzel's platoon, holding the crest of Cemetery Hill. Muetzel pulled back his platoon. As his Marines slid down the hill, they came under fire from a North Korean machine gun

in a building on Observatory Hill. A chance 40mm shell from one of the LSTs knocked out the gun. Weapons Company and Headquarters and Service Company of Roise's 2d Battalion landed about 1830 and came under LST fire that killed one Marine and wounded 23 others.

By 1900, all eight LSTs had stopped firing and were nestled against the seawall. By then Second Lieutenant Byron L.

Magness had taken his 2d Platoon, Company C, reinforced by Second Lieutenant Max A. Merritt's 60mm mortar section, up to the saddle that divided the crest of Observatory Hill. Their radios were not working and they had no flares. They had to inform the beach of their success by sending back a runner.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion's reserve company—Company B under Captain "Ike" Fenton—had landed in the 2d Battalion's zone. Lieutenant Colonel Newton ordered Fenton to assume Company C's mission and take the northern half of Observatory Hill. Six Marines were wounded along the way, but by about 2000 Fenton was at the top and tied in with the Magness-Merritt platoon.

In the right half of the regimental zone of action, Roise was getting the congestion on the beach straightened out. Company D, commanded by First Lieutenant H. J. Smith, had followed Company E ashore, but had landed to the left in the 1st Battalion zone. Smith (called "Hog Jaw" to make up for his non-existent first and second names) understood that Jaskilka's Company E was already on the crest of Observatory Hill. Under that assumption he started his company in route column up the street leading to the top of the hill. An enemy machine gun interrupted his march. After a brisk firefight that caused several Marine casualties, the enemy was driven off and Company D began to dig in for the night. A platoon from Company F, the battalion reserve, filled in the gap between Company D and the Magness-Merritt positions. The only part of the O-A line that was not now under control was the extreme right flank where the line ended at the inner tidal basin.

Maggie Higgins, after seeing the war, such as it was, found a boat



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A3190

Marines go over the seawall forming the sharp edge of Red Beach. The Marine on the ladder has been identified as 1stLt Baldomero Lopez. Moments later he would give his life and earn a posthumous Medal of Honor.

on Red Beach that was returning to the *Mount McKinley*, where, after the personal intercession of Admiral Doyle, she was allowed to stay for the night. She slept on a stretcher in the sick bay. Next day, Admiral Doyle specified that in the future women would be allowed on board only between the hours of nine in the morning and nine at night. (About a month later, Maggie's transportation orders were modified. She would still be allowed on board any Navy ship but would have to be chaperoned by a female nurse.)

Murray, the regimental comman-

der, came ashore at about 1830 and set up his command post at the end of the causeway that led from the mainland to Wolmi-do. Roise wished to stay where he was for the night, but Murray ordered him to reach the tidal basin. Company F, under Captain Uel D. Peters, faced around in the dark and plunged forward. Shortly after midnight, Roise reported that his half of the O-A line was complete.

Assaulting Blue Beach

The confusion was greater on Blue Beach than on Red Beach.

Amphibian tractors, rather than landing craft, were used for the assault. The seawall was in disrepair with numerous breaks up which it was presumed the amphibian tractors could crawl. The 18 Army armored amphibians (LVT[A]s) forming the first wave crossed the line of departure at 1645 and headed toward Inchon. At four knots they needed three-quarters of an hour to hit the beach at H-Hour.

The soldiers had the compasses and seamanship to pierce the smoke and reached the beach on time. The second and following

First Lieutenant Baldomero Lopez

Baldomero Lopez was always eager. During World War II, he was 17 when he enlisted in the Navy in July 1943. Most thought him a Mexican American, but his father, also named Baldomero, as a young man had come to Tampa from the Asturias region of Spain. Los Asturianos, the men of Asturias, are known for their valor and honor.

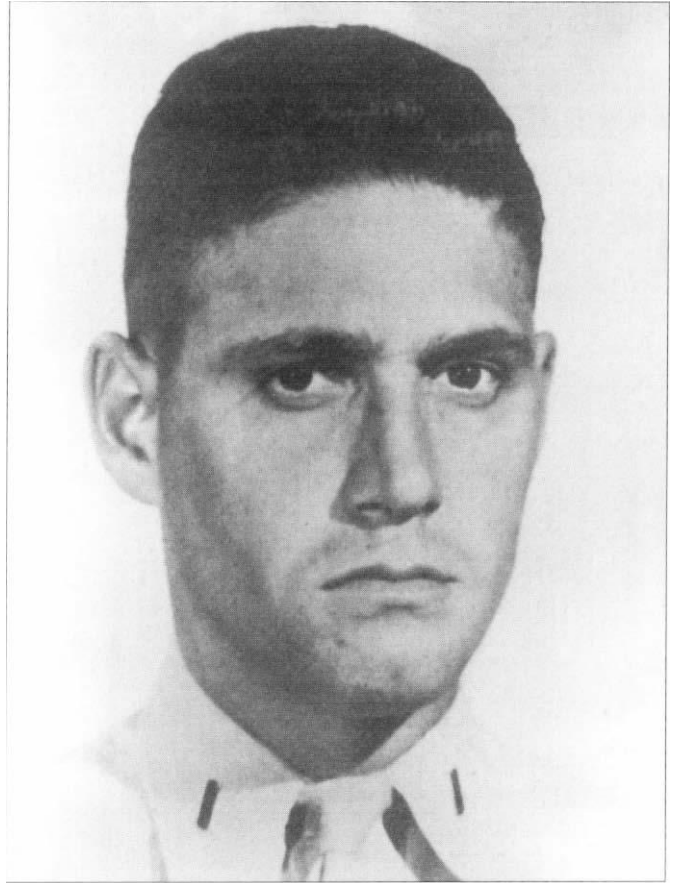
He was appointed from the fleet to the Naval Academy in July 1944. His class, 1948A, was hurried through in three years. Lucky Bag, his class book, called him "one of the biggest hearted, best natured fellows in the brigade." Otherwise he does not seem to have been exceptional. His nickname at the Academy was "Lobo." This changed to "Punchy" after he came into the Marine Corps in June 1947, because it was generally believed that he had boxed while at Annapolis. After Basic School he stayed on at Quantico as a platoon commander in the Platoon Leaders Class. In 1948, he went to North China as part of a Marine presence that was in its last days. He served first as a mortar section leader and then as a rifle platoon commander at Tsingtao and Shanghai.

When the Marines closed out in China, he came back to Camp Pendleton. In the early summer of 1950, when the formation of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade stripped the 1st Marine Division dry, he asked to be included but was left behind. He went out, however, to Korea in the draft that was sent to Pusan to fill the 5th Marines to war strength before embarking for Inchon. He was given the 3d Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion.

Secretary of the Navy Dan Kimball presented the posthumous Medal of Honor to his father and mother at ceremonies in Washington on 30 August 1951.

Citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Rifle Platoon Commander of Company A, First Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), in action against enemy aggressor forces during the Inchon invasion in Korea on 15 September 1950. With his platoon, First Lieutenant Lopez was engaged in the reduction of immediate enemy beach defenses after landing with the assault waves. Exposing himself to hostile fire, he moved forward alongside a bunker and prepared to throw a hand grenade into the next pillbox



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A43985

whose fire was pinning down that sector of the beach. Taken under fire by an enemy automatic weapon and hit in the right shoulder and chest as he lifted his arm to throw, he fell backward and dropped the deadly missile. After a moment, he turned and dragged his body forward in an effort to retrieve the grenade and throw it. In critical condition from pain and loss of blood, and unable to grasp the hand grenade firmly enough to hurl it, he chose to sacrifice himself rather than endanger the lives of his men and, with a sweeping motion of his wounded right arm, cradled the grenade under him and absorbed the full impact of the explosion. His exceptional courage, fortitude and devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon First Lieutenant Lopez and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

waves did not do so well. Rain and smoke had completely blotted out any view of the beach. From the bridge of his ship, the Blue Beach control officer watched the first two or three waves disappear into the smoke. He requested permis-

sion to stop sending any further waves ashore until he could see what was happening to them. Permission was denied.

As Major Edwin H. Simmons, the commander of Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 1st

Marines, remembered it:

We had been told that a wave guide would pick us up and lead us to the line of departure Two LCVPs did come alongside our wave.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A2816

A key objective for the 5th Marines was the 200-foot-high Observatory Hill. Both the 1st and 2d Battalions converged on the hill with Marines from Company B taking the weather station on its top.

Marines setup a temporary barricade on the causeway to Inchon, after mopping up and consolidating their positions on Wolmi-do. Although not expecting a counterattack, they

position a 3.5-inch rocket launcher and a machine gun just in case. The 3.5-inch rocket launcher proved itself adequate against the vaunted T-34 tank.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A2747





Department of Defense Photo (USMC)

Amphibian tractors (LVTs) churn away from the landing ships (LSTs) that brought them to Inchon. "Amtracks" were used chiefly for the assault of Blue Beach within the inner harbor.

another wave. I asked if they were headed for Blue Two. Their wave commander answered, "Hell, no. We're the 2d Battalion headed for Blue One." We then veered off to the right. I broke out my map and asked my LVT driver if he had a compass. He looked at his instrument panel and said, "Search me. Six weeks ago I was driving a truck in San Francisco."

The nine Army LVT(A)s making up the first wave for Blue Beach One got ashore on schedule, but found themselves boxed in by an earth slide that blocked the exit road. The remaining nine Army armored amphibian tractors, forming Wave 1 for Blue Beach Two, made it to the seawall shortly after H-Hour but were less successful in getting ashore. The "road" separating Blue One and Two turned out to be a muck-filled drainage ditch. After exchanging fire with scattered defenders in factory buildings behind the seawall, the Army

vehicles backed off and milled around, getting intermixed with the incoming troop-carrying Waves 2 and 3.

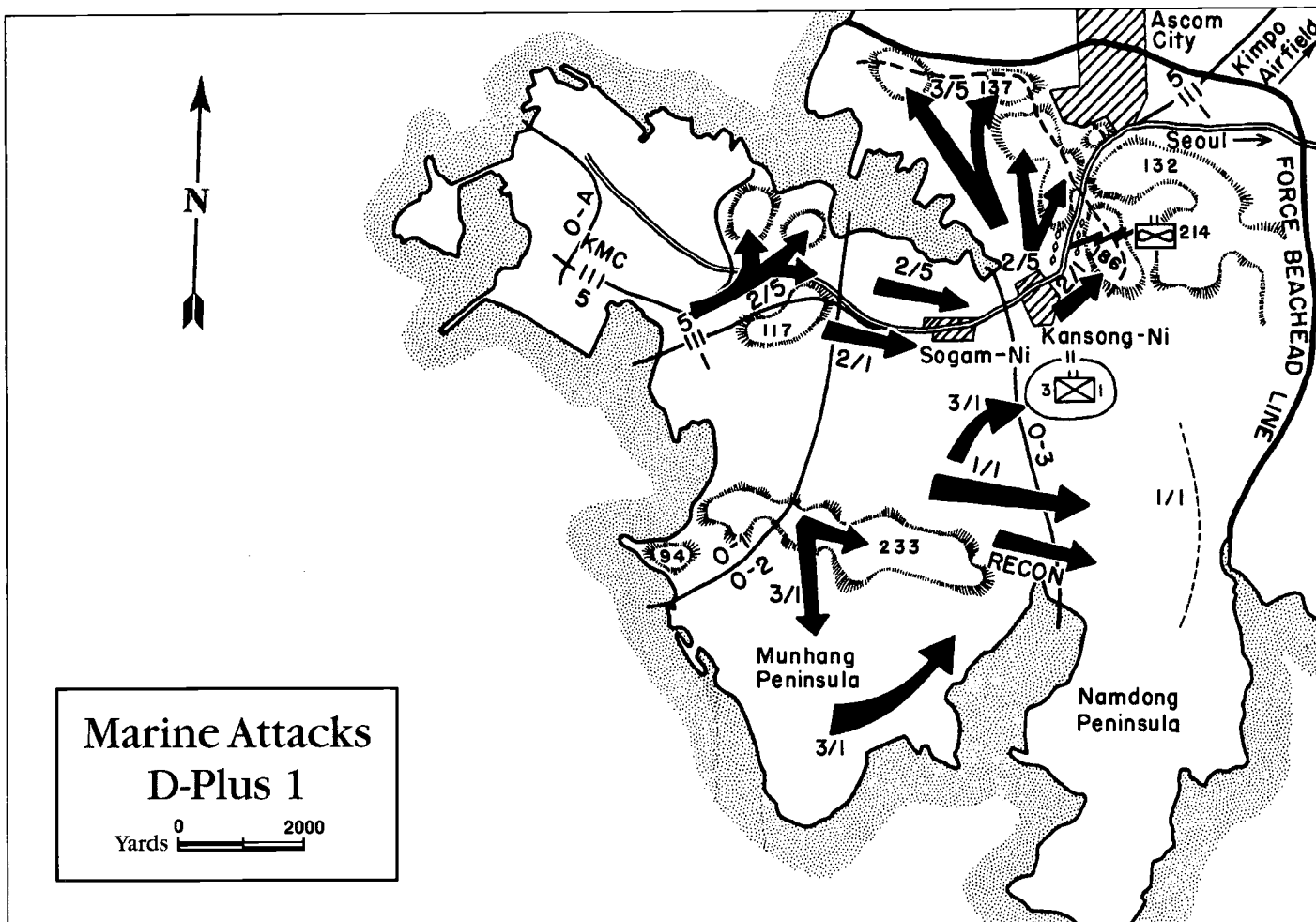
From his seat on the bridge of the *Mount McKinley*, MacArthur, surrounded by his gaggle of generals and admirals, peered through the gathering gloom of smoke, rain, and darkness and listened to the reports crackling over the loudspeaker. From his perspective, all seemed to be going well.

Lieutenant Colonel Sutter's second wave landed elements of both his two assault companies, Company D, under Captain Welby W. Cronk, and Company F, under Captain Goodwin C. Groff, across Blue Beach One shortly after H-Hour. Some of his amphibian tractors hung up on a mud bank about 300 yards offshore and their occupants had to wade the rest of the way. Most of Sutter's last three waves, bringing in his reserve, Company E, drifted to the right. As Sutter reported it: "For some unknown reason the third, fourth, and fifth waves were diverted from

landing either on Beach BLUE-1 or along the rock causeway by a control boat. Instead they were directed to the right of the two beaches prescribed for the regiment and landed at Beach BLUE-3."

Wave 2 for Blue Beach Two, with Ridge's assault companies, passed through the Army tractors, Company G under Captain George C. Westover on the left, Company I under First Lieutenant Joseph R. "Bull" Fisher on the right. They reached the seawall about 10 minutes after H-Hour. The tractors bearing Company G formed up in column and muddled their way up the drainage ditch. Company I went over the seawall using aluminum ladders, some of which buckled. Assault engineers from Captain Lester G. Harmon's Company C, 1st Engineer Battalion, reached the wall and rigged cargo nets to help the later waves climb ashore.

Ridge, the 3d Battalion commander, accompanied by his executive office, Major Reginald R. Myers, seeing the congestion on Blue



Beach Two, moved in his free boat to explore the possibilities of Blue Beach Three. He found a mud ramp broken through the seawall and some of his battalion was diverted to this landing point. An enemy machine gun in a tower about 500 yards inland caused a few casualties before it was knocked out by fire from the Army's armored tractors.

More serious problems confronted Lieutenant Colonel Jack Hawkins' 1st Battalion, which was in regimental reserve. Boated in LCVP landing craft, he was ordered by Puller, who was already ashore, to land his battalion. If things had gone well Hawkins should have beached at about H+45 minutes or 1815. Veering off far to the left in the gloom, his leading waves mistook the wall of the tidal basin for the seawall of Blue Beach Two.

Most of Company B and some of Company A had landed before Hawkins could correct the error. Most of those who landed were re-boated and sent on to Blue Beach Two. Because of a shortage of boats, however, one platoon was left behind. Marching overland to Blue Beach Two this orphan platoon gilded the lily by picking up a bag of prisoners enroute.

The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines' reserve—Company H under Captain Clarence E. Corley, Jr.—landed across Blue Beaches Two and Three. The 1st Platoon, led by First Lieutenant William Swanson, had the mission of securing the right flank of the bridgehead. Swanson slid his platoon behind Company I and moved against a platoon-sized enemy dug in on Hill 94, which topped the fish-hook cape bounding the beach-

head on the south. The North Koreans were driven out, but at a cost. Swanson himself was severely wounded in the thigh and evacuated. (Swanson returned to the 3d Battalion in late winter 1951, was wounded in the hand at the end of March, and killed by one of our own mines on 15 May 1951.)

Corley's Company H, less its 1st Platoon, moved into the gap between Companies G and I. The 2d Platoon, Company H, was sent forward at midnight to outpost Hill 233, a mile to the front, got halfway there, to Hill 180, and received permission to stay put for the night.

Generals Almond and Shepherd came in with the ninth wave, along with Admiral Struble, for a look-see at how events were progressing on Blue Beach. Almond's aide, Lieutenant Haig, had come in to



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-GK-2341-A409339

On the morning following the landing, the Marines marched through Inchon itself against no resistance. Initially, the Marines enjoyed a 10 to one numerical advan-

tage over the mediocre defense force. North Korean resistance stiffened in both numbers and quality as the attack moved inland toward Seoul.

Red Beach on board one of the LSTs. He had with him Almond's personal baggage and the wherewithal to establish a mobile command post including a van fitted out as sleeping quarters and an office. In transit Haig had lost two of the general's five jeeps, swept over the side of the LST in the typhoon. When Haig met up with his boss, Almond's first question was whether Haig had gotten his baggage ashore without getting it wet.

While the 5th Marines were assaulting Red Beach, Brigadier General Craig—with his brigade dissolved and now the assistant

division commander—came ashore at Wolmi-do and, joining Taplett's 3d Battalion, established an advance division command post. Craig had brought his brigade staff ashore intact to function as an interim division staff. Since his arrival in the objective area, Craig had had no opportunity to meet with O. P. Smith face-to-face.

During the night, Taplett's battalion crossed the causeway from Wolmi-do and rejoined the main body of the 5th Marines on Red Beach. Before morning the 1st Marine Division had all its first day's objectives. Resistance had been scattered—of the sort that

goes down in the situation report as "light to moderate." Total Marine casualties for the first day's fighting were 20 killed, 1 died of wounds, 1 missing in action, and 174 wounded.

Assault Continues

At about midnight Puller and Murray received the division's attack order for the next day. Murray was to bring the 5th Marines up on line abreast of Puller's 1st Marines. The axis for the advance on Seoul would be the intertwined highway and railroad. The Korean Marine regiment



Department of Defense Photo (USA) SC348506

Once ashore at Inchon, the Marines see for themselves that naval gunfire had destroyed much of the city. Once ashore, the rule-of-thumb was that each assault battalion would have a cruiser or destroyer available for on-call missions.

was initially left behind in Inchon to mop up.

The day, 16 September, was clear and pleasant. The climate was about the same as our north-eastern states at this time of year, warm during the day, a bit cool at night.

Murray elected to advance in column of battalions, leading off with Roise's 2d Battalion, followed by the 1st and 3d Battalions in that order. The 2d Battalion's advance through Inchon was strangely quiet. The enemy had vanished during the night.

Corsairs Against T-34s

Five miles to Murray's front, six of the vaunted Soviet-built T-34 tanks, without infantry escort, were rumbling down the Seoul highway toward him. Near the village of Kansong-ni, eight Corsairs from VMF-214 swept down on the advancing tanks with rockets and napalm. One Corsair, flown by Captain William F. Simpson, Jr., failed to come out of its dive,

killing Simpson, but the tank attack was halted. One T-34 was engulfed in flames, a second had its tracks knocked off, and a third stood motionless on the road. A second flight of Corsairs came over to finish off the disabled T-34s. The pilots pulled away, thinking incorrectly that all six tanks were dead.

The rubber-tired amphibious DUKW pulls a trailer about a mile outside of Inchon on the first morning after the landing. These "ducks" were used primarily to move guns, ammunition, and supplies for the artillery.

Department of Defense Photo (USA) SC348502





A curious Marine passes three knocked-out T-34 tanks. The vaunted Soviet-built tank proved no match for the array of weapons that the Marines could bring to bear, ranging from

Department of Defense Photo (USA) SC348504
a Corsair fighter-bomber's rockets to the 3.5-inch rocket launchers in the rifle and weapons companies.

quality of the Japanese crews threw the planned schedule for unloading completely out of balance.

The landing and employment of tanks presented problems. The Marines had just received M-26 Pershings as replacements for their

M-4A3 Shermans. Few of the members of Lieutenant Colonel Harry T. Milne's 1st Tank Battalion—except for Company A, which had been with the 5th Marines and had the M-26 at Pusan—were familiar with the Pershing. The tankers received their instruction on the new tanks

on board ship—not the best place for tank training.

Major Vincent J. Gottschalk's VMO-6, the division's observation squadron, began flying reconnaissance missions at first light on D+1, 16 September. VMO-6 possessed eight Sikorsky HO3S-1 helicopters

M-26 Pershing tanks emerge from the maws of beached LSTs ("landing ships, tank") at Inchon. Marine tankers, previously equipped with the obsolescent M-4 Sherman tank,

were re-equipped with the Pershings literally while on their way to the objective area.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC)





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A130235

Maj Vincent J. Gottschalk, commanding officer of VMO-6, prepares to take off in an OY light observation aircraft. Among the varied missions of the squadron was spotting and adjusting artillery fire on the retreating North Koreans for the ground troops.

and eight OY airplanes and had been with the 1st Brigade at Pusan where for the first time Marines used helicopters in combat. That day, First Lieutenant Max Nebergall pulled a ditched Navy pilot out of Inchon harbor in the first of many rescue operations.

In the 1st Marines' zone of action Puller sent Ridge's 3d Battalion to make a sweep of Munhang Peninsula. Ridge used amphibian tractors as personnel carriers—a bold but dangerous practice—and advanced on a broad front, Companies G and I

abreast with Company H following in reserve. Prisoners and materiel were taken, but there was almost no fighting. By noon the division held the 0-3 line, a front three miles long, secured on both flanks by water. Smith ordered Murray and Puller to move on forward and seize the Force Beachhead Line (FBHL) which would conclude the assault phase of the amphibious operation.

Murray chose to advance in two prongs. Roise with the 2d Battalion would continue to advance with his right flank tied to the Seoul highway. Taplett, coming up from behind with the 3d Battalion was to swing wide to the left. Newton, with the 1st Battalion, would follow in reserve.

Roise's battalion, escorted by Lieutenant Sweet's five M-26 Pershing tanks, moved up the road and at about 1330 rounded the bend into Kansong-ni. Two of Sweet's tanks crawled up a knoll from which they could cover the advancing riflemen. From this vantage point the Marine tankers saw three T-34 tanks, not dead as supposed, but ready for battle with hatches buttoned up and 85mm guns leveled on the bend in the road. Sweet's tanks smacked the T-34s with 20 rounds of armor-piercing shells. The T-34s went up in flames. Company D led the advance past the three burning hulks. Nearby the Marines found the two tanks knocked out earlier by the Corsairs. The sixth tank had vanished.

Company D continued for another thousand yards and then climbed a high hill on the west side of the road. Company F joined Company D on their left. They were still two miles from the Force Beachhead Line, but it looked like a good time and place to dig in for the night.

On Roise's left, Taplett's 3d