Depot was not turning young men into Marines but into day laborers and stevedores. All hands spent much of every day mobilizing the depot for the expected waves of new recruits; the reservists set up bunks, hauled mattresses out of storage, and carried footlockers into the reopened barracks. Every night for two weeks the reservists went to the North Island docks to load ammunition and mount-out boxes for the 1st Marine Division. Not until the division cleared the harbor for Japan did the reservists start their formal boot camp schedule, which now seemed like welcome relief from the role of slave laborers. Jack Davis found boot camp no special challenge.

The follow-on field training, eight weeks and mandatory for every Marine regardless of assignment, proved more and less fun. Jack enjoyed the long days on the ranges of Camp Elliott. He qualified with ease with the M-1 and fired the entire range of individual and crew-served weapons found in a Marine infantry battalion. Jack liked them all except the M-1 carbine, which riflemen did not carry anyway. The last phase of the training focused on cold weather, mountain training at Pickel Meadow, which was neither meadow-like nor cold. Temperatures that December reached the 70s, and the Marines trudged around in the mud and slush in their layers of cold-weather clothing issue, all of them perilously close to heat exhaustion and dehydration. Apparently the Marine Corps had found a way to train the replacements for Korea's winters and summers at the same time.

In January 1951, Jack Davis and his comrades of the 6th Replacement Draft boarded the Army transport *Randolph* for the trip to Korea. The *Randolph* had come directly from Pusan where it had disembarked a part of the 1st Marine Division, recently evacuated from Hungnam. When Jack and his messmates reached their troop compartment, they found the canvas bunks decorated with messages from the survivors of the Chosin Reservoir campaign. Jack did not find the words of wisdom very comforting. A few were clever and humorous, but most of the collected battlefield folk wisdom struck Jack as sad, depressing, bewildered, stunned, and even suicidal. As the messages from the veterans attested, the war had almost been lost, had almost been won, and then almost lost again. As General Douglas MacArthur had just reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Jack Davis and his comrades now faced the Chinese army and an entirely new war.

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could usually find the right combination of leadership and technical skill to give the separate battalions a strong commander. Among the commanders General Thomas inherited in these battalions were Marines whose accomplishments had made them legends: Lieutenant Colonel John H. Partridge of the 1st Engineers, who had opened the route out of the Chosin Reservoir; Major Lloyd O. Williams, the master marksman, who commanded the 1st Ordnance Battalion; and Lieutenant Colonel Henry J. "Jim" Crowe of the 1st Shore Party Battalion, a heroic battalion commander at Tarawa and Saipan as well as another team shooter.

As the commander of a great division, whose management he shared with an able staff, General Thomas could focus on his relations with Generals Van Fleet and Almond. Although Van Fleet took a practical, unpretentious approach to commanding Eighth Army, General Almond had become not one whit more subdued by the twin blows of surrendering the independent status of X Corps and the abrupt removal of his patron, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. Almond retained the imperiousness and elegant field life style that characterized many Army generals of his generation and, especially, his two models, MacArthur and General Mark W. Clark, his army commander in World War II. Surrounded by staff officers from central casting—albeit very talented—Almond favored high-fashion field uniforms, opulent vans and messes, and imperial gestures worthy of Napoleon himself, including the haphazard awarding of medals. Almond's airy disregard for time-space factors and enemy capabilities, as well as his habit of ignoring the chain-of-command, had driven General Smith into tight-lipped rebellion. Thomas had dealt with some difficult Marine generals, but Almond would be a challenge.

Thomas first made sure that no one would mistake him for the Almond model of a modern major general. He truly preferred the look of the Old Corps of World War II, not a U.S. Army that had remade itself in the image of its flamboyant armor and airborne generals like Walton H. Walker and Ridgway. Thomas wore a uniform that was strictly issue from his battered utility cap and standard helmet to his canvas leggings and worn, brown field shoes. Instead of the "generals" version of the Colt .45-caliber automatic worn the Army-way with a fancy leather belt, he carried an issue pistol in a black shoulder-holster. None of his regular field wear—jacket, sweaters, shirts, and trousers—would be mistaken for tailors' work. His only personal affectation (a very useful one at that) was his old Haitian *coco-macaque* walking stick, whose only local counterpart was carried by General Shepherd. On special occasions General Thomas and his regimental commanders might sport white scarves and the division staff red scarves, but the idea

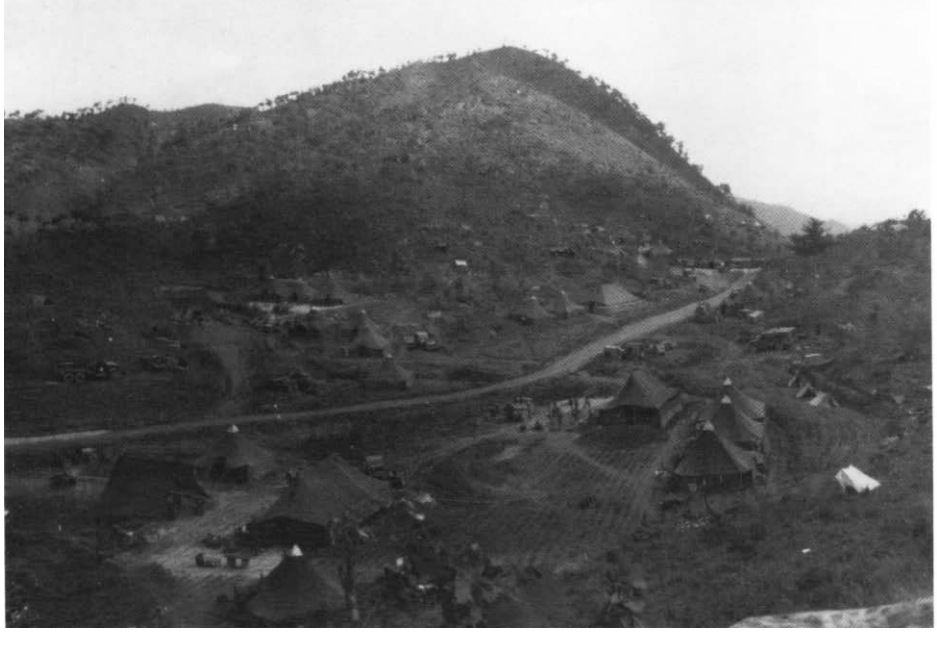
was Van Fleet's, who thought the scarves would show the troops that senior officers were not allergic to frontline visits.

Still a part of IX Corps—one wonders now about the urgency in the change of command—the 1st Marine Division disengaged from the Chinese *39th* and *40th Armies* and fell back unmolested 15 miles to the No Name Line, a belt of prepared positions dug by Korean laborers and Army engineers. The 1st Marines, reinforced by a battalion of the 7th Marines, protected the bridges and passes while the rest of the division withdrew in good order over the Pukhan and Soyang Rivers, both in flood from rain and melting snow. By 29 April the division had put the rivers at its back and filed into the No Name Line positions with the 5th Marines, the 1st Regiment of the Korean Marine Corps (KMC), and the 7th Marines on line from west to east. The 1st Marines went into division reserve. Colonel Bowser thought that the retrograde movement—which he and Thomas did not think necessary—proved that the division had lost nothing of its 1950 ability to march and fight superior numbers of Chinese troops without prohibitive losses. Meanwhile General Van Fleet met with his corps commanders on 30 April to discuss Eighth Army's next move: an active defense of the No Name Line and maximum readiness to meet another Chinese-North Korean offensive, predicted for mid-May by Van Fleet's intelligence staff. In the reorganization of the front, the 1st Marine Division would rejoin X Corps, effective 1 May.

General Thomas first had to fight off General Almond before he could focus on killing Chinese. The two generals met every day for three days (1-3 May), and Thomas emerged victorious in establishing new ground rules for the Marines' dealing with X Corps. Thomas had already told his staff that it would take a hard-line with "suggestions" from any corps staff member; one of his assistant operations officers tested the guidance by telling his Army counterparts from Almond's headquarters that he could "go to hell" for giving orders in Almond's name.

The 1st Marines regimental headquarters occupies a tent-camp along the road to Hongchon, just south of the No Name Line. United Nations Command air supe riority allowed such administrative arrangements.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A8728



Thomas took a disgruntled Almond head on. He could be charming in his own way—he pointed out his own Virginian and Confederate roots to Virginia Military Institute "Old Grad" Almond—but he insisted that Almond stop bypassing the chain-of-command or allowing his staff to run roughshod over the proper channels in the 1st Marine Division. Almond insisted he was an active corps commander. (Meddlesome was the word the Marines chose.) Thomas told him that he was an active division commander and that he intended to make as many visits to regiments and battalions as Almond made. Thomas added that he would "execute any order proper for a soldier to receive." Almond pressed Thomas to go on, but Thomas now remained silent as if expecting a further elaboration of policy. Almond said he would make many visits. "Is that all right with you?" Almond continued. More silence. Almond went on: "But I can assure you that I will never issue an order affecting one of your units except through you." Now Thomas responded: "On that basis . . . you are always welcome." The two generals remained true to their word.

Thomas tested the era of good feeling with X Corps almost immediately and to positive effect. Van Fleet had the notion that each division should establish a battalion-sized outpost from which it could patrol northwards to make contact with the Chinese. For the 1st Marine Division the best place to establish such a base—which Thomas and Bowser thought was a miserable idea—was south of Chunchon but north of the critical

Morae Kagae Pass, the only route of escape to the No Name Line. The position would be outside the artillery fan of the 11th Marines, and close air support alone (now complicated by Air Force scheduling practices) would be no substitute. Thomas argued with Van Fleet and Almond that he would perform the mission, but that he should dictate the size of the force and its rules of engagement—and disengagement. When Thomas put his "patrol base" in place on 5-7 May, he sent the entire 7th Marines (artillery and tank reinforced) north toward Chunchon, and he added the 1st KMC Regiment to Nickerson's task force. In addition, he had the 5th Marines put a screening company in front of each of its frontline battalions, but kept the companies well within artillery support.

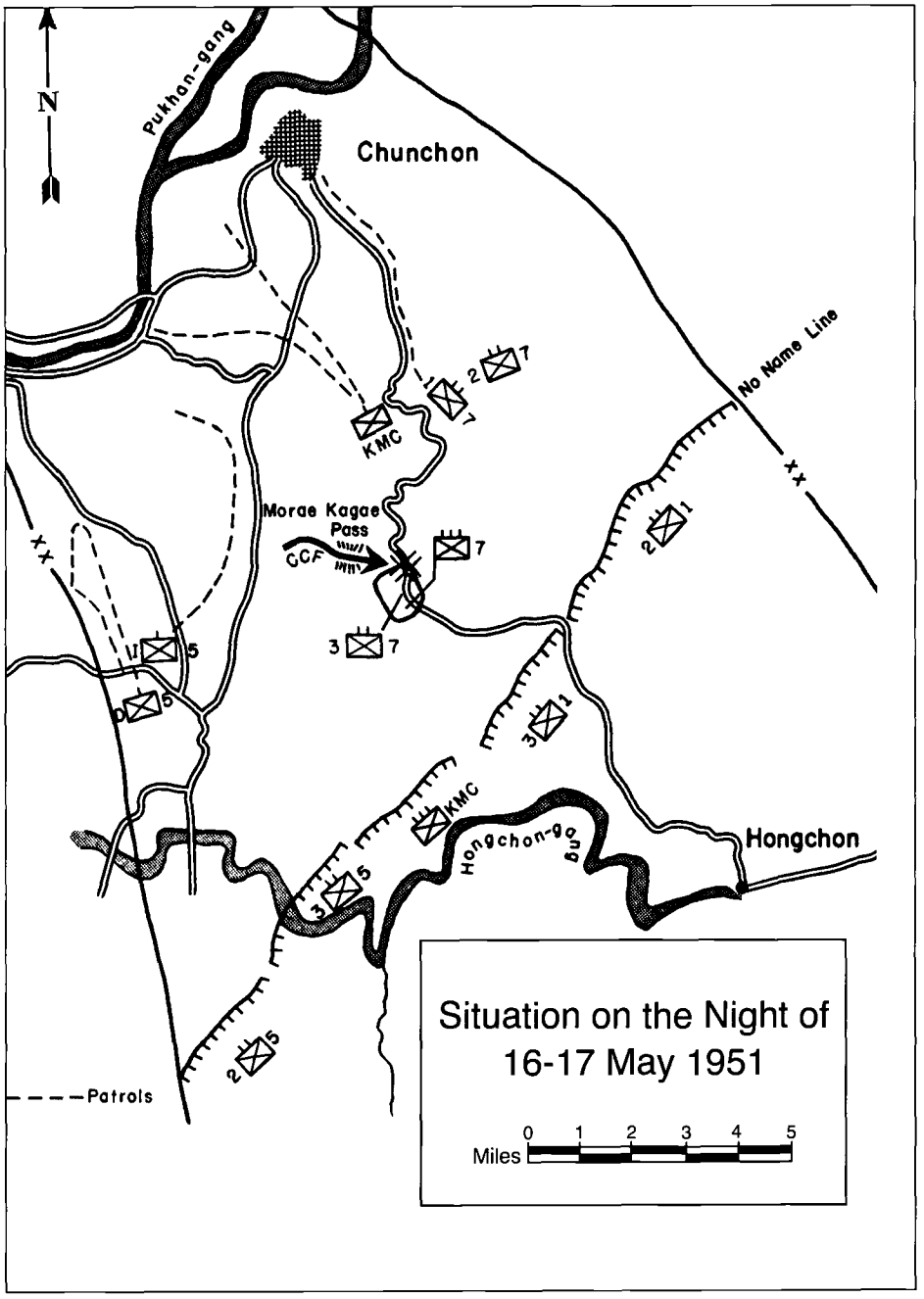
National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A8898

A Marine patrol secures a hill and moves forward. Its mission was to maintain contact with the enemy, warn of an impending attack, and delay its progress as much as possible.

Thomas continued to press X Corps for more artillery since Van Fleet's intelligence staff insisted that the next Chinese offensive might focus on the 1st Marine Division. Thomas' own ground and aerial patrols found ample evidence of Chinese troop movements between the Pukhan River and the No Name Line. The commanding general had also heard Van Fleet insist that no Eighth Army unit, a company or larger, should be isolated and cut-off; Van Fleet told his generals that night withdrawals and counterattacks should be abandoned as operational options. He also insisted that every division artillery groupment (the 11th Marines for Thomas) should use its daily allowance of shells (the "Van Fleet unit of fire" or five times the normal allotment of shells) to fire upon suspected enemy concentrations and transportation routes. Thomas persuaded Almond that the 1st Marine Division could not meet Van Fleet's expectations without some Army help, and Almond committed two X Corps general support artillery battalions to reinforce the fires of the 11th Marines. Thomas also negotiated a shortening of his frontage since he had to put two battalions of the 1st Marines into the line to replace the 7th Marines, which left only one infantry battalion as division reserve. Even though he had come to conclude that the Chinese were massing to the east instead of to his front, Thomas had no intention of allowing any part of the 7th Marines to be cut off between the Morae Kagae Pass and the No Name Line. He approved a Nickerson-Davis plan to garrison the pass with a reinforced battalion (less one rifle company) and simply announced the change to Almond, who did not object to the fait accompli. Thomas also planned to extract the 7th Marines from its advanced position as soon as he though he could justify such an action to Almond. He anticipated that trouble would develop along the boundary of the 1st Marines and the U.S. 2d Infantry Division, not to his front. The 7th Marines would be his new division reserve, ready to attack to the northeast. The plan proved to be prescient.

Offensive and Counteroffensive

Changing their operational style of nighttime infiltration attacks, characterized by surprise and the limited use of artillery, the Chinese *Ninth* and *Third Army Groups*, augmented by the North Korean *II* and *V Corps*, opened the Fifth Offensive (Second Phase). On the morning of 16 May 1951, the offensive began with a Soviet-style preparatory artillery bombardment. Frustrated in his April offensive, Peng Dehuai decided that the limited road network and sharp, rugged mountains of eastern Korea offered a better area of operations for a renewed offensive. Van Fleet and his corps commanders would find it more difficult to shift reinforcements against the shoulders



of any breakthrough, and the steep mountains made it difficult to mass United Nations artillery fire. The broken, forested terrain would provide welcome cover and concealment from United Nations Command air strikes. The weight of the Chinese offensive (27 divisions with three artillery divisions in support) fell on (from west to east) the U.S. 2d Infantry Division, the 5th ROK Division, and the 7th ROK Division of X Corps with additional attacks upon the neighboring 9th ROK Division of the Republic's III Corps. The Chinese did not ignore the western-most division of X Corps, the 1st Marine Division, which would be pinned in its part of the No Name Line by attacks from the Chinese *60th Army*. The minimal operational goal was to destroy one or more U.N. divisions; a major victory would be the fragmentation of either X Corps or the ROK III Corps and a return to a campaign of movement that would dislodge the Eighth Army from the Taebaek Mountains to the Han River valley.

Eventually described by X Corps as the battle of the Soyang River, 16-21 May 1951, the Chinese offensive overran various parts of the frontline positions and the patrol bases of the hard-luck 2d Infantry Division and the three ROK divisions to its right. Despite some dogged defensive action by American and South Korean soldiers, the Chinese advanced 30 miles, forcing the three ROK divisions to the south and threatening to roll-up the right flank of the 2d Division, which lost the better part of the 38th Infantry and its attached Dutch battalion in slowing the Chinese attack. General Almond decided he needed to insure that the western side of the Chinese salient was secure first; he requested reinforcements from Van Fleet, who sent the 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment and U.S. 3d Infantry Division to blocking positions behind X Corps. In the meantime, Almond wanted the 2d Infantry Division to refuse its right flank. Such a redeployment required the 1st Marine Division to extend its sector of the No Name Line to the east and to do so while in contact with the enemy.

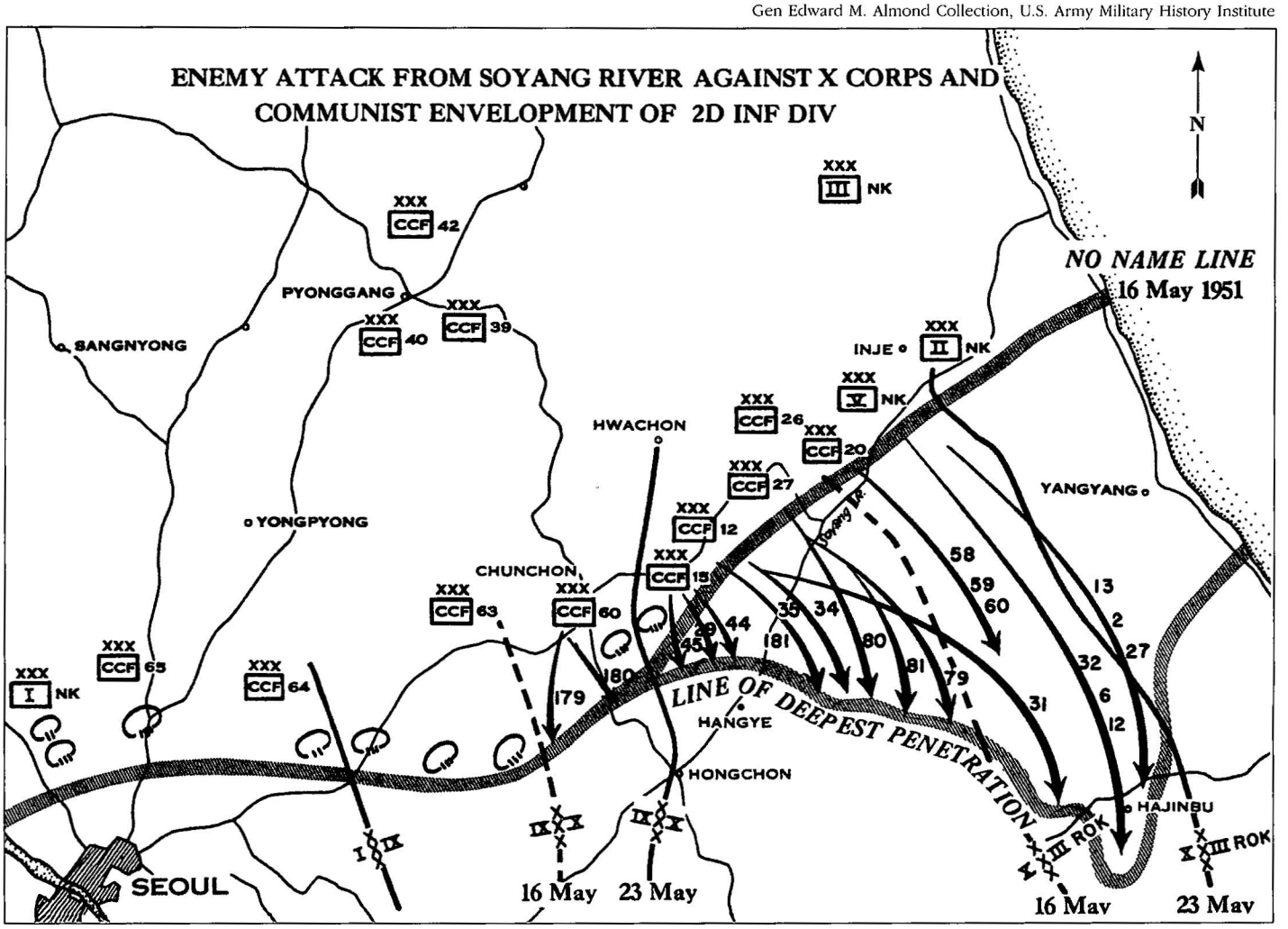
On the first day of the Chinese offensive, General Thomas visited Almond's command post at Hoengsong and saw the crisis build in X Corps' eastern sectors. Thomas and Almond discussed what situations the 1st Marine Division might face, but Thomas would make no commitments until he was sure he could withdraw the 7th Marines (Reinforced) from the ill-conceived "patrol base" north of the No Name Line. Closer to the anticipated Chinese attack, Colonel Nickerson reinforced the outpost at Morae Kagae Pass, bringing the defenders to battalion strength and including the regimental headquarters and a tank platoon. Having just joined the 7th Marines—his

regiment in World War II—Second Lieutenant Earl F. Roth wondered who had placed the regiment so far from the rest of the division. He reached the Morae Kagae Pass and the 7th Marines rear defenses only after a long and lonely jeep ride across an empty countryside, but he felt eyes watching him from every hill. When he later saw the piles of Chinese bodies at the pass, he remembered similar scenes from Peleliu. On the evening of 16 May, a Chinese regiment attacked the pass in force and lost 112 dead and 82 captured before breaking off the action. Nickerson's force lost two tanks, seven dead, and 19 wounded. The attack gave Thomas plenty of reason to pull back Nickerson's entire regiment, ordered that night with Almond's approval. Colonel Frank T. Mildren, X Corps' operations officer, correctly assumed that the Chinese wanted no part of the 1st Marine Division: "The Marines [are] just wrapped up in their usual ball." Mildren's assessment did not accurately picture the 1st Marine Division's skillful redeployment to

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A155692

Marines of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, gather the bodies of the Chinese 179th Division, *which attacked the regiment's patrol base at Morae Kagae Pass on the night of 16 May. As part of the Chinese Fifth Offensive (Second Phase), the attack did not pin the 1st Marine Division to the No Name Line, which allowed its redeployment to the east to aid the U.S. 2d Infantry Division.*

Gen Edward M. Almond Collection, U.S. Army Military History Institute



release the U.S. 9th Infantry Regiment for a new mission, saving the rest of its parent division.

After artillery and air strikes insured that the Chinese *60th Army* marched east to the sound of somebody else's guns, Thomas ordered the 1st Marines to shift right and take the 9th Infantry's positions while the 7th Marines marched back to the No Name Line and took over the 1st Marines sector. In the meantime, two battalions of the 5th Marines moved eastwards behind the No Name Line to refuse the division right flank north of the crucial road junction of Hongchon. The 7th Marines and the 1st KMC Regiment slipped to the left to take over part of the 5th Marines' former sector. General Thomas reported at 1730 on 18 May to Almond that the realignment had been accomplished, but that he also wanted more corps artillery ready to fire defensive fires along his thinly-manned front. He requested and received more aerial reconnaissance from the Cessna light patrol aircraft (L-19 "Bird Dogs") assigned to X Corps. Thomas had already improved his defensive posture by placing the 1st Marines in positions almost four miles south of the original No Name Line. The only contact occurred on 20 May when elements of the Chinese *44th Division* marched unawares into the defenses of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, and left behind almost 170 dead and prisoners when the Marines shattered the lead regiment with their battalion weapons, artillery, and air strikes. The 1st Marine Division awaited more orders. It did not expect Almond to remain on the defensive since X Corps now had fresh troops and the two Chinese army groups had placed themselves inside a vulnerable salient.

Although he had won the respect of Almond and his staff in his first month of division command, General Thomas had no intention of becoming a compliant subordinate commander when he thought Army generals paid too little attention to tactical realities. Thomas and Almond conferred twice on 19 May and again on 20 May at the 1st Marine Division command post. The issue was a counteroffensive order from Van Fleet to I and IX Corps, a movement that began on 20 May for the 7th Infantry Division, the IX Corps element on Thomas' left flank. Almond wanted the 1st KMC Regiment to advance beyond the No Name Line to conform to IX Corps' advance, but Thomas "expressed reluctance" to send a regiment on an axis of advance that took it away from the rest of the division and opened a gap in the division's defensive alignment. Thomas won a concession from Almond immediately: he could make his own arrangements to secure X Corps' left flank and coordinate the movement directly with IX Corps.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A8875

MajGen Gerald C. Thomas checks the frontline situation map with the 5th Marines' commanding officer, Col Richard W. Hayward, center, and the regiment's operations officer, Maj Robert E. Baldwin.

As Peng Dehuai acknowledged, the collapse of the Fifth Offensive (Second Phase) gave United Nations Command an unprecedented opportunity to mount a counteroffensive of potential strategic consequences. Even though his army group commanders protested his withdrawal orders, Peng called off the offensive on the afternoon of 21 May and issued orders that the eastern armies should withdraw during the night of 23-24 May to a defensive line that would run from the Imjin River to Hwachon to Kansong, roughly the line occupied by United Nations Command when the Fifth Offensive began in April. Five Chinese armies and three North Korean corps would defend the line.

Prodded by General Ridgway, who flew to Korea to inject some of his special bellicosity into a flagging Eighth Army, Van Fleet had stolen half a march on his Chinese counterpart by ordering I and IX Corps to start a drive to the Topeka Line, a phase line on the ground about halfway to the contemplated

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A8867

A .30-caliber machine gun team and a Marine with a Browning Automatic Rifle occupy recently abandoned enemy foxholes, using them for cover while pursuing Chinese and North Korean forces.

Chinese defenses. Van Fleet and the corps commanders of I and IX Corps, however, could not create much urgency in their divisions. Neither Ridgway nor Van Fleet thought I and IX Corps had seized the moment. They were thus pleasantly surprised when Almond, who seized moments whether they were there or not, proposed that he could shift to the offensive as soon as noon on 23 May as long as he retained control of the 187th Airborne and the 3d Infantry Division and gained the use of the brand-new 8th ROK Division as well. Instead of driving almost directly north like I and IX Corps, however, Almond planned to use his South Korean divisions to keep the Chinese and North Koreans engaged at the forward edges of the salient. His American divisions would cut across the base of the salient from southwest to northeast, roughly on an axis that followed Route 24 through Chaunni—Inje—Kansong where X Corps would link up with ROK I Corps. The counteroffensive, supported by massive aerial bombardment and Van Fleet-directed artillery barrages of World War I profligacy, would bag the survivors of the Chinese *Third* and *Ninth Army Groups*. Van Fleet approved Almond's plan, and X Corps issued its attack order on 21 May.

For the 1st Marine Division the development of two Eighth Army counteroffensives with different

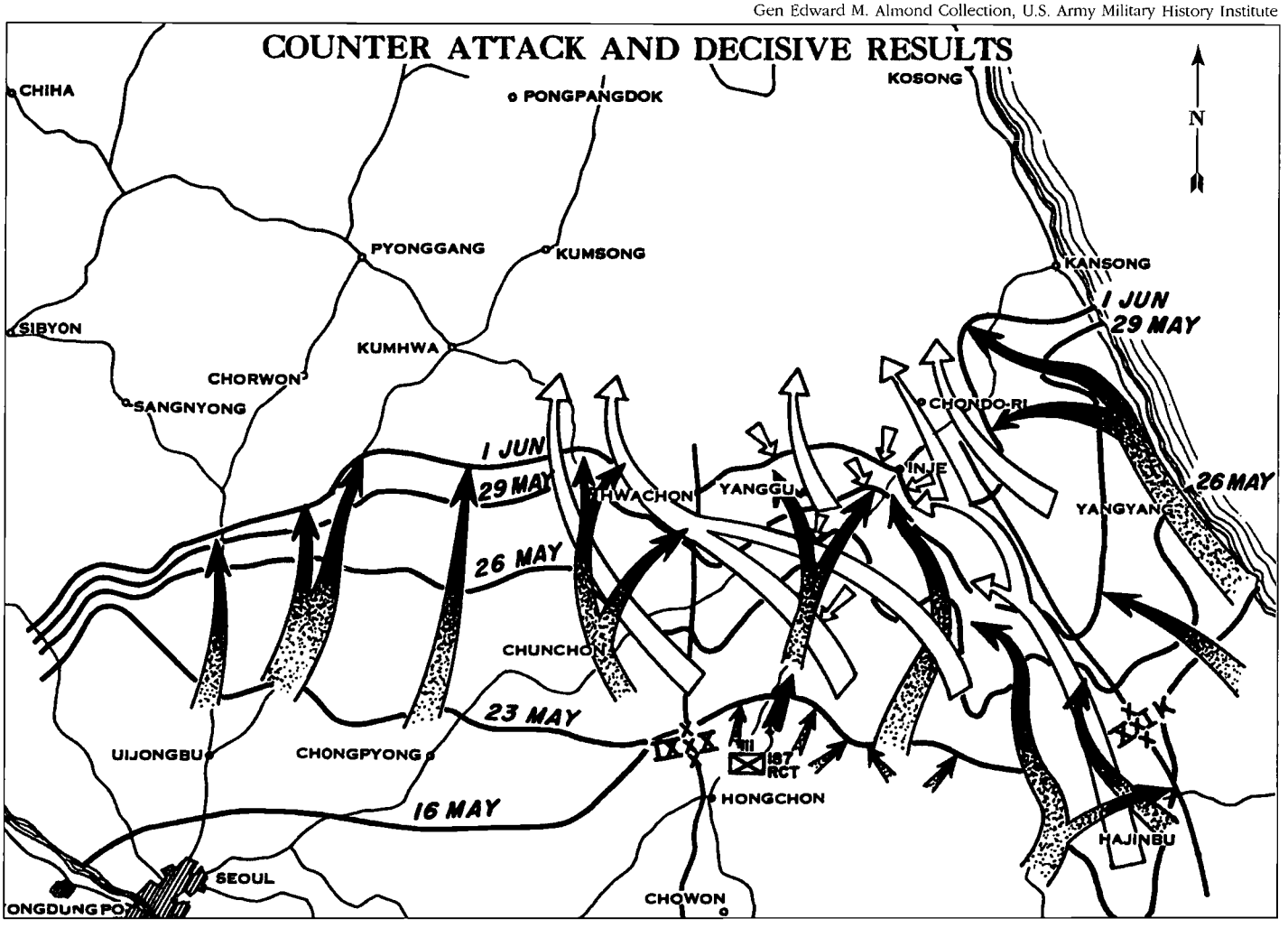
Elements of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 5th Marines, hit the dirt after taking heavy enemy mortar and machine gun fire from Chinese forces occupying Hill 1051. Air and artillery forced the enemy to retire northward and the regiment secured the commanding high ground.

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC368657

axis of advance provided General Thomas and his staff with new challenges. A shift of corps boundaries as far east as a line Hongchon-Hwachon Reservoir helped some, but not much. As he himself later admitted, Almond had once again promised too much, too soon in the way of decisive action. For once he had not underestimated the enemy; the Chinese army groups in his zone of action were indeed wounded, but not as seriously as Eighth Army estimated. (United Nations Command estimated total Chinese casualties for the Fifth Offensive at 180,000, but the Chinese put their own losses at half this total.) The difficulty was the time and effort necessary to get the offensive moving with task forces drawn from the 2d Infantry Division, the 3d Infantry Division, the 187th Airborne, and the divisional and corps tank battalions. The result was that the attacks at the tip of the salient jumped off on time (mid-23 May), but the big drive across the base of the salient did not begin until 24 May and the serious, organized advance up Route 24 did not begin until the next day. In the meantime the Chinese, attacked 12 hours before they began their own withdrawal, fought back sluggishly as they moved up their withdrawal schedule, a euphemism for—in some cases—a Chinese "bug out."

The result of the gelatinous attack by Major General Clark L. Ruffner's 2d Division and its attached task forces was that the 1st Marine Division advance, also dutifully begun on 23 May, had to conform to the Army units on its right. The Marine advance of 24-31 May developed into a two-axis attack with the 1st Marines and the 1st KMC Regiment moving through the hills south of Soyang, crossing the river on 28 May, and reaching the heights above the Hwachon Reservoir on 31 May. The 5th and 7th Marines started the march north in a column of regiments, but the 7th Marines pulled ahead while the 5th Marines took the commanding heights of Kari-san (Hill 1051). The 7th Marines then turned northeast away from Route 24 to take the shortest route to the town of Yanggu, just east of the eastern end of the Hwachon Reservoir. The 7th Marines assaulted and captured the Yanggu heights, but watched the Chinese flee through the open zone of the tardy U.S. 2d Infantry Division. The

Gen Edward M. Almond Collection, U.S. Army Military History Institute



National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-429689

After securing Kari-san (Hill 1051), Marines search two Chinese prisoners of war for weapons and documents.

5th Marines shifted right to the hills east of the road to Yanggu and drew abreast of the 7th Marines on 29-30 May. The next day all of Thomas' four regiments occupied their portion of Line Topeka.

For the rifle companies at the head of each pursuing battalion, the war did not look much like the reassuring blue arrows on an acetate-covered 1:25,000 map. The last two weeks of May 1951 proved to be hot and very dry during the day, but cold and wet at night as unusual spring rains kept the hills slick and the valleys a slough. Water to drink, however, proved harder to find than water for discomfort. Few Marines were willing to chance the ground water or local streams, but potable water seemed to take second place to ammunition in the columns of Korean bearers. In an era when "water discipline" made "exces-

Hugging the crest of a ridgeline, the 7th Marines prepare to "pour hot lead" into enemy positions as a prelude to a general assault by other Marine units.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A8888

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A155279

Marines of Battery L, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, prepare their 155mm howitzer for a fire mission in support of Marine units around Yanggu. Observed, adjusted artillery fire provided the Marines with essential support against North Korean defensive positions.

sive" drinking a sin in the Marine Corps, dehydration stalked the struggling columns of laden troops. The columns not only fought groups of Chinese, but marched through the Eighth Army's dying fields of February and May, passing the bodies of soldiers from the 2d Infantry Division.

Despite the profligate use of artillery and air strikes, the Marine rifle companies found their share of close combat in the last week of May. Moving along a steep hillside only by hanging from the trunks of shattered trees, Second Lieutenant Earl Roth's platoon saw enemy mortar rounds fly by them and explode in the gully below. Roth suppressed a strong urge to reach out and catch a mortar round as it passed by, a vestige of his football playing days at the University of Maryland. Although the firefights seldom involved even a whole company, they were a world of war for the engaged Marines. One platoon of Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, stormed a Chinese ambush position only to have the defenders charge right back at them in the most intimate of meeting engagements, a brawl won by the Marines with grenades, clubbed rifles, bayonets, and fists. Urged on by the company's Beowulf, Second Lieutenant Paul N. "Pete" McCloskey, the Marines left few survivors, but their post-fury victory celebration was cut short by a deluge of 120mm mortar rounds pre-registered on top of the position. The company lost is commanding officer and other Marines in the swift reversal of fortune.

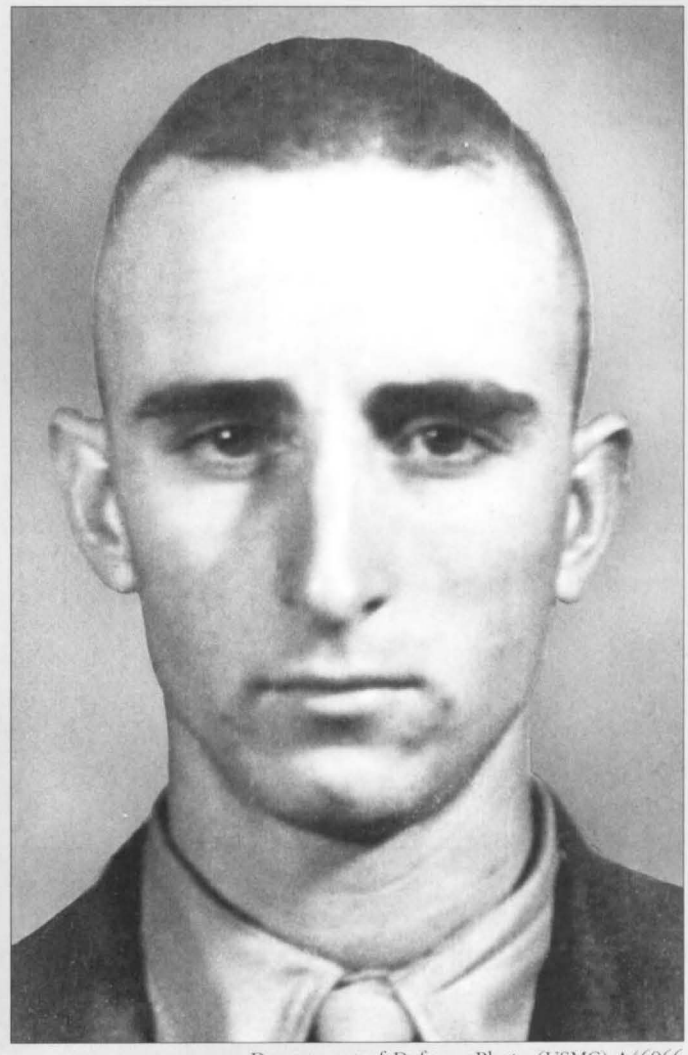
The six days of offensive action in the last week of May 1951 demonstrated to friend and foe alike that the 1st Marine Division remained a fearsome killing machine. Using artillery and tank fire, supplemented with battalion mortars and machine guns, the infantry regiments methodically took their objectives with minimal casualties and no operational crises. The Marines continued to run into scattered battalion-sized remnants of Chinese divisions, none willing to hold any position against the deluge of fire poured upon them. On 28 May, however, the Marines started to discover organized, company-sized defensive positions manned by North Koreans and ringed with mines. By 31 May, the day of the division's heaviest casualties for the week (126 killed and wounded), the Chinese had disappeared from the battlefield. During the week the division intelligence staff estimated that the division had inflicted 10,000 casualties; what it knew for certain was that the regiments had counted 1,870 enemy bodies and taken 593 prisoners. The 1st Marine Division's losses for the entire month of May were 83 killed in action or died of wounds and 731 wounded. The "exchange ratio" against an enemy still considered dangerous and willing to fight was about as good as could be expected.

The week of divisional attack brought its share of surprises. The enemy provided some of them. The Chinese, aided by the slow advance of the 2d Infantry Division, refused to wait for their entrappers and poured out of the salient after the first attacks of 23 May. Chinese soldiers from five different divisions of the *Third Army Group* crossed the path of the Marines on their way to rally points at Yanggu and Hwachon; the chaotic pattern of the Chinese withdrawal meant that enemy bands might appear at any time from the east and south, which lead Almond and Thomas to confer daily on flank security issues. When the Marines met the better-armed and trained infantry of the North Korean *12th Division*, they also came under fire from Soviet-made artillery and mortars. The Chinese withdrawal, however, gave Marine artillery a field day; between 10 May and 7 June the 1st

Private First Class Whitt L. Moreland

Born in 1930 in Waco, Texas, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1948, following graduation from Junction City High School. After serving out his active duty, he reverted to Reserve status. In November 1950, he was recalled to active duty and sent to Korea. While serving as an intelligence scout while attached to Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, he was killed at Kwagchi-dong on 29 May 1951. The citation of his posthumous Medal of Honor award reads, in part:

> Voluntarily accompanying a rifle platoon in a daring assault against a strongly defended enemy hill position, Private First Class Moreland delivered accurate rifle fire on the hostile emplacement and thereby aided materially in seizing the objective. After the position had been secured, he unhesitatingly led a party forward to neutralize an enemy bunker which he had observed some 400 meters beyond and, moving boldly through a fire swept area, almost reached the hostile emplacement when the enemy launched a volley of hand grenades on his group. Quick to act despite the personal danger involved, he kicked several of the grenades off the ridgeline where they exploded harmlessly and, while attempting to kick away another, slipped and fell near the deadly missile. Aware that the sputtering grenade would explode before he could regain his feet and dispose of it, he shouted a warning to his comrades, covered the missile with his body and absorbed the full blast of the explosion, but in saving his companions from possible injury or death, was mortally wounded.—Captain John C. Chapin, USMCR (Ret)



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A46966

Marine Division artillery fired 13,157 tons of shells, second only to the 2d Infantry Division (15,307 tons). The corps artillery group kept pace, especially since its fires supported the South Korean divisions. All X Corps divisions surrendered their trucks to keep X Corps guns supplied with shells. By the end of May ammunition shortages had become an operational concern. The artillery expenditures and the stiffening Communist defenses suggested that the "happy time" of X Corps exploitation operations had come to an end.

General Thomas had every reason to be proud of his division, for Generals Ridgway, Van Fleet, and Almond all visited his command post and praised the division's performance. General Shepherd and his senior staff visited the division on 28-29 May, and Shepherd added his congratulations not only for the operational successes, but also for the good relations with the Army. And Almond went out of his way to tell the other generals how much he valued Thomas' wise counsel. (Thomas was not so sure that Almond listened to anyone, but at least the corps commander now observed the chain-of-command.) Finding another way to celebrate a victory, the commander of the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, sent one of his lieutenants out on a desperate mission: find ice somewhere around Yanggu to cool the battalion's beer ration. Second Lieutenant Harold Arutunian's patrol returned with ice—stolen from the body bags of an Army graves registration unit. For at least one week the 1st Marine Division had fought by its book, and it suffered negligible casualties by pounding every objective with preparatory air strikes and artillery concentrations. For once Almond did not exaggerate when, on 31 May, he characterized the Marines as "fatigued, but spirits high."

North to the Kansas Line

Perched in their most recent foxholes above the Hwachon Reservoir and the blackened ruins of Yanggu—so flattened and incinerated that only the charred bank vault gave the town a skyline—the forward infantry battalions of the 1st Marine Division could see only more sharp hills to the north, rising ever higher into the smoky dusk of the last day of May. They did not know that conferences elsewhere were already deciding their fate in the month ahead.

The Chinese Fifth Offensive and its crushing defeat had opened the way for a second "entirely new war," but not one that made any of the belligerents very happy. The Communist coalition shared a common problem with United Nations Command: was there any operational option that offered advantage worthy of the risks of strategic escalation? What if the Soviet air forces, for example, mounted attacks on the American airbases in Korea? What if the Soviet navy mounted submarine or maritime aviation attacks upon the U.N. naval forces that roamed the east and west seas with impunity?

Relatively certain that Joseph Stalin would not authorize any attacks that might bring American retaliation on Soviet bases in the Far East, Mao Zedong sought some employment of the Chinese Communist Forces that would eventually destroy the will of the United Nations and the Republic of Korea to continue the war. On 27 May 1951, Mao Zedong opened discussions on strategy with his principal commanders in Korea. Within a week Mao conferred with eight senior officers of the CCF, especially First Deputy Commander Deng Hua and Chief of Staff Xie Fang. Mao told his field commanders that the CCF would conduct *niupitang* attritional warfare of position until United Nations Command casualties reached unbearable proportions.

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC382822
The Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the Commander in Chief, U.N. Command, Gen Matthew B. Ridgway, USA, to continue the offensive but only by advancing to the Wyoming-Kansas Line, a phase line in the mountains north of the 38th Parallel. The underlying objective of these operations was designed to support a negotiated end to hostilities.

Mao's use of the word *niupitang* could not have been more apt since *niupitang* was a delicious but very sticky candy from his native Hunan Province, an irresistible sweet that took a very long time to eat and usually made a mess. The *niupitang* strategy would work well with a policy of *biantan bianda* or simultaneous negotiating and fighting. Within two months Mao replaced three of the four army group commanders, retaining only Yang Dezhi, a modern commander and a protégé of Deng and Xie, and promoting him to second deputy commander and de facto director of operations for the Communist field forces. Peng Dehuai remained the titular commander of the CCF, but Deng Hua, Xie Fang, and Yang Dezhi directed the new strategy, "On the Protracted War in Korea," announced in July 1951.

The other Communist co-belligerents reacted to *niupitang* in much different ways, but neither the Soviets nor the North Koreans had much leverage on Mao Zedong. If they wanted the war to continue—and they did—they depended upon the Chinese army to bear the brunt of the fighting. Now that the war had not produced a great Communist victory, Stalin (beset with political problems at home) saw no reason to go beyond his commitment of Soviet air defense forces to "MiG Alley" along the Korean-Manchurian border and to rearm the Chinese army. The Soviets, in fact, saw truce negotiations as a way to increase their influence in the United Nations as well as to buy time to rebuild and rearm the Chinese forces. The North Koreans—represented by the pestiferous Kim Il Sung—wanted only more war and no talks, unless a truce brought an end to American air strikes. Kim and his inner circle agreed, however, that the 38th Parallel should be restored as an international border and that all foreign troops (including the Chinese) should leave Korea—after the South Korean army had been fatally weakened and the North Korean People's Army restored to fighting trim and much-enlarged. Kim ordered his generals to fight to the death for every rocky foot of North Korean soil.

The process of political-strategic reassessment, which had begun with the Chinese intervention in November 1950, blossomed in May 1951 like the cherry-blossoms in Washington, D.C. and Korean coastal resort town of Chinhae. Hints of peace negotiations sprout-

Close Air Support Controversy

By the spring of 1951, the question of close air support for United Nations Command ground forces had become a serious inter-service controversy that pitted the Marine Corps and some of the senior commanders of the Eighth Army against the United States Air Force and General Matthew B. Ridgway, the United Nations and American theater commander. To some degree the controversy involved the employment of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and several lesser and often false issues, e.g. jets versus propeller aircraft, but the heart of the problem was simply that the Air Force did not want to perform the mission. It regarded close air support as a wasteful and dangerous misuse of offensive tactical air power. Marine Corps aviation and Navy carrier-based aviation regarded close air support as an essential contribution to the ground campaign. The victim in all this inter-service wrangling was the Eighth Army and the 1st Marine Division.

From the Air Force perspective, the close air support mission belonged at the bottom of its offensive air missions, although the leaders of the Army Air Forces as early as 1943 insisted that air power was the equal of ground combat power in the conduct of war. The same senior officers donned new uniforms in 1947, but did not drop their old ideas about close air support, despite the relatively effective use of ground-directed air strikes against the German army in 1944-1945. The Air Force position was rooted in negative experiences: the bombing and strafing of friendly troops; the extraordinary losses to ground fire in making front-line, low-level bombing runs; and the conviction that Army ground commanders knew nothing of fighter-bomber capabilities and would scream for close air support when artillery was a more rapid and appropriate response to their indirect fire support requirements. The guidance in effect for Air Force-Army close air support operations in 1950 was the "Joint Training Directive for Air-Ground Operations," an agreement only between Tactical Air Command and Army Field Forces, not the Service headquarters.

In theory and application in Korea in 1950 the doctrine of the "Joint Training Directive," which the Air Force embraced as authoritative, made close air support difficult for a ground command to obtain. Basically, the Air-Ground Operations System (AGOS) required that a ground commander request air support prior to an operation and be very specific about his needs. Requests had to be processed through an Army operations officer (G-3 Air) from regiment through field army and reviewed by an Air Force officer at each echelon of command (the air liaison officer) until the request reached the Joint Operations Center (JOC), run by an Air Force general, which would allocate the available air strikes. The request system insured that close air support strikes were not likely to be tactically relevant, but the air direction system the Air Force preferred also added to the problem. The definition of close air support was that air strikes should be coordinated with the fire and maneuver of the ground forces through the positive direction by a forward air controller (FAC) who was fully knowledgeable about the ground combat situation. There was no fundamental disagreement that a Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) with reliable air-ground communications (vehicle- or ground-mounted) should be available so the FAC could direct air strikes by sight, just like an artillery forward observer. The Air Force, however, did not want to use its own personnel for such missions, and it did not trust the Army to provide a competent FAC. The Air Force might provide an Air Liaison Party down to the regimental level to do air strike planning, but it was not going to send Air Force officers (presumably pilots) out to the front to direct air strikes. In some fairness, the Fifth Air Force did provide such Tactical Air Control Parties to the Eighth Army in 1950, and they were shot to pieces—radio-jeeps and people alike.

The Fifth Air Force in 1950 created an air strike direction system that depended on airborne air controllers, basically the World War II system. During the course of the fighting in 1950 the Fifth Air Force and Eighth Army committed people and equipment to form the 6147th Tactical Control Squadron, later expanded to wing status. The "Mosquitoes," as the forward air controllers (airborne) came to be known, did yeoman work throughout the war, directing air strikes from their two-seat, propeller-driven North American AT-6 "Texan" aircraft, a World War II pilot trainer. The "Mosquitoes" lacked nothing in courage and skill, but they were still hostages to the JOC system. Either the air strikes had to be preplanned or they had to be requested as a matter of dire

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A131261

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A130146

emergency or diverted from other missions.

The Navy-Marine Corps system, developed for amphibious operations in World War II, offered a different approach. The Air Force tried to brand the system as driven by amphibious operations, which it was to some degree, but the system had proved itself in land campaigns on Saipan, Guam, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, the Philippines, and Okinawa. The Navy and the Marine Corps brought the same system to Korea, and it worked. It worked so well that Army generals, especially Major General Edward M. Almond, embraced it without reservation. His successor as commander of X Corps, Major General Clovis E. Byers, also became a convert, and it cost him his command. Other Army commanders at the division level envied the system and wondered why they could not receive adequate support, but they were too intimidated by Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway to push the issue.

The Air Force consistently misrepresented the essence of the Navy-Marine Corps system. The naval services never challenged the important of air superiority or interdiction operations. The naval services simply argued—and placed in their own doctrine—that if close air support missions were to be flown at all, they should be rapid, responsive, appropriate, and effective. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing might be best trained to perform such missions, but it was the system that counted, not the uniforms of the pilots or the type of planes they flew. The senior Marine ground commander did not command aviation units, as the Air Force charged. Either X Corps or 1st Marine Division did not command the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

The Navy-Marine Corps system accommodated planned requests, but its strength was its tactical flexibility. Each infantry battalion in the 1st Marine Division had a Tactical Air Control Party of two elements. One group served as the Air Liaison Party, part of the battalion operations staff. The other group was the Forward Air Control Party, an officer and communicators who could process requests for air support and direct air strikes from the ground, usually well forward with an infantry company. In practical terms, this system meant that each Marine infantry battalion had two Marine officers (naval aviators) as part of the battalion staff to insure that air strikes hit the enemy and did so soon enough to affect the tactical situation. The system worked, and the Marine Corps saw no reason to abandon it.

As X Corps commander, General Almond liked the Navy-Marine Corps system, which he saw at close quarters during the Inchon-Seoul campaign and again during the withdrawal to the Hungnam enclave. In fact, he ordered his Army divisions to form their own TACPs or he arranged for the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing to send

TACPs to Army units (American and Korean) within his corps. The ability of the TACPs to direct strikes naturally drew most of the sorties flown in December 1950 by the Marine squadrons and the naval aviators flying from the decks of Task Force 77.

The operational conditions and requirements of 1950 made it appear that the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing had come to Korea to be General Almond's corps aviation component. In fact, X Corps functioned much like a modern Marine air-ground task force, even if Almond had no direct authority over any of his supporting tactical aviation squadrons. Fifth Air Force, however, thought this ad hoc arrangement should not continue. In early 1951, General Ridgway and Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer, Commander General, Far East Air Forces, insured that General Douglas MacArthur placed X Corps in the Eighth Army and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing under the operational control of the Fifth Air Force and the Joint Operations Center. The Marines could perform their close air support magic for all of Eighth Army, not just X Corps. Ridgway, however, demanded that Fifth Air Force study the whole close air support question and find ways to make the JOC system more responsive to unplanned ground requests for air strikes.

While Fifth Air Force and Eighth Army both conducted reviews of the Air-Ground Operations System, the war went on. The 1st Marine Division returned to the fray in February 1951 without its usual customary air support, either in quality or quantity. Marine fighter-bomber squadrons (F4U Corsairs or F9F Panthers) flew missions for all of Eighth Army with results that depended entirely upon the ability of either the airborne "Mosquitoes" or ground spotters (if any) to identify the targets and communicate with the aircraft. In the meantime, Task Force 77 sailed north to attack Communist railroads and highways ("the bridges of Toko-ri"), and Air Force fighter-bombers of varying nationalities (predominately American or Australian) showed up to conduct missions for the 1st Marine Division with mixed results. Major General Oliver P. Smith asked Ridgway to use his influence with Fifth Air Force to give Smith operational control of just one Corsair squadron. Ridgway refused to raise the issue and breach the "single management" doctrine. "Smith, I'm sorry, but I don't command the Air Force!"

Even though Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force made serious efforts to establish all the personnel and communications elements of the AGOS request and direction organization, the Air Force's lack of interest and ability in close air support still discouraged ground commanders from making pre-attack requests. The system virtually guaranteed that emergency requests would be answered late, if at all. With their own TACPs at the battalion level, the Marines could and did short circuit the system by making emergency requests to an airborne Mosquito, who would then divert either outgoing or returning interdiction strikes to the Marines and release direction of the strikes to the forward air controllers. If the attacking aircraft happened to be flown by trained Marines, so much the better. The 1st Marine Division FACs, however, reported that in April 1951 the JOC had answered 95 percent of their requests, but only 40 percent of the missions were flown by adequate numbers of aircraft, properly armed, and arrived in time to make some difference in the battle. In the meantime losses of aircraft and pilots soared in the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, in part because non-Marine controllers provided poor information about the terrain and enemy situation. In April 1951, the Marines lost 16 aircraft and 10 pilots (one captured, nine killed) to enemy ground fire.

Although X Corps received ample close air support during the Fifth Offensive (Second Phase), Almond still criticized the AGOS practices. Major General Gerald C. Thomas entered the fray when he learned that his division had received only two-thirds of its requested air strikes in late May. Only about half of the delivered sorties were effective, and almost all were over an hour or more late. The only concession Almond and Thomas received was the stationing of one mixed Corsair squadron from Marine Aircraft Group 12 at K-46 a primitive strip near Hoengsong, but the JOC (Kimpo Airfield) still had to approve the missions. With the AGOS still in place—albeit somewhat more efficient and flexible—the war against the *niupitang* Chinese and North Korean defenders would go on—and the 1st Marine Division would indeed get stuck.

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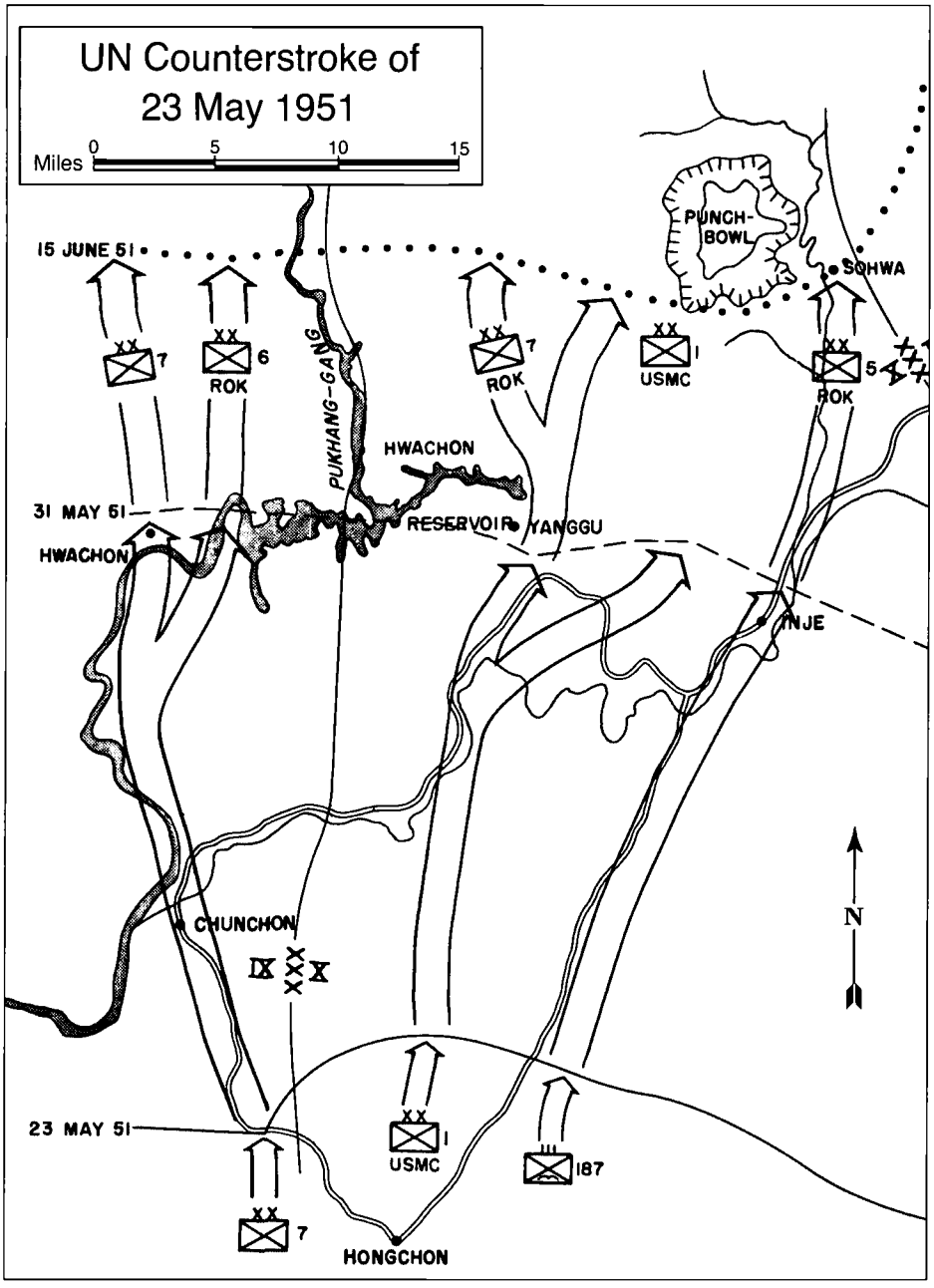
ed everywhere—most planted by shadowy Soviet sowers in the worlds' capitals and at the United Nations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff kept General Matthew B. Ridgway informed on the flood of speculation and hope. Until the last week of May, however, Ridgway had no reason to link his sense of the strategic shifts underway with the continuing operations in Korea. Then Van Fleet, pressed by Almond, proposed a significant change in the exploitation campaign that followed the defeat of the Fifth Offensive. When the bulk of the Chinese forces had already escaped the bag between X Corps and ROK I Corps, Van Fleet proposed a series of amphibious envelopments up the east coast that would conclude with the creation of an enclave at Tongchon, still short of Wonsan, but well north of the "Iron Triangle," the central Korean network of transportation connections and mountain corridors bounded by Chorwon-Pyonggang-Kumhwa from west to east. Ridgway and Van Fleet agreed with Almond that control of the "Iron Triangle," even from Tongchon, would give either



side an advantage in ending or continuing the war.

General Ridgway, however, did not agree that Van Fleet's proposed Operation Overwhelming could be mounted because of resistance in Washington and sheer operational feasibility. Even a modest shore-to-shore movement would require disengaging the 1st Marine Division and (probably) the 3d Infantry Division and transporting them to a port for embarkation. From Ridgway's perspective, time was of the essence, and the requirements of Overwhelming were too overwhelming with truce talks in the wind. Ridgway's greatest fear was that someone would give away the territorial gains already made in May and the additional ground he wanted to control in June after Operation Piledriver, a straight-ahead push by all four of Van Fleet's corps. The Eighth Army's goal would be the seizure and defense of a cross-peninsula line (Wyoming-Kansas) that would retake Kaesong, hold the mountain ranges and passes northwest of the Imjin River, secure at least part of the "Iron Triangle," and hold the mountains north of the Hwachon Reservoir all the way to the coast at Tongchon. Anticipating that a ceasefire would entail the creation of some sort of territorial buffer zone, Ridgway wanted to reach a line (Kansas) well north of the Wyoming Line, his non-negotiable position for ensuring the ground defense of the expanded Republic of Korea.

Two other considerations shaped Ridgway's thinking about the conduct of the war. Some of the general's critics and champions later suggested that he had become too interested in his personal goal of becoming Army chief of staff or faint-hearted at the prospect of excessive American casualties in Korea. Ridgway's ambition was well-known to his Army peers, but he realized that trying to please Washington was a fool's errand. Nor had Ridgway, notoriously ruthless in relieving non-fighters, suddenly become casualty-shy. He simply saw no purpose in risking lives in adventures that probably would not produce the promised results. Moreover, Ridgway had become convinced that air power could give him an offensive option to punish the Communist armies beyond bearing, his own high explosive, high altitude version of *niupitang*. Recent changes in the Air Force high command in the war zone placed very aggressive and persuasive air generals in Ridgway's inner council. General Otto P. Weyland, the Far East Air Forces director of operations since early in the war, became the commander, and Lieutenant General Frank F. Everest assumed command of the Fifth Air Force. Both Weyland and Everest, tactical aviation commanders in World War II, championed aerial interdiction as the most decisive way to use air power in a war like the Korean

conflict. Both also insisted that the senior theater Air Force officer should have operational control of all aviation units with combat capability, including the carrier air groups of Task Force 77 and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. Ridgway's coolness to any amphibious operation and his warmth toward the Weyland-Everest interdiction campaign, Operation Strangle, would have critical effect on both the 1st Marine Division and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing for the rest of the war.

For the 1st Marine Division the high-level discussions on the relative weight of the ground and air wars on bringing the Communists to terms had no immediate effect since X Corps' mission remained unchanged: seize the Kansas Line. Nevertheless, the Marines needed at least a brief pause, which Almond would not grant the division on 31 May. He ordered the attacks to the north to continue, and on 1 June the 5th and 7th Marines dutifully pushed on—and went nowhere. With the 11th Marines short of artillery shells, air arrangements uncertain, and the 7th Marines in need of a break, Thomas did not push Hayward and Nickerson until they all had a chance to think about the new attacks.

A rifle platoon of the 5th Marines does some "ridge-running" as it moves to an assault position in the broken terrain south of the Punchbowl.
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A8868

The terrain alone appeared formidable. A long, high ridge of the Taebaek Mountain chain dominated the 1st Marine Division's zone of action. The ridge was known as Taeu-san and Taeam-san for its two highest peaks, 1,179 meters for the northern most Taeu-san and 1,316 meters for the southern Taeam-san. Taeu-san/Taeam-san were bordered on the west by the Sochon River, which ran into the Hwachon Reservoir just past Yanggu. The Marines also inherited the southern part of another parallel ridge to the west, but dominated by the Taeu-san/Taeaum-san hill mass to the east, which meant that any force attacking directly north of Yanggu would receive fire from its right flank. The terrain situation to the east was even more daunting. The division's eastern boundary ran generally along the Soyang; the distance between the two rivers was 15 miles, more or less, and the entire zone stretched another four miles to the west. The Taeu-san/Taeam-san ridge, however, did not uniformly run northwards. The whole ridge complex had once been a volcano, and the crater created a depression in the mountain, the "Punchbowl," open at its eastern edge where the Soyang River had eroded a hole in the crater wall. The southern lip of the crater, remained, however, as a formidable extension at a right angle east of the main ridgeline, which provided a transverse position for fire directly along all the lower ridges to the south. In a sense the whole Taeu-san/Taeam-san complex looked like a giant leaf with its thin tip to the south and its thicker (higher) base to the

north; many veins (ridges) ran west and east from the central spine, some creating separate compartments to cross, others echeloned southwest or southeast and running uphill to the central stem, dominated by a series of separate peaks. The terrain is a defensive commander's dream.

The 1st Division attack on the Taeu-san/Taeam-san massif and the ridge adjoining it to the west began on 2 June and ended almost three weeks later with all four infantry regiments very bloodied, but unbowed and with three of them on or beyond the original Kansas Line. The advance uphill for about eight miles took the measure of the entire division as had no fight since the Chosin Reservoir campaign. For the 1st Marines, its losses exceeded those of December 1950, and the entire division suffered 183 dead and 1,973 wounded. Both Generals Van Fleet and Almond questioned General Thomas about his division's losses. Especially aggravated about the poor quality of his close air support and the Eighth Army's timorous treatment of the Fifth Air Force, Thomas felt no need to apologize to Van Fleet for completing his mission. "Well, General, you told us to take the Kansas Line, and we took it for you. I'm sure we paid for what we got, but we got what we paid for." Thomas wrote his family that his Marines were the best he had ever seen, and "Big Foot" Brown told his friends that the feats of his regiment had to be seen to be believed. Thomas fully appreciated the North Koreans' tenacity: "They fight like Japs!"

The battle began in earnest on 2 June with the 1st Marines and 5th Marines attacking abreast, each with two battalions, with the 7th Marines and 1st KMC Regiment in reserve. The 1st Marines took one intermediate objective (a small hill called X-Ray) and entered the lower ridges of the hill mass north of the Hwachon Reservoir and west of the Sochon River. The fight was an uphill slog all the way. General Thomas learned that the press identified the engaged Americans as "GIs." He wrote home: "That is us, and we are not GIs." Expert at the coordination of supporting arms, Colonel Brown used artillery to the limit of its effectiveness, but each objective ultimately had to be taken by Marine infantry, savaged with grenades and mortar shells as they literally crawled uphill. Brown had to pay special attention to his left flank, his boundary with the 7th ROK Division, and he often had to deploy one battalion against flanking attacks while the other two continued their forward crawl. As Brown recalled: "it was the toughest fighting I have ever seen."

Over the same period (2-10 June), the 5th Marines faced an even greater ordeal, especially its 1st Battalion, whose zone included seven ascending peaks before it could reach the crest at Hill 1316 (Taeam-san). The 2d Battalion's zone was somewhat less demanding, and Lieutenant Colonel Glen E. Martin more deft in paving the way with air strikes and artillery, and the weight of the North Korean defense faced the 1st Battalion anyway. It took two long days for the 1st Battalion to capture Hills 610, 680, and 692, a distance of about 2,000 yards. In addition to the stubborn defense by the North Koreans, the three rifle companies survived one "friendly" artillery barrage and one errant air strike as well as tank fire from the valley below to the west that, while welcome in bunker-busting, did not seem especially concerned about the position of friendly troops. At one point an inexperienced company commander allowed his men to be trapped in a North Korean mortar barrage, and another company, run off its objective by Corsair-dropped napalm, found itself the target of Communist artillery. McCloskey's platoon in Company C started the two-day ordeal with sergeants as squad leaders and ended it with a corporal and two private first classes in command; almost every platoon commander suffered at least minor wounds. In the meantime, the 2d Battalion had advanced almost 5,000 yards along the eastern edge of the ridge, but its movement did not put it on terrain that menaced the North Koreans on Taeam-san.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A9304
The look on the Marine's face tells the whole story. Having just engaged in a savage firefight with enemy forces, these Marines continue their grueling upward climb.

At this point, General Thomas decided he needed to bring his two uncommitted regiments into the battle since the burden of close combat in May-June 1951 had fallen disproportionately upon the 5th Marines. (Nine members of the regiment received Navy Crosses for heroism, the 7th Marines four, and the 1st Marine two.) The 7th Marines, after all of two days rest, went into the attack on the right of the 1st Marines, which allowed Brown to slide left to guard his loose connection with the 7th ROK Division. Nickerson's regiment also inherited the highest and most heavily defended ridgelines that ran eastwards to Taeu-san (Hill 1179) and the western rim of the Punchbowl. Thomas put the 1st

Private First Class Jack Davis: Combat Marine

After a short stop at Kobe, Japan, the Marines of the 6th Replacement Draft joined the 1st Marine Division in late January 1951. In the process of retraining and reorganizing, the division was conducting counter-guerrilla operations around Pohang, an east coast port within the Republic of Korea. Jack Davis (pictured on the left in the first row) was assigned to Company G, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, somewhere near Andung, northwest of Pohang. Known within the regiment as "Bloody George" Company, Jack's new comrades were little more experienced than he was with the exception of a handful of officers, noncommissioned officers, and privates. The original Company G had landed across Blue Beach at Inchon and fought in the liberation of Yongdung-po and Seoul. It earned its nickname during the Chosin Reservoir campaign. The company first met the Chinese at Majon-ni and lost nine dead and 15 wounded (including attachments) when its truck convoy was ambushed. Filled with wide-eyed reservists from the 1st and 2d Replacement Drafts, the company started north toward the Yalu with a full complement of seven officers and 224 enlisted men. It also had a new company commander, Captain Carl L. Sitter, a World War II combat veteran. He had replaced the first company commander, reassigned to Quantico, Virginia, as an instructor at The Basic School.

In just about one month, the second Company G practically disappeared, lost to battlefield deaths, wounds, and frostbite. The company fought its way into Hagaru-ri on 29 November as the spearhead of Task Force Drysdale, taking 48 casualties from the gauntlet of fire the Chinese created for the convoy of tanks and vehicles. At Hagaru-ri the company tried to retake East Hill, but faced too many Chinese with too few Marines. The dwindling ranks of Company G, nevertheless, held the shortened perimeter and took 60 more casualties.

Captain Sitter received the Medal of Honor, and 10 other company Marines were awarded decorations for valor, including a Silver Star for the first sergeant, Master Sergeant Rocco A. Zullo. Within 10 days of battle, the company lost all but 87 officers and men, and fully a third of these "originals" had been wounded and returned to duty. Jack Davis had not yet experienced the physical and emotional ravages of combat when he joined Company G, but he could appreciate having even a handful of veterans around to stiffen the third Company G.

Assigned to the 3d Platoon as a BAR-man, Jack soon learned that Sergeant Robert W. "Blackie" Jones, new to the company but a World War II veteran, had strong opinions about weapons. Sergeant Jones liked the Browning Automatic Rifle, and he had a way of finding additional BARs for his squad. Sometime in February, between Operations Ripper and Killer, as the Eighth Army ground its way back toward the 38th Parallel, Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller inspected Company G. Puller found Jones' squad armed in an unusual manner. "How many BARs are there in a Marine rifle squad?" he asked the squad sergeant. "Three, sir!" Jones smartly responded. "How many BARs do you have in your first squad, sergeant?" Puller continued. "Six, sir!" Puller then asked: "How did you get these weapons?" Jones responded with even more snap in his voice: "We liberated them from the Army, sir!" Puller grunted his approval and went on without further comment. Jack, standing next to Johnson in the ranks, almost laughed at the spirited exchange.

Sergeant Jones also demonstrated quick thinking under fire. Sitting on a rice paddy dike somewhere between Wonju and Hoengsong in late February, Jack's squad watched spouts of cold, muddy water rise from the paddy less than a foot beyond their outstretched boots. "Blackie" did a back-gainer off the dike to a lower-level paddy and screamed at his men to take cover. The Chinese burp-gunner faded into the woods without molestation. Jack also learned the value of water from Sergeant Jones and soon carried two canteens, the only man in the squad to do so. He checked his water sources carefully, especially after he found a rotting horse upstream in one clear, bubbling brook, and used halazone tablets liberally. His health remained good despite his constant fatigue and unrelenting diet of C-rations. Nevertheless, he lost weight and seemed to shrink within his parka and field equipment.

The new Company G received another opportunity to add to its "bloody" reputation in the first days of the Chinese Fifth Offensive, April 1951. Upon the collapse of the 6th ROK Division on the division's left flank, Major General Oliver P. Smith sent the 1st Marines west of the Pukhan River to seize the critical hills that dominated the river valley and the only road by which he could extract the 5th and 7th Marines from the Hwachon Reservoir sector to the north. Hill 902, a 3,000-foot tower, became the 3d Battalion's objective; the hill dominated a road into the Pukhan River valley and a critical bridge on the road south to Chunchon and the No Name Line where the division was to establish a new defensible position. The battalion beat the Chinese to the peak (aided by Marine trucks) and moved down three parallel western ridges where Lieutenant Colonel Virgil W. Banning, the battalion commander, expected to meet the Chinese on their belated climb toward the peak of Hill 902. Banning placed one rifle company on each of the three entrant ridges and arranged his supporting arms into the evening of 23 April. Around 2000 the Chinese attacked, first striking Company G, the most advanced (by plan) and defender of the center ridgeline.

Huddled behind barriers of rocks—no foxholes could be dug here—Company G threw back a Chinese regiment with the assistance of Companies H and I, which fired across its flanks and sent reinforcements. Marine and Army howitzers and mortars showered the attackers with shellfire. Rallied by Technical Sergeant Harold E. Wilson, an Alabama reservist, the center platoon of Company G barely held. Jack Davis' platoon held its hillside position along the southern slope of George Ridge; the platoon suffered two or three killed and several more wounded, popping up to spray the Chinese in between the artillery barrages. Jack made it through the night unscathed, but the next morning, as the battalion backed away from the Chinese under an umbrella of close air support strikes, Jack fell victim to some unfriendly "friendly fire." As he and some other Marines struggled down the steep eastern slope of Hill 902 with stretchers loaded with dead and wounded Marines, two Marine F4U Corsairs strafed the column, showered the cowering infantrymen with ricocheting bullets and rock fragments. Although he took no life-threatening hits, Jack found himself a bleeding, lacerated, and thoroughly enraged member of the "Society of Walking Wounded" and headed for the battalion aid station for treatment. Rested, fed, and patched up, he returned to the company on the No Name Line.

Although he avoided telling his parents about his combat experience, Jack wrote his brother Vince that he should forget about leaving Vanderbilt and joining the Marine Corps to fight in Korea. If Vince became an officer, his chances of surviving would not be as good as an enlisted man's since the Marines expected all officers to lead from the front. Artillery officers—to which Vince aspired—had no greater chances of survival since they all had to serve as forward observers with rifle companies before assigned to the comparative safety of a firing battery. "Stick to the Navy for my sake as well as the folks. I'll do both our shares of the dodging." Jack's war had just begun.

KMC Regiment into the 5th Marines hard-earned foothold below Hills 1122, 1216, and 1316 (Taeam-san). Hayward's regiment (with the exhausted 1st Battalion in reserve) moved into an expanded sector east of the Taeu-san/Taeam-san massif and started to work its way north toward the southern lip of the Punchbowl. Thomas did not pressure Hayward to move aggressively since such an advance would have put the 5th Marines in a salient below an L-shaped hill mass still occupied by much of the *12th NKPA Division.* Before the 5th Marines could press forward to its share of the Kansas Line, the South Korean Marines would have to take Taeam-san.

For five days (5-10 June), the 1st KMC Regiment repeatedly assaulted the Hill 1122-1218-1316 complex but, despite maneuvering to the right and left of the peaks, the Korean Marines made no progress and lost over 500 men without taking even one objective. Anytime the Marines gained a foothold, a North Korean counterattack threw the Marines back. Neither side took prisoners; one South Korean assault discovered 10 bound ROK Marines executed with neat headshots. In desperation, Colonel Kim Suk Bum, the Korean Marine regimental commander, decided to abandon the American way-of-war and ordered a three-battalion unsupported night attack on Hill 1122, the most exposed North Korean position. Advancing by slow infiltration, the South Korean Marines fell on the Communists at 0200 with complete surprise and ran the defenders off to Hill 1216. With a solid hold on at least a part of the crest, the Korean Marine regiment held its ground while its American advisers called in artillery and air strikes on Hills 1216 and 1316. The North Koreans soon fell back to the north to

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A155066

The natural beauty of this quiet scene in North Korea means little to these Marines as they rest during a lull in the struggle for the Punchbowl. In the wide, calm valley before them, each green field may hide a Communist gun position, each tree an enemy sniper.

Taeu-san to avoid being cut off by the American Marines now advancing steadily on both their flanks.

Service with the 1st KMC Regiment came as a surprise to some Marine officers. Assigned against his wishes to the 1st Shore Party Battalion, Second Lieutenant David J. Hytrek, a former private first class in the 5th Marines in 1950, wanted an infantry assignment to avenge the deaths of his comrades who had already fallen in Korea. Instead a crusty master sergeant serving as a personnel officer assigned many of the former enlisted men of the 7th Basic Class to combat service support battalions. "Let the college boys get killed in this war," he growled. Hytrek, however, had barely arrived at his new unit when he received orders to report to the Korean Marines as a liaison officer. General Thomas wanted experienced lieutenants sent to assist the Koreans, so David Hytrek found plenty of war in the battles fought by the Korean Marines around the Punchbowl.

To the west the 1st and 7th Marines fought from one hill to the next hill with consistent but costly success. The 1st Marines reached a line of hills identified as the Brown Line, a more defensible position than the original Kansas Line, which ran through the Sochon River valley to the regiment's rear. The 1st Marines started the regimental advance on 6 June and completed its mission on 14 June. The experience of the 2d Battalion represents the regimental ordeal. After two days of modest advances, the battalion, with the 1st Battalion on its left flank, ran into a very stubborn and skilled North Korean force on Hill 676. The attack stalled, in part because a heavy mortar concentration fell short and inflicted 40 casualties, including the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. McClelland. On 10 June, the battalion sent two companies against the eastern face of the hill since it

could then take advantage of supporting tank fire from the valley below. Many of the North Korean bunkers, however, were sited to protect them from tank guns, 75mm recoilless rifles, and 3.5-inch rocket launchers. Air strikes would have eliminated them, but repeated requests for close air support went unanswered until 2000 when one four-plane strike broke the North Korean defense. All day long, Marine squads inched upwards through the bunker complex, eventually destroying the bunkers with grenades and satchel charges. In one case a lone Marine jumped into a bunker, killed three Koreans with his rifle and strangled the fourth with his bare hands. Throughout the day "chiggy bearers" struggled forward through constant shelling with ammunition and water and stumbled backwards with loaded stretchers. In two days the battalion took more than 300 casualties and lost more than 200 members of its loyal force of Korean porters. The Marines found more than 100 North Korean bodies in the bunkers, including the NKPA battalion commander. The battalion went into reserve on 12 June when the 3d Battalion replaced it.

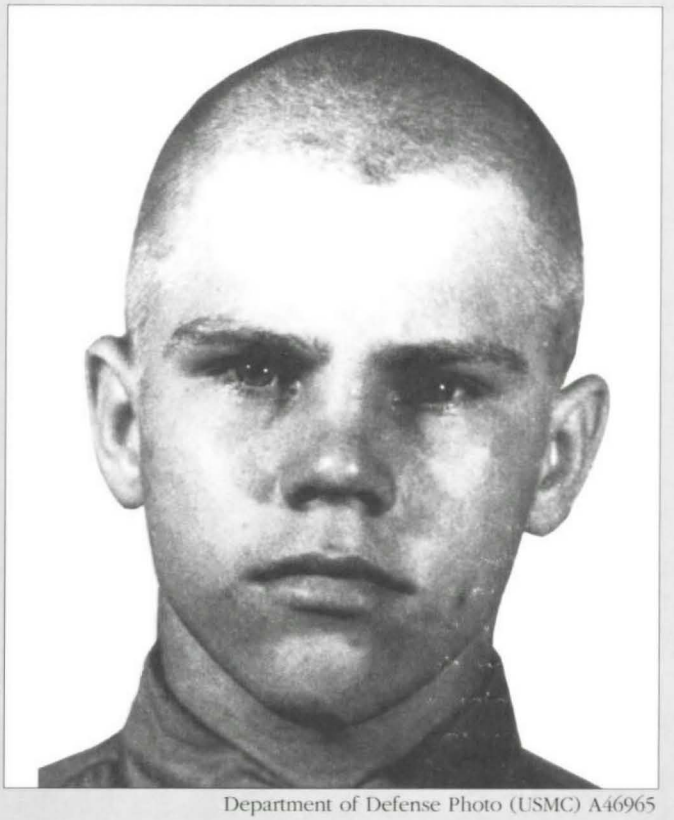
Wedged into a narrow but difficult sector between the 1st Marines and the 1st KMC Regiment, the 7th Marines fought for 10 days (9-19 June) to establish the regiment (two battalions abreast) along the critical hill complex to the west and the Taeu-san/Taeam-san peaks to the east above the Punchbowl. Colonel Nickerson used his supporting tank company to good effect, but Communist mines in the Sochon River valley put more than half of the company (10 of 17 tanks) eventually out of action despite heroic and costly efforts by Marine engineers to sweep the ground. Nickerson's use of supporting arms mirrored Brown's—long on artillery and short of crucial close air support. If the 7th Marines rifle companies took their assigned hills with slightly less cost than the 1st Marines, they had to defend them against even more stubborn nightly counterattacks. The NKPA battalion commander in this sector

Corporal Charles G. Abrell

Born in Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1931, he attended public schools in Las Vegas, Nevada, before enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1948 at the age of 17. Following recruit training at Parris Island, South Carolina, and a short assignment on board the USS *Noble*, he was sent to Korea in 1950 where he took part in five successive operations: Inchon, Seoul, Chosin, and two against the Chinese Communists. For his bold actions on 7 November 1950, he was awarded the Commendation ribbon with Combat "V."

As a fireteam-leader with Company E, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, he gave his life on 10 June 1951 at Hill 676 near Hangnyong. His Medal of Honor citation reads, in part:

> While advancing with his platoon in an attack against well-concealed and heavily-fortified enemy hill positions, Corporal Abrell voluntarily rushed forward through the assaulting squad which was pinned down by a hail of intense and accurate automatic-weapons fire from a hostile bunker situated on commanding ground. Although previously wounded by enemy hand-grenade fragments, he proceeded to carry out a bold, single-handed attack against the bunker, exhorting his comrades to follow him. Sustaining two additional wounds as he stormed toward the emplacement, he resolutely pulled the pin from a grenade clutched in his hand and hurled himself bodily into the bunker with the live missile still in his grasp. [He was] fatally wounded in the resulting explosion which killed the entire enemy gun crew within the stronghold.—Captain John C. Chapin, USMCR (Ret)



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A46965

employed reverse slope defenses, which swept each topographical crest with fire and put the North Korean soldiers close enough for sudden assaults. One 7th Marines company had to throw back five such attacks in one night before it could call its hill secure.

On the eastern side of Taeusan/Taeam-san ridge, the 5th Marines advanced through the ridges that ran down to the Soyang River valley. Alternating in the attack, Hayward's three battalions had to cross five different east-west transverse spur ridges before they reached the last (and highest) ridgeline above the Punchbowl, some 8,000 yards from the regiment's original line of departure on 6 June. As the regiment pushed north, the North Korean defenders took their toll, although somewhat less than the regiments to the west. Again, supporting arms and close air strikes that arrived broke the defensive positions until the regiment, lead by the 1st Battalion, reached the last objective, the Hill 907-Hill 920 ridgeline. No longer able to fall back to another defensive position, the remaining soldiers of the defending North Korean regiment went into their bunkers with no intention of conceding Hill 907 to the oncoming Marines.

The final assault on Hill 907, the regimental objective of the 5th Marines, caught the desperate character of the mountain war in Korea in June 1951. The long, narrow ridge that led to Hill 907 allowed no more than a reinforced platoon to deploy against the line of North Korean bunkers that stretched to the peak. So the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, had the objective, which it assigned to Company B, which passed the mission (at Lieutenant Colonel John L. Hopkins' direction) to Second Lieutenant Charles G. Cooper's 3d Platoon. As the Marines worked methodically through the bunker system, supported by mortar and machine gun fire, their casualties mounted. Cooper called in more artillery and air strikes, but enemy fire from his front and from two flanking ridgelines cut his ranks down to squad size. He lost two radio operators and then had the disconcerting experience of listening to Hopkins, who had turned ferocious on the eve of his change of command, screaming obscene challenges to the North Koreans over the battalion tactical net, presumably to confuse the listening enemy. Cooper managed to arrange for one more air strike, Air Force jets armed with napalm. Marking the target with white smoke, Cooper ordered an advance through the swirling mess, only to find the North Koreans attacking him. Knocked down by a ricocheting bullet in the back, Cooper lost his carbine to another bullet and ended the fight with a Ka-Bar and a hole in his left side that filled with blood and a damaged kidney. Just as the surviving Koreans reached the "Last Stand of the 3d Platoon," the Air Force jets—which had flown one dummy run to get the route right—returned and dumped their napalm tanks in the middle of the melee, only 30 yards from Cooper's position. The Marines almost suffocated, and most of them suffered burns, but the North Koreans disappeared, incinerated in the flames. The Marine attack ended 100 yards short of the summit, but the next day the 3d Battalion occupied Hill 907, abandoned by the North Koreans after the division headquarters they were protecting had displaced.

On 18 and 20 June, General Almond and General Thomas visited the high ground now held by the 1st Marine Division, and the X Corps commander agreed that patrols in the mountains ahead would be all the offensive action

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A8745

Crewmen of Battery C, 1st 4.5 Inch Rocket Battalion, reload their multiple-rocket launcher for another devastating ripple against North Korean troops. The battery of six launchers could fire 144 rounds on target in less than a minute.

required of the Marines. In the meantime, the defensive positions of the Kansas Line should be developed into complexes of trench lines, barbed wire, bunkers, and minefields, and before the summer monsoon made the supply effort even more difficult than it already was. Thomas could tell that major changes in the war might be underway since he had to entertain an endless stream of visiting military officers of all the Services, most of whom simply wanted to see the Punchbowl from the 5th Marines' observation post. Only admirals bearing gifts of good bourbon were truly welcome. General Thomas knew his division needed rebuilding with replacements and some rest. In the meantime, he had some unfinished business with Eighth Army over the issue of close air support.

A Summer of Discontent

When the 1st Marine Division settled down to a life of night patrols and the daytime construction of trenches and bunkers, two different changes of climate enveloped the men spread along the mountain ridges of the Kansas Line. The changes started a summer of discontent, a season of discomfort and uncertainty that did not reach the level of demoralization, but nevertheless took its toll on the morale of the Marines. The first change in the weather was predictable, the arrival of the summer monsoon, which advances northward from the island of Cheju-do until it reaches central Korea in late June and blankets the hills with daily showers and occasional downpours that seem to wash half of Korea into the west sea. The summer rains of 1950 had been light, a welcome blessing for American airmen. Even though it arrived weeks behind schedule, the next monsoon reversed the trend. The rains of 1951 gave Korea its normal ration of water. Twenty-six inches fell in July, and August brought about 20 inches more rainfall before the deluge stopped in September. The omnipresent mud and cascading streams made the patrols and construction an ordeal, even without an active enemy.

Marines wait for an air strike by Marine aircraft before moving on an enemy position.

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A9308

The other atmospheric change began with the preliminary truce negotiations on 7 July between the military delegations of China and North Korea on one side and a group of American officers on the other. When the negotiators at Kaesong—a neutral enclave within Communist lines—finally came to an incomplete agreement on an agenda, the one that most affected the Marines was the question of a ceasefire boundary between the two armies. The Communists wanted a return to the 38th Parallel. The United Nations demanded a line based on the forward edge of the battlefield if and when an armistice went into effect. Presumably the two forces would fall back by some agreed distance, and the intervening No Man's Land would become a demilitarized zone. To those with no sense of military geography, one hill seemed no different from another, but the relationship of dominant peaks, road networks, river valleys, and intersecting corridors in the mountains made the control of terrain an important issue, not just a matter of "face." From the front-line foxholes, however, the gloomy mountains all looked alike and simply reinforced the sense that no disputed peak could be worth dying for. Conditioned by World War II to think of victory in terms of geographic advances, the combat troops of the Eighth Army felt their martial ardor wash away with the rain.

No stranger to the challenges of command created by poor weather and endless action—Guadalcanal had provided both—Gerald C. Thomas pressed his regimental

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-432028

United Nations delegates to the Kaesong ceasefire talks pose with Gen Matthew B. Ridgway at Munsan-ni. Pictured from left are RAdm Arleigh A. Burke, USN, MajGen Laurence C. Craigie, USAF, MajGen Paik Sun Yup, ROKA, VAdm C. Turner Joy, USN, Gen Ridgway, and MajGen Henry I. Hodes, USA.

Pictured from left are Chinese and North Korean negotiators, MajGen Hsieh Fang and LtGen Teng Hua of the Chinese People's Army, and Gen Nam Il, MajGen Lee Sang Cho, and Gen Chang Pyong San of the North Korean People's Army.

National Archives Photo (USN) 80-G-431929

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC378978

Riflemen of the 5th Marines are issued a portion of the initial 40 armored vests developed by the Naval Medical Field Research Laboratory, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for field-testing in Korea. The new vest weighed eight-and-one-half pounds and combined curved, overlapping doron plates with flexible pads of basket-weave nylon. The garment was said to stop a .45-caliber pistol or Thompson submachine gun bullet, all fragments of a hand grenade at three feet, 75 percent of 81mm mortar fragments at 10 feet, and the full thrust of an American bayonet.

commanders to do the digging and patrolling Almond ordered. Sporadic shelling by the Communists provided extra incentives, and the Marines still took casualties, 39 in the last week of June. Thomas fought a successful rearguard action against Eighth Army and X Corps to hold pointless casualties down. On 22 June, Almond ordered Thomas to execute an Eighth Army plan to push forces northwards to the Badger Line, between a mile-and-a-half to two-and-a-half miles in front of the Kansas Line defenses. (Later in the war the Badger Line would be called the Combat Outpost Line.) Each frontline regiment was supposed to occupy a combat outpost of battalion strength; Thomas got Almond on 26 June to agree that one outpost was sufficient for the entire 1st Marine Division front, given the nature of the terrain. The 1st Marines sent its 3d Battalion forward to Hill 761 and received a 7th Marines battalion to plug the gap. Like Thomas, "Big Foot" Brown thought the patrol base concept dangerous and pointless; both sides had maintained very close contact with shelling and patrols and needed no additional action. The North Koreans immediately shelled the patrol base with such enthusiasm that Thomas and Brown withdrew the battalion and then told Almond that they would meet X Corps reconnaissance requirements in other ways.

Aware that Almond would soon leave command of X Corps, Thomas had one overriding reason to remain on friendly terms with his difficult corps commander: the close air support controversy. With a pause in the action, Almond marshaled an array of studies for Eighth Army that demonstrated that the Fifth Air Force's close control of each day's quota of close air support sorties limited the ground advances and caused avoidable casualties. Thomas consistently raised the issue with high-ranking military visitors to his headquarters, including Van Fleet, who dropped in on 8 July to give Thomas, Nickerson, Hayward, and five other Marines the Distinguished Service Cross. Thomas persuaded Major General Frank F. Everest to approve the movement of Marine Aircraft Group 12, the premier close air support group of Marine Corsairs, from Hoengsong to the east sea fishing town of Kangnung. The move to Airfield K-18 put the Marine fighter-bombers closer to their supply sources and only 40 miles from the front. Sheer proximity offered new opportunities to circumvent the Joint Operations Center request system, including Everest's promise to allocate 40 sorties a day for offensive operations. Closer division-wing relations seemed at least temporarily acceptable to Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force because Van Fleet had his planners hard at work on another version of Operation Overwhelming, the amphibious landing up the east coast that would involve the 1st Marine Division.

General Almond, however, did not relent in his demands for more fighting of dubious value. His aggressiveness brought General Thomas' only embarrassment as a division commander, the Taeu-san Affair, an abortive operation that remained unnoticed because the victims were the valiant men of the Korean Marine Corps' 1st Regiment. Almond had convinced himself that the North Koreans (despite the Hill 761 experience) would not fight for the lines they currently held. Therefore, Almond ordered the 1st Marine Division to capture the peak of Taeu-san (Hill 1179) and develop it into a regi-

Private First Class Jack Davis: Seasoned Infantryman

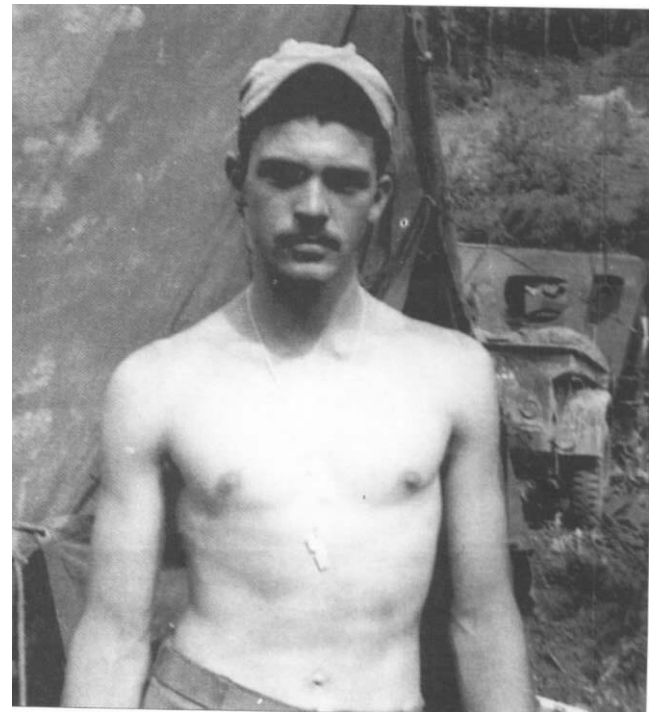
With a chastened Jack Davis back in its ranks, the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, held its part of the No Name Line and watched the last Chinese offensive of May 1951 slide past the 7th Marines to its front and fall upon the left flank of the 2d Infantry Division. With the 1st Marines on the corps and division left flank, the Marines went on the attack on 23 May and a week later reached the high ground overlooking the reservoir. Squeezed out of the advance, the 1st Marines reverted to division reserve.

With the 5th and 7th Marines struggling to penetrate the Communist hilltop positions north of Yanggu, the 1st Marines soon joined the slugfest. Somewhere in the barren ridges Jack Davis' platoon found itself in a grenade-throwing match with the stubborn—and uphill—Chinese defenders. Chinese mortar shells fell among the attacking Marines and took their toll, mostly in wounded. Jack saw five Marines from his squad go down in one shower of grenade and mortar fragments. Amazed by his own apparent invulnerability, Jack attacked a Chinese position with his rifle and grenades after crawling to a protected firing position. His attack and a flank assault by his buddy Frank Brown (carrying a BAR) wiped out the Chinese bunker and spider-traps. More American grenades completed the task. Jack thought he might have killed three Chinese, his only victims of the war.

During the fight, Jack received his second wound of the war, a grenade fragment that tore open his upper left arm and made him a one-armed Marine. While a corpsman bandaged Jack, his platoon commander asked him if he would take charge of three other walking wounded and lead them down the mountain to the battalion collecting and clearing station. Jack agreed, and off he went—slowly—trailed by his more seriously wounded comrades, one of whom had both eyes bandaged. As night fell, Jack's forlorn band had reached the foot of the mountain, but had strayed through a "no man's line" into the lines of the 5th Marines. Jack had no idea what the challenge and password was, so he simply screamed: "Wounded Marines! Wounded Marines!" Persuaded that no Chinese could scream with a Tennessee accent, the Marines brought in the wounded and sent them off to safety by jeep. Jack had a second Purple Heart, but his second wound was not severe enough for the Navy doctors to invoke a welcome Marine Corps policy: two wounds serious enough to require hospitalization bought a Marine a trip home.

Jack's arm healed more rapidly than his spirit. After almost six months in a rifle company with no real escape from the most primitive and exhausting field living conditions as well as combat, Jack Davis felt himself weakening in the psychological sense. He wrote Vince that he was not sure whether he could take the constant mortar and artillery fire. "You can't imagine what it does to a man's insides to see a big, six-foot man crying and shaking with fear, just because his mind has had all the killing and bloodshed it can take. When this happens to man, it also [is] because he is scared to death and wants to run but his loyalty won't let [him] and that if he did run, there's no place to go. Sometime they get evacuated and sometimes they don't . . . if they do come back in a couple of weeks . . . as soon as the first mortar or artillery shell comes screaming over and explodes nearby they are worse than ever." Jack was proud that he had not yet broken down, but he had some doubts about his ability to carry on. "I was a dope fiend about the last month I was in the hills." He took a quarter grain of Phenobarbital, dispensed by a corpsman, so that he would quit shaking from cold and fear while he stood watch at night. He could not eat or sleep without drugs. Unfortunately, the barbiturates gave him a "don't give a shit attitude" that worried him.

Upon his return to Company G, Jack requested an interview with the new company commander, Captain Varge G. Frisbie, and asked if he could get some credit for his two Purple Hearts and be transferred somewhere out of the battalion. Frisbie promised to take the matter up with the battalion personnel officer, and within days Private First Class Jack Davis had orders to report to the Service Battery, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, for retraining as an artilleryman—and a survivor.



mental patrol base on which to anchor the Badger Line. Thomas objected to the mission, pointing out that all the evidence suggested that Taeu-san anchored the main defensive position of the entire North Korean *V Corps*. Unmoved, Almond ordered the attack to be made, and Thomas assigned the mission to the 1st KMC Regiment, whose lines were closest to Taeu-san and who had shown some aptitude for mountain warfare. One suspects that Thomas saw no reason to squander one of his own Marine regiments on a forlorn hope. Colonel Kim Dae Sik accepted his assignment without a murmur, and the 1st Marine Division provided all the fire support it could possibly mount on behalf of the 1st KMC Regiment. *Han Pon Haepyong Un Yongwon Han Haepyong!* (Once a Marine, Always a Marine!)

For five days (8-12 July), the Korean Marines—one battalion at a time—tried to take and hold Taeu-san but managed only to hang on to Hill 1001, a hillock only halfway to Taeu-san. Successive assaults on Hill 1100 produced dead Korean Marines, but no permanent foothold on the Taeu-san main ridge. All combinations of shelling, air strikes, and infantry attacks did not break the North Korean defenses. Colonel Gould P. Groves, senior adviser to the 1st KMC Regiment, demanded that the fruitless attacks cease before the regiment became permanently ruined by the loss of its key leaders; one KMC battalion lost all its company grade officers and all but five of its sergeants. Thomas insisted to X Corps that Taeu-san would take an entire American regiment to capture (as indeed it later did) and that the security mission could be performed without the Badger Line. Almond insisted, however, that the Koreans hold on to the outpost on Hill 1001 even if the 1st KMC Regiment returned to the Kansas Line, which it did on 12 July. Of the 77 Marines killed or missing and 360 wounded in July, 55 of the dead or missing and 202 of the wounded were South Koreans.

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC382938

MajGen Gerald C. Thomas joins MajGen Clovis E. Byers, left, Gen Edward M. Almond's replacement as commander of X Corps, on board a helicopter at Kwandae-ri, the Corps' airstrip. Thomas and Byers developed a strong working relationship that profited the 1st Marine Division.

At the 1st Division headquarters the bad taste of the Taeu-san Affair faded with two bits of welcome news: Almond was finally leaving X Corps for a new posting in the United States and the division had been ordered to turn over its sector to the U.S. 2d Infantry Division and withdraw to corps reserve. Almond flew off to Seoul after giving Thomas a Distinguished Service Medal. He left X Corps in

the capable hands of Major General Clovis E. Byers, a 52-year-old Ohioan and Military Academy graduate (class of 1920) with an impeccable professional reputation and companionable personality. Thomas, who knew Byers, could not have been happier. In World War II, Byers had served with distinction in the Southwest Pacific theater as commanding general, 32d Infantry Division, chief of staff of I Corps, and chief of staff of Eighth Army. He had then commanded the 82d Airborne Division, the Army's only combat-ready contingency force, before becoming the G-1 (Personnel) of the Army Staff. Byers, however, had one glaring weakness. In a faction-ridden Army, he was a protégé of Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger, just retired, and not a member of the European clique of Generals Eisenhower, Bradley, Collins, Ridgway, and Van Fleet.

After the various elements of the 1st Marine Division reached their reserve areas, Thomas ordered a demanding training program of live-fire exercises, designed by his new chief of staff, Colonel Victor H. Krulak, and the G-3, Colonel Richard W. Hayward, former commander of the 5th Marines. Thomas prowled the regimental training areas by helicopter and jeep: the 5th Marines near Inje, the 7th Marines near Yanggu, and the 1st Marines near Hongchon. The pattern of deployment (with the battalions of the 11th Marines positioned to either fire for the 2d Infantry Division or train with the Marine infantry regiments) reflected Byers' concern about a sudden attack on the 2d Infantry Division or the 5th ROK Division. Byers also felt some anxiety about his eastern flank with the South Korean I Corps. Eighth Army's nervousness exceeded Byers', and Van Fleet ordered X Corps to form a task force built around the 1st Marines (Task Force Able) to be prepared to move east for a preemptive offensive. Thomas liked none of this business and said so to Byers, who supported Thomas' insistence that Army ad hocery would give way to Marine command if a real crisis arose. There was none, but Thomas and Byers cemented their sound working relationship. As Byers wrote another Army general: "the 1st Marine Division under the command of Major General Thomas, with Brigadier General Whaling as Assistant Division Commander and Col. Krulak as Chief of Staff, has become a vastly different outfit from that which it was under its former commander. They cooperate with the other divisions of the Corps smoothly and willingly."

Byers showed his appreciation in tangible ways. His staff ensured that the equipment rehabilitation of the division went forward without friction. X Corps engineers and artillery helped the Marines turn swamps into muddy camps with a few amenities like shower and mess tents with floors and drainage. Army and Marine technical experts worked together to train novice personnel and put everything from ordnance, tanks, radios, watches, motor vehicles, to engineering equipment in working order. The military policemen of both Services cooperated in trying to control the flood of Koreans sweeping toward the Marine tent camps to sell carnal and alcoholic pleasures. In turn, Thomas ordered 12 special Marine training teams from his infantry regiments to work with the 1st KMC Regiment to improve the regiment's use of supporting arms. All units conducted at least a third of their training at night. Night patrols went to work with rounds in the chamber and

Combat-ready division replacements disembark from a U.S. Navy landing ship. In the movement of Marines the Corps functioned as a single great unit, even though an ocean separated the vanguard in Korea from rear echelons in the United States.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A157123

engaged guerrillas along the rear area roads. Marines worked with Korean security forces and laborers constructing additional defensive positions to protect both I Corps flanks.

Although only Thomas and his immediate staff knew about the continuing exchanges between Ridgway and Van Fleet over future operations, the focus and pace of the 1st Marine Division training program suggested that the division might provide the spearhead of a new Eighth Army offensive. Van Fleet urged Operation Overwhelming upon Ridgway, but only if Eighth Army received American reinforcements. The new Ridgway, a paragon of caution, did not embrace the plan. Thomas and Krulak anticipated a landing until they received a clear signal that there would be no Inchon in their future when Van Fleet on 3 August ruled that the 1st Amphibian Tractor Battalion and 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion would not be returned to the division's operational control.

The disappointment did not change the urgency of bringing the 1st Marine Division to a new peak of strength in numbers and effectiveness. Two new replacement drafts (the 11th and 12th) would arrive in August and early September with more than 4,000 officers and men, more than replacing casualties and a small rotation draft. By mid-August the division had the responsibility of caring for 32,000 American and Korean personnel, making the division almost a small Army corps. The division's combat power—enhanced by its ability to use close air support as available—made it difficult for Van Fleet to move it from the eastern part of the front where the only other American division was the hard-used 2d Infantry Division.

From General Byers' perspective X Corps and the neighboring ROK I Corps occupied a vulnerable part of the Kansas Line, more vulnerable than the western sectors and the "Iron Triangle" where U.S. I and IX Corps faced the bulk of the recovering Chinese expeditionary force. Byers' G-2 made a special study of the activities of the North Korean *III Corps* (three divisions of 8,500 each) and concluded that the North Koreans had the capability to mount a serious offensive on any X Corps division sector along the Kansas Line. Well ahead of the Chinese rearmament programs, *III Corps* had accepted a full set of new Soviet weapons and showed every intention of using them again in the attack. Over the latter part of August the intelligence analysts saw the usual omens of an attack: increased patrolling and counter-patrolling ambushes, increased desertions, a reduced flow of refugees, tank sightings, the mass distribution of ammunition and rations, a decline in vehicle movement, and the imposition of radio silence. In the meantime, at Van Fleet's insistence, Byers had ordered the 2d Infantry Division into action west of the Punchbowl, and the division had exhausted itself again fighting the North Koreans and the rain over terrain only too familiar to the Marines. Only the names of the hills ("Bloody Ridge" and "J Ridge") and the Service of the bodies changed. To the west Major General Paik Sun Yup's ROK I Corps made no significant progress against three NKPA divisions, all entrenched and very combative in the hills east of the Punchbowl. The campaign wrecked the North Korean *II Corps*, but *III Corps* remained ready to enter the fray, perhaps in a major counteroffensive. The only fresh force in the eastern sector was the 1st Marine Division.

Once More into the Breach

With neither a ceasefire nor great offensive in prospect, General Van Fleet ordered his corps commanders to plan operations that would improve their control of the critical terrain in their sectors. They should prepare either for some later offensive (should the truce talks remain in recess) or to defend South Korea for the indefinite future. With the defenses of the Kansas Line largely completed, Van Fleet on 30 July decided to convert the combat outpost line (the Wyoming Line) into an advanced main line of resistance where the terrain allowed. The distance between Kansas Line and the Wyoming Line varied between two miles and 10 miles. In X Corps' sector Van Fleet thought that the trace of the front in July did not allow Byers to dominate the Punchbowl and the Sochon and Soyang River valleys. Van Fleet wanted X Corps to shift the focus of its attacks to the high ground (including Taeu-san) west of the Punchbowl, but the heavy rains of early August made it impossible for Byers to begin the attacks of the U.S. 2d Infantry Division and the 7th ROK Division (Brigadier General Kim Yong Bae). The 8th ROK Division (Brigadier General Choi Yong Hee) would attack the dominant hills east of the Punchbowl.

Having designated an intermediate phase line (Hays) between the Kansas and Wyoming Lines, Byers quickly learned that the terrain, the weather, and the North Koreans would prevent any easy victories. The battles west of the Punchbowl produced such disappointing results and bad blood between the American and Korean commanders that Byers narrowed the division sectors and committed the 5th ROK Division (Brigadier General

Min Ki Shik) west of the 2d Infantry Division, which meant that X Corps had three committed divisions west of the Punchbowl and only the 8th ROK Division in the Soyang River valley and the dominant hills on either side of the valley. On 23 August, Byers warned Van Fleet that he might have to relieve the 2d Infantry Division with the 1st Marine Division, which was "very anxious to take action," but Van Fleet still had an amphibious role in mind for the Marines, and he vetoed the idea. Van Fleet thus spared the 1st Marine Division the mission of capturing "Heartbreak Ridge." Only the 8th ROK Division had done better than anticipated, capturing some of the high ground east of the Punchbowl, but the South Korean divisions on its eastern flank had not kept pace, thus giving Byers some concern about his corps boundary.

Meeting on both 25 and 26 August, Van Fleet and Byers concluded that they could no longer hold the 1st Marine Division in reserve since all the rest of X Corps divisions had bogged down, and the corps could not change the tactical balance with artillery and close air support alone. Ammunition shortages, caused principally by transportation problems, had already affected operations. Troop movements, for example, on 28-30 August prevented the stockpiling of 1,800 tons of munitions. The Fifth Air Force, anticipating a break in the weather that would allow a surge in the interdiction bombing campaign, announced on the 23d that the Eighth Army would have to manage with less close air support through the end of the month. On 26 August, Byers called General Thomas and told him to move at least part of his division to the front east of the Punchbowl where the Marines would take up the missions of the 8th ROK Division. Thomas had four days warning since Byers alerted him to a possible move on 23 August. With the plans already in place, Thomas ordered the 7th Marines to start for the front that night, followed by the 1st KMC Regiment. The 5th Marines would move last, and the 1st Marines not at all since the regiment would be the only corps reserve.

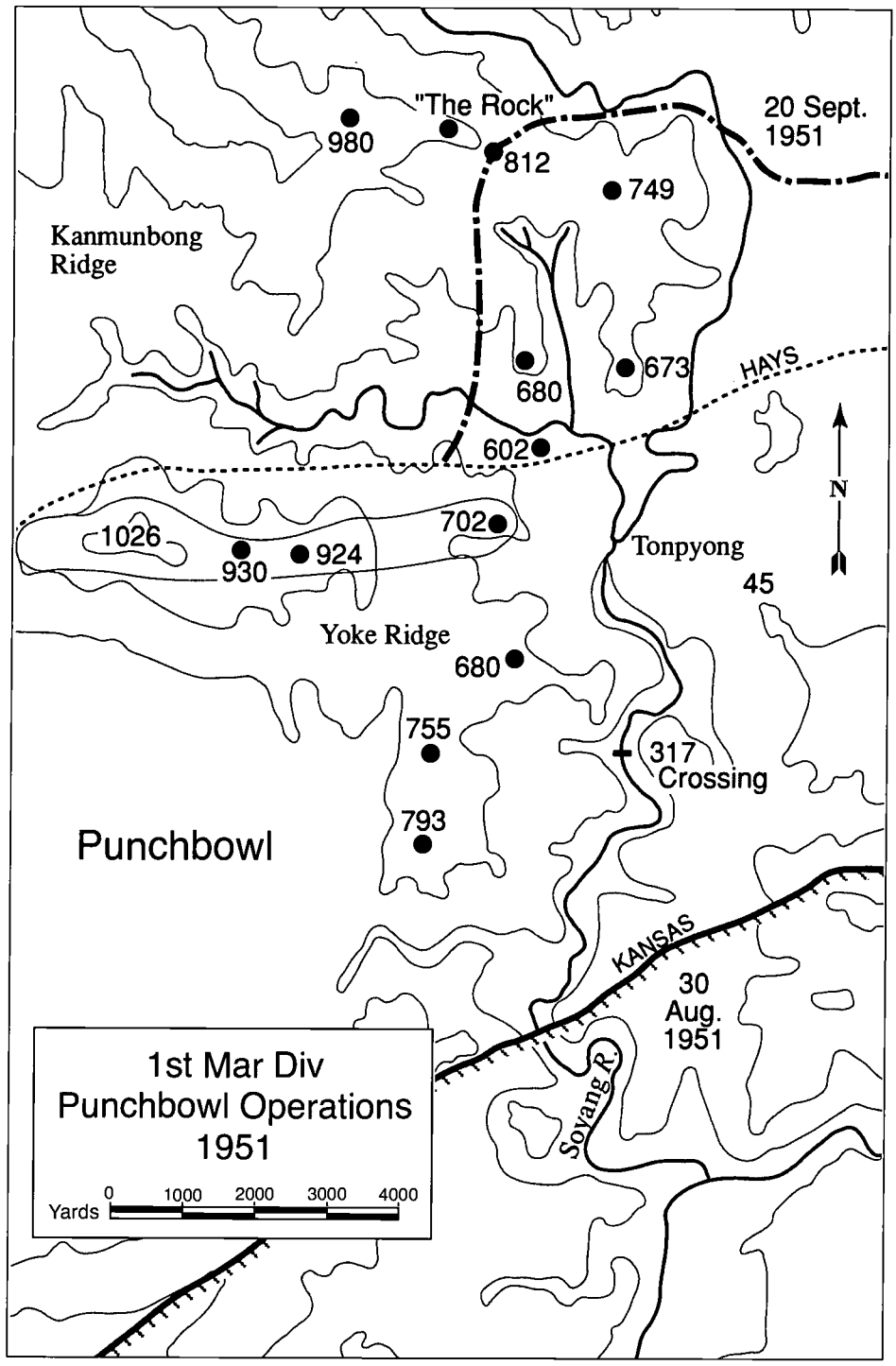
Thomas knew that the division

Rain and mud fail to halt the mortarmen of the 5th Marines' 4.2 Inch Mortar Company as they fire their heavy mortars at enemy-held positions.

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC380808

would receive an offensive mission: capture a ridgeline, an eastern extension of the hill mass that formed the northern rim of the Punchbowl. A corps objective designated Yoke, the ridge had four dominant west-to-east peaks (Hills 930, 1026, 924, and 702) and another north-south extension that began at Hill 702 and ran south through Hills 680, 755, and 793, thus forming a large L just west of the Soyang River. The river itself curled westwards, bounding Yoke Ridge on the north. Since the North Koreans showed no sign of reduced morale and fighting tenacity—they, in fact, had mounted many aggressive counterattacks west of the Punchbowl—the assignment had nothing easy about it. The rains and planning changes made 27-31 August some of the most discouraging days Thomas and his Marines had faced together.

From the division commander's perspective, the mudslides and floods that slowed his truck convoys were bad enough, but the operational confusion within X Corps, fed by tactical errors and bad blood between the 2d Infantry Division and 8th ROK Division, made the changes of orders reach epidemic proportions. Before it could displace, the 5th Marines detached a battalion to the operational control of the 2d Infantry Division to defend the Kansas Line while the 23d Infantry slipped to the west. The 1st KMC Regiment also picked up part of the Kansas Line defense, which meant that only the 7th Marines, struggling to cross the swollen Soyang River by wading or by a shuttle of DUKWs (amphibian trucks) could man the sketchy positions on the edge of Yoke Ridge held by dispirited soldiers of the 8th ROK Division. Confusion reigned, and the rain fell. Warning orders flooded the airwaves, and commanders and staff officers scurried by helicopter and jeep from headquarters to headquarters. General Byers, for example, made 12 commands calls in one week (25-31 August) and received General Van Fleet three times. General Thomas and his staff made the best of a bad situation, pushing the 7th Marines and 1st KMC Regiment into their forward positions. He tried to prevent the diversion of the 5th Marines to the 2d Infantry Division and kept the 1st Marines ready for such time, as Byers would release the regiment from corps control. In the meantime, the 11th Marines fired missions all along the corps front, scattered about the valleys in a desperate attempt to stay close to its ammunition supply and to



Courtesy of the Naval Institute Press

avoid having its fires masked by the hills to its front.

During a Van Fleet-Byers conference on 29 August, the army and corps commanders agreed that they could not wait for more success west of the Punchbowl before ordering the 1st Marine Division into action. Byers passed the news to Thomas the next day: attack Yoke Ridge on 31 August. Two factors related to the enemy situation helped shape Thomas' plan. Patrols by the division's Reconnaissance Company and the 5th Marines discovered enemy patrols active on either side of the Kansas Line, but no more than a nuisance. On the other hand, North Korean prisoners taken by the 8th ROK Division and the Marines reported large troop movements to the north and much talk about another Communist offensive while the weather limited United Nations Command air support. Visual sightings and other intelligence sources

Corporal Jack Davis: Truck Driver and Short Timer

Jack Davis, an old man at 19, found a new home in Service Battery, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines. His principal responsibility was driving a dump truck and working as a laborer on the battalion's gun positions and other construction projects. As the weather cooled in the fall of 1951, the 1st Marine Division resumed its attacks on the high ridges northeast of the Punchbowl. Its opponents were troops of the re-born Korean People's Army *2d Division*. Another enemy was a monsoon season that lasted through the entire month of August, washing away roads and bridges and making life generally miserable for all hands. Jack Davis found his dump truck in high demand. In addition to the usual construction materials, Jack hauled cut wood for the battalion's stoves. He became an expert at fitting out bunkers with furniture made from used shell boxes and other handy materials; he and his fellow engineers used layers of sandbags, logs, and loose dirt to build sleeping bunkers that could withstand a direct shell hit. Jack estimated that they made seven-foot thick ceilings to provide overhead protection.

Even if the pace of the combat froze along with the weather and Panmunjom peace talks, danger still waited for the unwary and unlucky. Employing their new Russian field artillery, the Chinese and North Koreans started to fire short counterbattery barrages late every

second or third afternoon. Even the bunkers to which the Marines fled to avoid the shelling could be death traps of their own; weakened by the rains and shellings and too heavy for their supporting walls, bunker roofs habitually collapsed. One such roof fell on top of Jack, bruising his body and pride and burning parts of his body when a stove overturned and ignited the bunker's interior. Jack took his third trip to sickbay with cracked ribs.

There were few diversions north of the Soyang River. Jack grew his third mustache, not as long and menacing as his "infantry mustache" of the summer. One day he received a call to report to battery headquarters, only to learn that the battery commander and first sergeant had arranged a little ceremony to award Jack his first and second Purple Hearts (a medal with gold star affixed). Jack had no idea what to do with the medal and presentation box until the first sergeant suggested he send it home. The final package featured paper torn from boxes in the mess tent, secured with communications wire. The Davis family received the box and properly concluded that Jack had not been entirely honest in his summer letters.

Although his anxiety about dying eased some, Jack's fears about living grew as his tour in Korea shortened. Under the rotation policy adopted in 1951, he could expect to rotate home sometime in early 1952, and the Marine Corps, having little need for short-timer reservists at the end of a two-year contract, promised to release him go to college short of his two-year obligation. Jack thought about getting his personal life in some order. He wrote a "Dear Jane" letter to a girl friend whose religiosity and immaturity now struck Jack as intolerable. He warned Vince that no one in Tennessee should discuss his love life. Jack also continued to send money home for his college savings account. His sense of duty received a jump-start with his promotion to corporal in November. His greatest leadership accomplishment to date was organizing the theft of an Army jeep that the battery sorely needed. He did his work, and he stayed out of trouble as he watched veterans of earlier replacement drafts turn in their equipment and head for processing for a flight or transport berth back to California.

By Thanksgiving the 3d Battalion had endured two snowfalls, general freezing, and the news that it was not on the itinerary for Bob Hope's Christmas show. Jack bought a contraband bottle of Canadian Club to hoard until Christmas. He liked the brand new thermal boots issued to the battalion—until he had to change his sweat-soaked socks in the cold. After a muted celebration of Christmas, Jack started watching the organization of each rotation group. He wrote Vince that he now stood 29th on the list and that 37 men had started home in December. Jack reported that he was "kinda nervous about coming home. I'm still not doing much work per usual." He worried about his future relations with his parents, whom he remembered as full of sermons about all the things he should not do and think. "If they start a bunch of harping and bullshit, I ship into the regular Marines because I really like this outfit." He admitted to Vince, however, the he would really have to be aggravated with civilian life to re-up for a second tour. He certainly was not going to miss his ride back to the United States. On 18 February 1952, Jack Davis left Korea for home.

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confirmed that fresh enemy troops were going into position on Yoke Ridge. The 1st Marine Division attack of 31 August was designed to squeeze out the Koreans on the eastern part of Yoke Ridge and to prevent the objective area from being reinforced from the north while the battle raged. Two Korean Marine battalions advancing in column from their position on Hill 755 would attack north to take Hills 1026 and 924 while two battalions on the 7th Marines would attack westwards from the Soyang River valley with two battalions abreast. They would seize the ground east and north through Hill 702 to Hill 602, another lower ridge that ended at the river as it changed its direction from east-west to north-south. Catching the North Korean *2d Division* in the process of moving into the bunkers of the North Korean *1st Division* on the morning of 31 August, the initial Korean Marine and 7th Marines attacks still faced extensive minefields and mortar barrages as the troops worked their way uphill. Marine artillery fire damped some of the enemy fire. The two 7th Marines battalions took their objectives, but the 1st KMC Regiment advanced no farther than the base of Hill 924, the most heavily-defended position encountered on eastern Yoke Ridge. Almost all the division's casualties for August (three killed and 57 wounded) fell on the first day of the Battle for Yoke Ridge.

Second Lieutenant Frederick F. Brower moved into his first big fight at the head of the 1st Platoon, Company H, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines. Occupying Hill 680 on 30 August, the company had endured a heavy mortar barrage and learned that North Korean regulars had replaced the scattered Chinese the company had chased north of the Punchbowl. The next day the company attacked Hill 702, Yoke Ridge, against "light resistance." Brower had commanded his platoon for three months, but he and his Marines had not yet closed with the enemy since they always seemed to be patrolling the division's western-most flank, keeping an eye on the neighboring South Korean division. As the skirmish line approached Hill 702, the North Koreans greeted it with a barrage of mortar fire. Only min-

utes into the battle, Brower crumpled with multiple wounds in his left leg, and he looked with dismay at his bloody and misshapen left knee. Pistol marksman, model Marine platoon commander, dedicated to a career in the Marine Corps, Brower ended his first battle on a stretcher carried by nervous Korean "chiggy bearers." Although he eventually served his full Korean tour as a semi-cripple, his career in a rifle company ended on 31 August 1951, and his damaged knee forced him into disability retirement in 1955. It had been a short but final war for Second Lieutenant Brower.

The fight gave few hints of the ordeals ahead. On 1 September, General Shepherd visited General Thomas and found no cause for alarm. Thomas felt confident that the attacks that day would take care of the Yoke Ridge problem. After seeing Byers, they agreed that X Corps had problems west of the Punchbowl where the 2d Infantry Division still had not secured all of "Bloody Ridge" despite the loss of 2,772 American and attached Korean soldiers since 18 August. For the Marines, however, the attacks of 2 September took only Hill 924 (but not Hill 1026) and consolidated the 7th Marines defenses on Hill 602. Throughout the day and the next, the North Koreans bombarded Yoke Ridge and mounted counterattacks of up to battalion-size. The 1st Marine Division's modest successes came in no small part from the artillery fire from two 11th Marines battalions and three Army corps artillery battalions, which fired 8,400 rounds on 1-2 September, an amount of fire that exceeded the "Van Fleet Day of Fire" for the five battalions (6,000 rounds). The battle drew in the remaining battalions of the 1st KMC Regiment and the 7th Marines. With American Marines holding the northern edge of Yoke Ridge, the South Korean Marines finally took Hills 924 and 1026, which completed the mission. It did not end enemy counterattacks and shelling, but the two regiments held the objective. The 7th Marines suffered five dead and 75 wounded, the Korean Marines 70 dead and missing and 274 wounded. The North Koreans left behind almost 600 bodies to be counted and 40 prisoners. None of the allies thought the victory had been easy.

The capture of Yoke Ridge might have been less costly if the Marines had received more effective close air support. General Shepherd made it one of the highest priority issues when he visited the war zone from 27 August to 12 September. The Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (and likely Commandant) met with the Major General Christian F. Schilt, commander, and Brigadier General William O. Brice, deputy commander of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. "A discussion of the close air support problem revealed that unsatisfactory conditions still prevail in regard to close air support for the 1st Marine Division." Shepherd then complained about the poor air support to Van Fleet and Everest even before he consulted with Byers and Thomas on 1 September. Shepherd recruited Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, Commander, Naval Forces, Far East, to join a coalition of senior officers who would force the issue with Ridgway.

During his Korean inspection trip, LtGen Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, left, discussed not only close air support, but also the performance of the Sikorsky HRS-1 helicopter. Pictured to his left are MajGen Christian F. Schilt, Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, LtCol George W. Herring, commander officer of Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 161, and newly-promoted MajGen William O. Brice, the wing's deputy commander.

Department of Defense (Photo) A131870

The battle of Yoke Ridge provided ample evidence that the Fifth Air Force would not modify the request system and that the real purpose of the Joint Operations Center was to prevent the diversion of fighter-bombers from Operation Strangle, the campaign against the Communist lines of communication. The 1st Marine Division had requested 26 aircraft to support the attack of 1 September. Despite the fact that the requests had been made 40 hours before the mission, only 12 aircraft were assigned. Requests made by the forward and other air controllers in the heat of combat took more than an hour to produce aircraft on station. One 7th Marines request for air strikes against a heavy North Korean counterattack had been canceled by X Corps' G-2 because he did not believe the counterattack was real. Despite the mounting evidence—and much of it came from the 2d Infantry Division's ordeals to the west—the Fifth Air Force made no concessions. The 1st Marine Division's fire support coordinator made the point in his briefing for Shepherd: "Close air support furnished by the Fifth Air Force JOC was inadequate and often not opportune."

Shell shortages, complex planning by both Eighth Army and X Corps headquarters, and the determination of the North Koreans brought a pause of six days to 1st Marine Division operations. The likely artillery shell expenditures of any future offensive—combined with road conditions between Hongchon and the front—would make an immediate offensive beyond Yoke Ridge difficult. The division goal was to stockpile 10 days of fire in artillery shells ("Van Fleet days") at ammunition supply post-60B, the ammunition dump and distribution point run by X Corps and division ordnance men located 48 miles from Hongchon and five miles from the gun line. Until the roads dried and engineers repaired the washouts and strengthened the roadbed, the round trip to ASP-60B took 25 hours. Some trucks still had to be diverted to lift troops to and from the front. In fact, the estimates for shells fell short of the actual expenditures, 24,000 tons (874,000 rounds) for X Corps in September 1951.

Intelligence officers believed that X Corps would need every shell it could find. The combat around the Punchbowl revealed a system of defensive fortifications that had been built before 1951 and strengthened since April. Much of the NKPA *I Corps* had been withdrawn, but its replacement—the NKPA *III Corps*—was one of the largest (30,000 soldiers) and best-trained in the North Korean army. Unlike the Chinese, the North Koreans had plenty of artillery, too, out-numbering Marine artillery pieces in the Punchbowl sector. In the Marine division's zone of action the NKPA *1st Division* appeared to be assigned the bunker defense role while the NKPA *45th Division* mounted counterattacks.

General Van Fleet did not win approval of his amphibious hook north to Tongchon, but his planners produced some more modest variants that might have put all or part of the 1st Marine Division within the ROK I Corps area and closer to the air and naval gunfire support that Task Force 77 could provide. An offensive westward from the coast might bring the Marines and the ROK I Corps in behind the fortified belt so well-manned by the North Koreans. For almost 10 days, Van Fleet and Byers examined their contingency plans and ruled them out as too risky and subject at any moment to another Ridgway veto. The result of the operational paralysis was that General Thomas learned on 8-9 September that he would repossess the 1st Marines from corps reserve, which would release the

The body of a Communist soldier lies atop a bunker captured by elements of the 7th Marines during the assault against Hill 673.

National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC380918

The "Chiggy Bearers"

They could be found trudging along after every Marine rifle company in Korea's mountains in the summer of 1951. Small men, powered by muscular but thin legs, bent under the loads of their A-frames or *chigae*, struggling along with ammunition, rations, and water, they were the "chiggy bearers." The 1st Marine Division depended upon them to close the gap between the supply points served by trucks and the Marine companies engaged in battle. The "chiggy bearers" made it possible for the Marines to search out and destroy the enemy.

Organized by the U. S. Eighth Army in 1950 and originally called the Civil Transportation Corps, this army of Korean laborers provided the United Nations forces with construction workers and pack bearers. For carrying supplies, the Koreans relied upon their traditional wooden A-frame packboard or *chigae*. Although renamed the Korean Service Corps (KSC) in 1951, the bearer corps remained the *chigaebudae* (A-Frame Army) or "chiggy bearers" to the Marines.

The "chiggy bearers" had either been drafted into their country's service or had volunteered. Members of the KSC had to be medically unfit for duty in the South Korean army or be over age 38. Marines often characterized the "chiggy bearers" as "elderly," but, in fact, the KSC included men and boys who had convinced someone that they were unfit for frontline service in the South Korean army. The South Korean government had almost absolute power to commandeer people and things for the war effort, but in reality the KSC competed with other American-financed Korean service agencies for personnel and could count only on unskilled workers (often displaced farmers and farm laborers) for the bulk of its manpower.

In many ways the lot of the average "chiggy bearer" was not a happy one, however essential. His contract said that he would carry up to a 50-pound load for as many as 10 miles each day, but the bearers often carried heavier loads for longer distances, especially if measured from valley floor to hilltop. The lines of bearers, shepherded by Korean soldiers assigned as KSC cadremen, often came under artillery and mortar fire. American divisions did not keep track of KSC casualties. Any man could be pressed into service as a bearer for six months, and the living and medical conditions for the bearers were no better than most refugee camps.

the end of the war an estimated 300,000 Koreans had served a tour as a "chiggy bear," and at the height of the fluid war of 1951 the South Korean government impressed an average of 3,000 men and boys a week into the KSC. A postwar accounting of KSC personnel listed 2,064 porters killed in action, 2,448 missing in action, and 4,282 wounded in action.

If a KSC "regiment"—with one assigned to each American division—had efficient and honest officers, the KSC bearer did not fare badly—provided he lived to collect his pay. Clothing and food were not a problem, which could not be said for his countrymen; the "chiggy bearer" ration was supposed to provide 3,500 calories a day and included a ration of 10 cigarettes. After some strident protests in 1951, KSC pay scales moved from those set for the South Korean army toward those paid other Koreans working as civilians for the United Nations Command.

One American army logistician calculated that an American infantry company required just about as many bearers as its own strength, around 150-200. If so, the 1st Marine Division had a "chiggy bearer" shortage since it had only 1,922 KSC members in support in May 1951. The bearer "gap," however, applied to all of United Nations Command. By war's end the KSC had a paper strength of 133,000, but its "A-frame strength" was about 100,000 or roughly one bearer for every six American and allied soldiers in Korea. Like everyone else on the United Nations side of the war, the "chiggy bearers" carried more than their prescribed load.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A8434