



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A6198

Marines and South Korean laborers bring a Marine casualty down from the scene of a skirmish with North Korean guerrillas. During the month at Pohang, Marine nonbattle casualties outnumbered battle casualties by a ratio of nine to one.

R4D Skytrain transport plane broadcast appeals to surrender. About 150 individuals answered the call, but most of them turned out to be South Korean laborers who had been forced into service by the NKPA. Chance-Vought F4U Corsairs from Marine Fighter Squadron 323 then dropped bombs, rockets, and napalm upon the remaining NKPA. The last major action of the "guerrilla hunt" occurred when two battalions of

the 1st Marines, commanded by the division's former logistics officer, Colonel Francis M. "Frank" McAlister, who replaced newly promoted "Chesty" Puller on 25 January, routed an estimated battalion of the *27th NKPA Regiment*, south of Samgo-ri. More than 75 enemy were killed and an unknown number were seriously wounded by the time the North Koreans fled the field of battle on 5 February. Only scattered resis-

tance by diehard individuals or small groups was reported to headquarters from then until the Marines departed Pohang.

Enemy deserters told interrogators that disease and low morale took a heavy toll. They reported an NKPA battalion commander had been shot for desertion and that General Lee was immobilized by severe depression. Other measures of enemy desperation were that women were increasingly being

drafted to serve as porters and combat troops were donning captured American clothing to cover their escape. Although the *10th Division* still could muster about 1,000 men, captured dispatches indicated CCF headquarters ordered the remaining NKPA to break out of the Marine encirclement. General Smith's situation report to Eighth Army headquarters on 11 February stated that the enemy had been appreciably reduced and declared "the situation in the Division area is sufficiently in hand to permit the withdrawal of the Division and the assignment of another mission." Armed with this knowledge, intelligence officers at Eighth Army rated the *10th Division* as combat ineffective, and General Ridgway decided the 1st Marine Division could be put to better use elsewhere.

There were several important administrative changes in the 1st Marine Division at Pohang. On 2 February, Brigadier General Puller became the assistant division commander when Major General Edward A. Craig departed for the United States. This was the first in a series of command changes wrought by new rotation policies. In the next three weeks, 12 of 16 maneuver battalions would change hands. Thirty officers and 595 enlisted men, all former members of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, were sent back to Pusan to await conveyance to the United States. That much-longed-for transportation arrived when the troop ship *USS General J.C. Breckinridge* (AP 176) delivered 71 officers and 1,717 enlisted men of the 5th Replacement Draft to Pohang on 16 February. These new arrivals were rather hurriedly assimilated and they brought the 1st Marine Division back up to fighting strength just as it shipped out for

central Korea. Unfortunately, the combined U.S.-Korean Marine team was broken up again. On 2 February, the independent 5th KMC Battalion was transferred to X Corps Headquarters, and General Smith learned the 1st KMC Regiment would stay behind when the 1st Marine Division moved out.

There were no pitched battles or epic engagements at Pohang, but the Marines had rendered an enemy division ineffective. Marine battle losses during the period 12 January to 15 February numbered 26 dead, 148 wounded, and 10 missing in action. There were also a large number of nonbattle casualties, primarily the result of frostbite or minor injuries, most returned to their units. Enemy casualties and non-combat losses were estimated at more than 3,000 men. The "guerrilla hunt" was also

particularly useful for training and physical conditioning. Constant movement over rough terrain ensured all hands were in good shape, rifle squads and mortar sections developed into coherent and tactically proficient units, and most of the 3,387 Marine replacements got at least a brief taste of combat conditions. With respect to operations, the Marines functioned as a truly integrated air-ground team. Although there were few opportunities to use Marine close air support, VMO-6's Consolidated OY "Sentinel" light observation aircraft and Sikorsky HO3S-1 "Dragonfly" helicopters served as airborne scouts and rescue craft while bubble-top Bell HTL helicopters were most often used as aerial ambulances. Indeed, the 1st Marine Division was so well honed after Pohang that five decades later

MajGen Smith distributes clothing donated by the Marine Corps League to Korean children in one of the nearby villages. "No attempt is made to obtain an exact fit," Smith said, "as there is not time."

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The Enemy

In the spring of 1951, the forces opposing the United Nations Command consisted of more than a half million men of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) and the Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) under the leadership of Chinese General Peng Teh-Huai. The CCF played no role during the initial stages of the Korean Conflict, but the Chinese *Fourth Field Army* serving under the questionable rubric "Chinese People's Volunteers" began secretly infiltrating North Korea in the fall of 1950. Such cooperation was nothing new; the Communists in China and North Korea had often worked together in the recent past. North Korea had been a Communist sanctuary during the Chinese Civil War, and North Korean volunteers fought side-by-side with the Chinese Communists since the mid-1930s.

The NKPA

The North Korean People's Army, more formally the *In Min Gun*, entered the Korean Conflict as a well-armed and well-trained military organization. The NKPA was modeled after the Soviet Red Army and was primarily armed with Soviet-made weapons. Specially selected veteran officers attended Soviet military schools in 1948 then became the cadre around which the NKPA was built. A few senior leaders and many enlisted men were veterans of the Korean Volunteer Army (KVA), which fought side-by-side with Mao Tse Tung's Communist guerrillas who successively defeated the Japanese during World War II and Chang Kai Shek's Nationalists during the Chinese Civil War. The Korean volunteers returned to North Korea in 1949 and were promptly integrated into the NKPA.

In the summer of 1950, the *In Min Gun* rolled over the surprised and outnumbered South Koreans. But, just as the victorious NKPA prepared for its final thrust to oust the United Nations from the Pusan Perimeter, General Douglas MacArthur conducted one of the most successful amphibious operations in military history when X Corps, spearheaded by the 1st Marine Division, landed at Inchon and then quickly recaptured Seoul. Outflanked and cut off from its supply bases, the NKPA was quickly routed and its remnants fled to the dubious safety of North Korea with the U.N. in hot pursuit. The sudden intervention of the CCF around Thanksgiving stopped MacArthur's northern advance, and by Christmas the United Nations Command was in full retreat. At that time the disorganized and demoralized NKPA underwent a complete make over. The NKPA was placed under Chinese command and was reorganized into light infantry units similar to those of the CCF.

During the spring of 1951, the Marines faced the NKPA *V and II Corps*. These units were armed with heavy mortars and machine guns, but only occasionally received adequate artillery support. The *10th NKPA*



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Division was the guerrilla force the Marines encountered at Pohang. The NKPA *V Corps* screened CCF movements and acted as the rear guard battling the Marines on the Central Front.

Communist Chinese Forces

The Communist Chinese *Peoples Liberation Army* (PLA) was a massive, mostly illiterate, peasant army that had been fighting for almost two decades without a break in 1951. Its sheer size and vast combat experience made it a formidable opponent. The PLA was, however, basically a light infantry force that possessed few tanks and its artillery arm was vastly undergunned by western standards. In November 1950, Mao Tse Tung sent more than 500,000 men into Manchuria and North Korea. The men entering Korea called themselves "Volunteers," but were labeled "Communist Chinese Forces" by the United Nations.

Initially, the CCF was actually the Chinese *Fourth Field Army* in Korea. This organization was divided into group armies, armies, and divisions. The 10,000-man Chinese divisions included only about two-thirds as many troops as an American infantry division but, ironically, mustered a much larger number of "trigger pullers" because the spartan CCF had so few support personnel. A CCF division was lucky if it had more than a single artillery battalion armed with 120mm mortars or 76mm antitank guns. The lack of fire support, motor transport, and modern communications dictated CCF tactics, which primarily consisted of night infiltration or massive frontal or "human wave" assaults conducted under cover of darkness. The Marines encountered the CCF *39th, 40th, and 66th Armies* during the fighting around Hwachon in the spring of 1951.

Marine historian Edwin H. Simmons reminisced about that time, stating: "The 1st Marine Division in Korea was the finest fighting outfit I ever served with"; no small praise from a combat veteran of three wars.

Back to the Attack

While the 1st Marine Division was busy rebuilding at Masan and chasing guerrillas at Pohang, the vastly outnumbered Eighth Army continued to fall back in what eventually became the longest retreat in American military history. But, as soon as the CCF Third Phase Offensive ran out of gas, General Ridgway resumed offensive operations. In mid-January, he initiated the first in a series of drumbeat attacks that eventually carried U.N. forces back above the 38th Parallel. Unlike the reckless rush to the Yalu the previous year, however, this time Eighth Army relied upon cautious advances, which were both limited in scope and closely controlled by higher headquarters, carefully coordinated actions intended to punish the enemy as well as to gain ground. In general, Ridgway eschewed flanking movements and objectives deep in the enemy rear. Instead, numerous phase lines strictly controlled U.N. activities and attacking units kept pace with those on each flank. The Marines—except for pilots flying close air support missions—missed the first three offensive operations (Wolfhound, Roundup, and Thunderbolt), but the 1st Marine Division was destined to play key roles in Operations Killer, Ripper, Rugged, and Dauntless.

Each of Ridgway's successive operations was more ambitious than the previous one. By mid-February, the Eighth Army had gathered momentum and was on

the move all across Korea. At that time the U.N. front was held from left to right by the U.S. I Corps, IX Corps, X Corps, and units of the South Korean army. The United Nations Command was in the process of rolling back the Communists in western Korea when General Ridgway met with General Smith at Suwon in late January to discuss the 1st Marine Division's next mission. Ridgway wanted to send the Marines to central Korea, but Smith lobbied hard to have the 1st Marine Division placed on the far right flank in order to stay near the coast. Smith noted that his division was the only Eighth Army unit trained for amphibious operations and added that a position near the sea would allow the Marines to make maximum use of naval gunfire and carrier-based air, supporting arms with which they were intimately familiar and well-practiced in using. Such a disposition would also allow the Marines to use Pohang as the principal port of entry, a factor that would ease the logistical burden by shortening supply lines. Amplifying, Smith pointed out that "the 1st Marine Division with a strength of approximately 24,000 was larger than any of the Army infantry divisions or ROK divisions at this time and in that there were single . . . supply routes, for the corps and the divisions and it would be less of a strain upon transportation and less of a logistical problem to supply a smaller army division or ROK division inboard, well inland in Korea, than it would be in the case of the Marine division." This was a critical consideration because it would reduce overland transportation problems. Marine trucks were both few in number and in poor shape after hard use at the Chosin Reservoir. Smith's logic won over the Eighth Army commander, and

after that meeting Ridgway directed his staff to prepare plans for the Marines to remain on the east coast.

Unfortunately, these plans were overcome by events before they could be put into effect. The catalyst for the movement of the 1st Marine Division into central Korea was the third battle for Wonju, a vital communications and road link whose loss might well force the evacuation of Korea by U.N. forces. Wonju was put at great risk when Hoengsong, located about 10 miles north on Route 29, was lost. This near disaster occurred when the Communists launched their Fourth Phase Offensive in which the CCF *40th* and *66th Armies* and the NKPA *V Corps* initiated a series of devastating attacks out of the swirling snow beginning on the night of 11-12 February. The U.S. X Corps suffered a serious setback when three Republic of Korea Army divisions disintegrated and combat support elements of the U.S. 2d Division were cut off and then annihilated in "Massacre Valley" just north of Hoengsong. The 23d Infantry was cut up, the artillery overrun, and "only 800 had come in so far and only one in twenty had weapons," General Puller told Smith. With the key city of Wonju threatened and X Corps reeling back, General Ridgway had no choice but to commit what he called "the most powerful division in Korea" to "where a great threat existed to that portion of the Eighth Army's lines." On 12 February 1951, General Smith received a warning order to prepare the 1st Marine Division to move to Chungju in south-central Korea "on 24 hours' notice at any time after 0700, 14 February." As Major Martin Sexton later commented: "The 1st Marine Division was deployed right in the center of Korea and its amphibious



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A Marine light machine gun team boards a train for the trip from Pohang to Chungju in central Korea. The 1st Marine Division was to be positioned astride what LtGen Matthew Ridgway considered to be the logical route for the expected enemy counterthrust.

capabilities destroyed at the same time.”

The Korean peninsula can be roughly described as a 600-by-150 mile parallelogram that descends ever downward from the Manchurian border and also slants down from the hilly eastern one-third that abuts the Sea of Japan until it gradually levels off along Yellow Sea to the west. The peninsula can be easily divided into several unique geographic areas: two horizontal sections, one in the north and one in the south, comprise the basic economic sectors; three vertical sections—the east, central, and west corridors—each comprise about one-third the width of the peninsula. Most of North Korea is rugged mountain territory whose fast-flowing rivers provide the water and electric power necessary for industrial development. South Korea, on the other hand, includes most of the

agricultural land. Trans-peninsular communications, particularly roads and railways, are hampered by geography. The craggy Taebaek

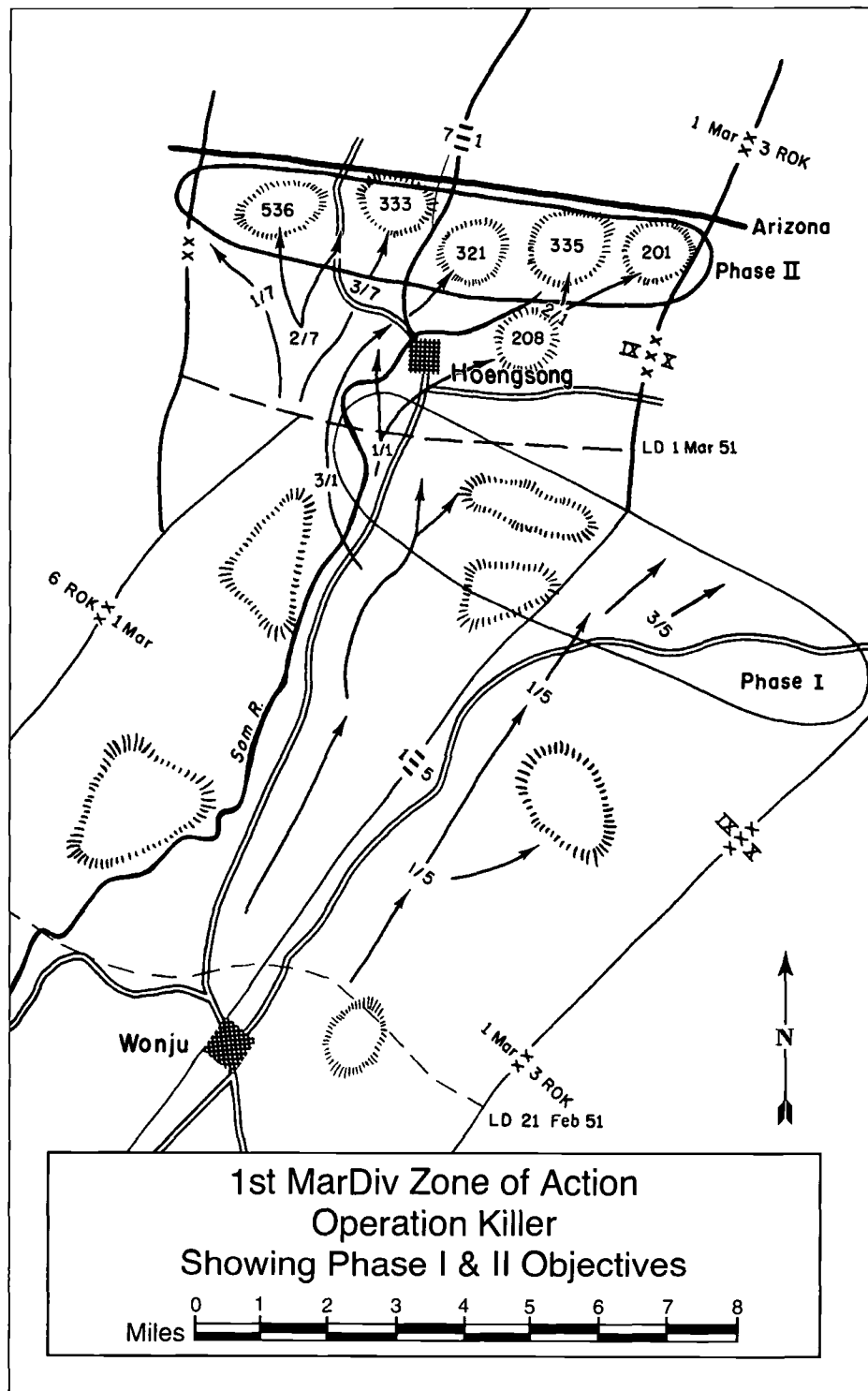
Marines move up to the front during Operation Killer, the fourth of the so-called Ridgway Offensives. During that action, the Marines advanced up the Som River Valley from Wonju to Hoengsong against light to moderate resistance.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A6851



Mountain range roughly parallels the east coast where its irregular cliffs severely limit the number of suitable landing areas and provide no spacious flat lands to support agricultural or urban development. There are few east-west overland links, and the only north-south route in the east runs tenuously along the narrow coast. Numerous fingers of the Taebaek intermittently reach west across the central corridor creating a washboard of alternating river valleys and spiny ridgelines. The flattest expanses are located along the west coast, an area that includes both Korea's major port Inchon and its largest city, Seoul.

General Smith's new orders focused Marine attention upon the central corridor, and all major combat actions during the spring of 1951 would take place in that zone. The dominating terrain feature was the Hwachon Reservoir, a 12-mile basin that blocked the southern flowing Pukhan River using a sizable dam. The reservoir was located just about at the peninsula's dead center. It provid-



ed pre-war Seoul with most of its water and electricity, but that was no longer true. The Hwachon Reservoir did, however, have significant tactical value. Just north of the 38th Parallel and at the southern edge of a mountainous shelf, it marked both the political and geographic divisions of North and South Korea. This barrier effective-

ly channeled all movement to either the east (Yanggu) or west (Hwachon), and the side holding the dam could threaten to flood the low-lying Chunchon and Soyang Valleys at will.

Korea's central corridor also included all of the major communications links between both the east and the west and the north

and south. A string of road junctions spiraled south along Routes 17 and 29 from Hwachon at roughly 15-mile intervals. These included Chunchon, Hongchon, Hoengsong, and Wonju—each of which would become a major objective during the Ridgway offensives on the Central Front.

Operation Killer

Beginning on 16 February, the Marines mounted out from Pohang by regimental combat teams for Chungju. Fortunately, by that time the CCF and NKPA were being pounded by air and artillery until their attacks ran out of steam north of Wonju. Thus, when the Marines finally arrived at Chungju, they could be used to spearhead a U.N. counteroffensive, a closely coordinated pincer attack by the U.S. IX and X Corps intended to trap the NKPA *III* and *V Corps* called Operation Killer. Eighth Army released the 1st Marine Division from direct control when it joined Major General Bryant E. Moore's IX Corps for Operation Killer, a two-phase drive up the Wonju basin to retake and secure Hoengsong. An Army officer, General Moore had served side-by-side with the Marines at Guadalcanal in 1942. He ordered General Smith to seize the high ground south of Hoengsong hoping to cut off enemy forces to the south by denying them use of their main egress routes. Although Smith lost tactical control of the 1st KMC Regiment when the Marines departed Pohang, U.S. Army artillery and transportation units reinforced the division. Particularly welcome additions were the much-needed vehicles of the U.S. Army's 74th Truck Company, and the "Red Legs" of the 92d Armored Field Artillery, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Leon F. Levoie, Jr.,

USA. This was a first-rate Army self-propelled howitzer unit that had rendered outstanding support at the Chosin Reservoir. The artillerymen of the 92d were, as Major Martin J. Sexton noted, "trained basically as Marines are in that they were essentially riflemen too, if not first."

On 19 February, Smith and Puller attended a commander's conference. There, they learned the 1st Marine Division was to be the focus of the main effort for Operation Killer and would advance with the 6th ROK Division on the left and X Corps to the right. General Ridgway's orders were to "seek out the enemy and inflict the greatest possible damage." In Marine terms, Operation Killer was going to be "buttoned up"; all U.N. forces were to keep close lateral contact, to maintain tactical integrity at all times, and to strictly adhere to the timetable.

Units would not bypass enemy positions and had to stop at each phase line even if there was no enemy resistance. Regrettably, the conference closed on a less than happy note for the Marines. Generals Smith and Puller were taken back to learn Operation Killer was to kick off in less than 48 hours, too short a time to move the entire division to the line of departure. The Marines were further dismayed when they were denied the use of a dedicated Marine fighter squadron. Their arguments to hold up the attack until the entire division could be assembled were dismissed by Ridgway who also refused to intervene to assure the Marines adequate close air support. In spite of Marine objections, H-hour was set for 1000 on 21 February.

General Smith elected to use two regiments (the 1st and 5th Marines) in the attack and keep

one, the 7th Marines, in reserve. The line of departure was located just north of Wonju. The area in the Marine zone was uninviting, to say the least. In the words of official Marine Corps historian Lynn Montross: "There were too many crags [and] too few roads." Rocky, barren, snow-covered ridges boxed in the narrow Som Valley whose lowlands were awash with runoff from melting snow and flooded by overflowing streams. The weather was terrible, "a mixture of thawing snow, rain, mud, and slush," according to 3d Battalion, 5th Marines' commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L. Stewart. The axis of advance was generally northwest along Route 29, which was sarcastically known as the "Hoengsong-Wonju Highway" (it was actually a primitive one-lane packed-dirt trail totally unsuited to support vehicular traffic) that generally paralleled

LtGen Ridgway ordered Eighth Army troops to "get off the roads and seize the high ground." Here a Marine patrol makes its way up a difficult trail during Operation Killer.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A6952





1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Jan-Feb51

A Marine Corsair circles after delivering napalm upon a suspected enemy position near Wonju in central Korea. The controversial breakup of the Marine air-ground team by Fifth Air Force in 1951 remained a touchy and unresolved issue throughout the rest of the Korean Conflict.

the Som River. The final objective was an east-west running ridgeline south of the ruins that had once been Hoengsong. The enemy defending this area was identified as the 196th Division from Chinese General Show Shiu Kwai's 66th Army.

Unfortunately, a series of events beyond General Smith's control hampered the start of operations. Transportation shortfalls meant that the 7th Marines would not be immediately available, so the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Glen E. Martin, a reserve officer who had been awarded a Navy Cross and served as a platoon and company commander during World War II, was designated the 1st Marine Division reserve for the first phase of Operation Killer. Snarled traffic, sticky mud, General MacArthur's visit to the 187th Airborne's zone, and the lack of trucks conspired to postpone the planned jump-off time. But, even with the logistical problems, the assault units of the

5th Marines—just like their World War I predecessors at Soissons—had to double time to get to the line of departure in time. Luckily, there was little enemy resistance. Under the watchful eyes of

Generals MacArthur, Ridgway, and Moore, the Marines advanced rapidly in a torrential rain opposed only by some ineffectual long distance small arms fire. Colonel Francis McAlister's 1st Marines moved up the muddy road in a column of battalions (Lieutenant Colonel Donald M. Schmuck's 1st Battalion, Major Clarence J. Mabry's 2d Battalion, and Lieutenant Colonel Virgil W. Banning's 3d Battalion, respectively). Colonel Raymond Murray's 5th Marines had a harder row to hoe advancing north (actually climbing up and sliding down the snow-covered terrain) across a series of steep ridges and narrow valleys. Lieutenant Colonel John L. Hopkins' 1st Battalion, with Lieutenant Colonel Joseph L. Stewart's 3d Battalion in trail, maintained the high ground by hugging the regimental left boundary. The Marines made it almost four miles the first day and then covered half as much ground the following day. "Unlike the Inchon-Seoul Campaign," recalled Private

Marines advance across a fog-filled valley in the Wonju-Hoengsong sector supported by machine gun fire. Elaborate weapons positions, common in the latter stages of the war, were unusual during the seesaw fighting in the spring of 1951.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A6843



First Class Morgan Brainard, “we were not moving out with what we infantrymen could recognize as a set goal, other than to kill gooks, and to move the lines steadily back north.”

The first real resistance occurred when the 1st Marines, moving with the 1st and 2d Battalions abreast, and the 5th Marines in column, neared Objectives A (Hill 537 and Ridge 400) and B (Hill 533), overlooking Hoengsong. The 1st Marines was stopped by small arms and heavy automatic weapons fire from Hill 166 on the left and dug in for the night. Supported by air and artillery, the 1st Marines secured the heights at 1015 on 23 February. That afternoon, the 1st and 2d Battalions conducted a successful flanking attack to take the final hill line and were overlooking Hoengsong as darkness fell. The 5th Marines waited in vain that same morning for an air strike before mounting a two-battalion assault to clear a pair of hills on the left. The next morning, a mechanized patrol from the 1st Marines passed through

Hoeng-song on its way to rescue several survivors still holding out in Massacre Valley where U.S. Army artillery units had been overrun almost two weeks earlier. The Marines found a gruesome sight. Burned out vehicles, abandoned howitzers, and more than 200 unburied dead lay strewn across the valley floor. This movement also stirred up a hornet’s nest. Enemy mortars and artillery ranged the ridgeline held by the 1st Marines. The major combat action of the day then occurred when Marine cannoners of Major Francis R. Schlesinger’s 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, bested their CCF counterparts in the ensuing late afternoon artillery duel. By dusk on 24 February, all Marine objectives for the first phase of Operation Killer had been secured. The Marines had suffered 23 killed in action and 182 wounded thus far.

The follow-on advance had to wait almost a week. Operations were placed on temporary hold for several reasons. One major reason was that General Moore, the IX

Corps commander, died following a helicopter crash. Additionally, the low ground around Hoeng-song had become a rain-soaked, muddy, impassible bog. Bad roads and poor weather stopped the Marines in their tracks because the assault units needed ammunition and food before they could renew the attack. Additionally, the Marine division was still fragmented because the 7th Marines was stranded at Wonju where a severe gasoline shortage idled most trucks. This shortfall was compounded by the poor trafficability of the road net, which had become a gooey morass due to the incessant rain. Army and Marine engineers labored night and day to shore up the deteriorating roads and bridges, but the supply situation became so critical that airdrops—an inefficient method heretofore used for emergencies only—had to become a logistics mainstay. Thirty-five airdrops were required to resupply the assault elements of the 1st Marine Division. Marine transport planes augmented the U.S. Air Force Combat Cargo Command participated in such drops all across the U.N. front. Also used in the resupply effort were 1,200 cargo handlers of the South Korean Civil Transport Corps. These hard-working indigenous laborers toiled under the direction of division Civil Affairs Officer First Lieutenant Oliver E. Dial. These hardy individuals each carried up to 50 pounds of supplies on A-frame backpacks to the forward most Marine units.

On 24 February, Major General Smith became the third Marine to assume command of a major U.S. Army formation (Brigadier General John A. Lejeune had commanded the U.S. 2d Division in France in 1918 and Major General Roy S. Geiger commanded the U.S. Tenth

Marine riflemen move across a frozen rice paddy during the drive back to the 38th Parallel. Although there were a few sharp actions, Operations Killer and later Ripper were remembered as “a long walk” by Capt Gerald P. Averill in his memoir Mustang.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A6869





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A6946

An automatic rifleman supported by another Marine with a carbine fires into a Communist-held position. Because of its great firepower, the Browning Automatic Rifle was the most vital weapon of a Marine fire team.

Army at Okinawa in 1945) when he took over IX Corps after General Moore's fatal heart attack. Smith's reception at Yoju was subdued, according to his aide, Major Sexton:

It was a very modest and unassuming entrance that was made when General Smith stepped out of the helicopter and was met by General [George B.] Peplow, who was the chief of staff of IX Corps. A brief introduction to the staff—the corps staff officers—followed, and I would say that it was approximately an hour, possibly an hour and a half after General Smith's arrival, that the first decision which he was required to make arose. It involved a seemingly complicated scheme of maneuver wherein IX Corps would execute a flanking maneuver to envelop

a sizable North Korean force which lay in front of the left portion of X Corps' zone of action. After deliberation with the G-3 and the chief of staff, the decision was forthcoming. It was simply "No, thank you." At which time, the G-3 excitedly called his . . . G-3 of X Corps, repeated these words and happily hung up the phone. As there were at this time smiles all around the staff, it was my impression that the general had been accepted rapidly.

The following day, Smith conferred with General Ridgway regarding future operations. Although Ridgway warmed Smith with glowing words of encouragement, he concluded by saying "he didn't know what the War Department would do." Smith knew. Despite the recommendations of U.S. Army Major General

Frank E. Lowe, sent to Korea by President Harry S. Truman to evaluate American units, that Smith be elevated to corps command, it was obvious no Marine general was going to be allowed to do so on a permanent basis; accordingly, Smith's tenure lasted only until a more senior U.S. Army general arrived in Korea. He also asked for recommendations as to the future employment of the 1st Marine Division, to which General Smith replied that he knew "of no better use for the Division than to continue north on the Hoensong-Hongchon axis" as the main threat would come from that direction. In addition, Ridgway announced that Operation Killer would not resume until 1 March and that he wanted a change in zones to reorient the division more to the north. The IX and X Corps boundary was shifted west in accord with the Eighth Army commander's wishes. To do this Brigadier General Puller, who was filling in as the 1st Marine Division commander, rearranged the Marine dispositions. He pulled the 5th Marines out of the line to become the division reserve and moved the 7th Marines up into the line on the left to replace a South Korean unit that had been holding that position.

Arguably, the 1st Marine Division had the most difficult assignment of any unit in the Eighth Army. It had to cross a muddy triangular open area and then eject a dug-in enemy from a ridgeline located about a mile-and-a-half north of Hoengsong. Phase Line Arizona, as the final objective was known, consisted of five distinct hill masses (Hills 536, 333, 321, 335, and 201). The 1st Marines' commander, Colonel McAlister, assigned two intermediate objectives (Hills 303 and 208) as well. The nature of the terrain, which required a river crossing



1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Mar51

A Marine tank pushes through the wreckage from ambushed U.S. Army units, which clogged the road to Hoengsong. Bad weather, poor roads, and supply difficulties held up the Marines more than enemy resistance during the spring of 1951.

and prohibited extensive vehicle movement, dictated a complex scheme of maneuver. The 7th Marines on the left would have to seize the hills in its zone to eliminate flanking fires before a battalion of the 1st Marines advancing through the 7th Marines' zone could assault its assigned objectives on the right. The CCF rear-guard, consisting of elements of the 196th and 197th Divisions, was situated inside a sophisticated reverse-slope defense system anchored by log bunkers and zigzag trenches immune to direct fire. Where possible, the Marines would use fire by tanks and self-propelled guns to reduce point targets, but emplacements on reverse slopes would have to be hit by unobserved close air support or high angle artillery and mortar fires. This meant if the Chinese defended in place the Marines would have to reduce the reverse slope defenses using close combat. The most important terrain obstacle was the chilly, chest-deep, fast-flowing Som River. During the plenary conference Colonel McAlister was informed that no engineer

support would be available and was further told the river was not fordable. Major Edwin H. Simmons, commanding 3d Battalion's Weapons Company, offered a solution. He recommended building a "Swiss bent bridge" composed of "A" shaped timber platforms with planking held in place by communications wire. This field expedient did the trick, and the 3d Battalion safely crossed the Som the night before the attack began.

The shattered remains of Hoengsong as they appeared after the four-day battle. During the battle, the 11th Marines fired more than 50 artillery missions while 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Corsairs and Panther jets flew 30 sorties in support.

1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Mar51



The battle for Hoengsong was a classic four-day slugging match in which the Marines slowly advanced against dug-in enemy troops under the cover of a wide array of supporting arms. On the first day (1 March), the 11th Marines fired 54 artillery missions, Marine Grumman F9F Panther jets and Corsairs flew 30 sorties, and Marine tanks lined up like a row of battleships using their 90mm guns to clear the way. Colonel Litzenberg's 7th Marines moved out with Major James I. Glendinning's 2d Battalion on the left and Major Maurice E. Roach, Jr.'s 3d Battalion on the right headed north toward Hills 536 and 385 respectively. Lieutenant Colonel Banning's 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, which was in the 7th Marines' zone, moved in echelon with Hill 303 in the 1st Marines' zone on the right as its final goal; concurrently, the other two battalions of the 1st Marines held fast and furnished fire support. Three artillery battalions (3d and 4th Battalions, 11th Marines, and the U.S. Army's 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion) were on call to support the 7th Marines. Major Webb D. Sawyer's 1st Battalion patrolled the left flank and main-



National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC361108
MajGen William M. Hoge, USA, seated in front, was sent out to relieve MajGen Oliver P. Smith, who had been given temporary command of IX Corps.

tained contact with the 6th ROK Division. The assault battalions advanced about a half-mile before they came under heavy mortar and automatic weapons fire, then were completely halted by a minefield. With the main attack stalled and darkness closing in, it was decided to wait until the following day to finish the job.

At 0800 on 2 March, both regiments jumped off. In the 1st Marines' zone, Banning's 1st Battalion went after Hill 303 on the left using a flanking attack while the 2d Battalion—well supported by rockets, artillery, and tanks—passed through the debris of Hoengsong, then took Hill 208 on the right with a frontal assault. Both attacks went smoothly, and the 1st Marines secured its intermediate objectives by midday. The 7th Marines, assisted by air strikes and 1,600 rounds of artillery, gained about a half-mile on the left. The toughest fighting occurred in the 2d Battalion's zone where the Marines had to crawl forward over rocky terrain. Unfortunately, Phase Line Arizona remained out

of reach when darkness fell.

The attacks on 3 March to secure the heights north of "Massacre Valley" featured the bloodiest single day of the operation. The 1st Marines secured Hills 321, 335, and 201 after some very tough hand-to-hand fighting which required the intervention of Captain Thomas J. Bohannon's Company A. The 7th Marines also continued the attack against a determined foe. Major Sawyer's 1st Battalion was called up from reserve to take and secure Hill 536 on the extreme left. The 3d Battalion then attacked Hill 333 with fire support from the stationary 2d Battalion. It was slow going for both assault units, and neither was able to secure its objectives before nightfall despite suffering 14 killed and 104 wounded since daybreak. These same two assault battalions determinedly "went over the top" amid snow flurries the next morning (4 March) only to discover most of the enemy had quietly slipped away during the night. Combat clearing duties ended at dark with the Marines firmly in possession of Phase Line Arizona.

The Marines had suffered almost 400 casualties (48 dead, 345 wounded, and 2 missing), while eliminating an estimated 2,000 enemy in two weeks of combat near Hoengsong. The bottom line, however, was that Operation Killer closed on an anticlimactic note. The Marines drove the enemy out of Hoengsong, but General Ridgway was dissatisfied with the punishment meted out. Although all terrain objectives had been taken, the enemy had deftly avoided a costly set piece battle and slipped out of the United Nations Command's trap. As a result, the Eighth Army commander ordered a new attack, Operation Ripper, to begin immediately.

There were several administrative changes during the brief respite between the end of Operation Killer and the onset of Operation Ripper. On 4 March, the 6th Replacement Draft (29 officers and 1,785 enlisted men) arrived, bringing with them 63 postal pouches—the first mail the Marines received since leaving Pohang. Concurrently, Lieutenant Colonel Erwin F. Wann, Jr.'s 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion and Lieutenant Colonel Francis H. Cooper's 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion were detached to support the U.S. Army crossing of the Han River and were thereafter sent to Inchon to conduct amphibious training. The amphibian tractors would not rejoin the 1st Marine Division until it moved to western Korea the following year. On the plus side, a 250-man South Korean National Police company joined the Marines. These "Wharrangs" primarily served as scouts and interpreters, but were occasionally used as auxiliary combat troops as well. On 5 March, the day after Operation Killer ended, General Smith returned to the 1st Marine Division upon the arrival at IX Corps headquarters of his replacement, Major General William H. Hoge, USA, who had quickly flown out from Trieste, Italy. An engineer by training, Hoge supervised the Alaska-Canadian Highway effort and commanded Combat Command B, 9th Armored Division, during World War II, the lead elements of which seized the only major bridge over the Rhine River at Remagen.

Operation Ripper

Operation Ripper was the fifth consecutive limited U.N. offensive. It would follow the same basic design as the previous attacks. As before, the real goals were to

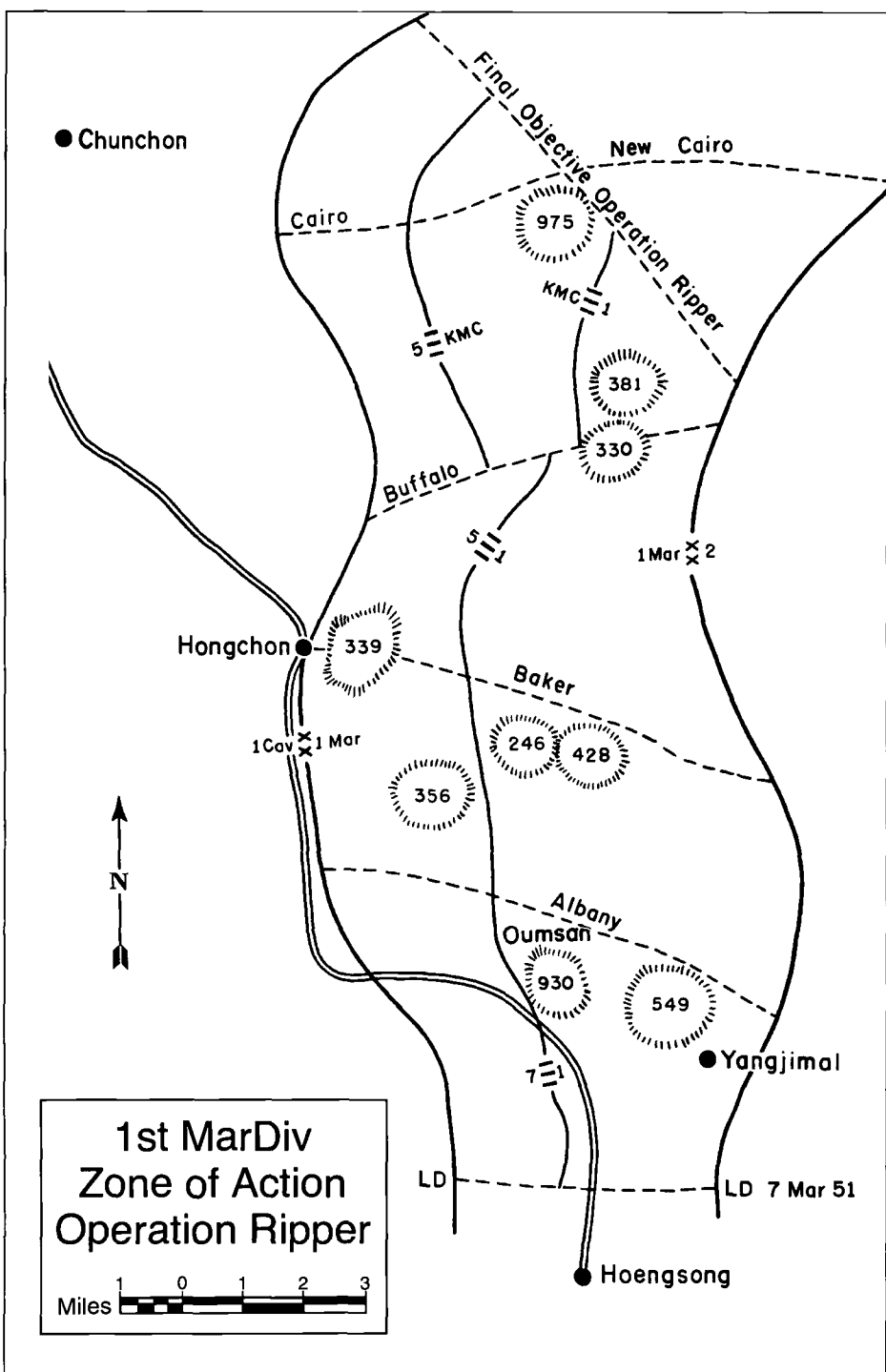
inflict maximum punishment and keep the Communists off balance, but this time General Ridgway added a major territorial goal as well. He wanted to outflank the enemy near Seoul and force them to withdraw north of the Imjin River, a movement that would carry the United Nations Command almost back to the 38th Parallel. The plan was for IX and X Corps

to drive north with I Corps holding in the west and the South Korean Army maintaining its positions along the east flank. The Central Front would be Eighth Army's primary arena. Hoge's plan was to drive north with the towns of Hongchong and Chunchon as major objectives in the IX Corps zone. Intermediate objectives included Phase Lines Albany, Buffalo, and

Cairo; the final objective was Line Idaho. General Hoge inserted an intermediate phase line, Baker, between Eighth Army-designated Lines Albany and Buffalo. The enemy in zone continued to be the CCF 66th Army, but intelligence officers were uncertain as to whether the enemy would continue to retreat or would finally stand and fight. Operation Ripper would, therefore, once again be a cautious advance, another limited, strictly controlled, "buttoned up" operation.

As in just-ended Operation Killer, the Marines would again be the focus of the IX Corps' main effort. A pair of U.S. Army units, the 1st Cavalry Division on the left and the 2d Infantry Division on the right, would guard the Marine flanks. Hongchong, an important communications hub located in the shadow of towering Oum Mountain, about five miles north of the line of departure, was the initial Marine objective. The coarse terrain included formidable Hill 930 and consisted of thickly wooded hills and swift-flowing streams. There were so few roads and trails that gravel-bottom streambeds were often pressed into use as roadways. The only thoroughfare (single-lane National Route 29) passed through Kunsamma Pass as it wound its way north to Hongchong from Hoengsong, and it initially served as the regimental boundary line inside the Marine zone. Intermittent snow, cold nights, and rainy days meant that the weather would continue to be a factor with which to be reckoned. The Marines in Korea, just as had Napoleon's army in Russia a century-and-a-half before, would have to deal with "General Mud" as well as enemy soldiers.

The 1st Marine Division mission was to seize all objectives and destroy all enemy south of Line





1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Mar51

Tank and infantry teams move to the flanks of the advancing Marine column north of Hoengsong. The cold weather and sticky mud were as difficult to overcome as was the enemy during Operation Killer.

Albany, then seize Hongchon and destroy all enemy south of Line Buffalo and be prepared to continue the attack to Lines Cairo and Idaho on order, with operations commencing at 0800 on 7 March. One regiment would constitute the corps reserve and would be under the operational control of the IX Corps commander during the latter portion of the operation. The 1st Marine Division would advance up the Hoengsong-Hongchon axis with "two up and one back." General Smith initially placed 1st and 7th Marines in the assault and earmarked the 5th Marines as the reserve. The two assault regiments (7th on the left and 1st on the right) were to advance astride Route 29 with all three battalions on line whenever possible. The difficult supply situation left Colonel Joseph L. Winecoff's 11th Marines short of artillery ammunition, so an emergency agreement between Major General Field Harris, Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and Major General Earl E. Partridge, Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, temporarily placed a Marine fighter squadron in direct support of the 1st Marine Division.

The operation started as

ordered. The Marines advanced in the afternoon snow against only light resistance, primarily small arms and mortar fires. The enemy once again relied upon delaying tactics, opening fire at long range to slow the attackers then withdrawing before close combat could be initiated. Additionally, Marine tankers noted increased use of road mines. During the first three days awful weather and difficult terrain were the main obstacles. The Marine attack was finally stopped in place by orders from above which halted the advance on 9 March until flanking units could catch up. The next two days were devoted to reconnaissance and security patrols as the division marked time. On 11 March, the Marines resumed the advance. This time the enemy put up a stiff fight in the 1st Marines zone, and the 1st Battalion had to use artillery and tank guns to reduce log bunkers atop Hill 549 before that position fell. This single battle cost the Marines more casualties (one killed and nine wounded) than had been inflicted in the previous five days (seven wounded). The first phase of Operation Ripper ended on 13 March when the 1st Marine Division successfully occupied all

of its objectives on Line Albany.

General Ridgway decided to change tactics for the next phase of Ripper. This time he opted to maneuver instead of slugging forward on a single line. His plan was a complex one. He decided to try an airborne drop north of Hongchon to be coordinated with a double envelopment by the 1st Marine Division and the 1st Cavalry Division, but this bold strike never came about because the Chinese *39th Army* slipped away before Ridgway's trap could be slammed shut. The reasons for this were divulged in a later intelligence find. A captured CCF directive indicated the enemy had adopted a "roving defensive" whereby units were no longer to hold at all costs, but should defend using movement to entice the United Nations Command to overextend itself as it had the previous November so the CCF could launch a "backhand" counteroffensive to isolate and annihilate the U.N. vanguard. It was a good scheme, but the wily Ridgway did not take the bait. Instead of mounting a headlong rush, his offensives continued to be strictly

Maj Vincent J. Gottschalk, commanding Marine Observation Squadron 6, discusses the tactical situation with Col Richard W. Hayward, commanding officer of the 5th Marines. The high-wing, single-engine OY-1 Sentinel in the background was used primarily as an artillery spotter.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A131207





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North of Hoengsong, Marines move up into the hills. Stamina and physical conditioning were important during the unending series of hill fights that led back to the 38th Parallel.

“buttoned up” affairs.

In the 1st Marine Division zone, General Smith retained the same basic plan of attack. The 1st and 7th Marines would mount the assault, and the 5th Marines, now commanded by Nicaragua-veteran and World War II Marine parachutist Colonel Richard W. Hayward, would be the reserve. As before, the Marine advance on 14 March moved forward against almost no resistance. The 7th Marines did not need to call for artillery or close air support, and the 1st Marines encountered only scattered fire as it moved forward. General Ridgway’s hopes of cutting off the enemy at Hongchon were dashed when an intercepted message from the enemy commander reported, “We must move back Enemy troops approaching fast,” before the planned airdrop could be made. True to his word, General Liu Chen’s troops were long gone by the time a motorized patrol from Major Sawyer’s 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, entered the devastated town of Hongchon. Although the patrol located no enemy, it did discover a large number of “butterfly” bomblets

dropped by U.S. Air Force aircraft. These deadly missiles so inundated the area that it took Captain Byron C. Turner’s Company D, 1st Engineers, and all available division personnel three days to locate and disarm most of the explosive devices before they could produce casualties. The 7th Marines also found a treasure trove: three

ammunition dumps that yielded more than two thousand small arms; a dozen heavy machine guns; a dozen mortars; a dozen recoilless rifles; numerous captured U.S. weapons; assorted demolitions; and four dozen cases of ammunition. This was one of the biggest finds of the war.

When the 7th Marines attacked the high ground north of Hongchon on the 15th, the 2d and 3d Battalions ran into a buzz saw. 120mm mortars and 76mm anti-tank guns pinned them down as they approached Hill 356. This Chinese fire was unusually accurate and intense, so much so that three 81mm mortars were knocked out. Likewise, the enemy was holding firm at Hills 246 and 248 in the 1st Marines zone. Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. McClelland’s 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, performed an extremely complicated maneuver when it moved from the right flank on the east across the entire zone behind the front lines, trucked up to the village of Yangjimal in the 7th Marines zone

A 81mm mortar crew fires in support of an attack. Under the leadership of a sergeant, a mortar squad was composed of seven Marines and was known as the infantry commander’s “hip pocket” artillery.

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on the west, then dismounted for a difficult overland march to join the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, for the assault on Hill 248. Unfortunately, the ensuing joint attack—including an air strike by Corsairs of Marine Fighter Squadron 214 and plentiful mortar and artillery fire—was not successful. After suffering about 100 casualties, the Marines pulled back to Hill 246 as darkness closed in. Another rifle battalion joined the assault force when Lieutenant Colonel Donald R. Kennedy's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, was attached to the 1st Marines that night. Fortunately, a morning assault by the 1st Marines the next day found Hill 248 undefended. Back in the 7th Marines' zone the 1st Battalion had to clear Hill 399 with hand grenades and bayonets on its way to Line Baker.

Despite the progress, IX Corps complained of the lack of speed in the advance. General Smith pointed out that the division was "making a conscientious effort to comply with the Army's directive to keep buttoned up and comb the

terrain." "This takes time," he said. Smith asked if there was any relaxation of the Army directive. General Hoge's answer was "'No,' but he still wanted more speed." On 17 March, Hoge ordered the 1st Marine Division to continue the attack to Line Buffalo and beyond. To comply, Smith moved the 5th Marines up on the left and pulled the 7th Marines out of the line. The 5th Marines advanced against scattered resistance and reached Line Buffalo without a major fight. In fact, no Marine in that zone was killed or wounded in action for three straight days. The CCF had pulled back, but left elements of the *12th NKPA Division* behind to delay the Marines. The biggest engagement occurred on 19 March in the 1st Marines' zone. There, the enemy was well dug in on a series of north-south ridges joining Hills 330 and 381. Fortunately, the terrain allowed the tanks of Captain Bruce F. Williams' Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, to support the 2d Battalion attack. After F4U Corsairs from Marine Fighter Squadrons 214

and 323 delivered napalm and high explosive bombs on suspected enemy entrenchments, artillery pounded the objective, then tanks moved up on each side of the ridge keeping pace with the advancing infantry. The powerful 90mm tank guns eliminated enemy bunkers with very accurate direct fire as their machine guns kept enemy heads down. This coordinated direct fire allowed the rifle companies to successfully leapfrog each other over the next couple of days. This formula was so successful that the NKPA finally panicked on 20 March. At that time the enemy fleeing Hill 381 were hammered by supporting arms and infantry fires until they were virtually wiped out. With the end of that action the 1st Marine Division was ready to renew the attack.

The advance to Line Cairo was made with Colonel Kim's 1st KMC Regiment, once again attached to the 1st Marine Division. This allowed General Smith to use three regiments (5th Marines, 1st Korean, and 1st Marines) on line. The 7th Marines was placed in corps reserve. The 5th Marines made it to Line Cairo without serious opposition, but this was not true for the 1st Marines or the Korean Marines. The Koreans relied upon aerial resupply as they moved forward in the undulating and trackless central sector. The biggest fight took place when the Korean regiment, supported by Major Jack C. Newell's 2d Battalion and Lieutenant Colonel William McReynolds' 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, fought a three-day battle to capture Hill 975. The position finally fell to a flanking maneuver. On 22 March, the 1st Marines encountered some fire from Hills 505, 691, and 627 before reaching the Idaho Line where it made contact with the U.S. Army's 38th Infantry Regiment. Elements of the

A Marine searches an enemy bunker. The Chinese often used small squad-sized bunkers as a limited defense to cover the withdrawal of larger units.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-7410



1st Marines encountered some stiff resistance at Wongo-ri in the Tuchon-Myon hills while patrolling on the 27th. Two days later, the 1st Marines and the Korean Marine regiment extended their lines north to the New Cairo Line without a fight and brought Operation Ripper to a close.

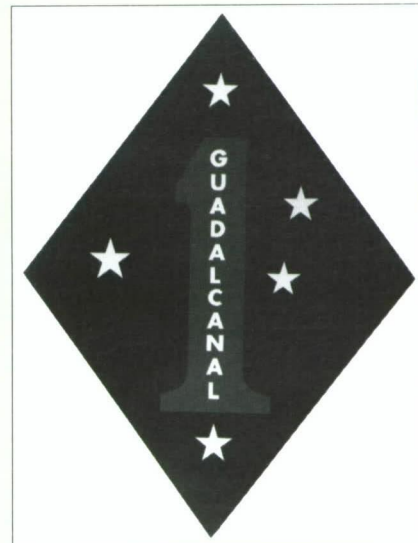
On 31 March, the 1st Marine Division mustered 21,798 men in addition to 3,069 Korean Marines and 234 attached U.S. Army soldiers. Most Marines were at Hongchon, but some service support detachments were located farther back at Masan, Pohang, and Wonju. Unfortunately, when the artillery ammunition crisis abated Marine air once again reverted to Fifth Air Force control, and Marine aviators were no longer in direct support of their comrades on the ground. In two major operations (Killer and Ripper), the 1st Marine Division suffered 958 combat casualties (110 killed and 848 wounded), while inflicting an estimated 7,000 enemy casualties and capturing 150 enemy prisoners. For five weeks the Marines spearheaded each of IX Corps' advances from Wonju to Chunchon and lead the Eighth Army in ground gained during that time.

Although the men at the forward edge of the battlefield did not yet realize it, the nature of the Korean War had changed radically. In fact, strategic discussions now centered on whether to once again invade North Korea or not and, if so, how far that penetration should be. The military situation was so favorable that U.N. diplomats actually began to entertain the notion that the other side might be ready to ask for an armistice if the pressure was kept up. The most controversial element of strategy thus became what to do when U.N. forces reached the 38th Parallel. After much high-level discussion,

1st Marine Division

The 1st Marine Division was the senior Marine Corps ground combat unit in Korea. By Table of Organization and Equipment it rated 22,343 men divided into combat, combat support, and service support units. The teeth of the division were its three 3,902-man rifle regiments which were subdivided into a headquarters and service company, an anti-tank company, a 4.2-inch mortar company, and three rifle battalions (1,123 men), each composed of a headquarters and service company, three rifle companies, and a weapons company. The firing batteries of an artillery regiment, a tank battalion, and a combat engineer battalion furnished combat support. Service support came from assorted organic battalions and an attached combat service group. A unique attachment in Korea was a composite aircraft squadron that included helicopters and observation aircraft.

For the most part, the Marines were equipped with weapons of World War II vintage: small arms



included .45-caliber automatic pistols, .30-caliber Garand semiautomatic rifles, carbines, Thompson submachine guns, and Browning automatic rifles; crew-served weapons included 4.2-inch, 81mm, and 60mm mortars, 155mm medium and 105mm light howitzers, 4.5-inch multiple rocket launchers, and .30- and .50-caliber machine guns. Two notable new weapons were the 3.5-inch rocket launcher and the M-26 Pershing tank.

1st Marine Division (Reinforced)

Headquarters Battalion
 Headquarters Company
 Military Police Company
 Reconnaissance Company
 1st Marines
 5th Marines
 7th Marines
 11th Marines
 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion
 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion
 1st Amphibian Truck Company
 1st Combat Service Group
 1st Engineer Battalion
 1st Medical Battalion
 1st Motor Transport Battalion

7th Motor Transport Battalion
 1st Ordnance Battalion
 1st Service Battalion
 1st Shore Party Battalion
 1st Signal Battalion
 1st Tank Battalion
 Battery C, 1st 4.5-inch Rocket Battalion

Attachments

1st Joint Assault Signal Company
 1st Provisional Truck Company
 Det, 1st Signals Operations Battalion
 Marine Observation Squadron 6
 1st Korean Marine Corps Regiment

American national command authorities agreed to go ahead and cross, but they warned General Douglas MacArthur that the con-

clusion of the next offensive would probably mark the limit of advance. Concurrently, the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the U.N.

commander that, since these actions would terminate maneuver warfare, a diplomatic settlement to end the conflict after all pre-war South Korean territory had been liberated would be pursued. Unfortunately, these high hopes for an early end to the fighting were dashed by General MacArthur's imprudent public ultimatum demanding that the enemy either stop fighting or face annihilation. This presumptuous announcement on 24 March had several far-reaching effects. First, it so offended the Communists that it torpedoed some promising secret negotiations and actually triggered an aggressive battlefield response. Second, this action also sowed the seed that later sprouted into one of the most famous controversies in American military history.

Operations Rugged and Dauntless

All of Operation Ripper's terrain objectives had been taken, but General Ridgway felt not enough punishment had been meted out and this, coupled with a desire to secure a more defensible line, led him to continue offensive opera-

tions without a break. This time he envisioned a "double whammy" in the form of Operations Rugged and Dauntless. The goal of Rugged was to carry the Eighth Army back above the 38th Parallel to occupy a trans-peninsular defense line anchored upon the centrally located Hwachon Reservoir. Dauntless, on the other hand, was to be a spoiling attack to threaten the enemy's major staging area located northwest of Hwachon. This was the so-called "Iron Triangle" that included the terminus of several railway lines running down from Manchuria and incorporated the intersection of all major roads in north-central Korea. Its forested flat lands were bounded by protective ridges and included the towns of Chorwan, Pyonggang (not to be confused with the North Korean capital of Pyongyang), and Kumhwa. The geographic shape of the road net connecting these towns gave the Iron Triangle its name.

The battlefield situation was very complicated. Eighth Army intelligence officers were not sure if the enemy was going to defend in place along the former interna-

tional dividing line or continue to give ground. Large troop movements into the Iron Triangle had been noted, but it was a point of contention as to whether these were part of a Communist "rotation" policy or if they constituted an offensive build up. (Actually, both events were occurring simultaneously; worn out elements of the CCF *Fourth Field Army* were moving back to Manchuria while the fresh CCF *Third Field Army* was entering Korea.) Unsure of enemy intentions, General Ridgway ordered a cautious advance, but warned his corps commanders to be ready to fall back to prepared defensive lines if ordered to do so. Ridgway's primary intent was to seize Line Kansas, a phase line purposely drawn so that it included the best defensive terrain in the vicinity of the 38th Parallel. In IX Corps' zone this line carried eastward from the Imjin River to the western tip of the Hwachon Reservoir and included that body of water's southern shoreline. IX Corps' axis of advance was to be about a dozen miles almost due north from Chunchon astride the Pukhan River using National Route 17 as the main supply route. The terrain in this zone was uneven. It was mostly flat west of the Pukhan River, but high hills on the right dominated the approaches to the Hwachon Reservoir. The enemy was believed to be stay-behind elements of the CCF *39th Army*, but it was uncertain if those forces would flee or fight.

On 29 March, Ridgway issued orders to initiate Operation Rugged. This time the hard-working Marines did not spearhead the attack as they had during Killer and Ripper. The U.S. 1st Cavalry and 6th ROK Divisions would carry that load, while the 1st Marine Division was IX Corps

Tank and infantry teams search out possible enemy positions on either side of the road to Chunchon. Unfortunately, the mountainous terrain of central Korea hampered effective tank support.

1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Apr51

