

perimeter. The Chinese *58th Division's* reported intentions to renew its attack against Hagaru-ri seem to have been thwarted by well-placed air attacks during the day and heavy artillery and mortar fires during the night. Ridge's supporting arms coordinator also experimented with night close air support, using converging bands of machine gun tracer fire to point out targets to the Corsair "night hecklers" overhead.

At 0800 on 30 November, the morning after George Company's arrival and a scant night's sleep, Ridge ordered Sitter to pass through Myers' position on East Hill and continue the attack. Drysdale's 41 Commando was held in reserve. This company-sized force of highly trained Royal Marines gave Ridge a small but potent maneuver element, far more promising than the scratch reserve formations he had been forced to use. Drysdale and his officers spent much of the day reconnoitering possible counterattack routes and acquainting themselves with supporting fire plans. "I felt entirely comfortable fighting alongside the Marines," said Drysdale.

Sitter, stoic and unflappable, sent out his 1st and 2d Platoons to pass through Myers' toehold on the hill. They were then to attack on both sides of the ridge. The 3d Platoon and two platoons of Able Company engineers would follow in reserve. Progress was slow and Sitter used his reserve to envelop the Chinese right flank. The attack bogged down and Sitter asked for permission to set up defensive positions on the ground previously held by Myers who had withdrawn his meager force. Corsairs were brought in and worked over the crest of the hill again and again, but George Company could not take the contested ground.



National Archives Photo (USAF) AC40314

Ammunition and supplies for the embattled Marines descend from a C-119 Flying Boxcar of the Far East Air Forces Combat Cargo Command. This was the only photograph the U.S. Air Force photographer was able to take before 23-degree-below-zero weather froze the shutter on his camera.

That same day at Hagaru-ri, 30 November, Colonel Brower, commanding the 11th Marines, came down with a serious liver infection. Command of the regiment passed to his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Youngdale.

Disaster Threatens RCT-31

Sung Shi-lun was amazingly well informed as to exactly what his opponents were doing. Chinese reconnaissance was good;

and Korean civilians, including line crossers, were at least as useful to the Chinese as they were to the Americans. Moreover, he apparently had a serviceable quantity of signal intelligence from radio intercepts. Stymied by the Marines' stubborn defense at Yudam-ni and Hagaru-ri, he decided to finish off the U.S. Army forces east of the reservoir by adding the weight of the *81st Division* to the *80th Division* already engaged against Task Force Faith.

The curious command relationships at Yudam-ni continued. Without a common commander in place on the ground, the two collocated regiments pursued their separate missions. Smith had issued an order on the afternoon of 29 November directing Murray to assume responsibility for the protection of the Yudam-ni area with his 5th Marines, while Litzenberg was to employ the entire 7th Marines in clearing the MSR to Hagaru-ri "without delay."

Almond Issues New Orders

At noon on 29 November, Almond departed Haneda airfield in Japan on his return flight from his meeting with MacArthur. Enroute to Yonpo he directed his G-3 and other staff members to commence planning the break-off of the offensive and the consolidation of the corps. When Almond arrived at his war room in Hamhung he saw that, in addition to the predicament of the 1st Marine Division and RCT-31 at the Chosin Reservoir, his remaining forces were in considerable disarray. Soule's 3d Infantry Division was headed in two different directions. A CCF column at Sachang far to the southwest of Yudam-ni had already engaged the division's 7th Infantry. The remaining two regiments, the 15th and 65th, were regrouping at Yonghong on the coast preparatory to attacking west, in accordance with orders to relieve pressure on the Eighth Army's dangling flank. In Barr's 7th Infantry Division, MacLean's RCT-31 was already isolated and heavily engaged east of the reservoir. Barr's remaining regiments, the 17th and 32d Infantry, were pulling back to the Pungsan area. By 2100 that evening X Corps Operation Order Number 8, providing for the discontinuance of the attack to the

northwest and the withdrawal of forces into the Hamhung-Hungnam perimeter, was ready for Almond's approval.

By that order, Almond placed under Smith's command all Army troops in the Chosin Reservoir area, including Task Force Faith and elements at Hagaru-ri, effective 0800 the next morning. Along with the assignment of these troops came a highly optimistic order from X Corps to Smith to "redeploy one RCT without delay from Yudam-ni area to Hagaru area, gain contact with elements of the 7th Inf Div E of Chosin Reservoir; coordinate all forces in and N of Hagaru in a perimeter defense based on Hagaru; open and secure Hagaru-Koto-ri MSR."

At 0600, 30 November, Litzenberg and Murray issued a joint order for the breakout. (Smith did admit in his log entry for 30 November: "An ADC [assistant division commander; that is, Craig] would have come in handy at this point.") That same morning, Almond gave the senior members of his staff a fuller briefing on the MacArthur decision to go over to the strategic defensive. He made it known that he had also issued orders to the ROK I Corps to pull back. By this time the 3d ROK Division was at Hapsu and the Capital Division above Chongjin. They were now to withdraw to Songjin, a deepwater port about 100 miles northeast of Hungnam.

General Barr, who had established an advance command post at Hungnam, was among those present. After the briefing, Barr—whether at Almond's suggestion or on his own initiative is not clear—flew to Hagaru-ri. There he met with O.P. Smith and Hodes and then borrowed a Marine helicopter to go forward to Faith's position. Smith asked Hodes to draft a message advising Faith that his com-

mand was now attached to the 1st Marine Division. Barr at this point was out of the operational chain-of-command to Task Force Faith, but RCT-31 was still, of course, part of the 7th Infantry Division. Barr told Smith that he was recalling Hodes from the Chosin Reservoir area to avoid any misunderstanding as to command arrangements. (Hodes would pay a last visit to Hagaru-ri on 2 December.)

Barr arrived at Faith's command post shortly before noon. He presumably informed Faith of the changed command status, either in substance or by delivering the Hodes dispatch.

On his return to Hagaru-ri, Barr agreed with Smith that Task Force Faith, with Marine and Navy close air support, could extricate itself and get back to Hagaru-ri. Almond arrived at about this time and met with Smith, Barr, and Hodes at Smith's forward command post, a few hundred yards from where Ridge's Marines were contending for possession of East Hill. Almond announced that he had abandoned any idea of consolidating positions in the Chosin Reservoir area. A withdrawal would be made posthaste to Hungnam. Almond authorized Smith to destroy or burn all equipment that would impede his movement. Resupply would be by air. Smith demurred: "I told him that my movements would be governed by my ability to evacuate the wounded, that I would have to fight my way back and could not afford to discard equipment and that, therefore, I intended to bring out the bulk of my equipment."

Almond shrugged. He then directed Smith and Barr to work out a time-phased plan to pull back the three Army battalions of RCT-31 making up "Task Force Faith." Furthermore, if Faith failed to execute his orders, Almond



National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC353607

Cases of ammunition are sorted out and lashed together at Yonpo airfield on 29 November before loading into C-47 transports of the Far East Air Force's Combat Cargo Command. This ammo was intended for RCT-31, better known as Task Force Faith, east of the reservoir. First airdrops directly from Japan would be to Hagaru-ri on 1 December.

opined that he should be relieved.

Almond later said that in addition to general instructions on withdrawal of forces and a specific plan for the withdrawal of RCT-31, he also asked Smith for an explicit plan for the evacuation of both Army and Marine wounded by way of the airstrip being completed at Hagaru-ri.

Almond told Barr that on his flight up to Hagaru-ri he had passed over a column of trucks halted on the road a few miles south of Koto-ri and recognized it as the 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry, which was working its way up from Chinhung-ni. He suggested to Barr that he relieve the slow-moving battalion commander, West Pointer Lieutenant Colonel Richard F. Reidy. Barr objected, saying he did not know the situation confronting the battalion. He may also have reminded Almond that all movements up to Koto-ri were being coordinated by X Corps. Almond telephoned (by radio link) his chief of staff, the able Major General Clark L. Ruffner, and ordered him to expedite the movement north of the 2d Battalion, 31st Regiment, to join Puller's forces at Koto-ri. Before

leaving, Almond told Barr and Smith that Soule's 3d Infantry Division was doing a "magnificent" job of covering the gap with the Eighth Army.

After Almond had departed, Barr and Smith agreed that not much could be done for RCT-31 until the 5th and 7th Marines arrived at Hagaru-ri from Yudam-ni. Smith did order Litzenberg and Murray to expedite their withdrawal, destroying any supplies and equipment that had to be abandoned.

Ruffner sent Captain Joseph L. Gurfein, West Point 1944, to get Reidy, a short, chunky man whose face showed the marks of his boxing days at the Academy, moving. Gurfein found Reidy and his battalion, which had only two rifle companies, stalled about three miles outside Puller's position. (The other rifle company had gone forward earlier, had been with Task Force Drysdale, and was now in place, more or less intact, at Koto-ri.) Reidy's battalion, urged on by Gurfein, made a faltering night attack and eventually pushed its way into Koto-ri. Puller gave the battalion a sector of Koto-ri's defensive perimeter. He also

ordered Reidy (who was suffering from a badly infected foot) to take charge of the sizable number of soldiers from various units—including a detachment of the 185th Engineer Battalion—that had now collected at Koto-ri.

With Task Force Faith

During the daylight hours of 30 November, Don Faith worked out counterattack plans to meet a penetration of his perimeter. The Chinese, not waiting for nightfall, began their attack in the afternoon. Task Force Faith's perimeter at Sinhung-ni was now isolated and alone with no friendly forces between it and Hagaru-ri. By midnight the attack against Faith's perimeter had built up to unprecedented intensity. There were penetrations, but Faith sealed these off with local counterattacks. At the aid station, medical supplies were completely exhausted. The dead, frozen stiff, were laid out in rows stacked about four feet high.

Meanwhile, well to Faith's rear, headquarters elements of RCT-31 and the 31st Tank Company at Hudong-ni, with 1st Marine Division approval, had fallen back to Hagaru-ri. Two disabled tanks had to be abandoned along the four-mile route, but otherwise the march, about 325 soldiers altogether, was made without incident. The regimental S-3, Lieutenant Colonel Berry K. Anderson, the senior Army officer present, was in charge. A new 31st Infantry headquarters was being formed at Hamhung, with Colonel John A. Gavin, USA, as its designated commander, but it was not sent forward to Hagaru-ri.

Intimations of an Evacuation

By the end of November it was increasingly obvious that Rear

Admiral James Doyle, who had landed the Marines at Inchon and again at Wonsan, was now going to have to lift them out of Hungnam as part of a massive amphibious withdrawal. Doyle, as Commander, Task Force 90, issued plans on 28 November for a redeployment of United Nations forces. Doyle's plans called for the division of his Task Force 90 into two amphibious task groups. Task Group Three, under Rear Admiral Lyman A. Thackrey, would provide for amphibious evacuation on the west coast of Eighth Army units if required. Task Group One, under Doyle's immediate command, would execute the amphibious evacuation of east coast ports, primarily Hungnam. Task Group Three, with two-thirds of the amphibious force, would go to the west coast where the situation, at that moment, seemed more critical. There would not be nearly enough amphibious ships for these tasks; there had to be an enormous gathering of merchant shipping. Vice Admiral Joy's deputy chief of staff, newly promoted Rear Admiral Arleigh Burke, largely ran this effort.

The carrier-based aircraft brought together for the Inchon landing and then the Wonsan landing had by mid-November been largely dispersed. Left with Task Force 77 were the fast carriers *Leyte* (CV 32) and *Philippine Sea* (CV 47). Also still on station was the escort carrier *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116)—"Bing-Ding" to the Marines and sailors—but her sister ship *Sicily* (CVE 118), having dropped off VMF-214, the "Blacksheep" squadron, at Wonsan, was in port in Japan. Major Robert P. Keller had commanded the squadron until 20 November when he was detached to become the Marine air liaison officer with Eighth Army and Fifth

Air Force. In World War, Keller served in the Pacific with Marine Fighter Squadrons 212 and 223 and was credited with at least one aerial victory. Command of VMF-214 was taken over by Major William M. Lundin.

The big carrier *Valley Forge* (CV 45), which on 3 July had been the first carrier to launch combat missions against North Korean invaders, was on her way home for a much-needed refit. Now the emergency caused her to turn about and head for the Sea of Japan. Also on the way was the *Princeton* (CV 37), hurriedly yanked out of mothballs. But until these carriers could arrive, tactical air operations, including all important close air support, would have to be carried out by shore-based Marine squadrons and Navy and Marine squadrons in the *Leyte*, *Philippine Sea*, and *Badoeng Strait*.

On 1 December the Far East Air Forces relinquished control of all tactical air support of X Corps to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, which, in the words of air historian Richard P. Hallion, "performed brilliantly." The *Princeton* arrived on station on 5 December. By then Task Force 77 was giving the Chosin exodus its full attention.

Carrier-based Vought F4U Corsairs and Douglas AD Skyraiders were the workhorses of Task Force 77. A typical ordnance load for the Corsair on a close air support mission was 800 rounds for its 20mm guns, eight 5-inch rockets, and two 150-gallon napalm bombs. With this load the plane had an endurance of two-and-one-half hours. The Navy's Skyraider, much admired by the Marines, packed an ordnance load comparable to a World War II Boeing B-17 heavy bomber, commonly 400 rounds of 20mm, three 150-gallon napalm bombs, and either twelve 5-inch rockets or twelve 250-pound frag-

mentation bombs. The Sky-raider could stay in the air for four hours with this load.

Bad Night at Hagaru-ri

The Marines at Hagaru-ri had another bad night on 30 November. The Chinese, the *58th Division* now augmented by the *59th*, assaulted Ridge's weary defenders once again in an attack pattern that repeated that of the night of the 28th. One regiment or more came in against the southwest face of the perimeter and unfortunately for them hit Item Company's well-entrenched position. First Lieutenant Joseph Fisher, always optimistic in his counting of enemy casualties, guessed that he killed as many as 500 to 750 of them. His own losses were two Marines killed, 10 wounded.

Another Chinese regiment came across the contested ground on East Hill hitting the reverse slope defenses held chiefly by Sitter's Company G and 1st Engineer Battalion's Companies A and B. General Smith watched the fight from the doorway of his command post, two-thirds of a mile away. Some ground was lost. Ridge sent up a portion of his precious reserve, 41 Commando, to reinforce Company G, and the lost ground was retaken by early morning.

After the night's action, Ridge, the defense force commander, came to see Smith at about 0900. "He was pretty low and almost incoherent," Smith wrote in his log for 1 December. "The main trouble was loss of sleep. He was much concerned about another attack. He felt with the force available to him he could not hold both the airstrip and the ridge [East Hill] east of the bridge. I told him he would have to hold both and would have to do it with what we had."

Casualty Evacuation and Resupply

Friday, 1 December—although no one thought of it that way at the time—was the turning point of the campaign.

Lieutenant Colonel John Partidge's 1st Engineer Battalion had succeeded in hacking out the semblance of an airstrip from the frozen earth in 12 days of around-the-clock dangerous work, the engineers at times laying down their tools to take up rifles and

machine guns. Heroic though the engineering effort was, the airstrip was only 40 percent complete. Its rough runway, 50-foot wide and 2,900-foot long, fell considerably short of the length and condition specified by regulations for operation of transport aircraft at those altitudes and temperatures. Smith decided that the urgency of the evacuation problem was such that the uncompleted airfield must be used, ready or not.

Its impossible load of casualties

LtCol Murray, exact location and time unknown, but possibly mid-November at Hagaru-ri, briefs Maj Vincent J. Gottschalk, commanding officer of VMO-6, on the locations of units of his regiment. Between 27 November and 1 December, VMO-6's helicopters flew 152 medical evacuation missions in addition to many other reconnaissance and liaison missions.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A130916



was overwhelming the division field hospital—a collection of tents and Korean houses. Navy Captain Eugene R. Hering, the division surgeon, met with General Smith that morning. Two additional surgical teams had been flown in by helicopter from Hungnam. The two companies, Charlie and Easy, of the 1st Medical Battalion, already had some 600 patients. Hering expected 500 more casualties from Yudam-ni and 400 from the Army battalions east of the reservoir. Grim as his prediction of casualties was, these estimates would prove to be much too low.

Until the airstrip was operational, aerial evacuation of the most serious cases had been limited to those that could be flown out by the nine helicopters and 10 light aircraft of Major Gottschalk's VMO-6, which also had many other missions to perform. From 27 November to 1 December, VMO-6, struggling to fly at the cold, thin altitudes, had lifted out 152 casualties—109 from Yudam-ni, 36 from Hagaru-ri, and 7 from Koto-ri. One of Gottschalk's pilots, First Lieutenant Robert A. Longstaff, was killed on an evacuation flight to Toktong Pass.

At 1430 on Friday afternoon, the first Air Force C-47 transport touched down on the frozen snow-covered runway. A half-hour later the plane, loaded with 24 casualties, bumped its way off the rough strip into the air. Three more planes came in that afternoon, taking out about 60 more casualties. "It takes about a half hour to load a plane with litter patients," Smith noted in his log. "Ambulatory patients go very much faster." The last plane in for the day, arriving heavily loaded with ammunition, collapsed its landing gear and had to be destroyed.

Because of Smith's foresight,



Photo by Sgt William R. Keating, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5683
Casualty evacuation from Hagaru-ri airstrip began on 1 December, although the condition of the field fell far short of what safety regulations required. Here, on a subsequent day, an ambulance discharges its cargo directly into an Air Force C-47 or Marine Corps R-4D transport. Weapons of other, walking wounded, casualties form a pile in the foreground.

Hagaru-ri was already stockpiled with six days of rations and two days of ammunition. The first airdrop from Air Force C-119 "Flying Box Cars" flying from Japan was on that same critical 1st of December. The drops, called "Baldwins," delivered prearranged quantities of ammunition, rations, and medical supplies. Some drops were by parachute, some by free fall. The Combat Cargo Command of the Far East Air Forces at first estimated that it could deliver only 70 tons of supply a day, enough perhaps for a regimental combat team, but not a division. By what became a steady stream of transports landing on the strip and air drops elsewhere the Air Force drove its deliveries up to a 100 tons a day.

Toward the end of the day Lieutenant Colonel William J. McCaffrey, West Point 1939 and

the X Corps' deputy chief of staff, visited Smith. McCaffrey, who had been Almond's chief of staff in the 92d Infantry Division in Italy, outlined for Smith the plan for constriction into a Hungnam perimeter and its subsequent de-fense. Soule's 3d Infantry Division was to move elements to the foot of Funchilin Pass and provide a covering force through which the 1st Marine Division would withdraw. The 1st Marine Division would then organize a defensive sector west and southwest of Hungam. The 7th Infantry Division would occupy a sector northeast and north of Hungnam.

The consolidation of X Corps in the Hamhung-Hungnam area included the evacuation of Wonsan to the south. Major General Field Harris, commanding the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, ordered MAG-12—the Marine aircraft group had three tactical squadrons and a headquarters

Mountains of supplies were rigged at Yonpo Airfield by Capt Hersel D. C. Blasingame's 1st Air Delivery Platoon for parachute drop, free airdrop, or simply as cargo for the transports flying into Hagaru-ri. The 1st Marine Division needed 100 tons of resupply a day, delivered by one means or another.

Photo by SSgt Ed Barnum, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A130436



squadron—to move up from Wonsan to Yonpo. The group commander, Colonel Boeker C. Batterton, 46, Naval Academy 1928, had spent most of World War II with a naval aviation mission in Peru. MAG-12 completed the movement of its aircraft in one day—that same busy 1 December. Some planes took off from Wonsan, flew a mission, and landed at Yonpo.

East of Chosin

Total strength of RCT-31 has been calculated at a precise 3,155, but of this number probably not more than 2,500 fell under Don Faith's direct command in "Task Force Faith" itself. On the morning of 1 December, Lieutenant Colonel Faith, on his own initiative, began his breakout from Sinhung-ni to the south. He did not have a solid radio link to the 1st Marine Division, and had nothing more than a chancy relay through Marine Captain Edward P. Stamford's tactical air control net. Faith's own 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, would lead off, followed by the 57th Field Artillery, with the 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, bringing up the rear. Trucks would be unloaded so as to carry the wounded. The howitzers were spiked. Most jeeps and all inoperable trucks were to be destroyed, as would be all supplies and equipment. In execution the destruction of the surplus was spotty. About 25 to 30 vehicles—all that were still in operating condition—formed up into column. The overriding mission for Task Force Faith was now to protect the truck convoy with its hundreds of wounded. Much reliance would be placed on the automatic weapons fire of the tracked weapons carriers, down to three in number, two quad .50s and one dual 40mm.

The column began to move out at about 1100. The soldiers could see the Chinese in plain sight on the surrounding high ground. Progress was slow. Mortar rounds continued to fall, causing more casualties, and Chinese infantry began pressing in on the column. The fighting for the first half-mile was particularly intense. Officers and noncommissioned officers suffered disproportionate losses. Control broke down.

Captain Stamford and his tactical air control party tried to keep close air support overhead as continuously as possible. Navy Corsairs from the fast carrier *Leyte* came on station at about 1300. With Stamford calling them in, the Corsairs used napalm and rockets and strafed with 20mm cannon. One napalm drop hit close to Faith's command group causing eight or ten casualties. This ghastly accident was demoralizing, but survivors agreed that without close air support the column would never have cleared the perimeter.

Some of the soldiers on the point began to fall back. Faith drew his Colt .45 pistol and turned them around. Panicky KATUSAs—and some Americans—tried to climb into the trucks with the wounded. Riflemen assigned to move along the high ground on the flanks started to drift back to the road. The head of the column reached a blown bridge just north of Hill 1221 at about 1500. Some of the trucks, trying to cross the frozen stream, broke through the ice and had to be abandoned.

The Chinese held the high ground on both sides of a roadblock that now stood in the way and were in particular strength on Hill 1221. Faith, .45 in hand, gathered together enough men to reduce the roadblock. Other small groups of men clawed their way crossways along the slope of Hill

1221. This fight was almost the last gasp of Task Force Faith. In the words of one major, "[After Hill 1221] there was no organization left."

Even so, by dusk the column was within four-and-one-half road miles of Hagaru-ri when a grenade fragment that penetrated his chest just above his heart killed Faith himself. His men propped up his body, with a blanket wrapped around his shoulders, in the cab of a truck—rather like a dead El Cid riding out to his last battle—hoping that word of his death would not spread through the column causing more demoralization. Just what happened to his body after that is not clear.

As the column struggled on southward the Chinese methodically continued their destruction of the convoy, truck by truck. Individual soldiers and small groups began to break away from the column to attempt to cross the frozen reservoir on foot. Task Force Faith, as such, had ceased to exist.

At Hagaru-ri

During the fighting at Hagaru-ri from 28 November through 1 December, Ridge's 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, had suffered 43 killed, 2 missing, and 270 wounded—a total of 315 battle casualties and a third of its beginning strength. The bits and pieces of Marine and Army units that made up the rest of the Hagaru-ri defense force had casualties perhaps this high if not higher. These casualties, however, did not come even close to those suffered by RCT-31 east of the reservoir.

Throughout the night of 1 December survivors of Task Force Faith drifted into the north side of the perimeter at Hagaru-ri, most of them coming across the ice.



Photo courtesy of Sgt Norman L. Strickbine, USA

Moving toward the perceived safety of Hagaru-ri, soldiers of Task Force Faith march in a well dispersed but terribly exposed single column across the snow-covered, frozen surface of Pungnyuri Inlet. The march across the ice would continue throughout the night of 1 December.

During that last night all semblance of unit integrity dissolved. At about 0230 on the morning of 2 December, Marine Captain Stamford appeared in front of Captain Read's artillery battery position. Stamford had been briefly taken prisoner but escaped. By mid-morning, 670 soldier survivors, many of them wounded or badly frostbitten, had found their way into Hagaru-ri warming tents. They had a terrible tale to tell.

Dr. Hering, the division surgeon, reported to Smith that 919 casualties went out on 1 December, but that among them there was a large number of malingerers. "Unfortunately," Smith entered in his log, "there are a good many Army men, not casualties who got on planes. . . . Men got on stretchers, pulled a blanket over themselves and did a little groaning, posing as casualties. . . . Tomorrow we will get this situation under control and will have MPs at the planes. No man will be able to board a plane without a [medically issued] ticket." Smith, who had ordered Army Lieutenant Colonel Berry K. Anderson to organize physically fit soldier survivors into a provisional battalion, now "talked" to Anderson again

and told him to get his soldiers under control.

X Corps had set up a clearing station at Yonpo. Triage determined those casualties who would recover in 30 days or less. They went to the 1st Marine Division Hospital in Hungnam, the Army's 121st Evacuation Hospital in

Hamhung, or the hospital ship *Consolation* in Hungnam harbor. Casualties expected to require more than 30 days hospitalization were flown on to Japan.

Lieutenant Colonel Olin L. Beall, 52, a quintessential salty old mustang and a great favorite of General Smith, commanded the 1st Motor Transport Battalion, which held a position on the northeast quadrant of the Hagaru-ri perimeter. Smith, not flamboyant himself, liked colorful leaders such as Beall and Puller. Murray, a very different style of leader, said of Beall: "We all agreed that he would have had to lived a thousand years to have done all the things he claimed to have done. But when people began checking up on some of the things that he had said he had done, by God, he had done them."

Beall had enlisted in the Marine Corps on 5 April 1917, the day before war was declared on

Marine wounded await evacuation at Yudam-ri. A total of 109 went out by helicopter. The rest would go out by ambulance or truck once the 5th and 7th Marines broke their way through to Hagaru-ri. Fixed-wing aerial evacuation from Hagaru-ri began on 1 December.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4858





Photo by Cpl Alex Klein, National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC353559

PFC Ralph C. Stephens, wounded at Koto-ri, receives whole blood at the 1st Marine Division hospital in Hambung on 1 December. Administering the blood are HM 2/C Emmett E. Houston and Lt(jg) Vernon L. Summers. Until the airstrips opened at Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri, evacuation of the wounded was virtually impossible.

Germany. He served in Cuba and Haiti, gained a temporary commission, and went to France just as the war ended. He reenlisted in 1920 and served as an officer—as did many other Marine noncommissioned officers—in the *Gendarmerie d’Haiti* chasing bandits. In 1935 he reached the much-respected warrant grade of Marine gunner. By the end of World War II he was a major and a veteran of Okinawa.

On Saturday, 2 December 1950, Beall led a rescue column of jeeps, trucks, and sleds across the ice looking for other Task Force Faith survivors. Marine Corsairs covered his efforts, flying so low that he said, “I could have scratched a match against their bellies.” He brought in 319 soldiers, many of them in a state of shock. The Chinese did little to interfere except for long-range rifle fire.

There is no agreement on exact Army casualty figures. Perhaps 1,050 survivors reached Hagaru-ri. Of these only 385 were found to be physically and mentally fit for

combat. These soldiers were given Marine weapons and equipment. Not a single vehicle, artillery piece, mortar, or machine gun of Task Force Faith had been saved. When Almond visited Smith that same Saturday, he had, in Smith’s words, “very little to say about the tactical situation. He is no longer urging me to destroy equipment.”

Coming Out of Yudam-ni

All day long on Thursday, 30 November, at Yudam-ni the Chinese harried the perimeter with long-range small arms fire and minor probing attacks. As a step in the regroupment of their battered regiments, Litzenberg and Murray organized a provisional battalion made up rather strangely of the combined Companies D and E, 7th Marines; and sections of 81mm mortars from the weapons companies of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines; and Companies A and G, 5th Marines. Dog-Easy Company, under First Lieutenant Robert T. Bey, was really no more

than two under strength platoons—a Dog Company platoon and an Easy Company platoon. Litzenberg gave overall command of this odd assortment to Major Maurice Roach, former commander of the 3d Battalion and now the regimental S-3.

A good part of the reason for forming the battalion was to free Lieutenant Colonel Davis of responsibility for Dog-Easy Company and other attachments. The battalion, which was given its own sector in the perimeter, was assigned the radio sign “Damnation” and that became the short-lived battalion’s title. Someone tore up a green parachute to make a neckerchief, the practice caught on, and a green neckerchief became the battalion’s badge.

The most difficult task in the disengagement probably fell to Roise’s 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, which held a long line stretching from Hill 1426 to 1282. Covered by air and artillery, Roise fell back about a mile from Hill 1426 to Hill 1294. This and other movements freed up Harris’ 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, to move to a position astride the MSR about 4,000 yards south of Yudam-ni.

Litzenberg and Murray issued their second joint operation order on the morning of 1 December. Essentially it provided that the 7th Marines would move overland and the 5th Marines would move along the axis of the MSR. Both regiments put what were widely regarded as their best battalions out in front. Davis’ 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, would take to the hills; Taplett’s 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, down to half-strength, would lead the way down the road. They were to converge in the general vicinity of Fox Company on Toktong Pass. Point for the advance along the road would be



Photo by Cpl L. B. Snyder, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5667
Maj Maurice E. Roach, the 7th Marines jack-of-all-trades, and for the moment commander of a provisional battalion, pauses for a photo with the regimental commander, Col Litzenberg, before leaving Yudam-ni on 1 December. Roach is wearing the Navy parka that was part of the winter uniform, but Litzenberg finds an Army field jacket sufficient for the daytime cold.

the single Marine tank that had reached Yudam-ni. Staff Sergeant Russell A. Munsell and another crewman were flown up by helicopter from Hagaru-ri to drive it.

Major William McReynolds' 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, was in general support of both regiments but under the command of neither. The arrangement was made to work with Lieutenant Colonel

Harvey A. Feehan, commander of the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, acting as coordinator of supporting artillery fire. McReynolds' battalion was ordered to shoot up most of its 155mm ammunition before pulling out. Excess gunners were then organized into nine rifle platoons. The guns themselves were to bring up the rear of the convoy.

Roach's "Damnation Battalion" was to have followed Davis across country, but Litzenberg reconsidered and broke up the battalion on 1 December returning its parts to their parent organizations except for Dog-Easy Company, which only had about 100 effectives. Litzenberg passed the orphan company to Murray who, in turn, passed it to Taplett, his advance guard commander.

All available Marine aircraft were to be in the air to cover the withdrawal. They were to be joined by carrier aircraft from Task Force 77. On the ground only the drivers and the critically wounded would move by vehicle; the rest would walk. It was decided to leave the dead at Yudam-ni and a field burial was held for 85 Marines.

The grand parade began at 0800 on 1 December. Taplett's 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, came down from its positions north of Yudam-ni, followed an hour-and-a-half later by Stevens' 1st Battalion. Company B of Stevens' battalion under First Lieutenant John R. Hancock made up the rear guard coming out of the town. Meanwhile the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, under Harris proceeded to clear both sides of the road leading south, Company H going up Hill 1419 east of the road while the rest of the battalion went against Hill 1542 on the west side. Roise's 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, having cleared the town, relieved Davis' 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, on Hill 1276, freeing up Davis to pursue his overland mission. Harris was slow in taking Hill 1542. By mid-afternoon, an impatient Taplett was in position behind Harris, ready to attack south astride the road even with his right flank somewhat exposed.

Company H, 7th Marines, commanded by First Lieutenant



Marines depart Yudam-ni on 1 December. The general plan for the breakout was that the 5th Marines would follow the axis of the MSR and the 7th Marines would move overland.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4862
MajGen Smith did not formally designate an overall commander, but LtCol Murray deferred to Col Litzenberg because of seniority.

The 7th Marines command group breaks camp at Yudam-ni on 1 December in preparation for the march back to Hagaru-ri. The jeep in the foreground carries a radio. Note the long antenna. Below zero temperatures caused problems with battery life. Extra five-gallon cans of gasoline are lashed to the front bumper.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5666



Howard H. Harris, met trouble on Hill 1419. Harris' battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Harris, was fully occupied with problems on Hill 1542. Litzenberg, realizing that Hill 1419 was too far from Hill 1542 for a mutually supporting attack, detached How Company from the 3d Battalion and assigned it to Davis' 1st Battalion. Davis, Hill 1419 now his responsibility, sent his Able Company to add its weight to How Company's effort.

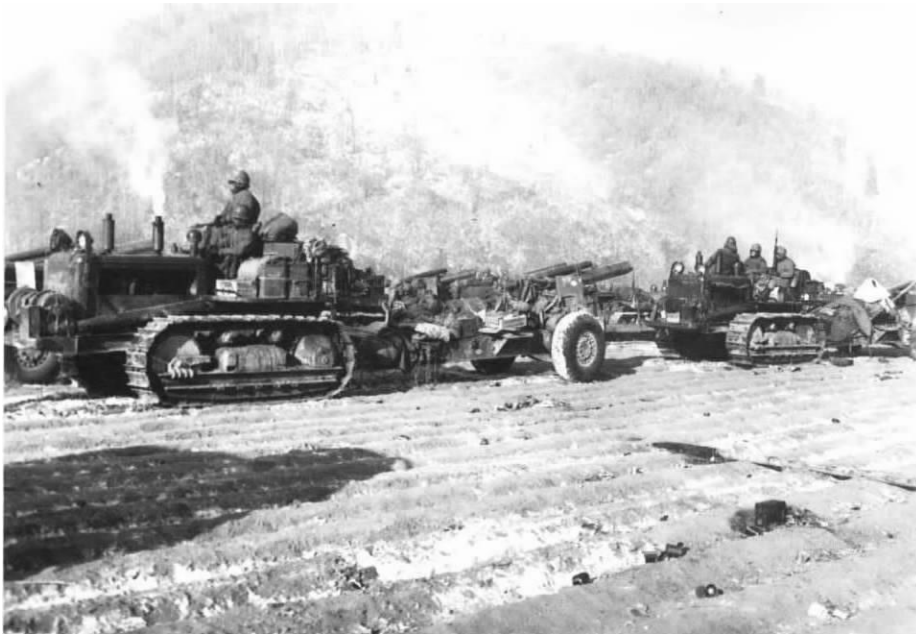
(Continued on page 292)

OVERLEAF: *"Band of Brothers"* by Colonel Charles H. Waterhouse, USMCR (Ret), widely regarded by many Marine veterans of the Korean War as Waterhouse's masterpiece, shows the column of Marines winding its way down Funchilin Pass. Courtesy of Col Waterhouse and the Chosin Few Association.





Whitely 67 1941



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5670

The heaviest guns in the defense of Yudam-ni were the 155mm howitzers of the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, commanded by Maj William McReynolds. Shown here, the big guns are preparing to leave the perimeter, towed by their tractor prime movers. Excess gunners were reorganized into provisional rifle units.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Harris had been wounded and Second Lieutenant Minard P. Newton, Jr., had taken over the company. Able Company, under Captain David W. Banks, passed through How Company and took the hill at about 1930.

Davis now stripped his battalion down for its cross-country trek. Everything needed for the march would have to be hand carried. He decided to go very light, taking only two 81mm mortars and six heavy machine guns (with double crews) as supporting weapons from his Weapons Company. His vehicles, left behind with his sick, walking wounded, and frostbite cases as drivers, were to join the regimental train on the road. Baker Company, now commanded by First Lieutenant Joseph R. Kurcaba, led off the line of march, followed by Davis and his command group, then Able Company, Charlie Company, battalion headquarters, and How Company, still attached.

It was a very dark night. The guide stars soon disappeared. The snow-covered rock masses all looked alike. The point had to break trail, through snow knee-deep in places. The path, once beaten, became icy and treacherous. Marines stumbled and fell.

Before leaving Yudam-ni, as a matter of professional pride, the 5th and 7th Marines "policed up the area." Trash, including remnants of rations, was collected into piles and burned. Slim pickings were left for Chinese scavengers who, desperate for food, clothing, and shelter, followed close behind the departing Marines.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A4848



Radios would not work reliably. Davis, moving ahead and floundering in the snow, lost touch with the forward elements of his battalion for a time. He continued forward until he reached the point. His map, hurriedly read by a flashlight held under a poncho, told him that they were climbing Hill 1520, the slopes of which were held by the Chinese. Baker and Charlie Companies converged on the Chinese who were about a platoon in strength, taking them by surprise. Davis stopped on the eastern slope of Hill 1520 to reorganize. Enemy resistance had slackened to small arms fire from ridges across the valley but Davis' men were numb with cold and exhausted. At 0300 he again halted his advance to give his Marines a rest, sending out small patrols for security. Now, for the first time, he gained radio contact with regiment.

On the MSR with the 5th Marines

Taplett, meanwhile, was marching southward astride the MSR, led



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5666

In coming back from Yudam-ni, the 1st Marine Division's large number of road-bound wheeled vehicles was both an advantage and a handicap. They carried the wherewithal to live and fight; they also slowed the march and were a temptation for attack by the Chinese. Here an 11th Marines howitzer can be seen in firing position to cover the column's rear.

by the solitary Pershing tank, followed by a platoon from his How Company and a platoon of ever-useful engineers. His radio call sign, "Darkhorse," suited his own dark visage. He advanced for about a mile before being halted by heavy fire coming from both sides of the road. He fanned out How and Item Companies and they cleared the opposition by 1930.

Taplett gave his battalion a brief rest and then resumed the advance. Item Company, led by Captain Harold Schrier, ran into stiff resistance on the reverse slope of still-troublesome Hill 1520 east of the road. Schrier received permission to fall back to his jump-off position so as to better protect the MSR. The Chinese hit with mortars and an infantry attack. Schrier was wounded for a second time and Second Lieutenant Willard S. Peterson took over the company. Taplett moved George Company and his attached engineers into defensive positions behind Item Company. It was an all-night fight.

In the morning, 2 December, 342 enemy dead were counted in front of Item Company. Peterson had only 20 Marines still on their feet when George Company passed through his position to continue the attack against Hill 1520. George

After leaving Yudam-ni, a unit of the 7th Marines, possibly a company of LtCol Davis' 1st Battalion, leaves the road to climb into the hills. Davis' objective was to come down on Toktong Pass from higher ground so as to relieve Capt Barber's embattled Fox Company.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4849



and How Company were both down to two-platoon strengths.

As a reserve Taplett had Dog-Easy Company, 7th Marines, detached from the now-dissolved "Damnation Battalion." Dog-Easy Company moved onto the road between How and George Companies. By noon George Company, commanded by Captain Chester R. Hermanson, had taken Hill 1520 and Dog-Easy had run into its own fight on the road. Second Lieutenant Edward H. Seeburger, lone surviving officer of Dog Company, was severely wounded while giving a fire command to the solitary tank. He refused evacuation. (Seeburger faced long hospitalization and after a year was physically retired as a first lieutenant. In 1995 he received a belated Navy Cross.)

Corsairs reduced the roadblock that held up Dog-Easy Company. "Darkhorse" trudged on, How and George Companies on both sides of the MSR and Dog-Easy moving down the middle, followed by the engineers and the solitary tank.

With Davis' Battalion in the Hills

East of the MSR at daybreak, Davis reoriented the direction of his march. The 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, passed over the east slope of Hill 1520 and attacked toward Hill 1653, a mountain a mile-and-a-half north of Toktong Pass. Davis' radios could not reach Barber on Fox Hill nor could he talk directly to the Corsairs circulating overhead. Fortunately opposition was light except for Chinese nibbling against the rear of his column where Company H, 3d Battalion, was bringing up the wounded on litters. Davis converged on Hill 1653 with his three organic rifle companies.

At last, radio contact was made with Captain Barber on Fox Hill. Barber jauntily offered to send out a patrol to guide Davis into his position. Davis declined the offer but did welcome the control of VMF-312's Corsairs by Barber's forward air controller. Just before noon, lead elements of Company B reached Barber's beleaguered position.

Company A halted on the north side of Hill 1653 to provide manpower to evacuate casualties. Twenty-two wounded had to be carried by litter to safety. The regimental surgeon, Navy Lieutenant Peter E. Arioli, was killed by a Chinese sniper's bullet while supervising the task. Two Marines, who had cracked mentally and who were restrained in improvised strait jackets, died of exposure before they could be evacuated. Marines of Kurcaba's Company B celebrated their arrival on Fox Hill with a noontime meal of air-dropped rations. They then went on to take the high ground that dominated the loop in the road where the MSR passed through Toktong Pass. First Lieutenant Eugenous M. Hovatter's Company

A followed them and the two companies set up a perimeter for the night. Meanwhile the balance of Davis' battalion had joined Barber on Fox Hill. Barber's Company F had suffered 118 casualties—26 killed, 3 missing, and 89 wounded—almost exactly half of his original complement of 240. Six of the seven officers, including Barber himself, were among the wounded.

5th Marines on the Road

At the rear of the column on the MSR, Lieutenant Colonel Roise's 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, the designated rear guard, had troubles of its own on Hill 1276 during the early morning hours of 2 December. Captain Uel D. Peters' Company F was hit hard. Night fighters from VMF(N)-542 came on station and were vectored to the target by white phosphorus rounds delivered by Company F's 60mm mortars. Strafing and rockets from the night fighters dampened the Chinese attack, but the fight continued on into mid-morning with Fox Company trying to regain lost ground. By then it was time for Roise to give up his position on Hill 1276 and continue the march south.

Lieutenant Colonel Jack Stevens' 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, had its fight that night of 1-2 December east of the road, being hit by a Chinese force that apparently had crossed the ice of the reservoir. Stevens guessed the number of Chinese killed at 200, at least 50 of them cut down in front of Charlie Company by machine guns.

Lieutenant Colonel William Harris' 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, meanwhile was continuing to have trouble on Hill 1542. Litzenberg reinforced Harris with a composite unit, called "Jig Company," made up of about 100 cannoneers, headquarters troops, and other individ-

uals. Command of this assortment was given to First Lieutenant Alfred I. Thomas. Chinese records captured later indicated that they thought they had killed 100 Americans in this action; actual Marine losses were something between 30 and 40 killed and wounded.

Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri, 2-3 December

At the head of the column, Taplett's Darkhorse battalion on the morning of 2 December had to fight for nearly every foot of the way. George Company still had Hill 1520 to cross. Dog-Easy Company was moving along the road itself. South of Hill 1520 at a sharp bend in the road a bridge over a ravine had been blown, and the Chinese covering the break stopped Dog-Easy Company with machine gun fire. Twelve Corsairs came overhead and ripped into the ravine with strafing fire and rockets. Dog-Easy Company, helped by How Company, re-sumed its advance. The attached engineer platoon, now commanded by Technical Sergeant Edwin L. Knox, patched up the bridge so vehicles could pass. The engineers had started out with 48 men; they were now down to 17. Taplett continued his advance through the night until by 0200, 3 December, he was only 1,000 yards short of Fox Hill. Taplett could only guess where Davis might be with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines.

To the rear, the Chinese pecked away at the Marines withdrawing from Hills 1276 and 1542. Stevens' 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, continued to provide close-in flank protection. Marine air held off much of the harassment, but the column of vehicles on the road moved slowly and the jeep and truck drivers became targets for Chinese snipers.



Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4840

Dead Marines at a Yudam-ni aid station wait mutely on their stretchers for loading onto the truck that will take them to eventual burial. Once on the march, practice was to carry those who died in the savage fighting in the hills down to the road where they could be picked up by the regiments' Graves Registration detachments.

That night the Chinese got through to Lieutenant Colonel Feehan's 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, and the artillerymen had to repulse them with howitzer fire over open sights.

Six inches of new snow fell during the night. In the morning, 3 December, Taplett combined the remnants of Dog-Easy Company with George Company and returned the command to First Lieutenant Charles D. Mize, who had had George Company until 17 November. From up on Fox Hill, Davis made a converging attack against the Chinese still holding a spur blocking the way to Hagaru-ri. He pushed the Chinese into the guns of Taplett's battalion. An estimated battalion of Chinese was slaughtered. By 1300, Davis' "Ridgerunners" had joined up with Taplett's "Darkhorses."

Davis and Taplett conferred.

The senior Davis now took the lead on the MSR with his battalion. The lone tank still provided the point. The truck column reached Toktong Pass. The critically wounded were loaded onto the already over-burdened vehicles. Less severely wounded would have to walk. Stevens' 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, followed Davis' battalion, passing through Taplett's battalion. Taplett stayed in Toktong Pass until after midnight. Coming up from the rear on the MSR was Roise's 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, followed by Harris' 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, now the rear guard.

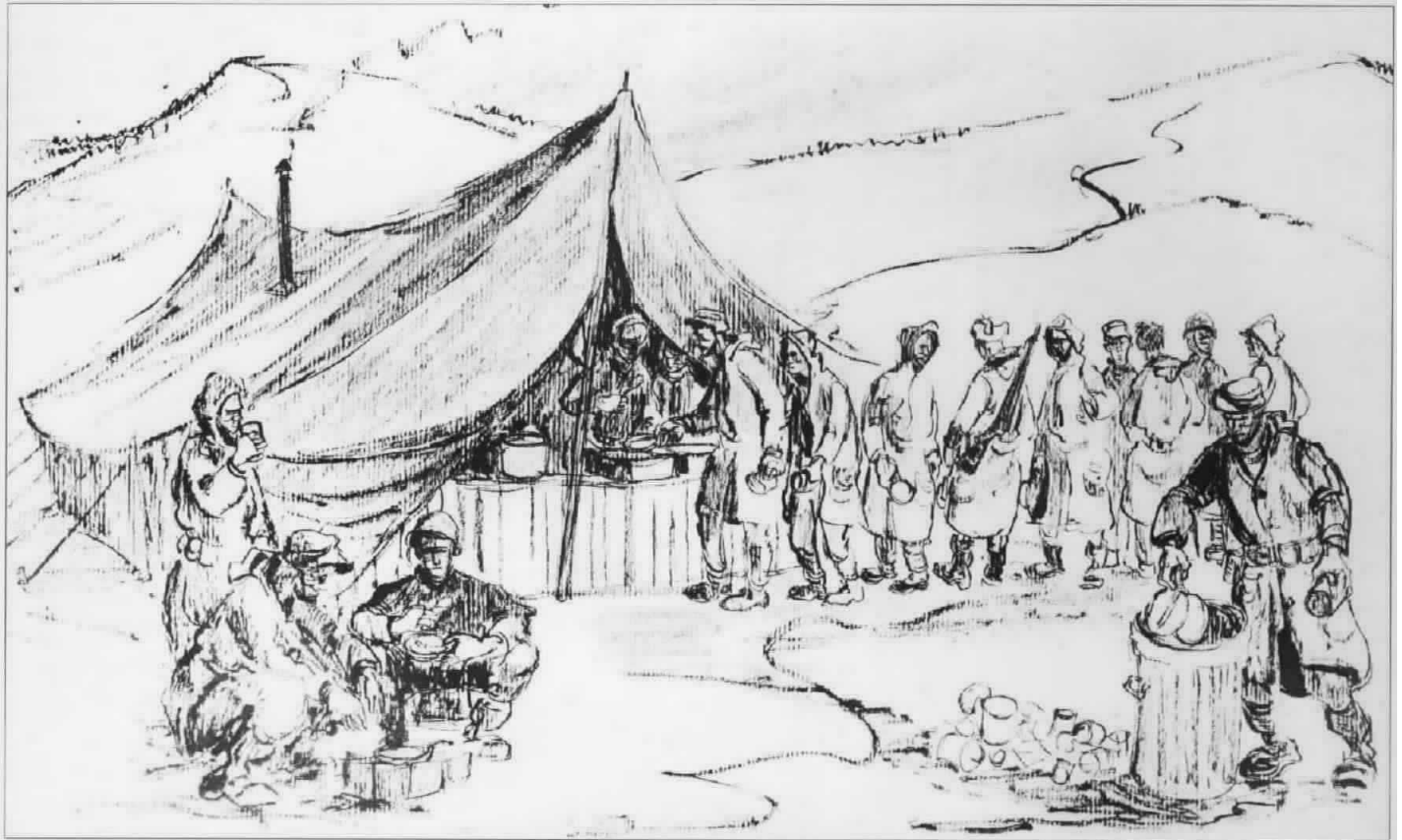
Sergeant Robert B. Gault, leader of the 7th Marines Graves Registration Section, came out of Yudam-ni in the column on the MSR with his five-man section and a truck with which to pick up Marine dead encountered along

the way. As he remembered it a few months later: "That was the time when there was no outfit, you was with nobody, you was a Marine, you were fighting with everybody. There was no more 5th or 7th; you were just one outfit, just fighting to get the hell out of there, if you could."

Column Reaches Hagaru-ri

The six fighter-bomber squadrons of Field Harris' 1st Marine Aircraft Wing flew 145 sorties on Sunday, 3 December, most of them in close support of the 5th and 7th Marines. Under this aerial umbrella, Davis' 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, marched along almost unimpeded. In the early evening, Ridge sent out Drysdale with 41 Commando, supported by tanks from Drake's 31st Tank Company, to open the door to the Hagaru-ri perimeter. At about 1900, a few hundred yards out, Davis formed up his battalion into a route column and they marched into the perimeter, singing *The Marines' Hymn*. Hagaru's defenders greeted the marchers with a tumultuous welcome. A field mess offered an unending supply of hot cakes, syrup, and coffee. Litzenberg's 7th Marines command group arrived shortly after Davis' battalion and was welcomed into the motor transport area by Litzenberg's old friend, Olin Beall.

In Tokyo that Sunday, MacArthur sent a message to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that X Corps was being withdrawn to Hungnam as rapidly as possible. He stated that there was no possibility of uniting it with Eighth Army in a line across the peninsula. Such a line, he said, would have to be 150 miles long and held alone by the seven American divisions, the combat effectiveness of the South Korean army now being negligible.



Sketch by Sgt Ralph Schofield, USMCR

The 5th and 7th Marines on arrival at Hagaru-ri combat base found hot chow waiting for them. The mess tents, operating on a 24-hour basis, provided an almost unvarying but inexhaustible menu of hot cakes, syrup, and coffee. After a few days rest and reorganization, the march to the south resumed.

The Chinese made no serious objection to the last leg of the march from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri until about 0200 on Monday morning, 4 December, when the prime movers hauling eight of Mc-Reynolds' 155mm howitzers at the rear of the column ran out of diesel fuel. That halted the column and brought on a Chinese attack. Taplett's battalion, unaware of the break, continued to advance. The artillerymen—assisted by bits and pieces of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 5th Marines, who were on the high ground to the flanks—defended themselves until Taplett could face around and come to their rescue.

It was a bad scene. The eight heavy howitzers had been pushed off the road, perhaps prematurely, and would have to be destroyed the next day by air strikes. A half-mile farther down the MSR was a

cache of air-delivered diesel fuel that would have fueled the prime movers. By 0830 the road was again open. Chinese losses were guessed at 150 dead.

At 1400 on Monday, the rear guard, still provided by the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, marched into Hagaru-ri and the four-day, 14-mile, breakout from Yudam-ni was over. The Marines had brought in about 1,500 casualties, some 1,000 of them caused by the Chinese, the rest by the cold. Smith observed in his log: "The men of the regiments are. . . pretty well beaten down. We made room for them in tents where they could get warm. Also they were given hot chow. However, in view of their condition, the day after tomorrow [6 December] appears to be the earliest date we can start out for Koto-ri."

Reorganization at Hagaru-ri

Ridge's Marine defenders of Hagaru-ri breathed much more easily after the arrival in their perimeter of the 5th and 7th RCTs. A sanguine corporal opined to his company commander: "Now that the 5th and 7th Marines are here, we can be resupplied by air, hold until spring, and then attack again to the north."

General Almond flew into Hagaru-ri on Monday afternoon to be briefed on the breakout plan and while there pinned Army Distinguished Service Crosses on the parkas of Smith, Litzenberg, Murray, and Beall. Almond then flew to Koto-ri where he decorated Puller and Reidy (who had been slow in getting his battalion to Koto-ri) with Distinguished Service Crosses. Nine others, including

Gurfein, who had nudged Reidy into moving, received Silver Stars. Reidy was relieved of his command not much later.

For the breakout, Murray's RCT-5, with Ridge's 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, and 41 Commando attached, would briefly take over the defense of Hagaru-ri while Litzenberg's RCT-7, beginning at first light on Wednesday, 6 December, would march to the south. Puller's RCT-1 would continue to hold Koto-ri and Chinhung-ni. All personnel except drivers, radio operators, and casualties were to move on foot. Specially detailed Marines were to provide close-in security to the road-bound vehicles. Any that broke down were to be pushed to the side of the road and destroyed. Troops were to carry two-days of C rations and one unit of fire, which translated for most into full cartridge belts and an extra bandoleer

of ammunition for their M-1 rifles. Another unit of fire was to be carried on organic vehicles. The vehicles were divided into two division trains. Lieutenant Colonel Banks, commanding officer of the 1st Service Battalion, was put in command of Train No. 1, subordinate to RCT-7. Train No. 2, subordinate to RCT-5, was given to Lieutenant Colonel Harry T. Milne, the commander of the 1st Tank Battalion. Although Smith had stated that he would come out with all his supplies and equipment, more realistically a destruction plan, decreeing the disposal of any excess supplies and equipment, was put into effect on 4 December. Bonfires were built. Ironically, loose rounds and canned foods in the fires exploded, causing some casualties to Marines who crowded close to the fires for warmth.

Air Force and Marine transports had flown out over 900 casualties

on Saturday, 2 December, from Hagaru-ri, and more than 700 the next day. To the south that Sunday, 47 casualties were taken out by light aircraft from the strip at Koto-ri. But casualties kept piling up and by the morning of Tuesday, 5 December, some 1,400 casualties—Army and Marine—still remained at Hagaru-ri. In a magnificent effort, they were all flown out that day. Altogether, in the first five days of December, by best count, 4,312 men—3,150 Marines, 1,137 soldiers, and 25 Royal Marines—were air-evacuated.

Even a four-engine Navy R5D ventured a landing. Takeoff with a load of wounded in an R5D was so hairy that it was not tried again. An R4D—the Marine equivalent of the sturdy C-47—wiped out its landing gear in landing. An Air Force C-47 lost power on take-off and crashed-landed outside the Marine lines. Marines rushed to the rescue.

Members of this patrol, moving along the abandoned narrow gauge railroad track that paralleled the main supply route, help along a wounded or exhausted comrade while

the point and rear riflemen provide watchful cover. No wounded Marine need worry about being left behind.

Sketch by Sgt Ralph Schofield, USMCR





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A4909

Aerial evacuation of wounded and severely frostbitten Marines and soldiers from Hagaru-ri saved many lives. During the first five days of December, 4,312 men—3,150 Marines, 1,137 soldiers, and 25 Royal Marines—were air evacuated by Air Force and Marine transports that also brought in supplies and replacements.

The plane had to be abandoned and destroyed, but there were no personnel casualties during the entire evacuation process.

During those same first five days of December, 537 replacements, the majority of them recovering wounded from hospitals in Japan, arrived by air at Hagaru-ri. Most rejoined their original units. A platoon sergeant in Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, wounded in the fighting in Seoul, assured his company commander that he was glad to be back.

Visitors who could wangle spaces on board the incoming transports began arriving at Hagaru-ri. Marguerite “Maggie” Higgins of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, well known to the Marines from both the Pusan Perimeter and the Inchon-Seoul campaigns, was among the gaggle of war correspondents that arrived on Tuesday, 5 December, including former Marine combat correspondent Keyes Beach. Higgins announced her intention to march out with the Marines. General Smith disabused her of

her intention and ordered that she be out of the perimeter by air by nightfall.

A British reporter made the impolite error of referring to the withdrawal as a “retreat.” Smith patiently corrected him, pointing out that when surrounded there was no retreat, only an attack in a new direction. The press improved Smith’s remark into: “Retreat, hell, we’re just attacking in a new direction.” The new television technology was demonstrated by scenes taken of the aerial evacuation of the casualties and an interview with General Smith and Lieutenant Colonel Murray.

Major General William H. Tunner, USAF, commander of the Combat Cargo Command and greatly admired by the Marines because of the sterling performance of his command, was one of the visitors. Tunner had flown the Hump from Burma into China during World War II and later commanded much of the Berlin Airlift. He solicitously offered to evacuate the rest of the troops now in Hagaru-ri. Smith stiffly told him that no man who was able-bodied would be evacu-

ated. “He seemed somewhat surprised,” wrote Smith.

Almond met with Major General Soule, commander of the 3d Infantry Division, that Tuesday, 5 December, and ordered him to form a task force under a general officer “to prepare the route of withdrawal [of the 1st Marine Division] if obstructed by explosives or whatnot, especially at the bridge site.” The site in question lay in Funchilin Pass. Almond apparently did not know that the bridge had already been destroyed. The downed span threatened to block the Marines’ withdrawal. Soule gave command of what was designated as “Task Force Dog” to his assistant division commander, Brigadier General Armistead D. “Red” Mead, a hard-driving West Pointer who had been G-3 of the Ninth Army in the European Theater in World War II.

Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri, 6 December

At noon on Tuesday, 5 December, Murray relieved Ridge of his responsibility as Hagaru-ri defense commander, and the battalions of the 5th Marines plumped up the thin lines held by the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines. The Chinese did not choose to test the strengthened defenses, but at about 2000 that evening an Air Force B-26 mistakenly dropped a stick of six 500-pound bombs close to Ridge’s command tent. His forward air controller could not talk to the Air Force pilot because of crystal differences in their radios, but an obliging Marine night-fighter from Lieutenant Colonel Max J. Volcansek, Jr.’s VMF(N)-542 came overhead and promised to shoot down any Air Force bomber that might return to repeat the outrage.

The well-liked Max Volcansek, 36, born in Minnesota, had come



Photo by Cpl Arthur Curtis, National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC354492

After her adventures at Chosin, including her aborted efforts to march out with the Marines, Marguerite "Maggie" Higgins, wearing a Navy parka and shoe-pacs, arrived safely at Haneda Air Force Base, Tokyo, on 15 December. Her broadly smiling traveling companion is Army MajGen William F. Marquat of MacArthur's staff.

into the Marine Corps as an aviation cadet in 1936 after graduating from Macalester College. During World War II he had flown Corsairs while commanding VMF-222 in the Pacific and had scored at least one Japanese plane. During the battle for Seoul he had been wounded and shot down but quickly recovered and continued in command of VMF(N)-542.

The plan of attack for Wednesday, 6 December, called for the 5th Marines to clean up East Hill while the 7th Marines moved south along the MSR toward Koto-

ri. Close air support for the attack against East Hill was to be on station at 0700. With a touch of condescension, Murray's Marines told Ridge's Marines to stand back and watch for a demonstration of how a hill should be taken.

Smith wanted to march out with his men, but Shepherd ordered him to fly to Koto-ri. Death or wounding of Smith, or worse, his capture by the Chinese, could not be risked. By this time the lurking presence of seven CCF divisions had been identified by prisoner of war interrogations—the 58th, 59th,

60th, 76th, 79th, 80th, and 89th. Two more divisions—the 77th and 78th—were reported in the area but not yet confirmed.

Later it would be learned that the 26th CCF Army—consisting of the 76th, 77th, and 78th Divisions, reinforced by the 88th Division from the 30th CCF Army, had moved down from the north into positions on the east side of the MSR between Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri. They had relieved the 60th Division, which had moved into positions south of Koto-ri. Elements of the 60th Division were preparing for the defense of Funchilin Pass including positions on the dominant terrain feature, Hill 1081. Even farther south the 89th Division was positioning itself to move against the defenders of Chinhung-ni.

Murray has given a characteristically laconic account of the attack by the 5th Marines against East Hill:

I had been ordered to take a little hill, and I had Hal Roise do that job. When he got over there, he found about 200 Chinese in a mass, and he captured the whole crowd of them. So we had about 200 prisoners we had to take care of. . . . A lot of them were in such bad shape that we left them there, left some medical supplies, and left them there for the Chinese to come along and take care of them after we left.

It was not quite that simple. Heavy air, artillery, and mortar preparation began at 0700 on Thursday, 6 December. Captain Samuel S. Smith's Dog Company jumped off in the assault at 0900, beginning a fight that would go on until daylight the next morning. All



Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5520

In a ceremony at Masan on 21 December, LtCol Harold S. Roise, the stalwart commander of 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, receives a Silver Star for actions incident to the seizure of Kimpo Airfield after the Inchon landing. Further awards for Roise for heroism at Chosin would come later.

three rifle companies of Roise's 2d Battalion and Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion were drawn into it. Estimates of enemy killed ran as high as 800 to 1,000. East Hill was never completely taken, but the Chinese were pushed back far enough to prevent them from interfering with the exit of the division from Hagaru-ri.

RCT-7 Attacks South

General Smith planned to close his command post at Hagaru-ri on Wednesday morning, 6 December. Before he could leave General Barr, commander of the 7th Infantry Division, who arrived to check on the status of his soldiers, visited him. The survivors of Task Force Faith coupled with units that

had been at Hagaru-ri and Hudong-ni added up to a provisional battalion of 490 able-bodied men under command of Army Lieutenant Colonel Anderson. As organized by Anderson, the "battalion" actually was two very small battalions (3d Battalion, 31st Infantry, under Major Carl Witte and 1st Battalion, 32d Infantry, under Major Robert E. Jones) each with three very small rifle companies. Smith attached Anderson's force to RCT-7 and it was sometimes called "31/7."

Litzenberg had about 2,200 men—about half his original strength—for the breakout to Koto-ri. His attack order put Lockwood's 2d Battalion, with tanks, on the MSR as the advance guard; Davis' 1st Battalion on the

right of Changjin River and the MSR; Anderson's provisional Army battalion on the left of the road; and Harris' 3d Battalion on the road as the rear guard.

Lockwood, it will be recalled, had stayed at Hagaru-ri with his command group and much of his Weapons Company while Companies D and E went forward to Yudam-ni and Company F held Toktong Pass. At 0630, tanks from Company D, 1st Tank Battalion, led Lockwood's reunited, but pitifully shrunken battalion out of the perimeter through the south road-block. Almost immediately it ran into trouble from Chinese on the left side of the road. The morning fog burned off and air was called in. A showy air attack was delivered against the tent camp south of the perimeter, abandoned days earlier by the Army engineers and now periodically infested with Chinese seeking warmth and supplies. Lockwood's two rifle companies—Fox Company and Dog-Easy Company—pushed through and the advance resumed at noon. Meanwhile, barely a mile out of Hagaru-ri, Captain John F. Morris' Company C, 1st Battalion, surprised an enemy platoon on the high ground to the southeast of the hamlet of Tonae-ri and killed most of them.

At 1400 Smith received a reassuring message from Litzenberg that the march south was going well. Smith decided that it was time to move his command post to Koto-ri. His aide, Major Martin J. "Stormy" Sexton, World War II raider, asked the commander of Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, for the loan of a jeep to take his boss to the airstrip. A 10-minute helicopter ride took Smith and Sexton to Koto-ri where Puller was waiting. Smith began planning for the next step in the withdrawal.



Col Litzenberg's 7th Marines led off the march south from Hagaru-ri on 6 December. Here one of his units pauses at the roadblock held by Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, 1st

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5464 Marines, before exiting the town to watch a drop of napalm by a Marine Corsair against a camp abandoned by Army engineers, now infested with Chinese.

Meanwhile Lockwood's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, had run into more serious trouble another mile down the road. Davis' 1st Battalion, up in the hills, could see the enemy; Lockwood's battalion, on the road itself, could not. Fox Company, with some help from Dog-Easy Company and the Army mini-battalions under Anderson, pushed through at about 1500. Davis' battalion continued to play company-sized hopscotch from hilltop to hilltop on the right of the road. By dark, lead elements of RCT-7 were about three miles south of Hagaru-ri. Enemy resistance stiffened and air reconnaissance spoke of Chinese columns coming in from the east, but Litzenberg decided to push on. After two more miles of advance, Lockwood's battalion was stopped in what Drysdale had called Hell Fire Valley by what seemed to be a solitary Chinese machine gun firing from the left. An Army tank

solved that problem. Another half-mile down the road a blown bridge halted the column. The engineers did their job, the march resumed, but then there was another blown bridge. At dawn on Thursday things got better. Air came overhead, and 2d Battalion,

7th Marines, had no more trouble as it marched the last few miles into Koto-ri. Through all of this Lockwood, sick with severe bronchitis, had sat numbly in his jeep. Early that morning his executive officer, Major Sawyer, had been wounded in the leg by a mortar

Coming out of Hagaru-ri, Col Litzenberg used LtCol Lockwood's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, reinforced with tanks, as his advance guard. Here a heavy machine gun squad rests by the side of the road while a M-26 Pershing medium tank trundles by. The M-26 mounted a powerful flat-trajectory 90mm gun.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A5469





Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5428

Marching, encumbered with weapons, packs, and winter clothing, on the road from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri was heavy work, even without Chinese interference. This unit of the 7th Marines, taking advantage of a halt, manages a quick nap. Most of the fighting was on the high ground on both sides of the MSR, but occasionally the Chinese reached the road.

fragment and was out of action. Major James F. Lawrence, Jr., 32, University of North Carolina 1941, the battalion S-3, had become the de facto commander.

Things were going even less well on the left flank and rear of the column. The Army provisional battalion, fragile to begin with, had fought itself out and was replaced by Harris' 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. By 2100 the Chinese had come down to within hand-grenade range of the trucks on the road. Harris deployed his George and Item Companies to push them back. Sometime before dawn, Lieutenant Colonel William Harris, son of Major General Field Harris, disappeared. He was last seen walking down the road with two rifles slung over his shoulder. A search for him found no body and it was presumed he had been taken prisoner. Major Warren Morris, the executive officer of the 1st Battalion, took over command of the 3d Battalion and it reached

Koto-ri at about 0700 on Thursday morning.

Chinese prisoners taken along the road from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri

The role of the rifle companies in the breakout from Hagaru-ri on 6 December was to take the high ground on both sides of the road. Much fought over "East Hill" dominated the exit from Hagaru-ri. It was never completely taken, but the Chinese were pushed back far enough to permit the relatively safe passage of the division trains of vehicles.

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5465



were identified as being from the 76th and 77th Divisions of 26th CCF Army.

For Almond, most of Wednesday, 6 December, was absorbed with a visit by General J. Lawton Collins, the Army chief of staff. Collins and Almond dropped in at the command posts of the Army's 7th and 3d Infantry Divisions, but "weather precluded flying to Koto-ri" for a visit with Smith. Collins left at nightfall for Tokyo. The visit had gone well and Almond noted contentedly in his diary: "Gen. Collins seemed completely satisfied with the operation of X Corps and apparently was much relieved in finding the situation well in hand."

At Koto-ri, 7 December

First Lieutenant Leo R. Ryan, the adjutant of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, alarmed by Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood's apathy, pressed the battalion surgeon and assistant surgeon, Lieutenants (jg)



Soldiers, readily recognizable as such in their short parkas, march in single file on 6 December along the MSR south of Hagaru-ri. RCT-31, badly mauled east of the reservoir and

Photo by Sgt Frank C. Kerr, Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A5466 reduced in combat effectives to a small provisional battalion commanded by LtCol Berry K. Anderson, USA, was attached to the 7th Marines for the breakout.

Laverne F. Peiffer and Stanley I. Wolf, to examine him. Neither doctor was a psychiatrist, but they came to the conclusion that Lockwood was suffering from a neurosis that made him unfit for command. This was communicated to Colonel Litzenberg who confirmed Major Lawrence as the acting commander.

In mid-morning, Thursday, 7 December, to ease the passage of the division train, both the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines, were ordered to face about, move north again, and set up blocking positions on both sides of the road between Koto-ri and Hill 1182. On the way the 2d Battalion picked up 22 Royal Marine survivors who had been laagered up in a Korean house ever since Task Force

Drysdale had passed that way. A VMO-6 pilot had spotted them three days earlier by the letters "H-E-L-P" stamped in the snow and had dropped rations and medical supplies.

Elsewhere on Thursday, 7 December, X Corps and Eighth Army had received orders from GHQ Tokyo to plan to withdraw, in successive positions if necessary, to the Pusan area. Eighth Army was to hold on to the Inchon-Seoul area as long as possible. X Corps was to withdraw through Hungnam and eventually to pass to the command of Eighth Army.

Almond visited Smith at Koto-ri and assured him that Soule's 3d Infantry Division would provide maximum protection from Chihung-ni on into Hamhung. Smith

LtCol William F. Harris, commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, and son of MajGen Field Harris, disappeared on the march from Hagaru-ri to Koto-ri. He was last seen moving down the road with two rifles slung over his shoulder. His exact fate remains a mystery.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A45353

