

reacted by calling on the 11th Marines to box in the outpost. Communications failed for a time, but at about 2115 the defenders of Detroit requested variable-time fire for airbursts over the bunkers, which would protect the Marines while the enemy outside remained exposed to a hail of shell fragments. The artillerymen fired as the Marines on Detroit asked, but the outpost again lost contact with headquarters of the 3d Battalion.

Two squads set out from the Jamestown Line to reinforce the Marines from Company G, 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, manning Outpost Detroit. The Chinese frustrated this attempt with artillery fire but in the meantime again abandoned their foothold on Detroit, probably because of the shower of fragments from Marine shells bursting above them. The respite proved short-lived, however, for the enemy renewed the attack shortly after midnight and extended his control of the hill despite further scourging from the 11th Marines. A six-man Marine patrol

reached the outpost, returning at 0355 to report that the Chinese now held the trenchline and bunkers; only two of the Marines who had manned Detroit escaped death or capture. The attempt to break through to the outpost ended, and by 0630, the Marines engaged in the effort had returned to the main line of resistance.

Meanwhile, at about 2000, a Chinese company hit the two squads from Company H that held Outpost Frisco, north of Detroit. The assault troops worked their way into the trenches, but airbursts from Marine artillery reinforced the small arms fire of the defenders in driving the enemy back. The Chinese renewed the attack just after midnight, and two Marine squads advanced from the main line of resistance to reinforce Frisco, only to be stopped short of their goal by fire from artillery and mortars. Companies H and I of Russell's 3d Battalion made further attempts to reach Frisco during the early morning, but not until 0510 did a reinforced platoon from

Company I arrive and take control.

During the final attack, Staff Sergeant Lewis G. Watkins, despite earlier wounds, took an automatic rifle from a more badly injured Marine and opened fire to keep the platoon moving forward. When a Chinese grenade landed near him, he seized it, but it exploded before he could throw it away, fatally wounding Watkins, whose leadership and self-sacrifice earned him a posthumous Medal of Honor. A second platoon from Company I joined the other unit atop the hill, and at 0715 Frisco was declared secure.

To keep Frisco firmly in Marine hands, however, would have invited attrition and ultimately required more men than General Pollock and Colonel Moore could spare from the main line of resistance. Consequently, the 7th Marines abandoned the outpost. The regiment had yielded three outposts—Detroit, Frisco, and Seattle—but forced the Chinese to pay a high price, estimated to include 200 killed. The losses suffered by the 7th Marines totaled 10 killed, 22 missing, and 128 wounded, 105 of them seriously enough to require evacuation.

Since the Chinese also wrested Outposts 37, 36, and 86 from the Korean Marine Corps, the 1st Marine Division had lost six combat outposts of varying tactical importance. The lost outposts and those that remained in Marine hands had no value except to the extent their possession affected the security of the Jamestown Line. As a result, the Marines remained wary of mounting major counterattacks; to provide continued protection for the main line of resistance, General Pollock would rely on nighttime patrols and listening posts to supplement the remaining outposts and replace the captured ones.

*During the battles of October 1952, a number of Marine bunkers on the Jamestown Line were severely damaged by Chinese mortar and artillery fire.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A167465





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A166429

*The Marine in the foreground reads while others talk or sleep just before jumping off into "no-man's-land" on the Hook.*

Unlike the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, which experienced shortages of spare parts, especially for its newer planes and helicopters, the 1st Marine Division emerged from the outpost fighting with few supply problems except for communications gear. The Army helped with replenishment by releasing essential spare parts from stocks in Japan, and new radio, telephone, and teletype equipment also arrived from the United States. The Army, moreover, tapped its stocks for new trucks to replace the division's worn-out vehicles. To operate the logistics network more efficiently, the division placed the re-equipped truck units

in direct support of the infantry regiments instead of keeping them in a centralized motor pool. The change reduced both the total mileage driven and vulnerability to artillery fire. In another attempt to improve logistics, the Marines increased from 500 to 800 the number of Korean laborers serving with each of the front-line regiments.

### Chinese Attack the Hook

The fighting for the outposts that raged early in October died down, although the Chinese jabbed from time to time at Bunker Hill and continued their nighttime

patrolling elsewhere along the Jamestown Line. During the lull, Colonel Smoak's 5th Marines took over the center of the division's line from the 1st Marines, which went into reserve, improving the fall-back defense lines, undergoing training, and patrolling to maintain security in the rear areas. As the division reserve, the 1st Marines prepared to counterattack if the enemy should penetrate the main line of resistance. Indeed, the regiment had to be ready to help block a Chinese breakthrough anywhere in I Corps, which held the western third of the United Nations line.

With the 1st Marines now in reserve, Colonel Moore's 7th Marines manned the right of the division's line placing all three battalions on line and keeping only one company from the 3d Battalion in reserve. To replace this company, Lieutenant Colonel Charles D. Barrett, the 3d Battalion's new commander, organized a platoon of cooks, drivers, and other members of the headquarters into an improvised platoon that served as his unit's reserve. Barrett's thinly spread 3d Battalion manned two combat outposts—Berlin and East Berlin, the latter established on 13 October—besides defending the center of the regimental line.

To the left of Barrett's unit, the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, under Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Caputo defended its portion of the regimental line and maintained three combat outposts, Carson, Reno, and Vegas. Like Barrett's battalion in the center, Caputo's Marines held a sector with few vulnerable salients that the aggressive Chinese might pinch off and capture.

On the far right of the regimental line, Lieutenant Colonel Dulacki's 1st Battalion held the dominant terrain feature in the reg-

## Distant Strikes to Close Air Support

During the struggle over the combat outpost line, from late July through early October, the 1st Marine Division benefited from a shift in aerial strategy. Long-range interdiction, an important element of U. S. Air Force doctrine, gave way to a policy of hitting the enemy wherever he might be, whether exercising control from the North Korean capital of Pyongyang or massing to attack Bunker Hill or some other outpost.

United Nations aircraft hit Pyongyang hard in July and again in August. The 11 July attack consisted of four separate raids, the last of them after dark. The operation, named Pressure Pump, blasted headquarters buildings, supply dumps, and the radio station, which was silenced for two days. Of 30 individual targets attacked on the 11th, three were obliterated, 25 damaged in varying degrees and only two survived intact. On 29 August, three daylight raids damaged 34 targets on a list of 45 that included government agencies—among them the resurrected Radio Pyongyang—factories, warehouses, and barracks.

According to Colonel Samuel S. Jack, chief of staff of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, a shift of emphasis away from long-range interdiction caused the Far East Air Forces to endorse the wing's using its aircraft primarily to respond to requests for support from the 1st Marine Division. Even as the Air Force became more cooperative, Army commanders complained about the air support they received and began agitating for a more responsive system, like that of the Marine Corps, that would cover the entire battlefield. General Mark W. Clark, the United Nations commander since May 1952, refused, however, to tamper with the existing system that in effect gave the Far East Air Forces, an Air Force headquarters, "coordination control" over the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and channeled requests through a Joint Operations Center. Instead, he called for increasing the efficiency of the current arrangement to reduce reaction time.

During the defense of Bunker Hill in August, 1,000 sorties, most of them by Marines, bombed and strafed the attacking Chinese. In early October, when the fighting shifted eastward to the outposts manned by the 7th Marines, the wing flew 319 close air support sorties.

Besides coming to the aid of their fellow Marines on the ground, crews of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing supported the U. S. and South Korean armies. In July, for example, eight heavily-armed and armored AU-1 Corsairs from Marine Attack Squadron 323 attacked Chinese mortar positions, antitank weapons, and troop concentrations opposing the Republic of Korea's I Corps. Rockets, 1,000-pound bombs, napalm, and 20mm fire killed an estimated 500 of the enemy. Similarly, four



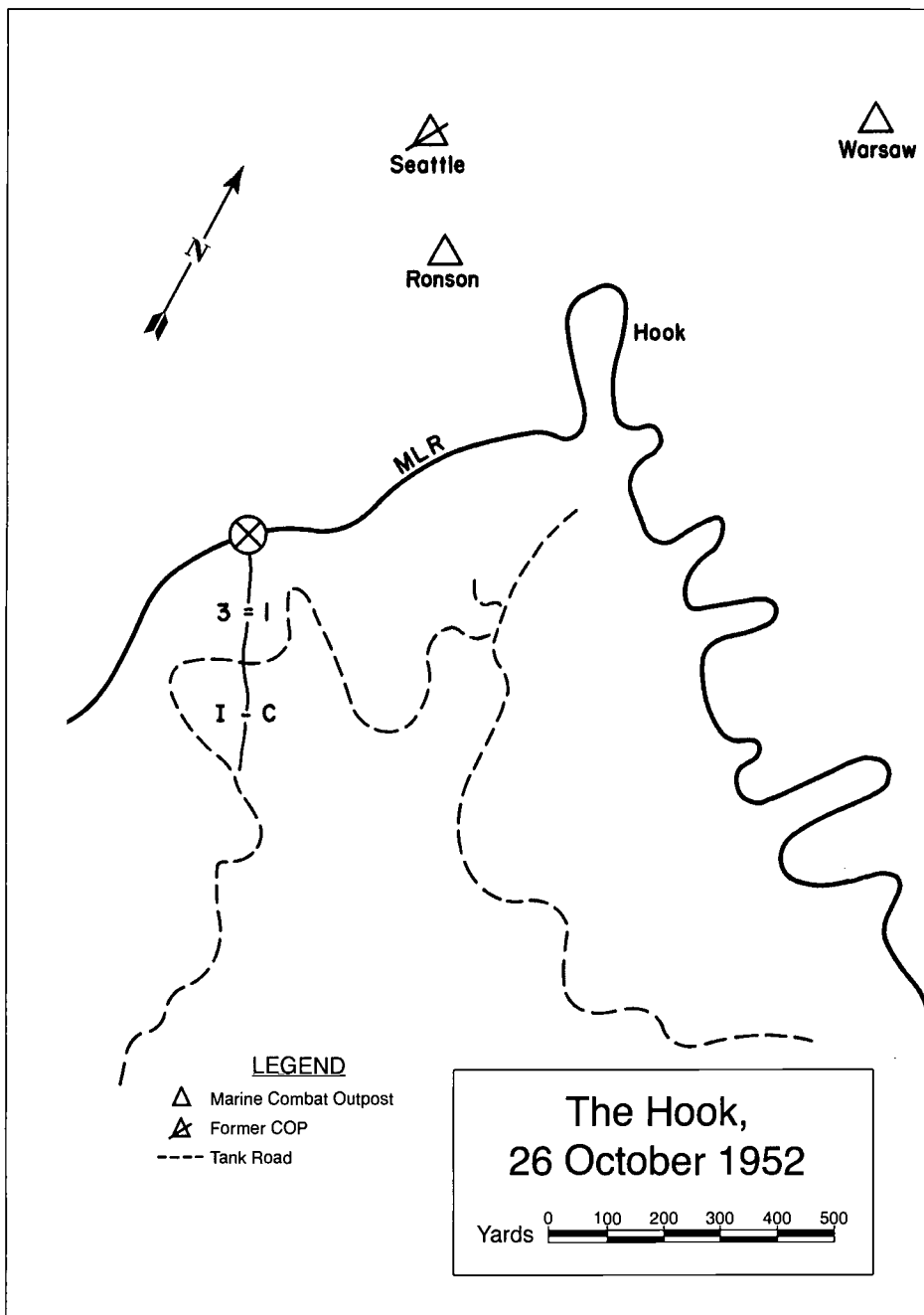
National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A133864

*Col John P. Condon, left, commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group 33, shows BGen Clayton C. Jerome, the area strafed in the largest Marine jet strike of the Korean War.*

pilots from Marine Fighter Squadron 311 helped the U.S. Army's 25th Infantry Division by destroying three bunkers and two artillery pieces while collapsing some 50 feet of trench.

In operations like these, weather could prove as deadly as antiaircraft fire. On 10 September, as 22 Panther jets were returning from a strike near Sariwon, fog settled over their base. Sixteen planes landed safely at an alternate airfield, but the others flew into a mountain as they approached the runway, killing all six pilots.

Marine helicopters continued to fly experimental missions, as when Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 161 deployed multiple-tube 4.5-inch rocket launchers from one position to another, thus preventing Chinese observers from using, as an aiming point for effective counterbattery fire, the dust cloud that arose when the rockets were launched. The same squadron, using 40 percent of its assigned helicopters for the purpose, delivered enough supplies to sustain the 7th Marines for five days. Problems continued to nag the helicopter program, however. The Sikorsky HO3S-1 light helicopter—used for liaison, observation, and casualty evacuation—had to be grounded in October to await spare parts.



imental sector, the Hook, where the high ground that defined the Jamestown Line veered sharply to the south. Outposts Seattle and Warsaw had protected the Hook, but only Warsaw remained in Marine hands. To restore the security of the Hook, Dulacki set up a new outpost, Ronson, some 200 yards southeast of enemy-held Seattle and 275 yards west of the Hook. Ronson guarded the western approaches to the Hook, while Warsaw commanded the lowlands east of the Hook and a narrow val-

ley leading eastward toward the Samichon River.

If the Chinese should seize the Hook, disastrous results might follow, for the Hook held the key to controlling the Samichon and Imjin valleys. Its capture could expose the rear areas of the 1st Marine Division and force that unit and the adjacent Commonwealth Division to fall back two miles or more to find defensible terrain from which to protect the northeastern approaches to Seoul. Because of the Hook's importance,

Colonel Moore set up his headquarters on Hill 146 near the base of the salient.

Opposite the 7th Marines, the Chinese had massed two infantry regiments, totaling some 7,000 men, supported by 10 battalions of artillery ranging in size from 75mm to 122mm and later to 152mm. The enemy, moreover, had learned during the fighting at Bunker Hill and along the outpost line to make deadlier use of his artillery, massing fires and, when the Marines counterattacked, imitating the box-me-in fires used by the 11th Marines. In preparation for an attack on the Hook, the Chinese massed their artillery batteries within range of the salient, stockpiled ammunition, and dug new trenches that reached like tentacles toward the various elements of the outpost line and afforded cover and concealment for attacking infantry.

Against the formidable concentration of Chinese troops and guns, Colonel Moore's regiment could muster 3,844 Marines, officers and men, supported by 11 Navy medical officers and 133 Hospital Corpsmen, three Army communications specialists, and 746 Korean laborers with their 18 interpreters. As in the earlier fighting, the 7th Marines could call upon the 105mm and 155mm howitzers of the 11th Marines, and other Marine supporting weapons including rocket batteries, tanks, and aircraft. Army artillery and Air Force fighter-bombers reinforced the firepower of the division.

In the words of Staff Sergeant Christopher E. Sarno of the 1st Marine Division's tank battalion: "Korea was an artilleryman's paradise." It seemed to him that the Chinese always fought by night, making effective use of an arsenal of weapons. The burp guns and mines were bad, Sarno said, but

the worst was the artillery, which “could blast a man’s body to bits so that his remains were picked up in a shovel.”

The static battle line obviously placed a premium on artillery, especially the 105mm and 155mm howitzers of the Army and Marine Corps. Indeed, by mid-October 1952 American batteries were firing these shells at a more rapid rate than during the bloody fighting in the early months of 1951, when United Nations forces advanced beyond the 38th Parallel and conducted offensive operations like Killer and Ripper. By the fall of 1952, firepower, especially

artillery, dominated the battleground, as probes, patrols, ambushes, and attacks on outposts took the place of major offensives.

Because of the demand of artillery support, the rationing of 105mm and 155mm shells became necessary. During the last 11 days of October, a quota prevailed, at least for purposes of planning. In support of the 7th Marines, each 105mm howitzer might fire a daily average of 20 rounds and each 155mm howitzer 4.3 rounds. The 81mm mortars located in each battalion also suffered from a shortage of shells, and even hand grenades were now scarce. To do the work

of mortars and artillery, Colonel Moore employed tripod-mounted, water-cooled .30-caliber machine guns. These weapons employed the techniques of World War I, engaging targets like potential assembly areas with indirect fire based on map data and adjusted by forward observers, as well as aimed direct fire.

The enemy initiated his attack on the Hook by battering the salient and its combat outposts with mortar and artillery fire; an estimated 1,200 rounds exploded among the trenches and bunkers on the Hook and Outposts Ronson and Warsaw between dusk on 24 October and dawn on the 25th. The Marine defenders, aided by detachments from the Korean Service Corps, struggled to keep pace with the destruction, repairing damage as best they could during lulls in the bombardment only to face new damage when the shelling resumed.

While shoring up trenches and bunkers, the 7th Marines fought back. In the hardest hit area, Lieutenant Colonel Dulacki’s 1st Battalion returned fire with its own mortars, machine guns, and recoilless rifles, while the regimental mortars and tanks joined in. Despite the shortage of high-explosive shells, the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, fired some 400 105mm rounds in response to the first day’s Chinese bombardment, 575 rounds on the 24 October, and 506 on the 25th, balancing the need to conserve ammunition against the worsening crisis. Air strikes also pounded the enemy massing near the Hook and the two nearby outposts, including attacks by four Panther jets from VMF-311 that dropped high explosives and napalm on Chinese troops massing some 750 yards east of the salient.

During the 24 hours beginning

*Ammunition carriers step aside to let litter barriers pass with a wounded Marine during the battle for the Hook.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A166424





National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A169052

*The crew of Number 5 gun, Battery L, 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, loads its 155mm howitzer after receiving word to prepare for a fire mission.*

at 1800 on the 25th, Chinese gunners scourged Colonel Moore's regiment with another 1,600 mortar and artillery shells, most of them exploding on the ground held by Dulacki's battalion. The shelling abated briefly on the 25th but resumed, convincing the division's intelligence officer, Colonel Clarence A. Barninger, that the enemy was planning a major attack to overwhelm the Hook and gain control of the Samichon Valley. Barninger warned the division's commander, General Pollock, well in advance of the actual attack.

The Chinese fire diminished somewhat on the morning of 26 October, but the Hook remained a dangerous place. On that morning, Lieutenant Colonel Dulacki took advantage of a lull to inspect the defenses, only to be knocked down by the concussion from an enemy shell. He escaped with bruises and abrasions and continued his rounds. The intensity of the bombardment increased later in the morning and continued after dark in preparation for attacks on Outposts Ronson and

Warsaw and the Hook itself.

Chinese troops stormed Ronson at 1810 on 26 October after three days of preparatory fire that had collapsed trenches, shattered bunkers, and killed and wounded Marines at both outposts and on the Hook. At Ronson, 50 or more of the enemy penetrated the

defensive artillery concentrations, overran the position, and killed or captured the members of the reinforced squad manning the outpost.

At about the same time, a Chinese company split into two groups and attacked Outpost Warsaw simultaneously from the east and west. A box-me-in barrage fired by the 11th Marines could not prevent the assault troops for closing in on the defenders, led by Second Lieutenant John L. Babson, Jr. The Marines at Warsaw fought back with grenades, pistols, and rifles, using the latter as clubs when ammunition ran out. Taking cover in the wreckage of the bunkers, they called for variable-time fire directly overhead. Hope lingered that the rain of shell fragments had saved Warsaw, but after four hours of silence from the garrison, Colonel Moore reluctantly concluded that Warsaw was lost, its defenders either dead or captured. Lieutenant Babson was one of those killed.

While the fate of Warsaw still

*Chinese shells explode in the valley below as Marines on the Hook move about in their trenches.*

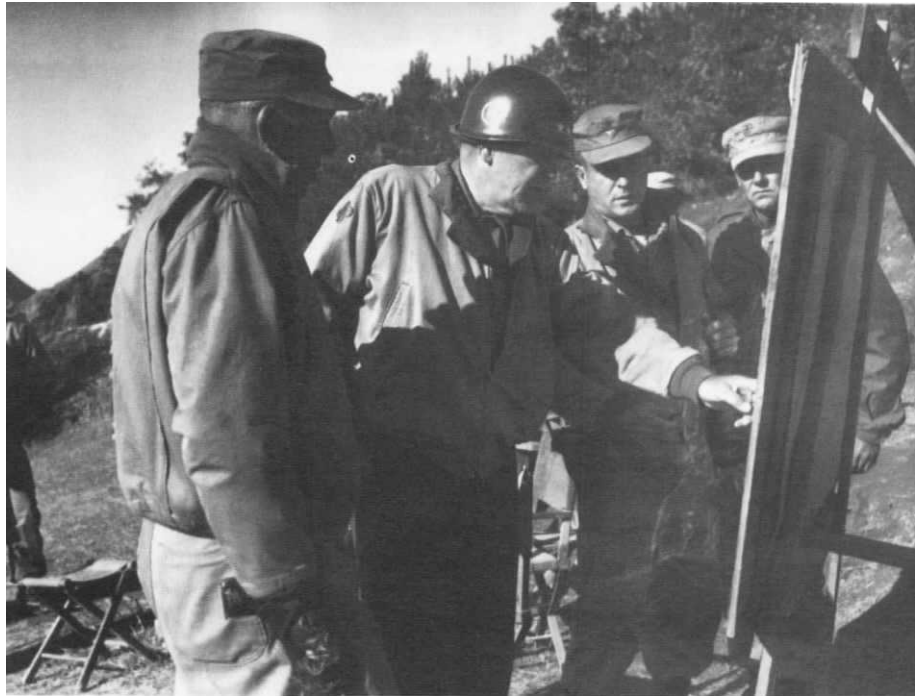
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A166773



remained in doubt and a platoon from Captain Paul B. Byrum's Company C was preparing to reinforce the outpost, a flurry of Chinese shells battered the Hook. Colonel Moore reacted by sending Captain Frederick C. McLaughlin's Company A, which Byrum's unit had just relieved, to help Company C defend the salient. Moore also directed that the 1st Battalion have first call on the regiment's supply of ammunition. In addition, the 1st Marine Division lifted the restrictions on artillery ammunition fired in support of the Hook's defenders.

Under cover of artillery and mortar fire, a Chinese battalion launched a three-pronged attack on Dulacki's 1st Battalion. By 1938 on the 26th, Chinese infantry first threatened the main line of resistance southwest of the Hook itself, to the left of the salient and roughly halfway to the boundary with the 3d Battalion. Within a few minutes, a second attack hit the very nose of the Hook, while a third struck its eastern face. Mingled with the assault troops were laborers carrying construction materials to fortify the Hook after the three prongs of the attack had isolated and overrun it.

The thrust along the ridge that formed the spine of the Hook continued until the Chinese encountered the observation post from which Second Lieutenant Sherrod E. Skinner, Jr., was directing the fire of the 11th Marines. The lieutenant organized the defense of this bunker, running from cover when necessary to replenish the supply of small arms ammunition. He was still calling down artillery fire when the attackers overran the Hook. He then told his men to play dead until other Marines counterattacked. For three hours, they fooled the Chinese who entered the bunker. Finally, an



National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A165743

*MajGen Paul A. Kendall, center, I Corps commander, receives a tactical briefing from Col Russell E. Honsowetz, operations officer of the 1st Marine Division. To MajGen Kendall's right is MajGen Edwin A. Pollock, 1st Marine Division commander, and to Col Honsowetz' left Col Thomas C. Moore, commanding officer of the 7th Marines.*

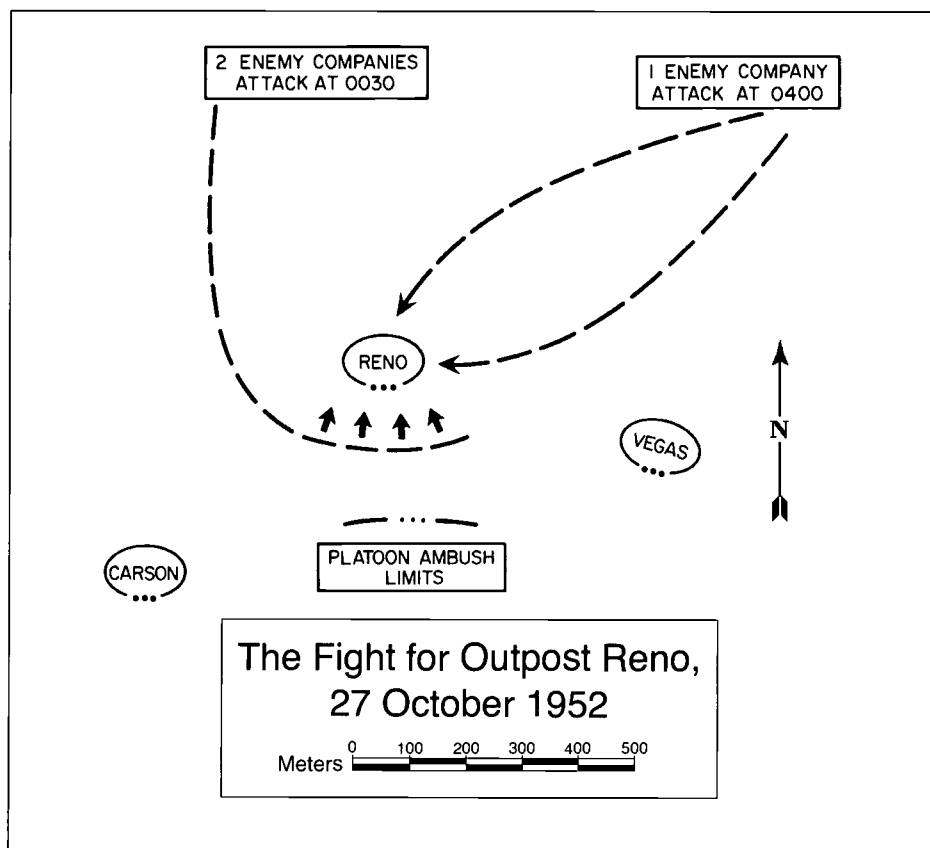
enemy soldier became suspicious and threw a grenade inside. Skinner rolled onto the grenade, absorbing the force of the explosion and saving the lives of two of his men. His sacrifice resulted in the posthumous award of the Medal of Honor.

To the left of the Hook, the assault force outflanked a platoon of Company C, led by Second Lieutenant John W. Meikle, but he succeeded in pulling back the flanks to form a perimeter. East of the Hook, on the 1st Battalion's right, other elements of Company C formed another perimeter. In the 400 yards separating the two, scattered groups from Byrum's company struggled to close the gap.

Help for Company C began arriving at about 2330, after the Chinese had overrun the Hook, when the first elements of McLaughlin's Company A, sent to reinforce Byrum's Marines, made contact with Meikle's perimeter to

the left rear of the captured salient. The arrival of reinforcements enabled the members of Company C, scattered between the two perimeters, to form a blocking position on a ridge running east and west a few hundred yards to the rear of the Hook. At 0300 on the 27th, Colonel Moore committed the regimental reserve, Company H, 3d Battalion. General Pollock ordered the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, from the division reserve into the sector held by Moore's 7th Marines.

The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, had the mission of counterattacking the Chinese who had seized the Hook and penetrated the Jamestown Line. Anticipating commitment in this critical sector, the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Sidney J. Altman, had already drawn up a basic plan for such a counterattack and personally reconnoitered the area. Now Altman's Marines prepared to exe-



ecute that plan. Tank gunners, mortar crews, and artillerymen battered the recently captured Outpost Warsaw, other Chinese troop concentrations, firing batteries, and supply routes. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing also joined in, as Grumman Tigercat night fighters used the ground-based MPQ radar to hit the main Chinese supply route sustaining the attack, dropping their bombs less than a mile west of the Hook.

### Action at Outpost Reno

While the 3d Battalion prepared to counterattack the Hook, the enemy made a new thrust at the 7th Marines. Early on the morning of 27 October, the Chinese attacked Reno, one of the outposts manned by Lieutenant Colonel Caputo's 2d Battalion. Some two miles west of the Hook, the battalion's three outposts formed an arrowhead aimed at Chinese lines, with Reno at the point, Carson on

the left, and Vegas on the right.

The pattern of hostile activity opposite the 7th Marines earlier in October persuaded General Pollock's intelligence specialists that the enemy had given first priority to seizing Caputo's three outposts. This estimate of Chinese intentions caused the 11th Marines to plan concentrations in front of the 2d Battalion, while Caputo set up strong ambush positions to protect the threatened outposts.

On the night before the assault on Reno, Captain James R. Flores led a reinforced platoon from Company E into the darkness. The patrol's destination was a camouflaged ambush position about 300 yards south of Reno and halfway between Carson and Vegas. At midnight, noises to the front alerted Flores and his men that the enemy had infiltrated between them and the outpost and were preparing to attack Reno from the rear. The ambush force alerted the Marines defending the outpost of

the danger behind them and opened fire when the force, estimated at two Chinese companies, seemed on the verge of attacking. Although raked by fire from the front and rear, the enemy fought back, holding the Marines in check until they could break off the action and make an orderly withdrawal to the main line of resistance.

Quiet enveloped Outpost Reno until 0400 on the 27th, when a Chinese platoon attacked from the northwest, assaulting in two waves. The Marines on Reno beat back this first attack, but a second thrust from the same direction broke through the perimeter. The defenders took cover so that variable-time artillery fire bursting overhead could maul the enemy. The tactics worked to perfection, forcing the Chinese to abandon their lodgment after some 40 minutes of fighting

### Counterattacking the Hook

After the ambush by Marines behind Reno, while the outpost's defenders were fighting off the subsequent Chinese assaults, Captain McLaughlin's Company A passed through the line established by Byrum's Marines and began advancing toward the Hook. Enemy mortar and artillery fire stopped McLaughlin's unit short of the objective, forcing him to order his Marines to dig in and hold the ground they had gained.

When McLaughlin's counterattack stalled, Colonel Moore attached the last of the regimental reserve—Company H, 3d Battalion, under Captain Bernard B. Belant—to Lieutenant Colonel Dulacki's 1st Battalion. At 0505, Belant reported to Dulacki, who directed him to renew the counterattack. Within three hours, Company H stood ready to attack



the Chinese, whose bridgehead encompassed the Hook itself and a crescent of ridges and draws extending from the spine of that terrain feature and embracing a segment of the main line of resistance about a half-mile wide.

As Belant led his unit forward, it rapidly covered the first 200 yards before Chinese small arms, mortar, and artillery fire shifted to meet the threat. The company commander pressed the attack, however. Second Lieutenant George H. O'Brien, Jr., led his platoon over the ridge to his front, the men zigzagging as they ran toward the Chinese-held trenchline. A bullet struck O'Brien's armored vest, knocking him down, but he scrambled to his feet and continued toward the enemy, pausing only briefly to help a wounded man. Throwing grenades and firing his carbine, he silenced the Chinese weapons in a bunker and led his platoon toward the Hook itself. This headlong assault, which

*Marines climb an improved trail to bring ammunition to machine gunners on the Hook.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A166423



earned O'Brien the Medal of Honor, broke through the Chinese perimeter and approached the enemy-held bunkers on the Hook before being contained by hostile mortar and artillery fire. The remainder of Company H widened the crack that O'Brien's platoon had opened and captured three prisoners as it overran the southeastern portion of the Hook before a fierce shelling forced the advance elements to find cover and yield some of the ground they had taken.

Marine aircraft helped Company H advance onto the Hook, attacking reinforcements moving into battle and the positions from which the Chinese were firing or adjusting fire. Key targets included the former Marine outposts of Irene, Seattle, and Frisco, along with the frequently bombed main supply route and those enemy troops trying to dislodge the Marines who had gained a foothold on the Hook. Fire from Marine tanks and artillery engaged some of the same targets and proved deadly against trenches and bunkers that the Chinese had seized. The howitzers also joined mortars in counterbattery fire.

At midday on 27 October, after General Pollock had released Company I, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, to Colonel Moore's control, the counterattack to regain the Hook entered its final phase. Company I would drive the enemy onto the Hook, after which Company H, the unit that had penetrated the Chinese perimeter earlier in the day, was to take over the right of the 1st Battalion's line, relieving Company B, which would make a final assault on the Hook and recapture both the Hook and Outpost Warsaw.

Captain Murray V. Harlan, Jr., who commanded Company I, launched his attack early in the

afternoon. The 1st Platoon, which led the way, seized the crest of the ridge to its front at 1350 and began advancing toward the Hook behind a barrage laid down by the 11th Marines. The Chinese reacted to the threat from Harlan's company with deadly artillery and mortar concentrations directed against not only the advancing Marines, but also Colonel Moore's command post and the weapons along the Jamestown Line that supported the assault.

Despite severe casualties, Harlan's Marines pushed ahead, at times crawling from one outcropping in the shell-torn earth to another. After pausing to reorganize at about 1635, the company moved, a few men at a time, onto the Hook, regaining the bunker where Lieutenant Skinner had sacrificed his life for his men and forging ahead against die-hard Chinese in collapsed bunkers and trenches. The deadliest fire came, as always, from enemy mortars and artillery shells that plunged steeply onto the Hook before exploding. Company I took such cover as it could find, but terrain afforded concealment and greater protection from flat-trajectory than from high-angle-fire weapons.

By midnight on 28 October, Company B had threaded its way through a maze of shell craters and moved into position to the left of Company I. Shortly afterward Company B began what Dulacki had planned as the final assault on the Hook. Small arms fire and a shower of grenades from the Chinese positions stopped the Marines as they attacked with rifles and grenades of their own. After exchanging fire with the enemy for perhaps 90 minutes the company fell back to obtain cover and called for mortar and artillery fire. The shelling battered not only the strongpoints immediately to the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A166425

*A Marine casualty arrives at a rear aid station for emergency treatment and evacuation to a hospital. Ammunition carrier in the background starts uphill with belted ammunition.*

front of Company B, but also the enemy's supporting weapons and the routes of reinforcement and replenishment that passed through the Chinese-held outposts of Warsaw and Ronson. The Marines renewed the assault at 0340, broke through, and by 0600 overran the Hook. Afterward, elements of Colonel Moore's regiment reoccupied Warsaw and Reno, which the enemy had abandoned.

A dense fog settled over the Hook as Lieutenant Colonel Dulacki's battalion killed or captured Chinese stragglers and reorganized the defenses. The battle for the Hook and its two outposts, along with the diversionary action at Outpost Reno, cost the Chinese 269 dead and wounded, a number verified as best the Marines could, and perhaps another 953 casualties that escaped verification. In preventing the enemy from gaining a

permanent tactical advantage at the Hook, the Marines lost 70 killed, 386 wounded, and 39 missing, of whom 27 were prisoners of the Chinese. At Reno, nine Marines were killed and 49 wounded.

During the struggle for the Hook, Chinese mortars and artillery proved as deadly as usual in both defending against Marine attack and battering Marine defenses. The enemy sent additional soldiers immediately behind the assault troops, intending that they exploit any breakthrough by the earlier waves, but the tactics failed to accomplish the intended purpose. Lieutenant Colonel Dulacki believed that the gambit failed because too few junior officers were on hand to commit the reserve at the precise moment to maintain momentum.

Dulacki also found flaws with his Marines. Judging from the fre-

quency of malfunctions, they did not appear to be cleaning and caring for their weapons, as they should. Dulacki also expressed concern that the Marines had become too willing to seek the cover of bunkers during Chinese attacks, gaining protection from shell fragments—though not from satchel charges or direct hits by large-caliber shells—at a sacrifice in fields of fire. He believed that infantrymen should build and fight from individual positions with at least some overhead cover, rather than from large bunkers in which several defenders might be isolated and attacked with explosive charges or trapped if a direct hit collapsed the structure.

### **Renewed Action Against Korean Marines**

From the Hook, the fighting returned to the sector of the South Korean Marines on the left of the 5th Marines. The most vulnerable points along the segment of the Jamestown Line held by the Korean Marines were Combat Outposts 39, 33, 31, and 51. Outposts 39, 33, and 31 were located near the boundary with the 5th Marines and manned by the 5th Battalion, Korean Marine Corps, which had relieved the 3d Battalion on the afternoon of 31 October. The 2d Battalion of the Korean Marine Corps maintained Combat Outpost 51, in front of its lines.

An assault against these four hilltop outposts would represent an extension of the attacks in early October that had overrun three other South Korean outposts—86 to the south, 36, and 37. The dominant terrain feature in this area was Hill 155 on the main line of resistance in the sector of the 5th Battalion, a promontory that overlooked not only the Sachon Valley

and the Chinese activity there, but also the Panmunjom corridor and its environs. The enemy made no attempt to disguise his designs on the outposts and ultimately the hill, unleashing a savage bombardment—more than 3,000 rounds during the 48 hours ending at 1800, 31 October—that rocked the South Korean positions, especially Outposts 39 and 33.

The anticipated Chinese attack began at 1830 on the 31st, when the Chinese probed Outposts 39 and 33, apparently in an attempt to exploit any confusion resulting from the 5th Battalion's relief of the 3d. Artillery fire blocked these enemy jabs but did not end the night's fighting. At 2200, an eight-minute bombardment struck the four outposts in preparation for infantry assaults against all of them.

On the right, a Chinese company pressured the platoon of South Korean Marines holding Outpost 31 until 0155, when defensive fire prevailed and the attack ended. At Outpost 33, another enemy company broke through a perimeter manned by only two South Korean squads, which clung to parts of the hill until 0515 when, with the help of artillery fire, they drove off the Chinese.

Two enemy companies attacked Outpost 39, the nearest of the four to Hill 155. The platoon of South Korean Marines deployed there yielded some ground before taking advantage of defensive artillery concentrations to eject the Chinese by 0410. The enemy again probed the outpost two hours later, but soon broke off the action on the right of the sector held by the South Korean Marines.

On the left, four Chinese companies attacked Combat Outpost 51, the most heavily defended of the four, since an entire company had dug in there. It was also the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A168017

*Men of the 5th Marines eat hot chow cooked and brought up to them on the front-lines from the battalion command post to the rear. Marines often ate in relays so as not to hamper operations*

most remote of the outposts, 2,625 yards from the main line of resistance, and this vulnerable location may have persuaded the enemy to scrimp on shelling. Except for 20 rounds of 90mm fire from Soviet-built tanks, the bombardment here was lighter and less effective than at the other three outposts. Three Chinese companies attacked Outpost 51 from the southwest and another from the north. After some initial gains, the attack lost momentum and ended at 0330.

### Period of Comparative Calm

Despite the clashes involving the Korean Marines, a lull settled over the division following the fierce action at the Hook. Elements of the Commonwealth Division assumed responsibility for the Hook itself on 3 November, but the 11th Marines continued to fire in support of the salient's British

defenders. On the night of 18-19 November, for example, Marine artillerymen fired some 2,000 rounds to help break up a Chinese attack.

Meanwhile, the 1st Marines replaced the 7th Marines in manning the right of the division's main line of resistance. On 22 November, the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, in regimental reserve, provided one company for Operation Wakeup, a raid on Chinese positions opposite Combat Outposts Reno and Vegas. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Warren, assigned the mission to Captain Jay V. Poage's Company D, which attacked just before dawn. The operation succeeded mainly in demonstrating the strength of the Chinese, whose defensive fire stopped the attack short of the objective and frustrated the plan to seize and interrogate

## Life in the Bunkers

Upon arriving on the Jamestown Line, the 1st Marine Division made use of log-and-sandbag bunkers, which Second Lieutenant William Watson, described as a simultaneous curse and blessing. Although the structures provided “places of some comfort to which Marines went to get dry and sleep and to escape incoming [fire],” the “sandbag castles” lured men out of their fighting positions. Once inside a bunker, the Marines could be killed or wounded not only by a direct hit by a heavy shell that collapsed the structure, but also by a grenade or explosive charge hurled inside.

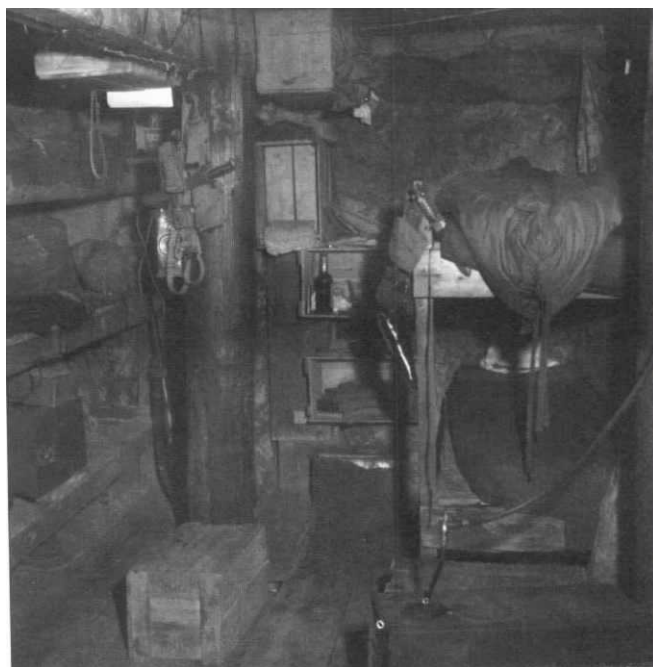
Given the vulnerability of bunkers and their effect on aggressiveness, it was no wonder, said Watson, that he and his fellow junior officers had received no formal instruction in bunker placement or construction. “They didn’t teach bunker building at Quantico,” he recalled. “Who would have dared?” In a Marine Corps trained “to assault and dominate the enemy,” anyone foolish enough to advocate the use of defensive bunkers would probably have been shipped at once to Korea where he might well have found himself building the very structures that had resulted in his being sent there.

Life in the bunkers gave rise to unique problems, not the least of which was trash disposal. As the bunkers and trenches proliferated on the main line of resistance and the outpost line, the troops manning them—whether American or South Korean Marines or Chinese soldiers—generated vast amount of refuse. Both sides, reported Second Lieutenant John M. Verdi, a Marine pilot who flew a hundred missions and for a time controlled air strikes from a bunker on the static battle line, did an adequate job of policing the main line of resistance, but the combat outposts posed a more difficult challenge. By day activity in a confined and exposed area could attract hostile fire, and by night policing up might interfere with planned fires, the movement of patrols, or the establishment of listening posts. As a result, trash accumulated around the outposts, especially those of the Marines who not only ate more than their enemy, but consumed food that came in cans or packages that could be more easily discarded than carried away, even with the help of Korean laborers.

Trash attracted rats, nicknamed “bunker bunnies” because of their size. The Marines waged war against them but with partial success at best. Verdi recalled that one Marine used his bayonet to pin a scurrying rat to a sandbag, but the screams of the dying varmint proved so unnerving that the hunter had to borrow a pistol to finish off his prey.

Mines planted by Marines could be as dangerous as those laid by the Chinese, or so Verdi believed. The Marines charted their minefields, selecting a starting point and an azimuth, then planting the mines at specific intervals to form rows a certain distance apart. An error with the compass or a mistake in recording the information would render the chart useless, and the map itself might disappear, destroyed as a result of enemy action or simply lost during the relief of a unit. A return to mobile warfare, or a truce that required removal of the old minefields, would increase the danger.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A169578



prisoners. Patrols, ambushes, and less ambitious raids continued for the balance of the year.

On the same day as Operation Wakeup, South Korean police captured two infiltrators in the rear area of the Kimpo Provisional Regiment. Although the Han River interposed a barrier to large-scale attacks, the occasional infiltrator

managed to cross and lose themselves among the 80,000 civilians living on the Kimpo Peninsula. A few of these infiltrators struck on 1 December, ambushing a jeep driving on the main supply route. Some two-dozen bullets tore into the vehicle, but only one struck the lone occupant, wounding him in the knee.

### Situation at Year’s End

During 1952, the Korean fighting assumed a pattern far different from that for which the Marines sent to Korea in previous years had prepared. Mobility gave way to stalemate. The battlefield now resembled the trench warfare of World War I more than the sudden



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A167563

*Two 48-ton Patton tanks wait to receive firing orders before their Marine drivers wheel them up onto earthen ramps behind the main line of resistance where they would fire on enemy positions as artillery.*

amphibious thrusts and rapid campaigns of World War II in the Pacific. If the amphibian tractor symbolized the role of Marines in the war against Japan, the bunker, built of logs and sandbags on both the main line of resistance and the line of outposts that protected it, represented the war along the Jamestown Line.

The final months of 1952 saw changes of leadership within the 1st Marine Division. On 5 November, Colonel Moore handed over the 7th Marines to Colonel Loren E. Haffner, and Colonel Hewitt D. Adams replaced Colonel Layer in command of the 1st Marines on the 22d. On 10 December, Colonel Lewis W. Walt assumed command of the 5th Marines from Colonel Smoak. Colonel Harvey C. Tschirgi took over the Kimpo Provisional Regiment on 1 December from Colonel Richard H. Crockett, who had replaced Colonel Staab, the unit's original commander, on 31 August. General Pollock remained in command of the division as the new year began and the stalemate continued.

In December, President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower made good his campaign promise to "go to Korea," but it was not yet possible to predict the consequences, if any, of his visit. The war remained unpopular with the American people, threats posed by the Soviet Union in Europe seemed more dangerous than the Chinese menace in the Far East, and the negotiations at Panmunjom had stalled over the question whether prisoners of war could refuse repatriation. The only hope, as yet a slim one, for resolving the issue of repatriation lay in the adoption by the United Nations of an Indian proposal to create a special commission to address the issue.

*Honors are rendered for President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower during his visit to the 1st Marine Division. Standing to Eisenhower's left are MajGen Edwin A. Pollock, the division commander, and Gen Mark W. Clark, USA, the United Nations commander.*

1stMarDiv Historical Diary Photo Supplement, Dec52



## About the Author

Bernard C. Nalty was a civilian member of the Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, from October 1956 to September 1961. He collaborated with Henry I. Shaw, Jr., and Edwin T. Turnbladh on *Central Pacific Drive*, a volume of the *History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II* series. He also completed more than 14 short historical studies, some of which appeared in *Leatherneck* or *Marine Corps Gazette*. He joined the history office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1961, trans-

ferred in 1964 to the Air Force history program, and retired in 1994. Mr. Nalty has written or edited a number of publications, including *Blacks in the Military: Essential Documents*, *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military*, *The Vietnam War*, *Tigers Over Asia*, *Air Power and the Fight for Khe Sanh*, and *Winged Shield*, *Winged Sword: A History of the U.S. Air Force*. In addition, he participated in the Marines in World War II commemorative series, writing *Cape Gloucester: The Green Inferno* and *The Right to Fight: African-American Marines in World War II*.

## Sources

Clay Blair, Jr., has chosen *The Forgotten War* as the title of his account of the Korean conflict, the history of which tends to be overshadowed by World War II and the Vietnam War. Detailed though it is compared to other such histories, the *Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Times Books, 1987) tends to gloss over the final 18 months of the war, especially the battles fought by the United States Marines. The best account of Marine operations during 1952 and after remains *Operations in West Korea*, volume five of the series *U. S. Marine Corps Operations in Korea, 1950-1953* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, HQMC, 1972), by LtCol Pat Meid, USMCR, and Maj James M. Yingling, USMC.

Although the official Marine Corps account is essential, Walter G. Hermes contributes valuable additional information on Marine Corps operations, as

well as Army activity and the negotiation of a cease-fire, in *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1988), a volume of *United States Army in the Korean War* series.

Personal accounts by Marines are included in *Korean Vignettes: Faces of War* (Portland, OR: Artwork Publications, 1996), a compilation of narratives and photographs by 201 veterans of the Korean War, prepared by Arthur W. Wilson and Norman L. Strickbine.

Other valuable insights and first-hand accounts appear in *The Korean War: Uncertain Victory: The Concluding Volume of an Oral History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988) by Donald Knox, with additional text by Alfred Coppel.

The *Marine Corps Gazette* covered the professional aspects of the war in a number of articles. Especially important are "Outpost Warfare," in the November 1953 issue, and

"Back to the Trenches," (March 1955), both by Peter Braestrup, and LtCol Roy A. Batterton's "Random Notes on Korea," (November 1955).

The personal papers collected by the History and Museums Division, Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps proved extremely helpful. The material on file varies tremendously, including journals, photographs, letters, narrative memoirs, and at least one academic paper, a master's thesis on outpost warfare by Maj Norman W. Hicks, a Korean War veteran assigned to help write the history of that conflict. Among the most valuable of these were the submissions by John Minturn Verdi, William A. Watson, and Gen Christian F. Schilt.

With the exception of MajGen John T. Selden, the senior Marine officers serving in Korea at this time participated in the Marine Corps' oral history program. The interviews with Gen Christian F. Schilt and Gen Edwin A. Pollock proved especially valuable.



# OUTPOST WAR

## U.S. Marines from the Nevada Battles to the Armistice

by Bernard C. Nalty



When 1953 began, the Jamestown Line had become, in the words of Marine Corporal Robert Hall who fought there, “a messy, rambling series of ditches five to seven feet deep” that linked a succession of bunkers constructed of sandbags and timber and used for shelter or fighting. The trenches wandered erratically to prevent Chinese attackers who penetrated the perimeter from delivering deadly enfilade fire along lengthy, straight segments. As for the bunkers themselves, since “piles of trash, ration cans, scrap paper, and protruding stove pipes” revealed their location, the enemy “must have known where every bunker was.”

A bunker, therefore, could easily become a death trap. As a result, the Marines had learned to dig and man fighting holes outside the bunkers. Hall described such a hole as “simply a niche in the forward wall of the trench, usually covered with planks and a few sandbags.” Within the hole, a crude shelf held hand grenades

AT LEFT: *Spotting targets of opportunity, a Marine crew fires its 75mm recoilless rifle directly against enemy bunkers.*

National Archives Photo (USMC) 127-N-A170206



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A167141

*By the end of 1952, the 1st Marine Division defended a static main line of resistance and its outposts, fighting from trenches, covered holes, and bunkers like these manned by Company E, 2d Battalions, 7th Marines.*

and a sound-powered telephone linked the hole to the company command post. Along with the fighting holes, Hall and his fellow Marines dug “rabbit holes,” emergency shelters near the bottom of the trench wall that provided “protection from the stray Chinese mortar round that sometimes dropped into the trench.”

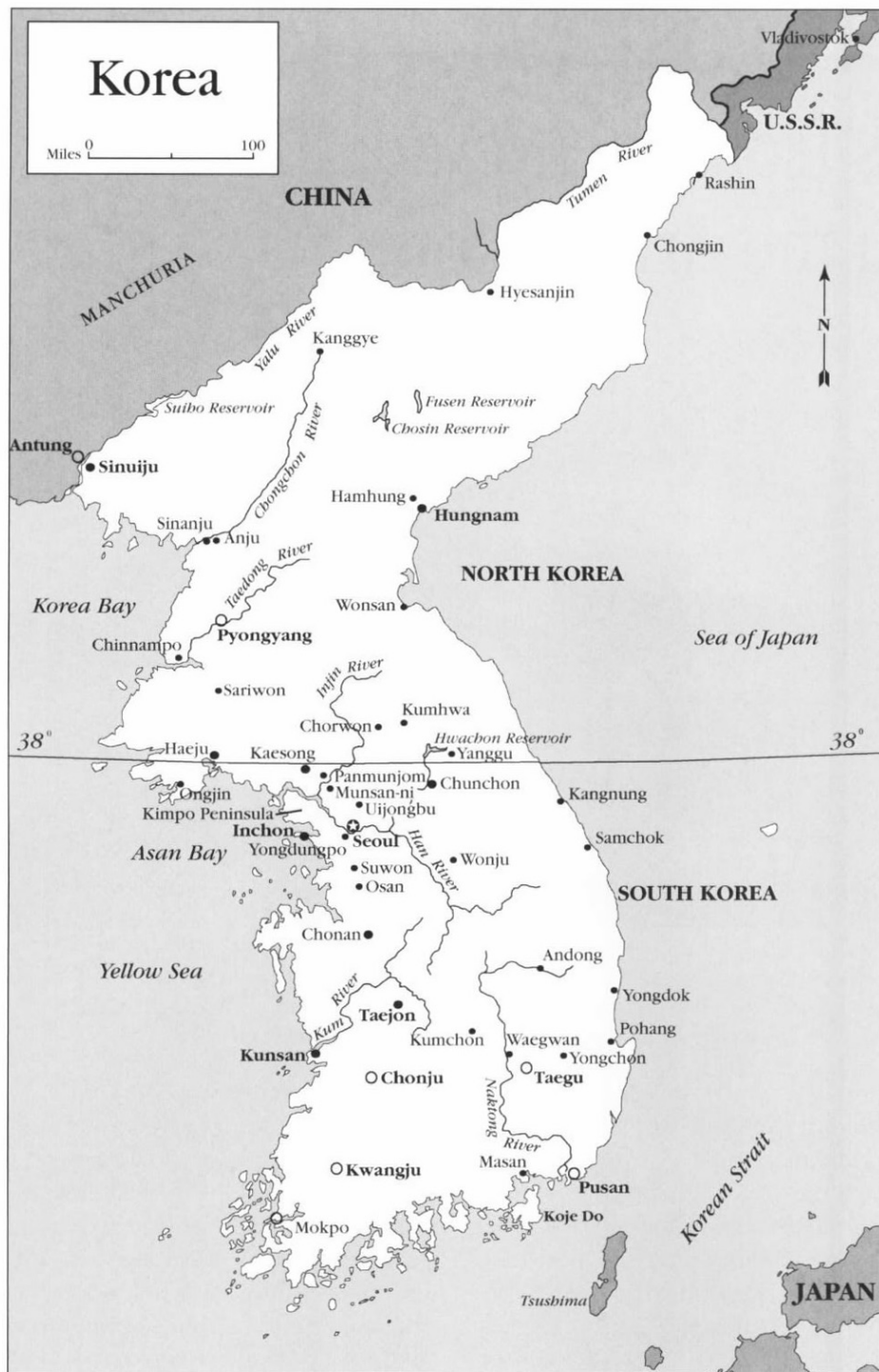
Some bunkers contained firing ports for .30-caliber or .50-caliber machine guns and accommodations for the crews. Chicken wire strung across the firing ports prevented Chinese assault troops from throwing grenades inside, but fire from the machine guns soon tore away the wire, which could be replaced only at night when darkness provided conceal-

ment from Chinese observers.

Other bunkers served as living quarters for five to 10 Marines and might also provide a brief respite for those standing watch in the rain or cold. Because of the emphasis on fighting holes, the living bunkers that Hall remembered had no firing apertures and sometimes a curtain of blanket wool or canvas instead of a door. Candles, shielded so they would not attract Chinese fire, provided light, and kerosene or oil stoves, vented through the roof, supplied heat. The more elaborate living bunkers to the rear of the main line of resistance had electric lights, the power produced by gasoline generators.

By night, during the early





months of 1953, a cold wind usually blew from the north, sometimes bringing with it the sound of Chinese loudspeakers broadcasting English-language appeals to surrender, interspersed with country music. The enemy's propaganda tended to reflect Communist ideology, urging members of the United Nations forces to escape their capitalist masters. The Chinese, how-

ever, also tried to take advantage of the fact that the combatants in Korea were discussing a ceasefire even as they fought. Since the summer of 1951, truce talks had taken place at Kaesong and later at Panmunjom, with the United Nations delegation traveling to the site of the talks through a carefully marked demilitarized corridor. When the talks seemed to be mak-

ing progress, the Chinese used a more subtle approach, trying to persuade members of the United Nations forces not to risk their lives in a war that had almost ended.

Despite cold-weather clothing and insulated boots, the chill of the winter night could numb the senses. As a result, a Marine usually stood nighttime watch in a fighting hole for 30 to 45 minutes before warming himself in a nearby bunker. On some nights, Corporal Hall recalled, an outgoing salvo or ripple of 4.5-inch rockets might swish overhead to explode on some distant hill. "All through the night," he said, "there were sporadic shots, grenades going off, artillery fire"—as outposts came under attack, ambushes were triggered, and patrols drew fire—and "at first light a ripple of random shots would greet the new day," as visibility improved revealing targets previously hidden by darkness.

From time to time, Marines manning the Jamestown Line got a brief respite from the danger, tension, and discomfort. "One of the most pleasurable things" in moving off the line, said Corporal Hall, "was to walk back to battalion for a hot meal and a shower." A Marine just come from the battlefield could sit down to the kind of meal he might have been served at a mess hall in the United States, eat at his own pace instead of the tempo set by the mess sergeant, have a hot shower in tents modified for that purpose, and exchange a filthy uniform for a clean one. A laundered utility jacket, formerly worn by a staff sergeant whose chevrons remained in place, might be issued to a corporal like Hall. After a trip to the shower, he said, "you could never be sure about a person's rank unless you knew him."



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170084

*Inside view of one of the cramped sleeping caves, which sheltered two to four Marines, on Outpost Carson (Hill 27). A majority of the outpost's strength stood watch and worked*

*on fortifications at night, while a small security team was on duty during the day.*

Marines on the battle line, who could not be reached with food prepared at field kitchens and brought forward in insulated containers, relied on C-rations easily transported in cardboard boxes and quickly prepared. The C-ration featured canned foods like sausage patties in gravy, corned beef hash, or beans and frankfurters that could be heated over a Sterno flame, along with candy, a cookie, crackers, instant coffee, cigarettes, canned fruit, toilet paper, and an ingenious can opener. Although the object of many a joke, C-rations were "quite re-markable" in the opinion of one Marine. "Everything was used," he said, "even the oiled cardboard box into which a person could relieve himself."

*Marines of Company B, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, enjoy hot chow on the reverse slope of the main line of resistance. These field mess areas, where Marines got at least one hot meal a day, were set up 50 to 100 yards from the frontlines.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A170997



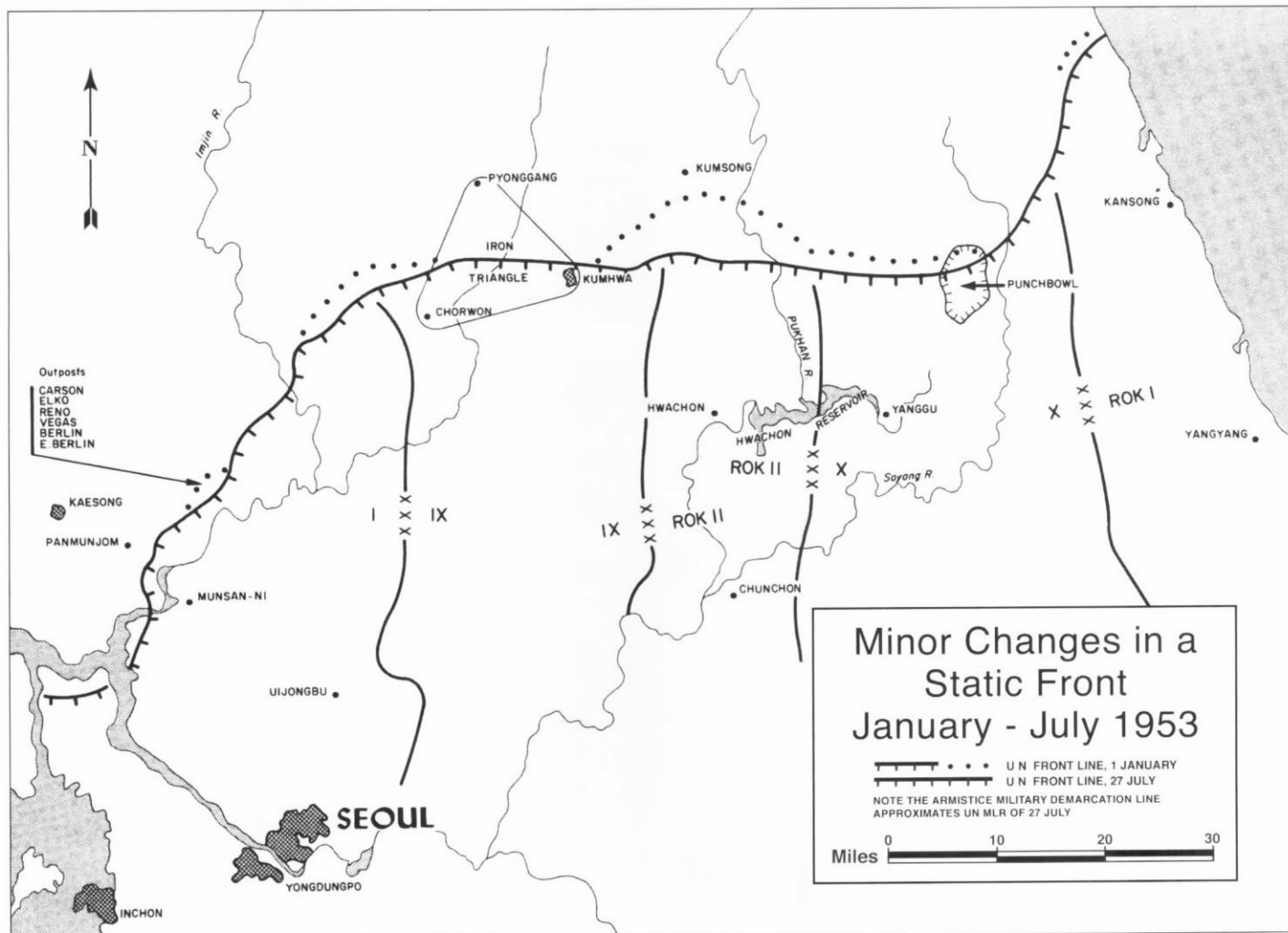
## Refinements in Position Warfare

Experience on the Jamestown Line in 1952 inspired innovations in static warfare, although not all were immediately applicable to the battlefield. The concept of a main line of resistance and its protecting line of combat outposts persisted into 1953, but the ideal placement and construction of trenches and bunkers changed. Chinese mortar and artillery fire demonstrated that trenches had to be deeper, fighting holes better protected, and bunkers stronger. Moreover, the military crest of a hill or ridgeline—the position on the forward slope with the longest fields of observation and fire—need not be the best location for the defenses protecting vital terrain. The topographic crest—the



National Archives Photo (USA) 111-SC428270

*In February 1953, LtGen Maxwell D. Taylor, USA, left, who led the 101st Airborne Division at Normandy during World War II, replaced Gen James A. Van Fleet, USA, center, in command of the U.S. Eighth Army. Standing to the right is Gen Mark W. Clark, USA, commander of United Nations forces.*



spine of a ridge or top of a hill—might be a better site for the main line of resistance, provided that fighting positions, readily accessible from the main trench, were located a short distance down the forward slope. Formerly, machine guns tended to fire directly into draws that the Chinese might follow to attack an outpost or a portion of the main line of resistance; now the machine gun crews, protected as necessary by riflemen, would dig in near the tips of fingers of high ground extending outward from the main line or its outposts and place interlocking bands of fire across the front. Moreover, units in reserve immediately behind the main line of resistance could move through trenches on

the topographical crest without crossing the skyline and risking direct fire from flat trajectory weapons.

Those Marines who could shift from the military crest to the topographical crest would enjoy certain advantages. Plunging fire, directed by mortars or howitzers against trenches on the topographic crest, proved difficult for the Chinese to register or adjust, since observers could not see the explosion of shells that fell beyond Marine positions. In contrast, when firing against the military crest, the enemy could spot shells that detonated both beyond and short of the target and adjust his fire accordingly.

Another defensive innovation

*A fire team from Company I, 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, sets out on a daylight reconnaissance patrol to one of outposts in front of the main line of resistance. Aggressive patrolling and improvement of the secondary defenses of the Wyoming and Kansas Lines occupied much of the reduced wintertime schedule.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A168856



proved as effective as it was simple. Instead of two aprons of barbed wire separated by about one yard, the Marines adopted the so-called Canadian system, which featured random strands of wire connecting the parallel aprons in the void between them. Artillery or mortar fire, which might rip apart the old aprons, merely churned and tangled the wire between the aprons, thus making the barrier harder to penetrate.

These changes could easily be incorporated in the fall-back positions, the Wyoming and Kansas Lines, to the rear of the main line of resistance. Major changes to the Jamestown Line itself and its combat outposts proved all but impossible when in contact with an aggressive enemy able to make deadly use of artillery and mortars. The frontline Marines could rarely do more than put out the additional wire, dig deeper, and add timbers and sandbags to the existing defenses.

## Daylight Raids

Besides strengthening the defenses, especially of the Wyoming and Kansas Lines, Marines of the division's reserve regiment continued to undergo training while patrolling the rear area. On the Jamestown Line and its outposts, the lull that settled in after the fight for the Hook ended when one of the regiments on the main line of resistance, the 5th Marines, raided Hills 31 and 31A in the Ungok hill mass. Because the Chinese had fortified this high ground so strongly, the Marines made elaborate preparations, planning feints to divert attention from the main thrust, bringing in pilots from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing to visit observation posts and become familiar with the battlefield, arranging for air strikes and artillery concentrations, reconnoitering