

called in close air support from Marine aircraft of Marine Night Fighter Squadron 513, which bombed and rocketed the NKPA's positions. Once again the NKPA fled. The presence of the aircraft was a great boost to Korean morale.

During the short sojourn near Pohang, the regiment was a logistical beggar. While the regiment was supposed to be supplied and equipped by the ROK army or the Eighth Army, the 1st Marine Division "furnished what items of equipment and supplies we could." In the case of food, the ROK army quartermaster supplied only rice. The regimental commander was given an allotment of about 250 won per day to buy what was known in Korea as side

dishes, e.g., eggs, fruit, meat, kimchi, and vegetables. There were two things wrong with this system: first, the troops had already eaten the country bare and there was almost nothing to buy; and second, rampant inflation had priced food out of the range of the regimental purse. Much later, the army quartermaster began issuing food for side dishes.

On 12 February, the regiment (less the 5th Battalion) received orders to prepare for its movement by landing ship to Samchok, up the coast near the 38th Parallel, where it would be attached to the South Korean army's Capital Division. Arriving on the 15th, the regiment went into division reserve. During the period of its attachment, the Korean Marines

engaged in some fairly heavy fighting and contributed considerably in preventing the collapse of the eastern end of the United Nation's defensive line. It was at such places as Yungil, Hongchon, Hwachon, Dosolsan, Daewusan, Kimilsung Hill, Motaekdong Hill, and Wolsan Pass that the Korean Marines earned the reputation that "when there is a Marine, there is no enemy before them."

Meanwhile, the 5th Separate KMC Battalion took part in a secondary landing at Inchon on 16 February and reported to the Eighth Army's 2d Logistical Command, while other United Nations forces reoccupied Seoul in the wake of the retreat of the CCF and NKPA from the South Korean capital. The battalion subsequently

*On the morning of 24 February 1951, an unopposed landing by 110 South Korean Marines on the island of Sin-do followed two hours of bombardment. United Nations forces*

*now held a strategic island north of the 38th Parallel in Wonsan harbor.*

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-427265



was used to man defensive positions on the Kimpo Peninsula and did not rejoin the regiment until the 1st Marine Division moved west in March 1952.

### 1st KMC Regiment Returns to the Front

Even as the 1st KMC Regiment was transferred yet again to another command, Rear Admiral Sohn Won-Yil, Republic of Korea Chief of Naval Operations, requested on 21 February of General Matthew B. Ridgway, Commanding General, U.S. Eighth Army, that to prevent the frequent shifting of the regiment or any of its attached units between other units, it be permanently attached to the 1st Marine Division. General Ridgway approved Admiral Sohn's request, and from 17 March 1951 until the armistice, the KMC remained under the tactical control of the 1st Marine Division. However, Eighth Army turned down Colonel Shin's request to regain control of the 5th KMC Battalion. Eighth Army's approval to permanently attach the 1st KMC Regiment to the 1st Marine Division came as the Korean War settled down into positional warfare along the 38th Parallel on the main line of resistance, and the assumption by the division of a sector of responsibility after being placed under operational control of X Corps, then IX Corps, and finally I Corps. It was at this time that Lieutenant Colonel Harrison was directed to reorganize and reassemble a KMC liaison group.

To provide the 1st KMC Regiment with direct artillery support, division headquarters assigned the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William McReynolds, the task. When the advance resumed in what Eighth Army



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A157570

*South Korean Marines employed all available weapons in the attack on Hill 975, including the 81mm mortar. Their success in forcing the enemy to withdraw from the strategic Kari-san massif "raised their stock considerably with the 1st Marine Division."*

dubbed Operation Ripper, the KMC occupied the center of the front and attacked between the 1st Marines on the right and the 5th Marines on the left.

The zone of the 1st KMC Regiment, now under the command of Colonel Kim Sung Un, was a wilderness without roads, making it necessary to airdrop ammunition and supplies for the attack on Hill 975. (The reason often given for the assignment of the Korean Marines to the sector with the roughest terrain was that Koreans were better "mountain goats" than the U.S. Marines, and that the Koreans had no experience operating with tanks.) This turned out to be the hardest fight of

the division's advance as it moved toward Cairo Line. McReynolds' battalion provided excellent artillery support for the 2d and 3d KMC Battalions as they inched their way forward in three days of bitter combat. Not until the morning of 24 March was the issue decided by maneuver when the 1st Battalion moved around the left KMC flank into a position threatening the enemy's right. Resistance slackened on Hill 975 and the South Korean Marines took their objective without further trouble.

The 1st and 5th Marines were already on Cairo Line, having met comparatively light opposition from NKPA troops who had



relieved the *66th* and *39th CCF Armies*. The enemy was apparently using the NKPA as an expendable delaying force while massing in the rear for an offensive that could be expected at any time. Even as Eighth Army had achieved all of the objectives set forth in Operation Ripper, General Ridgway planned to continue the offensive to keep the enemy off balance by applying as much pressure as possible, thus denying any respite to regroup and counterattack. In short, Ridgway wanted to maintain momentum and ordered the Eighth Army forward with little pause or interruption.

On 26 March, in keeping with this strategy, IX Corps ordered the 1st Marine Division to a new Cairo Line. This was simply a northeast extension of the old line to the boundary between IX and X Corps. While the 5th Marines maintained their positions, the 1st Marines and the 1st KMC Regiment moved up to the new line on schedule and without opposition. During the last weeks of Operation Ripper, Eighth Army units, which included U.S. and South Korean Marines, gained about 35 miles of additional frontage as they drove toward the 38th Parallel. On the 29th, General Ridgway published a plan for Operation Rugged, a continuation of Ripper aimed at achieving Kansas Line, the new objective. While the bulk of the 1st Marine Division was to be relieved by X Corps elements, the 7th Marines was to move up from reserve near Hongchon and join the 1st Cavalry Division in an attack aimed at Chunchon to drive the remaining enemy out of the area.

But instead of being relieved, General Ridgway ordered the 1st Marine Division to continue the advance with two infantry regiments as well the 1st KMC

Regiment. The 1st Marine Division's new mission called for the relief of the 1st Cavalry Division (with the 7th Marines attached) north of Chunchon. This gave General Smith's 1st Marine Division the responsibility for nearly 20 miles of front.

### Back Across the 38th Parallel

Further IX Corps instructions directed the 1st Marines into division reserve near Hongchon while the 5th Marines and 1st KMC Regiment attacked. After fording the Soyang River, the 5th Marines and the 1st KMC Regiment reached their objectives with only light enemy opposition. On 4 April, the Marines and their South Korean counterparts were among the first Eighth Army troops to recross the 38th Parallel. The following day marked an important event in Korean Marine Corps history when 10 officers and 75 men joined 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, for a month of on-the-job training in field artillery. "Korean officers were rotated through all the jobs peculiar to artillery," noted Lieutenant Colonel Harrison. During the cycle, the enlisted men were trained as cannoneers, fire direction control operators, communicators, and motor transport mechanics. This was the beginning of what later grew into a KMC artillery regiment.

Meanwhile, General Ridgway issued yet another operational order, which designated new objectives for the Eighth Army to the north. The purpose of this new offensive was to put pressure on expected Chinese preparations for a spring offensive behind the so-called "Iron Triangle." While aerial bombardment could hamper this CCF build up somewhat, General Ridgway correctly surmised that only with the use of ground forces

could the CCF be brought to battle. On 8 April, in preparation for this new offensive, the 1st Marine Division, along with the 1st KMC Regiment, relieved the 1st Cavalry Division on Kansas Line and prepared to renew the offensive with an attack toward Quantico Line near Hwachon. The 1st and 2d Battalions took positions generally along Kansas Line, while the 3d Battalion prepared the regimental reserve position on a ridgeline to the rear. The Korean Marines dug in and for the next 10 days sent patrols forward to the Pukhan River looking for suitable crossing sites. On the 18th, Korean Marine patrols crossed the river, secured key terrain on the north bank, and entered the town of Hwachon, unoccupied except for 11 Chinese who were captured.

At 0700 on 21 April, the 1st Marine Division renewed the attack toward Quantico Line with the 7th Marines on the left, the 5th Marines in the center, the 1st KMC Regiment on the right, and the 1st Marines in reserve. As aircraft from Marine Fighter Squadron 312 flying off the USS *Bataan* (CVL 29) pummeled CCF troops, both U.S. and Korean Marines met little opposition as they advanced the first 5,000 to 9,000 yards. The Korean Marines crossed the Pukhan River using rubber boats and amphibious trucks and occupied the high ground east and northeast of Hwachon in the usual formation of two battalions up and one back. Colonel Richard W. Hayward's 5th Marines, and the 7th Marines, commanded by Colonel Herman Nickerson, Jr., achieved both of their objectives on Quantico Line.

The long expected Chinese counterattack began late on 22 April. As the 1st Marine Division prepared to advance beyond Quantico Line, a CCF prisoner

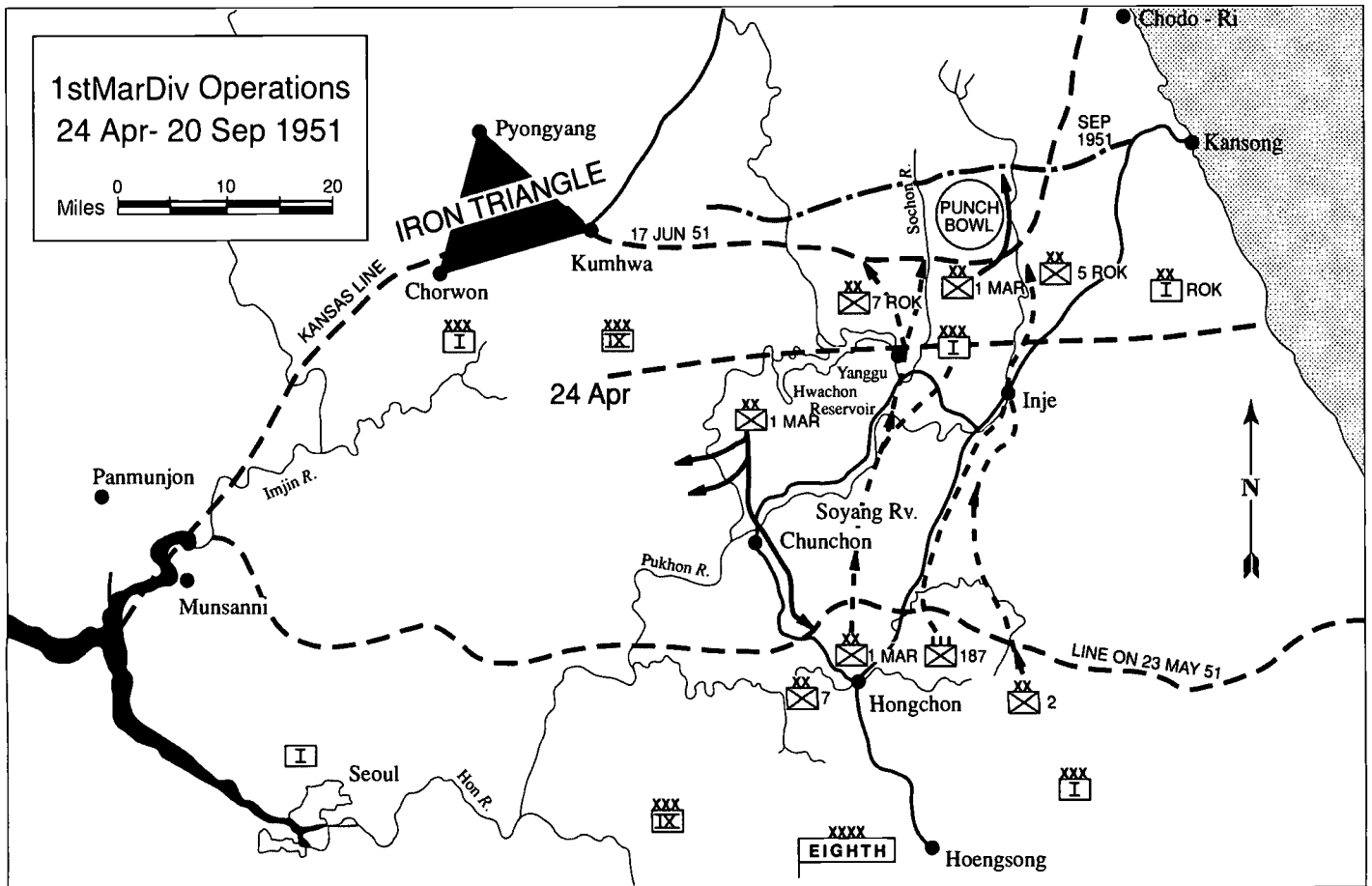
taken by the Korean Marines convinced General Smith and his staff that the CCF's offensive was only hours away from being launched. Smith canceled the advance and ordered all of his units on full alert. By 1930, the 1st Marines had been placed on full alert and by 2400 the reserve unit was on its way to reinforce the division's left flank to meet the expected enemy assault. While the 1st Marines were enroute, the Korean Marines and the 5th Marines began to absorb the full impact of the Chinese counterattack. Although the first blows fell on the 2d KMC Battalion on Hill 509, the 1st Battalion on Hill 313 also came under heavy attack, and was partially encircled, and forced from the high ground. Major Kim Jung Shik quickly notified Colonel Hayward's 5th Marines of the possibility of an enemy breakthrough.

After a furious nightlong battle

that pitted squad-sized U.S. Marine and KMC units against a well-armed enemy on Hills 313 and 509, the U.S. and Korean Marines gained the upper hand by dawn of 23 April. During the assaults, Marine platoon commanders and squad leaders demonstrated the soundness of Marine training as three squads of Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, led by Second Lieutenants Harvey W. Nolan and Patrick T. McGahn, attacked Hill 313 and eventually dislodged the Chinese forces who had emplaced machine guns in the seesaw battle. In one of the assaults, led by Sergeant William Piner, Marine riflemen advanced slowly under a blanket of well-directed machine gun fire by Chinese troops. After three attempts, the Marines forced the Chinese to withdraw as reinforcements arrived from Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, to assist in the final assault.

Even as the 1st and 2d Battalions, 5th Marines, took Hill 313, a vigorous counterattack by Korean Marines, who displayed excellent tactical proficiency in the assault, forced the Chinese from Hill 509. General Smith, who was shortly to turn command of the 1st Division over to Major General Gerald C. Thomas, commended the 1st KMC Regiment for their stubborn defense and spirited counterattack. In a message to Colonel Kim Suk Bum, the KMC's second commandant, Smith wrote: "Congratulate you and your fine officers and men on dash and spirit in maintaining your positions against strong enemy attacks. We are proud of the Korean Marines."

As a result of the Chinese attacks, the division's forward units were ordered to withdraw a short distance, in most cases less than a mile. In the Korean Marine zone, the 3d Battalion took up positions



in the left of the regiment's sector, while the 1st Battalion withdrew through the 3d to a position in the rear as regimental reserve. On the morning of 24 April, the battalions withdrew again, this time crossing the Pukhan River. By late afternoon, two battalions were in position on the crescent-shaped ridge-line south of the river with one to the rear in reserve. Although there were rumors of Chinese popping up everywhere by the thousands, it was not until the night of 24 April that sizeable numbers crossed the Pukhan. On the afternoon of 26 April, a further withdrawal was ordered, and the battalions moved off their mountain positions, forded the Soyang, and occupied the high ground south of the river. The following day, the KMC regiment, with the rest of the 1st Marine Division, received orders for a third and final withdrawal to the high ground between the Soyang and Hongchon Rivers. Patrols to the front had no enemy contact since the rapid U.N. withdrawal as perennial CCF logistical problems had left the Chinese far behind.

To fill the gaps in the ranks caused by the recent fighting, a draft of more than 200 replacements joined the regiment on 6 May. They arrived, however, without weapons or equipment (canteens, haversacks, helmets, and cartridge belts). Out of the regiment's meager stores, collected primarily from casualties, the replacements were fitted with weapons, although they were still short of a number of equipment items.

Meat in the troops' diet also was a problem; there was very little. At the beginning of the conflict, the Korean government agreed it would be responsible for all class I (rations) supplies for its troops. A good agreement, but it did not

put meat in the KMC mess kits. What was supplied was the Oriental counterpart to American C-rations manufactured in Japan, which the Koreans disliked. As Colonel Harrison later noted: "the truth of the matter was that the Koreans despised everything Japanese and abhorred the thought of Nips making profits off the Korean War." Consequently, Korean Marines often forcibly took the few remaining cattle from local farmers and slaughtered them. Since General Thomas would not tolerate this type of action, he sanctioned the issuance of the meat can in the C-rations from time to time. As the assistant division commander, General Puller, said: "If you're going to fight 'em you got to feed 'em." By the end of the first week of May, the Korean Marines had established patrol bases overlooking the vital Chunchon-Hongchon road and strong defensive positions to the rear.

### Action in the Punchbowl

The blunting of the Chinese counteroffensive by the counter-attack of the U.S. 3d Infantry Division to the east was followed immediately by a resumption of the advance by U.N. forces. On 22 May, the 1st KMC Regiment, supported for the first time by a platoon of five tanks, jumped off to seize two limited objectives—Hills 248 and 463—just three miles from the front. The objectives were occupied and the following day the regiment was relieved by elements of the 31st Infantry and moved by truck four miles northeast of Hongchong, only a mile from where it started the offensive two months before. About this time, Colonel Kim Tae Shik, a battalion commander during the Seoul and Wonsan operations,

assumed the post of regimental commander.

The regiment's rest in reserve was not long, and on the 25 May it started north. The three Korean Marine battalions moved rapidly through two valleys leading to the Soyang River—history was repeating itself practically over the same ground. In the advance, an ever-increasing number of Chinese prisoners were being rounded up by Korean Marine patrols. On 29 May alone, 59 prisoners were taken. Even a Chinese paymaster with his bags full of money was caught in the net. To press the advantage, the 1st Marine Division ordered the advance to speed up, and on 30 May, the 1st and 3d KMC Battalions crossed the Soyang River and moved along the axis of the Yanggu road toward the east end of the Hwachon Reservoir. The 2d Battalion plunged directly north into the wilderness leading to the south bank of the reservoir with the 7th ROK Regiment on its left. By the last day of May, Korean Marine patrols had reached the reservoir's south bank.

On 2 June, the 3d ROK Regiment arrived and relieved the Marines, who were shuttled to an assembly area south of Yanggu. The next afternoon, the three battalions moved forward and occupied positions on the high ground in preparation to relieve the 5th Marines on 4 June.

The KMC demonstrated its growing tactical proficiency beginning on 4 June in the assault on Hill 1122 or, as it is known by Korean Marines—the Battle for Taeam-san Ridge. In support of the renewed effort of the 1st Marine Division to extend its zone 5,000 yards to the east of the Soyang River valley, the KMC was brought out of division reserve not only to relieve Colonel



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A156047

*Col Kim Tae Shik assumed command of the 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment in late May following the blunting of the second Chinese counteroffensive. A battalion commander during the Seoul campaign, Col Kim would lead the regiment in the battle for Taeam-san Ridge, where it would earn acclaim.*

Hayward's 5th Marines, but also to free the 2d Infantry Division for the mission of mopping up in X Corps' rear. Three Marine regiments were now in line, the 1st Marines on the left, the KMC in the center, the 5th Marines on the right, and the 7th Marines in reserve.

The 1st KMC Regiment drew the most difficult sector of the main line of resistance, a rather extensive, gruesome looking mountain range that extended northeast from Yanggu to Hill 1316 (Taeam-san), the highest point in that part of Korea. Along the ridgelines, the Chinese had placed NKPA troops with only one order: "Hold until death." From the air, the ground in

front of the South Koreans resembled a monstrous lizard, rearing upon its hind legs. The two came together at the rump, Hill 1122. From this position, the backbone ran northeast to the shoulders, Hill 1218. Still farther northeast, along the neck, was the key terrain feature—Taeam-san, the head of the reptile.

Despite liberal use of artillery and close air support during their first assault on Taeam-san, the three battalions ran into stiff opposition from elements of an NKPA regiment of the *12th NKPA Division*, commanded by Major General Choe Am Lin. The crafty NKPA commander was quick to realize the tactical value of the

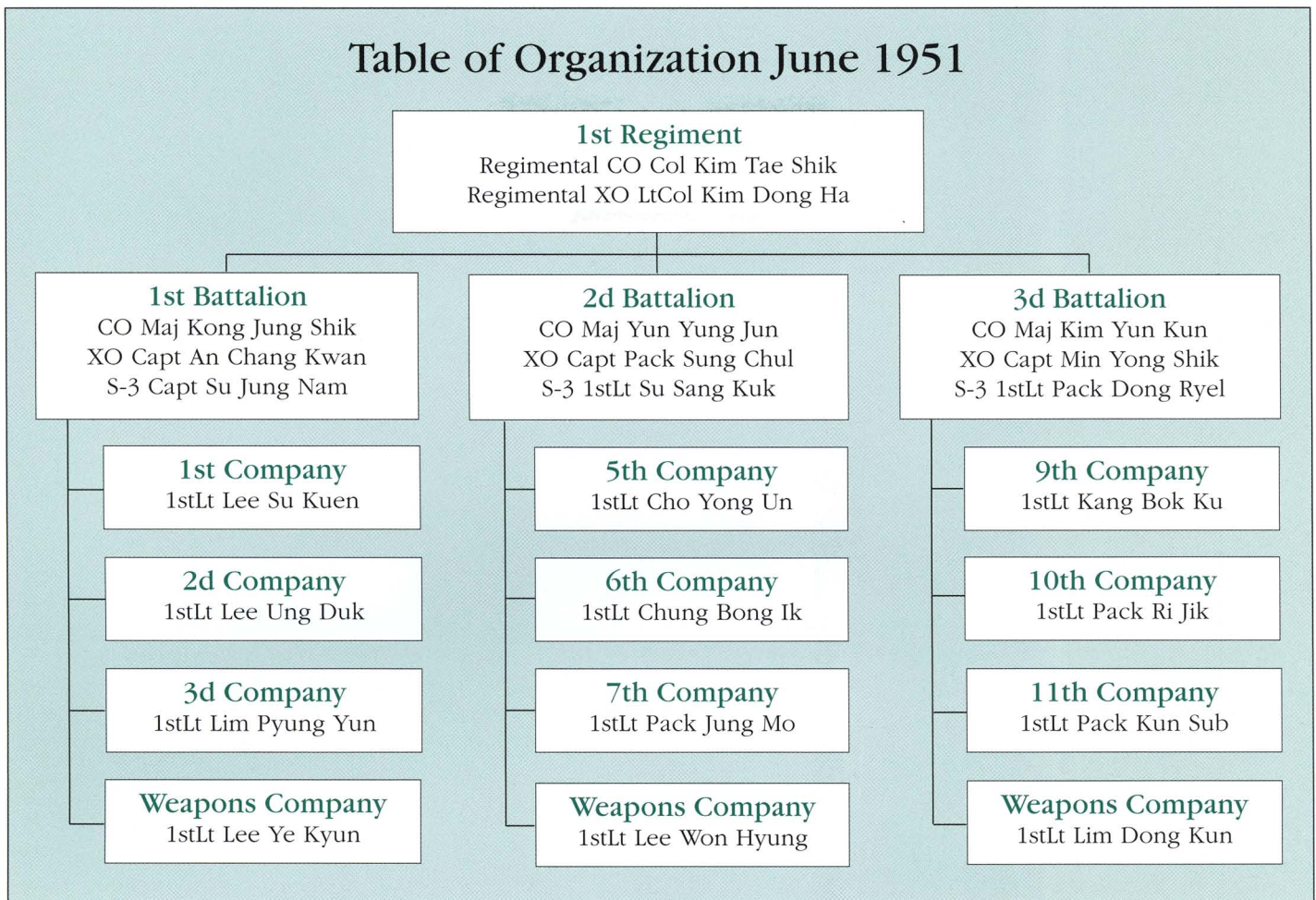
height and sought to make the KMC pay dearly for every inch of ground. This can be seen in the manner in which the NKPA dealt with the Korean Marines, who upon capture were summarily executed with a pistol shot to the back of the head.

For five days, 4-9 June, fighting raged around Taeam-san and the surrounding ridgelines. Because of the rugged, narrow terrain, the South Korean Marines were forced to attack in a formation that resembled a long thin spear rather than the blow of a heavy battering ram. Even when they managed to scale the heights, the enemy launched a furious counterattack and pushed them off. Not since the ill-fated attack of the 1st KMC Battalion in September 1950 against Hill 104 on the western outskirts of Seoul had the Korean Marines been up against such an entrenched and determined enemy. With losses mounting, the regimental commander decided to change tactics to break the back of the enemy defenses.

At 2000 on 10 June, the South Koreans decided to gamble on a night attack. Since the Chinese and North Koreans had used night attacks more frequently than U.N. forces, Colonel Kim concluded this could possibly catch the enemy off guard. He was right, for when the Korean Marines launched the next attack at 0200 on the morning of 11 June, most North Korean troops were either attending to garrison duties or were asleep. The three battalions fell upon the unsuspecting enemy "like an avalanche." Hill 1122, the center of resistance, fell to the KMC, and when it did, so did the remainder of the ridgeline. The North Koreans paid a heavy price that night, while KMC casualties were relatively light—five killed and 37 wounded. By the morning of 12 June, the battle for



## Table of Organization June 1951



Taeam-san was over and mop-up operations cleared the remnants of the enemy forces off the mountain without difficulty. In recognition of the bravery displayed by the Korean Marines, General Thomas sent the following dispatch:

Congratulations to the KMC Reg[imen]t on a difficult job well done. Your seizure of objectives on the Kansas Line from a determined enemy was a magnificent dash of courage and endurance. Your courageous and aggressive actions justify our pride in the Korean Marines.

The bitter fighting on Taeam-san was to become typical of the fighting in Korea. While U.S. and Korean Marines slugged their way

ahead during the day, the NKPA probed Marine lines by night, with each advance requiring a massive amount of firepower. This pattern lasted for several days before the Marines finally broke the resistance of the NKPA, who then fled from the hills surrounding Taeam-san.

As truce talks between the Communist and United Nations negotiators began, the fighting raged on. The defensive sector along Kansas Line west of the Yanggu road and north of the reservoir, which was assigned to the 1st Marines, left the enemy holding the high ground to the north. The regiment began pushing for a modification of the line to gain a better defensive position. The division bought the proposal and ordered Major Kong Jung Shik's 1st KMC Battalion to seize

Hill 1304 and then attack northwest to Tusol-san, the dominating piece of ground of the western rim of the strange geological formation soon to be christened the "Punchbowl." On 15 June, Major Yun Yung Jun's 2d KMC Battalion attacked north toward Hill 1304, which it seized the following day. Meanwhile, Major Kim Yun Kun's 3d KMC Battalion, following the 2d in trace, struck northwest along the ridgeline toward Tusol-san. As it approached the mountain, enemy resistance stiffened and frontal probes met with little success. On the night of 18 June, Major Kim's 3d Battalion launched an attack to capture the tactically important mountain. The battalion's 10th Company attacked straight along the ridgeline from Hill 1304. Meanwhile, its 11th Company, led by Captain Pak Kun

Sup, made a turning movement through the valley then up toward the ridgeline north of Tusol-san. The simultaneous attack from the southeast and north so surprised the enemy that his resistance collapsed.

As U.N. forces consolidated their gains after pushing back a combined CCF-NKPA offensive, Eighth Army adopted a defensive strategy in wake of the armistice talks that began at Kaesong that same month. In keeping with this strategy, General Thomas issued an order on 22 June that directed all three infantry regiments to establish battalion-sized patrol bases along the line. The KMC did the same. They dug trenches and erected bunkers, strung barbed wire, planted mine fields, and patrolled daily to the front, particularly toward Taeu-san (Hill 1179), where the enemy maintained a strong outpost.

On the morning of 7 July, the Marine liaison officer with X Corps alerted Colonel Richard G. Weede, the division G-3, to expect an order directing the seizure and establishment of a patrol base on Taeu-san the next day. The 1st KMC Regiment, warned by telephone, had very little time to plan and prepare for an attack. Since the Koreans could not be relieved of the responsibility for their sector, it was necessary to form a makeshift battalion of three companies (from the 1st and 2d Battalions). Unfortunately, they contained a large proportion of recruits and the battalion commander had only recently reported on board to take command.

There were two avenues of approach. The obvious avenue of attack was down the ridgeline leading north from Tusol-san and then west to Taeu-san. The other called for a descent from Tusol-san into a valley generally parallel-



1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Jun 1951

*Anytime there was a break in the action, U.S. Marines, assisted by interpreters, would hold familiarization school for Korean Marines on current or new weapons, such as the 75mm recoilless rifle, which the regiment received after the battle for Taeam-san.*

ing the main line of resistance and then up the steep slopes of Hill 1100, about a half-mile south of Taeu-san. The Koreans used both routes of approach. While one company advanced on the right by way of the valley, the other two took to the ridgeline on the left. The assault, which was to have been preceded by air strikes and an artillery bombardment, kicked off at 1030 on 8 July minus the air support, which had been canceled due to a soupy fog that cast its gray shadow over the entire battlefield. Despite heavy enemy resistance, the attack achieved some initial success as the companies gained a toehold on Hill 1100 where the advance ground to a halt.

The Korean Marines dug in for the night and repulsed a series of counterattacks. On the morning of 9 July, as one company broke contact and returned under orders to rejoin its battalion, the regimental commander, Colonel Kim Tae

Shik, committed the 2d Battalion, which jumped off from Hill 1100 toward Taeu-san. Strong enemy counterattacks drove the battalion back and off the hill. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion, led by Major Kong Jung Shik, jumped off toward Hill 1001, but encountered booby traps, mines, and heavy small arms fire. Once again, the Korean Marines advanced without air or artillery support as the fog that hindered the previous day's attack remained over the battlefield.

Colonel Gould P. "Pappy" Groves, who replaced Colonel Harrison as the senior U.S. Marine liaison officer with the 1st KMC Regiment, recommended the battalion be withdrawn. Although the 1st Battalion had managed to capture Hill 1001, it was obvious to all that the enemy's continued heavy resistance made the recapture of Hill 1100 impossible, at least for the moment, and that the KMC could not take Taeu-san as



planned. On 12 July, the 1st Marine Division informed X Corps the position held by the Korean Marines just north of Hill 1001 fulfilled the requirements for an advance patrol base and recommended that no further efforts be made to capture Taeu-san. X Corps concurred.

The Korean Marines suffered more than 220 casualties in their valiant assault on Taeu-san and Hills 1100 and 1001. Shortly after the actions near Taeu-san, the 1st KMC Regiment, along with the rest of the 1st Marine Division, went into corps reserve as the U.S. 2d Infantry Division assumed control of the sector occupied by Marines. It subsequently would require the

entire division to wrest Taeu-san from the enemy.

In reserve, the 1st KMC Regiment received what one observer described as "its most thorough training it had ever known," this given that all the while it had been fighting alongside its U.S. Marine counterparts. Each of the 1st Marine Division's three regiments sent four training teams to the four KMC battalions. Beginning on 22 July, these training teams consisted of a first or second lieutenant, a noncommissioned officer, and an interpreter. The 12 teams, one assigned to each KMC company, remained with their South Korean counterparts until 20 August. During this period, the

U.S. Marine advisors cross-trained members of each company in the use of small arms, company-level weapons, weapons maintenance, small unit tactics, and administration.

As it trained hard, it likewise expanded in size. According to General Kang, by 1 August, the Korean Marine Corps numbered approximately 4,000 men, with 3,200 of them assigned to the 1st KMC Regiment, while 800 served with the 5th Separate KMC Battalion, which was assigned to man defensive positions in and around the Kimpo Peninsula. As for the regiment's organizational structure, it now resembled that of a U.S. Marine regiment, consisting

*A three-man Korean Marine crew fires a .50-caliber machine gun at a forward patrol base. Regimental policy was*

*to keep one company out on a patrol base, rotating this assignment every few days.*

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A156474



of three infantry battalions, a regimental headquarters, a 4.2-inch mortar company, and a 75mm recoilless rifle platoon. The regiment's new commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel Kim Dong Ha, who replaced the wounded Colonel Kim Tae Shik.

### Fighting Along the Kansas Line

On 27 August, the 1st Marine Division, along with the KMC, returned to the line in time for the renewed effort in the Punchbowl.

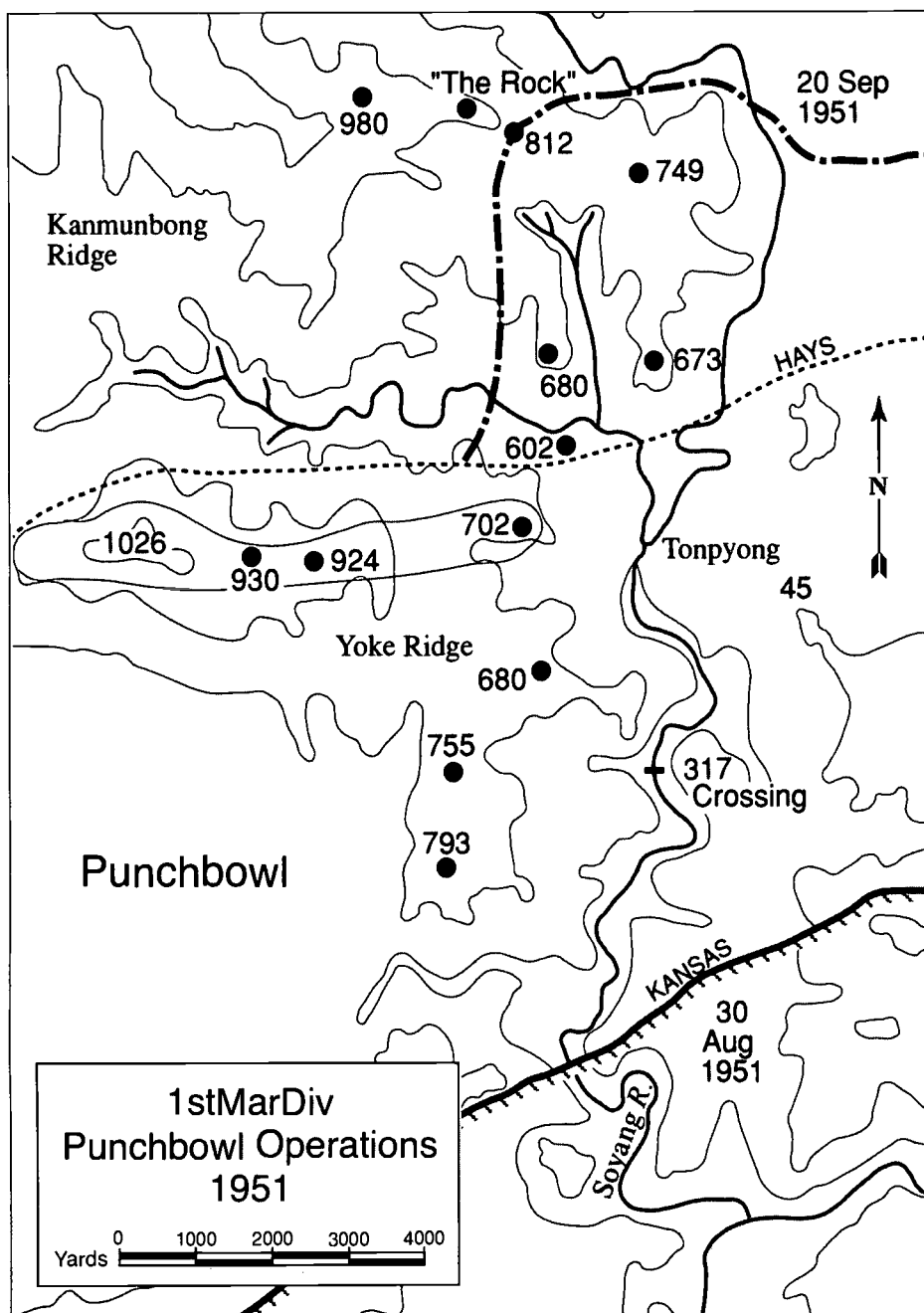
The 7th Marines and 1st KMC Regiment were assigned to relieve U.S. and Korean army units along the Kansas Line, while the 5th Marines had orders to reinforce the 7th Marines as it marched up the narrow Soyang Valley.

Despite having to march in a torrential downpour to its objectives, both the 7th Marines and the 1st KMC Regiment reached their assigned positions by afternoon on the 29th. The 2d KMC Battalion relieved the French battalion assigned to the 2d Infantry

Division, while the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines, completed the relief of elements from the 8th ROK Division.

Division Operations Order 22-51 directed two assault regiments, the 7th Marines and the 1st KMC Regiment, to attack at 0600 the following day and seize assigned positions on corps Objective Yoke, the ridgeline running from Hill 930 on the west through Hills 1026 and 924 on the east. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, already occupied Objective 1, a hill mass one-and-a-half miles northeast of Tonpyong. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, was ordered to seize Objective 2, generally that part of Yoke Ridge east of Hill 924. The 1st KMC Regiment was assigned Objective 3, which was the seizure and occupation of Hills 924 and 1026. As both U.S. and Korean Marines moved toward their objectives, small arms fire and land mines slowed their advance. Meanwhile, a number of prisoner reports indicated the enemy planned to hit the Marines along the Kansas Line on 1 September, which prompted the division's intelligence officer, Lieutenant Colonel James H. Tinsley, to suspect the enemy's Sixth Phase Offensive might be about to begin. Consequently, both the 7th Marines and 1st KMC Regiment prepared for the expected enemy onslaught.

In preparation for that attack, the two KMC battalions received priority for close air support missions. As the two battalions jumped off in columns on 31 August with Marine aircraft overhead, they met only moderate resistance on their advance up Hill 924. Enemy minefields gave the Korean Marines more trouble at first than the scattered enemy mortar and machine gun fire. The 1st KMC Battalion conducted a passage of lines through the 3d



Battalion and met increasing enemy resistance as it pushed toward its objective. On its right flank, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, also encountered light resistance, which increased as the Marines neared their objective. Taking advantage of the sloping terrain, the enemy commander planted mines along the most likely avenues of approach on Hill 702. Forced to take alternate positions, which had been bracketed by the enemy, the forward elements of 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, were hit by a concentration of mortar and artillery fire. East of the Soyang, on the regiment's right flank, where Objective 1 had been occupied without a fight, the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, supported the attack of 3d Battalion with mortar fire. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, and the Korean Marines were within 1,000 yards of their objectives late in the afternoon when a halt was called for the day. Minimal losses were due in large measure to the excellent air and artillery support.

When the attack resumed on 1 September, Major Kim Yun Kun's 3d Battalion conducted a passage of lines through positions occupied by 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, to reach a ridgeline on the flank of the regimental objective. While the 3d Battalion advanced from the northeast, Major Kong Jung Shik's 1st Battalion closed in from the southeast. Both battalions suffered heavy losses from enemy mines and mortars, as well as from machine gun and automatic weapons fire from hidden bunkers. The converging attack made slow but steady progress until one company of the 3d Battalion drove within 200 meters of the top of Hill 924 at 1700. It took four more hours of hard fighting to secure the objective. That evening, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, relieved the



Department of Defense (USMC) A157705

*Following a U.S. Marine artillery preparation, Korean Marines charge an enemy bunker complex as part of the 1st Marine Division's plan to seize a series of commanding ridgelines surrounding the Punchbowl.*

2d KMC Battalion of its defensive responsibilities, enabling the battalion to join in the attack.

Throughout the day, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Bernard T. Kelly, slugged it out in the vicinity of Hill 702 with an NKPA battalion, which launched four different counterattacks with as many as 500 men. While some of the enemy troops briefly penetrated the battalion's lines, they were beaten back with the help of supporting air and artillery strikes from Colonel Custis Burton, Jr.'s 11th Marines, which poured a deadly concentration of 105mm artillery fire on the North Korean troops. Kelly's battalion continued to fight off the enemy attacks until dusk.

The tenacity of the NKPA's defense was again demonstrated on the KMC when they were driven from the top of Hill 924 by a surprise enemy counterattack at midnight. But the Korean Marines showed their own determination on the morning of 2 September, and following a terrific firefight,

the North Koreans were evicted around noon. The guns of Major Gordon R. Worthington's 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, fired 1,682 rounds of 105mm ammunition in direct support of the KMC assault on Hill 924. At the same time, the guns of Lieutenant Colonel McReynolds' 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, fired 1,400 rounds in support of 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. The 11th Marines' other battalions, reinforced by elements of the U.S. Army's 196th, 937th, and 780th Field Artillery Battalions, brought the total number of rounds fired during the 24-hour period to 8,400.

After Major Kim Byong Ho's 2d Battalion secured Hill 924, it conducted a passage of lines through the 1st and 3d Battalions to spearhead an attack toward Hill 1026. In the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines' zone, Company H repulsed an enemy counterattack at 0700 with mortar and machine gun fire, and then moved out to resume the attack on Hill 602. Lieutenant Colonel Kelly ordered his battalion's heavy machine guns to set



up in battery order to deliver overhead supporting fires. In less than two hours, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, swept the crest of Hill 602 and secured the division's Objective 2. After taking Hill 602, the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, repulsed three company-sized enemy counterattacks before the North Koreans withdrew to the north at 1500.

The 2d KMC Battalion fought its way to a point within 800 yards of Hill 1026 before dusk. So aggressive and persistent was the NKPA defense that several light enemy probing attacks were launched during the night of 2 September, not

only against forward Marine elements, but also against the 5th Marines on the Kansas Line, five miles to the rear. The fluid nature of the front meant fighting could erupt anywhere and everywhere and at any time.

While Kelly's Marines constructed emplacements and obstacles on Hill 602, the South Korean Marines continued their attack toward Hill 1026 on the morning of 3 September. With the extending of the 7th Marines zone to the left to decrease the width of the KMC front, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, was brought up from regimental reserve to help cover a new sector

that included Hill 924. The attack led by Major Kun's 2d Battalion collided with a large-scale enemy counterattack. The fighting raged for more than three hours before the NKPA broke off contact, and by mid-morning on 3 September, the Korean Marines were in possession of the division's Objective 3. They quickly consolidated defenses for the expected enemy counterattack, which came at 1230 and lasted for two hours before the NKPA once again broke contact and retreated. This action by the KMC completed the battle for corps Objective Yoke. At 1800, on 3 September, the 1st Marine

*Korean Marine Corps mortar men prepare to launch a mortar shell. Along the main line of resistance during the winter of 1951-1952, three battalions of Korean Marines con-*

*tinued to maintain a vigorous forward patrol effort while improving their defenses in case of an enemy counterattack.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A160234



Division was in full possession of the Hays Line, which dominated the western side of the Punchbowl.

On 4 September, with all objectives consolidated, 1st Marine Division units patrolled northward from defensive positions. Division planners already had been laying the groundwork for the second phase of its attack on the Punchbowl, which was to advance a further 4,000 to 7,000 yards to seize the next series of commanding ridgelines. As for the price of the last offensive, it was not cheap. During the four-day battle, a total of 109 Marines (U.S. and South Korean) were killed and 494 were wounded. North Korean casualties were even higher with 656 killed and 40 taken prisoner. As the U.S. and ROK Marines consolidated their positions, replaced worn equipment, and replenished depleted stocks of ammunition, the next phase of the fighting in the Punchbowl resumed. For the remainder of September, the 1st KMC Regiment occupied the Hays Line and conducted vigorous patrols north of the division's positions as it awaited new orders to resume the attack.

By 1 October, seven infantry battalions manned the division's main line of resistance—three KMC battalions on the left, two battalions from the 5th Marines in the center (relieved by the 7th Marines on 11 October), and two battalions from the 1st Marines on the right. The mission of the KMC and of the 1st Marine Division remained virtually unchanged as they conducted numerous foot patrols far into enemy territory and initiated company-strength tank-infantry raids supported by Marine aircraft and artillery. In one such raid, conducted on 17 October, a reinforced KMC company, supported by tanks, air, artillery, and

combat engineers, attacked enemy positions about 875 yards northwest of Hill 751 and 1,500 yards south of Hill 1052. During the day-long raid, the Korean Marines destroyed 25 NKPA bunkers, killed 15 enemy troops, captured 3 prisoners of war, and netted 5 machine guns.

On 21 October, the front of the 1st Marine Division was reduced a mile when elements of the 3d ROK Division relieved Major Kim's 2d Battalion on the Marine left flank in accordance with instructions from X Corps. A total of six infantry battalions now manned the 12-mile front.

Throughout the remainder of 1951, the 1st Marine Division continued to occupy the eastern portion of the X Corps defense sector in east-central Korea. From left to right the 1st KMC Regiment, 7th Marines, and 1st Marines held the main line of resistance with two battalions each. The 5th Marines remained in reserve until 11 November when it relieved the 1st Marines, which went into reserve at Mago-ri. As Marines continued patrols and efforts to improve their defenses, the KMC added its own artillery support—the 1st Korean Artillery Battalion consisting of two medium (155mm) and two light (105mm) howitzer batteries. The 2d KMC Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kim Doo Chan, was organized as were engineer and medical companies. In the spring of 1952, the 1st Marine Division, along with the 1st KMC Regiment, received orders to move across the peninsula to western Korea. The regiment was the first unit to move to its new positions along the extreme left flank of the Eighth Army, where it was given the mission of guarding the approaches to Seoul along the Jamestown Line. By 24 March, the 1st Marine Division and 1st KMC Regiment

had relieved elements of the 1st ROK Division along the left sector of the main line of resistance, adjacent to the British 1st Commonwealth Division, and were in position to continue sector outpost security and ground defense in what had become a war of attrition.

### On the Western Front

As the Marines of the 1st Division prepared to occupy positions along the Jamestown Line, the efforts of the Marine liaison groups began to take noticeable effect on the KMC's battlefield proficiency, which was increased tenfold. On 11 February 1952, in response to a request from the Commandant of the Korean Marine Corps, the 1st Marine Division activated the Korean Marine Corps Advisory Group (KMCAG), which consisted of six officers and 11 enlisted Marines. The U.S. Marine advisors provided assistance in an advisory capacity to the Commandant of the Korean Marine Corps and his staff. Shortly thereafter, the KMCAG came under the administrative control of the Commander, Naval Forces, Far East, which had a similar team providing advice to the ROK Navy.

Along the Jamestown Line, elements of the 1st KMC Regiment and units of the 1st and 5th Marines manned security outposts, dug field fortifications, built defensive positions, conducted aggressive foot patrols, and drove back small enemy probing attacks. The division, now commanded by Major General John T. Selden, consisted of 1,364 officers and 24,846 enlisted Marines, 1,100 attached naval personnel (doctors, corpsmen, and Seabees), and 4,400 officers and men of the 1st Korean Marine Regiment. It also had operational control of several I Corps reinforcing artillery units in its sec-





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A161982

*Camouflaged Korean Marines on patrol pause to check the route. The Koreans frequently drew the sector with the roughest terrain and least number of roads. The reason often given for the assignment was that the Koreans were better "mountain goats" than U.S. Marines.*

tor. On 31 March, another major infantry unit, the Kimpo Provisional Regiment (KPR), was organized to augment the fighting strength of the division.

### Kimpo Provisional Regiment

General James A. Van Fleet's transfer of the 1st Marine Division to western Korea aimed to strengthen the defenses of the approaches to Seoul and the Kimpo Peninsula. Several units, the 5th KMC Battalion, the U.S. Marine 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, and the 13th ROK Security Battalion (less one company), had been assigned to the protection of the peninsula. Their operations, while coordinated with I Corps, were of a more inde-

pendent nature. The fixed nature of the Kimpo defenses provided for neither a reserve maneuver element to help repel any enemy attack that might occur nor a single commander to coordinate the operations of the defending units.

These apparent weaknesses prompted concern for the security of the Korean capital, which lay just east of the bases on the Kimpo Peninsula, separated only by the Han River. Also located on Kimpo was the key port of Inchon and two other vital installations, the logistical complex at Ascom City and the Kimpo Airfield. All of these facilities were indispensable to the U.N. war effort. To improve the security of Kimpo and provide a cohesive, integrated defensive line, General Selden formed these

independent commands into the Kimpo Provisional Regiment and placed Colonel Edward M. Staab, Jr., in command. This unique command functioned in a tactical capacity only and had no administrative duties.

In addition to maintaining security on the division's left flank, the KPR was given the mission of protecting the support and communications installations in that sector "against an airborne or ground attack." To support the KPR's tactical mission, General Selden placed the division's artillery and motor transport assets at its disposal.

For ease of control, the KPR commander divided the peninsula into three sectors. The 5th Separate KMC Battalion occupied the northern sector, dominated by



## Training a Republic of Korea Marine

The training of a Republic of Korea Marine was patterned after that of a U.S. Marine. Like his U.S. Marine counterpart, recruits for the Korean Marine Corps (KMC) reported to the Marine Recruit Training Center at Chinhae, near Pusan. There, recruits underwent a grueling eight weeks of basic training patterned after that of the U.S. Marine Corps recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, and San Diego, California. Upon completion of recruit training, the basic Marine reported to the 1st KMC Regiment or the 5th KMC Battalion. Upon arrival at the regiment, the Marines were formed into a provisional recruit company for additional infantry training, much like that received by a U.S. Marine at the Infantry Training Regiment at either Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, or Camp Pendleton, California. Here, the basic Marine received classes in small unit tactics, weapons familiarization, first aid, field hygiene, and field sanitation.

Training cadre for the provisional organization comprised assigned officers and noncommissioned officers of the different battalions under the direction of the regiment's operations officer. This training period usually lasted about four weeks, at which time the Marine was assigned to a permanent regimental unit. After joining a combat organization, the new Marine received additional on-the-job training. Korean Marine officers coupled this training with as much formal instruction and practical work as possible for units occupying a sector of the main line of resistance. In view of the static situation during the winter of 1951-1952, and the increased number of replacements, small unit instruction among the units increased considerably.

As time permitted, the Marine was given more comprehensive training while his battalion remained in regimental or division reserve. Corps training cadre carried out all instruction under the direction and supervision of the battalion commander and his staff.

U.S. Marine Corps personnel performed an important training role, but only through the Korean Marine Corps Advisory Group's battalion liaison officer. This officer contributed materially to the training of the battalion through his continuous contact with and influence on the battalion staff. The U.S. Marine Corps officer's role was one of advisor, with final decisions resting with the KMC battalion and company officers. When they were available, the 1st Marine Division and Commander, Naval Forces, Far East, provided additional Marine officers, noncommissioned officers, and corpsmen to the KMC for specialized training.

During July and August 1951, when the 1st Marine Division was in reserve, an extensive training program was undertaken by the 1st KMC Regiment. During this period, the division assigned a U.S. Marine Corps advi-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A8215

sory to each KMC company. The teams consisted of an officer, a noncommissioned officer, and an interpreter. This further enhanced the training of the KMC through the team's expert advice and on-site demonstrations of various infantry techniques. This demonstration-style instruction proved to work well among Korean Marines, as did the use of training aids such as disassembled M1 Garand rifles, machine guns, mortars, and sand tables.

Marine advisors also provided classes in infantry tactics for KMC platoon, company, and battalion commanders. This training was carried out exclusively by U.S. Marine Corps officers selected from the various regiments that were on the main line of resistance. These officers prepared outlines of instruction, which they then submitted to the U.S. Marine liaison teams for review and revision to make them relevant to their KMC comrades. The liaison teams ensured these instructions were basic in content and terminology, and that they were delivered effectively to the KMC officers. For their part, the KMC officers designated to attend classes were not required to speak English. Instead, the lecture by the U.S. Marine instructor was delivered in English and then translated into Korean by the interpreter. After each thought or idea was presented to the students, the instructor stopped to allow the interpreter to explain it in Korean. In this manner, maximum emphasis was given by the instructor and transmitted to the students. As a means to reinforce the lessons presented in class, every KMC officer attending the class received a set of translated lecture notes for his personal use.



commanding terrain. The ROK army battalion occupied the southern portion and was assigned the protection of Kimpo Airfield and the containment of any attempted enemy attack from the north. Both the KMC and the ROK army units provided security for supply and communication installations within their sectors. The western sector was held by Company A, 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion, less two platoons. The company had the mission of screening traffic along the east bank of the Yom River, which flanked the western part of the peninsula. Providing flexibility to the defense was 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, the designated maneuver battalion, then in reserve and on call in case of an enemy attack.

The unit adjacent the KPR in the division line in late March was the 1st KMC Regiment. Commanded by Colonel Kim Dong Ha, the regiment assumed responsibility for its portion of the Jamestown Line at 0400 on 20 March with orders to organize and defend its sector. The regiment placed the 1st and 3d KMC Battalions on the main line of resistance, with the 2d Battalion in the rear as regimental reserve. Holding down the regimental right flank was the 1st Battalion, which shared the boundary with the 1st Marines until 29 March when the 5th Marines entered the lines and assumed the defense of the sector between the regiment and 1st Marines. To bolster the defenses along the Jamestown Line, General Selden added the remaining companies of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion to the four regiments on line, making a total of five major units manning the front. Inserted between the KPR and the 1st KMC Regiment, the amphibian tractor companies added to the division's maneuverability along the line.

Enemy units facing the Marines along the Jamestown Line were both tough and considered first-rate by the division's intelligence officer, Lieutenant Colonel Tinsley. The units located directly beyond the 1st Marine Division's sector included elements of the *65th* and *63d CCF Armies*. Together, the enemy armies numbered 49,800 troops. Opposite the west and center sectors of the division's lines was the *65th CCF Army*, with elements of the *193d Division* opposing the Kimpo Provisional Regiment and the *194th Division* facing the 1st KMC Regiment. The U.S. Marine regiments faced the *195th Division*, *65th CCF Army*, which had placed two regiments forward. North of the division's right lay the *188th Division*, *63d CCF Army*, which also had two regiments forward. In support of the estimated 15 enemy infantry battalions were 10 artillery battalions with a total of 106 guns of varying calibers (75mm to 155mm). Intelligence reported the presence of the *1st CCF Armored Division* and an unidentified airborne brigade located near enough to the front to provide support if needed.

### Fighting Along the Jamestown Line

Surprisingly, the Chinese did not interfere with the 1st Marine Division as it dug in along the Jamestown Line. This changed toward the end of March as the enemy increasingly probed the Marines' lines. From 25-31 March, the first week along the Jamestown, the division reported five separate attacks that included some 100 Chinese soldiers per probe. Most of these occurred against the 1st KMC Regiment, a front the Chinese believed was the weakest sector of the line.

The 1st KMC Regiment held the area containing Freedom Gate, the best of three bridges spanning the Imjin River. Both of the other two, X-Ray and Widgeon, were further east in the division's sector. If the Chinese could exploit a weak point in the KMC lines, capture Freedom Gate Bridge, and turn the division's left flank, enemy forces could pour into Eighth Army's rear and possibly retake Seoul. Without the bridge in the KMC sector, the division would "be hard pressed, even with helicopter lift, to maintain the regiments north of the Imjin."

At about 2130 on 1 April, the CCF launched its offensive, pounding KMC positions with a massive artillery barrage. A half hour later, Chinese troops launched a ground assault, hitting a Korean outpost and the main line. Marines of the 1st Company, 1st KMC Battalion, were the first to feel the brunt of the Chinese attack on the regiment's right flank. There, a Chinese company forced an opening between friendly outposts and reached a point about 200 yards short of the main line of resistance and just north of a road leading to the main bridge over the Imjin. While this attack was in progress, another CCF company hit the outpost line further south. This attack proved less successful, as the South Korean Marines were able to quickly muster sufficient strength to repel the invaders short of their objective. Battered and beaten, both Chinese companies withdrew at about 2345 to their own lines.

To the left of the 1st Battalion was Major Paik Nam Pyo's 3d Battalion, which received the force of the Chinese attack. The battalion's 9th, 10th, and 11th Companies (deployed in that order from west to east in the left battalion sector), had been engaged by the same preliminary