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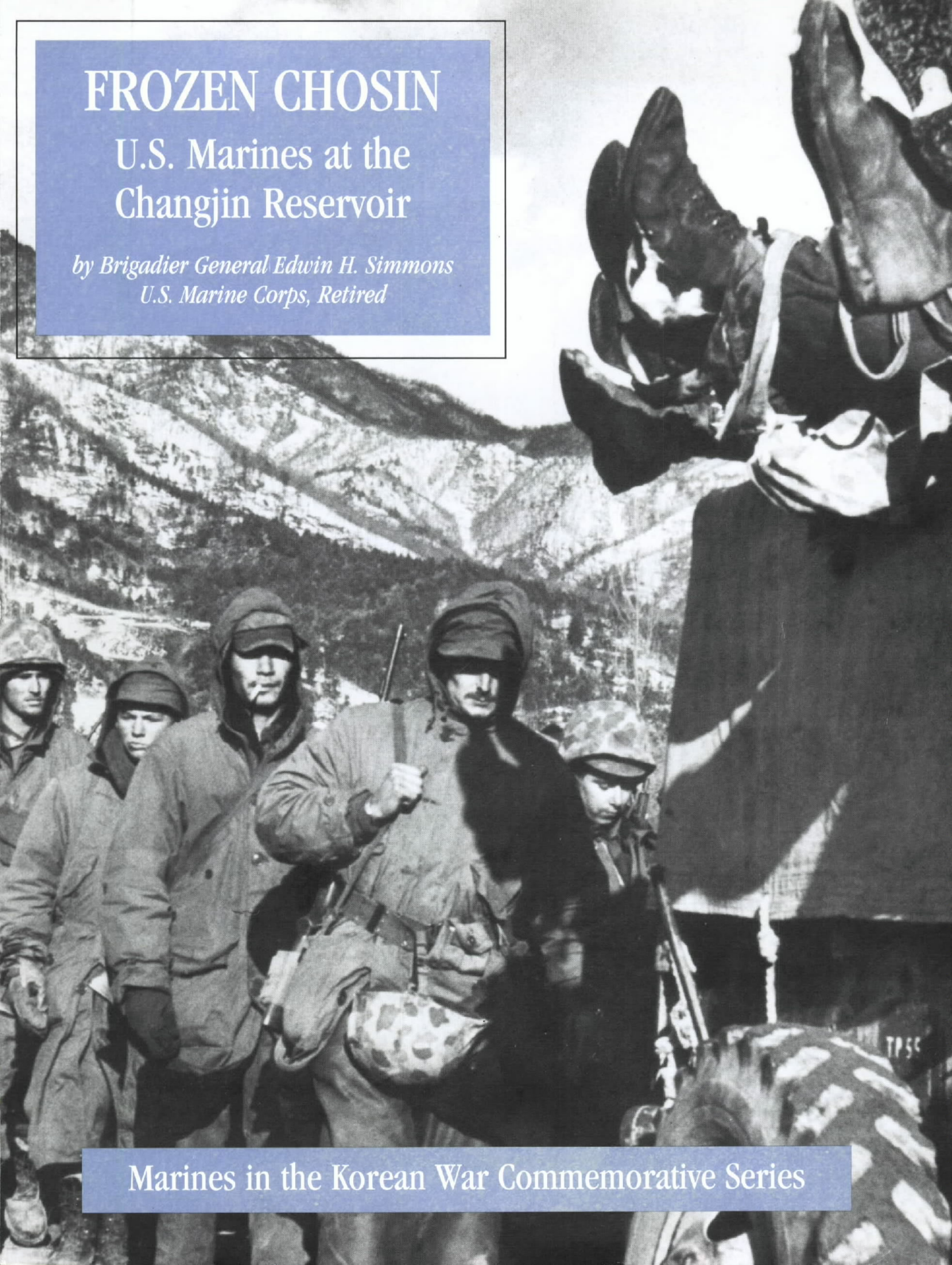
U.S. Marines at the Changjin Reservoir

by Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons
U.S. Marine Corps, Retired



Marines in the Korean War Commemorative Series

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by Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret)

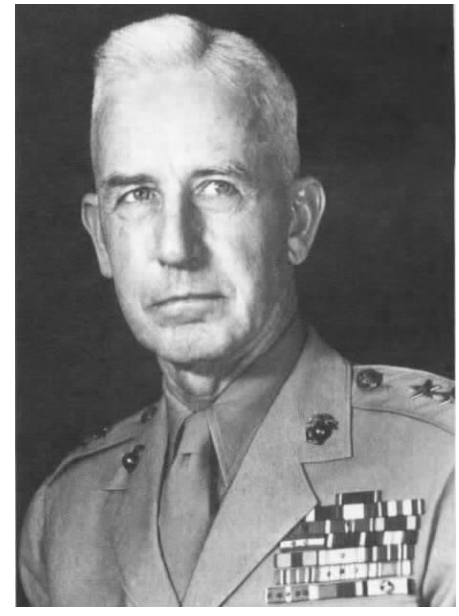
The race to the Yalu was on. General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's strategic triumph at Inchon and the subsequent breakout of the U.S. Eighth Army from the Pusan Perimeter and the recapture of Seoul had changed the direction of the war. Only the finishing touches needed to be done to complete the destruction of the North Korean People's Army. Moving up the east coast was the independent X Corps, commanded by Major General Edward M. Almond, USA. The 1st Marine Division, under Major General Oliver P. Smith, was part of X Corps and had been so since the 15 September 1950 landing at Inchon.

After Seoul the 1st Marine Division had reloaded into its amphibious ships and had swung around the Korean peninsula to land at Wonsan on the east coast. The landing on 26 October 1950 met no opposition; the port had been taken from the land side by the resurgent South Korean army. The date was General Smith's 57th birthday, but he let it pass unnoticed. Two days later he ordered Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr., 47, to move his 7th Marine Regimental Combat Team north from Wonsan to Hamhung. Smith was then to prepare for an advance to the Manchurian border, 135 miles distant. And so began one of the Marine Corps' greatest battles—or, as the Corps would call it, the "Chosin Reservoir Campaign." The Marines called it the "Chosin" Reservoir because that is what their Japanese-based maps called it. The South Koreans, nationalistic sensibilities disturbed, preferred—and, indeed, would come to insist—that it be called the "Changjin" Reservoir.

General Smith, commander of the Marines—a quiet man and inveterate pipe-smoker (his favorite brand of tobacco was Sir Walter Raleigh)—was not the sort of personality to attract a nickname. His contemporaries sometimes referred to him as "the Professor" but, for the most part, to distinguish him from two more senior and better known General Smiths in the World War II Marine Corps—Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith of famous temper and mild-mannered Julian C. Smith of Tarawa—he was known by his initials "O. P."

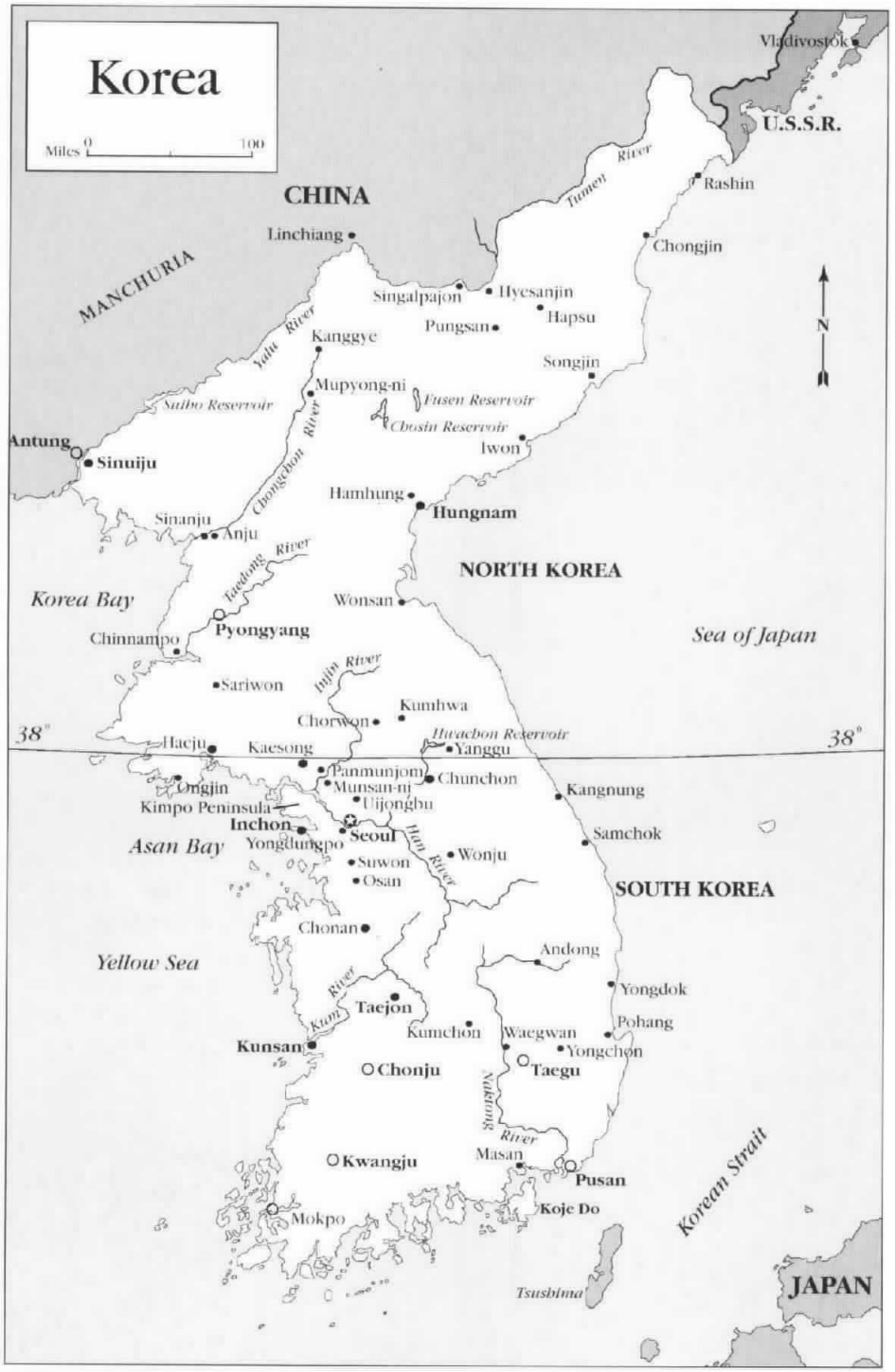
Across the Taebaek (Nangnim) Mountains, the Eighth Army, under Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, was advancing up the west coast of the Korean peninsula. Walker, a short, stubby man, was "Johnnie" to his friends, "Bulldog" to the press. In World War II he had commanded XX Corps in General George S. Patton's Third Army and had been a Patton favorite. But these credentials held little weight with General Douglas MacArthur. He had come close to relieving Walker in August during the worst of the situation in the Pusan Perimeter. Relations between Almond and Walker were cool at best.

MacArthur had given Almond command of X Corps for the Inchon landing while he continued, at least in name, as MacArthur's chief of staff at Far East Command. Almond, an ener-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A88898
MajGen Oliver P. "O.P." Smith commanded the 1st Marine Division throughout the Chosin Reservoir campaign. A studious man, his quiet demeanor belied his extensive combat experience. His seemingly cautious style of leadership brought him into frequent conflict with MajGen Edward M. Almond, USA, the impetuous commanding general of X Corps.

ON THE COVER: *In this poignant photograph by the peerless Marine and* Life *photographer, David Douglas Duncan, the dead ride in trucks, legs bound together with pack straps.* Photo by David Douglas Duncan
AT LEFT: *A cold and exhausted Marine light machine gunner climbs resolutely toward a ridgeline.* National Archives Photo (USAF) 342-FH-37885



getic, ambitious, and abrasive man, still nominally wore both hats although his X Corps command post in Korea was a long distance from MacArthur's headquarters in Tokyo.

"General Almond in 1950 and 1951 in Korea had several nicknames," wrote Roy E. Appleman in his *Escaping the Trap: The U.S. Army X Corps in Northeast Korea*. "Generally, he was known to his friends and close associates as Ned. Other names were 'Ned, the Anointed,' which meant he was a favorite of General MacArthur's, and 'Ned, the Dread,' which referred to his power, his brusque manner, and sometimes arbitrary actions."

Many persons, both then and later, thought that X Corps should have now been subordinated to the Eighth Army. But on the 28th of October, "O. P." Smith was less concerned with these higher-level command considerations than he was with events closer to his headquarters at Wonsan. The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, sent south of Wonsan to the coastal town of Kojo-ri, at the direction of X Corps, to protect a Republic of Korea supply dump had been roughly handled by a surprisingly strong North Korean attack. Smith thought that the battalion commander "was in a funk and it would be wise for Puller to go down and take charge." Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, the regimental commander of the 1st Marines, left late that afternoon by rail with the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, "to clear up the situation."

On the following day, Smith was annoyed by an order from Almond that removed the 1st Korean Marine Corps (KMC) Regiment from his operational control. The two commanders conferred on Monday, 30 October. Almond agreed to the return of one KMC battalion in order to expedite the move of the 5th and 7th Marines to Hamhung. After meeting with Almond, Smith flew by helicopter down to Kojo-ri and found that Puller indeed had the situation well in hand.

Tensions and differences between Almond and O. P. Smith were no secret. Almond had first met the Marine commander on Smith's arrival in Japan on 22 August 1950. As Almond still asserted a quarter-century later: "I got the impression initially (and it was fortified constantly later) that General Smith always had excuses for not performing at the required time the tasks he was requested to do."

With the 1st Marine Division

Department of Defense Photo (USN) 421392

Six weeks after the successful assault of Inchon, the 1st Marine Division made a delayed but unopposed landing at Wonsan on 26 October 1950. Heavy mining of the sea approaches with Soviet-made mines caused the delay.

After landing at Wonsan, the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, was sent south to the coastal town of Kojo-ri. Here it was savaged by an unexpectedly strong North Korean attack. MajGen Smith sent Col Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller south with the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, to "take charge."

Photo by Cpl W T. Wolfe, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4323

assigned as part of X Corps, Almond was Smith's operational commander. Smith's administrative commander continued to be Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., commanding general of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, with headquarters in Hawaii. While not in the operational chain-of-command, Shepherd was responsible for the personnel and logistical support of the 1st Marine Division. This gave Shepherd, an old war-horse, an excuse for frequent visits to the battlefield. Fifty-four-year-old Shepherd and 57-year-old Almond got along well, perhaps because they were both Virginians and both graduates of close-knit Virginia Military Institute—Almond, Class of 1915 and Shepherd, Class of 1917. "I liked him," said Shepherd of

LtGen Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., left, arrives at Wonsan Airfield on 31 October for one of his frequent visits and is greeted by MajGen Edward M. Almond. The two generals got along very well, perhaps because they were both Virginia Military Institute graduates. Both are wearing cuffed Army combat boots, a footgear favored by all those who could obtain them.

Photo by Cpl Jack Nash, National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC351739

Photo by Cpl Jack Nash, National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC351740

Using a map spread out on the hood of a jeep, MajGen Edward M. Almond briefs LtGen Lemuel C. Shepherd on his arrival at Wonsan on 31 October. At the extreme left is MajGen William J. Wallace, Director of Aviation at Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps, who accompanied Shepherd. MajGen Oliver P. Smith stands behind Shepherd and Almond. MajGen Field Harris is on the extreme right.

Almond at VMI, "but I really can't say he was one of my closer friends." Shepherd had had reason to expect command of X Corps for the Inchon landing, but MacArthur had given command to his chief of staff, Almond. Shepherd exhibited no visible grudge and Almond, in turn, always made Shepherd welcome on his visits and he often stayed with Almond in his mess. Years later, Shepherd, who considered Almond an excellent corps commander, said of him: "He was energetic, forceful, brave, and in many ways did a good job under most difficult conditions."

Concerning Almond's relations with Smith, Shepherd said: "He and O. P. just didn't get along, from the very first. They're two entirely different personalities. . . . O. P. [was] a cautious individual, a fine staff officer who considered every contingency before taking action. On the other hand Almond was aggressive and anxious for the X Corps to push ahead faster than Smith thought his division should. Smith wisely took every precaution to protect his flanks during his division's advance into North Korea, which slowed him down considerably. I'm sure Almond got into Smith's hair—just like I'm sure that I did too."

As a glance at a map will confirm, North Korea is shaped like a funnel, with a narrow neck—roughly a line from Wonsan west to Pyongyang—and a very wide mouth, the boundary with Red China and a bit with the Soviet Union on the north, formed by the Yalu and Tumen Rivers. Because of this geographic conformation, any force moving from the north to south had the advantage of a converging action. Conversely, forces moving from south to north must diverge. As Walker and Almond advanced to the north, the gap between Eighth Army and X Corps would grow wider and wider. This may have concerned Walker, but it does not seem to have bothered Almond—nor their common commander, General Douglas MacArthur, many miles away in Tokyo in what he liked to call his "GHQ."

General Shepherd arrived at Wonsan for one of his periodic visits on Tuesday, 31 October. Next morning Shepherd flew down to Kojo-ri to visit Puller and on his return to Wonsan he and Smith flew to Hamhung to see Litzenberg. That night Smith entered in his log:

> Litzenberg is concerned over the situation. He has moved up behind the 26th

Col Homer L. Litzenberg, Jr., commanding officer of the 7th Marines, was known to his troops as "Litz the Blitz," more for the alliteration than his command style. At the outbreak of the war, Litzenberg was in command of the 6th Marines at Camp Lejeune. In August 1950, the 7th Marines was hurriedly re-activated at Camp Pendleton using cadres drawn from the 6th Marines.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4719

ROK Regiment and will relieve them tomorrow. Two Chinese regiments have been identified to the front. The ROK regiment is very glad to be relieved by the Marines. The ROKs apparently have no stomach for fighting Chinese.

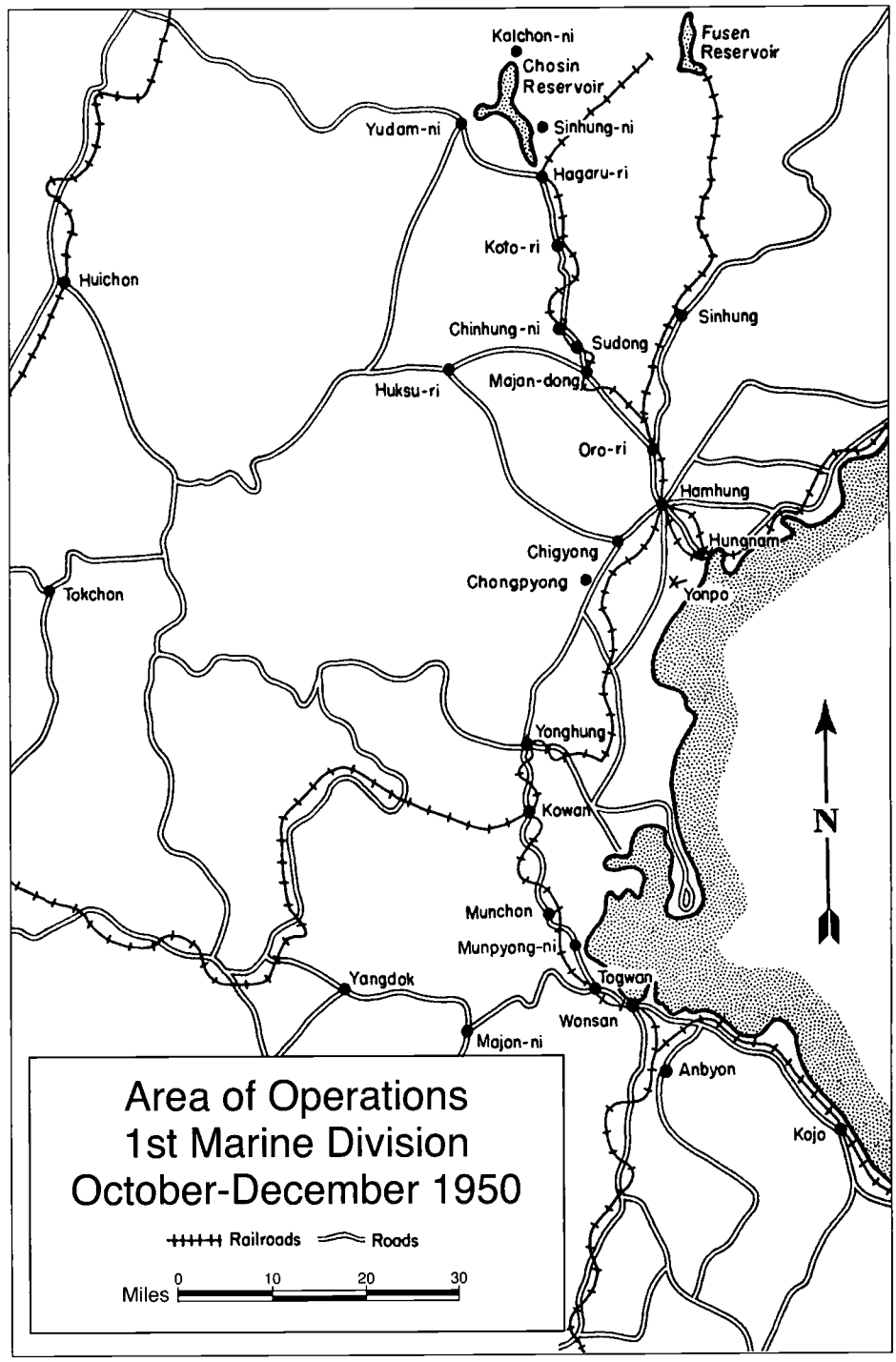
China Enters the War

Most Chinese historians now assert, and most Western historians are now ready to believe, that China entered the Korean War reluctantly.

In 1948, Kim Il Sung, then 37, had emerged under the patronage of the Soviet occupation as the leader of the so-called Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its capital in Pyongyang. In the West he remained a shadowy figure. Reputedly he had been a successful guerrilla fighter against the Japanese. He had returned to North Korea at World War II's end as a hero.

With the civil war against the Chinese Nationalists at a successful close, Mao in late 1949 and early 1950 released four divisions made up of soldiers of Korean origin to return to Korea. These Kim, under Soviet tutelage, reorganized into mirror images of Soviet rifle divisions in equipment and training. Early on Kim Il Sung learned how to play Mao Tse-tung against Stalin. For more than a year, Kim Il Sung zigzagged back and forth between Moscow and Peiping (not yet known in the West as "Beijing") seeking Stalin's and then Mao's support for an overt invasion of the South.

Both Stalin and Mao were at first skeptical of Kim's ambitions. Stalin cautioned Kim that he should cross the 38th Parallel only in a counteroffensive to a South Korea invasion of the north. Mao advised Kim to be prepared for protracted guerrilla warfare and not to attempt to reunify Korea by force.



For Mao, Kim's ambitious plans were a distraction. He was much more interested in completing his victory against the Chinese Nationalists by "liberating" Xingjiang, Tibet, and, most importantly, Taiwan. But in the spring of 1950 Stalin, playing his own game, gave Kim a qualified promise of Soviet support with the proviso that the North Korean leader consult with Mao. Accordingly, Kim went again to Peiping in mid-May 1950, put on a bold front and told Mao that Stalin had agreed with his plan to invade South Korea. A cautious Mao asked the Soviet ambassador to confirm Kim's assertion. A sly Stalin replied that while he approved Kim's plans, the deci-

Marine Corps Historical Center Photo Collection

Peng Dehuai, left, commander of the Chinese Communist Forces meets with Kim Il Sung, premier of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Peng later was China's Minister of National Defense but because of his criticism of the Great Leap Forward he was dismissed. During the Cultural Revolution he was arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and died in 1974 from a lack of medical care. He was posthumously rehabilitated as a "great revolutionary fighter" and loyal party member.

sion to invade South Korea was a decision to be made by China and North Korea. Until then Mao's position had been that Taiwan's liberation must have priority over Korea's unification. Reluctantly, Mao reversed these priorities but cautioned Kim on the strong possibility of intervention by the United States on the side of South Korea. Mao had almost no regular troops in northeast China. He told Kim that he would move troops into Manchuria, poised to cross into Korea, but that they would not enter the war unless American troops crossed the 38th Parallel.

The concentration of Chinese forces along the Yalu did not really begin until mid-July 1950 with the formation of the *Northeast China Border Defense Force*, about 260,000 troops. By mid-August Mao was certain that the United Nations forces would land at Inchon. On 23 August, the same day that MacArthur was wresting final approval for Inchon at a conference in Tokyo, Mao was meeting with his political and military leaders in Peiping. They were ordered to complete all preparations by the *Northeast China Border Defense Force* for war. The *Ninth Army Group*, which had been poised near Shanghai for the invasion of Taiwan (still known to the Western world as "Formosa"), was one of the major units ordered to move north.

The Inchon landing gave urgency to Chinese preparations to enter the war. Two days after the landing on 15 September 1950, a liaison party was sent to Pyongyang. Meanwhile, Kim Il Sung had asked Stalin for help, including putting pressure on China to send troops. Stalin considered the most acceptable assistance by Chinese armed forces would be in the form of "people's volunteers." In a telegram to Mao on 1 October, Stalin advised: "The Chinese soldiers may be considered as volunteers and of course will be commanded by the Chinese." Mao responded the next day that this was his intention.

For many years Western historians supposed that Lin Piao, a legendary Chinese Communist leader, commanded Chinese forces in Korea. They were wrong. At a 4 October conference in Peiping, Lin Piao argued strongly against sending troops into Korea to fight the Americans and refused to lead the intervention, using the subterfuge of poor health. Lin went off to Moscow for medical treatment and Mao named Peng Dehuai, a tough old revolutionary, to take his place. Peng, born in Hunan province of peasant stock, had emerged as a senior commander in Mao Tse-tung's famed Long March in 1934-1935. Peng arrived in Peiping too late for the 4 October meeting but met the next day with Mao who directed him to be ready to enter Korea by 15 October. On 8 October, Mao officially ordered the creation of the *Chinese People's Volunteers*, which would be the expeditionary element of the *Northeast China Border Defense Force*, with Peng as both military commander and political commissar.

That same day, 8 October, Mao sent his adroit vice-chairman and foreign minister, Zhou Enlai, to the Soviet Union to discuss with Stalin the provision of air assistance and military equipment. Zhou met with Stalin at his Black Sea resort. Stalin was noncommittal and said that he was not yet ready to provide air support. In Manchuria, Peng Dehuai was furious when he learned this. He stormed back to Peiping to meet again with Mao.

Meanwhile Kim Il Sung was pressing for immediate Chinese help.

In early October, Zhou Enlai informed the Indian ambassador in Peiping, Kavalam M. Panikkar, that if the United Nations forces crossed the 38th Parallel, China would send troops to defend North Korea. This warning reached Washington through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and London. Substantiating reports came through Moscow and Stockholm. The warnings were forwarded to MacArthur's GHQ in Tokyo.

On 15 October, the famous Wake Island meeting of President Harry S. Truman with General MacArthur took place. Truman's later blunt, but inadequate, explanation for the conference was "I wanted to have a personal talk with the General." A wary MacArthur perceived the meeting as a presidential ambush primarily designed to reinforce the Democratic Party's chances of success in the upcoming congressional elections. According to MacArthur, the possibility of Chinese intervention came up almost casually. He stated in his *Reminiscences* that the general consensus was that China had no intention of intervening. Truman would later say in his *Memoirs* that the threatened intervention in Korea was a prime reason for the meeting. He wanted MacArthur's "firsthand information and judgment."

What Truman took away from Wake Island was that the war in Korea was won and that the Chinese Communists would not attack. Asked about the chances of Chinese intervention, MacArthur, according to Truman, replied that there was very little chance that the Chinese would come in. At the most they might be able to get fifty or sixty thousand men into Korea, but since they had no air force, "if the Chinese tried to get down to Pyongyang, there would be the greatest slaughter."

MacArthur remembered the conversation quite differently. He would later say that it was a "prevarication" that he had predicted, "that under no circumstances would Chinese Communists enter the war." He characterized his Wake Island view on the possibility of Chinese intervention as "speculative." His own local intelligence, filtered through to him by his long-time G-2, Major General Charles A. Willoughby, USA, told him that large numbers of Chinese troops were massed across the Yalu, but his estimate was that America's virtually unopposed air power would make large-scale intervention impossible.

Four nights after the Wake Island meeting, on 19 October, the Chinese in massive numbers began crossing the Yalu.

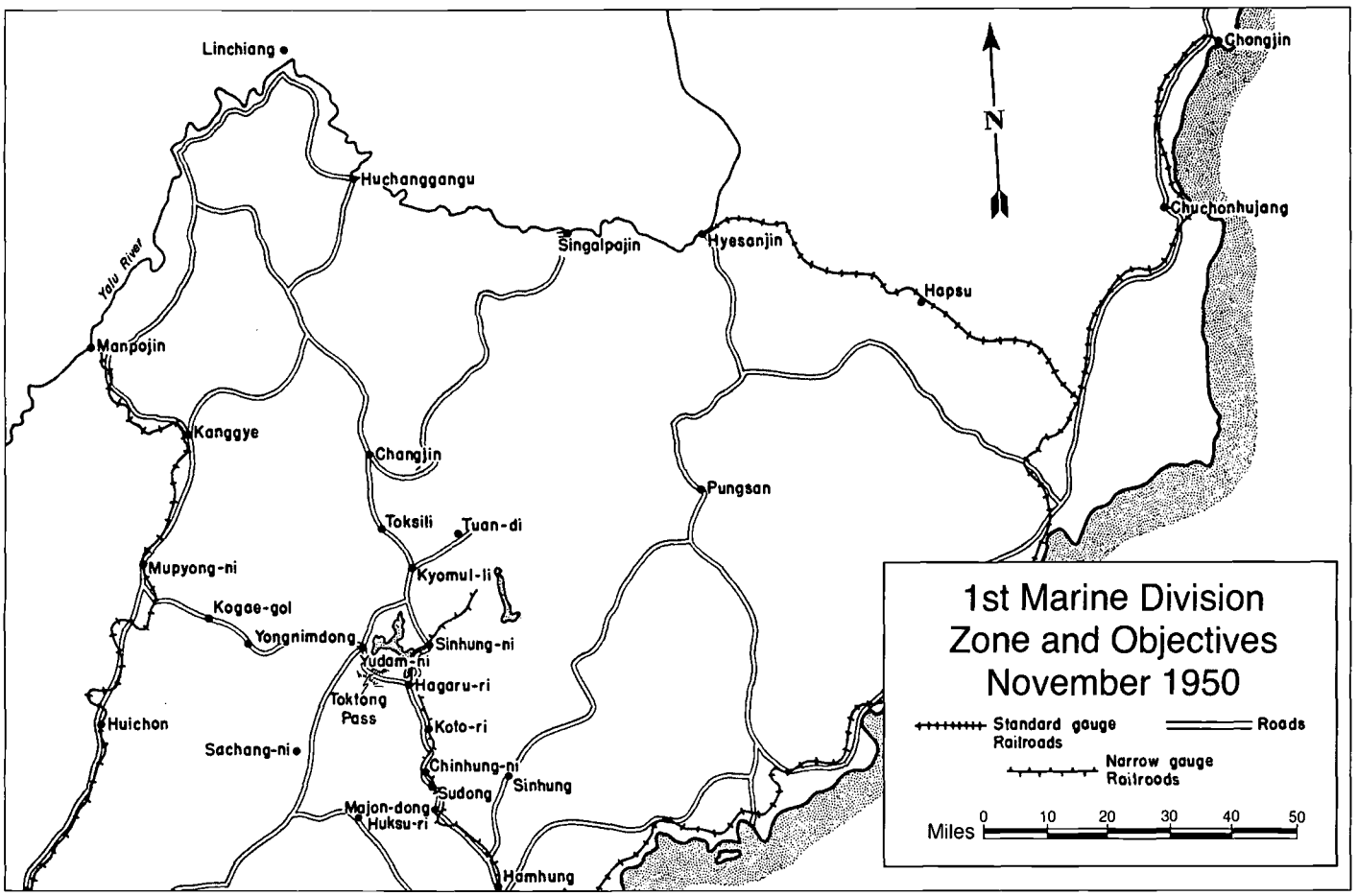
General Almond's Ambitions

The entry of Chinese troops in force into North Korea was not picked up by United Nations intelligence, neither visually by aerial reconnaissance nor audibly by intercepts of radio signals. In northeast Korea, Almond continued his advance with great confidence. Almond's over-riding ambition was to beat his rival, General Walker, to the Yalu. His X Corps included two strong U.S. divisions—the 1st Marine and the 7th Infantry—and two Republic of Korea or "ROK" divisions—the Capital and 3d—and there were more troops on the way. With the expected arrival of the U.S. 3d Infantry Division the total would come up to 102,000, about two-thirds as many troops as Walker had in his Eighth Army.

The two ROK divisions, organized into the ROK I Corps, could

From left to right: MajGen David G. Barr, Commanding General, 7th Infantry Division; MajGen Edward M. Almond, Commanding General, X Corps; and Col Herbert B. Powell, Commanding Officer, 17th Infantry. After Barr's division made an unopposed landing at Iwon on 29 October, Almond pushed Barr to get to the Yalu. Powell's regiment was the spearhead for the advance.

Photo by Cpl Alex Klein, National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC351957



best be described as light infantry. They had no tanks and their only artillery were obsolescent 75mm howitzers. Almond's optimistic assessment of the ROK corps' fighting capabilities was "that they were a good deal better than the people they were chasing, the disorganized, disabled North Korean force."

"I realized," said Almond years later, "that we were scattered all over the landscape, but the general deployment was controlled by the terrain of the area in which the [X] corps was to operate." Almond should also have realized that there were strings tied to his employment of the 1st Marine Division and its companion 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. Shepherd, in Hawaii, was watching the use of the Marines very closely and so was the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Clifton B. Cates, in Washington.

Army Major General David G. "Dave" Barr's 7th Division had loaded out from Pusan on 19 October as a follow-on to the 1st Marine Division at Wonsan. Barr had been the chief of staff of several commands in Europe during World War II. After the war he had headed the Army Advisory Mission in Nanking. At the war's beginning his 7th Division had been stripped to provide fillers for the 24th and 25th Divisions, the first divisions to be deployed to Korea. The 7th Division, before following the Marines ashore at Inchon, had been hurriedly brought to war strength with untrained South Korean recruits—the so-called KATUSA or "Korean Augmentees to the United States Army."

Now, when the Marine landing at Wonsan was delayed, Barr's destination was changed to Iwon, 75 miles northeast of Hungnam. Iwon was still theoretically in "enemy" territory, but it had good beaches and was known to be free of mines. Barr reloaded the 17th Regimental Combat Team under Colonel Herbert B. Powell into seven LSTs (tank landing ships) to be used in an amphibious assault in the event that the beaches were defended. They were not. As at Wonsan, the South Koreans had already taken the port from the land side. Powell's RCT-17 landed unopposed on 29 October and plunged ahead in a dash for Hyesanjin on the Yalu River. By the end of the month Powell's lead battalion was in a bitter four-day fight with the beaten, but still stubborn, North Koreans at Pungsan. In the days that followed, the remainder of the 7th Division came ashore. The 31st Infantry began landing on 3 November with the mission of moving in on the left flank of the 17th Infantry. The 32d Infantry followed on 4 November

and went into bivouac northeast of Hungnam. On 8 November, the 31st Infantry ran into Chinese troops on the slopes of Paek-san, a 7,700-foot peak. In what was the 7th Division's first contact with the Chinese, the regiment reported at least 50 enemy killed.

Almond considered his control over the ROK I Corps to be no different than that he had over the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division. Not all would agree, then or now, that his command of the ROK units was that complete. Their more binding orders came from President Syngman Rhee. While the landings at Wonsan and Iwon were still in prospect, the ROK Capital Division had marched steadily up the coast road to Iwon. The ROK 3d Division, meanwhile, had moved northwest from Hamhung toward the Chosin Reservoir.

On the Eighth Army front, the Chinese, whose presence in Korea had been doggedly denied at GHQ Tokyo, had by late October suddenly surfaced in formidable numbers. By the end of the month, the Chinese had defeated the ROK II Corps on the right flank of the Eighth Army to the point of disintegration, exposing the next unit to the left, the U.S. I Corps. General Walker ordered a general withdrawal to the Chungchon River. The Chinese did not pursue but broke off their offensive as suddenly as it began.

Separating the right flank of Eighth Army from X Corps was the Taebaek mountain range, the spine of the Korean peninsula and supposedly impassable to any significant number of troops. East of the Taebaek Mountains things seemed to continue to go well for General Almond and his X Corps. Almond did not appear to be perturbed by General Walker's problems.

Smith's Commanders and Staff

Because of the widely dispersed missions assigned his 1st Marine Division, General Smith had divided his command into regimental combat teams built around his three infantry regiments. RCT-5, under Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray, was assigned a zone behind Litzenberg's RCT-7. RCT-1, commanded by the legendary "Chesty" Puller, already the holder of four Navy Crosses, would remain for the time being in the vicinity of Wonsan fighting the remnants of one or more broken North Korean divisions struggling to get north.

All three regimental commanders had been successful battalion commanders in World War II. Moreover, Puller had commanded the 1st Marines at Peleliu. Now in this new war, Murray, 37, had brought the 5th Marines to Korea in a pell-mell rush to play a fire-brigade role in the defense of the Pusan Perimeter. Puller, 52, had arrived from Camp Pendleton with the 1st Marines in time for the Inchon landing. Litzenberg had formed the 7th Marines at Camp Pendleton, California, in a matter of days and had gotten to Korea in time to join in the battle for Seoul. Litzenberg was called "Litz the Blitz" by some, but this was more an alliteration—and maybe a little derisive at that—rather than a description of his command style, which tended to be cautious and buttoned-up. Because of his closely cropped prematurely white hair, some of his irreverent young lieutenants, and perhaps a few of his captains and majors often referred him to, as the "Great White Father."

Murray, the junior regimental commander, was simply known as "Ray." Among Marines, who like to argue over such things, Murray's 5th Marines, with the highest percentage of regulars and the longest time in the fight, would probably have rated highest in combat effectiveness. The 1st Marines, with Chesty Puller as its commander, most likely would have rated second. The 7th Marines, last to arrive and with the highest percentage of reserves, still had to prove itself and would have come in third.

Smith had a strong division staff: some members were already serving with the division when he took command and some that he had subsequently asked for. At the outbreak of the war Colonel Alpha L. Bowser, Jr., 40, had just been assigned as Force Inspector, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. General Smith asked General Shepherd for his services as G-3 of the division. Shepherd assented and Bowser had become Smith's operational right-hand man. Bowser, Naval Academy 1932, had an enviable reputation in the Corps as a Quantico instructor, staff officer, expert in naval gunfire, and artillery battalion commander at Iwo Jima. He said later: "One of the major problems of the entire operation to the north of Wonsan was our open flank to the west. We never established contact with the right flank of the Eighth Army, and we had a great void out there which I at one time estimated to be somewhere in the neighborhood of 85 to 100 miles."

In a 1971 interview by D. Clayton James, noted historian and biographer of MacArthur, Bowser gave his considered opinion of Almond's leadership:

> General Almond was probably one of the most aggressive corps commanders I have ever seen in action. He was aggressive almost to a fault in my estimation. From

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5895

For his brilliant staff work as division G-3, Col Alpha L. Bowser would later receive a Legion of Merit from MajGen Smith. Standing to Bowser's right is Col Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr., the division G-2, who received a similar decoration. These awards were made in January 1951.

> the standpoint of his own personal comfort and safety, he never gave it a thought. He was up at the front a great deal. He was what we referred to as a "hard charger."

However, Bowser went on to say:

> I questioned his judgment on many occasions. . . . I think that General Almond pictured this [campaign] in his mind's eye as a sweeping victory that was in his grasp. But he gambled and he lost. . . . A rather vain man in many ways. Ambitious. Could be a very warm personality as a personal friend. If he had one glaring fault, I would say it was inconsistency.

Bowser was not the only star player on Smith's team. Virtually all of the senior members of Smith's general and special staff were combat-tested veterans of considerable reputation.

Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, Smith's assistant division commander, now 54, had been commissioned in 1917, the same year as Shepherd and Smith. During the World War I years, while Smith was in garrison on Guam and Shepherd was winning laurels in France, Craig was fighting a kind of "cowboys and Indians" bush war against bandits in Haiti and Santo Domingo. In World War II he commanded the 9th Marines, first in training on Guadalcanal and then in combat on Bougainville and Guam—for the last he had a Navy Cross. He left the division in the summer of 1950 to command the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in its adventures in the Pusan Perimeter, but rejoined the parent division in time for the Inchon landing. Like Smith, Craig was tall, slim, and prematurely white-haired. Smith, perhaps recalling his own troubled period as the division's assistant division commander at Peleliu and being virtually ignored by the division commander, Major General William H. Rupertus, used Craig's services wisely and well, particularly as a roaming extension of his own eyes and ears. But Craig would be at home on emergency leave at a critical time in the campaign.

Smith's chief of staff, Colonel Gregon A. Williams, 54, had joined the division at Camp Pendleton in July. Before that he had been chief of staff of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. A short, erect man, Williams had the reputation of being a "mean SOB." He had had a remarkable—but not unique for an officer of his vintage—career. He had enlisted in San Diego at the outbreak of World War I, but did not get to France, serving, in due time, in Santo Domingo, China,

Col Gregon A. Williams, shown here as a brigadier general, was Smith's chief of staff. Seldom seen in the field by the troops, Williams ran the division staff and headquarters with an iron hand. Like many senior Marine officers, he had had considerable service in China, both before and during World War II.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A42833

Haiti, and Nicaragua. As a sergeant he had been in the Dominican *Guardia Nacional* as a local lieutenant. A young Dominican lieutenant, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, who would be the country's long-time dictator, became Williams' life-long friend. (The writer recalls that at the 1959 New Years reception at the presidential palace, in what was then Ciudad Trujillo, the single ornament on the grand piano in the ballroom was a silver-framed photograph of Colonel Williams.) Service in Nicaragua brought him a Navy Cross. At the beginning of the Pacific War, as an assistant naval attaché in Shanghai, he was taken into custody by the Japanese and held as a prisoner until August 1942 when he was repatriated because of his diplomatic status. Undaunted, he returned to China to the new Nationalist capital in Chungking where he became involved in the support of guerrilla operations. In the summer of 1944 he was sent to the Pacific to take command of the 6th Marines, then involved in mopping-up on Saipan. He was a consummate chief of staff although not much loved by those who had to work for him. He got along famously with contemporaries such as Craig, but he terrified junior officers. Bowser, after some rough spells, said that, "He and I came to a perfect relationship." According to Bowser, Williams "took no guff" from Almond or Almond's chief of staff. Williams stayed close to the command post. Murray recalled seeing him only five or six times during their respective tours in Korea and then only at the division headquarters.

Much more visible to the command than Williams—and much better liked—was the deputy chief of staff, Colonel Edward W. Snedeker, 47. By training a communications officer, Snedeker had been Craig's chief of staff during the fighting by the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in the Pusan Perimeter. Snedeker, Naval Academy 1926, had distinguished himself in World War II with a Silver Star from Guadalcanal and a Navy Cross from Okinawa where he commanded the 7th Marines. Smith's personal relationship with Snedeker was much closer than it was with Williams.

The G-1 (Personnel), Lieutenant Colonel Harvey S. Walseth, 39, Naval Academy 1935, had served in China before World War II and was a tank officer at Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima.

The G-2 (Intelligence), Colonel Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr., 42, movie-star handsome with his thin, clipped mustache and something of a bon vivant, was an old China hand. The cousin of Thomas Holcomb, who was the Commandant of the Marine Corps during World War II and the first Marine to reach the grade of four-star general, Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr., had graduated from high school in Peiping in 1925 and served two years as an enlisted man before going to the Naval Academy, Class of 1931. He returned to China in 1934 as an assistant to the naval attaché and Chinese language student, followed by two years as a Japanese language student in Tokyo. His speaking and reading ability in both Chinese and Japanese was rated as "excellent." He was at Pearl Harbor as an intelligence officer in December 1941 when the Japanese struck. In 1943 he returned to China once again, this time to operate out of the Nationalist capital of Chungking with Chinese guerrillas.

The G-4 (Logistics) Colonel

In January 1951, Col Edward W. Snedeker would receive a second Legion of Merit from MajGen Smith for his outstanding performance of duty as the division's deputy chief of staff. Earlier, in the Pusan Perimeter, he had been chief of staff of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade.

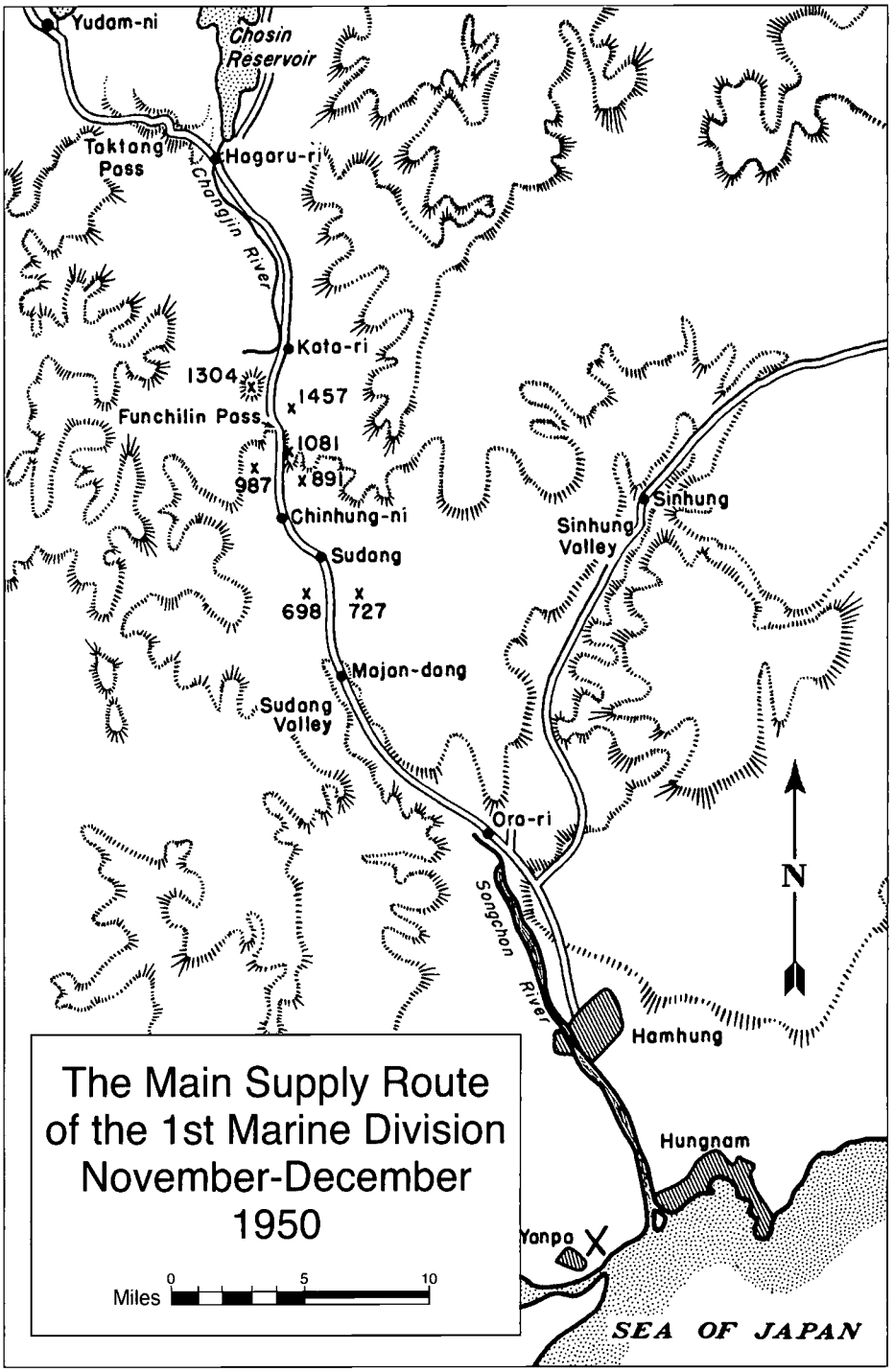
National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5897

Francis M. McAlister, 45 and Naval Academy 1927, had fought as an engineer at Bougainville, Guam, and Okinawa. Like most Marine officers of his generation, he had served in Nicaragua and China.

Walseth, Holcomb, Bowser, and McAlister were the four pillars of the division's general staff. Bowser, the operations officer, and McAlister, the logistics chief, had a particularly close working partnership.

The much larger special staff ranged in grade from second lieutenant to colonel, from Second Lieutenant John M. Patrick, the historical officer, to Colonel James H. Brower, the division artillery officer. Most of the special staff were double-hatted; they also commanded the unit composed of their specialty. Brower commanded the division's artillery regiment, the 11th Marines, with three organic battalions of 105mm howitzers, a battalion of 155mm howitzers, and a battery of 4.5-inch multiple rockets. Brower, 42, was a Virginia Military Institute graduate, Class of 1931, who trained as an artilleryman at Fort Sill. During World War II he served as a staff officer with amphibious forces in the invasions of Sicily and Italy, but arrived in the Pacific in time for Okinawa.

Col James H. Brower was the division artillery officer and commanding officer of the 11th Marines. He fell ill at Hagaru-ri and was replaced in command by his executive officer, LtCol Carl A. Youngdale.
National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4696



Forty-four-year old Lieutenant Colonel John H. Partridge, as the commander of the 1st Engineer Battalion, was the division engineer. His engineers would work prodigies during the campaign. Partridge, Naval Academy 1936, had been with the 4th Marine Division at Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima.

Smith and his staff, and his subordinate commanders and their respective staffs, worked their way through new sets of maps, analyzing the terrain and divining lines of

Distances in Road Miles

Hungnam to Hamhung	8
Hamhung to Oro-ri	8
Oro-ri to Majon-dong	14
Majon-dong to Sudong	7
Sudong to Chinhung-ni	6
Chinhung-ni to Koto-ri	10
Koto-ri to Hagaru-ri	11
Hagaru-ri to Yudam-ni	14
TOTAL	**78**

communication. Hamhung and Hungnam, then and now, are often confused. Hungnam is the port; it lies on the north side of the Songchon River where it empties into the Japanese Sea. Yonpo, with its airfield, which would prove critical, is on the south side of the estuary. Hamhung is the inland rail and highway nexus, straddling the main rail line from Wonsan north. A narrow-gauge (2' 6") line also started at Hamhung to Chinhung-ni. From there it climbed by cable car, now inoperative, to a plateau in the shadow of the Taebek Mountains. A road paralleled the narrow-gauge line. This would be the main supply route or "MSR" for the Marines' advance. The dirt-and-gravel road stretched 78 miles from Hamhung to Yudam-ni, which, as yet, was just a name on a map. "In only a few weeks," says the Corps' official history, "it would be known to thousands of Marines as the MSR, as if there never had been another."

RCT-7—with the 1st Motor Transport Battalion and Division Reconnaissance Company attached—received a partial issue of cold weather clothing before making the move north by truck and rail during the last three days of October.

Major Henry J. Woessner, 30, Naval Academy 1941, and operations officer of the 7th Marines, was at X Corps command post in Wonsan on 30 October when General Almond, standing before the Corps situation map, briefed General Barr on the upcoming operation. Barr's division was to push north to Hyesanjin on the Yalu. The 1st Marine Division was to reach the border by way of Chinhung-ni, Koto-ri, and Hagaru-ri. After describing this twin-pronged thrust to the Yalu, Almond again turned to the situation map. "When we have cleared all this out," he said with a broad sweep of his hand, "the ROKs will take over, and we will pull our divisions out of Korea."

Before leaving the command post, Woessner talked to an Army liaison officer who had just returned from the ROK 26th Regiment up near Sudong. The Army officer told him that the ROKs had collided with a Chinese force and had been driven back. Colonel Edward H. Forney, Almond's Marine Corps deputy chief of staff, arranged for Woessner to fly over the objective area in an Air Force North American T-6 Texan. Woessner saw no enemy on the flight to and over Hagaru-ri, but the rugged nature of the terrain impressed him.

Woessner, on his return that afternoon to the 7th Marines command post, made his report to Colonel Litzenberg who in turn called in his officers and noncommissioned officers and told them that they might soon be fighting the first battle of World War III. "We can expect to meet Chinese Communist troops," he said, "and it is important that we win the first battle."

Tuesday, 31 October

RCT-7 was scheduled to relieve the ROK 26th Regiment, 3d Division, in the vicinity of Sudong on 2 November. Litzenberg on 31 October cautiously sent out reconnaissance patrols from Hamhung to explore the route northward. One of the patrols from the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines—Captain Myron E. Wilcox, Jr., two lieutenants, three jeeps, and a fire team—reached the command post of the 26th Regiment near Sudong. Wilcox reported to Litzenberg that while there they had seen a Chinese prisoner. The South Koreans told Wilcox and his patrol that they had taken 16 Chinese prisoners and had identified them as belonging to the *124th Chinese Communist Force (CCF) Division.* The prisoners said they had crossed the Yalu in mid-October.

Further interrogation of the 16 prisoners had yielded that they were members of the *370th Regiment* of the *124th CCF Division,* which along with the *125th* and *126th Divisions*, made up the *42d CCF Army.* Roughly speaking, a Chinese army was the equivalent of a U.S. corps. On arriving from the Yalu, the *124th* had deployed in the center to defend the Chosin Reservoir, the *126th* had moved east to the vicinity of the Fusen Reservoir, and the *125th* to the western flank on the

Photo by Cpl Alex Klein, National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC351718

Marines on 31 October saw for themselves the first Chinese prisoners taken by ROK I Corps. These prisoners, identified as belonging to the 124th CCF Division, *are wearing padded winter uniforms that offered little or no protection for the feet and hands, and the weather was about to turn cold.*

right of the *124th Division.*

Continuing the northward movement of his division from Wonsan, Smith ordered Murray to advance a battalion of the 5th Marines to Chigyong, eight miles southwest of Hamhung. Murray sent his 1st Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel George R. Newton. Newton, 35, Naval Academy 1938, had been a company commander in the Embassy Guard at Peiping in 1941 and spent World War II as a prisoner of war. Now, as a battalion commander, he had done well at Pusan and Inchon. One of Newton's companies was detached to relieve a company of the 7th Marines that was guarding Yonpo Airfield, five miles southwest of Hungnam.

Wednesday, 1 November

As yet the Marines had encountered no enemy anywhere along the MSR from Wonsan north to Hamhung; but Litzenberg was certain that he soon would be facing Chinese adversaries. On the following day, 1 November, he sent a stronger patrol from the attached division Reconnaissance Company to reconnoiter the Huksu-ri area about 45 miles northwest of Hungnam. This patrol, mounted in 21 jeeps and under First Lieutenant Ralph B. Crossman, after running into a small North Korean guerrilla force about three miles short of its objective, dug in for the night.

Meanwhile, the Marines began hearing rumors that the Eighth Army's 1st Cavalry Division—which they had last seen when the 1st Cavalry passed through the Marine lines north of Seoul headed for the successful capture of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital—was in serious trouble. If division headquarters had more

A 3.5-inch rocket section with Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, holds a position outside Hamhung on 31 October. The next day the 7th Marines would begin its march northward to relieve the 26th ROK Regiment near Sudong-ni.

Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5129

Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4525

The 7th Marines began its motor march north from Hungnam on 1 November. A cautious Col Homer Litzenberg ordered LtCol Raymond G. Davis, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, to reconnoiter to his front. Davis' Marines moved forward on foot. A crackle of small arms fire caused the column to halt momentarily. A full issue of cold-weather clothing has not yet been received. Only one Marine is wearing a parka.

definitive information, it did not filter down to the troops. Some 60 miles to the Marines' west in the Eighth Army zone of action, the Chinese had roughly handled the 8th U.S. Cavalry Regiment and the ROK 6th Division during the last days of October, but this had little or no effect on Almond's plans. Litzenberg's orders to advance remained unchanged. His first objective was to be Koto-ri.

During the day on 1 November, the 7th Marines made a motor march from Hungnam to an assembly area behind the ROK 26th Regiment, midway between Oro-ri and Majon-dong, without incident. Nevertheless, a cautious Litzenberg ordered Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Davis, 35, Georgia Tech 1938, to make a reconnaissance-in-force to South Korean positions north of Majon-dong with his 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. In World War II, Davis had commanded a heavy weapons company at Guadalcanal and an infantry battalion at Peleliu. The latter battle brought him a Navy Cross.

Late in the afternoon the regimental combat team curled up into a tight perimeter for the night. As part of RCT-7, Litzenberg had Major Francis F. "Fox" Parry's 3d Battalion, 11th Marines; the division Reconnaissance Company under Lieutenant Crossman; Company D, 1st Engineer Battalion, Captain Byron C, Turner; Company E, 1st Medical Battalion, under Lieutenant Commander Charles K. Holloway; detachments from the division's Signal Battalion, Service Battalion, and Military Police Company; and most of the 1st Motor Transport Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Olin L. Beall.

Thursday, 2 November

The ROK 26th Regiment, awaiting relief, had withdrawn to a position about four miles south of Sudong. Early on the morning of 2 November, the South Koreans were probed by a CCF combat patrol estimated to be about two platoons in strength. Later that morning, Davis' 1st Battalion led the way out of the 7th Marines' perimeter toward the ROK lines at Majon-dong. Major Webb D. "Buzz" Sawyer, 32, followed with the 2d Battalion. A graduate of the University of Toledo, Sawyer had been commissioned in 1941. During World War II, as a captain and major he served with the 4th Marine Division at Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima. Afterward, as an instructor at Quantico, he was known as an expert in the reduction of fortified positions.

Corsairs from Marine fighter squadron VMF-312 flew cover for what was essentially a parade northward. The passage of lines with the ROKs was over by 1030. The point, Company A, under Captain David W. Banks, took some scattered long-range fire and suffered a few casualties. Resistance thickened.

Major "Fox" Parry, 32, commanding the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, was a Naval Academy graduate, Class of 1941. He had been the executive officer of an artillery battalion during Okinawa and immediately before Korea he had taken the yearlong Advanced Artillery Course at Fort Sill. At noon Battery I of Parry's artillery battalion fired the first of 26 fire missions covering the advance that would be shot during the day.

VMF-312, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel J. Frank Cole, flew 12 close air support missions and, as the light failed, night-fighter squadron VMF(N)-513, under Major J. Hunter Reinburg, delivered a few more.

Both Cole and Reinburg were experienced squadron commanders. Cole, 35, had entered the

Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4549

Guns of Maj Francis F. "Fox" Parry's 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, covered the advance of the 7th Marines to Sudong. Here a 105mm howitzer from Capt Samuel A. Hannah's Battery G, laid for high-angle fire, awaits a fire mission. First artillery missions, shot on 2 November, alternated with close air support strikes by Marine Corsairs.

Marine Corps from the University of Nebraska in 1939 and had commanded fighter squadron VMF-111 in the Central Pacific and VMF-312 at Okinawa. Reinburg, 32, was the stepson of Marine Corps aviation great Lieutenant General Clayton C. Jerome. Reinburg had enlisted in the Naval Reserve in 1936 and transferred to the Marine Corps as an aviation cadet in 1940. Flying as a captain in the Solomons he became an ace, shooting down seven Japanese planes and destroying seven more on the ground. Before taking command of VMF(N)-513 he had spent a year as an exchange pilot flying night fighters with the British Royal Air Force. Technically, Marine fighter-bomber squadrons designated as "VMF(N)" were all-weather squadrons, but the "N" universally caused them to be called "night fighters." Reinburg's squadron flew twin-engine Grumman F7F-3Ns Tigercats

The main body of RCT-7, moving along the road in what Litzenberg called a "walking perimeter," had advanced just short of a mile by nightfall. Davis' 1st Battalion's nighttime positions were less than a mile south of Sudong, stretching across the valley from high ground to high ground. Behind him was Sawyer 's battalion similarly disposed. Sawyer was responsible for the high ground on both sides of the line of march. Captain Milton A. Hull, 30, commanding Company D, had some problems going up Hill 698 on the left hand side of the road. (Hills and mountains—both always called "hills"—were designated by their height in meters above sea level. Thus Hill 698 would be 698 meters or 2,290 feet in height.) A ROK company had precipitously given up its hillside position. The South Koreans, as they passed hurriedly southward, pointed back over their shoulders exclaiming "Chinese!"

Hull, a University of Florida graduate, had been commissioned in 1942 and had spent a good part of the war in China with the guerrillas, possibly with some of the same Chinese soldiers he was now fighting. Easy Company, under Captain Walter D. Phillips, Jr., passed through Hull's Dog Company to complete the fight, getting almost to the crest just

Col Homer Litzenberg called his road march a "walking perimeter." Here a part of the column pauses off the road, while Marine artillery and air pound the hills ahead. At nightfall on 2 November, LtCol Ramond Davis' 1st Battalion, lead element of the main body, halted one mile short of Sudong.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4498

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4438

These Marines are members of Company D, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines. By 2 November, LtCol Raymond L. Murray's regiment had moved up by train to Hamhung with orders to patrol between Hamhung and Chigyong. Two days later the 3d Battalion was positioned near Oro-ri and the 2d Battalion was sent into Sinhung Valley. The 1st Battalion remained at Chigyong.

before midnight. (Rifle companies were almost invariably called by their name in the phonetic alphabet of the time: "Dog," "Easy," "Fox," and so on.) Farther to the rear was Major Maurice E. Roach's 3d Battalion, in a perimeter of its own, protecting the regimental train.

That morning, 2 November, Smith had met again with Almond. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 5th Marines were moving by train to Hamhung. The 1st Battalion had already gone northward. Smith pointed out that the main supply route from Wonsan would be left exposed to guerrilla attack. Almond was not disturbed. He said that patrols could handle the guerrilla situation. Puller's 1st Marines, supported by elements of the 1st Tank Battalion, was given the responsibility from Wonsan northward to as far as Munchon. Murray's 5th Marines would patrol south from Hungnam to Chigyong. This left 54 miles from Chigyong south to Munchon uncovered except for light patrolling by Almond's Special Operations Company and a handful of South Korean counterintelligence agents.

Puller returned to Wonsan at midday on 2 November with his 1st Battalion. The 2d Battalion came back from Kojo-ri the following day. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, was still heavily engaged at Majon-ni, 26 miles west of Wonsan.

Friday, 3 November

Litzenberg did not know it, but he was two-thirds surrounded by the *124th CCF Division*. The *371st Regiment* was in the hills to his north and west. The *370th Regiment* was to his east. Somewhere behind these assault regiments, the *372d Regiment* stood ready in reserve.

By midnight on 2 November the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 7th Marines were being probed. An hour later both battalions were bending back from the weight of assaults on their flanks and Marines became acquainted with the Chinese habit of using flares

By 3 November, the 7th Marines was surrounded on three sides by the Chinese 124th Division. *Fighting grew fierce and casualties mounted. A sturdy masonry building in the shadow of high-tension lines coming down from the hydroelectric plant on the Changjin plateau became a battalion aid station.*

Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4541

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4489

MajGen Smith used his assistant division commander, BGen Edward A. Craig, as his roving eyes and ears. Here, on 3 November, Craig, left, checks with Col Litzenberg whose 7th Marines had just made its first solid contact with the Chinese. Litzenberg is digging away at a half-size can of C-ration, probably canned fruit, a favorite.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4501

Chinese prisoners, taken by Col Litzenberg's 7th Marines in the 3-4 November fighting, were identified as being members of the 370th *and* 371st Regiments *of the* 124th Division. *Chinese Communist "volunteers" fought well, but were surprisingly docile and uncomplaining once captured.*

and bugle calls to signal their attacks.

On the MSR, the roadblock in front of Able Company let a T-34 tank go by, thinking it was a friendly bulldozer. The single tank pushed through the company headquarters area and on through the battalion's 81mm mortar position, reaching Davis' command post. The startled Marines engaged the tank with rocket launchers and recoilless rifles; the tank took one or two hits and then turned around and headed north.

All three of Davis' rifle companies suffered heavy casualties as the night went on. The Chinese attackers got down to the road and wedged their way between the 2d and 3d Battalions. The regiment's 4.2-inch Mortar Company was overrun and lost one of its tubes. When morning came a confused situation faced the Marines. The Chinese were still in the valley. Getting rid of them would be an all-day effort. At first light Cole's VMF-312 came overhead with its Corsairs and was joined in mid-morning by Reinburg's Tigercats, pounding away with rockets, fragmentation bombs, and cannon fire. Parry's howitzers rendered yeoman service; before the end of the day his 18 guns had fired 49 missions delivering 1,431 105mm rounds. At closer range, Marine riflemen flushed out the Chinese enemy, fragmented now into individuals and small groups.

This would be Reinburg's last show. On 4 November he relinquished command of VMF(N)-513 to Ohio-born Lieutenant Colonel David C. Wolfe, 33, Naval Academy, Class of 1940. A big, athletic man, Wolfe had taken flight training as a captain and had commanded scout-bomber squadron VMB-433 in the Southwest Pacific during World War II.

The 1st Battalion counted 662 enemy dead in its zone of action. The 2d Battalion did not make a precise count but could not have been far behind. When Marine trucks came up with resupply, they carried back to Hungnam about 100 wounded Marines. Total Marine casualties for the two days—2 and 3 November—were 44 killed, 5 died of wounds, 1 missing, and 162 wounded, most of them in the 7th Marines.

As recorded in the official history by Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona, a tactical principle was emerging: "To nullify Chinese night attacks, regardless of large-scale penetrations and infiltration, defending units had only to maintain position until daybreak. With observation restored, Marine firepower invariably would melt down the Chinese mass to impotency." It was a principle that would serve the Marines well, time after time, in the coming several weeks.

Photo by Cpl L. B. Snyder, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4463

BGen Edward Craig, on the left and wearing a Marine "fore-and-aft" cap, and MajGen Edward Almond, on the right with map case and wearing an Army cap, went forward to the 7th Marines command post to see for themselves the Chinese prisoners that had been taken. Col Homer Litzenberg, the regimental commander, is talking with BGen Craig.

Saturday, 4 November

The 7th Marines' positions remained essentially the same during the night of 3-4 November. The perimeters were peppered lightly, but there were no further Chinese assaults. Later it was learned that the *370th* and *371st CCF Regiments* were withdrawing to a defensive line, established by the *372d Regiment* about two miles north of Chinhung-ni, stretching from Hill 987 to Hill 891.

Wounded Marines arrive at the battalion aid station of Maj Webb D. "Buzz" Sawyer's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. Helicopter evacuation was still the exception rather than the rule. Most wounded Marines were hand-carried down to the closest road and then moved by jeep to the nearest aid station. Here they would be sorted out ("triage") and sent to the rear for more definitive treatment.

Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4546

Litzenberg ordered increased patrolling to the north to begin at dawn on 4 November. Marines from Davis' 1st Battalion patrolled to the edge of Sudong, met no resistance, and returned to their perimeter. Crossman's Reconnaissance Company moved out in its jeeps at 0800. First Lieutenant Ernest C. Hargett took the point into Sudong and met a party of Chinese in the middle of the town. Hargett's men killed three and took 20 more as willing prisoners. Crossman now put Second Lieutenant Donald W. Sharon's 2d platoon into the point with the 1st Battalion coming behind them into Sudong.

The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) skeleton *344th Tank Regiment*, down to five Soviet-built T-34 tanks and apparently unable to negotiate Funchilin Pass, had been left on the low ground to fend for itself. One T-34 was abandoned after being damaged in its wild one-tank attack against the 7th Marines command post. The remaining four tanks took covered positions off the road. Sharon passed by the first hidden T-34 but bumped into the second. He and two of his Marines damaged the tank with hand grenades. Charlie Company, 7th Marines, with its own 3.5-inch rockets and reinforced with a section of 75mm recoilless rifles, came on the scene and finished off the second tank. A third tank emerged from a thatched hut. Engaged by both rocket launchers and recoilless rifles, the tank continued to move until stopped by the 5-inch rockets of a flight of Corsairs. The Marines now found the bypassed first tank.

Photo by Cpl Peter W. McDonald National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4496

Bodies of dead Marines, covered with ponchos and shelter halves, await further disposition. The 7th Marines fight at Sudong lasted three days, 2-4 November. Division casualties for the period, nearly all of them in the 7th Marines, totaled 61 killed in action, 9 died of wounds, 162 wounded, and 1 missing in action.

After receiving fire, the crew surrendered their tank and themselves. The fourth tank, now alone, surrendered without a fight. The *344th NKPA Tank Regiment* was no more. Litzenberg, having advanced almost four miles by mid-afternoon, ordered his regiment to halt for the night in a tight perimeter at Chinhung-ni.

For the first 43 miles north from Hungnam the 1st Marine Division's MSR was a two-lane highway passing through relatively flat terrain. At Chinhung-ni the road narrowed to one lane as it went up Funchilin Pass, climbing 2,500 feet in eight miles of zigzagging single-lane road clinging to the sides of the mountains; "a cliff on one side and a chasm on the other" as the official history described it. The narrow gauge railroad was operable as far as Chinhung-ni and it was decided to establish a railhead there.

The division Reconnaissance Company was ordered to move forward another mile, on up into Funchilin Pass, and outpost the southern tip of Hill 891. With Second Lieutenant Charles R. Puckett's 3d Platoon out in front, the reconnaissance Marines moved almost into the saddle separating Hills 987 and 891, already inconveniently occupied by the Chinese. A firefight developed. The company held its ground but lost two Marines killed, five wounded, and two jeeps destroyed.

On 4 November, Smith shifted his command post from Wonsan to Hungnam, occupying an abandoned engineering college on the outskirts of the city. In reconnoitering for the site, Smith's assistant division commander, Brigadier General Craig had been treated to the sight of 200 dead Koreans laid out in a row, executed by the Communists for no apparent reason. Smith flew to Hungnam by helicopter and occupied the new command post at about 1100. Most of his headquarters arrived by rail that evening, an uneventful trip except for a few scattered rifle

The 7th Marines entered Sudong on 4 November. Beyond Sudong the main supply route began its climb into Funchilin Pass. Here, a Marine patrol, troubled by a sniper, searches out a hamlet of thatched-roofed, mud-wattle huts.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4537

Sketch by Sgt Ralph Schofield, USMCR

A Marine sniper draws a bead on a distant Chinese enemy. This sketch, and numerous others that follow, are by Cpl (later Sgt) Ralph H. Schofield, a talented Marine Corps reservist from Salt Lake City, who served as a Leatherneck *magazine combat artist. A seasoned veteran of World War II, Schofield had fought as an infantryman in the South Pacific.*

shots. The larger part of his headquarters would remain in place in Hungnam for the duration of the operation.

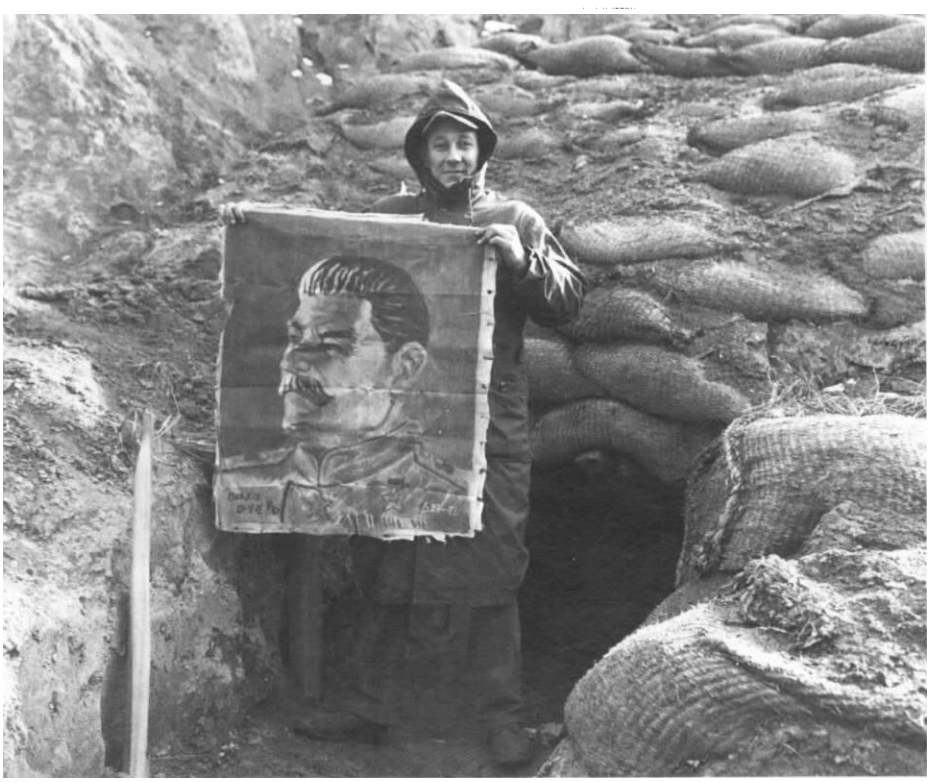
To the south of the 7th Marines, the battalions of Murray's RCT-5 were having their own adventures. "Our first assignment was to go to the east side of the reservoir," remembered Murray. "I wondered, why are they splitting us up like this?" By 4 November, the 1st Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel George R. Newton) had been left behind at Chigyong and detached to division control. The 3d Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. "Tap" Taplett) was positioned near Oro-ri. The 2d Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Roise) had been sent into Sinhung Valley, five miles north and 15 miles east of the 7th Marines, to relieve the ROK 18th Regiment. The relief was accomplished without incident. Roise, 34, from Idaho, had spent World War II in the battleships *Maryland* (BB 46) and *Alabama* (BB 60). The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, was his first infantry command and he had done well with it at Pusan, Inchon, and Seoul. His mission now was to block the Sinhung corridor and to find a northerly route to either the Chosin Reservoir or to the reservoir known to the Marines by its Japanese name "Fusen." The Korean name was "Pujon." Roise's mission carried him away from 1st Marine Division's axis of advance and into the zone of the 7th Infantry Division.

With 7th Marines, 5-6 November

Early on Sunday morning, 5 November, the Major Roach's 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, passed through the 1st Battalion to con-

SSgt Meyer Rossum triumphantly displays a poster of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin found in a by-passed Chinese bunker in the vicinity of Funchilin Pass. Marines would learn that the Chinese, despite problems of weather and terrain, were avid diggers and experts at field fortification.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4807



tinue the advance up Funchilin Pass. Hargett's reconnaissance platoon led the way. Rounding a hairpin turn, Hargett ran into Chinese fire and had four more Marines wounded. The 3d Battalion moved into the attack. Item Company was given Hill 987 and George Company Hill 891 as their objectives. Both were stopped by mid-morning by heavy small arms and machine gun fire. For the rest of the day the battle continued as a duel between Parry's 105mm howitzers and Chinese 120mm heavy mortars. From overhead, the Corsairs of VMF-312 delivered 37 close air support sorties.

At the top of the pass the road flattened onto a plateau and ran for two miles until it reached the village of Koto-ri where it rejoined the now-abandoned narrow gauge railroad. During the day General Smith gave Litzenberg the objective of reaching Koto-ri.

Roach's 3d Battalion continued the attack the next morning. How Company, under First Lieutenant Howard H. Harris, was to pass through George Company and move up the southern tip of Hill 891. Item Company, under First Lieutenant William E. Johnson, was to continue its attack against Hill 987. Both attacks went slowly, with the assaults not getting underway until mid-afternoon.

Second Lieutenant Robert D. Reem, leading one of How Company's platoons in the final assault, threw himself on a Chinese grenade and was killed. Harris radioed Roach that his company was exhausted. Roach relayed the report to Litzenberg who ordered the company to disengage and withdraw. Next morning, 7 November, Roach's battalion again moved up the slopes of both Hills 891 and 987, and this time found them empty of enemy. The Chinese had disappeared during the night. For most of the next three weeks traffic northward on the MSR would be unimpeded.

Operations North of Wonsan, 4-9 November

Meanwhile, in accordance with Almond's decision on 3 November, X Corps troops and the 1st Marine Division continued to share the responsibility for the Wonsan-Hungnam MSR. Operation of the Wonsan-Hamhung rail line came under X Corps Railway Transportation Section. The division began sending supply trains north daily from Wonsan. For two days they got through unmolested, but on the third day, 6 November, the train was halted at Kowan by torn-up rails. North Korean guerrillas then attacked the train, which was guarded by 39 Marines from Charlie Company of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion. Taken by surprise, eight Marines were killed, two wounded, at the outset. Six more Marines were wounded in the ensuing firefight. The guard then broke off action and found protection within the perimeter of an Army artillery battalion.

Smith was promised the use of the Army's newly arrived 65th Regimental Combat Team to guard bridges and other key points along the route. Rail service from Wonsan to Hamhung was resumed on 9 November with the caution that passengers were to ride only in open gondola cars. Their steel sides promised some order of protection from small arms fire and mortar fragments. While Marines rattled northward in gondola cars, MacArthur on 9 November informed the Joint Chiefs of Staff that complete victory was still possible and reiterated his belief that U.S. air power would prevent the Chinese from crossing the Yalu in decisive numbers.

Arrival of 3d Infantry Division

The Army's 3d Infantry Division, its ranks hastily filled out with South Koreans, began arriving at Wonsan in early November. Major General Robert H. "Shorty" Soule, the division commander, was a paratrooper who had fought with the 11th Airborne Division under MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific. The first regiment of Soule's division to land was the 65th Infantry, made up largely of Puerto Ricans, on 5 November. Almond came, looked, and said he "didn't have much confidence in these colored troops."

During World War II, Almond had commanded the U.S. 92d Infantry Division which had almost all white officers but black rank-and-file. The division had turned in a mixed performance in Italy. Almond's prejudices were typical of his generation and Southern background. The regimental commander, Colonel William W. Harris, West Point 1930, protested that most of his men were not "colored," but "white." Almond, unconvinced of the 65th RCT's reliability, told Harris that he was going to send the regiment north to Yonghung and then west across the mountains to make contact with the Eighth Army's right flank. Harris was appalled by these orders.

The 1st Shore Party Battalion, under command of legendary Lieutenant Colonel Henry P. "Jim" Crowe, 51, stayed behind at Wonsan to help the 3d Infantry Division land and unload. Crowe had enlisted during World War I and had a fabled career as football player, team shot, and bandit fighter, reaching the highly prized warrant grade of Marine gunner in

1934. He had a Silver Star from Guadalcanal and a Navy Cross from Tarawa where he commanded a battalion as a major. He thought Soule "one of the finest men" he ever met, but he found Almond "haughty."

5th Marines Operations, 5-8 November

There was now clear evidence that the Chinese, and some North Koreans, were out in front of Roise's 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, in Sinhung Valley but keeping their distance. Northwest of Sinhung itself and about 10 miles due east of Koto-ri, Dog Company captured a stray Chinese soldier found sleeping in a house. He proved to be a wealth of information. He said that he belonged to the *126th CCF Division*. He asserted that six CCF armies had arrived in North Korea and that a total of 24 divisions had been committed to the intervention. He had learned this in a series of lectures given by political officers to his regiment after it had crossed the border.

Smith conferred with Almond on the afternoon of 7 November. "He apparently has been somewhat sobered by the situation on the 8th Army front, which is not very good," Smith entered into his log. Almond promised Smith that he would let him concentrate the 1st Marine Division.

The 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, remained at Chigyong. On 7 November, Major Merlin R. Olson, 32, the battalion's executive officer, with Companies A and B reconnoitered in force west of Oro-ri to Huksu-ri. On the 8th, still short of his objective, Olson ran into a North Korean force, estimated at 2,000, and was recalled.

Meanwhile, Roise's patrols had found no useable road to either Chosin or Fusen Reservoirs but had learned that the road leading northeast to the Manchurian border, into the zone assigned to the U.S. 7th Infantry Division, could bear military traffic. One of his patrols touched a patrol from the 31st Infantry on 8 November. Smith had an understanding with Almond that if the 5th Marines could not get to the Fusen Reservoir by road, Barr's 7th Infantry Division would attempt to reach it from the east.

Photo by Cpl L. B. Snyder, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4620

LtCol Raymond Davis' 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, occupied Koto-ri on the Marine Corps Birthday, 10 November, against no resistance. A day later needed replacements arrived. One or two battalion-sized replacement drafts arrived in Korea each month to keep the division's ranks—particularly the infantry units—at fighting strength.

7th Marines Operations, 8-11 November

On 8 November General Almond visited the 7th Marines. On learning that Captain Thomas E. Cooney, commander of George Company, had been twice slightly wounded on Hill 891, he awarded Cooney an on-the-spot Silver Star. His aide was caught without a supply of medals. Almond scribbled a note on a piece of paper—"Silver Star for Gallantry in Action"—and pinned it to Cooney's jacket.

A patrol of 15 Marines under First Lieutenant William F. Goggin of the 2d Battalion left Chinhung-ni at noon on 8 November, reached Koto-ri, and next evening returned unscathed to the lines of the 3d Battalion. Next day, 10 November and the Marine Corps Birthday, the 1st Battalion passed through the 3d Battalion and an hour-and-a-half later entered Koto-ri.

X Corps issued an order attaching the 65th Infantry and the ROK 26th Regiment to the 1st Marine Division. Two battalions of South Korean Marines were also to be attached. On receiving the order Smith learned that he was responsible for making contact with the Eighth Army. He gave orders to that effect to the 65th Infantry and was annoyed to find that Almond had already given the regiment's commander, Colonel Harris, detailed instructions down to the company level as to what to do. Something of the same happened with regards to the mission of the ROK 26th Regiment. "Such a procedure, of course, only creates confusion," Smith fussed in his log. "It was this type of procedure

Photo by Sgt John Babyak, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4562

At division headquarters at Hamhung, MajGen Smith observed the Marine Corps Birthday in traditional fashion. He read the birthday message from the Marine Corps Manual *and then cut the somewhat meager cake with a Korean sword. As tradition prescribes, the first slice went to the oldest Marine present, BGen Craig.*

which I protested to General Almond in connection with direct orders given to my regiments." To Smith's further annoyance, he was ordered to provide a rifle company to guard X Corps command post at Hamhung. The order was passed to the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, for execution. Taplett received it with "surprise and disgust," not understanding why a headquarters with about 2,000 troops needed extra security so far behind the lines of advance. He detailed Item Company under Captain Harold G. Schrier to do the job—the same Schrier who as a lieutenant had taken his platoon up Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima to raise the first flag.

That evening there was a Marine Corps Birthday party in General Smith's mess attended by his staff. Punch and cake were served. Smith entered in his log: "I read the paragraphs from the Marine Corps Manual and then cut the cake with a Korean sword."

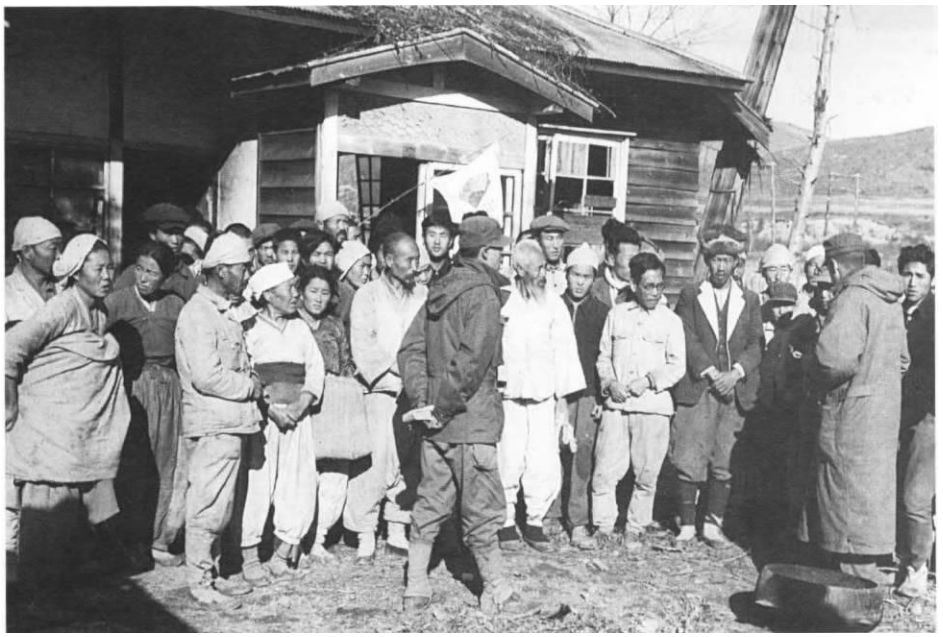
The weather had turned terrifically cold up on the plateau, well below zero at night. Platoon warming tents were set up in Koto-ri, a hapless little hamlet. As the official history observed, the cold seemed "to numb the spirit as well as the flesh." On the 11th, Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, had a fight in which it lost four Marines killed, four wounded, and claimed 40 enemy casualties. Otherwise the enemy seemed to have vanished.

5th Marines Operations, 9-13 November

Murray received orders on 9 November to concentrate his regiment on the MSR leading to Chosin Reservoir. Newton's 1st Battalion, coming out of Chigyong on 10 November, was to move to Majon-dong. A patrol sent forward from Newton's battalion was ambushed and had to be rescued with a battalion-sized attack before the battalion could get to the village. On the 13th, another patrol from the 1st Battalion, 5th

Col "Chesty" Puller cuts the Marine Corps Birthday cake on 10 November at his 1st Marines regimental headquarters outside Wonsan where the weather was still pleasant. Far to the north, on the Chosin plateau, the 7th Marines was already encountering sub-zero temperatures.

Photo by Cpl W. T. Wolfe, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4571



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4628

On 12 November the villagers at Koto-ri were informed that they have been "liberated" and were now free to elect their own village officials. The large number of Korean civilians, who would later crowd into the Marines' defensive perimeters, would become a huge problem.

Marines, ran into a company-sized group of Chinese that killed seven Marines and wounded three more before withdrawing.

Roise's 2d Battalion came out of Sinhung Valley on 13 November with orders to relieve the 7th Marines of the responsibility of defending Koto-ri. Along the way Roise's Marines picked up one Chinese and 12 North Korean prisoners. An airstrip capable of handling light aircraft was opened at Koto-ri that same day. Taplett's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, was now at Chinhung-ni. Taplett, 32, from South Dakota, had spent most of World War II on sea duty with the cruiser *Salt Lake City* (CL 25). The 3d Battalion was his first infantry command. He was not always an easy personality, but his performance at Pusan, Inchon (where he had led this battalion ashore in the successful seizure of Wolmi-do in the opening phase of the landing), and Seoul had been outstanding. Still stiffer fights were ahead of him.

Smith, making his own road reconnaissance of Funchilin Pass, took a helicopter as far as Chinhung-ni. Helicopters at that time, because of the cold and altitude, were not going farther north; there being problems with gear boxes freezing up. Smith borrowed a jeep from Taplett and drove on up to Koto-ri.

MacArthur Reassesses Situation

By now MacArthur had to accept that the Chinese were in Korea in strength, perhaps as many as 100,000 of them, but he was still of the opinion that China would not make a full-scale intervention.

Almond had moved his headquarters on 11 November from Wonsan to Hamhung with plans to move his command post farther north to Hagaru-ri. Almond must have reflected that 11 November was Armistice Day from the First World War. Many of the senior leaders in Korea had fought in that war, including MacArthur as a brigadier general and Almond as a major. Almond had served with distinction in the U.S. 4th Infantry Division as commander of the 12th Machine Gun Battalion. Armistice

(Continued on page 34)

The wreath with "Merry Christmas," perhaps some Marine's idea of humor, is misleading. The photo was probably taken at Chinhung-ni in mid-November. At left is LtCol Robert D. Taplett, Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, and at right is his executive officer, Maj John J. Canny, who would die at Yudam-ni two weeks later.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A7349

Coping with the Cold

How cold was it at the reservoir? Most Marines "knew" that the temperature went down to about 25 degrees below zero at night, but how many Marines had a thermometer in their pack?

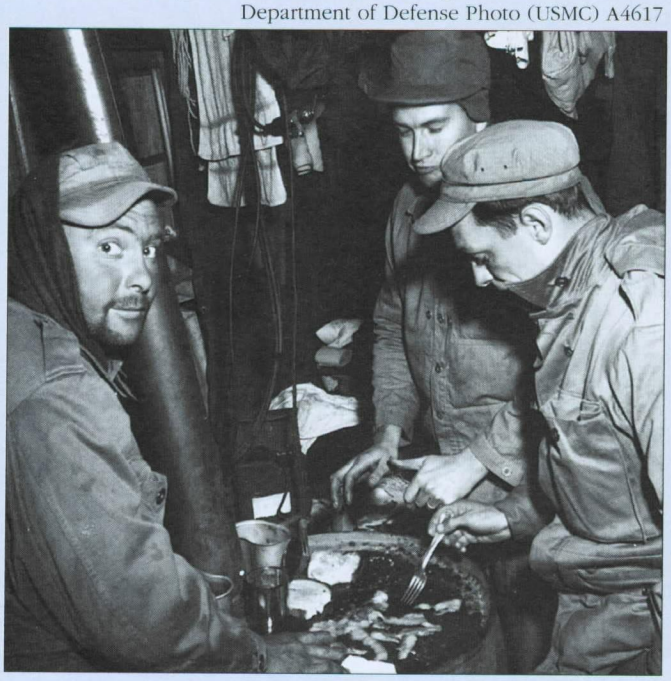
The cold was no great surprise, unless, perhaps, you were like one Marine from Samoa who had never seen snow before. The division staff knew by late October or early November that Hagaru-ri had the reputation of being the coldest place in North Korea, with a recorded temperature of 35 degrees below zero. The climate is roughly like that of Minnesota or North Dakota. The winter of 1950 was a cold one, but not unusually so. The powers that be had adequate warning that it was coming and considerable preparations had been made.

Those at the top, and some at other levels in the 1st Marine Division, had had some experience with cold weather operations, if not by participation, at least by observation and a bit of training.

The division's commanding general, Major General Oliver P. Smith, had gone with the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade to Iceland in August 1941 to relieve the British garrison, as a major in command of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. He remembered Iceland as a "bleak and rugged island—mountains, cliffs, no trees—not a tree" and most of all the violent, never ceasing wind.

Cold was all-pervasive, even at Hamhung, which with its near sea-level elevation was much milder than up on the Changjin plateau. Here Marines at Hamhung, probably members of a combat service unit, cook bacon and beans on top of a stove made from a gasoline drum.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4617



National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-424584

These Marines, looking very fresh, pause enroute to Yudam-ni on 27 November to heat their C-rations over an open fire. They are wearing the newly issued shoe-pacs with boot socks folded neatly over the tops. At the far left the Marine appears to be wearing old-fashioned galoshes over field shoes or boots, a better combination against the cold than the shoe-pacs.

There were others, besides Smith, in the division who had also been in the Iceland expedition. One of them was Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Murray, commander of the 5th Marines. In Iceland he had been a captain and commander of a machine gun company. He had also served in Peiping in North China before World War II. He did not find Iceland as rugged as Korea: "It was not terribly cold. I don't think it ever got much below 10 above zero."

The Marines suddenly on their way to Iceland did not, at first, have any specialized winter clothing. They wore their wool kersey winter service uniforms including their woolen overcoats, supplemented by some items bought on the open market, notably some short, sheepskin-lined, canvas coats purchased from Sears Roebuck and carried as organizational property. Another much-favored addition were pile-lined hats with ear flaps, such as Marines had worn in North China.

The Marines in Iceland did not live in tents or in

the open. They were billeted in Nissen huts, "an elongated igloo covered with corrugated iron roofing and lined with beaver board," the flimsy British equivalent of the more substantial American Quonset huts. Marines piled sod on the sides of the Nissen huts to improve insulation. Each battalion had a different camp in a different part of the island.

In many ways the deployment, as an opportunity for winter training, was a disappointment. Finnish success with ski troops in the Winter War with the Soviet Union in 1939 had been much publicized (and romanticized). But it did not get as cold in Iceland as it was supposed to get and there was not much snow, seldom as much as a foot.

Marine experiments with skis and more work-a-day snowshoes did not come to much. Nine years later, the Marines at Chosin Reservoir did not have skis or snowshoes and it was just as well. They would not have been useful.

The brigade came back in February and March 1942 wearing the British Polar Bear shoulder patch—and were ordered to take it off. Most of the Marines would soon be on their way to Guadalcanal, and beyond that to Tarawa, and would earn another shoulder patch, either that of the 1st Marine Division or 2d Marine Division.

A larger percentage of Marines in the division than those few who had been in Iceland were those who had served in North China after the end of World War II, a now almost forgotten episode. It began with the 55,000-man deployment of the III Amphibious Corps at the end of September 1945 that included both the 1st and 6th Marine Division and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and ended with the withdrawal of the last battalion in 1949, just a year before the Marines went to Korea. Like Iceland, it was largely a garrison experience, but the China Marines learned about the sub-zero temperatures and the arctic winds that came out of Manchuria and across the Gobi Desert. Marines guarding supply points or critical bridges or riding the coal trains knew how cold it could get.

The clothing they wore, including the Navy parka, was not much different than that which would be worn in Korea. Officially designated as the Marine Corps' 1943 cold weather uniform, it was predicated largely on the Iceland experience and consisted primarily, except for the parka, of U.S. Army components.

Other, older Marines in the division, including the chief of staff, Colonel Gregon A. Williams, the G-2, Colonel Bankson T. Holcomb, Jr., and the commanding officer of the 1st Marines, Colonel Lewis "Chesty" Puller, had had substantial service in pre-World War II China, including a chance to observe operations by Chinese Communist forces in the cold. They knew about the padded Chinese winter uniforms. Some, including Chesty Puller who was much better read and more of a student of military history than his flamboyant reputation would suggest, had studied Japanese winter operations in northern Korea and Manchuria in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.

The Quartermaster General of the Marine Corps, Major General William P. T. Hill, himself an old China hand and an explorer of the Gobi Desert, began shipping out cold-weather clothing, including Navy parkas, to Korea in October 1950. Beginning in November, the battalion-sized replacement drafts being sent to restore combat losses received rudimentary cold weather training, at least in the wearing of cold-weather clothing.

The Marines, and, for that matter, the U.S. Army, used the "layer principle" for winter clothing, which simply meant that the Marine or soldier piled on as many layers of clothing as he could find. From the skin out he might have on cotton underpants and shirt or "skivvies," winter underwear or "long johns," mustard-colored flannel shirt, utility trousers or green kersey service trousers if he had them, sweater, green sateen winter trousers, alpaca vest, utility coat, a woolen muffler, and perhaps an M1943 field jacket, all crammed under a long, hooded, pile-lined Navy parka. The parka was warm but heavy and clumsy. Some Marines managed to find the shorter anorak-type parka worn by the Army and liked it better. Also popular, when they could be found, were the Army's "trooper" style pile-lined winter hats with earflaps. Several styles of gloves were issued. The most common had a leather and fabric outer shell and an inner mitten of knitted wool.

On their feet, Marines, unless they could find a substitute, wore "shoe-pacs"—waterproof rubber bottoms with laced leather uppers. They were issued with two sets each of felt innersoles and heavy woolen boot socks. The Marines were told to keep one set of the socks and innersoles inside their clothing next to their body and to change them frequently. These instructions were good in theory but difficult to follow in practice. Excessive perspiration, generated by marching, soaked the

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5351

When possible, as here at Koto-ri, sleeping holes were dug behind fighting holes and frequently covered with ponchos or shelter halves. In this case, the occupants have managed to incorporate a stove. Most often the only relief from the cold for the infantry was in the form of warming tents set up to the rear of their position.

innersoles and socks. When the Marine halted, the felt innersoles and stockings quickly froze and so did the wearer's feet.

The shoe-pacs were hated, but the sleeping bags that the Marines had carried ashore at Inchon, now had a heavier lining and were much loved and, indeed, were indispensable. Marines found the bags, which could be rolled and tied to the bottom of their haversacks, good for sleeping, for warming feet, and for keeping casualties from freezing to death. There was a problem, though, of Marines standing watch in foxholes being allowed to pull their sleeping bags up to their knees or waists, and then, giving into temptation, slipping further into the bag and falling asleep. A Chinese soldier suddenly upon him killed more than one Marine, caught in his sleeping bag.

In fighting the cold, the Marines learned or relearned certain principles including the importance of keeping moving to generate body heat. The drawback to this was, of course, the sweat-soaked shoe-pacs that invited frostbite. The digging in of a foxhole, which could require six to eight hours of effort, often at the end of a long march, also generated heat, sometimes presenting the paradoxical sight of a Marine, stripped almost to the waist, hacking away at the frozen earth. In last analysis, the imposition of cold weather discipline depended upon the small-unit leadership of lieutenants, sergeants, and corporals. All things considered, they did amazingly well.

The Marines were still using their World War II pack; a well designed but complicated piece of equipment with a haversack, knapsack, a bedding roll, and many straps and buckles. Ordinarily, a Marine in combat carried nothing but his haversack and sleeping bag, and, of course, his rifle belt with its load of canteens, bayonet, first aid packet,

ammunition, and possibly a few grenades. Most Marines preferred a pack board whenever they could get one.

A Marine also had to find a place for his daily C-ration when it was issued. It came in a clumsy cardboard box about the size of a shoe box, six cylindrical cans in all, three "heavies" and three "lights," plus an assortment of packets that included a day's supply of toilet paper and a neat little box with four cigarettes. The "heavies" were the meat components, much improved and with a much wider variety of items than the disliked World War II C-ration. The Army's Quartermaster Corps had worked hard on the improvements, basing them on regional favorites. Among the offerings were hamburgers (highly prized), chicken with vegetables, ham and lima beans, meat and beans, and sausage patties (the least favorite). The "lights" included at least one half-sized can of some kind of fruit, easily the best-liked element in the ration and one or more "bread units" which were biscuits of one sort or another, descended from Civil War hardtack, and something that passed for cake. Also to be found were different sorts of candy (disks of chocolate were preferred), salt, pepper, and packets of soluble coffee and cocoa. Most often a Marine took out what he liked or could trade and threw the rest away. What he retained he would fit into various pockets. He wondered why the ration could not be packed in flat cans that he could pocket more easily. His largest problem, though, was heating the meat component. Best method was to heat it in a bucket or GI can of boiling water, but these were seldom available. Cooking fires made with available wood usually did more burning than cooking. Unused mortar increments and bits of C-3 plastic explosive, when they could be found, burned with a quick hot heat. Dirt in a larger can, doused with gasoline, gave an improvised stove. But such open fires did not do well, tending to scorch the meat closest to the can and leaving the interior still frozen. Jeep and truck drivers could wire a can to their engine and when their run was finished, have a hot meal.

C-ration meat components would begin to freeze as soon as their cans were removed from the heat. Drinking coffee from an aluminum mess cup could be a dangerous process, the drinker's lip or tongue freezing to the cup. On the march it was often impossible to heat the meat component. Consequently the bread unit and fruit component were the first to be consumed.

Marines soon learned that keeping a thin coat of oil on their weapons, as taught to them emphatically by their drill instructors at boot camp, was not a good idea in sub-zero temperatures. Even a thin coat of oil tended to congeal and freeze the weapon's action. The word went out to wipe all weapons dry of oil. There was some argument over this. Some Marines thought that an infinitesimally thin coat of oil was best. There were arguments, pro and con, on the advisability of keeping personal weapons in sleeping bags or taking them into warming tents, or leaving them out in the cold.

By and large the weapons of the Marines worked well. A notable exception was the caliber .30 M1 and M2 carbine. Already suspect in World War II, it proved to be a miserable failure in sub-zero weather. Its weak action failed to feed rounds into the chamber, the bolt failed to close, and the piece often failed to fire. The release for its box magazine was a fraction of an inch from the safety. Mittened or cold-stiffened fingers sometimes pressed both, dropping the magazine into the snow. Even when a carbine did fire, the round had no stopping power. Most Marines carrying carbines replaced them as quickly as they could (and most often informally) with the prized M1 "Garand" rifle.

The Browning automatic rifle, M1918A2, continued to be a favorite Marine weapon. It functioned in proportion to the care it was given. Ice tended to form in the buffer group and inside the receiver.

As with all weapons with a recoil mechanism, machine guns, in general, were sluggish in their rate of fire. The old reliable Browning water-cooled M1917A1 fired well as long as there was antifreeze (not always easy to get) in the water jacket. Without liquid, the barrels quickly overheated. The barrels of the M1919A4 light machine gun tended to burn out and there were not enough spares. The 60mm and 81mm mortars fired reliably although there was considerable breakage of base plates and optical sights. It was remarked that the 81mm mortar shells looping across the sky left fiery tails more like rockets.

As to the cold, some units did claim nighttime temperatures of 35 degrees and even 40 degrees below zero. Best-documented temperatures, though, are the records kept by the battalions of the 11th Marines, the artillery regiment, that had to factor in the temperature as an element of gunnery. These battalions routinely recorded temperatures of 20 and 25

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5356

As shown in this photo of Marines marching out of Kotori on 8 December, each Marine carried what he considered necessary to live and fight, a considerable load of upwards of 60 pounds. Some got along with just their sleeping bag slung below their haversack. More carried a horseshoe-shaped bedding roll that could contain as much as a sleeping bag, a blanket, a poncho, and a shelter half.

below zero. Snow showers were frequent but not much snow accumulated. The winds of 35 and 40 miles per hour tended to blow the rock and frozen earth free of the thin snow. When morning came there would be ice crystals in the air, glinting in the sun like "diamond dust."

Water in five-gallon "Jerry" cans and individual canteens turned into blocks of ice. Some Marines carried a canteen inside their clothing to keep it thawed. Since World War II and the thirst of the Pacific War it had been the Marine Corps habit of having each man carry two canteens. This continued in the Korean War. Some Marine officers and senior noncommissioned officers carried whiskey in their left or "port side" canteen, which they doled out to their subordinates on a most-needed basis. The surgeons also had a carefully controlled supply of two-ounce bottles of medicinal brandy. Those lucky enough to get a bottle might use it to thaw out a C-ration can of fruit and then comment wryly on the luxury of "dining on brandied peaches."

Immersion heaters seldom provided enough warmth to thaw the contents of a water trailer. All valves and piping froze solid. Fires built beneath the trailers were a sometime effective expedient. Some men ate snow. The favorite beverages, when the water for them could be heated, were the soluble coffee and cocoa to be found in the C-ration, or better yet, the more generous allowance in larger rations.

A-rations, the full garrison ration with fresh or frozen meat, fruits, and vegetables, was, of course, unavailable except in an extraordinary set of circumstances such as the celebrated Thanksgiving